

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

## Total Immersion

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

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יהזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע  
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | דב בעריש בן שפרה צביה

In this week's Parsha the Pasuk (18:4) says, "Carry out My judgments and observe My decrees to follow them; I am Hashem your G-d." Rashi comments on the words "to follow them" as follows: "Do not take leave of them, that you should not say, 'I have learned the wisdom of Israel, I will go and I will learn the wisdom of the nations.'"

Upon initial analysis Rashi is difficult to understand and requires further clarification. Rashi seems to be saying that a person who feels his knowledge in Torah is full, and would like to now pursue other wisdoms is tantamount to a person leaving a life of Torah and Mitzvos. This is perplexing, as Rashi is discussing a person who has learned the entire Torah, and is completely committed to Shmiras Hamitzvos. This person would like to now go and study secular wisdom as well. The secular wisdom he is studying is not necessarily counter to Torah, and he is continuing to study Torah as well. Keeping all of this in mind, where in this desire to pursue secular wisdom is there a statement that the person wishes to depart from Shmiras Hamitzvos?

It seems from here that a person who is not entirely immersed in Limud Hatorah is not just lacking in the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah, but he is also considered to be departing from Shmiras Hamitzvos. The connection between Torah study and Shmiras Hamitzvos is not merely academic, to know how to do the Mitzvos. The impact of Talmud Torah goes beyond this, and

is our whole connection to Shmiras Hamitzvos. Any drop in Talmud Torah even to one who has a thorough knowledge of the entire Torah will have devastating effects on his Shmiras Hamitzvos. This is why Rashi says that pursuing secular knowledge is tantamount to a person departing from the Mishpatim and Chukim.

This idea is echoed by the Gemara in Nedarim that says the Neviim and Sages did not know why the first Beis Hamikdash was destroyed. Until Hashem explained the reason, "Because they abandoned my Torah." Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav explains this to mean that they did not say Birchas Hatorah, which the Rabbeinu Yonah says means they were lacking in their Chashivus of Torah. The question is obvious, why is a lack in Chashivus Hatorah expressed in such harsh terms, that they abandoned my Torah?! According to Rabbeinu Yonah they were learning constantly, so why would this deficiency in Chashivus Hatorah be expressed this way? The answer is that as we said above Limud Hatorah and Shmiras Hamitzvos are so inextricably connected, that any lack in Talmud Torah automatically impacts a person's Shmiras Hamitzvos and connection to Hashem.

We can use the above idea to increase our dedication to Limud Hatorah. As we see, Limud Hatorah is not just the greatest Mitzvah, but it is also the fuel for all the Mitzvos. Any lack in Limud Hatorah will directly impact our Shmiras Hamitzvos and connection to Hashem.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

*Please tell Him that I am lovesick with Him.*

*(Shir HaShirim 2:5)*

What is the proper level of love? It is that a person should love Hashem with a very great and exceeding love until his soul is bound up in the love of Hashem. Thus, he will always be obsessed with this love as one who is lovesick, whose thoughts are never diverted from the love of that woman. He is always obsessed with her; when he sits down, when he gets up, when he eats and drinks. More than this should the love for Hashem be in the hearts of those who love Him, obsessing over Him at all times as we are commanded (*Devarim 6:5: "Love Hashem..."*) with all your heart and with all your soul." This is what Shlomo said (*Shir HaShirim 2:5*) when he stated, as a metaphor: "Ki cholas ahava ani - I am lovesick." And all of Shir Hashirim is a parable describing this. (*Rambam, Hilchos Teshuva, 10:3*)

When one sees the above description of true love of Hashem, he may think: How beautiful is this love, but how far am I from attaining it? However, the Rambam states that this level of love is encapsulated in the words of the maiden in Shir HaShirim who asks the girls she meets to pass on to her husband that she is "lovesick with him."

At what point in the story of Shir HaShirim does this take place?

Mere minutes after she had felt devoid of any love for him, in fact her feelings could have well been described as hatred. Similarly, every Jew must know: Despite his current feelings of love for Hashem, the full extent of the love described in the Rambam above, is mere minutes away from him, for in fact it is in reality already there, merely hidden away!



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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It is easy to have bitachon when things are going well, but not so when times get tough. This is for two reasons: 1. We take our situation as a sign from Hashem that we may be in for a hard time. 2. When one is emotionally overwhelmed with worry its very hard to focus logically on strengthening our bitachon.

The following words of Rabbeinu Yona (*Sha'arei Teshuva, Shar Beis*) help us address these two issues: "One who trusts in Hashem, when faced with calamity should trust that the darkness he faces will in fact be the cause of the light to come. As it states (*Michah 7*): 'Do not rejoice, my enemies, over me for I have fallen, I have stood erect, when I sit in darkness Hashem is my light.' Our Sages have explained this to mean: Had I not fallen, I would not have stood erect. Had I not sat in darkness, I would not have merited light."

Perhaps this can be explained as follows: Every aspect of our lives runs solely on the kindness of Hashem and His constant Divine intervention. However, when things are running smoothly, we tend to lose sight of this. Many times, Hashem wants to bestow His kindness upon us but sees we have lost focus on our need for His special intervention. Hashem will then shake things up in order to refocus our thoughts towards Him. This takes care of the first reason mentioned above that we find it hard to have bitachon. For in fact instead of hardship being a sign from Hashem that we are in for hard times, it is a sign that we stand on the verge of beholding His loving kindness!

Focusing upon this helps us address the second reason mentioned as well, for there is no reason to be emotionally overwhelmed with worry if our troubles are in fact a sign of good times ahead!