

Alumni Reflections

Impact of Limud HaTorah

What Would Hashem Say?

By: Rabbi Yochanan Schnell

Then



Now



The Torah contains everything: Practical Jewish Law, proper ethical behavior, and many other relevant lessons. There are also topics, however, that do not seem relevant in the practical, conventional sense. We are taught that every verse, word, and letter has equal significance but what gain and purpose can we appreciate from learning these topics?

There are many answers to this question and I would like to share with you one particular approach that is based on an idea I heard from my Mashgiach, Rabbi Yeruchem Pitter shlit"א.

The following anecdote happened in Rabbi Mendel Kaplan's 12th grade class in Yeshiva of Philadelphia. R' Mendel asked the class what they thought of the sefer Razi'el Hamalach- a work written by a malach- an angel. He went on to develop the thought of having a tangible object that one can hold which was written by a completely supernatural entity. How astonishing such a concept is! He then looked at the class and asked them, "And what about the Torah which was written by Hashem Himself?" Isn't that a million times more amazing?!

Let's take an example from the mundane world. A person I know is an avid reader, particularly of mystery novels written by a certain author. She has read so many of these mysteries that after just a few pages she can accurately predict who will turn out to be the hero and who the villain. She is so familiar with the author's style and mindset that while she is reading she is thinking the very same thoughts that went through the author's mind! This is true with anything one reads, watches or listens to. As we become more and more in tune to the

author/producer's thought process we are even able to foresee the conclusion. This is one of the main reasons that we study Torah. When we study any aspect of the Torah we are thinking Hashem's thoughts! The more Torah we study – irrespective of what topic – the more we are training our minds to think in a G-dly manner. (It must be noted the contrast between humans who's thoughts are limited and Hashem whose thoughts are infinite). Through frequent Torah study we will begin to see the world around us through the Torah's eyes-through Hashem's eyes!

This idea is expressed in the following passage from Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato: "Among the influences that Hashem gives to mankind there is one which is most dear and prominent. It is the ultimate expression of Hashem Himself and it is the very item that He has bequeathed to His creation- the Torah... the more a person thinks Torah thoughts the more that person receives this ultimate influence from Hashem." (Derech Hashem section 4 chapter 2)

Next time we learn let us ponder this: Often we'd love to know what a certain person thinks about something- maybe a parent, teacher, or respected friend... Next time we are unclear about an issue let's ask ourselves, "What would Hashem say about this?" Then, open up the Torah and find out!

For, as the Zohar says "Hashem and the Torah are one."

Have a good Shabbos.





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Rosh Kollel

**HaRav & Rebbetzen
Menachem Frank,**
Rosh Kollel, 2005-2011

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Alumni Profile

Rabbi and Mrs. Yochanan Schnall

Members of the Kollel: 2005 - 2010



Chaya Itta 9, Tehila 5, Lipa 3, and Aryeh Leib 1

Personal Reflection

"I will always be grateful for what the Kollel provided myself and my family. The years that I spent there bring the fondest memories. More than anything else, it was there that I learned what Ahavas Yisroel is all about: The glue that connects us all is our beloved Torah commonality."

Highlights

- Yochanan is the director of JEP Rockland
- Devora works as a part time sonographer near Monsey
- The children have B"H made a smooth adjustment
- We miss the entire Minneapolis community. We would love to have visitors to bring a taste of home!

Keep in touch with the Schnalls

Home

H- 845.352.6438
27 Regina Rd.
Monsey, NY 10952

Rabbi

C- 845.558.5606
Yochanan.schnall@gmail.com

Mrs.

C- 612.360.1544
ydschnall@gmail.com