

T1 - Tefilla



Concrete Concepts:

1. Tefilla is not just about Hashem, it's about humbling ourselves.
2. The structure and restrictions of Tefilla (time-wise and text-wise) help remind ourselves of what is important.
3. There are ways of approaching Tefillah that cause it to have a positive impact on one's quality of life

This tochnit is designed to be given on Bet Base Machane by BMP Madrichim.

What is Tefillah?

The word Tefilla comes from the Hebrew word, **להתפלל** meaning *to pray*. The root, **פלי** also appears in the Torah with various meanings including **בפללים**, *exercising judgement* (Shemot 21:22) and **פללתי**, *thought* (Bereishit 48:11).

Already, we can see various connotations emerging of what it means to do Tefilla.

So why do people use the word 'Daven'?

'Daven' is the Eastern Yiddish word for 'pray'. It's etymology is greatly debated but some say that it originates from an Aramaic word, *de'avuhon* or *d'avinun*, meaning 'of their/our forefathers', as Shacharit, Mincha and ma'ariv are said to have been invented by Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. (more about this later).

Why do people daven?

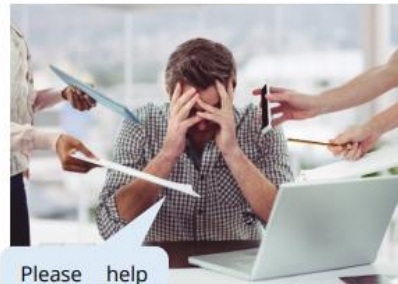
Some people daven when things are going well



Some people daven because they're afraid of what will happen if they don't



Some people daven when things are going badly



Some people daven because they love enhancing their connection with



Discussion point 1: Which of these do you think is closest to your motivation for davening? Do you think it matters what someone's reason is for davening? Do you think your Chanichim would answer these questions differently to you?

Why does Hashem want us to Daven- relationship vs obligation?

The Gemara (Brachot 26b) discusses the origin of tefilla. Two different suggestions about where prayer comes from are given:

| Rabbi Yosei B'Rabbi Chanina (relationship) | Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi (Obligation) |
|---|---|
| <p>Tefilla was instituted by the Avot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avraham – Shacharit (עמידה - standing) • Yitzchak – Mincha (שיחה - conversation) • Yaakov – Maariv (פגיעה - encounter) | <p>Tefilla was instituted based on the daily <i>Korbanot</i> (offerings)</p> |

According to Rabbi Yosei B'Rabbi Chanina, for each of the Avot, a different word is used to connect them to the concept of Tefilla. For Avraham, this is **Amad, standing**. Perhaps this has connotations of tefillah as an active process, something for which we must exert some effort in order to do affectively.

The word **Sicha**, meaning **'conversation'** is used in reference to Yitzchak. This reminds us that prayer is meant to be a dynamic internal process in which we are not just mumbling words mindlessly, but actually believe that we are communicating with Hashem. Since Hashem does not communicate back to us with spoken words, this can be particularly challenging.

For Yaakov, the word **'Pegia'**, meaning **'encounter'** is used. When we daven, are we fully aware of the fact that we are standing before the Creator of the World? The concept of an 'encounter' also suggests that we should have gained something new each time we daven and walk away a different person to the one we were before we began our Tefilla.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's approach, however, differs significantly in the way it causes us to view Tefilla. His approach is far more halachic and views Tefilla as a replacement for the daily offerings that took place in the Beit Hamikdash. This offers the perspective that the main reason for praying is to fulfil a halachic obligation.

Set Prayer vs Spontaneous Prayer

The above Gemara is highlighting the tension between fixed and spontaneous forms of Tefilla.

Today, our tefillot are "fixed" in two ways:

1. **Fixed times** – Shacharit, Mincha and Maariv. Sof zman kriyat Shema, no shacharit after Chatzot, no Mincha after Shkia. All that Jazz.
2. **Fixed text** – The earliest siddur as we know it is that of the Gaonim (R. Amram and R. Sadia both had). The Brachot of the Amidah are even earlier.



Structure of our Amidot

According to the Rambam (Mishneh Torah Hilchot Tefillah 1:2), there are 3 aspects to Tefillah:

1. Praising Hashem
2. Asking for things
3. Thanking Hashem

Despite there being this prescribed structure for Tefillah, there is something poignant about its structure.

Often we forget that the purpose of Tefillah is not just to ask Hashem for things. It is also to build up a relationship with Hashem, to fulfil an obligation, to reflect on where we are at spiritually and to express gratitude for what we already have.

Living on a Prayer:



The English word to 'pray' comes from the Greek word meaning 'to beg' – stemming from the incorrect belief that 'prayer' is about begging to God and if we ask Him really nicely and grovel, He might 'change His mind' as we will have 'appeased' Him. This essentially is a rather pagan concept, viewing Hashem as human-like Being who can be easily bribed.

However, the Hebrew word for 'prayer' – 'Tefilla' comes from the word 'l'hitpalel', meaning to 'meditate' or 'inwardly reflect.' This brings in the idea that we are nourishing our souls when we pray. More than anything else we are affecting ourselves. We can't affect what God does with His global plans that are beyond our comprehension. But when we pray, we have a positive effect on our character, even if we don't notice it. It is this improvement builds our worthiness to merit what we pray for.. **We are not changing Hashem's mind – we are changing ourselves!**

For example, at the end of the Amida we say:

"יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֵמְרֵי פִי וְהַגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ. ה' צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי"

"May the words of my mouth and the desires of my heart be Your will, Hashem, my Rock and my Redeemer."

With this line we are acknowledging that Hashem has a plan, and we are asking Him to help us make our desires align with what He has planned for us. This will minimise any distress at not being granted a request. For example, instead of us saying "Hashem, please make it Your will that I get a PS4 for my birthday", we say words to the effect of "Hashem, I recognise that You have a plan. It may be Your will that I get a PS4, but if not, help me to stop wanting it so much so that the desires of my heart will be more in line with Your will".

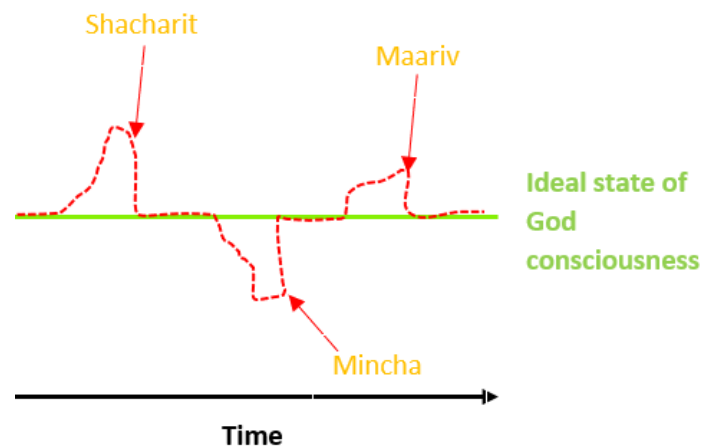
So, considering Tefilla now appears to be about changing ourselves, does it really make sense to have set time and wording for Tefilla? Yes! It does! There are three main reasons for fixed forms of Tefilla:

1. Structuring your day

Tefilla gives us a *structure* to the day, preventing us from accidentally forgetting about Hashem because of the busyness of our lives [school, uni, work, Facebook, mobile, chores, friends, more Facebook...]. If we didn't have the set times and laws of Tefilla, we may be tempted just to waste time and say, "I'll make up the time to pray later". In the end, we'd never pray and show appreciation to God which we desperately need to do!

2. Ideas

Why does Tefilla have to be the same each time we say it. Well its because the ideas contained within it are so important. We're essentially reminding ourselves of God's values – knowledge, forgiveness, teshuva, healing, national redemption, judgement, peace, gratitude....etc (I'm listing the brachot of the Amida here btw). Think of a state where we are perfectly in tune with all of these ideas, thinking about how Hashem wants us to implement them in the world 24/7. The consistency of tefilla allows us to get to get back to that state when we "veer off".



3. References to Israel

Furthermore, our set prayers keep us connected to Eretz Yisrael. We speak about our shared destiny, namely our national return to our homeland in Israel. We believe that eventually Hashem will gather us from among the nations, return all of us to Eretz Yisrael and reveal Himself to the entire world so that all of mankind acknowledges Him and is united in His service. The structure of Tefilla became "set" in exile because that was when we needed it most.

Discussion Point 2: Can you think of specific prayers in davening that show each of these 3 'reasons' in action?

T2: The Oral Law



Concrete Concepts:

1. Hashem gave the Jewish people the written torah (Torah Shebictav) and the oral Torah (the Torah She Baal Peh) at Har Sinai.
2. We cannot understand the Torah Shebichtav without he Torah SheBaal Peh.
3. Both the written Torah and the oral Torah have unchanging and dynamic parts – and both are necessary to transmit something as rich and complex as the Torah.

This tochnit is designed to be given on Aleph Chalutzi Machane. The Aleph Chalutzi chomer, 'ha'am ba'aretz' is largely about Nach. The job of this tochnit is to make sure that they don't leave camp thinking 'Torah' = the written torah. It's a great opportunity to demonstrate the importance of Torah She Ba'al Peh.

“The Torah”

When we think about the Torah, the image that most probably pops into our heads is that of the Sefer Torah, the Five Books of Moshe that we read from each week in shul. But surely the stories that happened after the giving of the Torah (like the story of the spies for example) wasn't given to Moshe before it happened?

So what is the Torah all about? The word 'Torah' literally means 'instruction', and it is filled with laws and commandments - according to tradition, 613 of them! In one way, Torah is the set of rules which instructs us as Jews for how we live every detail of our lives. In the words of Tevye the Milkman “We have traditions for everything! How to eat, how to sleep, how to work, how to wear clothes...”



Is that it though? Just a collection of rules? In his first comment on the Torah, Rashi asks a pretty obvious question: If the Torah is just simply a rulebook, what's the point in all the other stuff? The story of Creation, the Flood, the exploits of our Avot and Imahot, Yosef and his dreams – how is that relevant to the Torah?

Ok, I think that's a solid array of questions – certainly enough to get us questioning what the 'Torah' we talk about the whole time actually is and start to get us questioning the stereotypical story of “the giving of the Torah” that we might have in our minds.

Discussion Point 1 – The best way to get your chanichim to appreciate questions is getting them to realise the questions by themselves. How could you achieve that with the questions above?

A key distinction:



Discussion Point 2 – Imagine you had a fantastic cake recipe and had the task of transmitting it to your great great great grandchildren so they could make the exact same cake. What would be the best way to do it? Write down the recipe? Or tell your children how to make it? Or BOTH? What could change over time?

Hashem gave the Jewish people “two Torahs” at Har Sinai, so to speak. The first is the written law – Torah Shebichtav. The second is the Oral Torah – Torah Shebaal Peh.

One is designed to never change (the written Torah) and be passed down from generation to generation. Constantly comparing our sifrei Torah to one another and checking for mistakes means that the Torah we have written down in all our shuls today is exactly the same one that Moshe finished writing! The other one (the oral Torah) is designed to be passed down orally – taught from parents to children and teachers to students. Why both? Well think back to the cake. What if your great great grandchild reads “preheat the oven to 180C” but they don’t have ovens in the future! Only by also orally transmitting the Torah do we ensure that its key mitzvot and messages are applied to different times.

Another great analogy from Rav Hirsch is to imagine **a lecture and lecture notes**. Imagine a university student goes to a biology lecture and you want to understand that lecture. The student gives you their lecture notes. But it doesn’t really help. They’ve written down things that don’t really make sense without explanation. So too, **the giving of the Torah was like a 40 day university lecture and the written Torah only gives us the lecture notes**. The university student may have written down “keep shabbat” but we have no idea what that means without listening to the actual lecture!



When referring to Torah She’Baal Peh, we are primarily talking about the Mishna and Gemara. We believe that all the laws and details that are included in Torah she’Baal Peh were also given to Moshe at Sinai, in addition to the Chumash.

What is the Mishna?

The word Mishna comes from the Hebrew word שנה ‘shnah’ - to teach (like ‘ve’shinantam levanecha’ in the Shema). It is the oldest part of the Oral Torah and is a collection of teachings of the greatest Rabbis of the time, called Tanaim.

It was written down by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi by about 200 C.E in Yavneh – about 100 years after the destruction of the Beit haMikdash. It is written in a very precise style, presenting complex subjects in a very concise form and deals with mainly halachic matters.

| The Six Orders of the Mishnah (ששה סדרי משנה) [hide] | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| Zeraim (Seeds) (זרעים) | Moed (Festival) (מועד) | Nashim (Women) (נשים) | Nezikin (Damages) (נזיקין) | Kodashim (Holies) (קדשים) | Tohorot (Purities) (טהרות) |
| Berakhot · Pe'ah · Demai · Kif'ayim · Shevi'it · Terumot · Ma'aserot · Ma'aser Sheni · Hallah · Orlah · Bikurim | Shabbat · Eruvin · Pesachim · Shekalim · Yoma · Sukkah · Beitza · Rosh Hashanah · Ta'anit · Megillah · Mo'ed Katan · Hagigah | Yevamot · Ketubot · Nedarim · Nazir · Sotah · Gittin · Kiddushin | Bava Kamma · Bava Metzia · Bava Batra · Sanhedrin · Makkot · Shevu'ot · Eduyot · Avodah Zarah · Avot · Horayot | Zevachim · Menahot · Hullin · Bekhorot · Arakhin · Temurah · Keritot · Me'ilah · Tamid · Middot · Kinnim | Keilim · Oholot · Nega'im · Parah · Tohorot · Mikva'ot · Niddah · Makhshirin · Zavim · Tevul Yom · Yadayim · Uktzim |

What is the Gemara?

For three centuries after the compilation and editing of the Mishna, the Amoraim (the generation after the Tanaim) and their students discussed and analysed the Mishna. Their questions, discussions and solutions make up the Gemara. They had 4 aims:

- 1) To clarify the Mishnah text and what it is talking about in context
- 2) To resolve contradictions between Mishnahs
- 3) To make practical halachic rulings
- 4) To apply its principles to any new cases that arose



There are two versions of the Gemara – Talmud Bavli, written in Aramaic in Babylon, and the Talmud Yerushalmi written in a confusing combination of Hebrew and Aramaic in Israel (interestingly, it was actually written in Tiberias, the last place where the Sanhedrin sat).

Torah scholars would gather together at fixed times of the year or would meet by chance. Their conversations and teachings were committed to memory and sometimes recorded in writing in brief notes. This material was eventually collected and written down around the year 500 CE - making up the Gemara.

What's the difference between the Oral and Written Torah?

Rav Kook (Orot haTorah 1:1) suggests that the Written Torah is something that is given to the Jewish people directly from Hashem above. This means that it ultimately has the highest level of holiness possible and affects everything in the world by being above it. The Oral Torah on the other hand, is something that has the ability to enter our lives in a different way. It is something that we, the Jewish people, are always actively involved in, and have the ability to affect. This means that Torah she'Baal Peh is always changing and comes alive in each new generation.

Surely its all in Torah sheBichtav?

The written Torah lacks many details of how to actually perform and fulfil mitzvot and therefore requires interpretation. For example, Sefer Devarim (24:1) mentions a 'sefer keritut' [a contract of divorce] required for a divorce, but nowhere hints at what this contract might include.

Similarly, in Shemot (21:24) it says, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand" - does this actually mean that one needs to cut off a person's hand or gouge out their eye? We therefore require the Oral Torah to explain that this refers to financial compensation. As different interpretations and beliefs of the Oral Torah developed, the Rabbis felt it imperative to relate these independent 'oral' traditions to the written text. This was necessary both to respond to challenges from alternative sects of Judaism (such as the Karites and the Sadducees), as well as to prove the authority of the Torah she'Baal Peh. There can be no real understanding of the Written Torah without an Oral tradition.

We receive the Written Torah through the most elevated and inclusive conception within our souls. From the midst of our souls, we sense the blaze and beauty of that living, encompassing light of all existence. It makes us soar higher than all logic and intellect. This great light was not created by the spirit of the Jewish people. Rather, it was created by the spirit of G-d, the Creator of all. This living Torah is the foundation of the creation of all universes.

With the oral Torah, we descend to life. We feel that we are receiving the supernal light in the second stream within our soul: the stream that advances toward the life of action.

These two lights make one complete world, in which heaven and earth are nourished.



- Rav Kook, *Orot haTorah* 1:1

Why did it have to be "Baal Peh"?

The Torah contains 613 Mitzvot. Each mitzvah contains all the information needed to apply them in every possible circumstance (e.g. technological innovation and electricity on Shabbat). Included within the mitzvot is the philosophy that connects every Jew to the Torah is the key to inspire each Jew to serve Hashem. There is an old joke that there are as many different types of Jews as there are Jews. For every type of Jew there is a path to encourage them to be shomrei mitzvot and to be involved in Talmud Torah. Every one of us has a different aspect of the Torah that enthruses us and this should help us find a suitable path to follow.

The reason the Mishna is so brief was for the simple reason that every Jew had to remember its ins and outs. It is compiled in such a way so that one can learn many different things from each line. It is for this reason that when studying Mishna, like topics are grouped together, as are opinions of certain Tannaim and Amoraim. The brief nature of the Mishnah resulted in it being elaborated on in great depth in the Gemara. The Gemara is also written in a style which lends itself to an oral way of learning: it is written in a series of discussions and arguments. To read the Gemara in the same way you read a novel or a guide book would be impossible.

"The Torah was not meant to be just a book lying on the shelf. It was meant to be part of the everyday life of an entire people. Because of this it could only be transmitted by word of mouth. Torah She'Baal Peh was handed down from teacher to pupil for almost 1500 years until the harsh Roman persecutions finally threatened to eradicate it completely. Finally, 1700 years ago, it was written down to form the Talmud."

- Aryeh Kaplan, Tefillin

Therefore, Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, created the Oral Torah, a framework in which not everything was clear cut, one where different interpretations could arise. The framework of the Oral Torah, requiring large sections of the Torah to be passed down verbally, would ensure that the Torah would be kept alive and vibrant through being passed down from father to son, from teacher to student in the homes and Batei Midrash of the Jewish people. How can we be sure the Oral Torah has been transmitted accurately for the last 2333 years?

When we play broken telephone, often the thing that the last person says is wildly different to what the first person says. The truth is **the transmission of Torah She Baal Peh is nothing like a game of broken telephone.**



Here's why:

- 1) Imagine a game of broken telephone but if the message is transmitted correctly then everyone received £1000 (or a sweet in Chanich-terms). When something is important to you and your family, you transmit it accurately.
- 2) It wasn't completely oral! Obviously people still wrote notes down. When we say the "oral law" we don't mean that no one was ever allowed to write it down we just mean no one could canonise it formally.
- 3) It wasn't transmitted from 'person to person'. It was given over hundreds and thousands of times in lecture halls and classrooms all over Israel and Babylonia to loads of students at once. Any mistakes in transmission would simply be weeded out.
- 4) There were literally people whose career it was to be guardians of this message – to make sure it was transmitted properly.
- 5) We can trace back an exact chain of teacher-student relationships all the way back to the giving of the Torah.

If it's Oral Torah, how and why is it written down?

The Oral Torah was controversially written down during times of persecution. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi (also known as Rebbe) wrote down the basics of the Mishna in a logical order in order for the tradition to be passed on correctly. The Talmud Bavli was similarly written down in times when the Jewish communities had less means to pass on the tradition effectively or correctly.

Since the time of the last Amoraim (those who compiled the Gemara) Rishonim, Achronim and present-day Rabbis have devoted themselves to writing down their explanations of the Mishna and Gemara. Literally libraries of Jewish books, all considered "Torah" in their own right, have been published. This at first glance seems purely a positive thing. However, reading such books in a way that keeps the flavour of a living Torah (i.e. one you've learned from a living teacher who learned from their living teacher who learned from theirs...) ought to be a consideration as well. Therefore, in an ideal world, the oral Torah would have best been kept oral, but as a result of human deficiency and yeridat ha'dorot (the spiritual decline of each generation), we simply could not remember it all.

So do we still have Torah she'Baal Peh?

Does that mean that, now, in the imperfect world in which we live, that we no longer have the real thing? Of course the answer is emphatically NO! Despite the fact that we have printed versions of the Talmud and many other books as well including translations to help us, the Oral Torah is still oral at its essence. Without the guidance of a teacher and the help of a chavruta to battle our ideas with, the Oral Torah still remains relatively inaccessible.

Is there a connection between Torah she'Baal Peh and Galut?

"In exile, these twins were separated. The written Torah rose to the heights of holiness, and the oral Torah descended to the very depths." - Rav Kook, Orot haTorah 1:2

Here, in the continuation of the piece we read before – Rav Kook makes a clear connection between the land of Israel and the Oral Torah. He says that only in Israel, when we are ruling ourselves and we have a Temple, the Oral Torah will truly flourish. As we explained before, the Oral Torah gives Am Yisrael the potential to become holy by being involved in its creative process. This is no more relevant than is Israel. When we are in Israel, keeping our laws the way we should, building our country, we are directly involved in creating holiness through doing seemingly normal actions. When we fulfil the Oral Torah in Israel, we are fulfilling our potential as a people.

But in the Galut, we do not have the opportunity to fulfil the Oral Torah properly, to grow as a nation and therefore, the Oral Torah cannot properly exist. It therefore had to be written down. When we lost the Beit HaMikdash and the

ability to flourish as a people, we also lost the ability for the Oral Torah to flourish as it should.

The writing down of the Oral Torah is a not just a technicality based on practicality, it is a consequence of Am Yisrael not being able to fulfil their proper potential anymore in Israel. In the Galut, we are much more restrained and therefore the Gemara tells us *"From the day of Churban (destruction of the temple), Hashem has nowhere to reside in this world save the 4 Amot of Halacha."* (Brachot 8a)

As we have seen the Oral Torah is always alive and changing as the world grows and changes. There are many aspects of modern-day life which never existed before and therefore never needed to be discussed. When learning the Oral Torah we often find that to answer our question more questions must be asked. Often to know which way to go and which path to take we must delve a little deeper. It is through constantly asking and learning we find out how to live our lives as Jews in a very changing world.

The Oral Torah draws sustenance in a hidden manner from the heavenly, and in a revealed manner from the earthly.

The land of Israel must be built up, with all the people of Israel dwelling upon it in a well-ordered manner: with the Temple and a kingdom, with Kohanim and prophecy, with judges and officers and all their accoutrements. Then the oral Torah will live in all the glow of its beauty. It will flower and bloom. With its entire measure, it will connect to the written Torah. – Orot HaTorah

T3: Talmud Torah



Concrete Concepts:

1. There is an obligation to learn Torah, both as a means to an end and as an end itself.
2. Learning Torah allows us to gain a deeper understand of Hashem.
3. Learning Torah connects us to the Jewish past and future.

This tochnit is designed to be given on Gimmel machane – older chanichim will be able to appreciate its themes to a greater extent.

Discussion Point 1: What will your CCCs (Classic Chanich Conceptions) about Talmud Torah be going into these two weeks of Sviva?

The Supremacy of Talmud Torah

Although there is a Machloket in the Gemara (Menachot 99b) as to the exact requirements for the Mitzva of learning Torah, it is clear according to all opinions that it is central to Jewish life, seemingly more so than other Mitzvot. Indeed, this is evident from *Eilu Devarim*, the piece of Gemara we say ever morning after Birchat haTorah:

*These are the things that one sees the benefit of doing in this world and whose full reward remains intact for him in the world to come. They are: the honour due to father and mother, acts of kindness, early arrival at the house of study in both morning and evening, hospitality to guests, visiting the sick, providing for a bride, escorting the dead, absorption in prayer, bringing peace between man and his fellow – **and the study of Torah is equivalent to them all** (Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 127a)*

Discussion Point 2: How can you help your Chanichim understand the value of learning Torah without detracting from the value of all the other things mentioned in this Gemara?

Learning for its own sake

Talmud Torah, unlike other Mitzvot, has two components. It's not just a means to an end, but it also an end in and of itself. For example, I can learn Hilchot Shabbat to know how to keep Shabbat, but at the same time I am getting rewarded purely for the fact that I'm learning. Hence why we don't just learn Shulchan Aruch; there's a Mitzva to learn even the no-longer-practical aspects of Torah, such as laws relating to Korbanot and ritual purification.



Discussion Point 3: Can you think of any stories/metaphors that relate to your Chanichim's lives that you can use to help them understand this concept?

Learning to know Hashem

For the Rambam, Talmud Torah is all about getting to know Hashem. He writes in his 'Sefer Mitzvot' that: "He commanded us to love Him, may He be exalted. This means that we should analyse and ponder His commandments, His words, and His works until we comprehend it and we enjoy in its comprehension the ultimate

delight." He also states in Hilchot Tefilla that "every Jewish man whether poor or rich, healthy or sick, young or old, is required to set time every day and night to learn Torah".

Torah study is the crucial tool that can help us decipher the workings of the world and appreciate its wonders. Just as you can understand more about an artist by looking at their painting, you can understand more about Hashem by learning His Torah.



Additionally, studying Torah instils *Yirat Shamayim* (reverence for Hashem) in a person. This happens not only because one who studies it becomes deeply connected with its text, but the time spent delving into it helps one become closer to Hashem. The reward you receive for learning Torah is based on the effort you put in. The end product of how many chapters you cover, or pages of Gemara you read is not as important. It's the time and effort you put in that counts the most. Learning Torah is not just about "finishing", it's about continuing, progressing, constantly striving and improving.



But in order to know someone, you can't just read their CV; you have to have deep conversations with and about them. Maybe this is why we have Torah SheBa'al Peh (oral Torah). We are supposed to discuss the Ratzon Hashem, debating what He really wants from us! Furthermore, Torah is not supposed to be a reference book that sits on the shelf. Rather God wanted His Torah to be constantly alive in the mouths and hearts of all of us throughout the generations. He therefore in His infinite wisdom created the oral Torah in order that the Torah will be passed down through the generations and the Torah will truly be a 'Torat Chayim'. And, of course, having an oral Torah means you can never think you're done with learning; there's always another argument that requires analysis, another commentator who is unclear, another Halachic case that is yet to be resolved....

Discussion Point 4: Talmud Torah comes in many forms. E.g Halacha, Tanach, Character Development (mussar), Gemara...etc. Different chanichim will connect to different aspects of Talmud Torah. How can we make this week of Sviva demonstrate the value in the various areas of Torah learning?

Learning to teach

According to the Rambam, teaching is fundamental to the Mitzva of learning Torah (although others disagree). This is because when you have to teach someone else you are forced to clarify the material for yourself first. This is basically what pre-camp is all about! Only after we've immersed ourselves in and fully understood the Chomer can we possibly attempt to pass it on to our Chanichim, (we should be learning and growing just as much as they will be!).

"The one who learns in order to teach will be enabled both to learn and to teach. But the one who learns in order to practice will be enabled to learn, to teach, to observe, and to practice." (Pirkei Avot 4:6)

There are 3 levels of Torah teaching:

- Teaching through telling
- Teaching through telling
- Teaching through being

Learning is the one Jewish constant

Although much has changed since the giving of the Torah, from food and clothes to music and technology, the Torah is the only thing in our lives that truly remains constant. Yes, it's applications in Halacha may have changed (e.g. Moshe wasn't teaching the Jewish People not to drive to Shul on Shabbat!) but ultimately, it's still the same Torah. Thus, Limmud Torah is crucial because it connects us to the Jewish past AND to the Jewish future.

Learning in Medinat Yisrael

In recent years, there has been a massive increase in Torah learning across the world. Although some of this may be down to more Torah being available in English and other popular spoken languages, a large part of this is down to the State of Israel. In addition to the Israeli government helping to fund many Yeshivot across the country, a significant number of Jewish youths from around the world spend a year post high school studying in Yeshiva or Midrasha, something that would never have been possible without the Jewish State. Lastly, the existence of Medinat Yisrael has led to greater worldwide interest in previously theoretical topics that are only relevant in Israel, such as Shemitta; more than just facilitating Torah learning, Medinat Yisrael is giving us the opportunity to live a more complete Torah Yisrael.



Discussion Point 5; What do you think your Chanichim's impressions are of people who go to Midrasha/Yeshiva in Israel? What can you do to challenge stereotypes of this that they may have?

T4: Torat Chesed



Concrete Concepts:

1. "Chesed" means giving to the undeserving. Going above and beyond.
2. A "Chasid" is a person that lives for others.
3. Chesed applies on a national and global scale.

Imitatio Dei (Emulating G-d)

Unlike the other creations of the world, Hashem created humans in His image, with both responsibilities towards protecting and developing the world and the creative capabilities with which to do so. He left us with a mandate to “carry on what He started” and continue developing the world for the better. This emulation of Hashem, or (*Imitatio Dei* for those of you so inclined) is brought down in a Gemara in Sotah:



ואמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא מאי דכתיב אחרי ה' אלהיכם תלכו וכי אפשר לו לאדם להלך אחר שכינה והלא כבר נאמר כי ה' אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא אלא להלך אחר מדותיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא מה הוא מלביש ערומים דכתיב ויעש ה' אלהים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבשם אף אתה הלבש ערומים הקדוש ברוך הוא ביקר חולים דכתיב וירא אליו ה' באלוני ממרא אף אתה בקר חולים הקדוש ברוך הוא ניחם אבלים דכתיב ויהי אחרי מות אברהם ויברך אלהים את יצחק בנו אף אתה נחם אבלים הקדוש ברוך הוא קבר מתים דכתיב ויקבר אותו בגי אף אתה קבור מתים (בבלי, סוטה יד.)

[R. Hama bar R. Hanina asked: What does the passuk mean:] “You shall walk after the Lord your God?” After all, is it possible for a human being to walk after the Shechinah?! Doesn’t it say: “For the Lord your God is a devouring fire?” Rather, it means to walk after the attributes of God. Just as He clothes the naked, (“And God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin and clothed them”) so too you should clothe the naked. Just as He visited the sick (“And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre”) so too you should also visit the sick. Just as He comforted mourners (“And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son”) so too you must also comfort mourners. Just as He, buried the dead (“And He buried him in the valley”) so to you must also bury the dead. (Sotah 14a)

1) R. Simlai expounded: Torah begins with an act of Chesed and ends with an act of Chesed. It begins with an act of Chesed, for it is written: “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin and clothed them”; and it ends with an act of Chesed, for it is written: “And He buried him in the valley.”

(Continuation of the above Gemara in Sota)

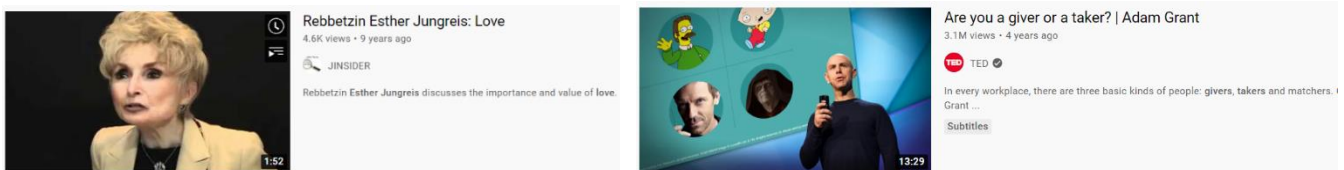
[י] אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניך אל נא -ויאמר (ה') [אדנ"אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: גדולה הכנסת אורחין מהקבלת פני שכינה, דכתיב . אמר רבי אלעזר: בא וראה, שלא כמדת הקדוש ברוך הוא מדת בשר ודם: מדת בשר ודם - אין קטן יכול לומר לגדול "תעבר וגו' (בבלי, שבת קכז.)"י] אם נא מצאתי וגו'-ויאמר (ה') [אדנ"המתן עד שאבא אצלך, ואילו בהקדוש ברוך הוא כתיב .

Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: Hospitality to guests is greater than welcoming the presence of the Shechinah, for it is written, “And he said, ‘My Lord, if I have found favour in your eyes, do not pass on, etc’”. R. Eleazar said: Come and see how the conduct of God differs to that of mankind. The conduct of mankind [is that] an inferior person cannot say to a greater man, “Wait for me until I come to you”; whereas in the case of the Holy One, blessed be He, it is written, “And he said, My Lord, if I have found, etc”. (Talmud Bavli 127a)

Loving-Kindness:

Discussion Point 1: Why do we give to others? Is it because of something we will get in return? Is there a difference in the way we give to close family over friends?

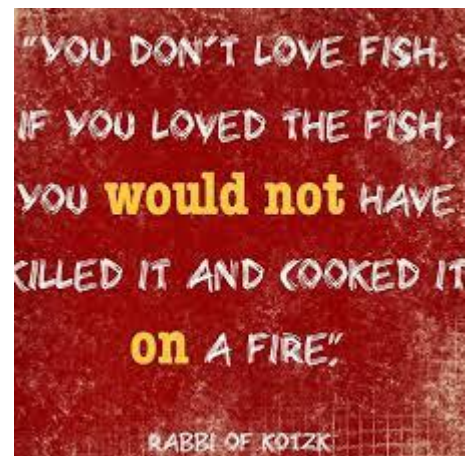
Chessed is about going above and beyond the call of duty; not just being considerate of others, not just doing what's right (Tzedakah = righteousness) but actually having an outward-focused mentality of unconditional giving, thinking about how you can improve other people's lives. Constantly.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyE7XFKEDm0>

<https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=YvXRYgiOXX0>

In the prayer "Avinu Malkeinu" we ask Hashem to deal with us through both **Tzedaka** and **Chessed**. Tzedaka means righteousness, i.e. giving people what they deserve. But when we ask Hashem to deal with us through Chessed we are asking Him to give us the things we need, **even if we don't really deserve them**. This is how we must deal with other people in order to build positive relationships; if we're too judgmental, relationships will break down and we will fail in mankind's task of building up the world.



Discussion Point 2: What ways can we get chanichim to think about the difference between conditional giving and unconditional giving? What does the Kotzke Rebbe mean by the quote?

"And Hashem appeared to him (Avraham) in the plains of Mamre and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day. And he raised his eyes and he saw, and behold! Three men were standing over him; and he saw, and he ran to greet them from the entrance of the tent and he bowed toward the ground". (Bereshit 18:1-2)

Let's think about this above scenario for a minute. Imagine you have a meeting with the queen or the prime minister. They come to meet you and as they arrive, some stranger asks you if you know what time it is. It would be pretty rude to answer them and ignore this figure of importance. Seemingly, this is exactly what Avraham did! Hashem comes to Avraham whilst he is recovering from his Brit Milah, and in the distance, Avraham sees the three 'men' and tells Hashem to come back later! The episode in Vayeira **shows how importance chessed is.**



Being Chassidim:

Discussion Point 3: What pre-conceived notions might Chanichim have about the word "Chasid"? How do your chanichim perceive ultra-orthodox Jews?

"The 19 Letters" is a work by Rav Hirsch from 1836. It is portrayed as a fictional correspondence between Naphtali (a young Rabbi and philosopher) and Benjamin (a youthful intellectual with quite a few bones to pick with Judaism!). One of Benjamin's objections comes from his image of a "religious Jew/ Chasid" as someone learning all day, engrossed in ritualistic service and monastic prayer, with very little to do with the world around him.

Naphtali's response: "Unfortunately the term "chasid" has become misunderstood because of misconceptions foisted upon us from without. A Chasid is a person who totally gives themselves in love ("**Chasid**" = "**Chesed**"), does not look out for themselves but lives only for others through acts of lovingkindness. Far from retiring from the world, they live in it, with it and for it.



A Chasid is the ultimate giver! Pre-conceived notions and negative perceptions in our mind should not change the truth. Even though nuclear weapons exist, E still equals mc^2 . Based on this, we should all be striving to be "Chasidim"!

National Chesed:

"Learn to do good, seek justice, vindicate the victim, render justice to the orphan, take up the grievance of the widow" (Yeshayah 1:17)

כִּי-אָמַרְתִּי עוֹלָם הָסֵד יִבְנֶה – "For I said the world was built on kindness" – Tehiillim 89:3



Hashem does not want us to just "look after number 1"; we are expected to build a just society, and now we have fantastic potential in the State of Israel to always be involved in its development. But we have a long way to go before we fully achieve *national and global lovingkindness*. What will YOUR contribution be...?