

## Tehillim 143 Rising Above the Pain

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

“Answer me quickly, Hashem, my spirit pines. Do not hide Your countenance from me, lest I be likened to those who descend into the pit.” Seforno explains, don’t treat me as one whose *teshuva* wasn’t accepted, whom Hashem turned away from, who has a barrier that blocks his prayers. “Let me hear Your kindness in the morning, for I hope in You; let me know the way in which I am to go, for to You I have lifted up my soul.” Some commentators explain that this refers to David Hamelech who was being pursued by his enemies. He asks Hashem to tell him which way to go. Other say, he’s lost his way spiritually and therefore he begs Hashem to show him the way. Malbim explains, at the brink of death he pulls back with renewed hope and prayer, hoping that Hashem will forgive him for what he’s done, that in the process of trying to save his life he had to kill others to save himself.

“Save me from my enemies, Hashem; to You I have hidden.” If *kisiti* is a transitive verb and it means I covered something, the question is what. One explanation is- I covered up my enemies. I will not mention them by name. There’s no point in revealing who they are for Hashem knows better than I do. There may be people acting like my friend and hating me

inside. Meiri explains *eilecha* as equivalent to *ba'avurecha* -for your sake, I covered them up referring to my troubles. Rashi concurs that this means my troubles. No one else will help me so I leave it to you. Why should I point out all my troubles, you know them better than I. There’s no point in asking anyone else. Redak concurs, I didn’t reveal my troubles to any human for they cannot help me, I can only rely on you Hashem. Rav Hirsh says, I put a veil over all the evil humans have done to me. I’ve removed them from my memory and consciousness. I don’t want to think of it. I don’t care about them or what happens to them. I’m not looking for vengeance, I just want you to save my soul. The only thing I’m left with is You.

He’s quite close to death, trying to move on and therefore he attempts to take all that he’s suffered and move them out of his consciousness so that he can move forward. This all assumes *kisiti* is a transitive verb. Some argue, among them Rav Sadya Gaon, that it’s a reflexive verb though not written in the form of *hitpael*. Save me from my enemies for I hid myself in you-under the wings of the Shechina. The Targum agrees that it is a reflexive verb and that it means- I’m counted as one who relies solely on you. Rashi quoting Rabbi

Marinus says *kisiti* is the same as *chasati* -I found refuge in you.

A third position argues that *kisiti* is a noun with the subject that makes it mine. Rabbi Menachem ben Saruk says it means- my portion and he quotes from *Tehillim*, “*Hashem menat chelki v’kosi* ....” My portion or lot in life is to do, save me from my enemies. The Alshich’s opinion is that this is a transitive passive word. Save me from my enemies for they’ve made a barrier or a cover between me and You. While David Hamelech was persecuted he needed to live in a rough way which created a barrier between him and Hashem. “Teach me to do Your will for You are Hashem; may Your good spirit lead me in an even land.” If I can have a meaningful life in which my spirit is drawn to you, this is all I want. “For the sake of Your name, O Hashem, revive me; with Your righteousness, deliver my soul from distress. And with Your kindness, You shall cut off my enemies, and You shall destroy all the oppressors of my soul, for I am Your servant.” *Ibn Ezra* says, he imagines himself as a wind tossed little ship on troubled waters. Send me a good wind, not one that will sink my ship, but one that will lead me to safe harbors. *Redak* says, he’s asking for salvation of the body, but more importantly salvation of the spirit.

## Lost Property Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dayan Shlomo Cohen

If you find lost property in a public place at a time when the owner didn’t yet know that he lost the property and hadn’t given up hope, then you cannot take the item for yourself. You have to look after it and make every effort to find the owner. The obligation to return the property won’t go away even after the owner has given up hope. How can you know whether the owner knows if he lost the object or not? You can tell by the way the object is lying on the ground that it’s been there for a while. If it’s covered with dust or the like, you can presume the owner already knows that it’s lost. If the property has *simanim* (identifying features), you would be obligated to announce your find and give the owner a chance to get his property back. If it doesn’t have *simanim* and you have an obligation to

return it, but you can’t find the owner, then you would need to keep it and guard it until Mashiach comes and Eliyahu Hanavi can reveal the owner. Alternatively, you can make a note of the approximate value of the property and take it for yourself or sell it or discard it and when Eliyahu Hanavi reveals the owner you can return its monetary value. If it has *simanim*, you must make a note of that too.

There are certain types of property where it could always be presumed that the owner knows straightaway that he’s lost it. People who walk around with large sums of money generally know how much they’ve got and are always feeling their pockets to make sure it’s there. Therefore, if you find a large amount of cash it could always be presumed that the owner knows of his loss and seeing that there

are no identifying features you can take it for yourself. Even if the owner wrote down the serial number of the notes, it won’t help because the notes are constantly changing hands and it can’t be used as proof that he’s the owner. Even if it seems that the owner hasn’t give up hope, the truth is he has, and is only looking for the money out of desperation. Nevertheless, it’s certainly fitting to return it, if it’s clear he’s the owner. All this applies to large sums of money where the owner would know right away that he lost it. The *Poskim* argue whether the same applies to small sums where people don’t know usually know exactly how much they’ve got. Some *Poskim* say it doesn’t make any difference what amount it is, seeing as the Gemara says, if you find money you can take it. The same principle would also

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apply to a pen or a handbag or suitcase where one would quickly realize if it was lost. If you find it in a public place you could take it. The larger the object the more one can presume the owner already knows it's lost.

In the case where one finds objects such as a phone, wallet or keys where people are always checking if they have it, we can presume the owner knows it's lost and has relinquished ownership. Even so, the right thing to do would be to return it if it has *simanim*. If it doesn't have *simanim*, in many cases the owner can

be believed. Still, each situation should be judged on its own merit whether you can presume that the owner knows of his loss and has given up hope in which case you can take it or if he hasn't yet realized he lost it, in which case you have an obligation to find the owner.

## The Workplace Cauldron- Shine or be Smelted Part 7C

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Justin Tregger

We've learned the fundamental principle that hard work alone is not what makes a person succeed in business. It's hard work coupled with Hashem's *bracha* and *tzedakah* is the primary key to bring that blessing into our work so that our efforts bear fruit. In addition, fixed times for *Torah* affects the productivity of our work. Finally, the influence other people have on our financial success is directly related to Hashem's partnership in our business. As the *Mishna* in *Avot* says, "Annul your will before His so that He will annul the will of others before your will." Restraining ourselves from sin is what forges our partnership with Hashem and ultimately brings us incredible *bracha*.

One of the most severe sins that often comes up in the workplace is theft. The *Mesilat Yesharim* says that theft was what sealed the decree in the *dor hambaul*. If separating from sin builds a partnership with Hashem, theft will sever that partnership. Employee theft is primarily theft of time. When you sign a contract with your employer, your working hours belong to your boss and every single minute must be dedicated to productive work.

The *Mesilas Yesharim* says that the chachamim took theft of time so seriously they even exempted a worker from certain *mitzvot* so that he shouldn't be distracted from the work at the hand. If an employee spends work time doing his own things or even doing a *mitzva* he's a thief in the *Torah's* eyes. *Yom Kippur* doesn't atone for sins between man and man. If your boss doesn't forgive you, you'll never be forgiven. This is a heavy load for an employee to carry.

There was a time when I was learning in the mornings and then working from 10-4pm. Although I was also teaching and managing a shul on the side, I was very careful not to do anything else during my work hours. I wouldn't take personal calls and I had a special notebook and pen in my pocket for my own use. I had a separate email for shul matters which I never opened during work hours because I wanted Hashem's blessing in my work. If I stumbled here, I knew I would be leaving the most important partnership of my life. To be honest things got a hectic before *Rosh Hashana* and I couldn't contain my work hours. We were getting closer to *Yom Kippur* and I didn't have a great feeling about it. My

boss was a frum person and I told him I was using work time for shul matters and I hoped he understood. He looked at me and said, "With pleasure, just make up the time in the evenings." I thought he would say- "Sure, you're doing great don't worry about it." But he didn't. And it was then that I realized that all the justifications that my boss only cared about output wasn't true. And I used that as my barometer afterwards. If you haven't asked permission, assume it's not allowed. Don't use the office photostat machine for your children's schoolwork. Don't chat during worktime. It's not your time. Devote every second for work and you'll succeed in forging that partnership with Hashem.

*Mesilas Yesharim* describes how Yaakov worked for Lavan, the biggest crook in town. Yaakov said, "I was consumed by the heat and frost at night and sleep was removed from my eyes. I worked so hard not stealing even a moment that I sold to you."

It's a heavy burden, but if you want Hashem with you in your business endeavors, honesty is the bedrock that your success will stand on.