



A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

All Our Colors

THERE ARE FEW NARRATIVES IN THE TORAH THAT stretch out through so many weeks like the episode of Yosef and his brothers. *Sefer Bereishis* is filled with *Toras haavos*, the ideology that is the make-up of the Jewish people. The different character traits that defined Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov are who we are as a nation. How are we supposed to understand this standoff between Yosef and his brothers, this climax between Yosef and Yehudah?

One might think this is just another example of sibling rivalry. His brothers thought Yosef had his personal ambition in mind, and they wanted to get rid of him. The *Sefas Emes* (in the name of his grandfather, the *Chidushei Harim*) disagrees. He feels it is disrespectful to consider their conflict to be anything less than a deep ideological disagreement.

Yosef felt they needed to hold themselves to a very high standard; he viewed small nuances as significant offenses. He believed they must be holy and separated [the Torah describes Yosef as "*nezir echav*," a Nazirite (*Bereishis* 49:26)].

On the other hand, the *shevatim* (tribes), led by Yehudah, felt the proper path was to bring sanctity down to matters of this world. His philosophy was to be involved in this world, and to be involved with people. Yehudah's philosophy was encapsulated in Moshe's *bracha* to him: "To his nation You will

bring him..." (*v'el amav tevi'enu*—bring it to the people) (*Devarim* 33:7).

This is a tension that has always remained with us—what is a considered a "high standard" and what is extreme?

This is one of those difficult questions—questions of balance often are—and often people have different intuitions. When do we say that a person is just being real and when do we say that something is unrealistic? It is hard to quantify something like this.

On the one hand, we find Yosef and his philosophy are ultimately vindicated, and the brothers come down to Mitzrayim. On the other hand, the *Mashiach* comes from Yehudah and not Yosef.

We might add that the reconciliation between Yosef and his brothers is indicative of a recognition that there is truth to both of these philosophies. There are many ways to serve Hashem, and one is not more correct than the next—as long as they are all based on the Truths that our *emuna* (faith) is built upon. 🕊

RABBI MECHAEI SOROKA



A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI YITZCHAK PREIS

This coming Tuesday is the 10th of Teves, a "minor"—but very significant—fast day.

Asara b'Teves commemorates the initial stage of Exile—the siege against Yerushalayim was laid by Nevuchadnetzar on this date. It was the transformative moment when Yerushalayim was, for the very first time, perceived as "touchable" and potentially conquerable. From that tragic moment, there has been no point in history that Yerushalayim was completely without foreign influence or control.

Asara B'Teves is also the culmination of what is described as a three-day "Fast of the *Tzaddikim*." Devout Jews would fast dawn-to-dark three days in a row reflecting on tragedies that took place on the 8th and 9th of the month as well.

This fast day starts relatively late. Calculations for *alos* (dawn) in Cincinnati come to 6:25-6:39AM this Tuesday. As such, it is very likely that many will want to eat prior to dawn.

The following factors should be kept in mind if doing so:

Although we tend to take it for granted that fasts such as this one start at dawn, there is significant reason to suggest that once "finishing" all eating for the night the fast kicks in.

Going to sleep without having stipulated that one might eat upon arising creates a "detachment" from eating and triggers the onset of the fast.

Early *Poskim* debate whether this stringency applies to drinking. As such, it is preferable to make a verbal stipulation even if one intends only to drink and not

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Mazel Tov to Sachi Klinkowitz on his completion of Maseches Sukkah. Years in the making!"



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GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

TO SAY BENNY WAS NOT A GOOD STUDENT WOULD be an understatement. He was constantly getting into trouble. After years of keeping his teachers up at night, one day in 6th grade, inexplicably, he turned over a new leaf. No one knew why, but one day out of the blue Benny showed up to school with a new attitude. He was respectful, patient, and well-behaved. He had a lot to catch up on, but by the time he graduated eighth grade he was at the top of his class. The mystery remained however: what had caused this change? Several years later, a former teacher happened to run into Benny and asked, "I don't want to bother you but could you share what inspired you to make such a change in your life?" "I'm glad you asked! One day in 6th grade I was again sent to the principal's office. As I sat there listening to the principal, he received a call from someone, and after listening for a moment to the person on the other line, he excused himself saying, "I have an important person waiting for me, I'll have to call you back." The rest of the night it bothered me, who was this important person that the principal was referring to? I was the only one there. He had to be talking about me! I am important! The realization changed my life. If I was an important person, I could expect a lot more from myself, and I made the commitment to do so. That's when I turned over a new leaf." 🕊

A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

What future event was predicted in this week's *parasha*, but never occurred?

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer! 🕊

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

As mass Jewish immigration to America began in the 1880s, Jews escaped the physical danger and oppression of Europe but now faced a new danger—assimilation to the point of losing their Jewish identity. The problem intensified as the first generation of immigrants began raising children in America and their children did not identify with the Yiddish culture of their parents. To combat this assimilation, the Young Israel movement was started. The first thing the organizers did was to create a series of Friday night classes on Jewish topics with a twist that was novel for the time—they would be given in English! The first synagogue to allow these classes stipulated that the same class must be given the next day in Yiddish! Young Israel's next step was to create its own synagogue, known as the Model Synagogue, with the intention of encouraging involvement of all congregants, whether through adding congregational singing or giving honors without the auction system common at the time. This blossomed into a national organization with a host of programming to strengthen Jewish life, and which succeeded greatly in its endeavor to keep Jewish identity strong even in America. 🕊

SOURCE: Scheinbaum, Rabbi A. Leib. *The World That Was America*, The Shaar Press, pp. 14-25, 2004.

At the Kollel

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WEEKLY

MORE

🕊 "Dirshu" Gemara Shiur (Maseches Chulin)

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

🕊🕊 Mishnah Kavuah online

two mishnayos and some mussar
Rabbi Ezra Stettin any time you like

🕊 Daf Yomi

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

🕊🕊 Night Seder Chabura

in the Annex Library
(Maseches Avodah Zara)
led by Rabbi Tzvi Fishman
Sunday–Thursday 9–9:50 PM
followed by Ma'ariv at 9:50

KEY: 🕊 Beginners 🕊 Intermediate 🕊 Advanced 🕊 for men and women

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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

eat. If no stipulation was made, one may drink (but not eat) upon arising prior to dawn.

There is a prohibition of starting a meal within a half hour of dawn—any day of the year. The *mitzvah* of daily recitation of *Shema* becomes relevant as soon as dawn breaks, and there is a general rule that one may not initiate a meal within a half hour of a *mitzvah* obligation. This prohibition applies to bread and those grain products that share certain bread qualities. As such, if one wants to eat an egg's volume of any classic bread product, or a

muffin, coffee cake, crackers, etc., one must start prior to the half hour preceding *alos*. Most breakfast cereals, eggs, fruit, and coffee do not share this restriction, and may be consumed in any measure any time prior to dawn. 🕊



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