

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Pinchas



בס"ד

Torah WELLSPRINGS

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Torah Wellsprings

Pinchas

Tefillah - The Peak of the Day

The Torah commands us (28:2) תשמרו להקריב לי במועדו, "Be scrupulous to offer [the *korbanos*] to Me in its appointed time."

The Sfas Emes (5647) says that תשמרו can also be translated as waiting (see *Bereishis* 37:11). So, תשמרו להקריב לי במועדו means we should wait the entire day for the time when we can bring the *korbanos*. We should consider the *korbanos* as the highlight and most important part of the day.

Today, tefillah takes the place of *korbanos* (see *Brachos* 26:). Thus, the Sfas Emes writes, "The entire day should be of secondary importance; a person's focus should be tefillah." תשמרו, wait for those times of tefillah. Tefillah should be the highlight of your

day, with the rest of the day utilized to prepare for this important time.

Reb Aryeh Leib Epstein *zt'l* wrote the following letter to Reb Yonoson Eibshitz (printed in *Pardes*, year 5519), "I heard that on Rosh Hashanah your *Shemonah Esrei* takes two hours, almost until *kriyas haTorah*, but on a regular weekday, people told me, you don't daven long. Therefore, I request that you tell me your ways, so I will know how to act myself."

Reb Yonoson replied in a letter, "It is true [that during a regular weekday] due to my obligation to study Torah and my many other obligations throughout the day, I need *rachmei Shamayim* and a lot of effort to daven properly... Nevertheless, my davening isn't that quick. Generally,

when the congregation says Kaddish after *Aleinu* I'm still in the middle of *Shemonah Esrei*. Although there are young people who laugh at me, I'm not ashamed. From all my toil and everything I do, my highlight is the hour I stand before the One Who hears all prayers."

Reb Yonoson Eibshitz was a genius in all areas of the Torah. We have many *sefarim* from him (כרתי ופלתתי, אורים ותומים, יערת דבש, and others). Nevertheless, he testifies that the highest point of his day is that hour that he stands before Hashem in tefillah.

The Kuzari writes (3:5), "The time of tefillah should be the heart and the fruit of your day. The rest of the day should be paths leading up to this time. Yearn for these special moments

when you become spiritual and distant from *gashmiyos*. Food nourishes you from one meal to the next one. Similarly, tefillah should nourish your soul from one tefillah until the next."¹

נחלה בלי מצרים is *gematriya* 515 the same as תפילה. This hints that when one davens well during the three weeks of בין המצרים this turns everything around so that there are no more מצרים, boundaries and limits, and everything becomes good for Bnei Yisrael.

The standard definition of the word לחם means bread or war, but לחם has another translation. It also means to connect. (Perhaps some readers will recognize the word הלחמה, which means to solder and connect.)

It states (*Yeshayah* 55:7), יעזוב רשע דרכו ואיש און מחשבותיו "The rasha

1. The Brisker Rav *zt'l* said to his son, Reb Refael *zt'l*, "I hope that in the merit that I toil all day long in Torah that I will be able to daven well."

should abandon his path. The sinful person should abandon his thoughts. He should return to Hashem, and Hashem will have compassion on him." Hashem promises to have mercy on those who repent.

The Midrash (*Vayeira Rabba* 3:3, see commentary מתנות כהונה) says that we should read וירחמנו as וילחמנו, and the *pasuk* is saying that when one does *teshuvah* he becomes attached to Hashem.

We quote the Midrash: "It is like someone fits two wooden planks and connects them to one another."

So, לחם means to connect. In fact, bread is called לחם because it connects the body to the soul, so they don't detach from each other. Likewise, the *korbanos* are called קרבני לחמי, because they connect Klal Yisrael to their Father in heaven.

Today, tefillos take the place of the *korbanos*. The concept of tefillah is לחמי, to connect the Yid to Hashem, for it trains us to turn our eyes and hearts to Hashem for all our needs.

The Power of Tefillah

We find an interesting *pasuk* in the parashah of Akeidas Yitzchak (*Bereishis* 22:7). "Then Yitzchak spoke to Avraham his father and said 'Father - 'And he (Avraham) said,' Here I am, my son. And he (Yitzchak) said 'Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering.'"

What is the significance of the introductory portion of this *pasuk*? Why doesn't the *pasuk* simply write that Yitzchak asked Avraham, here is the fire...?

The Divrei Yisrael *zt'l* answers, "When Yitzchak called out to his father אבי, and Avraham replied בני, this made an impression in heaven, for all generations, that when a Yid cries out to

his father in heaven and says אבי, 'Father!' from the depths of his heart, it will arouse Hashem's immense compassion and Hashem will reply, הניני בני, 'I am here, my son, to answer all your requests.'"

The Klausenberger Rebbe *zt'l* heard the following story from his father, Reb Tzvi of Rudnik *zt'l*:

There are two cemeteries in Krakow. In the older cemetery are buried many ancient scholars, such as the Bach, the Megaleh Amukos, and the Rema. A local Krakow woman wanted to be buried in the older cemetery, but that was almost impossible. For hundreds of years, no one was buried in the old cemetery. Even the rabbanim of Krakow were buried in the new cemetery. But this woman didn't give up. Three times a day, by *shacharis*, *minchah*, and *maariv*, she came to the beis knesses and davened that Hashem have compassion

on her, and she be buried in the old cemetery. She was so obsessed with this desire that all children in Krakow knew to greet her, "Good morning, aunt. May you be buried in the old cemetery." This is what she trained them to say.

At the weddings of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, she would ask the *chasan* and *kallah* to bless her that she be buried in the old cemetery.

It was really insane because why was this so important to her? Furthermore, it was almost impossible to be buried in the old cemetery. But she was stubborn with her wish.

On the day she left the world, there was a heavy snowstorm and snow piled high on the ground. The *chevora kadisha* couldn't carry her to the new cemetery, so she was buried in the old cemetery.

Reb Tzvi of Rudnik commented about this story, "This taught me that even when one davens for something insane, Hashem will listen to his tefillos and answer them. So great is the power of tefillah!"

Rebbe Avraham Dov of Avritch, the Bas Ayin zt'l, arrived in Eretz Yisrael around Elul time. His boat docked in the north of Eretz Yisrael, and he planned to stay in Tzefas until after the *yomim tovim* and then move on to Yerushalayim. However, on Chol HaMoed Succos, he changed his mind and decided to remain in Tzfas.

This change of plans occurred when he heard a woman tell her son, "On Simchas Torah we will *bench geshem*, and I'm certain that Hashem will listen to the *tefillos*. Bring the mattresses down from the roof so they won't get ruined in the rain."

The Bas Ayin said that he chose to remain in

Tzefas to be among people who believed so firmly in the power of *tefillah*.

In Your Own Words

On the topic of prayer, it is essential to mention the importance of praying *in your own words*. You can do this in the middle of *Shemonah Esrei* at the *brachah Shomei'a Tefillah*. If this will cause you to miss *kedushah*, the *Mishnah Berurah* recommends that you say your own tefillos at the end of *Shemonah Esrei*.

You can actually say these tefillos, in your own words, at any time of the day.

The Gemara (*Brachos* 21.) says, ולוֹאֵי שִׁתְּפִלֵּל אָדָם כָּל הַיּוֹם כּוֹלוֹ, "*Halevay* a person would daven all day long!" How does one do that?

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zy'a* says that if one davens for success before everything he does, he will be davening all day

long. When he goes to work, he davens for success; before performing *chesed*, he davens that his deed should have the proper impact on the recipient, and so on. When you pray for all the trivial and significant things you do, you will be davening all day long.

It is written, תפילה לעני כי "The tefillah of a poor person who wraps himself and pours his speech out before Hashem." The Divrei Chaim *zt'l* explains that one should יעטוף wrap his tefillos within the conversations he speaks during the day. Even as he converses with someone, he can intend it as a tefillah to Hashem.

Generally, one needs to be on a very high level to create such a tefillah. It isn't a simple matter to have a conversation with someone and conceal a prayer within the words. Therefore, let's translate תפילה לעני כי יעטוף in a slightly

different manner, which will be easier to follow. The *pasuk* is saying that one should wrap his tefillos around everything he does. As Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa taught us, whatever you're doing, daven to Hashem. Pray for success in your work, pray for *shalom bayis*, and pray for *nachas*. Success is in Hashem's hands, so daven to Him at all opportunities.

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* (*Likutei Amorim* 10) teaches, "In addition to *Shemonah Esrei*, which one says three times a day, one should daven from the depths of his heart when he is alone in his house. The daily *Shemonah Esreis* is [often] said by rote, and people don't think about what they are saying. But when a person is alone, and thinks about his life and struggles, he will pour his heart out like water before Hashem and daven with *kavanah*. It will be a tefillah from the depths of his broken, humble heart, and

such *tefillos* never go unanswered.¹²

The Holidays

This week's *parashah* discusses Shabbos, *rosh chodesh*, and the *yomim tovim*.

We discussed above how *tefillah* should be the highest point of the day. Similarly, we add that Shabbos and the *yomim tovim* should be the high points of the year. We should look forward to these days and strive to

2. In a beis medresh in Chaifa, a Yid was contemplating what to do. He had a debt due that day but didn't have any cash. He could take money out of an ATM machine, but it was in the middle of the summer and there were challenges with *shemiras einayim*, so he preferred to avoid being outdoors, whenever possible.

He decided to daven for *siyata dishmaya*. Hashem has ways of sending him the money without needing to go outdoors.

So, after *Minchah*, he said a *tefillah* in his own words, asking Hashem to send him the money in the beis medresh. He expressed in his *tefillah* that his intentions are *leshem shamayim*, to safeguard his *kedushah*.

After saying this *tefillah*, he went into a side room, put his hat on the table and laid down his head for five minutes. When he woke up, exactly the amount of money he needed to pay the debt was lying there, in his hat. The person to whom he owed the money was also in the beis medresh at this time, so he was able to pay back the debt immediately.

Wanting to know how the money got there, he checked the shul's camera system, and saw a stranger — someone he never saw before — enter the beis medresh and place the money inside his hat and leave. Apparently, he wanted to give *matan b'seser*, *tzedakah* in a concealed manner.

His *tefillos* were answered!

spend these days with holiness.

Perhaps you will say that it is hard for you to keep the entire Shabbos holy and exclusively designated for Hashem. So, we advise you to make one hour of the day holy. Do what you can.

Rebbe Shlomke Zvhiller *zt'l* says, "An hour on Shabbos is like five hundred weekday hours."

The Ben Ish Chai says an hour on Shabbos is like a thousand weekday hours.

The Ahavas Shalom *zt'l* says that an hour of *avodas Hashem* on Rosh Chodesh makes the entire month holy like Rosh Chodesh. As the saying goes, "the body follows the head."

The body of the month is influenced by the head (Rosh Chodesh).

So if you can't remain focused to make the entire *rosh chodesh*, Shabbos, and *yom tov* holy, do what you can. Even just one hour is significant.

For many people, it is easier to serve Hashem during the weekdays than on Shabbos. Many *kollelim* and *yeshivos* are closed on Shabbos and *yom tov*. Furthermore, some working people have fixed times for studying Torah during the week, but somehow, on Shabbos, they don't have time.

Shabbos and *yom tov*, the most important days of the year, can be squandered and lost.³

3. The Dubno Magid *zt'l* told the following story:

A large border city passed hands several times between its two neighboring countries, both countries claiming the city as theirs.

After many years of war and bloodshed, both governments decided that enough is enough. The matter has to be settled once and for all. They decided to conduct one final battle and the

winner will own the city, forever.

They also decided that this time, large armies won't fight the war, as in the past. This time, only one warrior from each country will come to the battlefield. The mighty warriors will wrestle in a field near a cliff and the one who throws his opponent down the cliff wins.

The day of the great battle arrived. The kings of both countries and many spectators came to witness this decisive battle.

At the start, one of the warriors was far more successful than the other. It seemed that he would win. The countrymen of the winning wrestler cheered him on as the warrior dragged his opponent towards the cliff.

Suddenly, when they were steps away from the cliff, the warrior of the other country jumped up from the dust, overpowered his opponent, and threw him over the cliff.

At the victory celebration, the king said to the mighty wrestler, "We were so worried. We were certain you would lose. How did you end up winning?"

"I purposely allowed my opponent to drag me all the way to the cliff because I wanted to tire him. When we were near the cliff, he was exhausted, and I was strong, and it was easy for me to win the battle."

This story is a reminder that we must be strong and fight the battles that are most important. We can't allow ourselves to be exhausted on Shabbos and *yom tov*. Those are the moments of the critical and decisive battles.

Reb Eliyahu Dessler *zt'l* (*Michtav MiEliyahu, Elul - Tishrei*) told the following analogy:

Two people had the same illness; one was wealthy and other was poor; they both went to see the same doctor.

The doctor advised the wealthy man to take a vacation in a health-spa resort where there are hot mineral springs. "Every day, bathe in the mineral water until you are cured."

The doctor advised the poor person to buy mineral water, heat it

Chazal say, "Whoever is greater has a greater *yetzer hara*." Reb Yechezkel Levinstein zt'l taught that this also applies to days. On the more important days of the year – such as Shabbos and *yom tov* – there is a greater *yetzer hara*, which is one reason people find it hard to serve Hashem on those days. But if we make an effort, we can accomplish so much these days.

Shabbos

Hashem told Moshe, "I have a good gift in My

treasury, Shabbos is its name; I want to give it to the Jewish people. Go and inform them" (*Shabbos* 10).

The Chidushei HaRim says that this wasn't a one-time event. Every week, before Shabbos arrives, Moshe speaks to every Yid's *neshamah* and says, "Hashem told me to tell you that He is giving you the great gift of Shabbos."

Many Yidden feel uplifted Friday, Kabalas Shabbos time, when Shabbos comes in. The Chidushei HaRim writes,

up, and dab the healing waters on his body.

The doctor knew that the poor man couldn't afford the cost of the health-spa, so this was second best option.

The *nimshal* is as follows:

Shabbos and the *yomim tovim* are like purifying waters. Those who are wealthy in a spiritual sense immerse themselves completely in the holiness of these days. They won't just dab themselves with the holy waters; they are totally immersed in them. (They do so by spending these days on Torah, tefillah, joy, and good deeds.) However, those who are poor in a spiritual sense, they dab themselves with the pure waters of Shabbos and *yom tov* when they perform mitzvos here and there – but they aren't immersed in the holy spirit of the day.

"Even if a person is alone in a room, he will experience the holiness of Shabbos when it arrives," because that is when they receive Moshe Rabbeinu's encouraging message. He tells them about the beautiful gift Hashem is giving them.

Shabbos has two components: the halachos of Shabbos and the joy of Shabbos. Both aspects of Shabbos must be kept. One without the other is incomplete.

Some people only keep its laws. They would never consider moving something *muktzah*, cooking, carrying,

etc., and they should be commended for this. However, if they don't experience the joy of Shabbos, they are missing something fundamental. Although there is no explicit obligation to be happy on Shabbos as there is on *yom tov*, nonetheless, that is the spirit of the day, as it states (Bamidbar 10:10), "וביום שמחתכם, On the day of your joy" and Chazal say that this refers to Shabbos. Those who tap into the joy of Shabbos experience Gan Eden every week!⁴

The Shabbos *zemiros* states, כל מקדש שבת כראוי לו, כל שומר שבת כדת מחללו שכרו הרבה ⁵. Rebbe Henoah of

4. The Chazon Ish said, "If a non-Jew would know the enjoyment of learning a *daf* Gemara before *Shacharis* on Shabbos morning, he would convert just to experience it."

5. The Midrash (*Beshalach* 25) says that when a person keeps Shabbos, "even if Hashem makes a *gezeira*, he is able to annul it." In the merit of keeping Shabbos, one's *tefillos* are answered, and he can annul harsh decrees.

This is alluded to in the words, על פי פעלו (from the *zemiros Shabbos* quoted above). The Beis Aharon *zy'a* explains (in the name of Rebbe Mordechai of Kremnitz *zy'a*) על פי, whatever this person will pray for, פעלו,

Alexander zy'a said that this song refers to the two aspects of Shabbos. Some keep Shabbos, כראוי לו, as is fitting and proper, with joy and pleasure. Others only keep it, כדת מחללו, "according to the law - not to desecrate it."

The following words are, שכרו הרבה מאוד, "his reward is very great." The reward for keeping Shabbos is very great. Reb Henoah notes that the discussion of the great reward follows the words, כדת מחללו, which refers to the people who keep the Shabbos according to its laws, but they don't necessarily experience the joy of Shabbos. Why doesn't the song also mention the reward for those who keep Shabbos כראוי לו correctly, with joy and celebration? Why don't we emphasize that they too will receive a great reward?

Rebbe Henoah explains that the purpose of this song is to encourage people to keep Shabbos. Those who experience the joy of Shabbos don't need encouragement. They don't need to be told that they will be rewarded in Olam HaBa. They are motivated to keep Shabbos because they know just how beautiful, pleasurable, and joyous Shabbos can be. Only the people who don't yet experience the joy of Shabbos must be told they will receive a great reward.

Reb Moshe Leib Sassover zy'a told the following *mashal*:

Someone wanted to invite a king to his home. In honor of this esteemed guest, he ordered the best foods, professional musicians, comedians, etc. Everything was perfect, but he forgot to invite the

Hakadosh Baruch Hu will give him, in the merit of his Shabbos observance.

guest of honor. He forgot to invite the king.

Rebbe Moshe Leib said that this can occur on Shabbos. Before Shabbos arrives, everyone is busy preparing for the holy day. Everyone wants Shabbos to be unique. They cook and clean, wear their best clothes, and prepare *divrei Torah* to tell the family, but when Shabbos arrives, they forget to be happy. It is like forgetting to invite the guest of honor, Shabbos itself. Reb Moshe Leib explains that this is hinted at in the *pasuk*, וקראת לשבת [עונג]. Invite the Shabbos as well. Don't forget the guest of honor.

Reb Chaim Brim *zt'l* heard a Yerushalmi Yid say, "Ribono Shel Olam, You gave me *challos* for *lechem mishnah*, wine for Kiddush, and food for the meals. Now, I request that You give me Shabbos for Shabbos." He was saying, "Everything is ready. You gave me everything for Shabbos. Now enable me

to experience the joy and the holiness of Shabbos.

There is a kabbalistic concept that when one performs a mitzvah, he can merit that a tzaddik who is presently in heaven and had excelled in performing this mitzvah during his lifetime will become attached to the Yid who is performing that mitzvah in this world. This happens to help him perform that mitzvah in the best way.

For example, Reb Shmuel Azida (author of *Midrash Shmuel* on *Pirkei Avos*) once came to the Arizal, and the Arizal stood up for him. Reb Chaim Vital *zt'l* asked the Arizal why he stood up for his student. The Arizal replied, "I didn't stand up for him. I stood up for the Tana Reb Pinchas ben Yair, who entered with him. Reb Shmuel did a mitzvah today and merited a connection with Reb Pinchas ben Yair."

Intrigued, Reb Chaim Vital asked Reb Shmuel

what mitzvah he performed that day that he had merited this honor. The Midrash Shmuel replied that early that morning, as he was walking to shul for *Shacharis* he heard cries coming from a house. He investigated and found a distraught family who was robbed that night. The thieves stole their money and clothing. "So, I gave the head of the household my clothes so that he could have something to wear. This is the reason you see me dressed in my Shabbos clothing. I gave away my weekday clothes to that poor family."

Reb Chaim Vital returned to the Arizal and told him what he had heard. The Arizal confirmed that this is why Reb Pinchas ben Yair came to him. The Arizal explained, "Reb Pinchas ben Yair excelled in helping the poor. Therefore, when Reb Shmuel helped this poor family, Reb Pinchas ben Yair came down from

heaven to help him perform the mitzvah in the best way."

The kabbalah sefarim explain that this connection of the souls (such as in the story above) is for the benefit of the person performing the mitzvah and the neshamah in heaven. The person performing the mitzvah benefits from this connection because it helps him complete it in the best possible way. The neshamah in heaven also gains because it receives an opportunity to perform another mitzvah in this world.

The place for performing mitzvos is this world; therefore, tzaddikim in heaven yearn to help a Yid perform a mitzvah.

Based on these ideas, the Chidushei HaRim teaches the following:

Hashem keeps Shabbos as it states, *וביום השביעי שבת, וינפש,* "On the seventh day, Hashem rested." As we

discussed, when one observes a mitzvah, he can receive a connection from a soul in heaven who excelled in this mitzvah. Hashem keeps Shabbos. So, when a Yid keeps Shabbos, he can merit that Hashem Himself will help him keep Shabbos!

Remembering Hashem

It states in this week's parashah (*Bamidbar* 26:2) שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל. One translation of שאו is to raise. Thus, the pasuk is saying: Hashem said to Moshe and Elazar HaKohen "Lift the heads and the consciousness of the Jewish nation - let them remember Hashem at all times."

The Chofetz Chaim zy"asaid that when Reb Mordechai Binet zy"a, the rav of Nikelsberg, would teach Torah to his students (and sometimes also when he studied alone), he would move his hand around in the air or on his table as if he was writing something. The students observed his

motions until they figured out that he was formulating the words אשרי איש שלא ישכחך, ובן אדם יתאמן בך, "Fortunate is the person who doesn't forget You, and fortunate is the man who fortifies himself in You" (from the *Shemonah Esrei* of Rosh HaShanah). In this way, Reb Mordechai Binet was careful to remember Hashem Yisbarach, even as his mind was deep in his studies.

Also, while working, we should remember Hashem. Our eyes should continuously turn to Him, recognizing that we can't do anything alone.

The Megaleh Amukos zt'l was rav in Krakow. One day he announced he would be leaving the city, and that they should find another rav to take his place. The community begged him to stay, but he wouldn't be persuaded.

"At least tell us the reason you want to leave,"

they pleaded, but the Melageh Amukos refused.

When the day he planned to leave arrived, he announced that he had changed his mind, and we would remain in Krakow. The people of Krakow were overjoyed, and now they were even more curious. They asked, "Why did you want to leave, and what made you change your mind?"

The Megaleh Amukos replied, "I still won't tell you why I planned to leave, but I will tell you why I decided to stay.

"In our city, there's a poor peddler who stands on the sidewalk, selling bread that his wife baked. A couple of months ago, a wealthy person recognized the poor man and said, 'You're a *talmid chacham*, and you come from a very prestigious family. You shouldn't be working like this.'

"What should I do? This is what I do for a living.'

"I will support you," the wealthy man said. "You can study in *beis medresh*. I will give you as much money as you would earn from selling bread and bagels."

The peddler agreed.

This arrangement went on for a couple of months.

And then, one day, the wealthy man saw the poor man on the sidewalk selling bread.

"What happened? We have an agreement!"

"I decided to back out of the deal."

"But a deal is a deal. You can't back out just like that. You can only back out if a *beis din* agrees."

The Megaleh Amukos continued, "Yesterday they came to my *beis din* with this most unusual *din Torah*: The wealthy person wants to continue supporting his

friend, but the poor peddler doesn't want to accept the money anymore. I asked the peddler why he wanted to renege on the agreement. He explained, 'When I had my bread business, my wife and I always turned to Hashem in prayer. We davened that the dough should rise and that the breads should be tasty. We prayed that I find dry firewood (since wet wood smokes and ruins the bread). We davened that the customers should appreciate the bread and buy more the next day. In

short, as a peddler, our entire day revolved around *tefillah*. But ever since we started receiving a weekly stipend, we almost stopped davening because we didn't have any worries. So we decided to go back to our old lifestyle and retain our constant connection with Hashem.'

The Megaleh Amukos concluded, "When I heard that there are people like that living in Krakow, I decided to remain here. I want to be near such people."⁶

6. A princess became ill, and the doctors determined that she was suffering from depression. To cure her, the king hired musicians to play music near her bed, and he hired clowns to make jokes, but she wasn't interested, and remained sad.

A wise man advised the king, "The princess will become happy when she wears the clothes of a very happy person. Find someone who is always happy, someone who has no worries, and borrow his clothing. She will wear them, become happy, and will be cured."

The king sent his servants to find a happy. The servants started their search in the wealthy part of town because "who is happier than the wealthy? What worries could they possibly have?"

They started at the home of the wealthiest person in the kingdom,

but he told them, "I'm sorry, and I know that this might surprise you, but I'm not always happy. In fact, I'm always worried that I shouldn't lose my wealth due to theft, fire, etc."

They went to the other wealthy people, and they all replied in a similar manner. They weren't always happy.

They went to musicians, thinking that their music should make them happy; they went to doctors, because healing people is a joyous occupation, but whoever they spoke to had some worry. No one was worry-free.

They headed back to the palace to tell the king that they couldn't find a happy person. En route to the king's palace, they passed the poor section of town. They were disgusted by the filth of the slum and said to each other, "We certainly won't find a happy person here."

Then they noticed a tiny house, made from scraps of wood and cardboard, shabbier than all the rest, and was on the verge of collapse. Surprisingly, happy music was coming from the hut. They could also hear joyous conversations coming from within. Is it possible that happy people live there?

They knocked, and the host joyously invited them in. They found a family seated around the table, their faces shining with contentment. The servants asked, "Are you always so happy?"

"Yes. We are happy with our lot. If we need something, we trust that Hashem will help us, and we pray to Him. We never worry."

"The king's daughter is sick and if she wears the clothes of a happy person she will be cured. Please, lend us one of your garments."

The head of the family replied, "It would be my honor to lend clothing to the king's daughter, but I don't have any clothes other than what's on my back."

This story reminds us of *מרבח נכסים מרבה דאגה*, "The more assets, the more worries." Wealth and a nice home aren't guarantees for happiness. *Tefillah* and *bitachon* will make you happy. *שאו את ראש כל עדה בני ישראל*, remember Hashem and you will always be happy.

This story teaches us the importance of always thinking about Hashem and turning to Him. With everything you do, שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל, keep your heads aloft and remember that everything is from Him.

Bitachon

It states (*Yirmiyahu 17:6*) ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח ב' והיה ד' מבטחו, "Blessed is the person who trusts in Hashem and Hashem is the root of his trust."

The pasuk seems to be repetitious.

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* explains that many people trust in Hashem but wrongly think that Hashem can help them only through a certain channel. A tailor trusts that Hashem will send him customers who need new suits, a builder trusts that Hashem will send him people who need a home, and so on. They can't imagine that Hashem

will help them in any way other than what they are familiar with.

But Hashem's options and resources are unlimited. He can help us in many ways.

This pasuk, says the Baal Shem Tov, refers to the perfect level of bitachon. ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח ב' והיה ד' מבטחו, and he understands that Hashem can help him in many ways. He doesn't place his trust on a particular job or business deal, only on Hashem alone.

It states (*Tehillim 118*), טוב לחסות ב' מבטוח באדם טוב לחסות ב' מבטוח בנדיבים. The basic translation is, "It is better to trust in Hashem than to trust in man. It is better to trust in Hashem than to trust in the wealthy."

But upon closer attention to the words, the translation seems to be like this: "It is better to trust in Hashem *from* trusting in

man."⁷ This means that there were times in the past when we trusted in man, and we discovered how futile and unproductive that was. We thought this person or that person would help, and in the end, they turned us down. From those times, we learn that it is far better to trust in Hashem.

Thus, the *passuk* is saying, טוב לחסות בד' one person can know that it is wise to trust in Hashem, מבטוח באדם, from the times he relied on man.

Don't Lose Hope

A *poritz* once informed one of his Jewish subjects, "I want you to invite me for a meal."

The Yid cleaned his home and prepared an expensive meal for his guest, but when the *poritz*

arrived, he asked, "Where's the Swiss cheese? Why didn't you prepare Swiss cheese for me?"

The *poritz* ordered his servants to beat the Yid cruelly with their sticks because "he didn't honor me properly. He didn't even serve Swiss cheese."

The following day, the *poritz* met up with another Yid and again asked to be invited for supper. As this Yid was preparing a special meal for the *poritz*, yesterday's host came and said, "Make sure you prepare Swiss cheese. The *poritz* is crazy over Swiss cheese."

It wasn't easy to find Swiss cheese in their small village, but having heard what happened to the other Yid, he worked hard and got the cheese for the *poritz*.

7. If the *pasuk's* sole meaning is the standard translation, it would have written מלבטוח.

But the *poritz* still wasn't satisfied. "Where is the English halvah?" he asked. "Why didn't you prepare English halvah for me?"

The *poritz* ordered his servants to beat him because "he didn't honor me properly. He didn't serve me English Halvah!"

The next day, the *poritz* invited himself to a third person's home. This Yid received warnings from the first two hosts that he must prepare Swiss cheese and English Halvah or he will be beaten.

But the *poritz* wanted French wine, which he didn't have, and he was also beaten.

The next day, the *poritz* invited himself to a fourth home. The first three hosts warned him to prepare Swiss cheese, English halva, and French wine, but this Yid didn't prepare anything at all. When the *poritz* walked in, there was

nothing on the table besides a loaf of dry bread. The shocked *poritz*, asked, "Is that how you honor me?"

The Yid replied, "You don't want to eat. You want an excuse to hit a Yid. So, why should I work for nothing?"

The story is a *mashal* that describes the *yetzer hara*. The *yetzer hara* comes to a person and tells him about his shortcomings and faults, and each time, the *yetzer hara* comes with another claim. Sometimes the *yetzer hara* belittles a person for not davening with *kavanah*, and sometimes the *yetzer hara* disgraces a person for not studying enough Torah. It is obvious that he doesn't mean what he is saying. He is just seeking excuses to knock down a Yid and make him feel like a failure because he knows that he can snare him into his trap when he is sad and feels down.

A wise Yid learns to disregard all of the yetzer hara's follies and serve Hashem with joy.

The Minchas Yitzchak, the Rav of Yerushalayim, *zt'l*, would speak *halachah* and *drush* at his *shalosh seudos* meal, but not *mussar*.

Someone requested that he also speak *mussar* at *shalosh seudos*. He humbly replied, "Who am I to give *mussar* to others?"

Nevertheless, the next week, at *shalash seudos*, he repeated a *mashal* from the Chovas HaLevavos (*Shaar HaTeshuvah* 10) which teaches us never to lose hope. Even a person who sinned his entire life can rectify everything with *teshuvah*.

The Chovas HaLevavos writes, "The early scholars compared someone who does *teshuvah* at the end of his life to someone who

has many silver coins and needs to cross a large river. Standing on the river's shore, he threw his coins into the river, hoping to stop the stream, so he could cross the river and get to the other side. He threw in all his coins except for one. But, of course, his coins couldn't stop the flow of the deep river. So he took his last coin and paid a sailor to bring him across the river by boat. He felt that he didn't lose anything since he designated these coins to get to the other side, and he got there in the end.

"The same is with a *baal teshuvah* who spent most of his life doing things not for Hashem's service. When he does *teshuvah* at the end of his life, Hashem forgives him for all the bad he did his entire life." Everything is rectified.⁸

8. The Chovas HaLevavos concludes, "Don't ask, my brother, why I am rousing you to *teshuvah*, when I myself, haven't done *teshuvah*

Shame

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Pinchas*) states, פנחס זה אליהו. This means Pinchas is Eliyahu HaNavi, and he lives on until today.

The explanation is as follows:

The Gemara (*Chagigah 4:*) repeats a conversation between Rav Bibi bar Abaya and the *malach hamaves*. Rav Bibi bar Abaya asked the angel of death, "When someone dies before his time, what do you do with all those extra years?"

The *malach hamaves* replied, "If I find a Torah student who is מעביר על מדותיו, *relinquishes his measures*, I give him those years." The simple meaning of these

words is that the years go to a Torah student who is forgiving and relinquishes his right to exact retribution for the wrongs done to him.

The Maharam Shik *zt'l* adds that מעביר על מדותיו can also mean going beyond one's nature to serve Hashem. In the days of Pinchas, twenty-four thousand people died before their time in a plague. Where did all those years go to? Their years went to Pinchas, who was *talmid chacham*, a *maavir al midosov*, as he went beyond his nature to do Hashem's will. Consequently, Pinchas received the lost years of the twenty-four thousand people. With all those years he lives forever.

for a very long time, because I'm not speaking only to you; I'm speaking to myself as well. Therefore accept the truth from whoever says it and don't run away from it. Thank Hashem that I am making you aware of matters that you weren't aware of. Don't use [my faults] as an alibi not to repent because this claim is from the *yetzer hara's* tricks. May Hashem place us among those who are swift to do *teshuvah*, with a complete heart, amen."

How did Pinchas go beyond his nature? The Ksav Sofer explains that he went against his nature to act zealously, even though he had a kind and compassionate nature. According to the Maharam Shik, he went beyond his nature because, naturally, people seek to protect themselves, and Pinchas endangered his life by killing Zimri.⁹

We can also explain that Pinchas was מעביר על מדותיו, because people shamed him, and yet he remained silent and didn't answer back. *Rashi* (25:1, quoted above) writes, "The *shevatim* disgraced Pinchas... 'Did you see what the offspring of פוטי [Yisro] did...? He went and killed a *nasi* of Yisrael!'" Pinchas accepted the shame silently. Thus, he was *maavir al midosov*, and all the years of the

people who died in the plague were given to him.

The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabba* 27:2) teaches that no one really deserves reward for performing mitzvos because Hashem's kindness precedes every mitzvah. As the Midrash states: "Who circumcised his son before I gave him a child? Who built a *maakah* (gate) before I gave him a roof? Who put up a mezuzah before I gave him a house? Who built a *succah* before I gave him a place? Who took a *lulav* before I gave him money? Who wore tzitzis before I gave him a garment?" So why should he be awarded for the mitzvos? Wasn't he already rewarded with the goodness he received? The exception, the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* says, is when one is humiliated and doesn't respond. This good deed

9. The Midrash tells us that Shimon's tribe surrounded him and wanted to kill him because he killed their *nasi*. He needed great miracles to save him.

isn't preceded by kindness. In fact, it was preceded by shame and humiliation. And for that, *בדין הוא שיטול שכרו*, he deserves reward. Therefore, about Pinchas the Midrash states, *בדין הוא שיטול שכרו*, he justly takes his reward.

Rebbe Boruch'l of Mezhibuz *zt'l* was once traveling. As he approached the outskirts of Zhitomir, the people of Zhitomir came out to greet him. A simple man was among the throngs of Yidden who came to greet Rebbe Boruch'l. This simple person came from a non-prestigious family, and there was also an old *lashon hara* on him, and because of it, people disrespected him, although he had become wealthy.

Rebbe Boruch'l sat in his wagon greeting the people of Zhitomir. When the simple man gave his hand in greeting, Rebbe Boruch'l invited him to join him in his wagon, and they rode together the rest of

the way to Zhitomir. The people of Zhitomir were shocked. Several respected people were present, among them very wealthy people and prominent Torah scholars. Why did the Rebbe choose to honor that person whom they degraded? But they didn't dare say anything.

As they traveled, Rebbe Boruch'l asked the simple person whether he could stay at his home. The simple person was delighted with this merit. The people of Zhitomir were upset that the Rebbe chose to stay with this simple person instead of staying at the home of one of the community leaders or scholars. Of course, they didn't say anything out of respect for Rebbe Boruch'l.

Despite their misgivings, Shabbos was uplifting and inspirational for the entire city. On Sunday, throngs of people arrived to receive a *brachah* from the Rebbe. The simple host also came for a *brachah*. The Rebbe

asked him, "Do you have children in *shidduchim*?"

The man replied, "Yes, I have a daughter of marriageable age, and that's why I came to the Rebbe to ask for a *brachah*."

The Rebbe replied, "I have a son," and the Rebbe asked whether he agreed to the *shidduch*. The simple man couldn't believe his ears. Overjoyed, he agreed, and the Rebbe shook his hand, "Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov!"

The news of the unusual *shidduch* spread quickly, and the people of Zhitomir were baffled. Why would Rebbe Boruch'l, a grandson of the Baal Shem Tov *zy'a*, take a simple *mechutan*? Their main concern was the man's reputation. Twenty years earlier, that man was accused of committing a severe sin, and he was harassed and humiliated in public, so that others shouldn't follow his example. So is it fitting

for the Rebbe to be his *mechutan*?

Until that point, the people of Zhitomir didn't think it was necessary to tell Rebbe Boruch'l about that man's history, but now, they felt they had to speak up for the Rebbe's honor and the honor of the Baal Shem Tov.

They told the Rebbe their concerns. "He committed grave sins twenty years ago, and who knows what's happening now..."

The Rebbe moaned, "When I first saw him at the outskirts of Zhitomir, I felt a strong desire to be his *mechutan*. That's why I asked to stay at his home. Then, when he came to me on Sunday, I again desired immensely to be *mechutanim* with him. It seemed to me that it was destined from heaven. And now that I hear your concerns, I will think it over again."

Rebbe Boruch'l went to visit the *almanah* of Or HaMeir, who lived in Zhitomir. She said, "Yesterday, I learned that you are a true tzaddik and *gadol hador*." She said, "My husband and I stood near this window twenty years ago when they pulled your *mechutan* through the streets of Zhitomir to embarrass him. They were shouting, ככה יעשה לאיש אשר יעשה נבלה בישראל, 'This shall be the punishment for those who do disgraceful things in Yisrael.' My husband, *zt'l* said, 'Look how everyone is running after a person, a tzaddik, who's clean from sin. I wish that I will be so clean from sins as he is when my time comes to stand before the heavenly court. In the merit of his humiliation, he will become a *mechutan* with one of the *tzaddikei hador*.' So when I heard that you did a *shidduch* with him, I knew that you are a *tzaddik hador*." The *almanah*'s words quickly spread through the Jewish community.

Everyone rejoiced. They immediately went to the simple man's home and wrote the *tena'im* with joy and happiness.

This story is an example of the immense benefits one earns from remaining silent when humiliated.

Sefer Chassidim (116) states, "Don't be surprised if you see a wealthy, successful *rasha*, and because of his wealth respected, and scholarly people are being *mishadech* with him. Know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave him wealth so that tzaddikim should agree to marry their children into his family. Why did that *rasha* merit wealth and that tzaddikim should be *meshadech* with him? Either it is in his parents' merits, or because he was once embarrassed and humiliated, and due to the shame, he was blessed with wealth and to have sons-in-law *talmidei chachamim*."

Bein HaMetzarim

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 31) says that one of the primary questions a person will be asked on his day of judgment before the heavenly court is whether he anticipated and awaited the coming of Moshiach.

We say אני מאמין... בביאת המשיח... ואע"פ שיתמהמה אם כל זה אחכה לו, "I believe in the coming of Moshiach, and although he may delay, nevertheless, I anticipate every day that he will come." It is our obligation to wait and aspire for the coming of Moshiach.

It states (*Yirmiyahu* 30:17) ציון היא דורש אין לה.

The Gemara (*Succah* 41.) expounds, "How do we know that we must do things וזכר למקדש, to remember the Beis HaMikdash? It is because it states ציון היא דרש

" אין לה מכלל דבעיא דרישה " This posuk teaches us that we must search and yearn for Tzion." ¹⁰

It is true that Moshiach will come when we stop thinking about him. As Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 97.) say, באין בהיסח הדעת: משיח מציאה ועקרב, "Three things come when we don't expect them: Moshiach, lost items, and scorpions." And Rebbe Elimelech said that the shoemaker will be in the middle of fixing shoes and the tailor will be busy sawing clothing, and suddenly they will hear that Moshiach has arrived. It will be sudden. Nevertheless, we must remember, yearn, and daven for the coming of Moshiach.

The Mesilas Yesharim (ch.19) writes, "It is certainly proper that the chassid

10. The Kav HaYasher (93) writes, "I have a true tradition: Whoever is constantly heartbroken and distressed because the *Shechinah* is in *galus*, will merit the Crown of Torah."

should be in constant distress over the *galus* and the *churban*, which caused *Hashem yisbarach's* honor to be diminished. He should yearn for *geulah* because that will increase Hashem's honor. As it states in *Tana d'bei Eliyahu*, "Be upset about the [lack of] honor in Yerushalayim and constantly daven for the redemption of Bnei Yisrael and the return of Hashem's honor." If one will say, 'Who am I to daven for the *geulah* and for Yerushalayim? Could it be that my tefilos will end the *galus* and bring the redemption?' The answer is, as the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 37.) says, 'Therefore man was created alone so that everyone will say the world was created for me.' Hashem has *nachas ruach* when His children daven. Even if his requests aren't answered because the time has not yet arrived or for some other reason, they did theirs, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is happy with that.

"We see from the above that this is our obligation to daven and that we shouldn't exempt ourselves due to our weakness and low spiritual levels. About such matters Chazal (*Avos* 2:16) say, לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ואי אתה בן חורין ליבטל הימנה.

"Because Hashem's honor isn't complete without the redemption of Bnei Yisrael, because they depend on one another."

Someone once asked the Apter Rav *zt'l* advice regarding his business, and the Apter Rav responded with wise counsel. Then the Apter Rav emitted a deep moan and said, "A great tragedy occurred today."

"What happened?"

"We didn't bring the *korban tamid* today." and the Apter Rav cried profusely.

Someone came to the Kotzker Rebbe *zt'l*, complaining that his son-in-law had become a

Kotzker chassid. He told the Rebbe that his daughter was very upset about this. He cried, "Whoever has a heart can understand me. How could that heart not burst from my daughter's pain and sorrow?"

The Rebbe replied, "Indeed, if one has a heart, how could it not burst from sorrow from the *churban* Beis HaMikdash."

During the Three Weeks, a certain tzaddik visited the Sfas Emes of Gur zt'l. "What brings you here?" the Sfas Emes asked, knowing that this tzaddik lived far away.

"My family's tradition is to travel during the Three Weeks," the tzaddik explained. "Hashem is,

kivayachol, in *galus*, so we, too, go to *galus*."

"The main thing is to remember that we aren't home," the Sfas Emes replied.

The Sfas Emes rarely traveled, but he always remembered that he wasn't *home*. We aren't where we should be.

Reb Yaakov Emdin zt'l (*Siddur Beis Yaakov*, Tisha b'Av 6:16) writes, "If our only sin were that we don't mourn for Yerushalayim, it would be sufficient reason to prolong our *galus*. In my opinion, this is the primary cause for all the terrible problems that befall us in *galus*. We are persecuted and don't have peace. It is all because the mourning has left our hearts."¹¹

11. A talmid chacham wrote a sefer on Shas and brought it to Reb Yechezkel Abramsky zt'l for a haskamah.

Reb Yechezkel Abramsky reviewed the sefer, and he spent an especially longer time on a particular sugyah. Reb Yechezkel asked the author, "When did you study this subject?"

The scholar thought Reb Yechezkel disagreed with the chidushim

If unfortunately, we forget to mourn throughout the year, the Three Weeks is an excellent time to begin. One of the ideal times for mourning is after midday. The Magan Avraham (551:45) writes, "The Arizal taught that one should mourn during these days [of Bein HaMetzarim] after midday and to cry for about a half-hour."

In the Chasam Sofer's yeshiva, in the afternoons during the Three Weeks, they would gather to recite *Tikun Chatzos* and mourn

over the *churban*. Generally, the tzaddik, Reb Fishel Sofer *zy'a*, was the *chazzan*. He would cry bitterly, and the congregation cried along with him.

Once, Reb Fishel wasn't in yeshiva, so a young *bachur* with a sweet voice was chosen to lead *Tikun Chatzos*. This *bachur* didn't cry like Reb Fishel. Instead, it appeared more like a yom tov *tefillah* than lamentations. When he finished, the Chasam Sofer commented, "We should check if this *bachur* belongs

in that section, so he explained that he wrote this section when his son was in the hospital. "Due to my responsibilities and confusion of the time, the chidushim in this section aren't as good as the rest of the sefer."

Reb Yechezkel replied. "On the contrary, I think that these chidushim are on a higher level than the rest of the sefer. You studied this section with *mesirus nefesh*, so you had extra *siyata dishmaya* to reach true chidushim. This is as Chazal (Koheles Rabba 2:9) says, *תורה שלמדתי באף עמדה לי*, "The Torah that I studied with hardships were my success."

Reb Yeruchem *zt'l*, the mashgiach of Mir yeshiva said that people think that they must study Torah even when going through hard times. It is the opposite. (*Iyov* 5:7) *אדם לעמל יולד*, man was created for toil. You were created specifically for these times when it is hard.

to Shabsai Tzvi's *sr'y* group. Because how can one discuss the *churban* Beis HaMikdash with such ease and comfort?"¹²

Mourning vs. Joy

Shulchan Aruch (561:5) teaches, "One may not fill his mouth with laughter in this world." The *Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah* adds that this is especially true during the Three Weeks.

However, we aren't sad on these days, either. A *Yid* must always serve Hashem with joy.

How do we combine mourning with joy?

Rebbe Shmelke of Nikelsburg *zy'a* answers this question with the following *mashal*:

There was once a king who sadly had to run away from his homeland. He had

enemies there who were trying to harm him. He traveled to a distant land and stayed in the home of a friend. The friend was happy and was crying all at once. The king asked him, "Are you happy that I'm here, or are you sad?"

The friend replied, "I am delighted that the king is here, in my home. I feel so privileged. But then I think about why the king is here and how hard it must be for the king, and I become sad."

Rebbe Shmelke of Nickelsburg explained that during the Three Weeks we are happy and sad. We cry because the *Shechinah* is in *galus*, but we are also happy because the *Shechinah* is with us.

We are closer to Hashem during the Three Weeks than the rest of the year because the King is in exile and is looking for a place

12. הפ"ה means "Hashem's will."

to stay. At such times, whoever wants can host the king. All he needs to do is clean up his home, which means he should do *teshuvah*, but it is easier to be close to the king these days than the rest of the year.

Therefore, it states, כל רודף השיגה בין המצרים (רודף Hashem בין המצרים), who runs to find Hashem (רודף Hashem), can find Him (י-ה), השיגה, during the Three Weeks of *Bein Hametzarim*."

There is another reason we are both happy and sad during the Three Weeks: We are sad, and we mourn, and the rule is: When one mourns for Yerushalayim he immediately feels in his heart the joy of Yerushalayim as if it were rebuilt.

In *Shulchan Aruch* (554:25) it states, כל המתאבל על ירושלים, זוכה ורואה בשמחתה "Whoever mourns for Yerushalayim merits and sees its joy." זוכה "merits and sees" is in the present tense.¹³ The *Kedushas Levi* and other *sefarim* explain that when one mourns for the Beis HaMikdash he immediately experiences the joy of the redemption.

The *Kedushas Levi* (*Eichah*) writes, "When one thinks about holiness and mourns for Yerushalayim, he immediately perceives a little bit of the joy of Yerushalayim, of how it will be in the future."

Therefore, mourning isn't a contradiction to joy. On the contrary, through

13. Here is one of his famous quotes (*Devarim* 26:1): שאם היו בני אדם מרגישים במתקנות ועריבות טוב התורה היו משתגעים ומתלהטים אחריה ולא יחשב בעיניהם מלא עולם כסף וזהב למאומה כי התורה כוללת כל הטובות שבעולם "If People would experience the sweetness and the good of the Torah, they would pursue it madly and passionately. The entire world filled with gold and silver would be like nothing to them, because the Torah has in it all the good of the world."

mourning, we experience the joy of the future.

At a *chasunah*, we do several things to remember the *churban*. For example, we break a glass under the *chuppah*, we say the *brachah* שוש תשיי, which is a prayer for the *geulah*, and ash is placed on the *chasan's* head. The Sfas Emes (*Ki Savo* 5653) explains that these customs and halachos aren't a contradiction to the atmosphere of joy that prevails at a *chasunah*. On the contrary, the mourning enhances the joy. He explains, "At a *chasunah*, we say the *brachah* שוש תשיי because when the Beis HaMikdash stood, the *simchah* was complete. Today, we merit the completion of the *simchah* through mourning over the Beis HaMikdash. As it says, שישו... מוש כל המתאבלים, "Rejoice... all those who

mourn." Because of his mourning, he will feel the joy of Yerushalayim."

Shabbos in the Valley

In *Lecha Dodi* we say, רב לך שבת בעמק הבכא, and the *meforshim* explain, "The Shabbosim of the low times are very great." The Shabbos before Tisha b'Av is the greatest Shabbos of the year (see *Ohev Yisrael*); the Shabbosim of the Three Weeks, generally, are very high Shabbosim; and the Tiferes Shlomo adds that all Shabbosim in *galus* are greater than Shabbos when the Beis HaMikdash stood.

We will elaborate:

Parashas Bechukosai discusses *galus* and states (Vayikra 26:34), אז תרצה הארץ את שבתותיה"¹⁴. The Tiferes Shlomo *zt'l* writes, "אז, when the Yidden are in *galus*, תרצה... את שבתותיה,

14. Anger is Gehinom, as *Chazal* (*Nedarim* 21) say, "Whoever becomes angry, all forms of Gehinom rule over him."

Hashem enjoys the Shabbosim. The Shabbosim of *galus* are greater than the Shabbosim of the past when the Beis HaMikdash stood. Because in this bitter exile, the weekdays are very dark. Our connection to spirituality is solely through *Shabbos Kodesh*. Therefore, Shabbos is very high, and the love [that Hashem has for us] on Shabbos is even greater than in the past."

The holy *sefarim* teach us that the highest point of Shabbos is *shalashudes* time because during the week, the afternoon is a time of *din* (harsh judgment), and Shabbos turns the *din* of the afternoon into *rachamim* (compassion) and whenever *din* turns into *rachamim* it is a very auspicious time.

The Yid HaKadosh *zy'a* adds that during the Three Weeks, the entire day is a time of *din*, and Shabbos turns it into *rachamim*. So, on Shabbos, the whole day becomes like the special time of *shalashudes*.

Torah

At a *siyum* during the Nine Days, it is permitted to eat meat and drink wine. Rebbe Ahron of Belz *zy'a* said that this teaches us that when a Yid studies Torah there is no *galus*.

The Chozeh of Lublin taught something similar. He explains that the *galus* came from not learning Torah, as it says (*Yirmiyahu* 9:11), על מה אבדה ארץ על עזובם את תורת, "Why was the land destroyed? Because they abandoned My Torah." So, when we study Torah, we amend the root of the *galus*, and it is like the redemption has arrived.

The Chozeh asks: At a *bris* during the Nine Days, only ten people may eat meat and drink wine. At a *siyum*, however, everyone present may eat meat and drink wine. What's the difference?

The Chozeh answers that the *churban* came because there wasn't enough Torah study, so

when one studies Torah and finishes a *mesechta*, he has fixed the root of the *churban*, so to an extent, a scent of the *geulah* is in the air. Therefore, all participants can partake in the meal.

The Mishnah (*Avos* 2:14) says, *הוי שקוד ללמוד תורה*, "be diligent in studying Torah." The *Avodas Yisrael* writes that *הוי* is *gematriya* 21, corresponding to the 21 days of the Three Weeks. *הוי* - during the 21 days of the Three Weeks; *שקוד ללמוד תורה* - devote yourself to Torah study."

The *Avodas Yisrael* explains, "It is the way of kings to have musicians. When the king is happy, he doesn't need a band to play music for him. But when the king is sad, he calls for his musicians to play and make him happy. Similarly, *keviyachol*, the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, and there is sadness. Someone who cares should come before the King, devoid from all *atzvus* and strive to make the King

happy." And one makes Hashem happy by studying Torah with joy.

During the Holocaust, people were amazed to see the *hasmadah* of Rebbe Pinchas of Ustila *zy'a* (son-in-law of Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zy'a*). "How was he able to put aside his pain and anguish and delve into Torah study?" people wondered.

Rebbe Pinchas replied, "People asked my father-in-law, Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz, this very same question during WW1. People couldn't understand how he had the peace of mind to study Torah during the war. He explained that it is even more important to study Torah during hard times to make Hashem happy. The Mishnah says, 'When a person has pain, the *Shechinah* says, 'My head hurts. My arms hurt.' Hashem suffers together with us. Therefore, we must try to make Hashem happy, and nothing brings Hashem joy like when a *Yid* learns Torah."