

PAYING THE TRIBE OF TORAH LEARNERS / "I HAVE RECEIVED MORE THAN I DESERVE"

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The first dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #965 – The Proper Time for Maariv. The second dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 216, Maariv. Good Shabbos!

The Tribe of Torah Learners Was Created As A Result of Someone's Payment

I recently heard a story involving a Rav Orenstein, who was a Rav in Detroit more than 50 years ago. Rav Orenstein was a student of the Chofetz Chaim in Radin, Poland. Rav Orenstein commented that he once heard an interesting observation from his esteemed teacher:

The *pasuk* [verse] in Parshas Vayeitze talks about the birth of the Tribe of Yissacher. Reuven brought home certain flowers for his mother. Rochel saw the flowers and asked Leah for some of them. Leah responded "Was your taking my husband insignificant? – And to take even my son's flowers!" Rochel proposed an offer that Leah accepted: "Therefore, he shall lie with you tonight in return for your son's flowers". [Bereshis 30:14-15] Yaakov in fact spent the night with Leah and that night the Tribe of Yissacher was conceived.

Rav Orenstein said over in the name of his Rebbi that we know that the Tribe of Yissacher is the tribe in *Klal Yisrael* that personifies Torah study. The whole genesis of *Shevet Yissacher* occurred because somebody paid somebody else. This set the tone for the rest of Jewish history. The existence of the "Tribe of Torah learners" amongst the Jewish nation comes about because other people are willing to pay. This is the "*ma'aseh Avot siman l'Banim*" – that there should be a concept amongst the Jewish people that there is a class of individuals devoted to Torah study amongst the nation that involves someone else "footing the bill". The classic relationship between the supporters of Torah and the Torah learners has its beginning in Parshas Vayeitzei when Yissacher came into existence because of the flowers that Rochel was willing to pay for.

Leah Was Commended For Recognizing "I Have Received More Than I Deserve"

Upon the birth of her fourth son, Yehudah, Leah said, "This time I will thank Hashem" [Bereshis 29:35]. Rash"i quotes the Rabbinic explanation that this expression of gratitude was due to the fact that she

now had given birth to more than her share of Tribes. "Now that I have received more than my portion, it is time to express my gratitude to G-d".

What is the meaning of the statement that Leah received more than her portion? Our Rabbis explain that Leah made a simple mathematical calculation. She divided the twelve future tribes by 4 wives and arrived at the result of 3 tribes per wife. Now that she had her fourth son, she offered praise to G-d. The Rabbis praise Leah for her recognition that she owed a debt of gratitude to the Almighty.

Although Leah's recognition that she owed a debt of gratitude is certainly praiseworthy, this teaching of our Rabbis does not seem to make sense. Who deserves more praise — the person who receives his or her proper share and feels indebted to G-d, or the person who receives more than his or her fair share and feels indebted to G-d? Obviously, the first person is more deserving of praise.

I saw a very interesting observation from Rav Dovid Kviat (Maggid Shiur in the Mir Yeshiva, New York): The praiseworthy aspect of Leah's behavior here was that she viewed what she received as "more than her fair share".

By nature, human beings view that which they receive in life as something that they had coming to them. "This is what I deserve." If my friend is earning \$30,000 a year and I am earning half a million dollars a year, it may not be so easy to recognize my great fortune. It is easy to think, "I am smarter than him, I am cleverer than him, I earned this on my own — it was coming to me!"

The novelty of Leah's comment is that we see that a person has the ability to step back, look at a situation objectively and conclude, "I am getting more than I deserve". This is not our normal tendency. The normal tendency is to view life as either "I am getting my fair share" or at best, "I am getting less than I deserve." The rare person, who lives their life with the attitude that "I have gotten more than I deserve," is indeed a praiseworthy person.

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Vayetzei is provided below:

- # 032 - The Obligation to Give Ma'aser
- # 074 - Honoring Parents Who Are Not Observant
- # 123 - Tefilla B'tzibur: Is It Mandatory?
- # 170 - Marrying Off a Younger Child First
- # 216 - Maariv
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- # 526 - A Million Dollars to Tzadaka If ..
- # 570 - Tuition and Maaser Money
- # 614 - The Tefilah of Baruch Hashem L'Olam Omein V'Omein
- # 658 - Lashon Aramis - Aramaic
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- #1009 - Sheva Brachos Questions
- #1053 - The Younger Brother Who Says "I'm Getting Married First"
- #1096 - Davening With A Minyan - Obligation Or Just A Good Idea?
- #1139 - Can The Younger Brother Marry Before His Older Sister?
- #1182 - Chasan Going To Work During Sheva Brochos / Leaving Chasunah Early
- #1226 - Why Was Rachel Punished for Stealing Her Father's Idols?

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