

## Rabbi's Article II

### *To Work, To Speak, and to Study-Torah*

Concerning G-d's promise to Abraham (-Genesis 12:7), "To your seed I will give this land," our sages teach (-Bereishit Rabbah 39:8), "When Abraham was walking in Aram Naharim and Aram Nahor, he saw them eating, drinking and reveling, he said, 'May it be that I will not have a share in this land.' And when he reached the 'Ladder of the Rock' (Land of Israel), he saw them busy with mowing at the time of mowing, and with hoeing at the time of hoeing, he said, 'May my portion be in this land.' The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'To your seed I will give this land.'"

Questions: (i) Abraham expressed his desire that he live among those who are occupied themselves with constructive work in his times, hence, what does this have to do with the land being promised to his offspring generations later?! And (ii) especially so, when in the times that Abraham's offspring inherited the land (-Toras Kohanim, Acharei 18:3), "The deeds of the Canaanites are corrupt of all the nations and the place where Israel settled is more corrupt of them all"?!

To understand this, let us see the teaching of our sages (-Sanhedrin 99b) concerning the importance of work: "Rabbi Elazar says: Every man was created for labor, as it is stated (-Job 5:7): 'Man is born for toil.' (Based on this verse,) I do not know whether he was created for toil of the mouth, (speech,) or whether he was created for the toil of labor. When (the verse) states (-Proverbs 16:26): 'For his mouth presses upon him', you must say that he was created for toil of the mouth. And still I do not know (with regard to the toil of the mouth) whether it is for the toil of Torah or for the toil of conversation. When (the verse) states (-Joshua 1:8): 'This Torah scroll shall not depart from your mouth,' you must say that he was created for the toil of Torah." Let us understand: (i) Why would physical work be a reason to have been created for? (ii) Why would speech be a reason to have been created for, especially when Maimonides (-[Link](#)) comments on the teaching (-Ethics, Chapter 1, Mishna 17), "I have found nothing better for the body than silence," that, "most of man's words are undesirable"? (iii) More so, being that even a preliminary thought in Torah is Torah, hence, in conclusion we must say that both, physical work and simple conversation, are part of, "Man is born for toil," --only that ultimately the fullest toil that man was born for is the toil of (the speech of) Torah,-- how can the final analysis be that physical work and regular conversation are part of man's purpose in life?

What is the reason that G-d, Who is the essence of goodness, with the nature of doing good, should want man to toil, and strenuously so? The answer is that the truest goodness for man is to be, "Likened to his Creator," as our sages refer to it, to become (-Shabbat 10a), "a partner to the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the act of Creation." Hence, the ultimate goodness for man is when he becomes, not just a receiver, but a giver in this world. Therefore, the first opinion is that man was born to toil in physical work. For when on does physical work, in accordance with the laws of Torah, he becomes a true, "partner in the act of Creation," by being a giver to the world.

However, being, "Likened to his Creator," does not mean to be a giver in only that which already exists, but as with G-d's work, it also entails creating something new within creation. Hence, physical doing is not a novelty among the creatures of the world, and is also performed by animals. The novelty that only humans offer creation is that of speech and conversation. Therefore, the second opinion is that, "Man is born for toil," must also include, "toil of the mouth," "the toil of conversation." Nevertheless, even the human novelty of speech does not make one, "a partner in the act of Creation," for the power of speech is not something that the human himself creates, but rather, is the gift that G-d gave him. Therefore, it is only when a person connects his power of speech with the words of Torah, which is the Torah of the Creator --Which by G-d, "He and His wisdom are one,"-- and specifically when the person studies the Torah strenuously with great effort, until the Torah (-Avoda Zora 19b), "is called by the name of (the one who studies it)," that the person is uniting the Creator (Torah, "He and His wisdom are one") with His creation (the physical person physically studying). Hence, the person now becomes, "Likened to his Creator," and, "a partner to the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the act of Creation."

*Mystically speaking, concerning our service to G-d:* (i) *Toil of Work* refers to a person *doing his work with faith*, in having faith that it is G-d alone who sustains and gives livelihood, and that G-d is with him in his work in blessing. (ii) *Toil of Conversation* refers to *praying*. And this is as we explained earlier, that through the *Toil of Work*, in having faith that G-d is the sole provider, the person becomes a giver, but does not draw something new, beyond the already existing *Divinity* within the universe. However, through the *Toil of Conversation*, *praying*, which is (-Genesis 28:12), "a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven," through which the person praying elevates the, "on the ground," to an unprecedented (new) *Divinity* of, "reached to heaven." However, being that prayer are the words of the human, bound within the limitations of the human, who cannot perform *creatio ex nihilo*, therefore, it is only through the, (iii) *Toil of Torah*, which are the words of G-d placed upon our tongue, through which we can effect a total new existence of creation, making us truly, "Likened to his Creator," and, "a partner to the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the act of Creation."

Nevertheless, in order for our *Toil of Torah* to accomplish this newness in creation, we must first refine the world through our *Toil of Work*, and elevate the world through our *Toil of Prayer*. And so it is with the *Land of Israel*, that in order for this land to be a vessel for the *Torah Light of Abraham*, the people of the land had to first refine the land with their, *Toil of Work*, "mowing at the time of mowing, and hoeing at the time of hoeing," followed with Abraham's *Toil of Prayer* of, "May my portion be in this land," was the land ready for, "To your seed I will give this land," for them to transform the land into one in which the *Light of Torah* shines.