

# COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

*by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch*

## **SHMINI ATZERES/SIMCHAS TORAH and Parshas Vezos Haberacha - 22 Tishrei 5764**

### **The First Day of the Rest of the Year**

**by Rabbi Moshe Peretz Gilden**

Simchas Torah's celebration of the completion of the Torah involves reading the final portion from the Torah, VeZos HaBeracha, and reading the account of the seven days of creation at the start of Beraishis (Genesis). The Torah's conclusion is primarily the blessings that Moshe gave the Nation of Israel immediately before his death. But while the Parsha starts, "And this is the blessing that Moshe, the man of G-d, bestowed upon the children of Israel before his death." (Devarim/Deuteronomy 33:1), before delivering the actual blessings, he first reviewed the giving of the Torah by G-d on Mount Sinai. Why is this interjection necessary?

Nachalas Dovid (Rabbi Dovid of Tevil, primary disciple of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, disciple of the famed Rabbi Eliyahu, Gaon of Vilna) explains that blessings cannot simply enter our lives. Rather, blessings are requests for additional good to be added to the good one already has. The prior blessing acts as a vessel to receive and carry the additional blessing. Moshe wanted to bless the Children of Israel, but he first needed to awaken their cognizance of their existing blessings. Thus, Moshe started with our receiving the Torah, utilizing the Jewish nation's greatest blessing as the receiving agent for his blessings.

We all know we are supposed to "Count your blessings," but we do not usually consider that a person who only sees the negative parts of his life he has no vessel to carry any blessings that he may deserve. However, one who is constantly attuned to all the good that he does have can receive even more, for now he has a "vessel" in which to carry them.

The holiday of Simchas Torah is a day to rejoice in the completion of the Torah. But it is also the completion of the cycle of holidays with which the Jewish year starts. We now appreciate the gifts G-d has given us: a renewed relationship with Him from Rosh Hashanah, a new lease on life and all

of life's accoutrements on Yom Kippur, and a new sense of trust in our Heavenly Father from Succos. Today we celebrate our manifold blessings: we savor the blessings of these past three weeks, and with them we ready ourselves to receive the bounty G-d has in store for us for the coming year.

Have a Good Shabbos and a Good Yom Tov!

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