

## **"This is the matter of the murderer who shall flee there and live." (19:4)**

*Chazal* derive from the word *hju* "and [he shall] live," that we must provide every opportunity to sustain the inadvertent murderer in a manner that goes above and beyond mere existence. He must live with vitality. What is the meaning of life for a Jew ? How is true *chiyus*, living, defined in *Torah* vernacular ? The *Torah* in *Devarim* 30:20 states, "For it (the *Torah*) is your life and the length of your days." A Jew's *chiyus* is *Torah*, his breath of life is *Torah* study. As life has no trade-off, so, too, does the *Torah* have no trade-off. One cannot choose between a life of *Torah* orientation and one that is not *Torah* oriented. One cannot barter *Torah* for anything else.

If one has fully accepted the notion that *Torah* study is the essence of life, no exchange can be offered for it. Just as an individual cannot barter in regard to life, one cannot trade when it comes to the *Torah*. Every time the *yetzer hara*, evil inclination, attempts to entice him to leave the *Bais Ha'Midrash* or to take off "some time" from his daily schedule allotted for *Torah* study, he will respond by saying, "This is my life, and there is nothing more important!"

This idea follows logically from the *halacha* which *Chazal* derive from the word *hju*. If one must go into exile because he has killed someone inadvertently, his *rebbe*, *Torah* teacher, is to accompany him (*Makos* 10a). The *Rambam* in *Hilchos Rotzeiach* 7:5 comments, "The lives of wise scholars and seekers of (*Torah*) knowledge are worthless if they cannot study *Torah* properly." The *Nimukei Yosef* adds that even if a great *Torah* scholar happens to live in the city of refuge, his own *rebbe* must nevertheless be "exiled" with him. One cannot always learn from another *rebbe* as well as from his own *rebbe*, with whom he has established a special bond.

*Horav Benzion Baruk, z.l.*, derives from the *Nimukei Yosef's* commentary a profound insight. One may have the opportunity to study *Torah* with a superior teacher. If there happens to be, however, another teacher from whom he may study better, with whom he has a stronger and closer relationship which is more conducive to **his** educational growth, he must seek out this other teacher. After all, his life depends upon it! This is a remarkable statement. *Torah* learning is our life, and it behooves us to study with the one who will best maximize our efforts and potential.