

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

## The Seeds of Rebellion

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 (*Shelach 14:9*), Yehoshua and Calev said to Klal Yisrael, "However, don't rebel against Hashem." The Ramban comments on this Pasuk, "Your fear of the strength of the nation that lives there is rebellion against Hashem. You did not leave Mitzrayim based on your strength, it was Hashem's hand who did these wonders. He guaranteed you that you would inherit Eretz Yisrael. If so, believe and you will succeed."

Upon initial analysis, this Ramban is difficult to understand. Where is the rebellion? All their fear seems to demonstrate is a lack of Bitachon in Hashem. In response to this fear, a speech inspiring them and reminding them of the miracles of Egypt and Hashem's promise to give them Eretz Yisrael would surely address this fear. However, where in this fear is there any hint of rebellion? It must be that when a person is fully aware of the Yad Hashem through first hand experience, he has the tools to prevent being overwhelmed by fear. He can do this accessing his own experiences with the miracles of Hashem and temper that fear. Therefore, if a person allows this fear to overpower him, it must be that somewhere inside him he really wants to rebel. This is a fascinating insight as it shows us that a very normal reaction to a scary situation can be motivated by a rebellion beneath the surface.

A similar idea can be derived from the Rabbeinu Bachya on this Pasuk. "The Pasuk teaches us that the fear of the nation is rebellion against Hashem. Similarly, Shlomo Hamelech said 'The fear of a person puts a stumbling block.' The fear that a person experiences from a human being, places a stumbling block for his soul. Similarly, it causes him to forget Hashem, as it says in Yeshaya, 'Who are you...and you forgot Hashem who made you?'"

The Rabbeinu Bachya seems to be equating three ideas, fear is rebellion, fear causes a person to stumble, and fear causes a person

to forget Hashem. These ideas all seem to be separate results of fear, why is he combining them into one idea? It must be that a person who encounters fear is now in danger, putting a stumbling block in front of him and causing him to forget Hashem - a very vulnerable state to be in. Therefore, a person who experiences fear would do everything to rise above this fear so as not to be exposed to such danger. A lack of doing this can only be because deep down he wants to rebel. Once again, one would think that fear is causing the stumbling block and him forgetting Hashem, however, we see it as a seed of rebellion which is truly the cause. This lesson is still valid, even though we know that they were spiritual giants - and thus their rebelliousness must have been very small - but because of their stature, the Torah views it very seriously.

In Parshas Bechukosai, we find a similar idea that an underlying seed of rebellion is really the root cause of something that would seem to be manifesting itself due to other reasons. The Pasuk (26:14) states, "If they do not listen to me." Rashi says that if someone does not labor in Torah, they recognize their Creator and are intending to rebel against Him. This Rashi presents a challenge, as there are so many factors why a person would not labor in Torah besides trying to rebel. Perhaps he is lazy or doesn't value it? Where is the rebellion against Hashem? It must be that to a person who recognizes the Chashivus of Torah, and how it directly connects you to Hashem, the only way that he would fail to labor in it, is if he was trying to rebel.

From all of the above we see that at times a normal reaction such as fear or not laboring in Torah due to laziness, is really a result of a feeling of rebellion that lies beneath the surface. Knowing this, can help spur us to learn Mussar and directly address the fear or laziness with a renewed Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim which will work to dissipate feelings of rebellion.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

**Kiss me, from the kisses of Your mouth for Your love** (the words of the Oral Torah) **is better than wine** (the Written Torah).

(**Shir HaShirim 1:2**, with Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zara)

In this week's Parsha, we encounter a Pasuk that discusses the severe consequences for someone who acts defiantly and curses Hashem. The Gemara in Sanhedrin further broadens the scope of those who despise the word of Hashem, including individuals who have the opportunity to engage in Torah study but choose not to. This may seem puzzling, as it raises the question of how one who neglects Torah study can be equated to someone who actively curses Hashem.

To gain insight into this concept, we must recognize the nature of Torah study. The Torah represents the Divine thoughts and wisdom of Hashem. When we engage in Torah study, we are granted the privilege of connecting with Hashem's thoughts and becoming unified with Him in a profound way. It is as if He is kissing us on the mouth, imparting His knowledge to us and merging His essence with ours.

Chazal teach us that the presence of the Shechinah accompanies those who study Torah. Tana D'Vei Eliyahu explains that when a Talmid Chacham sits and delves into the depths of Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He, sits opposite them, studying alongside him. This extraordinary partnership between Hashem and the Torah scholar highlights the intimate and personal relationship established through Torah study.

When an individual turns down the precious opportunity to engage in Torah study, it is akin to rejecting a personal and intimate meeting with a powerful king. Such an action demonstrates the utmost disrespect and disregard. Considering that the Torah is the manifestation of Hashem, the rejection of Torah study reflects a profound level of disrespect towards Hashem Himself.

By understanding the depth and significance of Torah study, we can appreciate the gravity of neglecting its pursuit. It is a missed opportunity to connect intimately with Hashem and delve into His Divine wisdom, which ultimately leads to a deepening of our relationship with our Creator.



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

A Westwood Realty Initiative

In this week's Parsha, the Meraglim express a perplexing statement to Klal Yisrael. They declare, "We cannot attack that people, for it is stronger than Him." Chazal explain that the pronoun "Him" refers to Hashem Himself. This raises the question: How could the Meraglim, who were esteemed leaders of Klal Yisrael, make such a claim?

The Chofetz Chaim offers an insightful explanation to shed light on their perspective. He suggests that the Meraglim were not necessarily questioning Hashem's overall power, but rather they believed that the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael were stronger than what they perceived as Hashem's attribute of strict justice, known as Midas Hadin. In other words, they felt that due to their own sins and the resultant judgment, Klal Yisroel would face insurmountable challenges.

Yehoshua, however, responds with a powerful rebuttal. He reminds the people of the numerous miracles and salvations that Hashem had performed for them. Yehoshua argues that if Hashem had already demonstrated His miraculous power by dividing the Yam Suf, providing manna from heaven, and sending quails for sustenance, then they should not lose hope. Despite their sins and the potential application of Midas Hadin, Hashem had consistently saved and protected them.

According to some interpretations by the Rishonim, Tehillim echoes this sentiment: "Because they did not put their trust in Hashem, did not rely on His deliverance." This verse emphasizes the crucial lesson that we can derive from this episode. If we find ourselves doubting Hashem's ability to save us due to our own transgressions, we must recognize that just as Hashem has saved us in the past despite our failings, He will continue to provide salvation in the future.

This lesson encourages us to maintain trust and reliance on Hashem's deliverance, even when faced with difficulties. Instead of succumbing to doubt and despair, we should draw strength from Hashem's history of delivering miracles and guidance throughout generations. It reminds us of Hashem's unwavering commitment to His people and inspires us to persevere in our faith, knowing that Hashem's salvation knows no bounds.