

Special Mazel Tov to Rabbi & Rebbetzin Yehoshua Gold (Baal Hanechemadim M'Zahav) on the birth of a baby boy this week.

עדותיך אתבונן

לומדים מאת הרב אברהם דניאל אבסטיץ שליט"א, בעמ"ס סדה אברהם

זמן מתן תורתנו מקרא קודש וזכר ליציאת מצרים ...
(תפילה לשלש רגלים) - בענין הכנה לקבלת התורה

אתָּרֵךְ תַּג הַפֶּסַח אֲנִי מִתְחִילִין לִלְמֹד "פֶּרֶק אֲבוֹת" - פֶּרֶק לִשְׁבוֹעַ בַּמִּשָּׁךְ יָמֵי הַקֶּץ. וְכֵן הוּבָא בְּדִבְרֵי הֶרְמִיא (ס' רצ"ב ס"ו), וְיֹאדָר הִלְבוּשׁ (שם) הַטַּעַם לִמְנַחַּה זֶה יְהוּדִי: "וְיִמְנַחֵה מִתְחִילִין לִמְדַּר פֶּרְקִים מִמִּסְכַּת אֲבוֹת, וְנִרְאָה לִי הַטַּעַם מִשּׁוֹם שֶׁבְּמִסְכַּת הַזֹּאת יֵשׁ תְּמִשָּׁה פֶּרְקִים וְעַם הַתּוֹסֵפֶתא שְׁהוּא שְׁנֵי חֲכָמִים שְׁהוּא דוֹמֵה לָהֶם הֵם שִׁשָּׁה, שְׂכוּלִם מְדַבְּרִים בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹכָהוּ וּמוֹסֵר לִקְלָב עֲלֵינוּ עוֹל תְּרוּהָ וּמִצְוֹת, וְגַם הֶפְרֵק דְּרֵאשׁוֹן הוּא מְדַבֵּר בְּשִׁלְשֶׁלֶת קִבְּלַת הַתְּרוּהָ מִדּוּר לְדּוּר מִמִּשָּׁה רִבְעִי ע"ה עַד סוֹף כָּל תְּנָאִים, לָכֵן אוֹמְרִים אוֹתָם בְּאֵלֶּה הַשִּׁשָּׁה שְׁבִתוֹת שְׁדֵם מִמֶּנּוּ גְּאוּלַּת מִצְרַיִם עַד יוֹם מֵתָן תְּרוּהָ. וְיֵשׁ מִקְוִמוֹת שֶׁאֵין אוֹמְרִים אוֹתָם אֲלֵא פַּעַם אַחַת עַד שִׁבְעוּעוֹת, וְיֵשׁ מִקְוִמוֹת שֶׁחֹזְרִים וּמִתְחִילִין לְאוֹמְרָם אַחֵר שְׁבִעוּעוֹת וְאוֹמְרִים אוֹתָם כָּל יְמֵי הַקֶּץ, שְׂכִין שֶׁהִפְסִיק לִמְדַּר בְּרִכִּי נִפְשִׁי אֵין חֹזְרִין לִמְדַּר אוֹתוֹ עַד זְמַנּוּ שְׁהוּא שִׁבְעַת בְּרֵאשִׁית", ע"כ. מְבוֹאֵר מְדַבְּרֵיו, שְׁעִיקָךְ סִיבַת הַמְּנַחָה הוּא לִלְמֹד פֶּרְקֵי אֲבוֹת מֵאַחֵר תַּג הַפֶּסַח לַחַג הַשְּׁבִעוּעוֹת, וְהַטַּעַם לָזֶה מִשּׁוֹם שֶׁזֶּהוּ עֵיקֶר הַכְּנָה לִקְבֶּלַת הַתְּרוּהָ, וּבְעֻדַּת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ, נִבְאֵר עַל יְסוֹד אַחַת מִמֶּנּוּ אֲבוֹת שְׁנוּעָה לִקְבֶּלַת הַתְּרוּהָ, וְשִׁנּוּעָה לִקְבֶּלַת הַתְּרוּהָ, לִלְמֹד לְדִבְרֵי וּלְקִיָּם כֵּן הַמִּצְוֹת, וְלִכְּלֵךְ עֲבוֹדַת הַשֵּׁם" וְהֵנָּה תִּבְנֶנּוּ בְּמִתְנָה" (אֲבוֹת פ"ו מ"ד): "כִּי הָיָה דְּרַכָּה שֶׁל תְּרוּהָ פֶת בְּמִלָּה וְאֶתְכֵל מִיָּתֵם בְּמִשְׁמֹרֶה וְשִׁתָּהּ וְעַל הָאֵץ תִּשֶׁן וְהָיָה צֶעַר תְּרוּהָ וּבִתְרוּהָ אַתָּה עֹמֵל וְאֵם אַתָּה עוֹשֶׂה כִּי מִשְׁרֵק וְטוֹב לֶךְ אֲשֶׁרֶךְ בְּעוֹלָם הוּא וְטוֹב לֶךְ לְעוֹלָם רַבָּא", ע"כ. דְּרֵי מְבוֹאֵר בְּמִתְנָתִי, שְׁעִיקָךְ הַצֹּרֵחַ שֶׁל תְּרוּהָ הוּא אֵךְ וְרַק בִּיגִיעָה וְעִמְלּוֹת, וְמִי שֶׁתְּרוּתוֹ אֵינוּ בִּיגִיעָה וְעִמְלּוֹת אֵין זֶה "דְּרַכָּה שֶׁל תְּרוּהָ".

ויסוד דבר זה מבוואר מדברי הגמ' בברכות (מג, ע"ב): "אמר ר"ל מניין שאין דברי תורה מתקיימין אלא במי שמצוה עצמו עליה, שנאמר זאת התורה אדם כי ימות באהל", ע"כ. ומבוואר מדברי הגמ', דהקיום של התורה הקדושה אינו רק בלימוד בעלמא, רק ההתורה צריך יגיעה ועמילות הרבה לצעם קיום התורה.

הבחמדים מזהב

would be quite difficult to find a tenth men at that late hour. When asked if he had *davened* yet, he denied having done so. That was not a smart idea as the holy *Ribnitzer* saw right through him, and refused to include him in the *minyan*. At first, the man was embarrassed that the *Rebbe* had caught him in a lie. But then it struck him that his *Tefillah* of *Maariv*, simple and unassuming, was indeed special. It had unique value before *Hashem*.

We say in the *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov Shemonah Esrei* as follows: “*V’sein Chelkeinu B’Torasecha - Grant us our portion in Your Torah.*” What this means is that every individual Jew has a personal *chelek*, a unique piece of *Torah*, that only he can reveal. This is why every single member of *Klal Yisroel* was required to be present at *Kabbolas HaTorah* thousands of years ago on *Har Sinai*. One doesn’t need to publish a groundbreaking *sefer* on esoteric topics, or deliver dazzling *shiurim* replete with exciting *chiddushim* in order to have an individual place in *Hashem’s Torah*. On the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuot*, we all re-accept the *Torah*. Take a moment to reflect on your worth. Appreciate what you bring to *Torah* and to *Klal Yisroel*. No one else can do what you can do. You count, not just as a number, but as a soul with infinite value.

וה' במש"כ ה'רש' במס' פרה פ"ד מ"א הביא בשם החוטפתא וז"ל, "שדיה רבי יהושע אומר כל הדומה ולא עמל כאיש הזורע ולא קוצר", עכ"ל. דרי, שתכלית של לימוד התורה אינו רק עצם הלימוד שלמד, רק העסק והעמילות והיגיעה, שעמל ללעמוד על עומק ואמיתות הדברים, ומכלי שלומד ואינו עמל, דרי הוא כמו הזורע ואינו קוצר; דרי, שאין שום תכלית כלל וכלל מצד עצם הלימוד אך עמילות, דנחשב כזורע בלי קצידה - דרי מבורך והפירות של הלימוד, הוא אך ורק ע"י העסק והעמילות, ובלי עמילות בתורה, חסר בעיקר לימוד התורה. דברים נוראים

וכל זה מפורש בדברי **מֶרַח הַמִּשְׁנֵה ר' יְרוּחֵם הַלֵּוִי לִבְיוֹכִיץ וְצוֹקֵל**. דהנה פ' ש"ש על הקדא **אם** בחקותי תלכו וז"ל, ש'תהיו עמלים בתורה'. וכתב המשגיח וז"ל: **"כלומר: לא "ללמוד" לא "להבין", כי אם דוקא עמל, עד שאמרו בירושלמי (עוין קד"ר א' ג) שנגזרו עלינו לשכוח, כי אם לא היינו שוכחים לא היינו עמלים** בתורה. הרי מוכרח כי לא התבטלו דבריו רק עמל וכל מה שהעמל יותר **"בש" טפי מעלה"**. עכ"ל. וע"ז גם באריות דבריו שכתב לבאר חצונו.

הנה בברכת התורה, אנו מברכים: "ברוך אתה... וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה". וכבר עמדו כל המפרשים מדוע נקבע לשון של הברכה "לעסוק" בדברי תורה, ולא "ללמוד דברי תורה"? ולפי הנ"ל מובן היטב, שהתכלית אינו רק ללמוד התורה, רק לחיות עמל ביגיעה עצומה עד אין סוף. וא"כ נתקנה הלשון של הברכה דוקא "לעסוק" שזו מהותו של המצוה להיות "עמל בתורה". ומצינו בכמה מקומות בש"ס שהגמ' למד עיקר מהותו של המצוה מלשון הברכה, ומביא כ"ל שזו מהותו של המצוה להיות עוסק בכל כוח בהתורה הקדושה, ולא רק ללמוד התורה הקדושה בלי עמילות ויגיעה רבה. ותן לחכם ויחכם עוד!

ועל פי כל זה נראה שיש לבאר הטעם מדוע נהוגים ללמוד כל הלילה, ולא לישן לבילי בשעותיו. וכפשוטו, הטעם מנהו זה הוא משום שבבילי מתן תורה כלל ישראל היו ישינים כל הלילה, והוצרך הקב"ה להעיר אותם, וע"כ לתיקן את זה אנו לומדין תורה כל הלילה. אמנם על פי הג"ל יש לומר, שאנו מבינים עצמינו לקבלת התורה, וצריך התבטל בלימוד תורה כל הלילה הוא אך ורק להיות עמלן עמלן בתורה דמי שאינו חולק לישן, וישוב ולומר תורה כל הלילה אין צורך עצילות גדול מזה!

**שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחתם
לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם בַּמִּסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת כָּל זָכָר לְלִגְלֹתָם** (N)

Sefer Bamidbar opens with *Moshe Rabbeinu* being commanded to count *Bnei Yisroel*. At first glance, it seems like a straightforward national census. However, the **Ramban** brings a *Medrash* that Moshe did not simply ask each head of household how many members were in their family. Rather, every individual passed before him to be counted personally. Why was this necessary?

R' Yakov Bistritz זי"ל explains that this counting was not just about numbers; it was about identity. Every person in *Klal Yisroel* was counted, individually, one-by-one, to teach us a powerful message, that each and every single *Yid* matters, each and every single *Yid* has a unique *tafkid*, a distinct role and purpose that only he or she can fulfill. We often hear this concept mentioned and we nod in agreement, yet we must ask ourselves: do we really live by it? Do we diminish our own value, thinking we aren't as important, learned, or spiritual as others?

In order to answer this, let us relate a story that is very enlightening, about the holy **Ribnitzer Rebbe, R' Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz ז"ל**. Late one night, the *Rebbe* was waiting to start *Maariv* but insisted on having a *minyán* of people who hadn't yet *davened*. One man there had *davened* earlier, but decided to stick around assuming it

תזרת הצבי על הפטרות

וזהו **מספר בני ישראל בחול הים אשר לא ימד ולא יספר** ... (חושע ב-א, הפטרה לסדר במדבר)

Divine mercy. Rashi explains that this can be compared to a king who became angry with his wife and summoned a scribe to hasten and write a bill of divorce. However, before the scribe arrived, the king felt bad and reconciled with his wife. When the scribe arrived, the king decided to use the scribe's services to add to his wife's allowance.

Now we can understand the reason for the seemingly contradictory juxtaposition. *Hashem's* love for *Klal Yisroel* runs so deep that even when He turns away from us, exiles us, and declares that we are “*no longer His people*,” He still ensures that we multiply and grow in exile - for the way to *Hashem's* “heart” is through the continuity of the Jewish people and our ever-growing numbers.

וּדְמוּת פְּנֵיהֶם פְּנֵי אָדָם וּפְנֵי אֲרִיָּה אֵל הֵיכָל

alternately prosecuted and defended. “*The face of the ox to the left*” symbolizes the angels who accuse *Klal Yisroel* of the *Chet HaEigel* - the sin of the Golden Calf, whereas the “*face of the lion to the right*” stands for the angels who speak up on behalf of the Jewish people. *Hashem*, in His mercy, will quickly turn from the left to the right and pay attention to the defenders in order to rule with mercy.

Amazingly, even as we sin and are being prosecuted in the heavenly court for our sins, *Hashem* always leaves room for ministering angels to come before Him and plead on our behalf. "מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום" - we must live by *Hashem's* example and always give others the benefit of the doubt.

ביץ הריחיים – תבליץ מדרף היומי

א"ר יוחנן האומר שבועה שלא אישן ג' ימים מלקין אותו וישן לאלתר - שבועות דף כה.

The *Gemara* quotes ירוק ר' that says if one swears, "I will not sleep for three days", we give him מלקות and he may sleep right away. רש"י explains: This is a שבועת שוא, because it is impossible to stay up for three days straight.

The (זמנים) (אומרים) If one swears not to sleep for three days, or swears not to eat for seven days (זמנים) (אומרים) *paskens* like ר. יוחנן (הל' שביעות פ"ה, ה"כ) **רמב"ם** this is a שוא and we don't say he should torture himself and not eat or not sleep until he can't survive and then be forced to eat or sleep, but rather מלקין אותו מיד for uttering a שביעת שוא and he may now eat or sleep immediately. The מ"ן says it's תמורה that the above שביעות שוא puts these two cases together, as they are not comparable. When one swears that he will not sleep for three days, it's a שביעת שוא because he will fall asleep, so it's אפשר לקיימו and as a result, we are מלקין אותו מיד. But if one swears he will not eat for 30 days, he could control himself and not eat and when he is about to die, his שביעה will be נדחה because of פשוט and he will be able to eat מיד. So, it's not a שביעת שוא! However, he concludes that the *halacha* is like the רמב"ם that "שלא אוכל" is a שביעת שוא, but for a different reason. Since he swears not to eat for seven days, he's swearing to kill himself (suicide) which is דברי תורה and נשבע לעבור על דברי תורה constitutes a שביעת שוא. ועיי' ט"ז י"ד רל"ז. who says the same *svara*.

The **משנה** [שם] brings the ר"ן and defends the רמב"ם. He explains: a שבעה that "I will not eat", is comparable to swearing, "I will not sleep," because both are אי אפשר לקיימו. The fact that the ר"ן says he can fast until it's a סכנה and then eat, but still, since he will ultimately eat, it is considered a שבעה because it's לקיימו. The **קהלת יעקב** [ס' כא] explains the underlying *lomdus* between the רמב"ם and the ר"ן, as there are halachic ramifications if a שבעה is classified as לקיימו or א"א ד"ת. The שבעה לעבור על ד"ת holds: even a שבעה that גלגל א"א לקיים. So, even though when he ultimately eats, it's ג"פ דין, but since למעשה the שבעה can never be fulfilled, it's a שבעה. The ר"ן holds that only a שבעה מקיימים (he can starve himself) can't be מקיימים and is considered a שבעה. But not eating, which במציאות could be מקיימים (he can starve himself) just the *halacha* doesn't allow it, is just considered a שבעה, but not a שוא. [אות ג']

[ו"ד ס' רלו, ד'] שו"ע brings this *halacha*, it says: "נשבע שלא יאכל ז' ימים" but does not

“On that first *Shavuot*, when *Bnei Yisroel* were all gathered at *Har Sinai*, the Jews took a binding oath to keep the *mitzvos* of the *Torah*, and that oath has been in effect ever since. I want to learn the laws of oaths so I can understand how important it is to keep a promise and how serious it is to break one.” The young boy spoke with such earnest innocence.

But he was not finished. “In fact,” said young Shmelke, “there are forty-nine *blatt* (double pages) in *Meseches Shavuos* and forty-nine days between *Pesach* and *Shavuos*. If we learn one *blatt* every day, we will finish it in time for *Yom Tov*.”

R' Tzvi Hirsh was pleased with his son's erudite reasoning and he happily agreed to learn according to this suggestion. They studied intensely and when *Lag B'omer* arrived, they even reached a *daf* which mentions a *halachah* in the name of *Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai*. By the time the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuot* arrived, they had finished the *masechta* entirely.

The following year right before *Pesach*, the *Tchortkover Rebbe* again asked his two sons what they wished to learn in preparation for the holiday of *Shavuot*. This time the younger child, Pinchos, answered: “I think we should learn *Kesubos* (marriage contracts) and *Kiddushin* (the laws of marriages).”

The *Tchortkover Rebbe* was surprised. “Okay, but please explain. What do these *Masechtos* have to do with *Shavuos*?”

Now it was young Pinchos’ turn to respond, much like his older brother did the previous year. He smiled and said, “*Tatte*, by *Kabbolas Hatorah*, *Hashem* took the Jewish people to be His chosen Nation and said the words, ‘*I have betrothed you to Me forever.*’ He held *Har Sinai* over our heads like a marriage canopy. The holy words of the *Torah* were like our marriage contract, and He gave us a gift as well – *תורה שבעל פה* – the *Oral Torah*. That is why I think we should learn the laws of marriage contracts and betrothals – so we will know that the ‘wedding’ of *Klal Yisroel* and the *Ribono Shel Olam* was a valid one and that both He and His people are obligated to fulfill all the points of the contract.”

R' Tzvi Hirsh couldn't help beaming with pride from his son's well-reasoned words. The three scholars learned the two *masechtos* in record speed - finishing close to 200 *blatt* - until forty-nine days later, they celebrated both the holiday of *Shavuot* and the successful completion of their studies. "Ashreinu Mah Toy Chelkeinu U'Mah Naim Goraleinu."

משל למה הדבר דומה

שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחתם לבית אבתם במספר שמות כל זכר לגולגלתם ... (א-ב)

שש: There was once a boy who was learning in a respectable *yeshivah*, doing quite well, and understanding what a *ben Torah* is. Unfortunately, he got himself caught up with a bad group of friends. Although he had been a good *bachur* in the past, now he began taking his life in a far different direction. He soon found himself totally lost and on his own. He grew his hair long, his clothes were disreputable rags, and he was living in the dumps - with no financial support in his new “lifestyle.”

One day, he found an advertisement for a job as a janitor in a local *yeshivah*. Due to the lack of a better option, he called to apply. The young man showed up to the interview and was ushered into the office of the esteemed **Rosh Yeshivah, R' Shlomo Freifeld zt"l**.

He sat down to discuss his viability for the job and before he knew it, the *Rosh Yeshivah* had him waste deep in a discussion about his origins and where he grew up. After disclosing that he was a former *yeshivah* student from a respectable *yeshivah* and had been a full-time learner at one point in his life, R' Freifeld smiled and told him that he found a better paying job than the janitorial work.

“What is it?” the young man asked eagerly.

“I want you to become a *maggid shiur*!”

“What? A *maggid shiur*?! Me?!”

“Yes!” R’ Shlomo confirmed. “You’ve learned in a respectable *yeshivah* for years, and you undoubtedly have what it takes to give a good *shiur* on *Gemara*. I have a couple of wild guys here in *yeshivah*, and even some that I

to Yaakov, the consummate **איש תם יושב אהלים**? The answer is as above, that *Shavuot* is not about the *Torah* that we received per-se, so much as the **יראת שמים** that we got then. Hence, it certainly corresponds to Yitzchok, the **עמוד היראה**.

In truth, however, this *yirah* is not something unconnected to *Torah*. The **Maharal** ז"ל asks, why is it that *Hashem* had to hold *Har Sinai* over the Jewish people's heads and force them to accept the *Torah*, when they had already said נעשה ונשמע? He answers that *Hashem* was teaching them that *Torah* does not depend on their current desire to learn and observe it. *Torah* must be learned with *yirah*, with the recognition that even if right now I am not in the mood and don't enjoy my learning, I must learn anyhow, as that is what *Hashem* commands me to do, period! That is the *giluy* of *yirah* we got at *Matan Torah*.

The *Aibeshter* should *bentch* us that we should come to קבלת התורה with a firm commitment to rededicate ourselves to למד התורה and through that, yes, to come to love *Torah*, too!

מחשבת הלב

hekdes incorrectly, the object reverts back to חרולין. However, regarding *kedushas haguf*, the rule is, יש מעול אחר מעול. The *kedusha* remains intact. Regarding *Hashem's* nation, *Hashem* says, "נבים אתם למקום". Even when you sin, you are still Mine. In other words, our holiness is part of our DNA, קדושת הגוף so to speak, and can never be lost. Let us take pride in this realization and live up to what's expected of a *yid*, גוי קדוש and show the world what it means to be a *yid*.

אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים ... (שמות כ-ב)

Why are these opening words of the עשרת הדברות, which speak to all of *Klal Yisroel*, said בלשון יחיד, singular form? *Chazal* say מעמד הר סיני was not just a communal event. It was a קבלת התורה for each *yachid* as well, in their own unique and individual way. Hence, the *posuk* is talking to each person: I am your (singular) *Hashem* - אלקיך not only אלקיכם.

The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* describes the scene at that monumental occasion. "ויתעצבו בתחתית ההר". *Hashem* was כפה עליהם הר כגיגית, and told the *Yidden*, "If you're *mekabel* the *Torah*, great. But if not, שם תהא קבורתכם." There are two obvious questions. First, *Klal Yisroel* had already declared "נעשה ונשמע", so what was the need for this open threat at this time? Second, why is the word "שם" used? It should have said "פה" - right here you will be buried. Again, the following *yesod* is part of our *mesorah*, has been passed down for generations, and complements the above *machshava*.

Granted, *Klal Yisroel* in unison, "כאיש אחד בלב אחד", had already proclaimed "נעשה ונשמע". But *Hashem* came to them again on *Shavuot* and said that is not sufficient. I don't need only a communal commitment. I need each of My children's steadfast pledge as well. Because *each* yid has his private

³ **כִּי לִבְעֶבֶד נָסוּת אַתֶּם בְּאֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וּבְעֶבֶד
תִּהְיֶה יִרְאָתוֹ עַל פְּנֵיכֶם לְבַלְתִּי תִחְמָא (שְׁמוֹת כ"ו)**

Throughout *davening* on *Shavuos* we declare that *Shavuos* is זמן מתן תורתנו, the time that *Hashem* gave us the *Torah*. Now, this seems difficult: Why do we celebrate *Shavuos* as זמן מתן תורתנו, if after the חטא העגל we lost the *luchos*, and the “*Matan Torah*” of *Shavuos* was in effect בטל? We should really celebrate *Matan Torah* on *Yom Kippur*, when we received the second *luchos* permanently! Why do we still celebrate *Shavuos* as זמן מתן תורתנו?

Says **R' Asher David May *shlita***, the *posuk* states that the whole *tachlis* of *Matan Torah* was so that through the awesome display of "קולות וברקים וקול שופר חזק מאד" we should be inspired to great heights in *yiras shamayim* - י"י. לבעבור נסות אתכם בא האלהים ובעבור תהיה יראתו על פיכם בלבתי תחטאו". The *יראה* that they received then by *Matan Torah* remained indelibly etched upon our souls. It is that aspect of *Matan Torah* that we celebrate on *Shavuos*. Indeed, the Tur writes that *Shavuos* corresponds to *Yitzchok Avinu*. Now, that seems strange: wouldn't such a *Yom Tov* be more connected

קח את הלוים תחת כל בכור בכני ישראל ואת בהמת הלוים תחת בהמתם והיו לי הלוים אני ה' ... (ג-מה)

There is a fascinating *pshat* from the **משך חכמה**. The *Gemara* (*Megillah* 26b) makes a halachic distinction between items that come in direct contact with **דברים שבקדושה**, known as **תשמישי קדושה** (e.g. a *Sefer Torah mantel*), and items that are a step more removed, known as **תשמישי דתשמיש** (e.g. outside plastic for a *Tefillin* bag). The former retains its holiness and mustn't be discarded, while the latter may be discarded once no longer in use. What is the source for this differentiation? He says the *chiluk* can be extrapolated from this week's *sedra*, where the *Torah* refers to both, the *Kohanim* and the *Leviim* as "לִי", belonging to Me, *Hashem*.

The *Leviim*, however, as the *Torah* states, are "נְתֻנִים לַאֲהֶרֶן" (נְתֻנִים). So while the *Kohanim* are "קְדָשִׁים יְהוָה", תְּשֻׁמְשֵׁי קְדוּשָׁה, the *Leviim* are תְּשֻׁמְשֵׁי דְתַשְׁמִישׁ. And the *halacha* is that if a *Kohen* commits certain *aveiros*, he becomes defiled, and is prohibited from eating *Teruma*. A *Levi*, on the other hand, in the same scenario, is still permitted to eat from his *maaser*. The reasoning can be because a *Levi* is a lower *kedusha* than a *Kohen*. This is the source for the aforementioned contrast between a direct תְּשֻׁמְשֵׁי and a secondary one. (He uses this to explain other distinctions שֶׁם.)

In *Parshas Yisro*, the *posuk* says, וְאַתָּם תִּהְיוּ לִי מְמֹלֶכֶת כְּהֹנִים, "וגוי קדוש". The **Beis HaLevi** (*drush* 17) explains that through *Klal Yisroel* attained an elevated level of *kedusha*. Similarly, there are two types of *kedusha* in *hekdesh*. One is *קדושת דמים* - *hekdesh* will use the value of the designated item. The other is *קדושת הגוף*, an intrinsic holiness that exists not only in the monetary aspect but in its entire essence (e.g., a *korban*). Hence, when *Klal Yisroel* became a holy nation, which degree did they receive? The rule is that if someone is *מועיל*, he uses a money related

birthday cards out of obligation. I'm all alone.”

He paused. Then he said something I'll never forget. “You know, Rabbi, you’re going nowhere ... but you’re really going everywhere. I’m flying all over the globe. I know exactly where I’m going. I have my itinerary for the next year and a half - departure times, arrival gates, routes, everything. But you? You’re going around in circles on a little train with your children. And you’re going somewhere. Because you have a life. You have a family.”

And with that, he walked out. I sat there with those words echoing in my mind. You’re going nowhere - but you’re going everywhere. **(Excerpted from Rabbi Yaakov Astor’s column in the Monsey Mevaser)**

ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויהנו במדבר ויהן שם ישראל נגד החר (שמות יב-ב)

The *Medrash* (*Bamidbar* 1:2) notes that *Hashem* chose the *Midbar* (desert) to give the *Torah* and create the Jewish nation because He knew that in the *Midbar* they would greet Him appropriately. **R’ Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi ז”ל** explains that people in the desert have both no distractions, nor nothing to hide, from the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. They reach out to Him and accept His command fully. They long for this interaction and prepare constantly for it. In the process, the personal withholding that takes place in many relationships when people are not open to sharing a piece of themselves, did not exist when *Klal Yisroel* sojourned in the *midbar*. The result was an honest, open and loving *Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shomayim*.

Rav Elazar M. Teitz ז”ל, longtime rabbinic leader of Elizabeth, NJ, would relate a great story about the *Gaon*, **R’ Yaakov Meshulam Orenstein ז”ל**, author of **Yeshuos Yaakov**. It seems that the *Yeshuos Yaakov* was invited to be the *Rav* of Zalkava. Upon arriving at the city and taking residence, his first major challenge arose one *Shabbos*, right before *Shavuos*.

Apparently, there was some discussion about whether the residents of Zalkava are supposed to say the *tefillah* of “*Av HaRachamim*” on the *Shabbos* before *Shavuos*, when that day falls out on “*Yom HaMeyuchas*” (2 *Sivan*). The *Yeshuos Yaakov* was then relatively young and observed the various factions as they fought it out in *shul*. One group insisted that since the day was a day that *Tachanun* was not recited, *Av HaRachamim* must not be said. At the same time, the other group argued that due to the tragedies of the period, *Av HaRachamim* must be recited as it is on *Shabbos Mevorchim Chodesh Sivan*. (Rav Teitz added that this must be the source of the famous joke about the *shul* that said that their *minhag* was to fight about it).

Eventually, both sides came to the relatively newly installed *Rav*, the *Yeshuos Yaakov*, seeking his opinion. He heard both sides and recognizing the basis for such a *minhag* on both sides, did not rule on the matter. He tried to bridge the gap and create a compromise that would satisfy both sides. In a way, his idea worked for the two factions united and together decided to remove R’ Yaakov Meshulam from his position for not issuing a firm decision that was in their favor.

Now unemployed and having heard of the recent *petirah* of **R’ Tzvi Hersh Rosen ז”ל**, Rav of Lemberg, the *Yeshuos Yaakov* traveled to that large city seeking employment. When he got there, someone recognized him and sought to advance his candidacy for the position of *Rav* in the city (which he eventually won and accepted).

The individual was curious and asked him, “HaRav Orenstein, what brings you to our fair city of Lemberg?”

Without missing a beat, the *Yeshuos Yaakov* answered: “Obviously, it was none other than the *Av HaRachamim*!”

People tend to get caught up in the mechanics of *minhag* and assume that everything is a *minhag*. While *minhagim* are important and have a special *mesorah* to them, they are important when they are utilized to bring about a closer relationship with *Hashem* and his *Torah* and *mitzvos*. Merely creating *minhagim* that do not fit that bill - like a *minhag* to fight about something specific - are in fact, *Minhagei Shtus* (foolish practices). Often when we think about our religious connection to *Hashem*, we get bogged down in silly questions of identity and practice which focus more on our own selves and do not represent the true experience of our interpersonal relationship with the *Av Harachamim*. We can do better and achieve more.

מנין שנשבעין לקיים את המצוה, שנאמר נשבעתי ואקיימה לשמור משפטי צדקך, והלא מושבע ועומד מחר סיני הוא ... (מדרים ה.)

Two of the most renowned *Gedolim* of the past few centuries, the *Rebbe*, **R’ Shmelke ז”ל** of **Nikolsburg** (**Divrei Shmuel**) and **R’ Pinchos ז”ל** of **Frankfurt** (**Baal Hafla’ah**) were brothers, sons of the **Tchortkover Rebbe**, **R’ Tzvi Hirsh Halevi Horowitz ז”ל**. Even as small children they were known as prodigies and their father was forced to assume the duty of teaching them *Torah* himself. It was a challenging job and he taught them as quickly as their brilliant minds could absorb. When they were both well below ten years of age, they were already learning *Gemara* with several commentaries.

As part of their study schedule, father and sons would learn together the laws which pertained to the next approaching holiday. Thus, when the *Yom Tov* of *Chanukah* ended, their father began the study of *Meseches Megilla*. Having completed it by *Purim*, they began learning the areas of *Meseches Pesachim* dealing with the laws of *Pesach*, which they finished right on target; the day before *Pesach*. At this point, Shmelke, the elder of the two boys said to his father, “*Tatte*, we must begin learning *Meseches Shavuos* if we want to finish it by the time the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos* comes along.”

Their father smiled tenderly. “Shmelke, *mein tayera*, *Meseches Shavuos* does not deal with *Chag HaShavuos*.”

“I know, father,” replied young Shmelke, “it deals with the laws of oaths; but I have a reason why we should study it now.

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cheilek in *Torah* which no one else has! At times, this concept gets distorted and people tend to look around at others wistfully wishing they had their strengths. If only I had the talents, brains, passion, of “*yenem*” then I would really *shteig* and be able to accomplish. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* says that’s not what I need from you. I need you to fulfill your *tafkid* using your unique characteristics that I provided you with.

If however, you are not “*tzu-frieden*” with your own G-d-given talents and capabilities, then “שם” - there, you’ll cause your own demise. Meaning the concept of “שם” - there, I wish I was someone else, will only harm you.

May we be *zocheh*, *b’siyata dishmaya*, to be *mekabel HaTorah* on a personal level; each person committing to actualize his own *kochos*, bringing *Hashem* a *nachas ruach*.

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויעשו בני ישראל ככל אשר צוה ה' את משה בן חנו לדגליהם וכן נסעו איש למשפחתו על בית אבתיו ... (ב-לד)

In *Parshas Bamidbar*, we are introduced to life in the desert. It’s not exciting. It’s not glamorous. It’s not exotic travel. It’s the same cloud, the same camp, the same man - day after day. But it was also the greatest training ground in history. It’s where *Hashem* shaped us into His nation. And that’s what *Sefer Bamidbar* is all about. Desert life is not about destinations. It’s about formation. It’s about forming and forging ahead with a mission and purpose in life. We might not always know where we’re going, but if we’re with our families, with *Torah*, with *Hashem*, we’re going everywhere that counts.

Rabbi Fischel Schachter tells the following story with his signature blend of humor and heart: It was *Chol Hamoed Pesach*. Now, *Chol Hamoed* with a large family is anything but “*chol*.” It’s packed. It’s hectic. It’s loud. *Baruch Hashem*! So there I was, *erev* the second days, trying to survive the *Pesach* whirlwind when my wife - how shall I put this politely - “suggested” that I take the kids out for a while. Now, I know how this works, so I preemptively turned the request into a command to myself. I clapped my hands together and announced, “Everyone into the van! We’re going on an excursion!”

“Where?” the kids asked. “You tell me,” I said cheerfully, “where do you want to go?” That was a mistake.

The older kids groaned, “If we see the Prospect Park Zoo one more time, we’re going to turn into monkeys!” Another yelled, “Not the Aquarium again!” And then, I had a brainstorm. I quickly swerved and turned onto the Belt Parkway.

“*Tatty*, are we going to the airport? Are we flying somewhere?” Noon on *Chol Hamoed*? No, we’re not flying anywhere.

So what were we doing? We were going to the airport. Why? Because the AirTrain at JFK goes from terminal to terminal - and guess what? It’s free. You get a great view. It’s quiet. Quality time with the kids. And ... it’s free! Did I mention that?

“Listen,” I explain to the kids, “typically, you wait on line for four hours and pay twenty bucks to ride something for thirty seconds. This ride is longer and costs nothing. What more do you want?” They were skeptical. But their only alternative was going home to help their mother with the dishes, so they agreed. Suddenly, one of my kids asked loudly, “*Tatty*, you’re wearing your *shtreimel* and *bekeshe* ... you know, there aren’t going to be a lot of other *Yidden* at the airport right now.”

I retorted, “You’ve seen the way other people dress? I think we’re the least of anyone’s fashion concerns.”

And then - relief! We pull up to the platform, and what do I see? *Yidden*! Everywhere! Boro Park, Flatbush - we were all there. The platform was tile-to-tile covered in macaroons, orange peels, and *matzah* crumbs. I felt like I had just arrived at the *Mirrer Yeshiva* on *Chol Hamoed*. *Baruch Hashem*, I wasn’t the only one with this brilliant idea.

We boarded the AirTrain, and my kids were in heaven. They waved at every other AirTrain full of Jewish families. They were pointing at planes, giggling, clapping. It was a 10-minute loop around the airport, and we stayed on for over an hour.

At one point, the train stopped, and a man boarded. A real live pilot - wings on his uniform, rolling suitcase, the whole look. He stood there, taking it all in. You could tell he’d flown to distant war zones and survived typhoons, but this? This *Chol Hamoed* mob on the AirTrain? This was new. I quickly told one of my kids to give him a seat.

The pilot waved it off. “Nah, I’ve been sitting for 16 hours. I don’t need to sit anymore.”

I asked him where he flew in from. “China,” he said. Then he looked at me and asked, “Mind if I ask you something?” Whenever someone says that, you always mind - but you can’t say so. “Sure,” I said, dreading the next question.

“Are these all your kids?” I smiled. “Nah. Some are in Israel. Some are at home helping my wife.”

We started schmoozing. Then he asked, “So, Rabbi, which terminal are you heading to? Maybe I can help you find it.” I hesitated. “Eh ... I’m not sure.” He offered to look at my ticket. I stammered, “You can’t. It’s ... an electronic ticket.”

I was spiraling. The more he asked, the deeper I was digging myself into this fictitious flight. Finally, I confessed. “To be honest, we’re not going anywhere. We’re just riding the AirTrain going around the airport. Been here about half an hour.”

There was a long pause. He looked at me confused and asked, “Why?”

“Well,” I hesitated before plunging ahead, “These kids don’t have TV at home. They don’t play computer games. They don’t even own their own phones. So it’s up to me to give them quality time, something wholesome and fun. It’s not easy finding places that meet our standards. So ... here we are.”

He nodded. Then he got real. “I fly the world. Three weeks out, one week home. Sometimes not even that. If I end a flight in Australia but live in Denver, by the time I get home, I have to head back. My wife left me years ago. My daughter sends me