

# ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



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פרשת שלח תשע"ה

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## Valuing Time

### Precious Moments

The Torah says that *Avrohom Avinu* became old and was "coming in days." The *Zohar* explains that this refers to the many mitzvos that he fulfilled: all the days of his life were fully utilized for the service of HaShem.

As *Chassidus* explains, a person is given the exact number of days needed to accomplish his tasks in this world. If a day is not used for its purpose, then that day's task is left undone.

(זהר ח"א קכט א', תו"א עט,ב, אג"ק ח"א ע' נד,  
חכ"ב ע' א')

In valuing every moment and utilizing it for growth, there are two main aspects:

a) Wasted time never returns, as every individual is given a finite number of days and minutes to accomplish his *tafkid*.

B) Today's *avoda* raises tomorrow's *avoda* to a higher level, as Chazal say, a person who has a hundred coins desires two. Therefore if today's *avoda* is blemished, then tomorrow's will be weakened.

(תו"מ חכ"א ע' 59)  
(היום יום י"ז השון)

There is an early quote brought in *seforim* that illustrates this: people are concerned over a loss of money, and not concerned over the loss of time. Lost money can be recovered; lost time cannot.

(ס' החיים י, א)

The *Rayatz of Lubavitch* once said, "Time must be *oisgerechent*, and one must accept upon himself the yoke of Torah continuously. Every day that passes is not only a day, but a life's concern."

As the *Baal HaTanya* would say, "A [long] summer day and a [long] winter night comprise a year."

### Passing Time?

During the summer of 5651 (1891), at the age of eleven, the *Rayatz of Lubavitch* was arrested for trying to protect a Jewish farmer from a cruel police officer. Thrown into a dark cell and overcome by fear, he suddenly realized, "I'm imprisoned just like my holy forefathers were, so I should respond to the challenge with courage and faith, and spend my time studying Torah."

He already knew the *Mishnayot* of *Zero'im* and *Moed* by heart, so he began reviewing them. Suddenly, he heard fearful groaning and whimpering. The prison was dark, and he could not make out the source of the sounds, so he tried to ignore the moaning and concentrate on his learning. He then *davened Mincha*, omitting *Tachanun* because he was so happy to have had the great *zechus* of being imprisoned for defending another *Yid's* honor.

Continuing to review from memory, he once again heard wailing noises. He struck a match, looked around the cell, and discovered a calf tied up, with a muzzle on its mouth. His fears were calmed. He went through the entire *Seder Zero'im*, began *Seder Mo'ed*, and before he had a chance to finish, he was released.

Later, when his father, the *Rashab*, heard what had occurred, he complimented his son on being able to review *mishnayot baal peh*. Otherwise, he added, with what would he have been superior to (*lehavdil*) the calf which had also been imprisoned...?

When the *Rayatz* related this story, he added: "These words engraved in my mind and heart the necessity of preparing 'provisions for the way' by learning Torah by heart, so that in any situation, one will not waste his time."

(התמים חו' ז' ע' ס"ה)

### Every Moment

During a visit of the *Rashab of Lubavitch* to Germany, some locals accompanied him to the railway station, and one of them remarked that the train would be leaving in another minute.

The *Rebbe* replied, "In one minute one can do *teshuvah*."

(תו"מ ח"ב ע' 183)

When, in his early years in America, the *Rayatz of Lubavitch* spoke of the imminent coming of *Moshiach*, some people questioned his activities to strengthen *Yiddishkeit* and build *yeshivos*. They argued: "If anyway we are in *golus* only for a short while, what is the need for all this?"

The *Rayatz* answered by reminding them of the *Mishkan* in the desert. While in some places *Bnei Yisroel* camped for long periods of time (once for 19 years!), in others they camped for only one day. Yet, in every place they set up the *Mishkan* with all of its *keilim* and *korbanos*, regardless of how long they stayed.

(ס"ה ש תש"א ע' 162, תו"מ ח"ה ע' 299)

## Consider This

Is the importance of using every moment because more can be accomplished, or because that moment must be elevated?

Does using one's time to the maximum mean that one should never relax?

## Sparks of Greatness

### ב' תמוז - Reb Nachman Horedenker

Reb Nachman of Horedenka was one of the close talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov and his mechtutan as well. After his marriage, he came to the Baal Shem Tov and served as his gabbai for a while. Reb Nachman was instrumental in bringing many chasidim to the Baal Shem Tov and was also sent by him on various missions. In the year תקכ"ה (1764), he journeyed to Eretz Yisroel together with a group of other chasidim, and during that year was niftar on Bais Tammuz and interred in Tverya. His grandson, named after him, was Reb Nachman of Breslav.

The talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov were once sitting at their Rebbe's table, listening to him speak about the kavanos of tevilah in the mikvah. The talmidim commented that it seems the Arizal explains this idea differently than their saintly Rebbe. The Baal Shem Tov tilted his head backwards and his face became aflame, an obvious sign of an 'aliyas haneshama' which the Baal Shem Tov would often experience. A great awe descended upon all the talmidim as they sat there enraptured in silence, all besides for Reb Nachman Horedenker who felt a heavy sleep overcoming him. Reb Nachman desperately tried to remain awake, but it was to no avail, and he fell into a deep sleep.

In his dream, he saw a great pandemonium and many people were bustling about. When he stopped one of them to ask what the commotion was about, the man retorted, "Do you not know that the Rav is going to speak?" Reb Nachman tried asking who is this "Rav" for whom they are

all hurrying for, but the man was in too much of a hurry to reply. Reb Nachman decided to run together with the rest of the people, and soon reached a magnificent building where a great crowd had gathered. A hush fell over the crowd and suddenly he saw the Baal Shem Tov himself going up onto the podium and starting to speak about the kavanos of mikvah...

As the Baal Shem Tov was talking, a young man stood opposite him and began arguing with him. When Reb Nachman asked who this was, he was told that this was the Arizal. The two argued for a long time, after which the young man gave in to the Baal Shem Tov. Reb Nachman awoke to the Baal Shem Tov saying, "Nachman! I took you with me as a witness, as to who is correct..."

The Baal Shem Tov was once sitting and praising Reb Nachman Horedenker. Reb Nachman himself was sitting at the end of the table, bent over, trying and hear the words of his Rebbe... The other talmidim expressed their wonder as to how he could be so eager to hear praise about himself. The Baal Shem Tov explained: "Reb Nachman asked Hashem for a gift not to hear those things that he should not hear, and therefore, he actually did not hear anything that I spoke concerning his greatness. It was for this very reason that he tried to bend over, for he thought that I was saying words of Torah and he wanted to hear. The proof to all this is that when I say Torah, he does not need to bend over..."

## Library Sparks

In this week's Torah portion, *Shelach*, we read about the report of the spies whom Moses sent to explore the Land of Israel. The reaction of the Jewish people to the spies' negative report was immediate: "Our wives and children will surely be taken captive by the strong people living there. Let us appoint a new leader and go back to Egypt." G-d, therefore, decreed that they would not be allowed to enter the Land. "But your children, of whom you said 'they will become prey,' them I will bring in, and they will know the land you have despised." The children, the younger generation, will be the ones to enter Israel, G-d promises.

Why is there such an emphasis on children, in both the complaint of the Jewish people and in G-d's response? Because children played a role of great significance, both in the inheritance of the Land and the mission with which the Jewish people are entrusted.

Concerning young children our Sages comment: "A baby breaks into crumbs more than he manages to eat." This means that a young child utilizes only a small portion of the food he is given, while most of it ends up on the floor.

This saying can also be understood in the spiritual sense. A baby symbolizes a person who possesses little wisdom and understanding. The food stands for the Torah and its commandments which sustain the G-dly soul. A person who is an "adult," who utilizes his time on earth wisely, devotes the major portion of his life to doing mitzvos and fulfilling his mission in life. A child, in the spiritual sense, wastes most of his time by becoming involved with

foolish and extraneous matters, losing sight of the Divine purpose for his soul. Most of his spiritual sustenance, the Torah, ends up unassimilated and undigested, "crumbs on the floor."

This, in fact, was the claim made by the spies: "Why must we enter the Land of Israel and waste our precious time involving ourselves with physical matters? Here in the desert where all our physical needs are miraculously met, we can devote ourselves totally to learning Torah. For even if we will have time to learn once we enter the Land, most of our day will be wasted! It is far better to stay in the desert than to lower ourselves to that level!" they claimed.

To which G-d responded: "Your children...will be the ones to inherit." Even though the generation of Jews which left Egypt was on a very high spiritual level, devoting their lives to studying the Torah, it was precisely the children, those possessing little Torah knowledge, who would be allowed to enter the Land of Israel. The new generation would be required to pursue a different path, working hard to provide the physical necessities of life, while at the same time imbuing their surroundings with G-dliness and holiness. For this is what G-d really wants Jews to do. Our mission in life is to lead a normal, physical existence, while at the same time following the precepts of the Torah.

The Torah learning of young children is also especially dear to G-d. "The learning of little children may not be disturbed, even to build the Holy Bais Hamikdash!" we are told. Their pure faith and belief in G-d has the power to arouse G-d's mercy and foil the evil plans of the enemies of the Jewish people.

## Halacha Sparks

### Vacationing in Spain

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

**There is a kabala (oral tradition) that following the expulsion of the Yidden from Spain, a cherem was made prohibiting the return to Spain. Is one obligated to heed this cherem, or would it be permissible today? Would it be permissible to vacation in Spain?**

This tradition is not recorded in any seforim and there are several reasons to believe that the cherem never took place. First, it is not mentioned in the Abarbanel's description of the events surrounding the expulsion<sup>1</sup>. Second, Reb Yehuda Hachosid<sup>2</sup> warns against making this sort of cherem, since it places a stumbling block before future generations.

A cherem is a form of a neder, and is therefore ossur mide'oiraisa<sup>3</sup> or midivrei kabala (a din learned from nach) according to others<sup>4</sup>, therefore when in doubt we would need to be stringent. However, there are poskim<sup>5</sup> which differentiate between when the doubt concerns the extent of the cherem, in which case we would be stringent, or when the doubt concerns whether there is a cherem at all, when we are lenient. Other poskim<sup>6</sup> do not accept this differentiation.

In our case there are several additional doubts which classify this question as a s'fek s'feika<sup>7</sup> (a double doubt) which would permit taking a vacation<sup>8</sup>:

- (1) Perhaps the cherem was only regarding those who were actually expelled, that they should never return.
- (2) Even if we say that they accepted it for the future, perhaps it only included their descendants and not all of klal Yisroel.
- (3) Even if they did make it for the entire klal Yisroel, perhaps they made the cherem similar to the Torah's prohibition of living in Mitzrayim which only includes residing there but not merely visiting.

1. בהקדמתו לספר מלכים.

2. ספר החסידים סי' תכד, ועי' בהגהות מקור חסד שם להג"ר מרגליות שצ"ח לרונס' מ"ק ג. ד"ה כל הוצאה לבטל יבא ויבטל.

3. שו"ת המיוחסות לרמב"ן סי' רפח; תרומת הדשן סי' רפא; מהרש"ל יוש"פ פ"ק דחולין סי' לו, הובא בש"ך י"ד סי' ריח סק"ג; עבודת הגרשוני סי' נג; נ"ב קמא חאה"ע סי"ס עז הוכיח מתשובות הר"ן סי' לח; שו"ת ברית יעקב חאה"ע סי' ב.

4. רדב"ז ח"ג סי' תתק; נ"ב תניא חיד"ו סי' קמו הדר ביה ממ"ש בנה"י קמא הנ"ל.

5. שו"ת כנה"ג י"ד סי' שלד הגה"י אות יז בשם מהרמב"ל ח"ב סי' עא, הובא בשו"ת משפט צדק ח"ב סי' ד; וליכ' בשו"ת משפט שמואל סי' סה; שו"ת שער אפרים סי"ס קב דף עט ע"ד.

6. מהרא"ח בתשובה סי' כה.

7. נחלקו הפוסקים אם יש להתייר חרם בספק ספקא או בעינן ג' או ד' ספקות, עי' בשו"ת דברי ריבון סי' שה; כנה"ג אה"ע סי' א הגה"י אות ג; שו"ת חקרי לב ח"ב מ"ד סי' מט דפ"ח ע"ב; שו"ת חיים ושלום חאה"ע סי' א; שדי חמד מ"ע אשוח סי' ב אות יט, אבל הכא הרי איכא ג' או ד' ספקות ושמה לא היה חרם הוא ספק גמור.

8. שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ז חיד"ו סי' יד.

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Special Women's Hours: Sunday 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm.