

THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel

Parshas Eikev

August 3, 2018

A Taste of Torah

Food for Thought

by Rabbi Yaakov Zions

The book of Devarim is sometimes referred to as a work of *mussar*, an ethical discourse, because of the many moral principles contained therein. This week's parsha, Eikev, contains many of the wonderful lessons Moshe imparted to his beloved nation before he passed on. Continuing the theme of the past Torah portions, he reviews the experiences they encountered throughout their forty-year sojourn in the desert and points out the great and the not-so-great. The recording of this "State of the Nation" address for posterity highlights the importance for all of us to learn from these experiences.

Aside from the lessons we can learn from the individual episodes, there is a broader aspect, as well. The desert experience was an essential part of the formation of the G-dly nation the Jews were to become. It is for this reason that Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah 2:2) refers to this sojourn as "*kelulosayich*," the nuptials. Similarly, in the era of the future redemption, we will once again have this nation-forming experience. The verses in Yechezkel (20:35) tell us of a trip in the future to "*midbar ha'amim*," the desert of (i.e., surrounded by) many nations. According to Rashi, that prophecy refers to a future redemption where we will need to undergo another desert experience in order to once again join in the honeymoon!

One of the experiences discussed in our parsha is the manna. Moshe tells the Jewish People how G-d tested them and fed them manna in order to teach them that "man does not survive on bread alone, rather,

man survives upon all of Hashem's utterances (Eikev 8:3)." This cryptic verse needs explanation. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821), in his work *Ruach Chaim* (3:3), quotes Rabbi Chaim Vital and explains this verse based on the following Kabbalistic concept: There can be nothing in our physical world which is totally devoid of a spiritual spark. Our mission is to remove, purify and elevate these spiritual elements with lives lived in accordance with Torah and mitzvos.

It is noteworthy that abstinence from physicality is not a highlight of Judaism; it is, indeed, frowned upon. With specific limitations, we engage the physical world head-on, albeit in a spiritual way. The manna seems to be an exception to this rule. The Talmud (Yoma 75b) tells us about the special qualities of the manna, one of them being that the manna produced no waste. It was a purely spiritual food for a special period in history, the desert "education" system. For forty years, the generation experienced a special connection to Hashem through Moshe - heaven-sent spiritual manna to eat and the lack of daily distractions such as farming. It was truly a national honeymoon, and the nation would have to take this experience with them as they would travel through different circumstances in their "marriage" with G-d.

Rabbi Chaim, based on these ideas, explains the aforementioned verse as follows: Man does not survive on bread alone; rather, on all of Hashem's utterances which are interwoven with the physical bread. When we eat, our spiritual elements

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Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Stories for the Soul

Jump Ship

Based on a story on revach.net

A man living in Vienna was struggling to support his family. He decided that his fortune lay overseas in the "*goldene medinah*" of America, so he bought a ship ticket with plans to travel there and start anew. While this fellow was not one to run to Chassidic rebbes before making important decisions, he decided to heed his friends' advice and go to the saintly Chortkover Rebbe (Rabbi Yisroel Friedman; 1854-1934) for a blessing before embarking on his new life.

He was greeted very cordially by the Rebbe, who gave him a heartfelt blessing for success. On his way out, the Rebbe stopped him and said, "When you get to America, please sends regards to Hashem."

The man, a bit befuddled, turned to the Rebbe and asked, "Why? Is there a different Hashem in America than in Vienna?" The Rebbe then retorted and said, "If the same Hashem is in Vienna, why do you need to go to America for Him to give you a livelihood?" While this lesson ought to suffice, there is an addendum. The story continues that the man took the Rebbe's message to heart and decided to stay in Vienna, accepting the loss of the money he spent on the boat ticket to America. The name of the boat he was supposed to have taken? *Titanic*.

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.

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.

THE LETTERS OF THE LAW: THE MELACHOS OF SHABBOS

Rabbi Shmuel Halpern received *semicha* (ordination) from Beth Medrash Govoha in 2016 and has spent the past four years receiving *shimush* (training in practical halacha) from Rabbi Micha Cohn of Lakewood. Rabbi Halpern now shares his halachic expertise in this weekly class that will help familiarize you with the laws of Shabbos. Monday evenings 8-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St. Class resumes August 13.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: What halacha is based on the unique specifics of rennet?

A: The concept of *gevinas yisrael*. The rennet used in cheesemaking must originate from a kosher source. If even a miniscule amount of non-kosher rennet was used, the resulting cheese will be non-kosher. This is based on the concept of *davar hama'amid*, that an ingredient that gives a product its form can't be nullified. As such, there was a genuine concern when purchasing cheese produced by a non-Jew that the rennet used may be from a non-kosher source. The Sages therefore enacted that for cheese to

be considered kosher, a Jew must be present when the rennet is added. According to some authorities, the Jew must personally add the rennet to the milk. Although much of the rennet used today is from artificial sources, the need for *gevinas yisrael* remains unchanged.

Sources: Avodah Zarah 29b, 35a-35b, Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 115:2, Shach, Yoreh De'ah 115:20.

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

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

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Chasam Sofer - Part V

Apparently, the twenty-year-old Moshe had merely come to see his rebbi off, but, on the spot, he decided to follow Rabbi Adler to Boskowitz. It is said that he chased the wagon carrying Rabbi Adler, calling that he wished to accompany him, until he caught Rabbi Adler's attention. Moshe would never return to Frankfurt, although he always signed his name as *Moshe Sofer of Frankfurt am Main*.

The period when Moshe left Frankfurt was a rather tumultuous one. Earlier in 1782, an enlightened Jew by the name of Naftali Hertz Wessely had written a work titled *Divrei Shalom Ve'emes*, which advocated abandoning traditional Jewish educational systems and creating a new one which would have a much greater focus on secular

education. This work, along with Moses Mendelssohn's translation of the Torah into High German and his commentary on the Torah, drew much condemnation and criticism from many circles across the Jewish world, as it was seen as the beginning of a very slippery slope toward assimilation. (These predictions ended up being tragically prophetic, as assimilation ran rampant in the coming decades in Western Europe. Of Mendelssohn's six children, all but one converted to Christianity.)

One of those critics was Rabbi Sofer's teacher, Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz, who delivered a sermon against Mendelssohn and the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement he had unleashed.

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are nourished by the spiritual parts of the food! This lesson was inculcated in our very essence from our desert experience, and that was what Moshe

was stressing in his final days. Let us learn this lesson and our seemingly mundane activities, such as eating, will become truly elevated and rewarding!