

The Delicate Nature of Middos

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

On the Mitzvah not to slaughter a mother and her child on the same day, the Sefer Hachinuch says, “Furthermore, we are able to say in this matter based on the simple understanding, the goal is to instill within our soul the trait of compassion, and to distance the Middah of cruelty which is a bad Middah. Therefore, even though Hashem allowed us to eat animals, He commanded us not to kill the mother and child together, and internalize in our soul the Middah of compassion.”

Generally speaking when we think about improving our Middos, we think in terms of staying away from significant things that impact our Middos. However, subtle sensitivities are often overlooked, and not recognized as having a negative impact. From this Sefer Hachinuch we see that even abstract, seemingly slight sensitivities in Middos can have a major impact on us. The Mitzvah of not killing the mother and child in one day includes even if they are not killed in front of each other or if it is done at different times during the day. Seemingly, in these situations the mother and baby won't be aware of what is happening, and there won't be any more pain related to them being killed on the same day than if they were killed on different days. However there is some slight sensitivity to create a clear separation when you kill them that is abstract and very subtle, and this slight sensitivity impacts Middos both positively and negatively.

The Vilna Gaon tells us that, “If not for Tikkun Hamidos, why am I alive?” The Medrash tells us that the Mitzvos were only given to refine our character. Clearly Middos are front and center of

our Avodos Hashem, and they are so delicate that they are even impacted by the most minute things both positive and negative.

This idea of not killing them on the same day is Chinuch HaMussar, the training with which we can use to impact our character. Additionally, the Medrash shares with us an idea that can help us with the Chochmas HaMussar and imagery needed to refine our character. The Medrash says, “Why is a baby given a Bris Milah on the eighth day? Because Hashem had compassion on the baby to wait until it is stronger. Just like Hashem has compassion on a person, so too is his compassion on an animal. Where do we see his compassion on an animal? As it says, “From the eighth day onward it will be pleasing for a Korban.” Furthermore, Hashem says, “The mother and child should not be slaughtered on the same day.”

From this Medrash we see that the goal of the Mitzvah is not only the Chinuch HaMussar of instilling compassion in ourselves, but it is also an expression of Hashem's care for the animal. A care that is so subtle, the animal will be killed eventually anyways, and generally animals mature faster than humans. Yet, Hashem cared about every level of pain and reduced it as much as possible. Similarly, Hashem himself expressed the sensitivity of not wanting a mother and child to be killed on the same day. This image provides us with an image of Hashem to model after, and fulfill our obligation to walk in His way.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

Since the day the world was created there was no more joyful time before Hashem then when the Beis HaMikdash was completed. At that time a heavenly Beis HaMikdash was created as well and was established in all the worlds, enlightening and filling them with sweet fragrance. All heavenly enclosures opened, casting their light. There was no greater joy in the entire universe such as the joy of that day (Zohar Teruma 143). The Beis HaMikdash, the place of the great King... for from there emerges all the light and all the blessings and happiness in the world... (Zohar, Vayigash). ...The Beis HaMikdash is the beauty of the entire universe... where all the people of the world look towards and pray towards. Just as when the neck breaks, with it the entire body breaks, so too the Beis HaMikdash when it is destroyed and darkened with it the entire world is darkened and the sun doesn't shine nor the heavens, earth, or stars (Zohar, Vayigash 90).

For thousands of years, since the creation of the world, Hashem waited for Klal Yisroel to build Him a dwelling where He would concentrate His holy Shechinah, which fills the entire universe, between its four walls. The house of Hashem! The focal point of creation!

However, what does Hashem testify to us is the reason this place is beautiful to Him? The Pasuk in Shir HaShirim (4:10) tells us: How beautiful is your love - every place where you showed me affection is beautiful in My eyes; Gilgal, Shiloh, Nov, Givon, and the eternal Temple - My own, my bride!

What does the Creator of the Universe consider the defining beauty of the Beis HaMikdash? It is the place which Klal Yisroel showed their affection to Him. For it is that love, and happiness of experiencing it, which is the very reason for the entire creation!



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The Never Ending Hashgacha Pratis Story

In this week's Parsha, the Torah commands us not to slaughter a mother and her child on the same day. The Sefer Hachinuch explains that one of the purposes of this Mitzvah is, "That a person should focus on the fact that Hashem's Hashgacha is on all living things in general, and with this Hashgacha they will survive forever, because Hashem's Hashgacha on something is what allows it to exist. Therefore the species will never be completely destroyed. Even though when it comes to people, Hashem's Hashgacha is on each individual...it is not so by animals, rather it is more general over the species. Therefore we are commanded to refrain from destroying the tree and the branch together to hint to this."

The Sefer Hachinuch tells us that the goal of this Mitzvah is to focus on the fact that Hashem's Hashgacha is causing these species to continue to exist. However, he adds one sentence which expands this focus to include a much broader concept, as he says, "because Hashem's Hashgacha on something is what allows it to exist." Meaning we are not only focusing on the concept of Hashem's Hashgacha on these species of animal, but on Hashem's Hashgacha on everything in the world as the factor causing it to exist.

This idea has far reaching ramifications, since normally when we focus on specific Hashgacha we don't think of it in such broad terms. However, we see from here that when seeing Hashgacha, our focus should be that this particular thing is Hashgacha, because everything in the world is Hashgacha. This is similar to the Ramban at the end of Parshas Bo who says we are obligated to view everything in the world as miracles, and there is no such thing as miracles. In other words, every experience of Hashgacha is an opportunity to reflect on the fact that everything that happens in the world is Hashgacha.