

Moadim

Manhattan High School for Girls | Shavuot 5776 - 2016



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Moadim



A Message from the Menacheles

In the introduction to the first volume of the *tshuvos* of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, his children recount some of the guidelines which he instructed them to follow in the publication of his writings. He requested that they use only first-rate quality paper and ink and that the sefer be set in an up-to-date format. He stressed that legibility is key to learning. He also insisted that none of the submissions be entitled “my *talmid*” in the reponsa. Despite his great stature he sincerely stated “who knows who learned more from whom?” With his legendary probing mind, he actually discovered many insights into Torah from unrelated remarks or nuances of some of his talmidim.

In the spirit of *Zman Matan Toraseinu* and honoring the Torah and *Talmidei Chachmim* we can extrapolate lessons from these pithy statements.

Indeed our Moadim editors who so capably represent the student body in their leadership capacity, truly are a paradigm of first rate editorship who strive to produce a qualitative digest with clear and substantive content. In their Shavuos publication, it was their greatest wish and desire that they provide our student body with *divrei Torah* from every *sefer* of *Tanach* in honor of *Zman Matan Toraseinu*. The quality of their submissions is reflective of their depth and their meticulous attention to detail. The fact that they endeavored to include כ”ד ספרי תנ”ך is emblematic of their *abavas Torah*. They also chose to include short blurbs about their *Tanach* teachers to whom they attribute their superior education which was saturated with אהבת תורה ויראת שמים.

Truly, in the spirit of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, I can attest to the fact that our students spur us on to greater heights. With their astute and clever questions, they are a catalyst for further reflections, with their sincerity and quest for truth, they cause us to dig deep within our best selves. מכל מלמדי השכלתי ומתלמידי יותר מכולם. We are indeed fortunate.

As this is the final Moadim edition for תשע”ו, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the prodigious efforts of our editors. It was a pleasure to work with a cohort of girls who are responsible, devoted and scholarly. May they go מחיל אל חיל.

בברכת חג שמחה,
Mrs. T. Yanofsky

Thank you to our master proofreader, Ms. Hadar Feinberg.

**A special thank you to Miss Chani Schwartz,
our talented and beloved graphic designer.**

**We are grateful for the exceptional efforts of Deena Abittan,
Esther Butler, Ashira Feld, Devorah Pinczower, and Rebecca Russo.**

A Letter from the Editors

Deena Abittan,, Esther Butler, Ashira Feld, Devorah Pinczower

Throughout the weeks of *sefira* we embark on a journey to perfect our *middos* in order to be worthy of receiving the Torah on Shavuos. To prepare ourselves properly we must understand what it entails to be one who lives a life of Torah. In *parshas Acharei Mos* we are instructed וְהָיָה בְהֵם, live by the Torah and *mitzvos*. This *pasuk* explains that we must devote our life to Torah. On a deeper level this signifies that we must not do the *mitzvos* solely because it is what we are commanded to do, but rather to fulfill Hashem's commandments with excitement and passion. The *Chidushei Harim* elaborates that this means that one's life must *be* Torah; life and Torah cannot be two separate entities. Every *mitzvah* you do and all the Torah you learn must be done with your entire being.

As we spend Shavuos consumed in Torah study and surround ourselves with the love of *mitzvos*, we must ensure that this excitement and connection we feel with the Torah linger after the *chag* itself. We can fill ourselves with this everlasting passion by understanding the beauty of the Torah. Shavuos is the most opportune time to do so, as we embrace the Torah-filled ambience of the *chag*.

One of the most famous *pesukim* that explains our relationship with the Torah is תּוֹרָה צִוְיָה לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מֹרְשָׁה קְהֵלַת יַעֲקֹב. Rabbi Mordechai Gifter explains the difference between a *nachala* and a *morasha*. A *nachala* is an inheritance, which belongs to the heir, and therefore, the person who inherited it can do as he pleases with it. However, a *morasha* is a heritage owned by the preceding generations and current generations. Because it is something that is not changed by time, it must be kept intact. It is the responsibility of whoever owns it now to maintain it exactly as they received it. Our Torah is a heritage that has descended throughout generations and will continue to be the most central element of *Yiddishkeit*. It is upon us to preserve its purity, its *kedusha*, and its perfection. On Shavuos, as we relive Har Sinai and strive to reconfirm our commitment to Torah, let us keep this message in mind.

As you read through the pages of this Moadim you will be enlightened by *divrei Torah*, not only regarding Shavuos itself, but highlighting every *sefer* of Tanach. Every *sefer* is precious and timeless and we are so fortunate to be the *mekabli Torah!* May we merit to increase our *ahavas Torah* and become a true *oved Hashem* who succeeds in living a life of וְהָיָה בְהֵם.

בראשית

Shalva Gozland

ויאמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע (Shemos 24:7). From where did *Klal Yisrael* gather the strength to say “*na’aseh v’nishma*” without doubt or hesitation? R’ Meir Shapiro beautifully explains that we gained this trust in Hashem from *Avraham Avinu*. In *sefer* Bereishis 15:5, the *passuk* says:

ויוצא אותו החוצה ויאמר הבט נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים אם תוכל לספר אותם ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך
“Look toward the heavens and count the stars. Are you able to count them?... So shall be your offspring.” As Hashem promised Avraham a child, He showed Avraham the stars and commanded him to count them, which Avraham immediately began to do. When Hashem saw Avraham’s wholehearted obedience, He told Avraham that just as he tried to fulfill His will without first debating if he would be able to do so, “כה יהיה זרעך,” so too Avraham’s descendants will have the *emunah*, *bitachon*, and *zerizus* to say “*na’aseh*” before “*nishma*.”

If a Jew only accepts the Torah so long as he understands it entirely, he will be restricted by his human intellect, and will never achieve any level of comprehension at all. However, if he is willing to accept Torah unconditionally, then Hashem will bless him with true mastery of His Holy Torah. May we merit to follow in the footsteps of our great forefathers, accepting every commandment of Hashem with alacrity, respect, and love for our Creator.

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שמות

Avigail Spira

On Shavuot we read Megillas Rus. The first *passuk* in the *megilla* states, וילך איש מבית לכם - and a man left Beis Lechem, because of a famine, and went to live in Moav. The *passuk* does not specify who this man is; it simply says “a man”. However, in the next *passuk* we discover that this man was Elimelech. Why didn’t the Torah say the name of the man and what he did in the same *passuk*?

A similar *passuk* is found in *parshas* Shemos. The *passuk* says (2:1):

וילך איש מבית לכם ויקח את בית לוי - a man of the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. Later on the Torah points out that this man and lady were Amram and Yocheved. Why didn’t the Torah say, “And Amram went and married Yocheved”?

field, the *mitzvah* is to make sure it lays fallow in the seventh year. Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, explains that although there is no *mitzvah* to actually work the field in the six years prior to *shemita*, what the *passuk* is teaching us is that if a person does work the field for the six years prior to *shemita*, then when the field is left fallow in the seventh year, it will be very clear that the reason it was left fallow was simply for the *mitzvah* of keeping *Shemita*. Rav Chaim Kanievsky adds that the Vilna Gaon had a tradition to specifically eat *chumetz* on *motzei matzah*. By doing so the Vilna Gaon showed that the lack of eating *chumetz* on *pesach* was for the *mitzvah*. The contrast was significant!

ויקרא

Noa Hacker

Though speech is an internal action, when one says *lashon hara* he gets punished with physical blemishes. Why does evil speech end in physical afflictions?

The Yalkut Lekach Tov explains that physicality is the root of *lashon hara*. A person who says *lashon hara* is focusing on the exterior and physical aspects of his friend. This person fails to recognize that his fellow Jew has a *nesbama*, which truly makes him who he is.

The one who spoke *lashon hara* is inflicted with *tzaras* so that he should be subdued in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. When someone speaks about someone else, he is raising himself at the expense of his fellow. This is the reason why the sinner is inflicted with *tzaras*. When he gets *tzaras*, he goes *mechutzel limachaneh*. As he sits in solitude, the sinner has a chance to think about his sin and understand that one's spiritual element is essential, not the physical element. *Tzaras* teaches a person that the physical body is merely a garb, and the true essence of a person is the *nesbama*. When this sinner sees that only his physical body was affected, he will learn to focus on his *nesbama*.

Sources: Yalkut Lekach Tov and Orchos Tzadikim

ויקרא

Meital Israel

Parshas Behar discusses the *mitzvos* of *shemita* and *yovel*, the laws regulating commerce and the redemption of slaves. What is the correlation between the *parsha* discussing Har Sinai and these specific *mitzvos*?

The Ahavas Hachaim explains that these *mitzvos* are particularly unique. One was obligated to completely neglect his fields and instead devote his

time to learning Torah, thus putting his earnings and business at risk. The Ahavas Hachaim answers that before Hashem gave us the Torah, He had gone to the *umos ha'Olam*, but they refused to accept the Torah. They felt it was too complicated and the mitzvos, such as Shemitah and Yovel, would have interfered with their livelihood. But, as *Bnei Yisrael* accepted the Torah, Hashem simultaneously placed a certain hatred within *אומות העולם*, against *Bnei Yisrael*. This was done to ensure that *Bnei Yisrael* would never befriend the *umos ha'Olam* or complain, as did the *umos ha'Olam*, that these mitzvos are too difficult and cumbersome. Additionally, the *mitzvos* of *shemitah* and *yovel* require a certain sense of *emunah*, because one places his whole livelihood on hold and learns Torah. Hashem guarantees a *bracha* to those who keep *shemitah*, as it is stated, וצויתי לכם את ברכתי.

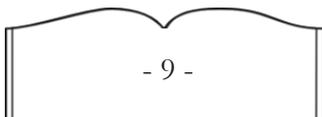
ויקרא

Kayla Landau

In Parshas Emor, there are many differences between the *pessukim* referring to Shavuos and those of the other *Chagim*. The only information we are provided with regarding Shavuos is that we count 50 days from the second day of Pesach. Shavuos is not specifically identified as a Yom Tov with a defined date. The name for Shavuos that we use in *benching* and davening, “*Z'man Matan Toraseinu*,” is not mentioned in the *pessukim*. In addition, although we have many *minhagim* related to Shavuos, we have no specific symbol representing this Yom Tov, as we blow the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah and eat *matza* on Pesach.

The Sefer Hachinuch sheds light on this question. The fact that we count from *Yetzias Mitzrayim* until *Matan Torah* demonstrates that the entire purpose of the former is in fact the latter. This is evident when Hashem says to Moshe, “*בהוציאם את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלוקים על ההר הזה*” (Shemos 3:12). Pesach represents our physical *geula*, while Shavuos is our spiritual *geula*. The goal is to count from our physical redemption to our spiritual redemption. The Ramban (Vayikra 23:15) adds that the entire Pesach is really the first days of the *chag*, the 49 days in between are Chol Hamoed, and Shavuos is the last days of the same *chag*. For this reason, the date given in the Torah for Shavuos is 50 days after Pesach. A specific date is not designated, to show that the entire goal of our physical redemption was our spiritual redemption. Due to the tremendous spiritual significance of Shavuos there is no physical symbol that would do it justice. Receiving the Torah was the ultimate goal, because the ability to learn Torah is the ultimate freedom.

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במדבר

Daniella Coben

Rav Simloi explains, “When Klal Yisrael said ‘Na’aseh’ before ‘Nishma,’ 600,000 Malachei HaShareis came to each and every member of Klal Yisrael and crowned him with two crowns - one corresponding to ‘Na’aseh’ and one corresponding to ‘Nishma’” (Shabbos 88a).

Hashem is infinite. Therefore, the Torah, Hashem’s will, is also infinite. This is not so with the human mind. A human being has a limited intellect, and can only understand according to the capabilities Hashem granted him. This is why *Bnei Yisrael* had to say *Na’aseh V’nishma*- we will first accept the Torah and Hashem’s ways, and after we will hear the details. It seems irrational to agree to something without first hearing the conditions. However, if they would have said the opposite it would have been *chutzpah*. *Nishmah* before *Na’aseh* would mean that they would first like to understand Hashem with their limited human intellect and then accept it. This is the opposite of *emunah*, and the epitome of *chutzpah*. We do not listen to Hashem because we understand what we are doing, rather because He commanded us.

This thought can also be applied to *parah adumah*. One of the reasons for *parah adumah* is to be *mechaper* for *cheit haegel*. Usually, when we atone, we are commanded to think about what we did wrong, and then go on to try to stop it. Here, by this *kapparah*, we are actually commanded not to think about it. This is because *parah adumah* is not possible for a human to comprehend, and so by thinking about it, doubts may surface. Hashem in His infinite wisdom gave us a *kapparah* that does not make sense to us, in order to teach us a lesson. The source of the *cheit haegel* was that *Bnei Yisrael* thought they understood Hashem’s ways, so they made calculations of when Moshe would be back. When he was not back “on time”, they persisted with the *cheit*. Hashem gave us a *mitzvah* that we do not understand, to be *mechaper*, to teach us that we do not do *mitzvos* because our limited human intellect understands it, rather we do it because Hashem told us to. Saying *Na’aseh* before *Nishma* indicated that *Bnei Yisrael* were accepting the Torah without understanding it, because regardless of what it contained they would embrace the Torah, as Hashem’s will dictated.

Source: Adapted from Rabbi Gelley’s Class

במדבר

Shalva Gozland

The Chidushei HaRim notes that Parshas Bamidbar tends to fall out very close to Shavuos. What is the significance of this? When *Bnei Yisroel* camped in the *midbar*, each *shevet*, family, and person had their own place within the camps, symbolizing the unique role that every soul possesses within the *kelal*. When we truly acknowledge the distinct role of every one of our Jewish brothers and sisters, we can work together to realize our common goal, and recognize our great strength in numbers. Parshas Bamidbar stresses the importance of fostering unity within our nation, a perfect pathway into Shavuos. Rashi comments that when we stood at Har Sinai, to receive the Torah, we were 'like one man with one heart'.

May the unity of our people only continue to grow stronger through our unwavering commitment to HaKadosh Baruch Hu and His Holy Torah.

Source: Chidushei HaRim

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דברים

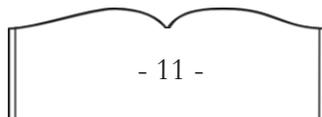
Avigail Deutsch, Passaic

The first of the *Aseres Hadibros* is "*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*". This statement is simple, yet profound. Why does the Torah wait until this point in *sefer Shemos* to write this fundamental *dibra*? The *mehiltah* in *Yisro* answers this question with a parable. Suppose a man walks into a province and crowns himself king. The citizens would obviously reject his rulership. However, if he comes and builds a wall for them, feeds them, and fights their wars, then the people would gladly accept his rulership. Similarly, the *מכילתא* explains that we see Hashem taking *Bnei Yisrael* out of *Mitzrayim*, satiating them with the *mun* and water in the desert, and fighting *Amalek* for them. Then, the Jewish people happily followed Him and accepted His Torah.

We can apply this to our lives too. Although we do not see open miracles like *Yetzias Mitzrayim* or *Matan Torah* anymore, we can train ourselves to notice the hand of Hashem in our world. Once we learn to recognize Hashem, it would only make sense to renew our acceptance of Hashem's Torah with joy and gratitude.

Source: Adapted from Mrs. E. Cohen's Class

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יהושע

Rachel Klamen

There is a Medrash that explains why Yehoshua was the new leader of *Bnei Yisrael* after Moshe died. Yehoshua was chosen because every day in the *midbar* Yehoshua would set up the chairs in the Beis Medrash, where Moshe would teach. Why does this make him a good leader? The answer is that he helped Moshe and was an extension of Moshe.

All of our leaders have attributes that characterize them. Avraham has *chessed*, Yitzchak has *gevura*, Yaakov has *emes*, Moshe has *anava*, but what about Yehoshua? Yehoshua is compared to the moon, while Moshe is compared to the sun. The moon reflects the sun's light at night, when it cannot shine itself. In the above Medrash, Yehoshua set up the chairs to help Moshe continue shining his light, by doing a job when Moshe was otherwise engaged. Similarly, when Moshe died, Yehoshua continued his role when he brought *Bnei Yisrael* into *Eretz Yisroel*.

Both the *Chumash* and Sefer Yehoshua, show that Yehoshua continually reflected the actions of Moshe. Moshe split the Yam Suf, and Yehoshua brought *Bnei Yisrael* through the Yarden. They both made Pesach with *Bnei Yisroel*, and both married converts. In Sefer Yehoshua, Hashem tells Yehoshua he will be with him like he was with Moshe. Moshe brought us the Torah, and Yehoshua led us in conquering *Eretz Yisroel*, which is a land that spreads Torah.

From here we learn the importance of continuing one's legacy and continuing to spread the lights of others, who are no longer able to do so themselves.

Source: The Short Vort

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שופטים

Deena Abittan

Sefer Shoftim explores Jewish life in *Eretz Yisrael* after Yehoshua passes away, and the Shoftim begin ruling *Bnei Yisrael*. After the death of the third Shofet, Shamgar, Sisra the officer of the king ruling *Eretz Yisrael*, began attacking *Bnei Yisrael*. In order to cause Sisra maximum shame because of his wickedness, Hashem decreed that his downfall would be through a woman. After losing a battle with Barak, Sisra was running away when Yael, the wife of Barak, saw him and convinced him to seek refuge in her tent. While he was resting, Yael killed him using the peg of her tent. When Barak saw Sisra

dead, he was energized and continued fighting against the king, ultimately winning for *Bnei Yisrael*. Thus, the battles success was all because of Yael, a woman who utilized her opportunity and saved *Bnei Yisrael* from a wicked man.

The story of Yael killing Sisra is empowering as it teaches us that we must maximize every opportunity we have to do good for *Klal Yisrael*, and we never know how far reaching our actions are.

Source: Rabbi Moshe Weissman

שמואל

Rachel Klamen

The *chosen mishpat*, was one of the *bigdei kehuna* worn by the Kohen Gadol. It contained 12 stones, engraved with the names of the *shvatim*. The *Shaim Hamiforash* was written on the *Urim V'tumim*, and placed inside the *choshen*. The Ramban explains the difference between the *Urim* and *Tumim*. *Urim*, means light, and after the Kohen Gadol asked a question, the stones would illuminate in a scrambled order. However, the *Urim* could not be deciphered without the *Tumim*. The *Tumim* was a form of *Ruach Hakodesh* used to interpret the *Urim*.

Not everyone who had the power of *Urim* had the power of *Tumim*. Therefore, one who lacked the power of *Tumim*, would misinterpret the *Urim*. In Sefer Shmuel, Shmuel Hanavi told Shaul Hamelech to eradicate Amalek. He was not allowed to have any mercy, and was commanded to kill all of the men, women, children, and animals. However, Shaul did not kill Agag Melech Amalek or the animals, as he wanted to bring *korbanos* and be *mikadesh shem shamayim*. After the war, Shaul told Shmuel ה' הקימותי את דבר ה' - I have fulfilled the word of Hashem (15:13). How could Shaul tell Shmuel he carried out Hashem's word, if he had mercy and did not completely obliterate Amalek? The answer is that Shaul genuinely believed he executed Hashem's commandment. Shaul's mistake was that his understanding relied solely on the power of *Urim*, but not *Tumim*. He misinterpreted the *Urim*, and did not listen to Shmuel Hanavi or Hashem, so the *melucha* was taken away from him.

Sefer Bais Av tells us that today when one is immersed in Torah learning and brings proofs from the Torah it is comparable to the power of *Urim*. However, genuine *da'as* Torah, is *Tumim*; being able to say this is exactly what the Torah wants us to do. Even Shaul Hamelech was not able to understand the *Tumim*. Therefore, we need a Rav or *Gadol* to teach us the *Tumim*, to avoid misinterpreting the *Urim*. May we all be *zoché* to have *Gedolim* who can understand the *Tumim* and guide us through our lives.

Source: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

מלכים

Rachel Klamen

During the time period of Eliyahu Hanavi there was a drought. Hashem told Eliyahu to go to נהל כרית. There, ravens brought him food every morning and every night. Why did Hashem choose ravens to save Eliyahu? Ravens are known to be cruel and evil animals, so why did Hashem choose these specific birds to help Eliyahu?

The Succas Dovid says that Hashem was telling Eliyahu that if good can come out of an evil raven, *kal vachomer*, good can come out of bad people. Hashem taught Eliyahu this lesson, as he continually criticized *Bnei Yisrael* and gave them *mussar*. He said “עזבו בריתך” - they abandoned Your *bris*, and he said that *Bnei Yisrael* were wicked, and they deserved to die. Therefore, a chair is set aside for Eliyahu, at every *bris* today, showing him that *Bnei Yisrael* keep Hashem’s *bris*. Although we make mistakes, we do *teshuva*. We still keep the *bris*, and we are not beyond hope. Through the ravens, Hashem is telling Eliyahu that even though *Bnei Yisrael* sinned, they can still achieve greatness. Even though they were doing *avoda zara* with Achav, they were not beyond redemption.

No one is completely wicked, and there is always a chance to do *teshuva* and find the good inside. If a cruel raven can be good to Eliyahu and bring him food, so too every person has a kernel of goodness that can sprout forth.

Source: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

ישעיה

Devorah Pinczower

Megillas Rus is a story about the ancestors of Mashiach. It seems strange that Mashiach’s forefathers were born in such an unconventional manner. The *halacha* that women from Moav are permitted to convert was not public knowledge in the days of Rus. Many questioned the validity of Rus’s conversion, and by default, David’s lineage. If Rus was in fact not allowed to convert, due to her *moaviya* status, then all of her future generations would be considered *pesulei kehal*, and therefore unable to marry into *Bnei Yisrael*. Thus, even though they would marry Jewish women, and their children would be seemingly Jewish, in fact the status of *p’sulim* would pass on even from the father. However, this was not the case, as her conversion was permitted be-

cause of the halacha of “...*moavi v'lo moaviyah.*”

In addition, upon first glance the story of Yehuda and Tamar seems strange, however, while under scrutiny it is found to be totally permissible.

Why is the birth of Mashiach surrounded by all of this ambiguity? When the Satan sees a person doing something that could lead to sinning, he leaves him alone. To ensure that Mashiach is born, and the Satan does not interfere, Mashiach has to be born in a manner that seems like it can lead to sinning, but in reality is permissible.

But lest one think that Mashiach is *chas V'shalom* based on deception in Yeshayahu (11:3), Mashiach is described as having an acute sense of smell with which he judges the nations:

והריחו בירת ה' ולא למראה עיניו יפוט ולא למשמע אזניו יוכיח. - The Metzudas David explains that the smell is the most sensitive sense, and it therefore never misleads a person. Biologically, one can see that indeed the sense of smell is unique from the other senses. Most senses are processed through the thalamus in one's brain before going to the cerebral cortex. The only exception is the sense of smell. Smell is processed directly from the olfactory receptors, to the olfactory bulbs, straight to the cerebral cortex. While a person may see something that is not there, or hear something that was not said, one will never smell something incorrectly. So too, Mashiach will have a sensitive and deep understanding of both people and situations, and as a result his judgements will always be accurate. Mashiach had to be born in an unconventional manner to circumvent the *yetzer bara*. This was all to ensure that he will be able to judge with precision as honest as the sense of smell.

Sources: Adapted from Mrs. Koenig,
Mrs. M. Cohen, and Mrs. From's classes

ירמיהו

Chayala Hauptman

Much of Sefer Yirmiyahu is dedicated to trying to bring awareness to the fact that the *Churban* is imminent and “*mitzafon tiftach bara'ab,*” which Rashi interprets to mean that the *churban* will come from Bavel. Despite the fact that *Bnei Yisrael* knew that Yirmiyahu was a Navi, they still tortured him and threw him into jail. Through the writings of megillas Eicha we see the urgency of *teshuva* and the persistence of Yirmiyahu to get the message of the *churban* across to *Bnei Yisrael*. The concept of “*Sinab m'kalkeles es hashburab*” is seen when Yehoyakim *Hamelech* threw the *megilla* that Baruch Ben Neriah wrote into the fire, and stood there and waited for it to burn. Hashem came

to Yirmiyahu in jail and commanded him to dictate the *megilla* over again to Baruch ben Neriah and to add another perek, *perek gimmel*, with “*devarim rabim ka’hemah*”. We see that Hashem and Yirmiyahu both were determined to save us from the upcoming *churban*. From this sad story we can be encouraged that Hashem never gives up on us, even when we think we have stooped too low to do *teshuvah*. Interestingly, Melech Tzidkiyahu, who we know was a tzadik, is described in the *pesukim* as a *rasha*. In his private life he was a *tzadik*, but as a ruler and a public figure, he was a *rasha* and did not try hard enough to convince *Bnei Yisrael* to return from their bad ways. We see how much Hashem values the efforts of our leaders to care about *klal Yisrael*. Hashem ensures that we will have the correct leadership to encourage us to follow the right path, like Yirmiyahu, and will not remain indifferent, if we *chas vshalom* stray from the *ratzon Hashem*.

Source: Adapted from Rebbetzin Fink

יחזקאל

Esther Butler

Our three *avos*, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov all received *nevuah* from Hashem. Avraham and Yitzchak lived their lives in *Eretz Yisrael*, and during those times Hashem appeared before them. However, Yaakov received *nevuah* outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. The Meshech Chochma notes the difficult life of Yaakov; he had to run away from Asav and his most beloved son, Yosef, was taken from him. Even while in the pain of *galus*, Yaakov had trust in Hashem, and he was *metaken tefillas Maariv*. Despite his suffering, Hashem’s *shechinah* appeared to Yaakov at night, while he was in *chutz laaretz*. How was Yaakov able to receive *nevuah* while he was outside of *Eretz Yisrael*? The answer is found within *sefer Yechezkel* (1: 3):

Hashem appeared to Yechezkel the son of Buzi the Kohen in the land of Kasdim. Rashi learns from the double wording of *היה היה* that Yechezkel was a *navi* in *Eretz Yisrael* before he received *nevuah* in *chutz laaretz*. Since he already had *nevuah* in *Eretz Yisrael*, he was able to receive *nevuah* outside of *Eretz Yisrael* as well.

The Meshech Chochma adds that even while we are in *galus* we should be connected to the Torah and *Eretz Yisrael*. Yaakov’s *tefilla* of *Maariv* can be compared to the fats of the *karbanos* that were brought at night. One could only be *maktir* these fats on condition that the rest of the *karbon* was brought during the day. So too with *nevuah*, one can only receive *nevuah* in *chutz laaretz* after receiving it in *Eretz Yisrael*. May we be *zoche* to the day when

כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלים

Source: Rabbi Yonasan Sacks

תרי עשר

Chynna Levin

The last *passuk* of תרי עשר is:

והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם פן אבוא והכיתי את הארץ חרם, which means “that he (Eliyahu Hanavi) may turn the heart of the fathers back through the children, and the heart of the children back through their fathers-lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction”. The Radak brings the simplest explanation that Eliyahu Hanavi will bring back the fathers with the children. However, according to the Abarbanel and Metzudas David, this *passuk* is saying that any children who *chas vishalom* pass away before their fathers will be brought back to *olam hazeh* when Eliyahu Hanavi comes to announce *mashiach*. These children will tell their fathers about *gan eden*, and that is how the people will know how to prepare for *mashiach*. This is an unusual explanation of a *passuk* that speaks about family reunions during the time of *mashiach*.

תהילים

Chayala Hauptman

Hallel is כולו שבה to Hashem and is our way to express to Him our *bakaras batov*. Like the rest of Tanach, it is our guide book which instructs and directs our levels. In Hallel we highlight the three levels of *Bnei Yisrael*: *Yisrael*, *Beis Abaron* and *Yirei Hashem*. *Yisrael* is the highest level because Yaakov Avinu was given this name when he was *kovesh* his *yetzer*, and that is the highest level of *avodas Hashem*. The next level is *Beis Abaron* because *shevet Levi* was the only *shevet* that did not participate in *Cheit Haeigel* and was *moser nefesh* out of their love for Hashem. From here we learn that *ahava* is the next highest level in *avodas Haborei*. The third level are those that act from fear of Hashem. As Hallel mentions each of these levels of *tzidkus* in *avodas Hashem*, we can see that He appreciates all our efforts, as long as we try. During this Shavuot, as we accept *Toras Hashem* and strive to the highest levels of *ordei Hashem*, we should aspire to achieve the stature of the Jew described in Hallel.

Source: Adapted from Rabbi Gelley's Class

משלי

Shalva Gozland

Rus is the only woman in the Torah who is referred to as an *eishes chayil*.

Naomi tells her daughter-in-law (3:11),

ועתה בתי אל תיראי כל אשר תאמרי אעשה לך כי יודע כל שער עמי כי אשת חיל את .

It is not a coincidence that the composer of the legendary *eishes chayil* in *sefer*

Mishlei is Shlomo HaMelech, a descendant of Rus. A *Midrash* suggests that

the song of *eishes chayil* is an allusion to Rus. רבות כנות עשו

חיל ואת עליית על כלנה - *Many women have acquired valor, but you surpass them all*

(31:29). This is Rus, who clung to the ways of Hashem, and merited to give

rise to the noblest family of the Jewish people: the family of Mashiach. The

next *passuk* furthers the connection between *eishes chayil* and Rus.

שקר החן והבל היפי אשה יראת ה' היא תתהלל - *Charm is false and beauty is inaccurate;*

a G-d-fearing woman is to be praised (31:30). Rus left behind her the royalty

and wealth, and followed her mother-in-law Naomi. Rus accepted all of

the Torah's commandments with unwavering devotion and sincerity. מעשיה

תננו לה מפרי ידיה ויהללוה בשערים - *Give her of the fruit of her hands, and her deeds*

will praise her in the gates (31:31). Rus's legacy of valor and righteousness lives

on, throughout the generations. May we merit to follow in the footsteps of

her greatness, as we look up to our incredible mothers and teachers who

continue to inspire us.

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איוב

Chana Fine

Sefer Iyov discusses לו רשע וטוב לו - when bad happens to the righteous, and good to the wicked. The *sefer* is structured as a *masbal*, and tells of a man who was not Jewish but nevertheless feared Hashem. He was a good man who lived in a land called עוץ. He had ten children - 7 boys and 3 girls - and plenty of cattle and servants. He was well known in his times and his name was Iyov. Every night Iyov's children would host parties, and the following day, Iyov would bring a *korban* to Hashem in case his children had sinned at their parties.

In *shamayim*, Hashem said: "Have you seen my special servant who brings a *korban* every day?" The Satan responded, questioning Iyov's stature. The Satan claimed that Iyov was only loyal to Hashem because he had wealth

and success. But if he would lose his fortune, then he would no longer serve Hashem to the same extent. Hashem agreed to test Iyov, on condition that Iyov himself would not be harmed. The Satan caused great destruction to Iyov's possessions. A servant told Iyov that his cattle died, another informed Iyov of a fire that burned the sheep, a third spoke of robbers who came to the fields, and a fourth servant told Iyov that his house collapsed, killing all of his children.

Hashem declared "Iyov is still a *tzaddik*." The Satan responded that this was only because Iyov, himself, was not physically harmed. Then Hashem gave the Satan permission to injure Iyov. The Satan inflicted Iyov with boils. They were so painful that Iyov had to sit in the sand to relieve himself of the pain. Despite the hardships, Iyov remained loyal to Hashem. The Satan could not make Iyov sin, proving that he was righteous all along. Hashem repaid Iyov in full, granting him a new family of seven boys and three girls.

There is so much to be learned from Iyov, whose unconditional loyalty to Hashem can certainly serve as a paradigm for generations of *Bnei Yisrael*.

Source: Mrs. E. Cohen's Class

שיר השירים

Esther Butler

Shir Hashirim begins with אשר לשלמה שיר השירים, contrasting to Tehillim 127, שיר השירים לשלמה. What is the reason for the word אשר in Shir Hashirim? The Medrash Shir Hashirim Rabba explains that this song was first sung by Hashem at *Har Sinai*, and Shlomo Hamelech said it years later. Hashem sets aside a portion of the Torah for each individual to teach to others. Therefore, Hashem said Shir Hashirim in the name of Shlomo, as he would reteach it to *Bnei Yisrael*. The beginning of the song is saying that this is Shir Hashirim that is destined for Shlomo's *neshama* to teach to *Klal Yisrael*.

Why was Shlomo Hamelech chosen to give over the consoling words of Shir Hashirim? One reason is that Shlomo built the first *Beis Hamikdash*, so Hashem chose him to inform us that after the final *galus* there will a third *Beis Hamikdash*. A second reason is that the generations of *Bnei Yisrael* are compared to the light of the moon. Avraham Avinu was the first to bring light into the world, so he is compared to the beginning of the month, when only a sliver of the moon is visible. From Avraham until Shlomo there were 15 generations: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yehuda, Peretz, Chetzron, Ram, Aminadav, Nachshon, Sal'mon, Boaz, Oved, Yishai, David, Shlomo. In the beginning of the month the moon waxes, appearing brighter until the 15th of

the month when a full moon is observed. Following Shlomo was Rechavam, when the kingdom split, and the greatness of the kings diminished. Similarly, after a full moon, less of the face of the moon is visible, and thus less light is seen. The last king of Yehuda was Tzidkiyahu, the 29th generation since Avraham, when once again a mere sliver of the moon is visible. Since then we have been in *galus* and are awaiting our return to Yerushalayim. Therefore, as Shlomo was the last generation with the ultimate light, he was chosen to give Shir Hashirim to *Bnei Yisrael*. Shir Hashirim comforts us that even in dark times Hashem loves us. We await the time when Hashem will gather all of *Bnei Yisrael*, unite the split kingdom, and return the ultimate light of *Bnei Yisrael*.

Source: *Alshich*

רות

Rosie Katz

A purpose of *galus* is to bring close the holy *neshamos* that want to become *geirim*. *Geirim* are part of the many other nations who declined to accept the Torah at *Har Sinai*. It is our responsibility to bring these *neshamos* close to us. The strong holiness of *klal Yisrael* in *Eretz Yisrael* and Jews all around the world can be compared to a magnet. A magnet can attract metal from a great distance. So too, the *neshamos* of the *geirim* are magnetically attracted to Klal Yisroel throughout the world and throughout the millennia. In *Megillas Rus*, the *kedusha* of Boaz drew Rus close to the Jewish nation. In the *Megilla* it says ‘*mikrah*,’ a happenstance that Rus encountered Boaz in the fields, which ultimately led to Rus becoming a *goyores*. Nothing ‘just happens,’ it was obviously *hashgacha*.

At *Matan Torah*, each nation received a portion of the Torah, and were asked if they wanted the Torah. The other nations declined the Torah. However, there were some individuals amongst them who wanted the Torah. Once these hidden *neshamos* become *geirim*, they are reunited with the Torah and Hashem. There is potential to become closer to Hashem in *galus* by bringing close the lost *neshamos*.

We may not realize the influence that our good deeds and proper behaviors have on the public at large. It is not our duty to find people to bring close to Hashem. We simply have to make sure to set a fine example, which has the potential to draw these *goyim* close.

רות

Rachel Jacobi

In *Megillas Rus* there is an unusual interaction between Boaz and his field employees. The *passuk* says

“והנה בועז בא מבית לחם ויאמר לקוצרים ה' עמכם ויאמרו לו יברכך ה'” - Behold, Boaz arrived from *Beis Lechem*, he said to the harvesters, ‘Hashem should be with you!’ And they answered him ‘May Hashem bless you!’ (Rus 2:4)” What is the significance of this short conversation between Boaz and his workers?

The Talmud [Makkos 23b] tells us that this interaction was an enactment of the court of Boaz. Previously, people did not greet each other using Hashem’s name, saying ‘Hashem should be with you’. Now, as well, one does not greet his friend by telling them that Hashem should be with them. So clearly this was a *Hora’as Sha’ah*, short enactment, only during Boaz’s time.

What was the reason for this short term law? During the time of the *megilla*, the Jewish nation had been suffering from a terrible hunger. The morale of the nation at that time had reached new lows, and mitzvos להחברו בין אדם לחברו was in danger as well. To remedy this, *Beis Din* decided that people should greet each other using Hashem’s name. This showed the Jews that everyone is holy, created with a *Tzelem Elokim*, and deserves to be greeted with the name of Hashem.

This is why the conversation between Boaz and his workers is of tremendous importance. It teaches us how to treat and interact with other human beings, with our friends, family, neighbors, and even strangers on the street. When we recognize that Hashem created us in His spirit, our behavior and approach to each other should automatically be different.

The Medrash tells us that when we come up to שמיים after 120 years, we will be asked two questions. ‘Did you make Hashem your King?’ And ‘Did you make your friend your King?’ Meaning, did you treat every friend like you would treat royalty? Boaz’s conversation conveys the importance of treating each other like the princes they are, with the *Tzelem Elokim* inside.

Source: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

רות

Nechama Weiner

On Shavuos we read *Megillas Rus* which opens up with the words ויהי בימי שפוט השופטים - and it happened during the time when *Bnei Yisrael* was ruled by judges. When a *sefer* begins with the words ויהי בימי it is alluding to

the fact that in the future something bad will occur. In this instance, the bad occurrence was the severe and painful famine that *Bnei Yisrael* suffered, and in addition, the hardships that would come upon Elimelech and his family. The words שפוט השופטים present a question; what does it mean that *Bnei Yisrael* were being ruled by judges, what time period was this? The approach of the אגרת שמואל to this question is that a famine only befalls a strong and righteous nation that can withstand the hardship and pass the *nissayon*. Therefore, we learn that *Bnei Yisrael* were ruled by righteous judges, who judged with justice, and *Bnei Yisrael* listened to them and obeyed their word. Hashem knew that this holy generation would be able to withstand the test, so Hashem presented them with that struggle. We can learn from here that Hashem only gives us a *nissayon* that is on our level, which we can pass. Nothing in our lives is too hard or too big for us to overcome.

Source: *Artscroll Megilla*

איכה

Ilana Krausman

In *Megillas Eichab*, *Bnei Yisrael* experienced difficult times, including a famine. The *passuk* says (1:11):

כל עמה נאנחים מבקשים לחם נתנו מחמדיהם באכל להשיב נפש ראה ה' והביטה כי הייתי זוללה- the whole nation of *Bnei Yisrael* are sighing, searching for bread, giving away their treasures to revive their souls, see Hashem that I have become gluttonous." The *Medrash Raba Mivoar* explains that *Bnei Yisrael* were so eager to eat that they immediately used all of their saved money to buy food. Why does the *passuk* call *Bnei Yisrael* gluttonous if they did not have food? Seemingly, they should be described as starving. The *Alshich* notes that it says הייתי זוללה, in past tense. *Bnei Yisrael* were gluttonous before the *Churban*, and they took advantage of all the good they had in *Eretz Yisrael*. With this they developed a need for luxuries. If they would not have accustomed themselves to unnecessary grandeur, then the pain would have been less once they lost their wealth. We learn from here that one should not overindulge in every nonessential item. Extravagant nonessentials corrupt us, and make us unappreciative of the small gifts.

Source: *Adapted from Mrs. Ferber's Class*

קהלת

Elisheva Hoffman

Sefer Koheles (1:3) questions the gain of toiling under the sun-מה יתרון למלך במלך עמלו שיעמול תחת השמש. One way to respond to this question is that we can benefit from any item that is used for *kedusha*. If one earns money, and takes *ma'aser*, then the shell of *tumah* is removed from the money. Hashem gave us many *mitzvos* with specific details; for example, the order dictated for putting on shoes or cutting nails. At the end of Pirkei Avos we say, רצה הקדוש ברוך הוא לזכות את ישראל לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצות *mitzvos* in order to give us reward. We should try to do everything we do for good, so we can gain *mitzvos*, and ultimately reap the benefits in the World to Come!

Source: Adapted from Mrs. Ferber's Class

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אסתר

Bryna Greenberg

In Megillas Esther (4:13-14) it says,

ו-יאמר מרדכי להשיב אל אסתר אל תדמי בנפשך להמלט בית המלך מכל היהודים. כי אם החרש תחרשי בעת הזאת רוח והצלה יעמוד ליהודים ממקום אחר ואת ובית אביך תאבדו ומי יודע אם לעת כזאת הגעת למלכות.

And Mordechai said to reply to Esther, "do not imagine in your soul that you will be able to escape in the king's palace any more than the rest of the Jews. For if you insist on keeping silent at a time like this, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, while you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether it was just for such a time as this that you attained the royal position!"

This was Mordechai's response to Esther's request of postponing her visit to Achashverosh until a time when he called her. Esther felt that if she went to Achashverosh when she was called, the chances of a positive response to her request would be greater, and the risk of Achashverosh killing her would be lessened as well. Esther's true intentions were to save herself as well as *klal yisrael*.

The Maharal of Prague asks, was Esther not willing to risk her life for the sake of *klal Yisrael*? Also, if Esther was correct and would have been able to save herself *and klal Yisrael*, why didn't Mordechai reconcile with her plan? According to the Maharal, Mordechai saw in *Ruach Ha'kodesh*, that *klal Yisrael* were not only going to be saved, but the decree of Haman would be

completely turned around. And that was why he did not fear sending Esther even in a time of danger. He believed that by waiting, she would squander her opportunity to be Achashverosh's queen, and therefore would be punished.

The Chidushei Halev builds on the Maharal's explanation and asks, why couldn't Mordechai explain his foresight to Esther rather than rebuking her? He answers, Mordechai suspected that Esther's motives for waiting was that she had a *nigia daka*- a slight bias, that if it was possible, she wanted to also save her own life. Her *nigia* is what prevented her from understanding the importance of having complete faith in Mordechai's words. Therefore, his explanation of what he saw, would not have swayed her. Her *nigia* was to try to wait a little longer to be able to save herself. Mordechai, therefore, had to adjust his response to address her *nigia*. He shed light upon the fact that Esther was in the same boat as the rest of *klal Yisrael*, and being in a position of royalty is not what will save her. Her risk of being killed would be *greater* by waiting because *klal Yisrael* would be saved by other means, and she and her family would lose out completely because she would no longer have a *tafkid*. Once he said that, her *nigia* was removed. She understood that she had to act immediately.

From here we can see the power of having a *nigia* within ourselves. Our visions become clouded of what is right because we are so attached to what we want for ourselves. As humans, we do not know what Hashem has in store for us. We can never assume we know better. Esther sincerely wanted to save *klal Yisrael*, but her *nigia* nearly caused her to make a costly mistake.

We can also learn from Mordechai how to address a *nigia*. In order to rebuke a person *L'sheim Shamayim* we must come out of ourselves and look into what could possibly be holding a person back from making the right decision. We must consider their attachments and *nigos*, and assess their needs accordingly.

May we all be *zocheh* to have the clarity to see past our *nigos*, and be able to serve Hashem *L'sheim Shamayim!*

Sources: *Megillat Esther (4:13-14)*, *Ohr Chadash by the Maharal*,
and *The Chidushei Halev by R' Henech Lebowitz*
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דניאל

Rebecca Russo

In *sefer Daniel*, Chananya Mishael and Azarya are confronted with the ultimate *nisayon* of giving up their lives *al kiddush Hashem*. Nivuchadnezer threatened that unless they bow down to the *tzelem*, which was a deity in

itself, he would throw them into a burning furnace. These *tzadikim* knew the *dvar Hashem* and understood this was one of the *gimul chamuros* that they are *mechuyav* to give up their lives, rather than cross the line of *emuna*. When a person is giving up his life he needs *chizuk* from others or within. The *medrash* in *Shemos* says that these *tzadikim* learned from the *tzfardea* in *Mitzrayim*. If the *tzfardea* were willing to infest the furnaces of the *Mitzrayim* and by that give up their lives, we, *kal vchomer*, have an obligation to allow ourselves to be burned in this *kinsban al Kiddush Hashem*. The obvious question rises- the frogs never had *bechira*. The frogs do not get credit for doing *dvar Hashem* because they do not know otherwise, so from where did they learn to be *moser nefesh*? We are *baalei bechira*, so how could these *tzadikim* take inspiration from the frogs?

When we do *dvar Hashem* we have to be in the mindset that there is no alternative. We have to feel as if it is black and white without *bechira*. Similarly, in *sefer Breishis* the Ohr Hachaim says, “*Limsbol Byom Uvalila*” that the sun and moon rule the world. One can learn from this *passuk* that we too should serve Hashem like the sun and moon that do not have *bechira*. Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya learned from the *tzfardea* that they have to be *avdei Hashem* with clarity that there is no other option, without *bechira*. This mindset is what ultimately saved them when they entered the burning furnace. The total subservience to Hashem that *ain od milvado*, ultimately saved their lives.

Source: Harav Kook

דברי הימים

Ashira Feld

Much of *Sefer Dvrei Hayamim beis* is about the splitting of the *malucha* into *malchus yehuda* and *malchus yisrael*. *Perek 11, passuk 1* says:

ויבא רחבעם ירושלים ויקהל את בית יהודה ובינימין מאה ושמונים אלף בחור עשה
מלחמה להלחם עם ישראל להשיב את הממלכה לרחבעם

Rechavam came to Yerushalayim in order to gather Yehuda and Binyamin to fight against Yisrael, beginning the split between the *malchus*. We see the result of this split in the next *perek* (12:1):

ויהי כהכין מלכות רחבעם וכחזקתו עזב את תורת ה' וכל ישראל עמו
as Rechavam established his *malchus*, the tension within *Klal Yisrael* grew stronger, and they began to leave the ways of the Torah. We learn from here that a lack of *achdus* has a direct correlation with one straying from the Torah. The exact opposite phenomenon happened at *Har Sinai*. The *passuk* in *Parshas Yisro* says: ויהן שם ישראל נגד ההר. Rashi explains that ויהן is in *lashon yachid*, singular, be-

cause *Bnei Yisrael* were ויהן שם ישראל נגד ההר. The epitome of *achdus* amongst *Klal Yisrael* was at *Har Sinai*, and is the reason we were worthy to receive the Torah.

This is the meaning of the *passuk* in *Parshas Achrei Mos* when it says “ואהבת לרעך כמוך,” and Rashi comments in the words of Rabbi Akiva “זה כלל גדול בתורה.” The *Sefer Olam Hamiddos* interprets Rabbi Akiva’s words to mean that this is the essence of the Torah. In order to attain such an elevated level of loving one’s fellow Jew, one must embark on *tikun hamidos* and perfect themselves in all aspects of בין אדם לחבירו, until they have reached the point of ואהבת לרעך כמוך.

The Gra says שעיקר התורה הוא תיקון המידות, that the most important element of Torah is to work on one’s middos in order to reach this level of loving *Klal Yisrael*, as *achdus* and the receiving of the Torah go hand in hand.

According to the *Olam Hamidos*, this is why the students of Rabbi Akiva were *niftar* specifically during the weeks approaching Shavuos. It was their lack of *tikun hamidos* and *achdus* that made them unworthy of receiving the Torah on Shavuos, as this is the *ikur* of Torah.

On Shavuos we must make sure that we are worthy of accepting the Torah as we work on our בין אדם לחבירו and take part in strengthening the *achdus* of *Klal Yisrael*, because as we learn from *Divrei Hayamim*, it is the lack of *Achdus* that causes us to ח"ו leave the ways of the Torah.

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תורה שבעל פה

Nechama Melohn

It is hard to think about Shavuos without having cheesecake and blintzes come to mind. This delicious *minhag* is one that delights children and adults, but seems different from all the other *chagim*, where we specifically prepare meat in honor of the *chag*. What is the meaning behind the practice of eating dairy foods?

The *Mishnah Berurah* gives perhaps the most popular answer to this question. It is explained that Shavuos is when we first learned all the complicated *halachos* of *kashrus*. Since *Bnei Yisrael* had never learned these laws and they did not have any experience with separating meat and milk or with shechting and kashering meat, they refrained from eating any *fleishig* food until they were familiar with the *halachos*. Instead, they ate dairy meals, so we continue this practice commemorating *Matan Torah* and *Bnei Yisrael's zehirus b'mitzvos*.

The *Shulchan Orech* offers a different view, as there is no mention of *milchig*

meals on *Shavuos*. Instead, the Rama teaches that there is a *minbag* for Ashkenazi Jews to eat dairy at the beginning of the meal and then, have *fleishigs* in honor of the *chag*. He brings a *halacha* that if there is a loaf of bread eaten with a dairy meal, then that same loaf cannot be eaten with a meat meal. He then explains that the *korban* of the *Shtei Halechem* was offered on *Shavuos*, and it involved two loaves of bread. To commemorate this *korban*, the Rama says that, in accordance with the *halacha* of separating bread that was used for meat or dairy meals, we use one loaf of bread with the *milchig* part of the meal and a separate loaf of bread with the *fleishig* part of the meal.

The Bais Halevi offers a beautiful response to the question about eating dairy on *Shavuos*. He teaches that the *melachim* asked Hashem why He chose to give the Torah to *Bnei Yisrael* and not to them? Hashem's response was that the *melachim* were not as careful with *mitzvos* as *Bnei Yisrael*. When the *melachim* went to visit Avraham, they ate milk and meat together, demonstrating that they were not careful about *halacha*. To contrast this, Hashem showed the *melachim* how careful *Bnei Yisrael* were with the *halachos* of *kasbrus* that they refrained from eating meat altogether after they got the Torah!

Hashem chose to give the Torah to us because He was so happy with our meticulousness regarding *mitzvos*. This *minbag* of eating *milchigs* on *Shavuos* is a custom that reminds us of how careful we should be with *mitzvos* and how pleased Hashem was with our behavior.

תורה שבעל פה

Baila Schuster

Yom Tov was given to us so that we can develop a closer relationship with Hashem. The Mishna Berura writes that Chol Hamoed is included in this opportunity. Together with Yom Tov it forms a weeklong festival that enables us to work on and develop our love for Hashem and his Torah. This being the case, the Darchei Mussar says that we can understand that on Pesach and Succos we have the chance to achieve this level of closeness because there is an entire week that we are busy with learning, davening, and other *divrei kedusha*, but *Shavuos* is only two days (*chutץ laaretz*)! What can we possibly accomplish in such a short time frame?

Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovits explains that the entire day of *Shavuos* is a day for us to renew our relationship with Hashem and His Torah. There is a *mashal* of a man who is wandering alone in the extreme darkness of night. He is walking along a path, not knowing where it will lead, when eventually he comes to a fork in the path. He stumbles around looking for a road sign. He feels a plank of wood with arrows pointing right and left, he has found

the sign, but because it is so dark he cannot make out any of the words. Then, all of a sudden, there is a flash of lightning and in that moment, the writing on the sign is illuminated, enabling him to head along the right path home.

Our *rabbonim* explain that we are like that man. Throughout the year we walk enshrouded in the darkness of *galus*. But on Shavuot, we have the ability to reaffirm our relationship with Hashem, and to reclarify the direction where we are heading with that flash of lightning: our expression of joy over the Torah that Hashem gave us. From the expression of *ahavas baTorah* that we show on Shavuot night we are able to follow the right direction in our daily lives, Torah learning, and relationship with Hashem throughout the year. May we all be *zoche* to feel the love of the Torah that will be our guiding light to bring us home to Yerushalayim.

Source: *The Short Vort*

תורה שבעל פה

Kayla Samet

Our lives revolve around the fact that we are *frum* and keep the Torah. One day a year, we turn to Hashem and say, I am ready to accept it again for another year. What is this Torah that we commit our whole beings to? Why is it that we are constantly trying to grow and achieve? Someone who was known for his constant immersion in Torah, and total acceptance and commitment was Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l, the beloved Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva.

The Rosh Yeshiva's favorite *passuk* was: *מה אהבתי תורתך כל היום היא שיחתי*. When someone loves something so much, they simply cannot help but speak about it all the time. Conversely, the more one speaks about something, the more one comes to love it. Rav Finkel started out as a simple boy, in Ida Crown in Chicago. Once he began learning in the Mir, when he was in high school, his friends began to notice that whenever they were with their dear friend, they would speak mostly about Torah topics.

One *talmid* remembers that Rav Finkel would learn during times that no one else considered a time to learn. For example, *Erev Pesach*, when everyone was busy burning their *chametz*, Rav Finkel was already walking to *yeshiva*, with a *gemara* in his hand.

Rav Finkel was constantly reviewing. He would reread the same page, never growing tired of it. He would prepare for a *shiur* with ten different *chavrusos*, and start each one with the same excitement. He would read a page ten times over with the same enthusiasm as the first time.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger was also someone who embodied this idea. He was once travelling and stopped at an inn to rest for the night. He asked the innkeeper if there were any seforim around that he could study from, and the innkeeper returned with Teshuvos HaRashba. Rabbi Akiva Eiger began to study it, until he came to a page where the page before was missing. Rabbi Akiva Eiger took out a piece of paper and wrote down, by heart, the words from that missing page. While it is impressive that he knew the words by heart, what is more exceptional is that he stayed up all night to learn and study something that he already knew. *Chazara* is an integral part of learning Torah, as seen by Rabbi Akiva Eiger and Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel.

In Pirkei Avos, (1:17) it says:

שמעון בנו אומר כל ימי גדלותי בין החכמים ולא מצאתי לגוף טוב משתיקה - *“Shimon and his son said: All my days I have been raised among the Sages and I found nothing better for one’s self than silence...”* Why couldn’t Rabbi Shimon just say that there is nothing better than silence? He is teaching us that being around our *chachamim* can teach us a lot about life and proper Jewish behavior. Since our sages are so engrossed in Torah, their behavior is one to emulate. Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky z”l, former Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaath, was renowned for his exceptionally refined middos. He was easily differentiated from amongst a group of people as someone special. Rav Kamenetsky is remembered for being a living *sefer* Torah. How does one achieve such a lofty *madreiga*? By total commitment to the Torah and its ways. Only when the words of Hashem become one with a personality, can a person truly breathe Torah. The Torah guided Rav Yaakov through his everyday life. When he did not have an answer for someone, he would delve into learning, and emerge with a clear answer.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky also had incredible self control. During a wedding, the *kesuba* was nowhere to be seen. While all the guests were frantically searching for it, Rav Kamenetsky remained calm, calming down the *chosson* and *kallah* as well. This self control was an outgrowth of a Torah personality, a *gadol* who completely subjugated himself to the will of Hashem.

אשרינו מה טוב הלקינו - how fortunate are we to be the *Am Hanivchar*, and to attend MHS and learn Torah from exceptional role models who honor and revere *talmidei chachamim*.

Sources: *Artscroll Series: Rav Nosson Tzvi and Mesorah Artscroll: Reb Yaakov*

תורה שבעל פה

Ayelet Landau

Prior to *Kabalas Hatorah*, one would think we should be focusing on halacha, and perfecting *mitzvos bein adam l'Makom*. However, we spend the weeks leading up to *Kabalas Hatorah* fine tuning our *middos*, and working on *mitzvos bein adam l'chavero*. It is no coincidence that during *Sefiras Haomer* we focus on our *middos*. We cannot physically receive the Torah unless we have *middos tovos*. This is explained with the following *masbal*: One can bake a cake with the finest ingredients, but if there is a hole in the pan the batter will seep out, and there will be no cake. So too, one can be the greatest Torah scholar, fluent in Halacha, yet if he lacks *middos tovos* his Torah is lacking. A person is the *keli* to hold the Torah, but without *middos tovos*, all his Torah learning seeps out of him. During *Sefira* we mourn the loss of Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 *talmidim*. They were all tremendous Torah scholars, the *gedolim* of their generation, yet they did not respect one another (on their madreiga) so all but five students passed away. The mere fact that they did not treat their peers with respect made them deserving of death. Even their tremendous Torah knowledge could not counteract the lack of *middos tovos*. This is why during the seven weeks leading up to Shavuos we work on our *middos*, so that when we come to *Kabalas Hatorah* we are truly ready to receive the Torah.

Source: Adapted from Rabbi Gelley & Rabbi Taub's classes

מה אהבתי תורתך כל היום היא שיחתי

Deena Abittan,, Esther Butler, Ashira Feld, Devorah Pinczower, Rebecca Russo

It is particularly apropos for the Moadim, in honor of Shavous, זמן מתן תורתנו, to reflect upon those teachers who teach *Sifrei Tanach*. Sara Schneirer, founder of the Bais Yaakov movement, with the guidance of the gedolim of her generation, determined that through the formal study of Tanach, Bnos Yisrael would absorb אהבת ה' ויראת שמים. Today we continue her legacy with mechanchos, whose lessons on Tanach are saturated with אהבת ה' ויראת שמים .

אשרינו מה טוב חלקנו!

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Despite her busy schedule, Mrs. Yanofsky takes the time to teach Mishlei, because she values having a deep understanding of Torah. Her classes are practical, and we relate everything we learn to our lives. We learn how to read mefarshim accurately and fluently, but also to appreciate the depth behind every word of the meforash. Her reverence for chachamim and gedolim is clearly manifested in all of her discussions, regardless of the topic. She is knowledgeable in all areas of Torah and life, and she brings that knowledge into everything we learn. Pesukim are constantly on her tongue, and she embodies everything that she teaches us. She takes the time to explain every topic in detail, and gives meaning to everything we learn. We learn middos that are applicable to us now, but also learn about topics that help us for the future.

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Rebbetzin Twersky's unwavering emunah in Hashem is clearly manifested in the way she teaches, acts, and talks. No matter what happens, the words "Baruch Hashem" are always on her lips. She doesn't just learn Torah, but she lives by and for Torah. She can take a seemingly abstract concept and make it relevant. We take a meforash and go in depth until we live the Torah we are learning. Her lessons make us thirsty for more, and make us truly appreciate the beauty and depth of Torah. Rebbetzin Twersky can answer a question on any topic, as she is extremely erudite and informed. She is not just a teacher, but a true role model for us, and is an embodiment to all that we aspire. After going through Rebbetzin Twersky's class, Torah becomes a part of us, and we cannot help but come out as better people.

Mrs. Yankelowitz's Chumash Bekius class is always timely. For example, she taught us the topic of Amalek, before Purim. Every lesson is thought out carefully, and has a specific purpose. She gives us a deep understanding of the pesukim, and she helps us see the beauty in the most miniscule details of the Chumash. Mrs. Yankelowitz taught us that there is meaning behind every mitzvah that we do, and nothing should be taken for granted. She does not just teach us, but she teaches us how to learn, thereby enabling us to learn independently. Not only do we learn Chumash in her class, but we also learn lessons and skills for life. Mrs. Yankelowitz appreciates every second, and therefore does not waste a single minute of class. Her devotion is evident by the fact that she is always available for every student, even after school hours.

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Mrs. E. Cohen does not just think about all of her students, rather she is constantly doing for them, both in and out of school. When something needs to be taken care of, she does it, no matter how difficult it may be. But despite all that she does, she has such incredible *anivus*, to the point where her efforts are not known by most. We clearly see that Mrs. Cohen lives her life according to Torah values, she does not just teach it. She has such an *אהבת התורה* and she truly uses it as a guidebook for her life. Her classes enable us to build the skills to learn *mefarshim* on our own. Mrs. Cohen really knows *Tanach* backwards and forwards, as she teaches Chumash and Navi, in addition to other Jewish subjects. Her *ahavas Yisrael* and emphasis on *achdus* are clearly manifested in all of her lessons.

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No girl leaves MHS without remembering Rebbetzin Fink's Navi class and its invaluable lesson of "Mikan Lomdim." Mikan Lomdim we can learn bot- any from the Torah... Mikan Lomdim Yehoyachin also had a summer house... Mikan Lomdim even lower objects have a purpose... Mikan Lomdim an ordi- nary klaf can become kadosh... Mikan Lomdim we learn the importance of just two minutes... "Mikan Lomdim" has become the paradigm of our high school shiurim, and we've taken it with us ever since. Rebbetzin Fink, you taught us the importance of learning from what we learn, and that's some- thing that will remain with us forever. Mikan Lomdim, We love Rebbetzin Fink!

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Mrs. Ferber's vibrant smile and passion for limud Torah spreads throughout the class. Her lessons are taught with such enthusiasm that we look forward to each Megilla class. She begins her classes with a flow of pesukim, and the entire class repeats it out loud, chanting the beautiful words of the megilla. At the end of each class every word of the pasuk, now committed to memory, has meaning, and relevance. As a class, we have gained a new appreciation for limud Torah. We have learned from Mrs. Ferber's example that one can lead a life guided by Torah. Her innate happiness stems from a true connection to the sefer, a feeling which we have all been privileged to experience through the enlightening class of Mrs. Ferber.

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From the first *Chovos Halevavos*, you had us hooked on Nosim B'Chumash. Your class is unlike any other class we've ever had. While focusing on the specific words in a pasuk and analyzing all the possible meanings, we reached a new understanding for topics we've been learning our whole lives. You built in time for us to ask questions and be involved in the very curriculum of the class. Any questions you don't have an immediate answer to, we know you will find answers to satisfy us. You have introduced us to so many new meforshim, and you legitimize and respect all their opinions, no matter how difficult they may be. You have introduced us to a diverse array of meforshim and taught us to respect the opinions of all sects. It is so obvious to us how much you care, that we can't help but love the material as much as you do. When we ultimately study, we don't just learn for the test. Truky, from you we have absorbed integrity, *ahavas Torah*, and *ahavas rayim*.

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Rebbitzin Eisenberger's chumash class is no ordinary chumash class. Rebbitzin Eisenberger has the unique ability to take apart a pasuk and explain it so meticulously. Refined and poised, Rebbitzin Eisenberger successfully teaches Parshas Bereishis with a whole new dimension. Her longing for her students to understand and live by the material she teaches is so strongly evident in her class presentation. Rebbitzin Eisenberger's Chumash automatically becomes a part of us due to her extreme passion and determination. Rebbitzin Eisenberger is a dynamic teacher who will teach a lesson when there are just two minutes left of class, because she never wastes time and she understands the importance of proper chinuch. A *passuk* is never just a *passuk* in her Chumash class. She never teaches a class without having taught us a life lesson as well, all of which are vital in the next stage of our life.

Mrs. M. Cohen infuses meaning in every meforash, ensuring that as students we walk away from each Navi Yeshayahu class with a lesson. The curriculum is structured in a way that we learn the perakim that appear as the haftorah of the upcoming chag. With this forum, we now feel that the sefer is truly part of our everyday lives. Mrs. Cohen teaches us that Navi is not merely a subject we learn in class, but it is the guide to our everyday lives. For each meforash, we delve into its meaning. The words of the sefer become tangible by discussing the significance behind each word and the lessons we can learn from them. Mrs. Cohen is truly successful in transforming the sefer we learn to become part of the person we are and strive to be.

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Rebbetzin Neuburger, from the first *Chovos Halevanos*, you had us hooked on Nosim B'Chumash. Your class is unlike any other class we've ever had. While focusing on the specific words in a pasuk and analyzing all the possible meanings, we reached a new understanding for topics we've been learning our whole lives. You built in time for us to ask questions and be involved in the very curriculum of the class. Any questions you don't have an immediate answer to, we know you will find answers to satisfy us. You have introduced us to so many new meforshim, and you legitimize and respect all their opinions, no matter how difficult they may be. You have introduced us to a diverse array of meforshim and taught us to respect the opinions of all sects. It is so obvious to us how much you care, that we can't help but love the material as much as you do. Truly, from you we have absorbed integrity, *abavas Torah*, and *abavas rayim*.

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Mrs. Koenig's Megillas Rus class has deepened our understanding of the megilla by bringing deep Mefarshim that can help explain difficult concepts. She uses the megilla as a method to bring in life lessons to ensure that we grow from each and every lesson, and apply them to our everyday lives. When in Mrs. Koenig's class, we can visibly see her strong connection to Hashem, and we are inspired to grow. She connects with her students, always helping them improve according to their ability. She is always available to take time to discuss topics that she feels are pertinent, even if it takes class time, and she is willing to stay after class to further discuss a topic with any student. Her true devotion to her subject is visible to all.



Manhattan High School for Girls
מכון יעקב לבנות