

לעילו נשמת: פייגה בת הרב אהרן ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

לזכות רפואה שלמה: מלכה בת רחל, מיכאל בן שולמית, יעקב משה בן דבורה שירי, ואברהם יהודה בן שרה רבקה.

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Behar - Bechukosai



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Torah Wellsprings

Behar - Bechukosai

Shemitah: Belief in Creation

Next year is *shemitah*, which is the topic of this week's *parashah*.

The Chinuch (mitzvah 84) writes, "This mitzvah plants in our hearts and clarifies in our minds that Hashem created the world. Because Hashem created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day [so we also work six years

and rest on the sabbatical year]. We must uproot the thoughts of the *apikorsim*, those who deny the Torah, and say the world always existed..."

The punishment for transgressing *shemitah* is *galus*.¹

Why is transgressing *shemitah* punished so severely?

Reb Henoah of Alexander zt'l (Chashvoah

1. The Mishnah (*Avos* 5:9) states, ועל גלוי, ועל עבודה זרה, ועל גלוי, ועל גלוי ועל גלוי, ועל גלוי ועל גלוי ועל גלוי ועל גלוי, ועל גלוי ועל גלוי ועל גלוי ועל גלוי, "Exile comes for the *aveiros* of *avodah zarah*, adultery, murder, and for not keeping *shemitah*."

Similarly, Rashi (26:35) writes, שבעים שנה של גלות בבל הן היו כנגד ע' שנות, השמטה ויובל, "The seventy years of *galus* in Bavel correspond to seventy years of *shemitah* and *yovel*" that the Yidden didn't keep.

And it states in the *tochachah* (*Bechukosai* 26:33-35), ואתכם אזרה בגוים... והיתה, "I will disperse you among the goyim... Your land will be barren... The number of days that the land will be desolate corresponds the number of *shemitos* you didn't keep." These sources prove that *galus* comes for not keeping *shemitah*.

l'Tovah (ד"ה אז) explains that this is because for a whole year *shemita* reminds us that Hashem created the world. *Chalilah*, if we don't keep *shemita*, we need another reminder that Hashem created the world. Therefore, Hashem sends us to *galus* and reveals to us that the world is indeed His. He created it, and He can take it away from us.

Hashem taught Moshe the entire Torah, with all its details on Har Sinai (see *Rashi* beginning of *parashah*). When the Torah states, וידבר יה' אל משה לאמר "Hashem spoke with Moshe..." it means Hashem spoke with Moshe on Har Sinai. That's when the entire Torah was given.

However, in this week's *parashah*, when the Torah discusses *shemita*, the *pasuk* tells us that the mitzvah was given on Har Sinai. As it states (25:1), וידבר יה' אל משה בהר סיני "Hashem spoke with Moshe at Har Sinai..."

Why are these words necessary?

As *Rashi* asks, מה ענין שמיטה אצל הר סיני, "Why does the Torah associate *shemita* with Har Sinai? והלא כל המצוות נאמרו מסיני And weren't all of the mitzvos said at Sinai!"

The *Sfas Emes* answers that it is to tell us that by keeping *shemita* we become pure and holy, just as when we stood at Har Sinai.

We will explain:

When the Jewish nation stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah, they became like *malachim*. As it states (*Tehillim* 82:6), אני אמרתי אלקים אתם, "I said you are angels..." But then they worshiped the *egel* and fell from that high level. Since then, we are no longer like the *malachim*. Nevertheless, there are times when we become like *malachim*. Such a time is *Shabbos* when we are like the *malachim* who don't need to work.

Additionally, during the *shemita* year, we also resemble *malachim*. We don't work the land, and we aren't worried about our *parnassah*, thereby not involving ourselves in the *gashmiyos* of this world.

The Sfas Emes explains that the Torah associates *shemita* with Har Sinai because, with the mitzvah of *shemita*, we are like the *malachim*, just as we were when we stood at Har Sinai.

We can also explain that the Torah associates *shemita* with Har Sinai because, just like then, our observance of *shemita* proves the completeness of our *emunah*. Chazal tell us that when Hashem gave the Torah to the Jewish nation, He opened up all seven heavens and the Yidden saw אין עוד מלבדו, that there is only Hashem. Similarly, as we explained, the purpose of *shemita* is to teach us that Hashem created the world and אין עוד

מלבדו, there is none other than Hashem.

Shemita is every seven years. After seven *shemitos* pass (which is forty-nine years) comes the fiftieth year of *yovel*. The halachos of *yovel* are similar to *shemita*. We don't work the land in *yovel*, as we don't work in *shemita*. And once again, a primary purpose of *yovel* is to remind us that Hashem created the world.

One of the unique halachos of *yovel* is that all fields sold during the forty-nine-year period are returned to their original owners. As it states (25:10), וישבתם איש אל אחוזתו, "Each man will return to his property." Chazal (*Toras Kohanim*) teach, אל אחוזתו הוא שב ואין שב לשררה, שבירו, "He returns to his portion of land, but he doesn't return to his power and control that he used to have."

The Daas Sofer explains, after keeping *shemita* and *yovel*, one becomes aware that Hashem is the creator

and the ruler of the land. Perhaps previously, he considered himself wealthy and powerful, but now he humbly realizes that everything he owns comes from Hashem. This is the meaning of the Chazal, אל אהוותו הוא שב ואין שב לשררה שבידו, he returns to his property, but he doesn't return to the control and power that he once had. Because now he humbly recognizes that everything is from Hashem.

Hefker

The Torah (25:6) says, והיתה שבת הארץ לכם לאכלה, לך ולעבדך ולאמתך ולשכירך ולתושבים הגרים עמך, "You may eat from the produce that grows in the seventh year; also, your slaves, maidservants, workers, and the people who live with you in your land" [even non-Jews]. Rashi explains, הכל יהיה שוין, "everyone is equal." This means no one can act like he is the owner of the crops. They are *hefker*. Whoever wants can come

into the field and pick some fruit.

What does this aspect of *shemittah* teach us? We discussed above that keeping the field fallow teaches us that Hashem created the world. But this halachah teaches us another lesson. It tells us that fruit can't grow if Hashem doesn't say it should. As the Chinuch writes, "Hashem commanded us to be *mafkir* whatever grows that year...so a person will remember that when the field yields produce...it isn't that the earth has the power or the *segulah* to give forth fruit. Rather, there is a Master over the earth and over people. And when He wants, He commands us to be *mafkir* the field *hefker*."

Most people think the earth has the power to bring forth produce. The Chinuch clarifies that without Hashem's help and Hashem's decree, nothing would grow. The earth cannot produce

anything on its own. The mitzvah to be *mafkir* the produce helps us remember that.

And the truth is, scientifically, there isn't any rational explanation to explain how the earth can grow food. Think about it: A wheat kernel rots in the ground, and then, without adding any other ingredients other than rain and sunlight, the seed grows and develops. It becomes a tall wheat stalk, carrying many wheat kernels, each with the potential to grow more wheat stalks. Isn't this wondrous? How do water, sun, and soil achieve that?²

Scientists can explain several aspects of how things grow, but most of the process remains a mystery. And even if

scientists knew a hundred times more than they know today, they still wouldn't understand how things grow because, ultimately, it is a miracle. As the Chinuch writes, "It isn't that the earth has the strength or the *segulah* to give forth fruit. Rather, there is a Master over the earth..."

Therefore, when you grab a fruit, and you are about to mumble a *borei pri ha'eitz*, or when a dish of good food is placed before you, realize you are looking at a miracle. The rules of nature couldn't create this without Hashem.

But we don't recognize the miracle because we are so accustomed to seeing it.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (וארא ד"ה ולקחתי אתכם) writes

2. Today, with the microscope, millions of wonders can be found in each detail of creation. And that is just the beginning. There are yet many more miracles to discover. Despite the many advances in science, they didn't yet skim the surface of all the wonders that are in each detail of creation.

that the Yidden who left Mitzrayim knew, since their youth, that grains and fruits grow out of the earth. Therefore, when they saw the manna raining down from heaven, they couldn't contain their excitement. "Food is falling from heaven!" they shouted. "We never saw anything like it before!"

But what about the children who were born in the desert? They didn't consider the manna a miracle because they were accustomed to it from their youth. When they came to Eretz Yisrael and saw food growing out of the earth, they were amazed. "Food is growing from the earth!" they shouted excitedly. "Who would imagine such a thing? How great is Your creation, Hashem!"

The Chovas HaLevavos (*Cheshbon HaNefesh* 3:23) discusses the wonders that we see in creation and writes, "Although you see these wonders all the time...and you know what

to expect, don't let this take away from the immense wonderment you should have when you see them... People are amazed when they see new wonders that they aren't accustomed to but aren't stunned when they see the sun and the moon, rain falling and winds blowing, and other matters that they are accustomed to seeing. They recognize the wonders of creation when they see the sea with its waves, storms, and the many fish [because they aren't accustomed to these miracles]. But they aren't shocked when they see rivers and brooks flowing without stop. There are many other examples. Therefore, my brother, think about everything Hashem created. Think about the aspects of creation that are new to you and think about those matters you are accustomed to seeing. Don't be foolish and ignore the wonders that you are accustomed to seeing. Because now that you are

older and your intelligence has developed, it is proper that you should think about creation as though you never saw it before. Imagine that you were blind until today, and you are seeing these wonders for the very first time... Do so, and you will see the Creator's wonders... As a scholar said, 'The wise have eyes, and they see what the fools don't see.'

Chazal (*Sotah* 48:) say, "Whoever has bread in his basket and says, 'But what will I eat tomorrow?' he is *מקטני אמונה*, he has a low level of *emunah*." This is because if he had a higher level of *emunah*, he wouldn't worry about tomorrow. Just as Hashem helped you today, Hashem will help you tomorrow.

Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* taught another way to read this Gemara. He says that the person who isn't worried about *today* has low *emunah*. Although he has bread, that doesn't mean he can

eat it. Nothing is guaranteed. One can't do anything without Hashem's aid, and he must always turn his eyes to Hashem.

"What Will We Eat"

The Torah writes (25:20), *וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית*, "If you will ask what will we eat in the seventh year?"

This seems to be a valid question, since if we don't work the field in *shemittah*, what will we eat?

Many people ask the same question, until today. They wonder, "What will we eat? How will we manage? I'm not making enough money."

By worrying and doubting Hashem's ability, one prevents the bounty from coming down. One must work on his *bitachon*, live without stress, and then he will undoubtedly have *parnassah*.

I heard that this is hinted to in the *pasuk* (*Eichah* 3:22), *חסדי ה' כי לא תמונו*.

לֹא תִמְנֶוּ is *roshei teivos* for לֹא תִמְנֶוּ, וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מִה נֹאכַל. So, לֹא תִמְנֶוּ means we don't ask מִה נֹאכַל, "What will we eat?" And when we don't ask, חֲסִדֵי ה', we will receive Hashem's kindness.

The Torah tells us that if people will ask "What will we eat?" וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת בְּרַכְתִּי לָכֶם בַּשָּׁנָה "I will command my blessings on the sixth year," and the crops of the sixth year will last for the sixth, seventh, and even for the eighth year.

Rebbe Zusha of Anipoli *zt'l* (quoted in Noam Elimelech) explains that it is better when we don't ask מִה נֹאכַל. Because when we have *bitachon*, the bounty will come down. When we ask questions, and when we worry, Hashem says וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת בְּרַכְתִּי, "I will create a new channel of *parnassah* for you. Your worries ruined

your original channel, so I will create a new channel through which you will have *parnassah*."

We quote the Noam Elimelech:

"When Hashem created the world, Hashem created channels to send down the bounty, to fill people's needs. These channels remain open, and the bounty descends. However, when a person doesn't have *bitachon* due to his impure worries, the bounty stops, *chalilah*. Now Hashem must create a new source of bounty.

"This is the meaning of the *pasuk*, וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ; the Torah is teaching that he should have perfect *bitachon*. He should never ask, מִה נֹאכַל, 'What will we eat?' because [due to his question] he is obligating Heaven to toil³ to make a new command

3. In the Noam Elimelech's words, וְאִמְרָהוּ כִלְפֵי שְׂמִיא לְצוּת מוֹחַדֵּשׁ, "he is causing Heaven the *tirchah*, toil, to create a new channel of *parnassah*."

for bounty... Therefore, don't ask questions, trust in Hashem with all your heart, and then the bounty will come to you always, and nothing will be lacking."

ולא תונו – The Prohibition of Cheating in Business

The Torah writes (25:14), ולא תונו איש את עמיתו, which means it is forbidden to cheat in business. For example, you can't sell something for a higher than the going rate, and you can't sell something that's broken while telling the consumer that the item is in good, working condition. The *pasuk* concludes (25:17), ולא תונו איש את עמיתו ויראת מאלקיך כי אני ה' אלקיכם, "...fear Hashem, because I am Hashem your G-d."

Why is fearing Hashem mentioned by this mitzvah?

The *pasuk* also says, כי אני הויה אלקיכם, and הויה is Hashem's name for compassion. Why is Hashem's name of compassion mentioned here?

The Maharal Tzinz *zt'l* (*Melo HaOmer*) explains that when Reuven cheats Shimon and takes Shimon's money wrongfully (against the rules of the Torah), it is as though Reuven is forcing Hashem to do two things: (1) Hashem has to take away from Reuven the money he earned improperly. (2) Hashem will also need to reimburse Shimon's loss.

Because it is determined on Rosh Hashanah how much money one will earn and how much money one will lose. That means

We should refrain from worrying and asking, "what will we eat?" so we don't cause Hashem this *tirchah* of creating a new bounty for us.

Reuven has extra money, more than what was destined for him, and Shimon has a loss that wasn't destined on Rosh Hashanah.

The Torah writes, ויראה מאלקיד, be afraid of Hashem. You must fear Hashem and refrain from cheating your fellow man because you don't know by which means the excess money will be taken away from you. Perhaps through unexpected medical expenses, or perhaps via government taxes (see *Bava Basra* 10). Fear Hashem and fear the trouble you might have to endure in getting the money back to its rightful owner.

Someone once stole a hundred dollars. The next day, he slipped, broke his

foot, and the doctor charged him a hundred dollars. The patient thought to himself, "It's a good thing I stole a hundred dollars yesterday. Now I can pay this bill easily." He doesn't know that if he didn't steal the hundred dollars, he wouldn't have fallen and broken his foot. He broke his foot, so he won't have more than the quota set for him on Rosh Hashanah.⁴

The Torah adds, אני הוי"ה אלקים. This means Hashem's attribute of הוי"ה, compassion, will also be employed because Hashem will compassionately return to Shimon the money that he lost.

The Maharal Tzinz adds:

Let's say you know that Reuven stole money and did

4. Sometimes, the money does remain with him. This is when it was destined on Rosh Hashanah that he should get this bonus. His fault is that he took it in forbidden ways. Had he acted according to the Torah, he would have received the same amount of money, in permitted ways.

other corrupt deeds to attain the money of others. And you know that Hashem will certainly take all that money away from him, as it is money that wasn't destined for Reuven on Rosh Hashanah. So, you figure you might as well quicken the process of lessening Reuven's money, and you cheat him in business (אונאת ממון).

To counter that logic, the Torah writes, אַנִּי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם, Hashem says: "Leave these matters up to me. It isn't your responsibility to help remove someone from his extra money. Let Hashem take care of that."

Chazal (*Avos* 2:7) say, מרבה אגה, נכסים מרבה דאגה, "When one increases his assets, his worries increase." The Ksav Sofer *zt'l* explains that this refers to a person who strived very hard to earn more money than the amount that was decreed for him on Rosh Hashanah. He took on night jobs, worked hard, etc. Even if he succeeded and earned

extra money, it will be taken away from him. The Mishnah teaches, מרבה נכסים, if he works very hard to make more money, מרבה דאגה, he will end up with many worries. He might need to go to the doctor, and he might undergo other hardships, so he won't end up with more money than is rightfully his.

Emunah: A Segulah for Success

The Divrei Yisrael (Modzitz) *zt'l* on the *pasuk* (26:3-4) אִם בַּחֻקְתִּי תִלְכוּ... וְנָתַתִּי writes, "There is nothing better for *parnassah* than *emunah*." *Emunah* is a *segulah* that results in *parnassah*.

The Mishnah (end of *Kiddushin*) states, why do animals have *parnassah* without difficulty, but I must struggle for my *parnassah*? It must be that "I did *aveiros*, and therefore

my *parnassah* was cut and lessened."

The Divrei Yisrael says that *קפחתי* has in it the letters *פקה*, wise. The Mishnah says that I don't have *parnassah* because I thought I was wise, and I relied on my clever ideas to earn me my *parnassah*. And when one believes and depends on Hashem, he will have *parnassah* in abundance.

The Torah says, *אם בהקתי* אם תלכו, if you believe that your *parnassah*⁵ is from Hashem, *ונתתי* ונתתי, you will have rain, *parnassah*, and all your needs.

Emunah is a *segulah* for success in all areas of life.

The Gemara (*Brachos* 8.) writes that when someone got married in Eretz Yisrael, people would right away ask the *chasan* *מוצא או מוצא*?

מוצא is asking the *chasan* whether he found a good

wife, as in the *pasuk* (*Mishlei* 18:22), *מוצא אשה מוצא טוב*, "when one finds a wife, he found good." And *מוצא* is asking the *chasan* whether he married a bad wife, as in the *pasuk* (*Koheles* 7:26), *ומוצא אני מר ממות את האשה*, "I find the wife I married bitterer than death."

Let us ask some questions:

a) How should the *chasan* know so soon after his *chasanah* whether his wife is good or bad?

b) The Gemara writes, *במערכא אמרי* "in Eretz Yisrael they say to the *chasan* *מוצא* or *מוצא*." Since they were asking a question, it should state *במערכא שאלי*, "In Eretz Yisrael they ask."

c) Why was it important for them to know whether his wife was good or bad?

d) The Chofetz Chaim (1:13) discusses why this

5. One of the translations of *הק* is *parnassah*.

conversation doesn't involve *lashon hara*.

We can answer that they were telling the *chasan* that his success in marriage is dependent on his awareness that everything is from Hashem. מצא אשה, is when he believes that Hashem helped him find his wife. In contrast, מוצא אני, "I found" is when one thinks that he found his wife on his own. If he believes he found his wife on his own, it will be מר ממות, more bitter than death because he doesn't

have the *segulah* of *emunah*. Because *emunah* is the *segulah* for success in *shalom bayis*, *parnassah*, and in all aspects of life.⁶

Tragedy in Miron

Chol HaMoed Succos, Rebbe Shlomo Leib Lenchana *zt'l* was leading a *tish*, and he was telling *chassidim* the following ideas: "The entire world isn't worth a *krechtz*. Our destiny is *Olam HaBa*. Therefore, we shouldn't be upset about matters that

6. Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa *zt'l* (*Imrei HaRim Beshalach*) teaches that when we pray, ותקנונו בעצה טובה מלפניך, "Prepare us with good counsel" we are asking for *emunah*, as we say (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) עצתו אמונה, because when we have *emunah*, we will automatically find the right counsel, and Hashem will direct us on the best path.

People often say, "These are hard times for *parnassah*. In the past, it was easier, but now we came upon hard times." Their mistake is that they think the "time" is the problem. It isn't the "times," rather the extent of *emunah* he possesses. As it states (*Yeshayah* 33:6), והיו אמונת עתך, the times (good or bad) are according to your *emunah*.

Reb Yitzchak of Neshchiz *zt'l* asked, since *parnassah* comes from *emunah*, why are there people who don't believe in Hashem, and yet they have *parnassah*? The answer is, Hashem has *rachmanus* on them. But according to how things should be, it is hard to have *parnassah* without *emunah*.

happen in this world. We should keep our focus on the goal, on Olam HaBa."

Just then, a bench broke. It couldn't carry the weight of the many people standing on it. Some of the chasidim fell and were injured, and also the Rebbe was hit and injured from the broken bench. The Rebbe emitted a *krechtz* because of the pain.

One of the chassidim asked, "Why is the Rebbe *krechtzing*? Didn't the Rebbe say this world isn't worth a *krechtz*?"

The Rebbe replied, "It is exactly so. The world isn't worth a *krechtz*. But when it hurts, one shouts from pain."

What is the explanation? If there is no reason to moan, why may one moan when he is in pain?

The Beis Yisrael of Gurzt'l repeated this story, and he explained that there are many parts to man: He has a mind, he has feelings, and he has natural human tendencies and reflexes. It is a natural reflex and reaction to *krechtz* and to shout when one is in pain. But even then, his mind and intellect should remember that this world isn't so important that we should moan over it.

The same applies to our emunah that everything is for the good. We would assume that when one has that emunah he will never moan and *krechtz*, but it isn't always so. Feelings remain feelings, and when one is in pain, he shouts.

Nevertheless, at least the mind should always remember the truth. The mind should accept that everything is for the good.⁷

7. A father takes his son to the dentist. It is natural that the son will cry during the treatments. The father will encourage the son

The tragedy in Miron broke everyone's heart. There are no words that can stop our moaning and *krechtzing*. The pain is too severe, too fresh. But even as we cry, let our minds grasp the emunah that (a) it didn't happen by chance. (b) Hashem loves us. (c) It was for the good. Let's discuss these three points:

A) It didn't Happen by Chance

Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil would often say: People claim they believe in Hashem, but the test is when they go through hard times. Do they believe in Hashem also then?

It states (Devarim 1:31-32) במדבר הזה אשר ראית אשר נשאך ה' אלקיך כאשר ישא איש את בנו "In this desert you saw that Hashem carried you like a

father carries his son... ובדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלקיכם, but for this matter, you aren't believing in Hashem." When Hashem is taking care of all your needs – figuratively, *mon* falls down from heaven to sustain you, you are protected with the ענני הכבוד, everything is going your way – it isn't hard to believe in Hashem. As the Chozeh of Lublin zt'l taught, בדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלקיכם, this isn't called emunah. The test is to believe in Hashem even when things don't seem right, and you don't understand why these things are happening to you.

Immediately following the tragedy, fingers were being pointed, as people sought to find the culprit. As the days pass, more

to be brave, and he will try to comfort him, but he won't be upset with his son when he cries. But if the son tells his father, "Why did you bring me here? Why are you doing this to me?" the father will get upset. The son should trust that his father brought him to the dentist for the child's benefit.

accusations are being made, and everyone has an opinion. But let us remember that ultimately it happened because it was decreed from Above. It couldn't have happened otherwise.

Reb Yechiel Michel Feinstein's *zt'l* daughter suffered from a severe case of asthma. The family had three nebulizers in the house, so there would always be at least one available in case of an asthma attack.

One night, their daughter had an attack, and the family was frantically looking for the nebulizers, but they couldn't find any of them. They called Hatzalah. By the time they came, she had already died. Only then they find the machines. All three of them were under her bed. They didn't think of looking there. The family was inconsolable. They asked themselves, "Why weren't we wiser and store the machines in a place where

we will always find them? And why didn't we think to look under her bed?"

Reb Yaakov Galinsky *zt'l* came to be *menachem avel*. He told the family, "My *rebbe*s taught that the concept of *hishtadlus* is only about the future; not about the past. After something happened, one must believe that whatever occurred was exactly as Hashem planned it, and nothing could have been done to change it. The person who placed the breathing machines under the bed isn't guilty, and the family members who didn't think of looking there aren't guilty either. This was Hashem's plan, and nothing people did or did not do could have changed it".

Only after they heard these words, were they ready to accept condolences.

Approximately twenty five years ago, a *bachur* from Yeshivas Chevron was murdered by Arabs. Reb Nota Zehnwirth *zt'l*

came to be menachem avel the father. As soon as Reb Nota sat down, he asked the father, "Had Avraham Avinu slaughtered Yitzchok at the akeidah, would Avraham Avinu need to sit shivah for him?"

"Of course, he would," the aveil replied. "Why shouldn't he?"

"I have my doubts," Reb Nota explained, "because the akeidah and the death were Hashem's will..." The father replied, "Every death is Hashem's will. Whenever someone dies it is Hashem's decree, and yet, there is an obligation to sit shivah."

Reb Nota Zehnwirth replied, "That is exactly what I wanted to hear." And then Reb Nota stood up, said the brachah, המקום ירחם אתכם and left. His message was understood. As painful as it is, everything happens by Hashem's decree.

Reb Leibke Glauberman zt'l was one of the

Yerushalayimer tzaddikim. (In his younger years, he was among the chassidim of the Yanuka zy'a, Rebbe Yisrael of Stolin zy'a). In his old age, his legs were sick, and the doctors decided they must amputate them. Reb Leibke accepted Hashem's decree, and he was brought in for the operation, while his children waited outside the operating room. After the operation, a doctor told the children that they made a mistake; the operation wasn't really necessary. They could have saved his legs. "But it is too late now," the doctor said, "What's done is done."

Reb Leibka's children were angry with the doctors for making this terrible error. When Reb Leibka woke up they told him that it was all a mistake. "Your legs didn't need amputation."

Reb Leibke replied, "I heard from my holy Rebbe, the Yanuka: '*Volt ich, zolt ich* [if only I would have done things differently...]

is *apikorsus*.' Everything is destined from heaven. The doctors may say that an illness such as I had didn't call for an amputation. But my foot needed to be amputated nonetheless because that was decreed from Above. It wouldn't have happened if it wasn't Hashem's will."

The *tochachah* is written in this week's *parashah*, and again in *parashas Ki Savo*. One difference between the writing of the two *tochachos* is that in this week's *parashah* there are some words of comfort to the Jewish nation. For example, it states (26:44-45), ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ אויביהם לא מאסתים ולא געלתים ללכותם... וזכרתי להם ברית "Also when you will be in the lands of your enemies, I will not be disgusted with you, to destroy you... I will remember the covenant that I made with the *avos*..." Whereas, in the *tochachah* of *parashas Ki Savo* there are no comforting words.

Another difference between the *tochachos* is that in *Ki Savo*, Hashem's name appears amidst the harsh rebuke. As it states, ידבק ה'.. יתן ה' but in this week's *parashah*, Hashem's name isn't mentioned.

It is repeated in the name of the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* that *Parashas Ki Savo's Tochacha* doesn't need any comforting words because when one remembers ידבק ה' that everything is coming from Hashem, that is the greatest comfort. Everything He does is for the good of His people. Whereas in this week's *parashah*, since Hashem's name isn't mentioned, one doesn't recognize clearly that the *tochachah* is from Hashem, and therefore, he needs to be comforted.

Reb Michoel Ber Weismandl *zt'l*, who saved many people from the Holocaust, had a plan, which could have potentially saved thousands of Yidden from the Holocaust, but (as is sadly

known) there were some irreligious American Jews, who cruelly and selfishly prevented him.

Reb Michoel Ber was devastated and poured his broken heart out to Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch *zy'a* (the Maharyatz). The Rebbe said one statement, which Reb Michoel Ber later admitted, changed his entire outlook, and revived his broken spirit. The Rebbe said, "And who did all of

this?" This too was from Hashem. Those cruel people who prevented the salvation were certainly punished, because they had freewill to do better, but the results couldn't have been different.⁸

When the Baal Shem of Michelstadt *zt'l* was a mere five years old, people were already talking about his amazing wisdom. These amazing reports reached the count of Michelstadt,

8. A family moved into a home near the forest. The father said to his young son, "Don't ever climb over the gate because there are wild animals, and even lions, in the forest."

The child didn't listen, and he climbed over the gate. The father quickly put on a lion costume and followed his son. He wanted to scare him, so his son wouldn't ever go into the forest again. The child saw the 'lion' approaching and shouted, "Father! Father! Help me! There's a lion! There's a lion!" The lion came closer, bit the screaming child, and the child ran home crying. "Father, you won't believe what happened to me. I was in the forest, and a lion bit me. I called for you, but you didn't come. Where were you?"

"Where was I?" the father repeated, "I was the lion."

We are so aware of Hashem's infinite compassion, and we know that Hashem loves every Yid like an only son, and much more than that. That is why it is hard for us to imagine that the hardships also come from Him. But the truth is that everything comes from Hashem.

and he asked that the child be brought to him. He wanted to see with his own eyes the amazing wisdom of this *wunderkint*.

At the designated time and date, the child approached the count's castle, and took in its magnificence and beauty from the outside, and then the child entered. The child noted that although the castle had many rooms and floors, no one was around. He would have to find the count on his own.

It didn't take long at all, and the child knocked at a door. "Good day, honorable count."

The count was astounded. "How did you know I was here?" "When I looked at the castle from the outside, I saw that the drapes on all the windows were drawn open, to let in the sunlight. But one room had the curtain closed. I understood that you were there, watching me from behind the curtains." The

count had told all his staff that they shouldn't be around to direct the boy. This was how he wanted to test the boy's wisdom. And the boy passed the test with flying colors.

Years later, the Baal Shem Tov of Michelstadt *zt'l* repeated this story, and he explained, "Whenever one is going through hard times and he feels that the curtains of heaven were drawn closed, that's a sign that Hashem is watching you even closer."

B) Hashem Loves Us

Even when going through hard times, we mustn't forget that Hashem still loves us.

At the end of the *tochachah*, the Torah tells us (26:44), ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ אויביהם לא מאסתים ולא געלתים לכלותם להפך בריתי אתם כי אני ה' אלקיכם, "Even if the *tochachah* will come to fruition [nevertheless] when they will be in the lands of their enemies, I will not be

disgusted with them to destroy them, and to annul my covenant with them, because I am Hashem, your G-d."

Even though we were banished because of our aveiros, and we are now living in non-Jewish lands, Hashem still loves us.

The *Zohar* (vol.3 115:) elaborates on this pasuk:

Rebi Chiya said: "I heard a new lesson from Rebi Elazar: The pasuk writes- לא מאסתים ולא געלתים לכלתם. The word לא מאסתים usually is spelled with a ו"ו, meaning 'To destroy them.' In this pasuk the word is written without a *vav*, saying לא מאסתים ולא געלתים, 'I will not be disgusted with the Jewish nation'... לכלתם, because I love [Bnei Yisrael, like a כלה, a bride]."

The Torah writes לכלתם without a ו"ו, to imply כלה, that Hashem loves us just as a chasan loves his kallah.

The *Zohar* continues, "It can be compared to a

person who loves a woman that lives in a tannery market [בורסקי, where there are very foul odors]. If she didn't live there, he would never go there. But since she lives there, he considers it like a perfume market, where the best scents of the world are sold.

"[This is what the pasuk is saying]: ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ אויביהם, 'Even when they will live in the lands of their enemies,' which the lands of galus have a terrible stench, like a tannery, ולא געלתים, I will not be disgusted with her. And the reason is לכלתם, because I love her [like a כלה]. She is my beloved, and she lives there. For me, it is as if the best perfumes of the world are there because my *kallah* is there.

"Rebi Yosi replied, 'If we came here just to hear this *vort*, it would be enough."

The *Zohar* (vol.2 p.5:) states, "If the Jewish nation knew how much Hakadosh

Baruch Hu loves them, they would roar like a lion to chase after Hashem." This is the lesson of the *pasuk*, to know that Hashem loves us. He never abandons us, even when we are in *galus*.

Another translation of ללכתם is yearning (כלות הנפש). According to this translation, the Ropshitzer Rav zt'l (Zera Kodesh, וזרח ד"ה, וידבר משה) explains the *pasuk* as follows: ואף גם זאת בהיותם ואף בארץ אויביהם, even when you are very distant from Hashem, לא מאסתים ולא געלתים, I will never be disgusted with you, because ללכתם, you yearn to serve me,

with all your heart and soul.⁹

After the *tochachah*, the Torah discusses ערכין, which is when a person says ערכי עלי, "I will give my worth to the Beis HaMikdash," or when one says ערך פלוני עלי, "I will give the worth of that person to the Beis HaMikdash." According to age and gender, the Torah spells out the monetary ערך, worth, which he must pay. Why do these *halachos* follow the *tochachah*?

The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l explains that after reading the *tochachah*, one might think that Hashem is angry with him. He might

9. The Ropshitzer Rav adds the following words:

"Therefore, a person should never lose hope. He should never say that he is detached from Hashem's holiness... [And if he feels distant], he can turn this feeling into a tefilah. He should shout out and pray to Hashem that he feels so distant from Hashem, that he isn't able to even speak properly before Him. He should plead that Hashem have compassion on him, that he should be able to express himself well before Hashem, to say the proper words, and to daven as one should, and Hashem will certainly help him."

feel that he doesn't have any worth. Therefore, following the *tochachah* comes the *parashah* of עריבין, so that it should be known to all Bnei Yisroel that they have tremendous worth and value before Hashem.

A *bris milah* is a pact, a pledge of love, between Hashem and the Jewish nation. This bond is made when the child is eight days old and doesn't even know about it. Years later, he might feel that he doesn't have a connection with Hashem. We tell him, when the *bris* of love was made, you were a baby, and you also didn't know that there was love between you and Hashem. You might not know about it now, either, but Hashem loves you immensely.

The end of *masechta* (*Beitzah* 40.) discusses the topic of someone who owns cattle that are distant from his home (- מדבריית - בביית). Nevertheless, according to Reb Shimon, they aren't *muktzah*. One

may *shecht* them and eat them.

The Munkacher Rebbe *zt'l* said that when Chazal discuss מדבריית, "cattle that are very distant" it is alluding to people who are very distant from Hashem. Nevertheless, they are never *muktzah*; they are never cast away from Hashem. Hashem's love is always with them.

After serving in the army, a Yid who veered very far from the path of Torah went to India, where he practiced all kinds of *avodah zarahs*. A Chabad *shaliach* met up with him and said, "You can wear your kippah, and you can take off your kippah. But no matter how you appear, Hashem loves you, and He is waiting for your *teshuvah*!"

The conversation didn't go much further. The Chabad *shaliach* didn't know what he accomplished with those words, but this conversation penetrated

deeply into that young man's heart. He discovered that Hashem loves him as he is. From then on, he went from one teacher to the next, seeking ways to do *teshuvah*.

He is now a *baal teshuvah*. The *shaliach* who brought him back still doesn't know what his words accomplished. He revealed to him that Hashem loves him.

There was once a child who unfortunately went off the *derech*. His distraught parents invested a lot of money – hiring tutors and role models – to bring their child back. After many tears, prayers, and efforts, the child returned. The father asked him, "Which dollar brought you back?" The father meant, "I paid a lot of money for mechanchim and tutors. Which one had

the greatest influence on you; which one brought you back?"

The bachur replied, "It wasn't because of the mechanchim that you hired. Rather, once, a certain rav greeted me with a happy countenance. I said to him, 'Do you know who you just greeted?', and I told him about my sins. The rav replied, 'It doesn't make a difference. Hashem loves you regardless, and He is waiting for your return.' I told him about some of the graver sins that I was committing, and the rav replied, 'Even so, Hashem is still your Father, awaiting your return.' Then the rav kissed me on my forehead and left. This occurred just as I was about to commit a very severe sin. This episode turned me around, and I returned to my Father in heaven."¹⁰

10. People try to come close to Hashem, yet they fail. They try again and again, and keep on failing. They should know that the

Reb Shimon bar Yochai proclaims (Succah 45:) יכול אני לפטור את כל העולם כולו מן הדין, "I can redeem the entire world from judgment." He can argue that everyone is righteous. Reb Akiva Eigar zt'l explains that this is because Reb Shimon sees the good in everyone, and he finds justification for all the bad they do. Reb Shimon proclaims before Hashem and before the court in heaven that the Yidden's aveiros are the result of living in *galus*, and with a *yetzer hara*, etc. It isn't their fault. And he

elaborates on all the good that they do.

This proclamation is particularly pronounced on Lag b'Omer, and Hashem accepts his plea. Hashem sees the good in all Yidden and pardons them from their *aveiros*.

In relation to the recent episode, we mustn't think that what occurred this year in Miron means the love isn't complete. Hashem loves us, now and always.

C) Everything is for the Good

very fact that they are trying so hard is in itself a sign that they are still connected to Hashem.

Reb Mendel Futterfas zt'l was in a jail in Russia for years. He once watched a spider spin a web. A fly got caught in the web, and it tried to get out, but it couldn't. It kept struggling to free itself, and when it gave up, the spider came and finished the job.

Reb Mendel Futterfas thought to himself, "Everything in the world can be a lesson in *avodas Hashem*. What lesson can I learn from what I just witnessed?"

He came to the following conclusion: Chazal compare the fly to the *yetzer hara*. As long as one is trying to get free, the *yetzer hara* stands at a distance. But when a person loses hope, then the *yetzer hara* comes and tries to finish the job, *rachmana litzlan*.

It states (27:10), והיה הוא, ויהיה קדש, ותמורתו יהיה קדש, the Beis Yisrael explains that והיה is an expression of happiness. The *pasuk* is saying that one should be happy when things are good, and he should be happy even when it is תמורתו, the opposite of good. He should believe that every situation יהיה קדש, is holy and good.

It states (27:14), והעריכו הכהן, בין טוב ובין רע, the Beis Yisrael explains that הכהן represents the attribute of *chesed*. והעריכו, when a person evaluates his situation, and he says, בין טוב ובין רע, whether matters are good or bad, that they are all, הכהן, Hashem's attribute of kindness, כאשר יעריך אותו הכהן כן, יהיה, as he judges things, so shall it be. Everything will become good.

To describe how everything is *chessed*, we share the following *mashal*:

A father comes home late at night and finds the front door locked. He

knocks and knocks, but the family is sleeping and nobody hears him. He sees that one of windows is open. He takes a long stick, puts it through the open window, and pokes one of the sleeping children with the stick. The child begins to cry, and soon the entire household is awake. "Why is there someone outside, trying to hurt them?" they wonder.

If they knew that the person poking them is their father, and he only wants to come inside to be with them, they would open the door quickly. This is hinted in the words (*Shir HaShirim* 5:4), דודי שלח ידו מן החור, "My Friend sent His hand through the hole..."

Turn to Hashem

When one sells his portion in Eretz Yisrael, it isn't sold forever. It will come back to him in the *yovel* year. Furthermore, the Torah (25:25-26) permits the seller's relatives to

redeem the field from the buyer, and the buyer can't decline. The buyer must accept the money, and the field goes back to the original owner.

Then, the Torah discusses the seller and says, ואיש כי לא יהיה לו גאול והשיגה, ידו ומוצא כדי גאולתו "If he doesn't have a relative, but he earned enough money, and he was able to redeem his field..." he may repurchase his field.

Why does the Torah specify that the seller doesn't have any relatives? It doesn't matter whether he has relatives or not. If he gets hold of enough money, he can repurchase his field.

The Chasam Sofer and the Netziv (*Haamak Davar*) reply that the Torah is telling us *how* this poor person's mazal turned around and how it happened that he suddenly has enough money. The explanation is, לא יהיה לו גאול, he didn't have any relatives.

He was alone in the world. No one was helping him. Because when one feels alone in the world, he turns his eyes to heaven. And when one turns his eyes to Hashem, Hashem will certainly help him.

When the Torah discusses the reward for keeping the mitzvos, it is always about having many cattle and success in agriculture. An example is the beginning of *Bechukosai*. אם בחקתי תלכו... ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם, ונתנה הארץ יבולה ועץ השדה יתן פריו, "If you go in the path of the Torah...I will give rain at the right time, the earth will give forth its crops, and the trees will give their fruits...". Reb Shimshon Pinkus *zt'l* (*Tiferes Shimshon, Bechukosai*) asks, why doesn't the Torah say, "If you go in the path of the Torah, you will become wealthy, and you will have a lot of gold and silver and diamonds?"

Reb Pinkus replied that a gift is given to increase closeness between the giver and the receiver. Hashem

doesn't want to provide wealth, gold and silver, because these have an inherent risk of distancing the receiver from Hashem.

Because when one has a lot of money, he feels secure. He doesn't have any worries. He tells himself, "Even if there's a famine, I can take my money, travel elsewhere, and buy food there. Money doesn't spoil. I have nothing to fear." Whereas crops and livestock can die in a plague or frost, and he must always turn to Hashem to help him. Hashem prefers to give such gifts, which will guarantee the

connection between the Giver and receiver.

The truth is, even someone wealthy can't rely on his wealth. He can only rely on Hashem. The Noda b'Yehudah (*Ahavas Tzion drush* 5, ד"ה א"נ מטבע 5) writes, "All coins – ancient and modern ones – are round. They don't have any other shape. Perhaps this was established purposely to hint that money rolls; it doesn't stand still in one place. Wealth is a גלגל המתגלגל בעולם, like a wheel that turns around in the world [sometimes you have it and sometimes you don't] and one shouldn't place his trust in his wealth."¹¹

11. A businessman was staying at a hotel. One day, the owner of the hotel said to the businessman, "You have certainly heard of Rebbe Dovid of Tolna *zt'l*. Tonight, this great Rebbe will be coming to our hotel. Do you mind sleeping in a less extravagant room, so I can give the best room in the inn to the Rebbe?"

The businessman wasn't a chassid, but he didn't mind doing this favor. He was also interested to watch the Rebbe, to see if he truly is a tzaddik.

That night, the businessman overheard the owner of the hotel speaking to his wife. He wasn't purposely listening in to their

conversation, it was just that they were speaking loudly, almost shouting at each other, and the new room that he was sleeping in was next to the owner's apartment. He understood from their loud conversation that the Rebbe had asked them to give him two-hundred rubles, which was all they owned. They were wondering and debating whether they should acquiesce to the Rebbe's request or not.

The next day they gave two-hundred rubles to the Rebbe.

The businessman was upset with the Rebbe. He didn't think it was fair that he should ask them for so much money.

The businessman found the Rebbe with his *gabbai* outside the inn, and the businessman was listening to what they were saying. The Rebbe pointed to one corner of the yard and said, "This is a good place to build a barn." He pointed to another spot and said, "And this is a good place to build a new inn..." The businessman thought it was strange that the Rebbe was saying these things.

A few years later, the businessman returned to the inn and he saw that everything was exactly as the Rebbe had said. There was a large barn in the corner that the Rebbe had pointed to, and a new inn at an opposite side of the property, just as the Rebbe predicted. The businessman quickly traveled to Rebbe Dovid of Tolna *zt'l* and said, "Now I know that you are a holy man. Everything you predicted occurred. But please tell me, why did you take so much money from that couple? Two hundred rubles was everything they owned. It didn't seem correct."

The Rebbe replied, "It was destined in heaven that this couple should become wealthy, but there was a condition: They had to daven for the wealth. The problem was they weren't davening for money. They felt secure that they have two hundred rubles in the bank. Whenever a problem or a worry came up, they said to one another, 'But we have two hundred rubles... Everything will be fine.' So I took the two hundred rubles away from them. This spurred them to pray to Hashem, and they received the wealth that was destined for them.

The Nesivos Shalom writes that when they were building the

Honor the Poor

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 50.) relates:

Reb Yosef, the son of Reb Yehoshua ben Levi was *niftar*, and then came back to life. His father asked him what he saw in Olam HaBa. Reb Yosef replied, עולם הפוך ראיתי, עליונים למטה ותחתונים למעלה, "I saw a turned-over world. Those who are valued in this world [due to their wealth] are lowly and not important in that world. And those who are humble in this world [because they are poor], are precious there."

This is as it states (*Zecharyah* 14:6), אור יקרות כפאון, "The light that is precious and weightless." The Gemara says that this refers to wealthy people who are precious in this world but not necessarily in the next world.

Because in this world, people honor the wealthy, but in the world of truth, it can be the opposite.

Our intention isn't to belittle the wealthy. The wealthy can earn a very high place in Olam HaBa, especially when they use their money to help the poor and support Torah.¹²

Slonimer Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael, they were confronted with many hardships, and the founders and *roshei yeshiva* would meet from time to time to seek ways to overcome the obstacles. They would always conclude the meetings with the following words: "We are *umbeholfeners*, and the *umbeholfeners helft der Aibershter*." Translation: We don't see any hope. And Hashem helps those who feel helpless."

12. The Chofetz Chaim was once speaking to a group of wealthy people, and he told them that when they support Torah, they will receive the same reward as Torah scholars who learn Torah.

One of the wealthy men said to the Chofetz Chaim, "So maybe

Our intention is primarily to recognize and appreciate the value of the poor. People tend to look down at them because they were not successful in the rat race of this world. But we should honor them because they might be more precious than the wealthy in the world of truth.

Reb Shimon bar Yochai lived in a cave for thirteen years. Most of the day, he and his son were buried up to their necks in earth so that they could study Torah. They donned their clothing only for tefillah. They weren't wealthy. But we celebrate Reb Shimon greatly on Lag b'Omer. Because there are far more essential criteria to measure the worth of a person than

his bank account. Keep this in mind when you are in contact with the poor. It isn't wealth that determines a person's worth.

When the Chofetz Chaim's *rebbeztin* was *niftar*, the Chofetz Chaim requested that the *chevrah kadisha* bury her next to a poor woman. He explained, "In *Tehillim* (109:31) it states, *כי יעמוד לימין אביון להושיע משפטו ונפשו*, Hashem stands to the right side of the poor to help them in their judgment." The *pasuk* doesn't say that *tzaddikim* or *gaonim* enjoy this benefit, only specifically the poor. Therefore, I want my wife to be buried there."

Similarly, in his *tzavaah* (will), Reb Shlomo Kluger

you should join me in my business. You can earn a lot of money, you will support Torah, and your reward in the next world will be the same."

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "Yes, the reward in the next world will be the same. But what about this world?" Because fortunate are those who study Torah. Nothing compares to the enjoyment and pleasure that they have in this world.

zt'l requested that they bury him near a poor person, as long as this poor person acted honorably (according to Torah) during his lifetime.

He could have asked that they bury him near a tzaddik or near a great *baal tzedakah*, and the *chevrah kadisha* would have fulfilled his request. But Reb Shlomo Kluger wanted to be near the poor.

This is because of the humility of the poor and because the poor always turn their eyes to Heaven.

The Mesilas Yesharim (1) writes, "Everything in the world, the good and the bad, are tests for mankind. Poverty on one side, and wealth on the other..." Each situation is a test, and one can grow from every situation. Poverty is a great test. There are those who, *chas veshalom*, become angry at Hashem for not giving them more money. Some poor people lose their

peace of mind as they constantly worry about the future. Some poor people steal, etc. But there are the fortunate poor people who pass these tests. They trust Hashem and are happy with their lot.

A *bachur* once asked the Chofetz Chaim's opinion about a certain *shidduch* that was proposed to him. The Chofetz Chaim advised the *bachur* to visit the family's home to see what it was like.

After visiting, the *bachur* told the Chofetz Chaim, "You wouldn't believe how their house looks! The house is tiny, the floor isn't tiled, the ceiling leaks when it rains, there aren't any chairs. They turn over a crate to sit down."

The Chofetz Chaim listened attentively and said, "Nu! And tell me another *maalah*, quality, of this family." In the Chofetz Chaim's eyes, being poor was an asset for a *shidduch*, not a fault.

The Chofetz Chaim himself married a poor girl (the daughter of his stepfather). He could have married wealthy, but the Chofetz Chaim realized that if he doesn't marry his father-in-law's daughter, this could cause a *shalom bayis* problem for his mother, so he agreed to marry her. In retrospect, he said that marrying a poor girl was the best thing for him. His wife earned money working in a store, allowing the Chofetz Chaim to devote his life to learning Torah and writing his *sefarim*. The Chofetz Chaim said that he had a friend who married a girl from a wealthy home. Shortly after the wedding, he went into business and lost a lot of money. So, he lost out on both worlds. The Chofetz Chaim commented that had he married a wealthy girl, the same would have happened to him. But he married a poor girl, and he was able to study Torah his entire life.

A destitute, troubled man came to the Chofetz Chaim and complained to him about his poverty. The Chofetz Chaim explained to him that when he will go to heaven, and will stand before the heavenly court, he will have Hashem as his lawyer, helping him, as it states, *כי יעמוד לימין אביון*, להושיע משופטי נפשו, "Hashem stands at the right side of the poor to save him from the judgment..." What could be better than that?

The Chofetz Chaim elaborated: If you would have a *rishon* helping you in heaven, serving as your lawyer, pleading for you, there is an excellent chance that you will be found innocent in heaven. Let's say you study a lot of Rambam. Therefore you merit that the holy Rambam advocates on your behalf in heaven, and the Rambam explains before the court your virtues, and explains that even your sins can be justified when taking into account your very difficult

struggles, and so on. His words will certainly help you immensely. But if another *rishon* comes to court and disagrees with the Rambam (such as the Ra'avad, who often disagreed with the Rambam), what will you do then? There is now a *machlokes rishonim*, and your fate in court is uncertain.

Similarly, you might earn the merit that an *amora* will testify for you in heaven, but what will be if a *tana* disagrees with him. A *tana's* view has a stronger influence in heaven. And even if a *navi* testifies for you, you are also not guaranteed success because Hashem can disagree. As occurred when Shmuel *hanavi* came to anoint one of Yishai's older children, and Hashem told him, "man sees with the eyes and Hashem sees the heart," and Hashem told him to anoint Dovid. So, we see that at times, Hashem disagrees with a *navi* too. But when you are

poor, you merit that Hashem will testify for you in court, as it states, *כי יעמוד לימין אביון להושיע משופטי נפשו*, and when Hashem is your advocate, you have nothing to fear.

The Dubno Magid *zt'l* told a *mashal* of a poor man and a wealthy man who was called to trial. The rich person hired an expensive lawyer to represent him. The poor person couldn't afford a lawyer, but his relative was scheduled to be the judge presiding over the case.

One day, the poor and the wealthy person met up. The poor man said, "I am so jealous of you because you can afford a lawyer while I can't."

The wealthy man answered, "On the contrary, I'm jealous of you because the judge is your relative. He will certainly have mercy on you. But I don't know what will be with me."

This is the meaning of the *pasuk*, כי יעמוד לימין אביון, להושיע משופטי נפשו, Hashem is at the right side of a poor man to help him in the judgment. He has the strongest support, and he will be found innocent in judgment.

So, there are many benefits in being poor. Yes, there are tests, and yes, in this world, in the eyes of the masses, being poor isn't something to be happy about, but through the eyes of truth, there are benefits.

There was once a poor person who never stopped bemoaning his plight and was very jealous of the rich. One day he said, "My wish is that whatever I touch should turn to gold."

His prayers were answered. He picked up an object, examined it from all

sides, and saw that his dreams and prayers had come true. He touched the table, and the table turned to gold. He touched the chairs, and they also turned gold. He went around his home, touching things, turning them to gold. He was imagining how much money he will earn when he sells all that gold. When he became hungry, he took out a piece of bread to eat. But alas! It turned to gold. He tried taking a cup of water. It, too, turned to gold. Fearing that he would die from hunger, he shouted, "Hashem! Take this blessing away from me!"

That is when he realized that there is more to life than money and gold, and he should be thankful for the blessings that Hashem gives him.¹³

13. The story we wrote is based on the Mahrshah's commentary (*Bava Basra* 25:). The Maharsha discusses a person that whatever he touched turned to silver, but then he didn't have anything to eat.

The Maharsha writes the *pasuk* (Koheles 5:9) , אוהב כסף לא ישבע כסף , "When one loves silver, it won't satisfy him."

Sometimes it appears that the grass is greener on the other side, and other people suffer less, but if one knew what other people are going through, he would be happy with his own fate.

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zy" a said that this is alluded to in *parashas Korach* (17:24), ויקחו איש מטתו , "each person took his staff." Each person chose their own *peckel*, because they realized that the grass isn't greener on the other side, and that they should be happy with the good that Hashem gives them.



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