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בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
VA'ESCHANAN

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAH BENSOUSSAN

LIKE BEGGARS AND PAUPERS

This week's *Parshah* begins with Moshe *Rabbeinu* praying that Hashem allow him into *Eretz Yisrael*. The *Sifsei Kohen*¹ (Reb Mordechai Kohen, mid 1600's) asks that it seems odd that Moshe *Rabbeinu* would continue to *Daven* after Hashem had already told him that he would die in the desert. Why did Moshe continue to *Daven*?²

To answer this, the *Sifsei Kohen* quotes the *Medrash*³ that states that after the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem showed Moshe *Rabbeinu* all of the treasure houses filled with the spiritual bliss set aside for the *Tzadikim*. With each treasure house, Hashem explained, "This one is for those who follow the commandments, and this one is for those who raise orphans," and so on. Finally, Hashem showed Moshe the largest of the treasure houses. "And to whom do these riches go?" inquired Moshe. "This treasure house is set aside for those who do not have merits of their own. If one does not have merit, I go to this treasure house, and give them a gift for free."

From this episode, says the *Sifsei Kohen*, Moshe *Rabbeinu* understood that the bulk of what Hashem gives us is not because we deserve it, rather, it's because Hashem loves us, and wants to give. Additionally, Moshe understood that Hashem wanted Moshe to teach all generations that when we speak to Hashem, we should come to Hashem with the knowledge that Hashem gives, not because we deserve it, but because Hashem loves us.

Thus, despite the fact that Hashem already told Moshe that he does not deserve to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, Moshe continued to *Daven*. Not because he felt that his actions warranted a reversal of Hashem's decision, but because he knew that Hashem loves us, and gives us graciously, even when we don't deserve it.

When we *Daven*, it is possible to come to Hashem with a sense of entitlement. "I deserve, and I demand such and such!" And if we don't get what we want, we complain! However, if we would recognize that even the great Moshe *Rabbeinu* understood that everything Hashem gives us is a gift, we would come to Hashem with humility, and find it easier to persevere in our *Tefillos*.

1 *Devarim* 3:23 s.v. ואתחנן

2 *Bamidbar* 20:12

3 *Shemos Rabbah* 45:6

**Hashem gives,
not because we
deserve it, but
because Hashem
loves us.**

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Let's face it, it's not uncommon to feel, "My own power has created this wealth for me."¹ Even when we have a life-changing event, something that we do not take for granted, we later become accustomed to it, and complain when our lives change for the worse.

Yes, recognizing that everything Hashem gives us is a gift can mitigate the feeling of, 'I deserve it,' but how does one engender that feeling? What practical steps can we take to feel that all that we have is a gift from Hashem?

Think about something that you don't have, something that you think you'll never get. Imagine yourself actually attaining that particular thing, and the feelings that go along with it. There is elation, excitement, and, of course, the recognition of Hashem's hand in this. After all, this didn't happen because of you!

While holding on to that feeling, think about your daily life. Realize, *there is no difference!* Hashem's intervention in our lives is just as much a gift as anything else. The more we appreciate this idea, the more effective we will be in our *Tefillos*.

1 *Devarim* 8:17



Daily Mussar study is essential for men, women, and children alike.

- Reb Yisrael Salanter, Essay 3
How much time should one devote to studying Mussar? On average at least ten minutes a day.

- Reb Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz, *Darchei HaChaim*, Vol 1. p. 347

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MY FATHER, MY KING

Mr. Shlomo Zuckerman* was sick. Not “I have a cold,” type of sick - he was sick with cancer, and undergoing chemotherapy. But that was before the cancer transformed into a rare and virulent form of the disease. At this point, Mr. Zuckerman was given a bleak diagnosis - five to eight months to live.

There was hope, though. A possible treatment was available, though it would involve considerable pain, and only a chance at living a normal life going forward.

Mr. Zuckerman and his wife decided that this was the best and only course of action. They then reached out to friends and family, asking them to storm the heavens with their prayers. And so it was, the procedure was done, and Mr. Zuckerman spent a long time recovering in the hospital. The recovery was difficult, but it was better than the alternative.

Today, Mr. Zuckerman is mostly healthy. He developed some serious, but expected, side effects in response to the aggressive treatment plan. Nevertheless, the Zuckermans attribute his recovery to the efficacy of prayer.

When asked if she has a particular approach to *Tefillah*, Mrs. Zuckerman had this to say. “During this difficult time, my husband told me that our perspective in *Tefillah* should be that we are asking for a gift. When I *Daven*, I don’t come with complaints, demands, or even justifications for why Hashem should do something. I come as a daughter of my Father and King - and all I am asking for is a favor from my Father. Please be clear to your readers, there have been many times in my life where I have *Davened*, and have not received the answer that I had hoped for. However, this particular instance is one where we were very clearly answered, and we are very thankful to Hashem for healing my husband.”

“When I *Daven*... I come as a daughter of my Father and King - and all I am asking for is a favor from my Father.”

**Names have been changed. Based on a true story, known personally to the author.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- Three times in *Tehillim* we find a *Tefillah* attributed to someone - *Tefillah L'Moshe, L'Dovid, and L'Ani*. Of these three, the one of the poor man, the *Ani*, is the most desired.¹
- The proper mindset during *Tefillah* includes humbling oneself before Hashem and recognizing that we are totally dependent on Him.²
- A *Tefillah* that stems from a person’s personal pain has the power to go straight to the highest heavens.³
- In the *Tefillah* of Rosh Hashanah, we say “We knock on your door like beggars and paupers.” We are all truly paupers, and we only have wealth because of Hashem’s intervention.⁴

¹ *Zohar* 3:194b

² *Chovos HaLevovos, Cheshbon HaNefesh, Perek 3*

³ *Rabbeinu Bachya on Shemos 2:23 s.v. ותעל שועתם*

⁴ Reb Naftali Trop, as quoted by the *Chidushei HaLev, Bamidbar* 10:35