

This week's edition is dedicated in memory of Avraham Moshe ben Yehuda Leib, Mr. Bud Glassman a"h, whose 8th yahrtzeit was Tuesday, 7 Cheshvan/October 20th

A Taste of Torah

Spare the Wealth

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Avram has just miraculously defeated four mighty kings. The reason for his going to war in the first place? No, they weren't trying to develop a nuclear weapon, but they had just crushed the armies of five other kings, and, in the process, captured Avram's nephew Lot. Avram felt responsible to rescue his nephew, and, with Divine intervention, he won a spectacular victory.

One of the five kings initially defeated before Avram appeared on the scene was the King of Sodom. The King of Sodom tells Avram that he is welcome to keep the spoils of war, but requests that he return the prisoners.

Avram responds with an oath that he will not take "from a thread to a shostrap" (Lech Licha 14:22), lest the Sodomite monarch claim, "I have enriched Avram," (ibid.) and, as Rashi (ibid.) explains, Hashem had already promised that *He* would enrich Avram.

Sounds like Avram is very careful about not accepting gifts that can't be traced straight to Hashem. But let's go back to the beginning of the parsha, when Avram and his wife, Sarai, are forced by famine to descend from the Land of Canaan to Egypt. Pharaoh abducts Sarai, after Avram claims that she is his sister. After being forced, through Divine intervention, to release Sarai, Pharaoh gives Avram lots and lots of livestock - and Avram accepts it! Is this the same Avram who swore that he wouldn't take even a pittance for himself, lest some try to portray that a human, and not Hashem, was the source of his fabulous wealth? To make things even more complicated, when Avram initially asks Sarai to play along and say they're siblings, he explains that the purpose of this charade is "that it may go well with me for your sake, and that I may live on account of you." (ibid. 12:13) "That I may

live" is a reference to Avram's fear that the Egyptians would murder him to make his wife available. But what is meant by "go well with me?" Rashi explains that Avram expected that the Egyptians would offer him gifts to win his "sister's" hand! How does this jibe with the Avram who refuses any recompense from the King of Sodom?

One approach to this conundrum may be as follows: Rashi makes it clear that when Avram went down to Egypt, he had a shortage of funds, and he incurred debts that had to be repaid when he returned from Egypt. (See Rashi ibid. 13:3) That being the case, Avram had a responsibility to procure a means of repayment. He had no right to shrug his shoulders and say, "Well, Hashem promised He'll take care of me, so I'll just sit tight and wait for Him to give it to me." His personal concern in assuring that no one short of Hashem Himself would take credit for his success was just that: a personal concern. He had no right to impose that concern when he'd come up short in his obligations to others.

Later, when he was already quite wealthy, his refusal to keep the spoils of war affected no one but himself. In fact, he told the King of Sodom to compensate those who had assisted him in battle - again, because his personal stringencies did not extend to others.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707-1746), in his magnum opus *Mesilas Yesharim* (Pathway of the Just), discusses the idea of a *chassid*, a pious individual who goes beyond the basic obligations in his service of Hashem. A point Rabbi Luzzatto stresses is that part of the "balance of piety" is not just knowing when to do more than strictly required, but to also know when *not* to do more, due to the adverse effect it may have on others. An idea for all of us to bear in mind: Sure, sometimes we feel like doing more for Hashem. But will there be any

Stories For The Soul

A Cut Above

For more than sixty years, Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932) served as a *mohel*. He never refused an invitation to serve as *mohel*, and his face shone with joy when he had the privilege of performing a *bris milah* on a Jewish child - "to add another Jew to the King's legions," he would say.

Once, a huge snowstorm hit Jerusalem, leaving close to three feet of snow on the ground. Walking outside posed a real danger, especially for someone of Rabbi Sonnenfeld's age - he was already in his 70's. Except that prior to the storm, Rabbi Sonnenfeld had been asked to serve as *mohel*.

On the day of the *bris*, Rabbi Sonnenfeld laboriously made his way through the snow to the site of the *bris milah* - which was quite a distance from his home - and performed the *bris* as he had promised.

A grandchild of his, upon hearing what his grandfather had done, exclaimed, "Zaydie, this is *pikuach nefesh* (danger to life)! Would it have been so bad if they had used a different *mohel*, one who lives in this area? After all, you had no reason to worry that the mitzvah of *bris milah* would be put off just because you couldn't come!"

Rabbi Yosef Chaim answered, "As a matter of fact, because this is a case of *pikuach nefesh*, I was afraid that they might put off the *bris*. Having invited me to serve as *mohel*, they would wait for me, while other *mohalim*, reluctant to act in my place, would hesitate to come. Therefore, I got up and started walking - and, thank G-d, I made it there in peace!"

Our Sages tell us that the Jewish People go to great lengths to perform the mitzvah of *bris milah*. And they continue to do so, throughout the ages, despite difficult circumstances.

Kollel Happenings

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE MODERN WORLD AT NOV. 4 TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Richard K. Kornfeld, Shareholder, RechtKornfeld, and Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab, Dean, Denver Community Kollel, as they explore the issues of this contentious conundrum. November 4th, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

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.

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 jlitzman@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: How many different kinds of *kaddish* are there (not including slight textual variations)?

A: 1) *Kaddish Tiskabel*: "May (the prayers) be accepted," generally recited once after each prayer. 2) *Kaddish Shalem*: "Complete," recited at various points, usually by mourners. 3) *Chatzi Kaddish*: "Half," generally recited by the prayer leader to

mark the start or conclusion of a segment of the prayers. 4) *Kaddish L'ischadasa*: "To be renewed," special *kaddish* recited at a *siyum* or burial.

This week's question: When is *Kaddish Tiskabel* not recited after a prayer?

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

Ask the Rabbi Child-Raising Starts Early

Name@Withheld from Chicago, Illinois wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

To my continual joy and miraculous wonder, I am pregnant with our first child. Is there anything I should or can be doing during this exciting time to help prepare, spiritually, for the incredible job of parenthood and motherhood? Thank you for your consideration and for the weekly dose of humor and wisdom!

Dear Name@Withheld,

Judaism teaches that the influences surrounding the baby in the womb have a profound effect.

So avoid negative influences, like those on television and in movies. You don't want your developing baby's first sensations to be ones of violence and immorality. Instead, listen to inspiring music, study about Judaism, talk to positive people, etc.

The Talmud relates that one expectant mother used to go to the houses of Torah Study and ask the scholars to pray that her unborn baby should one day become a Torah scholar. And when her baby was born, she brought him in his crib to the Torah academies so that his ears should absorb sounds of Torah study.

He grew up to be one of the great Sages of the Talmud, Rabbi Yehoshua.

And remember, your baby is made from the food you eat. So, make sure your baby is kosher! Kosher food has a positive spiritual effect on the developing fetus, and non-kosher food has the opposite effect.

Someone once asked a rabbi, "When do you Jews start educating your children?" The rabbi answered, "Twenty years before they're born!" More than anything else, the example set by the parents is the greatest influence on a child's life. Begin now a renewal of your own commitment to the study and practice of Judaism.

May Hashem bless you with an easy pregnancy and birth, and with children who are a constant source of joy to you and your family!

Sources:

Avot 2:5 and Commentaries

Rabbeinu Bechaya, *Vayikra* 11:43

Shulchan Aruch *Yoreh Deah* 81:7

Reprinted with permission from *Ohr Somayach*, Jerusalem, www.ohr.edu

A Taste of Torah

Continued from front side

collateral damage? Will others be offended or suffer emotionally or financially? These considerations may not be as prominent when fulfilling our basic obligations as Jews (though seeking competent Rabbinical

guidance is always a good idea), but these concerns become even more pertinent when we are trying to do extras.