



May 20, 2011

י"ז אייר תשע"א

פרשת בחוקתי

Candle Lighting 7:44 PM

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Dvar Torah - Acquiring Torah - by Rabbi Hillel Dudovitz



As we move closer to *Shavuos*, each day is like a precious coin needed in order to acquire the Torah. This is why we count **up** to *Shavuos* instead of counting down. One of the most central *midos* needed to acquire the Torah is found in the beginning of this week's *Parsha*.

The *Parsha* begins "אם בחוקתי תלכו," which can be translated as "If you will go in the ways of my laws..." רשי"י explains that it can not be referring to doing the Torah, as that is the next part of the פסוק. Rather, רשי"י says, it means "תורה - שתהיו עמלים בתורה" - You should toil in Torah.

One has to realize that תורה knowledge is unlike any other knowledge in the world. It is not a law book or blueprint to holiness; it is a מצויא, a living entity. That is why the גמרא in מגילה says, "יגעתי ומצאתי" - I worked and I found." Even after hard work, it is like something you have found. True understanding is a gift from Hashem.

Part of the explanation for this is the statement, "ישראל הוא ואורייתא וקודשה בריך הוא חד הוא" On a deep level, ישראל, the תורה and ה' are one. This is how the אבות and אמהות were able to know the תורה even without having anyone to teach it to them.

Dvar Halacha - Celebrating ל"ג בעומר

There is a period of days between *Pesach* and *Shavuos* during which we observe some of the customs of mourning. However, on ל"ג בעומר, we celebrate a holiday. The *Mishna Berura* states that the reason for this period of mourning is the deaths of Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 *talmidim* who passed away during this relatively short period of time. We celebrate ל"ג בעומר as a holiday to commemorate the cessation of these deaths. So what is the cause for celebration? Rabbi Akiva was away from his wife for 24 years and he returned with 24,000 students. Then, in his old age, they all died within a few

This was not just a phenomenon in the "old days." Rather, this was seen in the *baal teshuva* movement in Russia during the 80s. The underground Yeshivas were in need of *Rabbeim* and a rotation of *Magidei Shiur* would go to Russia for two-week stints to teach, almost nonstop.

Rabbi Ezra Hartman related upon returning from one of his trips how amazed he was at the high level of understanding these *baalei teshuva* had. They were constantly being מכון to the סברות and פשטים of Rebbi Akiva Eiger, Rav Chaim, Rav Elchonon Wasserman, Rav Shimon Shkop and other *Gedolim*. It was a mystery to him until the following episode occurred.

One of the *baalei teshuva* asked him the following *halachic* question. In order to learn his regular session, which was eight hours straight, he would do certain exercises first. One of those exercises was to stand on his head for five minutes. He was afraid to waste all that time, so he wanted to know if it was appropriate to learn *Mishnayos* by heart, or if it was not the proper התורה to do so.

Rav Hartman said that at that point, he finally understood. It was their great עמילות בתורה which caused ה' to reveal to them so much of His תורה.

weeks! Normally, one probably would just despair and say, "I tried, I did my best, I'm not going through this again." But Rabbi Akiva was different. He started all over again with just five students. It is from these five students that the knowledge of our *Torah Shebaal Peh* comes. Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was one of those five students. His *Yahrtzeit* is on ל"ג בעומר. What we celebrate is not merely that these students stopped dying; rather, we celebrate that the Torah continued to endure.

The Weekly Quiz

How long did R' Shimon bar Yochai and his son hide in the cave?

Answers or ideas for future questions may be submitted in writing to the Spotlight office or emailed to Quiz@ytcteam.net.

The first correct answer submitted will be announced in the next Spotlight. You need not be a student to participate.

Hatzlochah!

Answer to last week's question:

Q. Who was also known as בלשטראזר?

A. Daniel

YTC Spotlight

Alumnus of the Year Ari Averbuch to be Honored at YTC Chinese Auction

From Early Childhood and continuing through the *Bais Medrash* level, the bond formed between the students and our educators extends far beyond graduation. One particularly strong *kesher* that exists is with our alumni. We are proud of the *B'nei Torah* they have become and the impact they continue to make on their communities. For the first time, we are proud to present an "Alumnus of the Year" Award at this year's Chinese auction on Sunday, May 29, 2011.

Receiving this inaugural award is Hollywood's **Ari Averbuch**. A graduate of Toras Emes, Ari spent the next six years at Yeshiva Toras Chaim learning, growing and seeing much *hatzlacha* from his efforts. Without exaggeration, the Miami Gardens Drive Campus would not have opened on schedule (September 2004) had it not been for Ari's technical

expertise and super-human efforts, including several 18-hour days of laying wire and testing systems.

Ari was and remains a *ba'al chesed* whose quiet, unassuming way and calm demeanor make him a most-sought after *chaver*. If someone has a problem, Ari doesn't just listen; he actively helps to solve the problem as if it were his own. Ari has matured and grown into the consummate *mentch*, and together, he and his wife Rivki have built a *Bayis Ne'eman b'Yisroel* with their beautiful children, Alexander and Tziporah. While we congratulate Ari, we also wish him *Tzaischem l'Sholom* as he and his family prepare to make *Aliyah* this summer.

Please join us in our expression of *HaKoras HaTov* to Ari by placing an ad in this first-ever Alumnus of the Year Journal.



Ads placed in Ari's honor will entitle you to a corresponding auction package. Browse through the auction book and enjoy our selection of fabulous prizes, including a **\$10,000 tuition break or car lease of your choice, vacation packages, jewelry and electronics.** Place ads and buy ticket packages by calling our office at 305-944-5344 or visiting us online at ytcteam.org/auction.

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3-2-1 Liftoff!!!

Dozens of YTC students assembled on our basketball court Monday morning during breakfast to witness the final launch of Space Shuttle Endeavour.

Trip 1 June 22-July 22
Trip 2 July 25-August 12
For Boys Entering Grades 7-11

8 Exciting,
Action-Packed Weeks of
Learning, Trips, Sports and a Wide
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Environment

**For further information, please call
the YTC office 305-944-5344
or email us at MasmidMiami@ytcteam.org!**