

PREPARING FOR YOM KIPPUR

Background

It is difficult to imagine a person with a greater love for the Land of Israel than Moshe Rabbeinu. His passion to be in the land was so strong that when HASHEM told him that he would not be allowed in, he *davened* with great fervor. But his prayer wasn't an ordinary request; the *Gematria* of the word וְאֶתְחַנֵּן is 515. We are taught that he davened 515 prayers to be allowed to go in. Finally, HASHEM said no.

ספר דברים פרק ג

כג) וְאֶתְחַנֵּן אֶל יְדוּד בְּעֵת
הַהוּא לֵאמֹר

*And I prayed to HASHEM
at that moment saying. . .*

רש"י על דברים פרק ג פסוק כג

כג) ואתחנן - אין חנון
בכל מקום אלא לשון
מתנת חנם אע"פ שיש
להם לצדיקים לתלות
במעשיהם הטובים אין
מבקשים מאת המקום
אלא מתנת חנם לפי
שאמר לו וחנותי את
אשר אחון אמר לו בלשון
ואתחנן

*And I prayed – The word
“chanun” in all places re-
fers to an undeserved gift.
Even though the tzaddik-
im can depend upon their
good actions, they only
ask HASHEM for un-
warranted gifts because it
says, “I will grant mercy to
those who find favor.”*

Questions

Rashi is teaching us that when it comes to making requests from HASHEM, there are two systems: the merit system and the mercy system. Typically, we don't have the right to assume that we deserve the things we ask for, so we use the mercy system. *Tzaddikim*, on the other hand, are deserving, so they can ask using the merit system – yet they don't. They, too, ask in the method of mercy.

Since Moshe Rabbeinu so desired to be allowed into the land of Israel, why didn't he use the stronger system, the merit system? It may well have succeeded in getting HASHEM to allow him to go into the land of Israel.