



# Find Yourself a Friend...and Get Learning! Simchat Torah Resource 5777



## SECTION ONE- We Are Commanded To Learn...

### Deuteronomy 5:1

Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them: Hear, O Israel, the laws and rules that I proclaim to you this day. Study them and observe them faithfully!

דברים ה:א  
וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת-הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת-הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי דֹבֵר בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם  
וְלִמְדֶתֶם אֹתָם וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם:

### Blessing before studying Torah

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy with Your commandments, and commanded us to engage with the words of Torah.

ברכת תלמוד תורה, מן הסדור  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

### Questions:

1. What exactly are we being commanded to do here in the Deuteronomy text?
2. Does this text remind you of anything else we say frequently?
3. What is meant by 'engage with the words of Torah' in the blessing?
4. Do you feel commanded to study? Do you feel commanded to do anything?

*Sweet as honey, sweet as honey, sweet as  
honey on our tongue*

## SECTION TWO- Learn with a Partner...

### Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 7a

Rabbi Hama bar Hanina said: What is the meaning of the verse "*Iron sharpens iron*" (Proverbs 27:17)? This teaches you that just as is the case with iron, where one implement can sharpen another, so do two scholars sharpen each other's minds by discussion of matters of law.

Rabbah bar Hana said: Why are the words of the Torah likened to fire, as it is said: "*Is not My word like fire, says the Lord*" (Jeremiah 23:29)? This teaches you that just as fire does not ignite by itself, so too the words of the Torah do not endure with one who studies alone.

### Rashi on Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 7a

"*Just as is the case with iron, where one implement can sharpen another*": for example, a knife can be used to sharpen another.

### תלמוד בבלי, תענית ז א

אמר רבי חמא אמר רבי חנינא: מאי דכתיב "ברזל בברזל יחד" (משלי כז:יז)? לומר לך: מה ברזל זה אחד מחדד את חבירו אף שני תלמידי חכמים מחדדין זה את זה בהלכה.  
אמר רבה בר בר חנה: למה נמשלו דברי תורה פאש, שנאמר: "הלוא כה דברי פאש נאם ה'" (ירמיהו כג:כט)? לומר לך: מה אש אינו דולק יחידי אף דברי תורה אין מתקיימין ביחידי.

### רש"י, שם

מה ברזל זה אחד מחדד את חבירו – כגון ספין על גבי חבירתה.

### Questions:

1. What does Rabbi Hama bar Hanina think the verse 'Iron sharpens iron' means?
2. What are the advantages (and disadvantages) of studying with someone else?
3. Are there times when it is better to study alone?
4. What do you make of the two metaphors here? Is either one or the other more compelling to you?

With thanks to  
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