



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Ki Tisa 5774

For many years, my grandfather zy”a walked each Shabbos from his home in Bayit Vegan to the *shalosh seudos tish* of the Gerrer Rebbes, the *Beis Yisrael* and his brother the *Lev Simcha zy”a*. He walked summer and winter, in pouring rain and in blazing heat. An average person, walking normally would take at least an hour to reach the Gerrer *beis medrash*. My grandfather would walk even in his eighties, and the walk would take about two and a half hours!

I remember that the *Beis Yisrael zy”a* once told me in amazement that according to his calculations just the walk from my grandfather’s house to the entrance of *Bayit Vegan* would take fifteen minutes.

For many years my grandfather suffered from medical conditions that made walking very painful. Despite the entreaties of my grandmother and other members of the family, he insisted on continuing his *minhag* with great *mesirus nefesh*. I doubt that among the thousands of *chasidim* in the Gerer *beis medrash* there was anyone who endured such hardship in order to be with the Rebbe.

Often, when my grandfather finally reached the *beis medrash*, the *shalosh seudos tish* was over. Time after time, I asked him why he undergoes such difficulty if he doesn’t even get to see the Rebbe, or hear his *divrei Torah*. I pleaded with him to stay in Bayit Vegan rather than suffer for hours without even arriving in time for the *tish*. He always refused to listen.



[1]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

Once, when I asked him to please explain why he insists on continuing to walk to the *beis medrash* even though he arrives so late, he agreed to explain. He referred me to the *pasuk*

וּמֹשֶׁה יָקַח אֶת הָאֹהֶל וְנִטָּה לוֹ מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה הַרְחֵק מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה וְקָרָא לוֹ אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהָיָה כָּל מִבְקֵשׁ ה' יֵצֵא אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה (שמות ל"ג, ז)

And Moshe would take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it *Ohel Moed*. And it was that whoever sought Hashem would go out to *Ohel Moed* that was outside the camp.

Rashi explains - "From here we see that someone who is *מבקש פני זקן* - who seeks to be in the presence of a *zakein*, is compared to *מקבל פני השכינה* - one who greets the *Shechina*."

My grandfather asked, "Why is the statement presented by *Rashi* asymmetrical? The first clause utilizes the verb *מבקש* - to seek, while the second clause utilizes the verb *לקבל פני* - to greet? Also, when we look at *Rashi's* sources in *Chazal* we find different terminology.

In the *Talmud Yerushalmi* - *מכאן שכל המקבל פני רבו כאילו מקבל פני שכינה* (עירובין פ"ה ה"א)

And in the *Midrash Rabba* - *כל מי שהוא מקביל פני זקן, כמקביל פני שכינה* (בר"ר ס"ג:ו)

Why did *Rashi* deviate from the terms utilized by *Chazal*?

My grandfather explained that *Rashi* wanted to teach us that even someone who was *מבקש פני זקן* without succeeding to be *מקבל פני זקן*, is considered to have greeted the *Shechina*. He went on to explain that he yearns with all his heart and soul to see the Gerrer Rebbe and to participate in the *tish*. Nonetheless, he doesn't feel discouraged if he arrives after the *tish* is over, because he knows that since he was *מבקש פני זקן*, his efforts alone will enable him to be *מקבל פני שכינה*.



[2]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור' שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortna@gmail.com

I will mention something related to that topic in honor of the *yohrzheit* of *Harav Hakadosh* the *Pnei Menachem zy”a*. I had the *zechus* of hearing from him on multiple occasions, something that he heard from the *chasid* Rav Avraham Mokotovsky z”l. Rav Mokotovsky had heard this lesson first hand, from the *Pnei Menachem’s* father, the *Imrei Emes zy”a*.

The *Chida zy”a* coined the phrase, אין לך דבר העומד בפני הרצון - Nothing can stand in the way of a person’s will. The *Imrei Emes* asked, “Doesn’t the *Gemara* explicitly state (ברכות ו.) חשב לעשות מצוה ולא עשאה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו עשאה. - If someone planned to do a *mitzva* but was prevented from doing so, the Torah considers it to be as if he did the *mitzva*. It is clear from the *Gemara* that a person often has *ratzon* to fulfill a *mitzva*, but something stood in the way of his desire and prevented him from doing so.

Even outside the realm of *mitzvos*, we encounter people daily who truly want to do something, yet circumstances prevent them from fulfilling their wishes.

The *Imrei Emes* went on to explain the *Chida’s* intention. A person often can’t achieve everything that he yearns to do. However, in so many areas he must face the question, ‘Why didn’t you at least yearn?’. Our ability to implement is limited by many factors. However, our world of *ratzon* is unbounded. There can be no excuse for not at least wanting to do all that a Jew can do, even while understanding that you may never succeed in realizing many of those desires.

Unfulfilled *ratzon* is not an exercise in futility. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* sees our sincere desires and rewards us for them. My grandfather understood this and happily set out from Bayit Vegan each Shabbos afternoon.

In a similar vein, there is a story about the *Pnei Menachem zy”a* that I often repeat. Before he became the Gerrer Rebbe, the *Pnei Menachem* served as *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Sfas Emes* (where I was a *Magid Shiur*). One of the *talmidim* found learning very difficult, and even though he



[3]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

sincerely tried, he met with no success. He asked me to help him meet with the *Rosh Yeshiva* in order to receive some encouragement. When the time came, I went in with the *talmid* to the Rosh Yeshiva's office. The young man began to cry bitterly. He told the *Pnei Menachem* that he doesn't understand anything that he tries to learn and that he feels that his life is going nowhere.

The *Pnei Menachem* was moved by the boy's words and he said, "I'm jealous of you. Everything that I try to learn, I comprehend instantly, without investing any effort. Even as a child I was very talented in learning. I must have inherited those talents from my father, the *Imrei Emes zy" a*, and from my mother who was the daughter of the *Gaon Rav Yaakov Meir Biderman zt" l*, the son in law of the *Sfas Emes zy" a*."

"However, I always aspire to some day truly learn with *amal haTorah*, toiling and laboring over my learning. You however, have the *zechus* of *amal HaTorah* each time that you try to learn anything. You must learn to state loud and clear, 'אשרי וטוב לי' - I am fortunate, and it is good for me!' For the primary aspect of *talmud Torah* is the effort."

The *Pnei Menachem* continued to encourage him, and when he left the Rosh Yeshiva's office, he began to learn with renewed effort. Eventually, his efforts bore fruit and he began to understand what he was learning. Today, he serves as a *dayan* in a municipal *beis din* in *Eretz Yisrael*.

This illustrates the value of effort and aspiration, as well as what may be achieved through sincere *ratzon*. *Ratzon* can penetrate the heavens and shatter iron walls. It all depends on us and on the strength of our yearning.

זכותו תגן עלינו ועל כל ישראל אמן כן יהי רצון.



[4]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com