

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

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במדבר

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## The Key To Appreciating The Good In Our Lives

*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 | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

The Rabbeinu Bachya in this week's Parsha (1:1) relates, "Rebbi Yehoshua Ben Levi says, if the nations of the world would have known how much the Beis Hamikdash helped them, they would have surrounded it with armies to guard it. This is because it was more beneficial to them than to Klal Yisrael. Shlomo Hamelech davened, 'And also to the non-Jew that is not from the nation of Yisrael... You should listen from the heavens. You should grant everything that the non-Jew asks for.' However, regarding Klal Yisroel it writes, 'And you gave to man according to his ways that are known in his heart.' Shlomo Hamelech said, 'Master of the Universe, if Klal Yisroel is worthy, give them, and if they are not worthy don't give them. This is because Klal Yisrael recognized Hashem, and knows that He is capable. In addition, if their Tefillah is not listened to they will attribute it to their own sins. However, a non-Jew will attack and say, a house whose reputation spread from one end of the world to the other and therefore I invested great effort to travel here. I came and davened in it, and I did not find it to be real, just as the idols are not real.' Therefore, Shlomo asked 'You should grant them all their requests.'"

The Rabbeinu Bachya seems to be saying that if the non-Jews did not know that their Tefillos were answered more than the Jews, they would not have protected the Beis Hamikdash. At first glance this is perplexing and requires further clarification. Why wouldn't the mere fact that their Tefillos are being answered be enough for the non-Jews to protect the Beis Hamikdash. Why do they have to know that their Tefillos are more effective than the Jews. This should be irrelevant?

We can explain the Rabbeinu Bachya as follows, it is human

nature to only appreciate what we have through contrast.

Comparison allows someone to see what he has as special and unique. Therefore if the non-Jews would have had their Tefillos answered equal to the Jews, they would not have been able to properly appreciate the Beis Hamikdash, and protect it. We can derive a powerful insight from here, often we are the recipients of tremendous good and kindness from Hashem, yet we fail to appreciate it. From the above it is clear that if we wish to take full advantage of the good in our lives, we have to see it in contrast to a life that is void of these benefits.

Another point in the Rabbeinu Bachya that requires clarification is Shlomo Hamelech's Tefillah. Granted it is important for Hashem to answer the Tefillos of the non-Jews, but why wouldn't Shlomo Hamelech also daven that Hashem should always answer the Tefillos of the Jews? It would seem that if the Jews were living in that reality, surely their connection to Hashem would increase, and they would be elevated from the constant manifestation of Hashgachas Hashem. So why did Shlomo Hamelech refrain from asking for something that would be so beneficial to Klal Yisrael?

This question can be answered as follows, it must be that Shlomo Hamelech understood that the growth and elevation that the Klal Yisrael would have from their Tefillos not being answered, would be greater than the growth of their Tefillos being answered. Shlomo Hamelech understood that the introspection and Teshuva that would result from their Tefillos not being answered, would elevate a person beyond the Dveikus of all his Tefillos being answered. We can use this idea to help us cope and introspect when we feel our Tefillos were not answered.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

In this week's Haftorah, Hashem tells us that in the end of days Klal Yisroel will see that the nations of the world that she had cozied up to when she strayed from Hashem can't help her and, "Pursue her lovers as she will, she shall not overtake them; and seek them as she may, she shall never find them. Then she will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband (Hashem), for then I fared better than now.'" (*Hoshea 2*)

The Gemara learns from this, ***A single regret in one's heart*** (*Rashi - that one comes to understand in his heart by himself*) *is preferable to many lashes* (*Maharsha - For Klal Yisroel had previously received many afflictions without returning to Hashem*) ***as it is stated: "And she chases her lovers*** [as she will, she shall not overtake them; and seek them as she may, she shall never find them] ***and she will say 'I will go and return to my first husband; for it was better for me then than now.'*** (*Hoshea 2:9*)

This Gemara begs an explanation. It is understood that a *single regret in one's heart is preferable to many lashes*, but why doesn't the person come to that single regret in his heart when receiving the afflictions?

It seems that when one directly receives punishment for his sins, he builds a barrier to protect himself from rationally responding to it and doing Teshuva. Therefore, it is preferable to lead a person's heart to come to the correct conclusion by himself than to punish him many times, for this bypasses the defenses to Teshuva he has placed around his heart.

We see from here the critical need to teach ourselves and our children the beauty of Torah and having a relationship with Hashem, not only in the context of trying to convince them to make the proper spiritual decisions, but as basic staples of their education, in order to enable them to come to the proper conclusions themselves and say, "I will go and return to Hashem; for it is better for me with Him than now!"



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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The Ramchal writes that Moshiach will eventually come to redeem Klal Yisroel in the merit of our Bitachon in Hashem. From the story of Rus we learn that Moshiach himself is a product of Bitachon. When Rus sent Na'ami to ask Boaz to marry her, the Pasuk says, "The man was frightened and turned himself." (*Rus 3:8*) The Medrash Rabbah tells us, "And he justly could have cursed her, [rather than agree to marry her as he did, leading to the eventual birth of their descendant Dovid HaMelech the paragon of Bitachon, as we see from Tehillim, and his descendant Moshiach] but rather "He who trusts in Hashem shall be safeguarded and You [Hashem] placed it in his heart to bless her!"

Really she would have been cursed, but the Bitachon she placed in Hashem during those critical moments changed the course of history for all eternity!

Next time we struggle in strengthening our Bitachon, let us keep in mind just how far it can go!