

טיב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

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טיב המערכת

ויחבש את חמורו – הוא בעצמו

And he saddled his donkey – he himself

It is told about a certain Rosh Yeshiva who saw a student walking in the Beis Midrash with a cup of coffee in his hand. Some of the coffee spilled, but the student paid no attention and continued walking. The Rosh Yeshiva did not say anything to him. Instead, he left the Beis Midrash and asked someone outside, "Where can I find a rag?" The person was surprised and wondered why the Rosh Yeshiva needed a rag but showed him where it was kept. The Rosh Yeshiva took the rag, entered the Beis Midrash, bent down, and wiped up the spilled coffee. His students asked him, "Rabbi, please teach us—why was it so urgent for you to wipe up the coffee? After all, at the end of the learning session, the cleaner would come and clean the Beis Midrash. And if it was that urgent, why didn't you just ask the cleaner to come and do it instead of cleaning the floor yourself?"

The Rosh Yeshiva answered them, "I could not leave the Beis Midrash dirty because it is not respectful to the Torah. But why did I not call for the cleaner? I will reveal this to you: I always seek opportunities to show my affection for the Torah. This was the first time I had the privilege of cleaning the floor of the Beis Midrash for the honor of the Torah, and this was a great merit that I could not pass up!"

Avraham Avinu always did what the Creator commanded him. But how do we know whether he acted out of fear or out of love for the Creator? The answer is found in our parasha (and in other places). When HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded Avraham to offer his son as a *karban*, he hurried to get up early in the morning and saddled his donkey himself, even though he had many servants and could have ordered them to prepare the donkey, as he presumably did in his daily life. But this time, he did not act that way. Instead, 'Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey himself,' (22:3) as Rashi comments: 'He himself, and he did not command one of his servants, for love disrupts the natural order.'

The Gemara tells us about the great Amoraim who performed menial tasks in honor of Shabbos to show their affection for it. We learn this from Avraham Avinu: it is not enough to fulfill the commandments; it is important to show that we cherish the Torah and the commandments given to us by the Creator. "The heart follows one's actions." When a person performs actions that demonstrate love for the Creator, that love becomes strengthened in their heart and in the hearts of their children and family, and they will learn from him and do the same!

- Tiv HaTorah - Vaveira

טיב ההשגחה

'G-d has made laughter for me' - 'צחק עשה לי אלקים'

I have a dear son who does everything at the last minute.

He has a good heart, but his stress begins when everything is already at its limit. I prayed to Hashem that I would be able to bring in the Succos holiday early, with the succah ready ahead of time. My dear son was in charge of building the succah and its decorations.

A few days before the holiday, I sat him down and pleaded with him in every possible way not to wait until the last minute as he does every year!

Indeed, the day before the holiday, he enthusiastically set up the succah and even got his younger siblings to help arrange tables and take care of everything needed for the succah. My wife called to update me that he had taken the initiative and leadership and was ensuring the succah would be ready early, just as we had asked him. Toward the evening, my son called me, somewhat stressed, asking if I could buy some additional decorations for the succah on my way home. I told him I heard he was handling things well, and instead of going to look myself, I would come and take him to buy more decorations for the succah. He asked me to hurry and pick him up before the stores closed. I reassured him that stores wouldn't close so early and that I would take him to buy the other items he wanted when I got home.

When I arrived home, I was surprised to see that my prayers had worked, and the succah was almost completely ready.

My energetic son urged me to drive quickly before the stores closed. I didn't understand his rush and explained that no store would close its doors before 11 p.m. on the eve of the holiday, and it wasn't even 6 p.m. yet!

My anxious son stopped and asked, "Wait, isn't tonight the first night of the holiday?!" "Tomorrow night!!!" we all answered him in unison, me and my family. "Are you sure?!" he asked in shock.

"Absolutely sure!!!" we replied to him.

At that moment, it became clear—he thought that tonight was the start of the holiday and was experiencing his usual last-minute stress. He had even gone to the mikvah with all the intentions of accepting the sanctity of the holiday. From his perspective, he could not understand why I was so calm and seemingly indifferent to the holiday's approach. Thanks to my prayers, Hashem had confused him, and we were able to welcome the holiday peacefully and calmly, with joy and a happy heart, and a beautifully prepared succah—not at the last minute.

Pray, and you will see miracles!

ב.ש.

וַיְהִי בַעַת הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּפִיכֹל שָׂר צְבָאוֹ אֶל אַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר
אֲלֵקִים עִמָּךְ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה: (כא:כב)

At that time, Avimelech and Phicol, general of his legion, said to Avraham, "G-d is with you in all that you do." (21:22)

Rashi explains: G-d is with you – because they saw that he had left the vicinity of Sodom safe and sound, and he waged wars with kings, and they fell into his hand, and his wife was remembered in his old age.

It is written in the holy *seforim* (see *Noam Elimelech* on Parashas Chayei Sarah) that if a person is impressed only by rare and extraordinary occurrences, considering them alone as miracles, it indicates some deficiency in his faith. Such a person implies that there is a natural order in the world, which operates independently, and only occasionally does Hashem command nature to deviate from its course. However, the truth is that there is no nature at all in the world; the world's existence at every moment is a miracle. As we say daily (in the blessing of *Yotzer*), 'המחדש בטובו בכל יום מעשי' - 'Who renews in His goodness every day the work of creation.' If we believe that the initial act of creation was miraculous, we must also believe that the renewal of creation every day is a miracle. This understanding applies both to the world as a whole and to every individual creation. A person must recognize that at every moment, Hashem sustains him and performs miracles and wonders for him.

A hint to this concept can be found in the event of *Kriyas Yam Suf*, where it is stated (Shemos 14:31), 'ויראו העם את ה' ויאמינו בה' - 'And the people feared Hashem, and they believed in the Hashem.' The holy *Zohar* (part II, 55b) explains that whenever the Torah uses the term "people" (עַם), it refers to the *mixed multitude* (*erev rav*). According to this, the verse informs us that during the *Splitting of the Sea*, when the natural order was altered, even the *erev rav* marveled at the miracles and were inspired to faith. These individuals were still influenced by their flawed belief that there was nature in the world and that divine supervision was not constant. Therefore, their faith was strengthened only when they saw with their own eyes the changes in nature. However, *Bnei Yisrael*, who were steadfast in their faith, were not as astonished by the magnitude of the miracle, for they believed that even what is called "nature" is itself a miracle!

Well-known are the words of the Ramban on this topic (Shemos 13:16): 'From the great and public miracles, a person comes to acknowledge the hidden miracles, which are the foundation of the entire Torah. A person has no share in the Torah of Moshe Rabeinu until they believe that all our affairs and experiences are miracles, with no element of nature or the customary way of the world—whether for the many or the individual. If one fulfills the commandments, his reward will bring him success, and if he transgresses them, punishment will cut him off; all by the decree of the Most High, as I have mentioned. The hidden miracles will become evident in the context of the collective, as described in the promises of the Torah concerning blessings and curses. As the verse states (Devorim 29:23-24): 'ואמרו כל הגוים על מה עשה ה' ככה לארץ: 'And all the nations shall say, Why has Hashem done thus to this land? ... Because they forsook the covenant of Hashem, the G-d of their fathers.' This will make it clear to all the nations that it was from Hashem due to their punishment. And regarding obedience, it states (Devorim 28:10), 'ויראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך' - 'And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of Hashem is called upon you, and they shall fear you.' I will further explain this, with Hashem's help.' See there for further explanation.

From his words, it is clear that all of nature is indeed miracles dependent on divine providence, and all events in the world, whether general or specific, even if they appear clothed in natural processes, are necessarily due to the actions and behavior of creations.

It is well-known, as stated in the *Zohar* (Part III, 149b), that we must not say the Torah recounts stories simply for the sake of storytelling. Therefore, when the Torah tells us about Avimelech and Phicol, his general, approaching Avraham to make a covenant, it must be teaching us something. We can say that this is what Rashi reveals in his commentary: the reason Avimelech wanted to form a covenant with Avraham was because he observed an unnatural, miraculous conduct in three matters concerning Avraham. Through this, Rashi teaches us that the Torah aims to show the difference between a Jew and a non-Jew. What we see here is the way of a non-Jew—one who attributes everything to nature and only acknowledges divine oversight when faced with supernatural occurrences. Even then, such acknowledgment does not necessarily extend to a belief in divine providence governing all, leaving the view that creation generally follows the natural order. This is illustrated by Avimelech's statement to Avraham: "Hashem is with you in all that you do," implying that the world operates naturally, except for rare individuals like Avraham, for whom Hashem maintains constant supervision.

The faith required of a Jew, however, is different. A Jew must believe that at every moment there is specific and miraculous *hashgacha pratit* over all creation and every individual within it. Some may ask, if nature itself is unnatural, why did HKBH need to aid the Avos and the descendants of Israel in miraculous ways rather than always working within nature? The answer is that it is unrealistic to expect non-Jews to have such pure faith as to recognize that nature itself is a constant miracle. HKBH desired that, at the very least, there be an acknowledgment among the nations that there is a divine ruler. Therefore, He sometimes aided the Avos and Israel in extraordinary and miraculous ways so that even the nations would recognize that Hashem exists in the world. This is evident here, where the miracles performed for Avraham led Avimelech and Phicol to recognize Hashem. Similarly, Hashem instilled faith in Egypt through the signs and wonders, leading even Pharaoh, who initially denied Hashem ("I do not know Hashem" - Shemos 5:2), to ultimately believe. By the time of Yonah, Pharaoh even led his people to repentance due to his newfound faith and fear of Hashem *Yisbarach*.

The Ramban mentioned earlier supports this, explaining that the purpose of the miracles in Egypt was to demonstrate once and for all that Hashem exists on earth, and for this reason, these miracles were recorded in the Torah.

This is also why the Baal Shem Tov and his holy disciples would act beyond nature to sweeten judgments and assist their Jewish brethren. During times when many Jews were spiritually weakened by their circumstances, their faith needed reinforcement, which could only come by witnessing supernatural acts. Once their faith was strengthened, the righteous leaders instilled in them the pure belief that nature, too, is governed by God—a belief required of every Jew.