

# THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel

Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei/Parah

March 9, 2018

## A Taste of Torah Three-Dimensional World

by Rabbi Yaakov Zions

The Torah portions of the past few weeks dealt extensively with the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). The portions of *Teruma* and *Tetzaveh* contain the basic overview of the details of the *Mishkan* and its components, and this week's portions of *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* (combined this year in one reading) discuss the recording of the actual donation and fabrication stages. There is a major event which divides the two abovementioned groups: the story of the Golden Calf in last week's parsha of *Ki Sisa*. The great Torah commentaries struggle with the timeline. Did the Golden Calf occur between the commandment to make the *Mishkan* but before its construction or is the chronology not as it appears in the text? For the purpose of our discussion, we will follow the position of the Sforno (by Rabbi Ovadia Sforno of Italy, c. 1475-1550) in his commentary to Shemos 31:18. The Sforno suggests that the *Mishkan* was only needed after the Jews sinned with the Golden Calf. The reason they now needed a *Mishkan* was not merely to serve as an atonement for their sin; it now became necessary to have a physical edifice for Hashem's presence, so to speak.

Originally, Hashem's plan called for every member of His nation to be His priest (Shemos 19:6) and that He would be present wherever His name would be mentioned (Shemos 20:21). After the Golden Calf, however, the Jewish People were no longer on this high spiritual level, and the only way they could merit an intimate connection with Hashem would be

through a *Mishkan*, a spiritual oasis to connect with Hashem.

Let us take this concept one step further. We may be familiar with the idea that in Judaism, people, places and time are not equal. For example, in the people category, we have the Kohen, Levi and Yisrael. In the places category, we have the ten levels of ascending holiness enumerated in the Mishnah (Keilim 1:6-9), the highest being the *Kodesh Kadashim* (Holy of Holies). In the time category, Shabbos and Festivals are above all other days. The Sforno's understanding is that the original plan called for less barriers between people ("You shall be a nation of priests") and place ("Wherever My name is mentioned, I shall come to you and bless you."). Perhaps it can be suggested that the same is true with time. It is noteworthy that immediately after the Golden Calf, the nation is commanded to observe the three festivals, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkos, and to visit the *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple) during those times. Only at that juncture was it necessary to ensure a time and place for the nation to "meet" Hashem.

This may also explain a cryptic and mystical statement by the Arizal (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria; 1534-1572), quoted by Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad (1835-1909; also known as the Ben Ish Chai) that the festivals are a means to atone for the Golden Calf. The Arizal said that the Golden Calf was worshipped for six hours and we therefore have 15 (Biblical) festival days, or 360 hours, to nullify the sin with the famous

## Stories for the Soul

### The Time Is Now

Based on a story in Wellsprings of Torah

On February 6, 1941, General Erwin Rommel, one of Germany's most gifted military personnel, arrived in Africa with a powerful German army. He attacked the British so skillfully that, by July 1942, he was deep inside Egypt, only sixty miles from Alexandria.

Palestine, too, was under threat. German planes bombed the Tel Aviv Central Bus Station while an Italian plane dropped a bomb near Shaarei Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem.

At this critical juncture, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, the Ponevezher Rav (1886-1969), decided to found a yeshiva in Bnei Brak. He had arrived in Eretz Yisroel months earlier. He had been travelling abroad when World War II broke out, allowing him to escape the fate met by his wife and children and many of his students.

"When the lazy Lithuanian peasant sees storm clouds about to destroy his crops," he explained, "he springs into action and harvests them before the rain damages them. Now that storm clouds hang overhead, it is time to rebuild the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak!"

"But Rommel might be about to invade!" someone protested.

"That is exactly the moment we have to build Torah," the Rav retorted.

The Ponevezh Yeshiva was founded with five *talmidim*. Today, it is one of the most prominent yeshivos in the world, and has produced numerous Torah scholars and leaders of the Jewish People.

In this week's parsha, Moshe is instructed to put up the walls of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). Although the walls were much too heavy for one person to lift, Moshe put in his effort, and Hashem ensured the walls would rise. We, too, must put in our efforts for what needs to be done and trust that Hashem will assist us in succeeding.

## Kollel Happenings

### 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. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave., this week at 8:00 pm. For sponsorships and info, contact [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### LEARN 2 LEARN

You have long dreamed of acquiring the tools to achieve proficiency in learning Gemara on your own. But how? The Denver Community Kollel offers a comprehensive, step-by-step, level-by-level program crafted for people just like you. All you need is the ability to read Hebrew; we will teach you the rest. For more information, contact [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org).

### A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SOMMERS

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights at Aish Denver (lounge area), 8:15-9 pm, for men and women.

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: When is something permitted, provided that the item was made with a non-kosher ingredient?

**A:** One may not derive any benefit from a mixture of milk and meat which were cooked together. This includes feeding it to animals, and applies even if the mixture was cooked by a non-Jew. This prohibition applies only if both the meat and milk are from kosher *beheimos* (usually translated as domesticated animals).

Thus, if the milk or meat were from a non-kosher species, one is permitted to benefit from it or use it as pet food. This is also true for kosher poultry or venison cooked with milk. There is a company (Evangers®) which has rabbinical supervision which certifies that their pet food contains no forbidden mixtures! (Source: Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 87:1,3)

**This week's question:** What other *halachos* apply to providing food for non-humans (livestock, pets or fish)?

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Yonasan Eybeschütz - Part X

Rabbi Emden returned to Altona in 1752, and the Danish courts ordered that nothing be published regarding the controversy over the amulets. In the same year, the Senate of Hamburg suspended Rabbi Eybeschütz as rabbi of Hamburg.

Despite the ban against publishing materials related to the dispute, pamphlets were published by Rabbi Emden's followers, and Rabbi Eybeschütz published a work titled *Luchos Ha'edus* wherein he wrote an introduction in his defense followed by many letters from those who backed his position denouncing the accusations.

Around this time, the Jewish community began to pressure that

the issue be brought before the rabbinical authorities. The case came before the *Va'ad Arbah Aratzos*, or Council of the Four Lands. The *Va'ad Arbah Aratzos* was centered in Lublin, Poland. It was the central body of Jewish authority in Poland from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1764. Seventy delegates from local communities met to discuss taxation and other issues important to the Jewish community. The "four lands" were Greater Poland, Little Poland, Ruthenia and Volhynia. The *Vaad* convened in Jaroslav in 1753 specifically to deal with the Rabbi Eybeschütz-Rabbi Emden controversy raging in its Jewish communities.

## A Taste of Torah

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1/60 ratio at which forbidden taste is nullified when mixed into a permitted food item.

Although this explains the positioning of the festival verses immediately following those of the Golden Calf, we are still in need of an explanation to connect the two. Based on the

above, we can attempt to explain that by meeting Hashem during the festivals, or perhaps even utilizing the days properly in the absence of a *Bais Hamikdash*, we can experience the originally intended closeness with Hashem and recharge for our mission throughout the year in our daily lives.