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לבנך  
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PARSHAS BEHAR - BECHUKOSAI • MAY 23, 2025 • 27 IYAR 5785

The Zera Emes Project was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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## Ameilus Bitorah

The opening *passuk* of Parashas Bechukosai states: "If you will follow My decrees and observe My mitzvos and perform them, then I will provide your needs." This *passuk* contains three distinct phrases. Rashi asks: What is the meaning of "follow My decrees" and "observe My mitzvos"? Since "fulfilling mitzvos" is explicitly stated in the *passuk*, "following My decrees" must refer to something else. Rashi explains that it means toiling in Torah study.

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh offers 42 interpretations on this *passuk*! One might wonder: Why so many interpretations? The Torah is infinite, and theoretically, the Ohr HaChaim could have written extensive explanations on every *passuk*.

Rav Elchanan Yosef Hertzman (*Chizuk Un Mussar*) explains that when the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh read Rashi's words—"one should be toiling in Torah study"—he felt compelled to fulfill them immediately, prompting him to delve into this Rashi. He toiled and toiled until he completed 42 explanations that he wrote.

We can expound on Rav Hertzman's explanation that true Torah toil involves two steps: The first is recognizing one's obligation to toil in Torah, and the second is immediately beginning that toil. There should be no hesitation between the two.

The Mishnah in Avos (2:4) warns: "Do not say,



RAV HERTZMAN MATZEIVA WITH HIS PROMISE TO ADVOCATE FOR ANYONE FULFILLING HIS TZAVAH

"When I have time, I will learn Torah,' because you may never have the time."

Many people feel inspired by a powerful speech or meaningful words of Torah. However, inspiration often fades, and one returns to routine, forgetting the spark of repentance. Without immediate action, the desire to change remains abstract and eventually disappears.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz (*Sichos Mussar* 1971:30) recounts a story from the Volozhin Yeshiva during the leadership of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik: During a meal, someone asked the greatest *baki* a question

## אור החיים

R' Chaim Ben

Moshe Attar (4

Av 1696 – 15 Tamuz

1743) was born in

Morocco, where he

learned from his

grandfather, R' Chaim

Attar. He married his

first wife, Fatzunya,

of whom it was said

that she wore tefillin,

like Michal, daughter

of King Shaul. He

later married Esther,

daughter of Meir

Kapas. In 1739, a

famine forced him

to leave Morocco.

He traveled to Italy,

where a Yeshiva was

established for him.

In 1741, he set out

for Eretz Yisrael with

30 students. Due to

epidemics at the time,

he initially founded

his Yeshiva, Knesses

Yisrael, in Acre,

eventually moving

it to Yerushalayim.

Among his students

was R' Chaim

Yosef Dovid Azulai

(the Chida), who

described his Rebbe's

greatness in Torah as

uprooting mountains,

his holiness as

astonishing, and

noted that his

written works were

only a fraction of

his vast knowledge.

Approximately one

year after arriving

in Yerushalayim, he

passed away and

was buried on Har

Hazeisim.



רבי אלהן יוסף הערצמאן ז"ל בשיחה עם סוהר רבי ברוך בער ליבוביץ זצ"ל  
RAV HERTZMAN WITH HIS REBBI RAV  
BARUCH BER

from Tosafos, but he did not know the answer. In anguish, he immediately left the meal, locked himself in a room, and studied for seven years, eventually becoming one of the greatest *gedolim* of his generation.

When asked whether this was the proper response, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik explained: On one hand, he was wrong for leaving before reciting Birkas HaMazon. On the other hand, had he delayed even slightly, he never would have achieved such intense Torah study. (Rav Chaim Shmulevitz cited a different version in *Chochmas Adam* page 45). This story demonstrates the importance of acting immediately upon inspiration. Waiting even a moment may cause it to be gone forever.

The Ohr HaChaim learned the words of Rashi, “one should be toiling in Torah study” and *immediately* began toiling.

Returning to R’ Hertzman’s insights regarding this Rashi.

Rav Hertzman explains that true toil in Torah means learning with full concentration—physically and mentally. One who does this becomes a *gadol* in Torah. He cites the *Chazon Ish*, who explains that the result of toiling in Torah is the destruction of the yetzer hara and a level of purity where one loses interest in physical indulgence.



RAV MEIR SHAPIRO WITH TALMIDIM IN  
FRONT OF THE LUBLIN YESHIVAH

His sole desire becomes Torah growth. What is toil? Just as one sweats out a cold, learning with fire and enthusiasm cleanses the soul. Hasmadah is measured by desire, not time—one who dedicates themselves fully for an hour accomplishes more than one who spends longer with less devotion.

How should one learn? The *Chazon Ish* (Igros 2) adds that one should study Gemara and strive to understand the initial reasoning behind halachos. The result of such toil is a deep desire to fulfill the mitzvos one has learned.

Accordingly, the *passuk* states: “If you will follow My decrees,” meaning, if one toils in Torah, they will naturally want to “observe My mitzvos and perform them.”

Rav Hertzman also quotes the story that *Rav Meir Shapiro* told the talmidim of the Lubliner Yeshiva, emphasizing his mother’s role in inspiring his Torah learning. One day, young Meir did not learn. When he offered to make up for it the next day, she wept and asked, “What is a day without Torah?” Those tears deeply impacted him, and he later told his students that her tears were the true foundation of the yeshiva.

What better way to prepare for Shavuot than by recognizing the value of Torah learning, and acting upon it immediately?

## ר' אלהן יוסף הערצמאן

Rav Elchanan Yosef Hertzman (5th day of

Chanukah, 29 Kislev 1915 – 11 Nisan 2009) was a student of Reb Baruch Ber, with whom he had spent a Seder with (*Kinor Shel Rav*, p. 12), and later learned in Mir Yeshiva. He authored many sefarim, including *Escape to Shanghai*. During World War II, he followed the Mashgiach’s advice that in times of danger, one must remain connected to the Yeshiva, and thus survived the war with the Mir Yeshiva as it traveled to Japan and Shanghai. While still a bochur in Shanghai, he completed his first sefer, *Gadlus Ha’Adam*, which contains many of the speeches given by Rav Levenstein during that time. In 1948, he married his wife, Sara, a descendant of the Divrei Chaim, and began delivering shiurim. In his will, he wrote that, having not been blessed with children: “Anyone who recites 10 *kapitlach* Tehillim, learns Mishnayos, studies my sefarim, or gives charity for the sake of my *neshamah*—I promise to do all that I can and daven for them.” These words are inscribed on his *kever*, located near his Rebbi, Rav Levenstein, in the Ponovitch Chelka in Bnei Brak, a destination for countless visitors. Many stories of extraordinary *yeshuos*, including finding a shidduch, having children, financial success, and more, are frequently recounted there.

## חזון אי"ש

R’ Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, known

as the *Chazon Ish* (11 Cheshvan 1878 – 15 Cheshvan 1953), was born into an illustrious family of Torah giants. Among his eight siblings, one brother married the daughter of the Cheshek Shlomo, another was the editor of *Knesses Yisrael*, and one sister married the Steipler Gaon. In 1905, he became close with R’ Chaim Ozer Grodzensky. In Vilna in the early 1930s, he met the Chofetz Chaim, who urged him not to remain hidden from public view. In 1933, the *Chazon Ish* moved to Bnei Brak, Eretz Yisrael. Although he never held an official position and rarely spoke publicly or left Bnei Brak, he was deeply involved in all communal decisions, serving as an influential leader.

## ר' יהודה מאיר שפירא

Rav Yehudah Meir Shapiro (7 Adar 1887

– 7 Cheshvan 1933) was the visionary behind Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, in addition to founding Daf Yomi. He took great pride in these two significant achievements. Rav Wosner quoted his Rebbi, saying that Rav Shapiro fulfilled the obligation to have children through these two creations.