

## **“Let the people go out and pick each day’s portion on its day, so that I can test them, whether they will follow My teaching or not.” (16:4)**

The daily gift of *manna*, *Klal Yisrael*’s Heavenly food, was actually a lesson in Jewish spiritual survival. The Jewish People had witnessed incredible miracles leading up to, and including, the exodus from Egypt. Life is all one miracle: an important lesson that so many of us tend to ignore. Many of us go through life with the notion that we are in charge, we make decisions, and we carry out what we have determined is the correct course to follow. It is always “we” or “I”. Whatever happened to Hashem? Why do we always impose upon Him a reason to remind us that He is there – always, constantly and in every aspect of our lives?

In the *Talmud Sotah* 48b, *Chazal* remark regarding the above *pasuk*: “Whoever has enough to eat today and says, ‘What will I eat tomorrow?’ has little faith.” *Horav S.R. Hirsch, z.l.*, submits that by limiting the *manna* to a daily allocation, Hashem showed *Klal Yisrael* that He was their Provider at all times. Furthermore, by providing a double portion for *Shabbos*, He demonstrated that *Shabbos* observance would never impede one’s livelihood. We are taught that it was necessary for the generation that accepted the Torah to have first proven their faith and trust in Hashem through the vehicle of *manna*. Only a nation that has been taught to rely upon the kindness and consistency of Hashem could receive His Torah.

Faith is not a simple attribute to develop. Indeed, in our sophisticated society, faith is sorely deficient. In today’s culture, some view the faithful Jew, the one whose fidelity to Hashem never wanes, as somewhat simpleminded. In the Torah world, however, the Torah scholar who has been endowed with a brilliant and erudite mind also possesses a soul that is committed unconditionally to Hashem. Many narratives portray the unequivocal faith of both the scholar, and simple, common Jew. I have selected two stories which demonstrate this commitment and also convey an important lesson to us.

There was a *Rosh Yeshivah* in Europe whose dedication to his students was legendary. The *yeshivah* regrettably had no money and consequently, could not always provide meals. Yet, the students demonstrated unfailing devotion to their *rebbe*. Often they went to bed satiated spiritually, but physically starved. One day the *Rosh Yeshivah* heard that a wealthy philanthropist lived in a neighboring community, who was very generous to *yeshivos*. The *Rosh Yeshivah* decided that he had no alternative but to go to the philanthropist and appeal for his assistance. He bade farewell to his students and left for the train station. While he was waiting for the train, one of the town’s outspoken skeptics appeared.

“*Rebbe*,” he asked, “what brings you out of the *yeshivah* into the ‘real’ world?”

The *Rosh Yeshivah* ignored the derogatory stab and responded, “I am going to the next town in an

attempt to raise money for the *yeshivah*.”

“Have you purchased your ticket?” “No,” replied the *Rosh Yeshivah*.

“What do you mean? You do not have a ticket? The train will arrive any minute, and you will be left here!”

“I have no money for a ticket but I am not concerned – *G-t vet helfen*” (G-d will help).

Hearing this, the skeptic shook his head, muttering under his breath, “These *frum*, observant, Jews are out of their minds.” He decided to hang around the station to see what would occur. Would G-d really help the *Rosh Yeshivah*?

Five minutes later, the train whistle sounded and the train pulled into the station.

“Tickets, tickets,” the conductor called out. “Have your tickets ready.”

To the man’s bewilderment, the *Rosh Yeshivah* proceeded to get into the line. “Rabbi, what are you thinking? How do you get into line without a ticket?”

“Do not worry,” answered the *Rosh Yeshivah*. “*G-t vet helfen*.”

The skeptic scratched his head in amazement. “I cannot figure out the rabbi. He has no money to buy a ticket. Yet, he gets into line to board the train.” As he got closer to the train, he said, “Ok, Rabbi, I am going to give you the money for the trip now, but do not rely on me again. How could you be so naïve as to think that G-d will help?”

Here we have a case of a believer and a non-believer. The believer had no doubt that he would get on the train. The non-believer was so obsessed with his heresy that he never realized that he was the medium through which Hashem helped the *Rosh Yeshivah* – to sustain his entire *yeshivah*. His bias prevented him from believing that “*G-t vet helfen*.”

The second narrative demonstrates how deeply committed one can be in his belief and to what extent this faith will carry him. It is a story about two *chassidim* who visited their *Rebbe* annually on *Succos*. Each year, they would stop overnight at the same inn. One year, the innkeeper approached them humbly and said, “You know, I am neither a *chassid* nor a disciple of your *Rebbe*, but I have a great favor to ask of you. My wife and I have been married for ten years, and, unfortunately, we have not yet been blessed with a child. Please ask the *Rebbe* to pray for us.” The *chassidim* agreed to do so.

The very next morning, the innkeeper’s wife began parading around the neighborhood with an expensive baby carriage. When her friends came over to wish her *mazel tov*, she explained that

while she did not yet have a child, she soon would, since the *Rebbe* was going to pray for her. Hearing this, the two *chassidim* were somewhat embarrassed, because they knew that prayers did not always produce the desired result. They said nothing and continued on their journey, faithfully carrying out their mission when they arrived at the *Rebbe's* court.

When the two *chassidim* returned the following year to the inn, the baby's *Bris*, circumcision, was in progress. The innkeeper understandably was quite elated and thankful to see them, treating them as guests of honor. Later on, when they arrived at the *Rebbe's* home, one of the *chassidim* entered the *Rebbe's* office and complained, "*Rebbe*, you do not even know the innkeeper. Yet, you prayed for him – successfully. I have been your trusted disciple since I was a child. I visit you every year just as my father did before me. Yet, I am married for twenty years, and I have made the exact same request of you – and my wife has still not conceived. *Rebbe*, is it fair?" The *Rebbe* took his trusted *chassid's* hands and looked deeply into his eyes, asking, "During all those twenty years, did you ever go and buy a baby carriage? How great was your faith in comparison to that of the innkeeper's wife?"

*Bitachon*, trust in Hashem, has to be unequivocal. We either believe, or we do not. To believe when it is convenient, to trust when there is no other alternative, is not trust. It is self-serving and hypocritical. When we say we believe, when we express our trust, we have to be prepared to purchase that baby carriage.