

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

Lending With Dignity

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 | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

In this week's Parsha, the Pasuk says (22:24), "When you will lend money to my people, to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not place interest upon him."

Rashi comments on the words "The poor person who is with you" as follows, "Look at yourself as if you are the poor person." From this Rashi we can derive the extent of a person's discomfort to borrowing money. Since a person is usually embarrassed to borrow money as he feels put down, part of the Mitzvah of lending money is for the lender to create an atmosphere in which the poor person feels equal to the lender.

An additional insight into a person's sensitivity towards borrowing money can be derived from Rashi's comments on the words "Do not act toward him as a creditor." Rashi comments, "Do not make your claim against him forcibly, if you know he does not have the funds to repay the debt. Do not appear to him as if you lent to him, but rather as if you did not lend to him. That is to say, do not embarrass him." It is clear from Rashi that a lender's obligation to not embarrass the borrower, goes beyond approaching the borrower and telling him it is okay that he is unable to pay. It is a lender's obligation to make the borrower feel as if he never lent him the money, otherwise the lender would be considered as having embarrassed the borrower. We see from here that it is not enough to make the borrower feel like an equal. The lender has to go as far as making the borrower feel as if he did not lend him the money.

This insight into a person's sensitivity to borrowing money can be further expanded upon based on the Ramban. The Ramban writes, "The lender should not be a ruler over the borrower, as it says (Mishlei 22:7) 'And the borrower is a servant to the lender.' However he should act towards him in every matter as if he never lent him." It seems from the Ramban, that a lender's obligation goes beyond acting towards him as if you never lent him the specific money that he owes. As the Ramban says "As if he never lent him," which implies that even if there were other loans in the past that were already repaid, the lender should act as if the borrower and him never entered into such a relationship. This Ramban illustrates the great discomfort one who borrows money endures, and it is therefore the lender's obligation to create an atmosphere in which it is as if this relationship never existed.

We can glean from the above how painful it is for someone to have to borrow money, as he becomes indebted and ruled over by the lender, and how sensitive the lender must be to this embarrassment. We find a similar idea of the sensitivity of the soul to borrowing money expressed by the Alter of Slabodka. The Alter points out that in Bentching we say, "Please Hashem let us not need to receive gifts from human beings, rather directly from your hand that is full, open, holy, and expansive, so that we not be embarrassed and humiliated forever." The Alter points out that our soul is so sensitive to its dignity, that if we would receive gifts from Hashem, but the gifts were somewhat restrained, we would be embarrassed forever.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

In this week's Haftorah Hashem tells us how He will comfort us when Moshiach comes:

*As a son - who mourns his mother who has left him and he believes she has died - **who's mother** - who in reality is still alive and she herself - **comforts him, so I will comfort you** - for over Me you have mourned. (Yeshayah 66:13 with Malbim's commentary)*

How can the Pasuk be saying that Klal Yisroel in Galus, the nation of Ma'a'minim Bnei Ma'a'minim, who have sacrificed their lives to fulfill the Mitzvos in every generation, and pray three times each day, "VeliYerushalayim irchah b'rachamim tashuv...for Your salvation we await the entire day...", mourns over Hashem as a son mourns over his mother whom he believes to be dead? Do we not say in Tehillim (44:22,23) "...for He knows the secrets of the heart. It is for Your sake that we are slain all day long, that we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered!" Do Chazal not tell us that the ultimate redemption will come about through our Emunah? How can we, at the time of the Geulah, be considered as nonbelievers?!

It seems the analogy of Klal Yisroel in Galus to a son who believes his mother has died merely refers to the feeling we sometimes have that Hashem has distanced Himself from us. However, if this is the case, how will Hashem comfort us as a mother who comforts her son by showing him that his entire mourning is mistaken for she has never died? We always knew Hashem will ultimately redeem us, but, that doesn't mean our mourning for his parting was mistaken!

It seems that when Moshiach, comes Hashem will comfort us by showing us that at all those times we suffered so greatly and we thought He had distanced Himself from us, we were mistaken! He was right there sharing our pain and holding our hands as He was carrying out His master plan to bring His children back home!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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I heard a story this week (from the son-in-law of the person it happened to) that should bring great comfort to each and every one of us.

Kaminetz, Poland, in the 1930's.

Tzvi was a bright young boy learning in yeshiva, when he received a draft notice to the Polish army. Frightened, he ran to his Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, zt"l, and tearfully related the terrible news. Rav Baruch Ber wrapped his rabbinic cloak around Tzvi, closed his eyes, and pronounced with emotion, "The army doesn't need you; we need you! The army doesn't need you; we need you!" The next day, Tzvi arrived at the local army office where a doctor gave him an exemption from service for an injured leg, despite having no injury whatsoever!

Why should this story bring us great comfort when we do not have Rav Baruch Ber to run to and hide inside his cloak anymore?

Because we can run and hide in the cloak of Someone much greater...

How precious is Your faithful care, O G-d! Mankind shelters in the shadow of Your wings! (Tehillim 17:8) Guard me like the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings! (Tehillim 36:8) Have mercy on me, O G-d, have mercy on me, for I seek refuge in You, I seek refuge in the shadow of Your wings, until danger passes! (ibid. 57:2)