

A Taste of Torah

It Doesn't Come Easy

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

The coming week will feature the beginning of the month of Elul, a month of preparation for the judgment of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, when we try to strengthen ourselves in our service of Hashem as we approach the Days of Awe.

In looking to improve our spiritual stature, there is a tendency to focus on mitzvos which are more challenging to fulfill, as opposed to mitzvos that are easier to observe and whose fulfillment are thus taken for granted. In this week's parsha, however, we find a need to strengthen ourselves for even the simplest mitzvah.

The Torah tells us (Re'eh 12:23), "You should strengthen yourselves not to eat blood." Rashi cites an argument as to the need to strengthen ourselves in an area that we would naturally avoid, for consumption of blood is normally repulsive. Rabbi Yehuda derives from here that the Jewish People were, indeed, habituated in consuming blood as part of their normal diet. However, Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai argues and posits that blood is disgusting and was therefore avoided regardless. Despite this, the Torah orders us to strengthen ourselves in not consuming blood. From this, he infers that if the Torah expects us to fortify ourselves for an easily-observed mitzvah, how much more so must we take steps to reinforce our observance of more challenging mitzvos!

A deeper appreciation of this idea can be found based on the words of Tosafos (Kiddushin 32a). The Gemara (ibid.) tells us that one who is commanded to fulfill a mitzvah

and does so is greater than someone who is not commanded to perform the mitzvah but fulfills it nonetheless. Tosafos there explain that this is due to the fact that the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination) will target the person who is obligated in the mitzvah, trying to prevent him from fulfilling the mitzvah that he has been commanded. One who is not obligated, however, is of far less interest to the *Yetzer Hara*. This idea can explain why every mitzvah, regardless of the apparent ease of observance, requires one to strengthen himself to ensure it is properly fulfilled. The *Yetzer Hara* is always on the prowl, looking to trip up those who have mitzvos to keep.

Based on this, we can explain a difficult passage of Talmud (Shabbos 10a). The mishna teaches us that once one begins a meal, he is not obligated to interrupt the meal to pray when the time for the *mincha* prayer arrives; rather, he may complete the meal and pray later. The Talmud states that the beginning of a meal is defined as when one loosens one's belt. The Talmud poses two questions. First, asks the Talmud, is it such an inconvenience to fasten one's belt (and then go pray)? Secondly, let us assume the belt is not properly fastened; why can't the person pray without a fastened belt? The Talmud answers that a person should be properly dressed when davening.

Seemingly, the first question of the Talmud was not addressed. Rabbi Shnuer Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812) explains that the Talmud did indeed answer the first question. Since there

Stories for the Soul

Hands Off

Rabbi Yehoshua Isaac Shapira (1801-1873), better known as Reb Eizel Charif (Reb Eizel the Sharp-Witted), served as the rabbi of Slonim. He once saw a wealthy but stingy resident of his city emptying his pockets of *chametz* (leavened bread) before Pesach.

"Why are you emptying your pockets?" he asked the gentlemen. The fellow explained that he needed to get all the *chametz* out of his pockets ahead of Pesach.

"Surely you forget the law that says that when checking for *chametz*, one is only obligated to search "*ad sheyado maga'as*," until where one's hand can reach," said Reb Eizel. "For years, I have witnessed your behavior when it comes to giving charity, and it appears to me that your hand does not reach all the way to your pocket. Don't bother with your pockets, you have no obligation to check them!"

In his week's parsha, the Torah exhorts us to assist the poor and less-fortunate. Focusing on our own personal mitzvos but forgetting the mitzvah to provide for the needy is a most unfortunate situation.

Kollel Happenings

POLICE BRUTALITY AT THE SEPT TORAH FOR TYCOONS

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

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

SUMMER NIGHT SEDER FOR BACHURIM

Attention bachurim in Denver over the summer! The Kollel is once again holding its Summer Night Seder for Bachurim at the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash. Sunday-Thursday. Night seder begins at 8 pm, with ma'ariv at 9:10 pm. Stipends available for boys who maintain the sederim. For further details, info or sponsorship opportunities, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: What commonly used ingredient is regarded as parve (neutral; non-meat and non-dairy), although it originates from a kosher mammal?

A: Gelatin originating from animal hides are considered parve according to many halachic authorities. The reasoning is as follows: Hides that are chemically decomposed lose their halachic status of food. The new substance's subsequent use as an ingredient serves to halachically reconstitute it, thus achieving the status of food anew. Specifically, gelatin is considered a *ma'amid*, a

food stabilizer, which cannot be negated. Therefore, the hides used must be kosher hides. However, the meat status does not get reinstated, and it is considered a parve product.

This week's question: *Min haTorah* (Biblically), one is forbidden to consume meat from a kosher *beheima* (domestic mammal) which was cooked with milk. The Sages expanded this prohibition to include poultry as well. What halachic leniencies exist regarding poultry vis-à-vis meat in this regard?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Chasam Sofer - Part VI

The opposition Moshe witnessed to the nascent Haskalah seems to have left a deep impression upon him, as he became a staunch opponent of the Haskalah and reform Judaism (as will be discussed at length later). He would recall, even toward the end of his life, the dire predictions of his teacher, Rabbi Horowitz, regarding the Haskalah movement.

When Rabbi Adler returned to Frankfurt in 1785, Rabbi Sofer remained in Moravia; upon the advice of Rabbi Adler, he moved to Prossnitz (Prostjov). There, he became engaged to Sarah Yerwitz, daughter of Rabbi Moshe Yerwitz, the rabbi of Prossnitz.

Sarah Yerwitz was several years older than Rabbi Sofer and a widow, and she had not borne any children during her first marriage. When Rabbi Sofer's family learned of this, they pressured him to break the engagement. Rabbi Sofer wrote to Rabbi Adler for advice on how to proceed, but he did not receive a reply prior to the wedding date. He took this as a Heavenly sign that the wedding plans should continue.

Rabbi Sofer remained in Prossnitz following his marriage, devoting all of his time to Torah study; his father-in-law supported him financially for two years. Eventually, Rabbi Sofer became head of the yeshiva in Prossnitz.

A Taste of Torah

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is an obligation to dress properly, there is now an inconvenience to fasten one's belt! The *Yetzer Hara* will try to interfere, making fastening one's belt a challenging activity.

As we begin our spiritual preparation

for the Days of Awe, let's realize that spiritual growth is attainable, but it does not happen on its own. It requires focus and commitment to overcome the *Yetzer Hara* that seeks to impede our progress.