



פרשת תולדות

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Pressing For Awareness

Contents:

Part I. Crying Out - 1

Part II. Crying Out in Bad Times - 4

Part III. Crying Out in Good Times - 7

Part I. Crying Out

Standing in the Corner

Everybody knows the story of how for twenty years Yitzchak and Rivkah prayed for children. *וַיַּעֲתֶר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנִכְחַ אִשְׁתּוֹ* – And Yitzchok prayed abundantly to Hashem across from his wife (Toldos 25:21). *וַיַּעֲתֶר* means that he davened excessively, with force; and he did it opposite his wife – it means that Yitzchok was standing in this corner and Rivkah in this corner and they were both pouring out their hearts, tearing the skies apart with their prayers.

The truth is that I hesitate to use the word 'prayers' because what we think of today when we hear that word is an empty shell of what *davening* is supposed to be. You think they were standing in the corner saying a formal prayer? Something in the Siddur, a *יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ* that they got through with and that's all? No! That's not how they prayed. They prayed from the bottom of their hearts. I cannot describe what took place there but you

can be sure it was the most pathetic scene. It could be that they were hysterical!

Hysterical Prayers

I told you once the story about the *tzaddik* Reb Dovid Lelover, in Galicia; they said about him that he was *kadosh mei'rechem*, that he was born a *tzaddik*. What that means exactly I can't tell you, but there must have been something there, and according to the story a person once came and asked his mother, "How did it happen that your child was born a *tzaddik*? Maybe your husband – her husband was dead already – maybe your husband had some *middos* of *chassidus*, special practices of holy behavior that we don't know about?"

"No," she said, "he was a plain man."

"It can't be," they said, "Can't you recall anything exceptional about him?"

She couldn't remember anything out of the ordinary. But then she said one thing she does remember. There was a *tefillah* she used to hear

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him saying. וַיִּזְכְּרוּ לְרֵאוֹת בְּנֵים וּבְנֵי בְנֵים עוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה; וּבְמִצְוֹת; it's talking about being worthy of having children who study Torah and do *mitzvos*. And she remembers that he used to say those words again and again, and each time he became more and more excited. And then he began to cry out and shout; he broke out in tears praying for good children. And the end was that he was banging his head against a wall, begging Hashem. He banged so much he used to faint. "Sometimes he fainted; that I remember," she said.

And so it could be that Yitzchok and Rivkah when they stood there in their corners pouring out their hearts, they banged their heads against the wall too. It could be they fainted from excessive prayers. I can't tell you exactly what they did, but you can be sure they were importuning and begging and shouting and beseeching. I'm sure they wetted the floor of their tent with tears.

When He Doesn't Yield

Now, had we been there, our hearts would have melted with pity at these two great people. Had it been up to us, we would have yielded and fulfilled their requests straight away, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't. He listened to their prayers but He didn't answer them. Yitzchok and Rivkah endured that experience of childlessness for twenty years. Twenty years! That's a very long time.

Now, we understand that there was a plan here; such a thing is not an accident. Even in our own lives there is plan and purpose but surely when it comes to our *Avos* and *Imahos* and to the episodes that are transcribed in the Torah, everything was done for a reason. And we are expected to study the stories and understand the lessons intended.

And so the Gemara (Yevamos 64a) asks, what was the purpose of this plan? Why did Hashem squeeze Yitzchok and Rivkah with this *tzaar* for so long?

The Great Why

And so listen now all you people who don't have children and are waiting to be answered. And not only them – all of you people who are undergoing any type of difficulty, pay attention to this and understand the great opportunity you've been given.

Why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu withhold children from Yitzchok and Rivkah? מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהִקְבִּ"ה – *Because Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires the prayers of tzaddikim (ibid.)*. It means that those who seek righteousness, He wants to hear their prayers. Not only He *wants* but He's מְתַאָּוֶה, from the word *ta'avah* which means a passion; Hashem longs, He desires to hear them pray.

Not because He needs it. I explained this to you already once. To Hakadosh Baruch Hu your prayers are as important as the prayers of bacteria. Suppose all the bacteria on this big rug would start praying to you now. Millions, billions, of bacteria are bowing to you and praying. It would mean absolutely nothing to you; you wouldn't even turn a hair. But the prayers of the bacteria are relatively more important to you than our prayers are to Hashem – He doesn't need our *tefillos* at all. And still, He wants it, He passionately desires it. Why? Because it's for *our* benefit.

Living Like a Squirrel

Benefit?! What benefit do we get when we *daven* for twenty years, day after day, year after year, and our prayers are not answered?

The answer is that Hashem wants to confer upon us every form of perfection. That's the purpose of life; we are here in this world to make the best that we can out of ourselves. We're not rabbits and squirrels who just pass out of this world after a useless existence. The truth is that rabbits and squirrels will have to excuse me because they are very useful in this world. Men, it could be, waste their lives but squirrels don't; they live purposeful lives. Everything they do – squirrels,

when they're busy burying acorns they may think they're preparing food for the next spring but they're planting some more oak trees. Many squirrels never live to dig out those acorns that they planted but now the oak trees begin to grow. And rabbits are busy catching field mice or other things. And so animals are living useful lives, doing the plan of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Only that after they do their job in this world, it's finished; they go lost forever. But we can't just live and then go off into oblivion like animals. We're here to acquire perfection, all forms of *shleimus*, that we'll take with us forever, beyond the grave. And one of the very big forms of perfection, one of the most important forms, is the Awareness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **רְאִשִּׁית הַחֵכֶּמָה** – *What's the highest wisdom that a person can acquire in this world?* **יְרֵאת ה'** – *Yiras Hashem* (Tehillim 111:10).

Better Than Lip Service

Now, there's a big misconception here because *yiras Hashem* doesn't mean to be very *frum* and observant; a man can be very pious and still not have *yiras Hashem*. We explained here more than once that *yirah* means to be *aware*, to feel the Presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Not mere lip service, 'I know that there is a Hashem'. No, that's just words. It's also good but it's very remote from this true achievement of actually being aware of Hashem; it's allegiance to an ideal but it's not *yirah*. Actually it's just a piece of information that is put away somewhere in the attic. If we'll ask him, he'll bring it down from upstairs and brush it off – "Yes, sure. *Ani maamin!*" – but it doesn't actually function and participate in his daily life. *Yiras Hashem* means you feel like Hashem is right here; it's the *hargashah chushis*, the sensory feeling, that you're standing *lifnei Hashem*. Always!

That's the great success of a man in this world! And if by that time when you're already white at the temples and you are thinking of going into a

home for the aged or your children are thinking of putting you there, if by then you'll have acquired some actual *yiras Hashem* – you feel Hakadosh Baruch Hu actually like you feel a person – then you can know that you have lived with a purpose. You've lived successfully!

Unfortunately, it's not a subject that's spoken about enough. Even in the Orthodox world, the Torah world, there are all forms of success you'll hear spoken about, but this most important achievement, Awareness of Hashem, you'll be hard-pressed to find people speaking about it. And that's a tragedy because *yiras Hashem* is an attitude that requires a lifetime of effort to acquire, a lifetime of practice, and most people are bumbling their way through life without even trying, without attempting to become *yorei Shomayim*.

Squeezing Out Obstestations

Now you know why Hakadosh Baruch Hu sometimes squeezes us where it hurts. Because you know when a person feels Hashem? When he needs Hashem.

You're hearing now the real benefit when people are *mispallel*. You think it's so that you'll be answered? No, that's not the chief function of *tefillah*. Yes, it's important, absolutely; we want Hashem to accede to our obstestations when we call out to Him. But the chief function of calling out to Hashem is so that you should realize *that there is a Hashem!* You hear that *chiddush*? The primary purpose of *davening* is that it causes you to have more awareness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Because when we live our regular lives, even if we live them with principles of the Torah, with Torah and *mitzvos*, but they have only a faint effect upon our minds. Hashem is in the Siddur and He's in the Chumash but that's where He stays – into our minds, not so much. But when some occasion turns up and we are squeezed and because we are really in need we respond with a more original and genuine reaction – we turn to Hakadosh Baruch

Hu with sincerity that we haven't expressed in our regular prayers – then the benefit which we gain, the added awareness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu which comes from those prayers, is the greatest fortune for us.

Pressing Out Greatness

And that's why sometimes, no matter how much a person suffers thereby, Hakadosh Baruch Hu continues to press him – maybe even twenty years! – because the perfection in awareness of Hashem that comes from the anguish of a person who longs for something with all his heart and he turns to the only One Who can give it, that's a perfection that is unmatched.

And even if it's the last thing a person does, he has lived successfully. That's what it means, that famous Gemara (Brachos 10b), that a person should never give up hope and should never stop asking Hashem for mercy even if a sharp sword is already on his neck. It's not only because maybe he'll be saved; that too, but the crying out to Hashem, that itself is his success. So imagine now a Jew who is *chalilah* in danger of his life; maybe in another minute he'll be destroyed. But because he realizes the circumstances, now, for once in his life, he pours out his heart. So he has to know that no misfortune is happening to him. What takes place subsequently, one way or the other, makes no difference. He has achieved the purpose of life!

The purpose of life is not to continue to exist. The perfection a person acquires in this world when he utilizes his misfortunes – not merely he suffers like a stone, like a tree, but he reacts; he reacts with *emunah*, and he prays and prays and prays, and he pours out his heart more and more, and he opens up the fountain of tears, then this man should know he's gaining the most out of life.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

When I was a young boy in Baltimore I had a *rebbe*, a Lubavitcher; [Rav Avraham Eliyahu Axelrod z"l]. He was a real Lubavitcher – he came from the town of Lubavitch and he learned there in the yeshivah for sixteen years. They sent me to him to learn and the *cheder* was supposed to pay him. But in the end they couldn't afford it and I was a very poor boy and so we were never able to give him even a nickel. He knew he wasn't getting paid and he learned with me anyhow a whole year. He learned the whole Mesichta Kesuvos with me for nothing and then we made a *siyum* in the Nusach Ari Shul in that city; a *siyum* – just he and I with the people of the shul. I look back with affection on him. He was my *rebbe*.

Now, sometimes he used to tell me stories and I remember he once told me the following. A *chossid* once came to his *rebbe*; he was having a lot of difficulties, a lot of *tzaros*. "Rebbe," he said, "if I didn't have to be busy with my sick child and if I had enough money to make a comfortable living, I could sit all day long in the synagogue and study Torah and serve Hashem. I wouldn't have to waste my life on a livelihood and all the troubles I have." He wanted a *brachah* from the *rebbe*.

So the *rebbe* said to him, "Who says Hashem wants your Torah? Maybe He wants your suffering?"

Pshat in the Story

That's the end of the story, at least that's how he said it to me, but even then I understood that it needs a *peirush*. Because you hear that and you're surprised – Hashem wants our suffering?! And we know that it's not true because most of our lives are filled with happiness. Hashem is giving us a good time; you can't deny it. When we sink our teeth into a piece of bread, it tastes good; we enjoy it. Let's not be ashamed to admit it, it's a lot of fun to eat. Fun to eat? Maybe you wouldn't say such

things but I do say it. Because it's true. It's fun to eat! And who made it fun? The Creator! He gave you food to sink your teeth into; you sink your fangs into a morsel of bread and let your saliva run. It's a lot of fun!

It's fun to walk and to see and to talk and to breathe. It's fun to sleep and to see the sun. Life is fun! You're well? Everything in your body is functioning smoothly more or less? If someone would stop you, "Mr. So and So, do you have a headache?" No. "Do your eyes hurt?" No. "Do your teeth hurt?" No. "Does your throat hurt?" No. "Do your ears hurt?" No. "Does your stomach hurt?" No. "Nothing hurts?!" No. So what are you so glum about? You should be smiling! If you're sitting here right now – you're alive, you're breathing – that's already a big happiness.

Most of you are married. Marriage is a happiness. More or less it's happiness. Most of you have children. Children are a happiness. I don't think any of you here are homeless. You'll go home tonight, not to a park bench; you'll go to a warm house and you'll probably have there a bed and a pillow and a warm blanket. So we're living happy lives. We should admit that. Our lives, in general, are happy days.

Some Difficulties Too

But we know also that everyone is pressed. Some more than others but everyone is sometimes squeezed by Hashem. Who doesn't have times when he feels he's slipping? Everyone has his moments, his difficulties, his – I don't want to say 'misfortune' because it isn't a misfortune – but who doesn't have in his life at least some occasions when he is in a vice, when he's being pressed by a crisis?

And people don't know what to do: "What does Hakadosh Baruch Hu want of me? Should I be *bodek* my *tefillin* or my *mezuzahs*? Maybe I should give more *tzedakah*?"

Nothing wrong in doing all these good things. Certainly, all those good things He wants. But

among all those things what He chiefly desires is that you should cry out with all your heart. And not once! Pour out your heart to Hakadosh Baruch Hu again and again – *vayetar* means to do it excessively – and that's going to be a success that He wants for you.

And if subsequently He grants your request and you're redeemed from your tribulations and from then on you live a tranquil life, don't think that that's the purpose, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu created you in order to live successfully and happily. No. The purpose was already achieved when you were in the midst of the *tzarah* and you responded by crying to Him. That's when you became successful.

The Wrong Address

And so the man who is tormented by *yissurim* – big *yissurim* or little ones – should realize that he has a life of opportunity before him: to cry out. Of course, you have to know the address; when a man mails his petition to the wrong address he can't expect to get any kind of credit. If he'll bellyache and grouch to his wife, then he's addressing his petition to the wrong address. It's like taking an envelope with a letter inside and you put the wrong address on it and you throw it into the mailbox.

It's a waste of effort to cry out to the wrong people. Especially if you pay a man, a bareheaded man, to listen to your troubles, that's absolutely the wrong address – and you're going to be more and more troubled. It's well known. I spoke to a man who has been going twenty-five years twice a week to speak to his psychiatrist.

I asked, "Did it solve your problems?"

"No," he tells me.

I said, "Why are you going?" – he's still going – so he said, "He's helping me understand my problems better." After twenty-five years, you're still understanding them better?! That's called the wrong address.

The Right Address for Love

However, when a man understands how to complain, how to cry out for help, and he has the right address – Hakadosh Baruch Hu – then you're making use of your troubles for exactly what they're intended. If you respond to the squeezes and pinches by calling out to Hashem then even though you don't do anything except that – you don't gain in your estimation any high *madreigos* of Torah; you don't become a *gadol b'Yisroel* – but you can become more beloved to Hakadosh Baruch Hu than the greatest *gaon*. Because the constant application of a person's thoughts to Hashem, that's what makes a person beloved by Hashem!

That's what this *rebbe* was telling his *chossid*, his adherent. "You're making a big mistake," he said. "Do you think Hakadosh Baruch Hu needs your *Torah* and this or that? It's your troubles that He wants. He wants to make something out of you; and in trouble, that's when you have an opportunity to become something that you wouldn't become with just your *Torah* and *mitzvos*." That's what the story means, that the greatest achievements of a person are sometimes borne upon the wings of his difficulties, on the wings of his crying out to Hashem in the midst of his troubles.

Utilize Every Squeeze

And so when a man has trouble, he's being threatened with bankruptcy, or with illness, or some other peril, he has to understand that this is sent from Heaven as an incentive to become great. But not only great perils, big troubles; the person who understands his function in the world knows that *every* squeeze should be utilized. And so, if he's sitting in the dentist chair and they are drilling down and down, deeper and deeper, instead of useless agony, he sits there and he cries out to Hashem. Even if you can't open your mouth, but there is a prayer in the mind: *בִּינָה הַגִּיגִי*, Dovid said to Hashem: "Understand my thoughts." Sometimes a man is too sick to pray; he should pray with his mind.

You can think in your mind to Hashem that it shouldn't hurt so much. You should pray that the dentist should succeed, that the dentist shouldn't ruin the next tooth over. Sometimes a dentist botches up the next tooth; you didn't know that's why you have to come back for a second time. Teeth on both sides might become ruined because of this one tooth that he saved. So you have a lot to pray for; a lot of crying out you need at the dentist.

Golden Troubles

And so when you're pressed in any way – if you feel that old age is catching up with you; you're losing your grip, you feel you're not as beautiful as you used to be, you see that you're turning gray, or you feel that you're not as successful as you wanted to be. Or sometimes worse troubles – sickness and poverty, *chas v'shalom*, trouble with children or with a spouse – it's a golden opportunity. Just the opposite of what you think! You think it's a dark hour of your life. You should know that's a bright light in your life.

Only that you have to seize the opportunity; if you experience pain and forget this function, then you're losing out on its most valuable accomplishment. You shouldn't just sink into despondency; you should respond! You should rise to the opportunity and call out to Hashem! And not once – again and again; days, weeks, years, whatever it is, never give up! You should squeeze out all that you can, and that's what will transform your time of falling into a time of real success. And even if you continue to fall, *chas v'shalom*, you have already succeeded thereby more than at any other time in your life. Because no matter what happens, the result will be good because there's no greater result than the achievement of *reishis da'as*, the highest form of understanding.

Broken Hearts and Successful Lives

If you take your broken heart or your half-broken heart and call out to Hashem, that's your success in life. No matter what happens you lived life for a purpose – you became Aware of Hakadosh

Baruch Hu. You're the successful one now; not the man who's sitting in the penthouse apartment and he's counting the dividends as they come in, every morning in the mail. No, he doesn't pray, he doesn't ask. He's stupefied, he's drugged by his success. But you, as you walk by in your poor threadbare suit, without even a nickel in your pocket, and you cry out to Hashem to help you pay the rent or the electric bill; *ahhh*, that's the success of a life! You're living for a purpose.

And the more you put into your *tefillos* – if it's a voice with tears, a voice wracked with pain, it's more sincere than just a healthy happy voice who sits in the shul and sings *hallelukah*. Singing in happiness and gratitude is very good, but a voice that is motivated by an urgent desire – you need help; you're desperate and you cry out to Hakadosh Baruch Hu – that person is the one who is living a successful life.

Part III. Crying Out in Good Times

The Crying Faller

Now, we have to make an important addendum to this subject. Until now we were talking about how a person who feels like he's falling, he's bent over with *tzaros*, should use that opportunity that's being given to him to call out to Hashem while he's being pressed. But now we're going to add an important point and that is that we are *always* falling; we are *always* in trouble and we *always* have to call out to Hashem for His help.

That's what it says in the *siddur*, **סוּמְךָ ה' לְכָל הַנְּפֹלִים** – Hashem upholds all who fall and He makes erect all those who are bent over (Tehillim 145:14). There are two explanations to that *possuk*, both true. The first is what we were saying till now, that if anyone finds that he's falling, if he finds himself in any form of distress, *chas v'sholom*, he should appeal to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Besides for all the exertions that he makes –

and he should – to help himself, he should not forget that the most important result of his *tzaar* is to address himself to the Master of the world. Only He can cushion your fall; only He can lift you back up. And therefore it's to Him we have to appeal.

And so if you feel that you're falling down or you're bent over, call out to Him, pray to Him. And that's already your success. The chief purpose why this misfortune happened to you is to elicit from you *tefillah* for help and the Awareness of Hashem that you'll gain thereby.

The Crying Non-faller

But there's a second idea here, an entirely different thing, but it's included in these words. **סוּמְךָ ה' לְכָל הַנְּפֹלִים** – All those people *who should be falling* but they are not, they should know that it's Hashem Who is keeping them up. **וְזוּקְרָה לְכָל הַכְּפוּפִים** – And all those *who should be bent over* they should know that they are only straight, they're only secure, because He is straightening them out. If you walk through the street like this, with a ramrod spine, in reality you are like this, like an old man who's bent over double. It's only Hashem Who is keeping you up. Because why should your spine be erect? Why shouldn't it bend over? Only because Hashem is straightening you out.

You're successful? You have to know that in reality you're a pauper. You're a rich man sitting behind a desk giving orders? In reality, you're pushing a homemade wagon and collecting plastic bottles from garbage cans. The only difference is, Hashem is holding you up.

I once had, in my first congregation, a man who was a pauper, almost a beggar. A few years before he had been so wealthy that he had to make business trips back and forth the Atlantic all the time. In those days, way back, that was very unordinary. And then he was wiped out like this, in an instant.

I saw him after his failure but I couldn't believe what I was told. I was trying to picture what Mr. So

and So looked like when he was still a big executive. Would anybody have dreamed that he would have been reduced to his present circumstance? And the only difference is, Hashem.

Times of Not So Plenty

Now we'll study this subject for a few minutes. I don't know if you have it in your prayer books, in the Syrian *siddur*, but we have it; we say it Shabbos morning: בְּרָעַב זָנְתָנוּ – *In starvation times You fed us*, וּבְשָׂבַע בִּלְבַלְתָנוּ – *and in times of plenty You supplied us*.

Now my father, *alav hashalom*, used to explain it as follows. I want to repeat it; I want to give him a *zechus*. He said like this: the first half we understand: 'In famine, You fed us,' that's understandable. There were times we were struggling, we had fallen and we were lying prostrate on the ground, and You saved us anyhow. You lifted us up, You fed us, You healed us, whatever it is. There is nothing to eat, and still we survived. All around the populace was expiring from hunger, but we survived. A great thing! בְּרָעַב זָנְתָנוּ – *You fed us in times of famine!*

But what's so great that בְּשָׂבַע בִּלְבַלְתָנוּ – 'in times of plenty You supplied us'? It's times of plenty after all. All the stores are bursting with food; you walk out on the avenue, the stores are crammed with all good things. Bakeries, meat shops, fish stores, fruit stores, *nosherei* stores, whatever you desire is available. So what's so great that Hakadosh Baruch Hu supplies us in a time of plenty?

Empty Full Pantries

The answer is that actually it's not a time of plenty. We have nothing. 'בְּשָׂבַע בִּלְבַלְתָנוּ' means that in times of plenty we were starving the same like in times of famine, only what happened? You came along and fed us. Just like in famine we were in danger of starving to death, in times of plenty we were in no less of a precarious situation. The fields are filled with produce and the storehouses are overflowing with grain? No matter. Actually we're

falling and it's only Your Hand that is supporting us.

And that means that in good times we have to cry out no less than in times of difficulty. As we wipe our lips when we finish eating what do we do? We pray to Him for the next meal! וְנָא אֵל תִּצְרִיכֵנוּ! – 'Please Hashem, don't make it necessary for us to have help from human beings for our next meal.'

Now that's something! "Ribono shel Olam, please see to it that we have breakfast tomorrow." What do you mean 'have breakfast'? The refrigerator is full! The freezer too. I know a man, a wealthy man, who has two freezers, and they're always full.

No, you have no refrigerator. You have no freezer. You have nothing. You are falling, only that He is supporting you. We're in danger of not having our next meal if not for His mercy. That's וּבְשָׂבַע – *in a time of satiation*, בִּלְבַלְתָנוּ – *we know that You're the One Who gave it to us*. Without You we'd be starving urchins on the street, picking our way through the garbage can. And so we're crying out to Him, "Please, please! וְנָא – Please don't abandon me to poverty, to a lack of food."

Sick Healthy People

Here's a healthy man who prays, וְהַעֲלֵה רְפוּאָה – *Bring a healing to all of our ailments*, so he's thinking about the sick Jews in the hospital, in the cancer ward. No, it means you!

"Me?!" he says. "Chas v'shalom! What me?! I'm well."

Yes, it's you! You know that all it takes is one cell to start going crazy and you're finished. Who's making those cells act normal? Only Him! Right now, this second, He's making you healthy.

Saved in the Brain

Does a person realize how many hundreds of thousands of complicated situations take place in his body every day and every one is *mammesh* a miracle? It's a miracle that you're alive right now.

Don't you know that you have in your brain very thin capillaries where the blood flows through slowly, corpuscle by corpuscle – they're so thin that the blood corpuscles go in a single file. Now blood is a sticky business, you know. Blood is plasma and it's sticky, viscous. So why doesn't it happen – it should happen that in these very thin tubes, they get stuck. If they get stuck and clogged, *chas v'shalom*, in the brain, it's a stroke right away.

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu keeps the blood liquid; even though they are very fine capillaries, it flows through. Sometimes the corpuscle almost gets stuck, the next one comes and nudges him and pushes ahead. Aah! It cleared! You're saved!

Every day you're being saved! **עַל נְסִיךְ אֲשֶׁר בָּבָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ**, the miracles that are every day with us. We're living by miracles. And so when we say **בְּרוּךְ רֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל** – *I thank You Hashem, You are the One Who keeps us well*, you have to cry out. You're healing me! Not merely I'm not sick – you're healing me constantly.

Healthy Praying

That's what the Gemara says in Masechta Shabbos (32a) that **לְעוֹלָם יִבְקֶשׂ אָדָם רַחֲמִים שְׁלֵא יִחֻלֶּה** – always a man should be praying to Hashem that he should not become sick. *Lolam* means always, even in the best of health one should pray to Hakadosh Baruch Hu to remain well.

Now that's a piece of very good advice; I really should charge you admission tonight because if I ever told you anything that was worthwhile, this is it – to pray to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for good health while you have it. You have no premonition, no inkling of any misfortune. To you it seems that you're speeding down the straightway of happiness, success and perfect health for the rest of your days. Oh no, that's the time to ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu for good health. But not because it might happen, it could be, maybe, you might be the unlucky one. No! It's much worse than that. It's because you're standing on the precipice! You're falling! Only that He is supporting you.

Sane Prayers

Even for sanity you have to beg, you have to pray and cry. Here's a person who says, "I'm normal in my mind. I'm sane. I was born sane. I have to be sane." No, you don't have to be anything. Look at Downstate Hospital. There's a tall building there that all of Brooklyn can see. A lot of smart guys are cooped up over here. They thought they were smart too. So what are you doing walking around?

The answer is the reason you're not *chalilah* in an insane asylum, in a padded cell and raging and knocking your head against a wall is because He's supporting you. Like this, you'd be a raving lunatic. You're on this side only because every minute Hashem is giving you sanity.

Who knows what causes insanity? In order for the mind to function you need so many factors that have to cooperate, even more mysterious than the factors in the physical wellbeing that causes health; the factors that must cooperate in the mind are even more complicated. He's the one who's making you sane. As you walk in the street and you're not mumbling or shouting; you're walking like a decent, civilized person, cry out to Hashem, "Oh Hashem, please keep me sane!"

Always Falling, Always Praying

And that's how it is with everything. Not only when you're in *tzaros* do you need Hashem. You live in America, the law is on your side, police are on your side, the president is on your side. It's nothing! You're not safe! You have to cry out to Hashem it should continue that way. **הִזְיֵה מִתְפִּיל לְבִשְׁלוֹמוֹ שֶׁל מַלְכוּת** – pray for the welfare of the peace of the government, that it should continue so. We should cry out to Him all the time that America should continue a land of peace. Who knows? Who knows what could be?

You have children at home and you're healthy and you have money too? You married off children? Keep crying out that it should continue *b'shalom*. It's only Hashem supporting you and you're only one step away from falling *chas v'shalom*.

And therefore the wise person, the one who knows that 'Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires the prayers of the righteous ones' because it's the path towards perfection in Awareness of Hashem, that person is aware that he always needs Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Of course, he makes use of any difficulty, any squeeze that Hashem presses him with, to call out to Hashem and achieve that perfection of *yiras Hashem* that he'll take with him to the Next World. But he knows also that he's *always* in distress. He always needs Hashem to prop him up. And therefore, as much as possible, he's always crying out to Hashem and always achieving more and more perfection.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Crying Out For Support

Yitzchok and Rivkah were pressed so that they would improve, indeed all pressure should direct us toward Hashem. This week every time I say Ashrei and I get to the *possuk* סוּמְךָ ה' לְכָל הַנִּפְּלִים וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל הַכְּפוּפִים – Hashem upholds all who fall and He makes erect all those who are bent over, I will *bli neder* stop for a half minute and review the two attitudes and lessons that Tehillim is teaching me. Number one, that every time I fall or I'm bent over under some burden, that's my opportunity to call out to Hashem and achieve the greatness that I'm living for. And number two, even if I feel like I'm secure and safe, actually I'm on the precipice of danger and it's only Hashem that is supporting me.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

R-15 - Prayers of the Perfect | R-55 - The Childless Righteous
293 - Shemoneh Esrei III | 300 - Power of Prayer | 527 - Gift of Speech III
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How do I deal with my husband's mother who I would consider a difficult mother-in-law?



The best answer to that is, וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ – *Make sure to love your fellowman like you love yourself.* And you can be sure that if your mother-in-law is difficult right now, part of it is due to difficulties in you. And you love yourself anyhow.

And so, at all times make your mother-in-law feel that you like her. Because that's what you're going to want your daughter-in-law do to you. מִה דְעָלָךְ סִנֵּי לְחַבְרָךְ לֹא תַעֲבֹד – *That which you don't want done to yourself, don't do to others* (Shabbos 31a). And remember that someday, you too will be a mother-in-law, and your daughter-in-law will ask the same question about you.

And therefore, get busy now and utilize your mother-in-law. Being a daughter-in-law is a training school for you because you will learn how to be a mother-in-law. If you pay attention, you can prepare yourself by learning about what not to do to your own daughter-in-law.

In general, a mother-in-law must be treated with great diplomacy. You must treat *everybody* diplomatically but your husband's mother especially deserves a good deal of thought. Whenever she gives you advice without being asked, don't resent it. Now, I'm not saying you should encourage it; don't go and ask her – even if it's just for politeness sake – unless there's no risk of her going too far. But if she *does* tell you something, act like you accept it; and then when she hangs up the phone or when she leaves the house, forget all about it.

In case she resents the fact that you don't consult her, make it a plan to frequently send her small gifts. Always remember her anniversary and you should do it on other occasions too. And sometimes you can ask her advice about things that are not important – how to make a certain dish or how to soak a certain object. But don't get her too much involved in your affairs. TAPE # 40 (November 1974)