

VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

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In English

ערב שב"ק פרשת

Netzavim-Vayeilech

שנת תשפ"ו

בס"ד

Everything One Has is Given to Him by Hashem in His Great kindness, and He Decides on Rosh Hashanah How Much of this Kindness One Will Receive!

» *The Reason We Recite Perek Chaf Daled as the Shir Shel Yom on Sunday*

The pasuk in this week's Parshah (29:9-11) states: "You are all standing today before Hashem your G-d... that you may enter the covenant of Hashem, your G-d." Rashi states (ibid:12): "Because Klal Yisroel were now passing from one leader to the next, i.e., from the leadership of Moshe to that of Yehoshua. Therefore, Moshe made them stand, in order to encourage them."

The Shem M'Shmuel of Sochatchov zy"l (5674) writes that the reason they needed to be encouraged was because there was a major change taking place, as the leadership of Yehoshua was very different than that of Moshe Rabenu. During Moshe's time, they lived completely on open miracles. They ate bread that fell from Heaven, they drank water from the be'er, they were surrounded by clouds that kept them protected, and their clothing never wore out. Once they would enter Eretz Yisroel and Yehoshua would become the leader, however, they would have to live "natural" lives. They would need to work for a living and farm the land to raise crops.

In other words, until now they saw Hashem, so to speak, in every part of life. Now, they would need to have *emunah* and believe in Him even without seeing Him. They would need to fulfill Chazal's dictum (Shabbos 31A): "Believe in Hashem and plant."

At this juncture, Moshe needed to encourage the people to remember that they are always standing before Hashem. He reminded them that, in truth, there is no such thing as "nature", as everything comes from Him. Even when things appear to be natural, He is the one orchestrating all events.

We see from here that when a person is involved with worldly matters, he needs encouragement to remember that Hashem is the only one truly in control. In this vein, Rabenu Bechaya writes (in his introduction to Parshas Masai) that the word "teva" (nature) is related to the word "tovea" (to drown). He explains that nature is called by

this name because one who believes in it will drown in confusion and will be unable to extricate himself from the hole he makes for himself.

The Izhbitzer Rebbe zy"l (Sefer Mei Hashiloach, Parshas Vayeilech) uses this idea to explain the reason that the Shir Shel Yom that was sung by the Leviim in the Bais Hamikdash begins with the words "LaHashem ha'aretz u'melo'ah" (to Hashem is the land and all that fills it, Tehillim 24:1). He writes that Sunday is the first day of the workweek, and when one goes out to start to work, he must ingrain within himself the recognition that Hashem Yisborach is the one who really owns the entire world and all that is in it, and that He decides how much one will succeed in his work.

He adds that having this recognition that Hashem is the true provider and one cannot be sustained by his own toil and efforts is the best *segulah* for *parnassah*.

This also explains why it is said in the name of the Arizal Hakadosh that reciting this chapter of Tehillim on the night of Rosh Hashanah is a *segulah* for *parnassah*. One might ask why reciting this perek, which doesn't mention *parnassah* at all, is auspicious for livelihood. As we stated above, we can answer that question by saying that making this declaration that the world and all that is in it belong to Hashem is a means of deeming one worthy of receiving an abundance of His blessings.

» *Appointing Him King on Rosh Hashanah*

The Gemara states (Rosh Hashanah 16): "Say 'malchios' before Me in order that I should be crowned as king over you." This means that the main *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah is to appoint Hashem as our king by expressing our *emunah* that He is the sole ruler of the world, and He guides every aspect of everything that occurs.

The Gemara also says (ibid 18A) that on Rosh Hashanah, all people pass before Him like sheep. The Meiri (ibid 16B) explains this to mean that people pass before Hashem like sheep pass under their owner's staff as he counts them for the purpose of designating the tenth one

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as *maaser*.

The Gemara specifically compares us to these sheep, as the owner watches them meticulously as he counts them and looks over each one with a keen eye in order to keep an exact reckoning of how many animals he has in his herd and how healthy and strong they are. So too, every person passes before Hashem, and He carefully inspects every aspect of each one's life.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16B) says that every year which begins poor will end rich. Rashi explains that this means that everyone begins the year on Rosh Hashanah by making themselves poor by lowering themselves before Hashem with heartfelt prayers and supplications. This is stated in the verse (Mishlei 18:23): "The poor people recite supplications."

Tosafos adds: "Because we are like paupers, our hearts are broken, and the Heavens have mercy on us."

We see that Chazal are giving us a deep piece of advice and telling us that if we contemplate our situation and see how we truly are lowly like paupers, our hearts will be broken and our prayers will come from the depths of our souls. Once we do this, Heavenly mercy will be aroused, and we will merit a good year.

The Gemara, as explained by Rashi, is advising people to "act" in this way. For us, however, it is not merely an act. It is the unvarnished truth. We truly are paupers. There is nary a home in our society that is not full of suffering, both physical and spiritual.

Physically, we are beset with illnesses and financial hardships and are struck with anxiety to the point that we cannot function. Spiritually, so many souls fall each year to the lowest levels. Even those who do merit to live Torah lives continue to fall to lower levels and can be truly called paupers. Therefore, we certainly can come to Hashem and proclaim ourselves paupers and beggars.

If we would only contemplate our situation a bit, we would see how truly poor we are, and our hearts would be broken, and Heavenly mercy would be aroused.

» Having Bitachon that Hashem Will Perform Miracles

Rav Chaim Friedlander zt"l notes in a letter that he wrote regarding Rosh Hashanah that Rashi does not

speak of people who act "like they are poor." Rather, he says that they actually "make themselves poor." This means that one must realize that he really is very poor and has no merits of his own. He must know that all that he has is merely a gift from Hashem, who is now judging whether to continue providing him with His Divine kindness or not.

When one has this fear – this realization that he deserves nothing and only will have anything if Hashem deigns to give it to him as a gift – he will emerge "rich" – meaning that Hashem will decide to continue to provide for him for another year.

This idea is also found in the Rabenu Yona (Avos 2:13). Rabenu Yona writes that one should utter his prayers like a pauper that is supplicating and asking for what he needs – not like someone who is asking for something he doesn't really need, who isn't begging with a lowly heart and broken spirit. Every man must make requests for himself because everyone needs mercy. Hashem withholds His anger and has compassion for people – not because of their virtue. One must supplicate to Him, for perhaps Hashem will stop holding back evil that is caused by one's sins. For miracles do not occur all the time.

The Tur (581) cites the Medrash that says the way of the world is that when one is being judged in a court case, he wears black clothing, grows his beard long, and does not cut his fingernails because he is worried about what ruling he will receive. However, when Klal Yisroel is being judged, we wear white clothes, trim our beards, cut our nails, eat and drink, and celebrate – because we have faith that He will perform miracles for us.

From the Tur's words that "we have faith He will perform miracles for us", we see that this all depends on the strength of our faith. If one has true faith in Hashem Yisborach, he can merit having miracles performed for him. However, one cannot

expect open miracles to occur for him every day. Therefore, one must pour out his heart in prayer and cry out to Hashem and beg Him to continue His kindness. If one makes himself like a pauper, begging Hashem for kindness in this manner, he can be assured that his prayers will be answered and he will emerge "rich".

In this vein, the Rambam (Pirush Hamishnayos, Rosh Hashanah 4:7) says that the reason we do not recite the prayer of Hallel on either Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur is because these are "days of service, self-annulment,

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fear, and quaking before Hashem, and for all of these things it is improper to have laughter and joy.”

» *The Selichos Recited by the Students of the Chofetz Chaim in Yeshivas Radin*

One year in the yeshiva of Radin, on the Motzoei Shabbos preceding Rosh Hashanah, the *talmidim* all gathered in the bais medrash to recite Selichos. The Chofetz Chaim approached Rav Naftali Trop zt”l, one of the Ramim in the yeshiva at the time, and asked him to lead the Selichos.

Rav Naftali wrapped himself in a *talis* and prepared to begin the recitation when the Chofetz Chaim approached him again and said, “The custom is to say some words of *hisorerus* before beginning Selichos. Please address the assemblage.”

Rav Naftali tried to demur, saying, “Who am I to speak in front of the great Chofetz Chaim?” However, the Chofetz Chaim insisted, and, left with no choice, he began to speak.

He said: “We say in Selichos, ‘*Lo b’chesed v’lo b’ma’asim ba’anu l’fanecha*. We do not come before you with acts of kindness or good deeds. *K’dalim u’k’rashim dafaknu dalasecha*. We knock on Your door like paupers and beggars.’ How are we to understand these words? We ask Hashem to forgive our iniquities and grant us a good year, yet we say that we have no merits and are simply beggars!?”

“Wouldn’t it make more sense to come before Hashem with some claim of merit and tell Him that we tried to daven properly, to learn properly, and act properly? Even if we didn’t always succeed, and our prayers, actions, and learning were often lacking, we certainly can say that we tried our best and deserve something in return for that. Why would we openly say that we are coming to Hashem completely empty-handed?”

“The answer is that there are two distinct types of beggars. One is a poor man who makes his living by collecting alms from door to door. Some people feel bad, respond generously, and give him a respectable donation. Others slam the door in his face and give him nothing. He accepts his humiliation in silence and continues on his way.

“The other type of beggar is in an even worse strait. He is a ‘*dal v’rosh*’ and literally does not have a penny to his name. He is hungry. He has been lost in the forest for days and is bitterly crying out with desperate pleas for assistance.

“This destitute pauper has gone days without eating. He is literally starving when he knocks on a door and is depending on getting something to stave off death from hunger. Imagine his reaction when there is no answer to

his knocking. He knocks again and hears a voice from inside telling him to come back later because they are not available now.

“How will he respond? He will stamp his feet and cry out! Please have mercy on me! Open the door! I am about to die from starvation! He has no intention of moving on to the next house. He knows that his only chance of survival lies inside this house, and if he is not granted the sustenance, he immediately needs he will surely die. He will continue to bang on the door with as much strength as he can muster until someone opens it. When someone unremittably knocks on a door in this way, it is certain that it will eventually be opened.”

“This is how we approach Hashem,” Rav Naftali said. “We cry to him, ‘We are starving spiritually! We have been lost in the physical world for the past year and are ‘*dalim v’rashim*’ who have nothing! Therefore, we knock on the Heavenly gates with all of our strength and cry to Hashem, telling him that if He does not help us, we will surely perish!

“When we cry in this manner, the gates of Heaven will surely be opened for us, and our prayers to Hashem will be heard and accepted.”

The students of Radin who were present at the time would later relate that the prayers recited that year were powerful enough to pierce the Heavens, and they all merited a good, sweet year.

» *Learning Bitachon from Our Own Past Experiences*

These concepts apply to us at all times; however, they are especially relevant to the time of year when we prepare for Rosh Hashanah. An entire year has passed, yet we are still “like paupers.” Anyone with any semblance of intelligence will realize that everything is in the hands of Hashem, and that whatever will occur to him in the upcoming year will be determined when he is judged on Rosh Hashanah.

One who reaches this level of realization will “start the year poor” by crying out to Hashem from the depths of his heart, like a pauper begging for His kindness, and he will “end the year rich”, as Hashem will shower him with kindness and blessing.

The *yeitzer hara* tries to confuse us by convincing us that all occurrences are natural and happen on their own. One only needs to think about it a little to recognize that this claim is preposterous. Every individual can look back at his own experiences and see that there were times when all his efforts didn’t help him at all, but he ultimately had a great salvation in an unexpected way and he subsequently saw much success. This should be recognized as clear confirmation that everything is orchestrated by Hashem.