



Bo 5775

January 23, 2015

# A Taste of Torah

## A Binding Obligation

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

All Jewish men don them on a daily basis, but how often do we stop to think about what they contain?

Our tefillin, one on the arm and one on the head, contain four sections from the Torah. Perhaps more well-known are the first two paragraphs of Shema, but what of the other two sections? They are found in this week's Torah reading.

Our parsha ends with the other two sections that are inserted into our tefillin. These paragraphs speak about the Exodus from Egypt and G-d's visible might during that period.

The question begs to be asked: Why is this such an important idea, that we must don these sections on our arms and heads daily? These sections don't discuss our national creed or commitment to observe all the commandments of the Torah, so why the special stress?

Let us examine the answer given by the Ramban (Nachmanides) in his commentary on these verses. He begins by telling us a rule regarding many of our mitzvos. Even among those who believe in the existence of G-d and His creation of the world, there are many who question or deny

His omniscience and involvement in man's actions and welfare. However, this is an essential concept of our service of G-d; our actions and mitzvos are monitored and what we do can inspire G-d's reaction. It was due to this that He gave us the opportunity to witness, as a nation, the miracles of the Exodus, showing us the rule, rather than the exception, of His involvement and intervention in Man's issues. To paraphrase the Ramban's end-statement: One does not have an acquisition of Torah until he understands that all occurrences are miracles, not coincidences.

It is for this reason, then, that we are commanded to bind these foundations of our faith, literally, to our very being. Especially telling is how the Gemara (Rosh Hashana 17a) refers to one who chooses not to put on tefillin: a tefillin-less skull. Just as a skeleton is the form of the body, but, without the other necessary components, is left quite lacking, a Jew without tefillin is missing some of his most essential parts. May we all merit to fulfill all the commandments in their proper way.

## Stories For The Soul

### A Horse is a Horse, of Course

One cold winter day, Rabbi Nosson Adler (1741-1800) was traveling together with his esteemed student, the Chasam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer, 1782-1839). The horses pulling the wagon were trudging through the heavy snow with great difficulty. Suddenly, one of the horses collapsed and died, and the second horse was not strong enough to pull the wagon alone. The wagon driver, having no other choice, starting walking to the nearest village to obtain an additional horse. The two venerated passengers waited in the wagon.

Eventually, the wagon driver returned, leading... a donkey. When Rabbi Adler saw the donkey, he descended from the wagon and began to dance happily in the snow. "Rebbi," asked the Chasam Sofer, "why are you so happy?"

"Don't you see?" exclaimed Rabbi Adler. "The wagon driver brought a donkey instead of a horse. Who would have ever thought that I would merit fulfilling the mitzva of, 'Do not plow with an ox and donkey together', which prohibits hitching two different animals together for work? I never imagined that I would merit fulfilling this commandment. Now that I have the opportunity to do so, I am filled with joy!"

In this week's parsha, the Jewish People required a merit to leave Egypt, so Hashem gave them the mitzvah of bringing the korban Pesach, the Pesach offering. Our adherence to proper performance of mitzvos is a source of great merit, and ought to be a source of great joy.

## Kollel Happenings

### CONTAGIOUS DISEASES AT FEB. 11 TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Dr. Daniel M. Mogyoros, infectious diseases specialist, and Rabbi Eli Mozes, Community Scholar of the Denver Community Kollel, as they explore the ethics of treating contagious diseases. February 11th, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

### THE FAR SIDE OF THE TALMUD

Aggada, the passages of the Talmud that focuses on Jewish thought and outlook, provides keen insights into human nature, and offers advice on how to live our lives, can be difficult to understand, but the knowledge and wisdom hiding beneath the surface is ample reason to make the effort. Be fascinated and inspired as Rabbi Moshe Heyman presents a whole new dimension in Torah learning based on the classic work *Ain Yaakov*. Tuesdays, 1:45-2:45 pm at the Kollel Torah Center, 9550 Belleview Ave.

For more info, contact [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org).

### LEARN 2 LEARN

You have long dreamed of acquiring the tools to achieve proficiency in learning Gemara on your own. But how? The Denver Community Kollel offers a comprehensive, step-by-step, level-by-level program crafted for people just like you. All you need is the ability to read Hebrew; we will teach you the rest.

For more information, contact [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org).

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By: Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: Which parsha can be read twice – its entirety – within one year?

A: If there is a Shabbos between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, during which the parsha of Ha'azinu is read, then Parshas Vayelech is read on Shabbos Shuva, the Shabbos in between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. The following year, if there is no Shabbos in between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, Ha'azinu is read on Shabbos

Shuva, and Vayelech is read (together with Parshas Nitzavim) on the final Shabbos of the year. Thus, Vayelech is read twice during a single calendar year.

**This week's question:** Which Torah readings are repeated yearly six or more times?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email [ryz@denverkollel.org](mailto:ryz@denverkollel.org).

## Ask the Rabbi

### Water Filters on Shabbos

Sharona Shapiro wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have never used this forum before but I understand that you give answers to halachic questions. Here is mine: I have a Brita water filter pitcher. Can I refill it on Shabbos and allow the water to go through the filter?

Thank you very much and tizku l'mitzvos.

Dear Sharona Shapiro,

As you know, there are 39 categories of creative activity forbidden on Shabbos. One of them is borer - selecting one type of food or object from a mixture. Pouring wine or water through a cloth in order to strain out sediments or dirt is an example of borer.

But let's say, for example, you have a full glass of wine, and you only want to drink half. So you pour half back into the bottle. All you've done is to separate 'wine' from 'wine.' This is not an example of borer, since there was no 'mixture' to begin with.

So, too, in the case of a water filter. Most people looking at a glass of clean tap water see nothing but pure water. Even though we all know it's full of impurities, we accept it and drink it as is. Since we don't view it as a 'mixture' of water and impurities, the impurities are therefore considered part of the liquid itself. It's therefore OK to run it through a water filter.

This is true for most people. However, if you personally would never drink the water without filtering it, then for you the impurities can't be considered part of the liquid; filtering them would be borer. Neither may someone else filter the water for you; but if someone filters water for himself, you may drink it.

Sources:

*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 319:10*

*Ibid. Bi'ur Halacha "Ho'el"*

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