



The Joy of Torah - For Life

## **Parshas Behar/Bechukosei -**

**Shmuz by Rabbi Shimon Max**

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The Medrash on this week's Parsha, Parshas Behar - Bechukosai, discusses the chesed of Hillel Hazakein, noting that when he left his students, they would accompany him and say, "Rebbi, where are you going?" He would respond that he was going to greet the guests in his home. They asked him, "Every day you have guests?" He responded, "Is our soul that despises overindulging in physical pursuits not a guest in our body? One day it is here, and tomorrow it isn't here." The Eitz Yosef comments in the name of the sefer Toras Chaim, that the reason Hillel described the neshama (soul) as a guest in our body was to teach his students that when a person eats and enjoys the pleasures of this world, he should do so the way a guest eats and drinks, which is eating and drinking in a rush and not overly indulging in the physical pleasures of this world. One can ask that if Hillel already implied that the soul despises and is disgusted by indulging in the gashmius of this world, then why did Hillel need to add that, "Today the neshama is here, and tomorrow it isn't?" Is it not obvious that a neshama does not need or want to spend time overindulging, especially after Hillel explained that the neshama is pure, spiritual, and holy?

We see from here that until you realize that our soul is on a different plane of existence, that in fact it isn't even truly part of the physical world, and that even when it is in our bodies it is in the mode of "here today but gone tomorrow", it's impossible to fully appreciate the real gadlus and sanctity of our neshama and to fully appreciate that our neshama is not interested in worldly pleasures. We also see from here that we shouldn't be afraid to think about the fact we won't be here forever, because if understood properly, this concept can propel us to appreciate who we really are. Our essence is truly another worldly existence with indescribable sanctity and Kedusha. It may appear like we are part of the physical world, but it is the furthest thing from the truth.