

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Key To Kabalas Hatorah

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 | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

In this week's Parsha, the Pasuk states (19:19), "The sound of the Shofar grew continually much stronger, Moshe would speak and Hashem would respond to him in a voice." The Ralbag derives the following lesson from here: "This Pasuk comes to tell us the extent of Hashem's Hashgacha on Klal Yisrael, and his desire to benefit us, by giving us the Torah in a manner that we would not have any doubts that it was from Hashem. The purpose of this was so that we would completely believe in the Mitzvos of the Torah, and follow its ways. However, if Moshe would have told them the Torah through prophecy, there would have been room for doubt. Since Klal Yisrael could not be sure if what Moshe told them was from Hashem. Therefore, Hashem gave over the Torah in this miraculous way..."

The Ralbag's lesson that the Pasuk comes to tell us the extent of the Hashgachas Hashem, requires further clarification. We would assume that the more significant message communicated by this Pasuk is that Hashem gave the Torah in a manner that did not leave room for any skepticism. It is this factor alone that caused Klal Yisrael to believe and accept the Torah. However, the Ralbag seems to add an additional ingredient necessary for Kabalas Hatorah, seeing the extent of Hashem's care and concern. Why is this factor mentioned by the Ralbag?

It must be that the Ralbag understood that for someone to accept the Torah, it is critical that they not only know that the Torah is from Hashem, but they must also know how

much Hashem cared that they should have that clarity. Our recognition of Hashem's concern that we should be free from doubts is part and parcel of our ability to believe in the Torah and commit to it. This idea has a parallel in the world of education in which it is often said, "Nobody cares what you know until they know that you care." When a person sees how much Hashem cares for them to have clarity, that influences their ability to fully receive the message. Perhaps intellectually Klal Yisrael would have fully seen the truth of the Torah by the Har Sinai experience, however for that truth to fully penetrate and be accepted, they needed the care and love of Hashem. Once Klal Yisrael saw how important having that clarity was to Hashem, they were fully receptive to Kabalas Hatorah.

Parents and Rabbeim can glean a tremendous lesson from here. Often we offer our children and students opportunities for clarity in learning through tutoring, teaching, and other resources. However, we see from here that unless our children and students see how much we personally care that they get this clarity, they will be somewhat stifled in attaining this clarity. This can be expressed in a variety of ways; spending personal time learning with our children and students, especially when they missed the material in school, or them seeing us invest effort into setting them up with people who can help them succeed in learning. This care and concern is the key to their receptivity.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

“My beloved is mine - He demanded all of His needs from me; He commanded only me: Make a Passover sacrifice, sanctify the firstborn, make a Mikdash, sacrifice burnt offerings, and He did not demand these things of any other nation. **And I am His** - All my needs I demanded of Him, and not of other deities.”

I never saw a couple as close to each other as my Grandma and Grandpa. Their many years together, through tragedy as well as happy times, had seemingly fused them into one being. They lived for each other. Each knew no greater joy than the other’s happiness and felt no greater sorrow than the other’s sadness. I had come that day just for a visit and found Grandpa in bed under the weather. We had been talking for some time when he suddenly called out, “Rachel! I could really use a drink of cold water if you don’t mind.” Grandma was shortly at his side, breathing heavily from the climb up the stairs, with two cups of cold water and a warm smile on her face. When she left I asked Grandpa, “Why didn’t you just ask me to get the water?” Grandpa turned to me with a smile, “How can I do that to Grandma, she lives to take care of me, just as I live for her. I would never take that away from her, ever!”

“I am to my Beloved,” I live to serve him, it is my one and only wish, therefore, “All His needs He only asks of me and of no other.” **“And my Beloved is to me,”** I dare not deny Him the pleasure of bestowing His kindness upon me for that is in fact the very reason that He created the entire Universe!

Hashem's greatest desire is to benefit us, however, there are times when for our own good, to His great sorrow, He must withhold His kindness until we sincerely ask for it. We may think we’re the ones who desire His salvation but in truth our salvation is His desire. Chazal explain the Pasuk in Tehilim, “For Your salvation I await Hashem”, that we await for Hashem's own salvation for when we are hurt, so is He. By focusing on this whenever we Daven, our Tefillos take on a whole new meaning and bring us that much closer to true Bitachon in Hashem’s salvation.



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“I know that Hashem revealed Himself over 3,300 years ago in front of millions of people, my own ancestors. I understand that all of Klal Yisroel bore witness to this claim by the recording of the eye-witness testimony and its passing down from generation to generation so meticulously. The very life that they have led and sacrificed for this belief further validates this claim. Such an event cannot be falsely claimed and this is the only possible reason why it has not been despite the desire of thousands of religions who sought to use the greatest possible claim they could find. But how do I feel it when it happened so long ago?”

A look at the following Ramban reveals to us the answer to this question: Moshe asked Hashem: When Klal Yisroel ask me what is His name - this means when they will ask for evidence of His existence and His hashgacha - what should I tell them? Hashem responded: Why should they ask for this, they have no need for any other evidence for I will be with them in all their troubles; they will call out to me and I will answer them. This is the greatest evidence that there is a G-d amongst Klal Yisroel, close to us whenever we call out to him... (Ramban, Shemos 3:12)

The greatest evidence, in the words of the Ramban, did not occur thousands of years ago, it occurs today and every day of our lives. Why is this greater than any other evidence Hashem would give Klal Yisroel? Because most decisions that we make are with our heart not just with our mind. In fact, the prohibition of not straying from our belief in Hashem is, “And you shall not go astray after your heart.” Our brains can behold the greatest miracles in the world, but if we do not involve our heart their effect will not last. However, when we develop a relationship with Hashem, feeling his involvement in our everyday lives, His existence is internalized in our hearts more powerfully than any miracle in the world. We just have to learn to use this gift. To sincerely call out to our Father-in-heaven and to behold and truly feel His loving intervention in every facet of our lives. Then our hearts will feel His revelation, as powerful as the revelation of Har Sinai, each and every day.