

Ki Heim CHAYEINU



Sivan 5769

The Torah Protects

Preface

Due to the ongoing interest and concern of our community's security, and in connection with Chag HaShavuot when we received the Torah, presented here are a collection of sayings from our Sages, and the Rebbe's sichos and idioms, that express the protection granted to the Jewish nation when occupied in Torah study. Torah offers much protection, as our Sages said, "The Torah protects and saves." The Sages added that even when they aren't busy learning and are momentarily involved in other matters, the Torah guards

them against any evil.

That being the case, some real introspection is required. Are we doing our utmost in our study of Torah? Do we have set times for the study of Nigleh and Chassidus? Are we actively talking to friends and acquaintances making sure they also have exclusive, set times for Torah study?

May it be Hashem's will that as a result of Torah study done in Golus, we will be worthy of the time when "...There will no longer be famine nor war. There will be no pastime other than to know Hashem," "...For the world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as the waters cover the sea bed."

The Yagdil Torah Publications Department

“Tell the Jewish nation, ‘My children occupy yourselves in Torah and then you will fear no nation.’”

(Vayikro Rabo)

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“WHEN JEWS ARE OCCUPIED IN TORAH STUDY – NO NATION OR COUNTRY CAN SUBDUCE THEM”

Once Rabbi Yosi, from the city of Lod, sent a messenger to Rabbi Iloi with the following question: "Hashem placed guardian angels over the nations of the world, – the seventy guardian angels surrounding His supernal throne. Where did He place the Jewish nation?" The messenger returned to Rabbi Yosi with the message, "Hashem placed them in the heaven."

Rabbi Yosi returned the messenger to Rabbi Iloi with his answer to the question. "In the midst of the water", which means, in the midst of words of Torah, Torah being analogous to water. As it says "Whoever is thirsty should go drink water." It is for this reason that when Jews are occupied in Torah study, no nation or country can subdue them. The evil eye likewise cannot subdue them, just as fish that are immersed in water, totally immersed and evasive of any fishing net. This applies even to the Yetzer Hara, the prosecuting net. The Torah guards a person from being caught in the net."

(The Midrash "Bein Mayim Limayim – Botei Midrashos" part 2)

“IF YOU ACQUIRED WORDS OF TORAH – THEY WILL PROTECT YOU”

"Then you will understand righteousness, justice, and fairness, every good path..." There is no good aside from Torah, as the verse says, "For I gave you good teaching; forsake not My Torah." If you leave it, it will leave you. If you keep it, it will keep and protect you. "...When wisdom comes into your heart..." "comes into your heart" means that if you acquired words of Torah, they will protect you.

(The Midrash on Mishlei, chapter2)

THE TORAH ACTS AS A SHIELD

It's a shield for those who go in its ways wholeheartedly. Just as a shield protects a person, so does the Torah protect those who are occupied in its study.

(The Midrash on Mishlei, chapter2)

THE TORAH SAVED THE JEWS FROM SANCHEIREV

“...And the yoke shall be destroyed because of oil...” Rabi Yitzchak the blacksmith said, “Sancheirev’s yoke was destroyed as a result of Chizkiyahu’s oil that he provided for the shuls and Batei Midrash. What did he do? Rabi Yitzchak stuck a sword at the entrance of a Beis Midrash and said, “Whoever will not be occupied with Torah study will be stabbed with this sword.” They checked from the area of Dan until Beer Sheva but couldn’t find a person ignorant of Torah; from Givas to Antifos, but were unable to find a boy or girl, man or woman who wasn’t versed in the laws of impurity and purity.

(Sanhedrin 94:2, Rashi’s commentary)

THROUGH TORAH STUDY NO NATION WILL RULE OVER THEM

The Jewish nation received the Torah in order that no nation or country would be able to rule over them, as the verse says, “In order that he may be good to them and to their children forever” from this we can deduce that they didn’t receive the Torah to receive compensation, but in order that no nation or county rule over them. (This is the reference to good in the verse, “...In order that he may be good to them...”)

(Avodah Zoro 5:1, Rashi’s commentary)

“EVEN IN THE EVENT THAT ARROWS AND STONES ARE SHOT AT THEM THERE’S NO NEED TO BE ALARMED”

Hashem told Avraham, “You were occupied in the study of my Torah. By your life, (Hashem swears), ‘I will act as a shield for you’, as the verse says, ‘Have no fear, Avraham; [I will act as a shield for you].’” Just as a person holding a shield doesn’t fear arrows or stones shot at him, [likewise I will do the same for you], as the verse says, “I will act as a shield for you. Your reward is very great. Not only for you, but also for your children, provided that they will be occupied in Torah study, just as you did, as the verse says, “[Every] word of Hashem is refined; He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him.”

(Tanchuma Lech Licha, chapter 14)

“IF YOU ARE OCCUPIED WITH THE BOOK, THEN I WILL FIGHT FOR YOU”

“Therefore the verse says, “Fight my antagonists, Oh Hashem, battle those who battle against me.” Could it be that a human being would say to his master, ‘Master, fight my antagonists, go out and fight instead of me’?! Hashem told Dovid Hamelech, “Dovid, go learn Torah and I will fight your wars.” Similarly Moshe said, “Concerning this it is told in the sefer of the Wars of HaShem”, if you are occupied in the study of the sefer, I will fight for you.” Therefore Dovid Hamelech said, “Fight my antagonists, Oh Hashem, battle those who battle against me.”

(Midrash Tehillim, chapter 38)

A STORY ABOUT A BOY WHO WAS SAVED IN THE MERIT OF SEFER BREISHIS

A father taught his son Sefer Breishis. When the Czar conquered that country the child and sefer were captured and placed in captivity. The boy was sent to prison and his book was confiscated and placed in the Czar’s treasury.

Soon afterwards the Czar became delirious and ordered his servants to bring him his memoirs. They went into the Czar’s treasury and found the sefer Breishis. All the top government officials came and tried to read its contents, but were unable to do so. They told the Czar that the book was seemingly of Jewish origin and that there was a young Jewish child in his prison who perhaps could read it. Upon the Czar’s command, they immediately took the child and brought him to the Czar. As soon as the boy saw his sefer he immediately hugged and kissed it. He read its contents from the beginning until the conclusion of creation in front of the Czar. When the Czar heard Hashem’s praises, and how he created his world, he immediately stood up and kissed the young child’s head. He told the child, “I now know that the reason why Hashem created the world was in order to release you from prison.” The Czar gave him lots of silver, gold, precious stones, servants and maid servants and sent him back to his father amidst much honor.

[The lesson we can take from this story is that if] the young child, who only learned the sefer Breishis received all of the aforementioned wealth and honor then certainly one who learns the entire Torah should be entitled to all of this wealth and honor.

(Tano Dibe Eliyohu Zuto, chapter 17)

EVEN CHILDREN LEARNING IN CHEDER KNOW THAT TORAH PROTECTS

Rabbi Shimon ben Lokish said, “Hardship is distanced from those occupied in Torah study, as the verse says, “...But man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward ...” The term “fly” refers to Torah, as the verse says regarding Torah, “Should you blink your eyes at it and it is not there...” [alluding to something that flies, and therefore moves quickly from second to second].

The term “sparks” (reshef) means hardships, as the verse says, “and the devouring of the fiery bolt” (reshef). [The above interpretation of the words “fly” and “sparks”, implies that Torah learning distances hardships]. Rabbi Yochanan told him, “Even school children are aware of this, as it says, “And He said, If you hearken to the voice of Hashem, your Hashem, and you do what is proper in His eyes etc.” [The Torah protects, as we learn from the Chumash “...If you hearken...” I will protect you from every illness that I afflicted etc.” Children who didn’t even start learning Iyov already know this.]”

(Brachos 5A)

WHEN A PERSON LEARNS TORAH FOR ITS OWN SAKE, HASHEM HIMSELF WILL WATCH OVER HIM

Every learned person who is continuously studying to increase heavens honor will not need a sword, a lance a spear, nor any weapon for protection, for Hashem Himself will watch over him. Ministering angels will encircle him with a sword in each of their hands watching him, as it says, “The exaltation of Hashem is in their throat and a double edged sword in their hand”

(Eliyohu Rabo chapter 4)

IT SAVES HIM FROM THE BIRTH PANGS OF MOSHIACH

Rabi Elozor’s students asked him, “What should a person do to be spared the birth pangs of Moshiach?” He responded, “He should be occupied in Torah study and acts of loving kindness.”

(Sanhedrin 98B)

PROTECTION DURING WAR

Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi said, “What is the meaning of the verse, ‘Our feet were standing within your gates, Oh Jerusalem?’ What brought us to stand during war? The gates of Jerusalem that were occupied in Torah study

(Makos 10:1)

THE TORAH SAVED MOSHE RABEINU FROM THE ANGELS

The Jewish nation told Moshe Rabeinu, “Rejoice, for you have taken gifts.” He responded to them; If not for the fact that I told the angels two things, I would have been consumed by their fire; this Torah saved me from their fire. Regarding this the Torah says, “...My lesson will drip like rain...” The Hebrew word for drip (Yarof) in the verse also means to kill, as we see in a different verse, “...And there in the valley, they shall decapitate (Urfu) the calf...” The Hebrew word for the expression “my lesson” refers to the Torah, as another verse teaches us (regarding the Torah), “...For I gave you a good lesson...”

(Tanchumo Haazinu, paragraph 3)

THE TORAH KEPT YAAKOV WHILE TRAVELING

“When you walk, it shall lead you...” The verse is referring to Yaakov who was occupied in Torah study when he left his father’s home, not leaving it behind. The next part of the verse “...When you lie down, it shall guard you... and when you awaken, it shall speak for you.” When did Yakov experience this security? It says; “...And he took from the stones of the place [putting it underneath his head and he lay down to sleep in that place].” He lay down to sleep and it safeguarded him.

(Tanchumo Vayeitzei, paragraph 2)

ANYONE OCCUPIED IN TORAH STUDY WILL NOT SEE THE ATTRIBUTE OF RETRIBUTION

What’s the meaning of the words, “...And he will not see when heat comes...?” They teach us that one who learns Torah won’t see the attribute of retribution neither in this world nor in the time of ben Dovid or in the World to Come.

(Tano Dibe Eliyohu Rabo, chapter 18)

IF YOU SET WORDS OF TORAH IN YOUR HEART – THEY WILL PROTECT YOU

“The words of the wise are like goads, and like well-fastened nails with large heads.” Why is the word nails (in Hebrew Masmeres) written with the letter Shin (which when read looks like the word ‘protect’ [Meshamros]) This is to teach you, that if you set them as with a nail in your heart, they will protect you.

(Tanchumo Bahaloscho, chapter 15)

“WHENEVER THE VOICE OF YAAKOV IS HEARD IN THE SHULS AND BATEI MEDRASH, THE HANDS OF ESAV DON’T DOMINATE”

Rabbi Aba Bar Kahana said, “The nations of the world never had philosophers like Bilaam ben Beor and Avnimus Hagiradi. The nations of the world asked them, “Are we able to win a war against the Jews?” They responded, “Go and see what is going on in their shuls. If little children are there chanting words of Torah you will never win, because their forefather promised them that “...The voice is the voice of Yaakov, and the hands are the hands of Esav.” As long as the voice of Yaakov is to be heard in the shuls and Batei Medrash, the hands of Esav will never dominate. Conversely, whenever Yaakov’s voice doesn’t chant in the shuls and Batei Medrash, the hands of Esav will then dominate over them.”

(Eicho Rabo, chapter 2, the words Rabi Abo)

WHEN TORAH STUDY IS NEGLECTED IS THE ONLY TIME THE NATIONS CAN DO US HARM

“Therefore, as stubble consumes a flame of fire etc.” Can stubble eat fire? The nature of fire is to consume stubble, yet the verse says the opposite, that stubble consumes the flame of fire. The term stubble in the verse is a reference to Esav’s house. A flame of fire refers to the house of Yaakov. ...Why is that so? It’s because they despised Hashem Tz’vakos’s Torah. Rabbi Yuden said, “The statement ‘... Because they despised Hashem Tz’vakos’s Torah...’ refers to the Written Law, whereas ‘...And the word of the Holy One of Israel they have despised...’ refers to the Oral Law. Since they disregarded words of Torah, Yereimiah began lamenting with the book of Lamentations.”

(Eicho Rabo Pisichto, beginning with Rebi Abo)

VICTORY OVER THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD IS IN THE MERIT OF THE TORAH

“Behold I have begun to deliver Sichon and his land before you”; and also, “...I destroyed the Amorites [from before the Jews, whose height is as the height of the cedar trees].” In which merit? In the merit of the Torah that’s taught by the Sages.

(Tanchumo Divorim, chapter 68)

“MY CHILDREN OCCUPY YOURSELVES IN TORAH AND THEN YOU WILL FEAR NO NATION”

“My son, if you accept my words, and treasure my commandments,” If you have merit, take my words.

Rav Hunah in the name of Rabbi Benjamin ben Levi said, “This is comparable to a situation when a king told his son, “Go out and make a living.” The son responded, “I’m afraid of thieves and pirates.”

What did his father do? He took a staff and etched some words into it, gave it mystical powers and gave it to his son. He told his son, “Take the staff and you will fear no creature.”

In a similar manner, Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu, “...Tell the Jewish nation, ‘My children occupy yourselves in Torah and then you will fear no nation’”

(Vayikro Rabo, chapter 28, paragraph 1)

FREQUENT THE BATEI MEDRASH IN THE MORNING AND EVENING AND THEY WILL DISSIPATE ON THEIR OWN

Mar Ukva sent a letter to Rabi Elozor who was in Israel. “... Should I turn in to the authorities’ people who are troubling (cursing) me to the authorities...?” Rabi Elozor responded to the letter quoting the verse, “I said that I would guard my ways from sinning with my tongue; I would guard my mouth with a muzzle, [even] while the wicked one is before me.” He continued, “Although an evil person stands before me, I would guard my tongue with a muzzle.”

Rabi Elozor sent another letter right after saying, “Depend on Hashem and hope in Him...” Depend on Him and He will cause your enemies to fall. Frequent the learning halls and they will dissipate on their own.

(Gitin 7:1, Rashi’s commentary)

THE SALVATION OF THE JEWISH NATION COMES THROUGH THOSE WHO ARE OCCUPIED IN TORAH STUDY THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Through whom does Hashem save the Jewish nation? Through those that frequent the shuls and Batei Medrash in the mornings and evenings and are always occupied with the study of Torah throughout the day.

It says “And Devorah sent for and called Barak...” Why was it necessary for Barak to go to Devorah? The Sages said that Barak served the Elders during Yehoshua’s leadership and continued to do so after Yehoshua’s demise. Consequently, they brought and placed him before Devorah [to help fight the war.]

(Yalkut Shimoni Shoftim Remez 42)

ONE OR TWO ANGELS, OR HASHEM HIMSELF

One angel watches a person who acts properly and learns Chumash, as it says, “Behold, I will send an angel before you to watch you.” Two angels watch a person that learns Tanach, as the verse says, “For He will instruct His angels in your behalf, to guard you in all your ways.” However, Hashem Himself will watch one that learns Tanach, Mishnah, Midrash, laws, Agadata and serves Talmidei Chachamim.

(Tano Divei Eliyohu Rabo, chapter 18)

“PROTECT MINE AND I’LL PROTECT YOURS”

When will these angels guard him? When he guards the Torah. Rabbi Elazar Hakafor said, “Hashem told man, “My candle should be in your hand and your candle in My hand. “My candle should be in your hand,” as it says, “For a commandment is a candle, and the Torah is light.” Your candle is in my hand. “The flame of Hashem is the soul of man.” Protect mine and I’ll protect yours. Rabbi Chiya said, “What is this analogous to? Two men owned vineyards. One was in the Galilee and the other was in Yehuda. The one who lived in the Galilee had his vineyard in Yehuda and vice versa. Once they both met and one said to the other, “Watch my vineyard in the Galilee and I’ll watch yours in Yehuda. If you lose mine, I’ll lose yours.”

Similarly Hashem told the Jewish nation, “If you keep my Torah I’ll keep you,” as the verse says, “For if you keep all these commandments.” If you keep it, it will keep you.

(Midrash Tihillim, chapter 17)

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לרגל הולדתה

ביום כ"ד אייר ה'תשס"ט

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הרב אפרים פישל ורעיתו שיחיו אסטער

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