

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

שבועת

VOL 2

## Weekly Parsha

### Eternal Vulnerability - Our Need To Refocus

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

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח | לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | לעילוי נשמת רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה | לרפואה שלמה יהושע דוד בן אלטא יענטא

In Parshas Vaeschanan (4:6), the Pasuk tells us to be careful to keep the Torah, “For it is your wisdom and understanding before the nations... and they will say this is a wise and understanding nation.” Then the Torah goes on to give a warning to the Jewish People (4:9), “However you should be careful, and guard your souls extremely carefully, lest you forget what you saw with your eyes, and lest it be removed from your heart all the days of your life. You should share this with your children and grandchildren.”

The Seforno explains the connection between these Pesukim as follows: “Even though I told you that you should be considered wise in the eyes of the nations, guard yourself from the philosophies of their wise men, that contradict the existence of G-d, His ability, and supervision over the world, through logical proofs. The reason I warned you to protect yourself from this is because there is a concern that you may forget that which you saw with your physical eyes at Har Sinai. In addition, you may forget the compelling intellectual proofs that discount their philosophy, that you understood from the explanations of the Torah. You should share these compelling proofs with your children that did not witness Har Sinai.”

If one reflects on the concern the Seforno is expressing, it is quite mind-boggling. Hashem is clearly talking to the generation that personally witnessed Yetzios Mitzrayim, and the revelation at Har Sinai. They personally experienced

Hashem’s power and Hashgocha Pratis throughout all of the miracles of Mitzrayim and the Yam Suf. This generation saw Hashem at Har Sinai and reached the greatest clarity of His existence. In addition, they had the greatest intellectual clarity through logical proofs of Hashem’s power, Hashgocha and existence. Due to this, it seems odd to warn this generation, that in their exposure to the other nations they need to take heed not to be swayed by the philosophies that contradict these ideas. This generation had both the physical experience and the stronger intellectual proofs to know that these philosophies had no basis in reality. Additionally, they experienced the pleasure of a connection to Hashem at Har Sinai, a pleasure to which there is no comparison. Their vulnerability to the philosophies of the nations is truly perplexing.

From the above we can glean a powerful insight into our vulnerability and the power of our Yetzer Hara. It seems that even when a person achieves high levels of Emunah in Hashem, they are still prone to be persuaded by ideas that they know to be false. Therefore, it is imperative that we constantly refocus and deepen our Emunah. As we are about to celebrate Shavuot, let us use it as an opportunity to deepen our Emunah in Maamad Har Sinai, and fortify ourselves against the onslaught of the Yetzer Hara.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

*In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern*

O maidens of Tzion, go forth and gaze upon King Shlomo (Hashem) wearing the crown that his mother gave him on his wedding day, on his day of bliss. (Shir HaShirim 3:11)

“R’ Shimon bar Yochai asked R’ Elazar the son of R’ Yossi: Is it possible that you heard from your father what this crown is with which his mother crowned him? He replied: Yes. It is like a king who had an only daughter. He loved her too much and would call her ‘my daughter.’ He kept loving her until he called her ‘my sister’ and until he called her ‘my mother.’ So too, at first the Holy One called Yisroel ‘daughter,’ as it says “Hearken, daughter...” (Tehillim 45:11) He kept loving them to the point of calling them ‘my sister,’ as it says “...Open for me, my sister, my beloved...” (Shir HaShirim 5:2) He did not cease to love them to the point that He called them ‘my mother,’ (imi) as it says “Hearken to Me, My people, and My nation (u’lumi)...” (Yeshayah 51:4) R’ Shimon bar Yochai stood up and kissed R’ Elazar on his head and said, “If I had just come to hear from you this reason it would have been worth it.” (Medresh Raba Shir HaShirim 3:11)

The Mefarshim ask: It seems from the Medrash that Hashem’s love was increasing as he referred to Klal Yisroel first as His “daughter” then as His “sister” then as His “mother,” however, in reality the love for one’s daughter is greater than the love for one’s sister and mother?

The Vilna Gaon explains that a daughter only receives from her father while a sister doesn’t and a mother actually gives to her son. The same is true regarding Torah. A student begins by merely receiving Torah from his teacher. Then, when he becomes a Talmid Chachom, the Medrash (Tanna D’Bei Eliyahu 18) says, “Every Talmid Chachom who sits and reads and reviews and involves himself in Torah, Hashem sits opposite him and reads and reviews with him.” When he advances further he teaches others as a mother gives to her children. At this time, Hashem says over his rulings in Halacha which are binding on high, and calls him “mother” as Hashem is, so to speak, receiving from him. As the Medrash says, “When Moshe went up to heaven, he heard Hashem’s voice, as He was sitting and learning Parshas Parah and was saying the Halacha in the name of the one who said it: Eliezer, My son, says: Parah – a cow, means a two year old and Eglah – a calf, means a one year old. Moshe said before Hashem: Master of the worlds, all that is above and below are in Your possession and You sit and say the Halacha in the name of flesh and blood?

As we celebrate the Yom Tov of receiving the Torah, let us stop for a moment to appreciate what a gift we have received. Through the Torah, we, mere mortals, have the ability to set what will be accepted as binding Halacha in Heaven; giving Torah, so to speak, to the Creator of Heaven and Earth as a mother gives her son!



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE **Emunah Highlights**

*A Westwood Realty Initiative*

What merited our receiving the Torah at Har Sinai?

We say each day in the Bracha of Ahava Rabba: “Our Father, our King - for the sake of our fathers who had Bitachon in You and You taught them the laws of life...”

The Avudraham explains that this refers to the Bitachon we displayed when going out of Mitzrayim into the dessert, as the Pasuk (Yermiyahu 2:2) states: “Go proclaim to Jerusalem: Thus said Hashem: I accounted to your favor the devotion of your youth, Your love as a bride— How you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.”

We see that in order to accept the Torah we must first strengthen our Bitachon. This is brought out in the following words of Rabbeinu Bachayah (Introduction to Parshas Beshalch) as well:

“When the Jewish people left Egypt and G-d performed innumerable miracles for them in the desert, most of these miracles were designed to be tests. When G-d split the sea for them to enter into, He did not show them a path which led from one side to the other; rather He split the sea a little at a time... Something similar occurred with the Manna. G-d never supplied more than enough for one day or one day plus the Sabbath. (Shemos 16:4). Desert travelers would normally carry a supply of several weeks’ provisions with them. G-d acted as He did in order to instill the habit of Bitachon in the people.”

As we celebrate the giving of the Torah and reaffirm our acceptance of it, let us strengthen ourselves in the vital ingredient without which we can’t truly receive it and as the Vilna Gaon writes (Mishlei 22:19) is “the central reason for its giving”: Bitachon!