

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ד RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS SHOFTIM

THE REWARD FOR LIVING AN ANTSY LIFE

The *parsha* begins with the placement of judges and enforcers in all your gates. Immediately the Medrash brings the *passuk* from Mishlei וחכם ראה דרכיה עצל אך אל הנמלה עצל ראה דרכיה וחכם If one is lazy he should take a field trip to an ant hole and colony, observe her ways and he will become very enlightened.

(ב) זש"ה (משלי ז) לך אל נמלה עצל ראה דרכיה וחכם אשר אין לה קצין שוטר ומושל תכין בקיץ לחמה אגרה בקציר מאכלה מה ראה שלמה ללמד לעצל מן הנמלה רבנן אמרי הנמלה הזו שלשה בתים יש לה ואינה כונסת בעליון מפני הדלף ולא בתחתון מפני הטינה אלא באמצעי ואינה חיה אלא ששה חדשים וכל מאכלה אינה אלא חטה ומחצה והיא הולכת ומכנסת בקיץ כל מה שמוצא חטין ושעורין ועדשים א"ר תנחומא וכל חייה אינה אלא חטה ומחצה והיא כונסת את אלו ולמה היא עושה כן שאמרה שמא יגזור עלי הקב"ה חיים ויהיה לי מוכן לאכול אמר ר"ש בן יוחאי מעשה היה ומצאו בבור שלה שלש מאות כור מה שמכנסת מן הקיץ לחורף לפיכך אמר שלמה לך אל נמלה עצל ראה דרכיה וחכם אף אתם התקינו לכם מצות מן העולם הזה לעולם הבא ומהו ראה דרכיה וחכם רבנן אמרי ראה דרך ארץ שיש בה שבורחת מן הגזול אמר ר"ש בן חלפתא מעשה שנמלה אחת שהפילה חטה אחת והיו כולם באות ומריחות בה ולא היתה אחת מהן נוטלת אותה באה אותה שהיתה שלה ונטלה אותה ראה חכמה שיש בה וכל השבח הזה שיש בה שלא למדה מבריה ולא שופט ולא שוטר יש לה שנא' (שם) אשר אין לה קצין שוטר ומושל אתם שמניתי לכם שופטים ושוטרים עאכ"ו שתשמעו להן הוי שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך :

The ant in an extraordinary creature that displays so many features that Man can learn from in order to be a better person. Its alacrity and diligence is supernatural. Its life span is only six months and the quantity of food which sustains its lifetime is only a wheat and a half. Yet they store up enough food in the colony to last 10,000 lifetimes. Why then would they desire to overexert themselves to prepare to store for food which they will not even eat. They don't need judges or policemen for they are dedicated and devoted to fulfill their duties. Chazal say that the ant thinks that maybe Hashem will grant him a longer life and consequently he will need more grain than 1 and 1/2 pieces of wheat. Another characteristic of the ant is that they do not steal from one another. It was observed that one ant dropped part of what is was carrying and all the other carriers would pass by and smell it and move on knowing that it is not theirs.

Of course we understand that the ant doesn't figure all this knowledge out by itself. Hashem programmed all of this into its natural instincts like He did by all the animals and creatures. So the questions arises how does this *middah* of "anti" laziness, swiftness and diligence apply to me when I don't have these instincts implanted in me?

Here is where we are absolutely wrong. Just like the ant in which Hashem programmed it to live as if it might continue to exist for a prolonged time, bringing about its life mission to work tirelessly for the necessities of future sustenance, Hashem also programmed us to really live forever as Chazal say חיי עולם כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא, and as we say in *davening* וחי עולם. If so, how can we fail to plan for a prolonged life and make the necessary preparations? This world is only a corridor to the Next World which is eternal. That inner

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instinct must drive us every day to break our laziness and spiritual contentment through *bechirah*, just like the ant which does the same differing only in that it is driven by instinct alone. The goal of man is to transform his *bechirah* choices into instinct like the ant אדם לעמל יולד.

היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה the day is short but the work load and awaiting achievements is a lot. Every individual possesses a unique potential to fulfill in this fleeting world. We are tasked and inner driven from a coming world to make sure we will have the entry ticket to bask in Hashem's glory for eternal bliss. The acronym of היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה spells מקוה. A mikvah has the power to change a *goy* into a *yid* an identity change which is millions of light years distant from one another to say the least. So too, the more we toil to fulfill the mitzvos in this world and correct our bad *middos*, the greater the reward of eternity will be waiting for us. Every upgrade of *Olam Habah* will be like that *mikveh* more than millions of light years away from the previous level.

Some people live life with the attitude that it is like a hotel during vacation. At the end of the vacation one receives a bill for all the amenities that he partook from even though he forgot about them. The *Lashon Hakodesh* of hotel is מלון which has the root word נמל and is the *gematriah* of נמלה including the word. Even when the ant deserves a vacation because it has enough food to last for more than one lifetime it still not cease to work and toil for it must prepare for a maybe and perhaps it will live longer and will be unprepared for that extension of life. Does it have to be a *meshuganah* workaholic when it could already retire and live comfortably? Yet the opposite is true if Hashem will be so kind to it that it will be granted a couple more lifetimes and do nothing else but work again for more extensions it would be a *meshuganeh* if he didn't prepare for that extra bonus.

In contrast, we are told by Hashem that we will **definitely** merit to longer **eternal** life if we follow His advice. Surely we should be driven to do all what we can within our grasp to become eternal. We'd be great fools do trade off eternity for some fleeting and passing pleasure or laziness.

Elul is here. In last week's *parsha* the Torah prohibits one to cry and mourn over a departed person to the point of gashing yourself. The *goyim* are not prohibited from damaging their bodies over dead people because they are dead and there is no future world to Come for them. Therefore it is tragic and there is zero continuity. In contrast Jewish deaths are just a transfer from one world to another from a temporal one into an eternal one. Therefore mourning too much is forbidden. We must always realize that eternity lies **within** us and is connected to our *neshamos*. When Yaakov Avinu came to Yitzchak to receive the *berachos Chazal* say that the scent of *Gan Eden* entered with him to convey that his present action was the will of Hashem. At *Har Sinai Chazal* tell us that on each *dibbur* the world was filled with בשמים a heavenly scent. At *Havdalah* we make a בורא מיני בשמים in order to give comfort to our **soul** who just lost its partner of נשמה יתירה.

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In contrast, when one does *aveiros* he brings about a **זוהמא** a bad smell within himself as it happened to Chava even in *Gan Eden*. It was brought about by her association with the *Nachash* (Shabbos 146). When one follows and obeys the animal **instinct** within himself he is **in stink** putrid mode. The *Nachash* works to seduce Man into sin with his charm **חן**. That is why in its name we find the letters of **חן**. However its **חן** is *sheker* for it will cause the transgressor to acquire **זוהם** a stench of *tumah* the same *gematriah* of **חן**.

Without the spiritual instinct to drive towards the next world we would lead our lives to follow our bodily and animal instincts. For what reason should I break myself to become less selfish or greedy if not because of my realization that there is reward and punishment for listening to Hashem. *Teshuvah* works because I realize that Hashem's sole purpose in creation is to bestow on us reward **שכר** which are the letters of **כשר** virtuous. We are inner directed to become wholesome and toil on spiritual upgrades in order to **מכשיר** **prepare** ourselves to become that vessel that will transform our achievements and dedication of our lives into eternal receptacles of Hashem's Light.

The Torah begins with the letter **ב** to teach us that there are two worlds don't forget. When the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe ztl was taken into custody by the KGB an officer put a revolver to his head and said you better answer my questions. The Rebbe smiled and said put away your toy. The people who would fear you are only those who have many g-ds and one world. I have one g-d and two worlds. I am not afraid.

This concept of two worlds is hinted with the creation of Man as the *passuk* says **וויצר** with two letter *yuds* to reinforce the idea that we must daily focus on both worlds **היום לעשותם** **מחר לקבל שכרם**. Shlomo Hamelech was the wisest and richest man on earth. When he was asked by Hashem that he had a choice of the greatest wealth or the greatest **חכם** he chose wisdom. Hashem rewarded him with both. He merited to build the *Bais Hamikdash* the residing place for Hashem's *Shechinah* on earth. His name was a constant reminder to himself not to forfeit eternity for a world of trinkets that glitter momentarily. The acronym of his name **שלמה** is **היום לעשותם מחר לקבל שכרם**. Hashem gives us a taste of *Olam Habbah* every Shabbos to remind us what the goal of life is through in case one forgot about it during the working week. The Song of Shabbos begins with the words **שיר ליום השבת** which is the acronym of **היום לעשותם מחר שכרם**.

What wouldn't we do to in order for our bodies not to emit a perspiration odor. We spray our underarms with chemicals to cover up our stink. We spray and dab on perfumes to give off artificial messages. However concerning the Z the *zuhama*, bad *tumah* smell acquired by following our instincts that removes us from eternal reward, to that we become oblivious since we cannot smell it. We should just know that even though **we** cannot smell the *zuhamah*, *tzaddikim* can. As it says about *Moshiach* **ה' והריחו ביראת ה'** He will be able to smell the measure of *Yiras Shamayim* that one possesses.

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The month of אלול is gifted to us in order to focus on this shortcoming and to strengthen the consciousness that inside of us lies the yearning and instinct of self survival for *Olam Habah*. It is at the end of *davening* that we remind ourselves about our divine future in the *tefillah* of שנשמור חקך בעולם הזה ונזכה ונחיה ונראה ובא לציון where we beseech Hashem to grant us ונירש טובה ולחיי. העולם הבא. With this clarity and direction of mind we go off out to work in the world of the mundane. So too, at the end of the year when we are soon to be judged for the coming year and *Olam Habah* (Tosfos) we end with Elul which is also to remind us who we are and what is our life goal and mission.

This is also hinted in the acronym of אלול which is "לעולם ועד" אני לחיי The true me is driven to attain a life of FOREVERNESS, eternal bliss with Hashem. The Elul Reminder will refocus our lives to make a reset to the NWO which is the **Next** World Order so that when we come to Rosh Hashanah our GPS of life will be updated with a much more improved version that functions smoothly with very few glitches if any at all.

Rav Brazil,

Gut Shabbos