

## Response to 'Revisiting Torah Codes, Valid or Not?'

I am not surprised that there are those who take issue with my article about the Torah codes. As I am sure you noticed when you reviewed this piece, I took great care not to condemn the validity of the Torah codes. I intentionally left the decision as to whether the codes are valid or not up to the reader. My goal was to bring to the attention of Hamodia readers information about the codes that many were probably not aware of.

Most of the points that Mr. Y. Horowitz makes in his article **Revisiting "Torah Codes, Valid or Not"** are similar to those made in emails to me by Rabbi Shraga Simmons from aish.com. Aish is one "of the *baalei Teshuva* movements in Eretz Yisrael" that uses the codes as part of its presentations. However, according to Rabbi Simmons, Aish does not use the codes in the manner suggested by Mr. Horowitz, namely, "to show proof (one of many) for *Torah min Hashomayim* to those that have not yet tasted the *taam* of Torah." On the contrary, Rabbi Simmons wrote, "We do not present the Codes as definitive statistical proof. We present them as an interesting phenomenon, that has its source in classical rabbinic teachings." My response to Rabbi Simmons was, "When you present the codes 'as an interesting phenomenon,' do you at the same time point out that similar results can be obtained from Moby Dick and a translation of War and Peace into Hebrew? These are also 'interesting' phenomena. In my opinion, intellectual honesty should require the presentation of these results too."

Rabbi Simmons and Mr. Horowitz have pointed out sources for the codes in the writings of the RAMAK. Rabbi Simmons also mentioned a basis in the writings of the GRA. My response to Rabbi Simmons was, "The statements you gave (below) from the GRA and R' Moshe Cordevaro in no way legitimize the methods employed in the codes. One can subscribe to the statements of these two Torah greats and at the same time not subscribe to the validity of a method that has its roots in academia. To put it another way, the knowledge that these two Torah greats asserted is in the Torah is indeed there. However, the codes as employed today may not be a valid way of revealing this knowledge."

Mr. Horowitz and Rabbi Simmons pointed out to me that Rav Michael Dov Weissmandel, zt"l, used Torah codes. I was aware of this when I wrote my article and have the greatest respect for Rav Weissmandel. Again, my point is that it may well be that the manner in which Torah codes are being utilized today is not consistent with the way that Rav Weissmandel arrived at his insights. Indeed, I wonder what Rav Weissmandel would have said about today's claims about the

Torah codes, given that the methods presently being employed can also be used on *l'havdil* secular books to obtain "similar" results. After all, the end of the original article in the Hamodia Magazine of July 30 that prompted me to write about the codes mentioned using a computer program to find hints about personal events in the Torah.