

Kinder Torah

Parashas Ki Savo

One Request

Imagine you could ask for anything, but only one thing. What would you ask for? Wealth? Health? Long life? A large family? There are a thousand possibilities. Is there one request that includes everything?

We say Chapter 27 of Tehillim twice each day during the months of Elul and Tishrei. The Malbim in his introduction to this chapter explains that when we strive to attach ourselves to Hashem, He attaches Himself to us with a higher level of hashgacha pratis (personalized supervision). The more we pay attention to Him, the more He pays attention to us. This protects us from all evil.

That is why Dovid HaMelech, the author of Tehillim, made the following request. "One thing I asked of Hashem, that I shall seek: Let me dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life" (Tehillim 27:4). The Malbim explains that David asked to be attached to Hashem, that He should remove all the obstacles that block coming close to Him. That is the best thing that a person can ask for. That is the only purpose of our life here on this earth.

Rav Chaim Friedlander is puzzled by David's request. How could the King of Israel want to sit in the Beit HaMedrash (study hall) all day? His job was to lead the nation in peace and in war. Was he trying to shirk his responsibilities? Of course not. His request was to be close to Hashem at all times and in all places. When he was sitting on the throne, and when he was in the battlefield. To be attached to Him and always sense His presence — that is what it means to be in "the house of Hashem."

Kinderlach . . .

When are you close to Hashem? In the morning when you are praying in the Beit HaKinesset? When you are learning Torah in the Beit HaMedrash? When you are preparing for the arrival of the Shabbos Queen? When you are reciting blessings before and after eating? We surely feel Hashem's presence at these times. King David tells us that we can feel Hashem's presence at all times. When we are working, playing, or walking to school. Think about Him. Let Him into your heart. "Dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of your life."

Go in His Ways

It was Erev Yom Kippur. Everyone was hurrying to Beit HaKinesset for Kol

Nidrei. This heartfelt prayer marked the beginning of Yom Kippur - the holiest day of the year. The entire community would spend twenty-five hours fasting, praying, and crying out to Hashem, pleading with Him to accept their teshuva and grant them another year of life. No one wanted to be late. Everyone wanted to begin the day on the right foot.

The congregation slowly assembled in the Beit HaKinesset. People took their seats, and prepared themselves for the prayers. Their thoughts were totally directed towards Hashem. Almost everyone had arrived. However, one person was missing. One very important person. Who was he? The Rav. Where was the Rav? He was never late for any tefillah. How could he possibly be late for Kol Nidrei? The congregation waited, and waited, and waited. There were only a few minutes left. They decided to go search for the Rav. Perhaps he was not feeling well or



needed their assistance. The congregants took to the streets, searching every alleyway. They knocked on doors of homes, hoping to find their beloved leader. Suddenly, someone looked into the window of a small home. There he sat - the Rav. What was he doing? Rocking a small baby. "Sha baby. Sha, sha, sha." The people gathered around the window. The Rav looked up and saw the look of astonishment on the faces of his congregants.

"I will tell you what I am doing here. I was on my way to the Beit HaKinesset, along with everyone else. I turned down this street and heard a baby crying. The crying got louder and louder, so I approached the house to see if I could be of some assistance. I found this baby, alone in his crib, crying hysterically. His mother had apparently gone to the Beit HaKinesset for Kol Nidrei. The baby needed immediate attention. The congregation

could pray without me, however, this baby would not calm down by himself."

The people began to cry. What a holy man! What a kind person! He saw a mitzvah that needed to be done, and he was the only one to do it. Therefore, he put off the Yom Kippur prayers to comfort a crying baby.

"You shall go in His ways" (Devarim 28:9). The sefer Eved HaMelech enumerates a long list of mitzvos that we learn from this verse. First and foremost is the mitzvah to emulate Hashem. The Gemora (Sota 14a) asks, can we possibly emulate the Shechina (Divine Presence)? The answer is that we must emulate His middos (character traits). He provides clothing, visits the sick, comforts mourners, and buries the deceased. We must do the same. He is kind, merciful, patient, and slow to anger, so too we must be kind, merciful, patient, and slow to anger. We when copy these, and other traits of Hashem, we fulfill a positive mitzvah of walking in His ways.

Kinderlach . . .

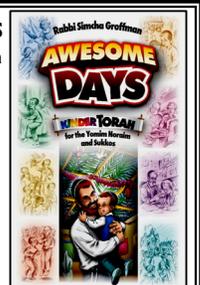
Whether we realize it or not, we are always following someone. Sometimes we follow our parents. Other times we copy our teachers. Our friends often influence us. The books we read about great people also guide our actions. Who is The Greatest One we can follow? Hashem. He is The Perfect One. If you follow Him, you cannot possibly go wrong. The Tanach is filled with stories of His kind deeds. Our sages in the Medrash and Gemora recount countless examples of His Greatness. Just look at the wonderful world that He created for us. Every flower, every fruit, every drop of water is a tremendous chessed. Kinderlach, He is The Greatest! He is The One to follow. Walk in His ways.

Parasha Questions:

- How long does it take a person to fully understand his Rebbe? (Rashi 29:6)
- Why did all of the curses come upon us? (28:47)
- What will happen to your wives, homes, vineyards, animals, and children? (28:30-32)

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