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Parashat Yitro

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What is faith? It is confidence or trust in something or someone. It takes faith to accept many laws of the Torah. It takes faith to trust in G-d.

There are those who believe that religion is a crutch for the less fortunate in the world. When the Children of Israel departed Egypt they had great affluence and perfect health. The reason G-d gave them this, was to teach, faith in G-d applies to the “haves and the have nots”, the wealthy and the needy.

This year, 5782, is what is known as a “Shmittah” year, a sabbatical year. One works the land for six years and on the seventh year the land is left alone. In the sixth year one needs to gather enough for years six, seven, and eight.

The sabbatical year is one that requires great faith. A person with faith is one that knows and believes that it is G-d who provides for their sustenance. A person of faith seeks proper balance between working, learning Torah, praying, and pursuing righteousness, and pleasure.

Faith is being honest with one’s self when it comes to wants and needs. The border between necessity and pleasure changes as a person moves through life. What faith gives us is trust that G-d knows exactly what we need, and while we may not comprehend it, G-d can be counted on to provide for those necessities.

There is no promise that G-d will provide whatever a person “wants”, even when there is complete trust in G-d. What a person needs is a different issue.

Rambam (Maimonides 1135-1204) writes: One of the types of evil that people experience in life is self-inflicted. What kind of people are these? People who are full of jealousy that they do not have the luxuries that other have. What do these people do? They pursue luxuries that they do not need. They complain that G-d is not “fair”.

Faith is power and its power grants us the opportunity to learn the fact that “G-d knows what is best!”

Good Shabbos

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

