

English

בסייעתא דשמיא

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmani zy" a, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



Tazria Metzora תשפ"ו

• Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos •

ליל 389

אמרות שמשון

That Which is Necessary for Man's Life Does Not Diminish His Portion in the World to Come

“Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: ‘When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male, she shall be impure seven days...’” (Vayikra 12:2)

The *Midrash* (Vayikra Rabbah 14:1) says regarding the verse “When a woman conceives...”: this is what the verse says (Tehillim 139:5): “Back and front You have confined me.” Rabbi Yochanan said: “If a man is meritorious, he inherits two worlds—this one and the World to Come; this is the meaning of ‘Back and front You have confined me.’ And if he is not meritorious, he comes to render judgment and give an account.”

One must analyze how the *Midrash* says he inherits two worlds when, on the contrary, in this world the righteous are afflicted with suffering while the wicked live in tranquility. Furthermore, what Rabbi Yochanan says next is difficult: “And if he is not meritorious, he comes to render judgment,” for this is not the opposite of the previous statement; he should have said: “And if not, he loses both worlds.”

This can be explained according to what is said in the *Gemara* (Berachot 17a), that Rabbi Ami blessed his student, saying: “May you see your world in your life, and your end in the World to Come.” Rashi explains: “‘May you see your world in your life’ means ‘May you find all that you need.’ That is, let him lack nothing in this world; for it cannot be understood that he blessed him to ‘consume’ his merit of the World to Come in this life.”

It is written in *Mishlei* (13:25): “The righteous eats to satisfy his soul,” meaning he does not pursue luxuries, unlike the

wicked, of whom it is said: “but the belly of the wicked shall want.”

From here it can be said that although the righteous person does not enjoy tranquility in this world and suffers afflictions, he obtains all his needs with ease and without effort. As they said in the *Gemara* (Shabbat 151b), a Torah scholar does not become poor; and even if he does, he does not need to go from house to house to beg for food. This is the portion he receives in this world. However, he loses nothing of his part in the World to Come, for he only consumes what is necessary for the subsistence of his body—the indispensable—and it is not just that he should lose out for that which

is essential to his life. Therefore, the *Midrash* says he inherits two worlds: he receives his needs in this world and also his full portion in the World to Come.

In contrast, the wicked man, who enjoys this world and pursues luxuries, must render an account for everything he enjoyed improperly. For they said in the *Midrash* (Vayikra Rabbah 4:5) that all of a man's mitzvot and good deeds do not even suffice to [compensate for] the breath that leaves his mouth—meaning, even that already exceeds what he is entitled to by right.

How much more so the wicked, whose enjoyment is greater: everything he enjoys in this world beyond what is necessary is more than what he is entitled to, and for all of it, he will be judged in the future.

This is the meaning of the *Midrash*: the righteous man inherits two worlds—what he receives for his needs does not diminish his portion in the World to Come—while the wicked man will be required to render an account for the pleasures he enjoyed beyond what was his by right, and his portion in the World to Come will be reduced.

(Zera Shimshon, Parashat Tazria, Art. 1)

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The Metzora Must Approach the Entrances of the City

“This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification: he shall be brought to the cohen, and the cohen shall go outside the camp; and the cohen shall see, and behold, the mark of tzaraat has been healed from the metzora.” (Vayikra 14:2-3)

Rashi explains: “and the *cohen* shall go outside the camp’—meaning, outside the three camps: the camp of the *Shekhinah* (where the *Mishkan* is located), the Levite camp surrounding it, and the Israelite camp surrounding the Levite camp.”

However, the beginning of the verse is difficult: “he shall be brought to the *cohen*,” for the *metzora* is still forbidden from entering the camp; therefore, it should be the *cohen* who goes out to him to see him.

It can be explained that the law of the *metzora* is to dwell outside the camp of Israel—that is, outside any walled city. Nonetheless, the *metzora* could establish his residence wherever he wishes, whether near the city or far from it. Now, the *cohen* is obligated to go examine the *metzora* when called, as ruled by the Rambam (*Hilchot Tum-at Negaim* 9:11).

If this were so, one might think that even if the *metzora* were in a place very far from the city, the *cohen* would be obligated to go all the way there. Therefore, the Torah first specifies: “he shall be brought to the *cohen*,” meaning the *metzora* must initially approach the vicinity of the city. Then the *cohen* will go out to him. The *cohen* is only obligated to go outside the camp in the proximity of the city, but not to travel further away.

(Zera Shimshon, Parashat Tazria, Art. 8)

Toldot Shimshon



Chapter 2 Mishna 11

“[Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai] said [to his disciples]: ‘Go out and see which is the straight path a person should cling to... Go out and see which is the evil path a person should avoid.’”

We can propose a difficulty: why Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai asks his disciples what the evil path is, after already asking which is the good path — it would seem obvious that the opposite of the good path would be the one to avoid.

This can be understood in light of what is taught in *Sefer HaGilgulim* (Chapter 4), where it is explained that a person must fulfill all *mitzvot* with thought, speech, and action. It is not enough to simply do good and fulfill

mitzvot, assuming that in doing so one automatically distances oneself from evil. Rather, one must actively hate evil and avoid it and choose good. This is why he repeated the question — what is the evil path — and specified, “from which a person should distance himself,” for in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* fully, one must not only choose the good, but also know what is the evil path to actively avoid it.

Chapter 2 Mishna 17

“Rabbi Tarfon says: ‘The day is short, the work is abundant, the workers are lazy, the reward is great, and the Master is pressing.’”

It can be explained that all these elements mentioned in the *Mishnah* are interconnected. Because if “the day is short,” then the “work” becomes abundant. And because the task is great, the workers become lazy, feeling overwhelmed — there is too much to do and too little time. This heavy burden is precisely what makes them worthy of a “great reward” when they carry it successfully.

Indeed, as the *Midrash* teaches (*Shemot Rabbah* 32:1), the Children of Israel received the Torah engraved on the two Tablets; the Hebrew word for “engraved” is *charut* (חרוט) and the intention behind using this word is to allude to *cheirut* (חירות, “freedom”) — namely, that through accepting and fulfilling the Torah, they were granted freedom from the *Malach HaMavet* (the Angel of Death), such that there would be no more death in the world. Had they not sinned, they would have

received only the Five Books of the Torah and the book of Yehoshua, as our Sages teach in *Nedarim* 22b. Thus, before the sin, the days seemed long — as death did not exist —, and the workload was minimal, with only five books to study over an unlimited span of time. But after the sin, the Angel of Death resumed his role, and hence “the day is short” (one’s life in this world is limited) and it became necessary to transmit the entirety of the Torah, making “the work abundant.”

Since the Torah is vast, the “workers” become lazy; and since death exists in the world, so too does the *Yetzer Hara* (the Evil Inclination), which reinforces that laziness. Therefore, great effort is required to resist it, and accordingly, “the reward is great” for those who carry out the task — because the greater the effort and struggle, the greater the reward.

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