

THE REBBI LINE

A PROJECT OF DIAL A EBBI

OVER THE YEARS, our Dial a Rebbi and Dial a Morah hotline has served as a trusted resource for students, parents, and members of the community seeking guidance, clarity, and *chizuk* in matters of Torah, *hashkafah*, and *avodas Hashem*.

This booklet is a curated collection of questions and answers that were asked on our hotline and thoughtfully addressed by our esteemed staff of Rebbeim and Moros. Each response reflects a deep commitment to Torah values, sensitivity to the questioner, and a desire to strengthen understanding and connection to Hashem.

We are pleased to present this collection to the public during the special days of Sefiras Ha'Omer, a time dedicated to personal growth, refinement of character, and spiritual preparation. As we count each day toward *Kabbalas HaTorah* on Shavuos, these questions and answers offer insight, inspiration, and practical guidance that can enrich our learning and avodah.

It is our hope that this compilation will encourage thoughtful learning, meaningful discussion, and a deeper appreciation for the beauty and relevance of Torah in all stages of life.

May our collective engagement with Torah during these days bring us closer to Hashem and prepare us to receive the Torah anew.

A COLLECTION OF TORAH QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Prepared for the public in honor of Shavuos
All answers were reviewed by Reb Boruch Hirschfeld Shlita

How do you begin to think of good sevaros and know if they are solid?

Great question! Practice makes perfect. The more you learn, the better you will pick up this skill.

You also don't have to reinvent the wheel. See if your *sevaros* make sense to your *Rebbeim*, and by looking into sefarim from the *Acharonim*, *Gedolei Roshei Yeshiva*, and *Poskim*. Over time, you will develop a feel for what is a solid *sevara*.

Keep it up!

What do you tell someone who says that Rashi and the Rambam (among

many others) had jobs to support their families and still learned Torah? Why does it seem to be different today, that people more learning in Kollel full time, while others support them?

The question he is asking you is based upon a mistaken notion. There have always been *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* who were supported so that they could learn. This is not a modern invention. The *Mishnah* in *Megillah* already discusses the concept of *asarah batlanim*.

The Rambam himself writes in *Hilchos Shemittah v'Yovel* (13:13) that the Torah set aside one *shevet*—

"DIAL-A-REBBI'S MECHANIM ARE THE FIRST RESPONDERS OF KLAL YISROEL!"

Rav Elya Brudny

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Shevet Levi—to be supported and devoted exclusively to learning. (This is in addition to the arrangement of *Yissachar* and *Zevulun*.) The Rambam continues to say that this path is not limited to *Shevet Levi* but is open to anyone.

It is also important to note that the Rambam himself was supported by his brother so that he could learn. Only after his brother passed away did the Rambam begin supporting his family as a doctor.

After the Holocaust, *Gedolei Yisroel*—including Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Aharon Kotler, among many others—felt that because of *yeridas hadoros* and increasingly challenging times, it was necessary for larger numbers of people to continue learning in Kollel. A significantly improved economic situation, which does not have a comparison in many centuries, also made this a more viable option for many bnei Torah.

What is the importance of a girl learning Navi, Chumash, Megillos, and similar subjects if she does not have the mitzvah to learn Torah?

Girls learn Torah in order to understand proper *middos* and how to perform *mitzvos* correctly.

Learning Torah also allows us to see what happened in the past so we can understand how to act in the future. By learning about the greatness of the *Avos*, *Imahos*, and *Nevi'im*, we gain models for how to live our own lives.

Additional Answer:

That is an excellent question. Women do not have a mitzvah to learn Torah in the same way men do, but they do have a mitzvah to know Torah.

Torah, *Navi*, and *Megillos* all reflect Hashem's priorities and values—such as *hashgachah*, *chesed*, and *din*. The foundations of *emunah* that all of us—men and women alike—must live by are reflected throughout *Tanach*.

It is far easier and more meaningful to see Hashem's *hashgachah* through *Megillas Esther* than through abstract explanations. Lessons of *chesed* and *mesirus nefesh* are absorbed more deeply when learning about Rus or Avraham Avinu. Even complex stories—such as Yaakov dressing as Esav to receive the *berachah*—give us opportunities to explore the concepts of *emes* and *sheker*.

Should a yeshiva bachur be involved with the news?

The primary question to ask yourself is whether—and how—it will help your *avodas Hashem*.

The Brisker Rav told his children not be involved in the news. Reb Elchonon, however, did read the news as a bachur because he felt it helped him see the *Yad Hashem*, although the yeshiva eventually stopped him from continuing.

In short, if you feel it will genuinely help your *avodas Hashem*, there may be room for it. But if it will distract you or take away from your learning, then why get involved?

I'm learning a difficult Gemara. I keep reviewing it but I still don't understand it. Do you have any advice?

There are three important things to remember when trying to understand a *Gemara*:

First, make sure you understand every word.

Second, ensure that you follow every step of the *shakla v'tarya*.

Third, do not approach the *Gemara* with assumptions.

An additional piece of advice is to first read through the entire section of *Gemara* before trying to understand every detail.

If all this doesn't help, call Dial a Rebbi!

Is it appropriate for a bachur to learn with an Artscroll Gemara?

That is an excellent question, and there are really two parts to it.

When I was in yeshiva, many *Rebbeim* were against it. Once, during a *Shabbaton*, we saw Rav Moshe Meir Weiss from Staten Island was learning with an Artscroll *Gemara*, and the bachurim reacted with surprise. The truth is, that it is not intrinsically wrong.

It depends on what's good or bad for you personally. For some people, Artscroll becomes a crutch, making it difficult to learn from a regular *Gemara*. They become accustomed to the English and find learning without it painful or boring.

For others, it functions like a dictionary—you look up a word and then continue learning. There is no single correct approach. I once saw a very *chashuve* Rav use Artscroll to see how a particular idea was *teitched*.

You can use it as a *chavrusa*, as a tool for *teitching*, or as a quick aid. The concern is when it replaces real *Gemara* learning entirely. Balance is the key.

If you use it only occasionally and it has not replaced genuine learning, that sounds healthy.

Similar criteria would apply to using Hebrew ArtScroll or *Mesivta*.

ArtScroll has done an amazing job of making *Shas* accessible to *balei batim*. This response is specifically intended for a *bachur* in yeshiva who should be familiar with learning from a standard *Gemarah*.

Does one receive *schar* for learning Torah if one does not understand the *pshat* in the end?

The Chofetz Chaim comments on the *tefillah* we say after learning at night:

"Anu ameilim v'heim ameilim. Anu ameilim u'mekablim schar, v'heim ameilim v'ainam mekablim schar."

He asks: People who toil in worldly matters as well, seem to receive reward—so what does this mean? He explains that in worldly pursuits, one is rewarded only for results, not effort. If someone works for months on a project that fails, they are not paid.

In Torah learning, however, effort itself is rewarded. Even if one does not ultimately understand, the *amalus* itself earns *schar*. The more effort one puts in, the greater the reward.

It's difficult to say such learning doesn't fulfill the *mitzvah* of Torah learning. One would not suggest

that such learning could be done without *Birkas HaTorah* or in a *makom metunaf*, unclean place.

It is possible to understand the *mitzvah* of Torah learning as having two components:

- 1) The act of learning itself
- 2) Acquiring *yediyos haTorah*

If one does not understand the *pshat*, they may fulfill the first component without fully achieving the second.

Why do we learn Torah? I understand that Hashem wants us to, but why does He want us to?

A simple answer is that Torah teaches us how to perform the *mitzvos*, through which we earn the great reward of *Olam HaBa*.

On a deeper level, Hashem wants us to have a close relationship with Him—*deveikus*. The closest way to connect with another person is to think their thoughts and care about what matters to them.

Hashem therefore gave us the *mitzvah* of learning Torah, which is His *ratzon*, so that we align our thoughts with His.

I'm in eighth grade and we have *chavrusa* time for an hour and a half each day. We find it hard not to *batel* during learning. Is there an *eitzah* to help us stay focused?

Decide that for the first ten minutes of the *seder*, you will talk about nothing except learning. If ten minutes feels too long, start with five.

It is a simple technique, but it works very well—and you will often find that the focus lasts much longer.

Hatzlachah rabah!



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SHAVUOS FLOWERS: MINHAG, MEANING AND MUKTZEH

by Rabbi Shmuel Goldstein, *Rosh Kollel, Kollel Hora'ah*

Where is the custom to put flowers on Shavuos? And why? Can I move them on Yom Tov?

There is a widespread custom to put flowers or grass in shuls and in homes on Shavuos as a commemoration of Mount Sinai which was barren until Hashem rested His *Shechinah* there for the giving of the Torah.¹ Flowers and the like that are detached from the ground are not *Muktzeh*.² (Some *Poskim* are stringent not to move a flower in a flower pot.)³ It is important to keep in mind that the petals or other parts of the flower that fall off are *Muktzeh* [whether they fell off before or on Shabbos].⁴ Therefore, if they are in one's way (e.g. they fell onto the table which will be used or they are in a place which makes one feels like the house is 'dirty'), one should move them with an unusual part of one's body (e.g. with ones elbow) or through another object (e.g. with a broom and dust pan).⁵ On Yom Tov [which is not Shabbos too] one may remove flowers from a vase, put them back in, and even add water if it is less than the amount of water remaining in the vase.⁶ On Shabbos one may return the flowers to their original water but, no water may be added.⁷ Both on Shabbos and Yom Tov if there are buds which will open from the water, then the flowers may not even be returned to their water.⁸



1 רמ"א תצדג: ומ"ב ס"ק י. וע' מ"ב שם בשם מנ"א להעמיד אילנות כדי להתפלל עליהם ביום דין שלהם ואז הביא שהג"א מבטל המנהג כי הגוים עושים זה בחג שלהם.

2 ע' ש"ע שלוח: ומ"ב ס"ק מד.

3 ע' שעה"צ שלו ס"ק לה.

4 מ"ב בהקדמה לסי' שה, וזה מוקצה מחמת גופו - ע"ש.

5 ש"ע שיא:ח ועוד מקומות.

6 ש"ע תרנד:א. והערה"ש סע' ב כתב "ונ"ל דההוספה ביו"ט הוי פחות ממחצה דביותר לא מקרי הוספה.

7 רמ"א שלוח:יא ומ"ב ס"ק נד.

8 מ"ב שלו ס"ק נד.

Dial-a-Rebbi was built on one simple idea:

That every child who wants to learn should have someone they can turn to.

Today, thousands of talmidim and talmidos rely on Dial-a-Rebbi to get unstuck, gain clarity, and feel confident in their learning, thanks to the dedicated Rebbeim, Moros, and supporters who keep the line going.

If you're a parent, share the number. If you're a mechanech, join the team.

And if you believe in what we're doing — **help us grow.**



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