

# THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel

Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Acharei Mos-Kedoshim

April 27, 2018

## A Taste of Torah

### Appreciate the Journey

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Forty-six. That's the number of times, according to one opinion in the Talmud (Bava Metziah 59a), that the Torah warns the Jewish People regarding proper treatment of a *ger*, (lit., a sojourner; in context, it refers to a convert). Many of those times, including this week's parsha (Kedoshim 19:34), the Torah tells us to do so due to the fact that we, too, were *gerim*, sojourners, in the Land of Egypt.

Rashi (ibid.) explains this reasoning by informing us that one should not criticize another with a shortcoming he himself possesses. As we were *gerim* in a foreign land, we have no business looking down upon a fellow sojourner.

Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980) provides an entirely new approach to the Torah's oft-repeated mitzvah based on his analysis of the words of the Rambam. The Rambam states (Hilchos De'os 6:5): *Love of a ger who comes and enters beneath the wings of the Shechinah (Divine Presence) includes two positive commandments, one because he is included in "fellow," and one because he is a ger, and the Torah states, "You shall love a ger." The Torah commands regarding love for a ger as it commands regarding loving G-d Himself... G-d Himself loves gerim, as it says, "And he loves the ger."*

Rabbi Hutner observes that the Rambam adds two points to the basic halachic content in his discussion. One, that we must love a *ger* as we must love G-d, and two, that G-d Himself loves the convert. Why, wonders Rabbi Hutner, are these addendums necessary in a halachic work?

Rabbi Hutner explains that when the Torah demands that one love every Jew, included in the mitzvah is that one love another Jew because he is part of the Jewish People. If one loves another Jew for another reason, the mitzvah has not been fulfilled. This detail is an integral part of the mitzvah. By the same token, continues Rabbi Hutner, one's love

for a *ger* must be due to his status as a *ger*, recognizing what he has sacrificed and achieved by choosing to become a member of the Jewish Nation. Thus, the Rambam describes a *ger* as an individual who has chosen to enter beneath the wings of the *Shechinah*, for this is a precise description of the mitzvah. The love must grow out of a profound appreciation and admiration for what this person has done in becoming a *ger*. If one loves a *ger* out of mercy or pity due to the fact that he is a stranger among the Jewish People, he has not fulfilled the mitzvah!

This idea, says Rabbi Hutner, can be proven by the love G-d expresses for the *ger*. In numerous places, the obligation to care for a *ger* is mentioned together with caring for the widow and the orphan. Yet in one verse (Devarim 10:18), the Torah states, "[G-d] carries out the judgment of the orphan and the widow, and loves the *ger*." The Rambam saw, in the singling out of G-d's love for the *ger* in the context of the widow and orphan, that the *ger* differs from the other two. While G-d cares for the widow and orphan due to their difficult and tragic circumstances, G-d does not care for the *ger* due to his challenging situation. Rather, there is a love expressed in the verse that is due to the unique spiritual achievement of the *ger*. This, says Rabbi Hutner, is why the Rambam specifically mentions G-d's love for the *ger*, as it proves the point that this love is borne out of appreciation for what the *ger* is, not due to the challenges he encounters in his life.

This also explains, continues Rabbi Hutner, why the Rambam mentions that there is a mitzvah to love the *ger* just as there is a mitzvah to love G-d. The obligation to love G-d stems from the appreciation of G-d's inherent greatness; it is impossible to say that one can love G-d because he pities Him, as such a relationship is irrelevant.

## Stories for the Soul

### Tough Call

One of the students at Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood had the special privilege of serving its great founder Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Aharon Kotler (1891-1962), his daily cup of coffee. One day, after placing the coffee on his rebbi's desk, the student passed the office and noticed that the cup was untouched. He slipped in, removed the cold cup of coffee and returned with a piping hot replacement, assuming that Rabbi Kotler had simply forgotten his coffee because he was so engrossed in his studies. Upon passing by a bit later and seeing the second cup still untouched, the student realized that it was not merely a matter of concentration; there must have been a distinct reason. With proper apologies he approached Rabbi Kotler for an explanation.

"I'll share my thoughts with you," Rabbi Kotler told him. "A certain family with whom I'm friendly is taking an interest in a former student of the yeshiva as a marriage prospect for their daughter. It is very likely that they will call me to inquire about him. "Praising him with attributes he does not possess is a Torah prohibition on two counts, '*midvar sheker tirchak*,' 'distance yourself from words of falsehood,' as well as '*lo sa'amod al dam re'acha*,' 'do not stand by your fellow's blood,' (which obligates us not to ignore harm of another that we can prevent), for if unknown negative traits ultimately lead to discord or divorce, it is directly attributable to the fact that honest information was withheld. On the other hand, I don't feel comfortable divulging my true feelings, since there is always the possibility that, once married, the couple will be happy with one another. My remarks might very well cause the needless disintegration

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## Kollel Happenings

### LEARN-A-THON & SIYUM ON MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>

Join the communal completion of an entire tractate of Talmud in the course of one hour of Torah study! Men, sign up and study a preassigned section of Tractate Beitzah and Mo'ed Katan with a class or chavrusah. Women, sign up to take part in a special study session. Sponsorship opportunities available with all proceeds to go to Tomchei Shabbos of Denver. For more info, to sign up or to sponsor, visit [denverkollel.org](http://denverkollel.org), email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org), or call 303-820-2855.

### THE TWO SIDES OF THE GUN CONTROL DEBATE AT MAY 9<sup>TH</sup> T4T

Join Ken Toltz, Founder & Co-Chair of Safe Campus Colorado, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they discuss the explosive issue of gun rights vs. gun control. Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### SFAS EMES: A PIERCING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

It is one of the most widely-studied works of our time. Sfas Emes gives us a glimpse into the infinite depths of Torah and Jewish thought. Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky is an expert in this great work, and a master in bringing its timeless lessons into daily life. Join Rabbi Karnowsky on Thursdays, 8:15-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St.

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

**Last week we asked:** How can an item in its natural state be permitted for consumption by one Jewish individual and forbidden to another? Neither is a *Kohen*, has any health issue or different customs, and no vows are involved.

**A:** 1. When there is a valid doubt if a food is permitted or Rabbinically prohibited, one may consume the item. This concept is called *safek d'rabanan l'kula*. Thus, if one individual was aware of a doubt (e.g. whether the forbidden item got switched with another), it is permitted to him; for all others it would still be forbidden. 2. The first three years after a fruit tree has been planted, its fruit are called *orlah* and are forbidden to eat. Contrary to most agriculturally-based mitzvos, *orlah* applies outside of Eretz Yisrael as well, with one

great difference: When one is in doubt if fruit are *orlah* outside of Eretz Yisrael, it is permitted. Thus, one who knows that the fruit are *orlah* is forbidden to partake of them, while the unknowing individual is permitted to do so. Many Rishonim rule that since this is not a general rule to follow in cases of doubt but a bona fide detail of *orlah*, one who is aware that the fruit are *orlah* need not protest upon seeing another Jew eating it! Practical halacha does not follow this opinion, though, and one ought to inform the person. (See *Minchas Chinuch* 246:14)

**This week's question:** When may the testimony of an individual be trusted for halachic matters (i.e. whether a food is kosher) by one Jew and not by another?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email [ryz@denverkollel.org](mailto:ryz@denverkollel.org).

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Noda BiYehuda Part III

Rabbi Landau entered the fray in an attempt to mediate the dispute. His *Iggeres Hashalom* (Letter of Peace) was his effort to resolve the terrible fight that was causing

so much harm. The content of this letter was regarded as very tactful, and it gained much attention among European Jewry.

## A Taste of Torah

*continued from front*

By the same token, one's love of a *ger* must grow from developing an appreciation of the greatness of the *ger*.

Developing an appreciation for everyone is an integral part of personal growth. The Torah provides us the opportunity for this exercise specifically with a *ger*, for a *ger* is someone who has exhibited great inner

conviction and strength to make a huge change in his life. As our Sages teach us, "Who is honored? One who honors other creations." If we only see the externals, we exist as superficial people. By recognizing the special qualities of others, we become people who are defined by our own inherent potential for greatness.

## Stories for the Soul

*continued from front*

of a match.

"It is indeed an awesome responsibility that I'm facing. For this reason, I have designated this day as one of fasting and prayer to Hashem that He grant me a kindness and spare me from this call."

This anecdote was related to the late Rosh Yeshiva of Manchester, Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, while he was visiting the United States. He was so inspired by Rabbi

Kotler's meticulousness in guarding each word he uttered that he remarked: "Had I come to America just to hear this beautiful story, it would have sufficed."

In this week's parsha, we are enjoined to take responsibility for others by not standing by the blood of another, but also warned to guard what comes out of our mouths. An awesome responsibility, indeed.

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