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# Dear Editor,

*Dear Editor,*

Prejudices and anti-Semitism do not die but hibernate. Witness the case of Spain. A country occupied for seven centuries by Islamic Moors now rushes to recognize a never-existent Palestine that proudly boasts no Jews will be allowed in its areas.

Spain who ignominiously expelled Jews in 1492, now 532 years later, supports the expulsion of Jews again; now from large portions of the Land of Israel. How shocking!

Certainly, Jews who intends to visit Spain should reconsider their travel plans, as I am.

*Sincerely,*  
**Henry Moscovic**

*Dear Editor,*

Permit me to belatedly question a puzzling incident related in your tribute to R' Dov Wolowitz, z"l (May 9 issue).

The article states that one year, R' Dov arrived to Lakewood several days after the start of the z'man. He had been implored to remain at a kiruv camp, where his talents literally saved the spiritual lives of the campers. R' Dov's keshet with the campers often led them to transfer from public school to yeshiva. With Elul arriving early that particular year, R' Dov chose to stay at camp despite the fact that this made him arrive late to Lakewood.

According to the narrative, HaRav Aharon Kotler was incensed at R' Dov's choice. "A z'man is a z'man," thundered Rav Aharon.

This does not square with halacha. It is clear that if one can save a physical life by missing yeshiva, he must miss yeshiva. How, then, can saving spiritual lives be any less valuable? We sometimes have to bypass what we want to do in favor of what Hashem wants us to do.

Further, the episode also does not correspond with a story that I heard from my

rebbe, HaRav Yechiel Perr, one of Rav Aharon's finest talmidim. Rav Aharon once insisted that Rav Perr embark on a fund-raising trip, despite the fact that it meant missing critical days of yeshiva. When my rebbe asked Rav Aharon why he had to go, the answer was: "*Vayl du kenst*, because you can," that is, because Rav Aharon knew that this particular talmid possessed the requisite skill to successfully accomplish this particular mission, despite the fact that he would lose days of learning.

My rosh yeshiva told me that Rav Aharon would tell the bochurim: "I am not saying you should never close your Gemara, but I am saying that you should do so reluctantly." This approach – valuing Torah study above all but knowing that in the real world, sometimes other tasks take priority – is a lesson I imbibed from my rebbe for half a century.

Given this contradiction, and knowing that Rav Aharon put infinite value on bringing Jews closer to Judaism, I can only surmise that something is missing from the story told by R' Dov Wolowitz. I would be eager to hear a clarification from anyone with access to the facts of this encounter between R' Dov and Rav Aharon.

*Avi Goldstein*  
**Far Rockaway, NY**

*Dear Editor,*

There was a custom that existed in some shuls, going back some time, where they would put ostrich eggs on top of the Aron HaKodesh. It was based on the notion that the focused ostrich stare can cause the chicks to hatch, imparting the lesson that prayer to G-d must come with intense focus and concentration.

It may be posited as well, that prayer can help one reach the pinnacles of the Aron HaKodesh. This is based on the verse (Tehillim

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## Readers Poll

Do you prefer a thicker, creamier cheesecake or a lighter, fluffier cheesecake?

**64%**

Thicker

**36%**

Lighter

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81:11), "...Open your mouth wide and I will fill it," and the Gemara says this is going on Torah (Berachos 50a). It may be said that to reach the "page," level of 50 in Berachos and surpass the highest level of 49, prayer is a necessary tool.

Besides the power of prayer by which to request to be filled with the greatest understanding of the Torah, there is certainly a level of *hishtadlus* to put in. No one says that a *daf* Gemara comes easy. My late relative, Rav Avrohom Genechovsky, *zt"l*, who had the Torah on his fingertips with a true love for the Torah, noted that to reach the sweetness of the Torah takes time. He says it can be bitter and difficult in the beginning, but once the initial barriers are broken, it's pure beauty and song.

A key element to the Oral Law is the understanding of it. My uncle, Rabbi Genack, notes in his *sefer* that Rav Elchanan Wasserman was once talking in learning with the Griz, and Rav Elchanan said that maybe they should look inside the Gemara because of the idea that letters themselves bring wisdom. The Griz responded that such an idea only applies to the Written Law and not the Oral One. When it comes to the Written Law, even if you don't understand the meaning of the words, one still gets rewarded for saying them. But when it comes to the Oral Law, saying the words brings no fulfillment of the mandate; the only way to fulfill its requirement is by understanding the meaning and concepts.

One piece of advice that the Chazon Ish gave to reach the depths of learning was quoted by Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt"l*. The Chazon Ish said to learn a piece of Gemara twelve times without looking at any of the Rishonim or Acharonim on the page, but rather to analyze it based on one's own understanding. He said that by using this method a person will ultimately come to ask the same questions of the Rishonim and Acharonim. Rav Gustman, *zt"l*, was known to read the Gemara without first looking at Rashi and Tosafot in order to see the *sugya* through fresh eyes and come to his own understanding and questions before looking at the commentators.

The wonder of Shavuot is that it's preceded by Bamidbar. In Bamidbar there's a counting of all of Israel, cementing the notion that we are all individuals that are part of a nation. My first cousin, Rabbi Yaakov Nagen (Genack), notes that each person has their own letter in the Torah, and we are always changing and thus changing our letter. Most importantly though, as the Zohar says, "G-d, Israel, and the Torah are One," which accentuates the idea that we need to mimic G-d and be a nation of one as well. Obviously, the potential is there, and we can merge

with G-d and His intellect through cleaving to focused prayer and learning in depth.

**Steven Genack**

**Dear Editor,**

I feel compelled to respond to the first letter in the "Letters to the Editor" section of your most recent (5/30/24) issue, which was critical of my 5/23/24 letter. The criticism was made that "if you are going to write a letter setting forth strong political opinions, you should not be afraid to sign your name. Sending an anonymous letter lessens the impact of your argument."

According to that logic, the content of an argument does not have merit on its own, but rather derives value solely from the person who makes the argument. If the person who wrote the 5/30/24 letter is influenced by superficialities rather than by substance, does that mean that he would, for example, purchase athletic equipment (such as a pair of sneakers) simply because it has been endorsed by a sports celebrity? Does it mean that he would purchase apparel or an accessory for a female relative simply because it is a brand-name item from a well-known designer? Does it mean that he gives credence to the opinions of the "talking heads" of the media simply because they are "television personalities," rather than analyzing the content of their opinions?

The fact that a letter writer requests anonymity could mean nothing or could be on the basis of many different factors. For example, the letter that had appeared in the 5/23/24 issue which has been objected to because the writer was "Anonymous" could have originated from someone in the inner circle of "Jihad Joe" or "Schumer, the Schemer/Scammer" or "Nattering Nadler." Or it could have originated from your next door neighbor even. Or anonymity may have been requested because what was important was the message itself, rather than the messenger (so that it was not necessary for the ego of the letter writer to be stoked by seeing their name in print).

**One Who is impressed by the Content of a Letter, Rather than by the Name of the Letter Writer**

P.S. These past few days, we see further evidence of the duplicity of Jihad Joe, the Traitor. This is the same Joe Biden who proclaimed publicly that the Iranian regime would never be allowed to possess nuclear weapons, but now carries (heavy) water for the Iranians by reportedly seeking to prevent the British, French and Germans from even condemning Iran. No concrete action has been taken by the U.S. in the face of further uranium enrichment by Iran. Perhaps serious attempts at "regime change" in Iran would be a solution, but Jihad Joe, the Traitor, would likely not acquiesce in this.