

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Table of Contents

Torah Wellsprings - Bo

The Hand of Hashem	4
Foundation of <i>Emunah</i>.....	7
Reviewing <i>Emunah</i>.....	9
Laughter	12
<i>Bitachon</i>	13
In the Right Time.....	16
<i>Zrizus</i>.....	21
The Rocking Cradle.....	25
Unhurriedly.....	28
<i>Chesed</i>.....	30

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The Hand of Hashem

At the beginning of Bnei Yisrael's slavery in Mitzrayim, the Torah writes (1:12), ויקצו מפני בני ישראל. Rashi adds, קצו בחייהם, "The Mitzrim became disgusted with their own lives." The rapid growth of the Yidden bothered them to the extent that their lives felt purposeless.

Rashi offers a second explanation; בקוצים היו בעיניהם, the Yidden were like thorns in the eyes of the Egyptians. The Midrash adds that when the Mitzrim thought about Klal Yisrael, they felt as if pierced by thorns all over their bodies.

After the Mitzrim suffered from nine *makos*, we would assume that the Mitzrim's hatred and animosity toward the Yidden would be at its peak. Yet, after the ninth

plague it states (11:3), ויתן ה' את חן העם בעיני מצרים, "Hashem granted the nation favor in the eyes of Egypt." גם האיש משה גדול מאוד בארץ מצרים בעיני עבדי פרעה ובעיני העם, "moreover, the man Moshe was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants, and in the eyes of the Egyptian nation." Everything turned around. How did disgust turn into favor?

The Ramban writes, "The Mitzrim didn't hate the Yidden because of the *makos*. Instead, they loved the Yidden a lot; they found *chen* in the Yidden. This was because they realized that they are the *resha'im*, the thieves, and it is appropriate to be kind to the Jewish nation."

Everything comes from Hashem. At first, Hashem put hatred into their hearts, as it states (*Tehillim* 105:25),

הפך לבם לשנוא עמו, "Hashem changed the hearts of the Mitzrim to hate His nation." And now Hashem turned their hearts around to love the nation. As it states (*Tehillim* 84:12), הן וכבוד יתן ה', "Hashem gives *chen* and honor." Hashem put into the Mitzrim's hearts to repent for what they did to the Yidden, and to love Bnei Yisrael.

The Midrash (*Bereishis* Rabba 84:18) says something similar regarding Yosef's

brothers. "When You wanted, You put love in their hearts, and when You wanted, You placed hatred in their hearts." First, the brothers hated Yosef and sold him into slavery, and then their hearts turned to love Yosef. The Midrash teaches that both the hatred and the love that followed were from Hashem.¹

Everything comes from Hashem. Our life's mission is to recognize it.² This isn't a simple task because the

1. The Eitz Yosef clarifies that the brothers still had *bechirah*. Had they wanted to, they could have loved Yosef from the beginning. But it was a difficult test because Hashem put the hatred into their hearts.

2. *Emunah*, belief in Hashem, also comes from Hashem.

In *parashas Shemos*, Moshe said to Hashem (4:1), והן לא יאמינו לי... כי יאמרו, "The Yidden won't believe me... They will say, 'Hashem didn't reveal himself to you.'"

Hashem gave Moshe three signs to perform before the Jewish nation, to prove that Hashem spoke to him. One of the signs was to throw his staff to the ground, and it turned into a snake. It states (*Shemos* 4:3), ויהי לנחש וינס משה מפניו, "It became a snake and Moshe ran away from it."

Why was Moshe afraid of the snake? The Chovas HaLevavos (*Shaar Ahavas Hashem* 6) relates that there was once a chassid who

default setting of our minds is to think that things happen by nature or chance.

It states (11:4), ויאמר משה כה, אמר ה' כחצות הלילה אני יוצא בתוך מצרים ומת כל בכור, "Moshe said [to Pharaoh], so said Hashem, at about midnight I will go out in Mitzrayim, and every firstborn shall die."

Rashi points out, "Moshe said כחצות, at about midnight. Moshe didn't say בהצות, that the plague will occur exactly at midnight because Pharaoh's astrologers might

miscalculate the time and think that the moment of the plague was somewhat before or after midnight and claim that Moshe is a charlatan for predicting the wrong time."

The Brisker Rav *zt'l* comments that from this we see the power of denial and people's tendency to attribute everything to nature. The Mitzrim just witnessed ten wondrous and painful *makos*, precisely as Moshe prophesized. Yet, if the final one wasn't exactly at midnight (according to their calculations), they would say it is all a

would walk fearlessly through forests, unafraid of the wild animals. He said, "I'm embarrassed from my Creator to fear anything other than Hashem."

So why was Moshe afraid of the snake? When he spoke with Hashem, he certainly shouldn't fear anything but Hashem, alone.

The Panim Yafos explains that Hashem took away Moshe's high level of *emunah*, momentarily, and therefore, Moshe was afraid of the snake. This showed Moshe that also his faith in Hashem is from Hashem. When Hashem takes away his *Emunah*, even Moshe is afraid of a snake. Because belief in Hashem or the opposite are in Hashem's hands. If Hashem wants it, the nation will believe him.

hoax, and there is no truth in Moshe's message.

In contrast, those with *emunah* recognize Hashem's hand even when the circumstances aren't evident.

Foundation of *Emunah*

Yetzias Mitzrayim is the foundation of our *emunah*. As it states in the beginning of the parashah (10:2) ולמען (10:2) ותספר באזני בנך... וידעתם כי אני ה' "You will tell your children...and know that I am Hashem."

This is the reason for the mitzvah of (13:8) והגדת להגדת, to "Tell your children..." the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* every Pesach at the Seder, as well as the mitzvah to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* each day, as it states (*Devarim* 16:3) זכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים, כל ימי חיך "Remember the day you left Mitzrayim, all the days of your life." The Yesod HaAvodah adds

that remembering *yetzias Mitzrayim* is *mesugal* for *emunah*.

The Ramban (end of the *parashah*) writes, "Ever since people began worshiping *avodah zarah*, people became confused in the fundamentals of *emunah*... When Hashem performs miracles beyond the rules of nature, this disproves all false ideas. The wondrous miracles reveal that Hashem created the world, knows everything, leads it with *hashgachah pratis*, and has the ability to do as He wants. If before the miracle occurred, a *navi* said in Hashem's name that it would happen, this also gives credence to the truth of *nevuah*, that Hashem speaks with man and tells His secrets to His servants, the prophets." This is how the miracles of *yetzias Mitzrayim* teach us belief in Hashem.³

3. The Ramban also writes (ibid.) "From the great miracles one believes in the concealed miracles (the miracles concealed in nature).

The *Teshuas Chein* (*Va'eira* ד"ה והפלתו) writes, "In Mitzrayim, people believed in מקריית, that things happen by chance. Pharaoh didn't believe the world is run with *hashgachah pratis*... and since the Jewish nation was under his rule, they were influenced by Pharaoh's false philosophies. The sweet poison of heresy gradually caused the Yidden to adapt his way of thinking. They believed in Hashem but said, 'Hashem is so great and holy that it isn't logical that Hashem will look down at this lowly world.' Indeed, the Rambam in *Morah Nevuchim* writes that the Jewish nation in Mitzrayim was confused in this matter. And the truth is, to some extent, we are still somewhat confused. The *yetzer hara* dances among us and brings into

our hearts the belief that occurrences happen by chance. To correct our emunah, Hashem gave us the mitzvah to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* every day. The miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim remind us that everything happens by Hashem's decree.

"Pharaoh believed that everything happens according to the rules of nature. Each *makah* taught Pharaoh in a new way that the world isn't run by nature."

After Pharaoh discovered that Hashem runs the world with *hashgachah pratis*, he became entangled in another philosophical error. He thought that there were two gods, *chalilah*, one to give punishment and one to bestow kindness.

Belief in concealed miracles is the foundation of the Torah. One doesn't have a portion in Torah until he believes that everything that happens to us are miracles and there is no nature or accidents at all."

But then came *makos arov*, the mixture of wild animals that smote the Egyptians and didn't harm the Yidden. As it states (*Shemos* 8:19), ושמתי פדות בין עמי, Hashem separated the Jewish nation from the Egyptians by this *makah*. This showed Pharaoh that the same G-d does *chesed* and *din*. Everything comes from Him.⁴

The Maharal (*Gevuras Hashem* ch.60) teaches that many laws of the *korban Pesach* are related to the number One. For example, it must be (12:5) בן שנה, *one-year-old*; (12:46) בבית אחד יאכל, eaten in *one* house; and it is forbidden to break any of the bones into two; the bones must remain *one*. The Maharal (*Gevuras Hashem* ch.60) explains that this is

because the function of the *korban Pesach* is to remind us that everything comes from the One Hashem.

Reviewing *Emunah*

The *parashah* begins, ויאמר ה' אל משה בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי את לבו, "Hashem said to Moshe, come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart." The Noam Elimelech asks two questions:

(1) It should say לך אל, "Go to Pharaoh." Why does it say בא אל פרעה, "Come to Pharaoh"?

(2) כי אני הכבדתי את לבו, "Because I hardened his heart." This is a reason *not* to go to Pharaoh. What is the purpose of going to someone who won't listen? Why is this used as a reason to go to Pharaoh?

4. The Teshuas Chen adds that the Magid Meisharim (the *malach* who taught the Beis Yosef) said that Yisro was initially also confused in this matter. He thought that there are two gods, *chalilah*, one to bestow kindness and one for punishment. But *kriyas Yam Suf*, which punished the Mitzrim and saved the Yidden taught him that everything is from the One Hashem.

The Noam Elimelech's answers, *בא אל פרעה בקביעות, ולא בדרך ארעי, ולכך לא יום אחר יום ולא בדרך ארעי, נאמר לך שהוא לשון ארעי*, "Bo means to go continuously, day after day, and not occasionally. Therefore, it doesn't state *לך*, which connotes an occasional visit.

Hashem instructed Moshe to go to Pharaoh often, even every day, because *אני הכבדתי את לבו*, I hardened his heart, and he won't listen to you if you go occasionally. Even if Pharaoh listens, it will be just for the moment, and then he will return to his old ways. The only way for him to attain *emunah* is through constant review.

The Ramban at the end of the *parashah* discusses fundamental concepts of *emunah*.⁵ The Beis Aharon advised his chassidim to review this Ramban daily

because *emunah* requires constant review.

A *bachur* once asked his friend if he plans to go to Reb Shalom Shwadron's *zt'l* weekly Friday night *mussar drashah* in the Zichron Moshe beis medresh, in Yerushalayim. The friend replied, "No. I know all his *drashos* by heart. Although he expresses himself in different ways each week, the points are more or less the same. "

After this exchange, they turned around and saw that Reb Shalom Shwardon was standing behind them, listening to their conversation.

That Friday night, Reb Shalom Shwadron noticed that those two *bachurim* had come after all. During the *drashah*, he said the following *mashal*:

5. We quoted sections of this Ramban above.

Someone parked his car in the middle of the road, blocking all traffic, and began reading the newspaper. Cars behind him were honking, urging him to drive on, but he didn't pay them any attention. Soon, many cars were lined up. They were all honking, and he just sat there, peacefully reading the newspaper.

At one point, he got out of his car and shouted, "Why are you honking so much? Enough! I heard you already. I know you want me to drive on. Why do you keep repeating the same honks over and over again?"

They replied, "We will continue honking until you get the message."

Reb Shalom Shwadron explained that the goal of *mussar* isn't just to learn the ideas. Even if you know all the points, if you don't change, you will need to hear the concepts again

and again until they enter your heart.

Similarly, *emunah* needs constant review.

It states (*Tehillim* 116:10), *האמנתי כי אדבר*, and the Lechovitzer Rebbe *zt'l* translated it, "I believe in Hashem because I speak about *emunah*." Speaking about *emunah* drills *emunah* into our hearts. The Baal HaTanya *zt'l* said that the letter *א* of *אדבר* is enlarged in the *sefer Torah* and it has an appearance of a hammer. This hints that one must hammer *emunah* into our minds. We do that by speaking about *emunah* often, again and again, until the ideas penetrate our hearts.

A doctor once asked Rebbe Chaim of Tzanz *zy"a*, "What do you do for a living?"

"I build bridges," he replied.

The doctor was shocked. He didn't think the rabbi was an architect.

The Divrei Chaim explained, "I'm working to build a bridge that connects my brain to my heart."

Tzaddikim say, "The distance between the heart and the brain is greater than the distance between heaven and earth." We need constant review until the heart believes what the mind knows.

Laughter

When we have emunah, we can fully appreciate the story of yetzias Mitzrayim.

Early Shabbos morning, parashas וּאֵרָא, the Chofetz Chaim zt'l was being maavir sidrah, when suddenly he laughed out loud, and exclaimed, "A frog! A frog!" The Chofetz Chaim's shamesh, who was present at the time, wondered what had prompted the Chofetz Chaim to laugh. Later, the Chofetz Chaim told his shamesh that when he was reviewing the parashah, he remembered Rashi's

comment (*Shemos* 8:2) that Hashem sent one giant frog to Mitzrayim. In an attempt to get rid of the frog, the Mitzrim began beating it, and each time they hit it, more frogs emerged from the giant frog. The Chofetz Chaim imagined to himself how this scene must have appeared until he laughed joyously.

As it states at the beginning of the *parashah* (10:2) וְלִמְעַן תִּסְפֹּר בְּאוֹנֵי בְּנֵי וְבִן בְּנֵי אֵת (10:2) "So that you will tell your children and grandchildren how I made a mockery of Mitzrayim." Rashi writes הַתְּעַלְלֵתִי - שְׁחַקְתִּי, Hashem made laughter out of Mitzrayim.

The Chofetz Chaim visualized it, and we should also visualize yetzias Mitzrayim. As it states (13:8) וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, "tell your children," and Unkelos writes וְתִּחְוֶי לְבַבְךָ, "Show your children." The Avnei Nezer explains that the story of yetzias Mitzrayim should be alive and real to you, as

though you see it happening. You should be able to "show" your children what happened at yetzias Mitzrayim.

Tzaddikim add that joy and laughter were needed to bring about the redemption from Mitzrayim. This is because the nation fell to very low levels in Mitzrayim; they were sad and unworthy to be redeemed. Hashem made a joke out of Mitzrayim, which brought joy to the Jewish nation and thus became worthy of being saved.

As it states *כי בשמחה תצאו*, with joy, you will leave all troubles.

A chasid told the Lev Simchah zt'l that he is without children many years after his wedding. The Lev Simchah told him "Be b'simchah, and there will be 'a simchah.'" If he is happy, he will merit bearing a child.

The man's *mashpiah* asked the Rebbe to find him another solution because it was almost impossible for him to be happy in his childless state.

The Rebbe replied, "What can I do? Hashem loves *simchah*."

The chasid worked on himself and succeeded in becoming happy, and his salvation came shortly afterward.

Bitachon

We discussed that *simchah* brought about the redemption. *Bitachon* also played a significant role. As the Rabbeinu b'Chaya (*Kad HaKemach, Bitachon*) writes, "In the merit of *bitachon*, Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Mitzrayim."

It states (12:11), *וככה תאכלו*, אתו מותניכם חגרים נעליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידכם ואכלתם אותו בחפזון פסח *הוא לה*, "This is how you should eat [the *korban Pesach*]: your loins girded, your shoes on your feet,

your staff in your hands, and you should eat it in haste, for it is a *korban Pesach* to Hashem."

They had to eat the *korban Pesach* all dressed, ready for travel. The Siforno writes, להורות על ביטחון בלתי מסופק בקל יתברך בהיותם מכינים עצמם לדרך בעודם בבית ללא "This was to show their *bitachon* in Hashem...by preparing to travel while they were still in prison."

Similarly, the Chasam Sofer (*Oros Chasam Sofer*) zt'l explains that ומקלכם בידכם, "your staff in your hands," hints to *bitachon*, because מעולם is *roshei teivos* for מועלם, "We always trust in you" (from *Shemonah Esrei*). So, *bitachon* is what got them out of Mitzrayim.

Hashem commanded the nation to put the blood of the *korban Pesach* on the lintel and doorposts of their homes. Hashem said (12:13), וראיתי את הדם ופסחתי עליכם, "I will see the blood, and I will jump over your homes."

What is significant about the blood that it protected the Jewish nation?

The Rabbeinu b'Chaya explains that the *korban Pesach* was sacrificed with *bitachon*. Because the *korban Pesach* can be either a goat or a sheep – the Egyptian god – and it was offered in public. Sacrificing this *korban* was a daring act, requiring a lot of *bitachon*.

Hashem protected them; no one was harmed by bringing the *korban Pesach*. And then Hashem commanded them to put the blood on the doorway, so the merit of their *bitachon* will protect them once again from *makas bechoros*. When Hashem saw the blood, He remembered their *bitachon* in Him and skipped over their homes.

We say in *Shacharis* (אהבת עולם), אבינו מלכנו בעבור שמך הגדול ובעבור אבותינו שבטחו בך, "Our Father and King, because of Your holy name, and because of our forefathers

who had *bitachon* in You..." The Shem Mishmuel (מקין תרע"ה) proves from these words that the primary merit of the holy *avos*, which we rely upon to arouse Hashem's compassion, is their *bitachon* in Hashem.

The Midrash (*Tehillim* 32:12) says, אפילו רשע בוטח בה, חסד יסובבנו, "Even when a *rasha* trusts in Hashem, he is surrounded with Hashem's kindness."

Similarly, it states (*Tehillim* 34:23), ולא יאשמו כל, החוסים בו, "They will never regret, *everyone* who trusts in Hashem." Notice the word כל, everyone. The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* said to Reb Chaim Volozhiner, "Not Eliyahu (the Vilna Gaon) and not Chaim, rather Hashem helps כל החוסים בו, everyone who trusts in Him" (*Imrei Yaakov, HaBoteiach*, 133).

It states (*Tehillim* 146), שברו, על ה' אלקיו עושה שמים וארץ, "His trust is in Hashem, his G-d, Who made heaven and earth."

Why is the creation of heaven and earth juxtaposed with someone who has *bitachon*? The Midrash (*Shochar Tov*) answers that the *pasuk* is saying, "From the time I created heaven and earth, heaven and earth never ceased existing. Similarly, whoever trusts in Me, his reward will never cease."

A poor person told Reb Chaim Brisker *zt'l* that he wants to move to America to earn *parnassah*, and perhaps wealth, too.

Reb Chaim Brisker told him, "If Hashem wants to give you *parnassah* or wealth, it can happen here in Brisk. And if Hashem doesn't change your destiny of poverty, what will you gain by going to America?"

A bird accidentally came into a home and couldn't find its way out. It flew to the window but crashed into the closed window. The bird kept flying back to the window,

thinking it was the way out, but it kept crashing.

Someone heard the commotion and opened the window, allowing the bird to go free.

The bird thought it was saved by its *hishtadlus*. It doesn't know that without the person opening the window, it wouldn't be free. Similarly, though we do *hishtadlus*, and sometimes we succeed, it isn't us. Hashem opens the window and grants us success.

But the bird did accomplish something with its *hishtadlus*. It alerted the owner of the house to come and see what's going on. Similarly, we must do *hishtadlus*, which is our obligation, and then Hashem helps us and grants our needs.

In the Right Time

We say in *Ashrei*, עיני כל, אליך ישברו ואתה נותן להם אכלם בעתו, "The eyes of all turn to

You, and You give them their food *in the right time*." Sometimes you wait for salvation, but Hashem is there for you when you need it.

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* was once a guest in a wealthy man's home. After Shabbos, the Baal Shem Tov thanked his host and asked him to deliver an envelope to a specific address in another city.

The host agreed to do so, but he forgot about the letter. It remained in a drawer in his home for a long time.

Years passed, and this wealthy person lost all his money.

One day, he found the letter that the Baal Shem Tov asked him to deliver. He immediately set out to deliver the letter.

The man who received the letter read it out loud before him. The letter said, "The person giving you this letter was once wealthy,

but he lost his money and is now going through a hard time financially. Please help him generously."

This was how the Baal Shem Tov repaid his host. The money came to him just in time, when he needed it most.

A *yungerman* had a toothache, and the dental treatment would cost him five hundred shekels. He didn't know what to do. On the one hand, he was very tight with money, and five hundred shekels was a lot of money for him. But on the other hand, his tooth hurt so much.

He went to daven *Maariv*, and begged Hashem for direction and salvation.

When he came home, his wife and children told him they had just found five hundred shekels, which he could take to the dentist.

This is what happened: The wife was distressed by their financial situation, so she decided to clean up and organize the house. If there isn't money, she thought, at least, the house should be orderly. As she organized the home, she shook out an old sheet, and five hundred shekels fell out from between the folds.

They remembered what had happened. Years before, they hid their wedding money in this sheet. They used up most of the money, so they stopped looking there. Meanwhile, they forgot that there was still five hundred shekels left. The husband davened, and they found the money when they needed it most.

The Klausenberger Rebbe *zt'l* related that a priest once said to a rav, "In the desert, Hashem gave you manna; it rained down from heaven. But that doesn't happen anymore. Why not? It must be because you are sinners."

The rav replied, "It isn't so. Hashem continues to send us manna. But instead of dropping it to the ground, it falls directly into our pockets or our bank accounts. In the desert, there were no goyim around, so the manna could fall to the ground, and no one stole it. But today, we live among goyim. If the manna fell to the ground, our gentile neighbors would steal it. Therefore, today, the manna comes down in concealed ways."

The manna continues to come down in concealed ways, and when we need the money, Hashem sends it to us.

The Kotzker Rebbe *zt'l* revealed an amazing thing that happens to us in regards to *parnassah*. Often, somehow, a small amount of money goes a long way. Mathematically, it may not make sense that a person is covering all his expenses. His income is too small to cover everything

he pays for. But somehow, miraculously, it works out.

The Bnei Yissaschar once tested it. He gathered some people and calculated their expenses vs. their incomes with them, and it didn't add up. Each person spent more money than he earned, more than he had.

How did they manage? The answer is, Hashem performed miracles for them.

This continues to happen today. Perhaps Hashem adds some money into our pockets or bank accounts, and maybe Hashem does miracles in other ways, but miraculously there is always enough; things work out in the end.

It states (*Tehillim* 9:19), **כִּי לֹא לְנֶצַח יִשְׁכַּח אֲבוֹן תְּקוּת עֲנִיִּים תִּאֲבָד לְעַד**, "Hashem won't forget the poor forever. The hopes of the poor are lost forever."

The beginning of the *pasuk* seems to contradict the end of the *pasuk*. The

pasuk starts off by saying that Hashem won't forget the poor forever. And then we say, תקות עניים תאבד לעד, their hopes are lost forever.

The answer is that Hashem always helps the poor, but not the way the poor person planned. They think they will earn *parnassah* in this way or that way, תקות עניים תאבד לעד, but nothing materializes from their hopes and plans. Hashem saves them in ways that He chooses.

It states (13:8), והגדת לבנך, ביום ההוא "Tell your children on that day..." The Imrei Chaim translates, "Tell your children ביום ההוא, to think solely about "that day." If you have all your needs for today, don't worry about tomorrow. Trust in Hashem that He will supply all your needs."

A few days before Pesach, a Yerushalmi *yungerman* still didn't have money to purchase the Pesach products. He davened Minchah in a

shtibel, and at the end of *Shemonah Esrei*, he poured out his heart before Hashem, asking Hashem to send him money for Pesach.

Standing next to him in this *shtibel* was a wealthy American Yid who came to Eretz Yisrael for *yom tov*. After Minchah, the American guest told the Yerushalmi Yid, "Perhaps you didn't realize, but you were davening loud enough that people around you could hear what you were saying. I heard you express that you don't have money for *yom tov*. Come later tonight to the hotel where I'm staying, and I'll give you some money for *yom tov*."

The man was delighted; his tefillos were answered so quickly.

The next day, he told his friends what had happened. They asked him, "Did you ask for his address in America?"

"Why do I need his address?" the Yerushalmi Yid replied. "He didn't help me. Hashem helped me. And I know Hashem's address. When I need something, I can always turn to Him, and He will give me my needs.

A *bachur* in Kfar Chasidim yeshiva told the *mashgiach*, Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l*, that he will soon find his *bashert*, get married, and have children. So he wants to begin working now, to prepare for his future.

Reb Elyah Lopian asked the *bachur*, "How do you know that you will get married?"

The *bachur* was hurt by this question but replied as politely as he could. "Most people get married, and I have bitachon that I will get married, too."

Reb Elyah asked, "But how do you know you will have children?"

The *bachur* replied, "Are you cursing me? Most people have children, and I trust in Hashem that Hashem will give me children too."

Reb Elyah Lopian told him, "So you trust in Hashem that He will grant you a wife and that you will have children because this is what Hashem does for most people. So why don't you believe that He will give you *parnassah*, as He gives to most people in the world?"

There was a person who had financial worries. A wise friend asked him, "Are you able to prepare a meal and feed seventy people?"

"It is expensive to make a supper for seventy people, but I have enough money to do that."

"Can you feed seven hundred people?"

"I guess I can. I've made *chasunos* before, and there were many guests."

"Can you prepare a meal for seven thousand people?"

"No. That's going too far. I don't have that kind of money. What's your point? Where are you leading to?"

"Hashem feeds *seven billion* people each day. So why are you worried? Hashem can certainly grant you all your needs."

Zrizus

It states (12:11), וככה תאכלו ויכנה תאכלו אתו מתניכם חגרים ועליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידכם ואכלתם אותו בחפזון פסח "הוא לה" "This is how you should eat it [the *korban Pesach*]: your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hands; you shall eat it in haste – it is a *korban Pesach* to Hashem." Above, we quoted the Sforno's explanation, that Hashem told the nation to eat the *korban Pesach* with *bitachon* that they will very soon leave Mitzrayim. In the merit of their *bitachon*, they

were redeemed from Mitzrayim.

We will now bring another explanation. It was to train the nation in the trait of *zrizus*. They should be dressed, prepared, and ready to leave Mitzrayim the first moment they can.

Indeed, the *pasuk* concludes, ואכלתם אותו בחפזון "Eat it in haste, for it is a *korban Pesach* for Hashem."

Rashi writes that בחפזון expresses לשון בהלה ומהירות, rushing, and quickness.

The *korban* is called Pesach (as is the *yom tov*). פסח means to skip or to jump.

Rashi explains, על שם הדילוג והקפיצה שהקב"ה מדלג בתי ישראל מבין בתי מצרים וקופץ ממצרי למצרי וישראל אמצעי נמלט ואתם עשו כל עבודותיו לשם שמים דרך דילוג וקפיצה "Hakadosh Baruch Hu *skipped* over the Jewish houses...and He *jumped* from one Mitzri house to the next Mitzri house, and the Jewish home in between was

spared. You should do all rituals [of the *korban Pesach*] in a skipping and jumping manner, symbolic of its name, Pesach."

Rashi adds that *Paska* (which is old French for taking a large step) is similar to the word Pesach.

We see that a major aspect of eating the *korban Pesach* is *zrizus*.

The concept of chametz (which is also discussed in this week's *parashah*) further denotes the importance of being quick. If you are lazy,

the dough will become chametz, and you won't be allowed to eat it on Pesach.

It states (12:17), ושמרתם את, המצות, "Be cautious with the matzos." Rashi writes, אל תהי קורא את המצות, אלא את המצוות, כדרך שאין מחמיצין את המצות כך אין מחמיצין את המצוות, אלא אם באה לידך עשה אותה מיד, "Don't read it matzos; rather, read it mitzvos. Just as we don't allow matzos to turn chametz, we shouldn't delay mitzvos. When you have an opportunity to perform a mitzvah, do it immediately.⁶

6. There are other examples of *zrizus* in the *parashah*. For instance, it states (12:33), ותחוק מצרים על העם למהר לשלחם, "The Mitzrim rushed the nation out of Mitzrayim..."

And it states (12:39), ויאפו את הבצק אשר הוציאו ממצרים עגת מצות כי לא חמוץ כי גרשו, "They baked the dough that they took out of Mitzrayim as matzos, and not as chametz, because they were rushed out of Mitzrayim, and they couldn't delay."

We say in the *Hagaddah Shel Pesach*, מצה זו שאנו אוכלים על שום מה על שום, שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא, "This matzah that we eat, what is the reason? It is because the dough of our forefathers didn't have time to become chametz before Hakadosh Baruch Hu appeared to them and redeemed them."

Why is *zrizus* so important?

The Mesilas Yesharim (6) writes, "Just as the *yetzer hara* tries and schemes to have people fall into sin, so does he attempt to prevent people from doing mitzvos. A lazy person who doesn't chase after mitzvos will remain without anything at all. That's definite.⁷

Very frightening, yet true. You have to be a *zariz* to grasp opportunities for Torah or mitzvos, or days and years will pass by, and you won't have much accomplished in all that time. *Zrizus* is essential.

The Noam Elimelech writes (*Tzetal Katan* 16), "A person was created to break his nature... Therefore, someone who is lazy by nature, for forty days he should do everything swiftly. For example, he should be quick to go to bed at night, to wake up in the morning, to get dressed, walk quickly to beis kneses immediately after he stops studying, and so on. And from then onwards, he will be helped from heaven..."

Zrizus is especially important in the morning because *sefarim* say when one is a *zariz* in the morning

7. I heard a *mashal* comparing a lazy person to a sewing machine that doesn't have thread: You insert the garment, and the machine goes up and down as you push the garment through the machine. But without thread in the machine, you went through the motions, but you are left without accomplishing anything.

The same can be said of a *bachur* who goes through the yeshiva system. One class and then the next class. He went through the motions. He did what everyone else was doing. But he must do his part. He has to exert himself to succeed. As in the *mashal*, he has to add the thread. If he doesn't exert himself, he will not succeed.

(to awaken, to go to daven, etc.) the entire day becomes *much* longer. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (1:4) writes, "One must be strong like a lion to rise in the morning. He should get up swiftly for Hashem's service before the *yetzer hara* comes with excuses on why he shouldn't wake up so early. In the winter, the *yetzer hara* says, 'How can you wake up so early? It is so cold? In the summer, he says, 'How can you wake up? You didn't sleep enough.' Because the *yetzer hara* knows how to catch people so they won't wake up. Everyone who fears Hashem must battle the *yetzer hara* and not listen to him. When a person accustoms himself in this way four or five times, it won't be hard for him afterward."

It takes just four or five times of getting up right away, and then it becomes easy. Experience proves that this is true.

Zrizus is essential throughout the day, too. There is so much to do; the day is short, so the solution is *zrizus*.

Zrizus serves another purpose, too. It generates *hislahavos*. As the *Mesilas Yesharim* (ch.7) writes, "Zrizus creates *hislahovos*. When one doesn't have *hislahavos*, he should practice doing his deeds with swiftness because this will develop his desire, his *hislahavos*. The external act [of *zrizus*] will cause him to feel the yearning in his heart. A person certainly has more control over his external deeds than over his internal emotion." Because when one is excited with the mitzvos, he will perform them with *zrizus*. And if he isn't excited, he should *pretend* that he is. He should perform mitzvos with *zrizus*. The heart follows one's actions, so acting with *hislahavos* will generate genuine *hislahavos* in one's heart.

While you can tell yourself why you should be excited, happy, and yearning for the mitzvos, it is hard for the heart to feel those ideas. However, if you act with *zrizus*, actions speak louder than words. Your efforts will plant in your heart a yearning and a *hislahavos* to perform the mitzvos.

The Rocking Cradle

The Karan Or Pnei Moshe (printed תקמ"ו) writes that Avraham Avinu discovered the importance of *zrizus*, and taught it to his descendants.

We quote:

"The Gemara (*Pesachim* 4.) teaches the importance of *zrizus* from Avraham Avinu, as it states, וישכם אברהם בבוקר, 'Avraham awoke early.' Avraham was the first to practice *zrizus* because he understood that *zrizus* is a means of reaching *sheleimus* (perfection). [Before Avraham] even *gedolim* weren't aware of the

benefits of *zrizus*. And because Avraham loved Hashem so much, he wanted his children to follow in his ways. As the Torah testifies, כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו, 'I love Avraham, because he will command his children after him to go in Hashem's ways...' So, Avraham discovered the importance of *zrizus*, and he passed it on to his descendants.

The Yalkut Shimoni (beginning of *Lech Lecha*) writes, "When Avraham was traveling through Aram Naharayim and Aram Nachor, he saw people eating, drinking, and wasting time. Avraham said, '*Halevay* that my portion shouldn't be in this land.' Then he arrived in Eretz Yisrael, and he saw people hoeing and weeding the fields. He said, '*Halevay* that my portion should be in this land.' Upon that, Hakadosh Baruch Hu replied, לזרעך אתן את הארץ הזאת, 'I will give your children this land.'"

This Midrash is another source to Avraham's recognition of the importance of *zrizus*.

Let's continue with this subject, and we will discover an amazing concept.

Everyone knows that when a baby cries, people rock the crib to help the child calm down and relax. Some cribs are built in a way that makes it easy to rock them.

Who created the rocking crib? The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 53:10) states, לא נדנדה עריסה תחילה אלא בביתו של אברהם, אבניו, "The first rocking crib was in Avraham Avinu's home." It wasn't always so. There was a time when people didn't rock cribs. The *Karan Or Pnei Moshe* writes, "There was a time when cribs were small beds with four feet, and they didn't rock. Perhaps people thought it is better when the baby lies still, without rocking. Maybe they thought that the child

would fall asleep quicker that way..."

The *Karan Or Pnei Moshe* explains that Avraham created the rocking crib to train his children and descendants in the path of *zrizus* and *hislahavos*.

Because one's deeds influence his heart, as the *Mesilas Yesharim* (ch.7) and other *sefarim* discuss. The rocking motion of the crib will train the child to be a *zariz* in *avodas Hashem* and to serve Hashem with *hislahavos*.

Goyim pray, standing erect. They don't sway back and forth. But Yidden *shuckel* when they daven. Why?

The *Zohar* explains that a Yid has a *neshamah*, which wants to return to its source in heaven. The *neshamah's* yearning causes a person to *shuckel* when he davens.

It can be compared to a flame over a candle, which wavers up and down. This

is because fire comes from the יסוד האש in heaven. The flame wants to return to its origin, which creates the flickering up and down motions of the flame. (The wick holds it back.) The same happens when we daven and study Torah. The *neshamah* wants to return to its origin, resulting in *shuckeling*.⁸

As it states (*Mishlei* 20:27), נר ה' נשמת אדם, "Hashem's candle is the *neshamah* of man." Like the flame on a candle that yearns for its origin in heaven, the person tries to connect to his origin above.

Avraham wanted us to serve Hashem with *zrizus* and with *hislahavus*. He, therefore, invented the

rocking crib to train young children in these two traits.⁹ Of course, the rocking is external, done by others to the crib. Nevertheless, the movement will train young children to have *zrizus* and *hislahavus* in *avodas Hashem*.

The *Karan Or Pnei Moshe* writes, "The custom to rock a crib is primarily of Jewish origin. Years passed, and the nations of the world saw that the Jewish people had rocking cribs for their infants, and they realized that rocking motion helps calm crying children and helps them fall asleep, so they created rocking cribs for their children. Due to the long and difficult *galus*, most Yidden forgot the reason

8. When the Yid does worldly deeds, the *neshamah* isn't roused, but when he is occupied with holy deeds, such as Torah and tefillah, the *neshamah* is aroused, it wants to return to its origin, and this causes the *shuckeling*.

9. Avraham excelled in *chinuch*, as it states (*Bereishis* 22:3), כי ידעתיו, "I love Avraham, למען אשר יצוה את בניו, because he trains his children to go in Hashem's ways."

for the rocking crib, and they think it is good for sleeping and for calming crying children, as we explained."

The Or Pnei Moshe adds, וכן יש מנהגים רבים הנראים וכן יש מנהגים רבים הנראים שהונהגו על דרך הטבע ויש להם שורש ועיקר גדול בעבודת הבורא ב"ה אשר נתייסד ע"פ אנשי מעשה צדיקים יסודי עולם, "There are many customs that seem to have been established for natural reasons, but the primary root is in *avodas Hashem*, and it was established by *tzaddikim*, the founders of the world."

This is an amazing statement. Many things people do today are taken for granted, but actually, it began with *tzaddikim*, and later the nations of the world adapted it. Like the rocking crib, which was invented by Avraham Avinu *a"l*.

In *parashas Mikeitz*, Yaakov asked his children (43:6) למה הרעתם לי להגיד לאיש העוד לכם אה, "Why did you do bad to me by telling the

man [Yosef] that you have another brother?" The brothers replied that Yosef knew many things about their family, so they felt they must tell the truth. Rashi (43:7) writes, אפילו עצי עריסתנו גילה לנו "He even revealed to us the wood of our cribs."

Why did Yosef speak to them about the cribs of their home?

The Karan Or Pnei Moshe explains that Yosef told them that he knew that they had an innovative cradle, which at the time was still only in Avraham Avinu's family.

Unhurriedly

Every rule has an exception. *Zrizus* is essential. We have to grab as many mitzvos as we can. But we must be calm and collected, too. We can't rush and lose our peace of mind. This brings us to our next discussion, to discuss the virtue of not rushing. But it isn't a contradiction

to zrizus. The wise can find a balance between these two essential traits.

Reb Moshe of Kobrin *zt'l* and some of his chassidim were once guests at the home of the daughter of Rebbe Boruch'l of Mezhibuzh *zt'l*. At the end of their stay, they were in a rush to leave. The chassidim were busy packing up and preparing to leave.

At this time, Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin asked the rebbetzin to repeat something she heard from her father, Rebbe Boruch'l of Mezhibuzh. She replied, "My father would often say, '*A Yid tur zich nisht yugen,*' a Jew shouldn't rush. He mustn't ever be in a confused, rushed, panicky state. He should always be calm and patient."

Upon hearing that, Rebbe Moshe Kobriner instructed his chassidim to stop rushing. Everything will work out well. The atmosphere in the home changed immediately.

They calmed down, and it took them quite a while before they left the house.

Outside, neighbors informed them that a group of thieves was waiting for them in ambush, knowing that they would soon be leaving with all their packages. But since the Rebbe and the chassidim were delayed, the thieves gave up and left.

The delay saved them.

The Divrei Shmuel repeated this story and said that this is the meaning of the *pasuk* (*Yeshayah* 30:15), *בשׁוּבָה וְנַחַת תְּשׁוּעוֹן*, "With tranquility and calmness you will be saved." *בשׁוּבָה*, when one does *teshuvah* and he repents from his rushed ways and accepts on himself *נַחַת*, to act consistently with *yishuv hadaass*, *תְּשׁוּעוֹן*, he will be saved from all troubles and hardships.

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* said *וְאִבְדַתֶּם מַהֲרָה*; you must abolish the rushing.

There was an old Lubavitzer chassid in London who davened very slowly. When he came to a few words of the tefillah that touched his heart, he repeated those words over and over again.

Someone who never saw this kind of tefillah before asked him, "Is that called davening?"

The chasid replied, "It's good for me here. Why should I move on?"

Similarly, in regards to Torah study, there is a *yetzer hara* to rush, to move on. Sometimes one has to *אבדתם מהרה*, stop rushing and relish in the *sugyah* that he is studying.

Zrizus and tranquility aren't contradictions. Instead, it is about finding the balance between these two essential traits.

Chesed

About *makas chosech* it states that it was so dark (10:23), *לֹא רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו*, "one didn't see his brother."

The Chidushei HaRim (*Likutei HaRim*) explains that when one doesn't think about the needs of his fellow man, that is the greatest darkness.

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni*) says that *חושך*, the plague of darkness, was as thick as a dinar (a coin).

Perhaps this is to hint to us that money causes *לֹא רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ*, that people don't see the needs of their fellow man. Money distances people because (1) they don't want to depart from their money to help others, (2) money causes jealousy, and (3) money creates social classes, and people choose to befriend some individuals and ignore others.¹⁰

10. You can always find a reason to love your fellow man. As Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer *zt"l* (*Imrei Pinchas Hashalem, Behaloscha*) writes,

It states (13:16), כי בחזק יד, הוצאינו ה' ממצרים, "With a strong hand Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim." This can be translated, בחזק יד, it is in the merit that each person gave *chizuk* and support to their fellow man that we were redeemed from Mitzrayim.

It states (11:7), לא יחרץ כלב, "the dogs won't bark..." The Rizhiner Rebbe *zt'l*

explained that the *pasuk* is warning us, לא יחרץ, one shouldn't have a sharp mouth against his fellow man (חרץ means sharp). Rather כ-לב לשונו, every word should be said with a soft, caring heart.¹¹

Chesed is rewarded; even animals get rewarded for the *chesed* they do.

The Gemara (*Bechoros* 5:) says that donkeys helped

"In every Yid there is holiness and something unique; something that no one else in the world possesses."

11. Rebbe Tzaddok HaKohen (*Tzidkas HaTzaddik* 175) writes, "One must be very cautious not to cause distress to any creature, even when performing a mitzvah." He proves this from Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (*Rabba* ch.24:6) that says that the stones that were used for *sekilah* and the wood that was used for hanging will be punished. They were used for a mitzvah (because מיתה בית דין, corporal punishment in *beis din* is an obligation), and stones and wood don't have feelings of their own mind, but they will be punished because they caused *tzaar* to someone.

Reb Tzaddok HaKohen explains that this is the reason the Sanhedrin fasted on the day they sentenced someone to death. As the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 63.) says, כדי לכפר על נפשותיהם, to attain atonement. Although *beis din* is obligated to mete out judgment, nevertheless, a Yid had *tzaar*, and for that they may be punished.

If even inanimate objects that were used for a mitzvah are punished because they caused *tzaar* to a Yid, how careful must we be never to hurt our fellow man, such as by saying harsh words.

Bnei Yisrael carry their belongings out of Mitzrayim, and therefore we have a mitzvah of פדיון פטר חמור, to redeem the firstborn donkey (as it states [13:13], וכל פטר חמור תפדה בשה).

And it states (*Shemos* 22:30), ובשר בשדה טרפה לא תאכלו, ולכלב תשליכון אותו, there's a mitzvah to give dead carcasses to dogs to eat.

Rashi explains, "Hakadosh Baruch doesn't withhold reward from any creature. It states (*Shemos* 11:7), ולכל בני ישראל לא יחרץ כלב, לשונו, that the dogs didn't bark by *makas bechoros*; therefore, Hakadosh Baruch Hu provides dogs their reward."

It states (12:22), ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בוקר, "Don't leave your homes until the morning." The night of *makas bechoros*, all Yidden had to remain home. Rashi explains, שמאחר שנתנה רשות למשחית לחבל, אינו מבחין בין צדיק לרשע, "When the *malach hamaves* has permission to destruct, he doesn't

differentiate between a tzaddik and a *rasha*." If Yidden were to go out, their lives would be in danger.

Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* asks that the Mitzrim weren't told to remain home. Many of them probably went outside that night (especially in the chaos of midnight, when the firstborns died. As it states (12:30), ויקם פרעה לילה הוא וכל עבדיו וכל מצרים ותהי צעקה גדולה במצרים כי אין בית, אשר אין שם מת, "Pharaoh awoke at night, he and all his servants and all of Mitzrayim, as there was a great cry in Mitzrayim because there wasn't a house without a corpse.") If so, why didn't many Mitzrim die when the *malach hamaves* ran rampant that night? Why did only their firstborns die?

Rebbe Shlomke answers, they had just given כלי כסף וכלי זהב ושמלות, valuable utensils, and clothing to the Yidden (see 11:2). This *chesed* protected them.

As Chazal (*Shabbos* 151.) say, המרחם על הבריות מרחמין עליו מן השמים, "Those who have *rachmanos* on others, Heaven has *rachmanos* on them."

Indeed, it seems strange that the Mitzrim lent the Jewish nation whatever they requested. They used to hate the Jewish nation (see *Shemos* 1:12, ויקצו מפני בני ישראל). How did they change from hating Yidden to doing *chesed* with them?

Furthermore, the *pasuk* states (11:2), וישאלו איש מאת רעהו, "א"מ ואשה מאת רעותה כלי כסף וכלי זהב", "a man should borrow from his *friend* and a woman should borrow from her *friend* utensils of gold and silver." If they borrowed from Mitzrim, why does the Torah call them רעהו, friends? Goyim are not called רעהו, friends (see *Bava Kama* 36:).

The Vilna Gaon (*Kol Eliyahu*) *zt'l* answers that Hashem requested that the Jewish nation should first borrow from one another

clothing and valuable utensils. That created an atmosphere of *chesed* in the world. And then, when they asked the Mitzrim to lend them gold and silver utensils and expensive clothing, the Mitzrim agreed to lend it to them.

Because *chesed* generates more *chesed*. The *chesed* the Yidden did with one another swayed the Mitzrim's hearts to do kindness with the Jewish nation.

Chazal (*Menachos* 110:) say, "Whoever studies about *korbanos*, it is like he brought *korbanos*,"

Similarly, the Sfas Emes (*Bo* תרמ"ה) says, studying the *makos* is considered as if we received the *makos*. If, *chalilah*, it was destined that we must suffer punishment, learning about the *makos* can be sufficient.

We add that these *parshiyos* teach us *emunah*, and when a person lives with *emunah*, his life is

always good. He doesn't have any *makos* at all because he knows it is all for the good.

May Hashem bestow kindness on Bnei Yisrael, with the *geulah sheleimah*, speedily in our days, amen.