

טוב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

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טיב המערכת

ומל ה' אלקיך את לבבך

Hashem, your G-d, will circumcise your heart

One evening during Elul in the Bais Midrash of the holy Baal Shem Tov, the congregation was getting ready for Maariv and the Baal Shem Tov came in and went to his place but did not open his siddur.

The congregation waited quite a while, until suddenly, the face of the Tzaddik shone and began the Tefillah. After the Tefillah, his Chassidim gathered around the Rebbe to hear what happened and this is what the Tzaddik told them:

In a village there was a young Jew who became distant from the ways of the Torah and mitzvos until he totally left Judaism and went to live as a complete *goy*. He lived like this for thirty years until one day he happened to find himself in a Jewish village. He saw them all busy and preparing. When he asked them what was the special occasion, they told him that we are Jews preparing for a great day called Yom HaDin [Judgment Day], the day that the Creator created man and on this day He judges all the creations.

The man was very moved by the answer. When he was young, he himself used to go with his father for *selichos* and the davening of Yomim Noraim. His heart began to pound, and he continued to walk until he came to the entrance of a shul. When he heard the congregation begin Maariv, he wanted to join them, but he was ashamed because he looked like and was dressed like a *goy*. He went into the ladies' section which as empty, opened a siddur and said:

"*Ribono shel olam*, I know that there is no sinner like me in the world, but I also know that You are merciful and compassionate! Accept my Tefillah and forgive me, and from now on I will no longer sin."

The pure Tefillah of the Baal Teshuva made a great impression in Heaven and brought along with it Tefillos that had been waiting for hundreds of years. The Baal Shem Tov concluded: When I saw the turbulence caused by the man, I waited. I wanted to *daven* together with him, and so we merited that our Tefillos rose with his Tefillah straight to the Throne of Glory.

When a person wants to repent for his sins and begin to walk on the straight and good path, it is difficult for him because his heart is accustomed to sin. So the Torah promises us that if you want to do Teshuva then, 'ומל ה' אלוקיך את לבבך' – 'Hashem, your G-d, will circumcise your heart' (30:6), Hashem Yisbarach the foreskin of your heart and then the path of Teshuva will be much easier, to which Chazal have said (Shabbos 104a) 'one who comes to be purified, they help him'.

- Tiv HaTorah - Nitzavim

טיב ההשגחה

'Be written and sealed for good' – 'כתיבה וחתימה טובה'

We endured many difficulties trying to register our son for yeshiva high school. Registration was particularly difficult during Corona, both from the high school and the elementary school. And how to take his *bechina*. Also, I am a father who is not sure of which yeshiva is right for my son as it has only been 20 years since I finished yeshiva. Here I must explain that the elementary school recommended a yeshiva that was not right for my son. I got this from a close friend who was interested in which yeshiva I was sending my son, and when he heard, he was not pleased and suggested a yeshiva more suited for my son. He tried to use his pull to at least get my son a *bechina* and acceptance interview. Eventually, he was able to get my son in literally a few days before *Elul zman*, but since it was vacation and the rebbe giving the *bechina* was in one city and the *mashgiach* was in another city, everything had to be done in one day.

My son prepared himself for the Gemara *bechina*, and while travelling to the rebbe, I reviewed the Gemara with him, but my son was stuck on a long Tosfos and he wanted to focus on it. I suggested that he review the whole Gemara, but he insisted on spending the time just on that Tosfos. For 45 minutes he worked on that Tosfos until we got to the rebbe. Amazingly, the rebbe questioned him just on that Tosfos which by now he knew quite well. Then we traveled to the *mashgiach* for the interview. We went in his house with a little concern that at the end of the day it was a little strange that a good student wanted to be accepted at the last minute, but the *protechsia* worked for an interview, but he was still not sure that he would be accepted.

We went into the interview with trembling heart and mouth full of prayer. The interview had just begun when his son ran into the living room. He tried to bring his son out, but the boy refused. I realized that his son is a special needs child and I called his son over to sit by me. The father was very pleased with my patience and he asked me my connection to special children. I explained that I grew up with them as my parents started an organization for special needs children so my natural connection to them is different from others who have to learn to associate with them. It was explained that they had used my parents' organization and the interview then began calmly. When we left, my son promised money to *tzedakah* with the hope of being accepted to the yeshiva, this is what he said: "Abba, the moment his son came in the room and you were joking with him, I understood that Heaven made this happen so that if there he had a doubt, he no longer had a doubt and he would accept me." Baruch Hashem he was accepted and learns well.

כה.

אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם. (כט:ט)

You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d. (29:9)

If you switch the 'tav' and the 'mem' in the word *atem* [אתם], you now have the word *emes* [אמת] – truth. That is, the Torah is hinting to us that with the power of truth a person can stand before Hashem with complete integrity. The Torah is not just referring to the righteous of the generation, rather, from the greatest of the generation to the plain populace and it implies even converts. When the posuk continues **ראשיכם שבטיכם זקניכם ושטריכם כל איש ישראל טפכם נשיכם וגרך אשר בקרב מחניך** – 'Your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel; your small children, your women, and your convert who is in the midst of your camp, from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water', this excellent trait can apply to any person at any level.

Not only this, but by going by the true light the person becomes fit to stand before HaKadosh Baruch Hu in judgment. It is brought down in the Zohar HaKadosh on this posuk, that when it says '*hayom*' it is referring to the great and awesome *Yom HaDin* – Rosh Hashanah, when all creations stand before the Judge of the world and pass like sheep, who will merit to be written for kindness and mercy, and in contrast, whoever is not worthy will be decreed on him on this day that the trait of judgment will be meted out against him *Rachmana litzlan*. By the person conducting himself in all his ways as if on a balance scale and he weighs his steps and goes in the light of the trait of truth, he merits to stand in judgment and he goes out innocent from all sin to be written in the book of the completely righteous.

The Torah of truth – תורת אמת

The Torah reveals to us that the way for a person to go with truth is by following the commands of the Torah and its mitzvos which the Torah calls '*Toras Emes*' – the Torah of truth as it says (Malachi 2:6), **תורת אמת היתה בפיהו ועולה לא נמצא בשפתיו** – 'The Torah of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and with fairness, and turned many away from iniquity'. This is why we recite in the Bircas HaTorah '**אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת**' – 'Who gave us the Torah of truth', through this we earn **והיי עולם נטע בתוכינו** – 'and implanted eternal life within us', this also causes that one mitzvah leads to another and we can bring others to Teshuva.

The entire blueprint of the Torah are words of truth as it is brought down in the Gemara 'like an actual Torah – this are the sections of the mezuzah that includes all topics of the Torah, whether acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven or the yoke of Torah and mitzvos (Megillah 16b; see Tosfos to Menachos 32b) and it is brought down in the Mishna (Berachos 2:2) 'Why does the passage of '*Shema*' precede the parsha of '*Vehaya im shamoa*'? Only so one will first accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and afterward accept upon himself the yoke of mitzvos.' If we fulfill the Torah and mitzvos this way, we will come to the characteristic of truth which causes him to stand properly before Hashem.

It is not in Heaven – לא בשמים היא

But perhaps the person will say, 'What do I have to do with this trait? I am many miles away from the truth like east is from west.' Therefore, the Torah testifies and says (30:11-14), **כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוך היום לא נפלאה הוא ממך ולא רחקה** – 'For this mitzvah that I command you today, it is not hidden from you and it is not distant. It is not in the heavens... It is not across the sea...', rather, **כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפוך ובלבבך לעשותו** – 'it is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to perform it.'

Therefore, a person should not think that he is not at this level, and he cannot even touch it, for there is nothing in the words of the Torah that was not given for man to attain and perform, rather, everything was given for man to attain and he has the ability to do them like the testimony of the Torah.

Not only in this must we know that there is no holding back from keeping it, but we can even keep all the words of the Torah and its laws and commandments. Our main diligence and persistence involved in the study of Torah is not far from us, the things are actually very close to us. There is nothing holding us back and there is no valid reason to hold us back from being involved in Torah at all times, rather, we can actually fulfill 'it is very near to you', and whoever increases his learning will feel that the Torah is close to him and it is easy to attain.

But this does not diminish the exalted worth of the holy Torah, to the extent that the angels wanted it for themselves and they did not let Moshe Rabeinu bring it down to this world to give it to flesh and blood people, until he replied as he did and they could not argue with him. Now, a person cannot say that the Torah is unreachable since the Torah testifies that it is not in Heaven, rather, he must faithfully know that it is broader than the earth and wider than the sea and higher than the highest point and there is no end to its attainability. However, together with all this the matter is very close to us since the Torah was not given to the Angels of Servitude, rather, it was specifically given to people to delve into it and learn novel approaches and it is in our power and mouths to do this.

כי לא יטוש ה' עמו – For Hashem will not cast off His people

The Torah is not the only thing called '*Toras Emes*', but even *Am Yisrael* which studies and keeps the Torah are called the Nation of Truth, which lives and exists forever as it states (Shmuel I 15:29) **וגם נצח ישראל לא ישקר** – 'Moreover, the Eternal One of Israel does not lie'. Israel was promised that even if they were cursed with all these curses they will still be standing. Rashi quotes the Midrash Aggadah (29:12) which asks, 'Why was the passage of '*Atem nitzavim*' juxtaposed with the curses? Because Israel had heard 98 curses besides the 49 curses in *Toras Kohanim*. Their faces turned pale and they said, "Who can bear these?" Moshe began to console them, "You are standing today". Although you have caused much anger to the Omnipresent, He has not made total destruction of you, and behold you exist before Him.' Despite all the words of rebuke, you continue to live and exist.

Despite Hashem agonizing His nation with a lengthy, heart-pounding rebuke, but we are still His nation and are strengthened with words of consolation and encouragement. We were even sworn to that He will never forsake us as it states (Yeshaya 66:22), **כי כאשר השמים החדשים והארץ החדשה אשר אני עשה**, – 'For just as the new heavens and the new earth that I will make will endure before Me, the word of Hashem, so will your offspring and your name endure'. Similarly it states (Shmuel I 12:22) **כי לא יטוש ה' את עמו בעבור שמו הגדול כי הואיל ה' לעשות אתכם לו לעם** – 'For Hashem shall not forsake His people for the sake of His great Name, for Hashem has sworn to make you for a people unto Him.'

We can for ourselves a way of life from these words. If a person is smitten with an affliction, we must strengthen and encourage him despite that he is being punished for something in *avodas Hashem*, for after the punishment he becomes an upright person who needs encouragement as Rambam rules (Hilchos Sanhedrin 17:7): One who sins and is punished reverts to his upright state as it states (Devorim 25:3) **ונקלה אחיך לעיניך** – 'and your brother will be degraded in your eyes' – the Gemara (Makkos 23a) 'once he has been flogged he is like your brother'. Just as Hashem consoled and encouraged His nation with many words and He showers us with love when we repent, as it says (30:9-10) **כי ישוב ה' לשוב עליך לטוב כי תשמע בקול ה' אלקיך** – 'when Hashem will return to rejoice over you for good when you listen to the voice of Hashem, your G-d.'