

A BOND UNLIKE ANY OTHER

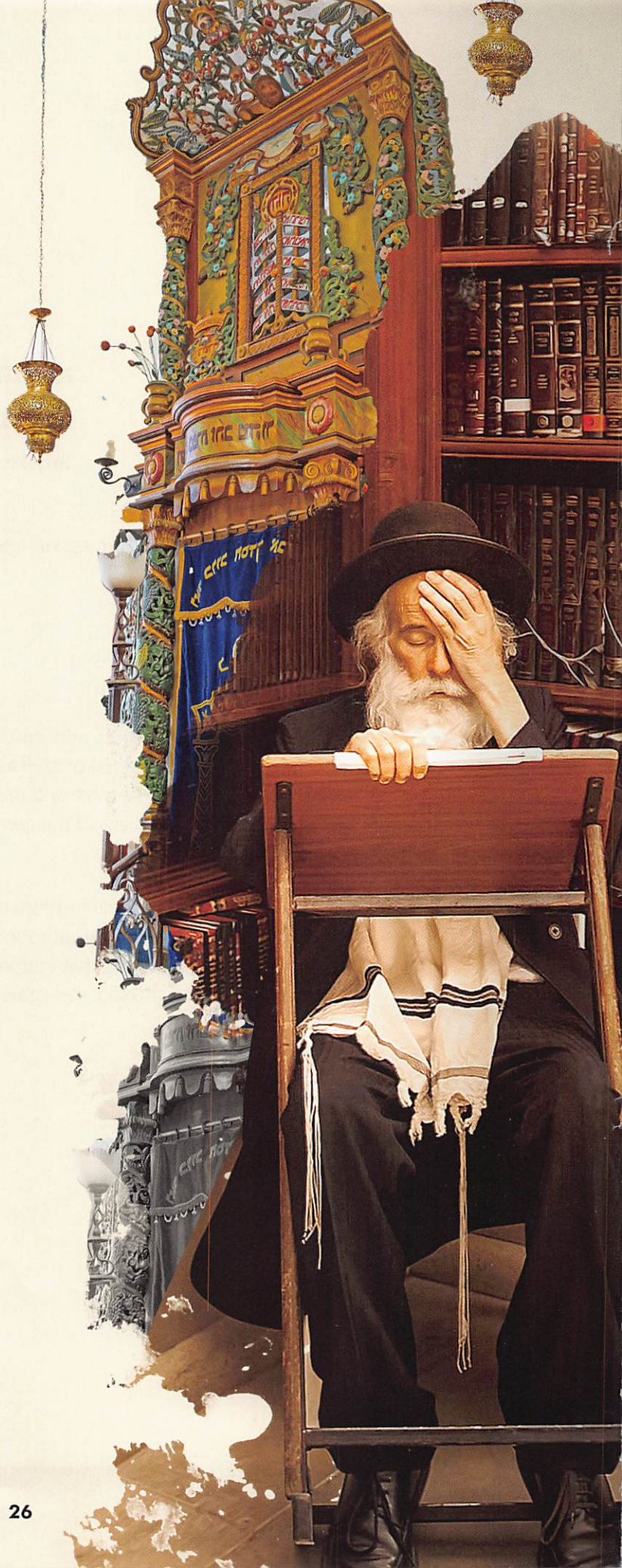
By Rabbi Aaron Lopiansky

“The Luchos were six tefachim in length. Two tefachim were — so to speak — in the hands of the One Who created the world by His word; two tefachim Moshe held in his hand; and two tefachim were between the two of them...”
(Shemos Rabbah 28:1).

If this were nothing more than a snapshot of the act of the giving of Torah, we would still need an explanation of such an enigmatic description. But this is a lot more than a snapshot of a fleeting moment in time. Rather, it is an eternal picture; for every time we make a blessing on Torah, we describe *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* as the *Nosen* [present tense] *haTorah* — the constant Giver of Torah. And Torah must always be studied in the spirit that prevailed at the moment it was given: *k'nesinasah*, with the same gravitas. This means that a person who has engaged in frivolous activity is excluded from studying Torah until he prepares himself to do so (see *Berachos* 21b).

The *Gemara* understands this to be evident in the *pesukim* themselves, as the obligation to teach and study Torah is immediately followed by the *passuk* of “Remember and never forget the day that you stood before Hashem at Sinai.” Every session of Torah study starts with a moment of “Sinai.”

Each time we sit down to learn, “*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is holding onto two *tefachim*, we are holding on to two *tefachim*, and two *tefachim* are in the middle.” Understanding this mystery is vital for us each time we sit down to study Torah.



This obligation of *k'nesinasah* is a paradox. On one hand, we are obligated to be in fear and trepidation as we were at Sinai (*Brachos*, *ibid.*). On the other hand, the mood pervading the giving of the Torah is described as "steeped in joy" (*Yerushalmi, Chagigah* 9b). So what is the mood, trepidation or joy?

The Maharal (*Tiferes Yisrael* 48) explains what the *Midrash* means when describing Hashem and Moshe each "holding on to the *Luchos*." Torah, the revelation of Divine wisdom, carries within itself three types of that Divine wisdom. There are *chukim* — the type of wisdom understood by Hashem only. There are *mishpatim*, intuitively understood by man. And finally there's *eidus*, which is somewhat comprehended by man, but not fully. Therefore, the giving of the Torah includes an element that will always remain with Hashem, an element that can become totally ours, and, finally, a shared component.

The Maharal then adds a halachic parallel. When two people are holding on to an object, both claiming it as theirs, the *halachah* is as follows: The part held by each one is completely his, while the part in the middle is jointly owned (*Bava Metzia* 7a).

While the Maharal demonstrates this thesis with specific areas of Torah, we can extend the idea to every element of Torah within itself as well. Every point studied in Torah includes a Divine axiom. By definition, an axiom is an external given. And every aspect of Torah includes the human mind processing that axiom. Sometimes we succeed in fully processing it and it becomes fully "our own." Sometimes we can chart its parameters and boundaries, but the axiom itself is a mystery to us.

This means that Torah is an actual bond, "a meeting of minds" between the human and the Divine. In every word of Torah over which a person struggles, there is a purely Divine element, an element of human comprehension of the most profound kind, and a framework for the bonding of the two, as it were!

The *Tanya* (1:5) describes the unique bonding process of Torah as "wisdom that is understood and grasped by the human mind, is 'enveloped' by the mind, and in turn the mind is 'enveloped' by that wisdom..."

"This creates an extraordinary union," the *Tanya* continues, "one that exists nowhere else and does not exist at all in the physical realm: to become one, bound togeth-

er in every way. This is the extraordinary superiority of Torah — its knowledge and comprehension — over all other *mitzvos*..."

Perhaps this explains the two emotions associated with Torah: trepidation and joy. When the person becomes aware that he is grasping "the Divine," trepidation is surely the emotion that ought to be evoked. Then, when his mind comprehends, surely joy wells up.

Thus, the moment of "giving the Torah" is an eternal moment. It happens every time a person studies a word of Torah. Hashem is holding onto that word as the "source" of Torah; the person is holding onto it with his mind, which is busy processing it and internalizing it; and within that framework of each one "holding one end," a new framework is created in which we "share" in wisdom and become one.

Each and every time you sit down in yeshivah or at home to open a *sefer* and learn, remember that you are not about to do something pedestrian. Instead, you are about to embark on the greatest pursuit of all, and receive the greatest gift of all. Because every time a Jew opens a *sefer* to learn, there is a *nesinas haTorah*. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is holding onto His part, we are holding on with our minds, and in between a common bond is created! ■



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