

Bais Yaacov Bnos Malka Newsletter

לעילוי נשמת יצחק עקיבא בן אהרן ז"ל

December 2023

Parshas Vayichi

פרשת ויחי

טבת תשפ"ד



Rely on Hashem

The Torah tells us that after Yosef assured Yaakov that he would not bury him in Mitzrayim, “וישתחו ישראל על ראש המטה,” “Yisroel bowed toward the head of the bed” (*Bereishis* 47:31). *Chazal* explain that the *Shechina* rests over the head of a *choleh*, and that is why Yaakov bowed there. Rav Michoel Fodor *shlit”a* explains that a person who is sick recognizes that everything is in *Hashem*’s hands; no one else can help him. That is why the *Shechina* hovers over his bed. Someone who is ill *davens* with more *kavana* and is more focused on *Hashem*.

Rav Asher Weiss *shlit”a* explains that this is why *Hashem* ultimately heard the *tefillos* of *Bnei Yisroel* in Mitzrayim. The Torah tells us that after the king of Mitzrayim died, *Bnei Yisroel* groaned and cried out from the *avoda*, and it was at that point that *Hashem* heard their cries and chose to redeem them (*Shemos* 2:23). What is the connection between the death of Pharaoh and the people’s cries? Rav Weiss explains that *Bnei Yisroel* were under the misimpression that Pharaoh’s oppression was personal; once he died, things would get better. But then he died – and nothing changed! It was at that point that the people called out to *Hashem* in desperation. Until Pharaoh died, the people could hold on to some other hope, but now they realized that only *Hashem* could save them. Now they called out to *Hashem* with great intensity, and that is why their *tefillos* were answered. Indeed, the Ramban writes that one of the main reasons that *Hashem* saved us was because of our *tefillos*.

The more a person realizes that everything is in *Hashem*’s hands, and the more he directs his heartfelt *tefillos* to *Hashem*, the more likely it is that his *tefillos* will be answered.

Rav Avigdor Miller *ztz”l* discusses this idea often. He notes that people often consider *davening* just another thing on the list of things one needs to do in order to achieve his goals. I’ll invest in this, invest in that, and then I’ll *daven* to *Hashem* for *parnassa*. In truth, however, one must remember that *Hashem* is his **only** hope for success.

Rav Miller gives the following *meshal*: A person is totally bankrupt, and the bank is coming to foreclose on his home. He knows the bank won’t help him, and no one else he knows can help him either. Then he remembers he has a very rich second cousin. He hasn’t spoken to him in a couple of years, but that distant relative is his only hope, so he decides to call.

He is about to make the phone call. What is his mindset going into the call? He is going to prepare exactly what he is going to say, and he is going to plead with that second cousin. “Please help me! You’re my last hope! I am losing my home!” That’s how a person has to focus on *davening* to *Hashem* at all times, because that is the *emes*. Everything is in *Hashem*’s hands.

The *gemara* explains that one of the reasons that Tu B’Av is a happy day is that it was on that day that the *Dor HaMidbar* realized that the *gezeira* following the *cheit hameraglim* had stopped; people were no longer dying. Every year, around 15,000 people died on Tisha B’Av, but in the final year in the *midbar*, no one died. But the people weren’t sure if they had gotten the date right; they didn’t have a set calendar, and since the date was determined by the moon, they thought that maybe there had simply been a miscalculation. So they waited a day, and then another and another. On the 15th of the month, when the moon was full, it was clear that Tisha B’Av had passed. Since 15,000 people had not died, it was clear that the *gezeira* had been annulled. They knew that they were going to live! For that reason, Tu B’Av is a happy day.

Who were these last 15,000 people who were spared from death? Were they originally supposed to die or not? In other words, it could be that these last 15,000 were never supposed to die in the first place. Maybe that had mistakenly thought, based on their dates of birth, that they were included in the *gezeira*, but in reality, they were exempt from it. Alternatively, maybe they were, in fact, supposed to die in the *midbar*, but *Hashem* did an extra special *chesed* and allowed them to live.

If we assume that these 15,000 people were spared through *Hashem's* mercy, the question is why. Were they greater *tzaddikim* than all the others who died in the *midbar*? I once heard a beautiful *pshat*. Every year, all the people who were included in the *gezeira* to die in the *midbar* knew that 15,000 people were going to die on Tisha B'Av. Obviously, they all *davened* that it wouldn't be them; no one wants to die. But in the back of their minds, they each realized that it might not be his turn anyway. So they *davened* hard, maybe even very hard, but they knew that there was a "natural" way out. In the last year in the *midbar*, however, the 15,000 who remained knew that it was definitely their turn. When they *davened*, it was all or nothing. They realized that they could be saved only through *Hashem's* mercy, and their *tefillos* were therefore stronger than the *tefillos* of previous years.

Rav Michael Fodor *shlit"a* cites another source for this idea. The *gemara* explains that Esther invited Haman to two parties a day apart so that the Jews would be worried. She did not want them to think that everything was going to be okay because they had *protektzia* in the palace; if they were to think that way, they wouldn't *daven* as hard. So she invited Haman twice in order to purposely give the misimpression that she wasn't really on the Jews' side. The Jews then realized that they had no hope except for *Hashem*, and they *davened* even harder.

The Rashba writes that the reason that we keep our feet together during *Shemoneh Esrei* is that we should feel that without *Hashem*, we can't move. A person should *daven* as if his feet are bound, because he can't accomplish anything without *Hashem's* help. If you have that in mind when you *daven*, there is a better chance that *Hashem* will accept your *tefillos*.

A Jew has to realize that everything is in *Hashem's* hands. Even though we do *hishtadlus*, without *Hashem's* help, we can't accomplish anything in life. When a person realizes that there is no other hope except for relying on *Hashem*, his *tefillos* are different, and there is a much better chance of *Hashem* listening and sending salvation.

Have a wonderful and Peaceful Shabbos!

The Dvar Torah has been adapted from the shiurim of Harav Beinish Ginsburg



Kita Daled finished Parshas Naso and made chocolate lollipops in Parsha themes.



Rainy
day
projects
with art!





Middot Tovot School Decorations!

