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by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

THE SECRET TO UNIMAGINABLE WEALTH!

PARSHAS MISHPATIM

Lebron James, the basketball player, earns \$44.4 million dollars for the season. He earns \$542,378 per game and \$11,300 per minute of each game! If he would take a short, 5-minute nap, while sitting on the bench, he would earn \$56,500!

Shimon is a 7th grader who learns Torah. He can say 40 words of Torah per minute. Every single word of Torah is so precious and so invaluable. Using a very low number, we can guesstimate that his Heavenly reward for each word is \$1 million. Based on that, every minute he is earning \$40 million. If Shimon takes 10 minutes to eat breakfast, he "potentially" could earn \$166,666. If he plays basketball at recess for 20 minutes, he can "potentially" earn \$3,333,320. While sleeping at night for 7 hours, he could "potentially" earn \$69,999,720 for that one night. That is about 70 million dollars!

*Why do I say, "potentially"? If Shimon's intentions are to be able to serve Hashem better, then Hashem considers his eating, his recess break, and even his sleeping to be an actual mitzvah for which he gets rewarded! We should "know" Hashem and "serve" Hashem in all that we do. Even our mundane actions should be done for the sake of Hashem. It says in **Mishlei** (3:6), "בְּכָל-דַּרְכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׁרַךְ" "In all your ways acknowledge Him...." The **Metzudas Dovid** says, "Know Hashem in all that you do... Think about how your deeds can fulfill the will of Hashem. Then Hashem will guide you on the straight path and you will be successful."*

Two of Aharon HaKohain's sons were Nadav and Avihu. They were great men; some say that they were even greater than Moshe and Aharon. Nadav and Avihu had been destined to take over the leadership of the Jewish People. At our greatest moment in history, the giving of the Torah, Nadav and Avihu had a vision. They saw the Holy Presence of Hashem. The **Torah** (Shmos 24:10) says that "they saw [a vision of] the G-d of Israel, and under His feet

"They beheld G-d, and they ate and drank."
(Shmos 24:10)

[there was something] like a brickwork of sapphire, and it was like the essence of heaven in purity." The next pasuk says, "They beheld G-d, and they ate and drank". **Rashi** explains that they had sinned and deserved to be punished. They had gazed at Hashem, feeling some minute degree of arrogance, while actually eating and drinking. Because of that, they were severely punished at a later time. Apparently, their eating and drinking was inappropriate while seeing or sensing a very holy vision. On some level, it was considered arrogance.

The **Targum Onkelos** has a totally different understanding. He says that Nadav and Avihu were praised for their actions. They did not actually eat or drink. Rather, they felt such elated joy that Hashem had accepted their sacrifice. Their joy was comparable to the joy one feels when eating a delicious meal and then drinking.

How can we compare holiness to physicality? How can we compare their spiritual joy of beholding the Holiness of Hashem to the physical joy of eating and drinking?

The **Vilna Gaon** zt"l answers this question based on a pasuk in **Mishlei** (Proverbs 3:6). The pasuk says, "In all of your ways know Him." The **Vilna Gaon** explains that one should serve Hashem with both his evil and good inclinations. Even physical acts can be elevated into spiritual acts of service to Hashem, if done with the proper intentions.

Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Sher zt"l was the rosh yeshiva of the Slabodka Yeshiva in Lithuania and Bnei Brak. He was the son-in-law of Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka. **Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Sher** zt"l says that all of the actions of our forefathers, even their physical acts of eating and drinking were on a very holy level. Their eating and drinking were on the level of the service that the Kohain Gadol did in the Beis HaMikdash. Eating and drinking involves

many body parts. When done for the sake of Hashem, there is more physical involvement which contributes to more joy and closeness to Hashem. According to **Targum Onkelos**, this elevated level of joy was what Nadav and Avihu felt.

The **Torah** says that (Bereishis 27:20) our forefather Yaakov brought our forefather Yitzchak savory food to receive his blessing. The **Midrash Rabbah** (Bereishis 65:19) says that Yitzchak was suspicious as to how Yaakov could bring the food so quickly. Yaakov replied, "If Hashem summoned a ram to take your place to be sacrificed, then surely Hashem will provide for the savory foods for you to be brought quickly." When one eats or drinks for the sake of Hashem, one can reach a higher level of holiness than when one offers an actual sacrifice.

When we do a mundane action for the sake of Hashem, we elevate that action to holiness!

Think about which actions YOU can elevate to holiness.

Based on a dvar Torah By Rabbi Alter Henach Leibowitz zt"l

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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