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Tachanunim\Supplication: Finding Chein (Favor) By Hashem

אתה - כי קל שומע תפילות ותחנונים - “For You Are The Almighty G-d that hears prayers and supplications.” We turn to Hashem with both *tefillah*, prayer, and *tachanunim*, supplication.

When it comes to *tachanunim* (supplication), there are two aspects. There is the factor of how much we daven for something (*kamus*\amount), and there is also the quality and depth that we are putting into our prayers (*eichus*\quality).

Tachanunim, a supplication, is to keep *davening* to Hashem again and again for something, as we see from the word *V'asechanan* (And he [Moshe] implored), which comes from the word *tachanunim*; Moshe repeatedly kept begging Hashem in his prayers to go to Eretz Yisrael.

The word *tachanunim* is rooted in the word *chinam*, “free.” The Vilna Gaon writes that *tachanunim* is when one *davens* to Hashem and requests for something not due to any merits he has, but because he is asking Hashem to have mercy on Him and give him a free gift, a *matnas chinam*.^[1]

However, the depth of *tachanunim* is not to ask Hashem for a *matnas chinam*; it is not mainly about ‘getting’ something. *Tachanunim* is rooted in the word *chein*, to find favor. Our main aspiration in our *tefillos* should be to strive to regain favor with Hashem again. When a person sins, he loses his *chein* in Hashem’s eyes, and he needs to get it back. Through *teshuvah*, one can get back his *chein* in Hashem’s eyes.

Rabbeinu Yonah writes that there are 20 fundamental aspects of *teshuvah*, and one of them is ***tefillah***, to pray for assistance in doing *teshuvah*. Included in this, Rabbeinu Yonah writes, is to *daven* for three things: **1)** One part of it is to *daven* to Hashem for assistance in doing *teshuvah* over our sins and stop sinning. **2)** The second part of it is to ask Hashem that we merit to return to Hashem, as a result of stopping to sin. **3)** And the third part of it is to *daven* for when we do *teshuvah* is to *daven* to Hashem that we should regain our original *chein*, favor, in His eyes.

The third aspect is to be desirable again by Hashem. This is what is written, “*Chaim b’retzono*”, “Living by His will” – this describes one who is desirable by Hashem.

Truly Desiring Hashem

Yemei Ratzon, the Days of Will, which are these days of Elul through Yom Kippur, are days in which one desires Hashem and yearns for Hashem, and Hashem desires us too especially during these days.

As Rabbeinu Yonah writes, the purpose of doing *teshuvah* is that after sins are removed, we once again are desired by Hashem. This is the entire desire of the *tzaddikim*: to become desirable and favorable by Hashem.

This is the goal of all our *teshuvah*: to find *chein* by Hashem. The depth of this is not just because we hope to become desired again by Hashem. It is written, "*Just as water reflects one face to another, so is the heart of man to another.*" Hashem acts towards us how we feel towards Him; if we truly desire Him, He reciprocates.

How indeed can we *daven* that Hashem should desire us? The entire desire of the righteous is for Hashem, which implies that regular people don't desire it as much. Yet, even if someone is not a *tzaddik*, he also wants to be close to Hashem. If so, why does Rabbeinu Yonah write that only the *tzaddikim* have a desire for Hashem?

The answer is: Only a *tzaddik* really desires it with his entire being. When a person has real pain over his sins and he's ashamed, and he has all the 20 parts of *teshuvah* as Rabbeinu Yonah describes, he is one who *truly* desires Hashem. He is one who *truly* wants closeness with Hashem. Just as much as he wants Hashem, so will Hashem desire him, for Hashem will reciprocate.

But if someone is full of various desires in his life, and one of the desires on his list is that he wants to be close to Hashem and to also be desired by Hashem - but it's not his main desire - he doesn't have the real desire to have *chein* by Hashem. *Chaim b'retzono* is only when it is one's entire desire in life to have a relationship with Hashem.

Yemei Ratzon is the time which clarifies a person's true will. Deep down, we all want to be close to Hashem, for that is our soul's essence. But our essence is usually hidden from us and not revealed. In the revealed layers of our will, the deep will of our soul which is to only want closeness to Hashem is often not revealed in our daily life.

Our Avodah on Yom Kippur: Holding Onto Our Deepest Ratzon

The main *avodah* of these days, especially Yom Kippur, is to reveal our deepest *ratzon*, the *ratzon* to be close to Hashem - and to only desire that.

It is written, "*Their sins separated them*"; sins put a barrier on our relationship with Hashem, but we must have the fundamental understanding towards ourselves that sins are only on our outer layers, outside of our true self, for our true self always remains pure and holy. Deep down, in the point of our soul which is our very essence, it is "our will to do Hashem's will" ("*Retzoinenu Laasos Retzoncha*"). Our inner will becomes more revealed to us on Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur atones, meaning, it reveals the deep will of a Jew.

However, the spiritual light on Yom Kippur is coming from Above; our *avodah* on Yom Kippur is to connect ourselves to our inner point, to use the awesome time of Yom Kippur to help us connect to our soul.

Without striving to take the Heavenly illuminations of Yom Kippur and connect our soul to it, a person might want to be desired by Hashem, but it won't be enough to seal the connection.

To illustrate, Reuven might like Shimon very much, but Shimon doesn't always like Reuven. It's just a yearning that Reuven has for Shimon; it's a one-way street, and it is not a solidified relationship between them, in spite of the fact that there are great yearnings here on Reuven's part to become close to Shimon. But if Shimon likes Reuven too, he reciprocates the feelings, and then it's a real friendship.

So too, if we have a great desire for Hashem, but we don't get ourselves to become desired by Hashem, then although we have a great yearning for Him and we have a *ratzon* for Him, it doesn't cause anything permanent to happen. We must therefore yearn not only for closeness with Him, but to have a permanent relationship with Him, to desire a relationship in which we have *chein* by Him.

Sometimes a person can yearn very much for another and he sees that the other is not returning the feelings, until he eventually despairs on ever having a relationship. So too, a person might yearn so much for Hashem, yearning and yearning for Him, but he finds that he's not forming a lasting relationship with Hashem. The lesson we see from this is, that yearning for Hashem is not the purpose. The purpose of the yearning for Hashem is not just to yearn for Him and wish so much to be close to Him. It is to eventually arrive at a permanent relationship with Him.

On Yom Kippur, it is a special time in which the soul can feel the depth of Hashem's will towards him, and then he can connect his own *ratzon* with Hashem's *ratzon*; our *ratzon* can bond with His *ratzon*, and a lasting relationship can then be formed. This does not occur when one just wants to be close to Hashem; it will not be enough to want. There must be a connection with Hashem that is formed. It is to *truly* want, and when one *truly* wants, the will of the soul then bonds with Hashem's will, and then the bond becomes permanent in one's soul.

A relationship cannot be a one-way street. Both of them have to want each other. So too, if it is only we who have a desire for Hashem, but we haven't made ourselves desirable to Him, then although our desire for Him is present, His desire for us will not be there. In order for us to merit that Hashem reciprocates our desire for Him, we have to truly desire to have a permanent relationship with Him in which we should wish that we find *chein* by Him.

These words, when put into practice, can give a person an overhaul and help him live an inner kind of life.

Our avodah is not just about yearnings for Hashem, a will for closeness with Hashem, and to have inspiration. It is written, "*The soul cannot become full.*" Our soul isn't satisfied with just more and more yearnings for Hashem. We all yearn during these days; each to his own. Inspiration is just a cycle of elation going up and down. It doesn't last. We need to make it lasting.

The Greatest Love You Can Ever Know Of

Our soul will only find its serenity when we make ourselves desired by Hashem, and then we will really feel a reciprocal bond with Hashem that will be the most ultimately satisfying relationship we will ever know of. If one achieves it, he knows of more than just having feelings for Hashem; he will feel how Hashem feels towards him in return. The relationship with Hashem then goes from being a just one-way street to the real thing.

Naturally, people seek love in their families, from their spouse and from their children. That is the way of the world. But one when feels Hashem's love toward him, he feels a love greater than any love found on this world. Because Hashem is endless, His love for us is endless, and if one feels it, he feels that endless love. People are limited; our love is limited for each other. But Hashem's love is unlimited, for He has no limits. This is the ultimate *yishuv hadaas* (calmness) that those who serve Hashem in an inner way live with.

There are many people who wish to really serve Hashem and they yearn all the time to be close to Hashem, but they don't strive to make that into a permanent connection inside their soul; the inner reason behind this is because although they seek to be close to Hashem, they are not seeking to be desirable to Hashem. They get their *yishuv hadaas* when they have *seder* (orderliness) in their life, be

it a *seder* every day in learning or from doing anything orderly that gives them fulfillment. But if *seder* is the main source of a person's *yishuv hadaas* in his life, it is only imaginary *yishuv hadaas*. A real feeling of *yishuv hadaas* only comes to a person when he truly seeks Hashem and feels His love toward him as a permanent part of his life.

This is also the depth behind forgiveness of our sins on Yom Kippur. To be cleansed from sins is when the barriers are removed, and then the soul finds itself naturally with Hashem.

In Conclusion

These words always were always applicable, but nowadays, it is especially relevant.

We live in *ikvesa d'meshichah*, in the era preceding Moshiach, which is the final 2000 years of the world; Chazal said there will be 2000 years of desolation, 2000 years of Torah, and 2000 years of Moshiach. This does not mean that this will take place in chronological order; rather, the periods of desolation, Torah, and Moshiach all overlap with each other at once. We can see it clearly in our times; there is much Torah going on, the future is imminent, yet as it unfolds, the world is really destroying itself with all of the desires that people are pursuing.

These days, more and more buildings and skyscrapers keep going up - and it will all be destroyed one day, because the desires of the world that people are pursuing will eventually destroy This World, whereupon a new world will be revealed in its place.

In the future it will be revealed a permanent connection with Hashem, but even in our own times we can still strive to live a life of *Ain Od Milvado* (Nothing besides for Hashem), to live with Hashem in our life, and to feel His love, and that our only desire should be to be desired by Hashem and to have a permanent connection with Him in the soul.

The purpose of Yom Kippur, and the main request we need to have in all of our *tefillos*, is that we become desired by Hashem.

May we all merit a *gmar chasima tova*, to be sealed for a good year.

[1] See *Tefillah #0114 - Asking For Reward*.

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