

# CHAPTER SEVENTY-FIVE

*by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin*

It is so late in the night, or perhaps I should say so early in the morning, as the clock ticks its relentless way toward the rising sun and you still can't find sleep. Swirling about in your mind is the past and future. After anxious hours of restlessness you add to your worries how you will face the morrow with only two or three hours of sleep. You have tried everything. You've learned in a sefer, said Kerias Shema several times, yet your mind won't shut down and sleep eludes you. What is it that stays its grasp?

The answer lies in what is in our minds. Our heads are full of the many things experienced during the day - pain seen, problems not yet solved, and the soul-grinding galus that locks out true peace of mind. There is no day without its sorrow, no moment that allows for complete peace.

Is this then Hashem's will? Are we meant to torture ourselves till we fall apart? This cannot be the truth. Hashem is a sweet Father, and He doesn't wish us to carry a tortured soul. Rather, He wants us to be simultaneously aware of the world's pain and the hope that will be our ultimate salvation.

The Torah tells us in great detail the story of our greatest teacher, Moshe Rabbeinu. It is interesting to note that nothing is spared, and what emerges is the narrative of a great saint who seems to be constantly deluged by woes and problems. Deprived of his home at childhood, raised in glorious opulence only to become a fugitive, Moshe finds himself called upon to lead a fractious, stubborn people for forty years of wandering. Every new event comes with its own rebellion, to the point that finally, at the long-awaited moment of his people's entry into the Promised Land, our faithful shepherd is denied this longed-for experience.

Why are we told all this? Are we meant to think that every holy Jew will have a difficult life? Is this the payoff for following Hashem's path? Obviously not! Perhaps we are meant to learn the true secret of Moshe's example. For despite all the aggravation Moshe lived with, he was a truly happy man, one who was at peace with his inner being. Every Shabos we are reminded of this when we say, Yismach Moshe bematnas chelko, "Moshe rejoiced in the gift of his portion." Moshe rejoiced despite adversity because he knew who he was. Eved neeman karasa lo, he knew that he was called a faithful servant. Knowing and being that, consumed and satisfied by his mission, he was forever happy with his lot. He was able to empathize with others, even with those who seemed to want to do him harm, because knowing who he was gave him the ability to accept the frailties of others.

What irks us in those lonely moments when sleep eludes us is our soul telling us that all is not well,

that we are not truly balanced within ourselves. We are told of Moshe's trials so that we can know of his happiness in the portion Hashem gave him. We too have a portion worthy of exhortation. Unfortunately, however, we often don't see it, but it's there. Look for it and you will find it. Identify it and you'll be joyous with it, because it is yours - your portion, your lot to rejoice in.

Only after we find ourselves can we accept others with all their foibles. Their actions won't destroy our souls because they won't change who we are. Yes, others will throw obstacles in our path, but these are all part of our portion and we can use them to climb further on our own unique way.

In this kapitel David voices our trust that Hashem will ultimately raise up the righteous and show how shallow the wicked really are. When we are feeling low, these words can bring so much comfort. They tell us that it is not all for naught. There will be a time when even the wicked will accept that those who stayed on the pathway of the Torah were in the right. If we can internalize this message, we will know what is really vital and what is just the mist of senseless worry.

*Hodinu lecha Elokim hodinu...*, "We thanked You Hashem, we gave thanks, for Your Name is near; they told of Your wonders." We rejoice in our portion, Hashem, for we hold Your Name close in our hearts. With every beat our love is fortified, and with every lesson learned from our forefathers who told of Your wonders, we see Your trustworthiness all the more.

*Nemogim haaretz vechol yoshveha...*, "In danger of total dissolution was the earth and all its inhabitants, but I firmly established its pillars, sela." Rashi tells us that this passage speaks of when the Yidden accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai. At that moment the fate of the entire world hung in the balance. Had we not accepted Hashem's will, Hashem would have dissolved this material place we call home. The world cannot exist without Hashem's consistent spiritual energy. This is the pillar upon which everything else stands. We need never lose our bearings when travestying this mortal coil, for Hashem is the Author of our destiny. We need only accept this.

*Amarti laholelim al taholu...*, "I say to the arrogant, Deal not arrogantly; and to the wicked I say, Do not raise the horn of pride." David calls out to those who are arrogant and wicked that theirs is only a world of mirage, and they should not think that with such posturing they will succeed.

*Ki lo mimotza umimaarav...*, "For neither from the east nor from the west, nor from the wilderness [comes success]." What seems as success is only our human perception of what success is. True success, however, is measured with another, greater yardstick. All the real good in this world comes from the Fountain of all goodness, Hashem.

*Ki Elokim shofet...*, "For Hashem is the Judge; one He humbles and one He raises." What we see is all a facade, an empty picture that seems to have some volume but is in fact nothing at all.

*Ki kos beyad Hashem...*, "For a cup is in the Hand of Hashem, with strong wine, a full mixture, and He pours out of this cup; but only its dregs will all the wicked of the earth drain and drink." The real joys of this life are in the cup of rich love that Hashem holds in His Hand. What the wicked experience are

but its dregs, for true happiness can only be found in Hashem's Torah. The holy plan that is our destiny is where we will find completeness. Everything else will end in bitterness.

*Vaani agid le'olam..., "But as for me, I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the G-d of Jacob."* For the Torah Jew, there is nothing else but Hashem. By living our lives with this confidence we can declare Hashem's truth forever, long after the woes and difficulties recede into the past.

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