

Pursuit of Purpose

פרשת

כי תצא

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Purified by Mitzvos, Anchored in Truth

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

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In this week's Parsha, פרשת כי תצא, there is a famous Ramban on the Mitzvah of Shiluach Hakan. He says that Mitzvos are not to benefit Hashem, rather they are to benefit a person, to either prevent him from damage, or bad Emunah, or an ugly Middah, or to remember the miracles and to know Hashem. This is what it means to be refined by them, as someone who refines silver, his actions are not for nothing, but are to remove any impurity. So too, says the Ramban, the Mitzvos are to remove any false belief from our heart, and let us know the truth, and remember it all the time. They come to teach us that Hashem does not need the light of the menorah, and He is not hungry for korbanos, and He does not need the fragrance of the incense. Even remembering the miracles and creation give him no benefit, it is just for us to know the truth, which will merit us for Hashem to protect us.

Upon initial analysis the Ramban is difficult to understand and requires further clarification. He starts off saying that the goal of the Mitzvos is to refine our character and remove bad Emunah, but later he omits this only mentioning that the goal of the Mitzvos is just for us to know the truth. How can we reconcile this?

We can answer that in truth the goal of all the Mitzvos is so that we know the truth. However, if a person has misplaced or misconstrued beliefs, or he has Middos that are deficient, his view will be tainted. Only with the Mitzvos that refine our character can we reach the ultimate goal, of knowing the truth. This achievement will result in Hashem protecting us.

This Ramban highlights the importance of truth, and how paramount it has to be in our lives, as it is the goal of everything. The Medrash Rabbah in Rus, compliments this idea by showing us the power of truth.

The Medrash says, "Hashem said return to me and I will return to you". This applies to everyone besides Elisha Ben Avuya, because he knew My strength, (he knew the Emes). and he still rebelled. One time he was sitting and learning when he saw someone do Shiluch Hakan. When the person came down he was bit by a snake and he died. Elisha was utterly confused, as the Pasuk says the reward is a good life and long days. This confusion led him to leave Judaism. Clearly Elisha did not know Rabbi Akiva's Drasha that says this Pasuk is referring to Olam Habah."

The Medrash refers to Elisha as rebelling against Hashem, however upon reading the Medrash this rebellion is unclear. Elisha has a good question that sparked confusion, which led to him to disconnect from Judaism, why is this considered a rebellion?

It must be that since Elisha was someone who knew the truth, his breaking away from Yiddishkeit can only be because of a rebellion. In other words just because he had questions, questions alone would not have been able to shake him, due to his knowledge of the truth. It is only because he wanted to rebel, that he left Yiddishkeit.

We see from here that when someone knows the truth, even if there is confusion, it would not do damage to their Emunah, and if it does it is only because that person wants to rebel. This thought is extremely encouraging, as it illustrates the power of knowing the truth, that our Emunah will allow us to be unfazed by things that may confuse us. **Emes is the goal of everything, and it allows us to weather any storm.**

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