



A Taste of Torah Pre-Arranged Accommodations

by Rabbi Aharon Wilen

The Medrash (Bamidbar Rabba 2) relates that during the revelation at Mt. Sinai, *Bnai Yisrael* beheld the legions of heavenly hosts arranged in *degalim*, specifically-arranged groups, around the *Shechina* (Divine Presence). The legion of Michael was on the right to the south, Gavriel on the left to the north, Uriel in the front to the east, and Refael in the back to the west. After seeing this formation, the *Bnai Yisrael* came to Moshe and asked for their own *degalim*, arranged by their tribes. Hashem told Moshe to listen to them and form *degalim* in accordance with their request.

Moshe, anticipating the fighting that would ensue, got very agitated. He was concerned that when he'd tell a tribe to occupy a particular side, the tribe would insist on being placed elsewhere.

Hashem assured Moshe that he had nothing to worry about. "They don't need you for this," said Hashem, "for they already know on their own where they belong. Yaakov their father taught them. When Yaakov was on his death bed, he called his sons and instructed them: 'When you carry me out of Egypt, do it with awe and reverence. Make sure not to let any of the Egyptians or even any of your sons touch the bier. Yehudah, Yissachar, and Zevulun shall carry on the east, Reuvain, Shimon, and Gad on the south, Efraim, Menashe, and Binyamin on the west, and Dan, Asher, and Naftali on the north. Yosef and Levi should not carry at all. If you do exactly as I have instructed, Hashem will dwell among your

degalim.

Yaakov perceived where each of his sons belonged and arranged them accordingly, so when Hashem commanded *Bnai Yisrael* to set up their *degalim*, the Jewish People followed the arrangement made by Yaakov.

Why did Yaakov promise his children *degalim* as a reward for carrying his bier? What connection does one have with the other? In addition, what was Yaakov's need for awe and reverence during the process of his burial?

The Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 47) teaches that the *Avos* (Patriarchs) are the *merkava*, the chariot that "carries" the *Shechina*. The Mesilas Yesharim (Ch. 26) (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto; 1707-1746) explains that the *Avos* reached a level in their devotion to Hashem that He was able to rest His *Shechina* upon their very bodies. The Mesilas Yesharim adds that *tzaddikim* (righteous individuals) who reach this point are like a *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), *Mikdash* (Temple), and *Mizbe'ach* (Altar). Their every action is solely focused on serving Hashem to the point that anything physical they interact with is raised into the service of Hashem. Even the food they eat is equal to a sacrifice on the *Mizbeach*.

When Yaakov's sons carried his bier, it was not just a simple funeral. They were carrying the body of a *tzaddik* who achieved such spiritual greatness that he was among those referred to as a chariot for the *Shechina* itself. This body was a place wherein the *Shechina* resided just as it would in the *Mishkan* centuries later. It is understandable,

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Stories for the Soul

Made to Order

A young religious Jew was drafted into the German army during World War I. Determined to remain loyal to Torah, he ate only fruit, vegetables and bread. Eventually his superiors discovered his behavior and the reason for it, and they reacted by beating him, claiming he was weakening himself so that he wouldn't have to serve in the army. Although the soldier stood his ground, he was subjected to daily humiliation, and eventually, out of desperation, he wrote a letter to Kaiser Wilhelm himself to complain about his treatment. Though a risky move, as the Kaiser could also react cruelly to the entreaty, he felt he had no other option.

One afternoon, all of the soldiers were ordered to line up immediately. The captain announced that the unit had received a personal letter from the Kaiser, and he was going to read its contents aloud. The young Jewish soldier shook with fear, not knowing what the letter contained.

He needn't have worried. The letter stated that the young soldier's need for kosher food was to be met, and all efforts made to procure kosher food. If this was not feasible, then the Jewish soldier had to be transferred to another unit where kosher food was available!

The Jews' journey through the desert was not merely a means to arrive at the Land of Israel. It was an opportunity to grow and achieve

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Kollel Happenings

SPECIAL TORAH FOR TYCOONS SEASON FINALE ON JUNE 15TH

Tune in on Zoom on Wednesday evening, June 15th at 7:30 pm for a special T4T session. Mr. Harry Rothenberg, plaintiffs personal injury attorney and partner at The Rothenberg Law Firm LLP and sought-after lecturer on Torah topics, will present the entire session on the topic of *When Systems Collide: Professional Responsibility and Opportunity vs. Religious and Moral Imperative*. For more details and Zoom info, visit www.denverkollel.org or 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.

TALMUDO BIYADO GEMARA CLUB FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

Learn, review, and acquire a masechta! Boys in grades 6-8 are invited to join Rabbi Chaim Gross at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissochor weeknights Mon.-Thu. from 8-8:30 pm for a Gemara shiur followed by review. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: What part of *Birkas Hamazon* should normally be said quietly when *bentching* but out loud when leading a *mezuman*?

Answer: The word *amein* at the end of the blessing of *bonei Yerushalayim*. This *amein* is recited to one's own blessing to signify the end of the three Torah-level blessings, as the fourth and final blessing is Rabbinic (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 188:1). The Mechaber (ibid.:2) states that this *amein* should be recited quietly so as not to loudly announce that

the fourth blessing is of a lesser status than the previous three, which may lead to people not treating it with proper respect. However, the Rema (ad loc.) says that if one is leading the *bentching*, everyone else is responding *amein* to his *bracha*, and so he should say the *amein* along with the others, as his recitation will not stand out as it is swallowed by the others' response.

This week's question: Men must say this or else must repeat. Women are not supposed to say it but they do anyway. What part of *bentching* is this?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XLIX

Despite the spiritual successes of the yeshiva, keeping it financially afloat proved to be a daunting task. As mentioned above, his wife's entire inheritance from her father was put toward the expenses of running the yeshiva. But the costs continued to mount. Forced to leave his

beloved yeshiva to seek funds, he found it extremely difficult to meet the budgetary demands of the yeshiva. One student stated that, upon returning from one particularly difficult trip, he commented, "Instead of dreaming about pages of Gemara, now I dream of dollars."

A Taste of Torah

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then, why this task demanded awe and reverence and why, in return, Hashem would, in the future, arrange the Tribes' descendants in *degalim* around a *Mishkan* where the *Shechina* dwelled. The formation Yaakov created was based upon the same angelic arrangements that *Bnai Yisrael* beheld at Mt. Sinai, and the positions that he chose were appropriate and precise based on the unique spiritual position each of his sons occupied and that their descendants would continue to hold in the future they would be arranged in *degalim* around the *Mishkan*.

The Nefesh Hachaim (1:6) (Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner; 1749-1821) teaches that each of the mitzvos parallel a specific part of the body. Each mitzvah brings *kedusha* (holiness) to a specific limb, and fulfillment of all the mitzvos properly creates a body that is perfect and sanctified. This, he explains, is the achievement of the *Avos*, for they succeeded in perfecting their entire physical selves to the point that the *Shechina* could rest upon them. The opportunity is there for any person to perform the mitzvos and bring this sanctity into his physical body, just as the *Avos* did.

Stories for the Soul

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great spiritual heights by overcoming challenges there. Throughout our history, whether as a nation or as individuals, Jews have been sent to

the four corners of the globe. These exiles and journeys are meant as an opportunity to sanctify G-d's Name, in all places and situations.

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