

Pursuit of Purpose

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פרשת
בשלה

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The Perfect Environment for Limud Hatorah

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

In this week's Parsha the Pasuk states, "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Behold, I will rain down for you food from Heaven. Let the people go out and pick each day's matter on its day, so that I may test him, whether he will follow my Torah or not.'" (*Beshalach 16:4*) The Seforno comments, when they receive their sustenance free from pain, as our Sages say, "The Torah was only given to be expounded by those who ate the Manna."

It seems from the Seforno that a prerequisite in achieving the greatest heights in Torah is the freedom from suffering and pain. However, this seems to be in direct contradiction with the Gemara in Brachos 5A that states, "Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai taught in a Baraisa, there are three gifts that Hashem gave to Klal Yisrael and they were all given through suffering. They are Torah, Eretz Yisrael, and the World to Come." This implies that suffering is a prerequisite for the acquisition of Torah. In addition, the Rambam wrote his magnum opus, the Mishneh Torah, while on the run from the Muslims, which seems to indicate that great heights in Torah can be achieved through suffering. How can we resolve this seeming contradiction?

We can rectify these apparent opposing Chazal with an understanding that there is external suffering that is a hindrance to success in Torah, and there is intrinsic suffering, which is the key to success in Torah. On the one hand, external suffering can cause a person to muster up resources

of strength to fight back and achieve great heights, as we find with the Rambam. However, we see from the Seforno that the perfect environment for one to thrive in Limud Hatorah is an environment free from external pressures and distractions. This is all in the realm of the external environment necessary for growth in Torah, but when a person is actually involved in the learning, תורה נקנית ביסורין. To absorb and acquire Torah a person has to suffer in the learning, he needs to struggle to understand the Dvar Hashem, and spend days and nights working just to understand the Torah. This intrinsic suffering is a condition necessary to attain the Torah, as our Sages say, אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה. Based on this understanding, these two statements do not conflict, on the contrary they compliment each other. The more one is free from external distractions, the more they will be able to struggle to acquire an understanding of the learning itself.

We can learn an important lesson from the above. The environment necessary for the greatest success in Torah is one free from distractions. Clearly, there is no place for cell phones or outside conversations during our personal Sedarim. These distractions can really hinder our growth in Torah and not allow us to become fully absorbed in the learning. It is therefore incumbent upon us to minimize these distractions as much as possible, so we can have a portion in the learning of the תורה.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

Last week we stressed the importance of knowing the deeper meaning behind the Mitzvos we do. We quoted the Rabbeinu Bachaya who explains that we wear Tefillin to show how Hashem clings lovingly to us and we to Him. But the Rabbeinu Bachaya does not stop there, he continues:

“And Hashem also prides Himself in us, as the Pasuk (Yeshaya 49:3) states: ‘Yisroel, in whom I will pride Myself.’ And in order to make known the tremendous extent of the clinging of Hashem to us, Chazal had to say that Hashem wears Tefillin, this teaches the nation that just as we, His nation and the sheep of his flock, pride ourselves in Him with the story of His Oneness and His miracles and wonders that He did for us in Mitzrayim (which are written inside our Tefillin) so too He, may He be blessed, takes pride and relates our oneness, that we are one nation on Earth exclusively for Him. And this is what the Gemara (Brachos 6) says: ‘Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said to Rav Chiya bar Avin: What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the world? Rav Chiya bar Avin replied: It is written: Who is like Your people, Yisroel, one nation in the land?’ (Divrei HaYomim 17:21). And the Gemara asks: Is the Holy One, Blessed be He, glorified through the glory of Israel? Yes, as it is stated: ‘You have glorified the L-rd as your G-d, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His laws and commandments and listen to His voice.’ And the subsequent verse (Deuteronomy 26:17-18) states: ‘And the L-rd has glorified you, this day, to be His treasure, as He spoke to you, to keep His commandments.’”

Imagine if we would think each day as we put on Tefillin that it is the affirmation of how we take pride in Hashem and Hashem puts on Tefillin as an affirmation of how much he takes pride in.....Wait! What can the Creator and Sustainer of the entire Universe, Hashem, possible take pride in?

You!



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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Why did Chazal prescribe that we remind ourselves specifically of Krias Yam Suf every Shacharis right before we begin Shmoneh Esrei?

As we approach Hashem with our Pekel of Tzaros every morning, we relive that day when we were surrounded, the Mitzriyim behind us and the sea in front of us. With no where to turn, Moshe cries out to Hashem... and what does Hashem tell him?

“Why are you crying out to Me? Speak to the Klal Yisroel that they should start moving!” (Shemos 14:15) The Nefesh HaChaim (1:9) explains that this was, “As if to say that it depends on them. That if they will be in the mode of faith and Bitachon, and they would travel, going and proceeding to the Sea absolutely certain and without fear out of their mighty Bitachon, it will undoubtedly split before them. Then, as a result they will cause an awakening above, so that a miracle should happen, and it will split before them.”

As we approach Hashem every morning and it seems our Tzaros surround us with no way out, we relive that day when we were also surrounded, and Hashem told us it’s all up to us!