

A Taste of Torah True Holiness

By Rabbi Moshe Heyman

What is true holiness?

According to Rabbi Gedalia Schorr (1910-1979), the great scholar and Rosh Yeshiva who was regarded as the “first American Gadol (Torah giant),” we can find the answer to this question in the names of the recent parshiyos.

Parshas Korach starts with the letter “kof.” The parsha that follows, Chukas, has a kof in the middle. And the name of this week’s Parsha, Balak, ends with the letter kof. Rabbi Schorr explains that the letter kof represents kedusha, holiness.

Korach had kedusha in the beginning of his life. His ancestors were great people from the tribe of Levi who dedicated themselves to the study of Torah. Yet Korach’s desire for honor led to his ultimate downfall. That is why the kof is at the beginning of his name.

In Parshas Chukas, we read about the Para Aduma, Red Heifer, which

purifies those who are impure. The heifer’s kedusha is in the present. We aren’t concerned about it where it came from or what will become of it. That is why there is a kof in the middle.

In this week’s parsha, we read about Balak, the King of Moav, who hired Bil’am to curse the Jewish people. Although Balak was an evil person, he merited to have Ruth, the great convert, descend from him. That is why there is a kof at the end.

Both Korach and Balak had some aspect of kedusha in their lives, says Rabbi Schorr, but they did not fulfill their potential for lifelong kedusha.

What do we learn from here? That kedusha must be consistent. It must be an integral part of one’s life in the beginning, middle and end.

One cannot work to bring holiness into his life at his convenience. Selective kedusha has no place in Torah living. True holiness is a lifelong struggle – and achievement.

Ask the Rabbi The Race is On

Debra Korenstein from Jerusalem wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have always wondered how from Adam and Eve came all the different races and colors of the world?

Dear Debra Korenstein,

Great Question! The Talmud itself deals with this. In reality, the modern concept of adaptation to the environment is rooted in the Talmud

written 1800 years before Darwin was born!

The Sages teach us that in order to help different people survive in their respective climates and conditions, G-d gave them physical characteristic traits adapted specifically for their environment. For example, the Talmud states that G-d gave people who live in swampy regions large feet to help them contend with the soft footing. And to those who live in eastern desert climates G-d gave special eyelids to help them

Stories For The Soul

Miracles Do Happen

My name is Mildred Hondorf, and I am a music teacher from Des Moines, Iowa.

Once, I had a student named Robby who told me that it had always been his mother’s dream to hear him play. But as much as Robby tried, he lacked the sense of tone and basic rhythm needed to excel. Over the months he tried and tried while I listened and cringed and tried to encourage him. At the end of each weekly lesson he’d always say, “My mom’s going to hear me play someday.” But it seemed hopeless.

I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. Then one day Robby stopped coming to our lessons. I assumed that because of his lack of ability he had decided to pursue something else.

Several weeks later I mailed a flyer about a recital to all my present and former students’ homes. Robby called and asked if he could be in it, but I told him it was for current pupils. He said that his Mom had been sick and unable to take him to piano lessons but he was still practicing.

“Miss Hondorf... I’ve just got to play!” he insisted.

The night for the recital came. The high school gym was packed. I put Robby up last in the program because I thought I could always salvage his poor performance through my “curtain closer.”

Well, the recital went off without a hitch. Then Robby came up on stage. His clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked like he’d run

Kollel Happenings

TUESDAY NIGHT TORAH AT AISH KODESH IN BOULDER

Join the Kollel for a dynamic one-on-one and small groups Torah encounter. Maariv will be held at 8:15 followed by Torah study at 8:30. Program will be held at Aish Kodesh, 1805 Balsam Ave. For information, contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at 303-820-2855 or rmh@denverkollel.org or Charles Fried at 917-499-4307 or charlesfried@gmail.com.



DERECH HASHEM SERIES MON. NIGHTS

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for "Derech Hashem: Understanding G-d's World", a series for women based on Derech Hashem by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato. The classes will be held on Mondays at 7:45 p.m., locations to vary. For info, call 303-257-1089 or email pit@denverkollel.org



PARTNERS IN TORAH AT AISH

Join the Kollel's Partners in Torah program for men at Aish Denver, on Wed., nights at 8 p.m. If you'd like to join - and learn the topic of your choice, at your own pace, with a knowledgeable mentor - please call the Kollel at 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org.

Interpersonal Issues Making it Work

The Torah requires a worker to be paid in a timely fashion.

A worker who finishes a job by day must be paid before sunset. A worker who finishes a job by night must be paid before dawn. In both instances, there is

a positive and a negative commandment to pay on time. This mitzva is known as *bal tolin*.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

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contend with the sand which is kicked up.

Along the same line of reasoning, we can postulate that G-d adjusted the melanin in the epidermis of people who live in different longitudes to contend with the varied exposure to the angles of the sun's rays. Or, simply put, G-d did it.

This is clearly the way G-d created the whole world. Many times in Tanach we see that G-d created everything in kindness, with the innate ability to survive and contend with its environment. Not only does G-d give all life its capability to survive, but he created the inanimate world with many different manifestations of nature to protect and enhance life.

For example, King David in Psalms

says that G-d gives "snow like wool." What kind of comparison is this? Snow is cold and wool is used to warm and protect! Yet, careful observation gives us the answer: Snow acts like an insulation to protect the ground and its vegetation from the extreme cold of winter. The closer to the poles we traverse the more snow there is, further insulating the ground underneath. Many animals even have the innate understanding to burrow themselves in the snow during extreme temperatures.

In his inspired wisdom, King David perceived this concept of ground insulation marvelously. Differences among people, too, can be seen as helpful adaptations from a benevolent Creator.

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Stories for the Soul

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egg-beater through it. I was surprised when he announced that he had chosen Mozart's Concerto #21 in C Major.

I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers danced nimbly on the ivories. He went from pianissimo to fortissimo...from allegro to virtuoso. After six-and-a-half minutes he ended in a grand crescendo and everyone was on their feet in wild applause.

Overcome, I ran up on stage and cried, "I've never heard you play like that Robby! How'd you do it?"

Through the microphone Robby explained: "Well, Miss Hondorf,

remember I told you my Mom was sick? Well, she had cancer and passed away this morning. And, well, she was born deaf so tonight was the first time she ever heard me play. I wanted to make it special."

In this week's Parsha, Bilam's donkey miraculously spoke to him. Just as Hashem gave the donkey this ability, we must believe that He can give us the ability to accomplish the seemingly impossible. All we have to do is put in the effort.

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.