

Parashas
Bamidbar

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כ"ט אייר תשפ"ו

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י"ח ע"י

קהילת שבתאי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ

רבי גמליאל הכהן

רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

הזריז ימיו כפולים

The diligent one - his days are doubled

טיב המערכת

למשפחותם לבית אבותם

According to their families, to their fathers' house

It is said that the yetzer hara invests more effort in order to cause the great righteous individuals to fall, and this is more important to it than causing the masses of simple people to fall. And why? Because when the yetzer ensnares a simple person, its gain is not so great, since others will not learn from him. However, in contrast, if chas v'shalom, the yetzer succeeds in ensnaring an important person—even in one light mitzvah, or in one good custom, for as is known, “the custom of Israel is Torah”—then other people can learn from his actions and act like him. Therefore, the more important and greater a person is in Torah and in fear of Heaven, so must he be more careful of the schemes of the yetzer that plots against him to cause him to fall. And as is known, in order to be saved from an enemy, we must recognize his tactics of war; so too, we must know and recognize the tactics of the yetzer in order to know what to be careful about and how to guard ourselves from it.

In our parashah, the Torah counts all of Bnei Yisrael according to their tribes, but when it comes to the tribe of Levi, the situation is different. There, the Torah counts each family separately, and by each one it is mentioned “according to their families, to their fathers’ house.” And this parashah is generally read on the Shabbos before the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, and to teach us what this comes to indicate: that the tribe of Levi is the chosen tribe—they are the Talmidei Chachamim of every generation. And regarding them, the Torah testifies that they always related “according to their families, to their fathers’ house,” for this is the weapon of the Torah scholars who wish to maintain their learning and fulfillment of the Torah and to be saved from the cunning of the yetzer that constantly plots against them.

Generally, the yetzer does not come to a great person and say to him, “Go and serve idolatry.” So how does it nevertheless manage to cause him to fall? It suggests to him to forgo the customs of his forefathers. And it even has a “strong argument,” for behold, you are a Talmid Chacham and you are not obligated to do everything that your father did if you do not understand the reason for the matters. And through this it can, chalilah, succeed, because if others see the Talmid Chacham belittling the customs of his forefathers, they too may come to belittle customs, and even chalilah, the essence of the Torah. Therefore, the Talmid Chacham must gird his loins like a man and cleave to the customs of his forefathers—even if he does not understand them—for ‘minhag Yisrael Torah’ - “the custom of Israel is Torah.”

- Tiv HaTorah - Bamidbar

וְאֵת כָּל הָעֵדָה הִקְהִילוּ בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי וַיְתִילְדוּ עַל מִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְבֵית אֲבוֹתָם בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת מִבְּנֵי עַשְׂרִים נֶסְכָּה וּמַעֲלָה לְגִלְגֻלָּתָם: (א, יח)

And all the congregation assembled on the first of the second month, and they declared their lineage according to their families, to their fathers’ house, by the number of the names, from twenty years old and up, according to their head count. (1:18)

Behold, the Torah opens its words in this parashah with the command that was told to Moshe to count and to know the number of the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael. And at the beginning of the command (above 1:1), the Torah notes that this command was said “on the first of the second month in the second year.” And afterward, all the details of the command were brought (verses 2–16), and afterward came the posukim that tell of the fulfillment of the command in practice, among them the posuk before us, which notes among its words the day on which they began to carry it out—that it was also “on the first of the second month,” meaning on that very same day on which the command was said to Moshe from the mouth of the Almighty.

The Torah wished to teach through this the obligation to be diligent in the service of the Creator and in the fulfillment of His mitzvos, and not to postpone them to tomorrow or to a later time. And even when a mitzvah presents itself that requires deep thought as to how to fulfill it, one should not delay it until a time when his mind will be clearer; rather, immediately and without delay he should delve into his thoughts and place counsel within himself as to how to fulfill it in the best possible manner, and immediately afterward bring it from potential into action. And similar to how Moshe and Israel conducted themselves in fulfilling the said command, for there is no doubt that its fulfillment depended on complex arrangements. After all, it was an assembly in which the entire congregation of Israel appeared in multitudes with their genealogical records, and each one needed to bring with him also witnesses establishing his lineage. Thus, many of Israel were required to testify in that assembly both about themselves and about others, and they needed to prepare for its fulfillment properly and fittingly, and to think through who would come first and who last, and to whom these would turn and to whom those would turn. And the diligence in its fulfillment was bound up with great exertion. Nevertheless, Moshe hastened together with the distinguished leaders, and already on that very day everything was resolved and the counting already began to be carried out.

A person must know that the laziness because of which he postpones his obligations from day to day stems from the encrustation of Amalek, as in that well-known saying that one of the righteous said on the posuk (Shemos 17:9), ‘צא והלחם בעמלק מחר’ - “Go out and fight Amalek tomorrow”—that a person must hasten in the fulfillment of mitzvos and wage war against the encrustation of Amalek that entices him to postpone them until tomorrow.

Well known is the statement of the chacham that “the diligent one—his days are doubled,” meaning that the diligent one seizes through his diligence more and more mitzvos, and when he comes to the Upper World, his treasures are many times greater than those of the lazy one, and he is comparable,

relative to him, to one whose days were doubled.

The yetzer that entices a person to be lazy deceives him that his days are many, and that he will yet merit to fill many of them with Torah and mitzvos, and that nothing will happen if he delays his mitzvos. However, the holy Tanna Rabban Gamliel, the son of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, already warned us not to be enticed by his words, saying (Avos 2:4): "Do not say, 'When I will have free time I will study,' perhaps you will not have free time..."

It is told about Maran the Griz of Brisk, that the formulation of language of one of his close associates found favor in his eyes, and every time he needed to compose a letter he would send for him to come and formulate its content. And once, on Erev Shabbos after midday, the messenger of the Griz appeared at the home of that associate to summon him to compose a letter, whose content was a request to a certain person that he should endeavor to involve himself in some matter of benefiting the public.

After the man came and composed the letter, he turned to the Rav and asked him: The practices of the Rav are Torah, and I must learn from them. Behold, now it is Erev Shabbos Kodesh, and the Rav knows that I am a family man, and like all בעלי בתים I too am occupied at such a time with preparing the

needs of Shabbos. On the other hand, the post office has already closed its doors, and until Sunday morning it will not open its gates, so that it is impossible to make any progress in sending the letter until Sunday morning. Why then was it necessary for the Rav to devote specifically this hour for composing the letter? Would it not be preferable to summon me for this on Motzaei Shabbos? For then I am not occupied, and I would be able to compose it with a settled mind.

Upon hearing the question, the Griz answered

in astonishment: Who guarantees you that on Motzaei Shabbos I will still be in this world? Does a person know his end? I fear that only now, while I am certainly alive, the hour stands for me to utilize it for composing the letter and to serve as a cause for benefiting the public...

This was an illustration of the fulfillment of the above statement of Rabban Gamliel: "Do not say, 'When I will have free time I will study.'"

I will further relate on this matter what I heard from the gaon, my father and teacher zt"l, how he once merited a demonstration of the aforementioned statement of Rabban Gamliel. It was at the beginning of one of the winter months, when it was already possible to fulfill the mitzvah of "Kiddush Levana." After Maariv, several of the mispalalim—and my father with them—requested to be among the diligent in mitzvos and to sanctify the moon immediately. However, at that time the clouds stood between them and the moon, and they needed to wait some time until it would be seen in its entirety.

Since this was so, the concern of one of those waiting was aroused lest in the end the moon would not be seen in its clarity, and he preferred to wait for the coming nights, perhaps the skies would be clearer on one of them. However, in the end that man did not merit a clearer night until they announced the time of his funeral...

May Hashem grant that we utilize all our times for His Torah and for His mitzvos, and through them we will merit many eternal acquisitions.

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‘The thousand are for you, completely’ האלף לך שלמה’

Baruch Hashem, I merited to marry off some of my children. As is known, *hachnasas kallah* is something that costs a great deal of money, and I was forced to travel to the United States in order to request the help of our brethren in the Diaspora...

In one of the shuls there sat an *avreich*, a Talmid Chacham, who saw a stranger passing by and inquired about my well-being. I told him that I had come from Eretz Yisrael to collect donations for the purpose of *hachnasas kallah*. He heard the story and said that although he is an *avreich*, he wants to help me, and he wrote down my telephone number in Eretz Yisrael. We parted warmly and I continued with my task.

When I returned to Eretz Yisrael, my phone rang and on the line was that same *avreich*. He told me that he spoke with his son who lives in Beit Shemesh, and he transferred to him a sum of one thousand shekels into his account so that he should give it to me. I was very moved by this man, who himself sits and learns and exerts himself to such an extent to help me...

When we finished the conversation, I called his son, and behold, to my

amazement, he apologized that he was not currently in Beit Shemesh but rather in Beitar Illit, and that in the evening he would arrive home. I burst out in wonder and asked: "On which street are you in Beitar?!" And he answered with the name of the street that I was exactly on. I approached and took the envelope with praise and thanksgiving to the Creator of the world for the perfect messenger.

I called to thank the donor who gave a completely unexpected sum, and he responded with emotion: "Exactly when I finished making the transfer to my son's account, a man entered the shul and asked me to say Tehillim for him. I agreed with joy and a willing heart, but he, on his part, asked me to take an envelope that he was holding in his hand and left. In the envelope rested dollars in the exact amount of those same one thousand shekels that I transferred to you for ההכנסת כלה!!!"

Now that he saw that from Heaven there is special assistance, he requested that I send him an invitation so that he could try to grant other Jews the merit of this important mitzvah...

י.ל.

The Gemara states in Perek Ve'eilu Nedarim (Nedarim 81a): "Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: What is the meaning of the pasuk (Yirmeyahu 9:11), מי האיש החכם ויבן את זאת, - Who is the wise man that he may understand this? This matter was asked of the Sages and of the Prophets, yet they could not explain it, until Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself explained it, as it states (ibid 12), ויאמר ה' על עזבם את תורת אשׁר נתתי לפניהם ולא שמעו בקולי ולא הלכו בה - And Hashem said: Because they forsook My Torah which I placed before them, and they did not heed My voice and did not walk in it (ibid. 12). Now, ויאמר ה' על עזבם את תורת אשׁר נתתי לפניהם ולא שמעו בקולי, - they did not walk in it - Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: This means that they did not recite an initial berachah over the Torah."

The Beis Chadash (Bach) zt"l (Orach Chaim, siman 47) explains as follows: "One wonders: How could such a severe and exalted punishment come upon them for failing to recite a berachah over the Torah beforehand, which appears, on the surface, to be a relatively minor transgression?"

"Rather, it appears that His blessed intention from the outset was that we engage in Torah so that our souls would become strengthened and united with the very essence, spirituality, and holiness of the Divine source from which the Torah emanates.

Therefore, Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave the Torah of truth to [the people of] Yisrael as a gift, so that it would never be forgotten from us, in order that our souls and our bodies—through the two hundred and forty-eight limbs and the three hundred and sixty-five sinews—would cleave to the two hundred and forty-eight positive mitzvos and the three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions of the Torah."

"Had they engaged in Torah with this intention, they themselves would have become a chariot and a sanctuary for the Shechinah. The Shechinah would have resided within them literally, for they themselves would have become a Sanctuary of Hashem, and within them the Shechinah would have established its dwelling. Then the entire land would have shone with His glory. In this way, the heavenly retinue and the earthly retinue would have been bound together, resulting in a single Mishkan."

"But once they transgressed this principle, and did not engage in Torah except for material purposes—for their own benefit: to know the laws for business dealings, or to glorify themselves by displaying their wisdom—and they did not intend to become strengthened and bound to the holiness and spirituality of the Torah, nor to draw the Shechinah down into this world so that their souls would ascend to a lofty level after death—then they caused a separation. The Shechinah departed from the world and ascended on high, and the land remained in its physicality, devoid of holiness. This, in turn, brought about its destruction and desolation."

"This is the meaning of the pasuk: 'Who is the wise man... for what reason has the land perished?' And Hashem said: Because they forsook My Torah which I placed before them...."

Hashem says, My Torah—the Torah of truth that I gave as a gift, so that they would not merely learn and forget. I even explained to them the reasons and meanings of all matters—which I placed before them, like a set table.

My intention was that they bind themselves to the very essence of the holiness of My Torah, the

סיב המעשיות

Why Was the Land Destroyed?

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים, ונתן לנו את תורתו, ברוך אתה ה' נותן התורה

Blessed are You, Hashem our God, King of the universe, Who chose us from among all the nations and gave us His Torah. Blessed are You, Hashem, Giver of the Torah.

Torah of truth, and that the Shechinah would dwell among them. Yet, they forsook My Torah and did not walk in it—that is, they did not begin the path of spiritual ascent within the Torah, from level to level, so that the soul might cleave to the essence of the Torah's holiness."

"They did not walk in it—meaning, they did not engage in Torah lishmah, for its own sake, at the very moment they began to involve themselves in Torah. They failed to bless Hashem beforehand and to thank Him for giving the Torah to His people Yisrael, so that they might cleave to its holiness and to His Shechinah...."

"This is the true intent of the berachah, אשר בחר בנו - 'Who chose us.' He brought us close before Mount Sinai and gave us His holy Torah, His treasured vessel with which He delighted each day, so that our souls would cleave to the very essence of the Torah's holiness and spirituality, and so as to draw the Shechinah down to dwell among us.

Because they did not walk in it—that is, they did not engage in Torah lishmah—they were punished by the withdrawal of the Shechinah from the lower world. Then, the land was lost, scorched like a wilderness without any passerby: it was destroyed and left purely material, with no passing presence of the Shechinah, for the Shechinah departed entirely from the world and ascended on high."

(See further how the Bach explains according to his approach in the laws of the concluding berachah (Orach Chaim, siman 208, s.v. ve'katav od ve'yesh omrim), regarding the text of Al Ha'michyah: "and we shall eat of its fruit and be satisfied with its goodness."

This refers to the spiritual holiness of the Shechinah that rests in the supernal Land, "for through eating its fruits we are nourished by the holiness and purity of the Shechinah, and are satisfied by its goodness"; see there.)

Maran Hagaon Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l preserved in his holy home a wondrous inheritance from his grandfather, the awe-inspiring kabbalist, the holy gaon Rav Shlomo Elyashiv zt"l, author of the Leshem. These were sacred manuscripts from the innermost depths of the Torah—filled with the wisdom of chen, the most profound secrets that no human eye had ever beheld.

The Leshem had printed them only as individual folios, not bound together as a book. His grandson, Rav Yosef Shalom, concealed them in his home and hid them away in a secret place, so that they would

not come into public view.

On one occasion, I asked Rav Moshe Elyashiv shlit"l, why his father did not bring the manuscripts of the Leshem to print, thereby increasing Torah and aggrandizing it. Rav Moshe replied that he himself had already asked his father this very question, inquiring why he concealed the writings and did not send them to press.

Rav Yosef Shalom explained his reasoning as follows: In his estimation, there were not even ten people in our generation capable of understanding and attaining this profound and wondrous Torah, due to the depth of the concepts and the limitations of human comprehension. Consequently, there was no audience for whom to print these writings, since no one would open the book or engage with it.

When I heard this explanation, I myself went up to his holy home and asked him directly why we were not privileged to see the luminous work of his grandfather, the author of the Leshem. He answered me in his characteristic manner that it did not appear there were, in our lowly generation, even ten people who would truly engage in this wisdom and understand each sacred folio as it ought to be understood.

I asked his permission to respond to his argument. He smiled with gracious kindness and said, "Please do so." I then said: I can present before our master not merely ten, but thirty outstanding rabbanim from our holy yeshivah, Yeshivas Shaar Ha'shamayim, who study and engage in the pure Torah of the author of the Leshem, and who indeed understand and attain it—each according to his own level.

I added what is already well known in this matter: that the generation has become fit, as several holy and righteous kabbalists of the later generations revealed—that in the final era the wisdom of kabbalah would become increasingly revealed. Whereas in earlier generations those who engaged in this wisdom did so discreetly and in concealment, today there are entire yeshivos in which rows upon rows of talmidei chachamim engage in the Torah of secrets. Fortunate are they, and fortunate is their portion.

Moreover, the Bach zt"l has already established that the essential purpose of the giving of the Torah is "so that our souls cleave to the essence, spirituality, and holiness of the source of the Torah... that they become a chariot and a sanctuary for the Shechinah... and the entire earth be illuminated with His glory... and there be a bond between the heavenly and earthly hosts, and the Mishkan be one."

This is precisely the essence of the wisdom of kabbalah, which deals with the inner dimension of Torah—its holiness and purity above and below—and it is the most direct and effective means for drawing down the Shechinah....

When Rav Yosef Shalom heard all these words, he replied, "If this is indeed the case, and there are Torah scholars in our generation who will engage in this holy work, then I retract my position." He immediately brought out those sacred manuscripts—the treasured inheritance of his holy grandfather—and placed them into my hands, instructing me to prepare them properly and to publish them for the light of the world.

Indeed, the Almighty granted me the great merit of publishing the sefarim Leshem Shevo Ve'Achlamah with splendor and dignity, so that they might endure for many days, illuminating the hearts and souls of Yisrael with

wisdom and exalted light of kabbalah. It is known that the holy Leshem did not publish his manuscripts as a bound book during his lifetime, apparently out of similar concerns. On one occasion, however, he had the opportunity to send to Maran the Ben Ish Chai zt"l, in the city of Baghdad, copies of several pages and folios containing secrets from his sacred writings. When the emissary arrived in Babylonia and delivered the holy manuscripts into the hands of Rav Yosef Chayim zt"l, he immediately sat down to study those secrets of the Torah, drawn from the very furnace of creation.

After his eyes were sated with this clear and pleasant light, and in accordance with the lofty greatness of his Torah genius he merited to understand it so profoundly, that its words were exceedingly sweet to his palate. He rejoiced in them with immense joy, to the point that he donned his Shabbat clothes and made a special celebration, dancing fervently while holding the sacred manuscripts in his hands.

When the author of the Leshem heard of this, he burst into great weeping, saying: Had I known that there truly existed such people who can fathom this wisdom, I would have labored far more to bring forth ever more wondrous insights from the depths of the holy and pure Torah of kabbalah. This follows the spirit of what our master the Arizal instituted in the Shabbat zemiros:

יְשֻׁדֵי לֵן שׁוֹפְרִיָּה, וְיַחֲדֵי לֵן סִתְרִיָּה, דְּאֵתְמָמֵר בְּלַחֲשֵׁא. יְגִלָּה לֵן טַעְמֵי כּו'. חֲדוּ חֲצֵדֵי חֻקָּא, בְּדַבּוּר וּבְקֵלָא, וּמִלִּילוֹ מְלָה בְּמִתְרִיקָא כְּדוּבְשָׂא. קְדָם רְבוֹן עֲלֵמִין, בְּמִלּוֹן סִתְרִיָּמִין, תְּגַלּוּן פִּתְגָמִין, וְתִימְרוּן חֲדוּשָׂא. לַעֲשֶׂר פִּתּוּרָא, בְּרָא יְקִירָא, עֲמִיקָא וְטִמְיָא, וְלֹא מִלְתָּא אִוְשָׂא. וְאֵלִין מְלִיָּא, יְהוֹן בְּרִיקוּעִיָּא, וְתִמְן מֵאן שְׂרָיָא, הֲלָא הֵוּא שְׂמִשָּׂא – May He send us His radiance, and may we behold His glory; and may He reveal to us His secrets, which are spoken in whispers. May He reveal to us the reasons... The field's companions shall rejoice, in speech and in voice, uttering words sweet as honey. Before the Master of the worlds, with obscure matters, reveal secret expressions and declare new insights—to adorn the table with precious mysteries, profound and concealed, that shall not be revealed. And these words shall ascend in the firmaments, and there—who abides? Is it not the [sun] Shechinah?"

Rav Z. Rein shlita, one of the veteran residents of the Shaarei Chesed neighborhood, told me something etched in his heart from his childhood—a lasting moral lesson concerning the obligation of kevod haTorah, the honor due to the Torah.

As the time of his bar mitzvah approached, it was the established custom in the great beis knesses of Shaarei Chesed that each bar mitzvah boy would receive the maftir aliyah on the Shabbos preceding his celebration and read the haftarah aloud before the congregation. However, it was known that on several Shabbosos during the year, later halachic authorities disagreed as to whether a minor could be called for maftir and thereby discharge the congregation's obligation of the haftarah. This question arises especially on those Shabbosos when maftir is not a repetition of the final pesukim of the weekly portion, but a special reading from an additional Sefer Torah.

Since his own bar mitzvah Shabbos coincided with such a Shabbos—when a special Torah is taken out for maftir—he was unsure how to proceed and whether he could receive maftir on that occasion.

He therefore approached Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, and asked him to rule whether he could receive maftir that Shabbos, or whether it would be preferable to do so on another Shabbos that did not involve this halachic uncertainty.

To his surprise, Rav Shlomo Zalman declined to give him a ruling. Instead, he said: "You are about to enter, with joy, the world of Torah and mitzvos at your bar mitzvah. Come, let me teach you a chapter in the obligation of honoring the Torah. Know with certainty: wherever there is a rav who serves as the local halachic authority, all questions of halachah must be directed to the rav of the place. Here in Sha'arei Chesed we have the great rav, Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlap zt"l, author of Shaarei Zevul, who is the mara de'asra and rav of the great shul. You must go and ask him, and follow his ruling."

The boy accordingly approached the mara de'asra, who examined the question carefully from every angle and permitted him to receive maftir on that Shabbos before his bar mitzvah.

Thus one learns a vital lesson in honoring the Torah and its scholars—especially in educating young boys, the tender flock, and accustoming them from an early age to proper reverence for the Torah and its sages, upon which so many foundations of Torah depend.

I recall that in my childhood I was somewhat shorter than other boys my age. On the last day of Simchas Torah, when the custom is for all Jews to be called to the Torah, my revered father, the righteous gaon wished to enhance the honor of the Torah by allowing me, even as a child, to receive my own individual aliyah, and not rely solely on the collective aliyah of Kol Ha'ne'arim. This practice exists in many communities, where even older children are given a separate aliyah on Simchas Torah, and it has firm halachic support.

In our shul, the Torah Ve'yirah beis haknesses in the Meah She'arim neighborhood, there were not many children at the time, and the devoted gabbai agreed to uphold this custom and allow the older children to be called individually.

When the moment of my aliyah arrived, a certain apprehension fell over me—as is natural for children who feel shy, all the more so since I was rather short in stature. But how astonished I was when, as the gabbai announced my name, the righteous gaon Rav Aharon Katzenellenbogen zt"l, one of the leading rabbinic figures of the beis haknesses, approached, took a shtender, turned it over so I could stand upon it, then removed his own tallis and wrapped me in it, arranging it carefully upon my shoulders. In this way I was able to approach the Torah fittingly for my aliyah.

That righteous man exerted himself in all this solely to make that aliyah pleasant for me—to ensure that I would approach the Torah with love and affection, without discomfort or embarrassment. To this very day, whenever I recall that aliyah, I feel again the sweetness and joy that filled my heart from the care and devotion with which that tzaddik treated me, so that I might receive the Torah with love.

In the generation following the terrible Holocaust, as the world of Torah began to flourish anew in Eretz Yisrael, with Torah institutions rising one after another in splendor, a fierce struggle was waged over every Jewish child and youth—whether he would merit drawing close to the holy Torah or, chas vechalilah, fall into a spiritual abyss that was all too common at the time.

In the year 5720, a bar mitzvah was celebrated in Yerushalayim for a boy born to distinguished parents who were Holocaust survivors—one of the first bar mitzvos of the new generation born after the war, to

raise new generations for Hashem and His Torah from the ashes of destruction.

The boy was exceptionally diligent and gifted, among the finest and most industrious students in his class. At the same time, he was quiet and reserved, not inclined to socialize much with his classmates. He cherished his time, and during recess—when others played—he would review his learning.

As his bar mitzvah approached, there was great excitement in the family. Yet for some reason, his classmates, though invited as customary, did not feel compelled to attend. Since he had no close friends, they assumed he would not notice who came and who did not.

One boy, however—Rav Fishel Rabinowitz zt"l—thought differently. He understood the heart of the bar mitzvah boy and felt it improper to stay away. He purchased a fine gift, dressed in his best clothing, and went with joy to participate in his friend's celebration.

The bar mitzvah boy was overjoyed to see him, welcomed him warmly, and they sat together in friendship and happiness throughout the celebration.

Years passed. That bar mitzvah boy grew into a man, continued his diligence and spiritual ascent, and in time merited the crown of Torah, becoming a prominent rosh yeshivah in one of the great yeshivos of Eretz Yisrael.

On one occasion, he met his old friend Rav Fishel Rabinowitz at a major Torah gathering and said to him: "Know for sure that a great part of my Torah learning and teaching today is to your credit."

He explained that at the time of his bar mitzvah, he had been torn between continuing in yeshivah or pursuing academic studies, as some family members urged him. When he saw that his classmates did not value his celebration enough to attend, he resolved to leave yeshivah and pursue secular studies. But when you came with warmth and affection, sat with me in friendship, and gladdened my heart, I changed my decision—not wishing to lose a dear friend like you. I remained on the benches of Torah, until I merited to grow and rise in its sacred heights.

In Lakewood, New Jersey, there lived a wealthy Jewish businessman, a major stock trader and one of the great benefactors of American Orthodoxy. He spent most of his day in Manhattan's financial district, traveling daily by private jet, yet each evening devoted two hours to chavrusa learning in the holy yeshivah of Beis Midrash Gavoah studying with enthusiasm and joy like a young student.

At one point, the yeshivah fell into severe financial distress and required large sums to overcome the crisis. The administrators asked this benefactor to increase his support. He reasoned that if he worked two additional hours at the stock exchange, forgoing his evening learning, he could earn more and thereby sustain the yeshivah.

He entered the study of his rebbe, the great gaon Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l, and presented his plan, even offering a "learning-based" argument: Chazal say that at times the suspension of Torah study is itself its fulfillment, and surely supporting public Torah study—especially a great yeshivah—yields immeasurable reward.

Rav Aharon replied with his characteristic clarity: "Regarding reward in the World to Come, I will not debate which is greater. But regarding life in this world, the matter is simple: if you give up those two precious hours in which you toil in Torah with spiritual delight—you will have no life. Without those hours, what kind of olam hazeh will you have? Your life is not life without Torah. Leave Lakewood to manage somehow—but from your Torah, do not depart."

May it be Hashem's will that we merit to receive the Torah with both hands—עֵשֶׂר וּבְכֹד וּבְשֵׂמֶלֶה עֵשֶׂר וּבְכֹד - Length of days is in its right hand; in its left, wealth and honor" (Mishlei 3:16).