

When was the last time you sat with yourself?

FIND A QUIET PLACE — SOMEWHERE IN NATURE IF YOU CAN. SIT DOWN. NO PHONE. NO MUSIC. JUST YOU. LET YOUR MIND SETTLE, THEN ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS HONESTLY.

- 1 Where am I really holding right now — spiritually, emotionally, mentally?
- 2 How am I treating the people closest to me — my friends, my family? Would they say I'm really there for them?
- 3 How is my connection with Hashem? Am I talking to Him, trying to connect with Him, or just going through the motions?
- 4 What am I avoiding — and what would happen if I finally faced it?
- 5 If I could be honest with one person about how I'm really doing — what would I say?
- 6 Am I living with intention, or just letting the days pass?

TIME TO REFLECT

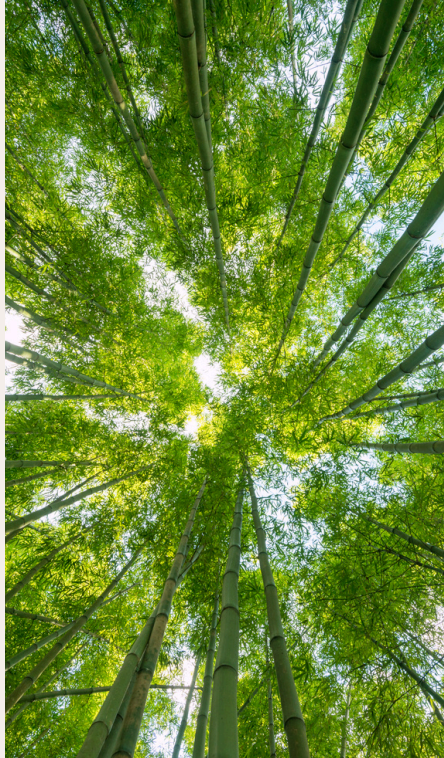
Find a quiet spot outdoors.

A bench in a park, a patch of grass, somewhere near water. The goal is stillness.

Let your mind wander first — don't force anything. After a few minutes, gently turn inward.

Ask yourself:

Where am I holding? Who needs more from me? Am I close to Hashem right now?



THIS WEEK — FIND 15 MINUTES TO SIT WITH YOURSELF.
Quiet-Honest-Present



In Loving Memory of Virginia Sultan A"H
SHAVUOT



BE CONSCIOUS



YOUR NESHAMA KNEW EVERYTHING — AND IT SHOUTED NA'ASEH V'NISHMA ANYWAY.

Picture this. Spain, 1491. The Inquisition is at its peak. A group of broken Jews shows up at the door of R' Yitzchak Arama with one question gnawing at them: if we convert, are we off the hook? Is Judaism just a religion we can step out of like changing a coat?

He tells them no. You can run, but you cannot hide.

Their spokesman pushes back. "That's not fair. My great-great-grandparent stood at Har Sinai, not me."

And R' Yitzchak's answer is the answer for every one of us.

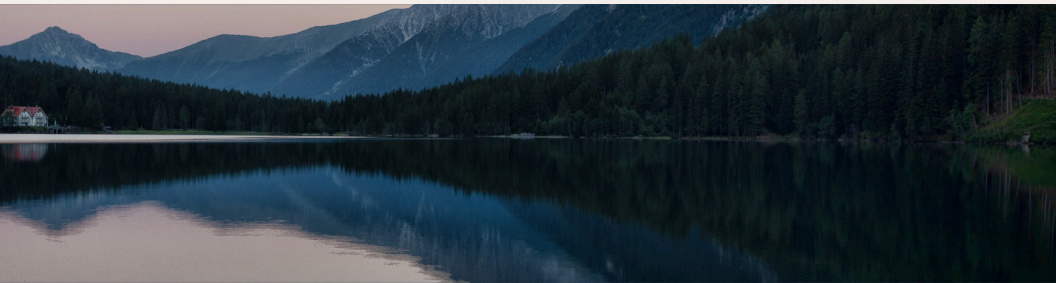
Your neshama at Har Sinai wasn't some abstract spiritual version of you. It knew everything. It knew the family you'd be born into. It knew the schools, the divorce, the medications, the anxieties, the streets you'd walk down. It knew about Spain 1491 and Morocco 1860 and Brooklyn 2026.

It knew all of it. And it shouted na'aseh v'nishma anyway.

And in that moment you were given a spark — custom-built for your life. Strong enough to shine in the darkest version of darkness Hashem knew you'd one day walk through.

Every other ancient nation became history. **We became eternity.** Shavuot is the day we remember we're the latest link in the oldest living chain on earth — and that the spark is still in there.

Waiting for us to choose it again.



"Every other ancient nation became history. We became eternity."

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

STAY HYDRATED

Most of us aren't spiritually collapsing. We're just 2% off. One slow berakha. One honest thank you. The small things ARE the relationship.

YOUR SPARK IS YOURS

Hashem didn't give you someone else's life. He gave you yours — and a spark built specifically for it. Stop measuring your avodah against someone else's. The test in front of you today is the one your neshama signed up for.

CHOOSE IT AGAIN

Sinai wasn't a one-time event. Every day you have the same choice your neshama made then. Pick one mitzvah today and do it like you're choosing it for the first time — not out of habit, out of decision.

R' HILLEL EISENBERG

FEATURED EPISODE



LEARNING FROM OUR PAST

Guest · Rabbi Eliyahu Ben-Haim

beconscious.org/podcast

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In this episode we explore how Haham Baruch would guide the generation of today. Our fast paced lives slowed down for a bit. A place to feel how our great rabbi would guide us in this modern era. Hope you enjoy!

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LEARNING FROM OUR PAST

From The Podcast · Hal Doueck feat. Rabbi Eli Ben-Haim

beconscious.org

01 THERE WAS NO PARTITION

Q: How did Hacham Baruch reach so many people — Syrian immigrants, secular families, everyone?

He was there for everyone. The Supermarket trip that would take you 20 minutes would take him two hours — not shopping, but stopping every ten steps for someone who needed advice or a moment of his time. He played handball with kids at Magen David Yeshiva. Decades later, Syrian immigrants who arrived in the early 90s considered him their rabbi. The bridge wasn't formal authority. It was human accessibility. People don't follow titles. They follow people who make them feel seen.

03 EVERY TRAIT HAS ITS PLACE

Q: What did a silent car ride teach Rabbi Eli that no classroom ever could?

Rabbi Eli drove hours to take his father to the doctor, passing his two doctor brothers nearby. When he asked why, Hacham Baruch was silent. Then: "Your brothers accept what the doctor says. You question him. That's what I need." Just as Hashem gave every person a different face, He gave every person different traits. What seems like a flaw is often the exact tool for a different situation.

02 FIVE MINUTES WAS THE SECRET

Q: How did Hacham Baruch turn Shaare Zion from near-zero Torah learning to hundreds of people studying?

Five minutes. Not an hour. Not a weekly commitment. He never burdened a person with more than they could handle — and he extended that to people who worked on Shabbat, people who were barely observant. Over 55 years, he built a Torah center with hundreds learning morning and evening. The person who starts small and keeps showing up will outpace the one who commits to an hour and burns out in three weeks.

04 THE DOOR WAS ALWAYS OPEN

Q: How do you give personalized answers without compromising your principles?

Hacham Baruch would tell two people in the same room different things — not because he was inconsistent, but because each person was at a different point. The man who drove on Shabbat and the daily Torah learner were both his people. His principles were the destination, not the entry requirement. The most principled thing you can do is meet someone where they are and help them take one step from there.

THE TORAH WASN'T JUST GIVEN TO US. IT WAS GIVEN FOR US.

Shavuot is the greatest moment in Jewish history. Millions of souls standing around a mountain, receiving the greatest gift of all time. Our Torah. And somehow, so fast, we forget. **We forget that the Torah wasn't given to us. It was given for us.**

It's not a rulebook Hashem dropped on us to make life harder. It's a full guide on how to actually live — not just succeed in business, not just succeed in relationships, not just succeed in one piece of life. Across the board. That's what Shavuot reminds us of. **Every morning when we wake up to a brand new day, we're getting that gift again.**

Here's what gets me though. Every single day in Tefilah we say:

יְהוָה עֲרַב נָא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ

"Please Hashem, our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet in our mouths."

And a bit later:

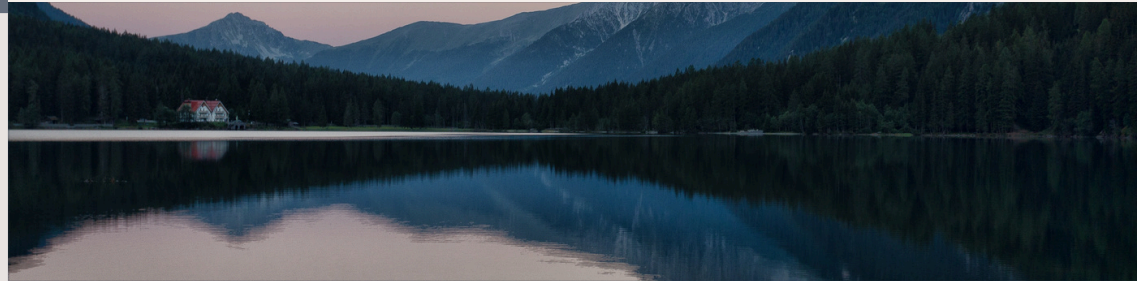
וְתֵן בְּלִבֵּנוּ לְהַבִּין וְלִשְׁכַּחַל, לְשָׁמוֹעַ, לְלַמּוֹד וְלִלְמַד

"Place in our hearts to understand and discern, to hear, to learn — and to teach."

To teach. We're not just asking Hashem to show us how sweet His Torah is. We're asking Him to help us bring it to the people around us who haven't tasted it yet. **That's the relationship. That's the responsibility.**

Shavuot is the reminder. Cherish it for yourself. Then turn around and share it.

"Cherish it for yourself. Then turn around and share it."



LET'S GET PRACTICAL

FIND A CHAVRUTA BEFORE SHAVUOT

Don't walk in alone. Set up someone to learn with — and prepare together for the night.

ASK THE PERSON YOU'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK

That rabbi. That friend. That cousin. Your father. Mussar, Halakha, Gemara, Chasidut — whatever pulls the two of you closer to Hashem.

START SMALL, BUT COMMIT

Five minutes counts. The hardest part isn't the learning — it's showing up. Pick something tiny and actually do it.

THE REAL QUESTION IS WHETHER WE ARE TRULY OPEN TO RECEIVING.

On Shavuot, we celebrate the giving of the Torah. But the Torah was not only given once, long ago at Har Sinai. In many ways, it is still being given. **The real question is not only whether the Torah was given, but whether we are truly open to receiving it.**

Before Am Yisrael stood at Har Sinai, they prepared themselves. They paused. They created space within themselves to receive something greater. Because receiving requires more than simply showing up. It requires openness. This teaches us something essential. **Many times, a person can hear truth, wisdom, advice, or inspiration, yet nothing truly enters.** Not because the message is missing, but because there is no room inside to receive it.

Sometimes we become so filled with pressure, distraction, ego, insecurity, or the need to control everything that we stop listening, not only to others, but even to ourselves. **Shavuot reminds us that growth begins with receptivity.**

Our Sages teach that the Torah was given on Har Sinai, a smaller mountain. And many ask: if humility was the goal, why wasn't the Torah given in the desert itself? **Perhaps the message is that humility does not mean becoming nothing.**

First, a person must become a mountain, strong, grounded, and aware of their own strengths. Only then can they learn to be truly humble. **Real humility is not weakness. It is the ability to remain open, teachable, and receptive even after becoming something.**

A person who constantly feels small cannot receive properly because they are consumed by insecurity. But a person who knows their value and still remains open to growth becomes a vessel for Torah.

And perhaps this is one of the deepest forms of freedom a person can experience: **to stop needing to prove, defend, or pretend and simply become open to truth.**

Because the Torah was not given to perfect people. It was given to people willing to stand honestly and say: "Teach me."

"Humility does not mean becoming nothing. It is the ability to remain open, teachable, and receptive even after becoming something."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

NOTICE WHAT CLOSES YOU OFF.

When advice, feedback, or truth feels uncomfortable, pause before rejecting it. Sometimes discomfort is not a threat, but an opportunity to grow.

MAKE ROOM TO RECEIVE.

A person cannot receive while constantly distracted, rushed, or emotionally closed. Even a few quiet moments can help you hear what your heart has been trying to tell you.

STAY TEACHABLE.

The moment a person feels they already know everything, growth begins to slow. The more open we remain, the more life, wisdom, Torah, and blessing we can receive.

Shavuot is not only the anniversary of receiving the Torah. It is a reminder that the more open we become, the more we are able to receive, from Torah, from life, from others, and from Hashem.

ISAAC JEMAL

Shavuot 5786

THIS WEEK'S NEWSLETTER

Is Dedicated

To those who need a refuah sheleimah.

To those looking for their shidduch.

To those married — for shalom bayit.

To parents — that they receive nachat from their children.

For peace of mind to all.

And for anyone in Klal Yisrael who sits down to learn Torah —

may they be filled with tremendous joy,

clarity in their learning,

and see tremendous success.

**May we be zocheh to greet
Moshiach quickly in our days.**