

# THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel

Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Vayelech/Shuva

September 14, 2018

## A Taste of Torah

### Desire for Change

by Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

“Gather together the nation; men, women and children, in order that they hear and learn, so that they fear Hashem and keep all the words of His Torah.” (Vayelech 31:12) In this verse, the Torah teaches us the mitzvah of *hakhel*. The basics of this mitzvah are as follows: Once every seven years, there is a special mitzvah to gather together all members of the Jewish Nation in order to hear the Torah being read in the *Bais Hamikdash*.

Rashi, quoting the Talmud (Chagigah 3a), questions the necessity of requiring the attendance of the young children. Just how much Torah can an infant possibly understand? The Talmud answers that the purpose of this obligation was to provide merit to the parents for bringing them. The Sfas Emes (Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter; 1847-1905) asks, if there is, in fact, no intrinsic benefit for the infants, why reward the parents for bringing them?

The Sfas Emes explains that the superficial understanding of the Talmud’s question is incorrect. Certainly, there is a great benefit for all in being exposed to the great spirituality of the *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple). The question was how an infant can access that value. Although Hashem bestows great spiritual inspiration to those who engage in Torah study and prayer, this inspiration must be preceded by a strong desire to connect to Hashem. When we put in the required effort, showing a strong *ratzon* (desire), Hashem then showers us with inspiration. How, then, can an infant receive this Divine inspiration when

it hasn’t invested any effort or *ratzon*? Now that we understand the Talmud’s question in a new light, we must reassess our understanding of the Talmud’s answer. How does “giving reward to the parents” compensate for the lack of effort on behalf of the child? The Sfas Emes answers that the reward for the parents isn’t something unrelated to their act. The parents are rewarded for their efforts by the inspiration the child receives. Here lies a great secret. While it’s true that Hashem only bestows inspiration to those who seek it, parents can, on some level, seek on behalf of their children. This concept can give parents great hope. Even when the road of influence seems blocked, the road of hope and yearning is never closed.

This idea isn’t limited to the parent-child relationship. Since Jews are all part of one collective soul, we all have the unique ability to influence our fellow Jews on many levels. It seems obvious that we influence the people we interact with; the novelty of the Sfas Emes’s teaching is that this influence is much farther-reaching than we’d think possible. When a Jew has a positive *ratzon*, a deep desire to connect to his Creator, he can share that with the entire Jewish People. This can then allow for a Heavenly inspiration to flow forth from on high to the entire Jewish People! All we need to do is focus on the fact that we are much more than just a lot of individuals. We are part of a larger picture; not only do our actions influence others, our yearnings do, too!

## Stories for the Soul

### Firm Friendship

The Satmar Rov, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum (1887-1979), arrived in America following World War II. He settled in Williamsburg, New York, where he rebuilt the Satmar chassidus that had been decimated during the Holocaust into one of the largest and most influential Chassidic communities in the world.

Rabbi Aharon Kotler (1891-1962) escaped the European inferno and arrived in the United States in 1941. In 1943, he opened Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, NJ, and pioneered the notion of Kollel learning in America. His efforts bore fruit, as the Kollel movement swept the country, and Beth Medrash Govoha is today the largest yeshiva in North America.

These two great men differed strongly on a number of issues vital to the Jewish world. They were both unflinching and firm in their positions. Yet they had the greatest respect for each other. When Rabbi Kotler passed away, the Satmar Rov eulogized him effusively, famously paraphrasing a comment of Rashi regarding the lighting of the Menorah by Aharon the Priest: “Aharon did not change a thing!” Despite the fact that he disagreed with Rabbi Kotler on fundamental issues, he still testified that Rabbi Kotler did not deviate from the proper traditions and observances that Torah Judaism had kept for millennia!

In this week’s parsha, Hashem instructs Yehoshua to stand firm

*continued on back*

*continued on back*

## Kollel Happenings

### THE ROAD BACK TO HASHEM: THE PROGRESSION THROUGH ELUL, ROSH HASHANA, YOM KIPPUR & SUKKOS

Join the Kollel for a special series for women during this special time of year. The final class will be delivered by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher on *Awe & Joy: The Repentance of Yom Kippur & Sukkos*, Sunday, 9/16, 7:45 pm at the Weiss home, 5012 S. Xenia St. Classes sponsored in memory of Alex Wappelhorst, Michel ben Baruch a"h.

### 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](http://www.denverkollel.org), email [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

### DNA TESTING AT OCT. TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Cody Glickman, Doctoral Student at CU Anschutz, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they analyze the various strands of this new frontier October 10<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:** How can a food be permissible to eat, but become prohibited based on the passing of time? We are not referring to sacrifices or *chametz* with the approach of Pesach.

**A:** As we have discussed previously, if a patient requires a meal to be cooked for him on Shabbos, we would request a non-Jew to do the cooking, even if it is a *bishul-akum*-sensitive food (i.e., it is inedible raw and fit for a royal

meal). According to some halachic authorities, once Shabbos has passed, the food becomes forbidden, even for the patient!

Sources: Rema, Yoreh De'ah 113:16, Mishna Berurah 318:14 and 328:63.

**This week's question:** What is unique about the way *Shiras Ha'azinu* (the song comprising most of Parshas Ha'azinu) appears in the Torah?

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

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Moshe Sofer, Chasam Sofer Part XI

It is notable that the Pressburg yeshiva featured many programs that were considered innovational for their time. All schools in Pressburg had to be licensed, and the yeshiva was no exception. The Ministry of Education oversaw its operations. By law, secular

studies had to be taught in the four upper grade levels. While secular studies did not take place in the yeshiva itself, but at a different location, the classes were taught by religious teachers. At a certain age, students took course in public speaking.

## A Taste of Torah

*continued from front*

The Chazon Ish (Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz; 1878-1953), at the end of his commentary to *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim*, applies this principle to *tefillah* (prayer). He explains that we need to make a choice of our own free will before we can hope for Divine assistance in our spiritual growth. This free-willed choice is sometimes expressed through action, and, at other times, through prayer. The human effort must

precede the Divine gift of inspiration, but the human effort doesn't have to be through the individual in question. Through the prayer and yearning of one Jew, Hashem will help another Jew find his way home. The greater one's connection to his people, the greater his impact. May we all merit to maximize our potential by enabling the collective Jewish People to connect with their Father in Heaven.

## Stories for the Soul

*continued from front*

as the leader of the Jewish People and to be the final decision-maker, even in the face of opposition. Yet Moshe tells Yehoshua elsewhere to seek the advice of the Elders. Both are true - a leader

must take the responsibility of making the right decision, even when it is unpopular. But he must show respect to those who have other ideas.