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Parashat Bemidbar - #281

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On Shavuot...

## Laws of Staying Awake All Night on Shavuot

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:26-27, 222 and Q&A from radio call-in show]

The custom of learning Torah the entire night of Shavuot is mentioned by the Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim #494), based on the Zohar: we dedicate the night to learning Torah in an attempt to rectify a mistake made by the Nation of Israel at the time of the Giving of the Torah. When Hashem "arrived" to give the Torah to the Nation of Israel, we were still sleeping and had to be woken up. The custom therefore developed to stay awake all night to spirituality make-up for our oversleeping and to show our zeal for the Torah. But one should be aware that if, on account of the exhaustion of learning Torah all night, he cannot daven Shacharit in the morning with proper concentration, it is better not to stay up since davening properly is a clear obligation (the Magen Avraham makes this exact point regarding staying up all night on Yom Kippur – see Orach Chaim 611:11).

In fact, Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, the Brisker Rav, was surprised that people are so particular to stay awake the entire night of Shavuot, which is a custom, while on Pesach night, when there is a law to discuss the Exodus from Egypt until one is overcome by sleep, people are not so careful. And in the city of Brisk, people were not careful to follow the custom of staying awake the entire night of Shavuot, since why is this night different from all other night...? And also, learning on Shavuot night is not more important than learning during the day... (Uvdot Ve-Hanhagot Le-Beit Brisk vol. 2, p. 79).

And it is related in the book "Ha-Shakdan" (vol. 2, p. 240) that one of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv's grandsons once asked him why he does not stay awake all night on Shavuot like everyone else, but follows his regular learning schedule of waking up at 2:00 AM to learn Torah. Rav Elyashiv explained that he calculated that if he changed his few hours of sleep on that night, he would not gain more time learning Torah - he would actually lose 15 minutes of learning! For a few precious minutes of learning Torah, he decided that it is preferable to go to sleep at the beginning of the night as usual.

Each person should therefore carefully consider if it is worthwhile for him to stay up all night since there is a concern that "his gain is offset by his loss."

For one who remains awake all night, this is how he should act in the morning:

1. Talit  
One who wears Tzitzit all night should not recite a new blessing on it in the morning. One should try to hear the blessing said by someone who is obligated to recite it or have the Tzitzit in mind when he recites the blessing over his Talit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 8:16 with Mishnah Berurah #42).
2. Netilat Yadayim  
One should wash "Netilat Yadayim" without a blessing or hear it from someone who is obligated to recite it (Shulchan Aruch Ha-Rav 4:13). It is preferable to use the restroom as one is then obligated according to all opinions to wash "Netilat Yadayim." After washing "Netilat Yadayim," he should recite the blessing of "Al Netilat Yadayim" and "Asher Yatzar" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 4:13 with Mishnah Berurah #27, 29, 30).
3. "Elohai Neshamah" and "Ha-Ma'avir Sheinah"  
They should be recited without the ending of using Hashem's Name or be heard from someone who is obligated to recite them, since these blessings were established over the return of the soul and removal of sleep and neither of these occurred (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 47 with Mishnah Berurah #30 and Biur Halachah). If one sleeps a half an hour, one is obligated to recite these blessings (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 4:16 with Mishnah Berurah #34-35 and Biur Halachah).
4. "Ha-Noten Le-Yaef Koach"  
One should recite this blessing even if he is very tired, since this blessing was not established for the person's individual state, but as a general praise of Hashem who created His world which includes the removal of tiredness (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 46 with Mishnah Berurah #22 and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 47 with Mishnah Berurah #28). Chasidim recite all of the morning blessings even if they remain awake all night (Shulchan Aruch Ha-Rav 47:7 and Siddur Chabad in the laws before the morning blessings and blessings over learning Torah).
5. Blessings over Learning Torah  
There is a dispute whether these blessings should be recited if one remains awake all night. One option is that the morning before Shavuot, one make a condition that the blessings will be for the following day as well. One can also hear the blessings from someone who did sleep, with both individuals having in mind that the blessings will apply to both of them (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 47 with Mishnah Berurah #25-28). If neither of these is an option, one can recite the blessings based on the opinion of the Shut Sha'agat Aryeh (#24-25) that these blessings are a Torah Mitzvah and in the case of a doubt, one is strict to recite them. This ruling is found in Maran Ha-Rav Kook's commentary on the siddur "Olat Re'eiyah" (vol. 1, p. 59 #5) and in Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef's responsa (Shut Yabia Omer vol. 5, Orach Chaim #6 and Shut Yechaveh Daat 3:33).

In this regard, women are also required to recite the blessings over learning Torah and these blessings are printed in all of the Siddurim for women. But how can they recite the blessing "Blessed is Hashem...who has made us holy and commanded us to engage in words of Torah" when they are not obligated to learn Torah? There are various answers, but the answer of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, known as the Griz, on the Rambam (at the end of Hilchot Berachot, p. 10) and Maran Ha-Rav Kook (Orach Mishpat 11, 2) is that these are not blessings over performing a mitzvah but blessings of praise. If the Torah was not given, the world would be in darkness for both men and women. Women therefore also thank Hashem for the Torah being in the world.

Rav Aviner on...

### Ha-Rav Moshe Levinger, Great and Heroic

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Behar-Bechukotai 5773 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Our master and teacher, Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Rabbi Moshe Levinger shelita, is certainly worthy of the Moskowitz Prize for Zionism, and he is worthy of a lot more than that. One time Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Shlomo Min Hahar, zt”l said, “It should only be that I should have a place in Paradise by his side, because of all that he did for the sake of Eretz Yisrael.” And we pray that he should live for many more years in the earthly paradise of Eretz Yisrael.

Yet make no mistake: Before Rav Levinger is a man of Eretz Yisrael, he is a man of Torah, or, more precisely, he is a man of Torah and a man of Eretz Yisrael – Eretz Yisrael deriving from the Torah. Indeed, he once actually initiated the creation of a political party which he called “The Torah and the Land”. He is great in Torah, and a hero regarding Eretz Yisrael. That same description, “great and heroic”, originated with Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook (Ma'amarei Ha-Re'eiyah 127). Rav Kook explained that there are a lot of men who are great in Torah and great in holiness, but they are not heroes. In other words, when they encounter difficulties, they back off. Rav Kook wrote that Rav Shmuel Mohliver was both great and heroic, and although he suffered battles and outright wars, suffering and insult, he held firm to his path with heroism and courage, and never backed off.

Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Levinger is a true “Gaon”, a true genius, in Torah. I met him for the first time when he established the Hebron settlers' group in 5728. He was only thirty-three years old, and already he was a great Gaon in Torah, a true genius, a genius in acumen and a genius in breadth of knowledge, a genius in sterling character and a genius in the fear of G-d, a genius in modesty and a genius in humility.

And indeed, one time “Reb Avrum”, Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira, zt”l, pointed out to me, on a humorous note, many years after, “Don't refer to him as 'our master and teacher'. When you learned Torah from him, you were young, and now you are both young'...

So I follow his wish, even though being a minor disciple of a great man leaves a great imprint on one's soul. Indeed, already then Rav Levinger was a genius, and I am not

the only one who noticed that. All the true scholars in Yeshivat Mitnachlei Chevron noticed it as well. Due to his struggles over Eretz Yisrael, the media hid this primary side of his personality. Another sin of the media was that they presented him as an aggressive, angry person. Certainly in matters of principle he is firm in his views, and so must every true Torah scholar be, especially if he is not just great but also heroic. Yet anyone who knows him even slightly, knows just how gentle, humble, accommodating and smiling he is. What a marvelous smile he has! It is a sweet smile, a wise smile. Anyone in Rav Levinger's proximity will fall in love with him. He will fall in love with him, but will feel the greatest reverence for him.

Yet he is not only great. He is also heroic. He is not like those leaders who send others into battle while they remain in their easy chair. No! With any struggle that he viewed as just, he went first, and he proclaimed, "After me!" and his entire personality cried out, like Gidon, "See what I do, and do the same" (Shoftim 7:17). He did not send out innocent lads on missions causing them to be arrested and sit in prison. Rather, he himself set out on the missions, and he himself sat in prison. Obviously, I am not presenting sitting in prison as an ideal! I am just providing examples of the true heroism of his personality. He is not just a hero in words, not just a hero as far as telling others what to do, but a hero himself.

For what did he sit in prison? Not for shady money dealings or deception. Rav Moshe Levinger is as straight as a ruler. Rather, it is because he defended the strength and glory of the Nation, and he still does so and shall continue doing so. He was on trial more than ten times, had costly fines leveled against him, was convicted and sentenced to prison, sometimes resulting in actual prison time and sometimes in suspended sentences, because he defended the strength and glory of the Jewish people, because he shot at those who attacked him with rocks. Sometimes he forced Arab merchants who had behaved provocatively towards Jews to close their stores, and similarly, he responded forcefully when an Arab insulted his son in the street. One time, after he was freed from prison, he proclaimed, "I will continue in my path." Once more let me say that here is not the place to discuss whether his path is the desirable one or not.

One time he said to me, "Reb Shlomo" (that's what he humbly called me), "One doesn't always need peace and quiet like you think," by which he meant: Sometimes you have to show what a hero is. One time when we were at Yamit, struggling against the destruction, he called for an appalling initiative: That Torah scholars should lock themselves in a room and threaten collective suicide if Yamit was handed over to the enemy. His halachic reasoning was as follows: For Eretz Yisrael, every sort of self-sacrifice is required. The initiative did not get off the ground, due to a lack of volunteers...

He suggested it to me as well, saying, "Reb Shlomo, this involves a weighty decision, for you and for your family. Think well." I humbly disagreed with him, but nobody could dare to claim that he lacked self-sacrifice!

Yet he didn't just possess self-sacrifice of this sort, but, first and foremost, self-sacrifice for building and for positive activities. He was a partner in the renewal of Gush Etzion after the Six Day War, and afterwards, with great toil and stubborn

effort, he established the Hebron settlers' group, out of which sprang forth all the settlements of Judea and Samaria. One cannot imagine how great a deed this was.

Time will tell, and people will come to understand. Once, in 5747, the newspaper Hadashot asked: "From amongst twenty-two Israeli personages representing the entire public spectrum, who has had the greatest influence on Israeli society during the past twenty years?" First place went to Menachem Begin together with Rav Moshe Levinger....

Let us go back to our starting point: Torah and the Land, and from the Torah, the Land. Rav Levinger does not belong to the practical, pragmatic stream within Gush Emunim, or to the leadership of Judea and Samaria, but rather to the ideological, moral, spiritual and Torah-oriented stream. For over forty-five years he has been teaching that the more spiritually things are run, the more they will succeed.

He is a man of morality and justice - quite the opposite of how the media distortedly presents him.

The State of Israel, he says, is not just a military and economic dream, but, first and foremost, a moral, spiritual, social dream, as appears in the words of the Prophets.

Every settlement built in the Land of Israel has spiritual/ethical worth. G-d said of Avraham, "I have given him special attention so that he will command his children and his household after him, and they will keep G-d's way, doing charity and justice" (Bereshit 18:19). Loving your fellow Jew, loving social justice, loving hard work. First, explains Rav Levinger, it was necessary to fly a national flag over the settlements. Now, we must raise up over that flag a noble, spiritual banner, a banner that is great and exalted. Give greatness to our G-d!

Rav Levinger's vitality has not left him. He learns Torah and teaches Torah, lifts people's spirits and gives new life to the dejected. He is yet young, and will yet accomplish much. He is great and heroic, brilliant in Torah and a fighter for the Land. He has no need of the Zionism Award. Zionism needs the prize of his contribution. All the settlers of Judea and Samaria are his prize.

He is not a person looking for acclaim. Far from it. He is not a person seeking to appear attractive to the media. He is a person who raises a banner, a banner of the truth, a banner of the Torah.

Everything I have written here applies equally to his wife, Rabbanit Miriam, who is together with him in all his holy work.

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