RABBI JUDAH MISCHEL

Mashpiah, OU-NCSY
Executive Director, Camp HASC

Dedicated L'Iluy Nishmas HaChaver Shlomo Michael ben Meir z'l

The Blessing of Today

A wealthy Jew and clever businessman approached Reb Yisrael Meir, the Chofetz Chaim zt'l, with what he thought was a winning proposition: "In my *tzava'ah* (will), I'll divide up my estate into seven portions. As I have six sons, each will receive one *cheilek* (portion) and the seventh portion I will leave to the yeshivah on condition that you will learn Mishnayos for the sake of my *neshamah*. The talmidim of Radin will benefit, and I will enjoy the merit of your Talmud Torah from the next world!"

The sagely Chofetz Chaim answered, "Why wait until after you are dead to dedicate one-seventh of your belongings to tzedakah? Give the money to the yeshiva today, and instead of me learning Torah for the sake of your *neshamah*, you yourself can learn those Mishnayos right now!"

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A PATH OF BLESSING

"*Re'eh*, Behold, I set before you *hayom*, today, a blessing and a curse; blessing if you will heed the commandments of Hashem, which I command you *hayom*... and the curse, if you will not heed the commandments...but turn away...to follow other gods, which you did not know." (11:26-28)

The directive is simple and clear: we are empowered to make the most of our lives, to determine our fate and create the reality in which we desire to live. The choice is ours, and we have the responsibility to embrace a path of blessing and revealed good, or the opposite. We are the masters of our own fate, and the Torah places the ultimate responsibility for the life we lead directly upon us.

One of the details in this directive that draws our attention and hints at deeper meaning is the repetition of the word *hayom*.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 272) regarding the verse in *Tehilim* (95:7)*: Hayom, Today — if you heed His voice...* "It is an important rule in Avodas Hashem to focus only on today.

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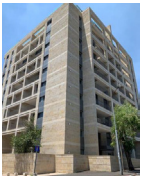

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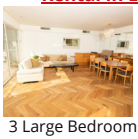
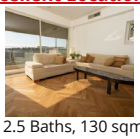

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Whether with regard to one's livelihood and personal needs, one should not think about one day to the next...with regard to serving God, he should not consider anything beyond this day and this moment. Sometimes the world of *Avodas Hashem* can seem overwhelming, heavy, even burdensome. However, when a person considers that he has only 'that day' ...he will find it no burden at all."

Rebbe Nachman's advice parallels the directive of our sedra and is the essence of the wise words of the Chofetz Chaim. When we feel moved to grow and strengthen our relationship with Hashem, we ought to immediately attach an action-point to this awakening and capitalize on a feeling of inspiration or desire for self improvement and responsibility in our lives:

"...A person should not procrastinate from one day to the next, saying, "I'll start tomorrow. Tomorrow I'll pray more attentively, and with the right enthusiasm," and likewise for other devotions. For a person's world consists only of the present day and moment. Tomorrow is a different world entirely." (*Likutei Moharan*, 272, continued).

Hayom — as soon as Hashem sets before us a blessing or presents a *mitzvah* — may we merit to swiftly ground it in this world of action. As the Chofetz Chayim urges us, "Why wait?" ■

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