

Letter of approbation from Rav Chaim Malinowitz, *shlita*,
General Editor, *The Schottenstein Talmud*
Rav of Kehillas Beis Tefillah, Ramat Bet Shemesh

”א מרחשון תשס”ד

Rambam, in Chapter Two of *Hilchos Yesodei Torah*, writes that the path leading to love of Hashem lies in one’s observing the phenomena of the natural world, perceiving His creations and appreciating the Creator’s boundless wisdom. In his *Sefer HaMitzvos*, Mitzvah Three, Rambam writes that the path to love and devotion for Hashem is through studying His Torah – learning it, analyzing it, understanding it, asking, answering, unearthing its truths – all this causes a person to joyfully bond with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

These two directives from Rambam are obviously complementary. Each path, the study of the natural world and scientific laws, and the study of our Holy Torah, would bring a person to love and appreciate Hashem’s wisdom and Essence – yet each alone, taken narrowly, is only a part of the total picture.

This is ever more so when the Torah deals directly with the world of the natural sciences, i.e, when knowledge of “other” branches of learning is necessary to understand the Torah itself! How much more incumbent upon us is it then to delve into and sort out the vast store of scientific knowledge which exists today to unlock the meaning of the Torah and Chazal. The task is daunting – many times difficult questions exist, apparent contradictions, and statements which seem to fly in the face of our present scientific knowledge and understanding. While many times the ultimate solution might well be to wait for further discoveries and realities to be unearthed and “discovered,” each generation has no choice but to learn and understand Torah with the tools it presently has. And in an area which is touched upon by *Torah Shebichsav* – the Written Torah – which is easily available to the general public- any seeming problem also becomes an area of potential *Chillul Hashem, chas v’shalom*.

It is to fill one such “gap” that the young Torah scholar and by now world-famous “Zoo Rabbi,” Nosson Slifkin, has stepped in with his work entitled *The Camel, The Hare, And The Hyrax*, which he has written in order to clarify the Torah’s descriptions of animals which possess only one “kosher” sign. Rabbi Slifkin, the author of many works on the interface between Torah and the natural world, clarifies, with impressive scholarship, and intellectual objectivity and honesty, many seemingly difficult statements of Chazal, *sugyohs* in *Maseches Chullin*, and other areas, to help clarify this somewhat obscure area of Torah. While one might not necessarily agree with some of

his conclusions or speculations, he certainly expounds a Torah opinion which should be reckoned with. And the Torah world is thus in his debt, both in helping to meet challenges to Its truth, and in showing how *lais assar panuy minai* - "there is no place (read, "area," both physical and conceptual) which exists without Hashem's essence (and His Torah)." I wish Rabbi Slifkin well, and may this book, and his other works, open our minds to understand both Hashem's Torah and His wondrous universe.

חיים זאב בן הרב אברהם אהרון הלוי מלינוביץ

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