

Two Tracks - Effort And Trust

פרשת תולדות

In this week's Parsha, the future of the Jewish people is on the line due to Yitzchak's plan to bless Eisav. Rivkah springs into action and tells Yaakov to pretend to be Eisav, so that he would receive the Brachos. However, Yaakov is hesitant as he fears Yitzchak will recognize him. Rivkah alleviates his fear by disguising him in Eisav's clothing, as well covering him in goat skins in case he is touched by Yitzchak.

The Ralbag derives a lesson from here regarding the amount of effort one has to exert into accomplishing his goal. The Ralbag states, "The third lesson is in regards to Middos. It is appropriate that anyone who is striving to accomplish a goal remove all the obstacles preventing him from accomplishing that goal, as well as accessing all the things necessary to actualize that goal. This is derived from the fact that Yaakov feared that the plan set forth by Rivkah would fail, until Rivkah would provide him with a strategic plan that would remove his concerns. This plan was for him to wear Eisav's clothing and goat skins, so that Yitzchak would perceive him as hairy upon feeling him." The Ralbag seems to be saying that we learn from here that one has to invest the maximum amount of effort possible when striving to achieve his goals. This idea fits with the Ralbag's approach to Hishtadlus in which he indicates that one is not allowed to rely on a miracle, and his Hishtadlus must not be reduced due to his trust in Hashem.

"One who finds himself fearful in the pursuit of his Hishtadlus is not necessarily lacking in his Bitachon that Hashem will bring him success."

However the Ralbag's statement that, "The proof that one has to go all out when doing Hishtadlus is from the fact that Yaakov was afraid that Rivkah's plan would fail," requires further clarification. Firstly, why is the fact that Yaakov had fear, necessary for the proof that one has to invest their full efforts? It should be sufficient to prove this point from the mere fact that Yaakov put in so much effort. Secondly, granted one's trust in

Hashem shouldn't reduce their Hishtadlus due to the fact that one is not allowed to rely on miracles, however, surely one's Bitachon should eliminate any room for fear. This is certainly true regarding Yaakov, who was filled with Bitachon, and had no doubt that this plan to save the future of the Jewish people would succeed. It is therefore difficult to understand this fear.

We can answer, it must be that the Ralbag must hold that the above mentioned Hishtadlus and Bitachon are two separate tracks, and must be looked at independently, so that they don't impact each other. Since a person is obligated to invest full effort into accomplishing his goal, he needs to utilize the emotion of fear to enable him to discover his obligation. This fear will allow him to see the full extent of the Hishtadlus he needs to invest. Therefore, a person's approach to Hishtadlus should not be viewed through the lens of Bitachon, to allow room for fear. This way a person will be able to discover the parameters of Hishtadlus that is required of him. At the same time one is obligated to have complete trust in Hashem that he will succeed.

We can glean from here a powerful insight into human nature. It seems from the Ralbag that it is possible and appropriate for two contradictory feelings to coexist within a person. On the one hand he is completely reliant and trusting that everything will work out, while at the same time he is fearful, and preparing in case of failure. It is also significant to note that one who finds himself fearful in the pursuit of his Hishtadlus is not necessarily lacking in his Bitachon that Hashem will bring him success.

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
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