

Dvar Torah for Birkat HaChamah (Blessing the Sun*)

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Based on Likutey Moharan I, Lesson #1

Finally! The sun is having its moment in the sun. There are so many, many lessons to be learned from this (most?) infrequent mitzvah that it would take at least 28 years to cover them all. Here is our modest contribution to all the divrei Torah being written and spoken on the occasion of Birkat HaChamah.

In the opening lesson of Likutey Moharan, Rebbe Nachman teaches that to live a fully Jewish life one must regularly seek and integrate into himself, the seikhel, the Divine wisdom, that gives life to every thing and concept in Creation. The Divine wisdom contained within, is a thing's purpose of existence. One's goal in this enterprise is, of course, to come that much closer to God.

This wisdom, continues the Rebbe, is a bright light, that clearly illuminates our way and is personified by Yaakov Avinu (our Patriarch), whose path required of him quick decisions and treading in darkness the Road of Uncertain Outcomes. This wisdom is symbolized by the sun which illuminates our way and it is acquired by studying Torah—even (especially!) in inconvenient or trying circumstances—in order to be a more loyal subject of God's kingdom.

Unlike the moon, the sun knows its way (Rashi on Psalms 104:19). Even so, despite knowing which roads it needs to travel and which not; where the pitfalls are and how to avoid them, it still takes the sun 28 years to return, to come home to its original place. Only after 28 years of journeying all over the world, and seeing everything under the sun, is the sun's teshuvah (repentance, return) complete.

So even if we were actually studying Torah with genuine self-sacrifice and actually knew what we were doing with our Jewishness; even if we knew which roads to take and where the potholes were, it would still take us a long, loooong time to get to where we ought to be, to that pristine state we began life in. And then, like the sun, we would have to start all over again—setting forth anew to warm and illuminate the world.

May all the roads we travel be the straight highways of God (Hosea 14:10) and may we never stumble. May we ever follow the the always radiant paths of the tzaddikim (Proverbs 4:19).

To paraphrase the classic Yiddish blessing, “Iber ayor, nokh amol (next year, [may you do it] again)” —next cycle, may we again make Birkat HaChamah, together with the Mashiach, may he arrive soon, in our lifetime. Amen.

*Don't know what it is? After you read the rest of this, go [here](#).

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