

Ki Seitzei

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Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints
לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת
הר"ר ישעי' זושא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
גלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
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כִּי תֵצֵא

Ki Seitzei

כא:י | 21:10

כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל אִיבֶיךָ וַנִּתְּנֶנּוּ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּיָדְךָ וְשָׁבִיתָ שְׁבִי'וֹ

*When you go out to war against your enemy, then
Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hands,
and you will take his captives.*

Just Go Out

The Torah introduces the laws concerning prisoners of war by stating assuredly, “When you go out to war against your enemy, then Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hands, and you will take his captives.”

This verse also alludes to the battles we wage against our internal spiritual enemies—the physical desires of the body and the selfish tendencies of the animal soul, which constantly challenge our devotion to G-d. The goal is not to destroy these enemies, but to redirect their energy and passion toward fulfilling our G-dly mission in this world. Yet this effort is also a war, for the body and animal soul fiercely resist such transformation.

Despite the difficulty of this battle, the Torah guarantees us certain victory—even before we enter the thick of the war. “If you go out to war,” says the Torah, meaning, “If you set yourself to the task and ‘go out’ on the mission to transform your inner enemy,” you are guaranteed that “Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hands.” And not only will you vanquish your enemies (and not be vanquished by them, G-d forbid), you will even “take their captives.” By redirecting the energies of the body and animal soul toward your G-dly mission, you will succeed in extracting the sparks of Divine purpose that lie dormant in the physical world to an even greater degree than you were capable of previously.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 384

 כב:ח | 22:8

כִּי תִבְנֶה בַּיִת חָדָשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה לְגִנְיָהּ וְלֹא
תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתָהּ כִּי יִפֹּל הַנֹּפֵל מִמֶּנּוּ

*When you build a new house, you shall make a
guardrail for your roof, so as not to cause blood in your
house when the faller will fall from it.*

Don't Put Others at Risk

The Torah instructs us that upon building a new home we must erect a *maakeh*, a guardrail around the roof, to prevent others from falling.

In addition to its literal meaning, this command also refers to G-d's blessing and mandate that each Jew “build a new home”—i.e., take initiative to create an environment in which Judaism flourishes. The “homes” built by others do not exempt us from building our own home, i.e., positively influencing those who have been led specifically to *you* by Divine Providence.

The Torah warns us, however, that we must limit and enclose the “rooftops” of the new homes that we build. The roof represents pride and self-importance, and the requirement to place a guardrail around it means that we must limit and contain our pride. For “the faller will fall from it”—our pride can place those who seek shelter in our “new homes” at risk of spiritual downfall.

This is because “words spoken from the heart enter the heart.”¹ If our efforts to draw others closer to Torah observance

1. See R. Moshe ibn Ezra, *Shiras Yisrael*, p. 156. See also Shnei Luchos

are pure and altruistic, we will certainly succeed. But if our words are tainted with the pursuit of self-aggrandizement or other personal agendas, we have no such guarantee. Worse yet, our self-pride—even if it stems from spiritual achievements—can distance from our “homes” those who depend on them for spiritual shelter.

This is the inner meaning of the mitzvah of *maakeh*: by curbing our self-pride, we can succeed at creating environments in which all who seek spiritual shelter will thrive.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 24, pp. 142–144

Habris, Shaar HaOsios, Lamed, quoting Sefer HaYashar by Rabbeinu Tam.

23:21 | כג:כא

לְנִכְרִי תִשָּׂא וְלְאֶחָיִךְ לֹא תִשָּׂא

*You may lend at interest to a gentile, but to your brother
you shall not lend at interest.*

Collecting Dues

Charging interest on a loan is fair and reasonable. The borrower knowingly accepts this fee in exchange for the temporary use of the money, thereby compensating the creditor for the “inactivity” of his money while it is on loan. That is why the Torah permits collecting interest from a gentile (though we are repeatedly commanded to lend money to our fellow Jews free of interest). The Rambam writes, however, that not only is it permitted to lend to a non-Jew with interest, it is actually a positive mitzvah to collect interest on loans to an idolater.² Why?

The Baal Shem Tov taught that the money G-d places in a Jew’s possession contains “sparks of holiness” that relate specifically to his soul and therefore depend on him for their elevation. Since money has the natural potential to generate more money when it is loaned, it follows that the permissible interest your money generates is related to your soul just as the principle is. Thus the Torah’s directive to know G-d “in *all* your ways,”³ meaning to utilize every aspect of your life to come closer to G-d, also applies to the potential interest that your money can generate.

Therefore, when lending to an idolater, from whom it is

2. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Malveh v’Loveh 5:1.

3. Mishlei 3:6.

permissible to collect interest, collecting the justly earned interest is actually a mitzvah. For his requirement for a loan indicates that the interest he will owe on it is money whose elevation depends on the lender, who will extract it and reveal its Divine purpose to the best of his ability.⁴

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 12, pp. 118–119

4. Nevertheless, the Torah obligates us to lend money to our fellow Jews free of interest. In this instance, the potential interest is elevated in the opposite fashion—by the lender refraining from collecting it, like other prohibited objects that are elevated through our restraint.

 24:1 | כד:א

כִּי יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה

When a man takes a wife.

Holy Matrimony

This verse teaches us the mitzvah of *kiddushin*—that a man must betroth his wife before they begin living together as a married couple. In the words of the Rambam:

Once the Torah was given, the Jews were commanded that when a man desires to marry a woman, he must acquire her as a wife in the presence of witnesses, and only then does she become his wife. This is stated in the verse “When a man takes a wife.”⁵

The effect of the *kiddushin* is twofold: it designates the woman to be married to this man, and simultaneously “prohibits her to the rest of the world.”⁶

The relationship between G-d and the Jewish people, which is often compared to a marriage in the scriptures and teachings of Chazal, likewise contains both aspects of *kiddushin*.⁷ The first aspect of this *kiddushin* is to devotedly strive to cleave to Him; the second is to distance ourselves from anything that could distract us from this relationship—namely, mundane passions and desires. Just as both components of the *kiddushin* between man and woman are interdependent, and one cannot exist without the other, so is it with the *kid-*

5. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Ishus 1:1.

6. See Talmud, Kiddushin 2b.

7. See Kesser Shem Tov, sec. 10.

dushin between G-d and the Jewish people. In order for our love and attachment to G-d to be complete, we must truly separate ourselves from any other lusts or passions. In the words of the Chovos HaLevavos, “It is impossible to implant love of G-d in our hearts while love of this world still resides within us.”⁸

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19, pp. 217–218

8. Shaar Ahavas Hashem.

לעילוי נשמת
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בת ר' שניאור זלמן
שמואל הכהן ע"ה אנשיל

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תנצב"ה

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♦

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