

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vaeschanan 5785

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Moshe recounts that he pleaded with Hashem.

וַאֲתַחֲנֶן אֵלֶיָּה בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר:

“And I pleaded to [lit. displayed grace with] Hashem at that time, saying. (Devarim 3:23).

What is the significance of the word “vaeschanan?” In what way did Moshe plead with Hashem? What other types of prayer does the Torah teach that a person can do?

One of the more prevalent ways to communicate with Hashem is crying out **וַיַּעַק**. This is used when the person is in pain and is suffering. Words cannot be used. The victims in Sodom cried out. (Bereishis 18:20). Bnei Yisroel cried out after centuries of hard labor in Mitzrayim. (Shmos 2:23). It is also used to make a point, like when Mordechai went throughout Shushan crying out. (Esther 4:1). It was used by Moshe at the edge of the Yom Suf. (Shmos 14:15). When there is imminent danger and there is no time or mindset for words, there is crying out.

There is also Tefillah which is supplication. This a calm-mannered way of using the right words to ask Hashem to do something. Avraham supplicated to Hashem to heal Avimelech. (Bereishis 20:17). Moshe davened on behalf of Bnei Yisroel and Aharon after the incident with the Molten Calf. (Devarim 9:20). The word also signifies a form of hope. Yaakov told Yosef that he would never even have supplicated for a reunification with Yosef—thinking it could not happen—and yet he saw Yosef and his grandchildren. (Bereishis 48:11). Combined, when Bnei Yisroel were so aggrieved by the fire that Hashem brought after the Korach rebellion, they cried out to Moshe and Moshe supplicated to Hashem, and the fire died down. (Bamidbar 11:2).

There is calling in the name of Hashem **וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם ה'**. Avraham (as Avram) did so when he traveled to Eretz Canaan and stopped at Beis-El. (Bereishis 12:8). This is exalting Hashem's might upon seeing a great destiny. After seeing the land, Avram called out. That—incidentally—was the place where he would return and learn was the gateway to heaven. (Ibid 13:4). After concluding the pact with Avimelech, Avraham called out in the name of Hashem. (Ibid 21:33). This took place at Beersheva. It was again an exalting of Hashem who allowed Avraham to make peace with the surrounding governments. This foreshadowed the ability for Eretz Yisroel to make peace with its surrounding neighbors. Later, Hashem appeared to Yitzchok at Beersheva. Yitzchok, too, called out in the name of Hashem. (Ibid 26:25). This was an exalting of Hashem's name after Hashem spoke to him. Then, Moshe called out in the name of Hashem, too. (Shmos 34:5). This was after Hashem told Moshe to bring up two new luchos onto Har Sinai and He would teach Moshe how to pray for forgiveness. Moshe exalted the name of Hashem in a climactic moment of his leadership. He obtained the secret to forgiveness and also the promise that the Torah would remain with Bnei Yisroel, forever.

Raising a voice is a worded dirge called יִשָּׂא קוֹל. It signifies a feeling of future or pending doom. Hagar raised her voice and wept over the impending death of her son. (Bereishis 21:16). As she had no hope for his life, she abandoned him. This was despite Hashem having already promised that her son would thrive. (Ibid 16:12). After learning that the brocha of wealth and might was given to Yaakov, Eisav raises his voice and cried. (Ibid 27:38). He hated Yaakov for having taken that blessing from him. (Ibid 27:41). The progeniture was not yet given away. That was given to Yaakov later. (28:4). Eisav cared not for it as he was already despondent over it earlier. (25:34). It was the wealth that Eisav cried over. He felt like his future as a great nation was lost. To this day, his descendants – the Arabs – cry over their poor situation and lack of greatness. This is even as they are made rich with oil and the nations of the world bowing to their whims.

Yaakov raised his voice and cried when he met Rochel. (Ibid 29:11). Despite meeting the love of his life, he was able to feel that she would die early and that her children would not be automatically granted the status of progeniture. When Naomi wanted to part with her daughters-in-law, they raised their voices and wept. (Rus 1:9). After Naomi tells them there is nothing she could give them to bind them to her, they raise their voices weep again. (Ibid 1:14). Orpa saw her life moving toward oblivion and Rus saw living life as a stranger in Eretz Yisroel.

There is also conversation. This is hinted at when Yitzchok returned from conversing in the field. (Bereishis 24:63). Conversation is used as prayer as seen in Tehillim. "Supplication for the poor man.... before Hashem he speaks." (Tehillim 102:1). It calls the speech before Hashem supplication.

There are others like request בִּקְשָׁה (Ibid 34:5). There is also entreat עֲתָר. Yitzchok entreated Hashem on behalf of his wife. (Bereishis 25:21). Pharaoh asked Moshe to pray for the amphibian mako to stop. (Shmos 8:4). Interestingly, Moshe cried out to Hashem "over the matter of the amphibians." (Ibid 8:8). "And Hashem did like the *dvar* of Moshe." (Ibid 8:9). It could mean "words" of Moshe. Then "dvar" should be plural. It is singular because it is the "matter" of Moshe. The same "matter" mentioned that Moshe cried over. There is also "seeking" דָּרַשׁ like Rivka did on behalf of own pregnancy pangs.

Moshe used the form of prayer called תַּחֲנִינָה. It is pleading to Hashem by appealing to Hashem's grace. More specifically, it is appealing to the grace that Hashem bestowed upon the person. When Moshe asked to see Hashem's Glory, Hashem said, "I will proclaim the name of Hashem before you, and I will grace those that I grace." (Shmos 33:19). Hashem used Noach to build the ark because Noach found grace in Hashem's eyes. (Bereishis 6:8). Grace is connected to forgiveness and salvation. Moshe was channeling the grace he found before Hashem. Moshe, literally, put his grace before Hashem. Using this grace, he was hoping to merit forgiveness, and permission to cross into the Land. It was not a gratuitous plead. It was a plea reminding Hashem the he found grace in Hashem's eyes and he wanted to cash in on that favor. The people found such favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and were able to empty Egypt of its wealth. (Shmos 12:36). Moshe presenting himself before Hashem as a receiver of grace, looking for Hashem's grace to favor him. This is a lesson to anyone to asks for something. If he is not worthy of it, he can be worthy by cashing in his grace.