

THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

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Because Torah Is for Every Jew

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A Taste of Torah Get Your Mind in Order

By Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

Every once in a while, a fresh scandal hits the news. Once again, a high-ranking government official has been discovered carrying out his business with a complete disregard to the law and against direct orders from his superiors. At first glance, it appears that this occurred in this week's Torah portion, as well, where we find Moshe acting in what seems to be a rather strange manner. In the Book of Shemos (29:5), Hashem tells Moshe to dress Aharon with the priestly garments: the tunic, the robe of the *ephod*, the *ephod* itself, the breastplate, and, finally, the belt of the *ephod*. Ostensibly, the order given was specific. But in this week's Torah portion (Tzav 8:7), Moshe changes the order and places the belt on Aharon immediately after dressing him with the tunic! While it may seem trivial to us, we must realize that in the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), every single detail was of utmost importance! To make matters worse, this seeming disregard for Hashem's orders took place in public, in full view of the Jewish People who were told to assemble to watch the seven inaugural days of the *Mishkan*. Which itself begs another question: Why was it necessary for everyone to witness the seven days of inauguration in the first place?

The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin; 1816-1893) explains that Hashem commanded Moshe to gather the Jews in order that they learn a most vital lesson. Although a simple reading of the command of how to dress Aharon would indicate one order of donning the vestments, Hashem, in fact, told Moshe to follow a different order. A Jew would see in the Torah one apparent order, but would see Moshe following a completely different one! This was to teach the Jews for all time that a simple reading of the Written Torah is never enough; we must have the Oral Transmission from Moshe to correctly interpret the Torah.

This raises a question that has troubled many: Why not just write it all down in

a very clear manner? Why did Hashem choose to give over the Torah in a way that demands an oral transmission, as well? I heard a beautiful explanation from Rabbi Yisroel Blumenthal of Lakewood, New Jersey. Imagine you are digging in your backyard, and you find an old scroll from an ancient Native American society. After much work, you finally manage to translate all the words, but you still cannot understand the message within. Why? You realize that to truly understand a message, you must understand the mindset of the intended recipient of the message; simply understanding the words themselves is insufficient.

The purpose of the Oral Law isn't merely to transmit information; it's to maintain the state of mind of our forefathers who received the Torah at Sinai. A perusal of the Talmud reveals that it wasn't meant to be a compilation of laws, but, rather, a conversation, and the only way to truly access Talmudic wisdom is to do all you can to achieve the mindset of the great Sages of the Talmud.

When Moshe taught the Jewish People, he, too, did not limit his teaching to the recitation of words. Moshe gave over the understanding granted by Hashem that pertained to each of the mitzvos. When the Jewish People passed the Torah on to their children, they did not limit the communication to the recital of words or the delivery of a book. The children absorb how their parents live the Torah, how their parents sense the Torah and the spiritual concepts that stand behind each of the laws of the Torah. The Jewish People accept the Law of Moshe together with the understanding that they received it from the Jews who walked before them. This gives us an entirely new perspective in our approach to Torah, as well as great responsibility in passing on not just Torah, but a Torah mindset, as well, to our children.

Stories For The Soul

Beds & Beyond

The Jewish community in Radin decided to establish a Jewish hospital, and a meeting was held for this purpose, chaired by the saintly Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan; 1838-1933). The well-to-do members of the town attended and made pledges to cover the cost of beds for the hospital. Each one called out how many beds he would sponsor. After the pledges were made, they had amassed perhaps twenty beds in all.

Suddenly, the Chofetz Chaim called out a donation of fifty beds from the Radin Yeshiva. The attendees were shocked, as neither the yeshiva nor its students had any extra money; on the contrary, they suffered from great poverty. One of the men asked the Chofetz Chaim to explain his pledge.

The Chofetz Chaim explained, "The yeshiva students are preventing fifty people from requiring beds in the hospital! Due to the spiritual power and merit of their Torah study, at least fifty people in town will remain healthy and not become ill. They are thus donating fifty beds to the hospital!"

Although we do not have a *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple) today, our Sages teach us that one who studies the sections dealing with the sacrifices is regarded as having brought that sacrifice. The power of Torah to achieve spiritually what cannot be achieved physically is astounding.

Kollel Happenings

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch-and-Learn class on the weekly parsha at the East Side Kosher Deli, 499 S. Elm St. at 12:00 am. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! Transportation can be arranged. For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

DEVELOPING TALENTS AT NEXT TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Charlie Miller, Co-Curator of Off-Center at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they explore the responsibility of utilizing one's talents. April 6th, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

RAV SCHWAB ON CHUMASH AVAILABLE FROM KOLLEL

The Denver Community Kollel is offering the book *Rav Schwab on Chumash* for sale to the community. The book is available through the Denver Community Kollel at a special discount rate of \$24. To order, call 303-820-2855, email info@denverkollel.org, or go to www.denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: Which one of the Shabbos *haftarahs* is specifically mentioned in the Gemara, an exception to the general rule?

A: The *haftarah* of Parshas Tzav (Jeremiah Ch. 7-9) is mentioned in Tractate Megillah (23b) as an example of how a *haftarah* may be shorter than the normally-required 21 verses if the discussion of the verses has concluded. Most congregations nowadays read a special *haftarah* on the Shabbos

preceding Pesach (Shabbos HaGadol), which, during a Jewish non-leap year, is Parshas Tzav, precluding this *haftarah* from being read during a non-leap year. It is also not necessarily read during a leap year either (due to other special *haftaros* read on that week); this year, it is being read this week for the first time since 5768/2008!

This week's question: What is the source of the selection of *haftaros*?

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

Lives of Our Torah Leaders The Rashba Part I

Rabbi Shlomo ben Aderes, known by the acronym of his name, the Rashba, was the leader of Spanish Jewry for much of the 13th century. His scholarship and strong leadership were a pillar of strength during a time of great trial and tribulation for the Jews of Spain. His halachic works and Talmudic works are studied until today, and his outlook on many areas of Jewish life holds lessons for us in our day and age, as well.

The Rashba was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1235. In his younger years, he was a successful merchant and banker. He subsequently applied himself completely to his Torah studies. The Rashba studied by two well-known medieval Torah leaders, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (the Ramban; 1194-1270) and Rabbeinu Yonah of Gerona (1180-1263). The Rashba became the rabbi of Barcelona, a position he would hold for over forty years. Later in his life, as his prestige grew, he was recognized as the "Rabbi of Spain."

The Rashba authored a number of important works. He wrote a commentary on much of the Talmud, and his words are studied, analyzed, debated and dissected in yeshivos and *batei medrash* throughout the world until this day. He also authored thousands of responsum, many of which

have been published; these responsum are also frequently found in the study halls of the Jewish People world-wide. In addition, he authored several halachic works on major areas of Jewish law, and they are frequently studied by advanced Torah students.

All of the Rashba's works are referenced frequently in the later halachic decisors, and his opinions have played, and continue to play, an important role in determining practical Jewish law.

The Rashba lived during a turbulent time in Spain. For a number of centuries, much of Spain had been under Moslem rule; the Moslems had conquered Spain as part of their conquest of much of the Middle East and parts of Europe. Most of the time, the Jews enjoyed relative freedom and calm in Moslem society, and they flourished and prospered. By the time the 13th century came around, however, most of Spain had been reconquered by the Christians, and they re-established the dominance of Christianity in Spain.

The Christian government, along with the citizenry, pressured the Jewish communities to abandon their faith. This began a dark period for the Jews in Spain, which ultimately culminated with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

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