



BADERECH

RABBI JUDAH MISCHEL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CAMP HASC
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From the Heart

Rav Dovid Trenk, zt'l, legendary educator, mentor and talmid chacham, was a *gadol* in *chinuch* and a passionate *eved Hashem*. As the founding rosh yeshivah of Moreshes Yehoshua in Lakewood, Rav Trenk took responsibility for the financial wellbeing of the program. Upon moving into the community and opening the new yeshiva, he launched the initiative to dedicate a Sefer Torah as fundraiser for the new yeshivah.

A few days into the campaign, Rav Trenk called a devoted *talmid* and friend who was heavily involved in this fundraising initiative. The fellow was in the middle of his workday, unable to answer the phone at the moment, and made a mental note to call his Rebbi back as soon as he could. A short while later, Rav Trenk arrived at his home and urgently knocked at the door. "I'm sorry to barge in unannounced; I know you are in the middle of work, but this is an emergency, it can't wait..."

"What is it Rebbi, is everything alright?" he replied, startled, "What can I do?"

Rav Trenk handed his talmid an envelope from the Sefer Torah campaign that had arrived that morning. The donor sent a check dedicating the *pasuk* of Moshe's prayer for the *refuah* on behalf of his sister Miriam: ל-א-ל-ה-י נא רפא נא לה, "I beseech you Hashem, please

heal her!"

Having just moved to the neighborhood, Rav Trenk did not yet recognize some of the names or addresses of the local residents who had donated. "Clearly, whoever purchased this specific *pasuk* needs a *refuah*. It probably means they purchased it as a *segulah* for themselves, or a family member or friend. There is no doubt that they need support and *chizuk*! Please help me find out who this person is, so I can visit them... I need to know who it is so I can daven!"

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וַיִּצְעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה'... א-ל-ה-י נא רפא נא לה

Moshe cried out to the Hashem, saying, "I beseech you, God, please heal her." (12:13)

The Chozeh of Lublin, zy'a, tells us the "וַיִּצְעַק", the 'crying out' of Moshe Rabbeinu, expressed his uncertainty of how to approach Hashem in prayer. He knew his sister was in need, afflicted with *tzara'as*, and he was crying out for the right way and the right words to help her.

Our sages (*Berachos*, 34a) relate two parallel incidents involving students of Rebbi Eliezer. In the first instance, the *shaliach tzibur* leading the congregation in prayer was מְאִרְיָהּ יוֹתֵר, מְדַאֵי, "excessive in prolonging the davening". The *chevreh* were getting frustrated and complained about the '*shleppiness*' of the tefillah. Rebbi Eliezer pushed back at them: "There is no limit to the duration of a prayer. Is he prolonging his davening any more than Moshe Rabbeinu did when he beseeched Hashem for forty days and nights (after *Cheit haEgel*, the sin of Golden Calf)?"

In the second anecdote, another student of Rebbi Eliezer was leading *tefillah* and was *מְקַצֵּר יוֹתֵר מִדֵּא*, “excessively shortening the davening”. His fellow students criticized him for being too brief. Rebbi Eliezer again countered them: ‘None abbreviated their prayer more than Moshe Rabbeinu, who said, ל-א” נָא רַפָּא נָא לָהּ’.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook, zy’a, in *Ein Eyah*, explains that *tefillah* verbalizes and reflects what is within the soul. There are certain expressions or movements of *tefillah* that require sustained effort over time to accomplish the intended goal and outcome. Following the embarrassing and tragic episode of the *Eigel*, forty days and nights of *selichos* prayers were necessary to achieve forgiveness for the Nation. The communal betrayal and lack of responsibility taken for the sin demanded prolonged inner work and prayer to awaken Am Yisrael to *teshuvah*.

On the other hand, there are times where a very concise *tefillah* is sufficient, and even preferred. In the case of the *tzadekes* Miriam, who had recognized and admitted her mistake, the process of restoring her physical and spiritual health required but a short, simple prayer. As our sages say, אחד המרבה ואחד אחד המעט, ובלבד שיכוין את לבו לשמים “There is no difference between one who does more and one who does less, as long as one’s heart is directed to Heaven” (Mishnah, *Menachos*, 13:11). There are times to be long-winded and מאריך, and there are other times where it is preferable to be מקצר, times when less is more.

Perhaps a lesson to be drawn from our *sedra* is the impact that a direct and natural, urgent prayer from the heart can

have. May we spare no effort in calling out to Hashem on behalf of our sisters and brothers, and whether we daven long or short, may our prayers be answered for the good! ■

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Excerpt from Baderech: Along the Path of the Torah, forthcoming (Mosaica Press, Elul 5786)

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