

Kinder Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Nitzavim-Vayelech

Divine Conversation

“**B**oruch Atto Hashem, go'al Yisrael.”

With these words, the *shliach tsibbur* (leader of the prayers) finishes the last blessing after the morning *Kriyas Shema*. The congregation now begins the silent *Amida*. The holiness of the moment is underscored by hushed silence in the *Beis HaKinesses*. The congregants concentrate intently on the prayers that they are offering up to the Almighty.

Yehuda Melumoda is standing near the front row, whispering, “. . . *gomel chassodim tovim, vi'konay hakol* . . .”

His mouth pronounces the holy words. His thoughts, however, are a million miles away. He is absent-mindedly reciting the first blessing without *kavannah* (concentration on its meaning).

Suddenly, he realizes what he is doing. “Oy vey!” he thinks. “I am standing before the King of kings. I have the opportunity to speak to the Creator of the universe. What am I doing with this golden moment? Daydreaming?!? What a shame! What a waste! I must focus my thoughts! I must concentrate on these holy words!”

Yehuda Melumoda thinks for a few moments and comes up with an idea. “I will have a two-way conversation with Hashem. I will carry on both sides of the conversation in my thoughts. This will focus me in. Here goes . . .”

“**Y**ehudeleh . . .”

“Yes, Hashem.”

“Are you there, Yehudeleh?”

“Yes I am, Hashem.”

“Yehudaleh, do you realize where you are?”

“I am standing before you, Hashem.”

“That’s right, Yehudaleh. I know that you have a million things on your mind, my dear Yehudaleh. I know that they are all important. You have a test today, you cut your finger, your neighbor needs a *refuah shelayma*, your cousin wants to get married, your older sister and brother-in-law want to have a baby, and your neighbor lost his job. These things all bother you, and you want to help. Correct, Yehudaleh?”

“Yes, Hashem.”

“Yehudaleh, you can relax. Leave them all to Me. I can take care of every one of these things. You do not have to worry. I have just one request from you.”

“What is that Hashem?”

“To ask Me. Tell me all of your problems and ask Me to solve them. First, focus on Me and Who I Am.”

“Yes, of course Hashem. It is all laid out for me in the *tefillah*. You are the Source of all *bracha* – *Elokeinu Velokey Avoseinu*.

You are *gomeil chassodim tovim*. Everything is Yours. You are Holy – sanctified beyond all comprehension – in all worlds. Although You set up the ‘laws of nature,’ You remain in total control of them. You and only You grant wisdom, spiritual growth, salvation, health, livelihood, children, and will bring the ultimate redemption. I stand in absolute, utter humility and subservience before You, my Master. I am nothing without You.”

“Very good, Yehudaleh. Now, what would you like Me to do?”

“I have a long list, Hashem.”

“That is no problem, Yehudaleh. I can take care of everything. Just keep in mind that I am listening to every word. I take everything you say very seriously. There is one condition, however. The words of *tefillah* must come from your heart. You

Yehudaleh

Yes, Hashem



cannot just absent-mindedly rattle them off. If you talk to Me from the depths of your soul, I will listen to you.”

“Will you grant me everything that I ask for, Hashem?”

“I may, Yehudaleh, or I may not. It depends upon many considerations, some of which are hidden from you, and some of which are too deep to grasp. Your request may be something that requires several *tefillos*. I may not answer for a long time. Or it may require an intense depth of *tefillah* – hours of crying from the bottom of your heart. Only I know what is best for you. However, you may feel confident that every word you say is important to Me.”

“That is so comforting, Hashem. I feel so close to You.”

“You are close to Me, Yehudaleh, as *Dovid HaMelech* says, ‘Hashem is close to all who call upon Him – to all who call upon Him in truth’ (*Tehillim* 145). Now, pray these words of the *Amida* to Me, and give Me great *nachas ruach*.”

“With all my heart, Hashem.”

Kinderlach . . .

Tefillah is a conversation with Hashem. To have a conversation with someone, you first have to know with Whom you are speaking. Before you begin praying, focus in on Who the Almighty is – the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He. Then think about your helplessness without Him. Next, consider your tremendous privilege of having a personal relationship with Him. With this in mind, you can speak the words of *tefillah* to Him from your heart. Pour out your thoughts and emotions to Him. Seek His comfort, His counsel, His help. He hears your every word. It gives Him great *nachas ruach*. Moreover, it forges a relationship so strong, that it will last for an eternity. That is what *tefillah* is, *kinderlach*. Focus yourselves in to this Divine conversation, and cherish it forever.

Choose Life

“**A**nd choose life in order that you and your offspring will live.” (*Devarim* 30:19). “Why does the Torah need to write this?” asks *Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l*. The previous verse (30:15) already stated that doing good brings life, and evil brings death. However, there is a deeper point here. The way that we choose to fulfill the *mitzvos* can bring life. Do we perform *mitzvos* begrudgingly, out of a feeling of obligation? Are our *mitzvos* a “lifeless” routine? If so, they will not have a positive influence on our offspring and students. They will sense that the fulfilling the *mitzvos* of the Torah is a big burden, and find excuses to throw off the yoke.

Contrast this with one who does *mitzvos* with great *simcha* (happiness). He learns Torah with tremendous joy. He puts “life” into his *mitzvos* because they are his life’s pleasure. All other fleeting delights pale in comparison. This person will merit true life - great happiness in this world, and eternity in the world to come. And his children will see it, feel it, and follow in his footsteps.

Kinderlach . . .

Just one more week until *Rosh Hashanah*, the beginning of the month of *Tishrei*. *Tishrei* has more *mitzvos* than any other month! *Shofar, sukkah, lulav, simchas yom tov* are just a few. The *Ramban zt”l* counts thirteen *mitzvos d’oraysa* (from the Torah) in the month of *Tishrei*. What a wonderful opportunity to be happy! Each *mitzvah* brings us happiness. Thirteen *mitzvos* are enough to make us ecstatic. Be happy, *kinderlach*. Enjoy life.