



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 ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Kedoshim

Faith is the Key to Life

Our *parashah* states (*Vayikra* 19:35-36), "You shall not commit a perversion of justice [*be'mishpat*], in measures of length, weight, or volume. You shall have correct scales, correct weights, correct dry measures...I am Hashem, your G-d, who took you out of the land of Egypt"

Questions:

- 1) On the aforementioned *pasuk*, Rashi offers an explanation from our Sages (*Baba Batra* 89b), who have stated that the "justice" [*mishpat*] mentioned in the *pasuk* is referring to the usage of honest measurements. The Alshich asks why the Torah refers to this as "*mishpat*."
- 2) Additionally, the word *be'mishpat* has a *patach* under the *bet*. This is similar to a *hei ha'yidiah*, which connotes that this *mishpat* is one that is particularly well known.
- 3) We must furthermore ask why the Torah says that the reason not to act deceitfully in business, but rather with integrity, is because Hashem took us out of Egypt.

People Believe in Their Own Abilities

We will begin by saying that when one looks at the world around him, he will see that people believe in their own abilities and wisdom. They conjure up Hillel's famous adage and think, "If I will not be for myself who will be for me?" Man thinks that his livelihood, success, and standing depend on his actions. As a result, man does whatever he can to achieve his goals. This is to the extent that sometimes individuals are beguiled by their *yetzer hara* and lured to act deceitfully to achieve their goal. However, the mistake that they make is that they fail to read the continuation of Hillel's words. For Hillel continues by stating, "and if I will be for myself, what am I?" Man must know that his actions do not determine his success in this world, rather, his entire success is dependent upon Heaven and the Will of Hashem. On the other hand, Hashem lowers the arrogant and makes the undeserving poor, if He chooses. Everything depends upon the type of deeds man performs – does he serve Hashem with faith and trust, and perform the Will of Hashem or, Heaven forbid, the opposite?

There is an Eye Which Sees from Above

Let us quote the first explanation of Rashi on the above *pasuk*. Rashi, quoting the *pasuk* comments, "Who took you out" - on this condition. An alternate explanation, [Hashem says,] "In *Mitzrayim* I discerned between the seed of the firstborn and that of a non-first born, and I can be trusted to repay



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somebody who covers his weights in salt to trick people." It is also stated in *Masechet Baba Metzia* 61b, "Said Raba: why does the Torah mention the Exodus in the *parasha* of forbidden usury and interest, *tzitzit*, and faulty weights? Said Hashem, 'I was the One Who discerned in Egypt ... And I am the One Who in the future will repay someone who lends money to a Jew and demands interest, claiming that the money belongs to a gentile. [I will also repay] one who covers his weights in salt, and one who claims that he is wearing *techeilet* but is really wearing an imitation." **From all of this we see that remembering the Exodus is meant to warn an individual that he will be punished for his actions, even if people are not aware of what he has perpetrated. This is because the matter is revealed before Hashem. There is an Eye above which sees everything, an Ear above which hears everything, and all of man's deeds are written in Hashem's book. In present times, we can see a real life example of this by noticing how all of the world can be accessed in the palm of one's hand and how people can see, hear, write, and speak to others in seconds, despite the fact that there are thousands of miles separating them.**

The Second Explanation: Wealth and Honor are from Hashem

I believe we can add that the Torah's intention is that since the reason a person acts deceitfully in business is because he believes that his success and failure are dependent upon his wisdom and actions, he therefore can be said to be lacking faith. However an individual must believe that "Hashem is the One Who makes impoverished and even raises" (Shmuel I perek 2:7). For wealth and honor are from Hashem, they do not depend on man's wisdom and actions. By thinking in such a fashion, man will not be deceitful in his business dealings. Since the fundamental of faith was learned from the Jews' Exodus from Egypt, as the *pasuk* states, "I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out from the land of Egypt." In other words, we see that the basis of our faith is learned from the Exodus. By ingraining this in one's self, man will act with integrity and act with faith in the business world as well. What we have stated works well with the holy Alshich's explanation of the word *mishpat* in the *pasuk*. The Alshich writes, "On Rosh Hashanah, Hashem decides how much of the livelihood each person will merit that year; this is a result of his *mishpat* and trial on that day, which is judged according to his deeds. Therefore, if someone uses the money which he has been allotted from Heaven and buys land or other items, and gets cheated – for example, for something worth \$150, he pays \$200, the seller has perverted the sentence that was meted out by Hashem on Rosh Hashanah. For by cheating, the seller is diminishing the amount of money that the buyer was allotted on Rosh Hashanah. The same thing applies if the buyer cheats the seller.

A Lesson Taught to a Kohen

The *Midrash Tanchuma (Tazria 6)* relates a story about a *kohen* who used to look at marks and rule if they were leprous ones or not. His livelihood took a turn for the worse, and he wished to go to *chutz la'aretz* to try and earn a living. He called his wife and told her, "Since people come to me to look at



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their marks, it is difficult for me to leave them. Come and I will teach you how to rule on such marks. If you see hair whose source has dried out, then you know that the individual is afflicted. This is because Hashem created each hair with a source from which to draw sustenance. If the source dries up, then so has the hair." His wife responded, "If Hashem created each hair a source from which to draw sustenance, then won't you – a human being who has many hairs and children whom he supports – certainly be sent by Hashem a livelihood in *Eretz Yisrael*?" He therefore decided not to travel to *Chutz La'aretz*.

Story About the Lelover Rebbe

In the *sefer, She'al Avicha Vayagedcha* (pg. 200), R' Shalom Shwadron relates that an individual came to the Lelover Rebbe and said that because of the difficulty he was having in making a living, he wished to move with his family to *chutz la'aretz*. The Rebbe answered, "I wish to tell you a story. In one town lived a great *talmid chacham*, but he was very poor. One day, two wealthy men came to him and asked him to adjourn a *din Torah* between the two of them. It was on condition that he would come to their city, and they would pay him handsomely for his efforts. The *talmid chacham* said that before he decided, he had to pray *mincha*. When he finished praying, he refused their offer. His wife was bewildered as to why he would turn down such an attractive offer and what it had to do with his *mincha* prayer. To this he replied, 'I stood to pray the *Shemonah Esrei*. When I came to the blessing of *Bircat Hashanim*, I thought to myself, *I am now asking Hashem to bless us this year; that blessing should descend from his Throne of Glory to my house. This is a distance of thousands of years, for from the earth to the first firmament is a distance of 500 years, and from the next firmament, several hundred years more, and so on.* I thought to myself, *if Hashem is already sending his bounty from so far away, He does not need to send it specifically to the town of these rich men; He can send it directly to my home.* I therefore said to them, 'I will stay where I am, and if it is Hashem's Will to send me blessing and bounty, it will come to my home.' Indeed" continued the Rebbe, "This is exactly what happened. For a few days later, the rich men returned and agreed to conduct the hearing in the *talmid chacham's* home and were willing to pay him just as much as before. Regarding this, can be applied the *pasuk* 'From afar she brings her sustenance.'"

Words of Mussar

We have learned that man's livelihood is sent from Heaven, and it is not dependent, nor upon his actions or his wisdom. This is as is taught to us by the *Chovot HaLevavot* (*Shaar 4* – introduction to *Shaar HaBitachon*) that the *pasuk* states, "Blessed is the individual who trusts in Hashem..." and "Praiseworthy is the individual who places his trust in Hashem and does not turn to the haughty and those who stray after falsehood." On the other hand, says the *Chovot Halevavot*, the *pasuk* states, "Cursed is the individual who trusts in man ... and turns his heart from Hashem." He continues to write that if he trusts in his wisdom, strategies, strength, and effort, Hashem will leave him. He will toil in vain and grow weak,



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and his strategies will not be successful ...for "it is not the swift who win the race, nor the mighty who are victorious in war.." and it states, "Cubs will want and hunger, but those who seek Hashem will not lack any good." And if he trusts in his abundant wealth, it will be taken from him, and he will be left without it... On the contrary, it is to strengthen ourselves in faith, and to make Hashem's Will our will, in regards to Torah and mitzvot. He must also make sure that his business is conducted with honesty and integrity, and in that merit, Hashem will give us what we want and shower us with much bounty, blessing, and success in everything we do. *Amen ve'amen.*

Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Mordechai Malka