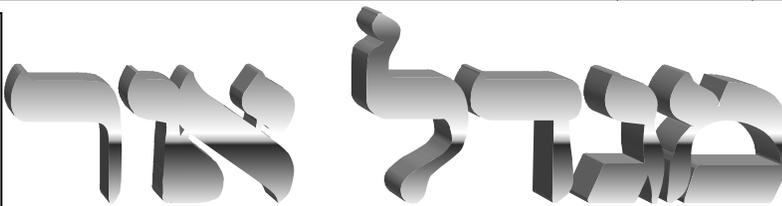


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Mazel Tov to  
**Shuey Landa** נ"י  
of Brooklyn, NY  
on becoming Bar Mitzvah.  
May you grow to be a continued source  
of Yiddishe Nachas to yourself, your  
family, and the Ribono Shel Olam.

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*A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah*

**Zmanim for שבת ויו"ט**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:59 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:17 - שקיעה
- 8:35 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:11 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:26 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:18 - שקיעה
- After 9:08\* - הדלקת נרות יו"ט
- 9:31 - צאת 72
- 12:53 - חצות
- 5:28 - נץ החמה
- 8:19 - שקיעה
- After 9:09\* - הדלקת נרות ב'
- 9:31 - צאת 72
- 8:20 - שקיעה
- 9:10\* - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:32 - צאת 72

\* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars  
Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

**Did You Know?**

The Magen Avraham (494:5) says we place trees in our shuls and homes on Shavuos because it is the Day of Judgment for the fruit of trees and these remind us to pray for a good growing season. Though it might seem anticlimactic to daven for mundane physical needs when we are celebrating the spiritual bounty of receiving the Torah, such is not the case.

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos says, "One who is learning on a journey, and departs from his learning and says, "How lovely is this tree" is nearly worthy of losing his life." Though he is praising HaShem, says the Tiferes Yisrael, it shows that his eyes and heart are not bound together in the words of the Living G-d.

In essence, the problem is not that he comments on the tree, but that he separates nature from Torah. The Ribono Shel Olam created the world with the Torah as a blueprint not because He needed a plan, but so we might learn to recognize the Torah from the natural world.

If one who looks at a tree can hear HaShem talking to him the same way as when he is learning, then there is no contradiction and his physical needs and spiritual needs are one and the same.

**Thought of the week:**

**It's never too late to give someone a second chance — not even yourself.**

**"מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כל יצא צבא בישראל תפקדו אתם אתה ואהרן." (במדבר א:ג)**

**"From twenty years old and up, all who can go out to war in Israel, you shall count them, you and Aharon."**

In this Parsha, which is always read before Shavuos, we find the Jewish People being counted for the third time. The first time was when we left Egypt, the second was after the sin of the Golden Calf when thousands perished, and now, when HaShem was bringing His Shechina, his Divine Presence to rest amongst us, we were counted yet again.

Rashi points out that Aharon was included this time, but when the Jews were counted after the sin of the Calf Aharon was not involved, because he had played a role in the formation of the Golden Calf and thus a hand in the sin. We might ask: we know that the Kohain Gadol did not wear golden vestments into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur because they serve as a reminder of the sin of the golden calf. This is in perpetuity, not only the first time. If so, why was Aharon involved in counting the Jews at this time, and not permanently disqualified?

The simple answer, of course, is that he was not involved in the counting that was necessitated by the sin he was involved in, but for other countings his involvement would be OK. However, there is a deeper answer; one that can cast the days of the Omer and the holiday of Shavuos in a special light.

In the case of Yom Kippur, even though the golden vestments were disqualified forever, the Kohain Gadol, who was also involved in the cheit ha'egel, was not. Objects may become undesirable, but for people, it is never too late to make amends and be drawn back into HaShem's loving embrace.

During Sefira we have Pesach Sheini, the holiday of second chances when people who missed bringing the Korban Pesach got to make up for it. We associate this time with R' Akiva who didn't learn Torah until he was forty, but who decided it wasn't impossible and became the leader of a generation. He lost twelve thousand pairs of students, and he started over with five, from whom the Torah we have today has been transmitted. On Shavuos, we read about Rus, who was redeemed by Boaz on the last night of his life, and gave birth to the ancestral line of Dovid HaMelech and ultimately Moshiach.

Recalling this counting of the Jews before Shavuos reminds us that we are each precious to HaShem and He wants to dwell with us. Chazal say that each day should be in our eyes like the Torah was just given. If so, that the Torah was given today, then I can put the past behind me and make a new start because HaShem wants to be close to me! I can leave behind the guilt and the feelings of failure, loss, or despair. Today we get the Torah, and I can become great from this point onward, and never look back.

*A Baal Teshuva once came to R' Avrohom Gurwitz of Yeshivas Ner Moshe. "Rabbi," he said, "I can't go on. When I think of my past and all the things I did wrong, I can't imagine being able to consider myself an observant Jew."*

*"You know," replied R' Gurwitz, "Human beings have eyes in the front of our heads, not in the back. If we stretch our necks and turn, we can look behind us, but the angle is skewed and it's uncomfortable to do it for any length of time."*

*G-d made it this way to teach us that the important thing is to always look ahead, and look forward to what you can do and where you can go. You should look behind you to see where you've been by all means, but if you focus on it too long you won't be able to get anywhere, and you'll wind up hurting yourself."*