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THE "FORMULA" OF THE SHEMONEH ESREI

Tisha Ba'av is a day on which we have an appointed meeting, a *moed*, with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Tisha Ba'av is a day of special *tefillah*, called *kinnos*. The way the *moed* is expressed is through the *kinnos* and by yearning for the *Beis Hamikdash*, and yearning to be taken out of *galus*. We have to analyze and understand that not all requests are uniform. Different requests require different formats. What is the format for asking for the *geulah*?

Now, in light of the coronavirus, there are many people who awoke to the idea of Moshiach and they began to wait, hope and think that Moshiach must be coming. I hope Moshiach is coming very shortly. I've received many calls about this subject. However, one must know how to ask for Moshiach and for the *geulah*. You have to understand how the request must be presented. Some people aren't even aware that in our *shemoneh esrei* - the daily *shemoneh esrei* - that we say three times a day, we ask for the *geulah*. We ask in three *brachos*: we ask for *binyan Yerushalayim* (in the bracha of "ולירושלים" "עירך ברחמים תשוב") and we ask for Moshiach when we say, "את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח וקרנו תרום בישועתך" and for *Geulah*.

The Chafetz Chaim points out that this *brachah* for Moshiach has a very unique wording. If you look at the rest of the *shemoneh esrei*, you will see that the *berachos* follow a certain pattern. We say to Hashem, *atah chonen le'adam da'as*, "You graciously grant people *da'as*. Therefore grant us *da'as*." We say to Hashem, "You are a *rotzeh beseshuvah* - You desire us for *teshuvah*. Therefore help us do *teshuvah*." We say, "Hashem, You're the *soleach* - You're the forgiver of all sins. So therefore, Hashem, סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו."

TOTAL DEPENDENCE

So the "formula" is as follows. First, I establish and acknowledge that the only source of my salvation and the only One who can help me is Hashem, and with that in mind, I make my request. If a person says *רפאנו ה' ונרפא*, but he's thinking, "Hashem, make this doctor see me, so that this doctor should heal me," he's being *boteach* in the doctor. He's not being *boteach* in Hashem, because if he was *boteach* in Hashem, he would say to Hashem *רפאנו ה' ונרפא* - because You are the source of our praise and our healing and our salvation. What's the difference how Hashem will bring it - through this doctor or through that doctor? Hashem knows how to choose a doctor for you. A person has to acknowledge this 100%, and then he could present his request.

Why is this so important? Doesn't Hashem know what I need? Why do I have to constantly present a formula of, "You're the source, You're the ultimate source"? Why would Hashem, who knows my needs better than I do, withhold from me the *brachah* and the *hatzlachah* until I acknowledge that Hashem is the ultimate source of my salvation?

And the answer is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to understand that we must be connected with Him, because any lack we have is due to a lack in our connection to Him. Our purpose in this world is to develop a relationship with Hashem, and Hashem wants us to realize that He is the sole source of anything that we have and anything we need to have in the future. And we need to reiterate it over and over and say, *אתה חונן לאדם דעת*. Do you know how many people think they can take a course and sharpen their brain? Sharpen their understanding? There are courses in college and universities that teach you how to think by using deductive logic, different methods of thinking. I once had a *talmid* who told me he was trained in this; he was a brilliant fellow, and he was trained in different methods of very unique thinking. The government wanted to use him for their benefit. I told him he must be talking about Russia because they don't believe in Hashem. That's why they're called Russia since it sounds like *rasha*. We know that all *da'as* comes from Hashem. *אתה חונן*, You graciously give *da'as* to a person.

RELATIONSHIP AND APPRECIATION

Here's a person who thinks he can do *teshuvah* on his own. The truth is he can't. One can only do *teshuvah* because Hashem is *rotzeh beteshuvah*. One only can get *selichah umechilah* because Hashem is a *soleach* and *mochel*.

If I know that I'm dependent upon Hashem, I automatically build and develop a relationship with Him. And I have to reiterate this idea three times a day to internalize it. Sadly, many of us aren't fully cognizant when we are *davening* and

we're not fully aware of what we're saying. And therefore, the message gets lost. We don't think about the fact that Hashem is the only source of our *refuah*. It's not the doctors. They're only *shluchim*. The source of my *refuah* is You Hashem and only You. The same is with *barech aleinu*. Hashem, You are the only source of my *parnasah*. You provide. Not my uncle, not my friend, not my connection, not my networking, not my degree, not my street smarts and not my savvy, or my glib tongue. That doesn't provide anything. Hashem provides every single penny for a person. By doing that you create a connection with Hashem you're acknowledging that Hashem loves us and Hashem cares for us. It creates a sense of appreciation and you want to be *modeh umehallel*, you want to sing and praise Hakadosh Baruch Hu all day long. It's a preface to אנחנו מודים לך. We thank only You Hashem. We're grateful only to You, Hashem.

The point is to become close to Hashem. That's why we have this formula, dependence on Hashem, a relationship with Hashem and appreciation of Hashem.

DOING OUR PART

The brachah which is different, says the Chafetz Chaim, is the *brachah* for Moshiach. We say את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה, *the offspring of Dovid Your servant please cause to flourish quickly*, and *his pride may You exalt through Your salvation*. It doesn't say, "because You are the One who brings Moshiach," like the other berachos. It says something different. It says ברוך אתה ה' כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום, *because for Your salvation we are mekaveh every day*. We await, we rely and depend on You, Hashem, to send us salvation. And then we conclude: מצמיח קרן ישועה.

So the question is why is this *brachah* different? Why wouldn't it be sufficient just to say, "Hashem because You are the one who is *meivi Moshiach*. You are the one who brings Moshiach."¹

And the answer is, that in order to bring Moshiach we need to do our part, and our part is not enough to simply acknowledge that Hashem is the One who brings Moshiach. *We* have to bring the Moshiach. *We* have to wait for Moshiach. *We* have to want Moshiach. The Chafetz Chaim says that when somebody does a job for somebody else, he's always waiting to get his money, to receive payment for his work. There's no question that the money is owed. There's no question that it will be paid. It must be paid. The Torah says a *mitzvah*, ביומו תתן שכרו, on the day that the person finishes his job, you have to pay him on that same day (Devarim 24:15). However, the Chafetz Chaim points out that there's a very interesting *halachah* in *Shulchan Aruch* stating that you only have to pay the person if the person asks for his money. But if the employee expects you to come

to him and give him his paycheck, or that you will chase him after him, this obligation does not apply. The *chiyuv* is when the guy says, "Can I get my pay?" Then, when he says that, you have a *chiyuv* to chase him down to wherever he is and give him his money.

So the Chafetz Chaim says there is a *chiddush* here, an insight, that payment is not due upon completion of work, which is a very interesting *chiddush*. Payment is due when the guy finishes the work and *when* he demonstrates that he expects to get paid. Then the *chiyuv* starts.²

When it comes to Moshiach, says the Chafetz Chaim, we have to come to Hashem and say that we are *mekaveh*, we are awaiting Moshiach, and because we're *mekaveh* for Moshiach, therefore we're entitled to get Moshiach. What does the word *kavei* come from? The word *kavei*, I once heard, comes from the word *kav*, line: קוה אל ה', hope to Hashem. What does a "line" mean?

So there's a famous principle that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. There are many people who hope Hashem will give them something but not in the "shortest" or most direct fashion. Maybe the government will give him another stimulus check. Maybe there will be an employer who will decide to give him money. Maybe some *guir* will decide to donate and share his wealth with others and so on and so forth. Maybe my mother-in-law will give it to me, my father-in-law, my parents, my who-knows-what. These are not straight lines. You have to know *kivuy* means only from Hashem. I want the straightest line. I'm relying only on You and because I only rely on You, that's why I can expect to see that payment.

ASKING ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

Asking for Moshiach is not enough though. You have to be *mechakeh lo* (wait for him) and you have to be *mechakeh lo* in a certain way. Let's say a person is waiting for a job. He doesn't have a job right now and he's waiting for one. So what does he do? He makes phone calls. He sends out resumes. He goes to organizations that help people find positions. Is that

¹ בעולם האמת אומרים חז"ל ששואלים לו לאדם "צפית לישועה?" לא "קוית לישועה" אלא "צפית" מלשון צופה ומביט, להורות שצריכים פשוט לעמוד ולהמתין על הגאולה כמו שמתעדים לבוא אורח חשוב, שעומדים על אם הדרך ומצפים לו. זוהי המצוה שעל ביצועה אנו מתפללים שלש פעמים ביום: "את צמח דוד מהרה תצמיח וקרנו תרום בישועתך כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום." לכאורה אינו מובן מה נתינת טעם הוא? "שמא תאמר - אבד קציר וגו', ת"ל - קוה אל ה' - לא נושעים - קוה ושוב - קוה, אפילו אין ביד ישראל אלא הקיווי כדאי הם לגאולה בשכר הקיווי. וכך יתעורר אדם ויתבונן בתפילתו לומר הלא "לישועתך קוינו כל היום ועד מתי איפוא, רבש"ע, תתן לנו להמתין: את צמח דוד מהרה תצמיח!..." (החפץ חיים בנתיבות התפילה)
² "וגאלנו מהרה למען שמך." יש לבקש תמיד מרבנו של עולם על הגאולה דכשאי תובעים אין חיוב לפרע בזמנו... כשחז"ל: "ביומו תתן שכרו - אימתי בזמן שתבעו, לא תבעו אינו עובר עליו" (ב"מ ק"א ע"א) בעל הבית שחייב כסף לפועלו אינו מצטרף כשהלה אינו בא לתובעו ממנו. לעומת זאת הקב"ה חפץ ומצפה שהאדם יבוא לתבוע. משתובעים ללא הרף מבשר ודם הריחו כועס. אבל שונה הוא הדבר לגבי השי"ת ממנו צריכים לבקש ולתבוע... וקרוב ה' לכל קוראיו (שם)

called *kavei*? No. That's called wishful thinking. He doesn't have any reason to believe and rely that this company is going to hire him. He has no reason to believe that. It's just wishful thinking. There are many people who wishfully think and wish for Moshiach to come, but that's not called being *kavei*, *kivinu leyeshuah*. *Kivuy* means, "Hashem, I'm waiting and I know it's going to come. I'm relying on You completely that You will send the Moshiach." You want the Moshiach to come, and we want the Moshiach to come, and our wanting and our requesting the Moshiach is what's going to bring the Moshiach. You have to ask Hashem and tell Him, "Since we're *mekaveh*, send the Moshiach."

A DIFFERENT DAVENING

This is something that's not required in all other *tefilos*. But this is a level of *emunah* and *bitachon*. A person could be *boteach* in Hashem and come up with an understanding that Hashem definitely wants him to be healed. Hashem definitely does not want me to be ill. Hashem does not want anybody to have *tzaros*. Hashem doesn't send *tzaros* to any person. But it's not a prerequisite to be *boteach*. All *tzaros* come from a person himself. We say in *Eichah* (3:38): מפני עליון לא תצא הרעות: *no evil comes out from Hashem*. It never starts with Hashem. It starts with us.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner says one of the best ways to get your *tefilos* answered is in the following fashion. *Daven* to Hashem and say, "Hashem, I feel bad for You that I am in this plight." For example, let's say a father tells his son, "I'm lending you my car. Go take a drive. But I'm warning, don't speed, because the roads are very curvy. I'm watching from the window. Drive carefully." And the father gives him a warning and he gives him a double warning. The kid gets into the car. He turns the car on. He's all excited to drive his father's new car. He rips out of the driveway and he hits the road. The father is watching. He's grabbing his head. He's saying *oy vey iz mir*. The kid is going to have an accident. He can't go that fast. And suddenly he sees the car wobble, shake from side to side, go to the side of the road and roll over and the father screams. He doesn't say, "Oh, good for you!" Not because of his car but because he cares for his kid. He doesn't know what's going to happen with his kid. And let's say the father is a doctor and he has to then cure the kid. He's going to be very pained.

It's the same thing with Hashem. When Hashem sees a person in a plight, Hashem is saddened. The *gemara* in Sanhedrin (46a) tells us that when a person transgresses a cardinal *aveirah* for which he's *chayav misah*, Hashem Yisbarach is sad.³ Hashem Yisbarach feels bad so-to-speak over the plight of this young person. Hashem doesn't think, "You know, I'm happy - you got what you deserved! I warned you. I told you. You stepped into it. You were warned. You said *af al pi ken*." No. Hashem says, "I feel bad for you."

We say in *ashrei* ויני כל אליך ישברו ואתה נותן להם, פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון, we say all eyes are focussed on Hashem, את אכלם בעתו, Hashem

provides everybody with what they need. Hashem wants to. That's His *ratzon*. So why doesn't it work? Because we created our own blockages. We prevented Him from giving us what we asked for. So if we come to Hashem and we say to Hashem, "I'm very sorry that I put You in this uncomfortable position. I'm very sorry that I am in a position that I can't get what You want to give me," that itself is a powerful *tefilah* and a powerful way of coming to Hashem. And if you feel bad for Hashem, you can now rely on Hashem, that Hashem will bring it to you because now you're giving the *koach* to Hashem to be able to help you.

HITTING A JACKPOT

I want to share with you a recent story. I met a young man who told me that he's under stress and his wife is under stress. They're carrying a burden. What was the burden? The burden was that his wife could not "hold" children. She had miscarriage after miscarriage after miscarriage. I believe four or five. He had gone to Rav Chaim Kanievsky, who said to learn *perek Hamapeles* in *Niddah*, and he did and still nothing happened. Then he went back to Rav Chaim and Rav Chaim told him to learn it again. He learned it again. Nothing happened. Then he was speaking with me one time and I said, "I'd like to help you. I know the *eitzah* from the Chafetz Chaim who says that if you do *chessed* with others, that works wonders. I want you to do extreme *chessed*. I want you to do *chessed* where you're going to feel a pinch." And this wasn't the easiest thing for this particular person. He thought about it and he decided "I'm in." He began to give *tzedakah* very generously to support *talmidei chachamim lomdei Torah mitoch hadechak*. A short while later, his wife became pregnant. They were very happy. He told me he's not happy yet because she's gotten pregnant before. She loses children. And every week they were counting and the fellow continued with his *chessed* and his generosity and it went forward.

Now he has already gone to all the organizations that help people with children. He had gone through tests and gone through all kinds of doctors. He's up to the gazoos with all the medical procedures. It went on for a week, two weeks, three weeks, four weeks, and every week I would speak to him. I'd be *mechazek* him. I said, "Trust Hashem it's going to happen. This is the one. And it went on. Ten weeks, eleven weeks. If I remember correctly, they got to sixteen weeks and then I didn't hear from them the next week. I was wondering why not. I called him. He said, "We lost the baby. It just can't work. My wife

מנני כיצד תולין אותו, וכו'. ומתיירין אותו מיד ואם לן עובר עליו בלא תעשה שנאמר (דברים כא, כג) לא תלון נבלתו על העץ כי קבר תקברנו כי קללת א-להים תלוי וגו' כלומר מפני מה זה תלוי מפני שבידך את השם ונמצא שם שמים מתחלל. אמר רבי מאיר בשעה שאדם מצטער שכינה מה לשון אומרת קלני מראשי קלני מזרועי אם כן המקום מצטער על דמון של רשעים שנשפך קל וחומר על דמון של צדיקים, וכו'.

can't hold the baby." I felt terrible. I felt the guy's pain. I told the guy, "I hope you're not angry with me that I misled you. *Lema'aseh*, whatever money you gave to *tzedakah*, went to poor people and you're going to get full *sechar* for it, but I want you to know it's not over yet. It's not over. Maybe that *tzedakah* will pay off a little later."

After that, the guy decided to revisit the organization that takes care of people who have no children and they hooked him up with a doctor, a *frum* fellow named Dr. Zev Williams, a humble doctor, a fertility specialist. They came to him. He had to see all the medical records. They brought him all the medical records. They went through it. He said, "You didn't do all the tests." The guy said, "We did every test in the book that's *shayach* to be given. We went to every doctor. All the tests were done. You can't help us." He said, "I think you're missing a test." It was like hundreds of pages because they have a very extensive history. He read through it all again. He said, "This test you don't have. Take this test."

He directed them to a particular doctor who deals with infertility, a doctor who has 30 years of experience, a big specialist. They took that missing test. And this doctor says, "Guys, you're good to go. You can have a baby. There's no reason why you can't have kids. We figured out the problem."

His wife became pregnant again and a week goes by, another week goes by. Now with this team of doctors, there's the big doctor, this doctor with 30-years of experience. He has two underlings, ten-year doctors, younger fellows who are his students. Once the process got under way, they were pushed to the younger guys for the maintenance. They went on for weeks, more than sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, *baruch Hashem*. We're getting somewhere. They told him that the main date is the 24th week. Once the baby reaches 24 weeks the baby is viable and you're good to go. The 24th week came. It turned out to be the father's birthday. He took it as a good *siman*. He was in heaven. 24 weeks! The baby is viable. He would have taken the baby out now in the worst conditions.

A short while later, he went to visit the doctor, the younger doctor. The younger doctor looks and he says, "The cervix is too short. It's not going to hold." *Oy vey iz mir*. The guy was *ois mentsch*. Then a couple of days went by. He said, "I couldn't come to myself. I didn't know what to do, yes, no. I want the baby to be healthy."

He said, "I remembered everything you told me about how to *daven* to Hashem. I went to *shul* and I started to cry. I said to Hashem, 'I'm not complaining.' I remember you told me the first thing is Hashem doesn't like people who complain."⁴ (You want to complain, complain to your mother. She'll get tired of your complaining and maybe she'll give you what you want. Not because she thinks you need it or you deserve it but just to silence you). By Hashem that doesn't work. Hashem wants to see positive. He wants

to see somebody who is hopeful, who is relying on Him. Someone who trusts Him. Not someone who treats Hashem like an outsider, like a government. Hashem wants us to treat Him as if we have a relationship. This is what he said, "Hashem, if I'm not supposed to have children I accept it 100%. If I can, please, Hashem, make it work. Hashem, I thank You for everything You ever did for me." He started to sing Hashem's praises and he thought *be'emes* positive thoughts. He said that when he finished that *tefillah*, "I never in my life *davened* like that. I had no *safek* it was accepted. I came home. I told my wife I have good news for you. Everything is going to be fine. No problem." She said, "What, are you nuts?" He said, "No, I'm telling you. I *davened*. I felt it was accepted."

They went back to the big doctor. He said, "You're fine. Nothing to worry about."

Now, during this time the organization that sent him to that first doctor was running an auction and they had a "split the pot." The pot was never more than \$101,000. That was the highest. So he figured, "If I win, I can make 50 grand." They weren't sure if during the Coronavirus it was going to be more or less. He said to Hashem, "I'm going to give my *chomesh* if I win - i.e. if I make 50, I'll give 10 grand, a *chomesh*." Then he thought it over again and he decided, "No. Hashem if I win, I'm going to give 25, half. I have *hakaras hatov* to these people. They were the right *shluchim*. I'm going to give them half of the bucket." Lo and behold the guy won. He won the "split the pot." I told him, "Do you realize that Hashem *mamish* showed you *ha'aras panim*." This was the highest number in "split the pot" ever, \$130,000. So he said to me, "I *lechatchilah* wanted to keep 40 for myself and give 10. Then I said 'I'm giving half to Hashem.' You know what Hashem did? He made it go up to 65. I gave 25 to them and I ended up with 40 for myself. Amazing *chessed* of Hashem." He said, "I'm *shikur*. The baby is expected in a couple of weeks now. Everything should be *besh'a'ah tovah umutzlachas*. He hoped, he was *mekaveh* and he did everything that was within his power - not *segulos*, not magic tricks (I call *segulos* magic tricks). They did the truth, the *tefilah*, the *tzedakah*. The *tefilah* in the right way. "Hashem, if You want us to have a child then that's what You want. Hashem we're not complaining to You. We're working with You."

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us be *zocheh* to see the *geulah* and the *yeshuah bemeheirah* כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום

⁴ כתב חפץ חיים בספר "מחנה ישראל", שער האחרון פרק ב, וז"ל: "ע"כ צריך כל איש ישראל בכל יום כי ישועת ה' כהרף עין, וכמו שאנו אומרים בתפילה כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום, וכתבו בספרים שלא דוקא על הגאולה בלבד צריך לצפות, אלא על כל מין צרה שלא תבא צריך לצפות לישועת ה', וכבר כתבו בשם האר"י ז"ל שבכל יום כשאומר "כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום" יכוין שמצפה לישועה על כל צרה שנמצא בו, והוא מסוגל מאד להצלה, וה' יזכנו להיות מהמקוים לישועתו תמיד, ובזכות זה נזכה לתשועה האמיתית בב"א."

❖ THE BOTTOM LINE ❖

When we acknowledge in our tefillah that Hashem is the only source of our salvation, our refuah, our parnassah, our da'as, and even our teshuva, we can connect with Him in a deep and meaningful way. When we know that we are completely dependent on Him in all areas of our lives - and we internalize it by expressing that three times a day - it means that we can constantly build on that relationship. The brachah for Moshiach in our Shemoneh Esrei is different though, because - besides acknowledging that Hashem ultimately brings Moshiach - we must also sincerely express our own desire and hope for his arrival. And when we rely on and hope to Hashem to bring Moshiach (or other yeshuos in our lives) in such a fashion - with the same dependency of a worker who expects to get paid, and not just as wishful thinking - we actually become "entitled" to get our requests answered, says the Chofetz Chaim. This week, when I daven for my own yeshuos, I will not complain about my plight to Hashem, but I will fill my heart with positive hope and trust that Hashem can and will grant me what I am missing, in order to serve Him better. And in that zechus, I will see yeshuos Hashem, כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום.