

AT THE ARTSCROLL YOM TOV TABLE

A PROJECT
OF THE
Mesorah
Heritage
Foundation

שבועות - במדבר
ד' סיון תשפ"ה
5785
MAY 31, 2025
ISSUE #240
RABBI YEHUDA MUNK,
EDITOR
DESIGN & LAYOUT:
MRS. AVIVA KOHN

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

PROJECT DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

SHAVUOS

HE HAS CHOSEN US

Reb Meilech Around the Year by Yisroel Besser

On the night before we received the Torah, we slept soundly, and the entire nation needed to be awakened by the Ribbono Shel Olam (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:56). To rectify this, the *minhag Yisrael* is to stay awake learning Torah on Shavuos night, depriving ourselves of sleep to immerse ourselves in learning Torah (*Magen Avraham* 494).

How are we to understand this Midrash? How could six hundred thousand people, a nation which included *Nevi'im* and *tzaddikim*, sleep restfully on the night before the greatest moments of their lives, the greatest moments in history?

The Arugas HaBosem explained that it was no accident. There would be times, the Ribbono Shel Olam foresaw, in which it would be difficult for Yidden to learn Torah, when the hassles of *galus*, the pressures of feeding their families, the challenges of being surrounded by host nations, would make it hard.

One might think that the obligation to learn Torah is relevant when one feels tranquil and calm, experiencing *gadlus hamochim*, an expanded state of mind.

No, said the Ribbono Shel Olam, it is not so. The Torah that I am giving you calls for a relationship, and you must be devoted to it both when life is peaceful and serene and when there is turmoil, when it is easy and pleasant and when it is difficult as well.

Hashem caused them to sleep deeply, and He awakened them just in time. They were forced to hurry to receive it, even without the opportunity to get themselves "in the mood." This was to give us that ability throughout the generations ahead, the

understanding that Kabbalas HaTorah doesn't depend on a person's intellectual or emotional state, because it is connected to their essence.

That's what a *kabbalah* means, true acceptance. Regardless of how we feel, regardless of what is going on around us, and regardless of the fact that we might have failed in the past, now we have to accept the Torah.

When we received the Torah, we had just emerged from hundreds of years of slavery. We were a people who did not exactly exude sophistication and prestige, but it was then — specifically then — that Hashem crowned us as His People, a nation of princes. A person can never fall too low to be deserving of that title.

The Torah states regarding this Yom Tov of Shavuos: ...ועשית חג שבועות ושמחת לפני ה' אלקיך, *You shall observe the Festival of Shavuos... You shall rejoice before Hashem, your God* (Devarim 16:10,11).

And then the Torah says: וזכרת כי עבד היית במצרים, ושמרת ועשית את החקים האלה, *And you shall remember that you were a slave in Mitzrayim, and you shall observe and perform these decrees* (v. 12).

This, explains the Chasam Sofer, is the depth of what happened at Har Sinai: the recollection of the years in Mitzrayim is part of what Shavuos is meant to celebrate.

If you do not believe that you have the strength or ability to fulfill and keep the Torah, then you should look back and remember. You *continued on page 2*



Reb Meilech Biderman



R' Eliezer Yosef Lederberg was a storekeeper who lived in Batei Varsha in Yerushalayim; he used every spare moment to learn Torah.

R' Eliezer Yosef was diagnosed with a disease that affected his eyes and was informed that he would have to undergo surgery, which would likely cause him much discomfort afterward and possibly even render him blind.

"How long can I wait until I undergo the surgery?" asked R' Eliezer Yosef.

They told him that he can wait six months, but not longer than that.

R' Eliezer Yosef realized that once the operation was performed, it was probable that he'd never be able to look into a Gemara ever again.

If that was true, he had work to do.

For the next half a year, he spent every waking moment of every day focused on one thing: learning two *masechtos* by heart. He learned *Rosh Hashanah* and *Beitzah* over and over, day in and day out. The only thing that consumed him

was mastering those *masechtos*. R' Eliezer Yosef prepared himself for the challenge that he might be forced to face on the road ahead.

On the day of the operation, his family wept while saying *Tehillim*, hoping and davening for a positive outcome.

As he was about to be brought into the operating room, he gazed at his family, knowing that this might be the last time he would be able to see them.



R' Eliezer Yosef Lederberg's matzeivah

**HE HAD
LEARNED
ROSH
HASHANAH
AND
BEITZAH
OVER 4,000
TIMES!**

He thought of all the moments he had wasted during his lifetime. But now he had achieved something remarkable. He had mastered those two *masechtos*.

When he woke up after the surgery, his eyes were bandaged. They wouldn't know for a few days if the


operation was a success and whether he'd ever be able to see again.

Finally, the day arrived. Thick apprehension filled the air. R' Eliezer Yosef took off the bandages and couldn't hold himself back from crying.

He was able to see!

For the rest of his life, wherever he went, he reviewed the *masechtos* that he had mastered before his operation.

After his *petirah* in 1954, his children read his will. In it, he instructed them to write on his *matzeivah* that he had learned *Rosh Hashanah* and *Beitzah* over 4,000 times. He explained his reasoning: "Perhaps one day someone will read this and accept upon themselves to do the same."

When I heard this story, I wondered if it was true. Then a friend of mine told me that he had gone to Har HaMenuchos himself to find the kever. There, he saw that the words were indeed inscribed on R' Eliezer Yosef's *matzeivah*. 

HE HAS CHOSEN US continued from page 1

were once a slave in Mitzrayim, lowly and humbled, and yet, you received the Torah, despite your humble station. So too, concludes the Chasam Sofer, today as well you can "observe and perform" the mitzvos; today as well you can rejoice in this gift you were given.

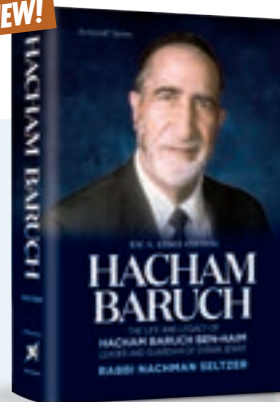
The *berachah* we recite as we accept the Torah each day is "*Asher bachar banu*, for He has chosen us" — because that was the entirety of Hashem's choice, to select us from among the nations. Once He chose us, however, there are no ranks or levels; none are "more chosen" than others, says the Chasam Sofer. What He chose was *banu*, us, every single Yid, regardless of his level.

"He chose to marry His Torah to us," Reb Meilech says, pointing to himself, to the people around him. "Chasunah machen mit un, with us," he says again, delighted, "we are the ones He chose."

Mattan Torah is found in *Parashas Yisro*. When you think of that *parashah*, you think of Mattan Torah.

You know why? Because Yisro was a *koimer*, a priest to *avodah zarah*. And he climbed so high, leaving it behind to become part of the *am Hashem*. We say the name of this *parashah* and we think of Mattan Torah, says Rav Leibele Eiger, to make sure we remember what Torah is and what Torah can do for a person!

Chazal (*Bava Basra* 75a) discuss the continued on page 5



Despite the fact that Hacham Baruch was such a scholar and so brilliant, he never made a big deal about the amount of knowledge he possessed or the fact that he had a mind and memory that were razor-sharp. He was naturally humble and instinctively shied away from drawing attention to his greatness. But the signs were there for anyone who cared to connect the dots.

David Abe Kassin recalls an incident that illustrates Hacham Baruch's incredible memory. He was learning *halachot shehita* in the *Shulhan Aruch* with the Rabbi in the Lawrence Avenue shul. One day they were learning together, and Hacham Baruch was reading to him from the words of the Shach, breaking down the intricate laws in a way that was easy to understand. Suddenly David, who'd been looking into the *Shulhan Aruch*, realized that the Rabbi's voice had become harder to hear. He looked up, only to see that the Rabbi had left his spot at the table and had gone to the nearby kitchen to make himself a glass of tea. What was fascinating was that, although he was no longer at the table and not looking into the *sefer*, he continued reciting the words of the Shach as if the *sefer* were still sitting open before him!

"Until today," David said, "I'm trying to figure out how a person knows every word of the Shach on the very complicated *halachot shehita* by heart..."

In the Syrian community, there was a longstanding tradition in which people would come together at the office of a business that was being established and recite selected pieces from different sources (similar to a *hanukat habayit*), as a *segula* for the success of the new enterprise. Hacham Baruch was always invited to take part in these gatherings, and he always attended them, as he did every other celebration, *shiva*, or event in the community. There he would go through the *Zohar* they were reading, stopping every so often to explain what they were reading and adding stories to bring the lessons to life.

One day, a group of people gathered at a brand-new office in Manhattan to mark a firm's opening. As the group took their seats around the polished conference table, people began asking one another who had brought the books containing the pieces of *Zohar* they were supposed to be read. To their chagrin and disappointment, everyone admitted that they'd forgotten to bring the *sefarim*, which were still sitting peacefully back in Brooklyn.

Now what? Who was going to go back to Brooklyn to bring them?

Hacham Baruch was not fazed. "It's okay," he said.

Everyone there looked at one another. What did the Rabbi mean?

The question was settled moments later, when Hacham Baruch began reciting the words of the Mishnayot, Gemara, Rambam, and *Zohar* aloud without hesitation, from memory, without missing a beat and without skipping a word.

And on the topic of *Zohar*:

Hacham Baruch would recite the words of the *Zohar* at any event where it was called for, be it the opening of a business or the night before a baby's *berit*. However, he had his own way of doing it. Whereas most people recite the *Zohar* as quickly as possible before carrying on with their lives, Hacham Baruch would stop after every two paragraphs and explain the ideas contained in the words that had just been read, usually bringing the message home with a story that resonated with the people in the room. It was his way of turning something esoteric into an idea that everyone was able to relate to in their own way.

R' David Seruya understood why the Rabbi went out of his way to attend every *huppa* he was invited to. But he didn't quite grasp why Hacham Baruch felt the need to go to every *Zohar* reading as well. He once asked the Rabbi to explain his reasoning.

"When I come to read the *Zohar*," the Rabbi said, "I am being invited into a person's home and tasked with giving a speech. This gives me an opportunity to tell every person and family what they need to hear. I cannot tell you how many lives were changed because I came to recite the words of *Zohar* in so many homes and businesses."

Hacham Yaacov Ben-Haim had this to add:

"My father told me that the two places where he was able to have the most influence on the people were during the *Zohar* readings and when a family was sitting *shiva* for a loved one. And because he was able to change their lives during those times, he never missed going."



Hacham Ovadia and Hacham Baruch on stage in the dome of Shaare Zion

NOW WHAT? WHO WAS GOING TO GO BACK TO BROOKLYN TO BRING THEM?

NEW!



MIDDOS MATTAN TORAH AND HUMILITY

Beis HaLevi on Anavah by Rabbi David Sutton

The Torah (*Shemos* 19:1-2) states: *In the third month from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from the land of Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai. They journeyed from Rephidim and arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the Wilderness; and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain.*

Ohr HaChaim wonders, why must the Torah emphasize: *And they encamped in the Wilderness?* Isn't it obvious that if they arrived at the Desert that they encamped there?

Since this is an introduction to the verses that speak of the giving of the Torah, the Torah hints to one of the prerequisites for Torah. And that is humility. The term *Wilderness* alludes to the teaching (*Eruvin* 54a), which states that one must humble himself like a wilderness, upon which people trample freely, in order to merit the Torah. Thus, the Torah emphasizes that they encamped in the Wilderness, implying that this trait was one of the requirements for receiving the Torah.

Rav Dessler (*Michtav M'Eliyahu*, Vol. II, p. 26) elaborates on this topic. He explains that success in Torah learning is not a natural occurrence, but is rather miraculous. Indeed, the Torah is described as a "gift," indicating that it is not acquired by simply studying and mastering the subject matter, as an intellectual pursuit. So, how does one merit this gift of Torah?

The Gemara (*Nedarim* 55a) states clearly, *One who makes himself like a desert, the Torah is given to him as a gift*, and elsewhere (*Sotah* 21b), *The words of Torah endure only in one who makes himself as if he does not exist.*

This, he explains, is the concept of *נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע*, *we will do and we will obey* (*Shemos* 24:7), the famous words the Jewish people said when



Rav Eliyahu Dessler

SUCCESS IN TORAH LEARNING IS NOT A NATURAL OCCURRENCE, BUT IS RATHER MIRACULOUS

accepting the Torah. This means: *We will do* and abide by the Torah, even before *וְנִשְׁמָע*, even before we understand the reasoning. (*וְנִשְׁמָע* can mean to *obey*, but also to *hear* and to *understand*.) This is an expression of complete subjugation to the will of Hashem, humbly committing to fulfill all His commands without any selfish or ulterior motives.

This mindset was a prerequisite of receiving the Torah, since only through humility can one merit the "gift of Torah."

This explains why *Torah lishmah*, learning only for the sake of Hashem and His Torah, is greatly praised and extolled by Chazal. Learning Torah for its own sake means that the person has only one goal and motive,

ignoring all of his personal desires and inclinations. And this level of humility is essential for maximum success in Torah learning.

There is another aspect to this, as well. The Gemara (*Eruvin* 13b) states that when Beis Shamai and Beis Hillel argue, the halachah follows Beis Hillel.

The Gemara explains: *Because they were easy and forbearing, and they would study their own opinion and also the opinion of Beis Shammai. And not only that, but they would mention the opinion of Beis Shammai before their own.*

Clearly, these are all signs of humility, and it is for this reason that Beis Hillel merited that the halachah follows their view.

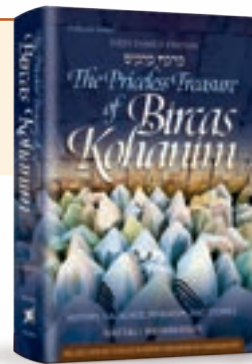
What is the connection?

Chida (*Pesach Einayim*, ad loc.) explains. This is not some sort of special reward that Beis Hillel merited, but a natural consequence. A humble person will always question his reasoning, and delve into the matter a number of times before coming to a final conclusion. Humility causes one to acknowledge that perhaps he is mistaken and that perhaps he should seek guidance from someone else. Thus, Beis Hillel, which excelled in this trait, would usually emerge with the correct opinion, and the halachah is therefore established according to their ruling. 📖

YOMI SCHEDULES FOR THIS WEEK:		SHABBOS MAY 31 ד סיון	SUNDAY JUNE 1 ה סיון	MONDAY JUNE 2 ו סיון	TUESDAY JUNE 3 ז סיון	WEDNESDAY JUNE 4 ח סיון	THURSDAY JUNE 5 ט סיון	FRIDAY JUNE 6 י סיון
	BAVLI	Shevuos 30	Shevuos 31	Shevuos 32	Shevuos 33	Shevuos 34	Shevuos 35	Shevuos 36
	YERUSHALMI	Pesachim 2	Pesachim 3	Pesachim 4	Pesachim 5	Pesachim 6	Pesachim 7	Pesachim 8
	MISHNAH	Avos 3:2-3	Avos 3:4-5	Avos 3:6-7	Avos 3:8-9	Avos 3:10-11	Avos 3:12-13	Avos 3:14-15
	KITZUR	95:12-End	96:1-5	96:6-14	96:15-97:9	97:10-End	143:1-9	143:10-18

WASHING HANDS BEFORE BIRCAS KOHANIM: A HALACHIC PERSPECTIVE

The Priceless Treasure of Bircas Kohanim by Naftali Weinberger



Although Kohanim, like all Jews, are required to wash their hands in the morning before davening, they are also required to wash their hands (up to the wrist) again before performing Bircas Kohanim. This should be done before the chazzan begins the *berachah* of *Retzei*. The Gemara (*Sotah* 39a) derives the obligation of handwashing from the verse *וְרָכְבוּ אֶת ה'*, *Lift your hands in the Sanctuary and bless Hashem* (*Tehillim* 134:2). Based on this *pasuk*, the Gemara there states: “R’ Yehoshua ben Levi said: Any Kohen who has not washed his hands may not lift them up to pronounce Bircas Kohanim.”

1. If the Kohen's hands remained clean since he washed them earlier that morning, and there is no water available for him to wash again, he is permitted to rely on the morning handwashing and *duchan*.
2. If the Kohen's hands are still clean, and in order for him to get to the sink to wash again he has to walk within four *amos* in front of someone who is davening *Shemoneh Esrei*, it is preferable for him to rely on the morning washing rather than walk to the sink. If his hands are not clean, he is required to wash them, even if that entails passing within four *amos* in front of someone davening *Shemoneh Esrei*. Similarly, he may walk within four *amos* of someone davening *Shemoneh Esrei* in order to reach the *duchan* at the front of the shul.
3. The Kohen does not recite a *berachah* when he washes his hands for Bircas Kohanim.
4. The hands of the Kohen should be washed until the wrist with at least a *reviis* of water, poured from a utensil by a person (and not directly from the sink).



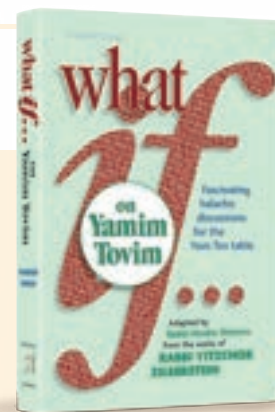
5. Although for all other prayers, if one does not have access to water he may use other cleansing agents, for Bircas Kohanim the only acceptable method of purifying one's hands is washing them with water.
6. It is necessary to pour water over the hands of the Kohen only one time.
7. Although the Kohen should make sure his hands are clean before washing them, if there is a *chatzitzah* (obstruction, such as a Band-aid) on the Kohen's hand that prevents the water from reaching that area, he is still permitted to perform Bircas Kohanim.
8. When one washes *netilas yadayim* on the morning of Tishah B'Av or Yom Kippur, he is permitted to wash only his fingers. Nevertheless, a Kohen's entire hands may be washed for Bircas Kohanim. In Eretz Yisrael and in Sephardic congregations worldwide, where Bircas Kohanim is recited on Yom Kippur three times (Shacharis, Mussaf, and Neilah), it is permitted to wash the Kohen's entire hands before all three recitations of Bircas Kohanim.
9. If the chazzan is a Kohen, and the shul follows the custom that a chazzan who is a Kohen performs Bircas Kohanim, he may rely on the handwashing of the morning rather than exit the shul in the middle of *Chazaras HaShatz*.
10. The Kohen should be careful not to converse with anyone after washing his hands for Bircas Kohanim, which would be an interruption (*hefsek*) between washing his hands and performing the mitzvah of Bircas Kohanim. 📖

HE HAS CHOSEN US continued from page 2

halachah of one who sells a plot of land to another, but there doesn't seem to be an access road to this field. Does the sale include the private path leading to the road or not? There is a *machlokes* in the event that the field in question was sold, but if it was given as a gift, then everyone agrees that the access road is included with the field, since “*hanosein, b'ayin yafeh*

nosein, one who gives a gift, does so generously.” A gift, says the Chiddushei HaRim, includes the object and also whatever it takes to fully enjoy it. Torah is the ultimate gift, and so, it is obvious that it comes along with the access road. “Each and every person is given the strength and the intellect to approach Torah,” concludes the Chiddushei HaRim.

All we have to do is step onto that road and start walking. 📖



Q: The administration of Yeshivas Derech Aliyah was searching for a new rosh yeshivah, and they had narrowed down the choice to two candidates. One of them is a brilliant and outstanding *talmid chacham*, and the other is someone who takes tremendous pleasure in his learning. Which of them would be a better choice to serve as rosh yeshivah?

A: One who vows to abstain from any benefit from communal property may not make use of the street, the public bathhouse, the shul, or the *sefarim*. The commentaries wonder why using the *sefarim* should be prohibited, as there is a rule that when one performs mitzvos, it is not considered that he is taking a benefit. Rabbeinu Avraham Min HaHar answers that Torah is different from all other mitzvos — Torah was given to enjoy!

The *Taz* also writes that Torah gladdens the heart. This is why one may not learn in times of mourning. In this way Torah differs from other mitzvos, as Torah lends itself toward the person's enjoyment. This is similar to the ruling of the *Magen Avraham* that one may not smell forbidden spices for *Havdalah*; although *Havdalah* is a mitzvah, and mitzvos were not given for our pleasure, the mitzvah of smelling spices at *Havdalah* is to enjoy them.

Rabbeinu Yonah explains:

The *pasuk*, *im tivakshenah kakasef*, *If you seek it as one seeks silver [money]*, means that we are being instructed to seek wisdom with the effort of one who seeks money. Through one's effort in searching, one attains the pleasure of one who is searching for treasure. The *pasuk* states, *sas anochi al imrasecha*, *I rejoice over Your word*. Commensurate with the pleasure attained through one's effort

and searching, the mind's eye will be opened and the heart will preserve (one's findings). *Chazal* say that a person can learn only that which his heart desires.

Hence, one's success is dependent on his desire.



The Brisker Rav with his sons Rav Berel (L) and Rav Dovid (R)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND WISDOM IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT YEARNING AND APPETITE.

The Chazon Ish writes in a letter that the relationship between man and wisdom is impossible without yearning and appetite. Torah is beloved, and that love opens the mind and the heart to absorb wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. The Chazon Ish adds that the accuracy of one's learning is dependent on the pleasure he experiences. The mind enjoys the analysis, and through this pleasure one can reach the truth of the matter.

The *Eglei Tal* expresses that the essence of the mitzvah to learn Torah is to be thrilled with the pleasure of learning, and that will cause the Torah to be absorbed

into his blood. Rav Hutner says that the enjoyment of acquiring Torah is integral to the mitzvah, whereas for other mitzvos it is merely a crown upon the head.

Accordingly, it would be preferable to appoint as rosh yeshivah the candidate who loves to learn, if he is capable of infusing his students with a similar desire to learn.

Based on this discussion, we can appreciate our request in *Birchos HaTorah* to sweeten the words of Torah in our mouths. We are not merely asking to find our learning pleasurable; we are asking for the ability to accomplish the mitzvah itself in a way that will embellish the mitzvah more and more.

The Brisker Rav was once asked why he had such an intense love for Rav Shach. He responded that it was because Rav Shach felt such tremendous enjoyment from an explanation in Torah. 📖

שאו את־ראש כל־עדת בני־יִשְׂרָאֵל

Take a census of the entire assembly of the Children of Israel (Bamidbar 1:2).

The process of counting *Bnei Yisrael* described in this *parashah* differs drastically from the election tallies or censuses that take place in our time. In the electoral process, it makes no difference whether the one placing the ballot is a professor or an illiterate, because the purpose of the voting is not to place a spotlight on the individual; the aim is simply to identify which party has accumulated the greatest sum total of votes. Similarly, the purpose of a census is to determine the total count of people in any specific area. The counting of *Bnei Yisrael*, on the other hand, was carried out as a manifestation of Hashem's *Hashgachah Pratis* and love for each Jew. Rashi tells us, "Because of His affection for them, He counts them at all times" (1:1).

The Torah instructed Moshe, Aharon, and all the leaders of the tribes to be present during the process of the counting. Since this census was performed by counting each individual's half-shekel donation, would it not have sufficed for a collector to go around and collect the money? Why did the leaders of the nation have to give of their precious time to be involved in this process?

This census was meant to be an uplifting experience: "*Se'u es rosh Bnei Yisrael*" — lift up the heads of *Bnei Yisrael* (1:2). The only way the counting could be performed was if the greatest men of the generation would take interest in the individual.

Ramban explains that there was even a more compelling reason

that necessitated the presence of Moshe and Aharon. "Additionally, *he who comes and introduces himself before the foremost prophet and his brother, the holy one of Hashem, has gained merit and life ... It is a merit to be counted by Moshe and Aharon because they will look at them favorably and pray that Hashem have compassion on them ...*" When each person came to give his half-shekel, Moshe would ask him his name and then bless him that he succeed in his endeavors.




Rav Shlomo Wolbe

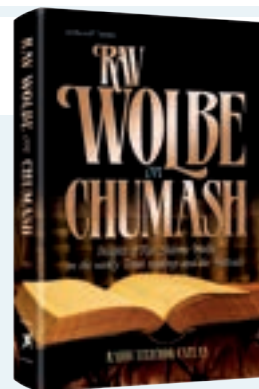
IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHETHER THE ONE PLACING THE BALLOT IS A PROFESSOR OR AN ILLITERATE

The Gra said that during the era of prophecy there was no need for anyone to try to determine his own unique purpose in life. He would simply ask the prophet, and the prophet would tell him what he was supposed to do and how to go about doing it. A person who came before Moshe, the greatest of all prophets, would merit an even more inspiring encounter. Moshe

would penetrate into the deepest recesses of each person's soul in order to give him an appropriate blessing for success. Afterward, Aharon and the leader of his *shevet* would also bless him individually. Such a process uplifts and encourages a person significantly.

It is crucial that every person know that he is important: "Each and every person must say, 'The world was created for me'" (*Sanhedrin* 37a). Every person has a unique combination of strengths and circumstances that distinguish him from anyone else who has lived or will ever live. He was born to specific parents, lives in a particular era and place, and was given certain talents because he has an *avodah* that he, and only he, can accomplish. The entire creation is waiting for him to achieve what is incumbent upon him.

If a person is not conscious of his own importance, he cannot begin his *avodah* in Torah. As an introduction to *Kabbalas HaTorah*, Hashem told *Bnei Yisrael*, "And you will be for Me a kingdom of priests (i.e., dignitaries)" (*Shemos* 19:6; see Rashi). Every Jew is a dignitary with responsibilities and an elevated status, no different from a dignitary in a government. It was with these feelings that *Bnei Yisrael* prepared themselves to receive the Torah, and it would be beneficial for us to try to emulate these feelings as well. 





Better Than a Computer

Rav Chaim knew the entire Torah, frontwards and backwards. When it came to Torah, his memory was like a computer. In truth, it was much better. A man came to him saying that he once learned that the entrance to Gan Eden is in the Me'aras HaMachpelah, where our Avos are buried, in Chevron. "I have checked all over and cannot find the source anywhere," he said. "I have even asked many *talmidei chachamim* but none of them knew the source either."

At the time, Rav Chaim was on his way to Minchah, walking towards the Lederman Shul. He thought for a second, then he took a step towards the shul and said, "No, it is not in *Bavli*." Then he took another step and said, "No, it is not in *Yerushalmi*." After a third step he said, "No, it is not in *Midrash Rabbah*."

With each step he was able to review these entire massive works and know if this quote was mentioned there or not.

After just a few moments, he smiled and exclaimed, "*Zohar*. It is in the *Zohar*, *Parashas Lech Lecha*." He even told the man the exact place in the *Zohar* where it could be found.

Another time, someone asked him how many times the name "Moshe" is mentioned in the Torah. A few moments later Rav Chaim gave the man the number.

The next day the same man returned and said, "Last night, I did a computer check and it gave a number very similar to yours. But the number it gave was greater by two than the number you told me."

Rav Chaim laughed and said, "The reason for that is simple. The computer does not read the *nikkud*, the vowels, it only reads the letters. The letters משה, *mem, shin, hey*, appear in the Torah many times. Usually, it is referring to the name of Moshe Rabbeinu. But there are two times that these same letters appear, but with different vowels. In one place, the word is pronounced *miseh*, meaning 'from the sheep'; and in the other it is pronounced *mashei*, meaning 'of a loan.' Your computer can't tell the difference!"

Rav Chaim's mind worked better and more efficiently than any computer.



WIN A \$36
ARTSCROLL
GIFT CARD!

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Bamidbar:

Why are there dots over Ahron's name in the verse that tells us how many Levi'im there were?

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.

Winner for Tazria Metzarah: YANKY EDEL, Brooklyn, NY

Question for Tazria-Metzarah: If a bris is performed on the eighth day and a week only has seven days, how come a baby usually has a bris on the same day of the week that it was born? Answer: The day the baby is born is considered the first day.

