

# טעמו וראו

A taste of the  
Rebbe's teachings

Parshat Mishpatim



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## Reincarnation Can Define Your Life's Mission

People are often quick to shrug off communal responsibility. Even Moses himself, when instructed to redeem the People of Israel, made every effort to avoid the mission.

What does Jewish tradition say about this attitude? Is communal work really for everyone? Does reincarnation make an impact?

Dedicated in honor of  
**Chana bas Sonya**  
for her birthday, 2 Adar

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In a fascinating Midrash on the opening verse of our Torah portion, our Sages say that a person should never set himself apart from his brethren. Communal work is an obligation for every individual. It relates a story on this topic as well—Rabbi Asi wept before his demise, because he felt he had neglected his obligation to the community.

In the first part of his talk, the Rebbe cites this Midrash and points out how the Rebbes of Chabad Lubavitch adopted this concept and demanded of their followers to take on communal responsibility.

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In the second portion of the talk, the Rebbe explains that a person should not persuade himself that communal work is not for him because he lacks the necessary talents. Even if you feel unfit for the job, it remains your obligation.

A story to illustrate this concept: Reb Dov Zev (Bere Volf) Kozhevnikov, the rabbi of Yekatrinoslav preceding Reb Levi Yitzchok, was known as a fabulous speaker. Not many knew that during his childhood, he suffered from a terrible stutter. With a lot of perseverance and a blessing from the Tzemach Tzedek, he managed to overcome it.

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The Zohar on our Parsha speaks of the concept of reincarnation. According to Jewish tradition, reincarnation occurs when a person didn't manage to finish his life-mission during his first lifetime. This is illustrated with a fascinating story of the Baal Shem Tov.

In the third part of the Rebbe's talk, he uses this concept to delve a little deeper into the discussion: Often, the Rebbe says, you don't seem fit for a job, but little do you know that it is exactly what you need to complete a mission from a previous life.

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The Alter Rebbe once told a scholar to become a wagon driver. It seemed quite out of character for him. But years after following his Rebbe's instructions, he finally understood the purpose of his mission.

# Preface:

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This week's lesson focuses on the Rebbe's call to every individual to take communal responsibility and make a larger impact on the world.

In this Sicha, the Rebbe learns from a Midrash that one must not suffice with studying Torah, doing Mitzvos and even occasionally showing kindness to another person. A person is obligated to take on real responsibilities and to devote himself to the larger community.

The Rebbe discusses the most common excuse—that the individual doesn't feel that the work is for him. The Rebbe rejects this notion, and declares that it is the *atzas hayetzer*, the workings of your Evil Inclination. Taking it a step further, the Rebbe says that even if you are indeed unsuited for this type of work, the obligation rests on you anyway; perhaps if only because of your life-mission in a previous incarnation.

There are two points that are worthy of emphasizing:

1. This Sicha was spoken specifically about the Shlichus movement, but the message still clearly applies to every Jew. Every person has a spiritual mission, and the Rebbe encouraged every person to see himself as a Shliach. Even when reading the Sicha, it is worthwhile to explain it from the outset as a message which is applicable to every individual.

2. In this Sicha, the Rebbe says that your obligation to devote time to the community derives from the fact that "you were asked to do so." That itself demonstrates that the mission is somehow associated with your soul. In other talks, the Rebbe words this same idea a bit differently: If the issue came to you, it clearly is associated with your life-mission.

The message of the Sicha is very clear and applies to every person and every situation. Before your lesson, think of examples of how your participants can join this call themselves and devote their own time and efforts to the community, becoming Shluchim of their own.

# Opening

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In the 1950s, the Rebbe began to send out emissaries, young couples who would leave their homes and communities behind to move out to a distant corner of the world. They moved to locations without strong Jewish infrastructures and without kosher food and all the amenities of Jewish Brooklyn. There, they were expected to settle down, establish relationships, and create a Jewish community.

In our day, the Shluchim project has proven to be a success. Over five thousand couples serve throughout the world, and many more are waiting in line hoping to be sent out. However, it wasn't so simple in the beginning. The Rebbe invested a lot of time and effort to educate and teach about the importance of Shlichus.

Beyond the initial challenge of moving to a faraway place is an additional one: In many instances, a potential Shliach feels that he is not cut out for communal work, because he is timid or for whatever reason. Notwithstanding these inhibitions, the Rebbe encouraged every single person to serve the community; nobody was exempt.

It is important to note that the Rebbe saw every Jew as a Shliach. The Rebbe encouraged every Jew to dedicate some of his time to public service. Often, when a businessman would notify the Rebbe of an upcoming business trip, the Rebbe would instruct him to do something for the benefit of the local community. When someone would ask the Rebbe for a blessing, he would often respond by instructing him to engage in spreading Judaism. These missions were not always easy—these fellows also occasionally thought to themselves that community work wasn't for them. But the Rebbe rejected all excuses. Community work was relevant to every individual. Every person had something to contribute.

In this Sicha, the Rebbe addresses these difficulties, and takes lessons from the Parsha, Midrash, Zohar and the Baal Shem Tov—emphasizing that community work is relevant for every single person.

# A. Sustaining the World

Last week's Parshah concluded with the Ten Commandments. This week, Moses begins to lay out the Torah's legal code for the Jewish people.

## Source 1

Exodus 21:1

These are the laws you shall place  
before them...

וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר  
תָּשִׂים לְפָנֵיהֶם:

The Midrash Tanchuma focuses on the word *Mishpatim*, which means “laws” or “judgment.” There are two types of people, the Midrash says: those who dedicate themselves to “judging” the people, i.e. devote themselves to public service, and those who are “*terumah*”—they hide themselves in a corner and ignore the rest of the world. The former is, of course, the preferred course of action.

(*Terumah* is the percentage of a Jew's crop which he would donate to the priest. It was considered holy and was eaten only when ritually pure, so it was always placed aside in a specific location to ensure it did not come in contact with impurity. Hence, the Midrash uses the term *terumah* to describe someone who secludes himself from the rest of the world.)

## Source 2

Midrash Tanchumah on the verse

**These are the laws:** The Torah says:  
“With justice a king sustains the land,  
but a man of *terumah* tears it down.”  
The king of the Torah rules through  
justice and thereby causes the earth to

וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים: זֶה  
שֶׁאָמַר הַכֹּהֵן: מֶלֶךְ  
בְּמִשְׁפָּט יַעֲמִיד אֶרֶץ, וְאִישׁ  
תְּרוּמוֹת יִהְרַסְנָהּ. מֶלֶכָּה  
שֶׁל תּוֹרָה, בְּמִשְׁפָּט שֶׁהוּא

endure, but if a person acts as though he were terumah which is set aside in a corner and declares: “What concern are the problems of the community to me? What does their judgment mean to me? Why should I listen to them? I do well without them,” he destroys the world. Hence, “a man of terumah tears it down.”

עושה, מעמיד את הארץ.  
ואיש תרומות יהרסנה. אם  
מישים אדם עצמו כתרומה  
הזו שמשלכת בזוית הבית  
ואומר מה לי בטרח הצבור,  
מה לי בדיניהם, מה לי  
לשמע קולם, שלום עליך  
נפשי, הרי זה מחריב את  
העולם. הוי ואיש תרומות  
יהרסנה.

*The Midrash continues with a story of Rabbi Asi. Rabbi Asi wept on his deathbed; his nephew asked him, “Why are you crying? A righteous man like you who ignored everything besides for Torah study—you surely have nothing to fear in the next world.” Rabbi Asi replied, “this is exactly why I cry—because I didn’t engage in leading the community. I will need to answer for that decision.”*

When Rabbi Asi lay dying, his nephew visited him and found him weeping. He said to him: “My master, why do you weep? Is there a single law that you have not learned and taught? Indeed, even now your disciples sit in your presence. Is there any kind deed you have not performed? Your greatest virtue is that you withheld from acting as a judge and didn’t allow yourself to take a position of control.” Rabbi Asi replied: “My son, that is why I weep. I may have to account for the fact that

מעשה ברבי אסי, כלשהיה  
מסתלק שמצאו בוכה.  
אמר לו: רבי, מפני מה  
אתה בוכה? יש תורה  
שלא למדת ולמדתי, הרי  
תלמידיך יושבים לפניך.  
יש גמילות חסדים שלא  
עשית. ועל כל מדות  
שהיו בך, היית מתרחק מן  
הדינין, ולא נתת רשות על  
עצמך להתמנות על צרכי  
צבור. אמר לו: בני, עליה  
אני בוכה, שמא אתו דין

I refused to concern myself with the affairs of the Jewish people though I was able to do so.” Hence, “a man of *terumah* tears it down.”

וְחָשְׁבוֹן עַל שְׁהִייתִי יְכוּל לַעֲשׂוֹת דִּינֵיהֶם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, הָיוּ, וְאִישׁ תְּרוּמוֹת יִהְרָסְנָה.

## >> The Rebbe

### Don't Isolate Yourself

על הפסוק "ואלה המשפטים גו'", מבואר במדרש, וזה לשונו<sup>1</sup>:

"זה שאמר הכתוב<sup>2</sup> מלך במשפט יעמיד ארץ ואיש תרומות יִהְרָסְנָה . . אם משים אדם עצמו כתרומה הזו שמושלכת בזויות הבית ואומר מה לי בטורח הצבור, מה לי בדיניהם, מה לי לשמוע קולם, שלום עליך נפשי, הרי זה מחריב את העולם, הוי ואיש תרומות יִהְרָסְנָה".

כלומר: כאשר ההנהגה היא באופן של תרומה, שמונחת בקרן זוית, להיותה "קודש", ולכן יראה היא להתערב בחולין כדי שלא תטמא חס ושלום, וכמו כן עומד הוא בקרן זוית וצווח "אל תגש בי כי קדשתיך", "כי קדשתי וטהרתי יותר ממך"<sup>3</sup>, ולכן אני ירא מלהתקרב לזולתי - הנה על זה נאמר "ואיש תרומות יִהְרָסְנָה", כיון שאין זו הכוונה, אלא הכוונה היא להמשיך את הענינים הנעלים ביותר למטה דוקא ובפנימיות דוקא.

וזהו הטעם שמצינו בהנהגת רבותינו נשיאינו, ובפרט כבוד קדושת מורי וחמי אדמו"ר, שהיו שולחים שלוחים שיפעלו גם עם אנשים פשוטים ובענינים נמוכים - שענין זה הוא טובה לא רק עבור הזולת, אלא גם עבור השלוחים עצמם<sup>4</sup> - כיון שהכוונה היא להמשיך את הענינים הנעלים למטה דוקא.

וזהו גם המשך דברי המדרש שם: "מעשה ברבי אסי כשהיה מסתלק מן העולם נכנס בן אחותו אצלו, מצאו בוכה, אמר לו רבי מפני מה אתה בוכה, יש תורה שלא למדת ולימדת, הרי תלמידך יושבים לפניך, יש גמילות חסדים שלא עשית, ועל כל מדות שהיו בך, היית

(3) ישע"י סה, ה ובפרש"י.  
(4) ראה גם לעיל ע' 46. וש"נ.

(1) תנחומא פרשתנו ב. וראה גם שמור"ר פ"ל, יג.  
(2) משלי כט, ד.

מתרחק מן הדינין ולא נתת רשות על עצמך להתמנות על צרכי ציבור (והיינו שאמר לו ענין זה בתור שבח), אמר לו, בני, עליה אני בוכה, שמא אתן דין וחשבון על שהייתי יכול לעשות דיניהם של ישראל, הוי ואיש תרומות יהרסנה".

והיינו, שאין מספיק לימוד התורה והעסק בגמילות חסד כאיש פרטי, אלא יש צורך בהתעסקות בטובת הזולת בתור פרנס ציבור, היינו, שמוסר עצמו לגמרי כדי לפעול עם הזולת.

ועל זה נאמר "מלך במשפט יעמיד ארץ", היינו, שהעוסק בצרכי ציבור הוא המעמיד ומקיים את הארץ: מה שאין כן כאשר הנהגתו היא באופן ד"איש תרומות", "כתרומה הזו שמושלכת בזויות הבית", הרי אף שעוסק בגמילות חסד בתור איש פרטי, מכל מקום "יהרסנה", כי על ידי זה חסרים בהעולם כמה ענינים, וכיון שהיה ביכלתו לתקנם ולא תיקנם, נחשב לו כאילו הרס אותם.

*When a person refrains from engaging with the community, he is considered someone who destroys the world, because our Divine purpose is to bring G-d throughout the world.*

On the verse, “These are the laws...” the Midrash comments:

“The Torah says: ‘With justice a king sustains the land, but a man of *terumah* tears it down.’ ...If a person acts as though he were *terumah* which is set aside in a corner, and declares: ‘What concern are the problems of the community to me? What does their judgment mean to me? Why should I listen to them? I do well without them,’ he destroys the world. Hence, ‘a man of *terumah* tears it down.’”

Meaning: *Terumah*, the portion of food set aside for priests, is safeguarded in a corner of the home to protect its sanctity and to ensure it does not mix with the regular produce. If a person follows suit by placing himself in a proverbial corner of society and declaring, “I am holy and must not desecrate my sanctity by associating with others”—G-d says of him, “A man of *terumah* tears it down,” because this was not His intention with the creation of the world. G-d wants us to channel the greatest spiritual revelations to be internalized even in the lowest levels of society.

*This was the attitude of the Chabad Rebbes, who sent their followers to teach Torah to community people and even small children, even if they themselves were great scholars; because the Divine purpose of creation is to bring G-d to every person, and that is for the benefit of the messenger as well.*

For this reason, the Chabad Rebbes in general and by my father-in-law, the [previous] Rebbe in particular, sent out emissaries to engage with people of all levels. Their mission doesn't only benefit those whom they bring closer to Judaism; it benefits themselves as well, because they fulfill G-d's greatest wish to bring spirituality everywhere.

*Rabbi Asi wept before his passing, even though he had studied Torah and done acts of kindness, because he hadn't dedicated himself to community work. Because a person who is devoted to the community is someone that "establishes" the world.*

The above-mentioned Midrash indeed follows on the same note:

“When Rabbi Asi lay dying, his nephew visited him and found him weeping. He said to him: ‘My master, why do you weep? Is there a single law that you have not learned and taught? Indeed, even now your disciples sit in your presence. Is there any kind deed you have not performed? Your greatest virtue is that you withheld from acting as a judge and didn't allow yourself to take a position of control.’ [i.e. the nephew saw it as a virtue]. Rabbi Asi replied: ‘My son, that is why I weep. I may have to account for the fact that I refused to concern myself with the affairs of the Jewish people though I was able to do so.’ Hence, ‘a man of *terumah* tears it down.’”

It is not enough to study Torah and do good deeds as a private individual. One is obligated to serve the needs of the entire community from a leadership position and dedicate himself fully to their benefit.

Hence, the verse says, “With justice a king sustains the land.” When a person assumes leadership and tends to the needs of the community, he sustains the world. But when someone acts like *terumah* and confines himself to his own corner, even if he engages in deeds of loving-kindness, “he tears it down.” His lack of leadership creates a void, and he is therefore considered to have “torn it down.”

## B. The Character Question

### >> The Rebbe

#### Don't Underestimate Your Ability

אמנם, היצר הרע הוא ערמומי, ולכן בא וטוען, שאמנם כל האמור אמת הוא, אבל לא אליו הכוונה. . לכל אחד יש ענינו הפרטי, והענין הפרטי שלו הוא להיות "איש תרומות", והראיה לדבר - שאין לו חוש בהפעולה עם הזולת!...

והיצר הרע אינו מסתפק בכך - בידעו שהאדם יכול לענות לו שהרגשתו שאין לו חוש כו' היא מצד "השוחד יעוור"<sup>5</sup>, שהאדם הוא משוחד בנוגע לעצמו ולכן באפשרותו לרמות את עצמו - ולכן עולה בדעתו של היצר הרע "המצאה" נוספת, וטוען, שגם כשמתדבר עם אנשים אחרים שאין להם פניות לגביו, טוענים גם הם שאין לו חוש בפעולה עם הזולת... וכאמור, אמת הדבר שהעבודה ד"מלך במשפט" היא נעלית ביותר, אבל הוא - אין לו חוש בכך, ולא זהו ענינו, ומביאים כמה וכמה ראיות שאם יעסוק בענינים נעלים יצלח, ולכן - טוענים הם - אינו צריך לעסוק בענין המשפטים.

והמענה לזה: לכל לראש - אין זו עדיין ראייה שזוהי טענה צודקת: יתכן שכל הטענות הן מתחבולות היצר, ולאמיתו של דבר יש לו שייכות לענין המשפטים.

*You might think that you are not capable of community work, and your friends might even confirm your thoughts, but it all comes from the Evil Inclination...*

However, the Evil Inclination is cunning. He might approach you and argue, "This all may be true, but it doesn't apply to you... Everyone has their personal path, and your path is to be a *terumah*. Proof of the matter is: you do not have the character of the communal activist!"

The Evil Inclination understands that the individual could counter-argue that he does have the necessary abilities and his reticence is merely a result of self-centeredness. So the Evil Inclination has a new idea: He will persuade you that other people think you don't have the necessary abilities either. Although communal activism is very worthy indeed, it is simply out of character for you; and since you can utilize your time for all sorts of worthy endeavors, communal activism is clearly not your G-d-given mission.

The response is, first of all, that these thoughts have no validity simply because they probably come directly from the Evil Inclination. It is very likely that in fact, you are inclined to this form of work.

*A good example of this concept is Moses, the greatest Jewish leader of all time. He didn't see himself as a leader. When G-d sent him to redeem the Jewish people, he presented every excuse in the book. He said he was a stutterer, that the people wouldn't believe him—but G-d didn't accept his refusal. As you probably know, he was a spectacular success.*

*The following section is a story about a young Chossid in Czarist Russia, who wanted to teach Torah to others but suffered from a terrible stutter. He didn't allow it to hamper his activities, and with a blessing from the Tzemach Tzedek, he was able to overcome it.*

## A Story

Based on Sefer Hasichos—Summer 5701 pg. 33

Rabbi Dov Zev Kozhevnikov, the rabbi of Yekatrinoslav, Ukraine, was famous as a powerful orator. His speeches were renowned for their brilliance, eloquence, and inspirational content.

Whenever he would be complimented for his talent, he would make sure to note, “These are not my own powers. In fact, I’m not a natural public speaker at all. It was a blessing I received from the Tzemach Tzedek that gave me these abilities.”

The story was as follows:

Reb Dov Zev was born in a small town near Chernigov. The town boasted several prominent Chassidic scholars, and they taught him the importance of devoting oneself to others. By the time he was twelve years old, he had acquired vast knowledge in Talmud, but one problem weighed down on him—he suffered from a terrible stutter.

Many of the local townspeople were very simple; they didn’t even understand the meaning of the prayers they recited. Reb Zev Dov began to teach them the meaning of prayers and also shared with them various stories from Mishnah and Talmud. Over the next few years, he accomplished a lot, but only with great difficulty. His poor language, his stutter and his lack of self-confidence weighed down on him, and as the years progressed, the problem became more and more severe.

When he was seventeen years old, he traveled to Lubavitch to visit the Tzemach Tzedek. When he entered for Yechidus, he told the Rebbe about his efforts with the townspeople and complained about his difficulty with public speaking.

The Rebbe thought for a few moments, and then replied, “Continue as before! Continue teaching the townspeople, and G-d will bless you with the ability to speak, and to speak beautifully.”

As he left the Rebbe’s room, he didn’t recognize himself. He found himself able to speak easily, clearly and eloquently. He couldn’t

understand where these abilities had suddenly appeared from. When he returned home, he eloquently repeated three Chassidic discourses for the local Chassidim, who listened and couldn't believe their ears.

"I am the Rebbe's *golem*," he would say. "The Maharal made a *golem* of clay, but the Rebbe made a *golem* of flesh and blood."

## C. A Mission Reincarnated

The Zohar cites the first verse of the Parsha, and notes that in Unkelos, the word “tasim” is translated “tesader—you should arrange.” The Zohar suggests that tesader here has a deeper meaning—it refers to the “arrangement of souls in reincarnation.”

### Source 3

Zohar, Exodus 21:1

Rabbi Shimon opened with the words, “These are the laws you shall place before them.” In the Aramaic translation [of Unkelos], he says, “These are the judgments which you shall arrange before them.” This refers to the arrangement of reincarnation, which is the judgments of souls, who are sent back into this world according to their individual judgments.

פְּתַח ר' שְׁמֵעוֹן וְאָמַר,  
וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר  
תָּשִׂים לְפָנֵיהֶם, תְּרַגּוּם,  
וְאֵלֶּיךָ דִּינָא דְתַסְדֵּר  
קְדָמֵיהוֹן. אֵלֶּיךָ אֵינּוֹן  
סְדוּרִין דְּגִלְגוּלָא, דִּינִין  
דְּנִשְׁמָתִין, דְּאֵתְדָנוּ כָּל חַד  
וְחַד לְקַבֵּל עוֹנֵשִׂיהָ.

*What is reincarnation in Jewish thought?*

*Every soul enters the world with a specific mission. If the soul doesn't fulfill the mission in its entirety, it could be sent back into this world in a new body, where it is given the chance to complete its mission and correct the wrongs of a previous lifetime. This could even take place several times.*

*In Maaseh Oreg\*, a story is shared on this topic about the Baal Shem Tov.*

*A person deposited money with a friend, and the friend died. When the depositor approached*

\*A mystical commentary on the Mishnah by Rabbi Yitzchak Eizik Yechiel Michel Sufirin, the first Komarna Rebbe and student of the Chozeh of Lublin.

*the inheritors, they denied any knowledge of the deposit. The Rabbinical court ruled that in the absence of evidence, the children should take an oath that they have no knowledge of the deposit, and be absolved of the case.*

*However, the community members weren't satisfied. They knew the depositor to be an honest man, and they knew that the deceased was very poor and the large sum of money in his possession was out of character. They asked the Baal Shem Tov: We understand that the ruling was based on Torah law, but we all know the truth, that the money belongs to the depositor. How is it possible that Torah law could lead to a result which is incorrect?*

*The Baal Shem Tov responded that G-d leads the judges to the correct decision. However, it is the correct decision in the broader context. In this case, the depositor owed the money to the receiver in a previous incarnation. Since he didn't repay the money in that lifetime, he was given the opportunity to correct the wrong in a second life.*

*Please note: you may want to skip this source, as the story is retold almost word for word in the Rebbe's Sichah.*

## Source 4

Maaseh Oreg, Peah 8:9

Sometimes the Torah's ruling seems to bring about an unjust result, as in the case where someone deposited a large fortune by a friend and went out on a long journey. When he returned, his friend had died and his heirs denied any knowledge of the deposit. They were instructed to swear in Rabbinic court that they knew nothing of the matter and were absolved of the claim. However, everyone knew the claimant to be an honest and G-d fearing man, and the sum of money was far beyond the deceased's means.

ענין לאמתו הוא, כי כמה פעמים יצא משפט מעוקל מדיני התורה, כמו שאירע לאחד שהפקיד הון רב אצל אחד והלך לדרכו, וכשבא כבר מת הנפקד, ותבע מיורשיו, וטענו לא פקדנו אבא על זה, ופסקו להם שבועה ונפטרו, וכל העולם היו יודעין שזה איש נאמן וחסיד וירא שמים, וזה לא היה אמיד בכך.

They asked the Baal Shem Tov, how could Torah law produce an unjust result? Are we not taught that G-d ensures the justice of Torah rulings? He answered that everything is orchestrated by G-d. In a past life, the claimant owed the deceased this amount of money and never paid his debt, and now he repaid his debt to rectify the situation. It was all orchestrated by G-d—the amount was exact, not a penny more or less. This is true judgement. Even if it seems to you to be unjust, follow Torah's guidelines and don't seek compromise.

ושאלו למרן הרב ישראל בעל שם טוב על זה, האיך יצא משפט מעוקל מדיני התורה? וכתוב אלהים נצב בעדת אל. והשיב: שזהו בהשגחת המשגיח. שבגלגול העבר היה זה חייב לזה ולא פרע לו, וכעת החזיר לו לתקן נשמתו, והיה בהשגחה, לא החסיר ולא העדיף, וזהו דין אמת לאמתו, אף שנראה לך שהוא משפט מעוקל, תדון הדין לאמתו, ולא תחזור אחר הפשרות, וכיוצא בזה בענינים אלו, והמשכיל יבין לאישורו.

## >> The Rebbe

### Your Ultimate Mission

ויתירה מזו: אפילו לו יהי כדבריו, הנה כאשר אומרים לו שעליו לעסוק בענין זה, הרי זו ראייה מוכחת שעבודה זו שייכת לשורש נשמתו.

אלא מאי, מצד כל הענינים נראה הדבר באופן אחר - הרי הכל יודעים שישנו ענין הגלגולים, ואם כן, גם אם מצד מצבו בגלגול זה אינו צריך לעסוק בענין זה, הרי אינו יכול לדעת ענין ומצב נשמתו מצד הגלגול הקודם.

ולהעיר, שגם ענין זה מרומז בפסוק "ואלה המשפטים גו'", שהרי ענין הגלגולים מבואר בזהר<sup>6</sup> על פסוק זה.

דוגמא לדבר מצינו בספר מעשה אורג על מסכת פאה<sup>7</sup>, שמבאר דיוק הלשון "דין אמת לאמיתו"<sup>8</sup> - דלכאורה מהו החילוק בין "אמת" סתם ל"אמת לאמיתו" - על פי מעשה ידוע מהבעל שם טוב<sup>9</sup>:

מעשה באדם שהפקיד ממון אצל חברו, ומת הנפקד. כשבא המפקיד אל היורשים ותבע את פקדונו, טענו היורשים "שלא פקדנו אבא"<sup>10</sup>, דהיינו שאביהם לא אמר להם דבר על הפקדון, ונשבעו על כך. ומכיון שלא היו עדים למעשה, פטרם בית-דין כדין התורה<sup>11</sup>.

אמנם, הכל ידעו שהאמת היא כדברי המפקיד, כי המפקיד היה ידוע כאיש אמת, וכן היה ידוע שלא היה להנפקד סכום כה גדול.

באו איפוא אל הבעל שם טוב ושאלוהו: כיון שהדיין פסק כדין התורה, שהיא תורת אמת, ובפרט ש"אלקים נצב בעדת אל"<sup>12</sup>, דהיינו שהקב"ה עצמו פוסק פסק-דין זה<sup>13</sup>, הרי זה בודאי פסק-דין אמת! אבל איך מתאים הדבר עם המציאות?!...

והשיב להם הבעל שם טוב: בגלגול הקודם היה המפקיד חייב סכום זה להנפקד או ליורשי הנפקד. ונמצא שהבית דין פסק דין אמת, שהרי כן הוא האמת, שממון זה שייך ליורשי הנפקד.

(11) ראה רמב"ם הל' שאלה ופקדון פ"ו ה"ד טושו"ע חו"מ סרצ"ו.

(12) תהלים פב, א.

(13) ראה סנהדרין ז, סע"א.

(6) ח"ב צד, א ואילך.

(7) בסופה.

(8) משנה פאה שם.

(9) ראה גם ס' בעש"ט עה"ת ריש פרשתנו, ובהערות שם.

ובזה מבאר דיוק הלשון "דין אמת לאמיתו" - שגם כאשר מצד עניני העולם הזה אין מוכרח שדיני התורה יהיו אמת, מכל מקום, הרי הם אמת לאמיתו מצד כמה וכמה ענינים שאינם מושגים בעולם הזה.

וכשם שישנו ענין זה בגשמיות, שיכולה להיות מציאות שהאדם יודע בעצמו בוודאות, מבלי לרמות את עצמו, שאינו חייב ממון לחבירו, ואף על פי כן האמת לאמיתו היא שהוא חייב לו - כמו כן יכול להיות כן ברוחניות הענינים, שבאמת לאמיתו, מצד הגלגול הקודם, או מצד סיבות אחרות הקשורות עם שורש נשמתם, חייב הוא לזולתו חוב ברוחניות, ולכן שולחים אותו לשלם חוב זה.

*You might be correct that communal activism is not your forte, but if you are aware of a problem, it is because you have some connection to it—perhaps in a matter related to a previous lifetime...*

Moreover: Even if it is indeed out of character for you, the very fact that you were asked to engage in communal activism means that this mission has a soul-connection with you.

Does it seem otherwise? In Judaism, there is a concept of reincarnation. Even if it doesn't seem right to you in your current state, it is possible that in a former life this was a mission you needed to accomplish [and it still needs to be carried out].

Interestingly, the Zohar's writings about reincarnation are on this very verse...

*There is a possibility that you owe a spiritual debt in this regard. Even if you don't feel inclined to this work, you may have been sent into this world specifically for this purpose.*

This idea is explained in Maaseh Oreg on the Mishnah, regarding the Mishnah's reference to the words "*emet l'amito*, the truth of the truth." What is the difference between that and ordinary truth? To explain, he shares a story of the Baal Shem Tov:

A person once entrusted money in the hands of a friend, and the friend died. When the depositor approached the heirs, they denied any knowledge of the incident. As per Torah law in a case where there are no witnesses, they swore in Rabbinical Court that they had no knowledge of the matter and were excused from the case.

However, it was common knowledge that the depositor was right. Everyone knew him to be an honest man, and they also knew that the heirs inherited a sum of money far beyond their father's means.

They came to the Baal Shem Tov and asked: The Rabbinic judge followed the ruling of Torah, the Torah of truth. If so, G-d surely upholds and supports that very decision. No doubt, it reflects the truth. But how does it concur with the reality?...

The Baal Shem Tov responded: In a previous incarnation,

the depositor owed a similar sum to the deceased or to his children. So the ruling was just. The money does, in fact, belong to them.

Maaseh Oreg thereby explains the term “truth of the truth.” Sometimes, a ruling doesn’t seem correct from our earthly perspective, but it does, in fact, mete out justice, in light of details which are not known to us in this world.

This story is about a material item—there is a possibility that you will know, without a shadow of a doubt, that you do not owe someone money, when in fact, according to the truth of truth you actually do. If so, the same can be true on a spiritual level. The true truth is that based on a previous incarnation, or due to some circumstances that only your soul is aware of, you owe a spiritual debt to your friend. And you are therefore being dispatched to fill that debt.

Shabbat Parshat Mishpatim 1959  
Toras Menachem 5719 vol. 2 pg. 67

*The Rebbe’s point is that the task you are faced with might indeed not be what you are inclined to do. You may be very shy or very intellectual and you don’t see yourself as being active in community affairs. However, there is something else you need to take into account.*

*The soul of a person comes into this world with a specific mission in life. If you don’t manage to fulfill your mission, you can be resent into the world to complete your task. Sometimes, a soul comes into this world for the sake of a single deed—to do a favor for another person. So even if you think that you don’t have the necessary talents, don’t pass over the opportunity. This could be your life’s mission.*

*The Baal Shem Tov taught: A person can live through an entire lifetime, just to do a favor for another person.*

## Source 5

Hayom Yom 5 Iyar

The Alter Rebbe received the following teaching from the righteous Rabbi Mordechai, who had heard it from the Baal Shem Tov: A soul may descend to this world and live seventy or eighty years, in order to do a Jew a material favor, and certainly a spiritual one.

רבינו הזקן קבל מרבי  
מרדכי הצדיק ששמע  
מהבעל שם טוב: נשמה  
יורדת לעולם הזה  
וחיה שבעים-שמונים  
שנה, כדי לעשות  
טובה ליהודי פעם  
אחת, בגשמיות ובפרט  
ברוחניות

## D. Conclusion

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*On two separate occasions, the Rebbe repeated this famous story about Reb Yosef of Beshenkovich to emphasis that often, we are presented with an opportunity to help another individual in a form that doesn't appeal to us—while in fact, therein lies our purpose. Even if it is uncomfortable, we are obligate to do it.*

### A Story

Based on Pokeach Ivrim pg. 18

Reb Yosef lived in Beshenkovitch. He was no ordinary man. He knew the Talmud virtually by heart and earned the greatest respect from the scholars of his town.

On a visit to the Alter Rebbe in 1804, he was advised, amongst other things: “For the benefit of your soul it is better for you to be a wagon driver than a rabbi.”

Years passed by. In 1814 Reb Yosef was offered the Rabbinate in the town of Lieple. Reb Yosef recalled Reb Shneur Zalman's words some ten years earlier! “It is better for you to be a wagon driver than a rabbi.” He realized that now was the time to fulfill the Rebbe's advice. He refused the offer.

But, how could he become, of all things, a wagon driver now at the age of seventy? Eventually he mustered up enough courage and went to the local wagon station.

“Yes, rabbi,” asked the drivers, “where would you like to travel?”

“I have not come to travel but to learn to become a wagon-driver,” he answered softly. The wagon drivers could not believe their ears. That night Reb Yosef came home dirty and bruised. He found his wife in tears. She had heard of her husband's visit.

Reb Yosef explained the Rebbe's instructions. She told him, "If the Rebbe told you this, you mustn't delay even a day. Tomorrow I will sell my jewelry and you will be able to buy a wagon."

A year passed and Reb Yosef was used to his new lifestyle. One evening he stopped over at a Jewish inn. The director introduced him to Solomon Gamitzki, a friend and employee of the Batchaikov Count. Gamitzki agreed to travel with Reb Yosef.

Reb Yosef said, "Tomorrow morning, G-d willing, we will make our way."

"What time?" asked the visitor.

"After praying," was Reb Yosef's reply.

"At what time?" retorted Gamitzki. "To me it makes no difference whether you pray or not, I need to know when we will travel, to know when to wake up, wash, and eat."

"...And pray," concluded Reb Yosef.

"That I leave for you," said Gamitzki.

When Gamitzki realized Reb Yosef would not leave until 10:00 am, he ordered another coach for 5:00 am.

Gamitzki went to sleep for the night. Shortly after midnight, he awoke bewildered. Someone was crying. He opened his door and saw Reb Yosef sitting on his floor, reading by candlelight and crying. He was reciting the special midnight prayers.

Reb Yosef's crying went deep into his heart. He began recalling his youth, his father, his teacher, the wife and children he had

left when he became non-religious. His entire past opened up before his eyes.

When the night came to its end, Solomon watched Reb Yosef pray, with great devotion. He started to cry. At 5:00, the innkeeper came to Solomon and told him that his coach was ready. But Solomon had decided to travel with Reb Yosef. Hours went by. Reb Yosef was still praying. Solomon, overcome with anguish, went to the innkeeper, borrowed his Tallis and Tefillin, and prayed, too.

Out of his deep remorse, Solomon became sick. For several days, he hovered between life and death. The count sent his own doctor, but the doctor gave up hope.

Reb Yosef remained at Solomon's bedside, guiding him and helping him in his decision to return to his family and Judaism.

Eventually, Solomon was strong enough to leave the inn and Reb Yosef went home. Reb Yosef planned a visit to the Rebbe, Reb Dov Ber, who had succeeded his father, Reb Shneur Zalman, after his passing. He traveled together with other Chasidim to the city of Lubavitch.

One day, while in Lubavitch, Reb Yosef was greatly surprised to meet Solomon. Solomon had resigned from his job with the Count and had now come to Lubavitch to study and be near Reb Dov Ber.

Reb Dov Ber had an interesting announcement for Reb Yosef: "I am appointing you as rabbi of the synagogue on Market Street. You no longer need to be a wagon-driver. My father appeared to me last night and told me that Yosef of Beshenkovitch has fulfilled his purpose."

