



For such a small nation as we are, it seems odd that there are so many types of Jews. We are comprised of Litvaks, Chassidim, Sefardim and so on. And within these there are many groups—the numerous diverse groups of Chassidim, Sefardim, etc. What is the reason for this?

One reason is that it is for us to choose what we need for our avodas Hashem. Thus, we may see someone who looks like a Litvak but enjoys the vibrancy of Chassidus, learning their sefarim, davening with them and the like. If something brings you close to Hashem, then you can pursue it. This is hinted to in ואני יטוב קרבת אל-ים לי טוב (Tehillim 73:28) if it brings us close to Hashem, then it is good.

One way is not more correct than the other rather one must choose that which brings him close to Hashem. A way to comprehend this is that just as there are many ways for example to get to the number 19-11 added to 8, 14 and 5, 10 and 9 and so on. Similarly, there are many paths in Avodas Hashem.

Each Jew is a letter in the Sefer Torah, as there were 600,000 root souls at Sinai and 600,000 letters in the Torah. Indeed, ישראל is an acronym of יש ששים רבוא אותיות, there are 600,000 letters in the Torah (Pri Tzadik, Rosh Chodesh Elul, 1). יש ששים רבוא נשמות (Devarim 32:15, see R' Gershom in Eruchin 33a), another name we are called by, is an acronym of יש ששים רבוא נשמות, there are 600,000 souls.

Incidentally, the Arugas Habosem (Yisro, 20:15, s.v. vayar) tells us about a very interesting occurrence that took place at Har Sinai. We know that every Jew corresponds to a letter in the Sefer Torah as there

were 600,000 Jews and 600,000 letters in the Torah. At Matan Torah, every Jew recognized his own letter as well as the letter of his counterparts. He also knew the formation—which letters came first and which later on. So the one who knew that his letter was the ב of בראשית, for example, stood next to the Jew who was the ר of בראשית. In this way they displayed the Torah in human form! This is how we can grasp וירא העם וינעו וירא העם וינעו, the people saw, trembled, and stood from afar (Shemos 20:15). וירא העם—they saw their own letter as well as those of their friends, and also the arrangement of the Torah. וינעו, they moved around (as in נע ונד, wanderer—Breishis 4:12) to form the sequence of words properly. ויעמדו—although far from the top, they stood in a way exactly corresponding to the arrangement of the text on the mountain.

Based on what we said, we can answer many questions that arise. There are gedolim whose level we can't even think of reaching, as they are so exalted. From where do these gedolim get their power? R' Moshe Wolfson posits that it comes because their personal letter is from Hashem's name, Y-H-V-H. Those who live in a certain community have their letters in the same section of the Torah. Those from the same family are in that family because their letters are from the same word in the Torah. Examining others, we see that some are more zoned into a specific mitzva, such as Shabbos. They live and breathe Shabbos. This is because their letter is in the word Shabbos (see the Pnei Yehoshua to Kidushin 30a).

At times, we may see a charismatic

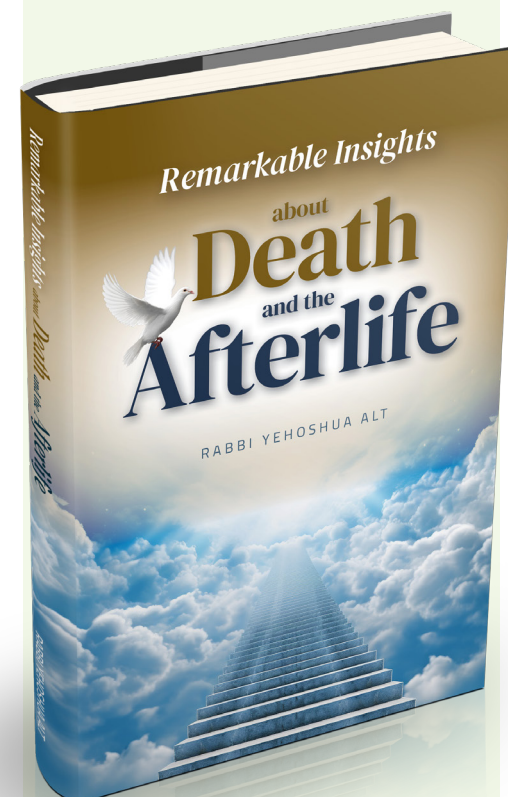
kiruv professional unable to influence another about religion. This doesn't mean that you also won't be successful in influencing this person, since it may be that your letter in the Sefer Torah is closer to his than that of the kiruv professional's. Thus your neshama may be more connected to his, thereby giving you the ability to influence him.

So one's spiritual personality depends on where his letter is in the Torah. Just as there are different parts to an army—soldiers, sailors, marines, and the like, so too there are many parts to Hashem's army. Each person has his purpose. Just as there is no extra letter in the Sefer Torah, likewise there is no extra Jew. They are all necessary, similar to a radio in which all the wires are needed.

The pasuk says ודגלו עלי אהבה (Shir Hashirim 2:4), which means that each tribe had its דגל, flag, banner. The same applies to us Jews, as we each belong to a דגל. That is to say, Sefardim, Ashkenazim, and so forth. Yet even with all these differences, we are all under one umbrella—Klal Yisrael—just as the tribes were with their different flags. This is what Hashem wants and desires—ודגלו עלי. This is followed by the word אהבה, since Hashem loves that we are different and at the same time united.

One place we see this difference is in Shacharis, as Nusach Ashkenaz begins with שיר...לדוד whereas Nusach Sefard starts with הודו. Where do they meet in agreement? At יהי כבוד. This tells us that although there are Chassidim, Litvaks and the like, we are all in unity when it comes to serving Hashem—'כבוד ה'.

RABBI YEHOSHUA ALT



The newly released book "Remarkable Insights about Death and the Afterlife" is now available (as a paperback, hardcover and digitized version) for purchase and delivery on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CNNDCMNC> or by sending an email to yalt3285@gmail.com. This extensive and thought-provoking book addresses these questions and many more, providing transformative insights. With a collection comprising over 70 meticulously crafted essays, it eloquently articulates the Torah's viewpoint regarding death and the afterlife. This work stands as an invaluable resource, facilitating readers in acquiring a deeper comprehension of this vital subject. It makes a great gift for friends, relatives, business associates and learning partners. Purchase it at <https://amzn.to/3eyh5xP>.

Some of the questions discussed in this book are the following.

- What is the ultimate way to elevate the soul of one's parents?
- How does the death process rectify a person's soul?
- What profound life lessons can we learn from gravestones?
- In what ways can the concept of reincarnation help us better understand life?
- What is the idea behind davening at gravesites?
- What will happen at the Resurrection of the Dead?

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