

Keep Davening

וַאֲתוֹזַזְנָן אֶל ה' (דברים ג, כג)

I pleaded to Hashem. (Devarim 3:23)

Moshe Rabbeinu stood and prayed to be let into *Eretz Yisrael*, and *Chazal* say he in fact prayed 515 *tefilos*, which is the *gematriya* of ואתחנן, "I pleaded."

What does this teach us? That when a person needs a certain thing, such as healing for a sick person, or help with financial troubles, and he sees that he is not being answered by Heaven, he should *daven* more and more prayers and keep on asking for the thing he needs, to the point that he doesn't give *Hashem* rest, so to speak, and He must grant his wish.

This is what *Moshe Rabbeinu* did. He offered all sorts of different pleas and arguments, over and over again, that he should be allowed to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.

It says also about Yitzchak that he was ויעתר, he implored *Hashem*, and Rashi explains that he offered many prayers and kept on begging. Channah, too, prayed and prayed until her request was granted, and *Chazal* learn from her story that anyone who prays again and again will be answered.

And it is written:

כִּי תִרְבּוּ תַפְלָה אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ — Even if you pray again and again, I will not hear.

From this one exception, *Chazal* learn the rule that anyone who prays again and again will be answered by Heaven. This is what all holy people have done when they wanted to receive something. They prayed again and again until *Hashem* did their will.

It may be compared to a beloved son. If he keeps on asking and begging his father without stop, there is nothing he can't get. His father will even give him the coat off his back.

This is how *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* treats us. If we just keep on asking and begging and *davening* without stop, even if we don't really deserve that our prayers should be answered, *Hashem* will grant our wishes nonetheless, as long as it is not harmful to us.

However, together with praying over and over, we need to keep firmly in mind:

Whoever speaks too much brings sin.

It is not a good idea to be too stubborn about getting a certain thing, such as wealth and the like, or even extraordinary wisdom, because we are very far from knowing what is truly good for us. I am sure that many of us could think

of things we asked for, and later on, we realized how fortunate we were that we never received them.

So what should one do? Always ask in a general way. Word the request to ask for that which is in accordance with *Hashem's* Will. For instance, if a person needs *parnassah*, he should ask *Hashem* to send him the *parnassah* that *Hashem* knows is good for him.

Also, we should ask *Hashem* not to allow sins and *kitrugim* to hold Him back from bestowing goodness. And the best thing is to include one's prayer with the prayers of the Jewish people as a whole, and to recite many *Tehillim* or other prayers written by *Chazal*. Then the prayers will ascend to Heaven and find favor in *Hashem's* eyes and bring down blessing in every matter that we pray for.

Chazal say that if Moshe had continued to pray even just one more prayer, he would have been answered, and allowed into *Eretz Yisrael*. This teaches us that a person should not give up. He should pray another prayer and another supplication and another set of *Tehillim*, and this will cause *Hashem* to answer his prayers and grant his requests.

A Time to Be Doubly Comforted

נְזַחְמוּ נְזַחְמוּ עַמִּי יֵאמֹר אֲכַלְקִיכֶם: (ישעיהו ב', א)

“Be comforted, be comforted, My people,” Your G-d will say. (Yeshayahu 40:1)

These are the opening words of the first of the seven *haftaros* of *nechamah*: “Be comforted.” But the *Midrash* notes that the message is actually stated twice: נְחַמוּ נְחַמוּ.

The doubling of the message is itself a very important message.

The *Midrash* states that it is because the Jewish people sinned twice, as it says חָטָא חָטָא יְרוּשָׁלַם, and was punished twice, as it says כִּי לָקְחָהּ מִיַּד ה', so is also consoled twice, as it says, נְחַמוּ נְחַמוּ עַמִּי.

This may be compared to two people who were traveling away from one another, one to the east and the other to the west. Whatever distance one of them goes, he is thus twice that distance from the other.

This is the meaning of “they sinned twice.” *Chazal* say, “If you leave Me for one day, I will leave you for two days.” Every day that a person distances himself from the Torah, the Torah, distances itself from him correspondingly, so the person and the Torah are now two days apart.

This is an important principle in *avodas Hashem*. When a person does an *aveirah*, the damage that results is not just that of the act itself. It also causes the person to be distanced from *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And when a person is far from *Hashem*, thus lacking *siyata d'Shamaya*, he experiences double *nisyonos* and double downfalls. He is in a disgraceful spiritual state. This

damage is no less than that of the sin itself. Thus, damage caused by sin is actually double.

And so it is with the double punishment that the Jewish people underwent. When a person receives punishment, he suffers double the punishment itself. For instance, let's say a person is sick and bedridden. Besides the suffering of the sickness itself, he also couldn't go to work all those days, and lost a lot of money. Sometimes a person can lose thousands and thousands because of a relatively minor sickness or disturbance.

Where does all this come from? The sickness was merely a manifestation of *Hashem* hiding His face from the person. Therefore, besides the punishment itself, lots of other troubles come along with it.

And so it is regarding *nechamah* as well. When a person does *teshuvah* with all his heart, and *Hashem* turns to him with love and affection, besides the person being comforted by the troubles going away, he also receives *siyata d'Shmaya* in other and greater matters. He becomes close to *Hashem* and beloved to Him. *Hashem* graciously accepts his *mitzvos* and answers his *tefilos* immediately. He is connected to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

When a person wants to change his ways and do *teshuvah* and reconnect to Torah, he might take a look at his abilities and at what he wants to accomplish, and conclude that it doesn't add up. He is not capable of it; he doesn't have what it takes.

But it is not really so. Because as soon as he starts to draw closer to *Hashem*, he receives double *siyata d'Shmaya*. Now his capabilities are redoubled. Because whether we are dealing with *aveiros* or with *mitzvos*, the true dimensions are double of what they appear.

An In-Between Time

וְכֹל בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי ה' וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ: (ישעיהו נד, יג)

All your sons learn of *Hashem*, and great is the peace of your sons. (*Yeshayahu* 44:13)

This is the period of time known as *bein hazemanim*. It is when *yeshivos* are on vacation, before the beginning of *Elul zeman*. The *pasuk* of וְכֹל בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי ה' וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ is very appropriate to this time of year. When the children are on vacation from school and *yeshivah*, they are exposed for many hours of the day to various dangers. Some are physical dangers, because the children tend to be outside, and traffic accidents pose a risk, as well as other various physical dangers. There are also spiritual dangers. The children can pick up bad influences from the surroundings.

Whatever sort of danger it is, one thing is for sure: playing outside and traveling around is not the same as being in *yeshivah*.

What will protect us and our children at this time?

We know that the greatest *shemirah* a person can attain is by learning Torah. *Chazal* say that if a person is on the road alone, without a travel companion, he should engage in Torah study, because Torah is called a “companion.”

Chazal also say about *David Hamelech* that he was meant to pass away on *Shabbos*, but on *Shabbos* he would sit and learn all day, so the *Malach Hamaves* could not take him, until the *Malach Hamaves* made a noise that disturbed *David Hamelech* from learning, and then he was able to take him.

This is why it says, “All your sons learn of *Hashem*, and great is the peace of your sons.” When we learn, we have great peace and protection. When our children learn, angels protect them from physical and spiritual harm.

We recite every day in *Shema* the verse of **וְלִימַדְתֶּם אוֹתָם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם** from which we learn that a person has an obligation to teach his sons Torah himself. We generally fulfill this great and important obligation by means of a *shaliach*, i.e., the *rebbe* in *yeshivah*, and when a *shaliach* does something for us, it is considered as if we did it ourselves.

But sometimes the *rebbe* is on vacation. Then what? If the *shaliach* can't fulfill our obligation for us, we need to do it ourselves, or find someone else who can.

We just finished three weeks of great mourning for *Beis Hamikdash*, and *davened* that it be rebuilt. If we could actually build the *Beis Hamikdash*, we would put everything else aside and devote our energies and resources to it.

Now, there is something even more important than building *Beis Hamikdash*. *Chazal* say expressly that we may not take the children out of *yeshivah* even to build *Beis Hamikdash*. Let's say we needed the children's help to build it. We would have to delay building *Beis Hamikdash* so as not to take them away from their learning in *yeshivah*.

Yet, we see that many children wander around aimlessly during *bein hazemanim*. They are idle. They are doing neither Torah nor *mitzvos*. It is therefore the obligation of every parent to make sure that the children devote a significant amount of time to Torah learning during vacation. This will bring great peace and great protection, and guard our children from all physical and spiritual harm.