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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,
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Parashat Naso

The Secret to Success in Business

Our *parasha* states (5:9), "And every donation from all of the sanctified things that *Bnei Yisrael* brings to the kohen shall be his [- the kohen's]." The following *pasuk* states, "An individual's sanctified things should be his [- the individual's], and what an individual brings to the kohen should be his."

Questions:

- 1) Since the Torah already stated in *pasuk* 9 that any sanctified item that is brought to the kohen will be his, why does it again state in the very next *pasuk* that whatever sanctified thing is given to the kohen will be his? This seems to be a redundancy.
- 2) We must furthermore understand the intention of the second *pasuk* when it states, "An individual's sanctified things should be his." The *pasuk* is speaking about someone who is bringing his sanctified items to the kohen. How, then, could the sanctified item belong to the individual?
- 3) The second *pasuk* states, "what an individual brings to the kohen should be his." Instead of writing two *pesukim*, it would seem to have made more sense to simply write, "An individual should give his sanctified items to the kohen." Additionally, why is there a need to add that the sanctified things "should be his?"
- 4) Also, why does the second *pasuk* state "an individual" twice? It would seemingly have sufficed to write it only one time.

All of Man's Ways are Correct in His Eyes

When it comes to business, man believes that the more money he saves the better, and that this will help him do more business. Therefore, when there is a need to purchase a mitzva item or give tzedaka, he finds it difficult and either gives little or nothing at all. All the more so, if we are talking about giving a large amount of money to tzedaka. Man feels as if he is losing his money by giving tzedaka, and that he is foiling his business plans. Despite the fact that he is refraining from fulfilling the mitzva of tzedaka, he is not bothered by it. He thinks that he is correct, as Shlomo HaMelech stated in *Mishlei* (21:2), "All of man's ways are correct in his eyes." However, the Torah teaches that such an individual is making an absolute mistake and that his *yetzer hara* is fooling him. This is a test that he must pass, as we will soon explain.

One Who Withholds His *Ma'aser* Will Eventually Need It

Now we can answer the questions we posed on the aforementioned *pesukim*. On the *pasuk*, "An individual's sanctified things should be his," Rashi cites the Midrash which states that if one withholds his *maaser*, **he** will eventually be left with *maaser* [lit. "a tenth"], i.e., his field will only produce a tenth of what it normally does. However, "what an individual brings to the kohen should be his." In other words, by giving his *maaser* to the kohen, **he** will grow wealthy. We find that the *parasha* of *sota*, the woman suspected of adultery, is placed next to the section dealing with *terumot* and *maaserot*. The Gemara teaches in *Masechet Berachot* (63a), that this is to teach us that one who has *terumot* and *maaserot* but does not bring them to the kohen, will eventually bring his wife to the kohen and need the him to conduct the procedure performed with a woman suspected of adultery. Furthermore, states the Gemara, the man will eventually need the *maaserot* himself. But if he gives them to the kohen, then he will grow rich, as stated above in the Midrash.

We can explain that our Sages found several of the expressions in the aforementioned *pesukim* difficult, for they appeared to be superfluous as we mentioned above. They therefore expounded that *pasuk* 9 is speaking about the requirement for every Jew to give his sanctified donations to the kohen. The following *pasuk* continues to state that there are two different types of individuals. There is one individual who feels that it is vital to preserve his money, and he therefore holds on to his *terumot* and *maaserot*. His end will be as Rashi depicted, that his field will only produce a tenth of what it did before. Similarly, a business transaction from which he previously earned \$1000 will now earn only \$100. This is as related in the Midrash cited in *Tosafot* (*Masechet Taanit* 9a), which tells us about an individual who owned a field that yielded 1000 measures of grain each year. From that thousand, he



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would give a hundred to *maaser*. Before he passed away, he called his son and told him that he was soon to leave the world. He then said, "My son, I want you to know that I am bequeathing you this field. It yields 1000 measures each year, and it is all in the merit of my giving the kohen 100 measures of wheat as *maaser* each year. Therefore you should be careful to follow my instructions to separate *maaser* every year, and then you will be successful." The son agreed, and after his father died, the field yielded 1000 measures of grain, from which he separated 100. The next year, however, he regretted his decision, because he felt that 100 measures was too much to give to *maaser*. He therefore began to give less, and resultantly, the field yielded less and less wheat, until it yielded only 100 measures. With this, he saw the fulfillment of the Gemara's words that if one refrains from giving *maaser*, he will ultimately be left with only a tenth of his previous earnings. Alternatively, one who refrains from giving *maaser* will see the fulfillment of the Gemara according to its simple explanation, that he will ultimately become a pauper and be in need of accepting *tzedaka*. However, there is a different type of person, one who gives the kohen what he is supposed to. We learned above that he will lose nothing by doing so, for anything he gives will be returned to him by Heaven. Secondly, his money will be blessed, and he will merit blessing and success in his business dealings. This is as R' Yochanan has taught (*Taanit* 9a, *Shabbat* 119a) that one who gives *maaser* will grow wealthy. The Gemara continues to state that despite the fact that it is forbidden to test Hashem, however, one can test Hashem when he fulfills the mitzva of giving *maaser*. This is as the *pasuk* states (*Malachi* 3), "Bring all of the *maaser* into the storage house ... please test Me with this, says Hashem, and see if I will not open for you the windows in Heaven and pour out for you blessing without end [עד בלי די]." The Gemara asks for the meaning of the expression עד בלי די [without end], and explains that it means that one will accrue so much blessing that his lips will grow weary from saying "enough" [עד שיבילו שפתותיכם מלומר די].

Supporting the Present Day Tribe of Levi

The *kohanim* were the *talmidei chachamim* in the time of the *Beit Hamikdash*, and they disseminated *halachic* rulings amongst the Jewish people. This is as the *pasuk* states (*Devarim* 26:3), "And you will go to the one who will be the kohen in those days [- for a ruling]." Therefore, for the *kohanim* to be able to perform the Divine service and guide the nation, they needed to have the yoke of earning a livelihood taken off their shoulders. Therefore, Hashem commanded the Jews to give *teruma* to the kohen. By doing so, the *kohanim* would be able to continue learning Torah and benefitting the public. Additionally, the Jews will all have a portion in their Torah study, which is the purpose of Creation. Therefore, man's *bracha* was dependent on his actions. By separating *teruma* for the sake of supporting the Torah, he demonstrated his total belief that he was a partner in their Torah study. Presently, when the *Beit Hamikdash* is destroyed, we do not have a kohen to perform the Temple service. In the place of sustaining the *kohanim* stands supporting those who study Torah. Praiseworthy is he who merits supporting Torah scholars, for about him it states (*Mishlei* 3:18), "It [- the Torah] is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and its supporters are praiseworthy." In present times, the Torah scholars who sit and study Torah and disseminate *halachic* rulings are the Tribe of Levi. When every Jew makes sure to give his *maaser* and support Torah, he becomes a partner in that Torah study. As a result, Hashem gives him limitless blessing in his business endeavors. However, if he refrains from giving, then he is the one who loses out. This is because his success is not dependent on his wisdom, rather on Hashem.

The Chafetz Chaim on Supporting Torah

In the *sefer Torah Ohr* (*perek* 11), the Chafetz Chaim writes that in present times, *maaser* should mainly be given to those who toil in Torah study, just like it was in the times of the *kohanim* and *leviim* in the *Beit Hamikdash*. In the times when the *Beit Hamikdash* stood, it was a mitzva to make sure that the *kohanim* and *leviim* studied Torah, and by doing so, they were able to strengthen Torah study. This is as the Gemara states in *Masechet Chullin* (131) that one should not give a gift to a kohen who is an ignoramus. He continues to write that when Hashem judges man for the sin of *bitul Torah*, He will call to judgment all those who had the ability to support Torah but chose not to. Even though all Jews contribute something towards supporting Torah, however, one whom Hashem blesses with wealth definitely does not fulfill his obligation by giving a meager amount to *yeshivot*. For the Yissachar – Zevulun agreement to which the Torah consents was like an actual partnership. The Tribe of



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Zevulun would provide Yissachar with all of their material needs, so that they would not have to earn a livelihood. However, offering only meager assistance is not enough, unless the giver does not have ample means. This is as the Gemara relates about Nakdimon ben Gurion, who was one of three wealthiest men in Yerushalayim (see *Gitten* 57). He gave much *tzedaka*, but since he did give all that he was able to, he lost his fortune. The Gemara (*Ketubot* 66) relates that the situation worsened until his daughter, to sustain herself, was forced to gather the barley that was stuck inside the hooves of horses. The Gemara explains that Nakdimon, indeed, gave much *tzedaka*, but he could have given more. The Chafetz Chaim continues to write that Nakdimon ben Gurion was an extremely pious man, one of only three men – the other two were Moshe Rabbeinu and Yehoshua – who were able to keep the sun suspended in the sky when it normally would have set (see *Taanit* 19). He also gave a great amount of *tzedaka*. Nevertheless, his great merits did not come to his aid, and his daughter was forced to endure what she did, all because he did not give the amount that he could have given. All the more so, does this apply to men of our times, who are of a far smaller stature. There are wealthy individuals who spend hordes of money on decorating their homes. They place curtains in their windows and color the window glass, and a variety of other frivolous, decorative items that provide no benefit to either body or soul. At the very same time, *talmidei chachamim* who study Hashem's Torah are starving for bread. He adds that neglecting to support Torah results in the tragic waste of potential of thousands of Jewish youths. Since there are not enough *talmidei chachamim* and *yeshivot* in which they can study and learn from, they simply don't attend *yeshivot*. He writes that the blame will be placed squarely on the shoulders of those who had the means to support *yeshivot* but did not. How great will the shame and disgrace be in the future, when Hashem asks him, "With the money that I gave you, could you not have supported *talmidei chachamim* who study My Torah? How many poor Jewish souls could you have revived with the light of the Torah, with the money that I gave you? Instead, what did you do? You placed the money in your bank account, where it remained until the day you died." Supporting Torah is a great responsibility that man must not neglect.

Only One Who Gives All of His *Maaser* is Guaranteed Blessing

In *Malachi* (3), the Navi instructs, "*hevi'u et kol hamaaser*, bring **all** of the *maaser*," and then they would be blessed with limitless bounty. From this we learn that the bounty is dependent upon giving **all** of one's *maaser* and not an approximation, simply giving what one **thinks** that he owes.

Losing One's Fortune Because of Not Giving *Maaser*

A renowned philanthropist in recent times was famous for giving an endless amount of *tzedaka*. Suddenly, though, his business collapsed, and no one could believe it. I recently met a wealthy friend of mine from *Chutz La'aretz*, and he told me that he had a meeting with this man over an important business matter. Sitting together, he asked him how it was possible that he could have experienced such a collapse, since he gave such an abundance of *tzedaka*. The philanthropist answered that while it was true that he gave a lot of *tzedaka*, but it did not equal a tenth of his earnings, and this is what caused the collapse. He therefore decided to truly give a tenth of his earnings to *maaser*, and sometime later, he once again grew successful.

Words of Mussar

We have learned that the secret to success in business is dependent upon man. Hashem Himself guarantees that everyone who gives *terumot* and *maasrot* according to his ability will merit endless blessing and success. Furthermore, Hashem has allowed man to test Him when it comes to giving *maaser* despite the fact that this seems to run contrary to our faith. Hashem allows this however, because He does not make unfair demands against man. He knows how hard it is for someone to part with the earnings that he so painstakingly worked for. However, it is stated explicitly that this guarantee is only possible when man gives according to his ability and does not suffice with giving beneath his means, even if he gives a large amount. This is because money has been given to man to safeguard. It is meant to benefit his soul so that he can earn the World to Come and amass Torah and mitzvot in this world. If he is not a trustworthy guardian, Heaven forbid, it will be held against him. For who knows how many *talmidei chachamim* could be raised with his money, and because of his refraining from giving, he prevents them from developing into Torah scholars. This is as the *Yerushalmi* stated, that instead of investing



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in buildings, man should invest in Torah scholars. For with the money he is spending on buildings, he is burying many souls that could have otherwise become *talmidei chachamim*. He will ultimately be held accountable for this. He will be included amongst those about whom it states, "Cursed is the one who does not support the Torah," Heaven forbid. Therefore, everyone should garner strength and commit to do all that he can to support the Torah and those who study it. This also applies to one who sits and studies Torah himself. By doing so, he will merit being included amongst those about whom it states, "Blessed is the one who supports the Torah." Then *bracha* and success will rest upon all of his endeavors. *Amen ve'amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka