

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayigash

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Parshas Vayigash 5771

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“He Sent Yehudah before Him to Yosef”

Yehudah Teaches Us How to Withstand the Test of Poverty

Yosef Teaches Us How to Withstand the Test of Wealth

In this week's parsha, parshas Vayigash, we read (46,28): **ואת יהודה שלח לפניו אל יוסף להורות** —“He sent Yehudah before him to Yosef, to instruct ahead of him in Goshen.” Rashi comments in the name of an aggadic Midrash: **להורות לפניו, לתקן לו בית תלמוד שמשם** —“to instruct ahead of him” means to establish a house of study for him, from which instruction will go forth. We must endeavor to explain what possessed Yaakov to choose Yehudah, specifically, from among all of the brothers for this task; in fact, Torah scholarship and instruction were the domain of Yissaschar.

Yaakov Sent Yehudah to Appease Him

We find an unbelievable idea presented in the Midrash Tanchuma (9). According to the Midrash, Yaakov Avinu suspected Yehudah all along of having killed Yosef and he was sending him, now, on this mission in order to appease him for this erroneous suspicion. Let us present the Midrash, since it contains numerous surprising ideas:

“ואת יהודה שלח לפניו אל יוסף וגו’, זה שאמר הכתוב (ישעיה יא יג) וסרה קנאת אפרים, לפי שהיה יעקב אבינו סבור שיהודה הרג את יוסף, בשעה שהביאו לו את הכתונת, שנאמר (בראשית לז לג) ויכירה ויאמר כתונת בני חיה רעה אכלתהו, ואין חיה אלא יהודה שנאמר (שם מט ט) גור אריה יהודה, והיה אומר יעקב ליהודה, אתה הוא שטרפת אותו, לפיכך (שם לז לד) ויקרע יעקב שמלותיו ויקומו כל בניו וכל בנותיו וגו’...”

אמר ליה הקב”ה ליהודה, אין לך בנים עד עכשיו, ואין אתה יודע צער בנים, אתה טיגנת [ציערת] את אביך והטעית אותו בטרף טרף יוסף, חייך תישא אשה ותקבור את בניך, ותדע צער בנים, מה כתיב אחריו (שם לח א) ויהי בעת ההיא וירד יהודה מאת אחיו, מלמד שנתנדה מאחיו, שבשעה שאמר להם, לכו ונמכרנו, אם אמר להם לכו ונחזירנו היו שומעין לו, לפיכך וירד יהודה וגו’ שהורידוהו מגדולתו, וירא שם יהודה וגו’, וילדה ער ואונן, וימת ער ואונן

וכל אותן השנים שהיה יוסף חוץ לאביו, היה בלבו של יעקב שיהודה הרגו, מנין אתה למד מבנימן, שכך אמר יהודה ליוסף, כי (בראשית מד לב) עבדך ערב את הנער, כיון שנתן נפשו על בנימן ונתוודע יוסף, נמצא יהודה נקי מכל אותן הדברים, הוי וסרה קנאת אפרים, לכך כתיב ואת יהודה שלח לפניו.”

To summarize: (1) Yaakov was of the opinion that Yehudah had killed Yosef; when Yaakov recognizes Yosef's bloody tunic and states that he must have been eaten by a wild animal, he is

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alluding to Yehudah—who is described (Bereishis 49,9) as a lion cub. (2) HKB”H tells Yehudah that for tormenting his father and misleading him with regard to Yosef’s true condition, he, too, would experience the pain involved in raising children; he would marry and, subsequently, bury his sons. (3) The brothers banished Yehudah and removed him from his prestigious status as their leader after this incident with Yosef. (4) During all of the years that Yosef was separated from his father, Yaakov believed that Yehudah had killed him. When it became evident that Yehudah was innocent of said crime, Yaakov sought to appease him by sending him on this mission.

The Midrash clearly states that after Yehudah offers to sacrifice his life on Binyamin’s behalf—assuming the role as his guarantor—and Yaakov finally becomes aware of the fact that Yosef is still alive: **“נמצא יהודה נקי מכל אותן הדברים... לכך כתיב ואת יהודה שלח לפניו”**—he realizes that Yehudah is innocent in these matters and, therefore, chooses to send Yehudah before him to join forces with Yosef. It is still unclear, however, why he chooses to appease Yehudah by sending him to establish a house of study. As stated previously, this task was, seemingly, more appropriate for Yissaschar, the pillar of Torah study; surely, Yehudah could have been appeased in other more suitable ways.

Another startling statement is also found concerning this possuk in the Midrash Tanchuma (6):

“ואת יהודה שלח לפניו. ילמדנו רבינו אימתי מברכין על הנר במוצאי שבת, כך שנו רבותינו אין מברכין על הנר עד שיאותו לאורו... רבי זעירא בר אבהו אמר, מכאן שמברכין על הנר במוצאי שבת משיאותו לאורו.”

Here the Midrash discusses the proper time of reciting the blessing over the havdalah candle on motzaei Shabbos. The commentaries struggle to explain the connection between the blessing over the havdalah candle and Yaakov sending Yehudah to establish a house of study.

Adam HaRishon Discovers that Fire is Produced When Two Stones are Ground Together

Let us begin by explaining what we have learned in the Gemorah (Pesachim 54.): **“במוצאי שבת נתן הקב”ה דיעה באדם הראשון מעין דוגמא של מעלה, והביא שני אבנים וטחנן זו בזו ויצא אור”**—at the departure of Shabbos, HKB”H placed in Adam HaRishon a knowledge reflective of divine knowledge; as a result, Adam brought two stones and ground them together creating a flame. This statement is taught in greater detail in the Yerushalmi (Berachos 8,5) and in the Midrash (B.R. 11,2). According to these sources, a great fear befell Adam HaRishon as darkness fell with the departure of Shabbos; he feared that the primeval serpent would bite him in the darkness. Yet, when he successfully created a flame from the two stones, he recited the blessing **“מאורי האש”**, the illuminations of fire. It is for this very same reason that we also recite the berocheh over fire on motzaei Shabbos. Similarly, we have learned (ibid.):

“שלשים ושש שעות שימשה אותה האורה שנבראת ביום הראשון, שתים עשרה בערב שבת ושתיים עשרה בליל שבת ושתיים עשרה בשבת, והיה אדם הראשון מביט בו מסוף העולם ועד סופו... כיון שיצאת שבת התחיל משמש החושך ובא, ונתיירא אדם ואמר אלו הוא שכתב בו

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(בראשית ג טו), הוא ישוּפֵךְ ראש ואתה תשופנו עקב, שמא בא לנשכני ואמר (תהלים קלט יא) אך חושך ישופני.

אמר רבי לוי, באותו שעה זימן הקב"ה שני רעפין, והקישן זה לזה ויצא מהן האור, הדא הוא דכתיב (שם) ולילה אור בעדני, ובירך עליה בורא מאורי האש. שמואל אמר, לפיכך מברכין על האש במוצאי שבתות שהיא תחילת ברייתה."

The light that was created on the first day served for thirty-six hours—twelve hours on erev Shabbos, twelve hours on Shabbos night and twelve hours on Shabbos day. It allowed Adam HaRishon to see from one end of the universe to the other. . . as Shabbos departed, the darkness began to serve and come, and Adam became fearful that the serpent would come and bite him.

Rabbi Levi said: at that moment HKB"H presented him with two pieces of slate, he struck them together and created a flame. . . then, he recited the berocheh "borei meorei ha'eish." Shmuel stated: therefore, we recite this blessing over the fire on motzaei Shabbatos, since that is when it came into existence.

Certainly, producing a fire from two stones is a unique skill. Nevertheless, it is a physical action. We must clarify, therefore, why does the Gemorah describe it as: **נתן הקב"ה דיעה באדם הראשון** "HKB"H placed in Adam HaRishon a knowledge reflective of divine knowledge? How is this physical action reflective of divine knowledge?

The Test of Poverty and the Test of Wealth

In order to address these issues, let us begin by examining a subject the Rishonim and Acharonim have discussed at length—the two trials with which HKB"H tests mankind, the test of poverty and the test of wealth. Concerning the test of wealth, we find a strong admonition in parshas Ekev (Devarim 8,11):

"השמר לך פן תשכח את ה' אלקיך... פן תאכל ושבעת ובתים טובים תבנה וישבת, ובקרך וצאנך ירביון וכסף וזהב ירבה לך וכל אשר לך ירבה, ורם לבבך ושכחת את ה' אלקיך המוציאך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים... ואמרת בלבבך כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה, וזכרת את ה' אלקיך כי הוא הנותן לך כח לעשות חיל."

"Take care lest you forget Hashem, your G-d, by not observing His commandments, . . . lest you eat and be satisfied, and you build good houses and settle, and your cattle and sheep increase, and you increase silver and gold for yourselves, and everything that you have will increase—and your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem, you G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery, . . . And you may say in your heart, 'My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!' Then you shall remember Hashem, your G-d, that it was He Who gave you strength to make wealth."

We see clearly from these verses that an abundance of possessions carries the inherent danger of leading one to a situation of: **"ורם לבבך ושכחת את ה' אלקיך"**—**"and your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem, you G-d."** Ultimately, this person says to himself, chas v'shalom: **"כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה"**—**"My strength and the might of my hand**

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made me all this wealth!" Similarly, we find the following explicit statement (Devarim 32,15): **"וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְעַט, שְׁמַנְתָּ עֵבֶיֶת כְּשִׂית, וַיִּטּוֹשׂ אֱלֹהִים עוֹשֵׂהוּ וַיִּנְבֵּל צוּר יִשׁוּעָתוֹ"**—**"Yeshurun became fat and kicked. You became fat, you became thick, you became corpulent—and it deserted G-d its Maker, and was contemptuous of the Rock of its salvation."**

This is the same message expressed in the Gemorah (Berachos 32.) elucidating the possuk (Devarim 1,1): **"וְדִי זֶהב, אִמְרֵי דְבִי רַבִּי יִנְאִי, כִּךְ אִמְרֵי מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי הַקֶּב"ה, רַבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם** בשביל כסף וזהב שהשפעת להם לישראל עד שאמרו די, הוא גרם שעשו את העגל. אמרי דבי **—רַבִּי יִנְאִי, אִינְךָ אֵרִי נוֹהֵם מִתּוֹךְ קוֹפֵה שֶׁל תְּבִין אֵלֵּא מִתּוֹךְ קוֹפֵה שֶׁל בִּשְׂרֵי"**—Moshe argues that Hashem is partially to blame for the sin of the egel, because He gave Yisroel the gold and silver of the Egyptians which provided them with the means to commit this sin.

Nevertheless, we also find the inherent difficulty in the reverse situation—the test of extreme poverty. The Gemorah (Eiruvin 41:) teaches us that one of the three things that causes a person to violate his own will and the will of his Creator is **"דְּקִרְוֵי עֲנִיּוֹת"**—**"the tribulations of poverty."** Concerning these two trials, Shlomo HaMelech proclaims (Mishlei 30,8): **"רֵשׁ וְעוֹשֶׁר אֵל תִּתֵּן לִי"**—**"Give me neither poverty nor wealth."** He beseeches Hashem that he not be subjected to these two trials—neither the trial of poverty nor the trial of wealth. Rather, **"הִטְרִיפְנִי לַחֵם חֲקִי"**—merely provide me with my basic needs and sustenance.

Yosef Was a Slave Who Rose to Become a King

It is important to recognize that both of these trials present tremendous hardships. Nevertheless, each possesses two degrees of hardship, one more difficult than the other. After all, we cannot compare the trial of poverty of someone who has been poor his entire life—and is accustomed to this destitute lifestyle—to that of someone who has been rich his entire life and suddenly the wheel of fortune turns him into a pauper, depriving him of all of his wealth.

Similarly, there is no comparison between the two distinct types of riches. Someone who has been wealthy his entire life, has adjusted to a lifestyle of luxury and abundance, and his wealth doesn't cause him to violate his own best interests and the will of his Creator as much. By comparison, the pauper, who had nothing, and overnight rises to riches, is unaccustomed and unprepared for the great danger posed by this new lifestyle; he is much more likely to violate his own will and that of his Creator.

This second, more difficult "test of wealth"—the so-called "rags to riches" scenario—is the test that Yosef HaTzaddik endured. First, he was a slave in Egypt, he sat in prison for twelve years and, then, overnight, he was elevated to the highest position in all of Egypt, second only to the King. Against all odds, despite this incredibly difficult challenge, he remained devout and righteous, as the possuk testifies (Shemos 1,5): **"וַיֹּסֵף הָיָה בְּמִצְרַיִם"**—**"And Yosef was in Egypt."** Rashi explains: **"לְהוֹדִיעַךְ צְדָקְתוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף, הוּא יוֹסֵף הַרְעֵה אֶת צֶאֱן אָבִיו, הוּא יוֹסֵף שֶׁהָיָה בְּמִצְרַיִם וְנַעֲשָׂה מֶלֶךְ וְעוֹמֵד בְּצַדְקוֹ"**—this verse reveals to us Yosef's righteousness; this is the same Yosef that was a shepherd for his father; even in Egypt, after rising to power, he remained true to his righteous origins.

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In this manner, the Ksav Sofer clarifies the possuk in this week's parsha (Bereishis 45,28):

”רב עוד יוסף בני חי. במדרש (ב”ר צד ד) מה רב כוחו של יוסף, שעברו עליו כל הצרות ועמד בצדקו. צריך להבין הלא לא ראה אותו בעת צרה רק בגדולה, הוה ליה לומר שיש לו גדולה כל כך, וישמן ולא בעט ועומד בצדקו.

נראה לי כי בוודאי ניסיון העושר יותר מניסיון העוני, אבל יותר ויותר הוא ניסיון העושר, במי שהיה עני ומצוּעַר תמיד, ובפתע פתאום יגדל ויתעשר מאוד יגבה לבו, ועבד כי ימלוך ירום לבו מאוד... והנה יוסף מבית האסורים יצא למלוך, ומכל מקום עמד בצדקו, וזה הניסיון היותר גדול, והיינו רב כוחו של יוסף, כי עברו עליו כל הצרות ועכשיו הוא בגדולה ומכל מקום עומד בצדקו.”

Yaakov reacts to his son's greatness with an exclamation. The Midrash explains that he is impressed that Yosef remained righteous despite all of the indignity he had to endure. The Ksav Sofer explains that the test of wealth is certainly more difficult than the test of poverty—even more so, in the case of one who was previously destitute and suddenly becomes extremely wealthy. Inevitably, a slave who becomes a king will be haughty. Nevertheless, Yosef withstood this tremendous test and remained righteous. This is the greatness which prompts Yaakov's exclamation.

Yehudah Is the King Who Fell from Greatness

Whereas Yosef was subjected to the difficult “test of wealth”—rising from the depths of slavery to the heights of kingship—the story with Yehudah is exactly the opposite. He was subjected to the difficult “test of poverty.” At first, he rules over his brothers as their king. The Midrash (B.R. 92,5) describes that Yosef looks at the chalice and proclaims: **”יהודה שהוא מלך יושב בראש, ראובן—”Yehudah, who is the king, will sit at the head of the table; Reuven, the firstborn, will sit in the second position, and so on and so forth with all of the rest.”** Elsewhere, the Midrash teaches (B.R. 93,2): **”כי הנה המלכים זה יהודה ויוסף—”For, behold the kings,’ refers to Yehudah and Yosef.”** The Matnos Kehunah explains that Yehudah ruled over his brothers and Yosef ruled over Egypt.

Yet, after the brothers sold Yosef, following Yehudah's advice, they removed him from power. It is written in parshas Vayeshev (Bereishis 38,1): **”ויהי בעת ההוא וירד יהודה מאת אחיו—”At that moment, Yehudah went down from his brothers.”** Rashi comments: **”למה נסמכה פרשה זו לכאן, והפסיק בפרשתו של יוסף, ללמד שהורידוהו אחיו מגדולתו כשראו בצרת אביהם, אמרו—אתה אמרת למכרו, אלו אמרת להשיבו היינו שומעים לך—”**—what is the connection between this event and the previous narrative? It teaches us that when the brothers witnessed their father's agony, they removed Yehudah from power. They blamed him for advising them to sell Yosef and causing their father such grief; had he advised them to return Yosef to Yaakov, they would have listened.

According to the Midrash, they not only removed him from power, they banished him from their midst. In addition, his two sons died childless during his lifetime. This was detailed in the Midrash Tanchuma (9) cited previously: **”אמר ליה הקב”ה ליהודה... אתה טיגנת [ציערת] את אביך**

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והטעית אותו בטרף טרף יוסף, חייך תישא אשה ותקבור את בניך, ותדע צער בנים, מה כתיב HKB”H told Yehudah—אחריו, ויהי בעת ההיא וירד יהודה מאת אחיו, מלמד שנתנדה מאחיו.” that he would be punished for causing his father to suffer and for misleading him. He was told that he, too, would experience the pain that comes with having children; he would marry and, subsequently, bury two sons. Then, the verse alludes to the fact that his brothers banished him from their midst.

Yaakov Avinu Restored Yehudah’s Royal Crown

We do not find anywhere that the tribes, themselves, returned Yehudah to his sovereign position. Only as Yaakov nears death, he blesses all of the tribes and says to Yehudah (Bereishis 49,8): **”יהודה אתה יודוך אחיך, ירך בעורף אויביך ישתחוו לך בני אביך... לא יסור שבט מיהודה”**—**“Yehudah, your brothers shall acknowledge you; your hand will be at your enemies’ neck; your father’s sons will bow before you. . . The rod shall not depart from Yehudah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh arrives and his will be an assemblage of nations.”**

Rashi explains: **”יהודה אתה יודוך אחיך, לפי שהוכיח את הראשונים בקנטורים, התחיל יהודה לסוג לאחוריו [שלא יוכיחנו על מעשה תמר], וקראו יעקב בדברי רצוי יהודה לא אתה”**—since Yaakov had rebuked the first sons in harsh terms, Yehudah began to back away [so as not to be rebuked concerning the incident with Tamar]; so, Yaakov called him with words of conciliation, **”יהודה, אתה יודוך אחיך, אמר לו הקב”ה, אתה הודית במעשה תמר, יודוך אחיך להיות מלך עליהם”**—HKB”H says to Yehudah, **”Just as you confessed in the matter of Tamar, so, too, your brothers will submit to you as their king.”** We see that Yaakov Avinu restored the royal crown to Yehudah and his children before departing from this world.

We have seen that after the sale of Yosef, Yehudah was removed from power, he was banished and two of his sons died. Despite this extreme “test of poverty” and degradation, he remained solid as a rock. So much so, that he merited sanctifying the Name of Heaven publicly while confessing in the matter of Tamar—when he declares (Bereishis 38,26): **”צדקה ממני”**—admitting that justice is on her side. As a result, the Gemorah teaches us (Sotah 36:): **”יהודה שקידש שם שמים בפרהסיא—נקרא כולו על שמו של הקב”ה”**—**“Yehudah who sanctified the Name of Heaven in public, had the entire name of HKB”H incorporated into his name.”** As Rashi explains, all four letters of the holy, four letter name are contained in the name Yehudah, יהודה.

The Beer Mayim Chaim writes concerning this matter (Vayeshev): **”כי כשם שצמיחת מלוכת יוסף התחיל להיות מהשפלה רבה, בבחינת (תהלים קיז ז) מקימי מעפר דל מאשפות ירים אביון להושיבי עם נדיבים, כן מלכות בית דוד וירד יהודה תחילה, שהורידוהו אחיו מגדולתו למלוך”**—just as Yosef’s sovereignty arose from lowly beginnings, so, too, the Davidic dynasty began with the fall of Yehudah.

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Just as Yehudah was subjected to the difficult “test of poverty”—being stripped of power by his brothers—so, too, the Davidic dynasty descending from Yehudah would endure a similar test. At first, Dovid HaMelech and his son Shlomo reigned over Yisroel with a mighty hand; however, with the ensuing generations their power waned until the Beis HaMikdash was ultimately destroyed and we were exiled from our land—due to our multitude of sins. Nevertheless, just as Yaakov Avinu restored the kingship to Yehudah, HKB”H will restore the kingship to the house of Dovid with the coming of Melech HaMashiach, from the house of Dovid—as it is written (Yermiyah 30,9): **“ויעבדו את ה' אלקיהם ואת דוד מלכם אשר אקים להם”**—**“They will serve Hashem, their G-d, and Dovid, their king, whom I will appoint for them.”**

Yaakov Chose Yehudah and Yosef to Teach Yisroel Their Ways

We can now appreciate Yaakov Avinu’s deeper objective: **“ואת יהודה שלח לפניו אל יוסף להורות לפניו גשנה”**—**“He sent Yehudah before him to Yosef, to instruct ahead of him in Goshen.”** As mentioned above, Rashi comments: **“לתקן לו בית תלמוד שמשם תצא הוראה”**—he sends him to establish a house of study from which instruction will go forth. Yaakov chose these two holy personages, Yehudah and Yosef, to serve as personal examples for all of Yisroel to learn from. They would exemplify how to withstand these two difficult tests. Yosef HaTzaddik showed them how to overcome the “test of wealth” when he rose from slavery to royalty; Yehudah showed them how to overcome the “test of poverty,” when he was stripped of his power and prestige. Despite their trials and travails, both maintained their supreme levels of kedushah.

This was Yaakov’s true agenda. Yehudah and Yosef would instruct Yisroel how to remain stalwart in the face of these difficult trials—the trials of poverty and wealth—just as they had. In this light, the meaning of the Midrash is now easily understood. This is how Yaakov chose to appease Yehudah for having originally suspected him of killing Yosef. By means of this mission, it would become clear to everyone that Yehudah’s fall from power was a divine test—a “test of poverty.”

How fitting that the two future Mashiach’s hail specifically from these two tribes: Mashiach ben Yosef, a descendant of Yosef’s, who withstood the “test of wealth,” and Mashiach ben Dovid, a descendant of Yehudah’s, who withstood the “test of poverty.” Ultimately, the future geulah, redemption, will be realized in the merit of the members of Bnei Yisroel who remain stalwart and unwavering in the face of the tests of poverty and wealth—those who learned this important lesson in the study hall of Yehudah and Yosef.

This is reflected in the words of the prophet regarding the future geulah (Yeshaya 27,13): **“והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול ובאו האובדים בארץ אשור והנדרחים בארץ מצרים והשתחוו לה' בהר הקדש בירושלים”**—**“It shall be on that day that a great shofar will be blown, and those who are lost in the land of Assyria and those cast away in the land of Egypt will come together and worship Hashem on the holy mountain in Yerushalayim.”** In the future geulah, facilitated by the two mashiachs--Mashiach ben Yosef who withstood the “test of wealth” and Mashiach ben Dovid who withstood the “test of poverty”—these factions will be reunited: (a) ”

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“האובדים בארץ אשור”—those lost in the land of Assyria, comprised of the members of Yisroel who fell prey to the satisfaction of their desires and worldly delights and (b) **והנרדחים בארץ** “ומצרים”—those cast away in the land of Egypt, comprised of those who sank to the depths of tumah due to their inability to withstand the “test of poverty.”

The Decline from the Light of Shabbos to the Darkness of the Weekdays

Continuing along this path, we can proceed to explain the blessing of “meorei ha’eish,” which we recite with the departure of Shabbos—just as Adam HaRishon did. We cited the Gemorah previously: **במוצאי שבת נתן הקב”ה דיעה באדם הראשון מעין דוגמא של מעלה, והביא שני** “אבנים וטחנן זו בזו ויצא מהן אור” —at the departure of Shabbos, HKB”H placed in Adam HaRishon a knowledge reflective of divine knowledge; as a result, Adam brought two stones and ground them together creating a flame. Also, the Yerushalmi: **באותו שעה זימן הקב”ה שני רעפין, והקישן זה לזה ויצא מהן האור, הדא הוא דכתיב (שם) ולילה אור בעדני, ובירך עליה בורא** --מאורי האש. שמואל אמר, **לפיכך מברכין על האש במוצאי שבתות שהיא תחילת ברייתה**” at that moment HKB”H presented him with two pieces of slate, he struck them together and created a flame. . . then, he recited the berocheh “borei meorei ha’eish.” Shmuel stated: therefore, we recite this blessing over the fire on motzaei Shabbatos, since that is when it came into existence.

If we examine and evaluate Adam HaRishon’s situation after the sin of the Tree of Knowledge and compare it to his situation before that fateful sin, we find that he experienced the ultimate “test of poverty.” Before the sin, he lived in Gan Eden and the angels prepared his food for him, as the Gemorah describes (Sanhedrin 59:): **אדם הראשון מיסב בגן עדן היה והיו מלאכי השרת צולין לו בשר**. He existed in Gan Eden as king of the world.

After the sin, however, he experienced a fall from the greatest of heights to the lowest of depths. HKB”H evicted him from Gan Eden and condemned him to death and poverty (Bereishis 3,19): **“בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם”**—“By the sweat of your brow, you shall earn your bread.” Despite this unfathomable decline, he did not lose hope or become disheartened. In fact, he strengthened his resolve to repent fully for his sin, as the Gemorah explains (Eirubin 18:): **“היה רבי מאיר אומר, אדם הראשון חסיד גדול היה, כיון שראה שנקנסה מיתה על ידו, ישב בתענית מאה ושלשים שנה”**—“Rabbi Meir used to say, ‘Adam HaRishon was tremendously pious; upon realizing that he brought death to the world, he fasted for one hundred and thirty years.’”

Now, we learned in the previously cited Yerushalmi:

“שלשים ושש שעות שימשה אותה האורה שנבראת ביום הראשון, שתים עשרה בערב שבת ושתים עשרה בליל שבת ושתים עשרה בשבת, והיה אדם הראשון מביט בו מסוף העולם ועד סופו... כיון שיצאת שבת התחיל משמש החושך ובא, ונתיירא אדם ואמר אלו הוא שכתב בו, הוא ישובך ראש ואתה תשופנו עקב, שמא בא לנשכני”.

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After experiencing the light created on the first day, for thirty-six hours, Adam HaRishon experienced the darkness with the departure of the Shabbos. This made him fearful that he would be harmed by the serpent.

Once the darkness of Motzaei Shabbos arrived, and he was deprived of the illumination of Shabbos kodesh, he experienced a tremendous spiritual downfall—from the intense light to the deepest darkness. Consequently, he became fearful of the primeval serpent, who is, in fact, the yetzer horah. He was worried that he would fall into its trap and be unable to withstand the difficult test ahead of him—dealing with his decline and poverty. Concerning this matter, we learned in the Gemorah: **“במוצאי שבת נתן הקב”ה דיעה באדם הראשון מעין דוגמא של מעלה, והביא שני אבנים”** -- at the departure of Shabbos, HKB”H placed in Adam HaRishon a knowledge reflective of divine knowledge; as a result, Adam brought two stones and ground them together creating a flame.

In other words, HKB”H favored him with divine knowledge, so that he would understand that HKB”H tests mankind with two categories of tests—a “test of wealth” and a “test of poverty.” While living in Gan Eden, sitting on top of the world, he had to remain stalwart against the persuasions of the serpent and serve Hashem by withstanding a “test of wealth.” The serpent taunted him by saying (Bereishis 3,5): **“כי יודע אלקים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו ונפקחו עיניכם והייתם כאלקים”** -- **“for G-d knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like G-d, knowing good and bad.”** Thus, he had to resist this temptation and avoid becoming proud and haughty. Similarly, he had to serve Hashem while subjected to a “test of poverty” and decline.

It is well-known that the yetzer horah is compared to a stone. The Gemorah teaches (Kiddushin 30:): **“אם פגע בך מנוול זה משכהו לבית המדרש, אם אבן הוא נימוח”**—if you encounter this despicable character, drag him into the study hall; if he is like a stone, he will dissolve. Based on what we have just explained, there are two types of yetzer horah—the yetzer horah that harasses one during “tests of wealth” and the yetzer horah that harasses one during “tests of poverty.” They are like two stones grinding a Jew into submission until he abandons the ways of the Torah—either while he is poor or while he is wealthy. It is a Jew’s duty, though, to believe absolutely, that if we all stand resolute against these two forms of yetzer horah, we will prevail. We will drive away this darkness attempting to blind us and, in so doing, we will unveil the immeasurable light of Torah and mitzvos.

Adam HaRishon Ground Together Two Stones the Test of Poverty and the Test of Wealth

This, then, is the meaning of our blessed sages statement: **“במוצאי שבת נתן הקב”ה דיעה באדם”** -- at the departure of Shabbos, HKB”H placed in Adam HaRishon a knowledge reflective of divine knowledge; as a result, Adam brought two stones and ground them together creating a flame. In other words, in order to help Adam HaRishon remain strong and resolute in the face of his monumental decline--from the illumination of Shabbos to the darkness of the weekdays--HKB”H

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gave him an understanding akin to divine understanding; he was able to comprehend that the purpose of creation was that he would withstand the two tests posed by the two yetzers.

Therefore, Adam HaRishon cleverly brought “two stones,” alluding to the two types of yetzer horah—the one involved with “tests of poverty” and the one involved with “tests of wealth”; **“ויטחנן”**—and he ground them together—he overcame and invalidated these two yetzer horahs; **“זו בזו”**—and a flame was created. For, when a person successfully grinds these two stones together, standing resolute against these two difficult tests, he merits to behold the immense light that results from their extinction.

We can now explain the Yerushalmi: **“באותו שעה זימן הקב”ה שני רעפין, והקישן זה לזה ויצא מהן האור, הדא הוא דכתיב ולילה אור בעדני, ובירך עליה בורא מאורי האש. שמואל אמר, לפיכך מברכין על האש במוצאי שבתות שהיא תחילת ברייתה”**—at that moment HKB”H presented him with two pieces of slate, he struck them together and created a flame. . . then, he recited the berocheh “borei meorei ha’eish.” Shmuel stated: therefore, we recite this blessing over the fire on motzaei Shabbatos, since that is when it came into existence. In other words, we recite this blessing over the havdalah candle on motzaei Shabbos for the very same reason.

On Shabbos kodesh, when one is prohibited from working, one achieves a very high spiritual level and draws nearer to Hashem. On motzaei Shabbos, however, when the kedushah of Shabbos departs and the darkness of the weekdays enters, one is likely to become discouraged and to lose faith. The decline from the heights of Shabbos to the depths of the weekdays can be devastating.

For this reason, we light a fire on motzaei Shabbos and recite the berocheh “borei meorei ha’eish.” We wish to recall Adam HaRishon’s sublime experience, when HKB”H favored him with knowledge **“מעין דוגמא של מעלה”**—reflective of divine knowledge. He ground two stones together creating a flame in order to teach us that the purpose of creation is that we remain stalwart against the two tests posed by these two stones; thus, we are alerted to remain diligent in our service to Hashem even during the spiritual decline of the weekdays ahead.

Alas, we stand enlightened and gladdened to have gained a greater understanding of our sages’ puzzling statement in the Midrash: **“ואת יהודה שלח לפניו, ילמדנו רבינו אימתי מברכין על הנר”**—“He sent Yehudah before him; may our Rabbi teach us when do we recite the berocheh over the candle on motzaei Shabbos? This is what our Rabbis taught: we do not recite the berocheh over the candle until its light can be appreciated.” Yaakov sent Yehudah to Yosef, to establish a house of study; there they were to instruct all of Yisroel how to withstand the tests of poverty and wealth.

It is for the exact same reason that we recite a berocheh on the light on motzaei Shabbos. We strengthen our resolve as we recall Adam HaRishon’s sublime experience at the conclusion of Shabbos; in order to face the darkness of the week ahead, he ground two stones together and produced light. Thus, we should merit: **“ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר כן תהיה לנו”**—**“For the Jews there was light, gladness, joy and honor. So may it be for us!”**