

## Life Lessons From The King's Table

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 | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי  
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

In this week's Parshah, Hashem warns a king (17:17), "and you shall not have too many wives, and you should not turn your heart, and silver and gold you should not have a lot of". The Ralbag derives the following lesson from here. A king is warned to not have too many wives so that they don't remove his heart from diligence in Torah and being drawn to it."

The Ralbag's statement, that having too many wives will remove a person's heart from diligence in Torah, is understandable, as more wives would surely require more time, decreasing the amount of time he can spend on Torah. However, the second statement, that this will remove his heart from being drawn to Torah, requires further clarification. A king is obligated to carry a Sefer Torah with him at all times. This obligation ensures he is constantly focused on Torah. Granted, if he would have more wives it would impact his ability to spend time studying, but how would that diminish his desire for Torah, especially since he is wearing the Sefer Torah at all times?

It must be that a person has a limit of how many things he can be drawn to, and when there is an overload of things he is drawn to, something has to give. Therefore, if a king has too many wives that he is drawn to, it will result in a reduction in his drive for Torah, despite him wearing a Sefer Torah all day.

This idea has wide reaching ramifications in our generation. We live in a world that constantly tries to grab our attention and tempt us. This constant bombardment of temptation directly impacts our drive for Torah. It is therefore critical that we do everything possible to insulate ourselves as much as we can, while at the same time, dedicating ourselves to Limud

Hammusar, which will increase our craving for Torah, directly countering the reduction caused by outside temptation.

The Ralbag draws the following additional lesson from the second part of the Pasuk. "A king is warned from increasing his wealth beyond his needs, because this will cause arrogance and him straying from the path of Torah and being diligent in it, due to his great desire to acquire possessions."

Once again we can understand the lack of diligence in Torah caused by the lack of time, due to the pursuit of wealth. However, how does the pursuit of wealth itself cause one to become arrogant, especially since he is not necessarily desiring anything that is forbidden to him? It is one thing to say that the actual wealth itself causes a person to become arrogant, as he no longer feels the need to depend upon Hashem. But how does the craving for materialism cause arrogance?

It must be that a person who craves money and pursues this desire, is subtly saying I am running my own life, and I am not happy with what Hashem gave me. This thought process increases his arrogance and decreases his humility and dependence on Hashem. So many of us struggle with this pursuit, and we see from here the pursuit is more damaging than we think.

Elul is once again upon us, and the call of the hour is Limud Hamussar. We see from the above that there are so many emotional subtleties that underlie all our actions. Only through Chochmas Hamussar can we gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics that go on within ourselves, and truly refine our intellect to be in control.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

"Open for Me, My Sister, My Wife, My Dove, My Pure One!" (Shir HaShirim 5:2)

Love can arise from three fundamental sources: desirability, goodness, and benefit. Yet, there is a fourth type of love that is purely a response to the love felt from another, even if that other is not particularly desirable, beneficial, or good. As the Pasuk says, "As water reflects a face, so too a heart reflects another."

Based on this, the Vilna Gaon explains the four expressions of Hashem's love for Klal Yisroel in our Pasuk:

Achosi - "My Sister" symbolizes Hashem's love for us because we "benefit" Him.

Rayosi - "My Wife" signifies His love stemming from how desirable we are to Him.

Yonasi - "My Dove" reflects His love for our inherent goodness.

Tamasi - "My Pure One" refers to the love He feels simply from seeing how much we love Him, even if hidden deep within.

This Pasuk reveals the astounding depth of Hashem's love for us. In this part of Shir HaShirim, the wife shows a cold indifference to her husband. He stands in the rain, pleading to be let in, while she would rather he leave than soil her feet by opening the door. This symbolizes the Jew at his lowest point, seemingly distant from his Creator. Yet, even in this state, Hashem says, "Please! Let Me into your life so I can express My great love for you! You benefit Me (so to speak). You are desirable to Me. You are inherently good. I, the One who sees the depths of every soul, see the immense love you have for Me buried within your heart!"



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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"I will flee from You—toward You, I will take shelter from Your wrath—in Your shadow." (Rabbeinu Shlomo Ibn Gabirol, piyut from Rosh Hashanah davening)

The Brisker Rav explains that true Bitachon is not placing trust in Hashem while being unaware of the dangers one faces. Rather, it is fully understanding the danger of one's situation and, despite this, choosing to trust in Hashem to provide salvation. Therefore, before the Yamim Nora'im, before one runs towards Hashem and trusts that He will judge favorably, one must first "run away" from Him—recognizing the peril created by one's own shortcomings. Yet, where can a Jew flee, if not to their Father in Heaven?

The Brisker Rav notes that this idea is expressed by the Rambam (Pirush Hamishnayos, Rosh Hashanah Chap. 4): "Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are days of service, subjugation, awe, and fear of Hashem—fleeing from Him and toward Him."

This dual concept is beautifully highlighted every morning during the month of Elul. As Shacharis concludes, we blow the shofar to awaken the fear of the impending Day of Judgment, as the Pasuk (Amos 3:6) states: "Shall a shofar sound in a city and the people not tremble?"

But immediately, we follow with the words of Dovid HaMelech: "LeDovid Hashem ori v'yishi mimi ira — Hashem is my light and my salvation, from whom shall I fear?" This reminds us that even in our trembling fear, we can always turn to our Father in Heaven for refuge.