

# Life's Difficulties: A Source of Strength



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# *Letter to a Friend*

Dear Friend,

Needless to say, I was very saddened and disturbed by the problems that you shared with me. They certainly are enough to upset anyone, and together not only pose formidable difficulties, but also cause great pain.

As we have referred to in previous letters (“Coping with Stress in Business” and “Nothing Besides Hashem”), we know that everything is from Hashem and everything that Hashem does is for the good. We also know that the problems and challenges of life are all part of a process spurring us on to greater Bitachon. This Bitachon can then turn situations around dramatically, and in the merit of our enhanced Bitachon and deepened relationship with Hashem, we can merit even greater kindness and assistance from Him.

Maybe a few words about suffering are in order. After that we can suggest to Hashem that we have benefited from the difficulties and now we turn our Bitachon to Him to get us out of these problems.

The challenges of pain and suffering fall into two broad categories: The irrevocable finality of tragedy, and the pain and suffering of a work in progress. The ability to see Hashem’s goodness and kindness in the former enhances our capacity to rely on Him in the latter. The more deeply and thoroughly we recognize His love in the most tragic of situations, the greater our awareness of His loving kindness, which helps us to rely on Him that He will extricate us from life’s most difficult challenges. Please

refer to the readings enclosed for some insights into this positive attitude towards tragedy.

About two days after we spoke, a young man, a teenager, approached me with a question. For about a week before a snowboarding trip, he prayed to Hashem that he should not get hurt. However, he did get into a painful accident. “How does Hashem expect me to continue Davening to Him, if He does not show me some response?” he questioned.

We know that Hashem is the *Shomay’ah Tefillah*, the One who hears and answers our prayers. We know that *Tefillah Oseh Mechtzah*, prayer always accomplishes at least a partial result. Yet, when we pray with a specific request, and we should do so, and we do not see any apparent response, it can be discouraging. Especially when one Davens over and over again and there is still no visible results, it can become more and more difficult to continue. When these feelings are compounded by a sense that one really trusted that Hashem was going to help him, and still he is left disappointed, it becomes a serious challenge to his faith to be able to continue praying and trusting.

Yet, this challenge seems to be an integral ingredient to the Tefillah/Bitachon human development system. The perseverance in prayer and trust, despite the apparent lack of results, spurs one onto even higher and higher levels of closeness to Hashem, bringing the relationship to new heights and deeper feelings of hope and reliance.

This lesson is even relevant after the fact, as in the case of the young man’s accident. Bitachon and Tefillah are part of an infinite continuum. The more we do and grow in them, the more assured the results, since their purpose in the first place was to bring us closer to Hashem.

Our Rabbis in the Medrash express this concept in the following comments: “Why were our matriarchs, Sara, Rivka, Rochel, and even for a while, Leah, not able to bear children? Because Hashem craves the prayers of the righteous.” It certainly does not mean that Hashem uses their prayers for His need. It can only be for the benefit that the prayer affords those who Daven. It seems that Tefillah performed again and again has a profoundly beneficial impact on the one who prays. It brings the person ever closer to Hashem.

A question arises: Why didn’t Hashem set it up that, for example, Sara could pray until she was 60, have a child, and then spend the next 30 years thanking Hashem for answering her prayers after so many years of being childless, instead of praying until she reached 90 years of age and then having a child? It seems that Tefillah in need brings us closer to Hashem than Hallel, thanks for granting our requests. When we are in need, we keep at it again and again, until we see some results. With Hallel, first we are very thankful, and then as time goes on we tend to forget the kindness that was given us. It therefore cannot enhance our relationship with Hashem, as much as does prayer in need.

We know that the Tefillah that is most irresistible to Hashem, so to speak, is the Tefillah born of an intimately close relationship with Him. Therefore the Tefillah that must be repeated over and over again to bring us closer to Him is also more powerful and effective. Therefore, it may well be that the continued repeated Tefillos are not only necessary to bring us closer to Him, but the enhanced quality of the latter Tefillos may be the merit needed to achieve our difficult goals.

A similar dynamic applies to the system of Bitachon, placing our total and complete trust in Hashem that He will come through for us and not disappoint those who rely solely on Him. Sometimes, we really feel trust in only Him and confidence that He will not let us down, and yet, nothing seems to be happening. One of many such situations comes to mind. I remember an occasion when I needed \$30,000 for a payroll with absolutely not more than a day deadline. I recall not being concerned the first day, because I felt an unusual surge of Bitachon and confidence that Hashem was not going to let me down. By the next day, nothing had happened. I was perplexed. I never felt such strong, real Bitachon, and yet, nothing happened. I finally had no choice but to try to borrow the money. The individual I called on had only \$10,000 to lend for one week. When I explained to him my confusion as to why my Bitachon was being disappointed, a realization hit me. It went like this: If I did not really have true Bitachon, rather, I was fooling myself in thinking that I did, then the question of why there was no response falls away. I really don't have true trust and confidence in Him. If, however, my Bitachon is, in fact, more real than ever before, then I bet that Hashem is giving me an even harder test to force me to an even higher level of Bitachon.

With this inspiration, I reviewed every insight and concept about Bitachon that came to mind for seven minutes, to strengthen even farther my level of Bitachon. I then entered my office. In walked a young man who was dealing with some merchandise that we inherited. He informed me that he just concluded a deal with a company in another city to purchase \$30,000 worth of our merchandise. They would Fedex a bank check for \$20,000 to arrive early the next morning, and would pay the remaining \$10,000 as soon as they received the merchandise. This is unheard of in normal business

dealings. I borrowed the \$10,000 for one week, and they paid the rest in time.

In short, if we recognize Hashem's loving kindness even in irrevocable tragedy, we can come to rely on that loving kindness in the face of crises and challenges. This can allow us to continue to grow in sincerity of Tefillah and true Bitachon.

The elevated levels of Tefillah and Bitachon can undoubtedly serve as a powerful merit, to be able to witness the positive answers to our Tefillos and the reward for our Bitachon, in the complete fulfillment of our hearts' desires.

With best wishes for continued heartfelt Tefillah, and complete trust in Hashem leading to the fulfillment of all our hearts' desires.

Sincerely,

Your Friend

Would you like to have a powerful device that you can use to help you really enjoy life, be more successful financially and socially, and help you develop your *Yiras Shomayim*.

## Trust Hashem

Seven qualities that Hashem has that ensures our trust in Him:

1. Hashem loves you.
2. Hashem is with you wherever you happen to be, and He is ready to help you.
3. Hashem is stronger and smarter than everyone in the world (and can find solutions to problems that seem impossible to solve).
4. Hashem knows what is best for you, even better than you know yourself.
5. Just as Hashem has helped you many times in the past, He will help you again now.
6. Nobody can do anything to help or harm you, other than Hashem, who has total control over everything.
7. Hashem wants and seeks to do Chessed, more than the most wonderful, kindhearted and generous person you can imagine.

If you could picture a person with these seven qualities, you would feel quite secure being with him, and all your worries and concerns would melt away. In reality, the greatest person cannot be perfect in even one of these qualities, but Hashem is perfect in all of them.

## ***Ein Od Milvado!***

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# *Tragedy – A Source of Strength*

We are a nation experienced in tragedy. Our people have suffered the severest pain and persecution on both the personal and communal level, yet miraculously, our people have endured, persevered and even flourished, despite these brutal conditions. Should not the reaction of a constantly suffering people have been one of demoralization, of rejection, of shattered faith? The answer to this question captures the very essence of Klal Yisroel with its unique understanding of the meaning and purpose of life and its special relationship with the Almighty.

King Solomon in the Song of Songs (Chapter 5) describes the saga of the rejected lover seeking to reunite with his beloved. “Open the door, my beloved.” He pleads to be allowed entrance but is rejected. “I have removed my garment, must I get up and get dressed? I have washed my feet, must I get up and dirty them?” Despite the most ardent pleas, the woman remains cold, aloof and unmoved. Yet, suddenly, she observes his hand through a crack in the door and immediately her emotions stir. She rises from her bed and hastens to let him in.

We know that the entire Song of Songs is analogous to the relationship between Klal Yisroel and the Almighty. The Ramban interprets the previous episode in the following manner:

The prophets come to Klal Yisroel and plead with them to repent their evil ways. Despite all their exhortations, the people turn a deaf ear and show no response. However, when Hashem causes Klal Yisroel to

suffer, there is a definite reaction and a return to righteous ways. It would seem at first glance that the analogy in Song of Songs is a bit strained. How can the appearance of the man's hand through a crack in the door be compared to an act of punishment meted out by G-d to His children?

If we analyze the following sentence of the Psalms of King David, the analogy becomes clear. "Your staff and your cane, they will comfort me." A stray lamb, separated from its flock, alone and bewildered, suddenly feels the stinging staff of its master upon its back. At that very moment, despite the piercing pain, the lamb feels the greatest comfort. My master is here! I am not alone! Despite the pain and suffering inflicted upon us by Hashem, it is that very same pain that strengthens our knowledge of His presence. We recognize His need to reprimand us for our wrongdoings, and, therefore, we realize that the punishment is a revelation of His existence and manifestation of His concern. It is for this reason that we respond. Not out of fear, but rather, out of love.

This approach is what has sustained us through centuries of bloodshed and torture. However, it still remains to be explained how we, as a people, have been able to reach this astounding level of perception. How, as a nation, have we been able to see through the clouds of agonizing pain and focus on the reality of our suffering?

Man lives in an imaginary world. He believes that the pleasures in which he indulges himself will last forever. The pursuit of gratification is his overwhelming concern, leaving little or no room for an honest examination of the reality of his existence. The truth is, of course, that life is just a fleeting moment in eternity and even that short period of existence is filled with difficulty and pain. The reality is that the soul is immortal, that a future does exist,

that this life is no more than a corridor to the World to Come. It is man's lack of control, his inability to curb and harness his passions, that distorts his grasp of reality and leads him to a life of false fulfillment and mistaken values.

The people of Israel are different. As the nation that embraced the Torah, as those who adhere to its precepts and ideals, we do not live under the haze of illusion. The Torah outlines for us a life, which calls for the subjugation of desires. With the Torah we avoid being enslaved by our passions, and, therefore, we can free our minds to objectively pursue a life of significance and meaning. The Torah is the heartbeat and soul of our people. Its message as to the purpose of life is aflame within us. It is for this reason that when tragedy strikes we are not defeated. The pain and suffering help us focus on the reality of life and intensify the fires of faith with a reevaluation of our actions and a reassessment of our life's purpose, followed by a renewed commitment to the Torah and Mitzvos.

Our Rabbis tell us (Smachos, Chapter 8) that Rabbi Akiva lost his beloved son, Rabbi Shimon. When Rabbi Akiva rose to deliver the eulogy and beheld the great assembly of people, he was overwhelmed with emotion and proclaimed, "Do not think it is easy to bury a child. But now that I see so many people gathered to perform "honoring the deceased" because of my son, I am assured that he is guaranteed a place in the World to Come, and I have been consoled." The Talmud related that this same Rabbi Akiva was once traveling and stopped to spend a night at an inn. He was told that there was no room for him at the inn. At that moment, he proclaimed, "All that the All-Merciful does is for the best," and proceeded to sleep out in the field. While in the field he lit a candle, but a wind came and blew it out. Again he repeated, "All that the All-Merciful does is for the best." Rabbi Akiva again

repeated the same phrase when his rooster was killed, and again, when the same happened to his donkey. The next day, Rabbi Akiva discovered that the inn was attacked by thieves and all the lodgers were killed. Had he spent the night at the inn, he certainly would have been killed. Had his candle been lit, had his rooster crowed, had his donkey brayed, he would have been discovered. Had nothing happened to the inhabitants of the inn, Rabbi Akiva still would not have registered any complaint. That Hashem does everything for the best was expressed with complete sincere will before he knew how his misfortunes were really preserving and protecting him.

Yet this same Rabbi Akiva did not find comfort for the loss of his child with, “All that the All-Merciful does is for the best.” To intellectually accept and adjust to such a loss is feasible. To find emotional comfort seems an impossible task. This is what Rabbi Akiva meant when he said, “Do not think it is easy to bury a child.”

Did Rabbi Akiva have to inform us of the difficulty of burying one’s own child? Rabbi Akiva knew that, logically, no one could comprehend his consolation other than with the assumption that his loss was not that profound. Rabbi Akiva explained that his loss was extremely profound, but the knowledge that his son was guaranteed a place in the World to Come, and the deep understanding that this was all that mattered, gave him solace and comfort.

Rabbi Akiva did not have a distorted picture of the meaning of life. His comprehension that our life in this world is temporary and transient was complete. When he was assured that his son was guaranteed a place in the World to Come, he knew that there had been no end. The

momentary pain can only be soothed by the knowledge that eternal pleasure has been guaranteed.

## *“If Only We Could See”*

*By Baruch Cohen, in memory of Hinda Cohen*

Parshas Re'ay gives us a very clear glimpse of the attitude the Torah enjoins us to have towards death: You are sons of Hashem, your G-d, do not gouge yourselves over a death [14:1]. The custom of the gentiles was to scratch and cut themselves in order to show and vent their agony over the death of a dear one. We are prohibited from acting in such a fashion. Why? Because we are the sons of Hashem.

What is the connection between being the sons of Hashem and the prohibition of gouging ourselves over the death of someone we loved?

Of the different explanations of the many commentators, the Ohr HaChaim and the Chizkuni are the most poignant.

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the Torah is teaching us that death is a loss to those that remain alive – not to the one that died. It can be compared to a person who sent his son to a faraway land in order to start a business there. After many years, the father summoned the son to return home and the son acceded to his wishes.

The son is not lost. Those who had grown to love him are no longer able to see him and to build the relationship further, but the son is not lost. On the contrary, the son is returning home to his father. The thought of those friends going ahead and gouging themselves over the agony of the son's departure is

preposterous. Sadness and a melancholy feeling of detachment are in order. Gouging is definitely out!

"You are the sons of Hashem your G-d." At 'death,' the person is simply returning to the Father. The duration of that person's visit to this transient world has come to a close. The time has come for the return trip – to return home. Therefore, "do not gouge yourselves over a death." Reacting in such a way really contradicts our beliefs.

The Chizkuni explains that the basis for the command not to gouge ourselves is that we are the sons of Hashem – we are mere children. Do we have an understanding of why we live and why we die? Can we fathom the Divine decisions which determine these occurrences? A child does not comprehend the decisions that a mature father makes – we too are children. "do not gouge yourselves."

What follows is a very powerful story by R' Yom Tov Ehrlich which is based on the writing of Rav Chaim Vital, the primary student of the great Kabbalist, the Ari z"l. This was taken from the Sefer Yalkut Lekach Tov, vol. 1, p. 284.



Newly married Chaim walked his younger brother David home from shul one Shabbos evening to wish his mother a good Shabbos. The house glowed with warmth and peace. Candles burned brightly, announcing the arrival of the holy Shabbos. The only thing disturbing the restful atmosphere was the empty chair at the head of the table, the chair that had once been their father's. Since he had gone to his eternal rest two years earlier, longing and

anguish filled their hearts. The mother sat in her usual place, reading.

“Good Shabbos,” he sons greeted her joyfully.

“Good Shabbos,” she answered them, trying to hide her tears with a smile.

“Mother! You’re crying again,” Chaim exclaimed in distress. “Please. Today is Shabbos – crying is forbidden.”

“But you know as well as I do,” the widow sobbed, “that exactly two years ago today your father left this world! How can I not cry?”

“Yes, Mother,” Chaim said kindly, “it is true – today you have a reason. But what about yesterday and the day before? Two years have already passed, and still you are not comforted. You continue to cry and mourn, but do you think this makes Abba happy in Gan Eden? As for our Creator – it is certainly against His will. The Shulchan Aruch tells us when to mourn and when not to mourn. If you behave differently, you are disobeying Hashem’s will. Forgive me, Mother, for speaking to you this way,” Chaim pleaded.

His mother stood up and wiped away her tears. “You are right, Chaim. But even though I wish with all my heart to forget, I am not able to.” She began to sob.

Little Shoshana begged her, “Mommy, Mommy, we want you to be happy all the time.”

“I also want to be happy,” the mother whispered. “I promise I will try my best.”

Chaim wishes his mother “Good Shabbos” and left for his own home. His younger brother, David, made Kiddush over the wine, and the whole family sat down to a

wonderful Shabbos meal. A feeling of well-being enveloped the table and everyone felt the true peace of Shabbos. Their mother even laughed. The children told stories from the weekly Parsha, and their mother felt so much Nachas.

By the time everyone was ready for sleep, it was much later than usual. The widow felt a sense of quiet such as she had not felt since the day her husband left her. She began to think about her fate. She realized, perhaps for the first time, that she was not the only person in her situation. But she also realized that many other young widows had found happiness again, because, unlike her, that had accepted their bitter lot. Her thoughts drifted to the Shidduch that had recently been proposed to her. How could she betray her beloved husband's memory? Sleep overcame her, and she dreamt a beautiful dream.

In her dream, she saw people running, so she ran too. They all ran out of the city until they came to a thick forest. Even though it was dark, they continued to run. Suddenly, there was a burst of light and the forest ended.

The sun shone brightly and she saw before her a large garden filled with beautiful flowers which filled the air with a wonderful fragrance. The garden was filled with streams of sparkling blue water. Suddenly, a white bearded Jew dressed in a long white garment appeared before her eyes. He asked her if she would like to see her husband. Heart pounding, she followed him. The sage stopped near a large tree laden with beautiful ripe fruit. From afar, she saw a spacious clearing, surrounded by a golden fence. She saw colorfully dressed Jews sitting in rows learning Torah. In their midst a young man stood teaching them.

“Please wait a moment,” said the elderly Jew.  
“Soon they will conclude the lesson, and you will have a clearer look.”

She could not believe the dazzling sights her eyes beheld. When the lesson ended, the teacher began walking towards her. She almost fainted when she saw it was her husband.

“Avraham!” she cried, and swooned against a nearby tree.

“Yes, it is I,” her husband replied. “Be calm.”

For a long time, she remained where she was with her eyes closed. When she recovered, she opened her eyes and asked, “Why did you leave me at such a young age?”

“Please understand,” he answered serenely, “that the world in which you live is like a land of exile. People are sent there to complete specified tasks, or to suffer for earlier transgressions. The true world is here. Before you ever knew me, I once inhabited the world below. I was a Torah genius and perfectly righteous. My only fault was that I was unwilling to marry and bring children into the world, because I wanted to remain undisturbed in my learning.

“When I departed from that world, I was made head of a yeshiva in Gan Eden, where I began to ascend to ever-higher levels. But when they found out that I had never married and had never had children, I was sent back to the lower world in order to marry and bring children into the world.

“So, I married you, and, Baruch Hashem, we were blessed with children. When our seventh child was born, I

was called again to return to my yeshiva in Gan Eden, where everyone awaited me. Great is your merit that I am you husband, for I have a good name here. When the right time will come, we will again live together in this world in delight.”

“But,” his widow protested, “I did not know you were such a great scholar. You never had much time to learn.”

Her husband replied, “I too did not know, since I came to the lower world only to correct what I lacked – that is, to marry and have children, and to provide for them. When I departed from that world, my mind was immediately filled with endless Torah knowledge.”

His wife continued her questions. “Why doesn’t our Chaim prosper in his affairs?”

Her husband responded, “You surely remember the Din Torah Chaim had with a certain Jew. Although Chaim won legally, he was judged guilty of causing great pain to the other Jew, and faced a harsh sentence. I prayed on his behalf and asked that he be given only four difficult years. In just one more year, the period of his penalty will be complete, and he will begin to prosper.”

“And what about our David? Not a single Shidduch as been offered him. I don’t even have the money to make a wedding.”

He husband smiled and explained: “The reason for that situation is that David’s mate was late in coming into the world. She is now only thirteen years old and lives in a distant land. In another five years, she will come to your city. She will then become engaged to David and her parents will pay for the entire wedding.”

His widow began to tremble as a painful memory arose within her. In a soft voice she asked her husband, “Why was our three-year-old son killed by a drunk?”

He husband smiled and said, “Follow me!”

She began to walk towards a light-filled garden. Small trees lined her path. Radiant beams of multicolored light shone from above, while beautiful songbirds flew from tree to tree. She found herself able to understand their songs. Some were singing, “Light is planted for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. “ Others were singing, “To sing to your glory...” She heard: “Peace, peace to the distant and the near...” Small deer leaped back and forth singing , “I will sing of Your might; I will laud Your kindness daily.” Even the grass was singing: “May Hashem’s glory be forever!” The trees too joined in with: “All the trees of the forest will sing...”

Suddenly, she saw leaping circles of fire in many colors. They positioned themselves near her in column-like formations, followed by small angels who also settled down near her. A wonderful melody played by musical instruments was heard from all sides, and she felt her soul slipping away. Her husband rushed to place a flower from the garden close to her. Her strength returned, and a Chuppa canopy made of sparkling precious stones appeared before her. Under the canopy, facing her, stood a small angelic form. She recognized her murdered son, who was now laughing with great joy. Again she felt faint, and again her husband gave her the flower to smell. She opened her eyes, and saw that she was not mistaken – it really was her son.

“Why did you leave me when you were so young?” she asked.

“Everything is in accordance with the plans of the Creator,” he answered, “I had already been in the world once before, as a member of a prominent family. There had been wild attacks on the Jews in our town, and the gentiles murdered everyone. I was the only survivor. I was then about six months old, and a gentile woman took me into her house and raised me until I was redeemed by Jews. They taught me Torah and I studied until I became a great Torah scholar. I lived the rest of my life in comfort and peace. When I left that world, I was received in the True World with joy. I rose higher and higher, until I reached a point where I could rise no higher, because I had nursed from a non-Jewish woman. It was decreed that I be born again to a Jewish mother, and live those early years in purity. That way, I would be able to continue to rise in the upper world.

“I was then born to you, Mother. It was a great merit for you. After three years, I was taken back to my place, for there was nothing left for me to do in that lowly world.”

“But why were taken in such a horrible way?” his mother asked.

“When I was about to depart from the world,” explained her son, “a terrible decree was issued against the Jews of our town – everyone would have died, including you and Abba. I was given the honor to be the sacrifice for the entire town. I was killed for their sake, and thus the town was spared. For that reason I receive all this honor now. Nobody in Gan Eden is allowed to approach me except for Abba, who can see me whenever he wishes.” The child laughed softly, and wandered away until he disappeared from view.

“So you see now, there is an answer to all your questions,” the Torah scholar told his wife. “Our Creator does no evil.”

“I must return now to my students,” he concluded. He escorted her to the place where she had first opened her eyes, near the great tree, where he said to her: “It is very good here, but I cannot bear to see your suffering. You will do me a great favor if you now begin to live happily. You have been offered a Shidduch – please accept it.”

He vanished, and once again the old man appeared and led her back to the forest.

She awoke from her dream a changed person. For a long time she lay in bed with a smile on her face, as the images of her content husband and smiling son lingered in her mind. A great stone had been lifted from her heart, and she was consoled.

She remarried and lived a life of happiness and contentment.

The Ari z”l taught deep secrets of the Torah and, in particular, the subject of Gilgulim, transmigration of souls. He taught that all creatures are like cogs in the great machine called Creation. Hashem places each cog in the world and adjusts it to suit the operating needs of the mechanism. He brings into the world souls that have a function in this world, and removes the souls that are needed Above, for this world and the Next World are both part of the same machine.

Here below, the machine operates with souls plus bodies, while Above, it works with souls alone. If we

would know how it all works, we would never become upset, for in the very near future, all the souls will return to this lower world. Here, they will serve Hashem with body and soul combined, until all the physical bodies will become purified and soul-like. This last stage will take place towards the end of the sixth millennium, which will be followed by the “Great Shabbos” (R’ Chaim Vital, heard from his great teacher, the Ari z”l).

# *Perspective*

*By: Miriam Kramer*

So many years ago, in so far away a place,  
there was a little village of poorly constructed huts.  
Travel was accomplished with a horse and cart  
through unpaved streets traversed with ruts.

Winters were brutal and summers equally so,  
and there was little available to deal with the weather  
extremes.

Just an extra lining of paper in hole-ridden shoes,  
or an extra splash at laundry time in the nearby stream.

The Jews who lived in this simple village  
lived a simple and straightforward existence.  
Their job was to survive, bear children, have Nachas  
and learn Torah with Mesiras Nefesh and persistence.

At the helm of this village was the Rebbe  
to whom all looked for guidance and inspiration.  
To him they turned for Halachic answers,

and to him they brought their heartaches and frustrations.

A spouse who was sick, a child who needed a Shidduch, an income that provided for a tad more than starvation, to the Rebbe they brought every problem they had and begged him to alleviate their situation.

The Rebbe admired the **אמונה פשוטה** of these Yidden, and looked upon each villager with compassion and love. He did all he could to assuage their pain by storming the gates of Heaven above.

Reb Yankel came one day to the Rebbe's house, his face etched with lines of anxiety and stress. "Rebbe," he sobbed, "my Ruchaleh is such a fine girl, but in Shidduchim she just has no success."

The Rebbe nodded and sent Yankel home, and then went to his Davening room alone. Where he wept and sweated and beseeched Hashem that mercy to Reb Yankel should be shown.

Some few months later, music could be heard  
as the villagers turned out en masse,  
to watch with great happiness  
as Ruchele's Chosson broke the traditional glass.

Srulik's mother came one day to the Rebbe's house,  
bowed and broken with sorrow.  
"My Srulik's been sick for so long,  
the doctors don't think he'll live till tomorrow.

The Rebbe nodded and sent Srulik's mother home,  
and then went to his Davening room alone  
Where he wept and sweated and beseeched Hashem  
that mercy to Srulik's family should be shown.

A few weeks later, boys were playing,  
racing through the streets chasing each other.  
Wondering how she would clean those mud-spattered  
pants,  
was Srulik's ecstatic and grateful mother.

Reb Itzik the tailor came one day to the Rebbe's house,  
his devastation and despair complete.

“Rebbe,” he wept, “my business just doesn’t support us,  
and we simply have nothing left to eat.”

The Rebbe nodded and sent Itzik home,  
and then went to his Davening room alone  
Where he wept and sweated and beseeched Hashem  
that mercy to Itzik’s family should be shown.

A few weeks later the country’s military required  
a slew of uniforms for each soldier and sailor.  
And who do you think they commissioned to sew them?  
None other than Itzik the tailor!

Many years passed in this fashion,  
and the villagers became used to the Rebbe’s heavenly  
ways.  
But then one sad day the news was released-  
The Rebbe was ill and had only a few more earthly days.

“Woe to us!” the Yidden cried in fear.  
“Who will intercede to Hashem on our behalf?”  
But even as they all wept in despair,  
one wise villager began to laugh.

“Why do you wail in so heartrending a fashion?  
Don’t you see that our lives will be better than ever before?  
If the Rebbe’s Tefillos are so effective on this earth,  
near the *Kisei Hakavod* he’ll be able to accomplish even  
more!”

“Surely our lives will be good and sweet  
when the Rebbe will have direct access to Hashem.  
He’ll advocate to reverse our harsh judgments,  
and you’ll see, we’ll have no more Tzaros then.”

Even as the Yidden mourned the passing of their Rebbe,  
they breathed a quiet sigh of relief.  
In their trouble-free future they took solace,  
so simple and pure was their belief.

But as the months passed, reality was bitter,  
for troubles and anguish besieged these poor village folk.  
And try as they might to plead with their Rebbe,  
his compassion they could not seem to invoke.

They Davened at his Keiver, begging for help,

asking for the same compassion he'd always shown.

But as time progressed with no change in their circumstances,

they felt so abandoned- so alone.

Finally one night, the Rebbe appeared in a dream to one of the respected village men.

And he said, "I haven't forgotten you, my beloved friends, but my perspective now is so different from then."

"When I lived amongst you, I ached when you did, and my heart broke as each of you grappled with pain, and I used that empathy to storm the heavens to reverse the harsh verdict that was ordained."

"But now, my children, I see differently, and I know now what I've never before understood – that what seems harsh and unjust on this earth is really and truly eternally good!"

"Hashem has a plan that we cannot perceive, and in our limited understanding it seems cruel and unfair, but in the long view of your lives,

it's really a Chessed beyond compare!"

"Divine *cheshbonos* are for your benefit,  
and the good they produce is eternal,  
but you can only see the truth of that  
from the advantage of a perspective supernal."

"So how can I Daven for you,  
and why should I beg to have the verdict changed,  
when I know now with utmost certainty  
that it's for your benefit that all is arranged?"

"Yes, I know that problems with children or Parnassah  
feel like raw and brutal grief,  
but I beg you, my sweet villagers,  
to hold on to your faith and belief."

"Believe that Hashem wants the best for you,  
and believe that He yearns for your well-being and success,  
but he's willing to sacrifice a few superficial joys  
to grant you the ultimate happiness."

“I can’t intercede for you, my friends,  
when I have this newfound view.  
All I can tell you is that it’s never been clearer,  
just how much Hashem loves each one of you.”



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