

## *Haya Mehalech Bamidbar*

### Shabbat in Outer Space

#### Astronaut Ilan Ramon's question:

*"When Should I Observe Shabbat on the Columbia?"*

#### Shabbat 69b

Colonel Ilan Ramon, of blessed memory, posed the following halachic question to Rabbi Tzvi Konikov, the rabbi of Cape Canaveral: When should I observe Shabbat while I am on the space shuttle Columbia?

The forty-eight year old Ramon was a veteran Israeli fighter pilot before he was picked to be Israel's first astronaut. Ramon, whose father was a German refugee who fought in Israel's War of Independence, and whose mother was an Auschwitz survivor, brought on board the shuttle a miniature Torah scroll that had made its way to Israel from the Nazi concentration camps. Since Ilan Ramon considered himself to be representing the Jewish people and Israel, he asked NASA to provide him with kosher food during the flight, and arranged to keep the Sabbath while in orbit.

Though the question of when to keep Shabbat in space had been the topic of theoretical discourse since the 1960s, Ilan Ramon was the first Jew in world history to ask it *halachah lema'aseh*, with an eye to applying it as practical halachah.

The Space Coast, Florida rabbi posed the question to some leading halachic authorities, including Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Halperin, the director of Jerusalem's Institute for Science and Halacha. Rabbi Halperin penned a responsum, and eventually published a pamphlet entitled, "Im Esak Shamayim (If I Fly up to Heaven [... There You Are])," on how to keep Jewish law in space. This *Thinking Gemara* shiur is based on Rabbi Halperin's presentation. He claims that we can learn about this issue from the halachic literature about keeping Shabbat in areas near the Arctic Circle, where the sun does not set for months. That discussion, in turn, draws from a passage in the Talmud about a desert wanderer who forgets which day Shabbat is.

Here are some of the key questions this shiur will deal with:

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**KEY  
QUESTIONS**

- Is a Jew in space obligated to observe the mitzvot?
- If he is, when should he keep the Shabbat?
- When does a Jew observe Shabbat in areas where the sun does not set for months?
- What should someone do if he or she is detached from civilization and forgets when Shabbat is?
- What do these extreme situations teach us earth-bound Jews living in places with conventional latitudes?

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**CLASS  
OUTLINE****Section I. Observing Shabbat in Space****Section II. Keeping Shabbat near the Arctic Circle****Section III. Observing Shabbat when Lost in the Desert****Section IV. Lessons for Jews in Normal Places**

**Note:** This shiur is not intended as a source of practical *halachic* (legal) rulings. For matters of halachah, please consult a qualified *posek* (rabbi).

(א) מן קי"ל כרצא עד סוף הענין הוצא צא"ו בשם רבינו.

אלה בעיני שגננו בלא  
שבה, ודחה קרבן לאה  
דבאי וזמר לעולם מינה  
במקום כרת עומדת, ובשם  
בשאר צמות אלא שגנ  
בכרת אע"פ שהיוד בלא  
לוי יוחנן מביא קרבן,  
הכי נמי בעינן תרומה  
א"ש שגנ בעיניה אע"פ  
שהיוד בלאו מוסף חומש,  
שחושב במקום קרבן הוא,  
וקמיניה כרסא. וקמיניה  
נמי דאמי אביי שבתות  
ביטוי דשגנו בלאו  
שבה, אבל שגנתי קרבן לא  
שבה מנהג, לרובן אסימיה

## SECTION I Observing Shabbat in Space

### Case 1. Shabbat on the Space Shuttle Columbia

*The first Israeli astronaut to fly on a space mission – NASA Microgravity Research Mission STS-107, on the Space Shuttle Columbia – was also the first Jew ever to ask a rabbi the following question of practical halachah: “When should I keep Shabbat on a spaceship?” What follows is the background of that she’elah – halachic query – in that rabbi’s own words.*

**1. From “Shabbat in Space: The Legacy of Ilan Ramon,” by Zvi Konikov, available online at [chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/632169/jewish/Shabbat-in-Space.htm](http://chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/632169/jewish/Shabbat-in-Space.htm)**

*I first met Ilan Ramon at an almost clandestine gathering in my hometown of Satellite Beach, Florida. NASA personnel and Israeli Security teams had taken extra security precautions to ensure that nothing would go wrong. Even the location had been kept secret until the very day of the meeting.*

*Ilan addressed the assembled Jewish community leaders. After his speech he approached me. He greeted me with a warm hug and presented me with his request: “Rabbi, I need to talk with you. I want to keep Shabbat while in space, but no one can tell me how to do it!”*

*And that was how our friendship began.*

*Ilan was a very special Jew. He often expressed the thought that he saw his trip to space as a mission. “I will represent the entire Jewish people,” he would say. As a representative of the Jewish people, he wanted to do everything in the very best possible way Jewishly; including keeping Shabbat and eating only kosher food.*

*“Kosher food?” the NASA staff shrugged their shoulders at the Jewish astronaut’s strange request. Ilan was not one to give up easily, and a solution was found. NASA contacted My Own Meals, a company in Deerfield, Ill. that sells certified kosher food in “thermo-stabilized” sealed pouches for campers.*

*Shabbat also presented quite a challenge. A day/night cycle in orbit is 90 minutes long, which means that a week lasts a mere ten and a half hours from start to finish! Would Ilan need to keep Shabbat every half day?!*

*At his behest I brought his case before some of the world’s leading rabbinic authorities...*

Here are selections from the text of the letter in which Rabbi Konikov poses Ilan Ramon’s halachic question to a number of *poskim* (halachic authorities), including Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Halperin, whose response forms the backbone of this shiur.

## 2. Letter published in Or Yisrael, Tishrei 5763

To the honorable and scholarly Rabbi ... may he be blessed with long years,  
Peace and blessing,  
To follow up today's telephone conversation, I am writing with regards to my meeting with Mr. Ilan Ramon, who is now part of the team on spaceship STS-107, that, according to schedule, is to fly on the 27th of June, 2002. (Note: the Columbia actually ended up taking off on January 16, 2003.)

I was very moved and impressed by Mr. Ramon, and specifically by his deep love for Judaism and the Land of Israel. During my conversation with him, he asked me, in my capacity as the official rabbi of the NASA district, the following question: Given that he must be on the spaceship on Shabbat, what should he do to keep Shabbat, and which time zone should he follow, to know when Shabbat begins and ends ...

As you know, this question has already been dealt with extensively by a number of halachic authorities, but, in my humble opinion, this is the first time that it is being raised, not only as a theoretical possibility, but for practical application. Therefore, I feel the need to consult with an expert on the matter before making any practical judgment.

Therefore, I turn to you, since it is well known that you are fluent in much of the literature on the topic, and have already dealt with the issue in the past ...

I will greatly appreciate if you can assist me on this matter as soon as possible.

Thanks in advance,  
Chaim Tzvi Konikov

כבוד הרב הגאון ... שליט"א  
שלום וברכה,  
בהמשך לשיחתנו הטלפונית  
מהיום, הנני בזה לכתוב בענין  
הפגישה שלי עם מר אילן רמון,  
שכרגע הוא משתתף לחללית  
STS-107 שליפי התכנית צריכה  
לטוס לחלל ב-27 ליוני 2002.

מאד התפעלתי והתרשמתי מפר  
רמון ובפרט מאהבתו וחבתו  
ליהדות וארץ ישראל. הוא שוחח  
אתי והעלה את השאלה הבאה  
בתור הרב הרשמי של תחום  
NASA ושאלתו היא: בנוגע לזה  
שעלי לחיות על החללית בשבת,  
מה עלי לעשות כדי לשמור את  
השבת ולפי איזה שעון עלי ללכת  
כדי לדעת זמני כניסת ויציאת  
השבת....

כידוע לה, שאלה זאת כבר  
נידונה באריכות אצל כמה וכמה  
פוסקים, אלא שזה לפי עניות  
דעתי הפעם הראשונה ששאלה  
כזו נשאלת לא רק באופן תאורטי  
אלא למעשה בפועל, ולכן מרגיש  
הנני צריך שלפני שאחליט על  
פסק הלכה למעשה בפועל,  
שעלי להתיעץ עם ממונה בנדון  
כיון שנוגע למעשה בפועל.

ולכן הנני פונה אליו, כיון שכידוע  
הנך בקי בכמה וכמה תשובות  
בנדון, וכבר התעסקת בעבר  
בנושא הזה....

אודה לה מאוד אם תוכל להיות  
לי לעזר בהנזכר לעיל ובהקדם  
האפשרי.

בתודה מראש,  
חיים צבי קניקוב



### What do you think?

**When** should an Israeli, flying on an American space mission that takes off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, keep Shabbat? The satellite orbits the earth every one-and-a-half hours, so the astronauts on board see a sunrise every one-and-a-half hours. Does that affect when he should keep Shabbat? What are the Shabbat options open to the astronaut in space, and which makes the most sense to you?

### 3. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kasher, “The Man on the Moon,” Ch. 5, “Keeping the Torah on the Moon,” p. 53

I saw that ... a certain rabbi [wrote] that “One is not obligated in mitzvot while on the moon, even in a closed earth colony,” and, “There is no place for the Torah on the moon even for people.” ... I was shocked to read such a decision with regards to a question that touches on keeping the entire Torah.

In my humble opinion, it is crystal clear that the *halachic* parameters are such that the obligation to keep the Torah’s mitzvot rests on everyone, and that every Jew must keep the Torah wherever he lives: up on the moon, or in the water underground, at the North Pole or the South Pole where a large part of the year it remains light or dark, or in an airplane. As long as one is alive and able to fulfill the mitzvot of the Torah, he is obligated to keep them and is forbidden to transgress any prohibition. If it is beyond his control, the merciful God absolves him. But when it is not clearly beyond his control, he has to keep them. There is no place where a Jew could become absolved from the Torah’s mitzvot.

רָאִיתִי לְהֵרֵב ... [שֶׁכָּתַב] “אֵין לְחַיֵּב עַל הַיָּרֵחַ בְּמִצְוֹת, גַּם בְּתוֹךְ שְׁלֵחָה סָגוּרָה שֶׁל הָאֲדָמָה, ... וְ”אֵין לָנוּ מָקוֹם לַתּוֹרָה עַל הַיָּרֵחַ גַּם בְּשִׁבִּיל בְּנֵי הָאָדָם.” ... נִשְׁתַּמְּמִתִּי לְקִרְוֹא הַחֲלָטָה כּוֹז בְּשֵׂאֵלָה הַנוֹגַע לְקִיּוֹם כָּל הַתּוֹרָה בְּלָה.

לְפִי עֲנִיית דַּעְתִּי בְּרוּר בְּלִי שׁוּם סִפֵּק שֶׁהַהִגָּדָה שֶׁל הַהֲלָכָה הִיא, שֶׁהַחַיִּיב לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה הִיא חֹבֶת גִּבְרָא, וְכָל בֶּרֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל חַיִּיב לְקַיֵּם הַתּוֹרָה בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁהוּא חֵי: בְּשָׂמַיִם מִמַּעַל עַל הַלְּבָנָה אוֹ בְּמַיִם מִתַּחַת לְאָרֶץ בְּצִיר הַצִּפּוֹנִי אוֹ בְּצִיר הַדְּרוֹמִי שֶׁבּוֹ חֶלֶק מִהַשָּׁנָה כָּלוּ אוֹר אוֹ חוֹשֶׁךְ, אוֹ בְּאֵוִירוֹ. כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהוּא חֵי וְאֶפְשָׁר לוֹ לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה חַיִּיב לְקַיֵּם וְאִסּוּר לַעֲבֹר עַל שׁוּם אִיסּוּר, וְאִם אָנוּס הוּא רַחֲמָנָא פְּטִירָה, אֲבָל עַל מַה שֶׁהוּא אֵינוֹ אָנוּס בְּרוּר שֶׁהוּא חַיִּיב לְקַיֵּם, וְאֵין שׁוּם מָקוֹם כָּלֵל לֹאמֹר שֵׁישׁ לְבֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶפְשָׁרוֹת לְהַפְטִיר מִמִּצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה ...

### 4. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Halperin, Im Esak Shamayim, p. 22 – Proposal One

We can indeed consider each time the shuttle orbits the globe (90 minutes) as one complete day, including both a nighttime and a daytime period. Based on this, there will end up being sixteen complete “days” within a twenty-four hour period. This would follow the biblical

... נִתֵּן אָבִן לְהַתְיַחֵס לְכָל פַּעַם שֶׁהַמַּעֲבֹרֶת מְקִיפָה אֶת כְּדוּר הָאָרֶץ כִּימָמָה שְׁלֵמָה, הַפּוֹלָלֶת בְּתוֹכָהּ לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם גַּם יַחַד. לְאֹרֶז זֶה נִמְצָא שֶׁבְּמִשְׁךָ 24 שָׁעוֹת (הַמְהוּוֹת יָמָמָה שְׁלֵמָה עַל פְּנֵי כְּדוּר הָאָרֶץ) עוֹבְרוֹת עָלָיו שֵׁשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִמוֹת שְׁלֵמוֹת, שֶׁל לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם כָּל אַחַת,

verse (Bereishit [Genesis] 1:5), "It was evening and it was morning, one day," that teaches us that a nighttime period followed by a daytime makes up one complete "day."

In line with this approach the astronaut would, apparently, have to read the Shema thirty-two times in a twenty-four hour period...he would have to put on tefillin once every hour and a half...pray forty-eight prayers (every twenty-four hour period)...According to this calculation he will have at least two Shabbatot every twenty-four hour period, each one an hour and a half long...

ולפי הכתוב בבְּרִייתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם (בְּרֵאשִׁית א:ה), "וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד," הַמּוֹרָה לָנוּ שֶׁהַלֵּילָה וְהַיּוֹם שֶׁלֹּאֲחֲרָיו מִהַיּוֹם יַחֲדָיו יַחֲדָה אַחַת שֶׁל יוֹם שָׁלֵם (מִמָּוָה).

בְּהִתְאֵם לְקִבְעָה זוֹ יִהְיֶה עָלָיו לְכַאוֹרָה לְקְרוֹא קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע 23 פְּעָם בְּמִשְׁךָ 24 שָׁעוֹת ... לְהַנִּיחַ תְּפִלִּין פְּעָם אַחַת כָּל שָׁעָה וַחֲצִי ... לְהַתְפַּלֵּל 48 תְּפִלוֹת ... לְפִי חֲשֹׁבוֹן זֶה יִהְיֶה לוֹ בְּמִשְׁךָ 24 שָׁעוֹת לְפָחוֹת שְׁתֵּי שַׁבָּתוֹת, בְּנוֹת שָׁעָה וַחֲצִי כָּל אַחַת ...

## 5. Ibid., p. 26 – Proposal Two

There is another possibility...that the astronaut should always act in accordance with the time of the place that he is passing over. This applies both to day and night, to the date, and to the count of the days of the week, month, and year.

However, this possibility is also not very sensible, for according to this a strange possibility becomes possible – that for a few moments it will be Shabbat for him, and immediately afterwards Shabbat will go out. A little while later it will be Shabbat for him again, and this will continue. Similarly, it is possible, according to this possibility, that at a certain point he is obligated to say the morning Shema, and right after he begins the time for Shema will end (the time for the morning Shema on earth is only the first three hours of the day, and the space shuttle is circling the entire earth every one-and-a-half hours!). According to this approach other similar strange and blatantly illogical situations like these are likely to arise.

קִיַּמַת אֲפִשְׁרוֹת נּוֹסֶפֶת ... כִּי עָלָיו לְהוֹג בְּכָל עֵת כְּפִי הַזְּמַן שֶׁל הַמָּקוֹם שֶׁהוּא חוֹלֵף מֵעָלָיו, הֵן לְגַבִּי הַיּוֹם וְהַלֵּילָה, וְהֵן לְגַבִּי הַחֹדֶשׁ וּמִנְיַן יְמֵי הַשָּׁבוּעַ, הַחֹדֶשׁ, וְהַשָּׁנָה.

אֲדָּה גַם אֲפִשְׁרוֹת זוֹ אֵינָה סְבִירָה כָּל כּוֹ, שֶׁכֵּן לְפִיָּה יִתְכַּן מִצָּב מוֹדָר, שֶׁדְּקוֹת סְפִירוֹת יִהְיֶה אֲצִלוֹ שַׁבָּת, וּמִיָּד לְאַחַר מִכֵּן כְּבָר תֵּצֵא שַׁבָּת, וְלְאַחַר זְמַן מָה שׁוֹב יִהְיֶה אֲצִלוֹ שַׁבָּת, וְחוֹזֵר חֲלִילָה. כִּיּוֹצֵא כֵּזֶה יִתְכַּן לְפִי אֲפִשְׁרוֹת זוֹ שֶׁבְּרִגַע מְסוּיִים הוּא מִתְחַיֵּב בְּקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית, וּבְעוֹד שֶׁהוּא מִתְחִיל לְקְרוֹא קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע כְּבָר חֲלָף עֶבֶר לוֹ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, וְעוֹד מִצָּבִים שׁוֹנִים נּוֹסְפִים, שֶׁהֵם בְּלִתֵּי סְבִירִים וּבְלִתֵּי הִגִּיוֹנִים בְּעִלְל, כִּיּוֹצֵא בְּאֵלוֹ.

## 6. Ibid., p. 20 – Proposal Three

It is possible to determine that a complete day for him will finish after twenty-four hours pass, twelve of them night, and twelve of them day –totally ignoring what is going on outside the space shuttle, whether it is orbiting above an area of the earth that is in daylight or one that is covered with the darkness of night.

If we take this approach, he would have to treat the first twelve hours of the day as night, with all the mitzvot and obligations that go along with it, and the twelve hours that follow as daytime, with all the mitzvot and obligations that follow. He will then apply this calculation to counting the days that pass and to keeping all the rules and mitzvot of the Torah, whether they are leniencies or stringencies.

... נתן לקבוע שיממה שלימה לגביו  
הוא לאחר שחולפות 24 שעות,  
כשמתוכן 12 שעות הן לילה ו-12  
שעות הן יום, מבלי להתחסם כלל  
לסביבה בה נמצאת המעבורת, אם  
היא נמצאת בסביבה ששורר בה  
אור יום או חשכת לילה.

באם ננקט בן, יהיה עליו לנהוג ב-12  
שעות הראשונות של היממה כאלו  
הן לילה, על כל המצוות והחייבים  
הפרוכים בה, וב-12 שעות  
שלאחריהן כאלו הן יום, על כל  
המצוות והחייבים הפרוכים בה.  
בהתאם לחשבון זה יהיה עליו גם  
לחשב את מנין הימים העוברים  
עליו לגבי כל דיני ומצוות התורה,  
הן לקלא, הן לחומרא.

## 7. Bereishit 1:14-19

14. And God said, "Let there be luminaries in the expanse of the heavens, to separate between the day and the night, and they shall be for signs and for appointed seasons and for days and years.

15. And they shall be for luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to shed light upon the earth." And it was so.

16. And God made the two great luminaries: the great luminary to rule the day and the lesser luminary to rule the night, and the stars.

17. And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to shed light upon the earth.

18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate between the light and the darkness, and God saw that it was good.

19. And it was evening, and it was morning, a fourth day.

(יד) ויאמר אלהים יהי מארת  
ברקיע השמים להבדיל בין  
היום ובין הלילה והיו לאתת  
ולמועדים ולשנים:

(טו) והיו למאורת ברקיע  
השמים להאיר על הארץ ויהי  
כן:

(טז) ויעש אלהים את שני  
המארת הגדלים את המאור  
הגדל לממשלת היום ואת  
המאור הקטן לממשלת הלילה  
ואת הכוכבים:

(יז) ויתן אתם אלהים ברקיע  
השמים להאיר על הארץ:

(יח) ולמשל ביום ובלילה  
ולהבדיל בין האור ובין החשך  
וירא אלהים כי טוב:

(יט) ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום  
רביעי:



## 8. Rashi's Commentary on Bereishit 1:14

**And for appointed seasons:** This refers to the future, when the Israelites are destined to be commanded concerning the festivals, and they [the festivals] are reckoned from the first phase of the moon. — [from Gen. Rabbah 6:1].

**And for days:** The sun serves for half a day, and the moon for half of it, so that you have a full day.

**And years:** At the end of 365 days (other editions: and a quarter of a day) ...

ולמועדים: על שם העתיד,  
שעתידיים ישראל להצטוות  
על המועדות והם נמנים  
למולד הלבנה:  
ולמים: שמוש החמה חצי יום  
ושמוש הלבנה חצי יום,  
הרי יום  
שלם:  
ושנים: לסוף שלש מאות  
וששים וחמשה ימים ....

## 9. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Halperin, Im Esak Shamayim, p. 41

Therefore, everywhere on the globe – where the Creator set and imprinted the order of creation based on the paths of the Earth, sun, and moon – all of Torah's time-bound mitzvot are applicable... That is not true in space, where the laws of creation and the order of time are totally different, and are not bound at all by the system of day and night – and the time that flows from it – based on the path of the earth, sun, moon, and the relations between all of them.

לפיכך בכל מקום שהוא על פני כדור  
הארץ, אשר שם קבע וטבע הבורא  
את סדרי הבריאה המושגתים על  
מסלולי כדור הארץ והשמש והירח,  
נוהגות כל מצוות התורה התלויות  
בזמן... לא כן בחלל, שם חקי  
הבריאה וסדרי הזמנים הם שונים  
לחלוטין, ואינם כפופים כלל  
למערכת חקי היום והלילה וסדרי  
הזמנים הנגזרים ממנה המבססת על  
מסלולי כדור הארץ, השמש, הירח,  
והיחס שבין כולם.

## 10. Ibid., p. 42

If a man flies in a space shuttle and orbits the earth in a way that as a result of his orbit, the times of light and darkness frequently change for him, he has created for himself a personal time system, but this system is not within the rules of nature or the order of creation.

For the Torah's system of time is based solely on the order and paths of the luminaries in relation to man living on Earth. It is not determined by a new system of light and darkness that is a result of man's movement in relation to the heavenly bodies.

וגם אם משייט שם אדם במעבורת  
חלל ומקיף את כדור הארץ, באופן  
שבכל פעם משתנים אצלו זמני האור  
והחושך, הרי זו מערכת זמנים שהוא  
יצר לעצמו, כתוצאה ממסלול  
הקפתו, ואיננו מחקי טבע הבריאה  
וסדריה.

שכן סדרי הזמנים שקבעה התורה  
מששתתים אף ורק על סדרי ומסלולי  
המאורות ביחס לאדם הנמצא במקומו  
על פני כדור הארץ, ולא על סדרי  
מאורות חדשים שנוצרים כתוצאה  
מתנועת האדם במקביל למסלולי  
המאורות.

It therefore seems obvious that with regards to space...essentially, the mitzvot, laws, and obligations dependent on day and night, the week, month, and year are not applicable. For these mitzvot are only applicable to one living in a place that is following the laws of creation and the order of time on the globe – not to someone living with a totally different time system.

נראה, אפוא, כדבר פשוט, כי לגבי החלל ... מעקר הדין אינם נוהגים שם כל המצוות, הדינים, והחייבים, התלויים בזמני יום ולילה, שבוע, חודש, ושנה. כי המצוות הללו נתנו אך ורק למי שחי במקום המתנהג לפי חקי הבריאה וסדרי הזמנים התקפים על פני כדור הארץ ולא למי שחי בסדר זמנים שונה לחלוטין.

### 11. Rabbi Moshe Shternbuch, Teshuvot Vehanhagot, 5:84

It seems that since we have received the Torah with the times as they are in our world, someone who leaves this world absolves himself of the mitzvot that are dependent on time, such as Shabbat, the holidays or the daily Shema and prayers. But it is prohibited to absolve oneself of the Torah's obligations, for we are servants of the Holy One, blessed be He, and are obligated to keep His commandments.

ונראה שקבלנו את התורה עם הזמנים כפי שהם בעולמנו, ומי שייצא חוץ לעולם זה הפקיע עצמו ממצוות התלויות בזמן כמו שבת ורגלים או יום ולילה בק"ש ותפלה, ואסור להפקיע עצמו מחייבי התורה כיון שאנו עבדים להקדוש ברוך הוא לשמור מצוותיו

### 12. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Halperin, Im Esak Shamayim, p. 43

Nevertheless, it is very logical that on a rabbinic level, a person is obligated to fulfill these mitzvot, so that he should not lose consciousness of these mitzvot.

בכל זאת, מסתבר מאד, כי מוטל עליו לקיים את כל המצוות הללו מדרבנן, כדי שלא תשתכח ממנו תורת מצוות אלו.

## SECTION II Keeping Shabbat near the Arctic Circle

### Case 2. Shabbat in the Land of the Midnight Sun

*Dave and Brenda Goldfish, a newlywed couple with an itch to travel, decided on an offbeat vacation spot for July, 2014: Longyearbyen, Norway, the world's largest town closest to the North Pole. Their base was to be the Spitsbergen Hotel, and their trip was to include a snowmobile expedition, a dogsled ride, and...Shabbat in a city well north of the Arctic Circle where the sun does not set for more than four months. Longyearbyen, in a fjord off the Greenland Sea, is, at latitude 78° 13' N, whereas the Arctic Circle is at 66.56° N. The sun does not set in Longyearbyen from April 18th until August 23rd and they are set to be there on Shabbat July 4th and 5th! They asked their rabbi, Rabbi Tzefaniah Levi, when they should keep Shabbat during their vacation.*

*Before we hear from Rabbi Tzefaniah, think it over yourself – when do you think Shabbat should be kept when the sun never sets for four months? April 18th, when the period begins, falls out on a Shabbat, and then the sun does not set until August 23rd. If there were Jews in Longyearbyen, would they observe a 127-day Shabbat?*

### What do you think? What possible options can you imagine?

#### 13. Chagigah 12a

Rabbi Yehudah quoted Rav, as saying: Ten things were created on the first day. They are: Heaven and Earth, desolation and emptiness, light and darkness, spirit and water, the measure of day and the measure of night. Heaven and Earth [were created], as it is written (Bereishit 1:1), “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”; desolation and emptiness, as it is written (Bereishit 1:2), “And the earth was [full of] desolation and emptiness”; darkness, as it is written (Bereishit 1:2), “and there was darkness on the face of the deep”; light, as it is written (Bereishit 1:3), “And God said, ‘Let there be light’”; spirit and water, as it is written (Bereishit 1:2), “and the spirit of God hovered on the face of the waters”; the measure of day and the measure of night, as it is written (Bereishit 1:5), “And it was evening and it was morning, one day.”

וַאֲמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: עֲשָׂרָה דְּבָרִים נִבְרְאוּ בְּיוֹם רֵאשִׁון וְאֵלּוּ הֵן - שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, תְּהוֹ וְבְהוֹ, אוֹר וְחֹשֶׁךְ, רוּחַ וּמֵיִם, מִדַּת יוֹם וּמִדַּת לַיְלָה. שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: דְּכֵתִיב, (בְּרֵאשִׁית א:א) “בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ.” תְּהוֹ וְבְהוֹ: דְּכֵתִיב, (בְּרֵאשִׁית א:ב) “וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְּהוֹ וְבְהוֹ.” אוֹר וְחֹשֶׁךְ - חֹשֶׁךְ דְּכֵתִיב, (בְּרֵאשִׁית א:ב) “וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם.” אוֹר: דְּכֵתִיב, (בְּרֵאשִׁית א:א) “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים יְהִי אוֹר.” רוּחַ וּמֵיִם: דְּכֵתִיב, (בְּרֵאשִׁית א:ג) “וְרוּחַ אֱלֹקִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם.” מִדַּת יוֹם וּמִדַּת לַיְלָה: דְּכֵתִיב, (בְּרֵאשִׁית א:ה) “וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד.”

#### 14. Rashi, Commentary on Chagigah 12a

The measure of day and the measure of night –  
The two of them together form a twenty-four hour period.

מִדַּת יוֹם וּמִדַּת לַיְלָה - עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע שָׁעוֹת בֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם:

The daytime and nighttime periods, altogether twenty-four hours, existed even before the creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day. In most places in the world, we begin Shabbat before sunset, the halachic night sets in when the stars are visible following a sunset, and morning begins with the sun's light and is followed by sunrise itself. Although this pattern does not take place near the poles, the *midat yom valayla*, the raw twenty-four hour day, still exists.

### 15. Rabbi Chaim P. Beinish, Hazmanim Behalachah, p. 67

According to this, in a place and time outside of the dominion of the luminaries (before the fourth day of Creation), as mentioned in our discussion of the area near the earth's poles, the primordial division of the measure of day and the measure of night still stands. Day and night are determined by their original definition, two equal parts of a [twenty-four hour long] earthly orbit as [exists in other places] on the days of the vernal and autumnal equinoxes (the first days of spring and fall when the day and night are of equal length).

ולפי זה במקום ובזמן שלא  
קיימת ממשלת המאורות,  
וכמו בנדינו באזורי הקטבים,  
אזי החלוקה הראשונה של  
”מדת יום ולילה” במקומה  
עומדת, והיום והלילה נקבעים  
על פי קביעתם הראשונה,  
שהיא חלקים שווים ליום  
ולילה הבנויים על תנועת כדור  
הארץ על צדו, בימי ניסן  
ותשרי.

### 16. Rabbi Yaakov Emden, Mor Uketziah 344

We must examine how people that live in or travel to countries near the earth's poles [should keep Shabbat]. Because of their proximity to the pole, the day is so long (in the summer) that one “day” ends up being two months or more, and there is even a place where one “day” lasts half a year, and it is night the other half. At the pole itself there is no day and night at all; rather, all year long it is bein hashmashot (twilight), because there is no sunrise and sunset there, for the equator is their horizon. If so, how should they keep Shabbat there?

It seems to me that they should count there seven equal periods of twenty-four of our hours. They should calculate Shabbat based on when they arrived there [e.g. Tuesday], counting days by [twenty-four] hours, and observe Shabbat on the seventh day [of the week], similar to what we spoke of previously concerning someone in the desert (see Section III below).

צריך עיון איך ינהגו היושבים או  
נוסעים במדינות הסמוכות לקוטב.  
שלפי רוב הקרבה, מתאריך היום,  
יש שיהיה חודש או שני חדשים  
יום אחד, וכן יותר, עד שימצא  
מקום מתאריך היום חצי שנה, וכן  
הלילה חצי שנה. ותחת הקטב לא  
יש יום ולילה כלל אלא כל השנה  
כלה הוא בין השמשות שם, לפי  
שאין באותו מקום עליית ושקיעת  
השמש, כי המשווה הוא אופקם.  
אם כן כיצד יעשו שם שבת?

ונראה לי שיש למנות שם שבועה  
ימים שווים של כ”ד שעות שוות  
שלנו, ומחשב מיום שהגיע לשם,  
מונה הימים בשעות, ומקדש  
שבועי, כדרך שנזכר לעיל להולך  
במדבר.

## 17. Tiferet Yisrael, Commentary on Mishnah Berachot 1:5

The fact that there are differences between different locations – that night comes earlier in one place than another – does not bother me. For it certainly makes sense that every man should go according to his place and time...Therefore, all of Israel is not keeping Shabbat at one time and in one place. In fact, God sanctified us with his mitzvot and commanded each of us to keep his Shabbat according to his place and time...But I am in doubt about someone who happened to come close to the North Pole in the summer. For there are a number of straight months where there is genuine daylight, and you see the sun surround the entire horizon, east, south, west, and north. What should a Jew who goes there with sailors on a whale hunting expedition do? When should he pray the morning and evening prayers, and when should he keep Shabbat?

וְאִמָּנָם בְּעֵינֵי חֲלוּק מְקוֹמוֹת  
שְׁבִמְקוֹם אֶחָד מִקְדִּים הַלֵּילָה לְבֹא  
וּבְאַחֶרֶת מְאַחֶרֶת לְבֹא, בְּכָגוֹן דָּא  
לֹא קָמִיבְעִיא לִי, דְּבִנְדָאִי שְׁוֹרֶת הַדִּין  
נֹתֵן, דְּכָל אָדָם נִידֵן לְפִי מְקוֹמוֹ  
וְשַׁעֲתוֹ ... וְאִם כֵּן אֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל שׁוֹמְרִין  
שַׁבָּת כָּלֹן יַחַד בְּשַׁעֲה אַחַת וּבְזִמָּן  
אֶחָד. אֲפִילוּ הֵכִי כִּף קִדְשָׁנוּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ  
בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְשִׁמּוֹר  
כָּל אֶחָד שַׁבָּת בְּשַׁבָּתוֹ לְפִי מְקוֹמוֹ  
וְשַׁעֲתוֹ ... וְלִכְאוּרָה יֵשׁ לְהִסְתַּפֵּק גַּם  
כֵּן בְּמִי שֶׁקָּרָה לוֹ שְׂיָבֵא בְּקִיץ סְמוּךְ  
לְנֶאֱרָדָפָא. שְׁשָׁם יֵשׁ אִיזָה חֲדָשִׁים  
רְצוּפִים בְּקִיץ יוֹם מִמָּשׁ, וְרוֹאִים  
הַחֲמָה מִקְפֶּת כָּל הָאֶפֶק סְבִיב מִזְרָח  
דְּרוֹם מְעַרֵּב צָפוֹן. וְהָאִיךְ יִתְנַהֵג  
הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי הַבָּא לְשֵׁם עִם הַסְּפָנִים  
שֶׁהוֹלְכִים לְשֵׁם לְצוּד הַתְּנִינִים  
הַגְּדוֹלִים (וּוְאֵלֶּפֶיִשָּׁע) מִתִּי זִמָּן  
תְּפִלָּתוֹ וּקְרִיאַת שְׁמֵעַ שְׁחֲרִית  
וְעֶרְבִית וּמִתִּי יִשְׁבּוֹת שַׁבָּתוֹ?

## 18. Ibid.

We can say that there is a different indicator there, for [one observing the sun in the Arctic sky will note that] the sun makes the rounds of all four directions in a twenty-four hour period (even though the sun does not set below the horizon there, one can still tell that the earth has made its entire daily rotation on its axis by watching a complete rotation of the sun in the sky). If so, he knows that each revolution that the sun makes is one day.

Therefore, if, according to his time, he comes there on a Sunday, he will know that the seventh revolution that the sun makes will be Shabbat (that is, he knows that the earth has rotated on its axis seven times and seven days have passed, because he observed the sun seem to make seven revolutions in the Arctic sky) – although he will not know his time to pray the morning or

יֵשׁ לוֹמַר שֶׁם סִימָן אַחֵר יֵשׁ לוֹ,  
דְּשֵׁם הַשְּׁמַשׁ מִקִּיף מְכַל הַד'  
רוֹחוֹת כָּל כ"ד שָׁעוֹת.

אִם כֵּן, יוֹדֵעַ שְׁכָל הַקֶּפֶה א'  
שֶׁתַּעֲשֶׂה הַשְּׁמַשׁ, יָדַע שֶׁהוּא  
יוֹם אֶחָד. וְאִם כֵּן, אִם יָבֹא  
לְשֵׁם לְפִי חֲשׁוֹבוֹנוּ בְּיוֹם א' יָדַע  
שֶׁהַקֶּפֶה הַשְּׁבִיעִית שֶׁתַּעֲשֶׂה  
הַשְּׁמַשׁ הוּא יוֹם שַׁבָּת וְאַף עַל  
גֵּב שְׁזִמָּן שְׁחֲרִית וְעֶרְבִית שְׁלוֹ  
לֹא יָדַע. וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה לֹא יָדַע



afternoon prayers. Likewise, through this he will not know when Shabbat should come in or go out, or whether he should keep Shabbat according to the European or the American clock. It is known that these two countries are on opposite sides of the globe, one directly opposite the other. If so, when they are beginning Shabbat in [certain areas of] Europe by making Kiddush Friday night, Friday morning is just beginning in [certain areas of] America...

He should keep the leniencies and stringencies of the place he came from...

He should note the hour that he reached there, according to his clock. For instance, if he came at 6:00 PM according to his time, that will remain 6:00 PM on Sunday, and he will count another five times twenty-four hours or five revolutions of the sun until that point, and then begin to keep Shabbat for the next twenty-fours.

In any case, it seems to me that if he were to then transgress the Shabbat by doing forbidden activities...it would be no better than someone who was walking in the desert and did not know when Shabbat was to be (a Talmudic passage that will be the subject of Section III – and it would only be obligated on a Rabbinic level).

According to this approach, if there are two people there, one from America and the other from Europe, each one will observe his Shabbat according to the place he left...but they are only obligated on a Rabbinic level.

גם כן מתי זמן כניסת ויציאת  
שבת. והאיד יתנהג אם כפי  
תושבי אייראפא או כפי תושבי  
אמריקא? והרי ידוע ששתי  
מדינות הללו אחת מנחת  
על פני כדור הארץ מצד  
אחד והאחרת ממולה ממש  
מתחתיה ואם כן, כשמקדישין  
השבת באיראפא היא תחלת  
ערב שבת קודש באמריקא ...  
ואם גם נאמר שנותנין עליו  
חומרות וקולות המקום שיצא  
משם ...

אפשר לצדד בשיחשוב  
למפרע על פי אזהר נכונה  
באיה שעה הוא. למשל, שיבא  
שם בשעה ו' שעל האזהר שלו  
והוא לפי חשבוננו שעה ו' לאחר  
חצות יום א', יחשוב עוד ה'  
פעמים כ"ד שעות או ה'  
הקפות השמש עד הנקודה  
ההיא, ואז יתחיל למנות  
ולשבות שבתו כ"ד שעות.  
ועל כל פנים נראה לי שאם  
עשה אז מלאכה... דלא עדיף  
ממי שהולך במדבר ואינו יודע  
מתי שבת.

ולפי זה אם יהיו שם שני  
אנשים, אחד מאמריקא ואחד  
מאייראפא כל אחד ישמור  
שבתו לפי מקום שיצא משם...  
ואין חייבים רק מדרבנן ...

## 19. Rabbi Moshe Shternbuch, Teshuvot Vehanhagot 1:315

Question: I was asked by someone who was traveling to Finland for a short period, and would be in a place where there is no day for a number of months – How should he keep Shabbat and when should he pray?

Answer: The later authorities dealt with this issue, and my position is that there is no daytime (in

שאלה: נשאלתי בנוסע  
לפינלנד לזמן קצר מאד  
במקום שאין יום במשך כמה  
חדשים, מהו לתפלה ושבת

האחרונים נסתפקו בזה,  
ואמרתי לו שלדעתי אין שם

the winter period when the sun does not appear at all) or nighttime (in the summer months when the sun does not set) there, but, nevertheless, we count a day as having passed. The change (from, for instance, Friday to Shabbat) takes place (in the summer months) at the moment that the location is the closest to the sun (when the sun is at its lowest point in the sky). Similarly, when there is a long night, the day switches when the point as far as possible from the sun is reached. According to this, there are places where daytime is but a fleeting moment; and similarly sometimes nighttime is but a fleeting moment. Since this person is traveling to a place where there is no day, daytime is but a fleeting moment and the mitzvot of the day are not applicable, even though Shabbat is not canceled.

In my opinion, a person should not live in such places because he absolves himself from the mitzvot of the day. Only if he is forced to be there, the law is as I have stated (the days continue to progress, but there is no daytime when the sun does not appear for months, and there is no nighttime when the sun does not set for months)...

יום וְלֵילָה, וּמְקוֹם מְקוֹם יֵשׁ  
יָמָּה וּמִתְחַלֶּפֶת בְּרֹגֶעַ  
שְׁנוֹמָצָא בְּמָקוֹם הַכִּי קָרוֹב  
לְשֶׁמֶשׁ, וְהוּא הַדִּין כְּשֵׁיִשׁ  
לֵילָה אֲרוֹךְ מִתְחַלֶּפֶת הַיָּמָּה  
בְּרֹגֶעַ שְׁמֹגִיעַ הַמָּקוֹם בְּסִבְבוֹ  
אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּמָקוֹם הַכִּי רְחוֹק  
מִהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, וְלִפִּי זֶה יֵשׁ מְקוֹמוֹת  
שֵׁיוֹם רַק רֹגֶעַ כְּמִימָרָה  
וּמִתְחַלֶּפֶת, וְהוּא הַדִּין לֵילָה  
רַק רֹגֶעַ כְּמִימָרָה שְׁמִתְחַלֶּפֶת,  
וּכְיוֹן שְׁנוֹסֵעַ לְמָקוֹם שְׂכָלוֹ  
לֵילָה, רַק רֹגֶעַ כְּמִימָרָה יוֹם  
בְּשַׁעָה שְׁמִתְחַלֶּף, וְלִכּוֹן  
מִתְבַּטֵּל מִפְּנֵי שְׂמָה כָּל מִצְוֹת  
הַיּוֹם אֲףִי שִׁשְׁבֶּת לֹא בְּטִלָּה.

וְלִדְעָתִי אֲסוּר לָגוֹר בְּמְקוֹמוֹת  
כָּאלוֹ מֵאַחַר שְׁמִפְקִיעַ מַעֲצָמוֹ  
אֶת מִצְוֹת הַיּוֹם, וְרַק אִם  
מוֹכֵרָח לְהִיּוֹת שְׂמָה הַדִּין כְּמוֹ  
שֶׁבְּאַרְנוּ...

## SECTION III Observing Shabbat When Lost in the Desert

### Case 3. A Jew Lost in the Jungle

*Imagine the following: After an intense month, running a summer day camp in New Jersey, Lenny, a third grade teacher, decided he needed to get away for some personal time. Lenny nonchalantly told his roommate Alex that he plans on traveling to Bolivia for a few weeks. Alex – deep into his master's thesis – nodded and said, "Have a great time." Lenny was an adventurer, the type to just get up and fly somewhere for a couple weeks, and then return back to teaching his third-grade class.*

*By the end of the first week, Alex was getting a little concerned about not hearing at all from Lenny but brushed it off assuming Lenny just wanted to have time to himself. But in the second week, Alex called other friends, and Lenny's aunt in Los Angeles (his only relative), who was also worried, having not heard from him either. They contacted the United States Consulate, which contacted authorities in Bolivia.*

*A search party eventually found Lenny, lost but alive after nineteen days in the*

*Bolivian rainforest. He had miraculously survived a fall, which had knocked him out cold.*

*Though the entire story of Lenny's adventures is beyond the scope of this class (and is the subject of an upcoming documentary), one aspect is directly related – what he did about keeping Shabbat. Between the fall, the anxiety, the thick storm clouds – and losing his cell phone, which also served as his watch – Lenny had lost track of time.*

*Lenny had once participated in a three-part series about observing Torah in extreme situations, and one of them focused on a passage from the Talmud about someone lost in the desert who forgot when Shabbat was. That shiur did not remain a theoretical dialogue for Lenny. He lived it out.*

## What do you think a person should do if he totally forgets which day Shabbat is?

### 20. Shabbat 69b

Said Rav Huna: If someone was walking in the desert and did not know which day was Shabbat, he should count six days, then keep one (as Shabbat). Chiya son of Rav says: He should keep one day, then count six.

אמר רב הונא: הָיָה מְהֵלֵךְ (בַּדֶּרֶךְ) אוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר וְאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ אִמְתִּי שַׁבָּת, מוֹנֶה שְׁשֵׁה יָמִים וּמְשַׁמֵּר יוֹם אֶחָד. חִיָּא בֶר רַב אוֹמֵר: מְשַׁמֵּר יוֹם אֶחָד וּמוֹנֶה שְׁשֵׁה.

### 21. Shabbat 69b

What is the source of their dispute? One of the rabbis holds that [he should count Shabbat] as it took place in the creation story (following six days of the week); the other holds that [he should count Shabbat] just as Adam [who kept Shabbat a short time after he was created towards the end of the sixth day].

בְּמַאי קָמִיפְלִיגִי? מֵר סָבֵר כְּבָרִיתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, וּמֵר סָבֵר כְּאֶדָם הָרֵאשׁוֹן.

### 22. Shabbat 69b

Rava said: Every day he can do what is necessary (even if it involves transgressing the prohibited Shabbat activities) in order to keep alive.

Q. [And when the traveler reaches the seventh day, he should refrain from any prohibited activities, and not having prepared food] on that day he should die [from starvation]?!

A. On the previous day he prepared enough for two days' sustenance.

אָמַר רַבָּא בְּכָל יוֹם וְיוֹם עוֹשֶׂה לוֹ כְּדֵי פְּרֻקְתּוֹ [בֵּר מִהֵוָּא יוֹמָא]. וְהָהוּא יוֹמָא לִימּוֹת?! דְּעָבִיד מֵאֲתָמוּל שְׁתֵּי פְּרֻקְתּוֹ וְדִלְמָא מֵאֲתָמוּל שַׁבָּת הָוָא?! אֵלָּא, כָּל יוֹם וְיוֹם עוֹשֶׂה לוֹ פְּרֻקְתּוֹ אֲפִילוּ הָהוּא יוֹמָא. וְהָהוּא יוֹמָא בְּמַאי מֵינַפֵּר לֵיהּ? בְּקִידוּשָׁא וְאַבְדֵּלְתָּא.

Q. But maybe yesterday was really Shabbat [and he shouldn't have done any preparations]?!

A. (Reformulation:) Rather, each day – including the day he counts / observes as Shabbat – he does whatever activities are necessary to keep alive.

Q. But in what way is that day distinguished as Shabbat (if he also does prohibited Shabbat activities in order to keep alive)?

A. Through making Kiddush (at the beginning of that day) and Havdalah (after it finishes).

Rashi expands on why there is a need to distinguish one day.

### 23. Rashi on Shabbat 69b

Kiddush and Havdalah – This is merely a method of remembering. He should have one day that is different from the rest, so that he will not forget the concept of Shabbat.

רש"י שבת סט:  
קידושא ואבדלתא - לזכרון בעלמא,  
שניהא לו שם יום חלוק מן שאר ימים,  
ולא תשתכח שבת ממנו:

## SECTION IV Lessons for Jews in Normal Places

### 24. Tehillim 139:8-10

8. If I fly up to Heaven, there You are, and if I go down to the depths, there You are.

(ח) אם אֶסַּק שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אַתָּה  
וְאִצְעָה שְׂאוֹל הִנֵּנִי:

9. I fly on the wings of dawn, or live beyond the sea,

(ט) אֶשָּׂא כַנְפֵי שָׁחַר אֶשְׁכֵּנָה  
בְּאַחֲרֵית יָם:

10. Even there Your hand guides me and You hold me with Your right hand.

(י) גַּם שָׁם יָדְךָ תִּנְחֵנִי וְתֹאחֲזֵנִי יְמִינְךָ:

### 25. From Rabbi Shlomo Gestetner, January 15, 2003, "Ilan Ramon's Subtle Call to Jewish Earthlings," [jr.co.il/pictures/israel/history/a030115.txt](http://jr.co.il/pictures/israel/history/a030115.txt)

Ramon's journey ... is an inspiring example of one man who senses the importance of Jewish identity ... Ramon made headlines around the world as a result of his insistence on marking Shabbat in space and his procurement of kosher food from NASA.

Says Ramon: “My mother is a Holocaust survivor who was in Auschwitz, and my father fought for the independence of Israel not so long ago. I was born in Israel and I’m kind of the proof for my parents and their generation that whatever we’ve been fighting for in the last century is coming true.

“I feel I’m representing the whole Jewish people.”

No wonder, then, that one of our students recently came back from a trip to Universal Studios with a poster not of Eminem, but of this 48-year-old veteran of the Israel Air Force.

Unlike so many Jewish celebrities Ramon isn’t blurring his Jewish roots ... By being proud to display his heritage, Ramon is making a massive contribution to Jewish continuity.

**26. Ner Le’Elef Thinking Gemara (quoting an observer of the conversation below)  
– Where do you begin observing the Torah?**

*A man approached the head of an Israeli yeshivah, with the following request: I want to start keeping the Torah but I have no idea where to start. Please tell me, where should I start keeping the Torah?*

*His response: Start where the Jewish people started. The Torah tells us that before the Jews even reached Mount Sinai, they came to a place called Marah. The Torah tells us (Shemot [Exodus] 15:25), “... There he placed before them a statute and an ordinance ...” Rashi explains, “He gave them a few of the sections of the Torah to already get involved in – Shabbat, the Red Heifer, and civil laws.”*

*“Start getting involved in Torah by taking on three things,” said the Rosh Yeshivah to the man.*

*“Civil law: A Jew must know that Judaism is not just between man and God, but also between man and man. Take on some interpersonal mitzvah.*

*“The Red Heifer: A Jew must know that the Torah is God-given; the human mind cannot understand everything. Take on one thing you do not understand.*

*“Shabbat: It is essential that every week include the holiness of Shabbat. Do something special on Shabbat – light candles before, make Kiddush and enjoy a Shabbat meal with family and friends, go to the Beit Kneset – do something that will make Shabbat special.”*



**RECOM-  
MENDED  
ADDITIONAL  
READING**

“In Memory of Ilan Ramon z”l,” the most extensive collection of links, articles, videos, and images about Ilan Ramon, collected by Jacob Richman, available online at <http://www.jr.co.il/pictures/israel/history/space.htm>

Ilan Ramon's Diary  
<http://www.aish.com/jw/id/48910512.html>

Detailed map of the Arctic Circle:  
<http://athropolis.com/map2.htm>

“When Does One Pray When There Is No Day?” by Rabbi David Heber, available online at <http://www.star-k.org/kashrus/kk-whendoesonepraywhenthereisnoday.htm#f3>

**Hebrew**

“אם אסק שמים: קיום מצוות בחלל,” מאת הרב לוי יצחק הלפרין, בהוצאת המכון המדעי טכנולוגי להלכה, ירושלים תשס”ג

האדם על הירח לאור התורה והאמונה, הרב מנחם מנדל כשר, תש”ס

“קיום מצוות בחלל,” ו”זמני היום והלילה בארצות הצפוניות,” שיעורים וחומר לימוד מאת עולמות - <http://olamot.net>