



*Because Torah Is for Every Jew*

# A Taste of Torah Closeness Through Separation

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

The year was 1929. Jews throughout Europe converged in Vienna, Austria for the knessia gedolah, a massive gathering of Rabbis, to address the pressing issues of the day. People of Chassidic, Lithuanian Yeshiva, and Yekkish (German) backgrounds came together to hear the words of the leading Torah sages of the era. But, as often occurs by such events, there arose a debate. Although men and women were seated in separate areas, there was a question as to whether a mechitza (barrier) ought to be erected between the men and the women. Some said it was an necessity, some said absolutely not, while others were unsure.

The various parties agreed to present the question to the saintly Chofetz Chaim (1838-1933), and to abide by his ruling. The Chofetz Chaim replied that although the strict letter of the law does not require a mechitza, nonetheless, if there are those who want one, it should be provided. The Chofetz Chaim then explained the reasoning for his answer. The Torah states in this week's portion, "So that He ( Hashem) will not see any matter of erva amongst you and turn away from behind you." (Devarim 23:15) The term erva means a shameful thing, and alludes to, among other things, a lack of tznius - proper behavior between men and women. Thus, the greater the degree of sensitivity there is

in this area, the closer Hashem comes to us. When there is less sensitivity, while perhaps technically permitted, Hashem distances Himself.

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman (1874-1941), who, besides being one of the Torah giants of his time, was also a student of the Chofetz Chaim, quotes his teacher as having expanded this idea further. Hashem protects the Jewish People. However, we do not pay Him to provide us with security; He supplies it at His will. What is it, then, that induces G-d to want to guard His people? It is their vigilance in the area of tznius. When He sees that we live in a way that avoids immorality in these areas, and take pains to avoid situations and environments that may compromise such purity, He desires to watch over us.

Tznius is more than just abiding by a set of technical rules. It is a mindset, a sensitivity, and an awareness of the proper attitude one must have towards such matters. Certainly, a community must take the spiritual level of its members into account when making decisions as to what demands should be made of the local residents. But at the same time, those who may not be at that level ought to appreciate the idealism and dedication of those who seek to live beyond the letter of the law, and who want to follow a lifestyle that enables the Divine Presence to reside in close proximity.

# Ask the Rabbi Rosh Hashana Judgement

From: Melanie

is being judged and how?

Dear Rabbi,

Dear Melanie,

Why is Rosh Hashana considered the Day of Judgment, and what exactly

Rosh Hashana was ordained as a day of judgment for two reasons: The first

## Stories For The Soul

### Choose Life!

Jerry was always in a good mood. When someone would ask him how he was, he'd reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!"

Once, Jerry, a restaurant owner, left the back door of his restaurant open. He was shot by robbers and rushed to the local trauma center. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Jerry was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullets still in his body.

Six months later, someone asked him what went through his mind after he was shot.

"The first thing I thought was that I should have locked the back door. Then I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live, or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

Jerry continued, "The paramedics kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the emergency room and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read, 'He's a dead man.' I knew I needed to take action.

"A big, burly nurse asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes,' I replied, 'bullets!' Over the doctors' laughter, I told them, 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead.'"

In this week's Parsha, the Torah tells us how to act properly when going through war and when going through life. It's a matter of perspective. How we approach our challenges has a profound impact on our lives.

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

## Kollel Happenings

### TORAH FOR TYCOONS DO YOU COPY?

Join Daniel Sherwinter and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher as they delve into the issues and halachos of intellectual property. September 5th 12-1pm @ESKD. For more information or to register visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855



### DONOR APPRECIATION EVENT

The Denver Community Kollel is celebrating its 15th year of bringing Torah to Denver at its annual Donor Appreciation Event. The event will take place at the home of Brad and Dana Licht, 6156 East Powers Ave on September 24 at 7:00 p.m. For more information or to donate, please visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org)



### LABOR UNIONS & STRIKES THIS LABOR DAY AT THE KOLLEL

Join the Kollel this Labor Day, Monday, September 3rd, for Legal Holiday learning. The learning will focus on the Torah's view of labor unions and the right to strike. Shacharis is at 8 am, followed by breakfast and chavrusa-style learning at 9. For more info, or to sponsor, please email [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org).

## Interpersonal Issues Safeguarding a Lost Object

One who finds an item may not pick it up and move it to a place where he feels it will be safe in the hope that the owner will return and notice it. Once he picks it up, he must safeguard it, and leaving it in such a location is not

sufficient to fulfill that obligation.

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

## Ask the Rabbi

*Continued from front*

is that on this day, the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, the creation of the world was completed and it was the Divine intention that the world be ruled by the trait of strict justice. Hence the beginning of the year was marked as the 'Day of Judgment'. The second reason is that on this day Adam was judged, he repented, and he was forgiven.

Rambam teaches that every person has both merits and transgressions. If one's merits outweigh one's transgressions, he or she is considered to be righteous and judged for life and blessing. If the transgressions outweigh the merits, one is considered wicked and judged negatively, as in the verse, "I have wounded you...because of the enormity of your sins" (Jer. 30:14). If they are basically equivalent, the judgment hangs in the balance till a person tips the scale in either direction, affecting the judgment accordingly.

The same is true regarding an entire country. If the collective merit of all the inhabitants is greater than their sins, the people are considered to be righteous and the country is judged favorably for the coming year. If their collective sins are greater than their merits, they are considered to be collectively wicked and the country is judged for damage and destruction, as the verse states, "For the outcry from Sodom and Amorah is great" (Gen. 18:20). The same is also true of the entire world, as in the verse regarding the Flood, "And G-d saw that man's evil was great" (Gen 6:5).

However, this judgment is not quan-

titative but rather qualitative. There are individual acts of merit that far outweigh many sins, as in the verse, "Because in him there is found some good" (Kings 1 14:13); and, likewise, there are individual sins that outweigh many acts of merit as in the verse, "One sinner can cause much good to be lost" (Eccl. 9:18). The determination of this is dependent solely on the judgment of G-d, Whose knowledge is all-encompassing, for only He can truly evaluate merit and sin.

Therefore, each person should see himself during the entire year as if he were half meritorious in order to be encouraged by the recognition of his goodness, and half guilty in order to be spurred to rectify what's wrong or missing. Likewise, he should consider his country and even the entire world as being in the same state of hanging in the balance. Thus, if he commits one single sin, he is capable of tipping the scale of transgression for himself, his immediate environment, and the entire world toward destruction. Similarly, if he performs one mitzvah, he can tip the scale of merit for himself, others and the world, causing salvation and deliverance. This is as in the verse, "And the tzaddik is the foundation of the world" (Prov. 10:25). Meaning, because he is a righteous tzaddik, he tips the scale of the world to the side of merit and saves it.

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