

בעזרת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

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Re'eh



The Way of Emunah

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Parshas Re'eh

Maaser Creates Wealth/It Is Permitted to Test Hashem/The Entire Harvest is Considered Maaser/Emunah Creates Wealth/The Benefit of Wealth that Comes From Maaser/The Reward in This World and The Next/Learning Torah Without Losing Olam Haba/Even 100 Times/One Who Gives to Others Benefits Himself/Wealth That Comes From Maaser Brings Satisfaction/Wealth that Saves From Harm/Esav Wanted to Give Maaser so That He Would be Wealthy/Wealth from Maaser Creates Kedusha and Yiras Shomayim/Wealth from Maaser Leads to Torah L'Shma/One Who Gives a Chomesh Will Become Wealthy/In Control of One's Money/Looking Away from Tzedakah/How Not to Embarrass the Taker/Doing Good Every Day

עֲשֵׂר תַעֲשֶׂר אֶת כָּל תְּבוּאֹת זֶרְעֶךָ וְגו' (יד, כב)

You shall take off a tenth of all your crops... (14:22)

Maaser Creates Wealth

The Gemara (Tainis 9B) states: “*Aser te’aser...Give ma’aser* so that you will become rich.” Tosafos quotes the Sifri that says: “‘You shall take off a tenth from all of the crops of your field.’ We only see that one needs to give *maaser* on crops. How do we know that one must also give from business and all other

profits? This is learned from the word ‘all’ (*kol*). It could have said to give ‘from your crops’. Why does it say ‘all of your crops’? This is meant to include all profits.”

We see from this that one also gets the guarantee that he will become wealthy if he gives *maaser kesafim*.

This is also seen from the Medrash Tanchuma (18) that states: “*’Aser t’aser.*” Give *maaser* so that you will become wealthy. Give *maaser* so that you will not lose out. This is a hint that those who travel by sea (businessmen) should give one-tenth of their profits to those who toil in Torah.”

It Is Permitted to Test Hashem:

The Gemara continues to say: “If you give *maaser*, you will become rich...Is it permitted to test Hashem? Doesn’t the *pasuk* say (Devarim 6:16) that one is not allowed to test Hashem? Rav Hoshea said that this is the exception to that rule. This is seen from the *pasuk* (Malachi 3:10) that says: ‘Bring all the *maaser* into the treasury so that there

may be food in My House, and **test Me now with this**, says Hashem, to see if I will not open for you the windows of Heaven and pour down for you blessing until it is more than enough.”

This too does not only apply to *maaser* given from crops. It also applies to *maaser kesafim*. This is seen from the Rema (Yoreh Deah 247:4), who writes that one may test Hashem with *maaser kesafim*.

The Entire Harvest is Considered Maaser:

The Kedushas Levi explains the Gemara’s statement that *maaser* creates wealth by stating that when a person gives *tzedakah*, the money ascends to the Heavens. For example, if one gives one coin to charity, it rises to the Heavens, where it is noted

that he gave one coin as *maaser* because he had 10 coins. Thus, all 10 coins are part of the mitzvah, as it was only performed because the man was given 10 coins.

Since this person performed a mitzvah with 10 coins, he is rewarded with the ability to give 10 coins to *maaser* during the next year – meaning that he is given 100 coins. Thus, one becomes wealthy by giving *maaser*.

With this in mind, he translates the Gemara's words "*aser bisvhill shetisaser*" to mean "give one-tenth of your crop as *maaser*, so that the full amount of your harvest of this year will be the amount of your *maaser* next year."

The Vitebsker Rebbe *zy"ta* (Sefer Pri Ha'aretz) writes that *emunah* is also part of the *segulah* to attain wealth through giving *maaser*. He explains that when one gives *tzedakah* with the belief that it will earn him a *yeshua*, he is expressing genuine *emunah* that Hashem will help him, and this *emunah* arouses Divine mercy. He adds that **since the person shows how much he desires to do the mitzvah of giving *tzedakah*, Hashem rewards him by giving him enough wealth to continue doing this mitzvah.**

The Benefit of Wealth that Comes From Maaser:

Yalkut Me'am Lo'az explains the statement that one may test Hashem with *maaser* by citing

Emunah Creates Wealth:

the various words of Chazal regarding things that create wealth. One example is that Chazal say (Yalkut Shimoni 848): “One who wants to get rich should work with small animals.” In another place, Chazal say that marrying one’s son off to a daughter of a kohen causes him to become wealthy.

Since Chazal tell us that there are numerous things one can do to get rich, one may wonder why he should be so careful to give *maaser*. Why can’t he just do one of the easier things? Such a person should know that wealth that comes through *maaser* has numerous benefits that wealth generated in other ways does not.

1. Other forms of wealth can be lost during troubling times, and it is possible that one will not derive enjoyment from it.

Wealth that comes from giving *maaser*, however, will have Hashem’s blessing upon it and one will definitely enjoy it. 2. Wealth that comes from giving *maaser* will bear dividends and increase year by year, as long as one continues to give *maaser*. 3. If one gets rich by working with small animals, for example, the wealth will only be in the individual’s flock of sheep. Wealth from *maaser*, however, will extend to whatever one tries his hand at.

All three benefits are hinted to in the *pasuk*. It says “*aser t’aser*”, which Chazal understand to mean that one who gives *maaser* will become rich. It then says “from the crops of the field year by year”, meaning that the blessing will manifest itself every year, which is not the case regarding other forms of

wealth. It continues to say “and you and your household will rejoice”, meaning that you will definitely be able to enjoy your wealth, which is also not true regarding other forms of wealth. Finally, it says “so that Hashem will bless you in all of your handiwork”, meaning that everything you try will be successful and will bring wealth.

The Reward in This World and The Next:

Rav Yosef Chaim of Baghdad *zt”l* (Chasdei Avos 6:7) relates the story of two neighbors, Reuven and Shimon, who both became wealthy. Each of them had a different story to explain how they got rich. Shimon heard a *drasha* from his Rov in which he quoted the Gemara (Bava Metziah 59B) that says that if a husband

honors his wife, he will become rich. He fully believed this to be true, so he bought nice clothing and jewelry for his wife. Since he had full *emunah* in the words of Chazal and he pushed himself to fulfill them, he was blessed with wealth as a reward.

Shimon also heard a *drasha* from the same Rov, but he heard him quote the Gemara that says that one who give *maaser* will become wealthy. He fully believed this and he took one-tenth of everything he owned and gave it to charity. As a result, he was blessed with wealth.

When Shimon saw that Reuven became wealthy without giving *tzedakah*, he became very puzzled. He wondered how he got rich without giving *maaser*. He asked Reuven about it, and Reuven told him that his wealth was the result of buying nice

things for his wife. This answer caused Shimon a lot of anguish. He thought to himself: If only I had known about that *segulah* I could have gotten away with spending a lot less than 10% of my entire net worth, and my wife also could have benefited from the nice clothes and jewelry. Now that I gave *maaser* instead, it cost me a lot more and my family didn't benefit at all from all the money I gave away.

He went to discuss this with the Rov and he asked him why he didn't mention both *segulos* at the same time, so that the listeners could decide which one they prefer. The Rov replied, "Dovid Hamelech already answered this question!"

He opened a Sefer Tehillim and showed him the *pasuk* that states (49:17): "Fear not when a man becomes rich, when the

honor of his house increases. For he will not take anything in his death. His glory will not descend after him." He explained this to mean that one should not envy a person who becomes rich by "increasing the honor of his house", i.e., through purchasing fancy things for his wife (as the word "house" is reference to a wife). Even though he retains ownership of the nice things he bought and his household can enjoy them, this enjoyment is not eternal. He cannot take it with when he dies. On the other hand, **if one becomes rich through giving *maaser*, he will merit wealth in this world and will also be rewarded in the World to Come.**

**Learning Torah Without
Losing Olam Haba:**

It is stated in Sifri: “‘And you shall rejoice with all of the good that Hashem your G-d gave to you. (26:11)’ There is no ‘good’ besides for Torah. Therefore, Moshe said to give *maaser*.” This Sifri needs explanation.

The Chasam Sofer explains by citing the verse (Devarim 33:18), “Zevulun will rejoice in his goings and Yissochor in his tents.” Zevulun and Yissochor share a partnership. Yissochor does his part by sitting and learning, while Zevulun goes out to do business. They have a deal that Zevulun gives half of his earnings to Yissochor, and Yissochor gives half of the reward for his learning to Zevulun.

In this world, Zevulun may feel pained that he has to give half his money to Yissochor, but he will rejoice in Olam Haba

when he gets half the reward for Yissochor’s learning even though he didn’t do the learning himself. Yissochor, on the other hand, will rejoice in this world, as he is able to learn Torah without having to go out and work, but he will be pained in Olam Haba when he has to give up half his reward to Zevulun.

Accordingly, the *pasuk* says that Zevulun will rejoice “with his goings”, meaning that he will experience joy when he goes away from this world but not in this world, and Yissochor will rejoice “in his tents”, meaning that he will have full joy as he sits in the tents of Torah in this world, but he won’t be fully happy in Olam Haba.

This would seem to indicate that it would be better for Yissochor if he would work to support himself so that he could

receive his full reward in the World to Come. However, this would be impossible, as if he spent his days working, he would not have time to immerse himself in his learning. So what can he do? The best advice for him would be to be careful with giving *maaser*. If he does so, **he will be blessed with wealth in this world without the need to rely on the largesse of others, and he still would have enough time to devote himself to learning.**

With this in mind, he explains the Sifri to mean that if one wants to truly rejoice with the “good”, which is reference to Torah – meaning that he wants to receive his full reward for learning – he should do as Moshe advised. He should give *maaser* so that he will not have to depend on others for money and he will

still be able to learn all day, and he will then be able to receive his full reward in Olam Haba.

Even 100 Times

The Vilna Gaon *zt”l* explains how *maaser* creates wealth by citing the words of Chazal in regards to the mitzvah of *shiluach hakan*. Chazal learn from the *pasuk* of “*shaleach teshalach*” that one can send away the mother bird and fulfill this mitzvah even 100 times. So too, they learn from the verse “*nosson titein*” that one should give *tzedakah* to a needy person even 100 times. We see from this that when a *pasuk* repeats a word, the intention is that one should do it many times. However, the words “*aser t’aser*” cannot mean that one can give *maaser* 100 times, as

Chazal (Kesuvos 50A) say that one is not permitted to give more than one-fifth of his income to charity. If so, why is this word repeated?

The answer is that **the Torah is promising that one who gives *maaser* will make more money, and he will then give *maaser* on that money. Since he gave *maaser* again, he will make even more money to give *maaser* on. Thus, he will be able to give *maaser* 100 times without giving more away more than one-fifth of his money, as he will constantly be granted more money from Hashem and he will always be able to give more *maaser*.**

One Who Gives to Others Benefits Himself

The Maharal *zt"l* (Nesiv

Hatzedakah 2) writes that *maaser* is “like a wellspring that waters everything around it and spreads further and further. As long as the water flows and benefits everything around it, it gets stronger and its source remains clear and pure. But if the flow is stopped and the water becomes stagnant, the source gets dirty and is no longer pure and clear.”

He continues: “So too, as long as a person is allowing his money to flow to others, Hashem makes the source get stronger and he merits having his wealth remain with him. But if one stops helping others with his money, the source is no longer pure and it will get destroyed.”

Wealth That Comes From Maaser Brings Satisfaction

The Imrei Emes zy”a asks why the Torah would bless someone who gives *maaser* with wealth. What is so great about being rich? Doesn’t Shlomo Hamelech say (Mishlei 30:8): “Leadership and wealth do not give me”, and (Koheles 5:12): “Wealth is set aside for its owner for his detriment”? This seems to indicate that wealth is a bad thing!

He answers that although money usually can be harmful to its owner, money earned by giving *maaser* cannot. Regarding this type of money, the *pasuk* says (Mishlei 3:10): “Bring all the *maaser* into the treasury so that there may be food in My House, and test Me now with this, says Hashem, to see if I will not open for you the windows of Heaven and pour down for you blessing until it is more than enough.” Chazal explains (Shabbos 32B): “Until your lips become swollen

from saying that it is enough.” Usually, “one who has \$100 wants \$200”, but when one gets money from giving *maaser*, he is satisfied with what he has and says that it is enough.

Wealth that Saves From Harm:

The Imrei Emes further writes that the *pasuk* that says that “wealth is set aside for its owner for his detriment” seems to be saying that having too much money can be harmful, as was seen by the story of Korach. The Rishonim, however, explain the words to mean that wealth can save its owner “from his detriment”. In other words, if one uses his wealth properly, by giving it to *tzedakah* and for mitzvos, it can save him from harm.

Esav Wanted to Give Maaser so That He Would be Wealthy:

The Medrash (Tanchuma, Toldos 8) says that Esav fooled his father, Yitzchok, into thinking he was pious by asking him if he is obligated to give *maaser* on salt. The Satmar Rov zy"u (Divrei Yoel, Parshas Ki Savo) explains why Esav specifically used the mitzvah of *maaser* to fool his father by saying that Esav knew that *maaser* creates wealth. Since he had to act piously in regards to one mitzvah in order to fool his father, he chose the mitzvah that would make him wealthy.

Wealth from Maaser Creates Kedusha and Yiras Shomayim

The Satmar Rov zy"u (Divrei Yoel, Parshas Reeh) explains the

promise that one will become wealthy if he gives *maaser* by citing the words of his father, the Kedushas Yomtov, in the name of Sefer Arvei Nachal, who says as follows:

It is known that "the challenge of wealth is worse than the challenge of poverty." However, this is only true when speaking of wealth that one acquires in "natural" ways or as a result of his mazal. This type of wealth can easily affect a person's character and lead him astray. However, if someone is rewarded with wealth by directly from Hashem, this type of riches will not negatively affect him. Regarding such wealth, it is stated (Mishlei 10:22): "The blessing of Hashem it will not bring sadness ('*etzev*') with it."

We see from this that money from Hashem is blessed, while

money earned in other ways is detrimental to a person. Therefore, one should be exceedingly careful to ensure that all of his wealth only comes from pure sources.

When the Torah says that one should give *maaser* in order to become wealthy, it is giving good advice. It is saying that if one wants wealth that will not negatively affect him, he should not try to earn money in “natural” ways and **he should not rely on his mazal. Rather, he should give *maaser* and thereby earn blessed money that will not harm him in any way.**

For this reason, the verse continues to say: “So that you will learn to fear Hashem your G-d.” **The reason one should try to earn his money in this way is so that he should not be negatively affected by his**

wealth and he should continue to fear Hashem and to be on a high level of *ruchnius*.

Wealth from Maaser Leads to Torah L’Shma:

The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe) writes that it is impossible for a poor person to learn *Torah l’shma*. Rather, he has to use his learning as a means to get paid for it or to get people to support him. Therefore, Hashem promises wealth to anyone who gives *maaser*, so that a poor man has the ability to become rich and no longer be dependent on others, and he can now learn *Torah l’shma*.

Thus, the *pasuk* continues to say “in order for you **to learn** to fear Hashem.” When one gives *maaser*, he will be able to learn with *yiras Shomayim* – meaning

that he will be able to learn *l'shma*, as he will not have to use his learning as a means of being supported by others.

One Who Gives a Chomesh Will Become Wealthy:

It is related (Keser Rosh, Siman 123) that Rav Chaim of Volozhin *zt"l* said in the name of his rebbi, the

Vilna Gaon *zy"ta*, that anyone who gives a *maaser* (a tenth) of their money to *tzedakah* will be protected from all harm, and anyone who gives a *chomesh* (a fifth) of their income to *tzedakah* is guaranteed to become wealthy. He concludes by adding that if everyone would give *maaser*, we would see fulfilment of the verse (15:4) that there would no longer be any poor people.

וְנָתַתָּה בַּכֶּסֶף וּבְצֵרֶת הַכֶּסֶף בְּיָדְךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֵל הַמָּקוֹם וְגו' (יד, כה)

And you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and you shall go to the place He will choose... (14:24-25)

In Control of One's Money:

Rav Meir of Premishlan *zy"ta* explains the *pasuk* to be saying

that one should “bind the money in his hands”, meaning that he should be in control of his money, rather than let his money control him.

הַשְׁמֵר לָךְ כִּן יִהְיֶה דְבַר עִם לִבְבְּךָ וְגו' וְרָעָה עֵינֶיךָ בְּאַחֶיךָ הָאֲבִיוֹן וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ וְגו' וְיִהְיֶה בְּךָ חֲטָא (טו, ט)

Watch yourself lest something will affect your heart... And your eyes will be bad towards your poor brother and you will not give him... (15:9)

Looking Away from Tzedakah:

Rav Shmuel of Kaminka zy”a once traveled away from home to raise money. When he came back, his daughter thought that he must have brought some money home and that they would be able to pay their debts. However, when their creditors came to collect the money they were owed, Rav Shmuel said that he had nothing to give them.

His daughter understood that he had given away all the money he raised and hadn’t kept a penny

for himself. She began to cry but her father told her, “My daughter, if you had heard that your father had given up his religion and converted in Berditchov, would that make you happy?”

She answered, “Of course not!”

“If so,” he said, “why are you crying? Chazal say (Kesuvos 68A) that one who turns away from giving *tzedakah* to the poor is akin to one who serves *avodah zara*. **So how could I not give away all the money I had to *tzedakah*?**”

נָתַן תְּתֵן לוֹ וְלֹא יֵרַע לְבָבְךָ בְּתַתָּהּ לוֹ כִּי בְגִלְלֵי הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה יִבְרַכְךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְגו' (טו, י)

You shall surely give him, and your heart shall not be bad when you give to him as Hashem your G-d will bless you because of this thing. (15:10)

How Not to Embarrass the Taker:

The Chida *zt”l* (Sefer Pnei Dovid) learns this *pasuk* to be teaching

us how to give *tzedakah* in a way that does not embarrass the taker and in a manner that does not require him to feel beholden to the giver. One can do this by

going over to a poor man and saying, “A wealthy man gave me some money to distribute to whoever needs it. I want to give you some of it. Please take it.”

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying: “*Nasan titein lo.*” This can be translated to mean that you should give in a manner that looks as if you are giving someone else something that was given to you, rather than your own money. It then says “your heart shall not be bad when you give to him”, which can be understood to mean that you should do it this way so as not to embarrass him. The *pasuk* concludes by saying that if give in this way, Hashem will bless you greatly.

Doing Good Every Day:

The Rasha”b of Lubavitch zy”a once told his son, the Riyat”z of Lubavitch zy”a, “Getting up every day to learn and daven is all fine and good, **but if you don’t find a way to help a Jew, it is a ‘dry’ day.** Therefore, you should daven to Hashem to be given the opportunity **to do *chesed* and give *tzedakah* every day!**”

That very day, two men came to the door and asked for a donation for a poor family. The Rasha”b turned to his son and said, “You see! If you really want it, Hashem sends it!”



בס"ד

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