

# AHA!

by Rabbi Label Lam

*And they said, "Everything HASHEM says, we will do and we will hear!" (Shemos 24:7)*

The classic question is asked, "How can one do before hearing?" There are many approaches to decoding this unanimous declaration made by the Jewish Nation prior to receiving the Torah. Let's try one!

One Friday evening as the Shabbos meal began, the Kotzker Rebbe said, "The world is filled with wise and learned men, researchers and philosophers, who spend their time pondering and philosophizing about the verity of G- d's existence and function. How much can they really come to grasp? How much can they truly understand? No more than the limits of their own intelligence.

The people of Israel, however, were given tools- the Mitzvos- with which they could reach far beyond their own limitations. This is the whole truth in the meaning of the words: 'We shall do and we shall hear!' If we have tools with which to act, then we will be able to hear, to understand, to attain anything, even in the highest and loftiest realms beyond our normal and mortal capabilities."

A man sits down in a restaurant and orders a full seven course meal. The waiter delivers a piping hot bowl of soup. The customer requests that the waiter should taste the soup. The waiter begs forgiveness and offers to reheat the soup but the man insists that he just taste the soup. The waiter offers to not charge him for the soup if he is displeased but the man persistently demands that he just taste the soup. After a few more exchanges the waiter agrees, "OK I'll taste the soup! Hey, where's the spoon?" To which the customer declares, "Aha!"

One can analyze for decades the chemical component of chicken soup; the carrots, celery, onion etc. and write a scientific expose' on its nutritional and health benefits. However, nothing will ever substitute or inform better than a single taste on a Friday night. Aha!

One can study the laws of Shabbos and read a thousand doctoral theses on the subject, interview subjects and still never know what it's really about without having first tasted a Shabbos itself. It is very much like a blind person learning about colors. By opening one window of experience manifold vistas of understanding become accessible.

The Talmud tells us that the Caesar asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania, "Why do the cooked foods of Shabbos give off such a fragrant smell?" He answered him, "We have a special spice called "Shabbos" we put into the food that gives off a fragrant smell." The Caesar demanded, "Give us

some!" Rabbi Yehoshua replied to him, "Anyone who keeps the Shabbos it will help. It will not work for anyone who does not keep the Shabbos!" (Shabbos 116A)

I think we can all easily appreciate what a difference it makes to have the correct tools? The total number of stars visible to the naked eye under ideal conditions is not more than 2,500. Now with some visual assistance from sensitive telescopes it is estimated that 70 thousand million- million - million stars come into view.

Shabbos, the Talmud tells us, it is 1/60th of the Next World. Any number no matter how large is infinitely shy of infinity, and 1/60th of eternity is still a huge helping of soup. Only by keeping Shabbos can one ever hope to understand what that really means- Aha! Text Copyright &copy 2005 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.