

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

פרשת

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Living in the Darkness of Bad Middos

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-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 Pesukim say (26:52-56) "Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, 'Among these the land should be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names: with larger groups increasing their share, and with smaller groups reducing their share. Each is to be assigned its share according to its enrollment. The land, moreover, is to be apportioned by lot; and the allotment shall be made according to the listings of their ancestral tribes. Each portion shall be assigned by lot, whether for larger or smaller groups.'"

The Ralbag derives a lesson from here: "The fourth lesson is to let us know that it is appropriate for a person to do his utmost to distance himself from arguments. Therefore, the Torah organized the division of the land with great wisdom in a manner which would be free of complaints and fights. The division was done before they got the land. This is because perhaps if it was done afterwards, some people may say that they fought harder in the war or the success of the war was because of them, and therefore they will ask for a greater portion. This will cause a new fight. In addition, it was divided with the ultimate justice, that each one would take a portion according to his numbers, and the children were also taken into account so that they should not be left without an inheritance."

Upon initial analysis the need to divide the land before going to battle so that Machlokes would be avoided is perplexing! Even if the land was divided after Eretz Yisrael was conquered there would seem to be no basis for arguments. The division of the land was done based on the word of Hashem, which would seem to negate any possibility of dispute. In addition, who are the parties of the dispute? The Ralbag does not say they would argue with Hashem, rather he says that they would argue with their neighbor for taking the land unjustifiably that should really be theirs, as they fought harder! What is the rationale behind this fight with their neighbor - their neighbor got it from Hashem? What do they want from them!

We see from here how blinding and biased Middos can make a person. Although it would seem so irrational to try to claim ownership of someone's land that was given to them by Hashem, when jealousy sets in, a person's reality is blurred. Once his intellect is clouded, he is capable of ignoring the obvious truth and making absurd claims. If this is true when Hashem's involvement is so clear and the claims are baseless, how much more so does this apply in our everyday lives. Therefore, it is critical that we constantly work on our Middos to ensure that our judgment and intellect is free from the blinders of our bad Middos.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

Developing Love for Our Talmidim Through Gratitude

The Rambam in Hilchos Talmud Torah (5:12) states the following: "Just like students are obligated to give respect to their Rebbi, so too, it is necessary for the Rebbi to give respect to his students and bring them close. Our Sages expressed this in the following statement: 'Your students' honor should be as dear to you as your own.' A person needs to be careful with his students and to love them, for they are his children who give him benefit in this world and in the next world."

We are all aware of how important it is for a Rebbi to love his students, as loving them is critical to their receptivity to our influence. This Rambam shares with us an insight in how one can work on developing this love. Although a Rebbi is already obligated to love his students based on the commandment of "Love your friend like you love yourself," the Rambam adds another reason a Rebbi needs to love his students, "For they are his children who give him benefit in this world and in the next world." This implies that he is required to love his students out of Hakaras Hatov.

We need to have gratitude to them for the benefits and pleasure they give us in this world and in the next world. The benefits they give him in the next world is stated in many places by Chazal that all underscore the point that he will be Zoche to the greatest portion in the next world. However, what pleasure does a Rebbi experience from his students in this world? Perhaps it is a Rebbi's students who enrich and give his life so much meaning, as happiness is achieved through meaning and purpose. It is a Talmid who helps a Rebbi fulfill his mission of passing on the Mesorah to the next generation. Therefore, a Rebbi needs to love his students for how much they do for him.



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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The one who has Bitachon should trust in the depth of his desperation that the darkness will be the cause of his future light. As the passuk states (Michah 7:8), "Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy! Though I have fallen, I rise again; Though I sit in darkness, Hashem is my light." And Chazal explain this to mean, "if not for my falling I wouldn't rise, if not for my sitting in darkness it wouldn't be light for me."

(Rabbeinu Yonah, Sha'arei Teshuva 2:5)

How can he have Bitachon that "the darkness will be the cause of his future light?" Perhaps the darkness is a punishment for his sins? The answer is that even if it is a punishment, one who has Bitachon trusts in Hashem that He will turn his calamity into the cause of his good fortune.

This is similar to the Maharal's explanation of the expression "Gam Zu L'tova." The Maharal explains that this doesn't mean that everything is ultimately for our good in the long run. Rather, it means through our Bitachon we can turn any bad into something good even in the here and now. As he writes (Nisivos Olam, Nesiv HaBitachon chap. 1): "Gam Zu L'tova means: Also this which seems to be a calamity and a great misfortune...through Bitachon in Hashem it becomes completely good... Hashem has the ability to make everything for the good, for He can make something that seems to be the ultimate bad into the ultimate good. And all this is because He is One and all-powerful and therefore from something that seems completely bad He can make complete goodness..."