

טוב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו הרה"צ ר' גמליאל רבינוביץ שליט"א

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טיב המערכת

ויהי הגשם על הארץ – And the rain was upon the earth

There once was a king whose dear son sinned against him. The king got angry at his son and ordered that he be banished to a faraway land. After this happened, the king's mercy was aroused for his son and he wanted to lessen the decree. He immediately ordered his servants to build him a unique palace made of only earth and clay. Whoever would see this structure would think he was in a desolate desert. The servants built the palace as the king instructed, and the king made it his residence and from there he watched over his son to see for his wellbeing and that he not lack anything. The prince stayed in that place while sad, and whenever a person would 'happen' to pass there, the prince would tell him how his father had banished him to this place and the king did not have mercy on his son.

One day one of the king's wise men 'happened' to pass by there. The prince approached him, and the prince told him how his father decreed to banish him there. The wise man told him, "Why don't you ask him for mercy? Why don't you fall at the king's feet and ask for his forgiveness by crying and begging?" The prince was surprised, "How can I fall at his feet when he sent me to this faraway and desolate place, as distant as east is from west?" The wise man replied, "You should know that the king is not so far away at all. Just the opposite, the king is very close by and he has been sitting and watching over you every moment. Speak to him and I assure you that with his generous mercy he will forgive you."

Even when HaKadosh Baruch Hu decided to bring an end to the generation of the flood, He waited 120 years until Noach built the ark, and after that He waited another seven days after the death of Mesushelach, and even after all these deadlines passed and the people of the generation did not repent, the flood began to descend in the form of rain, so that if they did Teshuva they would change into rains of blessing.

Sometimes we think and we are even certain that 'כלתה הרעה מאת המלך' – 'the king's evil determination against him was final' (Esther 7:7), but the truth is that even if we see that all the deadlines have passed, HaKadosh Baruch Hus is with us in every situation and waits for our Teshuva. Even if the flood has already begun to come down, we must believe that if we do Teshuva everything will convert to good for us, and the flood waters will turn into rains of blessing.

- Tiv HaTorah - Noach

טיב ההשגחה

'הבוטח בהם חסד יסובבנו'

'He who trusts in them, grace will surround us'

On Motzei Shabbos and Simchas Torah I heard Havdalah in shul along with many friends who stayed waiting for second *hakafos* that continued late into the night.

So as not to waste precious time, I sat with my *chavrusa* to learn in the Bais Midrash. A short while later, I wanted to drink a cup of coffee to revive myself, but where would I find coffee now? My friend told me that there was no way I would find coffee now in that area, and as for me, when I hear that there is 'no way', it is enough for me to jump and I told him that '*ein od milvado*' – 'there is none other beside Him', and if the Creator of the world wanted, then I would have an abundance of coffee!!!

I immediately began thinking of ways that Hashem could send me coffee, and after discussing it, we agreed that in the end Hashem will send the coffee only in a way that we did not think about.

After learning a little, we went out to get some air, and to our great amazement, diagonally across from the Bais Midrash was a 'coffee room' all set up. The problem was that it cost one shekel for a cup of coffee... I was still wearing Shabbos clothes and I did not have a shekel on me. My friend turned and noticed a small sign that read: "Coffee tonight is reserved for those who are learning, free!!!" I was very happy, and I thanked Hashem for His many kindnesses.

My friend was also happy, and he reminded me that a few months ago, an incident happened also while we were learning and there was no milk for the coffee. I told him that Hashem would send it, and he thought it would never happen... I asked him, "Is Hashem's arm short?" He told me that it was not, but there would not be milk for the coffee in a normal way.

A few minutes later, an older man who I help called me and asked for a favor. I went up to his home for a moment and when I turned to go, he asked that I do him a favor and donate his milk to the yeshiva since he is not allowed to drink milk and it came in his food package.

I was so excited then!!! This was like a hug that Hashem said, "I am with you", or in other words, "I am watching over you", and the stronger one's *Emunah* is, so too is the *hashgacha* of Hashem Who changes things in a most unnatural way.

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בתחבולות תעשה לך מלחמה
Through strategies you can wage war

טיב הפרשה

תמים היה בדרתיו (ו:ט) - (6:9) Perfect in his generations

Rashi explains: There are some Rabbis who expound this as praise, all the more so if he had been in a generation of righteous people, he would have been even more righteous. And there are those who expound it detrimentally, when compared to his generation he was righteous, but if he had been in the generation of Avraham, he would not have been considered anything.

Seemingly, this is difficult, if we are able to expound Noach for praise, then why expound him detrimentally? Also, we must understand Rashi's intent by using the anonymous term "some of our Rabbis" without naming them since their names are explicitly mentioned in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 108a), as R' Yochanan and Reish Lakish. Additionally, even if Rashi had reason to be anonymous and not mention the Rabbis, we have to understand why Rashi did not use this format: 'There is an argument in the Gemara, one expounds for praise etc.' The way Rashi wrote it is misleading since the expression 'some Rabbis' might lead one to think that there many taking sides in the argument, but the truth is there were only two wise men in the Gemara who disagreed.

Perhaps we can say that Rashi is coming to teach us the acceptable way in *avodah*. That is, from then and forever the great ones of our nation disagree on the correct way for a person to go in the ways of *avodah*. Some Rabbis say that a person should consider every deed that he does for HaKadosh Baruch Hu should arouse a joy within him that he merited to fulfill it since by doing this he will encourage many others to do the same. Some Rabbis say that a person should minimize every deed he does and to think that he has still not truly done the *avodah*. These Rabbis are the opposite of the other Rabbis as they claim that their approach can bring a person to arrogance.

This is what Rashi is hinting to with his words 'some Rabbis expound for praise', as they say that one must consider every deed that a person does for good. According to their way of thinking, Noach felt that he deserved praise since his actions were very meaningful, and he would say about himself, 'Had I been in the generation of Avraham, I would have been more righteous'. That is, not only am I pleased with my portion that I merited to arouse satisfaction for HaKadosh Baruch Hu with my actions, there is another attribute, that I want to be in the generation of Avraham, for then Avraham would have enlightened my eyes and my understanding and I would have been able to serve Hashem Yisbarach even better. I would have been more righteous. From the power of this desire my actions would have been elevated and they would have been considered by Heaven as if I had fulfilled them in their entirety like in the generation of Avraham. They would have then been categorized as stated in the Gemara (Berachos 6a) 'If one thought to do a mitzvah but did not actually do it, the Torah counts it as if he did it'. This is how Noach acted according to the Rabbis who expounded for praise, to arouse the craving to do more and more good deeds. However, 'some Rabbis expounded detrimentally' that a person must minimize his actions, perhaps he will come to haughtiness. According to them, even Noach minimized himself by saying when compared to Avraham, his actions are not worth anything.

Rashi brings both views to teach that nowadays it is fitting to expound both ways. Sometimes a person has to serve Hashem Yisbarach this way, and sometimes that way, and only by grabbing hold of both ways will he avoid the trap of the *yetzer*.

In earlier times, people knew how to choose between encouragement and boasting. In those times a person could look for praise from the general public and he need not be concerned that the people will think that he is blending encouragement and boasting. Nowadays, due to our small-mindedness things are different. The result is that the one seeking praise might cause arrogance, therefore, one should not grab hold of this trait. However, on the other hand, one cannot focus on minimizing his actions too much like those who expound detrimentally, and he will minimize his actions to the point that it will bring him to sadness. Therefore, he has no choice but to grab hold of both together, and when he sees that sadness brings him to laziness, he must be encouraged with the joy in that he merits to bring satisfaction with his deeds, and he will think about his actions. However, if he sees that this results in wanting honor, which is arrogance, then he should minimize the value of his deeds in his eyes. The matter goes around in a circle, and though he is pleased with himself, there is a thread of sadness that makes him minimize his actions and tells him they are valueless. Then, his soul will be saved from the claws of the *yetzer*, and his heart will enlarge in the ways of Hashem to seek out more praise, and joy will arouse through the merit of devoting his time to Hashem Yisbarach and His Torah. This will save him from the guiles of the *yetzer*.

Similarly, I heard from Rebbe Natah Freund zt"l, on that which is written in the Torah when Hashem spoke to Kayin (4:7) הלווא אם – תיטיב שאת ואם לא תיטיב לפתח חטאת רובץ' – 'Is it not true that if you do good, you will be forgiven? But if you do not do good, at the entrance, sin crouches.' The explanation is: 'If you do good' – if a person thinks that he is doing good, then he will come to 'you will be forgiven' [*se'ais* literally means lift up] which is arrogance, the mother of all sin. If so, then it would be better not to think about his actions. 'But if not', if he considers his actions and *avodah* as completely nothing, then, this is worse for 'at the entrance sin crouches', that is, then the *yetzer* of sadness will break him as he does nothing acceptable to Heaven. We find that there is no way to save him from the *yetzer*, so what is the remedy? נע ונד תהיה בארץ' – 'you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on earth' (4:12), one must always wander from thought to thought. If the *yetzer* tells him that he is nothing, he should think about his actions. If it tells him that he is accomplished, then he should think that his actions are minimal, then his Torah and *avodah* will be acceptable to Heaven.

I saw an *avodah* like this by my *mechutan*, Rebbe Zundel Kroizer zt"l. R' Zundel had the custom not to eat meat during the week. He based this on Chazal (Pesachim 49b) that an unlearned person is not allowed to eat meat. Whoever knew R' Zundel knew he was a man of truth and if he did not consider himself unlearned, he would not have taken on this custom, since he was very humble.

Once, the opportunity arose, and I asked him, "Our Rebbe, teach me! How can you call yourself unlearned? You are familiar with all aspects of Torah, the *sefer* 'Ohr HaChamah' on the Torah and on Shas is before us and testifies to your brilliance, how can you say that you are an unlearned person?"

Rebbe Zundel replied: "Whenever I start to think thoughts like this, I turn my mind to the truly righteous of the previous generations, and I think to myself that my writings help our generation, but if these *seforim* were in earlier years, even in the generation of the Chazon Ish, they would be considered nothing." In his humility, this is how R' Zundel replied, but as anyone who looks in his *seforim* can testify, the truth is, his words are sweet and illuminate the eyes, and are fit to be on the table of the *Talmidei Chachamim* of earlier generations.