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נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
 רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
 ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Vayigash

"Hashem's Plan Will Endure" (Mishlei 19:21)

Teachings of our Sages

Our Sages teach in *Masechet Chagiga* that when Rebbi Elazar would come to the *pasuk*, "And his brothers could not answer him because they were frightened of his face," he would cry. "If the reproach of flesh and blood is so powerful," he would exclaim, "then the reproach of Hashem – how much more so!" It is furthermore stated in the *Pesikta Zutrata (Lekach Tov)* on the *pasuk*, "And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef.' R' Shimon ben Elazar said in the name of R' Elazar ben Azarya ... Woe to us from the Day of Judgment! Woe to us from the Day of Reproach! Bilam was the wisest of the Nations of the World and he could stand up in face of his donkey's reproach ... Yosef was the smallest of the Tribes and they could not stand up before him. If so, when *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* comes and reproves each and every individual according to his deeds, how much more so will we not be able to stand!"

- 1- From the aforementioned words of our Sages we see that Yosef reproved his brothers. Where do we find that he offered them words of reproach?
- 2- Why did Rebbi Elazar cry when he reached these *pesukim*?

Today's Way of Thinking

We recently wrote about the way that man views the events of his life, such as his health, livelihood, and everything else. Now we will discuss man's perspective on things that others do to him. If someone insults, injures, steals from someone, or cheats him, the victim views him like he is the true perpetrator. He therefore pays him back tenfold for what he did, or at the very least screams at him or flares with rage. This arouses hatred and strife, since he points the finger at his assailant. However, our Torah teaches us that man is mistaken by thinking in such a manner. For when a person throws a rock at a dog or hits him with a club, is it the rock or the stick that is guilty? – Of course not! It is the man who wields the club and throws the rock who is the guilty party. The same applies to a man who insults or injures another. When he inflicts damage it is not really *he* who is to blame. For each and every man is but a tool in the Hand of Hashem, as it were. Even though man is certainly held liable for the damage he causes – there is a section of *Shulchan Aruch* known as *Choshen Mishpat* which rules on monetary matters, and a *beit din* will hold him responsible to compensate for all monetary losses that have resulted from his actions. However, it should all be carried out with peace of mind and love, and he should accept the verdict, whatever it may be, happily. Furthermore, there is a fifth section of *Shulchan Aruch* that is above and beyond the other sections, and that is *lifnim m'shuras hadin*, going above and beyond the letter of the law. As we soon learn from our *parasha*, man is required to make a spiritual accounting, to try and understand why something has befallen him.

Hashem Thought Otherwise



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The Brisker Rav offered an explanation as to where we find reproach in Yosef's words. For, seemingly, all Yosef did was reveal himself to his brothers, saying, "I am Yosef," and by doing so, he showed them that they had sinned by selling him. But that was enough to frighten the brothers to such an extent that they could not answer him. Therefore all the more so, when Hashem will ultimately reproach man on the Day of judgment and Reproach, how terrible will man's fright be simply from being made aware of his sin.

I believe that we can also suggest that Yosef's reproach was over his brothers' lack of *emunah*, faith. He reproved them by telling them that their actions had stemmed from a lack of complete faith in the Creator, who directs the world. For man cannot do anything if it is not the Will of Hashem. Proof to this is as Yosef remarked, "You thought to do evil to me, but Hashem thought to do good" (*Bereishit* 15:20), i.e., by sustaining the world. In reality, claimed Yosef, all that the brothers tried to do to him backfired, for it is impossible to alter Hashem's ultimate plan. Therefore he did not hold them responsible, for all that happened to him was not perpetrated by them; rather, it was Hashem who had directed the entire process, from beginning to end. Nevertheless, the fact that they had been the ones to do it requires them to now make a serious spiritual introspection. They must ponder how they could have possibly displayed any lack of faith and forgotten about their Creator, causing them to hate Yosef and treat him harshly. Yosef's reproach affected them greatly, for, indeed, what would they be able to answer on the Day of Judgment, when the first question asked in Heaven is, "did you conduct your business matters with *emunah*, faith?" In other words, man's *emunah* in this world carries with it the utmost importance.

Woe to us From the Day of Reproach

Now we can understand well why Rebbi Elazer (or Rebbi Yochanan according to the *midrash*) would cry when he reached these *pesukim*. We can also understand our Sages statement, "Woe to us from the day of reproach!" For the Gemara in *Masechet Shabbat* (31a) teaches that when man stands trial before the Heavenly Tribunal, he is asked if he was honest in business, set fixed times for Torah study, had children, hoped for the future salvation, and deeply analyzed the Torah's wisdom. It is clear that man thinks that he conducts his life with *emunah*, faith in Hashem. But in the future he will be shown in Heaven how his deeds were contradictory to faith in Hashem. He will be asked why he battled and argued with a particular individual. He will be shown how he reacted to someone who insulted or injured him; he focused entirely on them, and gave not a thought to Hashem, who is truly behind everything that happens in this world. He needs to search his soul to understand why this befell him and not just exact revenge against his enemy. To act in such a way is heresy, and what will he answer on the Day of Judgment?

Segula of Ein Od Milvado

Besides for inspiring an individual to take a spiritual accounting, internalizing the precept of *ein od milvado*, that there is no other power in the world besides Hashem, can annul all harsh decrees. As it states in *Parashat Va'etchanan* (4:34), "You have seen that Hashem is *Elokim*, there is none besides Him." The Gemara in *Sanhedrin* expounds in the name of R' Chanina that "There is none besides Him,"



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comes to include even witchcraft. The Gemara goes on to relate an incident when a sorceress was unsuccessful in harming R' Chanina with her witchcraft. When she wondered how it could be, R' Chanina responded that she could not harm him because it states, "There is none besides him." Rav Chaim of Volozhin writes in *Nefesh HaChaim* that this is a *segula* for each and every individual, that by ingraining in one's heart that there is no other power in the world besides for Hashem and he annuls himself before Hashem, nothing in the world could harm him.

Saved in the Merit of a Famous *Segulah*

The Emperor's army once raided stores to check if they were carrying smuggled merchandise. They were banning the goods and also issuing prison sentences. There was a certain Jew who had a store in the marketplace, and all of his goods were smuggled, illegal merchandise. If the Russian authorities were to enter his store, not only would all of his merchandise be confiscated, but who knows what his fate would be? Distressed, he ran to Rav Yitzchak of Volozhin and poured out his heart. Rav Yitzchak told him about the well-known *segulah* of his father Rav Chaim of Volozhin, that if any person, at the time of his distress, will think and focus intently and internalize that *ein od milvado*, there is nothing besides Hashem, no harm will befall him. Indeed, the storeowner, thought about this hundreds of times. The army had issued a command that all stores must close. The army would then open each store, one by one, and would search it for smuggled goods. When they reached the store of this Jew it was already the afternoon. Suddenly, the commander issued an order to stop and they all took a break, marking the store of the Jew as the next in line to be searched. When they resumed, they began arguing about whether they had already checked the store that they had marked or not. Suddenly the commander ordered that they begin searching from the next store! This great miracle occurred at the very moment this storeowner was internalizing the belief that *ein od milvado*. It is also famously known how when the Brisker Rav was fleeing the Germans on his way to *Eretz Yisrael* and was in mortal danger, he utilized this *segulah* thinking in depth that "there is nothing else besides for Hashem." He and his family were saved from sure death.

Words of Mussar

We have learned that even though "there are many thoughts in the heart of man," and he mistakenly attributes all that happens to him to the actions of man, "the counsel of Hashem will endure." For one who believes with total faith in Hashem, knowing that there is no other power in the world besides for Him, and that everything that happens to him is sent from Heaven, will be inspired to make a spiritual reckoning. By doing so, he will avoid strife and peace will reign in his home and surroundings. Not only this, but one who trusts in Hashem is showered by Hashem's kindness and is saved from every harsh decree. For everything is in the hands of Hashem, whether it be good or not, as it were, and by placing his trust in Him, Hashem will protect him. By strengthening our faith and making sure that it is pure, we will be sheltered by Hashem and merit every salvation, *amen ve'amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Mordechai Malka