

תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

SEFER DEVARIM - THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE MERON AND SURFSIDE TRAGEDIES,
AND AS A ZECHUS FOR THE YESHUA OF KLAL YISROEL

TORAS AVIGDOR

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Attaining True Bitachon

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פרשת כי תבא

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Attaining True Bitachon

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Part I. Urgent Tefillah

Gratitude For The Land

In Parshas Ki Savo we read about the mitzvah of *bikurim*; it was a scene to behold – our forefathers would gather together from all corners of Eretz Yisroel and bring the first ripe fruits of their fields to the Beis Hamikdash as an expression of thanksgiving to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Now, included in this mitzvah was a certain formula, a declaration of gratitude to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that the farmer would make upon his arrival in the *azarah* and it's going to be some of these *pessukim* in the Torah that we will attempt to study now.

Among other things, the farmer expressed his gratitude to Hakodosh Boruch Hu for saving the Bnei Yisroel from Mitzrayim and he said as follows: וּנְצַעַק אֶל הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִשְׁמַע הַשֵּׁם אֶת קִלְנוּ ... וַיִּוֹצֵאנוּ ... – “We cried out to You Hashem

... and You took us out of Mitzrayim ... and brought us to this place” (Ki Savo 26:8-9). He’s describing there how Hakodosh Boruch Hu had kept His promise to us by saving us from slavery in Mitzrayim.

But we note something queer in the *pessukim*: “We cried out to You and You took us out.” It seems like that’s the reason Hakodosh Boruch Hu took us out but that’s a big question. What’s this business about crying out? And if they didn’t cry out? Wasn’t it a promise made to Avrohom and Yitzchok and Yaakov – each one separately – that Hakodosh Boruch Hu would take their children out of Mitzrayim? It was a *bris!* The farmer himself says it: הַגִּרְתִּי הַיּוֹם לְהַשֵּׁם – אֲלֹקֶיךָ כִּי בָאתִי אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע הַשֵּׁם לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ לָתֵת לָנוּ – *I declare today to Hashem that I’ve come into the land that He swore to our fathers to give to us*” (ibid. 3) He gave his word to the Avos. Isn’t that enough?

The Dealbreaker

And the answer is, no, it's not enough. There’s another element required for a nation that’s going to be taken out of Mitzrayim and that’s crying out. And we’re going to learn now that it wasn’t just another thing – it was *everything!* It was *only* because the Bnei Yisroel cried out that they were taken out of Mitzrayim. Despite the covenant, despite the oath that had to be fulfilled – it’s the word of Hashem after all so there’s no way that it wouldn’t come true sooner or later – despite all that, Hakodosh Boruch Hu waited until He heard their outcry. The outcry was what sealed the deal.

And not just one outcry; they cried out for a long time. It’s repeated again and again: “I have heard their crying out” (Shemos 3:7), “Their crying out has come before Me” (ibid. 3:9), “I have heard the groaning outcry of Bnei Yisroel” (ibid. 6:5). Only when He heard enough outcries from them, it was only then that finally Hakodosh Boruch Hu decided to fulfill His covenant with them.

Large-Scale Groaning

Now, we think that this one groaned on his own, and that one groaned on his own; that they cried out privately. Each time something happened they cried out. No, that’s a big error. Of course that too, but you don’t understand the ways of our forefathers. It was

organized groaning! They *came together to groan*. That's what they did. Whenever they had an opportunity they gathered together and they shouted “אָנָא הַשֵּׁם הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא – Hashem, please save us.”

But not like I say it, “*ana Hashem*,” quietly. They raised the roof! That's how our forefathers did it; that's the old – I won't say Jewish way – it was the old Israelite way to shout “*mikiros liban*”, *from the walls of their heart* (Yirmiyah 4:19) They shouted to make Hakodosh Boruch Hu listen.

Minimal Groaning

Now that seems queer to our ‘sophisticated’ ears; when we pray we wouldn't shout to tear the skies open. We understand that Hashem hears even a whisper and so we don't do such things – we're too cultured for that.

Not only do we not shout but we don't pray excessively either. You know there are a lot of people here who are nice people and they don't like to burden Hashem too much. They'll ask, they'll say the prayers, but they won't go overboard. Quietly, they'll mention something, “I need *parnossah*,” or “I want good health.” But to importune Him and to be bothersome, to raise their voices and call out to Him, that they wouldn't do. They won't pester Him like that. They remind Him once in a while to keep them in mind and that's all.

Yell Under The El

But that's very far from the way of our forefathers. You think they were standing there saying a formal prayer? יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, or something like that from the *siddur* and they got through with it and that's all. No! That's not how they prayed. They were tearing the skies apart with their prayers, אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אַתָּה – *We have no king except for You!* Not Pharaoh, not Moshe Rabeinu, nobody is going to take us out of here except for You! I cannot describe what took place there but you can be sure it was the most pathetic scene. I'm sure they were hysterical! *Vanitzaak!* And we cried out!

Try that one time. You're walking in the street and there's a lot of noise from the traffic – maybe you're walking under the El (the elevated train tracks) and there's a train overhead making a

tremendous racket. Nobody's standing next to you, no one can hear you now, so open your mouth and shout at the top of your voice, "I have no king except for You!"

You never did it before? What are you waiting for? Try it once in a while. Cry out to him for something! For what? For a *shidduch*, for children, for health – there are thousands of things you need. You don't need anything? It's impossible but let's say you have a thick head; so cry out for other people who are suffering. That's the way to *daven* – you're *shouting* because you're all in!

The Tzadik's Father

There was once a *tzadik* in Galicia, Reb Dovid Lelover, and he was a *tzadik* since he was a little baby; as a little child he was already a *tzadik*. But I'm not talking about him now – I want to tell you about his father.

The *chachomim*, the sages, once came and asked his mother – it was after his father died already – so they came to his mother and asked her, "How did it happen that your child was born a *kadosh me'rechem*?" He was a *kadosh* when he was a little baby!

How did you merit such a thing? Maybe your husband – that's the father of Reb Dovid – maybe he was a big *tzadik*?"

"No," she said, "he was a plain man."

But the sages wouldn't let up. "Can't you recall anything about him? Something! Tell us something that was exceptional."

Crying on Shabbos

But she insisted. "There was nothing exceptional," she said. "He was a plain man. Only one thing I do remember. I recall that he used to walk around the table praying for a son on Shabbos. When they used to come to the words – in one of the *zemiros* they say וְיִצְבוּ לְרֵאוֹת וְיִבְנוּ בְּנִים וְיִבְנִי בְּנִים עוֹסְקִים בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת; it's a *tefilah* that we should be worthy of having children who study Torah and do mitzvos – so he used to sing it again and again, and each time he became more and more excited.

“And then he began to cry out and shout and the end was that he was banging his head against a wall. He was crying out to Hashem! And he banged his head so much against the wall he used to faint!

“That’s what I remember,” she told them. At that time it seemed like he was an extremist, to be so excited about *tefillah*, but that’s what happened. That was a “plain Jew” in ancient times.

Ready for Redemption

And so our Avos in Mitzrayim banged their heads against the wall. I can’t tell you exactly what they did, but you can be sure they were extreme. They were tearing their hearts out and asking to be saved from the wicked Egyptians, from the whips and the bricks and the servitude. And that’s why they finally came out of Mitzrayim.

But I want to tell you something now, something that you probably didn’t know. Hakodosh Boruch Hu didn’t take them out because they were crying. It’s not that they cried so He had *rachmonus* on His people. Oh no! Of course that too, but it was much more than that – it was because by means of all of their calling out they became new people. As much as they trusted in Hashem before, it was increased now a hundred fold, a thousand fold. They became tremendous *baalei bitachon*.

They cried out with such fervor, with such intensity, with such a loud voice, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu saw that they trusted in Him and now they were ready to be His people – they were ready to be redeemed from Mitzrayim and to brought to Har Sinai to receive the Torah. “If you trust in Me so strongly,” said Hashem, “so you’re ready now for Matan Torah.”

Trust and Learn

It’s something we say every day in our davening but most people don’t realize what they’re saying. In *Ahava Rabah* we say: אָבִינוּ מֶלֶכֵנוּ – *Our Father our King*, בְּעִבּוֹר אָבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבָטְחוּ בָךְ – *for the sake of our fathers who had trust in you*, וְהִלְמִדְם הִקְיָה הַיָּיִם – *and You taught them the statutes of life, the laws of life*. It means *because* our forefathers trusted in you, *that’s* why you chose to take them out of Mitzrayim and bring them to Har Sinai to become the eternal Torah people.

That's what Yetzias Mitzrayim was after all. The deliverance from Egypt we must understand was not only for the purpose of our becoming a free people. It certainly wasn't merely to rescue us from oppression, or to punish Pharaoh and our tormentors. It was for a much bigger purpose than that. Yetzias Mitzrayim is the preface to the giving of the Torah.

And how did all of that begin? What was the catalyst for this great and eternal career? It was because of אָבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבָּטְחוּ בָּךְ — *our fathers who had trust in you*, וְהִלַּמְדוּם חֻקֵי הַיָּיִם, — *that You chose to bring them out of Mitzrayim and teach them the statutes of life at Har Sinai.*

Now that seems like a new thing to us. When you ask, “What caused our Forefathers to be worthy of לָנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ, of being chosen?” We wouldn't have imagined that it was because they cried out when they were distressed. But that's what we're hearing now. That's the meaning of בְּעִבּוֹר אָבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבָּטְחוּ בָּךְ — *our forefathers trusted in You.* It's because they cried out to You with all their hearts, again and again, that's what perfected them and made them ready for Yetzias Mitzrayim and Kabolat Hatorah.

Part II. Faithful Tefillah

Living In A Daze

We must understand something about the human soul and its function in this world. The human soul is very deep; it's profound and bottomless. Hakodosh Boruch Hu breathed the soul into man and anybody who breathes into somebody breathes of himself. And that means that there's unlimited greatness, infinite possibilities, in each one of us.

The *gemara* (Niddah 30b) says, before a child is born, a *malach* comes and teaches him the entire Torah. All the great ideals of Torah living he's taught before he's born. And then, just as he is about to go out into this world, the *malach* gives him a slap and he forgets everything. Remember that *maamar Chazal*? Isn't that a queer thing?

What's the purpose of teaching him everything if he's going to forget it all immediately anyhow?

And the answer is he *doesn't* forget! It remains forever within him. When the *malach* gives him a slap, he becomes 'unconscious' and that's how we are born in this world; we are in a daze and we are unaware of what we are and what we have; but subconsciously it's there.

Awake My Glory

And therefore our function in this world is to awaken the greatness within us and to cause it to surface. That's what Dovid Hamelech said: עוֹרָה כְּבוֹדִי – *Awake my glory!* We all have a glory within ourselves, but it's fast asleep. We have to stir it like Dovid did and make it come to the surface.

Now, one of the greatnesses that we have within ourselves is the glory of *bitachon*, of relying on Hakodosh Boruch Hu. But not just rely like, "What can I lose, I'll ask You too." That's not the glory of *bitachon* that Hashem breathed into you.

Suppose somebody is at the end of the rope; he has tried everything already. Nobody is going to help him. No bank is going to offer him any loan. He has no friends. And so finally he comes to you. He remembers you from way back, you used to be a schoolmate of his, and he comes to you and he says, "Please! You have to help me!" And he cries out to you, "I have nobody to rely on except for you." And he's serious – he's not just trying to pull the wool over your eyes. Now, you would like to send him away but he won't take no for an answer because you are his only hope. He's desperate. He knows there is nothing but you.

That was our forefathers! Only that they didn't wait to go around to find out what other means there are to help them. They didn't go to the bank for a loan or call up the rich uncle in the Bronx first. They knew from the beginning that אֵין לָנוּ מִלְךְ אֱלֹה אַתָּה – there's nobody but You! And they cried out with such fervor, with such intensity, with such a loud voice, that each *tefillah*, each groan and each cry

made them greater and greater *baalei bitachon*. Until they became so great that Hashem said, “Now is the time!”

Prayer As A Pathway

And so we are learning now one of the great ways — one of the big methods of bringing forth what is in your *neshoma* and making yourself into what you are able to become. It's *davening*; it's prayer. And that's what our forefathers in Mitzrayim did — they brought out all of their greatness in *bitachon* by means of *davening*.

Now, when I say *davening* it's not going to mean anything; *davening* to us means just saying words and *shoin*. You're going to have to first forget what you have in your head about *davening* because we're going to learn now an entirely different purpose of *tefillah*. We're going to see that *tefillah* is the well-paved and well-traversed road to *bitachon*.

Now, everyone knows that there's a Shaar Habitachon in Chovos Halevavos; he's famous for that — he's one of our most important sources on this great subject. But when will you do it? Learning Shaar Habitachon is excellent but how many people do that? Chovos Halevavos is not such an easy subject. And even if you do learn Shaar Habitachon, you have to practice it every day. You have to say it again and again, so that it gets into your head. And *tefillah* gives us a pathway to achieve that.

The Mussar Movement

It's like what Reb Yisroel Salanter said about learning *mussar*. Reb Yisroel invented a system of learning *mussar*. The truth is, it's an old system, but he reinvented it.

Let's take as an example a man who was against studying *mussar* in the yeshivos — there was a man like that. So he took a Mesilas Yesharim, and he read a few lines and he said, “So what?! I read it. Did it change me?”

No it didn't change him. But he didn't understand what it means to learn *mussar* — he was learning it the wrong way. Reb Yisroel taught the *right* way. He said that first of all you should say it with a

loud voice and with passion — you should shout it. Secondly, you should do it again and again. And if you follow that way, Reb Yisroel said, then after a while you'll be a different person.

Isn't it a tragedy to say the words all your life and never actually feel them? Reb Yisroel taught us that you have to repeat these great words over and over — but you have to shout them and put your whole heart into them.

Mussar Seder in Slabodka

That's how they learnt *mussar* in Slabodka. They stamped with their feet and they shouted; each one was shouting his own favorite *ma'amar*. And they were raising the roof of the yeshiva. For a half hour there was a *kol ra'ash gadol*. And at the end of a half hour you weren't the same person anymore. Those words that everybody says coldly without being affected, now it went into the marrow of their bones. They began to live the great ideals.

Now, that's only a half hour. But on Shabbos night, we didn't have any lights in the yeshiva; it was dark, so then we had a full hour before *maariv* began. And then we used to really let go. A full hour on one thing! Everyone picked their favorite *ma'amar Chazal* and the tears flowed like water, like a fountain from their eyes. Each one was shouting his *ma'amar Chazal* from his corner, “הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה דוֹמֵה לְפֶרֶזְדוֹר — This world is like a hallway to get to the Next World! אַי אַי אַי אַי אַי! הִתְקַן עֲצֻמָּה — Prepare yourself! אַי יָהּ יַי! Prepare yourself!” Over and over again.

At the end of the hour, when you came out, you were a new man. You saw things so clearly that nobody else understood. The same statements that were superficial before now became so sharp and so brilliant in your mind.

Detonating the Bomb

Now, that's what *tefillah* is. *Tefillah* is a *mussar seder* — it means that you're speaking directly to the King. You say “Atah — You Hashem!” Y-o-u. I need You, Hashem! Do you know what “You” means? It means you're talking directly to Hakodosh Boruch Hu because He's the One you need.

And that starts pumping out of your heart all the *bitachon* that you have. We don't have to go outside and find *emunah* and put it into our hearts; we have an atom bomb of *bitachon* within us. There are endless stores of spiritual energy inside of us and it's up to us to start letting it come forth.

What *tefillah* does, nothing else can accomplish. You're saying it again and again; "I need You for this and I need You for that and for this and that." And that draws up from the *neshoma* a greatness that you never imagined was possible, a greatness of *bitachon* that's buried in our *neshoma*. When you shout constantly to a Borei, and you do it with *hislahavus*, with feeling and excitement, that teaches you *bitachon*. That's how *tefillah* makes you great.

Changing Yourself

And actually it's the most fundamental purpose of *tefillah*; *tefillah* is not about getting what you need, what you want in your pocket. It's about getting *bitachon* into your head. That's one of the main objectives of the *tefillah*, to learn that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the one that does things, that He's in charge.

And even though you're far away from it – you didn't learn *Shaar Habitachon*; you didn't study anything about *bitachon* – but the mere fact that you're asking Hashem and you're trying to do it with a purpose of gaining that quality of character, by means of talking to Hashem and asking Him for things, you start getting that attitude that Hashem is the One who's going to give it to you – you become an *ish bitachon*.

And so, everyone has to take himself in hand, and make *tefillah* a program for life – every good *frum* Jew, man and woman, has to lift himself up by his bootstraps and get out of this rut of *davening* the way we do in our *shuls*.

Reverse Kiruv

You know sometimes an idealist, a *baal teshuva* let's say; he came in from the outside and his heart is full of fire to serve Hashem. And so he comes into a place where people have always been observant and he looks up to them; they are his models. And what

does he see? He sees that they don't make a big fuss of this business of prayer. They hurry through the *shemone esrei*. It's a formality. Nobody is banging his head, nobody is *davening* like Hashem is the *only* one who can answer.

And therefore he feels embarrassed; what will he do, a new arrival; he's going to teach them how to pray?! Anyone who shows he's a little more *frum* than the people expect him to be, he's a crank already. And so after a short while, he gets into the rut like they are, and he also begins wasting his life away.

Oh no! Don't look at the people around you! The glorious opportunity of *tefillah* should be utilized even if it means you'll have to disregard all those people around you. Even if they are *talmidei chachomim*, if they're stuck in the rut of habit, disregard them. Sometimes if you want to become something, you have to be independent. You cannot lean on the opinions of other people; you must set out on the path to Hakodosh Boruch Hu all by yourself. Save your life! You only have one life!

The One Mountain To Climb

And don't talk about it because they'll call you a dope. Don't tell your wife or your husband. They'll cool you off *chas v'shalom*. Even in the yeshiva, you can't say it. Let's say you go into the *beis medrash* and you'll tell them, "I want to become an *ish bitachon* by asking Hashem for everything I need, everything I want," so they'll consider you a lunatic, they'll laugh in your face. It doesn't mean that they're against the idea but if you say it, it means you're a dope. You're not supposed to say such things in the yeshiva. The mountain of *bitachon* is a mountain you'll have to climb by yourself.

It's a path that's sparsely traversed; very few travel it. You know when climbers want to conquer a high mountain, there are a lot of people at the bottom of the mountain. They all have their climbing equipment; the tents and picks and the harnesses. But the higher you go, the more rare the atmosphere is and very few people are willing to actually make the climb. But those who do, the ones who keep climbing, those are the ones who reach the summit.

Now, we're not interested in climbing those types of mountains – it means nothing at all to us. But the mountain of *bitachon*, that means *everything*! Of course, it's a very high mountain and you're down at the bottom yet. Genuine *bitachon* means that you believe that Hashem is the only One that can help you and nobody else has any say in the matter, and we're still far away from that. But now we have our way forward – we have our most important climbing tool.

When a person appeals to Hashem for help, that outward act makes him feel that Hashem is the One who can help him. And that begins to draw forth the intense *bitachon* that he's capable of. The more you get busy praying to Hakodosh Boruch Hu – not just *davening* but calling out to Him because He's the only One – the more you realize that He is the only One that can help you. That's one of the great ways of climbing up the mountain. And the more *tefillah*, the faster you climb and the higher you reach.

Part III. Studying Tefillah

The Overlooked Opportunities

It's a tragedy that so many good people aren't climbing this mountain of *bitachon*. I'm talking now about good people who are committed to a life of serving Hashem. And yet, so many fail to utilize one of the biggest opportunities that life can offer to anybody and that is the success that one gains from a career of *tefillah*. Isn't it a pity that idealistic people should allow their lives to go by, *davening* by rote מְלִמְדָה אֲנָשִׁים מְלִמְדָה, without thinking what they are saying? Three times a day or more, day in and day out, and they don't realize that every piece of the *davening* is an opportunity to climb higher.

Now, I want to tell you a little point here before I go on further. You might say, "Well, a one time *tefillah*, how much *bitachon* can I gain already? *Bitachon* is so lofty, so high, what could a little *tefillah* do?"

The answer is like this: I know a man who has a diamond shop, and all day long he is rubbing diamonds with a wheel to shape them.

When 5 o'clock comes, he gets down on his knees with a pan and a brush and he sweeps up all the dust underneath his machine; because it's not dust – it's diamond dust and diamond dust is precious. And sometimes a little chip of a diamond is found on the floor too.

And therefore, when it comes to *bitachon* every little speck is precious, even more than a diamond. And *tefillah* is where you'll find those diamonds. You'll find diamond dust and diamond chips, and if you put your mind to it you'll find nuggets too.

He's Doing It

When you go through the *tefillos*, you'll see many such statements that declare that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is in charge of every detail of our lives. And even if once in the whole *shemoneh esrei* you'll have a *hargasha*, a real feeling that He's the One in charge, that little bit is already a big achievement. You're living for a purpose that day!

Now, I won't take your time now but I'll give just a few examples so you'll understand what I'm saying. You know in the *tefillah* we're going to start saying in a few weeks **מְשִׁיב הַרְרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם** – *You blow the wind and You make it rain*. In *lashon hakodesh* it doesn't rain, that's in English. In America they say 'it rains;' in Yiddish too, 'es regent.' *Es regent, gornisht!*

Or, "*ah vint blozt,*" a wind is blowing. *Sheker v'chazav!* The wind doesn't blow by itself! It doesn't rain by itself! It's **מְשִׁיב הַרְרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם** – *You Hashem, You're blowing the wind. You're bringing down the rain*. Keep that in mind when *motzoei Sukkos* comes and we start saying those words. You're practicing up your *bitachon* every day with those words. You're teaching yourself that Hashem is in control of the world.

Acquiring Sanity

When you say **אֲתָהּ חוֹנֵן לְאָדָם דַּעַת** – "You give us *daas*", why do you say **אֲתָהּ חוֹנֵן**? You don't start all the *tefillos* with an **אֲתָהּ**. You say **שָׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, רַפְּאֵנוּ, בְּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ**. Only when it comes to *daas* we say right away, the first word of the *bracha*, "You".

The answer is that even the *baalei bitachon*, when it comes to *daas*, so people think, “I have *daas*. It’s me. What’s that got to do with *bitachon*?”

No! Without Hashem you don’t have any *daas*. That’s why we need a *hakdamah*; the preface is אַתָּה – You! If it wasn’t for You, I’d be a raving lunatic. The reason you’re not *chalila* in an insane asylum, in a padded cell and raging and knocking your head against a wall is אַתָּה. You’re walking in the street and you’re not babbling nonsense? You’re walking like a decent, civilized person? It’s Atah *chonein*!

Oh, now you’re learning *bitachon*! Three times a day you’re reminding yourself that Hashem is the one making you sane. It’s אַתָּה! It’s You! If you know what you’re saying, it’s a diamond each time you say it.

He Is The Healer

When you say רַפְּאֵנוּ הַשֵּׁם וְנִרְפָּא, “Heal me, Hashem”, so you’re thinking about how many hundreds of thousands of complicated situations are taking place in in your body every day – it’s *mamesh* a miracle that you survive.

I always tell you about the very thin capillaries in your brain where the blood flows through slowly, corpuscle by corpuscle; they’re so thin that they go in single file. Now blood is a sticky business, you know. It’s plasma and plasma is sticky. So in such thin tubes, it could happen that it gets stuck and when that happens it can cause, *chas veshalom*, a stroke right away. So why doesn’t it happen?

Because the Rofei Cholim keeps the blood liquid and it flows through. Sometimes a corpuscle almost gets stuck; that’s when Hakodosh Boruch Hu sends another blood cell to give it a nudge and push it ahead. Ahh! It clears it and you’re safe.

Millions of things like that are happening in your body all day and all night long. So when you say, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם – You Hashem are the רוֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל – the One who keeps us well; You are the One who heals us constantly, so you’re working on *bitachon*. Of course, when it’s necessary to take a *refuah* you should take the medicine,

but you have to know that **אתה**, it's You. Hashem is the One who heals us. Your mitzvah is to take the medicine, but by *davening* you're reminding yourself that only Hashem is the **רוֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל**.

Avoid Troubles

Now, every *bracha* is like that; every *bracha* is a *mussar seder*. All the way to the end of the *davening*. **שִׁים שְׁלוֹם**. Oh Hashem, *sim shalom!* There shouldn't be any war in my household. There should be peace in the households of my sons and daughters too. Oh, it's quiet on all fronts? Your daughters are quiet with their husbands? Nobody's complaining? Maybe they are but not to you. You hear nothing from your children. That's Hakodosh Boruch Hu! It's only because of Hakodosh Boruch Hu!

“Hashem, please! I don't want any litigation with my neighbors!” Did you ever go through that? You have some trouble with a neighbor and then sometimes you're dragged to court. A man used to come here and he was blinking all the time; I saw he was very nervous. And I spoke to him once and he told me he has constant legal trouble with neighbors. About the driveway, about this and about that; he was driven into the courts again and again. That's *tzaros!* Only with Hakodosh Boruch Hu do you avoid such things!

Don't let your *shemone esrei* go to waste! *Shemone esrei* is a gold mine. And when you're standing in a gold mine, even if you grab only one handful you're already a wealthy man. But you have to know how to grab! **כָּל שְׂאֵינוֹ אוֹמְרָה בְּלִשׁוֹן תַּחֲנוּנִים** — “If you're not begging Hashem for mercy, if you're not crying out and begging, so your *tefillah* is not a *tefillah*” (Brachos 29b). When you *daven*, you have to *daven כָּרֵשׁ בְּרֵשׁ* **הַמְּבַקֵּשׁ בְּפִתְחוֹ** (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 98:3). He's talking here about a man without shoes, he's hungry and cold, and he's begging for something to eat. That's a man who knows how to cry out! And that's how we're supposed to *daven*.

Talking All Day Long

But it's not only in the *shul*. An *ish bitachon* has to be shouting to Hashem all the time. Because if He's the only One, if He's the only

address, so it becomes an all day business. If you could do it in *shemone esrei* with *kavanah*, very good, but that doesn't mean you can't do it outside of *shemone esrei*. You can say it in English or Yiddish in the middle of the day.

From time to time, during the day, say to Hakodosh Boruch Hu "Hashem! Protect me from *tzaros*." You know, people cross streets. Ocean Parkway is known as the most dangerous street in all of Brooklyn. The last six years, there were thirty one people killed on that street besides many accidents where people were hurt.

And so when you're crossing a street, it's worth saying a *tefillah*. Don't think it's a joke. You walk out at night, wearing black suits and black hats, they can't see you; you should be *mispallel*. When you have to cross a street at night, make it your business to pray beforehand, "Hashem, please bring me across safely."

Now, the mere fact that you asked for it, is a success already. Even though all cars tonight are in the garages and nobody is traveling on the streets tonight — you weren't in danger anyhow — it's a success because you relied on Hashem.

Ask, Ask and Ask Some More

And so, while you're walking down the street you can talk to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. He's the only One who can help you anyhow. You're not married? Ask for a good *shidduch*. You're married already? Ask for nice children; ask for good *shidduchim* for your children. Ask for good *eidims*, good *mechutanim*. Ask Him for *parnossah*. You have *parnossah*? Ask that you should succeed in your profession. Ask that there should always be peace and quiet in your neighborhood. Ask always that you should have good health, that you should have good eyesight always. You should always be able to walk without a cane. You should never get a cold, never catch any diseases. There's so much to ask for.

Ask Hashem you should be popular. Why not? Ask Hashem that you should be wise. You can ask Hashem to make you a *lamdan* too. Of course you have to do something about it, but you can still ask Hashem that He should help you succeed in knowing Bava Kama and

Bava Metzia. You want to know Bava Basra? Ask Hashem. Now, you might say, "Well, it's a big job, so I shouldn't really be asking; I should start doing it myself." Ask Him anyhow. Say, "Ribono shel Olam, give me a *cheshek* to learn; give me a desire to learn." Ask for it. Always.

You want to catch the bus? So while you're running – of course you should look where you're going so you shouldn't fall; sometimes the sidewalk is uneven – but while you're watching where you're going, say, "Hashem *hoshia!*" Or say, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu help me get the bus!"

Absolutely! There are no limits; you can ask for anything; for every little thing. And that's because when it comes to *bitachon* there are no little things. No matter how small of a thing it is, the *tefillah* is great. It's not the thing that's so important; it's the *tefillah* that's important. The constant crying out makes you great.

Bitachon Is The Key

It wasn't the going out of Mitzrayim that made us so great. It was a tremendous thing by the way; what we saw then we'll remember forever. But it's *before* we went out of Mitzrayim that we became great. Why did we get the big *zechiyah*, the tremendous privilege of witnessing the *nissim* of Yetzias Mitzrayim and being brought to Har Sinai to receive the Torah? Because we became great beforehand by crying out to Hashem.

Now you know why Mitzrayim was called the **בּוּר הַבְּרִזָּל**, the iron furnace. How do you make metal perfect? Let's say you want to make something out of gold. But you want pure gold, perfect gold. Do you know how you purify gold? You boil it in a refining pot, in a furnace.

The *tzoros*, the troubles of Egypt, were the refinery. And how did it refine them? Because they were boiling with troubles. And because of those troubles they cried out so long and so fervently until they were refined and they became pure gold. That was the achievement of Mitzrayim.

After that big treatment, after all those years of **וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם** **וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם** that caused them to cry out, they became so perfect that now **אֲשֶׁר־בָּטְחוּ בַּיהוָה**! Now they had full trust in Hashem! They had trust

before too. But they had it now on a new *madreigah* that they never had before.

That's what the bringer of *bikurim* declared when he came into the Beis Hamikdash. "We cried out and then – *only then* – did You take us out." Because it was dependent on that! That's how we became worthy of everything that came afterwards. It was all **בְּעִבּוֹר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ** **שֶׁבָּטְחוּ בְּךָ** – because we relied on You and spent our days in *tefillah* climbing the great mountain of *bitachon*. That's how we were taken out of *golus* Mitzrayim and brought to Har Sinai and Eretz Yisroel. And that's how He'll once again take us out of *golus* and bring us back to Eretz Yisroel – by means of our *bitachon*.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Utilizing Tefillah to Become An Ish Bitachon

This week I will remember the lesson of *Vanitzaak* - it was our forefathers' outcry which made them worthy of leaving Mitzrayim and receiving the Torah. Before every Shmone Esrei this week I will *bli neder* pause for a moment to select one *bracha* that I will say with extra *kavanah*, having in mind that I am calling out to Him because I want to grow in *bitachon*.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Is there anything wrong with smoking only one cigarette a day?

A:

If you'll give me a contract that it won't be more than one cigarette, I'll agree. But since you cannot give such a contract, you have to know it's the beginning of a career of chain smoking. Eventually that's what happens.

You have to know that in all things there's a principle: The first step is what's most important. Someday I'll talk about that *bli neder*. The first step! Be careful with that first step!

Let's say you're going someplace on the street and somebody starts walking with you and he says, "Come into this place with me," and so you walk in with him. You have to know that the first step you just took is the beginning of a career either upward to Hakodosh Boruch Hu or down to Gehinom. It depends where he's taking you. Just one step!

If you look back, you'll see in your career somebody persuaded you to take one step in the right direction! And therefore the first cigarette is the beginning of the end.

TAPE # 719

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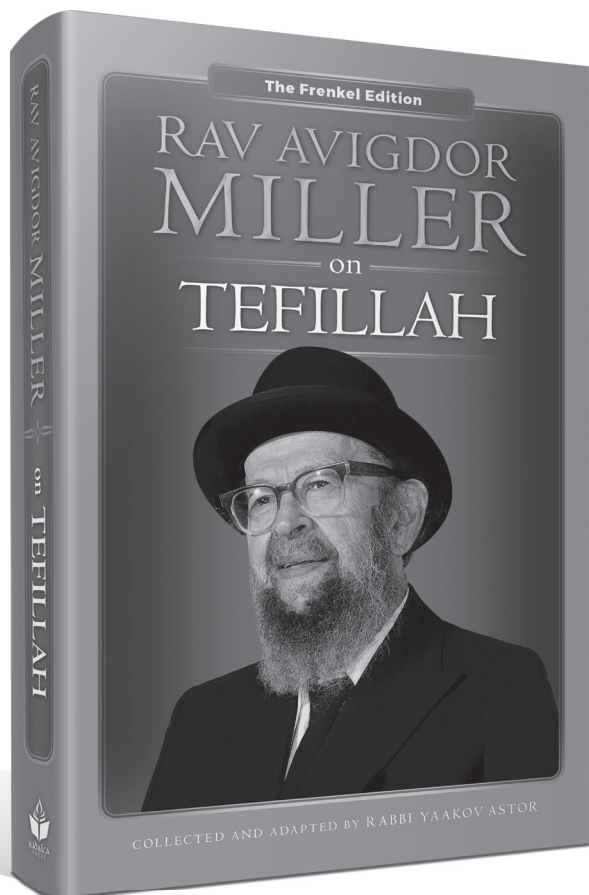
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The gates of *tefillah* have been opened!



How can we improve at davening? · How can I utilize davening to help me feel happy? · Can I ask Hashem for anything? · What's the main thing to focus on in davening? · Why does the Rav daven without making noise or shuckeling? · What does it mean to call out to Hashem "in truth"? · Why study the siddur? · How do we develop a sensory awareness of Hashem? · How can we overcome the habit of taking our health for granted? · Why should we yearn for the Geulah? · When Mashiach comes, will we all be happy? · Why do we bow during Shemoneh Esrei? · Why do we fall on our face when reciting Tachanun? · Are non-Jews obligated to praise Hashem? · Why does the Gemara say

nan
re? ·

nan

**Rav Miller's words never fail to inspire.
Now is the time to improve your *tefillah*!
Just in time for the Yamim Noraim ...**

