

ציון הלא תשאל בשלום אסיריך. We are all captives in our places. ציון inquires about our wellbeing. We are awaiting the manifestation of the words of the נביא - וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל בְּיָא -

We are living through truly trying times, the likes of which our generation has never seen !

The סכנה, the fear, the inconvenience and the financial hardship.

So many aren't well, many are no longer with us, so much suffering on many different levels. However yidden always know that everything is exactly measured in 'shomayim', and it is all part of a master plan.

Here in E'Y things are b'h on a relatively better note, much less of all the above. The government may contribute this to the early response by the authorities. It is irrelevant if it was done out of personal interest. The posuk says לֵב מַלְכִּים וְשָׂרִים בִּיד ד'. The Maharal explains that this is a must, for it can't be that the dictator can wake up in the morning and do as he wishes at the expense of an entire nation. ! לֵב מַלְכִּים וְשָׂרִים בִּיד ד'.

This is definitely a demonstration of the 'Hashgacha Elyoina' of 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu' for am yisroel as a whole, and for E'Y in specific.

The רמב"ן explains that the אומות העולם get their השגחה and השפעה from 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu' through their שר and מזל in 'shomayim', whereas the השגחה and השפעה of ישראל comes directly from 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu' as it says אֵין מֶזֶל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. He takes it a step further that a yid living in ארץ העמים will be subject to the שר and מזל of that nation. With this he explains what is says כִּל הָדָר בְּחוּץ לָאָרֶץ כִּמִּי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ אֱלֹהִים. He says that is why he went far beyond his abilities to move to ארץ ישראל, on which the posuk says אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עֵינֵי ה' אֵין בָּהּ. מֵרֵאשִׁית שָׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה. 'Halivai vayter' !

Our main concern now here in E'Y, is for our families and friends, friends of the family, family of the friends and all of Klal Yisroel wherever they may be. Hashem should watch over them as well as us all, that we be safe and secure in order to be able to continue in our 'avodas Hashem' and bring the proper 'nachas ruach' to 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu'.

We as 'ma'aminim' know that the situation is מחייב us all, as we were told by many. We must all make our חשבון הנפש for our own and for all of Klal Yisroel's suffering.

However I would like to add a dimension to the picture.

This is a genuine time of חרון אף of 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu'. We must look for means in which to be מפיס the הדין. Of course תורה and תפילה are the primary tools for accomplishing. Saying תהילים has the power to be מעורר רחמי שמים. We can't gather for a 'Yom Tefilah' or the like, but sometimes davening in your own corner can be irreplaceable.

However I would like to expand on something specific.

The Torah tells us that יעקב אבינו as he runs to לבן he stops, sleeps on 12 rocks and has a revealing dream. When he awakes it says :

וידר יעקב נדר לאמר אם יהי אלוקים עמדי וכו' ושמרני וכו' ונתן לי לחם לאכול ובגד ללבוש ושבת בשלום וכו' והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה וכו' וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך, ופרש"י אם תעשה לי את אלה ואף אני אעשה זאת.

The Medrash brings a posuk in תהילים and explains אשר פצו שפתי ודבר פי בצר לי - לאמר לדורות - לשון וידר יעקב 'לאמר'. Then the Medrash explains the 'לאמר' יעקב. The Medrash is telling us that יעקב אבינו had set the way that כלל נודר לדבר מצוה - צרה to be - צרה should react in a time of.

We need to understand why this is the preferable way to react בעת צרה, especially the manner in which יעקב said his נדר with a long list of demands, as Rashi explains that יעקב was saying if you, Hashem, do this, that, and the other, then I will do for you as well. Why is this acceptable? Preferable?!

The רמב"ן in פרשת אמור explains the difference between a נדר and a נדבה as follows:

"והנראה בעיני בעבור שאמר הכתוב לפלא נדר וכן יאמר בכ"מ וכו', כי הנדר הוא הבא על דבר שיפלא ממנו, שידור לה' בצר לו אם תעשה עמי להפליא להצילני מן הצרה הזאת אביא עולה או שלמים, כענין וידר יעקב נדר לאמר אם יהי אלקים עמדי וכו' להגיד החלוק שביניהם כי דרך הנודרים בצרתם לאמר אם יהי אלקים עמדי בזה עלי לעשות עולה או זבח, וזה לא יקרא נדבה סתם, ואשר יפרישו ויתן מיד הוא נדבה, כי בעת המתן נדבה רוחו אותו".

The רמב"ן is saying that the distinction between a נדבה and a נדר specifically, is that a נדבה is impulsive giving on the spur of the moment of נדבת הלב, whereas a נדר is calculated giving, the נודר binds himself after his צרה has past and his inspiration has worn off, to stick to the נדבת הלב that he had at the moment of התעוררות. That is the reason why a נדר לדבר מצוה is a proper reaction at an עת צרה.

He explains that this is done when one wants to achieve something which is above and beyond him. With this he explains the לשון הפלאה that we always find by נדרים.

To take this a step deeper, in ספרים it says that a נדר uplifts the נודר to a level above his difficult circumstances and with that he can survive. They explain that the לשון נדר is a נוטריקון for נדר meaning that the נודר is זוכה to live in the highest of levels known as שער החמישים.

This explains the previously mentioned words of the רמב"ן, that a נדר is in essence an expression of ones desire to utilize his situation to uplift himself from the sphere of his momentary circumstance, and to obligate himself to take upon for life, the lesson that Hashem is sending him. This is certainly a worthy way to achieve the proper ישועה from 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu'.

Yaakov avinu was not testing 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu', rather he was telling him - I got your point ! The sign from heaven to attest that he is right, will be that he is all taken care of !

What Hashem wanted from him was that, in his unfortunate circumstance running away from עשו הרשע to the hands of לבן הרשע, he should uplift himself to the highest of levels he was just zoiche to see in the great מראה הסולם. That is exactly what he did - he uplifted himself to calculate beyond his circumstances by making a נדר to abide himself to his 'avoidas Hashem', as it says והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה יהי בית אלוקים.

In addition he promised to give מעשרות from his profits. This too is a similar expression to that of the general message of נדר לדבר מצוה בעת צרה. I will explain.

The Gemarah in תענית tells us that the mitzvah of Tzedakah is different than other mitzvas by the fact that one may test 'Hakadosh baruch hu' with this mitzvah to see if he is given what he demands for it. We read in the הפטורה of שבת הגדול - שבת צבקות - ובחנוני נא בזאת אמר ד' צבקות - שבת הגדול of הפטורה and the Gemarah דרשן'ס the Posuk עשר תעשר - עשר בשביל שתתעשר. Whereas in other mitzvos it is אסור to test 'Hakodosh Boruch Hu' as it says לא תנסו את ה'.

Here too we may ask what is the privilege of this mitzvah to demand for it ?

The explanation can be with the story brought in תוס' on that Gemarah from the Medrash, as follows:

מעשה באדם א' שהי' עשיר והי' לו שדה שעשתה אלף כור והי' אותו עשיר נוטל ק' כורין למעשר ומפריש כל שנה ושנה וכן עשה כל ימיו, כשחלה למות קרא לבנו וא"ל בני דע ששדה זו שאני מוריש לך עושה בכל שנה ושנה אלף כורין, הזהר שתפריש ק' כורין כאשר עשיתי, ומת אותו האיש ועמד הבן במקומו ועשה השדה אלף כורין כאשר היה עושה בחיי האב והפריש ממנה ק' כורין, בשנה שניי' נסתכל וראה הבן שמעשר היה דבר גדול ואמר שלא יפריש, לשנה אחרת נתמעט השדה ולא עשה כי אם מאה כורין, נטצער עליו, ושמעו קרוביו שכך מיעט ולא הפריש מעשר באו כולם אצלו מלובשים לבנים ושמחים, א"ל כמדומה לי שאתם שמחים בקלקלתי א"ל נצטער עליך כי גרמת לך כל הרעה הזאת ?, ומפני מה לא הפרשת מעשר כראוי היטב?, בא וראה כי מתחלה כשבא השדה לידך היית בעל הבית והקב"ה כהן שהי' המעשר חלקו ליתן לעניים, ועכשיו שלא הפרשת חלקו לו היה הקב"ה בעל הבית ואתה כהן, שאין שדך עושה מה שהי' עושה מתחלה אלף כורין והפריש לך מאה כורין !, והיינו דכתיב (במדבר ה) ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו כלומר כשאינו מפריש כהוגן לא יהי' לו אלא הקדשים כלומר המעשר, וע"ז אמרו חכמים המעכב מעשרותיו לסוף בא שלא יהיה לו אלא אחד מעשר.

It would seem that תוס' is explaining with this story the דין of the גמ' mentioned above, the stipulation with which one can give צדקה is specifically by מעשר, because that is not a test, on the contrary 'Hakadosh baruch hu' is testing him to see, if he understands who is the 'Bal habais' the giver, and who is the 'Ani' the recipient. One who gets this point, 'Hakadosh baruch hu' promises to continue giving him the 'Bircas Hashem' he was already 'zoiche' to. This expression is similar to that of the נדר בעת צרה, that one gets the point and puts himself aside for 'Hakadosh baruch hu', even in reference to his very own accomplishments.

All this was established by Yaakov avinu at מעמד מראה הסולם as guidance for 'am yisrael' throughout the generations on how to react בעת צרה, in order to prevail and come out with the great gain worthy for Am Hashem. It is this deep and uplifting understanding that he contributed to his future generations for eternity.

I would like to end with a similar יסוד I was zoiche to hear from the Rosh Hayishiva R' Yonoson David Shlita. We ask in תפילת זכרונות בר"ה - יצחק את א"א את יצחק - ויתראה לפניך עקידה שעקד א"א את יצחק - בן וכו' וכבש רחמיו לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם, כן יכבשו רחמין את כעסך מעלינו, ובטובך הגדול ישוב חרון אברהם אבינו. He explained the connection between אברהם אבינו overcoming his נסיון to 'Hakadosh baruch hu' being מרחם on his nation, that this is מדה כנגד מדה, just as אברהם אבינו uplifted himself above his personal רחמנות for his son, so does

‘Hakadosh baruch hu’ look over his חרון אף for the sake of the children of אברהם אבינו, and he will return to us לשרות שכינתו בתוכנו בקרוב בימינו.

So, חרון אף the אברהם אבינו set the way for am yisroel to seek חסד ד' at a time of חרון אף, by uplifting themselves above their personal desires. Likewise, יעקב אבינו set the path for am yisroel to be zoiche to ישועת ה' at a time of צרה, to overlook their momentary circumstance by abiding themselves to the message they received from ‘Hakadosh baruch hu’.

This serves as a guideline for us today, in the current state of חרון אף בעולם, we must be נודר נודר. In this time of התעוררות, we need to take on to stretch ourselves to exceed in our לדבר מצוה and avoidas hashem, beyond our comfort zone - each one in the way he has been zoiche to achieve over the years. And with this we can merit to see ישועת ד' בקרוב !

I personally have had the tremendous zechus to establish and successfully spearhead for many years, a kollel, a setting for choshuve yungerleit who are dedicated to a true high level of Torah learning and are living a very simple life style here in the Eretz Hakodesh. B'H - ‘Halivai vayter’ !

I have been speaking in the past few months, about the great need for a new kollel in the newly established neighborhood of Ramat Beit Shemesh Gimel 2. Young families are moving in - quite a few of them have moved just over Pesach. I am constantly being asked by askanim, rabbanim and yungerleit to arrange an appropriate setting, at least for some of the many who are in need of a local full day kollel.

In the weeks before Pesach, I put together a beautiful group of ‘chusheva’, ‘emese feina’ young yungerleit to open such a kollel. Each day brings more requests to join this fledgling group. I made arrangements with a keren that promised to take on half the monetary burden, and the Government has recently also been a help to kollelim. That left me with a minimal burden, that seemed doable (with a small stretch).

However, the next words are perhaps not even necessary to say... the world turned over ... (the keren will no longer promise to commit, and who knows what the government will do.)

I am choosing this נדר to take upon myself ! It is indeed an honor and zechus to take part in such an endeavor and to help set the tone in this brand new Torah community.

However I need שותפין to be נודר as well, so that when Hashem leads us out of this עת צרה, in this zechus, we will come out with the upper hand - ובחנוני נא בזאת אמר ד' - !

Perhaps one can be בורח Hashem in parts, should he come out in the best scenario he would take on ten Yungeliet, should he come out as expected he would take on five.

Each one should make his own cheshbon and take on their person chizuk, and we ask for a Hishtatfus in carrying the burden of this endeavor of Hachzakos Hatorah.

In this zechus may we be zoiche quickly to see the end of the current pandemic, to see the good that lies buried beneath this heavenly decree, and the revelation of Mashiach Tzidkeinu.