

Love Melts the Heart

Fights, resentment and negative emotions are all too often par for the course in our daily interactions. These experiences and feelings can create distance, even in the most loving relationships. More often than not, relationships are destroyed by petty issues that could have been resolved through proper techniques and strategies. It is therefore integral that we learn the secret to conflict resolution.

In this week's Parsha, when Yaakov was returning home after many years, he prepared for his encounter with Eisav. Yaakov was well aware that Eisav had a deep seeded hatred towards him for taking the brachos, to such an extent that he wanted to murder him. Yaakov devised a plan to dissipate Eisav's hatred. He sent messengers to tell Eisav what had been going on in his life up until now. He told him the following: "I lived with Lavan until now, and I have oxen, donkeys, sheep, servants, and maidservants." The Ralbag explains that Yaakov's intention in sharing this information with Eisav, was to express friendship and love. People only share the details of their lives with friends and loved ones. Yaakov felt that through this expression of love, Eisav's hatred would dissipate. From here the Ralbag derives that through a show of friendship we can melt the heart of an enemy.

" Even a slight show of friendship, merely sharing the non-personal events of one's life, can warm a cold and callous heart. "

If we analyze and put into context the lesson mentioned above, we can glean a powerful insight into understanding human relationships and conflict resolution. Our Sages tell us that Eisav's hatred towards Yaakov was so intense, that it became embedded within his DNA, and passed down to all of his descendants. In addition, Eisav made no indication that he desired a relationship with Yaakov. Yet we find that Yaakov could have been able to remove this hatred and evoke love and friendship from Eisav. We see from here that even the greatest hatred can be transformed through love. Moreover, it is evident that hatred does not necessarily require an extreme show of love or a need to dwell on the problem. Even a slight show of friendship, merely sharing the non-personal events of one's life, can warm a cold and callous heart.

Yaakov's actions still require further clarification. Although love melts the heart of even a mortal enemy, in this situation there was an additional problem. Eisav said about Yaakov that, "He tricked me twice." Eisav found himself duped by Yaakov in the past and knew Yaakov was clever and cunning. Thus, at best, Eisav could not have been sure that this expression of love from Yaakov was fully sincere. Yet Yaakov felt that this expression of love could potentially have the power to break through Eisav's heart. We see from here that even an expression of love that the other person is skeptical of it's sincerity can work to melt the heart.

In every relationship, whether it is a marriage, parent-child, teacher-student, or our other friendships, it is normal and quite common to experience conflict. However, we learn from the Ralbag that there is no hatred that can't be broken. People have an extreme craving for friendship and love even when they may appear to seem angry or uninterested in you. This desire is so strong that upon seeing your interest in them, you can melt their heart, despite their doubts about your sincerity.

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
לרפואה שלמה רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה