

## *Beyond Twelve Gates by Rabbi Ze'ev Smason Parshas Ki Seitzei September 6, 2014*

### *Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates ~*

It can't be said that all celebrities are talented, but most of Hollywood's A-list are there for a reason. Be it for acting, singing, or another skill, most celebs earn their fame. What you may not know, however, is that many celebs actually have a second hidden talent. Here's the scoop on three famous Jewish celebrities.

Harrison Ford, the real-life Indiana Jones is a skilled pilot of all kinds of aircraft. Before he was famous, Ford took flight-training lessons in the 1960s but had to stop when it became too expensive. But Ford never forgot about this passion, and began his training again after he became an international star. Matthew Perry became a recognizable and beloved face across the world as Chandler Bing in "Friends." Growing up in Ottawa, Ontario, Perry was more interested in athletics than in drama. In particular, Perry was obsessed with tennis, and was even ranked as a top junior player. Mayim Bialik is a top-flight actress with top-tier academic credentials. She earned a B.S. degree in Neuroscience, Hebrew studies and Jewish studies, and in 2005 took a break from studies to return to acting. Mayim obtained her Ph.D. degree in 2007. Her dissertation was an investigation of hypothalamic activity in patients with Prader-Willi syndrome, titled, "*Hypothalamic regulation in relation to maladaptive, obsessive-compulsive, affiliative, and satiety behaviors in Prader-Willi syndrome.*"

What are your unique talents and skills? All human beings, at birth, are given talents, dispositions, and inclinations. G-d gives these qualities according to the task assigned to each person in this world. Some people have a proclivity for kindness, others for honesty, others for humility or anger. Your personal destiny can only be fully realized if you identify and utilize your special qualities and talents.

### *Parshas Ki Seitzei Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19*

This week's Torah portion contains 74 mitzvos (commandments) -- more than 10% of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah. Among the highlights:

- Guidelines for treatment of captured female prisoners of war
- Treatment of the 'stubborn and rebellious son'
- Prohibition of wearing *shatnez* -- a mixture of wool and linen in the same garment
- The case of the defamation of a married woman
- Men are forbidden from wearing women's clothing and vice versa.
- Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden
- The requirement of a *get* (bill of divorce) when divorce takes place
- The obligation to pay workers in a timely fashion (handymen, babysitters, etc.)
- Special consideration must be given to a widow and orphan

This power-packed Torah portion concludes with the command to remember the atrocities which the nation of Amalek (from whom Haman came) committed against us upon our exodus from Egypt.

### *Rabbinic Ruminations*

Many animals have remarkable sensory abilities.

Think of the term *alligator skin* as a compliment: It is extraordinarily sensitive to minute changes in vibration, which helps locate prey. Alligators are touchy, but the platypus is more the feely type. The only mammal with electroreception, it uses sensors in its bill to detect electrical impulses sent out by prey in murky water. Researchers believe electromagnetism may help red wood ants sense imminent earthquakes in time to evacuate their mounds. Someday these creatures may be part of geologic threat-detection systems.

Elephants are acutely aware of vibrations. They use seismic activity generated by their trunks and feet to communicate with one another about predators, territory and mating preferences. Star-nosed moles

have 22 tiny trunks containing a total of nearly 100,000 nerve fibers — six times as many touch receptors as on a human hand. As the mole burrows, the tentacles sweep ahead like a high-speed broom, faster than a human eye can detect. Above ground, wolves have a sense of pitch. Not wanting to lose their voice in a howling chorus, they pick their own unique note. Seals are notable for their whiskers, which can detect the hydrodynamic trail of fish swimming up to 600 feet away.

The character of wisdom is unique to human beings. Seeking to increase your wisdom? Learn Torah. Moses tells the Jewish people that the laws of the Torah are "not too baffling for you, nor beyond reach" but "very close to you in your mouth and heart." (Deut.30:11-14) This passage also affirms that the Torah is reasonable and in accordance with common sense. And because the words of the Torah are wise, one can learn wisdom in studying it: "The teaching of the Almighty is perfect ...making the simple wise."

### *Quote of the Week*

If a man does his best, what else is there? -- *General George S. Patton (1885-1945)*

### **Joke of the Week**

The boys had been up in the attic together helping with some cleaning. The kids uncovered an old manual typewriter and asked, "Hey, Mom, what's this?"

"Oh, that's an old typewriter," she answered, thinking that would satisfy their curiosity.

"Well, what does it do?" they queried.

"I'll show you," their mother said. She went downstairs and returned with a blank piece of paper. She rolled the paper into the typewriter and began striking the keys, leaving black letters of print on the page.

"WOW!" the boys exclaimed, "That's really cool -- but how does it work like that? Where do you plug it in?"

"There is no plug," she answered. "It doesn't need a plug."

"Then where do you put the batteries?" they persisted.

"It doesn't need batteries either," she continued.

"Wow! This is so cool!" the brothers exclaimed. "Someone should have invented this a long time ago!"