

Kinder Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Trumah

Sadness to Joy

“Good morning my good friend Dovid!”

“Good morning Aharon. You seem so happy this morning.”

“I am happy. Hashem is so good to me.”

“I wish I could say the same. I am very worried.”

“Why, Dovid?”

“The economic situation is looking worse and worse. Businesses are closing up and people are losing their jobs, their cars, and their homes. It seems that everyone is worried, nervous, or panicky. How can you stay relaxed and happy in such a situation?”

“That is a good question, Dovid. I’ll tell you. I was born in Eastern Europe before the war, and had a happy and fulfilling childhood. Then, while I was still a young boy, the trouble began. My parents sensed a disaster and they made the decision to run away. We fled to Russia and lived in the wilderness for six years. We barely had the basic necessities of life. I cannot remember one time that I was not hungry or cold during those six years.”

“How did you survive?”

“My father used to inspire us with two verses from Tehillim. ‘He does not desire the power of the horse, nor does He favor the legs of man. Hashem favors those who fear Him, those who hope for His kindness’ (147:9,10). We realized that neither our strength, nor our cleverness would save us. Rather, we had to turn to the Almighty. *Teshuva*, *tefillah*, *tsedaka*, and normal *hishtdlus* (preparatory action) would gain His favor. Eventually we came back to civilization and made our way to the United States.”

“What suffering!”

“Yes, it was a real ordeal. You might think that it is too painful for me to even speak about. However, I gain strength every time I recall those times.”

“How is that?”

“Let’s have a look at the very same Psalm (147; one of the *Pisukei DiZimra*), verse three. ‘He is the Healer of the broken hearted, and the One Who binds up their sorrows.’ This verse is puzzling. Once the broken heart is healed, there should be no more sorrow. What is Dovid HaMelech adding when he says that Hashem ‘binds up their sorrows?’”

“Perhaps he is referring to the suffering of the past.”

“Precisely! A human being, can heal a wound or emotional anguish. From the time of the cure and onward, he will not feel any pain. However, when he recalls the past, he may still suffer. Hashem’s ways are exalted. He also heals the past suffering.”

“How does He do that?”

“He turns the bad into good. When we contemplate what happened to us, we realize that it was all from Hashem. It was a test that gave us an opportunity to grow. ‘Were it not for my falling, I would not have risen’ (Yalkut Shemoni Tehillim

5:728). When I recall those years, I remember how hungry and cold I was. It was hard, but we grew from it and became strong. We turned to Hashem and He supported us. We saw His Loving Hand save us time after time after time. We became very close to Him.”

“That is so inspiring.”

“I have retained that close relationship with my Creator to this very day. I look to Him in times of trouble. I know all about the economic crisis. Many people are suffering. I turn my thoughts and heart to the Almighty. I pray to Him to save us. I do not suffer, because I gained strength from my past *nisyonos* (trials).”

“May we all be inspired by your example.”

Kinderlach . . .

We say Psalm 147 every morning in Pisukei DiZimra. It details Hashem’s unlimited power and myriad of chassodim (kind deeds). He lovingly cares for all of our needs. What does He want from us? Just to fear Him and look for His kindness. He will redeem us, heal the broken hearted, rebuild Yerushalayim, gather us together, and settle us safely inside. What an opportunity to strengthen our emunah! It is good to sing to our G-d, for His praise is pleasant. Halleluka!

Integrity Before Charity

The Rabbi knocks gently on the door. The man of the house opens the door and greets the Rabbi with a big smile.

“Shalom Rabbi Yosher, how are you? I must compliment you on your punctuality.”

“Thank you very much Mr. Finagler. I am fine, how are you.”

“Wonderful. To what do I owe the honor of this special appointment?”

“This is the time of year that you give your annual donation to the Yeshiva, Mr. Finagler. Every year you give \$500. Will you be able to help us this year, also?”

“Rabbi, this year I would like to give \$10,000 to the Yeshiva.”

Rabbi Yosher is very pleasantly surprised.

“Mr. Finagler, that is fantastic! *Tizke li mitzvot* (may you merit to have mitzvot)!”

“Thank you Rabbi. I just made a great profit on big business deal, and I want to share my good fortune with the Yeshiva. I am in a new business. Some say it is not so legal. My lawyer had to bend some laws, my bookkeeper funneled some money from here to there without recording it, and my C.P.A. did some creative accounting work. But that’s business, Rabbi. All is fair as long as it works out in

the end, right? Give me a minute while I get my checkbook.”

Rabbi Yosher has a few minutes to think. How will he inform Mr. Finagler of his mistake?

“Rabbi Yosher, I am sorry to keep you waiting. Whom shall I make the check out to?”

“Mr. Finagler, do you have a minute for a Devar Torah first?”

“Of course, Rabbi.”

“Last week we read Parashas Mishpatim, which details many monetary laws: to safeguard your possessions from damaging others, to not steal, to treat servants fairly, to properly watch other people’s possessions, to not charge exorbitant prices, to lend money (interest free) to fellow Jews in need, and to judge cases fairly in *Beis Din* (court of Torah law). This week’s parasha, Trumah, deals with donations to build the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). The Torah was not written haphazardly. Parshios were written in a specific order for a reason. The *Beis HaLevi* explains why parashas Trumah follows parashas Mishpatim. Before a person gives *tsedaka* from his money, he must first check to make sure that there was no stealing involved in acquiring this money. Why? *Tsedaka* given from stolen money is a *‘mitzvah habbo bi’aveyra’* (a mitzvah that comes about via a sin). It is like a stolen lulav. The Mishna (Succah 3:1) states that a stolen lulav is *posul* (unfit), and cannot be used for the mitzvah.

Similarly, *tsedaka* given from stolen money will not earn you a mitzvah. Therefore,

examine your business dealings, and then give *tsedaka*, as the verse states, ‘Observe justice, and perform righteousness’ (Yishaya 56:1).”

“Rabbi Yosher, I am truly sorry. I never realized that business and *tsedaka* were connected.”

“I understand, Mr. Finagler. Your desire to do the mitzvah will help you. May Hashem give you *Siyata Di’shmaya* (Heavenly Assistance) to make a big profit without bending any laws. Then we will look forward to your donation.”

“Amen.”

Kinderlach . . .

Stealing is an aveyra (sin). Therefore, stolen money cannot possibly be used for a mitzvah. That is like trying to use dirt to wash yourself clean. No matter how much dirt you put on your hands, they will never become clean. More dirt will only soil them more. So too, you cannot clean up stolen money by giving it to tzedaka. You will not receive any mitzvah from this. The only way to correct the problem is to go to the source and return the stolen money to its rightful owner. Then use money that was acquired honestly for tzedaka. Remember, integrity before charity.