

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Significance of a Seemingly Insignificant Concern

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
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

In this week's Parsha, the Medrash relates, "Why were the Imahos barren? Because they were the daughters of idol worshippers, and when they were younger their father gave them over to their priests to worship idols. Hashem said, 'If I gave them children right away their fathers would praise their idols. The fathers would say that the idol is worthy of serving because through it our daughters merited to have children.' Rather Hashem said let them suffer for many years, this will cause them to Daven to Hashem with all their strength, and afterwards I will give them children. Through this they will know that there is no need for their Avodah Zara."

Upon initial analysis, the concern that there will be a Chizuk in Avodah Zara if they have children right away seems bizarre. The norm is that most women are not barren and have children right away. Connecting this to their Avodah Zarah would be based on their preconceived belief in the idol, and it would not be too convincing or impressive to someone who does not believe in the idol. Therefore, the Chizuk in the power of their idol doesn't seem to be too serious, and definitely should not warrant the Imahos suffering for so many years to dispel this Chizuk in idol worship. In addition, by delaying them from having children, Hashem was postponing the birth of the

Shevatim, and Kabalas Hatorah, which is the purpose of creation. The extent to which Hashem is going to avoid such a slight Chizuk in Avodah Zara is perplexing!

A tremendous insight can be gleaned from this Medrash into how significant the nuances and the subtleties are to Hashem. A seemingly slight Chizuk in idol worship is so concerning to Hashem, that it is worth the years of suffering and the delaying of Hashem's mission to avoid it.

However, despite the fact that Hashem is so concerned with this Chizuk in Avodah Zara, He allowed Leah to have children right away. The Pasuk explains the reason for this as "because she was hated." Her pain took precedence and overrode the concern that there will be a Chizuk in Avodah Zara, despite the fact this concern warranted all the suffering and the delaying of the mission of Hashem.

We see from here how attuned and alert we need to be to the messages we send out. We may think that someone taking it the wrong way is unlikely and there is no need to refrain from saying the message. However, it is clear from here that even when the stakes are high and the wrong interpretation is unlikely, we need to still worry about wrong messaging. However, at times this worry should be ignored in the face of someone's personal pain.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

I understand from the study of Shir HaShirim the infinite love Hashem has for every one of us. I understand as well that this love is not conditional upon our spiritual state, rather, it is a result of our ancestors' love for Him. However, it still seems that this love is still not as pure as if Hashem would love me solely for my own sake.

This week's Haftorah challenges that notion. Hashem addresses Klal Yisroel, saying, "I have shown you love." Despite this, they question, "How have You shown us love?" Hashem clarifies, "Esau is Yaakov's brother, yet I loved Yaakov, and I hated Eisav."

The Abarbenel explains that Hashem is conveying to Klal Yisroel: "Since I knew you, I have consistently loved you. Even when you sinned and faced My retribution, My love persisted, for 'as a man punishes his son, Hashem your God punishes you' out of love." Despite this, Klal Yisroel, ungrateful, asks, "How have You loved us?" They are not denying Hashem's love but questioning the reason behind it. They assert that Hashem loved Klal Yisroel because of Avraham's love for Him, indicating that Hashem's love is not an act of kindness but a reward for Avraham's love. Hashem counters, "Is not Eisav a brother to Yaakov? And I loved Yaakov." This emphasizes that Hashem's preference for Yaakov was not due to Avraham's love, as both Yaakov and Eisav shared the merit of Avraham. Rather, Hashem chose Yaakov and his descendants over Eisav.

This reveals that the undeniable and self-evident infinite love that Hashem bestows upon each of us is not solely a result of our ancestors' love for Him, as this would imply love for Eisav as well. Instead, it is an inherent love for Yaakov and his descendants, independent of their forebears, for their own inherently lovable nature.

So, raise your head higher as you sense Hashem's boundless love flowing through you, realizing that it is not merely a consequence of your ancestors' love for Him; it is a love bestowed upon you for your own intrinsically lovable essence!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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Each and every Jew is obligated to say, "When will my deeds reach the level of my forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov."

(Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu Rabah Chap. 25)

During these weeks' Parshiyos, when we delve into the boundless greatness of the Avos, who were willing to sacrifice their lives and the lives of their children for the sake of Hashem, the question becomes even more profound. Yet, amidst this awe-inspiring legacy, the Torah's portrayal of Yaakov Avinu offers a guide on how to strive to emulate them.

The Torah depicts Yaakov's greatness as an "Ish Tam" - a complete and wholehearted individual. An "Ish Tam" comprehends that there is no way to circumvent Hashem's will; instead, he places absolute trust in Hashem to address all his needs. Seforim explain that due to Yaakov's unique attribute of being a "Tam," his likeness is engraved into the Kisei HaKavod - Hashem's holy throne. They elucidate that trust in Hashem inherently leads to the highest level of closeness to Him, as the Pasuk states, "You must be **חמים** - wholehearted - with Hashem your G-d." In other words, by being "tamim", one naturally attains the highest level of closeness to Hashem.

While the infinite greatness of our Avos may seem unattainable, their most significant accolade was their trust in Hashem. This is a quality we can all aspire to on our own level by internalizing the fundamental truth that everything is in Hashem's hands. Embracing this reality in our everyday emotions allows us to connect with the essence of trust that defines our Avos, bridging the gap between their monumental stature and our personal capacity for spiritual growth.