

GROWTH

7th Edition
By Mishaël Sionov
BS"D

At The

~~YOM TOV~~

~~SHABBAT TABLE~~

SIMCHAT

TORAH

The Magic Number

R' Jonathan Rietti, in "The One Minute Masmid," quotes a fascinating excerpt from the Shlah HaKadosh, who quotes from the Shulchan Aruch of the Arizal.

The Gemara (Chagigah 9b) states that a person cannot compare one who reviewed his learning 100 times to one who reviewed it 101 times. What exactly is the Gemara trying to convey?

The Shlah describes that Hashem appointed an angel over 'memory,' named Michael. The *gematria* (numerical value) of Michael is exactly 101. The angel appointed over forgetfulness, however, is the Satan, and the *gematria* of his name, which is really (S"ם) ה"ו, comes to a total of 100. This means that one cannot compare 100 reviews to 101, since up to and including 100 reviews, a person can still forget his learning because it is still within the range of the angel S"ם. But through learning just one more time, one escapes the range of this Angel of Forgetfulness, and enters the influence of the Angel of Memory, Michael.

With this, we can also understand another statement of Chazal in Pesachim 50a: אשרי מי שבא לכאן ותלמודו בידו – "Happy is the one who comes here and his learning is in his hand." In its simple understanding, the Gemara means '*happy is the one who arrives in Olam Haba and remembers what he learned*.' However, says the Shlah, there's much more here. "Happy is the one who comes *to here*." The word for "*to here*" in Hebrew is לכאן, owning an uncoincidental numerical value of 101. He is happy because he arrives with 101 reviews on what he learned, and therefore has it on his fingertips.

As we dance with the Torah this chag and look forward to a year with much growth, let us work on trying not just to learn it but to also own it. Chazara and review may not always seem interesting but it reaps a great and bountiful harvest.

Your Mindset

I heard a powerful message from R' Menachem Goldberger; one that can revolutionize our view of Simchat Torah and what we can accomplish on the special day. One year, in a certain yeshiva, there were two boys dancing on Simchat Torah with extra fervor and enthusiasm. One of the rabbis commented to another, "*I know that this boy [referring to one of the two] is going to have a tremendously successful year. The other [of the two], I don't know...*" When asked why, the rav explained: "That second boy, I know he had an amazing and productive experience in learning this past year, and he's dancing to celebrate his past accomplishment. For him, I'm not sure what this coming year will hold for him. The first boy, on the other hand, did not have such a good year in learning. But right now he is dancing with much excitement over the potential for this coming year. He is celebrating a fresh beginning. I am therefore certain that he will have an amazing upcoming year."

Keep in mind, we aren't celebrating past accomplishments as much as we are celebrating the productivity that lies in the year ahead. May Hashem grant us all another year of growth.

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida	Rachamim Ben Shifra	Yitzchak Ben Naama	Noach Yisrael Ben Yaffah	Miriam Bat Bakol	Frida Bat Yaffa
Esther Bat Frida	Arkadiy Avraham Ben Mazal	Nosson Feitel Ben Yehudis	Yitzchak Elimelech Ben Chana Sarah		
Yitzchak Ben Sarah	R' Aharon Moshe Ben Fruma Rachel	Chaya Dina Bat Chana Mindy	Menachem Mendel Chaim Ben Merel		

The Late-Night Call

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R' Avi Slansky once related a touching story. The Vizhnitzer Rebbe was up late one night, and at 3 am made a phone call. As he dialed the number, the *gabbai*, who was there with him, was perplexed. *Who would the Rebbe call at such a late hour? What pressing matter needed to be addressed immediately?* "Mazal tov, mazal tov!" exclaimed the Rebbe into the phone. "Thank you!" the man on the other end replied. "How was the wedding?" the Rebbe continued. "It was beautiful, Baruch Hashem. I just came home." "Please, tell me more," the Rebbe pleaded, "Who came?" The man started telling the Rebbe various details, and the Rebbe continued the conversation. "How about the band, and the flowers, and the food..." They spoke on the phone for half an hour, and finally, the Rebbe concluded before they hung up: "That's beautiful, mazal tov, it's wonderful to share in happy occasions." The *gabbai* turned to the Rebbe and inquired, "Honored Rav, it's 3:00 in the morning! Why couldn't the call have waited until tomorrow, or even next week?" The Rebbe gave an amazing response. "The man who made the wedding tonight lost his wife this past year. Usually, after making a wedding, the husband and wife go home and discuss the details of the event and talk about the beautiful *simchah*, about the flowers and the guests and the band and the food. But this man didn't have anyone to talk to, and I felt the need to fill his void.

"Sometimes the blessing is when Hashem holds back a little bit so we could look up to Him. We don't have Hashem to fulfill our needs. We have needs to find Hashem."

(Charlie Harary)

My Good Friend

Reb Naftali Horowitz shared an amazing story. There was a man who would pray in the same *shul* as R' Avraham Pam, and after a while the Rav noticed the man's absence. He called the man's son, who told the Rav that his father was very ill and was staying in a hospital. Upon hearing the sad news, R' Pam asked him to visit his office so he can deliver something to his father. R' Pam wrote the man a short, simple letter, on a regular piece of paper, saying: *Dear So-and-So, I want to let you know that I miss you in shul. It's not the same without you. Love, your friend, Avraham Pam.* He gave the letter to the man's son, who delivered it to his father.

Two weeks later, the man passed away. R' Pam, informed of the tragic news, went to pay a *shiva* call to the mourning family. The son took out the letter written by the Rav and informed R' Pam: "Rav, I want you to know that for the last two weeks of my father's life, he would proudly show off this letter to every single person that came to visit, and would brag, 'Look, I'm friends with R' Avraham Pam!'"

R' Pam left the *shiva* house, and immediately sat on the steps and started to cry. His grandson (who told the story) asked him, "Why are you crying? What you did was beautiful!" R' Pam responded, "It was. But how many more letters like that could I have written?"

We all have the power to lift up those around us. Everyone could use chizuk, and you really never know how far a kind word can go...

A Tap On The Shoulder

There was a man in a *kollel* in Israel whose family was growing and needed to extend his house, but by no means could afford it. He felt stuck, and went to his rabbi for advice. The rabbi advised going to the *kotel* before anything else and crying out to Boreh Olam. The man went to the *kotel* and spent a significant amount of time there praying and pleading with sincerity. After a while, the man felt a tap on his shoulder. A wealthy man from America presented himself and inquired, "You seem so genuine. What is the problem; why are you crying?" He told him his story, and the American tourist was taken aback and inspired. He pulled out his checkbook and assured the man that he would be happy to help cover the cost of the whole project. The man was ecstatic, and immediately got back to his *kollel*, where he told his rabbi of the "angel" Hashem had sent to deliver His salvation.

Another individual at the *kollel* overheard the story and thought, "I could use money for an extension, too." He went to the *kotel* and prayed at the exact same spot as his friend had. After several moments, he felt a tap on his shoulder. He got excited and quickly turned around to meet the benefactor, but was vexed to find a collector tapping him on the shoulder asking for a shekel.

The second man returned to the *kollel* to ask the rabbi for an explanation. The rabbi smiled and explained, "Why are you bothered? It makes a lot of sense. Your friend put his full trust in Hashem and waited for His response. You went waiting for a tap, so you got a tap. You both got exactly what you were waiting for."

(R' Joey Haber)