



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Toldos 5760

In this week's parsha, we learn about the wells that were dug by Yitzchak Avinu. The third well he dug was not sabotaged by the Plishtim, and he called it *Rechovos* and said עתה הרחיב השם לנו ופרינו בארץ.

The description הרחיב לנו implies that Yitzhak is thanking Hashem for giving him a great gift, far more than what was needed. A person who can only afford bread and water wouldn't say that he lives ברחבות (luxuriously). What was so luxurious about this well that provided them with nothing more than water.

This is exactly the lesson that the Torah is teaching us. This well provided Yitzchak Avinu and his family with drinking water. Without that well, it is likely that they would have died of thirst. (A death which Rashi describes (Bamidbar 20/3), as worse than any other. Therefore, when they found this well, the fear of that impending horrible death disappeared. That is why Yitzchak called the well *Rechovos*, to thank Hashem for the "expansiveness" they experienced for there is truly no more luxurious experience than the transition from death to life.

Someone who has experienced that transition views every aspect of life differently. Someone who hasn't experienced the total absence of water, views a well of fresh water as a simple daily necessity. However, a person who nearly died of thirst, views the same well as the greatest luxury.

We shouldn't have to experience life threatening situations to appreciate even the smallest gifts that we receive every day. However, only



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someone who is humble, and truly feels that nothing is simply “coming to him”, can experience that expansiveness. In his eyes, everything in his life is a gift that Hashem bestows upon him with great *rachamim* that doesn’t correspond in any way to his good deeds. He rejoices in the smallest, most mundane items, more than a millionaire rejoices in his rare treasures.

This applies not only to our property, but to constant function of our minds and bodies. When a person understands that sight, breath, understanding and walking are all gifts, he lives with a constant sense of *rachavus*. He thanks Hashem with all of his heart and soul for those daily gifts, because he views them as *matnos chinam* that come to him because of Hashem’s great *rachamim*.

Perhaps this is the intention of the *Tana* in *Pirkei Avos* who said, “This is the way of Torah, eat bread with salt, drink water by the measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of discomfort, and toil in Torah. If you do so, you will be fortunate and it will be good for you. You will be fortunate in *Olam Haze*, and it will be good for you in *Olam Haba*. (Avos 6/4)

We have difficulty understanding how a person who lives a life of such *tzaar* can be described as “fortunate in *Olam Haze*”. Perhaps we are willing to accept that it will be “good for him in *Olam Haba*”, but nothing in the Mishna’s description seems to portray someone who is “fortunate in *Olam Haze*”.

It must be that that the *Tana*’s intention was to teach us that if a person is *עמל בתורה*, truly toils in Torah, he will internalize the *midah* of true humility. Such a person realizes that even the most basic things in his life, come to him as *matnas chinam*, a gift from Hashem. That outlook enables him to feel “fortunate in *Olam Haze*” even when all he has is bread, salt, and a measure of water.



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This was truly the way of all the *tzadikim* and *chasidim*, who were sincerely humble. I heard a story from my grandfather *zy" a* that illustrates this approach.

R. Menachem Nochum of Trisk *zy" a*, was the son in law of R. Dovid of Tolna, and the son of R. Dovid's brother, the Trisker Magid *zy" a*. At one point in his life, he moved to the city of Brisk, and built a small building that would serve as a center of Torah and Avodah. When the building was ready, the Rav of the city, R. Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik, the *Beis Halevi zt" l*, (who greatly respected R. Menachem Nochum), attended the *chanukas habayis*.

He was surprised to see how small the building was, and mentioned this to R. Menachem Nochum. R. Menachem Nochum responded, "If I will make myself smaller, the place will become bigger". The Beis Halevi greatly praised this *vort*, which expressed the humility of the one who said it.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 7a), says that when two people love each other, there is room for both of them, and if they don't love each other, even a space sixty *amos* wide won't be sufficient for them.

Yitzchak Avinu called the well *Rechovos* because *הרחיב ה' לנו*. The *gematria* (numerical value) of the first letters of those words is equivalent to the *gematria* of *מה*. That word expresses the *midah* of *anava* (humility), as Moshe and Aharon said (Shemos 17/7-8) *ונחנו מה* (what are we). This *gematria* hints to the principle, that the more a person minimizes himself, he experiences expansiveness, and is able to rejoice with what he has.

Unfortunately, people constantly forget that anything they have didn't come to them as a result of their cleverness, strength, or even as a reward for their good deeds, but rather from Hashem's hand. Since they mistakenly imagine that they accomplished everything, they always feel limited, and aren't able to experience *rachavus*, not matter how much



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they have. Chazal taught us that “someone who has one hundred, wants two hundred”. If they only opened their eyes, and saw the world as it truly is, they would rejoice and thank Hashem even for the smallest items. Someone who lives that way will merit the *brachah* at the end of the pasuk, ופרינו בארץ - we will be fruitful in the land.

Melave Malka is a very appropriate time to focus on this message. Dovid Hamelech described himself in Tehillim as, “I am a worm and not a man”. We also had the privilege of seeing my grandfather zt”l, who throughout his life really viewed himself as the lowliest of creatures, and also rejoiced and experienced *rachavus* in everything he had. He never felt that he was missing anything.

May Hashem help us in his *zechus*, and in the *zechus* of Dovid Malka Meshicha, to be truly humble and serve Hashem with a constant sense of *rachavus*. אכי"ר



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