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Hag HaShavuot

Happy Birthday To Torah

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Note: This essay was written in the year 5760 (2000), please adjust all dates herein accordingly.

Note 2016: As my personal education has been on-going, I have acquired new information since the time I wrote this essay. While I still consider this essay to be of good value, nevertheless, I have come to change my opinions on a number of issues, specifically with regards to the sanctity of the Zohar, and the value of its observances. I wish to advise every reader to decide for oneself which opinion, and what practices to embrace.

This Shavuot marks the 3312th birthday of the Torah. While 3312 is only a number to us, look at what has happened in human history over the past 33 centuries. Although at Mt. Sinai, G-d gave the Torah exclusively to the Jewish people, where it became our national constitution, birthright and law, it has since become the foundation and moral gauge of almost every culture and law in the world. Even peoples as far away in time and place as Native Americans, the Chinese and other oriental cultures, everyone today knows about our Torah, our Moshe and our Laws.

Torah, we celebrate its 3312th birthday this Shavuot (for 5760). For over 33 centuries have the Sages of Israel studied this sacred work. You would think that by now every possible understanding of the Torah would have been squeezed out of it. However, herein lies the problem. To read the Torah and to understand its surface teachings is an accomplishment achieved by many. Yet, a point long emphasized from the days of the Biblical prophets to the teachings of the holy Mekubalim of today - there is much more to Torah than meets the eye. Like the depths of the ocean, the Torah conceals many secrets. Indeed, even with tens of thousands of religious texts written over the centuries, the true essence of Torah is as much a mystery to us today as it was 33 centuries ago.

What do we really know about the Torah? Granted, we know the 613 Laws that G-d has commanded us to observe. Barukh HaShem, we obey them. We know the stories about our ancestors. Barukh HaShem, we have learned many moral lessons from Adam & Eve, Noah, Abraham & Moshe and we apply those morals to our lives. Yet, is this all there is to the Torah?

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai, the great Talmudic Sage and legendary author of the mystical Zohar states, that if all there was to Torah was its stories and morals, it would be quite an unimpressive book. Indeed, Rabbi Shimon says, if all there was to Torah was its surface, we could write a better Torah ourselves, today. However, Rabbi Shimon advises us, this can never be so. One must never underestimate the depths of the Torah. For as it is recorded in Pirkei Avot, "all is within It." Just what this "All" is has never been fully determined. Because in spite of all the study in Torah accomplished over the last 33 centuries, even the holy Mekubalim, the masters of mysticism admit, that the Torah has such depths, that even our deepest scans have just scratched the surface.

All we can say for sure about the Torah is that 3312 years ago, an incredible event occurred, mankind through the Jewish people was contacted by a Force not of this Earth and had an "extra-terrestrial" CLOSE ENCOUNTER far beyond anything in science fiction. This encounter was not with mythical little green men, nor with black eyed, bulb headed aliens in flying saucers. This encounter was with the Creator Himself, along with His entourage of angels. Judging from the description of this encounter recorded in the Torah and other related literature the Sinai revelation appeared more alien, bizarre, and "other-worldly" than anything described or portrayed in the modern entertainment media. The sight on Sinai that day was something for real "out of this world."

While many have arisen over the centuries to debunk the otherworldly origins of the Torah, none of them has ever succeeded. With the discovery in our generation of the Torah Codes, even some scientists have come forward to make the claim that now there is proof that the Torah could not ever have been written by human hands.

Rabbis and Mekubalim have never needed scientific confirmation for that which they have always known. You see, the Rabbis have a psychic connection with Torah. Through their studies, the Torah becomes a part of them; it seeps into their souls and their consciousness. The Torah absorbs them; they do not absorb it. The Rabbis and Mekubalim, therefore, KNOW the Torah in the same way as "Adam knew his wife Eve" (Gen. 4:1). What Mekubalim have known (and used) for centuries, science is only now catching up.

In this last century, human technology has leaped forward more than in all of human history combined. Our understandings of science & cosmology, matter, energy and light have taken us from investigating the super-strings that underlie all subatomic particles to the big bang and the beginning of the universe. Never in human history have we as a race been so close to recognizing, and even deciphering the Hand of G-d in creation.

Yet, with all our scientific advancements, the general "super theory" about everything still eludes the scientist. My prediction is that even when science does discover their version of the "super theory of everything," they will soon develop new understandings about what "everything" really means. They will discover that their new theories only create new questions. Thus onwards and onwards will science go towards an unknown and unknowable goal.

It is rather hard starting at the bottom rung of a ladder and to try to climb all the way to Heaven, especially when the ladder twists and turns (like the double helix in DNA), making the proper direction ever more so impossible to decipher. Would it not be nice if indeed, "Someone" (at the

top of the ladder) made contact with us and that “Someone” gave us some instructions on how to properly ascend? Well, contact with THE “Someone” who is “THE ONE” was made at Mt. Sinai. We received there and then in encrypted and coded form full instructions for the evolution of the human race and also our guide how to ascend to the stars. We have only one minor problem in achieving these lofty goals - we have not yet figured out how to decipher the whole message. Torah is and always has been an anomaly to anyone who has not bonded with it in the mystical sense, as described above.

Maybe what we need today is a new, non-surface approach to Torah study. We should acknowledge the profound depths concealed within the Torah and thus endeavor to study Torah with scientific discipline and inquiry. By this, I do not mean, G-d forbid, to insult HaShem by denying the validity and necessity of fulfilling the surface level Laws and moral lessons. On the contrary, we should encourage the exploration of HaShem’s Torah scientifically, in the laboratory, using computers, and every other understanding available to us in modern science.

In order for this course of investigation to be successful, to penetrate beneath the surface of Torah, one will have to be properly connected to its surface through complete observance of the mitzvot, with proper religious morals and values. Only when we start from the beginning of Torah can we ever expect to properly explore and discover the secrets of creation and science that lie concealed within Her depths. I am certain that if pursued correctly by G-d fearing, scientifically prepared and intelligent people, what will be found will be mind boggling. What we might reveal could only be called the Torah of Mashiah.

We know from Einstein’s famous $E=MC^2$ that there is a direct relationship between matter and energy. Matter becomes pure energy when it speeds up and approaches light. Indeed energy is light. Being that Torah is constantly referred to as the “Light of G-d,” we may wish to reexamine the Torah in light of modern science and apply to it all the lessons now known about the real structure of nature. We might discover previously unknown layers in the Torah, lying dormant, waiting for us to have reached the level of discovery.

Information, as we know, is acquired through learning. Learning, as we know, is the primary mitzvah of the Torah. By studying Torah, even at the trivial level we humans are presently able to understand, we make contact with the universal archetype, the foundation and source of humanity and creation. We touch G-d.

The Midrash teaches us that G-d looked into the Torah and created the world. Pirkei Avot tells us in the name of Ben Hey Hey that the Torah contains everything. If the Torah contains everything, as it does, than I expect “everything” to be found in the Torah to include all the laws of science, physics, chemistry, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, cosmology, metaphysics and everything else. There is much more to Torah than the surface level understanding of how to observe the commandments and to live moral, righteous and holy lives. The Torah reveals to us the Mind of G-d, the very thoughts, ideas and desires of our Creator.

Indeed, Torah does contain all this knowledge and more. Even in the story of the Garden of Eden, hidden gematrias (numerical values of words) form the Fibonacci numerical sequence for the creation of spirals. This mathematical formula is the basis of every spiral pattern in the universe from the shell of a snail to the entire Milky Way galaxy. All this is hinted to in the numerical values of the words spelling out the surface level Garden of Eden story. Who knows

what else awaits our discovery? Who knows what questions we have not even thought of yet to ask, all the more so to seek their answers in the Torah.

In light of the awe and wonder of Torah, knowing as we do its extraterrestrial origins, how is then that its surface messages, i.e., the 613 commandments and moral guidance are all ignored repeatedly by people who should know better. Agreed, as human beings we have human frailties and earthly passions. We do not always think with our heads. Sometimes we do not think at all. I understand a person succumbing to earthly passions. As bad and wrong as it is, it is at least understandable. What I cannot understand is why we humans do not take advantage of our greatest gift and potential – our human minds.

The power of the human mind is endless. Scientists tell us that today humans use no more than 10% of our individual brainpower. If the smartest of us uses all 10% and has an I.Q. of, let's say, 200, then one who develops and uses his entire mind will have an I.Q. of at least 2,000. What a mind-boggling proposal! How would someone study Torah and perceive the world with a 2,000 I.Q.? What entirely new and unseen worlds and dimensions would such a person take for granted as we take for granted the air we breathe?

The Mekubalim have taught us that Adam, prior to the sin had such an I.Q. and lived such an extraordinary life. Quoting Midrash, the Mekubalim have said that Adam used the special light of the First Day of Creation to see from one end of the world to the other. This is interpreted as Adam having full use of his mental faculties. Alas for us, when Adam sinned with the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil, he lost his full potential, he was shrunk in stature, mentally speaking, and became the man that we are and know today.

The purpose of HaShem giving the Torah to Israel on this Shavuot day was for us to study and learn it. By doing so, we would be opening long lost avenues in the mind, enabling us to expand our consciousness. Indeed, Jewish scholars have always been a cut above the rest. This is because of both, what we study and how we study. There is a secret method to the madness of constant Torah study.

Yet, with all due emphasis that I can place on Talmud Torah (Torah study), Pirkei Avot (1:17) has already said, "Lo HaMidrash HaIkar, Elah HaMa'aseh" (it is not the study, but the practice that counts).

The only way to reach the depths of the Torah is through the surface of the Torah. HaShem, in His Divine Wisdom, knows and understands that the only way to correct the fallen human intellect is through the rectification of the human heart. Indeed, in order to grasp a glimpse of the essence of Torah one must first be in a state of complete bond, unity and harmony with its surface.

You guessed it! Unless and until one is observant of the mitzvot of the Torah and places Yirat Shamayim (fear of heaven) in their hearts, there cannot exist the necessary connection that leads one to full human evolution and personality individuation (fullness of self).

Make no mistake about it – the only way one can find oneself is to go to the source, the Creator of self – and this is none other than HaShem.

In order to get to HaShem one must follow the map that HaShem Himself has outlined for us. Along the route, there are 613 directions, some are right turns, and some are left turns. Yet, unless you follow the directions precisely, you will get lost! Why is it that so many people, Jewish and Gentile alike are so darn stiff-necked and rebellious, always thinking that they know better than G-d? These self-same people, not due to earthly passions, but due to a rebellious heart have messed up humanity for over 33 centuries (5,760+ years to be exact). When will we ever be free of them?

As we approach Torah's 3312th birthday, I ask that we contemplate Her wonder. I ask that we contemplate what it is that we are missing that we cannot know until we open our hearts to knowing. I ask that we give Torah the best birthday present She could ever receive from us – our compliance to HaShem's mitzvot.

The Torah is indeed a living, vibrant and passionate FEMALE soul. We know Her best as the Shekhina. This is why Rabbis know the Torah in the same way as Adam knew Eve. The bond is one of passion. The study is energized by elevated libido. Once the earthly passions are disciplined, libido (sexual) force ascends into the heart, creating passion, love and desire to know the ways of HaShem. After years of study and observance of the mitzvot, one's inner and outer being is transformed. One becomes a new individual, an evolved soul.

In such a state the Shekhina, the Soul of the Torah now "modulates a frequency" which the evolved soul can receive. With this "psychic" connection, the true Talmid Hakham (Rabbi, lover of the Torah) is given passage to delve beneath the Torah's surface and to explore her inner depths. The experience is breath taking. This is an act of love that no man or woman can ever quite describe.

This is path of the true Talmid Hakham (Rabbi), the sincere Ben/Bat Torah (Torahyeshiva student). Yes, women can also experience this level, even as did Sarah, Rivka, Rahel and Leah. Their life stories serve as examples to women how to live exemplary lives crowned by the mitzvot of the Torah. After all, the Shekhina dwells in them, more so than in we men. That is why we men must make extra efforts in Torah study and mitzvot observance – to attain the level and feeling of heart that is more natural to occur among women.

With all the turmoil in world Jewry and in Israel this special birthday holiday, let us take pause to remember the important things in life. Let us seek a glimpse of the "big picture."

Shavuot tradition (with its source in the Zohar) dictates that we stay up the entire night studying Torah at this most auspicious time. According to the Kabbalah, there is a special order of readings for this night called the Kriyat Mo'ed, which sets into motion an alignment of spiritual energies that we call the Sefirot. I know that not everyone is aware of the Kabbalistic meditations for Shavuot. I know that not everyone has access to the order of the Kriyat Mo'ed (special readings). Nonetheless, whatever a person does and studies, make this night a special one.

Rabbi Haim David Azulai (the HiD'A) writes in numerous places that Shavuot night IS NOT a night like all others, therefore, what we study on this night should NOT BE what we study on all other nights. He very clearly states that Shavuot night is not the time to be studying Gemara or to read Mishnayot. One must follow the Kriyat Mo'ed he writes. It is essential.

For those of you with the opportunity to do so – do not miss your chance to touch the soul of the Shekhina this night, in that special way that only the Mekubalim can know.

For the rest of us, regardless of what course of study one takes; stay up the night; pray with the netz (sunrise) and take a little time out during the night to talk to HaShem. Contemplate His Majesty, wonder about all the secrets of the universe locked up and concealed within the Chumash (Torah) that you hold in your hands.

Give to Torah, a beautiful birthday present. Study Her, explore her, make love to her with your minds and your souls. Observe her mitzvot, see, and feel how wonderful being bonded with HaShem can truly be.

Hag Sameah.

The KosherTorah School



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