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TEFILLAH CAN CHANGE NATURE

The parshah begins with a story out of the life of יצחק and רבקה. It tells us that יצחק and רבקה - who had gotten married in such a wonderful and miraculous way through the hands of בעצמו and בברוך הוא - had a difficulty with having children. At the time, Yitzchak was 40 years old, and his bride, Rivka, was a young girl. Yitzchak understood he wasn't going to have children right away, but then "right away" became a longer period of time. The Torah tells us "ועתה" - יצחק pleaded with Hashem because his wife was - עקרה - she was barren (Bereishis 25:21). Rashi comments on the word וַיַּעֲרָב, and says it means הרבה עקרה, that Yitzchak davened a lot, and he was וַיַּפְצִיר - he pleaded urgently before Hashem to give him children.¹ And "ועתה לו" - Hashem acquiesced to his "pushing," to his begging, Hashem became appeased, Hashem gave in to his many בקשות.²

Now, this is a tremendous *sugya* because this *sugya* is not an uncommon one. Everybody knows someone who struggled with having children right away: relatives, close relatives, friends, etc. And everybody is looking for all kinds of *segulos*. The Torah tells us that the only thing you can do is daven to Hashem in a way of הפציר. והרבה והפציר. The word הפציר means to beseech. Now, there is a tremendous lesson to be learned from this episode. Rabbein Bechaye wrote a *sefer* called *Kad Hakemach*, where he has a section called ערך הביטחון.³ And he says there as

¹ ועתה הרבה והפציר בתפלה.

² ויעתר לו. נתפצר ונתפסי ונתפתה לו. ואומר אני, כל לשון עתה לשון הפצרה ורבי הוא, וכן ועתה ענן הקטרת (יח' ח') - מרבית עליית העשן. וכן והערתם עלי דבריכם (שם ל"ה). וכן ונעתרות נשיקות שונא (משלי כ"ז) - דומות למרביות והנם למשא; אנקרי ישראל בעל"ז.

³ ה' אלהים צבאות שמעה תפילתי האיזנה אלהי יעקב סלה (תהלים פד). פסוק זה אמרו דוד ע"ה והיה מתחנן להקב"ה שישמע תפלתו לפי שעה התפלה יתקרב אדם לבוראו, והנה דוד שריוה להקב"ה בשירות ותשבחות ריבה לפניו תפלות ותהלות מכל אשר היו לפניו וערך שלחם התפלה לכל באי עולם, וכיון שבא דוד באת תפלה לעולם כי הוא החזיק יסודותיה והדריך בה לכל הבריות ולימד דעת את העם איך יתנהגו בתפלה ובתחנה לפני אדון הכל. וגדול כח התפלה אפי' לשנות הטבע ולהנצל מן הסכנה ולבטל הנגזר. לשנות את הטבע ממה שכתוב (בראשית כ"ה:כ"א) ויעתר יצחק לה' וגו' ה' הכותב ראו לומר ותהי רבקה עקרה ויעתר יצחק לה' ויעתר לו מפני שראוי ה' להקדים הסבה שבשבילה באה התפלה. אבל נ"ל כי זה יורה כי אין העקרות עיקר הסבה אלא התפלה ולא בא העקרות אלא בשביל שתבא התפלה אם כן התפלה עיקר. ולכך רצה להקדים העיקר ולהתחיל בתפלה. אמרו במס' יבמות (פ"ו עד) מפני מה נתעקרו אמהות מפני שהקב"ה מתאוה לתפלתם של צדיקים, בארו לנו בכאן כי לא בא העקרות אלא מהות אלא מפני התפלה וכשהתפללו בה נשתנה הטבע בהן וילדו. וא"כ ה"ו מבואר שהתפלה י"ה כח לשנות הטבע, וכן להנצל מן הסכנה ממה שכתוב (תהילים ק"ז:כ"ג-כ"ד) יורדי הים באניות עושי מלאכה במים רבים המה ראו מעשי ה'. ויאמר ויעמד רוח סערה יעלו שמים ירדו תהומות נפשם ברהה תתמוגג ויצעקו אל ה' בצר להם. וכתבי בתריה יקם סערה לדממה ויחשו גליהם הרי שהתפלה מגינה על הסכנה. וכן כח התפלה לבטל הנגזר ואמרו בברכות (פ"ק דף י') מחזקיהו שהוסיף לה' הקב"ה בכח תפלתו חמש עשרה שנה שנא' (ישעיהו ל"ח:ה) הננו יוסיף על ימך חמש עשרה שנה, ומלת יוסיף היא מורה שהיה זמנו קצוב ונגזר שלא לחיות יותר. ויפה כח התפלה לבטל הנגזר, ואמרו בברכות (פ"ק דף י') אמר לו ישעיה לחזקיהו אמר אמינא אל צ' לביתך ואת אמרת לי ה' ב' לרתך כבר נגזרה גזירה, אמר לו בן אמוץ כלה נבואתך וצא כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא אפי' הרב מנוחת על צואר של אדם אל ימנע עצמו מן הרחמים שנאמר (איוב י"ט) הן יקטלני לא איחל. ביארו לנו חכמי האמת בכאן כי התפלה מביטלת הנגזר במערכת הככבים, כי מה שאמרו באין כבר נגזרה גזרה ביאורו במערכת הכוכבים שמשם הגזרות והמשפטים באים לעולם השפל בכח עליון עליהם כי היה רואה כן נבואתו, והוסיפו עוד באור שהתפלה למעלה מן הנבואה כלומר מן המקום שמשם תוצאות הנבואה נלביאים, וכו' (רבנו בחיי, סד הקמח, תפלה א')

follows, “Great is the power of *tefillah* that it can even change the *teva*.” Listen to what he is saying. This is a very lofty and important lesson: *tefillah* can change nature. וצריך אתה לדעת כי כח התפלה גדול אפילו לשנות הטבע ולהנצל מן הסכנה ולבטל הגורם - “you have to know that the power of *tefillah* is so great that it can even change the nature and enable one to be saved from dangers that were decreed.” When somebody called me and said, “My husband is in his 80s, and I am in my 50s - can we have children?” I said, “Of course you can have children! But you have to know you are going to need a lot of והרבה והפציר - a lot of beseeching and begging.”⁴

Now, someone will always tell you that you cannot change nature. No! You can change nature! And Rabbeinu Bachaye asks what is the source of this idea. The source is right here, in our parsha, where the Torah tells us that Yitzchak Avinu pleaded עקרה לנכח אשתו כי עקרה on behalf of his wife who was barren. Rivka had a medical condition. The Torah tells us: ויעתר לו ה'. Rabbeinu Bachaye asks why our matriarchs were all barren. They were barren in such an extreme way! Not barren that they simply weren't producing kids. They were barren because they did not have the “plumbing” to have kids! You know why? So he says מפני צדיקים שהקב"ה מתאוה לתפלתן של צדיקים. *Tefillah* has the *koach* to change nature! This is a tremendous thing. You should never know from it, but I know people who are married, and the doctor tells them, “He can't have children” or “She can't have children.” And what happens at that point is they act like adults: they accept their lot in life, and they go on and try to find a solution, some alternative manner to replace their hopes for children. Some think of adoption. Another way is for a person to undertake to raise a child. I once knew a man who was a *rasha*. He decided that he and his wife don't want kids. He didn't want to be woken up in the middle of the night. He wanted to say, “I never had to change a diaper.” He wanted to have peace in his life. He didn't get any peace. But that's what he tried to do. Then I met him and he became frum. I told him there's a mitzvah in the Torah to have children. “You rejected a mitzvah of Hashem.” He wasn't up to adoption. So, I said, “I'm going to arrange for you very very *chashuve* children - a boy and a girl, and you're going to raise them financially, and that's going to be your replacement for having children.”

At first, he was excited about the idea, but then he never realized what children cost. The children came from a frum family. They lived on bare minimum. Children need shoes for the weekday, they need shoes for Shabbos. They need coats. They need jackets, they need shirts, they need food. He did it for a short while, and then he failed out of the program. I told the guy, “Now you're a real *rasha* because you had a chance to fix yourself up, and you chose not to. That is not a good thing, not a good position for you to be in.”

Then there are people who think they act very mature when they say, “If Hashem doesn't want me to have kids, Okay I'll go *viter* without kids.” That is a bad attitude. That's not called a good attitude, because Hashem wants you to plead, He wants you to beg, He wants you to beseech Him! He doesn't want you to get upset. He doesn't want you to fall into despair and *yiyush*. He wants you to always daven. He wants you to be מרבה ומפציר in your *tefillah*.

⁴ Ed. note: Incredibly, this couple merited to have a son six years later, when the wife was in her mid 50's and the husband in his late 80's.

CRYING ONE'S EYES OUT IN THE DESERT

There's a famous story about R' Shimshon Pinkus, z"l (1944-2001). He knew a *yungerman* who didn't have children for many years. This fellow came to R' Shimshon one day and burst out crying. He said that his house was empty. He related to R' Shimshon the loneliness, the dreariness, the emptiness of his house. Rav Pincus told this fellow the following: "Come to me at two o'clock in the morning, and I'll see what I can do for you." Nu. The fellow obviously came back late at night and knocked on R' Shimshon's door at two o'clock in the morning, as instructed. R' Shimshon opens the door, welcomes him in, and tells him, "Come with me, we are going for a ride." R' Shimshon was the Rav in a city called Ofakim, which is a town in a desert. Eretz Yisrael in the south has big deserts. He drove on the highway and took this fellow into the desert. He stopped on the side of the road after he got into the desert, and he stepped out of the car. He tells this *yungerman* to step out of the car with him. R' Shimshon tells him, "My friend, you are now alone in the desert - you and the Ribono Shel Olam. Cry out to Him! Cry out to Hashem like somebody who cries out to his fellow man. This is the only way you're going to get help. I'm going to be back in a half hour." He gets back into the car and drives away, leaving the guy in the middle of the desert at two something in the morning! And trust me, at two something in the morning in the desert, in southern Israel, the only things you could find are coyotes and undesirable other people, and other things.

Rav Shimshon comes back in about half an hour. He looks at the *yungerman*. He peers into his face, and said, "I told you to cry! I told you to cry! That's not called crying! I can see on your face that you didn't let it out. Listen, pour out your heart with all of your *neshamah*! I'll be back." He gets back into the car and drives off again. Nu. After a half hour, he comes back. This time, he sees the guy has red eyes, and his shirt is soaking in his tears. "You know what? That's what I was talking about. That's what I meant. Now you're going to see, you're going to be helped." And *kach haveh*. He had a *yeshuah*.

ARE YOU ALLOWED TO DAVEN FOR A MIRACLE?

You have to know that Hakodosh Baruch Hu gave us the power of *tefillah* and if we use this "weapon" properly, Hakodosh Baruch Hu will be *mekabel*. But now the question is, if the doctor tells you you can't have kids, how could you daven for a miracle?! You're not supposed to daven for a miracle. Now listen carefully, as this is a tremendous *yesod* in *bitachon*. Here is a guy who's a *shlepper* deluxe, a poor *lo yutzlach*. He calls me up and says, "Can I have a *bitachon* that I'm going to win the lottery?" I said, "I don't think so because that's *b'geder* a *nes*." I told him, "Do you know anybody who ever won the lottery?" No. "I don't either. Do you know anybody who knows somebody who ever won the lottery? I'm talking about the big power bucks?" No. "So the chances of you winning the lottery are about as bad as a cat falling out of *shamayim* on top of your head. That's called davening for a *nes*. If you really want to go for a lottery, go for a \$500 lottery, a \$1000 lottery, maybe a \$10,000 lottery. Maybe that will be more *shayich* because it's not a *nes*." So how could you daven for kids if the doctor told you you can't have kids? And doctors love giving bad news. They love telling people they can't have kids. So I want to tell you a *yesod gadol* from Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin (1823-1900), who sheds light on this subject.

Rav Tzadok who himself did not have children wrote a sefer called *Pokeid Akarim* on the subject of “Hashem remembering the barren ones.”⁵ Right at the beginning of the *sefer*, he says an incredible statement. He writes as follows: “דבר וזוהי הבריאה שישד הש”י, זה שלא יוליד הוא יציאה מסדר הבריאה ודבר שאינו ראוי כלל כפי חוקי הבריאה שישד הש”י. This matter of a person not having children is called going out of the normal order of creation, and it’s not something normal and expectant according to the rules of nature that Hashem established.” You know why? Because Hashem gave a mitzvah of nature that Hashem established. פרו ורבו - a commandment to have children. Hashem made males and females produce more males and females. And therefore R’ Tzadok continues: וע”כ הישועה לזה אינו ככל נסים היוצאים מהטבע דזה אדרבא בא לקיים הטבע דהרי כך הוא חוק טבע “therefore, the salvation for this is not like other miracles that are outside of laws of nature. This matter is just the opposite - it fulfills the law of nature that a person should give birth to children.” And he writes that this is what Chana, who went for years and years without children, said to Hashem, “I am not asking You for a nes.” Because if Hashem does a nes for you, you lose your *zechuyos* (merits).

RIDING MOTORCYCLES TAKES AWAY ZECHUYOS

Let’s say you have a guy, a young *tipesh*, who wants to be cool. He buys himself a motorcycle. Now, you should know that many doctors have told me that the best season they look forward to is the spring. Why do they love spring so much? Because they’re kept busy continuously in the spring as a result of all the “*chachamim*” and “*tipshim*” taking out their motorcycles. And they don’t even call them motorcycles in hospitals. You know what they call them? “Donor cycles.” That’s what they call them. So here’s a *tipesh* who gets himself a “donor cycle” and he thinks that he will merit a miracle. Now, if he takes one quick ride - maybe he goes down the block, or on a track where no one’s around because he wants to practice being a cool guy driving a motorcycle - okay. Or if he wants to drive on a side street because he wants to feel like *macher* - okay. But then there’s a guy who wants to take it on the highway and he wants to “let it rip.” He wants to open up that engine to feel a “psshhh,” with the wind in his face. So what happens

⁵ פקידת עקרים מכונה בדברי רז”ל כן בכ”מ בלשון פקידה שכן מצינו בלשון הכתוב וד’ פקד את שרה שהיא הראשונה לדבר זה ולישועה זו משנברא העולם, וידוע דכל דבר בפעם הראשון הוא פתיחת אותו השער לכל הדורות עולם דא”כ נקל לאחרים לפעול ג”כ ישועת אותו דבר אחר שכבר נפתח שער הישועה בדבר זה והכל נכנסים ויוצאים דרך אותו שער, ומאחר שצמצנו ישועה הראשונה בלשון פקידה ש”מ דזהו שער הישועה של דבר כל כשזוכה שהש”י פוקדו, ועי’ בע”מ [מאכ”ח ח”א ר”ס ג’] דחמשה משמעויות במלת פקד ודכולהי אתנהו בוד’ פקד וגו’ אף דעיקרו לשון השגחה יעוש”ב, ובאמת כל החמשה משמעויות כולם הולכים למקום אחד דהכללשון השגחה דהמנין הוא ההשגחה על דבר המנוי על כל פרט ממנו והציווי הוא השגחת המצוה על המצוה והשגחת המצוה על הדבר שנצטוו להשגחה, ומזה פקדון אשר הפקד שראוי שיהי’ להשגיח עליו לשמרו וכן המינוי לפקדו הוא למשגיח על הדבר שנתמנה והמנהג הוא משגיח בזה על המתמנה והחסרון הוא מהוראת ההיפך שיש בכל שורש על דרך סקלו מאבן תבואתי תשרש וכדומה, ויהי’ ויפקד לא בא בפקידים, וכל מי שהוא מושגח א”א שיהי’ עקב כלל שיהי’ כל בריאת האדם הוא לפרות ולרבות כמש”נ לא תוהו בראה וישבע יצרה, ודבר זה שלא יוליד הוא יציאה מסדר הבריאה ודבר שאינו ראוי כלל כפי חוקי הבריאה שישד הש”י וע”כ הישועה לזה אינו ככל נסים היוצאים מהטבע דזה אדרבא בא לקיים הטבע דהרי כך הוא חוק טבע הבריאה להיות האדם מוליד, וזה ה’ טענת חנה אם מצבא העליונים אני אחי’ לעולם ואם מצבא התחתונים אהא מוליד (רש”י ש”א א’ י”א בשם אגדת ריה”ג וכו”ה בשוח”ט שם פ”ב ובפסיקתא פמ”ד ס’ ג’) דלבקש נס אין כל אחד ראוי לזה ואפי’ אטרחו מנכין מזכותיו (כמ”ש שבת ל”ב א’) ואין ראוי לבקש לזה וגם אין עושין נס אלא כשיש בו צורך גדול וצורך לאטרחו למארי’ כידוע (ועי’ תענית ט”ז ב’) אבל זהו נס ויצאה מהטבע והיא צווחה אדרבא אני רוצה שתקיים גם בי טבע הבריאה וזה כל אדם רשאי לבקש וראוי לכך דלא ישוב ריקם, ומיד שהש”י פונה אליו להשגיח עליו מיד הישועה בזה לא מהעצמה בפקידה והשגחה זו, ואפי’ כשרה אמונה שהיתה אילונית בבריאה וטומטמים היו מ”ש בהבע”י (יבמות ס”ד א’) מ”מ מה שחזרו להיות ככל אדם אינו אלא חזרה לטבע הבריאה, ומפני שהעוה”ז הוא הנחת המקום לבחירה ברע וקלקולים מהם ממשך ג”כ קלקולים בנבראים בבריאה והקלקולים הם היוצאים מסדר הבריאה וכאשר האדם שב להש”י ומחזיר הדברים למקורן כמו שהי’ האדם ישר בתחלת הבריאה הרי כל הקלקולים מתתקנים וחוזרים למה שהי’ כפי סדר הבריאה ופקידת הש”י הוא מה שהש”י משים אל לבו כביכול תחלת רצונו בבריאית העולם שרצון זה ודבר זה דמאמרות דששת ימי בראשית שעל ידן הרי הבריאה על ידן הוא ג”כ השגחתו ית’ בקיומו כל ימי עולם ועי’ זהו חזרת הדברים למקורן במעשה בראשית ואין ראוי להיות יציאה מסדר מעשה בראשית כלל (פוקד עקרים א’)

then? “He loses all his *zechuyos*,” my Zeida (R’ Avigdor Miller) told me. He said, “If he ever said an *Amen* once in your life, or you ever said a *Boruch Hu u’ Boruch Shmo*, they take it out of your bank and you end up without one *zechus*.”

Therefore asking Hashem to be safe as you are riding your Harley 150 mph on a highway is called davening for a *nes*. If a guy would tell me, “I like to ride fast motorcycles but I have a *bitachon*,” he’s making a grave mistake. Incidentally, have you ever seen these people riding motorcycles in Eretz Yisroel? It’s hair-raising. They go in and out of traffic. I mean, the traffic is jammed with three or four rows, and this guy is weaving in and out of the cars! I don’t know how they don’t fall. I never saw a guy fall down, *baruch Hashem*. But you read about a lot of accidents. A person has to know that that’s called a *nes*. So one guy tells me, “I have *bitachon*.” I told him, “Your *bitachon* is worthless. You can’t have *bitachon* that Hashem is going to make a *nes* for you in this situation. However, under normal circumstances you can rely on Hashem. But you have to know, the only time Hashem makes *nissim* is when there is a *tzorech gadol*, a great need. And if Hashem makes a *nes* for you, you know what the *gemara* says? Hashem is going to hold it against you because you were *matriach* Hakodosh Boruch Hu.”

There is a famous story in the *gemara* of the man who lost his wife (when his children were very young), and he was *boteach* in Hashem that he was going to grow “milk dispensers” on his chest. Hashem *taka* performed this miracle. I remember reading that *gemara* and I said, “Wow, this guy must have been some super duper *tzaddik*. The guy was *boteach* in Hashem and he was able to accomplish this without undergoing a surgery?!” He *pashut* davened to Hashem that He should give him milk to feed his small children. So you naturally think, “Wow, what a *tzaddik*!” Do you know what the *gemara* says? He dropped dead. You know why? Because he was *matriach* Hashem to make a *nes*. If Hashem makes a *nes* for you, it’s a *tircha*. Hashem doesn’t like to get bugged to make magic shows for people. Now, if there’s a great need, that’s a different story.

EVERY PERSON IN NEED CAN ASK FOR THIS!

So asking for miracles outside the *teva* is a *tircha* for Hashem. Chana, however, davened to Hashem ע"פ טבע ע"פ בריאה She said, “Hashem, I should have kids, because I’m a woman and you created me a woman. And do you know what it says elsewhere? ותפלת על ה' “and she *davened al* (lit. “upon”) Hashem” (Shmuel 1:10). You know what she said to Hashem? (paraphrasing) “Hashem, You created me a woman and You built into me a functionality, ‘machines’ that could produce children, feed children, and raise children. Hashem, if You don’t give me a child, Your whole creation that You created is going to be for naught. It’s going to be for waste. And Your intended *kavanah* will not be reached. Please, Hashem, give me a child so that I can raise that child for Your honor, Hashem, remove the anguish that my barrenness is causing in the higher worlds, and fulfill the purpose of my creation.” Amazing! And Hashem said, “Bingo! That’s how you *daven*. You’re going to have a child.”⁶ And every single person could be *mevakesh* this and

⁶ ולכן כשקל תכלית תפלת האדם לפניו: תברך שמו להסיר מעליו צער, הוא רק על הצער של מעלה המשתתף עמו בצער, ונשב ומתחרט באמת על עונו שגָרם על ידו הצער של מעלה, אז היסורין מסתלקין מעליו. ולא עוד אלא שמוֹדֵדִין לו כמדתו “וכוֹפְלִין” לו פרנסתו, נגד ה' מיני צער שגָרם למעלה, ועתה מתחרט על שנייהם, זדונות מתהפכין לו לזכות. והוא שדָרְשׁוּ רז"ל בחנה (ברכות ל"א ב') “והיא מרת נפש ותתפלל על ה'” (שמו"א א, י), שהטיחה דברים כלפי מעלה. רוצה לומר, הגם שהיא עצמה היתה מרת נפש, עם כל זה, השליכה צערה מנגד ולא אכפת לה להתפלל על זה כלל, אלא שהטיחה דברי תפלתה לפניו: תברך שמו על הצער של מעלה, הנעשה מחמת שהיא שויה עתה בצער, וכו'. (נפש החיים, שער ב פ"ב) [**] הגה שם: וז"ל במאמרים. שהטיחה דברים כלפי מעלה. רצה לומר, למה יגיע לך צער [נפש החיים, שער ב פ"ב]

Hashem won't turn them away. This is a massive *yesod* because it's not only *nogea* to this *inyan* of having children.

A person wants to know when he could have *bitachon* in Hashem when it comes to children. Whenever a person calls me regarding that, I tell them, "Of course you're going to have children." Then they tell me, "Why are you so sure?" I tell them, "Isn't $1+1=2$? Isn't the purpose of marriage to have children? Yes, all our *avos* and *imahos* couldn't have children initially, but the *teva* is that you have children." Do you think the sun is going to fall out of the sky tomorrow? No. Has the sun ever stopped in the middle of the day? Yes. When you read that story in *Sefer Yehoshua* about the sun setting later than it was supposed to set, did they think that maybe the next day it was going to happen again? No. I never thought it was going to happen. Do you know why? Because it's not according to *teva*. But when something is according to *teva*, you can expect it to happen.

When people are sick, let's say, do they get better? I sure hope so! If anybody was sick one time, and right now he's sitting here or listening to what we're talking about, this means that he got better! That's why he's sitting here listening to us right now. When it comes to sicknesses, we know that Hashem is *ישראל רופא חולי עמו*. That's Who Hashem is. So you're not relying on a *nes*. I don't care what happened to so many other people. We see with our own eyes and we know this to be a fact, that the majority of people get better, so you have to rely on Hashem. That's all.

DON'T DISCONNECT YOURSELF FROM HASHEM

Can a person expect to get a *shidduch*? When I meet a person who gave up on their *shidduch* because they're already 30 years old, my heart breaks for them! That's a tragedy of tragedies! Do you know why? Because when you pull the cord of any appliance from the wall, it ain't never going to turn on. But as long as it's still plugged, there's always a chance it may go on. But if you disconnect yourself from Hashem, you're finished. You have to understand that. That's such an important thing to understand, *rabbosai*.

Take *parnassah*, for example. We say everyday in davening: *עֵינֵי כָל אֱלֹהִים יְבִיאוּנוּ*, "The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food at its proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living being." We say in benching, *הַזֵּן הָעוֹלָם בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ*, "Who nourishes the entire world with His goodness, with favor, with kindness, and with mercy." That's nature, that's *teva*!

In any single example you could think of, when someone is missing something that he needs for *Avodas Hashem*, you have to be connected to Hashem, to request for that void to be filled. The key is to always be connected.

LEAVING KOLLEL AND FORGETTING LEARNING

So if you're not getting *parnassah* you have to know why. Maybe you messed something up. Here's a young man that learned in kollel for 10 years, and he learned well, he *shteiged*. And he and his wife decided it was time to go to work. Okay. And Hashem provided him with a job. And after 6 months, they said "bye-bye" to him. Now the curtain just came down on the guy. The guy needs his *parnassah*. You know how many guys are let go from their jobs? But he wants to know why. Nu. His wife tells me, "Could it be because he left kollel?" I said, "There is nothing wrong when one makes a transition from kollel to a working

life. That's normal behavior." But then it turns out that her husband was working so much and got so heavily involved in the job, his learning was on a very "meager diet." He was on a starvation diet when it came to his learning. I don't want to pry and I don't want to get involved, but a person has to look inside and ask himself, "Am I davening with a minyan three times a day?" Do you think Hashem gave you a *parnassah* that you should not daven with a minyan three times a day?! It doesn't make any sense. Do you think Hashem gives you *parnassah* because He doesn't want you to be committed to learning seriously anymore? You think it's a "graduation" to becoming an *am ha'aretz*, an ignoramus, and not take learning seriously? Of course you learn less hours than you learned in kollel and that's expected and that's normal when you are transitioning to a full time job, but you still have to learn seriously. The *gemara* definitely says when a person sees his *parnassah* going down, he should be *mechazek* his learning! *Mechazek* his Torah! That's what a person has to know. This is very important.

But sometimes a person is learning and his *parnassah* is *shvach* and he can't attribute it to any specific reason. In that case, what does he have to do? He should daven to Hashem and *mitoch bitachon*! "Hashem, You give *parnassah* to people. You provided me with *parnassah* my whole entire life. Please continue, Hashem!" And you beg Hashem for that. When it comes to money people truly know how to be *מרבה ומפציר*, but they'd rather do some *segulos* instead. Please understand - there's nothing wrong with helping 42 orphans - that's a wonderful investment. I've made that investment myself. Even though it said it was the first collection campaign on the flier. We got it last year, too, with 42 orphans. I guess every year it's the "first time." I hope it's not the same 42 orphans. But regardless, it's not a bad investment. A little impulse buying. Valuable objects. I thought it was like "Black Friday" coming early. They asked me for \$120 for 42 orphans. You want to support 42 orphans with one \$120 check. And they are doing it *davka* in the month of Cheshvan. Why not in Kislev? All the orphans get married in Kislev?! I don't know. But it's a wonderful thing, you should know. Chessed is a tremendous *zechus* to have children and to help with your *parnassah*. No question about it! But davening is a great thing, too. Davening is one of the most wonderful things.

People have a problem with davening. The *yetzer hara* got to them and he says to them, "You know, your davening doesn't have great value by Hashem. And if you know what it says in the *sefarim*, the Steipler brings it down, that there are six conditions that are required for a person's *tefillos* to be accepted."⁷ Somebody posed the question to the Chofetz Chaim, "What's my davening going to be worth?" Do you know what the Chofetz Chaim told him? He said, "That's all in the old days. In the olden days, when the people knew how to daven, so then Hashem was choosy and picky, but nowadays where there are very few people calling out to Hashem *b'emes*, so Hashem lowered His standard, and He's not so

⁷ כתוב בס' בני עולם (ר' דוד אברהמי): "זוה לשון ספר דברי' ה'ושע (מ"ב פרק ט') לענין תפלה על הצלחת למודו: דע בשמפתל האדם אל השי"ת שיצילו מניצור הרע ויזכהו הרע לעשות רצונו ויעלה תמיד, תפלה קצאת היא חשובה מאד ומועלת. וטוב לו שיקדים ששה תנאים ועל ידי זה תהיה התועלת היוצאת מן התפלה גדולה מאד בעזה"ת. א, יבוש ויכלם על עונותיו ויצטרע מזה צער חזק. ב, יקאב לבבו על אשר קצרה ידו מהושיע את עצמו מיד יצור, וקשה לו לעמד כנגדו, ומחייב הוא לזעק לפני המלך ה' צבאות שיחננהו ויפדוה מרדת שחת. ג, יותר רצוי שתהיה התפלה בלילה שאז היא מעוררת את האדם ביותר. ד, יכתי לבו בתפלתו עד אשר תביאיהו אל הבכי, כי הבכי הוא תועלת גדול להשיג סיוע מהשי"ת אל התשובה. ה, לא יסמך לבו על תפלתו, ומחמת זה יתירשל ח"ו בעבודתו לבל יעשה בה אף כפי יקלתו. ו, יותר רצוי שיצמצם זמן תפלתו בשעה שמרגיש בגופו היותה אז קרובה לקדשתו ויתברך, כגון שלמד תורה הרבה, אשר על ידי זה זוכה לקרבתו ויתברך, או עשה מצוה המשמחתו כי אז תפלתו יותר רצויה להתקבל, עכ"ל. ואין לו לעכב תפלתו עד שיודמנו לו כל התנאים הנ"ל, אלא יתפלל בכל זמן שנגרך והקב"ה שומע תפלה בכל עת, אלא שיש לו לנצל את התנאים הנ"ל באופן מיוחד."

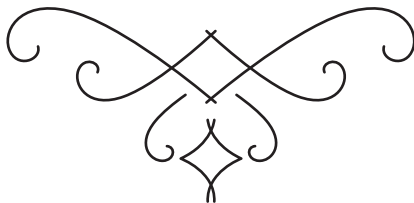
picky anymore. He takes what He can get.” You have to try to daven to Hashem *be’emes*, and if a person davens to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that way, He is going to accept his *tefillos*. You have to have *bitachon* that Hashem will accept your *tefillos*.

We explained here many times that if you have *bitachon*, even if your *tefillos* are not up to par, Hashem can also accept your *tefillos*, without *zechusim*. Those conditions that are necessary to have your *tefillos* accepted are only if you want to *גו* בדרך התפילה, but if you want to *גו* בדרך בטחון and you want to daven בטחון, then Hashem takes everybody’s *tefillos*! So a person has to *mechazek* himself and be *mechazek* others and you should never give up! Never!

As I told that woman who was in her 50’s (see footnote #4), “Don’t give up. You could still have kids. Just keep in mind that Sarah Imeinu was much older. And especially if Hashem shows you signs and gives you a *משטן* - He gives you a supporting sign, then there is hope. If Hashem gives you a sign that there’s hope, you have to be jumping up and down from *simchah*! And now you have to *daven* even harder, because you see hope.” You see, when most people see a *משטן*, they say, “Ah, I am finished davening. I already see the light at the end of the tunnel!” My friends, as long as you are in that tunnel and you didn’t get out of that tunnel, don’t count your chickens before they hatch. But you want to know if you can be hopeful? Of course you can be hopeful! If you find some *משטן* in the matter, of course you can!

Hakodosh Boruch Hu should help us all. Hakodosh Boruch Hu should give us the strength to daven and to plead with Hashem. Many people have called me saying they are in terrible jams. “My friend, you have to help yourself. If you can help yourself to rise to the occasion and plead and cry and supplicate Hashem, you definitely can be helped.”

Hakodosh Boruch Hu should give us the strength to remember that if it’s not *b’derech nes*, you have to believe, and you can believe, and you can hope and be *boteach* that you will be answered. Hakodosh Boruch Hu should help us all.



✧ IN SUMMARY ✧

Parshas Toldos is the *mekor* that reveals *tefillah* as a powerful tool for having a *yeshuah* where it seems that there are no natural means of having a *yeshuah*. The issue discussed is that of having children; however, this wonderful gift, *tefillah*, should be used for every *yeshuah* that we need. The *pasuk* tells us that Yitzchak pleaded with Hashem to give him children. Rashi explains that Yitzchak beseeched and *davened* to Hashem a lot. In the merit of Yitzchak's many *tefillos*, Hashem answered his request and gave him children. This episode underlines the words of the Rabbeinu Bechaye, who explains that *tefillah* is very powerful; through *davening* we can even change nature. We can have realistic expectations in life - such as having children and having a *parnassah* - as these systems are built into the foundations of how the world normally functions. These are legitimate needs according to Hashem's design for the world. Therefore, when we face a brick wall in our expectations in any area of life, we should know it is because Hashem is asking to hear our *tefillos*. We should not give up hope or resign ourselves to a bitter existence. We should not struggle on 'bravely' without what we need. Instead, we should connect to Hashem and plead, and beg, and beseech Him. We should *daven* and *daven* and *daven*. This is called being *marbeh umqftzir*. We only have to look for examples of people who did this, such as when Rav Pinkus took a man to the desert to *daven*, to see that it works, both in the area of having children and in other areas. Asking for a *neis* for something that is outside of 'normal' living is discouraged. So we should not ask for a *neis* for something that we should have been careful with but we chose to act dangerously with. We should never leave off connecting with Hashem. We can quiet the little voice inside us that says, "What are my *tefillos* worth?" Hashem wants our *tefillos*! We can have *bitachon* that Hashem will accept our *tefillos*. When we do that, the special requirements for having a *tefillah* accepted simply fall away. When we *daven* from that place of trust (*bitachon*) in Hashem that He hears our *tefillos*, He will accept our *tefillos*. This week (*bli neder*), I will focus on a legitimate, unfulfilled need in my life and think about my attitude to having that need fulfilled. I will set aside some time and energy to *daven*, and plead and beg Hashem to answer my need, and have trust that Hashem will answer my *tefillah*.

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