

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Tefillos for Mr. Grossman - seemingly unanswered Prayers

The following appeared in Hakhel Community Email

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Special Note One: Based upon all of the tefillos and hishtadlus of the tens of thousands of individuals and dedicated tzibbur the world over, it would seem to have been Derech HaTeva for Michael Yechiel Grossman's a'h life to have been spared--at least for now. Hashem, for reasons known only to Him did not will it, and the unworthy puppets below performed. To put matters in further perspective, for those who did not immediately turn there for guidance, we reprint below Day 77 in the daily program of Praying With Fire the monumental work by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman, Shlita (Artscroll, footnotes have been omitted):

"Sometimes, unfortunately, despite sincere prayers, a seriously ill family member or close acquaintance passes away. There is a natural tendency in such a situation to feel that one's prayers were for naught. However, according to the Steipler Gaon, comfort should be drawn from the knowledge that our prayers do have a significant effect; the prayers remain a source of merit because through them, Heavenly compassion was aroused. These merits will stand by the departed in the World to Come and may also protect their children in the future.

"These prayers may also bring salvation to other individuals and to the community as a whole. At the End of Days, when all will be revealed, we will see the redeeming power of each and every tefillah that has ever been prayed.

"When Rav Shneur Kotler, Rosh Yeshivah of Beis Medrash Gavoha of Lakewood, was suffering from his terminal illness, a group of his students and admirers journeyed to Bnei Brak, Israel, to implore the Steipler Gaon to intensify his prayers on Rav Shneur's behalf. They confided to the Steipler that they were discouraged because prayers were pouring from tens of thousands of Jewish hearts, yet the Rosh Yeshivah's condition continued to decline.

"The Steipler responded, 'Do not be dismayed. There is no such thing as a sincere prayer that goes unanswered. Any heartfelt request addressed to G-d must be answered. It cannot be otherwise. If it is not answered today it will be answered tomorrow. If not tomorrow it will be answered in a week. If not in a week, in a month. If not answered in a month, it may be answered in a year, or in ten years, or in one hundred years or more. If your prayers are not answered in your lifetime, they will be answered for your children or for your children's children. We cannot say for sure when a prayer will be answered, but we can rest assured that every prayer will be answered somehow, someday.' Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus, Shlita, explains that while each prayer evokes a corresponding reply from Heaven, Hashem alone perceives a situation in its full complexity. One cannot always understand the logic or justice in His response. Seemingly unanswered prayers are sometimes like the rain and snow. They appear to sink out of sight, accomplishing nothing, but in fact, they saturate the Heavens just as rain saturates the earth and brings forth its blessings. The bounty of Heaven, just like the bounty of earth, waits for its proper season.

"Only Hashem knows when that season will be. For example, a loved one might be involved in a serious accident, G-d forbid. Nobody in the family knows of the accident as the ambulances race to the scene. No one is there to pray while the victim hangs tenuously onto life. In such a case, Rav Pincus says, Hashem "takes out" a heartfelt prayer that a family member uttered years ago--a prayer that was unanswered at the time--and showers its merit upon the current situation. That prayer, held in reserve for so long, may now become the injured person's salvation.

"Reuven is a confident, energetic little boy who runs everywhere he goes. One morning, his mother calls him to come downstairs for breakfast, and he dashes to the stairs in his typical, high-speed style. This time, however, he trips on his shoelace and begins a headlong descent down the stairs. His mother hears the child's startled shout and then the sickening thump-thump of his body landing heavily on step after step. She runs to the scene just as he crashes to the floor. He lies perfectly still for a moment, and her heart fills with cold fear. Just as she approaches him, he begins to move. He gets up, adjusts his rumpled shirt, collects his yarmulke and says, 'What's for breakfast?'

"The boy's mother has prayed many times for many things, and sometimes, her prayers were not answered as she had hoped. At this moment, however, she can appreciate that not one word has gone to waste.

"We pray for certain aspects of good to come into our lives, yet we have no real way of knowing if our vision of good is accurate from the true perspective of Heaven. The man praying to meet his household's expenses may always have to struggle for money, but his prayers might keep his children securely upon the path of Torah. The couple praying for children may not ultimately succeed in their quest, but the merit of their prayers may help save their entire community from some terrible decree.

"We do not always know what good a prayer will bring. We do know, however,

that all sincere prayer is answered with good."

Special Note Two: The S'forno at the outset of Parshas Mishpatim explains that the entire Parsha is really a continuation of the last of the Aseres HaDibros--which is Lo Sachmod--not to covet another's possessions. Once we respect the fact that his possessions are not ours--then the next step is to recognize all of his rights in those possessions.

Hakhel Note: The Mishna in Avos (4:1) first teaches "Who is a Gibor--who is strong? He who overcomes his Yetzer Hora", and only afterwards teaches "Who is rich? He who is satisfied with his lot." One must first vanquish the Lo Sachmod within him (which is so important that it culminates the Aseres HaDibros)--and only afterwards will he properly regard money and possessions in this world. At the recent Hakhel Yarchei Kallah, Rabbi Yisroel Reisman, Shlita, taught that people are very mistaken about Jewish Law in monetary matters. Choshen Mishpat provides us with detailed laws as to what to do in particular circumstances. We do not follow peshara--compromise--if a person asserts a specious or meritless claim, or a claim that is lacking. We follow peshara when both sides have relative equities in their positions--which each party may very well be blinded to. When Dayanim make a decision, their role, Rabbi Reisman explained, is not to effectuate what they may think works out nicest for both sides--it is to rule in accordance with the teachings of Hashem as put forth by Rebbe Yehuda HaNassi in the Mishna, Ravina and Rav Ashi in the Gemara, and as promulgated by the Tur and Shulchan Aruch and their commentaries. Unlike other bodies of law which are left up to the foibles of fallible mortals, our monetary laws are actually G-d given, developed by extraordinary men imbued with Ruach HaKodesh, and applied by spiritual guides--Rabbonim, Dayanim and Poskim who must realize that being a Yirei Elokim is part of their role in life--as opposed to secular jurists with no pure knowledge of truth, who state what they feel is right based upon their upbringing and own ideas, often resulting in marred conclusions. When it comes to monetary matters, we must know that Hashem wants us to follow His laws, and we must understand that not everything is based upon one's good sense, business practices or custom in the community. We should ask those who know what the right thing to do is. Rabbi Reisman's Sefer on Ribbis, Rabbi Marburger's Sefer on Business Halacha, and Rabbi Bodner's Sefer on The Halachos of Other People's Money are starters for everyone's home. Rabbi Reisman, in fact, pointed out that when Yirmiyashu Hanavi was exhorting the people to prevent the Churban Beis Hamikdash, one would think he would spend all of his time convincing them to rid themselves of all of the avoda zara that was then being practiced. Yirmiyahu, however, focused to a great extent on proper dealings with money--honesty and integrity in business matters according to Torah law--in order to try to prevent the Churban.

There are, of course, many, many things that can be said about the events of recent days in Florida. One of the major lessons we must take with us is that we must do our best to finally rid ourselves and the world of this bitter Galus. A world being run by secular leaders, without regard for instructions and pleas from men of spirit, is certainly devoid of much of its purpose. Hashem especially showed us how we have to yearn for Geulah, as he allowed all of the goodness to fall before us. So, although our achdus over the last week was unmatched by any other people, the Parsha cries out to us that it is time to work on the Mishpatim. It is no secret

to anyone that Parshas Terumah this week follows Parshas Mishpatim of last week--ostensibly indicating to us that if we follow the Torah's teachings in money matters--then we get to the immediately following step--building the Mishkan! Let's get going--instead of being washed-out--we can be mezakeh ourselves and Michael Yechiel by purifying ourselves and the world.

Hakhel MIS

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