

Good Shabbos Everyone. The Haftorah this week for parshas Bechukosai, brings a very powerful verse which is a foundation in our service of Hashem. It states, "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem, then Hashem will be his security." (Yermiyahu 17:7)

While explaining the beauty of faith and trust to his chassidim, Reb Noach of Lechovitch told the story of a simple Jew who arrived at the level of pure, uncomplicated faith, and prospered thereby. This simple fellow, Hirschke by name, used to earn his living by bargaining with the gentile farmers over the merchandise that they used to bring to town on market day — hides, honey, wax, milk, boar bristle, and so on. Stallholders at the market, like himself, were accustomed to go out to the countryside two or three hours before daybreak in order to meet the gentile merchants on their way to the market, in the hope of clinching their deals before the merchandise arrived in town.

Now one day an itinerant preacher came to spend Shabbos in town, and he held forth in the synagogue on the virtues of living with perfect trust in Hashem. He explained the teaching of the Talmud that the world is so ordered that in the final analysis no man ever trespasses on the earnings that have been divinely ordained as the particular livelihood of another.

This speaker was a Hashem-fearing man, so it is not to be wondered at that his words found their way deep into Hirschke's heart. The next day, Sunday, was market day, but instead of rising hours before daybreak in order to meet the gentile farmers before his competitors did, he decided that this time he was not going to do so.

Whatever Hashem had set aside for him he would be able to buy at home -for is it not written that "no man ever trespasses on the earnings" and so on? His wife, seeing him lying snugly in bed at a time when he was normally up and about, urged him to get up and start moving. "I'd like you to know," he answered, "that I myself heard the preacher say that no one can take away the earnings that have been set aside for someone else. Why, then, should I rush out in the freezing snow on the lookout for these simple gentile merchants? For nothing is stopping Hashem from seeing to my needs right here in my house."

His wife was not one to submit meekly. She buried him in abuse, and then declared: "This preacher of yours will be paid for his sermon, that's for sure! And you? You'll sit home idle — and starve!" Hirschke did not answer a single word — but neither did he step out of the house.

After a little while they heard the loaded wagons of the gentiles creaking past their house. They could even hear Hirschke's friends slapping their hearty handshakes with the gentiles as they settled their deals. This was too much. "Tell me, Hirschke," she pleaded. "Are you stark crazy, or just a fool? Can't you see that your friends will buy up every last ounce of merchandise?"

"Those merchants can jolly well come in here, if they like!" he retorted. "Why should I go out to them in this bitter cold?"

Then, right under their very shutters, they heard the insistent voice of one of the gentile farmers: "We're not selling any more stuff until Hirschke turns up!" One of Hirschke's competitors gave a quick reply: "Hirschke's dead!"

"A bunch of lies!" shouted the gentiles, and began thumping with their fists on the shutters. "Hirschke, get up!" Hirschke obliged. He got dressed, and opened the door, and the farmers with whom he was accustomed to do business came right inside, and he bought up whatever merchandise he had always bought from them, without even having to bargain.

From that day on he never had to leave his house, for the farmers used to bring him their goods, and he made a respectable livelihood to the end of his days. Reb Noach had finished his story. "Now this worked for him," he added, "because he was a simple fellow whose faith was whole and uncomplicated. Things would hardly be the same for someone who tried to improve on Hirschke's kind of faith by adding the sophistication of reason."

The Chovos HaLvovos teaches us an important lesson about trusting in Hashem. One who puts his trust in some force or person other than Hashem, Hashem removes His heavenly control over that person and gives it over the force or person in whom the person has put his trust. For example, if someone believes that his livelihood depends on the kindness of his boss at work, then Hashem removes His Divine supervision over that person and, as it were, gives the boss at work control over the person's livelihood! Let us all know where our bread is buttered: by the Holy One Blessed is He! **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

A Refuah Shleimah to Shusha Malka bas Golda

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