



A Taste of Torah Getting It Done

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

The challenge of making a living is as old as Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. And while G-d punished him with the curse of "by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread", He also left us with the wherewithal to do so. Until He commanded us to keep the Shemithah year.

Shemithah offers a unique challenge, as we are commanded to allow the land of Israel - all the land - to lie fallow. It can be pretty tough making a living as a farmer, which was the occupation of most Jews during Temple times, if you can't work the land. But fear not. G-d has a solution for your problem. "And if you will say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year... and I will command My blessing for you... (Leviticus 25:20-21) G-d guarantees that there will be more than enough food produced during the sixth year to provide for all the needs of the Jewish People.

Yet the wording of the verse is a bit strange. "And if you will ask..."; why must we ask before being guaranteed the plenty of the sixth year? Should it not be bestowed automatically, without the need for any questions?

Rabbi Yaakov Neiman explains that if the truth be told, we really have no business worrying about how we'll manage to observe the laws of the Torah.

If G-d instructs us to do something, we ought to be doing it, whether it makes any sense to us or not. To that end, the Torah would have sufficed with merely informing us that we are not allowed to work the land during the Shemithah year. Whether or not there will be enough food to go around should play no role in the decision to observe the Shemithah properly.

Nonetheless, not everyone always behaves in an ideal, perfect fashion, and there may be those who will have some concern about livelihood issues during the seventh year. To those people, the ones who ask, "What will we eat?", the Torah responds that G-d will send His blessing. However, observing Shemithah does not hinge on this assurance; it doesn't change the reality that we are to keep the Shemithah irrespective of whether there is a guarantee or not.

At times, observing some of the commandments of the Torah can be challenging, whether due to our inability to understand them, difficult circumstances, or a lack of enthusiasm. It is important to keep in mind that one is not excused from keeping the Torah's laws due to his lack of interest or ability to commit; it is our duty to work on reaching the point where we can fully observe all that G-d expects of us no matter what the circumstances may be.

Ask the Rabbi Plane Prayer

Alan Levine from Illinois wrote:

My parents recently flew to Israel on El Al. The airplane was very full and they

ended up having to sit in the back in the smoking section and unfortunately had a very bad flight. On top of the smoking and the people marching back and forth

Stories For The Soul

'This Is G-d's House'

There was a certain synagogue in the Catskill region of New York that closed down in the 1950s. In the mid 1970s, a Jewish summer camp chose to hold prayers at the building, which was vacant, but still standing.

Upon entering, camp members were amazed to see that the interior was in working order, and that there was not a speck of dust on the furniture. More amazing, there was a shul calendar that was up to date. How could this be?

They inquired and finally found a man who told them the following:

"My father, may he rest in peace, was one of the founders of this shul. He was a carpenter and literally built much of the building with his own hands.

"After WWII, many young people either moved out or were killed in the war. The membership dwindled till the shul closed. I came in once a month since then to dust the place, update the calendar, and do whatever else was necessary."

A counselor asked him, "Why did you bother doing all that?"

He replied with complete simplicity, "I figured this is G-d's house and I have to take care of it."

In this week's Parsha, the verse tells us, "And My Sanctuary shall you revere" (26:2).

This simple man understood the holiness of a shul. We must have the same respect and reverence for any shul or yeshiva today, as we would for the Holy Temple itself.

Adapted with permission from Shul-Week by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.

Kollel Happenings

LIBERATED PARENTS, LIBERATED CHILDREN WITH MRS. AVIGAIL STEINHARTER

Join Mrs. Avigail Steinharter for "Liberated Parents, Liberated Children: Your Guide to a Happier Family." This six-part series for moms integrates the timeless wisdom of Torah with the approach of the world-renowned Dr. Haim Ginott. Classes will be held at Denver Jewish Day School, 2450 S. Wabash Street on Tuesdays, May 1,8,15,22,29 & June 5, 2:30-3:30 pm. Cost: \$80 for all six classes. For information, call 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org



HEART OF THE TORAH - AT AISH OR ANYWHERE

Join Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab and Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger to learn the Ten Commandments - the Heart of the Torah - in depth. This 14-part series will complete the study of the Ten Commandments just in time for the August 1st national and local Grand Siyum Hashas celebrations. Classes are held at Aish & broadcasted via gotomeeting.com. For information, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS CLASS

Join Mrs. Esti Schwab for an exciting new six-week series, United We Stand, Mondays 11:30 am-1:00 pm at the East Side Kosher Deli, beginning April 16th. The class will focus on creating and bettering our relationships with others. Each week will focus on an independent area of personal growth. For info email esti@denverkollel.org

Interpersonal Issues

Acceptable Signs for Identifying Lost Objects

A unique feature of the container or package in which the item was in, as well as a unique way in which the item was tied or knotted, is a valid sign. For example, giving details for unique writing on an envelope that contained money would suffice. If it was a

common bank envelope, however, this would be insufficient; as such a feature is common.

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

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

and the people marching back and forth to the bathrooms - just when my mother had finally fallen asleep - the people started davening Shacharit [praying the morning service]. My dad said it bothered them and woke my mother up. He said it wouldn't have bothered them if it'd just been quieter. My question is this: Can I pray sitting in my seat if I feel more comfortable? I think I would be able to concentrate better and it wouldn't bother anybody.

Dear Alan,

According to the Shulchan Aruch, someone traveling in a ship and unable to stand may pray while sitting, but must pray over again when he reaches his destination. (Today, however, due to our low level of concentration during prayer, we wouldn't pray over, but rather would rely on the sit-down prayer.)

On a 'jumbo jet', though, there are places where ten or more can stand and pray together, while following common courtesy: Pray quietly, avoid stepping on toes, don't block the bathroom or aisle, etc.

To find out El Al's official policy towards in-flight prayer groups, I called their assistant director of public relations. The official told me, "El Al is a Jewish airline. We have never stopped this [people praying with a minyan]... We do know that people are complaining

about this." If enough people were to congregate and cause a noticeable weight imbalance, the captain would be obligated by international aviation regulations to disperse them, said the official, but this never actually happens.

I asked Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, shlita, if one should pray with a minyan on an airplane. He said yes, adding that he does it "all the time." While strictly speaking it might be permitted to pray at your seat, Rabbi Scheinberg prefers that one pray with a minyan, but quietly in a way that doesn't disturb others.

True story: Two rabbis I know were flying from one city to another somewhere in America's 'Wild West'. Heavy turbulence caused one passenger ~ a first-time flyer ~ a great deal of fear and anxiety. Just as the flight attendant succeeded in reassuring him that all was normal, it came time for afternoon prayer. The rabbis got up, put on their hats and jackets, and headed towards the back of the plane. Seeing this, the frightened passenger became hysterical, saying, "You see! You see! Those guys are getting off!"

Sources:

Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 94:4,9

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