

## A Taste of Torah Exceeding Requirements

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Looking to buy a new tallis? Make sure it's a good-looking one. Are you a board member of a synagogue looking to commission a new Sefer Torah? Hire a scribe with who writes beautifully. Going to the store to purchase a shofar for Rosh Hashana? Spend a few extra dollars on a nicer one. In general, one should go the extra mile to beautify a mitzvah. And the source of this obligation – known as *hiddur mitzvah*, beautifying a mitzvah – is in the Song of the Sea, sung by the Jews following their miraculous salvation from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. Therein we find the verse, "This is my G-d, and I will beautify Him." It is from this verse that we are instructed to not be satisfied with merely fulfilling a mitzvah, but to make the effort to beautify it, as well.

There are many, many obligations that we are informed of in the Torah, yet they are not usually given during a song. Yet this unique requirement found its way into the celebratory exultation of the Jewish People as they praised G-d for their deliverance from disaster. Why is the Song of the Sea the most apropos location for this obligation?

Imagine a mother preparing lunch for her young child before sending him off to school. The mother has a responsibility to provide food for her child, yet she has two options of how to prepare her child's meal. She can simply throw a sandwich together, stuff it in the lunchbox, put in an apple and a juice box, and send the child off to school.

Or, she can choose to make her child's favorite sandwich, include a note wishing him a good day, and maybe even include a small sweet for the child to enjoy. What will determine which choice she makes? If she loves her child, she will opt for the second route; if she is merely looking to get her job done, then she will take the first approach.

G-d had to save the Jewish People. He had promised the Patriarch Avraham that He would do so. But G-d could have simply split the sea and saved the Jews, and He would have thus fulfilled His promise. Yet, G-d did so much more. He created a special path through the water for each tribe; if someone was hungry or thirsty, he simply stuck his hand into the wall of water and withdrew something to eat or drink. In short, G-d showed the Jewish People that he wasn't merely interested in keeping His word to Avraham; he wanted to shower the Jews with His love.

It was with this realization in mind that the Jewish People proclaimed that they, too, wished to show their love to G-d. And if G-d made demands of them, they weren't merely going to find the simplest, easiest way to fulfill the mitzvah; they would fulfill it in the best way possible. They would look for *hiddur mitzvah*.

When we perform mitzvos, as well, we should seek to do so with enthusiasm; we should endeavor to show that we fulfill G-d's bidding not merely due to the fact that we must do so, but because we love G-d, and want to fulfill his Will.

## Ask the Rabbi Miracles- Why Not Today?

Michael @McGill wrote:  
Shalom Rabbi,

Why doesn't G-d speak to us today, the way

He did in the days of Moses? I know that He indirectly performs miracles (saving us from the destruction of our nation in the Spanish inquisition and the Holocaust), but if He really

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## Stories For The Soul

### 'I Love Jews'

In 1942 America had just entered World War II, and Seymour Lederman was stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi, for basic training.

The small Jewish community in Biloxi arranged a Pesach Seder for the Jewish soldiers. The rabbi thanked the local parson's wife, saying that the Seder could not have been arranged without her help.

At the end of the Seder, Seymour thanked her. She told him it was no bother and said, "I love Jews."

"Many years ago," she explained, "I worked as an office manager for a hospital. The head doctor told me that there was a widowed Jewish woman who had run up quite an unpaid bill. I told him that her husband had been wealthy and had surely provided for her. When I went to speak to her, she revealed that the mounting medical bills had eaten up all her savings. She had no money and no hope.

"I remembered hearing of a prominent Jewish businessman in the region. I called him and gave him the details. We hung up.

"The next day, the man arrived. He found the woman and spoke to her with great kindness and respect. He paid her entire bill and told me to send the future bills to him. I was dumbstruck. This man traveled several hundred miles for the sake of a stranger, yet he took care of her like she was a queen. When I saw how Jews take care of each other, I knew that this was a truly special and blessed people. I love Jews."

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

## Kollel Happenings

*The Kollel is on Pesach break. Classes will resume on April 23.*

### DERECH HASHEM SERIES MON. NIGHTS

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for "Derech Hashem: Who is G-d and Why Did He Create the World?", a series for women based on Derech Hashem by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato. The classes are held on Mondays at 7:45 p.m., at EDOS. The class will resume after Pesach break, on April 23rd. For info, contact Mrs. Tzippy Sommers at 303-257-1089 or [pit@denverkollel.org](mailto:pit@denverkollel.org).



### A DEEPER LOOK AT KORBANOS WITH RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers and delve deeply into the weekly Parsha. Class is held on Tuesdays at Aish from 8-9 p.m. The class will resume after Pesach break, on April 24th. For information, contact Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher at [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org) or 303-820-2855



### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS CLASS BEGINS AFTER PESACH

Join Mrs. Esti Schwab for an exciting new six-week series, United We Stand, Mondays 11:30 am-1:00 pm at the East Side Kosher Deli, beginning April 16th. The class will focus on creating and bettering our relationships with others. Each week will focus on an independent area of personal growth. For more info email [esti@denverkollel.org](mailto:esti@denverkollel.org)

## Interpersonal Issues Simanim (Identifying Signs for Lost Objects)

As mentioned in previous weeks, a lost object can generally be returned only if the person claiming it can give an identifying sign of the object. Otherwise, the finder must hold onto the item.

*Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)*

## Ask the Rabbi

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wanted us to follow His commandments, why doesn't He simply come in a show of fire, and tell us that He's still around?

Dear Michael,

Your question is timeless and I'd like to offer two possible answers:

According to the Ramban, miracles such as the "splitting of the sea" were performed in the past to teach that G-d is Omnipotent and is always ruling over all of Creation. But, G-d doesn't perform miracles in every generation just to impress non-believers. Rather, He performed the miracle(s) then, and afterwards He commanded us to remember them via numerous mitzvot, such as mezuzah, krias shema and Pesach. By recalling these "open" miracles a person can also become aware of the "hidden" miracles. A basic tenet of the Torah is the belief that all occurrences are miraculous and are not merely "nature".

So, in answer to your question, Michael, Hashem is in fact "speaking" to us all the time, and it's our job to be attentive!

Another possible answer is the following:

When the Biblical generations experienced miracles, they were impressed and showed their recognition of G-d's hand by living according to G-d's word. The miracles taught a lesson to a People prepared to learn.

They possessed a pure and wholesome faith.

Today, however, if miracles were to occur, we would explain them away scientifically. We would lose sight of the miracle and be satisfied with some natural explanation. So, what effect would miracles have today? Miracles are a means of communication, and communication requires two sides. When we are ready for miracles, when we can recognize one when it hits us, we will have them.

Our Sages teach us to "Praise Him for each breath we draw." We are supposed to be grateful for each heartbeat, for all of our vital functions, and, for that matter, all of the day-to-day workings of nature. This teaches us that there are miracles all around us, even if they occur seventy times a minute. "But it's perfectly natural" is the usual rhetoric. Yet, this is exactly the point. The ordinary, the natural and the commonplace are as much the works of His hands as the splitting the sea and Creation itself.

Science seeks the natural in the supernatural; whereas the Torah shows the supernatural in the natural.

Sources:

Ramban ~ Shemos 13:16.

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