

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

Forgive and Forget

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 | הפאל 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 (21:7) states, "The nation came to Moshe and said, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against Hashem and against you. Daven to Hashem to take away the serpents from us.' So Moshe davened on behalf of the people." The Ralbag derives an important lesson from this incident, highlighting the dynamics of forgiveness. When a person sins against another and sincerely regrets their actions, acknowledging their wrongdoing, it is appropriate for the injured party to accept this and grant forgiveness. This is exemplified by the fact that as soon as Klal Yisroel recognized and regretted their sin, Moshe accepted their repentance and davened for their relief from the serpents.

This insight from the Ralbag offers a fascinating perspective on interpersonal relationships. Often, when we encounter conflict or are offended, we tend to condition forgiveness on the other person explicitly asking for it. However, in this instance, Klal Yisroel did not formally request forgiveness; they simply expressed regret and showed recognition of their mistake. Yet, this was enough for Moshe to forgive them. While it remains an obligation for the one who caused harm to seek forgiveness, we can learn from Moshe's actions that the injured party should extend forgiveness even without a direct

request, as long as they witness genuine remorse and acknowledgment of the wrongdoing. This principle carries significant implications for our daily interactions. Too frequently, we uphold a rigid stance, waiting for the other party to approach us and ask for forgiveness. However, this can be difficult for them due to embarrassment and shame, even if they do recognize and regret their actions. The lesson here is that our standard for forgiveness should be based on sincere recognition and regret, rather than a formal request for forgiveness.

Another valuable insight that can be derived from the Ralbag's interpretation relates to the connection between forgiveness and Tefillah. The Ralbag assumes that Moshe's act of davening for Klal Yisroel indicates his forgiveness of them. But why is this assumption made? Can't someone be upset with another person for causing them harm and, at the same time, genuinely care about their suffering and pain, leading to heartfelt Tefillah on their behalf? It appears from this perspective that as long as we hold onto feelings of resentment towards someone, we cannot sincerely daven for their well-being. This insight should motivate us to cultivate forgiveness in our hearts, enabling us to genuinely daven for others, especially during times of their distress and hardship.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

In this week's Parsha we find Bilam seeking to curse Klal Yisroel, but can't help himself from proclaiming their praise:

He - Hashem, **did not gaze at the iniquity** - when they sin before Him He is not exacting with them to dwell on their sins, **in Yaakov and He did not see toil in Yisroel, Hashem, their G-d, is with them** - even when they anger Him and rebel against Him He does not budge from among them, **and their King's acclaim** - love and friendship, **is in their midst.** (Bamidbar 23:21 with Rashi)

But is the above true praise of Klal Yisroel or is it merely a praise of Hashem who, despite Klal Yisroel's sinfulness, overlooks their iniquity?

A look at the Netziv of Volozhin's (Emek Davar) explanation of this Pasuk provides an answer to this question.

He did not gaze at the iniquity in Yaakov, the iniquity in Yaakov is not intrinsically rooted in their hearts (for "gaze" means to look intensely at something's innerness), rather they sin due to a temporary spirit of foolishness. This is as Chazal teach us in Bamidbar Rabbah on the Pasuk in Shir HaShirim (8:8), "We have a little sister..." That is the reason Hashem's love for Klal Yisroel is overwhelming even though they sin just as the nations of the world do, for their sins are like a child's without mindfulness.

Indeed, Klal Yisroel's intrinsic greatness is the reason why, "Even when they anger Him and rebel against Him, He does not budge from among them!"



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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Who is assured of a place in the World-to-Come? It is one who juxtaposes the blessing of redemption, recited after Shema, to the evening prayer. (Brachos 4b)

"Does it make sense that simply by juxtaposing the bracha of redemption to the prayer, one should receive the great reward of Olam Haba? The answer is that when one mentions the redemption from Mitzrayim and immediately prays, they demonstrate their trust in Hashem through their prayer. By asking Him for their needs, they exhibit bitachon in Him, for someone who lacks bitachon does not ask anything of Him. Therefore, by mentioning the redemption from Mitzrayim, where Klal Yisrael had bitachon in Hashem and He saved them, and then immediately davening, they show that they too have bitachon that Hashem will answer them, just as He answered Klal Yisrael because they trusted in Him. Thus, they mention the redemption and immediately daven. And since bitachon is at the core of the fear of Heaven and emunah, through it, one merits Olam Haba." (Rabbeinu Yona *ibid.*)

It is interesting to note how these words of Rabbeinu Yona echo the words of the Ramchal (Ma'amar HaKivuy):

"One who has bitachon, even if they enter Gehinom, they will exit... Numerous heavenly angels raise them up... and accompany them upwards... One who has bitachon literally breaks through with their bitachon and creates a hole and crack that enables them to go up under Hashem's throne... Just as they had bitachon during their lifetime, they continue to strengthen their bitachon afterwards, when the forces of judgment begin to overwhelm them. They become attached to Hashem through their strengthened bitachon..."