



# A Taste of Torah

## Understanding & Understanding

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Why do bad things happen to good people? One of the classic questions asked by mankind, this conundrum has been pondered for millennia. In fact, this issue traces its origins back to the Torah. In this week's portion, Moshe asks Hashem, "Please show me Your ways." (33:13) According to the Talmud (B'rachos 7a), Moshe was asking Hashem, "Why are there some righteous who have it good, some wicked who have it bad, some righteous who have it bad, and some wicked who have it good?"

Later on in the dialogue between Moshe and Hashem, Moshe requests to behold Hashem's Glory. Hashem responds that though it is impossible for any human to see G-d's Face, Moshe would see the back of Hashem. (G-d has no form, human or otherwise. However, the Torah employs anthropomorphism to enable us to relate to what is being discussed.) Rashi (33:23) explains that

"the back of G-d" refers to the knot of the tefillin worn upon the head.

Rabbi Chizkiyahu Eliezer Kahan (1901-1968) gives some insight into the significance of G-d's tefillin. While our tefillin contain sections of the Torah discussing G-d's greatness, the Talmud (B'rachos 6a) states that G-d's tefillin contain sections discussing the greatness of the Jewish People. Thus, Hashem's tefillin are a manifestation of the great love He has for us, His Chosen Nation. That being the case, there is no question that regardless of how terrible a catastrophe may befall us, we can rest assured He is acting out of love; though we may not perceive it, all that occurs is for our ultimate benefit.

Hashem, by showing Moshe the knot of His tefillin, was sending an important message that echoes throughout the ages: Though we cannot possibly behold Hashem's Face, that is, to fully understand G-d and His ways, we can be aware that whatever He sends our way is only for the good.

# Ask the Rabbi

## Kosher Bacteria

Susan wrote:

Why is yogurt with live acidophilus and bifidus cultures kosher to eat if we are not allowed to eat bugs?

David Preiss wrote:

Why does the Torah speak of forms of life that are visible only to the human

eye?

Dear Susan & David,

Good question. Now let me ask you one: Why are we allowed to breathe? Zillions of microorganisms are floating around in the air, and we swallow some with every breath.

## Stories For The Soul

### Uniquely Equal

Every Jew was commanded to contribute one half shekel for the Mishkan. The wealthy were limited from contributing more and the poor were not permitted to give less. Each person's contribution was the same. This reminds us that every person has the ability to make a contribution to society as great as anyone else. Everyone has the potential to achieve greatness. That greatness can be tapped in remarkable ways as the following true story, told to me by Rabbi Zvi Freund, illustrates:

Early in his career, Rabbi Hillel Mandel taught 4th grade in Yeshiva Tiferes Moshe in Kew Gardens, NY. He once had a student Heshy, who was not doing well in his studies and behaved in a manner that disrupted the class.

Rabbi Mandel was asked by the principal to try to "lift him up". The principal explained that Heshy's parents were in his office, pleading that their boy had a good heart, but he was getting lost and no one was helping him. He was drowning and no one was throwing him a lifeline. The principal asked Rabbi Mandel to do whatever he could.

Rabbi Mandel accepted the challenge, and immediately tried every trick in the book to aid young Heshy. He tried moving him to a better seat. That didn't help. He tried calling on him more. That didn't help. He tried positive reinforcement. That didn't help. He tried talking with him privately and strategizing together about his schoolwork. Still nothing. He tried giving him extra

## Kollel Happenings

SHLOMO FRIED, JAY KAMLET, HARVEY AND STEPHANIE MILZER, RICH AND ROCHELLE SOKOL TO CHAIR BENEFIT EVENT ON MARCH 20

Shlomo Fried, Jay Kamlet, Harvey and Stephanie Milzer, and Rich and Rochelle Sokol will chair the Kollel's 14th Anniversary Benefit Event. The theme of the event is "Torah - Heartbeat of Our Nation" and will include an original musical experience composed and presented by the Kollel. Special guest speaker: Rabbi Yechiel Spero, author of the 'Touched by a Story' series.



'CLOSER LOOK AT PARSHA' NOW SUNDAYS AT EDOS

'A Closer Look at the Parsha,' Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher's popular Parsha class, is also offered on Sundays at 8 a.m. at EDOS, following Shacharis. Each week Rabbi Fleisher discusses a topic in the Parsha and its relevancy today.



NEFESH HACHAIM, MONDAYS @AISH W/RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

Join Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers in studying the timeless work of Rav Chaim Volozhiner, Nefesh Hacham. Tuesday mornings 9:15-9:50 at Aish. For information, please contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org) or 303-820-2855.

## Interpersonal Issues Returning Lost Objects

If the item has no identifying marks, the owner will despair as soon as he notices the loss. Therefore, the item may be kept or left behind if the owner was aware of the loss prior to the finder

discovering it.

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

## Ask the Rabbi

*continued from front*

The answer is: The Torah prohibits only bugs which can be seen by the naked eye. Organisms seen only with the aid of a microscope are kosher.

The logic is this: The Torah was given to human beings, not angels. Its laws are geared to normal human experience. Bugs we see in 'real life' are forbidden. 'Invisible' ones - which seem like they exist only in a laboratory - are not forbidden.

When improved microscopes

brought improved awareness of microscopic organisms, some people suggested that perhaps we should filter our water to avoid consuming the organisms. A renowned rabbi responded: "If you give a nickel to charity while holding it under a magnifying glass, do you get credit as though you gave a dime?"

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## Stories for the Soul

*continued from front*

assignments. All to no avail.

No amount of praising, coaxing, cajoling or anything else made any impact on poor Heshy. There was no change whatsoever in his poor performance. Every day, Heshy fell further and further behind the rest of the class. Rabbi Mandel truly felt for him. He was, after all, a nice boy, but what could he do? He was running out of ideas.

In addition to his academic failings, he was not doing well socially within the class, and his behavior was going from bad to worse. Even during recess, Heshy had problems.

One day the class was going on a special field trip where they would eat a picnic lunch. As they were about to leave the classroom, Heshy said, "Don't forget the bentchers."

Suddenly, a thousand lights went off

in Rabbi Mandel's mind. It occurred to him that despite the qualities and abilities Heshy possessed or lacked, he had a keen sense of responsibility. Finally there was a glimmer of hope - a leg to build on.

From that moment on, whenever he needed to be reminded of something, he would single out Heshy. "Heshy, remind me to give out the workbooks. Heshy, remember to collect the extra credit assignments."

This proved to be the key to the mystery that was Heshy. He felt that he had a contribution to make to the class. This new sense of self-worth set Heshy on a path that ultimately unlocked his potential. By the end of the year Heshy had improved dramatically - both academically and socially. He was now indeed a model student.

*Adapted with permission from ShulWeek*