

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

פרשת
במדבר
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Weekly Parsha • My Rebbe, My Father

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

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח | לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | לעילוי נשמת רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה | לרפואה שלמה יהושע דוד בן אלטא יענטא

In this week's Parsha, the Torah writes (Bamidbar 3:1-2), "These are the offsprings of Aharon and Moshe...and these are the names of the children of Aharon." The Pasuk clearly refers to Moshe as the father of Aharon's children, as Moshe's children are never listed. Rashi comments and explains, "They are called Moshe's children because he taught them Torah. This teaches us that whoever teaches his friend's son Torah, the Torah considers it as if he gave birth to him."

The Sifsei Chachamim asks, Moshe taught the entire Klal Yisroel the Torah, so why are they not called his children? He answers that Moshe was commanded to teach the entire Klal Yisroel Torah. Therefore, the principle of whoever teaches his friend's son Torah is considered as if he gave birth to him, does not apply. However, in regards to Aharon's children, since it is an obligation of a father to teach his son, Moshe was not obligated to teach them and learn with them any more than any other member of Klal Yisroel. Hence, they are called Moshe's children because he went beyond his obligation and spent more time teaching them and learning with them.

At first glance this idea is difficult to understand and requires further clarification. Why would holding back from going beyond one's obligation to teach Torah fail to transform the student-teacher relationship to a parent-child relationship? By teaching Torah, a Rebbe is providing his student with a spiritual life just as a parent gives their child a physical life. What is lacking in this relationship, if the Rebbe merely fulfills his obligation and does not go above and beyond?

We can explain this idea as follows: Granted that if one teaches Torah as a fulfillment of his obligation, his greatest accomplishments in life are the students that he produces. However, the title of "father" can only be achieved through giving of himself voluntarily. Through going beyond his obligation of teaching Torah, his self sacrifice, love and dedication has the power to form a bond with his student, which can transform the very identity of that relationship, to father-son. Certainly this new identity is not merely a title, but it is rather an expression of the expansion of the Rebbe's sphere of influence, and the increased receptivity of the students' hearts.

Rabbi Chatzkel Sarna ZT"L derived from this Rashi a further insight into the power of teaching Torah as a means of transforming the Rebbe-Student relationship. He said that from this Rashi we see, "That through teaching Torah one can even snatch a child from such a father like Aharon Hakohen." Aharon was the ultimate role model and teacher for his children, yet through teaching Torah, Moshe was able to even go beyond Aharon's bond, to the extent of being considered as if he gave birth to them.

We can learn from the above an important lesson in regards to Chinuch. If we want to influence our students, and take advantage of the potential bond that can be created through teaching Torah, it is not enough for us to fulfill our basic obligations. Only through going above and beyond can we exert the greatest influence on our students, and be called their father.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

"I know from Shir HaShirim how much Hashem loves each and every Jew no matter his spiritual state. However, though I understand Hashem's great love for Tzaddikim and even for simply good Jews it is hard to understand and therefore feel the love He feels for someone like me, who so often fails in the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos."



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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And I, in Your kindness have placed my trust, my heart rejoices in Your salvation I will sing to Hashem when He has saved me. (Tehillim 13:4-6)

Rav Chaim Brisker explains this Pasuk to mean: Even before the salvation actually takes place I will rejoice, for I am so certain it will come.

Emunah Highlights *Continued*

“What are we going to do?” cried the innkeeper, R’ Mottel’s wife.” If you don’t pay the Polish landowner the entire amount you owe him by 9:30 tomorrow morning, he promised to throw our whole family into his dungeon.”

“I’ve been working on my bitachon for many years now,” replied R’ Mottel, “and I’m not worried in the slightest, I have no doubt that my dear Father-in-Heaven, who cares about me more than we could even care about our own children, will take care of everything.”

The Vilna Gaon, a guest at the inn witnessing this exchange, waited to see how this man’s Heavenly salvation would come about.

At 9:25 am the next day, the Gaon sees R’ Mottel reassuring his wife, “True, I still do not have the money, but I will go right now to him and you’ll see how Hashem will take care of everything.”

The Gaon followed R’ Mottel from a distance on the five-minute trek to the Polish landowner’s mansion, to see what would happen.

9:26: Suddenly, the Gaon sees a wealthy man on horseback ride up to R’ Mottel and engage him in conversation. R’ Mottel shakes his head with an emphatic “no” following which the man rides away.

9:28: The rider returns to R’ Mottel, says a few words following which R’ Mottel again shakes his head emphatically and the rider rides away.

9:30: It’s the dreaded deadline and R’ Mottel is standing confidently in the doorway. Suddenly, the Vilna Gaon sees the rider returning, he exchanges something with R’ Mottel and rides off. The Polish landowner opens the door, accepts something from R’ Mottel, who then turns around and heads back to the inn.

“What happened?” asks the Gaon.

“When I was already in the doorway, without any money, Hashem sent someone to buy my entire fruit crop for the coming year for their full value which is more than twice the sum I owed!”

“But what happened the first two times he came up to you?” asked the Gaon.

“The first two times he offered me a little less than the true value of my crops, so I refused to sell them!”

When one is already rejoicing in Hashem’s complete salvation, with the Hallel already at the tip of his tongue, you don’t settle for anything less!!

Shir HaShirim Insights *Continued*

Your feelings are due to a lack of understanding of the basis of Hashem’s love for us. The Netziv gives a beautiful explanation of the Pasuk (*Devarim 7:7*), “It is not because you are most numerous that Hashem set His heart on you and chose you—indeed, you are the smallest of peoples; but it was because Hashem loves you...” He says that it is not due to their great intelligence, rather out of love that comes without any noticeable reason rather through connection of spirit, as when a father and son, who for whatever reason have never seen each other, meet and during a brief amount of time connect with an overwhelming love. This is because their Mazel sees that their spirit is connected as offspring, so too Hashem’s love for Klal Yisroel is due to their being a ‘portion of Hashem from above’. For this reason, they are called ‘children to Hashem’ and Hashem calls Himself ‘Father’ as the Pasuk (*Devarim 32:6*) states ‘Is He not your Father?’ (*Ha’Emek Davar*)

If Hashem’s love was similar to a relationship between friends, which is based upon each person’s qualities, such a question may be in place, but in truth it is based on something else entirely and that is just the fact that you are ‘a part’ of Him! Is there a better feeling than that?!