

# Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita

Achrei



בס"ד

# Torah WELLSPRINGS

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Mail@TorahWellsprings.com  
718.484.8136

Weekly bulk orders in USA:  
Wholesale@BeerEmunah.com

*Weekly in your email free!*

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

*Lashon Kodesh*

באר הפרשה

subscribe+subscribe@beerhaparsha.com

*English*

**Torah Wellsprings**

Torah+subscribe@torahwellsprings.com

*Yiddish*

דער פרשה קוואל

yiddish+subscribe@derparshakval.com

*Spanish*

**Manantiales de la Torá**

info+subscribe@manantialesdelatorah.com

*French*

**Au Puits de La Paracha**

info+subscribe@aupuitsdelaparacha.com

*Italian*

**Le Sorgenti della Torah**

info+subscribe@lesorgentidellatorah.com

*Russian*

**Колодец Торы**

info+subscribe@kolodetztory.com



**USA OFFICE** Mechon Beer Emunah  
1630 50th St, Brooklyn NY 11204  
718.484.8136

**ERETZ YISROEL OFFICE**

מכון באר האמונה  
רח' דובב מ'שירים 4/2  
ע"ה"ק ירושלים תובב"א  
025 688 040

יו"ל ע"י מכון באר אמונה

COPYRIGHT 2024 הזכויות שמורות כל

Duplication of this gilyon in any format, for any sales or marketing purpose, without written permission by Machon Be'er Emunah, is against the law and Halacha.

# Table of Contents

## *Torah Wellsprings - Achrei*

Sefiras HaOmer.....	4
Eating with Kedushah.....	9
Advice for Eating Properly.....	11
Brachos on Food .....	12
One Day at a Time .....	14
Run Like a Deer.....	16
From the Brain to the Heart.....	21
Beginnings.....	25
<i>Kevias Ittim</i> for Torah.....	27

# Torah Wellsprings

## Achrei

### Sefiras HaOmer

Some kehilos count sefirah ha'omer in a loud voice and with great enthusiasm and hislahavus. Someone asked Reb Yosef Salant zt'l why people shout out the brachah on *sefirah ha'omer*. Reb Yosef Salant replied, "What is the question? Every brachah should be said that way!"

The person countered, "But no one shouts the other brachos!"

"Now, that is a good question!" Reb Yosef replied.

So, the question shouldn't be why people say the brachah on sefirah with a fiery hislahavus. The question is why every brachah isn't said that way.

A student of Reb Chaim of Sanz zt'l described how Rebbe Chaim of Sanz would

count *sefirah ha'omer*. "His face turned black like coal and עהר האט געדראפעט אויף די גראַדע ווענט - he climbed straight walls." This is an expression of exceptional hislahavus.

In his later years, my grandfather, Reb Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zt'l, lived in my parents' home, and he had a minyan for maariv in their home. Although he was weak and old, he counted *sefirah ha'omer* with all his strength. His excitement was palpable. In the prayer after sefirah ha'omer, he would repeat some ten times, ואמרה ואתקדש בקדושה של מעלה... ולתקן את נפשותינו מכל סיג ופגם, "I should become pure and holy with the *kedushah* of Above...and this mitzvah should rectify all blemishes from our souls..."

(After he finished *sefirah ha'omer*, my mother would inspect the house

to make sure everything was ok and that nothing broke due to her father-in-law's spirited *sefiras ha'omer*.)

Sefiras HaOmer begins on the second day of Pesach, the day the korban ha'omer was brought in the Beis HaMikdash, and it ends with Shavuot, the day the shtei halechem, two breads were brought in the Beis HaMikdash. The omer is brought from barley, primarily used as animal food, while the shtei halechem were made of wheat flour, a staple from which human food is made. The Aruch HaShulchan (and other sefarim) say that this is a hint that during the days of sefiras ha'omer, we elevate ourselves from being like animals to becoming humans. It is a time for growth and to significantly improve our ways. The change occurs through (a) counting the sefiras ha'omer, (b) the prayers people said by sefiras ha'omer, (c) and simply by working on oneself and improving one's character these days. In

particular, these days are designated to improve our *bein adam l'chaveiro*. Reb Akiva's 24,000 students were niftar during these days because they didn't sufficiently honor one another. We mourn that error and seek to improve our ways on these days so that such faults shouldn't repeat themselves. If we acted like an "animal" towards other people in the past, we make a plan for improvement these days, and by Shavuot, we hope to be "human." We also seek to improve in all other ways as well. After sefiras ha'omer, there's a tefillah that mentions the sefira that is associated with that day: חסד שבגבורה, חסד שבחסד, and so on. Chesed represents love, and in the merit of sefiras ha'omer, instead of loving material matters, we seek to increase our love of the Torah and mitzvos, our fellow man, and Hashem. Gevurah is associated with fear. These days, we can rectify our natural feelings

of fear and channel them toward fearing Hashem.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Sefiras ha'omer purifies and prepares us for the yom tov Shavuos. It makes us a fitting vessel to accept the holiness of the upcoming yom tov.

To explain, we tell the following mashal:

Mrs. Fisher didn't know how to cook a cholent, so her husband prepared it each week. But she wasn't happy with this arrangement. She felt she was neglecting her responsibilities, so when she saw an advertisement for a course to learn how to prepare Shabbos foods, she signed up.

She knew how to bake challah, cook fish, eggs with onions, chicken soup, etc., so the classes on these dishes were unnecessary for her, but she was a sport and went to these classes and picked up a few new ideas. But the highlight for her was when the course reached its final stage and was teaching how to prepare cholent. They were taught various options: a sweet cholent, a watery cholent, and so on.

She chose the cholent that she liked best and told her husband that starting that week, she would be making the cholent.

But it didn't turn out well. No one ate it, and she couldn't eat more than a couple of forks.

After Shabbos, she called her teacher to find out what she did wrong. The teacher asked some questions, but her student had followed the recipe and did everything correctly. Then, it dawned on her teacher what went wrong. She asked her student, "Did you use a clean pot to make the cholent?"

She replied that she did not.

"That's the problem," the teacher said. The pot must be clean for the to be tasty."

The lesson of this story is that we must prepare and cleanse ourselves to become vessels suitable for receiving Hashem's light.

The Mishnah (Klayim 8:5) describes an apparently extinct animal called אדני השדה. It was a unique animal due to its human-like features. Rambam writes, "There are animals that appear like human beings. Those who tell the world's news say this animal speaks a lot, but its words are unintelligible. It speaks like a human being. It is called Alnans in Arabic. Many things are said about it."

Ra'v Bartenura writes, "It is an animal that grows in the fields. A long cord emerges from the earth, and this animal grows from it. The animal is called ידוע, and ידעוני in the Torah (see Devarim 18:11). It is connected from its belly to this rope that comes out from the earth. Its face, hands, and legs appear like a human being. No creature can come near it because it kills and rips whatever comes near it. When they

want to capture it, they shoot arrows at the rope until it becomes disconnected. It shouts bitterly and dies immediately. Perhaps Iyov discussed this animal when he said (Iyov 5:23) עם אבני השדה בריתך."

Reb Avraham Genichovsky zt'l pointed out that although this animal looks like a human being because it is bound to the ground, it is an animal. This hints that if you are connected to the ground, you are an animal. Tear yourself away from earthly temptations, and you will become human.

It states (Vayikra 15:31) והזרתם את בני ישראל מטמאתם, "You shall separate Bnei Yisrael from their tumah." The Sfas Emes (Tazria 5643 and Metzora 5646) says that the root of the word והזרתם is זר, which means crown. This teaches us that when you separate from the

---

One way we prepare for the great light of Shavuot is by counting sefirat ha'omer.

impurity of this world, this becomes your crown.<sup>2</sup>

It states (18:3) כמעשה ארץ מצרים אשר ישבתם בה לא תעשו וכמעשה ארץ כנען אשר אני מביא אתכם, שמה לא תעשו ובחקתיהם לא תלכו, "Like the practice of the land of Egypt, in which you dwelled, you shall not do, and like the practice of the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you, you shall not do, and you shall not follow their statutes." According to many miforshim, this is a warning against committing arayos. The Mitzrim and the Canaanim sinned in these matters, and we shouldn't be like them. The Sfas Emes (Acharei 5635) says that if this were the meaning of the pasuk, the pasuk is extra because the Torah clearly

forbids arayos. What is the purpose of stating that we shouldn't be like the Mitzrim and like the Canaanites if the following pasukim list the arayos that are forbidden? Rather, says the Sfas Emes, the pasuk refers to permitted deeds, saying that even when we engage in permitted activities, we should do them differently than the goy. Our middos, speech, how we relax, and the way we dress should be distinctly different from that of the goyim.

The avodah during the days of sefiras ha'omer is to elevate ourselves from behaving like animals and like the nations of the world to living like human beings and going in the ways of Hashem.<sup>3</sup>

---

2. Furthermore, the Sfas Emes teaches that if you fall into the trap of aveiros, r"l, and then you separate yourself from them, והורתם, the aveiros and tumah become your crown. This is based on the principle that when one does teshuvah, his aveiros become virtues. Thus, והורתם, he receives a crown, מטמאתם, from the aveiros and tumah.

3. Sfas Emes writes that a technique to elevate our mundane deeds

### Eating with Kedushah

We should not eat like the goyim. Our eating should be more elevated.

The Zohar (*Eikev* 272.) calls the time we eat שעת מלחמה a time of war. If you eat properly, you win the battle and become elevated. If you don't eat properly, you lose the war, and the food will draw you down.

Eating properly is essential to succeeding in both worlds. We don't realize how much we suffer from eating improperly. One's ability to have good middos, make wise decisions, understand Torah, and be focused in tefillah all depend on having a clear mind. If a person eats food that is harmful to him, it confuses his mind, and he

---

to be deeds of kedushah is to perform them in connection with a mitzvah. He writes, "Bnei Yisrael can do all their deeds with holiness because of the mitzvos. This is the meaning of the next words of the pasuk את משפטי תעשו, 'You shall fulfill my mitzvos...' When you do so, your everyday deeds won't resemble the ways of the Mitzrim and the Canaanim..."

An example of this concept is to prepare delicious meals for Shabbos, yom tov, or a siyum. If you want to eat well, there are days and times you can do so, and it will be kedushah. This is when it is performed for a mitzvah.

The Chinuch (488) discusses the mitzvah to be happy on yom tov, and he writes, "One of the reasons for this mitzvah is because it is understood to all that a person needs to be happy at times. It is a human need, just as a person needs food, rest, and sleep. Hashem wanted to grant us (His nation and sheep) the ability to fulfill this need while performing a mitzvah. So, Hashem commanded us to be happy [on yom tov], so we can earn merits with everything we do."

We learn from this Chinuch the benefit of sanctifying our mundane deeds by turning them into mitzvos.

will find himself failing in these important areas.

Likewise, if a person gobbles up food inhumanely and improperly, it will also draw him down, drawing him toward negative behaviors. He is harming himself for no good reason.

The Pachad Yitzchak of Boyan *zt'l* taught אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה, which can mean that the primary way one becomes holy is when he eats his meals properly. That is when one rises, or chas v'shalom, falls.

One Friday night, chassidim sat together at a *zits* (chassidic gathering), discussing the importance of eating with *kedushah*. The following morning, there was a kiddush in shul, and hot kugel was served. Reb Aharon, the Rav of Zhitomir *zt'l*, had attended the Friday night *zits* and was inspired to eat with holiness. He decided to wait a few moments before eating to weaken the grip of the *yetzer hara*. Meanwhile, he used

his fork to cut his portion of kugel into small pieces. That's when he found a needle in his kugel. Reb Aharon would say, "Since then, I make sure to attend every Friday night *zits* because the *zits* saved my life. Had I eaten quickly, I might have swallowed that needle."

Rebbe Zev of Zhitomir *zt'l* once looked out his window and said, "I see a cheese blintz running down the street."

The chassidim looked out the window, wondering what their Rebbe was referring to, but all they saw was a *yungerman* running down the street with his tallis and tefillin tucked under his arm. The Rebbe explained, "This man's mother-in-law made cheese blintzes this morning and told him to daven quickly so he could eat them while they're hot. The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* teaches that a person is where his thoughts are. Therefore, since this *yungerman* so was excited

for the cheese blintzes, that's how he appeared to me."

Reb Hillel Kolemaia *zt'l* was visiting Rebbe Avraham Yaakov of Sadigura *zt'l*. When Reb Hillel was preparing to leave, the Sadigura Rebbe said, "Reb Hillel, you are renowned for your *mussar* lessons. Please give me some *mussar*."

Reb Hillel Kolemeia said, "Why doesn't the Rebbe give *mussar* to his chassidim?"

The Rebbe replied, "I teach my chassidim to eat properly. If they do that, their deeds will automatically be good."

### Advice for Eating Properly

Someone asked the Chazon ish *zt'l* for advice on how to be less passionate about food. The Chazon Ish *zt'l* replied, "I am certain that the 'Ketzos' never experienced the taste of kugel." He explained that a person cannot possibly carry two passions with the same intensity in his heart. The

Ketzos desired Torah immensely, and automatically, he had less interest in matters of Olam HaZeh. Therefore, when one desires Torah and a connection with Hashem, automatically, he has weakened his craving for food.

Reb Ahron Luria (the Avodas Panim) *zt'l* asked Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* for advice on *kedushas achilah*, to eat with holiness. Rebbe Shlomke told him, "When you eat, remember that Hashem is present." He said that this counsel is alluded to in *Megillas Esther* when it states (5:8) יבוא המלך והמן אל, "let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will make for them..." This hints that when you eat, invite the King and know that the King is there. You will eat properly when you know that Hashem is present.

Haman, the yetzer hara, will also be at the meal, as indicated by the words יבוא המלך והמן אל המשתה. Haman,

the yetzer hara, seeks to entice us to eat in improper ways. But remember that Hashem is present, and with that awareness, you will be inspired to eat appropriately.

The *pasuk* concludes, ומחר, "Tomorrow I will do the king's bidding." If you remember Hashem at the meal, then ומחר, "eventually, אעשה כדבר המלך, you will eat as the King desires, properly, as a Yid should.

The Baal HaTanya offers another counsel for kedushas achilah: "When one desires to eat and pushes off the meal for an hour or less, he has conquered the sitra achara below, and Hashem's honor and holiness escalate Above. And because of this kedushah, he will receive immense help from Heaven to succeed in his *avodas Hashem*."

The Meor Einayim (Matos) clarifies that we can't serve Hashem by eating on levels that are beyond us, but within our levels, we can eat

in manners that will elevate the sparks of the food and bring immense pleasure to our Father in heaven.

### Brachos on Food

Rebbe Zev of Zhitomir zt'l was once in an inn and saw someone eating without a brachah. Reb Zev told him that there are neshamos in food. Sometimes, a neshamah waits for years for a tikkun, and if a person says a brachah over food, the neshamah can go up to Gan Eden. Reb Zev added, "And at times, the neshamah in food is the neshamah of your own relative, perhaps even of your father or mother."

The man hit his forehead with his hand and shouted, "Today is my father's *yahrzeit*!"

For many reasons, it is important to say brachos with kavanah.

There are kelipos, impurities, in food, that can draw a person down. And,

in contrast, there is kedushah, holy sparks in food that can elevate the person. A primary factor determining whether he will go up or down from the meal is how he says the brachos over the food.

Reb Chaim Vital *zt'l* writes, "My teacher, the Arizal, told me that attaining *ruach hakodesh* depends on the degree of *kavanah* one has when he makes *brachos* on food. When the *brachos* are said with *kavanah*, it destroys the *kelipos*, and the food is pure to receive holiness. The Arizal warned me about this a lot... A person must be extremely careful with brachos over foods because the person becomes holy from these *brachos*, as it says (Tehillim 40:9), ותורתך בתוך מעי, 'Your Torah is in my stomach.' A divine spirit comes to the person."

When one makes an על המזון, he says the phrase, ונברך עליה בקדושה ובטהרה, "We will bless You in the land with holiness and with purity..." We don't mention

kedushah and taharah in ברכת המזון. Why is that?

Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* explains that this is because when we eat bread, we first wash our hands, and the entire mannerism of eating is generally with kedushah and taharah. Therefore, we don't need a reminder in the brachah that we should eat with holiness and purity because, generally, that is how the meal will appear. However, mezonos is often eaten in haste. When someone is hungry, he grabs a mezonos and eats it. He doesn't wash his hands first. He might forget to eat with purity and holiness. Therefore, Chazal established that the *brachah acharonah* should remind us to eat these mini-meals with kedushah and taharah.

Tzaddikim of the Bobov dynasty sought to say על המזון every day so they could say the words ונברך עליה בקדושה ובטהרה.

### **One Day at a Time**

When we count the omer, we say, היום יום... לעומר, "Today is day... to the omer." There is an important message in these words. It tells us to focus on "today." Tell yourself, "I want to make today good."

People feel overwhelmed when they think about improvement. The task seems too hard, almost impossible. But you can be good for one day. That seems feasible. You think you can't change for always, but you can be good for one day. Focus on today, and tomorrow, you will focus on that day. Take one day at a time, and you will see that it is possible to change.

For example, if you want to overcome anger, it is probably useless to tell yourself, "I will never become angry again." If you try that approach, you will probably become angry one day, and you will despair and not try again. Instead, tell yourself, "I won't become

angry today." That is a kabbalah you might be able to keep. The next day, repeat your success. And in this manner, you will improve, one day at a time.

The same is true of tefillah. If you tell yourself, "For now on, I will always daven with kavanah," it seems overwhelming, and you won't be able to daven well, even for one day. Instead, tell yourself, "I will daven with kavanah today." This is a smaller undertaking, and your chances of success are much better. Tomorrow, tell yourself the same. Step by step, you will improve your ways.

It states (Vayikra 14:2) ביום טהרתו, "on the day of his purification." The Divrei Shmuel zt'l explains that if your focus is ביום, today, you will be able to improve your ways and attain purity. He writes, "Don't think about the aveiros of your past [which will cause you to lose hope] and don't think about what will be in the future [which will

overwhelm you]. Focus on today. "Today, I can make a nachas ruach for Hashem with Torah and mitzvos." Focus on this day alone, and you will become tavor.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 98.) tells that Yehoshua ben Levi once found Eliyahu HaNavi standing at the entrance of Reb Shimon bar Yochai's cave.

Yehoshua ben Levi asked him, "When will Moshiach come?"

Eliyahu replied, "Ask Moshiach himself."

Yehoshua ben Levi went to Moshiach (Eliyahu told him where to find him) and asked Moshiach, לאימת אתי מר, "When will you come?"

Moshiach replied, היום, "Today."

Yehoshua ben Levi returned to Eliyahu and said, "Moshiach lied to me. He said he would come today, but he didn't."

Eliyahu explained, "Moshiach meant (Tehillim 95:7) היום אם בקולו תשמעו, 'Today if to His voice you will listen.'" Moshiach will come today if we will listen to Hashem's voice.

Tzaddikim added that Moshiach was advising him on how to succeed in listening to Hashem's voice. It is to focus on היום, today, one day at a time. If you do so, you will find yourself able to listen and obey Hashem's voice.<sup>4</sup>

---

4. Reb Binyamin Rabinowitz zt'l was the *rosh yeshiva* of Toldos Aharon. On Shiva Asar b'Tamuz, a student saw Reb Binyamin Rabinowitz learning eight hours straight without interruption! Generally, on a fast day people are weaker, but he learned with *hasmadah* the entire day, without taking any breaks. The student was amazed, and asked Reb Binyamin how he did it. He replied:

"I didn't begin studying eight hours straight. I started with a *kabbalah* that I wouldn't interrupt my learning for five minutes. I

## Run Like a Deer

Chazal say (and we mention it in the tefillah of *Kiddush Levanah*) that saying *Kiddush Levanah* is like meeting with the *Shechinah*.<sup>5</sup>

Amid this special tefillah, the custom is that people say shalom aleichem to one another. We can explain, b'derech tzachus, that this tells us that we should never forget our fellow man. Even at this special time when we meet with the *Shechinah*, if someone greets you, answer him. Say *shalom aleichem* three times because one

must be considerate and caring to his fellow man, even during the most holy moments.

The Baal HaTanya zt'l lived in the same house as his son, Reb Dov Ber (the Mittele Rebbe) zt'l. Once, Reb Dov Ber's son fell out of his crib. Reb Dov Ber was engrossed in his studies and didn't hear the baby cry. The Baal HaTanya, however, from his apartment upstairs heard the cry, and he went downstairs to take care of the baby. He rebuked his son, Reb Dov Ber, and said, "No matter how engrossed

---

kept this *kabbalah* for several months. Then I added on another five minutes. A few months later, I added another five minutes. Now I'm an old man. Those five minutes have accumulated. Now, I'm up to learning eight hours without interruption."

5. Another specialty of *Kiddush Levanah* is that it is mesugal for long life. The *magid* (angel) told the Beis Yosef, "After you say *Kiddush Levanah*, you will surely live out that month."

Shaarei Teshuvah writes that a band of thieves and murderers once captured a Yid. They agreed to grant his final wish before murdering him r"l. He said that he wanted to recite *Kiddush Levanah*. When he jumped up during *Kiddush Levanah* (as is customary to jump three times), a strong wind caught him in the air and carried him far away from the bandits. This saved his life.

one is in his studies and avodas Hashem, one may never fail to hear the cry of a child." Our devotion to Hashem should never cause us to lose sight of the needs of others.

It states in *Pirkei Avos* (5:20), "Reb Yehudah ben Teima says, קל כנשר ורץ, הוי... קל כנשר ורץ, 'Be... light like an eagle and run like a deer...'"

An eagle is quicker than a deer. After the Mishna states that we should be light and swift like an eagle, why does it add that we should run like a deer, at a slower pace?

Reb Shimon Sofer zt'l answers that רץ כנשר, "run like a deer," means that even when we are swift in avodas Hashem, and we run to do Hashem's service, we should be similar to a deer that always looks back it. It states (Shir HaShirim 8:14) ברח דודי ודמה לך, "Flee, my beloved, and liken yourself to a deer." Chazal explain that when Hashem runs away from us due to our sins, chalilah,

Hashem should be like a deer that always looks back. Hashem should do the same and continue to watch over us from afar.

The Mishnah is telling us הוי... קל כנשר, that one should be very quick in avodas Hashem, and yet he should be רץ כנשר, he should look back to see if someone needs help. His hislahavus to serve Hashem shouldn't prevent him from helping his fellow man.

This lesson particularly applies during sefiras ha'omer, a time designated for spiritual growth. Grow swiftly like an eagle but run like the deer that always looks back to see if others need your help. Your righteousness and spiritual pursuit shouldn't cause you to lose sight of other people and their needs.

Shulchan Aruch (58:1) states that the earliest time to read Shema in the morning is when one can recognize a friend from a distance of four amos.

Saying Shema is a highlight of the day; we proclaim our emunah that Hashem is one. Yet, even at this exalted time, we can't forget our fellow man. This is hinted at in the halacha that the time to say Shema begins when one can see his fellow man.

The Kedushas Levi zt'l (quoted in Bas Ayin) taught that the אה"ך of Shema stands for אה"ל, the brother of the poor. You should consider yourself the brother of the poor, who will do whatever he can to help his brother.

The fact that this important lesson is derived from the word אה"ך in Krias Shema indicates that even at the highest moments of our life when we focus on the One Hashem, we shouldn't lose sight of our needy brothers.

Reb Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt'l had an open kitchen to feed the poor. He would sit near a table on the side, studying Torah, as his guests would eat the meals he graciously served them.

Once, one of the elderly guests had difficulty eating the bread. This old man didn't have teeth, and it was hard for him to peel away the crust. Reb Yehoshua Leib stopped learning and helped the old man cut away the crust. Someone asked Reb Yehoshua Leib, "You were studying so intensely; how did you notice that the old man needed help?"

He replied, "Hashem was speaking to Avraham Avinu when the guests arrived, and Avraham recognized them. He asked Hashem to wait until he cared for his guests (see Bereishis 18:3). But how did he even notice that guests arrived? Hashem was speaking with him! He was undoubtedly entirely engrossed in his conversation with Hashem. The answer is that a person recognizes the mitzvos that are important to him. Avraham excelled in the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*; therefore, he could always recognize when guests arrived.

Reb Yehoshua Leib explained that although he was immersed in learning Torah, the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim was important to him, and therefore, he was constantly in tune with his guests' needs.<sup>6</sup>

Rebbe Shlomo of Radomsk *zt'l* (the Tiferes Shlomo) came to the Rebbe of Radoshitz *zt'l* for Shavuos.

"But you have your own community," the Rebbe of

Radoshitz rebuked him. "They need you. Why did you come to me?"

"I also need a Rebbe," the Tiferes Shlomo explained, "so I came to you for Shavuos."

The Rebbe of Radoshitz wasn't pleased and said, "Before *matan Torah*, it states (Shemos 19:14) וירד משה מן ההר אל העם "Moshe went down from the mountain to the nation." Rashi writes, "We learn from this that Moshe didn't go to

---

6. When a question regarding kashrus was brought to Reb Moshe Klirs *zt'l*, the Rav of Teveria, he was meticulous to rule correctly. He wouldn't take the easy way out when it was a complex shaaleh, and just rule that it isn't kosher. He explained, quoting the Shevet Mussar, that if he makes a mistake when he rules that the food isn't kosher, he is causing a poor person to lose money. That is a sin *bein adam lechaveiro*, for which Yom Kippur doesn't atone. This is a greater aveirah than when one errs and rules that something is kosher when it isn't. The latter is a sin *ben adam laMakom*, which can be rectified with teshuvah.

As an interesting aside, one of the *sefarim* that the Shevet Mussar wrote is called *Eizur Eliyahu* (Eliyahu's belt) because of a miracle that happened to him. Once, he awoke in the middle of the night and wanted to study Torah and pray, but he needed a belt. It was dark. He bent down and picked up what he thought was a belt and wrapped himself with it. In the morning, he saw that he had wrapped himself with a snake. To commemorate this miracle, he named his *sefer Eizur Eliyahu* (the belt of Eliyahu).

his own business. He went directly from the mountain to the nation.' What businesses did Moshe Rabbeinu have? His business was spiritually preparing for *matan Torah* because Moshe also wanted to prepare himself for this great moment. The *pasuk* praises Moshe Rabbeinu for abandoning his own growth to help the Jewish nation."

This is how the Rebbe of Radoshitz impressed on the Tiferes Shlomo that one must be ready to make spiritual sacrifices to help others.

Someone entered the Baal Shem Tov's *beis medresh*, possibly for the first time. The Toldos zt'l greeted this newcomer and asked him where he was from. The guest replied, "What difference does it make?" He wasn't interested in making small talk.

The Toldos tried another time. He asked him a question, but the man replied, "Where I am from

and where I am going to, what difference does it make?"

The Toldos told him, "When two people meet and share a few words, they become friends. The next time they meet, they are happy to see one another. They praise Hashem that they had this opportunity to meet with their friend. Hashem loves it when we praise Him, as it states (Tehillim 22:4) ואתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל, which can be translated that Hashem sits and awaits to hear the praises Bnei Yisrael tell him. Therefore, it is important to greet your fellow man and to become friends, because this will result in Hashem's name being blessed and praised.

Perhaps there was another reason the Toldos considered it important to greet this stranger. The guest was new in town. Maybe he needed advice, help, a place to be, etc. By greeting him, the Toldos made himself available to help.

As is stated in Kesubos (17.), a person shouldn't live like a hermit, alone. He should be among people, so he can help everyone with what they need.

The Toldos was in the Baal Shem Tov's beis medresh then. He was certainly inspired to daven and to study Torah on a very high level, in the elevated *derech* of avodas Hashem that the Baal Shem Tov taught. Nevertheless, his inspiration didn't prevent him from thinking about the needs of his fellow man. Someone new arrived, and perhaps he needed help. The Toldos wouldn't forget his fellow man, even then.

### **From the Brain to the Heart**

A lecturer was preaching to his audience about avoiding anger at all times. He hollered, "Even if you have good reason to be angry, it isn't worthwhile. You will only lose. You must

always control your anger! Never lose your temper..."

Just then, someone came up to the podium to serve him a hot tea. The problem was that he carelessly placed the tea on the slanted lectern. The hot tea spilled on the speaker, scalding him and messing up his new suit.

The speaker was annoyed and said, "Why can't you be careful? This isn't the first time. You always do things like this." The speaker carried on and on. He couldn't control his anger.

How did this happen? Didn't he just say that one must always control his anger? The answer is that he knew these ideas in his mind, but that wasn't enough to influence the heart. You have to bring the ideas in the mind to the heart, or your actions won't change and improve.

The Tzaddikim of Slonim *zt'l* say, "The distance between the mind and the heart is greater than the

distance between heaven and earth."

A doctor once asked the Divrei Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* what he does for a living. The Divrei Chaim replied that he is a bridge builder. The doctor's eyes opened wide in disbelief. The Sanzer Rav explained, "I am working to bridge the gap between the mind and the heart, that the ideas in my mind should reach the heart."

The Sanzer Rav's *gabbai* (in *Darkei Chaim*) relates that each morning, upon awakening, the Sanzer Rav would review concepts of *emunah*. He worked on bringing the ideas of *emunah* that are in the brain to penetrate and reach his heart.

The Dubno Magid *zt'l* told the following *mashal*:

A teacher walked with his students through a thick forest and told his students, "If you see dogs, don't be afraid. Just say, *ולכל בני ישראל*

*לא יחרץ כלב לשונו*, and the dogs will scatter."

A pack of large dogs approached them. The teacher was the first to run. When things calmed down, the students asked their teacher, "Why were you so afraid? All you needed to do was say the *pasuk*, and the dogs wouldn't harm us.

The teacher replied, "When I heard the dogs barking, I became so afraid, I forgot the *pasuk*."

The explanation is that the idea was in his mind, not his heart. Therefore, he was afraid of the dogs.

Someone was once experiencing nightmares that someone was speaking *lashon hara* on him. He remembered the dreams by daytime, and they robbed his peace of mind.

"It's just a dream," his wife would tell him. "Don't worry about it."

But the nightmares kept coming back. Once, he told

his wife, "It's terrible! This person said the worst things about me in front of many people..."

His wife reminded him that it was just a dream. "החלומות שוא ידברו Dreams tell nonsense," she said.

"I know it's just a dream," he replied, "but how does that help me? I still have a great problem because he's talking about me!"

Intellectually, he knew that it was just a dream and not real, but his heart didn't know that.<sup>7</sup>

The lesson is that one must often review concepts of emunah and mussar that he wants to acquire. Although you know these concepts already, don't think that it is superfluous to discuss them again. Talk about emunah and mussar with your students, your children, and your fellow

---

7. A story is told of a young man who was confined in a mental asylum because he thought he was a mouse. His wealthy parents hired a psychologist to speak with the boy every day. The psychologist had the young man repeat, "I'm not a mouse," many times until he was cured, and his parents were notified that they could take him home.

The joyous parents picked up their son and were happy that everything was well with him. They came to the driving lot, where the parents' car was parked, and suddenly, the boy ran away and crawled under one of the cars. The exasperated parents asked him, "What are you doing under the car?"

He replied, "I saw a cat in the parking lot."

"So what? You've been cured. You aren't afraid of cats anymore. You know that you aren't a mouse."

The boy replied, "Yes, I know I am not a mouse, but how does the cat know?"

man. The ideas are well known, but you need the reviews so the ideas of *emunah* and *mussar* will penetrate and reach the heart.

The Baal HaTanya *zt'l* explained that the ך' of אהד looks like a large hammer because one has to hammer into his head the *emunah* that ה' אהד. One accomplishes

this by constantly reviewing *emunah* until it becomes his reality. Yes, you know the *emunah* already, but say it every morning and evening, and repeat it by *kriyas Shemah al Hamittah*, and before the *korbanos*. Each time you say it, put all your heart and soul into the words. You know it already, but we also need your heart to know.<sup>8</sup>

---

8. At the end of the Seder, we sing אהד מי יודע... The song is written in question-and-answer form: "Who knows one? I know one. One is Hashem in the heaven and the earth. Who knows two? Two are the *luchos*..." and so on. The Shem MiShmuel *zt'l* questions why it needs to be with questions and answers? It could have simply stated, "One is Hashem, two are the *luchos*, three are the *avos*," and so on.

The Shem MiShmuel explains that this song is a test. At the end of the Seder, we want to see whether we've internalized the lessons that the Seder teaches us. We ask, "When I say one, what's the first thought that comes to your mind? Is it 'one hundred dollars'? Is it some other worldly object, or is your first thought that Hashem is one?"

We go through the numbers from one to thirteen and ask the family, what's your first association when you hear these numbers? If we acquired the lessons of the Seder correctly, we will say: One is Hashem. Two are the *luchos*. Three are the *avos*...

The Gemara (*Menachos* 43:) says, "The color of *techeles* (of *tzitzis*) resembles the ocean. The color of the ocean is similar to that of heaven. When one thinks about heaven, he thinks about the *Kisei*

## Beginnings

Tzaddikim taught that a person's first thoughts, speech, and actions (מחשבה, דיבור, ומעשה) of the day should be for Hashem. For example, the first thing people do upon awakening is they say *modeh ani* and they wash *negel vasser*. That means the first words and deeds were for Hashem, which sets the tone for the entire day.

Rebbe Zusha of Honipoli *zt'l* would begin the day by

saying, "It should be a good morning for all Yidden."

Our subject includes the idea that one should begin the day by learning Torah, davening, etc. Don't begin the day by reading the newspaper or listening to the news. Begin the day in a positive manner; it can change the entire way the day transpires. When the foundation is good, the entire edifice of the day will be built on a firm basis, and

---

*HaKavod* (Hashem's throne)." Thus, by wearing *techeles*, one remembers the *Kisei HaKavod* and Hashem.

It's quite a distance between *techeles* and the *Kisei HaKavod*. Quite a few steps are required to get from *techeles* to Hashem's throne.

Some people look at the sea and even at the sky and still forget the *Kisei HaKavod*. So how does wearing *techeles* help?

The answer is that if someone desires *emunah*, even the vaguest hint will remind him of his *emunah*.

The Gemara says "It is forbidden to look at women's colorful clothing, even when they are hanging on a wall, if he knows who the clothes belong to" (*Avodah Zarah* 20:). The Gemara explains this may cause him to have improper thoughts. So everything depends on where one's mind and desire are. His mind will bring him to what he wants to think about. We should develop an affinity for *emunah*, so that the slightest reminder of *emunah* should inspire us to remember Hashem.

you will accomplish a lot during the day.

The Toldos (Ki Savo) writes, "The wise should be cautious, and he should tell his children as well, that the younger years should be used primarily for avodas Hashem and fighting the battle against the yetzer hara. This is as it states in Pirkei Avos (3:12) הוי קל לראש [which can be translated as that one should be swift to utilize the beginnings of one's life for avodas Hashem]..."

In parashas Shlach, the Toldos writes, "When a child begins to speak, Chazal (Succah 42.) say we should teach him... to say תורה צוה לנו משה, [so the beginning of his speech should be speaking Torah]. Also a person's deeds, each day, should begin with going to the beis kneses before he goes to his work. This is a great benefit for many reasons. It will help him daven with kavanah, without foreign thoughts, etc. And, in this way, he will have greater

success in his work, too. The same applies to all one's senses: sight, hearing, walking, and feeling. The wise will listen and add on more ideas."

This also applies to the times one sets for Torah study. It is wise to begin right away with studying Torah. If you start with shmoozing with your chavrusa, asking him how his day went, fifteen minutes can pass unproductively. If you begin with Torah, the entire learning session will appear differently.

This also applies to when a new zman begins. For many yeshiva *bachurim* and *kollel yungerleit*, a new *zman* for Torah study is about to start. It is important to make the beginning good, with *hasmadah* and enthusiasm. The *hasmadah* and enthusiasm will probably cool down as the days and weeks pass, but since you began on a positive note, you will likely continue learning well throughout the *zman*.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Kevias Ittim for Torah***

Fortunate are those who can learn Torah for many hours a day, but many people can't. The obligations of *parnassah* take up much of their time. Nevertheless, they should have their times and moments when they study Torah. Those times are very precious.

Tzaddikim of Slonim *zt'l* would say that when you have an hour of Torah study, consider it a "#1". An hour without Torah is a zero. Place the many zeros after

the one, and you have a large number.

The question is, how does one place the zeros after the one? Perhaps the zeros will come before the one?<sup>10</sup>

The tzaddikim of Slonim replied that if you consider the hour of Torah the most important part of your day, you have placed the "1" before all the zeros. But if the work hours are more important to you, then you have placed the zeros before the one.

---

9. When preparing a cup of coffee, boiling water is used. Most people cannot drink the coffee at that high temperature, though. They wait for the coffee to cool down a bit (or add milk). But it is important that the beginning should be piping hot.

Similarly, one should begin the *zman* with fiery enthusiasm. The enthusiasm and *hasmadah* will likely not remain at the same intensity throughout the *zman*, but it is essential to begin in this ideal state. If one starts the *zman* lukewarm, not entirely focused on Torah study, he will likely become even less interested as time goes on. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to start off with a bang.

10. Based on what we wrote above, we can answer that we should begin the day with Torah and *tefillah*. Begin the day with good deeds, and then all the zeros that follow will increase the value and worth of that one hour that you dedicated to *avodas Hashem*.

The father of the Shlah Hakodesh, Reb Sheftel Ish Levi zt'l, teaches that just as we daven each day and wear tefillin each day, studying Gemara, Rashi, and Tosfos each day is no

less of an obligation. A day shouldn't pass when one isn't involved in Torah.<sup>11</sup>

Sometimes people feel they need every minute of their day to earn money and

---

**11.** Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zy'a was renowned for his love and passion for Gemara. He would say: "Someone who doesn't study Gemara is נישט קיין מענטש און נישט קיין איד, "He isn't a Yid, and he isn't even a human being."

He explained that this is the reason the *brachah* השיבו in *Shemonah Esrei*, which is a request for success in doing *teshuvah*, begins with a request for Torah. This is because without Torah, one is נישט קיין איד און נישט קיין מענטש, "not a Yid, and not even a human being." It is impossible to succeed in doing *teshuvah* without dedication to Torah study.

It is written: ותהי ראשית ממלכתו בבל (*Bereishis* 10:10). Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zt'l would say that implied in this *pasuk* is, ותהי ראשית ממלכתו בבל "One should begin with Talmud Bavli." That is the first step in the process of *teshuvah*.

We say in the morning, שתרגילנו בתורתך, "Make us accustomed to Your Torah."

The Imrei Emes zt'l said that although being accustomed to something has a negative aspect to it, for then it will lack the freshness and newness of someone starting to study Torah for the first time, nevertheless, it is possible to be accustomed to Torah, and yet study daily with a new, refreshed vigor. An example of this, he said, is eating. People eat every day, yet they never become bored. When a plate of food is in front of them, they can eat it with gusto, like they have never eaten before. We should similarly be accustomed to learning Torah, yet it should always be new and cherished.

don't have time for Torah study. We remind them of the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 19), which says, "Whoever studies Torah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu fulfills his desires....Whoever studies Torah, his assets prosper." Torah study is mesugal for wealth and success. Setting time for Torah won't lessen the parnassah.

A chassid once wrote a kvittel to Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmastrivka zy'a stating that he wants a brachah for hatzlachah in everything he does."

Rebbe Yochanan Rachmastrivka told him, "Dovid HaMelech was also a great Rebbe. His counsel for hatzlachah was to study Torah. As it states (Tehillim 1), כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת ה' חִפְצוּ... וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ, 'His desire is solely Hashem's Torah...whatever he does prospers.' This isn't solely a brachah; it's a guarantee. If you study Torah, you will succeed in everything you do."

Year 5314 was a devastating year in Italy.

Hundreds of thousands of sefarim were burned (similar to the gezeirah that occurred in Paris, approximately year 5004). The decree began in Rome, and then other cities followed. To annul this decree, the Ramchal zt'l established a plan that Torah should always be studied in his beis medresh, and the scholars' intentions should be to annul the harsh decrees from Bnei Yisrael.

The plan is written in a letter, quoted in Otzros Ramchal (p.349).

"The counsel for the Jewish community in Italy that they should be saved from this decree that their enemies established is certainly that they should be cautious with the following counsel, and they shouldn't be lenient because it is a wonderful solution to save them from the gezeirah. We chose seven talmidei chachamim who have designated themselves for this mission, that between them, there will always be Torah studied, day and night, without stop.

Together, they accepted on themselves that their learning should be for the rectification of all Yidden. In this manner, we are all like one person; they won't be studying for themselves but for all of Yisrael.

"They begin after Shacharis. One person chooses a spot to study and studies there until the second person comes to take his place. This second person will take the same type of sefer and continue from where the first one had reached. And he will learn until the third person comes. The third person will take a sefer and continue from where the second person left off. They continue with this pattern until the stars come out at night. They do so every day. As they learn, they consider themselves as though they are davening Shemonah esrei, so they won't stop or interrupt their learning. Additionally, the first person won't stop learning before the next person begins to study. In this manner, there isn't a

moment without Torah study. We know that Hashem chose this to annul all harsh decrees, particularly to be a protecting wall in regards to this harsh decree, chas v'shalom."

He recommends in this letter that others copy this plan and implement it in their communities.

We quote this Ramchal here primarily for the line, "As they learn, they consider themselves as though they are davening Shemonah Esrei, and therefore, they won't stop or interrupt their learning." This is what people should do when they designate time for learning Torah. They should feel that they are in the middle of Shemonah Esrei and can't speak.

Furthermore, just as one wouldn't consider missing one of the three Shemonah Esreis of the day, so, too, one shouldn't consider missing the time he set for Torah study.