

Parshas Pinchas

July 6, 2018

# A Taste of Torah

## Trade Secrets

by Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky

We are all familiar with this process. We just fell into the trap of the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination). He successfully convinced us that it's definitely worth it to indulge in this forbidden pleasure. Then comes a feeling of "I give up!" There is no way that G-d is still interested in us after what we just did. So we go and commit another sin, because we figure, "I'm a lost case anyway," and the process continues.

How do we stop this downward spiral and create positive momentum to climb back up?

This week's Torah portion relates how Pinchas turned back G-d's wrath from upon the Children of Israel. He zealously avenged the sin of Zimri ben Salu, a prince of the tribe of Shimon, who sinned with a Midianite woman. Pinchas took a spear and killed both of them, and, in doing so, removed G-d's anger from the Children of Israel.

Why was G-d's wrath directed at the entire Jewish Nation because of the sin of a solitary man, Zimri ben Salu? Zimri definitely deserved what he got, but what did the rest of the Jews do wrong?

The Nesivos Shalom (Rabbi Sholom Noach Berezovsky; 1911-2000) points out that the Torah relates that Zimri publicly took the Midianite woman in front of the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and Moshe. What were they doing when they saw it? They were all weeping at the entrance of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle).

The Nesivos Shalom explains that they were weeping because they believed there was no more hope for such a person. One who can publicly engage in such a morally depraved act can no longer have a connection with G-d. It's over. This, however, was a mistake, and was considered a transgression on their part. A major tactic of the *Yetzer Hara* is not

just to get one to sin, but to cause one to become depressed after the sin, and therefore give up! Once he has a person feeling, "I've messed up and G-d doesn't want my mitzvos anymore," he has him in his claws. Now he can get the person to commit any sin that he wants him to.

Once one knows this secret, what's the best thing to do after falling prey to sin? Get up right away and say, "I just slipped temporarily, but G-d still loves me and wants me to come back." Of course, one has to do real *teshuva* (repentance) - confession of wrongdoing, regret for the sin and acceptance not to repeat it again. But don't fall into the trap by giving up and feeling depressed. Get up, do *teshuva*, and immediately do a mitzvah! This is the way to truly win. The *Yetzer Hara* doesn't have us in his clutches anymore.

The Jewish Nation saw another Jew do a despicable act, and they all started weeping. No one moved to rectify the situation; they just cried. Because they believed it's too late. There is no hope for such a situation after seeing a Jew bringing a Midianite women into his home. All they could do was cry. This aroused God's anger against them.

Pinchas removed the wrath by taking action - he took a spear and avenged the deed. He believed that there is no situation that cannot be rectified. Don't give up and say that there is nothing to do. Get up and repair the sin, do whatever needs to be done. But don't believe the *Yetzer Hara's* narrative that it's too late and all that's left to do is to weep and feel depressed.

This is the only antidote to get off the slippery slope after a sin. There is never a time for depression in the Torah. One can feel serious regret and try to feel the depth of how bad it was to do this act. But know that there is always *teshuva*. G-d still loves me and is waiting for me to

## Stories for the Soul

### A Child for the Ages

In a small village in Lithuania lived a Jewish couple and their 15-year-old daughter, Sara. The couple owned a tavern, paying monthly rent to the gentile landlord.

One day, the son of the landlord happened by the tavern and noticed Sara. He decided on the spot that he would marry her - or else. He rode off to get ready for his wedding, leaving the family despondent. There was only one way out - Sara would need to immediately marry someone else. Once married, the young man would not be able to dissolve her marriage and take her for himself. The problem was, where could an unmarried Jewish male be found so quickly to marry her? Furthermore, the fellow would be risking the wrath of the landlord's son, never a good idea.

In the tavern at the time was an older, single man named Reb Yosef. Reb Yosef served as the *melamed*, teacher, for the children of the village. As the family agonized over their very limited options, Reb Yosef spoke up. "I would be willing to wed Sara," he said. "A bit later, after things settle down, we will arrange a divorce."

Sara and her parents agreed to the idea, and a marriage ceremony was arranged. Not long after, the landlord's son arrived, only to discover that his would-be bride was already married! Enraged though he was, there was not much he could do, and he left in a huff.

After his departure, Reb Yosef offered to arrange a divorce. However, Sara refused, saying Reb Yosef had already displayed his devotion and commitment to her, and that if G-d had arranged for her to marry this

*continued on back*

## Kollel Happenings

### RABBANIT MIZRACHI AT THREE LOCATIONS!

The Women's Division of the Denver Community Kollel present a video for women, **Mourning the Churban**. Three Locations & Times! **Sunday, July 15** at Aish Denver, 9550 E. Belleview Ave. **Monday, July 16** at the Fine home, 1664 Wolff St., **Tuesday, July 17** location TBA. Doors open at 7:45 pm, presentation at 8 pm. No charge, suggested donation of \$5 to help cover costs of future video presentations.

### MOTZOEI SHABBOS NACHAMU KUMZITZ

Join the Kollel for an evening of inspirational singing on Motzoei Shabbos Nachamu, July 28<sup>th</sup> at the home of Ari and Ruthy Krausz, 1675 Tennyson St. The event will feature live music, refreshments and divrei Torah. The kumzitz will be held at approximately 10 pm. For more information, please contact [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org).

### POLICE BRUTALITY AT SEPT. TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Daniel Waitz, former law officer, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they explore this difficult subject. September 5<sup>th</sup>, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

**Last week we asked:** Is there a difference between a Jew's prohibition of *aiver min hachai* and that of a non-Jew?

**A:** Yes. 1. A non-Jew is commanded not to consume *aiver min hachai* of any creature, regardless of its kosher status, while for a Jew, only kosher animals are included. 2. The Rambam (Melachim 9:10) writes that unlike a Jew, a non-Jew is liable for consuming even a minute amount of *aiver min hachai*. 3. Additionally, according to the Rambam (9:12), an animal which has been slaughtered but is still convulsing would be considered *aiver min hachai* for a non-Jew only. This is because the point that permits an animal for a non-Jew is death, not slaughter. The

Rashba (quoted by Kesef Mishna) rules that this is permitted for a non-Jew, as well. 4. According to some authorities, the concept of *bitul* (nullification of forbidden items) does not apply to non-Jews. Thus, if even a minute amount of *aiver min hachai* would be mixed with a large quantity of other foods, it would be forbidden. (See Teshuvos Pischei Teshuva Yoreh De'ah 62:1 quoting Chasam Sofer and Darkei Teshuva 62:5)

**This week's question:** What commonly available item may be forbidden for non-Jews due to the prohibition of *aiver min hachai* (consuming a part of a living animal)?

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

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Chasam Sofer - Part I

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, generally known as the Chasam Sofer, was one of the towering Torah leaders and giants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Moshe Sofer was born in Frankfurt am Main on 8 Tishrei 5523/September 24, 1762, during the Seven Years' War, to Shmuel and Reizel Sofer. Shmuel's maternal grandfather was Rabbi Shmuel Schotten, who had served as the *Rosh Yeshiva* (Dean) of the yeshiva

of Frankfurt am Main and rabbi of Landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt (a state of the Holy Roman Empire). Rabbi Schotten published *Kos ha-Yeshu'os* and a collection of responsa titled *Shu"t Mharsheishoch* (an acronym of Moreinu Harav Shmuel Schotten Cohen).

At nine years old, young Moshe entered the yeshiva of Rabbi Nosson Adler (1741-1800) in Frankfurt.

## A Taste of Torah

*continued from front*

come back to Him. Get back up and move forward, and you will immediately have left the clutches of the *Yetzer Hara*. We will not let him win by being depressed

and losing hope. We will get up and head right back to our loving Father in Heaven. Because we know the *Yetzer Hara*'s trade secret.

## Stories for the Soul

*continued from front*

man, despite his advanced age, she would remain his wife.

The couple had a son, whom they named Aryeh Leib. Although Leib, as he was called, lost his elderly father at a relatively young age, he was a special child. He grew up to become the great Chassidic *tzaddik* Reb Leib Sarahs; his last name was taken

in honor of the sacrifice of his mother to avoid marrying a non-Jew.

In this week's parsha, the Torah lists the lineage of the families of the Jewish People, as a testimony that, despite being slaves in Egypt for centuries, they maintained their purity and did not allow their lineage to be tainted.