



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Shelach

June 24, 2022

A Taste of Torah

Pure Evil

by Rabbi Nosson Schoss

This week's parsha discusses the story of the twelve spies who were sent to scout the Land of Canaan before the Jews would go ahead and conquer the land. As we all know, ten of the spies came back reporting bad news. It seemed, to them, to be an impossible feat, and so they recommended the Jews not move forward into the Land of Canaan. There were, however, two spies, Kalev and Yehoshua, who stood up and urged the people not to listen to the others, but instead tried convincing the nation that they should trust Hashem and conquer the land. In their argument to the people they said (Shelach 14:9), "But do not rebel against Hashem and you will not fear the people of the land, for they are our bread. Their protection has parted from them; Hashem is with us. Do not fear them." Their words require explanation; what did Kalev and Yehoshua mean by comparing the enemy to "bread," and what is the meaning of "their protection has parted from them"?

The Ohr Hachaim (Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar; 1696-1743) explains that all creations in the world need to have some element of spiritual connection to G-d in order to exist. Every entity, no matter how impure, contains a spark of holiness that enables its existence - even non-kosher animals, even wicked people, and even Satan himself. There is nothing in Creation that doesn't contain within itself an aspect of a force of existence, an aspect of good, for that is what sustains everything, and without which nothing could exist. Thus,

when that spark of holiness and goodness is separated from its place within an entity, the entire structure of that entity disintegrates.

By comparing the enemy to "bread," Kalev and Yehoshua were making an analogy: Bread is the final, prepared product, after the lengthy process of plowing the field, planting the seeds, nurturing the plants, harvesting the grain, processing the kernels into flour, kneading the flour into dough and baking the loaf is complete; all that's left is to enjoy the fruits of the labor by eating the bread. Similarly, said Kalev and Yehoshua, G-d has already removed the protection from the giants living in the Land of Canaan, for He has departed from them. The spark of holiness that enables their existence and sustains them has already been partly dislodged from them, and it will not take much for it to be completely extracted. They are like the final product, the finished loaf of bread, waiting for the hungry man to come and consume it.

Similarly, in Parshas Bo (Shemos 11:5), when speaking about the last of the Ten Plagues, the death of the firstborn Egyptians, the verse says "every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die." The commentaries wonder, inasmuch as G-d is the One speaking in the verse, it would have been more appropriate to say, "I shall kill every firstborn." The Ohr Hachaim explains, in line with the above concept, that all G-d did was remove the spark of goodness and holiness from within them, thus allowing them to dissipate on their own. This

continued on back

Stories for the Soul

Heartbroken

Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz (1886-1948), the head of Yeshiva Torah Voda'as in New York, was one of the major architects of Torah in America. Rabbi Mendlowitz was known for his great love of Eretz Yisrael.

Rabbi Mendlowitz suffered from a weak heart. In 1948, upon hearing that Jerusalem was captured by the Arabs during the Israeli War of Independence, Rabbi Mendlowitz was devastated. He was reciting *Birkas Hamazon*, the blessings recited after a meal. He arrived at the blessing that beseeches G-d to have mercy upon the Jewish People and upon Jerusalem. He began sobbing, and his frail heart gave out - his love for Eretz Yisrael and his grief over the tragedy took him from this world.

A student in Torah Voda'as once informed Rabbi Mendlowitz that he wanted to move to Eretz Yisrael.

"How do you plan on getting there?" asked Rabbi Mendlowitz.

"I will purchase a round-trip ticket," replied the student. "If it doesn't work out, I will return home."

"In that case, you may not go," said Rabbi Mendlowitz. "One does not go to Eretz Yisrael with a round-trip ticket."

In this week's parsha, the Spies and the Jewish People failed to properly appreciate the gift of Eretz Yisrael. It is up to us to rectify their error and develop the proper love for our homeland.

Kollel Happenings

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.

LEARN 2 LEARN GESHMAK WITH RABBI YOSSE EPHRATHI

You may have limited experience learning Talmud. You may think that you don't enjoy serious Talmud study, that it's just not for you. But you haven't tried Learn 2 Learn Geshmak. A Gemara program crafted to give you the satisfaction and joy of learning, Learn 2 Learn Geshmak is taught by Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Ephrathi. Contact info@denverkollel.org for further details.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: When would one wash his hands with orange juice?

Answer: If one needs to wash *mayim acharonim* (washing hands following the meal) and does not have water, any liquid besides wine or grape juice may be used (Shulchan Aruch Orach

Chaim 181:9 with Mishna Berura 20) – including orange juice.

This week's question: Why would the flooring material make a difference when one washes his hands on a regular weekday?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part LII

As Rabbi Shapiro's illness worsened, it became more and more difficult for him to breathe. He was unable to speak, and communicated by writing messages. As his death became more imminent, his wife, who was in the room with him, began sobbing. Upon

seeing this, he wrote her a message: "Now the true *simcha* (joy) begins."

A number of his students were present in the room with him, and he asked wrote, "Let everyone drink a *l'chaim*." His request was carried out, and those present wished Rabbi Shapiro *l'chaim*.

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

is also the way Satan will be removed at the end of time.

This idea can be taken a step further. The Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto; 1707-1746) in *Derech Hashem* (2:3:6) teaches, "There is a limit placed on the amount of evil that a person can do. Once this limit is reached, G-d no longer gives the individual a chance, but obliterates him from the face of the earth. This is what our Sages mean by the expression, 'The measure is filled' and this is based on the verse (Iyov 20:22), 'When the measure is filled, they are crushed.' For this reason, it is possible that the wicked will be successful in order that the door remain open for their destruction. With regard to this, our Sages taught, 'When one comes to defile himself, the door is opened for him.' When the limit is reached, destruction is imminent. G-d's anger is aroused and a catastrophe comes, totally annihilating such an individual."

Evil can and often does flourish, says the Ramchal. Based on the Ohr Hachaim's words, we understand that it is that spark of goodness and holiness that allows it to flourish. The evil grows and destroys the good around it. Eventually, however, that evil will reach a point where it destroys the very good that allows it to exist! The evil that looked so huge and indestructible simply self-destructs and vanishes.

We've seen this many times through history. At times, a particular evil seemed so strong and there was no happy future in sight, but overnight, the tables turned. Relatively recent events like the utter destruction of Nazi Germany, the sudden death of Stalin, and the fall of communism reflect this reality. There is a limit to all bad. We look forward to the coming of Mashiach when Hashem will end all pain, remove the connection of good from the Satan, and all evil will cease to exist.

To sponsor Torah Weekly, delivered weekly in print and via email to thousands of Jews worldwide, email info@denverkollel.org
Denver Community Kollel | 5080 W. 14th Ave., Denver, CO 80204 | 303-820-2855
info@denverkollel.org | www.denverkollel.org

To receive Torah Weekly by email, email to info@denverkollel.org