

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

The One Thing

ASSOCIATE SCHOLAR
RABBI YEHUDA LEVI

The most penetrating questions a person can ask him or herself are, "Why am I here? What am I supposed to accomplish in this world?" The Torah provides the answer with Moshe Rabbeinu's address to the Jewish people beginning with, "And now Israel what does Hashem your G-d ask of you but to fear Hashem your G-d." The preface, "but to," gives the impression that Hashem has but one small request of us; however, the Torah continues with a demanding list of guidelines, "[T]o go in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Hashem your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of Hashem and His statutes." Why are these requirements portrayed as being simple to fulfill?

Rabbi Shimon Schwab explains that there really is only one request being underlined in this sentence, and that is to have *yiras Hashem*, fear of G-d. However, fear of Heaven is not to be an isolated experience, independent of any action, but rather an underlying mindset that guides all our experiences in life. All our interactions, spiritual endeavors, and mundane pursuits are to be performed within the framework of *yiras Hashem*. This is what Hashem wants of us, to fear Him in everything we do; as we walk

in His ways and love Him, and as we serve Him and keep His Torah

A more accurate definition of *yiras Hashem* in its ideal form would be, "awe of G-d." Not fear of being hurt, but recognition of His Majesty and Omnipotence. When we live with awe and constant awareness of Hashem, our lives take on an entirely new look, one that is more in consonance with the values of the Torah. Much like our conduct in front of a great Torah leader being more refined than our general behavior, living life with such a focus raises our existence to a loftier plane. Understanding that Hashem is always present should instill us with a reverence and sense of purpose that is reflected in our actions. When it does, we truly will be able to fulfill that which Hashem asks of us, and we will become a kind and just people in the devout service of G-d. 🕊



THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

This week's *parasha*:

Q) Regarding the *parasha* of *Arei Miklot* (cities of refuge) the commentators bring the *Gemara* in *Makkos* that relates how the mother of the *Kohen Gadol* used to bake and serve refreshments to the murderers who were detained there. Her intention was that they should be content and not daven that the *Kohen Gadol* die so that they could return home. What was her concern? Did she think the prayer of a few murderers would trump the *tefillos* of the rest of the Jewish people that wanted the *Kohen Gadol* to live, that it be necessary to appease them?

A) My *Rosh Yeshivah*, Rav Elya Svei, *zt"l*, used to often share before *N'eila* on Yom Kippur from the Alter of Nevardok. From here we can learn that not all *tefillos* were created equal. True most people want the *Kohein Gadol* to live and they even *daven* for his well-being. However, the murderer who is desperate to return and see his family again definitely focuses and concentrates more on what he is saying and puts a little more *umph* into his prayer. It is no wonder that such a *tefillah*, coming from just a few, can override the rest of *Klal Yisroel*.

Similarly, the *Meshech Chochma* explains the reason why the *Kohanim*

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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specifically were given the job of *Birkas Kohanim* and not any other group (such as leaders or *Talmidei Chachamim*). Hashem knew that the *Kohanim* will have more *kavana* (intent) while delivering the *bracha*, considering that they themselves benefit through *terumas* and *maaser* (tithes), through the prosperity of the nation.

Lastly, the *Ben Ish Chai* uses this concept to explain why the *Birkas Habal Habayis* (blessing for the host) at the end of *Birkas Hamazon*, includes the words “*v’y’heyu nechasov U’N’CHASEINU mutzlachim ukrovim la’ir*” (“and may his possessions and our possessions be successful and close to the city”). Isn’t it strange that we mention ourselves in the midst of blessing the host? *Chazal* (the sages) specifically included each person in the *bracha* in order to ensure that it will be recited with the proper *kavana!* 🙏

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week’s)? Ask! If you would like to submit a question on the parasha, please email it to parasha@cincykollel.org. Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.

A SHINING EXAMPLE

Rabbi Elya Meir Bloch did not have much, if any, extra time in his day. Rav Bloch said regarding himself when he was ravaged by the disease that would take his life that lying in his hospital bed was the first time in his life that he had sat idle. This was the man who rebuilt the Yeshiva of Telz in America, after its destruction at the hands of the Nazis, and was one of those instrumental in the blossoming of the Torah community on American shores. One would think that with his life dedicated entirely to his students at the yeshiva that there would not be much time left for his own family. His son related, though, how his father came up with an original way to spend time with each individual child every single day. His time, he said, was sharing a cup of tea with his father every morning before davening. Every morning his father would wake him up and, while the rest of the house was quiet and dark in the early morning, father and son would sit and enjoy each other’s

A BA’AL HATURIM FOR YOU

The second paragraph of the *Shema* prayer that is said twice a day is located within our *parasha*. The last *passuk* ends with the words “*Al Ha’aretz*” – on the land. Ba’al Haturim points out that the phrase “*Al Ha’aretz*” is used nine times in *Sefer Devarim*. This, he says, corresponds to the nine tribes that were actually going to be taking their portion exclusively in the land of Israel itself. 🙏

company. His father would inquire about how the day before had gone and what was coming up on the day ahead. Then Rav Bloch would begin to share as well: what things he was looking at accomplishing that day and broader plans for the yeshiva or the Jewish people. No matter how busy their lives were, there was always the talk in the kitchen before daylight. The time spent was not terribly long, but the impression of love left on the heart of a son from his father was immeasurable. 🙏



The Kollel will be on summer recess from Tuesday August 3rd through Tuesday August 17th.

THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

THE FRANKISTS (PART III)

The emergence of Frankism as its own faith has been linked to a fateful incident that occurred in the small Polish town of Lanckoronie in 1756. The event itself is shrouded in mystery, with different variations of the story appearing in the accounts and chronicles of both purported eyewitnesses and scholars writing about the event thirty to fifty years after it happened. All sources establish with clarity the following details: Jacob Frank and some followers spent the night of January 26, 1756, singing and dancing with crosses hanging from their necks. When the rabbis of Lanckoronie received word of Frank’s party, they contacted the local Catholic authorities of the Kamieniec diocese and, on account of heresy and blatant violation of the Traditional Jewish Law, requested that they investigate the matter.

The response of the Catholic Church was immediate; Bishop Dembowski of the Kamieniec diocese launched an investigation into the events which occurred in Lanckoronie on that fateful night. Over the course of the trial several rabbis, including the venerated Rabbi Yakov Emden (one of the most forceful Sabbatian hunters of the 18th century), encouraged and supported the Catholic court’s investigation with the hope that the Sabbatians would be punished by the Polish Catholic authorities. About half a year later, on August 2, 1756, twenty-one Podolian Sabbatians (Frank himself was in Salonika at the time) presented the following claim before the Catholic court: “We have come to the conclusion that the Talmud is offensive to God and his commandments. As a result of our religious position, we have suffered great persecution and excommunication at the hands of the rabbis. We therefore demand that the Talmud be burned!” In addition to their rejection of the Talmud, the Podolian Sabbatians announced the tenets of their faith before the court, many of which were principal beliefs of Christianity.

The Podolian Sabbatians’ anti-Talmudic attitude likened them to the Karites who denied the validity of the Talmud and the Oral Law in its entirety. The Karites were already recognized by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a valid religious entity and the Podolian Sabbatians hoped to gain the same recognition. The case dragged on for months as the rabbis and Sabbatians debated each other in the presence of Bishop Dembowski. 🙏