

GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

8th Edition
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BS"D

PARSHAT MISHPATIM

Father of Orphans

"כל אלמנה ויתום לא תענון. אם ענה תענה אותו כי אם צעק יצעק אלי שמוע אשמע צעקתו."
(שמות כב: כא-כב)

In this week's Parshah, Boreh Olam warns us to be cognizant of the tremendous plight of widows and orphans: *"Do not oppress any widow or orphan. If you will cause him pain (double expression), causing him to cry out to Me (double expression), I will listen (double expression) to his outcry."* The next *pasuk* very frighteningly goes on to describe the swift, graphic consequences brought upon one who pains a widow or orphan, *rachmana litzlan...*

What is behind the double expressions throughout the entire verse? Furthermore, what is it about the orphan and widow that grants them this power of having their prayers answered instantaneously?

R' Shlomo Farhi shared a beautiful idea. There is one key word that explains everything: *אלי* ("eilay" – to Me). When a person is in trouble or experiencing pain, the natural thing to do is to pour out one's heart to someone you love and trust. For a child, that would be a parent. For a married individual, that would be one's spouse. However, a widow is unable to share her pain with her husband. Likewise, an orphan can't reach out to his parents for help. They are left in a state of vulnerability, and out of desperation, they scream out to the only One they're able to: Hashem. Their pain is doubled due to both the actual hardship as well as the lack of the protective and loving figure in their life that they could otherwise turn to. Thus, because of the compounded aching, they don't just cry out; they cry out to G-d, the only One Who will *always* be there for them. And Hashem says: *Because they screamed out to Me, I will surely listen to their outcry* – with a doubled expression of *שמוע אשמע*, connoting a multiplied power to their *tefillot*.

We can derive from here a potent idea in both raising the level of tefillah in our personal lives, and perhaps even having them answered more rapidly and favorably. Prayer, as beautiful and powerful as it is, reaches unimaginable pinnacles when cried out to Boreh Olam with the mindset of vulnerability, that we have no one else to rely on other than Him. When talking to G-d, whether to ask or to thank, realize that He is the only One Who understands you, loves you truly unconditionally, and provides you with everything you need. He cherishes His relationship with you, and wants nothing more than for you to reach out to Him and put your full faith and trust in Him alone. With that mindset, the strength of that tefillah is multiplied and aggrandized.

*"Never forget that the Creator,
Who created nature, can
change nature at will, and do
what you could never expect."
(Baba Sali)*

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Frida Bat Yaffa Miriam Bat Bakol Shira Chaya Bat Rachel
Esther Bat Frida Rahamim Ben Shifra Yitzhak Ben Naama Idan Ben Tova
Chaim Avraham Ben Shifra Zisel Yoel Ben Sara Mihael Rahamim Ben Mazal
Chana Bat Malka Yosef Ben Oksana Noach Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa
Daniel Ben Shoshana Yair Shimon Ben Esther Elinora Nina Bat Blor

Sure Thing

R' Ilan Meirov related a notable thought from R' Matisyahu Solomon, *zt"l*. If someone approached you and asked you for a favor, would you say 'yes' instantaneously? Even if it's your best friend asking, you wouldn't respond in the affirmative right away. Perhaps you would answer along the lines of, "I would be more than happy to help you, but what is it first?" That would be the logical way of conducting oneself.

That being the case, asked R' Matisyahu, how could it be that when G-d offered us the Torah, the Jews instantly answered *"na'ase v'nishma* – we'll do it, and (then) we'll hear what You want us to do"? What happened to the basic principle of thinking twice before speaking? How could they have agreed to something that may have ended up being not possible?

The answer he gave was very basic but a foundation in Jewish life: If *Boreh Olam* gives you a command to do something, He's also giving you the ability for it. Whereas a favor asked by another person may be out of your reach, when Hashem asks to put on *tefillin* every day and keep Shabbat and *kosher...*, He in essence is guaranteeing that the ability to do so is within your power, because Hashem never gives you a challenge you can't overcome nor ever asks of you something that is far beyond your reach. Thus, if G-d commands "Don't be jealous," although it may seem like an unconquerable emotion, it's within you to overcome. The same is true for anger or other negative character traits.

It is imperative to always be aware of this empowering phenomenon, that our Creator gave each of us the koach to elevate ourselves to the stature of a complete and lofty individual...