

Trust Only Hashem

An element of bitachon is that one should not place his trust in man whatsoever. It is known in truth that flesh and blood cannot benefit or save a person unless Hashem so decrees...When misfortune approaches, if one realizes that it is from Hashem he will be able to understand that his salvation or harm isn't in the hands of the person who seeks to harm him, and he will not be frightened. For the pasuk states: "like channeled water is the heart of the king in the lord's hand; he directs it to whatever he wishes." Similarly, the pasuk states regarding Sancheirev: "Shall the axe boast over the one who hews with it?" The navi analogizes man to an axe – for just as an axe does nothing by itself rather only through its wielder, so to man, anything he does or desires to benefit or harm another it is not from him, rather it is from Hashem.

(Rabbeinu Yonah, Kad HaKemach, Avel)

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Isn't it elementary that if...it is from Hashem...his salvation or harm isn't in the hands of the person who seeks to harm him? If so, why does Rabbeinu Yona imply that there may be another (although it would be incorrect) way to perceive one's misfortune?

Perhaps a person may feel that the fact that someone powerful is persecuting him, although it is from Hashem, means that Hashem has obviously decided to punish him and he will therefore be frightened despite his belief in Hashem. To dispel this notion Rabeinu Yona says: "Just as an axe does nothing – at any point in time – by itself rather only through its wielder, so too man, anything he does or – even – desires to benefit or harm another it is not from him rather it is from Hashem! From when misfortune approaches until it passes and every second in between, it is not from man rather it is from Hashem!