

FAITH IN TZADDIKIM

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לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי ש"י בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

COMPLETE FAITH

The Torah says that after *krias yam suf* the Yidden believed in Hashem and in Moshe his servant. The *medrash* explains that from here we learn that the belief in the *Ro'eh ne'eman* (faithful shepherd) is really a belief in Hashem.

The Rebbe explains that the *emunah* in *tzaddikim* is an extension of the *emunah* in Hashem, that one believes in the messengers that Hashem has placed in every generation.

(מכילתא בשלח פ"ו, לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 291)

One Motzoei Shabbos before *havdala*, the Baal Shem Tov instructed his talmidim to purchase candles to light up the *beis medrash*. Though there was no way they could have possibly had money on them, the talmidim put their hands in their pockets to take out money, and hurried to buy candles. Such was their faith in the Baal Shem Tov.

(תו"מ הל"ו ע' 56)

During the *yechidus* of one businessman, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked him to sponsor the printing of the Tzemach Tzedek's *seforim*, naming an enormous sum. The man did not own such a large amount of money, but hearing the request of the Rebbe, he immediately obliged.

Upon return to his hometown, someone asked to purchase merchandise which he had despaired of selling, and also offered an excellent price. With this transaction, he made enough money to pay up his pledge and additional profit for himself. Sometime later, he met the buyer who commented, "I have no idea why I decided to pay such a large sum for some old goods..." Excited, the donor hurried to tell the Frierdiker Rebbe, but the Rebbe was not surprised, being accustomed to *nissim*.

(תו"מ הל"ו ע' 55)

Not long after their *chassuna*, the wife of Reb Shlomo Bayever of Slutsk lost her sanity. The young woman would not speak a word and was returned to her parents' home, rendering her husband an *agun*. This situation remained unchanged for six years until the Baal Shem Tov came to visit Slutsk. Reb Shlomo's father, a great *gaon*, and the wife's father Reb Eliyahu Moshe, hurried to ask for advice and a *bracha*. After ascertaining that both fathers-in-law were on good terms, the Baal Shem Tov told them, "With Hashem's help, I can heal her completely, but this is on condition that the couple divorce." The parents offered a lot of money for *tzedakah* instead, but the Baal Shem Tov repeated his demand.

A few days later, they returned to declare their agreement, but added that they could not guarantee the consent of the young woman. The Baal Shem Tov instructed Reb Eliyahu Moshe to go tell his daughter that the Baal Shem Tov, a well known miracle worker, was in Slutsk and wanted to see her. The two men looked at each other in astonishment, and Reb Eliyahu Moshe, mustering his courage, explained that his daughter hadn't spoken for the past six years. The *tzaddik* did not respond, and they left with broken hearts. Reb Shlomo, having been already exposed to Chassidus, insisted that the Baal Shem Tov's instructions be followed.

Upon arriving home, Reb Eliyahu Moshe began telling his wife about the Baal Shem Tov and his wonders, when suddenly their daughter spoke up, asking to hear more. Over the next while, she continued improving mentally, but physically, she was still very weak and soon fell ill. One day, she cried and begged to be taken to the *tzaddik*, and Reb Eliyahu Moshe suddenly realized that, amidst the excitement, he had forgotten to relate the Baal Shem Tov's message. The young woman immediately agreed, and on the following day, they traveled to Slutsk. The young couple entered together, and the Baal Shem Tov told them the need to divorce and gave them three days to rethink it.

For the next three days, they fasted and said much *Tehillim* and on the fourth day, they returned to the Baal Shem Tov. They relayed their readiness to divorce, for each other's benefit, due to their *emunah* in the *tzaddik* and the *bracha* that he would *bentch* them with. Hearing this, the Baal Shem Tov went into another room for a while. When he returned, he said, "About six years ago, a *kitrug* (decree) was placed against you, decreeing that the woman would lose her mind and that the man would remain an *agun*. However, now that you have, with simple *emunas tzaddikim*, accepted upon yourselves to divorce, your judgment was meritorious and the decree has been removed." The Baal Shem Tov then *bentched* them with sons and daughters and with long life.

(ספר השיחות תש"ג ע' 158)

The Baal Shem Tov explains that the reason for one's superrational faith in a *tzaddik* is because of a connection that exists between his *neshama* and the *neshama* of that *tzaddik*. The *zchus* to recognize this connection is mostly dependent on the refinement accomplished by his previous *gilgulim*. That is why we may find very fine people who do not believe in the *tzaddik*, while some very coarse people, with bad *middos*, do believe in him.

(מאמרי אדמו"ר הזקן ענינים ע' רצט)

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THE POWER OF FAITH

The tzaddik Reb Mendel Horodoker had a chossid who always requested a bracha for children, but without success. Finally one time, he pleaded so much that the tzaddik told him, "I cannot help you. However, because of your *emunas chachomim*, you are deserving that Hashem should fulfill your request." Indeed the man merited having children.

(סה"ש תש"ב ע' 95)

One villager fell ill, and he requested of his wife to ask a tzaddik to daven for him. Though she did not believe in the powers of tzaddikim, but being that her husband desired it, she hired a wagon and set out to see the tzaddik of Ruzhin. Passing through the neighboring village, she heard that the local innkeeper was in dire straits as well, having no money with which to pay his landowner. The innkeeper's wife, who had a strong faith in tzaddikim, joined her, and together they traveled to Ruzhin.

As soon as they arrived, they had their requests written on paper by the *gabbai*, but in their excitement, each one took the other's paper. When their turn came to see the Rebbe, the sick man's wife handed him the note about the lease, and the tzaddik gave her a bracha. Then, the leaseholder's wife gave the tzaddik the note about the illness, and the tzaddik advised the application of hot cupping glasses and leeches...

The woman's emunah was strong, and she returned home with the firm belief that Hashem's salvation would come through this. When she told her husband what the Rebbe had said, he was quite surprised by this strange *segulah*, but as the day approached and he had no other option he figured he would not lose by trying. He lay down in bed, covered himself with blood-sucking leeches, and dutifully applied the heated cupping glasses to his body. While he was lying there, bloody on all sides, the *poritz's* henchmen came to warn him that if the money would not be paid, he would be evicted. The servant then returned to the *poritz* and reported that the Yid was lying in bed, bleeding profusely. Not quite believing this, the *poritz* ordered for the leaseholder to be brought to him.

When the Yid was being carried in, the *poritz's* wife saw him, and with much sympathy, she asked the suffering man what had caused this. In desperation, he came up with a tale of how he'd taken a journey to try collecting the money he needed, and after much effort, he'd finally put the sum together. Unfortunately, on his return trip home, a wild gang robbed and beat him... Deeply moved, the *poritz's* wife promised that they would pay the doctor's fees, and because he was now in great debt, for the coming three years, he could use the inn for free.

The tzaddik of Ruzhin, related this story to Reb Aharon of Karlin and added, "Believe me, when that woman stood before me, I knew no way of drawing down help for her. She alone, through the intensity of her faith, drew her salvation down from *shamayim*."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 208)

In the year תשמ"ט critical elections were held in Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe said that it was important for a certain side to win. Some Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel campaigned that people should vote for that party, and some went so far as promising brachos to those who would. A couple from Meah She'arim did not have any children, and would go each night to the Kosel to recite the entire Tehillim. One day, the woman was home alone and someone came by and promised many brachos to those that would vote. The woman was very excited, but her husband would not hear of it since they belonged to a group that did partake in the elections.

At last she influenced him to go and they made a special effort to sneak out and vote on the day of the election.

When a while had passed and the couple was still not blessed with children, the husband complained that it had all been for nothing. The wife suggested that they write to the Rebbe, asking for their *bracha*. In the response, the Rebbe clarified that he had never promised any bracha concerning this, yet great is *emunas chachomim* that they should be helped. Sure enough, they soon merited having children.

(כפ"ח גליון 1128)

ACQUIRING THE BRACHA

A couple once came to the tzaddik Reb Yisroel of Kozhnitz asking that they find a large amount of money which they had lost. The tzaddik refused to bentsh them, using various excuses, but the couple persisted. At one point the man placed a gold coin on the table and offered it to the Rebbe for tzedakah, but the tzaddik said, "If you give me sixty gold coins for tzedakah, I will perhaps be able to help you." The woman was shocked at the great price. She grabbed back the gold coin and said to her husband, "Hashem will help us even without him..." The tzaddik was pleased, "Until now you trusted in me and forgot Hashem, now that you trust in Hashem, your bracha is soon to come."

(סיפורים חסידיים ח"א ע' 62)

One woman, after having miscarried a number of times, asked the Rebbe to *bentsh* her with a brocha for children. The Rebbe gave her some instructions and a *bracha*, but a while later, she miscarried again. Greatly disappointed, she asked the Rebbe what had gone wrong. In a handwritten response, the Rebbe wrote, "The couple forgot that Hashem is the source of bracha and its deliverer etc. and have only placed their trust in human beings – myself."

(אג"ק חכ"ט ע' ל', ושם ע' 19)

Amongst the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid, there was a difference of opinion concerning *emunah* in *tzaddikim*. Some held that it was enough for a chossid to have faith in his Rebbe and fulfill Torah and *mitzvos*, but he himself need not learn Chassidus and ascend its levels. But others, including the Alter Rebbe, held that each individual must learn Chassidus and implement it in his own *avodas Hashem*.

While this path is more difficult, it is more effective in transforming the selfish part of the person to *kedusha*. It is particularly relevant today, as we approach the time of Moshiach when everyone will understand Hashem.

(תו"מ חכ"ד ע' 270, לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 475)

The Mittlerer Rebbe explains the advantages of davening at the *kever* of a tzaddik: the *tefilos* there are more accepted because of the *kedusha*, one is more aroused in his davening out of sadness of the loss, and one feels insignificant from great awe of the tzaddik, causing his *tefilos* to reach a greater level. This is applicable even to most Yidden who do not perceive the great revelations there from the *neshama* of the tzaddik.

(קוני' ההשתחוות ע' ג')

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