

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
BO

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

When we think of the good that people do, we tend to focus on the positive outcomes of their actions. This may be true in interpersonal relationships, or even between a person and Hashem. However, what may get ignored in this is the initial work that went into the endeavor. Certainly, even if someone put in a lot of effort, but was not able to accomplish their goal, our accolades would be diminished.

However, we find a fascinating idea in our *parshah*. Towards the end of *Parshas Bo*, *Moshe Rabbeinu* instructs *Klal Yisrael* in how to observe their first Pesach. Afterwards, the Torah states, "ויילכו ויעשו" - "And they went, and they did."¹ Since the Torah doesn't waste even a single letter, one may wonder, why does the *passuk* state, "And they went," when "And they did," would have sufficed?

The *Mechilta*² explains that the extra verbiage is there to make a point — even the effort that went into walking to get a sheep was noticed by Hashem, and rewarded. Yes, there is reward for the accomplishment, but there is also reward for the 'going,' for the effort involved in the preparation for the accomplishment.

Perhaps this is only true if one ends up achieving their goal? But what if a person tries and fails? There too, we find that the effort is rewarded. The *Mishna*³ states that one type of person is one who "Goes, but doesn't do," and he receives reward for 'the going.' The *Bartenura*⁴ gives an example of a person who heads to the *Beis Medrash*, but once he is there, does not study. Rather, he sits there, and doesn't understand anything. Nevertheless, this person is rewarded for the effort they invested in going to study, despite not accomplishing anything at all.

Every aspect of effort is precious! Our accomplishments in life are not all-or-nothing. Indeed, with this awareness, we can push ourselves to even greater achievements, secure in the knowledge that even if we fall short of our goals, we will have attained great heights simply by attempting to do so.

1 *Shemos* 12:28

2 *Mechilta D'Rebbi Yishmael*, 12:25

3 *Avos* 5:14

4 *ibid.* s.v. הולך ואינו עושה

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

We can all understand the idea of greater reward for the effort put into anything, but it can be very difficult to be excited about doing something when there is a real chance of failure.

Furthermore, if we actually don't reach our goal, telling ourselves, "Don't worry, you get an A for effort," is not very satisfying.

This thinking, though, stands upon a fallacy. Society tells us that we are what we accomplish, and *Yiddishkeit* gives us so many *mitzvos* to complete. Nevertheless, the reality is that we *never* accomplish, whatever we do accomplish is from Hashem.

Rather, our job in this world is to choose to do good. The choice has to be real, and we need to do what we can to bring about its fruition. But that's all, because that's all that we have.

When our plans fall apart, and we are sitting in the rubble of our dreams and hopes, it is important to recognize that from Hashem's perspective, we are no different than if we were standing high upon the peak of our greatest feats. In both scenarios we made a choice to do good, and did our best to carry through.



Of course not!

Limud HaMussar is Limud HaTorah!

- Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l, when asked if one may engage in Mussar study on Tisha B'Av, when halacha prohibits Torah study.

Darchoi Moshe vol. 2 (please consult Rabbinic authority for practical ruling)

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LISTENING TO TORAH

Rabbi Moshe Black* took his glasses off, as they had fogged up from the heat. Shaking the snow off his coat, he took a breath and looked around. Sure enough, Ben Fischer was there, sitting in his seat as always. Rabbi Black nodded a greeting, removed his coat, and sat down. "Looks like it's just you and me this morning," Rabbi Black remarked, as he glanced at the clock on the wall. "Five-thirty. Let's begin." With that, the two of them began learning the *daf* of that day.

This wasn't the first time Ben Fischer arrived before anyone. In fact, it happened nearly every day. And, in fact, Ben Fischer was usually the last to leave at night as well. If there was a *shiur* going on in town, you could be sure that Mr. Fischer would be there.

Though impressive, this was only half the story. Ben Fischer's formative years were under the rule of the German regime. He was robbed of the normal childhood every child deserves, and instead of spending his days learning *Chumash*, *Mishnayos*, and *Gemara*, spent his days working for his oppressors.

After WWII, Ben made his way to the United States, where he married and raised a family. He was never particularly learned, though he could painfully make his way through a page of *Gemara*. But, more often than not, he did not understand nor follow what was going on in the *shiur*.

This didn't stop him, though. Like clockwork, Ben Fischer would sit down, open his *sefer*, and listen to whomever was speaking. His grandson, Naftali, once asked him why he spent so much time going to *shiurim*, when he didn't seem to get much out of them.

"First of all, I always get something," Ben responded in his Hungarian accent. "And is it so bad to spend my time listening to Torah?"

Sadly, Mr. Ben Fischer passed away a couple of years ago. Rabbi Black, amongst others, eulogized him. "I have no doubt," said Rabbi Black, "that when we arrive in the *Yeshivah Shel Ma'aleh*, we will be lucky if we are counted amongst those who can sit at Mr. Fischer's feet, and study the precious Torah that he has certainly amassed."

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- The amazing *berachos* listed at the beginning of *Parshas Eikev* are the reward for *Klal Yisrael's* 'simple' *mitzvos*, like walking to do a *mitzvah*.¹
- Hashem will sometimes structure a commandment in a way to specifically give additional reward for the 'going' to do the *mitzvah*.²
- If one has a choice of two *shuls* to *daven* in, it is preferable to walk³ to the *shul* that is further away, in order to receive a greater reward for the walking!⁴

1 *Hilchos Ketanos*, 223 הלכה ריוחת

2 *Bereishis Rabbah* 55:7

3 *Tzitz Eliezer* 12:17

4 *Magen Avraham* on *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orech Chaim*, 90:22