

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

A Perspective On External Motivation

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

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן -ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

The Ralbag derives the following lesson from this week's Parsha. "The fourteenth lesson is to teach us that it is inappropriate to be lazy in eulogizing a wise man. Rather it is fitting to do it right away. This Zerizus will benefit a person to achieve Shleimus - human perfection to whatever degree possible - through recognizing what was taken away from us by losing this wise man. This is why the Torah tells us that the entire Klal Yisrael cried for Aharon for thirty days, and next to this the Torah places the victory over the Canaanites, the king of Arad, to tell us that one who does this, Hashem will give him a reward."

The Torah is written both for one who is on a level where he needs rewards to motivate him, and for one who is on a level where he is motivated by Shleimus. Based on this premise we can ask, why is it necessary to motivate a person who's sole desire is achieving Shleimus by telling him that Klal Yisrael were victorious as a reward for eulogizing Aharon? For this person, just telling him that through the eulogy more Shleimus will be achieved should provide sufficient motivation!

We see from here that even someone on the highest level will increase his motivation if he is aware of an external reward that he will receive in this world.

Another insight can be derived from the Ralbag's lesson. He emphasizes that it is the Zerizus which is going to lead a person to achieve Shleimus. However, it seems that the Shleimus is being achieved through recognizing the greatness of the person who died. Why then is Zerizus a factor in achieving Shleimus? We see from here that it is not merely inspiration alone that causes Shleimus, but zeal to achieve Shleimus is a necessary component to attain it.

The Power Of The Picture

In this week's Parsha, (21:8,9) the Torah tells us that Hashem sent the burning snakes against Klal Yisrael, and they bit the people, and many people died. Klal Yisrael then came to Moshe to remove the snakes. Hashem said to Moshe, "Make for yourself an image of the burning snake, place it on a pole and anyone bitten should look at it and they will live." The Seforno comments, "Make for yourself a Seraph figure, the snake should be constructed of material which is associated with burning. The association with 'burning one's tongue' should be uppermost in their minds when contemplating

their sin, which had been that they allowed their tongues to utter thoughts that angered Hashem. They would repent when looking at a snake called Seraph, something which 'burns.' After Moshe had understood what Hashem had intended with His command, he agreed to make this replica of a snake out of copper and not out of gold. Copper would be more likely to induce thoughts of remorse as they would associate its color with the sensation of burning."

It is interesting to note that the goal here is to get Klal Yisrael to do Teshuva by recognizing their sin of Lashon Hara. One would think that if we are talking about the Dor Deah, the greatest generation to ever exist, sending a spiritual and emotional message would be enough to get them to do Teshuva. However, it seems that a pictorial message is needed in addition to the other messages. A person needs to see the snake, and the snake has to be made from copper, a combustible material called Nechoshes, as in Nachash, snake, reminiscent of the Lashon Hara of the snake to Chava. This will inspire the Teshuva, and allow Klal Yisrael to fully internalize the message. We see from here how important it is to have ציור חושי, something one can picture with his senses. Utilizing this tool is the key to penetrating the message deeply into our hearts, even to people on such high and lofty levels.

A similar idea can be found in the Shaarei Teshuva. The Pasuk states, "When you go out to war against your enemy and you see a horse and chariot of a nation that is greater than you, you should not be afraid of them." The Shaarei teshuva says that we are warned with this that if a person sees that danger is close, the salvation of Hashem should be in his heart, and He should trust in Hashem.

It sounds like there is a two-step process in a situation of danger when an army is approaching. First the salvation should be in your heart, and then trust in Hashem. One would think that in a situation of danger a person will automatically trust in Hashem, as he realizes there is no one else to turn to. However it sounds like from the Shaarei Teshuva that first a person has to think and feel that the Yeshua could happen. Hashem has a greater army, and it is possible for Him to save me. This feeling is not trust yet, but rather a feeling that inspires hope. Only then can a person trust Hashem. The vehicle to reach trust is first picturing the salvation in your heart, only then can trust come. Once again we see the need for ציור חושי, when working on ourselves.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

Shir HaShirim teaches us that no matter the current spiritual level of any Jew, he is holy of holies and closer to Hashem than any other creation.

How can we understand this?

The *Medrash (Tanchuma Kedoshim 5)* states:

“For as the girdle clings unto one's loins, [so I have made all the House of Israel and all the House of Judah cling to Me, says the Lord].” Therefore, the Pasuk (*Vayikra 19:2*) states, “You will be holy, because I, the Lord, am holy.”

The Maharal explains this *Medrash* as follows:

“The explanation of this “clinging” is that Yisroel cling to Hashem completely to such an extent that through this clinging they receive from Hashem all levels of holiness. For there is no doubt that two things that cling to each other receive from each other due to their clinging... It is impossible for this connection to be severed.” (*Netzach Yisroel 13*)

Perhaps, if Klal Yisroel had initiated this clinging to Hashem then it would be possible for us to let go. However, Hashem says, “*I have made all the House of Israel and all the House of Judah cling to Me,*” and therefore it will remain, despite our sins, for all of eternity!



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Chavakuk came and established the entirety of Torah on one principle, “And the righteous will live within his faith.”
(Chavakuk 2:4, Makos 24a)

What does “live within his faith” - upon whose fulfillment the Novi establishes the entire Torah - mean?

The Chazon Ish (*Emunah U'Bitachon* Chap. 2;2) explains the difference between Emunah and Bitachon as follows: “Emunah is the general outlook of the believer whereas Bitachon is the outlook of the believer upon himself. Emunah is the halachic aspect whereas Bitachon is its actuality.” In other words, Emunah is the theory, and Bitachon is actually living with this Emunah in one's day to day life.

Based on the above it would seem that “living within one's faith” - upon which the entire Torah depends upon - is in fact what we refer to as Bitachon.

This idea can be found explicitly in the words of the Vilna Gaon in his work on Mishlei (22:19) where he explains three Pesukim in Tehillim as follows:

And He established testimony – the prophets and scriptures – ***in Yaakov and Torah He placed amongst Israel. He commanded our forefathers to teach them to their children. So that the later generations will know. For children they will bear, and they will pass it on to them.*** [All this is for what?] ***And they will place in Hashem their trust.*** – For the primary reason for the giving of the Torah is so that we will have Bitachon in Hashem. (*Tehillim 78:5-7* – with the explanation of the Vilna Gaon)