



TORAH

CREATING CONNECTION

TORAH: CREATING CONNECTION

Torah is the foundation of Judaism. But what is it all about? How do we interact with Torah? Why?

TORAH FOR ONE, TORAH FOR ALL

- Who should study Torah? Who should NOT study Torah?
- Do you feel a connection to Torah? How?
- What Torah do you enjoy learning?

WHOSE TORAH IS IT?



תהלים א:ב

כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת ה' חִפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרַתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה

Psalms 1:2

Rather, the teaching of HaShem is His delight, and he [people] studies that teaching day and night.

SO MANY LETTERS!

ישראל – יש ששים ריבוא אותיות לתורה

Israel – There Are Six Hundred Thousand Letters to the Torah



FIND YOUR LETTER

P'nei Yehoshua's commentary on Kiddushin 30a	פני יהושע על מסכת קידושין ל עמוד א
We find in many places that there are 600,000 letters in the Torah. Based on this we find the hint that the name "Yisrael" stands for Yesh Shishim Ribuya Otivot L'Torah [YSROeL], "There Are Six Hundred Thousand Letters in the Torah." Therefore, the 600,000 people of Israel correspond to the letters of the Torah, that every person in Israel has a soul with a connection to a specific mitzvah, and a specific letter. And this idea is consistent throughout many works of Torah and Kabbalah (mysticism).	מצאנו בספרים קדמונים ואחרונים שמספר כל האותיות שבתורה הם ששים ריבוא, ועל זה רומז ישראל שנוטריקון שלו יש ששים ריבוא אותיות לתורה ולכך מספר כל ישראל היו ששים ריבוא כמו אותיות התורה ו שכל אחד מישראל יש לנשמה שלו מצוה אחת ואחיזה באות אחת , ודבר זה כמעט שהוא דבר מוסכם ונזכר בזהר ובספר הקדוש שני לוחות הברית במקומות הרבה.

<p>But I was confused because I checked and there are only half that many letters [304,805 letters]!</p> <p>...</p> <p>Another answer, that every letter in the Torah has 2 elements to it: 1) the written letter 2) the spoken letter. The letter that HaShem wrote and the letter HaShem spoke to Moshe, and there is an entirely different aspect to the letter that is spoken, heard and expressed verbally.</p>	<p>ועמדתי משתומם ומתפלא לפי חשבון חמשים פסוקים שיערתי בלבי שלא יהיו אותיות התורה כי אם חצי ערך החשבון המוזכר!</p> <p>...</p> <p>ועוד נראה לי לפרש בענין יותר מרווח שכל אות מאותיות התורה יש לה שני בחינות קדושות ממש ענין הכתיבה שנכתב באצבע אלקים וענין קדושת הקריאה שדיבר הקב"ה עם משה וכדכתיב אחת דיבר אלהים שתיים זו שמענו ורואין את הנשמע ושומעין את הנראה...</p>
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The P'nei Yehoshua explains that half the letters of the Torah are made up by the written text, and that we fill in the other half, by learning, sharing, and expressing the Torah.



- ❖ HOW CAN YOU FIND YOUR "LETTER" IN THE TORAH?
- ❖ WHEN DOES TORAH FEEL PERSONAL FOR YOU?

UNITY

ONE HEART, ONE SOUL

Exodus 19:2	שמות יט:ב
And they traveled from <i>Refidim</i> and they arrived at the Sinai Desert, and they camped in the desert. And Israel camped beneath the mountain.	וַיֵּסְעוּ מִרְפִּידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינַי וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּמִדְבַּר וַיַּחֲנוּ שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר.
Rashi	רש"י
And Israel camped – [The singular language teaches that] they were as one person, with one heart.	ויחן - כאיש אחד בלב אחד

The Lubavitcher Rebbe comments that the Jewish people performed one action on numerous occasions throughout their travels in the desert. But on this occasion, Rashi points out their unified action, "One person, with one heart", because **accepting the Torah brought about communal unity.**



- ❖ WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT TORAH THAT IS BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER?
- ❖ WHEN ELSE HAVE YOU SEEN THE ENTIRE JEWISH PEOPLE JOINING TOGETHER?

INTRODUCING DAF YOMI

MAKING MILESTONES

(https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/02/siyum-hashas-2012-ortho_n_1735510.html)

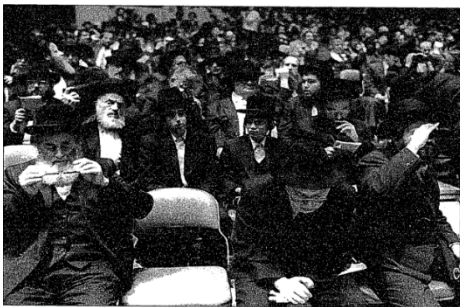
EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (RNS) It has been described as a spiritual calling, a labor of love, a rich opportunity to connect with thousands of years of Jewish history and religion. **It has also been called a relentless endeavor and a marathon of study. There are no vacations, no shortcuts.**

For 7 1/2 years, day in and day out, Jews in New Jersey and around the world have studied a new double-sided page of the Talmud, the biblical commentary that, written over centuries, serves as a guide to spirituality and practical life.

On Wednesday night (Aug. 1), in what was billed as the largest celebration of shared Jewish learning in history, some 90,000 people crowded into MetLife Stadium to read portions of the Talmud's 2,711th — and final — page.

The celebrants, mostly Orthodox Jews from across the U.S. and beyond, closed out the 7 1/2-year cycle with prayer, speeches and, when the final line was read, an explosion of jubilation that literally shook the cavernous stadium for more than 20 minutes.

Erupting into song, they swayed arm in arm, danced in circles and formed a conga line that snaked along the field level. Others danced and swayed in the stands.



About 30,000 Orthodox Jews gathered last night at Madison Square Garden for the completion of a cycle of Talmud reading that covered all 2,711 folio pages. Some of them used binoculars to get a better view of the speakers.

Talmud Gala: Ancient Law for 1990's Issues

By ABIL GOLDMAN
Despite the demands of his law firm, his five children, summer vacations and tennis matches, Jacob T. Freedman has managed to squeeze one hour every day for the last seven and a half years to study the Talmud, the veritable library of Jewish law, ethics, customs and folklore.
Last night, Mr. Freedman joined thousands of other Orthodox Jews at Madison Square Garden who have observed all 2,711 folio pages of the Talmud in a method of study called Daf Yomi, or daily page. It was the eighth time the cycle has been completed since the ancient project was instituted in Vienna in 1323 as a method to keep Talmud study alive in the modern era. Smaller commemorations were held in Israel and in Europe.
Last night, women were admitted to the Daf Yomi celebration for the first time. Several hundred sat in an upper tier of the Garden overlooking nearly 20,000 men. Although no women are allowed to participate in the daily study classes, the women had been encouraged to bring a ritual bath of the sacrifices and the food to cause their husbands to study.
"It's not easy," said Mr. Freedman, a partner specializing in tax law at Proskauer Rose LLP, a Manhattan law firm. "The amount of material I read got up to 1 mile my daily 90-day regimen at 6 A.M. in a synagogue near my home in Brooklyn. Others study in hotel-time sessions or at the average 1.5 regular minutes a class, he can call Daf-

(NY Times November 15, 1990)

Thousands Mark Talmudic Milestone

By CHARLES AUSTIN
Thousands of Orthodox Jews, for whom the intense study of the Talmud is the most precious activity, gathered in Madison Square Garden yesterday to celebrate the completion of a seven-and-a-half-year cycle of learning in which small study groups around the world met daily to pore over one of 2,711 pages of Jewish law.
The method of study is called "Daf Yomi," meaning "daily page." This month marks the end of the study period during which, it is estimated, 4,000 Orthodox Jews around the world clustered around the ancient commentaries on the Scriptures.
At yesterday's ceremony the students also began another seven-and-a-half-year cycle of immersing themselves in the detailed explanations of the law, as interpreted by the great rabbis. For instance, the first lesson deals with the different kinds of blessings an observant Jew is to use on different occasions.

For the thousands in Madison Square Garden's Post Forum, the rite of Siyum HaShas, as the completion of the cycle is known, pointed to more than the end of a course of study. The study, usually done for the Talmudic way of reasoning, creates a spiritual discipline and inspires devotion, even if some of the ancient laws are not applicable to the present time, said Rabbi Nissan Wolpin of Agudath Israel of America, the organization of Orthodox Jews sponsoring the Daf Yomi program.
"Through Daf Yomi we learn to absorb the divine thinking of the Talmud," said Rabbi Wolpin, who edits The Jewish Observer, published in New York.
The Daf Yomi study also creates a feeling of unity among Jews, the rabbi said, because in the cycle of Talmudic learning, everyone studies the same page on the same day.
Many of the men who chanted prayers at yesterday's rite wore the distinctive black garb of several Hasidic sects. Although the followers of various rabbis often disagree with one another on different points of Jewish law, they are united in their reverence for the Talmud, and it was this intense dedication to the Talmud that they came to honor.

was the eighth completion of the Daf Yomi study.
That plan was designed to draw laymen into the intense Talmudic study, previously limited to rabbis and scholars. A calendar was devised so that each day of the year was given to a specific page (actually two sides of a page). Entering the course of study committed a man to his "mitzvot" — his fellow students — and was designed to make the Talmud a focal point of his life.
"It's not just the study; it's the persistence, the hanging on," said Rabbi Wolpin, whose Daf Yomi group meets at 6 A.M. each day.
Telephone Instruction Offered
Modern technology has also provided a lift to the study of the ancient law. Through the Torah Communications Network in Brooklyn, a student can "Dial a Daf" and receive part of the instruction over the telephone. For \$12 a month a Dial-a-Daf member gets a code number enabling him to phone for a 40-minute Torah commentary.
The Orthodox Jews who study the Talmud through the Daf Yomi method carry on a tradition going to the first formal transcription of the law, believed to have been set on stone in writing about 1,500 years ago. To outsiders, a rabbi might seem to be irrelevant to modern life, but it is the spirit of the Talmud and the devotion of the student that makes the Talmud study crucial to Orthodox Jewish life.
And many of the ancient words bring comfort to modern times, said Rabbi Wolpin. "The opening word is 'blessing,' and the closing word is 'peace,'" he explained. "What better framework for our devotion?"

(NY Times November 15, 1982)

"This is what unites us together as Jews, the study of the Torah and the Talmud and its lessons," said Simon Weinstein, 47, of Lakewood, N.J., who grew emotional as he explained what daily study of the Talmud has meant to him. "I learned to always have gratitude for everyone and everything. I'm much more appreciative in my life."

It was a graduation ceremony of sorts for the page-a-day study program, known as Daf Yomi, which has grown exponentially for the decades. In addition to the 90,000 who took part at the East Rutherford stadium Wednesday night, tens of thousands of others watched via satellite broadcasts in more than 80 cities in 15 countries...

Shaina Weitz, 39, a West Orange resident who came to support her uncle, called the celebration an "incredible experience." Her eyes lighting up, Weitz said she was struck by one of the speakers, who pointed out the stark difference between how Hitler spoke to a crowd of thousands at a stadium in Germany

during the 1936 Summer Olympics, and how there was an equal number of Jews listening to very different speakers at MetLife on Wednesday night.

“It shows we’re still here,” she said. “It’s the exact opposite of that moment.”

For Rabbi Daniel Oppenheimer, 57, the event brought great pride over completing the cycle, the 12th since the Daf Yomi began in the 1920s. “It became the major item I did any day,” said Oppenheimer, who traveled to New Jersey from his home in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

As religious Jews will often say, they do not “read” a page of the Talmud so much as “study” it, taking hours, days or sometimes more than a week to examine groups of commentaries that delve into Jewish laws and interpretations on everything from holiday celebrations, candle-lighting and agriculture to business, ethics and sexual relations between spouses.

A page of the Talmud usually consists of the writings of different rabbis from different eras. **Historically, study of the Talmud from start to finish was accomplished by a select few, taking decades. But Daf Yomi — initiated in 1923 by a Polish rabbi, Meir Shapiro — encourages Jews who have secular jobs to study in their own way.**



Typically, those who take part devote an hour or more a day to the study, making time even amid the most challenging schedules.

Jacob Schlanger studied with a group of men at 5:30 every morning at Bnai Yeshurun synagogue, a few blocks from his home in Teaneck, N.J. Schlanger called the daily effort a challenge, but one that was well worth the effort.

“It’s the same reason people climb Mount Everest,” he said. “Because it’s there.”

NEVER MISS A DAY – JOSHUA 1:8

לא יָמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ בַּיּוֹם וּלְלַיְלָה לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל הַכְּתוּב בּוֹ כִּי אַז תִּצְלִיחַ אֶת דְּרָכְךָ וְאֶז תִּשְׁכַּל.

Let not this Book of the Teaching cease from your lips, but recite it day and night, so that you may observe faithfully all that is written in it. Only then will you prosper in your undertakings and only then will you be successful.

- ❖ DO YOU DO ANYTHING EVERY SINGLE DAY?
- ❖ WHY DO YOU THINK TORAH NEEDS TO BE STUDIED DAILY?

Thousands Celebrate Completion of Talmud Study

By FRANK BRUNI

To say that all the people in a sold-out Madison Square Garden were on their feet, rocking back and forth, and that the arena was utterly still would seem contradictory.

But that was the awe-inspiring scene last night as a secular temple became a temporary synagogue, and a space more commonly used by sports lovers and rock fans was filled by Orthodox Jews who rose in unison at 8 P.M. to offer an unspoken prayer.

They were there to celebrate the fact that over the last seven and a half years, many of them, along with thousands of other Orthodox Jews around New York City and the United States, have completed a 12-year cycle of study of the Talmud, one of the most sacred and important texts in Judaism, by reading and studying one two-sided page each day for 271 consecutive days.

And their extraordinary numbers — an estimated 20,000 at Madison Square Garden, and 40,000 more at celebrations occurring simultaneously in other North American cities — indicated the extent to which this method of learning, called Daf Yomi, or daily page, has become popular among Orthodox Jews.

“It’s been an explosion in the last 10 to 20 years,” said Mitchell Radman, a commentator under the pseudonym Chofetz Chaim, who came last night to mark the third time he had finished a seven-and-a-half-year cycle of Talmud study.

The first time, Mr. Radman said, he knew



A prayer started yesterday evening's celebration of the 10th Syum HaShas of Daf Yomi in Madison Square Garden, attended by tens of thousands of Orthodox Jews.

relatively few Orthodox Jews who had made a similar commitment. This time, he said, he knows many, and he gestures with his arm across the expanse of the Garden — a sea of rock overhead for the most part in black — to prove his point.

“Looking to me, the way we are,” Mr. Radman said, “this is the thrill of a life to see everyone united together in the service of our creator.” Like many others at the

event, Mr. Radman said he could not recall a time when he had seen so many Jews under one roof.

The event was formally titled the 10th Syum HaShas of Daf Yomi, signifying the 10th celebration of a completion of the seven-and-a-half-year study cycle. In this program, which began in 1923,

Continued on Page A7

(NY Times September 29, 1997)

CHAVRUSA – LEARNING AND LOVING

- What are your closest relationships? How did they develop?
- Have you ever gotten into an argument with a friend? How did you resolve it?

Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 30a	תלמוד בבלי מסכת קידושין ל עמוד א
<p>What is the meaning of the phrase “enemies in the gate” with regard to Torah study? Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba says: Even a parent and child, or a teacher and student, who are engaged in Torah together become enemies “at the gate”. But they do not leave there until they love each other.</p>	<p>מאי "את אויבים בשער"! אמר רבי חייא בר אבא : אפי' האב ובנו הרב ותלמידו שעוסקין בתורה בשער אחד - נעשים אויבים זה את זה ואינם זזים משם עד שנעשים אוהבים זה את זה</p>



Torah is not just a way to connect to God ... Learning together is a means to develop meaningful relationships.

MAKING IT LAST

Avot 5:17	אבות ה:יז
<p>Every argument that is for the sake of Heaven is destined to endure; but if it is not for [the sake of Heaven- it is not destined to endure. What is an example of an argument for the sake of Heaven? The argument of Hillel and Shammai. What is an example of an argument not for the sake of] heaven's name? The argument of Korach and all of his congregation.</p>	<p>כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, סופה להתקיים. ושאין לה לשם שמים, אין סופה להתקיים. איזו היא מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, זו מחלוקת הלל ושמאי. ושאין לה לשם שמים, זו מחלוקת קורח וכל עדתו:</p>

WRAPPING UP

- ❖ The Torah contains 600,000 letters which correspond to the number of “souls” that make up the Jewish people. The P’nei Yehoshua teaches that every Jew should “find their letter” – to find their unique piece of the Torah.
- ❖ The Jewish people became like “One person, with one heart” when they received the Torah – Torah has a way of bringing people together for a common cause.
- ❖ Daf Yomi is a perfect example of how Torah connects people.
 - Everyone can learn *something* every day.
- ❖ Torah is not learning alone, but with a study partner – a Chavruta. Learning together, and arguing over the meaning of the Torah develops long lasting relationships.