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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 Toldot

One Who Connects With a Tzaddik is Blessed

Our *parasha* (*perek* 26) teaches us about the *Pelishtim's* jealousy over Yitzchak's success and about how they sealed his wells and expelled him from their land. Later, Avimelech and his entourage approached Yitzchak, explaining that they saw that Hashem is with him. They then mentioned that they wished to make a pact with him, to which Yitzchak agrees.

Questions:

1) In *perek* 26, *pasuk* 27 Yitzchak asks Avimelech and his men why they came to him since they hated him and expelled him from their land. Yet we find that they do not address this question at all. Rather, they make matters worse by stating that since they see that Hashem is with him and that he is successful, therefore they wish to form a treaty with him. How can we understand such behavior? 2) Furthermore, why **did** Yitzchak agree to this treaty? 3) Avimelech initially said to Yitzchak (26:17), "Go away from us, for you have grown very wealthy from us [ממנו]." The words "from us" seem unnecessary. The *pasuk* should have simply stated, "For you have grown wealthy." Why does it state, "from us"? 4) Additionally, why was the fact that Yitzchak grew wealthy a cause for them to evict him from their land?

The Reality of Our Generation

In our generation there has risen Leftists from amongst us who wonder and ask what purpose the Torah world serves. They claim that they have become a burden to the nation. They do not serve in the army, and they even live off stipends that are provided by the State. They do not engage in business and industry and cause direct financial damage to the State, taking its money and giving nothing in return. Understandably, the media lashes out against the Torah world, claiming that all governmental allotments to Torah educational institutions should cease, as they do not prepare their students for a prosperous future. Let us begin by responding that these individuals are contradicting their predecessors, the founders of the State, who wrote in the State's declaration of independence that it is the right of every group to observe its religion and to be a free people. Therefore an agreement of a religious "status quo" was reached allowing each individual to continue his religious observance that he had been maintaining up until that point. There would be pressure to compromise it, and the youth of our generation would therefore be unable to change this. Despite this, much to our sorrow, there are those who have risen to annul this and to prove wiser than their predecessors. However, there is no doubt that all of the noise generated by the media is totally false. There are many from amongst the Torah world who engage in earning a livelihood and totally contribute to the success of the State, even according to their standards. Even so, in our *parasha* is found the true answer to all the Leftists. The perspective of their world is identical to that of the Ministry of Finance of the *Pelishtim's* state Gerar. Therefore Avimelech and his men evicted Yitzchak. Yet they ultimately reached the conclusion that the opposite is true, as we will later explain.

They Recognized that Bounty Comes in the Merit of the Tzaddik

In order to explain the exchange between Avimelech, his men, and Yitzchak, we will begin by stating a principle: all those who connect to a *tzaddik* are blessed in his merit. This is as we find by our three forefathers, as we will soon see. Dozens of years ago, I wrote that the *Pelishtim* thought that Yitzchak was taking away all of their wealth, and that whatever was meant for them, Hashem was instead giving to Yitzchak. Therefore, they thought that he had become wealthy at their expense. They believed that if he had not lived in Gerar, all of the blessings would be theirs, they would grow rich, and the economy would blossom. But since he lived with them, they became secondary due to his righteousness, and all of the bounty went to him instead of them. Therefore Avimelech told Yitzchak to leave because all of his wealth had been "from us." In other words, what was supposed to have been ours, you have taken, and we are therefore requesting that you leave.



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It is now understood why Yitzchak remarked when they returned to him, "You hate me and asked me to leave your city, because I cause you financial damage. Why then do you come to me?" They therefore answered that they came because they saw that he was blessed by Hashem. In other words, they were saying that they erred in thinking that all of his wealth was at their expense. In fact, they realized that exactly the opposite was true. They were saying to Yitzchak, "Once you left our city, the economy suffered tremendously, and all of the businesses collapsed. Yet, on the other hand, we see that you have continued to succeed. This proves that your success is not at our expense; on the contrary, all of the blessing that we had is only because of your righteousness and Torah, which benefited everyone. We are therefore interested in joining you once again." Once Yitzchak saw that they regretted their actions and gained a true perspective of the situation, he made a treaty with them [see *Targum Yonatan* who writes similarly].

The same thing applies to the Torah world. The antagonists should realize that it is specifically in the merit of the Torah world and in the merit of giving allotments to Torah institutions that the State has economic success, despite the fact that the world's economy has declined. If Heaven forbid, they would evict the Torah world like Avimelech did to Yitzchak, there is not the slightest doubt that the State's economy would entirely collapse. The reverse is also true – to the extent that the State continues to maintain and support the Torah world and its institutions, so too, will it succeed. In *Parashat Vayeira* we learned that if there were 10 *tzaddikim* in the city, it would have nullified the decree and Sodom would not have been destroyed, as our Sages state (*Masechet Sanhedrin* 99). This shows just how much each individual who studies Torah has a positive influence on his surroundings. All the more so, the entire Torah world's beneficial effect on the State's economy, security, and all aspects of life, is inestimable. Praiseworthy is the one who believes that our holy Torah is the inheritance of our forefathers and maintains our Nation.

Lot was Blessed Because of Avraham

We find similarly regarding Avraham in *Parashat Lech Lecha*. The *pasuk* states (13:5), "Also Lot who went with Avraham had sheep, cattle, and tents." Rashi explains, "Who caused him to have this? Going with Avraham." It similarly states in the *Pesikta Zutrati (Lekach Tov)*, "It is not sufficient that the *tzaddikim* benefit themselves, they also benefit those who cling to them." Also see *Bava Kama* 93a, where our Sages derive from the fact that Lot grew rich on account of Avraham, that one who accompanies someone blessed with wealth also becomes wealthy because of him.

Blessing was Bestowed to Lavan's House Because of Avraham

See *Parashat Vayeitzei* (30: 27-30, 43, 31:1) where the Torah relates that at the beginning of Yaakov's stay with Lavan, Lavan understood that all of his blessing came in the merit of Yaakov. As Yaakov himself stated [30:29]. However, Lavan's sons voiced the opposite opinion, stating that all of Yaakov's wealth was from their father's property (31:1). Lavan as well, since he did not possess complete faith, said that he thinks that he had grown wealthy due to Yaakov. This is as it states, (30:27), "*Nichashti vivarcheini Hashem biglalecha*, I have guessed that I have become wealthy because of you." In other words, he was doubtful and only **guessed** that this was the case. Therefore his sons were able to convince him that he was mistaken and that all of Yaakov's wealth came from Lavan's property. However, the truth is that the Torah testifies that all of Lavan's blessings came because of Yaakov, and that Lavan did not lose anything on account of it; on the contrary, his assets increased tremendously.

The House of Potiphar was Blessed Because of Yosef

Additionally, In *Parashat Vayeishev*, the *pasuk* (39:5) states, "And Hashem blessed the house of the Egyptian because of Yosef." In the *Midrash Shochev Tov*, our Sages expound on this *pasuk*, "To the place where the *tzaddikim* go, blessing goes with them. So too, you find this with Yitzchak by Avimelech and Yaakov by Lavan [see the *Targum Yonatan* on the aforementioned *pasuk* who writes similarly.]

In the Merit of the Tzaddik

Our Sages (*Kiddushin* 29) relate that R' Acha bar Yaakov once came to the city where Abaye dwelled. There was a dangerous *mazik* (spiritual demon) in Abaye's *beit midrash*, and he knew that R' Acha bar Yaakov was righteous



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enough to kill the *mazik*. He therefore ordered that R' Acha be refused lodging; that way he would be forced to sleep in the *beit midrash*. He knew that a miracle would be wrought for R' Acha in the merit of his great piety, and that he would kill the *mazik*. R' Acha slept in the *beit midrash* unaware of the *mazik*. Only at the night did the *mazik* appear. It had seven heads, and when R' Acha prayed to be saved from it, with each time he bowed, he took off one of the *mazik's* heads. The next day, R' Acha voiced his dissatisfaction, saying that if a miracle had not occurred for him, those who were responsible for his sleeping in the *beit midrash* would have been liable for placing him into a dangerous predicament.

The Power of the *Tzaddik* to Influence His Surroundings

One of the fundamentals of *chassidut* is that an individual ingrains in himself the awareness that there is no bounty that descends to the world which is comparable to the bounty that emanates from the *tzaddik* and his blessing. This is as the *Ran* teaches in his *drashot* (*drush* 8), that the *tzaddikim* are compared to the *Beit Hamikdash*. He writes that all of the bounty that used to descend through the *Beit Hamikdash* are now sent through the *tzaddik*, who are comparable to the *Mikdash*. Not only is physical bounty sent through the power of the *tzaddik* and his blessing, but spiritual bounty is sent through him as well. This is as the *Toldot Adam* teaches, that the awakening of any spiritual bounty that descends to the world and inspires man to examine his deeds and return to Hashem is only because of the *tzaddikim* of that generation. It is thought the Torah and mitzvot that they perfectly perform with fear and love that they draw down Heavenly favor to the Jewish Nation. All of the achievements that man achieves in his Divine service is also on account of the generation's righteous individuals. Man must obviously be aware of the fact that the source of all the influx which emanates from the *tzaddik* is the source of all blessings – the Creator.

Story About the *Taz*

R' Chayim of Volozhin related that a woman one approached the *Taz*, crying bitterly. "My son is sick," she screamed, "Please save him!" The *Taz* answered her, "Am I a *malach* that I can heal your son? What would you like me to do?" Crying, the woman answered, "I am not appealing to **you**, I am appealing to your Torah!" "If that is the case," answered the *Taz*, I will dedicate my regular scheduled *shiu*r for your son's recovery." It was not long before the boy regained his health, and his fever dropped incredibly. So it has been throughout all the generations – the *tzaddikim* benefit the Jews with their prayers and salvations. There is not a single individual who does not need the blessing or salvation of one of the generation's *tzaddikim*, when a misfortunes befalls him, Heaven forbid. He receives it entirely because of the fact that he supported the Torah world. There is no end to the amount of stories about how *tzaddikim* saved the Jewish Nation.

Words of Mussar

We have learned just how much blessing an individual can merit by connecting with a *tzaddik* and supporting him. He loses nothing by doing so; on the contrary, all of his endeavors will be blessed. Therefore, praiseworthy is he who merits assisting and supporting the Torah world and Torah institutions. This is as the *pasuk* states, "*Eitz chayim hi la'machazikim ba ve'tomchaha me'ushar*, It is a tree of life to those who grasp it, and its supporters are praiseworthy." This is because it is in their merit that the Jewish Nation in general, and they in particular, are blessed. This is as it states, "On its right is lengthy days; on its left, wealth and honor."

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka