

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Chase Is On

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | 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
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | דב בעריש בן שפרה צביה

In this week's Parsha, the Medrash Tanchuma says, "The arrogance of a person will be his downfall, but humbleness will be supported with honor. (Mishlei 29:23) Anyone who runs after the status that results from a leadership position, the position will run away from him. Anyone who runs away from the leadership position, the position will run after him.....Moshe ran away from honor, at the time that Hashem said to Moshe, 'And now go, I will send you to Pharaoh,' Moshe said, 'Please my Master send anyone else.' Rabbi Levi said, for seven days Hashem tried to persuade Moshe to lead Klal Yisrael, and Moshe responded by saying send anyone else. Hashem said, 'I promise you, that in the end you will go.' Moshe then went to Pharaoh and said, 'So said Hashem the G-d of the Jews, send out my nation so that they can serve me.' The wicked Pharaoh responded, 'Who is Hashem?' Moshe started to say to Hashem, 'I fulfilled my mission.' He then went and sat down. Hashem said, 'Why are you sitting? Go and speak to Pharaoh the king of Egypt.' Moshe repeated this many times. This teaches us that every time Moshe ran away from his leadership position, in the end it ran after him. He took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, split the sea, brought them to the desert, brought down the Manna, gave them water from the well, gave them the meat, and made for them a Mishkan. Moshe then said, 'Now what more is there for me to do,' so he went and sat down. Hashem said, 'I promise that there is a job left that is greater than anything you have done previously. You have to teach them the laws of Tumah and Taharah, to teach them how they should bring a Korban before me.' As it says, and Hashem called to Moshe."

Based on this Medrash we can expand our perspective on the concept of, "If one runs away from honor, honor will run

after him." Usually we understand this concept to mean that one should do everything possible to avoid a position of honor. However, once a person is selected for that position, as Moshe Rabbeiu was from Hashem, he must embrace it and no longer attempt to avoid it. We see from here that this concept requires a person to constantly look to exit a position of honor. It is not merely the initial response one is supposed to have towards honor, but the approach one should have throughout his entire position. Without this, a person cannot be considered to be completely running away from honor.

An additional insight can be derived from the end of the Medrash. The Medrash says that Hashem told Moshe that there is a job left that is greater than anything you have done previously. At first glance this is perplexing. Granted, teaching the laws of Tumah and Taharah are important, but how can this be greater than everything mentioned previously? At Krias Yam Suf the Bnei Yisrael reached extremely high levels of Emunah and Nevuah. The Manna was a constant miracle in the Midbar, which caused their Bitachon to be strengthened. Through the Mishkan the Shechinah rested amongst Klal Yisrael. Surely teaching the laws of Tumah and Taharah are not greater than all these miracles!

We can glean from here an insight into the greatness of Torah. All of the Nissim that Moshe performed a role in were dwarfed by his role of teaching Torah to Klal Yisrael. Often we are enamored by Nissim and assume a miracle will have the greatest impact on us. We see from here that a greater force of impact is Limud HaTorah.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

*I adjure you O daughters of Jerusalem—[You] heathens, Nebuchadnezzar’s men, who saw Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah submitting themselves to the fiery furnace, and Daniel to the lions’ den because of prayer, and Mordechai’s generation in the days of Haman—if you find my beloved—in the future, on judgment day, for He will request you to testify about me, as it is stated (Yeshaya 43:9): Let them present their witnesses, that they may be deemed just, **what will you tell him**—you will testify on my behalf—that **I am lovesick**—that because of love for Him, I suffered harsh tortures among you. Let Nebuchadnezzar come and testify... let Eliphaz and Zophar and all the prophets of the heathens [come] and testify about me that I fulfilled the Torah. (Shir HaShirim 5:8 with Rashi)*

Why is it fitting for the heathens to testify as to the reason we suffered from them? Additionally, how would they know if the Mitzvos we did that led to their persecutions was out of love for Hashem, perhaps it was out of fear of Him?

Perhaps we can suggest that what we ask the heathens to testify to is not the reason we observed the Mitzvos despite their decrees against them which led to our suffering. Rather, it is to testify what they saw in us, which was the real reason behind their persecutions. The Gemara says that the reason Har Sinai is called “Sinai” is because it was there that hate descended to the world. Some commentators (see Iyun Yaakov) explain this as referring to the hate the heathens have for the Jews due to their jealousy of us for receiving the Torah. The heathens will testify that what had caused them to persecute us throughout the generations, those generations that fall short in their observance of Mitzvos, was their jealousy of the infinite love held between us and our Father in heaven. That love that can never be fully hidden—even when it looks depleted—is so enviable as to cause the greatest hatred known to mankind—the eternal hatred of the Jew.



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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After Klal Yisroel sinned, taking part in Achashverosh’s feast, the Medrash relates the words of Esther’s prayer before entering the Achashverosh’s presence to plead for her people:

“Hashem, G-d of Israel, who ruled from the beginning of time and created the Universe, please help Your maidservant! I have been left orphaned, with neither a father or mother, I’m like a pauper who begs from house to house, so too I beg for Your mercy from window to window in Achashverosh’s house. Now, Hashem, bring success to Your poor maidservant and save the sheep of your flock from these enemies who have come upon us. For nothing can hold back Your salvation. You are the Father of orphan’s, stand by this orphan who trusted in Your kindness, and place pity upon me before this man...!”

The entire world is coming to an end! Klal Yisroel and all the Heavenly angles are crying out to Hashem! Even the little children are fasting for days! What is the reason Esther says to Hashem that Klal Yisroel should be saved? “Stand by this orphan who trusted in Your kindness!” For even a decree that can stand in the way of all the Heavens and Earth cannot stand in the way of Bitachon!

Esther enters the king’s chamber uninvited, in violation of the law, and brings upon herself his wrath. He is about to order his guards to have her killed. The Medrash tells us what follows: *And our G-d saw and He had pity upon His nation, and He paid heed to the pain of the orphan who trusted in Him! And He made her pleasing before the king...!*

Perhaps this is why Klal Yisroel says every year upon completion of the Megillah reading in the prayer of Shoshanas Yaakov: You were their salvation for eternity and their hope in every generation. To proclaim that all who await Your salvation will not be shamed and those who take shield under You will not be shamed forever!