

Before the eyes of all Yisrael. (34:12)

The Torah begins with the creation of the world, the creation of mankind, and concludes with death – with the passing of our quintessential leader, Moshe *Rabbeinu*. The life cycle, from cradle to grave, is exactly that – a cycle. A man is born, lives out his life, and returns sometime later to his source. One ends where the other one starts. A perfect circle is complete in the sense that it unites the beginning with the end. Indeed, there is neither a beginning to a circle, nor is there an end. If one selects a specific point and designates it as the beginning, when he arrives at the end, he will find himself back where he started.

Horav Shlomo Yosef Zevin, zl, observes that *V'zos HaBrachah* is the only *parsha* of the Torah that is not read on *Shabbos*. *V'zos HaBrachah* is read, instead, on *Simchas Torah*, because, on this day, we conclude the reading of the Torah, and we dance in a circle by design. This intimates that there is no end to the Torah. Its final words, its closing sentence is, *l'einei kol Yisrael*, and it immediately begins with *Bereishis bara Elokim*. Is this really the end? No! Because we now begin with *Bereishis*. As we dance in a circle on *Simchas Torah*, we connect the end with the beginning. Thus, the “eyes of all *Yisrael*” stay focused on the *Bereishis bara Elokim*. The beginning declares Hashem as the Creator of the world. This is what we look at as we conclude the circle of life – the beginning.

Death is not an end. It is the beginning of a new spiritual odyssey. The soul returns to its source – the end of the circle. It is now time for a new beginning. As this soul returns, another leaves, thus life goes on – in a circle. When the “eyes of all *Yisrael*” remain transfixed on the beginning, we realize that life does not come to an abrupt end. It is only beginning. A circle does not end. Wherever one stands in the circle of life, when his name is “called” to return, he is not really leaving. He is merely starting over again. After all, life is a circle.

Dear Readers,

Completing a cycle of learning is a wonderful achievement. It, however, creates a feeling of ambivalence, since, after all is said and done, one is back at his point of origin after traveling through various stages. Concerning Torah erudition, there is no end, because every end begets a renewed responsibility to begin over again. Torah is endless. Thus, as soon as we complete *V'zos HaBrachah*, we immediately begin *Sefer Bereishis*. I really wonder what provides the greater sense of *simchah* – completing the previous cycle; or the excitement that is generated by the merit of a new beginning. I have this feeling every time I complete a cycle of *Peninim*. While I am excited and inspired by the achievement, I am equally enthusiastic and humbled with being granted the opportunity to commence another cycle anew. Therefore, as I conclude my twenty-fourth cycle, I celebrate my twenty-fifth beginning. The *simchah* of a *Siyum* is not only in the inherent completion, but in the immediate initiation of another cycle. The recognition and acknowledgement that Torah study never ends, that one can never amass enough knowledge, are constant motivators.

During these past twenty-four years, I have had more than my share of *siyata diShmaya*. I have had the good fortune of seeing *Peninim* grow exponentially. The merit to be granted the opportunity for such *harbotzas Torah* is humbling, and I pray that I will continue to warrant this *z'chus*.

While my name is more publicly identified with *Peninim*, its success is due largely to the individuals who are involved with its weekly preparation. Their efforts are hereby recognized, with overwhelming gratitude and appreciation. I do this annually, and, while it might seem redundant, I think gratitude should never be taken for granted, and appreciation is never superfluous. Indeed, it should be repeated often.

I have the privilege of once again thanking *Mrs. Sharon Weimer* and *Mrs. Tova Scheinerman* who prepare the manuscript on a weekly basis. It takes great patience, and, at times, creative ingenuity to read my illegible scrawl and understand what it is I am trying to say – especially when some of the words are missing. *Mrs. Marilyn Berger* continues to do an amazing job of editing the copy, making it presentable and readable to the wider spectrum of the Jewish community. She often tells me when I veer too much in either direction away from the center. My dear friend, *Rabbi Malkiel Hefter*, somehow finds the time in his busy schedule to see to it that the final copy is completed, printed, and distributed in a timely and orderly fashion.

Over the years, *Peninim* has developed its own network of distribution. While the constraints of space do not permit me to mention each and every person who sees to it that *Peninim* is distributed in his or her individual community, I will highlight a few. It was *Baruch Berger* of Brooklyn, New York, who came to me originally, requesting that he be able to distribute *Peninim* in his community. He later became ill, hindering his ability to continue his *avodas ha'kodesh*. As his illness progressed, Baruch was compelled to halt his activities, but the *z'chus* is all his. It was just three years ago, shortly before *Rosh Hashanah*, when Baruch's pure *neshamah* returned to its rightful place *b'ginzei meromim*. May the *limud ha'Torah* which he initiated be for him an eternal *z'chus*.

Avi Hershkowitz of Queens, New York, and *Asher Groundland* of Detroit, Michigan, distribute in their respective communities. *Shema Yisrael* network provides the electronic edition for the worldwide distribution. A number of years ago, *Eliyahu Goldberg* of London, England, began a "World" edition. Through his efforts, *Peninim* has received extensive coverage in England, France, Switzerland, South Africa, Hong Kong, South America, and Australia. Eliyahu goes so far as to Anglicize the text to make it more readable in the United Kingdom. *Rabbi Moshe Peleg*, *Rav* of Shaarei Zedek Medical Center, prints and distributes *Peninim* throughout the English speaking community in *Eretz Yisrael*. Kudos to *Meir Winter* of Monsey, New York, and *Moshe Davidovici* of Antwerp, Belgium, for including *Peninim* in their internet edition of *Divrei Torah*. May the *mitzvah* of *harbotzas Torah* serve as a *z'chus* for them to be blessed *b'chol mili d'meitav*.

My wife, Neny, has been supportive in many ways. Sharing with me all of the agonies and ecstasies of writing, her support and encouragement, as well as her constructive critiques, have

been indispensable. She avails me the peace of mind to write, regardless of the time or place – whether convenient or not. Her “early morning” editing has become a weekly ritual in our home. After carefully reading the manuscript, she offers her excellent suggestions, and, with her keen eye, she repairs the poor punctuation. Indeed, she is literally the last word on my manuscript before it is printed. Without her, *Peninim*, like everything else in our lives, would be incomplete. To this end, and for so many other considerations too numerous to mention, I offer her my heartfelt gratitude. I pray that we: are both blessed with good health; merit that Torah and *chesed* be the hallmarks of our home; and continue to derive much *Torah nachas* from our children and grandchildren, *kein yirbu*.