



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Ha'azinu

September 25, 2020

A Taste of Torah Heavenly Wisdom

by Rabbi Yosef Melamed

Refreshing. Revitalizing. Rejuvenating. These are some of the adjectives that are associated with the experience of going outdoors just after a fresh rain. The ground is sparkling. Vegetation is covered with the refreshing drops, and the air is fresh with the pleasant scent that comes with the rain. The freshness and invigoration that can be felt from the early morning dew is sure to raise a similar sentiment.

In this week's parsha, Moshe teaches the Jewish People the song of Ha'azinu. In one of the opening sentences of this cryptic song, Moshe states: "May my teachings drop like the rain; may my utterances flow like dew." (Devarim 32:2) Rashi explains that the dew and rain refer here to the Torah. Rain grants sustenance to the world through the growth that it stimulates, and the Torah also grants life to the world through the power of its study and fulfillment. Rain, however, is sometimes unwelcome when it interferes with people's plans and lives. Dew, on the other hand, is always well-received, and the Torah also provides joy to the world in all situations. Thus, Moshe exhorts the Jewish Nation to understand the importance and preciousness of the Torah he brought down from Sinai and taught them.

Rabbi Gedalya Schorr (1910-1979) offers another reason for the comparison of Torah to rain and dew. The Zohar (3:88b) explains that the comparison of Torah to rain refers specifically to the Written Torah, and the reference to dew refers specifically to the Oral Torah. Rabbi Schorr

explains that the Written Torah is clearly from G-d; it was given to Moshe at Sinai in its precise written form and is unchanged throughout history. Thus, it is comparable to the rain, which clearly descends from the heavens above.

Dew's source, however, is not as obvious. An observer might conclude that dew is a product of the ground, and "grows" out of the grass or other surfaces dew forms on. In reality, though, the formation of dew comes when water particles in the surrounding air condense on a cooler area. The dew thus comes from the external atmosphere; the supposition of its source being the surface upon which it appears is a mere illusion. The Oral Torah, says Rabbi Schorr, is comparable to this quality of dew. While also given at Sinai, the Oral Law continuously evolves over time through countless Torah discussions and struggles to understand the full meaning of the Written Torah, and is subject to the understanding of human intellect. This kind of Torah study is comparable to the dew, for it appears that the insights gained from Torah study through a person's personal efforts and toil in Torah study have emerged from "the ground," that is, from Mankind's work and exertion. This is not the case, though. The Torah achieved through the efforts of the human mind are only possible through the descent of those Torah thoughts from the outside, by means of *siyata di'shmaya*, Heavenly assistance, that a person is given to discover the depths of Torah through his study.

Stories for the Soul

Clothes Make the Man

Young Tzvi Hersh Katz was orphaned at a young age. He made his way to Rimanov, where he eventually served as the attendant, or *mishareis*, for the great Chassidic Rebbe Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rimanov. He was extremely devoted to his rebbe, and over time developed into an outstanding Torah scholar and *tzaddik* (righteous person). Nonetheless, he was always known as "Reb Tzvi Hirsch Meshareis."

Before his passing, Rabbi Menachem Mendel designated Reb Tzvi Hirsch as his successor. While some looked down upon him due to his humble origins, Reb Tzvi Hirsch gained wide respect and renown.

Later, one of Reb Tzvi Hirsch's children became engaged to a child of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, one of the great Chassidic leaders of his day, famous for the aristocratic and royal demeanor he cultivated as a leader. At the engagement party, Reb Yisrael mentioned that it was his custom to recount the *yichus* (lineage) of the two families joining in marriage. He then proceeded to list a number of prominent Chassidic masters and Torah leaders who were part of his lineage.

After he concluded, Reb Tzvi Hirsch spoke. "My father was a simple tailor," Reb Tzvi Hirsch stated. "I remember one thing that he taught me: An old article of clothing should be mended, and a new article of clothing should not

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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.

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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) Measured punishment | 4) No rush to judgement |
| 2) Hungry hair | 5) Transitional Shabbos |
| 3) Ancestry won't help any more | 6) Let's see you stop me |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael - Part XXIII

Rabbi Menashe gained great renown during his stay in England, and he remained there for nearly two years following the Whitehall Conference, continuing his efforts to gain official admission into England for the Jews. During his stay, he met with many of the great English intellectuals and theologians of the time. It appears that he was so well-known that he had a manager, a Baptist clergyman and philosemite by the name of Henry Jessy.

During Rabbi Menashe's absence from Amsterdam, a prominent Jewish philosopher by the name of Baruch

Spinoza was excommunicated by the Talmud Torah congregation of Amsterdam in 1655 due to his heretical beliefs and teachings. It is alleged that Spinoza had been a student of Rabbi Menashe's in Amsterdam, but this is far from clear. While Spinoza is regarded by the secular world as one of the greatest philosophers in history, he is an extremely problematic person from a Jewish viewpoint. His views and teachings were indeed heretical, as he denied many basic tenets of Judaism. Excommunications were not unusual during this time, but the language of the *cherem* (excommunication) issued against Spinoza is particularly sharp.

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

The Taz (Orach Chaim 47:5) explains that this is the reason why in the second blessing on the Torah, we refer to G-d as the *Nosein haTorah*, "the One who gives the Torah," in the present tense,

as opposed to the Giver of the Torah, in the past. G-d constantly teaches us Torah, by enabling us to grasp the depths of the heavenly wisdom of the Torah.

Stories for the Soul

continued from front

be ruined."

Reb Yisrael responded, "Reb Tzvi Hirsch, you have bested my *yichus*."

In this week's parsha, Moshe teaches the Jewish People to "Ask your father, and he will relate it to you; your elders

and they will tell you." (Ha'azinu 32:7) Lessons from our parents and earlier generations come in many forms, and we would do well to pay attention and learn them.

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| (1) Measured punishment 32:40 s.v. <i>ki esa</i> | (4) No rush to judgement 32:40 s.v. <i>ki esa</i> |
| (2) Hungry hair 32:24 s.v. <i>mitzei ra'av</i> | (5) Transitional Shabbos 32:44 s.v. <i>hu</i> |
| (3) Ancestry won't help any more 32:35 s.v. <i>it'ais</i> | (6) Let's see you stop me 32:48 s.v. <i>vayidaber</i> |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers

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