

טיב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

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

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טיב המערכת

סולם מוצב ארצה – A ladder was set on the earth

In the time of the holy Baal Shem Tov, there was once a drought, and the community declared a fast. Everyone gathered in the shul and prayed from the depths of their hearts, but their prayers were not answered. One day, the Baal Shem Tov saw a simple farmer reciting *Shema*. When he reached the words 'ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר' - 'He will shut up the heavens so there will be no rain', he recited them with great intention and tears. In his holy spirit, the Baal Shem Tov perceived that at that very moment, the decree of drought was annulled. After the prayer, the Baal Shem Tov asked the man what he had intended when he said the words "He will shut up the heavens so there will be no rain". The man answered that he had meant the simple interpretation of the words: "He will shut up the heavens"—that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would "press" or "squeeze" the heavens, as one presses grapes, until there would come a point where "there will be no rain", because all the rain in the heavens would have been released. Then the Baal Shem Tov understood that the pure and simple intention of this man had saved everyone and annulled the harsh decree.

Yaaakov Avinu, saw in his dream 'והנה סולם מצב ארצה וראשו מגיע' - 'and behold, a ladder was set upon the earth, and its top reached the heavens.' One could interpret this *posuk* as an allusion to prayer. The word "ladder" (*sulam*) in gematria is equivalent to the word "voice" (*kol*), representing prayer, which depends on one's voice. Sometimes, a person finds themselves in a lowly and degraded state, akin to "set upon the earth". They may think that their prayer surely holds no significance before the Creator and, as a result, fail to pray for what they need. However, they do not realize that even in such a simple state, their prayer possesses immense power, as its "top reaches the heavens."

The word *sulam* also equals the gematria of *mamon* (wealth). Both *kol* and *mamon* share a quality of "going up and coming down", as they sometimes ascend and other times descend. Therefore, if a person sees that their financial situation is in decline, they should strengthen themselves in the service of prayer and believe that HaKadosh Baruch Hu desires their prayers and waits for them, as we see in the story of Choni HaMe'agel, whose prayer was answered. Shimon ben Shetach understood why Choni's prayer was effective—not because he aligned his intentions with all the hidden mystical meanings, but because "you plead with the Almighty and act as though you are a child pleading with his father, who fulfills his wishes." HaKadosh Baruch Hu loves prayers that are like those of a small child asking his father for what they want, using simple words and heartfelt intention. A prayer from the depths of the heart has the power to change the natural order and annul harsh decrees.

- Tiv HaTorah – Vayeitzei

טיב ההשגחה

'Listen and Hear, Israel' – 'הסכת ושמע ישראל'

During my stay in Meron, I lost a valuable hearing aid that I had purchased only a week earlier. It is unpleasant to lose something essential for hearing, especially when its value is in the thousands of shekels, and it happens in such a short period. While I was contemplating the loss and trying to locate the device, a man approached me. He had come to Meron specifically from abroad to celebrate his son's *chalaka* (the traditional first haircut) at the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. He asked me to cut his son's hair as per the custom.

I asked the boy's father if he had any sweets to cheer the child and prevent him from being scared. The father responded that he did not. In the middle of our conversation, a man standing nearby handed me a handful of sweets without saying a word. I was moved by the fact that, among all the Jews in the courtyard of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Meron, this specific individual happened to be standing next to me, overheard our conversation, and took the initiative to provide the treats. This could only be *hashgacha pratis*! Then I thought to myself: "Just as this man with the candies appeared through *hashgacha pratis*, so too, the loss of my hearing aid is under *hashgacha pratis*!"

This realization uplifted my spirits and brought me great joy. After all, HaKadosh Baruch Hu does only what is good for us, and everything happens with wondrous providence. We must recognize that not only what we understand as "good" is under providence, but even what appears to us as "not good" is also under miraculous supervision! - Moreinu HaRav

'Peeking from the Cracks' – 'מציץ מן החרכים'

I went down from my house to my car while in the middle of a phone conversation with my brother. Since the conversation was in full swing, I continued talking even after I started driving. In the middle of the call, my phone battery died, so I placed the device on the seat beside me. At that very moment, as I set the phone down, I noticed a policeman hiding behind a bus, with only his head peeking out to catch drivers who were either talking on their phones or not wearing seat belts.

I thanked Hashem for the kindness He had shown me, despite knowing that I must follow the laws designed to save lives. Nevertheless, I had been spared a certain fine!

תכלית העושר להרבות במצוות
The purpose of wealth is to increase
mitzvos

טיב הפרשה

וַיִּדַר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם יִהְיֶה אֱלֹקִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרָנִי בְּדַרְךָ הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לְלַבֵּשׁ: (כח:כ)
Then Yaakov took a vow, saying, "If G-d will be with me, and
He will guard me o this way that I am going, and He will give
me bread to eat and clothes to wear. (28:20)

At first glance, it seems that Yaakov added two seemingly redundant words to his condition when he said, "And gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear". Is it not self-evident that bread is for eating and clothing is for wearing? Would it not have sufficed to simply say, "And gives me bread and clothing"?

Some explain that Yaakov was asking HaKadosh Baruch Hu to provide him only the amount of bread necessary for eating and a single garment for wearing, nothing more. In other words, in that prayer where he requested his needs, he also asked to avoid excess or luxuries.

However, if this was indeed Yaakov's intention, we must question why HaKadosh Baruch Hu did not heed this request. After all, at the end of our parsha, we see that Yaakov became exceedingly wealthy, as it is written later (30:43): 'וַיִּפְרָץ הָאִישׁ מְאֹד מְאֹד וַיְהִי לוֹ צֹאן רַבּוֹת וּשְׂפָחוֹת - 'And the man became exceedingly prosperous, and he had large flocks, and maidservants and manservants, and camels and donkeys.'

It seems, therefore, that Yaakov's prayer was not to avoid having luxuries but rather to be saved from their negative influence. Yaakov desired wealth, but not for the purpose of indulging in worldly pleasures. Instead, his intent was to use his wealth to increase acts of charity. However, Yaakov was aware that when a person possesses great wealth, his *yetzer* often tempts him to use it not only for his essential needs but also to indulge in the pleasures of this world. Therefore, Yaakov prayed that he would not stumble into worldly indulgences. Even when he would attain wealth, he asked that his heart remain under his control and that he only use it as necessary. Bread would be eaten only in the measure required for sustenance, and clothing would be limited to what was truly needed. All excess, he intended to distribute as charity to those in need.

As told about the holy Rebbe of Satmar, it is well known that he was extraordinarily generous in giving charity. When his admirers built him a beautiful home, appropriate for someone of his stature, they spent a great deal of money on its elegance. However, the holy Rebbe expressed disapproval, saying that he had no need for such luxuries. He added that if they had given him the money to distribute as *tzedakah*, they would have truly benefited him. This reflected his deep appreciation for the mitzvah of *tzedakah* and the extent to which he devoted himself to it.

Similarly, a story is told about one of the righteous individuals of Yerushalayim of old, named Rebbe Pesach. Before moving to settle in Yerushalayim, he served as a Rav in one of the small towns abroad. Upon establishing his residence in Yerushalayim, he found a kindred spirit—a local *maggid* who was also an elevated individual. Together, they resolved to serve Hashem Yisbarach as a team. Every night, they would rise at midnight to recite *Tikkun Chatzos*, and afterward, they would engage in learning Torah until the time of *Vasikin* (praying at sunrise). Following their Tefillah, they would eat a small meal and return to their Torah study, dedicating most of the day to learning.

One day, the *maggid* began speaking to Rebbe Pesach about the disgrace of indulging in luxuries. He elaborated at length on the harmfulness of such behaviors. At first, Rabbi Pesach thought that the *maggid* was simply trying to reinforce the message for both of them and not directing his words at him personally. However, after several days during which the *maggid* did not stop raising the issue—even to the point of reducing their study time—Rabbi Pesach realized that the remarks were indeed aimed at him.

Understanding this, Rebbe Pesach questioned the *maggid* in astonishment, saying: "What 'luxuries' have you found in me? My children wear patched clothing upon patched clothing, and we barely have enough to eat. I am like the other poor people in the city who endure a life of deprivation and hardship. Why would you accuse me of indulging in luxuries?"

The *maggid* then revealed his reasoning and said: "I was in your home on Rosh Chodesh, and I saw a pristine silk tablecloth of considerable value on your table. I ask you, is that not a luxury? How can you justify using such an expensive tablecloth when it is possible to use an ordinary one?"

Rebbe Pesach responded to the *maggid* and said that it had never crossed his mind to purchase such a tablecloth, nor had he spent a single coin on it. He then recounted how the tablecloth came into his possession:

"While I was serving as a Rav abroad, it happened that a wealthy man in my town fell gravely ill, and his condition was life-threatening. He required daily care, a type of care that involved great effort. There was no one in the town deemed suitable for this task except for me. So, I took it upon myself to care for him and began attending to him diligently every day. Each day, I went to his home, looked after him, and also studied Torah with him. Baruch Hashem, my efforts made a significant impact on him, and gradually, he recovered. Once he regained his health, he wished to reward me with a generous gift. However, I, of course, did not want to trade the mitzvah for any material compensation, and I refused to accept anything from him.

This wealthy man lived a long life and passed away only a short while ago. A few days after his passing, a messenger arrived carrying this tablecloth along with a letter. The letter explained that their elderly father had passed away, and in his will, he had instructed them to gift me this tablecloth as a token of gratitude for the time I had devoted to caring for him during his illness." "The truth is," continued Rebbe Pesach, "that I did not want to use the tablecloth, just as I did not wish to accept any reward at the time. I had already considered returning it to the children of the wealthy man. However, before reaching a decision, it occurred to me that the children might feel hurt upon seeing that I did not value the gift from their father. Also, there is the halachic principle of '*mitzvah l'kayem divrei hamet*'—the obligation to fulfill the wishes of the deceased." "Therefore, I reluctantly decided to use the tablecloth."

Hearing this explanation, the *maggid* was appeased and understood that his righteous companion was not guilty of indulgence. Nevertheless, he still felt uneasy about the practical use of what he considered to be a luxury. Together, they deliberated seriously over what should be done about the matter. Since they could not reach a definitive conclusion, the two agreed to present their case to the Rav of Yerushalayim at the time, Rebbe Shmuel Salant, and seek his ruling on the matter. Rebbe Shmuel, with his wisdom, surprised them with his decision. These were his words: "Rabbi Pesach is correct that the tablecloth should not be returned, as it was given in fulfillment of the deceased's wishes. At the same time, the *maggid's* argument is valid that using it constitutes a form of indulgence. Therefore, my advice is as follows: use the tablecloth in a way that eliminates any enjoyment from it. Lay it on the table, but cover it with the old, simple tablecloth you have been using."

From this we learn how meticulous the righteous of previous generations were in avoiding even the slightest hint of indulgence. This also reflects Yaakov's request, as mentioned earlier. Even if he were to acquire wealth and valuable possessions, his intent was to avoid deriving personal enjoyment from them in this world and instead to use them solely for mitzvot and good deeds.