



Kinder Torah®



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Ki Sisa

Over and Over Again

“When He (Hashem) finished speaking to him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two Tablets of Testimony . . .” (Shemos 31:18). The Medrash Rabba (41:6) explains this verse as follows. The entire forty days that Moshe Rabbeinu was on Mount Sinai, he kept learning Torah and forgetting what he learned. He said to Hashem, “Master of the World, I have learned forty days and I don’t know anything!” What did Hashem do? When Moshe Rabbeinu completed the forty days (of learning), He gave the Torah to him as a gift. Rav Dovid Luria zt”l points out an important lesson that we learn from this Medrash. In order to learn Torah, understand what you learned, and remember it, you must receive *siyata di’shmaya* (heavenly assistance). The only way to receive this help from Hashem is to pray for it. Another important lesson that we learn from this Medrash is the importance of constant review of what we learn.

The Gemora (Eiruvin 54b) relates that Moshe Rabbeinu first taught the Torah that he learned to Aharon, then to Elazar, then to the Elders of the Nation, then to the entire Jewish people. Rebbe Eliezer explains that one must review what he learned four times. The Gemora then relates a story about Rebbe Preida, who had a student who needed to learn everything 400 times before he understood it! Rebbe Preida patiently taught this student every lesson 400 times. One day, Rebbe Preida informed his student that he needed to go out soon to do a mitzvah. After their usual 400 repetitions of the lesson, the student still did not understand. When Rebbe Preida asked him why he did not understand, the student replied that he could not concentrate because he knew Rebbe Preida had to leave to do a mitzvah. With that, Rebbe Preida told him to pay attention well and they would learn it again. Rebbe Preida sat with the student and repeated the lesson another 400 times! This time the student understood. A voice came down from heaven rewarding Rebbe Preida for his diligence. “If you wish, Rebbe

Preida, I will add 400 years onto your life. Or you and your entire generation will merit *Olam Habbo* (the next world).” Rebbe Preida chose the reward of the next world. Hashem gave him both long life and the next world.

Kinderlach . . .
Our learning requires constant review. We must review what we are learning until we understand it, and then continually go over it until we remember it. This requires patience and diligence. We should not get discouraged children, if we do not understand or remember something the first or second time we learn it. Moshe Rabbeinu did not get discouraged. Neither did Rebbe Preida. Let us all take a lesson from Rebbe Preida who had the perseverance to teach his student 800 times until he understood! The other essential ingredient to success in learning is tefillah (prayer) for siyata di’shmaya (Heavenly Assistance). Without the help of the Merciful One, we cannot accomplish anything. May Hashem answer all of our prayers for success in all of our endeavors.

Uncountable

“Do we have a minyan yet, Shimi? Let’s count. One, two, three . . .”
“We shouldn’t do that, Dovi.”
“Do what?”
“Count Jews like that. It is customary to count Jews with the words of a verse, or using objects.”
“I’m confused, Shimi. Can you explain what you’re talking about?”
“Look in this week’s parsha, Dovi. Moshe Rabbeinu counted the Jews using half-shekel coins. Each person gave a half-shekel. Moshe counted all of the half-shekels, multiplied the sum by two, and came up with the number of Jews.”
“That’s a little clearer, Shimi, but I have another question.”
“Go ahead.”
Why did Moshe Rabbeinu use half-shekel coins and multiply by two? Wouldn’t it have been simpler to use one shekel coins and count them to get the number directly?”
“Dovi, that’s a famous question asked

by many of our great sages. Each one has his own answer to the question. I will tell you the answer given by the Kesav Sofer, the great Rav of Pressburgh. We are all composed of two parts, body and soul. Each part is represented by half a shekel. The two halves together make a whole. The only half that we can count, however, is the body. It is limited and can be counted. The body can only eat or drink so much. Then it must stop. It can only work so long. It can only live so long. It eventually reaches its limits. The soul, however, is unlimited. The soul is the part of us that comes from the heavenly realm. We cannot begin to count it. There is no limit to what the soul can accomplish. It is eternal.”

“That’s a pretty deep concept, Shimi. Can you give me an example of what you are talking about?”

“Rebbe Akiva was the leader of the Jewish people who lived almost 2000 years ago during the time of the Romans. He did not begin learning Torah until he was forty. When he began, he could not even read aleph-beis. He studied diligently for twenty-four solid years and became the greatest *talmid chochom* of his generation and indeed one of the greatest of all time. Dovi, this is an accomplishment far beyond the realm of natural attainment. It shows us the unlimited potential of the soul. The soul cannot be counted. It is unlimited.”

“Shimi, those are very encouraging words. There are many times when I feel tired or frustrated or too discouraged to continue. Now that I see what a person is capable of doing, I’ll try a little harder. Who knows what hidden potential is inside of me, or you, or Yitzky, or Shmuelik.”

“Look at that Dovi, as we’re talking, a minyan of men has arrived. Lets all pray to Hashem that we soar with our souls to great achievements.”

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