



THE LIGHT, LIFE & LEGACY OF R' MICHOEL FORSHLAGER ZT" L



Matos-Maasei

אברהם אבינו רב קהילת אורחיים

The Light

When the Jews planned their arrival to Eretz Yisrael - the promised land, the tribes of Reuven and Gad asked to remain where they were as they did not want to leave their livestock behind. The Midrash refers to the following passuk; “A wise persons heart is to the right and a fool’s heart is to the left.” The fool refers to those who pursue wealth instead of wisdom. This is indicted by the actions of the tribes of Reuven and Gad who prioritized the monetary value of their livestock over their own families lives. We later see that they were indeed punished for their skewed values by experiencing exile first. One might say that wanting to be well-off is not that big of an offence, so why is it then that Reuven and Gad were considered fools and even received punishment over this?

In order to understand this sin, we first need to understand the unique characteristics of the desire for money. Shlomo Hamelech says, “A lover of money will never be satisfied by money (Koheles 5:9).” Chazal explains this by saying that a person always covets more money than he has. If one has a one hundred dollars, he will want two hundred dollars, and if he has two hundred dollars, he will desire three hundred dollars and so on. In this regard, the desire for money is not like other desires such as food. In the case of food, when one gives into the desire, he becomes satisfied and no longer craves it. However, with the desire for money – the more one has the more his appetite / need for it increases.

The reason for this is that money represents the more crude and lowly elements of the world. It is in complete contradiction to elevated and spiritual matters. So, the more one immerses themselves in a life of material value, the more beholden they become to those values.

Because of the nature of money and its connection to the world of unholiness, the desire for money may lead leads ones increase for other desires and ultimately come to sin. We find proof of this in Geichazi the servant of Elisha. Chazal says that he was guilty of several sins including adultery, idol worship and disgracing Gods name. And yet the only sin explicitly mentioned is that he coveted the riches of Naaman, one of the noblemen of Emor. Despite his many sins the root of his wickedness was in his lust for money specifically.

It’s important to note the opposing outcome of the aforementioned. When one removes themselves from the pursuit and desire for money, they can achieve increased levels of holiness. This idea is illustrated in the following story: When Reb Yohanan’s mother was pregnant with him she had a potentially dangerous hunger attack on Yom Kippur. When Reb

Yehudah Hanasi was asked about this case he advised the family to whisper in her ear that it's Yom Kippur. As soon as they did that her hunger passed and she was fine. Why was R' Yochanan so holy that he recognized the holiness of Yom Kippur from the womb? It is because he sold most of his worldly possessions in order to immerse himself in Torah study.

Now we can better understand the fault seen in the actions of the tribes of Reuven and Gad. Their desire for wealth removed them from the pursuit of holiness and ultimately directed them to a life removed from the pure spirituality of Torah study.

-Translated and Adapted from Toras Michoel Parshas Matos

The Life

Rav Forshlager led a life void of the pursuit of wealth and materialism. In Poland his father-in-law R' Aryeh Leib Fleishman, a well-to-do businessman took care of providing his family with all their needs. In Baltimore his father, R' Avraham Moshe worked in the real estate industry and was able to take on the financial burden so Rav Forshlager could focus on what really matters: Torah study.

When his father lost his income during the Great Depression, Rav Forshlager needed to support himself. Being that he didn't have any interest in monetary values / accruing wealth of any sort, he was only motivated to provide for the sustenance of his family. He often did menial jobs that were not appropriate for a person of his stature. After a short while of that, respected members of the community realized that he was a Torah scholar and invited him to give a daily Torah shiur. The rest of his life he supported himself through the money he would earn for teaching Torah.

It's interesting to note that the term "support" in his case was very relative. He lived in great poverty owning possessions that valued less than twenty dollars. He trained himself not to need much and would spend whatever money he had on the purchase of seforim.

For many years he had an arrangement with the Bigeleisen seforim store in Borough Park: any new or interesting sefer would be sent to Baltimore. Rav Forshlager would look through them and send money for the ones he wanted to keep and would then return the others. Throughout the years he amassed an incredible collection of over seven thousand seforim. His library was sold by his family to Yad Harav Herzog in Israel. Yad Harave Herzog publishes the Talmudic encyclopedia which is ubiquitous in many shuls and yeshivos. Another interesting fact – when the very popular seforim database Otzar Hachochma was founded, they were looking for a

large collection of seforim in pristine condition - and Rav Forshlager's library fit the criteria. Rav Forshlager had an extensive collection of seforim, and because of his great value for his seforim, he never wrote in the actual sefer but rather on little notes he kept in the pages.



Like R' Yochanan, Rav Forshlager gave away his earthly possessions in order to amass eternal life- Torah. Despite the fact that during his lifetime he was very poor and could barely afford shoes for his kids, he left over glorious riches of Torah. His torah is a treasure that has served tens if not hundreds of thousands of Torah learners in the many decades since his passing. May his Torah continue to shine brightly for the many adherents of his holy works.

-Based on Michoel Be'achas by Reb Bentzion Bergman

The Legacy



The kever of Rav Forshlager has in the last couple of years become an address for people to come and pour their hearts out and receive salvations for their troubles.

We recently received word of an incredible story that highlights the miracles that people have experienced upon their visit to Rav Forshlager.

The story begins at the beginning of the year when a young boy from Israel was discovered to have a tumor r'l growing on his kidney. The diagnosis was severe enough that the doctors in Israel sent the family to America for treatment. The family approached some of the best doctors in New York for diagnostics and treatment. Unfortunately, the prognosis seemed really dire based on the scans and tests taken. All of the possibilities pointed at a malignant tumor which would require months of radiation and chemotherapy. The family repeatedly asked the

medical professionals if there was any possibility that the tumor could be benign, the doctor ascertained that there was an astronomically small chance - one in many million perhaps.

The surgery was scheduled for Tuesday and the boy was being checked in on Monday. The Sunday prior, friends planned one last day of fun as a 'normal' family before their lives completely changed. However, a close family member who knew of Rav Forshlager and had been at his Kever, made a strong recommendation for the family to make a trip from NY to Baltimore to visit Rav Forshlager's kever and merit his blessings. Instead of their pursuing the fun day as planned, the family drove to Rav Forshlager's Kever and spent many hours davening for a positive outcome. They made a promise to support the efforts related to printing Rav Forshlager's seforim when the miracle would happen.

They had been told – prior to the surgery, that the kidney might not be able to be saved. As the surgery progressed, the family stood outside waiting and praying for positive results. As they were waiting, the doctor came out of the room to update them on the proceedings/findings. The surgery, they were told, went incredibly well and that the kidney was miraculously left completely unharmed. At the same time the pathologist joined the update and shared – to his and the families utter surprise that there seemed to be a chance that the tumor was benign after all, but they would need to wait several weeks for the test results for that to be determined. For the next two weeks the family waited anxiously for any updates. After two weeks they got the long-awaited phone call they hoped and prayed for: the tumor was benign, and the boy was free to go home!

When they shared the happy news with the rest of their family, another family member called up excitedly saying "I was by Rav Forshalger's Kever just five minutes ago". It looked like they needed that one last tefilla by the Kever to get their yehoshua. Baruch Hashem the boy was back home and in school within the next week. The boy who was about to be a cancer patient was fully cured thanks to the great Zechusim of the Tzadik Rav Michael Forshlager.

Postscript: The boy recently had his six-month follow-up visit and Baruch Hashem it is 100% clear.

-This account was personally shared by the boy's family members.

Toras Michael al Hatorah on Vayikra, Bamidbar and Devarim is available for sale.

The address to the Kever of Rav Forshlager is:
B'nai Israel cemetery
3701 Southern Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21206
Visit Rabbiforshlager.com for

To share a personal story or to donate please email RabbiForshlagerFoundati on@gmail.com or call Pinny Kreizel 845-263-0781