

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Heart of The Matter

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, there is a Medrash on the Pasuk of "Don't hate your brother in your heart" that says: "Love is only in the heart as it says, 'You should love Hashem with all of your heart.' Hatred is only in the heart as well, as it says, 'Don't hate your brother in your heart.' Therefore Hashem only looks at the heart, as it says, 'A person sees what is in front of his eyes, however Hashem sees a person's heart.'"

The Pasuk quoted by the Medrash that, "A person sees what is in front of his eyes, however Hashem sees what is in his heart," is usually interpreted to mean that people are limited in what they can see, and Hashem sees beneath the surface. Hashem has an expansive view and can also see what is in a person's heart. However, the Medrash seems to explain this Pasuk slightly differently, and in a way that has significant ramification. The Medrash says that this Pasuk teaches us that Hashem only looks at the heart. In other words, it is not merely that Hashem's vision and perception goes beyond a human being, rather it is that in Hashem's eyes the only thing that matters is the heart, as that is where everything stems from.

This Medrash highlights the importance of

focusing on the Chovos Halevavos. If our hearts are pure and good, then everything else will fall into place. This idea is echoed in our Sages statement of "Hashem wants our hearts," which further emphasizes this idea. Based on this, the most prudent thing to do is work on our Chovos Halevavos through Limud Hamussar.

Limud Hamussar is a window into a person's heart through which one can discover his true motivations and intentions. For example, the Chovos Halevovos says in Shaar HaBitachon, "If one does not trust in Hashem he is trusting in something else." From this statement we can derive an insight into human nature. People need to trust in something, there is no state of neutrality where one is neither trusting in Hashem or something else. It is one or the other. Based on this insight, we can now introspect within ourselves and reflect on what we are trusting in, and work to direct our trust to Hashem. Everytime we learn Mussar we expand our knowledge base of the workings of our heart, so we can work to purify it.

This Medrash underscores the importance of each and every one of us being Mechazek Limud Hamussar.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me!

(Shir HaShirim 2:6)

His left hand is under my head: In the desert. ***And his right hand embraces me:*** He traveled a three-days' journey; to search out a rest for them [*in Bamidbar 10: 33*], and in the place of the rest, He brought down manna and quails for them. All this I remember now in my exile, and I am sick for His love. (*Rashi*)

If all this we remember now in our exile, why does the Pasuk say *His right hand is...* – presently, instead of *His right hand was...* – using the past tense?

Perhaps we can explain this with the following story: Zalmen was caught being mechalel Shabbos! Someone who could fall so low didn't seem to have much of a chance, however, as a last resort, Zalmen was taken into the Chofetz Chaim's room. After a few minutes, he walked out. He was never mechalel Shabbos again! What did the Chofetz Chaim tell him? For many years no one knew until Rabbi Berel Wein retold this story to an audience in Florida. After the speech, an old Jew approached him and said: I am Zalmen! Rabbi Wein immediately asked, "Nu, what did the Chofetz Chaim say?" Zalmen, filled with emotion, replied, "He just took my hand in his, stroking it lovingly and as tears streamed down his eyes he said, 'Shabbos! Shabbos! Shabbos!' Since that day so long ago, there were many times when I faced great challenges keeping Shabbos, but I could never violate it for I would immediately feel the warm tears of the Chofetz Chaim on my hands!"

The Pasuk testifies to us that, despite how low we may fall in our Galus, the supreme love of our Father in Heaven, displayed to us in the Midbar, is still alive in the depths of our hearts. So much so, that we actually feel the warmth of His hug around our necks, so to speak, as if He is hugging us presently. When we still rebel against Him, deep down, it is with the broken heart of one who is compelled to breach the love of one who loves him so dearly, while his arms are still around his neck in a loving embrace!



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"Please, tell me what's bothering you?" said R' Eliyahu Lopian to the talmid who had asked to meet with him. "I would like to leave the yeshiva to find a job that can provide me with a decent Parnasah," said the talmid hesitantly. "I understand," replied R' Eliyahu, "but why now? Why the sudden worry regarding Parnasah?" "Well," said the bachur, with worry etched upon his face, "I'm getting older and will soon have to get married, I must begin to worry how I'll be able to support my family." "And who says you'll find a shidduch?" asked R' Elya. "What does Rebbe mean? The Gemara says that forty days before a child is formed in his mother's womb Hashem already arranges who he will marry," replied the bachur with conviction. "Ok, but who says you'll merit having children?" "Is Rebbe saying that I won't have children Chas V'shalom? Just as Hashem gives everyone else children so will he give me." "I understand, but who says you'll find a job upon leaving the yeshiva?" asked R Eliyahu. "I'm sure Hashem will help, Rebbe, He always does."

"I see," summed up R' Elya. "A shidduch— Hashem has decreed. The greatest miracle of having children—Hashem will take care of. A job—Hashem will certainly find you. So, don't you think Hashem can find a way to provide for your sustenance without your leaving yeshiva in the prime years of your spiritual growth?!"

This talmid remained in the yeshiva eventually becoming a great rosh yeshiva himself!

Often, we worry about an upcoming business meeting, deal or the like. "Will Hashem pull through for me? Will everything really work out?" Why don't we worry how we will live until our upcoming meeting? Every breath of oxygen we take and distribute to each cell in our body involves the most unbelievable miracles, millions of times more complex in nature than a mere business meeting. However, we don't worry because we're sure Hashem will perform all those great miracles as He always has. So why not rely on Him to take care of our little meeting as well, it won't make His responsibilities any harder!