

RE'EH SEE OUR SUFFERING

'SEE OUR SUFFERING': FEELING OTHERS' PAINFUL SITUATIONS

ראה בענינו We ask Hashem to “see our suffering.”

Whenever we daven for something in Shemoneh Esrei, we need to ask for it truthfully. “The mouth and heart must be equal.” It is not enough to know the meaning of what we are saying and to concentrate. The point is that we when we ask for something, we need to really want it – our heart should want what we are saying with our mouth.

For example, when one asks Hashem for understanding, but he doesn't seek to understand things, his prayer is not truthful. His heart and mouth are not equal with each other, because his mouth is requesting something that his own heart is not in touch with.

If one davens that Hashem should return us to do teshuvah, yet he himself makes no effort to help others do teshuvah, his prayer is not truthful; his heart is not in line with what he says in with his mouth. The same is true for when someone asks Hashem to be forgiven

for his sins, yet he himself is not forgiving of others.

We ask Hashem in this blessing of Shemoneh Esrei that He should see all our suffering, and in particular, the financial suffering that is going in Creation - all of the oni\poverty. In particular, the Jewish people suffer from poverty.

But first, we need to see how others are suffering, and then we are able to ask Hashem from a more truthful place in ourselves, that He should see our suffering.

It is written, “And purify our hearts to serve You in truth.” If a person doesn't reveal emes\truth in himself, he can't recognize what's going on, so things don't bother him. When he davens, it is if he is saying a lie, because he does not feel for anything he davens for. His behavior contradicts what he says in his Tefillos.

We are supposed to feel the pain of others. We learn this from Moshe Rabbeinu, who went out from the palace to see the suffering

of the people. Chazal say that “he placed his mind and heart to worry about them.”

The world is full of so many, many kinds of suffering. People often do not think about what others are going through. A person never thinks about it; he begins to realize it when a collector comes to his door and he sees that there is a family with a widow and 19 orphans, and that the family is full of all kinds of terrible suffering as well...

EMPATHY TOWARDS THE SUFFERING TZADDIKIM IN THE TORAH

Let us reflect just a little into the weekly parsha. Yaakov Avinu mourned Yosef for 22 years; he had tremendous pain and mourning, over the loss of his beloved Yosef. When anyone reads the parsha, like when he is fulfilling his obligation of Shnayim Mikra (*to read the Torah portion twice and the translation once*), does he ever feel Yaakov's pain?

When the baal korei is leining the parsha, does the person listening feel the events of the parsha going on? Or does he just hear the words so he can fulfill his obligation? Think about it. Yaakov Avinu is mourning Yosef for 22 years! He is in a lot of pain.

Does this cause a person to feel any pain when he reads this in the parsha or when he hears it being leined?

Here is another example from the parsha. Imagine the pain of Yosef, who is imprisoned in Egypt. He is stuck in Egypt, a terrible and

impure place, and he is far from his holy father. How distressing this must have been for him!

Another example. After the sale of Yosef, the parsha records the life of Yehuda thereafter, where he had to bury his wife and two sons in his own lifetime. Imagine his pain!

Does anyone feel the pain of Yaakov, of Yosef, or of Yehuda, when he reads about them or hears it being read? Perhaps a person is thinking that in order to feel the pain of these tzaddikim in the parsha, one would have to learn the parsha very in-depth and to see all the commentaries, until he can finally feel their pain....

REFLECTING ON THE SUFFERING IN THE WORLD

And what about the suffering that takes place in our world? The world is full of so much suffering!! If anyone has any true feelings, he feels the pain going on in the world.

The Chazon Ish and the Sfas Emes were both asked a question: How can you not go crazy from all the suffering you hear about? These two Gedolim answered that they are able to retreat into an inner place in their soul of calmness. But only a person who learns Torah lishmah merits to enter this inner place of the soul. As for the rest of us who do not reach this level, our avodah is to feel the pain of the generation.

If a person doesn't feel the pain going on in the world, either he is completely insensitive to

emotions, or, he wishes to detach emotionally from all the pain he hears about, so he runs away from it and he attempts to live in an inner silence; but this is not the correct response.[1]

To name some of the troubles going on in our world, there are people in the world who have lost their parents. There are people who have lost their spouse. There are people who have lost children. There are people who are full of financial suffering; suffering in their health; or strife in their families. There are all kinds of terrible suffering that exist in our world.

INTERNAL SUFFERING

Yet, there's an even deeper kind of suffering that is taking place on this world. It is a more inner kind of suffering than the above kinds of suffering mentioned: Is there anyone in the world who derives sippuk (*satisfaction*) from their life?? Living without sippuk is a terrible, internal suffering which makes a person feel hollow and empty inside for his entire life.

A person on average lives for 70 or 80 years, as the possuk says: "The years of a man are seventy, and with strength, eighty." When a person is a child, he enjoys life, more or less. A child doesn't think about pain or feel pain, so life as a child is relatively happy and carefree. He gets older, and he begins to access his emotions. How much pain does he have from his social life, from the agony that he has from his friends, and from trying to fit in

with society?

When he gets older, a person begins to think more and use his intellect, and he has all kinds of ambitions that he wants to fulfill. How much pain people have from this!

Do people have satisfaction from their life, or do they mostly feel empty and unfulfilled? Some people simply don't feel this pain; they are busy with their job and taking care of their family, so they never think about all their inner emptiness. But there are a very large amount of people in the world who are suffering from feeling an inner emptiness in their life. And it feels utterly horrible.

Even with people who are sitting and learning Torah all day, there are many of them who don't feel like they are fulfilled from it. They don't feel inwardly connected to it.

So much pain is going on in the world! Men, women, children – all are full of suffering. The suffering going on in our internal world is much more painful than the suffering we see going on in the external world.

How many people today are seeking therapy, for guidance in life? How much deep pain fills the hearts of so many people? And all of this is besides for all the physical ailments that people have, which is also astronomical in proportion.

When a person lives a deeper, internal kind of life, he feels how other people are souls, who go through pain, and he feels how much pain all people are having. Everyone in

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the world has something else; the common denominator is that we are all suffering.

A person goes through so much internal suffering on this world. It's a whole different kind of pain and suffering than physical pain.

The amount of pain going on in the world is too much for anyone to bear if he thinks about it; we would go crazy. Only Hashem can take all the pain.

Most people don't think so deeply, so they never realize what we are saying here. But if anyone thinks a little, like when he has some time of quiet, it should bother him that there is so much pain going on in Creation. *(He can then uncover a deep emunah; but we aren't discussing this point right now.)*

SEE OUR SUFFERING

This is what we should have in mind when we daven to Hashem, ראה בענינו - "See our suffering."

If we think into all the suffering going on in the world, we will greatly weaken our connection to this physical world. We will be able to aspire to connect to a better world than

the world we see, a world which is entirely good, the Next World.

Don't just think about the pain of the world in the superficial sense. That's not the point. Think about how all the pain must cause us to realize something - that we are not here for This World.

Reflecting about this will help a person gain emunah, as well as a yearning for the Next World. But it will also cause us to really mean what we say when we say ראה בענינו.

When we reflect into all the pain that is going on in the world, we will feel the pain going on, and then we are davening to Hashem truthfully when we say these words of ראה בענינו. And when we daven to Hashem truthfully, we will be answered, for it is written, "Hashem is close to those... who call out to Him in truth."

May we merit from Hashem to feel the pain of others, and to merit a world in which everything will be completely good.



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