

*The screams of pain emitting from the two rooms opposite each other frightened the hospital supervisor. “What’s going on?” he asked the nurse as he entered the first room. “It’s a stillborn,” whispered the nurse. The sadness and distress on the patient and her husband’s faces haunted him as he went to the room across the hall where the equally loud screams were emerging from. Entering the room, he was shocked at the quiet happiness he witnessed on the patient’s face in-between her screams in stark contrast to the sadness he had just witnessed. “What’s going on?” he asked the nurse. Smiling she answered, “Her first born is minutes away!”*

The Rambam (*beginning of Hilchos Teshuva*) tells us: “...For when a trouble comes and they yell out about it and sound [trumpets], everyone will know that it was because of their evil deeds that this bad was done to them. ...And this is what will cause them to remove the trouble from upon them. Those who do not cry out ... but rather say, ‘What has happened to us is the way of the world, and this trouble is merely happenstance’ – it is surely the way of cruelty, and it causes them to stick to their bad deeds. And the trouble will add other troubles.”

In addition to causing us to do *teshuva*, thereby removing the affliction entirely, our realization that our affliction is from Hashem and for our own benefit makes it much easier to deal with. Just as a woman giving birth is happy in contrast to one who suffers equal pain for no benefit.

This point is brought out in the words of Yeshayah HaNavi (**Yeshayah 16:17** with the Radak’s commentary):

**Hashem! In their distress**, during the exile, **they sought You** alone and no one else; when **Your chastisement** was meted out to them they would pour out their hearts to You in **anguished whispered prayer**, knowing that their troubles in exile were Your chastisement not mere happenstance, rather, You chastised them over their sins and they would confess their sins. This was their habit throughout their exile. As much as You would hit them and pain them they would always return to You and love You just as a woman approaching childbirth, when her pains increase, **writhing and screaming in her pangs**, yet though she knows her husband caused her pain she does not hate him, rather at the time of her severest pain she loves him, **so were we before You, Hashem**. For when You hit us and pain us, we love You even more and we return to You with our whole heart.

