

If You Only Knew...

PARSHA INSIGHTS - KI SAVO (5758)

SMILE - YOU REALLY ARE ON CANDID CAMERA!

In the RITSS *d'var Torah* [lesson] of *Naso* 5757, we discussed the issue of serving Hashem with joy and enthusiasm.

☞ Copies of the essay are available by clicking the following link, or online at TorahMax.com under: “Sefer Bamidbar”, “Parshas Naso”, “[Fill Your Soul With Ecstasy](#)”- R. Moshe Heigh.

For a more complete picture, please join that information with what is found in this week’s. Today, we will expand on this topic, using the words of Rabainu Bachaya on *Ki Savo*, based on a *Midrash Rabba* in *Rus* [Ruth].

Our *parsha* [Torah portion] contains the second dreadful *tochacha* [rebuke]— the list of tragic consequences for not learning Torah and performing the *mitzvos* [commandments/good deeds] properly. It was predicted that this would befall *Klal Yisroel* [the Jewish people] in the form of torturous exiles and persecution at the hands of the gentiles. At one point, the Torah explains a specific cause for all this calamity. “Since you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, with joy and a good heart...” (28:47). Could it be that this lack of happiness in doing the *mitzvos* brought about the fulfillment of the enumerated curses? Certainly, states Rabainu Bachaya.

The *pasuk* [verse] considers us guilty for serving Hashem without delight and enthusiasm. What is the reason? A person is obligated to be joyful when he performs the *mitzvos*. In fact, the jubilation which accompanies *mitzvos* is, in itself, a *mitzvah* [commandment/good deed]. Besides the reward one deserves for the actual *mitzvah*, there is payment coming for the exhilaration he feels in doing it. That is why the Torah predicts a punishment for those who do *mitzvos* without the proper feelings. Consequently, declares Rabainu Bachaya, a person must serve his Creator with gladness and full devotion. The term used is “*kavana shlaima*” [total concentration and intent]. Some illustrations are forthcoming; the source is the *Midrash Rabba* in *Rus* 5:6.

“If a person does a *mitzvah*, he should do it with a full heart.” The *Midrash* cites Reuven as the first example. If Reuven would have known that Hashem was writing about him, “And Reuven heard, and he saved him from their hand” (*Vayaishev* 37:21), he would have carried Yosef to his father on his back. In other words, he would certainly have done the *mitzvah* of saving Yosef in a more enthusiastic, efficient manner. You are familiar with the incident - Reuven planned to rescue Yosef from his brothers’ plot, so he suggested throwing him into a pit (*Vayaishev* 37:22). His plan was to return to the hole, remove Yosef, and assist him in arriving back home. In the meantime, in Reuven’s absence, Yehuda suggested that Yosef be sold (37:27). Reuven returned to discover that this had transpired, and he tore his clothes in horror (37:29). We see that his strategy failed. The above mentioned *Midrash Rabba* is pointing out that people often do not think of the implications of their deeds. What if Reuven would have kept in mind, during the episode of Yosef, that the Torah was going to testify about all his actions? He would have brought Yosef home to Yaacov on his back! He would surely have devoted himself wholeheartedly to this undertaking. In that case, the Torah could have written something like this: “Reuven heroically and energetically delivered his younger brother from an uncertain fate in the pit. He slung him over his shoulder and carried him home!” Instead, Reuven did an incomplete job of rectifying matters. As a result, Yosef was sold. This reminds us to accomplish all we do with wholehearted dedication. We will soon be reminded that OUR deeds are also recorded in Heaven, so we are supposed to behave this way as well.

The next case brought in the *Midrash Rus* 5:6 deals with Moshe’s brother, Aharon. In Moshe’s dialogue with Hashem at the burning bush, our future leader was begging that someone else redeem the Jews, instead of him. He felt unworthy of this noble task. Hashem replied that Aharon would be Moshe’s spokesman; there was nothing to fear. Furthermore, proclaimed Hashem, Aharon is already “coming to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart” (*Shmos* [Exodus] 4:14). This is a Divine testimony that Moshe’s older brother was not jealous of his younger sibling’s distinguished role as supreme leader of *Klal Yisroel*. Hashem Himself informed Moshe that Aharon would be delighted, not irritated, to see Moshe. This was despite the fact that Moshe would be “number one”, and Aharon only “number two”. Everything seems fine, right? But the *Midrash Rus* points out that Aharon, just like Reuven in the above-mentioned episode, might have done even better. The Torah convinces us that Aharon harbored no ill feelings to his younger brother, and this is certainly true. “He is coming to meet you...he

will be glad...” However, if people would constantly be aware that their actions are being observed and recorded, they would often do things differently. “If Aharon would have known that Hashem was writing about him, ‘Behold he is going out to meet you’, he would have gone out to greet him with drums and musical instruments (or drums and dancing)” (*Midrash Rus* brought above). In that case, the Torah’s account might have been a bit different: “Moshe, do not be apprehensive. Not only is your brother not upset about your new position, he even hired a marching band to greet you! He is obviously not resentful that you will have more prominence than he will have.” We are again reminded that all our deeds are noticed and marked down for eternity. Consequently, we must remember to perform them wholeheartedly. Our record book in Heaven will look so much better if we show proper enthusiasm.

The final example is Boaz with Rus. (Incidentally, that is why this *Midrash* is found in *Rus*.) One kind gesture of Boaz was to provide Rus with a meal. Boaz invited her to partake of bread dipped in vinegar (commentators offer different reasons for this “dip”), and she also ate parched grain (*Rus* 2:14). The same *pasuk* states that “she ate and was satisfied”. This all seems fabulous, especially for someone in desperate need of sustenance and attention like Rus. A satiating meal! But the *Midrash Rabba* shows that even in this case, Boaz could have done more. “If Boaz would have known that Hashem was writing about him, ‘And he reached her (gave to her) parched grain, and she ate and was satisfied...’, he would have fed her fattened calves.” A rich, *fleishig* [meat] meal would have replaced the more simple foods, if only Boaz would have realized the seriousness of being written into *Tanach* [Scripture]! This underscores the same theme, that the WAY we do *mitzvos* is its own *avoda* [service] to Hashem. As Rabainu Bachaya mentioned before, we get reward not only for the *mitzvah*, but also for the manner in which we do it.

How does this pertain to us? The *Midrash* concludes [using the *Maharzav’s* commentary]: In the past, when one would do a *mitzvah*, it would be recorded by a prophet, as in the cases brought before. Who keeps an account of our deeds today? Eliyahu *Hanavi* [Elijah the prophet], the great prophet, plus the *Melech Hamashiach* [King Messiah]. They write down what we do, and Hashem, in His glory, “signs” or puts His seal on what they have recorded. This is proven from verses quoted in the *Midrash* and supported by commentaries. Do we know how Hashem “signs His Name”? It could be suggested that Hashem seals the account with the word “*Emes*” [Absolute Truth]. This is based on the *Gemara Shabbos* 55A, that the stamp, the emblem of Hashem, is “*Emes*”. *Rashi* explains that the word אמת “*Emes*” contains the middle letter of the *Alef Bais* [Hebrew alphabet] מ (mem), plus the first א (alef) and last ת (tof) letters. This hints to the fact that Hashem is first, last, and He IS the Ultimate One. Since the word “*chosam*” [signet or signature] is used by the *Gemara Shabbos* AND by our *Midrash*, it is quite possible that this is how He “signs” the ledger.

Let us take this *Midrash* to heart. Whether doing an interpersonal *mitzvah*, such as charity or *chesed* [kindness], or a *mitzvah* such as saying a *bracha* [blessing] or putting on *tefillin* [phylacteries], **Hashem expects us to feel excited about the precious opportunity.**

By Rabbi Moshe Heigh

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