

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמות גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

A Perspective On Suffering

In this week's Parsha, Yaakov explained to Yosef why he did not bury Rochel in the Mearas Hamachpela. The Medrash states that Yaakov explained, "I did this based on Hashem's instructions. Hashem saw that in the future the Beis Hamikdash would be destroyed, and His children would go into Galus. Klal Yisrael will approach the Avos and ask them to Daven for their salvation, and their Tefillos will not help. As they continue to walk they will encounter the burial plot of Rochel. Klal Yisrael will grab onto it and beg her to ask Hashem for mercy. Rochel will then go and ask Hashem for compassion. She will say, 'Creator of the universe, listen to my crying, and have mercy on Your children or give me the reward for my pain that I suffered (by not telling Yaakov that he was really marrying Leah).' Hashem listened to her Tefillos immediately."

An amazing insight into suffering can be gleaned from the above Medrash. The Avos and Rochel both begged Hashem for mercy. Each one of them were righteous individuals who had many Zechusim. Each one of them cried out to Hashem. Yet Rochel's Tefillos were answered, while the Tefillos of the Avos were not. What added ingredient did Rochel's Tefillos possess? The Medrash indicates that she asked Hashem for a reward for her suffering, and she was answered. We see from here that suffering can entitle a person to his Tefillos being answered, beyond Zechus Avos and heartfelt crying. A person can come to Hashem and say, "Please fulfill my request as a reward for my suffering."

We find a similar idea, that suffering brings about Hashem's Chesed, echoed by the commentary of the Tosfos Rid on the Haggadah. In his commentary, he addresses the question of why the Haggadah mentions our blemished past as being descendants of idol worshippers. He explains that, in truth, we can ask: Why are we praising Hashem for taking us out of the suffering of Egypt? And why are we thanking Hashem for granting us freedom? If He

wouldn't have put us in Egypt in the first place, He wouldn't have had to free us. It is this question that the Haggadah is answering by mentioning our blemished past. The Tosfos Rid explains that the Haggadah is saying that Hashem wanted to give us Shabbos, the Torah and the Beis Hamikdash. However, even with all of His mercy and compassion, our past of descending from idol worshippers left a genetic imperfection that made us undeserving of these gifts. Therefore, Hashem had to subject us to the suffering of Egypt, so that He would be able to have compassion on us, and bestow upon us the greatest gifts ever given to mankind.

Unfortunately, we hear about tragedies quite often. The above Chazal can help us not feel broken and crushed by the pain. Knowing that suffering is part of Hashem's master plan, and it can grant us Chesed that was previously unattainable, can help us cope with suffering. In addition, we see that one of the most powerful ways to approach Hashem in our Tefillos, is to ask Hashem to answer us as a reward for our suffering.

Seeing The Yad Hashem

In this week's Parsha the Torah tells us that when Yosef walked into the room, Yaakov "Strengthened himself, and sat up on the bed." "Pesikta Rabasi asks, why did Yaakov do this? Rebbi Yehoshua Ben Levi answers, Yaakov said, Hashem made Yosef a ruler, and I am not going to give him Kavod! Therefore he strengthened himself and sat up in order to give honor to the Malchus."

Generally, when we think of the Kavod that we have to accord to a king, we think in terms of the individual deserving Kavod because of his position. However, we see from here that the reason we are obligated to give Kavod to a king is because Hashem put him in this position. This perspective can help us see the Yad Hashem in many similar situations, and develop a deeper connection with Him.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

Yosef ordered his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father Yisroel; he presented himself to him and, embracing him around the neck, he wept on his neck a good while. (Bereshis 46:29) Yaakov, however, did not fall upon Yosef's neck nor did he kiss him. Our Sages say: The reason was that he was reciting the Shema. (Rashi)

The Mefarshim ask: Why did Yaakov see fit to recite the Shema specifically at this momentous occasion?

Perhaps we may suggest the following: One of the greatest ways to reinforce one's love of Hashem is by focusing on the depths of love one feels to those closest to him and then redirecting that love towards Hashem by realizing that infinitely greater than the love he feels for anyone at any given time is the love Hashem feels for him constantly, from before he was born until the present, as well as the love he himself feels for Hashem in the deepest recesses of his heart.

Perhaps as Yaakov felt this boundless love for his dearest son over whom he had mourned the past seventeen years he felt it was the most appropriate time to refocus his love upon an infinitely greater one – that which lies in the heart of every Jew and is a mere reflection of the love constantly overflowing from our Father above!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE **Emunah Highlights**

A Westwood Realty Initiative

“When I was learning in Yeshiva, I was soaked in Ruchniyus from morning to night, now that I must work for a living how do I keep my day from remaining just mundane?”

In this week's parsha, Yaakov Avinu says: “For Your salvation I waited Hashem!” Yaakov Avinu's stating this specifically right before his parting from this world fits well with what the Gemara teaches us (*Shabbos 31a*): “After departing from this world, when a person is brought to judgment they ask him: Did you conduct business faithfully? Did you designate times for Torah study? Did you engage in procreation? Did you await salvation?”

The Peleh Yoetz (section on Tzipuy) comments on the above Gemara, “Not for the ultimate redemption alone must one await, rather, for any sort of worry that may come, one must await, the salvation of Hashem is like the blinking of an eye.

The Beis HaLevi similarly explains the Gemara as follows, “‘Did you await salvation?’ - And not give up on it, and did you strengthen your bitachon in every detail of everything that happened to you?”

Even when one is working from morning to night, the greatest of spiritual attainments is available to you in every detail of everything that happens to you. As the Vilna Gaon writes, “The main reason Hashem gave the Torah to Klal Yisroel is in order for us to trust in Hashem.”