



Parshas Beha'aloscha

June 9, 2017

A Taste of Torah

A Fighting Chance

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

Many times in life we are faced with missed opportunities. The actual occurrence is gone, so there is no need to cry over spilled milk. What is up to us, though, is how we react to these chances. We can react negatively by saying it must not have been so important anyway. Or, on the contrary, one can respond positively by saying, I can't believe I missed such an opportunity! This attitude tends to result in seeking other, similar opportunities or perhaps even finding bigger and better opportunities.

This concept is related in an incident in this week's parsha. The Torah relates that when it came time to offer the Pesach offering, there were people who were *tamei* (ritually impure) due to coming into contact with a corpse and were therefore unable to bring the Pesach offering.

Though they were involved in the mitzvah of burial of the dead, and did nothing wrong in missing the chance to bring the Pesach offering, they still felt badly that they missed out on the incredible experience of the Pesach offering, which allows one to connect with the spiritual power of the redemption from all of our suffering in Egypt. They therefore approached Moshe saying, "Why should we be left out?" It was because of their desire to serve Hashem that Hashem commanded Moshe that, indeed, these individuals would have a second chance to perform the offering a month later.

What is not explained is where they got the right to demand and beseech "Why should we be left out?" in the first place! We do not find that

a person who has missed out on a mitzvah receives a second opportunity to perform it, yet here, they not only asked for the chance, their request was granted!

Perhaps we can explain that their source of inspiration was a result of their actions. Our Sages teach us that the body these men were in contact with was none other than that of Yosef. Yosef had made the Jewish People swear that they would take his body to the Land of Israel for burial, and these individuals were the ones ensuring that oath would be fulfilled. We can suggest that carrying Yosef enabled them to tap into his great characteristics.

One of the most remarkable traits of Yosef was that he was very driven and focused and never gave up or gave in. In spite of the many challenges Yosef lived through - being kidnapped and sold as a slave, being tempted by his master's wife and thrown into jail for refusing her, his subsequent rise as the second-most powerful person in Egypt - through it all, he remained loyal and devoted to Hashem and never lost sight of the big picture.

Carrying Yosef's coffin through the desert required dedication and perseverance, the very same trait that carried Yosef through his experiences. It was this very trait that led these individuals to demand that they, too, have the opportunity to bring the Pesach offering. Their determination to come close to Hashem despite challenges drove them to come before Moshe, and Hashem, seeing their devotion, agreed that, indeed, they had earned that right, both for

Stories For The Soul

Chew It Over

Rabbi Yaakov Shonek was an esteemed Torah scholar who was quite ill toward the end of his life. Despite the limitations imposed by his illness, he strove mightily to fulfill the mitzvos to the best of his ability.

One of the challenges Rabbi Shonek faced was that he had difficulty swallowing. He worked with a therapist to help him ingest food more easily, but he still had considerable trouble..

Pesach was approaching, and family members wondered how Rabbi Shonek would be able to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah at the Seder; the mitzvah requires consuming a fair amount of matzah in a relatively short amount of time. To compound the problem, matzah, being dry and brittle, is difficult to swallow.

Several weeks before Pesach, Rabbi Shonek called a grandchild and asked that he purchase a box of hand matzah and bring it to him. The grandchild wondered aloud why his grandfather wanted a box of matzah several weeks before Pesach actually arrived. Rabbi Shonek explained that he and his therapist had decided that they would practice eating matzah every day until Pesach, so that when Pesach arrived, he would be able to fulfill the mitzvah properly!

In this week's parsha, a group of Jews who had been unable to bring the Pesach offering asked Moshe for the opportunity to do so. Their determination and desire to fulfill a mitzvah led to a special mitzvah, Pesach Sheini, being given to the Jewish People.

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Kollel Happenings

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SOMMERS & RABBI FLEISHER

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 issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 8-9 pm, for men and women. Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher presents Sunday nights at the West Denver Bais Medrash 8-8:45 pm for men.

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.

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 or email info@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: When does Shavuos occur during the week of Parshas Beha'aloscha, an exception to the general rule?

A: This occurs during some Jewish leap years only! In the Diaspora, this occurs only during years that begin on a Thursday. (See Biur Halacha 428 s.v. Bamidbar) In Eretz Yisrael, this also occurs when Pesach begins on Shabbos. Since they celebrate Pesach for seven days

only, the Torah reading for the following Shabbos is a "regular" one, unlike Jews in the Diaspora, who read the special Yom Tov reading. The communities in Eretz Yisrael are subsequently one parsha ahead until mid-summer, and therefore read Parshas Naso prior to Shavuos.

This week's question: What special event in Tanach (the 24 books of Torah) occurred on the 23rd day of Sivan?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Shlomo Luria, the Maharshal Part III

The Maharshal's approach to Torah study was to carefully trace the halacha back to its original sources and analyze the roots of the Torah subject at hand. He strongly rejected the pilpul methodology of study (which may have been the cause of his departure from the original yeshiva of Lublin, which had been led previously by proponents of the pilpul approach).

He was a very outspoken individual, critical of many other great Torah authorities. He was an opponent of the Shulchan Aruch, which sought to codify practical halacha. One of the chief criticisms of the Maharshal against the Shulchan Aruch was that it is not possible to codify Jewish law, for future Torah authorities would reanalyze the sources and come to different conclusions, other opinions or angles would inevitably arise, and codification would only stifle healthy discussion and debate.

Ironically, the Shulchan Aruch itself became one of the most discussed and written-about works of the past five hundred years. Commentaries, supercommentaries, responsa and entire works have been written agreeing, disagreeing, analyzing and dissecting the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch. Thus, the Maharshal's concern that future analysis and discussion would be stymied never really came to pass; the opposite occurred, as the halachic process continues until this day.

It must be understood that the Maharshal's strong opinions and criticisms of others were driven by his desire for truth, his quest to maintain Torah-true Judaism, and to eliminate what he perceived as threats to the traditions that had been passed down from one generation to the next.

A Taste of Torah

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themselves and for the entire Jewish Nation for all time.

This idea is very relevant to every one of us. We should never lose hope or miss out on good opportunities; rather, we should strive to always yearn to do as much as we can within our capabilities to achieve

and accomplish whatever we can as Jews devoted to Hashem and His Torah. At times when one feels like throwing in the towel, stop for a few moments and study and analyze the actions of our ancestors. Find that spark within, passed down through the generations, and say, "Why should I lose out?"

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