

תורת אביגדור
הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

Rav Avigdor Miller on the Parsha
Adapted from his Tapes, Seforim and Writings of Talmidim

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————— This week's booklet based on Tapes: —————

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Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l on

פרשת וארא

| Hashem's Bitter Medicine |

IT'S TIME TO GO HOME!

In *Parshas Va'eira* the seeds of our redemption from *Mitzrayim* finally begin to take root and sprout. The time has come for the ten *makkos*, the great retribution upon Pharaoh and his slavemaster people, and for the *Am Yisroel* to finally make their exit from the long and arduous servitude in the ארץ לא להם, the land not their own. The *geulah* of the *Am Yisroel*, the fulfillment of ויאזרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול, had finally arrived.

And on what basis was the *Am Yisroel* going to be taken out of *Mitzrayim* now? That we all know; it was the *bris bein hab'sarim*, the famous covenant that Hashem had made with Avraham centuries earlier. You remember when Avraham asked Hakodosh Boruch Hu: במה אדע כי אירשנה - "How do I know that the land will be mine"? (Bereishis 15:8). "Give me some guarantee," begged Avraham, "a guarantee that I'm going to receive the land; that my progeny will one day inherit this land." Avraham was worried; "Who knows? Maybe our merit won't be sufficient. Maybe someday You'll be displeased with us. I want an unbreakable covenant with You!" So Hakadosh Baruch Hu told him then, "Take three calves, three goats and three rams, so that you and I can enter into a covenant." And

what did Avraham do? He took these animals and cut them in half and set the parts opposite each other.

That was the practice in those days. It says that in Yirmiyahu (34:19). When you wanted to enter a covenant, when you wanted to commit yourself to a course of action with an unbreakable promise, you would divide an animal and pass between its pieces as a sign of your commitment to uphold the deal.

HAKODOSH BORUCH HU SEALS THE DEAL

So what happened? Hakodosh Baruch Hu sent down His Presence, His glory, in the form of a fiery furnace to “seal the deal.” Suddenly a great dread and a darkness fell upon the scene. And Avraham witnessed how this fiery furnace - it was the Presence of Hashem - marched between the offerings. והנה תנור עשן ולפיד אש אשר - עבר בין הגזרים האלה “And behold, a smoking furnace and a torch of fire passed through the pieces” (ibid. 15:17).

That was the *bris bein hab’sarim*, when Hakodosh Boruch Hu came down and entered into a covenant with Avraham. ביום ההוא כרת - השם את אברהם ברית Avraham” (ibid. 15:18). It's something unequaled in the history of our people, even among the greatest prophets, that such a covenant was made. That Hakodosh Boruch Hu should come down and “shake hands” to close the deal?! It's unheard of in all of history.

And what did Hakodosh Boruch Hu tell Avraham at that moment? ידע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם - “Know with certainty that your offspring will be sojourners in a land not their own, ועבדום - “And they will enslave them, and oppress them... and afterwards they shall leave with great possessions... to your descendants I have given this land” (ibid. 15:13-18). So it was an imperishable promise that Hakodosh Baruch Hu had made, that He would stand by His people and that He would eventually take them out of *Mitzrayim* and bring them to the land that He had promised to them.

THE TIME FINALLY COMES

And now, in the beginning of our *parsha*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is telling Moshe to let His people know that the time has come. Hakodosh Baruch Hu is invoking that great promise He had made centuries before. “I - וגם הקימותי את בריתי איתם לתת להם את ארץ כנען

am upholding My covenant that I made for them to give them Eretz Canaan" (Va'eira 6:4). "The time has come for Me to fulfill My promise to the Bnei Yisroel," says Hashem, והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ אשר - "And I will bring you to the land which I raised up My hand to give it to you" (ibid. 6:8).

But it's very important that we should listen to the next verse, the *possuk* after Hashem invokes the great promise: וגם הקימותי את - "And not only am I upholding the covenant I made with Avraham," but also - now listen to these words: וגם אני שמעתי את - and I also heard the outcry of the Bnei Yisroel, ואזכור את בריתי - "And therefore, I am now reminded of My promise to them" (ibid. 6:5). What do we see here? That despite the covenant, despite the oath that had to be fulfilled - it's the word of Hashem after all so there's no way that He would fail to fulfill it - *despite all that*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu *waited* until he heard their outcry.

THE GREAT OUTCRY

And not just one outcry; they cried out for a long time. It's repeated again and again: "I have heard their crying out" (ibid. 3:7), "Their crying out has come before Me" (ibid. 3:9), "I have heard the groaning outcry of *Bnei Yisroel*." And it was only when He heard enough outcries from them, וגם שמעתי את נאקת בני ישראל, it was only then that finally Hakodosh Boruch Hu decided to fulfill His covenant with them.

And that's something we say every day in the *siddur* ועונה - "Hashem answers His people Yisroel, at the time that they cry out to Him." It doesn't say merely that He hastens to their succor; that He is at hand to help them. It doesn't say that. It says *v'oneh*, "He is ready to answer them." When? *B'eis shav'am eilav*, at the time that they cry out. *Shav'am* means "a great outcry." וישמעם - "And then He rescues them" (Tehillim 145:19). So we see that it's not sufficient merely to mumble a little prayer. And even to cry out once or twice is not enough. It's important to make a big outcry to Hashem, and to do it again and again.

DID WE MISS THE FINE PRINT?

And actually that's a very big question. Because why *did* Hashem need our outcry? He had already raised His hand and swore

that He would take us out from *Mitzrayim*! So why is the crying out to Him for help under the heavy weight of oppression so important? And even more remarkable, the words of the *possuk* imply that our redemption was *dependent* on our crying out: ועתה הנה צעקת בני ישראל - באה אלי...ועתה לכה ואשלחך אל פרעה והוצא את עמי בני ישראל ממצרים - “The outcry of *Bnei Yisroel* has come to Me...And *now* I will send you to Pharaoh and take out My nation from *Mitzrayim*” (ibid. 3:9-10). Even the great covenant of the *bris bein hab'sarim*, the inviolate word of Hashem was *dependent* on the *Am Yisroel's* entreaties, on their crying out to Hashem. And that's very strange because that wasn't part of the *bris bein hab'sarim*; “crying out” wasn't part of the deal that we “signed!”

But first, there's a fundamental question we have to ask about the entire subject of *tefillah*, of praying for something. We introduce many of our prayers with the words *yehi ratzon* - “May it be Your will, Hashem...” For instance, suppose somebody is in the midst of *shemonah esrei* and he remembers there's somebody ill, *challilah*, in the family. Or it's a person he knows and he wants to pray for him. So he adds these words: יהי רצון מלפניך השם אלוקינו ואלוקי אבותינו שתשלח - “It should be Your will Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our fathers, that You should send speedily a complete recovery from heaven, a recovery of the soul and recovery of the body,” that means mentally and physically. And we mention the person, his name, so that he should be healed among all the other *cholei Yisroel*. Now, we are saying *yehi ratzon*, it should be Your will. That's how we introduce the *tefillah*.

ILLNESS IS ALSO CHESED HASHEM

Now we have to know that whatever “happens” to a person is Hashem's will. Nobody is sick because of accident. It's always Hashem's will. Of course, sometimes a man can induce the illness by his own carelessness, but nevertheless it's Hashem's will. That's his punishment for being negligent with his care, with his health, or his safety. If a man is careless, he's being punished *by Hashem*. No matter what, it's Hashem's will that decreed that this man should be ill.

And when Hakadosh Baruch Hu makes a decree like that, we have a principle, a fundamental principle called *kol orchos Hashem chesed v'emes* - all the ways of Hashem are kindness and truth (Tehillim 25:10). - צדיק השם בכל דרכיו. - “Hashem is righteous in all His

ways," וחסידי בכל מעשיו - "And He is kindly in all His acts." (Ibid. 145:17) Now, when you come in here you have to divest yourself of outside attitudes. Because here we want to study *Torah attitudes*; and the truth of the matter is that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu does everything for kindly purposes*. Everything! And if it was His will that this man should be ill, then it must be for this man's benefit. What the most important benefit is, we'll study soon, but it's out of the question that it shouldn't be a kindness. It *certainly* is for the person's benefit.

"HASHEM, CAN I GET A SECOND OPINION?"

So here it was *Hakadosh Baruch Hu's ratzon* to give this man the benefit of becoming sick. So the question arises, where do we get the audacity to ask Hashem to change His will? Suppose a man goes to a physician and the physician writes a prescription for some medication, let's say it's a foul tasting medication. Would the man say to the physician, יהי רצון מלפניך - "It should be your will *not* to give me this prescription. I want to get along without the prescription."? Only a *meshugeneh* would say such a thing! The doctor studied for years and years, his profession is medicine, his knowledge and experience is medicine. He's the expert here. And you're just an obstinate fellow, maybe ignorant too. Either the expense is too much for you, or maybe you don't like the taste of the medicine. So you don't want to bother with it. It's a *meshugas* to even ask such a thing!

And here is *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, the great Healer, and He's prescribing for a man certain pills - whether the pills are troubles, or headaches, or pains, or illness - big and small. Whatever it is, it's certainly pills. There's no question that Hashem is benefitting the man by giving him these troubles, these misfortunes, pains or illnesses. So how can a man say to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, "I beg of you, *yehi ratzon*, that You should change the prescription, or not give me the prescription at all?" That's a big question that needs to be answered. And actually that's what all our *bakashos* seem to be - an attempt to change the will of Hashem.

WHY ALL THE TURBULENCE?

And another question - just as important and maybe even more perplexing: What's Hashem's purpose in causing any disturbance, either in a man's health or in his family life or in his business? It's a question we want to ask of Him: "Why do You send anything to ruffle the tranquility of our lives?" After all, like we just

said, Hashem's ways are perfect, and He is kindly in all of His deeds. That's a truism. So why is it that we see sometimes that Hashem does things that seem to be contradictory to these principles of kindness?

Actually it's a question that all thinking men ask one time or another. Because *chalilah* something happens; sometimes it happens. Here's a man who's successful, and all of a sudden a freak misfortune happens to him and unfortunately he's in the hospital. It's not an accident, it's Hashem! So he's thinking, "Why did this happen to me? Before everything was going smoothly with me; *boruch Hashem* I was a good frum Jew more or less. Why did Hashem do this?"

THE GREATEST CHESED!

And the answer is as follows: There is a great kindness that's most paramount, more important than all the *chassodim* in the world - more important than *parnasah*, more important than *shalom bayis*, and good health. And that's the kindness called *yiras Hashem*. *Yiras Hashem* - which means to be Aware of Hashem, that's the most important thing in your life. Now, this might sound queer to the ears of those who live with materialism, but it's a fundamental principle that we must get into our heads. *We are here to gain Awareness of Hashem.*

Now, if that's the purpose, then what a tragedy it is when people let their lives go by and fail to utilize the opportunities to recognize Hashem. You forgot about Him?! To forget Hashem is the worst ruination in life! To live without awareness is not a life worth living!

So Hashem sees that you're wasting your life - of course you're a *frum* person - you're doing *mitzvos*, you're ultra-ultra Orthodox. But that's not enough for Hashem. He doesn't want "Orthodox;" He wants to squeeze *greatness* out of you! He wants to save you so that your life shouldn't be wasted. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to give you the gift of being Aware of Him.

HASHEM: A ONE DAY HEADACHE FOR CHAIM

So what does Hashem do? He orders a prescription; one headache. Prescribed: Chaim ben Dovid, one headache, for one day. It's a pill. And so one morning you wake up with a headache. And what's the purpose of that prescription? *The purpose of the headache is so that you should call out to Him and achieve the perfection of even a little*

more awareness of Hashem. And when you do that, you're turning your migraine into diamonds!

All the events in a man's life are being manipulated by Hakadosh Boruch Hu; He puts disturbances in your life so you'll call out to Him. And that is the chief purpose of every mishap in your life; to cause you to cry out for aid from Hashem and to thereby become more aware of Him. The outcry that comes from desperation, from unrequited needs and from anguished hopes for the future, causes Awareness of Hashem's Presence, and it is that Awareness that is the true achievement, the chief purpose of Man's existence in this life.

"BETTER ANGER THAN LAUGHTER"

And now we have an answer to the age old question of why "bad" things happen to good people: Because Awareness of Hashem is the greatest *chesed* that Hashem can give man, and most often it is the *tzaros*, and the crying out to Hashem it encourages, that brings this Awareness. When you're subject to adversity, that's the great opportunity to be *makir* Hakadosh Boruch Hu, to recognize Hashem. When a man finds himself subject to mishaps and misfortunes - he needs things, so it's much easier for him to raise his eyes to Hakadosh Boruch Hu and ask for it; and that is the great gift of Awareness of Hashem.

And therefore, טוב כעס משחוק - Better anger than laughter" (Koheles 7:3). Now we know that's not true. Anger is no good; it's a very big mistake to get angry. But there is *one* anger that is good - and that's Hashem's anger. טוב כעס שכועס הקדוש ברוך הוא על הצדיקים - That's good. When Hashem gets angry at you, that's *tov*, that's good for you. Don't ask for it though. You ask for good times. הרחב פיך ואלמלארו, ask Him for good times and appreciate what He's giving you. But still, "when Hashem shows his anger to the *tzadikim*, that's better than the smiling Hashem does on the *reshaim*." (Shabbos 30b) If there ever happened that a *tzadik*, *chalilah* had a setback, a misfortune, so you must know, and he must know, that it's a stroke of good fortune. Now I know that it's very hard to accept, but we have to learn that and understand that it's a *chesed gadol* when that happens to him. *Tov*, it's better, it's a greater *hatzlacha* than had Hashem smiled.

ברוע פנים ייטב לב, When the face is sad then the heart becomes better (ibid.). Now it doesn't mean you should be sad and sour faced. On the contrary - if you're sad faced it shows that you don't appreciate what Hashem is doing for you. You don't appreciate that things are *tov*. But sometimes a man against his will is sad because some misfortune has happened to him, so he should know however that ייטב לב, his *neshama* is improving.

DON'T TAKE THE WRONG MEDICINE

So when Hashem sends you a headache, you have to know that it was for a great purpose. And if you take an aspirin, and after one day the headache goes away, *and you never cried out to Hashem*, so you wasted the prescription. You've wasted an opportunity! The purpose was for you to become Aware of Hashem, and you wasted the glorious opportunity.

And so when we ask Hashem "*Yehi ratzon*, let it be Your will that I be healed," we are not telling Hakadosh Baruch Hu to *change His will*. *Yehi ratzon* means this: "Hashem, I know that what You want from me is that I should become more Aware of You. And that's what I'm doing now; I'm calling out to you. Let it be Your will that I can get better now - or my *tzaar* should be removed, whatever it is you're asking for - *because* I'm calling out to You. I'm becoming more aware of You. Whatever trouble You gave me, can go away now because I've achieved the purpose."

WHEN HASHEM DOESN'T ANSWER

Now the truth is that sometimes you cry out to Hashem and He doesn't answer. A man called me on the telephone and he tells me: He's crying out and crying out, and there's no answer. He wants to know what he's supposed to think.

He's supposed to think that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu wants him to cry out even more*. And suppose he cries out even more - let's say a man is on his deathbed, he's an old man, 119 years old, he can't expect to live much more. But still he cries out on his deathbed. Did he waste his time? No! He achieved maybe in his last minutes more than he did in his whole life.

119 YEARS IS NOT ENOUGH?!

An old man is crying out on his deathbed, he says "Oh, Hashem, heal me!" "Oh it's silly," you'll say. The bystanders think it's

ridiculous. "You want to be healed?! How long do you want to hang around here?! The children want to take over the business already, they want the "old man" out of the way already. 119 years is not enough?! No, for him it's not enough. When you're on your deathbed it's never enough. He wants to live a thousand years. Why shouldn't he? He has a great grandfather who lived almost a thousand years. Mesushelach lived almost a thousand years so why can't he?

So he's crying out to Hashem. Why not? He has the right to cry out. And when he finally takes his last breath don't think he didn't accomplish with the crying out. He accomplished plenty. *The crying out is the purpose.* That's the biggest achievement there is. So nobody is ever frustrated in his *davenen* when he's not answered - because he has gained the most important thing, more Awareness of Hashem.

DISCOVERING WINEMAKING

It's like a man who has a very good vineyard. He has blue-blooded grapes, good quality grapes "with a *yichus*, with a pedigree." So when he takes his grapes to the wine press and he presses out the wine, it's a pity to take that mash, the residue, and throw it away. So he decides to press it a little more; he takes that mash and presses it some more. He puts them on the wine press and gives a *koetch*. And a little more good wine squirts out. But it's not enough for him. He says, "I can't leave *any* wine inside the peel. Maybe there's some more good wine in there. So he puts it under the press again and puts some more pressure to get out the last drop.

Now you have to know that *we* are the good grapes and Hashem wants to press from us *all the yiras Hashem that He could get* - for our own benefit. He wants to squeeze out some more "good wine of Awareness" from us because from good grapes you try to squeeze out all that you can.

THE SOUL OF GOOD GRAPES

And so Hakodosh Boruch Hu is pressing us with all kinds of pressure. One pressure might be trouble with *parnasa*, another might be trouble with your children, or trouble having children, *chas v'shalom*. And when you cry out to Hashem, that's the good wine, the good wine of Awareness of Hashem dripping from the good grapes of your *neshamah*. When your heart is torn with anguish, and you turn to Hashem for His help; you weep and you pour out your heart

in *tefillah*, that's the good wine that Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants from you. And sometimes He might press you again and again, and the good grapes will keep on giving good wine.

Until finally Hashem will say, "Enough! You achieved exactly what I wanted from you." And now רצון יראיו יעשה ואת שועתם ישמע - it means that Hakodosh Boruch Hu does the will of those who continue to grow in Awareness of Him, but first they have to cry out to Him. *Shavasam* means that they cry out. They cry out! "Oh," says Hashem, "If that's the case, if you're crying out to Me, so you're becoming Aware of Me. So now, וישמעם - "Now I'll help you. Once you cried out, once you perfected yourself in Awareness of Hashem, so now I'll answer you."

SO IT WASN'T FINE PRINT AFTER ALL!

And that leads us to the answer that we were searching for in the beginning of our talk. Hakodosh Boruch Hu had given us His word at the *bris bein hab'sarim*; He caused His *shechina* to pass through the *besarim*, the halves of the animals, and swore to Avraham that He would take us out of Mitzrayim. So how is it that now He could he make our *geulah* dependent on our crying out to Him? Is not the word of Hashem imperishable?! דבר אלוקינו יקום לעולם - "The word of Hashem stands forever" (Yeshayah 40:8).

And so we'll study again the words of Hashem to Avraham Avinu. ועבדום וענו אותם - "And they will enslave them, and oppress them" (Bereishis 15:13) The word וענו, "and they will oppress," you must know actually means "and they will cause you to cry out." The word *ani*, a poor or afflicted man, actually means "the man that cries out," from the root *anah*, "to speak up." The *gemara* (Bava Basra 10a) tells us that "the poor man is beloved by Hashem," because *he cries out* to Hashem in his affliction, and he therefore becomes more Aware of Him.

And so we have to say that the וענו אותם that Hashem promised us, the *tzaros* that Hashem foretold would come upon us in Mitzrayim, were intended specifically for the *Bnei Yisroel* to reach greater and greater heights of Awareness of Hashem. That was its purpose. And how? By means of the עינוי, by means of them calling out to Him and thereby becoming more Aware of Him and of their dependence on Him.

PREPARING US TO BECOME HASHEM'S PEOPLE

Hashem had brought the afflictions on the Am Yisroel *for the purpose* of causing them to cry out to Him. He was preparing us in *Mitzrayim* to become "My people," and the oppression was His plan of conferring upon us the perfection of crying out to Him. The heavy affliction caused a great and unceasing outcry, which resulted in a heightened Awareness of Hashem. It was this keen Awareness which made them My people, *and now the covenant with the Avos could be triggered, and become effective, in causing their deliverance from Mitzrayim.*

And until they would reach those heights, that achievement of Awareness, then the וְעַבְדְּתֶם might have been fulfilled, but the וְעָנֹה אֹתָם - "And I will cause them to oppress you until you cry out to Me," would still be missing. In reality the entire bondage and affliction were intended to be stimulation towards the outcry to Hashem, and toward the achievement of a greater Awareness of Hashem, which would be demonstrated by their outcry to Him.

PHARAOH, HASHEM'S WINEMAKER

And if we wouldn't have cried out to Hashem we would have remained there forever. Absolutely we wouldn't have come out of *Mitzrayim*. Hashem said, "You have to cry out to Me if you want to get the salvation." And that's why Hashem applied pressure. When He saw that they were not crying enough so He told Pharaoh, "Get busy and apply a little more pressure to the wine press." So all of a sudden Pharaoh comes out with a new decree: "Up till now you were making bricks and I supplied the hay, the straw. Now you go look for the straw by yourself." That's a double job. In addition to making bricks all day long, in your lunch hour, in your three minute lunch hour, go and look for straw too. Because אֵת מִתְכֹנֶת הַלְבָנִים, the same amount of bricks has to be supplied, the same count of bricks you must continue to give.

Now that's putting pressure on the wine press with a vengeance! Even when they cried out, Hashem pressed more on the good grapes. So the Bnei Yisroel cried out more. And that's what Hakadosh Boruch Hu wanted. "Ahh, my children. You remember Me now. You're aware that I'm in existence - you know about Me now." It's like a man who is carrying his child on his shoulders - and this child was so happy riding on high; he thought *he* was the tall one. So

he started kicking with his feet, kicking his father in the chest with his feet, he was so happy.

So the father saw now that his son was not aware of him anymore, his child was riding on high. So when the father saw a dog coming, he put the child down near the dog, "Oh, Poppy, Poppy, save me." "Oh," the father said, "So I'm a Poppy now."

And so even after Hakodosh Boruch Hu took the Bnei Yisroel out from Mitzrayim, He was afraid - *afraid for them* -that they might forget about Him. He took them out of Egypt, so it's all over now. Now they can stop crying. So ויבוא עמלק - And Amalek came (Shemos 17:8). So they cried out to Hashem. "Oh," Hashem said, "I'm still around, huh?!" Because that's the arrangement of Hakodosh Boruch Hu in this world. It wasn't a one-time event, in Mitzrayim. Forever and ever the plan of Hashem is to press the good grapes of the Am Yisroel a little bit more. And our job is to always utilize the opportunities and not make it necessary for the wine press to be pressed even harder.

BE SMART AND DON'T WAIT

Let's remember always that there are *madreigos* and *madreigos* in persecution - and wise is the man who will use all of them, even the smallest misfortune, to improve, by calling out to Hashem and becoming more Aware of Him.

So you're standing in your store and no customers are coming in. Why are you wasting the great opportunity?! You have to cry out to Hashem, "*Ribono Shel Olam!* Please give me some customers!" And those opportunities are endless, because all day long there are bumps in the road. Just because there's no taskmaster standing over you with a whip, doesn't mean you can't use the opportunities of *tza'ar* in your life - the smallest things and the biggest things - to call out to Hashem.

YOU ARE STANDING IN A GOLD MINE!

I'll tell you something else. Don't let your *shemonah esrei* go to waste! You mean to say you're going to spend your years just mumbling your *tefillos* every day by rote and not thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu?!? *Shemonah esrei* is a gold mine. And when you're standing in a gold mine, even if you grab only one handful you're already a wealthy man. But you have to know how to grab! כל

שאינו תחנונים - "If you're not begging Hashem for mercy, if you're not crying out and begging, so your tefillah is not a tefillah" (Brachos 29b). When you daven, you have to daven כרש המבקש בפתח, like a poor man begging at the door of a rich man (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 89:3). He's talking here about a man without shoes, he's hungry and cold, and he's begging for something to eat. That's a man who knows how to cry out! And that's how *we're* supposed to daven.

Now we can't ask too much of you, but when you stand *shemonah esrei* at least one *brachah* from the gold mine you can choose to say *b'tachanunim*. For one thing at least you can cry out to Hashem instead of running through the words. You have a cold? "*R'faeinu Hashem, v'neirafei!*" Cry out! Trouble with *parnasah*? Cry out, "*Bareich aleinu!*" There's fighting in the house, *machlokes* with the neighbor? *Sim shalom!* Don't just mumble the words to yourself; cry out to Hashem! At least in your mind you should be crying out; it should be a cry of the mind up to Hashem.

And sometimes things get even more difficult. And what that means is that Hashem wants even more Awareness from you. When things are going hard with *parnasah*, so you get desperate - you were hoping this job would work out, or maybe this deal would go through - but nothing is going, you're at your wit's end! So what happens? בלית ברירה, you have no choice - your rich uncle won't take your phone calls, the bank won't lend you any more money, and welfare won't pay the bills. So you have to cry out to Hashem. Ohh, that's a *hatzlacha* - that's more important than your *parnasah!*

LET'S LEARN FROM IYOV'S MISTAKE

Now, I want to expand this subject a little more. Because once we understand that the purpose of tefillah is Awareness of Hashem, so you'll see that we're not talking only about *tefillah* when something *already* happened; I'm also talking about *tefillah* that it *shouldn't* happen. *Tefillah koidem l'tzarah*, how important that is! When you fall *tachanun*, you fall on your arm after *shemonah esrei*, so it's *tachanunim*, you're entreating Hashem for mercy. *Rachum v'Chanun* - "Hashem, You're the Merciful One." - השם אל באפך תוכיחני - "Please Hashem, don't rebuke me in Your anger," ואל בחמתך תיסרני - Please don't chastise me in Your wrath." So you might think that this *kepitel* is for Dovid maybe; he was in trouble so he was calling out, that's why he

said those words. No, don't make that mistake; it's for us! And we're saying it *so there shouldn't come trouble*. We want to be wise enough to call out to Hashem before the *tzarah* even comes.

Why wait *chalilah*? Maybe it'll be too late then. You remember how *Iyov* was in trouble, *gehokte tzaros*. He lost his sons; he lost his daughters. He lost everything; he even lost his health. And he was sitting on a garbage pile; this wealthy man now didn't have a home at all - he was sitting on the dunghill of the city and he was scratching his wounds. The puss was dripping from his wounds and he was scratching the itching wounds with a piece of broken pottery. Imagine the scene. It's *Iyov*, the "great rich *Iyov*," sitting on a dunghill, with a piece of a broken pot scratching his itching wounds. He couldn't even afford a salve to heal himself!

So his friends came to visit him, his *chaveirim* who knew him in his good days. And one of them said to him as follows: היערוך שועך ולא בצר - Did you set forth your outcry *before* you were in distress?" You hear that?! היערוך, "Did you set forth your outcry to Hashem, did you arrange your *tefillos*, לא בצר, *before* the trouble came upon you?" (*Iyov* 36:19). That's what he said to *Iyov*: "Did you cry out to Hashem *before* you were in trouble?" It was the good old days, when you could criticize a man who was suffering and he'd listen.

THINK AHEAD

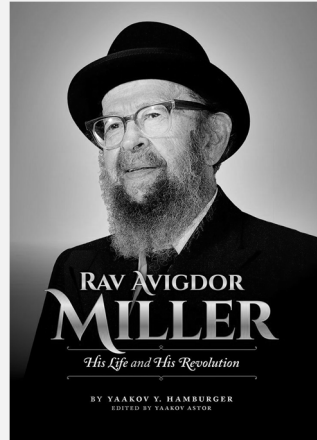
Now, I don't know what the answer is; we don't know what *Iyov* answered his friends. Maybe he did. But we see what the *gemara* says about that: לעולם יקדים אדם תפילה לצרה - "A man should always say his prayers *before* he needs something, before the troubles set in" (*Sanhedrin* 44b). That's a real sign of *yiras Hashem*. The real sign of Awareness of Hashem is when you are always aware of *what could be* - so many things could go wrong in a man's life - and you cry out to Hashem so that He should save you from them all. Because that's the system that Hakadosh Baruch Hu set up for mankind. That's His prescription for the world. So if a man says to Hashem "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I'm going to cry out to You even when there's no trouble," so that man is filling his prescription of *yiras Hashem* in the best way possible. And Hashem says, "I'm satisfied - as long as you cry out. But to not cry out at all? I might have to give you a reason to cry out.

And so we say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Hashem, please don't give me any headaches. And from now on I'm going to ask You as much as I can to save me from headaches." "Oh," Hashem says. "That's a deal that I like. As long as you're aware of Me; as long as you ask Me every day to protect you from illness, then I don't have to give you any illness. Of course if you'll let down your side of the bargain, if you start saying the words only out of habit, so sometimes I'll have to remind you. Sometimes a little headache I'll send again so that you should call out to Me with more sincerity."

THE BEST TIME FOR PRAYER

And so we are never telling Hakadosh Baruch Hu to change His will. Who are we to tell Hashem what's good for us?! Let's say, He prescribed a person should have to be in a hospital. Maybe He prescribed a person should have to lose his job *chalilah* or have trouble with one of his children *chas v'shalom*. So we say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu beforehand, before he fills the prescription, "May it be Your will that I shouldn't have to ever go into a hospital - except to visit my wife when she has a baby." "*Yehi ratzon m'lifanechah* that I shouldn't have any problems with my boss, and that I should have my job for as long as I want it." "Ribono Shel Olam, please keep my children on the *derech hayashar*, the *derech hatorah*."

The best time to cry out to be saved is when everything is well ! It's important



The last year of his life, tragedy struck. His beloved grandson, Reb Yisroel Miller, was killed when his car collided with a bus while on the way to the Kosel with his bar mitzvah son. The news hit Rav Miller like a hammer blow. Living as he did in close proximity to his grandfather, Sruly had the opportunity to serve his *zeide* in various ways and became close to him. From his youngest years, Sruly had learned privately with him. At the *shivah*, Rav Miller expressed his pain, telling the family, "I feel I should be sitting *shivah* here along with you."

When his daughter asked him for a practical lesson the family could derive from the tragedy, Rav Miller responded that he felt that his daily *tefillos* for his children and grandchildren were becoming habitual, so he needed to add more fervor when he beseeched Hashem to protect them. He suggested to his children to add more *kavanah* when they recited the *berachah* of *Hashkiveinu*.

(Rav Avigdor Miller – His Life and His Revolution p. 253)

for you young people to think about that. You're healthy?! Cry out to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that you should stay well! Your children are well?! Cry out to Hashem, "Ribono Shel Olam, please! It shouldn't come upon me or anyone in my family what happened to that man in shul!" *Parnasah* is good? Cry out to Hakodosh Boruch Hu! Suddenly things could *chas v'shalom* happen. Out of nowhere things happen!

When you say וּשְׁמוֹר צֵאתְנוּ וּבֹאֵינוּ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם - "Hashem, guard our going out and our coming back, for good life and peace" (Birkas Kriyas Shema - Maariv) you should be saying it with an outcry. At least in your mind it should be וְתַעַל שׁוֹעֵתָם אֵל הָאֱלוֹקִים. Who knows what could happen on the road once you walk outside?! On the streets, people are speeding in cars through the streets. And sometimes the car jumps the curb onto the sidewalk where people walk. Who knows what could happen?! You cross by a building and suddenly a facade of the building, it's been hanging on for twenty-five, thirty years, a big chunk of cement falls loose and starts coming down. It's very important that you should be a few inches out of the way. And that's what your *tefillah* can accomplish.

I DON'T WANT ANY SPECIALISTS

When you walk down Ocean Avenue so you see signs. A doctor specializing in this, a different doctor specializing in this, a doctor specializing in something else. It's no accident that you saw those signs today. Look how many things they specialize in! It's a reminder to cry out! Look how many problems *could happen*. Even one thing wrong and you have to go to a big specialist *chas v'shalom*. Sometimes you have to go to Manhattan and it costs a load of money. And then some people get a diagnosis, the dreaded diagnosis. *Ay yah yay*, the terrible news. And now the *tzaros* begin. And there are so many things that could go wrong, it's endless. So cry out now *koidem l'tzarah*: "Ribono Shel Olam, please save me from that dreaded disease" - I don't want to say it, it starts with a C.

And when you pass by the shingle hanging on the next building, let it be a reminder of another *tzarah* that you don't want to come upon you. I recommend that - walk by one of these fancy streets where there are a lot of doctor signs and practice up on crying out to Hashem *before the troubles come!*

You pass by a big drug store - all kinds of medicines, creams, drops, with long names for different problems. Bargain prices! So cry

out, "Hashem, please I should never need this type of medicine for kidney failure." You know what it means to *not* have a working kidney? It's *gehenim*! Cry out to Hashem, "Ribono Shel Olam, please keep my kidneys working. I don't want to be hooked up to a kidney machine; I want to be able to empty my bladder on my own, in my own bathroom, not in a hospital room."

THERE'S NO CHESS IN THIS HOME

Even when you pass a funeral parlor, you should cry out. You know, if you'll take a walk with me down Ocean Avenue, we'll pass three separate funeral parlors. Funeral "homes" they call it. They want you to think maybe that they're inside there playing chess, or reading the newspapers! No, he's laying in a plain wooden box, that's all. So every time you pass by the funeral parlor, you can cry out to Hashem, "Please keep me alive. Please give me good health and *arichas yomim*; I want to stay for a long time outside of this home." You have to cry out to Hashem with intensity!

You know what a tragedy it is when people have to beg Hakodosh Boruch Hu for peace *after* the war has already begun? I'm talking about domestic peace, peace in the home. You should be crying out to Hashem all the time, during the times of peace - especially when there's peace. There shouldn't be any "war" in your household. And that there should be peace in the households of your sons and daughters. You ask Hashem, "Please don't let my telephone ring with bad news." Sometimes a daughter calls up, *chalilah*, she's having a fight with her husband. She wants to leave him. *Ay yah yay*, the tragedy of a broken home. Don't wait! When it's quiet on all fronts, your daughters are quiet with their husbands. Nobody's complaining - maybe they are, but not to you. You hear nothing from your children. That's wonderful, the great peace of *shalom bayis*. And that's when you should cry out to Hashem, that He should continue to keep peace in your home and the homes of your children.

HASHEM, SAVE ME FROM BLINKING TOO MUCH

And if you don't have any litigation with your neighbors, that's the best time to *daven*. If you never went through that, you're a lucky man, and you want to keep it that way. Trouble with neighbors, fighting and recriminations, going to court; it's all *tzaros*. A man used to come in here. He used to come here and he was blinking all the time. I saw that the man was very nervous. And so I spoke to

him and he told me he has constant legal trouble with neighbors. Jewish neighbors. About the driveway, about this and about that, and it got so acute that he was dragged into the court again and again. That's *tzaros*.

And so we ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu, שלום רב על ישראל עמך - תשים - "Great peace in every area of our lives you should put upon us." "Please Hashem. There should be peace inside of our stomachs. Our stomach shouldn't complain, shouldn't growl, shouldn't groan. Our nerves shouldn't complain, our head shouldn't complain." The body has a lot to say, and when the body is quiet and it's peace all throughout the body, people aren't grateful. You don't realize how lucky you are. Your brain is getting good messages from all parts of the body. Constantly. You're not aware of the messages. When do you become aware? When even once the messages are not good. Even if one pinprick somewhere on your skin is taking place, it's relayed to your brain and you're acutely aware of it. And so, when nothing is happening, it's *shalom*. It's complete tranquility on all fronts. From your toes to the scalp of your head, it's quiet on all fronts. *And when all is quiet, that's the best opportunity to cry out to Hashem that it should remain quiet.*

THINK ABOUT WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU

Only that when you call out to Hashem before the *tzarah*, it has to be with the same intensity as during a *tzarah*. The same Awareness of Hashem you have to accomplish in the good times! If you would think even a little bit about what *tzaros* does to a person, hospitals, and bills, and litigation, and so much pain and anguish! Cry out to Hakadosh Boruch Hu that it shouldn't happen! At all times you should be crying out.

And don't think it's excessive what I'm telling you now. You can never ask enough for Hashem to help you, because *you can never be too Aware of Hashem!* Because what we've learned from our *parsha* is that *we're in this world primarily to become Aware of Hashem.* That's our perfection! The more we call out to Him the more our *neshamos* are being purified.

And therefore, usually we have two choices: You can become Aware of Him while He's still giving you good things - while you're healthy, while your wife and children are healthy, while you still have *parnasah*, and so on and so forth - by crying out to Him and

entreating Him that everything should remain as is; that's the best way to squeeze out from the good grapes the wine of Awareness of Hashem.

THANK YOU FOR ALL THE TROUBLES!

However, in this world, Hakodosh Boruch Hu will always press the good grapes of the *Am Yisroel* like He did in *Mitzrayim*; there's always some more wine of Awareness to squeeze from you that you haven't *kvetched* out on your own. And so Hashem says, "It pays to give you trouble because the gain, the benefit for you when you're thinking about Me, is the greatest of benefits. And when you come to the Next World, you'll say, אודך השם כי אנפת בי - "I thank You Hashem for causing me that pain, for giving me this *tza'ar* or that *tza'ar*, because it made me call out to You. And it was the crying out in that world that gave me the greatest success, Awareness of You, Hashem, so that I can bask forever in the Presence of Your *shechinah*."

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Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Tz"l

Q:

Should we be storming the heavens about *bi'as hamoshiach*?

A:

Every day you should storm. את צמח דוד עברך מהרה תצמיח, say it with a storm! You should also storm by ברך עלינו את השנה הזאת ואת טל ומטר כל מיני תבואתה לטובה. When you get to the words טל ומטר you should storm. Storm by טל ומטר! Don't just be *yoitzei*. What a miracle *tal u'matar* is! You think it just happens? *Tal u'matar* just happen?! It's a *neis*, no less a *neis* than the *mann*.

If the *mann* had happened only once, ooh would that have been something. But because it happened for forty years they became accustomed to it and it stopped being a *neis*. You know when they came to Eretz Canaan and they saw food coming out of the ground, that was a *neis*. Food coming out of the ground?! "It's a *neis*, food is coming out of the ground!" They thought food comes from the clouds. Because really it *is* all a *neis*; it's only that habit makes you not notice.

So we have to storm the heavens for טל ומטר. And we have to storm for everything. You have to storm for רופא כל בשר ומפליא! לעשות! You went to the bathroom? It's a *neis* that you were able to go to the bathroom. Miracles are happening when you go to the bathroom! ומפליא לעשות – it's all wonders what happens in the bathroom. Only that we're all fast asleep. Our minds are *metumtem*, they're stupified by the *gashmiyus*, by the *mechitza* of *chumriyos*. So we have to storm, to fight back against the *chumriyos*, and we have to see the *yad Hashem*, the miracles of everything in this world. Certainly we have to storm about everything.

TAPE # 854

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