

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Power Of A Middah To Influence and Resist Influence

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 | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

In this week's Parsha Avram heard that his nephew, Lot was taken captive. The Pasuk tells us that Avram reacted to this by (14:14) "mustering up his attendants born into his household". The Ralbag derives a lesson from here with regards to Middos. He writes, "It is only appropriate to go to war with people whose nature has been habituated in the Middah of courage as well as strength. This is because if there will be people among those going to war who are scared and soft hearted, it will cause the others to become soft hearted, and they will be beaten. It is due to this dynamic that Avram only brought into battle those members of his household who he educated from birth. There is no doubt that he educated those born in his household in the Middah of courage just as he trained them in all the praiseworthy Middos. However those members of his household that he did not raise from birth were already entrenched in poor Middos, and Avram was unable to completely eradicate these Middos."

In essence the Ralbag is saying that Avram was afraid that the members of his household who he did not raise would soften the hearts of those that he did raise. The Ralbag further implies that one person alone could have impacted the group that was raised in Avram's household negatively. At first glance this is perplexing. Avram was on the highest levels of Emunah and Bitachon, and his Middah of Gevurah was exemplary. We can only imagine that those raised in his household were exposed and influenced in their Middos by the ultimate role model in these Middos. Yet the Ralbag says that if one person who

was also influenced by Avram and reached high levels of Gevurah but not to the fullest extent, expresses a feeling of fear and weakness, it will cause those that reached the highest levels of Gevurah to soften. This is despite the fact that Avram would be with them on the battlefield encouraging and inspiring them. Surely this needs clarification! It must be that our confusion is due to our underestimating the power of an inappropriate Middah. An inappropriate Middah can have devastating effects. Although one has reached the highest levels in a particular Middah, that Middah can be undermined by an exposure to someone with a lack in that Middah, despite the counter-influence of someone on the caliber of Avram.

Another point in the Ralbag that requires further clarification is his reasoning why Avram could not eradicate this Middah completely from them. He says, since "He did not raise them from birth they were already entrenched in poor Middos." Many members of his household were with him for years and were exposed to his constant influence. One would have thought that being taught by someone on the caliber of Avram daily would suffice to completely remove a bad Middah. Why is being under the tutelage of Avram not enough? We see from here that once a bad Middah develops and takes root it is extremely difficult to remove. Therefore we must be attentive to improve our Middos as early as possible because once they take root they can even withstand the influence of Avram.



Why did Priority-1 initiate the 1-Focus Say Nishmas Campaign?

Priority-1 initiated this campaign because we are passionate about helping people strengthen their emunah and develop a strong connection with Hashem. We have noticed a wonderful increase in awareness of Hashem's absolute control over the world during the coronavirus pandemic. We want to ensure that the strides we have made on a communal level continue even after the crisis ends. That is the sole purpose of this campaign.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

In this week's Haftorah Hashem tells Klal Yisroel: Fear not, for I am with you, be not frightened, for I am your G-d; I strengthen you and I help you, I uphold you with My victorious right hand. Shamed and chagrined will be all who contend with you; they who strive with you will become as naught and will perish. You may seek, but shall not find those who struggle with you; less than nothing shall be the men who battle against you.

The Ben Ish Chai zt"l (Aderes Eliyahu) explains the above words, "Fear not, for I am with you," as follows: When Klal Yisroel sins there is an exemption they are eligible for in judgement. For the culpability of a sinner is on account of his negligence regarding the soul Hashem has entrusted in his safekeeping. And regarding one who is negligent with something entrusted in one's care, the Torah tells us that one is exempt if the owner of the item is together with him. Since Hashem is constantly with us, as Chazal say, "Anywhere they are exiled to Hashem did not budge from their side," Klal Yisroel is exempt (on some level from their sins).



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It is taught in the Tosefta Kidushin (5:14): Rav Nehorai said: I set aside all the trades in the world, and I teach my son only Torah, as all other trades serve one only in the days of his youth, when he has enough strength to work, but in the days of his old age, behold, he is left to lie in hunger. But Torah is not like this: It serves a person in the time of his youth and provides him with a future and hope in the time of his old age. With regard to the time of his youth, what does it say? "But they that trust in Hashem shall renew their strength" (Yeshayah 40:31)...

The above passuk tells us that one who trusts in Hashem will have renewed strength. What proof is there from there that learning Torah itself gives one renewed strength? It seems that Chazal viewed learning Torah as synonymous with Bitachon. This is understood based on the famous words of the Vilna Gaon: The main reason Hashem gave Klal Yisroel the Torah is so that they will have Bitachon in Him! If so, it is no surprise that Torah is synonymous with Bitachon. When one toils in Torah, investing great time and enormous effort, he is clearly trusting Hashem, otherwise why would he invest so much time and energy.