



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת שמות

וַיָּשָׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וַיֹּאמֶר, ה', לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּה לְעַם הַזֶּה לָמָּה זֶה שְׁלַחְתָּנִי. וּמֵאֵז בָּאתִי אֶל פַּרְעֹה לְדַבֵּר בְּשִׁמְךָ הֲרַע לְעַם הַזֶּה וְהֵצִיל לֹא הֵצִילְתָּ אֶת עַמִּי. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה, עֲתָה תֵּרָאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לְפַרְעֹה, כִּי בְיַד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַחַם וְכו'. וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי ה' וכו'.

Moshe returned to Hashem and said, "Hashem, why have You harmed this people, why have You sent me? From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he harmed this people, but You did not rescue Your people." Hashem said to Moshe, "Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh, for through a strong hand will he send them out ..." And Hashem spoke to Moshe and said to him, "I am Hashem ..." (Shemos 5:22-6:2)

In this week's *Sidrah*, the Torah describes the harsh labour imposed on the Bnei Yisroel by Pharaoh in Mitzrayim. When Hashem sent Moshe to command Pharaoh to release the nation, Pharaoh was not receptive. In fact, instead of leading to salvation, Moshe's efforts seemed to have worsened the situation, as the workload increased for the Bnei Yisroel. Moshe expressed his frustration, claiming that Hashem had sent him to Pharaoh in vain and that his actions had only made their circumstances more difficult.

In response, Hashem rebuked Moshe for his complaint and assured him that all would now witness the severe punishments that Pharaoh and his nation would face, which would ultimately compel them to drive the Bnei Yisroel from their land. In next week's *parshah*, Hashem continues His response, speaking sternly to Moshe, and unfavourably comparing him to the Avos who maintained their faith without complaint.

Hashem declared to Moshe, ה' אֲנִי ה', *I am Hashem*. Rashi explains that with this declaration, Hashem intended to convey, "נֶאֱמַן לְשַׁלֵּם שְׂכָר טוֹב לַמַּתְהַלְכִּים לִפְנֵי (בְּתַמִּים) - *I am faithful to pay a good reward to those who walk before Me (with wholeheartedness)*. וְלֹא לַחֲנָם שְׁלַחְתִּיךָ, כִּי אִם לְקִיָּם דְּבָרִי שֶׁדִּבַּרְתִּי. *I have not sent you in vain, but rather to fulfil My words that I spoke to the forefathers.*"

It is interesting to note that the wording of this Chazal, cited by Rashi - **שְׂכָר טוֹב לַמַּתְהַלְכִּים לִפְנֵי בְּתַמִּים**, *good reward to those who walk before Hashem with wholeheartedness*, implies that there is another type of reward that is not considered good. What are these two kinds of reward, and in what circumstances do they apply?

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that these categories of Hashem's recompense can be understood through Chazal's explanation of Shlome HaMelech's *tefillah* after the Beis HaMikdash was erected. Shlome davened (*Melachim* I 8:38-43):

כָּל תַּפְלָה... אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶה לְכָל הָאָדָם, לְכָל עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל... וּפָרַשׁ כַּפָּיו... וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁמַע הַשָּׁמַיִם... וְעָשִׂיתָ וְנָתַתָּ לְאִישׁ כָּכָל דְּרָכָיו אֲשֶׁר תִּדְעַתָּ לִבּוֹ... וְגַם אֶל הַנִּכְרִי... וְכֹא מֵאֲרָץ רְחוֹקָה לְמַעַן שְׁמִי... וְהִתְפַּלֵּל אֶל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה. אַתָּה תִּשְׁמַע הַשָּׁמַיִם... וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא אֵלָיךְ הַנִּכְרִי, לְמַעַן יִדְעוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ אֶת שְׁמִי לִירְאָה אֶתְךָ כְּעַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל...

Any prayer... that any person of your people Yisroel may have... when he spreads out his hands (in prayer)... may You hear from Heaven... and act, and recompense that man according to his ways as You know his heart... Also, a gentile... who will come from a distant land, for Your Name's sake... and will pray toward this Temple. May you hear from Heaven... and act according to all that the gentile calls out to You, so that all the peoples of the world may know Your Name, to fear You as does your people Yisroel...

The Meforshim note that when referring to the prayers of non-Jews, Shlome asked that Hashem answer, **יְקַרְא אֱלֹהִים כָּל אִשָּׁה וְכָל אִישׁ**, *all that the person calls out to Him*. However, when speaking of Yidden, he only requested that Hashem, **וְנָתַתּוּ לְאִישׁ כְּכֹל דְּרָכָיו**, *recompense that man according to his ways*, heeding his prayers only if he is worthy. Rashi (*Bereishis* 27:28), quoting from the Midrash, explains that a Yid's faith in Hashem is well established; he will acknowledge the justice of Hashem's judgement, regardless of what befalls him. In contrast, a non-Jew lacks this faith, and if his prayers are not answered, he might accuse Hashem of unfairness. Therefore, Shlome davened that when a gentile reaches out to Hashem, he should be answered unconditionally, even if unworthy.

The Rosh Yeshiva explains that certainly Hashem does not withhold reward from anyone, Jewish or not. However, the reward given to Yidden who possess faith is tailored to their best interest. There are various reasons why enduring hardship can be beneficial for a person: it can lead to *teshuvah*, help cleanse an individual in preparation for Olam Habah, or increase one's *zechuyos*. In these cases, Hashem will not grant a person's wish, in accordance with the principle of **וְנָתַתּוּ לְאִישׁ כְּכֹל דְּרָכָיו**, *recompense that man according to his ways*. On the other hand, a non-Jew, who lacks faith, receives a reward that may seem favourable but could actually be to his detriment. Thus, the term **שֶׂכֶר טוֹב**, *good reward*, refers to a reward that is truly advantageous for a person, even if man may not recognise it at the time.

For this reason, Hashem held Moshe accountable for his complaint of **לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּהוּ**, *why have You harmed this people?* Although Hashem's actions may seem "bitter," they are never truly "bad." Indeed, while the labour may have become harsher after Moshe visited Pharaoh, everything is Divinely orchestrated for our ultimate benefit, and never for our detriment. As the Gemara (*Berachos* 60b) teaches: **כָּל מַה דְּעֵבִיד רַחֲמָנָא לְטַב עֵבִיד**, *all that Hashem does is for the good*. The Chovos HaLevavos (*Sh. Bitachon* 7) explains that a person who develops a recognition of Hashem's mercy will come to accept everything that befalls him with joy. Whether it involves life or death, wealth or poverty, health or illness, a person can tolerate it all equally, appreciating that Hashem has arranged everything for his ultimate well-being. Eventually, one can reach a *madreigah* of excelling in *bitachon* and be able to say, "I never wake up expecting anything in my life to be otherwise!"

Hashem responded to Moshe: **עַתָּה תֵּרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לְפָרְעֹה, כִּי בְיָד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַחֵם וְכוּ'**, *Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh, for through a strong hand will he send them out*. In this statement, Hashem was revealing that everything happening would ultimately serve the good of the Bnei Yisroel. If Pharaoh had listened and liberated the Yidden immediately, there would not have been a tremendous *giluy Shechinah* in Mitzrayim. It was only due to Pharaoh's stubbornness that the Bnei Yisroel witnessed Hashem's might, through the miracles and wonders of the *makkos* and the splitting of the Yam Suf. Although the harshness of their work and Pharaoh's refusal to liberate the Yidden seemed "bitter," it actually provided them with something exceedingly positive: the unparalleled revelation of Hashem's incredible strength and power.

We learn a tremendous lesson from this. Although we may face bitter difficulties, nothing that Hashem does is for our harm. While some experiences may be painful, they ultimately serve our benefit. By recognising this truth, we understand that although the rewards that Hashem bestows upon us may not seem good at first glance, they are indeed **שֶׂכֶר טוֹב לְמַתְּהִלָּה לְפָנֵי בְּתָמִים**!