

# Negating Resistance

פרשת חיי שרה

Our Sages tell us that, “Greater is the reward of one who acts out of obligation than one who is not obligated.” The commentators explain that when one is commanded to do something, the יצר הרע attempts to stop a person from fulfilling Hashem’s commandment. Therefore, a person who acts out of obligation receives a greater reward than one who acts voluntarily, as he faces greater resistance. Often this resistance can be extremely challenging, and we may require strategies and techniques that will mitigate this resistance, thereby enabling us to fulfill our obligations. In this week's Parsha, the Ralbag shares with us an insight that can help to negate our resistance to obligations and commandments.

The Ralbag says; “The 7th benefit is in Middos. To know if one is a perfect fit for a specific service, it is appropriate that they volunteered in this service before being commanded. For if one was not stirred to this service independently, his service will be lacking. It is for this reason that Eliezer chose a wife for Yitzchak who possessed the qualities of the service she would become obligated in, so that she would fully be able to fulfill her obligations to Yitzchak. Eliezer knew that since Rivkah voluntarily offered to serve Eliezer out of kindness, she would surely fulfill her obligations of service to her husband in the most fitting manner.”

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The idea expressed by the Ralbag, that Eliezer knew with certainty that Rivkah would fully serve Yitzchak due to her voluntary service, requires further clarification. Granted that when someone naturally wants to do something, it can help to mitigate and counter any resistance. However, how can the Ralbag say that Eliezer knew for sure she would serve Yitzchak based on the kindness she bestowed on him? We mentioned above that obligation evokes resistance. So perhaps Rivkah would be less inclined to serve Yitzchak than Eliezer due to it being obligatory.

It seems that although obligation triggers resistance, if a person intrinsically wants to engage in the activity it will negate this resistance. The removal of this resistance now enables a person to be sparked and motivated by the commandment to fulfill Hashem’s will. Therefore, Eliezer knew Rivkah would surely fulfill her obligation to Yitzchak, as her nature would counter any resistance caused by the obligation. Once this interference is removed, the obligation will create an even greater commitment.

We can learn from here a powerful lesson in educating our children toward their future responsibilities. If we can instill within them an appreciation of the benefits of Mitzvos, and the happiness offered by a Torah lifestyle, to the extent that they want this on their own, then when they become obligated in Mitzvos, any resistance will be negated by their deep desire to live a life of meaning and purpose. Thus enabling them to soar in their service of Hashem.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח  
לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר  
לעילוי נשמת רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה  
לרפואה שלמה יהושע דוד בן אלטא יענטא