



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 he needs to accomplish his tasks in this world. If a day is not used for its purpose, 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)

To highlight the importance of valuing every moment and utilizing it for growth, the Rebbe made two points:

Firstly, wasted time never returns. Every individual is given a specific number of days and seconds to accomplish all that he is charged with. Hence, when a day is misused, this loss is irreplaceable.

Secondly, today's *avoda* raises tomorrow's *avoda* to a higher level – for, as *Chazal* say, a person who has a hundred coins desires two. Therefore if today is misused, this will weaken the chances for a better tomorrow.

(תו"מ חכ"א ע' 95)

At a *farbrengen* the Frierdiker Rebbe once said, "Time must be monitored, and one must accept upon himself the yoke of Torah. Every period of time and every day that passes is not only a day: it is a life's concern."

The Rebbe Rashab related in the name of the Alter Rebbe, "A [long] summer day and a [long] winter night comprise a year."

(היום יום י"ז השון)

The brother of the *Maharal* points out an unfortunate reality: while people are concerned over a loss of money, they are less concerned over a loss of time. In truth, of course, the reverse should be the case. Lost money, after all, can be recovered; lost time cannot.

(ס' החיים י"א, סה"ש תשמ"ט ח"ב ע' 106)

PASSING TIME?

During the summer of תרנ"א, at the age of eleven, the Frierdiker Rebbe was arrested for trying to

protect another Yid 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 *Mishnayos* 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 Rebbe Rashab, heard what had occurred, he complimented his son on being able to review *mishnayos baal peh*. Otherwise, he added, with what would he have been superior to (*lehavdil*) the calf which had also been imprisoned...?

When the Frierdiker Rebbe 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 was so precious to the Rebbe Rashab, that he was available to discuss communal matters only at mealtimes. When the Frierdiker Rebbe was away and the Rebbe Rashab had to review the *yeshiva's* affairs with the bookkeeper, he did so during mealtime.

For the same reason, even when money was extremely tight, he always traveled by train first class, so that he would be able to learn undisturbed.

(לשמע אוזן ע' 311, רשימות היומן ע' ריה)

On *Nittel Nacht*, when it is forbidden to learn Torah, the Rebbe Rashab would use his time to play chess, thereby sharpening his mind for his future Torah studies.

From this, says the Rebbe, we see how even when one cannot learn Torah, he should utilize his time for beneficial activities.

(סה"ש תש"נ ע' 291)

EVERY MOMENT

During a visit of the Rebbe Rashab to Germany, some local *Yidden* 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' 381)

In the year תש"ד, the Rebbe davened at the *amud* after the passing of his father Reb Leivik. It once happened that the *minyán* did not gather in time. The Frierdiker Rebbe called the *rosh yeshiva* and told him that his son-in-law, the Rebbe, had complained about his wasted time. The *rosh yeshiva* excused himself, saying that the *bochurim* had arrived only five minutes late.

The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "For my *eidem*, a minute is a year. Do you want to steal *five years* from him?!"

(אוצר פתגמי חב"ד ח"ב ע' 05)

When, in his early years in America, the Frierdiker Rebbe 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 Frierdiker Rebbe 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.

(סה"ש תש"א ע' 261, תו"מ ח"ה ע' 992)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is the importance of using every moment since more can be accomplished, or since that *moment* must be elevated?
- Does using one's time to the maximum mean that one should never relax?

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VACATIONING IN SPAIN

There is a *cabala* (oral tradition) that following the expulsion of the Yidden from Spain, a *cherem* was made forbidding a Yid to ever return to Spain. Is one obligated to heed this *cherem* today? Would it be permissible to take a vacation to Spain?

- This tradition is not recorded in any *seforim* and there are several reasons to believe that the *cherem* never took place. Firstly, it is not mentioned in the Abarbanel's description of the events surrounding the expulsion¹. Secondly, Reb Yehuda Hachosid² 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*³ or *midivrei kabala* (a *din* learnt from *nach*) according to others⁴, therefore when in doubt we would need to be stringent. However, there are *poskim*⁵ 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*⁶ do not accept this differentiation.
- In our case there are several additional doubts which classify this question as a *sfek sfeika*⁷ (a double doubt) which would permit taking a vacation⁸:
 - (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.
- It is worthwhile mentioning that the Rebbe sent a *shliach* to live in Spain.

1. בהקדמתו לספר מלכים.
 2. ספר החסידים סי' תכד, ועי' בהגהות מקור חסד שם להג"ר מרגליות שצ"ן לתוס' מו"ק ג: ד"ה כל הרוצה לבטל יבא ויבטל.
 3. שו"ת המיוחסות לרמב"ן סי' רפח;
 4. תרומת הדשן סי' רפא; מהרש"ל י"ש פ"ק דחולין סי' לו, הובא בש"ך יו"ד סי' ריח סק"ג; עבודת הגרשוני סי' נג; נ"ב קמא חאה"ע ס"ס עז הוכיח מתשובות הר"ן סי' לח; שו"ת ברית יעקב חאה"ע סי' ב.
 5. רדב"ז ח"ג סי' תקיח; נ"ב תניא חיו"ד סי' קמז הדר ביה ממ"ש בנה"י קמא הנ"ל.
 6. שו"ת קנה"ג יו"ד סי' שלד הגהב"י אות 5.
 7. נחלקו הפוסקים אם יש להתיר הרם בספק ספיקא או בעיני ג' או ד' ספקות, עי' שבש"ת דברי ריבנות סי' שה; כנה"ג אה"ע סי' א הגהב"י אות נז; שו"ת חקרי לב ח"ב מיו"ד סי' מט דפ"ח ע"ב; שו"ת חיים ושלום חאה"ע סי' א; שדי חמד מע' אישות סי' ב אות יט, אבל הכא הרי איכא ג' או ד' ספקות ושמוא לא היה חרם הוא ספק גמור.
 8. שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ז חיו"ד סי' יד.

THE OHR HACHAIM HAKADOSH

Reb Chaim ben Moshe Ibn Atar was born in the year תנ"ו in Morocco. His family name 'Atar' is of Spanish origin and means 'spices' or 'spice merchant.' The Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh was often forced to migrate from where he lived and at one point, he resided in Italy where he printed his famous *peirush* on the Torah "Ohr HaChaim." The Chida was one his famous talmidim. About one year before his passing, he traveled to Eretz Yisrael, where he established two *yeshivos* (one for *nigleh* and the other for *nistar*). He was *niftar* on Tes Vav Tammuz תק"ג at only 47 years of age. The Baal Shem Tov was said to say that Reb Chaim was befitting to be *moshiach* in his generation.

The Ohr HaChaim did not want to benefit from his Torah learning and therefore supported himself by being a goldsmith. He would only spend the minimal time working, as per his employers needs, and would then return to his learning.

It once happened that the king placed a large order of jewelry to be made for his daughter's wedding. A deadline was given, but because at that time the Ohr HaChaim was not in need of money, he refused to take off learning time just to have the order ready for a certain date. When the king heard about this, he flew into a rage and ordered that the Ohr HaChaim be thrown into a den full of lions and other wild beasts.

When the time came for the verdict to be carried out, the entire Yiddishe community escorted the tzaddik, while weeping and lamenting the terrible decree. The gentiles also came, excited to watch the scene of a Jew being eaten alive by hungry, ferocious animals. The Ohr HaChaim remained calm, placing full trust in Hashem, and while being led, he kept encouraging the Yidden that hashem would definitely help in this hour of need. All he had with him were his *tallis*, *tefillin* and some *seforim* that he had asked for permission to bring along with him. And then, while the crowds watched, the Ohr HaChaim was lowered down into the cage.

A few days passed and the care-taker of the royal garden went to clean up what little was surely left of the body. To his utter astonishment, he beheld the tzaddik wrapped in his *tallis* and *tefillin*, completely engrossed in his learning and the usually ferocious lions were sitting around him like children in front of a teacher! The caretaker ran to let the king know, and his royal highness hurried out to see this unbelievable site. Immediately, the king commanded that Reb Chaim be taken out and he then proclaimed with deep feeling, "Now I know that there is a G-d among the Jews!"

(תולדות ומעשיות – רבינו חיים בן עטר)

When visiting the camp Emunah for girls, the Rebbe said in a sicha:

"Today (15th of Tammuz) is the *Yom Hilula* of the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh – Reb Chaim ben Atar. The Ohr HaChaim has a special connection to Yiddishe girls, for as is known, he would learn with his children, all daughters, a *shiur* in Chumash every Friday night, and would later write the *peirushim* he had expounded to them during these *shiurim*. From these explanations, he organized his *peirush* the 'Ohr HaChaim' on the Torah."

The Rebbe concluded, "From this you can learn to not only engage yourselves in your own education, but to educate and influence others"

(תו"מ חכ"ה ע' 942)

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שיי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

VACATION

As is well known, the Rebbe never took off a day from his work of his intense schedule of learning Torah, davening and serving *Klal Yisroel*. Reb Chesed Halbershtam relates:

"One day, the Rebbetzin asked me to accompany her on a trip to buy much needed furniture for her porch. When we returned, the Rebbetzin asked me to arrange the chairs on the porch. When the Rebbe came in, he sat down on the chairs, and began to discussing the vacation resort of the Rebbe Rashab.

"After a relaxing conversation for two, three minutes, the Rebbe said, 'Nu, af dem yor hoben mir yeitzeh geven af datcheh' (for this year, we have already fulfilled the need of our vacation), and got up to continue his holy work."



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