

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Bereishis





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Torah Wellsprings

Bereishis

Shabbos Bereishis

After the Second World War, Reb Moshe Gross from Geneva, Switzerland, yearned to be with his Rebbe, Reb Aharon of Belz *zt'l* for *yom tov*. Reb Aharon lived in Tel Aviv, Eretz Yisrael.

Reb Moshe set out on the journey, traveling by train and by boat, but due to a series of delays, the boat finally docked at the Chaifa port on Hoshana Rabba afternoon.

He spent Simchas Torah in Chaifa and got to the Belzer Rav for Shabbos Bereishis.

The custom in Belz is to sing the *piyut* אמונים אשר נאספו, three times. (This short *piyut* is in the Shmini Atzeres *machzor* before the *shacharis Shemonah Esrei*.) As the chasidim sang that song, Reb Moshe was thinking about how much

he regrets he didn't manage to be there for *yom tov*. All that long way, only to arrive after *yom tov*?!

When they finished singing, the Rebbe whispered into his ears, "Shabbos Bereishis is associated with the *heilige teg*." Shabbos Bereishis is part of the holy *yomim tovim*.

Indeed, many people eat round challah dipped in honey on Shabbos Bereishis, and they say in *birchas hamazon* the *harachaman* for the new year (הרחמן הוא יחדש עלינו את השנה), and many shuls still have a white *parochos* hanging over the aron *hakodesh*. Because this Shabbos is still associated with the holy days of *yom tov* that just passed. It is like a middle stage, closing the *yomim tovim* and

bringing the inspiration to the rest of the year.¹

We should be disappointed that the holidays are leaving.

The Ropshitzer Rav zt'l told the following *mashal*:

A simple farmer lived by himself on a farm for many years, and he didn't know how to daven. When he moved to a larger city and began joining the beis medresh, he realized he needed help. He didn't know where to start, where to end, and what to add on special days.

He befriended someone who took it upon himself to teach the farmer how to daven. He showed him what he should say on weekdays, on Shabbos, and special occasions.

When the days of *selichos* arrived, the friend told the farmer, "For a couple of weeks, we will be awakening early and spend more time in the beis medresh..." The farmer wasn't happy to hear that. Going to shul was an ordeal for him. Each morning, when he came through the doors, his primary goal was to get the tefillah finished and done, so he could go on to do other things. But he accepted this new information and was willing to go through with it. The friend showed him the order of *Selichos*, and how they are said.

The farmer almost fell off his chair when his friend told him about the long tefillos of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Then came Succos

1. In the yom tov tefillos we say, מועדי קדשיך ... והנחילנו ה' אלקינו, "You gave us the holy holidays as an inheritance..." An inheritance is something one takes with him. Now that the holidays are over we are left with the inheritance to take along with us for the rest of the year.

with *Hallel* and *Hoshanos*. It was all very long and hard for him.

Simchas Torah was approaching, and he heard, once again, about the long tefillos and long *hakafos*.

"I see how things are going," the farmer said. "I figure that after Simchas Torah, we'll have another long tefillah coming up."

"Actually, after Simchas Torah, things go back to regular," his friend said.

"Baruch Hashem!" the farmer exclaimed with joy.

That Simchas Torah he danced with all his might because he was happy that the ordeal was reaching its end.

The Ropshitzer Rav *zt'l* said:

Woe to those who are happy when these days finally pass. The yomim tovim aren't hurdles to pass, rather opportunities for growth and a connection with Hashem.

Motzei Simchas Torah, the Imrei Chaim of Viznitz *zt'l* said to one of his chassidim, "Would you want to begin all over again, beginning with the first night of Selichos?" And he sang to him the tune of אשרי יושבי ביתך that we say at the onset of the first night of Selichos.

Because the Imrei Chaim loved the yomim tovim, and when the yomim tovim passed, he was ready to start them all over again.

The Torah tells us that when Yaakov Avinu arrived in Charan he reminded himself that he passed Har HaMoriah, the mountain where his father Yitzchak and his grandfather Avraham davened, and he asked himself, "How could I have passed the location where my parents prayed, and I didn't pray there?"

Rashi (*Bereishis* 28:17) writes, יהב דעתיה למהדר, Yaakov Avinu decided to go back, וחזר עד בית אל וקפצה לו

הָאָרֶץ, he went back until Beis El, and then the earth jumped towards him..." and Har HaMoriah came to him so he could pray there (see also *Sanhedrin* 95).

The Arugas HaBosem *zt'l* says that this story shows us that when we yearn for *ruchniyus*, it jumps and comes to you.

For example, on Rosh Hashanah we attain *yiras Shamayim* for the entire year; on Yom Kippur we draw feelings of *teshuva* for the entire year; and on Succos, we draw buckets of joy for the entire year. However, Hashem knows that in the later generations, people will think back on the holy yomim tovim, and they will ask themselves, "How did I allow these special days to pass by without any fear, *teshuvah*, and joy? I hardly accomplished what I wanted to in these days. I wish these days were here again." When a person has these pining thoughts, the

holy days come back to him.

So here we are at Shabbos Bereishis, and we might be disappointed that we didn't take better advantage of these holy opportunities. This yearning brings the yomim tovim back!

Reb Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* expressed it this way: Sometimes the yomim tovim pass, and we feel bad that we didn't take advantage of these holy days. Immediately, Hashem gives us Shabbos Bereishis, which means "beginning," hinting to us that what was, was. We can begin now and make the future good.

Reb Chaim Palagi (*Sefer Chaim siman* 36) writes that he received the following tradition:

The first twelve days after Simchas Torah correspond to the twelve months of the year. The way one acts on these days

influences the entire year. He writes, "It's the custom of chassidim to be cautious with their thoughts, speech, and deeds during these twelve days, for they correspond to the twelve months of the year. They stay home during these twelve days and review their studies (each person whatever he studied), and this is a great *segulah* to receive Hashem's *siyata dishmaya* every day, from the beginning of the year until its end. He will succeed with everything he does, be it in Torah, chassidus, or business."

A Time for Reflection

When Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, Hashem asked Adam (3:9) אֵיכָהּ, "Where are you? Before the *aveirah*, you were higher than the *malachim*, but where are you now? Look at yourself; how did you fall so low?"

The Divrei Shmuel *zt'l* writes that on Shabbos

Bereishis everyone should ask himself (3:9) אֵיכָהּ, "Where are you?" There was a Rosh Hashanah, the holy Yom Kippur, Succos, Hoshana Rabba, very high, exalted times. You did *teshuvah*. You made *kabbalos* to become better. But where are you now? How did you fall so suddenly?

The Divrei Shmuel *zt'l* relates that a chassid stood in the marketplace in Warsaw and watched people rushing around, everyone in a panic to earn some money. The chassid raised his eyes to Heaven and asked, "Ribono Shel Olam, where are you, and where am I?"

This is how people feel when the yomim tovim pass. They experienced such high times, learning Torah, davening, sitting in the *succah*, shaking the four *minim*, etc., and suddenly they are back in the workplace, often among goyim, and they ask themselves אֵיכָהּ, "Where am I? What happened to my

connection to Hashem? How did I fall so drastically?"

And most importantly, one should ask himself, "What can I do to keep the spirit of the yomim tovim with me throughout the year?"

There was a town's fool whom everyone called "Motel Naar" (Motel the Fool). On the day of his marriage, Motel the Fool was crying. People asked him why. He replied, "Now, people are calling me "Motel Chasan," but I know that when the *sheva brachos* end, people will call me "Motel the

Fool" once again. That's why I'm crying."

Rebbe Hershel Ziditchover *zt'l* told this *mashal* and expressed that this is what happens to people after yom tov passes. For seven, eight days people are wise; they felt connected to Hashem. But as soon as the yomim tovim pass, they return to be like fools again. And that's a reason to cry. And more importantly, it is a reason to seek ways to remain connected the entire year.²

It states (*Yeshayah* 1:6), מִכֵּי רָגַל עַד רֹאשׁ אֵין בֵּי מוֹתוֹם "From

2. A person driving along the highway stopped at a gas station to fill his car with gas. After his car was filled, he parked on the side of the gas station and said, "I like it here. It's a good place. People come and fill up their cars with gas... Why should I leave?"

Someone explained to him, "The purpose of the gas is to enable further travel, not to stay in one place."

We just had a Tishrei, we did great mitzvos, and we climbed to greater heights. Its purpose wasn't to make us remain there forever. It's time to move on, and to use the inspiration we acquired for the rest of the year.

פרידתכם, "It is hard for me when you leave."

One translation of פרידה is a mule, which is an animal that can't bear children. We can explain that Hashem says, קשה עלי פרידתכם, it is distressful for me when you don't take the yom tov with you to act upon the inspiration you received, and you act like a mule that doesn't bear fruit.

Tishrei All Year Long

We say (*zemiros* Friday night), יהא רעוא קמיה דתשרי על עמיה. Hinted in these words

is a request that דתשרי על עמיה, the mitzvos of the month of Tishrei should remain with the Jewish nation the entire year.

As a Karliner chassid once said, "The yom tov didn't pass. It went inside us." We take it along with us, and it grants us blessings throughout the year.

It states (*Tehillim* 118), אסרו חג בעבותים, that we should tie down the holidays with ropes. We shouldn't let it slip away. We must tie it down and keep it with us the entire year.³

3. The Pnei Menachem *zt'l* said, "People try hard to connect themselves to the yom tov. But really the yom tov never leaves us. The problem is we leave the yom tov. Our goal should be to tie ourselves to the yom tov. This is the meaning of אסרו חג בעבותים, we should bind ourselves to the yom tov.

We can accomplish this by upholding the *kabbalos* we were inspired to keep during the yomim tovim.

There is a real estate owner in Golders Green, London, who is careful to only rent his apartments to people he trusts will pay the rent. If the person applying for the apartment appeared to be someone he couldn't trust, he would find an excuse why not to rent it to him.

Reb Leibele Eiger *zt'l*
(*Toras Emes, Simchas Torah,*
תרי"ב) teaches:

"The Midrash (*Koheles* 9)
says, 'When Yidden leave

the beis medresh a *bas kol*
goes forth and says, 'Eat
your bread with joy,
because Hashem has
accepted your deeds.' We
can explain that this

But there was a time, about ten years ago, when there were many empty apartments in Golders Green area, and he realized that he couldn't be too picky. If he found a potential tenant, he accepted him, even if he feared that he might not pay.

It happened with at least one of his tenants, that his fears were actualized, and the tenant didn't pay his rent.

The landlord brought him to court. The judge asked the tenant why he didn't pay the rent. He replied, "The apartment has many issues with the heating, air conditioning, plumbing, and electricity. I asked the landlord to fix them, but he didn't, so I had to pay for these things on my own. Why should I pay the rent, too?"

This was something that couldn't be proven, and the landlord feared he might lose the case. Especially, since the English law favors the tenant over the landlord.

But then the judge asked the tenant, "Did you pay rent for at least one month? Because if you didn't even pay rent the first month, that proves you never intended to pay the rent."

He hadn't paid even one month of rent, so the judge obligated him to pay in full.

Reb Elchanan Halprin *zt'l* of Radumishla told this story and said that it is a lesson regarding *kaballos tovos*. Sometimes people have excuses why they didn't keep their *kabбалos*. But the court of Heaven will ask, "Did you keep your *kabbalah* at least once? Did you begin the year adhering to the *kaballos* you took on? Because if you didn't even begin with your *kaballos*, that shows you weren't serious, you never truly intended to keep them.

Midrash refers primarily to Simchas Torah, the day we complete the tefillos of the yomim tovim. The *bas kol* comes forth and encourages the Jewish nation that their tefillos were accepted. The [mitzvos and the tefillos of the] holidays can be compared to seeds planted in the ground. Now you don't see anything, but during the year, these seeds will sprout, each in its time."

Perhaps we don't feel that anything has changed, but all the good deeds we did on yom tov are there, planted in our hearts. And throughout the year, we will reap and benefit from the yomim tovim that passed.

One night, Reb Eizek Yekel's of Krakow (*niftar* 370 years ago, ת"ג) dreamed that there was a large treasure under a bridge. So, he went to the bridge, and a police officer stopped him and asked him what he was doing. Reb Eizik told him the truth. "I dreamed that

there's a great treasure under this bridge."

The officer replied, "Why do you take dreams seriously? I also had a dream. I dreamt there's a great treasure under the oven of a Yid called Reb Eizik Yekel's of Krakow. I'm not crazy. I didn't go seeking a Reb Eizik Yekel's in Krakow. It was a dream, and dreams don't mean anything."

Reb Eizik Yekel heard what the policeman said and was shocked. The police dreamed that there was a treasure in *his* home! He had mentioned his name. He didn't tell the goy that he was Eizik Yekel's. He immediately went home, dug under his oven, found a great treasure there, and became very wealthy.

With a portion of the money, he built a beautiful shul in Krakow called "Eizik Shul."

Tzaddikim tell this story, and they teach various lessons from it.

One year, after Yom Kippur, the Imrei Chaim of Viznitz *zt'l* (*Likutei Imrei Chaim, Motzei Yom Kippur*) repeated this story and explained that people think that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the treasure because on these days we reach high spiritual levels. But when these awesome days arrive, they discover that they have the treasure within *themselves*. They have so much potential. They have so much talent. There is so much that they can do.

This is the *avodah* after the *yomim tovim* pass, to find the treasures that are within you.

Never Lose Hope

The Gemara (*Yoma* 29.) says, הרהרי עבירה קשו מעבירה, "Thoughts of sin are worse than sin itself." The Chazon Ish *zt'l* explained the Gemara like this: Being depressed about *aveiros* is worse than the *aveiros* itself.

As the Kotzker *zt'l* taught: More than the *aveirah*, the *yetzer hara* wants the depression that comes after the *aveirah*.⁴

It states (6:5-7), וירא ה' כי רבה רעת האדם בארץ וכל יצר מחשבת לבו רק רע כל היום וינחם ה' כי עשה את האדם בארץ ויתעצב אל לבו ... ויאמר ה' אמוחה את האדם. Literally, this means: Hashem saw the many *aveiros* people were doing and their corrupt thoughts, and Hashem regretted creating mankind. ויתעצב על לבו, *keviyachol*, Hashem was sad.⁵ Hashem

4. Reb Gad'l Eizner *zt'l* said, "I am not afraid of the *aveirah*. I am afraid of עבירה גוררת עבירה, of what this *aveirah* can lead to." Because the *aveirah* causes people to feel despair, which leads them to doing worse *aveiros*.

5. The Imrei Emes *zt'l* said that Hashem wasn't sad, because עון

said that He will destroy mankind (in the flood)."

The Chebiner Rav *zt'l* heard a wonderful explanation to these words following the path of *remez*. He heard the lesson איש מפי איש from the Chozeh of Lublin *zt'l*:

וירא ה' כי רבה רעת האדם בארץ, Hashem sees the many bad deeds that people do, but Hashem isn't angry with them. Hashem understands that וכל יצר מחשבות לבו רק רע כל

היום, that people have a *yetzer hara*. Therefore, their aveiros aren't really their fault. How can they stand up against such a strong *yetzer hara*?

In fact, וינחם ה', Hashem regrets creating the *yetzer hara*. As the Gemara (*Succah* 52) lists four things that Hashem regrets, and one of them is the *yetzer hara*.

As it states (*Michah* 4:7), אשר הרעותי, "I did bad" and the Gemara (*Brachos* 32)

Hashem always has joy. Rather, ויתעצב אל לבו means that Hashem made mankind sad. Because people at that time were very happy, as it states (*Iyov* 21), 'There was no fear in their homes, and Hashem's punishment didn't come to them. Their bulls impregnated without fail, and the cows didn't miscarry. They sent their children out like sheep, and the children would dance about. They raised their voices like drums and harps, and they rejoiced to the sound of a flute. Their days were spent with goodness, and their years were pleasant.'"

The Gemara says that this abundance of good led them to rebel against Hashem. They said to Hashem (*Iyov* 21), 'Go away from us. We don't want to know Hashem's ways. Who is Hashem that we should serve Him, and what bad will happen to us if we rebel against Him?'"

There is a rule that when one is happy nothing bad can befall him. Therefore, ויתעצב אל לבו, Hashem made mankind sad, and now affliction was able to befall them.

explains that Hashem takes responsibility for Yidden's *aveiros*, because Hashem created the *yetzer hara*. Hashem isn't angry with

people because of their sins. Hashem says that it is His fault because He created the *yetzer hara* who entices people.⁶

6. The grandson of Rebbe Henoch of Alexander *zt'l* had his bar mitzvah on Shabbos Bereishis. The Rebbe of Alexander told his grandson that *בראשית* is *gematriya* תרי"ג.

The bright bar mitzvah *bachur* immediately asked, "But *בראשית* also has a "ש" The letters of *בראשית*, without the *שי"ן* are *gematriya* תרי"ג, but there's a *shin* there, too.

The Rebbe replied that *ש* is *gematriya* יצר, the *yetzer hara*. *בראשית* implies that when one rids himself of the *יצר הרע*, he will be able to keep the *תרי"ג* mitzvos.

The Rebbe added that this is the meaning of the phrase we say on Yom Kippur, *לברית הבט ואל תפן ליצר*: You can keep the *תרי"ג* mitzvos (which are *gematriya* *בריית* with the *kollel*) when you don't pay attention to the *yetzer hara*.

The snake said to Chavah, "אף כי אמר אלקים לא תאכלו מכל עץ הגן... Did Hashem say that you may not eat from all trees in the garden?" The Chidushei HaRim said that *אף* can be translated, "So what?" The snake told Chavah, "So what if Hashem commanded you? Does that mean you have to listen?" The Chidushei HaRim explains that the *yetzer hara* continues to use this method in our generation, to cool off people's *yiras shamayim*. He comes to a person and says, "who says that it's so important to listen to this law? Is it really so important? What will happen if you don't listen?" With this conniving approach, he causes people to sin and transgress Hashem's will.

In this week's *parashah* it says, *ויאמר ד' אלקים לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עוזר כנגדו* (2:18). The Akeidah explains (בדרך רמז) that the *עוזר*, the helper, is referring to the *yetzer hara*. Hashem says, *לא טוב היות האדם לבדו*, it isn't good when man is alone, without struggles and challenges.

However, ויתעצב אל לבו, if a person will be sad and upset that he has so many *aveiros*, and if he loses hope, then ויאמר ה' אמוחה את האדם אשר בראתי, Hashem says He will destroy man.

Because man must be happy, no matter what happens. There is nothing worse than *yeush* and falling into *atzvus* because there is no knowing how far he will fall because of that.

This is a new outlook. More than the *aveiros*, we must be cautious from the *atzvus* and *yeush*, sadness and despair, that we have when we regret the *aveiros*.

Obviously, we strive never to do *aveiros*. We don't want even the smallest ones. But no matter what happens, don't lose hope. Be strong and make the future better. Don't despair. Because if you are sad, you lost the battle.⁷

The value of our deeds is so much greater when we are confronted with challenges and we overcome them to serve Hashem.

Rebbe Yochanan of Stolin *zy'a* told the following parable: An artist drew a beautiful painting that sold for a lot of money. He also made photocopies and sold those for a fraction of the price of the original. Why? The copies are just as beautiful as the original. Why are they worth so much less? The answer is: Art isn't only about how beautiful it is. It's about appreciating the effort that went into the painting, the artist's talent, training, and energies.

Rebbe Yochanon of Stolin *zt'l* said that the same is with *avodas Hashem*. It isn't just the deeds that Hashem wants from us. The heart and effort that one puts into the *mitzvos* are what make them truly valuable.

7. The Yesod HaAvodah (vol.2, 6) wrote in a letter, "Years ago, during a war, the general received a letter saying that the enemy

The first letter of the Torah is a ב"ת, which is closed from all three sides and opened in front to hint that we don't think about what was. Our focus is on making the future better.

Hashem asked Kayin (4:6) למה נפלו פניך, "Why did your face fall?" The Sforno explains, "Whenever there's a problem that has a solution, it isn't proper to be upset about what happened, rather to fix it in the future." Hashem was telling Kayin that if he didn't bring a good *korban*, that could be fixed in the future. He can bring a better *korban* next time. There is no place for sadness.

Tosfos (*Sanhedrin* 70:) says that Adam wanted to cover himself up with leaves, but the trees didn't permit him to take from their leaves. The trees rebuked him, calling him a thief, etc. Only the fig tree allowed him to take her leaves, and Adam wrapped himself with the fig leaves. (There's an opinion that the Tree of Knowledge was a fig tree, so only this tree permitted Adam to take its leaves.)

In Yiddish, a fig is called a *faag*.

A *faag* is also a Yiddish expression that means something like, "I don't care what you say or what you think. I have my own way."

had broken through their military strongholds. The general became very down, and he told his wife the news.

"She replied, 'I also just received a letter. It came just this minute. It tells of a greater loss than what you told me.'

'Really! What does it say?'

'It says that in addition to losing that fort, you lost your morale (your מורט) and that is the greatest loss.'

Reb Ben Tzion Apter *zt'l* explained that the trees were teasing and rebuking Adam, not letting him take from their branches, calling him a thief, etc. But Adam didn't allow himself to be insulted and to be broken. He took the fig leaves. In other words, he responded to the trees that were rebuking him, *a faag*. "I don't care what you say. Call me a sinner. Call me whatever you want. I will be happy, regardless."

Adam and Chava took the leaves and fashioned belts. As it states (3:7), וַיַּתְּפֵרוּ עָלָי תְּאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגוּרוֹת. The Divrei Shmuel *zt'l* said that belts are an expression for strengthening oneself. (As we say, אזור ישראל בגבורה, Hashem girds us with strength, and as there is a Yiddish expression יך אונגעארטלט, to buckle down, which means to make oneself strong). After his *aveirah*, he didn't permit himself to feel down. He girded himself with confidence and joy and was ready to serve Hashem again.

The Ruzhiner Rebbe *zt'l* told the following story:

A Russian Czar feared his enemies, and when he traveled, he had soldiers scout the area ahead of him. Then, when the Czar met up with his soldiers, they would tell him that the area was safe, and the Czar would ride on.

Once, a soldier checked an area in a forest, and he determined it was safe for the Czar to pass through. He waited at his post for the Czar's arrival.

The sun was shining brightly, and there was a lake nearby. The soldier thought he had some time before the Czar arrived, so he bathed in the lake and drank the water.

The Czar arrived, and still undressed, the soldier rushed to his post to tell the Czar that the coast was clear, and that the Czar could pass by safely.

The Czar barked, "Don't you know it is disrespectful

to stand before me without clothing?"

The soldier replied, "I know. But I figured why should my negligence of leaving my post cause the Czar to wait until I dress? So I came here as quickly as I could to tell the Czar that he can continue his travels."

The *nimshal* is, we shouldn't allow past sins to prevent us from serving Hashem. Even if we became naked and disgraced because of our sins, this doesn't permit us to be lax from doing our service before Hashem as we are obligated to do.

Adam said to Hashem (3:10-11), את קולך שמעתי בגן ואירא, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I am undressed, so I hid."

He was also spiritually naked because of his sin, and he didn't feel worthy to stand before Hashem.

Hashem replied, מי הגיד לך, "Who told you that you are naked?"

Hashem was saying, "who told you that this is a valid reason not to stand before Me? When I summon for you, you must come. Even if you are naked due to sins, that doesn't exempt you from doing what is incumbent upon you to do."

The Sign of Emunah

Hashem created the world that animals should fear human beings, as it states (*Bereishis* 9:2), מוראכם וחתכם יהיה על כל חית הארץ. But after Kayin killed Hevel, Kayin feared that animals would kill him. Therefore (4:15), וישם ה' לקין אות לבלתי הכות, "Hashem gave Kayin a sign to protect him from being smitten by whoever sees him."

What was that אות, sign?

Rashi writes that the אות was a letter of Hashem's name engraved on Kayin's

forehead. This protected Kayin from wild animals.

The Or HaChaim writes that the אֹת was a mitzvah that Kayin performed. Because every mitzvah becomes engraved on one's forehead. Kayin performed a mitzvah, which was engraved on his forehead, and that was his protection.

Which mitzvah did Kayin do?

The Or HaChayim says that Kayin he believed that without Hashem's help, anyone could harm him. Kayin said, וְהָיָה כָּל מוֹצְאֵי יְהִרְגֵנִי, "Whoever sees me will kill me." Because after he sinned, he knew that he lost Hashem's special *hashgachah pratis* and feared he might be killed by people or by animals. This awareness, this *emunah*, was the mitzvah engraved on his forehead, and that was his protection.

The Lechovitzer also explains that the אֹת on Kayin was his *emunah*, and he explains the *pasuk* allegorically. The *pasuk* states that the אֹת was, לְבַלְתִּי לִבִּי מוֹצְאוֹ הַכּוֹת אֹתוֹ כֹּל מוֹצְאוֹ, which can be translated, "So his heart won't pound from everything that happens to him." Because when people lack *emunah*, their hearts pump vigorously with fear and panic when a challenge arises in their life. They are worried about *parnassah*, health, the future, etc.

But those who have *emunah* aren't afraid.

Kayin had *emunah*, and therefore, the *pasuk* tells us, לְבַלְתִּי הַכּוֹת אֹתוֹ כֹּל מוֹצְאוֹ, his heart won't pump and bang within him due to life's challenges and worries.

Who deserved a better fate, Kayin or Hevel? Logic says that Hevel deserves more.⁸ He was the righteous

8. Hevel was killed by his jealous brother Kayin. The Maharal asks, why didn't Hevel's mitzvah protect him from death? Isn't it

one. Whereas Kayin brought the bad *korban*, and he killed Hevel due to his jealousy. He deserves less.

Yet, when one studies *Chumash*, it seems that Kayin got a better share. Because Kayin and his descendants lived while Hevel died, and nothing remained from him.

It doesn't seem fair. Why should the murderer Kayin get more than Hevel?

The Chasam Sofer answers that Hevel got a better share. He explains:

Kabbalah sefarim tell us that Hevel was reincarnated in שת and later in Moshe Rabbeinu. (Therefore, משה is *roshei teivos* for משה שת הבל).

Kayin's descendants perished in the *mabul*. Nothing remained. Only Noach and his family, who were descendants of שת, survived. And as we wrote, Shes was a reincarnation of Hevel.

Thus, taking in the greater picture, Hevel had everything. The entire world came from him. Everything is fair.

Savlanus

Savlanus (patience) is a very important trait.

Reb Shmuel Huminer *zt'l* was renowned for his patience. He said that he wasn't always that way. "Once, the Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* walked with me around the grounds near the

written (*Koheles* 8:5), שומר מצוה לא ידע דבר רע, "nothing bad will happen to one who does a mitzvah"?

The Maharal answers that Hevel's mitzvah was imperfect, because it says, והבל הביא גם הוא מבכורות צאנו, "Hevel *also* brought from his first-born sheep" (4:4). גם implies that Hevel was copying his brother Kayin; he wasn't acting on his own.

yeshiva, and the Chofetz Chaim repeated again and again, סבלנות, סבלנות, and from that conversation I acquired this trait."

The Mishnah (*Avos* 2:9) states, "What is the good path that one should follow? Reb Elazar ben Arach says לב טוב, a good heart."

Rabbeinu Yonah explains, "This means to be patient, and to avoid becoming angry quickly. To respond with soft words, to accept, and to never be bitter. Everything is sweet; everything is good. Regarding this attitude, Reb Yochanan ben Zakai said, 'I appreciate Reb Elazar ben Arach's opinion over all the other scholars, because when one has *savlanus*, he is kind to his friends, to his neighbors, and the entire world."

One acquires this trait when he has emunah that everything is from Hashem. So why should he be nervous, anxious, and upset when everything is exactly as it should be.⁹

The Gemara (*Brachos* 60.) states, "Hillel HaZaken was once, traveling and [as he was approaching his town] he heard shouts of agony. Hillel said, 'I am certain that it isn't from my home.'"

How could he be sure?

Early commentaries (מהר"ם אולמשנינו) explain that Hillel taught his family that no matter what occurs, there is never a reason to panic. Everything is from Hashem, and everything is for the good, and with that awareness, there is never a reason to shout hysterically.

As it states at the end of the *parashah*, ונה מוצא הן בעיני ה'.

9. I heard that the gematriya of סבלנות in מספר קטן (dropping the zeros) is 26, the same as Hashem's name הו"ה. When you believe everything is from Hashem, you will have *savlanus*.

Noach had חן, he was always calm and collected because he knew that everything that transpires is עיני ה', Hashem's *hashgachah*.

It states (*Tehillim* 144:14), אלוֹפוֹנוּ מְסוּבִילִים, and the Toldos Yaakov Yosef *zt'l* explains that when one believes in the אלוֹפוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, the master of the world, מְסוּבִילִים, he can accept with *savlanus* everything that happens to him.¹⁰

It states (*Yonah* 2:11), וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְדָג וַיִּקַּח אֶת יוֹנָה הַיְבִשָּׁה, "And Hashem said to the fish, and the fish ejected Yonah onto dry land." Did the fish have a prophecy?! What does it mean וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְדָג, that Hashem spoke to the fish?!

The Radak explains: וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְדָג – הָעִיר אֶת רְצוֹנוֹ שִׁיקִיאֵנוּ, "Hashem gave the fish the desire to eject

Yonah on dry land." It wasn't a prophecy. It was an urge, a feeling, that the fish had, and the *pasuk* tells us that this feeling was given to him by Hashem.

Similarly, the Ibn Ezra explains: וַיֹּאמֶר, דֶּרֶךְ מֶשֶׁל, שֶׁהִכְרִיחוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת חֶפְזָהּ, "Hashem forced the fish to do His will."

Similarly, Shimi ben Gera cruelly cursed Dovid HaMelech, but Dovid didn't permit his followers to retaliate or harm him. Dovid said (*Shmuel* 2, 16:10), ה' אָמַר לוֹ קַלֵּל דָּוִד וּמִי יֹאמֶר מִדּוֹעַ עֲשִׂיתָ, "Hashem told him, 'Curse Dovid,' and who can ask him, 'Why did you do so?'"

Dovid understood that Shimi's scheme ultimately came from Hashem.

Similarly, Hashem told Eliyahu to go to a particular

10. We say each morning, בְּרוּךְ שֹׂאֵמֵר וְהִיא הָעוֹלָם, the first letters spell equal. The Baal Shem Tov *zy'a* explains that when one believes in Creation and that everything comes from Hashem, all situations are the same to him.

city, and Hashem assured him (*Malachim 1, 17:9*), הנה צויתי, "I commanded a widow who lives there to support you."

The Chofetz Chaim asks: This woman wasn't a נביאה. When and how did Hashem command her to support Eliyahu?

But the answer is Hashem put it in her heart to support Eliyahu.

Let us similarly understand that when people do something to us, good or bad, it isn't them. Hashem places the thoughts and desires in their hearts to do just that. With this awareness, we can have *savlanus*, and accept everything that happens to us.

Rashi (1:1) writes, מזה טעם, פתח בבראשית, and the Kedushas Levi *zt'l* explains, מזה טעם, how good and sweet it is when one is פתח בבראשית, always speaking about his *emunah*. Life is always sweet for such people. No

matter what people do to them, or what happens to them, they know it is from Hashem.

Rashi writes בשביל ישראל, שנקראו ראשית, "The world was created for the Jewish people who proclaim בראשית, that Hashem created the world" (*Yesod HaAvodah *zt'l**).

Tzaddikim say, בראשית, the first thing one must know is ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ, that Hashem created the world.

Amen Yehei Shmei Rabba

The Chida teaches: אמן בראשית is *roshei teivos* for אמן, "Answer *Amen yehei shmei rabba* out loud." It is hinted to at the beginning of the Torah, which teaches us the importance of answering *Amen yehei shmei rabba* loudly and with *kavanah*.

Answering *Amen yehei shmei rabba* loudly and with *kavanah* annuls harsh decrees. The *Zohar* tells us

that Reb Yishmael ben Elisha was once in heaven and was shown rooms filled with terrible decrees. He said, "How can anyone endure all of this?"

He was then brought to a higher room, and he saw even greater *tzaros*. "How can we possibly endure these?" he asked.

Heaven replied, "When Klal Yisrael say *Amen yehei shmei rabba* all these *gezeiros* are ripped up."

Shulchan Aruch (56) states, "One should have *kavanah* when answering *kaddish*. One should say it in a loud voice. One should run to answer to a *kaddish*."

The Mishnah Berurah explains, "One should say *Amen yehei shmei rabba* in a loud voice because this helps concentration, and this will annul evil decrees. But, nevertheless, one shouldn't shout too loud as that will bring people to laugh at him, and then he

will be causing people to sin.

"Answering "'*Amen yehei shmei rabba*' is a מצוה גדולה מאוד, a very great mitzvah, greater than *kedushah* and *modim*, and therefore one should run to be able to answer it."

The Baal HaTanya said, "The *malachim* would give away everything to be able to say *Amen yehei shmei rabba*."

The Gemara (*Brachos* 57) teaches that when a person sees himself in his dream, saying *Amen yehei shmei rabba mivorach* he should know that he is a *ben olam haba*. The Yaavatz adds, "If this is the reward for answering *kaddish* in a dream, how great will be his reward when he says these words while awake!"

Answering *Amen yehei shmei rabba* also hastens the coming of Moshiach. The Gemara (*Brachos* 3.) says, "When we say '*Amen yehei shmei rabba*...' Hakadosh

Baruch Hu says, 'Fortunate is the King Who is praised in His home with these words. What did the Father gain by sending His children into exile? Woe to the children who were banished from their Father's table.' In other words, when we say *Amen yehei shmei rabba*, we arouse a desire in heaven to bring Moshiach.

The Mishnah Berurah (56:1) discusses the intense concentration one should have when answering *Amen yehei shmei rabba*, and he adds, "Certainly, one must be extremely careful not to speak during *kaddish* or *kedushah*. It states in *Masechta Derech Eretz* that Reb Chamma found Eliyahu with thousands of donkeys carrying אף וחימה (wrath and anger) to punish the people who speak then. The Sefer Chassidim writes, 'There was a chassid who saw another chassid (who was already *niftar*), and he noticed that his face was

green. 'Why is your face green?'

"It is because I would speak when the chazan was saying מן אבות ויכולו and by *kaddish*.'

"The *sefer Matteh Moshe* repeats the following Midrash: A *chacham* came to his student in his dream, and the student saw that he had a mark (כתם) on his forehead. The *chacham* told him that it was because he wasn't careful not to speak when the chazan said *kaddish*..."

New Beginnings

We finish the Torah on Simchas Torah and immediately begin the Torah again. The Avudraham says that we do this so that the Satan shouldn't be *mekatreg* and say that we are celebrating the completion of the Torah and that we now become free from the yoke of Torah.

Similarly, the Maharasha (*Avodah Zarah* 19) explains

that by a *siyum* when we finish a *masechta*, we immediately begin a new one. We do this for the very same reason.

We can also explain that at a *siyum*, we are primarily celebrating that we are beginning all over again. The first word of the Torah is בראשית, beginning. New beginnings are cause for great joy.

Maavir Sedrah

Shabbos Bereishis, a time for new beginnings, is an ideal time to remind people of the mitzvah to be *maavir sidra*, to review the *parashah* each week.

Shulchan Aruch (285:2) states: "Although one listens to the Torah reading each week in the shul, one is obligated to read the *parashah* himself by reciting twice the *parashah* and once

targum Unkelus. The *yirei Shamayim* also read Rashi's commentary in addition to the *targum*."

The Gemara (*Brachos* 8) says, "Whoever is *maavir sidra*... his days and years are increased."

The Beis Ahron *zt'l* teaches that from being *maavir sidra*, we receive our *chiyus* (vitality) for all our needs for the entire week.

The Or LaShamayim said that cutting nails and being *maavir sidra* on Friday morning before *chatzos* (midday) guarantees that one won't commit severe sins that week. The Chidushei HaRim, the Sar Shalom of Belz, and others said that those who review the *parashah* with *Rashi* each week will merit being in the yeshiva of Rashi in heaven.¹¹

11. A trustworthy Yid from Bnei Brak related that his childhood friend was *niftar* young (at nineteen years old). He saw his friend in his dreams, and his friend told him that since he died young, he

Reviewing the *parashah* with *Rashi* is *mesugal* for *yiras Shamayim*.

Rebbe Mordechai of Nadvorna *zt'l* tested the *bachurim* in the Arugas HaBosem's yeshiva. After the test, the Rebbe said to the Arugas HaBosem, "They are outstanding *bachurim*, but if they will be *maavir sidra*, they will have even more *yiras Shamayim*."

Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l* would study *Chumash* with *Rashi*, each day while wearing his *Rabbeinu Tam* tefillin.

Try, and Try Again

The world we know isn't the first world that Hashem created. Chazal (*Bereishis Rabba* 3:7) state, "Hashem created worlds and destroyed them until He created this world."

This is hinted at in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 105:8), דבר צוה לאלף דור. For one thousand years Hashem was creating worlds, but they weren't to His liking, until this world was created.

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz *zt'l* said that this teaches people to continue trying. Even if you failed a thousand times, try again. Perhaps this time, you will succeed in accomplishing something good.

During the *yomim nora'im* and *Succos*, many people made *kabalos*, good resolutions, to help them become better people, better Yidden.

But change is difficult. Often, when *Shabbos Bereishis* comes around, we realize that we aren't keeping up with the

wasn't judged for his sins (see *Rashi, Bereishis* 23:1). At his death, *Rashi* came to greet him, and he was immediately brought to *Rashi's heichal* (yeshiva) in heaven. He merited this because he would review *chumash* with *Rashi* each week.

resolutions we made at the beginning of the year.

But that doesn't mean our *teshuvah* failed. The process of *teshuvah* is to fall, to pick ourselves up, and to try again.¹²

"Let Us Make Man"

After every part of Creation it states, וירא אלקים כי טוב, "Hashem saw it was good." But when man was created, the Torah doesn't

say, וירא אלקים כי טוב. The Yismach Moshe *zt'l* (ד"ה א"י) (ולי מה יקרו רעיד) explains that this is because a person wasn't created "good." He has many faults. He must become good on his own by improving his ways.

Therefore, Hashem says, נעשה אדם, "Let us make man." It is written in plural form to teach us, that in order to make himself into a man, one must also do his share.¹³

12. Sometimes a person has to change the *kabalos* that he made at the beginning of the year to make them more practical. When he made the *kabalos*, he thought he could keep them, but in real life, he sees he can't. Shabbos Bereishis is a good time to adjust those *kabбалos*.

On Shabbos, during *minchah* we read the beginning of the next week's *parasah*, but we don't finish it. On Monday and Thursday, we begin the *parasah* again, but we don't finish it. On Shabbos we start from the beginning a fourth time, and this time we finish the *parasah*. This teaches that one should start, and if he doesn't succeed, he should start over again. Eventually, he will succeed.

The Torah begins with ב. - ראשית. This means he should have two beginnings. If he wasn't successful with his first beginning, he should begin a second time.

13. Chazal say, "Whoever says פרק שירה every day is a ben Olam HaBa. He will merit learning and teaching Torah, and he will

On Yom Kippur by *minchah* we read in the Torah *parashas Kedoshim*, which tells about the prohibitions of *arayos*, forbidden marriages.

Why do we need to be reminded of these lowly sins during this holy time? Presumably, at this holy time of Yom Kippur, people don't have these kinds of things in mind. So why must we discuss them?

The answer is, we shouldn't underestimate

the *yetzer hara* or overestimate who we are. Even on Yom Kippur, we didn't become angels, and tests, even great tests, are to be expected.¹⁴

The essence of man is far lowlier than we would like to admit. And with these thoughts in mind, one won't be taken by surprise when he falls from his high levels of *ruchniyus*.

However, if he perseveres and passes the

remember Torah. He will be saved from the *yetzer hara* and merit to see the era of Moshiach..."

Why is saying פרק שירה so special?

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* explains, "When a person sins, he loses his *tzelem Elokim* and he is like a *בהמה*, *rachmana litzlan*. Sometimes his sins are so great that he takes on the appearance of a rodent (שרץ) or other non-kosher animals. If he can sing to Hashem from that lowly level for all the kindness Hashem does for him, he deserves all the rewards Chazal list.

For that is the highest level: to pick oneself up and serve and praise Hashem, no matter which level he is on.

14. We can also answer that even if right now he doesn't have these tests, it is possible that in a few months he will. We encourage him to know that when he passes those tests, it sanctifies him as though it were Yom Kippur.

tests, he can reach the highest levels which emerge out of darkness, as we will explain:

Chazal (*Zohar* vol.2 184.) say, לִיכָא נְהוּרָא דְנִפְיָא אֲלָא מִגּוּ חֲשׁוּכָא, "Light shines from darkness." This means that the downfalls are part of the process towards attaining perfection. If it weren't for the darkness, we wouldn't get to the light.

The *parashah* begins, בְּרֵאשִׁית... תְּהוּ וּבְהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ... וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים יְהִי אוֹר. We can explain, at the beginning of one's *avodas Hashem*, there is תְּהוּ וּבְהוּ, darkness, emptiness, and confusion. As the Midrash (see *Bereishis Rabba* 23:5) says, תְּהוּ וּבְהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ, represents the evil deeds of the *resha'im*. This is where we are holding at the beginning of our *avodas*

Hashem. But if we will continue serving Hashem, Hashem will say, "Let there be light," and we can reach very high levels in *avodas Hashem*.¹⁵

Chazal (*Avodah Zarah* 8.) teach, "The day Adam was created, the sun set. Adam said, 'Woe is my portion! The world is turning dark because of my sin, and the world will revert to being תְּהוּ וּבְהוּ, void and emptiness.' He sat and cried all night.

"But then daybreak came. He said, 'This is the way of the world.'"

At the first sunrise of Adam's life, he learned that the world runs on a cycle. Also, *avodas Hashem* has a cycle. There are dark times, and there is light. In fact, the darkness is the path

15. The Lechovitzer Rebbe *zt'l* explained, וַיֹּאמֶר, one should pray, אֱלֹקִים, "Hashem! יְהִי אוֹר, Let there be light!" And Hashem will help him.

one must pass through to reach the light.¹⁶

Reb Tzaddok HaCohen
(*Tzidkas HaTzaddik* 11) writes:

"We learn from the creation of the world that

there is always night before day... Because man's life is a mixture of darkness and light, day and night. It happens in this order, with darkness coming first because the shell comes before the fruit."

16. We add that even when it is very dark, one should seek ways to bring light into his dark situation. We learn this from Adam HaRishon. The first night of his existence he created fire and illuminated the darkness. As it states (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 8:5), "Hakadosh Baruch Hu put intelligence into Adam's heart. He took two stones and rubbed them together and a fire came forth, and he made a *brachah* on it." Adam didn't wait until daytime came. He attempted to bring light into the darkness. Similarly, when one falls from his *avodas Hashem* it is possible to enlighten the situation by strengthening oneself to serve Hashem, doing what he can, even at that low level.