

SATISFACTION CAN BRING HIM BACK

by Rabbi Label Lam

Righteousness righteousness you should pursue in order that you should live and you should inherit the land that HASHEM your G-d is giving you. (Devarim 16:20)

Truth- truth you should pursue... (Targum Onkelos-Aramaic Translation)

The story is told of a linguistics professor who was lecturing to his class one day. "In English" he said, "a double negative forms a positive. In some languages though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However, there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative." A voice from the back of the room piped up, "Yeah right!"

Why the double of expression of righteousness- righteous or truth-truth? Is it a positive or is it a negative? How does the pursuit of truth and righteousness relate to inheriting "the land"?

The Peshischa Rebbe had said "The pursuit of truth should be with truth and not with falseness." How can the pursuit of truth be with falseness?

It was told of a young man in Peshischa that learned for the sake of a cat. It seems that after he married the young man was offered a study in the home of his in-laws. Whenever he heard the sound of movement outside his room, he would raise his voice and learn more loudly and diligently because he thought the noise was the footsteps of his father in-law or his mother in-law and so he aimed to impress them with the level and intensity of his Torah scholarship. The movements he heard, however, were only the footsteps of the cat moving about. So it was said about him that instead of learning for the sake of Heaven he learned for the sake of a cat.

The corollary to that story may be as follows: A wealthy man entered a Yeshiva one day in search of a suitable match for his beautiful daughter. To ensure he would be selecting the best candidate he presented a difficult Talmudic riddle and offered his daughter's hand in marriage to the fellow that could give the right answer. Throughout the day students lined up and attempted to answer the question. Not one student though was successful in offering the correct answer. So the wealthy man picked himself up, boarded his horse and carriage, and headed out of town. As he reached the city limits and he paused to consider his direction a voice was heard shouting in the distance. Soon he saw a young man running exhaustedly but with great determination. It was instantly apparent that this young fellow was a student from the Yeshiva. He had been running all the way after the speeding horse and carriage. Finally he had caught up. Out of breath, sweating profusely and caked

with dust and mud he declared to the wealthy man, "OK! Nobody merited marriage to your daughter. What's the answer to the question?" The man looked at him with astonishment and responded confidently, "You're the one I want for my daughter!"

Perhaps the Peshischa means that the means means much more. For the chaser of truth, his passion for plumbing the depths of a matter will likely lead him to strike ore more than a casual externally directed approach. Sure the fellow with the cat upped his output and it's a big merit for the cat. However, the burning curiosity of the Yeshiva man got him the grand prize. There may be more to the kiddy phrase, "Curiosity killed the cat. Satisfaction brought him back. So say the sages, "The Torah is only maintained by one who kills himself over it. Seeking that **satisfaction can bring him back**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).