

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

## Keys To A Rebbi's Success

*based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh*

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

In this week's Parsha, the ten commandments are introduced by the following Pasuk (20:1), "And Elokim spoke all these words saying". The Medrash Rabbah (28:3) comments, "Why does the Pasuk start with the word 'And He spoke' which is a language that conveys harshness, then follows with the word 'Elokim' which conveys the trait of might, and then concludes with the word 'Saying', which is a soft language. One can see from here that the Middos of Hashem are not like the Middos of a human being. A human king cannot fight battles and also be a teacher of children. However, Hashem is different. Yesterday He revealed Himself as master of war, as it says 'Hashem is a master of war,' and 'with His strength the sea roared,' but today He came down to teach Torah to His children like an old man full of mercy, as it says 'Hashem is elevated in His strength, who is like Him as a teacher.' At this time He conducted Himself with these two opposites."

We can derive from the above Medrash an insight into teaching Torah. Har Sinai was the initial encounter with Hashem giving the Torah, and Hashem felt it necessary to reveal Himself to Klal Yisrael with both the Middos of strength and mercy. It seems that in order for Klal Yisrael to be receptive to the teachings of Torah, softness and gentleness are not enough. They also have to know that the one giving the Torah is a mighty warrior as was demonstrated at Har Sinai. Care and compassion alone may be perceived as a weakness and a lack of confidence, which will impact our receptivity and may cause us to feel vulnerable. However, once we know His Gevurah it allows us to feel confident in Him, and be fully receptive.

Granted a human being does not have the ability to possess both of these Middos to the fullest extent, however, since we see from here that both of these traits are critical to a person's receptivity to Torah, it is integral for Rabbeim to exhibit both of these Middos to whatever extent they can. While a Rebbi must speak softly and interact with students in a gentle manner, it is also important that he exudes confidence and strength so that students feel secure in following his guidance and instruction.

The Medrash Tanchuma (15) in this week's Parsha comments on the words in Pasuk (20:1), "These words saying." "There was a story with Rebbi Akiva who was called up by the Chazzan publicly to

read the Torah. He refused to go up. His students asked him, 'Rebbi didn't you teach us - This is your life and the length of your days? Why are you refusing to go up?' Rebbi Akiva responded, 'The Avodah - A person is not permitted to say words of Torah in front of the Tzibur until he reviews it privately two or three times. This is derived from Hashem, who prepares the speech of all men, and the Torah is revealed in front of Him. Yet when He came to give the Torah to Yisroel, it is written, 'Then He saw it, prepared and delved into it, and then He taught it.' So too it says that Hashem spoke all the words privately to himself, and then it said it."

Upon initial analysis it is difficult to understand the idea brought forth in this Medrash. Generally one reviews and prepares to achieve clarity in his understanding. Clearly Hashem is not reviewing for clarity! In addition, Rebbi Akiva knew the entire Torah on his fingertips and he did not need to prepare to read the Torah. Further clarification is needed to understand the purpose of this preparation and review.

It seems from this Medrash that when it comes to Torah, preparing and reviewing is not merely to achieve clarity. As Rebbi Akiva, and surely Hashem, had that clarity. Rather, it is also an aspect of Kavod and Chashivus Hatorah. When a person knows how precious the Torah is he won't be able to present it publicly without preparing it first. He will feel, how can I present the most important thing in the world without preparation? That would cheapen it, and the audience won't be receptive to the messages conveyed by the Torah. This seems to be true even if the audience is totally unaware of whether one is prepared or not, as no one was aware if Rebbi Akiva or Hashem reviewed or prepared the Torah. However, the preparation is for oneself to deepen his Chashivus Hatorah which is critical in the Torah impacting and influencing the audience.

We can derive from here a tremendous lesson in regards to Chinuch. Often a Rebbi finds himself teaching a lesson he has taught many times and may know the subject matter well. He may therefore find little need to review. However, we see from here that no matter how clear we have grasped the information, we need to prepare and review to enhance our own Chashivus Hatorah.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

***“With Me from Levanon My bride; with Me from Levanon you will come.” (Shir HaShirim 4:8)***

Hashem said, “With Me from Levanon you will come. It was taught, ‘We give a maiden twelve months from when she is engaged to prepare herself,’ and I did not do this, rather, while you were still dealing with mud and bricks I sprang forth and redeemed you. Even the revolting in manner, Achashverosh, said, ‘Six months [the maidens must prepare themselves] with myrrh oil...’ and I did not do this.” (Medrash Rabbah)

The Mefarshim explain: Hashem is referring to the fact that though Klal Yisroel were filthy from the impurity of the idols and terrible character traits of Mitzrayim, He still brought them to Har Sinai as His bride without waiting for them to first cleanse themselves.

Properly, Hashem ought to have waited for them to cleanse themselves from the repulsive impurity of Mitzrayim and only then bring them under the wedding canopy of Har Sinai, but His overwhelming love caused Him to jump ahead of the customary process, as Chazal (Bereishis 55:8) say, “Love disregards the rule.”

One may wonder: What did Hashem see as he gazed upon a Klal Yisroel still uncleansed from the historic filth and impurity of Mitzrayim? “For man sees only what is visible, but Hashem sees into the heart.” (Shmuel I 16:7) No matter the thickness of filth, it remains merely a removable layer covering the infinite beauty of the Jewish soul, a beauty that overwhelms Hashem to the point where He can not even wait the extra few months of cleansing needed before He brings this “filthy” Jewish soul under His chuppah in eternal matrimony.

Next time we see a Jew who seems filthy with impurity let us remember, because of what hides under that filth, Hashem chose him as well, as His eternal bride!



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE **Emunah Highlights**

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*All the true believers would go out and gather the Manna... when he would place it before him, he would taste in it any taste he wished... And those that were not true believers, what does the Pasuk (Shemos 11:8) say regarding them? “The people would go about and gather it.” What is the meaning of וַשׁוּרוּ -they would go about? וַשׁוּרוּ – with craziness they would act, for they were not true believers. What does the Pasuk (ibid.) say regarding them, “They grinded it between millstones or pounded it in a mortar.” Who caused them such hardship? Rather, it was because they were not true believers. Like these are those who do not believe in Hashem, they do not wish to contemplate upon His ways, and they burden themselves every day in search for sustenance, day and night, out of fear lest they not find bread. Who caused all this to them? Rather, it is because they are not true believers. (Zohar, Beshalach, 62b)*

One portion of Manna provided all the sustenance one needed. Without any culinary preparation it tasted like anything one’s heart desired. Yet those that were small of faith, “grinded it between millstones or pounded it in a mortar,” in order to prepare it “properly” in their eyes. What did they gain from all their extra effort? Nothing but heartache! How silly they appear in our eyes! This leads us to two questions: 1) They were witnessing the greatest miracles before their very eyes, day in and day out, how is it possible that they were still “not true believers” (on their lofty level)? 2) How can a member of our generation who overburdens himself in search for a livelihood at a time when Hashem does not perform open miracles each day, be compared to them?

A careful reading of the Zohar provides us the answer to our first question. *Like these are those who do not believe in Hashem, they do not wish to contemplate upon His ways.* Without contemplation, one can witness the greatest miracles unfold before his eyes each and every day and they will still have no effect upon him. This leads us to the answer to our second question. Do we not, in our own generation, also bear witness to the greatest miracles each day? Is what happens to us between placing food in our mouths until it is completely digested any less of a miracle than Manna falling from heaven? Certainly not!

Would it not be easier to burden ourselves a drop every day in contemplation over Hashem’s miracles than overburdening ourselves day and night in search for sustenance?!