Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita

Vayera



בס"ד

Torah WELLSPRINGS

CONTACT INFORMATION
Mail@TorahWellsprings.com
718.484.8136

Weekly bulk orders in USA:
Wholesale@BeerEmunah.com

Weekly in your email free!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Lashon Kodesh
באר הפרשה
subscribe+subscribe@beerhaparsha.com

English
Torah Wellsprings
Torah+subscribe@torahwellsprings.com

Yiddish
דער פרשה קוואל
yiddish+subscribe@derparshakval.com

Spanish
Manantiales de la Torá
info+subscribe@manantialesdelatora.com

French
Au Puits de La Paracha
info+subscribe@aupuitsdelaparacha.com

Italian
Le Sorgenti della Torah
info+subscribe@lesorgentidellatorah.com

Russian
Колодец Торы
info+subscribe@kolodetztory.com

מכון באר האמונה

USA OFFICE Mechon Beer Emunah
1630 50th St, Brooklyn NY 11204
718.484.8136

ERETZ YISROEL OFFICE
מכון באר האמונה
רח' דובב מישרים 4/2
עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
025 688 040

יו"ל ע"י מכון באר אמונה

כל הזכיות שמורות COPYRIGHT 2026

Duplication of this gilyon in any format, for any sales or marketing purpose, without written permission by Machon Be'er Emunah, is against the law and Halacha.

Table of Contents

Torah Wellsprings - Vayera

Hashem Directs Human Plans to Fulfill His Purpose 4
Never Lose Hope 9
Hishtadlus 14
Kindness 16
When We Have Compassion on Others, Hashem Has Compassion on Us .. 18
Avraham's Ten Tests 22
Accepting All Situations with Love 25

Torah Wellsprings

Vayera

Hashem Directs Human Plans to Fulfill His Purpose

Avraham thought that the three men who came to his tent were human beings, regular merchants. Avraham urged them to come to his tent to eat because (18:5) כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עַבְדְּכֶם, "for this is the reason you have come here."

What did Avraham mean by these words? Weren't they passing by, enroute to do business? Why did he think they were coming to eat?

Avraham was telling them, "You think you came here to perform business, but I will tell you the real reason you came. You came to enable me to perform the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*."

This is an important lesson. People have their own reasons why they do things, but Hashem plants their desires into their hearts *for His reasons.*

Rashi (18:1) writes that after the bris milah, Avraham was weak. Hashem caused a hot sun, so there should be no travelers to trouble Avraham. Hashem saw Avraham's distress because there were no guests and sent him the three malachim. So, it was true that they came to be guests for Avraham. Even if they intended to do business, Avraham revealed to them that the real reason they decided to travel was Hashem's plan to help Avraham.[1]

---

1. This lesson is taught by the Shem MiShmuel (תרע"ז, ד"ה כי) on the verse (18:5), וְאֶקְחָה פַּת לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לִבְּכֶם אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרוּ כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עַבְדְּכֶם, "I will take a piece of bread and sustain your hearts; afterward you may pass on, for this is why you have passed by your servant."

It states (Bereishis 4:22) תּוּבַל קַיִן לֹטֵשׁ כָּל חֹרֵשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וּבַרְזֶל, "Tuval-Kain… sharpened all tools of copper and iron." Rashi explains that he created weapons to be used for murder. His name was תּוּבַל קַיִן, and תּוּבַל is from the word תיבל, spice, for he added "spice" to the ways of Kayin. Kayin killed his brother Hevel with a lot of effort, because he didn't have tools. תּוּבַל קַיִן added spice to Kayin's murderous approach and enhanced it by creating weapons for mass destruction, r'l.

Yet, one wonders why his name was תּוּבַל קַיִן and not תיבל קין. When one spices food, or the like, the word used is תיבל, not תובל.

תובל means "brought". Rashi (Bereishis 4:23) explains that Tuval-Kayin "brought about" Kayin's death. This will explain why his name is תּוּבַל קַיִן and not תיבל קין. There are two reasons he was called תּוּבַל קַיִן: first, because he spiced and enhanced

---

The Shem MiShmuel explains:

"This verse can be understood simply, based on the pasuk (Tehillim 37:23), מֵה' מִצְעֲדֵי גָבֶר כּוֹנָנוּ, 'A man's steps are established by Hashem.' Hashem arranged for these three men to pass by Avraham's tent so that he could fulfill the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim. This is the true explanation, as Rashi writes that Hashem saw Avraham's distress and therefore brought him guests. This is the meaning of the words כִּי עַל כֵּן. They came in order to enable Avraham to perform this mitzvah. Avraham assumed that this was not their intention, since he viewed them as ordinary travelers who had their own reasons for taking this route. Therefore, he taught them an important lesson: they should recognize that מֵה' מִצְעֲדֵי גָבֶר כּוֹנָנוּ, a person's steps are directed by Hashem. Even when someone believes he is traveling for his own purposes and with his own intentions, וְדַרְכּוֹ יֶחְפָּץ, Hashem guides him to where he needs to be in order to accomplish the Divine purpose."

Kayin's ways of murder, r'l, and second, because תובל brought about Kayin's death.

Rashi tells us how this occurred. *Lemech* was blind, and his son, Tuval Kayin, would bring his father to the forest and help his blind father hunt. When Tuval Kayin saw an animal in the forest, he would tell his father to shoot his arrow. Once, Tuval Kayin thought he saw an animal. He told his father to shoot his arrow. Lemech did so, and they discovered that it wasn't an animal. It was Kayin. Lemech had accidentally killed his grandfather, Kayin.

It seems that Tuval Kayin was guilty, to an extent, in Kayin's death because he didn't check to see whether what he saw was a human or an animal. But the truth is that it was destined for Kayin to die at this time. This is because seven generations earlier, Kayin killed Hevel. Hashem said that Kayin would be punished after seven generations pass, as it states כִּי שִׁבְעָתַיִם יֻקַּם קָיִן (4:24). So, essentially, תובל קין's part in the murder of Kayin was that he was מוביל, "brought" it about to occur.

We now understand the reason his name was תובל קין and not תיבל קין. תיבל קין means that he added spices to Kayin's murderous ways, and he created weapons. תובל קין adds another aspect. It tells us that he brought about Kayin's death, the death that was destined to occur.

The lesson is that people think they act on their own. But there is a greater plan, and Hashem arranges each event, exactly as it is destined to be.

Chazal use two different expressions for travelers. One term is הולכי דרכים, people who *walk* on the way. Another is עוברי דרכים, people who *pass* on the way. The Gemara (Brachos 3a) states, "Reb Yosi tells, 'Once, I was מהלך בדרך, *walking on the way*,

and I entered one of the ruins of Yerushalayim to daven. Eliyahu came, and waited at the doorway until I finished my tefillah.'" Eliyahu asked him why he davened in the ruin. He should have davened on the road! Reb Yosi replied, מתיירא הייתי שמא יפסיקו בי **עוברי דרכים**, "I was concerned that the people who *pass on the road* might disturb me and interrupt my tefillah."

The Ben Ish Chai asks that when Reb Yosi spoke about himself, he said, פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך, "once I was *walking on the way*…", and when he spoke about others, he called them עוברי דרכים, people who *pass* on the road. Why did he change, when speaking about others, to call them עוברי דרכים, people who pass on the way?

Ben Ish Chai (Ben Yehoyada) answers that there is a difference between הולכי דרכים (those who walk on the road) and עוברי דרכים (those who pass on the road). עוברי דרכים are people whose goal is to pass through the road *to get to their destination*. They don't consider their traveling as part of the purpose. However, הולכי דרכים are those who believe that even their walking on the road is from Hashem's hashgachah pratis. Their goal isn't solely to reach their destination, but also the trip itself, because they believe that the trip was destined and planned by Hashem.

עוברי דרכים will be very upset when they encounter a traffic jam or some other disturbance to their trip. Their goal is only to get somewhere, whereas the trip, itself, has no purpose for them. Therefore, they can't make peace with any interruption along the way. However, those who are הולכי דרכים, those whose goal is also the trip itself, aren't upset when there is a traffic jam or when there is some other interruption. They consider it as part of Hashem's plan, for reasons Hashem knows.

Reb Yosi began saying that פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך,

"Once I was walking on the way…" He was a מהלך בדרך, one who understands that the walking, the trip, itself, has a purpose. He didn't want to daven on the road, because there are those on the road who are עוברי דרכים, whose goal is solely to get to their destination, and they don't consider the trip itself important. For these people, any disturbance is very upsetting. If Reb Yosi would daven along the way, the עוברי דרכים would find the traffic his tefillah causes to be very disturbing. They would interrupt him and disturb him.

With this idea, the Ben Ish Chai explains the Gemara (Taanis 24b) that Reb Chanina ben Dosa was once מהלך בדרך, walking on the way, and it began to rain. Reb Chanina ben Dosa said, "Ribono Shel Olam! The entire world is at peace [because they are in their homes, dry and well], and Chanina is in distress!" His tefillah was answered, and it stopped raining. Rav Yosef said, "The kohen gadol's tefillah didn't work against the tefillah of Reb Chanina." Rav Yosef meant the following:

On Yom Kippur, the kohen gadol would daven that Hashem shouldn't answer the tefillos of עוברי דרכים, those who travel on the road. The world needs rain, and the kohen gadol prayed that when travelers pray that the rain should stop, Hashem shouldn't pay attention to their tefillos. Rav Yosef noted that Hashem did answer the tefillah of Reb Chanina, when he prayed that it should stop raining. Against Reb Chanina's tefillah, the kohen gadol's tefillah was ineffective. The Ben Ish Chai explains that this is because Reb Chanina was מהלך בדרך (as we quoted above from the Gemara). The kohen gadol prayed that Hashem shouldn't answer the tefillos of עוברי דרכים, but he didn't pray that Hashem shouldn't listen to the tefillos of הולכי דרכים. For those who are הולכי דרכים, their tefillos will be answered

when they pray while walking on the road.

Never Lose Hope

The Torah (21:14-19) tells us that Hagar was wandering in the desert, and she didn't have water to give to her ill son Yishmael. וַתַּשְׁלֵךְ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד תַּחַת אַחַד הַשִּׂיחִם, וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּשֶׁב לָהּ מִנֶּגֶד הַרְחֵק כִּמְטַחֲוִי קֶשֶׁת כִּי אָמְרָה אַל אֶרְאֶה בְּמוֹת הַיֶּלֶד וַתֵּשֶׁב מִנֶּגֶד וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת קֹלָהּ וַתֵּבְךְּ, "She cast the child under one of the bushes, and she went and sat down from afar… for she said, 'Let me not see the child's death.' She sat from afar, and she raised her voice and wept."

Hashem heard Yishmael's tefillos, as Rashi writes, שיפה תפלת החולה מתפלת אחרים עליו, והיא קודמת להתקבל, "The tefillos that a ill person says for himself is better than the tefillos that others say for him. His tefillos are quicker to be answered." The salvation came, as it states וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹקִים אֶת עֵינֶיהָ וַתַּרְא בְּאֵר מָיִם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתְּמַלֵּא אֶת הַחֵמֶת מַיִם וַתַּשְׁקְ אֶת הַנָּעַר, "Hashem opened [Hagar's] eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the pouch with water and gave the lad to drink."

We can ask, why is this episode written in the Torah? Why is it important to know that Yishmael almost died, and a miracle occurred, and he survived?

The Radak explains, "This is written to teach us that a person shouldn't be flustered when tzaros come. He should trust in Hashem that in the end it will be good."

We can make a kal v'chomer. If Hagar didn't have to be worried when she had tzaros, certainly we, children of the holy avos Avraham Yitzchak and Yaakov, have nothing to fear.

It states in this week's parashah (18:13-14) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָהָם לָמָּה זֶּה צָחֲקָה שָׂרָה לֵאמֹר הַאַף אֲמְנָם אֵלֵד וַאֲנִי זָקַנְתִּי, הֲיִפָּלֵא מֵה' דָּבָר לַמּוֹעֵד אָשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כָּעֵת חַיָּה וּלְשָׂרָה בֵּן, "Hashem said to Avraham, 'Why is it that Sarah laughed, saying: 'Shall I in truth bear

a child, though I have aged? – is anything beyond Hashem?! At the appointed time I will return to you at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

We wonder why the Torah elaborates on Sarah's fault, that she laughed. Why elaborate on a mistake a *tzadekes* made? Furthermore, what difference does it make for us, today, whether Sarah laughed or not?

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l (Letters, 2) answers that the Torah writes about this because something similar will occur in the future, when we hear that Moshiach has come. There will be people who will laugh in their hearts; it will be hard for them to believe that the *yeshuah* has finally come. Therefore, the Torah tells us that Sarah was rebuked for laughing, and we must know הֲיִפָּלֵא מֵה׳ דָּבָר, that there is nothing that Hashem can't do.

Sarah Imeinu expressed the unlikelihood that she could bear a child. She said (18:12) אַחֲרֵי בְלֹתִי הָיְתָה לִּי עֶדְנָה וַאדֹנִי זָקֵן, "After I have withered shall I again have delicate skin? And my husband is old!" The Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l (written in לב שמח) explains that even when, according to the rules of nature, it is impossible to bear a child, behold, וַאדֹנִי זָקֵן. This is referring to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the אדון עולם, master of the world. Behold, He is זָקֵן, which represents compassion (as in the saying, זקן מלא רחמים, the old one, filled with compassion). Despite the rules of nature, Hashem will have compassion for me, and I will have children. Even if it is beyond the rules of nature, I can bear children.

Rebbe Tzaddok HaKohen (Divrei Sofrim 16) writes that a Yid should never lose hope. He writes the following: "A Yid should never lose hope in any matter. He shouldn't lose hope in gashmiyus, worldly salvations, as Chazal (Brachos 10b) says, 'Even if a sharp sword is upon a person's neck, he shouldn't

lose hope in receiving Hashem's compassion.' The same is for ruchniyus matters. Even if he is steeped in severe sins, about which Chazal (Zohar HaKadosh vol.1, p.219b) say teshuvah doesn't help for it, chas v'shalom, or at least that it is hard to do teshuvah. Or if he sees himself very steeped and involved in matters of this world, he shouldn't lose hope and say that he can no longer leave his old ways, because אין יאוש כלל אצל יהודי, for a Yid, there is no *yeush*, at all. Hashem can help with all issues."

Reb Tzaddok continues:

"The entire edifice of the Jewish nation was created after a situation of total loss of hope, *yeush*. Avraham and Sarah were old, as it states (21:7) מִי מִלֵּל לְאַבְרָהָם הֵינִיקָה בָנִים שָׂרָה, who would believe that Sarah would nurse children? No one imagined that this would occur. Even after the *malach* promised them that they would bear children, and the tzadekes Sarah knew and believed that Hashem yisbarach is כל יכול, that He can do anything and everything, even so, she laughed. It was hard for her to imagine that she could still have children, knowing both Avraham's old age (see Bereishis Rabbah 48:17) and her own. If Hashem wanted to give them children, He would have given them children earlier, for למעט הנס עדיף, it is better when the miracle is less noticed. ולא עביד ניסא במקום שאין צריך, furthermore, Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't perform miracles when it isn't necessary. But this was from Hashem, that the nation should be built specifically after total *yeush*, when no human believed they would bear children, and even Sarah didn't believe it. This is because the essence of a Yid is to believe that there is no *yeush*, and Hashem can always save. הֲיִפָּלֵא מֵה' דָּבָר, is there anything Hashem can't do...?

"Also, regarding the salvation of the future, it states (Yeshayah 53:1) מִי הֶאֱמִין

לִשְׁמֻעָתֵנוּ. [This means that when Moshiach comes, the nations will say to one another, 'If we didn't see it with our eyes, we wouldn't believe it'] Chazal (Sanhedrin 97a) states, אין בן דוד בא עד שיתיאשו מן הגאולה, 'Moshiach will only come after people lose hope from the redemption.' Therefore, it states (Yeshaya 51:2) הַבִּיטוּ אֶל אַבְרָהָם אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶל שָׂרָה תְּחוֹלֶלְכֶם, 'Look at Avraham your father and at Sarah who bore you'. The nation began from Avraham and Sarah, from whom everyone had lost hope of bearing children. (See Tanchuma 16)."

In chapter כ, Avimelech becomes ill because he took Sarah. Hashem tells Avimelech to return Sarah. He does so; Avraham davens for Avimelech, and he is healed. Avraham explained to Avimelech the reason he said Sarah was his sister: (20:11) כִּי אָמַרְתִּי רַק אֵין יִרְאַת אֱלֹקִים בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְהָרָגוּנִי עַל דְּבַר אִשְׁתִּי, "I said, 'Surely, there is no fear of Hashem in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife." He feared Avimelech would kill him in order to marry Sarah.

We must understand the reason Avraham was afraid of Avimelech. Avraham had fought a war against four mighty kings, and he won the war. Did he not think he could fight with Avimelech as well? There was no reason to be afraid of him.

The sefer נפלאות חדשות (printed year 5647) writes that he heard from one of the tzaddikim that Hashem placed the fear of Avimelech into Avraham's heart. Logically, Avraham shouldn't have been afraid of him. Avraham's strength was proven when he battled successfully against four mighty kings. However, Hashem caused Avraham to be afraid, and it was for a great benefit. This is because, from this episode, Avraham and Sarah merited bearing children. As it states (20:17-18) וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אַבְרָהָם אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹקִים אֶת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וְאֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאַמְהֹתָיו וַיֵּלֵדוּ, כִּי עָצֹר עָצַר ה' בְּעַד כָּל רֶחֶם לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל דְּבַר שָׂרָה אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָהָם, "Avraham prayed to Hashem, and

Hashem healed Avimelech, his wife, and his maids, and they gave birth. For Hashem had completely restrained every womb of the household of Avimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Avraham." Rashi explains that every opening in the human body, of Avimelech and of his entire household, was closed. This was the punishment he received for holding Sarah in his home. Also, for those who had to give birth, the wombs were closed (as the Ramban explains). This rare illness was cured when Avimelech returned Sarah, and Avraham prayed that they be healed, and those in labor were able to give birth.

The next pasuk (21:1-2) states, וַה' פָּקַד אֶת שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמָר, וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֵּר, "Hashem had remembered Sarah as He had said, and Hashem did for Sarah as He has spoken. וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֵּן לִזְקֻנָיו, "Sarah conceived and bore a son unto Avraham in his old age…"

Rashi (21:1) explains, סמך פרשה זו, ללמדך שכל המבקש רחמים על חבירו והוא צריך לאותו דבר, הוא נענה תחלה, שנאמר ויתפלל וגו' וסמיך ליה וה' פקד את שרה, שפקדה כבר קודם שריפא את אבימלך, "This parashah [which states that Sarah gave birth to a child] is written here [immediately following the parashah of Avimelech, that Avraham prayed for them and healed them] to teach you that whoever prays for his friend, and he needs the same matter, he is answered first. As it states ויתפלל, [that Avraham prayed for Avimelech], and next to it, it states ה' פָּקַד אֶת שָׂרָה, 'Hashem had remembered Sarah.' This means she was already remembered, before Avimelech was healed." Avraham's tefillos were answered for himself and Sarah, even before Avimelech and his household had their salvation.

Hashem made Avraham afraid of Avimelech because this resulted in Avimelech taking Sarah, becoming ill, and Avraham praying for Avimelech and his

household. This tefillah was needed so Sarah could bear a child.

Let us learn from the above the following lessons:

1) Even our emotions, such as fear, are given to us from Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Who leads us according to His plan. Avraham wasn't weaker than Avimelech, but he was afraid of Avimelech because this was Hashem's plan.

2) We can also learn from the above the principle that even those matters we think are bad are all for the good. As Chazal tell us, one should always say, כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד, "Everything Hashem does, it is for the good." The terrible tzarah that Sarah was taken to Avimelech's home was for the good. From this tzarah, Yitzchak was born. If it weren't for this tzarah, there wouldn't be the concept of כל המתפלל בעד חבירו, davening for one's fellow man, which results in הוא נענה תחילה, the person who davens is answered first.

Hishtadlus

It states (21:19) וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹקִים אֶת עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרֶא בְּאֵר מָיִם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתְּמַלֵּא אֶת הַחֵמֶת מַיִם וַתַּשְׁקְ אֶת הַנָּעַר, "Hashem opened her eyes and she perceived a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water and gave the youth to drink." The Midrash (53:14) states, "We see from this that she had a low level of emunah (מקטני אמנה היתה)". How? Because she took water for now and for later. She took enough water so that she could give water to her son the next day, as well. This is a sign that she had a low level of emunah in Hashem. If she trusted in Hashem, she would take water that was needed for right now, and then travel on.

We struggle to understand this midrash. She would need water the next day as well. What is wrong with filling up her jug with water for the next day?

Apparently, the answer is that after seeing the miracle Hashem performed for her, to create for her son a well in the middle of the desert, she should know that she can rely on Hashem to give her water the next day as well. She should have recognized that Hakadosh Baruch Hu takes care of all His creations, and that there is nothing to fear. Hashem would create a well for them the next day as well, or Hashem would help them in some other way. Despite seeing this wondrous miracle, she remained unaware of Hashem's ways, and she was worried about how she would attain water the next day.

In the haftarah (Malachim 2, 4), it tells the story of an almanah, who had been married to one of the *nevi'im*. She came to Elisha and cried that they had no money at home, and debt collectors were planning to take two of her children as slaves. Elisha told her, לְכִי שַׁאֲלִי לָךְ כֵּלִים מִן הַחוּץ מֵאֵת כָּל שְׁכֵנָיִךְ כֵּלִים רֵקִים אַל תַּמְעִיטִי, "Go borrow vessels for your yourself from the outside, from all your neighbors – empty vessels, be not sparing." Those empty vessels filled up with oil, which she sold and paid up her creditors. אזור אליהו (written by a student of the Kotzker zt'l) explains that her parnassah came when she prepared כֵּלִים רֵקִים, empty vessels. This is a lesson in hishtadlus: to know that we prepare "empty vessels," because the hishtadlus can't help us without Hashem's help.

We quote his words, "This is a good counsel on how one can earn parnassah. A person should consider himself entirely incapable of earning parnassah, and to know the truth that his hishtadlus can't help at all. The more a person knows this, the more capable he is of receiving parnassah… This is the meaning of כֵּלִים רֵקִים אַל תַּמְעִיטִי, "empty vessels, be not sparing." The more a person knows that he is an empty vessel, the better it will be for him."

Kindness

Rabbeinu Yonah (in his commentary to Chumash) writes that from parashas Vayeira, we learn the reward and the importance of being generous with one's money, which is the attribute of נדיבות. Avraham Avinu performed the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*; he gave money to the needy with an open hand. We also learn in this week's parashah the ugliness of being stingy. Behold it states (18:19) כִּי יְדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יְצַוֶּה אֶת בָּנָיו וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ ה׳ לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט, "For I love him because he commands his sons and his household after him, that they should keep the way of Hashem to perform tzedakah and justice." Avraham was rewarded for his generosity, as it states (18:18) וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוֹ יִהְיֶה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם וְנִבְרְכוּ בוֹ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ, "Avraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the world will be blessed in him."

The people of Sodom were stingy with their money, as it states (18:20): וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי רָבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד, " Hashem said, 'Since the cry of Sodom and Amorah has become great, and since their sin has become very grave…" Rashi (18:21) explains that their sins were that they didn't want to give their money to the poor. There was a girl who was killed in a very cruel way because she gave food to the poor.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 109) tells that when a guest came to Sodom, they would give him a bed that didn't suit his size. If he were longer than the bed, they would cut off his feet, so his body would fit the bed he lay upon. If he was shorter than the bed, they stretched his body, r'l. The Navi tells us that the sin for which Sodom was overturned was that they didn't give money to the poor. As it states (Yechezkel 16:49) הִנֵּה זֶה הָיָה עֲוֹן סְדֹם ... וְיַד עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן לֹא הֶחֱזִיקָה, "Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom… she did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."

This sin was so severe that the entire city of Sodom was overturned. Never in the history of the world was such a punishment enacted. (It was decreed on Nineveh that it be overturned, but this decree was annulled because they did teshuvah.)[2]

---

2. It states (18:20), וְעַצְקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי רָבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד, "The outcry of Sodom and Amorah has become great, and their sin has become exceedingly grave."

The Tiferes Shlomo asks:

1. What is the meaning of וְעַצְקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה, "the outcry of Sodom and Amorah"? The Torah does not tell us what kind of outcry took place there.

2. Seemingly, this outcry is the same matter referred to by וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד, "their sin has become exceedingly grave." If so, why does the pasuk repeat the same idea twice?

The Tiferes Shlomo answers that the people of Sodom and Amorah were guilty of two categories of sin: sins between man and his fellow, and sins between man and Hashem. The pasuk alludes to both. וְעַצְקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי רָבָּה, "the outcry of Sodom and Amorah has become great," refers to their sins between man and his fellow. The cries of pain and suffering arose from the cruelty they inflicted upon one another. וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד, "their sin has become exceedingly grave," refers to their sins against Hashem.

The Tiferes Shlomo explains that had they been guilty only of sins against Hashem, they would not necessarily have been punished so severely. Even grave sins between man and Hashem can be forgiven when people conduct themselves properly with others. Chazal (Rosh Hashanah 17a) teach that whoever is ma'avir al midosav, overlooks and forgives the offenses of others, merits that all of his own sins are overlooked. The source for this teaching is the pasuk (Michah 7:18), נֹשֵׂא עָוֹן וְעֹבֵר עַל פֶּשַׁע, which Chazal expound to mean that Hashem forgives those who are willing to forgive others.

Thus, had the people of Sodom and Amorah sinned only against

Rabbeinu b'Chayei (18:2) writes, "The decree [that their city be overturned] came because of the sin that they hated the concept of tzedakah, and they didn't pay attention to the poor or to their friends who were hungry… The people of Sodom were disgusted with tzedakah; they were cruel, through and through. The Torah wasn't given yet, but tzedakah is among the מצוות המושכלת, the mitzvos that common sense understands. It is מתועב, disgusting, that a person can see another human like himself, suffering from hunger, while he is wealthy, satisfied, and has everything good. It is even more disgusting when people don't help others in their nation, who live in the same city as they do. Hashem destroyed the people of Sodom because they didn't want to do tzedakah and chesed. He took נקמה, revenge, for the poor people."

When We Have Compassion on Others, Hashem Has Compassion on Us

We say in the tefillah המאיר לארץ ולדרים עליה ברחמים, "The One Who shines to the earth and to those who dwell upon it with compassion." The simple translation of ברחמים is with Hashem's compassion. This means Hashem compassionately shines His light to the world. The Ahavas Shalom zy'a, however, translates it as Hashem shining His light and His kindness to the world, ולדרים עליה ברחמים, when

---

Hashem, there would have been room for atonement. However, that was not the case. וַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה, there were cries of anguish, conflict, and suffering throughout Sodom and Amorah. People treated one another with cruelty. Therefore, וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד, their sins remained unforgiven, and they were punished for their aveiros.

people act with compassion towards one another. This is because Hashem acts with us as we act with others. When we have compassion for one another, Hashem has compassion for us, and He shines His light and His kindness upon us. However, if we don't act with kindness, we lose the opportunity to receive Hashem's kindness.

All the Avos and Imahos cry in heaven and plead that Hashem save His nation. But it is specifically the tefillos and tears of Rachel Imeinu that saves us, as it states (Yirmiyahu 31:14) כֹּה אָמַר ה׳ קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים רָחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל בָּנֶיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהִנָּחֵם עַל בָּנֶיהָ כִּי אֵינָנּוּ, כֹּה אָמַר ה׳ מִנְעִי קוֹלֵךְ מִבֶּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדְּמָעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לִפְעֻלָּתֵךְ נְאֻם ה׳ וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב, "So says Hashem: A voice is heard on high, lamentation, bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, she refuses to be comforted for her children for they are not. So says Hashem, 'Refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for there is reward for your work, says Hashem, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy.'"

Why were Rochel's tears and prayers heard over the others? Why were her tefillos more influential in heaven than the tefillos of the other Avos and Imahos?

We can explain that it is because Rachel paid a heavy price to prevent the tears of others. Leah cried a lot, as it states עיני לאה רכות since she feared she would marry Eisav. Rochel gave Leah the *simanim*, which enabled her to marry Yaakov. Rochel sacrificed her own future to prevent the tears of her sister. She knew that she might never marry Yaakov, after he was already married to Leah, but she sacrificed her own good for the sake of her sister. For this deed Hashem told her מִנְעִי קוֹלֵךְ מִבֶּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדְּמָעָה, that she should stop crying because the salvation will come. Hashem acts with us as we act with others. If we remove the tears of others, Hashem removes our tears.

The Yismach Moshe zt'l discusses the expression (ibid.) קוֹל בְּרָמָה, which can be translated as "a loud voice". Generally, when one asks another for a favor, he speaks in a low, pleading voice. He doesn't raise his voice. But Rachel raised her voice when she asked for the salvation of Bnei Yisrael. This is because she has a right to make this request. When one asks for what he deserves to receive, he can ask for it in a loud voice. Since Rochel was mevater and gave the simanim to Leah, she pleaded in a loud voice that Hashem should have compassion on her children.

The malachim came to Lot's home and they said (19:13) כִּי מַשְׁחִתִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶת הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי גָדְלָה צַעֲקָתָם אֶת פְּנֵי ה' וַיְשַׁלְּחֵנוּ ה' לְשַׁחֲתָהּ, "For we are destroying this place, because their cry has become great before Hashem, and Hashem has sent us to destroy it." The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 50:9) says that this was an aveirah. The malachim shouldn't have revealed Hashem's secrets. Hashem told Avraham that He was planning to overturn Sodom, because Avraham deserved to know, as it states (18:17-18) הַמְכַסֶּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה, וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוֹ יִהְיֶה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם וְנִבְרְכוּ בוֹ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ, "Hashem said, "Shall I conceal from Avraham what I am doing? Behold Avraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the world will be blessed in him." Because of Avraham's greatness, Hashem wanted to tell him what He planned to do (see Rashi 18:17). But there was no reason to tell Lot what Hashem planned to do. Therefore, the *malachim* were punished for revealing this secret.

Why was this revelation considered to be such a sin? Wasn't Sodom going to be overturned shortly after? Why wasn't it ok for Lot to know this information before it was going to happen?

Reb Chaim Efraim Zeichik zt'l (rosh yeshiva Novardok,

in his sefer ואני תפילה, ח"ג שער יוה"כ מאמר להרגיש בצער הזולת) answers that when Hashem gives yesurim, it is always with exact measurement. It is never a drop more severe, and it is never for a moment longer than needed. It was destined for the people of Sodom that they suffer, but it wasn't decreed upon them to know about it and suffer from panic before it occurred. Therefore, the malachim were punished for 138 years; they weren't permitted to come before Hashem.

The Midrash states, "Reb Levi said in the name of Reb Nachman, the malachim, because they revealed Hashem's secrets, were banished from being in Hashem's presence for 138 years.[3]

---

3. Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l was once walking along Rechov HaPisgah in Bayit V'Gan on his way to the yeshivah when a heavy rain began to fall. A thirteen-year-old bachur carrying an umbrella noticed him and offered the rosh yeshivah shelter beneath it. Reb Shlomo Zalman graciously accepted and bent down so he could fit under the umbrella.

The problem was that the umbrella was sized for a young teenager, not for an adult, and certainly not for both an adult and a thirteen-year-old boy together. While Reb Shlomo Zalman's head and part of his body remained dry, much of his clothing and the rest of his body became soaked by the rain.

A passing driver noticed the rosh yeshivah getting drenched and stopped to offer him a ride. "I'm fine," Reb Shlomo Zalman replied. "I don't need a ride."

When he arrived at the yeshivah, the bachurim were surprised to see how wet he was and asked why he had not accepted the ride. Reb Shlomo Zalman explained, "I saw that the boy felt very good about helping me, and I did not want to take that pleasure away from him."

Avraham's Ten Tests

It states (22:1) וְהָאֱלֹקִים נִסָּה אֶת אַבְרָהָם, "Hashem tested Avraham…" The Mishnah (Avos 5:3) states, עֲשָׂרָה נִסְיונות נִתְנַסָּה אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם וְעָמַד בְּכֻלָּם, "Avraham Avinu was tested ten times and he passed all of them." All this was to test Avraham Avinu's emunah (see Pri HaAretz from Rebbe Mendel of Vitebsk, Vayeira, ד"ה כללא דמלתא) to see if he would think thoughts of emunah. For example, Hashem told Avraham to go to Eretz Canaan, and then everything would be good for him, ואברכך ואגדלה שמך, "I will bless you and aggrandize your name." But when he arrived (Bereishis 12:10), ויהי רעב בארץ, there was a hunger in the land. It was the only land that was struck with

---

This story reminds us to be sensitive not only to the needs and feelings of adults, but also to those of the young. People often go to great lengths to help older individuals, while overlooking the emotional needs and simple joys of children and teenagers. Yet those feelings are precious as well and deserve our consideration.

Once, the Chofetz Chaim noticed a piece of paper lying in the street and picked it up, suspecting that it might contain sheimos and require genizah. Upon examining it, he saw that it contained only ordinary, secular writing. Nevertheless, he placed it in his pocket.

A person accompanying the Chofetz Chaim asked why he kept the paper instead of throwing it back onto the road.

The Chofetz Chaim explained that if the paper remained on the ground, other conscientious Yidden might stop and bend down to pick it up, thinking it contained sheimos. To spare them that unnecessary effort and inconvenience, he kept the paper himself.

This story highlights the extraordinary sensitivity that great people have toward others. They do not concern themselves only with major hardships. They are attentive even to small inconveniences, seeking every opportunity to spare others discomfort and trouble.

famine. This was to see if Avraham would question Hashem and ask, "Why did Hashem send me here, and how is this for my good?"

Even the Akeidah, which required action (to bring Yitzchak on the Akeidah), was just a part of the test. The actual test was to see if Avraham believed in Hashem without questioning Him. Years before, Hashem told Avraham that the continuation of his family would come through his son, Yitzchak. Then Hashem told Avraham to bring Yitzchak as a korban. How is that possible? How can Yitzchak be a korban if he was to be the continuation and origin of the Jewish nation?

If Avraham had allowed himself to ask this question, he wouldn't have been able to perform the Akeidah. He removed the contradiction from his mind and followed Hashem's obligation blindly, without seeking to understand.

When a person believes in Hashem, and he believes everything is for the good, he can always be happy, even during the most challenging times. Shem MiShmuel (תרע"א) teaches that even at the Akeidah, Avraham was joyous, with a *simchah* shel mitzvah, happy to perform Hashem's mitzvah. Shem MiShmuel proves this from the fact that he had a *nevuah* at this time. Chazal (Shabbos 30b) say, אין הנבואה שורה אלא מתוך שמחה, that *nevuah* only occurs when one is happy. At the Akeidah, Hashem told Avraham (22:12) אַל תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל הַנַּעַר וְאַל תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי יְרֵא אֱלֹקִים אַתָּה, "Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a G-d fearing man..." At the Akeidah, Avraham received the message not to sacrifice Yitzchak. If Avraham wasn't happy at that time, he couldn't have heard the nevuah. Avraham's *simcha* was due to his emunah and שמחה של מצוה. We can now say that

the existence of Klal Yisrael is because of שמחה של מצוה, joy while performing a mitzvah.[4]

We must know that it wasn't only Avraham Avinu who was given ten tests.

---

4. Reb Zalman Brizel zt"l, a renowned tzaddik from Yerushalayim, contracted tuberculosis in his youth. At that time, there was no cure, and the doctors did not know how to treat him. Moreover, because tuberculosis was highly contagious, people were afraid to come near him. He lay alone in bed, fighting for his life, with no visitors and no one to care for him.

One day, Reb Yisrael Grossman zt"l, a Stoliner chassid, exclaimed, "How can we allow this? A member of our kehillah is ill, and no one is looking after him. Someone must go and see how he is doing."

Reb Yisrael went to visit Reb Zalman. He was careful to keep a safe distance, and Reb Zalman was so weak that he could barely speak.

When Reb Zalman saw him, he motioned for him to come closer. Reb Yisrael hesitated. "This illness is extremely contagious. I have already taken a risk by coming here. How can I get any closer?" Yet, on the other hand, the patient was clearly asking him to approach. Perhaps he had a final request, a tzava'ah, or an important message to convey.

Realizing how important it was to Reb Zalman, Reb Yisrael decided to take the chance. He stepped closer and leaned in. Reb Zalman, barely able to speak, whispered into his ear, "נאר מיט שמחה" - "Only with simchah."

His message was profound: "I am lying here alone. No one visits me, and no one can help me. Yet I remain b'simchah. That is my salvation."

In the end, Reb Zalman recovered from the illness and lived to nearly one hundred years old.

Let us learn from this story the tremendous importance of maintaining simchah even during the most difficult and challenging

Many of our brothers of Bnei Yisrael are tested with "ten difficult tests", of various kinds. They shout out to Hashem, and their shouts go up to heaven. Think of those who are ill, or those drowning in debt, r'l. There is the person who cries ceaselessly because he wants to bear a child, and there are the parents who have older children at home, and they cry and pray for their shidduchim. Yet, another painful struggle is צער גידול בנים. They daven for nachas. They want to see their children go on the good path of Torah and mitzvos. R'l, there is sorrow and pain for those whose children were niftar young. These are tests, like that of *akeidas Yitzchak*.

Each person has their own *peckel*, but the component that unites everyone is the distress of not knowing what Hashem wants from them. The Torah tells us about Avraham Avinu's tests to teach all future generations that just as Avraham was tested for his emunah, so does Hakadosh Baruch Hu test every Yid. Hashem wants us to believe and to pronounce that everything is just, everything is from Him, and everything is for the good.

Accepting All Situations with Love

It states (Devarim 6:5) וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ, "You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your means."

Chazal explain that וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ means to love Hashem even if this requires sacrificing one's own life. (For example, for avodah zarah, one must give his life, rather than transgress. This

---

times. Often, it is precisely that attitude of joy and trust that gives a person the strength to persevere and overcome.

is to love Hashem with all one's soul.) After this we say, וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ, which Chazal (Brachos 54a) say means בכל מדה ומדה שהוא מודד לך הוי מודה לו, "Whatever portion Hashem gives you, you shall praise Him." We love Hashem and praise Him, no matter which portion He gives us.

Nesivos Shalom zt'l (Michtavei Kodesh p.149) asks why the Torah obligates us to love Him to the extent that we should be prepared to give our lives for Him, and only after that we should love Him בְּכָל מְאֹדֶךָ, which is a lower level and an easier test. After we say וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ, that we are prepared to give our lives for Hashem, why do we need to say וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ, that we also love Hashem with a lower level of love?

Apparently, to accept and to praise Hashem in each situation of life is an even higher level of love. Sometimes, it is easier to give one's life than to accept life's tests and challenges with emunah, love, and joy.

We will explain:

The Machatzis HaShekel (591:7) asks that in the tefillah, after we say the Akeidah, we request, כמו שכבש אברהם אבינו את רחמיו לעשות רצונך כן יכבשו רחמיך את כעסך מעלינו, "Just as Avraham Avinu captured his compassion to do Your will, so shall Your compassion capture Your anger from upon us." We focus on the greatness of Avraham, who passed this test. Why don't we also mention Yitzchak's portion in the test? Wasn't this also Yitzchak's test? Yitzchak Avinu was thirty-seven years old at this time. He knew why he was being bound on the mizbeiach, and he wanted to do Hashem's will. It seems that Yitzchak's mesirus nefesh, to die, is greater than Avraham Avinu's test. So, why is *Akeidas Yitzchak* counted as Avraham's test?

Machatzis HaShekel quotes the sefer Nezer HaKadosh, which raises another question. Nezer HaKadosh asks why the

Akeidah is considered the hardest of Avraham Avinu's ten tests. The Midrash (Tanchuma 22) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Avraham, 'I tested you ten times, and you passed them all. Now, pass this test [of the Akeidah], so people won't say that the first tests weren't meaningful." But why is the Akeidah greater than all the other tests? One of the tests was when Nimrod threw Avraham into a furnace in Ur Kasdim because Avraham refused to bow to idols. (According to some Rishonim, this is the first of Avraham's tests.) Avraham willingly went into the fire to sanctify Hashem's name. This test seems greater than the Akeidah.

He answers that it is easier for a person to be thrown into a furnace, which is to suffer immense pain. But then, after one dies, the pain ends. A parent sacrificing a child is a greater pain, because the distress of the parent will remain with him for days and for years to come, and it will never leave him.

With these ideas, the Machatzis HaShekel explains why the test of the Akeidah is attributed to Avraham Avinu. Yitzchak was prepared to die, which would cause suffering for a moment, but then be over. Avraham was prepared to carry the distress that would remain with him for days and years afterwards. That is a greater mesirus nefesh.[5]

---

5. The Maharal explains that the purpose of tests is not to reveal to Hashem where a person stands in his devotion or avodas Hashem, for Hashem already knows that before the test. Rather, the purpose of a test is to help a person actualize his hidden potential.

The potential already exists within him. A test brings that potential into action, thereby strengthening his character and advancing his

spiritual growth.

The Ramban writes that there were other tzaddikim in the generation of Avraham Avinu who observed the Torah. Nevertheless, they did not attain Avraham's level because they were not challenged by, and did not overcome, ten nisyonos as Avraham did.

The Baal HaTanya zt"l once sat in the beis medrash of the Maggid of Mezritch zt"l and overheard three individuals discussing the Akeidah.

One of them asked, "What is so remarkable about this test? Wouldn't every Yid be willing to sacrifice his child if Hashem spoke to him directly and commanded him to do so?"

Another replied, "That may be true, but every Yid is a descendant of Avraham Avinu and inherited Avraham's devotion to Hashem. Avraham, however, was the son of Terach. He had no righteous ancestors from whom to draw inspiration. He reached that level entirely on his own. That is why the Akeidah was such an extraordinary test for him."

A second participant was not satisfied with that explanation. "Even without the influence of righteous ancestors," he argued, "anyone who received a direct command from Hashem would surely obey. In my opinion, the greatness of the Akeidah lies in the fact that Avraham acted immediately. Hashem commanded him to offer Yitzchak, but He did not specify when. Technically, Avraham could have delayed for years. Yet because of his burning love for Hashem, he rose early and carried out the command without hesitation. That is the greatness of his deed."

The third person was unconvinced.

"In my opinion," he said, "every Yid would also rush to fulfill Hashem's will if he received such a direct command. The true greatness of Avraham was revealed when the malach stopped him. Avraham was no happier hearing that Yitzchak should live than he had been when he was commanded, והעלהו לעולה, to offer him as a korban. His sole desire was to fulfill the will of Hashem.

This also applies to the great tests of this generation. The tests of our generation aren't a one-time battle. It is a constant struggle. The yetzer hara keeps coming back in various ways. Therefore, those who pass these tests are very respected and praised in heaven.[6]

That is the most magnificent aspect of the Akeidah."

The Baal HaTanya commented that each of the three men explained the Akeidah according to the spiritual level at which he himself was holding.

6. Rav Shach zt"l once remarked during a shivah, "Not questioning Hashem is not merely an act of tzidkus; it is an expression of wisdom and common sense (חכמה ופקחות)."

He illustrated this with an example from the years when the Russians exiled many Yidden to Siberia. Those who remained behind viewed themselves as fortunate and pitied their brethren who were sent to that frozen land of suffering. Yet a few years later, when the Nazis ym"s conquered large parts of Russia and murdered the Jews living there, those exiled to Siberia survived precisely because they were no longer there. What had initially seemed like a terrible misfortune ultimately became their salvation.

From this we learn that no human being can truly know, at the outset, what is good and what is bad. What appears to be a tragedy may later reveal itself as a tremendous kindness. With our limited perspective, we are simply unable to see the full picture. Therefore, a person with wisdom understands that it is futile to question Hashem's ways.

(Reb Shach told this to Reb A.Y. Kook, Rosh Yeshivah of Meor HaTalmud in Rechovot, when Reb Kook was sitting shivah for his brother.)

I heard a remarkable story about Reb Ovadia Yosef zt"l that illustrates this lesson.

Just one week before his scheduled chasunah, his kallah began

---

describing a lifestyle very different from the one Reb Ovadia envisioned for himself. She expressed her desire to attend theaters and similar forms of entertainment together.

As a result, the engagement was called off, and the marriage never took place. Later, Reb Ovadia married Rabbanit Margalit.

When Reb Ovadia was about ninety years old, only a few years before his petirah, a woman arrived at his home insisting that she had to speak with him. She was eventually brought in and asked, "Do you remember me?"

Reb Ovadia did not.

She continued, "We were supposed to get married many years ago, but the engagement was broken a week before the chasunah. You should know that Hashem loves you. Today I am an almanah, and throughout all the years of my marriage I never had children. The doctors told me that I would never be able to have children."

The cancellation of that shidduch was undoubtedly painful for Reb Ovadia at the time. Yet, in retrospect, it was clearly for his benefit.

The same is true in our own lives. When something difficult or disappointing occurs, we should remember that Hashem sees what we cannot. Although we may not understand the reason now, we can trust that it is ultimately for our good, and that great blessing can emerge from what initially appears to be hardship.