



THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

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Because Torah Is for Every Jew

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A Taste of Torah Tale of Transition

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

The Grand Finale. The climax of the sojourn in the Wilderness. With Sefer Devarim, the fifth and final book of the Torah, the culmination of this forty-year period begins. Over a period of five weeks, Moshe will deliver his final words to his flock, and then the curtains will drop on this extraordinary time in Jewish history, never to be repeated. Much of this book is what we would expect; a summary of the high and low points of the forty years and instructions for the future. However, much of this book is a mystery. Why are many, but not all, *mitzvos* repeated, while many others make their first appearance here? The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin; 1816–1893) quotes our Sages, who refer to Devarim as “Mishneh Torah.” Many of the commentators translate this as “Repetition of the Law,” due to the repetition of other parts of the Torah (with addendums), but the Netziv is critical of this explanation, since the repetitious parts are but a small part of this book. Rabbi Shmshon Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888) adds that of the more than one hundred laws contained in this sefer, more than seventy are completely new!

While the Netziv suggests an alternate meaning of Mishneh Torah, Rabbi Hirsch suggests that we stick with the above-mentioned translation. Rather than this repetition being a mere mental primer, it was the adaptation of all they had learned during the previous two-score years in the desert for their future existence. Entering Eretz Yisrael in the physical sense, as well as the cessation of the miraculous life as they had experienced in the desert, required the addition of *mitzvos* as well as additions to those *mitzvos* given previously. These additions were regarding not only the laws of the Land, but laws of national

leadership, conducting wars, as well as those relating to social life such as charity, marriage and inheritance. He goes on to explain the remainder of our book, including those *mitzvos* which were already mentioned previously, in this vein.

Perhaps we can build on the preceding foundations. The Medrash Shocheh Tov tells us that Sefer Tehillim (Book of Psalms) is comprised of five books, just as the Torah is. It would thus be fitting that the fifth book of Tehillim (Chapters 107-150) should mirror, to some effect, Sefer Devarim. Let us examine the fifth book of Tehillim; what is its uniqueness? The fifteen *Shir Hama'alos* (Songs of Ascent; songs sung by the Levites in the Temple), the entire *Hallel*, and *Ashrei* followed by the five *Hallelu-ya* chapters (recited in our daily prayers) are among the better-known chapters that are in this part of Tehillim. The Gemara (Pesachim 117a) tells us that while there are many words in Tehillim with various meanings of praise, the highest form is the word “*hallel*.” The *shoresh* (root) word “*hallel*” appears in the fifth book of Tehillim 58 times, almost double that of the rest of Tehillim combined. In addition, the word *hallelu-ya* appears 20 times, and only appears four times throughout the rest of Tehillim! This is no coincidence, and it may be the equivalent of the Mishneh Torah of Tehillim. Just as Sefer Devarim gives us the takeaway lessons for our future Torah life based on the ideas and concepts of the previous four books of the Torah, the book of Tehillim teaches us many life lessons, but the practical lesson for us is to utilize our ability to praise Hashem. May we merit to utilize our abilities and live our lives with these great sources of inspiration for continued success!

Stories For The Soul

Kosher but Treif

Rabbi Binyamin Mendelson was the rav of Moshav Komemiyus, a religious settlement in Eretz Yisroel, beginning in 1951. The *moshav* (settlement) had a kosher bakery that provided kosher bread to some 5,000 families in the area. Unfortunately, it was not profitable, and Rabbi Mendelson tried to borrow money to keep the bakery afloat until it would get in the black.

Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz, a religious member of the Israeli Knesset, helped Rabbi Mendelson obtain the loans from *g'machim* (free-loan funds). At some point, Rabbi Lorincz realized that it seemed unlikely that the bakery would ever become profitable. He did not see a realistic way that future loans could be repaid. Rabbi Mendelson, though, very much wanted to keep the bakery open to ensure a supply of kosher bread for the Jews of the area. The two decided to consult with the Brisker Rav (Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik; 1886-1959).

“Kosher bread is very important,” replied the Brisker Rav. “But kosher bread produced using *treif* (non-kosher) money is not kosher. If you secure a loan knowing that it is unlikely to be repaid, the money is *treif*! Even if your goal is to perform a *mitzvah*, it cannot be done in that fashion!”

In this week’s parsha, Moshe discusses the proper conduct of judges in a Jewish court. Among the admonitions he gives them is not to try to engage in helping someone when it is at the expense of true justice, such as finding a wealthy man liable, when he is really not, in order that he provide support to a destitute man. Even if the rich man has an obligation to give charity to the poor man, twisting the law to do a “*mitzvah*” is wrong.

Kollel Happenings

SUMMER NIGHT SEDER FOR BACHURIM

Attention boys entering 7th grade and older! The Kollel is once again holding its Summer Night Seder for Bachurim at the Kollel West Side Bais Medrash. Sunday-Thursday, mincha 7:45 pm, followed by learning. Ma'ariv at 9:10 pm. Stipends available for boys who maintain the schedule. For info or sponsorship opportunities, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

YARCHEI KALLAH ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND

Join Rabbi Binyomin Halpern, Rav of Cong. Bais Halevy and father of Kollel Scholar Rabbi Shmuel Halpern, for two days of Torah study, September 4-5, at the Kollel's West Side Bais Medrash. Breakfast and lunch provided along with the study sessions and lectures. For more details, visit the Kollel website, www.denverkollel.org, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

MOTZOEI SHABBOS NACHAMU KUMZITZ

Join the Kollel for an evening of inspirational singing next Motzoei Shabbos Nachamu, August 20th. The event will feature live music, refreshments and divrei Torah. The kumzitz will be held at the Joseph home, 1390 Tennyson St., at approximately 9:45 pm. For more information, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: In many *chumashim*, *Megillas Eichah* (Book of Lamentations) is followed by a strange mnemonic, *YaTKaK*. What does it stand for? (Hint: 4/24)

A: Four of the twenty-four books of *Tanach* end on a less-than-positive note, and when we read them publicly we repeat the next-to-last verse again in order to end with something positive. The mnemonic for these four books is *YaTKaK*; *Yeshaya* (we read the last part

on Shabbos Rosh Chodesh), *Trei Asar* (read on Shabbos Hagadol), *Koheles* (read on Sukkos) and *Kinnos* (the Gemara's name for *Eicha*, read on Tisha B'av).

(Source: Maharsha, *Chiddushei Agudos*, *Brachos* 31a)

This week's question: In which year in Jewish history was the second *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple) destroyed? How many years ago was that?

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

Lives of Our Torah Leaders The Rambam - Part XIII

The Ramban's efforts in defusing the terrible dispute over the Rambam put the matter to rest for some fifty years. At the start of the 14th century, however, the debate flared yet again. By now, the Rambam and his works were beyond criticism; the focus was on the study of philosophy and other areas of secular knowledge. In fact, an attempt by one Middle Eastern rabbi to ban the Rambam's works was ignored by the other Torah authorities, and when this rabbi persisted in his efforts, he was excommunicated by the rabbis of the Middle Eastern Jewish communities.

Rabbi Abba Mari (1240-1315) of Provence was quite disturbed by the credence given to secular philosophy by Spanish Jews of his time, some going so far as to equate Aristotle with Moshe Rabbeinu and philosophy with Torah. He attempted to have a complete ban imposed upon the study of philosophy, and the dispute over the study of secular knowledge, especially philosophy, raged once again.

Rabbi Shlomo ben Aderes, better known by the acronym of his name,

the Rashba, was asked by Rabbi Abba Mari to lend his name to the campaign. Although he agreed with Rabbi Abba Mari in a general sense that secular philosophy had taken hold too strongly, he recognized that a complete ban would be ineffective and would ultimately weaken the position of those opposed to the study of philosophy. He therefore agreed to issue a ban against the study of philosophy for those under the age of 25. All of the Rambam's works were excluded from the ban, as was the study of medicine and other similar sciences. This compromise was widely accepted by the Jews of Spain and Provence, where the issue was relevant. In the Ashkenazic communities of Germany and France, the entire issue was moot, as philosophy was not part of the general education in those Jewish communities.

While there is still some debate, even until this day, regarding some of the Rambam's views and parts of his works, the Rambam is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest medieval Torah authorities, and his works are studied in *batei medrash* (study halls) throughout the world.