

HALACHA V'HALICHA... By Rav Chaim Schabes

The Chafetz Chaim used to feel a live reality in every word of Torah, much as a regular person senses natural occurrences; more than that, he used to see the reality of natural laws only if they had a basis in the Torah. He once expressed this himself: how do we know that the sun will rise tomorrow? Because the *pasuk* states *יום ולילה לא ישבותו*.

Shulchan Aruch (OC 155:1) writes that one is obligated to schedule a time to learn Torah every day, and that the time should be fixed. One should not cancel it even if he thinks he will be able to earn a lot by doing so. The main feature of being *kove'a* times for Torah is that one doesn't skip even one day, and thus it is considered that he learns constantly (like the *korban "tamid"*, even though it was only one sheep in the morning and one in the afternoon, MB 4). Mishna B'rura (6) writes that even if one does not know how to learn, he should still go to the *bais midrash*, and he will be rewarded for going, and even if he does not understand what they are learning, it is nonetheless a *mitzvah* to remain in the *bais midrash*. One is not exempt from learning because he does not remember what he learnt, as the Or Zarua writes (Hilchos Krias Shma 6) that a person who toils in learning Torah as much as he is able, even if he produced very little, will be paid like the one who worked as much as he did and produced a lot, because the reward is according to the effort. Sefer Chasidim (874) writes that whatever work we put into learning in this world, even if one does not have good memory, he will remember everything in the world to come. One should *daven* that he and his children should be successful in Torah, and concentrate during the *b'racha* of *ahava rabba* (Rav Akiva Eiger YD 376 writes that it is a *segula* for memory), and one should do the different things that help memory, like the *gemarah* writes (Baba Metziah 107b) that eating breakfast is helpful for one's memory, learning in a *bais medrash* (Yerushalmi Brachos 5:1), learning out loud (YD 246:22), learning with happiness and song (Tosfos Megillah 32), and kissing the *sefer* when one opens it and closes it (Or Tzadikim 22:17). Finally, *סייג להכמה שתיקה*, the Tashbatz in Magen Avos writes that generally being quiet is also a *segula* for remembering Torah, etc.

A person is obligated to learn Torah *shebichtav*, meaning *tanach*, as well as *mishna, gemarah* and *poskim*; *ba'alei batim* who learn only 3 or 4 hours a day should not learn only *gemarah*, because they will not fulfill their obligation this way. Rather, they must also learn *halacha*, each one according to his ability (MB 3). Nowadays, when many don't learn as many hours as the Mishna B'rura prescribes, nevertheless, one must divide his learning time every day between all the different areas named, meaning, to learn *tanach, mishnayos, gemarah*, and stress the learning of *halacha*, and some *mussar*. One should keep in mind the words of the Ramban's letter, that when we get up from learning, we should always see if there is something we learned that can be applied to daily life. Learning should always be with happiness and pleasure (Levush 47), and one should rejoice and enjoy his learning, and then, the words of Torah will flow through his bloodstream (Eglei Tal, intro.). The time to fulfill the *mitzvah* of learning Torah is the whole day, any time one has available, and if one has time and he does not use it for learning, he comes close to what our *chachamim* said regarding the *pasuk* of *כי דבר ה' בזה*, that it is referring to someone who is able to learn Torah and doesn't do so. If an emergency came up, and one was not able to learn at his set time, he must consider it as a debt, and pay it back at later in the day, and even during the normal slot that he must skip, he should try to learn at least one *mishna* or one *pasuk*, so that his set schedule should not become completely annulled (MB 4).

THOUGHTS ON THE HAFTARAH ... By Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro (*Yeshaya 54:1-55:5*)

The Haftara of Noach contains a *nevuah* that represents one of the strongest calls for *limud Torah* in Tanach. This particular *nevuah* begins *הוי כל צמא לכו למים*. The word 'הוי' generally connotes a feeling of sadness or issuance of a warning, but in this case Rashi explains that it represents a call to the people to prepare themselves for what the *navi* is about to impart. Still, the 'warning' aspect of the word is also significant, since no good will come to those who do not heed the words of the *navi*. There are of course several other *nevuos* that chastise people for not learning, and encourage them to put an emphasis on this pursuit. This *nevuah*, though, is directed to those who already have a thirst for knowledge. To those people the *navi* says *למה תשקלו כסף בלא לחם*. Ibn Ezra, among others, explains that in the time of Yeshayahu, the pursuit of knowledge didn't abate, but it was severely misdirected. At that time, the power of the Assyrian kingdom was growing in Eretz Yisrael, and along with the political and military influences came other spheres of knowledge such as a new language and other disciplines. As the Jewish people began putting their efforts into acquiring this new knowledge and establishing themselves in the non-Jewish world, the study of Torah began to suffer. This is why the *navi* insists *ויגיעכם בלא לשבעה*. The level of your efforts is consistent, and you may be enjoying your studies, but in the long run they will not truly satiate you and you will remain hungry! In fact, as time has passed and as world power after world power has fallen, it becomes clear that what people had pursued as 'ultimate knowledge' has become worthless. This *nevuah* is meant for all generations, and its message is timeless: acquiring secular knowledge cannot quench a Jew's hunger and thirst for wisdom; only the pursuit of Torah and its knowledge can help a Jew attain his goals in this world.

ON LANGUAGE... By R' Moshe Orlian

In deciding what to do with the people of Bavel, Hashem says (B'reishis 11:7) *הבה נרדה ונבלה שם שפתם*. There are 2 basic approaches to understanding the word *ונבלה* ("ve-na-ve-LA"). The first view treats the *נ* of *ונבלה* as the *נ* indicative of *binyan nif'al*. As such, the subject of this verb is *שפתם*, and it would be translated as "their language will become confused" (*nif'al* is passive). According to this, *ונבלה* would be a variation of *ונתבלבלה*. Others, Rashi included, argue that the *נ* of *ונבלה* represents the first person plural, as does the *נ* of *נרדה* in the same *passuk*. The subject of the verb would then be Hashem and his hypothetical "*bais din*" (hence the plural), and the translation would be "we will confuse their language".

"A GIGANTIC LITTLE SECRET" ... By Rabbi Yosef Schwab

קץ כל בשר בא לפני, referring to the destruction of life on earth during the Flood, equals 190 in *gematria*. This alludes to the fact that the destruction occurred over 190 days: 40 days of rain + 150 days of the springs spewing forth.

