

VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

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In English

ערב שב"ק פרשת
Vayakhel-Parah
שנת תשפ"ה

בס"ד

Unyielding Emunah is the Key to Receiving the Sanctity of Shabbos and Dwelling With the Shechinah!

» Is Hishtadlus Necessary?

The verse states (35:1-2): “Moshe called the whole community of the children of Yisroel to assemble, and he said to them: These are the things that Hashem commanded to do. Six days work shall be done, and the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest to Hashem, whoever does work on it shall be put to death.”

The Meforshim ask why the verse tells us, “Six days work shall be done”, when the actual commandment is only to rest on the seventh day? Also, if the main commandment is not to do work on Shabbos, why does it say that this was commanded by Hashem “to do”? Shouldn’t it say “not to do”?

The commentators (Ohr Hachaim and others) further ask why the verse uses the terminology of “work shall be done”, which sounds as if the work is being done by others for you. Furthermore, they ask why the verse refers to Shabbos as “complete rest” (Shabbos Shabbason), which sounds as if the rest must in some way be more restful than ordinary rest.

The Noam Elimelech (Parshas Emor) explains that the verse is coming to teach us how to do our work during the six days of the week. We are meant to learn that we should never think that we acquire our livelihood through our own efforts, intelligence, talents or abilities. Rather, we must recognize that all *parnassah* comes from Hashem, and we only have to do our measure of *hishtadlus* in order to fulfill the Divine decree and allow His bounty to be sent to us. The verse tells us that we must work for six days, but, in truth, the work “is done” – meaning it is not done by us; rather, it is done through us but has no real connection to our efforts at all.

The Admor of Neshchiz zy”a (quoted in Yalkut Yosef) writes that Hashem’s promise that He will provide us with “bread from the Heavens” (Shemos 15:4) applies to all generations. Even today, everyone’s livelihood is provided to him in the same way that Hashem sent *mann* to the Yidden to eat in the *midbar*. And in the

same way that the *mann* was covered with a coating of dew on the top and bottom, so too our livelihood is “covered in dew”. It is hidden in the fact that it appears as if we are working by doing the 39 labors like planting and plowing, etc., for our money (the word “tal”, dew, has the same letters as “lamed tes”, 39), in fact, it is sent to us from Hashem.

He adds that this is why Moshe said that “these are the things that Hashem commanded to do.” This means that we are commanded to work – to do the 39 labors of the week – but, in fact, the labors are merely the covering to disguise the fact that our livelihood is sent from Hashem.

» Hishtadlus With the Hands or Hishtadlus With the Mind?

When one has *emunah* that his livelihood is provided by Hashem, he will be calm and serene and won’t have to worry about his work.

Rav Shlomo Ganzfried zt”l, author of *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, writes in *Sefer Iparion* that it is difficult for one who believes he earns his livelihood through his own work, rather than it being predetermined from Above, to observe Shabbos properly. This is because such a person believes he will lose money he could have earned on Shabbos. But one who truly believes that Hashem predetermines how much money he will receive is able to observe Shabbos with the firm knowledge that he is losing nothing by doing so.

The verse in Tehilim (128:2) states: “Work with your hands so you can eat.” The Kotzker Rebbe zy”a explains that it specifically says that one should work with his hands, rather than saying that one should work with his head, to teach us that even though one has to exert efforts for work, he should only use his hands for this purpose. His head and his mind should remain focused on *ruchnius* and not on his work.

Similarly, Chazal (Brachos 8A) say: “One who benefits from the work of his hands is better than one who fears Heaven.” Rav Yechezkel of Kuzmir zy”a (quoted in *Sefer Chemdas Dovid*, Parshas

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Eikev) explains that this refers to a person who only does his work with his hands, and not with his head and thoughts. Even when he works with his hands, he doesn't stop thinking about Hashem and trusting in him. Such a person is on an even higher level than one who fears Heaven.

The verse states (Devarim 2:7): "For Hashem your G-d is with you. You have lacked nothing." He explains that one who lives with constant *emunah* that Hashem is with him in every moment and in every time of challenge will never be made to lack by anything – he will not be obstructed by any obstacle. Nothing can cause him to despair because he knows he is connected to Hashem with unbreakable bonds. Therefore, he will always be filled with joy.

This is teaching us two lessons. 1. Genuine *emunah* is the source for all success and all good things. The more *emunah* one has, and the more ingrained it becomes within him, the more success and Divine assistance Hashem will grant him. This is as the Ohev Yisroel of Apta zy"l writes in the name of the Admor of Zlotchov zy"l that the word '*emunah*' can be translated to mean to 'pull' or 'raise.'

2. When a person comes to the recognition that everything is in the hands of Hashem and nothing occurs without His direct orchestration, he will be able to live a happy life. Even in difficult times, he will not despair. He will fully believe that Hashem is accompanying him on his life's journey and he will know that He will never abandon him. He will accept that every detail of his life is Hashem's will, even if he doesn't understand it, and that everything that happens is for his ultimate good.

>> The Connection Between Parnassah and Avodah Zara

The verse states (Shemos 28:28): "The Choshen shall not move from upon the Ephod."

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l (Darash Moshe, Parshas Tetzaveh) explains that the two items of clothing are connected as the Gemara says (Zevachim 88B) that the Choshen atones for improper judgments and the Ephod atones for idol worship. He says that both of these sins are a result of a lack of *emunah*. If a person really believed that Hashem is the source of all livelihood, he would recognize that no man can take away something that is destined for someone else. He would know that it is impossible to steal or cheat someone else if Hashem does not allow it to happen.

If a person makes an improper judgment and tries to take something illicitly from someone else, it is a sign that

he lacks *emunah*. He is akin to someone who worships idols because he lacks faith in Hashem. For this reason, the Choshen and Ephod, which both atone for sins caused by a lack of *emunah*, must be inseparable.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l also says that a man who believes that his work is the source of his *parnassah* is just like a person who worships idols. One who worships idols believes that his gods will provide for him and give him what he needs. So too, one who trusts in his work feels the same way about himself.

A person who has strong *emunah*, however, trusts only in Hashem to provide for him, and he knows that he is only doing his *hishtadlus* to create a "pipeline" for Hashem to send him whatever he is destined to receive in any case.

Rav Yeruchim Levovitz zt"l (Daas Torah, Parshas Vayeilech) explains this concept by quoting the verses on this topic (Devarim 8:12-17): "Lest you eat and be sated, and build good houses and dwell in them, and your heart grows haughty, and you forget Hashem, your G-d, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage... And you will say in your heart my strength and the might of my hand has made this wealth for me. And you shall remember Hashem because He is the One who gives you strength to make wealth."

He explains that the verse does not say that one will forget Hashem because he has bad ideological views. Rather, forgetting Hashem is the result of becoming haughty and taking credit for one's own successes. To counter this, one must remember that Hashem is the cause of his success.

Since it is natural for a person to take credit for his own achievements, it is a constant struggle to remember that Hashem is the source of whatever one has. One must work on his *emunah* and constantly keep in mind that Hashem is the true source of it all.

It is not easy to banish all thoughts one has that tell him that he is the source of his own success, but it is necessary to do so, as such thoughts are literal heresy. The recognition that Hashem is the sole provider of everything in this world is the most fundamental concept of *emunah* which everyone must believe. This is as is stated in Chana's prayer (1 Shmuel 2:2): "For Hashem is the G-d of ideas, And to Him are deeds counted." Every idea and plan is orchestrated by Hashem as part of His Master

*"...Sefarim
Hakedoshim
state that this
type of emunah
purifies the
mind, and
enables us to
greet Yomim
Tovim in purity.
Chazal tell us
this (Rosh
Hashanah 16B)
when they say
that "a person is
obligated to
purify himself on
the regel." The
way we do this is
by believing..."*

Plan.

In truth, the secret to success is accepting that everything depends on Hashem's will. If one fully believes that his success is in Hashem's hands and He will decide what to give him, he can be confident and assured that he will be provided for.

This is as is stated in the Gemara (Beitzah 15B): "If one wants to retain his money, he should use it to plant an Adar, as is stated (Tehillim 93:4): 'Adir b'marom Hashem. (Hashem is mighty on high)'" Rashi explains the word "Adar" to mean "strong". The Sefas Emes explains this to mean that if one wants to retain all his physical and spiritual possessions, he should strengthen himself at all times to recognize that Hashem rules the world from on high and everything comes from Him. If one does this, he is guaranteed to have success in all that he does.

» What Do the Gentiles Have Against the Mitzvah of Parah Adumah?

To further explain the concept of genuine *emunah*, we may quote the verse that states (Bamidbar 19:2): "This is the 'chok', statute, of the Torah which Hashem commanded, saying: Speak to the children of Yisroel and have them take for you a perfectly red cow that has no blemish, upon which no yoke was laid."

The word "chok" indicates a commandment that we do not know the meaning behind. Rashi says that this mitzvah is called a *chok* because, "Satan and the nations of the world taunt Yisroel, saying: What is this commandment, and what purpose does it have? Therefore, the Torah uses the term *chok*. I have decreed it and You have no right to question it."

We may ask why the nations of the world care about this mitzvah. Why do they want to know its reason?

Sefer Tiferes Shmuel (Parshas Parah, Ois 2) explains that the main purpose of mitzvos is to instill *emunah* into our hearts, and the most important type of *emunah* is to believe and trust in Hashem even in times of darkness, when we cannot understand His ways. We are meant to trust in Hashem unquestioningly and to recognize that everything He does is for our benefit, even if we cannot comprehend it at the moment.

The Sefarim Hakedoshim note that in the verse (Bereishis 15:6): "V'he'emin b'Hashem" (and he believed in Hashem), the word "v'he'emin" is written without a yud. This indicates that the ideal form of *emunah* is to believe in Hashem without any "chochmas", as the letter yud symbolizes intelligence and wisdom.

The *pasuk* says that because Avrohom believed in Hashem in this simple way, "it was considered an act of *tzedakah*." So to speak, it was as if he was doing an act of *tzedakah* to Hashem by believing in Him without any questions or investigations of his own.

This concept is also seen in the Gemara (Bava Basra 10A), that says that *tzedakah* brings the redemption close. Chazal also say (Mechilta 28) that Klal Yisroel will be redeemed from exile in the *zechus* of *emunah*. As we explained, simple, unquestioning *emunah* is called "tzedakah". Thus, both statements of Chazal are saying the same thing.

This greatly bothers the nations of the world because they know that Klal Yisroel will be redeemed in this *zechus*. Therefore, they demand to know why we would do a mitzvah if we don't know its reason. They simple cannot comprehend this concept.

The reply is that it is a decree from Hashem and we must obey it. We say that we believe in Hashem with unquestioning *emunah* and, therefore, we do not need to know the reasons for the mitzvos.

This explains the words of the *pasuk*: "This is the *chukah* of Hashem that he commanded to say." We are commanded to say that we fulfill His mitzvos because that is what He decreed, even if we do not know their reasons.

Sefarim Hakedoshim state that this type of *emunah* purifies the mind, and enables us to greet *Yomim Tovim* in purity. Chazal tell us this (Rosh Hashanah 16B) when they say that "a person is obligated to purify himself on the regel." And the way we do this is by believing and trusting in Hashem with simplicity and without question.

In the merit of this *emunah*, which is beyond human comprehension and logic, we merit great supernatural miracles, in fulfillment of the verse (Tehillim 108:5): "Your kindness is beyond the Heavens."

The Bnei Yissochor (Agra D'Kallah D.H. U'badavar) writes that the main avodah of a person is to have *emunah* at all times. One who only believes in Hashem when things are going well for him is not considered a believer at all. Rather, one must have faith in Hashem even when things are not going so well.

With this in mind, he explains the *pasuk* that states (Devarim 1:31-32): "And in the desert, where you have seen how Hashem, your G-d, has carried you as a man carries his son, all the way that you have gone, until you have come to this place. But regarding this matter, you do not believe in Hashem, your G-d."

We may ask: What is meant by the seemingly extraneous words "regarding this matter"?

He answers that verse is saying that one who only believes in Hashem "in this matter", meaning when everything is bright, clear and good to his eyes, is not a man of true *emunah*. Only one who has trust in Hashem even when things seem to be going bad for him and he cannot see the good before his eyes is really considered a true believer.