

# Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
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Shlita

Tetzaveh



בס"ד

# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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# Torah Wellsprings

## Terumah

### Priorities

This week's parashah discusses the mitzvah of kindling the menorah's lights in the Mishkan with pure olive oil.

There are nine levels of quality olive oil listed (*Menachos* 86.). Olive oil was used daily in the Beis HaMikdash to light the menorah and for the *menachos* (flour/oil offerings). Ideally, to perform these *mitzvos*, the highest quality, virgin olive oil was used. The Rambam (*Hilchos Isurei Mizbeich*, 7:11) asks, "Why are [nine levels of olive oil] listed if they are all kosher? So that we will know which olive oil is best, which is medium class, and which is poor quality. A person who wants to overcome his *yetzer hara* and be generous should bring his *korban* from the best quality. The Torah (*Bereishis* 4:4) states,

'Hevel brought from the choicest of his flock, and Hashem turned to Hevel and to his *korban*.' The same is for everything one does for Hashem; he should choose the most beautiful and the best quality. If he builds a Beis knesses, it should be more beautiful than his own home. When he feeds the hungry, he should give them the best and sweetest from his table. When he gives clothing to the poor, he should give them his nicest clothing. When he is *makdish* something (a donation to the Beis HaMikdash), he should donate the nicest item he owns. As is stated (*Vayikra* 3:16), 'כל הלב לה', 'all the choice parts for Hashem.'"

A poor person, dressed in an old, battered hat, came to the home of the Kopyshnitzer Rebbe *zt'l*. The Rebbe had compassion on him and took out a

brand-new hat from his closet and gave it to him.

When the poor man left, people said to the Rebbe, "The hat you're wearing right now is also much more beautiful than the hat the poor man wore. You should have given him your hat and kept the new hat for yourself."

He replied, "I did keep the best hat for myself. Because I gave my best hat for tzedakah, and that is for myself because I will be rewarded for that in Gan Eden."

Ideally, for the *menorah* and *menachos*, one should use the highest quality olive oil. Nevertheless, all nine levels of olive oil are kosher for *menachos*. But for the *menorah*, only three categories of olive oil are kosher. As the Torah states in this week's *parashah* (27:20), כתיב למאור, "pressed oil for the illumination." Rashi writes, "The olives [which will be used for the *menorah*] are pressed, not

ground, so there shouldn't be any sediments. After the first drop of oil dripped out, the olives were put into a mill and ground. The second oil is *pasul* for the *menorah* but kosher for *menachos*, as it states, כתיב למאור, 'Pressed oil for the illumination' but it doesn't need to be כתיב למנחות, pressed for the *menachos*."

On the other hand, humans don't need the best oil for lighting, but they want the best oil for eating. Unlike the Beis HaMikdash, where the best oil was required for the *menorah*, and secondary oils could be used for the *menachos*.

This teaches us an important lesson:

The *menorah* represents the light of Torah and mitzvos. The meal offerings of the *menachos* represent *parnassah*. The purest oils used in the *menorah* tell us that we should seek only the best when it comes to Torah and mitzvos. The secondary oil used for the

*menachos* reminds us that second grade is also good enough for matters of this world.

This lesson is also the opposite of how we think of things. When it comes to Olam HaZeh, we want the best car, the most beautiful home, etc. If a neighbor has more than us, we become sick with envy.

But when it comes to ruchniyos, we are satisfied with mediocre tefillos and a drop of Torah knowledge. If a neighbor knows more Torah or davens with more *kavanah*, we can live with that.

With the halachos of the olive oil – the best used for the menorah and second grade used for the *menachos* – the Torah reminds us to set our priorities straight. For Torah and mitzvos, we should strive for the best and for the utmost success. And when it comes to Olam HaZeh matters, we can be satisfied with less, too.

## Preparation for the Mitzvos

In this week's *parashah* it states (28:21), יערך אותו אהרן ובניו, "Aharon and his sons shall arrange [the menorah]."

The *rishonim* explain that this refers to the mitzvos of דישון והטבת המנורה, cleaning and preparing the menorah each morning, in preparation to be lit in the evening. Each morning, while bringing the *korban tamid*, *kohanim* would remove the old wicks, clean the lamps from the leftover oil, and put in fresh oil and new wicks.

Regarding the menorah there are two mitzvos: (1) lighting the menorah before nightfall. (2) Preparing the menorah in the morning for the next time (see Rambam, Temidin u'Musafin 3:10 and Chinuch #98).

The mitzvah of preparing the menorah is performed exclusively by *kohanim*, as the *pasuk* says, יערך אותו אהרן ובניו. However,

anyone can light the menorah. It isn't exclusively for *kohanim* (see *Yoma* 24:).

This halachah seems to go against what we would assume. We would think that lighting the menorah is the primary part of the mitzvah and should be performed by *kohanim* only, while anyone can prepare the menorah because it is just the preparation. But the opposite is true. Only *kohanim* may prepare the menorah, and any Yid can light the menorah.

The Sifsei Tzaddik comments that this teaches us that our preparation is the most important and necessary part of all of the mitzvos we perform. The actual deed and the results of the *mitzvah* aren't in our hands.

A chassid found a place in the Yismach Yisrael's *zt'l* room, and he watched his Rebbe prepare to light the Chanukah *lecht*. From his concealed spot, the chassid

saw the Rebbe's intense devotion and fiery *hislahavus*, as he poured the oil and prepared the wicks. The chassid thought, "If this is the *hislahavus* that the Rebbe has when he prepares for the mitzvah, I can only imagine the great fire of excitement I will see when the Rebbe lights the candles." But when the Rebbe lit the candles, the Rebbe suddenly appeared to be his regular self. He said the *brachah* and lit the candles like thousands of other Yidden do. At least externally, one couldn't perceive anything unique.

The chassid wondered, "It doesn't make sense. Shouldn't the mitzvah be performed with even greater *hislahavus* than the preparations?" He couldn't come out of his hiding place to ask the Rebbe this question since he was there without permission, so he kept this question to himself.

The next day, the Yismach Yisrael came over

to the chassid and said, "A person's *chelek* in a mitzvah is his preparation. When he performs the mitzvah, Hashem sends him inspiration from above. At that point, it isn't in his hands anymore."

This concept was seen by the menorah. The primary part was preparing the menorah, and therefore, the preparations could only be made by kohanim. But lighting the menorah is already mostly in Hashem's hands, and therefore, anyone could perform that part of the mitzvah.

There's a Chassidic concept that preparation for a mitzvah is greater than the performance of the mitzvah. Perhaps this is because the preparations are in our hands while the performance is already in Hashem's hands.

### **Toil in Avodas Hashem**

Rashi writes (27:20), כתיב למואור ולא כתיב למנחות "Pressed for the illumination and

not pressed for the *menachos*." The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Toras Moshe*) says that this hints that one must press and try hard to attain success in *ruchniyos* (represented by the menorah). However, one doesn't need to press and try so hard to succeed in *gashmiyos* (represented by the meal offerings of the *menachos*).

We don't need to toil so hard when it comes to matters of *parnassah* because Hashem gives *parnassah*. Our toil should be in attaining *yiras Shamayim* because that is something that we choose on our own. As Chazal say (*Brachos* 33:), הכל בידי שמים, חוץ מיראת שמים, "Everything is in Hashem's hands, other than *yiras Shamayim*."

This is another example of how people can perceive things differently than what they are. Many think that *parnassah* is up to them to attain, but *yiras Shamayim* is up to Hashem to give it to them when it is actually the opposite.



Hashem gives *parnassah*, and *yiras Shamayim* is the only thing that is in our own hands.

The Mishnah (*Avos* 5:10) states, שלי שלך שלי עם הארץ, if someone says, "Mine is yours, and yours is mine, he is an *am ha'aretz*." Rebbe Henech of Alexander *zt'l* explains that this Mishnah alludes to the error we are referring to. One says שלי, my portion, which is to attain *yiras Shamayim*, שלך, that's up to You, Hashem, to give it to me. While שלך, Hashem's portion, which is to grant us *parnassah*, שלי, that's up to me to do. I must toil very hard for *parnassah* because it is all in my hands. He is an *am ha'aretz* because it is exactly the opposite. You must attain the *yiras Shamayim*, and Hashem gives *parnassah*.

Rebbe Mendel of Riminov *zt'l* says, "The Rabbeinu Tam in *Sefer HaYashar* teaches that from all good traits and attributes that one should seek to

acquire, place the goal of attaining *emunah* and *bitachon* at the top of your list. Because when one believes that Hashem watches over him with *hashgachah pratis*, he knows that even when he doesn't work very hard, Hashem will give him all his needs. He won't spend his days earning wealth because he has *bitachon* that whatever is destined from heaven will be, and he can't earn more or less than that amount."

The community of Slonim, Lithuania, appreciated a good *chazzan*. They had an ear for talent. Every year, they hired a professional *chazzan* to daven in their city on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The community didn't mind the long *tefillos* because each moment was pleasurable.

But there was a problem. Communities in other cities knew that the Slonimers were good at choosing a

talented chazzan, so immediately after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, they would find out who davened in Slonim, and they would immediately hire him to daven in their city on the following Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

This happened every year, and the community of Slonim needed to find a new chazzan, each year, anew.

One year, they couldn't find an appropriate chazzan. All the super-talented chazzanim they knew were already hired for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. So, they hired the best chazzan they could find. His voice was weak, people at the back of the beis knesses wouldn't hear him, but that was the best they could find.

That year, they were wiser. They did something they should have done years before. They made a contract with the chazzan

for the next ten years. Without their permission, he couldn't go to any other city for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Reb Eizel Charif *zt'l*, the rav of Slonim, heard about the contract and laughed. People asked him why he was laughing, and he explained that when he became the rav of Slonim, thirty years before, the cemetery in Slonim was overcrowded. So the community bought a new plot of land and dedicated it to be the city's new cemetery, but it remained vacant for a long time. People preferred the old, well-occupied cemetery over the new, empty burial plot.

To encourage people to use the new beis hachaim, the *chevra kadisha* announced that they wouldn't charge for the first ten people buried there. Additionally, the families of the *niftarim* would be granted a gift of a thousand rubles.

Even with these benefits, the cemetery remained vacant.

Weeks passed, and Pesach was approaching. In the home of an impoverished couple, a wife was urging her husband to find a solution so that they could buy the products for Pesach.

One day, the poor man said to his wife, "I found a solution! Finally, we will be able to buy all our *yom tov* needs, and even have money left over."

"I'm relieved," she said. "What's the plan?"

"I heard that the *chevra kadisha* is offering a thousand rubles to the families that agree to use the new cemetery. I will pretend that I died; you will cry and wail over me. When the *chevra kadisha* arrive and offer you a thousand rubles if you agree that they bury me in the new cemetery, tell them that you agree to those

terms if they give you the thousand rubles upfront. Without the money in your hand, don't begin the funeral.

"Don't worry about me. Before they bury me, I'll find a way to escape. With this plan, we will have money to buy matzah, wine, and all groceries we need for the *yom tov*."

"Have you lost your mind?" she asked him. "I refuse to have anything to do with this."

But when the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nisan arrived, and her pantry was still bare, she agreed. The husband lay on the floor, and his wife wailed beside him. Everyone was speaking about the tragedy. A young man died suddenly, leaving behind an *almanah* and young orphans.

The *chevra kadisha* arrived. They told her that if she permits them to bury her husband in the new cemetery, the burial will

not cost her anything, and she will be given a thousand rubles."

"When will I get the rubles?" she wanted to know.

The *chevra kadisha* replied that within a month she will get the money.

She responded, "I can't wait a month. I need the money now! If you can give me the money within an hour or two, I will permit you to take my husband and bury him in the new cemetery."

The *chevra kadisha* didn't want to lose the opportunity because it was very rare that someone agreed to be buried in the new cemetery. So they returned with the money, and she consented to take her husband to the new cemetery.

The new cemetery was quite a distance from the city. After carrying the alleged *niftar* for some time, the *chevra kadisha* put his coffin down near a

tavern and went in for a drink. The '*niftar*' grabbed the opportunity. He climbed out of his coffin and ran as fast as he could. People rushed inside the tavern to tell the *chevra kadisha* that they had just witnessed *techiyas hameisim*.

The *chevra kadisha* understood what had happened. They were tricked and lost a thousand rubles.

A few days later, someone in the city died, but this time it was true. The *chevra kadisha* spoke with the family and explained their offer. The family agreed to let their *niftar* be buried in the new cemetery, but they also said that they want the money up front.

"Not that again," the *chevra kadisha* thought to themselves. "Just a few days ago, a woman said those words, and we ended up losing a thousand rubles."

They decided they would give the family a thousand rubles before the *levayah*, but this time, they would be more careful and make sure the *niftar* didn't escape.

When they reached the tavern, they tied the *niftar*'s hands and feet. They wanted to ensure he didn't run away like the last time.

One of the members of the *chevra kadisha* said to his comrades, "Fools! There's no need to tie him down. This man is dead. He isn't going anywhere. You should have tied down the other person because he was alive. But this time, it's for real. You have nothing to worry about."

Reb Eizel Charif concluded, "When you hired professional *chazanim*, that's when you should have made a contract with them. However, this *chazan* isn't going anywhere. No other community wants him. Therefore, there's no

reason to bind him with a contract."

This story is also a lesson regarding *parnassah*. Some people try to bind their *parnassah* to ensure that it will never leave them. But there's no need to do so because your *parnassah* isn't going anywhere. The *parnassah* destined for you will come to you. There's no reason to "tie it down."

Do you know the saying, *שכר מצוה מצוה*, the reward for performing a mitzvah is that you will be able to perform more mitzvos? The reward for performing mitzvos is more mitzvos because what greater reward can there be for a mitzvah than the opportunity to perform another one!

The Brisker Rav said something similar about *bitachon*. The Chovas HaLevavos (introduction of *Bitachon*) describes the wonderful life one has when he has *bitachon*. He is

never worried because he knows that he will have everything he needs when he needs it. *Bitachon* is so refreshing and liberating; what reward can possibly be given for having *bitachon*? Whatever is offered will be less than the actual *bitachon*.

It is similar to the story of a generous king, who announced that he will grant his subjects whatever they ask for on his birthday. One person asked for a village and received it. Another person asked for a high-ranking position and received it. Another person asked for a box filled with treasures, and he also received it.

A wise person told the king that he had one request: He wanted to be granted permission to speak with the king every day. His request was granted, and obviously, every other wish that he had was granted as well. He was with the king every

day, and every day, he could ask his requests.

Some things are so good that everything else pales in comparison. What reward can we possibly give to someone who has *bitachon*? If you give him money, he has more than that because he has *bitachon*, and knows that he will never be lacking. Therefore, the best reward for *bitachon* is to have even more *bitachon*.

A wealthy person was present when the Brisker Rav said this *vort*. He smiled and said enthusiastically, "Oh! That's a good *vort*!"

The Brisker Rav told him, "So why don't you stop working so many hours and begin spending more time in the beis medresh? You believe in the strength of *bitachon*. Hashem will support you. You can rely on Him."

The wealthy man replied, "*Ober gelt* - but I

need money! I said it's a good *vort*, but I didn't say I was going to do anything differently because of that."

The Brisker Rav replied, "Your response reminds me of a story that happened with my father, Reb Chaim Brisker *zt'l*."

A *meshulach* was away from his home for half a year raising funds. His last stop before returning to his home was Brisk, but in Brisk, he lost all his money. He didn't know how it happened. He came to Reb Chaim Brisker in hysteria. A half a year of toil was lost.

Reb Chaim told the *meshulach*, "You bought a new suit in Brisk. When you took off your clothes to try on the suit, someone must have stolen the money."

The man began to cry some more. "What's going to be with all that money?"

Reb Chaim said, "Come back in a few days. I will

speak with wealthy people. *B'ezras Hashem*, I hope to be able to give you the amount you lost."

A few days later, Reb Chaim gave the *meshulach* even more than the original sum. The *meshulach* was very grateful. But now, he was ashamed that he had cried so bitterly over money. He said to Reb Chaim, "It wasn't the lost money that made me so upset. I was mostly upset with *myself*. I felt like a fool because I was negligent with the money. That is why I was so upset. But it wasn't the money..." He was embarrassed to admit he had made such a scene over money.

Reb Chaim said, "Oh? I thought you were crying over the money. So, I understand that the problem wasn't the money, just your incompetence. Well, if that's the case, you can leave the money with me. I know people who could use it."

The man shouted, "No, Rebbe! *Ober gelt!* But I need the money!"

The Brisker Rav said to the wealthy person, "What you just said is similar to this story. First, you say that it is a nice *vort*, as though you are interested in *bitachon*, and then you shout, '*ober gelt!*' – but I need money!"

### Humility

The Gemara (*Eirechin* 16.) states, "Why do the *korbanos* (this week's parashah, ch.29) follow the discussion of the clothes of the *kohanim*? This is to tell you that just as the *korbanos* atone, so do the clothes of the *kohanim* atone. The *mitznefes* (the hat the *kohanim* wore) atones for arrogance. As Reb Chanina taught, let something high atone for the feeling of arrogance."

This idea seems surprising. We would assume that atonement should have the qualities of something low. We are

discussing the problem of arrogance, that people in the Jewish nation felt proud and haughty. How does the *mitznefes*, worn proudly on the *kohanim*'s heads, bring atonement for arrogance?

The Maharsha (*Zevachim* 88:) answers that the *segulah* of a head covering is that it brings humility. As the Gemara (*Shabbos* 156:) tells, that astrologers said to the mother of Reb Nachman bar Yitzchak that her son will be a *ganev* (a thief). To prevent this, she was cautious to have her son's head always covered. She would tell him, "Cover your head, so you will fear Heaven, and daven that the *yetzer hara* shouldn't rule over you!"

He didn't know why she was so worried about this.

Once, he was studying under a date tree and his cloak fell off his head. He saw the dates, and his *yetzer hara* overcame him.



He climbed the tree and bit into a date." We see that covering the head humbles the person before Hashem and saves him from the *yetzer hara* that makes people feel haughty and free to do whatever they want.

We can answer the question another way:

The *mitzneses*, the kohanim's hat, a symbol of pride, atoned for arrogance because the way to overcome the negative *gaavah* is to acquire the proper *gaavah*. There are times when one should have *gaavah*. As it states about the righteous king Yehoshofat (*Divrei HaYamim* 2, 17:6), ויגבה לבו בדרכי ה', "His heart was elevated in the ways of Hashem."

The Baal Shem Tov (*al HaTorah, parashas Chukas*) writes, "It states (*Sanhedrin* 37.), Why was Adam created alone (the only human being, unlike all other creations, which many were created at the beginning of creation)? So,

everyone should say the world is dependent on me. Because when the *yetzer hara* tells you that you aren't worthy of performing the mitzvos, you must use *gaavah*. And the truth is, this is humility."

People think humility means to feel lowly, unworthy, and unimportant. Actually, genuine humility is when one believes that his tefillos are desired, his Torah study is cherished on High, and he is important to Hashem. This realization is humbling because he knows before Whom he performs all his good deeds, and the awareness of Hashem's greatness humbles him. It is holy *gaavah*, which is simultaneously humility.

The main lamp of the menorah was its middle one. As it states (25:37), ועשית את נרותיה שבעה והעלה את נרותיה על עבר פניה, "Make seven lamps and light them towards the middle one." This means all lamps faced the middle lamp, which shows that

the middle lamp was the most significant of them all.

The middle lamp was also the smallest branch because the other six branches curved to the side before they reached the full height of the menorah. The Imrei Emes *zt'l* said that this is the reason the middle branch hints at the attribute of humility. The one who considers himself the smallest is the greatest.

The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* found a hint to humility from the *keruvim*, because the *keruvim* had the faces of young children.

About the *aron*, where the *luchos* lay, it states (*Shemos* 25:10), ועשו ארון עצי שטים, אמתים וחצי ארכו ואמה וחצי רחבו ואמה וחצי קמתו, "Make the *aron* from *shittim* wood. Two and a half *amos* long, an *amah* and a half wide and an *amah* and a half high."

The Kli Yakar writes, "All the *amos* of the *aron* were half (not full *amos*), so

every man should think he hasn't reached perfection in wisdom." Similarly, the Baal HaTurim writes, "All of its measurements were in half *amos*, to teach us that whoever studies Torah must be humble."

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* said that אדר is *roshei teivos* for אלוף דר רש, "Hashem dwells with the humble."

Among the traits of the humble is that they are, שומעים חרפתם ואינם משיבים, they can hear people disgracing them, and they don't answer back. They prefer to avoid *machlokes* rather than stick up for their honor silently.

This attitude is *mesugal* for many *yeshuos*.

There's a *beis medresh* in Lakewood that was built due to the fundraising efforts of one *yungerman*, who was one of the primary *gabai'im* of that congregation. He felt that since he raised the money, he had the right to make

the rules of the beis medresh. So he insisted that there be no speaking during the *tefillah*.

Each week before *kriyas haTorah* he stood on the *bimah* and announced, "In this beis medresh we don't speak from the beginning of the *tefillah* until the end."

Some people in the beis medresh wanted to speak and didn't appreciate his weekly announcements.

Each week, after his weekly announcement, they would shout, sarcastically, "*Yashar koach! Yashar koach!*" They made a joke out of it.

Their jeers bothered the *gabbai*. However, it didn't stop him from making his weekly announcement because it was important that there shouldn't be any speaking during the *tefillah*.

One week, the insults that the mockers flung at him were more insulting than usual. They shouted,

"Who are you to tell us what to do? Just because you have a loud voice doesn't make you in charge. I also have a loud voice..."

He descended from the *bimah* in shame. He didn't answer back. After the *tefillah* he went over to his friend, Reb Aharon Deutsch, and told him, "In the merit of the shame I just endured, and in the merit of my silence, may Hashem help that you should have children."

Reb Aharon was married seventeen years and didn't yet have children.

The following Shabbos, the *gabbai* went to the *bimah* again, and he said his weekly announcement, but his heart wasn't in it anymore. He was still hurting from the humiliation. A short while later, he decided to leave that beis medresh.

Nevertheless, he kept up with his friends from

this beis medresh, especially with Reb Aharon Deutsch.

One day, he said to Reb Aharon Deutsch, "The 3rd of Iyar, the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbe Shayele Kerestirer *zt'l* is approaching. Come with me to Kerestir, and you can daven at the tzaddik's *kever* for children. So many experienced *yeshuos* there."

By then it was already eighteen years after his *chasunah*. He had lost hope ever to bear children. The *gabbai* urged him to reconsider.

Reb Aharon Deutsch replied, "If you make peace with the people who embarrassed you in our beis medresh, I will go with you to Kerestir."

That wasn't an easy request, but it was important for him that his friend goes to Kerestir. So he called up the people who humiliated him, and he made up with them. They asked him for

forgiveness, and they told him that they hoped he would return to the beis medresh again. They promised they wouldn't embarrass him again.

Reb Aharon and the *gabbai* traveled to Kerestir on the *yahrtzeit*. Less than a year later, Reb Aharon had a daughter.

Reb Aharon Deutsch commented, "Chazal say there are three partners in the creation of man: the father, the mother, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But for this child, there were five partners because she was born in the merit of the *gabbai's* humility, and in the merit of Rebbe Shayele Kerestirer."

We share a similar story on this topic; it is two stories in one:

A family in Beitar didn't have children for many years. The husband is involved in communal work, and he was once at a communal meeting in Tzfas

(the city where he grew up). At the meeting, someone insulted him cruelly. He was ready to answer back. He has a big mouth, and he can make whoever humiliated him wish that he had never started up with him.

But before he could say anything, someone rushed over and said, "Please don't respond to his harsh words. I have an older brother who needs a *shidduch*. Please give him the merit of your silence."

He remained silent. Two weeks later, the *bachur* was engaged.

Now comes the second half of the story, which we repeat in the words of the *baal hamaaseh*:

"I told my wife what happened, how in the merit of my silence, an older *bachur* became a *chasan*.

"At first, she was upset that I didn't keep the merit of my silence for ourselves, to merit having children.

But she had learned the strategy. She awaited a time when she would be embarrassed and remain quiet and use that merit to have children.

"About a year ago, I was with my wife on vacation in Tzefas. We were walking down the street minding our own business, but there were some rowdy and cruel people walking behind us and terribly insulting us. My wife began to cry. I thought she was crying from humiliation. I was ready to answer back, but my wife told me one word, 'silence,' and I understood what she meant. She was crying and praying to Hashem that in the merit of her humiliation we will bear a child. So, we walked on, the people behind us continued their chants, and we didn't respond.

"Exactly nine months later, our first daughter was born."

## Virtuous Speech

As we wrote above (from *Eirechin* 16.), the clothes of the *kohanim* atoned for the *aveiros* of the Jewish nation. Therefore, the parashah of *korbanos* is after the parashah the clothes of the *kohanim* because just like *korbanos* atone, so did the clothes of the *kohanim* atone.

The Gemara says, "The *me'il* atoned for *lashon hara*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, *בא דבר שבקול ויכפר על מעשה הקול* 'Let clothing that has a sound atone for the *aveirah* that was committed with a sound." The sound of the bells at the hem of the *me'il* atoned for the sounds of *lashon hara*. As it states (28:33), *ועשית על שוליו רמוני תכלת... ופעמוני זהב בתוכם סביב,* "You shall make on its hem pomegranates of turquoise wool...and gold bells between them, all around."

We wonder, wouldn't it be better to atone for *lashon*

*hara* with silence? Why is it atoned for with sounds?

This is similar to our question above when we asked why the beautiful hat of the *kohanim*, the *mitznefes*, atoned for *gaavah*? We would assume that something humble should bring atonement for *gaavah*! Now we ask the same question regarding the *me'il*. If people sinned by speaking, shouldn't the cure be silence?

But the answer to this question is also similar to before. We explained above that the cure to pride is to have holy pride: to be proud at the right times and for the right reasons.

Similarly, the cure for *lashon hara* isn't to be silent, rather to speak when we should speak. Silence is a virtue, but an even greater virtue is to speak properly – words that help and encourage others.<sup>1</sup>

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1. We can also express it this way: Along the hem of the *me'il* were

The Gemara (*Tanis* 21.) relates that Rav Broka Chazoah was in the marketplace together with Eliyahu HaNavi, and he asked Eliyahu HaNavi, "Is there anyone in this market who will receive Olam HaBa?"

Two people arrived at the marketplace, and Eliyahu told Rav Broka

that these people would receive Olam HaBa. Rav Broka went over to them and inquired about their actions and how they earned Olam HaBa.

They replied, "We are happy people. When we see someone sad, we cheer him up. When we see two people arguing, we work with them until peace is

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פעמונים and רימונים, bells and pomegranates. The bells, which make sounds, atone for the sounds of *lashon hara*. The pomegranates, which are silent, atone for the times he remained silent when he should have spoken up to help his fellow man.

This idea is also stated by the purification process of the *metzora*. The Torah requires the *metzora* to take two birds (see *Vayikra* 14:4). The *Zohar* explains that one bird atones for the *lashon hara* he spoke, and the other bird atones for the good words he should have said to help his fellow man, but he remained silent.

The Gemara (*Megillah* 18.) says מלה בסלע משתוקא בתרין, which can be translated, "For speaking you earn a sela. For being silent you earn two."

The Imrei Emes *zt'l* asked someone, "Is it better to speak or to be silent?"

The man repeated the Gemara that silence is twice as precious as speaking. The Imrei Emes said, "Eh! You're not a businessman. When you're silent, you get two, and that's all. But each time you speak, you get one. Many ones are more precious than by being silent once and earning two. When you speak, you can do a lot of good."

restored." This is an example of the good that can be accomplished with speech.

The Meil Tzedakah writes, "Once, someone was going through tough times. He came to me and told me about his problems, and I spoke to him for a long time. I comforted him and gave him hope. Some days later, he told me that had I not spoken to him, he would have committed suicide. Therefore, be generous with your words when you encounter a poor person or anyone going through a difficult situation; don't be stingy with your words. Encourage him with many words. Even if you have worries of your own, don't let that prevent you from encouraging and consoling the poor, the worried, and the brokenhearted."

The Midrash (*Koheles Rabba* 8:5) tells a *mashal* of a person who was walking on the road and came across two birds fighting

with each other. The fight continued until one bird died. The live bird flew away and returned with a blade of grass. The bird placed the grass on the dead bird's mouth, and the dead bird came back to life and flew away.

The man saw this, and he took the blade of grass. As he walked, he was thinking of all the wonderful things he could do with this blade of grass that could resurrect the dead, when he came across a dead lion.

He bent over the lion and placed the grass on its mouth. The lion immediately came back to life and swallowed the person.

The Midrash says that the blade of grass is an allegory to speech because speech is very powerful – it can give life, but it can also cause death. It depends on how it is used. Kind words bring life. So much good can be done with a



single caring word, with a drop of encouragement. But when misused, speech causes pain and even death, *r'l*.

The Midrash (*Vayikra* 33:1) teaches: Reb Shimon ben Gamliel said to his slave Tevi, "Go to the market and buy me a good piece of meat."

Tevi returned with a tongue.

The next day, Reb Shimon ben Gamliel said, "Today, go to the market and buy me the worst piece of meat." Tevi went to the market and returned with a tongue. Reb Shimon ben Gamliel asked, "How can the tongue be both good and bad?"

Tevi replied, "Good and bad come from the tongue.

When the tongue is used for good things, there is nothing better. And when the tongue is used for bad things, there is nothing worse than it."<sup>1</sup>

## Truth

As we are on the topic of speech, its potential and risks, let's take this opportunity to discuss the mitzvah of (23:7) מדבר שקר תרחק, "Distance yourself from a false word"; the prohibition of lying.

No other prohibition states תרחק, that we should distance ourselves from it. Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* says that this indicates the severity of this aveirah, from which we must stay far away.<sup>2</sup>

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2. The Beis Yisrael of Gur *zy'a* asked one of his close chassidim to buy him a *lulav*, and he specified exactly the type of *lulav* he wanted. That year there was a shortage of *lulavim*, and the *shaliach* searched for many hours to find a *lulav* that met the Rebbe's criteria. In the end, he found such a *lulav* and paid a lot of money for it. The Rebbe was very happy with the *lulav* and asked, "How

Others say that the word תרחק, distance, teaches us that speaking untruths distances us from Hashem, r'l. As it states (*Tehillim* 101:7), דובר שקרים לא יכון לנגד עיני, "One who tells lies shall not be before My eyes."

Hashem's seal is truth (see *Shabbos* 55.), and untruths distance us from Hashem.

The Imrei Chaim of Viznitz zt'l related that a grandson of Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz once said an untruth, and Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer told everyone who heard the lie to fast to purify themselves from that impurity.

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zy'a said, "We should consider a lie to be like *arayos*, adultery. When Yidden will be cautious

with this prohibition, Moshiach will come."

What is the connection between being truthful and the coming of Moshiach?

Reb Refael of Barshid zy'a (one of Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer's primary students) explains as follows:

Tana d'Bei Eliyahu writes, "When one tells lies, *malachim* lie to him."

What lies do the *malachim* tell him? They tell him that an *aveirah* is a mitzvah and that a mitzvah is an *aveirah*.

(This is indeed the portion of those who tell untruths. They become dishonest with themselves, and in their confused state, they don't know which of their deeds are good and which are bad.)

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much did it cost?"

Before the man answered, the Rebbe said, "Better don't answer this question, because the only *aveirah* that the Torah specifies that one must distance himself is from telling a lie, מדבר שקר תרחק," and the Rebbe understood that this man might lie and tell a lower price than it actually cost.

Moshiach comes when we do *teshuvah*, but those who tell lies cannot do *teshuvah* because they don't know which of their deeds need correction.

When people are cautious with this prohibition, they will do *teshuvah*, and then Moshiach will come (*Imrei Pinchas* 6:78).

The *Imrei Emes* of Gurzy'a would say, "Everyone should choose one מצות עשה, one positive command, and one מצות לא תעשה, prohibition, to excel in and keep with *mesirus nefesh*."

The *Imrei Emes* said that he chose *kibud av v'eim*, honoring parents, for his *mitzvas aseh*, and keeping away from lies, for the *lo saaseh*, prohibitions. He explained that he chose specifically these two because they are the hardest to keep.

The *Shlah Hakadosh* (*Shaar HaOsiyos* 4) writes, "Here, in Yerushalayim

(may it speedily be rebuilt), there lived a very great chassid from the Sephardic community who would come to me often. For all the money in the world, he wouldn't say anything that wasn't one hundred percent true, *chas veshalom*. He told me how his father trained him in this trait."

This is what he would do. When his children would get into a fight and run to their father, each one complaining that it was the other one's fault, their father would tell them, "Whoever admits that he was wrong, I won't punish him (on the condition that he won't continue to do so), and I will also reward him with a few coins for telling the truth. However, if he will claim he did nothing wrong, and I discover that he lied, I will punish him severely."

The *Shlah* writes, "In this manner, he raised his children with the trait of *emes*. This is as it states: (*Mishlei* 23:23) "*emes knei* -

purchase truth" because with his money and presents, he trained his children to tell the truth until the truth became their second nature. Similarly, all wise people should devise strategies on how to raise his children with good *middos* and good deeds."

We discussed raising children to tell the truth, but how does an adult train himself to tell the truth?

Rebbe Mordechai of Chernobyl *zt'l* offers the following helpful counsel:

If you say something that isn't true, go back to that person you spoke to, correct yourself, and tell him the truth. It is very embarrassing to do so, and you won't want to go through that ordeal another time. The shame you experience will help you tell the truth.

## Tefillah

One day, Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* davened at the Kosel and wanted to return home through Shaar Shechem. His *gabbai* advised him to go through Shaar HaAshpos, a safer route. Rebbe Shlomke insisted on taking the shorter route through Shaar Shechem. As they walked, an Arab hit Rebbe Shlomke. The *gabbai* hinted to him that they should have taken the safer route. Rebbe Shlomke replied, "We have a *kabbalah* that if a gentile accosts you after you daven, that is a sign that your *tefillos* were accepted."<sup>3</sup>

This is hinted at in the *pasuk*, שמן זית זך, if one davens a pure prayer, כתיב, and then he is beaten by a gentile, למאור, that's a sign that his *tefillos* were answered.

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3. Rebbe Shlomke added, "Better that the body is hit, and not the soul" because the other route contained greater tests for the eyes.

Sometimes one davens for something, and not only aren't his tefillos answered, but matters become worse. For example, one prays for a *refuah*, and instead of becoming better, the illness intensifies. Rebbe Shlomke said that he has a *kabbalah* that this is also a sign that the *tefillos* were answered and salvation will come shortly. This is also hinted at in the words, שמן זית נד, if one davens with *kavanah*, like pure olive oil, כתיב, and afterwards he has a disappointment, the situation that he was davening for became even worse, לכאור, that's a sign that his tefillos were answered and things will soon become good for him.

When a person's tefillos aren't answered immediately, that can be for his benefit. We will explain this בדרך צחות.

Tzedakah collectors often carry with them credit card machines. Those who have money in their

pockets can give cash, but they can swipe their credit card and donate that way if they don't have cash. Generally, when they do so, they give more money than when they donate cash.

When they give cash, they might give a dollar or two, and that's all. But when they use the credit card machine, they would typically charge the card for five, ten, or eighteen dollars, etc.

When one pays with a credit card, he pays later. So, we see that when one pays later, he gives more. Similarly, when one's tefillos aren't answered immediately that can be a good sign, because Hashem is "paying" later, and when the payment is later, he will receive more.

Reb Mendel Horowitz *zt'l hy'd*, son of Reb Alter'l Horowitz of Dzhikov *zy'a* became very ill, and his life was in danger. The Ahavas Yisrael said to Reb Alter'l,

"It states in halachah (*Choshen Mishpat* 176:15) that if there are three business partners who agreed to remain partners, none of them can back out of the partnership without the consent of the other two parties. Chazal tell us that there are three partners in the formation of man: Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the father, and the mother. Hakadosh Baruch Hu can't leave the partnership without the parents' consent. Therefore, if you don't lose hope, and you believe your son can recover, you are partners in 'this business' of raising your child, and Hashem is obliged to remain a partner, as well, and your son will recover. However, if you lose hope and give up, the partnership is dissolved... Therefore, don't give up on your son. Continue to daven for him, and then the third partner, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, will also remain in the *shutfus*.

They didn't lose hope, they davened for their son, and he recovered.

Reb Zanvil accepted a job to be a chazzan for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

His Rebbe, the Ropshitzer Rav, told him, "Oy, Reb Zanvel. ובכן תן פחדך will also be about money?" He was telling him that when he says ובכן תן פחדך in the Rosh Hashanah tefillah, his thoughts will be on money because he will be davening to earn *parnassah*.

Reb Zanvel replied, "ובכן צדיקים is also money." We say ובכן צדיקים in the Rosh Hashanah tefillah as well. He was cleverly hinted to the Ropshitzer Rebbe that Rebbes and tzaddikim also need to earn *parnassah*.

Reb Ben Tzion of Bobov *zt'l hy'd* would repeat this story, and he added, "And I say, ובכן יתקדש שמך ה' אולקינו (also from the Rosh Hashanah tefillah) is also money." Because to make a *kiddush*

Hashem and to increase Torah and mitzvos, one needs money.

As Rebbe Meir of Permishlan *zt'l* said, "If you add up the intention of all the tefillos of Bnei Yisrael, you will see that their primary request is for money. But if you add up all the money of Bnei Yisrael, you will see that it is all about Torah and mitzvos." Because Yidden daven for money so they can raise their families and live as Yidden. Ultimately, it is all about studying Torah and performing mitzvos.

Chazal (*Taanis* 8:) say that one can't daven for two things at once. One should only daven for one thing at a time. The question is, we daven *Shemonah Esrei*, which includes so many requests. How do we daven for so many things at the same time?

The Chasam Sofer answers that our request is one: to serve Hashem.

There are many details. We ask for health, *parnassah*, wisdom, but they are all for the same purpose: To serve Hashem.

As it states (*Tehillim* 27:4), אחת שאלתי מאת ה'...שבתי בבית ה'. "One thing I ask from Hashem... That I should dwell in the house of Hashem...to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to visit the Beis HaMikdash." He says he is asking for one thing, and then he asks for three things. The answer is that it is all one request. All requests go under the primary request, to be close to Hashem.

### ***Purim Kattan***

Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 697:1) states, "Some say that there's an obligation to conduct a special meal on the fourteenth of Adar Rishon (*Purim Kattan*), but that isn't the custom. Nevertheless, one should add a little bit onto his usual meal, to fulfill the opinion of those who say

there's an obligation. וטוב לב, 'And a good-hearted person feasts perpetually.'

With these final words (whose origin is Mishlei 15:15), Shulchan Aruch encourages people to celebrate Purim Kattan. As the Mishnah Berurah writes, "The Rema concludes וטוב לב משתה תמיד, 'A good-hearted person feasts perpetually' because it is good to increase the meal in honor of the miracle that happened in these days."

Let us get into the atmosphere of משתה תמיד, to perpetually be happy with life. To do so, we need to focus on all the good we enjoy in life, and to believe that even the not-so-good is גם זו לטובה, for our benefit.

It states (*Avos* 4:1), איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו, 'Who is wealthy? One who is satisfied with his lot.'

Rashi writes, "He is happy with the portion that Hakadosh Baruch Hu

prepared for him, whether it is good or bad, little or a lot. He accepts everything with a good eye."

Old *sefarim* write that חם לה is *roshei teivos* for קר ויבש, "hot, wet, cold, and dry." This hints that in all situations, in all weathers and under all circumstances, שמח בחלקו, we should be happy with our portion.

It states (*Shemos* 23:25), והסירתי מחלה מקרבך, "I will remove illness from your midst." The Ksav Sofer *zt'l* explained that the illness in man is that he isn't satisfied with his portion.

Reb Yaakov Galinsky *zt'l* was a short man. Once, he said in a *drashah* that this is for his benefit because he can only see the half of the cup that's full.

The elders of Yerushalayim (and some say the origin is from the Skulener Rebbe *zt'l*) would say that a person shouldn't be upset that his cup is only half full



because his cup is actually entirely full, only his cup isn't as tall as he thought it was.

In other words, he thinks he deserves more and therefore thinks his cup is only half full. But, in truth, he receives everything he deserves.

Rebbe Shaul Yedidiah of Modzitz *zt'l* always had an energetic, joyous smile on his face, even in Poland during the Holocaust. People asked him how he managed to be so happy and why he wasn't worried like everyone else. He replied, "I'm also worried, only I keep my worries tied up and stored away. Once a day, I take out my worries to look at them, and then I immediately tuck them away until the next day. That's how I can maintain a happy disposition." (*Imrei Shaul*).

The *Imrei Emes* (*Korach* 5676) writes that in his youth, he heard in the name of Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* that if everyone would place their *peckel* (package of hardships) on a table, and they had the right to take any other person's package instead of their own, they wouldn't want to. They would want to take back their own *peckel*. This is because Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives each person the challenges that he can endure. Someone else's problems will be too strenuous on him.

A hint to this concept is the *pasuk* (*Bamidbar* 17:24), ויראו ויקחו איש מטהו. Targum Yonoson translates it, "ואשתמודעו ונסיבו גבר חוטריה", "They understood, and each person took his staff." They understood that their portion was best for them.