

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

TESTING G-D

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Rabbi Yohanan found the young son of Reish Lakish. He said to him, "Recite to me your verse" [i.e., the verse that you studied today in school; it was a common practice to ask school children what verse they learned that day]."

Quoting a verse from this week's Torah portion, Re'eh, the boy said, "A tithe you shall tithe."

Continuing, the boy asked, "But what is the meaning of the verse?" Perhaps the astute boy wondered why the word "tithe" was repeated.

Rabbi Yohanan replied that it means that one should take a tithe so that you will become wealthy.

His interpretation of the verse can be understood based on the fact that the Hebrew word for tithe, עֶשֶׂר, *asser*, can also be read with the letter 'sin' vocalized as a 'shin' (the Hebrew letters are identical in appearance, differing only in whether a dot is placed above the left branch or above the right branch). When pronounced with a 'shin' instead of a 'sin,' the word means wealthy. Thus, tithe (*asser*) in order to become wealth (*asher*).

The boy asked further, "How do you know this?"

Rabbi Yohanan responded, "Go and test it."

"And is it permitted to test the Holy One, blessed be He?!"



Rabbi Yohanan said to the boy that Rabbi Hoshaya said that it is prohibited to test G-d, except in the case of tithes, as the verse states, "...test Me now by this."

The sages further understand that the requirement to tithe one's produce applies to any financial gain. This is commonly known as *ma'aser*, that is, the halachic requirement to give (at least) 10% of one's income to tzedakah.

(Talmud, Ta'anis 9a; Tosafos & Maharsha ad loc.)

A DIFFICULT PLEDGE

In 1942, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, visited Chicago as part of a larger trip to many cities. While there, he addressed students at the Talmud Torah of Congregation Bnei Ruven.

One of the teachers at this school was Rabbi Yosef Fleyer, who amongst other things, was an expert in Tanach and all the commentaries. Rabbi Leibel Groner, secretary of the Rebbe, recounted that Rabbi Fleyer, "knew Tanach and its commentaries better than we know Ashrei," referring to the chapter of Psalms that is recited thrice daily as part of the prayers, and is known by heart by many Jews.

There is a rich body of correspondence between Rabbi Fleyer and the Rebbe. Towards Chanukah 1956, it seems

that Rabbi Fleyer was finding it difficult to fulfill a pledge for tzedakah that he had made. Although I do not know the details of this, he wrote to the Rebbe for advice, stating that he did not want to change his pledge.


The Rebbe's response came dated on the eve of Chanukah, and reads:

"I enjoyed reading your letter, where you write that even though it is difficult for you, you do not want to adjust what was discussed.

"This is the correct approach, particularly in light of the saying of my father-in-law [the 6th Rebbe, whom Rabbi Fleyer had met, as noted above], that when a person makes a firm resolve to give tzedakah beyond what he is capable of at that moment, new channels are opened from Above, bringing additional tides of income, in order that he be able to fulfill his pledge.

"The saying of our sages is well-known, that when one tithes, one will become wealthy. Moreover, we are even told that G-d says, 'test Me now by this.'"

What resulted from this correspondence? I don't know.

When we give, G-d blesses us with greater flow of blessings, and we become able to give even more. So give tzedakah beyond what you are capable of at this moment, and watch the blessings flow. 

(Based on Igros Kodesh vol.14, p. 211)

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

I Don't Feel Anything

The King Is In The Field

by Tzipah Wertheimer

The *Ani L'Dodi* maamer from Likkutei Torah shares a metaphor of Hashem as a King in the "field" during the month of Elul. On the simplest level, this means that Hashem is very, very accessible this time of year.

I was learning the Rebbe's explanations of this maamer with a recent alumna and she asked a very obvious question: *If Hashem is so extraordinarily available, why I don't "feel" the King in the field during Elul?!*

I started answering and then smiled at her and said "sometimes we don't always recognize our feelings." This was a bit of an inside joke because she's been talking to me about dating. She met 'the most amazing guy in the world.... who is totally perfect.' The only problem is that she says she has no feelings for him....

After my joke, she shared a much longer story from their last meeting. She had prepped a "breakup speech". She told him how amazing he is and that any girl would be lucky to marry him. It's just that she has no feelings and doesn't want to hold him back....

Then she noticed that she couldn't say goodbye and was very upset when she got home.



Finally she went on a walk with her mother later that night. Her mother had to explain that she obviously does have very real feelings and should call him back!! Baruch Hashem things are looking good :)

We were laughing together as she went through the speech and the regret and the whole process.

On a deeper note I wonder if there is some type of parallel when we ask about "feeling" the King is in the field. Maybe we just need help recognizing those feelings; maybe what we assume feelings are supposed to be limits our ability to tap into a greater reality. ☯

Chassidic Story

Reb Elimelech lived in Lizhensk over 200 years ago. The Jews in his town made a basic living by renting land for the local Poritz (land owner) and running inns, managing forests for lumber, lakes & rivers for fishing or orchards for fruit picking.

The Poritz was by nature a very harsh man and charged high rates. He would demand rent each month if anyone fell behind in payments. Despite his strong exterior, each year when it came time to renew their contracts the Poritz would ultimately turn soft and make a generous deal with the Jews. This angered the local priest.

The priest told the Poritz that the Jews had an unfair advantage. Before renewing their contracts they would go to the local Tzadik - R' Elimelech and request a blessing. He would pray that G-d would soften the heart of the Poritz. "This is why," explained the priest, "you melt like wax in your dealings with the Jews."

"The only thing to do," said the priest, "is to evict the rabbi so that the Jews will not be able to go to him for a blessing." The Poritz liked the idea and ordered R' Elimelech out of Lizhensk within 30 days.

In a celebratory mood, the Poritz went hunting. Deep in the forest the Poritz saw a refreshing river and took off his clothes to plunge into the cool water. When he swam back to shore, his servant, horse....and clothes were nowhere to be seen. He made his way to the local village only to be mocked and ridiculed.

Finally he decided to keep his identity a secret and was reduced to joining a group of beggars going from town to town in search of food. The group made their way to Lizhensk. Begging outside the local church the real Poritz saw an imposter Poritz emerge from the building!

(to be continued)

TANYA SUMMER SERIES FINAL CLASS

5-6pm

Chabad House
Men & Women

HAYOM YOM

29 Menachem Av

There must be avoda by one's own efforts.
Superior heights are attained when one is
taken by the hand and led; it is more precious
though, when it is by one's own strength..

To place:

your ad
HERE

✉ rabbi@qchabad.org
☎ 347.688.4770

Sponsored by:

*Rafi & Glenor
Levy*

In honor of the engagement
of their son Chaim to Ruti

7:25pm Candle Lighting

7:30pm Mincha & Kabbalas Shabbos

8:00am Tehillim

9:00am Chassidus

10:00am Davening

5:00pm Tanya Shiur - Men & Women

7:15pm Mincha & Shiur

8:24pm Maariv & Shabbos Ends