

## A Taste of Torah Of Man and Beast

By Rabbi Moshe Heyman

The newly wealthy Am Ha'aretz (ignoramus) comes to shul Shabbos afternoon and amongst a lot of fanfare, the gabbai places him right next to the rabbi, in a seat for the reserved for the most respected members of the community. Uncomfortable with his new seat and position in the shul, he struggles to say something smart to the rabbi. All of a sudden, he remembers a question that bothered him. Turning to the rabbi, he asks, "At the end of mincha on Shabbos we say a Psalm that states, 'Man and beast You save, Hashem.' Why did King David choose to mention beast and man together? They are two very different parts of creation; why are they put next to each other?" Not able to hold himself back, the rabbi replies, "Good question! Why don't you ask the gabbai? He is the one who put you next

to me."

The truth of the matter is that every human being is both man and beast. The Torah teaches us that man has the ability to be great or he can act like the lowest beast in the world. The difference is how we talk. What we say. If we keep our word, there is nothing greater. If we abuse our power of speech, we lower ourselves to the common beast. It is our choice. And to the extent to which we ennoble ourselves as man through our power of speech, Hashem will send his blessings and salvation. The parsha of Mattos teaches the importance of your word, because that is what makes us greater than any other animal. If we realize the power of words, it will be the first step towards getting out of this terrible exile. May we all merit that this be the last Three Weeks that we experience.

## Ask the Rabbi Jewish Lite

Email@Witheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I am Jewish, but not Orthodox. I do not follow all 613 commandments, say all the prayers, or keep kosher, and I occasionally speak improper words or think improper thoughts.

I had a bris, pidyon haben, and bar mitzvah. I try to attend synagogue on Friday nights, and all Jewish holidays. I fast for most of Yom Kippur and erev Pesach. I do not celebrate Xmas or Easter with my non-Jewish friends, and would never consider changing my religion.

At synagogue, we do not say all the traditional prayers, and we add a few "new" English prayers. I avoid pork and eating meat with milk, but I don't necessarily eat kosher food. I rarely say a blessing over the food I eat, mainly because it's rarely kosher, and I don't know all the appropriate blessings.

My question is this: Am I doing any good at all? Do abbreviated prayers, selective mitzvos, and acknowledged Jewish identity reap any reward at all? Or by being "Jewish Lite" am I no better than someone who is completely non-observant?

## Stories For The Soul

### The Perfect Partner

There were two business partners in the Jewish community in Aleppo, Syria, a century ago. They dealt in antiques, but despite their diligence, they did not have enough money to feed their families.

The business was on the brink of bankruptcy. The partners decided that they needed an additional partner who had money to invest in the business and provide it with sufficient capital to allow it to prosper. One of the partners was delegated to search for the new partner, while the other remained to continue running the business.

Before embarking on his search, the first partner repaired to the synagogue to ask for Divine aid. In the midst of his prayers, he was struck by a startling thought.

He said to Hashem, "Why should I search for another partner, when you, O G-d, are the perfect partner for us? You will be our third partner, and Your share of the profits will be distributed to the worthy Torah scholars and institutions of Aleppo."

Delighted with his deal, he rushed back to his partner.

"By your facial expression I see that you found us a new partner," his partner said. "But tell me, is this partner reliable?"

"He is most reliable and has never failed anyone as of yet," was the excited answer.

"Does he have money for our business?" asked the suspicious partner.

"Money! He has unlimited funds and can finance any endeavor."

## Kollel Happenings

### FATHERS-AND-SONS AT ZERA AVRAHAM

The next M.B. and Shana Glassman Foundation Fathers-and-Sons Sunday morning learning programs will be on Sundays July 24th and 31st at Cong. Zera Avraham. Davening begins at 8 a.m., with learning from 8:50 - 9:35, followed by hot breakfast. For information, contact Rabbi Amsel at 303-820-2855 or [rya@denverkollel.org](mailto:rya@denverkollel.org).



### HALACHOS OF THE THREE WEEKS FOR WOMEN

Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher is giving a three-part series for women on the halachos of the three weeks. The next two classes will be held on Sun., July 24 and 31 at Zera Avraham. Babysitting is available at the home of Mrs. Shulamis Muller, 1678 Vrain St. For information, contact Rabbi Fleisher at [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org) or 303-953-1388.



### CHERRY CREEK MUNCH AND LEARN, MON., JULY 25

The next Cherry Creek Munch and Learn for men, led by Rabbi Yehuda Amsel, will be held on Mon., July 25 at 12:30 p.m. at Colorado Capital Bank, 55 Madison Ave. The class focuses on Pirkei Avos. For information, contact Rabbi Amsel at 303-820-2855 or at [rya@denverkollel.org](mailto:rya@denverkollel.org)

## Interpersonal Issues Making it Work Part IV

Wages must be paid in cash. Checks are valid in places where storekeepers will generally take third-party checks in lieu of cash. However, if this is not the case, a check is invalid, unless it is common practice to pay by check. Even where it is not common practice, if the

worker is able to cash the check at the bank before the bal tolin deadline, a check is valid.

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

## Ask the Rabbi

*continued from front*

Dear Email@Withheld,

You and I have a lot in common. I am also Jewish. I also had a bris (but not a pidyon haben). I was also bar-mitzvah at age 13.

Like you, I also don't think of myself as "Orthodox" (although most people would call me that); rather, I think of myself as a Jew who tries to observe the Torah which G-d gave us. But, like you, I often succumb to the onslaught of human failings - laziness, desire, etc.

You wrote that you occasionally speak improper words. Did you know that more than one-third of the Yom Kippur penitential prayers are devoted to asking G-d to forgive us for sins committed through speech?

Everyone fails. Nobody is perfect.

I think my answer to your question should be evident by now. Any mitzvos which you perform are praiseworthy and should be encouraged.

Furthermore, your deeds can

influence others, without you even knowing it; for example a Jewish friend may stop eating pork because of your example.

There is a danger of being "Jewish Lite," however: It could furnish you with a feeling of being "comfortable" with your observance level. That should never happen to anyone. We all need to continually grow, study and learn more about the Torah. Therefore, you should feel happy about the Jewish things that you do, but you shouldn't think of yourself as being at a fixed level of observance. Realize that you can add, even just one mitzvah a year. Example: Get a tzeddaka (charity) box in your house and put in a coin (even a small one) every day. Perhaps the most important thing for you now is to study Torah on a daily, or at least weekly, basis.

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## Stories for the Soul

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"Who is he?" asked the partner.

"I cannot give you his name. His only request is that the one-third share of the profits that is rightfully his be distributed to the Torah scholars and institutions of Aleppo."

The partner mulled over the matter and then agreed to the new partner. Miraculously, the business took a great turn of fortune, and the two wealthy partners always supported the scholars

and Torah institutions in Aleppo.

In this week's Parsha, the Jewish people prepared for their journeys and ultimate conquest of the Land of Israel. It was a scary proposition, but they knew that if they followed Hashem's directives with faith and purity, then Hashem would give them Divine protection and success in their endeavors.

*Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.*