

## **And He (Hashem) said: "Gaze, now, towards the Heavens, and count the stars if you are able to count them!" And He said to him, "So shall your offspring be!" (15:5)**

In order to understand the foregoing simile, we must assume that the reference is to Avraham's descendants throughout the millennia. Otherwise, how are we to understand the inability to count the Jewish People? Are we that great in number that we cannot be counted? On the other hand, we find in the beginning of *Sefer Devarim* (1:10) that the *Torah* states: "*Behold, you are like the stars of heaven in abundance.*" *Rashi* attributes this comparison to the eternal nature of the heavenly bodies. As they last forever, so, too, will the Jewish People be blessed with permanence.

*Horav Shimon Schwab, zl*, suggests a novel exposition of this *pasuk*. The reason we cannot count the stars is that they cannot be seen. If we look up at the sky we can tally the number of stars that we observe. There are thousands of stars in the sky, however, that are so distant from us that we cannot see them. Consequently, they cannot be counted.

*Klal Yisrael* has its own unique infiniteness. We are all connected to an eternal source of life, encompassing every Jew who ever lived and is yet to be born. This is the concept of "*V'chayei olam nota b'socheinu*," "*And (He has) implanted eternal life within us.*" Indeed, if one were to count the Jewish People and announce the total, he would not only be wrong, it would be a denial of the eternity of *Klal Yisrael*. *Klal Yisrael* is one eternal continuum in which every Jew is included. As the stars cannot be counted, so, too, is the number of Jews not within the parameters of human perception.