

# Toronto Torah

**Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov**

Parshat Vayetze

10 Kislev, 5777/December 10, 2016

Vol. 8 Num. 14

*To sponsor an issue of Toronto Torah for \$180, please contact [info@torontotorah.com](mailto:info@torontotorah.com) or 416-793-6960*

## The Flow

**Rabbi Baruch Weintraub**

For seven years, Yaakov worked for Lavan, hoping to marry his beloved Rachel. The Torah tells us that these years did not seem long to Yaakov; on the contrary, "they seemed to him like a few days in his love for her." (Bereishit 29:20)

This assertion puzzled some of the commentators, as it seems to contradict a basic fact of life, recorded in Mishlei 13:12, "Hope prolonged makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life." Or, as Rabbi Yitzchak Arama put it, "How could he say that in his eyes they seemed as a few days in his love for her? On the contrary – waiting long for what a man desires is a great sorrow and a painful labour... and the time seems very long for the one who suffers... therefore, it should have said, 'And they appeared to him as thousands of years in his love for her!' (Akeidat Yitzchak Bereishit 25)

Various answers have been suggested for this question:

1. The assessment of the years as a few days relates not to how the time passed, but to his valuation of the price he had to pay to win Rachel's hand. Yaakov valued Rachel so much that seven years seemed like a small price given the true importance of the prize.
2. The sense of the years as short came only in retrospect, after Yaakov had completed them.
3. A very interesting answer is advanced by Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (HaK'tav V'haKabbalah). The verse actually

means to say that the time passed slowly: "Because of his love for her, the time seemed long to him, like one who is counting every single day of seven years."

I would like to focus on a fourth answer, which seems to be reflected in the following midrash comparing the Torah's description of our enslavement in Egypt with Yaakov's wait: "And in those many days, the king of Egypt died' - When days pass in agony they are called many, but when they pass in happiness they are called few, as it states 'They seemed to him like a few days in his love for her' (Midrash Lekach Tov, Shemot 2:23)

According to this midrash, what made Yaakov's days 'few' was not a sense that they were brief, but rather that they were lived in a state of joy and meaning. As the Malbim here notes, simple desire or lust would have led to great suffering throughout the seven years. However, Yaakov felt love, based on the knowledge that in Rachel he had found the perfect companion to continue the project of his father and grandfather, the establishment of a household who would "guard the path of Hashem to perform justice and judgment." (Bereishit 18:19). He was happy because he saw the road ahead – and the seven years of work became meaningful because of this clear goal.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a Hungarian psychologist named Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, described a phenomenon he came to call 'the flow'. He defined it as a state of concentration

or complete absorption within an activity and situation, such that nothing else seems to matter to the people involved. "The flow" can be achieved when there is a clear set of goals and progress, just as Yaakov experienced in his seven years of work.

An important message lies here: a life well-lived is a life of meaning and value, in which, as Csikszentmihalyi describes it, "Ego falls away... Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost."

As a matter of fact, this state of mind was described by the Rambam, some 800 hundred years before: "What is the proper love [for G-d]? To love G-d with a great and exceeding love until his soul is bound up in the love of G-d... as a lovesick man whose thoughts are never diverted from the love of that woman. He is always obsessed with her; when he sits down, when he gets up, when he eats and drinks. With an even greater [love], the love for G-d should be in the hearts of those who love Him... as we are commanded 'Love G-d with all your heart and soul.'" (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 10:3)

*[bweintraub@torontotorah.com](mailto:bweintraub@torontotorah.com)*

### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

<b>ROSH BEIT MIDRASH</b>	RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER
<b>SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH</b>	RABBI JONATHAN ZIRING
<b>AVREICHIM</b>	ADAM FRIEDMANN, YARON PEREZ
<b>CHAVERIM</b>	EZER DIENA, URI FRISCHMAN, NADAV GASNER, DANIEL GEMARA, SHIMMY JESIN, ELISHA KELMAN, BJ KOROBKIN, RONI PEREZ, JOSH PHILLIP, MORDECHAI ROTH, EZRA SCHWARTZ, DAVID SUTTNER, DAVID TOBIS, DAVID ZARKHINE
<b>WOMEN'S BEIT MIDRASH</b>	MRS. ORA ZIRING, MRS. ELLIEZRA PEREZ
<b>CHAVEROT</b>	YAKIRA BEGUN, NOA BORDAN, MAYTAL CUPERFAIN, MIRA GOLDSTEIN, KAYLA HALBERSTADT, LEORA KARON, RIVKA SAVAGE, KAYLA SHIELDS, ARIELA SNOWBELL, SARAH WAPNER



**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
TORAH MITZION  
BEIT MIDRASH**

Find our upcoming shiurim on-line at [www.torontotorah.com](http://www.torontotorah.com)

**We are grateful to  
Continental Press 905-660-0311**

**G-d is Proof Enough**  
**Rabbi Dr. Walter S. Wurzburger**  
**Devora Publishing, 2000**

**The Author**

Rabbi Dr. Walter Wurzburger, originally of Munich, fled Germany for America in 1938 as a teenager. He arrived in New York and studied at Yeshiva University, receiving a Bachelor's Degree and *semichah*. Subsequently he trained as a philosopher at Harvard, completing his doctorate there. Rabbi Wurzburger's rabbinic career was storied, including a pulpit at Shaarei Shomayim in Toronto, among several others. He was a formidable philosopher and theologian, teaching at Yeshiva University, editing the *Tradition* journal for many years, and writing and editing several philosophical works. *G-d is Proof Enough* was published towards the end of his life and reflects lessons learned from a lifetime of study, rabbinical work, and teaching philosophy.

**Goal of the Book**

The book is fundamentally about faith in G-d, how we find it, and the philosophical issues involved. Rabbi Wurzburger states at the outset, reflecting the thought of his revered teacher Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik, that belief in G-d is ultimately not the

result of some logical argument or another. Nor is it reasonable or honest to be religious "just in case", or to lead a religious lifestyle to delude oneself into the comforts of meaning or protection. Ultimately, belief is an "existential choice," a type of "all-in" commitment. In the final analysis, G-d Himself is "proof enough."

The goal of the book, then, is not to provide a path to faith through logical proof but to outline several issues which ought to be considered by the thoughtful religious person. These include the nature of human self-awareness, the confluence of faith and history, the problem of evil, family life, and others. By working through these issues, Rabbi Wurzburger provides background which may enable the faith commitment in the first place or strengthen it in those who have already made it.

**Style and Structure of the Book**

The book includes seventeen chapters, each considering a distinct topic. Rabbi Wurzburger brings the Torah into conversation with modern philosophy, quoting amply and creatively from sources in both areas of his expertise. He also brings his life experience to bear on the topics,

directing his analysis towards experiences that face us all in modern society. The result is a work that directly addresses human nature and contemporary life, frames issues in the constructs of philosophy, and then presents the Torah perspective. The writing is clear, and while there are some terms which may be unfamiliar to the philosophically uninitiated, definitions are generally provided.

**Final Thoughts**

This work is an excellent introduction for anyone without a background in philosophy and theology who seeks to understand how philosophy can be used as a tool for examining one's religious life. Even those with a background stand to benefit from the author's clear and well-structured presentation. The book does not provide any formulas for *emunah*, but it does exemplify how the issues surrounding faith can be straightforwardly analyzed, and used as a source of religious growth.

*afriedmann@torontotorah.com*

**Rav Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim ("Aderet")**  
**6 Sivan 5603 (1843) – 3 Adar I 5665 (1905)**  
**Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, 1901-1905**

Rabbi Rabinowitz-Teomim, also known by his initials as "the Aderet", was born in Pikeln, Lithuania. He was considered an *ilui* (child prodigy), with exceptional analytical skill; at the age of fifteen, he and his twin brother, Tzvi Yehudah, published *Shevet Achim* on the principles of the Talmud. The Aderet went on to write 120 books, although only two of them were published during his lifetime. Throughout his life, many sought his approbation of their books; even the Chazon Ish, who was his elder, sought the Aderet's approbation.

The Aderet studied in Yeshivat Ponovezh in Lithuania. At the age of 19 he married a local girl, Feiga Minna, and at the age of 29 he was appointed Rabbi of the city of Ponovezh. He was paid little, and his family often went hungry; seven of his twelve children passed away of childhood illness.

Alta Batsheva, daughter of the Aderet, married Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, but she passed away several years later. The Aderet successfully encouraged Rabbi Kook to marry the Aderet's brother's daughter, Rayzah Rivkah.

After eighteen years as Rabbi of Ponovezh, the Aderet became the Chief Rabbi of Mir. Seven years later, the aging Rabbi Shemuel Salant asked the Aderet to replace him as Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. In 1901, the Aderet became Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, under the guidance of Rabbi Salant. However,

the Aderet pre-deceased Rabbi Salant, passing away in 1905. He was buried on the Mount of Olives; he instructed his children not to eulogize him, but only to say "that all of his life, he wished to be a good Jew." Approximately one year later, Rabbi Kook published *Eder Yakar*, a book on the life of the Aderet.

The Aderet was a man of action. When he ruled that local stores must switch to iron weights to avoid the possibility of theft with their existing eroding weights, he also appointed two craftsmen to prepare new weights for all the merchants. He personally designed a new *eruv* joining the Old City and newer areas of Jerusalem, and he even funded part of the expenses personally. He personally raised funds for the needy. Indeed, while serving in Ponovezh the Aderet was approached by the City of Warsaw to become Chief Rabbi, but he declined this career advancement because he had not yet repaid money he had borrowed for local needy people.

One of the mitzvot which was most beloved to the Aderet was *Hakhel* [the gathering of Jews to hear a public Torah reading at the Beit haMikdash every seven years, on Succot]. A pioneer in the attempt to re-start this mitzvah, in 1889 he published a pamphlet calling people to practice *Hakhel* as a memorial to the Beit haMikdash. He also called upon community rabbis to speak on the topic of *Hakhel* on Shabbat Chol haMoed of Succot.

*yperez@torontotorah.com*

## Biography

### Rabbi Moshe Isserles

Rabbi Josh Gutenberg

Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Rama) was born in Cracow, Poland in 1530. His father was a wealthy man who supported the local synagogue in Cracow. At a young age, he went to Lublin to study in the yeshiva of Rabbi Shalom Shachna, whose daughter he later married. In 1550, Rabbi Isserles returned to Krakow and started his own yeshiva, which he was able to support by himself due to his family's wealth.

In 1553, Rama was appointed rabbi of Cracow, and he headed the local beit din. He was also appointed to the Council of the Four Lands, a body in charge of the Jewish communities in Poland and the surrounding areas. His reputation spread and he answered questions that were sent to him from all over Europe.

Rama is best known for his works relating to Jewish law. His major works include *Torat Chatat*, a book dealing with the laws of kashrut; *Darkhei Moshe*, an encyclopedic survey of Jewish law; and *HaMappah*, glosses to *Shulchan Aruch*. The latter two works correspond to works written by Rabbi Yosef Karo; *Darkhei Moshe* is an addendum to *Beit Yosef* and *HaMappah* is an addendum to *Shulchan Aruch*. Rama's main goal in these works is to emphasize the opinions and traditions of the Franco-German and Polish communities. Interestingly, he began writing *Darkhei Moshe* independently of Rabbi Karo's writing of *Beit Yosef*. However, once the latter book was published he changed the format of his work to summarize the opinions quoted in *Beit Yosef* and then add the opinions and customs not quoted by *Beit Yosef*.

Rama's contribution to Jewish law was significant. Even today, his glosses to *Shulchan Aruch* are the basis of Jewish law followed by the Ashkenazic communities.

Rama died at a young age in Cracow in 1572. His greatness can be summed up by the inscription on his tombstone "From Moshe (Rambam) until Moshe (Rabbi Moshe Isserles) there was no one like Moshe."

[jbgutenberg@gmail.com](mailto:jbgutenberg@gmail.com)

## Torah and Translation

### Yaakov's Rebuke of Rachel

Rabbi Moshe Isserles, *Torat haOlah* 1:16, 1:19

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

והיו י"א כפתורים נגד י"א עיקריה ושרשיה, כמו שכתב בעל עיקרים א:טו וז"ל "נמצא לפי זו הדרך שהעיקרים והשרשים הם י"א... ואף כי הרב אברבנאל בספרו ראש אמונה טען על מי ששם לתורה שרשים ועיקרים שהרי אנו צריכין להאמין בכל התורה, אין לדבריו שורש ועיקר בזה, כי כן מצינו ז"ל אמרם (מכות כג-כד) "בא דוד והעמידן על י"א, בא ישעיהו והעמידן על ששה וכו'..."

והיו הפרחים תשעה נגד תשעה אמונות אמיתיות שראוי לכל בעלי התורה להאמין בהן, וכל הכופר באחד מהן נקרא "מין"....

נשוב למה שהיינו בו לבאר שני הפרחים שבקנה ימיני ושמאלי. הפרח הימיני נגד אמונת התפלה שיש להתפלל לד' יתברך ושל אדם אמצעי. וזאת האמונה נתבארה בספר בראשית שמצינו כל האבות התפללו אל ד' יתברך בלי אמצעי כלל. וכבר אמרו תפלות אבות תקנום ומצינו אברהם שהתפלל במעשה סודם ויצחק התפלל על רבקה אשתו ויעקב התפלל כמו שדרשו ז"ל (בראשית כ"ח) "ויפגע במקום."

ולזה כיון יעקב באמת (שם ל) "התחת אלקים אנכי אשר מנע וגו'" להורות שאף אמצעי אין לאדם לשום בין לבין אלקינו, לכן חרה אף יעקב על רחל שרצתה לשומו אמצעי בינה לבין אלקיו באמרה "הבה לי בנים". וידע שרחל לא נשתתת שיעקב הוא הנותן, אלא שכוונה בדרך האמצעי ואפילו הכי חרה עליה, וכל זה מבואר.

There were 11 *kaftorim* [on the menorah of the Mishkan], parallel to the Torah's 11 essentials and roots, as [Rabbi Yosef Albo] the author of the *Ikkarim* wrote (1:15), "Using this method, we find that the essentials and roots are eleven"... And although HaRav Abarbanel, in his book *Rosh Emunah*, argued against those who identify roots and essentials for Torah since we must believe in the entire Torah, his words have neither root nor essential in this. We have seen the Sages say (Makkot 23b-24a), "David came and established the Torah on ten principles, Isaiah came and established it on six, etc."

And the flowers [on the menorah of the Mishkan] were nine, parallel to nine true beliefs which every person of Torah should believe, such that one who denies any of them is called a "heretic"...

To return to our subject, to explain the two flowers on the right and left branches: The flower on the right branch is parallel to belief in Prayer, that one should pray to G-d and not employ any intermediary. This belief is clarified in the book of Bereishit [which is the right branch, as the first chumash]. We find that the patriarchs all prayed to G-d without any intermediary at all. The Sages already said (Berachot 26b), "The prayers were established by the patriarchs", and we have found that Avraham prayed in the event with Sodom, and Yitzchak prayed for his wife Rivkah, and Yaakov prayed as they taught regarding Bereishit 28:11, "And he was *pogea* in the place." [Note: According to the Talmud, Yitzchak's prayer took place in the field before Rivkah arrived, in Bereishit 24:63. Rabbi Isserles seems to refer to Bereishit 25:21.]

This what Yaakov actually meant when he said (Bereishit 30:1-2), "Am I in the place of G-d, who has withheld, etc." He meant that one should not place any intermediary between himself and G-d. Therefore Yaakov was angry at Rachel, for she wished to place him between her and G-d, when she said, "Grant me children." He knew that Rachel was not irrational, thinking that Yaakov could grant children; rather, she meant that he should be an intermediary, and this was what enraged him. All of this is clear.

In presenting the laws for punishing a rapist, Devarim 22:26 warns, “You shall do nothing to the woman”; she should never be punished. The Torah compares this woman to the victim of murder, and the sages conclude that one who encounters anyone sexually assaulting someone who is prohibited to him must take all measures necessary to halt the assault. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Rotzeiach 1:8-11)

More broadly, the Sages learn from here that one who is compelled to perform any prohibited act is not liable; Sefer haChinuch counts this as the Torah’s 556<sup>th</sup> mitzvah. However, it is not clear whether “compulsion” is limited to physical force, or whether it might also apply to situations

in which other factors narrow down one’s options.

Rabbi Ari Shvat (Techumin 30) argues for a broader definition of “compulsion”, citing Rambam’s commentary to Megilat Esther. Rambam notes that Esther went to Achashverosh voluntarily (Esther 5), knowing what Achashverosh would expect of her, but he wrote, “She considered herself compelled, because of the compulsion of that decree of destruction... There was no sin, for this was not willing.” Meiri (Sanhedrin 74b) wrote similarly regarding Yael’s liaison with the Canaanite general Sisera (Shoftim 4-5).

*torczyner@torontotorah.com*

**Weekly Highlights: Dec 10 – Dec 16 / 10 Kislev – 16 Kislev**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Dec. 10</b>				
<b>Fri. 4:05 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Parshah and Kugel	BAYT	
<b>At Hashkamah</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Derashah	BAYT	<b>Hashkamah</b>
<b>After hashkamah</b>	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
<b>Derashah</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Derashah	The Conservatory	
<b>Before minchah</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<b>Rabbi’s Classroom</b>
<b>After minchah</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Simcha Suite</b>
<b>6:00 PM</b>	Yaron Perez	Parent-Child Learning	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Sun. Dec. 11</b>				
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>8:45 AM</b>	<b>R’ Josh Gutenberg</b>	Contemporary Halachah	<b>BAYT</b>	<b>Third floor</b>
<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Adam Friedmann</b>	<b>Chanukah and Halle!?</b>	<b>Clanton Park</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>9:15 AM</b>	R’ Shalom Krell	Book of Shemuel	Associated North	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>10:00 AM to 11:20 AM</b>	<b>Yaron Perez Mrs. Shira Lipner</b>	<b>Candles of Shabbat/Chanukah The Key is in Our Hands</b>	<b>Midreshet Yom Rishon Bnai Torah</b>	<b>For Women Light Refreshments</b>
<b>Mon. Dec. 12</b>				
<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>R’ Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Medical Ethics with CME: Dr. Choosing a Rabbi</b>	<b>Shaarei Shomayim</b>	<b>Open to laypeople</b>
<b>7:30 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Arvei Pesachim in Depth	Clanton Park	<b>Men</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Gemara Arvei Pesachim	Clanton Park	<b>Men</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	<b>R’ Jonathan Ziring</b>	<b>Palm Reading &amp; Segulot</b>	<b>Shomrai Shabbos</b>	<b>Third floor, Men</b>
<b>Tue. Dec. 13</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Ezra: Who is a Jew?	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Wed. Dec. 14</b>				
<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>R’ Jonathan Ziring</b>	<b>Angels Against Man &amp; G-d</b>	<b>Beth Emeth</b>	<b>There is a fee; see torontotorah.com/arguing</b>
<b>2:30 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of Vayikra	carolleser@rogers.com	<b>Women</b>
<b>8:00 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do...?	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>Thu. Dec. 15</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: War with Midian	49 Michael Ct.	<b>Women</b>
<b>5:30 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan & Ora Ziring	Mother-Son Mishmar	Yeshivat Or Chaim	
<b>Fri. Dec. 16</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Laws of Onaah	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>