

No Matter What Situation One Finds Himself In, He Must Never Lose Hope From Salvation!!!

» *Should Sara Have Believed The Words Of Three Arabs?!*

The verse states (18:11-14): "And Avrohom and Sara were old, on in years. The manner of women had ceased to be with Sara. And Sara laughed within her saying, after I have withered shall I again have a renewal and my husband is old? And Hashem said to Avrohom, why did Sara laugh saying, shall in truth bear a child though I have aged? Is anything beyond Hashem? At the appointed time I shall return to you at this time next year and Sara will have a son."

We may ask: It says in the Medrash that the visitors appeared to Sara as wandering Arabs. She did not know that they actually were angels in disguise. After Avrohom gave them food and drink, they blessed them with a "birchas hedyot", blessing from an ordinary person, saying that they will return next year and Sara will have a son. If so, what was the complaint against Sara for laughing?

Sara was ninety years old and childless. She was an "akara", barren. She didn't hear any prophecy that she would bear children. When a group of simple Arabs come in from the desert and bless her to bear children, her response of "after I have withered should I have a renewal" seems to be the normal, expected response. Why was this held as a complaint against her?

» *Hashem Yisborach Desires For The World To Operate In Its "Natural" Way*

To bring out the gravity of this question, we can quote the words of the Rishonim.

The Ramban on Parshas Noach states (6:19) that it is clear that the ark could not naturally hold all the animals of the world and all of the needed provisions for them to last a year. This was all a great miracle that allowed one ark to house all of the animals. If a miracle was needed in any case, he asks, why did Hashem command Noach to build a large ark? Why didn't He

command him to build a small ark and miraculously allow all of the animals to fit in it? He answers that Hashem specifically wanted Noach to build a large ark so that all the people would see it and ask about it. Noach would then explain to them why he was building it, and it was hoped that this might lead them to repent. Secondly, Hashem specifically wanted Noach to build a large ark in order to minimize the miracle. This, explains the Ramban, is Hashem's way, which is evident throughout all the miracles in the Torah. He asks man to do whatever is within his capabilities, and He takes care of the rest.

The Drashos HaRan (Drush 8, D.H. Hahakdama Harishonah B'biur Chata'am Shel Moshe Rabenu), writes similarly: Hashem Yisborach wishes to maintain the normal nature of the world whenever possible. Nature is precious in His eyes, and He does not change it unless absolutely necessary. For this reason, Moshe Rabenu said: "If sheep and cattle were slaughtered for them, would it suffice? (Bamidbor 11:52)" Moshe reasoned that Hashem would not wish to perform a miracle to fill their stomachs if it was not necessary, and he, therefore, questioned how there could be sufficient meat for the entire nation. Because nature is precious in the eyes of Hashem, when a miracle is necessary He mixes the miracle with nature for the miracle to lean on. Even if this natural means is not enough for the need, He causes the miracle to lean on it.

The Ran further proves this from the story of Elisha and Shunamite lady. Elisha asked if she had anything in the house, and she responded that all she had was one flask of oil. He then caused a miracle to occur through this bit of oil. It is certain that Hashem could have performed a miracle without any oil. But His way is to use some natural element for the miracle to lean upon so that it appears somewhat as if the miracle was "natural".

We see that Hashem does not wish to perform unnecessary miracles or change nature whenever it is not absolutely needed, and even when miracles are necessary Hashem minimizes the miracle as much as possible by adding a "natural" element to it so that it does not appear miraculous.

לעילוי נשמת הרה"צ אלתנן יוסף בן שמואל זצ"ל

Having said this, we can ask our question in even stronger terms. Avrohom Avinu believed that he would bear a son in his old age because he had received an assurance directly from Hashem and he had complete faith in Him. Sara, however, heard this from men who she thought were Arabs. She assumedly thought that if Hashem wished to give her a son, He would have provided her with one through “natural” means, and therefore did not believe the tidings. Why is this a complaint against her?

» *Hashem Yisborach is All-Powerful. Nothing Is Impossible For Him!*

The Ramban answers that Hashem held it as a complaint against her that she expressed the sentiment that it was totally impossible to believe that it could happen. She should have believed that it possibly could happen and should have responded: “Amen. So should be His will.”

Someone who has full faith in Hashem knows that nothing is beyond Him. There is nothing He cannot do. There is no independent power called “nature”. Everything depends solely on His will. Therefore, even though she only heard a blessing from ordinary people, she should have responded with: “Amen. So should be His will”, and strengthened her faith in Him and continued praying to Him to change nature to provide her salvation.

Rav Tzadok Hakohein (Perek 16) explains: A Jew should never despair for any reason, both in physical matters – as the Gemara states (Brachos 10A): “Even if a sharp sword is on one’s neck he should not desist from praying to Hashem – or in spiritual matters – even if he has sinned to the extent that he feels like repentance would be impossible. No matter what, a Jew should never give up hope, and should believe that Hashem can always save him.

He adds: The entire genesis of the creation of the Jewish people occurred after situations that seemed hopeless. Avrohom and Sara were old. No one would have believed they could bear children. Even after receiving the assurance, the righteous Sara, who knew Hashem could do anything, laughed and found it hard to believe. She felt that had Hashem wanted her to have a son, He would have given her one years before because He always minimizes the miracle. However, the truth was that He deliberately did it this way because He wanted the future of the nation to be conceived from a situation of despair, when no one –

even Sara – could believe it was possible. This teaches us that Jews must never despair of salvation because Hashem can always send salvation.

He continues: So too, regarding the future redemption it is stated (Yeshaya 53:1): “Who would have believed our report?” The Gemara also states (Sanhedrin 97A): “The son of Dovid shall not arrive until we despair of the redemption.” Yeshaya therefore tells us (51:1): “Look at Avrohom your father and at Sara who bore you”, and see that even the beginnings of the nation came after despair.

He concludes: Avrohom Avinu was the first to show us how not to despair in any situation. When Lot was captured, and everyone else had despaired of rescuing him, Avrohom Avinu girded himself and chased after the four kings with his 318 men – and the Gemara (Nedarim 32A) tells us that he actually only was accompanied by Eliezer, whose name has the numerical of 318. This name was hinted to by Moshe Rabenu, when he said, “Elokei Avi B’ezri V’yatzileini, For the G-d of my fathers was my help and saved me.” The sword of Pharaoh was already at his neck, and he did not despair from Hashem saving him. This is hinted to in the fact that 318 has the numerical value of “ye’ush”, despair (with the “kollel”), meaning that this number symbolizes how Hashem can save us from any desperate situation.

» *The Redemption Will Come After Suffering. Therefore, The Suffering Is Not A Reason To Despair!*

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 96B) relates: “Rav Nachman said to Rav Yitzchak: Have you heard when the ‘bar nifli’ will come? Rav Yitzchak said to him: Who is the bar nifli? Rav Nachman said to him: He is Moshiach. Rabbi Yitzchak asked him: Do you call the Moshiach ‘bar nifli’? Rav Nachman said to him: Yes, the verse refers to him this way, as it is written: “On that day I will establish the Tabernacle of Dovid that is fallen (hanofeles)”

The Aruch Laner explains the Gemara the meaning of the words “bar nifli” by saying that the questioner certainly was aware that no one knows when Moshiach will arrive, as Hashem has not revealed this secret to anyone. Rather, he was asking how the nation would look when it falls to a lowly level before his arrival -as “bar nifli” is a term for “nefilah”, falling, and Moshiach is called by this name because he will come after the nation goes through much suffering and falls to a lowly status.

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The Gemara then quotes the verse (Amos 9:11): “On that day, I will raise up the fallen Tabernacle of Dovid, and I will close up their breaches, and I will raise up its ruins, and build it up as in the days of yore.”

The Aruch Laner explains that the nature of all things in this world is that in order for something to reach its full potential it must first be created, and then temporarily destroyed. For example, in order to plant wheat to later make bread, stalks of wheat first must be broken apart and put into the ground, where they rot and are destroyed, before they can grow and be ground into flour to make bread. So too, in order for a person to go from this world to the World to Come, he must first die and have his body rot in the ground before he can ascend to Heaven.

This is also the reason that the Bais Hamikdosh first had to be built and destroyed before it can be rebuilt in all its glory, with much more splendor and holiness than before – as the greatest glory of the Bais Hamikdosh will only be seen in the rebuilt 3rd Bais Hamikdosh, which is one of the seven entities that were created before the world.

The verse is thus saying that Hashem “will raise up the Tabernacle of Dovid that has fallen”, meaning that it had to fall in order to be raised up. And when it is raised up, it will be even more glorious than previously, as the verse continues, “I will raise up its ruins as in the days of yore” – as in the way it was in the days before the world was created.

The Aruch Laner continues: This is the reason that in the days before Moshiach’s arrival there will be a lowliness in the generation and men of virtue and sagacity will be rare in the world. Before the greatness arrives, there must be a lowliness. This was the meaning of the Gemara, “When will ‘bar nifli come’ – when will Moshiach, who will arrive after the world falls to lowliness arrive? The response was: Once the nation suffers greatly and virtuous men become rare, the Tabernacle of Dovid will be rebuilt in full glory, as it was before the creation of the world.

We see that Moshiach will only arrive after a period of great darkness. This is the Gemara’s intent when it says that the son of Dovid will only come after the nation loses hope. Because of the suffering they will experience, they will despair of the redemption.

This is something that also occurred before the redemption from Egypt. The nation first was comforted by the assurance they had received that they would eventually be redeemed (Bereishis 50:24), and they did not despair. When Moshe first told them about the impending redemption, the verse (Shemos 4:31) tells us that they believed him. However, after Moshe’s words only made the suffering and bondage increase, they despaired and no longer believed Moshe that Hashem would rescue them (Shemos 6:9), and even Moshe questioned how it could

occur, as he said to Hashem (ibid 5:23): “Why have You sent me? Since I have come to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has harmed this people, and You have not saved Your people.” Only then could the salvation arrive.

We see from Sefer Yechezkel that in the future Klal Yisroel will be gathered to Eretz Yisroel, and it will appear that the great redemption has arrived. Then, the nations of the world will rise up against us in what will be known as the War of Gog and Magog. The war will be so severe that Klal Yisroel will despair from salvation, and many will return to exile, as is stated in Zecharya (14:2). This will finally lead to the ultimate and eternal redemption, as the verse ends: “And Hashem will be king over the entire land.”

This is as is stated in Yirmiya (e30:6-7): “Ask now and see whether a male gives birth. Why have I seen every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in confinement, and every face has turned to pallor? Oh, for that day is great, with none like it, and it is a time of distress for Yaakov, through which he shall be saved.” Just like a baby is born after the most difficult pangs of labor, so too the redemption will arrive after the worst sufferings.

It is incumbent upon all of us to take this lesson to heart and constantly remind ourselves that we must never despair no matter what situation we find ourselves facing. We must always remember that Hashem is watching over and guiding us, and He can change the situation in an instant. He can even remove the most difficult of sufferings whenever He desires, as he can do anything and nothing is beyond Him. Therefore, we must turn to Him in prayer and never despair from His salvation. Strengthening our faith and belief in His awesome power to save us will be the merit through which we will be saved.

The Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 68:10) tells us that after Elifaz took all of Yaakov’s earthly possessions, Yaakov was in great danger. Yaakov then said the words of Tehilim (121:1): “I lift up my eyes to the mountains. From where will my help come?” He then strengthened himself and said, “I certainly will not lose hope! My help will be from Hashem, creator of Heaven and earth.” And he then was saved.

The Sefer Meilitz Yosher (written by Rav Reuven Melamed zt”l, a close student of the Mashgiach Rav Yechezkel Levenstein zt”l) learns a great lesson from this Medrash. He writes: Yaakov Avinu merited an amazing Divine revelation. Hashem appeared to him and showed him a vision of angels ascending and descending a ladder from Heaven. He merited all of this because he first responded to his extremely trying situation by saying the words, “From where will my help come?” He then strengthened himself and said, “My help will come from Hashem creator of Heaven and earth”. Because of this perfect bitachon, when Yaakov reached an incredible level of greatness, Yaakov merited this revelation and this amazing guarantee for the future.