

The Small Things Count

We often view our regular daily obligations that come natural to us, to be undeserving of reward from Hashem. We tend to view fulfilling our familial responsibilities as small and insignificant, when compared to other opportunities of giving. Based on Rabbeinu Bachya's piece in the beginning of this week's Parsha, we will see that tending to our families needs is of greater value than we may have thought.

In this week's Parsha, the Rabbeinu Bachya tells us that Yaakov was supported by Yosef for the last 17 years of his life, as a reward for the 17 years he had supported Yosef as a child. He explains that this is what the Pasuk means in Mishlei when it says, "The ways of giving are life, and its path prevents death." Since Yaakov took care of Yosef, he was rewarded with life. The Rabbeinu Bachya even calls Yaakov supporting Yosef for the first 17 years of his life 'צדקה', abundant giving. He takes it even further to list a parent supporting a child, as a giving that is on the highest levels of giving, beyond that of supporting poor people.

At first glance calling Yaakov's support of Yosef צדקה seems bizarre. Yaakov was merely fulfilling his obligation as a father. An obligation that is natural to all parents, and would not seem to be deserving of such a significant reward. Yet Yaakov received a reward that we would have thought would only be reserved for much greater acts of giving.

"Taking care of our family is a tremendous Mitzvah, and is in the category of the highest levels of צדקה."

We can learn from here a tremendous insight into the importance of supporting our families. Its value and significance is quite the opposite of what we originally thought. Taking care of our family is actually a tremendous Mitzvah, that is in the category of the highest levels of צדקה. It seems, that since if not for you, your children would need צדקה, Hashem credits you with the fulfillment of the Mitzva of צדקה! Often we are drawn to areas of giving in which we may receive greater publicity or fanfare and neglect the home. However, if we keep in mind that taking care of our families' needs both physically

and spiritually are equally, if not more, important, it may change our priorities.

Another area we tend to belittle and view as insignificant is our influence on others. Often times, unless we see that we made a life changing impact on someone, we don't value our efforts. This perspective is incorrect, as can be seen from a Medrash in this week's Parsha. The Medrash explains the Pasuk of 'יששכר חמור גרם'. It explains the Pasuk to mean that the donkey was the cause for יששכר coming into existence. This is because when the donkey brayed, Leah knew Yaakov was coming, and she then ran out to give the דודאים to Rochel in exchange for Yaakov. As a result of this, יששכר was born. Once again at first glance this seems perplexing. The donkey was just doing what came natural to it with no intention of this outcome. The main cause was Leah's actions, therefore accrediting the donkey for יששכר seems bizzare. We see from here that in Hashem's eyes nothing is insignificant. Anything that we cause to come into fruition, no matter how indirect or unintentional, deserves recognition. If this is true for a donkey, that his unintended act is recorded for posterity in the Torah, how much more so for a human being.

We tend to belittle the small things and bemoan our lack of involvement in big things. We see from the above that we can't take for granted anything we do, as Hashem recognizes and credits everything, no matter how insignificant it may seem to us. We see from the above examples that the small things count, and perhaps they are not so small after all.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח
לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר
לרפואה שלמה רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה