



## LEARNING BEYOND LOGIC

Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai, 5725\*

Before the Torah begins listing the rewards for observing the Torah, and the opposite for not doing so, we are first told what it is that we must do:

**אִם-בְּחֻקֵּי תִלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְנִשְׂתִּיתֶם אֹתָם:**

**“If you follow My statutes and observe My mitzvos and perform them.”**

Rashi explains that since the Torah says “and observe my *mitzvos*,” the first half of the *possuk*—“if you follow My statutes”—cannot also refer to the mitzvos; it has to be telling us something else, something additional. Rashi says that **“It means that you must toil in the study of Torah.”**

You can’t do the mitzvos if you don’t learn about them first, so we must first “toil in the study of Torah,” and then we can observe Hashem’s *mitzvos*, as the *possuk* goes on to say.

But why do we have to *toil*?! Why couldn’t Rashi just say, “It means that you must *learn* Torah?” The word “בְּחֻקֵּי” must have told Rashi that it’s referring not just to “learning” but to “toiling.”

Rashi understood that the Torah could have said “אם בתורתִי תלכו” — “If you follow my **Torah**.” Instead, the word “בחוקותי” — “My **statutes**” is

used. “בחוקותי” is connected to the word “חֻקֵּי” — engraving.

Talking is easy; writing is not too difficult either. But engraving? That requires hard work and expertise. The Torah is telling us that we must work hard on our learning; anything less isn’t enough. It is no coincidence that the *mitzvos* whose reasons cannot be understood by man are called *chukim*—statutes. Doing a mitzvah without understanding why can be challenging, like carving something in stone.

The fact that “toiling in the study of Torah” and “*chukim*” are taught to us with the same word means that they are connected.

Firstly, the Torah is telling us that when you learn, you must work harder than your logic dictates. You must treat Torah-study like a *chok*.

And secondly, toiling in Torah leads a person to understand that those *mitzvos* that he *thinks* he understands are in truth far loftier than the mind can grasp. “The ultimate knowledge is to know that we do not know Hashem.” The more you learn, the more you realize just how much more there still is to understand.<sup>1</sup>

*Printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 17*