



# A Taste of Torah

## Stay Calm and Separate Challa

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

It's a rather strange sequence. Immediately following the debacle of the Sin of the Spies, G-d's decree that the Jewish Nation would remain in the desert for forty years, and the failed attempt by a small group to ascend to the Land of Israel sans Divine backing, Hashem gives Moshe two mitzvos. One is the libation offerings that are to be brought with the sacrifices, and the second is the mitzvah of separating *challa* from one's dough. What is the connection between these seemingly random mitzvos and the tragedy that had just occurred?

Rashi, commenting on the opening words of the section dealing with libations, "When you will come into the land of your dwelling places that I am giving you" (Shelach 15:2), states, "He informed them that they would enter the land." Seemingly, Rashi is pointing out that this was a reassurance that eventually, the Jewish People would enter the land. But still left hanging is why these two mitzvos were specifically chosen as the vehicle for that message.

The Sfas Emes (Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter of Gur; 1847-1905) explains that the primary error of the spies and the Jewish People who followed their lead was that they believed that success in conquering the Land of Israel was up to their ability to earn victory. Upon hearing of the great challenges that faced them, they quailed and felt that they could not achieve such a level to merit such victory.

What they failed to realize was that there are times when one must

surrender one's understanding of events and situations and simply rely on G-d to see things through, no matter how hopeless and impossible things seem. Despite the fact that the Jewish People may have indeed been less-than-perfect, their second-guessing of G-d's promise to them was a fatal flaw.

Living in the Land of Israel does not just mean plowing, planting and harvesting luscious fruits and grains. It means taking the physical blessings of that land and figuring out how to sanctify them in the service of G-d. It means being constantly on guard that one not be pulled down by the temptations that such worldly blessing present. It means that living in the Land of Israel as G-d's People is a tall order, one which the Jewish People were nervous of their ability to fulfill - and which exploded into full-blown panic when they heard the spies' report.

G-d sent them a message: "When you will come into the land... *that I am giving you.*" I am here to help you succeed, even when success seems nigh-well impossible. It's not all on your small shoulders! Remember Me, look to Me, ask for My help, and I will help you reach your goal.

There are many different mitzvos that require separations from one's produce. But libations and *challa* are taken at the farthest point in the process, at a time when a huge amount of human effort has been put into the product, at a point that seems quite distant from G-d's involvement and far closer to patting oneself on the back for a job well

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## Stories for the Soul

### Pulling Strings

In the Soviet Union, religious observance was grounds for severe punishment - loss of one's job, exile to Siberia, even execution. Still, there were Jews who took the chance to observe as much of the Torah as they could, despite the risks.

In one Soviet public school, there were four boys, Chabad chassidim, who were religious. Following school, they would go to a secret location to study Torah. The location of the school would change often, due to concern that it had been discovered.

The school principal walked into class at public school one day and announced that the children would be receiving immunization shots. A nurse entered, syringes in hand, and told the children they would need to lift their shirts to receive the shot.

One of the boys realized that he had a huge problem, as he was secretly wearing *tzitzis* beneath his shirt. Lifting his shirt would mean discovery and trouble for the boy and his family.

The boy immediately asked to use the restroom, planning to remove his *tzitzis* while he was out. The principal, though, thwarted his plans, saying, "Sure, you'll be the first to get the shot, and then you can go."

The boy did his best to hide his *tzitzis* as the nurse lifted his shirt. She gave no indication that anything was amiss as she administered the immunization,

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## Kollel Happenings

### STRETCHING THE TRUTH ON A CLAIM AT JUNE 13<sup>TH</sup> T4T

Join Richard Sokol, President of Personicare Healthcare Network LLC, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they discuss the issue of exaggerating a claim to ensure you get what you deserve. Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### 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 Edos, 198 S. Holly 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](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855.

### 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).

## Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

**Last week we asked:** An incident is related where Rav Shmuel Salant (1816-1909, Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem) was consulted regarding a dish into which a non-kosher ingredient had accidentally been mixed in excess of the 1/60 ratio which would have permitted it. He requested that a Sefardic Jew and a non-Jew be sought to aid in determining the permissibility of the dish. How would they be of assistance?

**A:** The Gemara (Chullin 97b) rules that in cases of mixtures, we may rely on a non-Jewish *kifeila* (cook) to taste the mixture, and if the forbidden item is indiscernible, the mixture would be permitted. The Shulchan

Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 98:1) quotes this ruling, while the Rema adds that the (Ashkenazic) custom is not to rely on the non-Jewish cook. Therefore, in the abovementioned incident, the non-Jew would taste it first. If the non-kosher wasn't discernible, the Sefardic Jew (who follows the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch) would be permitted to taste it, based on the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch. His testimony would then permit the Ashkenazic host to partake of the mixture!

**This week's question:** The general rule is that a derivative of a forbidden object is forbidden as well. Where do we have an exception to this rule?

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

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, the Noda BiYehuda - Part X

Rabbi Landau authored a work on a number of Talmudic tractates called *Tziyun Linefesh Chaya*, more commonly referred to by its acronym,

*Tzlach. Tzlach*, as well, has become an eponym for Rabbi Landau. Rabbi Landau also published his glosses on the Talmud, titled *Mareh Yechezkel*.

## A Taste of Torah

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done. At this crucial moment, when human achievement can cause one to forget Who really makes it happen, G-d commands us to give Him some of our produce! This is a reminder that no matter how much effort we may

invest, we still need His help. There is no need to panic at the outset and no right to fall victim to hubris once you have triumphed – at all stages, it is all in G-d's hands.

## Stories for the Soul

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though the child was unsure whether she had noticed them or not.

The next day during lunch break, the nurse called the boy to her office. The boy panicked, thinking she was going to tell him about the *tzitzis* she had seen. Instead, to the boy's shock and delight, the nurse informed him that she was Jewish! She expressed her admiration of the boy for his courage

and steadfastness in maintaining his religious beliefs under the difficult circumstances. The nurse told the boy that from that day on, he could come to her office to wash his hands for bread before eating lunch!

Our Sages stress the importance of *tzitzis* as a mitzvah that represents all 613 mitzvos, as well as providing protection from danger.

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