

לעילוי נשמת הר' אברהם יוסף שמואל אלתר בן הר' טוביה ז"ל

תורה תבלין

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מדעת עליון

וזהו מפרש"י כאן "לתלות במעשיהם הטובים" - כלומר, הרי צדיקים עושים מעש"ט במה שהשי"ת נותן להם, ולכן עליו ליתן להם עוד חיים. ואין זה סותר המדרש שבאמת משה רבינו ביקש מתנת חנם, ואין כלום לבריה אצל בוראה, אמנם משה היה יכול לבקש ולומר שיראה חקב"ה את מעשיו שהשתמש בכל איבריו רק לעבודת ה', וא"כ יזכה הוא ליכנס לא"י כי רוצה הוא רק לעבוד עבודת הבורא שם, ואעפ"כ לא ביקש משה באופן זה רק במתנת חנם ממש.

מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם ליראה אותי ולשמור את כל מצותי כל הימים וכו' (ה-כו)

איתא בגמ' (עבודה זרה ה.) ת"ר אמר להן משה לישראל כפויי טובה בני כפויי טובה, בשעה שאמר חקב"ה לישראל "מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם", היה להם לומר "תן אתה!" הנה מתבאר בדברי חז"ל שהתביעה נגד בני ישראל על שלא בקשו שהקב"ה הוא זה שיתן בלבבם יראת שמים ממש, אלא הסתמכו על עצמם. ולכאורה קשה, דהלא ידוע משאחז"ל ש"הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים"?

ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההיא לאמר וגו' (ג-כג)
פרש"י וז"ל אין חנון בכל מקום אלא לשון מתנת חנם. אע"פ שיש להם לצדיקים לתלות במעשיהם הטובים אין מבקשים מאת המקום אלא מתנת חנם עכ"ל. ומשמע שהיה יכול משה רבינו לבקש בזכות מעשיו הטובים שיכנס לארץ ישראל אבל לא רצה. אמנם יש לעיין, דהא במדרש מצינו על הכת' "ואתחנן אל ה'" - אמר ר"י מכאן אתה למד שאין לבריה כלום אצל בוראה, שהרי משה רבן של כל הנביאים לא בא אלא בלי תחנונים ע"ש. א"כ מצינו שלא היה יכול משה לבקש בזכות מעשיו הטובים בכלל?

ונראה לפרש עפ"י דברי המגיד הגדול, הגמ"ר שלום שבדרון זצ"ל, שביאר טענת חנה אל חקב"ה שאמרה שכל מה שהקב"ה נתן לה באבריה ובגופה היא משתמשת רק בשביל רצון ה', וא"כ יתן לה גם בן שיכולה היא להניק אותו ולעשות רצונך. וזהו הטענה שיכול כ"א לשתמש בה שאם האדם עושה עם אבריו רק מעשים טובים שפיר יש לו זכות שיקבלו תפילתו כחנה. אבל אלי"כ ולא השתמש עם אברין כהגון וכראוי למה לו להקב"ה לשמוע כלל אל תפילתו?

Halacha L'maaseh: Horav Boruch Hirschfeld Shlit'a - Rav D'khal Ahavas Yisroel, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
THE MANY MITZVOS OF KRIAS SHEMA

שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד וגו' (ו-ד)

One of the Taryag Mitzvos in the Torah is the obligation to recite the three parshios of שמע each and every day and night. The Shema that is recited by day must be fully completed before the first quarter of the day. There are two different calculations of when this exact time is:

1) The Magen Avrohom's Zman. 2) The Gra's Zman (which is 36 minutes later). It is incumbent upon every person to maintain a calendar which lists these times for the entire year, for the location where he lives, he travels and even vacations. Optimally, one should strive to make the earlier time of the Magen Avrohom, and one should take care to never miss - even on Shabbos and Simchas Torah, etc. - this precious מצוה דאורייתא entirely.

Concentration and Kavanos during Krias Shema

When a person fulfills the mitzvah of Krias Shema, he is able to actually fulfill a number of other mitzvos at the very same time. Before one begins, he should pause for a moment and have the following thoughts in mind:

1) I am now going to fulfill the mitzvah of Krias Shema. While reciting the first parsha of Shema, one should think:
2) I hereby accept upon myself the yolk of Hashem's kingdom-believing in Him as the sole Creator and Ruler over all. While reciting the second parsha of Shema one should think:
3) I hereby accept upon myself the yolk of performing all the mitzvos of the Torah.

While reciting the last verse of Shema, one should think:
4) I am hereby fulfilling the mitzvah of remembering the exodus from Mitzrayim and the accompanying miracles.

Aside from these basic intentions which are all mentioned in the gemara ושולחן ערוך, there are a number of other inspirational כוונות that one should keep in mind:

1) When one says the word "אחד" and sincerely intends to be מוסר נפש for the sake of Hashem's Oneness, it is as if he actually did so and was מקיים the posuk "ינקדשתי בתוך מקיים" "My Name is sanctified among Bnei Yisroel."
2) By "ואהבת את ה'", one should feel an increase of love for Hashem by thinking about how much Hashem loves him and does for him. This is actually performing "ואהבת"
3) In the morning, while saying the words "וראיתם אותי", one should look at his tzitzis as a reminder to fulfill all 613 mitzvos. This is in fulfillment of the posuk "וראיתם אותו ... למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי"

The following mitzvos are also relevant to Krias Shema:

1) Learning Torah - "ודברתם ושננתם"
2) Teaching Torah to children and students - "לבניך"
3-4) Putting Tefillin on one's arm and head - "ויקשרתם"
5) Placing mezuzos on one's doorway - "ויכתבתם"
6) To review and know one's learning "ואם שמע תשמע"
7) Have no connection to idol-worship - "ולא תתורו"
8) Keep eyes away from forbidden sights (sites) - "ולעבדו בכל לבבכם"
9) To daven daily - "ויהיה לכם לציצית"
10) To fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzis

הוא היה אומר

R' Shmuel Salant ZT"L would say:

"Even in my old age, how can I set fixed hours during the day for people who need my assistance? Chazal tell us to emulate the attributes of Hashem. In bentching we say that Hashem provides for us, 'Constantly, every day, at all times and all hours.' Hashem does not have fixed hours - how can I?

R' Moshe Ben Maimon ZT"L (Ramba"m) writes:

"Even if the chances of success and failure are equal, why worry about failure when you can just as easily hope for success?"

A Chassidische Rebbe would say:

"True, we mourn for the loss of the Bais Hamikdosh and feel it deeply. But we do have one pervading consolation: The structure may be not be here - but the real-estate is worth every cent!"

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of the nineteenth century, and once again during the last fire, the biggest ever in Nikolsburg, in the confusion of flames, smoke and rubble that so often fell upon the city, the Topolanski house always remained unaffected. The flames seemed to be brought to a halt before they reached that house.

TORAH GEMS

לא תסימו על הדבר ... ולא תגרעו ממנו וכו' (ד-ב)

The six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos* of the *Torah* are not to be tampered with. We are forbidden either to add a six hundred and fourteenth or to delete a *mitzvah*. But what could be wrong with adding to the *mitzvos*?

R' Yaakov Krantz ZT"L, the Dubno Maggid explained the answer with a parable. A man borrowed a silver spoon from a neighbor and several days later returned two silver spoons, explaining that the first spoon had given birth to the second; hence, the latter was therefore the lender's rightful property. The neighbor accepted the bonus, and when the man asked to borrow other things, he gladly complied. Each time, the borrower returned two of the item, explaining that the first had given birth to a second. The lender was overjoyed with this windfall, and was ecstatic when the borrower asked for a loan of his silver candelabra.

When the candelabra was not returned after several weeks, the lender asked for it, and the borrower said, "I must tell you the terrible news. Your candelabra died."

"What! Are you insane? A candelabra cannot die," the lender said.

"You certainly had no problem accepting that the other items you lent me gave birth. If they could give birth, a candelabra can die."

The Maggid continued, "If one can tamper with the *Torah* by adding to the *mitzvos*, one will assume that one can detract from the *mitzvos* as well."

לא מרבכם מכל העמים חשק ה' בכם ויבחר בכם
כי אתם המעט מכל העמים וגו' (ז-ז)

Moshe Rabbeinu is describing to the Jewish

people the root cause of Hashem's love for His people and the reason why they were "chosen" from among all the other nations. It is not because you are populous and larger than all the other nations, states Moshe emphatically, because you are the least from all the nations. This is a double statement issued by Moshe; if they are the smallest nation in the world, of course Hashem could not have chosen them because of their great and impressive size?

The Gerrer Rebbe, R' Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter ZT"L, Sefas Emes, puts this in its proper perspective. Large and small are all relative. In the case of the Jewish people, they may be small in quantity but large in quality. In spiritual terms, they have the unique capacity to rise to the highest levels of Godliness and inspirational fervor, yet at the very same time remain grounded to the earth, humble and self-conscious of themselves as compared with their Creator and His host of Heavenly Beings. This is the fulfillment of Hashem's blessing to Avrohom Avinu, "I will make you into a great nation" - A nation that is greater than any other in its stature of spiritual holiness, unique in its service of Hashem and level of רוחניות. However, what truly sets the Jewish nation apart is its humility, modesty and total self-nullification to G-d - it is what makes them a "small" nation.

Thus, the *posuk* tells us that the underlying reason why Bnei Yisroel became the "Chosen Nation" is not because of their greatness (מרבכם) in spiritual endeavors; there are many worlds and countless Divine Beings that maintain great spiritual levels. It is because of our small stature (המעט), our unassuming and humble nature that is truly the greatest virtue of the Jewish People.

וזוהו ביאור הקרא. "מי יתן" - שיהיה בין צדיקי הדור משתדלים לקרב לב כל העם לעבודתו ית'. אבל הקב"ה אינו נותן בלבם את הקירוב דאם יעשה כן, לא יתייחס הדבר לברואיו. אמנם אם האדם מתפלל לפניו על הקירוב, ותפילתו נשמעת, אז מתייחס הקירוב שעושה הקב"ה לברואיו, כיון שנעשה ע"י תפילת הנברא ממש. והיינו בגמ' "היה להם לומר תן אתה" - ר"ל היה אפשר להקב"ה לעשות הקירוב כיון שהוא ע"פ תפילתם ממש.

ומבאר החזון איש, הגמ"ר אברהם ישעיה קרליץ זצ"ל, כי אמנם הקב"ה מניח את הבחירה ביד האדם, אבל האדם רשאי להכריח את רעהו לעבודת השי"ת, בין בכפייה ובין בפיתוי, ולא הוי ביטול הבחירה כיון שהמעשה עושה הבחירה וכל ישראל כאיש אחד. ממילא בחירתו של הכופה את חבירו לעשיית המצות מצטרפת לעשיית המצות ע"י זה שעשה בכפייה וכאילו נעשה המעשה הכפוי עם בחירה.

מעשה אבות.... סימן לבנים

מן השמים השמיעך את קולו ליסרך ועל הארץ הראך את אשו הגדולה וכו' (ד-לו)

The Jewish community of Nikolsburg decided to set up an *eruv* in the city, to accomodate the *Shabbos* needs of the people. The boundaries of the *eruv* were very specific and detailed, and it was going to be necessary to run the wire past the house on the corner of Quergasse. However, the plan could not be carried out because the owner of the house, a Christian butcher named Topolanski, stubbornly refused to allow the wire to be set up. This was not so much due to any scruples of his own, as because of his neighbors, who objected to the presence of this symbol of an alien belief in their proximity. The governor of the town, to whom both parties appealed for arbitration, not surprisingly, decided in favor of the house owner.

After that, there was only one person who could still help, and that was the Chief Rabbi, R' Mordechai Benet ZT"L, who was the object of great veneration by both Jews and Christians alike, and whose judgement was accepted unconditionally by all. A deputation of the community elders went to see the Rov. They explained to him the problem and he answered them in his short and taciturn way, assuring his listeners that he would attend to the problem. And indeed, the next day, R' Modche, as he was known, was seen making his lonely way through the streets and alleys of Jewish Nikolsburg, towards Quergasse.

Topolanski was sitting in front of his house relaxing and smoking his pipe. As he saw the Rabbi coming, he rose and went a few steps towards him. After all, it was a great distinction when this famous man paid him the honor of a visit! R' Modche, explained the reason for his coming. Topolanski responded with a bewildered shaking of his head and a torrent of objections: he himself was not an enemy of the Jews, but the neighbors will complain. And anyway, the authorities had decided against the whole thing, he added.

The Rabbi listened quietly then replied: "As the authorities have decided in your favor, no one can make any complaint against you or force you to comply with any wish of mine. But pay heed to my words: All the different religious confessions which divide humans and fill them with blind hatred for one another, are G-d's children, and are all equally dear and valued in His fatherly heart. Thus, you need not be afraid of complying with my request. Furthermore, you and your descendants will be richly rewarded: I shall bless your house, which will for all time, protect it from fire." Topolanski was speechless and in awe. He had heard too many wondrous things about the Rabbi, not to believe him now. After a moment's silence he agreed to comply with the request and some days later the *eruv* was set up.

And what R' Modche had promised came true. When a terrible fire destroyed much of Nikolsburg in the 1830s, that house was protected from the flames. Time and again, as was common in the olden days, fire broke out and destroyed parts of the ancient town! In the year 1866, and later in the seventies and eighties