



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Bechukosai

May 27, 2022

A Taste of Torah

Enjoy!

by Rabbi Chaim Gross

The parsha opens with a promise from Hashem: “If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them, then I will provide your rains in their time... (Bechukosai 26:3)” While the reading of the verse seems to be quite straightforward, Rashi puts an entirely different spin on it: The second segment, “And observe My commandments,” refers to toiling in Torah for the purpose of guarding and fulfilling the mitzvos. If so, what then is the meaning of first part, “If you will follow My decrees”? It cannot be a commandment to guard and fulfill perform the mitzvos, says Rashi, because that is the second point of the verse. Rather, it is telling us something else entirely – and that is, to toil in Torah.

If you are scratching your head with a bewildered look on your face, you’re in good company. What is the nature of this mitzvah being given to us, “to toil in Torah”? Furthermore, we must understand how exactly the words “If you will follow My decrees” connote this meaning; it cannot simply be by a process of elimination.

I once heard a beautiful explanation from Rabbi Lipa Geldwirth, illustrated with the following story: The Brisker Rov, Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik (1886-1959), was once taking a *shpatzir* (Yiddish for “stroll”) with his daughter. Not wanting to allow the time to go to waste, but not wanting to burden his daughter with a heavy Torah discussion, he chose instead to pose a riddle so as to sharpen her mind. “How would one define a *shpatzir*?” he asked. “Well,” she answered uncertainly, “I suppose it means to walk around for a while and then to return home.” Rabbi

Soloveitchik responded, “You are half right. You see, to go for a *shpatzir* means to take a walk without a destination, simply for the pleasure of it. And so, as one strolls about, he is *shpatziring* – but once he decides to return home and has a destination in mind, it is no longer a *shpatzir*.”

We must look again at the wording of the verse, said Rabbi Geldwirth. The term it uses to express the idea of “following” Hashem’s decrees is the Hebrew word “*teileichu*,” which can be translated as, “go for a *shpatzir*.” In other words, go for a stroll, not in a park, not in a garden, but in the most beautiful atmosphere of all – the sparkling words of the Torah. Take a walk, not so as to know how to practically fulfill the mitzvos, but rather without a purpose, without an objective – without a destination. Take a *shpatzir* in learning Torah, simply to breathe in its fresh, pure air, inhale its delightful fragrance, absorb its Heavenly light. Enjoy it!

In the introduction to Sefer Iglei Tal, Rabbi Avrohom Bornshtain of Sochatchov (better known as the Avnei Nezer; 1838-1910) wrote that for many years he felt guilty that his Torah learning was not entirely for the sake of Heaven because he enjoyed it so much – until one day he was granted new insight into words we say every day in the blessing prior to engaging in Torah study. In that blessing, we beseech G-d, “Please, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people – then we, our offspring and the offspring of all Your people will know Your name and study Your Torah for its own sake.” Upon careful examination, the words are telling us that learning for pleasure is the epitome

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Stories for the Soul

Torah before All Else

Based on a story in Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Rabbi Moshe Neuschloss (1912-1997) was one of the great halachic authorities of his time. During World War II, he was in a Nazi concentration camp. At one point, he was so sick that he was presumed dead, and was brought with the other bodies to the crematorium. Miraculously, he revived and managed to survive.

Following the war, he returned to Hungary. His brother had also survived, and, upon discovering that his brother, thought to be dead, was indeed alive, he made haste to visit him.

He arrived on a Friday afternoon at the doorstep of Rav Moshe’s home. Rav Moshe opened the door, immediately invited his brother into the house and said, “We must learn Torah - now.” For five uninterrupted hours, they sat together studying. As Shabbos drew closer, they closed their books. Only then did they embrace with great emotion and weep uncontrollably on one another’s shoulders over the terrible tragedies that had befallen them and their nation.

Rav Moshe then explained his actions. “Since the world was devoid of Torah for so many years of the Holocaust - and even now, so many are involved with rebuilding their lives - I feel it necessary that someone carry the world’s spiritual needs, which can be accomplished only through intensive Torah study. I have made this my life’s commitment,

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Kollel Happenings

THIS SUNDAY! PRE-SHAVUOS LEARN-A-THON

Don't miss the return of the Kollel's Pre-Shavuos Learn-A-Thon on Sunday, May 29, 10:15 am-12 pm. Featuring one hour of learning for men for a communal completion of an entire masechta and a special class for women, followed by a celebratory *siyum* and buffet lunch. For more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

SPECIAL TORAH FOR TYCOONS SEASON FINALE ON JUNE 15TH

Tune in on Zoom on Wednesday evening, June 15th at 7:30 pm for a special T4T session. Mr. Harry Rothenberg, plaintiffs personal injury attorney and partner at The Rothenberg Law Firm LLP and sought-after lecturer on Torah topics, will present the entire session on the topic of *When Systems Collide: Professional Responsibility and Opportunity vs. Religious and Moral Imperative*. For more details and Zoom info, visit www.denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

SPRING-SUMMER AVOS UBANIM CONTINUES THIS SHABBOS

The Kollel's spring-summer Avos Ubanim program continues this Shabbos afternoon at the Kollel Torah Centers in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and prizes. Program ends 15 minutes before mincha in Southeast Denver, at mincha in West Denver. For sponsorships and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: Three people ate together, were obligated to have a *mezuman*, and none of them joined any other *mezuman*, but when the three of them recite *Birkas Hamazon* (at their place of eating, at the same time), they may not hold a *mezuman*. Why not?

Answer: If participants of a *mezuman bentched* but need to repeat *Birkas*

Hamazon after omitting *ritzei* on Shabbos or *ya'ale viyavo* on Yom Tov, they don't hold a *mezuman* a second time, as they fulfilled that obligation the first time around (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 188:9).

This week's question: What part of *Birkas Hamazon* should normally be said quietly when *bentching* but out loud

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XLVIII

Although Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin was destroyed by the Nazis during World War II (though the building itself still stands), it succeeded in

developing great Torah scholars and leaders, including a number who grew to become major Torah leaders of post-World War II Jewry.

A Taste of Torah

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of learning Torah for its own sake.

Why is this so? The answer is that the enjoyment being discussed here is not that of intellectual stimulation, but of an entirely different nature - that is, basking in the glory of the Almighty. To learn so as to merit that closeness is exactly what Hashem wants from us.

Rabbi Aharon Kotler, the great founder and rosh yeshiva of the Lakewood Yeshiva, was once addressing a parlor meeting. He spoke at great length of the value of financially supporting Torah study. Rav Aharon explained that in the World to Come, those who support it will be rewarded equally alongside those they provided for. After his speech,

someone asked the obvious question - if they are indeed rewarded equally in the World to Come, then why should the supporter bother to carve out time from his busy schedule to learn Torah himself? Rav Aharon did not understand the question. "I only said they would be equal in the Next World - but a person needs to have a bit of *Olam Hazei* (This World) too, to have pleasure in this world as well!"

As we count up to the day when we received this most awesome gift of the Torah, let us remind ourselves to take advantage of it, to take the time to learn its sacred words, to stroll amongst them - to enjoy it!

Stories for the Soul

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expressing my gratitude to Hashem.

"Furthermore," Rav Moshe continued, "there is another reason. In repayment for my room and board in this home, I agreed to a Yissochor/Zevulun partnership with the owner, whereby I spend my time learning and he shares my reward in the Next World. I did not think it appropriate that I detract from

my responsibility for personal reasons."

In this week's parsha, the Torah tells us that toiling in Torah is the first step to achieving spiritual greatness, while failing to do so is the first step on a slippery slope toward spiritual doom. It is thus imperative to immerse oneself in Torah study whenever possible, especially in times of spiritual decline.

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