



Parshas Vayera

November 3, 2017

A Taste of Torah

Bound to Be Better

by Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky

A man once approached Rabbi Shalom Schwadron (1912/1921-1997) after he had delivered his Friday night talk and related to him the following story:

The time after World War I was one of relative freedom for the Jews of Russia. I was involved in diamonds and things were going well. Every morning, I was at my office at 8:00 am, and I was busy all day.

One morning, I went to my office a bit early to get some paperwork done, carrying, as usual, my valise of diamonds and jewelry. On the way, I heard a man calling out from a small synagogue asking for a tzenter, the tenth man to complete the minyan (quorum of ten Jewish adult males necessary for public prayers). I decided to help out, but upon entering I saw that there were only three other men besides myself and the man at the door, who by now had resumed his search for a tzenter.

A bit upset at having been duped, I started complaining that I wasn't the tenth but the fifth! "Don't worry," he called back, "many Jews pass here and we'll have a minyan in no time." After waiting a while, I protested that I could not stay any longer; I must be in my office right now. At this point, he started pleading with me, "Today is my father's yahrzeit and I need a minyan. Please stay." I resolved that come what may, I would remain and help the poor fellow.

At about 8:30, he finally got his minyan together. I was stuck there until the final amen was answered after the final kaddish. He then thanked us profusely, served some cake and drinks and let us leave.

When I came within two blocks of my office, a man I knew came running frantically over to me. "The Bolsheviks took over the government, and some of them came in and killed the Jews at the diamond exchange. They are now busy looting as much as they

can. Run for your life!" I fled, hid for a few days and was able to get out of Russia. I thought I was losing business by staying for the minyan, but, in reality, it saved my life!

From reading the verses describing Akeidas Yitzchak (the Binding of Isaac), it would appear to be that Yitzchak almost died, but at the last minute, it was decreed that he would live. However, the Shelah (Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz; c.1555-1630) quotes the Zohar, which paints an entirely different picture. At the time of his binding, Yitzchak's soul actually left his body, only to be replaced with a different soul later! What did this exchange of souls actually accomplish? Yitzchak's original soul did not have the ability to have children. Through Akeidas Yitzchak, this soul left his body, and he received a new soul that possessed the ability to reproduce and have children.

If one contemplates this, it is mind-boggling! Avraham knew that he was being commanded by G-d to give up everything. Yitzchak was his only son and the future of the Jewish Nation. Avraham was told to sacrifice him on an altar, cutting the link to the future of the Jewish People. It seemed that the Jewish Nation was going to be destroyed in infancy.

Imagine if Avraham would have decided to keep Yitzchak alive and had not withstood the test. He would've been left with a son who would remain childless, and everything would have been lost! It was precisely because he blindly followed G-d's command and bound his son upon the altar that Yitzchak received the ability to create future generations.

G-d runs the world, and He is the only

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Stories For The Soul

Pay the Price

One Passover, some guests from outside of the Holy Land came to visit Jerusalem, and asked to join the saintly Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld and his family for the Passover festival. He graciously agreed to their request, and brought them to his home.

Just to be polite, the guests offered the rabbi some money to help defray the huge expenses of hosting the Passover Seder, and, much to their surprise, he immediately accepted their offer. They promptly gave his wife five liras sterling, and they settled into their rooms.

It was on the first day of Chol Ha'moed (the Intermediate Days of the Festival), and the guests were about to leave when Rabbi Sonnenfeld suddenly appeared at the door to their room with the five liras sterling which they had originally given him and placed it on the table in front of them. The guests were both surprised and confused. They had thought that the rabbi had willingly accepted their offer to pay for part of the food that they would be eating at his home, and here he was, returning all their money to them, unused.

Rabbi Sonnenfeld explained his strange behavior to them. "When you offered to pay for your meals, I realized that you didn't feel good about taking other people's food for free, and I knew that you would have limited how much of my food you were going to eat, thus not being able to enjoy the holiday meals. I therefore allowed you to give me the money, which in turn enabled you to eat to your hearts' content, thinking that you were

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Kollel Happenings

RABBANIT MIZRACHI AT THREE LOCATIONS!

The Women's Division of the Denver Community Kollel present a video for women, **Cheshvan: The Shower of Blessings & Tears.** **Sunday, Nov. 5** at Aish Denver, 9550 E. Belleview Ave. **Monday, Nov. 6** at Beth Jacob High School, 5100 W. 14th Ave. **Tuesday, Nov. 7** at the Halpern Home, 210 S. Oneida St. Sponsored by Gabriela Gottlieb in memory of Hana Tannenbaum. No charge, suggested donation of \$5 to help cover costs of future video presentations.

RABBI REISMAN WEEKLY IN DENVER

Join thousands around the globe in listening to the renowned weekly Navi shiur of Rabbi Yaakov Reisman! Rabbi Reisman's weekly Motzoei Shabbos class is shown at Beth Jacob High School, 5100 W. 14th Ave., this week at 8:30 pm. For sponsorships and info, contact info@denverkollel.org.

SHOW THEM WHO'S BOSS: DEALING WITH UNETHICAL SITUATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Join neurosurgeon Fredric Sonstein, MD, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they discuss how to deal with ethical challenges in the workplace. **Wednesday, December 6, at 12-1:15 p.m.** at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: In Torah scrolls, there are two styles of spacing between chapters (traditional chapters, not necessarily as they are generally numbered). One is a space which extends for the remainder of the line and is called *pesucha*, open spaces; the other is a blank space in the center of a line and is called *setuma*, closed spaces. If these spaces were deleted or the wrong type of space was used, the scroll is invalidated! (Y.D. 275:1) Are there more

pesucha or *setuma* spaces?

A: According to tradition, our Torah scrolls have 669 spaces between chapters, of which 290 (or about 43%) are *pesucha*, and 379 (or about 57%) are *setuma*.

This week's question: What book of *Tanach* (Scriptures) is written with *setumos* (literally: closed, a blank space in the center of a line) only, and why?

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

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Aryeh Leib Gunzberg - The Shaagas Aryeh Part VI

Why did Pharaoh ask Yaakov about his age? And why did Yaakov give such a lengthy answer? He should have simply answered that he was one hundred and thirty years old!

Our Sages tell us that as soon as Yaakov arrived in Egypt, the land was blessed and the hunger and famine ceased. Pharaoh worried that Yaakov was very old and would soon pass away, and that would spell an end to the blessings.

Yaakov realized this, so he answered Pharaoh that indeed, he was one hundred and thirty years old. But, said Yaakov, these years were few, since they did not reach the days of his

forefathers, who lived to ripe old ages of 175-180 years. Yaakov also explained that he looked much older due to the difficult life he had lived.

"The same is true for me," concluded Rabbi Aryeh Leib. "I am not as old as I look. I have been subjected to trials and tribulations during my life that have caused me to age prematurely. G-d willing, I shall serve as your rabbi for at least twenty years."

And so it was - Rabbi Aryeh Leib passed away twenty years later, at the age of 90!

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one who knows what's really best for us. One never gains from not listening to G-d, even if it appears that one is poised to lose everything. If we run our lives solely based on what makes sense to us, then we are in

deep trouble. But if we can withstand our tests and follow the Torah and keep the mitzvos, then our future is safe and secure and we can be sure that, ultimately, there will only be happy endings.

Stories For The Soul

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paying for part of it. But now that you have completed your stay at my home and are preparing to leave, I am returning your money, as I had no intention whatsoever of actually taking money from you in exchange for the tremendous opportunity to perform the mitzvah of

hachnosas orchim (hosting guests)!"

Avraham and Sarah excelled in performing kindness for others. The Torah particularly focuses on their *hachnosas orchim*, and the sensitivity they had in carrying out this great mitzvah.

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