

Part 4C Rocket Fuel for Torah

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Justen Treger

There seems to be an unbridgeable gap between our desire to make money and Hashem's desire to forge a relationship with us through the workplace. That misconception was born out of our understanding that earning money requires effort and long hours of hard work. It's a world without Hashem where I am the maker of my own fortune. But the *Torah* introduces us to the real way to make money and that is your effort with Hashem's bracha is what makes you wealthy. Our pursuit of Hashem's bracha forges the relationship with Him and so it becomes that our desire to make money projects us into a life of *Torah* and *mitzvot*. And in fact, *Torah* and *mitzvot* are the source and key to our financial success. So, our basic desire for

financial success becomes the rocket fuel which injects energy and vitality into our service of Hashem.

In the 7th chapter of *Mesilat Yesharim*, the Ramchal explains the various component of *zerizut*, doing Hashem's *mitzvot* with alacrity, vibrancy, and proactivity. Hashem desires our sincere love and yearning to be connected to Him. We should have a longing to serve Him just as a thirsty person pines for water. We aren't born with this desire. How do we awaken it? The Ramchal tells us- become a *zariz*, bring alacrity and vibrancy into your *avodat Hashem* by using the things that do drive you in life to propel you to love Hashem.

We need to take that boundless drive for money and use it as our engine to do *mitzvot* with alacrity. When we realize that it's *Torah* and *mitzvot* that will have the greatest impact on our financial success, we'll become a *zariz* in order to achieve our desire to make money. This, says the *Mesilat Yesharim*, is the entry to a relationship of *ahavat Hashem*. Hashem gave us an endless, insatiable desire for money because it will be the most effective rocket fuel to project us into a life of *Torah* and *mitzvot*. Ultimately that will give birth to a love of Hashem. The workplace can be a key to forge the most incredible relationship with Hashem. In the coming classes we will study how to we merge these two worlds successfully.

The Significance of Why There Are Five Books of the Torah Part 2

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

In the first blessing of *shemone esrei* we mention all the *avot*, but then we conclude with *Magen Avraham*. Why do we only mention Avraham at the close of the bracha? The commentators explain that a spark of Avraham is found in each of us and it doesn't let us rest until we find Hashem. This will guarantee that the *brit* will endure and that we will bring the world closer to Hashem. The journey each of us will take to the point that we connect with Hashem and reach our ultimate potential varies from person to person. But eventually all of us will get there. This is another way that Hashem allows free choice while maintaining the existence of the world and its ultimate mission.

We hear our inner voice all the time. *Rosh Hashana* comes and of all our hearts are open. The voice of our soul demands a connection with Hashem. We can choose to ignore it or listen to it, but eventually we'll come to the conclusion that nothing will give us what we want from life unless we connect to Hashem. The *brit* will bring the world to

purpose. Chazal say that the generation of the giving of the *Torah* had the souls of the people who died in the *mabul*. They didn't accomplish what they were destined to do and now they were given another chance.

The second *brit* is *brit milah* which Rashi says is a covenant of love between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael* that was established when Avraham first fulfilled Hashem's command. The *Kli Yakar* explains that the *brit* that we see externally is a revealed sign of the inner covenant, the hidden potential love for Hashem that is given to every baby boy at the time of his *brit*. The nations recognize that there's something inside the heart of the Jew that makes us different and that is why they hate us. They are jealous of our bond with Hashem.

The three covenants mentioned in *Sefer Bereishit* are like a three-pronged knot that can't be easily undone and they are mentioned separately in *Bereishit* because it's the book of creation where the DNA of *Klal Yisrael* was created. The *avot* gave us the potential we

need to become the nation of Hashem.

Sefer Shemot discusses the *brit* at *Matan Torah*. Hashem brought all of the souls of *Klal Yisrael* together at *Har Sinai* and implanted within us the strengths we would need to fulfill our role as the chosen nation. The Malbim says that when Hashem himself said the first two commandments, it became a part of our spiritual makeup and this makes us intuitively know Hashem. In *Bereishit*, the covenants were on a root level and in *Shemot* we received these spiritual assets on a national level leading us to connect to Hashem.

In *Parshat Nitzavim*, which discusses the blessings and curses, we find another *brit*. Hashem utilizes another mode to help us fulfill our mission is by giving us challenges which arouse us to ask why and then propels us to connect to Hashem. This is true on a personal and a national level. We've see this played out in history and throughout our long exile, whereby Hashem redirects us to our purpose by the tests and trials we face and overcome.



The Beauty of the Month of Elul Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottleib

The central theme of the *Selichot* is the 13 Attributes of Divine mercy. It's a time when Hashem's *rachamim* is prevalent and we can ask him to help us on our path to repentance. The first step is determining what is causing us to veer off. What is the root of the issue? Examine your life and the periods when you experienced guilt and pain. But once you do that, don't let it end there. Tell Hashem- "I don't know how to begin. I don't have the strength." And ask Him to help you.

We say in *Selichot*- "Hashem, Hashem *kel rachum*...Hashem is the one who is omnipotent, and He comes down to us, signified by the letters- *yud, keh, vav keh*. The *yud* is transcendental where there are no questions and answers and no limitations. Picture a vast river that peters off into streams. So too Hashem nurtures the entire world while simultaneously spreading His divine providence over each of us. *Vav* means a hook. Hashem connects to the world through revealing His attributes which in turn builds relationships. He created a world in which one can see spiritual goodness and connect to it through the *mitzvot*. The letter *heh* tells us that Hashem is there when we seek Him out. The world has become morally corrupt. There's a great deal of pain that we've created through our misguided choices, but Hashem doesn't change. The same goodness and overflowing desire to nurture is still there.

In order to tap into this, you have to find the place in you that mirrors that. You have to make a determined effort to be considerate with everyone with whom you interact no matter how difficult they are. They may have

limitations and may make terrible choices, but that's about them. It doesn't have to change you. You could look at every person you encounter with the same kind of conscious desire to understand and give no matter who they are. There are people to whom you can't and shouldn't give and those who you have to treat with severity, but it should be coming from a desire to improve the situation.

Here's an overt positive story that happened to me. We were going up north by taxi on the road leading out of Yerushalayim when I spotted a man in a wheelchair alone at the side of the highway. We asked the driver if we could head over there to help him out. The young driver illegally went through four lanes of traffic, he could've gotten a severe fine, parked the car and went out with my husband. The man wasn't talking and later I realized he might have been dehydrated. Finally, he indicated to the driver where he wanted to go and the driver took him up to *Kiryat Moshe* to a synagogue. My husband offered to pay the driver for his efforts and he replied, "I won't sell the *mitzvah*."

I don't know this driver at all. The compassion he showed in this story was there all along but it was latent and Hashem put him in a situation of struggle so it could come forth. He made it possible for an ordinary person to be at least for that moment a perfect *tzadik*. It's a gift from Hashem that He lets His flow of goodness and clarity touch us so that we can maximize our potential.

Wanting to be merciful doesn't mean being foolish or naïve. It's wanting to be a person

who has integrity and who is decent. If I dealt with someone dishonest, I'll be more aware of dishonesty in the future but I'm not going to change and say -This is the system, I'll be just as tough. If you do find yourself acting callous and dismissive of people ask Hashem to help you become the person you were meant to be.

Examine your life and your behavioral patterns and try to pinpoint where you need Hashem's help to change. This is the first step to *teshuva*. The next step is regret. Regret and guilt are not the same thing. Regret is acknowledging you did things that weren't good for you and getting rid of it. Pretending you didn't enjoy the act when you know you did is not honest. But saying I don't like the person I will be if I keep on doing this deed is reasonable. The next step is making a different plan for the future that's related to the trait, not solely the deed. You have to get to the bottom of the trait. A lot of traits are just habit and you have to force yourself to act against your instincts in small ways. For example, someone who is judgmental should make an effort to see things from another person's perspective.

Ask Hashem for assistance. Give *tzedakah* because the more you give the more you connect. *Tzedakah* is different than all other *mitzvot* in that it has the power to save us from death. Death means being in a state of non-movement, a dead person can't do anything. *Tzedakah* puts us in a world of movement. You can take the money you earned and invested yourself in and use it to be a giver instead of a taker. In this way *tzedakah* takes you out of spiritual death and brings you to spiritual life.