

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita*

Noach



Torah WELLSPRINGS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mail@TorahWellsprings.com
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Torah Wellsprings - Noach

No Complaints

When a person complains about his life, it makes matters worse. When he believes that everything is bashert, exactly as it is destined to be, he earns so much more.¹

The Chida asks why we have a mitzvah to sit in a succah commemorating the ענני כבוד, the clouds of glory that surrounded and protected the Jewish nation. Still, we don't have a mitzvah to commemorate the manna and the well of Miryam, which provided food and water for the nation in the desert? Why are these kindnesses not commemorated?

The Chida answers that the nation received water from the well of Miryam and the manna to eat only after they had complained and cried. It is not fitting to commemorate gifts that came through such a process. But the clouds of glory, which protected the Jewish nation, were given without complaint and without protest. Therefore, this kindness is commemorated with the mitzvah of succah.

Reb Moshe Feinstein zt'l teaches that when Bnei Yisrael were in the desert, they needed water. They complained before Moshe that they needed water, which caused Moshe to hit the stone, and Moshe had to be

1. This story was told by Reb Elyah Lopian zt'l, and Reb Shalom Shvadron zt'l repeated it to the Brisker Rav zt'l.

Reb Eliezer Shulvitz zt'l, founder of Yeshivas Lomzhe, once asked the Chofetz Chaim zt'l whom he should appoint as mashgiach for his yeshivah. The Chofetz Chaim replied, "I have a good idea for you. There is a gaon and tzaddik who lives here in our city. Until recently he served as a rosh kollel and had parnassah, but the kollel closed, and now he has no livelihood. I believe he would be an excellent mashgiach for your yeshivah."

This conversation took place shortly before Yom Tov. On Chol HaMoed, the Chofetz Chaim sent a telegram to Reb Eliezer Shulvitz informing him that he had reconsidered and was no longer certain that this individual was the right choice.

Immediately after Yom Tov, Rav Shulvitz returned to the Chofetz Chaim to ask why he had changed his mind. The Chofetz Chaim explained, "During the holiday, this rosh kollel came to visit me, and he complained that he has no parnassah. In my opinion, someone who complains about his livelihood is not suited to be a mashgiach for bachurim. Even though it was Chol HaMoed, I felt it was important to send you a telegram right away, so you would not hire him and later regret it."

Reb Elyah Lopian zt'l would repeat this story and add: We can be certain that this man — the one the Chofetz Chaim originally recommended — was a tzaddik, a talmid chacham, and a person who excelled in yiras Shamayim and in all middos bein adam laMakom and bein adam lachaveiro. Nevertheless, when the Chofetz Chaim saw that he complained and bemoaned his situation, unable to accept the difficult circumstances Hashem had placed upon him, he concluded that he was not the best choice to guide young bachurim.

Reb Elyah added another powerful point: See what a person loses when he lacks bitachon. Had this man trusted in Hashem and refrained from complaining about his parnassah, he would have been appointed mashgiach of the Lomzhe Yeshivah and would have received a respectable salary. But because of his worries and complaints, he lost that opportunity.

Therefore, train yourself not to worry. Whatever matter troubles you, your Father in Heaven is already taking care of you.

niftar before he came to Eretz Yisrael. Their complaints caused a loss.

The nation also complained that they wanted food. They received the *mann*, but they had to toil with it. The *mann* required some work to gather it, etc.² But they never complained about their clothes. They trusted in Hashem that He would provide for them. And since they didn't complain about their clothes, they received miracles with their clothes, and nothing negative occurred. As it states (Devarim 8:4) שִׁמְלַתְךָ לֹא בִלְתֶּה מֵעֲלֶיךָ... זֶה אֶרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה, "Your garment did not wear out upon you.... These forty years." Rashi writes, עָנִי כְבוֹד הָיוּ שָׁפִין בְּכִסּוֹתֵם וּמִגֹּהֲצִים אוֹתָם כְּמִין כְּלִים מִגֹּהֲצִים, וְאִף קִטְנִיהֶם כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיוּ גְדִילִים הָיָה גָדֵל לְבוּשָׁן עִמָּהֶם, כְּלָבוֹשׁ הַזֶּה שֶׁל "The clouds of glory would rub [and clean] their clothes and iron them out. For the young, their clothes grew with them, like the clothes of a snail that grows with it."

This is because when one trusts in Hashem, without complaints, he will receive everything he needs, without toil.

Caring for Others

Hashem acts with people according to how they act with others. If they are compassionate and kind towards others,

Hashem will be kind to them even if they have severe aveiros.³ If the people of the דור המבול, generation of the flood, had been compassionate to one another, Hashem would have had rachmanus and compassion on them. But they were cruel to each other, and therefore, they weren't treated with *rachmanus*, and they were punished for their severe aveiros.

There is a difficult Rashi (6:13, see also Sanhedrin 108a), which states לֹא נִחְתָּם גֹּזֵר דִּינָם אֱלֹא עַל הַגֹּזֵל, "Their decree was sealed solely because of theft." The דור המבול had worse aveiros than theft. The Rashi right before it states, כָּל מָקוֹם שֶׁאֵתָּה מוֹצֵא זִנוּת וְעִבּוּדֵת אֱלִילִים, אֲנִדְרַלְמוּסִיא בָּאָה לְעוֹלָם, "Every place that you find the sins of arayos and avodah zarah, destruction comes to the world, which kills those who are good and those who are bad." They sinned with avodah zarah, with arayos, which are worse aveiros than theft. Why was the decree signed and sealed solely because of theft?

The Chasam Sofer and the Tiferes Shlomo both explain that they were punished for their avodah zarah and for arayos. The "theft," however, showed that they didn't have compassion towards others. If they had had compassion, Hashem would have

2. It states regarding the manna (Shemos 16:4), וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה הִנְנִי מְקַטֵּיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וַלְקֻטּוֹ דִּבֶּר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ — "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Behold, I shall rain down for you bread from heaven. Let the people go out and gather each day's portion on its day.'"

The Noam Elimelech (Beshalach, "ה' ויאמר ה' אל משה") explains that Hakadosh Baruch Hu was telling Moshe: הִנְנִי — "I am ready," — מְקַטֵּיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם — "to shower you with parnassah from heaven." — הִיטָה פִּרְסָתוֹ מְזוּמָּנָה לוֹ שֶׁלֹּא בִצֵּעַר וְעִבְדוּת כָּלל כִּי אִם כְּמוֹת הַזֶּה הַהוּלֵךְ שֶׁלֹּא בִּיגִיעָה — "If a person would trust in Hashem with a faithful heart, his livelihood would come to him without pain or toil, just like rain that falls effortlessly."

However, וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם — when people lack bitachon and step beyond the proper measure of hishtadlus, when they feel compelled to run and strain and chase after their livelihood, then וַלְקֻטּוֹ דִּבֶּר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ — they must go out each day to gather their parnassah through effort.

The message is subtle but powerful: Hashem is prepared to send parnassah like rain — gently, steadily, without struggle — but when a person's heart tightens with worry, he pushes himself into unnecessary exertion. Bitachon opens the gates for heavenly sustenance; anxiety closes them.

3. It states (Tehillim 121:5) ה' צִלְךָ — "Hashem is your shadow." The Baal Shem Tov (and its source is a Midrash) explains that a shadow copies all of a person's movements. Similarly, Hashem mirrors what we do. If people act kindly toward one another, Hashem will bestow kindness upon them. If people forgive their fellow man, Hashem will forgive them, and so on.

compassion on them and save them, despite their severe aveiros. Since they stole, it means they were callous and cruel towards others, and therefore they had to be punished for their immorality and idolatry.

The parashah begins with the words, אלה נח. תולדות נח, נח is written twice to imply that he was נח לשמים ונח לבריות, kind to heaven and kind to people. The Chasam Sofer (ד"ה האיש נח) explains that everyone else in the generation was "bad to heaven and bad to people". They didn't have compassion on their fellow man. They didn't go in Hashem's ways, Who is רחום וחנון, compassionate and kind. Therefore, it states (6:12) וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחָתָה בִּי הַשָּׁחִית כָּל בָּשָׂר אֶת דְּרָכֹוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ, "Hashem saw the earth and behold it was corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." The Chasam Sofer says that דְּרָכֹוֹ means "Hashem's ways". בִּי הַשָּׁחִית כָּל בָּשָׂר אֶת דְּרָכֹוֹ means they were corrupt because they didn't follow Hashem's ways to be kind and compassionate. The Chasam Sofer writes, "If they would have gone in Hashem's ways to be compassionate and kind to all, Hashem would have had compassion on them [and the flood wouldn't come], although they had aveiros בין אדם למקום, sins against Hashem. But since they weren't compassionate and kind, their decree was signed and finalized, due to theft".

Similarly, the Tiferes Shlomo writes, if they would have had compassion on their fellow man, Hashem would have compassion on them. But since there was a lot of theft,

as it states (6:13) מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס, "for the earth is filled with theft", and they didn't act compassionately with one another, therefore, Heaven didn't have compassion on them.⁴

The Midrash states that there was a drought in the days of Rav Tanchuma, and he decreed a fast to pray for rain. They fasted for three days on Monday, Thursday, and the next Monday (as this is the pattern that is done when there is a drought), but it didn't rain. Rav Tanchuma said to the community, "My children, have a lot of compassion for one another and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will have compassion upon you."

There was one person who gave tzedakah to a poor person. The Midrash explains there at length that under normal circumstances, he would never have helped this poor person, but for the sake of acting with compassion, as Rav Tanchuma taught them, he helped this poor man. Rav Tanchuma turned his eyes to heaven and said, "Ribono Shel Olam, this person doesn't owe anything to this poor man. He isn't obligated to support him, yet he had compassion for him and helped him. Certainly, You, which about You it states (Tehillim 145:8) חנון ורחום ה', 'Hashem is kind and compassionate,' and we are the children of those whom You love; we are the children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov; certainly, you should have compassion on us." Immediately after saying this, it began to rain.

When we have rachmanus on others, Hashem will have rachmanus on us.⁵

4. It states (Tehillim 89:3) בִּי אֶמְרָתִי עוֹלָם יִבְנֶה — "For I said, 'the world will be built with kindness.'" The word יִבְנֶה is in the future tense (it does not say יִבְנֶה). This means that the world was not only created with kindness; its continued existence, in every generation and in all future generations, depends on the deeds of kindness that people perform. When they act with kindness, Hashem responds in kind, goodness comes to the world, and the world continues to exist.

5. The Zohar (Chadash, Rus) tells that it is eternally engraved upon Hashem's holy throne, the כסא הכבוד, the cries that Reb Yishmael ben Elisha Kohen Gadol cried over the head of Reb Shimon ben Gamliel. The story of this crying is discussed in the piyut אלה אזכרה, which we say on Yom Kippur. The piyut recounts the עשרה מלכות, the ten holy tanaim who were killed by the Roman emperor. It states that when the emperor was about to kill Reb Shimon ben Gamliel and Reb Yishmael, he made a goresl to determine who would be killed first. The goresl fell on Reb Shimon ben Gamliel. After the resha'im cut off Reb Shimon ben Gamliel's head, Reb Yishmael took the head in his hands and cried bitterly over it. The Zohar tells us that this crying

is forever engraved upon Hashem's throne.

The question is: over the past two thousand years of galus, there has been much crying, r"l. What was unique about this crying, more than all other tears, that specifically this one is engraved upon the כסא הכבוד?

The Tiferes Shlomo zt"l (Shaar Krias Shema, ד"ה ושמתם, הקב"ה) answers that Reb Yishmael knew that within moments he would also be killed. Nevertheless, he did not cry for himself; he cried for his friend, Reb Shimon ben Gamliel. Tiferes Shlomo writes, "This is the reason specifically this crying and shouting reached Hashem's throne. It is because the crying was not for himself, only for the tzarah of Reb Shimon ben Gamliel."

Every Shabbos (after יקום פרקו) we say: "מי שברך אבותינו... הוא יברך את כל הקהל הקדוש הזה... וכל מי שעוסקים בצרכי ציבור באמונה, הקב"ה — "The One Who blessed our forefathers... He shall bless every person from this holy community... and all those who involve themselves faithfully in the needs of the community. Hakadosh Baruch Hu shall reward them, remove from them all illness, heal their entire bodies, and forgive all their sins."

In this tefillah, we first daven for the physical wellbeing of the community and those who help the community, and only afterward for their spirituality, that Hashem forgive their aveiros. In Shemonah Esrei, the order is the opposite: first סליח לנו, that Hashem forgive our aveiros, and then רפאנו, that He heal us. Why does the order change?

The answer is that in the מי שברך we daven for others, whereas in Shemonah Esrei we daven for ourselves. When one davens for himself, it is proper to first pray for his spiritual needs and then for his physical needs. But when we daven for others, we should first pray for their physical well-being — that they be healthy and well — and afterward for their spiritual needs. For others, one's primary focus should be that they have all their gashmiyus needs, and second to that, one tries to help them with their spirituality as well.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l asks: why is the heart on the left side of the body? Usually, the right side is more important, and it would seem that the heart, which is so important, should be on the right side. He answers that the heart was not created for oneself, but to help others — to feel another person's hardships and to know what he lacks. When one person stands facing another, his left side is on the right side of the other person. Hashem placed the heart on the left side so that it should be on the right side of one's fellow man.

It states (Shemos 22:24) אִם בָּקִשְׁתָּ תַּלְוֶה אֶת עַמִּי אֶת הָעֹנִי עִמָּךְ. The Chasam Sofer zt"l (Toras Moshe, Mishpatim) explains: אִם בָּקִשְׁתָּ תַּלְוֶה — if you want your money to be מלווה, to accompany you to the grave, the counsel is to do good deeds with your money. Because אֶת הָעֹנִי — only the money you give to the poor, עִמָּךְ — that will go with you to the next world.

The Gemara (Yoma 66b) states: מִיִּקְרִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הֵיוּ מְלוּיִן אוֹתוֹ — the "honored people of Yerushalayim" would accompany the person sent to Azazel, who would push the goat off the cliff on Yom Kippur for the atonement of Bnei Yisrael. Why are they called מִיִּקְרִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם? We can explain that at this time, most people wanted to be in the Beis HaMikdash, to absorb the holiness there and to witness the avodah of the kohen gadol. But there were people who were mevater on their own gains to help this Yid, who would otherwise have to walk alone to the cliff of Azazel. People who give up their own benefits to help others deserve to be called מִיִּקְרִי — the honored ones.

In Eretz Yisrael, we begin davening for rain, וְתֵן טַל וּמָטָר, on the 7th of Cheshvan. We would begin earlier, but when the Beis HaMikdash stood, Yidden came for Succos to be oleh l'regel, and those who lived far from Yerushalayim only returned home by the 7th of Cheshvan. We do not want Yidden walking home to have to trek through mud in rainy weather, so we wait until the 7th of Cheshvan, when all Yidden are home, before asking for rain. Although most people were home earlier, we are careful to help every Yid. We have compassion on everyone, so they should not have to walk through mud on their way home.

The question is: why is this halachah kept in our times? We do not have a Beis HaMikdash; no one is traveling home, so why don't we daven for rain earlier? Perhaps it is to remind us to have compassion for our fellow man, for every Yid. In the era of the Beis HaMikdash, people did not say, "Most people are home already; let's begin to daven for rain." They waited until the last Yid arrived home. We want to remember this act of sensitivity in all generations. And when we have compassion, Hashem will have

The Aveirah of Taking Away Someone's Parnassah

It states in this week's *parashah* (9:6), שׁוֹפֵךְ דָּם הָאָדָם בָּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשָּׁפַךְ, "Whoever sheds the blood of man...shall his blood be shed." The Komarna *zt"l* (Heichel HaBrachah 9:5) says the *pasuk* is referring to taking away someone's *parnassah*. He writes, "We learn from this

pasuk how cautious one must be not to take away the *parnassah* of his fellow man, because it is literally like murdering him." The punishment for this is very severe, as the *pasuk* indicates.

Reb Yechiel of Alexander *zt"l* would say that it is dangerous to take away someone's *parnassah*. Doing so is risking one's life.

compassion on us and send us rain and salvation.

The Midrash (Shochar Tov 37) tells that Avraham Avinu asked Shem ben Noach, "In what merit did you leave the teivah?" Shem replied, "It was the merit of tzedakah that we performed in the teivah." Avraham asked, "What tzedakah did you do? There were no poor people in the teivah – only Noach and his children!" Shem replied, "We did tzedakah with the animals, the beasts, and the birds. We fed them all night long; we had no time to sleep." When Avraham heard the reward for feeding animals, he said, "They were freed from the teivah in the merit of tzedakah. I will do chesed for people, and my reward will be far greater!" That is when Avraham pitched his Eshel and began his involvement with hachnasas orchim.

One erev Yom Kippur, Reb Elazar Tzaddok Turchin *zt"l* was ready to go early to the beis medresh to say Tefillah Zakkah and prepare himself for Yom Kippur. He was rushing when the Tepliker Rav *zt"l* called to him, "Bachur'! Bachur'! I need help to clean my home." Reb Elazar Tzaddok put aside his aspiration to be early in the beis medresh and made his sole objective to help the elderly Tepliker Rav. When he finished cleaning, the Tepliker Rav told him, "I know you had many things to do today, and you helped me with mesirus nefesh. Therefore, Hashem will certainly help you this year beyond the rules of nature."

After this incident, Reb Elazar Tzaddok Turchin became like a new person. He would learn thirty pages of Gemara a day, in depth, and he did not forget anything. Reb Meir Chadash *zt"l*, the mashgiach of Yeshivas Chevron, noticed how his student was finishing one masechta after another and suspected he was learning superficially. He tested him, but Reb Elazar Tzaddok knew everything perfectly. Reb Meir Chadash told him, "You know wonderfully well. Nevertheless, I still maintain that this is not the way to study Torah. To learn a masechta b'iyun, one needs more than just a few days." (Reb Meir Chadash did not know the secret – the reason Reb Elazar Tzaddok's mind was so open for Torah.) Despite the warning, Reb Elazar Tzaddok continued learning in this manner and became a great Torah scholar. (He wrote the sefarim Shoneh Halachos together with Reb Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l*.) The entire Torah was at his fingertips. Anyone seeking a certain Gemara would go to him, and he would tell them exactly which page and line they sought.

Reb Elazar Tzaddok did a favor for the Tepliker Rav on one erev Yom Kippur, but ultimately, he did the greatest favor for himself. He earned so much from this chesed for the rest of his life. Because when you do chesed for others, Hashem does chesed for you.

An almanah cried before Rebbe Aharon HaGadol of Karlin *zt"l* that her daughter was a kallah and she needed a large sum of money to marry her off. Rebbe Aharon gave her generously. Sometime later, the almanah came again, crying that her daughter refused to go to the chuppah until she received a shtern tichel, which was very expensive. "I tell her that her request is ridiculous, but I cannot get her to change her mind." Rebbe Aharon took out a bag of money hidden in a closet and gave it to her.

When the rebbetzin found out, she asked, "Why did you give all this money to one woman? We could have distributed it to twenty poor people, and they would all have money for Shabbos!" Rebbe Aharon replied, "When I got up to give her the money, the question you just asked popped into my mind as well. I thought, 'Why should I give all this money to one almanah? I could help many people with this money.' But then I told myself: this money has been hidden in our home for ten years, and I never once thought of giving it all away to twenty poor people for Shabbos. Why did I think of doing so now, when I was planning to give the entire sum to this poor almanah? I understood from that that this thought came directly from the yetzer hara."

Once, a chassid tried to take away the *parnassah* of a certain rav. Reb Yechiel of Alexander called this *chassid* and said, "I received from my rebbes that when one takes away someone's *parnassah*, he is risking his own life." And then Rebbe Yechiel read with him the *pasuk*, שׁוּפֵךְ דָּם בְּאִדָּם דְּמוֹ יִשְׁפֹךְ. He read it to him word by word, and had him repeat it. The chassid promised that he wouldn't attempt to take away the rav's *parnassah* anymore.

But soon after he returned home, his friends convinced him to continue his *machlokes* against that rav, and to try to get the rav fired, and to take away the rav's *parnassah*. Immediately, after he began this evil path, he began to spit up blood. He continued spitting until he died. It was as Rebbe Yechiel told him that taking away someone's *parnassah* is risking one's life.

In contrast, helping someone get a *parnassah* is a great *chesed* and will be rewarded with life and *arichus yamim*.

Segulos to Bear Children

It states (6:10), וַיּוֹלֵד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים, "Noach had three children." The Siforno writes, "When he began to give *mussar* to his generation, he merited to bear children." We learn from this that helping others to go on the right path is *mesugal* for the barren to bear children.

Another *segulah* for bearing children is to perform deeds of *chesed*. Rebbe Henoch of Alexander *zt'l* explained that there is a chamber in heaven for bearing children. When one can enter that chamber, he will have his salvation. The problem is that this chamber is sometimes closed and the doors are locked. But there is a solution. Near the chamber for births is the chamber of *chessed*. This chamber is always open. When one comes inside, he can easily jump over to the chambers for children.

Rebbe Baruch of Zichlin's *zt'l* came to Rebbe Henoch of Alexander *zt'l* for Shabbos

Parashas Noach, and he told the Rebbe that his son-in-law doesn't have children.

Rebbe Henoch told him about the *segulah* of doing *chesed*, and to enter from there into the chamber for bearing children. He added that Rashi (6:9) writes, עֵיקַר תּוֹלְדוּתֵיהֶן שֶׁל צְדִיקִים מַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים. This can be translated, עֵיקַר תּוֹלְדוּתֵיהֶן שֶׁל צְדִיקִים מַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים, in the merit of their *gemilus chasadim*. Their good deeds enable them to climb over from the chambers of *chesed* to the chambers of bearing children. Therefore, the next *pasuk* states, וַיּוֹלֵד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים אֵת שֵׁם וְאֵת חָם וְאֵת יָפֶת, "Noach gave birth to three children: Shem, Cham, and Yafes," implying that Noach bore those children because he was involved with *chesed*.

It states (Tehillim 37:26), כָּל הַיּוֹם חוֹנֵן וּמְלוּוֶה וּזְרָעוֹ, "All day he is benevolent, and he loans money, and his children are blessed." The Divrei Avraham said that this means doing *chesed* is *mesugal* to have good children. (The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* praised this *vort* immensely.)

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 9:) says, "Whoever is accustomed to give *tzedakah* will have children who are *baalei chachmah*, *baalei osher*, *baalei agadah* (wise, wealthy, experts in Torah, etc.).

Cheshvan

It states (Tehillim 45:2), רָחַשׁ לִבִּי דָבָר טוֹב, "My heart is astir for good". רַחַשׁ has similar letters to חֶשֶׁן. The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* says that this is a sign that this month is *mesugal* to arouse the heart to do good.

The Maor V'Shemesh (*Shmini*) says that this month is *mesugal* to attain תּוֹרַת הַיּוֹם, a mind for Torah.

The Chida (*Moreh b'Etzba* 298) writes, "After *yom tov*, in the month of Cheshvan, strengthen your *yiras Shamayim* and Torah study *l'shmah* because it is the beginning of the year, and this will be a good sign for the entire year. Cheshvan is close to the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, and one must demonstrate that his *teshuvah* was sincere, and not just a show, *chas v'shalom*. Therefore, make a good *siman*

for the entire year. Run like a warrior to study Torah and to perform mitzvos."

There is an expression in Chazal מרחשן שפוותיה, that the lips are still moving.⁶ The Ruzhiner said that the month מרחשון has similar letters as מרחשן. This hints that in Cheshvan, our lips are still moving. We just had a month filled with inspirational tefillos, and we performed many mitzvos, and our lips are still moving. Which means the month of Cheshvan is still under the influence of the days and inspiration that we had in Tishrei.

The Imrei Chaim zt"l compared Cheshvan to someone who rolls a tire. The tire continues to roll, even after one lets go of it. In Elul and Tishrei, our mouths became accustomed to moving and to praying. Even after we stop, the momentum continues. This is the uniqueness of Cheshvan. The effect of the holidays is still upon us, and we should allow the momentum to continue.

Cheshvan is also a time to review the *kabbalos* we undertook for the new year and to try to keep them. If we don't review them and make a renewed resolution to keep them, it is likely that we will revert to our old routines.

It states in this week's parashah (9:13), את קשתי נתתי בענן והיתה לאות ברית ביני ובין הארץ, "I have

placed My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth." The rainbow is a sign to remind Hashem not to bring another *mabul* to the world. But why is this necessary? Hashem doesn't forget and certainly doesn't need a reminder!

We can explain that the rainbow is a reminder *for us*. It reminds us that if we want to remember the *kabbalos* we took on for the new year, we should make signs.⁷

Overcoming the Yetzer Hara

Someone once came to his rebbe for a *brachah*, and the rebbe asked him whether he sets times for studying Torah. "Rebbe," the man replied, "Why should I study Torah? Hashem has angels who serve Him far better than I can. What value can my Torah have?"

The rebbe asked his student, "What do you do for a living?"

"I'm an artist."

"What was the most beautiful painting you ever saw?"

"I once saw a beautiful painting of the sun setting over an ocean. It sold for five million dollars."

6. An example is the Gemara (Megillah 27:) which says that if a person is davening and he needs to go to the bathroom, he must wait a few moments — the time it takes to walk four amos — before relieving himself. The Gemara explains that immediately when he finishes his tefillah, מרחשן שפוותיה, his lips are still moving, and it is not proper to relieve himself at that moment.

7. The teivah had three floors. Rashi (7:16 and Sanhedrin 108:) explains that each floor served its own purpose: עליונים לאדם, אמצעים למדור, תחתיים לזבל — "The top floor was for people, the middle floor for the animals, and the bottom floor for garbage."

We can ask: Why did Noach and his family need their own floor? Chazal (Tanchuma 9) tell us that Noach and his family were busy day and night tending to the animals. They were probably hardly ever in their living quarters. Why, then, did they need a separate floor?

We can answer that the top floor served as a sign and reminder that they were not lowly animals. They were surrounded by animals for an entire year, and they needed a reminder that they were different — that they were people, human beings.

Similarly, we must make signs to remind ourselves of the matters that are important to us, so we do not forget what we need to do.

"Five million dollars?" the rebbe exclaimed. "Why so much? A person can simply take a picture of sunset, and it would appear even better, more real than what this artist created."

"Rebbe, that is true, but a photo doesn't require much effort. A painting requires hours of work, heart, and talent. That is why it is so much more expensive."

The rebbe said, "O.k. I understand that it should be more expensive, but why five million dollars! That seems exaggerated. If you would say that it costs ten thousand dollars, I could understand that, but five million seems ridiculous!"

The artist explained, "When a person takes a photograph, he is almost certain that it will turn out well. But when an artist begins to draw, he knows that he is liable to fail. The slightest stroke of the brush can ruin an entire painting that took weeks to create. There is only a tiny chance that his painting will turn out as he imagined it. Therefore, he deserves to be paid well."

The rebbe said, "Listen to what you just said. You were wondering why Hashem needs your service, since Hashem has angels who serve Him better than humans can. That's true, but angels do not have the hardships humans have, and they don't have a *yetzer hara*. Human beings struggle very hard to serve Hashem; we have a *yetzer hara* and various obstacles blocking our path. When we take all of this into account, a person's service is very valuable to Hashem. Don't underestimate your Torah learning. It is very precious to Hashem."

Chassidim of the Chidushei HaRim *zy'a* asked their rebbe to free them from the *yetzer hara*. The Chidushei HaRim explained to them that without the *yetzer hara*, our *avodas Hashem* doesn't have purpose. Hashem derives pleasure from our *avodas Hashem* because we struggle with human temptations, and because we overcome various obstacles to serve Him.

When Noach left the *teivah*, he offered up *korbanos*. Hashem said (8:21), לא אספ לקלל עוד את האדמה בעבור האדם כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו "I will never again curse the earth because of man because man's heart is bad from his birth..." If man's heart is bad, wouldn't that be a reason to punish him? How do we understand the *pasuk*?

The Magid of Mezritz *zt'l* (quoted in *Kedushas Levi*) explains that man's corrupt heart, when overcome, is the source of Hashem's immense pleasure. Hashem says that He will never again destroy the earth because He enjoys the service of people who have corrupt and evil hearts, which they overcome. Despite their tendency to do bad, they overcome their *yetzer hara*.

The *Kedushas Levi* adds that this explains the beginning of the *pasuk* (8:21), וירח ה' את ריח הניחוח, "Hashem smelled the pleasant aroma [of the *korbanos*]." The Baal HaTurim writes that the expression, וירח את ריח is written only twice in Tanach. Once in *pasuk* (8:21) and the other is (*Bereishis* 27:27), וירח את ריח בגדי, which can be translated as, "He smelled the scent of rebellion." It is the rebellious nature of his heart that creates ריח ניחוח, Hashem's pleasure. Hashem has immense pleasure when a Yid doesn't follow the dictates of his rebellious heart, and instead he serves Hashem.

Consider the following *mashal* (the Baal HaTanya tells a similar *mashal* in *Torah Or*, *t'l*, *Vayishlach* וירח הקרבנות):

A wealthy, powerful king had many musicians and singers. They would play and sing before him, and the king had much pleasure from them. But mostly, the king would listen to his pet bird, which was trained to sing. All birds, by nature, can whistle a few notes, but this bird was able to sing real songs and could carry a tune.

Once, one of his professional singers said to the king, "I sing better than your bird. Why does the king prefer the bird's singing over mine?"

The king replied, "You sing beautifully, that is true, but there are many people who

can sing well. However, a singing bird is a novelty. This is the only bird in the world that can sing. That's why I prefer listening to the bird's singing over the best singers and musicians."

This explains why Hashem loves our service more than the *avodah* of the *malachim* in heaven. The *malachim* sing better than we do, and they serve Hashem with more fear, love, and perfection than we can, but *malachim* don't struggle. They don't have a *yetzer hara*, and they aren't tested. Therefore, Hashem prefers to listen to the singing and the service of the Jewish nation, human beings made of dust, people who struggle with the *yetzer hara* because, despite their many hardships, they serve Hashem.⁸

It states (8:11), וַהֲנֵה עֹלֵה זֵית טָרַף בְּפִיהוּ, "Behold it had plucked an olive leaf in its mouth." Rashi writes that the dove was saying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "May my *parnassah* be bitter like an olive, but from Hashem, rather than sweet like honey from the hands of man." The Beis Avraham *zt'l* explains from these words a lesson for all of us: Better a small service (represented by the small olive leaf in the dove's beak) that is bitter due to the hard tests,

than great accomplishments that come easily and are sweet like honey.

It states (6:20), שְׁנַיִם מִכָּל יְבוֹאוּ אֵלֶיךָ לְהַחְיֹת, "Two of each [species] shall come to you to preserve alive." The Ramban writes that יְבוֹאוּ, "shall come," indicates that they came on their own. Noach didn't need to search for the animals. He writes, "They came to Noach in sets of two on their own. Noach didn't have to climb mountains or go to islands to hunt them. But...the animals that came in groups of seven, the *pasuk* doesn't state that they will come on their own. Noach had to search for those animals to bring them into the *teivah*."

The reason for this differentiation is discussed in Ramban (7:8-9). He writes, "The animals that came [in sets of two] for the survival of their species, Hashem didn't obligate Noach to search for them [they came on their own]. But those who came [in groups of seven, so Noach could sacrifice them] it was the opposite, because it is proper to toil in mitzvos." Avodas Hashem should be difficult. That is what grants us *chein* before Hashem.⁹

8. People told the Chazon Ish *zt'l* about a very special bachur who was a masmid, a talmid chacham, and had sterling middos. They said to the Chazon Ish, "It looks like he doesn't even have a *yetzer hara*." The Chazon Ish replied, "Then he is a baal mum." Because, as a rule, a person should have a *yetzer hara*; that is what makes his avodas Hashem precious.

Someone complained to Rebbe Mendel of Vitebsk *zt'l* that he has many tests, and when he succeeds in one, he is confronted with another. The Rebbe explained that each time he passes a test, he creates, *keviyachol*, clothing for Hashem. People do not want to wear the same clothing every day, and *keviyachol*, Hashem also wants new clothing. Therefore, one is confronted daily with new tests. Each test creates a new garment for Hashem.

9. When one recognizes the extent of his struggles and the power of his *yetzer hara*, he will not be surprised when he has ups and downs — days when he serves Hashem better and days when he fails, *r'l*. It is a battle, and a battle has casualties. The main thing is to keep on battling, and in the end you will succeed.

A father asked his son to get out of the car and see whether the blinkers were working. The son went out, looked at the blinkers, and said, "They're working. They're not working. They're working. They're not working." The father explained that this means they are working. Similarly, in avodas Hashem, we expect ups and downs. When everything is smooth and simple, something is wrong; that is not how avodas Hashem usually appears.

Someone said to a rosh yeshiva, "My son learns in your yeshiva. How is he doing? Does he study well?" The rosh yeshiva replied, "I don't know what to say. There are days when he studies well, but there are

Tefillah

Hashem told Noach (6:18), *ובאת אל התיבה*, "Enter the *teivah*...." The Magid of Mezritz *zt'l* explained that *תיבה* can be translated as "words" of Torah and *tefillah*. Hashem tells every Yid, *ובאת אל התיבה*, come into the words of *tefillah* and say them with all your heart and soul. That is the *teivah* that will save you from all your problems.

The Torah urges, *צהרתעשה לתיבה*, "Illuminate your words." Let every word of your *tefillah* shine.

Hashem's name *הוי"ה* is used when Hashem bestows His kindness, and the name *אלקים* is used when Hashem reveals his judgment. We are therefore surprised that it states (8:1), *ויזכור אלקים את נח*, "Elokim remembered Noach," and the flood ended. The *pasuk* doesn't state, *ויזכור הוי"ה את נח* (Hashem's name for compassion), as we would expect.

Rashi explains, "This name *אלקים* is *midas hadin* (harsh justice), but it turned over to *rachamim* (compassion) because of the *tefillos of tzaddikim*." Noach davened in the *teivah* until even Hashem's attribute of *din* agreed to save Noach and his family, and the flood ended.

A *segulah* for one's *tefillos* to be answered is to pray for Hashem's honor. When the *tefillah* is for Hashem's honor, his *tefillos* will be answered more easily and more quickly.

After the nation sinned with the *meraglim*, and Hashem said He would destroy the nation, Moshe saved them with his *tefillos*. Moshe said in his *tefillos* essentially two points: (a) If Hashem destroys the nation, it will create a *chillul Hashem* because the nations of the world will think Hashem

doesn't have power to bring them into Eretz Yisrael. (b) Moshe prayed that Hashem have compassion on the Jewish nation.

Hashem said, *סלחת כדברך*, "I forgive them, as you said," and Rashi writes, "Because of what you said that the nations of the world will say that Hashem doesn't have power to bring them into Eretz Yisrael..." It was specifically that prayer that saved them, and not the prayer that Hashem should have *rachmanus* on them. The Tchebiner Rav said that it's a *mitzvah* to publicize this Rashi, so people will know the great power of *tefillah*, when one pleads for Hashem's honor. Moshe's plea for compassion wasn't accepted, but Moshe's plea that Hashem save them for His honor's sake was accepted.

After *Shemonah Esrei* we say, *עשה למען שמך, עשה למען ימיןך, עשה למען תורתך, עשה למען קדושתך*, "Answer us for Your name's sake, for Your right arm, for Your Torah, for Your holiness." The *poskim* (Tur 122) teach that when one says these words *נעשה רעש גדול למעלה*, "It arouses a great commotion in heaven." The *Tur* writes that those who are cautious to say these words, *וזכה ומקבל פני שכינה*, will merit receiving the face of the *Shechinah*.

The Likutei Chaver ben Chaim (*Noach*) explains that after saying *Shemonah Esrei*, we request that Hashem should answer our *tefillos for His honor; for His sake*, and that is a very special *tefillah*.

The first letters of *שמך, ימיןך, תורתך, קדושתך* (from the *tefillah* *עשה למען שמך* etc.) spell *קשתי*. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Toras Moshe, Noach*, *את קשתי*) would say every year that this is hinted at in the *pasuk* (9:13), *את קשתי נתתי בענן*, "I placed My rainbow (*קשתי*) in the cloud."

The Chasam Sofer's student, Likutei Chaver ben Chaim, explains that it states

times when he doesn't..." The father smiled broadly and said, "That's what I was hoping to hear." The rosh yeshiva was startled – why would the father be happy that his son is not always studying well?

The father explained, "I'm a cardiologist, and I regularly watch the lines of the electrocardiograph. When the lines go up and down, I know the patient is alive. When there is a straight line, I know the patient is gone, *r"l*. So for me, ups and downs are a sign of life."

(Eichah 3:44) סכות בענין לך מעבור תפילה, that after the *churban* Beis HaMikdash, Hashem placed a cloud in heaven, which prevents the tefillos from going up. The *pasuk* is hinting, את קשת, נתתי בענין, that this cloud will be penetrated when one prays in the form of קשת, *roshei teivos* for קדושתך, שמך, תורתך, ימינך. When one prays for Hashem's honor, the tefillos will penetrate the cloud and go up before Hashem's throne.

Chazal (*Bereishis Rabba* 32:6, quoted in *Rashi* 7:7) tell us, אף נח מקטני אמנה היה, מאמין ואינו מאמין שיבא המבול. "Also Noach had a low level of *emunah*. He believed, and he didn't believe that the *mabul* will come." The *meforshim* struggle to understand this *Rashi*, because how can we say that Noach, the perfect *tzaddik*, lacked *emunah*?

The *Divrei Shmuel zt'l* writes in the name of the *Kedushas Levi zt'l* that the *pasuk* is telling us that Noach didn't believe in himself. He believed in Hashem, but he didn't believe that he could daven and abolish the decree of the flood. The *Divrei Shmuel* concludes, "When one has this *emunah* [that his tefillos have power in heaven], every Yid has the power to annul decrees with his tefillah."

The *Mesilas Yesharim* (19) writes, "When one prays one should think...that he is standing before the King of kings and praying to Him...as Chazal (*Brachos* 28:) state, וכשאתה מתפלל דע לפני מי אתה מתפלל, 'When you pray, know before Whom you are standing'... Know that you are literally standing before the Creator, and you are speaking with Him, although no eye can see Him... Someone with a straight mind, and with a drop of contemplation, can plant this truth into his

heart, that he is literally speaking with Hashem, begging from Him, and Hashem listens to his words as when one is speaking to his friend."¹⁰

The *Chareidim* writes, אני והו' הושיעה נא. This means that it's אני והו', only myself and Hashem, for it is true that I am alone with Hashem. Even when I am among other people, no one sees the secrets of my heart other than Hashem, and no one is seeking to help me other than Hashem, and no one can save me from my *tzaros* other than Hashem. Therefore, the people around don't create an interruption because they are all like nothing, and there is only Hashem and me. As it states (*I Malachim* 17:1) ה' אשר עמדתי לפני, 'I swear to Hashem Whom I stood before Him.' And it states (*Bereishis* 17:1) ה' אתה לפני והיה תמים, 'Go before Me...' This is the implication of אני והו': there is only me and Hashem. הושיע נא, and when one davens with this awareness, this will bring salvation."

(6:8) וְנָח מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה', "Noach found Chein in Hashem's Eyes".

The *Gemara* (*Succah* 49:) says, "If a person has *chein*, you can be certain that he fears Hashem."

Being cautious with kedushah leads to *chein*. It states (6:8) וְנָח מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה', "Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem." The *Beis Avraham zt'l* taught that Noach found *chein* בְּעֵינֵי ה', because he was cautious with his eyes.

The final words of the Torah (34:12) are לְעֵינֵי כָל יִשְׂרָאֵל, "before the eyes of all Yisrael," and connect with the first word of the Torah,

10. A non-religious Yid walked into the yeshiva in Kfar Chassidim while they were davening Minchah. He later said about that encounter, "I saw bachurim swaying back and forth, but an old man was standing near the wall [Reb Elyah Lopian zt'l], and it appeared that he was truly speaking with Someone..."

When we daven, we should pray for all our needs — the big and the small. Once, after *Shemonah Esrei*, people heard Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zt'l say, "May it be Your will that the maid should return..." His students assumed he certainly had lofty intentions with this tefillah, but he explained that there were no hidden secrets in his words. "My wife is elderly and needs help, but our maid left. So I prayed that the maid should return." (Written in *Divrei Shmuel*.)

בראשית, because the foundation and the beginning of the Torah is to be cautious with one's eyes.¹¹

The Torah (9:23) tells us that Shem and Yefes covered their father, Noach, and for this good deed, Yefes was rewarded that his descendants will have burial. Shem was rewarded with the mitzvah of *tzitzis*. Rashi writes that Shem receives a greater reward than Yefes because, שנתאמץ יותר מ'פת, "Shem exerted himself more than Yefes" in this mitzvah.

They both covered their father. But Shem was more motivated; therefore, he was rewarded with *tzitzis*. Yefes performed the mitzvah without interest, with a dead heart, and therefore, he received a reward fitting for the dead – burial.

When Shem and Yafes went to cover Noach, they walked backward so they wouldn't see Noach undressed. When they covered him, they naturally had to turn towards their father, but they did the most they could in that situation, and they were cautious that at least their faces were turned to the other side.

Rashi (9:23) says that this is the reason it states אחרוני, backward, twice in this *pasuk* (see footnote).¹² One refers to when they entered the room, and the other אחרוני is when they covered their father. At that time, their bodies were facing Noach, but they turned their faces away.

The Alshich HaKadosh asks, why didn't they simply close their eyes?

The Alshich answers that even to face an *ervah* creates a *p'gam*, a blemish, on one's soul. Shem and Yafes didn't want to see, and not even to face, an *ervah*.

In contrast, the Torah (9:24) tells us, וירא חם, "Cham, the father of Canaan saw his father's *ervah*." Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 70) tell us more terrible sins that Cham did to his father, but from the literal words of the *pasuk*, it seems that Cham's sin was that he saw his father's *ervah*. The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said we should learn from this the severity of not guarding one's eyes. For that sin alone Cham deserved all the curses he received.

Yosef HaTzaddik guarded his eyes and then became very wealthy. The Baal Shem Tov (*Lech Lecha* 3) proves from this that *shemiras einayim* and other precautions for *kedushah* are *mesugal* for becoming wealthy.

The Skulener Rebbe of Monsey Shlita tells that someone once came to his father *zt'l* seeking a *segulah* for *parnassah*. The Rebbe advised him to say פרשת היראה (printed after *shacharis* in many *siddurim*). The man thought the Rebbe didn't understand him, so he explained that he wasn't seeking a *segulah* for *yiras Shamayim*. He was seeking a *segulah* for *parnassah*. The Rebbe replied that it states (*Tehillim* 111:5), "טרף נתן ליראי, 'Hashem gave food to those who fear Him.' If you fear Hashem, you will have *parnassah*."¹³

11. On the *pasuk* לעיני כל ישראל, Rashi writes, זו שבירת הלוחות – this refers to when Moshe broke the luchos. The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said that what is implied is that when one is not careful with his eyes, it is like שבירת הלוחות, the shattering of the luchos, chas veshalom.

12. The *pasuk* (9:23) states: ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה וישמו על שכמם שניהם וילכו אחרנית ויכסו את ערות אביהם ופניהם אחרנית וערות אביהם – "Shem and Yefes took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and they walked backwards and covered their father... their faces were turned away..."

It states אחרנית twice because they walked in backwards, and when they needed to turn toward their father to cover him, they turned their heads backward so they would not see their father's disgrace.

13. Reb Yehudah of Nasod *zt'l* was once on a train, in a private compartment, when an old woman came aboard. Fearing the prohibition of *yichud*, the rav jumped off the moving train. His students asked him,

“Why were you moser nefesh? What were you afraid of? She’s an old woman!” He replied, “I wasn’t afraid of her. I was afraid of the aveirah of yichud.”

Chassidim would come to the Koznitzer Magid zt”l to receive counsel and his brachos, but he did not admit women to his room. Once, when the gabbai wasn’t around, an elderly woman arrived. She didn’t know the customs of the court and entered the Koznitzer Magid’s room. The Koznitzer Magid hurried to the window and was ready to jump out. Fortunately, just then the gabbai returned and prevented him from jumping.

Later, the gabbai asked, “The woman was old, and you are ill. What were you afraid of? Why did you have to risk your life and jump out the window?” The Koznitzer Magid replied, “When the yetzer hara gets into the picture, he can make an old woman appear young and make an ill person healthy.”