Bitachon Weekly

——— By Rabbi Yehudah Mandel שליט"א ———

פרשת האזינו-שובה תשפ"ז

Wake Yourself Up to Thank Hashem More And More

Many have asked why is Parshas Ha'azinu a Shira. It is basically a strong: תְּבִיעָה demand on why we aren't more grateful to Hashem. הֲלוֹא הוּא אָבִיךָ קָנָךְ? הֲלֹה' תִּגְמְלוּ זֹאת? לב ו Is this how you repay Hashem for everything He's done for you, including your very existence? When a Yid sings, he is usually praising Hashem and thanking Him. שִׁיר **וּשְׁבָחָה** Song & praise, הַלֵּל **וְהוֹדָאָה** Hallel and Hoda'ah (gratitude). We can suggest that the entire beautiful Parsha of Ha'azinu is a: תְּבִיעָה demand for more thankfulness.

Thankfulness isn't easy, and almost every human suffers from the lack of it in some way; either consciously or subconsciously. **A true Yid wants to be pressured and awakened to do more and more Hoda'ah**. Chazal say that a person should thank Hashem for every single breath of air! And Dovid said: לְךָ דֻמִיָּה תְּהִלָּה תהלים סה ב to fully praise Him is impossible, so I will praise by being silent. The Kapitchnitzer Rebbe was always worried how can he thank Hashem more!

There is no greater song than a constant spurring yourself on for more Hoda'ah, and always protesting that you are not thanking enough. It actually rejuvenates you, and it gives you Simcha when you're always worried how can I thank Hashem more and more! Look what He does for us!

כְּנָשֶׁר יָעִיר קִנּוֹ עַל גּוֹזָלָיו יְרַחֵף לב יא He treats us with tenderness etc. there is no end to His goodness. And the punishments for ungratefulness prove how important it is to always thank. In Novardok, one of the methods of working on Bitachon was: בְּדֶרֶךְ תְּבִיעָה demanding Bitachon from yourself, which is highly effective. "How can you not have Bitachon; are you normal??"

Believe it or not, this can give you loads of Simcha and Bitachon. It becomes easier when it is viewed as an obvious truth, and not a difficult mountain that needs to be worked on.

"Why don't you appreciate yourself and your great situation??" With a demanding "question mark", you see more clearly. You wake up!

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No Matter How Difficult Our Nature May Be, Hashem Can Help Us Become Like Honey

וַיֵּנֶקֵהוּ דְבַשׁ מִסֶּלַע וְשֶׁמֶן מֵחַלְמִישׁ צוּר לב יג

Eretz Yisroel was such a wonderful country, that oil and honey came out of hard rocks. How were they Zoche to this Ness? We can explain that the natural world is a reflection of the people who inhabit it. For example, before the Mabul, even animals did weird things, similar to the sins of the people.

This explains why oil and honey came out of hard rocks. The people in Eretz Yisroel were so great, that even a person with a bad nature became a Tzaddik. [Like Dovid, who was born with Eisav's difficult nature, and became a Tzaddik]. And a person with an "impossible" nature [like a rock] turns into a honey. [Like someone with an uncontrollable temper becoming a sweet person].

The Navi tells the story of Shimshon HaGibbor who scraped honey out of the body of a dead lion, and then asked the Pelishtim a riddle: What is a sweet thing that came out of a strong thing? When the Pelishtim found out the answer from his wife [honey out of a lion] Shimshon got mad at them, and had an excuse for killing the Pelishtim.

Surely there are deeper meanings in these stories. But on a basic level we can say that Shimshon's unusual physical Gevura in killing Pelishtim, was because he overcame his spiritual challenges. He came from the lowest Shevet of Don, and his father Manoach was an Am HaAretz. Yet, he rose to such greatness that he became the Shofet of Klal Yisroel. This takes tremendous Koach and Gevura. He was like sweet honey and oil coming out of a hard rock. That's why he was able to overpower the Pelishtim, since they were weak in overcoming their evil natures.

This inspires us, that no matter how difficult our nature may be, with Hashem's help and lots of Tefila, we too can become like honey from a rock.

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שבת שובה-יום הכיפורים

Teshuva - Come Back to Me!

Literally, Teshuva means coming back and being close to Hashem. אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי. The whole idea of Elul is being alone with Hashem and being His beloved friend. My Rabbeim have told me that being close to Hashem is everything, and if you have that, you have it all. I recommend davening specifically for this. And I have no: סָפֵק doubt that Hashem has Gevaldige nachas from such a Tefila!

כְּבָיָכוֹל (If it were possible to talk about Hashem like a human) how do you feel when a person tells you that he wants to be close to you? You love that person more than anyone else, and you'll do much more for him than for other people. This is a great way to be Zoche B'din on Yamim Nora'im and winning Hashem's favor. Also, R' Yisroel Salanter Zatzal said that a person should make sure that he becomes a: רַבִּים צָרִיכִין לוֹ someone that the public needs. **Since you're needed by the Klal, your chances of Chaim and a good life in general are much greater. There's nothing like Zikkui HaRabbim!**

R' Chatzkel Levenstein Zatzal mentions a Rashi in Brachos that when you praise Hashem you are close to Him. The Meshech Chochma says that: וּבוֹ תִּדְבָּק עקב י כ "you shall cling to Him" means having Bitachon. We see that praising Hashem makes you close, whereas having Bitachon makes you totally close and Mamash sticking to Hashem. This is similar to the Sefer Ha'Ikarim who says that the biggest: שֶׁבַח praise you can give Hashem is having Bitachon in Him.

Trusting a person is the best form of praising him. In Sefer Shaarei Teshuva, Rabeinu Yonah says that a person who praises Tzadikim has a great Zechus **until** Shamayim. And in Mishlei, Rabeinu Yonah says that having Bitachon gives you Schar: **מֵעַל** שָׁמַיִם **higher** than Shamayim, which seems like Hashem Himself. (Chazal say that a person who has Bitachon in Hashem is Zoche to become like Hashem Himself).

Notice how basic positivism is what makes a person close to Hashem. Either thank and praise all day, or calm down and have Bitachon; either M'halech makes you happy and positive. And Dovid said: וַאֲנִי קִרְבַת אֱלֹקִים לִי טוֹב תהלים עג כח all I'm interested in is just to get close to Hashem. If you learn Tanach, you'll see how Dovid was indeed the most positive person, full of singing and praising, and the #1 Baal Bitachon. The Passuk: וּבוֹ תִּדְבָּק עקב י כ "you shall cling to Him" which means Bitachon according to the Meshech Chochma, fits in perfectly with the Chazal that a Baal Bitachon is like Hashem Mamash, since you are indeed: דָבוּק attached to Him.

However, when it comes to Teshuva, you may actually be super close but you don't realize it. That's why the Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva says that a Baal Teshuva shouldn't think that he is: מְרוּחָק וּמְשׁוּקָץ distant and repulsive. He is actually M'kurav (close) and a much-loved Yedid (friend). This is very important, and it harms all those who are always struggling up-and-down. They are true Baalei Teshuva, since שֶׁבַע יִפּוֹל צַדִּיק וָקָם משלי כד טז A Tzaddik falls seven times, and gets up; this is the normal process. They are in pain over their sins, and they don't really believe nor feel that they are close.

They fall prey to the dangerous and much prevalent Yetzer Hara of putting yourself down. You need a special Avoda to keep Chazzering this Rambam and believing how great and close you really are. I know a Yungerman who Davka when he fell and was Nichshal, a big Mekubal told him that he sees the Shechina on his face. This can be because a person who is always working on himself is **always** a Tzadik, like it says שֶׁבַע יִפּוֹל צַדִּיק וָקָם משלי כד טז A Tzaddik falls seven times, and gets up, and **the pain he has over his sin makes him even greater, since: לְפוּם צַעֲרָא אַגְרָא אבות ה כב the reward increases according to your pain.**

When you're always aiming in a certain direction, it's as if you're always there, even when you aren't really there.

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