

# האמר השבוע



WEEKLY PARSHA SHIUR OF MARAN, ROSH  
HA YESHIVA, THE RIGHTEOUS KABBALIST,  
OUR RABBI BENAYAHU YISSACHAR SHMUELI

Leaflet No. 124  
Parashat Bamidbar 5786



## THE PREPARATIONS FOR RECEIVING THE TORAH

The great merit of Meron • The elevated stature of Torah in the Land of Israel • More Torah — fewer tanks • The month of Sivan — hints and insights • The Day of Judgment for Torah • The yearzeit of Samuel the Prophet • Jerusalem Day on the day of Samuel the Prophet • “Shabbat Derech Eretz” and “Shabbat Kallah.” • Fire, water, and wilderness • Self-sacrifice for Torah • The dedication of the Ponevezh Rav • The matchmakers — 20,000 shekels • Supporting a Torah scholar at the beginning of his path • Counting Israel and avoiding the evil eye • The longing for banners • Fixed times for Torah study • Traveling without wheels • How to be truly happy

### We Were There for Nine Days

We merited a great privilege to be in the “shadow of faith” (alt. trans. shadow of the Divine Presence) — in the holy place of Meron, by the Tanna HaEloki, the righteous one who is a foundation of the world, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who influences and **guides the generation**. As Rabbi Shimon said: “Heaven forbid that Torah should ever be forgotten from Israel.” Such a thing cannot happen. He merited to uphold the entire world until this day by means of the secrets of Torah that he revealed — through the holy Zohar.

The Holy One blessed be He granted us and the holy congregation the merit to be in that “shadow of faith.” There was a tremendous spiritual awakening there in Meron. We stayed there at least **nine days** and spent **two Shabbats** there. It is a tremendous merit, a great illumination, a great elevation for the Divine Presence. **May it be his will** that this merit stands for us and all of Israel, our brothers and may the Holy One blessed be He bring the redemption near — very soon! As it says: “Through this [the Zohar], they will leave exile with mercy.”

### From the Defense Budget — Not From the Ministry of Religion Budget

**We have now completed the Book of Leviticus** with the Torah portions of Behar and Bechukotai:

“If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and do them, then I will give your rains in their season and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall give their fruit. Your threshing shall overtake the vintage...”

...” If you follow Hashem’s path and observe the Torah, everything you need will come to you.

What does “If you walk in My statutes” mean? Our sages explain: **that you labor in Torah.**

As it says in Psalms: “One thing I asked from Hashem, that I shall seek — to dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life, to see the pleasantness of Hashem and to visit His Temple (every morning)...” **The pleasantness of Hashem**, this is the Divine Presence that rests upon Israel and the Land of Israel through the merit of the holy Torah. **As it is written in the Yalkut**, “Search for Hashem and his might ; seek His presence constantly”. - **If you want to see the Divine Presence? Engage in Torah in the**

ים- ת"א חופה ב"ש

7:12 7:15 7:11 6:53 כניסה:

8:11 8:14 8:13 8:10 יציאה:

8:54 8:59 8:57 8:53 ר"ת

חסויות ולהנצחות ניתן להתקשר: 02-6249000 | לקבלת העלון דרך המייל שלח בקשה < m6222560@gmail.com

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**land of Israel!** And this the power of the holy yeshivas, especially here in the land of Israel.

Once I heard directly from our teacher, Rabbi Ovadia that one has to understand what is written here, that just by means of the study of Torah can we **overcome and gain victory over all our enemies** and all that seek out our harm. How do I rabbis say it? "Our feet were standing within your gates, O Jerusalem." Who caused that our feet should stand in battle? "within you gates Jerusalem" – these are the gates of Jerusalem that were involved in Torah – gates that were distinguished in Halacha.

Rabbi Ovadia would say that government leaders must understand that the budget for yeshivas should not come only from the Ministry of Religion, but also from **the defense budget**. Just as King Hezekiah gave the entire defense budget to Torah scholars.

Chacham Ovadia used to say: "Every **Phantom jet** costs millions of dollars, **every tank and missile costs hundreds of thousands** of dollars— but through the study of Torah, we won't need Phantoms or tanks."

**When David Ben-Gurion met the Chazon Ish**, he asked him: "Assuming we had a large budget now, what should we buy — weapons, or should I give it to you, to the yeshivas to buy Talmuds that they shall study Torah?" **The Chazon Ish answered:** "There is no need to deliberate, there is no question at all. Only Torah! Torah protects and saves."

### "Eternal Life" - This World

**Our sages said:** "If it were not for the Torah, heaven and earth would not exist, if it were not for my covenant day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth." "The world does not exist except by the breath coming from the mouths of the children studying by their instructors" and "Talmud Torah is equivalent in value to all - it is equal to all the commandments." "It is more precious than pearls, and all your desirable things cannot be compared to it" - even the desirable things of heaven are not equal to the Torah. We see how powerful the power of the Torah is! How priceless it is!

Every day we say: "He who chose us from all the nations and gave us His Torah, a Torah of truth **and planted the life of the world within us.**" What is the life of the world? The simple interpretation is that the life of the world is **eternal life**, because by the Holy Torah one acquires eternal life.

But the **Holy Alshich** says "the life of the world" is the life of this (present) world! That the life of this world was given to us only by the power of the Holy Torah, because through the Torah, abundance descends from the upper world to our world, and this gives life, and if there is no Torah, there is no world! The 22 letters (of the Hebrew alphabet) within the Torah bring down abundance through 22 channels (alt. trans., pipes) and through the

study of the Torah, abundance descends to the world. And just as the soul sustains the body, and without a soul there is no body, so the Torah sustains the world. Without Torah there is no abundance, it would be impossible to connect with the Holy One blessed be He. Without this, there is no world. This is a known and agreed upon thing.

### The Word "Sivan" Contains Everything

**We now have the Shabbat where we bless on account of the upcoming month of Sivan.** This year it is also the day before Rosh Chodesh Sivan, which is especially significant.

**Now first of all our sages explain** that the word "Sivan" hints to the reception of the Torah:

ו (samekh, the first letter of Sivan) = 60 myriads of Jewish souls

י (yud, the second letter of Sivan) = the Ten Utterances (popularly called, *Commandments*)

ו (vav, the third letter of Sivan) = the 6th of Sivan, the day of the reception of Torah

נ (nun, the final letter of Sivan) = the 50 days counted from the exodus from Egypt

Before who are you purified, the Hebrew word for who, composed of the letters Mem and Yud have a gematria value when combined of 50. All of this is hinted at by the word "Sivan" (ויו). Furthermore, **Sivan** is an acronym for: Sof Yissurim Ve'techilat Nissim—"The End of Sufferings and the Beginning of Miracles." Enough! The People of Israel can no longer suffer. Now is the time!

### Taking Out the Torah Scroll for the Curses

**Every year, the Torah portion of Bechukotai** is read close to the holiday of Shavuot. **Why is this?** The **Gemara in Tractate Megillah** (page 31a) states: It was taught that Rabbi Shimon ben Eleazar said: Ezra enacted for Israel that they should read the curses found in *Torat Kohanim* (Leviticus) before Atzeret (Shavuot), and the curses in the portion of *Ki Tavo* (Deuteronomy) before Rosh Hashanah, so that **"the year and its curses may come to an end."**

**In other words**, the Sages established the reading of the curses in *Ki Tavo* before Rosh Hashanah so that the year ends along with its misfortunes; likewise, they established reading the curses in *Bechukotai* before Shavuot (which is the "New Year" for fruit) so that the previous cycle and its curses might end.

One must realize that while our current weekly Parsha cycle is arranged so that *Ki Tavo* is always near Rosh Hashanah and *Bechukotai* is near Shavuot, this wasn't always the case. **In the time of Ezra the Scribe**, they did not finish the entire Torah in a single year as we do today; instead, they would read and complete the Torah

over a cycle of **three years**. Consequently, they wouldn't naturally reach "Bechukotai" before Shavuot or "Ki Tavo" before Rosh Hashanah.

**So, what did they do?** They would take out an **additional Torah scroll** specifically before the holiday and read the curses of *Bechukotai* from it. Similarly, two weeks before Rosh Hashanah, they would take out a scroll and read the curses of *Ki Tavo*.

### Shavuot: A Different Kind of "New Year"

**The Gemara asks** a question regarding this special reading.

By default, the custom of reading the "Curses" (the *Tochacha*) before Rosh Hashanah fits; for then the year ends and fits the phrase: "*May the year and its curses come to an end.*"

But why read them before **Shavuot**? **Behold Shavuot is not the start of a New Year!**

**The Gemara answers** that Shavuot is indeed a "Rosh Hashanah" (start of a year), because the Mishnah teaches that on Shavuot, the world is judged regarding the **fruit of the tree**. Since it is a Day of Judgment, it carries the status of a New Year, making the prayer for the curses to end appropriate.

### The Difficulty: Why specifically Shavuot?

We must understand this further. The Mishnah in Tractate Rosh Hashanah states that the world is judged at **four points in the year**:

**1st of Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah):** All of humanity passes before Him like a flock of sheep.

**Atzeret (Shavuot):** Judgment regarding the fruit of the tree.

**Passover:** Judgment regarding the grain.

**Sukkot:** Judgment regarding the water.

If so, Passover and Sukkot are also times of judgment—why are they not considered a "Rosh Hashanah" in the same way in contrast to Shavuot which is considered as a "Rosh Hashanah"? Why don't we read the curses before these other days?

Especially since on Pesach and Shavuot there is judgement on grain (bread) and water which are absolute necessities for survival, whereas fruit is a luxury. So why should the judgment for "fruit" on Shavuot be significant enough to label the day a "New Year," while Pesach and Shavuot are not considered as a "New Year"?

### The Spiritual Judgment: Souls and the Tree of Life

The author of *Tolaat Yaakov* provides a **wonderful explanation** of what "judged on the fruit of the tree" truly means.

Just as on Rosh Hashanah, G-d supervises and examines the deeds of man because it is the "renewal of the world"—judging how long a person will live, how will he live, and whether he will undergo sufferings or not undergo sufferings—**so too on Shavuot, there is a judgment on souls**. The "fruit of the tree" refers to the souls that grow upon the **Tree of Life** upon this is the world judged on Shavuot.

That is to say, just as on Rosh Hashana, the Holy One blessed be He sits with all his heavenly court and judges the physical aspect, how many will be created and how many will be with them, the same thing happens on the sixth of Sivan that the Holy One blessed be He sits with all his heavenly court and judges the world from the spiritual perspective, how much will we achieve in knowledge of the Torah, and how will it be! Now they judge us on Shavuot how much Torah we will merit to learn, what will our stature be from a spiritual perspective; they judge the young man, will he remain in the Yeshiva, will he continue to study Torah or not. This is difficult, this is not easy!

### Why Gemini (The Zodiac Twins)?

The zodiac sign (*Mazal*) for the month of Sivan is **Gemini (The Twins)**. This contains several layers of meaning:

**Moses and Aaron:** They were "twins" in stature—equal to one another—and the Torah was given through both of them.

**Written and Oral Torah:** The Zohar explains that the "Twins" represent the two parts of the Torah. Both of which we received at Mount Sinai on the Holy Day - the Day of the Giving of the Torah.

**Unity of Israel:** In this month, the Jewish people achieved a state of unity, like twins, "And Israel encamped there opposite the Mount" - *like one man with one heart*. Therefore, "Twins" (in Hebrew, תאומים) has the same numerical value (**Gematria**) as **Malchut** (Sovereignty/Kingship), because the Jewish people are a nation of royalty. [\*Translator's note: Twins when spelled with the letter Aleph has a Gematria value of 497, while Malchut has a Gematria value of 496, by the rules of Gematria, see Baal HaTurim, Gen. 48:5 these are still considered equal. In addition, twins is sometimes spelled without the letter aleph and then it has a Gematria value of 496.]

**The Holy Zohar** also stated: that when Twins is written without the letter aleph, it has the exact Gematria value (496) like Malchut (Sovereignty/Kingship). The **Pesikta** writes: The Holy One blessed be He stated, I gave the Torah under the Zodiac sign of Twins, in order to inform the wicked Esau who is the twin of Jacob, that if he wishes to convert and learn Torah and repent, and draw near to our father in heaven, that he is able to come and study - the way is open.

### The Significance of the Number Three

The month of Sivan is the **third month** of the year (counting from Nisan). The Torah was specifically given in the third month, as the Gemara in Shabbat **relates**:

That man of the Galilee expounded before Rav Chisda: "Blessed is our L-rd who gave us a **triple Torah** (Torah, Prophets, and Writings) to a **triple nation** (Kohanim, Levites, and Israelites), through a **third-born** (Moses, the third child after Miriam and Aaron), on the **third day** of separation, in the **third month**. – the month of Sivan."

We have merited such a grand occasion! And now we prepare ourselves to receive the Torah. Every year, everything is renewed, and we receive the Torah once again. What a great privilege!

### "My Heart Tells Me It Is a Time of Favor"

This week we also have the day of the Eve of Rosh Chodesh Sivan, for which it is known what the Holy Shlah writes about this day: "**My heart tells me that it is a time of favor.**" And the Shlah writes that it is a unique day of its kind, because it is the Eve of the New Month of the receiving of the Torah, and that a person should perform repentance on it and fast on it.

And this year, the Eve of the New Month falls on Shabbat, and on Saturday night it is already Rosh Chodesh Sivan. On Shabbat, it is impossible to [recite the special penitential] prayers and fast; on Friday it is also impossible. **Therefore, we observe an "Early Eve of the New Month" (Yom Kippur Katan)—on this Thursday.**

Some say to **fast two consecutive days**. But today, who can fast for two days? At the very least, let us take hold of ourselves strongly; whoever can fast a whole day on the Eve of the New Month, it is a great thing, it is not [that] difficult. And if one cannot, let him fast at least half a day. And they should read the entire book of Psalms with the "*Seven Koretei Brit*, and on this day a person should cry and supplicate to Hashem, to utilize this time! This is a great merit unlike any other that comes to us now.

And in the days before the Eve of Rosh Chodesh Sivan, a man and his wife should sit and do a **soul-reckoning** of their situation at home: how they keep the matters of the home—the kosher status of the foods, the meat, the fruits and vegetables; do they perform tithes (*ma'asrot*)? The [leafy] greens they eat, is there, G-d forbid, some problem with them? Are there no worms? No problems? Are they careful that everything is good and Mehudar (high kosher standards)? And they should also check the status of holiness and the purity of the home (*Taharat HaMishpacha*), and what about the children—how and where they study. And also, how the **Shabbat** looks in the home and the Shabbat table. The Holy One Blessed Be He gave parents "deposits" [children]; are they guarding them?

In this way, they should pay attention to everything. And they should take upon themselves to fix what needs fixing so that the home is conducted according to the Torah. They should arrange for themselves what to **invest in** and what to fix. And they should also give charity to those who toil in Torah, so that they will have righteous sons walking in the way of Hashem, and that they will have good lives—because the holiday of Shavuot determines [this]! As we said, on Shavuot, one is judged on spirituality.

### On the Shoulders from Machane Yehuda

**There is another great thing this week:** that in the order of the Counting of the Omer, "**Yesod shebe-Yesod**" (Foundation within Foundation) falls on Wednesday [counted Tuesday night]. This is a holy and very important day, and it is also the anniversary of the **passing of the Ramchal—Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto**, author of *Mesillat Yesharim*. **The Vilna Gaon said:** "If I were in the time of the Ramchal, I would be prepared to go anywhere by foot to greet him." So great was his stature!

We have another thing this week on Friday, the 28th of Iyar: the anniversary of the passing of **Samuel the Prophet**. Maran [Rabbi Yosef Karo] writes in the *Shulchan Aruch* (Orach Chaim, Section 580) that the 28th of Iyar is the day of the departure of Samuel the Prophet. [And some say Samuel passed away on the 29th and not the 28th].

Maran does not just write the day of the passing of Samuel the Prophet for no reason; it is a holy and very important day; it is a time of favor. For regarding Samuel, it is written that he is equal to Moses and Aaron—"*Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among those who call His name.*" Furthermore, by Samuel the Prophet, we see the power of prayer—for Hannah, who was barren, prayed and supplicated to merit a son, and Hashem remembered her with a son unlike any other, Samuel the Prophet. How important is the prayer of a woman for her sons!

It is written that in the period before Samuel the Prophet was born, a **Prophetic Echo (Bat Kol) would go out from the heavens and proclaim:** "A son is destined to be born who will be a prophet, and will save the people of Israel, and his name will be called Samuel." And at that time, every mother would cry and pray that it would be her son, and everyone named their son "Samuel." **Hannah too, who was barren**, would pray and cry—what crying! What prayers! And Hashem gave her Samuel the Prophet!

Hannah and her husband Elkanah merited to receive this son because Elkanah would "bring merit to the many" (*mezakeh et harabbim*); he would beat his feet from place to place and announce the Torah of Hashem, and gather the people of Israel to the Tabernacle in Shiloh.

Hannah said in her prayer: "Master of the Universe! Give me a son; I will nurse him for two years, and afterwards

he will be Yours forever (*le'olam*)—and he shall serve Him forever." And so it was, that from the age of two he was with Eli the Priest in the Tabernacle in Shiloh, and would serve in the sanctuary. And Samuel the Prophet passed away at the age of 52. Because she said that "forever" (*le'olam*) he would be holy to Hashem, and a "world/forever" (*olam*) is 50 years, as it is written "and he shall serve Him forever"—referring to the "world" of the Jubilee (*Yovel*), which is 50 years. For fifty years he judged Israel, and he anointed David the King and Saul to be kings—there is none like him in the world.

How did this mother merit such a son! And how did Samuel the Prophet merit to be a faithful servant of Hashem, a prophet to whom everything was shown from Heaven! A soul unlike any other in the world!

My teacher and father told me: When we were children, the Tomb of Samuel the Prophet was like Meron [on Lag BaOmer]; on the day of the *Hillula* (anniversary), tens of thousands would cover the place—what prayers, what supplications! My father immigrated from Persia at the age of one, and while he was still a baby, his father would take him on his shoulders from here [they lived here in Mahane Yehuda] all the way to the Tomb of Samuel the Prophet! And he said he remembers when he was a child his father took him; that is how everyone would go and sit there—and what prayers! What candles! What requests!

### Samuel Said: I Am Not Moving From Here

And I will tell you another thing about Samuel the Prophet: Behold, on the day of the passing of Samuel the Prophet, it is "**Jerusalem Day**." And in the *Sefer HaChezyonot* (Book of Visions) of the Maharchu [the Maharchu is Rabbi Chaim Vital, student of the Arizal, who wrote down all the teachings of the Kabbalah, all of *Etz Chaim, Eight Gates*; and he had the *Book of Visions* where he writes things he would see]. And he relates: that they asked him in a dream if he wanted to go up now to the field to greet the Sabbath Queen.

And he writes thus: "In my dream, I ascended above to the Upper World; I entered into the Upper Worlds, and I saw the face of the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence). I was terrified and fell on my face, and the Holy One Blessed Be He came and held my hand and lifted me up, and said: 'Stand on your feet, do not be afraid.' And He said to me: 'What is it to you, Chaim? Come, sit at My right hand.' And I said to Him: 'But in this place sits Samuel the Prophet? How can I sit here?' And the Holy One Blessed Be He said to me: 'Since our Holy and Glorious Temple was destroyed, Samuel took it upon himself not to sit in his place; rather, he sits at the site of the destroyed Temple, mourning and shedding tears like a river—therefore I am giving you [permission] to sit here.'"

Do you see what Samuel the Prophet is? He leaves his

place and mourns over Jerusalem. He sits at the gates of Jerusalem and prays at the gate of the Holy Temple until the Holy One Blessed Be He returns the *Shekhinah*. He is not willing to give up! And exactly on the day of his passing—the 28th of Iyar—in the end, it turned out to be Jerusalem Day. Perhaps because he is responsible [for] and cries over Jerusalem and over our Holy and Glorious Temple. How the Holy One Blessed Be He, the "Cause of all Causes" and "Reason of all Reasons," brings things about! And the main thing is that one must pay attention to this matter: to utilize this day for prayer and Torah.

### Go and Let Us Go Toward the Bride

Now we come to **the upcoming Shabbat**. This Shabbat, we begin **the Book of Numbers (*Bamidbar*)**. **The portion of *Bamidbar*** is always read before the holiday of *Shavuot*, and therefore this Shabbat is called "**Shabbat Derech Eretz**" (Shabbat of Proper Conduct). Why? Because "Proper conduct (*Derech Eretz*) preceded the Torah." Therefore, the primary preparation for receiving the Torah—so that we may be worthy vessels to receive it—is that we have good character traits and proper conduct, so that we may be a worthy vessel to receive the Torah.

The *Tomer Devorah*—Rabbi Moshe Cordovero—says: "Mainly to honor and love every single person of Israel and to see the virtue of one's fellow, through which one will arrive at humility, which is the crown of all matters of character traits." And it is worthy and correct to study during these days the holy book *Tomer Devorah*—to strengthen oneself in proper conduct, for without proper conduct, there is no Torah.

Also, this Shabbat is called "**Shabbat Kallah**" (the Bride's Shabbat), because the Shabbat before a wedding is called *Shabbat Kallah*, when the groom prepares himself for the bride; and we, the People of Israel, the Holy One Blessed be He took us as grooms for His daughter, which is the holy Torah. On this Shabbat, we are preparing ourselves toward the great wedding.

### That He Should Abandon All His Property

Therefore, this is the time that we should now prepare ourselves, as is brought in *Midrash Tanchuma* on the weekly portion, *Parashat Bamidbar*: "And Hashem spoke to Moses in the wilderness (*Bamidbar*) of Sinai..." It is written in *Midrash Tanchuma*: Why does the Torah say "in the wilderness of Sinai"? What does it matter? Rather, **our Rabbis said**, to teach us that the Torah was given through three things: through fire, through water, and through the wilderness. To teach us that just as these things are free to all inhabitants of the world, so too the Torah is placed in the corner [available to all].

And the Midrash adds another thing that we learned

from "wilderness": that a person needs to make himself ownerless (*Hefker*) like a wilderness, and only in this way can he acquire the Torah. Therefore, the Torah emphasizes "in the wilderness of Sinai," that one must make himself humble, like a wilderness, like that which is ownerless.

**Our teacher, the Head of the Yeshiva Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka** (of blessed memory), Head of Porat Yosef Yeshiva, used to say that these three things—fire, water, and wilderness—symbolize three things with which one acquires the Torah, and a person who wants success in study, without these three things **he will not be able to succeed**. Which three things? **Fire**—symbolizes that a person must study Torah like a fire within him, with desire, with immense enthusiasm. **Water**—this is the symbol of humility, for water always goes towards a slope, descending downward, and the Torah also only dwells in a humble person. **Wilderness**—symbolizes that a person should abandon himself for the Torah, all his property, everything he has, like a "wilderness" that everyone treads upon. He should not care about his honor or his money, for everything is absolute nothingness compared to the holy Torah!

### Thus We Shall Overcome the Obstacles on the Way to the Torah

**Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin** used to say that "fire, water, and wilderness" **are three forces that symbolize the self-sacrifice** (*Mesirut Nefesh*) of the People of Israel for the Torah and for the Holy One Blessed be He. There are many **accusers** and detractors and many obstacles for one who studies Torah—one needs self-sacrifice for the Torah! And in the merit of the fire, the water, and the wilderness, we have the power to overcome them with self-sacrifice.

The **Fire**—this is the fire of Abraham our Forefather who gave himself over to the fiery furnace. And if a person comes and says, Abraham our Forefather was unique and special, only he could withstand that—from where would we know that the Jewish people as a whole can sacrifice their lives against the detractors? Rabbi Meir says that therefore the Torah was also given in **Water**—meaning, the waters of the Red Sea, for the entire People of Israel, with self-sacrifice, entered into the Red Sea, "And the children of Israel came into the midst of the sea." All this for the purpose of receiving the Torah. What self-sacrifice!

And if the claimant still comes and says, **the Red Sea is not proof**, because perhaps it was a one-time event, because at that time there was an illumination, but the People of Israel cannot perform self-sacrifice for the Torah all the time—for this claim, the Torah was also given in the **Wilderness**: **"I remembered for you the kindness of your youth... your following Me in the**

**wilderness in a land not sown,**" a place of snakes, fiery serpents, and scorpions—**consistent self-sacrifice!** Forty years! Not a year or two—this is the self-sacrifice of the People of Israel. And in the merit of self-sacrifice, they merit in all generations to uphold the Torah and overcome the detractors. **From here we learned** that a person who wants to merit the Torah needs self-sacrifice, to give ourselves strongly with self-sacrifice for the honor of the Torah!

And the **Midrash** is known, that at the standing at Mount Sinai when the People of Israel heard the Holy One Blessed be He, with every single word **their souls fled** [they died]. And the Holy One Blessed be He brought down the dew of the resurrection of the dead and revived them back. And **one must understand** this Midrash: Why did the Holy One Blessed be He do it such that there would be a situation of "their souls fled" and afterward brought down the dew of resurrection to revive them? Could not the Holy One Blessed be He from the start have given them the strength so that their souls would not flee?

Rather, the Holy One Blessed be He came to teach us a path for all the days of our lives: that a person cannot merit the Torah if he does not sacrifice his life for it, **to the point** that his soul departs. And he should not worry that damage will happen to him, because the Holy One Blessed be He will revive him back, but he must sacrifice himself for the Torah. And sometimes a person sees "**the waters have reached the soul.**" But do not be afraid! Continue to walk in the way of the Torah with self-sacrifice and you will see salvations!

### She Did Not Know It Was a Religious Education...

There is a wondrous story that happened with the **Ponevezher Rav** (of blessed memory). His entire family perished in the Holocaust, and he was saved and moved to the Land [of Israel], and it pained him very much over the situation of the destruction of the People of Israel, and over the destruction of the world of Yeshivas, and he established the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak—a Yeshiva of which there is no equal.

And he established another great enterprise: they called it "**Batei Avot - Ponevezh.**" It was an orphanage [it still exists to this day], and he would **pamper** them and bring them teachers who would instill in them Torah and fear of Heaven, and Sephardim and Ashkenazim studied there, the whole world came there. And it was **a great rescue for all the children who were Holocaust survivors.**

There was one mother, a Holocaust survivor, whose whole family perished in the Holocaust, and she remained with only one son, saved by a way of "no way" [unusual way], and she brought her son here, but she came out an atheist, who would say after the atrocities I saw I cannot

believe—if there were a Creator of the world, He would have saved us—a difficult trial.

And she came here destitute, and she had nothing to eat or wear, but she was a strong woman, she went to work **in cleaning** and in all sorts of odd jobs, and her child she put in this "Batei Avot," because they told her it was an orphanage that takes care of all their needs. **She, of course, did not know that it belonged to religious people...** she did not want a religious education... and there in Batei Avot they began to educate the child in the way of the Torah.

After a year or so when she strengthened herself a bit, received money and began to stand on her feet, she came to the orphanage to see what was happening with her son. **She came to the place and her eyes darkened...** she sees that they are educating her son in Torah, fear of Heaven; immediately she said "I don't want this," and took her son and left.

The Ponevezher Rav heard this; he did not give up. He went to her house to convince her, and she says to him, "Under no circumstances or way will it be! I am not giving him!" And the Rav tried to speak to her heart, and everything he spoke with her, she does not hear! When he saw that this was the situation, **the Rav began to cry**; for fifteen minutes he cries and cries over this soul. The child saw this whole scene, but in the end his mother took him, and he grew up secular, an atheist, not observing anything.

**After decades, when this child reached the age of seventy**, he came to the "Pitchei Olam" Yeshiva here in Ramat Shlomo, and said, "Can I enter the Yeshiva?" And the Head of the Yeshiva said to him: "Yes, please enter, but tell me, what brought you here now?" And the man told: "I saw the Ponevezher Rav how he cries over me, and how he kisses me, and says to me 'You are a soul, that is attached to G-d from above, you are a precious soul, I don't want you to go out to an evil culture,' he connected me to the Torah, I don't forget this, and behold now it awakened within me, and I cannot give it up, from now on I am not leaving the Torah," and so at the age of seventy he left everything and returned in repentance.

**Look what an action of the Ponevezher Rav** [does]—he did not give up, he cried, and the Torah seeks out—it will not leave a person, even if he ran away, it will catch him in the end! What self-sacrifice they had for the Torah! It's not money, it's not nonsense, it is all only the Torah!

### The Great Difficulty Began in the "Great Yeshiva"

A story occurred with a young married man (*Avreich*) who lived in Tel Aviv, and he had Torah classes that he would deliver in some synagogue, and behold he noticed a youth [not religious] about 12 years old, who from time to time plays soccer in the field next to the synagogue.

The man approached him and said to him: "Come in a bit, listen to Torah." The boy said to him: "All day I study in school, now I want to play, now also study Torah?" The man says to him: "Look, there are treats here, gifts, it's worth it for you to come, come hear once or twice, if it's not good for you, leave." The boy came and saw that they really pamper [the kids] there, they gave him all sorts of beautiful things. And he was a clever boy, he would hear Torah, and the Torah slowly became sweet to him. Slowly he was enticed... how do they say? "Taste and see that the Hashem is good; the Torah of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver." They put a drop in his mouth, and he wants more, he ran after it.

Meanwhile, his parents did not know what was passing over their son—they felt it a bit but did not know—and after two months he came to his parents and said to them, "I want to return in repentance and go to a Yeshiva." The parents were very alarmed... and said to him: "Woe to you, if you go to a Yeshiva, we will not look at you, you won't receive money, we will throw you out of the house."

But the boy did not want to surrender; he said to them: "This is the correct and good way, you are mistaken in your way, you will yet return to me." They said to him: "We are older than you, you are mistaken," and he declared: "I am going to a Yeshiva, come with me." And the parents actualized their threat: "Get out of here! We don't recognize you anymore!"

This man took this youth to a *Yeshiva Ketana* (Junior Yeshiva); in this Yeshiva they knew his situation—that his parents threw him out—and they would support him to buy clothes, to arrange himself, and he had everything.

In the Junior Yeshiva, the youth was already revealed as a great prodigy and was very successful in his studies. And after he finished Junior Yeshiva, he began *Yeshiva Gedola* (Senior Yeshiva), in one of the best Yeshivas, let's say Ponevezh. But the Rabbis in the Junior Yeshiva did not reveal to the Senior Yeshiva that his parents were not religious and that he had no home, so that his value would not decrease in their eyes. And because of this, in the Senior Yeshiva, they did not know that he had nothing and they did not support him. And the young man was ashamed to ask for charity, until slowly "the waters reached the soul," for he had no clothes, and no suit, and no shirts, and he remained destitute.

### The Tycoon Did Not Believe: Where Did You Find the Money?

This young man, in his distress, said: "**To whom shall we turn? To our Father in Heaven!**" And indeed, **one day** when there was no one in the study hall (*Beit Midrash*), he opened the Holy Ark (*Heikhal*) and began to shed copious tears: "Master of the Universe, I know that everything depends on You. I have nothing, no one. I am ashamed to ask; no one looks at me. I have no money, I

came alone. I need food, sometimes to buy something; I need clothes. Father! Give to me!" **And in conclusion, he promised: "Master of the Universe, if You give me enough for my needs,** by the time of [my] wedding I will finish the [entire] Talmud (*Shas*); I will give You great satisfaction."

**The next day,** he traveled to a certain place for a certain need, and suddenly he finds there a bundle of bills on the ground! **20,000 shekels!** All blue bills [200-shekel notes]... and it was a place where most of the residents are Arabs, and he knew the law (*Halacha*) that although it was 20,000 together, according to the law he could take them. He took them and said, "The Holy One Blessed be He is the Cause of all causes and the Reason of all reasons. **Thank You, Master of the Universe!**" And he bought clothes with it, and saved the money for himself, and each time he would take out a little.

**Several years passed; the young man rose and ascended [in his studies] and finished the Talmud,** and the time for the wedding arrived. **One day,** a great wealthy man entered to the Head of the Yeshiva, with a request in his mouth: "Listen, I want a prodigy (*Ilu*) for a son-in-law, a Torah scholar; I will give him everything he needs." The Head of the Yeshiva, without hesitation, pointed to this prodigy: "This one is something special." The Head of the Yeshiva told him his entire background and said to the tycoon: "Know, the lineage (*Yichus*) begins with him; his family threw him out of the house and do not want to look at him."

The tycoon took the young man for a conversation and asked him: "Tell me, how do you live? From charity?" The young man said to him: "I will tell you the truth. In the Junior Yeshiva they supported me, but since I came to the Senior Yeshiva I had nothing, and I cried to Hashem, and the next day I passed in the street and found 20,000."

**The tycoon did not believe his ears: "20,000 shekels? On which street was it? On what date?"** and very quickly it became clear that this money had fallen from the pocket of that very tycoon! **Immediately the wealthy man declared: "You are my son-in-law!** How happy I am now! See the Cause of causes and the Reason of reasons—see how the Holy One Blessed be He arranges matters."

### The Wisdom Is to Come at the Outset

**In the Midrash, it is told** about the Tanna, "Shimon, the brother of Azariah." And he is called "the brother of Azariah" because he and Azariah were partners like Issachar and Zebulun; Azariah would help him, would sustain him, and establish him. **On the other hand, it is told** that Hillel the Elder also had a brother, Shevna. Shevna also used to help Hillel the Elder study Torah, and they were partners like Issachar and Zebulun. **But one must understand:** why do they not also refer to

Hillel as "the brother of Shevna" just as they say Shimon "the brother of Azariah"?

**Rather, our Rabbis say,** there is a great difference between Azariah and Shevna. The Sage, Shimon, when he was a child, had nothing to eat. His brother Azariah, who was wealthy, came and said to him: "You study Torah and I will support you; I will buy for you, I will bring to you, I will marry you off—I will give you everything, you just study Torah." And so it was; in the merit of his brother, he rose and ascended in Torah. Therefore, they always say "Shimon, the brother of Azariah," because he grew in Torah in the merit of Azariah.

But Hillel the Elder was destitute, and **at the beginning his brother Shevna did not look at him;** he left him. Only when Hillel grew in Torah and became the *Nasi* [Leader/Prince] of Israel, did Shevna come to him and say: "Hillel, I will give to you, I will enrich you." Now he remembers... Hillel was humble; he did not say to him "who needs you now?" No, rather he agreed: "Fine, bring money," and he gave it to charities. Therefore, they do not say, Hillel "the brother of Shevna," because he did not support him from the outset, but only after he became the *Nasi* of Israel—this [brother] wants honor for himself. **The wisdom is to support Torah scholars when they are still at the outset!**

### Did Everyone Get Out of the Van?

Now we begin the Book of Numbers (*Bamidbar*), which is called **"The Book of the Countings"** (*Chumash HaPikudim*), because the Holy One Blessed be He counts the People of Israel in it: "Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers," "every man by his tribe."

Why does the Holy One Blessed be He count the People of Israel? Our Rabbis say that it is like a father who loves his children: at night he enters, sees everyone is sleeping and everything is fine, everyone is in the house, he sees everything is fine. Or like a mother who travels with the children to some place: when they get out of the van, she supervises so that some child won't remain in the van; she sees all of them A, B, C, D... [counting them]. She counts that everything is fine, sees them, strokes them; each one is a Torah scroll, she kisses him.

Or for example, a person who has pearls: he takes them, strokes them, counts them, arranges them very, very beautifully. **This is how the Holy One Blessed be He cherishes the People of Israel!** How much the Holy One Blessed be He loves the People of Israel! Each one is a precious pearl, a dear son!

**But one must understand:** it is written that if one counts, the *Evil Eye* (*Ayin Hara*) gains dominion. And if so, how does the Holy One Blessed be He count them? And in order to answer this, I will tell you a deed that happened many years ago.

## "If You Do Not Reveal It to Me, From Heaven They Will Reveal It to Me"

There was a righteous Jew in Tel Aviv who used to come a lot to Jerusalem; his name was **Rabbi Yosef Waltuch**, and I became a bit attached to him. He used to come to [Yeshivat] Porat Yosef, and during the afternoon hours I would study with him, because in the Yeshiva we had a break in the afternoon from ten minutes before 1:00 PM until 3:30 PM. And there was a Kollel for young men in the **Beit El** Yeshiva on Rashi Street; it was supported by Rabbi Yaakov Kassin (of blessed memory), who was the Rabbi of the holy congregation *Shaare Zion* in New York, and I was somewhat responsible for the Kollel. In the afternoon I would sit to study with Rabbi Yosef Waltuch. And naturally, sometimes I would accompany him a bit.

When I was in the Porat Yosef Yeshiva, our Head of Yeshiva was our teacher **Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka** (A"H), who was a supernal holy man. Once a year, he would take his class for a Shabbat in Safed (*Tzfat*)—each year a new cycle of students. In that year, I was about 17 years old; it was before the Shabbat of *Parashat Bamidbar*, like this Shabbat, when the Head of the Yeshiva told us that we would spend this Shabbat in Safed. Such a Shabbat with the Head of the Yeshiva was something very beautiful.

On the Thursday night before that Shabbat, I accompanied Rabbi Yosef Waltuch to Meah Shearim, because he wanted to buy some booklet there called *Yiddish a Licht*. On the way, we passed near the *Mikveh* of Meah Shearim; there is a *Shtiebel* [small synagogue] there. And behold, a certain non-Jew entered the bathroom there. Suddenly, I see Rabbi Yosef Waltuch saying "**Ish**" [Man], "**Ish**," "**Ish**." I say to him: "What happened to you?" And he says: "This non-Jew put an evil eye on me." And I say to him: "What evil eye? Where did this thing come to you from? And furthermore, what is this 'Ish' 'Ish'? How will 'Ish' help?" And he said: "I am nullifying the evil eye with this." I said to him: "Fine, what is the meaning?" And he said: "You cannot understand; you are still young. After you marry, I will explain to you, because this is Kabbalah..."

So I said to him jokingly: "If you do not reveal it to me, **from Heaven they will reveal it to me...**" Jokingly like that, to pique his interest. Fine. In short, afterward he traveled to his home in Tel Aviv, and I remained in Jerusalem.

## I Just Entered to Prepare a Torah Lecture

**The next morning, we woke up early.** How did we travel to Safed? There was a train station here, where the Liberty Bell Park is today; one would board the train there, and it took two hours to Haifa. And there on the train, it was pleasant—there were empty carriages. We sat and had a lesson on the train with the Rosh Yeshiva. We got off in Haifa, and there we took a bus to Safed. There, everyone already sits alone; it is impossible to study together. We

arrived in Safed, got off at the station, and walked by foot to the place where we were hosted for Shabbat—it was the Shababou family; their son also used to study with us in the Yeshiva.

Our teacher, the Rosh Yeshiva, loved to go to the Abuhav Synagogue to show the students the Torah scroll that the Mahari Abuhav wrote. Therefore, the first thing when we arrived in Safed, he said to us: "I promised you that I would show you the Torah scroll of the Mahari Abuhav." This is a Torah scroll in which there were miracles and wonders. Now, I did not come to tell about that; I already told you about it once. But it is told that once they took this Torah scroll from the synagogue, and it returned by itself! After we saw beautiful things [in] the Torah scroll of the Mahari Abuhav, I said, "I will go to some *Beit Midrash* (House of Study)," because perhaps the Rosh Yeshiva will tell me to say some words of Torah at the table— I will prepare.

I entered a House of Study, and which book came into my hand? *Aderet Eliyahu* by Rabbi Yosef Chaim [the Ben Ish Chai]. I opened it to the portion of *Bamidbar*, and he asks: How did they count the Children of Israel and the Evil Eye did not rule over them?

## The Secret of "Ish" (Man, Man) Was Revealed...

And he brings from Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli, who says: The answer to this is hinted at in the verse, "A man, a man (*Ish Ish*) for the house of their fathers you shall count them." **Ish** (אִישׁ) equals (in Gematria value) **311**. And there are 311 holy filaments (*Nimin Kadishin*) [like holy pipes in the eyes of the Upper Countenance, called *Arich*], which, if you bring down light from them to the Lower Countenance, the Evil Eye will be canceled.

And he brings that the **Gemara in Pesachim** says: A person who wants to cancel the Evil Eye from himself should place a thumb (*Godal*) on the nostril (*Nachir*) and look with the eyes, and this is a remedy (*Segulah*) to cancel the Evil Eye. And the Rabbi says that "**Godal Nachir**" (גודל נחיר) equals exactly **311** (in Gematria value). And when he looks here at these eyes, he draws light from the 311 holy filaments of *Arich* and 311 lower holy filaments, and in this way, it cancels the Evil Eye.

**Then I understood what Rabbi Yosef Waltuch** meant when he said "Ish" to cancel the Evil Eye—as Rabbi Yosef Chaim says, that *Ish* equals 311 corresponding to 311 holy filaments. So, I saw that from Heaven they showed me this sign. I reviewed it very, very well so that I would know it very, very well, and I decided that if they tell me to speak, this is the Torah Derasha (lecture).

In short, we are sitting at the meal. The Rosh Yeshiva says to me, "Benayahu, speak something." I said to him, "I will speak, Honorable Rabbi, I have prepared myself." And I told [them] that I went with Rabbi Yosef Waltuch,

and what happened with the gentile, and that I exactly opened the book *Aderet Eliyahu* and so and so; **I taught this whole Derasha (lecture) to him.** And there was great joy.

**On Monday morning, Rabbi Yosef Waltuch came again to Jerusalem,** and I said to him, "Yes, they revealed to me from Heaven... 311 holy filaments from *Arich* to draw them down to cancel the Evil Eye." Thus did I explain everything to him, and he says, "True. They revealed [it] to you." And at any rate, **this is the answer to what we asked:** How did the Evil Eye not rule over them after they were counted? Because it is written, "A man, a man (*Ish Ish*) for the house of their fathers to count them"—**Ish Ish**—to cancel this Evil Eye!

### They Want Banners

I will tell you one more thing about the portion, and afterward, we will go to the matters of Shavuot. In the portion, there are the **banners:** "Each man by his camp and each man **by his banner** according to their legions." **It is written in the Midrash:** At the hour that Hashem was revealed on Mount Sinai, **tens of thousands of angels** descended with Him, as it is said: "The chariot of the L-rd is twice ten thousand times thousands of angels, Our Master is among them as in Sinai in holiness." They were all crowned with banners, as it is written: "Distinguished (*Dagul*) among ten thousand." And when Israel saw that they were made into banners upon banners, **they began to desire banners.** They said: "If only we could make banners like them." The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: "You love banners? By your lives, I am fulfilling your requests. May Hashem fulfill all your requests." Immediately He said to Moses: "Go, make them with banners."

**And this is a wonder:** Mount Sinai is burning with fire, the People of Israel are standing at Mount Sinai to receive the hidden treasure [the Torah] that was hidden 974 generations before the world was created, and now they see banners and want to be like these banners? It is not for nothing. They knew that these banners **have great secrets in them,** and through them, one merits the Torah.

When Jacob our father told his sons how they should carry the bier [his coffin], he said to them: Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun shall stand on the east side. Reuben, Simeon, and Gad—the south side. Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin—the west side. Dan, Asher, and Naphtali—the north side. And in this way, you shall also set up banners. And Levi was not in the count, because they are the bearers of the Ark of the Covenant and the vessels of the Tabernacle.

### The Body — A Chariot for the Divine Presence

Now we come to our matter. The souls of the People of Israel **are higher than the angels.** There is the Throne of Glory higher than the angels; the angels are from [the world of] *Yetzirah*, and the souls of Israel are carved from under the Throne of Glory—from *Beriyah*. And Israel knew that their souls are a chariot (*Merkavah*) and a throne for the upper worlds; they just did not know how their bodies could be there, for **the body is connected to the lower [realms].** But when they saw the banners of the angels, who are a chariot for the upper [realms], they said: "We also can; also our body, which has a holy soul in it, **can be a chariot for the upper [realms].**" "In all your ways, know Him"—the root of our souls is high, and we want to be a chariot for the upper [realms].

And to understand what the meaning of this is: contemplate the portion when you read the *Shnayim Mikra* [the weekly review of the Parsha]. You see **that the Torah is placed in the Ark** in the Tent of Meeting; the Tent of Meeting must always be within the camps, in the middle—not closest to this one, not furthest from the other. Just as the platform (*Bimah*) is in the middle of the synagogue where they place the Torah, like the Tree of Life planted in the midst of the garden—"in the middle of the garden"—so too the Torah is the Tree of Life; it must be in the middle, and all of Israel surrounding [it]. And they would walk three by three. **The banners are like a heart;** the heart sustains the whole body and it is in the middle, and the body sends [blood] to all the limbs of the body—**everyone draws blood equally.** That is how it goes.

### Breakthrough Torah

Once, when they held a **great gathering of the "Vaad HaYeshivot," Rabbi Chaim Ozer [Grodzinski] of Vilna** said to them:

"Our holy Torah is not a cistern of gathered water that can be plugged; it is a 'source of living water,' it is flowing springs. It is not a pit of water; rather, if you plug it here—it flows from another place, **it breaks through paths.** Therefore, any weapon formed against us shall not prosper; no one can close our yeshivot, there is no such thing!"

And so, the Torah is in the middle, and all the banners are around it. **The tribe of Levi would lift the Ark.** Do you think they were lifting the Ark? **The Ark carries its carriers.** The Ark would lift them. It only looked as if they were lifting the Ark, and the people of Israel would see this and be **as if driven mad** [with wonder] at how everything was carried on its own. How they walk, how the order is, how the banners are, how each one receives abundance from above—it was all something of wonders of wonders. **These banners are upper secrets;** they would

see those who are close to the Divine Presence, receiving the abundance as is proper, all around. What power the people of Israel had!

### The Friend Who Arrives With You Until the End

Therefore, a person must always walk in the ways of Hashem, and know that **the one who will save him—is only the Torah**. Not his sons, not his friends, only the Torah.

They brought a **parable** of a man who had three beloveds: one beloved he loved most, the second beloved less, and the third beloved barely. **He loved money the most**, and when a person needs to go meet the King, he says to his beloved—this is the **money**: "Come with me to the King." The money says to him: "I cannot go, **I am afraid...**" and stays aside.

Afterward, he says to the second—these are his **sons**: "Come with me." They say to him: "We can come with me until [the gate of] the King; inside we are afraid to enter." But the **holy Torah**, which is the third friend—says: "**Do not fear! I am with you.**"

That is to say, the money leaves the person when he dies—there is no connection to it, it is over. The children—accompany him until his grave. But the Torah says to him: "*When you walk, it shall lead you; ... and when you awaken, it shall speak for you.*" I accompany you, **I will advocate for you**, I will speak before the Holy One, Blessed be He; I will tell Him how much you busied yourself with me. This is the greatest thing. "*If a man would give all the property of his house for love, they would utterly scorn him.*"

**Happy is he who merits to fix times for Torah** and walk in the ways of Hashem. And the Holy One, Blessed be He, helps him. There are many people who love the Torah so much, they also work—why not? "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread." He shall work, but he shall study. **When the study is the primary thing—he merits.**

### Lost a Bus—Gained a Job

There was a doctor here—a medical technician, who was fired from his job. He was invited to another workplace, where they heard he was a technician. On the day he was supposed to come for the meeting, he had a fixed **Torah lesson** that he refused to give up. Afterward, when he arrived at the central station to travel there, in the end, **he missed the bus**. He said: "Master of the Universe! I did not want to miss the lesson—the Torah—and now look, the bus closed on me, but **everything is from Heaven.**"

As he was running after the bus, a driver sees him and asks him: "Why are you running, what is with you?" He tells him: "I need to reach such-and-such a city, **I have a job interview.**" He said to him: "Come, get in with me, I

am going there, and **I will take you** to where you need." The doctor was happy and said: "I study Torah, I do what is necessary, and Hashem arranged the matters for me."

While they were still traveling on the road, [Heaven forbid] there was a **car accident** in his car; the car was gone—**but both of them came out alive**. Everything is fine, there is nothing [wrong]. The one who hit them says to them: "Come with me straight to the hospital, we will do checks, so you don't sue me later and there will be a mess." The doctor said to himself: "Now it's enough, what about the job? But this is all the '**Cause of Causes**,' I don't know what is happening here."

They took him to the hospital, did checks, and everything was fine. They see him **shedding tears**; they said to him: "Why are you shedding tears? What is with you? Blessed be Hashem, you are healthy." He said to them: "I am a certified medical technician, and I had a job interview and I have nothing to eat, and I fix times for Torah, walking in the way of Hashem." They said to him: "Come, you are in the hospital, **we also need a technician**, don't you see the advertisements?" At that moment, he was accepted for work there, with a **salary much more than what they promised him there**. You see how it goes? A person does not understand **how they arrange from Heaven**. It is a wonder of wonders; everything is the Cause of Causes and the Reason of Reasons.

### Mount Sinai Near Mount Moriah

Now we come to the main point. The Holy One, Blessed be He, did a great kindness with us that He took us out **from slavery to freedom**, from the house of slaves in Egypt—from the great impurity—with the goal of giving us the Torah on Mount Sinai. This is the gift [for] which He chose us from all the nations and gave us His Torah. And in the days of the Counting [of the Omer] now, we every day acquire, according to Sod, a **great level of holiness and purity**, leaving the gate of impurity and entering the gate of holiness, fifty days, until on the holiday of **Shavuot we reach the Fifty Gates of Understanding (Binah)**.

Therefore, Rabbi Akiva says: "Before whom (*Lifnei Mi*)," **Mi** (מ) —is the numerical value of fifty, "you are being purified." "And who purifies you"—and then will come the "Mi" day, the fiftieth day, and purifies us and sanctifies us, **Fifty Gates of Understanding**, the world of Repentance (*Teshuvah*). What a merit. Not for nothing on this fiftieth day, on the day of Shavuot, the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself purifies us through a great light. Each one receives **the light of the holy Torah**; is not this day "the Judgment Day of the Torah," [to see] how much a person will merit Torah? Then the Holy One, Blessed be He, descends from on high to illuminate all the dark places of the earth to lead us in the depths of the earth. "**Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice,**" what a merit! It is written in the Midrash that in the time to come, the

Holy One, Blessed be He, brings Mount Sinai, **clothes it upon Mount Moriah**, builds the Holy Temple, and the Holy Temple says a song, and all the mountains answer after it. A wonder of wonders what it will be! What a great merit. Only what? **We need to prepare ourselves**, so that we will be worthy vessels to receive the holy Torah.

### The Last Reincarnation of Joseph

The Chafetz Chaim says: **Oil** was lacking in one of the countries. Someone came and brought with him **rivers of olive oil**; only what, it is possible to buy, but it depends on the vessels you have. Do you have vessels? You can fill [them]; if you have no vessels, with what will you fill?...

Now the Children of Israel said: "We will do and we will hear" (*Na'aseh Ve'Nishmah*). This is a very great merit that now **we will utilize the time**. Does not the Gemara say that **Rav Yosef was exceedingly happy** on the Day of Atzeret, on the day of Shavuot, and requested that they prepare for him **choice meat** for the meal? He would say: "If not for this day—how many Josephs are there in the market." If not for this day of receiving the Torah, **there are many "Yossele's" in the market**. But I merited to sit and study Torah. Also, our Rabbis say that Joseph had to come in reincarnation several times, and now that I study Torah, **I do not need to come in reincarnation**—it is finished.

### Do Not Be Crazy!

One of the Admorim [Chassidic Rebbes] said: Who is a crazy person? **He who loses what they give him**. Now the Holy One, Blessed be He, gives us the Torah, a time of opportunity; **are you going to lose it?** Heaven forbid. Now is the time to elevate oneself, that a person should do everything he can so that we merit the receiving of the Torah in all our 248 limbs and 365 sinews; how great a merit this is.

What a special power we have, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, chose us from all the nations and gave us the Torah. As we say in the prayer: "**The time of the giving of our Torah**"—this is not just a **remembrance** of what was once, but every year it is the time of the giving of our Torah anew! Therefore, one must strive for this with all our heart and all our soul to acquire [it]; now is the time and **the great desire**.

### The Sun Shines Because of You!

The Gemara says: Rabbi Akiva would gather congregations. **Pappus said to Rabbi Akiva**: "How are you gathering congregations [against the Roman decree]?" He said to him: "I will tell you a parable to what the matter is similar: to a **fox** that was walking on the bank of the river, and fish were running in the river. The fox said to them: 'Why are you running?' They said to him: '**Because of the big fish** that want to swallow us.'

He said to them: 'Come, **come up to the dry land**, I will hide you in the clefts of the rocks.' They said to him: 'Are you the "cleverest of animals"? In the place of our life [the water] we are afraid, and you want to take us out from here?'" Rabbi Akiva said to Pappus: "**The source of my life is the Torah**, and you want to take me out of the Torah? For they are our life."

It says in *Tanna D'vei Elyahu*: A person should strive within himself in words of Torah, and know for himself that **words of Torah are likened to bread and water**; and just as it is impossible for the world [to exist] without bread and without water, so it is impossible for the world without Torah. "*This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate on it day and night.*" **One must be connected strongly**; without being connected to the Torah—there is no world. **One must fix strongly all our heart and all our soul to the holy Torah**; this is the strongest thing there is.

**Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin would say**: **All our life and our existence of the People of Israel**—it is through the study of Torah. Everything depends on the study of Torah, and **without this, there is no world**. And he writes further that the learners of Torah are the greatest helpers to the world; **only in their merit does the sun shine**, only in their merit does the rain fall; by their power and only by their power—**Israel subdues their enemies**. Only the study of Torah influences the abundance of blessing and livelihood.

The Ark of the Covenant would carry its carriers; **Torah scholars are in the category of the Ark of the Covenant**—they are the ones who carry the entire world. To the eye, it looks different, but there is no such thing; the Torah scholars, the holders of the Torah, **they are the defense line of the People of Israel**. The increase of Torah—that is what protects the People of Israel. And the opposite, Heaven forbid—the lessening of Torah strengthens the enemies of Israel. If "the voice is the voice of Jacob," then there are no "hands of Esau."

### Take Off the Wheels and Drive...

Once, several commanders from the army came to the Rav of Tshubin [Rabbi Dov Berish Weidenfeld ZT"l]; this was about 50 years ago. They said to him: "**The situation is not simple**; it is necessary to leave the Gemaras, the lecterns, and take weapons. **We need the Yeshiva students in the army!**"

He said to them: "I will tell you what you are actually saying. There was a certain person who had a wagon hitched to horses, and it climbed heavily up the mountain. The wagon could not move; it was heavy for the horses. They took off the load, but still, the horses could not bear [it]; they collapsed. They said: 'Perhaps we should take off the **heavy wheels**...'"

The Rav said to them: "This is what you are saying!"

Because everything that gives **the 'turbo' and the power and the wheels and the engines**, it is those who study Torah! Without Torah, you cannot do anything. *'If not for My covenant day and night, I would not have set the statutes of heaven and earth.'* Those who truly protect the world—it is only the Torah learners. Do you think it is the weapon and the army? It is not correct. And this is truth. Everyone admits that there is nothing like the Torah learners. They are the true army; they are the protectors of the People of Israel."

Those who go to the army—they went in this path, they shall go. But they must know: **who is the protector of the generation? It is the one who sits to study Torah.** Why do I say this and emphasize it to you? Because today **there is confusion**; there are those who think they still need to go to the army—no. This is not correct. Now it is the holiday of Shavuot, the holiday of the giving of the Torah; **the soul of the whole world is the Torah.** Without Torah, there is no world. Even the gentiles know this; the whole world knows this. Without the keeping of the commandments, without Torah, the People of Israel do not live, Heaven forbid. Rather the opposite—it descends, falls. Do you want to hold everything? It is only through our holy Torah. And yet days will speak, and there is still what to speak about.

### Being the Happiest in the World

But with the help of Hashem, we will take upon ourselves the great yoke of the holy Torah, "for they are our life and the length of our days," and we will prepare ourselves toward the holy holiday [Shavuot].

As we said at the beginning of the lesson, we have this week the day of passing [Yahrzeit] of the Ramchal (26th of Iyar), and we have the Eve of the New Month [Erev Rosh Chodesh] where it is determined for a person how much he will study Torah—to do repentance and good deeds. We have the day of passing of Samuel the Prophet (28th-29th of Iyar), the Shabbat of Blessing of the month of Sivan, and afterward the month of Sivan begins—to prepare ourselves strongly for the great standing of the Receiving of the Torah, that it should enter into us **in our 248 limbs and 365 sinews.**

I will tell you a very great thing: **who is the happiest in the world? He who studies Torah.** Who is the most joyous? Let's say he has no money, but he has Torah; at the very least he has Torah, spirituality—this makes him happy. And whatever money is meant for a person—he

will receive. "I have not seen a righteous person forsaken and his offspring seeking bread."

We grew up in our house; my father, at the beginning, had a lot of money—he used to manufacture "number one" shoes. Everyone would come to him. But he left everything and sat to study Torah, and became dirt poor. We had no food in the house at all; we were children, but we knew that Father gives himself over [sacrifices himself] for the Torah. The main thing is the Torah. This is what he rooted in us—**that there is nothing like the Torah.** He gave himself over; it is not simple. But he merited. **My father also did army** [service], he was in the "Infantry," he did wars; he said: "**Everything is vanity of vanities**; only he who studies Torah, he holds up the world. All the rest is vanity and emptiness!"

He who wants to hold up the world—it is he who studies Torah. All the rest comes on its own. Everything will come. What is meant for a person—**will come directly to his hand.** The great main thing is he who sits and occupies himself with Torah. He shall merit to strive more. To "acquire" for ourselves Torah. A person works? Very good, **but let him leave his special times** [aside]—at the time you are free, sit and study Torah. Fix times for Torah; **without Torah, there is no world.** And thus, when he works—he will have blessing. But the goal is not work; the goal is the Torah. That he should know to fix times for Torah and to walk in the ways of the Torah.

May Hashem merit us to serve Him and to fear Him. **May all the homes be happy and [see] great salvations;** may all the soldiers return healthy and whole—Hashem save them, Hashem help the people of Israel. To pray for them, to gird strength—**every person knows his path**—everything is the "Cause of Causes" and the "Reason of Reasons." But if a person asks where to be—let him be among the "Holders of the Torah"! **Sit to study Torah.** This is the right way. And the Blessed Name shall enlighten our eyes and gladden His people Israel, and **send us our righteous Messiah speedily in our days,** and let us say Amen.

**Also, we bless all the listeners** via the satellite, via Radio Moreshet, Radio Darom, and those studying in the pamphlet. Hashem bless you with all the blessings: salvations, satisfaction (*nachas*), and joy. May we merit the Receiving of the Torah **and the receiving of the Yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. And so may it be [His] will, and let us say Amen.**



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