

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR MELECH MANN

Soup or Salad?

People who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like.

So said "Uncle Abe," when reviewing an overly sentimental book, as quoted in George William Russells' book *Collections and Recollections* (1903). Our dear sixteenth president was not known for his fondness of emotion as an end in itself. Paul Johnson, perhaps this generation's foremost historian, writes in his New York Times bestseller *A History of the American People* that Lincoln made this comment when informed of the style of worship practiced by the cultural/religious movement known as "The Awakening," in early to mid-nineteenth century America.

Be that as it may, the American people are known for their problem-solving and pragmatic attitude to life's riddles and challenges; hence their services are often solicited (and sometimes not solicited!) to mediate between two opposing sides of a debate which involves multiple nationalities or states. A major element of this cultural reality has been, historically speaking, the "melting pot." "Melting pot" was an expression coined at the very beginning of this country's existence, as a reference to the American ideal of leaving old prejudices and nationalistically driven hatreds aside, and allowing the values and pathos

of the American spirit to serve as an equalizer and a unifying principle for all nationalities, cultures, religious groups, and races.

However, in the midst of the great and powerful unifying force of "the pursuit of happiness," and whatever falls under that umbrella, we have several statements in this week's Torah portion which seem to recommend otherwise for the Hebraic family.

...To distinguish between the holy and the mundane, and between the defiled and the pure. (10:10)

This sentence serves as a pithy summation of an overarching theme in this Torah portion, mostly concerning the laws of what we may ingest and what we may not.

The Torah, in its eternal and unmitigated genius, lays before our eyes what has been, until this day, perhaps the single most socially distinguishing aspect between the family of Abraham and the nations of the world. Nowhere does the differentiation between us and non-Jews find expression in such everyday and constant expression as it does through the laws and by-laws related to food and beverages.

One may wonder: Why would the Torah want to place us in such a different setting, virtually in a social bubble,

in contrast to the rest of the American melting pot, where so many cultures, nationalities, religions, and races have molded almost seamlessly together?

To add mystery to wonder, the Torah seems to switch modes between the two examples of demarcation between Jews and non-Jews. First the Torah lists "between the holy and the mundane," placing the adjective referring to the Israelite tribe first. Then it says, "between the impure and the pure," placing the adjective describing the people of Israel last. Queries Rabbi Shimon Schwab, of blessed memory, what was the intention of this non-uniform passage?

Rabbi Schwab postulates the following thesis.

The laws and statutes which affirm, strengthen, and create very clear differentiations between the stock of Abraham and the nations of the world are not only obligations on *us*. Non-Jews themselves have laws, as well, which clearly spell out an obligation incumbent *on them* to respect our uniqueness. A non-Jew who attempts to keep the Shabbos can incur the death penalty! A non-Jew is not allowed to study Torah!

This, says Rabbi Schwab, is the reason why the Torah switches its order between the two reference points of separation, as a way of illustrating the uniformity of obligation—as well as the reality that a Jew and a non-Jew, in their

— CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE —>

Sponsorship & feedback:

parasha@cincynollel.org

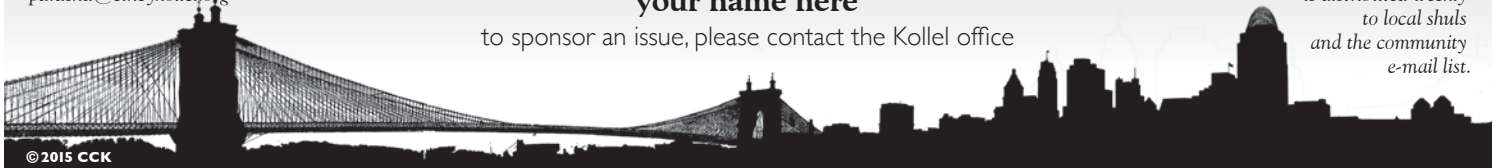
we would love to see

your name here

to sponsor an issue, please contact the Kollel office

Cincinnati Torah

is distributed weekly
to local shuls
and the community
e-mail list.



At the Kollel

KEY: 🖐️ Beginners 🖐️🖐️ Intermediate 🖐️🖐️🖐️ Advanced 🚺🚻 for men and women

Looking for a chavrusa? See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**
(Jewish Law & Parasha)
Rabbis Dani Schon
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM
Grand Deluxe breakfast served

Tuesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Partners in Torah
at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

Wednesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Torah Treasures for
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🚺🚻🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn
at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM
Homemade refreshments served.

Minyanim Daylight Time

Shacharis
Sunday8:15 AM
Monday–Friday7:20 AM
ShabbosN/A

Mincha
Sunday7:45 PM
Monday–Thursday5:45 PM
Shabbos6:30 PM

Ma'ariv
In the Beis Midrash:
Sunday–Wednesday9:45 PM
Thursday10 PM
ShabbosN/A

Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**
(Maseches B'choros)
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**
Live video conference!
Rabbi Dani Schon.....
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**
Rabbi Meir Minster.....
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**
Rabbis Dani Schon
& Binyamin Teitelbaum
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Chavrusa Learning
(private & small groups).....times vary

Soup or Salad? CONTINUED

ideal forms, will (to an extent) mutually repel one another!

One of the “Seven New Wonders of the World” is an awe-inspiring site at the summit of a mountain overlooking Cape Town, South Africa. From the vantage point of the hilltop, one can see where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet. The Indian Ocean has a greenish-blue color, while the Atlantic has a stronger, blueish character. The oceans each contain their respective species of fish, which do not cross this absolute line. It appears almost as if their were some tacit agreement or treaty between the two bodies of water, as to where to draw their borders.

Such a picture comes to mind when understanding the theme of this Torah portion. It’s a mistake, to my thinking, to see ourselves as having an obligation, so to speak, to be different. Rather, the correct approach is that *we are mutually and essentially different breeds*, and that this is a reality in the life of nations, the same way the Indian and Atlantic Oceans mutually respect their borders. In my interactions with non-Jews, I have found that when I am conscious of my uniqueness, and I allow it to naturally take expression in my mannerisms and quality of conduct—in addition to the Torah’s limits on food and beverages—then the quality of our interactions is

incomparably higher and positive.

I remember that once, when I was sitting among non-Jews and attempting to prove how “with-it” I was, I mentioned some television shows I used to watch. They responded, “We don’t let *our* kids watch that—it’s too dirty.” (Pinch. Ouch!)

We should stop trying to be like them. Lets stay the way we are, and perhaps—no, for certain—we will enjoy this great American culture, not as a melting pot, but as a salad, a potpourri, with us *Yidden* serving as the salad bowl, lending meaning, purpose, direction, and structure to the family of nations.

Have a good Shabbos! 🥂