

Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes. (30:2)

It is good to digress once in a while to gain insight into the eminence of those individuals who have ascended the ladders of Torah erudition sufficiently to be called *Roshei ha'mattos*, heads of the tribes. Someone asked *Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita*, how many times the word "Moshe" is mentioned in the Torah. He replied, "614 times." The questioner countered that he had checked with a computer, and the total was 616. *Rav Chaim* disputed this, claiming that the computer had erred. "Moshe" appears in the Torah exactly 614 times. The man was shocked. How could the computer be wrong? *Rav Chaim* explained that while the name Moshe is written 614 times, the spelling – *mem, shin, hay* – comes up two times, *V'im yimaat ha'bayis miheyos miseh* (spelled *mem, shin hay*). (*Shemos* 12:4) and *Shamot kol masheh yado* (spelled *mem, shin, hay*) (*Devarim* 15:2). *Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita*, quotes *Midrash Tanchuma (Beshalach 16)* that *talmidei chachamim*, Torah scholars, are called *sofrim*, since they are *sofer*, count, every word in the Torah (because it is so precious to them).

The *Rosh Yeshivah* of Mir, *Horav Nochum Partzovitz*, walked into the *bais hamedrash* and noticed two *bachurim* talking in anything but learning. When they saw him approaching, they suddenly changed their discourse and quickly transitioned to a debate concerning a passage in the *Talmud (Nedarim)*. One of them pretended to be reading: "*Tanu Rabbanan*; "The Rabbi taught." *Rav Nachum* walked by and, in his inimitable muted tone, said, "The phrase *Tanu Rabbanan* is not found anywhere in *Meseches Nedarim*."

When this vignette was related to *Rav Chaim Kanievsky*, he closed his eyes momentarily (as if he were quickly reviewing the entire folio of *Talmud*), and then he remarked, "It is true that *Tanu Rabbanan* is not to be found, but *d'tanu Rabbanan* is found" (27a).

This incident was shared with *Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl*. He commented, "Why are you so impressed? This is his *makolet*, grocery store. Every grocer knows exactly where every item in his store is situated, its price and how many of each item is available. He lives his *makolet*. It is his very life. To *Rav Chaim*, the *Gemorah* and its commentators are his very life. They are his *makolet*."