

SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Volume 21

Beshalach, Sicha 1 (Second Sicha of the week)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

לזכות מנחם מענדל בן חנה לרגל יום הולדתו יום הבהיר יו"ד שבט

Moshe had to force the Jewish people from the red sea, as they were busy gathering all the Egyptian gold and silver, due to their commitment to fulfill Hashem's directive "Vayenatzlu" to empty Egypt of their valuables. When Moshe made it clear that the Kavana is to leave, they pivoted and re-engaged in the Avoda of preparing for receiving the Torah.

Here are the three lessons in this Sicha, followed by a story connected to each:

1) When those whose primary occupation is Torah study receive a directive from Hashem that they need to also influence others, it might be against their will, due to their dedication to rigorous Torah study. Yet, as they commit themselves to this task, they should become completely engaged in this role as well.

Greater than one who studies Torah!

This story was related by Rabbi Abraham Yosef Leizeron, A"H, head of the Chinuch Atzmoi education system:

On the last day of one of my trips to America, in 1992, I went to the offices of Agudas Yisroel in Manhattan. I met a philanthropist there, who knew my father well and he said to me "Why are you so busy with communal work? Your father was such a great Torah scholar, so why don't you learn? Take a break from communal work and I will make a

deal with you. Open a Kollel and you will also study in this Kollel, and I will personally fund this Kollel for several years!”

I must admit, his offer deeply appealed to me, as communal work is very difficult and often thankless. Perhaps, I should take a break from facilitating Jewish education and instead learn in a Kollel, especially a fully funded Kollel!

From there, I went straight to 770 to get a blessing for my trip from the Rebbe as he was walking out of Mincha. When the Rebbe passed next to me Rabbi Groner told the Rebbe “This is Rabbi Leizeron from Yerushalayim”, the Rebbe responded, “I know him!”. I told the Rebbe “I am going back to Yerushalayim today” and the Rebbe gave me his standard blessing “have a good trip and lots of success in your work.”

While I was talking to the Rebbe, my mind was still swirling with the offer I received earlier. The Rebbe was about to enter his room when he turned around and came back to where I was and said with emphasis “there is an opinion in Jewish law that one who faithfully is involved in communal activities, is greater than one who studies Torah himself, have a safe trip and you should have lots of success in your work!” I was astonished, the Rebbe read my mind and felt my inner turmoil. The entire flight back I replayed these words in my mind and when I came back to Israel, I, of course, did the right thing...

*2) Those who, by divine providence, are in the business world or otherwise involved in elevating the world, need to pull themselves away daily to have set times of studying Torah. They should, during these times, be fully engaged in the study of Torah קביעות בזמן
בנפש ולא רק קביעות בזמן*

Every Sicha from the Rebbe is timely!

The epitome of a businessperson who took time each day to be fully engaged in Torah study, was the Chasid Reb Zalman Deitch, A”H. When he came home from work, he immediately sat down with his children to review what they learned in Yeshiva. Then he learned Sichos and maamorim of the Rebbe in depth. A few months before Zalman passed away in 5766 (2006), he completed learning all the Rebbe’s published teachings: Likutei Sichos, Farbrengens, Igros Kodesh, and Rehimos!!!

Once Reb Zalman's son saw him learning a Sicha in Likkutei Sichos with great concentration, even though it was not on the weekly Torah portion. He asked his father, "Interesting you can be so deeply engaged in a Sicha, even if it's not on the Parsha." Zalman responded, If one learns a Sicha to have insights on the Parsha, for oneself or to share with others, then you have a point. If one learns, however, the Rebbe's Torah because of an Ahavah to the Rebbe, and knowing that through learning we become one with the Rebbe (See Tanya, Chapter 5), then it doesn't matter what Torah portion the Sicha addresses!

(See the book 'A Chassid A Businessman')

3) Bnei Yisroel continued gathering precious jewels, though they already had more than enough. In the same vein, those who helped many Jews come closer to Torah should keep on bringing people close, until they hear from the Rebbe that their mission has changed.

Just getting started at eighty!

Rabbi Pinchas Feldman, Shliach in Sydney relates: Rabbi Asher Abramson, the Dayan of Sydney, was mistreated by the baalei batim of his shul and he needed to leave his shul. During a yechidus, the Rebbe spoke to me about many ways to keep him active in the community, but at one point I told the Rebbe, "He's already old, he's over 70 and no longer healthy." As soon as those words left my mouth, I froze. I had just said that to the Rebbe, who was in his mid-seventies as well! The Rebbe smiled broadly, and said, "I'm also over 70, and I still have plans for the next 10 years, and afterward for the next 10 years as well."

Rabbi Dovid Hollander began his career as a rabbi in 5703*. Forty years later, when he was almost 70 years old, his congregation had shrunk, his shul was on the verge of closing and he was planning to retire from the Rabbinate. However, when he told the Rebbe of this development, the Rebbe responded, "What right do you have to have such ideas? I'm older than you and I'm taking on new work!" A short while later, when he went by the Rebbe for kos shel bracha on Motzei Simchas Torah, the Rebbe announced, "Remember, rabbanus for life!" Rabbi Hollander went on to serve as a rabbi for another 25 years!
