

The Erratic Nature Of Hatred

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-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, the Torah tells us Yaakov's plan to remove the hatred of Eisav. He showed him honor and sent him presents, among other things. The Ralbag derives from here the following lesson: "It is fitting for a person to give his own belongings to an enemy, and be submissive to him as much as possible until peace is made. This is even if the enemy is of lowly character and he is of an elevated stature. As he is not being submissive to his enemy to benefit his enemy, but to benefit himself. It is also fitting to give him the present in a manner that it appears like an enormous gift. We see this from Yaakov who submitted himself to Eisav in an extreme way, and gave him a huge gift. Yaakov made sure that the males in each flock were enough for the females, and he commanded them to put space between each flock, to make the gift appear large."

Upon initial analysis the lesson derived from the story of Yaakov and Eisav seems to be a significant stretch. Eisav's hatred for Yaakov was so extreme that it became stamped in his DNA. As Chazal taught us, it is a law that Eisav hates Yaakov. This hatred was transmitted to Amalek and it rears its ugly head in each generation. It would be inaccurate to extrapolate from the manner in which Yaakov dealt with this hatred, as the formula of choice on how to deal with an enemy. The hatred Eisav possessed was surely unique and required a heavy approach to dissipate it. How can we derive from here how we should act in our everyday social interaction with an enemy?

The Ralbag must have understood that the feeling of hatred is so erratic and intense that any enemy can spin out of control, and become like Eisav. Based on this paradigm, the Ralbag was able to draw a parallel between the way Yaakov dealt with Eisav and how each person should deal with an enemy. Clearly, the feeling of hatred is dangerous and cannot be underestimated. Therefore,

we must be careful not to take any chance and follow Yaakov's formula of resolving conflict.

Torah Values Can Become Our Immediate Response

The Pasuk (35:8) states: "Devorah died, the nurse of Rivkah, and she was buried...and he called the place Alon Bachos." The Ralbag derives the following lesson from here: "The Torah tells us that Yaakov called it Alon Bachos, the name of the tree where she was buried, Devorah the nurse of Rivkah. This name indicates that they cried there. For this reason Yaakov put a tombstone on the grave of Rochel, so that her memory would be preserved. He did so as an act of kindness to her."

At first glance the Ralbag seems perplexing. Rochel was Yaakov's beloved wife who he spent years working for her. The Torah tells us that his love was so great that working for her felt like only a few days. One would think that his reason for setting up a tombstone and preserving her memory was due to his feeling of love. Why would the Ralbag ignore this reason and say he was motivated by Chesed?

The Ralbag understood that the Avos placed all their personal feelings secondary to the feelings that they were supposed to live by based on the Torah. Yaakov understood that being like Hashem is the ultimate goal, and his doing Chesed was the way to achieve it. Therefore, he refined his character and deepened his emotion for Chesed, even beyond his personal love for her. We see from here that we are capable of overcoming our natural feelings and instilling within ourselves the Torah's values as our knee jerk reaction.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

"Woe to the sons because of who's sins I destroyed My house, burned My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world."

The Gemara (Brachos 3a) states, that the above words are expressed by our Father in Heaven three times each night, the depth of their expression described as "Hashem roaring like a lion," while saying them. In contrast, later in this very same Gemara, Chazal relate that R' Yose recounted hearing a Bas Kol – a heavenly voice – "Crying like a dove" and saying the very same statement, "Woe to the sons etc."

How can we understand these seemingly diametrically opposed expressions of Hashem's statement? Does Hashem "roar like a lion" or does He in fact "cry like a dove" as He expresses these words?

Rashi in Meseches Sota (33a) describes a Bas Kol as an angel who is sent to convey the words of Hashem. Based on this, perhaps we can understand the words of the above Gemara.

Hashem Himself, so to speak, in fact "roars like a lion" in expression of His great pain over the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. However, this can be understood in two diametrically opposed manners. Either, He "roars like a lion" in expression of His ultimate anger towards us for "because of who's sins I destroyed My house...", or He "roars like a lion" in expression of His ultimate pain for His children "due to whose sins I (was forced) to destroy My house and exile them among the nations." Therefore, the Bas Kol sent to convey the true meaning of Hashem's roar, describes it as the "crying of a dove." This conveys the message to Klal Yisroel that rather than Hashem "roaring" in an ultimate expression of anger at us, He is "roaring" in an ultimate expression of crying for us, that our sins have brought such pain upon us.

Perhaps we can also explain why Hashem's "roar" is described as a "dove" crying. Our eternal bond with our Father in Heaven is described in Shir HaShirim (1:15 see Rashi there), "As a dove, who upon recognizing his mate will never part from her to allow her to mate with another." Therefore, as Hashem expresses His ultimate pain over having been forced to temporarily send us away from Him so to speak, He conveys His eternal bond with us.



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"Father!" - It's the word with which we refer to Hashem numerous times each day in all our prayers, it being most descriptive of our relationship with Him.

However, there are several stages in a father-son relationship. An older man will be sure to keep his parents updated regarding important developments in his life, however, he usually will be taking care of himself without their help and the love for his parents, though it runs deep, is seldom outwardly displayed. A middle-aged man, however, will involve his parents in his life more intricately - the younger the age, the more involved one's parents usually will be. When one is still single and living with his parents his dependence upon them is much more significant and the love in their relationship is much more apparent. When one is still a child, his parents are intricately involved in every aspect of his life. He will share his secrets with them and is mostly dependent upon their love which will be on constant display. However, all of this does not compare to the relationship a mother has with her newborn child. The child can't survive even a short period of time without its mother. It is totally dependent upon her for its food, drink, and even the minutest details of its existence, all of which it can not take care of on its own.

This begs the question: When we refer to Hashem as our Father, what sort of parent-child relationship are we referring to?

When we open our eyes to the true nature of our existence the answer is obvious. We may run complex lives, build buildings, and close business deals, but in truth can we survive for even a moment without the most complex miracles taking place? Each breath we take, science now knows, involves a more complex chain of events than sending a man to the moon. Only blind haughtiness can lead one to believe that his father-son relationship with Hashem is anything less than the reliance of an infant on its mother.

How succinctly is all this expressed by Dovid HaMelech: **Hashem! My heart was not haughty, nor were my eyes raised on high, and I did not pursue matters greater and more wondrous than I... I swear that I calmed and quieted my soul like a suckling on its mother; like a suckling was my soul with me. Yisroel, hope to the L-rd from now to eternity.** (Tehillim 131)