

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

פרשת  
נצבים

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## Focus Is The Name Of The Game

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

In this week's Parsha, the Pasuk states (30:19), "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day...". The Sifri comments on this Pasuk and says, "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, 'Look at the heavens which I have created to be at your service; have they ever changed their character? Has the orbit of the sun ever failed to rise in the east and to give light to the whole world, just as is stated, (*Koheles* 1:4 - 5) 'And the sun rises, and the sun goes down [and hastens to its place where it arises]?!' Look at the earth which I have created to be at your service! Has it ever changed its character? Have you sown it and it did not bring forth, or have you sown wheat and it brought forth barley?! Now how is it with these....If they act meritoriously they receive no reward and if they were to fail they would receive no punishment? They have never changed their character! You, who if you act meritoriously do receive a reward, and if you sin do receive punishment, how much more so should you obey the commands of your Maker!"

Upon initial analysis the Sifri's emphasis on looking at the heavens, and looking at the earth requires clarification. The realization that the heavens never change their character, that the sun never failed to rise in the East and light up the world, or that the earth constantly produces cannot be seen by simply looking at the heavens and earth. These realizations are based on prior knowledge that exists independently without actually looking at the heavens and earth. Therefore, why is it necessary to look at the heavens and earth to make this Kal Vchomer? The Kal Vachomer should be effective without looking, as it is predicated on previous knowledge. Hashem should have

said to Klal Yisrael, you know that the heavens and earth always listen to Hashem and receive no reward or punishment, surely you who receive a reward and punishment should listen to Hashem. What does looking add to the Kal Vachomer?

We see from here, there is a power in focusing on something tangible. Through looking at the heavens and earth, everything that you know about the heavens and earth comes into focus. This seems to be an integral component to be able to receive the message of the Kal Vachomer, even though it's logic is compelling. From the above it is clear that receiving the message requires focus. As Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur approach and we are all focused on lasting change, it is critical that we remember that the key to the message being received is focus.

This idea can also be derived from the Sefer Hachinuch's commentary on the Mitzvah of blowing Shofar on Yom Kippur of Yovel (Mitzvah 331). He writes that the purpose of blowing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah is to "Focus our minds on עקידת יצחק, and imagine ourselves expressing our love of Hashem through the same action. Through this our memory will go up in front of Hashem for good, and we will be innocent before Him."

Here too we can ask, why do we need shofar? Why can't a person imagine this without blowing the Shofar? We see this same concept from here, that a person needs a tangible focus to be able to properly imagine Akeidas Yitzchak.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

*A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me - My Beloved has become to me as one who has a bundle of myrrh in his bosom, and he said to him, "Here, take this bundle, which will give a more fragrant scent than the first one that you lost." So too was the Holy One, blessed be He, appeased by Klal Yisrael for the incident of the Calf and found them an atonement for their iniquity and said: Donate to the Tabernacle, and let the gold of the Tabernacle atone for the gold of the Calf. (Shir HaShirim 1:12,13 with Rashi)*

Why does Hashem give us more after atoning for the sin of the Golden Calf than He would've given us had we not sinned at all? Perhaps we can understand this with the following mashal:

They were a match made in heaven, and their deep love for each other was incomparable. For this very reason, when they got into a fight, though they made peace quickly, the scars remained. The husband knew that merely assuring his wife that their relationship is now as strong as ever, would not comfort her from her sorrow over having the stain of such a fight upon their perfect marriage. After much thought, the husband found the words that would indeed bring her complete and total comfort: "Our relationship won't be the same as it was before, rather, through our reconciliation and lessons we have learned it will be stronger than had we never got into a fight in the first place!"

So too, Hashem, our Beloved, seeks to comfort Klal Yisroel completely and therefore tells us "Not only has your sin not resulted in a weakening in our relationship, rather, it has led to an even greater level than before." We find this concept regarding Teshuva from any sin as well, as Chazal state: One who does teshuva out of love his sins turn into merits! (*Yoma 86b*).



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

*A Westwood Realty Initiative*

We discussed in the past that the basic level of Bitachon is living our Emunah, as the Pasuk states regarding Bitachon, "And the Tzaddik by his beliefs will live." (*Vilna Gaon*) However, most people who believe that Hashem is the sole decider of their fate still have a difficult time living constantly based upon that feeling. We discussed two basic reasons for this:

- 1) We are required to perform Hishtadlus, which basically means that throughout our day we are performing actions that, on a very simple level, seemingly contradict our Emunah that Hashem alone decides our fate.
- 2) What exactly is the actual effect of our Hishtadlus on our destiny is an unclear topic. For example, we know that everything is decided on Rosh Hashana, however, if one just lies in bed his business will not succeed.

To counter these issues we said: While one is performing Hishtadlus throughout the day he must constantly remind himself why he is doing so, i.e. just to fulfill his obligation of Hishtadlus since it is prohibited to rely on a miracle, and by neglecting this responsibility, one can potentially damage the good decree that was upon him on Rosh Hashanah. By doing the above, we not only counter the negative effects of acting in a way that seemingly counters our Emunah, but we also strengthen our Bitachon throughout the day.

Bitachon is, as the Vilna Gaon states, "The main reason Hashem gave the Torah to Klal Yisroel." Therefore, besides for ways we can counter the negative influences of Hishtadlus, the Torah and Chazal have also provided us with all-powerful methods to constantly strengthen our ability to live our Emunah. Through the study and internalization of Sifrei Mussar that discuss Bitachon, we can bring ourselves clarity in the balance of Hishtadlus and Bitachon.