

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

פרשת
לך לך

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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

Reframing Our Attitudes Towards Reshaim

In this week's Parsha, Avraham saves Lot through winning the battle against the other kings, thereby making Sodom victorious. Hashem tells Avraham, (*Lech Lecha* 15:1) "Don't be afraid Avraham, I will protect you." The Ralbag derives the following lesson from here, "It is not appropriate for one who achieved perfection to benefit a wicked person. Rather, one should hate them, and distance them due to their despicable behavior. Like it says in Tehillim (15:4), "A despicable person in my eyes should be degraded." This is because, in this way people will learn to distance themselves from wicked people and not be drawn after their lowly behavior. This is learned from the fact that Hashem said to Avraham "don't fear," which indicates that Avraham was afraid that he would get punished for what he did. We don't find any basis for him being afraid besides for him benefiting wicked people, the people of Sodom."

We can glean an important insight from the above Ralbag in how we should view Reshaim. The Ralbag says that the only reason we should hate Reshaim is to prevent us from learning from their ways. Acting positively towards them can engender in us positive feelings for them and influence us to follow their ways. It seems from the Ralbag that hating them because of their wicked behavior or their rebellion against Hashem would not warrant hating them. On the contrary, if not for the fear of being negatively impacted, doing kindness to them would be praiseworthy, as Hashem does Chesed for Reshaim. This idea can help

to reframe our attitudes and perspectives on sinners.

If when it comes to Reshaim, we are taught by the Ralbag to hate them only to protect ourselves, and not because they are bad, all the more so with someone who is not a Rasha and merely a sinner. In reality, we should not look down on them.

Receptivity To Rebuke

At the end of this week's Parsha, Hagar can't bear the suffering she is undergoing from Sarah, and she runs away. A Malach sent by Hashem comes to her and commands her to return. The Ralbag takes the following lesson from here, "It is not appropriate for one who receives rebuke, that they should reject it, rather he should accept it with love. This can be learned from the fact that Hagar was commanded by Hashem to return to Sarah, and she accepted the rebuke."

Upon initial analysis the Ralbag statement that, "he should accept it with love," is difficult to understand. Where is there any indication in the Pasuk that Hagar had a positive feeling towards this rebuke. Perhaps she went back because she couldn't defy the commandment of Hashem?

The Ralbag must have understood that rebuke would not be received unless there is a positive feeling towards the rebuke. It is not enough to merely avoid embarrassing the person being rebuked, there needs to be an element of love present for the rebuke to be received. Therefore, if Hagar accepted the rebuke, it must be because she had a positive attitude towards the rebuke.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

No one could believe it was really happening. The fact that the princess would be going on a two-year wilderness trip to study nature, and living in a tiny portable home could be understandable. The hard part to understand was the revelation of the astonishing love the King had for his daughter. Unable to bear the separation from his daughter, the King was exchanging his royal palace for his daughter's portable home in order to be together with her for the next two years. What was even more amazing than the love this displayed was the respect the King had for his daughter. The prime minister reported in awe that when he said to the King, "What an honor this will be for your daughter," the king responded with deep feeling, "I really believe it is my honor to be dwelling with her!"

The Creator of the Universe, in His infinite love, leaves all the celestial worlds to dwell with Klal Yisroel's tiny Mishkan, as Chazal state: "And He called to Moshe." From where did He call him? "From the Tent of Meeting." May His name be blessed forever! For He leaves the upper worlds and chose the lower ones to dwell in the Sanctuary, due to His love for Yisroel. Similarly, Shlomah said (*Melachim 1 8:27*): "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; much less this temple that I have erected. Does a creator yearn to dwell in a pottery vessel? For He is the Creator of everything!" Only due to His love, 'My soul yearns, yes, it pines for the courts... (*Tehillim 84:3*). (*Shemos Raba 34:4*) But it does not end there! Hashem considers it His honor to do so! As Chazal state:

"You're my children and I'm your Father," as the verse (*Devarim 14*) states, 'You are children of Hashem, your G-d, and I'm your Father...' It's the children's honor to be by their father and it is a father's honor to be by His children...' Create a house for the Father and He will dwell with His children."

Similarly, Chazal teach us that the Malachim said during the splitting of Yam Suf: "Hashem our Master! How awesome is Your name in the entire land! It is Your honor to dwell with Your children!" (*Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim 8*)

So hold your head high! The Creator and Sustainer of the entire Universe loves you passionately! And He alone recognizes your true, inherent greatness and therefore feels it is His honor to dwell beside you!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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הַשְׁלֵךְ עַל ה' יְהִיבְךָ וְהוּא יְכַלְכְּלֶךָ

Cast your burden upon Hashem and He will sustain you... (*Tehilim 55:23*)

The Pasuk says, "Cast your burden upon Hashem and He will sustain you." The implication of this verse is that when one is confronted with a problem, not only can he feel secure that Hashem will help him deal with and overcome it, but he can take that problem and, so to speak, "throw it upon Hashem." He can relieve himself from the worry and anxiety caused by it by "casting it upon Hashem," so that he can feel that it has now become Hashem's burden and not his problem any longer.

To explain this, the Dubno Maggid told the following parable: A poor man with a heavy bundle on his shoulders was walking along the highway. A rich man with a fancy carriage came by and generously offered him a ride. The poor man gladly accepted the offer. You can imagine the surprise of the wealthy man when he glanced at his passenger and noticed that he was still carrying the giant load on his shoulders. He called out to him, "My good man, what in the world are you doing? Why don't you put your sack on the floor?" The humble traveler replied, "My dear sir, you have been kind enough to me already. Your carriage has to bear the weight of my body even now. How can I presume to burden you with my bundle too?"

At this point, the host laughed heartily and lectured his guest, "Silly man, why strain your back? Don't you see that all is the same for me whether you hold your parcel on your shoulder or whether you place it beside you? It's still in the carriage and whatever you do the carriage is bearing its weight. You might as well let your burden down."

We all acknowledge that ultimately our parnasah, our material success or lack thereof, is not dependent on us. So why, asks the Dubno Maggid, do we spend so much time fretting over it? Why do we vainly attempt to carry the psychological burden of making a living upon our shoulders, if in the end it's really not up to us? Throw down your burden – and let Hashem, Who carries us and all our needs, do His job. This is precisely what David HaMelech says in Tehilim (*Psalms 55:23*), הַשְׁלֵךְ עַל ה' יְהִיבְךָ וְהוּא יְכַלְכְּלֶךָ, **Throw your 'baggage' upon Hashem, and He will sustain you.**