

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

Feeling Close to Hashem- A Prerequisite for Teshuva

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 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 (31:17-18), the Torah tells us that the Klal Yisrael will engage in Avodah Zarah, and then Hashem, "Will abandon them, and hide his face from them...they will experience many bad things and suffering. They will say on that day, this is because Hashem is not among us. I hid my face from them on that day due to all the bad that they did, because they turned to other gods."

The Seforno explains these Pesukim that, "Hashem will abandon them in the hands of the nations who will overpower them. Due to their suffering I will hide my compassionate eyes from them as if I don't see their suffering. (Implying that if I would see them suffer, I would be filled with compassion and I would have to save them.) The Klal Yisrael will think (mistakenly), that this is all happening because Hashem removed his Shechinah from them. This perspective will cause them not to turn to Hashem in Tefillah or Teshuva. Hashem addresses this mistaken perspective and says, wherever they are, my Shechinah is there... however I hid my face from saving them. Therefore, when they experience suffering for their sins, they don't turn to Tefillah and Teshuva. They rather turn to be saved by those serving other gods."

Upon initial analysis it is difficult to understand Klal Yisrael's lack of turning to Hashem. Granted they thought the Shechinah left them, however, they knew intellectually that **אין עוד מלבדו**. They experienced Nissim and felt Hashem's

presence. So why would they not turn to Hashem in Tefillah and Teshuva? What is even more perplexing is that Hashem told them that the way to stop the suffering is through Tefillah and Teshuva, so why would they turn to the very thing that caused the suffering in the first place, and not turn to the formula prescribed by Hashem to stop the suffering?

It must be that even if a person has Emunah that Hashem is in control of everything, if he doesn't feel a tangible closeness to Hashem, or worse he feels that Hashem has distanced himself from him, he will not be able to Daven or do Teshuvah. This feeling creates a blockage that impedes a person's heart from Tefilah and Teshuva. So despite a person's Emunah that Hashem is in control of everything, he won't be able, or may find it very difficult, to reach out to Hashem.

A powerful insight can be gleaned from here in regards to Teshuvah and Tefillah. Often we try to improve our Tefillah, and begin the steps of Teshuva during the days of Elul. We see from here that a prerequisite for this is a feeling of closeness to Hashem, and without this feeling we may not be able to begin this process. Therefore, it is important to not just focus on Teshuva and Tefillah during these days, but to also focus on how close Hashem is to us. Perhaps this is the essence of the message being conveyed in **אנו** being an acronym for **אני לדודי ודודי לי**.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

...For the Lord desires you, and your land shall be inhabited... and the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you. (Haftorah Parshas Nitzavim, Yeshaya 62:3-5)

The owner of the wedding hall looked on in amazement. He had been taken by surprise when he was informed the Chassan and Kallah were remarrying each other after having been divorced for years, for usually such a celebration would be low key, however what he was now witnessing was the happiest Chasuna he had ever seen. He pulled a close friend of the family, who happened to be an acquaintance of his, aside and asked him for a little more background to the story. What he heard explained it all. The reason the husband and wife had originally divorced was the exact opposite of the usual cause. Their love for each other was actually the envy of many a couple, however there was a medical issue that had forced them to separate. Following their divorce, they had both fallen into a tremendous depression as they both could not imagine going on in life without the other. After five long years of unbelievable suffering doctors had discovered a cure for the medical issue that had caused their separation and they had immediately booked a hall for a Chasuna like no other!

The Malbim explains the above Pasuk: **The rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you**, as follows: Usually when a divorced couple remarries the happiness is lower key than a regular wedding. However, when Hashem will take us back to Him with the coming of Mashiach "the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you." Why is this so when we in fact we have suffered so terribly during the thousands of years of our being distanced from Him? For just as in the above analogy, it was only out of His infinite love that Hashem had been forced to send us away for our own good. In truth, His love for us had never diminished and deep down neither did our love towards Him. Rather we both suffered for thousands of years refusing to give up on each other even on pain of death, such as we suffered countless times rather than forsake Him. Therefore, when the time finally comes when we can return to each other the celebration will be literally the happiest day since the creation of the universe! **The rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you** for all eternity!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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In a profound piyut from the Rosh Hashanah davening, Rabbeinu Shlomo Ibn Gabriel poetically expresses the complex relationship between us and Hashem:

"I will flee from You -Toward You. I will take shelter from Your wrath - In Your shadow."

These Pesukim encapsulate a paradoxical truth about trust in Hashem, as beautifully elucidated by the Brisker Rav. True bitachon isn't a blind reliance on Hashem when one is oblivious to the dangers that surround them. Rather, it's a profound trust that emerges when a person fully comprehends the peril they are in, yet still places their faith in Hashem's ability to save them. This concept is particularly poignant as the Yomim Nora'im approach when individuals are called upon to run toward Hashem and trust in His favorable judgment. But before that, one must, metaphorically speaking, run away from Hashem, recognizing the peril their sins have placed them in.

The Brisker Rav says that this concept is brought out in the words of the Rambam (Pirush Hamishnayos, Rosh HaShana chap. 4) "They [Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur] are days of service, subjugation, fright, and being in awe and fear of Hashem and fleeing from Him and towards Him."

This concept is beautifully brought out every morning during the month of Elul. As Shacharis comes to a close, we blow the shofar to instill in us the fear of the approaching day of judgment. The blast of the shofar symbolizes the awakening of fear and trepidation within our hearts, echoing the words of the Navi, Amos (Amos 3:6), "Will a shofar blast in the city and a people not tremble in fear?"

Yet, immediately following this powerful reminder of judgment, we recite the words of Dovid HaMelech: "LeDovid Hashem ori v'yishi mimi ira - Hashem is my light and my salvation, from whom can I fear?" These words affirm that while we acknowledge the awe and fear of the Divine judgment, we find solace in the light of Hashem's presence, where fear transforms into trust, and refuge is discovered within the shelter of Hashem.

In this delicate balance between fear and trust, we find the essence of the journey towards Teshuvah, forgiveness, and reconnection with Hashem during the Yomim Nora'im.