



# THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Vayakhel 5776

March 4, 2016

## A Taste of Torah True Love

By Rabbi Eli Mozes

Aharon and Sarah Wechsler were a happily married couple who had but one wish: They wanted a child. Finally, after a few years of waiting, they were blessed with a beautiful baby boy whom they named Chaim. Words cannot describe the way Sarah doted over her little Chaim'l; her whole life revolved around the apple of her eye. The Wechslers felt that they were living the ideal life in their small shtetl in Poland. Sadly, this all changed on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939 with the German invasion of Poland. The Wechslers realized how perilous it was to stay put and started seeking options to save their lives. A gentile neighbor whom they were close with offered to take in Sarah and pretend that she was his daughter; with her blond hair and blue eyes, she could easily pass for a gentile. However, to take in Aharon and Chaim would all but give it away. They decided that Sarah would remain behind with the neighbor while Aharon would attempt to flee with Chaim, who was only five years old, across the border to safer territory. The story of how Aharon and Chaim escaped could fill a book, but after a long and perilous journey, they arrived in England safe and sound, where they remained for the duration of the war.

After the war, Aharon traveled back to Poland to attempt to locate his wife. Cautiously optimistic, he knocked on his former neighbor's door with a heart full of trepidation. One can but imagine the jubilation when the door was opened by none other than Sarah. After a tearful reunion and much thanks to Hashem, they headed back to England, where Aharon had left Chaim in the care of a friend. Sarah could barely contain her excitement; the one thing which had kept her going during those terrible war years was the dream that one day she would be reunited with her dear Chaim'l. However, things did not play out exactly as she had imagined. The Chaim she had left was but a small child, and now he was a grown boy. Try as she might, she

couldn't seem to reclaim that strong bond of love which had previously connected her to Chaim. Instead, it seemed that Aharon was the one who had subsumed that love which she once had felt for Chaim.

Baffled by this phenomenon, Aharon went to discuss it with Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (1892-1953). The rabbi opened Aharon's eyes with an amazing insight: Giving isn't the product of love; rather, love is the product of giving. We think we focus most of our giving and self-sacrifice on those we love precisely because we love them, but that is not the whole story. Love itself is created when we give to someone. If there is someone whom you want to love, start giving to him or her, and, in but a short time, the feeling of love will follow. For all those years that Sarah had been separated from her son, she had been deprived of the ability to give to him. Instead, Aharon had assumed her role of selflessly giving to their dear son, thus, the resultant change in their relationship with their child.

Every year when we arrive at the Torah portions of the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), we grapple with relating to them. Why the need for going into such detail of the exact blueprint and construction of an edifice which was never meant to be permanent? Furthermore, the Torah doesn't just relate this one time. After the initial commandments for constructing the *Mishkan*, its vessels and the priestly garments in *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh*, we read the sections of *Vayakhel* and *Pikudei*, where the Torah again goes through the construction of the Tabernacle with all of its minutiae.

Even more puzzling, consider the following: Imagine if a multi-billionaire who is running for president would come to you for a donation to support his cause; wouldn't you reply, "Why don't you just use your own money?" Yet Hashem, to Whom all of Creation belongs, turns to the Jewish

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## Stories For The Soul

### Every Note Counts

Based on a story from [shemayisrael.com](http://shemayisrael.com)

An accomplished writer was working on a biography of the famous symphony conductor, Arturo Toscanini. The writer called Toscanini and asked if he could visit him on a particular night. The great maestro told him that he could not meet that night, as he was planning to listen, on the radio, to a symphony that he himself had conducted the previous year. The writer asked if he could join him and discuss the concert after it was over. Toscanini agreed on condition that he would not be disturbed during the concert.

The next night, after the performance ended, the writer said, "Wasn't that magnificent?" "No, it wasn't," Toscanini answered sternly. "There were supposed to be 120 musicians, among them 15 violinists, but only 14 were present."

The writer was skeptical, but did not dare question Toscanini. The next morning, though, he called the director of the music hall that had hosted the performance; the director informed him that there were supposed to be 120 musicians, including 15 violinists, but one of the 15 violinists had called in sick. The writer was in awe and could not understand how Toscanini could have noticed the missing sound of one violin. He returned to Toscanini and asked him how he was able to discern the missing violin in an orchestra of 120 musicians. Toscanini answered, "There is a great difference between you and me. As part of the audience, everything sounds great to you. But I, being a conductor, must know every sound that comes forth from the orchestra. When I heard the concert, I was able to perceive that one violinist was missing."

The building of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was a project that required the participation of every Jew, regardless of stature; each person's contribution was vital in constructing a place for the *Shechinah* (Divine presence) to reside. Because Hashem discerns the importance of every Jew.

## Kollel Happenings

### KOLLEL'S 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>

The Denver Community Kollel will hold its 18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at Aish Denver. Kollel founders Rabbi Myer J. and Mrs. Bruria Schwab will be the guests of honor. The Kollel will recognize the 18 current and past Kollel families who reside in Denver. To reserve or place an ad, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org), email [journal@denverkollel.org](mailto:journal@denverkollel.org), or call 303-820-2855.

### 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).

### RAV SCHWAB ON CHUMASH AVAILABLE FROM KOLLEL

The Denver Community Kollel is pleased to announce the publication and distribution of Rav Schwab on Chumash. The book is available through the Denver Community Kollel at a special discount rate of \$24.

To order, call 303-820-2855, email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org), or go to [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org).

## Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

**Last week we asked:** What is the longest *aliyah* (reading for one individual called to the Torah) of the year, and why?

**A:** The account of the Golden Calf is read in Parshas Ki Sisa, and the entire story is read during the second *aliyah*, which is given to a Levite. Since the tribe of Levi didn't sin with the Golden Calf, we prefer to read this tragic and shameful incident with those uninvolved in it. This phenomenon means that this *aliyah* contains 47 verses. (Magen Avraham Orach Chaim 428:8)

There is a custom, practiced by some

Sephardic congregations, to extend the first *aliyah*, which goes to a *kohen* (priest), in Parshas Naso until after the Priestly Blessings (for obvious reasons). This creates an *aliyah* of 87 verses!

**This week's question:** According to the Ashkenazic custom, the prayer of *Avinu Malkeinu* is recited during the Ten Days of Repentance as well as on public fast days. Which custom is of earlier origin?

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

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel – the Rosh, Part III

For seven years, Rabbi Meir remained a prisoner in the fortress of Ensisheim, until his passing in 1293. During this time his disciples, including the Rosh, were permitted to meet with him, and he was even able to compose several of his works within the prison walls.

After he died, his body was not surrendered until fourteen years later, when a heavy ransom was paid by a generous Jew, Alexander Suskind Wimpfen of Frankfurt. In return, Alexander Suskind requested only that after his own death, his body should be laid to rest next to the saintly Rabbi Meir. His wish was carried out when he died a year later, and he was buried next to the great Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg.

Rabbi Meir's efforts were ultimately successful. Despite much suffering at the hands of the local gentile populace through the centuries, it was rare for a government in Europe to take a prominent Jew prisoner for communal ransom after the incident with Rabbi Meir.

The Rosh spent much time studying with Rabbi Meir, even while the latter was imprisoned. He received his teacher's Torah knowledge, as well as the traditions and customs practiced by Ashkenazic Jewry, making him a premier authority on halacha in the Ashkenazic communities. He thus became one of the foremost Torah leaders in Germany and France.

## A Taste of Torah

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People and asks for a donation to build a resting place for His *Shechina* (Divine presence). Granted, the *Mishkan* was for the benefit of the Jewish People, not for His, but couldn't He just create mountains of gold and silver to cover the costs?

In light of what we have learned from Rav Dessler, this all starts to make sense. The purpose of the *Mishkan* was to help us concretize and realize our relationship with Hashem. To help us truly love Hashem and serve Him with all our heart and soul. But the only way

to this is by giving, because love is the product of giving. Therefore Hashem doesn't say, "Give Me a donation," but, rather "Take for Me a donation." (Exodus 25:2) The meaning is clear; it may be true that we are "giving" some of our wealth for the construction of this building, but that isn't the ultimate purpose; rather, we are "taking" from this the ability to truly love Hashem. Perhaps this is the reason we review this "giving" every year, in all of its detail, time and again, to remember what we have "given," and to once again "take" that feeling of true love.

The Torah Weekly is made possible through a generous grant from the Harry H. Beren Foundation of Lakewood, NJ, in memory of Harry H. Beren, z"l.  
Denver Community Kollel: 1516 Xavier Street, Denver, CO 80204 Tel: 303-820-2855 Fax: 303-820-2806  
Email: [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org) Web: [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org)  
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