

# THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel

Parshas Devarim

July 28, 2017

## A Taste of Torah

### Rising From the Ashes

by Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky

This Shabbos is known as Shabbos Chazon, due to the *haftara* that we read which starts with the *chazon* (vision) of the prophet Yeshaya (Isaiah). Yeshaya laments the impending destruction of the Temple and its underlying causes. We need to use this period of the year to reflect on what we can be doing to rectify the causes of the destruction. Yet we must ask, what, indeed, can we do in our current lowly spiritual state to rebuild what the spiritual giants of previous generations apparently could not accomplish?

We find a cryptic statement in the Jerusalem Talmud (Brachos 2:4). It states that Mashiach (the Messiah) will be born on Tisha B'Av. Out of all days that one would choose for Mashiach to be born, this day would likely have been the very last. This day is the Jewish Nation's lowest point; the Temple was destroyed due to our sins and the Divine Presence left us. What is the meaning of this passage?

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 98a) offers another statement that needs an explanation. It reveals to us that Mashiach will arrive either in a generation which is completely worthy or in a generation which is completely unworthy. This seems very strange, for while it certainly makes sense for Mashiach to come if we are deserving, why would he come if we are all completely undeserving?

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1892-1953) in his classic work *Michtav Me'Eliyahu* provides us with the key to the entire subject. Of course, he explains, the best-case scenario would be if the Jewish Nation would continuously choose good over evil, elevating themselves and the whole world, which would make us worthy

of the Mashiach. However, what if this plan does not unfold, and we don't always make the right choices, which sends us in a downward spiral - how, then, will we ever be redeemed?

The answer is incredible. The Jewish People will fall so low and the world will become so morally corrupt that it will self-implode! The evil will become very obvious and clear, and it will become very apparent that this is clearly not a viable option with which to navigate our lives. At rock-bottom, when one sees how the world looks in such a state, the only way forward is to rise once again. People will be forced to look inward and re-ignite their souls which were silent and dormant until that point.

Obviously, it would be better for Mashiach to come due to our worthiness, but there is a Plan B. Precisely in a generation that is so immoral and misguided there will emerge a clarity, like never before, that this is not what we really want. The Mashiach will be born on Tisha B'Av, because at our lowest point, all evil implodes and the Mashiach is born!

In the cycle of the year, one notices an interesting order of events. We go from a three-week period of mourning to seven weeks of being comforted, followed by the month of Elul when we begin the process of repentance and returning to G-d that continues into Rosh Hashana and culminates in Yom Kippur, and, finally, the joy and happiness of Sukkos. Rabbi Dessler explains that the mourning itself brings the comfort, because when the reality of how low we have sunk hits home, we know that we must rise, and that in itself is the comfort. Once one fully realizes how bad his choices were,

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## Stories For The Soul

### Are You Talking to Me?

Rabbi Aryeh Levine (1885-1969) was once apprised of a certain individual who did not treat his wife with the proper respect and needed to be reprimanded. Rabbi Levine, realizing that the man would likely become defensive if approached directly, decided on a different course of action. He would deliver an address at the synagogue the man attended, focusing on *shalom bayis* (domestic tranquility), and hopefully the fellow would get the message.

After Rabbi Levine concluded his talk, he was approached by Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer (1870-1953), one of the outstanding Torah personalities of his time.

Rabbi Meltzer thanked Rabbi Levine for his talk, and told him he had taken his words to heart. Rabbi Meltzer proceeded to explain to the surprised Rabbi Levine that his wife rewrote his Torah novella in preparation for printing (Rabbi Meltzer published a major work on Maimonides' *Yad Hachazakah*). Sometimes, she made errors, and Rabbi Meltzer felt he did not react properly. He assured Rabbi Levine that he planned on being extra careful to respond with sensitivity.

Whether the intended party changed or not, we do not know. But the great Rabbi Meltzer felt that the message was intended for him!

Moshe gives over his final series of addresses in the Book of Devarim, which we begin reading this week. He begins with an indirect reproof of the missteps the Jewish People committed during their years in the desert. Alluding to their errors was sufficient for them to understand his intent and improve their ways.



## Kollel Happenings

### GOOD MOURNING THIS SUNDAY

The final class of a two-part series for women in two different locations titled *Good Mourning: Understanding & Utilizing the Period of the Three Weeks & Tisha B'Av* will take place this Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>.

*Nobody's Home: The Purpose of Exile* will be delivered by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher at the Polter home, 5100 W. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave., 9:45 am-10:45 and at the Sommers home, 4902 S. Xenia St., 7:45-8:45 pm.

### MOTZOEI SHABBOS NACHAMU KUMZITZ

Join the Kollel for an evening of inspirational singing on Motzoei Shabbos Nachamu, August 5<sup>th</sup>. The event will feature live music, refreshments and divrei Torah. The kumzitz will be held at approximately 9:45 pm. For more information, please contact [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org).

### SUMMER NIGHT SEDER FOR BACHURIM

Attention bachurim in Denver over the summer! The Kollel is once again holding its Summer Night Seder for Bachurim at the Kollel West Side Bais Medrash. Sunday-Thursday. Night seder begins at 8 pm, with ma'ariv at 9:10 pm. Stipends available for boys who maintain the sederim. For further details, info or sponsorship opportunities, please contact [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org).

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

**Last week we asked:** There a custom to fast on a parent's *yahrtzeit*. What is the reason for this custom?

**A:** This custom is quoted by the Rema (Yorah De'ah 376:5), and there are three reasons given for it: 1. The Terumas Hadeshen (Rabbi Yisroel Isserlin; 1390-1460) explained that the fasting is for the children to remember the pain they experienced on that date. 2. The Levush (Rabbi Mordechai Yoffe, c. 1530-1612) explained that the date of a parent's *yahrtzeit* is also a day of strict judgment for the child, and as a measure of *teshuva*

(repentance), one should fast. 3. Others explain based on the Kabbalistic concept that *yahrtzeit* is a day of judgment for the deceased. Therefore, the children fast as a means of atonement for the parent.

(Sources: Divrei Sofrim, Aveilus, 376:50 and 402:71)

**This week's question:** When is *kaddish* officially recited on behalf of those deceased who did not merit having someone recite it for their soul's merit?

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

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Shlomo Luria, the Maharshal Part X

"The question that pertains to you is this," continued the Maharsha. "How could the heads of this community offer me the rabbinate of Lublin, when Ostroh is much larger? The question that pertains to me is: Why did I agree to leave Ostroh and come to Lublin?"

"The answer is: In all of Ostroh there are no sages as great in Torah as Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon Zev, Lublin's two deans. I left Ostroh and came to Lublin to be in their midst. Your behavior, though, perplexes me!"

After that opening, he launched into his Shabbos drasha, not allowing his listeners to react to his earlier remarks.

After his drasha, he concluded, "Since I have accepted your appointment, I am your rabbi and spiritual guide, and, according to Jewish law, you must obey me. Now, as your rabbi, I demand that you

reinstate the two great Torah luminaries, Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon Zev, to their former positions."

After Shabbos, the Maharsha returned to Ostroh, and the two deans of Lublin resumed their positions.

It is said that because the Maharsha had restored peace between the Maharam and the Maharshal's son-in-law (who headed the Maharshal's yeshiva and carried on his legacy), the Maharsha's commentary appears on top of the page, while the two giants of Lublin, the Maharshal and the Maharam, appear side-by-side under him!

The Maharshal passed away in 1573. His works, though, continue to be studied daily throughout the world, and the students he taught and nurtured carried on his teachings to future generations.

## A Taste of Torah

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he needs to repent for his past. Once that is complete and one is cleansed, having completely returned to G-d, we arrive at true joy.

We live in a world today where we can really connect to the truth of these words. The

direction in which the world is headed is very frightening in so many ways. We see everything once considered moral being destroyed in front of our eyes. Now is the time to look inwards and reflect, rekindle the spark, and arise out of the ashes of our destruction.

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