

Tefillah Transforms The דין

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

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In this week's Parsha, Parshas Toldos, Yitzchak blesses Yaakov (27:28), "Elokim should give you the dew of heaven and from the fat of the land..". Rashi comments, "Why does the Pasuk use the name Elokim, which refers to justice? If you are worthy, Hashem will give it to you, and if you are not worthy, He will not give it to you. However, to Eisav he said, 'from the fat of the land will be your dwelling', whether you are a Tzadik or a Rasha, He will give it to you. From here Shlomo Hamelech learned how to arrange his Tefillah when he made the Beis Hamikdash. Bnei Yisrael possess Emunah and will accept the Din and not complain, therefore Shlomo davened, 'You should give a person according to his ways..(Kings 1, 8:39). However, a non-Jew lacks this faith, therefore Shlomo davened 'You should do everything that the non-Jew asked for, whether or not he is worthy, in order so that he does not complain (Kings 1, 8:43)."

This Rashi provides us with a profound insight into how Hashem runs the world based on each person's own worldview and reaction to what he receives. What needs to be explored is the concept that someone who is not worthy will receive something that he does not deserve, so that he will not complain. We know that everything Hashem does is for the best and perfect, so how is this fair? How can someone continue to receive

good that he doesn't deserve out of concern that he may complain?

It must be that Hashem will find other ways to carry out the Din. He will find other things to take away, as illustrated in the following story. The Gemara shares a story of an astrologer who kept avoiding mishaps happening to him through astrology. Finally, his son got sick and he could not do anything. He approached a Tanna to ask him what to do. The Tanna responded, "The other things you avoided would have taken the place of your son getting sick, but now there is nothing to do."

This Yesod brings to the forefront the following question on Tefillah: why should I daven and ask for my requests to be fulfilled, perhaps getting what I ask for or what I don't deserve, if it will just cause me to have other problems I don't want?

To this we must answer that Tefillah is not only about asking for your requests. Tefillah works in a way that it can actually change the Din. When we daven, that process transforms us from being undeserving to deserving. This idea can help us reframe our view on davening. Tefillah is not just about making requests, but it is also about making a movement to be Zoche in Din.



Shir Hashirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

Being Close To Hashem Is Transformative

In this week's Parsha, Parshas Toldos, (26:2-5) Hashem appears to Yitzchak and tells him not to go down to Egypt....and He will make his children as numerous as the stars and give the land of Hashem. This is all due to the fact that "Avraham listened to my voice.." Yitzchak is being told that it is all due to the merits of Avraham and not his own merits. The Seforno comments, "This was before Yitzchak was inspired to call in the name of Hashem. However, after he called in the name of Hashem (Pasuk 26), Avimelech came to him...he no longer had complaints and fights against him as he did originally."

Upon initial analysis the Seforno is perplexing. At this point in Yitzchak's life, he had passed the test of Akeidas Yitzchak, totally willing to submit to whatever his father said, and he was a Navi. The closeness that Yitzchak had to Hashem is unimaginable. Yet, before he built a Mizbeach and called out to Hashem, his own Zechusim were not enough to merit him on his own, and he needed Avraham. Why did calling out to Hashem make all the difference now in Yitzchak being able to stand on his own merits?

We see from here that even if someone is very close to Hashem, every further step that they take in getting closer to Hashem can be transformative for their lives. Through Yitzchak calling in the name of Hashem, he was able to completely turn around how people were interacting with him. We can assume that this applies not only to building a Mizbeach and calling out to Hashem, but to anything we do to get close to Hashem.



Emunah Highlights

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Speaking About Hashem

In this week's Parsha, Parshas Toldos, Yitzchak says to Yaakov (27:21) "Please come close and I will feel you my son. Are you my son Eisav or not?". Clearly, Yitzchak was suspicious. The Ramban comments, "Rashi says that Yitzchak said in his heart that it is unlike Eisav to have the name of Hashem fluent in his mouth...I am bothered by this since Yitzchak did not view Eisav as a Rasha! Perhaps his viewpoint on Eisav was that since Eisav was a hunter, he did not mention the name of Hashem out of fear of mentioning it in a place that was impure or with intent, which was viewed by Yitzchak as fear of Hashem."

The perspective of the Ramban seems to be that Eisav not mentioning the name of Hashem would really deem someone a Rasha. However, since Yitzchak thought he was acting for the sake of heaven it was an expression of Yiras Shamayim. This is somewhat perplexing as we would have assumed that not mentioning the name of Hashem does not make someone a Rasha, but rather not such a big Tzaddik. So the Ramban should have said, "I am puzzled as Yitzchak did not look at Eisav as not such a Tzaddik." How can we explain the Ramban?

It must be that the Ramban feels that if someone is connected to Hashem they will automatically speak and connect Hashem to everything in their lives. However if someone is not connected to Hashem, that will result in them not having the name of Hashem on their tongue. Therefore, Eisav not mentioning Hashem would be reflective of a deeper issue, if not for the alternative interpretation given by Ramban.

It is clear from here that Hashem's name, who is the One orchestrating everything in our lives, should be mentioned in everything that we do. Failure to do so may reflect a deep concern that we are really disconnected from Hashem, deeming us a Rasha. We should therefore try to strengthen our relationship with Hashem which will automatically result in us speaking about Hashem in everything that we do.