

The Crowning Glory of Man

פרשת יתרו

In this week's Parsha, Hashem commands the Jewish people in the Mitzvah of Emunah. The Ralbag says that through the Mitzvah of אנכי ה' אלוקיך the Jewish people are commanded to believe that there is a G-d Who is in complete control of everything, and that He changes the order of nature in order to benefit those that cling to Him. Through the Mitzvah of לא יהיה לך אלקים אחרים, we are commanded not to attribute any power to anyone or anything besides Hashem. The Ralbag then continues to explain the benefit of these Mitzvos. He comments on the Mitzvah of אנכי, "The benefit of this Mitzvah is in understanding. When a person fails to believe that there is a primary cause to existence, he will not achieve any wisdom. This is because wisdom is attained through analyzing the causes. If there is a deficiency in this area it will result in a lack of wisdom. In addition, when one fails to believe in Divine Providence, he will be lacking in fundamental principles of the Torah." The

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Ralbag similarly comments on the Mitzvah of לא יהיה לך, "The benefit of this Mitzvah is in understanding. When a person attributes G-dliness to anything besides Hashem, he will be lacking in wisdom. This will result in him not achieving true spiritual success, which emanates from him understanding Hashem according to his ability."

At first glance this Ralbag requires further analysis. The benefits of Emunah and the impact of the lack of it are self-evident. Without the belief that Hashem created the world, and that He is in control of everything, the entire basis for the Torah would crumble. Although the Ralbag does mention this benefit by אנכי, it seems that the primary benefit he mentions is in attaining wisdom. This is perplexing. The fact that belief is the pillar of the whole Torah would seem to be the greater and more significant benefit.

We see from here that the greatest loss of a lack in Emunah is the impact it will cause to one's pursuit of wisdom and understanding of Hashem. Without this understanding, his entire Avodas Hashem will be deficient. This knowledge is the ultimate goal of the Torah, as the Pasuk says "כי אם בזאת יתהלל המתהלל השכל ויודע אותי." The Alter of Slobodka had a special affinity to the Zemira of דרוור יקרא as it emphasizes that wisdom is the crowning glory of man.

From the above we can learn how important it is to pursue wisdom and understanding of Hashem. If we want to attain this wisdom in our generation, we need to follow the words of Rabbi Yisroel Salanter, who taught us that this knowledge is only accessible to us through חכמת המוסר. We must make continual effort to delve into the depths of Mussar in order to properly understand Hashem.

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