

Beyond Twelve Gates by Rabbi Ze'ev Smason
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Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates

Hiring and being interviewed are skills. One gets better at it the more you do it. Do you have any favorite interview questions? Here are some of mine:

- So you're a St. Louis Cardinals fan (or Dodgers, or Yankees, or ...). If you were their owner, how would you make the team better?
- Who do you admire most, and why?
- How do you think they get the coating on the M&M's?
- If you could do anything, what would be your ideal job? What is your passion?
- If you were working in the office late at night alone and there was one chocolate biscuit left in the team biscuit box, what would you do?

Andrew Alexander, President of *Red Roof Inn*, said that his favorite interview question is "Why are you here?" Mr. Alexander said, "I always ask this the minute a prospect sits down. After the initial shock wears off, I hope to hear a passion for the hospitality industry and a deep respect for customer service. I find this to be a tremendously effective way to gauge whether the person is interested in working for us or simply seeking a job."

"Why am I here?" Isn't this an important question we should ask ourselves each day?

Parshas Behar Leviticus 25:1 -- 26:2

Behar focuses primarily on mitzvos concerning the land of Israel, beginning with the command to observe a Sabbatical (Shemitta) year. During Shemitta, one's fields are to remain uncultivated every seventh year, refraining from the normal cycle of planting and harvesting. Instead, anything that grows becomes free for anybody who wants to just pick and enjoy. Similarly, the land in Israel is to remain unworked in the Jubilee (Yovel) or 50th year, at which time the ownership of all land automatically returns to its ancestral heritage. A quote on the Liberty Bell, "*And you should sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land ...*" is taken from the passage describing the Jubilee year. Behar tells us not to worry that we won't have enough to eat during Shemittah and the following year because we can't plant and harvest. Promising an open miracle, G-d says that the year before Shemitta, the sixth year, will produce enough food for three entire years – enough for the sixth year, the year of Shemitta, and the following year, when things won't grow because there was no planting during Shemitta. The parsha also speaks about the poor and downtrodden. Not only are we commanded to give them tzedaka and do acts of loving kindness for them, but ideally we are to provide them with the means to raise themselves out of their poverty-stricken state.

Rabbinic Ruminations

Which group of statements rings true for you?

- I prefer a quiet one-on-one dinner to a noisy party*
- When I have a problem I like to ponder the issue*
- I work best by myself, with limited interruptions*

Or:

- When I need to recharge my batteries I go out with friends*
- When I have a problem I like to talk it through with friends*
- I work best as part of a team*

By understanding whether we are an introvert or extrovert, we gain insight into who we are and what makes us tick. According to Susan Cain, author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, introverts prefer spending time alone or one-on-one with friends and loved ones versus in a large group. They find their strength renewed when in solitude, and are careful observers and good listeners. Studies suggest introverts have better analytical abilities, information retention and may even have fewer accidents.

Extroverts enjoy stimulation. For them, rest and rejuvenation means time with friends or family in social settings. They process information as 'outside thinkers' by talking it through with others. Extroverts are believed to be more receptive and open-minded to change, and outgoing or curious when it comes to new situations and new people.

The great Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz, master of Jewish growth and development, once said: "*Oy (woe is) to the one who doesn't know his weaknesses, but oy-vavoy (a double oy-vey) to the one who doesn't know his strengths.*" Knowing your strengths provides greater self-knowledge and understanding of those around you. Knowledge of your strengths also creates an awareness of your latent capacity for growth and greatness.

Quote of the Week

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. -- **Mark Twain**

Joke of the Week

A husband looking through the paper came upon a study that said women use more words than men. Excited to prove to his wife his long-held contention that women in general, and his wife in particular, talked too much, he showed her the study results, which stated: "Men use about 15,000 words per day, but women use 30,000." His wife thought awhile, and then finally she said to her husband, "That's because we have to repeat everything we say." The husband said, "What?"