

Tehilim 73: The Little Job-The Suffering of the Innocent Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

"*V'ani k'mat natui raglai*- And as for me, says Assaf, I was a hairsbreadth away from going off the right path. *K'ayin shupchu ashurei* -from my *ashurim* being spilled." Some commentators say this refers to feet and it's repeating what was said in the first segment. My feet almost stumbled off the path. I almost took a spill. Malbim suggests that it's as if a person is carrying around a very fragile pitcher in which there is his *ashurim*, his sources of joy. And if he should stumble and fall, the pitcher he's balancing on his head would crash. "*Ki kinasi b'hallolim*...-For I have envied the perverse." There's a concept of *hollelut*-people whose entire life is the pursuit of pleasure and fun. Ibn Ezra says the world *hollel* means they go round and round, they have no direction. Seforno concurs with Radak that it refers to people who focus only on the here and now. Those that say, "Eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die."

According to Rashi it refers to the people who want it both ways. They want to live it up but

they also want to be good Jews. "*Shelom reshaim ireh*-I would see the tranquility of the evil doers." They are wicked, yet they don't suffer. "*Ki ein charzubos l'mosom*- There are no chains to their death" They are not shackled to their beds for a long period of time before they die. They pass away in peace without suffering. "*Uvari ulam*-They are healthy and strong." They don't go through the toil and troubles most humans must face. They are rich and derive pleasure from their ill- gotten gains while honest hard working people must suffer. "*Lachen anaksamo gaavah*-Therefore their necks are proud." In the olden days, food was scarce and being fat was the sign of a well to do person. "*Yatof shis chamos lomo*-Their bottoms are wrapped in fat." "*Yatzo m'chelev einomo*-Due to their corpulence, their eyes bulge." Rashi explains that a thin person's eyes are sunken while a stout person's eyes swell with fat. "*Uv'ru mashkiot leivav*. Rashi explains that they've exceeded their own imagination. They are rich beyond their wildest dreams. And as a result, *yamiku*- they melt.

The natural physiological reaction to terror is that one loses control of one's bodily functions. Rashi explains that they terrorize other people. Radak says they articulate evil. Some commentators say they are so arrogant that they brag about what they do and in the process they terrorize others. "*Ul'shonom tahalach b'aretz*- Their tongues are like snakes (spreading their message)."

"*Lachen yashuv amo...umei maleh yematzu lamo*" Therefore Hashem's nation has come back to exile. They hear the story, they believe it, and find themselves following the wicked. Ibn Ezra says *mei* means water but the word *kos* is missing. It should say a cup filled with water. They not only drink it, but suck it dry. According to the Ibn Ezra, they buy the lies of the wicked and drink it down like water. Rashi says there will be so much evil and cruelty that people will come back and seek to drink the waters of *Torah*.

Mishlei: The Levels of Wisdom

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah (Heller) Gottlieb

"*Yishma chochom v'yosef lekach*." A *chacham* is someone who seeks wisdom, listens, and then integrates it. *Tachbulat yikne*-A person who has understanding will be able to think of more ways to get what he really wants. You have to ask- "Who can I learn from? Where am I going?" The *Orchot Tzadikim* says the key to acquire knowledge is humility. A humble person will open a book or attend a Torah lecture with the assumption that there will be something there he does not know yet. An arrogant person will come with the attitude- I want to see how much this will validate what I already know. The litmus test is-How willing are you to hear something new, not just intellectually but also experientially? If you are a *chacham* you'll get more. And if you are not, you'll defend yourself against anything new. If you're a *navon* with the ability to see all of the dimensions of something, you'll have the ability for *tachbulot*. *Metzudat Zion* explains that this means fine distinc-

tions. Being content with the general idea is not the way to go. If you want to reach a goal, you need a plan with steps which begins with looking at the fine distinctions.

When Theodore Herzl propagated Zionism some factions just looked at the broad picture and ended up where they did not want to go. Others saw the fine distinctions, refused to compromise, and said no. You have to ask yourself continually -Am I seeing the fine distinctions? And in order for that to happen, you have to be a *yosef chacham*. You have to be willing to hear new ideas and examine them and find the difference between that and what you already think. What should be your goal when you find distinctions? It should not be for you to be able to say- "I'm good at mathematics and at figuring things out." It should be to understand *mashal u'melitza*, to be able to see what lies beyond the finite and delineated reality. Using words like- "Having a better economic future," is tangible. The intangible

piece would be asking yourself- Who is this being directed by and towards what goal? You have to be able to analyze the *mashal* parable in order to understand the *nishmal* (meaning). Everything in this world is a *mashal*. The *nishmal*, the ultimate reality is in the World to Come. Being a *chacham* is looking at reality and asking yourself, "What is this telling me?"

Every single aspect of the *meshalim* mentioned in *chazal* is meant to be informative and has its own teaching. You have to be willing to understand it which means analyzing its breadth, depth, and height. *Melitza* usually means speaking in a way in which the words themselves open a person's heart. When your heart opens through rhetoric you have to examine it and understand it. Where is it coming from? What are all the segments and what is its depth? This will give you the ability to integrate all of the lessons you've learned and make them a part of you.

Leah- A Role Model for Us Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

Eisav was born red, with a tendency to kill. He is described as an ish *sadeh*-a man of the field, with no boundaries holding him down. If he would have overcome his evil desires, he would've been able to attain higher levels than Yaakov. The struggle to achieve would have been harder and therefore the results would have been much greater. Every human has free choice and Eisav chose the easy way out.

The Shem MiShmuel explains that Leah was in fact intended for Eisav. Her mission was identical to that of Eisav's, to turn away from evil. Leah's test was external (Eisav), while Eisav's challenge was internal. Chazal teach that it is impossible to overcome the *yetzer hara* without Hashem's help. Eisav should have cried and begged Hashem for assistance in subduing his evil inclinations the same way Leah prayed and cried her eyes out not to be married to an evil person. Eisav failed while Leah succeeded.

Rachel symbolizes a completely righteous person who never sinned. Leah signifies a *baal teshuva*, a person who had contact with evil and then repented. There are levels of correction, depending on the depths of

teshuva. The first level is *teshuva* out of fear of punishment which transforms the sin into an act the sinner never did. But there's a higher level of *teshuva m'ahava*, when a person returns to Hashem out of love for Him.

Committing a sin detaches the sinner from his Creator. But deep down a Jew desires a close relationship with Hashem. So much so that he's motivated to work on himself to correct what he did wrong, so that he can once again experience the closeness he had before. In this case, his intentional sins are transformed into merits and he emerges with more than he had before.

On a superficial level, it appears almost as if it is better to be a *baal teshuva* than to be a *tzadik*. But in fact what *chazal* meant was that a *tzadik* has a merit that a *baal teshuva* doesn't and visa versa. Rachel, the quintessential *tzadeket* is described as *yifat toar yifat mareh*-beautiful in appearance. A righteous person who never sinned personifies perfection, harmony, and beauty. The *baal teshuva*, on the other hand, signifies something flawed. Every Jew is attached to Hashem with cords of love. When a person commits a sin, he's cut off so to speak. When he does *teshuva* the two ends of the cord are tied together to once again connect him to the Creator. One the one

hand the cord becomes shorter and closer to Hashem. On the other hand, it's not as perfect and beautiful as before. Therefore the *tzadik* will be described as beautiful while the *baal teshuva* will be described as strong.

Chazal say that a *kallah* whose eyes are beautiful needs no further examination and if they are not beautiful she needs further examination. This refers to Rachel and Leah. Rachel is described as *yifat mareh*. Reiah (sight) and *yirah* (fear of Hashem) share the same letters. When the *Torah* says Rachel was beautiful it implies that she had *yirat shamayim*. Fear of heaven indicates righteousness. Pointing out that Leah's eyes were weak indicates that she had some connection to evil. Leah personifies strength, having had to endure a lot to get to where she got to. Although she didn't commit any sin, she was in the category of a *baal teshuva*. In terms of her relationship with Hashem she was on the same level as Rachel. But because she was forced to detach herself from Eisav, she achieved something unique- the ability to turn negativity into something very strong and positive. It is this capacity to disconnect from evil and repent, that she passed down to the Jewish people.