

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

# בִּשְׁבִּיחָה



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS  
CHAYEI SARAH

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS  
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

## EVERY SECOND COUNTS

Our *Parshah* opens with a count of the years of Sarah *Imeinu's* life - one hundred and twenty seven years in total.<sup>1</sup> Although interesting in its own right, Rebbi Akiva finds a connection between this *Passuk*, and another Jewish prophetess, Esther. The *Medrash*<sup>2</sup> describes how Rebbi Akiva was once teaching Torah publicly, and the people were falling asleep. Seeking to stir the crowd, Rebbi Akiva posed the following riddle, "Why did Esther merit to rule over one hundred and twenty seven provinces?" Answering his own question, Rebbi Akiva said, "Sarah lived for one hundred and twenty seven years. In Sarah's merit, Esther, as her progeny, ruled over one hundred and twenty seven provinces."

Of all the possible questions Rebbi Akiva could have asked, why did he choose this particular inquiry? Did the issue of Esther's rule have more power to rouse the slumbering masses more than any other question?

The *Chidushei HaRim*<sup>3</sup> (Reb Yitzchak Meir Alter, 1799-1866) explains that there is a hidden message in this discussion. Rebbi Akiva was not simply informing everyone about an interesting tidbit of history. Rather, he was giving them a life lesson - a lesson directly related to one's proper use of time.

The *Chidushei HaRim* correctly points out that the length of Sarah's life is not meritorious - it's what she did with that time. She used her one hundred and twenty seven years to serve Hashem. Each year of *Avodas Hashem* produced another territory controlled by Esther. Mathematically, then, every week was another city, and every hour another neighborhood. Thus, Rebbi Akiva was telling them, "My dear students, don't underestimate the value of what you can accomplish in a short span of time. You think you are gaining a few minutes of rest, but you are sleeping away an empire!"

Our life's experience is made up of our days, and our days are made up of our seconds. We choose how we spend those seconds - we can spend them as if they are worthless, exchanging our time for fleeting pleasures, or we can trade our precious time for eternity. When we have the opportunity to learn another *Passuk*, listen to a parent, or make a *Brachah* with *Kavanah*, we have a choice - we can push off the task, or we can do a proper job. Remember Sarah *Imeinu*, and make it count!

1 *Bereishis* 23:1

2 *Bereishis Rabbah* 58:3

3 *Chidushei HaRim Al HaTorah Chayei Sarah* s.v. "איתא במד"ר"

**You think you  
are gaining a  
few minutes  
of rest, but  
you are  
sleeping away  
an empire!**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

It might be hard to truly appreciate the value of a minute - after all, what can one really accomplish or learn in one minute?

There are two types of 'wasting time.' One occurs when one has work to accomplish, but pushes it off in favor of a different activity. Another occurs when one has only a few minutes, and nothing of particular value to fill the time.

For the first scenario, focus on the feeling of accomplishment afterwards - instead of getting the job done in a hurried manner, you'll get the job done in a thorough and productive way. Then, not only will you have finished the task, but you'll feel much more satisfied when you are done.

For the second scenario, don't downplay what you can accomplish in those few minutes! Find something you'd like to accomplish - maybe finishing an area of *Mishnayos*, or improving a particular *Middah*. Bring a small sefer, article, or notebook with you wherever you go. Now you're prepared; over time, you'll be shocked to realize how much you've grown!



**Every hair's breadth that we are able to draw *Yiras Shomayim* closer to our hearts, using the gifts of contemplation and introspection, earns a reward that is beyond comprehension.**

- Alter of Kelm, *Sefer Chochma U'Mussar*

Sponsored Anonymously

לרפואה שלמה חיים דוד בן רבקה

To sponsor, or to receive Beshivticha by email, please contact us

at [info@ohr-yisrael.com](mailto:info@ohr-yisrael.com) or call 732-451-GROW (4769)

# DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

Shmuelly Benchaver\* was an intelligent young man, but always very busy. He didn't have any more obligations than the next fellow in yeshiva, but with his terrible time-management skills, it seemed that he was always running from one thing to the next.

Besides the stress that this caused, it also impeded his ability to learn, as he was constantly distracted with half-finished jobs that should have been completed weeks ago.

Despite it all, he was able to study many years in yeshiva. However, he was now focused on becoming a rabbi, and he found that he simply could not remember the material needed for his *Semicha* test.

Between the ongoing distractions, the lack of stable study sessions, and a complete disregard for reviewing the material, Shmuelly simply could not remember what he had learned. Though his peers assured him that over time he'll finally 'get it,' he privately felt that it was just not meant to be.

Fast forward months later - not only did Shmuelly pass his *Semicha* test, but he was the fellow that other students came to with their questions. He had a great grasp of the material, able to apply what he learned to the topic at hand.

What happened? In Shmuelly's words, "I knew that something had to change, but I didn't even know where to begin. After thinking about it for a while, I realized that because of a job I had once a week, I would be in the car for about two hours. I usually would listen to the news or maybe some music during that time. Instead, I decided that I would start to listen to *Shiurim* on the topics that I'm learning about.

"That, in a nutshell, is what did it. Once I was listening to these *Shiurim*, things started to come together. Not only did I get a lot out of what I was listening to, but when I sat down to learn, it was much easier. My head was already 'in learning,' and I didn't have to push other thoughts away. All in all, the decision to use my time in a more productive fashion turned a daunting and torturous exercise into something that I really enjoyed."

*\*Based on a true story, name has been changed.*

**"All in all, the decision to use my time in a more productive fashion turned a daunting and torturous exercise into something that I really enjoyed."**

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Being lazy and not doing *Mitzvos* is akin to doing an *Aveirah* and destroying what we have already achieved, as they both cause us to stunt our growth.<sup>1</sup>
- The *Yetzer Harah* minimizes our productivity by saying, "Waste just a few minutes," until it adds up to much wasted time.<sup>2</sup>
- More than a parent to a child, Hashem wants us to take full advantage of our time in our effort to grow.<sup>3</sup>
- If one is afraid that by keeping a scheduled time for learning Torah one will lose money, they should know with confidence that by the end of the year Hashem will fully reimburse them.<sup>4</sup>

1 *Meor HaMesillah* on *Mesillas Yesarim*, Chap. 6

2 *Sifsei Chaim*, *Middos* 2, p. 433

3 *Tiferes Yisrael* note 138 on *Pirkei Avos* 2:15

4 *Shmiras HaLashon*, *Sha'ar HaTevunah*, Chap. 9