



Parshas Toldos

November 17, 2017

A Taste of Torah Like Your Life Depends on It

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

The parsha begins with the story of Yitzchak davening for his wife Rivka to have children; Hashem answers his prayer and Rivka conceives. Afterwards, the Torah relates the dilemma Rivka faced during her pregnancy. The Torah describes that the unborn children were struggling inside of her, and she complains about her pregnancy. Rivka's complaint needs some explanation, for regular kicking or other normal irritation due to pregnancy is not cause for regret of wanting to conceive, especially when we are discussing one of the Matriarchs.

Rashi explains that there was something else going on. Every time Rivka would pass a place of Torah study, she would feel a kick, as if the child were attempting to emerge, and when she would pass a place of idol worship, she would feel the same sensation. This strange contradiction was what she complained about, as she only desired a child who would follow in the path she and her husband had chosen.

Rivka was informed, via a prophet, that there were two children within her. Yaakov attempted to exit when she passed the study hall and Eisav tried to get out when she passed a place of idol worship. The commentators, though, raise a basic question. Our Sages teach us that while a child is in the womb, an angel teaches it the entire Torah. That being the case, why did Yaakov feel the need to run to the study hall to learn Torah if he had all he needed in his mother? Rabbi Dovid Solveitchik (b. 1921) infers from this that Torah achieved through toil is more precious to Hashem than Torah handed over on a silver platter by an angel.

This concept is also found in the end of the parsha where the Torah relates

that after Eisav lost out on receiving the blessings from Yitzchak, he was very upset and said, "May the days of mourning for my father draw near, then I will kill my brother Yaakov." (Toldos 27:41) What is the significance of this tragic time that made them a propitious time to kill Yaakov? The Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz; 1550 -1619) writes that Eisav understood that as long as Yaakov was involved in Torah study, he stood no chance against him. He needed to wait until Yaakov was a mourner and was prohibited from studying Torah (due to the joy it brings).

Rabbi Mordechai Gifter (1915-2001) points out that the halacha is that a mourner may study Torah subjects associated with mourning. Why, he asks, wouldn't this derail Eisav's plans? Rabbi Gifter explains that while it is permitted to study these subjects at a basic level, toiling in them is forbidden. It is the toiling in Torah that would protect Yaakov.

Perhaps, based on this, we can explain the description the Torah gives of Yaakov as a wholesome man who dwelled in tents. The first description tells us about his character, as he had sterling character traits. The second description tells of his Torah study, for "tents" refers to the tents of the study hall. The Torah does not relate his great Torah knowledge or brilliant mind but, rather, that he dwelled in the tents of Torah; this was his life and his focus, to toil and sweat over the Torah.

The simple understanding of the value of toiling in Torah is that Hashem desires that we devote our hearts and minds toward His service. On a deeper level, Rabbi Avraham ben Shlomo Zalman, brother of the Vilna Gaon, explains that Torah is spiritual, and

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Stories for the Soul

Healing Words

Based on a story on revach.net

Rabbi Avraham Trop (d. 1978) was the Rosh Yeshiva (Dean) of the Radin Yeshiva in Poland, which was founded by the saintly Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan. At the outbreak of World War II, Rabbi Trop immigrated to the United States where he served as Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim and, later, in Karlin-Stolin.

Rabbi Trop would relate that while learning in Radin as a young man prior to marriage, he became deathly ill. His friends ran to the Chofetz Chaim and said, "What are we going to do? Avraham Trop is close to death!"

The Chofetz Chaim instructed the young men to whisper in Avraham's ear that if he would commit himself to spreading Torah to Jewish children his entire life, he would be cured from his illness.

The young men hurried to carry out the instructions, but when they arrived by Avraham's bedside, he had already lost consciousness. They ran back to the Chofetz Chaim and described the situation. The Chofetz Chaim replied that he himself would go to Avraham's bedside.

When the Chofetz Chaim reached Avraham's bedside, he requested that everyone leave the room. The young men left the room, but they strained their ears from the other side of the door and peered through the keyhole to see what the Chofetz Chaim was doing. The Chofetz Chaim was standing next to the wall and calling out the names of Avraham's ancestors, renowned as righteous individuals. He said, "Go before G-d's Throne of Glory and announce that your grandson Avraham accepts upon himself to teach Torah all his life to

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Kollel Happenings

LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING THIS THURSDAY, NOV. 23

Start your day off on the right foot with Torah study! Join the Kollel for learning at three locations around Denver: At the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash and Aish Denver, shacharis at 8 am followed by breakfast and learning, and at EDOS, shacharis at 7:30 followed by breakfast and learning.

SHOW THEM WHO'S BOSS: DEALING WITH UNETHICAL SITUATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Join neurosurgeon Fredric Sonstein, MD, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they discuss how to deal with ethical challenges in the workplace. Wednesday, December 6, at 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

RABBI REISMAN WEEKLY IN DENVER

Join thousands around the globe in listening to the renowned weekly Navi shiur of Rabbi Yaakov Reisman! Rabbi Reisman's weekly Motzoei Shabbos class is shown at Beth Jacob High School, 5100 W. 14th Ave., this week at 8:00 pm. For sponsorships and info, contact info@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: In Torah scrolls, there are two styles of spacing between chapters. If the wrong type of space was used, the scroll is invalidated! Regarding what is the halacha that if one made a different type of break, it is still kosher?

A: The mezuzah contains two chapters of Torah (*Shema*, Devorim 6:4-9 and *Vihaya*, Devorim 11:13-21). Preferably, there should be a *setuma* break between them, as *Vihaya* is preceded in the Torah by a *setuma*. Since, however, these two chapters aren't written consecutively in the Torah, if they were written with a *pesucha* break, they are still kosher. According to some

halachic authorities, this is true regarding the four chapters of tefillin as well. If one made the break of *pesucha* in place of a *setuma*, it is still kosher. If one, however, made a *setuma* in place of a *pesucha* it is *pasul* (invalid)!

Sources: Shulchan Aruch Yorah De'ah 288:13 and Rema Orach Chaim 32:36.

This week's question: What is the longest traditional chapter in the Torah (i.e., most verses between *pesucha* or *setuma* spaces; not chapters as they are generally numbered)?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Aryeh Leib Gunzberg, the Shaagas Aryeh - Part VIII

Rabbi Gunzberg was one of the most brilliant minds of his time, and he often disagreed with other authorities in matters of Talmudic interpretation and halacha. His strongly-held views sometimes led him to object sharply to those whom he felt had erred. As Rabbi of Metz, it is said that he only

entered the main synagogue of Metz four times a year to deliver a sermon.

The reason for this is related to an incident that took place on Shavuot early in his tenure in Metz, in connection with the *piyut* (liturgical poem) of Akdamus that is customarily recited on the first day of Shavuot.

A Taste of Torah

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physical beings really shouldn't be able to have any connection to the Torah. This is the reason the angel teaches everyone the entire Torah before they are born, for without this, we would not have any connection to the Torah. Once that connection is formed, the child is made to forget everything so that it can re-learn the Torah through effort and toil. Rabbi Avraham adds that toiling in Torah mitigates the temptations of

the physical world and allows us to turn into more spiritual beings, enabling us to comprehend the Torah to an even greater degree.

It emerges that through toiling in Torah, we can minimize being pulled toward the physical world. This, in turn, allows one to connect with Torah to an even greater degree, creating a cycle of growth that is limitless!

Stories for the Soul

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Jewish children."

The Chofetz Chaim left the room. Shortly thereafter, Avraham awoke and began to heal. He eventually recovered from his illness and spent the rest of his life teaching Torah.

The Torah tells us that Yaakov was "a man who dwelled in tents," which our Sages explain refers to the tents of Torah. His dedication to Torah left its imprint upon his descendants, the Jewish People, for all time.

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