



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א  
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד  
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,  
ישיבה קטנה ארצות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד  
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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## **Parashat Behar**

### **One Who Performs a Mitzvah is not Harmed**

Our *parasha* states (25:1-4), "Hashem spoke to Moshe on Har Sinai saying: Speak to the *Bnei Yisrael* and say to them, "When you come into the land that I will give to you, you should observe a *Shmittah* for Hashem ... the seventh year should be a complete rest for the land ... your field you should not sow, and your vineyard you should not prune..."

#### **The Details of Each Mitzvah Were Given at Sinai**

Rashi, quoting our Sages, asks: What is the connection between *Shmittah* and *Har Sinai* - all the 613 mitzvot were given at Sinai! So why does the Torah specifically need to state that the mitzvah of *Shmittah* was given at Har Sinai? The Sages go on to make a parallel between all the mitzvot and the mitzvah of *Shmittah*. There is also room to offer an explanation which revolves around man's behavior, as we will soon see.

#### **The Way of the World**

If we look at the world, we will see that when man is faced with a trial that is monetary in nature – for example, he must choose between Torah study and mitzvot vs. reaping a financial profit – he finds it difficult to overcome his *yetzer hara*, and chooses the monetary gain. Similarly, if he is faced with possibly incurring a loss on account of his Torah study and mitzvah performance, he finds it difficult to forgo the profit. Since he sees the profit or loss standing right before his eyes, he quickly fabricates a number of Torah sources that could substantiate his decision to forgo the Torah study or mitzvah performance. However, this is a mistake. For if man would believe that it is only Hashem who sustains every living creature, could he ever fathom that by performing His Will he would lose out? On the contrary, it is specifically by transgressing His Will, Heaven forbid, that he is guaranteed to suffer financially. How does his *yetzer hara* persuade him that only in such a fashion will he profit? Therefore, our holy Torah comes to teach us the proper Torah outlook and to strengthen our faith. For man will never lose by fulfilling the Will of Hashem. On the contrary, he will only gain, as we will soon explain.

#### **Explanation of the *Ben Ish Chai***

The *Ben Ish Chai* explains that the Torah, by connecting *Shmittah* and *Har Sinai*, is teaching us a valuable lesson: During *Shmittah* it appears that by abstaining from working the land, man will incur a loss in the yearly harvest. It appears to be a whopping loss that will damage his livelihood. However, the Torah guarantees us that, on the contrary, by observing the mitzvah of *Shmittah*, man merits that Hashem will send him blessing from Heaven, and in one year, the field reaps a harvest equal to three years. This is as the *pasuk* states, "If you will say, 'What will we eat...?' I will command My blessing to be bestowed upon you in the sixth year, and it will produce grain for three years..." From here can be drawn a parallel to all the mitzvot in the Torah. Many times man thinks that fulfilling mitzvot causes him to lose out, and as a



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result, his *yetzer hara* succeeds in preventing him from observing the Torah and mitzvot. But this is an error on the part of man, for observing the Torah and mitzvot will never cause a Jew any loss, as the *pasuk* states, "*Ha'shomer mitzvah lo yada davar ra*, One who performs a mitzvah is not harmed."

### An Act of Chessed for a Lonely Jew

In the *sefer Lev Shalom* by Rav Shalom Shwadron zt"l it is related that when Rav Shwadron was once travelling to *chutz la'aretz*, he scheduled to set sail on a boat from Chaifa. However, on his way to Chaifa, he requested his driver to return to Yerushalayim, claiming that he had forgotten to do something important. The "important thing" he forgot was that in his neighborhood lived a lonely Jew, who occasionally visited him to dispel his loneliness. Rav Shwadron had not informed him that he was leaving and that he would be unable to visit for several months. The driver told the Rav that if he would return to Yerushalayim to visit the man, he would miss his boat. But Rav Shwadron insisted that he must visit the man and also to arrange for other individuals to visit him, as well as tend to the rest of the man's needs. When he arrived, he sat with the lonely man for about an hour and spoke with him. He also spoke with several neighbors and asked them to care for him in his absence. Only then did he tell the driver, "Come, let us drive to Chaifa." "It is a waste of time," responded the driver. "We definitely missed the boat." "What difference does it make to you?" asked the Rav. "You will get your money whether we get there in time or not; perhaps because of this mitzvah, we will not miss the boat." When they arrived at the port in Chaifa, the captain said to them, "Why are you so late? The boat was supposed to leave two hours ago! You have very good *mazal* though. For right when it was about to leave, something faltered, and only now did we fix it." Rav Shwadron turned to those who had accompanied him and while holding his ticket, said, "You must understand this – 'One who performs a mitzvah is not harmed.'" He then sailed off peacefully.

### Looking Like a Jew

Moshe Wolfson once went with his brother to cut a big business deal with a gentile from Singapore. When they arrived, they met with the middle-man, and he set a date for their meeting. He told them that that were dealing with a tycoon, someone fabulously wealthy, to the extent that he was called "The King" because of his enormous wealth. He added that that he felt that they should remove their *kipot*, because wearing it might ruin this deal of a lifetime. But Mr. Wolfson responded that even if it meant losing out on this deal, he would not give up his Jewish appearance. He was brought up to a large hall where already 100 people were waiting. At the head of the table was a chair set up for the tycoon, which was worth \$20,000! They were all waiting for the tycoon to enter. When he entered, he greeted them and said to Mr. Wolfson to recite a *bracha* and have something to drink. Mr. Wolfson did not refuse, and he made a *bracha* and drank. To everyone's surprise, the tycoon listened to the *bracha* and even answered *amen* loudly. At that point, the tycoon explained: As a youth, he was an orphan. Yet who adopted him? A Jew. While he did not convert, he nevertheless had a great respect for Jews and would happily agree to his offer. The middle man then learned the lesson of his life – the fact that Mr. Wolfson guarded his Jewish



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identity was his ticket to success. We see from here that one never loses out by following the Torah and mitzvot.

### Prayer at any Cost

In the *sefer Pnini Avraham* by Rav Avraham Hakohen ben Tzalach, it is related that one of the *gabbaim* of Yeshivat Porat Yosef, Mr. Politi, sold fabrics and sewing needles to earn a living. It was during the period when the British were the ruling power in the Holy Land. One day, a distinguished British captain entered his store. He told him that he wished to give him the rare opportunity to sew uniforms for all of the British soldiers occupying the Land. It was a few minutes before sunset, and Mr. Politi had still not prayed *mincha*. Therefore Mr. Politi was pressed for time, and was unable to speak with the captain. He therefore politely requested that the captain wait fifteen minutes, and then he would be happy to sit with him and discuss the matter. But the captain refused. He said that he soon needed to travel to London and could not wait. He therefore left Mr. Politi's store and headed for a different one, where he closed his deal. Mr. Politi returned from *minchah*, saw that he had lost out on the deal, and it pained him. With a bitter heart, he went to speak with the Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, Rav Yehudah Tzadkiah. Rav Tzadkiah told him, "Now that you have showed Hashem that you are unwilling to forgo a prayer for even the most exclusive business deal, you have now raised the value of your own prayers in Heaven. There they are now worth all the money in the world." After two years, the captain returned to Mr. Politi's store. He told him that the deal he made with the other store was unsuccessful, and they were not in favor of the clothing. He therefore asked if they could now sign an agreement. So now Mr. Politi earned twice as much profit. He gained financially in this world and also gained in the World to Come, by escalating the value of his prayers.

### Words of Mussar

We have learned that an individual will never lose and will never be prevented from profiting because of Torah and mitzvot. On the contrary, it is specifically Torah and mitzvot which bring about all of man's good fortune. This is as the Tanna stated in *Masechet Kiddushin* (82a), that he never saw animals struggle to earn a living, and they were created only to serve man. Yet man was created to serve Hashem. If animals, who were created only to serve man, earn their living without struggling, then man, who was created to serve Hashem, should most certainly be able to make a living effortlessly. Then why doesn't he? Why does man struggle to make ends meet? He answered that his sins have caused it. This is what the Torah wishes to teach us by comparing *Shmittah* and the rest of the Torah; namely that just as one never loses by fulfilling the mitzvah of *Shmittah*, so too, does he not lose by fulfilling any of the mitzvot.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rav Mordechai Malka