



לזכות החייל בצבאות ה' מנחם מענדל שיחי
לרגל הולדתו ביום כ"ד ניסן התשע"ו, שנת הקהל
שיגדל להיות חי"ל כרצו"ק ולנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

ולזכות הוריו חבר מערכת של גליון זה הרה"ת ר' יוסף דוד שיחי' זוגתו מרת רבקה שתחי' שטראקס

TORAH WEALTH

Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabbeinu amassed riches of material value. Why? With all of the immense spiritual qualities of Moshe Rabbeinu, something like wealth would seem so trivial and insignificant.

In this Shavuos farbrengen, the Rebbe offers a fascinating explanation with a timely lesson for all of us.

Based on a sicha said the second day of Shavuos, 5737.¹

There is a somewhat mysterious and enigmatic passage in Gemara, in Nedarim². The Gemara is discussing the giving of the Torah and *Luchos*, when it mentions that Moshe Rabbeinu was rich.

An obvious question immediately comes to mind: What merit should be attributed to Moshe by virtue of his money? Why should one care whether or not he was wealthy? In fact, it didn't matter whether or not anyone had money in the desert; everything was provided for them anyway! And the question is only compounded by the fact that we're talking about Moshe Rabbeinu himself, who led us out of Mitzrayim and brought us the Torah. Who cares that he was rich?

Moshe Rabbeinu, the Gemara tells us, became rich from the scrapings of the *Luchos*. When Moshe was told by Hashem to carve out the *Luchos* from sapphire, it was the extra leftover

bits that gave him his wealth. The significance of his riches coming from leftovers should not be missed by us; it is a fact that underlies the meaning of the very riches in contention. (In *Lashon Hakodesh*, the word for "scrapings" is פסלתן - which can also mean "waste"; implying that the riches were in fact meaningless to Moshe).

The reason why we are told that Moshe had riches despite the insignificance of materialistic wealth is: material abundance helps broaden one's mind for Torah learning.

It is told of the Tzemach Tzedek, that when he wanted to open himself to a "*hisrachvus*" - a broader and deeper understanding in his Torah learning, he would request a tray of coins to be brought in and placed on his table.

What was it about coins that would improve his learning? How would that make any difference?



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While many would attempt to answer that it was because the Tzemach Tzedek desired to give a lot of tzedakah, that still wouldn't answer why it should help specifically with Torah learning.

But, the answer is also clearly stated. The Gemara in Brachos³ says that “a nice house with nice ornaments will broaden a person's intellect.” This is true for the following reason: one's *nefesh habehamis* is not naturally inclined to learn Torah. In other words, in order to prevent your *nefesh habehamis* from disturbing your Torah study, you need to distract it. Since it is *gashmiyus* that attracts the *nefesh habehamis*, by distracting it in this way, one can clear his mindspace for the study of Torah.

The Gemara raises the question of how Moshe became rich, not just to teach us the technical details of his wealth, but also to teach us a lesson: That when we dedicate ourselves to Torah, Hashem blesses us with wealth as well.

Yet, at the same time we must remember that it should be of no importance to us, just like by Moshe Rabbeinu. His wealth was completely

irrelevant to him, like leftovers that one has no care for. Nevertheless, Hashem endows a *tzadik* with wealth, since only then can one achieve true greatness in Torah.

In discussing *nevuah*, the Gemara in Shabbos⁴ says that “the shechina only rests upon one who is a *chochom* (wise), a *gibor* (mighty), and an *ashir* (wealthy).” The question is obvious here as well: What difference does it make how strong or rich one is? Why is that a prerequisite of prophecy? The answer is that while these things have no real *chashivus*, they are things that Hashem endows the greatest *tzadikim* with. Not because they make the *tzadik* any greater, rather it is simply an expression of the way Torah and *gedulah* come together.

This is the lesson that the Gemara and Midrash are trying to teach us. By emphasizing the idea that it was from the scraps and leftovers, it implies that even before he had finished carving the *Luchos*, he had already received the riches just by involving himself in fulfilling the action—making a vessel to receive it.

May it be Hashem's will that we have a year that is permeated

throughout with the spirit of *mattan Torah*, ultimately leading us to Moshiach, and we will hear Torah from Moshiach himself. May we merit to the fulfilment of the words of the Rambam, “*V'chol hama'adanim metzuyin ke'afar*,” *gashmiyus* and riches will be so abundant, as to become as meaningless as dust. May it be so with Moshiach now. **1**

1. Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 2 p. 55
2. 38a
3. 57b
4. 92a



LIVING LESSONS, PIRKEI AVOS