



## Ask for a Gift

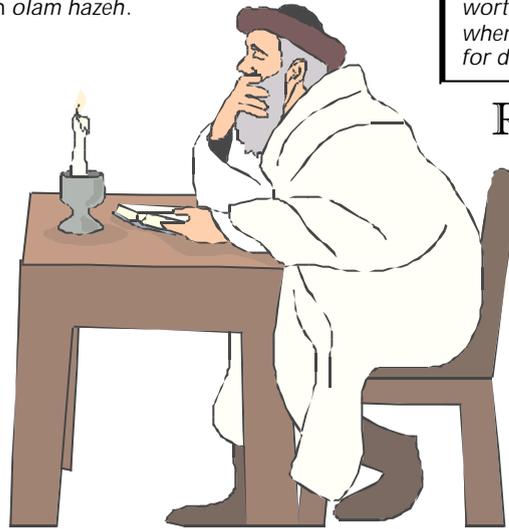
"I beseeched Hashem at that time, saying" (Devarim 3:23). The Yalkut Meam Loez asks an interesting question about the wording of Moshe Rabbeinu's request. The Torah normally uses the word "hispalet" when referring to praying to Hashem. Here, Moshe's request is described as "voeschanan" – to beseech. Why was he addressing Hashem differently? Was it the nature of his request? Was it because of Moshe's status as the leader of Klal Yisrael?

The answer begins with understanding the concept of "chanan" which is used the root word "chanan" when He spoke to Moshe Rabbeinu after the *chet ha'egel*. Moshe had asked Hashem to reveal His "goodness" to him. The Almighty's response was, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will call out with the name of Hashem before you; and I will show favor ("vichanosi") when I choose to show favor, and I will show mercy ("achon"), to whom I choose to show mercy" (Shemos 33:19). Although Moshe Rabbeinu did not deserve to see Hashem's goodness, he would receive it as a free gift. The word "chanan" therefore denotes the concept of a gift. He was asking the Creator of the Universe for a gift. Why was this necessary? Could he not ask for a reward based upon his *zechuyos* (merits)? Did Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest human who ever lived, lack the *zechus* to see Hashem's goodness?

The Yalkut Meam Loez has a variety of answers to this question. One may think that *tsaddikim* have enough *zechuyos* to deserve a reward. However, they themselves are humble. They look into their hearts and know that their deeds are lacking. Their *zechuyos* are not great enough to "pay" for the item that they are requesting. Therefore, they ask for a gift. Even though they do not deserve it, they still "mischanan", entreat Hashem for an undeserved gift. Moshe Rabbeinu, however, was different. He had more *zechus* than anyone else. His merits must surely have earned him the right to see Hashem's goodness! Perhaps they did. However, our leader Moshe, the humblest of all men, the quintessential pedagogue, wanted to teach a lesson for all generations. A person should not confidently sit back and think, "I have many, many good deeds. These *zechuyos* will carry me through." Rather he should always see himself as lacking. He should constantly strive to perfect himself. "If Moshe Rabbeinu, who had many, many more *zechuyos* than I do, felt so lacking that he had to 'chanan' – beseech

Hashem for much more than I do, who am so poor compared to him, I have to entreat the Almighty to give me an undeserved request."

Lastly, the Yalkut Meam Loez explains the concept of detracting from one's reward in the *olam habo* – next world. Ones mitzvos and "maasim tovim" (good deeds) earn him reward in *olam habo*. They may also bring him blessing in *olam hazeh* – this world. The reward in *olam habo* is far more pleasurable and everlasting than the blessing in *olam hazeh*. Therefore, it would be utterly foolish to exchange reward in the next world for blessing in this world. This is the reason why Moshe Rabbeinu entreated Hashem for a gift. He wanted his *zechuyos* to remain intact to bring him reward in *olam habo*. He did not want to use any of them in any way to grant a request here in *olam hazeh*.



This concept may seem strange to us, however it was once the prevalent way of thinking amongst the Jewish people. People were once afraid of taking anything more than the minimum that they needed from this world. The grandmother of a well-known Yerushalmi Rav was nervous when she had her house painted. Perhaps the enjoyment of the fresh paint would take away from the pleasure she would receive in *olam habo*! People would eat only the minimum food that they needed. The unnecessary pleasure would be paid for dearly in the future. This is a very high *madrayga* (spiritual level) in our days, *kinderlach*. However, it is good to hear and think about it. We are living for a higher purpose in life. The great rewards of *olam habo* await us.

a gift, how so do I, who am so poor compared to him, I have to entreat the Almighty to give me an undeserved request."

*Kinderlach . . . We all have many requests from Hashem. Health, parnassa, success in learning, meeting the proper marriage partner, good neighbors, the list is endless. How do we ask? We learn two important lessons from the Yalkut Meam Loez. Firstly, no matter how many zechuyos we have or we do not have, or we think we have; we should not ask for reward based upon those zechuyos. This is an act of pride; an inflation of ones self image and spiritual status. We should always look at ourselves as lacking. We are striving for greater madraygos. Therefore, we do not have enough zechuyos. One who is "poor" (so to speak), humbly asks for a gift. Secondly, why use up whatever merits we have here in this world? Far greater things await us in olam habo! Our life here is just a preparation for that eternal life. We want to guard our zechuyos carefully, and "cash them in" in the place where they are really worth the most. Therefore, kinderlach, when you speak with Hashem, never ask for deserved reward. Ask for a gift.*

## Review 101 Times

"Lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen" (Devarim 4:9). Our sages tell us that we must remember what we learn. The Keli Yakar points out that in order to remember we must review. He finds a wonderful hint to this in the words *zachar* (remember) and *shachach* (forget). The *gematria* (numerical value) of the word *zachar* is 227. The *gematria* (numerical value) of the word *shachach* is 328. The difference between the two is 101.

The difference between remembering and forgetting something is reviewing it 101 times. If you want to remember what you learned, review it 101 times.

*Kinderlach . . . Vacation is a wonderful time to review what you learned during the year. You have the time and you are relaxed. Review is much easier and more insightful than learning the first time. The more that you review Torah, the sweeter it becomes. Take advantage of vacation time to review. You won't regret it.*

### Parasha Questions:

- How many generations will receive the benefit of acts of chessed? (5:10)
- On what condition did Hashem redeem us from Mitzrayim? (Rashi 5:15)
- What is the meaning of "hayashar vi'hatov"? (Rashi 6:18)