



Parshas Nitzavim

September 27, 2019

A Taste of Torah

Portion Control

by Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz (1902-1979), the late Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem, would often repeat the following insight:

The Jerusalem Talmud (Rosh Hashana 3:5) tells us that the words of Torah are “poor” in one place and “rich” in another. This means that oftentimes, an obscure (poor) statement can only be understood with the knowledge of a “rich” passage found elsewhere. “If so,” wondered Rabbi Shmuelevitz, “how can one manage to study without an all-encompassing knowledge of Torah?” The Talmud teaches that a person should first broaden his knowledge and then work to deepen his understanding. Without a good knowledge base, it is extremely difficult to have the proper approach and perspective for one’s Torah studies. This is true in a general sense, and applies even where two subjects may not be directly related. In addition, many subjects in Torah are found in several locations. Only by studying the various relevant passages can we weave together the beautiful tapestry of the Torah.

This idea was a genuine expression of Rabbi Shmuelevitz’s focus on gaining a broad knowledge of Torah. Already in his early twenties, he had memorized the entire library of the Mir Yeshiva in Poland! This wasn’t due only to his great intellect, but was a result of tremendous effort and diligence.

As inspiring as these ideas are, they make attaining vast Torah knowledge and greatness seem very distant and unattainable. A verse in this week’s parsha comes to dispel this sense of

despair: “This mitzvah isn’t removed or distant from you. It isn’t in the heavens, nor across the sea. Rather, it is exceedingly close to **you**; it is in your heart and mouth to fulfill it.” (Nitzavim 30:11)

The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin; 1816-1893) explains that the words “from **you**” teach us that although the Torah is “wider than the land and deeper than the sea,” it is particularly suited for the Jewish People. Each and every one of us has his very own part in Torah, and our souls are connected at the root to our portion of Torah. As such, through serious focus and effort, one can arrive at an understanding of Torah that was intended for him all along. It is like reconnecting with an old friend, where the close feelings seem to come naturally. While the Torah is distant from this world, and in truth, it **is** from the heavens, so is the soul. As a result, we all have a path cleared for us toward Torah greatness.

Torah sources tell us that each Jewish soul corresponds to a letter in the Torah. The Maharal (Rabbi Yehuda Loew of Prague; 1512/1526-1609) explains that each part of Torah encompasses the entirety of Torah. Although on the surface, there may be no connection between two words of the Torah, on a deeper level, each word of Torah is one with Hashem’s unified will, and, as a result, one with all the other words of the Torah. This is analogous to the cells of a living being; while each cell serves a specific purpose, each contains within itself the DNA for every part of the entire organism. Similarly, each letter of

Stories for the Soul

The Last One Left Standing

World War I had ended with Europe in a state of shambles. The Communists had already seized power in Russia, and their methodical plans to eradicate any semblance of Judaism was taking hold across the country. It was only a short while before the Communists reached Slutsk and the yeshiva there. The students fled across the border to the city of Kletzk, Poland, about 30 kilometers east. Only the Rosh Yeshiva (Dean), Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, who also served as the rabbi in Slutsk, remained behind with his community and a few students.

The Bolsheviks marched into the yeshiva, arrested Rabbi Meltzer, and hauled him to a makeshift courtroom somewhere in the town. They were placed in front of a tribunal, three ersatz judges, who just days before had been common laborers. Unfortunately, they all were Jews who had forsaken their faith in the rush to embrace the false promise of Communism.

When the Rosh Yeshiva entered the courtroom, the three spurious judges began to mock Rabbi Meltzer. “Rebbei,” they began, “we want you to recite something for us. You might as well say it with enthusiasm, for you and all your students will be saying it for the very last time.” They then broke into the very same sing-song of the first words of the Torah in Hebrew and Yiddish, chanted by Jewish *cheder* (elementary school) children for generations. “*Beraishis, in ohnfahng, barah Elokim, hut G-t bashafen...* (In the beginning, G-d created...)” “You see, Rebbei,” they laughed, “this is going to be the very last time you will

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Kollel Happenings

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.

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START: MAXIMIZING THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE DAYS OF AWE, A SECOND LOOK CLASS FOR WOMEN

Rabbi Moshe Heyman will present a class for women, *Count to Ten: Aseres Yemei Teshuva as the Start of the Year* on Monday, October 7, at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissachar, 4902 S. Xenia St. at 8 pm. (back room)

TORAH BY THE MOON

A night out for couples to engage in Torah learning! Men join Rabbi Shmuel Halpern for Tractate Brachos in Halacha and Aggada. Women attend Chassidus in Real Life with Rabbi Moshe Heyman. Mondays, 8-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St. For more info visit denverkollel.org or email Rabbi Heyman, rmh@denverkollel.org.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Insincere woodchopper | 4) Guarantor's oath |
| 2) 98 curses | 5) Barley for wheat |
| 3) Partially hidden | 6) Fatherly advice |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XXI

Rabbi Silver thought a bit, then asked, "And did these people indeed give this man food in exchange for use of the siddur?"

The young man said that yes, others indeed gave away their food to use the

siddur.

Rabbi Silver said to him, "Why do you focus on this one man? Look at the faith of the many other men who gave away from the little food they had in order to pray to G-d!"

A Taste of Torah

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the Torah carries the entirety of Torah within itself. This allows a person to not only see one narrow aspect of Torah, but to achieve one's very own, personal understanding of the entirety of Torah.

Obviously, we need to make sure that our Torah perspective fits into the proper context. Let us imagine several art critics examining a work of art. While each has his own unique point of view, they're all still looking at the

same picture. Similarly, we should strive to ensure that our "picture" of Torah is the very same one as our Torah greats. If we find ourselves far away from the traditional Torah view, we may be looking at a very different picture, in which case we have taken our independent view too far. Only by remaining true to the *mesorah*, the tradition of what Torah truly is, can we achieve a correct perspective of our portion of the Torah.

Stories for the Soul

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ever hear this tune, as we will close down every single yeshiva and *cheder*!"

Rabbi Meltzer sprang to his full height. "You are mistaken!" he declared. "Jewish children will learn that verse forever! And as for you," he exclaimed with fire in his eyes, "there will be no remnant!"

Rabbi Meltzer was ultimately released and emigrated to the Land of Israel, where today, young children across the

country chant those words, along with children across the globe. Communism is but another failed movement relegated to the ash heap of history.

In this week's parsha, Moshe reassures the Jewish People that despite the many trials and tribulations the Jewish People will face throughout history, they will survive and stand before G-d.

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| 1) Insincere woodchopper 29:10 s.v. <i>metchoretz</i> | 3) Partially hidden 29:16 s.v. <i>etz</i> |
| 2) 98 curses 29:12 s.v. <i>vehu</i> | 4) Guarantor's oath 29:28 s.v. <i>hantistas</i> |
| 3) Partially hidden 29:16 s.v. <i>etz</i> | 5) Barley for wheat 30:19 s.v. <i>hu idost</i> |
| 4) Guarantor's oath 29:28 s.v. <i>hantistas</i> | 6) Fatherly advice 30:19 s.v. <i>uvachanta</i> |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers