



# TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Ki Savo

September 4, 2020

## A Taste of Torah Complete and Total Gratitude

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

Sometimes, one needs to lose what one has to appreciate it. The parsha opens with the mitzvah of *bikkurim*. A person is commanded to place the first fruits of the Seven Species mentioned in connection with *Eretz Yisrael* (Israel) in a basket and bring them to the *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple), where they are given to the *kohen* (priest). The Torah tells us that after the *kohen* received the basket, he would place it in front of the *Mizbe'ach* (Altar). The person who brought the fruit would then recite a lengthy declaration. Beginning with how Lavan wanted to destroy Yaakov and continuing with the hardships the Jews endured in Egypt, he moved on to discuss that Hashem redeemed the Jewish People, concluding with the Hashem's bringing His Nation into *Eretz Yisrael*. The person then stated that he has now brought the first fruits of the Land that Hashem has given him.

Rashi explains that the point of this declaration is to show gratitude to Hashem for all He provides. This explanation raises a basic question: Why is it necessary to recall all the hardships and suffering? Would it not suffice to merely thank Hashem for the good that He has provided?

A similar question can be asked regarding the Pesach Seder. The Mishna (Pesachim 116a) teaches us that in telling the story of Exodus, we need to begin with the Jewish People's disgraceful origins, both as idolaters in the time of Avraham and, later, as slaves in Egypt. The story then continues to tell of the great miracles and redemption from

Egypt. The story is told largely based upon the verses uttered by one who brought *bikkurim*. Here, again, one must ask why the humble, disgraceful beginnings of our Nation must be discussed; would it not suffice to merely express our gratitude for the glory of the Jewish People?

The Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad; 1832-1909) explains with a parable. There was once a rich person who adopted a son and provided for all his needs. Unfortunately, this son took everything for granted and showed no recognition to his adoptive father. One day, a poor person came collecting by this rich person and, upon receiving a generous sum of money, he thanked him immensely. After the pauper departed, the rich man began to think to himself that if this poor man, who received a one-time donation, showed so much gratitude, how could it be that my adopted son, upon whom I spent so much time and money, shows absolutely no recognition for my generosity at all?

He decided to kick his son out of the house and let him fend for himself. After a week or so, the rich man heard that his son was struggling tremendously, and he agreed to take him back into his house. Upon returning, the boy was thankful for everything his adoptive father gave him

Sometimes, says the Ben Ish Chai, we have to experience hardship to appreciate the good. With this, we can understand why one mentions

### Stories for the Soul

#### Double Happy

One Sukkos, Reb Meir of Premishlan's (1703-1773) daughter was so dangerously ill that by the time Simchas Torah came around, she was at the point of death. Reb Meir, though, was dancing exuberantly with the Torah as if nothing was wrong.

Suddenly, a group of chassidim rushed into the *beis medrash* with an outcry, imploring that he do something to bring down G-d's mercy for his daughter. Reb Meir walked into his daughter's room and saw where matters stood. Reb Meir (who would refer to himself in the third person as an expression of humility) emerged from the room and said: "Master of the Universe! You commanded us to blow the shofar on Rosh HaShanah - and Meir'l blew; You commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur - and Meir'l fasted; You commanded us to dwell in the *sukkah* during the festival - and Meir'l dwelt in the *sukkah*; You commanded us to be happy on Simchas Torah - and Meir'l is happy. But now, You've caused his daughter to be sick. Meir'l, for his part, has to accept this state of affairs joyfully, for the Mishnah teaches us, 'A man is obliged to bless his Maker for grievous tidings in the same way as he does for glad tidings.' And the Talmud explains that this means, 'to accept joyfully.' Meir'l therefore is accepting his lot joyfully. "But, Master of the Universe! Does the halachah not establish the law that 'one may not mingle one joy with

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## Kollel Happenings

### TORAH FOR TYCOONS VIA ZOOM ON SEP. 9

Torah for Tycoons resumes on Wed., September 9 via Zoom. Join Scott Levin, Regional Director for the Anti-Defamation League and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, for *Demonstrative Success: The Right & Wrong Way to Protest*. Visit [denverkollel.org](http://denverkollel.org) or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org) for more info.

### 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).

### 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](http://denverkollel.org) or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto: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) It's the thought that counts | 4) Make them rich and strong |
| 2) Coffin and shrouds           | 5) Reversed iron and copper  |
| 3) Nothing for Shimon           | 6) Forty years to understand |

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael - Part XX

In response to Rabbi Menashe's work sent to Cromwell, a politician by the name of William Prynne published a work titled *Short Demurrer*, which laid out the objections to the plan of allowing the Jews entry. In response to Prynne's work, Rabbi Menashe published *Vindiciae Judaeorum, Or, A Letter in Answer to Certain Questions Propounded by a Nobel and Learned Gentleman: Touching the Reproaches Cast on the Nation of the Jews; Wherein All Objections are Candidly, and Yet Fully Clear'din Response*.

The matter came to a head in December 1655 with the Whitehall Conference, where Parliament debated the subject.

While Rabbi Menashe won great respect in England, Prynne's work did much to turn opinion against the idea. It eventually emerged that there was, in fact, no law on the books banning the Jews from England. Rather, the Jews had been expelled by King Edward I by an Edict of Expulsion issued in 1290. Edward was long gone (along with the English monarchy itself), and so the edict held no force. Technically, then, there was nothing keeping Jews from entering England. This was expressed by Parliament with the statement "there is no law against their (the Jews) coming."

## A Taste of Torah

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the shame and hardships of the Jewish People. Mentioning these events allows one to have a greater

appreciation of Hashem's blessings as a nation and as an individual.

## Stories for the Soul

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another?... " (This is a reference to a law that weddings may not take place on a holiday as one should not mingle two different joyous events.)

Shortly thereafter, news came from his home that the girl's fever was subsiding, and she recovered.

In this week's parsha, Moshe tells the Jewish People that many calamities will befall them because they will fail to serve Hashem with joy. It's not always simple, but one must strive to be happy in living a Torah life.

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| 1) It's the thought that counts 26:5 s.v. <i>arami</i> | 4) Make them rich and strong 28:4 s.v. <i>v'ashartos</i> |
| 2) Coffin and shrouds 26:14 s.v. <i>v'ilo nasatu</i>   | 5) Reversed iron and copper 28:23 s.v. <i>v'itaynu</i>   |
| 3) Nothing for Shimon 27:24 s.v. <i>makeh</i>          | 6) Forty years to understand 29:6 s.v. <i>v'atavo'u</i>  |

## Parsha Quizzers - Answers