

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Golden Opportunity Of Tefillah

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

In this week's Parsha, the Pasuk states (2:5), "When no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because Hashem had not sent rain upon the earth and there were no human beings to work the soil." Rashi comments on this Pasuk and says, "And what is the reason that Hashem had not caused it to rain? Because there was no man to work the ground, therefore no one to recognize the benefit of the rain. When Adam came, however, and he realized that it was necessary for the world, he prayed for it and it fell, so that trees and vegetation sprang forth." The Gemara in Chulin says, "We learn from here that Hashem desires the Tefillah of Tzadikim." (Obviously Hashem has no needs and He desires the Tefillah of Tzadikim because it elevates them, and assists them in reaching greater heights.)

If we contemplate the magnitude of what is being said here it is mind boggling. The entire world was created for Adam Harishon, and the extent of the Chesed that Adam received is indescribable. This Chesed allowed him to reach immeasurable heights in his connection to Hashem. Yet, Hashem felt that this is not enough, and there is another dimension of Chesed that He wanted to bestow upon him. The Chesed of giving him the opportunity to Daven for rain. Depriving Adam of this opportunity to Daven and elevate himself would have been a lack in the Chesed Hashem.

We can glean an important insight from here that can help us deepen our appreciation of Tefillah. Tefillah can connect us to Hashem beyond being the recipient of all of Hashem's Chesed and having the whole world created for you. Through recognizing a lack in our needs, we are able to connect to Hashem beyond what

would seem to be the ultimate good from Hashem. This leads us to the conclusion that the opportunity to Daven is truly the ultimate Chesed Hashem.

The Power Of Gentle Words

It says in Sefer Koheles (9:17) "Words spoken softly by wise men are heeded sooner than those shouted by a ruler in folly." Rashi comments, "Moshe passed away many years ago, yet his decrees are still accepted by Yisroel, and how many kings of the nations issue decrees over Yisroel, but their words do not endure."

Upon initial analysis this is perplexing. Rashi seems to be saying that the reason Klal Yisrael is following Moshe's directives is because of his soft and gentle delivery. This is what created its lasting power. One would have thought that our commitment to follow Moshe's directives is due to our knowledge that this is the Dvar Hashem. As opposed to the edicts and decrees of kings which are man made?

We can derive an important lesson from here, the most powerful force in our ability to maintain a long term commitment to the Torah is not our knowledge that this is the Dvar Hashem, but rather the fact that it was given over with love and care in a gentle manner. Often we think a harsh tone and threats accomplish more than soft spoken words, we see from here that the opposite is true.

This lesson is so appropriate for parents and educators whose primary goal is to instill a long term commitment, rather than short term compliance.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

Thus said Hashem: A nation who survived the sword, found favor in the wilderness; When Yisroel was marching homeward. Klal Yisroel responds: It is true for from afar a long time ago Hashem revealed Himself to me however now He has hidden his face from me in exile. Hashem responds: An everlasting love I conceived for you then; My love for you was not temporary, rather, it was so that the love will be eternal, therefore I extended my kindness with you. By revealing Myself to you in all My glory upon Har Sinai so that My love for you will be eternal, not merely temporary.

(Yirmiyahu 31:2, 3 with Radak's commentary)

We see from the words of the Radak that no matter how much Hashem did for us the only way for our love to last eternally is "by revealing Myself to you in all My glory upon Har Sinai," through Torah. For no matter how much we owe Him, as in any relationship, only through the eternal loving communication we experience with Him each and every day through the study of His Torah where "at every time and moment He teaches us knowledge, understanding and intelligence in the wisdom of the Torah, and the Shechina sits opposite him and makes him wise and teaches him the wisdom of the Torah," (Bach, Orbach Chaim 294:1,1) can our infinite love continue to burn bright as ever. As Rashi writes in Shir HaShirim (1:4), "With this, they are still joyful today and happy with Him despite their afflictions and distress; and they delight in the Torah, and there they recall His love more than wine, and the sincerity of their love for Him."



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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If true bitachon is unstoppable then why do tzaddikim ever suffer?

The Vilna Gaon addresses this question in a comment on the following Gemara (Brachos 60a).

The Sages taught: *There was an incident involving Hillel the Elder, who was coming on the road when he heard a scream in the city. He said: I am certain that the scream is not coming from my house. And of him, the verse says: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord." (Psalms 112:7) Rava said: Any way that you interpret this verse, its meaning is clear. It can be interpreted from beginning to end or it can be interpreted from end to beginning. The Gemara explains: It can be interpreted from beginning to end: Why is it that: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings?" Because his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. The Gemara continues: And it can be interpreted from end to beginning: One whose heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord is a person who shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*

The Vilna Gaon (Imrei No'am, ibid) comments on the above Gemara: "This that there are tzaddikim who suffered one must explain that it all depends on the strength of bitachon in their heart."

Indeed, nothing can stand in the way of complete bitachon in our Father in heaven!