

The Middos Required To Make Good Decisions

פרשת ויגש

Throughout our lives we are forced to make difficult decisions. Often times these decisions are made by emotions and biases rather than sound logic. It is therefore critical that we develop the skills required to make healthy decisions. In this week's Parsha, the Ralbag shares with us the Middos that are necessary in making correct decisions.

The Ralbag learns a lesson in Middos from the fact that Yaakov stopped by Beer Sheva on his way down to Mitzrayim. He says, (Lesson 6) "It is inappropriate to act quickly when making big decisions, rather one should deliberate until he reaches a sound conclusion. This can be derived from Yaakov's hesitation to move to Egypt as Yosef requested, until he was able to achieve the perfect advice regarding this. Therefore, he did actions to attain prophecy in order to find out if it was proper for him to move down to Egypt."

At first glance the Ralbag's proof from Yaakov is difficult to understand. Perhaps Yaakov didn't have the Middah of pacing on decisions, however he may have felt this specific decision requires deliberation and clarity. Where do we see this was his Middah? In order to clarify this, we must say that the Ralbag is of the opinion that if not for Yaakov

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possessing this Middah of always being deliberate and acting slow on big decisions, he never would have been able to delay his move to Egypt. His strong desire to be close to Yosef would have clouded his judgement. It is only due to his Middah of being deliberate that he was able to restrain his desire and hesitate going down to Egypt.

We find another Ralbag in this week's Parsha that discusses another Middah necessary in decision making. The Ralbag learns a lesson in Middos from the fact that Yosef set up his family to live in the land of Goshen. He says, (Lesson 4) "It is appropriate for a person to see from the beginning all the possible outcomes of his actions, despite his desire for something specific. This way he will set up his affairs in the best possible manner to avoid negative and damaging

outcomes. This can be derived from Yosef's placing his family in Goshen to protect them from the danger of the big cities, despite his strong desire that they live in Egypt next to him."

We can ask a similar question and propose a similar answer here. What proof is there from Yosef that one should develop the Middah to see all the outcomes of his actions from the beginning. Perhaps Yosef didn't have this Middah, but he saw specifically in this situation that his family living in Goshen was the best for them? It must be that the Ralbag is of the opinion, since Yosef so desired to live near his family he would never have been able to set them up in Goshen, without the Middah of seeing the consequences of his actions. It is only because he developed this Middah that he was not swayed by his emotions.

We can glean from here a powerful insight in regard to decision making. If we want to make correct and effective decisions, we must recognize that our intellect can be blinded by strong desire, and therefore we need to develop within ourselves these two important Middos as our second nature. Through the Middah of deliberation and the Middah of seeing the outcome of one's actions deeply ingrained in our hearts, we will be positioned for success when making decisions.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS 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