

טיב הקהילה

בס"ד

'יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו הרה"צ ר' גמליאל רבינוביץ שליט"א

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טיב המערכת

ותקל גבירתה בעיניה

Her mistress became lighter in her eyes

The well-known story of the Baal HaTanya tells of a time when he was collecting money for *tzedakah*. Once, he needed a large sum and went with the charity collectors to knock on doors, seeking to give *Am Yisrael* the merit of this important mitzvah. When they arrived at a beautiful mansion, the collectors skipped it, saying that the homeowner was very stingy and didn't give to *tzedakah*. But the Baal HaTanya insisted on going inside.

When the wealthy man heard their purpose, he went to his safe, took out a single worn coin, and handed it to them. The collectors were angry at the insult, but the Baal HaTanya took the coin, thanked the man warmly, blessed him abundantly, and left. Soon after, the wealthy man chased after them, offering another small coin. The Baal HaTanya again thanked him and blessed him. This repeated several times until the wealthy man eventually gave the entire amount needed.

In this week's parsha, we encounter two different approaches to receiving a gift: Avraham Avinu, and his maidservant Hagar. Regarding Hagar, it says (16:4), 'ותרא כי הרתה ותקל גבירתה בעיניה' - 'And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her eyes.' Rashi explains that Hagar said, "This Sarah, she is not what she appears to be, she presents herself as if she were righteous, but she is not, since she wasn't blessed with children for so many years, while I conceived on the first attempt." In contrast, when HaKadosh Baruch Hu informs Avraham that he will have a son from his wife Sarai, he responds (17:18), 'לו ישמעאל יחיה לפניך' - 'If only Yishmael might live before You.' Why does he say this? Rashi explains that Avraham thought, "I am unworthy of such a reward." Even though he was already ninety-nine and had served Hashem with dedication since the age of three, he never felt he was owed anything. But Hagar, as soon as she received any status, immediately thought she was more worthy—even more than Sarah Imeinu—and that she deserved everything.

This is the nature of human relationships. When someone feels entitled to everything, people reject and distance themselves from him. Similarly, with Heaven: if someone feels everything is owed to him, HaKadosh Baruch Hu despises him. But one who humbles himself and feels he deserves nothing, always remembering to thank Hashem for all he has been given—Hashem desires to give him more and more. This is the appropriate way for the descendants of Avraham, who said (18:27), 'ואנכי עפר ואפר' - 'I am but dust and ashes.'

- Tiv HaTorah – Lech Lecha

טיב ההשגחה

'There is no treasure like Torah' - 'אין סגולה כתורה'

Baruch Hashem, I sit and study and try to provide for my household. Despite all my efforts, I live hand-to-mouth and thank Hashem for all His kindness. One day, I received a debt notice from a government office for 13,000 shekels, an amount I had no idea how I'd manage to come up with. Not only did I need to find the money, but my bank account was also frozen, which restricted me even more.

Since I did not see any natural way to earn such a sum to cover the debt through work, I turned to the path taught by Chazal (Avos 3:5): "Whoever accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, the yoke of worldly concerns is removed from him." So I took upon myself an additional time of Torah study as my effort. No more than a day passed after I made this commitment and began my study, when a friend innocently asked if I knew a Jew in need of a significant donation. He explained that he had received an inheritance of 130,000 shekels and was looking to give *maser* to a man who needed that amount. I felt embarrassed and uncomfortable, but I told him, "That's exactly the amount of the debt weighing on me—13,000 shekels! If Heaven arranged that you would meet me and ask me, then perhaps..." He was shocked and said that if I could show him documentation confirming the exact debt amount, he would transfer the entire sum to me. That very day, after *seider*, I brought him the papers, and with great excitement, he happily covered the debt that had fallen upon me.

I saw with my own eyes that what the sages promise—that the yoke of worldly concerns will be lifted—is quite literal!

.י.צ.

אצבע אלוקים היא – It is the finger of Hashem

Before the holidays, I took my wife to choose jewelry from a trustworthy friend who is a jeweler. Ahead of us was a couple, the husband a respected Rosh Yeshiva. As they were selecting a holiday piece for the rebbetzin, the Rosh Yeshiva asked about a diamond ring he had sent for repair. My friend urged him to share it's story:

The Rav had decided to buy an expensive diamond ring for his wife to fulfill the mitzvah of bringing her joy. She was thrilled with the ring, but that same day, a heavy metal door slammed on her fingers. The ring absorbed the impact, sparing her fingers, though a few diamonds shifted out of the setting!!!

"You see, the jewelry was a tool of divine protection!" the Rav concluded. "Now, I don't look at the price—I know this investment is worth more than gold!"

.ב.ש.

כי שמע ה' אל עניך: (טז:יא)

For Hashem has heard your prayer. (16:11)

In Targum Onkelos, the word "עניך" (your suffering) is translated as "צלותיך" (your prayer), which initially seems puzzling. Normally, "suffering" and "prayer" are two distinct ideas; suffering can lead to prayer, but it is not inherently prayer itself.

However, we could say that Hashem's purpose in bringing hardship upon a person is to awaken their faith and hope in Him, prompting them to pray. Since the ultimate goal of the suffering is to inspire prayer, we can consider the suffering as inherently linked to prayer. Thus, the word "עניך" can be interpreted as referring to prayer.

The *posuk* itself supports this, saying, 'כי שמע ה' אל עניך' - 'For Hashem has heard your suffering.' It is curious that it says "heard" rather than "ראה" - 'seen' regarding suffering, implying that the suffering's purpose is to lead to something heard—namely, prayer.

This also answers a well-known question about the view of some *poskim* that it is a mitzvah to pray in times of distress (see the Ramban on the Rambam in *Sefer HaMitzvos* and in Be'er Heitev, Orach Chaim 106:1). It might seem that praying in such moments contradicts acceptance of the Creator's decree, as if one does not trust in Hashem's decisions for the person's own good. So why is it considered a mitzvah? According to our explanation, HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not desire for a person to remain in distress. The purpose of hardship is solely to bring a person to prayer, affirming that all depends on the decree of the Supreme King. Therefore, prayer is not contrary to Hashem's will; rather, it fulfills His will by bringing about the desired outcome—that the suffering be lifted through prayer.

It is possible that the Targum interprets this way specifically regarding Hagar the Egyptian to show that this principle applies not only to the righteous, for whom Chazal have already taught that 'HaKadosh Baruch Hu desires the prayers of the righteous' (*Yevamos* 64a), but also to those who are less righteous. While HaKadosh Baruch Hu especially longs for the prayers of the righteous, as stated, He also has compassion for others and seeks to instill in them the belief that He controls everything, that all depends on His will. Therefore, He orchestrates situations that lead them to distress, prompting them to pray. When they are saved by His decree, they realize their prayers had an effect, and that it was only because of the Creator's will that they emerged from trouble to relief.

Do not be surprised, however, when you see people remain in hardship for prolonged periods, even after fervent prayer, with their salvation delayed. If the purpose of suffering is to draw a person to his Creator, should they not see salvation sooner? We must remember that HaKadosh Baruch Hu, examines the heart and mind, knows whether a person's prayer truly comes from genuine, clear faith or not. Sometimes, even when a person prays, it is not with full conviction that everything depends on the Creator's decree, and their hope in HaKadosh Baruch Hu is incomplete; their prayer may feel as if "it can't hurt" but lacks the depth of faith... With such a prayer, HaKadosh Baruch Hu's intended goal has not been achieved. G-d knows that, even if granted salvation, the person might later doubt the power of prayer and mistakenly think that their salvation might have come regardless.

Therefore, Heaven delays his salvation, allowing him to exhaust all other efforts. When he sees that these efforts are ineffective and understands that only Hashem Yisbarach can save him, the deep-rooted faith within him will be stirred, placing his hope solely in Hashem Yisbarach. His prayer will then come from the heart, and then, indeed, he will be worthy of deliverance.

As expressed by the holy Rav of Ruzhin, on the *posuk* (Tehillim 13:2-3), 'עד אנה ה' תשכחני נצח, עד אנה תסתיר את פניך ממני', 'How long, Hashem, will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long must I lay up counsel within my soul?' This *posuk* contains a hint for a person who awaits salvation, which seems delayed. When he laments and asks his Creator, 'How long, Hashem, will You forget me?' because his situation appears as if he has been 'forgotten forever' and 'How long will You hide Your face from me?' – he should respond to himself that this will last 'as long as I lay up counsel within my soul.' In other words, it will continue as long as he relies on natural means and solutions, which is proof that he has not placed his full hope in Hashem.

But once he understands that there is no true substance to all his efforts and schemes, that salvation depends only on the Creator's will, and that a person's only recourse is to place his hope in Hashem, then, when his prayer arises from clear and complete faith, he will indeed attain his request.

This may be the intention behind the teaching in the Midrash (*Devarim Rabbah*, Va'eschanan 2): 'Rebbe Chiya the Great said, it is written (Tehillim 27:14), "קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה' - 'Hope to Hashem, be strong and let your heart take courage, and hope to Hashem.' Pray and pray again, and there will come a time when you will be granted.' The truth is that prayer indeed has the power to be answered immediately. Therefore, as soon as a hardship arises for a person, he is told, "Hope to Hashem!" If, after praying, one sees he has still not been answered, it is a sign that his hope in Hashem is not yet complete. Thus, the advice is to strengthen one's faith, and then to try praying again. Hence, the *posuk* says, 'Be strong and take courage'—fortify yourself in faith, and afterward, 'hope to Hashem' once more. Perhaps now, with strengthened faith, he has merited clear faith. Then, when he is directed to pray again, the instruction is, 'Pray and pray again'—for if even this prayer does not leave an impression, he should strengthen himself and pray yet again.

For the very act of prayer is an expression of faith; without faith, one would not pray. When one prays repeatedly, he is, in effect, reinforcing his faith. This repetition of faith is a means to cultivate clear and deep-rooted belief, as the holy Rav Moshe of Kobrin taught to interpret the *posuk* (Tehillim 116:10), 'האמנתי כי אדבר' - 'I believed because I spoke'—I merited faith in Hashem Yisbarach because I spoke and repeated words of faith to myself. The repetition of faith instills it within a person's soul.

Therefore, our Chazal promise, "there will come a time when you will be granted," for ultimately, you will indeed attain clear faith. Then your prayer will rise before the One who dwells on high, and you will be remembered with salvation and mercy.