

טוב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

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

English Edition

Vayeishev

5783

No.

653.553

טיב המערכת

ימי שמחה והלל - Days of Rejoicing and praise

It is well-known that when Jews began to live in America, they were confronted by great challenges to keep their religion. Unfortunately, many did not have the fortitude to stand up to it and they left the ways of their fathers. One of the difficult challenges was keeping Shabbos since employers did not want to hire people that would not work on Shabbos. Therefore, there were Jews who were fired every week, and after Shabbos they would look for a new job. Those Jews were divided into two groups. There were those who came home Erev Shabbos with downfallen faces and would painfully relate how they had to leave their jobs again so as not to desecrate the Shabbos. Despite their *mesiros nefesh* [devotion], when their children got older, they did not follow the ways of their fathers and they discarded the yoke of Torah and mitzvos from upon them. But there were others who came home Erev Shabbos and related with joy about their devotion for the honor of Shabbos. Their children continued in their ways and remained *yirei Hashem*. The Rambam wrote in Hilchos Chanukah (3:1), 'Because of the miracle, the Chachamim established that in that generation that these eight days beginning with the night of the 25th of Kislev should be days of rejoicing and praise'. Since the main establishment for these days is rejoicing, we have to know how to achieve this. Of course the intent is not for frivolous rejoicing or the joy that comes from too many doughnuts or latkes... rather it comes from the joy of the mitzvah.

It is told regarding one of the great ones of the previous generation who had an only son. This son did not follow in the ways of his righteous father. When the man was old, he was once asked why his son had not followed in his ways? The *tzaddik* replied, "Because I did not stretch out the *seudos Shabbos* and not singing many *zemiros Shabbos*." When they asked him why he saw this as the reason, he replied, "When the son sees his father rejoice with the mitzvos, then he too will want to do them and keep them, and in this way he will continue in the ways of his father. But since my son did not see the joy of the mitzvah with me, therefore, he did not continue on the way."

We are standing at the beginning of the holy days of Chanukah, and this is the opportunity for us to instill in our hearts the simcha [joy], to show and feel the dearness of the mitzvah. To approach the lighting of the lamps with a joy for the mitzvah, and by doing this we will train ourselves and our children to love the Torah and the mitzvos, and the One Who gave the Torah.

- Tiv HaMoadim - Chanukah

טיב ההשגחה

'My strength and the power of my hand' – 'כוחי ועוצם ידי'

Moreinu HaRav shlit"za tells the following: A man came to my house and he saw that the lock on the entrance door was broken. He immediately offered to repair the cylinder. I asked him if he knew how to fix locks, and he replied in a singsong voice, "Sure!!!"

But a "Sure" like this can have two meanings. From speech to deed, he began to work with the lock. But as the minutes passed, he worked harder and harder on it without success. When I saw how hard he was working, I suggested to him that it was possible that HaKadosh Baruch Hu was standing there giving him a life lesson. He wondered and asked, "What lesson?" I told him that when he answered me with such self-confidence "Sure", instead he should have said, "I will try to fix it, and with Hashem's help, we will do it and we will succeed."

He thought about it, accepted it, retracted what he said, and he would succeed only with the help of Hashem Yisbarach...

Not three minutes later and the lock was repaired.

He was amazed since usually he fixes locks like this in seconds, and here he learned a life lesson.

~*~*~*~

Moreinu HaRav also relates on the same topic regarding a man who always *davens* with the intents of the Reshah from a special siddur. He leaves this siddur in a steady place in a corner of *shtieblach*. He always takes the siddur and returns it to the same place after he finishes *davening*. One morning he came to *daven* but the siddur was not in its place. He looked around but the siddur was not there. He smiled to himself, why did Hashem do this? He was about to begin Shemona Esrei, he thought that he had to do Teshuva since he could not have the proper concentration without the siddur.

While thinking about doing Teshuva, the siddur was placed before him, and he was able to *daven* from the siddur with the proper concentrations. He thought that a man who had never *davened* there was late for his regular minyan and came to *shtieblach* to *daven*, saw the siddur on a shelf, and because he saw the name written inside it, he returned it.

Rav Gamliel made the following point: HaKadosh Baruch Hu, in His mercy, stirs sensitivity within us, and the moment we get the point, everything is arranged for the best. We just have to contemplate why Hashem is doing these things, and we would avoid many distresses...

מורינו הרב שליט"א

חיזוק חעמוד בניסיונות
The encouragement to withstand challenges

וַיִּמָּאן (לט, ח)
But he refused (39:8)

We have a general principle that every statement in the Torah comes to enlighten and teach Israel the way they are to go. Some statements are 'express directives', what a person should do or not do. Some statements come as 'stories', and its purpose is to teach the person how to withstand the *yetzer* that wants to distract him and hold him back from fulfilling his obligation. One who thinks about them will understand by himself what the intent of the Torah was to teach us with every story.

In light of this, when we come to Parashas Vayeishev when the Torah begins to describe at length the events of Yosef HaTzaddik from when he was seventeen until his passing at age 110, we must understand that the Torah wants us to consider the direction of Yosef so that we can learn from how he conducted his life, so let us consider his events. Let us glimpse for a moment at that fateful time when the wife of his master became angry when she tried to get him to sin. It is known from Chazal that this cursed individual tried many times to seduce him until he almost capitulated to sin. There is a view in Chazal that things came to the point where Yosef almost gave in to her, however, at the end of the day he withstood the challenge of her seduction.

When we consider Yosef's situation at that time, we see in addition to the provocation of the wife of his master, Yosef was also tested with the very situation of one regiment of awesome hiddenness. At that time Yosef was filled with doubts, he knew that he had never stumbled with sin, yet even so, all these bad things were happening to him and he was abused for nothing. First, his flesh was exposed in the field, and while still alive, he was thrown in with snakes and scorpions. After this he was made into 'merchandise' since he was sold from one to another. Now he was turned into a slave where his entire being was dependent on others. He wondered to himself, 'Why is all this happening to me? All this suffering and degradation? It seems that I will never leave this master until I die, why is Hashem doing this to me?'

His unhappy state served as enough of a reason to throw doubt in his *emunah* and give free rein to his negative desires. With all this, he strengthened his pure *emunah* and stood with firm resolve to strengthen the ways of the Torah.

The first results of his withstanding his challenge is explained in our parsha. There we read that if the extent of the concealment was not enough, and the extent of his grief and humiliation, which had been his lot until now, we find room to add to his humiliation and place him under lock and key, and why? Because he did the opposite of what he was accused of! And we still haven't touched on the size of his shame that was his lot at the time, since she was not satisfied with her wickedness that those ruling the country knew of her lies and plots. Rather, she also saw fit to publicize her condemnation of Yosef in all the cities of Egypt as if he did what he did not do.

It is brought down in Chazal that after these things, that cursed one set a routine to show up at the prison every day to persuade him to sin. In exchange, she promised to agree to have him released.

It is easy to assume that the *yetzer* found an opening to prove there is no way to refuse! It told him, "The first stage of your degradation came to you in exchange for the mitzvah of '*kibud av*' – 'honoring father' – for the directive of your father led you to visit your brothers, and things kept revolving until you were placed in servitude to an Egyptian. The second stage also came about as a reward for a mitzvah, for although you withstood a hard and bitter challenge, [the Zohar HaKadosh and other holy *seforim* differ on the greatness of this reward], and for this you ended up in a pit and a source of embarrassment throughout the country. A wise man like you can still understand that you will spend most of your life here since the hand of that cursed woman reaches the highest levels of the government because she is an officer's wife. If so, you have no other choice but to give in to her, and most probably she can be trusted to stand by her word and release you, once you realize the extent of her reach... If with all this you are afraid of judgment day, you hold your answer, you saw no other way to get out of your sad situation, and what is a person to do with all these hidden things...?"

Yet with all this, Yosef stood firm! As the Torah testifies about him (39:21) 'וַיְהִי ה' אִתּוֹ יוֹסֵף' – 'Hashem was with Yosef' – HaKadosh Baruch Hu was with Yosef, and Yosef held strong with the command of his G-d! Yosef had already received the Torah from his fathers, and from their ways he also understood the meaning of 'תַּמִּים תְּהִיָּה' – 'You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d' (Devorim 18:13)! He said to himself, 'I do not know why all this has happened to me. I do not know why I see an upside-down world. However, this I do know, that even if the person walks in darkness, it is incumbent on him to trust his Creator. Therefore, I must realize that everything Hashem does is for the best. There is no room for compromise.'

And so, he saw the many kindnesses of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Had Yosef listened to her voice and pleased her, who knows if she spoke the truth about releasing him? Even if her intent was true, who knows if she could do this, maybe she thought she could do it, but this was not true. Even if we say that she could do this, he would have lost all the elevations and lofty levels, and he would also not be the ruler. But since he went wholeheartedly with his G-d and he had faith in his salvation, he ultimately went out permissively and with dignity, and remained with all his holy and lofty levels, and also merited to be a ruler for 80 years.

This shows us that even if the ways of Hashem are hidden, and it seems to us that the person that is being smitten as reward for his mitzvos, it is incumbent on us to believe that there is no bad here, just the opposite, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is working out a greater good to those who keep His mitzvos.

After all this, we can understand quite well what the Torah wanted to teach us with this story. A situation like this happens in every generation, Jews are always perturbed by various hidden things, and sometimes the hiddenness is prolonged. Not only that, but as time goes by, the hidden increases until it seems as if one will never see the light. Then the *yetzer* shows him there is only one way out of his situation, but it goes against the will of Hashem Yisbarach. Because of the pressure, the *yetzer* entices him with an improper solution. In order to encourage the person, the Torah tells us everything that happened to Yosef, that even after all the various events happened and he saw no salvation, even so he strengthened himself and trusted his G-d, and he did not allow his heart to be swayed by the wicked one although she promised freedom. When a person considers all that happens to him, and he agrees to go along with it, he will then see the salvation of Hashem with mercy and kindness.