THE LAX FAMILY EDITION




# צורבא מרבנן

# TZURBA M'RABANAN

A concise learning method from the Talmudic source
through modern-day halachic application

## Encouragement and Inspiration for Operation Iron Sword

FOR OUR SOLDIERS AND BRETHREN IN ISRAEL

*Tzurba M'Rabanan* Lax Family English Series
Special Shiur: Encouragement and Inspiration for Operation Iron Sword
First English Edition, 2023

Mizrachi Press
54 King George Street, PO Box 7720
Jerusalem, 9107602, Israel
www.mizrachi.org

Distributors: World Tzurba Institute
New York, NY
www.tzurbaolami.com

Shikey Press
Cambridge, MA
www.ShikeyPress.com

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With thanks to Sefaria for some of the English translations, including those from the William Davidson digital edition of the Koren Noé Talmud, with commentary by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz.

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Tishrei 5783
October 2023

To our brethren in Israel,

In this time of war, *Am Yisrael* has come together, both secular and religious, right and left, and those living in Israel with those in *chutz la'aretz*. We all stand behind and support our beloved soldiers and those on the front lines of this battle. The amazing acts of self-sacrifice by those who have fought and the morale and spirit of those entering battle is of the highest order. *Am Yisrael* is supporting them from behind as well, engaging in numerous acts of *chessed*, generosity and prayer.

Our Sages tell us that there is another area in which we can help all those in danger; that being *talmud Torah*. To this end, Rav Eli Ozarowski together with the *Tzurba* team has put together a pamphlet discussing the power of Torah study and *achdut* in times of trouble that we are distributing freely and hope that many people will study and make use of over the next week.

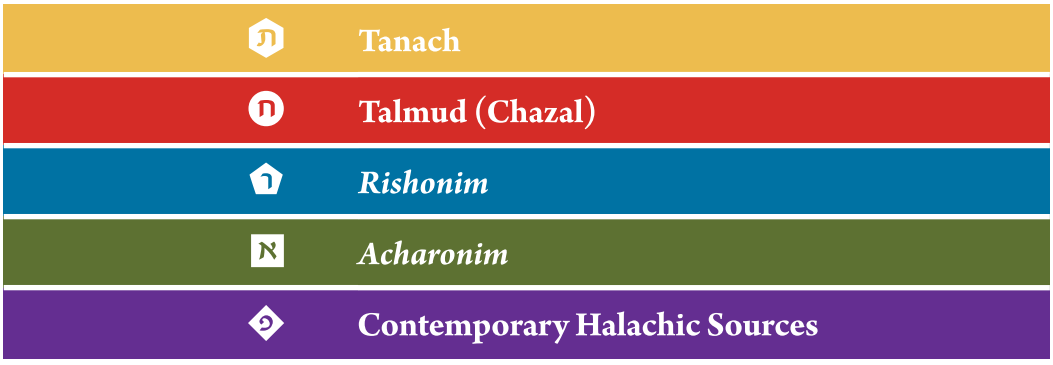
In this merit and the merit of the rest of our efforts, may all the injured have a complete recovery, may all the missing and captives return speedily and safely, and may our soldiers destroy our enemies. "*V'nachalato lo ya'azov*," "He will not abandon His inheritance."

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This past week has been one of the most traumatic and trying times for *Am Yisrael* in the last two generations. How should we respond? What can we do to help in this time of crisis? We are not all soldiers in the Israeli army, and yet we too want to take part in the physical and spiritual fight for salvation against our enemies. In this short piece, we have compiled some sources exploring our emergency spiritual arsenal, including *teshuva* (repentance), Torah study, and joining together in unity (*achdut*) with the rest of the Jewish People. Let us hope that in the merit of our study and performance of the concepts discussed here, combined with the rest of the physical and spiritual war effort, Hashem will grant *Am Yisrael* with salvation, complete recovery of the wounded, and safe and speedy return of the hostages.

## *Tefilla* and *Teshuva*

Throughout the Tanach and subsequent Jewish history, the most natural responses to crises have begun with crying out to Hashem and repentance. The **Rambam** famously writes that when a Jewish community is in distress, they should fast and cry out to Hashem. The Rambam emphasizes that an attack by enemies or an attempt to conquer land constitutes one of the primary scenarios which warrant this response.

### 1. רמב"ם | הל' תעניות א:א–ב, ב:ג

**א:א** מצות עשה מן התורה לזעוק ולהריע בחצוצרות על כל צרה שתבא על הצבור. שנאמר על הצר הצורר אתכם והרעותם בחצוצרות. כלומר כל דבר שייצר לכם כגון בצורת ודבר וארבה וכיוצא בהן זעקו עליהן והריעו.

**א:ב** דבר זה מדרכי התשובה הוא. שבזמן שתבוא צרה ויזעקו עליה ויריעו ידעו הכל שבגלל מעשיהם הרעים הורע להן ככתוב עונותיכם הטו וגו'. וזה הוא שיגרום להסיר הצרה מעליהם.

**ב:ג** על הצרת שונאי ישראל לישראל כיצד? עובדי כוכבים ומזלות שבאו לערוך מלחמה עם ישראל או ליטול מהם מס או ליקח מידם ארץ או לגזור עליהם גזרה אפילו במצוה קלה הרי אלו מתענין ומתריעין עד שירוחמו...

### Rambam, Hilchot Ta'aniot 1:1, 2:3

**1:1** It is a positive Torah commandment to cry out and to sound trumpets in the event of any difficulty that arises which affects the community, as it states (*Bamidbar* 10:9): "[When you go out to war… against] an enemy who attacks you and you sound the trumpets…" [This commandment is not restricted to such a limited scope; rather] the intent is: Whenever you are distressed by difficulties – e.g., famine, plague, locusts, or the like – cry out [to God] because of them and sound the trumpets.

**1:2** This practice is one of the paths of repentance, for when a difficulty arises, and the people cry out [to God] and sound the trumpets, everyone will realize that [the difficulty] occurred because of their evil conduct, as it states (*Yirmiyahu* 5:25): "Your sins have turned away [the rains and the harvest climate]." This [realization] will cause the removal of this difficulty.

**2:3** What is meant by "the distress that the enemies of the Jews cause the Jews"? When gentiles come to wage war against the Jews, to impose a tax upon them, to take land away from them, or to pass a decree [restricting the observance of our faith,] even concerning merely a light mitzva, they should fast and sound the trumpets until [God shows] mercy…

In our times, an attack against the State of Israel has repercussions and ramifications against Jews across the globe, where enemies of the State often create upheaval and often demonstrate aggressively, and/or vandalize, threaten, and attack Jewish communities throughout the world. Thus, these halachot pertain to all of us, wherever we live. Although today fasting is generally not encouraged on a widespread scale

(excepting the formal fasts enacted by Chazal), crying out to Hashem and repentance are certainly appropriate. Moreover, it may be that even the **Ramban**, who holds that the mitzva of daily *tefilla* is only of rabbinic origin, may agree that *tefilla* during an *eit tzara* (time of trouble) has the status of a biblical mitzva .[1]

### ו Hasagot HaRamban, Mitzvat Asei 5

…Regarding the derivation of the Sages in the *Sifrei* (*Parshat Ekev*), "'To serve Him,' this refers to learning Torah; alternatively, this refers to *tefilla*," **this is either a supporting text** [***asmachta***] or means to say that service of Hashem in general includes learning Torah **and praying to Him at times of distress,** and that we should look to Him like a servant looks to his master. This is in accordance with what is written in the Torah (*Bamidbar* 10:9), "when you are at war in your land against an aggressor who attacks you, you shall sound the trumpets, so that you may be remembered before Hashem your God." It is a mitzva for the community to respond to any distress that comes upon it by crying out before Him in prayer.

### ב. השגות הרמב"ן | מצות עשה ה

...ומה שדרשו בספרי (עקב) ולעבדו זה התלמוד דבר אחר, זו תפלה **אסמכתא היא,** או לומר שמכלל העבודה שנלמוד תורה **ושנתפלל אליו בעת הצרות** ותהיינה עינינו ולבנו אליו לבדו כעיני עבדים אל יד אדוניהם. וזה כענין שכתוב (במדבר י:ט) וכי תבאו מלחמה בארצכם על הצר הצורר אתכם והרעותם בחצוצרות ונזכרתם לפני ד' אלהיכם והיא מצוה על כל צרה וצרה שתבא על הצבור לצעוק לפניו בתפלה.

Many authorities have spoken and written about *tefilla* and *teshuva* at times of crisis, and their importance are well-understood. In these pages, we would like to explore sources related to two other important avenues of response to the current situation.

## The Protection of Torah Study

A number of sources indicate that Torah study can serve as an effective response during times of war and distress. In *Parshat Bechukotai,* the Torah describes the reward Hashem promises for those who follow His commandments.

### ת Vayikra 26:3, 6–7

3. If you follow My statutes and fulfill My commandments and perform them…

6. I will bring peace in the Land, and you will lie down with no one to frighten [you]; I will remove wild beasts from the Land, and no army will pass through your land.

7. You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword.

### ג. ויקרא | כו:ג, ו–ז

ג. אִם בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלֵכוּ וְאֶת מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם...

ו. וְנָתַתִּי שָׁלוֹם בָּאָרֶץ וּשְׁכַבְתֶּם וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חַיָּה רָעָה מִן הָאָרֶץ וְחֶרֶב לֹא תַעֲבֹר בְּאַרְצְכֶם:

ז. וּרְדַפְתֶּם אֶת אֹיְבֵיכֶם וְנָפְלוּ לִפְנֵיכֶם לָחֶרֶב:

1. See *Tzurba M'Rabanan*, volume 11, shiur 2.

According to **Rashi**, citing Chazal, the Torah's reference to following Hashem's mitzvot refers not only to a general fulfillment of mitzvot, but specifically to toiling in Torah study.

## ד Rashi, Vayikra 26:3

**If you follow My statutes** – I might think that this refers to the fulfillment of the commandments. However, when Scripture says, "and observe My commandments," the fulfillment of the commandments is [already] stated. So, what is the meaning of "If you follow [*teilechu*] My statutes"? It means that you must toil in the study of Torah.[2]

## 4. רש"י | ויקרא כו:ג

אִם בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלֵכוּ – יָכוֹל זֶה קִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹות, כְּשֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר וְאֶת מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אוֹתָם הֲרֵי קִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹות אָמוּר, הָא מָה אֲנִי מְקַיֵּם אִם בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלֵכוּ? שֶׁתִּהְיוּ עֲמֵלִים בַּתּוֹרָה (ספרא).

Thus, according to Rashi, exertion in Torah study helps to bring about Hashem's reward of peace in Eretz Yisrael, and the promise that the population will not need to fear the attacks of enemies. Hashem's rewards and punishments are more complicated than vending machines, which function by the most simple and immediate cause and effect; and we cannot be so arrogant as to assume that we can manipulate results to our exact liking. Nonetheless, by describing specific reward and punishment, the Torah clearly shows that intense Torah study is a powerful force in protecting our people against our enemies.

A similar conclusion concerning the importance of Torah during war time can be drawn from an incident in which the prophet Yehoshua encounters an angel.

## ת Yehoshua 5:13–14

13. And it was when Yehoshua was in Yericho, that he lifted up his eyes and saw, and, behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Yehoshua went to him, and said to him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries?

14. And he said, No, but I am the captain of the host of the Lord; I have come now. And Yehoshua fell on his face to the earth and prostrated himself, and said to him, What does my lord say to his servant?

## 5. יהושע | ה:יג–יד

יג. וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בִּירִיחוֹ וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה אִישׁ עֹמֵד לְנֶגְדּוֹ וְחַרְבּוֹ שְׁלוּפָה בְּיָדוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הֲלָנוּ אַתָּה אִם לְצָרֵינוּ׃

יד. וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא כִּי אֲנִי שַׂר צְבָא ד' עַתָּה בָאתִי וַיִּפֹּל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל פָּנָיו אַרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתָּחוּ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה אֲדֹנִי מְדַבֵּר אֶל עַבְדּוֹ׃

According to the **Gemara** in ***Masechet Megilla***, the angel approached Yehoshua in a hostile manner because Yehoshua had failed to urge his soldiers to learn Torah during wartime.

## ח Masechet Megilla 3a

…**Isn't it written: "And it was when Yehoshua was in Yericho, that he lifted up his eyes and saw, and, behold, a man was standing opposite him**… **and prostrated himself"**… As for the angel's mission, the Gemara explains that the angel **said to** Yehoshua: **Yesterday,** i.e., during the afternoon, **you neglected the afternoon daily offering** due to the impending battle,

## 6. מסכת מגילה ג.

והכתיב "ויהי בהיות יהושע ביריחו וישא עיניו וירא והנה איש עומד לנגדו [וגו'] וישתחו (לאפיו)"... אמר לו אמש בטלתם תמיד של בין הערבים

2. The word "*teilechu*" literally means "walk," a strenuous activity (*Gur Aryeh*). [Addition of the English editors]

**and now,** at night, **you have neglected Torah study,** and I have come to rebuke you.

Yehoshua **said to him: For which of these** sins **have you come? He said to him: I have come now,** indicating that neglecting Torah study is more severe than neglecting to sacrifice the daily offering. Yehoshua **immediately** determined to rectify the matter, as the verses states: **"And Yehoshua lodged that night"** (*Yehoshua* 8:9) **"in the midst of the valley** [***ha'emek***]" (*Yehoshua* 8:13), and **Rabbi Yochanan said: This teaches that he spent the night in the depths** [***b'umeka***] **of *halakha*,** i.e., studying Torah in depth with the Jewish people.

ועכשיו בטלתם תלמוד תורה.

אמר לו על איזה מהן באת? אמר לו עתה באתי. מיד "וילן יהושע בלילה ההוא" "בתוך העמק" (יהושע ח:ט,יג) אמר רבי יוחנן מלמד שלן בעומקה של הלכה.

Furthermore, much like Rashi's comment above, it seems that the key component necessary for the soldiers' victory was not only regular Torah study, but intense Torah study, or study of halacha in depth, *"b'umeka shel halacha."*

Another key source showing the importance of Torah study in protecting an individual can be found in the **Gemara** in ***Masechet Sota***. In the midst of a longer discussion, the Gemara explains in what ways Torah study and mitzva performance can protect a person from harm, while they are being performed and after they have been completed.

## ת Masechet Sota 21a

**Rabbi Menachem bar Yosei interpreted this** verse **homiletically: "For the mitzva is a lamp and the Torah is light"** (*Mishlei* 6:23). **The verse associates the mitzva with a lamp and the Torah with** the **light** of the sun. **The mitzva** is associated **with a lamp** in order **to say to you: Just as a lamp does not protect** one by its light extensively but **only temporarily,** while the lamp is in one's hand, **so too, a mitzva protects** one **only temporarily,** i.e., while one is performing the mitzva.

**And the Torah** is associated **with light** in order **to say to you: Just as** the **light** of the sun **protects** one **forever, so too,** the **Torah** one studies **protects** one **forever; and it states** in the previous verse with regard to the Torah: **"When you walk, it shall lead you;** when you lie down, it shall watch over you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you" (*Mishlei* 6:22). The Gemara explains: **"When you walk, it shall lead you"; this is** referring to when one is in **this world. "When you lie down, it shall watch over you"; this is** referring to the time of **death,** when one lies in his grave. **"And when you awake, it shall talk with you";** this is referring **to the time to come** after the resurrection of the dead. The Torah that one studies protects and guides him both in this world and in the next world.

## 7. מסכת סוטה כא.

והתניא את זו דרש רבי מנחם בר יוסי (משלי ו:כג) "כי נר מצוה ותורה אור", תלה הכתוב את המצוה בנר ואת התורה באור את המצוה בנר לומר לך מה נר אינה מגינה אלא לפי שעה אף מצוה אינה מגינה אלא לפי שעה.

ואת התורה באור לומר לך מה אור מגין לעולם אף תורה מגינה לעולם. ואומר (משלי ו:כב), "בהתהלכך תנחה אותך" וגו', בהתהלכך תנחה אותך זה העולם הזה "בשכבך תשמור עליך" זו מיתה, "והקיצות היא תשיחך" לעתיד לבא...

א"ר יוסף מצוה בעידנא דעסיק בה מגנא ומצלא בעידנא דלא עסיק בה אגוני מגנא אצולי לא מצלא תורה בין בעידנא דעסיק בה ובין בעידנא דלא עסיק בה מגנא ומצלא...

אלא אמר רבא תורה בעידנא דעסיק בה מגנא ומצלא בעידנא דלא עסיק בה אגוני מגנא אצולי לא מצלא מצוה בין בעידנא דעסיק בה בין בעידנא דלא עסיק בה אגוני מגנא אצולי לא מצלא.

**Rav Yosef said** that with regard to **a mitzva, at the time when one is engaged in its** performance it **protects** one from misfortune **and saves** one from the evil inclination; **at the time when one is not engaged in its** performance, it **protects** one from misfortune but it **does not save** one from the evil inclination. With regard to **Torah** study, **both at the time when one is engaged in it and at the time when one is not engaged in it,** it **protects** one from misfortune **and saves** one from the evil inclination.

**…Rather, Rava said:** With regard to **Torah** study, **at the time when one is engaged in it, it protects and saves; at the time when one is not engaged in it, it protects** one from misfortune but **it does not save** one from the evil inclination. With regard to **a mitzva, both at the time when one is engaged in its** performance **and at the time when one is not engaged in its** performance, **it protects** one from misfortune but it **does not save** one from the evil inclination.

Thus, according to the conclusion of the Gemara, although all mitzva performance can protect a person from harm on some level, Torah study is singled out as having the same protective value as well.

**Rav Chaim of Volozhin** mentions an additional benefit of Torah study, specifically from the ***Tanna D'bei Eliyahu***. When the Jewish people study Torah, Hashem Himself brings blessing to them and responds to their requests for their needs positively as a result.

## 8. נפש החיים | שער ד', פרק יד

ובתנא דבי אליהו סדר אליהו רבא פרק יח' אמר, כיון שלומד את התורה, הרי זה מביא טובה לעולם, ויכול הוא לבקש רחמים ולהתפלל לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא... ויביא מטר לעולם, וכו'. ואמר שם עוד, כל זמן שישראל עוסקין בתורה ועושין רצון אביהם שבשמים, הקדוש ברוך הוא בעצמו נפנה אליהם לברכה, שנאמר אמת מארץ תצמח וצדק משמים נשקף, ואין השקפה אלא לברכה, שנאמר השקיפה וכו' וברך את עמך, וכו'.

## א Nefesh HaChaim, Sha'ar 4, Chapter 14

In *Tanna D'bei Eliyahu* it states that when one studies Torah, it brings good to the world, and this person may request mercy and pray to the Holy One, blessed be He… and He will bring rain to the world. It also states there that whenever the nation of Israel is engaged in Torah study and fulfilling the will of their Father in Heaven, the Holy One, blessed be He, turns to them to bless them Himself, as it says, "Truth will sprout from the earth, and righteousness will look down from heaven." (*Tehillim* 85:12), and "*hashkafa*" refers to blessing, as it says, "Look down, etc. and bless your people" (*Devarim* 26:15).

These sources indicate that Torah study, especially when performed in a rigorous fashion, has tremendous power to protect a person from harm. Although one could argue that this protective power appears to apply only to the individual or group of people in question, in truth, everyone who lives in Israel today needs protection from the various tools and schemes of our enemies. Moreover, the **Gemara** in ***Masechet Makkot*** declares that people studying Torah in one location can even have an impact upon the soldiers waging war in a different location.

**ח Masechet Makkot 10a**

**Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: What** is the meaning of that **which is written: "Our feet were standing in your gates, Jerusalem"** (*Tehillim* 122:2)? **What caused our feet to withstand** the enemies **in war?** It is **the gates of Jerusalem, where the** others **were engaged in Torah** study. The term "in your gates" to mean: Because of your gates, the place of justice and Torah.

**9. מסכת מכות י.**

א"ר יהושע בן לוי מאי דכתיב (תהילים קכב:ב) "עומדות היו רגלינו בשעריך ירושלם"? מי גרם לרגלינו שיעמדו במלחמה – שערי ירושלם שהיו עוסקים בתורה.

It would seem, then, that increasing the amount and intensity of our Torah study may well be effective in granting additional spiritual protection to the soldiers and all those on the front lines of the current struggle.

## *Achdut*

Another critical component of the response to times of distress is that of *achdut,* unity among the Jewish people. To explain the importance of *achdut* at this time, we must first better understand the specific quality of Jewish unity. The **Maharal** writes that *Am Yisrael* is bound together as one people more than any other nation on earth. The oneness of a nation so close to Hashem, he explains, corresponds to the oneness of Hashem Himself.

**א Maharal, Netzach Yisrael, Ch. 3**

…Because from an entity that is One [i.e., God], only an entity that is one [i.e., the people of Israel] can emerge.

**10. מהר"ל | נצח ישראל, פרק ג'**

כי מן דבר שהוא אחד, לא יבא רק אחד.

**Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook** emphasizes the same point in his work ***Orot.***

**פ Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook, Orot, p. 55**

We are one people, one like the single One of the universe. This is the depth of our spiritual nature that we have in our force.

**11. הרב אברהם יצחק קוק | אורות, עמ' נה**

גוי אחד אנחנו, אחד כיחידו של עולם, זהו עומק טבענו הרוחני שיש בנו בכח.

This understanding explains the statement of the **Midrash** that when one Jew sins, all other Jews are impacted by it as well, as if it were their own.

## 12. ויקרא רבה | ד:ו

תָּנֵי חִזְקִיָּה (ירמיה נ, יז): שֶׂה פְּזוּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, נִמְשְׁלוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשֶׂה, מַה שֶּׂה הַזֶּה לוֹקֶה עַל רֹאשׁוֹ אוֹ בְּאֶחָד מֵאֵבָרָיו וְכָל אֵבָרָיו מַרְגִּישִׁין, כָּךְ הֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶחָד מֵהֶן חוֹטֵא וְכֻלָּן מַרְגִּישִׁין... תָּנֵי רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָאי, מָשָׁל לְבְנֵי אָדָם שֶׁהָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִין בִּסְפִינָה נָטַל אֶחָד מֵהֶן מַקֶּדַח וְהִתְחִיל קוֹדֵחַ תַּחְתָּיו, אָמְרוּ לוֹ חֲבֵרָיו מַה אַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב וְעוֹשֶׂה, אָמַר לָהֶם מָה אִכְפַּת לָכֶם לֹא תַחְתִּי אֲנִי קוֹדֵחַ, אָמְרוּ לוֹ שֶׁהַמַּיִם עוֹלִין וּמְצִיפִין עָלֵינוּ אֶת הַסְּפִינָה...

## 12. Vayikra Rabba 4:6

Chizkiya taught: "Israel is a scattered lamb" (*Yirmiyahu* 50:17), Israel is compared to a lamb. Just as when a lamb is struck on its head or in one of its limbs, all of its limbs feel it, so too for Israel, when one sins, everyone feels it… Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai taught: This is comparable to people sitting on a ship. One took a hammer and began to hammer underneath himself. His friends said to him, what are you sitting and doing? He said, what does it matter to you, as am I not hammering underneath myself alone? They said to him, but the water will rise up and flood the ship…

This is the reason that when part of our people is in pain or distress, it must be experienced by the rest of the people as well. But this reality can also be used to our benefit, and the more that we are unified, the more that Hashem will hopefully save us.

The **Midrash Tanchuma** states that if the Jewish people are united, then the *middat hadin* (attribute of justice) cannot harm us and the redemption can arrive.

## 13. מדרש תנחומא | שופטים יח

בזמן שישראל עושין חבורה אחת, אפילו עבודה זרה ביניהם, אין מדת הדין נוגעת בהם.

## 13. Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim 18

When the people of Israel make themselves one unit, then even if idolatry exists among them, the attribute of justice will not touch them.

## 14. מדרש תנחומא | נצבים א

...וכן אתה מוצא שאין ישראל נגאלין עד שיהיו אגודה אחת.

## 14. Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 1

…Similarly, you find that the people of Israel will not be redeemed until they have become one entity.

The **Talmud Yerushalmi** reinforces this idea by declaring that Achav, one of the wicked kings in the biblical kingdom of Israel, was still victorious in war due to his army's avoidance of speaking *lashon hara* against others.

## 15. תלמוד ירושלמי | פאה א:א

אבל דורו של אחאב עובדי ע"ז היו וע"י שלא היה להן דילטורין היו יורדים למלחמה ונוצחין.

## 15. Talmud Yerushalmi, Pe'ah 1:1

The generation of Achav was full of idol-worshippers, but because they didn't have gossipers they were victorious in battle.

The ***Shem Mishmuel*** echoes this theme as well in declaring that our defeating our enemies hinges upon our unity.

## 16. שם משמואל | כי תצא ח:ה–ו

אשר ניצוח האויבים תלוי ביותר בהתאחדות ישראל שאז הם נחשבים מקיימי כל הרמ"ח מ"ע, ושורה עליהם צלם אלקים בשלימות...

## א Shem Mishmuel, Ki Teitze 8:5–6

Defeating our enemies depends mainly on the unity of the people of Israel, as then they are considered to be fulfilling all 248 positive mitzvot [since the mitzvot fulfilled by different individuals are combined together], and the divine image rests upon them fully…

The ***Sefat Emet*** goes a step further and suggests that in the Purim story, the very fact that the Jews of Shushan gathered together in unity (Esther 4:16) in response to Haman's decree was itself the source of their salvation, even before any other steps were taken.

## 17. שפת אמת | שמות, לפורים כ:ג

...ואחר כך ע"י השנאה שעלה ע"ד העמים לאבדם. זה עצמו הי' הישועה... ונתאחדו בני ישראל כמ"ש כנוס כו' כל היהודים וכתיב נקהלו ועמוד על נפשם. לכן עיקר מצות מגילה... לרמוז שעיקר הישועה הי' התאספות בנ"י לבוא אל האחדות:

## א Sefat Emet, Shemot, Purim 20:3

…But then through the hatred that arose among the nations to destroy them, that itself was the salvation… and the Jewish people united, as it says, "gather all the Jews," and it is written, "they gathered together to stand up for themselves" (Esther 9:16). Therefore, the primary mitzva of *megillah* is [to read it] with ten… to allude to the fact that the main salvation was the gathering of the Jewish people to lead to unity.

According to the *Sefat Emet,* then, the very fact that the Jewish people unified themselves was itself the gateway to their salvation. This is an important message for us today as well. The more unified the Jewish people are, the more divine assistance and salvation we will receive.

For this reason, it is critical that everyone in the Jewish community be involved in the effort to support the nation in times of distress, in whatever way they are capable. The **Rambam** stresses that when the community is in distress, every individual must participate.

## 18. רמב"ם | הל' תשובה ג:יא

הפורש מדרכי צבור, ואע"פ שלא עבר עבירות, אלא נבדל מעדת ישראל ואינו עושה מצות בכללן ולא נכנס בצרתן ולא מתענה בתעניתן, אלא הולך בדרכו כאחד מגויי הארץ וכאילו אינו מהן, אין לו חלק לעולם הבא .

## ר Rambam, Hilchot Teshuva 3:11

A person who separates himself from the community [may be placed in this category] even though he has not transgressed any sins. A person who separates himself from the congregation of Israel and does not fulfill mitzvot together with them, does not take part in their hardships, or join in their [communal] fasts, but rather goes on his own individual path as if he is from another nation and not [Israel], does not have a portion in the world to come.

Every one of us has a role to play in this battle and various ways to contribute to the effort to support *Am Yisrael*. The greater role we play, the greater *achdut* we can bring among our people. Let us pray that in the merit of our physical and financial efforts, our *tefilla*, our *teshuva*, our Torah learning, and our attempts to increase *achdut* among the various parts of our people, Hashem will grant us divine assistance and salvation in every area and pave the way for the final redemption.