

B”H

# Torah Thoughts

**Torah time with Rabbi Itchie**



## **Forward**

**Throughout the summer, the campers at C-kids Gan Israel of Florida have been learning Torah with their dedicated counselors.**

**Torah, with its varied discussions regarding all areas of life, is understandably quite fascinating, and the campers have been bombarding the instructors with many questions, which they answered skillfully.**

**In this booklet, I have collected some of the best questions, and a sprinkling of my own “two cents” with suggested answers.**

**I hope that they will inspire many meaningful conversations.**

**ENJOY!!!**

**Rabbi Itchie  
Torah Time director**

# **Question 1: How will the resurrection happen?**

**By Aaron Abraham** םש

**Judaism believes that in the messianic era the dead will be resurrected. My question is, how will people get up at that time? Will they just appear from the ground?**

\*

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Wonderful question, Aaron!**

**In 1945, the Lubavitcher Rebbe wrote a fascinating in-depth treatise concerning the general nature, and many details, of the resurrection. It can be found translated into English, at:**

**<https://www.chabad.org/article.asp?aid=2282981>**

## **Question 2: Why not an ox?**

**By Josh Barthes** ״ו

**In Chumash Shemot (the book of Exodus) chapter 32 verse 4, the verse describes how the golden calf was made:**

**He took [them] from their hand[s], fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into a molten calf, upon which they said:” “These are your gods, O Israel, who have brought you up from the land of Egypt!” “**

**Rashi (the foremost traditional bible commentator) comments:**

**“There are those that say that Micah was there, who had emerged from the layer of the building where he had been crushed in Egypt. In his hand was a plate upon which Moses had inscribed “Ascend, O ox; ascend, O ox,” to [miraculously] bring up Joseph’s coffin from the Nile. They cast it [the plate] into the crucible, and the calf emerged”.**

**Now, if the plate contained the words “ascend, O ox”, then an ox should have emerged. Why, then, did a calf emerge instead?**

### **Question 3: What age will they be?**

**By Hayden Chazon םש**

**At the resurrection (see question 1), at what age will people get up? For example, if someone passed away 1,000 years ago, will he be over 1,000 years old, or the same age as when he passed away?**

**\***

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Not a simple question.**

**On the one hand, we know that the soul on its own is not affected by physical time and space, in the same way that it is while inhabiting the body. Which is why we do not find anyone who says that if an infant passes away, and 13 years have passed it would be Bar-Mitzvah upon arising at the resurrection.**

**On the other hand, we do observe the birthdays and Yahrzeits of departed ones, which indicates that in some way they do have a connection with time.**

**However, since, as we mentioned, practically souls are not bound by time, it would seem correct to say that people will get up at the same age when they passed away.**

## **Question 4: How many Mitzvot are there?**

**Same camper**

**How many Mitzvot (commandments) were given to the Jewish people? Is there an agreed upon number?**

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**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Good question, Hayden.**

**Tradition has it that we were given by G-D, through Moses, 613 commandments. 248 of them are things we should do, and 365 of them, things we should not.**

**And throughout the generations, the rabbis enacted 7 ordinances, making for a total of 620 Mitzvot.**

**The problem here is, upon counting one comes to realize that there are much more than 613, or 620, acts that the Torah, which guides every aspect of life, requires a Jew to do. So, some of the greatest Rabbis have debated exactly which of the Torah's commandments are to be counted as part of the 620.**

**Today we can do barely half of those, since many Jews live outside of Israel, we do not have a temple, nor an autonomous Jewish kingdom and religious court. When the Messiah comes, we will once again be able to observe all the mitzvot fully.**

**Does that like a long, long, list of things to do? Start with one or two, and you will make steady progress. As our sages say: "one Mitzvah brings another in its train".**

## **Question 5: Who served the Levites?**

**By Tal Cohen** ״ו

**I learned that the Kohanim (priests in the holy temple) were served by the Levites (Jews from the tribe of Levi). Who, however, served the Levites?**

\*

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Interesting question, Tal!**

**The tribe of Levi (from which the Kohanim and Levites descend), one of the 12 tribes of Israel, were selected by G-D for the task of serving in the temple, because of their loyalty to him during the incident of the golden calf.**

**In the days of olde, the Levites served the Kohanim by preventing any unlawful entry into the temple, which is essentially the responsibility of the Kohanim (in addition to their job of singing in the temple choir). Today, to commemorate that, the Levites pour water over the hands of the Kohanim before they deliver the priestly blessing on Jewish holidays.**

**The answer to your question, it seems, would be... no one. After all, specifically the tribe of Levi had been selected to serve in the temple, and the job of the Levites was not one that required outside help.**

**BTW, how cool would it be to find out that you are a Kohen or a Levite?**

## **Question 6: Explain 9/11 to me!**

**Same camper**

**In class, we were told a story that happened on September 11, 2001, that infamous day when two planes crashed into the twin towers.**

**Is there a rabbinical explanation for why this tragedy had to happen?**

**\***

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**That is a thoughtful and sensitive question. There is substantial literature dealing with such questions.**

**The Lubavitcher Rebbe wrote several letters in connection with this subject. One such letter can be found at:**

**<https://www.chabad.org/article.asp?aid=2188391>**



## **Question 7: What will happen to non-Jews in the age of Moshiach (the messiah)?**

**By Matteo Corea םש**

**Is the Messiah coming just for the Jewish people, and not for non-Jews? If so, what will happen to them when the Messiah comes?**

\*

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Good question, Mat.**

**Chassidut (Jewish mysticism) explains (building on the words of classic Jewish writers), that the arrival of Moshiach will herald an age of peace and goodness, not just for the Jewish people, but for the entire world.**

**Jews and non-Jews each have their own unique identity and mission in this world, which will come to its ultimate perfection in that truly golden age.**

## **Question 8: What's with the salt?**

**Same camper**

**Why do Jews put salt on the table during the meal? And dip their bread in it?**

\*

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**On the first day of creation G-D created water. The water covered the globe. On the second day, G-D made the firmament (sky), a divide in between the water. The waters on one side are today the physical water here on earth, and on the other side, the waters turned into a more spiritual substance.**

**To “appease” the waters which had to remain here on earth, G-D commanded that all sacrifices offered on the altar, be brought up together with salt.**

**Our tables today, say our sages, can bring atonement for us, like the sacrifices, when we conduct ourselves at mealtimes properly and generously. So, to commemorate the sacrifices of olde, we have salt on the table.**

**We dip the bread in salt for Kabbalistic reasons. On the Jewish new year, we dip our bread in honey to symbolize the sweet new year we wish for ourselves and everyone.**

## **Question 9: Will the Golem come back?**

**By Jacob Dajka םש**

**At the resurrection (see questions 1 and 3) will the Golem (man of clay made by various Kabbalists throughout the generations) come back?**

\*

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Interesting question, Jacob.**

**I would venture to say that the fate of the Golem would be like that of animals and other creatures which are not human.**

**For more information, see Yehuda Shurpin's article: "do dogs go to heaven?" at Chabad.org.**

**Here is the link:**

**[https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=013302620721958082615:ocf7y5l0\\_i0&q=https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/3016125/jewish/Do-Dogs-Go-to-Heaven.htm&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjy2PyQwbjxAhWDsDEKHT0hDnwQFjACegQICBAB&usg=A0vVaw0zLPSe9xr-DzQgX65Ud3Dr](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=013302620721958082615:ocf7y5l0_i0&q=https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3016125/jewish/Do-Dogs-Go-to-Heaven.htm&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjy2PyQwbjxAhWDsDEKHT0hDnwQFjACegQICBAB&usg=A0vVaw0zLPSe9xr-DzQgX65Ud3Dr)**

## **Question 10: Why do you spell G-D like that?**

**Same camper**

**I've noticed that many religious Jews (Rabbi Itchie included), tend to write G-D, with a dash, instead of spelling it out fully. Why is that?**

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**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Good observation, Jacob!**

**The basic answer is, out of respect to His name. Jewish law requires us to respect the mention of His name in any language, and random literature tends to be discarded or defaced.**

**For further insight, please see:**

**“Why don't you spell out G-D's name?” by Aron Moss, at Chabad.org. Here is the link:**

**[https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=013302620721958082615:ocf7y5l0\\_i0&q=https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/166899/jewish/Why-Dont-You-Spell-Out-G-ds-Name.htm&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjagNrO9rPxAhWrmeAKHYuhATMQFjABegQIBBAB&usg=AOvVaw3jJRnAEJhs8oWvpx4AiKyC](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=013302620721958082615:ocf7y5l0_i0&q=https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/166899/jewish/Why-Dont-You-Spell-Out-G-ds-Name.htm&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjagNrO9rPxAhWrmeAKHYuhATMQFjABegQIBBAB&usg=AOvVaw3jJRnAEJhs8oWvpx4AiKyC)**

# **Question 11: Can we rebuild the holy temple today?**

**By Dylan Douenias** ״שׁ

**For close to 2,000 years, Jews have been praying for the holy temple to be rebuilt. Why is it that we have never taken the initiative to build it on our own?**

\*

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Fascinating question, Dylan.**

**Building the temple is no simple matter. The political climate must be right, and there are strict ritual requirements that must be met.**

**Maimonides writes that Messiah will build the temple. Others say that the temple will descend, fully built, from heaven. Either way, we hope and pray anxiously for that day!**

## **Question 13: Why the yetzer hara (evil urge)?**

**Gur Levy** ״שׁ

**If G-D wants people to do good things, why does he give them the urge to do the opposite?**

**Noah Moshe Meir Roman** ״שׁ adds:

**Wouldn't Moshiach (the Messiah) come faster if people only wanted to do, and did, good things?**

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**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**That's a profound question.**

**The basic reason is, to give us free will, so that the good things we do should mean more. Just think about it: what do you feel more satisfied about, something easy you've accomplished (maybe solving an easy riddle) or a hard one (like passing a difficult test)?**

**It's easier to be victorious in the struggle against the evil urge, when you know that it was created just to make you a better person. So he isn't that scary or intimidating after all!**

## **Question 14: Are girls taught Talmud?**

**By Yanir Micha** ״ו

**I heard that girls are not taught Talmud. Is that true? If yes, why not?**

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**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**To my knowledge, Yanir, girls are indeed taught Talmud, however, they devote less time to it than boys.**

**One of the reasons seems to be, since men and women have different roles in life, they have been endowed by G-D with a different set of skills, as well as with a different intellectual bent.**

**Men are perhaps more inclined to the theoretical aspect of learning, which is why it is mainly they who learn Talmud.**

**Women with their often more “down-to-earth” approach to things, devote considerably more time to studying the practical aspects of Judaism.**

**They are also strongly encouraged to learn Chassidut (Jewish mysticism) as their extra sensitivity and intuition make them especially suited for that field of study.**

## **Question 15: Why split the sea?**

**By Noah Moshe Meir Roman םו**

**It would be interesting to know why G-D split the sea of reeds for the Children of Israel as they were escaping from the Egyptians, couldn't he just carry them over it? Was it just to lure the Egyptians into the sea so they would drown?**

\*

**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Great question, Noah!**

**In fact, according to some, splitting the sea was unnecessary to save the Jewish people anyway, and they emerged from the sea from the very same side where they entered!**

**One explanation may be, since at the time of the splitting of the sea, the people appreciated G-D's existence in a way they never had before, this was reflected in the splitting of the sea, allowing for the normally unseen seabed to become visible.**



## **Question 16: The reason for Anti-Semitism**

**Same camper**

**Why are there people who dislike and persecute Jews?**

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**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**I will add to your question: why are people sometimes not so friendly to others who are different than they?**

**It is difficult for people to accept others who are not like them. Especially when it comes to the Jewish people, who have a special G-D given mission in this world, much of the animosity towards them stems from (perhaps subconscious) jealousy.**

**We can all work towards peace, by learning to be welcoming to those around us, even if they seem different. Focus on what unites, rather than what divides, us.**

**May we merit the ultimate world peace of the Messianic era immediately!**

## **Question 17: Was Adam Jewish?**

**Same camper**

**We learned that Abraham was the first Jew. What about Adam, the first man? He also believed in only one G-D, was he also Jewish?**

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**Rabbi Itchie responds:**

**Great question.**

**Abraham was the first Jew, not just because he believed in one G-D, but also because of a unique quality he possessed which he in turn passed on to his children, later to become the Jewish people.**

**While Adam himself may have also possessed this quality, at least to some extent, it was not fully passed on to future generations before Abraham.**

**The unique Jewish quality is the “Nefesh Elohis”, which is basically a soul with extra sensitivity to G-dliness, and with that comes their special mission to help the entire world realize its Divinely ordained purpose.**

# מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות

## לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע

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ע"י המדריכים וה"סאטף" של מחנה "סי-קידז גן ישראל"

לייק-ווערט פלורידא

הת' יצחק בן שיינא ביילא איזאווי

הת' משה בן חי' גיטא בלאטנער

הת' ישראל בן רחל לאה ברוק

הת' ישראל בן דורית ג"ירו

הת' דניאל אליעזר בן חנה מלכה הירש

הת' מנחם מענדל בן חי' נעמי וואונטש

הת' יהודה בן רחל קריינא חאנאוויטש

הת' אילן בן אדא נעכא טראמפער

הת' זאב בן רבקה ויטא כהנוב

הת' פנחס הכהן ש"י בן מסעודא כ"ץ

הת' מנחם מענדל בן חנה לזרוב

הת' צבי בן נחמה דינה עבער

הת' ארי' זאב בן חי' בריינא פייגענסאהן

הת' מנחם מענדל בן אביבה פראדל ראד

הת' אברהם יצחק בן רחל רענדלער

הת' מנחם מענדל בן שפרה חוה שווארץ

הת' מנחם מענדל בן שרה שטיינמעטץ

הת' ארי' לייב בן מליא רבקה שמוטקין

הת' לוי בן קיילא ששונקין

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות  
ולגרום נחת רוח רב  
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע

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ע"י

השלוחים של מחנה  
"סי-קידז גן ישראל"  
לוי יצחק בן אסתר גאלדא  
וחי' בת חנה  
ושיינא בת חי'  
פלאטקין