

היוצאים

דברים

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Special Shavuot
Edition!

Celebrating Our Failures

By Yosef Fertig, Editor-in-Chief, 12th Grade

There's something about Shavuot which is just so exciting. After 49 days of counting towards this momentous occasion, it's hard not to be filled with joy as we enter the holiday. However, something about Shavuot always bothered me. Shavuot is the day that we were given the luchot with the Aseret Hadibrot at Har Sinai. There's all this buildup to this day, yet only 40 days later the Jews served the golden calf and the Luchot were shattered. Then, on Yom Kippur we were given a new and improved version of the Luchot. Why are we celebrating the giving of the first Luchot if they were shattered only a short time later and why don't we celebrate on Yom Kippur instead?

The great talmid of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, Rebbe Nosson, explains as follows. Without the first set of luchot, we would not have gotten the second one. It's the failures and mistakes in life which make the good so much more meaningful and enjoyable. The zohar says that for a person to truly serve Hashem, there must be some brokenness in his heart. It's because of our failures that we are able to obtain our successes and truly appreciate them. We celebrate the giving of the Torah on shavuot because failure is part of the process. Especially when it comes to studying Torah and keeping the

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The Words of the Rebbe

By Eitan Schafler, 9th Grade

Rebba Menachem Mendel Schneerson, also known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe Z"L, was the founder of Chabad and is known as one of, if not the greatest tzaddik of his generation. He reached all four corners of the earth with his trusted shluchim and with them, he brought all of Klal Yisroel closer to Yidishkite. At the 200th yearzeit of the Baal Shem Tov, the Rebbe gave the following speech about Shavuos:

The days of preparation for the receiving of our Torah call for special, deepfelt reflection on what the Torah is. The holy Torah is not a collection of laws for special occasions. It embraces the totality of the Jew, from his first moment to his last, and in all the minute aspects of his day-to-day life. This is the essential meaning of the Torah, Toras Chayyim, the "Law of Life." Furthermore, our Chachamim explain that the Torah embraces the totality of creation, citing the example of an architect who, before erecting a building, draws up blueprints and plans, covering every detail of the structure. So the Creator used the Torah as a "blueprint," as it were, for the creation, down to the smallest particle in the world. This, indeed, is one of the basic doc-

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

**Parshas Bamidbar
Questions**

1. A major census is recounted in the parsha. Where else in the book of Numbers is there a census of the Jews?
2. In this parsha, with respect to which two people does the Torah explicitly state that he has no sons?
3. Which *nasi* (tribal leader) is the brother-in-law of Aharon the High Priest?
4. Which two people in this parsha are explicitly called a "firstborn"?
5. Whose death is mentioned in this parsha? (2 answers)
6. Which of the 10 plagues is mentioned in this parsha?
7. The name of which "mysterious" animal appears six times in this parsha?
8. Which five members of the same immediate family have names that begin with the same Hebrew letter?

Answers

1. In parshas Pinchas, in the last year of the 40-year journey in the desert, another census is taken of the Jews (Numbers 26:1).
2. The Torah states that the eldest sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, have no sons of their own (Numbers 3:4).
3. Nachshon ben Aminadav, the tribal leader of Yehudah, is the brother-in-law of Aharon. Aharon is married to Elisheva, the sister of Nachshon (Exodus 6:23).
4. Reuven, the son of Yaakov (Numbers 1:20), and Nadav the son of Aharon (Numbers 3:2), are each called a firstborn.
5. The deaths of Nadav and Avihu are mentioned (Numbers 3:4).
6. The deaths of the Egyptian first born is referenced in the law of redemption of first born sons (Numbers 3:13).
7. Before being transported, many of the Tabernacle vessels are covered with skins of the *tachash* animal (Numbers 4:6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14). The identity of this animal is not conclusively known (see Rashi - Exodus 25:5).
8. Five members of Aharon's family the High Priest all have names beginning with the letter alef: Aharon, his wife Elisheva, and their three sons: Avihu, Elazar and Itamar.

ALIYAH SUMMARY

First Aliyah: Hashem commands Moses to count all Jewish men of military age and names a Nasi to lead each tribe. These Nesi'im helped in compiling the census of the Jewish people.

Second Aliyah: The Torah provides the population total of each tribe and a grand total of 603,550, excluding the Levi'im. The Levi'im were assigned to dismantle, carry, and re-erect the Mishkan during the Jews' travels in the desert.

Third Aliyah: The camping of the Jewish people was around the Mishkan in the center, which had the "Flag of Yehudah" (included the Tribes of Yehudah, Yissachar and Zevulun) to the east, the "Flag of Reuvein" (Reuvein, Shimon, Gad) to the south, the "Flag of Ephraim" (Ephraim, Manasseh, Benyamin) to the west, and the "Flag of Dan" (Dan, Asher, Naftali) to the north.

Fourth Aliyah: The Levi'im are appointed to serve in the Mishkan, a job originally given to the Jewish firstborns but was taken away from them due to their participation in the Golden Calf.

Fifth Aliyah: Moshe is now commanded to separately count all Levi'im males from the age of one month and older. The three Levi'im families are counted, and a leader is appointed for each of the families. The total of these non-firstborn Levi'im was 22,000. The family of Gershon camped west of the Mishkan and were in charge of transporting the tapestries and curtains of the Mishkan and their accessories. The Kehas family camped south of the Mishkan, and were in charge of transporting all the keilim. The Merari family camped north of the Mishkan, and were in charge of carrying the beams, panels, and sockets of the Mishkan. Moshe, Aharon, and their families camped to the east of the Mishkan.

Sixth Aliyah: Hashem tells Moshe to count all the firstborn Israelites because their holiness was now to be "transferred" to the Levi'im. The census revealed that there were 273 more firstborns than Levi'im. Each of these "extra" firstborns as determined by a lottery gave five shekel to the Kohanim, and was thus "redeemed."

Seventh Aliyah: Moshe is commanded to take a census of the Levi'im of the family of Kehas, but only those eligible to transport the Mishkan and its vessels — those between the ages of thirty and fifty. The Parsha ends off discussing the Mishkan-dismantling process, in which the Kohanim would cover all the keilim with specially designated sacks. The Kehas family would then take the covered vessels and carry them to their destination.

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- David Nisanov, DRS GO President



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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
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Transcribed by
Joseph Cohen

Eating Dairy On Shavuot

- Yore Deah - If you have a loaf of bread at a milk meal, you may not use that same loaf of bread for a milchik meal.
- Rama - There is a minhag among all of Klal Yisroel to eat dairy on the first day of Shavuot. We create a situation where we need two sets of bread in remembrance of the korban Shtei Halechem.
- Magen Avraham - Quotes the Zohar - We go through seven clean weeks of purity during the time upon Shavuos. And the sign of purity is considered to be milk based on a Gemara in Nidah. So, therefore, since we have now become pure we have milk.
- Mishnah Berurah - At the time that Klal Yisroel stood at Har Sinai, and they then came back to their houses they needed to find food to eat. But now they just accepted the Torah and they had all the halachos of meat. And it was easier to have a quick milk meal.
- Yeshuas Yaakov - The primary change at Kabalas Hatorah was that beforehand we always did the mitzvos, but now we had received a yetzer hara to not perform the mitzvos. As the Gemara in Kiddushin explains, someone who was commanded and does is greater than one who is not commanded and does the action. Tosafos explained that when you are not commanded to something there is no yetzer hara to do otherwise. But when you are commanded to do something, your initial reaction is to do the opposite. Rav Yosef, who was blind, was the gadol of the generation, and the people don't understand that he doesn't have a yetzer hara. He is not commanded in these mitzvos yet he does them, but everyone else is commanded in them. And if not for Shavuot, everyone would be like me, they would have no yetzer hara, and Shavuot was where we received the Torah. We finally had a Yetzer Hara to defeat and achieve greatness, so we come from blood - impure and the ultimate bad - to milk which resembles good and purity.
- Beis Halevi - The primary reason that we were able to defeat the Malachim when they asked G-d why are you giving them the Torah, was because we have a physical body. And we got the Torah because we are physical beings, so that's why we specifically on Shavuot eat milk, and meat on the same day for the next meal. So now that you are having both milk and meat, we show our emphasis on our halachic observance based upon our physical desires.

SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With Max
Blumenthal*

As we all know, Shavuot is the Yuntif when we received the Torah from Hashem at Har Sinai. Because of this, Torah is a huge theme throughout the whole Yuntif. Many have the minhag to stay up all night and learn. The Maharal writes about how holy Torah is: "Torah is greater than all mitzvos. Even the holy Beis HaMikdash doesn't compare to the sacredness of Torah because the Torah has no physical facet to it since it is wisdom, whereas the Beis HaMikdash was a house, made from physical materials. Torah, however, is wholly G-dly..."

The Maharal also writes that "Although Bnei Yisroel were commanded to be people of holiness, it is impossible for a human being to be holy. Someone made from earth can't reach this level. Rather, the pasuk is saying that one should act with holiness. But one thing is definite, whenever someone studies Torah, he is entering the Kodosh Hakedoshim, the Holy of Holies. He is going to a place where even angels can't go."

We all know the famous pasuk, "Torah tziva lanu Moshe morasha kehilas Yaakov" (Devarim 33:4). The Sfas Emes read the words "Moshe morasha" (Moshe is an inheritance) as one phrase and explained that when one studies Torah he inherits Moshe Rabbeinu! An aspect of Moshe Rabbeinu becomes part of him every time he studies Torah. This shouldn't surprise us because the Zohar teaches, "There is an element of Moshe Rabbeinu in every generation." The Gemara says that Moshe told Bnei Yisroel that all Hashem asks of us is to fear Hashem. This is much easier said than done so the Gemara asks if it's that easy to fear Hashem. The Gemara answers that yes it is since Moshe was able to do it. The meforshim ask: "Moshe was speaking to Klal Yisrael, so why did Moshe tell them it's easy? For them, yiras shamayim is difficult to attain!" We can answer that when one studies Torah he acquires an element of Moshe Rabbeinu. Now it's easy for him too to have yiras shamayim, as it was for the leader of our nation Moshe Rabbeinu.

These sources are samples of the holiness that each and everyone of us can attain when he learns Torah. With so much craziness going on in the world, if we spend our Shavuot learning Torah, Hashem will see how all we want is to be kadosh in the eyes of Him and hopefully will give us that. And when He does that he will also bring the final geulah in Yerushalayim b'yimheira b'yameinu!

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TORAH IN OUR LIVES

TORAH IN OUR LIVES

Shavuot, the celebration of the Matan Torah, is related to the Ten Commandments which we received on Har Sinai during Matan Torah. In Parshat Yitro, when recalling the Aseret Hadibrot, the Torah says, Vayedaber (“And G-d spoke all these words”) laimor (“to say”). This is unique, as the Torah rarely uses the word Laimor in this context. Ordinarily, Laimor means that it should be repeated to the Jewish people or to later generations. At the giving of the Aseret Hadibrot, however, all of Am Yisroel were there, and in Shemot Rabbah 28:6 it teaches that even the souls of all later generations were present at the giving of the Torah. So what is the real meaning of word laimor in this verse if everyone heard what G-d had said right then and there?

Dov Ber ben Avraham of Mezeritch, also known as the Maggid of Mezritch, a student of the Baal Shem Tov, posited that the word Laimor in this context means that “we have to put the vayedaber into laimor. The word vayidaber shares the same root as the term Aseret Hadibrot, and laimor has the same root as the Asarah Maamarot, the 10 utterances with which the world was created.” Meaning, a person shouldn’t make the mistake of thinking that “the Torah and the world are separate domains. One shouldn’t say, when I am doing Jewish things like praying, studying Torah, performing mitzvot, I will do as the Torah dictates. But, when I am doing worldly things, such as eating, drinking, and conducting business, I will act as the world dictates.” God wants us to bring our Torah way into worldly affairs. We should eat, drink and do business, but in the way that the Torah has taught us. Even when we talk, it should be apparent that Torah is our way of life. This shavuot, may our way of life be not only involved with, but also encompassed by the joy and honor of Limud HaTorah!



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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YOSEF SCHAFLER

Many years ago there lived in Tunis a worthy Jew named Matzliach. He was a great lover of Torah, though not an outstanding Torah scholar. He was not very rich, but generous in his charity contributions, and he was a G-d-fearing man. Matzliach was well respected in the community. He was particularly praised for his special custom in connection with Shavuot. Every year he would invite ten Torah scholars to his home on the first night of Shavuot, for whom he prepared a fine feast. After the feast they would all recite tikkun and study Torah all night, in honor of the Jewish people's receiving the Torah at Har Sinai. It all started many years before, when Matzliach learned for the first time about the origin of the Jewish custom to stay awake on the first night of Shavuot. He was greatly surprised to learn that on the night before that great day when G-d was to give the Torah to the Jewish people, they did not stay awake. Indeed, they slept soundly. Not that the people were not eager to receive the Torah. On the contrary, they had been counting the days from the day after they departed from Egypt, eagerly awaiting the great day when the Torah would be given to them. Yet the night before that great event, when one would have expected them to be too excited even to think of sleep, they slept more soundly than ever! Did they want to be well rested, refreshed and wide awake for the great moment of the divine revelation? Be that as it may, it was a letdown. And so it became the custom of Jews everywhere to make up for it and stay awake the night of Shavuot, and in this way "correct" the wrong impression. This is what tikkun means—"correction." Well, Matzliach and his guests certainly observed this custom in a fine way, and it impressed and inspired the whole community. There was not a Jew in Tunisia who did not stay up that night. There came a time, however, when Shavuot approached and Matzliach found himself in a difficult situation. Business had not been good, and Matzliach simply had no money, not only for his usual feast, but not even for the needs of his own family. Sadly he told his wife, Mazal, about his predicament, and she was greatly distressed. "It is not so much our own need that distresses me," the good woman explained, "but the fact that you cannot keep your fine custom. It is sad to think about it." "But what can we do?" "Well, I still have my precious earrings," Mazal said, taking them off from her ears. "Here, take them to the pawnbroker and get a loan till things will improve." "G-d bless you," Matzliach said gratefully. He took the earrings to the pawnbroker and obtained a tidy sum of money against them. As he was walking home cheerfully, Matzliach met the venerable Rabbi Hai Tayeb, chief rabbi of Tunisia. Matzliach greeted the rabbi respectfully, and he responded, "You saved me a trip. I'm going around collecting for our poor, so they, too, can celebrate the festival of Shavuot with joy." Without hesitation, Matzliach put his hand in his pocket and gave the rabbi the money he had just received from the pawnbroker. The smile with which Matzliach gave the money pleased the rabbi no less than the donation itself. "G-d bless you to do many mitzvot and good deeds," the saintly rabbi said, as they parted. Slowly Matzliach continued his way homeward. "What am I going to tell my wife?" he wondered. Suddenly he heard his name called. "Ya, Matzliach! You're just the man I want!" The caller was one of the royal servants of the Bey of Tunis. "His Majesty sent me out to buy a set of antique coffee cups. I have no idea where to get them. But you are an antique dealer. Get them for me, and you will be amply rewarded," the courtier said. "I will try my best," Matzliach promised. If there were such cups, Matzliach knew where to find them, and find them he did. Walking through the marketplace, Matzliach met the courtier again. "Did you manage to find the right cups for me?" the courtier asked eagerly. "Thanks to the One Above, I did." The courtier took Matzliach with the cups to the royal court, and introduced him to the Bey. The king was very pleased with the cups. "Just what I wanted," he said. "I know that the Jews are now busy with preparations for their festival. I am pleased that you took time out to find me these lovely cups. By the way, how are you doing with your preparations for the festival?" "The truth to tell, Your Majesty, I have not yet bought a thing." The king immediately ordered one of his servants to send to Matzliach's house two sacks of fine flour, a jug of olive oil and two choice live lambs. Then he asked Matzliach what he owed him for the cups. Matzliach told the king what he paid for them, and his usual commission. "What? That's all you paid for these precious cups?" the king said, much surprised. "Well, the ruler of Tunisia is not looking for bargains. You shall be paid their full value!" Matzliach left the king's palace with a very large sum of money. Walking briskly home, he again met the chief rabbi. "I can now afford to double my donation," Matzliach said happily, as he handed the rabbi an amount equal to his first generous donation. "Rabbi, your blessing was fulfilled," Matzliach said, and told him how G-d was kind to him. "Thank G-d, we both did very well today," the rabbi said. "Have a happy Yom Tov." And a happy festival it was indeed for Matzliach and his good wife Mazal. And what made them happiest of all was that this year, too, they were able to observe their custom of celebrating tikkun-night as ever before.

Ari Ivry

11th Grade

Why Har Sinai?

Everybody knows that the luchos were given by Hasehm on Har Sinai. But why Har Sinai in particular? The Midrash tells us that Har Sinai was not the highest and most splendid mountain. It was actually the lowest of all the mountains. Nonetheless, Hashem chose Har Sinai for the giving of the Torah in order to teach an important message: to tell us that humility is a basic fundamental that comes even before torah learning.

When hearing an instruction from the Torah, we need the ability to listen. This is a rare quality as our own egos usually get in the way. We hear our own ideas and not what the Torah is saying. Humility is the step beyond our ego, a mood of selflessness, which makes us open minded to the Torah. This idea is proven when we say in Shemoneh Esrei everyday "May my soul be to all as the dust, open my heart to your Torah". But, to take this even further, the question is that if the emphasis is on humility, why choose a mountain at all? Wouldn't the message have been more keenly felt if the Torah were given on a flat plain, or even better, in a valley? Surely this would emulate humility?

The answer is as follows: While humility is important, there are also many occasions in Jewish life when a more determined and forceful approach is demanded. Personal self-sacrifice, not backing down in face of ridicule, or the readiness to suffer for Judaism are all responses that are sometimes required.

It says in Shulchan Aruch, "Do not be embarrassed by mockery and ridicule". If one were to discard his observance in Jewish law simply because of the derisive criticism of others, there would soon not be much observance of Judaism left at all! So the lesson is, one needs both qualities: humility and strength. The ability to listen, and also the firmness to be able to stand up against the current. Both qualities are expressed in the image of Mount Sinai.

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The Children Over the Others

By: Joseph Abittan, 11th Grade

We learn from the Midrash that when the Jewish people were at Har Sinai in order to receive the Torah, Hashem asked that we guarantee that we would keep it. The Jewish people replied by saying, "Avoteinu orvim otanu" — "Our ancestors will be our guarantors." When Hashem did not accept this, they then offered, "Nevi'einu areivin lanu" — "Our prophets will be our guarantors." Hashem didn't accept this either. When they said, "Baneinu orvim otanu" — "Our children will be our guarantors" — Hashem replied, "Indeed these are good guarantors. For their sake, I will give it to you." We are left with the question as to why Hashem favored the children over the ancestors and prophets?

An answer to this can be that the Midrash is able to be explained as follows: Hashem wants the Torah to be studied diligently and observed meticulously throughout history; therefore, He asked the Jews for the assurance. With their first reply, "Our fathers will be the surety" the Jewish people were actually saying "By the time our parents reach old age and aren't involved in the business world, we will set them up in a senior citizen's club, and to keep them busy we will set up Torah study groups for them." Hashem rejected this as an assurance that Torah would flourish among the Jewish people. With only the elderly learning, not much be accomplished. Afterward, the people responded, "Nevi'einu areivin lanu." The Hebrew word for prophet "navi" is derived from "niv sefataim" — "speech of the lips" (Isaiah 57:19). With this, they implied that they would hire Rebbeim who would serve as orators; they would study Torah, and the laymen would be free to participate in business. Hashem wanted Torah to be studied and observed by all, so He rejected this offer too. Finally, the Jews said, "Our children will be our surety." Although they may have intended to send the children to yeshivah when young and to put them into business when older, Hashem accepted this knowing that once a child is in yeshivah, he would be molded into a Torah-loving Jew and refuse to leave. Moreover, the children will have an influence on their parents and get them to also learn Torah and to observe mitzvot. Thus, through them, the continuation of Torah study and mitzvot is guaranteed for posterity.

(Yosef Fertig- Continued from page 1)

mitzvot. Only through breaking your teeth on a Gemara, can you ultimately come to understand it.

The Gemara in Bava Batra (14b) says that the broken pieces of the first luchot are placed in the Aron alongside the full second Luchot. How fitting that the holiest place in the world contains both our greatest successes and our greatest failures because our failures are really what make our triumphs into true successes.

There's a lot of focus in the days leading up to Shavuot on working on ourselves. Just like the Jews went from the 49th level of Tumah to a level fitting to receive the Torah, so can we. Many might look back at these 49 days of preparation and perhaps might choose to focus on all of their failures during these days. They may get down on themselves and feel as if they wasted the opportunity. But, in fact, we should be celebrating these failures. Our failures are what lead to our successes. May we merit to just keep growing and to never give up! Chag Sameach!

(Eitan Schafler- Continued from page 1)

trines of general Chassidus as expounded by the Baal Shem Tov, based on his interpretation: "Forever, O G-d, Thy words standeth firm in the heavens", and explained at length in the teachings of Chassidus Chabad by the Old Rebbe, author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch, especially in his Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah. Everything, in the heavens above and down to the earth below, in all their particulars, exists only by virtue of the "word" of G-d, which created, creates, and vitalizes all things continuously, every instant, without interruption. From this follows the next basic doctrine, Hashgocho Protis, G-d's direct knowledge of all particular things, extends to each and every detail of the Creation, from individual man, the supreme creature, to the lowest thing in the inanimate world. From the above there follows yet another corollary, which is likewise basic to the teachings of Chassidus and which was especially emphasized by the Baal Shem Tov, although it is, of course, a law in the Shulchan Aruch, namely, that it is incumbent upon the Jew to serve G-d in and with all details and aspects of his life and surroundings, beginning with the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of the 613 Divine precepts, down to the simplest acts and conditions of the daily life, and that Everything in one's surroundings is a lesson in love of G-d and fear of G-d, the primary wellsprings from which the Jew draws the proper inspiration to fulfill the Torah and Mitzvos, the positive commandments (Mitzvos-Asseh) and prohibitions (Mitzvos-Lo Taaseh), permeated with true vitality and fulfilled with perfection. The concentrated reflection on all that has been mentioned above, reflection with intensity, animation and illumination, Especially in these auspicious days, on the eve of Mattan Torah, which is also the anniversary of the Histalkus-Hilulo of the Baal Shem Tov, and Transforming it into the detailed aspects of the daily life, both in one's personal life as well as in one's surroundings, and in all aspects of the world, according to the dictum—Let thy fountains spread forth outside, whereby the fountains of Chassidus, that is, the Inner Light of the Torah, will overflow and irradiate even the "outside"—the external and most distant details and aspects of the entire Creation— Will speedily bring the true and complete Geuloh, the Redemption through our righteous Moshiach, when the whole Creation will recognize and experience the meaning of I am the L-d, thy G-d.

INTEGRATING TORAH INTO OUR LIVES

By Dani Rosner, 10th Grade

The Torah calls Shavuot the and night and to teach it to his "Festival of Weeks" (Numbers children. If a Jew wants his fami- 28:26). The very word "Shavuot" ly to be Jewish and his children is Hebrew for "weeks"; it refers to marry other Jews, then he to the seven weeks that one must integrate the Torah study counts from the second day of into his life and implement the Passover until the holiday of teachings into his home and his Shavuot. It is one of the Shalosh being. One can tell his children Regalim where every man in the anything, but only if they see land of Israel was commanded to their parents learning and doing come up to Jerusalem to cele- Mitzvot, will they inherit the brate the festival when the Beit love for being Jewish. Remem- HaMikdash stood in Jerusalem. ber: a parent only owes his child Torah is the lifeblood of the Jew- three things -- example, example, ish people. Our enemies have al- example. How can we utilize this ways known that when we Jews opportunity to grow and stop learning Torah, our assimila- strengthen our self-identity as tion is inevitable. Without Jews? Just as a baby crawls, then knowledge, there is no commit- waddles, and then walks, like- ment. One cannot love what he wise with the Mitzvot. A person does not know. A person cannot should undertake one more Mitz- do or understand what he has vah, do it well and then build on never learned. A Jew is com- it. manded to learn the Torah day

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