



"CHARITY PRECEDED BY TORAH" **Farbrenge – 19 Kislev, 5745-1944**

What do we learn from these words concerning personal improvement? The Talmud in Tractate Brochos explains that the verse "Pada B'sholom" refers to "one who works in Torah, charity and communal prayers."

The key word here is "work," it doesn't say "study Torah," but one who *works* in Torah.

My father-in-law the Rebbe pointed out, that we should relate to Torah as to a business. When one makes a living from a business, he does not sit home waiting for a customer to come along and say "I need certain goods; do you have any?" And only then wake up, leave his house, to take the customer to the warehouse, and show him the goods.

That's not how you run a business. Working for a living means you go out to find a buyer; and you present the goods in the most appealing terms, advertising the value and beauty of the product, convincing the buyer that it is good for *his* clients. He does not grow tired of repeating his sales pitch again and again; until he convinces the buyer and makes the sale. That's the meaning of "work"!

Work also means that he doesn't look at the clock. Even when he sleeps he's dreaming about his business! Thus 'working in Torah' means that he is not just fulfilling his obligation to study Torah.

The Talmud rules that by studying one chapter in the morning and one at night one can fulfill the obligation of "this Torah shall not cease from your mouth day and night." Because he should not fulfill the Mitzvah as a servant who has no choice, and really wants to be "free" rather, it is his business.

Then the Talmud continues "and charity."

Charity must also be like the pursuit of one's own business. Not to wait until the pauper overcomes his shame, and having no choice, approaches him shamefaced, and begs for help in feeding himself and his family, that is not generosity! To be charitable means, you cannot rest as long as there might be someone nearby who does not have food, or if he does have food, he doesn't have what to wear, or food and clothing not befitting his dignity.

As the Rebbe, my father-in-law, explains, Hunger is not someone else's need so he can sleep peacefully until the person wakes us, and says "listen, the situation is so serious that I have to swallow my pride and ask you for a donation, for charity." Charity should be the *business* of the giver.



But in Torah, the order itself is also important: First it says Torah must be his work, then charity. When one's charity is not based on Torah the outcome is uncertain, one cannot know where it will lead.

I lived in Germany at a time when people were being killed in the most heinous ways. At the same time, they had organizations for the protection of animals, that would not tolerate cruelty to animals, such as not feeding a pet on time.

Anyone guilty of not treating their cat or dog properly was arrested, and the animal would be fed at government expense. At the very same time, an hour earlier or an hour later, they treated humans in the absolute opposite manner. And they "worked" at it!

As we saw then, those who lived there, that it wasn't only when they were "at the office" or at their official posts that conspired to bring suffering to those who were not in their party, particularly to a Jew. They were fully engaged in it even when they were at home.

Therefore, the order is also important: We start with Torah, "working" in Torah And only then can we be sure that our devotion to charity will be true kindness.

