

The Observant Jew by Rabbi Jonathan Gewirtz Quotes

There's a cynical expression, "Those who can — do, those who can't — teach." The Jewish corollary to that is that someone who "can't cut it" in the "real world" goes into *Chinuch*. How sad it is when people think this way. I have a friend who was actually preparing for law school when someone asked him if he believed that Hashem dictates *parnasah*. When he replied in the affirmative, he was asked, "Why not go into *Chinuch*? You think the world needs another lawyer?" *Baruch Hashem*, he did, and I can't tell you how many *talmidim*'s lives he has affected. I can also tell you that the level of honor and respect he enjoys from the people who know him is greater than any lawyer gets. Now, I'm not here to bash lawyers (well, maybe except for few of you — you know who you are). I'm here to say that teaching people Torah is probably the highest vocation to which one can aspire.¹

The answer is quite simple. I write because I can. The *Ribono shel Olam* gave me a talent to write. I didn't study it; I didn't take long hours of classes to learn how to write; I just write. Now, saying I am a good writer is no more arrogant than a professional basketball player saying that he's seven feet tall. It's not arrogance; it's a statement of fact. God made him tall; He made me a writer. However, when you're given a gift (here's the Chanukah tie-in...) you have an obligation to use it. The basketball player is tall, but unless he practices and uses his height as an advantage in the game, the gift is meaningless. I can write, but unless I put my talents to good use, using them for *kavod Shamayim*, it's a waste. That's why I write. I write to inspire; I write to make people think; I write to bring people closer to themselves and to Hashem. When people tell me they love reading my work, I feel fantastic. Not because I am impressed with myself, but because it means I am accomplishing my goal of touching others through my words.²

You see, *hishtadlus* is a test. You need to work to earn a living. How will you do it? Will you operate according to *halachah*, or will you bend the rules and say, "it's just business"? If you follow *halachah*, you're showing that you choose to be an *oved Hashem*. If you cheat, steal, and all the other wonderful things that people permit for "*parnasah*," then you've

¹ 121

² 176-177

shown that you don't trust Hashem to take care of you and you will be repaid accordingly.³

Buy the book: <https://www.amazon.com/Observant-Jew-Rabbi-Jonathan-Gewirtz/dp/1598261118>