

# THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Mikeitz/Shabbos Chanukah

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## A Taste of Torah The Good, the Bad and the Solution

by Rabbi Avraham David Karnowsky

Good days and bad days are part of the fiber of our lives. The question is not if we have them, but how we approach them. Many people view good days as times that don't require much effort; we can shift into cruise control and enjoy the ride.

As for the bad days, there seem to be two basic approaches among people. One is to get through them and hope that tomorrow is better. The other approach is to try fighting the bad days, exert effort to change one's mood, and change the bad days into good days.

These approaches present a problem, though. Cruising through the good days is that it may well be a lost opportunity to use those good times to grow. Trying to survive the bad days and just get to the next good day means one is allowing a great deal of life to go to waste. And successfully fighting the bad days can be very difficult; when a person fails, he tends to feel depressed and completely gives up hope.

Luckily, the Torah has a third approach for us, which has its roots in this week's Torah portion.

Pharaoh has a strange dream about seven robust cows and seven scrawny cows. Then a second strange dream with seven full ears of grain and seven withered and thin ears.

Yosef is the only one who is able to interpret these dreams, and he explains that there will be seven good years for the country which will be followed by seven years of famine.

Pharaoh is satisfied with this

explanation. He is now faced with the question of what to do about the situation that seems to be coming to Egypt.

Yosef presents a plan that during the seven years of plenty, Egypt will amass grain and safeguard it. That food will be reserved for the seven years of famine, thereby ensuring that the people will not perish from hunger during those years.

The Sfas Emes (Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter; 1847-1905) explains that this was not just an economical idea, but an approach to life in general. If one doesn't utilize the good times to plan and prepare for difficult times, then when the famine comes, one may perish. Fighting the famine may well prove impossible. The best solution is to prepare for the famine during the years of plenty, amassing enough resources to ensure survival during the lean years.

The same principle applies to our daily lives, too. When one is feeling good and upbeat, he shouldn't suffice with sitting back and enjoying the good times. Rather, one should try to amass as much spiritual strength as possible, incorporating that power into his very being. Then, one can hope that even if tomorrow is a bad day, yesterday's inspiration will continue and enable him to carry on. The rule of thumb is, if the good days remain just good, then the bad days will remain bad. But if one endeavors to make the good days amazing, one can then hope that the bad days will be decent, or even productive.

This very concept plays itself out in

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### Stories for the Soul

#### Up in Smoke

The Gerrer Rebbe, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter (1866-1948; known eponymously as the Imrei Emes) was known to be fond of high-quality cigars. A chassid (follower) of his was once travelling to Paris on business, and the Rebbe called him in prior to his departure. "In Paris, one can obtain very fine cigars," said the Rebbe. "While you are there, please purchase some for me."

The chassid was a bit taken aback that this was what the Rebbe wanted, but of course assured Rabbi Alter that he would comply.

During his time in Paris, however, the chassid forgot Rabbi Alter's request. Upon completing his business in Paris, he boarded a train to return to Poland. Suddenly, in the middle of the train ride, he recalled the request for the cigars. He got off at the next major city along the train's route and purchased the finest cigars he could find, then resumed his trip home.

Upon returning home, the chassid went to the Rebbe and explained that while he had forgotten to purchase the cigars in Paris, the ones he had obtained on the way back were certainly just as good, if not better.

"Do you think I really needed you to get the cigars for me?" asked the Rebbe. "I wanted you to remember, even in a place devoid of spirituality like Paris, that you have a Rebbe! And you forgot!"

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## Kollel Happenings

### HACHNASAS SEFER TORAH ON JAN. 19

A Sefer Torah is being dedicated to the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissachar in memory of Reb Shalom Sommers, father of Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers. Dedication opportunities for the Sefer Torah at all price levels are available. A Hachnasas Sefer Torah will take place at Aish of the Rockies on Sun., Jan. 19. For dedication opportunities or more info, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org), email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855.

### THE ETHICAL & PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF INHERITANCE AT JAN. 8 T4T

Join Daniel Levin, shareholder, Levin Jacobson Japha, PC, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they examine this complex issue. Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING ON JANUARY 1

Start your day off on the right foot with Torah study! Join the Kollel for learning at four locations around Denver: At the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash, shacharis at 8 followed by breakfast and learning; at Aish Denver, shacharis at 6:45 and 8 followed by breakfast and learning after each minyan; at EDOS, shacharis at 7:30 followed by breakfast and learning; and at Ohr Avner, shacharis 6:45 followed by breakfast and learning.

## 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) Seven daughters buried | 4) Foolish firstborn     |
| 2) Earth preservative     | 5) Secrets of the cradle |
| 3) Regret and redemption  | 6) Order of the cup      |

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk - Part V

It is said that following Reb Meir Simcha's passing, Rabbi Yosef Rosen (who, as discussed earlier, also served as a rabbi in Dvinsk) ordered the heads of Reb Meir Simcha's synagogue to bury his *shtender* (lectern at which he studied Torah) in the grave with Reb Meir Simcha. Such a practice is reserved only for people known to be extremely devoted to Torah and its study, to the extent that the *shtender* itself can testify in Heaven to the

dedication of its master to Torah study.

Reb Meir Simcha was very devoted to the needs of the people of Dvinsk, investing much time and energy into the community. He remained in his position in Dvinsk for the rest of his life, turning down prestigious offers for positions in great cities such as Kovno (then one of the largest Jewish communities in Lithuania), Jerusalem and New York City.

## A Taste of Torah

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the structure of the week. We have six days of the week followed by Shabbos. Shabbos is an extremely elevated day where we can easily focus on G-d and spiritual matters. During the week it can be a lot harder, as we get bogged down with work and the

many mundane details of daily life. If one strives to make one's Shabbos not just nice, but an incredible day to recharge one's spiritual batteries, that can then roll over and help carry one all through the week, until Shabbos comes once again.

## Stories for the Soul

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Yosef never forgot where he came from and maintained his high level of righteousness, both during times of difficulty as a slave and a prisoner, and, later, as ruler of Egypt. Indeed, our Sages teach that during his greatest trial, an image of his father

Yaakov appeared to him, providing the fortitude to overcome his ordeal. As Jews, we have a rich heritage of great leaders and ancestors to look back to and gain the strength to carry forward.

- 1) Foolish firstborn 42:38 s.v. lo  
2) Secrets of the cradle 43:3 s.v. lamm  
3) Order of the cup 43:33 s.v. habichor

- 1) Seven daughters buried 41:8 s.v. v'ain  
2) Earth preservative 41:48 s.v. ochel  
3) Regret and redemption 42:2 s.v. vayertdu

## Parsha Quizzers - Answers