

בשבת

BY RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN
RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS



NO TIME TO THINK

Parshas Va'eira picks up right where Parshas Shemos left off. After Moshe returned to Hashem, saying that he was unable to free the Jewish people, Hashem responded that now is indeed the time for *Klal Yisrael's* freedom. Moshe was charged with bringing a promise to *Klal Yisrael*, the promise of freedom. Moshe did so, but the Jewish people, despite their desire and yearning for liberation, simply did not listen to Moshe. The *passuk* explains it was not for lack of faith or trust in Hashem, it was simply because of their inability to spend just a moment to truly comprehend the message Moshe was conveying.

They were overworked, exhausted, with no reserves left. They did not have it in them to give any attention to Moshe and Aharon, they were overwhelmed with trying to make bricks for Pharaoh.¹

It is hard to fathom the amount of work the Jewish people must have faced. It is almost unrelatable — who can be so busy that they can't even understand the words that are spoken to them? However, Reb Moshe Chaim Luzzatto² (1707–1746) makes a shocking comparison to the Jews of *Mitzrayim*, and every person since.

In explaining the building blocks of *avodas Hashem*, the *Mesillas Yesharim* states that a person *must* spend time exploring one's actions, determining areas of improvement. However, he writes there is a terrible hurdle one must overcome when attempting this fundamental exercise — the same hurdle the Jews of *Mitzrayim* faced when told of their own emancipation. Just like Pharaoh overworked the Jewish people to the point where they could not even focus on what was being told to them, the *Yetzer Horah* does the same to us, on a daily basis. A person simply doesn't have the time or clearheadedness to think, "How can I do better?"

We are the Jewish people in *Mitzrayim*! But we have the ability to free ourselves, all it takes is a bit of patience, and the presence of mind to say, "Enough is enough! I am in charge of my schedule, and I decide what is important to me."

Setting aside time and truly considering one's path can spell the difference between the life you live, and the life you lead.

¹ Shemos 6:9

² Mesillas Yesharim Chap. 2

**...can spell
the difference
between the life
you live, and the
life you lead.**

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Lack of time is an insidious trap, because it specifically hinders the one solution — thought! How, then, is one supposed to escape if one is truly busy all the time?

One suggestion¹ is to set a specific time during the day that is inviolable. One may not use that time for anything else, for any reason. Once that time is set, one must use that period of time to its fullest, learning, thinking, and focusing on ways to better one's *avodas Hashem*.

The reality is, though, that it can be very hard to find time during the week. At the very least, Shabbos is a time for this reconnection to Hashem and one should avail oneself of the opportunity.²

In particular, one should use this time to think of ways to improve — either things they should cease doing, or things they can do better.³

Perhaps one can devise a plan on Shabbos regarding how to make more time during the week!

¹ Mesillas Yesharim, Chap. 5

² Shulchan Aruch, O.C 290:2

³ Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'avodah, Sha'ar Elyon, Chap. 12

Have you thought about sponsoring Beshivticha?

Sponsor in honor, or in the merit of a loved one!

To sponsor, or receive by email, please contact us at info@ohr-yisrael.com or call 732-451-GROW

“It is well known that all the happenings in the world are intended to inspire a person to contemplate their obligations to Hashem. It is also well known that people are not inspired, because no one thinks about what they see.” - Rav Michel Birnbaum zt”l, Sichos Mussar, Introduction

SPEAKING OF CHANGE

Penina Werman was horrified. Not simply shocked, stunned, or surprised. She was genuinely horrified by the words that were coming out of her mouth.

It all started just a few days ago. Mr. and Mrs. Werman were not bad parents, but they felt that they could probably use some guidance with bringing up their children. To that end, they enrolled in a parenting class given by their rav, Rabbi Moshe Golder.

They had gone to the first class, and that's when the terrible things started. Rabbi Golder had suggested that the parents take note of the words and tone they use when talking to their children. Not to necessarily change anything, but to simply take the time to note what is being said.

"Simple enough," thought Mrs. Werman. And it was indeed simple. After getting the kids out of the house for school, Mrs. Werman sat down before clearing off the breakfast table, and opened up a notebook she bought for this occasion. After just a few moments, Penina realized things needed to change. At breakfast there was nothing particularly overt, but the implied, "You're slow, you're selfish, you always make everyone else late," was loud and clear. No child was spared her critical eye, and worse, her accusing tongue. Penina couldn't believe it. She resolved to do better tomorrow, and to be more aware of what she was saying.

The next day, Mrs. Werman arrived, ready to do battle — not with her children, but with herself. But old habits die hard, and that's when the horror crept in. Words that she never thought she would utter, certainly not when she was aware of what she was saying, flew out of her mouth, landing on her unsuspecting victims. Again, nothing overt, no yelling, but it was clear that her children were hurt. Mercifully, breakfast ended, and Penina sat down again, this time with tears in her eyes.

A half hour later, Penina hung up the phone after speaking with Rebbitzin Mimi. "It takes time," Rebbitzin Golder had said. "You've already taken the first critical steps. You are aware of what you are doing. You don't know how many people don't even get that far!"

Mrs. Werman felt much better; she knew change didn't happen overnight, and she was indeed thankful that she was aware of her behavior. "And to think," said Mrs. Werman to herself, "I could have gone a lifetime not realizing how I was acting. The only thing that saved me was five minutes of focus."

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- It wasn't the difficulty of the work that caused *Klal Yisrael* to ignore Moshe, rather, it was the fact that their schedule was filled, without a moment to spare.¹
- Even the greatest *Talmidei Chachomim* can fall prey to running their lives on autopilot.²

¹ *Matnas Chelko* on *Mesillas Yesharim* Chap. 2, s.v. כי יודע

² *Mesillas Yesharim*, Introduction

info@ohr-yisrael.com

Ohr Yisrael is a global initiative seeking to energize, enlighten, and empower Klal Yisrael to make lasting personal change, using the profound systems and guidance that have been crystallized and in the classic Sifrei Mussar, presented in the language of today.