

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Shelach



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Torah Wellsprings - Shelach

A Moment of Teshuvah

It states (14:24) וַעֲבָדִי כָלֵב עֶקֶב הִיָּתָה רוּחַ אַחֲרֵת עִמּוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא אַחֲרָיו וַהֲבִיאתִיו אֶל הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר בָּא שָׁמָּה וְזָרְעוּ יוֹרְשֶׁנָּה, "My servant Kalev, because a different spirit was with him, and he followed Me wholeheartedly, I shall bring him to the Land to which he came, and his offspring shall possess it." Rashi writes that this means his offspring will inherit Chevron.

Kalev earned this great reward because he told the nation that they will succeed to conquer Eretz Yisrael, as it states (13:30) וַיִּהְיֶה כָלֵב אֶת הָעָם אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר עֲלֵה נַעֲלֶה וְנִרְשְׁנוּ אֹתָהּ כִּי יָכוֹל, "Kalev silenced the nation toward Moshe and said, 'We shall surely ascend and conquer it, for we can surely do it!'" Reb Moshe Feinstein (Darash Moshe) zt'l explains that when Kalev told the nation that they would conquer Eretz Yisrael, *they believed him*. Kalev succeeded in bringing the nation to emunah. They all did teshuvah for a moment, and they believed that Hashem would bring them into Eretz Yisrael.

Their teshuvah didn't last long, because immediately afterwards, the Miraglim told the nation that they won't succeed and that they won't conquer the land, as it states (13:31) וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עָלוּ עִמּוֹ אָמְרוּ לֹא נוּכָל לַעֲלוֹת אֶל הָעָם כִּי חָזָק, "But the men who ascended with him said, 'We cannot ascend to that people for it is too strong for us!'" Klal Yisrael believed them, and once again, they cried and were afraid to go to Eretz Yisrael.

Nevertheless, Kalev deserved immense reward because he brought the nation to teshuvah for a moment, and there is no limit to the value of teshuvah, even when it lasts just for a moment.

Reb Moshe Feinstein compares this idea to the halachah that it is permitted to be *mechallel Shabbos* to save a person's life, even if the *chillul Shabbos* will only grant the ill person one more moment to live (חיי שעה). A moment of life is so valuable that even *chillul Shabbos* is permitted. Similarly, a moment of teshuvah is immeasurable and extremely precious.¹

The Midrash (Bamidbar 16:2) states, "Kalev stood up on a bench and he said והם, and everyone was silent, prepared to listen to what he would say. Kalev said (14:7) טוֹבָה הָאֶרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד, 'The land is very, very good.' Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe טובה גדולה אני מחזיק לו. Hashem said that He has hakaras hatov for Kalev, and promised to give him a great reward because Hashem had *nachas ruach* that Kalev said these words. The Midrash adds the pasuk (Devarim 1:36) וּזְלָתִי, "except for Kalev..." and explains that וּזְלָתִי means לָזָה אִתִּי, "he was with Me, יותר, מֵשֵׁשִׁים רְבֹוא מִכָּם, more than 600,000 Yidden." Specifically, Kalev was with Hashem.

As we are explaining, this is because he brought the nation to teshuvah, although their teshuvah only lasted a few moments.

1. Rebbe Gedalyah Moshe zt'l of Zvhil asked someone why he wasn't attending a mussar drashah (which many people were going to). The man replied, even if the speaker succeeds in inspiring him to teshuvah, he knows that soon afterwards, he will go back to his old ways, so what's the point?

Rebbe Gedalyah Moshe replied that teshuvah, even for a moment, is invaluable. He told him a mashal of a person drowning at sea. Someone swam out to him and raised him above the water, saving his life. And then the savior said, "I can only hold you out of the water for half an hour. Then I will have to let go of you, and you will fall back into the sea." Will the drowning person accept the life offer of a half-hour, or will he say, "Since I won't live long, you can throw me back into the sea now"? There is no question he will choose life, even if it is only for half an hour. The same can be said about teshuvah. Even if it doesn't last long, the value of even a moment of teshuvah is enormous.

Sifsei Tzaddik (#20) writes, "We learn from this that a person whose heart continually changes, back and forth, all the time, sometimes he goes up and sometimes he goes down, nevertheless, the one moment when he was good is very precious to Hashem."

The Reward is from the Struggle

It states (Koheles 10:1) יָקָר מִחֻכְמָה מִכְבוֹד סְכָלוֹת מְעֵט, and this can be translated as, "More precious than wisdom and honor is a drop of foolishness." The Remak (Or Yakar on Tikunei Zohar, Shaar 2:10) explains that the pasuk is explaining the greatness of the Jewish nation over the malachim. Malachim don't struggle with their yetzer hara, and therefore, they can't make *tikunim* (spiritual rectifications), and they can't grow to higher levels. Only the Jewish nation, which has a yetzer hara, can accomplish so much when they serve Hashem. The pasuk is saying, יָקָר מִחֻכְמָה מִכְבוֹד, more precious than the wise and honored malachim are סְכָלוֹת מְעֵט, the Jewish nation who have a drop of foolishness, which is the yetzer hara. The yetzer hara factor makes our avodas Hashem far more precious than that of the malachim.

Moshe told the Miraglim (13:17) וַעֲלִיתֶם אֶת הַהָר, "climb the mountain." Bris Avram (from the Rebbe of Zalzi'tz zy'a) writes that הָר represents the yetzer hara (see Succos 52a). The pasuk is telling us that when we are confronted with the yetzer hara, וַעֲלִיתֶם אֶת הַהָר, you can ascend to very high spiritual levels. The struggles we go through give us our spiritual levels, and they are what make our avodas Hashem precious to Hashem.²

Desire to Serve Hashem

It states (13:16) וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשִׁיעַ בֶּן נֹון יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, "Moshe called Hosheia bin Nun, Yehoshua." He added a י"ד to his name, and הוֹשִׁיעַ became יְהוֹשִׁיעַ, placing Hashem's name י"ה at the beginning of his name.

Rashi writes that by doing so, Moshe was davening for him. Rashi writes, י"ה, הַתַּפִּלָּל עָלָיו, "He davened for him, that י"ה, Hashem, should save him (הוֹשִׁיעַ) from the counsel of the malachim." This tefillah helped Yehoshua, and he didn't join with the grave error and aveirah that the Miraglim committed.

The Midrash (Bamidbar rabba 16:9), however, explains that it wasn't a tefillah, but rather a prophecy. Moshe said a prophecy י"ה יוֹשִׁיעַךְ.

2. Someone asked Reb Uri Zohar zt'l "Who do you think will receive a greater Olam HaBa? You came from an irreligious background, and you partook in the culture that is immersed in all the tumah of this world. Then, you worked hard to succeed in your teshuvah to change all your past habits. In contrast, some people were raised with Torah and mitzvos their entire lives. They learned in cheder, attended yeshivah, and studied in a kollel. For their entire lives, they lived in a holy and pure environment, surrounded by Jews who followed the path of Torah. It is easy for them to observe the Torah and mitzvot. Don't you think that your tests are far greater than theirs? And, therefore, don't you agree that you will receive a far greater reward in Olam HaBa than them?"

Reb Uri Zohar replied that it isn't so. "Those who were raised with kedushah, Torah, and mitzvos their entire lives, will earn a greater reward than I because their tests are greater than mine. I experienced all the pleasures this world has to offer, and I know that they are empty, unfulfilling pleasures. When I did teshuvah, I experienced the joy of studying Torah, the joy of keeping Shabbos and performing mitzvos – a joy that has no limit! It cannot be described. The joy of Torah and mitzvos is so great, and the other world has nothing to offer, so it is easy for me to choose ruchniyus and despise gashmiyus. However, in contrast, those who were raised with kedushah could think that the other world has something to offer. They are sacrificing to live as religious Yidden. Nevertheless, they remain steadfast, and they don't follow the temptations of their heart. They remain within the world of kedushah. Therefore, their reward will certainly be greater." (He added that the yetzer hara comes to him as well. There isn't a person who isn't tested. Nevertheless, since he knows from experience that the yetzer hara has nothing to offer, it is easy for him to say "no" to the yetzer hara.)

מַעֲצַת מִרְגְּלִים, Hashem *will certainly* save you from the Miraglim's counsel.

The Yeitav Lev explains that Moshe knew that Hashem would protect Yehoshua from this error and aveirah of the Miraglim because Yehoshua had a strong desire to do Hashem's will. When one desires to serve Hashem, Hashem helps him. This is how Moshe knew for certain that י"ה יוֹשִׁיעַךְ, Hashem will help Yehoshua pass the test.

To explain, the Yeitav Lev quotes the Gemara (Succah 52b) which says, "The yetzer hara of man becomes stronger every day, and if Hakadosh Baruch Hu won't help him, he won't succeed over the yetzer hara." The Yeitav Lev quotes his grandfather, the Yismach Moshe zt'l, who discusses this Gemara and asks: Why does Hashem only help the tzaddikim to succeed over the yetzer hara? Why doesn't Hashem also help the resha'im conquer their yetzer hara? Furthermore, if the tzaddikim succeed in the battle with the yetzer hara solely because Hashem helps them, what makes them better than the resha'im? The resha'im would also do good, if Hashem would help them, as well!

The Yismach Moshe explains that Hashem helps tzaddikim because they genuinely desire *to do good*. They battle with the yetzer hara, they do as much as they can, and therefore, Hashem helps them. As Chazal say, הָבָא לְטַהֵר מִסִּיעֵין אוֹתוֹ, when a person tries to be pure, Hashem helps him. Also, it states (Shemos 25:3) כִּי תִרְאֶה חֲמוֹר שֹׁנֵאֵךְ רֹבֵץ תַּחַת מִשְׁאוֹ וְחָדְלָתָּ, "If you see your enemy's donkey lying under its burden would you refrain from helping him? You shall surely help along with him." On the words עֹזֵב תַּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ, "You shall surely help *along with him*," Chazal explain that you are only obligated to help your fellow man if he is trying to help himself. If he is trying to lift the animal, you must help him. But if he doesn't do anything, and he says, "You have a mitzvah to help me," you aren't obligated to help him. This is the way Hashem acts with us. If we try to help ourselves, Hashem helps us.

However, if we are lazy and don't help ourselves, and we don't try to overcome the yetzer hara, Hashem doesn't come to help us.

Moshe knew that Yehoshua's real desire was to do Hashem's will, so he was able to testify with confidence י"ה יוֹשִׁיעַךְ מַעֲצַת מִרְגְּלִים, Hashem will undoubtedly help him, and he won't fail the test of the Miraglim.

It states (15:39) וְלֹא תִתּוֹרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶּם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם זֵינִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם, "You shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes after which you are going astray." From these words, we understand that the nature of man is to stray after his eyes, so how can the Torah demand from us ... וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם, that we shouldn't stay after the eyes? How can we be obligated to go against the nature ingrained in us? The Chidushei HaRim (Sefer HaZechus) answers that although people's innate nature is to stray after the eyes, a person also has spirituality in him, which inspires him to guard his eyes and to search to do Hashem's will. He now has free choice – to either listen to the inspiration of his holiness or to follow the natural pull of his nature – and he can choose wisely, according to Hashem's will. The Chidushei HaRim explains, "This pasuk [obligating us to guard our eyes] is a guarantee from Hashem yisbarach that there is a spark of holiness in every Yid, which enables us to overcome the yetzer hara and to not listen to the drawing of the heart and eyes." And, as we explained, if he chooses to do good, Hashem will help him.

The Torah (15:41) writes (and we say it at the end of Shema), אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, "I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Mitzrayim to be your G-d; I am the Hashem, your G-d." The Gemara Menachos (44a) states that it says twice in this pasuk אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. With the double אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, Hashem is saying, "In the future, I will punish and I will give reward." The Gemara (ibid.) tells of a Torah scholar who almost committed a severe aveirah, but his tzitzis hit him in the

face to stop him. At that time, he said this lesson: there is punishment and there is reward, and this realization helped him overcome the yetzer hara.

The Chidushei HaRim elaborated on this lesson some more. The first time it states *אני ה' אלקיכם* in this pasuk, it refers to the miracles that Hashem performed for us at yetzias Mitzrayim. As it states *אני ה' אלקיכם אשר הוצאתי ממצרים*, "I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Mitzrayim." The purpose was *להיות לכם לאלים*, so Hashem will be our G-d. The pasuk concludes, *אני ה' אלקיכם*. The second time it states *אני ה' אלקיכם*, it is referring to our times. When a person desires to serve Hashem, Hashem will perform miracles to help him succeed.

The Chidushei HaRim's words are as follows: *מתעורר כל הנסים והנפלאות מיציאת מצרים*, "All the miracles and wonders of yetzias Mitzrayim are aroused to help the person who desires to serve Hashem." It is up to him to desire, to try, and then Hashem will help him, even in miraculous ways. He can merit miracles similar to those that occurred at yetzias Mitzrayim, to help him do Hashem's will. It all begins with his desire to do good.

Shemiras Einayim

Some people think that guarding the eyes isn't actually an obligation, but rather a good habit. But it is the Torah obligation, as it states (15:39) *ולא תתורו אחר ללבבכם ואחרי עיניכם*, "You shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes..."

Mishnah Berurah (75:7) writes, "All opinions agree that to look at a woman, even at her pinky, and his intention is for pleasure, it is transgressing the lav of *אחרי לא תתורו*... עיניכם."

Shaarei Teshuvah (3:64) writes, "Many make the mistake, and they desecrate their holy senses... Regarding the sense of sight it states *ולא תתורו אחר ללבבכם ואחרי עיניכם*. This means that we mustn't look at married women or other *arayos*, lest he falls in sin..."

Derech Pikudecha (ל"ה חלק הדיבור אות ו) writes, "Many people think that this is merely an idea of chassidus, and they don't refrain from looking at women. Know, my friend, that this is an *issur d'Oraysa*."

The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvah 4:4) states that one of the aveiros that are very hard to do teshuvah for is the aveirah of looking where one shouldn't. The Rambam writes that it is tough to teshuvah on this aveirah because "he doesn't know that looking is a grave aveirah because it leads to the aveirah of *arayos*, itself, as it states *ולא תתורו אחר ללבבכם ואחרי עיניכם*."³

The Raavad (Baalei HaNefesh, Shaar HaKedushah) writes, "The first of all gates and boundaries is to guard the eyes, because when his eyes are guarded, his heart is guarded, and when his eyes and his heart are protected, his entire essence is protected. But if he doesn't guard his eyes, r"l, he will certainly fall and commit aveiros, as Chazal (Bamidbar Rabba 10:62) tell us, "The eye sees, the heart desires, and the body completes [the aveirah]."

3. Reb Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 40) writes, "When walking in the marketplace, everyone has an obligation to look down, but not in the ways of the *פרושים קיזאי*."

The *פרושים קיזאי* are mentioned in Sotah 22b. They are people who want to make an impression that they are holy, and that they guard their eyes, but it isn't real. They pretend to be holy to fool people, because they want people to rely on them. The word *קיזאי* comes from the word *מקידם*, blood-letting. Rashi explains, "He makes himself like he is guarding his eyes, so as not to look at women, and thereby, bumps his head in the wall and blood comes forth."

Reb Moshe says that a person is obligated to guard his eyes while walking in the street, etc., but not to the extent that he will bump his head in the wall.

Chazal (Vayikra Rabba 24:6) tell us that the אשה said to her husband (Malachim 2, 4:27) הנה, "Behold now I know that he [Elisha] is a holy man of G-d." How did she know this? Reb Ayvun says that he never looked at her, all of his days."

Chazal say about this, "Whoever guards himself from *arayos* is called *kadosh*, holy." We are discovering that everything depends on guarding the eyes. If one guards his eyes, he is holy.

It states (Bereishis 33:5) וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת הַיָּלְדִּים וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אֵלֶּה לָּךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הַיָּלְדִּים אֲשֶׁר חָנָן אֱלֹקִים אֶת עֲבָדְךָ, "[Eisav] lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said, 'Who are these to you?' And [Yaakov] said, 'The children with whom Hashem has favored your servant.'"

From examining this pasuk, we understand that when Eisav asked מִי אֵלֶּה לָּךְ, "Who are these to you?" he was inquiring about the women and the children. Yaakov pretended that he didn't realize that Eisav was asking about the women, as well, and he answered him solely regarding the children, הַיָּלְדִּים אֲשֶׁר חָנָן אֱלֹקִים אֶת עֲבָדְךָ.

Shach al HaTorah explains that Yaakov was cautious not to cause embarrassment to his brother. So, he answered him as though he thought Eisav asked solely about the children.⁴

We learn from the above that even for Eisav, it would be an embarrassment and disgrace if he weren't cautious with his eyes.⁵

4. In the words of the Shach al HaTorah וזהו השיב, ולזה הסיב, "Yaakov pretended that he didn't suspect that he was looking at the women, rather that when he asked his question, he only asked about the children. This is why he only answered him regarding the children."

5. The Gemara (Brachos 61a) states, אַחֲרֵי אִרִי וְלֹא אַחֲרֵי אִשָּׁה, "Better to walk behind a lion than to walk behind a woman." The Imrei Noam, quoting the Vilna Gaon, writes that when a person walks behind a lion, he is transgressing the aveirah of לֹא תִרְצַח, murder, because he is placing his life in danger. Nevertheless, that is preferred over walking behind a woman and transgressing לֹא תִנָּאֵף, the sin of *arayos*.

Reb Zelmele of Volozhin zt'l (student of the Vilna Gaon) would walk on the side of the street, where the dirty, sewer water ran. He preferred to walk there, than to walk in the middle of the street. People asked him about that (because he would likely transgress the aveirah of studying Torah in the presence of a foul odor. He was so attached to Torah, it was almost impossible for him to stop thinking Torah.) He answered, based on the Gemara above, that it is better to walk behind a lion than behind a woman. Women walk in the middle of the street, and therefore, he preferred to walk on the side. Although he will probably transgress the aveirah of thinking Torah where he shouldn't, he considered this better than having to walk אַחֲרֵי אִשָּׁה.

I heard the following story from one of Reb Wosner's zt'l grandchildren, who heard the story from the baal hamaaseh:

One of Reb Wosner's students lived in London. He wanted Reb Wosner to be present when his son put on tefillin for the first time. He wanted his son to have the privilege of the gadol hador placing the tefillin on his arm and head. Months before the bar mitzvah, he called Reb Wosner to tell him his plans, and asked permission to come with his son. Reb Wosner agreed conceptually, but asked that he call him again a week before the bar mitzvah. When he called back shortly before the bar mitzvah, Reb Wosner told him not to come.

The man said that his son would be very disappointed. He was certain that he was going to Bnei Brak, and the posek of the generation would wrap him in, with kedushah and taharah. Reb Wosner replied that the airports have great tests for shemiras einayim. Whatever the boy will gain by putting on tefillin with him, will be lost due to forbidden sights.

The father said that he had already bought tickets for him and his so. Reb Wosner replied that even so, it

Rebbe Ber'inyu zy'a of Sadigura would say that preparation for tefillah is thinking about the following four pesukim that have the word **מה** in them: (Tehillim 8:2) **מה אדיר שמך בכל הארץ**, (Tehillim 8:5) **מה אנוש כי תזכרנו**, (Devarim 10:12) **מה אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה**, (Tehillim 31:20) **מה רב טובך אשר צפנת לראיך**. טובך אשר צפנת לראיך.

To explain, he told a mashal of a king who went hunting with his servants. The servants brought whatever the king might need to the forest, such as arrows, guns, food, drink, and a gold pipe, because the king liked to relax and smoke a pipe while outdoors. But they forgot one thing. They forgot to bring matches to light the pipe.

When the king stopped to relax on the forest floor and smoke a pipe, he was agitated to discover that there weren't any matches. He asked his servants to look for any passersby and ask him for a match.

The servants found one. There was a person relaxing, smoking his pipe. He had matches, but he refused to give a match to

the king. The servant said, "Think about who is asking for the favor. It is the great king! And think about who you are, a poor, powerless person. Think about what he is asking, just for a match that costs a few pennies. And think of the reward the king can give you for giving him a match. How can you say no?"

Similarly, before one davens, he should think about before Whom he will be davening. Before the Mighty Hashem, as it states (Tehillim 8:2) **מה אדיר שמך בכל הארץ**, "How mighty is Your name throughout the earth." Also, one should consider who he is. Behold, it states (Tehillim 8:5) **מה אנוש כי תזכרנו**, "What is a frail man that You should remember him."

Also, one should think (Devarim 10:12) **מה אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה**, "What does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem..." The request isn't so large. Furthermore, contemplate (Tehillim 31:20) **מה רב טובך אשר צפנת לראיך**, "How abundant is Your goodness that You have stored away for those who fear You." This tells us about the strength of

isn't worth transgressing the aveirah of **וְאַחֲרֵי לִבְבְּכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם** even once.

Chasidim tell the following story:

150 years ago, Slonimer chasidim were traveling from Teveria to Yerushalayim for Shavuot. Among the chasidim was the renowned chasid, Reb Noach Weinberg zt'l. (He was from the respected Yidden in Teveria, the leader of the Slonimer chasidim in Teveria, and he established the yeshiva Or Torah. He was also a member of the Slonimer dynasty; his brother was the Divrei Shmuel of Slonim zt'l, and he was the father of the Birkas Avraham zt'l of Slonim.)

The chasidim hired a wagon driver (baal agalah), a simple Yid, to take them to Yerushalayim. This simple wagon driver had a worry, each year, during the days of Sefiras Ha'Omer. His fear was that he might get confused, and count the wrong day.

He came up with a solution. He tied a knot, for each day he counted, on the rope he used to tie his donkeys. When he counted the knots on the rope, he knew which day of the sefirah it was.

On this long trip to Yerushalayim, the donkeys needed to rest and to eat. He tied them to a tree with a rope and gave them straw. One donkey started nibbling at the rope, and chewed at it until there was no way to know how many knots were on it. The wagon driver cried, "The donkey ate my entire sefirah... I don't know where I am in the world! I don't know the day of the Omer!"

Reb Noach saw this and said to his friends, "Understand what we can learn from this episode. Everyone has his donkey, his yetzer hara, and we must be very careful that the donkey doesn't eat our knots, barriers, and safeguards that we erect to protect ourselves from the yetzer hara.

One must avoid bad friends, unnecessary technologies, and looking where he shouldn't (either according to halachah or according to chassidus) because even if he thinks that nothing bad will come from it, it isn't so. When the wagon driver tied his donkey to the tree, he had no idea he was about to lose all his knots.

tefillah. It has the potential to transform nature, and you can fulfill all the desires of your heart. So, who wouldn't run at the chance to daven with kavanah?

Teshuvah Begins with Guarding the Eyes

It states (Tzefania 3:20) states, בְּשׁוּבִי אֶת שְׁבוּתֵיכֶם, לְעֵינֵיכֶם אָמַר ה'. Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l explains: בְּשׁוּבִי אֶת שְׁבוּתֵיכֶם when you want to do teshuvah, the first step is לְעֵינֵיכֶם, to guard the eyes. With teshuvah, you can rise to very high levels, and the first step is to guard the eyes.⁶

Chazal (Sotah 3a) tell us, "A person doesn't do an aveirah unless a *ruach shtus* comes into him." A person first receives a drop of insanity, r'l, and then he commits an aveirah. It states (Devarim 28:34) וְהָיִיתָ מְשֻׁעָה מִמִּרְאֵה עֵינֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה, תִּרְאֶה, "You will go insane from the vision before your eyes that you will behold." חושב (from the Mishnas Chasidim) explains that וְהָיִיתָ מְשֻׁעָה means a foolish, insane spirit came to him. This is terrible, as it leads to sin. This occurs מִמִּרְאֵה עֵינֶיךָ when you aren't cautious with your eyes.

It states (Yeshayahu 27:6) וְצִיץ וּפָרַח יִשְׂרָאֵל. Tzaddikim (see Beis Aharon, Likutim, (ד"ה ציץ) explain וְצִיץ if a person looks where he shouldn't, וּפָרַח, his holiness, the attribute of Yisrael that's in him, flies away, r'l.

מחזה עינים (written by the Magid of Brisk, printed 120 years ago, (תרס"ב) asks why tears come from the eyes and not from any other limb. Even when a person has pain in a particular limb, that limb doesn't cry; only the eyes do. What is the explanation? He writes, "This is because the eyes of man are the beginning of all aveiros, and the aveiros result in punishment, r'l. Therefore, when a person has pain or a bitter problem, it is the eyes that cry. This is because the eyes are the limbs that brought about all these tzaros and problems."

It states (Tehillim 119:136) פָּלְגֵי מַיִם יָרְדוּ עֵינַי עַל לֹא, שָׁמְרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ, "Rivulets of water ran down from my eyes because they did not keep Your Torah." The pasuk begins in singular tense, עֵינַי, "my eyes" and concludes in plural, לֹא, שָׁמְרוּ "they didn't keep". It seems it should state עַל לֹא שָׁמַרְתִּי תוֹרָתְךָ, "I cry because I didn't keep your Torah." Why does it state עַל לֹא, שָׁמְרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ, "I cry because they didn't keep the Torah?" The answer is that the pasuk is referring to the eyes. They didn't keep the Torah. They looked where they shouldn't, and this is the source and root of all aveiros. Therefore, particularly my eyes, cry – and no other limb.⁷

The Kedushas Levi (Likutim אותיות) explains the sequence of the letters: סמ"ך עי"ן פ"ה צדי"ק. The letter סמ"ך is a round letter, closed from all sides. So, סמ"ך עי"ן פ"ה means he should

6. When we say Shema, we cover our eyes (see Brachos 13b). The Yeshuos Moshe of Viznitz zt'l explains that this is because during Shema, we accept the yoke of heaven. The first step is guarding our eyes.

7. The Magid of Brisk said a powerful mashal:

Border police stand at the country's borders to prevent smugglers from importing merchandise without paying taxes. However, if smugglers manage to bring merchandise past the border, now the work of the police is far greater. They will have to search every city for the contraband, which is a hard task. A country is large, and it is easy for people to conceal their merchandise, to avoid detection.

The nimshal is that the yetzer hara wants to bring "his merchandise" through the gates, which are the eyes. From the eyes, he sends his forbidden wares to the entire body of man. If a person guards the boundary, which means he doesn't look where he shouldn't, it will be easy for him to overcome the yetzer hara. But if he doesn't guard the entranceway – the eyes – and looks wherever he wants, now it will be very hard for him, because he will have to check all his limbs to find where the yetzer hara concealed his merchandise.

The Magid of Brisk concludes, "Every G-d fearing person should close his eyes from seeing bad, and not enable the yetzer hara to enter his territory."

close his eyes and his mouth. He should close his eyes from seeing what he shouldn't and he should close his mouth from speaking what he mustn't. This brings us to the next letter, צדי"ק, this will render him a tzaddik. Because it is impossible to be a tzaddik if he isn't cautious with his eyes and with his speech.

Counsels to be Cautious

The Torah doesn't elaborate, לא תרצח, "Don't murder because you have the nature to do so". And the Torah doesn't say לא תחמוד, "Don't covet what belongs to others, because you tend to stray after these matters". However, when it comes to the obligation of guarding one's eyes, the Torah tells us that *we tend to stray after this aveirah*. As it states (15:39) וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶּם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם זֵנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם, "You shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes after which you are going astray." This is the only mitzvah of the Torah, which the Torah warns us that we must be cautious with because we tend to stray and to perform this aveirah. The Torah instructs us to find solutions and techniques to guard our eyes, as it is very difficult to remain cautious. For all other aveiros of the Torah, it is sufficient to make a kabbalah tova that you won't perform the

aveirah. But when it comes to the aveirah related to the eyes, in addition to the kabbalah tova, one has to make gedarim, boundaries, safeguards, to prevent him from committing the aveirah.⁸

Segulah for Parnassah

Beis Avraham teaches that guarding the eyes is mesugal for parnassah, because it states וְאֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם זֵנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם and זֵנִים is from the word מְזוּנוֹת, parnassah.

It states (Yeshayahu 33:15-16) וְעֵצָם עֵינָיו מִרְאוֹת בָּרֶעַ, הוּא מְרוֹמִים יִשְׁכֵּן מִצְדּוֹת סִלְעִים מְשֻׁגְבוֹ לְחֻמוֹ נָתַן מִיָּמִין וּנְאֻמִּים, He who... closes his eyes from seeing evil, he will dwell on high; rocky fortresses shall be his defense; his bread shall be given to him, and his water is sure." Rashi writes, "[A person who guards his eyes] he won't seek bread, because heaven will give it to him... All of his needs will be given to him." This means guarding the eyes is mesugal for receiving parnassah and all one's needs.

It states (Bamidbar 11:7) וְהָמָן כְּזֶרַע גֹּד הוּא וְעֵינָיו כְּעֵין הַבְּדִלָּה, "And the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance was like the appearance of crystal." The manna represents parnassah. The Torah tells us וְעֵינָיו כְּעֵין הַבְּדִלָּה, when his eyes are crystal and pure (which

8. It states (Bamidbar 9:13) וְהָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הוּא טָהוֹר וְכִדְּרָךְ לֹא הָיָה, "But the man who was tahor and was not on a journey..." Reb Naftali of Ropshitz zt'l repeated, quoting the Chozeh of Lublin zt'l, that this pasuk hints that if a person is tahor, he apparently didn't travel. This is because when one travels, it is harder to be cautious with one's kedushah (to guard his thoughts and his eyes).

A bachur told the Lev Simchah of Gur zt'l that it is hard for him to guard his eyes when he goes on the street. The Lev Simchah replied, "So, don't walk on the street." Then the Lev Simchah was silent for a few moments and said, "If you think Torah when you walk in the street, you won't see anything." When the mind is occupied with Torah, even if he accidentally sees what he shouldn't, it doesn't make an imprint on his mind.

Especially since he is feeling uplifted by his holy thoughts of Torah, and he doesn't want to think or see those matters that will make him impure. Therefore, thinking Torah helps a person guard his eyes.

The Belzer Rav zt'l advised to learn Maharsha as a segulah for pure thoughts. We don't know the reason behind this counsel, but one thing is certain: One can understand a Maharsha on a Tosfos only after he understands the Tosfos very well. And one can only understand a Tosfos after he knows the Gemara clearly. So, to study Maharsha, one must learn the Gemara and Tosfos very well. When one does so, his mind is focused on Torah, and this will purify his thoughts. If one reviews the Gemara, Tosfos, and Maharsha, etc., as he walks on the street, it will help him guard his eyes.

means he is cautious with his eyes) he will receive manna (parnassah).⁹

It states (Tehillim 145:15) עֵינֵי כָל אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁבְּרוּ וְאַתָּה נֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ, "Everyone's eyes look to You with hope, and You give them their food in its time." The word יִשְׁבְּרוּ can be translated as "break". The pasuk is saying that if a person breaks his eyes, which means he guards his eyes, he will have parnassah.

Guarding the eyes has other segulos, such as ensuring a good memory.

Someone once came to the Magid of Brisk and asked for a segulah for improving his memory, as he felt that his memory had become very weak and was deteriorating all the time. The Brisker Magid replied, "Why do you need to seek a segulah? Every day, you say the segulah, as it states (15:39-40) וְלֹא תִתְּנוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶּם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם... לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ, "You shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes... so that you shall remember."

The Magid of Brisk writes this story in his sefer גִּיא חֲזוֹן (which is printed together with עֵינֵים), and he writes, "This is because looking at an aveirah, and thoughts of an aveirah, weaken the memory of a person. This is certain and all medical scholars agree upon it."

The Magid of Brisk presents a proof for this from Rav Yosef and Rav Sheshes of the

Gemara, both of whom had a phenomenal memory for Torah. Rav Yosef was called Sinai (see Brachos 64a), and Rashi writes that this is because "he was an expert in all Braysos". The Gemara (Eiruvim 67a) also tells us that Rav Chisda was embarrassed before the great memory and expertise of Rav Sheshes.

Now, Rav Yosef and Rav Sheshes were both blind. This suggests that when one doesn't contaminate his eyes, he will have a phenomenal memory.¹⁰

Reishis Chachmah (Shaar HaKedushah ch.8, quoting Tikunei Zohar p.128a) teaches that the eye has four colors. (Although it appears that there are only three colors of the eye, there are some countries where people have four colors. Also, when one looks closely, one can see that around the iris, there is a thin ring, and it is of another color.) The white of the eye represents the oceans that surround the world. The color ring represents all the countries of the world. The next color, the iris, represents Yerushalayim. The pupil of the eye represents the Kodosh Kadoshim, the holiest place in the world. We understand from this that if a person isn't cautious with his eyes, he is contaminating the holiest places of the world. In contrast, we understand that if a person is careful with his eyes, he merits that the Shechinah will reside with him.¹¹

9. It states (Shmuel 1, 16:7) בִּי הָאֵדָם יִרְאֶה לְעֵינַיִם וְה' יִרְאֶה לְלֵב, "Man sees what is visible to the eyes, while Hashem sees into the heart." The Beis Yisrael zt'l said that לְלֵב is roshei teivos of בית, bread, clothes, house. This means that if a person guards his eyes, ה' יִרְאֶה לְלֵב, Hashem will see to all his needs, and he won't lack anything.

10. This story occurred two years ago. A young man became very forgetful. He would forget Torah and worldly matters, too. He was also dealing with health issues, and struggled with parnassah.

He went to doctors to find out why he was losing his memory. Tuesday, parashas Shelach, תשפ"ג, a doctor told him that after all the tests they conducted, they couldn't find a solution.

Two days later (Thursday, parashas Shelach), he listened to a shiur on the parshah and heard this segulah from the מַחֲזֵה עֵינַיִם, that when one guards his eyes, it is a segulah for a good memory. He reviewed his ways and realized that he hadn't been careful with his eyes for quite some time. He made a kabbalah to be cautious with his eyes and to learn sefer מַחֲזֵה עֵינַיִם because he had a powerful desire to get his memory back. That desire was stronger than the yetzer hara that encouraged him to look wherever he wanted. A few days later, he felt that things were improving. His memory returned. His health also improved, and he pulled out of the financial bind that he had been in for a long time.

11. The Baba Sali zt'l once told someone that he knew exactly where he was at that time. The Baba Sali

Another benefit of *shemiras einayim* is that it saves from all troubles. Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 70, p.31a) states, כל דינין תליין בדיבורא וכן בעינין, "All punishments are because of speech and because of the eyes, as Chazal (Bava Basra 131a) state, אין לו לדיין אלא מה שענינו רואות." Alluded in these words is that dinim come when people aren't cautious with their eyes.

In contrast, the reward for guarding the eyes is very great. Rabbeinu Yonah (Igeres HaTeshuvah 19:20) teaches, "When a person doesn't raise his eyes, his eyes will merit to see בנועם ה', the sweetness of Hashem. This is his reward מדה כנגד מדה. As Chazal (Vayikra Rabba 23:13) say, "Whoever turns his eyes down in order not to look at *arayos*, he will merit to

see the Shechinah, as it states (Yeshayahu 33:15) וְנִצַּח עֵינָיו מִרְאוֹת בָּרָע, 'He who... closes his eyes from seeing evil,' and it states afterwards (ibid. 33:17) מֶלֶךְ בְּיָפִיו תִּהְיוּנָה עֵינֶיךָ, 'The King in His beauty shall your eyes behold.'"¹²

The Preciousness of Time

It states (14:34), במספר הימים אשר תרתם את הארץ, ארבעים יום יום לשנה, "For the number of days you spied the land – forty days – a day for a year, a day for a year." The *miraglim* scouted Eretz Yisrael for forty days. Therefore, the nation was punished by remaining in the desert for forty years. Each day was equal to a year in the desert.

told him the name of the place, and the man admitted that it was so. People were amazed – it was ruach hakodesh – and they asked the Baba Sali how he reached such a level. The Baba Sali replied, "When one guards his eyes from seeing what he shouldn't, his eyes open up to see spirituality."

The taamim (trop) over the words ולא תתורו are אולא גרש, which can be translated "divorce/banishment go away".

This is because the pasuk is discussing guarding the eyes. When one isn't cautious with his eyes, he is banished and divorced from the Shechinah, and even from his own family, as is well known the tragedies that technology causes. When he is cautious with his eyes, אולא גרש, all these forms of divorce and troubles leave him, and life becomes good for him.

The Ben Ish Chai (introduction to Vaeschanan) discusses the pleasures of three worlds: (1) this world, (2) גן עדן, the lower Gan Eden, and (3) גן עדן העליון, the pleasures of the upper Gan Eden.

He writes that the primary pleasure in this world is food and drink. The primary pleasure of the lower Gan Eden is smell (the good scents that are there). The primary pleasure of the upper Gan Eden is from sight, because in this world, tzaddikim sit and enjoy the glow of the Shechinah.

The human face represents these three worlds and pleasures. There is the mouth, above it, the nose, and even higher are the eyes. The mouth represents the pleasures of this world, which come from the consumption of food and drink. Above the mouth is the nose, representing the pleasure of the lower Gan Eden, the pleasure of smell. Higher are the eyes, which represents the pleasures of Gan Eden Ha'Elyon, the upper Gan Eden, the pleasure of sight.

Reb Shmuel Shapiro zt'l, from the great Breslover chasidim, was extremely cautious with his eyes. (I heard from many special Yidden in Yerushalayim who lived in Reb Shmuel Shapiro's neighborhood, that when they were young, they always saw Reb Shmuel walking with his eyes closed, and they were sure that he was blind r'l.) When he was niftar and they were about to bury Reb Shmuel, Reb Tzvi Cheshen Shlita asked Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter shlita, "What is Reb Shmuel doing now?"

Reb Yaakov Meir replied immediately, "Now he is opening his eyes." His eyes were closed his entire life, and now his eyes can open and see the spirituality that he earned from a lifetime of mesirus nefesh to guard his eyes.

12. B'derech tzachus: In this world, a room is illuminated when one flicks up the light switch. When one turns the light switch down, it becomes dark. As it is known, this world is the exact opposite of the next world. There, it is the opposite. If you turn your head down, it will be light for you. When you raise your eyes, it is dark.

The comparison between a day and a year is also seen in the following Gemara (*Chagigah* 5:), which states, "Whoever sins even just one day a year, it is as though he sinned the entire year."

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* teaches:

Based on the principle that reward is 500 times greater than punishment.¹³ If one serves Hashem just one day a year, it is considered that he served Hashem for five hundred years!

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 94:) states that the distance between heaven and earth is a five-hundred-year walk. With this information, the Chasam Sofer explains the *pasuk*, למען ירבו ימיכם... כימי השמים על הארץ, "So your life will increase... like heaven is above earth." Because for serving Hashem even just one day, it will be like he served Hashem for five hundred years, the number of years that heaven is above the earth.

If he serves Hashem for another day, it will accumulate as though he served Hashem one thousand years, and so on. The reward will definitely be in Olam HaBa because the six thousand years of this world are too few to bestow this large reward that is due to him.

When we think about these concepts, we grasp the preciousness of time. Even for just a few moments of serving Hashem, we gain tremendously! We should look forward to each day because it carries so much potential!

Early one morning, the Rebbe of Radoshitz *zt'l* said, "A special guest arrived today, it's his first visit, and he won't be here again, so I want to honor him properly. The guest is Today. It came today, and it will never come back..."¹⁴

Reb Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* compared time to a travel bag. If one packs his bag neatly, there is plenty of room for all his belongings.

13. Chazal say, מדה טובה מרובה על מדת פרעניות חמש מאות פעמים, "The attribute of kindness is five hundred times more than the attribute of punishment."

14. Someone was waiting for a train at a Swiss train station. A train arrived, but he didn't board it. His friend asked him, "Why don't you board the train?"

The man replied, "This train is uncomfortable. The next train is luxurious. Every passenger gets their own table and a bed to sleep in... I'm waiting for that train."

"But that train won't be here for many hours..."

He replied, "That's ok. It's worth the wait."

The train finally arrived, and he boarded it with much joy. He enjoyed a good meal at his table. Then, exhausted (partly due to his waiting in the sun for so long), he lay down and slept for several hours. When he awoke, he realized he had boarded the wrong train and had traveled in the wrong direction!

It was too late to take a train home. It was almost Shabbos. He didn't even have Shabbos clothes to wear! He had to seek a place to stay for Shabbos.

This happened due to his misguided focus. He prioritized physical pleasures over what was truly important: the direction the train was headed.

When a person's primary focus is on attaining pleasures in this world, he will lose sight of the true purpose for which he was sent to this world, which is to engage in Torah study and mitzvos.

The Ben Ish Chai *zt'l* tells the following *mashal*:

Two rich people were forever arguing over which one of them was wealthier. This was an important matter because the wealthiest person had the final say in the city. They debated this for years and had many disputes on the topic.

One day, they decided to test it, once and for all. They would both throw coins into the ocean, one coin at a time. Whoever stops first means that he has less money, since it is hard for him to lose so many coins.

But if he throws the items in without folding them and without order, after just a few items are put into the bag, there isn't room for much else.

Time is similar. If one is cautious and orderly with his time, he will see that there is a lot of time in the day. But those who aren't careful with their time can't find time for anything.

A student asked Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* how to set up his schedule for learning Torah. Reb Shlomo Zalman advised him to set aside time each day to review everything he had studied up to that point. The student told Reb Shlomo Zalman he didn't have time for that.

Reb Shlomo Zalman had a bar-mitzvah present on his table. It was a wrapped *sefer*, bound with a rubber band. Reb Shlomo Zalman took off the rubber band and showed him how small it became, compared to when it was stretched around the *sefer*. Reb Shlomo Zalman explained to him that this represents time. It seems short. But if one stretches it, one can find that he has plenty of time to do everything he needs to.

In *Parashas Bechukosai*, it states the rewards for keeping the mitzvos. One of the rewards is (*Vayikra* 26:9), וּפְנִיתִי אֵלֵיכֶם. Rashi explains, אִפְנָה

מִכָּל עֲסָקִי לְשֵׁלֶם שְׂכָרְכֶם, "I will turn away from all my work so I can pay you your reward."

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that וּפְנִיתִי comes from the word פָּנָה, which means ample, extra time. The *brachah* is that the tzaddikim are granted ample time to accomplish a lot in *avodas Hashem*.

The Chidushei HaRim would often repeat this translation, for it is indeed the greatest gift to have enough time to do everything one needs to do.

In the *tochachah* (curses), it also states (*Vayikra* 26:17), וְנָתַתִּי פָנִי בָכֶם. According to the Chidushei HaRim's explanation, that פָּנִי means extra time, why does Hashem grant sinners ample time? The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* answers that having time is a blessing for those who use it well and a curse for those who use time unwisely and for sin.

Some have the custom of giving a gold watch as a gift to a *chasan*. This is to remind the *chasan* that time is precious like gold.

The Lev Simchah *zy'a* added that the gold watch is only the wrapping of time. The wrapping is always less valuable than what it holds. If the wrapping is made of gold, it shows that time is far more valuable.¹⁵

The one who would continue throwing in coins is unquestionably wealthier.

After a while, one of them stopped. He didn't want to lose all his money. The other one was still throwing in coins. It seemed he had so much money he didn't mind losing all these coins. Everyone was stunned by his immense wealth.

Later, it was discovered that he threw in fake coins. That's why he didn't mind throwing them all into the ocean.

The *nimshal* is that when one throws away time, it is a sign he considers time like counterfeit, of little value, and therefore doesn't mind wasting it.

15. Reb Zalman Brizel (of Yerushalayim) spent a night in Bnei Brak, at his son, Reb Nota's, house. Reb Zalman was studying Torah diligently.

"Father, it's late," Reb Nota told his father. "You can finish your studies tomorrow."

Reb Zalman didn't respond. He just kept on learning.

The son tried a couple more times to convince his father to go to sleep, but each time, Reb Zalman just continued learning. He finished learning around midnight. Reb Nota was then in the kitchen, eating a late supper. Reb Zalman said to his son, "Nota, it's late. You can finish your meal tomorrow."

The message was understood. Some things are too important to push off for tomorrow.