

Afterthoughts

- Yocheved Bienenfeld

UMASBIA L'CHOL CHAI RATZON

I'm sure I'm not the only one who, at this point in time, is obsessed with the war against Iran. Life can't possibly continue "as usual" when our minds and hearts are elsewhere; when sirens interrupt our sleep; when news of direct hits and casualties flood the media; when buses and transportation is few and far-between. Nothing is "normal". It's not supposed to be. We are one nation - no, more than that - we are one family. With its squabbles and problems, but ONE family. And a family cares about every single member.

I have absolutely no doubt that this will all end successfully and HKB"H will continue protecting us as He always has. That doesn't keep one from worrying about our soldiers - KULAM K'DOSHIM; or relatives in vulnerable areas; and about our family members who have been called up to who-knows-where for who-knows-how long.

Obviously, this has affected my davening in the usual way. Things I have been saying for years take on a new meaning, one related to the present. As such, I added another understanding to POTEI'ACH ET

YADECHA UMASBI'A L'CHOL CHAI RATZON, to the many other meanings I found. According to Chazal, this means that HaShem "satisfies all your wants". I certainly have a problem with believing that, since it doesn't seem to be true. But beyond that, logic tells me that it is impossible for HaShem to fulfill the desires of everyone if those desires conflict with each other. I want terrorists to be wiped out; I want Iran - as it has been until now - defeated; I want all antisemites to be done away with or to have them change. That is my desire. But the desire of terrorists is to kill me and my fellow Jew; Iran's desire is to destroy Israel; anti-semites' desire is to do away with all Jews. Even though Gd is clearly able to do anything and everything, how can He fulfill these conflicting desires?

Since I have always had trouble understanding this Chazal and since I cannot dismiss what Chazal say just because I don't understand them, I have come to see the meaning as not to be taken literally. As I once presented in a previous entry, I choose to understand RATZON not necessarily as the ratzon that I am aware of, but the RATZON of the neshama, which is always what the RATZON of HaShem is. If so, then all neshamot, even those of our enemies, do want peace and do want to do what HKB"H wants it to do. Then

there are no conflicts. But the fact of the matter is, even those positive R'TZONOT are not always fulfilled. I don't want any soldiers killed, I don't want any more korbanot. There have been more than enough. So how do I handle that when more are killed AL KIDDUSH HASHEM? I must go on to the next verse: TZADIK HASHEM B'CHOL D'RACHAV V'CHASID B'CHOL MA'ASAV - Gd is just in all His ways and full of devoted loving-kindness in all His works. Hidden from us and coloring any RATZON we might have is a tzedek, a pure justice through which Gd operates that we may not understand and that is the RATZON of Hashem. As the Malbim explains, that tzedek is what determines what is best for us, even though we may not realize it. And despite our lack of understanding, He clearly wants to satisfy us. I simply must trust HaShem.

Although this is not a translation or even a legitimate re-translation but: POTEI'ACH ET YADECHA UMASBIA L'CHOL CHAI RATZON - HaShem's RATZON is to be MASBIA L'CHOL CHAI - to satisfy all living things. That's what His desire is. ❀