

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Secret Ingredient Of Our Tefillos

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

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | 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 | דב בעריש בן שפרה צביה

In this week's Parsha, after Klal Yisrael committed the sin of the golden calf, Moshe Rabbeinu interceded on their behalf. Due to his intervention, Hashem rescinded the consequence that was decreed upon Klal Yisrael. The Ralbag learns the following lesson from here, "The fourth benefit is in regards to knowledge. The Torah is informing us that the loved ones of a good person will be saved, to prevent the good person from experiencing pain and anguish. It is for this reason that Hashem rescinded the consequence that He said He would enact, when He saw how painful it was to Moshe. It is also for this reason that Moshe expressed to Hashem how painful it would be for him if Hashem did not tolerate their sin. It would pain him to the extent that he would rather die."

A powerful insight can be derived from the above Ralbag. Everyone wants to know the secret of how we can influence Hashem to grant us our wants and desires, as we are not on the level of Dovid Hamelech who praised Hashem for both His kindness and justice. Here Hashem already decreed that Klal Yisrael deserved to be destroyed. All Hashem's compassion and kindness could not withhold the judgment. In addition, destroying them was ultimately the best thing to repair their mistake, and fulfill the purpose in creation. Yet we see that Hashem was willing to reconsider all of this due to the pain that it would cause Moshe. It seems that one good person's pain is taken so seriously by Hashem that it has the power to save an entire nation.

However, it seems that in order to evoke compassion that is able to overturn Hashem's decree, it is not enough that Hashem knows you will be in pain. The pain has to actually be expressed for it to evoke Hashem's compassion, as the Ralbag says, "When Hashem saw how painful it was to Moshe." The Ralbag goes further and explains that Moshe Rabbeinu understood this, and therefore expressed his pain to the extent that he said, "If you don't tolerate this sin, I would rather die than live." When we express our pain, it then has the power to somehow focus Hashem on our suffering.

This idea can be utilized to enhance our Tefillos. Many people find

it difficult to express themselves in Tefillah, as they feel Hashem already knows their challenges and difficulties, so what is the purpose of expressing it? It is evident from here that although Hashem knows what we are going through emotionally, focusing on our pain and expressing it is the key to evoking His compassion. It is perhaps for this reason that the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah instituted many statements that express this feeling in our Tefillos, i.e. *הבס משמים וראה* and *יהמו נא רחמך*, in which we focus Hashem on our need and pain.

Perhaps the understanding of this can be explained with the following idea; It states in the Pasuk (*Shemos 2:25*), "Hashem saw the Jewish people, and Hashem knew." Rashi comments on the words, "Hashem knew," that, "He focused His heart on them, and He didn't ignore them with His eyes." It is implied from Rashi that Hashem's response to Jewish people's suffering was based on focusing on their pain. This concept requires clarification when being applied to Hashem, as Hashem is always focused, and has no more or less awareness of a person's suffering. It seems from Rashi that although Hashem is all knowing, His love and care for the Jewish people is so intense, that He can't bear to watch them suffer and not respond. He therefore, so to speak, has to ignore them and pretend that He doesn't see them, thereby enabling Him to be able to allow them to suffer. This image can have far reaching implications. Often people wonder how it can be that Hashem, who is so merciful, can watch people suffer. A common answer given to this is that since Hashem knows it is for the good, He can tolerate the suffering. However, we see from this Rashi that this is not the case, and even though He knows it is for the good, He still can't stand to watch a person suffer, and must turn away so to speak.

Based on this it seems that if we can get Hashem to focus on us, He will respond to our suffering, as He can't bear to see us in pain. The above Ralbag shares with us the secret to grabbing Hashem's attention, so to speak, even when He is trying to ignore us. Through expressing our pain it causes Hashem to focus on us.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

I just found out that a student of mine did some terrible things that go against the Torah. I feel like telling him exactly what I think of his actions but what is the best way to bring him back?

The Navi (*Malachi 2:6*) says regarding Ahron HaKohein: 'He served Me with complete loyalty and many he returned from sin'.

Chazal (*Avos D'Rabi Nosson 12:3*) reveal to us just how he returned them from sin. "When Ahron was walking down the road, and he came upon a wicked person, he would wish him Shalom. The next day, when that man wanted to sin, he would say: Alas! How will I be able to look Ahron in the face; I will be so embarrassed when he wishes me Shalom. And so this man would stop himself from sinning."

The best way to make someone return from sin is by showing them love and respect for they will think, "He loves and respects me so much how can I continue to sin?!"

How much more so, when one studies Shir HaShirim and sees how much the Creator of the world loves him and esteems him he will begin to think: He loves and respects me so much how can I continue to sin against Him!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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Question: How can I have Bitachon that Hashem will help me when I may not be worthy. Perhaps I deserve whatever trouble I am experiencing?

Answer: ***One who trusts Hashem will triumph (Mishlei 29:25)*** over his troubles in the merit of his trusting Hashem, even when he deserves the trouble that has befallen him.... And Dovid HaMelech said: ***It is better for one to take shelter in Hashem than to trust in man.*** This means: It is better that one take cover under the shelter of Hashem, even with no assurance of Hashem's protection, than to trust in man, even when promised his protection, for one can not be sure of man's ability for he is controlled by outside forces and may be unable to fulfill his promise. Bitachon means that one's heart is firm in his Bitachon as if Hashem had actually promised to save him. (*Rabeinu Bachaya, Kad HaKemach*)

Question: How can Rabeinu Bachaya state that the merit of having Bitachon itself is enough to merit Hashem's salvation in any given situation when there are so many different levels of merit that may be needed in each situation? One may be righteous and have Bitachon for something small therefore needing a small merit, while another may be spiritually lacking and have Bitachon for something miraculous thereby needing great merit?

Answer:

- 1) There is no greater merit than having Bitachon.
- 2) Just as the more merit you feel you need the harder it is to have Bitachon, so to the more merit you will receive by, nevertheless, having that Bitachon.