



דרכים בפרשה

נצבים



לעברך בברית ה' אלקיך ובאלתו אשר ה' אלקיך כרת עמך היום

To enter into the covenant of Hashem, that Hashem is concluding with you this day, with its sanctions

The Baal Hatanya teaches that a treaty is not needed for the times in which things are wonderful between two friends, neighbors or Nations. Everyone seems happy and there are no problems. Yet, when things go wrong, very often the damage is irreparable. In order for the lines of communication to remain open even during the turbulent times, a treaty is put in place already during the good times so that there are avenues of repair which are always available.

The Shem M'Shmuel quotes this to explain the *bris* which is found at the beginning of our parsha between HaShem and Klal Yisroel. The ultimate *bris* that we have with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* is *tefillah*. *Tefillah* affords us the ability to connect with HaShem regardless of where we are or what we are going through. Furthermore, *tefillah* is available even after *Chas V'shalom* performing the worst sins in the world. One would think that at that very second, the sinner is left "without a hope and a prayer", but in fact, the opposite is true. it is precisely for moments like those in which that *bris* is called upon.

This is the reason that the Midrash in our parsha opens up with a discussion about the great powers of תפילה. The Midrash further comments that even if one is not granted their entire request, half will be granted. To illustrate its point, the Midrash cites the incident of Kayin. Upon killing his brother Hevel, it was decreed that he would *become a restless wanderer (na v'nad) on the earth*. Immediately, Kayin pleaded for mercy, finally acknowledging the gravity of sin, but arguing that the terms of his exile amounted to a death sentence. HaShem accepted his plea.

At first the decree from HaShem was נע ונד ויאמר קין אל ה' - *You shall be a restless wanderer (na v'nad) on earth*. Kayin cried out - ה' - *And Kayin said to HaShem, "My punishment is too great to bear!"* The Midrash explains that he said to HaShem, אמר לפניו רבונו - *He said before Hashem: Ribono shel olam!* *You bear the whole world, yet my sin You cannot bear?* כתבת (מיכה ז, יח): *נשא עון ועבר על פשע, סלח - You wrote, (Michah 7:18) 'Who bears sin and forgives the transgression, forgiving the great sinner.* מיד מצא חסד לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא ונמנע ממנו נע חצי הגזרה, שכן כתיב - *Immediately, he found kindness before the Hashem, and He held back the "restlessness" (na), half the decree, and so it is written (Bereishis 4:16) 'And he dwelled in the land of Nod [wandering, but not na, restlessness].* מכאן אתה למד שגדולה - *From here you learn that tefillah is held great before HaShem.*

The Midrash continues that we similarly find by Chizkiyahu Hamelech (as he was about to die for the sin of not trying to have children) that his *tefillah* also saved him: וכן חזקיהו, הנביא (ישעיה לח, א): *צו לביתך כי מת אתה, מיד (ישעיה לח, ב): ויסב חזקיהו פניו אל הקיר, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא (ישעיה לח, ה ו): שמעתי את תפלתך וגו' [והוספת] הנני יוסף על ימך חמש עשרה שנה, שכן כתיב (תהלים קמה): רצון יראיו יעשה ואת שועתם ישמע - *And so for Chizkiyahu, when the Navi told him, (Melachim 2, 20:1) 'Put your house in order, because you are going to die...' immediately ' Chizkiyahu turned his face to the wall [and davened to Hashem]...' Hakadosh Boruch Hu said to him: 'I have heard your tefillah... I have added 15 years for your life...'**

So is it written, (Tehillim 145:19) 'He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.'" (Chizkiyahu was almost 40 at that time. If the standard life cycle is 70 years, his life was about to be shortened by 30 years. HaShem granted him 15 more years thus giving him half of his request)

Rav Berel Povarski shlita (Rosh Yeshivas Ponevezh) notes that there is an obvious question that begs to be asked: If we are trying to show just how powerful tefillah is, why would we bring a proof from a case where only half of the request was granted? There are so many stories of tefillah accomplishing everything, (Yitzchok's request for a child; Moshe's request for Miriam to be healed etc.) and yet we choose a half accepted tefillah?

Let's take a few typical scenarios: Reuven needs *parnassah*; Shimon's daughter needs a *shidduch*; or Levi misplaced his wife's keys and he better find it before she notices that they are missing. All these are standard situations which Chazal tell us that HaShem wants to hear our *teffilos*. Of course He will grant our request; He wants to, but he first wants to hear from us. The fact that tefillah accomplishes there is a big deal, but again, HaShem actually wanted to grant our requests.

But then there are times that one does not receive all that was requested. At that moment, one must wonder, why HaShem did *not* wish to say "yes"; perhaps there are certain *aveiros* that need to be reconciled, or perhaps the time is *not* an עת רצון for whatever reason. In Kayin and Chizkiyahu's cases, the decision was already made and yet, the tefillah still managed to gain a "yes" on some level. Now already we begin to see that Tefillah can even force HaShem's hand *k'viyachol*.

This message is doubly important right now as we stand at the *shaarei tefillah*. The gemara in

Mesechta Rosh Hashana (18a) teaches us: היה רבי מאיר אומר: שנים שעלו למטה וחולייין שוה, וכן שנים שעלו לגדרום לידון ודינן שוה. זה ירד וזה לא ירד, זה מפני מה זה ירד וזה לא ירד, זה ניצל וזה לא ניצל - *Two people take to their beds, and their illness is the same, or two people ascend to the tribunal [gardom] for judgment, and their potential sentence is the same; but this one comes down from his bed, while that one does not come down from his bed, and this one is saved from death, while that one is not saved.* מפני מה זה ניצל וזה לא ניצל? זה התפלל ונענה, וזה התפלל ולא נענה - *For what reason did this one recover, while that one did not recover and why was this one saved from death, while that one was not saved? The difference between them is that this one davened and was answered, while that one davened, but was not answered.* מפני מה זה נענה וזה לא נענה? זה התפלל תפלה שלימה — נענה, וזה לא נענה - *And for what reason was this one answered and that one not answered? This one davened a tefillah with his whole heart and consequently was answered, while that one did not daven with his whole heart and therefore was not answered.* But the person is about to die? Is he daydreaming as he davens? Rav Elya Lopian z"l answers that clearly the person does not believe how powerful his tefillos are!

In Kayin's case, HaShem did *not* want. But for each and every one of us, HaShem desires nothing more than to grant us this year with *gezundt, parnassah b'revach, kinderlach, nachas* from our *kinderlach, hatzlocha, shalom* and *kol mili d'meitav!* He wants to give it, now we must ask for it and surely we will be answered לטובה

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos,



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