

Kinder Torah

Parashas Tzav

מוקדש לע"נ רבקה בת בלצ'ה ע"ה

Hidden in Nature

"Good Shabbos, Abba."

"Good Shabbos, Avi. We have a few minutes here in the Beit HaKnesset until the Maariv prayers. Perhaps you can tell me something you learned about the parashas ha'shavuah?"

"Sure Abba. We learned about the *aish tomid* (perpetual fire) on the *mizbeach* (altar) in the *Mishkan* (tabernacle). There were many *nissim* (miracles) associated with that fire. The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (5:5) states that the rains never extinguished the fire, and the blowing winds never moved the column of smoke that rose from it. Those are two truly amazing miracles. The fire itself was a supernatural blaze that came down from Heaven."

"Amazing, Avi."

"These *nissim* lead me to a question, Abba."

"Go ahead, Avi."

"The Torah writes in chapter six, verse five, 'The Kohen shall kindle wood upon it (the *aish tomid*) every morning.' Since Hashem was already making a miraculous fire, why did He command the Kohanim to add wood? He does not need wood to make a fire. In fact, it actually seems to diminish the miracle."

"That is a burning question, Avi. The Sefer HaChinuch (mitzvah 132) enlightens us with the answer. Hashem always wants to cloak His miracles within the framework of the laws of nature. Therefore, He commanded the Kohanim to put wood upon a fire that did not really need wood to keep burning."

"I see, Abba. Why does Hashem operate in such a fashion?"

"The Almighty is conducting Himself with great humility, Avi. His concealment of His power is one aspect of His greatness. He needs no 'publicity' so to speak. The Sefer HaChinuch explains that the *maven* (one who understands things) will realize that it is not the forces of nature, rather The All Powerful One, Who is performing this feat in a very humble fashion."

"Avi, you were very astute in your observation that adding the wood seems to diminish the miracle. The Sefer HaChinuch adds that miracles are hidden in this way, due to the lowliness of those who are receiving the benefit from them. They are not on the *madrayga* (spiritual level) to receive more good."

"Really, Abba?"

"Yes, Avi. The Chinuch points out that even the awesome miracle of Kriyas Yam Suf had a natural aspect to it, as the verse states, 'Hashem moved the sea with strong east wind all the night' (Shemos 14:21)."

"I am beginning to understand, Abba. Miracles reveal much more than Hashem's power. They show His humility and our lowliness. If this is true about the open miracles in the times of the Torah, how much more so is it true in our days. All of our miracles are almost totally concealed within nature."

"I see that you are a real *maven*, Avi. You see Hashem's Hidden Hand in everything. May you always continue to appreciate The Almighty and His Humility."

"Amen."

Kinderlach . . .

We have no *mizbeach* in our days. However, we can still keep the miraculous fire burning. The "spiritual light" of the *aish tomid* can enlighten our eyes to see Hashem's handiwork. He keeps us alive, providing us with sunshine, air, water, food, and everything else we need. He keeps us healthy and strong so that we can learn Torah. He helps us understand and remember the Torah that we learn. He provides us with a safe and comfortable place to sleep, and clothes to wear. "How great are Your works, Hashem!" (Tehillim 104:24). May we always appreciate Your Greatness and Humility.

It's All Good

"What is the prognosis, doctor?"

"I'm afraid that you are not a well man, Mr. Hodos."

"Oy vey. I was afraid of that. What is the problem?"

"You have high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Your heart is palpitating, and your kidney and liver function is below normal. You are in a very high risk category."

"What shall I do, doctor?"

"First, tell me about your daily schedule."

"I have my own business. I work sixteen hours a day. I squeeze in junk food snacks whenever I can. I don't sleep well at night and I hardly see my family."

"Considering all that, your state of health is not surprising. If you want to get better, you have to make some big changes. You must get at least eight hours of sleep at night. You must eat regular, healthy meals. And you must spend time relaxing with your wife and children."

"But what about my business, doctor? My *parnassa* (income)?"

"You must make the following decision Mr. Hodos: your money or your life."

"I understand, doctor."

Mr. Hodos made his way home from the doctor's office. His wife greeted him at the door with a big smile.

"How did the doctor's appointment go, dear?"

"Fantastic!"

"Great! What did he say?"

"He said that I am not well. He said that I must change around my whole schedule to get better. My business could well go down the drain."

Mrs. Hodos was shocked.

"That is fantastic news? Failing health, loss of income - who told you that was good news!?"

"The Kesav Sofer."

"Now you really have my curiosity going. The Kesav Sofer wrote a *peirush* on the Chumash. What does that have to do with your health?"

"He expounds on the Korbon Todah from this week's parasha. This korbon was brought by someone who was saved from a dangerous situation - illness, captivity, or a treacherous land or sea journey. He offered this korbon in thanks to Hashem for saving him from danger. Dovid HaMelech writes in

Tehillim, 'The one who offers a todah honors Me' (50:23). The word for honor, 'yichabdenni,' is spelled with two 'noons' instead of one. The Medrash (Bereshis Rabba 9:2) darshens this to mean, 'honor after honor.'"

"What does that mean?"

"The Kesav Sofer explains that thanking Hashem is a way of honoring Him. We must thank (and thereby honor) Him twice: once for placing us in danger, and once for saving us."

"Why do we thank Him for the danger? Isn't that a bad thing?"

"The Kesav Sofer says that everything is good, we just have to realize it. Hashem may want us to do *teshuva*, or He may want to bring us a far greater good. He must prepare the way, however, with something that is unpleasant."

"I am beginning to understand."

"The Kesav Sofer continues to darshen the end of the verse. 'He will show them the way that the salvation will come.' Many people are on the *madrayga* (spiritual level) to believe that everything is for the good. However, even they do not always realize what the good is. If they thank Hashem and bless Him, then He will enlighten their eyes to see the good."

"My dear, you have convinced me. I am sure that this is a good thing, and I thank Hashem for it!"

Surely enough, Mr. Hodos changed his whole life around. He sold his business and got a job with the government. He worked regular hours, ate regular healthy meals, and slept well at night. He enjoyed his wife and children. He lived a good long life, and never suffered from poverty or disease. "Tov l'hodos Lashem!"

Kinderlach . . .

Everything is for the good. First, we must realize this. Even unpleasant things are for our own good. Hashem loves us and does only good things to us. Secondly, we must repeat this. It is a halacha in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 230:5. "A person should accustom himself to constantly say, 'Everything that Hashem does is for the good.' Thirdly, we must thank and bless Hashem for everything. Then we will come to believe this in our hearts. The Kesav Sofer says that Hashem will actually show us the good. May we all merit reaching this *madrayga*!"



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