



MRS. LEAH FEINBERG

OU ISRAEL FACULTY

Torat Imecha
NACH YOMI

בס"ד

Willing Our Way to Wisdom

In Sefer Mishlei, Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men, extols the virtues of wisdom. HaRav Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l points out that Shlomo gained his wisdom as a reward for having prized its value above all else. When Hashem appeared to him in a dream and offered to grant him any request, Shlomo expressed his desire for wisdom rather than long life, wealth or victory over his enemies. Because he recognized the over-riding value of wisdom, Hashem granted his request. Who better than Shlomo HaMelech to help us grow in our own appreciation of the wisdom of Torah?

As we commemorate the approaching anniversary of the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash during these three weeks between the Seventeenth of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av, it behooves us to contemplate the causes of the devastation and improve our own Avodah in those areas.

The Talmud (Bava Metzia 85b) records a discussion in which Hazal sought an answer to Yirmiyahu's question: "על מה אבדה ארץ?" Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: Because

when they studied, they didn't make a blessing on the Torah first. The entire Land of Israel was destroyed and her people led into exile for not reciting Birchot HaTorah, the blessing over the study of Torah, before opening a sefer and diving in! The study of Torah itself was not abandoned - in fact, it proliferated during the Second Temple era. Rashi explains that through the failure to recite Birchot HaTorah, the people revealed that the study of Torah was not a precious gift that they valued. They were going through the motions of learning Torah intellectually, but remained emotionally disconnected from its messages. Their failure to appreciate the wisdom of the Torah as the source of eternal life led to death and destruction.

The Sfat Emet in Parashat Terumah teaches that the Torah was given to the people of Israel in accordance with their level of preparedness to receive it. In every generation, our ability to comprehend and apply the teachings of the Torah is directly linked to our will to do so. In Parashat Vayeitzei, the Sfat Emet explores the power of man's will to draw closer to Hashem. When Yaakov Avinu stopped at dusk to rest on his way to Haran, having run from Eisav and on his way to the home of his uncle Lavan, the pasuk states "ויפגע במקום וילן שם" - he encountered the place and rested there." Rashi, citing Hazal, explains the verse homiletically, to mean that in that place Yaakov encountered Hashem through prayer, and established Tefillat 'Arvit, the Evening Prayer.

The Sfat Emet notes that in the darkness of night, both literal and figurative, it is difficult to apprehend the light. In our darkest moments, light can only be revealed through man's determined effort to seek Hashem's illumination. When we exert ourselves in pursuit of spiritual growth through the study of Torah our efforts will be rewarded beyond measure. "הכל תלוי ברצון" - everything depends on will."

Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch on Mishlei elaborates on the connection between the will to learn and the success thereby engendered. At the time of Creation, Hashem willed the world into being. By studying the Torah and acting in keeping with its teachings, we align ourselves with the will of the Creator. This infuses our soul with energy and resolution and leads to the goodwill of G-d and man.

Rav Soloveitchik zt"l taught that the words of Birchot HaTorah reflect these ideas. We bless Hashem Who sanctified us with the mitzvah בדברי תורה - לעסוק - not merely to learn the teachings of the Torah, but to engage with them meaningfully. We ask Hashem to make the words of Torah sweet in our mouths - we want not just to speak words of Torah, but to enjoy their very taste, and to transmit that delight in Torah to the following generations.

May our study of Torah be preceded by the heartfelt recitation of Birchot HaTorah, in which we express our profound sense of privilege in having been chosen to receive, study and act upon the teachings of the Torah. May our appreciation be reflected in the will to deepen our wisdom as advocated by Shlomo HaMelech in Sefer Mishlei, and may our increased desire lead to the restoration of

our close personal and national relationship with Hashem, evidenced by the building of the Beit HaMikdash במהרה בימינו. ■

Mrs. Leah Feinberg is a master educator who taught at the SKA High School for Girls in Hewlett for twenty-one years, also serving as Tanach Department chairperson and New Teacher Mentor. Leah is currently on the faculty of the OU Israel Center and has taught in all three cycles of the OU Women's Initiative Nach Yomi program



Be'er Tziporah a'h - Bottled Water Gemach



Walking down King George St. in Jerusalem and want a cold bottle of water?

Come help yourself to a bottle at
52 King George.

In loving memory of Yoni's wife
Tziporah a'h, a true Eishes Chayil, always full of chessed, kindness and laughter, and brought life and strength to so many people, that she touched!
She was like Aron, who loved peace and pursued peace.



Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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