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Torah sweets



PARSHAS BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI EDITION – VOLUME 15, ISSUE 17 – 26TH OF IYAR, 5785/MAY 24TH, 2025

TORAH QUESTION OF THE WEEK BY RAV MOSHE KLEIN: - BEHAR/BECHUKOSAI – WHY WOULD HASHEM SYSTEMIZE CURSES?

Last week's question: Why in the world do we have to have an entire Parsha saying that if we don't listen to Hashem, we're going to experience terrible curses? Why is there a threat of such strong punishment? Why can't it just be nice and good?

Answer: To understand this question, let's cite the Gemara (Megillah 31a) that writes: "Ezra enacted for the Jewish people that they should read the portion of the curses that are recorded in Parshas Bechukosai before Shavuot and the portion of the curses that are recorded in Ki Sava before Rosh Hashana." **Rav Moshe Shapiro**, ZT"l, (based on Megillah 29b) comments that in Eretz Yisrael the Torah was once every three years; nevertheless, they still read the curses before Shavuot (*new year for trees*) and Rosh Hashanah.

The Gemara offers the reason why they did this: "So that the year concludes together with its curses, and the new year begins without the ominous reading of the curses." Then, the Gemara comments: *If old men say to you: 'Demolish' and children say to you: 'Build' then demolish and do not build, because the demolishing of old men is ultimately as constructive as building, even though it appears destructive, and the building of children is as destructive as demolishing.* What's the correlation between the previous teaching and this one?

The commentaries explain that one may think, "why say the curses before Rosh Hashanah and Shavuot – words are so powerful and have the power to hurt!" That is a childish way of talking. On the contrary, Ezra was instructing us to read it so that the actual curses mentioned are removed. The reading of these words is healing for us. This begs the question, how does reading the curses take them away? To answer, let's remember that Our Loving Father in Heaven is not trying to hurt anyone. As such, let's examine some of these curses.

The first one is (Vayikra 26:14): "if you do not obey Me", which **Rashi** (ibid) explains to mean, "to study the Torah laboriously". One stops learning Torah. Then, there is a slippery slope, which includes seven deteriorating steps, as he writes: Because didn't study (1) you will not learn you will not practice the commandments (2), which will lead you to scorn those who do (3), then to despise the sages (4), then to prevent others from observing (5), then to deny the Divine origin of the Mitzvos (6), and finally, to deny the existence of Hashem. (7)" We are talking about not such a great person who is throwing off Yiddishkeit in a very pointed and deliberate way, leading Hashem to punish him.

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Yet, that's not enough, as we see later (ibid. 26:18) states: And if you do not obey Me, I will go on to discipline you sevenfold for your (seven) sins, and I will break your proud glory." Because the sinning person didn't receive the message, more punishment ensues." If a person still doesn't accept, there is a third round, as it states (ibid. 26:21-22), "And if you remain hostile toward Me and refuse to obey Me, I will go on smiting you sevenfold for your sins. I will let out wild beasts against you... They shall decimate you, and your roads shall be deserted."

If one still doesn't listen to Hashem – a fourth time (ibid 26:23-24) and we walk without Him, Hashem will treat one the same and bring punishment. Then, there's a fifth time that one doesn't listen, Hashem says (ibid. 26:27-29): "If, despite this, you disobey Me and remain hostile to Me, I will act against you in wrathful hostility; I will discipline you sevenfold for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters." All these are to send one a message and reminders for one who sins to wake up and smell the coffee; to stop using the trait of stubbornness in a negative way. Nevertheless, we see (ibid. 26:42) that Hashem says: "Then will I remember My covenant with Yaakov, Yitzchak, and Avraham."

What we are bringing out here is that this entire system is not meant for a one-and-done sinner; rather, it's meant for someone who continuously doesn't listen to Hashem (up to five times) after He tries to get their attention by sending them and refuses to change. When one understands what the role of the curses truly is, he realizes that Hashem wants us to walk with Him and connect with Him. The punishment is not to hurt us by to reconnect with us, so when we read the scary curses, we are seeing their intention and message, thereby removing them. →

However, we need to go a step deeper into and explain a fundamental idea of the **Nefesh Hachaim** (Sha'ar Alef). **Rav Chaim Volozhiner**, ZT"l, writes that, when most people think that Hashem created the world and simply punishes one who does something wrong, it's an oversimplification. We are actually given a unique ability to build or destroy with our bechira – Free Will. This is what it means when he tells us we are created *b'tzelem Elokim* - image of Hashem – we are creators of sorts. When one commits a sin, he unfortunately brings a terrible impurity into the world and extinguishes tremendous amount of light. On the flip side, when one does a Mitzvah, he brings an incredible amount of light into the world.

Let's take it one more step. Say someone consumes poison, G-d Forbid, which causes a reaction, and the body starts going haywire. One's blood pressure rises or falls; perhaps, one starts throwing up. This is happening because something was introduced into the body that wasn't aligned with its system. Similarly, we are so connected/intertwined to creation because we are given the ability to be creators. What we do can literally make creation turn on its head; it's not just a punishment as we were saying before. It's Hashem saying, "you're given the ability to mess up the whole creation; you're being self-destructive by sinning."

The Nefesh Hachaim cites the Gemara (Bava Kama 50a) which states that: "*Whosoever claims that Hashem 'forfeits' (i. e., merely ignores violations), that individual's life will become forfeit*". Doesn't Hashem do so much Chesed (kindness)? This sounds cruel! The answer is that Hashem is not looking to punish; however, this is the *metziyus* (reality) that Hashem made the world with. If one maneuvers the world on the wrong path, there will be a very negative reaction. Hashem tells us, "*If you don't walk with Me, the world will turn, and if you don't correct yourself, it will just be worse.*"

It's not just Hashem sending a message to us. This is the reality, whether we like it or not. If someone gets an allergic reaction to milk or peanut butter and puts himself in possibly grave danger, there is no negotiating with the "system", the same goes for one who does a sin – there is a response that is embedded into creation.

Let's conclude with a very important note of *chizuk* (encouragement). This conversation is not referring to a person who fell for a temptation; rather, this is meant for one who uprooted the entire connection to Hashem and creation. When one remembers that all Hashem wants is for one to align the creation properly, the curses are fully negated. We should merit having only Bracha in our lives!

This week's question: Every year, Parshas Bamidbar is read before Shavuos. What message is there in this Parsha that doesn't discuss the Giving of the Torah to ready ourselves for this special Yom Tov?

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**BEHAR – THE SILENT DESTROYER: HOW INSULTS DAMAGE
MARRIAGE – AND WHAT THE TORAH SAYS TO DO INSTEAD**

In Parshas Behar, the Torah states, (Vayikra 25:17) "*Do not harass one another, and you should have fear of your G-d; for I am Hashem your G-d*". **Rashi** elucidates that this is referring to *ona'as devarim*, verbal harassment. He writes that the Torah enjoins us not to annoy someone or give someone advice that benefits only ourselves. The end of the Pasuk makes it clear that Hashem knows our true intentions. The **Alshich** understands this pasuk to mean that when a Jew commits *ona'as devarim* (verbal abuse) this is not so much an insult to one's fellow Jew, but an insult to Hashem himself. He learns this from the end of the Pasuk which states, "*you should have fear of your G-d*"!

The Alshich recommends that we also learn from this that we should never consider ourselves superior to anyone else. If we are older, we should think to ourselves that we must have more sins than someone younger. If we are younger, we should think we don't have as many good deeds as someone older. If we are more intelligent, we should realize we are more responsible not to fall into sin. The Alshich points out that this is why (in Pirkei Avos, 4:6) Rabbi Levitas exhorts us to be exceedingly humble. Only by being humble and relating to others in a humble way will we avoid the sin of *ona'as devarim*, hurting others with our words.

In a marriage, *ona'as devarim* is a common pitfall. Living with our spouses, we become familiar with their sensitivities and exactly how to push their buttons. When we get upset, it is extremely hard to control what we say. This is especially true if we get into arguments. If we keep this Pasuk in mind, namely that hurting our spouse with words is an insult to Hashem, that could give us the incentive to work on our self-control and avoid *ona'as devarim*.

The Alshich gives us the key to being successful in this area: through developing humility. Are we so much better than our spouse? The Alshich tells us what to think if we are older or younger or even more intelligent. Even after we read this, we might still fail and hurt our spouse with our words. What matters most to Hashem is our effort.

The end of the Pasuk states, "*for I am Hashem your G-d*". Hashem sees how much we want to succeed and how much effort we are putting in to look at our spouses through the lens of humility. The main path to avoiding *ona'as devarim* and reaching *shleyimus* (perfection) with our spouse is through working on our humility and being *mevater* (foregoing). May Hashem bless our efforts with success, and may our homes shine with the light of Shalom Bayis!

Rabbi Greenfield, MS MFT, is the author of the Torah marriage toolbox course. Create more Shalom Bayis in your home by visiting torahmarriage.com or email rabbigreenfield@gmail.com

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BEHAR – DON'T WORRY



One of the major themes in Parshas Behar is the concept of Shemittah (the Sabbatical year) at length. The Torah (Vayikra 25:4) tells us that during this year, one is not allowed to plant: *“The seventh year is a Shabbos of Shabboses for the land; it is a Shabbos unto G-d, during which you may not plant your fields nor prune your vineyards.”* Whatever is out there, that’s all you have. Then the Torah (Vayikra 25:20-21) continues: *“And if you will ask, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year? Behold! We will not sow, and we will not gather our crop!’ I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield a crop sufficient for the three years.”*

The **Seforno** poses a question: What if a person doesn’t ask? The answer is that he won’t get a triple crop. He will have one crop that will last for three years and get by with what he has. So, Reuven looks at Shimon, his neighbor, and starts worrying about what will happen with the Shemittah year around the corner. Suddenly - boom - he has a bounty in the third year. However, now that he has a triple crop, he must spend triple the time harvesting, threshing, winnowing and built two more silos to hold the produce.

Reuven then looks at Shimon (who got a regular crop) and asks him, “What are you going to do with Shemittah around the corner?” Shimon else replies, “I don’t know. Hashem told me not to plant, plow, or harvest – He didn’t tell me not to do anything else. Whatever will be, will be.” The Seforno says the amount of *hishtadlus* (effort) one must put in is directly proportional to the amount of *bitachon* (trust in Hashem) one has. If one trusts His Creator to provide for him, he doesn’t have to knock himself out. Hashem will provide. If one doesn’t have trust in Hashem, they will have to work very hard to feel secure. Shemittah teaches us not to worry about what will be.

Once in the Telz Yeshivah, the Rosh Yeshivah was about make Kiddush when he noticed that a boy took a piece of cake and put it on his plate. The Rosh Yeshivah walked over to him and told him, “You’re worried that you won’t get the cake? How about you put the cake back – and I will make sure you get a piece after Kiddush.” If we live with the understanding that Hashem knows about us and our needs and what we are meant to get we will get, we start to live with a peace of mind. Those who are trying to get everything they are entitled to get will live a life of upheaval and unrest. We should all merit a sense of security in our *Avodas Hashem* and live lives full of serenity.

BECHUKOSAI – TOGETHER



This week’s second Parsha, Bechukosai, deals with the curses the Jewish people would encounter if they do not keep the Torah. Ezra the Sofer enacted that the “curses” in Parshas *Bechukosai* be read before Shavuos, a form of Rosh Hashanah. This fulfills the idea of *“Tichleh HaShana v’Kileloteha”* - i.e., the year’s end should mark the end of curses, and the New Year should be a year of Bracha. There are a lot of curses here and not too many brachos.

However, let’s concentrate on one of the blessings. The Torah (Vayikra 26:8): *“Five of you shall give chase to a hundred, and a hundred of you shall give chase to ten thousand; your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.”* **Rashi** writes: *“Is this the right proportion? Surely it should have stated only, ‘and a hundred of you shall pursue two thousand (and not ten thousand)?’ But the explanation is: a few who fulfill the commandments of the Torah cannot compare with the many who fulfill the commandments of the Torah.”*

This means that when most Jews keep the Torah, every Jew can chase a 100, which appears to be a hundred percent potential. However, when a few Jews are keeping the Torah, that potential drops down to 20 percent. This is related to the idea that only 20 percent (*chamushim*) came out of Mitzrayim. However, that is still only a fifth of what we can accomplish.

This Rashi brings out an important idea. When we get involved in *kiruv rechokim* (reaching out to unaffiliated Jews), we tend to think we are doing them a favor. It’s a mistake; we are doing ourselves a favor. When more people are keeping the Torah, every Jew can be more effective as a person and one can accomplish more. When we don’t have most Jews, we are functioning at a fractional capacity.

As we reach the end of Sefer Vayikra, we recall Parshas Kedoshim and the interpersonal Mitzvos like loving a fellow Jew. Then, we read Parshas Behar, where there is a discussion regarding lending money to Jews in need. Finally, we reach this Parshah and the curses, but before we get to those, we hear about the blessings and see how every single Jew is essential to our own greatness and who we want to be. We should all go together this coming Shavuos and stand as they did on Har Sinai, as one man with one heart. This is an awesome level to aspire to and achieve, with the help of Hashem.



BEHAR/BECHUKOSAI – TRUE ABUNDANCE

In the opening Psukim of Bechukosai, the Torah tells us of the amazing Brachos that are in store for us if we live according to the Torah, as it says, *“You will have abundant yield from your crops and your grapes; you will eat your bread in satiation”* (Vayikra 26:5). Rashi comments that the *“V’Achaltem Lachmecham LaSova”* is extraneous since it would already be understood from the earlier promise that the yield will be abundant. Therefore, it must mean that *“Ochel Kim’ah Umisbarech B’May’av”* - you will eat a small amount and it will expand in your stomach.

We can understand this concept as a miraculous one or a psychological one, or perhaps a blend of the two. If one has the mindset that they wish to be sated with a small amount and they work at it, and they live a life informed by the values of living according to the Torah, then the Bracha is that they will achieve this state with *Siyata Dishmaya*.

There is a similar concept to this in Parshas Behar when it comes to the bumper crop that comes before Yovel. For an elaboration on this, see Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky’s column in this publication. Here are some ways you can put this into practice:

- Be intentional about what you take to eat. Assemble a meal and put it on your plate taking care to have a healthy and balanced amount of what you need to nourish yourself. Reduce any tendency to just grab something and eat.

- Have a seat and reflect for a short moment that you are about to do this important Mitzvah.

- Follow the guidelines of making a Bracha properly
- Hold the food in your dominant hand, look at it, identify the proper Bracha, and say the Bracha audibly

- Eat slowly without distractions. Pause at intervals to get in touch with your body.

- Engage your senses. Pay attention to taste, texture, smell, and appearance; this will enhance your satisfaction.

- Pause and put down your fork (or spoon)

- Ask yourself before continuing: *“Am I physically hungry or eating emotionally?”*

- Stop if you sense that it is not necessary to continue. Save the rest for later

- Meaningful Bentching! There are so many themes that we zip through in Birkas HaMazon. One area to focus on is the last paragraph, which discusses the interplay between sustenance and Bitachon. It’s a great way to connect your meal to the next steps of your day, infusing your actions with Emunah U’Bitachon.

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BEHAR- WE DON’T LIVE FOREVER



The **Dubno Maggid** relates that there was once a man who was awarded 10,000 cents and was very excited - that is, until someone reminded him this amount only equaled 100 dollars. In this week’s Parsha, Behar, we are told about Shemittah, the seventh year (in a cycle) that the farmers did not work the land in Eretz Yisrael. **Rav Moshe Shternbach** relates a sobering thought. People calculate they have many hours, days, weeks, months, or even years left to live, but if we calculate according to Shemittah, we should ask ourselves, how many Shemittas do we have left? The answer is: not that many. Furthermore, the way people build homes and mansions, it feels as if they are going to live forever. Yet, when compared to eternity, how long is 120 years (max lifespan of a person in this world)?

To understand the concept of “forever”, picture a side of the mountain with millions of grains of sand on the bottom of it; a bird shows up once per millennium and takes a grain of sand to deposit it on the other side of the mountain. How long would it take the bird to finish moving the sand? A very long time, but how would it take if there was another mountain behind it and another one behind that one? It goes on forever.

This is why a person must invest his energies in the Torah, Mitzvos, and Chesed. These are the only things we can take with us to the Eternal World. We are in this world temporarily, but while we are here, we should take advantage and pack our suitcase for our destination with a currency that not only stands the test of time but is eternal!

SUGAR RUSH ON THE 613 MITZVOS BY R’ELI REIT
MITZVAH # 164 – FASTING ON YOM KIPPUR

About Yom Kippur, the Pasuk (Vayikra 16:31) says, *“you shall pain yourself”*. Chazal explain that “pain” means fasting. In addition to fasting, the Gemara (Yoma 73b) says that four other types of pain are required: refraining from washing, smearing something on one’s skin, wearing shoes, and marital relations. Some people like to pain themselves but that is frowned upon by the **Rambam**. The Torah says that *paining oneself is good only on Yom Kippur*.

Whatever human desire there is for causing oneself pain is fulfilled in this little time frame and for a good cause; namely, bringing to repentance on the day of atonement.

“Don’t take from him interest...and you shall fear your G-d, and let your brother live with you” (Vayikra 25:36)

Why is it prohibited to charge interest even when lending to a rich man who will not be affected if he pays a little extra? The **Kli Yakar** suggests that the reason for the prohibition against collecting interest is because one should always believe in Hashem and rely on Him for his financial success. Interest, by nature, removes that need to trust in Hashem because there is no risk involved. The lender can be certain that he will make a profit. When a person makes a living out of lending with interest, his faith in Hashem is affected.

Because of this, one who borrows with interest is also culpable because he causes the lender to not rely on Hashem. In fact, writes the Kli Yakar, we find that most lenders and loan sharks are not scrupulous people, having little faith in Hashem. This is not the path that the Torah wants us to follow. Therefore, charging interest to a fellow Jew is prohibited at all times, regardless of the borrower's financial means.

“You shall not make idols for yourselves, and you shall not erect for yourselves a statue or a pillar, and in your land you shall not place a flooring stone upon which to prostrate oneself - for I am Hashem, your G-d” (ibid. 26:1)

Rashi on this Pasuk quotes the Toras Kohanim: *“These pesukim are addressed to one who sells himself as a slave to a gentile. He should not say: Since my master serves idols and engages in illicit relationships, I too will act like him. Since my master desecrates Shabbos, I too will act like him. Therefore, these pesukim were written.”* The Torah goes out of its way to tell us that when one find himself in a difficult situation, he should not give in to temptation. The Torah acknowledges the human mentality to feel this way but warns us against falling into this trap. The **Chofetz Chaim** says that if regarding someone who is forced to sell himself and put himself in a tough position where it will be difficult to keep Torah and Mitzvos due to poverty, the Torah tells us that he must be careful to do so anyway, certainly, we cannot use a difficult situation which we place ourselves in voluntarily as an excuse to take Mitzvos lightly.

There is another lesson that we can learn from this midrash. The fact that people stumble in certain areas of Torah observance should not cause them to feel that they can just throw in the towel completely and give everything up. Such a person should realize that he will be rewarded for that which he does do and recognize that he has the ability to use what he does do as a springboard to fix what he does wrong and to do teshuva. It is not good to have an all-or nothing approach to Torah and Mitzvos. Even if a person does a little bit at a time, it will eventually add up and he can grow slowly.

“I will walk among you, I will be G-d unto you and you will be a people unto Me” (ibid. 26:12)

The **Seforno** writes that this Pasuk is a promise that not only will the Divine Presence rest in the Beis Hamikdash, but it will be among everyone, in all our places. It will be walking among us. Every single person has the opportunity to create a type of atmosphere where the Divine Presence can be with him everywhere. The Divine Presence is not limited to places of worship but is a part of our daily lives and can accompany us every step of the way. When we do the right things, we will receive special guidance from Hashem and we will be helped in everything.

Rashi explains this posuk to mean "I will walk with you in Gan Eden." There will be a reward in store for us if we act as we should. These two explanations of the Pasuk are both true and they are not at all contradictory. If we follow the Torah and Mitzvos and act in accordance with Hashem's wishes, we will be rewarded with Hashem's proximity to us in both this world and the next world.

“If a person shall redeem some of his tithe, shall add his fifth to it” (27:31)

All maaser sheni must be brought to Yerushalayim and eaten there. However, if a person feels that his produce is too much of a burden to transport it, he is permitted to take money instead, but he is required to take an extra 25% in addition to the market value of the produce. Why must one who brings money spend more than if he had brought the actual produce?

Perhaps we can say that this extra money is a penalty, a fine, for not wanting to assume the burden of fulfilling a Mitzvah. The Torah provides a second option, but it costs more money. A person should live life with the attitude that being a Jew is enjoyable and the best possible way to live. **R' Moshe Feinstein** said that an entire generation of American Jewry left the path of Torah in the early 20th century because they were brought up with an attitude that it is difficult to be Jewish rather than with an appreciation for Torah. Let's careful about our attitude toward Torah so that the next generation learns the proper appreciation for the great gift that Hashem gave: His Torah.

SHORT STORY OF THE WEEK BY YONI SCHWARTZ

It was a regular weekday morning, but the sight they saw was rather unusual. For the first time in his life, people saw **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky**, ZT”L, putting on the Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin. Curious, especially since he was no longer young, people began to approach him and ask why he was suddenly wearing Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin. Rav Yaakov explained: “Some fifty years ago in Europe, someone asked me, ‘Why don’t you wear Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin?’ I told him why. However, he responded, ‘Okay, still - the **Chofetz Chaim** wears them.’ I said, ‘The Chofetz Chaim is ninety. When I turn ninety, I’ll also wear them.’” Rav Yaakov continued, “Today is my ninetieth birthday, and I never forgot what I said. An oath came out of my mouth.”

Comment: In this week’s parshiyos, following the tochacha (rebuke), we find the laws of erchin - donation oaths. Perhaps these passages are connected because Hashem only commanded us regarding vows after first making a promise of His own: that even when the Jewish people are in exile under terrible persecution, they will never be destroyed.

After 2,000 years of witnessing great empires rise and fall, the tiny Jewish people still stand to testify that indeed, “Netzach Yisrael (lit. Israel’s Eternality, fig. a reference to Hashem) lo yeshaker (will not lie)” (I Shmuel 15:29).

MAY THE LEARNING IN THIS MAGAZINE BE A ZECHUS FOR THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF OUR FAMILY IN ERETZ YISRAEL. IT SHOULD ALSO BE A ZECHUS FOR A FULL REFUAH OF LEEBA MIRIAM GEULAH BAS LEAH.



Summary: After discussing the idea of Fear of Hashem, the Ramchal turns to a second element of Chassidus in the matter for performing deed: Love of Hashem. Too often people struggle in this area because it takes more work and finesse than fearing Hashem.

The Ramchal writes: **“Let us now speak on the matter of love [of G-d]. Its branches are three: joy, clinging, and jealousy.”** (*Mesilas Yesharim, Chapter 19*)

The **Ba'al Shem Tov** once explained how it is possible to develop an intense love for Hashem, Who is not visible to the senses. He said, “One achieves love of Hashem through Ahavas Yisrael – if you love your neighbor, you will also love Hashem.”

Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, ZT”L, writes that one of the sources of our love for Hashem is Hashem’s love for us, based on the principle stated by Shlomo Hamelech (Mishlei 27:19), *“Just as water reflects an image, so does one’s heart reflect the feeling of another.”*

A Chassid once asked a Rebbe, “if Hashem’s love for us is so great, why don’t we feel the same love for him?” The Rebbe replied, “Note that Shlomo doesn’t say, ‘like a mirror reflects’, but ‘like water reflects.’ The difference is that a mirror will reflect even a distant object, whereas water will reflect only that which is close to it. If we were closer to Hashem, His Love would arouse ours.” This is why all the steps of the Mesilas Yesharim teach us how to come closer to Hashem.

The Ramchal continues: **“The matter of love of G-d is that a person yearns and lusts for closeness to G-d, blessed be He, and chases His holiness as one chases something he desires intensely. This is to the extent that merely mentioning His Name, speaking of His praises, and occupying himself with the words of His Torah or divinity literally becomes a delight and pleasure, as one who strongly loves the wife of his youth or his only son - even speaking of them gives him gratification and pleasure.** (*ibid, Ch. 19*)

There is one facet of love for Hashem that needs elaboration. The books of Mussar tell us that true love originates not from what someone does for you, but from what you do for the other person. If this is the case, we can understand why Hashem loves us, because He does everything for us, and all we have is from Him. Yet, how can we develop love for G-d, when there is nothing we can give Him?

It is impossible for Hashem to be lacking in anything. The psalmist (Tehillim 68:35) says, “Give strength unto G-d”, which some commentaries explain that when a Jew observes the Torah and Mitzvos, they “add strength to G-d.” There is thus a possibility of adding strength to G-d, but how are we to understand this?

Rabbi Twerski explains: Hashem designed the universe with a system of justice, which binds everyone, including Himself. **Rav Yeruchem Levovitz**, ZT”L, explains that Hashem does not deviate from justice, and even when He is merciful, it is within the confines of justice. Hashem will not override His own laws. Since He is infinitely benevolent, He wishes to bestow His blessings on all, yet human behavior is often such that the system of justice, which G-d observes, will not permit this. Divine mercy is thus contingent on finding some redeeming features which would merit mercy, so that Hashem can be merciful without transgressing His rules of justice.

When a Jew disobeys the Torah, they do not have the meritorious deeds that would allow G-d to dispense His mercy. When we do His will, we are providing Him with that which He “needs” so that He may implement His infinite kindness, which is what G-d wishes to do. Thus, we do give strength to G-d. With our observance of Torah, we give Him that which is necessary for Him to be benevolent to us. There are many references in the Gemara and Midrash to the Divine pleasure when people perform Mitzvos and to the Divine distress when they do not.

It is customary to precede the performance of a Mitzvah with the phrase, “I am hereby performing this mitzvah in order to provide a *nachas ruach* (pleasure) to my Creator.” How an All-perfect G-d can have pleasure is a theological-philosophic mystery, but we are told it is so, and we may think of it as similar to the pleasure of parents when they see their children doing what is right. We thus do have a way of achieving love for G-d by what we do for Him.

The Ramchal concludes: **“As it (*Yirmiyahu 31:19*) states: ‘[Is Ephraim my dear son, my delightful child?] For whenever I speak of him, I will remember him still’** (*ibid, Chapter 19*)

In this Pasuk, Hashem declares His great love for the Jewish people (referred to as Ephraim), equating them with a beloved only child whose father so enjoys speaking about him that he inevitably continues to mention him more and more. It follows that the Chassid who truly loves Hashem will likewise cherish the opportunity to mention His Name. *We will continue exploring this topic more next week, B’Ezras Hashem.*

SPLENDID QUOTE OF THE WEEK
BY RABBI MENACHEM LOMNER

“If you want peace and tranquility, best to keep all the Mitzvos.”

There are those who think that a vacation is what gives them true rest. That may help and is sometimes necessary, but the Pasuk says a different way. The Torah says (Vayikra 25:18-19), *“you should keep my laws and rules, and you will then be able to rest tranquilly on the land”*. **Rashi** says that we get removed from Eretz Yisroel when we don't keep the Mitzvos. The truth is that the most tranquil and contented people on earth are the great people who always strive to go in Hashem's ways. On the other hand, the least contented group of people on earth are those in Hollywood who are the exact opposite.

**PERSPECTIVES ON PIRKEI AVOS: CHAPTER 5 – THE
GEAT DEBATES OF BEIS HILLEL AND BEIS SHAMMAI
BY RABBI SIMCHA HOPKOVITZ**

“Any dispute that may arise Heaven has an end to its existence, and that which is not for the sake of Heaven has no end. What kind of disagreement is there? It is for the sake of Heaven, it’s the disagreement of Hillel and Shammai, and it is not for the sake of Heaven, it’s the disagreement of Korah and all his followers.”
(Avos 5:17)

The **Tosafos Yom Tov** writes, *“The Machlokes (dispute) between Korach and Moshe was due to Korach’s jealousy, but what about the argument between Hillel and Shammai? Their students did not fully absorb their ways and teachings, and from that point on disputes became more common among the Torah scholars. This is why the Mishnah chooses their dispute as an example.”*

This itself needs an explanation, because we thought that the disputes were a positive thing that helped further the Torah learning amongst the Jewish people, whereas the Tosafos Yom Tov looks at it as being a genai (shortcoming) in that the students didn’t fully incorporate the teachings of their Rabbis. This led to forgetfulness, which then led to debates in Halacha. So, was the *machlokes* of Hillel and Shammai positive or a negative development?

We can gain perspective on this from **Rav Yitzchak Hutner**, ZT”L, the Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Chaim Berlin. Rav Hutner comments (**Pachad Yitzchak** on Chanukah, ma’amar 3) that actually, the reason that there began to be an appearance of machlokes in learning was because there was an element of forgetting. Minds were not as strong to absorb, so to combat the power of forgetfulness, debates ensued. These debates were vigorous, lively, powerful and raging with intensity. Because of the debates of Hillel and Shammai, there was a blossoming of Talmud Torah. More Torah was being learned and understood and argued about - which ultimately led to greater clarity of Halacha and of Judaism.

In fact, the Gemara (Temurah 16a) states, that during the thirty days of mourning for Moshe, 300 detailed laws were forgotten and 700 halachos became unclear. A great Talmid Chacham, Osniel ben Kenaz (the first judge after Yehoshua) was able to bring them back through the power of his *pilpul* (Talmudic logical reasoning). It was due to his great ability in learning that was generated by the forgetfulness after Moshe’s death, that Osniel brought great glory to Hashem’s Torah by reteaching these laws.

Perhaps this is what exactly Tosafos Yom Tov means. The reality is that there was forgetfulness amongst them, yet it turned out to be the great engine of life, as Rav Hutner refers to it. It caused them to move forward in learning and delve as deeply as possible to understand the nuances words of their Rabbeim. Ultimately, it is the reality of forgetting that protected the Mesorah and a positive angle as it became the impetus for the *Torah Sheba’al Peh* – Oral Torah.

Rabbi Simcha Hopkovitz serves as Rav of the Young Israel of Hewlett and is a member of the Kollel of Yeshiva Darchei Torah.

**HALACHA DISCUSSION OF THE WEEK BY RABBI
DOVID OSTROFF: REHEATING ON SHABBOS**

Question: Is it permitted to pour hot water into a thermos on Shabbos?

The issue involved is *hatmana* – storing food in wrappers to maintain its heat. As we have previously learned, it is forbidden to totally enwrap hot food on Shabbos with the intention to maintain its heat. However, there are two reasons why it is permitted to pour water into a thermos: 1) *hatmana* is forbidden only when applied to the original pot, but if the water has been transferred to a second pot, it is permitted. 2) *Hatmana* must be done to a pot, the pot itself is not *hatmana*, and since the thermos is considered as one pot with a few linings it is not *hatmana*.

Question: The fire under my blech went out, and I would like to enwrap my pots within my bed linen, may I?

No, you may not because *hatmana* – enwrapping, when done on Shabbos, is forbidden even when there is no heat source present. You may, however, partially enwrap the pots.

Is it permitted to warm my baby’s bottle by placing it inside a pot of hot water? Most poskim agree that it is not permitted to immerse the entire bottle into hot water in order to warm the bottle for the same reason as in the previous answer. You may however, insert the bottle, leaving the top uncovered.

May I reheat food by placing it on the radiators spread around the house?

Yes, you may because it is not the normal cooking method. It is comparable to placing cold food on top of a pot that is already on the fire. However, only dry, cooked food may be reheated; a liquid, or a solid with gravy is forbidden to reheat.

Is it permitted to steep cold, cooked chicken inside cholent which is on my plate?

As far as cooking goes, even if the chicken would reach the heat of *yad soledes bo* it is not a problem for a few reasons, but even as far as *hatmana* goes, there is no issue when enwrapping a food within a food. As far as fully immersing a cooked egg within hot water, a *shaila* should be asked.



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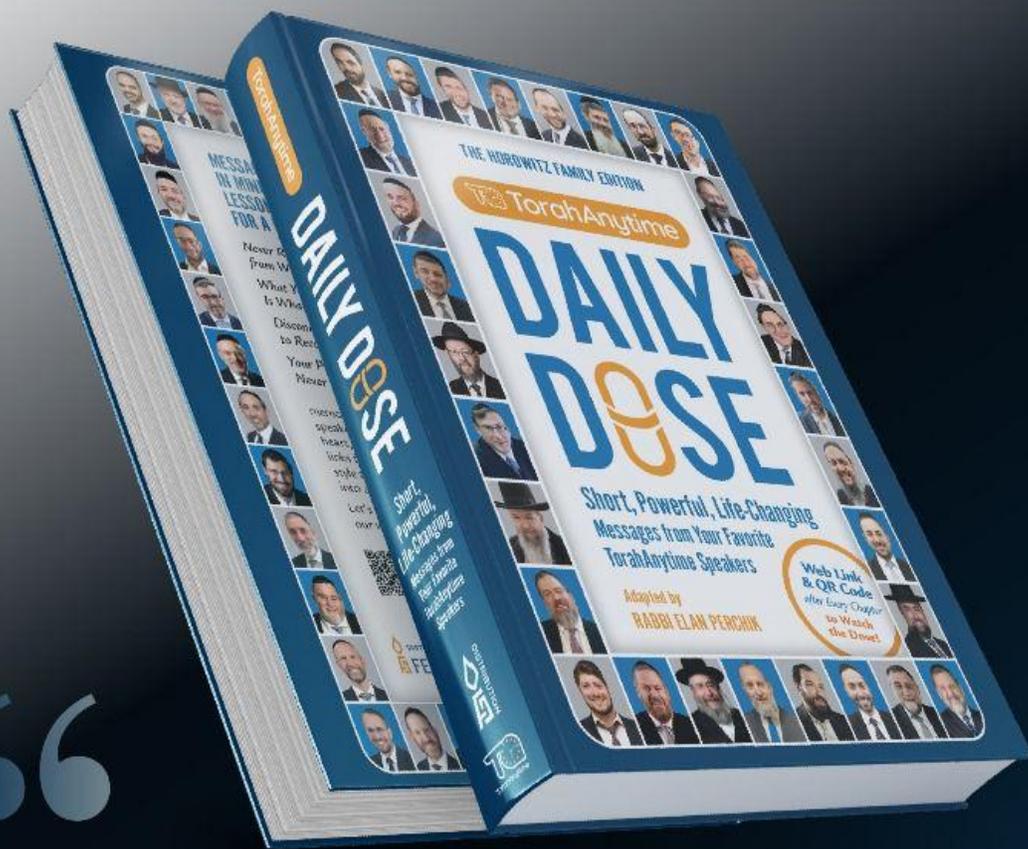


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