



WHAT MOTIVATES MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY?

What does a loan guarantor have to do
with loving our fellow Jews?
And what really lies behind the expression
"All Jews are responsible for one another?"

TEACHER'S MANUAL



JEWISH INSIGHTS

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In this week's Torah portion, we read about Judah taking responsibility and guaranteeing Benjamin's safe return home (Source 1). This episode is the foundation for the Jewish monetary laws of guaranteeing loans (Source 2). Beyond monetary guarantees, there is also a moral responsibility among Jews, where each individual is accountable for the spiritual level of the entire community—"All Jews are guarantors for one another." (Source 3). Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai likens this to a ship where one passenger drills a hole under their seat, endangering all passengers (Source 4). The Ben Ish Chai explains that this collective responsibility is why we confess on Yom Kippur, even for transgressions we did not personally commit. All Jews are one unified body, and we assume responsibility for one another's transgressions (Source 5). This principle also applies to the laws of mitzvah blessings: a person who has already recited a blessing may repeat it for another Jew because they are responsible for each other. (Source 6)

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The Maggid of Mezritch interprets the word "arevim" or responsible, in the sense of sweetness, intertwining, and mutual responsibility: a Jew should feel the sweetness of another Jew, fostering love and connection, which naturally leads to taking responsibility for them.

Sweetness relates to the power of pleasure, the strongest of the soul's faculties.

Examples illustrating the power of pleasure:

1. A person can derive pleasure even from something that causes distress. For instance, fasting on Shabbat because of a dream is permitted because, in this case, the fast brings genuine pleasure. (Source 7)
2. Intellectually, a person is more successful in learning when studying topics or in environments that bring them joy and pleasure. (Sources 8-10)
3. Physically, pleasure can induce tangible changes in the body, as in the case of Vespasian, whose bones expanded from joy upon hearing of his promotion. (Source 11)

The love a Jew has for their fellow Jew should not only stem from intellectual reasoning. Instead, one Jew should delight in the existence of another. When a Jew finds themselves

engaged with different Jews, they should derive joy from it. Thus, they will gladly accede to a request to serve as a financial guarantor.

This is the progression in the Maggid's teaching: When Jews find one another "sweet" and delightful, it fosters "intertwinement" between them based on pleasure. This leads to them serving as a "guarantor" for one another with joy.

Introduction

Mutual responsibility is a fundamental concept in Judaism, obligating every Jew to serve as a guarantor for their fellow. In this lesson, we will explore the origins of this principle in the Biblical narrative of the tribes, examine its legal and moral dimensions, and delve into the spiritual depth revealed through Chassidut.

השיעור לפרשת ויגש

משיחת י"ב תמוז, ה'תשל"א, הנחה בלתי מוגה
תורת מנחם כרך ס"ד עמוד 414 ואילך

[לשמיעת השיחה](#)



2:28 והלאה

A. "For Your Servant Guaranteed The Boy"

Twenty-two years after the fateful conflict between Joseph and his brothers—culminating in Joseph being sold into slavery—Divine Providence orchestrates their reunion, once again testing the brothers' loyalty and unity.

A famine grips the entire world, but Egypt, thanks to Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's interpretation, is the only country prepared for such a crisis. People from all surrounding regions flock to Egypt to buy provisions from the royal storehouses.

In Be'er Sheva, Jacob and his family run out of food. Ten of Jacob's sons set out for Egypt to purchase grain, while Benjamin remains behind under Jacob's watchful protection, fearing, "Lest harm befall him."

Upon their arrival in Egypt, Joseph immediately recognizes his brothers, but they fail to recognize him. He accuses them of being spies sent to scout the land with malicious intent. In their defense, the brothers reveal personal details, explaining, "We come from the land of Canaan. We are twelve brothers; one (Joseph) is gone, and the youngest (Benjamin) is with our father."

Feigning skepticism, Joseph demands proof. He initially proposes that all but one of them remain imprisoned while the lone brother returns home to bring Benjamin to validate their story. He then imprisons only one brother, Simeon, as collateral, and sends the others home with their grain.

Back in Canaan, the brothers recount the events to Jacob. However, Jacob adamantly refuses to send Benjamin, lamenting bitterly, "Joseph is gone, Simon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin?"

But as the famine worsens and the family's supplies dwindle, Judah steps forward, pledging to bring Benjamin back safely. Only then does Jacob reluctantly agree.

Source 1 Genesis 43:8-9

Student's
pg. 1

Judah said to Israel, his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will get up and go, and we will live and not die, both we and you and also our young children.

"I will guarantee him; from my hand you can demand him. If I do not bring him to you and stand him up before you, I will have sinned against you forever."

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו
שְׁלַחָה הַנֶּעַר אִתִּי וְנִקְוָמָה
וְנִלְכָה וְנִחְיֶה וְלֹא נָמוּת גַּם
אֲנַחְנוּ גַם אַתָּה גַם טַפְנוּ.

אֲנֹכִי אֶעֱרָכֶנּוּ מִיָּדִי תִבְקָשׁנוּ
אִם לֹא הִבִּיאֲתִיו אֵלַיךָ וְהִצַּגְתִּיו
לְפָנֶיךָ וְחָטַאתִי לְךָ כָּל הַיָּמִים.

They return to Egypt, this time with Benjamin. Joseph greets them warmly, hosts a meal in their honor, and even distributes gifts to them.

Before they depart, Joseph instructs his servants to secretly place his silver goblet in Benjamin's sack. Shortly after the brothers set out, the steward of Joseph's household pursues them, accusing them: "Why have you stolen my master's silver goblet?"

The brothers vehemently deny the accusation, but after a brief search, the goblet is discovered in Benjamin's sack. Ashamed and distressed, they return to Joseph. He proposes a solution: "The thief will be punished and remain as my servant, while the rest of you may return home in peace to your father."

This moment serves as a renewed test: Have the brothers learned from their past mistakes? Will they take responsibility for their youngest brother, or will they abandon him as they did with Joseph?

Judah steps forward and pleads with Joseph, offering himself as a servant in Benjamin's place. He recounts the events leading up to this moment—how he promised to protect Benjamin and personally guaranteed his safe return to their father.

Genesis 44:30-34

Student's
pg. 1

Now, when I come to your servant, my father, and the boy is not with us, since his soul is bound to the boy's soul, it will happen that when he sees the boy is gone, he will die. Your servants will have brought down the gray head of your servant, our father, in sorrow to the grave.

Your servant took responsibility for the boy from my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will have sinned against my father forever.'

Please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord, and let the boy return with his brothers. How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I cannot bear to see the anguish that would befall my father.

וְעַתָּה כִּבְאִי אֶל עֲבָדֶיךָ אָבִי
וְהַנֶּעֱרַר אֵינָנוּ אֲתָנּוּ וְנַפְשׁוֹ
קְשׁוּרָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ. וְהָיָה כִּרְאוֹתָיו
כִּי אֵין הַנֶּעֱרַר וּמָתָה וְהוֹרִידוּ
עֲבָדֶיךָ אֶת שִׁיבַת עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲבִינוּ
בְּיָגוֹן שְׂאֵלָה.

כִּי עֲבָדֶיךָ עָרַב אֶת הַנֶּעֱרַר מֵעַם
אָבִי לֵאמֹר אִם לֹא אָבִיָּאנוּ
אֵלֶיךָ וְחִטָּאתִי לְאָבִי כָּל הַיָּמִים.

וְעַתָּה יֵשֶׁב נָא עֲבָדֶיךָ תַּחַת
הַנֶּעֱרַר עָבֵד לַאֲדֹנָי וְהַנֶּעֱרַר יַעַל
עִם אָחָיו. כִּי אֵיךְ אֶעֱלֶה אֶל
אָבִי וְהַנֶּעֱרַר אֵינָנוּ אֲתִי פֶן אֶרְאֶה
כָּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִמָּצֵא אֶת אָבִי.

The story concludes with a happy ending. Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers, reunites with them, and asks them to share the news with Jacob that he is alive. He also invites Jacob to come and live in Egypt.

Monetary Guarantees

Beyond the fascinating story we have read and its moral lesson, this narrative also serves as a source for Jewish law: the laws of guarantors.

When a person seeks to borrow money, the lender often requires assurance that the loan will be repaid. This is where a guarantor comes in—a person who commits to fulfilling the borrower's financial obligations if the borrower fails to do so.

What is the basis for one person being able to guarantee the responsibility of another? It comes from this very story, where Judah guarantees that Benjamin will return home safely.

Source 2 Talmud, Bava Batra 173

Student's pg. 2 One who lends money using a guarantor, should not collect payment from the guarantor. If he stipulated that he could collect from whoever he chooses, he may collect from the guarantor.

הַמְלִיחַ אֶת חֲבִירוֹ עַל יָדֵי
עָרֵב, לֹא יִפְרַע מִן הָעָרֵב. וְאִם
אָמַר לוֹ: "עַל מְנַת שְׂאִפְרַע
מִמִּי שְׂאִרְצָה" – יִפְרַע מִן
הָעָרֵב.

Rabbi Huna says: What is the scriptural source for a guarantor? The verse says: I will guarantee him; from my hand you can demand him.

אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: מִנֵּין לְעָרֵב
דְּמִשְׁתַּעְבֵּד? דְּכָתִיב: "אֲנֹכִי
אֶעֱרְבֶנּוּ, מִיָּדִי תִבְקָשׁנוּ".

Moral Responsibility

This law is not limited to financial matters, but includes moral responsibility as well:

Source 3 Leviticus 26:37

The Torah describes the consequences that will befall the Jewish people should they not keep their covenant with G-d:

Student's pg. 2 Each man will stumble over his brother, fleeing as if from the sword, but without a pursuer. You will not be able to stand up against your enemies.

וְכָשְׁלוּ אִישׁ בְּאַחִיו כַּמְּפָנִי
חָרֵב וְרִדְף אֵין וְלֹא תִהְיֶה
לָכֶם תְּקוּמָה לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיכֶם.

Rashi

Student's pg. 2 Stumble over his brother: They will trample each other when attempting to flee with all the commotion and confusion.

וְכָשְׁלוּ אִישׁ בְּאַחִיו.
כְּשִׁירוּצוֹ לָנוּס יִכְשְׁלוּ זֶה
בְּזֶה, כִּי יִבְחָלוּ לָרוּץ.

Student's
pg. 2

Stumble over his brother: A man over the sins of his brother. This teaches us that we are all responsible for one another.

"וְכָשְׁלוּ אִישׁ בְּאַחִיו" – אִישׁ
בְּעוֹן אַחִיו. מִלְמֵד שֶׁכָּל
עֲרֵבִים זֶה בְּזֶה.

The Talmud quotes the verse, "Each man will stumble over his brother" and offers a deeper interpretation. This does not merely mean they will physically stumble upon one another, but rather that they will falter because of another's sins.

In other words, a person cannot claim, "I am doing the right thing, and it does not concern me what my neighbor or another Jew does." The verse teaches that all Jews are responsible for one another.

If one person sins, it becomes the responsibility of others to address and rectify it. If they fail to do so, they themselves will suffer the consequences of the other's wrongdoing.

One Ship, One People

Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai explained this with an analogy:

Source 4 Leviticus Rabbah 4

Student's
pg. 3

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said: This is like people who were sitting on a ship. One of them took a drill and began drilling underneath him. His companions asked him, "What are you doing?" He replied, "Why does it matter to you? I am drilling under my own seat!" They responded, "The water is rising; it will flood the entire ship!"

תָּנִי רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּר יוֹחָאִי: מְשַׁל
לְבָנֵי אָדָם שֶׁהָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִין בְּסִפִּינָה.
נָטַל אֶחָד מֵהֶן מַקְדָּח וְהִתְחִיל קוֹדֵחַ
תַּחְתָּיו. אָמְרוּ לוֹ חֲבֵרָיו: מָה אַתָּה
יוֹשֵׁב וְעוֹשֶׂה? אָמַר לָהֶם: מָה אֲכַפֵּת
לָכֶם? לֹא תַחְתִּי אֲנִי קוֹדֵחַ? אָמְרוּ
לוֹ: שֶׁהַמַּיִם עוֹלִין, מְצִיפִין עָלֵינוּ אֶת
הַסִּפִּינָה!

The Ben Ish Chai poses a powerful question that often comes to mind during the High Holy Days. We are accustomed to reciting the confessions of Yom Kippur as a matter of routine, even though many of the sins listed there are ones we have not committed, and certainly not in the past year! If so, why not change the wording of the confession and remove the sins that a person has not committed?

The Ben Ish Chai suggests:

Source 5 Ben Ish Chai, Ki Tisa 1:A

Student's
pg. 3

It is written in Chesed Lealafim: One must recite all the various sins in the confessional prayers even if they did not commit them, because all Jews are one body and are responsible for each other—especially if he could have protested the sin and instead remained silent.

כָּתַב בְּחֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים: יֵשׁ לֹמֵר כָּל
פְּרָטֵי הַיּוֹדֵי אֵף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין בּוֹ
מִהַדְבָּרִים הַנִּזְכָּרִים בַּיּוֹדֵי, מִפְּנֵי דְכָל
יִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹף אֶחָד הֵם וְכֻלָּם עֲרֻבִים זֶה
לָזֶה, וּבִפְרָט אִם הָיָה בְּיָדוֹ לְמַחֹת וְלֹא
מָחָה דִּנְקָרָא עַל שְׁמוֹ.

The Ben Ish Chai is employing an analogy similar to that of the ship. If the hand sinned, the foot must also repent.

The Talmud teaches us a law that in all mitzvah blessings, a person can fulfill the obligation of their fellow, even if they themselves have already recited the blessing.

Source 6 Talmud Bavli, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 29a

Student's
pg. 3

Ahava, the son of Rabbi Zeira, taught: "Regarding all blessings, even though one has already fulfilled their obligation, they can still fulfill the obligation of another."

תָּנִי אַהֲבָה בְּרִיָּה דְרַבִּי זֵירָא: כָּל
הַבְּרָכוֹת כּוּלָן, אֵף עַל פִּי שְׂיַצָּא —
מוֹצִיא.

Rashi is asked the question: Why? How can one person recite a blessing and fulfill the obligation of another, when the person reciting the blessing is not even obligated to bless? Rashi's answer is:

Rashi

Student's
pg. 3

"Because all of Israel are responsible for one another in the performance of mitzvot."

אֵף עַל פִּי שְׂיַצָּא מוֹצִיא:
שֶׁהָיָה כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרֻבִין
זֶה בְּזֶה לְמִצְוֹת.

•

The concept of mutual responsibility is highly relevant today and forms the foundation of Jewish society in Israel and around the world. When the Jewish people in Israel are under threat, Jews around the world rush to help. Since October 7, Jews in the Diaspora have donated over a billion dollars to support Israeli society!

Even within Israel itself, when communities in the Gaza border area were attacked, people who had no direct connection to those communities, and whose duty it wasn't, left their families behind

and went to defend them and protect them with their own bodies.

The principle that all Jews are responsible for one another has been one of the core values of the Jewish people throughout history.

In this discussion, we will explore a deeper layer to this value.

B. Why Should I Guarantee Someone Else?

>> The Rebbe

Three Meanings of *Arev*

Student's
pg. 4

The Rebbe Rayatz related a teaching that the Alter Rebbe said when he returned from his first trip to Mezeritch about the novelty of the Chassidic approach. This is a brief teaching, in the style the Alter Rebbe was accustomed to in his early years:

"The sages teach that 'all Jews are responsible for each other.' The Hebrew word for responsible, 'arevim,' has three possible meanings: responsibility, intertwinement, and sweetness. This means that we must consider each of our fellow Jews as sweet, intertwined with us, and people that we are responsible for."

ישנה תורה שמביא כבוד קדושת מוריו ומי אדמו"ר בעל השמחה והגאולה בשיחתו האמורה¹, שאמר רבינו הזקן כשחזר בפעם הראשונה מהמגיד ממעזריטש, אודות החידוש של דרך החסידות (וכדרך התורות של רבינו הזקן בימים ההם, בשנים הראשונות, שהיו תורות קצרות בכמות), כפי שנדפסה בדיוקן וזה תוכנה: אמרו רז"ל²: "כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה". והפירוש בזה - מלשון ערבות, תערובת ומתיקות, היינו, כל יהודי צריך חבירו להיות מתוק אצלו, להיות מעורב עמו, ולהיות ערב לו.

Already in his youth, the Alter Rebbe was a community leader. At one point, he decided to go to Mezritch to study Chassidus from the then Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch. He spent several months there, and upon returning home, he shared with his students the new teachings he had learned in Mezritch. One of them was the short teaching we read.

In the early days of Chassidus, the teachings were very concise, yet filled with deep meaning, which was difficult for ordinary people to understand deeply. Over time, Chabad Chassidus began to explain these teachings, elaborating on them and presenting them in a clear and understandable language.

In this talk, the Rebbe explains in depth this short phrase.

1. שיחת י"ב תמוז תש"א ס"ו (סה"ש תש"א ע' 144).
2. שבועות לט, סע"א. וש"נ. הובא בפרש"י עה"ת בחוקותי כו, לז.

Student's The practical meaning of the Sages' teaching in the context of Jewish law is that every Jew is responsible for their fellow Jews.
pg. 4

Every law has a reason, and the reason for this law of mutual responsibility is that all Jews are intertwined.

Student's Moreover, this relationship is not something imposed on us against our will, it is pleasant and sweet to us.
pg. 5

Our responsibility—arvut—is a result of us being intertwined—meuravim—in a sweet—arevut—way.

The Power of Delight

Pleasantness and sweetness are related to the soul's faculty of delight. Delight is the most powerful faculty of our souls. We see this in the fact that even when something is naturally bad and painful for us, if we insist that it is delightful for us then it actually becomes delightful.

Delightful Fasting

This has a practical ramification in Jewish law. We are commanded to enjoy Shabbat and delight in it, and it is therefore generally forbidden to fast on Shabbat. However, if a person wishes to fast because they are distressed by a negative dream they are allowed to fast. This is not considered contrary to the requirement to delight in Shabbat because this person will be

והענין בזה: הפירוש ש"כל ישראל ערביין זה בזה" כפי שנוגע להלכה בפועל - הוא ענין של ערבות, שכל אחד מישראל "ערב" לחבירו.

אמנם, לכל הלכה יש טעם, ובכן, הטעם לענין הערבות הוא - בגלל שכל ישראל מעורבים זה בזה.

ויתירה מזה, שענין זה אינו באופן של הכרח, בעל כורחו כו', אלא התערבות היא באופן שמציאותו של חבירו נעימה ועריבה (מלשון עריבות ומתיקות) אצלו.

ובפרטיות יותר: ענין העריבות והמתיקות קשור עם כוח התענוג שבנפש, שהוא הכוח הכי חזק כפשוטו בכוחות הנפש - כפי שרואים במוחש, שגם כאשר ישנו ענין שמצד עצמו הוא בלתי רצוי עבורו ומצער אותו, הנה כאשר מתקש שרצונו להתענג מזה, הרי זה נעשה אצלו תענוג בפועל.

ונפקא מינה להלכה בפועל - בנוגע לתענית חלום בשבת, ש"מותר להתענות תענית חלום בשבת... לפי שאין כאן ביטול עונג שבת לגמרי, כיון שנפשו עגומה עליו בשביל חלומו אם לא יתענה, ואם יתענה בטוח הוא שיקרע גזר דינו, אם כן הרי התענית הזה תענוג הוא לו".³

3. שו"ע אדה"ז אור"ח סרפ"ח ס"ג. וש"נ.

distressed if they don't fast, and is certain that fasting will revoke the decree against them. Thus, the fast is actually pleasurable for this person.

Occasionally people dream unpleasant dreams at night that foretell sorrow, illness, or death, G-d forbid, or other dreams that cause a gloomy feeling the next morning. This can cause people great distress, since some dreams do come true, as they are termed "one-sixtieth of prophecy."

In the teachings of the Sages, there are several pieces of advice on what to do after such a dream:

There is a special prayer for dreams, which we recite during the priestly blessing.

There is a ritual called "ameliorating the dream," in which the dreamer asks three people, who wish him well, to say that the dream is a good one. This has the power to turn the dream into something positive.

The third piece of advice is a "dream fast." A fast can inspire a person to repent, and through the fast, their sins will be atoned for, causing the bad judgment foretold in the dream to be annulled.

The Talmud says that dream fasts are effective only when observed on the same day as the bad dream. The question arises: What should a person do if they dream a bad dream on Friday night? Should they fast on Shabbat? It is forbidden to fast on Shabbat!

Source 7 Shulchan Aruch Harav 288:3

However, it is permissible to observe a dream fast on Shabbat if the bad dream occurred on that day, since the fast is beneficial for nullifying the decree, if done on the day of the dream. The Sages permitted such fasts for the purpose of annulling the bad judgment. Furthermore, this does not constitute the complete nullification of the joy of Shabbat, since the person's soul is distressed by the dream unless they fast. And if they fast, they are certain that their bad judgment will be annulled. Therefore, this fast is considered pleasurable for the person.

אָבֵל מִתֵּר לְהַתְעִנּוֹת תַּעֲנִית חֵלּוּם
בְּשִׁבְתָּ כְּשֶׁחָלַם בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם, שְׂיִפָּה
תַּעֲנִית לְחֵלּוּם לְבָטֵל הַגִּזְרֵי דִין,
כְּאִשׁ לְנִעֲרָתָהּ, אִם מִתַּעֲנָה בּוֹ
בַּיּוֹם, וְהִתִּירוּ לוֹ חֻקִּים בְּשִׁבְלִי
שְׂיִקְרַע גִּזְרֵי דִינּוֹ. וְעוֹד, לְפִי שְׂאִין
כָּאֵן בְּטוֹל עֲנָג שְׁכֶת לְגִמְרִי, כִּינּוֹן
שֶׁנִּפְשׁוֹ יַעֲגוּמָה עָלָיו בְּשִׁבְלִי חֵלּוּמוֹ
אִם לֹא יִתַּעֲנָה, וְאִם יִתַּעֲנָה בְּטוֹחַ
הוּא שְׂיִקְרַע גִּזְרֵי דִינּוֹ – אִם כֵּן
הָרִי הַתַּעֲנִית הַזֶּה תַּעֲנוּג הוּא לוֹ.

>> The Rebbe

Student's pg. 6 As this is a law in "the Torah of truth," it certainly isn't a phony pleasure—it is defined by Torah as a true form of pleasure. Since the person decided that if they don't fast they will feel distressed, and if they do fast they will feel pleasure, their decision makes the fast a real pleasure.

Digging Deeper

Student's pg. 6 We find the same concept with people who are engaged in intellectual matters. The Talmud teaches that "a person should always study parts of Torah that their heart desires," and this is cited as a matter of law in the Code of Jewish Law. Since this person desires to study this specific Torah subject and at this specific Yeshivah, they will be successful in their studies. Even though success in study depends on the faculty of intellect, the mind can only achieve this success when it enjoys its study subject, place of study, and teacher. When this pleasure is present the student will be able to understand their studies better, deeper, and easier. Pleasure has such an effect even on the mind, and its effect on the emotions is even greater. People love the things that bring them pleasure, and are afraid of things that bring them distress, and the effect is even stronger on the other faculties.

Student's pg. 7

וכיון שזהו דין ב"תורת אמת", הרי מובן שאין זה עונג מרומה, אלא עונג אמיתי על פי אמיתתה של תורה, והיינו, דכיון שהחליט שאם לא יתענה יצטער, ואם יתענה יהיה לו תענוג, הרי זה נעשה בפועל עונג לאמיתתו.⁴

וכן מצינו בנוגע לעוסקים בענינים שכליים - כמובא בגמרא⁵: "לעולם ילמוד אדם תורה במקום שלבו חפץ",⁶ דכיון שמתענג ורוצה ללמוד בישיבה זו ובענין זה כו', אזי יצליח בלימודו, והיינו, שאף על פי שהצלחה בלימוד תלויה בכוח שכלו, הנה ההצלחה בשכלו תלויה בענין התענוג, שכאשר מתענג בלימוד מסכת זו, בישיבה זו ואצל ראש ישיבה זה (ככל הפרטים שבדבר), אזי יבין באופן טוב ועמוק יותר, ובנקל יותר; ועל אחת כמה וכמה שהעונג משפיע על המדות שבלב, שאוהב דבר שמתענג ממנו, וירא מענין שהוא היפך התענוג שלו; ועל אחת כמה וכמה בנוגע לשאר הכחות שבנפש.⁷

7. ראה גם שיחת י"ב תמוז תשכ"ח סי"ב (תו"מ חנ"ג ע' 206). וש"נ.

4. ראה גם שיחת י"ב תמוז תשכ"ח סי"ב (תו"מ חנ"ג ע' 206). וש"נ.

5. עבודה זרה יט, א.

6. כמובא להלכה בשולחן ערוך יורה דעה סוסר"מ.

Source 8 Talmud, Avodah Zarah 19a

Student's "For he desires only G-d's Torah:" Rav says:
pg. 7 "One should always study parts of Torah that their heart desires."

"כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת ה' חֲפָצוֹ" (תהלים א, ב), אָמַר רַב: אֵין אָדָם לומֵד תּוֹרָה אֲלֵא מִמָּקוֹם בְּתוֹרָה שֶׁבּוֹ לְבוֹ חֲפֵץ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת ה' חֲפָצוֹ", בְּתוֹרָה שֶׁבָּהּ הוּא חֲפֵץ לְלַמּוֹד.

Rashi

Student's **Parts of Torah their heart desires:**
pg. 7 The teacher should teach subjects the student desires, for otherwise, the student will not retain it.

מִמָּקוֹם שֶׁלְבוֹ חֲפֵץ: לֹא יִשְׁנָה לוֹ רַבּוֹ אֲלֵא מִסֵּכֶת שֶׁהוּא מְבַקֵּשׁ הֵימָנוּ, שְׂאֵם יִשְׁנָה לוֹ מִסֵּכֶת אַחֶרֶת אֵין מִתְקַיֶּמֶת, לְפִי שֶׁלְבוֹ עַל תַּאוּתוֹ.

The Talmud teaches that a person should study topics that interest them because if they are forced to learn a subject they find uninteresting, the knowledge will not endure. Conversely, when studying a tractate they are interested in, they will learn more effectively.

The Rebbe often emphasized this principle in advice given to various individuals. Below are two letters addressing this topic:

Source 9 Igrot Kodesh vol. 9, p. 257

Student's Regarding what you write about forgetting
pg. 7 your studies, you should learn what your heart desires, and when you tire of it, switch to another subject. It is also worthwhile to memorize Mishnah, but do not exert your memory too much; allow it to rest. All this will certainly improve your memory.

מָה שְׁכוּחַת אוֹדוֹת הַשְּׂכָחָה – הִנֵּה יִלְמַד בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁלְבוֹ חֲפֵץ, וְכִשְׂיִרְגִּישׁ עֵינָיו וְיִגַּע הוּא, אֲזִי לְהַחֲלִיף הַלְמוּד לְסוּג אַחֵר, הֵינּוּ לְגִרְסָא, [מִ]חֲסִידוֹת לְנִגְלָה וְכִיּוּצָא בְּזָה. וְכֵן כְּדֹאֵי שֶׁיִּלְמַד מְשֻׁנִּיּוֹת בְּעַל פֶּה, וְגַם בְּזָה לֹא יִגַּע אֶת כַּח הַזְכָּרוֹן כִּי אִם יִתֵּן לוֹ לְנוּחַ. וּבִדְאִי עַל יְדֵי כָּל הַנֶּ"ל יִתְחַזַּק כַּח הַזְכָּרוֹן.

The Rebbe advises studying a subject that genuinely interests the individual. If, after some time, the interest in that topic fades, they should switch to another subject. The key is to always study something they find engaging and enjoyable.

Source 10 Igrot Kodesh. vol. 18, p. 7

Student's Regarding what you write about sleepiness
pg. 8 during your studies, one of the solutions is studying what your heart desires, and changing topics every so often; meaning, not to spend hours and hours on a single topic.

וּבִמָּה שְׁכוּחַת אוֹדוֹת הַמַּחֲוֵשׁ, שֶׁנוֹפְלֶת עָלֶיךָ תִּרְדָּמָה כו' – אַחַת הָעֲצוֹת לְזָה הִיא הַלְמוּד בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁלְבוֹ חֲפֵץ, וְשִׁנוּי הַלְמוּד מִזְמַן לְזְמַן, זֹאת אוֹמֶרֶת שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה הַלְמוּד שְׁעוֹת רְצוּפוֹת בְּעֵינֵי אֶחָד אוֹ בְּסִגְנוֹן אֶחָד.

>> The Rebbe

Bone Expansion

Student's
pg. 8

The feeling of pleasure affects not only our intangible faculties, but even the physical body. The Talmud relates a story to this effect about the Roman emperor Vespasian—when he heard news that brought him pleasure the bones of his feet expanded, as the verse states, “good news fattens the bone.” This growth doesn’t happen in an openly visible form like growth of the hair and nails which is quickly observable. It isn’t even as visible as the growth of the flesh caused by eating and drinking. Nevertheless, “good news” that brings a person pleasure “fattens the bone,” causing the bones of the feet to expand.

ועד שהתענוג שבנפש פועל (לא רק על הכוחות הרוחניים, אלא) גם על גשמיות הגוף - כמסופר בגמרא⁸ אודות “אספסיינוס קיסר”, שכאשר שמע דבר שגמר לו תענוג, אזי נעשה אצלו הרחבה בעצם שברגל - “שמועה טובה תדשן עצם”⁹, והיינו, שאף על פי שענין הגידול אינו ניכר בגלוי כל כך בעצם שבגוף האדם, ואין זה כמו שערות וציפורניים, שרואים הגידול שלהם במשך זמן קצר, ואפילו לא כמו הגידול בבשר הגוף על ידי אכילה ושתייה וכו’, אף על פי כן, “שמועה טובה” - דבר משמח של תענוג - “תדשן עצם”, שנעשה הרחבה בעצם של הרגל!

Source 11 Talmud, Gittin 56b (Hebrew translation)

In the period leading up to the destruction of the Second Temple, the Roman army, under the command of General Vespasian, conquered most of the Land of Israel and laid a tight siege on Jerusalem, cutting off all movement in and out of the city.

Within the walls, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai lead the central faction of the Jewish community, including the sages of Israel, who vehemently opposed the Great Revolt against the Romans and advocated for reconciliation as the only path to avoid mass slaughter and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Opposing him was his nephew, Abba Sikra, at the head of the extremist and violent Sicarii group, which spared no effort in forcing the Jews of Jerusalem into war against the Romans.

At a certain point, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai met with his nephew, who began to realize the wisdom of his uncle's stance. Together, they planned a meeting between Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai and Vespasian, the commander of the Roman forces in Israel.

After an intricate operation filled with deception and risks, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai finally appeared before Vespasian and spoke with him. During their conversation, a messenger arrived from Rome with startling news for Vespasian:

8. פרק הניזקין, גיטין נו, ב.
9. משלי טו, ז.

Student's In the midst of their conversation, a messenger
pg. 8 arrived from Rome and said to Vespasian: "Rise, for the emperor has died, and the noblemen of Rome plan to appoint you as their leader and make you the next emperor."

Student's At that moment, Vespasian was wearing only
pg. 9 one shoe. When he tried to put on the other one, it would not fit. He then attempted to remove the shoe he was already wearing, but it would not come off. He exclaimed: "What is this?"

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai reassured him: "Do not be distressed or troubled, for good news has reached you. As it is written: 'good news fattens the bone' (Proverbs 15:30). Your feet have grown fatter out of joy and satisfaction."

Vespasian then asked: "What is the remedy? What must I do to put on my shoe?"

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai replied: "Have someone with whom you are displeased pass before you, as it is written: 'A broken spirit dries the bones' (Proverbs 17:22)." Vespasian followed this advice, and his shoe went on his foot.

תוף כְּדֵי שִׁיחָתָם שֶׁל אֶסְפָּסִינוּס
קִיסָר וְרָבֵן יוֹחָנָן בָּא שְׁלִיחַ
אֵלָיו מֵרֹמָי.

אָמַר לוֹ הַשְּׁלִיחַ: קוּם, שְׁמַת
הַקִּיסָר, וּמִתְפַּנִּים אוֹתָם
הַשּׁוֹבֵי רוֹמֵי לְהוֹשִׁיבָה בְּרֹאשׁ
וּלְעֲשׂוֹתָהּ קִיסָר.

בְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה הָיָה אֶסְפָּסִינוּס
נָעוּל נָעַל אַחַת. רָצָה לְנָעַל אֶת
הָאַחֶרֶת – לֹא נִכְנְסָה לְרַגְלוֹ.
רָצָה לְחַלֵּץ אֶת הַנָּעוּל הָאַחֶרֶת
שֶׁהָיָה נָעוּל בָּהּ, לֹא יָצָאָה.
אָמַר: מָה זֹאת?

אָמַר לוֹ רָבֵן יוֹחָנָן: לֹא תִצְטָעַר
וְתִתְמָה, כִּי שְׂמוּעָה טוֹבָה בָּאָה
לָךְ, שְׁנֵאָמַר: "שְׂמוּעָה טוֹבָה
תִּדְשֵׁן עֲצָם" וְשִׁמְנֶת מִחֲמַת
נַחַת. וְשֵׁאל: אֵלֵּא מָה תִּקְנֶתוּ –
מָה עָלֶי לְעֲשׂוֹת כְּדֵי לְחַלֵּץ אֶת
הַנָּעוּל? אָמַר לוֹ: שְׂיָבֹא אָדָם
שֶׁלֹּא נֹחַה דְּעִתָּךְ מִמֶּנּוּ וְיַעֲבֹר
לִפְנֶיךָ שְׁנֵאָמַר: "וְרוּחַ נִכְאָה
תִּכְבֹּשׁ גֶּרֶם (- עֲצָם)". עֲשֵׂה כֵן,
וְנִכְנְסָה רַגְלוֹ.

>> The Rebbe

Sweetness Makes Us Intertwined

Student's Our relationship with our fellow Jewss shouldn't
pg. 9 only be defined by love—an emotion—and an intellectual appreciation of our fellow's personal state and feelings. Rather, the very existence of our fellow should be pleasurable and enjoyable to us, and this attitude will then automatically translate into intellect and emotions, to whatever degree needed.

ובנוגע לענייננו: היחס של יהודי אחד לחבירו הוא לא רק באופן שאוהב את חבירו, שזוהי מדה שבלב, ולא רק שמבין במוח שבראש את מעמדו ומצבו ורגשי לבו וכו', אלא מציאותו של חבירו צריכה להיות נעימה ועריבה אצלו; ואז נמשך הדבר בדרך ממילא גם בשכלו וברגש הלב ככל הדרוש כו'.

This way, our intertwinement with our fellow Jews is not something we feel forced into, that because we were made a part of the Jewish people we are involuntarily intertwined with them. It won't be just a fact of life that doesn't influence us, or something we feel because we are commanded to "love our fellow like ourselves," or something we intellectually appreciate as a result of our belonging to the "holy nation." The intertwinement will be something much deeper, beyond intellectual comprehension—a sweetness and pleasure from the very core of our being.

ואז הנה גם התערובת בין יהודי אחד לחבירו אינה ענין שנעשה בעל-כרחו, דכיון שהטילוהו בין ששים ריבוא בני ישראל הרי הוא מעורב עמהם, או (אפילו אם אין זה בעל-כרחו, הרי זה) על כל פנים באופן של "מהיכי תיתי" [=אין לזה חשיבות], מבלי שיהיה נוגע ואיכפת לו, או שזהו רק מצד הציווי "ואהבת לרעך כמוך"¹⁰, או מצד ההבנה וההשגה שכולם שייכים לאותו "גוי קדוש"¹¹ אלא יתירה מזה: זהו ענין שלמעלה מהשכל, ענין של עריבות ומתיקות, שקשור עם התענוג שבנפש.

Before the establishment of the Chassidic movement, there were clear divisions within the Jewish community. There was the scholarly elite, and there were the common folk. They had separate synagogues, different schools for their children, and they rarely interacted or intermarried.

The Chassidic movement broke down these barriers and connected the different groups. The hidden tzadikim (righteous individuals) would wear simple clothing and mingle with the common people. They inspired and strengthened them, bridging the gap between the classes.

Chassidut taught that all of us—the greatest Torah scholar and the simplest Jew—are brothers, with one Father in Heaven. It showed the great scholar how to enjoy and cherish the company of a simple Jew, to see their virtues, and to learn valuable lessons from them.

Chassidut teaches that the first meaning of the concept that all Jews are responsible for one another is that one Jew should be sweet and pleasant to another.

10. קדושים יט, יח.
11. יתרו יט, ג.

Student's
pg. 10

The teaching of the Alter Rebbe is structured, from the top down. The first meaning offered for arvut is “sweetness,” and this leads to the second meaning of intertwined, out of pleasure and enjoyment. Then when we are instructed to express responsibility for our fellow and “guarantee” them—the third meaning of arvut—we do so happily and gladly. This entire chain works because the first step is the “sweetness” of our fellow Jews.

וזהו סדר הענינים בתורת רבינו
הזקן הנ"ל - מלמעלה למטה - שמצד
הענין ש"ערבין זה בזה" לפי הפירוש
הראשון, מלשון עריבות, אזי נעשה
גם ענין התערובת מתוך תענוג [כשם
שכח התענוג עצמו חודר ופועל עירוב
כל הענינים שלו, שהכוח הכי עליון
פועל ברגל הענין ש"תדשן עצם"], ואז,
כשאומרים לו להיות "ערב" לחבירו,
הרי הוא עושה זאת בשמחה וטוב לבב.
וכל זה - בגלל שההתחלה היא מהפירוש
הראשון, מלשון עריבות ונעימות.

After a Jew internalizes that another Jew is "sweet" to them, it naturally follows that they will not resist mingling with Jews from different backgrounds or economic statuses, as they genuinely enjoy their company. When Jews love one another and take pleasure in each other's presence, they are certainly happy to be "responsible" for one another—both morally and financially.

משיחת י"ב תמוז, ה'תשל"א, הנחה בלתי מוגה
תורת מנחם כרך ס"ד עמוד 414 ואילך

Story - The Jewish Heart Says So

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In the Ukrainian city of Kiev, over 100 years ago a few days before Pesach, a couple of kids were playing in a field, when they suddenly came across the body of a dead child lying in a cave. The poor child's hands were tied behind him and his body bore signs of mutilation. It was quickly determined that the victim was a 12-year-old kid who had vanished from his home 12 days earlier.

Jew-haters quickly jumped at the opportunity, claiming that the Jews had murdered him in order to mix his blood into their matzos. Even as recently as a century ago, blood libels were very serious matters—and in this situation, the whole old lie was stirred up anew. A Jewish “suspect” by the name of Mendel Beilis, a brick factory supervisor, was quickly found.

Somebody claimed (falsely, of course), that he had seen Beilis in the area running after the child. Mr. Beilis was arrested and a lot of unrest broke out. The funeral of the child turned into a giant anti-Semitic rally, and at the burial, leaflets were distributed calling for riots against the Jews.

Anti-Semitic priests started inciting the masses in every city and town that the Jews murder Christians to use their blood. It became clear that if Beilis, G-d forbid, was found guilty in the lad's murder, there would be pogroms in every Russian city.

At the time, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn (the Rebbe Rashab, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, 1860-1920), got involved in this case. The Rebbe wanted one of the best attorneys in Russia, a Jewish man by the name of Oscar Gruzenberg, to take it upon himself to represent Mendel Beilis and essentially defend the entire Jewish Nation. But Gruzenberg wasn't so quick to accept the mission.

The Rebbe Rashab sent his son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn (1880-1950) (who in 1920 would become the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe), along with another chasid to meet with Gruzenberg sending along a personal letter in which he asked him to accept the defense work.

Mr. Gruzenberg accepted the delegation with great respect. But when they told him that they had come on a mission from the Lubavitcher Rebbe with regards to the Beilis affair, he became deathly silent and he told them that the situation was very serious.

And then they gave him the Rebbe's letter.

Mr. Gruzenberg read it and became very emotional. He stood up and paced back and forth in his office, lost in thought. After some time, he said to them, "My Yiddishe hartz (Jewish heart) tells me that I must get involved in the matter with all my might. But on the other hand, my healthy intellect tells me that with me being on the defense team, it could make the general situation worse because the justice authorities will also select judges with a history of persecuting Jews."

But in the end, Gruzenberg agreed to accept the mission upon himself.

The rabbi of Moscow at the time, Rabbi Yaakov Mazah, who descended from a Chabad family, took it upon himself together with a group of rabbis and investigators, to assist the lawyers to prove from the Talmud and Kabbalah that Jews were bound by a strict prohibition to not ingest even animal blood, how much more so human blood, G-d forbid.

But the prosecution brought "experts" of their own to try to prove from the same Talmud what the Jews really thought of Christians, etc.

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One such “expert” was a Catholic priest (who, at the time, it turns out, had already been accused of blackmail) from the city of Tashkent named Justinas Pranaitis. Despite the fact that he could not read Hebrew or Aramaic and whose anti-Semitic book, *The Talmud Unmasked*, was largely plagiarized from earlier such books, he came along and said that he had convincing “proof” from the Talmud about what the Jews “really” thought about the gentiles.

For example, the Talmud (Tractate Yevamot 61a) actually does quote Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai’s comment on the verse in Yechezkel which says, “Atem Adam, You are human”—on which Rabbi Shimon comments, “You are called human and idol worshippers are not called human.”

Quoting that, the priest turned to the judge and said: “If the Jews don’t consider us to be human, they certainly can slaughter us and mix our blood into their matzah!” That argument was shortly heard throughout the world, and even the rabbinical delegation led by Rabbi Mazah could not find an intellectually satisfying response.

So one day, Rabbi Mazah got a letter from the legendary Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin, in which Rabbi Shapiro wrote that he had an explanation that would satisfy the objections of even the judge. Rabbi Shapiro explained that the “min hamedaber,” the “species of speakers,” (a reference to human beings, has four names in the Torah: adam, ish, geveir and enosh, similar to how humans have several names in English: man, person, human being and Homo Sapiens.

Then, Rabbi Shapiro added something interesting in his letter: Each of those four names has a singular and plural form—except for “adam.” One ish, two ishim; one enosh, two anashim; one geveir, two gvarim—but “adam” has no plural form. In Hebrew, you don’t say “two adamim.”

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Rabbi Shapiro explained that the word “adam” (man, or human) symbolizes the fact that all humans come from one single human (Adam, the first man), and that everyone feels that they are part of the same body. Everyone feels that the other is a part of him or her, part of his or her own flesh—and that this is only seen in the Jewish Nation, which collectively form one pillar.

When a Jew like Mendel Beilis is accused of murder, every Jew wherever he may be feels as if he is personally sitting on the bench of the accused. But with other nationalities, you don’t find such solidarity: a Russian citizen will not be beside himself if he hears that there is a Russian at the other end of the world with nothing to eat. But go to a Jew and tell him that there’s a Jew in China who is unable to celebrate Passover, he immediately asks what he can do to help that Jew.

Student's pg. 13 The concept of one nation being like one human being is found in the Jewish Nation—and therefore, “You [the plural *atem*, not the singular *atah*] are called *adam*.” The name “*adam*” expresses the unity of the Jewish Nation—but not, G-d forbid, that the nations of the world are not human.

Key Points:

Student's pg. 13 • Judah's *guarantee* for Benjamin's safety teaches us the legal principle of responsibility between a borrower and his guarantor.

• There is also a moral responsibility among all parts of the Jewish nation: each individual is responsible for the spiritual state of the entire community—“All Jews are responsible for one another.”

• This principle explains why, during the Yom Kippur confession, we confess sins committed by society as a whole and why one person can recite a blessing on behalf of another. Everyone is intertwined and responsible for each other.

• The Maggid of Mezritch highlights that the word “*areivim*” (guarantors) has three meanings: sweetness, intertwinement, and responsibility. Every Jew should find another Jew “sweet,” feel intertwined with them, and act as their guarantor.

• The Rebbe explains that these ideas are interconnected:

• It begins with the power of pleasure, the strongest force in the soul, capable of influencing the mind and even causing physical changes.

• When a Jew trains themselves to take pleasure in the existence of another Jew, they will naturally enjoy engaging with them and will willingly take on financial or moral responsibility for them.

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Takeaway:

The path to deepening mutual responsibility among us does not begin by convincing others but by working on ourselves—to see the sweetness in others and find joy in connecting with another Jew. From this place, we can always be of help to them.