

# POVERTY IS A THING?

On the possuk “אשרי משכיל אל דל—Fortunate is he who gives wisely to the poor,” the Zohar states:

*How great is the reward of the poor before Hashem!*

“כי שומע אל אביונים ה”*—For Hashem hearkens to the needy.” Does Hashem only listen to the needy? What about everyone else?*

*Rabbi Shimon answered: Because the poor are closer to the King, as it says, “לב נשבר ונדכה אלהים לא תבזה”—Hashem, You will not despise a broken and crushed heart.” And who is more broken-hearted than a poor man.*

*The Zohar implies that the mere destitution makes a person deserving of a reward.*

*But why? If the suffering is not accompanied by any other accomplishments, why should one be rewarded?*

*Granted, when a person works harder to reach his accomplishments, it is understandable that he is more deserving of a reward. After all, he made a choice, worked hard, and put in the extra effort.*

*But if someone merely lived a miserable life, not even necessarily by his own choices, he may deserve our pity, but a reward just seems out of place!*

## TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM

The Rebbe answers this question with a beautiful explanation of the Tzemach Tzedek regarding Kohanim.

The Torah says that a Kohen with a *mum* is not allowed to serve in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Even though the *mum* is no fault of his own, it still disqualifies him.

Why would Hashem create a Kohen in such a way, that he can't even fulfill his life's main purpose?

The Tzemach Tzedek explains this with a *mashal*:

When a general goes to war against an enemy, he wants to ensure that he can fight on his own terms, so he uses a ploy: He places the weakest and most inadequate soldiers on the perimeter. This way, the enemy begins to attack these weak soldiers while being drawn away from their starting point. The weaker soldiers take a heavy hit, all the while retreating and pulling the enemy



A LOOK AT THE TORAH OF  
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THROUGH THE REBBE'S SICHOS

further away from their “comfort zone.” Once the enemy is far enough inside the field, the general can launch his attack and completely destroy the enemy.

In our instance:

Sometimes Hashem allows the *klipos* to draw life from *kedusha*, with the goal that eventually when the stolen *kedusha*-life is returned to its place, it will bring along with it the *chayus* of the *klipos* themselves as well, thereby totally annihilating the forces of evil.

When a Kohen is born as a *baal-mum*, it is because at that precise moment, Hashem is allowing the enemy, the *klipe*, to get in a few “hits” on the *kedusha*.

[Hashem does not let the *klipe* damage the soul of the Kohen; only the outer layer, the body, which is why even with the physical blemish he still remains a Kohen and is even allowed to eat from the *korbanos*.]

By being born at this “unlucky” time, this Kohen is essentially “taking a hit” for Hashem so-to-speak, and is therefore worthy of reward, even though he did not choose it.

### TIME FOR THE REWARD

We can now understand why the suffering of the poor is actually a great accomplishment, albeit one they did not choose. Hence the Zohar’s statement, “How great is the reward of the poor before Hashem.”

In a later portion, in Parshas Ki Tetzei, the Zohar states that if there comes a generation in which Hashem wants to bring Moshiach but the Jews are unworthy, Hashem will make them worthy. How? He will cause them anguish and then in turn will reward them with the *geula*. As the Mishna in Avos says, “לפום צערא אגרא— According to the pain is the reward.” This is as if pain itself is the quickest way to earn a reward.

But is this comforting? Do we really want to go through enough suffering to earn Moshiach with pain?

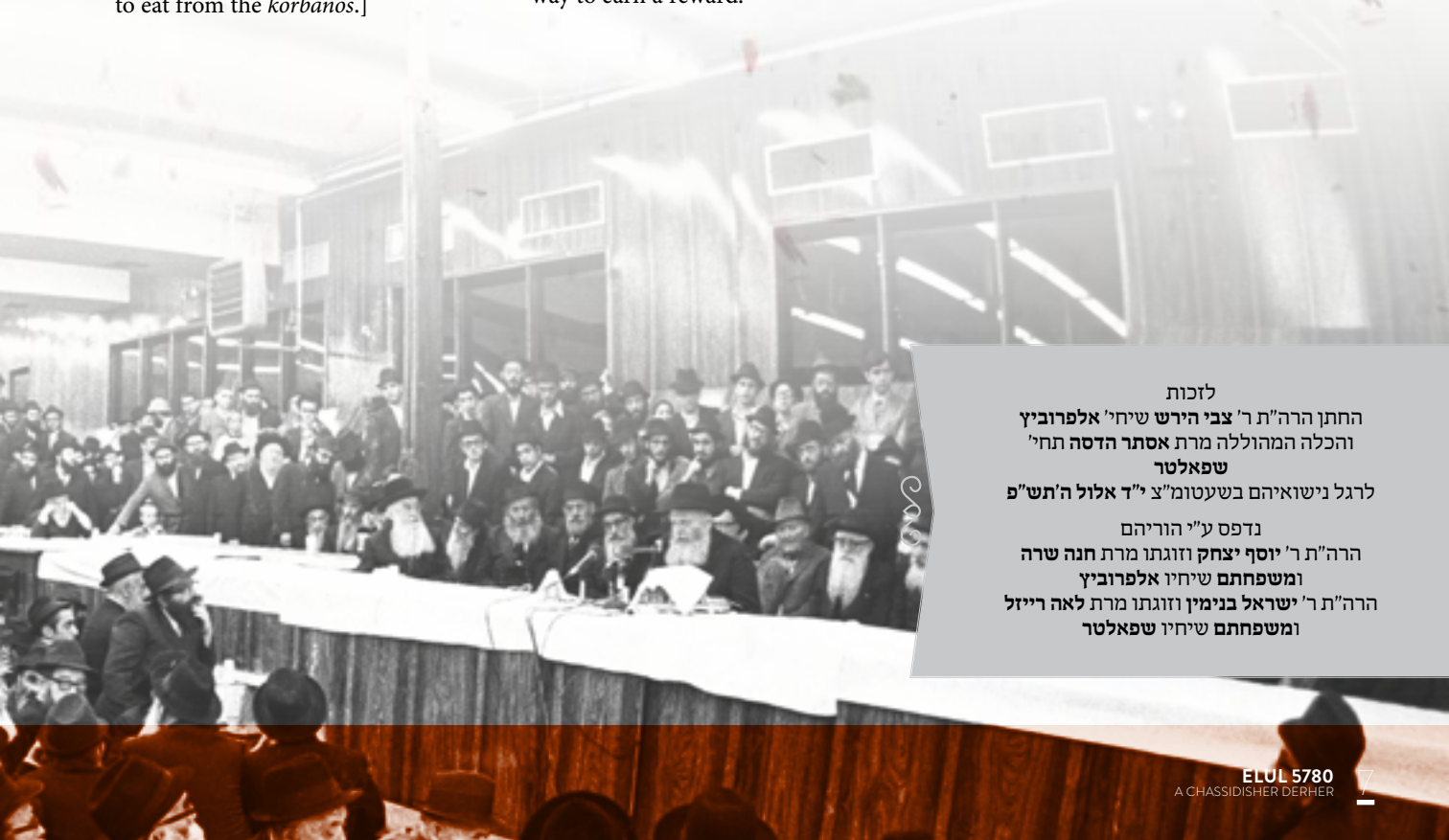
The Rebbe says “No!”

In fact we can be living well, with great abundance and all the blessings of health and wealth, and show Hashem our appreciation by being happy with our good lot.

As for the pain, it is enough that we are anguished by the fact that the *Shechina* is in *galus* in a society which confuses light and dark. We are anguished just knowing of the pain that the *Shechina* endures every time a *Yid* does something inappropriate.

Furthermore: Just knowing the pain of the *Shechina* in our mind alone, and even periodically, should already be sufficient for us to be worthy of “reward of the poor”—the *גאולה האמיתית והשלימה*. **1**

(Adapted from *Motzei Shabbos Parshas Beshalach 5739*)



לזכות  
החתן הרה"ת ר' צבי הירש שיחי' אלפרוביץ  
והכלה המהוללה מרת אסתר הדסה תחלי  
שפאלטר  
לרגל נישואיהם בשעתומ"צ י"ד אלול ה'תש"פ  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת חנה שרה  
ומשפחתם שיחי' אלפרוביץ  
הרה"ת ר' ישראל בנימין וזוגתו מרת לאה רייזל  
ומשפחתם שיחי' שפאלטר