

# Pursuit of Purpose

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פרשת

לר לר

VOL 171

## A Shliach In The White House & A Best Friend in Heaven

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  
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IAs Jews living in America, our lives have been shaken up since October 7th. We no longer feel safe in this country and we constantly worry about Eretz Yisrael. The recent presidential election has caused many of us to breathe a sigh of relief. However, this reaction is dangerous, as we may begin to rely on our friend in the White House, as opposed to our Father in Heaven. The Medrash tells us that Esther purposely invited Haman to the Seudah with the intention of getting Klal Yisrael to turn to Hashem. At that point Klal Yisrael felt secure since they had a sister as the queen. To turn their faith back to Hashem, which is the only thing that would save them, Esther confused them by inviting Haman to the Seudah. As the language on the news and media continues to distract us from the truth that everything is orchestrated from Hashem, we need to be Mechazek our Emunah, that everything is in the hands of Hashem. The president is merely a messenger. As we will soon see, it is only with this focus that we will be able to reach the highest level of dedication to Avodas Hashem.

The Chovos Halevovos in the gate of Cheshbon Hanefesh says the following in the third chapter, "The 14th Cheshbon is a person reflecting on the fact that he loves anyone who loves him, as it says לאדם לאדם כן לב האדם לאדם. כמים הפנים לפנים כן לב האדם לאדם. Surely if this person is royalty or a leader, and even more so if he sees an expression of this closeness, and that he does good and kindness to him, without him needing anything. This will result in a feeling of love that cannot be interfered with, a complete dedication to him, giving yourself over to his commandments and service. Willing to give one's soul, money, and children to repay him,"

The Chovos Halevovos seems to be describing 2 levels in our relationship with Hashem. The first level is more in the abstract, based on the knowledge that Hashem loves me. This will engender a reciprocal feeling of love towards Hashem. However this level won't produce a relationship of total self sacrifice for Hashem. Only when one experiences the expression of that love in a way that is visible, by seeing the good and kindness that Hashem does for him, can this lead to a higher level relationship; a relationship in which one will be willing to give up himself, his money, and children for Hashem. Only through seeing the Hashgachas Hashem in action, can we reach true אהבת ה'.

This idea is expressed in Krias Shema, where we end the Brochah, בעומר הבוחר ביהוה, declaring that Hashem chose us with love. Only then do we say אלוקים אחד, and we declare that Hashem is one. Rebbi Akiva Eiger points out that this is based on the concept of לאדם לאדם כן לב האדם לאדם, that once we know Hashem loves us, we automatically feel love for him.

However the Sifri says that the love of Hashem is based on the next Pasuk of והיו, which is referring to Torah. Through the Torah one comes to loving Hashem. How can we resolve this confusion, what generates the love, is it the knowledge that Hashem loves us, or is it the Torah? By understanding that there are 2 levels of love we can explain the Pesukim. Through knowing Hashem loves us, we come to love him. However to reach the level of ובכל נפשך ובכל לבבך, for that we need the gift of Torah. The Torah represents Hashem actively showing us love, this generates a higher level of love, with a higher level commitment.

We find a similar insight in the Tanna Dvei Eliyahu Perek 25, where the following is said, "Blessed is Hashem, blessed is He, who chose Klal Yisrael from all the nations, and from everything He created. He acquired them completely, calling them his children and servants. At times He speaks to them as He would speak to a large audience, and at times like He would speak to someone privately. Why does He do all this? It is all due to the love He has for them, and for the joy He gets when He rejoices in them...Therefore each person is obligated to say when will I reach the action of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. The Avos only acquired this world and the next...due to their good deeds and Torah study. This is what the sages taught each person is obligated to say the world was created for me." Upon initial analysis these ideas seem to all be disconnected and not in harmony with each other. Why does my obligation to aspire to be like the Avos result from me knowing that Hashem loves me? In addition, how is this concept synonymous with the idea that a person is obligated to say "The world is created for me," as this seems to be a different concept altogether?

It seems that in order for a person to be motivated to grow, he needs to know how much Hashem loves him. He loves him so much that He created the whole world for him. These ideas weave together to express that growth can only happen if one knows how much he is loved by Hashem. Once he knows this, he can strive to reach the heights of the Avos.

The Chovos Halevovos and the Tanna Dvei Eliyahu both illustrate how growth is predicated on the knowledge and experience that Hashem loves me.

We experience Hashgacha Pratis daily, however we often fail to see it, giving too much credit to the messengers. Seeing this hand of Hashem in our lives is integral for us to feel loved, which will result in complete dedication to Hashem. B"H we are experiencing a lot of good right now, but we have to realize all this good is from Hashem, and it is not based on who is in office. As the Pasuk says ומלכים ביד השם.

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