

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

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## Bitachon Expressed Through Character Refinement

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

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנח | 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 Torah discusses the Mitzvah of Bris Milah. As the Pasuk says, "On the 8th day you should circumcise him." (Tazria 12:3) An interesting conversation between Turnesrufus and Rebbi Akiva regarding Bris Milah is cited in the Medrash Tanchuma. (Tazria 5) At the end of their conversation Turnesrufus asked Rebbi Akiva, "If Hashem wanted Bris Milah why didn't He just make a person born circumcised?... Rebbi Akiva responded that Hashem gave the Mitzvos to refine a person's character. This is what Dovid said, "All Hashem's words are refining." (Tehillim 18) The Medrash Rabbah in Parshas Lech Lecha (34:1) conveys this same idea expressed by Rebbi Akiva, and quotes the end of the Pasuk in Tehillim as follows, "The words of Hashem are refining, a shield to all those who take shelter in Him." The commentary of the Maharzu addresses the connection between these two ideas, and explains the Pasuk as follows, the Torah refines those who listen to it's words. Then when one is faced with challenges Hashem protects them. However, if one does not refine themselves Hashem will not protect them.

At first glance it is difficult to understand how the Maharzu's explanation fits into the Pasuk. The Pasuk says, "Hashem protects all those who trust in Him." This seems to imply that the cause for Hashem's protection is trust in Him. However, according to the Maharzu the Pasuk is to be understood as saying that Hashem is protecting those who have become refined by His Torah. Meaning, the cause for Hashem's

protection is a person refining his character. How can this difficulty be resolved?

We can explain the Maharzu as follows: We must view a person refining his character as an expression of trust in Hashem. When a person is committed to Torah and Mitzvos, he is expressing that he trusts Hashem's master plan and what he is expected to become. This trust, which is expressed through refining one's character, is what the Pasuk means when it says, "He shields those that take shelter in Him."

A helpful insight regarding Bitachon can be derived from here. At times we may feel that we are having a difficult time reaching the highest levels of Bitachon. We may therefore worry that we are unable to receive Hashem's protection. However, we see from here that if a person is involved in character refinement and Mitzvos he should be encouraged, as he is still in the category of "He is a shield to all those who take shelter in Him."

An additional insight can be gleaned from the above regarding our focus when performing Mitzvos. If doing the Mitzvos is an expression of trusting in Hashem, as this shows I am trusting in Hashem to change and mold myself based on His guidance and direction, then it follows that to achieve this trust one should have this in mind while doing Mitzvos, and think that he is doing this to refine his character.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

Why is the study of Shir HaShirim so important? I find that some Sifrei Mussar help in my fight against the Yetzer Harah even more than Shir HaShirim.

Perhaps other Seferim may help you overcome your Yetzer Harah in the short term, but the secret of Shir HaShirim is that it negates the need to fight the Yetzer Harah by turning one's greatest desire into the love of Hashem. The Mesillas Yesharim explains this concept as follows:

The matter of love of G-d is that a person actually yearns and lusts for closeness to G-d, blessed be He, and chases His holiness as one who chases something he desires intensely. This is to the extent that merely mentioning His Name, speaking of His praises, and occupying himself with the words of His Torah or divinity literally becomes a delight and pleasure, as one who strongly loves the wife of his youth or his only son, so that even speaking of them gives him gratification and pleasure. This is as scripture states: "[Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my delightful child?] For whenever I speak of him, I will remember him still." (Yirmiyahu 31:19) Certainly, one who loves his Creator with a true love, will not forgo His service for any reason in the world, unless he is actually forced. He will not need any persuasion nor enticement to serve Him. Rather, on the contrary, his heart will lift him and rush him to it, unless there is some great barrier that blocks him. Behold, this is the precious trait which the pious men of old, the lofty holy ones had merited to attain. As Dovid HaMelech said: "As a hart cries longingly for the water brooks, so does my soul cry longingly to You, O G-d; My soul thirsts for G-d, for the living G-d; when shall I come and appear before G-d?" (Tehilim 42:2-3) and "My soul yearns, yes, faints for the courts of the L-rd," (Tehilim 84:3) and "My soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You..." (Tehilim 63:2) All this due to his powerful yearning to the blessed G-d. This is likewise as the prophet said: "To Your Name and to Your remembrance is the lust of [our] soul," (Isaiah 26:8) and "My soul yearns for You in the night; my spirit within me seeks You." (Isaiah 26:9) And David himself said: "When I remember You on my bed, through the night watches I meditate about You" (Tehilim 63:7). Thus, he described the pleasure and delight he experienced when speaking of and praising G-d, blessed be His Name. Likewise, he said: "I will delight myself in Your Commandments, which I love," (Tehilim 119:47) and "Your testimonies are my delight..." (Tehilim 119:24) (*Mesillas Yesharim chap. 19*)

The proper study of Shir HaShirim does not just help you battle your Yetzer Harah, it prevents the battle from ever taking place!



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

*A Westwood Realty Initiative*

*There is so much pain in the world! I understand Bitachon in Hashem provides us a way to circumvent all this pain, but the world's default position is pain and suffering and perhaps I'll never be able to attain Bitachon?*

This is not the proper, nor true, outlook on life. Hashem did not make a world of hurt, leaving us merely a potential way out called Bitachon. Just the opposite is true. We are from the chosen few who were born as princes to the Creator of the entire universe. Hashem is our beloved Father! He created us to be able to enjoy life and be happy forever. It is true that if we take the nonsensical route of letting go of our Father's hand, thinking we know better than the world's Creator, we will suffer, but why would we do something so foolish?! The default position of a young prince holding on to the hand of his father, the king, is not to think that he knows better and that he will be more successful letting go!

In this week's Parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu teaches us to look at life with the above outlook, as the Medrash (*Vayikra Rabbah 13:4*) says:

*There was a matron who entered the king's palace. When she saw whips hanging from a wall, she was frightened. The king said to her, "Do not fear! These are for the slaves; you, however, are meant to eat, drink, and be merry! Similarly, when Klal Yisroel heard the Parsha of Nega'im - afflictions, (other versions of the Medrash state "the Parsha of the Tochachah.") they became frightened. Moshe said to them, "Do not fear! These are for the nations of the world; you, however, are meant to eat, drink, and be happy!"*

You do not have to search for the hand of your Father, the King of the Universe...

Just do not let go of it!