

## Hashem spoke to Moshe and said to him, “I am Hashem.” (6:2)

The context of the word *dabeir*, speak, connotes a stronger, harsher form of speech. *Rashi* explains that the Torah is implying that Hashem rebuked Moshe *Rabbeinu* for his previous complaint: *Lamah Ha'reiosa la'am hazeh*, “(My Lord) why have You done evil to this people?” (*Shemos* 5:22): This implies that the lack of success of Moshe’s mission to Pharaoh was attributable to Hashem’s lack of support of his efforts. Veritably, Moshe was not blaming Hashem; he wondered why Hashem permitted Pharaoh to do such evil to His People. Pharaoh was a despot. Why did Hashem grant him license to inflict pain and suffering on the Jews? According to *Rabbeinu Chananel*, Moshe was intimating the classic question: Why do the righteous suffer, and the wicked prosper? Is this so bad? Surely, throughout the millennia various *tzaddikim*, righteous Jews, have “argued” on behalf of their flock, pleading mercy and forbearance.

*Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita*, opines that the Heavenly objection to Moshe’s complaint was not regarding the actual advocacy on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*, but rather, regarding his use of the word *Har'eiosa*, “You have done evil (to this people).” One does not interpret Hashem’s actions as evil. Hashem is the essence of good. No bad/evil ever emanates from Him. Our inability to view life in the context of the larger picture, its implications for the future, and its background from the past and the depth of the present scenario with its multifarious ramifications leaves us with an astigmatic perspective. How could we make demands concerning something which eludes us? Thus, to ascribe evil to Hashem, Who is ultimate good, is a grave error, which incurred Hashem’s harsh response. Had Moshe chosen different words for articulating his argument on behalf of the Jewish People, the rebuke would not have occurred.

This concept is underscored by the *Chafetz Chaim, zl*, in his commentary to *Eichah* (3:38), *Mipi Elyon lo seitzei ha'raos v'hatov*; “It is not from the mouth of the most High that evil and good emanate.” From the mouth of Hashem evil and good do not emanate, but only good. Hashem is ultimate, absolute good; therefore, only good can come from Him. Our limited vision may neither see nor understand how it may be good, but our myopia does not define Hashem’s actions.

Throughout our tumultuous history, holy, pious Jews have been taken from us under the most heinous, cruel and painful conditions. *Rav Shternbuch* cites the *Mekubalim*, Kabbalists, who assert that there is a profound reason for this. Prior to the descent of their *neshamos* into this world (into the body of the *tzaddik*, righteous person), they saw the extreme affliction and miserable conditions that would plague the Jewish People. As a result, they asked not to be sent down from the *Olam Ha'neshamos*, Heavenly sphere, where the souls repose. Hashem showed these special souls the lofty place in Heaven to which they would return, once having suffered in this world. They immediately agreed, because it was overwhelmingly worth it. This attests to how distant we are from the incontrovertible truth that with mortal limited vision we can see only so much. It appears to us that their cruel deaths were the antithesis of good, but in reality (which is beyond our ken), it was

something for which they asked!

The *Ritva* (*Taanis* 30b) writes that those righteous Jews who suffered greatly prior to leaving this world, who pined for salvation and an end to our present *galus*, exile, will arise at *Techiyas Ha'Meisim*, Resurrection of the Dead, before the rest of *Klal Yisrael*, who will be resurrected at the End of the Days. They waited their whole lives for the rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdash*; thus, they will be the first to see and bask in its holiness.

We should contemplate another point. Our vision and perspective are limited to the discipline/sanctification/spiritual expiation that Hashem metes – and it bothers us. As a result, we wonder: Do we ever take into consideration that Hashem purifies us *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure, which means that every Heavenly reaction is a response to our breach? At first, we do not realize the gravity of our actions. When we delve into the seriousness and intensesness of the punishment we are appalled – with the punishment. We fail, however, to take a more penetrating look at the disregard of our obligation to Hashem. What we might justify as naughty is actually a rebellion. The interpretation of sin should be seen through the lens of its expiation.

Our brothers and sisters who lived through the *gehinom*, purgatory, of the Holocaust and retained their *emunah*, faith in Hashem, did so with the understanding that *Kol mah d'avid Rachamana l'tav avid*; "(A person should accustom himself to say) everything that the Merciful One does, He does for good" (*Shulchan Aruch* 230, *Mishnah Berurah*). This should be said – and reiterated – to oneself, even if during his present travail, he has questions which may contravene his faith. Say it anyway. Furthermore, it would be a good idea to say it to oneself –not to intimate it to someone who is currently suffering. I recently came across an article in which the author writes that he heard directly from *Horav Mordechai Schwab, zl*, "There is a promise/guarantee that, if one says this, he will live to see the good that emerges from that situation."

A survivor of the dreaded concentration camps related his experiences to *Rav Shternbach*. This Jew had undergone the most cruel hardships. He was beaten mercilessly and made to work until he passed out. Nonetheless, he picked himself up and carried on. If the Nazi fiends would even have suspected that a Jew was too weak to work, he was immediately sent to the gas chamber. They wanted workers – not invalids. He lost his wife and children – yet he maintained his faith. This man told the *Rav* that their faith had been sustained by a *Rav* who was interred with them. This *Rav* would calm and encourage them, imbue them with faith in Hashem, constantly reiterating the words, *Kol mah d'avid Rachamanah l'tav avid*. One particular Jew was deeply committed to serving Hashem. He somehow was able to smuggle in a pair of *Tefillin* which he put on every day – considered to be an act of rebellion against the Reich and punishable by death. Nonetheless, he put on the *Tefillin*, at no small risk to his life. He refused, however, to do one thing: When he recited the daily *Bircas HaShachar*, he would recite all but one *brachah*. He deleted the blessing of *She'asah li kol tzarki*, "Who provided me with all of my needs."

“I cannot lie!” the man declared. “The Nazis have already murdered my wife and children. I have suffered immeasurably. At any moment, they might burst in and either kill me outright or subject me to such cruel affliction from which I will eventually expire. How can I truthfully say that I have all that I need?”

The *Rav*, who had heretofore encouraged this group of Jews, suffered as they did. He, too, had lost his family and had been subjected to similar torture and debasement. He asserted, “Hashem is *Tzaddik b’chol derachav*, righteous in all His ways. Everything that He does is inherently good. We just do not see the good. Our myopia should not dictate what is good – and what is not. Therefore, you should continue reciting the *brachah*, because He has provided you with all of your needs. You just do not see it yet.” At that moment, the other Jew screamed the *brachah* at the top of his lungs with untold passion and fervor. They all answered a resounding, *Amen*. They believed.