

## Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes beheld, and lest you remove from your heart all the days of your life, and make them known to your children. (4:9)

We are admonished to retain focus on *Torah* study, lest we forget any part of it. It is not easy to remember everything that we learn. After all, we are only human, so we forget. A *chasid* once came before the **Chidushei Ha'rim** with such a complaint. How was he to be expected to remember everything that he had learned? The *Rebbe* responded, "Tell me, my dear friend, did you ever forget to do something that your life depended on, such as eating or sleeping?" The *chasid* responded emphatically, "Of course not!" The *Rebbe* countered, "Eating and sleeping are functions upon which your life depends. Consequently, you would never forget to do them. Is the *Torah* any different? Your life also depends upon it. Without *Torah* you have no life!" Our problem with remembering what we learn is not associated with memory, but, rather, with our attitude towards the indispensability of *Torah* to our lives.

**Horav Chaim M'Krasna, zl**, who was a close confidant of the *Baal Shem Tov*, once told the story of a man who came to his city. He declared that he would walk across a tightrope suspended across a river, if he would be given one hundred gold coins. As is to be expected, a large crowd assembled at the banks of the river to see the tightrope walker perform this most daring feat. Indeed, even *Rav* Chaim was among the spectators. He stood in complete awe, solemnly observing every step of this daring exhibition with unusual intensity. His close friends were taken aback at the *rav's* extraordinary engrossment in the man's bold walk. When they asked him for an explanation, he said, "I looked at the man who was risking his life to walk across a tightrope, and I realized that he was doing this for a bag of gold. He was risking his life for money. Nonetheless, while he was walking across the rope, in danger of losing his life with every step, his mind was completely, totally and unequivocally upon one thing - his next step on the rope. Once he had begun his trek, the money no longer had any value, nothing mattered but his performance. He maintained absolute concentration upon his act. One wrong move, and he would plunge into the river. All of this undivided attention, this total abnegation of any unrelated thought, was directed for one purpose- money. If someone can divorce himself from any extraneous thoughts in order to amass money, how much more so is it demanded of us that we maintain total concentration and devotion when serving Hashem? Nothing should be able to sway our minds, nothing should penetrate and compromise our relationship with the Almighty."

In a thoughtful play on the text of the *pasuk*, **Horav Y. Trunk M'Kutna, zl**, infers a practical and timely message. The primary concern of some people is the education of their children. They do everything to provide the finest *rebbeim* and *chavrusos*, study partners, for their children. They, regrettably, forget that they still have a responsibility to themselves. They must also study *Torah*. Indeed, if the father does not learn *Torah*, he will not appreciate it. The *Torah* tells us, "*Beware*

*for yourself - lest you remove from your heart - and make known to your children."* One must realize that it is incorrect to concern oneself only about his children's *Torah* study, while neglecting his own. For, if he does not learn, his value judgment regarding his child's *Torah* study will be impaired.