

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Vayechi



בס"ד

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Torah Wellsprings

Vayechi

Acquiring Bitachon

קויתי ה', 'For Your salvation, I trust, Hashem.'

The Midrash says, "Everything can be attained with bitachon. If you suffer yesurim, have bitachon. To merit Hashem's compassion, have bitachon. If you want forgiveness, have bitachon. For the redemption, have bitachon, as it states [in this week's parashah, 49:18] לישעוּתְךָ

What are the techniques for acquiring bitachon?

One way is to speak about bitachon. One can say לישעוּתְךָ קויתי ה' several times (as is done by kriyas Shema *she'al hamittah*). He should review the concept of bitachon until he acquires it.¹

1. Someone once bought a lottery ticket with a grand prize of one hundred thousand dollars. The man announced, "I am certain I will win the money because I have bitachon."

Reb Yisrael Salanter zt'l asked him, "Would you agree to sell me your ticket for thirty thousand dollars?"

The man was overjoyed with this offer. Reb Yisrael Salanter admonished him that his joy proves he didn't have bitachon. Had he trusted that Hashem would grant him the one hundred thousand dollars, he wouldn't sell the ticket for thirty thousand dollars.

This story reminds us that sometimes we say we have bitachon, but we are fooling ourselves. We aren't genuinely relying on Hashem. But if we focus on emunah and bitachon, it will become more real to us.

Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l saw a Yid who was very worried and asked what was bothering him. The man told the Rebbe his problems. The rebbe replied, "When a Yid has a tzarah, he must say (49:18) 'לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה' 'For Your salvation, I trust, Hashem.' If the tzarah is greater, he should say, 'קוּיָּתִי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ. And if the problem is even greater, he should say 'ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי.'"

Perhaps we say לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי in three forms (לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', קוּיָּתִי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ, ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי) to hint that the salvation might come from the right, and maybe from the left, and it can come from a third place, too, from a place you never imagined. This is as Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer zt'l says, "Someone who lives with emunah and bitachon will have yeshuos and be saved in ways he never imagined."²

2. I heard the following story from the person to whom it occurred. He isn't wealthy, but he generally gets by and manages to pay his bills. One summer, he went on vacation with his family, which cost him significant money. Then, a relative of his finalized a shidduch, and the family asked him to pay up a debt of fifty thousand shekel that he owed them to cover the expenses of the tanaim, gifts, etc. He paid up the debt. But then, when Elul arrived and his children returned to school, he didn't have money to buy them clothing and sefarim. But he didn't despair. He trusted that Hashem would help.

That afternoon, his daughter woke him up from his afternoon nap. Annoyed, he told his daughter, "It is forbidden to awaken a parent when he is sleeping." But she insisted that she had found a lot of money in the dining room, and he should come and see it.

He came to the dining room and saw a stack of two-hundred-shekel bills pushing through the air conditioner vent. The family gathered the money – it was ten thousand shekels!

The father was shocked. The apartment was rented. He understood

Notice that each time one says לישועתך קויתי ה', Hashem's name comes closer to him. The first time, he says לישועתך קויתי ה', where Hashem's name appears as the third word. The second time, קויתי Hashem" is the second word. Finally, the third time, we say לישועתך קויתי, and Hashem's name is said first. This hints that the more we think about Hashem and the more we trust in Him, the closer Hashem comes to us.

Reb Shlomo Kalish zt'l was with Reb Chaim Brisker for a shalosh seudos, and he

related that for twenty minutes, Reb Chaim repeated the words לישועתך קויתי ה'. This is because emunah and bitachon require constant reinforcement.

In a Sefer Torah, where it states שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד, the אחד is written with a large *dalet*. The Baal HaTanya zt'l said that the large *dalet* appears like a hammer because we have to hammer the emunah into our consciousness. We say לישועתך קויתי ה' three times, and we speak about bitachon until we acquire it.³

that the tenants before him must have hidden the money there. He asked a sheilah from a rav, who ruled that he could keep the money, only he must keep a record of the amount found, so that if the original tenants returned and asked for the money, he would know how much to return.

The story is amazing because they lived in this rented apartment for several years and used the air conditioner many times, but the money never appeared. Furthermore, more than once, technicians came to work on the air conditioner, and they never came across the cash.

It was as Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zt'l teaches: "Someone who lives with emunah and bitachon will have yeshuos in ways he never imagined."

3. Reb Kopel Chassid zy'a (a student of the Baal Shem Tov) was called

by the merchants "Reb Kopel Shevisi'nik" because he always said *שׁוּיֵיתִי ה' לִנְגְדִי תָמִיד*, "I have placed Hashem before me, constantly." Every few moments in the marketplace, he would repeat this pasuk so he wouldn't forget Hashem as he conducted his business. Rebbe Yaakov Kopel owned the most accurate scale in the marketplace, as required by halachah. All the G-d fearing merchants used his scale to sell their merchandise.

On the day Reb Yaakov Kopel didn't come to the market, the other merchants would say, "When *Shevisi'nik* isn't here, we can't do business."

Their intention was twofold: When Reb Kopel Shevisi'nik is absent, we can't do business because we don't have an accurate scale. And they also implied that without *שׁוּיֵיתִי ה' לִנְגְדִי תָמִיד*, without Hashem's assistance, we won't be met with success.

We repeat this story here as an example of how we should always repeat phrases and ideas that strengthen our emunah and bitachon.

Slonimer Tzaddikim said that although sheker, falsehood, is a bad middah, one is permitted to speak about emunah and bitachon, even when he hasn't yet reached those levels, because by talking about it, he will attain it.

Reb Yechezkel Abramsky zt'l and a Lubavitcher chasid were detained in a Soviet prison. One day, an officer informed them that in another twenty-four hours, they would be hung r"l. Reb Yechezkel was very afraid, but the Lubavitcher chasid remained calm. He asked Reb Yechezkel why he was so worried. Reb Yechezkel replied, "Why shouldn't I be worried? The clock is clicking, time is moving along...!"

The chasid replied, "The clock is ticking, and time moves on, but the Ribono Shel Olam is always here!"

They were saved. Advocates from different countries pressured the Russian government to free these two men. Reb Yechezkel Abramsky would say that he learned bitachon from this Lubavitcher chasid.

It states (Tehillim 91:9) **כי אתה** ה' מוֹחֲסִי. At first glance, it seems that Dovid Hamelech is saying, "Because You, Hashem, are my refuge." However, Rashi and the Metzudas Dovid don't explain the pasuk that way. Rashi says that the word **אתה** is missing in the pasuk. It is like it states **כי אתה אמרת** ה' מוֹחֲסִי, "Because you say Hashem is my refuge." The chapter speaks about many salvations that Hashem does for Bnei Yisrael. We say in this chapter, **כי הוא יצילך מפח** יקוֹשׁ... באברתו יסֹך לך ותחת כנפיו תחסה, "For He will save you from traps... His wing He will cover you, and under His wings you will take refuge," etc. Dovid HaMelech reveals to us that all these miracles will occur to us because **אתה** [אמרת] ה' מוֹחֲסִי, because you say ה' מוֹחֲסִי, "Hashem is my refuge."

Hashem protects us because we say ה' מוֹחֲסִי, "Hashem is my refuge." Partially, this is because when we speak about bitachon, our bitachon

increases, and then we will merit Hashem's protection.

Rashi concludes, והרי זה מוקרא קצר, "The pasuk is written in brief," because the word **אמרת** is lacking in the pasuk. We can explain *bederech tzachus* that Hakodosh Baruch Hu doesn't ask too much from us. מוקרא קצר, a few words are sufficient. All we have to say is a brief sentence, **כי אתה** ה' מוֹחֲסִי, and Hashem will immediately save him from all bad.

Other Counsels to Attain Bitachon

We discussed speaking about bitachon as a technique for acquiring it. There are several other approaches, and we will discuss some of them.

Reb Shimon Sofer zt'l (son of Ksav Sofer, Shir Meon, printed in Toras Moshe, Bechukosei, Haftarah) explains the pasuk (Yirmiyahu 17:7) **ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה'** והיה ה' מבטחו, "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem, that Hashem is his trust." What

is the purpose of this double expression? He writes, "It is very hard to have complete bitachon in Hashem. But a person should do as much as possible, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will help him acquire perfection in bitachon. About this, Chazal (Succah 52:) say, 'If Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't help him, he won't succeed.' A person tries to attain bitachon, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will stand by his side and help him succeed. This is the meaning of the words ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה'. He trusts in Hashem. והיה ה' מבטחו, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will help him acquire perfection in bitachon."

Someone complained to the Satmar Rebbe zt'l that he lacks bitachon. The Rebbe told him, "To attain bitachon, one also needs bitachon. Have bitachon that Hashem will help you attain bitachon."

The Beis Avraham zt'l (Chanukah, Ner 6) writes that Hashem accepts our

bitachon, even when it isn't perfect. This is alluded to in the words (Tehillim 33:22) יהי חסדך ה' עלינו כאשר יחלנו לך, "May Your kindness, Hashem, be upon us, as if we trusted in You."

The word כאשר means "as if." Even if it is only *like* we trust in Hashem, it is enough to draw down Hashem's chesed and bounty.

Rebbe Refael of Barshid zt'l said that if a person sees that his bitachon isn't perfect, he should trust in Hashem that Hashem will help him, even if his bitachon isn't perfect.

Attaining Bitachon from Past Episodes

The Ramban (end of Bo) teaches that when we are impressed by Hashem's revealed, outstanding miracles, we learn to recognize Hashem even within nature. We begin to realize that everything is Hashem's hashgachah. Everything is miraculous.

We can say something similar regarding Hashem's hashgachah pratis. There are times we witness Hashem's hashgachah pratis. Those experiences serve as a revelation that Hashem is always with us.

It states (Tehillim 147:9) נותן לבהמה לחמה לבני עורב אשר יקראו, "He gives the animal its food, to the young ravens which call out."

The Midrash (Tanchuma Ekev 2) states, "The crows' children are born white, and their mothers abandon them and don't feed them because they think that they aren't their children. The small birds shout as if praying to Hashem for food, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu prepares for them mosquitoes, and they eat them."

The Radak elaborates, "Hashem always helps the weak, those who can't help themselves... Hashem desires those who are weak and feel low, the people

who aren't proud of their strength and abilities."

The following two pasukim (Tehillim 147:) state, לא בגבורת הסוס יחפץ, לא בשוקי האיש ירצה, "He does not desire the might of the horse, nor does He want the legs of man." רוצה ה' את יראיו את המיחלים לחסדו, "Hashem desires those who fear Him, those who hope for His kindness."

The Malbim explains that some earn their parnassah by making wars and taking the wealth of other countries. And some earn their parnassah by traveling long distances. But from the miracles that happen to the young crows, we know these means aren't necessary. Hashem wants those who fear Him, and He grants them parnassah.

We can now read the pasuk as follows: נותן לבהמה לחמה לבני עורב, Hashem gives food to animals, and Hashem compassionately provides food to the young crows, who were abandoned by their parents. אשר יקראו, this

miracle is a call to all mankind that they can trust in Hashem.

We quote the Malbim: לבני עורב, "Hashem gives food to the crows' children, אשר יקראו and [thereby] the crows announce, לא בגבורת הסוס יחפץ, Hashem doesn't desire the strength of horses. The crow proclaims that one doesn't need strength and hishtadlus to receive parnassah. Hashem gives parnassah to the weak animals, too. For example, He gives food to the baby crows. Some earn their living through war by taking booty from the enemy. Chazal (Brachos 3:) say that people said to Dovid, 'Your nation Yisrael needs parnassah,' Dovid replied, 'Let them make a war.' For war, one needs to ride on

horses. Some earn their parnassah by traveling long distances, as it states (Mishlei 31:14) מִמֹּרֶחַק תָּבִיא לַחֲמָה, 'She brings her food from afar.' They have to have thighs and legs to go that long way. The baby crows announce and reveal that Hashem doesn't want this. Whoever trusts in Hashem will receive his parnassah in his home. He doesn't need a horse, and he doesn't need a war. Hashem provides food for the baby crows, and He can provide food for all. רֹצֵה ה' אֶת יִרְאָיו, Hashem desires those who fear Him, and they don't make any hishtadlus, other than אֶת הַמִּיחָלִים לַחֲסֵדוֹ, that they await His kindness and they trust that Hashem will provide for them with His enormous kindness."⁴

4. The following story occurred a few years ago in Eretz Yisrael. Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the families involved.

One day, Mrs. Yisraeli wanted to call Mrs. Cohen but dialed the wrong number and accidentally called Mrs. Levi. They were complete strangers, but they spoke a little and enjoyed each other's company.

A week later was Erev Pesach, and Mrs. Yisraeli called Mrs. Levi again. "I enjoyed our conversation last time; I decided to call you again to wish you a happy holiday."

Mrs. Levi mentioned to her that her husband had just been taken to the hospital due to heart trouble.

Three weeks later, Mrs. Yisraeli called again to hear how Mr. Levi was faring. Mrs. Levi told her that her husband is getting better, and just today, the hospital is sending him to a rehabilitation center. "The problem is that the best rehab center is full and cannot accept him." She told her the name of the center she wished she could send her husband to.

Mrs. Yisraeli shouted excitedly, "When I accidentally called you a month ago, I wanted to call Mrs. Cohen. Mrs. Cohen is responsible for accepting patients to the rehab center you just mentioned. I will call her now and see if she can arrange a place for your husband."

It was arranged, and the hashgachah pratis wasn't lost on the families. Mrs. Levi and Mrs. Yisraeli became friends under the most interesting circumstances, so Mrs. Yisraeli should be able to help them get into the best rehab facility.

And the story isn't over yet.

During that time, Hamas terrorists were sending hundreds of missiles into Eretz Yisrael. A siren went off in Mrs. Levi's neighborhood in Bnei Brak. As she ran to a bomb shelter, she fell and broke her shoulder bone.

On the way to the hospital, Mrs. Yisraeli called again to hear how things were progressing with Mr. Levi! Mrs. Levi told her about her fall.

Mrs. Yisraeli got to work again. She called Mrs. Cohen and arranged for Mrs. Levi to recover from her fall in the room where her husband was staying. The facility even provided a room for their children.

A couple of days later, Mrs. Yisraeli visited her friend in the facility and said, "Now I know there is a G-d."

Mrs. Yisraeli wasn't religious, but after this episode, she

acknowledged Hashem's Omnipresence and began lighting Shabbos candles.

Everything was arranged from Above (a) to help the Levi family and (b) to help Mrs. Yisraeli come closer to Hashem.

A member of our chaburah from Bnei Brak told us that his wife hadn't been feeling well for a few weeks, and doctors suspected that she might have 'the machlah,' the dreaded disease r"l. They ordered tests, and indeed, they found a growth. This was on erev Chanukah.

The husband arranged an appointment with a renowned specialist. He asked for a night-time appointment. He wanted the merit of Chanukah lecht before going to the doctor. The doctor conducted some more tests and determined that there was no growth at all. He claimed that the first doctor was mistaken, but we know that the רופא כל בשר, the Great Doctor, healed her in the merit of Chanukah lecht.

The son of a member of our chaburah from Elad was in a car accident and was brought into the hospital in serious condition. This occurred at the beginning of Kislev. On the first night of Chanukah, he opened his eyes and spoke for the first time. He awoke from his unconsciousness in the merit of Chanukah.

We mention these stories to remind us that miracles also happen in our times. And when we remember the wonders Hashem does, this gives us strength to believe that Hashem will continue helping us. It strengthens us to place our trust in Hashem and rely on His kindness.

A couple of weeks ago was the shloshim of Reb Chaim Yissachar Breitstein z'l, a long-time melamed in the Belzer cheder, Bnei Brak. In honor of the shloshim, hespedim were delivered at his graveside. The hespedim began a half-hour late, and one of the melamdin of the cheder said in his hesped that Reb Chaim Yissachar always sought to do chesed with others, and it is known that whoever does chesed in his lifetime continues to do so after his petirah, and therefore, he will be a meilitz yosher in heaven.

As he spoke, a truck with workers arrived to deliver a matzeivah for a kever nearby. After the matzeivah was in place, the truck

backed up and bumped into the tomb they just set. People began shouting to get the driver's attention so he would stop backing. Then, the people who attended the shloshim went over to see the knocked-over matzeivah and the commotion that it caused.

The melamed who had just said his hesped read the name on the matzeivah and began shouting, "I was by this woman's levayah, but she wasn't buried here! I remember that she was buried a hundred meters from here."

He called his daughter because his daughter was a relative of this woman, and she agreed that her burial place wasn't the location where they placed the matzeivah.

As the melamed had said in his hesped. When one helps others in his lifetime, he continues to do so after his petirah. In this niftar's merit, the woman received her gravestone at the correct location.

It was also a chesed for the alman, the niftarah's past husband. This is because the minhag in Eretz Yisrael is to put up the matzeivah either at the shloshim or at the first yahrtzeit. There is also a custom that the alman, widower, shouldn't become engaged for marriage before the matzeivah of his first wife was established. It was in the middle of the year, and their original plan was to put up the matzeivah at the end of the year. However, they were putting up the matzeivah now because the alman planned to get engaged that night. So, it was a chesed for the alman and the niftarah.

This is a story of hashgachah pratis. The hesped was held a half-hour late, and the matzeivah was delivered precisely at the time and date when someone would be there and recognize that it was being set at the wrong place. The gravestone was knocked over by the truck to draw people's attention. It was all arranged by Hashem's wondrous hashgachah pratis. Such stories of hashgachah pratis strengthen our hearts to trust in Hashem. We say, "Just as Hashem was there, He will be with us to help us."

The Kedushas Levi (*Chanukah, Kedushah* 5) writes, "If a person *chas veshalom* doesn't believe in miracles, he thinks everything is a natural event, the sun shines by day, the moon shines at night... those who do wise business deals become wealthy, someone who

**When there is no other
Solution, We Trust in
Hashem**

position where bitachon is the only solution.

תשועת ה' There is a saying, כהרף עין Hashem's salvation can come in the blink of an eye. We can also explain

There are times that Hashem places us in a

travels [for business] will earn a profit... He thinks everything is הרגל, routine and natural. However, when he sees the miracles, how the Creator gave over the mighty into the hands of the weak... he discovers that the world isn't run by nature. Hashem frees the imprisoned... He creates light and darkness. He heals the ill..." From the large miracles, we discover that everything is miraculous, as the Ramban (end of Parashas Bo) teaches us.

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 21:) states, one should light the Chanukah candles מן השוק עד שתשקע החמה "From sunset until there aren't people walking in the marketplace."

The Kedushas Levi explains עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק can mean that we light the Chanukah lamps and ponder the wonders until תכלה רגל, we stop thinking that everything that happens is routine and natural.

And when we remember Hashem's miracles, we will know that we can trust in Hashem in the present, as well.

Yosef told Pharaoh (Bereishis 41:25) את אשר האלקים עושה הגיד לפרעה "What Hashem is doing, He has told Pharaoh." Reb Moshe Minder zt'l (Toras Avos) explains that Yosef told Pharaoh that everything that occurs in the world, האלקים עושה, is from Hashem.

Pharaoh replied (41:39) אין נבון וחכם כמוך "There is no one as understanding and wise as you." Pharaoh admitted that no one is as wise as Yosef because Yosef understands that everything is from Hashem.

And from episodes such as this one, we can learn to place our trust in Hashem, for Hashem is always leading us in the very best way.

that Hashem saves us בהרף עין when we stop looking around for salvation from others other than Hashem. When we place our trust solely in Him, Hashem helps us.

It states (*Tehillim* 9:19) כי לא לנצח ישכח אביון, תקוות עניים תאבד לעד. The pasuk seems to contradict itself. It seems to be saying, כי לא לנצח ישכח אביון, "For the needy shall not be forgotten forever," which means there is hope for them. And then the pasuk states תקוות עניים תאבד לעד, "the hopes of the poor shall be lost to eternity." So, do the poor have hope, or do they not?

We can answer that the poor person can always have hope. The pasuk is saying that the particular matter he trusted upon won't transpire, and Hashem will help him another way.

For example, perhaps the poor man thought that a particular wealthy person whom he knows would give him money, but תקוות עניים תאבד, his hopes were dashed. And then Hashem helps him in another way.

Kedushah and Bitachon

The root of the word בטחון is the three letters ב"ת ט"ת ח"ת. The Bas Ayin (Bamidbar) notes that all three letters have the letters ת"ת in them when they are spelled out in full. The gematriya of ת"ת is (410) בט"ה קדו"ש, so קדו"ש (410) hints to קדוש. It tells us that with bitachon one can achieve kedushah.

The Bas Ayin also teaches that בטחון comes from the word ט"ה, which means cover.⁵ This is because the cover of kedushah is

5. The root word of בטחון is טח, which means to cover. Kidneys are called בטוחות (see *Tehillim* 51:8, (הן אמת חפצת בטוחות), and the Metzudas Tzion explains that this is because במכסות בבליות הטוחות ומכוסות בבליות, the kidneys are covered and concealed under the fats.

bitachon. With bitachon, one can attain kedushah.

The explanation is as follows:

Many forms of livelihood involve tests in kedushah. The internet is an example. When one has bitachon, he will believe Hashem can support him without sacrificing his kedushah. He doesn't have to go where he shouldn't or see what he shouldn't to earn parnassah.

Bitachon is the cover that protects us and enables us to have kedushah.

The Zohar says that the more kedushah one has, the easier his parnassah will be.

A person was standing on a pier, casting out his fishing rod, when someone came by to see what he was doing. He saw that instead of putting bait on the hook, this person attached a clock. "Why are you casting the clock into the water?" the man watching asked. "Why don't you put bait on the hook?"

"It is a great secret," the fisherman responded. "I learned it in fishing school."

"What's the secret? Please tell me."

"No. I paid a lot of money to learn this secret and will not give it away for free."

The man watching said, "I am willing to pay to learn the secret."

The fisherman said, "For one thousand dollars, I will tell you, and believe me, that is a low price compared to the amount I paid to get this information."

The man paid a thousand dollars, and the fisherman said, "Fish always keep their eyes open, and biologists (ichthyologists) discovered the reason: There is no clock in the water, making the fish wonder what time it is. This is why they swim about, with their eyes opened, looking for a clock."

"Amazing," said the new student. "So, when you put a clock into the water, all the

fish come to see the time, and you can catch them."

"Exactly," said the fisherman, putting the thousand dollars he just received into his pocket.

"Tell me," said the student, "how many fish did you catch today?"

"Today, I caught eight fish... You are the eighth one."

The nimshal is that when you access the internet to earn money, you think you made money. Actually, it isn't money that was caught. It is you who was caught. This is the yetzer hara's way of drawing you into its trap.

The Shach's father-in-law once approached the Shach (Reb Shabsi HaKohen, one of the primary poskim in Shulchan Aruch) and told him, "I can no longer support you. I want you to try your hand at business."

So, when the market came to their city, the Shach engaged in some business

activity and was extremely successful.

Some weeks or months later, the market came to their city again. The father-in-law said, "You did so well last time; I'm certain you will succeed again this time."

"I will not do business this time," the Shach replied.

"But why not? You can be wealthy. You have a good mind for business."

The Shach explained that his initial success came from the yetzer hara, to lure him away from studying Torah. "The yetzer hara wants me to spend a lot of time doing business. And then, after he stole all those hours from me, he will take the money away as well. I will be left without money and without Torah."

The Shach said that this is hinted at in the words (Shemos 15:9) *אמר אויב ארדוף אשיג* *אחלק שלל תמלאמו נפשי אריק חרבי תורישימו*. The pasuk can be read like this: *אמר אויב*, the enemy is the yetzer hara. He

says, ארדוף אשג, I will catch the Yid in my net. How will he do so? First, אחלק שלל, the yetzer hara will give him a lot of money and make him feel like a successful businessman. And then, אריק, חרבי תורשמו ידי, the yetzer hara will take out his sword and make him poor. He only made him wealthy to pull him away from Torah study. After he succeeds, he will take away the money, too.

We similarly say that the yetzer hara enables people to earn or save money on the internet, but the yetzer hara doesn't want to make you wealthy. It is *you* he is after. And after one falls into his trap, the yetzer hara will take away all the money. The person will be left with nothing: without money and without kedushah.

Several years ago, a hacker targeted a real estate firm in Lakewood. He wrote an email to the secretary, making it appear that it came from the firm's president, asking the secretary to transfer seventy

thousand dollars into the hacker's bank account.

Everything looked standard, but the hacker made one mistake. In the email, he addressed the secretary by her first name. The boss never addressed his secretary that way for tznius reasons. She was ready to transfer the money, but this point alerted her that something was off. She called her boss before moving the money, and he told her he never sent that email.

The kedushah he placed in his firm saved him a lot of money.

A yungerman travels from Eretz Yisrael to Europe every two weeks to deliver a shiur in a particular yeshiva. He generally flies on planes that don't have video sets. When the only flights available are with videos, he prefers a daytime flight because then he can immerse himself in Torah study and doesn't see

anything happening around him.

Once, he had to take a night flight on a plane with video sets. He was very upset, but what could he do? He had to take this flight. So, he took along sleeping pills, and as he davened minchah in the airport, he davened that Hashem help him protect his eyes.

Then a miracle occurred. He sat between two goyim, and neither of their screens was working. They called over the steward, but he couldn't fix their sets either. His tefillos were answered. He was able to travel without sacrificing his kedushah.

The Gemara (Shabbos 22:) discusses the *ner maaravi*, the western lamp of the menorah, which

miraculously remained lit for 24 hours, while the others only remained lit at night.

The menorah had seven lamps. Which of the seven is "the western lamp, *ner maaravi*"?

Rashi (Shabbos 22:) explains that it is the second lamp. The menorah stood from east to west. The first lamp is considered eastern, and the next one is western, because it is the first one leading towards the west.

We would think that the furthest western lamp is the *ner maaravi*, but Rashi tells us that the second lamp is western.

This teaches us that every step in the right direction is precious. You are one step towards the other side and considered to be there already.⁶

6. Chazal tell us that the Shechinah is in the west. Also, the Beis HaMikdash and the Kodesh HaKedashim were on the western side. But one doesn't have to be all the way in the west to be precious to Hashem. Even if one is more to the eastern side but

This can be the reason a miracle happened with this lamp. The Gemara tells us that the purpose of the miracle was to inform us that the Shechinah resides with Bnei Yisrael. The miracle of this lamp shows us that if you take even one step towards holiness, that is so significant. For this step in the right direction, the Shechinah resides with Bnei Yisrael.

Reb Boruch Weinberg and my father zt'l lived in Bnei Brak. They both traveled together to and from Tel Aviv every day; Reb Baruch ran a candy factory in Tel Aviv, and my father was a magid shiur in his father's yeshiva in Tel Aviv.

They would travel by bus. One day, my father told Reb Boruch that he wouldn't be traveling by bus any longer. "I will go by taxi." I heard this from Reb Boruch

Weinberg. This was mesirus nefesh on my father's part because taking the bus was much more affordable. But my father realized it would be easier to guard his eyes when traveling by taxi, which was very important for him.

The Gemara (Kiddushin 7) teaches, "When one says this leg [of the animal] should become a korban, the entire animal becomes a korban." The sanctity spreads from that one limb to the rest of the animal's body. The Rebbe of Radzamin taught that this also occurs when one sanctifies one limb of his body. For example, when one is careful with what he sees. He purified one limb, but the purity extends to his entire essence and being.

The days of Shovavim are approaching. They begin on Motzei Shabbos Vayechi. May we merit to utilize the

takes one step westward, it is considered that he is in the west, in the kedushah.

days of Shovavim to become pure before Hashem.

older and couldn't wait any longer.⁷

Rebbe Moshe Lelover

This week is the *yahrzeit* of Reb Moshe of Lelov *zt'l* (*niftar* 13th of Teves, 5611)

Toward the end of his life, Rebbe Moshe decided to travel to Eretz Yisrael because he saw, through *ruach hakodesh*, that if he davened at the Kosel HaMaravi, he could bring *Moshiach*.

Before he began his journey, he went to *gezeigen* (take leave) from several *tzaddikim*. When he came to Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a*, the Ruzhiner said, "Wait for me, and I will go with you."

Rebbe Moshe Lelover pointed to his white beard, implying that he was getting

Rebbe Moshe Lelover planned to travel to Eretz Yisrael with a *minyan* of his followers, and he saved up money to pay for the voyage. But whenever he had enough money, he gave it away to some important *tzedakah*. Then, he would start saving up money for the trip once again.

Once, a wealthy woman came to Rebbe Moshe of Lelov and asked for a *brachah* that she bear children. Rebbe Moshe told her that she would have a child if she gave him the money he needed for the trip. She was prepared to provide the funds, but Rebbe Moshe Lelover told her that she must first ask permission from her husband.

7. The Rebbe of Ruzhin said that if the Yidden in Poland were wise, they wouldn't permit Rebbe Moshe of Lelov to leave them. He found this hinted at in the Mishnah *Shabbos*, אין פולין לאור הני, "the Polish Yidden aren't wise. They had one brilliant light, and they let him leave."

Her husband was a chassid of "The Gitte Yid" of Neustadt, and he asked the Gitte Yid whether he should give the money. His Rebbe replied, "If Rebbe Moshe guarantees a child, you can rely on that. However, before you give the money, ask Rebbe Moshe Lelover to guarantee that the child will live long because sometimes, a child born through a miracle won't live long."

When the parents placed that condition before Rebbe Moshe of Lelov, he replied, "The years of your child's life will be as many as the days I live in Eretz Yisrael."

Rebbe Moshe Lelover lived in Eretz Yisrael for 74 days, and the child lived for 74 years.

When Rebbe Moshe Lelover was on the boat, he kept repeating, יום לשנה יום, "a day for a year," and it is explained that he was saying he would live in Eretz Yisrael for 74 days, as he was 74 years old.

During his voyage to Eretz Yisrael, the ship sprung a hole and started taking on water. Rebbe Moshe placed a cloth over the hole, miraculously stopping the influx of water. (This cloth is now used as a *deck tichel* [veil] for the *kallahs* of Rebbe Moshe's descendants.)

During the trip, the ship docked at a deserted island. Everyone got off the boat, including Rebbe Moshe Lelover and his *gabai*. Eventually, the sailors blew their horns to call everyone back aboard. Everyone returned except the Rebbe's *gabai*. The ship departed, and his *gabai* was left behind! That following Friday night, before Kiddush, Rebbe Moshe announced, "I will not make Kiddush until the *gabai* arrives." Immediately, they heard a loud sound (boom), and the *gabai* appeared.

The *gabai* told them, "I was captured by the *other side* (*sheidim*/demons). I heard them say, 'The old tzaddik said he won't make Kiddush

until his *gabai* comes, but he can't do anything. The *gabai* is with us.' But their leader announced, 'This isn't a joke. If the old tzaddik said he isn't making Kiddush until the *gabai* comes, we must obey,' and they returned me here."⁸

The ship docked in northern Eretz Yisrael, and Rebbe Moshe Lelover visited

the holy tzaddikim living in Tzefas and Teveria and went to Miron and other locations where holy tzaddikim are buried. He explained that after he gets to Yerushalayim, he will never leave her.

When he finally arrived in the Old City of Yerushalayim, he became ill. His children debated whether to bring him to the

8. This remarkable story has a sequel: Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zy'a* (a descendant of Rebbe Moshe Lelover) lived in Germany before World War II. It was dangerous for a Yid to be seen outdoors during those times. Nevertheless, on Friday afternoon, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai left his house to use the *mikvah* because Rebbe Dovid of Lelov taught that a Yid must have *mesirus nefesh* to go to the *mikvah*. He passed a group of Germans. They grabbed him and began to beat him. Just then, a chassid, Reb Avraham Frankel *z'l*, passed by. Reb Avraham Frankel was a strong man, and he rescued Reb Moshe Mordechai without any trouble. Soon, the police arrived and arrested Reb Avraham Frankel!

Later that night, before Kiddush, Reb Moshe Mordechai repeated this story that happened to his grandfather, Rebbe Moshe of Lelov. When Reb Moshe Mordechai completed telling the story, Reb Avraham Frankel walked in. (When one repeats a story of a miracle that occurred, this can cause the miracle to happen again.)

Rebbe Avraham Frankel said that in the police headquarters, an interrogator asked him why he was arrested. Reb Avraham replied that he hadn't committed any crime. He only protected a Yid, who was harassed and beaten by a gang. The interrogator believed him and set him free. It was miraculous!

Kosel HaMaravi in this condition. Finally, they decided to take him since his primary goal for coming to Eretz Yisrael was to go to the Kosel and bring Moshiach.

On the way to the Kosel, a group of Arabs threw rocks at them, making it impossible to get to the Kosel. Shortly afterwards, he was *niftar*. Unfortunately, he never did make it to the Kosel....

He said that his *yahrtzeit* is *mesugal* for rain, and it is unnecessary to proclaim a fast day for rain before his *yahrtzeit* passes. Reb Shmuel Salant *zt'l*, the Rav of Yerushalayim, kept this counsel. He wouldn't decree a fast day for rain until the 13th of Teves passed.⁹

Tefillah b'Tzibbur

Moments before Yaakov Avinu's petirah, he gathered his children and said (*Bereishis* 49:1), הִאסְפוּ, "Assemble yourself..." The *Zohar* (*Bereishis* p.234.) says that Yaakov instructed his children to assemble and daven with minyan.

There are many benefits earned from davening with a minyan. One benefit is that it is *mesugal* for *parnassah*. It states in parashas Mikeitz (42:3) וַיֵּרְדוּ אֶחָד יוֹסֵף עֶשְׂרֵה לְשָׁבוֹר בְּרַ מִמְצָרִים, "Yosef's brothers - ten of them - went down to buy grain from Mitzrayim."

Rashi asks why the Torah tells us that there were ten brothers. We can figure out, on our own, that ten brothers went down to Mitzrayim!

9. The Gemara (*Taanis* 25.) says, דגמירי דמיהב יהבי מישקל לא שקלי, "We have learned that [Heaven] gives, it doesn't take away."

When someone told Rebbe Moshe Lelover that he sometimes earns *parnassah* but then loses it, he advised him to learn Gemara because דגמירי, when one studies גמרא, then דמיהב יהבי מישקל לא שקלי, heaven gives him *parnassah* and doesn't take it away.

The Divrei Yisrael of Moditz zy'a answers: The purpose of this trip was לשבור, to bring back food and parnassah for their families, and they knew that the success of their mission was dependent on their *tefillos* with a minyan because davening with a minyan is mesugal for parnassah.¹⁰

It states (Shemos 23:25) ועבדתם את ה' אלוהיכם ובירך את לחמך ואת מימך והסירותי מחלה מקרבך, "You shall worship Hashem your G-d and He will bless your bread and your water, and I shall remove illness from your midst." The Rebbe of Radshitz zt'l teaches that ועבדתם means *tefillah* with a minyan. (That's why it is written in plural tense.) The pasuk says that davening with minyan results in parnassah and health.

The Meor VeShemesh writes, "The primary way to

serve Hashem is together with the congregation. This applies to all avodas Hashem aspects: Torah, *tefillah*, etc ... In particular, one must be cautious to daven with a minyan. If he does so, he is guaranteed abundant *parnassah*, and there will be *brachah* in everything he does."

The Yismach Yisrael wrote the following letter to his chassidim, "I also request from the businessmen that they should always daven in the beis chassidim (beis medrash) and they should never miss. Even if they need to wait until ten people gather, they should wait, and in the meantime, they should study something. I guarantee that this will not cause them any loss, *chalilah*. On the contrary, it will bring a *brachah* into their *parnassah*. It will also train their children to go to the beis

10. The first word of the *pasuk* is וירדו. The Divrei Yisrael teaches that this also alludes to *tefillah* because the person who davens before the *amud* is called in Chazal, יורד לפני התיבה.

medresh twice a day. And when one goes into a perfume store, he becomes perfumed."

The final words of this letter tell another important reason to daven with a minyan. It is a mitzvah to be among good Yidden. When one enters a perfume store, he comes out smelling better, and when one goes to a beis medresh, he becomes stronger and better than before.

In states in Shemos (5:6), לא תאספון לתת תבן לעם ללקוט, "You shall no longer give straw..." Why is there an extra א in the word תאספון? Rebbe Dovid of Lelov zt'l explained that Pharaoh decreed, לא תאספון, that Yidden may no longer gather. Every Shabbos, in Mitzrayim, Yidden would gather and discuss *emunah*. Pharaoh understood how much they gain when they come together, so he decreed לא תאספון that they may not gather anymore.

(Rebbe Dovid Lelover zt'l said that he is sure that when Moshiach arrives, Moshe Rabbeinu will greet him and thank him for explaining the correct reason he added the א in this word.)

Indeed, this is one of the benefits of davening with a minyan. It is where we meet with good Yidden and strengthen our *emunah*.

Another benefit of a minyan is that Hashem is there wherever there is a minyan. The Baal HaTanya (letter 23) writes, "I was taught by my rebbes [the Baal Shem Tov zt'l and the Magid of Mezritzh zt'l] that if a malach were to stand in the presence of a gathering of ten Yidden, even if there were no words of Torah spoken between them, a boundless and infinite fear would befall that malach on account of the *Shechinah* that resides over them, and he would become utterly nullified."

Perhaps the most significant benefit of all is that the tefillos are answered.

The Gemara (*Brachos* 7-8) tells the following story:

Rav Yitzchak asked Rav Nachman, "Why didn't you come to the beis kneses to daven?"

"I couldn't. I was weak."

"You should have asked ten people to come to your home so you could daven in your home with a minyan."

"טריחא לי מילתא - it was hard for me to do that."

"You should have asked the *gabai* of the beis kneses to let you know when the *tzibbur* is about to say *Shemonah Esrei*, so you could begin *Shemonah Esrei* together with them."

Rav Nachman asked Rav Yitzchak, "Why is davening with a minyan so important?"

Rav Yitzchak replied in the name of Reb Shimon bar Yochai: "It states (*Tehillim* 69:14), ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון, 'I pray to you at a desired time.' When is that desired time? It's when the *tzibbur* is davening."

It is an *eis ratzon*, and there is a greater likelihood that his *tefillos* will be answered.

The Beis Aharon *zy'a* writes, "*Tefillah b'tzibur* can help for all matters, just like the *tefillos* of the *tzaddik hador*."

The Chofetz Chaim (Nidchai Yisrael 5) writes:

"Due to our many sins, some people daven at home during the weekdays because they don't appreciate the great mitzvah of davening with a minyan. Therefore, I feel obligated to write before all about this great mitzvah. When one davens with a minyan, in addition to increasing Hashem's honor, as it states (Mishlei 14:28) ברב עם הדרת מלך, 'In a multitude of people is the king's glory,' additionally, when he davens with a minyan, he performs several other mitzvos, such as answering Barchu and Amen yehei shmei rabba, and Kedushah. These are so great and very precious

before Hashem. These arouse Hashem's love for Yisrael, reminding Hashem of their galus and hastens their redemption. It states in Midrash 'Tell My children what I do at tefillas Shacharis when they say קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאו"ת. Teach them to raise their eyes to heaven...and they should lift their heels and their bodies when they sanctify Me because the pleasure I have when they raise their eyes to me, and I look into their eyes is more than all other pleasure that I have from the world. At this time, I grab onto My throne of glory, where the image of Yaakov is engraved, and I

hug and kiss it, and I remember their galus, and I hasten the redemption.' ... Also, Chazal say, 'Whoever answers Amen yehei shmei rabba with all his concentration, I will rip up harsh decrees.' In addition, when one davens with a minyan, he performs tens of mitzvos each day because he will answer amen to all the brachos he hears... Another great benefit is that when he davens with a tzibur, his tefillah is more likely to be answered. As the Gemara (Brachos 8) states, "When is it an eis ratzon for tefillah? It is when the tzibur davens."