



From the desk of
MORDECHAI MALKA
 Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel
 Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Chukat

HAMELECH

Born to Work

“This is the Torah: A man who dies in a tent...”
 (19:14)

Says Reish Lakish: Words of Torah endure only in a person who sacrifices himself for them! (Berachot 63b).

These days, everyone wants things the easy way. One, two, press a button and it's all ready. Even in Ruchniyot. People want the Daf Yomi Shiur in ten minutes, the two-minute dvar Torah, etc. But the rule is: easy come, easy-go. Did you ever notice that those who win the lottery do not usually stay rich? They tend to squander their money. Those who get rich quick often get poor even quicker. Both in ruchniyut and gashmiyut, that which is acquired with hard work is lasting.

Says R' Elazar: Every man was created to toil... with his mouth... in Torah!

Rava says: Everyone must toil. Fortunate is he whose toil is in Torah! (Sanhedrin 99b)

Hashem made man in a way that he must toil. That is how he feels fulfilment. Those who do “nothing” all day, become destructive. The only way to be constructive is to keep busy. If someone does not toil in Torah, he will have to

work hard at securing for himself means of physical survival. The only way to accomplish is to toil (Megillah 6b).

Moshe Worked Hard

Do you think that it was so easy for Moshe to learn Torah? Moshe ascended to the Heavens and the angels put up a fight. “What is *he* doing here?!” they protested. “Give Torah to the Heavens!” they proclaimed.

Moshe was so scared that they would burn him! They were made of fire, after all! Moshe grabbed ahold of the Kisei Hakavod for dear life! Finally, they acquiesced and allowed Moshe to take the Torah to the Yidden.

Moshe told Yisrael, “Do you know how hard it was for me to get the Torah for you?! I was there for forty days and forty nights, not eating nor drinking. I gave my all for Torah!

Toil is not only for Torah. It is for all mitzvot. Rav Pappa asked Abaye: Why is it that Hashem performed miracles for earlier generations but not for ours? It cannot be due to the level of learning because...

Abaye responded, “Earlier ones gave up their all for the sake of Kiddush Hashem...”



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Immerse for Safety

Rabbi D. C. Pinto heard the following story from Mrs. B. herself. Mrs. B. lived in South Africa. There was no kosher mikveh in her city of residence. Once a month, this righteous woman would fly on an airplane to a city which had one. She did that for years so that she and her husband would be pure before Hashem.

On one of her visits to that other city, she took care of her business and boarded the plane for the return flight. That plane crashed on a tall mountain in the middle of the forest. Everyone aboard died except for that woman. But she was stranded on a mountaintop. It was freezing cold and wolves were howling. Then she actually saw a pack of wolves approaching. They looked hungry. She turned to Hashem and said, "You did not have me die in the plane crash just so that the wolves would have some fresher meat, did You?! Please, in the merit of the mitzvah of kedushah and taharah, please save me from the wolves, as You have guaranteed that people who go on a mitzvah mission are not harmed!"

Then she took her towel out of her handbag and wrapped herself in it. The wolves came so close as to rub against the towel but did not touch the woman. One by one, each wolf came to attack, but the mikveh towel provided miraculous

protection and each wolf just rubbed against the towel and ran away!

The woman remained alive until emergency help arrived. They could not believe that she was alive.

Effort for Mitzvot

Mitzvot which are done even when lives were at risk, remained with us. That is why, for example, many more Jews perform *brit milah* than *tefillin*. (Shabbat 130a)

When we said in Shema, "*uvechol nafshecha*", we are prepared to give up our lives for Hashem and His Torah, if the situation would call for that. We also must be prepared to handle minor inconveniences! Sometimes people are willing to give up their life, because that is a big deal and a one-time thing. But a minor inconvenience is hard for them to endure.

We should try to do mitzvot with at least as much enthusiasm as evildoers do *aveirot*! (Chatam Sofer)

There are certain distinct mitzvot which earn for a person reward in both worlds. Among them is waking up early to get to Shul even before starting time. What is so great about that? Because it is hard! To get to Shul on time is hard. To get there early is even harder.



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Long Trip

Ben Hei Hei says: The harder the mitzvah is to do, the more reward Hashem will give you.

A donkey driver said to Hillel: We have it much better than you. You come all the way from Bavel to be *oleh regel*. I just roll out of bed and I live right next to Yerushalayim.

Hillel was silent. Later on he asked, "How much do you charge for a ride from here to Imaum?"

"One dinar."

"And from here to Lod?"

"Two dinarim."

"And from here to Keisori?"

"Three."

"It seems that for a longer journey, you make more money."

"That's right."

Said Hillel, "My feet are no worse off than your donkey's! If he gets paid according to the length of the journey, so do I."

Get Rich Slow

Says R' Yishmael: If you learned Torah in your youth, do not say, "Now I am too old to learn." If you learned Torah when you were wealthy, do not sit idle when you are poor. If you learned Torah when you had all you needed, do not

abandon Torah just because you are hungry... for better is one time with difficulty than one hundred times when it is easy. (Avot de R' Natan, chap. 3)

This applies to *ruchniyot* and *gashmiyot* alike. How do you get rich? Do a lot of business and deal honestly. Also, pray. (Nidah 70b) There are no shortcuts. Do you want to earn money fast and easy? Then you'll lose it just as fast and just as easily. Want it to last? You have to put in effort. (Malbim to Iyov 5:7)

Effort Pays Off

Rabbi Yitzchak dealt with precious gems. One particular gem aroused the interest of the local governor. He wanted it for his pagan worship. They were together on a boat and Rabbi Yitzchak understood that the governor would apply much pressure in an attempt to acquire the gem. So Rabbi Yitzchak took a preemptive measure and arranged a meeting on the deck. Rabbi Yitzchak took out the gem and began admiring it, holding it up to the sun and then "accidentally" dropped it into the sea. The governor was fuming mad. But R' Yitzchak was overjoyed. He lost the gem but received a much more valuable one – after many years of marriage, Hashem granted him a son who would one day illuminate the world for all future generations. He named the boy Shlomo.



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We know him as “Rashi” – an acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki.

Close the Store

Rabbi Isseral had a material shop. He would always close up on Friday at noon so that he would have plenty of time to get ready for Shabbat.

One Friday, a wealthy merchant came and prepared to place a large order. He measured all sorts of different material, the most expensive ones in the shop. He was taking his time, comparing, taking out, rolling out, rolling up, putting back etc.

At noon, Reb Isseral announced, “I’m closing now.”

The customer said, “I’m almost finished. You have a big order here; you don’t want to lose it.”

Reb Isseral said, “Please step outside. I am closing now.”

The customer said, “If I leave now, I am not returning.”

“That’s fine with me. I need to get ready for Shabbat.”

Hashem rewarded Reb Isseral. He had a baby boy and named him Moshe. That Moshe grew up to be Reb Moshe Isserals – the famed Rema, whose comments adorn the Shulchan Aruch and

guide Ashkenazim the world over as to how to conduct themselves in each detail of life!

An Explosive Story

And here’s a more current one. On 14 Av 5777, Mr. Mashgiach visited a food factory in China. After the two-hour visit, his hosts invited him to dine with them in a nearby restaurant. These managers did not even understand that he was on a strictly Kosher diet! They just figured that he was a health inspector.

At any rate, he graciously declined, claiming to only be able to stomach fresh fruit at the moment. So they set him up with a nice fruit basket and went by themselves to the restaurant.

Well, there was an explosion at the restaurant. Four lost their lives and tens of people were injured. But Rabbi David Moskovitz of SKS had sent this *mashgiach* on a *kashrut* mission. Not compromising on his own *kashrut* standards, even to the point of *marit ayin*, his life was spared.

So let’s get to work, in *gashmiyot* and *ruchniyot*. Do not expect everything to come on a silver platter. Greater is one who benefits from his labor, even more than a *yarei shamayim!* (Berachot 8)

**Wishing You a Happy and Heavy Work-week
and a Shabbat Shalom,
Mordechai Malka**