

He said: Hashem came from Sinai... from His right hand. He presented the fiery Torah to them. (33:2)

The *Baal HaTurim* comments that this *pasuk* begins with the letter *vov* (*Va'yomer*) and ends with the letter *vov* (*Iamo*). This is by design, to allude that Moshe *Rabbeinu* blessed all twelve *shevatim*, tribes. (The numerical value of *vov* is six. Two *vovim* equal twelve.) The commentators question why the *Baal HaTurim* did not note this in the earlier *pasuk*, which also begins and ends with *vov*. This *pasuk* addresses Moshe's blessing the Jewish People. It would have been more appropriate to underscore the dual *vovim* in a *pasuk* which speaks about blessing.

The *Zera Shimshon* explains that the main power of Moshe's *brachah* came from the merit of the Torah which they received – which is the source of blessing. (One who studies Torah is blessed. One must study Torah to perform *mitzvos* properly.) In the second *pasuk*, Torah study is explicitly mentioned. This is why the *Baal HaTurim* chose to note this numerical insight in the *pasuk* that specifically refers to the Revelation at *Sinai*.

We will attempt to expand on this idea. In order for a person to receive blessings, and in order for those blessings to be effective, the person must (somehow) be deserving of blessing. One who is insincere, whose outward actions do not represent his true self, is not deserving of blessing. In other words, spiritual integrity is an integral requisite for blessing. Torah is objective, absolute truth. It is immutable and ingenuous – untarnished by personal opinion, emotion or vested interest. The Torah is the template of unmitigated, unadulterated truth. The Torah provides us with the answers which we need to live. It is sad when those who lack spiritual integrity attempt to accommodate their chosen lifestyles by insidiously exploiting its truth. Thus, Torah is the source of blessing; those who are true to themselves are blessed by the Truth.

Horav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Kaminetz, was a gaon and tzaddik without peer. As a Rosh Yeshivah, his influence on his students was life altering. He was an exemplar of inexorable attachment to Torah. The following vignette, often quoted by his grandson (by marriage), Horav Yitzchak Scheiner, zl, gives us a glimpse into his derech ha'chaim, approach to life.

A noted speaker held forth in the *Kaminetz Yeshivah* about the greatness of Torah study. In his speech, he drew a parallel between learning Torah and breathing oxygen. A person needs oxygen to live; likewise, a Jew requires Torah to live. One who does not have a connection to Torah has a void in his life, much like a person who is unable to breathe properly.

Following the *derashah*, lecture, *Rav Baruch Ber* commented to his *talmidim* that he did not agree with the speaker's analogy: "Oxygen enables a person to live – much like food and drink. The Torah, on the other hand, is not something that enables life. It is literally life itself."

Rav Scheiner would supplement his words with his own. "Who is alive?" he would ask. "Someone

who is living life in the prescribed role that Hashem designated for him. For a person to be (considered) alive, he needs to be achieving the mission for which Hashem placed him in this world. Otherwise, he is not living.”