



Stellar Education for Every Jewish Child

# U'ahavta... ואהבת

Jan. 25, 2019 19 Shevat, 5779

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## Better Together Tu B'Shevat Program

We had an action packed Better Together Tu B'Shevat Celebration! The RTA seventh and eighth grade students were excited to greet old and new friends.

We started the afternoon designing our very own beautiful colorful trees... using process art. Of course, it was amazing to see the students and seniors working together to create these spectacular trees in honor of the holiday.



Morah Aronowitz spoke to us about Tu B'Shevat and the significance of the holiday both in Judaism and our own lives.

Then, as always, we spent some time working on our Better Together interviews. We shared information about significant places where we have traveled in our lives and our thoughts about those places.

**The Better Together Program is funded by a prominent national foundation.**

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### Candle Lighting

Friday, Jan. 25  
5:08 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 26  
Shabbat ends  
6:12 p.m.



#### Saturday, Jan. 26

PCL Program  
7:00 p.m.

#### Monday, Jan. 28

RTA vs. Toras Chaim  
of Norfolk  
6:00 pm @ WJCC

#### Tuesday, Jan. 29

What's Cooking?!  
3:45 - 5:00 p.m.

Kindergarten Open House  
7:00 p.m.

Meat Order Deadline

#### Thursday, Jan. 31

Computer Coding  
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Soccer  
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Mazel tov to Joel & Liron McCauley on the birth of a baby boy.

RTA - PVA  
**PRESENTS**

Brunch Style  
**PURIM**

**MISHLOACH MANOT**      **ORDER FORMS**

*Bagels.....INCLUDED*

*Pastries.....INCLUDED*

*Coffee.....INCLUDED*

*More.....INCLUDED*

**SCHOOL WEBSITE**  
 Visit <http://hudlin.com/> to find the form online

## **PVA Purim Project Frequently Asked Questions**

**The PVA Purim Project is the major PVA fundraiser of the year. The current format is in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year.**

**What are Mishloach Manot?** In Megillat Esther, Chapter 9:20-22, it says "These were to be days of feasting and joy, and *sending portions one to another*, and gifts to the poor." These "portions" are known as *Mishloach Manot*. Therefore, we send gift boxes including treats such as hamentaschen, candies, and other specialty items. In order to fulfill the mitzvah of giving Mishloach Manot, we encourage you to personally deliver one of your own.

**How does it work?** Orders are received by our wonderful office staff. The orders are then entered into a database. Once all orders are entered, hours of verification take place to ensure that the orders were entered correctly and are being sent to the correct addresses. As each address is entered, a map page number and grid are assigned. This is used to group the orders into routes. Once the routes are sorted, they must be reviewed for manageability. If one route is too large, it must be split into two or more routes.

While all of this is taking place, RTA shoppers are scouring the stores for delicacies to include in the Mishloach Manot boxes. At last, assembly day arrives. The entire gym becomes an assembly line with volunteers doing everything from assembling boxes, to putting items in the boxes, to carrying out the garbage. Cards are printed at this time and cards for out-of-town recipients are addressed and mailed. Then the fun begins — the distribution and delivery of about 800 boxes in just a few days.

**What needs to be done?** The PVA Purim Project has a job for everyone. The many jobs include shopping, assembly, and delivery. There is also a need at dismissal time to distribute the RTA/ST/YVA children and family Mishloach Manot. It takes the efforts of many volunteers. For example, last year there were 56 delivery routes!

**How many Mishloach Manot boxes are made?** This year's total won't be known until after the deadline. In the past it has been as high as 1200 Mishloach Manot boxes — 250 children's and 950 family size. We also mail greetings to approximately 100 families each year, including Israel and Canada!

**What are the delivery areas?** Our area of delivery includes zip codes 23059, 23060, 23103, 23112–23114, 23220, 23221, 23225, 23226, 23227, 23228, 23229, 23230, 23233, 23235, 23238, and 23294. For your friends outside our delivery area, we will send a lovely Purim greeting card.

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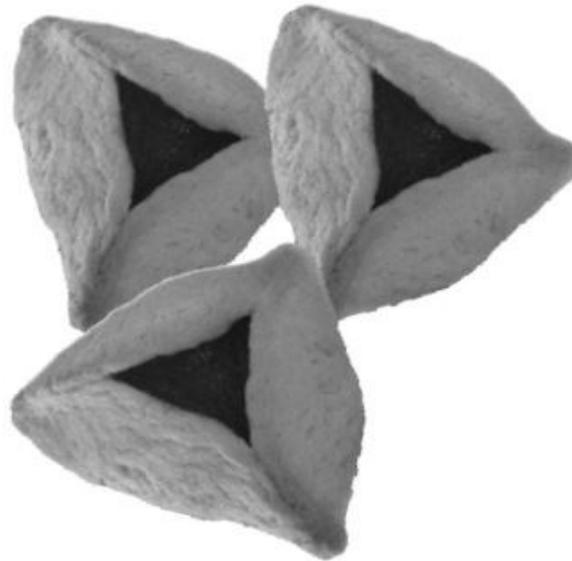
**How much does it cost?** Nine dollars (\$9) a name. A special package is offered, in which you may send Mishloach Manot greetings to every RTA/STOR/YVA parent, faculty, and board member for the low price of **\$125**.

**What is Auto-Reciprocity?** If you want to make sure you haven't forgotten someone, auto-reciprocity is the answer for you. We will check your order to ensure that you are sending Mishloach Manot to everyone sending Mishloach Manot to you. We do require credit card payment for this feature. Nine dollars (\$9) for each name added to your list will be included in the amount charged to your credit card.

**Who do I call to volunteer or if I have questions?** Please call the RTA office (353-1110).

DEADLINE: February 8!

פורים שמח!



Happy Purim!



### Better Together Tu B'Shevat Program

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Then, for the highlight of the afternoon, we were very privileged to plant our very own "ponytail palm trees." It was awesome to be able to do this and we loved working together on this meaningful, fun project. We can't wait to see the "fruits of our labor".

Afterwards, we were all excited to enjoy a delicious salad bar lunch complete with tuna and egg salad, lots of fresh fruit and, of course, homemade cookies for dessert.

Thank you to everyone who helped and assisted and, until next time, remember that we are "Better Together!"



(more photos on next page . . .)

### Better Together Tu B'Shevat Program

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### Better Together Tu B'Shevat Program

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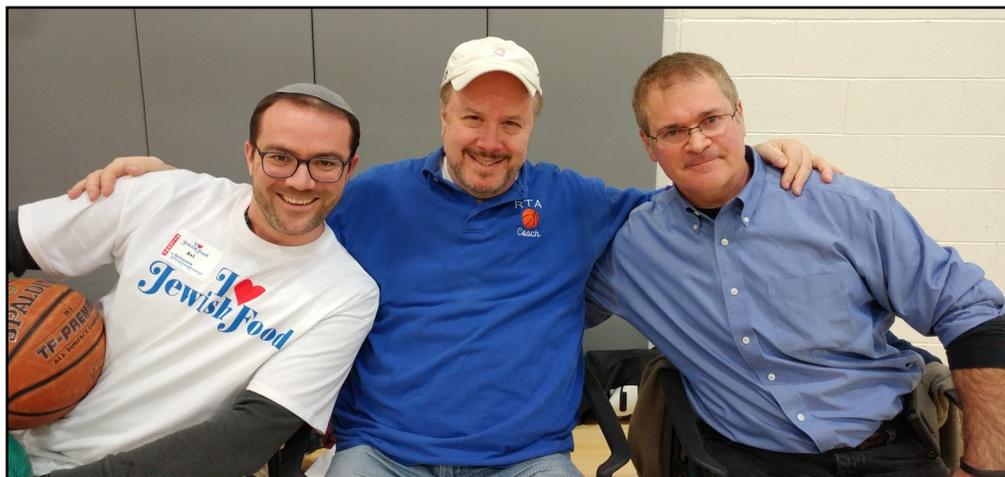
## RTA Basketball

### Iron Blue Lions Do It Again

One cheer for Coach Todd. One cheer for Coach Rich. And one cheer for Coach Avi.

That's three cheers for our hard working volunteer coaches, who have the RTA basketball team performing at their best.

The Iron Blue Lions defeated the Waldorf School, 29-12. The whole team contributed to this solid win.



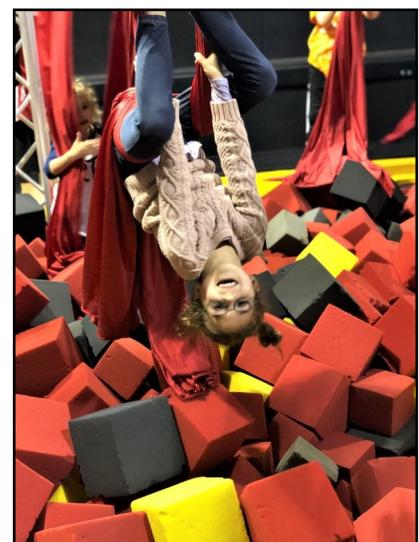
### Jumpology Trip

Last Thursday was the long-awaited trip to Jumpology for the whole school!

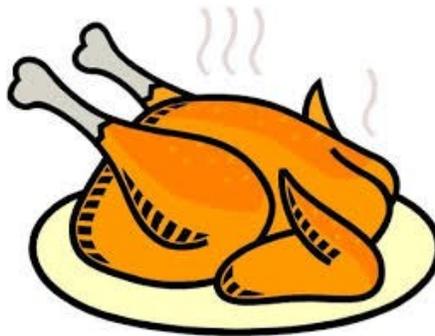


The trip had originally been scheduled as a Chanukah treat in December, but Hashem had other plans with the weather, and we had a snow day instead. (Not **so** bad....)

A huge thank you to the RTA-PVA for sponsoring the outing, to Mrs. Yali Klestzick for her determination that we should not miss this now-annual treat, and to all the parents who drove and chaperoned!



## MID-WINTER MEAT ORDER



Order Deadline: Tuesday, January 29

Pick Up Date: Tuesday, February 5  
Time: 4:00-6:00 pm

Location: Shaarei Torah of Richmond  
4811 Patterson Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23226

Please email order to: [mrsklestzick@rudlin.com](mailto:mrsklestzick@rudlin.com)

Or phone Noa Klestzick 804-909-9090

*(price list on next page . . .)*

**SHALOM STRICTLY KOSHER MEATS, INC. 1/2 PAGE**  
 1361 Lamberon Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20902 • Phone (301) 946-6500 • Fax (301) 946-1041

**NAME:**

**PHONE:**

<b>POULTRY Qty. specify lbs or pieces</b>	
WHOLE CHICKEN (3.89)	
WHOLE CHICKEN CUT UP (3.89)	
<b>3 LEGGED CHICKEN (3.89)</b>	
3 BREASTED CHICKEN (3.99)	
<b>4 LEGGED CHICKEN (3.19)</b>	
SHALOM FAMILY CHICKEN (3.99)	
CHICKEN BREASTS NO WINGS (4.69)	
CHICKEN BREASTS WING ON (3.99)	
<b>CHICKEN LEGS (3.49)</b>	
<b>CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS (4.89)</b>	
<b>BONELESS/SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGH (7.49)</b>	
<b>CHICKEN THIGHS (3.39)</b>	
<b>BONELESS CHICKEN BREASTS (6.99)</b>	
<b>BONELESS CHICKEN BREASTS FP (6.89)</b>	
CHICKEN WINGS (2.69)	
<b>CHICKEN BONES (2.49)</b>	
BBQ CHICKEN (4.19)	
<b>FRESH GROUND CHICKEN (7.29)</b>	
<b>CHICKEN LIVER (3.99)</b>	
WHOLE TURKEY (4.49)	
TURKEY CUBES (8.99)	
TURKEY SCHNITZEL (8.99)	
<b>TURKEY CHOPS (6.69)</b>	
TURKEY CUTLETS (8.99)	
TURKEY THIGHS (3.99)	
<b>TURKEY LEGS (3.99)</b>	
<b>TURKEY WINGS (2.59)</b>	
<b>TURKEY DRUMSTICKS (3.99)</b>	
FRESH GROUND TURKEY (6.99)	
BBQ TURKEY (4.69)	
BONELESS TURKEY BREAST ROAST (7.99)	
<b>FROZEN POULTRY specify lbs or pieces</b>	
CORNISH HENS 1 3/4 LB (6.99) LB	
<b>CORNISH HEN 2 LB (3.99) LB</b>	
DUCKLINGS (8.99)	
WHOLE TURKEY 10-15 LB (4.99) SZ	
WHOLE TURKEY 15- & UP (4.99) SZ	
TURKEY BREAST (5.99) SZ	

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	<b>LAMB specify lbs or pieces</b>	
	LAMB SHANKS (9.99)	
	LAMB STEW (17.99)	
	RACK OF LAMB (23.99)	
	LAMB CHOPS - SHOULDER (15.99)	
	- ROUND BONE (15.99)	
	- BABY RIB (24.99)	
	<b>VEAL specify lbs or pieces</b>	
	VEAL BREAST (8.99)	
	GROUND VEAL (8.99)	
	VEAL STEW (13.99)	
	SHOULDER ROAST (18.99)	
	VEAL SCOLLAPINI (22.99)	
	VEAL CHOPS - 1st cut (20.99)	
	- 2nd cut (17.99)	
	VEAL CUTLETS (15.99)	
	<b>BEEF specify lbs or pieces</b>	
	CHUCK STEAK (13.99)	
	CHUCK STEAK BONE IN (10.99)	
	1 ST CUT CHUCK STEAK (16.99)	
	RIB EYE FILLET STEAK (21.99)	
	RIB STEAK BONE IN (17.99)	
	MINUTE STEAK (16.99)	
	SHOULDER STEAK (13.99)	
	FLANK STEAK LONDON BROIL (16.99)	
	SANDWICH STEAK (15.99)	
	PEPPER STEAK (15.99)	
	SHOULDER STEAK THIN SLICE (13.99)	
	BBQ SPARE RIBS (9.99)	
	TOP RIB (14.99)	
	FRENCH ROAST LONDON BROIL (16.99)	
	CUBED CHUCK (10.99)	
	BEEF EYE ROUND CUBED (13.99)	
	EXTRA LEAN GROUND BEEF (7.69) sz	
	GROUND STEAK (6.69)	
	HAMBURGER PATTIES 3lb REG (7.69)	
	HAMBURGER PATTIES 3lb LEAN (8.99)	
	<b>ROASTS specify size and qty</b>	
	FRENCH (15.99) sz	
	PRIME ROLLED SHOULDER (14.99) sz	
	ROTISSERIE (14.99)	
	CHUCK ROAST (11.99) sz	
	BREAST DECKEL (11.99) sz	
	1 ST CUT BRISKET STRIPS (14.99)	
	TOP OF RIB ROAST (15.99) sz	

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	<b>KNISHES</b>	
	VEGT. EGG ROLL (1.50)	
	POTATO KNISH (2.75)	
	KASHA KNISH (2.75)	
	VEGETABLE KNISH (2.75)	
	BROCCOLI KNISH (2.75)	
	SPINACH KNISH (2.75)	
	MEAT KNISH (3.95)	
	<b>PACKAGED DELI</b>	
	MIDGET BOLOGNA 12OZ (4.69)	
	MIDGET SALAMI 12OZ (4.69)	
	CHICKEN FRANKS 1lb (2.39)	
	TURKEY FRANKS 1lb (2.39)	
	MIDGET KISHKA 12OZ (3.29)	
	BULLET SALAMI 2LB (13.99)	
	999 HOT DOGS 1 LB (5.69)	
	999 HOT DOGS 12 OZ (4.29)	
	999 HOT DOGS LOW FAT 12 OZ (4.99)	
	999 KNOCKWURST LOW FAT 12 OZ (4.99)	
	SLICED SMOKED TURKEY 8 OZ (4.89)	
	SLICED TURKEY 8 OZ (4.89)	
	SLICED TURKEY SALAMI 8 OZ (4.19)	
	SLICED TURKEY BOLOGNA 8 OZ (3.49)	
	SLICED TURKEY PASTRAMI 8 OZ (4.89)	
	SLICED CHICKEN BOLOGNA 8 OZ (3.49)	
	BEEF FRYE 6 OZ (7.99)	
	<b>CHEESE specify qty in lbs</b>	
	AMERICAN (7.99)	
	MUENSTER (8.99)	
	SWISS (12.99)	
	MOZZARELLA (8.99)	
	EMEK CHEESE (9.99)	
	IMPORTED SWISS CHEESE (17.99)	
	KASHKAVAL CHEESE (11.99)	
	BLEU CHEESE (11.99)	
	COLBY (8.99)	
	CHEDDAR (8.99)	
	HAVARTI (11.99)	
	EDAM (11.99)	
	GOUDA (11.99)	
	CREAM CHEESE (4.99)	
	CHIVE CREAM CHEESE (6.69)	
	VEGETABLE CREAM CHEESE (6.99)	
	CREAM CHEESE & LOX SPREAD (8.99)	

## Parsha Points

Each week we feature an article on the weekly Torah portion.

### Yisro (Exodus 18-20)

#### Get the Message!

In this week's Parsha, three million Jews gather at the foot of Mount Sinai and personally witness God Almighty giving the Torah. Although there are numerous miracles and historic events recorded in the Torah, it is the Revelation at Sinai which stands out as the central event in Jewish history.

It is surprising, therefore, that the name of this Parsha is "Yisro." Who was this man Yisro?

The Parsha begins:

"Yisro, the Priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard all that God did for Moses and Israel..." (Exodus 18:1)

Yisro heard about the amazing events of the Exodus and came to join the Jewish people. Rashi asks: "What was it specifically that Yisro heard that caused him to come? He heard about the splitting of the Red Sea and about the war with Amalek."

But really the entire world heard about the splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek! So why does the Torah single out Yisro?

The answer is that Yisro was a truth seeker. He had traveled around, trying every type of spiritual path, ultimately rejecting one after another as false. He was honest with himself and committed to the truth. Did others hear about the Exodus? Of course! But only Yisro was open to its message. It was this act of greatness which brought Yisro to become part of the Jewish people - and for that the parsha of the Ten Commandments bears his name!

#### KNOWLEDGE OR FAITH?

Certainly the Ten Commandments is the most famous part of the Torah. But what is the first of the Ten Commandments anyway?

"I am God."

What kind of commandment is that? That's not a command -that's a statement!

Explain the Sages: This is the Mitzvah to know there is a God.

But to whom is this Mitzvah addressed? If it's for people who already believe in God, they don't need to be told. And if it's for people who don't believe in God, they don't care what the Torah says anyway!

The answer is as follows: The Torah does not say "BELIEVE" in God. Nor does it say to wonder, feel, intuit, assume, presume, hope, or aspire that there's a God. Rather, the Torah commands us to "KNOW" there is a God!

Western society typically associates religion with "blind faith." But the Torah commands us to use reason and logic to ascertain God's existence. This intellectual understanding is crucial; feelings alone can deceive. In the Aleynu prayer, we say "know today and place it on your heart." Rational knowledge comes first; only then are we to connect emotionally. "Know there is a God" is the first Commandment - the most central idea of Judaism.

How does one achieve this knowledge? One word: Objectivity. The Talmud (Avot 1:8) tells us: "Be a judge, not a lawyer." A lawyer may sometimes advance his position without regard for its truth or validity. A judge, on the other hand, weighs each side carefully. When considering a question as profound and deep as the existence of God, we must be an impartial jury!

The Torah suggests 3 tools for attaining this objectivity:

#### TOOL #1: Listen To What Others Are Saying

Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai are two famous disputants in Talmudic literature. They argued about almost everything and saw the world from nearly opposite perspectives. (For example, Beit Hillel says we should light one Chanukah candle the first night, and add one candle each subsequent night. Beit Shammai, on the other hand, says to light 8 candles the first night and then decrease one candle each night.)

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## Parsha Points

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Jewish law, interestingly, follows Beit Hillel. And the Talmud explains why: In any disagreement, Beit Shammai would always state his own opinion. Whereas, Beit Hillel would always first state the opinion of Beit Shammai, and only then state his own position. In this way, Beit Hillel demonstrated that he was not just concerned with being right, but was seeking the truth that lied somewhere in between. That's why Jewish law follows Beit Hillel.

We see this dynamic in our own relationships as well. We've all met someone who stubbornly defends a ridiculous position, to avoid admitting being wrong. (The irony is that ultimately there is far more embarrassment in stubborn persistence, than in admitting the truth.)

To elude this trap, we can train ourselves to take other people's ideas seriously. The cardinal rule is: stay focused and calm. Communicate and discuss, rather than yell-and-proclaim. If anxiety about needing to be right becomes the primary concern, you become entrenched in a position. Getting defensive, interrupting, and responding impetuously you've lost the battle. Hillel (and Yisro), on the other hand, was willing to listening to another's opinion, subjugate his ego and acknowledge a truth not his own.

This is particularly important in marriage. Each partner brings to the relationship different insights and strengths. The ways we differ is not a threat; it is our opportunity to grow. If God had wanted us to be free of the need for each other, He'd have created us to split like an amoeba. Marriage is a unit, and when we focus on our common goals, we begin to view life in terms of "we," instead of the narrower "you-and-I."

This is true on a national level as well. Today, a wide gulf exists between different Jewish groups. As times, it seems the gap is unbridgeable. But in fact, there is greater area of agreement than we might think. We all agree on the need for tolerance, mutual trust, respect and understanding. We must find those areas of agreement and use them as a basis for building our relationships.

### **TOOL #2: Seek Friends Who Challenge You**

The Talmud tells the story of Rabbi Yochanan, a great scholar who had a study partner named Reish Lakish. (Before becoming a rabbi, Reish Lakish was a bandit. But that's another story...) These two men studied together for many years, until one day Reish Lakish got sick and died. Rebbe Yochanan was seen walking in the street, totally depressed. His students asked him, "What's wrong?" He said, "My study partner died and now I have none." They told him, "Don't worry Rabbi, we'll take care of it." So they went and found a brilliant young man to study with Rebbe Yochanan.

Two weeks later, Rabbi Yochanan is seen walking in the street again, totally depressed. They asked: "Rebbitz, what happened? Why are you so sad? We sent you the most brilliant study partner. What's the problem?"

He told them: "My new study partner is so brilliant that whatever I say, he brings 24 proofs that I'm correct. But when I studied with Reish Lakish, he showed me 24 proofs that I was wrong. That's what I miss. I don't want someone who will just agree with me; I want a partner who will challenge my position. In this way we will arrive at the truth together."

A good challenge - is that what friends are for? YES! The Sages say: "Better the criticism of a friend, than the kiss of an enemy." Your friend will tell you when you have spinach stuck in your teeth; your enemy will smirk and say you look great! The Torah speaks of Dikduk Chaverim, which literally means fine-tuning with friends. With this attitude, I see others not as adversaries, but as a welcome counterbalance to my own perspective. In choosing my friends, I want someone who will challenge me to become better in life, not just better on the tennis court.

### **TOOL #3: Don't Be Afraid to Ask**

One more story:

About 100 years ago in Europe, there was a wealthy man, named Rav Eisel Charif of Slonim. His daughter was ready to get married, so Rav Eisel sought the best young man. In those days, "the best young man" meant the top Yeshiva student. So Rav Eisel traveled to the town of Volozhin, which

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## Parsha Points

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was brimming under the tutelage of its famous Rosh Yeshiva, the Netziv. (It is said that in the years the Netziv ran the Yeshiva, some 10,000 students passed through.) When Rav Eisel arrived, he walked into the study hall, made a loud klop on the table, and announced: "I have a very difficult question on a passage in the Talmud. Whoever can supply the correct answer will have my daughter's hand in marriage."

A great buzz swept through the study hall. The chance to marry Rav Eisel's daughter! Soon a long line formed, and one by one the students were given their chance to provide the answer. And one by one, Rav Eisel rejected the answers as incorrect. This went on for days. Some students even stood in line 2, 3, 4 times. But still no one came up with the correct answer. When the students had all exhausted their options, Rav Eisel packed his bags and began to head out of town.

He had just reached the edge of the city, when he heard a voice shouting after him: "Rav Eisel, Rav Eisel!" He turned around to see a young Yeshiva student running in his direction. The student explained: "Rav Eisel, I know I wasn't able to satisfy the condition for marriage, but just for my own sake, sir, could you please tell me what is the correct answer?"

"Aha!" shouted Rav Eisel. "You will be my son-in-law!"

In our lives, the pursuit of truth can sometimes be stifled if we don't have the courage to ask. Seeking another's help is an admission that I don't have all the answers myself. This may necessitate asking an uncomfortable question. Or humbly admitting I don't know. Or risking the appearance of ignorance. But all this is infinitesimal when compared to a life perpetuated in falsehood. The Yeshiva student demonstrated this courage; it is the hallmark of intellectual honesty.

### THE SINAI EXPERIENCE

When the Jewish people stood at Sinai, they unconditionally accepted to fulfill all 613 Mitzvot. For those just beginning, 613 sounds like an awful lot ... even overwhelming! Where does one begin to tackle such massive breadth and depth? If only there was one, powerful idea we could grasp. Something that summed up all the rest.

Rebbeinu Bechaye explains that while the Torah contains 613 mitzvot, everything is ultimately contained in the very first command, "I am God." It all boils down to that one line. Why? Because it is around this point that all else revolves. Once we "know there is a God," the rest flows from there - because we recognize it as a unified, holistic system.

What was the exact encounter at Mount Sinai? The Talmud says: Every Jew experienced God's Voice. A Voice so powerful that the people not only heard, but they "saw the sound waves" emerging from God's mouth. This physiological phenomenon is called "synesthesia," whereby all the senses are intensified and fused.

Jewish tradition tells us that each and every Jewish soul - past, present and future - stood that day at Mount Sinai. When The Voice tore through all 7 Heavens, the Torah was engraved on the stone tablets ... but was first engraved on the heart of every Jew. The Voice spoke and we heard.

In Shema Yisrael, (the Jewish Pledge of Allegiance), we begin with the word Shema - "Listen." Carefully and calmly, we listen. Just like Yisro listened.

The Sfas Emes says that to receive the Torah, one has to desire truth. Do we truly want to attain clarity in life? Be a pursuer of truth. Listen carefully. For the mitzvah of "Know there is a God" invites us to rediscover the truth.

*Adapted with permission from the award winning website, [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com).*