

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

It's All About Connecting to Hashem

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-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, Parshas Teruma, the Pasuk says, "You should make curtains of goat skins." The Medrash comments on this Pasuk and says the following, "Rebbi Yaakov the son of Rebbi Asi says, what does it mean when the Pasuk says, 'Hashem, I love your house where You live, the dwelling place of Your glory.' The Mishkan is equated to the creation of the world. Where is this hinted? This is because it is written....He stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and what is written by the Mishkah, and You made curtains of goat skins."

This equation requires further explanation. The creation of the world set into motion the entire purpose of creation, which was so that Klal Yisrael should learn Torah. It set the stage for Hashem being able to fulfill His purpose of giving the ultimate good to man. The Mishkan was the creation of a place on earth where Hashem can rest His Shechinah, and His presence can be felt. What is the connection between these two ideas? Furthermore, the Zohar says that when the Beis Hamikdash was built it gave Hashem the greatest joy. Why does this give Hashem the greatest joy, more than all the other Mitzvos?

We can explain the Medrash by understanding the purpose of creation. Why did Hashem want us to learn Torah, so that we could connect to Him? That connection was the

purpose of the creation of the world. Therefore, Hashem resting his Shechinah on the Mishkan, is the culmination of the purpose of creation. The Mishkan gave Klal Yisrael a place to connect to Hashem in a tangible way, and feel His presence. This explains why the Mishkan is equated to the creation of the world, and why Hashem felt the greatest Simcha on the day the Beis Hamikdash was built, as these allowed for the culmination of the purpose of creation.

Often we focus on fulfilling our responsibilities; they may include our learning goals or other areas of Avodas Hashem. We tend to lose sight of the fact that these goals need to lead us to feeling a closer connection to Hashem. Sadly, it is possible for a person to daven Shacharis, Mincha, and Maariv, learn all day and not think about Hashem once! If we realize that connecting to Hashem and feeling His presence is the purpose of the world, we can place greater emphasis on focusing on this connection. There are many strategies to achieve this, however, one strategy that was taught to us by Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer is the following: He used to learn by saying, "Abaye said, who heard from his Rebbi all the way back to Moshe Rabbeinu, who heard from Hashem." This way he constantly focused on Hashem while he was learning.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

And they shall make for Me a dwelling place and I will dwell in their midst – in the midst of each and every one of them. (Parshas Terumah 25:8 with commentary of Rabbeinu Ephraim)

And you, my beloved, are handsome, Beautiful indeed! Our couch the base of the bed is fresh even though the bed sheets were removed with the iniquity of our actions, for they have caused You to hide Your face, nevertheless the base of the bed i.e. the knowledge of Hashem and the inclination of our hearts towards Him, is new and fresh as always and it's ready to accept the bedsheets, 'when Hashem returns to Tzion' for we have not forgotten the name of our G-d. (Shir HaShirim 1:16 with commentary of the Seforno)

Perhaps we can explain the Seforno's cryptic words as follows:

The Beis Hamikdash was where we lived with the Shechinah like a husband and wife as symbolized in the Cherubim, the image of a boy and girl facing each other, until due to our sins it was destroyed. One may understand the Beis Hamikdash to be analogues to a couples' bed, however, the Seforno explains that this isn't so, rather, it is analogous to the bedsheets upon which the couple rest. What then is the bed itself? The heart of each and every Jew. As Rabbeinu Ephraim explains, Hashem dwells in each and every one of us, for we are analogous to the bed itself, upon which the bedsheet, the Beis Hamikdash, is spread out where Hashem directly rests His Shechinah. Even in the depth of our Galus, no matter how distanced from Hashem and uninterested in Him we may seem, our hearts, even after 2000 years the base of the bed i.e. the knowledge of Hashem and the inclination of our hearts towards Him, is as new and as fresh as ever, yearning for our Chosson's return!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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One area that always requires Chizuk is Emunah. There is a fascinating Medrash in Parshas Yisro on the Pasuk, "I am Hashem your G-d, who took you out of Egypt", which shares with us a prerequisite for Emunah. The Medrash says, "Denying good is equated to denying Hashem. Similarly, Hashem said to Yisrael, I am Hashem your G-d. What are the words, 'who took you out of Egypt' coming to teach us? Hashem said to Yisrael, be careful that you don't deny the good, because if you deny the good you won't be able to accept Hashem as your king. Similarly, Yehoshua said to Klal Yisrael, 'If you deny this good you won't be able to serve Hashem.' They answered him, 'Hashem is our G-d who brought us up, we have gratitude to Hashem for this, we do not deny the good.'"

The Medrash is making a connection between Hakaras Hatov and Kabalas Malchus Shamayim. However, the connection made by the Medrash is not merely a connection that uses Hakaras Hatov as a motivator - that if one recognizes Hashem's good he will feel obligated to serve him. The Medrash takes this much further and says that without Hakaras Hatov one will not be able to accept Malchus Shamayim or serve Hashem. This idea is a massive Chiddush, as one would have thought that if a person sees open miracles like they saw in Egypt, even if they deny the good in their heart, they would still be able to recognize Hashem is the boss and accept Malchus Shamayim. Yet we see from here, that when a person disconnects Hashem from the good in his heart, that wedge has such a devastating effect on his relationship with Hashem, that he won't be able to accept Malchus Shamayim, which is equated to denying Hashem.

We can learn from here an important insight. Without a person recognizing the Chesed Hashem in his life, his Kabalas Malchus Shamyim will be lacking. Any deficiency in his recognition of the daily blessing that he has, will have devastating effects on his Emunah, as it is equated to denying Hashem. It is therefore critical that we spend time focusing and connecting the good in our lives to Hashem, so that we will be able to be Mekabel Malchus Shamayim.