

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In honor of our parents, Tuvia and Lea Schottenstein and Rabbi Yisroel and Chana Sirota

Erev Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai, 5781 – May 7, 2021

ערב שבת פרשת בהר-בחוקתי, כ"ה אייר, ה'תשפ"א

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

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Two Virtues in One

The Sages debate which is superior: Torah study or action-Mitzvos? Their conclusion, “Study is greater, because it leads to action.”

This statement is confusing. It insists that study is superior but argues that the superiority of study depends on something far more important: practical deeds.

The explanation: The superiority of study over action is that it includes both virtues. For our Sages taught that “whoever occupies himself with the study [of the laws of the burnt-offering], is considered as having offered an actual burnt-offering.” Consequently, the

meaning of “study leads to action” is not that after one has studied he will then put it into practice. Rather, “study leads to action” at the very moment of study. For whatever subject he studies, it is considered as having been accomplished at that same moment.

In conclusion: Torah study includes action, whereas action—although the ultimate goal—does not include Torah study.

Focus: Your Torah study has powerful and instant results.

שער הבטחון

GATE OF TRUST

From Chovot Halevavot

GateofTrust.org

Strengthen Your Trust

A person **should know and it should be clear to him that the Creator is watching over him and that nothing is concealed from Him**, neither **those** actions **that** the person performs in public and **are revealed** for others to see, nor **those** actions **that** the person performs in private and **are hidden** from others. Even his thoughts are not concealed from G-d, neither **those that are hidden** from other people, nor **those that are apparent** through his speech and actions. G-d also knows **if the person's reliance on Him is wholehearted or not**.

Commentary: According to the *Pat Lechem*, this preface mandates that a person should know that G-d is observing him to see if his trust is truly complete.

Strengthening Trust: G-d could have given the Jews in the desert the manna for a month or two at one time. Why then did He give it daily? It was in order to train them in *bitachon*. They had to develop their trust in G-d daily—that He would provide them with their needs for that day (*Rabbeinu Bechaya*, Exodus 13:17).

The Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, explains *emunah* as follows: The main thing is for the person to accustom himself—to habituate his thoughts continuously—so that they are imprinted in his heart and mind, that everything he sees with his eyes—the

heavens and earth and all they contain—all constitute the outer garments of the King, the Holy One, blessed be He. In this way he will (also) constantly remember their inwardness and vitality, which is G-d.

This is also implicit in the word *emunah* (faith), which is a term that also indicates training—the person accustoms himself, like a craftsman who trains his hands, and so forth. [The word *אמונה* *emunah* is etymologically rooted in the word *אומן* *uman* (artisan). In order to be successful, an artisan with a talent for painting, pottery, and the like must habituate and train his hands. The same is true of faith in G-d: Every Jew possesses faith. However, for this faith to be actualized, and a person's actions be in consonance with it, he must habituate and

train himself to recognize the G-dliness in everything.] (*Tanya, Likkutei Amarim* ch. 42; *Lessons in Tanya* *ibid.*)

The following is a letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe to a recipient who he felt was lacking in trust:

“Just now I dispatched a telegram to you (in which is written): ‘I am extremely surprised at your low spirits. You should follow the directives of two medical specialists and strengthen your trust in G-d, Who will certainly restore you to your former health. I wait to hear good tidings. With blessings for a speedy recovery.’” (The Rebbe continues:) “A person studies and studies (regarding Divine Providence, etc.), but when it comes to practical application, where is the trust? You should study *Shaar Habitachon* (the Gate of Trust) in *Chovot Halevavot* three or four times. It is self-understood that

I do not mean that you should study it all in one time, but in the course of a few weeks” (*Igrot Kodesh of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*, vol. 21, p. 131).

In another letter the Lubavitcher Rebbe writes: “You must be strong in your trust that G-d will lead you in a proper path and bring you success in your holy work. And if doubts regarding this enter your mind, this does not indicate a doubt regarding your ability; rather, this indicates a weakness in your trust. And the remedy for this is to study *Shaar Habitachon* in *Chovot Halevavot*, and, more generally, to be bound to the Tree of Life—the study of *Chasidut*, and to participate in a Chasidic *farbrengen* with genuine Chasidic joy, on a frequent basis, to be happy and to make others happy” (*Igrot Kodesh of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*, vol. 4, p. 318).

לקוטי שיחות

A SICHA

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org

Adapted from the works of the [Lubavitcher Rebbe](http://LubavitcherRebbe.org)

“If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them.” (Vayikra 26:3)

The Rashi: *If you follow My statutes* — I might think that this refers to the fulfillment of the commandments. However, when Scripture says, “and observe My commandments,” the fulfillment of the commandments is already mentioned. So what is the meaning of “if you follow My statutes”? It means that you must toil in the study of Torah.

And observe My commandments — You shall toil in the study of Torah in order to observe and fulfill the commandments.

The Questions: 1) How does Rashi know that “follow My statutes” refers to **toiling** in Torah, and not to standard Torah study?

2) Rashi seems to contradict himself in his commentary on this verse. In the first segment he posited that “when Scripture says, *and observe My commandments*,” it refers to “the fulfillment of the commandments.”

Yet in his remarks on the words, “observe My commandments” he says, “You shall toil in the study of Torah **in order** to observe and fulfill the commandments.” Meaning, this phrase does not refer to the fulfillment of the commandments, but rather, it is a clause that clarifies the beginning of the verse: *You shall toil in Torah so that you can observe the commandments.*

The Explanation: “Follow My statutes” cannot mean standard Torah study because studying Torah is itself a *mitzvah*, and thus it is included in the phrase, “My commandments,” which refers to all the *mitzvos*. Rather,

“follow My statutes” must refer to a qualitatively different form of study that goes beyond the letter of the law — “toil in Torah.”

This, however, creates a problem of sequence in the verse. The general exhortation, “observe My commandments,” should precede the higher, more intense practice of “toiling in Torah.”

To address this, Rashi explains that the second clause does not actually refer to *mitzvah* observance per se, but rather to the intention that should accompany in-depth study — “so that you can observe the commandments.” In this way, the verse’s sequence is intelligible.

The Deeper Lesson: The term *chukim*, “statutes,” generally refers to those *mitzvos* that are beyond human comprehension; it is also related to the word for “engrave,” — “*chakikah*.” The shared root alludes to the fact that fulfilling the supra-rational *mitzvos* is difficult work, like engraving in a stone, as opposed to writing on a paper.

Here, the Torah intentionally refers to Torah study with a term connoting supra-rational *mitzvos* to teach the following lessons: Even though Torah study is a rational practice, a person must apply himself to it with irrational devotion. Secondly, a person must recall that because Torah is Divine wisdom, it is essentially unknowable. Through toiling in Torah, a person will come to this recognition.

Based on *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 17, p. 313

The Aromatic Hide

וְאִם גַּם זֹאת בְּהֵיטֵם בְּאַרְץ אֹיְבֵיהֶם לֹא מֵאַסְתִּים וְלֹא גַעְלֵתִים לְכַלְתֵּם...

Yet, even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not despise them nor will I reject them to annihilate them... (Vayikra, 26:44)¹

“**R**” Chiya was once walking with R’ Yosi and he said: I heard a novel interpretation in the name of R’ Elazar: The verse states “*I will not despise them nor will I reject them to annihilate them* – לְכַלְתֵּם”. The word לְכַלְתֵּם is missing a ‘Vav.’ (The standard spelling of this word is לְכַלְוֹתָם.) What’s the reason for this (change of spelling)? The word without the ‘Vav’ can be seen as an indication to the word לְכַלָּה – for a bride. Meaning I will not “reject them” because they are the love of my soul and I am beloved amongst them.

The parable for this is as follows: A person whose intended bride lived in a foul smelling tannery market. If she had not lived there, the groom, searching for her, would never have entered such a place. Now, however, that she is there, it appears to him like a perfume market, where all the good aromas in the world are.

Here, too, “*and even so while they are in the land of their enemies,*” which is like a tannery market, “*neither are they despised nor rejected,*” because the Jewish People are beloved to me and it is pleasant like all the good aromas in the world.

R’ Yosi said: If I had not come here but to hear this thing — it would have been enough.”

(Zohar, Bechukosai, 115b.)

Driving Questions:

1. Why is the parable specifically about a tannery market?
2. What can be learned from the names R’ Elazar and R’ Yosi?
3. Why was R’ Yosi so excited from this teaching?

R’ Levi Yitzchak explains that this can be understood through analyzing a verse regarding Adam and Chava.

Following their sin of eating from the tree of knowledge, the Torah states:² וַיַּעַשׂ ה' אֱלֹקִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנוּת עוֹר וַיְלַבְּשֵׁם “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife shirts of skin, and He dressed them.”

The Hebrew word for skin is עוֹר, with the first letter being an *Ayin* – ע.

1. This verse in our Parsha, comes at the end of the תּוֹכַחָה, the rebuke where Hashem cautions His people lest they stray, and the consequences which will befall them. Nonetheless, Hashem promises to never wipe us out.

2. Bereishis, 3:21

The Midrash³ relates that in the Torah⁴ of R’ Meir the word עוֹר (skin) is spelled אֹור with the first letter being an *Alef* – א.

By changing this one letter, one also changes the meaning of the word from ‘skin’ to ‘light’, hinting at a deeper transformation that occurs.

Skin refers to a cover and concealment over the essence and only a minuscule amount of light can radiate through it.⁵

In the realm of the divine, skin refers to a concealment of G-dly light, and through the process of refinement, one transforms the *Ayin* – ע into an *Alef* – א; the concealment into revelation – עוֹר to אֹור.

Thus, at the onset of creation Adam and Chava were body and soul, but the soul was not concealed by the body, it radiated the Divine light. After their sin, their body turned into ‘skin’ — a natural impediment to the revelation of G-dliness. From that moment onward, it has been the purpose of every individual to break through the concealment of the body and transform it into light, which is the intended natural state of all of creation.

This is also the story of exile in general. Taking the darkness, challenges and strife and transforming it so it can radiate divine revelation.⁶

This is precisely the purpose of a tannery. The tanning process involves taking a thick, dirty and unusable hide and converting it into shoes and other items of need and usefulness.

These two stages, the apparent concealment and the need to refine it, are hinted at in the names of R’ Yosi and R’ Elazar.⁷

3. Bereishis Rabah, 20:12; Yalkut Shimoni, Remez 34.

4. This does not necessarily mean a change in the actual writing and accuracy of the Torah scroll as per Mesorah, but may be a metaphor for the light radiant in his teachings. See *Or Torah (R’ Dovber of Mezritch), Bereishis, Siman 14.*

5. See *Ma’amarei Admur Hazaken Parshiyos*, vol. 1 page 50.

6. R’ Levi Yitzchak references a Ma’amar of the Alter Rebbe. There it explains that the *Ayin* refers to the *Ayin Sarim* (heavenly ministers) which are known as the 70 nations (*Ayin* having the numerical value of 70) under which the Jewish People are exiled. The *Alef* refers to the True Being that is one - G-d. (*Torah Ohr, Maamar, E’eseh Lo Ezer K’negdo.*)

7. The teachings of R’ Levi Yitzchok are replete with this underlying theme of how the names of the sages indicate and lend insight into their perspective on Torah and life. As such, the more we understand the hint in their name the better we can truly understand the secret of their teachings.

