



# A Taste of Torah It's A Topsy-Turvy World

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

It's enough to make your head spin. One after the other, in a span of eight verses, the Torah lists six different commandments. It all starts with the mitzvah of sending away the mother bird before taking the young or the eggs, followed by the mitzvah of erecting a gate around one's roof. The Torah then discusses the prohibition against planting *kilayim*, grapes, wheat and barley together, proceeds to prohibit plowing with two different animals, continues on to prohibit wearing a garment containing *sha'atnez* (wool and linen), and concludes with the mitzvah of *tzitzis* (fringes on a four-cornered garment).

Rashi (22:8) points out that the Torah is teaching us an important idea known as *mitzvah goreres mitzvah*, one mitzvah brings another in its wake. When one performs the mitzvah of sending the mother bird away prior to taking the young or eggs, he will merit to build a new house, providing him with the opportunity to erect a fence on the roof. This mitzvah will, in turn, bring a field in its wake, providing the opportunity of the mitzvos of not planting *kilayim* and not plowing with different animals. This merit will bring new clothes, and the mitzvos of *sha'atnez* and *tzitzis*.

There is something strange going on here. It seems like the only reason one would get a new house, field, or suit is in order to perform the mitzvah associated with it. Yet these things are all basic human necessities; would a person not require these items

regardless of the mitzvos associated with them?

Rabbi Yosef Leib Nandik (d. 1943) resolves this oddity with a well-known statement of the Sages. The Zohar states that when G-d created the universe, He looked into the Torah and then made the world. Although there is much to be said about this idea, one aspect of it is that all of G-d's Creation exists for the purpose of fulfillment of His will, as expressed in the Torah. G-d therefore looked into the Torah to see what the world required. Thus, if there is a mitzvah of *tzitzis*, this requires that mankind must wear clothing. If one must avoid planting *kilayim*, G-d must create a need for planting fields to provide food.

It makes perfect sense, then, that the opportunity of a mitzvah will bring the materials and supplies needed for its performance. Need to perform the mitzvah of erecting a fence on your roof? No problem, here's a house. Looking for more mitzvos? How about *sha'atnez*? Have a new wardrobe. True, you need a house and clothes whether you are performing mitzvos or not, but that need is due to the existence of the mitzvah in the first place!

It's been said that the average person makes a blessing in order to eat, while the righteous person eats in order to make a blessing. Though a lofty ideal, it is worth focusing on the notion that we are here to fulfill G-d's will, and the world is nothing more than a means to achieve that end.

## Stories For The Soul

### Standing on Ceremony

When Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky (1899-1985, known as the Steipler) met his bride-to-be, Miriam Karelitz, she was initially dismayed because he dozed off during their meeting. She informed her brother, Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz (1878-1953, known as the Chazon Ish) of the incident.

The Chazon Ish asked the Steipler why he had fallen asleep. The Steipler explained that he had taken a train to get to Vilna, where Miriam lived, and had planned on sleeping on the train. Upon boarding the train, however, he realized that there was a possibility of *sha'atnez* (a mixture of wool and linen, forbidden to be worn) in the upholstered seats, and was therefore unable to sit down for the entire lengthy journey. (Sitting on *sha'atnez* fabric is problematic as it inevitably folds slightly around the one sitting in it, which is similar to wearing the fabric.) Exhausted due to lack of sleep and standing the entire trip, he dozed off during the meeting.

The Chazon Ish reported back to his sister, who agreed to meet the Steipler again. The two met a second time, and eventually married.

The Torah gives us numerous mitzvos in this week's parsha. Though sometimes challenging to fulfill, mitzvos give us the opportunity to rise to great spiritual heights. And the greater the difficulty, the greater the achievement.

## Kollel Happenings

KOLLEL'S DONOR APPRECIATION  
EVENT SEP. 10TH

The Kollel will be holding its annual Donor Appreciation Event on Tuesday, September 10th, 7 pm, at the home of Dov & Lara Mowszowski, 6656 E. Prentice Ave, Greenwood Village, CO 80111. To RSVP please email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA  
WITH RABBI MORDECHAI FLEISHER

The weekly parsha is replete with halachic issues. Every week, Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher will choose one topic based on the parsha, and lead an in-depth exploration of the sources and practical halachic conclusions of that issue. Sunday mornings at EDOS, 198 S. Holly St., shacharis 7:30 am, followed by breakfast and the class at approximately 8:15 am.

PARSHA ON THE MALL

Wish you could learn more about the weekly parsha? Looking to add some Torah study and inspiration to your busy day? Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher as he explores several parts of the weekly parsha at this exciting and intriguing class. Wednesday from 1-2 pm in downtown Denver at 910 16th St. 2nd floor. Refreshments are served. Email [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org) to confirm class.

# Interpersonal Issues

## The Laws of Lashon Hara (Slander)

If putting a positive spin on another's action requires more of a stretch than viewing it negatively, the law is as follows: If the perpetrator is known as a G-d fearing individual, one is obligated

to view the act favorably. If he is an average individual, although one is not required to view it favorably, it is proper not to conclude that the person acted improperly.

## Ask the Rabbi

### Why so Old in Biblical Times

From: Bob Mogel in Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Rabbi,

In the Hebrew Bible it states that in Biblical times people lived to be hundreds of years old. How is this possible given the fact that people don't live nearly as long today even with the advances in medical technology?

Dear Bob,

Until the Great Flood, there were no seasons; the weather was always temperate. After the Flood, G-d tells Noah that there will be constant seasonal changes (Genesis 8:22).

Rabbi Meir Leibush (Malbim) explains this as follows: Until the Flood, the earth's axis had no tilt relative to the sun. As a result of the flood, the earth's axis tilted in relation to the sun. Thus, the earth's climate changed drastically, resulting in a weakening of the human constitution and ability to withstand these constant changes in weather.

Thus, as a prelude to the Flood, G-d says "I won't constantly contend concerning Man ... his life-span shall

be 120 years (Genesis 6:3). The Ibn Ezra explain this to mean that lifetimes would gradually decrease, until the maximum will be around 120.

I hope that answers your question about why people don't live as long today as they once did.

As for technology's inability to slow the aging process, that's more a problem with technology than with the Bible. "The scientific study of aging is a young discipline" (National Geographic Nov. '97). Compared to many areas of science, relatively little is known about aging. Richard A. Knox refers to the "black box of aging," and calls it a "mystery" (The Boston Globe 1997).

By way of example, take the case of Jeanne Calment who died in France last year at the age of 122. Why did she live so long? No one knows. Why did she stop living? "Officials gave no specific cause of death" (Houston Chronicle News Services 8/5/97). If she had lived another ten - or 100 - years, it wouldn't have contradicted any law of science.

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