

Las Vegas Torah Weekly



Volume 4 Number 34
June 3rdth, 2011
2 Sivan 5771

Parshas
NASSO

Kollel Updates

- This Sunday will be our final week of Hebrew School lessons. If you are looking into a Hebrew School for next year, you are welcome to join us with your child/ren.
- **Jewish Knowledge Essentials**, the series in Jewish fundamentals will likewise hold its final session of the season this Sunday in Young Israel Aish. This special lesson, called **"Making a Prophet in Tough Times"** will discuss prophecy... Is it real? How can you know if a prophet is telling the truth? A voice in my head tells me this will be a great class!
- Join the movement! There's lots of excitement surrounding the Kollel's new Green Valley project, which will center around a new synagogue, led by our very own Rabbi Fromowitz. This is your opportunity to get on at the bottom floor. Come **help us go green!** **Rabbi Fromowitz now leads a weekly lunch n' learn at the District-join in!**
- Find it hard to get to a class, but still want to learn? We now have **two weekly eKollel classes**, available for phone and web conference, Monday (Rabbi Davidowitz) and Tuesday (Rabbi Locker) afternoons.
- **Our annual Family BBQ is coming June 12th, from 11am-1pm at the beautiful Mesa Park in Summerlin! Join us for games, prizes, sports, and of course great grilled food and ice- cold drinks! Please visit our website to register (advance registration earns you free food!**
- **Take advantage of our Auto Donation Program to receive HUGE tax exemptions!**
- If you have a child or know anyone who does, please do not miss this opportunity to find out about the greatest new Jewish camp in the West! There are still a handful of grants available for first year campers. Visit nageelawest.org!
- Have friends who like Jewish Knowledge? Have them sign up for our weekly Torah newsletter by forwarding the email with the included 'forward' button.

What's it got to do With *me*?

This week's Torah portion discusses the laws of two very unique topics. The first is that of the Sotah, the woman whose husband has suspected her of being with another man. He proceeds to warn her against secluding herself with him, and yet she is alone with him anyway.

The husband is then required to bring his wayward wife to Jerusalem, to the Temple. The Torah then goes on to describe how she is brought before the Kohain (priest) and goes through a series of steps designed to put the maximum pressure on her to admit to her guilt. If she still proclaims her innocence she drinks a special liquid admixture of water, dust and the name of G-d, written on parchment, dissolved in the water. Should she indeed be innocent, she is given blessings. If, on the other hand, she was guilty, she would then die a very gruesome death. This is a clear miracle, the only mitzvah which is a miracle itself, to ensure the peace and harmony of the Jewish home.

Continued on next page

Community Kollel of Greater Las Vegas

www.lasvegaskollel.org info@lasvegaskollel.org 702.487.3133

Las Vegas Torah Weekly



Continued from previous page

The next topic in the Torah portion is that of the Nazir, the man or woman who vows to take upon themselves this unique status, whereby the individual is forbidden to drink wine, cut his hair (think of Sampson) and on account of this holy status, come into contact with a corpse.

Why are these two topics placed next to each other?

The great commentator Rashi explains that the Torah is instructing us that whoever sees the Sotah in her public disgrace should take the vow of the Nazir and separate himself from wine. Since it is wine which brought the woman to the point of adultery, one who witnesses the disastrous consequences of wine should derive a lesson to stay away from wine.

In a similar vein, Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman, Ramban, explains that the lesson an onlooker will learn from the disgrace of the Sotah is how the pull of immorality leads people to do such illogical and damaging actions. Wine, too, leads people to act in irrational and destructive ways. Therefore, the observer is instructed by the Torah to learn the lesson, and abstain from wine.

With this, the Torah is imparting to us the perspective we must have on events happening around us.

How do we react when a person commits a wrongdoing and it gets publicized for the whole world to see his self-destruction? We are curious, fascinated and might even click our tongues tsk,tsk. We wonder how some people, smart ones too, can act with such foolishness. "Don't they think before they act?" we wonder.

Yet, after we have finished with our amazement at the whole sorry incident, we move on with our own lives, leaving the event behind.

The person who witnesses the disgrace of the Sotah is a perfect example. He might be curious with the whole process, indeed fascinated by it, and likewise pass a self-righteous judgment on the Sotah. He might be wondering why she got herself into this horrible situation in the first place, possibly figuring out as Rashi and Ramban do, that it is the pull of immorality or wine that caused this. Does he then go on, leaving the whole incident behind?

The Torah is instructing us that no one should just go on with their lives, having witnessed this. One who sees this

should take a vow to

abstain from wine,

and ensure that he himself does not fall into same trap he has just seen someone else fall into.

When we see people making mistakes we are to figure out where they went wrong and then realize that we have to safeguard ourselves from doing the same. What we see does not simply remain interesting material, having nothing to do with our own lives. Rather, the Torah is teaching us that we are supposed to be so focused on our personal integrity and growth that they are at the forefront of our minds. Then, when we witness external events, we should immediately relate it to our own lives, and have the reaction of "how can I make sure that I don't succumb to the same problem too".

In order for a person to have this reaction, one clearly has to have the mindset that improving oneself is an extremely important priority. A businessman's focus is to make money, and he therefore is always attuned to business opportunities in the world around him. A parent's focus is the well-being of his child, and will quickly recognize how what happens in the world relates to his child. So too, the Jewish person is expected to be so focused on keeping himself on the path of integrity that incidents in the world around him motivate him to think carefully about his own spiritual growth.

Wishing you a great Shabbat and looking forward to seeing you at a Kollel class soon,

Rabbi David Y. Kitainik

Like what you read? Join Rabbi Kitainik this Sunday morning at 10:30 for Jewish Knowledge Essentials special lesson on PROPHECY, or you can try Talmud 101 on Sunday Evenings on East side and Monday evenings on West side. Questions or comments about this dvar Torah

Community Kollel of Greater Las Vegas
www.lasvegaskollel.org info@lasvegaskollel.org 702.487.3133

Las Vegas Torah Weekly



Keepin' the
flame alive

Some thoughts about Shavuos

הַסִּכֵּת וְשָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נְתִיבָתָהּ לְעַם לְה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ

“Be attentive and hear O Israel: This day you have become a nation to Hashem your G-d” (Deuteronomy 27:9)

Moses, the Priests and Levites were addressing the Jewish people at the end of their forty years of wandering in the desert as they were preparing to enter the land of Israel.

The *Talmud* in Tractate *Brachos* (63b) asks a basic question: Since these remarks were being stated forty years after the Torah was given at Mount Sinai, how could Moses say that the Jewish people became a nation *today*? They had already become a nation forty years previously.

The *Talmud* answers that the Torah is so beloved by those who study it, that it remains just as dear to them as on the day it was given at Mount Sinai. Therefore, Moses could rightly state that they indeed were becoming a nation *that* day since they had the same feelings for the Torah as the day they received it.

It is truly amazing that the children of those who were present at Mount Sinai could retain the same emotional connection to Torah as had existed in their parents. But what does this have to do with us, living more than two thousand years, and dozens of generations later?

Actually, a lot.

The *Talmud* continues, explaining that we are capable of capturing that rapturous state even in our own distant generation. It comments that when we recite the *Shema* twice a day we say the verse “And these matters that I am commanding you *today* shall be on your heart...” This verse was not spoken on the day we received the Torah on Sinai. Indeed, it was said forty years after the command from G-d! Rather, explains the *Talmud*, we are all being instructed that

we should view these matters as if it was being commanded by G-d today.

This, the *Talmud* says, is the identical idea. Each and every one of us is instructed to experience the commands of G-d not as old rules, but as orders issued today, containing the same freshness as the day they were given.

This concept, explains *Maharsha*, is what the Jewish people were living during the last year of Moses's life, and is the same one that we are instructed to live by- and if G-d who created us, is telling us to do it; obviously He knows we are capable of fulfilling this.

Let us imagine the tremendous experience of millions of Jews surrounding Mount Sinai after preparing for this event for forty nine days. There is thunder and lightning, pillars of smoke, and the very mountain trembles (Exodus 19:18). G-d Himself utters the Ten Commandments (20:1, 19). This is the most powerful event in human history, all being done for the purpose of giving the Torah to us, the Jewish people.

The esteem in which the people held the Torah was immeasurable. The connection to the Torah and endearment of it that they possessed had to have been tremendous. Yet, the Torah is teaching us that not only the following generation was able to retain the same level, but, that as it says in the *Shema*, two thousand years later we too are capable of infusing ourselves with the same feelings of preciousness and endearment of the Torah.

Though Shavuos, when we celebrate the historical giving of the Torah has passed, let us not make the mistake of letting its lessons fade. Rather, the specialness of the Torah can, and must, be felt by each of us, the span of time never dulling its luster. Our Torah remains eternally shiny and new.

Community Kollel of Greater Las Vegas
www.lasvegaskollel.org info@lasvegaskollel.org 702.487.3133

COMING SOON! DON'T MISS...



Nageela
FAMILY
BBQ

Sunday, June 12th 11:00am- 1:00pm

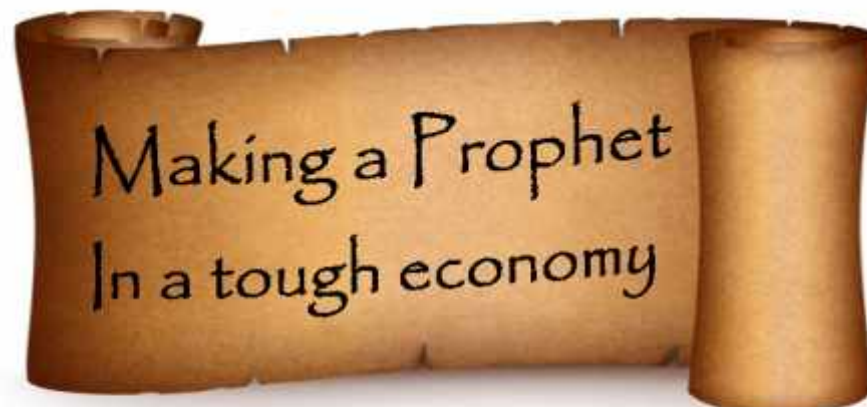
- For Families with children ages 7-14
- Fun outdoor activities
- Games and Contests
- Great grilling
- Ice- Cold drinks
- Raffles & Prizes
- Learn about our amazing summer and year-round programs
- Free Admission

Mesa Park
5401 Mesa Park Dr
Las Vegas, NV 89113

**RSVP by June 9th
And you eat FREE**

For more information or to RSVP,
please email info@nageelawest.org
or call 487-3133 ext. 4

A project of the Las Vegas Kollel



- What does it take to become a prophet?
- Should I be concerned with Modern Day doomsday prophets?
- Is prophecy real?

Join Rabbi Dovid Kitainik Sunday morning, June 5th for an interactive discussion group.
10:30am at Young Israel Aish
Refreshments and coffee will be served.

For more information, please contact rabbikitainik@iasvegaskollel.org