

Alumni Reflections

Impact of Limud HaTorah

The Cost of Breaks

By: Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Friedler, Rebbe at Torah Academy

Kollel Member
2006-2011



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The Torah in the beginning of this week's Parsha goes to great lengths to discuss the chesed (loving kindness) of Avraham Avinu (Our forefather Abraham). The Torah details Avraham's quick and all-out effort in preparing a feast for what he thought were three regular Arab travelers. It is interesting to note, that at the time of this episode Avraham was unaware that this episode would be recorded in the Torah and that over four thousand years later we, his descendants, would be reading and analyzing it. In other words, this was a standard day in the life of Avraham Avinu. The fact that the Torah chose to highlight this episodes from the lives of all of the Avos, is no indication that they realized these were seminal moments. To them, it was just another day.

Conversely, we find in Parshas Noach, that after Noach exited the teiva, the ark, he involved himself in a rather mundane act of planting a vineyard. This act ultimately led to Noach becoming drunk and ultimately the unfortunate results detailed in the Torah. From Noach's perspective, however, this may have been an insignificant and completely "normal" moment. Perhaps after a full year of very intense and totally exhausting labor in the teiva, Noach wanted to "chill out" a little bit, to take a break for a day. Is there anything wrong with a glass of wine after a full year of working non-stop?!

By comparing these two episodes in the Torah, we can derive a very important lesson. Avraham Avinu's entire life was completely devoted to serving Hashem. He never took a day off! He realized that every day is a new chance to grow even closer and closer to Hashem by building upon that which he achieved the previous day.

Avraham realized that if he were to take a break for even one day there would be no telling where it could lead.

As for Noach, the Torah stops recording his life after that episode even though he continued to live another few hundred years. It is as if his life ended at that point.

This message is echoed by the words of the navi, "*Im ta'azveini yom, yomayim e'ezveka, If you forsake me for a day, says the Torah, I will forsake you for two.*"

This can be explained with the following example: If a person were to board a plane in Minneapolis and travel 1000 miles east, how far is he from you now? The obvious answer is 1000 miles. However, if you were to travel at the same time 1000 miles west, now you would be 2000 miles apart even though you each only traveled 1000 miles. So too, says Hashem, if you are to leave the Torah for one day you are now actually two days apart. Since you left the Torah for one day, so too the Torah left you for a day.

The late Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva, R' Chaim Stein zt"l, used to tell his students to accept upon themselves to learn an hour each day no matter what, something which he himself took very seriously.

Towards the end of his life, when he was already an old man, tragedy struck. A grandchild of his passed away at a very young age. He traveled from Cleveland to New York for the funeral and returned to Cleveland that same day. After a very long and tiring day- physically and emotionally- he was preparing to go to sleep. Suddenly, he remembered that he did not yet learn his hour that day. He immediately arose and sat down to learn for an hour. To miss a day would have been too much!

If Avraham Avinu who never let up, even for a second, we can still learn from him. Let's realize that while breaks may sometimes be necessary, they come at a price. Let's value every moment, and build the momentum necessary to become the people we can be!





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MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY
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Organization Profile



Rabbi Friedler celebrating a siyum with the 4th grade boys.



Another successful year of growth and learning at Torah Academy

**About Torah Academy -
A conversation with Rabbi Friedler**

Q: How would you describe Torah Academy's importance in the Community?
Rabbi Friedler: Torah Academy is the yesod (foundation) of the community. We take children and give them a torahdike chinuch from the very beginning so that they can develop into bnei Torah. We try to infuse them with a love for Torah, and a geshmak (zest) for yiddishkeit! Another nice thing about Torah Academy is that since it is a community school, everyone gets personalized attention, enjoys close relationships, and really feels part of the community.

Q: How does Torah Academy impact the community?
Rabbi Friedler: Many of the students of Torah Academy will go on to Bais Yaakov or the Yeshiva and become fine members of the community at large. One thing in particular that gives me tremendous chizuk (encouragement) is when I see during Bein Hazmanim (intersession) all of the bochurim who come home for YomTov filling up the Kollel Beis Medrash with their learning. It is very gratifying knowing that I had some part in their growth.

Q: What has teaching at Torah Academy meant for you personally?
Rabbi Friedler: It gives me tremendous nachas to be able to see children I taught mature into young adults. For example, whenever I get a chance to see last year's eight graders thriving in yeshiva as real Yeshiva bochurim, it is really rewarding. With the younger students as well, there is nothing like watching the fruits of your labor grow.

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Insights Into Davening

**Modeh Ani
(2)**

By: Rabbi Yaakov E. Mandelbaum

Shehechezarta Bi Nishmasi
That you returned my Neshama to me.

At night, when we go to sleep, a part of our neshama (soul) departs and is returned in the morning. Upon arising we thank Hashem not only for returning a soul, but for returning "my soul" that each and every one of us is reinvigorated with the same neshama that animated him/her the day before! After all, could you imagine if every morning we woke up as someone else.