

VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

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In English



בס"ד

Even Things One Is Destined To Receive From Heaven Cannot Be Obtained Without Tefillah!

» Hashem's Guarantee To Redeem The Nation Was Not Enough

The verse states (Devarim 26:7-8): "We cried out to Hashem, G-d of our fathers, and Hashem heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. And Hashem brought us out from Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with great awe, and with signs and wonders."

The Tiferes Shlomo (Likutim on Parshas Vayeitzei) notes that the verse seems to be saying that Hashem saw the nation's afflictions only after they cried out to him. He asks how it can be said that Hashem did not see our suffering until we prayed to him.

When we look into the verses that speak of the exodus from Egypt (Parshas Shemos), we see that the nation was redeemed miraculously in the merit of their prayers that they said to Hashem during the course of the years of bondage.

This is seen in the verse (2:23-24): "And it was in those many days. And the king of Egypt died. And the children of Israel groaned from the labor. And they cried out. And their outcry from the work went up to G-d. And G-d heard their moaning, and G-d remembered His covenant with Avrohom, Yitzchak, and Yaakov." It further states (3:7): "And Hashem said, 'I have indeed seen the affliction of My people that is in Egypt and I have heard its outcry because of the taskmasters, for I have known of its suffering.'"

From both of these verses we see that Hashem Yisborach responded to the prayers of the Jewish nation in slavery.

The 10 Makkos (Plagues) also came about through prayer. This is stated in the verse (8:26): "And Moshe went out from Pharaoh's presence and he entreated Hashem."

Rashi explains by saying: "And he entreated Hashem" - he strengthened in

prayer...he increased his praying.' We see that Moshe Rabenu increased and strengthened his prayers and the entire success of his mission stemmed from these prayers."

We also see this during the Exodus, as it is stated (14:10): "And Pharaoh drew near. And the children of Israel raised their eyes. And, behold, the Egyptians were travelling after them. And they were greatly afraid. And the children of Israel cried out to Hashem." Rashi explains: They grabbed hold of the occupation of their fathers. (As Avrohom, Yitzchak and Yaakov had all prayed to Hashem in their time of need.)

From all of this, we see that the prayers of the Jewish nation succeeded in reaching Hashem Yisborach, and they continued to pray from the beginning of the bondage until the end.

We see this clearly in the Medrash (Shemos Rabbah 21:4) that states: Know that when the children of Israel left Egypt Pharaoh chased after them, as it states, "And Pharaoh drew near". And it states, "And they cried out to Hashem." Moshe also prayed to Hashem. The Holy One Blessed be He said to Moshe, "Why are you standing and praying? The children of Israel already prayed and I heard their prayers." This is stated in the verse, "Why do you cry out to me?"

This is also stated in the Ramban (2:25). He says that even though the decreed time of the bondage had expired, and Hashem had promised Avrohom Avinu that they would be redeemed, they were redeemed only because they cried out and He mercifully accepted their prayers.

We may wonder why the nation did, in fact, need to pray for their salvation, being that Hashem had promised Avrohom Avinu that he would redeem them in the proper time.

A similar question can be asked about the Gemara (Brachos 3A), that says that Rav Acha bar Bizna said in the name of Rav Shimon

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Chasida that a kinor, harp, hung above the bed of Dovid Hamelech. At the hour of chatzos, midnight, a northern wind came and blew upon the kinor and caused it to play. Immediately, Dovid arose and busied himself in Torah study until morning. In the morning, the wise men of Yisroel came in to him and said, “Our master the king, your people are in need of livelihood.” He answered that they should go out and wage a war. They consulted with Achitofel and spoke to the Sanhedrin and asked the Urim V’Tumim.

Rashi explains that they asked the Urim V’Tumim whether they would succeed and they spoke with the Sanhedrin in order to ask them to daven for them.

We may ask: If they already asked the Urim V’Tumim and were told that they would succeed, why did they need the Sanhedrin’s prayers? They already had a Divine assurance of success! What more did they need?

» **The World Was Created On Condition of Prayer!**

In order to answer this question, we will begin by quoting the words of Chazal and the Rishonim regarding the concept of prayer.

The verse states ((2:5) states: “No shrub of the field was yet in the land and the grasses of the field had not yet grown for Hashem had not yet sent the rain upon the land and there was no man to work the land.”

Rashi writes (based on Chulin 60B) that it says on the third day that the land gave forth the species of grass and of fruit-bearing trees. At that time, the trees and grass were at the tip of the ground, but they didn’t come up above ground until the sixth day since it had yet to rain. Why hadn’t it rained yet? Because there was no man to work the land and no one would appreciate the rain that Hashem Yisborach sent.

When Odom Harishon was created, and recognized that the world was missing something, he prayed for rain and the rains came and caused the trees and grass to grow.

From these words of Chazal, we see that there is a rule in this world that one can only receive good things from Above if he prays for them. This was the way it was on the third day of creation, when the plants could not grow until Odom prayed for them to grow.

The Gemara in Chulin (ibid) further relates that Rav Nachman bar Papa had a garden that grew plants; however, the plants did not grow until he first prayed for rain to fall on them. Rav Nachman said that this is an example of how Hashem desires the prayers of the righteous.

Accordingly, we can understand that even though the nation was assured by the Urim V’Tumim that they would succeed in war, they still needed the prayers of the Sanhedrin – as nothing can be obtained in this world without prayer.

» **Tefillah Was Needed For The Shechinah To Dwell On The Mishkan!**

We find this same concept regarding the building of the Mishkan.

It is stated (Shemos 39:43): “And Moshe blessed them.” Rashi explains that his blessing was: “May it be Hashem’s will that His Shechinah dwells in your handiwork.”

We may ask that the entire purpose of the building of the Mishkan was – as is stated in the Shemos 25:8 – to provide a place for Hashem’s Shechinah to dwell amongst the nation. If so, it is certain that the Divine Presence would dwell there – so why was Moshe Rabenu’s blessing necessary?

The answer is, as we have stated, that nothing good can occur in this world without prayer. For this reason, Moshe Rabenu’s prayer was needed before Hashem’s Shechinah could dwell on the Mishkan.

This also answers the question of Tosfos (Rosh Hashanah 16A): We know that everything that will happen to a person over the course of the year is decreed and sealed on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. If so, why do we pray every day?

The answer is that even though everything is decreed on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we still must pray in order to receive what is destined for us.

This is an incredible concept! It is thus possible that it was decreed for someone to receive riches, health and nachas, yet if he does not pray for it, he will not receive what is meant for him! Yet, if one prays, he will receive all the bountiful goodness decreed to be his.

... Amazingly, we see that the entire world was founded in this way. Everything was at the tip of the ground and would not grow – nothing could sprout in a spiritual or physical way – until Odom came and took everything out of the ground. With what did he take it out? With prayer...

» *Tefillah Is Needed Even For One Who Has Many Merits Of His Own And A Heavenly Decree Of Goodness!*

The Mashgiach of Mir, Hagaon Rav Yeruchim Levovitz zt"l (in his Sefer Da'as Torah, Chelek Biurim) expounds on the concept of tefillah and states that even if one possesses many merits and “deserves” to have his needs fulfilled, he still cannot receive anything until he prays for it. He brings proofs from the fact that even the holy Avos, on their lofty level of holiness, never merited anything without tefillah.

We find, for instance, that Avrohom Avinu was only blessed with children after davening to Hashem (as is seen in Bereishis 15:2 and 11:30). We find by Yitzchok as well that he was only given children after praying greatly (Bereishis 25:21). Rochel and Leah davened to Hashem for children as well (Bereishis 29:13, 30:1 and 30:6). And Yaakov davened to Hashem during his troubles with Esav, Shchem, Yosef and Binyomin. They did not depend on their many great merits. Rather, they all davened to Hashem.

Furthermore, says Rav Yeruchim, Hashem had sworn to the Avos that the Jews would be redeemed from Egypt. Yet the verse says (Shemos 2:24): “And Hashem heard their entreaties.” Without tefillah, they would not have been redeemed. Also, by the stories of the eigel, the Meraglim, and Korach, we find that the Jews were only helped through tefillah.

Rav Yeruchim continues: “Amazingly, we see that the entire world was founded in this way. Everything was at the tip of the ground and would not grow – nothing could sprout in a spiritual or physical way – until Odom came and took everything out of the ground. With what did he take it out? With prayer.

Thus, whatever man possesses in this world is only a start of what he can receive if he prays to Hashem. If he does pray, he will be given all that is truly destined for him. If not, he will receive nothing. For this is the fundamental rule of this world: One receives nothing unless he takes it himself. And how can he take it? Only through prayer.

“This is the intent of the Gemara in Brachos (32B): “Rav Elazar says that prayer is greater than good deeds. No one possessed more good deeds than Moshe Rabenu, yet we find that after Hashem told him not to ask him again to be allowed to enter Eretz Yisroel, he davened to Hashem for forty days until Hashem gave in to him and was allowed to see the entire land... We see from here that prayers can accomplish even what good deeds cannot.”

The holy Ohr Hachaim cites the verse regarding the birth of Yosef Hatzadik (Bereishis 30:22) that Hashem heard Rochel's prayers and remembered her and she

then bore Yosef. He explains that Hashem certainly recalled Rochel's good deed of relaying the signs to Leah. Still and all, her tefillos were missing. After she davened, Hashem listened to her – for one cannot be answered without tefillah.

» *When One Is In Pain, He Screams!*

The Mabit (Sefer Bais Elokim, Shar Hatefilah, Perek 6) quotes the words of Chazal that “one who raises his voice in prayer is like the prophets of the baal.” He asks how this can be said when there are many verses that speak of the Avos, Moshe Rabenu and Klal Yisroel praying with “tze'aka”, which means crying out to Hashem with a loud voice.

He answers: “We can say that the set prayers that we recite each day are not to be shouted in a loud voice. One can have concentration on these prayers when he recites them quietly, and they need not be screamed. However, when one prays at a time of suffering, one cannot pray quietly and serenely. He screams out his prayers to show that he is in pain and knows that his only hope is to cry out to Hashem.

“We find this idea when Moshe Rabenu prayed to Hashem to remove the plague of frogs. Pharaoh told him that if he removed the frogs, he would allow the people to leave Egypt (Shemos 8:5). When Moshe saw that the salvation of the entire nation depended on the removal of the frogs from Egypt, he cried out to Hashem in a loud voice.

So too, when Moshe prayed on behalf of his sister, Miriam, who was stricken with tzara'as, he cried out to Hashem and said (Shemos 12:13), ‘Please Hashem, heal her!’

“So too, whenever Klal Yisroel cried out to Hashem in times of suffering, they called out to Him loudly.

“Ezra also cried out to Hashem loudly when he saw the yeitzer hara of idol worship threatening the nation, and he beseeched Hashem to annul this desire.

“For this reason, every supplication in Tehilim is recited with ‘tze'aka’. One recites Tehilim in a time of distress, and can only express himself at such a time if he cries out loud.

“Therefore, the verse says regarding the four types of people who are obligated to thank Hashem for saving them from a dangerous situation: ‘And they cried out to Hashem in their distress; from their straits He rescued them.’ They cry out in a loud voice at the time of their difficulty, and He answers them. They recognized that everything comes from Hashem and only He can remove someone from a painful situation. He thus saved them from their distress.”