

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

## The Feelings Of Others Can Never Be Ignored

*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 Ralbag derives two important lessons from the story of Yosef while he was in prison, in regards to refinement of character and human sensitivity. He says, "The eighth benefit is in Middos. It is fitting for a complete person to cover up a person's shame, even if they did bad to him. This is derived from Yosef who did not want to reveal the shame of his master's wife to the butler. Rather he said, 'And also here I did not do anything.' Additionally, he did not want to reveal this to the butler, as this was the wise thing to do to not further anger the wife of his master, and cause her to continue to make more accusations against him."

Upon initial analysis the second reason the Ralbag gives to explain why Yosef did not want to reveal what his master's wife had done seems to undermine the first reason. If the best strategy to protect himself was to cover up her behavior, then how does the Ralbag know the first reason that he was concerned for her shame?

It must be that the Ralbag understood that the second reason alone - that she would continue to accuse him - would not be enough to stop Yosef from defending himself. Granted that this may be worse for him in the future, but right now Yosef is being accused of a despicable act and he has every right to defend his honor. However, in the process of defending himself he will shame this wicked and immoral lady - that he felt he couldn't do.

We can glean a tremendous insight from here, at times we may be in a position that requires us to defend ourselves. However, we need to pause and reflect on whether our defense will slight and shame someone else. If the answer is yes, we see from Yosef that the correct course of action is to refrain from defending ourselves, even if we are protecting the very person who is hurting us.

Another insight the Ralbag derives from this story is the following: "The ninth benefit is in Middos, it is not fitting for a person to hold back good from someone who was good to him. This is seen from the fact that the butler did not want to speak to Pharaoh to beg him to let Yosef out of jail, as he was innocent. Therefore, Hashem caused that he needed to mention it to Pharaoh with great difficulty, and he was forced to mention his sin that Pharaoh was angry at him for. This was the fitting punishment for him."

It seems from the Ralbag that the focus is on the fact that the butler did not want to mention his own sin to Pharaoh. It does not appear that the butler had any ill intent towards Yosef; he was just protecting himself. Yet, he was taken to task for this despite the fact that he was not a big Tzaddik. He was expected to put himself out there and experience discomfort to help Yosef, because Yosef helped him.

From the above, we see that protecting ourselves is not an excuse to hurt someone else, even if they are the one who hurt us, and it is not an excuse to not repay someone for the benefit that they did for us.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

*Despite each ruling a mighty kingdom of their own, King Richard of Alsands and King Clavon of Clemont were close friends, as were their children. Especially close was the relationship between Prince William, one of King Richard's ten sons, and Prince Jacob, King Clavon's only child. Despite their similarities in personality and deeds, William's father was very light on him, letting him do mostly what he wanted and rarely rebuking him for his actions or deficit in his studies. Conversely, Jacob's father involved himself in every aspect of his sons' day. He was quick to react to anything his son did wrong, guiding and training him constantly in every aspect of his life, as well as ensuring his continued success in his studies. One day, after a particularly strenuous rebuke from his father, Jacob cried, "Father, why must you be so overbearing?! Why can't you treat me the way William's father treats him?" "My dear son," the king responded, "William is but one of King Richard's ten sons. If he is not successful, he has another nine sons he can bequeath his throne to. You, my dear son, are all I have! If you are not trained for royalty, my life's efforts will all be for naught!"*

We are the King of the universe's only children! Each of us is to Him an "only" prince for whom He created the entire universe! As the Mishnah (Sanhedrin 4:5) teaches us: Each and every person must say, "For me the entire universe was created!" Only we can fulfill Hashem's purpose of Creation; that we should triumph in the relative "seconds" we are on Earth so we may bask in the infinite pleasure of His presence for eternity! When we experience Hashem's chastisement, instead of feeling distanced from Him we should feel the closeness of a Father to an only child, who's overbearing attention to his son is merely a product of his great love for his only hope!

With this we can understand the seemingly incomprehensible words Hashem tells us in this week's Haftorah: "To all the family that I brought up from the land of Egypt: You alone have I loved of all the families of the earth—That is why I will call you to account for all your iniquities." (*Amos 3:1,2*)



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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### **Hashem desires those who fear Him; those who await His kindness. (*Tehillim 147:11*)**

The Zohar in Parshas Beshalach explains this Pasuk: Who are those who fear Him? Those who await, anticipate, and ask Hashem for their food every day. Rav Yeysei Saba would not set his table with food each day until he would beseech Hashem for his food. He would say, "Let us not set the table until our food is given to us from the King." He would wait some time and then say, "Now is the time, it has been bestowed upon us by the King." This is the way of those "who fear Him".

What is the meaning behind the conduct of "those who fear Him" as exemplified by Rav Yeysei Saba? Why would He not partake of food he already had before praying to Hashem for it?

Additionally, why is the prime example of "those who fear Him" - "those who constantly await His kindness and ask Him for their sustenance every day"? Even people who don't especially fear Hashem ask for and await His kindness. The Gemara says that even a thief asks for Hashem's help when he steals. It would seem that there are far better examples of "those who fear Hashem".

Perhaps the Pasuk is teaching us the surest way of attaining fear of Heaven. There are many ways one may inspire himself to fear Hashem, however, these are temporary, as time passes so does the inspiration.

However, when we realize that even what seems to be in our possession we don't really have without Hashem's constant kindness, and we internalize this by asking Hashem for our every need and awaiting His fulfillment of them, our fear of Heaven becomes as permanent as all of our needs. To internalize this, even one as great as Rav Yeysei Saba saw fit to go through the process of asking Hashem for the food he already possessed before partaking of it.

Let us not take anything for granted. We need Hashem's intervention for everything we eat and do. We don't doubt this, however, without acting upon it it remains in our mind, not in our heart. Let us internalize this truth in our hearts by focusing upon it, calling out to Hashem for our every need, and awaiting His assured kindness.