



Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

By: Pinchas Ben-Ami

פרשת ואתחנן

A Whole Lot of Thinking

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ולזכות רפואה שלימה חיה פרומא בת פערל מרים מלכה

A Whole Lot of Thinking

I want to tell you a story about two neighbors, Elchonon and Chaim. But first let's talk about their mothers.

Elchonon's mother was very concerned about safety. Staying safe is a mitzvah in the Torah from this week's parsha, וְנִשְׁמְרֵתֶם מְאֹד, לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם, and so she always made sure to speak to her children about the mitzvah of being careful.

For example, she explained to Elchonon that he shouldn't go next to the stove because sometimes it's very hot. A different time she told him about a little girl she knew who got burned from touching the stove, and it took a few weeks until her skin healed. Another time she told her son a story about someone who got a burn and had to call Hatzolah and go to the hospital on Shabbos because the burn was so serious.

Elchonon heard about the danger of burns so many times from his mother that it settled into his head. And so Elchonon listened to his mother and always stayed away from fire.

But Chaim's mother never took the time to speak to her son about safety. Instead, when she saw Chaim going close to the fire she would just yell at him to keep away. "Chaim'll, get back! You're too close!"

Now, what do you think happened?

One erev Shabbos, Chaim's mother was making cupcakes l'kavod Shabbos. She was very busy and couldn't pay too much attention to Chaim. And she didn't see him as he went right up to where the chocolate was simmering on the stove. "Yummy! Hot chocolate!" he thought to himself and he stuck his finger right into the boiling pot!

Ow! That hurt! Chaim's mother had to stop her Shabbos preparations and rush with him to the doctor. He needed a special cream and bandage for the next few weeks, and because of that burn he finally learned his lesson.

There's another passuk in this week's parsha: **וַיִּדְעַתְּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשַּׁבָּת אֵל לְבַבְךָ**. This passuk was said after Matan Torah. After that big event when Hashem Himself came down on Har Sinai and everyone saw Him, He gave us a mitzvah that "You should know today, and you should keep putting it in your mind forever that Hashem is the Only One with power in this world." Everything happens only by Hashem's will.

But what does it mean that "You should know and keep putting it in your mind"?

And the answer is: that as much as possible, we should try to be like Elchonon's mother and not like Chaim's mother! If we learn



about an important idea, we have to think about it and talk about it until it becomes real for us.

If we listen to our rebbi in cheder or our teacher in school when we learn about the parshah, that's very good. But if you want to fulfill the mitzvos, then you have to do more than just hear about them.

When you stand outside in the morning waiting for the bus, there are lots of things you can do. Some boys waste time and fight with their little brothers. But you know what you can do instead? You can fulfill the mitzvah of **וְהִשְׁבֵּת אֶל לִבְכֶּךָ**. You can put good ideas — ideas about Hashem — into your head. Use those few minutes to think about Hashem, to think about the Torah, to think about mitzvos. Because the more you practice putting these ideas in your head, the more real they become.

Chaim knew that it's better not to touch fire, but it wasn't in his mind, and that's why he ended up with a bad burn and weeks of having to put on creams and bandages. But Elchonon didn't just know about it — his mother helped put it in his mind, and that's why he stayed safe.

Sure, we might know that Hashem runs the world. We hear about it all the time. And we know that when we do mitzvos we get Gan Eden, and if we do aveiros we go to Gehennom. We know that, too! But that's not enough. We need to think about these things so that they are in our mind.

And by thinking about Hashem as much as we can, that's how we fulfill the mitzvah of **וְיָדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשַּׁבָּת אֶל לִבְכֶּךָ**, of knowing that Hashem runs the whole world and that there is nothing else except for Him.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

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