

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita

Bo





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Email: **Mail@torahwellsprings.com**

Parshas - Bo

There is a famous Ramban, at the end of *Bo*, which teaches fundamental lessons in *emunah*. We will quote some phrases from this Ramban. The Beis Aharon *zt'l* (Stolin-Karlin) told his chassidim to study this *Ramban*, every day.

The Ramban writes, "Ever since the generation of Enosh, when people began dabbling with *avodah zarah*, people became confused with the fundamentals of *emunah*. There were those who thought the world always existed, and they denied that Hashem created the world. There were others who thought Hashem doesn't know what's happening in the world. As it states (*Tehillim* 73:11) ויש דעה

ב'עליון, 'Is there awareness Above?' A third category of people were aware that Hashem *knows* everything, but they didn't believe that Hashem *is* constantly involved with this world, leading it with *hashgachah pratis*... But when Hashem desires an individual or a community, and He performs miracles for them, beyond the rules of nature, all their false ideas are disproven. The wondrous miracles reveal that (1) Hashem created the world, (2) knows what's happening in the world, (3) He is constantly involved with this world and leads it with *hashgachah pratis*, (4) and He has the strength and ability to do so..."¹

1. The Teshuas Chein (*Va'eira* ד"ה והפלתי) writes, "Pharaoh, the ruler of Mitzrayim, didn't believe in *hashgachah pratis*... He proclaimed that everything happens by the forces of nature... The Jewish nation living there was definitely influenced by Pharaoh's philosophy. Although they believed in Hashem they said that since Hashem is so very great and holy, it isn't proper that He should look down at this lowly world. Indeed, the

Pri HaAretz (Bo) from Rebbe Mendel of Vitebsk *zy'a* writes, "Pharaoh believed in Hashem. He believed that the world was created on purpose and not by accident, but he didn't believe in *hashgachah pratis*. He followed the belief of many heretics, to think that Hashem abandoned the world after creating it and gave the world over to the *mazalos* and the stars of heaven. This is the reason all gentile nations worship the stars and the *mazalos*, as this is known (though we prefer not to elaborate on that)..."

The *emunah* of Klal Yisrael is very different than the beliefs of the Egyptians, because the Jewish nation believes that

Hashem takes an active part in the world and leads it with *hashgachah pratis*, while the Mitzrim believed that everything happens by the rules of nature.

The Egyptians enslaved the Jewish nation, and the *Pri HaAretz* explains that the enslavement proved a point. The Egyptians wanted to show that Hashem left the world. Their evidence: He doesn't help those who believe in Him and trust in his *hashgachah pratis*. They claimed that this proves Hashem doesn't intervene with what's happening in the world.

But despite their attempts to prove that Hashem abandoned

Rambam, in *Morah Nevuchim*, writes that the Jewish nation in Mitzrayim was confused in this matter. To some extent, we are still confused. The *yetzer hara* dances among us, causing us to think that things happen by chance. Therefore, we have the mitzvah to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* each day. That habituates us to recognize that everything happens by Hashem's decree..."

The Teshuas Chein then explains a *pasuk* (*Shmuel* 20) as follows: "מקרה הוא, if you think that matters happen by chance and you don't believe that everything is Hashem's *hashgachah*, בלתי טהור הוא, that means you aren't pure..."

the world, they actually proved that Hashem leads the world with *hashgachah pratis*. This is because the enslavement was part of Hashem's masterplan and *hashgachah pratis*. Hashem put into Pharaoh's mind, and into the mind of his advisors, to enslave the Jewish nation (as will be explained). So it is the opposite; the slavery proves that Hashem leads the world with *hashgachah pratis*.

Why did Hashem want slavery? It's because Hashem told Avraham that his descendants will be in exile for four hundred years, but because of the קושי השיעבוד, slave labor, the years were deducted to only 210 years. Thus slavery was for their benefit, and it was Hashem's plan, as it enabled the Yidden to leave Mitzrayim earlier. Thus, the slavery proves that Hashem runs the world and leads it according to His will.

The Pri HaAretz writes, "It states, ויעבדו את בני ישראל בפרך,

the Mitzrim enslaved the Jewish nation with hard labor. The Mitzrim did this to support their belief [that Hashem abandoned the world]. They didn't know that slavery was Hashem's gift to the Jewish people. The slave labor helped complete the quota of four hundred years they were destined to be in exile. This is the explanation of the *pasuk*, בא אל פרעה, 'go to Pharaoh' and *Rashi* writes, והתרה בו, 'and teach him' כי אני הכבדתי את לבו', that I hardened his heart.' Hashem was telling Moshe that he should explain to Pharaoh that even enslaving the Jewish nation wasn't Pharaoh's own choice. [It was Hashem's plan, and therefore He hardened Pharaoh's heart, to desire to enslave them.] Thus, the slavery isn't a sign that Hashem abandoned the world. On the contrary, it is an example of Hashem's *hashgachah pratis*."

The Pri HaAretz concludes that it is very hard for *resha'im* to attain true

awareness that everything happens by *hashgachah pratis*. He writes, "The truth is, it is very far and distant for *resha'im* to believe in ...*hashgachah pratis*: that a person doesn't hurt his finger if it wasn't decreed in heaven (as it states in *Chulin* 7), and that there isn't a grass that dries up and falls [without His plan]. And that a stone isn't thrown, only at the time and place that it was destined for. As it states (*Koheles* 11:3), אל מקום שיפול העץ, the place where the tree falls, שם יהיא, that is where it was destined to fall..."

About the *korban Pesach*, the Torah says it should be בן שנה *one year* (12:5), בבית אחד יאכל, eaten in *one house* (12:46), and it is forbidden to break any of the bones into two. This essentially means that each bone must remain whole. The Maharal (*Gevuras Hashem* ch.60) explains that these laws are to remind us that everything comes from the One Hashem, everything is

by *hashgachah pratis*, and nothing happens by nature.

Revealing the Concealed Miracles

The Ramban writes, "From the well-known, great miracles one believes in the concealed ones, because a person doesn't have a portion in Torah...unless he believes that everything that happens to us is miraculous, and there is no nature at all."

There are many concealed miracles that happen to us each day. They are called "concealed miracles" for if one doesn't pay attention to them, he won't notice them. He'll think that everything is natural.

In hind-sight one often recognizes that it didn't happen by chance. But as they are happening, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that it is all natural. Remembering the great miracles of *yetzias Mitzrayim* will help us recognize those concealed miracles.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* gave a *mashal*:

A talented artist sculpted a wooden horse. He brought it to the marketplace and sat on top of it, so people could admire his artwork and praise him. He was surprised that people just walked by without saying a word.

He asked a friend, "Why isn't everyone praising my craftsmanship? Is there something wrong with the horse?"

The friend replied, "Your artwork is outstanding, and that's the problem. Your horse seems real; no one knows it's

art. I suggest you cut your horse in half. Then, people will realize it's a sculpture, and they will admire your artistry."

The *nimshal* is, Hashem created the world with beauty and wisdom, only people are so accustomed to these wonders, they don't recognize them. What did Hashem do? He split the sea by *kriyas Yam Suf*. Now everyone recognizes Hashem and His wondrous creation. ²

Reviewing the Miracles

The Ramban writes, "Hashem doesn't perform miracles in every generation, before every *rasha* and non-believer.

2. The Ramban (10;19) quotes Rabbeinu Chananel who writes the following: "Moshe Rabbeinu prayed that the *arbeh* should leave Mitzrayim, and until today, there aren't any locust that ruin crops in Mitzrayim. If they come to Eretz Yisrael, and cross over into Mitzrayim, they won't eat any of the Egyptian crops. This is how it is until today, as this is known to all. However, in reference to the plague of *צפרדע*, Moshe said (8:5) *רק ביאור תישארנה*, that they should remain in the Nile. Therefore there are *אלתמצח*, crocodiles/alligators [which are a type of *צפרדע*] in the Nile until today. Whereas, about the locust it states, *לא נשאר ארבה אחד בכל גבול מצרים*, not one of them remained in all boundaries of Mitzrayim [and that is how it remains until today]. About this it states in *Tehillim* (105:2) *שיחו בכל* *נפלאותיו*, 'Speak about Hashem's wonders.'"

Therefore Hashem commanded we should constantly remember what we saw, and we should tell our children, and they, in turn, will tell their children, and this chain should continue until the final generation. The Torah is very strict about this matter [that we should remember *yetzias Mitzrayim*], for one receives *kares* for eating chametz on Pesach or for not bringing the *korban Pesach* (because these mitzvos remind us of *yetzias Mitzrayim*). He also obligated us to write everything we saw on our arms and on our heads, and on our doorposts, and to speak about *yetzias Mitzrayim* every morning and every night. As *Chazal* (*Brachos* 21) say, saying the *brachah* אמת ויציב is a Torah requirement, as it states, למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך, 'So you shall remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* all days of your life.' We must build a succah, and there are many other mitzvos that remind us of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, so that in all generations we won't forget the miracles, and no one will deny Hashem..."³

3. By *makos bechoros*, Moshe was careful to say כחצות, that the firstborns will die *approximately* at *chatzos*. He didn't tell them that it would happen *exactly* at *chatzos* (as indeed occurred). Rashi (11:4) explains that Moshe was concerned that the Egyptian clocks might be slightly off, and when they think that it is midnight, and *makos bechoros* didn't yet happen, they would say that משה בדאי, "Moshe is a liar," *chalilah*. To avoid that from happening, Moshe told them that *makos bechoros* will happen *about chatzos*, כחצות. That way, even if their clocks weren't accurate, they wouldn't accuse Moshe of lying.

The Brisker Rav *zt'l* wondered, how could they think Moshe was lying? They had already witnessed nine *makos*. Everything Moshe said occurred. How could they doubt him? The answer is, if one doesn't want to believe, he can see miracles and proofs before his eyes, and he will still find excuses to deny them, and to attribute it all to nature.

There are mitzvos that are kept once a week, such as Shabbos; there are mitzvos practiced once a year, like the *yomim tovim*; but the mitzvah to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* is a daily mitzvah — kept once by daytime and once at nighttime. This indicates to us the essential need for this reminder.⁴

The Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz *zt'l* was playing chess with his chassid Reb Dovid Rosenberg *z'l* on the night of *nitel* (many tzaddikim play chess on the night of *nitel*) and Reb Dovid won each game. The Ahavas Yisrael said, "I also know how to play chess. The difference between us is that I know the game, but you constantly review it."

A similar story is told about Rebbe Avraham Elimelech of Karlin-Stolin *zt'l* when he visited Eretz Yisrael. The Rebbe visited a winery together with a group of his chassidim. One of the chassidim was a talented wine taster. By merely tasting the wine, he was able to tell which year the wine was produced, the type, alcohol level, etc. Rebbe Avraham Elimelech explained, "Do you know what the difference is between you and him? You drink wine, but he reviews it constantly."

The lesson is, it isn't sufficient to know about *yetzias Mitzrayim*, or to know about *emunah*. By constantly reviewing one becomes an expert.⁵

4. We can draw a *mashal* to a doctor who prescribes different kinds of medicines. Some medicines need to be taken once a week, others are taken once a year, and other medicines must be ingested twice a day. Each *yom tov* is once a year; Shabbos is once a week; but remembering *yetzias Mitzrayim* is twice every day, because this is the foundation of the Torah.

5. In addition to reviewing *emunah*, one must pray for *emunah*. One night, the Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* traveled with his horse and wagon, via *kefitzas haderech*, to a village. He came to the home of one of his students,

A person with a sore throat went to his doctor. The doctor prescribed cough candies to suck on, to soothe the pain. The patient swallowed the candy instead of sucking on them. Obviously the cough candies didn't help him. The *nimshal* is, Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim with great miracles so we will believe in Hashem. But we must study *yetzias Mitzrayim*, discuss it, and think about it. Otherwise, a brief reminder that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim won't be sufficient. Similarly, we must think about *emunah* and we must review it. A

fleeting thought on *emunah* is not sufficient.

It states, צדיק באמונתו יחיה, "The righteous man lives with his *emunah*" (*Chabakuk* 2:4). This *pasuk* correlates *emunah* with life. The reason is because *emunah* is like breathing, which one can't be without, even for a short time. One eats a few times a day, but *emunah* is like constant breathing; it must always be on one's mind.

When one percolates hot coffee, he first boils the water on a high flame, and after the coffee is ready, he keeps it hot on a low flame to maintain the

and he said to his student, "The way to attain *emunah* is to pour your heart out before Hashem and to request *emunah*." After giving over this message, the Baal Shem Tov returned home.

That student later said that the Baal Shem Tov perceived with his *ruach hakodesh* that he was struggling with his *emunah* and having many questions. The Baal Shem Tov came to direct him towards attaining *emunah*.

The first Shabbos that Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zt'l* became Rebbe, he called over a *yungerman* who was standing on the other side of the beis medresh, and said, "If I know your thoughts then certainly Hashem knows your thoughts too."

Later, this *yungerman* said that at the time, he was having doubts in *emunah*. He was wondering whether Hashem knows his thoughts, and the Rebbe, with his *ruach hakodesh*, set him straight.

heat. The Chazon Ish *zt'l* used that as a *mashal* for *emunah*. There are times when one is actively increasing and strengthening his *emunah*. For example, when one is reviewing to himself the fundamental truths of *emunah*, or when one focuses on the wonders Hashem performs in the world. Even after he finished developing his *emunah*, and right now he is learning Torah, or working, or eating, etc., *emunah* should remain hot. As in the *mashal*, it has to be on a low flame, in the back of his mind, so his *emunah* won't cool off, but *emunah* must always be on his mind.⁶

The Gates are Open

The Baal Shem Tov *zy'a* taught: when a person is clearing the mud, he will inevitably also become dirty.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* quotes this lesson of the Baal Shem Tov and explains that this is the reason Moshe Rabbeinu didn't want to go to Pharaoh, to warn him that the plague of *arbeh* was coming. Pharaoh was a terrible *kelipah*, impurity, and Moshe feared that he might become impure, just by standing before Pharaoh's presence.

Moshe considered Pharaoh a terribly impure *kelipah*

6. The Yesod HaAvodah and the Shem Mishmuel (הגש"פ ד"ה ואפילו כולנו) *zt'l* teach that each mitzvah has its *segulah*. Tzitzis is *mesugal* for guarding one's eyes, as it states about tzitzis, עיניכם, ולא תתורו אחרי... "Don't stray after your eyes..." The mitzvah of honoring scholars is *mesugal* for *yiras Shamayim*, as it states, והדרת פני זקן ויראת מאלקיך, "Give glory to scholars and fear Hashem" (as taught by the Bnei Yissaschar *zt'l*). The mitzvah of telling the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* is *mesugal* for *emunah*. It isn't only rational – that if one will review the wonders that happened by *yetzias Mitzrayim* his *emunah* will become stronger – it is also a *segulah*. A *segulah* is something that can't be explained scientifically or rationally how it works. On a sublime plane, speaking about *yetzias Mitzrayim* engraves *emunah* onto one's heart.

because Pharaoh and the Mitzrim already suffered seven *makos*, and Pharaoh was still refusing to send the Jewish nation out of Mitzrayim. Moshe thought: only a very great *kelipah* could see such revelations and remain callous as Pharaoh.

Hashem explained to Moshe that although Pharaoh was certainly a great *kelipah*, he wasn't as terrible as Moshe perceived him. (Pharaoh was definitely terrible, but not to the extents that Moshe perceived him to be.) Hashem said, **בא אל פרעה**, "Go to Pharaoh, and don't be afraid of the terrible *kelipah*, **כי אני** ,because the reason he isn't freeing the Jewish nation is because I hardened his heart..." If he was under his own control, he would have already sent out the Jewish nation.

It states, **בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי** **את לבו**, "Go to Pharaoh because I hardened his heart ..." It seems counter-intuitive. If

Hashem hardened his heart that means Pharaoh will certainly refuse to free the nation, so why should Moshe go to Pharaoh?

The Chidushei HaRim's answers that Hashem said, **בא אל פרעה**, "Go to Pharaoh, and don't think that he is as great a *kelipah* and impurity as you perceive him, **כי אני הכבדתי את לבו**, because I hardened his heart. He would have freed the Yidden if it were entirely up to him."

The Chida (*Nachal Kidumim, Bo*) quotes Reb Shlomo Istaruk *zt'l* (a *rishon* who lived in the era of the Ra'n and Ritv'a) who taught that Pharaoh had the option to do *teshuvah*. It would be difficult for him to do *teshuvah*, because Hashem hardened his heart, but if he wanted to, he could do *teshuvah*, for the gates of *teshuvah* are always open. According to his commentary, **כי** means *even* or *although*. Thus the *pasuk* is saying, **בא אל פרעה**, go to

Pharaoh and ask him to free the nation. **כִּי אָנִי הַכְבַּדְתִּי**, although I hardened his heart, even so, the option for *teshuvah* is available for him. If he wants to do *teshuvah*, he will be able to.⁷

The Gemara (*Chagigah* 15.) states that a *bas kol* announced **שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹכְבִים חוּץ מֵאֲחֵר**, that everyone can do *teshuvah* except for Acher (a great sinner). The Maharshah, and the שו"ת מהרי"מ (8) write that if Acher disregarded the *bas kol* and attempted to do *teshuvah*, he would be able to, because *teshuvah* is always an option.

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 86:)

states, "You must do everything your *baal habayis* (host) tells you to do except when he tells you to leave." The Reishis Chachmah (*Shaar HaKedushah* 21) explains that this is hinting to those times when, *keviyachol*, Hashem (or the holy *sefarim*) tell a person that he must leave and distance himself from Hashem's presence, because he sinned too much. One doesn't have to listen to that. You listen to the *baal habayis*, the King of the world, and you follow all His rules, except for when He tells you to leave, because the gates of *teshuvah* are always open.⁸

7. It states (*Tehillim* 41:5) **לֵךְ כִּי חָטָאתִי לָךְ**, "Heal me because I sinned to you." It seems that the word **כִּי**, "because," doesn't fit here. Isn't sin a reason that he won't be healed? Once again, if we will translate **כִּי** as "even," Dovid Hamelech is praying that Hashem heal him, **כִּי חָטָאתִי לָךְ**, even if I sinned to You.

8. A non-religious *bachur* from Netanyah, Eretz Yisrael began his path of *teshuvah*. He began keeping Shabbos, and he also started coming to the local beis medresh. A *yungerman* who frequented that beis medresh offered to teach him Torah.

That *yungerman* taught him the basics of hilchos Shabbos, kashrus, *tefillah*, and more. There was one matter that was unusual and which puzzled him about the boy: each day he came to the beis medresh with a pocket bulging with sunflower seeds, and from time to time, he would

take a seed or two from his left pocket and put it in his right pocket. But the *yungerman* decided that he wouldn't ask him about that, and they focused on learning Torah.

One evening, before they began studying, the *yungerman* said, "I didn't eat anything today. Please give me some of your sunflower seeds, so I will have strength to learn with you."

"I can't," the boy replied.

The *yungerman* was insulted. For months he tutored him for free, without asking for a penny. And now, when he asks him for a minor favor, the boy refuses.

They learned for fifteen minutes, and the *yungerman* said that he had to stop. He felt uncomfortable learning with a *bachur* who obviously didn't appreciate for everything he was doing for him. The next day the *yungerman* didn't show up. The day after they learned, but it wasn't with the same enthusiasm and happiness like it used to be. Eventually, they stopped learning altogether.

One day, the *bachur* called up the *yungerman* and said, "You don't owe me anything, but I want you to come to my home for a couple of minutes."

The *yungerman* came, and he saw barrels filled with sunflower seeds! He was wondering what type of psychological syndrome this *bachur* suffered from.

The *bachur* said, "When I became a *baal teshuvah*, I had a very strong *yetzer hara* to revert to my old ways. A rabbi advised me that I should put a lot of sunflower seeds into my left pocket, and whenever I do a good deed, I should place one of the sunflower seeds into my right pocket. When I come home at night, I count my good deeds and I store them in these barrels, so I can remember all the good deeds I'm doing. When you asked me for a few sunflower seeds, I refused, because at that time, all the seeds were in my right pocket and I had to leave them there so I could count them at the end of the day..."

We repeat this story as a reminder that one must focus on the good deeds he does. Don't consider yourself lost from Hashem, because every Yid has many mitzvos. With this focus, you will be able to wholly change your ways and do perfect *teshuvah* before Hashem.

One of the popular *kevarim* in Poland is the *kever* of the Bnei Yissaschar

**Yetzias Mitzrayim in the merit
of Bitachon**

The Kad HaKemach, from
Rabbeinu b'Chaya (*Bitachon*)

writes, "We were redeemed
from Mitzrayim because the
nation had *bitachon*. As the
Midrash Tehillim (22) states,

zt'l. (There is a *hachnasas orchim* there, so people can have a good meal and a place to rest before they continue on their travels.) A *yungerman* told me that he was at the *kever* of the Bnei Yissaschar and saw a *bachur* praying there with immense *kavanah*. He knew that *bachur*. It was his neighbors' child. He also knew that this *bachur* had fallen off the *derech* ten years before. What turned the *bachur* around? How was he saying *Tehillim* with so much sweetness?

When the *bachur* finished his *Tehillim*, the *yungerman* greeted him, and asked him how he did *teshuvah*. The *bachur* replied, "Someone told me something that totally turned me around. The person who told it to me didn't realize the imprint he was having on my life. He told me that my parents keep their front door open every night, as they hope that I will return. They don't want me to come to the door, find it locked, and turn away. That's when I returned home and also to *Yiddishkeit*, after ten years of wandering."

This is as it states in *Tana d'Bei Eliyahu* (*Rabba* 31) "I testify heaven and earth that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is sitting and waiting for Yisrael more than a father waits for his son to do *teshuvah*."

There was a boy who was gradually slipping away from *Yiddishkeit*, and his father paid a lot of money for teachers, mentors, and big brothers to bring him back to Torah. When he finally came back, the father asked, "Which dollar brought you back?" The father's intention was, "I invested a lot of money to help you, in through various venues. Which investment influenced you to come back?"

The boy replied, "My salvation came from someone who you didn't pay. Once, a rabbi saw me, and smiled warmly and brightly. His greeting gave me a feeling of worth. I told the rabbi, 'If you knew my sins, you wouldn't smile to me.' The rabbi replied, 'It isn't true; each Yid is special to Hashem. You are precious to Hashem, regardless of your sins.' It was these words, and his friendliness, which brought me back."

אליך ועקו ונמלטו, "They shouted out to You and they were saved, בכ בטחו ולא בושו, because they trusted in You."

The *Seforno* also teaches that *yetzias Mitzrayim* was in the merit of the nation's *bitachon*. Hashem told the nation to eat the *korban Pesach*, מתניכם, חגורים, נעליכם בהגליכם, ומקלכם בידכם, "Your belts girded, wearing shoes, your staffs in your hands" as though they would be leaving Mitzrayim any minute. The *Seforno* (12:11) explains, "They were demonstrating their firm *bitachon* in Hashem, without any doubts. They prepared for leaving Mitzrayim even as they were still imprisoned." This implies that they were redeemed from Mitzrayim in the merit of their *bitachon*.

Furthermore, the Yidden put the blood of the *korban Pesach* on their doorways, and they were saved by *makas bechoros*. The Rabbeinu b'Chaya explains that they were saved from *makas*

bechoros because they trusted in Hashem.

The Rabbeinu b'Chaya (12:13) writes, "The blood wasn't what protected them from *makas bechoros*, and not putting the blood didn't cause death. Rather, whoever trusted in Hakadosh Baruch Hu with perfect belief and wasn't afraid of Pharaoh and of his decrees, and he courageously *shechted* the sheep — Mitzrayim's *avodah zarah* — in public, and he put the *korban Pesach*'s blood on the door posts and lintel, he is a *tzaddik*. He trusts in Hashem and he deserves to be saved."

Thus, the Jewish nation slaughtered the *korban Pesach*, as they trusted in Hashem to protect them. They ate the *korban Pesach* dressed in a way that indicated that they trusted in Hashem and are ready to leave Mitzrayim. All of this is because *yetzias Mitzrayim* was in the merit of their *bitachon*.

Bitachon Brings Parnassah

With *bitachon* we will have *parnassah*. The Kad HaKemach (ibid) writes, "Whoever trusts in Hashem, Hashem's *chesed* — which gives sustenance to the entire world — will envelope him. As it states (*Tehillim* 32:10) חסד יסוכבנו 'The one who trusts in Hashem, *chesed* (kindness) envelops him.' Hashem will arrange ways for him to attain his *parnassah*, and Hashem has unlimited

options. Eliyahu HaNavi was sustained by crows (as this is known), fifty-five *nevi'im* hiding in a cave were supported by Ovadyah.... Hashem sustains...a child in his mother's womb, and a bird in its egg, although there is no place to bring the food. Hashem gives *parnassah* to the birds who fly in the sky and to the fish in the sea; to the weak worm and to other small animals⁹... Being that *bitachon* is so important and it

9. A major part of the Cohen's monthly income comes from Mrs. Cohen's playschool (babysitting service for toddlers). She earns four thousand shekels per month. Joined with her husband's *kollel* stipend, plus some odds-and-ends jobs that he does, they are able to get by.

When Mrs. Cohen gave birth, she had to hire a substitute and take maternity leave. The Cohen's agreed that the substitute will get paid four thousand shekels each month. But they forgot to stipulate how long the substitute would be working there.

A few weeks later, that issue became a debate. The substitute claimed that she understood it would be a job for three months, as that is the standard maternity leave in Eretz Yisrael. Mrs. Cohen said that she needs the income, and she was planning on returning after two months. After discussing it with her husband, Mrs. Cohen said to the substitute, "The custom in Eretz Yisrael is to have a three month maternity leave; therefore we will let you run the nursery for three months. Hashem will enable us to earn our *parnassah* some other way."

During those three months, the Cohen's repeatedly reminded themselves that Hashem would help them. On Chol HaMoed Succos, the Cohen's

relative came for a visit, and he was enthralled by an expensive painting (made by the Beck family) hanging on the succah wall. The Cohen's explained that they couldn't afford buying such an expensive painting and they inherited that painting from their parent's. The relative said, "This would be a perfect present for a wealthy person who I want to show my appreciation to. If you will agree, I will buy it from you for twelve thousand shekels."

The Cohen's agreed. That was exactly the amount of money that they lost from the maternity leave.

The laws of *ribbis* are complex, and in Eretz Yisrael, as the banks and many companies are owned by Yidden, the laws of *ribbis* come up very often. There are often *kulas*, lenient opinions, that one may be permitted to rely on to pay interest to a bank, but there are opinions that are more stringent and prohibit any payments of interest.

One *kollel yungerman* living in Eretz Yisrael was learning the laws of *ribbis*, and upon seeing the stringent opinions, he made a *kabbalah* to pay all his bills in the bank, electric company, etc., on time, so he wouldn't be charged interest.

But once, when he was in America, he realized that there wasn't enough money in the bank. It was the tenth of the month, the day that most of his bills were paid automatically, and without money in the bank, everything would bounce. He could call the bank, and tell them to let the charges go through, but that meant having to pay interest to the bank, which was what he was trying to avoid.

He placed his trust in Hashem. He prayed and hoped that his bank account would suddenly become filled with money, and he wouldn't have to take out a loan.

He planned to call the bank at the last possible moment. If even then there wasn't enough money in the bank, he would have to take the loan.

When it was close to the bank's closing time, he left the beis medresh where he was learning, turned on the phone, and discovered that his *rosh kollel* had tried to reach him.

He immediately called back his *rosh kollel* who told him, "I wanted to let you know that I just deposited two months of your *kollel* stipend directly into your bank."

is a primary foundation of the Torah, therefore the Torah is called *bitachon*, as it states (*Mishlei* 21:22) עיר גבורים עלה משה ויורד עוז מבטחה, Moshe went up to heaven and brought down the Torah, which is called *bitachon*."

When one knows that everything happens by Hashem, he will put his trust in Hashem and not in any other source. He will not trust

his business or bank account; he will not trust his talents; and he will not trust *baalei tzedakah*, wealthy philanthropists, because *parnassah* comes solely from Hashem.¹⁰

The Bobover Rebbe *zy'a* (the Kedushas Tzion) wrote the following letter to someone who was struggling with *parnassah*, "Torah can be

That was enough money so his bank account wouldn't bounce.

This story can teach us several lessons:

- (1) When one wants to keep his *kabbalos*, Hashem will help him.
- (2) The system of the *kollel* was that the *rosh kollel* would call randomly one of the *kollel yungerleit* to tell him when he deposited money, and that *yungerman* was responsible to tell all the others. By *hashgachah pratis*, the *rosh kollel* called him, which enabled him to keep his *kabbalah* to avoid paying interest and not take loans.
- (3) Finally, this story is a reminder that if you will have *bitachon*, Hashem will help you.

10. Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* said that trusting in one's business, or on one's bank account, and the like, is equivalent to *avodah zarah*. The explanation is, he is placing his trust elsewhere, and not on Hashem. It states (*Tehillim* 9:19) "Hashem won't forget the pauper forever. The pauper's hopes are dashed, forever." This *pasuk* seems to contradict itself, because if Hashem won't forget the pauper, why are his hopes dashed?

We can answer that the pauper was hoping that a certain *baal tzedakah* will send him meat so his family would have meat for Shabbos and Yom Tov. He was also hoping that another *baal tzedakah* will send him milk and

studied on four different levels of *parde"s*, and also the simplest level of Torah (*pshat*) has many explanations. Why did you choose to follow the most extreme explanation of the *pasuk* (3:19), *בועה אפך תאכל ללחם*, 'You will eat bread with sweat on your face.' Why did you take the harshest *pshat*?

"If it wasn't that we are obligated to do *hishtadlus*, then *hishtadlus* would be *machshavas pigul* [forbidden to even consider]. But we are obligated to do *our hishtadlus*. However, who gave you permission to be worried?"

The Rambam (*Pirush HaMishnayos Brachos* 9) writes, "The fault of worrying and distress is so clearly stated and known from the words of the *nevi'im*, it isn't necessary to mention it."

Someone opened a printing

shop on the same street where Reb Shlomo Cohen of Bnei Brak had his printing shop. Any other person would be afraid that the competition would take away his *parnassah*. Often, this situation can also generate anger and disputes. But Reb Shlomo believed that *parnassah* was from Hashem, and therefore he wasn't angry at this man for opening his store on the same street. In fact, Reb Shlomo spoke with the new storeowner and gave him sound advice how to run the printing shop. He told him where he to buy ink and plates, what he should be wary from, etc. Reb Shlomo had years of experience in the field, and he shared it with his competition!

Reb Shlomo's children couldn't believe what they were seeing. They asked

cheese, and that a third *baal tzedakah* would pay his electric bill, and so on. When Hashem helps him *תקוות עניים*, all the pauper's previous hopes and aspirations, *תאבד לעד*, are lost eternally. He doesn't trust in them anymore, only on Hashem.

their father, "It is indeed very righteous of you that you aren't angry at this man for opening a store on our block, but why are you helping him out?"

Reb Shlomo Cohen answered, "We believe that our *parnassah* is decreed on Rosh Hashanah, and no one can take away the amount that we are destined to earn. This new shop isn't going to harm me in any way. If anything, it will enable me to work less (because some of the jobs will probably go to the new shop) and I will earn the same amount regardless. So, this man is helping me to work less. Shouldn't I repay him with advice?"

The Chazon Ish was extremely impressed by this story, and he repeated it at the *levayah* of Reb Shlomo Cohen (which he attended until the end). The Chazon Ish said, "How much holiness one acquires when one lives with *emunah*."

Reb Kopel Chassid *zy'a* (a

student of the Baal Shem Tov) was called by the merchants "Reb Kopel Shevisi'nig" because he was constantly saying, *שייתי ה' לנגדי*, תמיד, "I place Hashem before me, always" (*Tehillim* 16). Every few moments, in the marketplace, he would say this *passuk*, to remember that everything — including success in business — is from Hashem.

Rebbe Yaakov Kopel owned the most accurate scale in the marketplace (according to halachah, one must be cautious that his scale doesn't cheat people). All the G-d fearing merchants used his scale to sell their merchandise.

One day Reb Yaakov Kopel didn't come to the market. The other merchants said, "When *Shevisi* isn't here, we can't do business."

Their intention was twofold: When Reb Kopel Shevisi'nig is absent we can't do business, because we don't have an accurate scale. And

they also implied that without אֵל לִנְגְדֵי תָמִיד, without Hashem's help, we can never succeed in business.¹¹

With *Bitachon* there are no Fears

It states, בָּא אֶל פַּרְעֹה, "Come to Pharaoh..." The *Zohar* asks that it should have stated, לֶךְ אֶל פַּרְעֹה, "Go to Pharaoh." The *Zohar* answers that Hakadosh Baruch Hu was saying, בָּא עִמָּי, "Come with Me to Pharaoh." Hashem was telling Moshe that he doesn't have to be afraid when he goes to Pharaoh, because Hashem will go with him, and when one is with Hashem there is nothing to fear.

A child is afraid to walk alone at night, but when his father is with him he feels secure. People are afraid to walk through dangerous neighborhoods, but when they are together with a group of people, or with someone who is very strong, they aren't afraid. Similarly, in life, one may have problems and struggles, but he is never alone. Hashem is at his side, and when Hashem is with you everything will work out. There's never reason to be afraid.

As it states in *Tana d'Bei Eliyahu* (Rabba 18), "Hashem's compassion is

11. The Gemara teaches, "The person who enjoys the work of his hands is greater than the one who has *yiras shamayim*" (*Brachos* 8). Many struggle to understand the meaning of this Gemara.

Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozmir zy'a explained that the Gemara is saying, if someone works for a living, yet he knows that *parnassah* doesn't come from his work but from Hashem, this is a great level of *emunah*, because it is so easy to make the mistake and think that he is being supported by the work of his hand. Someone who has this *emunah* is greater than someone who has *yiras Shamayim*.

As Reb Avraham ben HaRambam writes: When a person thinks that he earns *parnassah* on his own, it is a כפירה מוסתרת, a concealed heresy, because *parnassah* comes from Hashem.

always intensely upon the Jewish nation. Even when they sin, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is angry with them, nevertheless, His compassion is with them each day, always... Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, with every hardship that the Jewish nation go through, I am with them with their every step. As it states (*Yeshayah* 63:9), בכל צרתם לו צר, when they have *tzaros*, Hashem has *tzaros* together with them..."

Destined

In Mitzrayim, the Yidden ate matzah, as we say in the Hagadah, הא לחמא עניא די אכלו, "This matzah is the poor man's bread that our forefathers ate in Mitzrayim." Upon leaving Mitzrayim, they thought they would have better tasting breads to eat, but once again, we find them eating matzah. As it states (12:39), ויאפו את הבצק אשר הוציאו ממצרים ענות מצות כי לא חמץ כי גרשו ממצרים ולא יכלו להתמהמה, "They baked the dough that they took out of

Mitzrayim as matzah, and not chametz, because they were banished out of Mitzrayim, and they weren't able to delay." This revealed to them that if it is *bashert* for them to eat matzah that is what they will eat. They can be slaves, and they can be free, but Hashem's plan will always transpire.

People think that if they would be rich, or if there would be some other major turn in their life, everything would be different, and they wouldn't be suffering from what they presently suffer from. But it isn't necessarily so. If something is destined to be, no matter whether you are rich or poor, healthy or ill, that will be your unescapable fate.

Similarly, when something good is supposed to happen to a person, nothing that he will do will prevent that goodness from happening. As Reb Yidayah Penini *zt'l* taught, "If one would run away from his *parnassah* like someone

running away from death, the *parnasah* will run even quicker and catch up to him." ¹² *Ahavas Yisrael* The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* said, "The greatest מכת חושך

12. In Eretz Yisrael, health insurance for free, but if one wants better coverage there is a monthly fee.

A child was born to a family living in Ashdod, and the father was arranging the health insurance for this newborn. The secretary at Macabi Insurance asked whether he wants to pay the small fee to get better coverage. He decided that for twenty-two shekels a month, it was worth the investment. A few months later, the mother was looking over the bank records, and she was upset when she saw that they were paying twenty-two shekels each month for insurance. Her husband explained to her that it was for better coverage.

"We don't need it," she said. "Baruch Hashem, our daughter is healthy. It is their way to become wealthy on our behalf..." Her husband agreed, and gave her permission to cancel the policy.

But as these matters often go, days and months passed, and she didn't get around to calling Macabi to change the insurance policy.

A year later, they gave birth to a boy. This time, the mother was the one arranging the insurance. The secretary asked her whether she wants the insurance that's for free, or whether she wants the upgraded insurance. She replied that she wants a regular insurance for her son, and she added that she also wants to change her daughter's insurance plan. The secretary began working on that, but then, suddenly, Hashem put into the mother's mouth to say, "I changed my mind. Let's leave matters as they were. I want to talk it over with my husband again before changing the policy."

More than a year later, their daughter was crying a lot, and she wasn't walking. Tests showed that she had a tumor on her spinal cord. The operation had to be in America. The flight and procedure would cost \$350,000, but since they still had the upgraded insurance policy, they didn't have to pay anything.

It was as Rabbeinu Yedayah Penini taught, even if one seeks to run away from his *parnasah*, his *parnasah* will run after him. Despite the mother's attempts to annul the insurance plans, she failed to do so, and they had the financial coverage when they needed it.

plague of darkness, is when one doesn't see his fellow man, and he doesn't seek to help his brother in need. As it states by the plague of darkness (10:23), **לֹא רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו**, "A man didn't see his brother." Allegorically, this means that they didn't care and help their fellow man.

Helping your fellow man begins with loving your fellow man. How do you love people when you know their many faults?

The Meor Einayim teaches, **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כַּמּוֹךְ**, "love your friend like you love yourself." You love yourself despite your faults. So shall you love your fellow man, despite his many faults.

People are aware of their faults and shortcomings, but they love themselves anyhow. They excuse all their downsides by claiming that their negative side isn't entirely their fault, and besides, they have many qualities as well. This is how

we should view our fellow man. When we see our fellow man's shortcomings, we should immediately have many explanations, excuses, and alibis popping up in our mind, to excuse them for their behaviors. We should have thousands of explanations to exonerate them and to prove their virtue, despite their faults.

In addition to excusing their faults, we should be awed and impressed by their good side. Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* (*Bahaloscha*) taught, "In every Yid there is something precious and holy that no one else in the world has." Everyone is unique and everyone serves Hashem in their individually special way that no one else can. Recognize that, and you will honor everyone.

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zy'a* said that he doesn't know how to advise people towards attaining *yiras shamayim*, but he does know how to advise

people towards attaining *ahavas Hashem*: If you will love your fellow man you will love Hashem.

The Value of a Good Moment

By *makkas barad*, Paraoth said (9:27), ה' הצדיק ואני ועמי הרשעים, "Hashem is righteous, and I and my nation are resha'im." That was a moment when Pharaoh repented, and he told Moshe that the Yidden can leave Mitzrayim. He soon changed his mind, though, and once again he refused to allow the Yidden to leave

Mitzrayim. But for that moment, he recognized Hashem. For the two words, ה' הצדיק, Chazal tell us, the Egyptians merited burial. After they drowned in the Yam Suf, they were thrown ashore, where they were buried.¹³

The Pnei *Menachem* (Gur) *zt'l* said: Notice the value of one good moment. Pharaoh didn't remain righteous. Soon afterwards he refused to let the Yidden leave. But for one moment he was righteous and therefore he was rewarded.¹⁴

13. Reb Mottele Slonimer *zt'l* would say: There are three things that people pray that they should be by their demise: (1) that there will be a minyan present by *yetzias neshamah* [when their soul leaves their body] (2) to be immersed in a *mikvah* before the burial (3) and that their money should go to good causes. The Egyptians earned these three benefits: there was many more than a minyan present at their death – there were more than 600,000 Yidden present! They were in a *mikvah*, as they drowned in the Yam Suf. Their money went to the Jewish people, so it went to good causes. All of this is Pharaoh's reward for saying ה' הצדיק .

14. There are many laws of the Torah that are derived from a seemingly extra word or letter, because each word and letter of the Torah has a purpose. Therefore, we are surprised at the great elaboration that the Torah uses to tell us all of Eisav's descendants (see *Bereishis* 36:15 עשו אלוהי אלוהי עשו). *Chazal* tell us that all of these families were in the merit of one good deed that Eisav had. When Eisav met with Yaakov, the Torah writes (*Bereishis* 33:4) וישקהו, "he

Let us learn from this that each moment of *teshuvah*, and each moment of performing a mitzvah, is infinitely precious. We hope that the good moments last for a long time, but even if they don't, a short experience of being good and righteous is also a wonderful benefit.

Consider a person who is in jail, and he is granted a short leave to be with family. Wouldn't he rejoice with the opportunity? It is true that it won't last long, but that doesn't take away from the goodness of a good moment. Similarly, we should value and cherish every moment of Torah, deveikus, and *teshuvah*. Even if it doesn't last, it is endlessly precious.

Pharaoh was immensely

rewarded for saying ה' הצדיק *kal vechomer*, everyone will earn immense reward for every good moment of Torah and mitzvos.

Rebbe Gedalya Moshe *zt'l* (Zvhill) asked someone why he wasn't going to a *mussar derashah*. The man replied, "I know that even if I will listen to the *derashah*, I will remain the same." Rebbe Gedalya Moshe told him, "If someone is drowning in the sea, and someone swims out and catches up to him and says, 'I can bring you to the shore, but it will only be for a half hour. Then, you will be thrown back into the ocean.' Would he accept the offer? Of course he would. Another half hour of life is priceless. So why don't you go to the *drashah*? When

kissed Yaakov." Rashi writes, "Reb Shimon bar Yochai said, 'There is a halachah that Eisav hates Yaakov, but at that moment, his compassion was roused, and he kissed Yaakov with a full heart.'" In the merit of that kiss, he earned his large and powerful family.

The Leiv Simchah *zt'l* said, "See how much one can earn in a moment. Eisav received great reward, for the one time that he performed a good deed."

you hear the drashah, you will be having thoughts of teshuvah. Even if they don't last, every moment of teshuvah is precious."

Zrizus

It states (12:17), ושמרתם את המצות כי בעצם היום הזה הוצאתי את מצרים מארץ מצרים, "Watch the matzos, because on this day, I took the Jewish nation out of Mitzrayim." Rashi tells that מצות means either matzah or mitzvos. If it means matzah, the end of the pasuk is understood: We must be cautious with the matzah that it shouldn't become chametz, כי בעצם היום הזה הוצאתי את מצרים מארץ מצרים, "because on this day I took the Yidden out of Mitzrayim." But if the *pasuk* is urging us to be cautious to

grasp the mitzvos, how is that related to *yetzias Mitzrayim*?

The Kesav Sofer answers: The Arizal taught that if Klal Yisrael would remain in Mitzrayim for one second longer, they would have fallen into the 50th gate of *tumah* and then they could never be redeemed. Thus, *yetzias Mitzrayim* teaches us to be cautious with every moment. Consider how much would have been lost, had there been a delay for just one second. With the same agility, we should grab the opportunity to do the mitzvos. When we have an opportunity to do a mitzvah, we should grasp it right away. That is the lesson that we learned from *yetzias Mitzrayim*.¹⁵

15. In this week's *parshah*, it states, (12:2) החודש הזה לכם, "this month is given to you." The Midrash writes about this *pasuk*, הכל מסור בידינו, "everything was given to our hands." The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* writes, "If a person would understand the meaning and significance of 'that everything was given into our hands,' he would never waste a minute.