

## Bringing the Farbrengen Home

### ENGRAVED

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer



At the beginning of this week's parsha, Hashem says, "If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them."

The verses then go on to enumerate the rewards for doing the mitzvot.

Rashi explains that the words "if you will follow My statutes" does not refer to keeping the mitzvot; that is the next words in the verse, "and observe My commandments."

What, then, does "if you will follow My statutes" mean?

Rashi continues: *You should toil in Torah.*

Not just learning Torah, but *toiling* in Torah, learning until you *schvitz!*

The Alter Rebbe explains that the Hebrew word **בְּחֻקוֹתַי**, My statutes, has another, deeper meaning -- and that is that the word **בְּחֻקוֹתַי** comes from the word **בְּחֻקֵּיהֶם**, engraving.

This teaches us that the Torah has to be engraved on our heart and soul.

What does it mean for the Torah to be engraved on our heart and soul?

In order to explain, it's important to understand the difference between regular letters -- ink on paper -- and letters engraved in stone.

When you write letters with ink, you have two separate things (ink and paper) that join together.

When it comes to engraved letters, there are not two separate entities (letter & stone) that have joined together. There is only stone. The letter is the empty void, the absence... there is only stone.




So perhaps this is what Hashem is asking of us when he says, "if you follow My statutes." Don't fulfill Torah and Mitzvot like something that is additional, link ink on paper...

...learn & live Torah and Mitzvot like letters that are engraved in stone. There are not two separate entities. There is not "you" and "mitzvah."

Our entire being is one with the stone, our entire existence is Torah and Mitzvot.

The Torah is our life. It is engraved on our heart and soul.

I am one with the Torah. You are one with the Torah. 

### Hayom Yom

#### Iyar 22

Several of the early chassidim had a farbrengen sometime between 5544-47 (1784-87) and the core of the discussion was this: The Alter Rebbe had accomplished something novel - that we are not alone. At one time, the Master - Rosh Yeshiva or Talmudic sage - was "alone" and his disciples were "alone." The chassidic way instituted by the Rebbe is a tremendous Divine achievement, that the Rebbe is not alone, nor are the chassidim alone.

### JUST שׁו"ת ME A QUESTION

**Q: Can I lift weights on Shabbos? Or what about doing push-ups and sit-ups?**

A: As a general rule, it is forbidden to exercise on Shabbos.

There are numerous halachic issues, including:

1. *Shelo yehei hiluchacha b'Shabbos k'hiluchacha bechol* (You should not walk on Shabbos the same way you walk during the week) -- This is why one may not run on Shabbos. Exercising is likely a violation of this.
2. *Menuchah* -- resting and not exerting oneself on Shabbos
3. *Uvadin dechol* (weekday activities) -- such activities are not permitted on Shabbos.
4. *Refuah* (healing) -- Through exercise we strengthen our body, and this may be forbidden on Shabbos.

So in other words, weightlifting and other forms of exercise are not permitted on Shabbos.

That being said, one may run on Shabbos if it is for a mitzvah, to escape from the rain, or somewhere where one is scared to walk slowly.

Source: Shulchan Aruch 301:1; 328:42 & Mishnah Berurah; Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 29:4, 34:22.

# Hiding Under the Bed

## Water or Lemonade?

by Tzipah Wertheimer

Bechukotai is etymologically related to the word "chukim." Indeed the word "chukim" in the first verse is used as a general term to refer to all the mitzvot. Every letter in the Torah is of tremendous significance and so many things can be learned from each detail. Certainly referring to the entire body of mitzvot under the singular term "bechukotai" implies many lessons.

Chukim are mitzvot that defy rational understanding and are therefore observed solely because they were commanded by Hashem. Examples include keeping Kosher, immersion in the Mikvah and "Shaatnez" which is a prohibition against wearing garment made of wool and linen.

Why do I keep Kosher? It's a mitzvah in the Torah. It's not a healthier diet, it's certainly not less expensive, better or in any way superior. Of course a bit of cultural conditioning has made keeping kosher easier and indeed kosher foods like chicken soup are appealing and other types of food off-putting – but that's just the icing on the cake; the real reason is because it says so in the Torah.

Morality on its own can become grey and find itself on a sliding scale. In such circumstances having a supra-rational objective commitment to certain types of behaviors cannot be underestimated – staying sane in an insane world.

When a person keeps all the commandments in the Torah solely because Hashem said so, they are nourishing a relationship with the Creator that is so deep it surpasses the intellect and gets right to the essence.



I could reason all day long that a glass of room temperature water is the best way to hydrate – but when I sit outside on a hot summer's day I crave ice-cold lemonade. Which one is the better choice? If I was a computer chip, I'd take the water since it will work most effectively - but alas this is just a metaphor because a glass of water would destroy an invincible computer.

Since I'm human, I'll take the lemonade because that is what I actually want. Taste and desire in general is not born out of intellect, which is why it can sometimes defy the intellect. Of course sometimes personal interest must yield to intellect.

It is with our depth of desire, infectious joy, overwhelming emotions and in general our true essence, that we are commanded to connect to our Creator. This is why "Chukim" which require unadulterated faith are the quintessential mitzvot and bear reference to the entire body of commandments.

### השגחה פרטית

*This is issue #50 of Queens Farbrengen, and by a stroke of Divine Providence, the laws of Yovel – marked every 50 years – appear in this week's parsha.*

## Chassidic Story

Reb Hillel Paritcher wanted to meet the Alter Rebbe, but each time he tried, he would arrive a the city where the Rebbe was just in time to miss him.

He decided to take matters into his own hands. He came to the place where the Alter Rebbe was meant to be. To further insure that he would meet the Alter Rebbe, when he arrived at the next destination, he went directly to the home where the Alter Rebbe would be staying and hid underneath the bed.

Reb Hillel prepared a question in the tractate of *Erchin* to ask the Rebbe. As soon as the the Rebbe entered the room – even before Reb Hillel had a chance to come out – he heard the sing-song of the Alter Rebbe: "If a *yunger man* (young man) has a question in *Erchin*, he must first be *maarich* (evaluate) himself." Immediately, Reb Hillel fainted, and by the time he was revived, the Alter Rebbe had already left.

*Erchin*, [lit., the monetary value of people as it relates to various situations in Torah law,] is that the process of "value" is based on their years, not their qualities. Therefore all people of the same age carry the same value.

You might ask, "I have spent all my life learning Torah & doing Mitzvos, shouldn't my worth be valued higher than an ordinary person? The other person's years went to waste, so how could both of our years be valued as equal?"

To this we tell him: When one has a question in *Erchin* (the "Value of People"), he must first evaluate himself, and automatically his question will be resolved.

### חזק חזק ונתחזק!

Sponsored by David Reghay

in loving memory of his Bubbe

Lois Gordon  
Leah Esther bas Sender a"h

L'ilui nishmat

Avraham ben

Yisroel Dovid HaKohen a"h

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SHIUR

in Halacha & Chassidus

8:00-9:00pm

at Chabad (Main & 69<sup>th</sup> Ave.)

[www.YouTube.com/qChabad](http://www.YouTube.com/qChabad)