

# A Taste of Torah

## Hidden in the Mud

by Rabbi Aharon Wilen

The Jewish People are very dear to Hashem. A verse in this week's parsha bears out this idea - "*ki chelek Hashem amo*" (Ha'azinu 32:9), "for Hashem's lot is His people." Which raises a basic question. If we are, indeed, Hashem's portion, why does He place us down here on this Earth, far away from Him? Would Hashem not want us right next to Him, up in the heavenly realms?

There was a little boy searching for something in the shul courtyard in Vilna with tears streaming from his eyes. People entering to pray were moved by his tears and asked him what he was looking for. "I dropped the coins my mother gave me to pay for *cheder* (school) today," was his response, whereupon they all joined in his search. The group searched for a little while, but the coins were nowhere to be found. Finally, one member of the search party asked the boy, "Where did you drop the coins?" Innocently, the child replied, "On the Glassblowers' Street."

"So why in the world are you looking here in the yard?" came the exasperated reply.

"Because the Glassblowers' Street is dirty and muddy from the rain, and I'm scared of getting my shoes dirty..."

The spiritual realms where one's *neshama* (soul) originates are clean, free of sin, and safe, a place where the

*neshama* happily resides. The Mesilas Yesharim (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto; 1707-1746), commenting on the mishna in Pirkei Avos (4:22) that states, "Against your will you were born," explains that a *neshama* is repulsed by this world and has no enjoyment from any of its physical pleasures. Our *neshamos* only entered our bodies because they were forced to do so by Hashem. Existence in this realm is uncomfortable for the *neshama*. Yet, strangely, the *neshama* is forced into a physical body and sent down to our world.

The Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan; 1839-1933) explains that the *neshama* is like that little boy who lost his coins. We also have our coins to find. Torah and mitzvos can be performed only in this physical world, and they can only be found down here. It is only in this world of distance from Hashem, a place of difficulty and challenge and temptation, that these coins can be found. Precisely because Hashem cares for us and loves us, He gives us this wonderful opportunity - a lifetime - to find the coins in the mud.

Like our protagonist, who should have been looking for his coins on the Glassblowers' Street despite the mud, we, too, must use our every opportunity to learn Torah and do mitzvos, and not to be deterred by the grime that surrounds us.

## Stories for the Soul

### The Right Answer

A man once came to Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980), seeking advice as to how to deal with a particular situation. Rabbi Hutner told the man that he could not tell him what to do; he advised him to go to Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach (1899-2001), who was regarded as one of the greatest Torah authorities of that era.

The man came to Rabbi Shach, who advised him on how he should deal with his issue. The man then asked Rabbi Shach to explain why he had decided on this particular approach. "I cannot explain that to you," replied Rabbi Shach. "Rabbi Hutner can answer that question."

Perplexed, the man returned to Rabbi Hutner, and he indeed explained Rabbi Shach's response. The man asked the obvious question: "If you understand the different possibilities presented by the question and Rabbi Shach's ruling, why couldn't you advise me the same thing? And why couldn't Rabbi Shach explain his ruling to me?"

Rabbi Hutner explained that there are Torah leaders in every generation who are granted by Heaven an instinctive understanding as to how to guide people. However, they cannot necessarily explain in detail why they feel that way; they have an instinctive feel for what the right approach is. He, Rabbi Hutner,

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## Kollel Happenings

### COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SCANDAL AT NOV. 6 T4T

Join Rick Kornfeld, shareholder, RechtKornfeld PC, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they examine this hot-button issue. Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### 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.

### 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](http://denverkollel.org) or email Rabbi Heyman, [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org). Class resumes following Sukkos break.

## 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)

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1) The Flood       | 4) Evil too far   |
| 2) Four directions | 5) Titus          |
| 3) Demonic battle  | 6) Try to stop me |

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XXIII

When Jewish people arrived at these orphanages searching for these lost children, they were usually turned away by the staff; even if they were let in, the children had all but forgotten their past.

Rabbi Silver called out "Shema Yisrael!" and received responses from some of the Jewish children who were there, thus saving them from the clutches of the Church.

This story is attributed to many other rabbis who were involved with the survivors following the war. It is possible that all the stories are accurate, as they may all have utilized the same method to identify Jewish children.

Rabbi Silver brought some \$100,000 with him to Europe to distribute. While in Europe, he borrowed large sums of money to give to desperate survivors. In the process, he incurred

huge debts, which he was unable to repay in his lifetime.

In 1946, Rabbi Silver was in the town of Kielce one day before a terrible pogrom killed more than forty Jews there and injured dozens more. Unfortunately, such post-Holocaust pogroms were not uncommon when Jews returned to their European towns of origin. The gentiles in these places, who were, by and large, delighted to be rid of the Jews and to take their property and possessions, were furious when Jews returned. Kielce was the largest such pogrom, and was a major catalyst for Jews to flee the blood-drenched earth of Poland after attempting to resettle there.

Another area of Jewish life in America that bears Rabbi Silver's imprint is that of Agudath Israel of America, also known as Agudas Yisrael or, colloquially, "the Agudah."

## Stories for the Soul

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understood the different sides of the question, but did not possess the instinctive feel for which side to go with. Rabbi Shach was granted this instinctive ability, but because this was a Divinely-granted ability, he couldn't necessarily express why this

was the most logical approach.

This week's parsha opens with advice to seek the counsel of our elders, the Torah leaders of our generation. Hashem grants them the means to lead their generation, and we would do well to follow their advice.

- 6) Try to stop me 32:48 s.v. bit'leim  
5) Titus 32:37 s.v. w'aman  
4) Evil too far 32:41 s.v. v'isochaz

- 1) The Flood 32:7 s.v. yechor  
2) Four directions 32:11 s.v. al  
3) Demonic battle 32:24 s.v. ulchumay

## Parsha Quizzers - Answers