



# TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Shavuos 5780

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## A Taste of Torah

### Baby Steps to Greatness

by Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky

Some human beings crave directions; they prefer to be told what to do and exactly how to do it. Others prefer being presented with endless possibilities, where all options are open and every option has many routes that can be followed.

There are obviously pros and cons to each approach. The direction-oriented person will likely reach his destination, but he won't go much further than that. The dreamer who desires infinite opportunities may end up no further than his dreams, never achieving any of the many possibilities he wanted. But if he pursues his dreams, he can reach the stars.

If we take a look at the name the Torah uses when referring to what we know as the holiday of Shavuos, we can discover the Torah's view on these two approaches.

The name the Torah chooses for Shavuos is *Atzeres*, which, literally translated, means "stoppage." What is the meaning behind this interesting name, and in what regard are we supposed to stop on Shavuos?

The Kedushas Levi (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov; 1740-1809) explains that there is a fundamental difference between the festival of Shavuos and all other festivals. All the other holidays feature specific commandments to be fulfilled during the festival. On Pesach, we eat matzah and remove all *chametz* from our homes. On Sukkos, we shake the Four Species and dwell in the sukkah. Shavuos, however, has no specific commandment that is part of

its celebration and observance. While we know it's a day that contains immense holiness, as it marks the Giving of the Torah, the Torah does not provide much direction on how to access the great potential contained in the day.

The reason for this, says the Kedushas Levi, is precisely **because** of its immense potential. It's a day that is so elevated that it could not be condensed into a specific commandment, for that would limit it too much. The Torah left it open, providing us with the ability to tap into it without any limitation.

With all of its great potential, though, there is a great risk that one may end up leaving Shavuos without anything tangible to take along into the rest of the year. To address that, the Torah refers to this festival by the name *Atzeres*, Stoppage. The Torah is teaching us that if we don't stop and contemplate this special time, this great day will come and go without leaving much of an imprint upon a person. Shavuos has incredible potential, but one must stop and decide for himself how he will connect to it and enable it to have a lasting impression on him.

Even great opportunities need to be accessed and reined in by a person in order for him to gain from them. If one stares in awe at great and unlimited holiness but does not take something specific from it, the opportunity will depart as fast as it came, leaving the beholder with nothing to show for it.

Each person has his own individual approach in utilizing spiritual

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## Stories for the Soul

### Blessed Devotion

Reb Yitzchak was a community leader and wealthy merchant who lived in the town of Volozhin (today in Belarus) during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At one point, Reb Yitzchak's wife requested that he purchase a set of Talmud for their home. While today a set of Talmud can be obtained easily, in those days, a set of Talmud was rare and costly. Reb Yitzchak fulfilled his wife's request and purchased the set of Talmud for their home. The couple made the volumes available for community members to study, a boon for a small community. Because Reb Yitzchak was often away on business, his wife took responsibility for the lending of the Talmud.

Rabbi Aryeh Leib Gunzberg, better known eponymously as the Sha'agas Aryeh, the name of his most famous work, was one of the leading Torah scholars of his day, and he was appointed as rabbi of Volozhin around 1750. He would regularly come to borrow the volumes of the Talmud that he needed. After a short while, Reb Yitzchak's wife told the Sha'agas Aryeh that she would have a servant bring the volumes of the Talmud required to the rabbi's home; this would save the rabbi from wasting precious time that could then be spent studying Torah.

The Sha'agas Aryeh was greatly impressed by this woman's devotion to Torah, and he blessed her that she would bear two sons who would become great Torah

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## Kollel Happenings

### KOLLEL 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: EMERGING STRONGER - A VIRTUAL EVENT

Spend an hour celebrating the unstoppable power of Torah on Tuesday, June 2, 7 pm, just a few days after Shavuos, the time of the Giving of the Torah. Honoring Kerry and Mindy Berman for their steady and unswerving commitment to Torah and the Denver Jewish community. Join the community as we continue to grow and emerge stronger. To place an ad and for more info, visit [denverkollel.org](http://denverkollel.org), email [journal@denverkollel.org](mailto:journal@denverkollel.org), or call 303-820-2855

### KOLLEL CLASSES CONTINUE VIA ZOOM MEETING

The Kollel is continuing many of its classes and offering new classes via Zoom Meeting. You can tune in to live classes online or call in on a phone. For a full schedule and the links and phone numbers to access this treasure trove of Torah, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org) or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### THE BIG PICTURE

Join a multi-part series of your choice via Zoom (online or on the phone) and discover The Big Picture of a section of Torah. Choose from an array of different Torah topics throughout the week. Classes run through 5/28. An initiative of the Denver Community Kollel in partnership with Aish of the Rockies and JOI. Visit [denverkollel.org](http://denverkollel.org) for full details.

## Parsha Quizzers

This week's Parsha Quizzers are taken from the Book of Ruth, which is read on Shavuos. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

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|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Conversion course | 4) Swear off evil      |
| 2) Dip for the heat  | 5) Anonymous           |
| 3) Demonic thought   | 6) Admission to Rochel |

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael - Part VI

The work received great acclaim and made Rabbi Menashe a household name in European intellectual circles. This fame, in turn, brought him into correspondence with not only many learned Jews, but with many non-Jewish intellectuals of the time.

## A Taste of Torah

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opportunities. For one, it may be to add some more time to his daily Torah study schedule. For another, it may be to give more attention to proper observance of a particular mitzvah in all its minute details, and for yet another, it may be to perform a mitzvah with more devotion and focus.

But the bottom line is to stop and

reflect - how can I incorporate this day into my being? How can I elevate myself throughout the whole year through this great day of limitless potential? Dreams are great, but they are the greatest when one reaches them by climbing one finite step after another.

## Stories for the Soul

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scholars. It is said that he said, "One son will create many communities and teach the Talmud to the young scholars of the Jewish People, and the other won't even need a Talmud!"

The blessing was fulfilled. This woman gave birth to two sons, both of whom studied for a tiem under the Shaga'as Aryeh himself: Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, founder of the first modern-era yeshiva, the Volozhin Yeshiva (known as "the Mother of Yeshivos"). The other son, Rabbi "Zelmaleh"

Zalman of Volozhin, was one of the most devoted and knowledgeable Torah scholars of his time, renowned for knowing the entire Torah by heart.

When Hashem offered the Torah to the Jewish People, He ordered Moshe to speak with the men and women separately. It is the dedication and love of Torah displayed by the great women of the Jewish People that has enabled their sons and husbands to become great Torah scholars.

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|---|--|
| 1) Conversion course 1:16 s.v. ki         | 3) Demonic thought 3:8 s.v. veygcherat |
| 2) Dip for the heat 2:14 s.v. vitavah     |  |
| 4) Swear off evil 3:18 s.v. chat          |  |
| 5) Anonymous 4:1 s.v. ploni               |  |
| 6) Admission to Rochel 4:11 s.v. kiRochel |  |

## Parsha Quizzers - Answers