

YOU FORGOT? NO PROBLEM?

PARSHAS HA'AZINU

A woman was having an operation to remove a brain tumor. She was kept awake to respond as the doctor touched various parts of her brain. The operation was going well. If she responded when the doctor touched part of her brain, it meant that it was healthy tissue, and they did not remove it. If she did not respond to contact, it meant that the tissue was dead, and they removed it. At one point, the woman startled the doctors by screaming. When the doctors recovered from her unexpected scream, she explained what had occurred. When they had touched a certain part of her brain, she had suddenly visualized a scene that had happened many years earlier, when she had been a baby. She had "seen" her now-departed aunt leaning over her crib. This woman's reaction to a very old memory confirmed that everything we see, and experience makes an indelible impression in the brain, for eternity. (Echoes of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn)

I studied very hard for my LSATS (The Law School Admission Test). I forgot some of the material and failed the test. Oh no!

I studied very hard for my MCATS (a standardized medical admission test that is a key prerequisite for students applying to medical school). I forgot some of the material and failed the test. Oh no!

I listened attentively to the Gemorah shiur. I understood it fairly well during the shiur. A short while after the shiur, I couldn't remember it enough to review it. Still awesome!

Rabbi Yaakov Neimann zt"l (Darchei Mussar) says that by nature, if one's efforts don't produce successes, he does not feel satisfaction with what he did. Therefore, there are students who become discouraged in their Torah learning because they forget part or all of what they had learned. They may feel that it is pointless to

*"For it is not a futile thing
for you, for it is your life;
and by this matter will you
live long on the land"
(Devarim 32:47)*

learn Torah since they don't remember it. **Rabbi Neimann** zt"l says that this feeling, although understandable, **is a big mistake!** The mitzvah is to learn Torah, just for the sake of learning Torah. The

purpose of learning is NOT to retain the knowledge. Rather, learning Torah for its own sake, without ulterior motives, helps one merit many spiritual and physical rewards (Pirkei Avos 6:1). The effort of toiling in Torah is what purifies and sanctifies a person, enabling him to achieve all the rewards that are mentioned in **Pirkei Avos**. (Yalkut Lekech Tov by Yaakov Yisroel Beifus)

Rashi (Devarim 32:47) says, "It is not for nothing that you are to occupy yourselves laboriously with it [Torah] because much reward depends on it, for it is your life."

Rabbi Chaim Volozhin zt"l says (Ruach Chaim) that the very existence of the world is

dependent on Torah learning. If there would be an absence of Torah learning for even a moment, Creation would revert, back to nothingness. **One studying Torah, for its own sake, may likely be the ONE who sustains the world at any given moment** (Pirkei Avos Treasury by Rabbi Moshe Lieber).

Rabbi Neimann zt"l continues and says that the effort, the toil in Torah, is what is primary, more so than remembering one's learning. Moreover, as a result of his sincere learning, Hashem will reward him with the ability to remember his learning.

The world exists only because, somewhere, Torah is being learned every second of the day.

Never stop learning Torah, even if you don't see the fruit of your labors.

Even if you don't retain what you learned, the merit of your Torah learning itself, is unimaginable!

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, 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.

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