

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Beshalach



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Table of Contents

Torah Wellsprings - Beshalach

Clarity in <i>Emunah</i>	4
Belief in Yourself	5
<i>Az Yashir</i>	8
Purity of <i>Emunah</i>	13
The Purity of Accepting the Yoke of Heaven	14
The Purity Attained by Eating Properly	16
<i>Parashas HaMon</i>	17
<i>Parnassah and Hishtadlus</i>	19
Bittersweet	23
<i>Bitachon</i>	30

Torah Wellsprings

Beshalach

Clarity in *Emunah*

In this week's parashah, Bnei Yisroel experienced one of the greatest miracles in history: the splitting of the sea. The nation saw the sea split before them, and they witnessed the many other wonderful miracles that happened at *kriyas Yam Suf*, and they believed in Hashem - ויאמינו בה' ובמושה - עבדו, "And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant.

Their level of *Emunah* reached a peak as it states (15:2), "This is my G-d." When one uses the word *זה*-this, it means that he can point to something and see it. Rashi writes, בכבודו נגלה עליהם והיו מראין אותו, באצבע, "Hashem...became revealed to them, and they pointed to Him with their finger. Rashi expresses the clarity in *emunah* that the

Jewish nation attained at *kriyas Yam Suf*.

Emunah can be divided into many sections and subcategories. Some of them are to believe in *hashgachah pratis*, to believe that Hashem loves us, and to believe that everything is for our good. These, and all other aspects of *emunah*, became clear to the Jewish nation at *kriyas Yam Suf*.

Already in *parashas Shemos* it states (4:31), ויאמן העם וישמעו כי פקד ה' את בני ישראל וכי ראה את עניי, "The nation believed, and they heard that Hashem remembered Bnei Yisrael and saw their affliction." If this describes the state that Bnei Yisroel were in already during the *Geula* process, then why does the Torah tell us, ויאמינו בה' ובמושה עבדו, that when the Yidden saw *kriyas Yam Suf*

they believed in Hashem? The answer is that during *kriyas Yam Suf* the Yidden attained a much higher level of *emunah*. It was *emunah* without any doubts. As sure as they were regarding matters they could point to and see with their eyes, that is how certain they were with all aspects of *emunah* in Hashem.

Everyone attained this clarity, from the tzaddikim to the smallest Yid, even down to the maidservants. As Rashi (15:2) writes, ראתה שפחה על הים מה שלא ראו נביאים, "A maidservant at the Yam Suf saw even what prophets did not merit to see." The Mizrachi explains that therefore *Az Yashir* is written in the singular tense, as it states (15:1-2), ...אשירה לה, "I shall sing to Hashem", and זה א"לי, "This is *my* G-d." Because each individual sang this song and attained clarity in *emunah* at *kriyas Yam Suf*.

Belief in Yourself

Reb Tzaddok HaCohen (*Tzidkas HaTzaddik* 154) writes, "Just as one must believe in Hashem, one must believe in *himself*. This means he must believe that Hashem wants *him* and that he wasn't created for nothing. He must believe that his soul comes from the Origin of Life and that Hashem has pleasure when he serves Him. As it states (14:31), ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו, 'They believed in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant.' Moshe represents each of the six hundred thousand Yidden of the generation. They believed that Hashem desires them and derives pleasure from the good that's in them." This is an essential aspect of *emunah*, to believe in the greatness of Bnei Yisrael.

During this extraordinary time in history, also the gentile nations recognized the greatness of Bnei Yisrael. As it states (15:15), אז נבהלו, אלופי אדם אילי מואב יאחזמו רעד,

"The officers of Edom were afraid, trembling gripped the powers of Moav..."

The next *pasuk* (15:16) states, תפל עליהם אימתה ופחד... עד, יעבר עמך ה' עד יעבור עם זו קניית, "May fear and terror befall them...until Your people pass through, Hashem - until this nation You acquired passes through." The *Yesod v'Shores HaAvodah* (3:7) writes, "When you say עד יעבור עמך ה' עד יעבור עם זו קניית, 'Until Your people pass through...' try to enter a state of extreme happiness that we are the nation Bnei Yisrael, who are chosen from the seventy nations... When you say עם זו קניית, "This nation You acquired" think of Rashi's explanation, that קניית means חבבת, 'You

love them more than all nations,' and become extremely happy."

There is nothing more important to Hashem than His people, the Jewish nation. As it states (*Devarim* 14:1), בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם, "You are Hashem's children"! Think of human kings, *lehavdil*, who have wealth, power, honor, but their children are more important to them than anything else. Hashem says that we are His children. This means that although the entire world is His, His heart is with us, with each and every Yid.¹

Bilaam said (*Bamidbar* 23:21), לא הביט און ביעקב ולא ראה עמל בישראל ה' אלקיו עמו ותרעת מלך, and Rashi explains,

1. The Rebbe of Zlotchev *zt'l* (*Orach l'Chayim, HaAzinu*) teaches that a Yid has the ability to turn over worlds, and to attain all his *gashmiyos* and *ruchniyos* needs. The problem is that he doesn't believe in his own strength, and this prevents him from achieving great things. As it states (*Devarim* 32:2), כי דור תהפכות המה, בנים לא אמון הם, they are a nation that can turn everything over, בנים לא אמון הם, the problem is that they are children who don't believe that they have this strength.

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't look at Yaakov's sins. When Yidden transgress His words, Hashem doesn't pay attention to it... ה' אלקיו עמו, even when they rebel and anger Hashem, Hashem doesn't stop loving them. ותרועת מלך בו, the love of the King is always with them."

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov zy'a taught that a Yid is purely good because he is part of Hashem. If you see bad in a Yid, know that it was adapted from the goyim, among whom we live. It is not a blemish in his neshamah.²

Once, Rebbe Dovid'l Lelover zt'l was collecting money with the Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa zt'l. When they came to one

home, Rebbe Dovid remained inside for a long time while the Yid Hakadosh waited outdoors. When Rebbe Dovid came out, he apologized for the delay, and he explained, "I saw a lot of *yiras Shamayim* in that home; I simply couldn't leave."

What *yiras Shamayim* did he see? He explained, "In this home, a young man works together with his elderly father. The old man made a mistake in the business, and his son was angry with him. I heard the son tell his father, 'If I didn't fear Hashem, I would kill you.' I heard him say that he fears Hashem, and I wanted to be around this special Yid who has so much *yiras*

2. The Gemara says, גוי ששבת חייב מיתה, "A non-Jew who keeps Shabbos deserves death." The Chidushei HaRim zy'a taught that it is therefore important to do *teshuva* on Friday, before Shabbos arrives, so that only the Yid within ourselves keeps Shabbos, and the Goyish parts in us, which we adapted in *galus*, shouldn't be with us on Shabbos.

Shamayim. That's why I tarried."

Rebbe Dovid Lelover focused on the good because that is the genuine essence of a Yid. He didn't want to see the bad. And this is what Hashem does too, as it states (Bamidbar 23:11) לא הביט און ביעקב ולא ראה עמל בישראל, "He doesn't look at the iniquity in Yaakov..."

My grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, zt'l, says that the Jewish nation didn't believe in themselves.

His proof is the pasuk (Tehillim 106:7), וימרו על ים בים סוף, "They rebelled by the sea, at the *Yam Suf*." The Gemara (*Pesachim* 118:) explains that they said, "We are leaving the *Yam Suf* from one side, and the Egyptians are leaving the *Yam Suf* from another side." They were afraid that they would once again meet with the *Mitzrim*, and they were fearful for their lives.

After all the wonders they saw, how could they have had these worries?

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zy'a* answers, "Although they believed in Hashem, they didn't believe in themselves." They didn't think they were unique to Hashem, chosen from all nations, and that Hashem would perform miracles for them. And that was their error.

Az Yashir

How fortunate are we to get a taste of *kriyas yam suf* every day by saying *Az Yashir*. This *tefillah* fills our hearts with *emunah* for the entire day.

The *Beis Ahron zy"a* teaches that the history of the world and all future events are hinted at in the words of *Az Yashir*. Furthermore, one can acquire all his needs – spiritual and material – by saying *Az Yashir* with all his heart.

The *Zohar* (Bo 40:) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu is happy when Yidden say *Az Yashir*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gathers all the *malachim* and tells them, 'Come and listen to the story and praises of My children. They are happy that I redeemed them.'"

The *Mishnah Berurah* (51:17, quoting a *Zohar*) writes, "Say *Az Yashir* joyously and imagine that you are crossing the sea today. When one says it with joy, all his sins are atoned."

The Rebbe Reb Shmelke of Nickelsberg *zt'l* hardly slept. (It is repeated that his mother once said in jest, "I have two children: One never says *kriyas Shema she'al hamitah*, and the other one never recites *birchas hamazon*." She meant that her son Rebbe Shmelka hardly slept and her son the Hafla'ah barely ate.) Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk *zt'l* once hosted Rebbe Shmelka and requested from Rebbe Shmelke that he should sleep well, because he believed that he would

accomplish more if his mind would be well rested. Rebbe Shmelka agreed to Rebbe Elimelech's request.

In the morning, at the tefillah, Rebbe Shmelke reached very high spiritual levels, and the entire community became inspired together with him. When they got to *Az Yashir*, people raised the hems of their clothing because they felt themselves crossing the sea and didn't want their clothes to get wet.

After the exalted tefillah, Rebbe Shmelka commented to Rebbe Elimelech, "Sleep is excellent, but who has time for it?"

According to another version, he said, "Sleep is very good, but who can risk it (because you might oversleep)?"

This story demonstrates that when we say *Az Yashir* we should imagine ourselves crossing the Yam Suf.

The Chareidim (ch.73) tells a story of a high-ranking officer in Castella, Spain, who was hunting in the forest. He tried to catch a fox, and the fox bit him in the leg. It was a small bite; he hardly felt it at first. But his foot became infected, and three days later, his entire leg was swollen, and his life was in danger. The king's doctors brought expensive remedies, but they didn't help him. Everyone lost hope, and he began telling his last goodbyes to his family as they cried before him.

One of the officer's loyal servants didn't know about his master's illness. He came in just to serve his boss and was shocked to see the officer in bed, writhing in pain, near death. He asked, "What

happened to you? I saw you just three days ago, and you were fine."

The family told him about the fox bite. The servant replied, "Don't worry. With G-d's help, I will heal him."

He ran outside and gathered certain plants. He ground them, put the mixture on his master's foot three times, and there was an immediate improvement. Three days later, the officer was healed and could walk again. The doctors were shocked, praising Hashem for creating plants with healing powers.

So, the servant's inexpensive remedies healed the officer. They were more helpful than the expensive remedies of the king's doctors.³

3. Rebbe Dovid Biderman zt'l gave a *segulah* for *refuah*:

Take olive oil and say, "The Rambam was a doctor. In his merit, please send a *refuah sheleimah* to *ploni ben ploni*." And light the oil at the Rambam's *kever* when the opportunity arises.

The Chareidim tells this story to explain that the same is true when it comes to curing a person who became sick in a spiritual sense with sins. There are very difficult treatments that will bring atonement. For example, he can fast excessively, give large amounts of money to tzedakah. And then, there are easier paths, which can heal just as well.

He writes six simple cures for spiritual ailments that remove people's *aveiros*. Among them are to answer *amen yehei shemei rabba* with all one's strength and to keep Shabbos with all its details.

His third counsel is to say *Az Yashir* with kavanah. This isn't so hard to do, and it cleanses a person from all his *aveiros*.

The Chareidim writes, "When you say the daily *Az Yashir*, say it out loud, with immense happiness, as if you are now leaving Mitzrayim. Because Chazal say on the *pasuk* (15:22), ויסע משה את ישראל מים סוף (the *pasuk* after *Az Yashir*) that Moshe הסיען מעוונותיהם, drove them away from their *aveiros*. Their *aveiros* were forgiven because they sang the *Shirah*. Because whoever experienced a miracle and praises Hashem, all of his *aveiros* are forgiven. Hashem commanded us to say the *Shirah* every day, as it states (15:1, at the beginning of *Az Yashir*), ויאמרו לאמר, 'and they said to say,' and Reb Shimon bar Yochai explains that this obligates us to say *Az Yashir* every day and with the same immense joy as the first time it was said. If one does so, it will benefit from the same *segulos* as the first time it was said."⁴

4. Chazal say that those who recite *Perek Shirah* every day are *bnei Olam HaBa*. *Perek Shirah* is a collection of the praises animals and

We are in the days of Shovavim, and we seek easy ways to purify ourselves from sin. The methods of the past, fasting, rolling in the snow, cold *mikvaos*, etc., to attain purity aren't applicable in our times. Today, we are weaker, and we need easier forms of rectification of severe *aveiros*.

As we've discussed in previous weeks, we can attain purity by studying Torah and saying *Tehillim*. This week we will discover other remedies. They are

easy (on the body) to perform, yet the benefits and the purity attained are equal (or perhaps even greater) to what people would achieve from the difficult afflictions practiced in the past.

These means of atonement can be practiced the entire year, not just during Shovavim.

We discussed above that saying *Az Yashir* with *kavanah* is *mesugal* for atonement. We will now discuss some other methods:

other creations say to Hashem. Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa *zy"l* asks: The praises of humans are certainly greater than the praises animals say. So why don't Chazal also tell us that "Whoever says *Az Yashir* every day is a *ben Olam HaBa*"? If for saying the praises of animals one receives *Olam HaBa*, we should certainly be rewarded with *Olam HaBa* for singing the praise of humans.

Rebbe Bunim answers: *Perek Shirah* isn't the praises that animals say. They are the praises that people say when they fall into sin and reach the levels of animals. Because due to sin, people become like wild animals, rodents, snakes, scorpions, etc. If they nevertheless praise Hashem from that lowly place (because they believe that no matter how far they fall, Hashem still loves them) then these praises are very precious to Hashem. Because of these praises they merit to be *bnei Olam HaBa*.

Purity of *Emunah*

The Or Lashamayim (Bo) writes, "In early generations, the *tikun hanefesh* (rectification from sin) came from afflictions... But in this generation, close to Moshiach, the *tikunim* are easier. One doesn't need afflictions. Rectification can be achieved through having *emunah* in Hashem, the Creator of the world."⁵

Similarly, Reb Yechezkel Levinstein zt'l said, "We are now in the days of Shovavim. Chassidim and *anshei maaseh* would immerse themselves in *avodas Hashem* during these days. They would fast, say many *selichos*, etc. But I think the primary emphasis should be on having *emunah*, because when one

establishes *emunah* in his heart, he has everything."

Every step we take towards attaining *emunah* purifies us immensely. Of course, perfection is difficult to achieve, but even *to try* to attain *emunah* is a great accomplishment.

The Yesod HaAvodah (quoted in *Toras Avos, Emunah u'Bitachon* 53) explains the *pasuk* (*Yirmiyahu* 5:1) שוטטו בחוצות ירושלים... אם תמצאו איש... מבקש אמונה ואסלה לה: "Walk about in the streets of Yerushalayim...if you will find a man...who seeks *emunah*...I will forgive her." The *pasuk* teaches that it is sufficient to be a מבקש אמונה, to search for ways to strengthen one's *emunah*. That achieves atonement.⁶

5. It states (*Chabakuk* 2:4), צדיק באמונתו יחיה. The Yismach Yisrael (*Shemos* 6) explains that this means with *emunah* alone one can become a tzaddik – a צדיק יסוד עולם.

6. Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l said that a person who never forgets Hashem, won't forget Hashem in Gehinom, either. And when one remembers Hashem in Gehinom, the fires of Gehinom won't harm

The Purity of Accepting the Yoke of Heaven

Another approach to attain purity during Shovavim is to embrace the yoke of

Heaven because that is the greatest *siguf* (affliction). People want to do, think, look, and say whatever they want and whenever they want. Accepting the yoke of Heaven means to do, think, look, and speak only what Hashem wants. It deprives a person of his freedom, his identity of being a person on his own. And that is the greatest *siguf*, even harder than

fasting, etc., and it purifies immensely.

The Shem MiShmuel (*Hoshana Rabba* תרע"ד) writes, "My grandfather from Kotzk *zt'l* said that it is easier for the body to do all kinds of afflictions rather than to accept the yoke of Heaven. There is no greater affliction for the body than to live under the yoke of Heaven, and to do all one's deeds according to the Torah."

There used to be a *shlacht*-house (slaughterhouse) in the outskirts of Bnei Brak. Reb Yaakov Landau *zt'l* gave the *hechsher*.

him. Also in this world, when one remembers Hashem, the fire of the yetzer hara won't burn in him.

Reb Sholom Teumim was a student of many early chasidic Rebbes. He writes (*Or Torah Bo*, p.141, "I heard a holy tzaddik tell his relative that when one goes through any kind of distress or hardship - money or other issues, *r'l* - he should say 'Ribono Shel Olam, You created me, and You give me life. I trust only in You. I have nowhere to turn to for aid, other than You...' If you will say that, you will be protected and guarded from all harm and tzaar. This is tested."

The animals were *shechted* lying down, tied down with rope. In case the animals broke free from the ropes, metal poles were stationed around the area. The *shochet* could escape through the polls, but the large cattle couldn't pass through.

One day, Reb Yaakov Landau came to watch the *shechitah* from up close. People warned Reb Landau that it was dangerous for him to be so close to the animals. "The *shochet* is young. If the animal breaks loose, the *shochet* can run to safety. But what will you do if the animal breaks loose? You cannot run. What will protect you?"

Reb Landau replied, "But I can't give a *hechsher* if I don't watch the *shechitah* from up close," and he went inside to watch the *shechitah*.

What they feared occurred. When the *shochet* took out the knife for the *shechitah*, the ox quickly

stood up and broke free. The *shochet* ran for his life, and the enraged animal began running around within its confined area. Reb Landau remained calm throughout this time, and he looked at the animal until it calmed down.

People asked Reb Landau how he kept his composure throughout the ordeal. He replied, "Someone who is afraid of Hashem isn't afraid of an ox. And if you are afraid of an ox, that means you aren't afraid of Hashem."

The *pasuk* says (*Shemos* 1:17), ותראנה המילדות את האלקים, "The midwives feared Hashem." The Noam Eliezer of Skulen *zt'l* explains that one can have only one fear. The midwives (*Shifrah* and *Puah*) knew that they could fear either Hashem or Pharaoh. Therefore, they increased their fear of Heaven so that they wouldn't be afraid of Pharaoh.

And when one fears Hashem, he will accept the yoke of Heaven. And as we are explaining, that is the greatest *siguf* and the utmost purifier.

The Purity Attained by Eating Properly

Today, we don't fast (other than a few times a year, according to halachah and *minhag*) because fasting makes us weak. However, we can refrain from eating unhealthy foods and from overeating. Doing so won't weaken us at all. On the contrary, it will even make us stronger. And the difficulty of refraining from the food we want to eat is considered as though one fasted.

There is also the Taanis HaRaavad. This means if you are in the middle of eating something, and your *taavah* (desire) is very great, but you stop yourself at

the peak of your temptation and don't finish the plate, that is considered a fast.

Eating with *derech erez* can also be considered a fast because you are forcing yourself to eat slower than you would like.

These "fasts" purify us from all sins without taking a toll on our health.

Early tzaddikim compared Shovavim to soldiers going out to war. A common strategy in war is to besiege the city you want to conquer. The siege prevented the residents in the city from receiving food and water. Eventually, they would surrender.

Similarly, during Shovavim, we cut back in water and food until the body is ready to surrender and stop preventing the person from serving Hashem.⁷

7. There was a person who liked eating. It wouldn't be an understatement to say that he ate twelve hours a day. Although

The word Shovavim is from (Yirmiyahu 3:14) שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים, "Return O wayward sons." The Gemara (*Chagigah* 15.) writes: שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים חוּץ מֵאַחַר. (Literally, the Gemara says that a *bas kol* said these words, expressing that everyone can do *teshuvah*, aside from a great sinner who was called Achar.)

The Valednicker Rebbe *zt'l* (*Shaaris Yisrael, Shovavim drush alef*) explains that the phrase, שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים חוּץ מֵאַחַר, is saying, "Repent, O wayward sons, and even those who are חוּץ and אַחַר,

which means that they sinned so much until they are outside (חוץ) the Jewish community, and their sins make them appear like they became someone else (אחר). They became completely different from their youths due to their *aveiros*. Even they can repent and improve their ways during Shovavim.

Parashas HaMon

The Meor Einayim (*Likutim* ד"ה כשרצה) teaches that each salvation and

there is a limit how much one can eat, when he was full, he ate fruits, vegetables, and drank various drinks. He was occupied with food most of the day.

Once, this man was at a *seudas mitzvah*. A friend who sat next to him noticed that he only ate a small spoon of the first course, nibbled at the main course, and didn't even touch the desert. "What happened to you?" the friend asked. "You eat all the time, and now when it's a *seudas mitzvah* you're not eating at all?!"

He replied, "I'm on a diet."

There was nothing else to ask. Everything was understood.

This is what one should think during the weeks of Shovavim. "I'm on a diet. I don't eat so much these weeks." This thought can help him curb his *taavah*.

chesed has its portion and area in the Torah, and one can study that section, and attain his salvation from there. For example, *refuah*, healing, comes from the words (*Shemos* 21:19), ורפא ירפא (see *Meor Einayim*, end of *Likutim*). By studying those words, one can draw down *refuos*.

Parnassah comes from *parashas hamon*. Studying that section will grant us *parnassah*. Therefore, some have the custom of saying *parashas hamon* every day to draw down *parnassah*.

As the *Meor Einayaim* writes, "All salvations can be found in the Torah. If a person needs a salvation, he should attach himself to Torah, for salvation can be found there... For example, if someone needs the *chesed* of food, he should read *parashas hamon* daily. Similarly, all other matters are in their place, in the Torah."

Every Shabbos, for twenty-two years, Rebbe

Menachem Mendel of Riminov *zt'l* would teach lessons in *parashas hamon*, in order to bring down *parnassah* for Bnei Yisrael.

It is also repeated in the name of Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Riminov *zt'l* that reading *parashas hamon* on Tuesday of *parashas Beshalach* is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

The Chidushei HaRim writes in a letter: "Rosh Chodesh Nisan, תרי"ב: I had an idea that I should say a *chiddush* in *parashas hamon* every day; that way, my *parnassah* will come from the Torah. As the Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 97:3) states, פרנסה בכל יום, every day has its *parnassah*...". The Chidushei HaRim wanted to draw his *parnassah* from *chidushei Torah* on *parashas hamon*.

Shulchan Aruch (*Orach Chaim* 1:5) states, טוב לאמר... פרשת המון, "It is good to say... *parashas hamon*." The Mishnah Berurah (1:13) explains, "It isn't sufficient

just to say the words. One must think about what he is saying and recognize Hashem's wonders. By reading *parashas hamon* we remember that *parnassah* comes with Hashem's *hashgachah*

"The Yerushalmi says that whoever says *parashas hamon* daily is guaranteed never to lack *parnassah*."

The Tashbatz quotes this Yerushalmi and adds "ואני ערב", "and I guarantee it."

Parnassah and Hishtadlus

About the manna it states (16:18), המרבה לא העדיף, והממעיט לא החסיר, 'Whoever took more manna had nothing extra and whoever took less was not lacking.' Rashi (16:17) writes, "Some collected a lot of manna, and some collected less. When they came homes and measured what they collected, they discovered that the person who collected a lot didn't end up having more than an *omer* for each member of

his family, and the one who collected a little didn't have less than an *omer* per person. This was a great miracle." They learned that Hashem gives *parnassah*, and extra *hishtadlus* won't generate a higher income.

Rebbe Moshe Lelover *zt'l* owned a store where he sold salt. Someone opened another salt store on the opposite side of the street. Rebbe Moshe didn't mind. He wasn't afraid that this would take away his *parnassah*.

Once, the competitor slept in, and Rebbe Moshe knocked on his window and said, "Come quickly. People are already waiting in your store."

Rebbe Moshe believed and knew that no one could take away the *parnassah* destined for him to receive.

The Yesod HaAvodah advised the merchants among his chasidim to come late to the market because he wanted to train

them in the *emunah* that *parnassah* comes from Hashem and working more won't increase the *parnassah*.

Probably, we should come on time to do business. We aren't on the level to purposely come late. Nevertheless, sometimes circumstances may prevent you from arriving on time to a business meeting or some other business opportunity. At these times, strengthen yourself with *emunah* that *parnassah* comes from Hashem, and you aren't losing at all.

When the Or HaChaim lived in Morocco, he convinced his congregation that it is sufficient to work Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday and devote the rest of the week to studying Torah. He assured them that they would earn the same amount of *parnassah* with a three-day workweek as they would by working the entire week.

They followed his counsel and saw that it was true.

When the Or HaChaim moved to Yerushalayim, his community in Morocco gradually went back to working the entire week. But they admitted that this didn't increase their *parnassah* at all.

The *מהר"ש*, Rebbe Shmuel of Lubavitz *zt'l* reprimanded someone, "You're a Yid, and you know about Shabbos. Why do you work on this holy day?"

He replied, *רבי, שבת איז א פֿעטע שטיקל*, "Rebbe! Shabbos is a fat piece." He meant that he earns a lot of money on Shabbos and doesn't want to give that up.

The Rebbe replied, "As you know, there's a halachah of *מהדר גלב* (*Devarim* 23:19). This halachah means that if you receive a sheep in exchange for a dog, the sheep may not be sacrificed as a *korban*. However, if

someone receives a sheep in exchange for a donkey or any other animal, he may sacrifice the sheep. What is the difference?

"It's because when a dog sees a fat piece of meat, he forgets about his loyalty to his master, and pounces upon the meat. Therefore, the dog is disgusting, and even its exchange cannot be sacrificed as a *korban*.

"So, think about whom you resemble when you run after fat pieces."

When one remembers that *parnassah* comes from Hashem, he won't work on Shabbos.

The manna didn't fall on Shabbos, and similarly, we don't work on Shabbos, yet Shabbos is the source of *parnassah* for the entire week. Because it isn't working that grants us *parnassah*, but Hashem's blessings.

The Shach (2661-1261, one of the primary commentaries on *Shulchan Aruch*) was

supported by his father-in-law for the first few years after his *chasunah*. When the father-in-law's commitment of support concluded, he advised his son-in-law to try his hand in business. "Market day is approaching. Here's some money. See what you can do with it."

The Shach was highly successful.

Another market day was approaching. The father-in-law said, "You did so well last time. I'm sure you will do well this time, too."

The Shach replied that his initial success doesn't prove that he will succeed in business in the long term. He explained that the *yetzer hara* gives scholars initial success to draw them into the business world and away from Torah study. And after the *yetzer hara* succeeds in pulling them away from Torah, the *yetzer hara* causes them to lose their money, too. And

then, they are left without Torah and without wealth.

He said that this is alluded to in this week's *parashah* (15:9):, אמר אויב ארדוף, אשיג. The אויב, enemy, is the *yetzer hara*. The *yetzer hara* says, ארדוף אשיג, that he will catch *talmidei chachamim* in his trap. How will he do that? אחלק שלל, The *yetzer hara* distributes wealth to the *talmidei chachamim*. He makes sure that the *talmid chacham's* initial attempt in business is successful. The exhilaration of making money drives him to invest a lot of his time and efforts towards becoming wealthy. And then, אריק חרבי תורישמו ידי.

אריק means to empty, and תורישמו is from the root רש poor. Now that he fell into the *yetzer hara's* trap, the *yetzer hara* empties his pockets and makes him poor. And he loses out in both worlds.

In Istanbul, merchants came to Reb Chaim Palagi *zt'l*, complaining that they weren't successful due to

three very powerful merchants who had a monopoly over the market. "They take away almost every opportunity we have to earn *parnassah*." The three wealthy merchants were *baalei tzedakah*, but the smaller merchants felt that their greediness in the market didn't allow them any room to grow.

Reb Chaim Palagi corrected them, "Hashem gives each person the amount of money that is destined from heaven. No one can take away your *parnassah*. It is even possible that they are helping you out in your *parnassah*. Because it is possible that in the merit of their *tzedakah*, everyone in Istanbul receives *parnassah*."

The smaller merchants weren't appeased.

Eventually, the three philanthropists closed their business and moved to Eretz Yisrael. The smaller merchants rejoiced. They were sure that their

business would blossom now that they no longer had to compete with merchants who control the market.

But within a year, the smaller merchants lost all their money. They realized that Reb Chaim Palagi was right: The wealthy people weren't taking away their *parnassah*. They had *parnassah* in the merit of the *tzedakah* those philanthropists gave. They discovered that what they thought was a problem was actually for their benefit. The wealthy people were helping them with their *parnassah* because their *tzedakah* brought blessings to all people in Istanbul.

Often, when we think something is negative, it is actually positive, and when we experience something bitter, it is actually sweet.

This is the topic of the following section:

Bittersweet

The Torah tells us that after traveling for three days, the nation arrived at a place called Marah. The water there was bitter and undrinkable. The nation complained, "What will we drink?" The Torah states (15:25), ויצעק אל ה' ויורהו ה' עץ וישלך, "Moshe called out to Hashem, and Hashem showed him a tree. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet."

We would assume that it was a sweet tree that treated the bitter water. However, Targum Yonoson (and other sources from Chazal) write that it was a bitter tree. A miracle occurred: A bitter tree sweetened bitter water.⁸

8. We quote the words of Targum Yonoson:

ואחוי ליה ה' אילן מריר דארדפני וכתב עלוי שמא רבא וקירא וטלק לגו מיא ואתחלון מיא

This teaches us the pattern that repeatedly happens in life. When you think something is bitter, it is actually for your good, sweetening your life.

The *pasuk* states (15:23), ולא יכלו לשתת מים ממרה כי מרים הם, על כן קרא שמה מרה, "They could not drink the waters of Marah because they were bitter; therefore, they named [the place] Marah." The place was named Marah for the bitter water. Rebbe Yechezkel of Kuzmir *zt'l* asks that the place should be called מתוקה, sweet, to commemorate the miracle that the waters turned sweet.

He answers that it is called מרה, bitter because we want to remember that a bitter tree healed the bitter waters. We must not forget that when we suffer a painful moment in life, it

is, in fact, sweetening our life.

We will share some examples:

There's an orphanage in Eretz Yisrael called Beis HaPleitos, run by Reb Chaim Elazar Rosenfeld *Shlita*. A few years ago (year תשע"ה), a girl from the orphanage became a *kallah*, and Reb Chaim Elazar Rosenfeld asked a wealthy person from *chutz le'aratz* to help finance the *chasunah*.

The wealthy man offered to send a suitcase filled with brand-new clothing for the *kallah*.

It wasn't what Reb Chaim Elazar had in mind. The clothing might not be the right size or style. Sending money would be much more practical. But the wealthy man was very excited about sending this

"Hashem showed him a bitter tree called Ardafnei... He threw it into the water and the water turned sweet."

gift, so Reb Chaim Elazar accepted it.

A week later, the donor called Reb Chaim Elazar and said, "I sent the suitcase on tonight's flight to Eretz Yisrael. A taxi will bring it to Har Nof. Can you pick it up from there?" He gave Reb Chaim Elazar the taxi's phone number.

Reb Chaim Elazar called someone he knows from Har Nof (whose wife works at Beis HaPleitos) to pick up the suitcase the following day, and he gave him the telephone number.

This *yungerman* from Har Nof called the taxi and gave him the address where he would be: at the Bnei Torah minyan in Har Nof.

This *yungerman* is of the very organized type, any change in the schedule is very hard on him. It was important for him to daven in the Bnei Torah minyan, where he davens every day. According to his

calculations, the taxi with the suitcase would arrive before Shacharis, and his day could continue planned.

However, the taxi driver misunderstood the address and stood waiting outside another beis medresh. The yungerman had no choice but to go there to pick up the suitcase. That meant he would miss his usual minyan where he davens every day.

As he left the Bnei Torah beis medresh, he called Reb Chaim Elazar to tell him about his disappointment. He said, "Thanks to you, my day is ruined." He didn't try to conceal his anger and disappointment. He even said, "You killed my day!" because he wouldn't have *yishuv hadaas* all day due to this schedule change.

Later that day, everyone in the Jewish world heard of what happened at the Bnei Torah minyan that morning. Arab terrorists

attacked; it was one of the worst terror attacks of recent history.

Video footage of the beis medresh shows this *yungerman* leaving the beis medresh before the massacre began. He is seen speaking on his phone, waving his arms in anger. He was telling Reb Chaim Elazar, "You killed my day." Little did he know that Reb Chaim Elazar gave "life" to that day and all other days of his life.

We learn two lessons from this story:

(1) *Chesed* always pays off. This *yungerman* went to do a *chesed*, to pick up a suitcase of clothing for an orphaned *kallah*, which saved his life.

(2) When you think something is negative, it is for your good. Missing Shacharis seemed tragic to this *yungerman*. It seemed bitter. But that's what saved his life.⁹

9. An octogenarian, Reb Michoel Dreifus z'l, from New York would attend a *daf yomi shiur* together with six other elderly men. One day, a young man of just forty-years-old joined the *shiur* of the elderly men. (This was his first and only time he attended this *shiur*, he never came again.) Immediately after the *shiur*, the newcomer shouted, "Kaddish!" to tell everyone that they shouldn't leave until he finds a few more people to come in and form a minyan to say Kaddish.

The men wondered why this newcomer felt he can tell people what they should do, especially since everyone in the class was old enough to be his grandfather.

The young man explained that Chazal (*Sotah* 49.) say, "The word stands on the *יהו שמיה רבא* that is recited after studying a *shiur*, and he is always *makpid* that this Kaddish should be said.

A few moments later, he found a few men outside who agreed to come in for Kaddish. He gave the siddur to Reb Michoel Dreifus and asked him to say the Kaddish, and he did so.

The following story happened this year, in Beit Shemesh, erev Shabbos Lech Lecha:

A *bachur* came to the apartment building where he lives, and there was a bag of garbage near the central doorway. "It's the messy neighbor again," he thought to himself, bitterly. Cleanliness meant a lot to this *bachur*, and disorder ruins his peace of mind. So, he knocked at the neighbor's door and asked them to remove the garbage bag and throw it in the bin.

The neighbor replied that he came down the stairs with two heavy

garbage bags. He didn't have the strength to carry both bags to the bin, so he left one bag at the entrance. "When I have strength, I'll go down and throw out the other one," he promised.

The *bachur* wasn't pleased, but he managed to control his anger.

A few hours later, the bag was still there, at the doorway.

The *bachur* needed to fix a window in his apartment. To do so, he had to stand on the outside side of the fence around his porch and lean over towards the window.

Reb Michoel came home, and his wife informed him that his sister from Eretz Yisrael called him around five times that morning. Because his sister's job in the family was to remind the men to say Kaddish on the *yahrtzeit* of one of their grandparents, and she had forgotten to call earlier to tell him that it was the *yahrtzeit* of their grandparent.

Hashem arranged what needed to be. Someone new came to the shiur (it was his first and only time), and he felt compelled to arrange a minyan to say kaddish, and he chose specifically Reb Michoel to say the kaddish. It was all arranged from heaven because it was his day to say kaddish.

Without much space to put his feet, he lost his balance and fell one and a half stories down, breaking his arm. He fell headfirst, but his head wasn't injured because he fell onto a *garbage bag*. (There was a stone under the garbage bag, with a sharp edge. Were it not for the offensive garbage bag, the damage could have been immeasurable, *r'l*)

This story is another indication that those matters you think are bad are for the good. He felt that the bag of garbage in the doorway was a bad thing, but it was there to save his life.

A businessman from Bnei Brak needed to go to Haifa to attend several important meetings. Generally, he drove to Haifa, but his car was broken, so he found someone driving to Haifa and went along with him.

They arrived a bit late for his first appointment. He quickly left the car and

walked hurriedly to the office building where he had his first appointment. As he walked, he checked to see that he had everything he needed for the meeting. It was then that he realized that in his haste, he left his briefcase with all the papers he needed for the meeting in the car. Without his briefcase, there was no purpose in the meeting. "I will call my friend who brought me here and ask him to bring me my briefcase." He reached for his phone, but he realized that he also forgot his cellphone in the car to his horror. (The driver's phone number was on his cell phone, so he had no way of contacting him.)

He would have to wait until nighttime when his ride would pick him up to return to Bnei Brak. Meanwhile, he had to spend what he considered a wasted day in Haifa.

On their return trip, the businessman took his phone and listened to the

voice messages that accumulated throughout the day.

Most of the messages were from his son's rebbe.

Message 1: "This is your son's rebbe. We are on a class trip. Please call back immediately."

Message 2: "Call me! It's urgent!"

Message 3: "We are hiking through the desert, and we lost your son a few hours ago. We don't know where he is. Call back!"

Message 4 (this time, from Hatzalah): "Where are you? We need to contact you!"

Message 5 (from the rebbe): "Your son fell from one of the mountains and is wounded. I am with him. We're going to the hospital."

Message 6 (from the rebbe): "We took care of your son in the hospital. I am now taking him home."

Message 7 (from his wife): "Our son has just come

home... He is out-of-danger."

The businessman sank into his seat and breathed deeply. He realized that if he would have had his telephone with him, he'd be terribly worried throughout the entire day. Instead of attending meetings, he would be rushing to the hospital. The forgotten bag and phone, which he thought was a problem, enabled him to enjoy a rather pleasant day in Haifa without worry and anxiety. Because everything is for the good, and sometimes we can even look back and recognize it.

We are asking people to do something very difficult. We are advising people to believe that bad is good and bitter is sweet. Of course, that is easier said than done. How do you ignore emotions?

But the answer is that we want that, at least, the mind should know the

truth. The heart feels pain, the heart is upset, but the mind should know and believe that it is all for the good.

Yosef told his brothers (*Bereishis* 45:5), וואל יחר בעיניכם, "Don't be distressed in your eyes." But is distress in the eyes? Isn't it in the heart?

Yosef was telling them, "I understand that your heart is distressed, and you are upset that you made this error and sold me to Mitzrayim. Nevertheless, your eyes, which means your mind and intellect, should know that it was for the good. You sold me to Mitzrayim so I can support you during the famine."

It states (*Michah* 7:15), כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות, which means that when Hashem takes out of our present *galus*, there will be wonders and miracles, like the *nisim* that occurred at *yetzias Mitzrayim*. The Binah Li'Ittim asks that it should say אעשה נפלאות, "I

will do wonders." Why does the *pasuk* state, אראנו נפלאות, "I will show you wonders"?

He answers that wonders are always happening. Even now, Hashem is performing great, amazing miracles for us, only we don't see them. The specialty of the *geulah* is אראנו נפלאות, we will see the miracles that will occur.

Miracles are happening to us all the time. And even when matters seem bad and bitter, they are all for our benefit.

Bitachon

A *bachur* in the Chofetz Chaim's yeshivah turned down one *shidduch* offer after the next. He insisted that he would only agree to a *shidduch* if the girl's parents agreed to support him for five years.

The Chofetz Chaim asked him, "How many years are you planning to live?"

"At least until seventy, with Hashem's help," he replied.

"So, if you find a father-in-law who will support you for five years, who will support you for the remaining years of your life?"

"Who will support me?" the *bachur* asked incredulously, "Hashem will support me!"

"If you believe that Hashem will support you most years of your life, why don't you believe that Hashem can support you for the first five years of your marriage, as well?"

The Chofetz Chaim explained that Dasan and Aviram made the same error. As it states (16:19) ויאמר משה אלהם איש אל יותר ממנו עד בקר ולא שמעו אל משה ויותרו אנשים ממנו עד בקר וירם תולעים ויבאש ויקצף עלהם. Moshe told the nation that they mustn't leave the manna overnight until morning. But Dasan and Aviram didn't obey. They

feared that they wouldn't have food the following day, so they left over the manna until the morning. The manna turned moldy and wormy, and Moshe was angry with them.

Dasan and Aviram feared that the *manna* would stop falling, so they saved *manna* for the next day. They had food for an extra day, but what did they expect to eat on the day after that? They would need to trust in Hashem, so they might as well trust in Hashem immediately.

The Brisker Rav *zt'l* would raise funds each month to support Torah scholars in Yerushalayim. Sometimes, he didn't raise enough money and had to borrow money to pay the *jungerleit*. A wealthy person told him, "The Rav should seek a very wealthy person, who can give you a quarter-million pounds. That way, you will have peace of mind for a few months."

"Chas veshalom!" the Brisker Rav said. "Even if someone would offer me millions, I wouldn't accept it. I don't want to receive more than I need for each month." The Brisker Rav explained that the responsibility to raise the money forced him to trust in Hashem. He would have some respite if he received a quarter million pounds, but he would lose his *bitachon*.

There were times when people wanted to give the Brisker Rav large sums of money, but he wouldn't accept it. He would tell them, "I already have enough for this month."

The *Chovas HaLevavos*, in his introduction to *Shaar HaBitachon*, writes, "Someone who has *bitachon* will be calm, and he won't have any worries, similar to a chemist who knows how to turn silver into gold, and how to transform copper into silver. He will be even calmer than the chemist because the person

who has *bitachon* will have ten benefits over the chemist..." The *Chovas HaLevavos* explains that the chemist is afraid of people because he is doing something illegal, and he is afraid to reveal his secrets so that people won't copy them. But the person who has *bitachon* in Hashem is totally worry-free.

Based on these words, the Brisker Rav *zy'a* explained the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 27:14), קוּה אֵל ה' הוֹק, ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה' "Trust in Hashem; strengthen yourself, and he will give you courage, and hope to Hashem." This *pasuk* can be explained that the reward for having *bitachon* is more *bitachon*. Why isn't there a different reward for *bitachon*? Why is the reward for *bitachon* more *bitachon*?

But the *Chovas HaLevavos* showed us that the calmest and most tranquil person in the world is someone who has *bitachon*, so what reward can possibly be

given to someone who has *bitachon*? Should we give him wealth? The reward would be far less than the *bitachon* he had before it. Therefore, the only reward for *bitachon* is more *bitachon*.¹⁰

10. There are different paths of *bitachon*, and the Alter of Navardok *zt'l* took a very demanding path: he would trust in Hashem, without doing *hishtadlus*.

Once, the Alter of Navardok *zt'l* arrived in a city after nightfall. He needed a place to stay for the night, but he refused to make *hishtadlus*. He told himself, "Hashem knows what I need, and Hashem can arrange it for me, even without my *hishtadlus*. He went into a *beis medresh* to study Torah. No one knew that he needed a place, so they didn't offer. Eventually, the *beis medresh* emptied, and he was left alone.

That night, a wealthy man couldn't sleep, so he took a stroll around the streets. He passed the *beis medresh* and found the Alter of Navardok sitting there, learning Torah. The wealthy person invited him to come to his home to sleep.

When the wealthy person heard that the Alter trusted in Hashem and that he didn't want to ask anyone for help, he laughed and said, "You acted ridiculously! If it weren't for the fact that I couldn't sleep tonight, you would still be there!"

The foolish wealthy man didn't realize the miracle he just witnessed. The Alter of Navardok trusted in Hashem, and Hashem helped him get a place to sleep.

Another time, the Alter of Navardok went to the train station, because he needed to take a train to get somewhere but he didn't have money to buy a ticket. He could have asked people to lend him some money, but he didn't want to make *hishtadlus*. "Hashem knows my needs, and Hashem will help me."

Someone at the train station teased the Alter for thinking he will

get on the train. The Alter remained steadfast in his *bitachon* that Hashem will help him. The whistle blew, the train was about to go. Just then, someone ran and bought a ticket for the Alter, and they both jumped onto the train, a second before the doors closed.

On the train, he met the man who rebuked him. He said, "You acted foolishly. If you would have delayed a moment longer, you would have missed the train."

This man failed to realize that it was in the merit of the Alter's *bitachon* that Hashem helped him get on the train in time.