

# A Taste of Torah

## A Steal Of A Deal

By: Rabbi Eli Mozes

A gnarled hand firmly knocks on the door, next to a brass nameplate that reads “Howard Wilson, Esq.” “Come in,” a voice calls from inside the office, and Satan quietly walks in and takes a seat. “I have a proposition for you,” says Satan. “Go ahead,” says the lawyer. “I will make you the most successful lawyer in all of Colorado. You will be rich and famous, a private jet and luxury yacht will be available at your beck and call. In exchange, all I ask of you is your soul, your wife’s soul, the souls of your two children and that of your dog.” The lawyer coolly looks Satan up and down and says, “What’s the catch?”

In this week’s parsha, Moshe discusses the Jewish People’s obligation to Hashem: “Now, O Israel, what is it that Hashem your G-d asks of you? Only that you fear Him, go in all His ways... (Deuteronomy 10:12)” The word “only” seems to indicate that we ought to be asking, “What’s the catch?” In truth, fear of G-d is no small feat. The Talmud (Megillah 25a) brings up this very question: “Is fear of Hashem a small matter?” it asks. And the answer it provides is mystifying. “Yes,” says the Talmud, “for Moshe, this is a small matter.” This doesn’t seem to make any sense; for Moshe it may be a triviality, but he isn’t talking to himself. He’s speaking to the Jewish People, for whom this is a tremendous challenge.

The Dubno Maggid (Rabbi Ya’akov Kranz; c. 1740-1804) explains this in a most meaningful fashion. Hashem tells Noach, “And your reverence and fear will be on all the beasts of the field (Bereishis 9:2); why is this being told

to man and not to the beasts?

The Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 70) contrasts the seven daughters of Yisro, who were chased away from the well, with Rachel, who was able to draw water from the well unharmed, even though she was only one girl surrounded by numerous other male shepherds. The Medrash explains with a verse, “The angel of Hashem camps around those who fear him (Psalms 34:9);” since Rachel feared Hashem, no one would start up with her. The Dubno Maggid expounds on this with an analogy; *yiras shamayim* (fear of Heaven) is like a candle. When one lights a candle for oneself, all those around him will have illumination. So, too, one who has *yiras Shamayim* will radiate it until all those around him are affected. He brings another analogy from the Vilna Gaon (Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer; 1720-1797), who says that a person has an internal storage vessel which fills as one’s *yiras Shamayim* grows, until it overflows onto those around him. With this, explains the Dubno Maggid, we can understand why Hashem told Noach, not the beasts, that his fear would be imposed upon the animals. Hashem was telling Mankind to grow in *yiras Shamayim* to the point that it would illuminate and overflow, so that even the beasts of the field would be affected.

We can now understand the Talmud’s answer. Since for Moshe *yiras Shamayim* was a small matter and something which his every action expressed, the Jews of his generation were powerfully affected, to the point where they could look at their “contract” with Hashem and say,

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## Stories For The Soul

### Who Is Stronger?

A rabbi once came to the great Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan; 1838-1933). He was the leader in a community beset by secularism, and he was in need of encouragement in his struggles.

The rabbi detailed the travails he was experiencing, asking the Chofetz Chaim for advice on how to confront those who wished to uproot Torah Judaism from his town.

“If there is a civil war,” asked the Chofetz Chaim, “and you are debating which side to join, what criteria would you base your decision on?”

“Whichever side has the best chance to win,” replied the rabbi.

“Correct,” replied the sage. “So fight for the stronger side!”

“But the secularists are far stronger than the religious!” protested the rabbi. “Are you suggesting I give up the battle?!”

The Chofetz Chaim replied, “Hashem is stronger than everyone else. Whichever side Hashem is on, that is the stronger side.”

In this week’s parsha, Moshe tells the Jewish people not to fear the might of the inhabitants of the Land of Canaan. As long as Hashem is fighting for the Jewish People, they needn’t fear defeat.

## Kollel Happenings

### 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). Class will resume on August 17th following summer break.

### A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

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. Sunday nights, 7:40-8:30 pm, at the Kollel for men, 1516 Xavier, and Tuesday nights at the Southeast Kollel Torah center, 8-9 pm, for men and women. Class will resume on August 17th following summer break.

### THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD ADOPT-A-BUBBY PROGRAM

Do you know of a senior – a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbor, fellow congregant – who would benefit from a weekly phone call to schmooze, share a thought on the parsha or Jewish calendar, or just say hello? Do you have a few minutes a week to call a senior in the community and make a difference in the life of another? Contact the Denver Community Kollel's M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Adopt-A-Bubby program! Call Joyce Litzman at the Denver Community Kollel at 303-820-2855, or email [jlitzman@denverkollel.org](mailto:jlitzman@denverkollel.org).

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By: Rabbi Yaakov Zions

**Last week we asked:** When do we prostrate ourselves during prayer, and why is it not considered adding bows?

**A:** The general custom is to prostrate once on each day of Rosh Hashana and four times on Yom Kippur. Three of the four times on Yom Kippur are when we discuss the prostration of those in attendance at the Temple during the service of the *Kohein Gadol*. This prostration is not regarded as "additional" as we are simply "joining" the prostration of those in the Temple.

The fourth time on Yom Kippur, as well as the one time on each day of Rosh Hashana,

occurs during the *chazzan's* recitation of *Aleinu*. While this prostration is mentioned by the Rema (O.C. 621:4) for Yom Kippur, its origins for Rosh Hashana are a later custom. This prostration is permitted the same as our daily bowing during *Aleinu* is permitted.

**This week's question:** On the seven Shabbosos following Tisha B'Av, we read special *haftarahs* known as the *Shiva Dinechemta* (the Seven of Consolation) that focus on consolation after the tragedies of Tisha B'Av. What part of our prayers are based on these seven *haftarahs*?

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

## Ask the Rabbi

### Faith & Folly

Michael wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Since there are many religions and faiths around the world with contradictory beliefs, but all believing in one or multiple supreme beings, are they all personifications of one ultimate reality?

Dear Michael,

No. The fact that people believe something doesn't necessarily make it true.

For centuries, Western man believed that blood did not circulate, that heavy objects fall faster than light ones and that iron could not float. Many believed the earth was flat. Some still do, such as the members of England's "Flat Earth Society."

Saying that "ultimately, everyone is right" is the logical equivalent of saying that "ultimately, everyone is wrong," because the other religions don't agree that "everyone is right." They all say they're right!

So, for example, by saying "Christians, Moslems, and Buddhists all have a piece of one reality," you are espousing yet another philosophy, one - like the others - which everyone else disagrees with! You're adding to the noise of people shouting "We're right!"

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"What's the catch?"

Practically speaking, one of the most important things for a Jew to possess is *yiras Shamayim*, as the Talmud (Brachos 33a) teaches us, "All is in the hands of Heaven except for *yiras Shamayim*," which the commentaries explain to mean that all is preordained except for that which is left up to free will. Which way one chooses, right or wrong, is determined

by how much *yiras Shamayim* one has.

We are thus faced with a difficult challenge of increasing our *yiras Shamayim*. But the Dubno Maggid teaches us that a means to achieving *yiras Shamayim* is to choose our friends wisely. Before I decide that this is someone I want to spend time with, I need to ask myself: Is this someone who will increase my *yiras Shamayim*?

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