

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



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פרשת וארא תשע"ה

Working with Faith

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Working with Faith

As the *Midrash* explains, one should not say, "I will eat, drink and enjoy, and in *Shamayim* they will have mercy," for HaShem sends his *bracha* through a person's work. If one doesn't take action, he will not receive the *bracha*. This can be learned from Yitzchak, who planted his field so that the *bracha* from HaShem would be able to rest upon it.

(תנחומא ויצא, תדב"א יד, תוספתא ברכות פ"ו)

Rabbeinu Bechaye in his **Chovos HaLevavos** explains why HaShem created the world in such a way that people must work to earn a living. Firstly, it serves as a test to one's dedication to HaShem in business, including his recognition of HaShem's hand in his success. Secondly, if not for work, many people would only indulge in worldly pleasures and be drawn to *aveiros*.

Elsewhere it is explained that HaShem wanted His influence in this world hidden, and made it appear as if it is we who are causing things to happen.

Chassidus adds that by working in the world a Jew elevates the world and arouses within himself a greater love for HaShem.

(חזו"ל שער הבטחון פ"ג הקדמה ה', שיחור ק תשל"ד ח"א ע' 145, לקו"ש ח"ל ע' 137 ואילך עיי"ש)

The **Baal HaTanya** writes: *Bracha* and success come from Above and all that has to be done is to make a suitable *keili* for this *bracha*. A person who is very involved in his *parnasa* is like a person who sews clothes for himself that are too long, and thus cause him to trip and fall.

(לקוטי תורה תצא לו, ב)

Shortly after the **Rayatz of Lubavitch** arrived in America, he once asked someone what he does, and was told, "I make a living." The Rebbe responded, "A living is made by the Eibershter; a Jew must be the recipient (*mekabel*)."

(תו"מ ח"ט ע' 115)

Chazal say that although a person should have a trade, he must still daven to HaShem, for any trade can either succeed or not, and all depends on a person's *zechuyos*, his merits.

Rebbi Shimon ben Elazar said, "Have you ever seen animals working for a living – perhaps a deer working in an orchard, a lion as a porter, or a fox as a storekeeper? Despite their lack of work they still have provisions, while I have to labor for mine! It is only because I myself have caused this, through my *aveiros*."

(קידושין פ"ב ע"א)

The Torah teaches that a person must remember that it is HaShem Who brings him any success, and one should not attribute it to his own doing. Some list this awareness as one of the 613 *mitzvos*.

An example of this is a businessman who before davening in the morning hurries to call his associate and strike a deal, lest someone else precede him. He does this because he thinks that he is the one who brings the *parnasa*. If he truly believed that everything is from HaShem, he would work only because He was commanded to do so, and he would work only in the manner in which he was commanded – for it is unthinkable that following the directives of HaShem would bring him a loss. Behavior contrary to this is a subtle form of *avoda zara*!

(עקב ח, יז, סמ"ג מל"ט סד, התועודיות תשד"מ ח"ג ע' 2123)

There was once a man who was both a skilled craftsman and an accountant, but was unsuccessful in earning money. The **Rebbe of Kotzk** once called him over and asked, "Do you understand the *possuk*, "*lo lachchomim lechem*" (simply meaning that a wise man does not necessarily have bread)? The man was quiet, and the Rebbe explained: "HaShem is telling a person, 'If you think you are a *chochom*, then go look for your *parnasa* yourself....'"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין [לה"ק] מועדים ע' 155)

The **Rebbe** explains that the same principle applies to disseminating *Yiddishkeit*. The

person's activity is merely a *keili*; the success comes from HaShem. However, only when he invests every possible exertion can he be blessed with supernatural *hatzlacha*.

(התועודיות תשמ"ב ח"ב ע' 560)

A Suitable 'Keili'

On one of his travels, the **Baal Shem Tov** went up to a house, knocked on the window and immediately continued on his way. Hearing the knock, the person living there rushed out and caught up to the Baal Shem Tov, asking him what he wanted. The Baal Shem Tov told him that he needed a certain sum of money and the man fulfilled his request.

The *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov then asked him, "If there was a need to knock on the man's window because something was needed from him, then why did you leave right away without waiting for him to come out and hear your request?"

The Baal Shem Tov explained that a man's request is fulfilled by HaShem, but He wants that person to take some action as well. Therefore it was enough to do something small, like knocking on the window. Once he had done his part, he had no reason to stay and therefore had continued on his way.

(התועודיות תשמ"ז ח"א ע' 290, לקו"ש ח"ה ע' 344)

Consider This



If HaShem can make everything happen, why is there a need for a '*keili*'?

Can it be said that the person's success is a result of HaShem's *bracha* and the '*keili*'?

Sparks of Greatness

Reb Zusha of Anipoli - ב' שט

Reb Meshulem Zusha of Anipoli was one of the great *talmidim* of the **Mezritcher Maggid** and a brother of **Reb Elimelech of Lizensk**. After exiling himself for many years, he finally settled in Anipoli, where he began teaching the ways of *Chassidus*. Throughout his life, he lived in poverty, but served Hashem with tremendous fervor and awe and aroused thousands to do *teshuva*. Reb Meshulam Zusha was the epitome of simplicity, humility, piety, and purity of heart. He was very close with the Alter Rebbe, who took a *haskama* from him on the *Tanya*. He passed away on the 2nd of Shevat 1800 (תק"ס).

The Mezritcher Maggid once called in **Reb Mendel Horodoker**, **Reb Pinchas Baal Hahafla'ah**, and the **Alter Rebbe**, to ask them a question in *nigleh*. They left the Rebbe's room and discussed the matter among themselves. Reb Zusha came over to them, asking what they were conversing about, but Reb Mendel Horodoker told him that this was not his domain. Shortly after, when **Reb Levi Yitzchak** of Berditchev came in, the chassidim told him the question, and Reb Zusha listened in.

Reb Zusha went to a side and began crying, "*Ribono Shel Olam!* Zusha does not have a part in the *Torah*; it does not belong to him..." Later, Reb

Zusha approached the Baal HaTanya, for he was ashamed to speak up in front of the entire group, and elucidated a possible explanation. Amazed, the Alter Rebbe declared that this was *Torah* from *shamayim*. The Baal HaTanya told over the explanation to the Maggid, in the name of Reb Zusha, and the Maggid accepted it.

Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg asked the Maggid of Mezritch, "How is possible to fulfill the words of our *chachomim*, 'A person is obligated to *bentch* Hashem for the bad the same way he *bentches* him for good?'" The Maggid told him to go to the *bais medrash* where he would find his talmid Reb Zusha, who would be able to explain the meaning of the Mishna.

Reb Shmelke went to Reb Zusha and told him that the Rebbe had sent him here to hear an explanation on the Mishna. Reb Zusha could not fathom why the Rebbe had sent the *chossid* to him. "Such a question you should ask to someone who had some bad experience, *chas v'shalom*. I, however, have had no such experience, for nothing bad has ever befallen me! How then would I be able to explain this concept?"

(התועודויות תשכ"ב ח"ב ע' 560)

Library Sparks

One of the main reasons that the Exodus from Egypt occupies such a central role in Judaism, is that this original exodus symbolizes the daily spiritual exodus which must take place in the life of a Jew. The Hebrew word for Egypt, "*Mitzrayim*," comes from the root word "*Meitzar*," meaning limitations and obstacles. It is up to every individual to liberate himself from his own internal limitations and boundaries, thus freeing his G-dly soul to express itself and seek spiritual fulfillment.

This week's Torah portion, *Vaeira*, tells of the very beginning of the events which led up to the Jews' triumphant liberation from bondage. By studying the circumstances of the Egyptian exodus, we see how we can apply these lessons to our own personal and spiritual journey as well.

The first plague to afflict the Egyptians was blood; every drop of water in the land was affected. Therefore, the first step toward spiritual liberation must also somehow be connected with transforming "water" into "blood."

Water symbolizes tranquility, coldness, and lack of emotional excitement. Blood, on the other hand, is a symbol of warmth, enthusiasm and fervor. The Torah asks every Jew: Do you truly want to leave "Egypt," to overcome your self-imposed limitations? The first thing you must do is turn your "water" into "blood."

Transform your apathy and inertia into enthusiasm and love of *Torah* and *mitzvot*. Infuse your life with a warmth and fervor directed toward G-d and holiness.

A person may claim, "Is it not enough that I simply perform the *mitzvot*, learn *Torah*, and avoid that which is forbidden? Am I not a good Jew even if I don't feel any enthusiasm for what I do?"

Chasidic philosophy explains that coldness and apathy are the source of all evil. When one is cool toward something, it means that he is totally uninterested in it. We see that when something truly close to the heart is mentioned, our pulse quickens and we "warm" to the subject. Coldness signals the mechanical performance of the commandments and leads to eventual spiritual deterioration.

The first action to be taken toward spiritual liberation is to replace our lukewarm dedication to Judaism with warmth and enthusiasm. We should be at least as equally enthused about Judaism as we are about other facets of our lives.

One of the practical ways this expresses itself is when we perform a *mitzva* in a particularly nice way. The desire to enhance our observance leads to our observing the precepts of Judaism out of love. This, then, is the first step towards going out of our own personal Egypt and ending our collective exile.

Halacha Sparks

Cheating on a Test

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

What are the prohibitions involved when cheating on a test? Is there any difference between a test on *limudei kodesh* material and *lehavdil* a test on secular studies?

To preface: The Torah requires a Yid to be moral and honest in all matters. Often, even if one cannot point to a specific *se'if* in *Shulchan Aruch* that forbids something, it is nevertheless obvious that the Torah forbids behaving in such a manner. So too here, it is self understood that cheating on a test is an act of deception which flies in the face of Torah's value of honesty.

However, the truth is that even from a dry legal perspective, cheating on a test involves several *Halachic* issues. Some instances of cheating have direct financial consequences and thus would be considered *gneiva*. For example, if one was hired based on test scores that were achieved by cheating, the salary received based on false pretexts constitutes theft.

Even when there are no monetary implications, the very act of deceit that causes another person, including a *goy*, to have a mistaken assumption or impression, is referred to in *Halacha* as *gneivas daas*. *Chazal* list seven types of thieves, the worst of which is someone who steals "the opinion" of others, i.e. leads them to false conclusions. Therefore, leading a teacher to believe the answers on the test are his own, when in reality they were copied from someone else, violates the prohibition against *gneivas daas*. It should be noted that many *rishonim* hold that *gneivas daas* is an *issur deoraisa*.

In summary: there is no difference between *limudei kodesh* or *lehavdil* secular studies with regard to the prohibition of *gneivas daas*.

חולין דף צד ע"א, ריטב"א שם, ספר יראים רכ"ד, שער תשובה לרבינו יונה ג, קפ"ד, תוספתא בבא קמא זג, שו"ע חו"מ סי' רכח סעי' ו, שו"ת אגרות משה חו"מ ח"ב סי' ל, שו"ת משנה הלכות ח"ז סי' ער"ה

Come visit our library at 1709 Avenue J, Brooklyn NY. Call us at 718-677-9000. www.thebaalshemtovlibrary.com. tbstlibrary@gmail.com

Library hours: Sunday : 1:30 pm - 9:30 pm. Monday - Thursday: 2:00 pm - 10:30 pm. New Women's Hours: Sunday 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm.

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