



A Taste of Torah

Paid Vacation

By Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

Sara Gold was having the most miserable vacation of her life. Her husband had pushed her into spending a week in Hawaii; considering that the Golds are in serious financial trouble, and Sara was on unpaid leave, the whole week was one big source of stress. Down the hall at the same hotel, Jane and Joey Schwartz were having a great time. Both Jane and Joey work for a travel magazine, so their travel expenses were covered, and they were getting paid too!

In Talmudic times the Romans gathered to decree that the Jews be prohibited from keeping Shabbos. A Jewish sage disguised himself as a Roman nobleman and snuck into the gathering. He got up and argued that the Jews be allowed to keep Shabbos. "Wouldn't we impose economic sanctions on our enemies? Now that their G-d has imposed it, should we interfere?" What's the true answer to this argument? Is the prohibition against working on Shabbos a punishment? I believe the answer lies in the contrast between the two families vacationing in Hawaii. When Shabbos is understood as a day when we can't work, and at the same time we are enjoined to spend money on fine meats and wine, then yes, it can be a burden. But if we understand Shabbos as the source of all blessing; that not only does G-d pay us back for our Shabbos expenses, but Shabbos actually brings blessing to the entire week, then it's literally a paid vacation!

In this week's Torah portion, after relating the story of creation, the Torah continues by introducing

the concept of Shabbos. "And G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (Bereishis 2:3) What's the meaning of blessing and sanctifying the Shabbos? Rashi (ibid.) explains that this verse is referring to the relationship of the manna (heavenly food eaten by the Jews in the desert) to the Shabbos. Although the manna for each day fell on that day, the manna for Shabbos fell on Friday. In this sense G-d blessed the Shabbos with an extra portion of manna on Friday, and sanctified it in that none fell on Shabbos. The Ramban (ibid.) comments that he finds it difficult to understand the verse as referring to the manna, an event far off in the future.

Perhaps we can suggest, in explanation of Rashi, that the relationship of the manna with Shabbos teaches us the very essence of the Shabbos day. We easily get carried away during the week, and come to believe that it's our toil that brings us our livelihood. The manna fell on Friday to teach us that although we've done nothing on Shabbos to earn our bread, we receive it as a gift from G-d. It's not only forbidden to work on Shabbos, but you don't need to work on Shabbos, for Shabbos is the source of all blessing. This idea itself is the sanctity of Shabbos, as it cuts away at the illusion of a G-dless world. With the holidays behind us, and a long winter ahead, let's look forward to a weekly holiday, a safe haven from the pressures of the daily grind, where we come to realize that everything is in G-d's hand. Truly a great vacation. Enjoy!

Stories For The Soul

A Sinking Feeling

A grandchild once visited Rabbi Avigdor Miller (1908-2001) at his home and was taken aback to see his grandfather with his face in the sink. After a minute, Rabbi Miller pulled his head out of the water, straightened up and inhaled deeply.

"Why were you standing there with your head in the water for so long?" asked the perturbed child.

"On my way home," explained Rabbi Miller, "someone commented that lately, the air has been polluted. I didn't want my gratefulness for Hashem's air to wane, so I decided to increase my appreciation of air. After depriving myself of air for just a short while, I am now even more thankful to Hashem for providing us with such wonderful air!"

The Rambam comments that one can develop a love for Hashem through appreciating the wonders of Creation. Rabbi Avigdor Miller, as this story illustrates, was notable in his efforts to fulfill this dictum.

Kollel Happenings

HONESTY & THE BEST POLICY THIS WEDNESDAY AT TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Adam Moskowitz, State Farm Agent, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they investigate the fact and fiction of insurance fraud. October 14th, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

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.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM
The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at the East Side Kosher Deli, 499 S. Elm St. at 12:00 am. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! Transportation can be arranged. For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: According to Ashkenazic custom (cited by Rema, Orach Chaim 651:8), only the chazzan waves the four species during the recitation of the verse of yomar na yisrael during the recitation of the sub-chapter of Hodu. Why don't the rest of the members of the congregation do the same?

A: Originally, the custom was that the congregation wouldn't recite this phrase at all! The chazzan would recite each of the four verses (hodu, yomar, yomru, yomru) and the congregation would listen and answer with the verse of hodu following each verse. Later, the custom developed in most communities

for the congregation to recite all the verses. The Mishan Berurah comments that this occurred because people had a hard time concentrating on the chazzan's recitation of the verses. Consequently, he recommends reciting it quietly along with the chazzan. It follows that only the chazzan should shake the Four Species, as he is the primary reciter of these verses.

This week's question: : This week's question: The following riddle is related to the Jewish Calendar: Long and short, he and she, white and black. Can you decipher it?

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

Ask the Rabbi

Creation, Purpose

Daniel Rabchinsky from Mexico City, Mexico wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Hello, first let me extend my gratitude for sharing your wisdom in this way. The life we live is not only made for the 80 or so years that we are here; as I have been taught, it is like a passage for the world to come. But why did G-d give us this life instead of giving us our direct existence in the world to come, where we will experience pleasure multiplied by the millions? The reason is so that we appreciate what we have fought to get to. The thing is, why don't we appreciate things if they did not cost us anything? I'd say that it is because G-d made us that way; He can do it all. So the question is: Why didn't G-d make us in a way that we would appreciate everything even if we did not work for it, so that we could be "born" from the beginning in the world to come? Shalom.

Dear Daniel Rabchinsky,

Your question is asked by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto in The Way of G-d, and is also addressed by Rabbi Yosef

Karo in Maggid Meisharim. The gist of what they say is as follows: The purpose of Creation is *chesed*, kindness. G-d wants to bestow the greatest possible good upon created beings. The ultimate and greatest good is G-d Himself. Therefore, the ultimate good available to created beings is closeness to G-d. Closeness to God requires compatibility and similarity to G-d. Therefore beings must have free will and not be created already similar, as this would be dissimilar to G-d (i.e., G-d acts because He chooses to do so, not because He is coerced). So that the creatures (humans) must be in a world in which there is choice so that the human can be as "G-dlike" as possible. The good has to be internal, not external, just as God is intrinsically good. The only way for us to internalize and be intrinsically good is to do it through challenge and free will, and, therefore, this world was created.

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