The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Shabbos, February 5, 2022 ■ ד' אדר א', תשפ"ב
סימן קנ"ו סעיף א'

Halacha Highlight

The dangers of luxuries

Shulchan Aruch Siman 156 Seif 1
לא יעשה מלאכתו עקר אלא עראי
One should not make his work primary

Shulchan Aruch emphasizes the importance of working in addition to studying Torah. The reason is that the study of Torah that is not accompanied by work as a means of financial support will lead a person towards sin since poverty turns a person away from Hashem. As important as it is to have a means of parnassah in addition to Torah study, one should not allow his work to become his primary activity. It is only when a person establishes his Torah study as primary and his work subordinate will he achieve success at both activities. In order to maintain this proper focus one must determine what are his essential needs, without which he could not live. In order to avoid the yetzer hora's trap of convincing a person that extras actually represent his needs, Sha'ar HaTzion (סק"ג) advises that one should imagine that he is responsible to provide financial support for someone else. In such a case one would have a clearer image of what are needs that must be supplied and what are wants that one could avoid.

Biur Halacha (סי' תקכ"ט סע' א') explains that becoming involved in the pursuit of acquisition of unneeded items will cause him to lose time from Torah study. He will have to spend additional time earning additional money to cover his additional expenses. Even one who is well off financially should avoid these extra expenses because once a person becomes accustomed to luxuries it is very difficult for one to separate himself from them. If the person's business were to take a turn for the worse he may resort to dishonest means to earn the money needed to maintain his lifestyle. Even if one is confident that he would never compromise his principles one must be concerned about accustoming one's children to luxuries that they may have difficulty giving up if they are not blessed with the same financial advantages. However, it is acceptable for one to earn more than his minimal needs to have the means to provide financial assistance to the poor and other worthy causes (מ"ב סי' רל"א סק"ח).

Stories to Share

The Trap of the Yetzer Hara

מ"ב ס' קנ"ו, ס"ק ד': "והוא לשון הרע..."

Some people may slander a worker or employer who failed to fulfill his commitments. They figure that this is a mitzvah to help others avoid making a business connection with a person who does not fulfill his obligations. Yet the Chofetz Chaim wrote that this is not a simple matter .

"One must be very vigilant not to give himself license to recount to others how so-and-so robbed or cheated him, or publicly shamed him, when they did business together. Even though he knows that he is telling only the absolute truth, he cannot do it unless he needs assistance catching the thief to retrieve his stolen property.

"Clearly he is not telling this story to others to protect them from being cheated or stolen from. His motivation stems from a desire to embarrass the person who did him wrong. The more this person's words are accepted by others, the happier he will be. (ספר ח"ח, לשון הרע, כלל י', סעיף י"א) The reason why this is prohibited is because one can only tell another lashon hara to benefit the hearer if he is not doing it out of hatred or spite."

באר מים חיים, שם

"One must be exceedingly careful even when asking others to help him apprehend the thief, since if he does not take great care he will easily stumble into the trap of his yetzer hara and transgress the Torah prohibition of lashon hara.

"In addition, he must be absolutely sure that he was robbed and that his friend is not entitled to what he took. This detail is exceedingly difficult to verify since no person sees his own faults. But if he is mistaken and then goes around to others ostensibly for aid to apprehend a thief, he is actually violating the prohibition of motzi shem ra!"

ספר ח"ח, כלל יוד

Overview

Siman 156 Seif 1:

Afterwards one should pursue his business since Torah that is not accompanied by work will eventually become nullified and cause one to sin since poverty can lead a person away from Hashem. However, one should not consider his business primary rather it must be secondary and one's Torah study primary and then one will succeed at both. One must be honest in his business dealings. A person must be cautious not to mention Hashem's name in vain since whenever Hashem's Name is found, death is also found. One must be cautious not to take an oath even if it is true since 1000 cities belonging to Yannai the king were destroyed because they took oaths even though they fulfilled them. One should avoid establishing a partnership with a gentile out of concern that he will have to take an oath and the Jew will be in violation of לא ישמע על פיך. Some authorities are lenient with regards to establishing a partnership with gentiles nowadays since they do not take an oath to their idols. Although they mention the name of their god their intent is the creator of the heavens and earth and they just associate Hashem with other forces and this would not violate לפני עור since they are not warned against worshipping forces together with Hashem. It is permitted to have business dealings with them according to all opinions as long as it is not one of their holidays (see Yoreh Deah *siman* 147).

- A person should always balance between two extremes, e.g. one should not be too miserly nor should one be spend thrifty. One must distance himself as far as possible from haughtiness and anger. (M.B. 1)
- One should seek to support himself and a person must determine what is an absolute necessity and this will lead him to recognize that his Torah study is primary. (M.B. 2)
- One must assure that there is no theft or deceit in his business dealings. (M.B. 4)
- Amongst the mitzvos not mentioned in Shulchan Aruch are (M.B. 4):
  - There is a positive command to cleave to Torah scholars which includes marrying the daughter of a Torah scholar, marrying one's daughter to a Torah scholar
  - To love every Jew
  - To love converts
  - It is prohibited to strike, degrade or embarrass another Jew
  - One must be careful not to hurt orphans and widows as long as they still need help
  - Tale bearing is prohibited as is *lashon hora* and *motzi shem ra*
  - One must avoid disputes
  - It is prohibited to take revenge or bear a grudge
  - One must confess to Hashem for all his transgressions
  - One should not overindulge when eating or drinking
  - One should not use improper language
  - One should not cause others to fall or give bad advice
  - One must avoid mockery and flattery as well as lies. One may change the truth regarding מסכתא פוריא ואושפיזא
  - One must judge others favorably
  - One who is suspicious of upright people will be physically smitten
  - One who talks about meaningless things violates a positive command
  - Rambam writes that one should try to resemble Hashem's behavior