



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Va'eschanan

August 16, 2019

A Taste of Torah

Higher Fulfillment

by Rabbi Nesanel Kipper

Moshe tells the Jewish People (Va'eschanan 4:1) to "listen to the decrees and laws that I teach you to perform, so that you may live..." What is meant by "in order that you may live?" It doesn't seem that by not listening to the mitzvos, one will simply cease to live. Furthermore, one can find many people who seem to live moral, happy, fulfilling lives, even without observing the mitzvos of the Torah. How are we to understand these words of the Torah?

The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin; 1816-1893), in his classic work *Ha'amek Davar*, explains that we find many times in the Torah that "life" is used in reference to the state of happiness and joy experienced when one feels complete. When one experiences happiness and feels complete, this infuses a person with life.

However, there are different levels of life. An animal, for example, needs very little. It may well feel happy and content by merely having sufficient food and drink. Hence, because its needs are minimal, an animal's sense of fulfillment is complete in a very basic way. However, Man needs intellectual pleasure, honor and the like. There are many more and greater needs for a person to feel fulfilled and complete. Let us say, for instance, that an intelligent professor decides to waste his knowledge and gift of intellect and instead spends his day eating and drinking in a local bar. At night he goes to sleep, he awakes in the morning, goes to the local bar again, and repeats this regimen day after day. What a sad reality that would be. Indeed, we would look upon the man with pity,

for he is wasting away his incredible capabilities. Surely, such a man is not feeling fulfilled and complete. Because his potential is so much greater, the needs for fulfillment and happiness - through realizing that potential - are much greater, as well.

When G-d gave us the Torah, He gave us the ultimate spiritual joy which is attained by attaching ourselves to G-d and His Torah. Just as Man, due to his greater potential, needs more than an animal to feel fulfilled, we, as Jews, merit the ultimate joy, the Torah, and can only truly experience the happiness of being complete through learning and living the Torah. It is only then that we are truly living. Indeed, through serving G-d and learning His Torah, we are infused with life.

If a Jew wastes this heightened sense of spirituality and doesn't use it to connect to G-d and engage in His Torah, he is like the professor who spends his days in a bar. Others can certainly achieve fulfillment and happiness by leading moral lives during which they achieve their full potential as humans. As Jews, however, who were chosen by G-d and given the Torah, we will never be complete without it.

This is what Moshe was telling the Jewish People, that we should listen to the laws and rules in order that we may live. Observing the Torah and the mitzvos will bring us the ultimate joy because only with the Torah will we feel complete.

It is with this understanding that we can strengthen ourselves, knowing that the more we immerse ourselves in G-d's Torah, the more we will experience the true joy of being complete - the joy of life.

Stories for the Soul

Pray to Delay

Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid Grossman, the rabbi of Migdal Emek, was once invited to officiate at a wedding taking place on the seventh day of the month of Tammuz. He accepted the honor with the condition that the *chuppah* (marriage ceremony) not take place later than eight o'clock in the evening. He explained that his grandson's *sheva brachos* (post-wedding celebration held during the seven days beginning from the wedding) was the same night, and he couldn't come too late.

On the night of the wedding, however, Rabbi Grossman got stuck in considerable traffic and arrived late to the wedding, and the *chuppah* took place only at 8:20. After the *chuppah*, one of the grandmothers said to Rabbi Grossman, with tears in her eyes, "I am so happy that the *chuppah* was at 8:20, after nightfall, and not earlier. I was praying all day long that the *chuppah* should take place after nightfall, since the *Sefer Chasidim Hachadash* teaches that one shouldn't get married on the seventh of Tammuz."

While most people are not particular about adhering to this custom, this woman's tradition was to avoid marriage on the seventh of Tammuz. She was quite distraught by this, and her sincere prayers that the wedding not take place until the following calendar day were answered.

In this week's parsha, Moshe relates that he prayed extensively - according to our Sages, 515

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Kollel Happenings

MOTZOEI SHABBOS NACHAMU KUMZITZ THIS WEEK!

Join the Kollel for an evening of inspirational singing on Motzoei Shabbos Nachamu, August 17th at the home of Rabbi Yissochor and Avigail Steinharter, 1395 Utica St. The event will feature live music, refreshments and divrei Torah. The kumzitz will be held at 9:45 pm. For more information, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A BLOWN CALL AT SEPTEMBER 4th TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Jesse Aragon, president, Ark Seal International, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they tackle this fascinating subject. Sep. 4th, 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.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: What is the association between the reading of the *haftarah* and the recitation of *Uva Letzion* at *mincha* of Shabbos?

A: There is a well-known reason for the recitation of the *haftarah*. At one time in antiquity, the gentile government prohibited the public reading of the Torah, but did not forbid reading *Navi* in public. Therefore, Jewish communities began reading selections from *Navi* that were similar to the Torah portion that should have been read that day. Although the decree was eventually rescinded, the practice of reading the *haftarah* continued and was appended as the final segment of the Torah reading.

There is, however, another credible reason for the recitation of the *haftarah* from the writings of the Geonim (early post-Talmudic scholars). They report that in ancient times, a *haftarah* was recited toward the end of *shacharis* every day of the year. At the point where *Uva Letzion* is recited today, they would take out a *Navi* and read about ten verses together with their Aramaic translation, the common Jewish vernacular at the time. (According to some versions, the study of *Navi* then

concluded with the two main verses of *kedusha*, which originate from the books of Yeshayahu and Yechezkel, with their Aramaic translation.) This was done to guarantee that people fulfilled the daily requirement to study some Scriptural part of the Torah, in addition to the daily requirement of studying both Mishna and Gemara. Although this custom ceased, the verses of *kedusha* remained and formed the nucleus of our daily recitation of *Uva Letzion*. On Shabbos and Yom Tov, when the *haftarah* readings continued, there is no need to recite *Uva Letzion* immediately after the Torah reading, since that is when we recite the *haftarah*. For this reason, *Uva Letzion* is postponed until *mincha*.

Sources: Abudraham, quoted by commentators to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 284, Teshuvos HaGeonim #55, Shibbolei HaLeket #44 (By Rabbi Tzidkiya ben Avraham of 13th-century Italy).

This week's question: When is a *haftarah* recited by some communities, while others omit it completely? Both are in the same locale.

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

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XV

Once the high-profile Mr. Taft entered the fray, Seasingood removed himself from the case, and, eventually, the suit against the mikvah was dropped. It is

said that Taft sent Rabbi Silver a bill for \$4,000 with the words "paid in full" written across it.

Stories for the Soul

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prayers! – to be allowed into the Land of Israel. G-d ordered Moshe to cease praying, as one more prayer and He would have to accede to Moshe's plea, something which could not occur.

The power of prayer is immense and one should never despair and cease, for one never knows what positive effect each word of prayer has.