

# בְּשִׁיטְיָחָא

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## OUR ONE CAUSE

**P**arshas Bamidbar introduces us to the *degalim* — the manner in which *Klal Yisrael* set themselves up around the *Mishkan*. Each *Shevet* had their own flag, and their own space where they marched while traveling, and settled when not traveling.

The *Shevatim* surrounded the *Mishkan*, with two thousand *amos* separating them from the actual structure. In that space, the *Levi'im* would camp. The *Mishkan* itself first had the outer courtyard, and then the *paroches* which separated the *kodesh* from the *kodesh hakodashim*. Even then, there was the *Aron HaKodesh*, and inside were the *Luchos* which Moshe received from Hashem. Thus, at the center of *Klal Yisrael* was the Torah, and multiple layers between the Torah and the general populace.

Why have all these layers? Why not, for example, have the *Aron*, or the *luchos* themselves, travel and settle with the people? The Akeidas Yitzchak<sup>1</sup> (Reb Yitzchak ben Moshe, 1420–1494) explains all of this fanfare created an atmosphere of awe and reverence for the great gift Hashem had given *Klal Yisrael* — the Torah. By placing the Torah in a central but separate position, all of *Klal Yisrael* notices, knows, and understands the centrality of the Torah to the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation is not a nation that happens to have the Torah, we are a nation *because* we have the Torah. It is the bond that keeps us together, both with each other, and to Hashem.

In fact, Reb Yaakov Kaminetsky<sup>2</sup> (1891–1986) points out that *Klal Yisrael* really should have created this method of travel immediately upon leaving Mitzrayim. Why did they wait a full year before organizing themselves in this arrangement?

Reb Yaakov explains that the *degalim* was a way for each *shevet* to focus on its unique capabilities and talents. Thus, until this point, it was preferable for *Klal Yisrael* to travel together, since the *degalim* may cause friction, with each *shevet* focused on their own goals and ideals. However, now that *Klal Yisrael* had the *Mishkan*, all of those capabilities and talents now have a focus — the Torah.

Yes, each *shevet* is different, but now all of *Klal Yisrael* has one goal, to use our specific abilities in the upkeep and safeguarding of the Torah. The Torah is the glue that keeps us together.

<sup>1</sup> Akeidas Yitzchak, 72:1

<sup>2</sup> Emes L'Yaakov, Bamidbar 1:1 s.v. יידבר

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### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

The Torah is central to the Jewish soul, and many of us can, at times, feel that. Very often, that feeling comes through exceptional toil in Torah study. And although toil in Torah study is essential for many reasons, are there any other ways to work on this idea, to make it something we feel, and more than just Jewish philosophy?

There are other opportunities throughout our day that, when seized, will help us recognize the importance of the Torah in our lives.

One example is to take a moment during *tefillah*, right before the *berachos* of *Ahavah Rabbah* and *Ahavas Olam*. Focus on both the importance and centrality of the Torah to the Jewish people and the fact that our Sages required a person to make this *berachah* every day, focusing on the great gift Hashem has given us.<sup>1</sup>

If it was so important to *Chazal*, certainly it must have deep, deep meaning for us!

Utilizing these two moments every day will go a long way in helping a person's love of Torah, and *avodas Hashem*.

<sup>1</sup> Hadrachos V'Eitzos B'Avodas Hashem, pg. 108

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**To feel that which was once only  
intellectual knowledge — that is Mussar.**  
- R' Reuven Leuchter, *Iyunim on Ohr Yisrael*,  
pg. 177

## A MISHNA A DAY

The mood was somber as the Levines\* shuffled out of their parents' house, perhaps for the last time. The patriarch of the family, Mr. Yehuda Levine, had passed away a month prior, and all of the Levine children gathered together for the *sheloshim* in their parents' home. It was understood that, as all the children lived far away, the house would be sold, and there was likely no reason one would be in the house again.

In fact, Shmuel Levine thought to himself, when is the next time all of us will meet again? With Avi living in Israel, will we ever get together again?

The more Shmuel thought, the more it concerned him. Of course we would get together for weddings, won't we? But maybe not, with Avi living so far away.

The next morning, Shmuel woke up with a start. He needed an excuse to stay in touch, and had the perfect idea. Shmuel called Avi after he landed and explained, "I think for the year of *yahrzeit*, it would be nice if we learned *Mishnayos* over the phone. I know we're many hours apart, but is there a way for us to coordinate our schedules, so that we can grab just a few minutes every day to do a *mishna*?"

Avi liked the idea immediately, and they started the next day. Although both of their schedules were busy, they both made an effort to learn daily. Of course, there were times when events would interfere, but this daily learning was so important, Shmuel once turned down a job offer, simply because it would disallow him from continuing his learning.

Even after the *yahrzeit* they continued learning, finishing many *mesechtas* together. Most days, it was a quick conversation, just a few minutes getting through the *mishna*. Other days, they spent time on the phone, catching up on recent events, discussing what was going on in their lives.

They still have not finished all *mishnayos*, but they also have not stopped their daily learning. For Shmuel, this daily learning had the desired effect. It kept Shmuel and Avi close, and through Shmuel, Avi kept in touch with the rest of the family. The learning was indeed the glue that kept everyone together.

**Shmuel once turned down a job offer, simply because it would disallow him from continuing his learning.**

*\*Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The *Mishkan* was a conduit for the light of the Torah. *Klal Yisrael* were able to learn and expound the Torah in a way they would not have been capable of, had the *Mishkan* not been built.<sup>1</sup>
- Torah is compared to water. Water is fundamental to the existence of life, Torah is fundamental to spiritual life. Water restores a person's health, Torah restores a person's spiritual health. And just like water is free for the taking, so too, Torah is free for all who want it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ha'amek Davar*, Shemos 27:20, s.v. ואתה תצור

<sup>2</sup> *Sifri*, Bamidbar 48:5