I Love My Money

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**#1**

**TODAY’S LEARNING MATERIAL**

**Torah Bereishis 4: 1-8**

*Now the man had known his wife Chava, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have acquired (“kanisi”, same root as Cain’s name) a man with G-d.”*

*And additionally, she bore his brother Hevel. And Hevel became a shepherd, and Cain worked the land.*

*After a period of time, Cain brought an offering to G-d of the fruit of the ground.*

*And as for Hevel, he also brought of the firstborn of his flock and their [choicest] fat parts.*

*And G-d turned to Hevel and his offering.*

*But to Cain and his offering He did not turn.*

*And Cain was very angry and depressed.*

*And G-d said to Cain: ‘Why are you angry? Why are you so upset?*

*Surely, If you improve yourself, you will be forgiven. But if you do ot improve yourself, sin rests at the door. its desire is toward you, yet you can conquer it.’*

*Cain spoke with his brother Hevel. And it happened when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against his brother Hevel and killed him.*

**Kli Yakar ad loc.**

*Cain and Hevel were actually involved in a philosophical dispute about Man and his reason for being. Is this world an end in itself, or is there another, eternal world? Is this world only a means to reach the World to Come?*

*It would appear that the land-loving Cain was of the opinion that life in this world is the goal, and that there is no life after this world. On the other hand, Hevel believed that there is another world, in which a person can truly attain his essential reason for being. He therefore chose to be a shepherd, an occupation that involved isolation and quiet time for contemplation and meditation. Indeed, maybe this is the meaning of the Midrash (Oral Torah that explains the written Torah) in Bereishits Rabbah (22:16) which says that Cain was interested in real estate while Hevel preferred movable assets. Cain saw this world as the solid base of his existence, and Hevel saw his existence in this world as temporary and uncertain.*

**Talmud Bava Basra 10b**

*Rav Yosef the son of Rav Yehoshua was ‘dead’ for a short period of time and then was resuscitated. (Had a near-death encounter.) To his father's question of what did he see, he responded: “I saw an upside-down world. The ‘high’ people were low and the ‘low’ people were high.” “You saw a clear world!” was his father’s response.*

**Rashi ad loc.**

*The people who were ‘high’ in this world due to their wealth were in a lowly position in the next world. The poor who were treated lowly in this world were the important ones in the next. His father responded that there he saw with clarity each person’s true state.*

**Questions:**

* **What is the purpose of money?**
* **What does money do to you?**
* **What are the advantages/ disadvantages of being rich?**

**#2**

**Talmud Sanhedrin 72a**

*If, while breaking in, the thief is discovered, and he is struck and dies, [it is as if] he has no blood (there shall be no blood guilt on his account)” (Torah Shemos 22:1).*

*There is a universal presumption that people will fight to keep their money. A thief thus knows that, while he may prefer not to, he may come face to face with the homeowner, who will fight to keep his money. In such a scenario, there is a legitimate fear that the thief may even be willing to kill to get his booty. And since it is a basic principle that, “when one comes to kill you, you may kill him first”, the homeowner—or anyone else, for that matter—can, in legitimate self-defence, kill the intruder. While the intruder may not actually be willing to kill, the homeowner has no way of knowing that, and is thus in a state of a possible threat to his life, which allows him to kill the thief.*

**Question: Would you risk your life to safe your money?**

**Talmud Sanhedrin 74a**

*One may not serve idols even on pain of death.*

*(Question: What is the Torah source for this ruling? Answer:)*

*Why must it say (in Torah) both “And you shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul...” and also “...and with all your possessions” (Torah Devarim 6:5)?*

*If one's soul (life) is dearer to him than his money, he is commanded to love G-d, even if he must forfeit his life. If his money is dearer to him than his life, he is commanded to love G-d, even if he must lose his money.*

**Questions:**

* **Why do people love money?**
* **Is it possible to love money more than yourself?**
* **Do you know people whose possessions are more important to them than their lives? What strikes you about them?**

**New York Times, The High Cost of Losing Money, Liz Robbins January 6, 2009**

The German industrialist Adolf Merckle was the 94th richest person in the world in 2008, with a net worth of about $9.2 billion. But his poor investment decisions concerning Volkswagen shares pushed his business empire to the brink of disaster, and on Monday he took his own life at age 74.

Mr. Merckle’s body was found by railroad tracks near his home in Southern Germany and his family confirmed the suicide.

**Questions:**

* **What pushes some people to do such an extreme act after losing their money?**
* **Are you willing to sacrifice your quality of life (i.e. longer commute, toxic or immoral working environment, short vacation time, health, happiness) to have a higher income? Explain why.**

**#3**

**Talmud Chullin 91a**

*For righteous individuals, their property is more precious to them than their physical welfare (literally their bodies).*

**Question: If we were asked to give a list of classic characteristics of righteous people, it is highly unlikely that this characteristic would come to mind. “He cares more about his clothing than his own body.” What could this mean?**

**#4**

**Jonah (1:8-9)**

*The sailors find Jonah hiding in the bottom of the ship, and they ask him suspiciously, “Who are you and what is your work?” To which he responds, “I am a Jew and I fear the G-d of Israel.”*

**Question: If someone asks you about your friend, what he does etc., you'd probably respond, “He is a doctor” or “He sells insurance policies for a living,” and if he is very wealthy you might add, “He is a millionaire.” Is it right to describe people based on their profession or financial success and not based on their virtues or other things?**

**#5**

**Question: What’s your takeaway from today’s discussion?**