ב״ה



HOW TO TALK WHEN PEOPLE WON'T LISTEN

From Abraham until today: Turning a closed heart into an open conversation.

TEACHER'S MANUAL

JEWISH INSIGHTS

A TASTE OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS

PARSHAT VAYERA

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The Torah tells us that Abraham planted an "eshel" in Beersheba. The sages explain that the "eshel" was actually a waystation where Abraham provided free food to travelers. After the meal, Abraham would ask his guests to bless and thank G-d for the food. Those who refused were asked to pay for the meal. The threat worked, and everyone ended up thanking G-d.

The Rebbe asks: What value is there in gratitude to G-d expressed under compulsion? Is this what it means to publicizeG-d in the world?

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The explanation is that there are situations where external pressure reveals a person's true inner desire.

Example 1: When the spies returned from scouting the land and delivered a negative report, the people were convinced that the locals were stronger than them and asked to return to Egypt. But after Moses told the people that G-d was angry with them and swore not to bring them into the land, they immediately changed their minds and expressed a desire to enter the land. What changed? If they did not believe in G-d's ability to bring them into the land, how would His anger make a difference?

The Tanya explains that the Jewish people are "believers, descendants of believers," and they always believed in G-d's power. Temporarily, however, the "other side" (Sitra Achra) influenced and confused them. When they saw G-d's anger, they regained awareness, and their inner faith was revealed.

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Example 2: An individual came for a private audience with the Rebbe Rashab and requested a blessing. The Rebbe initially said he could not help him. The man left and burst into bitter tears. Hearing the story, the Rebbe's brother asked the Rebbe to readmit him and bless him. The Rebbe did so, and the blessing was fulfilled.

Explanation: At first, the man's spiritual state was not suitable; he was not a "vessel" capable of receiving such a great blessing. But when he was refused and broke down in sincere

distress, his inner state changed, and only then did he become worthy of G-d's blessing.

Now we can understand Abraham's approach: Any person can come to recognize the Creator through reason and explanation, but when a person is especially hardhearted, a "shake-up" is sometimes needed. Through financial pressure, Abraham broke through the hardness of his guests' hearts, helping them understand the explanations about the existence of the Creator.

A similar idea is found in another story: The king of Aram sent messengers to Ahab, king of Israel, demanding that he surrender his silver, wives, and children. Ahab accepted the demand. But when the messengers returned and demanded that he hand over the Torah scroll, Ahab firmly refused, even at the cost of going to war with a cruel enemy.

The Rebbe continues: Ahab, was sinful and led others astray. He was not influenced by rebukes or attempts to convince him to repent. But when a gentile king called the Torah "the delight of your eyes" and sought to desecrate it, this shock awakened Ahab's inner faith, and he was willing to risk his life to protect the sanctity of the Torah.

Message to us: We must follow Abraham's path and publicize G-dliness in the world—not only among those close to us, but also to the "passersby." Even if a mitzvah is performed without full intention, "one mitzvah leads to another," and ultimately, faith in G-d will awaken within the person, leading him to full repentance.

Introduction

The Torah tells us that Abraham established a waystation in Beersheba, a hospitality center for people from all over the world. He didn't just serve them food; he also spoke with them about the meaning of life, about gratitude, and about the One who gives all this goodness.

But sometimes it didn't work so easily... There were those who didn't want to listen, who didn't want to thank G-d. Then—Abraham did something surprising. He asked them to pay. And this made them think differently.

What lies behind this story? Why did Abraham take such a firm, rather than gentle, approach?

Through the Rebbe's teachings, we learn in today's class that this story is much deeper. Sometimes, it is precisely a moment of shake-up, difficulty, or external pressure that succeeds in revealing what was always there: faith, goodness, and the inner spark within us.

השיעור לפרשת וירא

משיחת שבת פרשת במדבר, תש"ל

— לקוטי שיחות חלק ט"ו, וירא ג'

בתרגום ללשון הקודש

A. Abraham's Tent

Source 1 Genesis 21:33

וַיִּטַּע אֶשֶׁל בִּבְאֵר שָׁבַע וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם בְּשֵׁם ה' אֵ-ל עוֹלָם:

Student's pg. 1

Abraham planted an eshel in Beersheba. There, he proclaimed the name of G-d, the G-d of the universe.

What is an "eshel"? The Talmud explains:

Open Doors

Source 2 Talmud, Sotah 10a

נֶאֱמַר "וַיִּטַּע אֶשֶׁל בִּבְאֵר שָׁבַע", אָמַר רֵישׁ לָקִישׁ: מְלַמֵּד שֶׁעָשָׂה אַבְרָהָם פַּרְדֵּס וְנָטַע בּוֹ כָּל מִינֵי מְגָדִים.

בְּעָנְיָן זֶה נֶחְלְקוּ תַּנָּאִים, ר' יְהוּדָה ור' נְחֶמְיָה; אֶחָד מֵהֶם אָמַר: פַּרְדֵּס נָטַע, וְאֶחָד מֵהֶם אָמַר: פֻּנְדָּק עָשָׂה.

Student's pg. 1

"Abraham planted an eshel in Beersheba:" Reish Lakish said: This teaches us that Abraham planted an orchard with all kinds of delicious produce.

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechamia debated this, one said it was an orchard, the other said it was an inn.

Rashi

Student's pg. 1

Planted: For the benefit of the passersby.

Inn: For guests to rest. "Eshel" is an acronym for achilah, shetiyah, levayah—food, drink and escort. He would feed them, give them to drink, and escort them on their way.

וְנָטַע בּוֹ: לְהַהֲנוֹת עוֹבְרִים וְשָׁבִים.

פֻּנְדָּק: לָלוּן שָׁם אוֹרְחִים, וּלְשׁוֹן אֵשֶׁ"ל נוֹטָרִיקוֹן הוּא אֲכִילָה שְׁתִיָּה לְוָיָה, שֶׁהָיָה מַאֲכִילָן וּמַשְׁקָן וְאַחַר כָּךְ מְלַוֶּה אוֹתָן.

נֶאֱמַר שָׁם "וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם בְּשֵׁם ה' אֵ-ל עוֹלָם". אָמַר רֵישׁ לָקִישׁ: "אַל תִּקְרָא בַּפָּסוּק הַזֶּה כַּמִּפֹּרָשׁ בּוֹ 'וַיִּקְרָא' — אֶלָּא וַיַּקְרִיא". מְלַמֵּד שֶׁהִקְרִיא, כְּלוֹמַר, גָּרַם אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ לְשָׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁיִּקָּרֵא בְּפִי כָּל

Student's pg. 1

There, he proclaimed the name of G-d, the G-d of the universe: Reish Lakish says: "Do not read this as 'proclaimed' but that he caused others to proclaim G-d's name. How so? After

Student's pg. 2

Abraham hosted them, they rose to bless and thank him. "Did you eat my food?" he asked them. "You ate G-d's food! Thank and bless the One Who uttered the world into being."

עוֹבֵר וְשָׁב. כֵּיצַד? לְאַחַר שֶׁאוֹרְחָיו שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אָכְלוּ וְשָׁתוּ, עָמְדוּ לְבָרְכוֹ וּלְהוֹדוֹת לוֹ. אָמַר לָהֶם, "וְכִי מִשֶּׁלִּי אֲכַלְתֶּם? מִשֶּׁל אֵלֹקֵי עוֹלָם אֲכַלְתֶּם! הוֹדוּ וְשַׁבְּחוּ וּבָרְכוּ לְמִי שֶׁאָמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם". וְעַל יְדֵי כָּךְ גָּרַם לְכֻלָּם לְהוֹדוֹת לַה'.

What did Abraham do with recalcitrant guests who enjoyed his food and drink but refused to thank G-d? Abrahma had an original solution:

Moderate pressure

Source 3 Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 49:4

Student's pg. 2

Abraham hosted the passersby.

אַבְרָהָם הָיָה מְקַבֵּל אֶת הָעוֹבְרִים וְאֶת הַשָּׁבִים.

When they ate and drank, he told them, "Bless G-d."

מִשֶּׁהָיוּ אוֹכְלִים וְשׁוֹתִים, אָמַר לָהֶם: "בָּרְכוּ".

"What shall we say?" they asked.

אָמְרוּ לוֹ: "מַה נֹּאמַר?"

"Say 'Blessed is the G-d of the universe whose bounty we ate.' "

אָמַר לָהֶם: "אִמְרוּ: 'בָּרוּךְ אֵל עוֹלָם שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ מִשֶּׁלּוֹ'".

If they followed suit, they would eat, drink and go on their way. If they did not, he would request payment.

אִם קִבֵּל עָלָיו וּבֵרַךְ - הָיָה אוֹכֵל וְשׁוֹתֶה וְהוֹלֵךְ. וְאִם לֹא קִבֵּל עָלָיו לְבָרֵךְ — הָיָה אוֹמֵר לוֹ: "תֵּן מַה שֶּׁעָלֶיךָ".

"How much do we owe you?" they'd ask.

וְאָמַר: "מָה יֵּשׁ לְךָ עָלַי [עַל מָה עָלַי לְשַׁלֵּם]?"

"One jug of wine is 10 dinar, one litar of meat is 10 dinar and a loaf of bread is 10 dinar. Who gave you wine in the desert? Who gave you meat in the desert? Who gave you bread in the desert?

הָיָה אוֹמֵר לוֹ: "כַּד אֶחָד שֶׁל יַיִן בַּעֲשָׂרָה דִינָרִים, וְלִיטָר אַחַד שֶׁל בָּשָׂר בַּעֲשָׂרָה דִינָרִים, וְכִכָּר אֶחָד שֶׁל לֶחֶם בַּעֲשָׂרָה דִינָרִים". מִי נָתַן לְךָ יַיִן בַּמִּדְבָּר? מִי נָתַן לְךָ בָּשָׂר בַּמִּדְבָּר? מִי נָתַן לְךָ לֶחֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר?"

(*Abraham said this to justify the exorbitant cost of his food. They were in a remote desert, where supplies cost much more.*)

Student's pg. 2

When the guest realized their predicament, they said "Blessed is the G-d of the universe whose bounty we ate."

מִשֶּׁהָיָה רוֹאֶה הַלָּה אֶת הַצָּרָה שֶׁנִּגְרְמָה לוֹ — הָיָה אוֹמֵר: "בָּרוּךְ אֵל עוֹלָם שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ מִשֶּׁלּוֹ".

>> The Rebbe

What's the point of a statement under pressure?

Student's pg. 3

Their statement, "Blessed is the G-d of the universe," appears to have been made merely out of necessity (so that they would not have to pay), and not because they truly decided in their hearts to make a blessing.

This is puzzling:

For those whom Abraham influenced to bless G-d of their own free will, it is clear how this was a fulfillment of "he caused others to call upon the name of G-d." But regarding those Whom he compelled to bless—what value could there be in their mere verbal declaration, said once, in Abraham's presence, "Blessed is the G-d of the universe"? How can we say that through this Abraham made the name of G-d known in the world, when they still lacked any true acknowledgment of the Creator?

בפשטות נמצא, שאמירתם לאחר מכן "ברוך א-ל עולם כו'" היתה בלית ברירה (כדי שלא יצטרכו לשלם)[1], ולא משום שאכן הסכימו בלבם לברך.

ואם כן, תמוה:

בשלמא אלה שעליהם השפיע אברהם לברך לה' מרצונם הטוב, הרי מובן שעל ידי זה פעל את הענין האמור, "הקריא... לשמו של הקב"ה וכו'"; אבל בנוגע לאלו שהכריחם לברך - מהי התועלת באמירת פיהם (פעם אחת, אצל אברהם) "ברוך א-ל עולם וכו'"? ואיך יתכן לומר שבכך פרסם אברהם את שמו של הקב"ה בעולם, בשעה שעדיין נעדרה מהם ההכרה בבורא העולם?!

1 בתוס' שאנץ שם: אז ברכו הקב"ה שלא ברצונם על מנת שלא יפרעו שום דבר. וראה לקמן בפנים.

B. Drawing Closer Through Rebuke

>> The Rebbe

Student's pg. 4

To explain, we will preface with the story of the spies:

ויובן בהקדים מה שמצינו[2] במעשה המרגלים.

Moses Reprimands the Jewish People

Before the Jewish people entered the Land of Israel, Moses sent scouts to evaluate the land. When they returned after a 40-day trip, they arrived with a depressing report:

Source 4 Numbers 13:25-30; 14:1-3,39-40

Student's pg. 4

They returned from scouting the land at the end of forty days. They went to Moses and Aaron and all the community ... They addressed him and said, "We came to the land you sent us to, and it is flowing with milk and date and fig-honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who inhabit the land are mighty; the cities are fortified and huge; and we even saw there the sons of the giant. The Amalekites dwell in the south land; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountainous region; and the Canaanites dwell on the coast and alongside the Jordan River ... We cannot go up against this nation, for they are stronger than us!"

וַיָּשֻׁבוּ מִתּוּר הָאָרֶץ מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם. וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל כָּל עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, ...וַיְסַפְּרוּ לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ, "בָּאנוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתָּנוּ, וְגַם זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבַשׁ הִוא וְזֶה פִּרְיָהּ. אֶפֶס כִּי עַז הָעָם הַיֹּשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ, וְהֶעָרִים בְּצֻרוֹת גְּדֹלֹת מְאֹד, וְגַם יְלִדֵי הָעֲנָק רָאִינוּ שָׁם. עֲמָלֵק יוֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב, וְהַחִתִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי וְהָאֱמֹרִי יוֹשֵׁב בָּהָר, וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב עַל הַיָּם וְעַל יַד הַיַּרְדֵּן... לֹא נוּכַל לַעֲלוֹת אֶל הָעָם כִּי חָזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ".

Rashi

Student's pg. 4

Stronger than us: (The word "mimenu", "us" should actually be read as "mimeno",) referring to G-d.

חָזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ: כְּבִיכוֹל כְּלַפֵּי מַעְלָה אָמְרוּ.

Student's pg. 4

The entire community raised their voices and shouted, and the people wept that night.

וַתִּשָּׂא כָל הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ הָעָם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא.

2 שלח יג, לא ואילך. תניא פכ"ט, עיי"ש באורך.

Student's pg. 4

All the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron, and the entire community said to them, "If only we had

Student's pg. 5

died in Egypt, or if only we had died in this desert.

וַיִּלֹּנוּ עַל מֹשֶׁה וְעַל אַהֲרֹן כֹּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם כָּל הָעֵדָה, "לוּ מַתְנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לוּ מָתְנוּ.

Why is G-d bringing us to this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be spoils of war. Is it not better for us to return to Egypt?"

וְלָמָה ה' מֵבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לִנְפֹּל בַּחֶרֶב, נָשֵׁינוּ וְטַפֵּנוּ יִהְיוּ לָבַז, הֲלוֹא טוֹב לָנוּ שׁוּב מִצְרָיְמָה".

G-d became very angry at the Jews' lack of faith and told Moses that the spies would die immediately in a plague, while the entire nation would remain in the desert for 40 years. During that time, all the adults would die, and only the next generation would enter the land.

Moses conveyed this message to the people of Israel.

Student's pg. 5

Moses related all these words to all the Israelites. The people mourned greatly. They arose early in the morning and ascended to the mountaintop, saying, "We are ready to go up to the place that G-d said He would give us, for we have sinned.

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ הָעָם מְאֹד. וַיַּשְׁכִּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר, וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶל רֹאשׁ הָהָר לֵאמֹר, "הִנֶּנּוּ וְעָלִינוּ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר ה' כִּי חָטָאנוּ".

>> The Rebbe

Student's pg. 5

The spies initially said, "For they are stronger than us," which the sages interpret as meaning, "stronger than Him." The people wept and said, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt." But after "Moses spoke"—meaning he rebuked them with harsh words—then "the people mourned greatly" and said, "We are ready; we will go up to the place that G-d said He would give us."

ורואים אנו, שבתחילה אמרו "כי חזק הוא ממנו אל תקרי ממנו כו'[3] ויבכו העם גו' ויאמרו גו' נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה", אך על ידי "וידבר משה" - הכאה בדברים קשים - אזי "ויתאבלו העם מאד" ואמרו "הננו ועלינו אל המקום אשר אמר ה'".

What Changed?

The Alter Rebbe asks in Tanya, "What changed?" Why did they suddenly believe in G-d's power after hearing their punishment?

3. סוטה לה, א. וש"נ.

Source 5 Tanya, chap. 29

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Indeed, we find this explicitly stated in the Torah in connection with the spies sent by Moses to scout out the Holy Land. At the outset, they declared: "For he (the enemy) is stronger than us," and, interpreting the word מִמֶּנּוּ, the Sages say: "Read not 'than us,' but 'than He,'" meaning that they had no faith in G-d's ability to lead them into the Holy Land. But afterward, they reversed themselves and announced: "We will readily go up to conquer the Land."

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How did their faith in G-d's ability return to them? Moses had not shown them any sign or miracle which could restore their faith. He had merely told them that G-d was angry with them and had sworn not to allow them to enter the Land.

What value did this Divine anger and oath have to them if in any case they did not believe in G-d's ability to subdue the thirty-one kings who reigned in the Land at that time, for which reason they had had no desire whatsoever to enter the Land?

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁמָּצִינוּ דָּבָר זֶה מְפוֹרָשׁ בַּתּוֹרָה גַּבֵּי מְרַגְּלִים, שֶׁמִּתְּחִלָּה אָמְרוּ: "כִּי חָזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ" — "אַל תִּקְרֵי מִמֶּנּוּ כּוּ'", שֶׁלֹּא הֶאֱמִינוּ בִּיכוֹלֶת ה', וְאַחַר כָּךְ חָזְרוּ וְאָמְרוּ: "הַנָּעֲלֶה וְעָלִינוּ וְגוֹ";

וּמֵאַיִן חָזְרָה וּבָאָה לָהֶם הָאֱמוּנָה בִּיכוֹלֶת ה'? הֲרֵי לֹא הֶרְאָה לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם שׁוּם אוֹת וּמוֹפֵת עַל זֶה בְּנָתַיִם, רַק שֶׁאָמַר לָהֶם אֵיךְ שֶׁקָּצַף ה' עֲלֵיהֶם וְנִשְׁבַּע שֶׁלֹּא לַהֲבִיאָם אֶל הָאָרֶץ;

וּמַה הוֹעִיל זֶה לָהֶם, אִם לֹא הָיוּ מַאֲמִינִים בִּיכוֹלֶת ה' חַס וְשָׁלוֹם לְכִבּוֹשׁ ל"א מְלָכִים, וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה לֹא רָצוּ כְּלָל לִיכָּנֵס לָאָרֶץ?

The spies had previously spoken extremely heretically. They said that the inhabitants of the land were stronger "than Him"—not in the sense of "than us" (first person plural), but in the third person singular—implying, G-d forbid, that they were stronger than G-d Himself. This showed that they did not believe in G-d's ability to bring them into the Land of Israel—and the people accepted their view.

Only a few verses later, after Moses rebuked the people, it says that they reversed themselves and declared, "We are ready to go up" (Numbers 14:40). From where did this renewed faith in G-d's power suddenly come? At first, they felt completely incapable—believing that even G-d, so to speak, could not help them—and then they were suddenly filled with confidence, ready to go up and fight even without G-d.

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Surely, then, the explanation is as follows: the Jewish people themselves are "believers, the descendants of believers." Even while they stated, "The enemy is stronger than He," their divine soul still believed in G-d. They professed a

אֶלָּא וַדַּאי, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל עַצְמָן הֵם "מַאֲמִינִים בְּנֵי מַאֲמִינִים", רַק שֶׁהַסִּטְרָא אָחֳרָא הַמְלוּבָּשֶׁת בְּגוּפָם הִגְבִּיהַּ עַצְמָהּ עַל אוֹר

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lack of faith in His ability only because the "sitra achara" clothed in their body in the form of their animal soul had risen against the light of the holiness of the divine soul, with its characteristic impudent arrogance and haughtiness, without sense or reason.

Therefore, as soon as G-d became angry with them and thundered angrily: "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation…your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness…I, G-d, have spoken: I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation…,"—their heart was humbled and broken within them when they heard these stern words, as it is written, "And the people mourned greatly." Consequently, the sitra achara was toppled from its dominion, from its haughtiness and arrogance.

But the Jewish people themselves i.e., as far as their divine soul was concerned, had believed in G-d all along.

קְדוּשַׁת נַפְשָׁם הָאֱלֹקִית בְּגַסּוּת רוּחָהּ וְגַבְהוּתָהּ, בְּחוּצְפָּה בְּלִי טַעַם וָדַעַת.

וְלָכֵן, מִיָּד שֶׁקָּצַף ה' עֲלֵיהֶם, וְהִרְעִים בְּקוֹל רַעַשׁ וְרוֹגֶז: "עַד מָתַי לָעֲדָה הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת וְגוֹ'", "בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה יִפְּלוּ פִּגְרֵיכֶם וְגוֹ", "אֲנִי ה' דִּבַּרְתִּי, אִם לֹא זֹאת אֶעֱשֶׂה לְכָל הָעֵדָה הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת וְגוֹ'", וּכְשֶׁשָּׁמְעוּ דְּבָרִים קָשִׁים אֵלּוּ, נִכְנַע וְנִשְׁבַּר לִבָּם בְּקִרְבָּם, כִּדְכְתִיב: "וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ הָעָם מְאֹד", וּמִמֵּילָא, נָפְלָה הַסִּטְרָא אָחֳרָא מִמֶּמְשַׁלְתָּהּ וְגַבְהוּתָהּ וְגַסּוּת רוּחָהּ,

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַצְמָן הֵם מַאֲמִינִים.

C. Becoming a Vessel for Blessing

>> The Rebbe

"I can't help you"

על דרך זה אפשר לבאר גם את סיפור החסידים אודות אדמו"ר (מהורש"ב) נ"ע (שאירע בתחילת ימי נשיאותו):

יהודי נכנס אל הרבי נשמתו עדן ל"יחידות" וביקש את ברכתו של הרבי לענין נוגע ביותר, שעבורו נזקק להתעוררות רחמים רבים. אך הרבי נשמתו עדן השיב לו, שאין ביכולתו לפעול מאומה בדבר ואין בידו לסייע לו.

משששמע היהודי תשובה שכזו, יצא מחדרו של הרבי ופרץ בבכי מר. בעודו מתהלך ובוכה, פגש בו הרז"א ([ר' זלמן אהרן] אחיו של הרבי נשמתו עדן), ובמענה על שאלתו לסיבת בכייתו הגדולה, סיפר לו הלה את שאירע עמו ואת תשובתו של הרבי אליו.

נכנס הרז"א לחדרו של אחיו הרבי (וכאמור, הדבר היה בתחילת ימי נשיאותו), ואמר לו: "וכי זו צורת ההנהגה הראויה?! אדם בא ומבקש את ברכתך, והנך משיב לו שאין בידך לסייע לו, עד שהלה בוכה בדמעות שליש מרוב צער!"

בשמעו זאת, חגר הרבי את אבנטו וביקש שהיהודי יבוא לחדרו שוב,

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Along these lines, we can also explain the story told by Chassidim about the Rebbe Rashab, which took place at the beginning of his leadership.

A man came to the Rebbe for a private audience and asked for his blessing regarding a very important matter that required great mercy from Heaven. But the Rebbe replied that he was unable to do anything about it and could not help him.

Hearing this, the man left the Rebbe's room and broke down in bitter tears. As he walked and wept, he met the Rebbe's brother, Rabbi Zalman Aharon (Raza), who asked him why he was crying so intensely. The man told him what had happened to him and how the Rebbe had responded.

Raza went into his brother's room (as noted, this was at the beginning of his leadership) and said to him: "Is this an appropriate way to act? A person comes to you seeking a blessing, and you tell him you cannot help him—until he is left crying in anguish?"

When the Rebbe heard this, he put on his gartel (sash) and asked that the man be brought back to him. When the man entered,

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the Rebbe blessed him—and that blessing was fulfilled in full.

At first glance, this is difficult to understand: why did the Rebbe initially refuse to help this man, and in such a sharp manner that broke his heart? (Even if, hypothetically, the Rebbe truly could not help him, he could at least have offered words of comfort and encouragement, in the spirit of the sages' saying, "Even if a sharp sword rests upon a person's neck, he should not withhold himself from seeking mercy.")

ובהיכנסו בירכו הרבי נשמתו עדן, וברכה זו אכן התקיימה בפועל ממש.

ולכאורה צריך להבין: מדוע מלכתחילה סירב הרבי נשמתו עדן לסייע ליהודי זה, ועוד בסירוב כה חריף, עד שהדבר שבר את לבו? (והרי אף לו יצויר שאכן לא היה בידי הרבי נשמתו עדן לסייע לו, היה הרבי יכול לעודד את רוחו בדברי חיזוק ובטחון - על דרך מאמר חז"ל[4] "אפילו חרב חדה מונחת על צווארו של אדם אל ימנע עצמו מן הרחמים").

He wasn't capable of receiving a blessing

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The explanation, we can suggest, follows the same lines discussed above.

The man who came to the Rebbe for a blessing was, at that time—due to his spiritual state—not capable of receiving such a great blessing as his situation required. He was not a fitting "vessel" for it. This is what the Rebbe meant when he said that he could not help him.

However, when the man heard those words from the Rebbe, they broke his heart over his bitter condition, and he poured out his soul before G-d. Through that very exercise, he became a different person, and was transformed into someone who was capable of receiving the divine blessing.

וההסבר לדבר (בדרך אפשר) הוא על דרך הנ"ל[5]:

יהודי זה שביקש את ברכתו של הרבי היה באותה שעה, מפאת מעמדו ומצבו הרוחני, בלתי מוכשר לקבלת ברכה כה גדולה כפי שדרש מצבו - הוא לא היה "כלי" לכך. וזהו הביאור בדברי הרבי אליו, שאין בידו לסייע לו.

אולם בשמעו מהרבי את הדברים הללו, שפעלו אצלו שברון לב על מצבו המר עד ששפך את לבו לפני ה', הנה על ידי זה גופא נעשה כמציאות חדשה, וממילא נעשה גם "כלי" לברכתו של הקב"ה[6].

4. ברכות י, סע"א.
5. ראה גם לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 227.
6. וי"ל שעד"ז הוא בר"א בן דורדיא (ע"ז יז, א) שע"י ששמע ש"אין מקבלין אותו בתשובה" וכן שאין מי שיבקש עליו רחמים, "געה בבכיה כו'".

Sometimes pressure needs to be applied

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Based on this, we can also understand the conduct of Abraham, who pressured his guests until they said, "Blessed is the G-d of the universe, from whose bounty we have eaten."

Non-Jews also have the ability to recognize G-d's superiority, that "this palace has a master." This is why Abraham devoted himself to spreading awareness of G-d "through the mouths of all passersby," explaining theological concepts in ways they could grasp, using various forms of explanation.

But he saw that with some people none of these explanations had any effect, because they were so coarsely materialistic. In order to break through that extra layer of crudeness and physicality, Abraham brought them into a state of pressure.

Through that experience, his earlier explanations were able to take hold within them—to some extent—leading them to acknowledge G-d and say, "Blessed is the G-d of the universe, from whose bounty we have eaten."

ועל פי זה מתבאר גם הטעם להנהגתו של אברהם אבינו, שהפעיל לחץ כזה על העוברים ושבים שאכלו אצלו, עד שאמרו "ברוך א-ל עולם שאכלנו משלו":

אף לבן נח יש יכולת[7] להכיר בכך ש"יש בעל הבית לבירה זו"; ולכן עסק אברהם בפרסום אלוקות "בפה כל עובר ושב", על ידי זה שקירב להבנתם עניני אלוקות באמצעות ריבוי הסברים[8].

אולם משראה שאצל חלקם אין כל ההסברים הללו נתפסים ומשפיעים, משום שחומריותם היא כה גדולה, הנה כדי לשבור תוספת זו של חומריות וגסות, הביאם אברהם לידי מצב של לחץ - "עקתא"[9] [=צרה],

ועל ידי זה פעל ש(הסבריו הקודמים[10] יתיישבו בדעתם במדה מסוימת[11], וכתוצאה מכך) יכירו ויאמרו "ברוך א-ל עולם שאכלנו משלו".

Give Me the Delight of Your Eyes

Later in this farbrengen the Rebbe cited the fascinating story of the king of Aram and Ahab, the king of the Jews, which illustrates the same point: sometimes, during a crisis, we are brought to a deeper understanding than before.

7. שהרי מחוייב באמונת ה' היפך דע"ז (ולכמה דיעות (ראה פת"ש יו"ד סקמ"ז סק"ב) מוזהר גם על השתוף – ראה סהמ"צ לצמח צדק נט, ב ואילך. ד"ה מי כמוכה תרכ"ט – לאדמו"ר מהר"ש נ"ע).

8. ראה רמב"ם הל' ע"ז פ"א ה"ג. ד"ה ויטע אשל שם. וראה ד"ה כי חלק תרצ"ד (תשי"א) פ"ח. לך לך ה'ש"ת פ"ג. ובכ"מ.

9. לשון המדרש פמ"ט שם "מן דהוה חמי ההיא עקתא דהוה עקי ליה הוה אמר כו". ע"פ הנ"ל (בפנים) י"ל הכוונה (ברמז עכ"פ), שע"י דיבורו של אברהם "דהוה עקי ליה" ראה ה"עקתא" שבו נמצא, היינו גסותו וחומריותו (היינו דזה שלא רצה לברך קודם הוא מפני תוקף החומריות שלו), וזה הביא ד"הוה אמר ברוך א-ל עולם שאכלנו משלו".

10. להעיר מיפה תואר השלם שם ד"ה ומ"מ בסופו, שגם זה שאמר להם שישלמו (אם לא יברכו) "היה מכריחם בטענה" (שזה גופא היתה הסברה והוכחה שהם צריכים לברך), ע"ש.

11. להעיר מד"ה ויטע אשל שם ספ"ב שהיו חילוקי דרגות ד"הודו ושבחו וברכו".

Source 6 I Kings 20:2-9

The Bible tells of King Ahab of Israel, who reigned around 850 BCE. Ahab worshiped Baal—a pagan idol—and spread idolatry throughout the land. He provoked G-d repeatedly and married Jezebel, daughter of the King of Sidon, who murdered all of G-d's prophets (except for 100 saved by Obadiah, who hid them in a cave).

The Torah describes Ahab as one of the most sinful kings, for under his rule idolatry entered Israel for the first time with royal support. Ahab built temples for Baal and Asherah and supported hundreds of their false prophets in his court. Jezebel, the Sidonian princess, advanced pagan worship and persecuted G-d's prophets cruelly and relentlessly.

At that time, the regional superpower was the Kingdom of Aram (modern-day Syria). During Ahab's reign, Ben-Hadad, King of Aram, fought against Israel three times. The first time, he formed a coalition with thirty-two kings to besiege Samaria. He sent messengers to Ahab, saying:

Student's pg. 9	**He sent messengers to Ahab, the king of Israel, into the city.**	וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים אֶל אַחְאָב מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל הָעִירָה.
Student's pg. 10	**He said to him, "Thus said Ben-Hadad: 'Your silver and gold are mine; your beautiful wives and children are mine.'"**	וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ, "כֹּה אָמַר בֶּן הֲדַד, כַּסְפְּךָ וּזְהָבְךָ לִי הוּא, וְנָשֶׁיךָ וּבָנֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים לִי הֵם".
	And the king of Israel answered him and said, "As you say, my master, the king, I am yours, as well as all that is mine."	וַיַּעַן מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיֹּאמֶר, "כִּדְבָרְךָ אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ, לְךָ אֲנִי וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לִי".
	And the messengers returned and said, "Thus said Ben-Hadad: 'As I have sent to you, saying, "Your silver and your gold, your wives, and your children you shall give to me."	וַיָּשֻׁבוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ, "כֹּה אָמַר בֶּן הֲדַד לֵאמֹר, 'כִּי שָׁלַחְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר כַּסְפְּךָ וּזְהָבְךָ וְנָשֶׁיךָ וּבָנֶיךָ לִי תִתֵּן.
	But at this time tomorrow I will send my servants to you, and they will search your house and the houses of your servants, and they will put the delight of your eyes in their hands and take it away.'"	כִּי אִם כָּעֵת מָחָר אֶשְׁלַח אֶת עֲבָדַי אֵלֶיךָ, וְחִפְּשׂוּ אֶת בֵּיתְךָ וְאֶת בָּתֵּי עֲבָדֶיךָ, וְהָיָה כָּל מַחְמַד עֵינֶיךָ יָשִׂימוּ בְיָדָם וְלָקָחוּ'"

The king of Israel summoned all the elders of the land and said, "Please realize and see that this man is looking to cause harm, for he has sent to me for my wives, my sons, and my silver and gold, and I have not denied him."

And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not obey and do not consent."

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He said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell your master, the king: 'All that you sent to your servant at first, I will do, but this matter I cannot do.'" And the messengers went and brought the message back to him.

וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַלְאֲכֵי בֶן הֲדַד, "אִמְרוּ לַאדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ, 'כֹּל אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַחְתָּ אֶל עַבְדְּךָ בָּרִאשֹׁנָה אֶעֱשֶׂה, וְהַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲשׂוֹת'", וַיֵּלְכוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים וַיְשִׁבֻהוּ דָּבָר.

Here, Ahab refuses and says: I cannot give up the apple of my eye. What is this, after giving up his gold, silver and women?

Source 7 Talmud, Sanhedrin, 102b

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Rabbi Yochanan says: Why did Ahab merit to reign for 22 years? Because he revered the Torah which was given with 22 letters.

How do we see this? As the verse says: I will send my servants to you, and they will search your house and the houses of your servants, and the delight of your eyes they will put in their hands and take it away ...

And he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell your master, the king, 'All that you sent to your servant at first, I will do, but this matter I cannot do.'

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What was this "delight of his eyes" that he would not turn over? A Torah scroll. He was prepared to give up everything else, but not the Torah scroll, and thus, his kingship lasted.

אָמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן: מִפְּנֵי מָה זָכָה אַחְאָב לַמְלוּכוּת עֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנָה — מִפְּנֵי שֶׁכִּבֵּד אֶת הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁנִּתְּנָה בְּעֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁתַּיִם אוֹתִיּוֹת.

וְכִיצַד רוֹאִים שֶׁכִּבֵּד אֶת הַתּוֹרָה? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים אֶל אַחְאָב מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל הָעִירָה... וְהָיָה כָּל מַחְמַד עֵינֶיךָ יָשִׂימוּ בְיָדָם וְלָקָחוּ...

וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַלְאֲכֵי בֶן הֲדַד אִמְרוּ לַאדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַחְתָּ אֶל עַבְדְּךָ בָּרִאשֹׁנָה אֶעֱשֶׂה וְהַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲשׂוֹת".

וְשׁוֹאֲלִים: מַהוּ אוֹתוֹ "מַחְמַד עֵינֶיךָ" שֶׁלֹּא רָצָה לָתֵת לְבֶן הֲדַד אַחֲרֵי שֶׁכְּבָר הִסְכִּים לָתֵת אֶת נָשָׁיו וּזְהָבוֹ? הָיָה זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה! וְאִם כֵּן רוֹאִים אָנוּ שֶׁהָיָה מוּכָן לְוַתֵּר עַל הַכֹּל, אֲבָל לֹא לָתֵת אֶת סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה לַגּוֹיִים, וּבְשֶׁל כָּךְ נִמְשְׁכָה מַלְכוּתוֹ.

Ahab was willing to give up everything—but not to hand over his Torah scroll to the gentiles.

This same Ahab, who had established idol worship throughout Israel, built altars for Baal and Asherah, and killed the prophets of G-d—this very man, who had fought against everything connected to G-d—suddenly was aroused and said, "How could I possibly give him the Torah scroll?"

He sent a message back to Ben-Hadad: "I am willing to give you everything, but the Torah scroll—never!"

That firm response led to war with the regional superpower.

Source 8 Midrash Hagadol, Vayakhel

The Midrash tells us what happened in heaven:

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At that moment, a Torah scroll ascended and beseeched before G-d, saying: "Master of the Universe, does the one who had mercy on me deserve to be handed over to Ben Haddad?" Immediately, "behold a certain prophet approached Ahab, the king of Israel, and said, "So said the L-rd, 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold! I am giving them into your hands today, and you will know that I am the L-rd.' "

בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה עָלָה סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה וְנִשְׁתַּטַּח לִפְנֵי הקב"ה. אָמַר לְפָנָיו, "רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, זֶה שֶׁחָמַל עָלַי יִנָּתֵן בְּיַד בֶּן הֲדָד?" מִיָּד, "וְהִנֵּה נָבִיא אֶחָד נִגַּשׁ אֶל אַחְאָב מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר, כֹּה אָמַר ה', הֲרָאִיתָ אֵת כָּל הֶהָמוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה, הִנְנִי נֹתְנוֹ בְיָדְךָ הַיּוֹם וְיָדַעְתָּ כִּי אֲנִי ה'".

In the merit of his self-sacrifice for the Torah's honor, Ahab was saved and won the battle.

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What happened here? Only a day earlier, Ahab had fought against everything written in the Torah, against the Second Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before Me." And suddenly, he was willing to give up everything—except the Torah scroll. What caused this change?

>> The Rebbe

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Consider this:

It was no secret that Ahab conducted himself completely contrary to the Torah. He transgressed every commandment and even killed all of G-d's prophets. Yet when a foreign king told him, "Give me the delight of your eye," meaning the Torah scroll, that demand stirred him to proclaim openly and simply, "This I cannot do!"

והגע עצמך:

בנוגע לאחאב - אין זה סוד, אלא ידוע לכל שהנהגתו היתה היפך התורה, ועבר על כל התורה כולה, ועד שהרג את כל נביאי ה' וכו'. ואף על פי כן, כאשר מלך גוי אמר לו "לי תתן... מחמד עיניך", ספר תורה - הרי זה פעל עליו להכריז בגלוי ובפשיטות: "הדבר הזה לא אוכל לעשות"!

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Until that moment, Ahab had lived in total disregard of the Torah. When other Jews tried to influence him, they could not move him at all. Normally, a Jew is affected by the words of another Jew when those words come sincerely from the heart. But Ahab remained unmoved even by heartfelt words. What did affect him was when a non-Jewish king demanded of him, "Give me the delight of your eye" referring to the Torah scroll.

When the king of Aram made that demand, it brought forth from Ahab a deep, simple conviction that the Torah was indeed "the delight of your eye." As a result, he simply said, "This I cannot do!"

He was even prepared to give his life for this, because he knew that, naturally, he could not stand against the king of Aram. That is why he agreed to the first demands, saying, "Everything you asked of your servant at first I will do." Yet he absolutely refused to surrender "the delight of your eye," saying, "This I cannot do," to the extent of giving up his life, as the king of Aram went to war against him as a result. But in the end, Israel achieved a great victory, as the Torah tells us.

עד עכשיו היתה הנהגתו שלא על פי תורה, וכאשר יהודי ניסה להשפיע עליו, לא הצליח לפעול. - בכלל אצל יהודי הרי זה תלוי במשפיע, שכאשר דבריו יוצאים מן הלב, נכנסים הם אל הלב[12] ופועלים פעולתם, אבל אחאב לא התפעל גם כשדיברו אליו בדברים היוצאים מן הלב; מה פעל עליו? דוקא כשבא גוי ודרש ממנו "לי תתן... מחמד עיניך", ספר תורה...

וכאשר מלך ארם אמר לאחאב "לי תתן... מחמד עיניך" - הרי זה פעל על אחאב שאכן יהיה אצלו בפשיטות שספר התורה הוא "מחמד עיניו" (שהרי אחאב לא התווכח עם מלך ארם אם ספר התורה הוא אכן "מחמד עיניו" או לא), ולכן אמר בפשיטות "הדבר הזה לא אוכל לעשות"!

ועד שהיה מוכן למסור נפשו על זה - שהרי אחאב ידע שעל פי טבע לא יוכל לעמוד נגד מלך ארם, שלכן הסכים לדרישתו באמרו "כל אשר שלחת אל עבדך בראשונה ("כספך וזהבך ונשיך ובניך לי תתן") אעשה", ואף על פי כן, לא היה מוכן בשום אופן לתת את "מחמד עיניך", באמרו, "הדבר הזה לא אוכל לעשות", עד כדי מסירות נפש, שהרי בגלל זה יצא מלך ארם למלחמה עם אחאב, אלא שבפועל היה לבני ישראל ניצחון גדול, כמסופר בתנ"ך פרטי הדברים.[13]

When Ahab heard a gentile describe his Torah scroll as "the delight of your eyes"—the thing most precious to him—it was like a spiritual electric shock. Suddenly, he woke up and said, "That's true—it really is the delight of my eyes!" From that moment, he was ready to go all the way, to fight no matter what might happen—but he would not give up the delight of his eyes.

Sometimes, it's only when a non-Jew points out what he sees in you that you suddenly remember how truly precious it is to you.

12. ראה ס' הישר לר"ת שי"ג. הובא בשל"ה סט, א.
13. קטעי השיחה בנוגע לאחאב, משיחת שבת פרשת במדבר, ב' סיון, ה'תש"ל, הנחה בלתי מוגה, תורת מנחם, חלק ס' עמ' 331.

(For example, it sometimes happens that people begin attending Torah classes precisely because friends or coworkers—who aren't Jewish—ask them questions about the Torah, and they realize they have no answers. That moment becomes the spark that ignites something within them. Sometimes a Jew can't take that step on his own, and it takes an outside jolt to truly awaken him.)

Using every path

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The practical lesson from this is clear.

"The deeds of the ancestors are a sign for their descendants." We must follow the example of

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Abraham and dedicate ourselves to spreading awareness of G-d in the world. We should do this in the same manner that Abraham did, since even the specific way the patriarchs acted serves as a model for their descendants.

We should not be satisfied with influencing only the people in our home. We must go out into the street and reach Jews who are just "passing by"—"all passersby."

This effort must take every possible form—even when it requires providing these "passersby" with food and drink. Moreover, it may sometimes require exerting pressure (gently of course, following the Torah path of "her ways are ways of pleasantness").

And if someone should object: "What is the point of all this? That person who was persuaded to say a blessing, to recite the Shema, or to pray—he did it without real feeling or desire. The fellow who put on tefillin did it just so he would be left alone. Who knows how they will conduct themselves tomorrow?"—and so on with similar arguments—

וההוראה מכך בפשטות:

"מעשה אבות סימן לבנים" - יש לנהוג כאברהם אבינו ולעסוק בפרסום אלוקות בעולם, ודוקא באופן שבו עשה זאת אברהם (שהרי גם אופן הנהגתו של אברהם (והאבות בכלל) הוא סימן לבנים):

אל לאדם להסתפק בקירוב יהודים הנמצאים בביתו בלבד, אלא יש לצאת אל ה"רחוב" ולפעול שם על יהודים "עוברים ושבים", ובהדגשה - "כל עוברים ושבים".

וההשתדלות צריכה להיות בכל אופן אפשרי, גם כאשר לשם כך צריך לספק להם, ל"עוברים ושבים", דברי מאכל ומשקה[14]; ויתירה מזו - אפילו כאשר הדרך לפעול זאת עליהם היא על ידי לחץ (כמובן, בדרך התורה, אשר "דרכיה דרכי נועם גו").

ואם יבוא הטוען ויטען: מהי התועלת בכל זאת? הלא אדם זה שהושפע לומר ברכה, לקרוא קריאת שמע, להתפלל - עושה זאת ללא רצון ושלא מתוך הלב; וכן חברו שהניח תפילין בפעם זו, עשה זאת רק כדי להיפטר מן הלחץ, ומה יהיה מחר - אין לדעת, ועוד טענות כיוצא בזה -

14. להעיר משל"ה רפ, ב קרוב לסופו.

יש להשיב לו באמצעות סיפור התורה - לשון הוראה - הנ"ל, ובמכל-שכן וקל-וחומר: ומה בימי אברהם, כאשר היה מדובר בבני נח וקודם מתן תורה, פעלה הנהגה זו את ענין "הכרת אותי בבריותי", על אחת כמה וכמה לאחר מתן תורה, ובנוגע לבן ישראל ש"רוצה להיות מישראל ורוצה הוא לעשות כל המצות וכו'" -

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We should answer with the above story from the Torah, which is given to us as an instruction. If in Abraham's time—dealing with non-Jews, before the giving of the Torah—this approach succeeded in bringing people to recognize the Creator, then how much more so now, after the giving of the Torah, when every Jew wants to be part of the Jewish People and wants to fulfill the commandments.

שפעולת המצוות היא לרצונו של יהודי זה; ויתירה מזו: יתכן גם שהלחץ והכפייה יפעלו שהדבר יהפוך להיות רצונו הגלוי, עד אשר מצוה גוררת מצוה[15] ויבוא לקיום כל המצוות, ובאופן מושלם;

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When a Jew performs a commandment—even if at first it seems to have been done under pressure—it is actually in accordance with their inner will. And that very experience of pressure may bring their hidden desire to the surface, and one commandment will lead to another, and eventually they will fulfill all of the mitzvot, in a complete way.

ועבודה זו של פרסום שמו של הקב"ה בעולם באופן של "הכרת אותי בבריותי", תמהר - במדה כנגד מדה - את קיום היעוד[16] "כי מלאה הארץ דעה גו'", על ידי זה ש"יעמוד מלך מבית דוד... ויכוף כל ישראל לילך בה ולחזק בדקה"[17] (של תורה שבכתב ותורה שבעל-פה), בגאולה האמיתית והשלימה על ידי משיח צדקנו.

This mission of spreading awareness of G-d in the world, bringing others to "recognize Me among My creatures", will, measure for measure, hasten the fulfillment of the promise that "the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the L-rd." This will occur as a result of "a king from the house of David will arise and compel all the Jewish people to follow the Torah and strengthen its observance," bringing about the ultimate and complete redemption through our righteous Mashiach.

משיחת שבת פרשת במדבר, תש"ל
- לקוטי שיחות חלק ט"ו, וירא ג'
בתרגום ללשון הקודש

In the 1970s, when the Rebbe launched the "Mitzvah Tanks," Chabad Chasidim went out into the heart of Manhattan and asked passersby: "Are you Jewish?"

That simple question was, for many, a spiritual electric shock. Jews who hadn't thought about

15. אבות פ"ד מ"ב.
16. ישעיה יא, ט. רמב"ם סוף הל' מלכים.
17. רמב"ם שם ספי"א.

their identity for years suddenly awakened: "I'm Jewish? What does that mean?" Amid the noisy streets, with the big signs and music—those tanks were the electric jolt for the Jewish people.

Sometimes, it takes unusual methods, unconventional means, to awaken the Jewish heart. And it works. Try it—it will work for you too.

Key Points:

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• Abraham established a waystation where he offered free food, and during the meal he explained to his guests the belief in the one G-d. Those who accepted it thanked G-d for the meal. Those who refused had to pay a high price, and in this way were "persuaded" to bless G-d.

• The Rebbe asks: What value is there in gratitude expressed under compulsion?

• Explanation: Sometimes external pressure reveals a person's true inner desire. When Abraham compelled his guests to bless G-d, he broke through their hardness of heart and revealed the faith that had been hidden within them.

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Examples of this idea:

• The Sin of the Spies: The people did not believe in G-d's ability to bring them into the Land and asked to return to Egypt. But when they heard their punishment—to remain in the desert for 40 years—they awakened and wanted to enter the land. What caused them to believe in G-d's strength? The punishment shook them and revealed their true faith in G-d and their inner desire to obey Him.

• The Rebbe Rashab and the blessing: An individual came to request a blessing, and the Rebbe initially said he could not help him. When the man cried out in distress, the Rebbe then blessed him. Why? Initially, the man was not a suitable vessel for a blessing, but the breaking of his heart refined him, making him worthy of G-d's blessing.

• Ahab, King of Israel: He complied with the demands of the king of Aram, up until the moment he was asked to allow desecration of the Torah scroll. At that point, the external pressure awakened his inner desire, and he firmly stood to protect the honor of the Torah.

• The message to us: Like Abraham, we must publicize G-dliness in the world, and every mitzvah a Jew performs influences him to fulfill all the commandments.