



The Joy of Torah - For Life

Parshas Chayei Sara

Shmuz by Rabbi Yehoshua Fromowitz

Written over by Moshe Davidowitz

24 Cheshvan 5782

October 26th 2021

The Medrash in Parshas Chayei Sara (61,3) brings down the famous story of Rabbi Akiva's students who passed away. In a slightly different version than the one brought down in the Gemara, the Medrash says that Rabbi Akiva had 12,000 students and they died during one time period. In the end he raised 7 new talmidim - R' Meir, R' Yehuda, R' Yosi etc. He said to them "My sons, the first ones only died because they hated each other and didn't try to benefit each other in learning, Put your da'as (internalize) not to do what they did." **They then got up and filled Eretz Yisrael with Torah!**

Rabbi Fromowitz asked 2 questions on this Medrash. First, why was it necessary for Rabbi Akiva to say "Put your da'as (internalize) not to do what they did." Can't we assume that if Reb Meir and the other talmidim who were gedolim beyond anything we can imagine would do everything possible not to fall to a grievous avaira, especially after witnessing 12,000 incredible tzaddikim get killed for that very avaira?!?! Just tell them what happened and after witnessing the holocaust that they saw, they would avoid those pitfalls on their own!

Secondly, even if somehow Reb Meir and company wouldn't be inspired to do their absolute utmost from seeing 12,000 people die from doing that avaira, then how would Rabbi Akiva's warning help?!?!?

Rabbi Fromowitz answered that we see from here 2 incredible insights into human nature.

1. It is possible for people, even very great people to see the most obvious, earth-shattering warnings with their own eyes and still not fully emotionally internalize it. **They still need to put their da'as on it and drive home the message by delving into it intellectually and emotionally!**

2. Even after seeing a massive warning one more tiny warning can still make a difference! Every little bit counts!