



Your ointments yield a sweet fragrance, Your name is like finest oil— Therefore do maidens love you.

(Shir HaShirim 1:3)

Just like with oil, its beginning is bitter and then it becomes sweet, so too the Torah, one may be pained by it in the beginning but eventually it has a good ending. As the passuk (Iyov 8:7) says: Though your beginning be painful, in the end you will grow very great. (Medrash Rabbah Devarim 7:3)

The above *passuk* seems to contradict the following *passuk* (Mishlei 3:17) describing the Torah: *Her ways are pleasant, And all her paths, peaceful.* As the Ralbag explains: *Behold the pathways of the Torah are pathways that are exceedingly pleasant and sweet to the person. For the Torah didn't burden a person with any burden too harsh for him, rather all positive and negative commandments are sweet and desirous in and of themselves.*

It seems the answer lies in the wording of the *pasuk* in Mishlei: *Her* (the Torah's) **ways** are pleasant and all her paths, peaceful. This does not exclude the possibility that in the beginning it can be hard. Rather, this just means that its paths, once one walks steadily upon them, are entirely pleasant and sweet. We all witness people who are still getting on the path of Torah, at times finding it harsh. However, those who have successfully ridden upon its path would not trade its sweetness for anything in the world.

