To receive these Divrei Torah: Text the word "PARSHA" to 22828 or email us at jepqueens@gmail.com

www.JEPQUEENS.com
76-01 147 St | Flushing, NY

JEP Jewish Education Program Queens

(718) 544-5213
JEPQueens@gmail.com

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

TICK TOCK, TICK TOCK

PARSHAS BEHA'ALOSCHA

A woman had become the millionth customer at the local grocery chain. Her prize was that she was given 15 minutes of free shopping. Anything that she could grab and put in a cart would be hers. On the day that she was told to come, she came prepared. She wore special running shoes and had a map of the store and aisles attached to a cap on her head. She planned her route and planned how she would utilize multiple shopping carts. Every second counted and she wanted to maximize her time to the fullest. (Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld on Torah.org quoting Rabbi Zev Leff, Rav of Moshav Mattisyahu, Israel)

Pirkei Avos (2:20) quotes Rabbi Tarfon who says, *"The day is short, there is much work to do, the workers are lazy, the reward is great, and the Master of the house is pressing."*

> *"The day is short, there is much work to do, the workers are lazy, the reward is great, and the Master of the house is pressing." (Pirkei Avos 2:20)*

Rabbi Tarfon is saying that life is short and there is much to be done. Few of us live our days with a sense of urgency, despite the great rewards for our accomplishments. There are many distractions that take away our energy and our time. Some distractions are important to allow us to recharge and to allow us some relaxation to help cope with life's challenges. However, those diversions should not become our main focus in life. We must stop to think of why Hashem created us. Was it to earn more and more money, buy multiple houses and cars, go on numerous vacations, and spend hours following sports? Again, some of that is important but should that be our main focus? Hashem put us in the world to accomplish certain things. Hashem promises us great and everlasting rewards for the accomplishments that Hashem specifies. Learning Torah and performing mitzvos is our true mission in life for which we receive eternal rewards. In addition, we become happier and better people through the Torah that we learn and the mitzvos that we do. The less time that we spend on distractions and the more time and energy that we invest into learning Torah and doing mitzvos, the more eternal reward we will receive and the happier we will feel.

Midrash Rabba (Shmos 47:7) quotes an analogy of a king who gave his servant 24 hours to count gold coins in his treasury. The king told his servant that he may keep all the coins that he counted. During that time, the servant had no desire to eat or drink. When the servant got tired and wanted to go to sleep, he told himself that for every minute that he would sleep he would lose the opportunity to count more gold coins. Similarly, during the 40 days and 40 nights that Hashem taught Moshe the Torah on Har Sinai, Moshe did not eat or drink. Obviously, this was a miracle. Even when Moshe was tired and wanted to sleep, Moshe told himself that he could not miss this golden opportunity. Hashem had given him a set time of 40 days and 40 nights and Moshe did not want to waste this special opportunity of Hashem teaching him the Torah, even for one moment. Hashem miraculously made it possible for Moshe to manage without sleep for those 40 days and 40 nights.

Although our focus should be on learning Torah and doing mitzvos, it says in **Mishlei** (3:6), " בְּכָל דְּרָכֶיךָ דָּעֵהוּ", we should serve Hashem in all that we do. And it says in **Pirkei Avos** (2:12), *"...let all your actions be for [the sake of] the name of Heaven."* **Bartenura** explains that Hashem considers even our mundane actions as mitzvos if we do them to help us serve Hashem better. For example, our sleeping and eating are considered mitzvos if our intention in doing them

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

is to be alert or capable so we can serve Hashem better.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org) brings a similar idea from our parsha. The leviim were given tasks to assist the kohanim in the Mishkan and in the Beis HaMikdash. The Torah says that the leviim were tasked, ...*"from the age of twenty-five years and above."* At the age of 50, the leviim retired from their more difficult tasks and only continued the easier ones (see **Rashi** pasuk 25). **Rashi** is bothered by a question. This pasuk infers that the leviim started working at age 25. Whereas in an earlier pasuk (Bamidbar 4:3) it says that they started at the age of 30. Isn't that contradictory? **Rashi** answers that from the age of 25, the leviim learned the laws of what they were supposed to do. At the age of 30, they started doing the actual work. **Rabbi Frand** quotes an interesting question from the **Shemen HaTov** (volume 5). A kohain's service in the *Bais Hamikdash* is seemingly much more intricate and involved than a levi's service. Yet, the Torah does not mention that the kohanim have a training period to learn the laws before they do the different services. Why do the leviim have a 5-year training period whereas the kohanim have no training period?

The **Shemen HaTov** answers that a kohain can perform the *Avodah, service,* from the time that he is bar mitzvah until the time that he dies. He could be serving in the *Bais Hamikdash* for about sixty or seventy years. A levi's service is only for twenty years. So Hashem gave him the training period in advance. When someone has such limited time to do the *Avodah*, he needs to know immediately what he needs to do. He needs to be totally prepared and ready to start promptly. However, a kohain has potentially sixty or seventy years of service. Accordingly, Hashem incorporated the training period for the kohain within his years of service.

The levi had a limited time to do the Avodah. Thus, he needed five years of preparation so that when he began his service at age 30, he would know exactly what to do immediately. We, too, have limited time in this world. We need to be careful with the limited time that is available to us and maximize that time to do that which Hashem wants from us.

This is an important message for all who are privileged to learn Torah. **Rabbi Frand** says that however much time a day one can devote to learning, he should use productively. He should not waste that time. He should learn to his maximum potential for the maximum time that he has to learn.

Tick tock, tick tock. The clock that represents the years of our lives is ticking. We have a limited lifetime. We should choose to live productive and not wasteful lives. Hashem tells us that our main focus should be to learn Torah and perform mitzvos. The less time that we spend on distractions and the more time and energy that we invest into learning Torah and doing mitzvos, the more eternal reward we will receive and the happier we will feel.

Fundraising Breakfast this Sunday. 9 AM-10:15 at Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim, 76-01 147 St.
Come, to show your support!
To Donate, go to JEPQueens.com or Zelle to JEPqueens@gmail.com

Sponsored In Memory of: Mindel Adina bat Natan Zvi; Shmuel ben Eliezer Lipa; Shirley Shaindel Yaffa bat Yehuda Shmuel; Hadassah bas Yaakov; Faiga bat Pinchas; Yaakov ben Yeshayahu; Gershon ben Hillel; Gita bat Gershon; Rav Chaim Dov Weissmandl ben Rav Yoseph; Shraga Fayvel Leb ben Shmuel Abraham; Moshe ben Yitzchok; Sarah Vital bas Avrohom Yitzchok; R' Yisroel ben R' Yaakov; Risha Toiba bas R' Gershon, Zichronam Livracha.

Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.
To receive these weekly divrei Torah by email, send a request to jepqueens@gmail.com