

A Dvar Torah to encourage matters of Yiras Shomayim prepared to be shared and discussed with your family at the Shabbos table



פרשת חקת

57

A YIDDISHE VACATION

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לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

THE WAY TO RELAX

The Rambam writes that taking care of one's health is part of serving Hashem, for when a person is not well, he is unable to serve Hashem properly.

Rebbi Yehudah Hachossid writes that a person who is stressed should take a walk so that he is able to return to learning afterwards. The Medrash relates that Dovid Hamelech would take walks in order to clear his mind and learn further.

(רמב"ם הל' דעות רפ"ד, ס"ח אות תש"ע, יוסף אומץ אות של"ז)

The Gemara relates that Rebbi Zeirah, when feeling weak and unable to concentrate, would relax near the entrance of the Yeshivah of Rebbi Nosson bar Tuvia, so that when the chachomim pass by, he would be able to rise in their honor.

(ברכות כה ע"א)

The Gemora tells of Rebbi Yehuda Hanosi who was very wealthy and always had unique produce served at his table, even when they were out of season. Before Rebbi's passing, he lifted his hands upwards and said, "I did not have any pleasure at all!" The של"ה הקדוש explains that although Rebbi ate these delicacies, he only did so to be strong and healthy for עבודת ה'.

The Rebbe says that similarly, breaks should be taken to increase one's health for the benefit of serving Hashem and for this reason, children should be allowed to play. This is also קדושה, as for by Yidden, a holy nation, their body is קדוש as well.

ע"ז י"א ע"א, כתובות ק"ד ע"א, של"ה ע"מ מ"ח, התועדויות תשמ"ז ע' 186 תשמ"ד ע' 2453)

In response to many people who notified the Rebbe of their vacation plans for rest, the Rebbe gave a brocha that it should bring the desired result of strengthening the body, As the Rebbe Rashab expressed, "How precious is the Yiddishe body for which so much Torah was given." At the same time, it is necessary to ensure that one does not come to a situation where the strength of the body is a weakness for the נשמה.

(אג"ק ח"ג ע' שד"מ)

YIDDISHKIET IN THE SUMMER

The Medrash Shmuel writes that being that summer is a time when physical desires are stronger, we learn Pirkei Avos, strengthening ourselves in the right behavior.

(מדרש שמואל בהקדמה)

The Rebbe said: We must behave contrary to the ways of the rest of the world. They, during the summer months, decrease their learning and add emphasis to strengthening their physical health. We must do the opposite and emphasize the health of the neshama, and automatically, the physical will be strengthened as well. Especially, as chassidus teaches, that during the summer there is an additional measure of אלקות in the world, which is the cause for the additional sunlight.

(תורת מנחם חכ"ה ע' 268, לקו"ש ח"א ע' 4)

When the Rebbe Rashab would go on vacation, for health purposes, he would take off his kapota, and holding onto his tzitzis, he would sit down and say, "This is דאטשע (vacation)."

The Rebbe Rashab explained the inner meaning of vacation: In לשון הקודש it is called דשא 'a dwelling of grass'. The Medrash tells about the grass, that each blade decided to grow separately, although Hashem had not clearly instructed so. Similarly, each Yid, though he may be busy with others during the year, there are times when he should be occupied with his self growth in the ways of Hashem.

(סד"ש תש"א ע' 150)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related: In Lubavitch, during the years תרנ"א to תרנ"ג, the chassidim would observe 'datcheh' from after Pesach. They would sit in the courtyard in front of the house, breathing the fresh air, and relate stories about previous chassidim. Generally, the Rebbe Rashab would not join, for he would be very involved in עבודה, davening each day at length, until five o'clock in the afternoon. Occasionally, the Rebbe Rashab would come out and comment on the stories.

(סד"ש תש"ב ע' 120)

In previous generations, when living in Europe, the children would be in Cheder throughout the entire year, learning all through the day and even into the night; thus, they were constantly in an atmosphere of kedusha. Arriving in America, the Yidden began following the local custom of taking regular breaks from school. These children, who already learned very little in day schools, would have vacation every weekend, a few weeks in the winter and a couple of months in the summer. At that time, a number of camps opened, yet none focused on raising the standards of these children b'ruchnius.

At a farbrenge on Shavuos תשט"ז, the Rebbe spoke about this, "Once, children would have days off from cheder only twice a year: Pesach and Succos, and this produced children who were healthy b'ruchnius, as well as b'gashmius.

"Today, especially in America, this has changed. The children being too 'tired' from the few hours they learn, must regularly travel away for

the 'weekends', while some are even "מהדר" to leave a day earlier... This is done even more so during the summer, when one 'must' relax from the "fourth of July", and then upon returning, relax some more to recover from the trip..." The Rebbe concluded in astonishment, "And from such a manner they expect to raise proper children?!"

Therefore, the Rebbe suggested that an institution be opened, where although on the outside it will appear as a camp, in truth, it will be exactly like a cheder. The Rebbe pointed out that this time of year can have an additional advantage over the rest of the year, for the children will have more time for kedusha, being free of any secular subjects, and in a few weeks will be able to learn what would usually take them a couple of months. In addition, they will be spared any negative influences from home and the excessive spoiling they receive from their parents.

(בנאות דשא ע' 2, 15)

The Rebbe said that the true reason for vacation time is so that a Yid should be able to learn all day. This is applicable to the children as well as parents. When the children will see their fathers adding in learning during their vacation, they will do the same. Since a Yid was created to learn Torah and do Mitzvos, it is only way that he truly feels happy and at ease.

(שיח"ק תשל"א ח"ב ע' 367)

At a farbrengen (י"ב תמוז תשמ"ה), the Rebbe spoke of the lesson we must take from the מסירת נפש of the Friediker Rebbe for the chinuch of children: In recent times, a strange custom of closing the cheder during the summer has been introduced. Such behavior is not only contradictory to Frumkeit, but it is a tremendous craziness (וויילדיקייט)! The Torah is the life of a Yid and one cannot take a break from life. What type of message does this relay to the children?

The Rebbe said that even in those places where they do learn something, it is done in a 'burdensome way', only to fulfill an obligation and not as 'life'. The Rebbe explained that the source of this problem is the mistaken understanding that Torah is meant ח"ו to burden the Yidden, when in truth, the Torah was given to better the physical life of a Yid! It is the darkness of galus that prevents a Yid from accepting this explanation. The Rebbe concluded that we must do everything possible to prevent children from subtracting from their learning, rather we must make sure to add to it.

(התועודויות תשמ"ה ח"ד ע' 245)

The Rebbe spoke numerous times about the need to continue learning as usual throughout the summer, and called the break from learning a "strange" and "disgusting" custom.

(ראה התועודויות תשמ"ז ח"ד ע' 105, 135)

STANDING ON GUARD

The Gemora tells of one of the greatest chachomim Rabbi Elozor ben Aroch, who traveled to the distant lands and partook in the pleasures there, drinking the wine and bathing in the springs. As a result, he forgot what he had learned, and when he returned to the Beis Medrash and was called to the Torah, instead of saying לכם הזה, he read החרש הי לבם. The Rebbe Maharash explains the significance of

these words: they imply the heart being stopped up, as a result of the pleasures from which he partook.

(שבת קמו ע"ב, סה"מ תרכ"ו ע' לא)

Addressing the bochorim who would be speaking in different shuls, the Rebbe instructed that they speak about the עבודה of the summer months: During the summer time when nature begins to bloom, one must be careful, not to be overly drawn into physical pleasures, for he can be affected like Rabbi Elozor was. One must take care of his body, this also being a part of serving Hashem, yet one should not do so excessively. Rather, one must use the apparent beauty now found in nature, in the blooming trees, for kedusha, and learn from them to grow in עבודת ה'.

(תורת מנחם, ח"א ע' 248, 255)

On one of the weekly trips returning to Lubavitch from 'datcheh', where the Rebbe Rashab would visit his mother and receive guests for יחידות, Shaul the wagon driver stopped near a well to give the horses to drink. When the horses finished drinking, he whipped their backs and said, "Fools! You think I've given you water for your own benefit, so that the hay you've eaten should be tastier? This is not so! I've given you to drink so that you have more strength and desire to shlep the wagon."

Hearing this, the Rebbe became very serious and sat deep in thought for a long time and then said, "The Baal Shem Tov said that

everything a Yid hears and sees is a lesson in עבודת ה'. A Yid must remember that he is given his physical needs to have כח to shlep the Ruchnius'dike wagon, through Torah and עבודה. We cannot err and think that the hay is the main thing, only for us to enjoy."

(אג"ק ח"ד ע' תכ"ו)

In a specially added note to a sicha, the Rebbe addresses the laxness found in the summer: There are those who are "less stringent" during the summer with regard to matters of tznius — especially so, if they are living in a temporary residence in the country. Among them are those who say, "אחטא ואשוב", I shall sin and 'return' — when I return to the city." This is also very important regarding the men's conduct, but especially so for women, being that each and every one of them is called the עקרת הבית, the 'foundation of the home'.

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 84)

Wishing our readers the customary bracha:

"A Healthy and Successful Summer!"

לזכות אלעזר בן בילא פלברנאום
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ברוח ובגשם, לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות
נדבת בנו צבי גרשון שי'

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