

This week's פרשה is the second longest leining of the year, ויקהל/פקודי פרשת החדש. In ויקהל, משה רבינו makes a very interesting and definitive statement (35:10): וְכָל חֶכְמָם לֵב בָּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' - All of those who have a wise heart will come and do everything that Hashem has commanded. Rabbi Dr. Twerski, the famous psychiatrist and תלמיד חכם, has a very interesting story to tell about in relation to this פסוק. And I'm going to read it to you:

"I attended an event in which a friend, a prominent attorney who had recovered from alcoholism, celebrated his 25th year of sobriety. He reminisced about his early years of struggle and shared his history with those attending.

'Initially, I bitterly resisted joining Alcoholics Anonymous and finally did so under coercion when I was threatened with the loss of my job. I attended AA meetings regularly, but in spite of that, I was never able to abstain from drinking for more than two consecutive weeks. After a number of such relapses, I approached one of the older gentlemen at the program. "What is it that I'm doing wrong", I asked. "I keep coming back regularly. It doesn't seem to help. I still go out and get drunk". The older man responded very calmly. "I'm glad you asked me this, young man, because I've been observing you. I'll tell you what your trouble is. You're trying to analyze and understand this program, and your thinking gets in the way. Just stop trying to understand what it is and just do as you're told. You will stay sober". 'That was the most ridiculous thing I'd ever heard', my friend said. This was anathema, [anathema means poison to me], and downright insulting. What does it mean, stop trying to understand and do as you're told? I am a lawyer, an intelligent thinking person. I never do anything unless I understand why I'm doing it. A bit later it occurred to me that with all my thinking and intelligence, I was repeatedly getting drunk, whereas this senior person was staying sober. He obviously was doing something right. Against my better judgment, I decided I would do as he said, but only as a temporary experiment. That experiment has now extended to 25 years. I do as I am told, I have stayed sober, and I have been eminently successful in my profession. At times, my intellect tries to get into the act, but I stop it. I know where that will lead me. I think and analyze and try to understand everything else, but when it comes to staying sober, I do as I am told.'"

It may be difficult for a thinker to suspend his efforts to understand, but sometimes the greatest wisdom is to accept a superior intelligence, particularly when that superior intelligence is a benevolent Being, who does not stand to benefit personally from his dictates. And all the wise-hearted among you will come and do all that Hashem has commanded. The wise among you will do as Hashem instructs. At הר סיני, all the people answered וַיַּעֲשׂוּ וַיִּשְׁמָעוּ. In observing of the תורה, we must do what we are told, even if we don't understand why. משה רבינו was not preaching, he was living according to his own teachings. And it says everywhere, through the whole פרשה, בני ישראל did: אֶת מֹשֶׁה ה' צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה - what משה told them to do, and Baruch Hashem they were successful. Their superior intelligence notwithstanding, they did everything only as Hashem commanded, and not because they understood it.

The תורה wants us to think, the תורה wants us to analyze, but doing our מצות does not depend on our own understanding. An alcoholic will never recover if he relies on his own intellectual understanding, because the force that drives him to destruction is not a logical one and cannot be reasoned with. The drives that lead a person to improper behavior are not logical, we cannot reason with them. We have to do as we are told, and that way we will be successful and bezras Hashem have הצלחה in everything that we do, in עבודת גשמיית and רוחנית. Good Shabbos!

This is לעילוי נשמת

אבי מורי אהרן בן יששכר

אמי מורתי תמר רייזל בת מרדכי צבי

ואחי היקר אברהם יהודה בן אהרן.



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