

טעמו וראו

A taste of the
Rebbe's teachings

Toldos



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Faith in G-d - On Whose Account?

Our Sages command us to honor the Shabbat and promise that the costs won't be included in our destined portion for the year. But there is a caveat: If you have no assets, don't go into debt. Why can't we borrow with the power of our faith in G-d?

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Faith in G-d - On Whose Account?

"And Yitzchak sowed that land and reaped a hundred fold"

(B'reishit 26:12)

The Shabbat Budget

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe, writes in his code of Jewish Law:¹

The more one undertakes expenses for Shabbat and the cost of preparing many desirable foods, the more praiseworthy he is, as long as he has the financial capacity.

"If he doesn't have money on hand, only movable property, he should pledge it as security and take a loan against it. Hashem will provide him the means to repay the debt. In this vein, our Sages state: 'Hashem says, "Take a loan on My account; I will repay.'" Meaning, Shabbat and festival expenses are not included in the allotment a person receives on Rosh Hashanah... Therefore, if he increases his Shabbat and festival expenses, his income will be increased.

If, however, he doesn't have property for collateral, he should not borrow in the expectation that Hashem will repay. Since he has no resources of his own, he has no obligation to increase his Shabbat expenses beyond his financial capacity."

We see that Hashem promises to cover the costs of Shabbat expenses, "Take a loan on My account; I will repay,"² meaning, that it is an entirely supernatural phenomenon.

It is worthy to note that this is even more wondrous than Hashem's promise to those who observe the Shemitta-Sabbatical, that "I will command my blessing to you during the sixth year, and it will reap produce for all three years,"³ for the following reason:

G-d blessing us with a plentiful produce isn't a unique phenomenon for the

1) Chapter 242:3

2) Tractate Beitza 15b.

3) Behar 25:21.

Jewish people. Our forefather Yitzchak had a similar experience, when he “sowed in the land and reaped a hundredfold”;⁴ not only three times as much, but even one hundredfold. And this took place even in a difficult land and in a difficult year;⁵ how much more so in regular circumstances.

If Yitzchak was blessed in this fashion, the same should certainly be the case for every single Jew, as Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe, writes in Torah Or,⁶ “The forefathers (Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, our three patriarchs⁷) bequeathed their spiritual status to all their descendents throughout the generations...every person must resemble the forefathers.” Therefore, the power to “reap a hundredfold” must be within every Jew, and we shouldn’t be surprised by a blessing to reap threefold during the Sabbatical-Shemittah year.

The uniqueness about the Sabbatical’s blessing is that every Jew, regardless of spiritual stature, is assured of this blessing, and can therefore fulfill the commands of Shemitta without fearing, “What shall we eat?”⁸ His blessing is guaranteed for those three years.

However, even though he is granted supernatural blessings, he must still sow his fields! Only then will Hashem provide him with a three-year harvest.

But certain blessings are given to the Jew without the need to do anything. “Take a loan on My account; I will repay.” Meaning, even if you have no money, nor a business that could potentially bring in profit, nonetheless, Hashem promises, “I will repay”!

Faith Alongside Responsibility

...There is a powerful lesson to be learned here on the subject of Bitachon - trusting in Hashem:

A Jew is obligated to trust in G-d and rely on Him entirely - only in regard to his own personal affairs. However, when dealing with the belongings of others, we are forbidden to risk the loss of the asset. Therefore, with regard to Shabbat expenses, only if you have collateral may you “pledge it as security and take a loan against it, and Hashem will provide you the means to repay the debt.” As

4) Toldot 26:12.

5) Rashi.

6) Beginning of Parshat Va'era.

7) See Tractate Berachot 16b.

8) Behar ibid. 20.

long as you provide security, the lender doesn't risk the loss of his money. "But if he doesn't have property for collateral, he should not borrow in the expectation that Hashem will repay."⁹ Instead, he should cut his Shabbat spending to his regular weekday amounts,¹⁰ to avoid risking the loss of the property of others.

In other words: If a person wants to donate generously to charity, and to trust that G-d will repay him, it is a very worthy aspiration. However, he may do so only if he has the means to cover it. But to borrow with no security - absolutely not!

This sentiment is expressed in Sefer Chassidim: "One who is in debt should not give large amounts to charity before repaying his debts."

The question might be asked: the Mitzvah of charity is one of the greatest commandments. In fact, if a person of means withholds charity, he is held responsible for doing the opposite of "bringing life to the pauper."¹¹ If so, if a person is presented with the opportunity to give charity but doesn't have adequate funds, why shouldn't he borrow from others in order to donate? The verse states, "Hashem repays those who loan to the needy."¹² If so, Hashem will certainly repay the lender! Why shouldn't he borrow from others to donate to charity, and have faith in Hashem to repay the lender?

Rabbi Shneur Zalman's response is - these calculations are legitimate only in regard to your own assets. When you have money, you should give charity without calculations, and trust in Hashem to provide you with your needs. But with regard to others - you cannot trust in Hashem to repay your loans. You cannot profess faith in Hashem at someone else's expense.

The same is true regarding spiritual charity - caring for the spiritual life of others: When a Jew hears that he is expected to engage in spiritual charity, to go out and bring other Jews closer to Judaism, he may argue: Why should I deal with those individuals? "We have no-one to rely on but our Father in Heaven."¹³ We can surely trust in Hashem to provide all Jews with all their need. Why should I engage in spreading Torah and Judaism, and put in effort and toil to travel from one place to another until I reach even the Jew in the farthest reaches? It would be more productive to remain at home and engage in prayer, Torah study, and diligent observance of Mitzvot. Of course, I am troubled by the fact that a certain Jew may not have reached my spiritual level, but I will trust in Hashem, the All-powerful, to provide that Jew with whatever he needs. Jewish tradition says that "Nobody will

9) Tractate Shabbat, 118a. Shulchan Aruch, ibid. 4.

10) Ibid 454.

11) See Tanchuma Mishpatim 15.

12) Mishlei 19:17

13) Based on Sotah (Ein Yaakov)

be banished forever.”¹⁴ Surely, this Jew will one day come back to Judaism.

The answer is: “That’s not how it works!” We are obligated to have faith in Hashem, but when another Jew is lacking, physically or spiritually, we are obligated to give him “whatever he lacks.”¹⁵

Give Life to Another

The claim that we can simply trust in Hashem is actually the claim of Turnusrufus [a Roman officer who would often question Jewish faith] to Rabbi Akiva: “If your G-d loves the poor, why doesn’t he sustain them”? If Hashem wants a spiritually poor Jew to have everything he needs, why doesn’t He provide it on His own? Why should we be obligated to travel to him and ‘loan’ him our knowledge of Torah and Mitzvos – which also puts the messenger in the position of “a lender [who] is a servant to the borrower.”¹⁶ It would be simpler if Hashem took care of the issue on His own.

This ‘argument’ could be amplified according to Chassidic teachings: In Igeret Hakodesh, Rabbi Shneur Zalman cites the teachings of our Sages, “If one becomes angry, it is as if he worshiped idols,”¹⁷ and he explains: “Because at the time of his anger, faith in Hashem and in His individual Divine Providence has left him. Were he to believe that what happened to him was Hashem’s doing, he would not be angry at all. True, it is a person possessed of free choice that is cursing him, or striking him, or causing damage to his property, and is [therefore] guilty...for his bad decision. Nevertheless, as regards the person harmed, this [incident] was already decreed in heaven...”¹⁸

If so, one may ask: If this Jew deserves care and concern, he will surely receive it; he won’t lose his destined portion because of my bad decision. And if this Jew doesn’t deserve it, I won’t be able to change it”!

This is the conclusion I have reached – he will say – from studying Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s eloquent explanation in Igeret Hakodesh.

The response to him is: Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s goal is to help you avoid anger. But in practical terms, you are still obligated to provide a needy Jew with everything he needs, and to make every effort to help him. What of faith in Hashem? Faith is good and necessary, a very worthy pursuit and a principle of our faith. But practically, when speaking of another Jew, you are obligated to fulfill the Mitzvah of spiritual charity, to

14) See Shmuel II 14:14, Tanya chp. 39. Hilchos Talmud Torah Admur Hazaken 4:3.

15) Re’eh 15:8.

16) Bava Batra 10a.

17) See Likutei Sichos vol. 17 pg. 20 ft. 33.

18) Epistle 25.

travel there and bring him closer to Torah and Mitzvot.

The merit for doing so is very great. Our Sages say that “when the soul of a poor man is struggling to leave its body...you gave him life...”¹⁹ Although life is determined by Hashem,²⁰ you now have the ability to give him life.

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(Toras Menachem booklet pg. 10)

19) See Tanchuma Mishpatim 15.

20) Beginning of Tractate Taanit

Sources:

Source 1

Talmud, Beitza 16a

A person's entire livelihood is allocated to him from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur, except for expenditures for Shabbat and Festivals, and expenditures for his sons' Torah study. In these areas, no exact amount is determined at the beginning of the year; rather, if he spends less, his [income] is reduced, and if he spends more his [income] is increased.

Source 2

Talmud, Beitza 15b

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Shimon: Hashem said to the Jewish people: My children, borrow on My [account], and sanctify the the day [of Shabbat and the Festivals with wine], and trust in Me, and I will repay [this debt.]

Source 3

Code of Jewish Law, Laws of Shabbat 242:3

The more one undertakes expenses for Shabbat and the cost of preparing many desirable foods, the more praiseworthy he is, as long as he has the financial capacity.

If he doesn't have money on hand, only movable property, he should pledge it as security and take a loan against it. Hashem will provide him the means to repay the debt. In this vein, our Sages state: "Hashem says, "Take a loan on My account; I will repay." Meaning, Shabbat and festival expenses are not included in the allotment a person receives on Rosh Hashanah for the sustenance of the entire year and all

מקור 1

מסכת ביצה טז, א.

'כל מזונותיו של אדם קצובים לו מראש השנה ועד יום הכפורים, חוץ מהוצאת שבתות והוצאת יום טוב והוצאת בניו לתלמוד תורה: שאם פחת - פוחתין לו, ואם הוסיף - מוסיפין לו.'

מקור 2

מסכת ביצה טו, ב.

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי אליעזר ברבי שמעון: אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל: בני! לוו עלי וקדשו קדושת היום, והאמינו בי ואני פורע.

מקור 3

שולחן ערוך הלכות שבת סימן רמ"ב, ג'

וכל המרבה בהוצאת שבת ובתיקון מאכלים רבים וטובים הרי זה משובח והוא שידר משגת.

ואף אם אין לו עכשיו מעות מזומנים אלא חפצים ימשכנם וילווה עליהם והקב"ה ימציא לו לפרוע ועל זה אמרו רז"ל אמר הקב"ה לוו עלי ואני פורע כלומר שאין הוצאת שבת ויו"ט עולה בחשבון הקצבה שנקצב לו בראש השנה למזונות כל השנה ושאר צרכיו שכך אמרו

his other needs. For our sages taught: All the sustenance and expenses of a person are allocated from Rosh Hashanah; the amount he will earn to provide for food and other expenses is predetermined – with the exclusion of the expenses of Shabbat and Yom Tov. Therefore, if he increases his Shabbat and festival expenses, his income will be increased.

If, however, he doesn't have property for collateral, he should not borrow in the expectation that Hashem will repay. Since he has no resources of his own, he has no obligation to increase his Shabbat expenses beyond his financial capacity.

Source 4

Igeret Hakodesh chapter 25

Our Sages, of blessed memory, taught: “Whoever is in a rage resembles an idolater.”

The reason [for this] is clear to those who are wise: because at the time of his anger, he has abandoned his faith in G-d and in His individual Divine Providence. For were he to believe that what happened to him was G-d's doing, he would not be angry at all.

חכמים כל מזונותיו והוצאותיו של אדם קצובין לו מראש השנה שקוצבין לו כמה ישתכר בשנה זו לצורך מזונותיו ושאר צרכיו של כל ימות השנה חוץ מהוצאות שבתות ויו"ט שאין קוצבין עליה כלום אלא אם מוסיף בהוצאת שבת ויו"ט מוסיפין לו. אבל אם אין לו חפצים למשכנם ולפרוע בהם לא ילוה ושהקב"ה יפרע כי מאחר שאין לו משלו אין עליו חיוב כלל להרבות בהוצאת שבת יותר מהשגת ידו:

מקור 4

אגרת הקודש סימן כ"ה

בהקדים מאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, כל הכועס כאילו עובד עבודת כוכבים ומזלות וכו'. והטעם מובן ליודעי בינה, לפי שבעת כעסו נסתלקה ממנו האמונה, כי אילו היה מאמין שמאת ה' היתה זאת לו לא היה בכעס כלל.

Source 5

Talmud, Bava Batra 10a

The evil Turnusrufus asked Rabbi Akiva, “If your G-d loves the poor, why doesn’t he sustain them?”

Rabbi Akiva responded, “To save us from the judgment of purgatory [by virtue of charity].”

Turnusrufus responded: On the contrary, it is this charity which condemns you to purgatory. I will illustrate this to you with a parable. It is comparable to a king of flesh and blood who was angry with his slave and put him in prison and ordered that he should not be fed or given to drink. And one person went ahead and fed him and gave him to drink. If the king heard about this, would he not be angry with that person? And you, after all, are called slaves, as it is stated: “For the children of Israel are slaves to Me.”

Rabbi Akiva replied: I will illustrate it to you with a different parable. It is comparable to a king of flesh and blood who was angry with his son and put him in prison and ordered that he should not be fed or given to drink. And one person went ahead and fed him and gave him to drink. If the king heard about this [once his anger abated], would he not react by sending that person a gift? And we are called sons, as it is written: “You are sons of the Lord your God.”

מקור 5

בבא בתרא דף י' א.

וזו שאלה שאל טורנוסרופוס
הרשע את רבי עקיבא: אם
אלהיכם אוהב עניים הוא -
מפני מה אינו מפרנסם?

אמר ליה: כדי שניצול אנו בהן
מדינה של גיהנם.

אמר ליה: אדרבה - זו
שמחייבתן לגיהנם! אמשול לך
משל למה הדבר דומה: למלך
בשר ודם שכעס על עבדו,
וחבשו בבית האסורין, וצוה
עליו שלא להאכילו ושלא
להשקותו, והלך אדם אחד
והאכילו והשקהו; כששמע
המלך לא כועס עליו? ואתם
קרוין 'עבדים' שנאמר (ויקרא
כה, נה) כי לי בני ישראל
עבדים.

אמר לו רבי עקיבא: אמשול לך
משל למה הדבר דומה: למלך
בשר ודם שכעס על בנו וחבשו
בבית האסורין, וצוה עליו שלא
להאכילו ושלא להשקותו, והלך
אדם אחד והאכילו והשקהו;
כששמע המלך - לא דורון
משגר לו? ואנן קרוין 'בנים',
דכתיב (דברים יד, א) בנים
אתם לה' אלהיכם.

מיזם של "משרד השלוחים"

נוסד בימי השבעה לזכרון ולע"נ הרב גבריאל נח וזוגתו רבקה הי"ד
שלוחי הרבי במומבאי, הודו

