

# A Taste of Torah

## Going the Distance

By Rabbi Akiva Stern

The ache of abandonment, the deep stinging burn of betrayal. How does one begin to assuage and mitigate such hurt?!

In this week's parsha, Yosef attempts to comfort his brothers and to lessen the guilt they felt for having sold him. The Medrash adds that in the very same way that Yosef comforted his brothers, G-d will eventually comfort Jerusalem and the Nation of Israel with the coming of the final redemption.

This connection begs exploration. The Dubno Maggid elaborates and illustrates the depth of this puzzling statement in his inimitable style with a *mashal*, a parable.

Let's consider the separation of two different couples, and their subsequent reunion one year later. The first couple had a tremendous fight which escalated to the point that the man kicked his wife out of his home. After a year's time, the man regretted his decision and begged his wife to return home.

The second couple went to see an expert, as they had been married many years and had not been blessed with children. The doctor advised them to separate from one another for a year, during which time each one would undergo a regimen of medications and extensive surgery.

At the conclusion of the year, both couples were reunited, yet it is here that the similarities end. The first couple is living together, but the pain and deep hurt that caused their separation still hangs as a pall over them. Their separation is very much at odds with their attempt to reconcile and recreate their relationship.

In contrast, the second couple

perceives their forced separation as both part and parcel of their beautiful marriage. The trials and tribulations they suffered while apart, as well as the difficulty of the separation itself, only served to strengthen their love.

The Dubno Maggid explains that this is the intent of the Medrash. Yosef comforted his brothers by telling them that the difficulty he had endured all those years was absolutely essential for the continuity of the Jewish People! It was not, in fact, at odds with their familial connection; rather, this separation, albeit forced, allowed the family, and, ultimately, the entire nation of Israel, to survive.

The Medrash adds that although we may feel that the bitter exile we are mired in and continue to endure is a punishment and an estrangement from G-d, this is not so. When the final redemption comes (speedily in our days), G-d will comfort us by showing how all of the terrible persecutions the Jewish Nation has suffered in exile were all for a purpose. G-d will then provide us with the knowledge and understanding that those painful trials were, and continue to be, the essential building blocks of the greatest conceivable good.

## Stories For The Soul

### A Final Kindness

Judith Kaplan, dressed in her Shabbos finery, sat in a tent outside the NYC Medical Examiner's office, reciting Tehillim. From midnight until 5 a.m., within sight of trucks full of body parts from the World Trade Center, she fulfilled the mitzva of *shmira*: keeping watch over the dead, who must not be left alone from the time of passing until burial.

Normally, this ritual lasts for only 24 hours and is performed by one Jew for another Jew. But the weeks following 9/11 were not normal times. The round-the-clock vigil outside the morgue on First Avenue and 30th Street went on for weeks. The three sealed trucks may or may not have contained Jewish bodies.

Ms. Kaplan, 20, a senior at Stern College, was one of nine students who had volunteered for this task on Shabbos. The rest of the time, the task was performed by volunteers from Ohev Zedek Synagogue, but on Shabbos, it was too far for them to walk to the morgue. The Stern students, whose dormitories are within blocks of the morgue, filled the breach.

The students' dedication won blessings from Christian chaplains at the site, and moved police officers and medical examiners to tears. Several volunteers said they were fearful at first, but their fears were replaced by peace, and a kind of joy.

Yaakov's sons went to great pains to provide a proper burial for their father. Proper respect for the dead has always been a hallmark of Judaism.

*Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Baruch Lederman*

## Kollel Happenings

### DERECH HASHEM

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for a philosophical series on "Derech Hashem," a sefer by Rabbi Moseh Chaim Luzzatoo. Discover and delve into the vital understanding of Hashem's world. The women's class is held on Mondays at EDOS.



### A DEEPER LOOK

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issues, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Sunday nights 7:40-8:30 pm at the Kollel, 1516 Xavier, and Tuesday nights at Aish Denver 8-9 pm.



### TRUST THY FATHER

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers for "Trust thy Father," a series based on Chovos Ha'Levavos/Duties of the Heart. Discover and delve into vital Jewish concepts of Bitachon. The classes takes place on Tuesdays, from 7:55-8:25 a.m., at Aish. For more info, email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855.

## Interpersonal Issues

### When Returning a Lost Item Involves a Loss

Even if returning the lost item will not cause a loss but may prevent accrual of potential profits, one isn't required to involve himself in returning the lost item. Nonetheless, it is advisable to return the item in such circumstances unless there is a probable loss of

potential profit; otherwise, one will almost always be able to exempt himself from performing acts of kindness.

*Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)*

## Ask the Rabbi

### Tefillin

Aaron Goldman wrote:

I enjoy your postings immensely. Could you please tell me the reason for stripes on a tallis? I imagine that not having them would not disqualify the tallis but how did the black stripes come about? I know that the Sefardim have white stripes on their Tallis - and modern ones have different colors. But I am interested in the traditional ones. Thank you very much.

Saul wrote:

Here's a poser: Why do taleisim have stripes? Regards

Ruth Marcus from Hyde Park wrote:

Why don't cotton tzitzis have stripes?

Dear Aaron Goldman, Saul, and Ruth,

The stripes on the tallis remind us of the 'strand of techeles' once worn as part of the tzitzis.

Techeles is sky-blue wool. It is dyed with a special dye made from the blood of a fish/snail called the chilazon. The Torah says that if we wear a four-cornered garment, we should put strings on the corners, and one of these strings should be a 'strand of techeles.'

Over the centuries, the exact identity of the chilazon became forgotten. Hence, the 'strand of techeles' became a mitzva we are unable to fulfill (according to most authorities).

The idea behind tzitzis is that they serve as a reminder. Like royal subjects who wear special insignias to symbolize their loyalty to the king, we wear tzitzis to remind us of our duty to Hashem and His commandments. The beautiful blue reminds us of the sky, which in turn inspires us to ponder Hashem's greatness. Now that we no longer have techeles, we have the stripe on the tallis to remind us of the techeles.

Some people used to have a blue stripe. I don't know why ours is black.

It makes sense that only a woolen tallis has stripes, since techeles is made from wool.

According to some authorities, the tallis should be the same color as the tzitzis - white. That would explain the Sefardic custom to have white stripes.

Sources:

Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 9:4  
Pri Megadim, Mishbetzot Zahav 9:6  
Ta'amei Haminhagim 15

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