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THE PARNASAH CHALLENGE



FROM THE SHIURIM OF

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THE SEGULAH OF PARSHAS HAMANN

In this week's *parshah* we encounter *Parshas Hamann*.¹ Now this is a *parshah* that we should be talking about and learning about every single day. It's a *parshah* that contains probably the most mind-occupying subject in a person's life across the spectrum: *Parnasah*.

I want to add something that I saw in the *Tashbetz Katan*.² He quotes the Yerushalmi that says that if a person reads *Parshas Hamann* every day, he's *muvtach* (assured) that his *parnasah* will not be diminished, and he adds: "*V'ani arev* - I'm going to be a guarantor that this is how it will be." A highly unusual language.

WE OFTEN BADMOUTH PARNASAH

Now, sadly, the problem with this subject is that it's not a subject that you necessarily learn separately in *yeshivah* and most people learn this subject from their parents, who learned it from their parents. Meaning, that it's something where the education on

¹ שמות טז דלו: ויאמר ה' אל-משה הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן-השמים ויצא העם וילקטו דבר-יום ביום למען אנסנו הילך בתורתך אס-לאל: והיה ביום הששי והכינו את אשר-יביאו והיה משנה על אשר-ילקטו, וס' יום. ויאמר משה ואהרן אל-כל-בני ישראל ערב וידעתם כי ה' הוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים: ובקר וראיתם את-כבוד ה' בשמעו את תלנותיכם עליה ונחננו מה כי (תלונו) תלינו עלינו: ויאמר משה בתת ה' לכם בערב בשר לאכל ולחם בבקר לשבע בשמע ה' את-תלנותיכם אשר-אתם מלינים עליו ונחננו מה לא-עלינו תלנותיכם כי על ה': ויאמר משה אל-אהרן אמר אל-כל-עדת בני ישראל קרבו לפני ה' כי שמע את תלנותיכם: והיה כדבר אהרן אל-כל-עדת בני ישראל ויפגו אל-המדבר והנה כבוד ה' נראה בעננו: וידבר ה' אל-משה לאמר: שמעתי את-תלונת בני ישראל דבר אלהם לאמר בין הערבים תאכלו בשר ובבקר תשבעו-לחם וידעתם כי אני ה' אלהיכם: והיה בערב ותעל השלל ותכס את-המחנה ובבקר היתה שכבת הטל סביב למחנה: ותעל שכבת הטל והנה על-פני המדבר דק מחספס דק ככפר על-הארץ: ויראו בני-ישראל ויאמרו איש אל-אחיו מן הוא כי לא ידעו מה-הוא ויאמר משה אלהם הוא הלחם אשר נתן ה' לכם לאכלה: זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' לקטו ממנו איש לפי אכלו עמר לגלגלת מספר נפשיתם איש לאשר באהלו תקחו: ויעשר-כן בני ישראל וילקטו המרבה והממעט: וימדדו בעמר ולא העדיף המרבה והממעט לא התסיר איש לפי-אכלו לקטו: ויאמר משה אלהם איש אל-יותר ממנו עד-בבקר: ולא-ישמעו אל-משה ויוותרו אנשים ממנו עד-בבקר ויגרו תולעים ויבאש וילקטו עלקם משה: וילקטו אתו בבקר אשר כפי אכלו וסם השמש ונקם: והיה ביום הששי לקטו לחם משנה שני העמר לאחד ויבא כל-נשיאי העדה ויגידו למשה: ויאמר אלהם הוא אשר דבר ה' שבתן שבת-קדש לה' מקר את אשר-תאפו אפו ואת אשר-תבשלו בשלו ואת כל-העדר הניחו לכם למשמרת עד-הבקר: ויניחו אתו עד-הבקר כאשר צוה משה ולא הבאיש ורמה לא-היתה בו: ויאמר משה אכלהו היום כי-שבת היום ל ה' היום לא תמאנהו בשדה: ששת ימים תלקטוהו וביום השביעי שבת לא יתה-בו: והיה ביום השביעי יצאו מן-העם ללקט ולא מצאו: ויאמר ה' אל-משה עד-אנה מאננתם לשמר מצותי ואת-היום ראו כי-ה' נתן לכם השבת על-פני הוא נתן לכם ביום הששי לחם יומים שבו איש תחתיו אל-יצא איש ממקומו ביום השביעי: וישבתו העם ביום השביעי: ויקראו בית-ישראל את-שמו מן והוא קרע גדל לבן וטעמו כצפית בדבש: ויאמר משה זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' מלא העמר ממנו למשמרת לדורותיכם למען: וראו את-הלחם אשר האכלתי אתכם במדבר בהוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים: ויאמר משה אל-אהרן קח צנצנת אחת ותן-שמה מלא-העמר מן והנח אתו לפני ה' למשמרת לדורותיכם: כאשר צוה ה' אל-משה ויניחיה אהרן לפני העדת למשמרת: ובני ישראל אכלו את-החמץ ארבעים שנה עד-באם אל-ארץ נאשבת את-המן אכלו עד-באם אל-קצה ארץ כנען: והעמר עשירית האיפה הוא.

² ספר תשבץ קטן סימן רנו - "ירושלמי כל האומר פרשת המן בכל יום מובטח הוא שלא יתמעט מזונותיו ואני ערב."

the subject comes from the street. Most children grow up in homes where they heard over and over again about *parnasah*, about the lack of *parnasah*, about how they can't afford things. How hard they used to have it, how hard they have it now, how hard it will be in the future, and how worried they are about their children. How will their children live?

You have to know that first of all, you do a great disservice to yourself and to your children. Instead of teaching your children and yourself how to ensure and assure oneself and your children that they will have *parnasah*, what you're doing by feeding them worries is you're training them to have their *parnasah* diminished. Everybody will give you statistics and stories of life, Holocaust stories, post-Holocaust stories, what used to be when we came from the old country, all kinds of *narishkeit*. It would be bad enough if it would just be *pareve* and not negative, but not only is the thinking negative, it undermines people's whole challenge of *parnasah* and they never are able to get past it.

A Yid came here not long ago. He said, "Give me a *brachah* I should get old." I said, "Okay, what's that *brachah* about? You want to live long?" He said, "No, it's like this: In *Eretz Yisrael*, everybody knows one thing, that there's nobody without *chovos*, debts. People *drei* over there with debts for years as they marry off child after child... but it's an interesting phenomenon: When you get old, all the debts are taken care of."

You don't find 80-year-old people or 75-year-old people walking around with a burden of debt on their shoulders. All the old people in *Eretz Yisrael* that make it to that age, they're standing up straight and they're smiling. Their debts somehow dissipate. It's like there is a whole chunk of life when you're raising and marrying off your children that you're facing these debts and being challenged, and then it goes away.

HOW STRONG IS YOUR DEDICATION TO TORAH?

Now, the first thing you have to know — and you have to tell it to your children, you have to tell it to yourself, you have to tell it to your husband, you have to tell it to your wife, and many times they don't want to hear it — is that the *parshah* of *mann* in the Torah is the *parshah* of *parnasah*. In the introduction, when Hashem said He's bringing *השמים* מן מן, He said that the purpose of giving you *mann* is "למען אנסנו" — in order for Hashem to test you. What's the test? "הילך בתורתי אם לא" — *will you follow in My Torah or not?* That is the challenge.

One of the reasons people claim they don't learn Torah is because they have *parnasah* challenges, that they have to take care of their

parnasah. Now the question a person has to always ask himself is: What came first? What's the horse and what's the carriage? Did the *parnasah* challenges come first, or did your weakness of commitment to Torah come first? Hashem says: "I'm challenging your *parnasah* to see if you will go in the ways of My Torah. Will you learn or will you not learn? Will you commit yourself to Torah?"

Now, the Kli Yakar says that there are two *ta'anos* that people have to explain why they can't learn Torah. One is that they don't have *parnasah*. And the *shaylah* is, if a person commits himself to Hashem, the first question a person has to ask himself is: Why are you worried? No one has a difficult time *every day* of his life. So when you had good times, did you ever work on preparing yourself for this challenge? As a young, newly married couple, did you strengthen yourself? Most couples who get married have no *da'agos* of *parnasah* right in the beginning. They're like *bachurim* or unmarried girls. Have you ever seen a *bachur* worry about *parnasah*? No. Oh, I've seen greedy *bachurim* who wanted more: They wanted another piece of pizza. They wanted the biggest *shtick* in the pie, so they tried to manipulate their situation and get themselves some extra dough. But have you ever seen a *bachur* with financial worries? I never saw that.

Now the funny thing is, the *bachur* should be the first one to worry because most of the parents always complain to me about how little money they have. I'm sure they don't just tell it to me. They tell it to their kids, too. And to squeeze \$1 out of them is like squeezing dollars out of pressed grapes. So how come the kid is not worried? You know why? Because the kid trained himself to rely on his parents. And that's the biggest mistake, because the second he relies on the parents, that source will have to go. It will have to come to an end. If a person relies on his parents, that will have to come to an end. You know why? Because the whole purpose of *parnasah* is to realize it is coming from Hashem and to make a person have *bitachon* and be reliant on Hashem. That's what Hashem wants. He's training you. He's testing you.

Now, if you're smart, when you're a *bachur*, you tell Hashem, "Hashem, I'm relying on You. It's from You. It's from השמים, bread from heaven. The fact that You give it to me via my parents, *baruch Hashem*, that's only the conduit. That's not the source."

WORRY RESTRICTS PARNASAH

Here's a *yungerman* that gets married, and his in-laws or his parents help him out a little. In the beginning, they're living it up. They get a nice little car and they set up shop in the house, like a playhouse. They go buy what they want. Then, as they get more kids and the in-laws say, "Time is up already." Now, all of a sudden, their

whole source of income is gone. They never prepared themselves for real life.

Now, most people think: “You know what that means? They should have taken a course.” They think: “Maybe they sat in *kollel* for too long. They should have taken classes. They’ve got to get a trade, or do some other *hishtadlus*.” No! That is not the way to go. What you have to do is build yourself up through your *bitachon*. That’s the first thing you have to do. You have to realize that anything that you have is a gift from Hashem and no one else. Hashem is going to test every one of you. I wonder how many people failed the test and said to Hashem, “I’m now going to work,” and Hashem will some day show them that they failed the test. If they would have had the right *bitachon*, it would have been taken care of. But everybody says, “We can’t rely on that; that’s a *nes*.”

I think today parents are a *nes*. I see so many poor parents starting their kids off in their lives with support right after they said they don’t have a penny. All of a sudden, when push came to shove, Hashem gave them money and they came up with the money.

How could parents afford tuition? It’s a very big expense. (Others don’t pay, and not because they have *bitachon*. They don’t have *bitachon*. They take care of themselves. If they had the *bitachon* in Hashem, they would be able to pay.) Because people have worries and they don’t think about Hashem, and that itself becomes their greatest impediment.

TO WANT TO LIVE WITH BITACHON

The first thing you have to tell yourselves and your children is that Hashem gives *parnasah* to each and every individual, *b’hashgachah*...it’s supervised. He gives *parnasah* by personal delivery for each and every person. Tell your child: “What we have is good. It’s enough for us.” So he’ll say, “How come we don’t have *parnasah*?” You say, “It’s none of your business. You’re going to have *parnasah*, *mein kind*, because Hashem is going to give you *parnasah*. If you’re going to trust in Hashem, Hashem will give you *parnasah*.”

A person has to be *mechazek* himself in this area. Ask: “Why am I not getting *parnasah*?” The reason is...maybe you don’t have *bitachon*. So people say, “Oh I worked on that.” You know when you worked on it? After you have already failed the course; after years of forgetting about Hashem, and not relying on Hashem, and not training yourself to rely on Hashem, all of a sudden, you woke up and it was a little late. You forgot Hashem for many years. For many, many years, you forgot all about Hashem. All of a sudden, you woke up one day and you said, “Okay, Hashem, I heard about *emunah* and *bitachon*; okay, I trust You now. Give me the money.”

I once asked my Rebbi (R' Meir Halevi Soloveichik) about his father (R' Yitzchok Zev HaLevi Soloveitchik, the Brisker Rav) and *bitachon*. He said, "My father was a *ba'al bitachon*. We're not. My father was a *ba'al bitachon*." And he proceeded to tell me stories, amazing stories. His father was running a *kollel* where he had to pay the *yungerleit* every single Rosh Chodesh. He never went collecting, but he always worried about the money. And then was *boteach* in Hashem and Hashem brought him the money. One time, a fellow decided to do the Brisker Rav a favor. He figured, "The Brisker Rav has to worry every month about getting *parnasah*. I'm going to help him." That person decided he's going to put a whole bunch of money in the bank, and the Brisker Rav will have his income from the interest. He'll have an endowment fund, as they call it, and he'll have nothing to worry about.

If somebody would offer that to me, if someone would say, "Rabbi Brog, I'm going to put \$10 million in the bank. You'll have a few thousand dollars a month to live on." I probably would jump on it. Kiss the guy. Hug the guy.

You know what the Brisker Rav said? "Absolutely not." That means he thought about it and said, "Hashem is offering me a phenomenal opportunity." Maybe he could have thought it was a reward for his tremendous *bitachon*. He had tremendous *bitachon* in Hashem. You know what the Brisker Rav decided? That it was a test. He said, "I could take the money, but I'll never again have *bitachon* in Hashem. Or I could *not* take the money, and continue having *bitachon* in Hashem and getting the money the same way I got it until now, with *bitachon*." He said, "I'm not going to give up my *mitzvah* of *bitachon* or my opportunity of *bitachon* just to have a little less worry." You know why he said that? Because *bitachon* also gave him *menuchas hanefesh*. We don't have any *bitachon* like that.

That to me was mind blowing. I've thought about that story lots of times. If Hashem would give me this challenge, what would I do? I have no doubt what I would do. That's why Hashem didn't give me the challenge. I would fail the test on the spot. I would never have to worry about *bitachon* again. I would say, "Hashem, *bitachon* was great while it lasted. But now...I don't need it, thanks."

NORMAL LIFE VS. CRAZY STORIES

Imagine a child whose mother would come to him and say, "My son, you never know how long your parents are going to be alive. You never know how long I'm going to be able to provide for you, to feed you. You never know what tomorrow is going to be. I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I bought five freezers. I'm going to stack them with suppers for the next few years. I have closets. I'm going to stock them with clothes. I'm going to try to figure out how big your

shoes will be, how big your pants will be, how big your shirts will be — depending on how many of my suppers you eat. I'm going to decide that and put everything in the freezers and the closets." Do you think most people would appreciate that? Most people would say, "Ma, are you nuts? Are you crazy? What are you doing?" "I'm just making sure." No one wants that. No one wants to eat old food. No one wants to have some old clothes. This is crazy stuff.

The *gemara*³ says that if a person has enough to eat for today and he worries about what tomorrow is going to bring, he has to know he is *mi'ketanei emunah*, he's lacking in his *emunah*. Because if we believe that Hashem is going to feed me every single day of my life and He has done so until now, I have no reason to believe that He won't continue to do so.

You know, if a guy who was in the Holocaust would tell me he's worried about food, I would understand. There was a Yid over here who once came to my house; there were rotten fruits with all kinds of flies. He said, "Can I please have it?" I said, "It's garbage. You don't touch that stuff." He said, "Please? Can I have it?" I asked him, "What's the *pshat*?" He was a *chashuveh* person. He said, "You were not in the Holocaust. This is like a delicacy to me." A delicacy, rotten fruit! Now, some people can't even touch fresh fruit. But to that old Yid, that was a delicacy, rotten bananas, rotten apples. Oh, don't ask. By him that was a delicacy.

You have to tell your child and yourself that you have food in the refrigerator, not because your husband has a job. I never suffered one day in my life without food. The only way I had it was from Hashem. Do you know people who didn't have food for days in their life? Have you ever gone a day without having food in your life? Does anybody here know somebody like that? Did you ever go a day in your life without food? No, you can be sure about that. The world would have heard about it. There's no such thing. But as you read some of these stories, you start to believe from these crazy stories, "Maybe this is the norm?" But when you look around you, it doesn't happen; it's just a nutty story. The 'regular' story is, everybody has a roof over their head. Everybody has food. Everybody has a bed. It is unbelievable how many people have a normal life and are okay.

I knew a person, a *rosh yeshivah*, who was very, very poor. I felt terrible for him. At one point, I was a very good friend of his oldest child, perhaps he was my best friend at that period in time. The situation at home was dire, they slept in army cots. They got army cots that the army threw out, that's what they slept on. I mean,

³ סוטה מח: "...תניא רבי אליעזר הגדול אומר כל מי שיש לו פת בסלו ואומר מה אוכל למחר אינו אלא מקטני אמנה והיינו דאמר ר' אלעזר מאי דכתיב (זכריה ד') 'כי מי בז ליום קטנות' מי גרם לצדיקים שיתבדדו שולחן לעתיד לבא קטנות שהיה בהן שלא האמינו בהקב"ה וכו'".

the house looked terrible, like a *ruin*, a *churvah*. They had lots of kids. They slept two in the bed. I mean, *lechatchilah* two in the bed. One day, people in the *yeshivah* decided it's not *bekavodik*. It's a *bizayon* for the *yeshivah*, a *disgrace*. They got the *rosh yeshivah* to go away. They repainted the whole place. They threw out all the beds, got rid of all the furniture. They redid the house, furniture and all. He came home and was very upset. He said he wants it all back. "The paint you can't take off a wall, but I want it all back." He said, "The reason why I don't have it is not because I can't have it. I don't want it. I don't need it."

That's a different story. If a person is in that class, that's a different story. I'm talking about regular people. Everybody thought he was a *nebach*. I thought he was a *nebach*. I was shocked when I heard that story.

HASHEM'S CARE FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL

A person has to know that this is exactly how we have to live our lives. Every single one of us. Hashem is *doeg*, Hashem takes care. And if you thought about how much Hashem is *doeg* - *Ah!* I make a *cheshbon* every week and calculate how many fruits did Hashem provide me with this week. How many types of fruit? How many avocados did Hashem give me this week? The last few weeks, there has been a fancy store that's been having a sale on avocados. The price of avocados jumped up last year. A lot of the fields were destroyed. But there's a store that has the best avocados and they are running this kind of sale for 50 cents an avocado, I don't understand why. Hashem is *mazmin* to me, about seven to ten avocados a week. That means Hashem decided this year, on Rosh Hashanah: "I'm going to provide for you, Yisroel Brog. I'm going to give you avocados." That's such a *chessed* - to think about my diet to such an nth degree. He could give me a few dollars. "Go buy what you want." Hashem would have said to me, "I have to give you avocados? What kind of *meshugas* is that?"

You have to see Hashem's hand in every single thing. You got some honey tangerines? You got some clementines this week? Hashem gave that to you straight in the pocket, and He writes your name on each package. You can't read it. You have to have one of those machines, scanners. If you had a scanner, you could see it says "Brog" on it. It says it for each one of the family. This goes to Mrs. so-and-so. This goes to Mr. so-and-so. This goes to this child. This goes to that child. This goes to that one. This goes to this one. That's how a person has to look at it.

HAIR-RAISING REALIZATION

There is a *moradigeh* Medrash Tanchuma in *Parshas Tazria*.⁴ It tells a story about a *kohen* who would check *negaim*. When people had *negaim*, a kind of plague on their house or their clothes, they would come to the *kohen*. And this fellow was struggling with *parnasah*. He decided he's going to travel to *chutz la'aretz* and make some *parnasah*. So it says *kara le'ishto*, he called his wife, and he said to her: "Listen, people come to me all the time to check their *negaim*, so it's difficult for me to get a job. I can't keep a job. People are always knocking on the door with *negaim*." I didn't realize it was that common. He tells his wife, "Let me teach you how to check *negaim*. If you see a guy's hair, if the hair dried up at the source, you should know that this guy has been smitten with *negaim*, because," he said to his wife, "every single hair, Hashem creates with its own wellspring, its own source, a follicle. The hair comes out of a little well-spring, a little well of nourishment. It comes out of a follicle. Hashem keeps it moist, and when Hashem decides its time is up, it dries up. Now you know what to say, and I'm going to *chutz la'aretz* to make some serious money for us."

His wife said to him, "My dear husband," she says, "if Hashem created for every single hair on a human body its own *ma'ayan*, its own wellspring from where the hair gets its nourishment, so what about you? You're a human being; how many hairs do you have in your head? How many hairs do you have? And how many hairs in your children? And every one of those hairs has an absolute wellspring where that hair individually gets sustained from." She says, "Do you not think Hashem could give you *parnasah* right here? Do you think there's no wellspring for your *parnasah*?" He thought it over and he said, "I'm not going to *chutz la'aretz*."

HE IS THE ONE WHO GIVES

Most people see bills and expenses as being theirs. You have to realize that every challenge and every expense that a person has is *not* theirs. That is Hashem giving it to you. And Hashem knew about it before you knew about it. And Hashem is going to want to see: Do you believe that Hashem knew about it? That's why it says *השליך על ה' יהבך*, put on Hashem your *peckel*; your burden, put it on Hashem (Tehillim 55:23).

Now you would think that today a family that has ten to fifteen kids would never survive. It's not that uncommon among frum families today to have ten kids. If you would ask the United States government how much does that family need to be sustained, including tuitions in private schools, the numbers would come to astronomic numbers. Astronomic!

⁴תנחומא תזריע ו': "מעשה בכהן אחד שהיה רואה את הנגעים. מטה ידו, בקש לצאת לחוצה לארץ. קרא לאשתו אמר לה: בשביל שבני אדם רגילין לבא אצלי לראות את הנגעים, קשה עלי לצאת מעליהם. אלא בואי ואני מלמדך שתהא רואה את הנגעים. אם ראית שערו של אדם שיבש המעין שלו, תהא יודעת שלקה לפי שכל שער ושער ברא לו הקדוש ברוך הוא מעין בפני עצמו שיהא שותה ממנו; יבש המעין, יבש השער. אמרה לו אשתו: ומה אם כל שער ושער, ברא לו הקדוש ברוך הוא מעין בפני עצמו שיהא שותה ממנו - אתה שאתה בן אדם, כמה שערות יש לך, ובניך מתפרנסין על ידך, לא כל שכן שיזמן לך הקדוש ברוך הוא פרנסה. לפיכך לא הניחה לצאת חוצה לארץ, וכו'"

I once knew a person who didn't have any children. I suggested to him that when he comes to the Next World it's going to be a very lonely existence. He didn't have children because he chose not to have children. I said, "You're going to pull your hair out of your head. You're going to regret this like you never regretted anything else." I told him, "Now you're too old to have kids, but raise a boy and raise a girl. Support two kids. They won't keep you up at night; all you'll have is *nachas*. You'll support these children and you'll have *zechusim* as if you were *megadel* them." I said, "I'm going to find you a boy and a girl who I think are going to be superstars." And I chose two kids. I said, "It has to be completely in your *chesbon* - you pay everything." They both grew up to be superstars.

Now it's years later, and they're *mamash* outstanding. Each one of them is outstanding. They're *mamash* dedicated to Hashem with all their hearts. That *would* have been an investment for him. I was shocked that the parents, who were also *talmidei chachamim*, were *maskim*. I told the man, "Hashem is giving you this opportunity." And he did it; he did it for a relatively short time, until it started getting expensive. You know what he said? "I can't afford it." He could have afforded it. He didn't want to afford it. I told him, "This is the mistake of your lifetime...I'm not losing anything out of this. But for you, I want you to know it's the mistake of your lifetime." What a fool! For a few pennies! He said, "I didn't know raising kids is that expensive. How does everybody do it?" I said, "*Hashem*." That's what you have to train yourself to know.

EACH PERSON'S UNIQUE TEST AND HOW TO RESPOND

Now you have to realize the Rabeinu Bachaye (Shemos 16:4) says that the whole *ikar nisayon* that Hashem tests people in *parnasah* is *kedei lefarsem es ha'emunah*; the whole purpose why Hashem gives a person a challenge in the area of *parnasah* is because Hashem wants to publicize *emunah*.⁵ Hashem doesn't need this test for Himself; he knows where you're holding. But you don't know where you are holding. He wants to let people in the world know what they don't know. Hashem gives the *ashir* money - says Rabeinu Bachaye - because he wants to know how he's going to conduct himself with his wealth and with this kindness that Hashem bestowed upon him. Will he give charity or will he not give charity? And regarding the *ani*, the poor person - will he accept his poverty

⁵ ודע שיעקר הנסיון שהקב"ה מנסה את בריותיו הוא כדי לפרסם את האמונה באשר הוא יתברך גומל את הצדיקים ומעניש את עוברי רצונו ואין הנסיון צריך לעצמו יתברך כי הוא יודע תעלומות לב, אבל הוא להודיע לבריות העולם שאין יודעים, ומטעם זה מנסה הקב"ה את הצדיקים שנאמר (תהילים י"א:ה') ה' צדיק יבחן כדי שיתפרסם מזה גודל חיוב העבודה בעמלו על הנסיון ומצינו ג"כ שהקב"ה מנסה לכל בני אדם העשירים והעניים על דרך השכר והעונש, מנסה את העשיר היאך יתנהג בעשרו ובטובה שהשפיעו אם יתן צדקה אם לא, גם את העני אם יסבול עניו ורישו שלא יחליש ממנו כח יראתו או אם יבעט בו, ואין צריך לומר הנפש בגוף שהיא באה בתוכו לנסיון כדי לנסות את האדם אם ימשיך גופו אחר עצת נפשו או ימשיך נפשו אחר תאוות גופו, ובכל הענינים האלה אשר האדם מתנסה בהם תתפרסם לבריות אמונת התורה בעונש ושכר ויתקדש שם שמים בעולם ויכירו שכר העבודה והמחצוה שהוא יתברך גומל את האדם או מענישו בעוה"ז ובעוה"ב הכל לפי מעשיו.

and will his *yiras Hashem* not become weakened? Or will he resent Hashem, *chas veshalom*? You hear that? That's a person's challenge.

Here is a person who, *nebach*, went through his whole life always worried about money. That was his state of life. He heard it from his parents. He heard it from this one and that one. He went through all this suffering. He's going to come to the Next World and he's going to think, "Wow, I'm going to get a lot of *sechar* for my *yesurim*." You know what Hashem is going to say? "Wrong answer." He's going to ask him, "What do you think you're entitled to? Lots of *sechar*? Average *sechar*? Or below-average *sechar*?" I'm sure the mother and the father will say, "What we suffered all these years, my husband was learning in *kollel* and this and that, I'm sure we'll get big *sechar*, loads of *sechar*, for the suffering, for the sacrifice, for the *mesiras nefesh*." Hashem is going to say, "No. You're wrong. You failed the test! You never stopped making Me look bad. You always complained." On your lips was one song that you sang over and over and over: "*yesh li da'agah* - I have worries." Instead of singing "*Da'agah Minayin - Why Worry*", you sang *yesh li da'agah, yesh li da'agah, yesh li da'agah*. All day long you were singing that tune. You taught those *zemiros* to your kid. Your kid sang it. You know what happened because of that? Your kid said, "One thing I'm not doing; I'm not going to sit and learn. I didn't come here to do *mesiras nefesh*. What am I, Yitzchak Avinu at the *akeidah*? That's not me." You forfeited every single opportunity, the whole purpose of you being in this world. You're going to have to come back again to this world and Hashem is going to give you a repeat and He's going to say, "Let's see how you take it now."

The whole purpose of *parnasah* is לא למען אנסנו הילך בתורתו⁶. Hashem is challenging us. That's the *sugyah* of *parnasah*, to be challenged. How should we respond? The first basic level is to thank Hashem for everything you *do* have. Be exceedingly thankful for everything you *do* have, and realize that for Hashem to give you a little more is no big deal, because He gives you so much already. To give you a little more is no big deal, *mamash* no big deal. And then you tell yourself, "Hashem, I'm going to accept what You decided for me. You know better than me what I need and what I don't need. Hashem, I'm not going to budge; I never lacked all my life. I'm not going to shake. I'm not going to weaken." And that's what you tell yourself and you tell your children and you acquire what's called a Torah mind toward your *parnasah*.

HASHEM'S BILLS AND SOLUTIONS

They say, "Oh, I got lucky. I got lucky. I went to a Chinese auction." My Rebbetzin used to run a Chinese auction for many years, and every year, we would always be *nispo'el* how there were certain people who needed money and they would win. It was either that or the very rich who won everything, all the big prizes. I remember one time a guy came in and he

⁶שמות טז ד - ויאמר ה' אל משה הנני מקטיר לכם מן השמים ויצא העם ולקטו דבר יום ביומו למען אנסו הילך בתורתו
אם לא.

You have any *safek*?" I said, "I'm not sure. I don't know. I'm not picking out the tickets. If I'm picking the tickets out I can tell you if you're going to win or not. I'm not picking them out. My wife picks them out." Then this lady comes and says, "My daughter needs to go to *Eretz Yisrael*. I need to have money for a ticket." She put in one simple ticket and she won. I remember thinking, "Isn't that unbelievable?" Another poor couple who wanted to go to *Eretz Yisrael*. Hashem gave them the money. Hashem does these things; that's what a person has to realize. And if you realize this, your life will become much easier instead of living a life of worries. If Hashem gave you a bill, do you think Hashem doesn't know about the bill? Do you think Hashem doesn't know about the expense? Hashem wants to see: do you understand it to be *your* bill or is it Hashem's bill? If it's *your* bill, you're going to be up the creek without a paddle.

THE TEST OF HAVING GREAT WEALTH

Just because a person is wealthy doesn't mean he has it easy. It's a very big *nisayon* to be wealthy. You know why? You think it's easy to have *bitachon* and *emunah* in Hashem when you're wealthy? Most people that I see who have wealth take the credit for it. They walk around with airs. They walk around haughty. *My friend, there's nothing special about you; Hashem chose to test you with a couple of dollars.* And most of them failed the test. Most of them failed it.

Here is a person who is very wealthy, he gave a lot of charity, and then his kids were *yores* his money and they talk about how much charity their father gave. But they don't give that kind of charity. The grandkids hope there will be something left for them. They give much less. They always talk about it. Some rich people love to talk about how much *tzedakah* they give.

I'll never forget there was one man who was very hard to reach, very tough. I was at a *simchah* with him, and his accountant was there. The guy was saying, "It's 11 o'clock. People are waiting at my door. I never have any peace." I said, "Why don't you make a special time for *kabalas kahal* when people could come to your house? That's what successful people did. And people would know when to come. But you're playing this cat and mouse game with them all day long." He said, "But I give so much *tzedakah*." His accountant was right there. I turned to the *gvir* and I said: "Do you mind if I ask your accountant a question?" "What do you want to know?" I said, "I don't want to know numbers. I'd like to know what percentage he gives to *tzedakah*?" The guy said, "I give and I give and I give." I said, "I want to ask what percentage." I said, "Does he give 30%?" "No." "Does he give 20%?" "No." "15%?" "No." "10%?" "No." "8%?" "No." I said, "What would you say it is?" He said, "I'd say between 1.5 and 2%." I turned to the guy and said, "Have a nice day. You're a cheapskate. I want to tell you something. A *mechutza*. Hashem gives you such *brachah* and you give between 1.5 and 2%?" He didn't pass no test. He failed the test. No *emunah*. No *bitachon*. Hashem was testing him. He might have thought he was getting away. He

was riding a nice, big, fat car over here. He thought, “*Gevaldig*. I have a great life.” When he’s going to be driving in Gehinom, he’s going to hope he gets one of those little red wagons to drive. I’d make him walk around.

A person has to realize this and has to understand. Strengthen yourself. Be *mechazek* yourself so that you build up your *emunah* and pass this course. It’s the longest course in a person’s life. Pass it.

✧ IN SUMMARY ✧

It is really important to develop a strong Torah outlook on parnasah because it is a test that runs throughout our life and has eternal repercussions. By default, we tend to complain that we don’t have enough income and we worry about what will be in the future. The worst thing about worrying is that it undermines the work we are doing to build our bitachon. At the same time, through worry, we limit what Hashem will send us. The Torah approach to parnasah is that it is a divinely designed test to see how we will keep learning Torah and serving Hashem. Hashem wants us to realize that the whole purpose of toil in parnasah is to grow our bitachon and rely on Hashem. We must teach ourselves and our children to actively trust in Hashem and that is how Hashem will give us parnasah. This week I will (bli neder) invest in my Torah outlook on parnasah as follows: (1) I will thank Hashem for everything I have, and (2) I will work on acceptance and say, “Hashem, I accept the portion in life that You decided for me. I will not let it weaken my yiras Hashem!”

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Agudah of avenue L
Rabbi Bergman Ave N
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(Perlstein)
Sharei Zion Ocean Pkwy
Bais Horaa of Flatbush
Rabbi Frankel shul East 21 and
Ave J
Yeshiva Torah Voda's
Rav Scheinberg
Yad Yosef Torah Center
Rabbi Herbst Avenue M
Posna Shul Bedford Ave.
Bnei Binyamin
Ateret Torah Yeshiva
Shomer Shabbos
Emunas Yisrael
Biegelizen Alesk

Lakewood

Kol Shimshon
Beis Shalom
Satmar
Erech Shay
Arlington B"M
James St.
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Central Court
Rav Kahana's
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West Gate
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