

לעילוי נשמת  
מרת עקא עדנה  
צפורה ע"ה  
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



# על המשנה

## AL EI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

## Why Are Your Clothes Crimson?

### Living Emunah and Bitachon in Times of Great Upheaval - Words of Clarity, Chizzuk, and Guidance in the Wake of Recent Events in Eretz Yisrael Klal Yisrael's Cry

There are some things that we just don't have the audacity to state ourselves, but we can repeat a story, and we can let the story say it for us.

Hashem was talking to them in their language, in the language of galus. He was telling them that even while in galus, in the language you understand now, you will understand that there is a Watchguard, and there is a great morning on the way.

Close to a century ago, in תרפ"ט/1929, after the Chevron Massacre, there were *hespedim* given throughout the world. In the

town of Krula, the *rav*, Rav Shaul Brach zt"l mentioned in his *hesped* that the Midrash states that the *Ribono shel Olam* takes the blood of those who are slaughtered *al kiddush Hashem* and with it He dyes His clothes, כביכול.

The Krula Rav then cried out, "*Ribono shel Olam!* You made Yourself a new outfit with our blood!"

We wouldn't be able to speak this way, but we can relate the story. Each individual has no right to ask such questions, but *Klal Yisrael* as a whole does have the right. As the *pasuk*<sup>1</sup> says: *why is Your clothing crimson?* Why has so much blood reddened your clothing, *Ribono shel Olam?*

The *navi* tells us the response to this question. The *Yidden* who were in *Galus Bavel* asked Yeshayahu Hanavi, "Rabbeinu Yeshaya, what will have from this *galus*? The *navi* replied, "Wait, I'll ask Hashem." This exchange is recorded in the *Yerushalmi*.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to understand what this conversation was about. What were they

asking? What will be at the end of the *galus*? Of course, *geulah*. And is this an answer which the *navi* needs to seek from Hashem? Their question was on the mark. The darkness is so thick, the absence of Hashem's revealed Presence so acute. They wanted to know, "What can we learn from the darkness? What can we extract from these situations of *hastarah*?"

The *navi* says, from the darkness you will learn to recognize the light. *אמר שומר בקר*, *אתה בוקר*, *the watchguard said, 'morning is coming!'* Hashem is guarding you, watching you, even now. *אתה בוקר*, from the dreadful darkness you will see just how much light will be forthcoming in the future. The word *אתה* is an Aramaic word. In *Lashon Hakodesh* one would say *ba* to mean *is coming*, but in Aramaic it is *asa*. Hashem was talking to them in their language, in the language of *galus*. He was telling them that even while in *galus*, in the language you understand now, you will understand that there is a Watchguard, and there is a great morning on the way.

## Living with Emunah and Bitachon at Times of Tribulation and Upheaval

*Emunah* is not only about what happened. *Emunah* is also when a person is full of worry

for the present, for the future; what will be? There are some people who keep their *emunah*

in the attic with the Pesach dishes, and they retrieve it when something happens, when

1 Yeshayahu 63:2.

2 Taanis 1:1.



they need it. Maybe that's sufficient for normal times, but when we witness such upheaval, such extraordinary calamities, we need to live with *emunah*, and not just speak about it. We need to feel it in our every fiber, and that's something else entirely. This is *emunah* in practice, not just in theory. A person must be *mechazek* himself, and internalize the knowledge that in the final analysis, the *Ribono shel Olam* is in charge, He is the One Who is doing it all.

The *pasuk* says in Tehillim רַבִּים<sup>3</sup> מְכַאוֹבִים לְרַשֵׁעַ וְהַבּוֹטָח בְּה' חֶסֶד יִסּוּבְּנוּ. The simple reading of the *pasuk* would indicate two clauses: רַבִּים מְכַאוֹבִים לְרַשֵׁעַ, a wicked person has many aches, and, in contrast, one who relies on Hashem is enveloped by kindness. But the Sfas Emes points out that the *trop* seems to indicate a more complex idea. Notice that the *esnachta* breaks it up differently. רַבִּים<sup>4</sup> מְכַאוֹבִים לְרַשֵׁעַ וְהַבּוֹטָח בְּה' חֶסֶד יִסּוּבְּנוּ. Why is the *botei'ach baShem* bundled with the first part of the *pasuk*? The Sfas Emes explains that sometimes even a *tzaddik*, even one who relies on Hashem, can experience aches and pains; can experience *hester panim*. But it is the pain itself which serves as the key for the *botei'ach* to see that Hashem is in control over him, and then that knowledge and feeling itself awakens Hashem's *chesed*. *Chessed yisovevenu*.

There is a halachic conundrum in the Gemara:<sup>5</sup> If a walnut is in a bowl, and the bowl is floating in the sea, is the walnut in motion, or not? It is a question of relativity; in relation to the bowl it is inert, but in relation to the sea it is moving. The walnut has no say in the matter, it is inanimate, and has no feelings. In the Gemara it is an intellectual challenge, with halachic ramifications. But let's use

it as a metaphor for ourselves. We thought things are peaceful and settled, we thought that we are on safe, stable ground. Turns out we are in a raging sea. We wonder what will happen, but what Hashem wants of us is to realize and to feel that we are not on stable ground; we do not have a handle on the situation. We need to internalize, to appreciate, that we are not in charge and that we are subject and must be subservient to His will.

We see that even if there is security, it has no bearing on the results. אִם ה' לֹא יִשְׁמֹר עִיר שׁוֹא שׁוֹמֵר *if Hashem does not guard the city, for naught is the guard so vigilant*.<sup>6</sup> So, when there was no security, then we know that there certainly is a Guard, a Protector, Who is running the show, and being *mashgiach* over us. We have a natural tendency to need to be in control; Hashem wants it just the opposite: You have no control; you are subservient and subjugated to My will, and you must accept My decisions.

I've related this in the past. My father z"l told me that in difficult times he experienced in his personal life he would learn Koheles, and would find succor and encouragement from it. At first this was astounding to me; Koheles might even bring a person to low spirits, to depression. It describes how insignificant man is, how fickle and irrelevant; just a small cog in the vast machinery of the world. When I matured I began to understand. When a person sees himself as the center of the universe, then he will be broken when reality strikes. When there is trouble or he foresees a bleak future, he is in a real predicament.

But if he realizes that the *Ribono shel Olam* is the center of all existence, and he himself is only here to serve as Hashem's messenger do perform His will; if he is

conscious of the fact that Hashem has entrusted him with a mission and renews his *neshamah* for a purpose every single day, he realizes that he is a vital part of a tremendous machine. The small cog has no problem, because he knows that there is a greater scheme, and that he was not placed randomly, but he is there because the larger scheme needs him there, and there is One Who is running the entire apparatus. He is a part of something great.

He knows that even today, and in all situations, לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִשָּׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל, *the Guardian of Yisrael does not doze off; He does not sleep*. Maybe the mortal security is active, and maybe they are asleep at the wheel, but the *Ribono shel Olam* is not. He is present; He is protecting; He is running the show. We just need to boost our inner selves with this feeling; that we are simply His lackeys, we have a purpose in this world, and we need to do our best to carry out our job as best we can. And whatever the case, each morning He invests His trust in us once again. He gives us life and He directs it.

The Sfas Emes writes that the favor Yosef Hatzaddik found before Hashem was because he subjected himself entirely to Hashem's plan. "You want me to be sold to Mitzrayim? Down to Mitzrayim I'll go! You want me imprisoned? I'll accept my situation in prison. You want me to be the Egyptian viceroy? I'm fine with that as well." Today we call it to 'go with the flow.' He coasted upon the flow of Hashem's plan. He told Hashem, "*Ribono shel Olam*, you are directing me, and directing me well. גַּם כִּי אֶלֶךְ בְּגִיַּת צְלָמוֹת לֹא אֶיְרָא רַע כִּי אֶתֶּה. עֲמִדִי."

3 32:10.

4 It is worthwhile to note that the *esnachta* in Tehillim works differently then it does in the Torah and the majority of Tanach.

5 Shabbos 5b.

6 Tehillim 127:1.



## Keeping Calm and Collected in Frightening Times

Anohter thing. Don't get flustered and lose your composure. The Koznitzer Magid<sup>7</sup> writes on last week's *parshah*, on Hashem's punishment of Kayin: וְנָדַד תְּהֵיָה בְּאֶרֶץ צָרָה. What does *na vanad* mean? The *Ribono shel Olam* decreed that Kayin would be *na vanad*, a rootless, transient vagabond, but who was chasing him out of each place? The Koznitzer Magid writes that Hashem instilled in Kayin all sorts of neurosis and

fears and a restlessness which led him to move around by his own decision. He was unhappy in one place, so he felt he had to go to another place, but then at the next place he could find no peace, so he would move on. And that is how he lived his life. There was no outside factor, it was all in his mind. If he had cleaved to Hashem the way he was before he killed his brother he would not have this issue. Hashem is constantly with a person wherever he is. וְהוּא בְּכָל דְרָכָיךְ דַּעְהוּ *know Him in all of your paths*. Wherever one goes he is connected to Hashem (as דַּעְהוּ could be understood to mean connection). Wherever a person may find himself, on any road, in any situation, he must not allow himself to be disconnected. Don't allow the feeling of a disconnect make you be disconnected. Don't allow your *aveiros* or your emotions to make you disconnect. You are connected! You are in His wheelhouse, כְּבֵיכּוּל!

Great *tzaddikim* would teach, on Kayin's remark to Hashem that וְהָיָה כָּל מִצְאֵי

יְהִרְגֵנִי, that the words can be understood, 'whatever I encounter will kill me.' In other words, Kayin was nervous that he would be emotionally unprepared to face any trouble which might happen to him. In response Hashem gave Kayin a sign, וַיִּשָּׂם ה' לָקַיִן אוֹת לְבִלְתִּי הַכּוֹת אֹתוֹ כָּל מִצְאֵי כִי מִצְאֵי in Tanach; here, and in Mishlei<sup>10</sup> מִצְאֵי חַיִּים. These are the polar opposites; the two ends of the spectrum. There is Kayin, who is full of anxieties and neuroses; full of fears and illusions, who cannot find peace. And then there is the solution: Anchor yourself in the life of Torah, כִּי מִצְאֵי חַיִּים. Strengthen yourself in what the Torah requires of you, in what the Torah teaches you, in what you need to really be, and you won't have any problems. You will have no fears, no anxieties, no neuroses. You have Whom to rely upon; Whom to trust in and believe.

Anchor yourself in the life of Torah, strengthen yourself in what the Torah requires of you, in what the Torah teaches you, in what you need to really be, and you won't have any problems. You have Whom to trust in and believe.

## The Correct Balance Between Hishtadlus and Emunah with Bitachon

That said, this is no contradiction to *hishtadlus*. Certainly, one must take proper measures to keep safe, whether it is entering a bomb shelter, or other such measures. One should act upon the measures which are accepted as correct protocol for the given situation. But even when taking the proper steps and doing the accepted actions; and this applies to any *hishtadlus*, be it in the realm of *parnassah* or health or *shidduchim*; remember that

really there is Someone directing the event, Who is running this world and doing everything Himself. It's only that we have a requirement, it has been decreed since Adam Harishon, that we need to engage in actions of *hishtadlus*. I do what I have to for *hishtadlus*, but I do not rely on them; they do not afford me the sense of security. I do what I have to because that was decreed upon me, but for my security and for feeling safe, that I have because I

am in Hashem's hands. I have *emunah*. The two are no contradiction; they are two separate aspects of my *avodas Hashem*. We need to convey this to our children, our families, to anyone we can reach. There is Someone directing all that happens; Who protects over us, and He also told us to do what is accepted protocol. I don't do what I am not allowed to do, nor what is extreme; I only do it because I was told to, so I do what is normal in every situation.

## Empathy with Klal Yisrael

I am a bit embarrassed to discuss the following topic, but I did receive various questions about it, so I will touch upon it. People want to know about *simchos*. They have a *chassunah* scheduled, or other such

*simchos* or events, and due to the security situation there are limitations on the number of attendees, and they are not sure how to deal with this damper in the *simchah*, or such other questions which have arisen in this context.

I would like to say that this question was a fair question when it came to Corona. After all, people had planned weddings, for the *chassan* and *kallah* it's a once-in-a-lifetime event, and to limit the attendees would put a damper on

<sup>7</sup> Avodas Yisroel Parshas Bereishis.

<sup>8</sup> Bereishis 4:12.

<sup>9</sup> Cited by the Baal HuTurim here.

<sup>10</sup> 8:35.



the *simchah*. So people asked the question. But now? Hundreds of people lost their homes! Or worse yet, they have relatives who were taken captive and are now held hostage, and they have not heard from them, and are filled with that anxiety. Can a person have the audacity

to *kvetch* that it's not fair that his event will be minimized?! One should be ashamed to even ask such a question. In fact, it's not even a question. Be happy with what you do have! There is no 'us' and 'them.' 'Them' is *Klal Yisrael*! When one limb is injured the entire

body feels the pain! So what kind of question is that, "How do we deal with this issue?" One should not have room in his mind for such a question, when *Klal Yisrael* is hurting!

## To Strengthen Ourselves in the Ikar Not the Tafel

There is another *Mesorah* cited in the Baal HaTurim in this past week's *parshah*. There are two mentions in Tanach of the word צַעֲקִים. One in Parshas Bereishis when Hashem took Kayin to task: קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צַעֲקִים אֵלַי מִן הָאֲדָמָה: *the sound of your brother's blood is calling out to me from the earth*. The second is in Parshas Shemos, when Pharaoh denied *Klal Yisrael* the straw for the bricks: כִּי נִרְפִים הֵם עַל כֵּן הֵם צַעֲקִים: *for they are lazy, that is why they cry out, saying "let us go and sacrifice to our G-d."*

This contains a message for us. Our brother's blood is crying out! Everyone realizes that we must do something. Who knows what is happening?! Every day we hear about another attack. On such a scale, with such horror, evil, and depravity! Our brother's blood is crying out! We know we must do something, but sometimes we tend to cling to a fringe aspect, or a symbolic gesture. Let's not be lazy and say that we will strengthen ourselves in something benign. We certainly need *chizzuk*

in all aspects of *avodas Hashem*, even in these various specific acts of goodness. But let it not distract us from the main thing. Let us not lose sight of the question "What does Hashem really want from me?" What He really wants is for you to be cognizant of the fleetingness of this world. I wish that everyone lives to one hundred and twenty, but even that is fleeting.

We need to connect with the *Ribono shel Olam*. *Tefillah* is a means to connect with Hashem. This is a true *tefillah le'ani*, a desperate cry. One does not need to be materially impoverished to be able to attain a *tefillah* of a poor person; a person who understands that he has nothing himself, that Hashem protects him and embraces him, that is a prayer of the impoverished. That is a connection with Hashem. In fact, the word *tefillah* has a connotation of connection, of being intertwined.

*Emunah*. True *emunah* which one lives with, which one internalizes. That it remains

embedded within you for the long term is not simple, but at least for now it should be an internalized knowledge, not superficial, not some spiritual incantation, but a real feeling of Who is in charge.

And of course, elevating oneself a bit from the world, distancing oneself from that which is bad, increasing our love of our fellow *Yidden*, and in all of the important areas in which people have been improving. But let it come not from a perspective of 'let's do some *segulah* or program.' 'Let's say ויהי נועם three times,' or some other *segulah* event. Let it come from a place of true and essential connection with Hashem. What does He want from us? He wants us to connect with Him. Not 'נלכה נזבחה' 'לה, let's go bring a *korban*', or even 'let's make a *korban* event!' It's all nice, but let's go deeper than that. Let's feel it deep within ourselves, wherever we are, let's feel the connection with the *Ribono shel Olam*.

## May Hashem Protect His Beloved Children and Thwart Their Enemies

We plead before Hashem. The *pasuk* says in Tehillim<sup>11</sup> שׁוֹבוּנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ וְהִפְרֵ כַעֲסָךָ עִמָּנוּ *return us, G-d of our salvation, and rescind Your anger with us. Why עמנו with us?* It should say from us, from with us, or the like. What does 'rescind Your anger with us' mean? Rav Avraham Moshe of Pershischa (the son of the Rebbe, Rav Bunim of Pershischa) explained: A powerful king would sometimes get angry. No one would dare try to appease him in his agitated state, because he might just trigger his anger and in one instant he would lose his life. What would they do? They would bring his young son, his only child, the crown prince, and let him pass before the king. No more was needed. The king would see

his beloved son and his anger would dissipate and he would calm down immediately. כביכול we tell the *Ribono shel Olam*, "even if there may be reason for You to get angry, הפך כעסך, rescind Your anger, how so? עמנו, with us. Use us, Your beloved *Klal Yisrael*, Your only child, to assuage Your anger. You knew what You were doing when You chose us, and You know what You chose.

We believe the *Ribono shel Olam* בטובך הגדול *in Your great goodness, Your anger will be retracted from Your city and Your land and from Your inheritance [Klal Yisrael]*.<sup>12</sup> They can act in whichever

manner they wish, as we say in Selichos, "אלה *these with their murderers* and we can add 'אלה *these with their victors*' and we can add 'אלה *these with their drones*,' each one with their own things. But we believe in the *pasuk*<sup>13</sup> *as hovering birds, so Hashem will shield etc.* You have drones. You have such things. But we have *קצפרים* *עפות* כן *May Hashem help,* 'תגן על עמך', *so shall You shield Your nation Yisrael with Your peace.*<sup>14</sup> May there be peace and tranquility in the Land, and may we only hear good tidings.

(2 Marcheshvan 5784)

11 85:5.

12 Mussaf, Rosh Hashanah.

13 Yeshayahu 31:5.

14 Mussaf, Rosh Hashanah.