

So Much Love

"The situation does not look good."
"What do you mean, doctor?"
"I'm afraid that you haven't got much longer to live."

The man's face fell. His heart rose like a lump in his throat. He knew that he was sick, but he did not realize how seriously.

"I understand, doctor."
"I'm sorry Mr. Ginsburg."

Mr. Ginsburg slowly made his way home. He walked step by step, lost in deep thought.

"This is not the first time something like this has happened to me. Five years ago, I lost all of my money. My wife and I have been living on *tsedaka* (charity) ever since. That was very depressing. We have been married for a long time without children. What else can happen to us? Hashem please help."

Mr. Ginsburg reaches his front door. He knocks lightly and walks in. His wife greets him warmly.

"How was your day, dear?"

She senses his uneasiness. Before he has a chance to explain, there is a knock at the door. Mr. Ginsburg turns and answers the door. An older man with a long gray beard is standing there. He has an air of humble dignity about him. His face has a special glow, almost angelic.

"I have good news for you, Mr. Ginsburg."

"How did you know my name?"

"Never mind. I am coming to inform you that in a matter of weeks, you will have a complete recovery from your illness."

"What? Who are you?"

"Never mind. I have some more good news."

"Yes."

"Your wife is expecting and will give birth to a son."

Mr. Ginsburg's heart skipped a beat.

"There is more good news."

"Tell me please."

"A great business deal is coming your way. You will be rich in no time."

Mr. Ginsburg's joy was unimaginable. His heart was ecstatic.

"Who are you?"

"I am a messenger from Hashem."

With that, the man turned and walked out, disappearing into the darkness.

"And you shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart, all your soul, and all your might." (Devarim 6:5). All of your heart corresponds to children. All of your soul corresponds to life. And all of your might corresponds to money. How much

love is that? The Ohr HaChaim answers with the aforementioned parable. Imagine a person who was lacking money and children, and was deathly ill. Suddenly he is informed that he will soon have all three. How much love he would have for the One Who granted him these gifts! That is the love that we should have for Hashem.

Kinderlach . . .

How much should we love Hashem? As much as we can. How do we arouse that love? Let us begin by thinking of all the good that He has done and continues to do for us, similar to the man in our story. He gave us our life. He continues to preserve our life and our health. He provides for our needs - food, clothing, and shelter. These are only the basics, kinderlach. Hashem does much, much more for us. Recalling these things and thanking Him will arouse a deep love in our heart for The One Who provides us with everything. Love Hashem kinderlach, with all of the love in your heart.



Only Good

"A bba, what is the purpose of performing all of the mitzvos?"

"That is a very important question, Chaim. The answer is a verse in this week's parasha. 'And these are the mitzvos, statutes, and laws...learn them in order to do them...In order for you to fear Hashem your G-d...' (Devarim 6:1-2)."

"We must fear Hashem."

"Yes, Chaim. He can make things very unpleasant for us if we do not follow His commands. That is good reason to fear Him."

"That is puzzling, Abba. In the very same parasha, only three verses later, we are commanded to love Hashem. We generally love someone who does nice things for us."

"Brilliant, Chaim! You have discovered an apparent contradiction. The nations of the world have a difficult time with this

concept. Therefore, they create different idols - 'good' and 'bad'. The good idols bring them wealth and pleasure, and the bad ones are responsible for their suffering."

"How do we resolve the question, Abba?"

"Look at the verse in between the other two. 'Hear O Israel: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is the One and Only' (Devarim 6:4). We know that Hashem is One, and that everything comes from Him."

"Abba, we know that He is totally good. Therefore, how can suffering come from Him?"

"You have brought up another extremely important question, Chaim. The Malbim answers your question by first explaining the order of the verses. We are commanded to love Hashem only after fearing Him, because loving Him is a higher *madrayga* (spiritual level). However how can we love someone who brings us suffering? The answer is 'Hashem is One.' He is totally good. There is no 'bad' in the world. Unpleasant things are necessary to purify our sins, and pave the way for great things. They are good. 'Shema Yisrael! Hashem is One! It is all from Him. It is all good! Therefore, we love and fear the One G-d, because we know that everything that He does is good.'"

"What if it seems bad, Abba?"

"It is only our imagination. The yetzer hara is trying to fool us. Hashem is totally good. Everything He does is truly all good."

Kinderlach . . .

This is a very important idea. It can bring us much pleasure in life, and greatly lessen or eliminate the pain of suffering. How can we remember this concept, take it into our hearts, and make it a part of us? Our sages have a formula. "A person should always accustom himself to say, 'Everything that The Merciful One does is good'" (Berachos 59b). This is so important that the Shulchan Auruch fixes it as a halacha (Orach Chaim 230:5). Keep repeating this over and over kinderlach. It will go into your heart. Kinderlach, may you always merit to see only the good.

Parasha Questions:

- What will happen to the Jewish people if they worship idols? (4:25-28)
- What were we shown at matan Torah? (Rashi 4:35)
- What will be when we keep the mitzvos? (4:40)
- Where and when did all Klal Yisrael enter into a bris (covenant) with Hashem? (5:2-4)