

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Importance of Experiential Learning in Building Emunah

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

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | 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 (19:9) states, "Hashem said to Moshe, behold I am coming to you in a thick cloud, so that the nation will hear when I speak to you, and they will believe in you forever."

The Seforno comments, "They will believe in your Nevuah being face to face, because I will speak to them face to face, without a dream...They thought that Nevuah was not possible while in a state of consciousness, however, now they will see that Nevuah is possible in this state. Like it says, 'Hashem spoke to Moshe face to face.' They never questioned Moshe Rabbeinu's Nevuah, as they knew that the Avos, Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam already had Nevuah. However, until now every Nevuah was with a dream or vision. Therefore, **Moshe's Nevuah being in a state of consciousness would have been a doubt to them, if not for them experiencing it.** Through this experience they believed in Moshe's words, and no other Navi can dispute him, as their Nevuah was not on his level."

Upon initial analysis this Seforno is perplexing; Klal Yisrael would have had no doubt in Moshe Rabbeinu being a Navi, as they experienced Nevuah through the Avos, Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. They knew that Moshe Rabbeinu predicted the start and end of all the Makkos in the name of Hashem. In addition, they saw his close connection with Hashem especially by Krias Yam Suf, as they experienced miracles through him that were never seen before. With this backdrop, if Moshe Rabbeinu would have said to Klal Yisrael that Hashem

speaks to him in a different way than all previous prophets, the conversations are face to face, why wouldn't they believe him just because they didn't experience it? They knew he was a Navi who had been picked to orchestrate Nissim that were never seen, surely he wasn't lying!

It must be that intellectually Klal Yisrael fully would have believed Moshe Rabbeinu, however, emotionally they would have been skeptical. Their lack of being able to conceptualize this level of Nevuah would have made it impossible to believe it, thereby putting the Torah in jeopardy of being questioned in later generations. Only through their own experience of this level of Nevuah, were they able to deepen this Emunah in Moshe Rabbeinu in their hearts, thereby securing the Torah for all of time.

We can glean from here an important insight, often we try to convince people that have not experienced something themselves about the beauty and enjoyment of different concepts, unsure of why our logical messages don't seem to be resonating. These messages can range from describing the pleasure of learning a Tosfos, to the beauty of Shabbos. However, these messages may be logically sound but emotionally blocked, due to the listeners lack of personal experience. Therefore if we want to build someone's Emunah and receptivity it is not enough to explain the concept, we need to provide opportunities for our children and Talmidim to experience it for themselves.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

“His head is as the finest gold; his locks are curled, [they are as] black as a raven.” (*Shir HaShirim 5:11*)

“His head is as the finest gold: *The beginning of His words shone like finest gold, and so Scripture says: “The commencement of Your words enlightens.” (Tehillim 119:130) The commencement of, “I am the L-rd your G-d” showed them first that He has the right of sovereignty over them, and He then issued His decrees upon them.” (Rashi)*

On the Pasuk in Tehillim quoted above, Rashi elaborates further:

“The commencement of Your words enlightens: The beginning of Your words enlightened the heart of Israel, that You understand the simple, by Your statement, “I am Hashem Who took you out.” You let them know the favor that You did for them that You acquired them from the house of bondage to know that You are their Master, and they should accept Your kingdom upon themselves. “You shall not have another god, etc.” and afterwards You made Your decrees.” (Rashi, Tehillim 119:130)

Let us imagine: Klal Yisroel stands by Har Sinai as the Creator of Heaven and Earth opens all the Heavens above, showing them that Ein od milvado – there is no one else besides Him. He has chosen them to be His chosen nation. He has the power to punish those who disobey Him and provide infinite and eternal reward to those who follow His commands. However, it seems that all of that is not enough. In order to truly get His nation to accept His kingship upon themselves He must first, “Let them know the favor that He did for them.”

In the depths of Galus, far removed from the grandeur of Har Sinai, the imperative to precede the acceptance of Hashem's kingship with an acknowledgment of His benevolence becomes even more pronounced. Miracles, logical arguments, and compelling evidence may pale in comparison to the impact of conveying the kindness that Hashem has bestowed upon individuals. This approach recognizes that connecting on a personal and grateful level resonates more deeply with human nature than any external displays of power or persuasion.



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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“A heretic saw that Rava was immersed in studying halacha, and his fingers were beneath his leg, and he was squeezing them, and his fingers were spurting blood. Rava did not notice that he was bleeding because he was engrossed in study. The heretic said to Rava: ‘You impulsive nation, who accorded precedence to your mouths over your ears. You still bear your impulsiveness, as you act without thinking. You should listen first. Then, if you are capable of fulfilling the commandments, accept them. And if not, do not accept them.’ He said to him: ‘About us, who proceed wholeheartedly and with integrity [*Rashi - trusting in Hashem that He will not over burden us*], it is written (*Proverbs 11:3*): ‘The integrity of the upright will guide them,’ whereas about those people who walk in deceit, it is written at the end of the same Pasuk: ‘And the perverseness of the faithless will destroy them.’” (*Shabbos 88a*)

This Gemara resonates with the Vilna Gaon's insight that the central purpose of giving the Torah to Klal Yisroel is to instill Bitachon - trust in Hashem. The narrative underscores that the receiving of the Torah and its' Mitzvos was through our Bitachon in Hashem, as exemplified by Rava's immersion in learning despite physical discomfort, with the trust that he could handle it.

Moreover, the episode imparts a valuable lesson regarding spiritual obligations. It encourages a perspective that avoids becoming overwhelmed by the weight of Mitzvos we have. Instead, it advocates placing trust in Hashem, believing that through His guidance, fulfillment of these commandments will lead to happiness in this world and eternal bliss in the World to Come. The narrative thus serves as a powerful reminder of the inseparable connection between Bitachon and the receiving of the Torah.