

## **When I call out the Name of Hashem, ascribe greatness to our G-d. (32:3)**

The mention of Hashem's Name should evoke feelings of awe, as well as pride. The mere fact that we merit the He count us as His children, representing Him in the world as His nation, should generate joy and excitement. His Name should resonate throughout our very being, to the point that we want to shout out His Name and declare our allegiance to Him. We must give honor to His Name and all that it represents. The Torah, which is Hashem's blueprint for our lives, must be an integral part of our life's endeavor. When we study Torah, the joy should be palpable. Knowledge, without joy and enthusiasm in learning, is like a *guf b'li neshamah*, a body without a soul. *Horav Aharon Walkin, zl, Rav* of Pinsk and author of *Bais Aharon*, once visited a Jewish community not far from his home. Having such a distinguished *Rav* visit the community meant much to them. They asked him to visit the local *yeshivah*, which had broken with the standard of Torah learning in the area and introduced general studies into their daily program. This was some time before it became acceptable and even a government-mandated requisite. They asked that he test the students for their knowledge of *Talmud*.

The *Rav* acquiesced and tested the highest class and afterwards rendered his opinion concerning the students: "They know and understand the material; however, this is not considered *limud HaTorah*. They do not live the *sugyos*, topics, which they learn. *Talmud* is just another subject to them. In our *yeshivah* (circles), when one studies *Meseches Bava Metzia* and reads the *Gemorah's* statement, *Leima masnissin d'lo k'Ben Naness*, 'We must say that our *Mishnah* does not coincide with the opinion of *Ben Naness*,' they become visibly upset. Why should the *Mishnah* not agree with *Ben Naness*? Everything they learn is important to them. I did not make this observation of your students. They learn – they know, but without life and without joy."

A discussion ensued between a group of students in the presence of *Horav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, zl*, concerning the definition of a *masmid*, diligent student. They measured it in the number of hours expended in learning. The *Rosh Yeshivah* listened and added his own thoughts on the matter: "*Hasmadah* is not determined by how many hours one learns without interruption, rather, it is measured by what a person is prepared to do to in order to close his *Gemorah*." It is not how long one studies, but how much one values his learning.

*Gedolei Yisrael* throughout the generations have lived by the maxim of *Havu godel leiElokeinu*; "Everything that they did was focused on glorifying Hashem." *Horav Chaim Ezra Barzel, zl*, was a patient in the hospital for an extended period. During his stay, his good friend, *Horav Sholom Shwadron, zl*, was also a patient. These two sages had grown up together, their friendship harkening back to their youth. Both sages were battling serious illnesses.

One look into *Rav Sholom's* eyes showed that he was in great emotional pain. When *Rav Chaim Ezra* took a look at *Rav Sholom*, he said, "*Rebbe Sholom*, listen to me." Despite the fact that his

voice was low and weak, due to age and illness, the fire and passion that accompanied it were palpable. “*Rebbe* Sholom, a king has many soldiers. Some fight with tanks. Others fight in the sky, while yet others fight on the sea, and infantry men fight on land. They have paratroopers and special forces. All combine to provide security for their monarch. True, we are aged and no longer in the physical condition in which we once were. We are unable to establish and teach students as we once did. But, *Rebbe* Sholom, the king has one group of soldiers who do not go into the fray of battle. They remain in the palace and comfort the king with song. My friend, we can still sing for the King! We can recite *Tehillim* in His honor and praise Him with all our hearts! Come, let us go together and recite *Tehillim* to praise Hashem!”

*Rav* Sholom’s eyes emitted warm tears. He understood that, despite frailty and weakness – they were still soldiers! This is how one fulfills, *Havei godel leiElokeinu*. We live to glorify His Name with whatever we have, with whatever ability and capacity. After all, that is what soldiers do.