

A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them...Moshe said to Aharon, "Of this did Hashem speak saying, "I will be sanctified through those who are dearest to Me...and Aharon fell silent. (10:2,3)

This is one of the most compelling statements in the *Torah*. For a father to witness the devastating death of his two sons -- men who had exemplified service to the Almighty, who had brilliant futures before them -- and to remain silent as stone is incredible. How are we to understand this? Indeed, throughout the generations parents have suffered grievous losses and have accepted it as Hashem's Will. Where does one conjure the temerity, the superhuman strength, to transcend human emotion to accept Hashem's edict in such a manner? Apparently, these have not been ordinary people with an ordinary perception of Hashem's guiding-hand throughout our every endeavor. They believed in the Almighty in such a manner that accepting His decree, however difficult, is a natural response.

Chazal say that Hashem is not content with silence alone. In the *Talmud Berachos 60b*, *Chazal* relate that one must bless Hashem for the bad as well as for the good. Silence is not a sufficient response; we must welcome the bad, as we would the good. This is, indeed, a reaction that goes beyond the norm. Yet, this is the ideal that is expected of us. We should bear in mind that the Almighty gives strength to withstand His decrees. He does not demand from a person more than he is capable of handling. He certainly knows us better than we know ourselves.

There is a very moving story told about the *Aderes*, *Horav Avraham David Rabinowitz Tumim, zl*, regarding his reaction to the tragic death of his son. He was known to be punctual in his conduct with the community. They rarely had to wait for him. It was the day of his young son's funeral, and the entire community was waiting outside his home for him to come out. They waited and waited, but the *Rav* did not come out. After two hours, he came out and recited the *brachah*, "*Baruch dayan ha'emes*," after which they began the funeral. After awhile, his students asked him what had delayed him in the house.

He explained the delay in the following manner: We are told to make a blessing over bad news, "*k'shem*" - "like" we make a blessing over good news. The emphasis on the word "*k'shem*" - "like" - indicates that one must accept bad news with the same joy with which he accepts good news. When I prepared to recite the *brachah* of "*Dayan Ha'Emes*," praising Hashem as the True Judge, accepting His verdict, I could not arouse in myself the same sense of joy I felt when I had recited the *brachah* at my son's *Bris*. I remained alone in the room for awhile in order to bring myself to that level of emotion.

Horav Avrohom Grodzinski, zl, was a *baal yissurim*, one who went through life amidst great suffering. Never did it dampen his spirits. He drew strength from his suffering, becoming a better

person for it. Shortly after he was appointed *Mashgiach* of the *Slobodker Yeshiva*, he was struck by waves of troubles. His wife passed away, leaving him to care for eight young children. It was characteristic of the *Mashgiach* not to recite the *brachah* of *Dayan Ha'emes* immediately upon hearing the tragic news, for he felt that he would not recite it with the proper *kavahah*, concentration. If *Chazal* required one to be in a proper state of mind to perform *Tzidduk Ha'din*, proclaiming the justness of punishment, he must wait until he could accept the terrible decree with an affirmation of joy. He waited two days before reciting the *brachah* with complete intent and awareness.

We must remember that these stories are not about people who lived hundreds of years ago, but rather in the past generation. These stories demonstrate how *Torah* study refines one's character and enhances his perspective.