

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

I Feel Your Pain

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

In this week's Parsha, the Pasuk (*Shemos 2:11*) states, "And it was in those days, that Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers. He saw their suffering..." Rashi comments on the words, "He saw their suffering," - "He focused his eyes and his heart in order to feel their pain".

Clearly, Rashi is telling us that for Moshe to be able to feel the maximum amount of pain for Klal Yisrael, it was necessary for him to actively focus on their pain. The need for this focus seems puzzling in the context of understanding who Moshe was and the extent of the suffering of Klal Yisrael.

The Medrash tells us the following few points about Moshe Rabbeinu, "He saw that they were throwing the dead bodies in the garbage dumps, and not burying them. Moshe cared for these bodies and buried them." A different Medrash tells us, "Immediately Moshe went to Pharaoh, and said. 'You want their work done for you in the best way, give them one day a week to rest.' Pharaoh said, 'Go and do it.'" These Midrashim illustrate Moshe's high level sensitivity for the dignity and pain of Klal Yisrael, and his Zerizus in helping them. Based on these Midrashim which give us insight into who Moshe was, Rashi's comment (that Moshe needed to focus to experience their pain) becomes even more difficult to understand.

The perplexity of Rashi is furthered by the following Midrashim which describe the pain and suffering of Klal Yisrael. The Medrash says, "He saw that their shoulders were bleeding from the load they were carrying, and he made a bandage for them." Another Medrash says. "He saw that

sand was getting in their eyes through the wind, and Moshe went and cleansed their eyes." Clearly the scene was one where the pain and suffering was evident, and would evoke a response from someone like Moshe even without focusing. So why was it necessary for him to focus to feel their pain, wouldn't someone like Moshe seeing such excruciating suffering automatically feel their pain without actively needing to focus?

We can glean an extremely important insight from this Rashi, that even someone as sensitive as Moshe, who is seeing people tortured in front of him, would not be able to reach the maximum amount of empathy without focus. The ramifications and relevance of this idea is extremely significant for us who are not on the level of Moshe Rabbeinu, and surely need to focus to properly be able to feel the pain of others.

This lesson is extremely important in our times with the current Matzav in Eretz Yisrael. We all know that the power of our Tefillah to make a difference is based on the feeling of our heart. The more that we can feel the pain of those that are suffering in Eretz Yisrael, the more we will be able to express a heartfelt Tefillah. It seems from here that the secret to experiencing deeper and more intense feelings is by focusing on the pain of those that are suffering. Thinking about the impact that every soldier lost has on the families - parents, siblings, spouse, and children can help us call out to Hashem with greater feelings, which will surely impact the Hatzalah and Yeshua of so many of our brothers.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

The Medrash (*Bamidbar Rabbah 2:15*) on the Pesukim in this week's Haftorah states: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to him (Yirmiyah), 'From the north will begin the bad..' And what does it say following this? 'Go proclaim to Yerushalayim: Thus said Hashem: I accounted to your favor the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride — How you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Yisroel is holy to Hashem the first fruits of His harvest.' This is analogous to a king who married a woman. He said, 'There is none more beautiful than her, there is none more praiseworthy than her, there is none more put together than her.' The woman's aid entered her house and saw her in her filth, the house was not set up, and the beds were not made. Her aid said to her, 'I wish you'd hear how your husband praised you in the street, that praise does not fit with these deeds.' The aid said 'If when she is filthy he praises her so, if she acted properly how much more so.' So too, the generation of Yirmiyah was sinful and He said to them, 'I remember the kindness of your youth.' Yirmiyah said to them, 'I wish you'd hear what He says about you, 'Go proclaim to Jerusalem...I accounted to your favor the devotion of your youth...Yisroel is holy to Hashem...' He said, 'If when they sin He praises them so, when they do His will how much more so.'"

We see from here that the most effective way to get one to amend their evil ways is by letting them know how much you appreciate the good in them. This will make them think, "If when I act inappropriately, he thinks so highly of me, how much more will he admire me if I amend my ways!"



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"Moshe said to Hashem, 'When I come to Klal Yisrael and say to them, 'The G-d of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?' And Hashem said to Moshe, 'Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh - I will be that I will be.' He continued, 'Thus shall you say to Klal Yisrael, 'Ehyeh sent me to you.'" (*Shemos 3:16*)

Rashi explains: "I will be that I will be — I will be with them in this sorrow — I Who will be with them in the subjection they will suffer at the hands of other kingdoms." (*Berachos 9b*)

One may ask: Hashem has many names, each conveying a certain aspect of our perception of His traits, Ehyeh is the rarest of those and is not used anywhere else in Tanach. Many of Hashem's more common names seem more fitting to convey encouragement to Bnei Yisroel during their bondage, such as those mentioned in the Pasuk (*Shemos 34:6*): G-d, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to Anger, Abounding in Kindness and Faithful. Why of all the many names of Hashem did He choose specifically this one to introduce Himself to Bnei Yisroel during their suffering?

Let us explain with a story: *When Dr. Halperin, the eminent mental health expert in Yerushalayim, was asked what he does when he can't help someone he responded, "I send him to Rav Aryeh Levin." When they asked Rav Aryeh "What is your secret that lets you help people whom the greatest professionals couldn't help?" he answered, "I know how to listen, and share their pain."* What Rav Aryeh said to Dr. Halperin is what we learn from the above Pasuk. The first and most powerful way to relieve another's suffering is letting them know, what Hashem always lets us know, that you truly feel their pain.