



MISHNAS CHAYIM

משנת חיים

MISHNAH ON THE PARSHAH

פרשת בהר-בחקתי תשס"ט • 5769 Parshas Behar-Bechukosai

ACQUIRED TASTE

FREE-FOR-ALL

Imagine that a famous tycoon issues a public announcement. As one of the wealthiest men in the world, he has decided – amidst a spirit of spontaneous magnanimity – to share his wealth with the general public.

What this means on a practical level – the announcement continues – is that there is currently a hefty pile of cash (totaling in the billions) being held in an undisclosed location. At 3:00 this afternoon, a follow-up announcement will be issued, detailing the exact address where this treasure is located. At that point, it's "free pickin's": whoever wishes, may enter the building and help himself to as much money as he can carry off – first come, first served.

What happens at 3:00 P.M. when the big announcement comes, and the location is disclosed? Frenzied pandemonium! Hordes of people will storm the building, climbing over each other in a state of wild jubilation to be the first to enter the door. Others will literally scale the walls and catapult themselves into the windows to get their hands on this unimaginable windfall.

The Or Hachaim Hakadosh (*Devarim*, 26:8) declares that the Torah should really be viewed and treated in this manner. If people would be fully aware of the true nature of the Torah – the unparalleled sweetness that resides in its words – they would literally go "nuts" to attain its wealth. If the world were to be suddenly blessed with true clarity, throngs of people would immediately race toward the *beis hamedrash* and pound on its doors in order to gain access to the free and unequalled treasure that resides therein.

There actually have been individuals whose appraisal of Torah was, in fact, right on the money. A case in

point is the Tanna R' Yose ben Kisma, whose dialogue between himself and a passing traveler is recorded in the final chapter of Avos (6:9):

... אָמַר לִי, רַבִּי, מֵאִיזָה מְקוֹם אָתָּה, אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ, מֵעִיר גְּדוֹלָה שֶׁל חֲכָמִים וְשֶׁל סוֹפְרִים אָנִי, אָמַר לִי, רַבִּי רְצוֹנְךָ שֶׁתְּדוּר עִמָּנוּ בְּמִקְוָמֵנוּ וְאֲנִי אֶתֶּן לְךָ אֶלְפֵי אֶלְפִים דְּנָרֵי זָהָב וְאַבְנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת, אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ אִם אָתָּה נוֹתֵן לִי כָּל כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וְאַבְנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת שֶׁבְעוֹלָם, אֲנִי דָר אֶלָּא בְּמִקְוֹם תּוֹרָה, וְכֵן כְּתוּב בְּסִפְרֵי תְהִלִּים עַל יְדֵי דוֹד מְלֶכֶךְ שְׂרָאֵל, טוֹב לִי תוֹרַת פִּיךָ מֵאַלְפֵי זָהָב וְכֶסֶף.

Traveler: Rabbi, where are you from?

R' Yose: I am from a great city, filled with Torah scholars.

Traveler: Rabbi, could I offer you a position in *our* city? I will compensate you with gold, precious gems, and pearls worth millions!

R' Yose: Even if you were to offer me all of the silver, gold, precious gems, and pearls in the entire world, I would refuse; for I shall only dwell in a place saturated with Torah. Dovid Hamelech expressed the same sentiment in Tehillim (119:72), when he said, "Your Torah is more precious to me than thousands in gold and silver."

MEIN ZUN (MY SON), THE...

The author of several exceedingly intricate works (whose popularity are almost unmatched in the *yeshiva* world) is R' Aryeh Leib Hachohen, known alternately by the names of his masterpieces: the "Ketzos Hachoshen," the "Avnei Miluim" and the "Shev Shemeitsa." His siblings were quite erudite in their own right; his brother, R' Yehudah, authored another popular work on some of the most complex issues in Shas, known as the "Kuntres Hasefeikos"; and another brother, R' Mordechai, served as a prominent *rav* in a number of congregations.

לזכר נשמת
ציפא רבקה בת ברוך ע"ה

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of שלמה בן שמעון ע"ה, a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of his neshamah.

MISHNAS CHAYIM is brought to you by CHEVRAH LOMDEI MISHNAH, a network of Torah scholars dedicated to bringing the merits of Mishnah study to the greater Jewish public. Encompassing Mishnah, Gemara, and a variety of other services, CHEVRAH LOMDEI MISHNAH primarily assists mourners interested in acquiring the merit of Torah study for their loved ones.



**MISHNAS
CHAYIM**

משנת היום

פרשת בהר-בחקתי תשס"ט 5769 Parshas Behar-Bechukosai

During their mother's final illness, the brothers gathered around her bedside in those last, difficult moments. As time wore on, the brothers began to converse amongst themselves, and – not surprisingly – the topic turned to a Talmudic discussion, which soon became quite heated and intense.

This was the scene that accompanied the ailing woman during her final moments on earth. How did she react? From the pure joy and knowledge of her children's dedication to and excellence in Torah, she jumped out of her sickbed and began to dance exuberantly (*Moreshes Avos, parshas Tetzaveh, p. 154*).

Sadly, though, not many of us (as of yet) feel the inestimable value of the Torah as intensely as R' Yose b. Kisma or even the mother of the Ketzos. Even amongst those fortunate enough to (intellectually) recognize the importance of Torah, some still find that the attainment of its sweetness is somewhat elusive.

SHVITZING FOR SWEETNESS...

Is there an *eitzah* (solution) for bridging this gap? Can we also acquire such a "taste" for Torah study?

R' Chizkiyah Mishkovsky asked this very question of R' Chaim Kanievsky. How can someone develop a real *ta'am* (taste) for the Torah? To which R' Chaim responded with a characteristic answer, brilliant in its simplicity: "We have such a *gutte Tatte* (Kindly Father in Heaven)! Ask Him (to make the Torah sweet in our mouths)!" (We do find a similar notion in the Gemara [*Niddah 70b*], which instructs someone who wishes to increase his intelligence and Torah aptitude to pray to "the One Who owns intelligence").

Another potential key to developing this quality (discerning the sweetness of Torah) is found in the opening section to this week's *parshah*:

אם בחקתי תלכו – "If you shall walk in my statutes," (*Vayikra 26:3*). Rashi (*ibid.*) understands this verse as referring to Torah study in a very

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specific manner: שְׁתִּהְיוּ עִמְלִים בְּתוֹרָה – "That you shall *toil* in Torah study." While any type of studying Torah is a fulfillment of a *mitzvah* of the highest order, Rashi speaks here of a certain integral ingredient: *shvitzing* (sweating) over Torah. This refers to the intense effort involved in mastering a complete understanding of Torah's meaning. And, as we shall yet see, it is this very undertaking that can engender a true passion for learning within an individual, as well as afford him the ability to taste its true sweetness.

This component – toiling for Torah – plays a prominent role in the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuot*. As we examine this holiday next week, we shall expand on the theme of literally "*shvitzing* in learning" and its relationship to the development of a "taste" for Torah.

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