

A Result-Centered Society

The Ralbag in this week's Parshah derives an important lesson regarding our obligation to safeguard our property. Avrohom Avinu is forced to go down to Egypt due to the famine in Eretz Canaan. When he returns, he brings with him all the animals and wealth he amassed, leaving nothing behind. The Ralbag points out that this extreme measure Avrohom took in protecting his property could not have been motivated by him preventing a personal loss, as Avrohom was promised by Hashem that he would be wealthy. Yet we find him leading his livestock with the ultimate care and patience, delaying his trip back home to Eretz Canaan to ensure no loss would occur. Why did Avrohom feel obligated to be so diligent in safeguarding his property, if a loss would not impact him personally?

It must be that our duty to protect our property goes beyond our own personal loss and stems from a different source. The property we receive is a gift from Hashem, entrusted to us to watch and protect. Therefore, even if losing this property would not cause us to incur any personal loss, we are still obligated to guard it. It is with this in mind that Avrohom felt obligated to secure his property to the ultimate extent. From here the

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Ralbag derives how careful one must be in protecting his property, for they are on loan from Hashem. It is evident as well that our obligation and the right course of action are not always dictated by the result, but rather by asking oneself, "What does Hashem want me to do?" Again, since the outcome in protecting his property made no personal difference to Avrohom.

There is a similar idea expressed by the Mishnah Berurah in Siman 250, paragraph 2, in which he quotes the famous approaches of Shamai and Hillel regarding buying food for honoring Shabbos. Shamai says that if a person finds a nice piece of meat on Sunday, he should put it aside for Shabbos. If later in the week he finds a nicer piece of meat, Shamai indicates that one should eat the first one and place

the second one aside for Shabbos. Hillel dissented since he had a different Middah, of having trust in Hashem, thereby he was sure he would find a nicer piece of meat later in the week. He therefore did not put aside the piece of meat found on Sunday for shabbos. The Poskim explain that Hillel really agreed to the approach of Shamai, that it would be an honor to Shabbos to put aside the piece of meat on Sunday for Shabbos. However, since in doing this it would negatively impact his trust in Hashem, Hillel didn't put it aside for Shabbos. Rather he trusted in Hashem he would find a nicer one. Hillel's approach seems perplexing. According to him, why would it be an honor to Shabbos to put aside the food for Shabbos on Sunday? Hillel was sure that he will find a nicer piece of meat later in the week, and therefore this piece of meat would not be used. Putting away the meat would seemingly be an exercise in futility! However, based on the abovementioned concept, that our obligations are not dictated or impacted by the results, the confusion can be resolved. Granted Hillel would find a nicer piece of meat, but his obligation to honor Shabbos right now dictated that he should put it away for shabbos (if not for it impacting his Bitachon). In our society, much value and importance are heavily placed on the results of our actions. It is therefore important to realize that our obligations and actions have value independent of the results and are not dictated by the outcome.

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
לרפואה שלמה רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה