



Published on www.bilvavi.net

[Home](#) > 48 Ways - 010 Serving The Wise

48 Ways - 010 Serving The Wise

The Importance of Shimush Chachamim \ Serving The Wise

The next of the 48 qualities listed in the Mishnah is “*shimush chachamim*” (serving the wise). What is *shimush chachamim* (serving the wise)?

The Gemara^[1] [1] states that one is allowed to interrupt his Torah learning to greet a bride or escort the dead; *Tosafos* there states that even though learning Torah may be interrupted for such events, the *mitzvah* of “*shimush chachamim*” (serving one’s teacher) may never be interrupted.

Why indeed is “*shimush chachamim*” so important? Even if it is so important to acquire the Torah, how can it be more important than learning Torah itself?

To know the answer to this, we will need to think about what *shimush chachamim* is - and what its purpose is.

Elevating Creation

The *Mesillas Yescharim* writes that the more perfect a person makes himself, the more he elevates Creation; we see this from Yaakov Avinu, when each of the twelve stones wanted him to put his head on them.

This shows us what “*shimush chachamim*” is; it is because we are supposed to elevate Creation, and it is the *chachamim* (wise Torah sages) who elevate Creation. Thus, we must cling to *chachamim*.

Why must we learn from wise people? Don’t Chazal say that we must learn from all people, not just wise people? The simple answer to this is that wise people can teach us more than simple people, and therefore we must also seek to learn from wise people.

But the deeper answer is because after the Torah was given through Moshe Rabbeinu, we understand Torah only through the *chachamim* who teach it to us.

Shimush Chachamim - Clinging To Perfection

We are supposed to elevate Creation, as we quoted before from the *Mesillas Yescharim*. The reason why we are supposed to elevate Creation is part of how we become close to Hashem. Creation actually represents man; the Torah as well represents a picture of the perfect kind of man that can exist.

The *halachah* is that an animal of a *Kohen* is allowed to eat *terumah* (sanctified portions that may not be eaten by a non-*Kohen*). The depth of this is that all of Creation is really a part of man, and since the *Kohen* owns the animal, his holiness spreads to the animal, and thus the animal is allowed to eat *terumah*.

All of Creation is really a representation of man in his most perfect form ("*tzuras adam hashaleim*"). Before the first sin of Adam, man was perfect. After the sin, we sank to an animalistic level. When we stood at Har Sinai, we once again returned to the apex of human perfection. As we received the Torah in its pure holiness at Sinai, we were utterly perfect.

What is a 'perfect' person – an *adam hashaleim*? A superficial person thinks that it is to be physically perfect, to have no blemishes on the body. But the true definition of a "perfect" person is someone who reaches human perfection, *shleimus*.

"*Shimush chachamim*" is essentially about connecting ourselves to those people who are more perfected than us – the wise Torah scholars. The more perfected a person is, the closer he is to the level we were at the beginning of Creation and the level of when we stood at Sinai. For this reason, we must serve the wise, because in that way, we connect ourselves to perfection – and then we can receive perfection from them.

Therefore, we need specifically "*shimush chachamim*", even though we are supposed to learn from all people as well. Why? It is because it is not enough to learn from all people in the general sense. We need to also learn from those who are more perfected, because only those who are perfected will impart to us the perfection that we need to acquire.

The Point of 'Perfection' Within Each Of Us

At Har Sinai, we had no *yetzer hora* (evil inclination); it left us. We were at a perfect level; at the perfect level, man doesn't even have a *yetzer hora*, because he doesn't even have a thought to commit any evil. He is utterly connected to the Creator that all he wants is to do the will of the Creator. He has no other possibilities. This is the perfected level of man, "*adam hashaleim*" – and we were at this level as we stood at Har Sinai and received the Torah.

We all said "*Naaseh V'Nishma*" ("We will do, and we will hear") at Har Sinai, because all we wanted to do was listen to Hashem's will. We had no other desire whatsoever. We were at perfection, and therefore, we had no other *retzonos* (desires) in us other than do the *ratzon* of Hashem.

But after we stood by Har Sinai, we once again fell from this level with the sin of the Golden Calf, and the *Luchos* (Tablets) were broken. When the first *Luchos* were broken, it ended the kind of perfected level we were at.

However, every year when it comes Shavuot again, the special time of standing at Har Sinai returns, and we have the chance to once again access the great spiritual level that is inherent in this time [to a certain extent].

Before the sin with the Golden Calf, there was a whole different kind of Torah – it was a Torah of before sin. After the sin, the second pair of *Luchos* we received was a Torah that came after the sin, and it was not as perfected as the Torah contained in the original set of *Luchos*.

We must prepare ourselves to receive the Torah of the first pair of *Luchos*, in which there was no sin yet. How do we return to the level of the first set of *Luchos*? How do we prepare ourselves to receive it?

Every person contains within himself depth upon depth. The *Maharal* writes that sin by a Jew is never part of his essence; it is rather *mikreh*, “happenstance”, and it only exists on the outer layer of man. Even if a Jew falls to a sin, the sin never becomes a part of his actual soul. We all have in us an inner point, an inner layer of our heart, which is never affected by evil; the *Sfas Emes* writes about this concept at length.

Our *avodah* to prepare for Shavuos is essentially about revealing our innermost point of the soul, the point in us which contains no evil. This is how we can receive the original Torah of the first set of *Luchos*, which was a Torah given in a world where there was no sin yet.

Believe In The Purity of Your Soul

The way we access this point is by having the *emunah* (belief) that we are always intrinsically pure. This is not intellectual knowledge, but rather, something we can firmly establish in our soul; let the knowledge about this matter penetrate into your heart.

Use your *emunah* and believe that there is place in your heart which is totally pure, and that this place in your heart can allow you to receive the perfected level of Torah that existed before any sin.

The Gemara says that “On Shabbos, everyone agrees that the Torah was given.” The depth of this matter is that Shabbos represents the innermost point of our soul which is unaffected by any evil or sin, and thus, the Torah was given on “*Shabbos*” – it is accessed by the innermost place in our soul which is unaffected by sin.

We must realize that there is a G-dly spark in us, and that this G-dly spark within each of us enables us to return to the level of Har Sinai and receive even the first set of *Luchos*, which was the perfected level of Torah.

Preparing For Shavuos

The 49 days of the *Omer* represent the “49 Gates of Understanding”. The 50th Gate of Understanding, the *Ramban* writes, is described as “knowing of G-dliness.”

The 50th Gate of Understanding is above all the other 49, and it is the innermost point of our soul – to only know of Hashem. It is there that we can receive the perfect level of Torah, the Torah that was given in a world which did not sin yet.

We can use this innermost point in our soul – otherwise known as the “50th Gate of Understanding” within us – to prepare for the receiving of the Torah that comes each year on Shavuos.

The way we prepare for the Torah is by realizing that we have a G-dly spark in us; according to the amount that we recognize this, that is how much Torah will be revealed to us.

Each of us receives Torah “on our own level”; we are not all receiving the same exact level of Torah. And the way we can each receive Torah “on our own level” is by realizing that we have an inner, “G-dly spark” in us that is pure.

This is the inner *avodah* of preparing for Shavuos. After 49 days of counting the *Omer*, we reach the “50th day” – Shavuos. The first 49 days of the *Omer* represent the “49 Gates of *Binah* (Understanding), as is well-known; and Shavuos represents the “50th level of Understanding”. On the 50th day, Shavuos, we can come to the “50th Gate of Understanding”. This is the depth to why there is no more recitation of *Sefiras HaOmer* after 49 days – it is because the 50th day is on such a high level that it cannot be verbalized by the mouth at all.

May we merit to prepare our heart and purify it, so that we can properly receive the Torah, and to reveal the perfection of Torah in our souls – the kind of Torah that is “one” with Hashem and Yisrael.

[\[1\]](#) [2] Kesubos 17a

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/48-ways-010-serving-wise>

Links

[1] file:///D:/DATA-

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/NEW_WEBSITE/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/need%20to%20place%20on%20site/48%20Ways/48%20Ways%20of%20Torah%20010.%20Serving%20The%20Wise.%20V2.docx#_ftn1

[2] file:///D:/DATA-

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/NEW_WEBSITE/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/need%20to%20place%20on%20site/48%20Ways/48%20Ways%20of%20Torah%20010.%20Serving%20The%20Wise.%20V2.docx#_ftnref1