



A Taste of Torah Shock- & Awe

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

“Through those who are close to Me I will be sanctified. (Leviticus 10:3)” These are the words conveyed by Moshe to his brother, Aharon, quoted from Hashem Himself, following the tragic deaths of Aharon’s sons, Nadav and Avihu. The two were killed by a Heavenly fire after they brought an unauthorized incense offering in the Mishkan (Tabernacle) on the day of its inauguration. And while perhaps one can understand that their actions – bringing an offering without permission – warranted retribution, the sanctification of G-d is not as clear. How does their punishment display G-d’s greatness?

Rabbi Shimshon Pincus (1945-2001), in his work *Tiferes Torah*, says that we first need to examine the error of Nadav and Avihu. What motivated them to bring the incense offering in the first place? It was their overwhelming love of Hashem, and their desire to serve Him. And while love of G-d is extremely important – it is regarded as the highest level of service – one must not forget that Hashem is still far greater than we can possibly imagine, and

that our closeness must be tempered by a healthy dose of awe and fear of His greatness. This was the mistake of Nadav and Avihu. As much as they wished to express their love of Hashem through this special offering, their awe of Hashem should have impeded them from seeking such closeness to Hashem without His permission. At their exalted and unimaginable level of refinement, such an error, slight as it seems, warranted their immediate death.

The Jewish People, upon witnessing the swift justice meted out to Nadav and Avihu, came to an important realization: despite the fact that G-d’s Presence would reside in the Mishkan, amongst the Jewish People, they still had to keep their distance. Hashem was not their friend, nor was He anything they could possibly ever perceive or grasp. This was the sanctification of G-d mentioned by Moshe. The realization that Hashem was far beyond their puny human comprehension. A loving King and Father, to be sure, but, nonetheless, they could only approach Him with, and develop a relationship with Him based on, tremendous awe, despite their great love for Him.

Ask the Rabbi Counting from 13

Avraham Silvers wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My son Akiva has the following question:

I am 12 years old. At parshas ‘Emor’ I will be observing my Bar Mitzvah. Until now I have been counting the

Omer with a bracha [blessing]. When I reach thirteen I will be counting the Omer as an adult and previously I was only counting as a minor for ‘chinuch’ [educational purposes]. When I become bar Mitzvah, should I continue counting with a bracha as I do have a certain level of ‘Tammimus’ [completeness], but on the other hand the quality of

Stories For The Soul

Keep Your Fork

A young woman who had been given three months to live met with her Rabbi to discuss her final wishes.

She handed the Rabbi a portrait of herself holding a fork and said, “I want this picture to be on display at my funeral.”

Noticing the rabbi’s surprise, she explained, “My grandmother once told me how, in all her years of attending socials, she always remembered that when the main course was being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, ‘Keep your fork.’ It was her favorite part because she knew that something better was coming, like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance!”

“So,” continued the woman, “I want people to see me there with a fork and ask, ‘What’s with the fork?’ Then I want you to tell them, ‘Keep your fork - the best is yet to come.’”

This is, in fact, what happened at the funeral. The rabbi told the people of the conversation he had with the young woman, and about what the fork symbolized to her. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house.

In this week’s Parsha, the verse says, “Of this did G-d speak saying, ‘I shall be sanctified by those nearest Me,’” (Leviticus 10:3). In consoling Aharon after his sons’ death, Moshe pointed out their greatness and holiness.

When coping with life and death issues, it helps tremendously to keep in mind the big picture.

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

Kollel Happenings

The Kollel is on Pesach break. Classes will resume on April 23.

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 in-depth study of the Ten Commandments just in time for the August 1st national and local Grand Siyum Hashas celebrations. Classes are held at Aish and broadcasted via gotomeeting.com. For more information, contact email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855-820



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS CLASS BEGINS AFTER PESACH

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 more info email esti@denverkollel.org



DERECH HASHEM SERIES MON. NIGHTS

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for "Derech Hashem: Who is G-d and Why Did He Create the World?", a series for women based on Derech Hashem by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato. The classes are held on Mondays at 7:45 p.m., at EDOS. The class will resume after Pesach break, on April 23rd. For info, contact Mrs. Tzippy Sommers at 303-257-1089 or pit@denverkollel.org.

Interpersonal Issues Returning Lost Objects

A siman is valid only if it is unique. For example, stating that the pen that was found has blue ink and is a Cross pen is not valid, for this is a fairly standard characteristic of a pen.

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

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front
my mitzvah is not the same as if I had begun at the beginning?

Thank you for your time,

Alan Shear of Yeshiva College South Africa wrote:

Dear Rabbi

Many people have asked me the following question which can really be a bit perplexing. A boy who has his bar mitzvah during Sefiras HaOmer, may he continue counting with a Bracha? This has practical application here right now, so a timely answer would be greatly appreciated.

Dear Akiva & Alan,

The Torah says "From the day after Pesach you shall count seven complete weeks..." We therefore count each day for 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot, saying "today is the first day of the Omer, today is the second day of the Omer, etc." Each day we make a blessing.

The authorities differ whether each day's count is a mitzvah by itself, or if together all 49 days comprise one single mitzvah. The difference would be in a case where someone forget to count:

If each day is a separate mitzvah, someone who forgot a day continues to fulfill the mitzvah by counting the following days. So he should continue

counting and each day say the blessing.

But if together all 49 days comprise one single mitzvah, someone who missed a day can no longer fulfill the mitzvah. Consequently, he can't say the blessing.

In practice, someone who forgets a day continues to count - in accordance with the first opinion - but does not say the blessing - in consideration of the second opinion.

But what should you do? On the one hand, you've counted every day! But since you're not yet bar mitzvah and aren't commanded by the Torah to count, perhaps your counting 'doesn't count.' Perhaps your "seven complete weeks" are incomplete.

Most Poskim rule that if you counted every day until your bar mitzvah, you continue counting with a blessing.

Interestingly enough, Akiva, the command to count the Omer is found in Parshas Emor - your bar mitzvah parsha. The verse says "Count after Pesach, the day you bring the Omer offering, seven complete weeks..." In Hebrew, the word 'complete' is the 12th word of the verse. Perhaps this hints that even though you are only 12 years old and not yet bar mitzvah, your mitzvah of counting is nonetheless 'complete'!

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