

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita*

*Balak*



# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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# Torah Wellsprings - Balak

## Emunah

A *bachur* asked the Tzemech Tzedek *zt'l* of Lubavitch, "We don't see Hashem, so how do we know He is here?"

The Tzemech Tzedek *zt'l* wrapped his hand in a towel and waved his hand. He asked the boy, "Who is moving the towel?"

"The Rebbe's hand."

"Do you see my hand?"

"I don't see your hand, but I know that your hand is moving the towel."

The Rebbe replied, "Similarly, we don't see Hashem, but we see the entire world functioning, the grass growing, animals living, people moving, and we know that Hashem is behind it all. The world and all its activities testify to Hashem, Who is running it."

Another example mentioned by the *tzaddikim* of Chabad is the *neshamah*. Everyone knows that they have a *neshamah*.

How else does he move, see, hear, think? The fact that he is alive proves that he has a *neshamah*. Similarly, says the Tzemech Tzedek, the life we see in the world testifies that there is a Creator. No one saw the Creator, but it is obvious that the Creator is there.

Furthermore, the wonders found in every aspect of creation also testify to the Creator. No one sees Hashem, but everyone looking at the world knows that he is in Hashem's presence.

The same applies to *hashgachah pratis*. We might not see Hashem, but His presence is unmistakable.

It states (*Tehillim* 16:8), שׁוֹיֵתִי ה' לְנֶגְדֵי תְמִיד, "I place Hashem before me, always..." According to what we explained, placing Hashem's presence before your eyes is very easy. Just look at the world, and you will see Hashem is before you! Every detail of the world testifies to the Creator! The "life" of the world testifies that there is a Creator!<sup>1</sup>

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1. Reb Gad'l Eisner *zt'l*, the renowned *mashgiach* of Yeshivas Gur, endured the horrors of Auschwitz and lost his only daughter in the war, but his *emunah* remained intact.

To demonstrate to the students how difficult it was to have *emunah* in that era, Reb Gad'l took a bottle cap from the table, hid it in his hands, and asked his student, "If someone would come into this room and search for the cap, would he find it?"

"No," the student replied. "He wouldn't think to look in your hand. He will look all over the room and not find it."

Reb Gad'l said that this is how it was during the Holocaust. People were searching for Hashem but couldn't find Him. This is the reason so many people fell away.

Reb Gad'l asked, "If someone knew I am holding the cap in my hands, would he search for it?"

The student replied that he wouldn't search for the bottle cap because he knew where it was.

Reb Gad'l explained that his *emunah* remained firm throughout the Holocaust because he didn't search for Hashem. He knew Hashem was there. Had he searched, he wouldn't have found Him, but he had no doubts that Hashem was with him.

The following is another approach Reb Gad'l shared with his students to describe how he found Hashem even during the Holocaust: "If someone lost a diamond worth millions of dollars in a dark room, would he not search for it because it is dark and difficult to find? Of course not! He would crawl on his hands

The following pasuk states (Tehillim 16:9) לִבִּי כִּבְדֵי אֱלֹהִים בְּשֵׁן לִבְטָח, "Therefore, my heart rejoiced, and my soul was glad; even my flesh shall dwell in safety." This means that when you know you are always before Hashem, you will always be happy. And it is undoubtedly so. Emunah is a great fountain of joy and tranquility.

Toldos Yaakov Yosef (*Tzafnas Paneiach, Mishpatim* (ד"ה עור י"ל ונבאר ענין תענית אסתר) elaborates on one aspect of this joy, based on a lesson and mashal told by baalei mussar:

A person is speaking to the king when someone enters the room and gives him a resounding smack in front of the king! Of course, the one having the audience with the king will not react to the smack he has just received. He would remain silent, thinking, "If the king sent him to hit me, what can I do? And if he hit me with his own will, the king will certainly punish him for hitting me while speaking to the king. There is no reason for me to get involved." This is what a person should think when someone humiliates or harms him in any way. There is no reason to punish him or take revenge. It was sent from Hashem, and it was destined to be. Furthermore, Hashem will certainly punish him, so why must you get involved?

The Toldos explains that avoiding machlokes is a source of great joy because that will save a person from problems and strife. And this is easy to accomplish with the awareness of שוֹיְתֵי ה' לִנְגְדֵי תְּמִיד, that you are before Hashem. And therefore, שִׂמְחָה לְבִי, you can live a joyous and stress-free life.

It states in this week's parashah (*Bamidbar* 23:23), כַּעַת יֹאמַר לִיעֲקֹב וְלִישְׂרָאֵל מָה פִּעַל אֱלֹהֵי לְאֹהֲבָיו. The Divrei Yisrael *zt'l* (Modzhitz) teaches that this pasuk hints at the wonderful level of emunah, to know that everything is from Hashem. When you have this emunah, you won't get angry at those who wrong you and won't be upset when things don't go how you want. The pasuk discusses יַעֲקֹב and יִשְׂרָאֵל. The *Or HaChaim* (*Bereishis* 47:28) says that whenever the Torah states *Yisrael*, it represents the Jewish nation when they are on a high level, and when it states *Yaakov*, it hints to the Jewish nation when they are on a lower level. The *pasuk* says, כַּעַת יֹאמַר לִיעֲקֹב; this means that when Yidden are at a lower level, they say כַּעַת that things happen according to the times. They attribute everything to chance, to nature, to the era. However, וְלִישְׂרָאֵל מָה פִּעַל אֱלֹהֵי לְאֹהֲבָיו, when the Yidden are at a higher level, they say, מָה פִּעַל אֱלֹהֵי לְאֹהֲבָיו, everything happens by Hashem's decree.

This is as we say in the Shabbos *zemiros*, שִׂכְרוּ הַרְבֵּה מְאוֹד עַל פִּי פִּעֻלוֹ. The Divrei Yisrael explains, שִׂכְרוּ הַרְבֵּה מְאוֹד, he will receive a great reward for his emunah, עַל פִּי פִּעֻלוֹ, when he has the belief that everything happens עַל פִּי פִּעֻלוֹ, by Hashem's decree.<sup>2</sup>

### "Happy with His Portion"

The Mishnah (*Avos* 4:1) states, אֵיזֶהוּ עֲשִׂיר, הַשְּׂמִיחַ בְּחֻלְקוֹ, "Who is wealthy? He who is happy with his portion." The Tiferes Shlomo (Ki Savo) explains the words הַשְּׂמִיחַ בְּחֻלְקוֹ two ways. The common and popular translation of הַשְּׂמִיחַ בְּחֻלְקוֹ is that he is happy with what he has. Even when he sees that others have

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and knees and feel the floor until he found it. Similarly, when darkness covered the earth during the Holocaust, and it was hard to find Hashem, I knew that Hakadosh Baruch Hu was there. So, I continued searching for Him, despite the difficulties."

2. The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 67:) relates that a certain woman sought to take dust from beneath Reb Chanina's feet for the purpose of performing sorcery against him. Reb Chanina told her, "If you succeed in employing sorcery against me, go ahead and do it. It states, אֵין עֹד מִלְּבָדוֹ, there is no strength in the world other than Hashem's strength."

Rashi explains that he told her, "If Hashem desires me, you won't be able to harm me. And if you do succeed to harm me, that means that it came from Hashem, and I accept it."

more than him, he is happy with what he has and doesn't feel that he needs more. But how does one get to that level? How can one be happy with his portion, when it is less than others? The answer is found in the second translation of *הַשְּׂמִיחַ בְּחֵלְקוֹ*. He is happy with his portion because he knows that this is *חֵלְקוֹ*, the portion that Hashem chose for him. A person must believe that whether he is poor or wealthy, whether he has a lot or a little, it was planned by Hashem. It isn't by chance, and it isn't because he made wise or foolish decisions in life. This is the portion Hashem wants him to have. When one has this emunah, he can be happy with his portion.<sup>3</sup>

This lesson also applies to *ruchniyus*. Sometimes, a person goes through very difficult tests, ones that challenge his spirituality. With the emunah that Hashem chose the portion that is best for him, the tests that are needed for his *tikun neshamah*, he will be happy with his portion, and understand that his portion is *bashert*, planned especially for him.

Some people think, "Why didn't Hashem give me a better mind? I would succeed so much more in Torah!" But with the emunah that he has the talents and abilities that Hashem wants him to have, he will be happy

with his portion. He understands that it is specifically with this situation that he must serve Hashem.

It states in Avos (5:19) *כָּל מִי שֵׁישׁ בְּיָדוֹ שְׁלִשָּׁה דְבָרִים הֵלְלוּ, מִתְלַמְּדֵי שָׁל אַבְרָהָם אַבִּינוּ. וְשְׁלִשָּׁה דְבָרִים אֲחֵרִים, מִתְלַמְּדֵי שָׁל בְּלָעַם הָרָשָׁע. עֵינַי טוֹבָה, וְרוּחַ נְמוּכָה, וְנִפְשׁ שְׂפָלָה, מִתְלַמְּדֵי שָׁל אַבְרָהָם אַבִּינוּ. עֵינַי רָעָה, וְרוּחַ גְּבוּהָה, וְנִפְשׁ רְחֹבָה, מִתְלַמְּדֵי שָׁל בְּלָעַם הָרָשָׁע*, "Whoever possesses the following three traits is of the disciples of Avraham Avinu; and whoever possesses the opposite three traits is of the disciples of Bilaam HaRasha. The disciples of Avraham Avinu have a good eye... The disciples of Bilaam HaRasha have a bad eye..."

The Ra"v Bartenura explains that *עֵינַי טוֹבָה*, a good eye, means *מִסְתַּפְּק בְּמֵה שֵׁישׁ לוֹ וְאֵינוֹ חוֹמֵד*, "He is happy with he has, and he doesn't desire the money of others." The Bartenura brings a source from (Bereishis 14:23), when Avraham told the king of Sodom that he didn't want any of the spoils of the war. He said *אִם מִחוּט וְעַד שָׁרוּךְ נֶעַל וְאִם אֶפְסָה מִקָּל אֲשֶׁר לִי*, "Neither from a thread to a shoe strap, nor will I take from whatever is yours." He was satisfied with his portion. Bilaam had an opposite trait. He had an *עֵינַי רָעָה*, an evil eye. He always wanted more and didn't believe that Hashem gave him the portion that was best for him, so he always wanted more.<sup>4</sup>

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3. The Imrei Emes (Korach תרע"ו) said that as a child, he heard in the name of Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zt'l that if the "pekel" (package of hardships) of every person in the world were placed on top of a table, and there would be an announcement that everyone can choose any *pekel* they want, everyone would choose their own *pekel*. They wouldn't want to change their problems with another's. This is because Hashem hand-picks for each person the life situation that suits them. Every person is presented with specific challenges that they need to overcome to succeed in their *ruchmiyus* and *gashmiyus*. Furthermore, this is the *pekel* they are able to carry. Any other *pekel* would be too heavy for them.

It states (Yechezkel 36:26) *וְהִסַּרְתִּי אֶת לֵב הָאֶבֶן מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר*, "I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 34:15) says that *לֵב בָּשָׂר* in this pasuk should be read as *לב בוסר*. The translation of *בוסר* is unripe fruit, bitter fruit. The Midrash is hinting that we shouldn't be jealous of our fellow man's portion, because if we received the portion of others, it would feel bitter. This is because each person receives the *pekel* that is fitting for him.

Your fellow man can't carry your struggles, and you can't carry theirs. Each person is presented with their unique set of challenges and opportunities.

4. There are various definitions of Bilaam's *עֵינַי רָעָה*, evil eye. Rashi (24:2) writes, *בִּקֵּשׁ לְהַכְנִיֵס בָּהֶם עֵין רָעָה*, "He tried to give them an ayin hara." Bilaam's *עֵינַי רָעָה* was that he tried to give Bnei Yisrael an *עֵין רָעָה*. Another explanation of his bad eye will be discussed in the upcoming section, *b'ezras Hashem*.

Rashi (22:5) asks: Why did the *rasha*, Bilaam, have *nevuah*, prophecy? *Nevuah* is given to those who are at a high level of kedushah. How does it make sense that this terrible *rasha* had *nevuah*?

Rashi answers that there had to be at least one non-Jewish navi. If the goyim hadn't had any prophets at all, the goyim would come forward in the future and say to Hashem, "You didn't give us any prophets! How could we improve our ways? If you had given us prophets as you gave the Jewish nation, we would have improved our ways. Therefore, we should also receive the reward of the future!"

Therefore, Hashem gave them the navi, Bilaam. As it turned out, Bilaam caused the goyim to sin further, as Rashi writes, והם פרצו גדר העולם, "Their prophets broke the gates of the world." Before Bilaam came, the goyim were cautious with *znus*. Bilaam came and advised them to commit the aveiros of *znus* (see Rashi 25:1).

Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l (טעמא דקרא) asks that the goyim can still come with a complaint and say that if they had a *righteous* navi, someone who feared heaven, perhaps he would have influenced the goyim to repent and improve their ways. But their navi was Bilaam, the *rasha*. Obviously, he made matters worse. How was this a fair chance for improvement?

Reb Chaim answers that Bilaam was chosen to be the *navi* because, initially, Bilaam was righteous. He was the most righteous gentile among them. But when he became a navi, and he was able to tell the future, and he had the power to bless and to curse, things turned around. People were constantly contacting him; they sought his help, and they paid him a lot of money. Bilaam was given honor, prestige, and wealth, and he became arrogant. His gaavah

threw him to the lowest levels, and he acquired all bad middos.

Bilaam is therefore a valid proof that it won't help if the gentiles are given prophets. Bilaam was the best among them, and see how lowly he fell, and how much corruption he brought to the world. The goyim can no longer claim that a prophet would have influenced them to improve their ways.

This wonderful explanation teaches us many lessons. One lesson is to be aware that Hashem leads each person and each nation in the best way. When something is lacking, there is a reason for it, and it's for their benefit. The goyim lacked prophets, but this was for their good. They had one navi and see how much he corrupted them! If they had many prophets, they would worsen their ways.

If we believed in this with emunah sheleimah, we would live a tranquil life, with *menuchas hanefesh* and with joy. We would always be happy with our lot, the portion Hashem carved out for each of us.

### Hashem's Will vs. Hashem's Command

We discussed above that Bilaam had a bad eye. We elaborated that a bad eye is someone who isn't happy with his portion, and he thinks that he should have more. The Bartenura (Avos 5:19) has another explanation for a bad eye. He writes, ויבא אל בלעם עין רעה, ששהיה יודע שהיה רע בעיני המקום שגילג אצל בלק והיה הולך, "We find that Bilaam had a bad eye because he knew that Hashem considered it bad, if he were to go to Balak, but he went regardless..."

Hashem didn't forbid Bilaam from going to Balak. As it states (22:20) ויבא אל בלעם אל בלקים, לילה ויאמר לו אם לקרא לך באו האנשים קום לך אתם ואך את הדיבר אשר אדבר אליך אתו תעשה, "Hashem came to Bilaam at night and said to him, "If these

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Nevertheless, it is certain that an *עין רעה*, bad eye, is the opposite of an *עין טובה*, a good eye. An *עין טובה*, the Bartenura says, is a description of someone happy with his lot. We therefore understand that Bilaam was the opposite. He wasn't satisfied with what he had. He always wanted more.

men have come to call for you, arise and go with them, but the word I speak to you-that you shall do." Rashi explains that Hashem allowed Bilaam to go, but Hashem didn't want him to go. As it states explicitly (22:22) וַיִּחַר אַף אֱלֹהִים בְּי הוֹלֵךְ הוּא, "Hashem's wrath flared because he was going." Rashi writes that Hashem was angry because Bilaam knew that Hashem didn't want him to go, but he was going regardless.

Hashem's will is not only expressed with commands and prohibitions. There are times that something isn't an explicit halachah, but it is Hashem's will nonetheless. It is up to the person to perceive Hashem's will and to do what Hashem wants, even when not obligated.

When a child loves his parents, he gives them good things, even without them asking for it. The child knows what will make his parents happy, and he wants to do his parents' will. A person should perceive Hashem's will and try to perform it, even when Hashem doesn't explicitly ask for it.<sup>5</sup>

Reb Elchanan Wasserman hy'd zt'l teaches (Kuntres Divrei Sofrim #24): "There are things that aren't outright forbidden... but Hashem doesn't want us to perform them. In addition to keeping the mitzvos, we must also keep Hashem's *will*, even when it isn't expressed clearly in the Torah as a mitzvah.

This was Bilaam's sin. Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't forbid Bilaam from going with Balak's dignitaries to curse Bnei Yisrael, but he knew very well that this wasn't Hashem's will. But Bilaam didn't stop because he would only do *exactly* what Hashem tells him, as he said, לֹא אֶעֱבֹר אֶת פִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵי, "I cannot transgress the word of Hashem, my G-d", but he didn't mind if he would do something that is against Hashem's *will*. Therefore, he is called a rasha.

It states (Vayikra 10:19) וַיִּדְבֹר אֶהְרֹן אֶל מֹשֶׁה... וְאָכַלְתִּי חֵטְאֵת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הֲיִיטֵב בְּעֵינַי ה' "Aharon spoke to Moshe... 'If I had eaten a korban chatas, would it have pleased Hashem?'" The Yesod HaAvodah (Slonim) zt'l says that a person should always ask himself, הֲיִיטֵב בְּעֵינַי ה', would Hashem be happy with this? Perhaps it isn't forbidden, but would Hashem be happy with this action? This question should always be on our minds.

The pasuk states (ibid. 10:20) וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּיטֵב בְּעֵינָיו, "Moshe heard this, and it was correct in his eyes," which means that Moshe appreciated this approach. We don't focus only on what is permitted and what is forbidden. We also ask ourselves, "What would Hashem desire?"

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 106a) states how the aveirah came about. "They [the Bnos Moav] were selling silk clothes, and when a Yid

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5. The Gemara (*Gittin* 58.) relates a story of an apprentice carpenter who desired to marry his boss's wife. The apprentice came up with an evil plan. He had the carpenter think that his wife was defiled by others and advised him to divorce her. The carpenter said that the kesubah is for a lot of money, and he can't afford to divorce her. The apprentice lent him the money so that he could divorce his wife.

When the woman was divorced, the apprentice married her. Later, when the carpenter wasn't able to pay back the loan, he had to work as a servant for his former apprentice. The Gemara says, "The apprentice and his new wife ate while the carpenter served them. As he poured them drinks, tears fell into their cups. At that time, the decree for the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash was sealed in heaven."

The Yaavatz (Reb Yaakov Emdin zt'l) notes that in this story, no serious aveirah was committed. The apprentice only took the carpenter's wife after she was divorced. Yet, because of this story, the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed. "From this, we learn that there are aveiros that aren't written explicitly, yet they are extremely grave and despised by Hashem. They are worse than the cardinal sins."

Not everything is explicitly spelled out. A person must understand what is good and what is evil, and act accordingly.

came to the tent, there was wine from the Amonites there. At that time, wine wasn't yet forbidden... They asked him, 'Don't you want to drink some wine?' The Yid drank from the wine, and the fire of the yetzer hara burned in him..."

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz zt'l (Rosh Yeshivas Mir) explains that the Gemara explicitly adds that "wine wasn't yet forbidden" to express that their aveiros were caused by their lack of boundaries to prevent them from drinking that wine. Had they thought to themselves, "True, the wine isn't forbidden, but does Hashem want me to drink it?" they would have concluded on their own not to drink the wine.

This reflection is very helpful, as it helps people perform Hashem's will in all situations. Even where there isn't an explicit halachah, this thought can direct people on the right path.

### Concealed Miracles

The Chasam Sofer (Yorah Deiah 356) writes, "Everything written in the Torah we, ourselves, saw it occur. The exception is the story of Bilaam..."

"The miracles of yetzias Mitzrayim and the miracles that occurred in the desert were performed before all six-hundred-thousand members of Bnei Yisrael. There wasn't one Yid who didn't see it. (According to the view that Yisro came after matan Torah, Moshe's children weren't there. But besides this exception, there isn't one Yid who didn't see the wonders with his own eyes.) A father won't inherit a lie to his children; therefore, it is like we saw the miracles with our eyes.

"Also, the creation of the world, the stories of the snake in Gan Eden, the mabul, and Dor Haflagah [is like we saw these miracles with our own eyes]. The Ramban (Drashos HaRamban) writes that Adam HaRishon saw that he was created alone, without a father and mother, he saw what occurred in Gan Eden, and that he was banished. Adam repeated all of this to Shem, the son of Noach, the Rebbe of Yaakov Avinu. Yaakov Avinu was fifty years old when Shem was niftar, and Yaakov heard all of this. Shem also taught Yaakov Avinu about the mabul [he was in the teivah] and the Dor Haflagah. Yaakov told his children [he told it to Levi], and Amram heard it from Levi. Amram told it to his sons, Moshe and Aharan. And the entire generation heard it from their parents..."

"We witnessed the episodes of the entire Torah, except for the parashah of Bilaam. Because, who told us about the meetings between the king of Moav and a sorcerer called Bilaam? Who knew that he built seven mizbichos and that he wanted to curse, but it was turned around and became a brachah?"

"Bnei Yisrael were dwelling in the desert, while they [Balak and Bilaam] were in Moav, on top of a mountain. They looked down and saw the Jewish nation from a distance. How could the people in the desert know that they were being watched from a mountaintop and that they were using sorcery to harm them? Even Moshe Rabbeinu didn't know about it, he heard from Hashem's mouth, and he wrote it in the sefer Torah. Yet, the Navi shouts, זכר נא מה יעץ בלק [that we must remember this episode when Balak tried to have the Jewish nation cursed].<sup>6</sup>

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6. The Chasam Sofer concludes, "Even if a person believes in the entire Torah, with all its mitzvos, only he isn't certain about the story of Bilaam, he is an apikores! He doesn't believe in Hashem! No one would say that Bilaam is a primary foundation of the Torah, upon which the Torah is built, but nevertheless, if a person doesn't believe in this story, he doesn't believe in Hashem. Certainly, in regards to the final redemption, which is written clearly in the Torah, from Hashem's mouth to Moshe Rabbeinu [as it states] אם יהי נדחק בקצה השמים, that even if we are dispersed to the corners of the world, Hashem will return us to Eretz Yisrael, and it states (Devarim 32:43) וכפר אדמתו עמו, that Hashem will return us to Eretz Yisrael, and so on [if one doesn't believe in this, he doesn't believe in the Torah]."

The Chasam Sofer is teaching a lesson in emunah, but it is also a lesson in bitachon. It is a reminder that we should always place our trust in Hashem because no one can help us but Hashem.

Let us think about this scenario: It states (Michah 6:5) עמי זכר נא מה יעץ בלק מלך מואב ומה ענה אתו בלעם בן בעור מן השטים עד הגלגל למען דעת צדקות ה' "My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab planned, and what Bilaam the son of Beor answered him. From Shittim to Gilgal, may you recognize the kind deeds of Hashem." The pasuk tells us to remember Hashem's kindness when He turned Bilaam's curses into blessings. Let us not forget that only Hashem knew about the danger. Only Hashem knew that nations were plotting to curse the Jewish nation, and apparently, Bilaam's curses were something to be afraid of. Moshe Rabbeinu didn't know about the danger; the nation didn't know, and they didn't realize that they should daven. And Hashem performed the miracle for them, turning the curse into a blessing!

This reveals to us that we must have bitachon in Hashem. Sometimes, we think we have the strength and the ability to protect ourselves. This is a widespread belief in which people err. Everyone will admit, however, that we can't protect ourselves from surprises. How can we defend ourselves against the goyim who come up with new ideas each day on how to harm the Jewish nation? We don't know what to expect next to be ready. This reality reminds us that our only hope is to trust in Hashem. It was from such a danger, from Bilaam's curses, that Hashem saved us. It happened concealed on a mountaintop, but Hashem knew, and Hashem foiled their plans.

The Meshech Chachmah (*Devarim* 10:20) describes different kinds of *bitachon*:

One type is when someone trusts the government to help him. Another kind of *bitachon* is when a wife trusts that her husband will support her. A third kind of *bitachon*, a very high level of trust, is when a child of a king trusts that his father, the king, will provide him with his needs.

Bitachon in Hashem is even stronger because Hashem can protect us and help us with matters we aren't even aware of. Hashem knows what we need, more than we know.

For example, if someone plots to harm the king's son, the king won't know about it. And even if he knows, he might be unable to prevent it from transpiring. Hashem knows all our needs, including the matters that we aren't aware of, and Hashem can save us. Therefore, the highest form of *bitachon* is to trust in Hashem.

The Meshech Chachmah writes, "הוא מלכנו" *הוא אבינו*, Hashem yisbarach is our King and our Father, and therefore, *הוא ישיענו*, He will save us (based on Yeshayah 33:22). We believe that Hashem is close to His creations to give them their food and all their needs and to protect them from illnesses. Hashem knows a person's needs more than the person himself is aware of them. And Hashem has tzaar when we lack something, as it states (Yeshayah 63:9) *בכל צרתם לו צר*... Hashem feels the person's needs more than the person feels them, as Chazal say on the pasuk (*Shemos* 3:7) *כי ידעתי את מכאובי* 'I know their pain.' .... Hashem has the ability, and He knows everything that happens to a person... He knows what people are plotting, and therefore, He cares to do favors for them more than they could care for themselves. Therefore, a person should have *bitachon* and be calm and tranquil, and he should only do the hishtadlus that are necessary, as Hashem commanded all creation to do..."<sup>17</sup>

7. If we were to praise the holy *avos*, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, we wouldn't know where to begin or end. There is so much to say and more than we can even fathom. Nevertheless, in the *brachah* of אהבת עולם we request that Hashem answer our tefillos, *ובעבור אבותינו שבטחו* בך, in the merit that our forefathers



they bring out their most poisonous weapons. The yetzer hara does the same. When it feels that it will be soon destroyed, it fights with all its might, and it brings out its strongest weapons.

The Gemara (Succah, 52a) says that when Moshiach will come, the Satan (which is the yetzer hara) will be slaughtered. The Satan knows this, and when he senses that the redemption is about to arrive, he fights with all its strength. He brings forth his most poisonous weapons. The Satan knows that if he doesn't stop the Jewish nation, Moshiach will come and he will be slaughtered.

Bilaam was a navi, so he knew the future. He was able to perceive the final days, the era directly prior to the coming of Moshiach. He looked at that time, and saw the tests that the yetzer hara, the Satan, will present to the Jewish nation. Bilaam said to Balak, "I know that at the end of days, when the Satan fights with all his strength, he will test the Bnei Yisrael's kedushah and emunah. This is an indication that these are the worst aveiros and the greatest tests. I advise that you incite these aveiros now, against Bnei Yisrael." Balak accepted the counsel and brought about the aveiros with Bnos Moav. This was

a test on Klal Yisrael's kedushah and also their emunah, because there was avodah zarah there as well. Bilaam knew that these were the greatest tests, because he saw that in the future, these would be the great tests of Bnei Yisrael.

When we think about the great tests of this generation, we see that the yetzer hara is fighting tooth and nail, with all its might. This is an indication that the Satan/yetzer hara knows we are about to be redeemed, so he fights with all its might. It knows that "if not now, when?" The war is primarily against the emunah and kedushah of Bnei Yisrael. At this time, we must be extremely cautious not to allow his weapons into our homes. If we fight this war courageously, without compromises, we will win the war and merit the geulah, speedily in our days.<sup>8</sup>

### Or HaChaim HaKadosh

The Or HaChaim Hakadosh's *yahrtzeit* is on the 15th of Tamuz, so we will discuss some stories of this holy tzaddik and praises of his holy *sefarim*.

The Or HaChaim moved from Morocco to Eretz Yisrael,<sup>9</sup> and settled in Tveryia,

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8. HaRav Shach zt'l, rosh yeshiva Ponevezh, commented that someone who lived seventy years in Vilna won't have as many tests as a person can have in one day, on Rehov Reb Akiva in Bnei Brak. He said this forty years ago! What would he say today? We are at the end of the galus, and the yetzer hara is very strong.

The gaon Reb Moshe Sternbuch Shlita (Moadim u'Zmanim vol.7, siman 143, footnote) writes that the Beis Yisrael zt'l (Gur) revealed to him that he wanted to be *machmir* in all halachos, to perform the mitzvos according to all opinions and poskim. But he realized that he couldn't do so (see there for the reason). Nevertheless, he chose one rule for himself: The primary chumrah and boundary for the generation, with which we will greet Moshiach, is midas Yesod, the attribute of kedushah. And in that realm, he said, he is very *machmir*.

9. The Divrei Shmuel zt'l said that when the Or HaChaim HaKadosh was Rav in Morocco, he advised his community to only work the first three days of the week, on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. At the end of the week, on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, they should devote themselves to Torah study. The Or HaChaim told them that they wouldn't lose out financially from this.

They followed his counsel, and they were successful. They didn't lose any money because of it.

When the Or HaChaim moved to Eretz Yisrael, the people in Morocco gradually returned to their old habit of working six days a week. They thought that this would increase their income. But they soon admitted that they earned the same amount as when they had worked three days, and spent the next three days studying Torah.

where the great gadol, Reb Chaim Abulafia zt'l, lived. Once, Reb Chaim Abulafia zt'l invited the Or HaChaim to eat a meal in his home. The Or HaChaim HaKadosh came but declined to touch the food. He said, "I feel that there's *tumah* in this house."

Soon afterward, it was discovered that the maid had died. (People first thought she had fallen asleep in the kitchen.) People started murmuring among themselves that the Or HaChaim is greater than Reb Chaim Abulafia because the Or HaChaim sensed the *tumah*, while Reb Chaim Abulafia didn't. Because of this, the Or HaChaim moved to Yerushalayim and settled there to preserve the honor of Reb Chaim Abulafia.

There are many segulos associated with studying the holy sefer "Or HaChaim

Hakadosh". It is *mesugal* for bearing children. Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zt'l said that since the Or HaChaim didn't have his own children, he placed his entire strength of bearing children into his *sefer Or HaChaim*.<sup>10</sup>

It is also *mesugal* for *refuah*. The son of Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz became ill. Reb Pinchas accepted upon himself to study a *daf* of *Or HaChaim* each day (*Imrei Pinchas, Shaar HaTorah*, 133).<sup>11</sup>

Studying *Or HaChaim* is also *mesugal* for *teshuvah*. Whenever Reb Yaakov Yosef of Skver zt'l heard about a *bachur* who needed *chizuk* and was beginning to fall off the *derech*, he would advise that people learn *Or HaChaim* with him. He added that the section of *Or HaChaim* doesn't necessarily need to discuss *mussar* or *chassidus*. Any

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**10.** Reb Shpraver of Brashov (author of אפרקסרה דעניי) zt'l didn't have any children, and his Rebbe, the Imrei Yosef of Spinka zt'l, advised him to learn a certain *vort* from the *Or HaChaim*, as a *segulah* to bear children. He studied that piece every day until he had a child.

Towards the end of Reb Shpraver's life, he expressed regret that he forgot which piece of the *Or HaChaim* is *mesugal* for bearing children.

The Lev Simchah of Gur zt'l heard this story and said, "The truth is, every piece of *Or HaChaim* is *mesugal* for bearing children. The *Or HaChaim* didn't have children, so he placed his power of bearing children into his *sefer*."

It was medically impossible for Reb Hillel Shlesinger zt'l to bear children. A doctor said, "When hair grows on my palm, you will have children."

But Reb Hillel Shlesinger refused to despair. He went to the *kever* of the *Or HaChaim* and made a *kabbalah* that he would study *Or HaChayim HaKaodsh* each week as a *segulah* to have children. He was blessed with three daughters. One married Reb Moshe Halberstam zt'l, another married Reb Sender Freund zt'l, and the third married Reb Nochum Shapiro zt'l—three great scholars of Yerushalayim.

When one of his daughters was nine, she went to the doctor complaining of a cold. The doctor diagnosed her with diphtheria and immediately brought her into the operating room to save her life.

Reb Hillel Shlesinger made a *neder* that if his daughter recovered, he would bring her to the *Or HaChaim's* beis medresh in the Old City of Yerushalayim so that she could light a candle there. (In Yerushalayim of those days, this was a renowned *segulah* for *yeshuos*.) He also promised that if she recovered, he would light a candle *liluy nishmas* the *Or HaChaim* every week before Shabbos.

His daughter recovered, and naturally, he kept his promises. (This daughter later married Reb Moshe Halberstam zt'l.)

**11.** In 5773, a great rosh yeshivah lost his eyesight, and the doctors told him it was impossible for him ever to see again. He asked his students to bring him to the *kever* of the *Or HaChaim*. At the *kever*, he vowed to learn *Or HaChaim*, as this is a renowned *segulah* for *yeshuos*. Some days later, he went to the hospital again. This time, the doctors discovered that the part of his brain connected to his eyesight began to work again, which meant it was possible to restore his eyesight, and they succeeded in doing so.

piece of Or HaChaim can bring people to teshuvah and improvement.<sup>12</sup>

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**12.** The gaon, Reb Meir Arik zt'l, would study the entire commentary of the Or HaChaim each week. He said that the first time he finished the entire *sefer*, he felt he had become a new person.