

Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Shemini

26 Nisan, 5777/April 22, 2017

Vol. 8 Num. 30

This issue of Toronto Torah is sponsored by Esther and Craig Guttmann and Family

in honour of the yahrtzeit of Max Guttmann ז"ל מנחם מגדל בן שמואל ד"ל

The Silence of Aharon

Yaron Perez

Parshat Shemini presents the sin of Nadav and Avihu, sons of Aharon, in bringing a "foreign fire" before G-d. They were likewise punished with a fire which emerged from before G-d, killing them. (Vayikra 10:1-2) The sin is mentioned three more times in the Torah – Vayikra 16, Bamidbar 3 and Bamidbar 26 – demonstrating its significance. Commentators have struggled to explain these events on multiple levels, some contradicting each other; the only uniform element is that G-d was responsible for their death.

Aharon's reaction to his sons' death is also shocking: "And Aharon was silent." (ibid. 10:3) What is the meaning of this response? How could someone be silent in the face of such a tragedy? Commentaries on this aspect of the story proliferate, too.

The silence extends beyond Aharon; the entire nation cried when they heard of the death of Nadav and Avihu (ibid. 10:6), but we do not see a line of comforters arriving to console Aharon and Elisheva. This, too, is difficult.

This coming week, the State of Israel will mark *Yom haShoah v'haGevurah*. Here, too, we speak of a terrible and inexplicable tragedy for the Jewish nation. The Admor of Slonim, author of *Netivot Shalom*, addressed the Holocaust in a 2005 pamphlet, *HaHarugah Alecha* ["She who is killed for You"]. His basic premise is that we cannot understand the causes and circumstances of this terrible event. In the view of the Admor, it is the secret of all existence, sent by G-d, which the

human mind cannot grasp. Through this event and our national reaction we may understand the silence of Aharon.

Memorializing the Holocaust

The Admor wrote (pg. 14), "Just as the nature of this destruction remains opaque, a total mystery, no matter how much one investigates it... so one cannot understand the meaning of another silence [that of Aharon], which should trouble every thinking, feeling heart. Especially those whose world has darkened, who lost all that was precious and holy to them in the Holocaust: Not only is there neither memory nor Jewish burial for those holy ones... most were burned, their ashes cast heavenward or scattered to the winds. Not only this, but even after the Holocaust their death and memory are not marked in an eternal way."

The Admor of Slonim contends that unlike with other tragedies of relatively smaller proportions, no rabbinic, religious day of fasting has been established. There have been minimal *kinot* [elegies] composed and accepted at large, compared with those composed after the massacres of the Middle Ages, the Crusades and the Ten Martyrs. There are no special prayers like *Av haRachamim*, which Ashkenazi communities say on Shabbat to remember the attacks upon Jews in the First Crusade. There appears to be a general silence.

The Meaning of Silence

The Admor of Slonim suggests that these silences may be explained via Rashi's commentary to a frightening prophecy of Yechezkel (24:16-17).

The prophet says, "Son of man, I am going to take from you the beloved of your eye in a plague. You shall not eulogize, you shall not cry, your tears shall not come. You shall sigh in silence, etc." Rashi (24:22) explains the lack of eulogy, "You shall not conduct mourning, for there will be no one to console you, for there will be no one among you who is not a mourner. There is no mourning without those who would console." The Admor said that the same is true for Aharon, and for us; the loss is so great that all of us are as mourners without anyone to comfort us, such that we would conduct the rites of mourning.

In the view of the Admor, there is no mourning for the Holocaust because there is no mourning which suits a tragedy of this magnitude, the worst of devastations. We cannot understand it, so what can we say? All that remains is to be silent, as Aharon was.

This is not the silence of agreement or protest; it is a recognition that we cannot understand. It expresses pain which cannot be grasped. According to the Admor, "And Aharon was silent" is the appropriate response when a believer encounters a Divine deed and bends his head, understanding that his incomprehension emerges from his own limitations, and his belief does not depend on comprehension. And from this silence, according to the Admor of Slonim, emerges a cry expressing a pain for which there are no words.

yperez@torontotorah.com

OUR BEIT MIDRASH

ROSH BEIT MIDRASH	RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER
SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH	RABBI JONATHAN ZIRING
AVREICHIM	ADAM FRIEDMANN, YARON PEREZ
CHAVERIM	ISAAC BUSHEWSKY, URI FRISCHMAN, NADAV GASNER, SHIMMY JESIN, BJ KOROBKIN, YOSEPH LEVI, ZACK MINCER, RONI PEREZ, JOSH PHILLIP, JACOB POSLUNS, DAVID RIABOY, MORDECHAI ROTH, ARIEL SHIELDS, DAVID SUTTNER, DAVID ZARKHINE
WOMEN'S BEIT MIDRASH	MRS. ORA ZIRING, MRS. ELLIEZRA PEREZ
CHAVEROT	YAKIRA BEGUN, NOA BORDAN, MAYTAL CUPERFAIN, MIRA GOLDSTEIN, KAYLA HALBERSTADT, LEORA KARON, RIVKA SAVAGE, KAYLA SHIELDS, ARIELA SNOWBELL, SARAH WAPNER, MIRIAM WEISS



YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
TORAH MITZION
BEIT MIDRASH

Find our upcoming shiurim on-line at
www.torontotorah.com

We are grateful to
Continental Press 905-660-0311

Torat Imecha: Pirkei Chinuch
Rabbi Shlomo Aviner
Sifriyat Chavah, 1991, Hebrew

About the Author

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner was born in France in 1943; he was hidden during the war. After the war his family remained in France, where he was active in Bnei Akiva, eventually becoming National Director. He studied math, physics and engineering, before making aliyah in 1964 to Kibbutz Sde Eliyahu. He studied at Yeshivat Merkaz haRav, becoming close with Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook. Rabbi Aviner served in the IDF, including during the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War.

After serving as Rabbi of Kibbutz Lavi and then Moshav Keshet, Rabbi Aviner became Rabbi of Beit-El in the Shomron, and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Ateret Kohanim in Jerusalem's Old City. Rabbi Aviner is prolific; he has published hundreds of books and articles, as well as innumerable responsa on websites, and via email and text. He hosts two weekly radio programs and maintains a video blog.

About the Book

Torat Imecha: Pirkei Chinuch is an

anthology of articles written by Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, largely drawn from his writing in the *Kol b'Ramah* bulletin of Moshav Keshet. The pieces are composed of brief units, written in simple Hebrew, and they address contemporary practical concerns.

The opening three chapters address fundamental issues of education; the first two are drawn directly from the teachings of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook. Most of the subsequent material is in what appears to be Rabbi Aviner's preferred format, presenting questions and answers. Chapter headings include, "What is Education?" "For the Educator" "Educating Character" "Literature and Culture" "In the Synagogue" and more.

Much of Rabbi Aviner's advice comes across as common sense: He warns against any falsehood in speaking with children, and admonishes parents to honour their commitments. (pp. 135-140) He advocates being open with one's children about the conduct of non-observant relatives, but in a way which encourages respect and discourages judgmentalism. (pp. 100-104) In correcting behaviour, he contends that one should not speak to

children in a way which adults would find disrespectful, as in, "Have you lost your mind?! How could you put your dirty shoes on a clean couch? Put your feet down immediately! If you do this even one more time, etc." (pp. 121-122) Regarding teaching passages of Tanach which children find irrelevant, he advocates creativity rather than insistence upon the dry text. (pg. 50) Each passage is presented not only as logical advice, but as Torah; the text is filled with quotations from Tanach, Talmud and rabbinic tradition.

Caveat

It must be acknowledged that Rabbi Aviner has been involved in controversy over the years, both politically and personally. Also, Rabbi Aviner's approach to parenting is a function of his particular approach to halachah. The reader is encouraged to examine the book carefully and with a discerning eye.

torczyner@torontotorah.com

Israel's Chief Rabbis: *Rabbi Simcha HaKohen Kook*

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

Rabbi Simcha HaKohen Kook
Born: 1930, Jerusalem
Chief Rabbi of Rechovot (1980-present)

Life

Rabbi Simcha HaKohen Kook was born in Jerusalem in 1930. His father was Rabbi Refael Kook, brother of Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook. He studied in Yeshivat Bnei Akiva of Kfar HaRoeh, Yeshivat Chevron, as well as a kollel in Bayit V'Gan. He has established many yeshivot, including a high school in Netanya. He served as rabbi in Tiberias, where his father had served as Chief Rabbi, for several years. His brother, Rabbi Shlomo Kook was the Chief Rabbi of Rechovot. When Rabbi Shlomo died in a tragic car accident, Rabbi Simcha took his place.

In addition to serving as Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Kook also acts as the Rosh Yeshiva or president of many Yeshivot in Rechovot, as well as Yeshiva Torah Refael in Jerusalem, and many other schools throughout Israel. He was one of the contenders for the position of Chief Rabbi of Israel in 1993, though he lost to Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau. He has been the symbolic Rabbi of The Churvah Synagogue in Jerusalem since 2007, and the acting Rabbi since 2010. He was also a member of the Moetzet Rabbanut HaRashit (advisory council of the Chief Rabbinate) for 25 years, until 2008.

Legacy

Rabbi Kook has dedicated his life to building up educational institutions throughout Israel, especially in Rechovot. He devotes himself to increasing Torah observance among the entire population, and is known for being able to speak to all

types of people and make them feel accepted. He also expends much effort to bring religious and non-religious Jews together.

He has fought for businesses in Rechovot to become Shabbat observant. In one case, he convinced people to leave a disco on Shabbat by offering for them to come to his home where "drinks would be on the house." He circulates in the city asking people if they are closing for Shabbat, which has gently convinced many to do just that.

He has also worked to raise the standards of kashrut in Rechovot, by establishing a "Kashrut Mehuderet", which is one of the most accepted in Israel. He also helped establish the private "Badatz Mehadrin" kashrut under the auspices of Rabbi Avraham Rubin, though he has not been affiliated with it since 2008.

Rabbi Kook recently published the first volume of *Shalmei Simcha*, a collection of his derashot from Shabbat HaGadol. He has also published on halachic topics in various journals.

jziring@torontotorah.com

Biography

Rabbi Gershon Ashkenazi

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Rabbi Gershon Ashkenazi was born in 1615, probably in Cracow – but some maintain that he was born in Ulf, Germany. He likely had German roots; the name Ashkenazi was usually given in Poland to families of German origin. In his youth, he learned under Rabbi Yoel Sirkis, author of the famed *Bayit Chadash* commentary on the Tur, and married his granddaughter. He also learned with Rabbi Meir Schiff (known as Maharam Schiff) and Rabbi Yehoshua from Cracow (author of *Maginei Shlomo*) – all of them outstanding Rabbis and Torah scholars of their time.

After serving for some time as a Dayan (rabbinical judge) in Cracow, he decided to move to Nikolsburg, Moravia, to study under Rabbi Menachem Mendel Krochmal, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*. Unfortunately, Rabbi Ashkenazi's wife passed away young. He re-married to Rabbi Krochmal's daughter, and after her untimely death he re-married yet again. In all, he had ten children.

In 1650, Rabbi Ashkenazi became the Rabbi of Prossnitz, Moravia. After serving in a few more communities in the area, he succeeded Rabbi Krochmal as Rabbi of Nikolsburg. However, his urge to expand his learning caused him to abandon this convenient position, and he moved to Vienna, where he learned *Kabblah* with R' Yaakov Temerles of Worms. In 1670 he was expelled from the city with the rest of its Jews.

The following year, Rabbi Ashkenazi became the Chief Rabbi of Metz, France – an appointment which was approved by the King Louis XIV and the country's parliament. He founded a Yeshiva which attracted the best students in Europe. He was quickly recognized as the leading authority of his generation, and questions were delivered to him from all over the Ashkenazi world. He also led the war against the Sabbatean false messianic movement.

Rabbi Ashkenazi's responsa, named *Avodat HaGershuni*, is considered as an important halachic work, and is learned to this day.

Rabbi Ashkenazi passed away the tenth of Adar, 1693.

bweintraub@torontotorah.com

Torah and Translation

The Lonely Observers of BaHaB

Rabbi Gershon Ashkenazi, *Avodat haGershuni* 57

Translated by Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

אמרתי לעשות רצונו רצון יראיו ואשיב לו מפני הכבוד כאשר הורוני מן השמים. אמנם באשר שטרדנא טובא להשיב לשואלי דבר אשר קדמוהו למר, מלבד שארי טרדות אשר מקיפים אותי, ע"כ אינני אוכל להאריך בפלפולא ולהראות פנים לכל צד ואופן כמראה האופן, כדרכי להשיב לשואלי מלא דבר. רק אבוא בקצרה, ומה גם אין הנושאים של שאלות סובלים לפלפולא רבא כ"כ:

והנה במה דסיים מר אפתח ואומר: מה שנסתפק מכ"ת בני הכנסת שמתענין בה"ב שאחר פסח וסוכות ואין ביניהם רק ו' או ז' שמתענין אם יש להם רשות לומר סליחות תוך י"ח ולקרות "ויחל", ומכ"ת כותב שתפילת "ענינו" פשיטא ליה למר שאין קובעין ברכה לעצמן.

תשובה: אני אומר כיון דפשיטא ליה למר שאינם יכולים לומר ענינו בין גואל לרופא, והדין עמו כמבואר בטור סי' תקס"ו, א"כ גם איבעיה זו לענין "ויחל" נפשטה שאין לאומרו כי דיניהם שוה... ולא מיבעי' שאינם יכולין לקרות "ויחל" במנחה כיון שבלא התענית אין קורין בתורה כלל, אלא אפי' בשחרית שבלא התענית נמי קורין בתורה ה"א שיש לקרות "ויחל" במקום פרשת דיומא. מ"מ נלע"ד שאין לשנו' כי תקנתא דרבנן לקרות בפ' דההיא שבוע לכך אין לשנו' במתענין פחות מעשרה. ואפי' בעשרה שמתענין יש אומרים שאין לשנות כי תדיר קודם. אף על פי שאין אנו נוהגין כן, מ"מ בפחות מעשרה אין לשנות כלל.

ולענין שמסתפק מר אם יכולים לומר סליחות תוך י"ח, נלע"ד אם יאמרו לא הפסידו... אף על פי שאין מתענין כולם, כי סליחות אינו כרוך בתענית ואינו תלוי בו כלל.

I want to do His will, the will of the ones who revere Him, and I will answer you for your honour, according to what Heaven has taught me. Alas, because I have been very busy with answering prior questions, apart from other time-consuming matters which surround me, I won't be able to write long dialectical arguments, considering every side as I usually answer fully to those who ask me questions - so I will write briefly. Furthermore, the subjects of your questions do not lend themselves to long dialectics.

I shall begin with the subject you finished with. You asked: regarding congregants who fast on Monday, Thursday and Monday after Pesach and Succot, but there are only seven or eight among them who fast. Are they allowed to say *Selichot* during *shemoneh esreih* and to read *Vayichal* (the reading of fast days)? And your honour wrote that it is obvious to you that they may not recite the blessing of *Aneinu* (an additional blessing in *shemoneh esreih*) for themselves.

Answer: I say that since it is obvious to you that they may not recite *Aneinu* between the seventh and eighth blessings – and you are right, as explicit in Tur 566 – in the same manner we can solve the question regarding *Vayichal* that it should not be said, for their laws are equal... It is unquestionable that they would not read it at minchah, for without the fast day there would be no Torah reading at all; but even in Shacharit, in which without the fast we do read, I might have thought that we can change the reading to *Vayichal* instead of the weekly portion – regardless, I think the reading should not be changed. The sages' enactment was to read the weekly portion, and therefore it should not be changed when less than ten fast. Even when there are ten who fast, some say the reading should not be changed, for we give priority to that which occurs more frequently. While we do not act this way, we still should not change the reading at all with fewer than ten people.

Regarding your doubt as to whether they may say *Selichot* in *shemoneh esreih*, in my humble opinion they lose nothing by saying it... Even though not all of them fast, *Selichot* are not bound to the fast day and do not depend on it at all.

Following a passage presenting laws of *tzaraat*, Devarim 24:10-13 legislates regarding collateral, limiting the lender's power over a borrower. As explained by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, both *tzaraat* [which often punishes for sin against other people] and the laws governing collateral speak to the Divine concern for protecting the vulnerable of society.

Regarding collecting collateral from a borrower, Devarim 24:10-11 states, "Do not come to his house to take his pledge. Stand outside, and your debtor will bring the pledge outside to you." The Sages (Mishnah Bava Metzia 9:13) explained that one who wishes to take collateral from a

recalcitrant borrower should work through a *beit din* (rabbinical court). Sefer haChinuch codifies this as the Torah's 585th mitzvah. In truth, even a *beit din* is not empowered to enter a borrower's home to take collateral. However, a *beit din* is able to exercise control over property located outside of the home.

This protection only applies to debtors; employers who have not paid their workers, and renters who have not paid for rentals, are not protected. (Bava Metzia 115a; Hilchot Malveh v'Loveh 3:7)

torczyner@torontotorah.com

Weekly Highlights: Apr. 22 — Apr. 28 / 26 Nisan — 2 Iyar

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Apr. 21-22				
8:50 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Parshah	BAYT	"No-Frills" Minyan
After hashkamah	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
Before Pirkei Avot	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	Rabbi's Classroom
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara: Idols for sale!	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Sun. Apr. 23				
8:45 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	
8:45 AM	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachah	BAYT	Not this week
9:15 AM	R' Shalom Krell	Book of Shemuel II	Associated North	Rm. 206; Hebrew
Mon. Apr. 24				
7:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Jewish Philosophy	Terraces of Baycrest	
8:30 PM	Adam Friedmann	Gemara Arvei Pesachim	Clanton Park	Men
Tue. Apr. 25				
9:30-11:30 AM	Special Yom Iyun for University Women at Ulpanat Orot on Women and Halachah Speaker: Mrs. Ora Ziring, Contemporary Discussions of Women and Halachah			
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Ezra: Aliyah!	Shaarei Shomayim	
Wed. Apr. 26				
9:30-11:30 AM	Special Yom Iyun for University Women at Ulpanat Orot on Women and Halachah Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, "Meta-Halachah and Halachah"			
2:30 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of Vayikra	carolleser@rogers.com	
8:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do that?	Shaarei Tefillah	
8:30 PM	Yaron Perez	Parshah: הפרשה ואני	Shaarei Shomayim	
Thu. Apr. 27				
9:30-11:30 AM	Special Yom Iyun for University Women at Ulpanat Orot on Women and Halachah Speaker: Rabbi Jonathan and Mrs. Ora Ziring, Women and Tefillah: A Conversation			
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Yiftach's Daughter	49 Michael Ct.	Women
Fri. Apr. 28				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Borrowing a Cup of Sugar	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

This week, our Men's Beit Midrash for University Students at Yeshivat Or Chaim offers:
 Sundays 10:00 AM Gemara Chullin, Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, 11:00 AM Kuzari, Rabbi Elan Mazer
 Tuesday 8:30 AM, Nefesh haChaim, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring
 Friday 8:30 AM, Yeshayah, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

This week, our Women's Beit Midrash for University Students at Ulpanat Orot offers:
 Monday, 9:30 AM to Noon, Middot HaNefesh through Chassidut, Mrs. Elliezra Perez
 The normal Tuesday-Thursday shiurim are off due to the Yom Iyun program listed above.