



Alummi Reflections

Impact of Limud HaTorah

Deep in Our Souls

By: Rabbi Pinchos Friedlander

Then



Now



ונתן לנו תורה - אמת וחי עולם נטע בתוכנו - "Hashem Gave us the Torah of truth, and He implanted within us eternal life." This bothered me for many years. What is the eternal life if not the Torah? Aren't they the same thing?

To answer this we have to ask another question. We say every day in Birchas HaTorah (Blessings recited on Torah study)- אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתו - "The One who chose us from among the nations and gave us His Torah." This is somewhat puzzling: Did Hashem really choose us or did we choose Him? After all, there is a well-known Medrash which relates that before giving the Torah to the Jewish people, Hashem went to all the other nations asking them if they want to accept the Torah and they all turned Him down. When we were asked, we accepted. It seems that every nation had the opportunity to receive the Torah, yet we were the only ones that chose to accept it. Why then do we say that Hashem chose us?

R' Shimon Schwab, in his sefer Mayan Bais Hashoevah, provides the following answer. The fact is, says Rabbi Schwab, that Hashem always intended to give the Torah to the Jews; when He went around to the nations He was offering something else. R' Schwab proves this by elaborating on the details of the Medrash. The Medrash states: When Hashem went to the children of Eisav and asked if they wanted to accept the Torah, they asked "What does it say in it?" Hashem answered, "You may not kill." The children of Eisav said, "Our nation's essence is killing- we cannot accept the Torah." Hashem then went to Amon and Moav. They asked "What does it say in it?" Hashem answered, "You may not commit immoral acts." The

nations responded "We were founded on immorality- we cannot accept the Torah"

Rabbi Schwab asks an obvious question: The mitzvos that Hashem used as examples were part of the Seven Noachide Mitzvos which gentiles are required to keep anyway. Obviously, concludes Rabbi Schwab, Hashem wasn't offering the nations of the world the 613 Mitzvos that we have. What then was He offering?

Rabbi Schwab suggests that Hashem wasn't offering new commandments. He was offering a deep inner drive and desire to fulfill the mitzvos that the nations already had. Until now, the mitzvos were externally imposed rules to be heeded by humanity. Hashem was offering a new perspective on those same statutes. Going forward they were to be part of a deeply understood and meaningful mission in life, as opposed to pesky restrictions. The nations of the world rejected this offer, for they realized that to do so would require them to change their desires and missions in this world. The Bnei Yisroel, on the other hand, eagerly accepted the offer. Hashem indeed chose us to be the nation to receive the full body of the Torah's mitzvos; we chose to adopt them with a sense of mission and purpose. This, I think, is what we mean when we say "He implanted in us the eternal life." Not only do we have the true Torah, but Hashem also implanted deep within our souls the desire to keep the Torah and Mitzvos- as our eternal mission.

Let us always remember that the love for Torah and Mitzvos is deeply embedded in us. Our job is to make sure to act upon those feelings.

Have a good Shabbos!





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Chaim Simcha Gibber,**
Rosh Kollel

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

**HaRav & Rebbetzen
Eliyahu Stern,**
Rosh Kollel, 2011-

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Rabbi & Mrs. Avrohom Berzansky
Rabbi & Mrs. Nussie Bitterman
Rabbi & Mrs. Levi Botnick
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Rabbi & Mrs. Pinchos Friedlander

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**HaRav & Rebbetzen
Moshe Tuvia Lieff,**
Miyased HaKollel



MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY
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Alumni Profile

Rabbi and Mrs. Pinchos Friedlander

Members of the Kollel: 2008 - 2011



Chezy 9, Chava Esther 7, Yehuda 5, Nussi 2, Devora 10 months

Personal Reflection

Although we left Minneapolis almost 4 years ago, we will always be grateful for the growth that my family and I gained from the Kollel and from the Minneapolis community. The skills that I use daily when teaching and mentoring bochorim, I feel were developed while I was in the Kollel. A special thank you is due to R' Ron Mandelbaum for keeping up our weekly parsha shiur that started while I was in the Kollel. The Tele-shiur is running for almost 4 years now, without missing a single week. Thank you to all the participants!

Highlights

- Rabbi Friedlander is currently teaching and mentoring bochorim in Bais Medrash Mayan Hatorah, including some of our very own Minneapolis boys.
- Mrs. Friedlander is the coordinator for special education services in the Bais Shaindel High School.
- Our boys are in Lakewood Cheder, which has 10 parallel classes per grade!
- Our daughter, Chava Esther, goes to Bais Tova.
- It is great to see all our old friends and community members at the ever growing simchos in Lakewood.
- We would love to have visitors at any time!

Keep in touch with the Schnalls

Home

H- 732.886.8233
65 Maplewood Terrace
Lakewood, NJ 08701

Rabbi

C- 917.520.4050
psfriedlander@gmail.com

Mrs.

C- 718.872.8507
cfriedlander@hotmail.com