

A Taste of Torah For the Birds

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Moshe is at a total loss. The Jewish people are demanding meat, and Moshe has no idea how to satisfy their demands. So much so, that when Hashem assures him that He will provide the nation with meat, Moshe incredulously asks, "Six hundred thousand foot soldiers are the people in whose midst I am, yet You say I shall give them meat, and they shall eat for a month of days! Can flock and cattle be slaughtered for them and suffice for them? Or if all the fish of the sea will be gathered for them, would it suffice for them?" (Bamidbar 11:21-22)

Hashem's answer is forthcoming: "Is the hand of Hashem too short? Now you will see if what I said will happen to you or not." (ibid. 23)

There is some debate as to what Moshe's intent was, but there is an opinion among the Sages that Moshe questioned G-d's ability to provide (as the simple understanding of the verse seems to bear out). (see Rashi ibid. 22) If that is the case, we are left with a serious problem. How are we to understand Moshe, the greatest prophet to ever walk the face of the Earth, questioning G-d's ability to provide?!? To make the problem even more perplexing, G-d had already displayed His ability to provide the Jewish people with their needs numerous times in the desert, be it with water coming from a rock or manna raining down from heaven. Yet Moshe cannot believe that G-d will now give them meat?

I once heard a most fascinating understanding of Moshe's comments. Sure, Moshe was well aware of G-d's ability to miraculously provide for the needs of the Jewish people in the desert. Water? No problem, just hit the rock, and water comes out. Hungry? Manna

will come from the skies. But Moshe had never experienced G-d's maneuvering of the forces of nature to provide on such a grand scale. Plagues and splitting of seas are of the supernatural, and there was no question that G-d sometimes suspended nature to take care of His people. But the notion that G-d would directly intervene within the natural scheme of nature to provide meat for such a large nation, this Moshe did not believe could occur. After all, there was a natural system in place. Suspending it was one thing, but for G-d to mix into nature on such a level as to provide so much meat for so many people - this was unheard of by Moshe. And it was to this that G-d responded, "Is My hand too short?" Nothing is beyond G-d's ability, and He maintains the right to mix in and maneuver within the natural system if He so chooses.

Today we don't experience overt miracles that controvert the laws of nature. But the lesson that Moshe learned that day remains true until today - Hashem can intervene any time He chooses, and move things in the direction He desires, despite the continuation of the laws of nature. It is up to us to see G-d's Hand in our daily lives, as He guides and directs the day-to-day events of the world and of personal affairs.

Stories For The Soul

Stop and Smell the Roses

A man once stopped at a flower shop to order some flowers to be wired to his mother, who lived 200 miles away.

As he got out of his car he noticed a young girl sitting on the curb sobbing.

He knelt down beside her and asked, "Is everything okay? Why are you crying?"

"I wanted to buy a red rose for my mother," the girl replied. "But I only have seventy-five cents, and a rose costs two dollars."

The man smiled and said, "Come on in with me. I'll buy you a rose."

The girl smiled and followed her generous benefactor into the store.

He bought her a rose and then ordered an elegant arrangement for his own mother.

As they were leaving he offered the girl a ride home.

She said, "Yes, please! You can take me to my mother."

He followed her directions, and was surprised to find that they led to a cemetery.

The girl thanked him, ran out of the car, and placed the rose on a freshly dug grave.

The man wiped tears from his eyes. He turned his car around and went back to the flower shop. He canceled the wire order, picked up a bouquet and drove the 200 miles to his mother's house.

We often forget to thank Hashem for all the good in our lives. Sometimes, we need a little reminder.

Adapted with permission from Shul-Week by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.

Kollel Happenings

FATHERS & SONS

The Denver Community Kollel invites all fathers and sons to its Fathers & Sons program at the DAT Minyan, 6825 E Alameda Ave., Sunday, May 12th. Shacharis begins at 8 am, followed by breakfast and fathers and sons learning until 9:30. There will be a story and great prizes raffled off at 9:30. Bring a friend, get a coupon for a free Slurpee! For more info, email rmf@denverkollel.org or call Rabbi Dovid Schwartzberg at 732-779-1297.



MOMS STUDY, DADS AT THE PARK

Take advantage of a unique weekly learning opportunity for mothers with young children. Given on Shabbos from 4:30-5:30 pm at the Mandel home, 4762 S. Wabash St., by Zeldy Mandel and Yehudis Heyman, this class will inform and inspire! Dads are invited to bring the kids to Wallace Park, right across the street from the Mandel home. For more info, contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman, rmh@denverkollel.org.



TRUST THY FATHER

Join Rabbi Schachne Sommers for "Trust Thy Father," a series based on Chovos Ha'Levavos/ Duties of the Heart. Discover and delve into vital Jewish concepts of Bitachon. The classes take place on Tuesdays, from 7:55-8:25 a.m. at Aish. For info email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Interpersonal Issues

The Laws of Lashon Hara (Slander)

If one is aware of information about another which, although not negative, is likely meant to be kept private, and certainly if one was told to keep the information private, it is forbidden to share the information with others.

Ask the Rabbi

Jew-rusalem

From: Bart
Dear Rabbi,

Jerusalem isn't mentioned in Islam's "Koran," but I don't think it's mentioned in the Five Books of Moses either. I've heard it argued that the Koran's omission of Jerusalem shows a lack of connection between Islam and Jerusalem, but can't the same be said of Judaism?

Dear Bart,

Jerusalem is mentioned many hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible. As for the Chumash (Five Books of Moses), it is true that the exact word "Jerusalem" does not appear there. Most simply, this is because it was not yet called Jerusalem, and it had not yet been revealed as G-d's chosen city.

Under Jebusite rule and earlier, Jerusalem was divided into two cities, the western part called Jeru (Yere) and the eastern part called Salem (Shalem). Both of these names do appear in the Five Books: "And Malki-Tzedek, King of Shalem" (Genesis 14:18). "And Abraham called that place...Yere" (Genesis 21:14).

Around the time of Joshua's conquest, the Amorites consolidated the two halves of the city, and they combined the two names: Jeru-salem. From this point on in history, our Bible refers to Jerusalem countless times.

Furthermore, the Chumash refers 19 times to "the place that G-d will choose" as the center for Jewish life and religion (e.g. Deuteronomy 12:11, 14, etc.). The Prophets Samuel and Gad finally reveal to King David that this chosen place is

Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

So these are two reasons Jerusalem isn't mentioned explicitly in the Chumash as the holy city: It hadn't yet been called that; and it hadn't yet been revealed as such.

Maimonides, writing around 800 years ago, offers three reasons that the Chumash does not explicitly reveal the identity of the holy city:

1. If the nations had learned that this place would express the highest Jewish ideals, they would have united in an effort to occupy and prevent the Jews from ever controlling it. (Sound familiar?)

2. If they had known of Jerusalem's special spiritual stature, they may have tried to take advantage of its spiritual nature by making it into a center of idol worship.

3. Each of the twelve tribes would have desired to have Jerusalem in their borders, and this would lead to disunity.

Once the Jews had conquered and divided the land, the above ceased to be considerations.

So, in conclusion, Jerusalem played a prominent part in Jewish history and writings more than two thousand years before Islam's rise and the writing of the Koran, which makes no mention of Jerusalem, despite the fact that by then it had certainly become known as the holy city of the Jews.

Sources: Jerusalem, Eye of the Universe, by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

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