

A Taste of Torah Hearing Aid

By Rabbi Mordechai E. Fleisher

One of the most famous converts of all time, Yisro, is the namesake of this week's parsha. What prompted Yisro to join the Jewish People as they sojourned in the desert? The first verse in the parsha informs us, "And Yisro, the minister of Midian, heard everything that G-d did to Moshe and to Yisroel, His nation" (18:1). Rashi comments that specifically, Yisro heard about the splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek. These two events were the impetus for his conversion to Judaism.

Although we can well understand why the splitting of the sea would be an event that could convince a person to serve the G-d of Israel, we would be hard-pressed to explain why the subsequent war with Amalek should have a similar impact. Even if Yisro was impressed by the victory of the Jews over the forces of Amalek, Rashi should have then stated that Yisro heard about victory over Amalek. Yet, Rashi mentions that Yisro heard of the war with Amalek. What was significant about the war?

R' Eliyahu Lopian zt"l explains that in truth, Yisro was not the only person to have heard about the splitting of the sea. The Torah indicates that there were other nations of the world who were aware of the fantastic miracle that

had taken place. Our Sages expand the Torah's statement and say that in fact, every body of water in the world split along with the Sea of Reeds! Every nation knew of the awesome display of Hashem's power that had occurred at the Sea of Reeds. Every nation trembled in fear and awe of G-d when they heard of his omnipotent might.

It would have been expected then, that after realizing Who the Boss is, the nations of the world would behave themselves. You know, stay in line, at least for a while. Yet it was not to be. Shortly after the Jewish People emerged, dry as a bone, from the Sea of Reeds, they were attacked by the nation of Amalek.

When Yisro heard of Amalek's attack, he came to the realization that there is no system available to man to keep humanity in line. If the shock and awe of the splitting of the sea was insufficient to keep Amalek from committing such a heinous act, then any other approach - be it culture, education or any of the various "isms" that have promised salvation for mankind throughout the years - will inevitably fail as well. There is but one means to achieve perfection - following the Torah. Living and adhering to a Torah life is the sole guarantee of perfection. Any other system is bound to fail.

Ask the Rabbi Count Your Blessings

Mel Eltr wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

What is the origin of the halacha

that one must recite at least 100 blessings each day?

Dear Mel Eltra,

Stories For The Soul

A Child's Excitement

When Hashem gave the Torah at Har Sinai he asked the Jews for collateral. The only collateral he would accept was the Jewish children. Hashem wants the Torah to be loved and learned by the Jewish people and their children forever. Torah must be delved into with depth and passion. That is our past, present and future.

A great 19th century Rabbi sought a suitable match (shidduch) for his daughter. He let it be known throughout Eastern Europe that he would settle for nothing less than a true Torah scholar. In fact, the Rav set out to travel by wagon from town to town, asking top yeshiva students a most spectacularly difficult Talmudic question. The first to correctly answer this question would wed his daughter!

Needless to say, throngs of eager candidates sought out the Rav everywhere he went, hoping to answer the question and thus win the hand of his daughter. Not surprisingly, however, no one could come up with the correct answer. In every yeshiva in the land it was the same story over and over again - the eager students, upon hearing the Rav's question, would simply stare blank-faced at the great man in stony silence and utter hopelessness.

In one small town in a remote part of the country, the weary Rav entered a small yeshiva where he encountered a group of students huddled over their texts. When they recognized the great Torah sage they rushed to greet him. Once settled, the Rabbi asked his question. Once again, the answer was as elusive as a rainbow at night. Sadly, the great Rabbi bid them a goodnight and made his way back to his wagon.

He had just left when he heard running and a breathless shout coming

Kollel Happenings

CHERRY CREEK MUNCH AND LEARN, MON., JAN. 24

The next Cherry Creek Munch and Learn for men, led by Rabbi Yehuda Amsel, will be held on Mon., Jan. 24, 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



'THE PECKING ORDER' AT FEB. 2 TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Ed Barad, Shareholder, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, and Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab for "The Pecking Order: Prioritizing the Distribution of Our Time and Resources" at the next Torah for Tycoons, Wed., Feb. 2. The program will be held at noon at the East Side Kosher Deli. CLE credits pending. Cost: \$20. To RSVP, call 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org



PURITY OF CHARACTER AT FEB. 15 BAIS YAAKOV FOR ADULTS

"Purity of Character," a Bais Yaakov for Adults class for women, will take place on Tues., Feb 15. The class, led by Mrs. Chaya Meyer, will be held at Aish Ahavas Yisroel, and will take a deeper look at Pirkei Avos. Cost is \$5 or \$25 for all six upcoming classes. To RSVP, contact Mrs. Esti Schwab at 303-668-1878 or estischwab@denverkollel.org

Interpersonal Issues Borrowing Without Permission Part VI

If the item is being used to perform a mitzva, one may assume that the owner doesn't object to allowing him to use the object.

However, there are a number of limitations : a) there is no reason to suspect the owner is the type to object b) the owner doesn't need it for himself at that time c) the item is not being borrowed on a regular basis d) one cannot remove the item from the place

where the owner left it (one must use his own judgement as to what the owner would object to in this regard) e) it must be put back in the same state as it was found f) if the owner is present, one should ask permission.

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

Ask the Rabbi

continued from front

In the time of King David a plague was killing 100 people daily. The Sages at that time perceived the plague's spiritual essence and instituted 100 blessings a day. The plague stopped.

Even after the plague, the 100 blessing requirement still applies. Many halachic works make an accounting of exactly 100 blessings which are said in the course of every normal weekday.

On Shabbos (and festivals), the accounting is different because the amidah on Shabbos has fewer blessings than the weekday amidah . So on Shabbos you need to make up for the 'missing' blessings. You can do so with the blessings over foods and good smells. Or, according to some authorities, you can fill in the missing blessings by

listening to the blessings made during the Torah reading and saying 'amen.'

The Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveichik, was once a guest at someone's home. On Shabbos afternoon he asked his host for a banana and an apple, but didn't eat them. After Melava Malka, the host mustered up the courage to ask the Rav why he had requested the food and then failed to eat it.

The Brisker Rav answered that at first he had needed the fruit because he was missing two blessings from the required hundred. However, during the minchae he was called up to the Torah where he recited two blessings.

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Stories for the Soul

continued from front

from behind him. "Rabbi, Rabbi! Wait! Please WAIT!!" It was one of the young men from the village.

"Yes, my son? You thought of the answer to my question?" the great Rabbi asked with much hope in his voice.

"No, Rabbi, I am sorry to say I did not. But I can't stand the thought of not knowing the answer to such a great question! PLEASE, Rabbi! Shidduch or no shidduch, you MUST tell me the

answer!"

With that, the great sage smiled at the young man and grabbed his shoulders.- "YOU shall be my son-in-law!", he declared. "Such a burning, insatiable desire for knowledge is the very ESSENCE of the man I have been seeking!"

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman