

# Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita

Re'eh



©

**Copyright 2021**

for subscription and comments

Email: **Mail@TorahWellsprings.com**

Phone: 718.484.8136

Fax on Demand: 877.843.3049

# Table of Contents

## *Torah Wellsprings - Re'eh*

<b>In Hashem's Hands</b> .....	4
<b>Joy</b> .....	7
<b>Hashem's Children</b> .....	9
<b>Happy with Your Portion</b> .....	12
<b><i>Gaavah</i> - Arrogance</b> .....	14
<b>Elul</b> .....	16
<b><i>Teshuvah</i> - Never Too Late</b> .....	20
<b><i>Tzedakah</i></b> .....	21
<b>Collecting <i>Tzedakah</i></b> .....	24
<b>Give <i>Tzedakah</i> Wisely</b> .....	26
<b><i>Tzedakah</i> Protects</b> .....	28
<b>Loans</b> .....	29

# Torah Wellsprings

## Re'eh

### In Hashem's Hands

Rebbe Yitzchak Eizik Kahanah *zt'l hy'd* taught: When Shimon gives tzedakah to Reuven, Reuven won't thank Shimon's hand; he will thank Shimon.

In reality, Shimon is also a hand, a messenger; ultimately, Hashem is providing us. Therefore, our primary *hakaras hatov* should go to Hashem.

As it states (16:17) איש כמתנת ידו, כברכת ה' אלקיך אשר נתן לך. It can be translated, איש כמתנת ידו, just as when Shimon gives you something, you don't thank Shimon's hand, similarly, כברכת ה' אלקיך, we should have *hakaras hatov* primarily to Hashem, because you received His blessings.

We must also know that when we work, we don't earn *parnassah* through the

work of our hands. *Parnassah* comes from Hashem's hands.

In halachah, we find that the hands are most susceptible to becoming *tamei*. For example, we must wash our hands before eating, and there are other times in halachah when we must wash our hands (see *Orach Chaim* 4).

This is because the hands trick people. They think, כחי ועוצם ידי, that everything is dependent on their hands. And that is *tumah*. Knowing that everything is, בידי שמים, in Hashem's hands, is purity.

We say in Hallel, ימין ה' עושה חיל ימין ה' רוממה ימין ה' עושה חיל. The Ksav Sofer explains:

ימין ה' עושה חיל, there are times when Hashem's kindness - His right hand - is revealed and we enjoy

the good He bestows upon us.

ימין ה' רוממה refers to when Hashem's right hand of kindness is רוממה, very high and concealed. These are the difficult times, *chalilah*, when we don't see Hashem's kindness clearly.

ימין ה' עשה חיל, even during those hard times we believe that it is Hashem's kindness and for our good.

The Gemara (*Brachos* 51.) teaches that when one *benches* with a *becher* he should accept the *becher* with both hands and then hold it in the right hand.

The Gemara inquires, "Can he use his left hand to help support the *becher*?"

The Gemara concludes that he shouldn't. He should use his right hand exclusively.

The Ksav Sofer explains that these halachos teach us lessons in *emunah*.

One receives the cup with both hands to imply

that he used his hands to get his *parnassah*. Then he places the cup in his right hand, hinting to ימין ה', Hashem's right hand, symbolizing that it wasn't the work of his hands, rather it was Hashem's kindness that gave him *parnassah*.

The Gemara asks, "Can he use his left hand to help support the *becher* that's in his right hand?"

The intention is that we nevertheless did *hishtadlus*. Therefore, perhaps we can acknowledge the *hishtadlus* by allowing the left hand to support the right hand?

The Gemara replies that he can't use his left hand at all because his *hishtadlus* didn't even help him earn *parnassah*.

As the *Mesilas Yesharim* (21) writes, "It states (*Bereishis* 3:19), בועת אפך תאכל לחם, 'By the sweat of your face you will eat bread.' *Hishtadlus* for *parnassah* is like a tax that all mankind must pay. This

is the decree of the exalted King, and no one is exempt. And therefore, Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni Devarim 2, תת"ח) write, 'Perhaps a person doesn't need to do anything at all, and he will earn his *parnassah*? Therefore, the Torah clarifies, בכל משלה ידך, שאשר תעשה, we must do. But it isn't that *hishtadlus* helps; rather, it is an obligation. After he made *hishtadlus*, he fulfilled his obligation, and now there is room for Hashem's blessing to come in."

The Ksav Sofer adds:

Chazal say that when one says אמן יהא שמיה רבה בכל כחו with all his strength, he is a *ben Olam HaBa*.

The Ksav Sofer explains as follows:

The acronym of אֱמ"ן is "א"ל מל"ך נאמ"ן, "G-d, King, the reliable One." It expresses the belief that everything is from Hashem. When a person proclaims that, בכל כחו, even when he is young and strong and invests his

energies to earn *parnassah*, and nevertheless, he proclaims א"ל מלך נאמן, that everything is from; for this recognition, he will be rewarded with Olam HaBa.

This coming year is *shemittah*. *Shemittah* reminds us that *parnassah* comes from Hashem. Throughout the year of *shemittah*, we don't work the land; we don't make *hishtadlus*, and yet there is *parnassah* for everyone. We discover that it isn't *hishtadlus* that sustains us, but Hashem's blessings.

Similarly, each Shabbos we stop working, we don't do any *hishtadlus*, to remind us that our *parnassah* comes from Hashem.

Generally, we are obligated to do *hishtadlus*. However, the work of our hands confuses us, as we think that perhaps our *hishtadlus* brings us our needs. On Shabbos and *shemittah* we are forbidden to do *hishtadlus*, and yet we have *parnassah*. This is our

reminder that everything is from Hashem.

The Baal HaMaor (*Shabbos*, quoted in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 257:8*) says, "Our rabbis instituted that one must eat and enjoy hot food on Shabbos. Whoever doesn't eat hot dishes on Shabbos, we must check him out because perhaps he is a non-believer." Because why doesn't he believe in Chazal that it is permitted to eat hot foods on Shabbos?

Rebbe Hershele of Lisk *zt'l* (אור הישר והטוב p.129) explains that on Shabbos we attain *emunah* that everything comes from Hashem, and not through the work of our hands.

The hot foods we eat on Shabbos symbolize this principle. We begin cooking on *erev Shabbos*, and then we don't touch it until we eat it on Shabbos. It finishes cooking on its own. This reminds us that it is the same with all our *hishtadlus*. We begin the process, but

we don't finish it. The result is in Hashem's hands.

If one doesn't eat hot foods on Shabbos, it seems that he doesn't have this belief. He thinks that he does the beginning and the end, and everything is in his hands. Therefore, we are told to check him out to see whether he believes in Hashem.

## Joy

It states (*Devarim 33:18*), שמח וזבולון בצאתך, "Zevulun, rejoice when you go out." Rashi translates הצלח בצאתך לסחורה, "Succeed when you go out to do business."

So, the translation of שמח (joy) is הצלח (success). Similarly, in this week's *parashah* it states (16:16), והיית ברם חדון, and the Targum Yonoson writes באצלחותא, be happy with your success. Once again, there is a connection between שמח and *hatzlachah*. Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozmir *zt'l* explains that this is

because happiness brings success.

So, for *parnassah*, do your *hishtadlus* and be happy. Of course, you should pray, too. And Hashem will give you *parnassah*.

The Rebbe of Alexander *zt'l* (מאורן של ישראל ב') teaches that the first letters of *והיית שו"א* spell *אך שמה*, false. This hints that one should pretend to be happy, even if he isn't. Because by pretending to be happy, you will become happy, and you will attain genuine joy.

*שו"א*, falsehood, is alluded to in the *roshei teivos*, at the beginning of the words because it is only false at the beginning; later, it turns into genuine joy.

The Beis Aharon *zt'l* taught that it is generally forbidden to pretend to be on a particular *madreigah* when one isn't there yet. The only exception is joy

because false joy results in true happiness.

The Beis Aharon (*Succos* p.102:) says, "A person must work to attain joy more than all other *middos*."

In Olam HaBa there are no disputes, only happiness. When one is happy, it is as though he is living in Olam HaBa even while living in this world. As Chazal say, *עולמך תראה בעיניך*, "You shall see the future world in your lifetime." You should experience the bliss and joy of Olam HaBa while still living in this world.

The Gemara (*Taanis* 22) relates that Rav Broka asked Eliyahu HaNavi whether there was anyone in the marketplace who is a *בן עולם הבא*. Eliyahu showed him two happy people. "They are Ben Olam HaBa," Eliyahu told him.

The Gaon Yaakov (printed in *Ein Yaakov*) asks, "Why did Rav Broka want to know who is a *ben Olam HaBa*? Were they

considering marrying his sister or his daughter? Eliyahu's answer is even more difficult because how can one attest on a living person that he is a *ben Olam HaBa*? Who knows what the future will bring?"

The Gaon Yaakov answers that Rav Broka was inquiring about who lives in this world as though he is in Olam HaBa because he wanted to emulate them. So Eliyahu showed him the two happy people who knew how to live in this world with the joy experienced in Olam HaBa.

Joy in this world is never perfect. For example, good food makes people happy, but it comes along with illnesses that food can cause and the distress of lacking the money needed to purchase food. Food can also cause jealousy and enemies, etc. Similarly, every physical joy is limited and has a negative side to it. But these two people were happy, independent

of any physical pleasure or achievement. They were happy because that is how they chose to be. And that perfect joy is a scent of the pleasure in Olam HaBa.

### Hashem's Children

We have a lot to be happy about, as this week's *parashah* (14:1) proclaims, בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם, "You are children of Hashem, your G-d." Think about that for a moment. It is the greatest happiness in the world.

Hashem's love to us surpasses the love a parent has for his children. As it states (*Avos* 3), חביבין ישראל שנקראים בנים למקום. The Mishnah is saying that Hashem loves the Jewish nation, and He calls us His children. חבה יתירה נודעת להם שנקראו בנים למקום שנאמר בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם, Hashem's love to His nation is even greater than that, because He told them, בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם, that they are Hashem's children, and there's a rule: מקצת שבהו בפניו, you only tell someone

part of his praise. So, as we were told that Hashem loves us like His children, we understand that Hashem's love for us is even greater. That we are His children is solely מקצת שבחו, part of our praise.

Perhaps you will say that you sinned, and you lost the status of בנים, but it isn't so. As it states, בנים אתם, and Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa *zt'l* explains that אתם means that we are Hashem's children even if we sin. For the Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 25.) says, אתם אפילו שוגגין אתם אפילו מזידין אתם אפילו מוטעין, that the word אתם implies that even if you sin by accident, intentionally, or when you make mistakes, you remain בנים אתם, Hashem's children.

There's a *machlokes* in the Gemara (*Kiddushin* 36.) whether we are called Hashem's children even when we sin. According to Reb Yehudah, we are only Hashem's children when we act righteously.

Reb Meir says, בין כך ובין כך, קרוין בנים, regardless of whether we perform mitzvos or *chalilah*, *aveiros*, we are always בנים, Hashem's beloved children.

The Rashba (*teshuvah* 194) writes that although we generally accept Reb Yehudah's view over Reb Meir's, in this instance, the halachah is according to Reb Meir. At all times, regardless of our behavior, we are Hashem's children.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. When one needs a *yeshuah*, there's a custom to give tzedakah and to say אלוהי דמאיר עניי, "The G-d of Reb Meir should answer me." The Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* explains this custom .

The Gemara says (*Eiruvin* 13:), "It is revealed and known to the One who created the world that there was no one equal to Reb Meir in his generation. So why isn't the halachah like Reb Meir? Because

It states, בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם, לא תתגדרו ולא תשימו קרחה בין עיניכם למת, "You are Hashem's children. Don't inflict yourselves with wounds, and don't pull the hair from your head when someone dies." Since we are Hashem's children, it isn't proper to inflict ourselves or pull out hair when a tragedy occurs.

The Ibn Ezra explains, "Now that you know you are Hashem's children and He loves you more than a father loves his son, do not injure yourself when something distressful occurs because everything is for the good. It can be compared to a child who doesn't understand the ways of his parent, but he

---

his colleagues couldn't fully grasp his thoughts." Reb Meir's logic was beyond most people's grasp, and therefore, we cannot follow his opinion.

Heaven, however, certainly does understand Reb Meir's view, and therefore in heaven the halachah is like Reb Meir. In heaven, the halachah is בנים בין כך ובין כך קרוין בנים, no matter how Yidden behave, they are Hashem's children.

If a person has a problem and he needs a salvation, he gives *tzedakah* and says אלוך דמאיר עניי. This implies, "Hashem, I am certain that in heaven the halachah is like Reb Meir. Thus, even if I've sinned, I am your child. Therefore, have compassion and save me."

On Rosh Hashanah, we say, אם כבנים אם כעבדים אם כבנים רחמו כרחם אב על, בנים... The Satmar Rebbe zt'l (*Divrei Yoel, Rosh Hashanah, 36*) explains: If we are בנים, we can certainly expect that Hashem will have compassion and grant us a good year. אם כעבדים, if we are like slaves, because of our sins, עינינו לך תלויות we raise our eyes לך, to You, Hashem. Because in Hashem's view, we are always His children. עינינו לך תלויות, we request that Hashem see us in His view, that we are His children, and therefore, we request that He inscribe us for a good year.

relies on his parents. That's how you should be with your *emunah* in Hashem."

The Siforno writes, "It is improper to show extreme grief for a relative who died if there remained a closer relative who is more capable of caring for you. So too, you are Hashem's children, and He is your eternal father. Therefore, it isn't proper to worry and to mourn extensively for the dead."

The Or HaChaim HaKadosh (*Rishon L'Tzion*) writes on the *pasuk* (*Yirmiyahu* 31:19) הָבֵן יָקִיר לִי אֲפֵרִים that when someone has a foul odor, people keep their distance from him. However, when your baby needs a diaper change, the parents have no problem holding the child and playing with him. They hug and kiss him, almost as if they don't sense the bad odor because of their love for the child.

We are Hashem's children, and Hashem says

that even if we smell foully from our sins, we remain הָבֵן יָקִיר לִי אֲפֵרִים, Hashem's beloved children. אִם יֵלֵךְ שַׁעֲשׂוּיִם, Hashem plays with us and enjoys us, as a parent plays with his child, even when the child has a foul odor. כִּי מִדֵּי דְבָרֵי בּוֹ זָכוֹר אֲזַכְּרֶנּוּ, עוֹד רַחֵם, in any situation, אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ נָאם ה' Hashem says that He loves us, and He will always have mercy on us.

### Happy with Your Portion

Rebbe Shlomo Karliner *zt'l* said, "The reason *yungerleit* in our times don't succeed in *avodas Hashem* is because they don't recognize their successes" (שְׂאִינִם מֵחֲשִׁיבִים עוֹבְדָא). They perform mitzvos and good deeds, but they don't appreciate what they are doing. They think their deeds are mediocre deeds and nothing special. They don't realize that their mitzvos are precious in Hashem's eyes and that Hashem loves them for performing these good

deeds. Had they appreciated that, they would devote themselves so much more to Hashem's service.

It states (*Avos* 4:1), איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו, "Who is wealthy? Someone who is happy with his portion." Tzaddikim (the Sfas Emes ibid; Tiferes Shlomo, *Ki Savo* ד"ה ושמחת; and *Menuchah v' Kedushah, Shaar HaTorah* vol.2 23, in the name of the Vilna Gaon *zt'l*) explain that this also applies to *ruchniyos*. One must be happy with his portion.

As Rebbe Mendel of Vitebsk *zt'l* writes (letter 22), "A response to my friends regarding learning Torah and *avodas Hashem*: Many are complaining that they have impure thoughts. The reason for that is because they aren't happy with their service. This is a great rule: One must be happy with his portion. One must be happy with his portion in Torah and *avodas Hashem*, regardless of whether his portion is large or small.

He should be delighted with the service he performs. Of course, one must say, מתי יגיעו מעשי למעשי, 'When will I serve Hashem like the *avos*,' nevertheless, you should be very happy with the accomplishments you've achieved until now."

The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* (*Oros HaGra, simchah* 6) writes, *atzvous*, being sad, is a *mum*, a blemish, and it states, וכל אדם אשר מום בו לא יקרב למקדש, whoever has a *mum* can't come to the Mikdash. Therefore, when one comes to the Mikdash, he must be happy."

This also applies to all aspects of *avodas Hashem*; they need to be performed joyously. This also applies to Elul. We must approach this holy month with joy. As the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* says, "It is a great *aveirah* for a *baal teshuvah* to be sad."

*Parshas Re'eh* is an introduction to Elul. As tzaddikim say, ראה is *roshei*

*teivos* ראש אלול היום, "Today is the beginning of Elul." The *parashah* repeats the theme of being happy several times, which is the disposition we should have this month.

### **Gaavah – Arrogance**

Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev *zt'l* taught that *gaavah* separates a person from Hashem. As it states (*Devarim* 5:5), אנכי עומד בין ה' וביניכם, the sensation of אנכי, of pride, separates a person from Hashem.

The Maor v'Shamesh quotes this *vort*, and adds that there is a time for *gaavah*, too.

As the Maor v'Shamesh writes, "Nevertheless, there is a time for everything. Because when a person is about to pour his heart out before Hashem in prayer, and then he thinks, 'But who am I to pray before Hakadosh Baruch Hu?' and he is embarrassed to daven properly with *hislahavus* and to reconnect with

Hashem. At these times, he should tell himself that he is worthy to come before the king."

If he is humble, he won't be able to daven. Therefore, now it is time to utilize the attribute of *gaavah d'kedushah*, holy pride.

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk *zt'l* was extremely humble; he considered himself the worst person in the world. He said, "I wish my mother gave birth to a stone and not me because a stone doesn't rebel against Hashem, and I do." He humbly felt that he never served Hashem properly. Once, he reviewed his deeds and felt so broken by what he found that he feared he would become ill from depression. There was a bottle of wine on the table. He said, "Ribono Shel Olam, I never served you yet, but now I will serve you for the first time."

He took a cup of wine and said the *brachah* with a lot of *kavanah* and *mesirus*

*nefesh*. He felt he did a least one good deed – the *brachah* that he said properly – and that comforted him.

Despite his great humility, when people came to him, asking him to daven for them, he would tell himself, "I can help this person with my tefillos, and no one else can." When he understood that his humility would prevent him from serving Hashem, he followed the path of *gaavah d'kedushah*, holy pride.

The Maor v'Shamesh says that this is implied in the *pasuk*, ראה אנכי נותן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה, the attribute of אנכי, of *gaavah*, can be a blessing and it can be a curse. It all depends on how and when it is used.

The Baal HaTanya *zt'l* once knocked at the door of his Rebbe, the Magid of Mezritzh *zt'l*. The Magid asked, "Who's there?"

The Baal HaTanya replied, "It is I." The Magid

asked again, "Who's at the door?" and the Baal HaTanya replied, "It is I."

The Magid instructed the Baal HaTanya to go to a certain *bris milah*. The following day the Baal HaTanya went there, and he sat down at a table. Something was stolen at the *bris milah*, and as they didn't recognize the Baal HaTanya, they suspected that perhaps he was the thief, *chalilah*. They checked through his pockets to find the stolen item, and throughout this humiliating experience, the Baal HaTanya kept repeating, "It wasn't me. It wasn't me."

When he returned to the Magid, the Magid told him, "For each time that you said, "It is I," you had to repeat, "it wasn't me."

Because we must know that everything is from Hashem, and ultimately, "it isn't me."

Yet, as we see, there are times for holy pride, as well. There are times when one should gird himself with holy pride and say that he is special, he can serve Hashem, and he can accomplish great things with his Torah, tefillah, and *avodas Hashem*.

As it states in *Pirkei Avos* (6:1), "Whoever studies Torah *lishmah*... מלבשתו עונה, "He becomes dressed in *anavah* (humility)." The Maor Einayim explains that a garment can be put on or taken off. מלבשתו עונה, "He becomes dressed in *anavah*," but he can also take off the clothes of *anavah* and act with holy pride when needed. Because there are times when one must use the attribute of *gaavah*, too, to believe in his abilities.

It states (*Bereishis* 4:7-14), הלא אם תיטב שאת, the Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh *zy'a* explains: If you do good deeds, this might lead you to *gaavah* (התנשאות). However, ואם לא תיטב, if you will focus on how much

your *avodas Hashem* is lacking and how little you accomplished in your lifetime, לפתה חטאת רובץ, that can result in despair, and you might lose hope of ever succeeding in *avodas Hashem*. So, what should a person do? The answer is, נע ונד תהיה בארץ, to waver back and forth between the attributes of humility and holy pride. Depending on your need at the time, sometimes think about your humility, and sometimes discard humility and focus on your greatness.

## Elul

Last week's *parashah* begins with the words ויהי עקב תשמעון. Chazal say that the word ויהי expresses happiness. When is there true happiness? עקב, when we reach the heel- the end of the year, because, תשמעון, that is the time of year that we listen to the Torah and change our ways.

Tzaddikim would say, "Even fish in the sea tremble on *Shabbos Mevorchim Elul*."

Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zy'a* used to cover himself with blankets from the fifteenth of Av. He explained, "It says in *sefarim* that even fish tremble at this time of year. Fish don't know what Elul is all about. Those who learn *sefarim* and understand what Elul about certainly should be afraid."

It is repeated that every year, in Yerushalayim, when the chazan would *bench Chodesh Elul*, some women in the *ezras nashim*

fainted from fright. People would shout, "Water! Bring water!"<sup>2</sup>

In the court of Rebbe Dovid Biderman *zt'l*, the atmosphere on *erev Shabbos Mevorchim Elul* resembled that of *Erev Yom Kippur* as the *gabaim* would go around asking each other for *mehilah*.

Years ago, the *mussaf* that follows the Rosh Chodesh *benching* for Elul was said with a lot of *kavanah*, because people

---

2. There is an old Hungarian custom to say the *Rosh Chodesh benching* of Elul in the haunting tune that is used for the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur *tefillos*. The Rebbes of Belz *zy'a* praised this custom.

Rebbe Mordechai of Nadvorna *zy'a* instructed his chassidim to recite the entire *sefer Tehillim* on *Shabbos Mevorchim Elul*. He said that a *beis medresh* that doesn't do so, doesn't have the right to call itself "a Nadvorna Beis Medresh."

There is no *Rosh Chodesh benching* for Tishrei. Therefore, the Beis Ahron *zy'a* said, when we *bench Chodesh Elul*, we should have in mind Tishrei, too.

Ultimately this means that on this Shabbos, we prepare for Elul and for Tishrei and for the entire upcoming year. Because what will occur in the upcoming year is dependent on our *teshuvah* and *tefillos* of Elul and Tishrei.

were inspired to improve their ways.

Our holy sefarim bemoan the loss of inspiration and fear that

prevails nowadays. Nevertheless, to whatever extent we can, we should make this month special. Each moment of Elul is precious.<sup>3</sup>

**3.** Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk *zy'a* didn't accept visitors during Elul. He devoted this month solely for Torah, *tefillah*, and *teshuvah*.

There was once a wealthy person who desperately needed a *yeshuah*, because his son become insane, *r'l*. He wasn't able to formulate a single, sane sentence. It states (*Mishlei* 18:23), עשיר יענה עזות, that the wealthy speak with *chutzpah*. This means that wealthy people have courage to do things that others wouldn't dare do. Therefore, although this wealthy man knew that Rebbe Elimelech doesn't see guests during Elul, he figured that because of his wealth, an exception will be made, and he will be able to get an appointment with the Rebbe.

As they traveled, they met a poor person asking for *tzedakah*. The son said, "Give this man a generous donation."

The wealthy father was astounded. This was the first sound sentence the boy spoke in a long time. Since he was so pleased with his son's improvement, he gave the poor man a half-gold coin.

The poor man asked, "Where are you headed?"

The wealthy man told him that they were going to the Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk because his son became insane.

The poor man replied, "But don't you see that your son is healed! Why should you bother the *tzaddik*? The Rebbe doesn't want visitors in Elul."

But the father decided that since he traveled so far, he would continue.

When he came to Lizhensk, he gave the Rebbe twelve gold coins. The Rebbe said, "You gave Eliyahu HaNavi a half-gold coin and you give me twelve gold coins?"

That's when the father understood that the poor man he met was Eliyahu Hanavi.

Reb Yisrael Avraham Tchernostrau *zt'l* (the son of Rebbe Zusha of Honipoli *zt'l*) repeated this story, and added, "Notice how precious Rebbe Elimelech's Elul was to Hashem. Eliyahu Hanavi was sent to heal the wealthy man's son, to prevent them from disturbing Rebbe Elimelech's service in Elul."

There was a businessman who would often seek business counsel from his Rebbe, the Sfas Emes. Once, the Rebbe told him, "Now it's Elul. The wisest investment, which earns the greatest dividends – spiritually and materially – is to invest in this month.

The Or HaMeir's sister was making a wedding and she very much wanted that her brother, the Or HaMeir, to attend. The Or HaMeir debated whether he should go to the wedding, because the *chasunah* was in Elul, and the Or HaMeir generally didn't travel during Elul.

He resolved to begin the journey, and if Heaven doesn't want him to go, he would receive a hint from Heaven to return home.

At the beginning of his journey, he saw a young goy beating an old man. Startled, the Or HaMeir asked the young goy why he was hitting the old person.

The gentile replied, "This old man is my father. We made a deal that he will take care of my children so I can plant the fields. But he sleeps all day, so I have to take care of my children, and I can't plant. If I don't plant during this month, we will lose the crops of the entire year."

The Or HaMeir understood that Hashem was sending him a message: If you miss this month, the results will be felt the entire year, and he returned home.

Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz *zy'a* arrived at an inn together with his chassidim and they overheard the innkeeper say to his staff,

## **Teshuvah – Never Too Late**

Many people are inspired to do *teshuvah*, but they think it is too late. They've led their life a certain way for so long; how can they change their ways? And how can they attain atonement?

The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* shows how the first *pasuk* of our *parashah* amply answers those questions. The *parashah* begins, ראה אנכי ונתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה. Hashem gives us two paths: (1) The path of blessings, Torah, and mitzvos, or (2) the path of curse and *aveiros*. Hashem leaves it up to each

individual to decide which path he wants to follow.

The *pasuk* is written in the present tense, which means you can choose the right path now, regardless of your history. You can immediately decide to follow the path of *brachah*, the direction of adherence to Torah and mitzvos.

One might ask: "I've sinned for so many years. How can I possibly correct my past?" The *pasuk*, therefore, adds the word היום, implying that if you do *teshuvah* you become כתינוק דמי שנולד דמי, like a newborn baby who was born just today. Your past will be erased and rectified, and it

---

"This month is the peak season for our business. There is more work now than the entire year. But whoever works hard this month will earn enough money to last him the entire year. Therefore, my dear workers, I recommend that you work extra hours this month and be totally devoted to your chores. Later on, you will be glad you did so."

Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz turned to his chassidim, "We've heard enough. Now we can return home."

Let us invest in Elul, and make it a good month.

will be like your life began today.

There will be people who will say that it is hard for them to change their lifestyle. Therefore, the Torah writes, ראה אנכי. Hashem says, "See, I am with you, and I will help you succeed in your *teshuvah*." As Chazal (*Succah* 52.) say, יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ואלמלי הקב"ה עוזרו לא יכול לו, "The *yetzer hara* overpowers the person each day, and if Hashem wouldn't help him, he couldn't succeed."

When someone tries hard to sell you something, you become suspicious of the seller that maybe he isn't giving you a good deal. Similarly, one might say, since Hashem is urging me to follow the path of the Torah, perhaps it isn't for my benefit. Therefore, the Torah clarifies that you have two paths before you. You can take whatever you want. But if you are wise, you will choose the path of blessing, of serving Hashem.

Sometimes a person looks around and doesn't see anyone else doing *teshuvah*, so he thinks, "Why should I be the only one?" He thinks Hashem will not reward him.

To correct this thought, the Torah writes ראה in the singular tense. This means, even if you are the only person in the world who is improving your ways, Hashem will reward you immensely.

### ***Tzedakah***

The mitzvah of *tzedakah* is discussed this week, and now that Elul is arriving, we add that giving *tzedakah* is a primary aspect of *teshuvah*.

People wonder why they should give away their hard-earned money to others.

But is the money really yours? Some of the money you own was given to you so you can help others.

The Alshich (this week's *parashah* "א"ה"ה"ד"ה"א"י" explains that wealthy people should think of themselves like *apitropsim*, legal guardians, who were appointed to take care of the money of others and to give it to them when they need it.

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 131:) teaches that if someone has several children and he writes in his will that one of his sons should inherit his money, he means that this son should be the *apitropis*, the legal guardian, but all children inherit the money equally. Unless we know of a dispute in the family, we don't suppose the father wanted to give all his money to that one child because why should he single out one son over the others? We, therefore, explain that he meant that this child should be the *apitropis*.

Based on this Gemara, the Chida (*Pnei Dovid, Re'eh*) writes: Every member of Bnei Yisrael is Hashem's child, as it states, בני ישראל

אלקים, "You are Hashem's children." It doesn't make sense that Hashem should want some of His children to be wealthy while his other children should suffer from poverty. Obviously, Hashem gave extra money to the rich so they can help the poor. They are like *apitropsim* appointed to allocate the money to the poor.

Reb Eliezer Zusya Portugal, the Sukelener Rebbe *zt'l*, told the following *meshal*:

Many people were seated at a large table at a wedding. The waiter came by and placed a tray filled with meat in front of one person. Clearly, the waiter's intention was not that this individual should eat all the meat. Instead, he wants the food to be distributed among all the people seated at the table. Similarly, Hashem gives a lot of money to one person to distribute it to others.

Internalizing these ideas will make it easier for you to part with your money. You aren't giving your money. You are sharing the money that was given to you to help others.

This is the meaning of the double expression (15:10), נתן נתן לו, Hashem gave you so you can give to others. ולא ירע לבבך, don't feel bad when you give away your money, because it wasn't your money. One doesn't really deserve a reward for giving tzedakah. All he did was allocate the funds to where it was destined to be. Nevertheless, the Torah promises, כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכך ה' אלקיך בכל מעשיך ובכל משלח ידך, "For this mitzvah, Hashem will bless all your deeds, and grant you success

wherever you put your hand."

The reward for giving tzedakah is wealth. As it states, עשר תעשר and Chazal (*Taanis* 9.) explain, עשר בשביל שתתעשר, tithe your wealth so you will become wealthy. Reb Shimon Trop *zt'l* asks, why aren't any other mitzvos mesugal for wealth?

He answers using an analogy to someone who the government appointed to take care of a small treasure. If he does his job honestly and responsibly, he will be appointed over larger treasures. Similarly, when one tithes his money, he shows that he knows how to spend his money. Then Heaven will give him more money, and he will become wealthy.<sup>4</sup>

---

4. One shouldn't serve Hashem על מנת לקבל פרס, in order to receive reward. His intentions should be solely for Hashem. The Bnei Yissaschar (*Sivan* 5:14) asks, so why does the Torah tell us to give tzedakah to become wealthy?

He answers that the Gemara (*Eiruvin* 41:) says, את דקדוקי עניות מעבירין את

A poor man once complained to Rebbe Shayale Kerestirer *zt'l* about his financial plight. Reb Shayale advised him to start a different business, which he did, and in a short time became extremely wealthy.

A year later, he returned to Rebbe Shayele Kerestirer, this time with a different problem. "Many people are nudging me for money; relatives, friends, and even people I never knew before. I don't want to give them anything, and they keep bothering me ..."

The Rebbe replied, "I see you aren't a loyal *apitropis*. We will find someone else who will do a better job. Why does one need wealth, if not to distribute money to the poor?" I will settle this

matter by means of a *gorel*. I will write the names of all residents of Kerestir on small pieces of paper and place them all in a box. Your name will be there too. We will choose one. Whoever is worthy of being Hashem's *apitropis* will be selected by the *gorel*. He will become wealthy and distribute his wealth to the poor. If you regret your ways and commit to helping the poor, you will win the lottery."

This man did sincere *teshuvah*. He made up that he would help all poor people who came to him, and indeed won the *gorel*.

### Collecting Tzedakah

*Chazal* (*Bava Basra* 9) tell us, גדול המעשה יותר מן העושה, "Causing others to give *tzedakah* is a greater mitzvah

---

האדם על דעתו ועל דעת קונו, extreme poverty can cause a person to lose his mind and his *emunah*." Therefore, to want *parnassah* in abundance can be a spiritual quest. Therefore, one can give *tzedakah* to become wealthy, so that he can serve Hashem properly.

than giving *tzedakah* yourself." This means, in addition to giving *tzedakah*, there is a special *zechus* and benefit in going around, asking people to give to *tzedakah* for those in need.

It is repeated in the name of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk *zy'a*: "Going around the four corners of the city to collect money for the poor atones for severe sins that deserve the four deaths issued by *beis din* (ארבע מיתות בית דין)."

Reb Aharon of Belz *zy'a* said, "Going door to door collecting money for the poor frees a person from *kares*." The shame one has by doing this mitzvah atones and purifies.

The Aruch HaShulchan (247:5) writes, "I have received the *kabalah* that

when one collects money for the sake of others, it will protect his future generations that they will never need to go around, door to door, collecting money for themselves."

Reb Getzel Berger *z'l* from London (*niftar* 1977/ח"ז תשל"ח) was a wealthy Satmar chasid who gave large sums of money for *tzedakah*. The Satmar Rebbe *zy'a* told him that in addition to giving *tzedakah*, he must also speak with other wealthy people and encourage them to give *tzedakah*.

Reb Getzel replied that he would rather give more money for *tzedakah* than to ask from other, but the Rebbe insisted that he ask other wealthy people for donations.<sup>5</sup>

---

5. There is a halachah that one should stand up for someone who is doing a mitzvah. Therefore, the Pischei Teshuvah (*Yorah Dei'ah* 256:1) writes, "One must stand up for the *gabai tzedakah* when he collects money from people."

### Give Tzedakah Wisely

In *Tehillim* (41) it states, אשרי משכיל אל דל. One must be משכיל, think and contemplate about the needs of the poor, so he can help the poor in the very best way.

Someone told the Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* about his financial struggles, how hard it is for him to support his family, and to cover the expenses of an upcoming *chasunah*.<sup>6</sup> The Satmar Rebbe asked, "How much do you need?"

"Thirty thousand dollars."

The Satmar Rebbe gave him twenty-nine thousand dollars.

When the man left the room, the *gaba'im* asked the Rebbe, "If you were already giving so much money, why didn't you give him one thousand dollars more, so he can have the entire thirty thousand dollars he requested?"

---

Perhaps this is one of the reasons people stand during ויברך דוד. Often in this part of the *tefillah*, the *gabai* goes around the beis medresh collecting money. Therefore we should stand for him, as he is performing a mitzvah.

6. Someone in Eretz Yisrael was thinking of moving to America. He explained to the Satmar Rebbe, "When it comes to *chasunos* it is much easier in America. The amount of money the Yidden in Eretz Yisrael have make it impossible to pay for a wedding."

The Satmar Rebbe replied, "The truth is, all *chausnos* - in Eretz Yisrael or abroad - need miracles. According to the rules of nature, it isn't possible to earn enough money for the *chasunos*. The difference between Eretz Yisrael and America is that in Eretz Yisrael the miracles are obvious, while in *chutz le'aretz*, the miracles are concealed within the laws of nature. Isn't it better to live in Eretz Yisrael, where the miracles are obvious, than to live in America, where the miracles are clothed within nature?"

The Rebbe replied, "Had I given him thirty thousand dollars, he would be upset that he didn't ask for more. Now he is certain he asked for exactly the right amount, and is happy with the amount he received."

This is an example of, אשרי משכיל אל דל, to give charity to the poor in a way that will make them happy and not feel distressed and upset.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, there are ways to give to the poor that won't embarrass them.

---

7. In honor of the Satmar Rebbe's *yahrtzeit*, which was on the 26th of Av, we will tell a few stories about this great tzaddik.

The Satmar Rebbe would go to his cheder from time to time to test the children. Once, he asked a child a question, but the child stuttered and didn't speak clearly. The Satmar Rebbe repeated his question a second time, and a third time, but he couldn't understand what the child was saying. That is when the Rebbe understood that the child had a speech impediment. (The Rebbe was eighty-six years old at this time, his hearing was beginning to fail, and it took some time until he realized the child had a speech impediment.) The Rebbe feared he had embarrassed the child, so for the next half a year, whenever he saw this child, even from the distance, he would call him over, and speak to him.

The Satmar Rebbe was once at a *Kiddush* in the home of one of his chassidim. This chassid was extremely careful with kashrus. Several times during the Kiddush, he emphasized how everything was homemade and perfectly kosher. He asked the Rebbe, "Does the Rebbe want fish? It's *heimish* (homemade). How about some kugel? It's also *heimish* (homemade)."

The Rebbe pointed to the wine and asked, "Is the wine also *heimish*?" "No." The wine was bought.

The Rebbe said, "That's because *you* were supposed to make the wine."

Making wine is often the man's domain. The Rebbe was telling

And then there is the question to whom one should give tzedakah. This is an issue that often needs rabbinic guidance. In short, tzedakah should be performed wisely, as it states *אשרי משכיל אל דל*.

### **Tzedakah Protects**

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 156:) tells that when Reb Akiva's

daughter was born, astrologers told him that she will be bitten by a snake the day she marries, and she will die.

The day of her *chasunah* arrived. After the meal was over, she removed her jewelry and thrust the pin into the wall. In the morning, she saw that she

---

him that although it's very good to be careful with kashrus, but when extreme caution causes the wife to work extra hard, one should reconsider.

An orphan once came to the Satmar Rebbe before his *chasunah* for a *brachah*. The Rebbe put his hands over the *chasan's* head and blessed him, crying copiously. He blessed him for about twenty minutes. Afterwards, someone asked the Rebbe, "I understand the importance of being extra kind to this *chasan* since he is an orphan – but why for so long?"

The Rebbe replied, "The success of the *chasan* and *kalah* in their marriage are the tears and the *tefillos* their parents shed before the *chasunah*. But this *chasan* doesn't have anyone to cry for him, so I cried and prayed for him."

(It is worth remembering this story before leading your child to the chuppah. The children's success in their marriage and in their future life, is largely dependent on the *tefillos* and tears of the parents before the *chasunah*.)

Regarding *shalom bayis*, the Satmar Rebbe taught, "We have a *kabalah* (tradition) that the one who is *mevatar* wins." Sometimes there are differences of opinion between a husband and wife. The one who gives in is the winner.

poked the eye of a snake, thereby saving her life.

Reb Akiva asked her, "What mitzvah did you do that you merited this salvation?"

She told him that a poor person came to the *chasunah* asking for a meal. No one had time for him, so I got up and gave him my meal."

Reb Akiva said, מצוה עבדת, you did a mitzvah!" Then Reb Akiva went to the beis medresh and taught "(Mishlei 10:2) צדקה תציל ממות, tzedakah saves from death..."

The Ben Ish Chai *zt'l* (*Ben Yohayoda*) asks, why did Reb Akiva tell her, מצוה עבדת, "You did a mitzvah!" Isn't it obvious that she did a mitzvah?

He answers that the mitzvah Reb Akiva was referring to was that his daughter told him about this episode (not the tzedakah she gave). Reb Akiva told her, "You told me the story of how you were saved

from the poisonous snake! That is a mitzvah because now I can teach others the great merit of giving tzedakah."

Because one of the best ways to teach a lesson is by telling a story. Reb Akiva told the students in the beis midrash the miracle that happened to his daughter in the merit of giving tzedakah, and that made a powerful impression on the listeners.

We must recognize the importance of telling *sipurei tzaddikim*, and especially to tell stories of tzaddikim to children. The Chazon Ish *zt'l* said that stories are the best *mussar sefer*. It rouses people to *avodas Hashem*.

## Loans

This week, we also discuss the mitzvah of giving loans to people in need. As it states (15:10), נתן לו ולא ירע לבבך בתתך לו כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכך ד' אלקיך בכל מעשך ובכל משלה ירך "Don't feel upset when you give him

the loan, because Hashem will bless you with everything you do and wherever you put your hand."

The Chinuch (480) writes, "The purpose of this mitzvah is to establish in our hearts the attribute of generosity, and to distance us as far as possible from stinginess... Anyone who is familiar with the ways of the Torah and comprehends even slightly its beautiful ways knows with certainty that when one is generous with his money, he will gain more. And whoever refrains will lose. Hashem judges people according to their deeds. Being tight with money erects an iron wall that separates the person from Hashem's *brachos*. Generosity is in itself a blessing, and therefore, those who act with kindness receive [Hashem's] blessings."

The Chinuch is teaching that Hashem commanded us to give loans and perform other loving-

kindness deeds because generosity brings us many *brachos*.

It states (15:11), *כי לא יחדל, אביון מקרב הארץ על כן אנכי מצוך לאמר פתח תפתח את ירך לאחריך לענייך ולאביוןך בארץ*, "There will always be poor people in the land; therefore, I command you to open your hand to your brother, to the poor, and to the paupers of your country." The Ksav Sofer translates the *pasuk* as follows:

*כי לא יחדל אביון*, Hashem will always help the poor. Therefore, if you don't support the poor, Hashem will. So why does Hashem obligate you to give *tzedakah*? The answer is, *על כן אנכי מצוך פתח תפתח את ירך לאחריך לענייך ולאביוןך בארץ*, "I am commanding *you* to open your hand to... the poor," so you can earn My *brachos*.

The Matteh Efraim *zt'l* was very wealthy and owned a bank. Once, a poor person came to the bank and asked for a large loan, to be paid back in

half a year. The Matteh Efraim gave him a form to fill out and told him to find two co-signers, *areivim*, guarantors for the debt.

The poor person couldn't find an *areiv*. (Everyone suspected that the poor man wouldn't be able to pay back the loan, and they didn't want to get involved.)

So the poor man wrote on the line designated for the *areivim*, לִי הַכֶּסֶף וְלִי הַזָּהָב נְאוּם, "I have silver and I have gold, says Hashem..." Implying that Hashem is the *areiv* for this loan.

The Matteh Efraim had *rachmanus* on him and agreed to loan him the money.

A half year later, the Matteh Efraim wasn't feeling well, and he asked his wife to run the bank that day.

That night, the Matteh Efraim and his Rebbetzin discussed what happened in the bank, and she told him that she lent a lot of

money to a *poritz*. The Matteh Efraim asked, "How did you have money to lend? I thought there was no available cash in the bank."

She replied, "Someone came in the morning and paid up a debt."

He checked his records and remembered that the poor man's debt was due that day. The Matteh Efraim asked his wife, "Did the poor man, himself, pay up the debt, or did someone come in to pay the debt for him?"

She told him that someone came and paid the debt for him.

The Matteh Efraim understood that Hashem sent Eliyahu HaNavi to pay Hashem's part in the loan. He thought, "Where did I go wrong that I didn't merit seeing Eliyahu HaNavi myself?" He understood that it was because initially, he asked the poor man to bring

*areivim*. He should have lent him the money right away, without obligating him to find *areivim*. It must have been very stressful for the poor person to run from person to person, anxiously seeking an *areiv*, and everyone was turning him down. Since he caused him distress, he didn't merit seeing Eliyahu.

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* wrote the sefer *Ahavah Chesed* to teach the importance and the details of giving free-interest loans.

The Chofetz Chaim writes (chapter 5, *hagahah*) "Now, that we are living in a time when the *midas gevurah* [hardships and suffering] reigns in the world, the only solution to be saved from troubles is to do deeds of loving-kindness. These deeds of kindness will arouse Hashem's attribute of *chesed*. It states in *Tana d'Bei Eliyahu* (23), when the Yidden lived in Mitzrayim, they made a pact that they

would do *gemilus chasadim* with each other. Why? They realized that there was no way to escape Pharaoh's decrees, and the labor in Mitzrayim was becoming harder each day, so the nation gathered and to seek a solution. They concluded that they must do *chesed* with one another. That would arouse Hashem's *chesed* Above, and automatically Pharaoh's decrees would end.

"Their plan succeeded, as it states, נחית בחסדך עם זו גאלת, 'You led them [out of Mitzrayim] with Your kindness.'" Chazal explain, נחית בחסדך refers to the *gemilus chasadim* of the Jewish nation.

"It also states (*Yirmiyahu* 1), כה אמר ה' זכרתי לך חסד נעורייך, 'So says Hashem: I remember the *chesed* of your youth, the love of your marriage, your following Me into the desert.'

Three factors are stated in this *pasuk*: חסד נעורייך, means [Hashem remembers] that they did *chesed* with each other in Mitzrayim. אהבת כלולתך, 'The love of your marriage' refers to *mattan Torah*. לכתך אחרי במדבר, means they followed Hashem into the wilderness." And in the merit of these three matters,

they were redeemed from Mitzrayim.

One of them is חסד נעורייך, that they did *chesed* with one another. In this merit, they were redeemed from Mitzrayim.

In the merit of *tzedakah* and *chesed* may we speedily be redeemed from the present *galus*, amen.