

Parsha Knowledge

TORAH THOUGHTS, STORIES, AND INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

פֶּרֶשֶׁת וַאֲתַחֲנֶנּוּ

ל"ג אב תשפ"ד

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וּנְשַׁמְרֶתֶם מְאֹד...

“And you must watch yourselves very well...” (Devarim 4:15)

In this week's Parsha the Torah commands us, *V'nishmartem Meod Linfashosichem Ki Lo Reisem Kol Temunah...* - we must take care of and safeguard our health because when Hashem came down to Sinai he didn't come down in a form or image. The Torah is charging us to be strong and healthy when serving Hashem. There is an obvious question here: What is the connection between the first and second parts of the pasuk? What is the correlation between taking care of one's health and the fact of how Hashem presented himself at Sinai? Why the juxtaposition? What does one thing have to do with the other?

I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita, an astounding answer. The Chozeh of Lublin says that this is teaching us an incredible idea: Hashem is telling us that if you want to be religious and serve Hashem, if you want to be spiritual and godly - you must be careful. Don't neglect your body. Don't forsake your physical health. One may think of himself as being super spiritual when in essence he is playing the wrong part, he is playing the wrong role.

How do we know this? When Hashem came down to Sinai, He didn't come down in an image wanting to be physical. Hashem maintained and preserved exactly who he was – totally spiritual as a lesson for us. Says the Rebbe of Lublin,

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when you try to be godly don't try to be too spiritual. Understand that you are human and that there are certain parameters. Understand that you are physical and that physical people have physical needs. Hashem understands that we are human. He wants us to eat well, sleep well, and be well-balanced to be able to observe Him with joy.

Rav Zelig Pliskin shlita relates that one morning, a grandson of the Chofetz Chaim sadly passed away. There was great mourning and sorrow in the Chofetz Chaim's house. Everyone sat and cried. Amidst all this, the Chofetz Chaim called someone over and asked him if he could bring food to be served to the entire family. The man was surprised that Chofetz Chaim wanted everyone to eat before the funeral. In response, the Chofetz Chaim said, "The *levayah* (funeral) will take a long time and the burial will be very late, therefore, everyone should eat now."

This, commented Rav Yeruchem, is the behavior of a great person like the Chofetz Chaim. The Chofetz Chaim was careful to observe the natural laws of eating. He viewed them as an obligation and a mitzvah like every other mitzvah in the Torah. There is an obligation to mourn and cry over the death of a loved one, but the order of eating and rules of health must still be kept. We must be sure to safeguard our health and take care of ourselves. This way we will be able to serve Hashem with boundless joy and energy!

Have a Great Shabbos!

By Aryeh F.

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