

RABBI DR. JERRY LOB

BEING B'SIMCHA BY GOING THROUGH A TZORO

The list of tzoros is endless, the question is how do we raise our children when the struggles can be so painful. They are watching us, says, Dr. Lob, what are we showing them?

The answer is a mathematical equation-hishtadlus and bitochon. Hishtadlus is doing our part-getting the best doctor, the best therapist etc and then bitochon-trust in Hashem. And bitochon does not just mean, that I believe Hashem created the world, that I don't believe in evolution, but bitochon means I believe in Hashem that I trust him, I believe in Hashem that Hashem loves me. It is easy to say while going through a nisoyon-maybe Hashem doesn't love me, maybe I have too many sins, maybe Hashem doesn't care?

What we have to do says Dr. Lob, is look for Hashem's hand in the darkness, which is the lesson of Purim.

Our Hishtadlus is that we are the driver of our life, every opportunity that is presented to us , and yes, a nisoyon is an opportunity that we are meant to use to grow from. Even through the pain , we need to see the blessings we have, even though it is so so hard to do. We need to internalize that even while people are suffering, nothing happens behinds G-d's back so to speak. Nothing happens without his will. It can be a struggle for us to still love Hashem and understand that all that is happening to us is according to his will.

After we do our hishtadlus, then we have to stop worrying and be calm. Just as we calm our children and tell them everything will be okay, so too, we have to believe that Hashem is holding our hand in the darkness and he is saying to us it will be okay.

We need to trust him that he loves us, we need to really believe it and we need to cry to him. We need to hold onto Hashem's hand and feel that I'm not alone. It is important says Dr. Lob, to look for signs that Hashem is with us while we are going through our tzoro.

Every morning we say, S'asa li kol tzorchi"-he made us what we need, he tailor made our life for us-nothing happens without a reason. Everything in my life, my spouse, my children, my job, where I live, my friends, my parnasa was tailor to help me accomplish my mission in my life. And my nisoyonos also.

The medrash brings down 3 different versions of the concept that a blade of grass has a malach that tells it to grow. In one place, it says, the angel speaks to the grass, in the 2nd place, the angel screams at the grass to grow and in the 3rd version, the angel hits the grass to make it grow.This explains Dr. Lob is how Hashem deals with us, sometimes, the nisoyon comes as a whisper, sometimes, Hashem is screaming at us and sometimes, he is hitting us to grow.

Dr. Lob made an observation, that it struck him, that the most challenging person in our life, is the one who made us grow the most. And we should know he said, that that person, your

spouse, your child of the derech, your mother-in-law, your boss, who you find so difficult was handpicked for you for just that purpose-to make you reach your potential.

We have to grow from every part of our life, not just from the simchas-the brissim, bar mitzvahs, weddings, we have to grow from the illnesses, deaths etc.

We need to internalize the fact that Hashem wrote our script for us from the beginning. We actually get to choose our parents, because we knew that they would be the most helpful for us to reach our potential. Hashem wrote my life and he wrote it with love. This is going to be your nisoyon in life. Every step was tailor made for our growth and for our capability and no, it will not be easy.

When Hashem gave us the Torah at har Sinai, Moshe, Ahron and the tzakanim saw a vision of a 'levana' a brick. What did it come to symbolize? Hashem was showing them, that while the Yidden were doing back breaking labor in Mitzraim, Hashem did not forget about them for 1 second-he had a brick in front of him at all times-he knew what they were going through, but the exact time of the redemption, had not come yet. This Dr. lob says, we must remember while going though our nisoyonso-What do you think Hashem has in front of him at this very second to remind him of the difficult nisoyon you are going through? Be comforted by the fact, that he has you in front of him, every second. Hashem cries when we cry, this is not an exaggeration.

We need to acknowledge that , yes, I am going through a hard time now, but it does not erase all the joy I have. My marriage is difficult, let me think of the good parts of it etc. Do not allow the bad to erase the good. Look for evidence of the good things in your life. Find Hashem even through you tzoro.

We see this from the story of Yosef. Yosef was thrown into a pit, by his brothers, he was being sent down to Egypt, the most horrible county in the world-who cares that there were good smelling spices in his caravan? Who needs perfume when you are going down to gehanom? When his whole world is turning upside down. And did he not daven,' Hashem save me from this, don't let me go down to mitzraim, how will I stay frum in such an immoral land?' If we were Yosef, would we not think that Hashem does not love us, that he abandoned us. So Hashem sends him a quiet message, a little message in the form of the 'besomim'. Every time he took a breath, he smelled the sweet spice, telling him, Yosef, you are not alone, I am with you. So Yosef understood, that it would be great if Hashem could say yes, to all his tefilos, but obviously he has an agenda, but Yosef knew that Hashem was coming down to Mitzraim with him. He was holding his hand.

Our job is to look for besomin in our life and then calm down. If I know I am in a dark room, but Hashem is holding my hand, I don't need to be nervous.

The Nesivos Aharon gives a beautiful lesson on the Story of Purim . In the Torah Esther is mentioned by 'haster Esther es ponai'- I will hide my face in the time of Esther and it is a double loшон of hiding. What is the story of Purim? Mordechai found out that Haman wanted to kill

out all the Yidden. He tells Esther that she has to go to the King and that is probably the reason you are in the palace. Esther answers 2 things, firstly, it is dangerous to go because I have not been summoned by the King and secondly, till now I was forced to be with the King, if I go willingly than I can no longer be married to you, Mordechai. Mordechai answers her, "af ul pi kain" You have to do it, we have to do our part, that is our histadlus.

As she was walking from her palace to the King's palace, she felt Hashem holding her hand, she felt the shechina. Once she got to Achashverosh's palace, she no longer felt Hashem's presence with her and then she said, "kali, kali, lomo asavtoni?" Why are you abandoning me? And she thought maybe she had been right, and Mordechai had been wrong, maybe she should not be coming to the palace. And she agonized over this –and this was the double haster ponim-it was a double veil.

And this is our golus-it is dark. It is hard to see what Hashem wants. Even gedolim have access to what Hashem wants and never feel abandoned, but here Esther felt very alone and she doubted herself. But then she said, Mordechai is the godol in this generation, I will trust him. He knows what Hashem wants. And then she said to herself, "it just feels like Hashem abandoned me, but Hashem wants to see if I am willing to do this." And after this, she jumped into the situation and took control of it again.

The whole am Yisroel was saved by the emuna of Esther haMalka-because she jumped.

We need to jump, says Dr. Lob, and we need to know that Hashem will catch us. We need to raise our hands like a child raises his hands for the mother to pick him up, like Moshe raised his hands heavenwards for Hashem to help the Yidden win the war. We need to raise our hands, to know that Hashem is carrying us, he is holding us –that is the imagery of Moshe raising his hands.

Suffering, Dr. Lob says, is not a contradiction to life. Suffering is love driven. Hashem puts us in these situations because we need it for our growth.

We need to be b'simcha even while going through difficult times. How do we get there? By pushing away the anger. By feeling Hashem holding us, even though the going is rough.

Rav Aron Solovetchik zt"l used to travel from Chicago to NY 3 times a week, to give shiur. He suffered a stroke at the end of his life and did not have all his capabilities, but he still traveled to New York and it is was difficult. He was asked, why he continued to travel?

He answered, "I have a choice, I can spend my time mourning what I have lost or enjoy what I have."