

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

What's Holding Us Back?

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 | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
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In this week's Parsha we are taught the story of Akeidas Yitzchak. The Torah tells us the great Zerizus that Avraham had to do the Ratzon Hashem, "And Avraham got up early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey." (22:3). The Ralbag derives the following lesson from here in regards to Middos. He writes, "It is fitting for a person to do Hashem's Mitzvos with Zerizus, even if he will endure pain in the Mitzvah. This is illustrated by Avraham Avinu who got up early to do the Mitzvah with Zerizus, despite the fact that it was strange and painful."

Upon initial analysis, Avraham Avinu's need to overcome the strangeness in Hashem's request, and not let it interfere with his Zerizus is perplexing. Avraham Avinu heard this commandment directly from Hashem, and had already shown his level of commitment to Hashem, which had included being willing to die by Ohr Kasdim. In addition, his Emunah was steadfast - not even questioning Hashem regarding this commandment, even though Hashem told him that Yitzchak will carry on his name. Clearly Avraham was a giant of a person who we would assume would not be hesitant or impacted based on the strangeness involved in fulfilling the will of Hashem?

It seems from here that even a small interference can make a difference, and could potentially impact the passion and Zerizus of even an Avraham Avinu. This thought has major ramifications for us, as we all want to contribute and do, especially now due to the Matzav in Eretz Yisrael. However, we need to be aware of the fact that there may be many things holding us back that we overlook due to their perceived insignificance. Not realizing that it is those things that may be the impediment to us being spurred into action. It is therefore critical that we learn techniques to introspect and do a proper Cheshbon Hanefesh, this way we will be able to accurately identify the obstacles holding us back from acting with Zerizus.

One technique that we can use to overcome an impediment to action and Zerizus is offered to us by the Ralbag in his commentary on the Pesukim where Hashem commands Avraham to do a Bris Milah. The Ralbag writes, "When you want to get the one you love to do something that will benefit him, that involves strangeness and pain. It is fitting to first inform him of the benefits that he will get from doing this action, before telling him what he should. In this manner, the passion that is created to get the benefit, will cause him to ignore the strangeness and pain." From this Ralbag it is clear that if we focus on the benefits, that will help to mitigate the resistance caused by pain and something being strange.

We find a similar idea in the Medrash where Hashem reveals Himself to Avraham Avinu to inform him that he will have a son Yitzchak who will carry on his legacy, specifically in **אלוני ממרא**, to hint to him the following; "Just like this tree, even it totally dries up, and its leaves fall off, when it absorbs water it immediately blossoms. So too is Klal Yisrael - even if they fall to the lowest level, once the end of days come and they do Teshuva, immediately they blossom and shine."

It sounds like from the Medrash that telling Avraham that he would have a child who would carry on the mission of Klal Yisrael would not be enough. Perhaps his excitement or his Zerizus would be lacking to have this child as the future is unknown. Therefore Hashem had to let him know that in the end the Klal Yisrael will do Teshuva, and they will shine immediately.

Once again we see that our Zerizus and call to action is impacted by such small things, and is so subtle and delicate. We therefore need to be so self aware of our underlying feelings to understand what is holding us back. Especially paying attention to those minute things we may overlook as possible factors to our inaction.