

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

Lessons in Emunah

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 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

The Ralbag, in his explanation of the Mabul, conveys a profound message. He asserts that one of the many benefits in understanding this story lies in the realm of knowledge. “The seventh benefit is in knowledge. The Torah is teaching us in this story that when Hashem does miracles, He performs them in a way that is closest to the natural laws... this is because Hashem arranged nature in the most perfect way...and this, in my perspective, is clear from the miracles that are mentioned in the Torah and Neviim. This is the opposite of what the unintelligent people of our nation think, because they try to interpret the miracles as extreme - breaking the laws of nature. They explain that this illustrates Hashem’s greatness. Not only is this not an illustration of Hashem’s greatness, it actually detracts from His greatness.”

This perspective may initially appear challenging to grasp. We often associate Hashem's greatness with the spectacular miracles of the Mitzrayim, Krias Yam Suf, and the Manna. However, the Ralbag's insight suggests that the consistent, harmonious functioning of the natural world serves as a more profound indicator of Hashem's greatness. While these miracles indeed provide clear glimpses of His presence, the everyday beauty that surrounds us is the true testament to His magnificence. People may yearn for open miracles to tangibly experience Hashem, yet the Ralbag reminds us that His presence envelops us constantly and is more tangible than we realize.

Furthermore, the Ralbag's interpretation of Hashem causing people to speak different languages provides another valuable insight. He says, “The benefit of this story is to help us internalize our belief in the creation of the world, and to remove any doubt of how it can be that everyone came from one man, but they speak different languages.”

Some may view this question as relatively weak when compared to the vast array of inquiries people have about the Torah and creation. It might seem plausible that linguistic variations emerged naturally over time or as a result of people's desire to establish distinct societies. However, the Torah, in its wisdom, seeks to ensure the unwavering strength of our faith. Even seemingly minor questions are addressed to bolster our beliefs.

In light of these teachings, it becomes evident that we must safeguard our faith with unwavering determination. This message resonates profoundly in the challenging circumstances of our current era, where we may find ourselves shaken and susceptible to questions about Hashem's ways. We may ask "how," "why," "it's not fair," or "why them." In such times, it is imperative to strengthen our Emunah, focusing on its foundational principles, understanding that everything Hashem does is ultimately for the best and entirely just. Let us always remember that Hashem's ways are beyond our comprehension, and we are privy to only a small fragment of the greater Divine plan.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

In this week's Haftorah, Hashem tells Klal Yisroel how He will comfort us at the time of our ultimate redemption: "For a little while I forsook you, but with vast love I will bring you back. In slight anger, for a moment, **I hid My face from you**; but with kindness everlasting, I will take you back in love." (Yeshayah 54:7,8)

We find the expression of Hashem "hiding His face from us" in the Parshiyos of the Tochachah as well: "Then My anger will flare up against them, and I will abandon them and **hide My face** from them. They shall be ready prey; and many evils and troubles shall befall them. And they shall say on that day, 'Surely it is because our G-d is not in our midst that these evils have befallen us.' And I will keep My countenance hidden on that day, because of all the evil they have done in turning to other gods.

What is the meaning of Hashem "hiding His face" from us?

Perhaps this can be understood based on the following Pasuk in Shir HaShirim: **Turn your eyes away from Me for they overwhelmed Me.** (Shir HaShirim 5:6)

The Vilna Gaon explains: "Klal Yisroel cries over their suffering and Hashem is full of mercy, however, it is not possible to redeem them before the proper time. Hashem says: 'Don't continue to cry out to Me, for your love comes before Me... and I can't bear it.'"

This is why when Hashem must punish us for our own wellbeing, we find the expression of "hiding His face" from us, for it is only through doing so that He can bear to punish them. Even when "they have turned to other gods" and they act as "a treacherous breed, children with no loyalty in them," when He looks through their eyes, the windows to the true depth of their infinitely great souls, He is overpowered by love for them, and He, so to speak, can't mete out the punishment that they need for their own good.



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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"For a little while, I forsook you, but with vast love, I will bring you back." (Yeshaya 54:7)

In this week's Haftorah, the Navi Yeshaya delivers a message of profound comfort and hope to Klal Yisroel. The Radak explains that the Pasuk is a testament to Hashem's unwavering commitment to us, assuring that His seemingly abandonment during Galus will be eclipsed by an outpouring of His boundless love and redemption, to the point that the 2000 years of Galus will seem like a mere few moments. This promise of the Geulah, combined with Hashem's enduring kindness, serves as a powerful source of comfort through the unfathomable pain that we have been enduring these past few weeks.

The Pasuk acknowledges the reality that throughout the tumultuous course of Jewish history, there have been moments when it seemed as if Hashem had forsaken us. However, Hashem's love is not extinguished; instead, it is preserved and concealed, ready to be unleashed with the Geulah.

Yeshaya's prophecy extends beyond mere consolation; it should instill a profound sense of Bitachon in our hearts. The promise of "vast love" signifies the extreme kindness and compassion that Hashem will shower upon us during the Geulah.

This assurance is mirrored a few Pesukim later, where Hashem declares that "Though mountains may be shaken and hills be moved, My unfailing love for you will not be shaken." This resolute commitment to boundless kindness demonstrates Hashem's unwavering loyalty and love for His people, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges.

This message has served as a wellspring of hope and fortitude for generations, reminding us that no matter the extent of the tragedy that we find ourselves in, we can be confident that we will soon see it as a fleeting moment.