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PARSHAS VAYEITZEI

HARAV YISROEL BROG, SHLITA | ROSH HAYESHIVA, YESHIVAS TIFERES AVIGDOR
SHIUR PRESENTED IN 5783

YAAKOV REPRESENTS LOVING HASHEM WITH ALL YOUR MONEY

In this week's parsha, Yaakov Avinu says something interesting to Hashem: וְכָל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן לִי עֹשֶׂר אֶעֱשֶׂרנּוּ לְךָ, "whatever you give me, I will take off *maaser*" (Bereishis 28:22).

Now in today's shiur you're going to hear a חידוש, an insight that I believe few people are aware of. Yaakov Avinu says, "I'm going to give *maaser*." If you look in the תשובות רשב"א, he says: ואהבת את השם. You're supposed to love Hashem with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your money. *Pashut*. He explains that those things are what we were מקבל from our Avos, from Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. בכל לבב, with all our hearts, is something that was bequeathed to us through Avraham. Avraham had such *ahavas* Hashem! And he loved his son Yitzchak more than anything else in the world. But when Hashem asked him to sacrifice his son, *b'chol levovcha*, he was מתגבר over his passionate *ahavas* Hashem to overcome the *ahava* that he had for his own child.

B'chol nafshecha, "with all your soul," with all your life, was exhibited by Yitzchak Avinu who was מוסר נפש in the עקידה. He stretched out his neck to be on the *mizbeach*. *B'chol meodecha*, "and with all your possessions" from whom did we inherit this *midda*? Yaakov. Avraham is *ahava*, Yitzchak is *b'chol nafshecha*, and Yaakov represents *b'chol meodecha*.

So now the question is, and it always bothered me, why is that *b'chol meodecha*? Where do you see *b'chol meodecha* by the Avos? So Avraham, you see *b'chol levovecha*, that's clear. It's also clear that *b'chol nafshecha* can be seen with Yitzchak. The Rashba says that *b'chol meodecha* is Yaakov, but where do you see that? The answer is, because it says וְכָל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן לִי עֹשֶׂר אֶעֱשֶׂרנּוּ לְךָ, "whatever you give me, I will take off *maaser*."

But does it sound to you that *b'chol meodecha* means "with all your money"? Does that sound like that to you? He's only giving **part** of the money. That's not ***b'chol meodecha***! Ten percent is only part of the money! He only obligated himself on *maaser*!?

CHARITY DOESN'T NECESSARILY EQUAL MAASER

Is that a good question? What's the answer? So I'm going to share with you a piece from the Chofetz Chaim. He doesn't directly address this question, but he teaches us an amazing *yesod*. There are many people who don't give *maaser*. But they're charitable people.

And when you ask them, "Why don't you give *maaser*," what do they answer? "I can't, I don't have enough money." No, they don't say that. I said they're charitable people, kind, benevolent people.

So, what do they say? They say, "I give much **more** than *maaser*." So, כאילו, they're trying to say that the whole *maaser inyan* doesn't apply for them. "It's not נוגע for me."

"For a guy who's a cheapskate, he only gives you *maaser* or *chomesh*, it's okay for him, he has to keep *cheshbonos*. But I'm a giving type of guy. So I don't keep an exact *cheshbon*." He's wrong. Listen to the Chofetz Chaim. At the end of the 20th perek in חלק ב he says: "I want to publicize one more thing, that those who separate *maaser* and *chomesh* from everything they make, גדול הרבה, they're much greater than those folks who separate *stam tzedakah*."¹

The ones who separate *stam tzedaka* are the ones who, when somebody comes over to them, they put their hand in their pocket and - boom! - they hand over a donation. One guy comes over to them, they write a check. Another guy comes over, they take out their wallet. But if you give *maaser* and *chomesh*, that's גדול הרבה צדקתם.

For them, their righteousness and the mitzvah of tzedakah is much greater than for a guy who gives *stam tzedakah*! You hear this chiddush?! The guy who's giving *stam tzedakah* is not giving one penny less than the other guy who's giving *ma'aser* or *chomesh*!? Why should the guy who's giving *ma'aser* be greater? Isn't that a great question? So the Chofetz Chaim says: מפני שאלו הנותנים, because those people who give *stam tzedakah* - a lot of people give *stam tzedakah* - יש להם רק מצוה אחת, they have one מצוה of giving charity.

MAKE HASHEM YOUR BUSINESS PARTNER

But their business, their jobs, has no מעלה, advantage, over anybody else's job. However, מה שאין כן, this is not so, he says, for those people who make Hashem their business partner. And they say, "Hashem and I are partners in this business. And 10% or 20% of whatever I earn is Hashem's." So then

¹ עוד אמרתי להודיע דבר אחד, שהנהוגים במעשר וחומש מכל מה שריווחו, גדול הרבה צדקתם יותר מאותם שנותנים סתם צדקה, אפילו אם יתנו כמותם. מפני שאלו הנותנים סתם צדקה - יש להם רק מצות צדקה, אבל העסק שלהם - אין בו יתרון על זולתם; מה שאין כן, אלו שעסקם משתף גם לגבוה, העסק גופא - יש בו יתרון גדול, שהוא עסק שיש בו מצוה, ובפרט אם בעת שקבל על עצמו מצות מעשר וחומש, חשב אז כדי שכל פעולתו יהיה גם חלק לה' - מה יפה חלקו, ומה נעים גורלו.

the עסק גופא, the business itself that they do to bring themselves money, יש בו יתרון גדול, has in it a major advantage.

You know why he says this? It's an עסק שיש בו מצוה. It's a business that has a mitzvah of tzedakah associated with it! But a person who works only for himself, and then when he has money, people come and ask for tzedakah, and he gives them a check: his business is not an עסק of a tzedakah. It's not in partnership with Hashem.

However, somebody who says, "I'm giving *chomesh* or *maaser* from my נכסים," that guy is a partner with Hashem. And that's much greater than tzedakah. And he says, ובפרט, especially if at the time when the guy is מקבל upon himself to give *maaser* and tzedakah, he thought then: I want to make all my actions מצוות. If he thinks I want to have Hashem being a חלק of it", then יפה חלקו ומה נעים גורלו. How great and how beautiful his portion!

You have two people working, both giving checks, the same amount of money. One was מקבל to give *maaser* and tzedakah, and his whole business is transformed into an עוסק במצוה. And the guy who wasn't מקבל to give *maaser* or *chomesh*, even though he gives tzedakah, his עסק is not עוסק במצוה. It's עוסק בענייני חול.

You hear the חידוש? It's amazing! Now the *emes* is, at first I never saw this anywhere else. When I heard this, I said, "Wow! That's an insight from the Chofetz Chaim."

The Chofetz Chaim was a big Jew. A great Cohen Gadol. What he says you could take to the bank. The *emes* is, the brother of the Shlah Hakadosh also writes the same thing. He says, ודע, you should know that the priceless value of this מצוה, even those people who give *chomesh*, to separate one tenth, another tenth, he says, they are *zocheh* to a treasure. He writes, "not like I heard from people who say, even מדקדקים, they're not מפריש the tzedakah for the עניים because they give from their own money and they give plenty. Maybe even more." They're losing out on the treasure of this מצוה." Is that not amazing?.

NOW WE CAN UNDERSTAND YAAKOV AVINU.

The Rashba tells us that Yaakov Avinu said, וכל אשר תתן לי עשר, "Whatever you give me, I will take off *maaser*. Two מעשרות, *chomesh*. לך, to You, Hashem." So we asked: okay, but it's only a חלק? How could this be considered as *b'chol*? What does that have to do with *b'chol meodecha*? The *teretz* is, Yaakov Avinu made a partnership with Hashem so that every aspect of his "business," every single עסק that Yaakov Avinu did, Hashem was his partner. He didn't say, "I'll be a kind person and take from mine and give You, Hashem." He said, "I want Hashem with me in all my transactions."

And that's why Yaakov Avinu was *mekayem* the mitzvah **b'chol meodecha**.

HASHEM'S BUSINESSES FLOURISH

To have a partnership with Hashem is a tremendous, tremendous *zach*. I heard of a fellow in his low 30s, that was זוכה to be מצליח in his פרנסה, he acquired many nursing homes. And he said to the rabbi that introduced him to learning and woke him up to the Torah world, "I want to make You, Hashem, a 10% partnership in every business of mine."

He made Hashem a 10% partnership, legally documented, in all his nursing homes. I said, "Wow. The guy's a lucky young man." He's a very lucky young man. Because now all of his business is an עסק with Hashem. And that's something you can't minimize. People ask you, "Who do you work with?" "Oh, I don't like partners. I don't work with partners." Take Hashem as your partner! So what, you think you can rip off Hashem? No, no, no. You have to be honest. You've got to pay the business. Now especially if you're a person that gives *chomesh* and gives *ma'aser*, it's not so hard to commit yourself to making a partnership, because you do it anyway.

It's just a matter of you turbocharging your actions and putting in more effort. A person has to know, says the משנה in Avos, אין מלווין, לו לאדם, when a person leaves this world, and you will leave this world, sorry to inform you of this, but one of the realities of life is you will leave this world. Every one of us. I know some of you prefer to feel like you have a stake here forever and it's not going to happen to you. You're sure that you are not from those people who leave this world. But you are!

GASHMIYUS ITEMS WILL NOT ESCORT YOU TO OLAM HABA

And when you're going to leave, you're going to want לוויה. You're going to want the accompaniment. And it won't come from all your כסף and all your זהב, not your precious stones, not your precious pearls, not your cowboy steaks, not your diamonds.

Once I went to a *g'vir* and I saw him looking at magazines with watches.

I said, "What do you have a watch for, are you in the watch business?" It wasn't his business. He said he's a watch collector. "You collect watches?" "Yeah, I collect watches." I said, "What are we talking about?" "A couple of million watches."

I said, "You know what a fool you are?" He said, "Excuse me?" I said, "I'm the one who's going to tell it to you. I'm telling it to you

straight, you're a fool. You're a real fool. You like a watch? Okay, get one for your right hand, and get one for your left hand." But to put a watch in an expensive hiding place, because you can't let it stand out, because maybe someone will come and rob you tomorrow and you have to hide it in a safe - a well-built safe, not a little cheap garbage safe that a guy can pick up and carry away.

So you put your watches in a safe, and you have no use of them. Just every few weeks, if you're bored, you'll read one of your watch magazines, you'll open up your thing and you'll look inside, you'll see, do I have that one, and do I have this one, do I have a cousin of this one, do I have a *me'eyn* of this one? "You've got to be a *tipish*." I told the guy, "I thought you were a respected person."

Somebody just now told me he went to somebody's house, one of these well-to-do fellows, and the guy told him, "I'm on the phone right now, go into that room, make yourself at home. He went into the room, it was a full room. It was a cigar room-all over the walls, cigars in special humidifiers.

Humidors they call it, humidors. And they have all kinds of gadgets to modify and control the exact heat and temperature. And the guy told him, "I have to go into the next room, make yourself at home, take something. Take a cigar."

The guy says, "I don't smoke cigars." Come on, take a cigar, you know. He didn't know what kind of a *chashuve mentch* he was. Another room had wine bottles. I went to a guy's house, a room like this, at least this big (pointing to the beis medrash area), maybe even bigger, filled with bookcases of wines with bottles, caps and everything in the history of each bottle of wine. So I asked him, "How much wine is here?" He said, "Too much to count." He's got a lot of wine. So I said, "You realize this is junk."

I said, "First of all, I'm going to tell you a little secret, you know. At least half the wine you have in your thing is a forgery. You know a guy could take a bottle of wine and spill it in an old bottle, and then seal it and sell it for a thousand times more than it's worth. And fools buy it, and did you test it? There's one bottle here, I asked him, "Did you test it?" Isn't it easy, it's such an easy forgery.

Do people forge things? People are trying to forge the US dollar for the last who knows how many years, and they're not successful, but they keep doing it. Because forgeries are a good business. It's a great business. The Russian government forged dollars in World War II. They opened a whole section. They put Yiden in there. I read a whole book by a Yid that was in charge of that department. And how at the end he deliberately messed up the machines. It's

unbelievable. People put their lives into such garbage, it's all nonsense that has no value. "You can't take it with you," I told him, "It's all treif." "Why is it treif?" I said, "It's יין סתם, it's all סתם יין."

They don't have enough kosher wines to build a wine cellar like that. So now, some fools in Eretz Yisroel realized how foolish rich Jews are in America. So they built these little wineries in the hills of Hevron and then they write on it, you know, their names, and tell you how great this wine is. And then they charge you a fortune, but it's such *tipshus*.

And you could be in a special partnership, an עוסק with Hashem. הב אין מלויין לו לאדם לא כסף לא זהב, all the things you value are not going with you, אלא תורה ומעשים טובים בלבד. Only your Torah and *maasim tovim* escort you.

Now you could imagine if a guy is a wise enough man to make Hashem his partner, you don't think that will bring you hatzlaha? Much more hatzlaha than you had till now? There's no doubt about it! Rav Yaakov Galinsky (1921-2014) said that when he was a bochur, he was in prison with another Yid, who was a famous *g'vir*.

DON'T WAIT TIL IT'S TOO LATE TO GIVE

A very famous, wealthy man. And one day he *chapped* a *shmuz* with little Reb Yankel. Yankel Galinsky was a very, very small, tiny man. When he was a kid, he must have looked like he was five.

And this *g'vir* decided to have a conversation with him. And the *g'vir* says to him, with tears in his eyes, he says, "We're sitting here בצער, בגלות, in a prison. You should know, I want you to know something. There are two people in the world that I'm not *mochel*.

THERE ARE TWO PEOPLE IN THE WORLD THAT I'M NOT MOCHEL. NOT IN THIS WORLD AND NOT IN THE NEXT WORLD." "WHO, WHO?!" HE SAID, "ONE IS THE KOVNER RAV, THE D'VAR AVRAHAM, AND ONE IS THE PONEVITCHER RAV."

Not in this world and not in the next world." "Who, who?!" He said, "One is the Kovner Rav, the D'var Avraham, and one is the Ponevitcher Rav." Yeah. What a surprising answer.

Reb Yankel asked him, "What's the p'shat?! What did they do wrong to you? These two *gedolei olam are ba'alei chesed*, they are *gevaldike* people! What did they do to you??" So he said, "I'll tell you. They used to come to my mansion, to my palace. And they'd

come and visit me to ask for money for their yeshivos. But they always spoke with דרך ארץ. They always spoke nicely to me. And they gave me *kavod*. And I gave them money. But I gave them very little. Compared to what I had stashed away, I gave them nothing. Now, why didn't they pressure me for more? Is it because they didn't need more? They needed more. Why didn't they put the pressure on me? Look what happened to my money now! It was a time when the Bolsheviks came to power and they, in one night, every piece of paper money that existed in the country became worthless. Nothing. So if they would have talked to me just a little bit stronger, *lefachos* (at least), they would have been *matzil* (saved my money!). Nu, something would have remained. There would have been a *zecher* from my money, and I would have had עולם הבא. And he burst out crying. He said, "And that's why I'm not מוחל them."

I read this story a number of years ago from Rav Yakov. And I started to think about a big *g'vir* that I knew. He gave tzedakah, but *shvache ma'asim*. And I decided enough was enough.

I had a meeting with him. I said, "I gotta tell you, I'm really ticked off at you. I'm really ticked off at you." He said, "What did I do wrong?" I said, "How many years do I know you? I've known you for a number of years. You never stepped up to the plate with your checkbook. Yeah, you give me \$500, I call you up, I need \$500 dollars for this, \$500 dollars for that. Shame on you." I said, "What kind of business is this? Why isn't your name synonymous in the city with a בעל צדקה?" "So okay, okay," he said, "What do you want me to give?" I said, "You're gonna start with big bucks. Where's your checkbook?" It was in his car, he got his checkbook. I said, "Now start writing checks."

And he wrote out on the spot about \$75,000 in tzedakah. I mean it. Some \$5,000 for this, \$5,000 for that Yeshiva, this *mosad*, that *mossad*, this tzedakah, that tzedakah. I gave him a whole list. You know what he said to me? "Thank you. I appreciate what you've done to me. I'm not upset at you. Thank you." I said, "I'm not finished." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "That's the monthly budget for my tzedakos." He said, "Oh." I said, "Okay, we can modify it a bit." "I will give tzedakah to everybody now. I will make my name synonymous."

I said, "I want to make sure I get the benefits from it too." So, he's been doing it for years. I got him top tier *talmidei chachamin*. I'm telling you, *talmidei chachamin*, class A *talmidei chachamin* in the world.

I had to look for them, I had to find them, I had to find ones who were willing to accept money. And I have to tell you, I told him

all the time, “You don’t even know the money you give. You just transfer it to my account and I pass it out for you.” I told him, “You don’t realize what you have.”

“I gave you a stake. I gave you a stake in the world of tzedakah in Hashem’s world.” He also started giving other people a lot of money. I told him, “Get, get more, give more, and more and more. Become an accomplished person. You’re not the guy when you started out in business twenty-five years ago and you made a hundred thousand dollars, you thought you were a big *g’vir*. Now you’re making millions upon millions.”

A guy once came to Rav Ahron Leib Shteiman and he said he lost eighty million dollars. Eighty million dollars! Rav Ahron Leib looked at him and said, “You had eighty million dollars to give? And you didn’t give? You let all the *mosdos* tzedakah in the world hang out to dry and you didn’t give?! You had 80 million dollars. Write a check out right now for one or two million!”

So what did he say? “I just told you I just lost 80 million dollars.” “Write, write a check right now for a million or two. You want to get back on your feet? That’s what you do.” People don’t get it. They don’t get it. Forget about *b’chol meodecha*, “all your money.” They don’t want to give anything. They do their own tzedakah, they won’t come with much to show for it.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu should help us get this point clear. Join Hashem in your parnassah and don’t be like those people that once called me up I asked him, “Do you give tzedakah?” “No.” “Why not?” “I got a *heter*.” “Okay, goodbye, I can’t talk to you. I can’t help you.”

How do you expect Hashem to give you a ברכה in your פרנסה if you don’t give tzedakah?! “I got a *heter*?” A *heter* doesn’t mean you’re going to make money. A *heter* means you don’t have to give tzedakah, and you’re not going to make any money. You’re going to stay in the basement. You want to have a fancy house without giving tzedakah? There’s no such thing. A person has to know this. And if you do that, you’ll be *zoche*. Hashem will be your partner and you’ll have *hatzlaha rabah*.

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