

FAITHFUL EARNINGS

written by Chaim Kramer
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The Talmud teaches: These are the obligations of a father to a son: "...teach him Torah; teach him a trade..." (*Kiddushin* 29a).

Teaching one's child a trade or profession is an obligatory, not an elective, responsibility. It is incumbent upon a father to teach his child how to earn a living honestly. Included in this obligation is the need for teaching him to have faith. With faith, he will be able to stand up to monetary temptations which promote dishonesty. With faith, he will be able to bear the sometimes incredible pressures and demands that business and work place upon his shoulders. And with

faith, he will make sure to keep the Shabbat and Festivals, and make time for Torah study and prayer.

Rebbe Nachman teaches: The lust for money is idolatry. All idolatries in the world are connected to money. The main test of faith is in business (*Likutey Moharan I*, 23:1,4). In the language of the Zohar: She entices them with wealth in this life, then kills them (*Tikkuney Zohar*, Addendum 3). This refers to the Evil One, who tempts people with wealth and the “good life” in this world and then buries them because they have nothing in their lives but the lust for money. Their days have gone by and they are left with only emptiness. They have no faith and so do not spend their time wisely on Torah and mitzvot (*Likutey Moharan I*, 23: end).

Money, or rather the lust for it, devours a person’s life and time. Not only that, but the desire for money in itself creates the worst worries. It causes a person to worry at all times (*Likutey Moharan I* , 23:5).

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Someone I know lost quite heavily in some property investments, but still had a few million dollars left in the bank. When I approached him for charity, he began complaining about his losses. Seeing the terrible frame of mind he was in, I consoled him and offered the following analogy. “Losing heavily is like having your house burgled. You’ll never feel safe again.” “That’s right!” he exclaimed, relieved that I understood his situation. Actually, I felt great pity for him. His whole security was his money.

Imagine! He was left with enough money to live off the interest for the rest of his life. Yet he’s been so shattered by his losses that he’ll never again feel safe. Even having more than enough money to last him a few lifetimes cannot

provide him with the security he seeks because he lacks faith.



The lust for money is idolatry!

“Earning one’s livelihood is as difficult as splitting the Red Sea” (*Pesachim* 117a). Just as we cannot hope to split the Red Sea, so too, we cannot hope to control our income. However, just as it is nothing for God to split the Red Sea, so too it is incredibly simple for Him to provide us with an income. We just need faith (*Likutey Moharan* I, 23:end).

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When we have faith, then our livelihood is like receiving manna from Heaven – we can rely on Heaven to send it to us. This way, we are content with whatever we receive, and have no desire for more and more. Conversely, when a person does desire more than what he is given, he destroys his whole life with his desire for wealth, for there is no manna in that (*Likutey Halakhot, Netilat Yadayim li’Seudah* 6:85).

(taken from the book [*Crossing the Narrow Bridge: A Practical Guide to Rebbe Nachman’s Teachings*](#); chapter 5 – Faith pp. 86-87)