



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Eikev

August 7, 2020

A Taste of Torah

Doubly Frightening

by Rabbi Dov Holczer

While some people believe that “we have nothing to fear but fear itself,” the Torah teaches us that we indeed have other things to fear. Moshe teaches the Jewish People (Eikev 10:12), “What does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only that you fear Hashem, your G-d.”

The Rambam in his Sefer Hamitzvos (mitzvah 4) cites a later verse (Eikev 10:20), “Hashem, your G-d, you shall fear,” as a source of the mitzvah. The Rambam explains that mitzvah is to believe in Hashem and tremble with fear of the punishment that will be received by one who sins. The Rambam teaches that one must be fearful of transgressing the Torah mitzvos due to the consequences that Hashem will mete out against the transgressor.

However, the Kinas Sofrim (a commentary on the Rambam’s Sefer Hamitzvos) points out that the Rambam in his halachic compendium Mishnah Torah (Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 2:1-2) seems to explain the mitzvah of fearing Hashem differently. There, the Rambam explains that awe of Hashem comes through love of Hashem. The Rambam states that a person should ponder the wonders of Hashem’s creation to the point of realizing Hashem’s infinite and unmatched greatness. This realization, continues the Rambam, will create a feeling of love of Hashem, and a desire to praise Hashem and to know Him. This process, as it continues to develop, will automatically cause the person to be enveloped in fear of the Almighty, as one realizes that he is but a small and insignificant being

relative to the Almighty.

This description presented by the Rambam is quite different from the approach that he offers in his Sefer Hamitzvos, and seems to create a contradiction regarding the Rambam’s view of this mitzvah.

The Pirush, a commentary on the Mishnah Torah, explains that these two passages from the Rambam are not contradictory. Rather, they are two different levels of the mitzvah to fear Hashem. The lower level is to fear punishment for one’s sins, and the higher level is to be in awe of Hashem’s greatness.

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1838-1933; better known as the Chofetz Chaim) takes this mitzvah of fearing Hashem, even due to fear of punishment, to the next level. In his introduction to his classic Sefer Chofetz Chaim, he cites the Sefer Hachinuch (432) that the mitzvah of fearing Hashem is one of the constant mitzvos that we are commanded never to ignore, even for one moment. Therefore, says the Chofetz Chaim, it is incumbent upon us to always fear Hashem at all moments of our lives. When a person is faced with a challenge to commit a wrongdoing, he must remind himself that Hashem is watching his every move and he will therefore pay the price for any inappropriate action. This realization will enable a person to restrain himself from transgressing a mitzvah. The Chofetz Chaim concludes that if someone commits a sin, he is in violation of this positive commandment of fearing Hashem, in addition to the actual sin transgressed.

This idea can be further illustrated

Stories for the Soul

Sacred Sightseeing

The Boyaner Rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo Mordechai Friedman of Boyan (1891-1971) immigrated from the Ukraine to New York in 1927. In 1949, he had the opportunity to visit *Eretz Yisrael*. Upon arrival, he arranged for a driver to take him from the airport near Tel Aviv to Haifa, although he was staying in Tel Aviv. When the taxi came, four chassidim escorted him along the way, hoping that they would be able to spend some time talking to their Rebbe, looking forward to hearing some of his insights and Torah thoughts.

The chassidim were disappointed, however, as the Rebbe stared out the taxi window the entire time, not uttering a word. Moreover, when he arrived in Haifa, he did not get out to visit anybody. Instead, he asked the driver to take him back to his apartment in Tel Aviv. And he did not stop looking at the scenery on the way back, either. The chassidim were completely befuddled; they could not understand why their Rebbe would have taken a pointless ride. Finally, they arrived back at the apartment in Tel Aviv. When they did, the chassidim asked their Rebbe why he had wasted so much time going on a leisure ride.

The Rebbe replied, “The verse (Eikev 11:12) says, ‘A land which the eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it. If Hashem is looking at the Land, then there must be something beautiful to see. That is why I was looking at it. To see what He sees.’”

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Kollel Happenings

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 or email 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, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

HELP BUILD THE FUTURE OF TORAH IN DENVER

Claim your part in building the future of Torah in Denver! The Kollel is in the midst of a capital campaign to build a three-story, state-of-the-art Torah Center that will serve the entire Denver Jewish community. To contribute, or for dedication opportunities and details on the building, visit denverkollel.org or email info@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) A blinding insect | 4) War of retreat |
| 2) Cloud detergent | 5) Waterbed |
| 3) First Yom Kippur | 6) Teach them young |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael - Part XVI

Rabbi Menashe wrote an entire work on the subject, titled *Esperança de Israel* (*Mikveh Yisrael*/The Hope of Israel), an authoritative and broad treatise on the subject of the lost tribes and extensive discussion regarding the location of the purported lost tribe living in South America. The book was published in

1650 in both Spanish and Latin.

It was around this time that Rabbi Menashe attempted to gain entry for the Jews into Sweden (as mentioned in an earlier column), using his connections with Queen Christina of Sweden. However, the effort failed when the Queen abdicated the throne in 1654.

A Taste of Torah

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with a look back at one of the great Torah leaders of the past generation, Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach (1899-2001). Rabbi Shlomo Lawrence, a member of the Israeli Knesset for decades, writes in his book *Bimchitzasam* (translated into English as *In Their Shadow*) that Rav Shach, when making a decision, would carefully consider whether he would be reprimanded in the Heavenly Court for choosing a particular course of action. The fear of having to face Hashem's judgment thus constantly informed what approach he would take.

In the prayer recited during *Birchas Hachodesh* (the prayer recited the Shabbos before a new month begins), we request a number of types of lives, such as a life of goodness, a life of blessing, and so on. It is interesting to note that there is one type of life that is mentioned twice during this prayer - a life with the fear of heaven.

Why is this particular item repeated? Closer examination of the wording of the prayer will reveal a subtle distinction between the seemingly identical requests. The first time it is mentioned, it says "a life that has fear of Heaven and fear of sin." The second time, though, one says, "a life that has a love of Torah and fear of Heaven." As mentioned above, there are two types of fear of Heaven, a fear of punishment and a fear that grows out of love. The prayer thus requests both areas of fear of heaven. There is fear of heaven that is connected with fear of sin, which indicates the fear of the consequences one may suffer for sinning. The second mention is accompanied by love of Torah is a reference to awe that grows out of love. May this prayer be fulfilled for each of us, and may we merit to constantly maintain a proper state of mind of awe and fear of Hashem in all that we do.

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| 1) A blinding insect 7:20 s.v. hazira | 3) First Yom Kippur 8:18 s.v. va esnabpa |
| 2) Cloud detergent 8:4 s.v. simlachsia | 5) Waterbed 11:10 s.v. v'hishtkisa |
| 4) War of retreat 10:1 s.v. v'rasisa | 6) Teach them young 11:19 s.v. lidaber |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers