

In God We Trust

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Wealth is something that most people spend their days dreaming about. But how does one actually become wealthy?

In 1999 the executive chairman of Google (then the CEO of Novell), Eric Schmidt, said in an interview with *Forbes*, “Lots of people who are smart and work hard and play by the rules don’t have a fraction of what I have.” Schmidt acknowledged that the scale of inequality generated by the new wealth “makes me uncomfortable.” Why? “I realize I don’t have my wealth because I’m so brilliant. Luck has a lot to do with it.”

Is that so? Does luck actually spur on accumulating great wealth? Perhaps it’s just plain old hard work and effort?

Wealth is generated by God. However, when wealth reaches this world, it is disbursed via two “bank accounts” called the “time account” and the “place account.” For example, there are seasons when a person is financially successful, and other times when business is simply dead. A person may do very well at one location and dreadful at another. This is all due to how Divine bounty is filtered down to our world.

Very often we mistakenly think, “What if He forgot about me this month?” We begin worrying and using all our mental faculties to brainstorm about how to salvage our predicament. We might even lower ourselves to doing backbreaking labor or various other unworthy tasks, all in the hope of making a few bucks. In reality, we’re just pushing the envelope while gaining nothing. God is ready, willing and able to help – but right now is either not the time or the place for His blessing. A little patience (and some prayer) is all that’s needed.

Our Rabbis also teach that in order to receive our personal “disbursement,” we must first create a “vessel” to hold our bounty. We create this vessel by dedicating effort toward earning a living. How much effort should we contribute? The Kotzker Rebbe once remarked that we were cursed with the words “By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). But there is no mitzvah to fulfill the curse with absolute dedication! Thankfully, even minimal effort satisfies this curse’s requirements.

This is why our *parashah* says, “God your Lord will bless you in all that you do” (Deuteronomy 15:18). This implies that even if all you do is very little, you will still be blessed.

But it goes even further. The source of wealth is God, and God is above time and place. By remembering and being faithful to the true Source of wealth while engaging in our efforts, we connect our work with the ultimate source of income and expedite the whole process. However, by worrying and overworking, we sink further into the restrictions of time and place and distance ourselves further from the Source, making things even more challenging and time-consuming.

Haven’t we all invested enormous effort into a project, thinking for certain we would succeed, only to be utterly disappointed? And haven’t we laughed at other, simpler efforts and then witnessed tremendous success? So why can’t we just sit back and enjoy the show?

The secret ingredient to wealth is *bitachon* (trust in God). *Bitachon* is so great that one who has it need not make any other effort whatsoever! That being said, *bitachon* is our main vessel. The more we learn to trust in God, the more we can rely on His blessing and concentrate our lives on spiritual matters. For starters, we can begin by simply thanking God and remembering the many times He has helped until now. In this way, we will merit both material and spiritual wealth. Amen!

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Ribit 3