

THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

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Parshas Shoftim

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A Taste of Torah From Fear to Trust

by Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

In preparation for their entry into Eretz Yisrael, the Jewish People received the following warning: Don't be influenced by the actions of the locals, who use all sorts of means to attempt to predict the future. Rather, you should be complete and whole with Hashem (see Shoftim 18:13).

Rashi, quoting the Sifri, states: Walk with Hashem with wholesomeness and don't be concerned with the future.

All that comes your way should be accepted simply, without complication.

By following this approach, you will be with Hashem. According to the Sifri, the main message seems to be one of trust. Don't search out the future; rather, accept that Hashem is sending you exactly what you need and it is for your benefit.

However, Targum Onkelos seems to stress a different concept. He translates the verse as, "You should be whole and complete in your fear of Hashem." According to Onkelos, the main point seems to be fear of Heaven, not trust.

While we often find different interpretations of the same verse, in our case, it is difficult to understand the approach of Onkelos. The surrounding verses are discussing the fact that the nations of Canaan seek to know the future. The command to be simple and trusting (as explained by the Sifri) seems to fit the context much better. How does a command regarding fear of Heaven fit in here?

To answer this question, let's ask another question. What does it mean to trust in Hashem? Does it mean to assume that Hashem will fulfill my will? The obvious answer is no. True faith and trust means to recognize

that Hashem knows best, and that my perception of what is good is extremely limited and may very well be wrong. The work of developing trust in a deeper sense is to put aside one's personal will (i.e., desires and wants) and learn to desire that which Hashem desires. Otherwise, one's trust may very well be hypocritical. If one recognizes that what is truly good is what Hashem considers to be good, then how does one explain the choice to do that which he sees as being good - his desires and wants of the moment - when they are in opposition to the will of Hashem.

This leads us to a resolution for the aforementioned difficulty with Onkelos. Our trust and our fear of Heaven are very much connected. It is truly impossible for one to have true trust without fear of Heaven. And the reverse is true as well; it is inevitable that fear of Heaven will ultimately produce an elevated level of trust in Hashem. According to Onkelos, the Torah is teaching us that the antidote to the sorcerous Canaanite way is fear of Heaven. While the Sifri focuses directly on trust, Onkelos focuses on the path to trust, namely, fear of Heaven.

This idea not only gives us two paths to developing trust, but provides two approaches to growing our fear of Heaven, as well. We can directly focus on growing our fear of Hashem, and we can also focus on growing our trust in Him. As we develop a deeper understanding of what true trust means, we will come to submit our will before the will of Hashem. As we continue to grow, we will come to appreciate that we aren't giving up on the fulfillment of our desires; rather, it is our deepest will and desire to fulfill the will of Hashem.



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Stories for the Soul

An Honest Lecture

Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach (c. 1899-2001) served as Rosh Yeshiva (Dean) of Ponovezh Yeshiva for half a century. One of the highlights of his career there was a weekly *shiur klali*, or general lecture, on the Talmudic subject matter being studied by the students. Sources that would be discussed during the *shiur* were posted on the bulletin board outside the *bais medrash* (study hall) beforehand, allowing the students to prepare for the lecture.

There was a particular chapter of Talmud that had never been studied before in Ponovezh, and, one year, Rabbi Shach decided it would be studied. Since he had never delivered *shiur klali* on this material before, there was much anticipation ahead of the first lecture. The sources for the *shiur* were posted, and the student body was abuzz as they awaited what was sure to be a remarkable lecture.

As the time for the *shiur* approached, Rabbi Schach was at his seat in the *bais medrash* (study hall) speaking to his close student Rabbi Dovid Zimmerman. Suddenly, he stood up, went to the bulletin board and removed the paper upon which the sources were posted, effectively cancelling the *shiur*. Later, Rabbi Zimmerman explained what had occurred. Although indeed a brilliant *shiur* had been prepared, a last minute question weakened the main principal of the lecture, and Rabbi Schach would not say the *shiur* if he felt it was less than one hundred percent accurate. Better to cancel the *shiur*

continued on back

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.

LEARN 2 LEARN

You have long dreamed of acquiring the tools to achieve proficiency in learning Gemara on your own. But how? The Denver Community Kollel offers a comprehensive, step-by-step, level-by-level program crafted for people just like you. All you need is the ability to read Hebrew; we will teach you the rest. For more information, contact rmh@denverkollel.org.

SFAS EMES: A PIERCING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

It is one of the most widely-studied works of our time. Sfas Emes gives us a glimpse into the infinite depths of Torah and Jewish thought. Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky is an expert in this great work, and a master in bringing its timeless lessons into daily life. Join Rabbi Karnowsky on Thursdays, 8:15-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: How can you have a mixture which is dairy, but when meat accidentally falls in, the mixture becomes parve (neither meat nor dairy)?

A: Milk or meat which falls into a food is considered halachically nullified only if the food contains 60 times the amount of the milk or meat. If a mixture contains a ratio of 59 parts of parve food and one part milk, it is regarded as dairy. If one part of meat then falls in, the meat becomes nullified because the other food is 60 times greater than it. At this point, the milk also becomes nullified

because now there are also 60 units of food more than it (59 parve plus one of meat). Thus the entire mixture becomes parve. (Always consult with a qualified halachic authority for practical issues.)

Source: Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 98:9

This is the final installment of Jewish IQ. Great thanks and appreciation are extended to Rabbi Yaakov Zions for this popular column, which he has written for the past 4 years.

Beginning next week, a new column will appear in this space.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XVIII

Apparently, Jewish leaders of the "mainstream" American Jewish community had encouraged FDR not to attend the Rabbis' March, fearing it would increase anti-Semitism; they insisted that these people were not representative of American Jewry.

Rabbi Silver, as president of the Agudas Harabbanim, presented Wallace with a petition from the marchers asking the United States to expand the quota for Jews to enter the United States. Time Magazine reported that Wallace received the petition and "squirmed through a diplomatically minimal answer."

Despite Roosevelt's absence, the march generated a great deal of publicity. Bergson's supporters in Congress asked Roosevelt to create an agency that would help Jews find refuge. At

Senate hearings, State Department official Breckinridge Long insisted that the US had absorbed more than its fair share of Jewish refugees. However, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr., an assimilated Jew, presented a report that showed the State Department had gone to great lengths to prevent Jews from entering the United States. Shortly thereafter, Roosevelt established the War Refugee Board to deal with WWII refugees. Ultimately, some 200,000 Jews were saved through the War Refugee Board. Morgenthau's involvement is a story in its own right. Initially, Morgenthau had refused to assist in the efforts to save Jews. Rabbi Aharon Kotler visited Morgenthau along with the great lay leader Irving M. Bunim serving as an interpreter (as Rabbi Kotler did not speak English).

Stories for the Soul

continued from front

than to say something which may not have been completely truthful. In this week's parsha, Moshe exhorts the Jewish People to appoint judges

who will pursue righteousness. Integrity and honesty are vital attributes not just for a judge, but for all of us, and sometimes, honesty requires sacrifice.