

# Torah Life

# Weekly

פרשת יתרו תשע"ב

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## Torah Thoughts

Regarding the statement in the Ten Commandments "You shall not covet," the Ibn Ezra asks in his commentary on the Torah, how the Torah can command of person something that one cannot fulfill? After all, is it possible to prevent one from coveting in ones heart a beautiful thing that one sees? If not, how can the Torah require mankind to fulfill a command that is impossible uphold. In an attempt to answer his question the Ibn Ezra explains a great principle of emunah (faith). That is, one must know and believe that life, children, and ones livelihood are not dependent on one's own abilities and efforts rather they are all dependent on the workings of Heaven and on what is decreed from above. If it is decreed for one to receive a certain thing he will indeed receive that thing without any delay. The opposite is also true. If it is not decreed from Heaven that one should receive something, all the effort that one expends will not help this person obtain it or reach it. One must instill faith in his heart and believe in a perfect faith this principle. If one labor to reach this level of emuna then it will be that he will not covet other people's possessions to the extent that he will not even have thoughts regarding the matter. He will simply reason that if it was destined from above he receive this item, he will receive it immediately in the right time and if it is was not destined that he receive it nothing will help for him to receive it. The Ibn Ezra brings a parable to explain this principle. Just as a peasant in a village does not even think about the possibility to marry the daughter of the king knowing that this could never possibly happen and just like a person does not aspire to fly in the sky like a bird knowing very well that he will never have wings so too when a person reaches this perfect level of emuna then any money he earns, woman he marries or anything (physical or spiritual) he obtains will not be attributed to his own knowledge or actions, rather to what was destined from Hashem. And if indeed the thing is destined to be his, he will receive it, and if not, there is no chance that he can go against Heaven's decree to obtain it. By reaching this state of mind one in effect has fulfilled the commandment of "do not covet in your heart." The story is told about Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra who was a very poor man and lived all his life in poverty. His good friend Maimonides (the Rambam) was anxious to help him financially, but Rabbi Ibn Ezra resisted and refused under any circumstances to get financial help from others. The Rambam sat and thought to himself how he can help his good friend without his knowledge, when a clever idea flashed into his mind! The Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra goes out every morning for shacharit (morning prayers) to the synagogue near his home and on his way to prayer he crosses over a nearby bridge. The Rambam thought to himself that he will place money on the bridge and according to the Halacha "one who finds scattered money may keep them." This way the Rabbi Ibn Ezra could lawfully keep the money through a just find rather than through a charity. The Rambam decided to carry out his plan. He woke up the next morning and went to the bridge to scatter paper money bills very close to the usual arrival time of the Ibn Ezra. The Rambam then hit by a nearby tree and anticipated his good friend's arrival. Soon after the Ibn Ezra arrived and to the Rambam's amazement crossed the bridge with his eyes closed not even noticing the scattered money that was prepared especially for him. The Rambam immediately approached his good friend and asked him explicitly, "Why did you cross the bridge today with your eyes closed?" The Ibn Ezra answered him, "Every day I cross this bridge on the way to the Beit Knesset and today I told myself I wonder if I can pass this bridge successfully while closing my eyes? And indeed I succeeded." The Rambam heard this and decided to share his plan with the Ibn Ezra regarding the scattered money on the bridge. The Ibn Ezra answered the Rambam, a person only receives what he deserves and what he doesn't deserve nothing in the world will help. Even if the person obtains the money through just ways, if he doesn't deserve it, the money will eventually leave his possession in other ways. There is a story told of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, who held a great meeting of rabbis in a home, attended by heads of the yeshivas and greatest people of the generation. During the gathering one of the elder rabbis stood up and while getting up he accidentally pulled the table cloth off the table and all the glass cups and bottles on the table fell down to the ground. Everyone immediately turned and bent down to pick up what fell, when Rabbi Chaim stood up and yelled "Stop! Mind you! If there is a penny in my house that was obtained illegally, which I didn't deserve then let the glasses or dishes break, but if all the money in my house is clean and obtained lawfully then let all the dishes not break. And indeed all the dishes that fell were whole and no dishes had broken. From these stories we see the great obligation incumbent on us to strengthen our selves to develop a perfect emuna and to live in tranquility and peace and with knowledge that there is a director that is leading our paths and lives for goodness and for blessing.

One day, before dawn, as R' Beinish Finkel was on his way to the mikdash, he met a poor and lost man. "Did you have a warm drink yet?" R' Beinish asked him. "Yes, but another cup would not hurt," the man replied. R' Beinish, who was extremely particular about davening with the tzaddikim, returned home with the man. He offered him a drink, spoke for a long time and cheered him up. After he left, R' Beinish ran as fast as he could to the mikdash, making it in time for shemoneh esrei.

דולבי ישראלי  
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*Yahrzeits of our tzaddikim*

R' Binyomin Beinish Finkel zt"l, was born in Mir, Poland on י"ח ליר נידול to י"ה ביניש פינקל, and ר' אליה ( mother ) מלכה Kamai zt"l (daughter). At 9 years old, he learned five hours a day with his father daily. In 1931, he went to learn by the Rebbe of Chortkiv, and in 1933-34 he learned by the Brisker Rov. After his arrival in America (approx. 1940), he became close to the Rebbe of Chazon Avrohom Avrech. He married אסתר, the daughter of R' Shmuel Greineman zt"l, the Rebbe's brother-in-law. In 1965, he became ר' הראש מיר, where, in addition to giving shiurim, he took over fiscal responsibility of the yeshiva. There are fascinating stories of his סיגר ורשות and his גדרות ב תורה ובחסד. It is well-known that his father-in law considered him one of the צדיקים.



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|              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 5:05<br>עמ"ק | הדלקת נורת        |
| 8:49<br>9:28 | סוף זמן קריית שמע |
| 10:20        | סוף זמן תפילה     |
| 5:24         | שקיעה             |
| 6:03<br>6:37 | מוצש'ק            |

## Living with the Torah

Honor your father and mother ... (Sh'mos 20:12)

The were inscribed on 2 stone tablets, 5 on each side. One side contained laws relating to man and the other, contained laws relating to man and his fellow man. Why was the **מץוה** of honoring parents placed on the side?

There are many answers to this thought provoking question. The **העתק** explains that this is to teach us that one should always be aware that respect to our parents is part of our obligation to.

The **קנאה** answers that respecting one's parents is the cornerstone of faith. Our tradition is based on the chain from **אברהם** to **יעקב**, a chain based on the links between parents and children. If we do not show the proper honor to our parents we are cutting at the chain of.

The obligation to honor one's father and mother encompasses one's thoughts, speech and deeds. The most important honor is in one's heart — we must teach ourselves to appreciate and value our parents.



As a young boy, R' Shmuel Zvi Kowalsky would make his way to the rabbi's modest home where the two studied privately on a regular basis. The rabbi was extremely fond of his young student and guided him not only in learning, but in all areas of spiritual development. Once, as Shmuel Zvi prepared to travel home for **יום טוב**, the rabbi told him, "A Jew is required to begin reviewing the laws of a given **יום טוב** thirty days before the **יום טוב**. A boy who is preparing to return home for **כבוד אב ואם** must review the laws of **כבוד אב ואם** in **ערוך שולחן ערוך**." Shmuel Zvi was an ideal student; his performance of this **מץוה** remains a model to strive to emulate.

R' Kowalsky's father attended a **שעור** in **גמרא** that he delivered each morning. Whenever his father entered while the **שעור** was in progress, R' Kowalsky would rise to his full height, place his own **מגילה** before his father and take another volume for himself. When responding to a question posed by his father, he spoke as a servant speaking before a king.

After his father passed away, R' Kowalsky visited his mother daily after delivering his **שעור**. On **שבת**, when his mother joined his family for meals, she sat next to him and was always served first.

A week before R' Kowalsky's passing, he attended the wedding of a son of a primary benefactor of the **כופת** he headed. Another married son of the benefactor came to join the family at his brother's wedding. During the meal, this son suffered chest pains. Afraid to alarm his parents, he asked to be examined in a side room. After reading the EKG results, the doctor advised him to go directly to a hospital. The stricken man was in a quandary. He was afraid to disobey doctor's orders, but he was worried that his absence would be noticed and his parents would have to be told what had occurred. Aside from the worry and distress they would endure, the joy they were experiencing at their son's wedding would be marred.

R' Kowalsky, who was then gravely ill, entered the wedding hall and was apprised of the situation. After pondering the matter in silence, he told the patient, "Remain here at the wedding. You can relax; all will be well. I take full responsibility for your health."

R' Kowalsky returned home and told his family, "I have assumed a great responsibility!" He then distributed volumes of **תורת קהילות** to his family, divided the entire **ספר** among them, and they all began to pray. It was 3:00 A.M. when they finished. R' Kowalsky told them, "This young man came from America only for the sake of his parents, to honor them and bring them joy by participating in his brother's wedding. This **מץוה** is sufficient to shield him so that he will live long. It cannot be that he will suffer harm for having remained at the wedding to save his parents from distress."

The young man returned to America a few days later and visited a heart specialist. After a thorough examination and a series of tests,

### A Chochma Moment: Can Levi discuss all the details about the **חבר** with his **חבר**?

\*Although Freddy and Harry were neighbors, few people realized that they really never got along. Their **מחלוקת** most likely started when they realized that they both were in the same line of business. To make matters worse, their stores were across the street from each other. They would greet each other in the street, but that was all. Levi, a close friend to both of them, decided he would try to stop the feud. He decided to discuss with a **חבר** how to resolve.

**Answer:** While the **אסור** does not apply to those who are considered **בעל מחלוקת**, it is only permitted if it is the best way to resolve the argument. Nothing else negative may be discussed. Only details that he knows personally to be true, and will help resolve the argument, may be discussed.



Dear Talmid,

When it came to money matters, R' Beinish Finkel **לצ"ל** was renowned for his integrity and honesty. His home was rich in **luxuries** but contained only chairs, beds, a table, a bookshelf and basic kitchen appliances. His daughters' weddings, were the same. One wedding was held on **שבת**, and the **ששנה** was held on Friday night, primarily for family members. The other guests were served cake and soft drinks.

Although he was responsible for the millions of dollars that streamed into the **ישיבה**, he was extremely careful that the monies were untainted from any **אסור**. He even refused to conduct any financial arrangement that involved any **חכירה** (a valid business partnership that circumvents the **אסור** of **ריב**, interest).

Once, the **ישיבה** was offered a huge grant from a special fund so that it would be able to build a new wing. R' Beinish, however, feared that the transfer of the funds involved a **חכירה** and was wary of accepting the grant.

For many weeks, the **ישיבה**'s administration worked on a plan that would circumvent the need for a **חכירה**. When the grant money finally arrived, R' Beinish went to the bank and, along with its director, examined the issue from every possible angle. After he was certain that it did not involve a **חכירה**, he agreed to accept the grant. However, as he stood on line in the bank waiting to receive the money, he was suddenly overcome by tremendous fear.

"**אני!**" he determined then and there. "I won't accept it. I am afraid of violating a **תורה** prohibition." He never accepted the grant.

My **תלמיד**, R' Beinish understood Who is the One who gives sustenance and planted the seeds of purity that made his **תורה**'s **ישיבה** eternal. Today, 1000's of **טביה** travel in chartered buses to attend the **ישיבה**, which is now the largest **טביה** in the world! **היה וברוך ברוחך!**

גבידות

Your Rabbi

### Sage Saying

Before his **טפייה**, R' Beinish Finkel **לצ"ל**, called in his son-in-law, **ר' ר' צון צבי לצ"ל**, and said, "I'm giving the **ישיבה** over to you!" and handed him a list of how much each received. **ר' צון צבי** asked innocently, "And how do you make the money to give this amount to them?" "I have no idea," admitted R' Beinish. "איך נזאת מני בוטחוון — I used my own **דרכט** nutzen דין איגונע בוטחוון; בוטחוון your own **צמי**." R' **צון צבי** fulfilled R' Beinish's wish.



### Halacha Corner

הלכות ראש השנה

- On **ר' ראש השנה**, if one is in doubt whether if he said **עללה ויבא** he must assume he has not said it.
- However, if he knows that while **davening**, he was aware that he must remember to say **עללה ויבא**, but is in doubt only some time after finishing his **תפלה**, he may assume that he said **עללה ויבא**.

### question of the week: **רש"י**

1. The **הקב"ה** tells us that the **הקב"ה** punishes children for the sins of their fathers. Why? Can a child redeem himself?
2. What are **two** reasons that the stones of the **מזבח** cannot be hewn with metal?

Answers

1. The **הקב"ה** only remembers the sins of a father if the child follows in the footsteps of his father's evil ways. (20:5)
2. i. Metal is used to shorten a man's life. The **מזבח** is used to lengthen a man's life. ii. Metal is used to cut and injure. The **מזבח**'s purpose is to make peace between the **הקב"ה** and the **הקב"ה**. (20:22)

Prepared by Rabbi Shemuel Laniado

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