

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 19

פרשת יתרו תשע"ה

The Real Source

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

Recognizing the Source

A poor man had to marry off his daughter and came to ask **Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk** for assistance. The *tzaddik* gave him a letter to deliver to **Reb Moshe Chaim Rothenburg**, a wealthy Jew, asking for monetary aid. The poor man trudged from town to town until he reached the home of Reb Moshe Chaim, where he was graciously welcomed. After having rested, the poor man handed the letter to his host, and to his astonishment, he received a miserable sum. After all it had taken to reach here, especially with the letter he had brought from the Rebbe himself, he couldn't believe that this was all he was going to get! How would he cover the expenses for the *chassuna*? With no choice, the poor Jew exited and began his long trek home.

No sooner had he left than Reb Moshe Chaim hurried out to buy clothing, dishes and whatever else a couple might need, quickly loaded it unto a few wagons, took along an additional sum of money, and set out to catch up to his visitor. Seeing his host with all his baggage, the poor man asked in amazement, "If you were planning to give all this to me, why did you have to put me through all that anguish?"

"Listen," Reb Moshe Chaim explained. "When you arrived with a letter from the Kotzker Rebbe, you were sure you'd receive all you needed and forgot that we have an Eibershter on Whom we rely upon. I simply wanted to remind you to place your trust in Him."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין, תורה ע' 207)

An epileptic traveled to **Reb Yitzchak of Neshchiz** to ask for a bracha to be cured. Reb Yitzchak declined, but the sick man continued to plead, until the *tzaddik* told him, "It is possible for you to be cured, but I can't give you this promise. It's your fault, for you have heard there is a great man in Neshchiz who can perform miracles and you have placed your trust in him instead of in HaShem. When you place your trust in Him, you will be cured."

Reb Yitzchok then told him about a villager and his wife who were robbed and approached the **Maggid of Koznitz** for assistance. The Maggid protested that he had not stolen their money. They continued to beg for his help and gave him a gold coin to be given to *tzedaka* as a *pidyon*. "But I want

more," countered the Maggid, so they handed him another two, but he was not satisfied. They kept adding, until the Maggid said he would not agree unless they gave him 60 coins for *tzedaka*. This was too much for the woman, who gathered up all her coins and turned to her husband, saying, "Let's leave. HaShem can help us without all this!"

Hearing this, the Maggid told them, "Your request was hard to fulfill because you had placed your trust in me and not in HaShem. But now that you have thought about Him, your salvation is near... And if you don't mind, can you please give me back that first gold ruble you had given for *tzedaka*?"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין, תורה ע' 217)

When It's Going Well

The Jews in the midbar were finally about to enter the Land of Milk and Honey. At that time Moshe Rabbeinu warned them that they should not forget the Hand of G-d and proudly ascribe their prosperity to their own efforts, thinking that *kochi v'otzem yadi asa li es hachayil hazeh* - "My power and the might of my hand have secured all this wealth for me."

Sometimes a person's *bitachon* will be strong when his business is small, whereas later, when he succeeds, he may attribute his success to his own acumen. We are cautioned that when our efforts prosper, we should maintain the same simple *bitachon* as before, recognizing that it is HaShem who brings any success.

(עקב ה, ידיה, תו"מ תשמ"ב ח"ד ע' 2234)

During the first few years of his marriage, the **Yismach Moshe, Reb Moshe Teitelbaum of Ujhely**, was supported by his father-in-law so that he could study Torah undisturbed. When his father-in-law passed away, he realized that he would need to find some way to support his family. He had an idea: he would procure ten thousand silver reinish, entrust it to some merchant for business purposes, and from that he would have the means of support. There was only one problem: he had no way of securing such a sum.

One day, while trying without success to concentrate on his Gemara, Reb Moshe began to cry over his situation, and soon fell asleep over his open *sefer*. In his dream, he entered a great

hall in which sat a venerable sage, who motioned to him to go into a side room. There Reb Moshe saw another man who asked him if he knew who the scholar was. When Reb Moshe replied in the negative, the man exclaimed, "That is **Reb Yitzchak Luria, the holy AriZal!**"

When Reb Moshe returned to where the *tzaddik* was learning, the AriZal said, "Young man, if a person does have ten thousand silver reinish, is he no longer dependent on the favors of HaShem? Either way, he is dependent - in order that he should be able to eat, talk, walk and live. And just as HaShem will grant you these favors, so too will He grant you a livelihood, even without ten thousand silver reinish!"

Reb Moshe woke up and felt at ease.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין, מועדים ע' 221)

It's all from Above

Chazal teach that forty days before a child is formed, a *bas kol* proclaims who will be this child's spouse. The reason that we are told this so that we should know that this, too, is from Shamayim and is not dependent on our input.

(שמו"ס ח"א ע' 166)

While discussing the situation of the Jews in Eretz Yisroel under the British Mandate, the **Rayatz of Lubavitch** said: "People often attribute the course of events to a certain politician and the like, forgetting that all natural happenings come from HaShem, and most especially those events relevant to Jews and Eretz Yisroel."

(סה"ש תש"ח ע' 162)

Consider This



How can work be an obligation in order to earn money, yet not be the cause for it?

Sparks of Greatness

The Maharam Shik - כ"ב שבת

Reb Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Kotzk was a well-known Rebbe. He studied under the tutelage of the *tzaddik* the **Chozeh of Lublin**, and afterwards traveled to the **Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa** and **Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha**. After the passing of Reb Simcha Bunim, he took over the lead of his chassidim. He was known to be very sharp and always demanded of his chassidim to be truthful to themselves and completely devoted to the truth. For the last twenty years of his life, he closeted himself in his room and did not engage with his *chassidim*. He passed away on the 22nd of Shevat, 1859 (תר"ט).

The Kotzker Rebbe was well known for the sharp way he dealt with his *chassidim*. It was therefore quite astounding when a certain *Rov* came to Kotzk and the Rebbe greeted him in a friendly manner, talked to him for a while and

then invited him over to eat. Later, one of the Rebbe's close *chassidim* expressed his wonder over this. The Rebbe replied, "What do you not understand? This man is a very foolish and thinks very highly of himself. He believes that it is an honor for me to have him as a *chossid*, so you know what? I gave him that impression, for giving a fool what he wants is also an act of *gemilas chesed*..."

The Kotzker Rebbe was once asked how he gives people advice regarding matters of this world when he himself is totally divested and detached from all worldly matters? The Rebbe replied, "I act objectively. 'Whenever there is a business deal, there always needs to be someone who is uninvolved in the deal that is able to give an objective opinion. So too, I, who has no dealings with the mundane world, am truly objective and able to give the proper advice...'"

Library Sparks

The climax of the Exodus from Egypt and the purpose for which the world was created was the Revelation on Mount Sinai. It was there that G-d gave the Ten Commandments and the Torah to the Jewish People. In front of the assemblage of every single Jewish man, woman and child, and in the presence of the souls of every Jew that would be born throughout the millennia, G-d descended on Mount Sinai and said, "I am (*anochi*) the L-rd your G-d." These historic events are described in this week's Torah portion, *Yisro*.

The *Midrash* points out a curious fact: The word "*anochi*" is not Hebrew--it is an Egyptian word!

The Ten Commandments are a condensation of all the guiding principles of the Torah. Of these, the first two commandments, "I am the L-rd your G-d" and "You shall have no other gods," have an even greater measure of holiness, for they were heard by the Jews directly from G-d Himself, and not through Moshe. The first of these two commandments, by virtue of the order in which it was given, has even more significance. Why, then, did G-d choose to express the most lofty and exalted concept, the "I," the very essence of G-d Himself, in a foreign tongue? Why didn't G-d use the Hebrew word for I--"*Ani*"--to begin the most important utterance ever heard?

In order to understand this paradox, we must first examine the purpose of the Revelation on

Mount Sinai. The Torah was not given to guard the holiness contained in the Hebrew tongue; for this, no G-dly earth-shaking Revelation would have been necessary. G-d descended on Mount Sinai for one reason only--to enable us to elevate even the lowest and most mundane aspects of our lives and of the physical world, including the Egyptian language, the spoken words of the most corrupt and abominable nation.

Holiness existed before the Revelation, and Jews had long occupied themselves with the Torah. The innovation of the Revelation was the ability to "fuse" holiness with mundane, to imbue physical matter with spirituality. Even things that were seemingly far removed from the realm of holiness could now be used to bring G-dliness into the world.

The aim of the Revelation is pointedly emphasized by the use of the Egyptian word "*anochi*." A Jew's daily life involves elevating the physical and transforming it into a vessel for G-dliness. Prayer and Torah study enable us to reach only a limited level of spirituality; elevating that which is base and seemingly trivial, by adhering to the laws of the Torah, enables us to attain even greater heights of holiness.

When we fulfill G-d's will by elevating even the "*anochi*," as G-d Himself did, we fulfill the purpose of the Torah and carry out the world's Divine plan.

Halacha Sparks

Courteous verses

Friendly

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

I have heard that it is forbidden for a man to inquire about the welfare of a woman not related to him. Does that mean that it is forbidden to greet a bank teller by saying "Hi! How are you doing?"

Aside from prohibited marriages, there is a halachic prohibition to engage in friendly conduct with a person from the opposite gender (aside from some immediate relatives and very young children). This is referred to in halacha as '*kraiva le'aroyos*', as it is derived from the possuk '*lo sikrevu legalos erva*' – do not approach one who is prohibited to you. The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that it is prohibited *mide'oraisa* and one is even required to sacrifice one's life over it.

Examples of behaviors considered to be expressions of friendliness include:

1. Touching.
2. Acting in a frivolous manner or sharing a joke (e.g. making a sarcastic comment to someone from the opposite gender about something a co-worker said).
3. Giving personal gifts which form friendship (which is why it is forbidden for a woman to give *mishloach manos* to a man and vice versa.) A general bonus for all workers is permissible.
4. Inquiring of a woman about her personal life (*sheilas shalom*).

This *din* of *sheilas shalom* applies only to questions of personal nature, such as "How was your vacation?" etc.; but not to salutations customary in our society such as 'Hello', 'Good Morning' etc. because this impersonal gesture of etiquette will not elicit feelings of friendship.

Therefore, since in today's society, initiating a conversation with a bank teller by asking 'How are you doing?' is usually an expression of etiquette, rather than a genuine curiosity to know the answer, it would be permitted.

In conclusion: Considering the fact that there are so many variables and it is easily possible to transgress an *issur d'oraisa*, one should always be careful to pay on time for any work done.

רמב"ם הל' אסור פכ"א ה"א, רמב"ן בהשגות על ספח"צ
ל"ת שנה, ח"מ וב"ש סי' כ' ס"ק א, שו"ע אבן העזר סי' כ"א סעי'
ו, וי"ד סי' קנז סעי' א, ערוך השולחן שם סעי' ח, ספר יצא אדם
לפעול פרק א

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Our new exciting shiurim program will be operating soon! Shiurim will be taking place weekly at our state of the of the art library for men. Lectures will be taking place for women as well on a variety interesting & important topics.