



Parshas Behar

May 20, 2022

A Taste of Torah

Community Connection

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Jewish Geography is a favorite pastime of many a member of the Chosen Nation. We love to connect with our fellow Jews, and finding a person (or ten of them) whom we both know is a great way to do so. Living in a relatively small Jewish community like Denver means that there's a good chance I will know someone's friend/relative/former roommate who resides in Denver, and so I can often respond in the affirmative when asked, "Oh, you live in Denver, do you know so-and-so?" Living in a large community, such as Brooklyn (where I grew up), means you don't know the majority of people living in the community. When someone tells me they live in Brooklyn, the rules of Jewish Geography require me to narrow down the possibilities: "What street do you live on? What school did you attend? What *shul* do you attend?" Only then is it worth attempting to make a connection.

According to an insight by the Meshech Chochma (Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk; 1843-1926), a law in this week's parsha seems to approve of the small-town, know-everyone lifestyle.

Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) was apportioned to the Jewish People, with every qualifying individual receiving a share in the Land. If a person were to sell part or all of his land, the Torah specifies that he has the right to redeem the land (on a pro-rated basis) starting two years after it is sold. This applies to land as well as homes. If the seller or his close family member fail to redeem the land, it remains in the possession of the

buyer until *Yovel* (the 50th, or Jubilee, year), at which point it reverts back to the original owner's possession.

However, the Torah makes a notable exception: A house in a walled city can be redeemed by the seller only for one year following its sale, after which it remains in the possession of the buyer permanently.

The Meshech Chochma posits that the reason that houses in a walled city receive special treatment has to do with the nature of such locales. Walled cities, he explains, are often the strongholds of a nation when their territory is invaded. It is the vital, then, that the inhabitants of such places have a strong bond with each other so they can present a united front and properly defend their city against the attackers. The laws of land sales that apply to the rest of *Eretz Yisrael* create a reality wherein the resident of a piece of property can change frequently. A piece of land may be sold, then redeemed anytime from two years until 49 years after the sale. With the arrival of *Yovel*, the land reverts back to the original owner again. Such regulations, if applied to a walled city, would create a transitory populace, resulting in people not knowing each other very well and thus lacking the cohesiveness necessary to properly defend against any attackers. To avoid such a state of affairs, the Torah mandates that once a home is sold, the seller has one year to redeem his home, after which the buyer retains his purchase permanently. This means that residents will generally have a much higher level of permanence in the

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Stories for the Soul

From the Ground Up

Two men once came to Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner (1749-1821) to resolve a dispute. Each one owned a considerable amount of real estate, but they had a disagreement over the ownership of a particular piece of land, and they were hoping Rav Chaim would decide to whom the land belonged. The case was not simple, and Rav Chaim tried mightily to get the two men to reach a compromise. Alas, his efforts fell on deaf ears, as neither side was willing to give an inch. Suddenly, Rav Chaim put his ear to the ground, as if listening to something. The disputants stopped bickering and looked at Rav Chaim in amazement, wondering what he was listening to.

Rav Chaim explained, "Upon hearing how each of you stood here proclaiming 'All the land is mine!', and neither of you were amenable to compromise, I decided to hear what the land itself had to say! 'And do you know what the ground said about this? It said, 'What's the fight about?! Ultimately, both of them will belong to me!'"

The mitzvah of *shemittah* (Sabbatical year) is meant to remind us that the land is not truly ours, but rather, belongs to Hashem. We may be given possessions for our short time here on this world, but we must never lose sight of our true purpose, to use those possessions to serve Hashem, and remember that He is the One who provides our needs.

Kollel Happenings

PRE-SHAVUOS LEARN-A-THON

Don't miss the return of the Kollel's Pre-Shavuos Learn-A-Thon on Sunday, May 29, 10:15 am-12 pm. Featuring one hour of learning for men for a communal completion of an entire masechta and a special class for women, followed by a celebratory *siyum* and buffet lunch. For more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION LIVE & LEARN LEARNING PROGRAM AT THE WEST DENVER KOLLEL TORAH CENTER

The Live & Learn Learning Program for seniors is held Tuesdays at the West Denver Kollel Torah Center. Coffee and pastries at 10:30 am, two classes of 45 minutes each from 10:40-12:15 (including 5 minute break between classes), and lunch (including take-home option) at 12:15. For more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

SPRING-SUMMER AVOS UBANIM CONTINUES THIS SHABBOS

The Kollel's spring-summer Avos Ubanim program continues this Shabbos afternoon at the Kollel Torah Centers in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and prizes. Program ends 15 minutes before mincha in Southeast Denver, at mincha in West Denver. For sponsorships and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: How is it possible to recite a *borei pri hagafen* on a cup of wine on a weekday even though one is not drinking from the cup?

Answer: If *Birkas Hamazon* was recited with a *mezuman* over a cup of wine, the person leading *bentching* recites *borei pri hagafen* but may then give the cup to one of the other participants (who was included in his blessing) to drink the

cup (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 190:4; see Bi'ur Halacha ad loc. s.v. *yit'om* for an opposing view).

This week's question: Three people ate together, were obligated to have a *mezuman*, and none of them joined any other *mezuman*, but when the three of them recite *Birkas Hamazon* (at their place of eating, at the same time), they may not hold a *mezuman*. Why not?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XLVII

Rabbi Shapiro was extremely devoted to the students of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin and their wellbeing. His students loved him in return. This love and appreciation was manifest when, for Rabbi Shapiro's birthday, every member of the student body signed a document in which they committed to complete the entirety of the Talmud in his honor.

Rabbi Shapiro's wife, Malka Toba, was equally dedicated to the cause of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. She served as the "mother" of the yeshiva, caring for the boys' needs. In addition, her father, Rabbi Yaakov Breitman of Tarnopol, had been quite wealthy, and Rebbetzin Shapiro had inherited a significant amount of money. She used up every bit of her inheritance

on the yeshiva.

Seven months after the yeshiva was opened, in February 1931, the first *siyum* of Daf Yomi took place, with the main celebration in Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. Rabbi Shapiro viewed this as the culmination of his two major projects, Daf Yomi and Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin.

In June of 1931, Rabbi Shapiro was appointed as the rabbi of Lublin, where he now resided, leaving his old post as rabbi of Piotrkov.

The yeshiva did indeed live up to its promise, attracting the best and brightest students from across Poland. It is said that a student needed have committed 400 *blatt* (folios) of Talmud to memory for the entrance exam.

A Taste of Torah

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walled city.

While this approach seems to advance the virtue of living in a community where everyone knows each other, the lesson of the Meshech Chochma is relevant whether you live in Brooklyn, Bnai Brak, or Bangladesh. Striving to create connection with our fellow Jews means that when individuals or the community as a whole encounters

a challenge, everyone is ready to step up and help solve the problem. It may not be feasible to have a personal relationship with every person in a large community, but we can make the effort to offer a smile and a good morning, or a helping hand to another, even if we may not know him very well. With a little bit of focus, we can unite with our fellow Jews and successfully face whatever challenges come our way.

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