

# Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Acharei Mot/Kedoshim

10 Iyyar 5770/April 24, 2010

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## Just Keep Counting

R' Netanel Javasky

“לכל זמן ועת לכל חפץ תחת השמים.” (קהלת ג, א)

“For everything there is a time and season under the heavens.” (Kohelet 3:1)

The period between Pesach and Shavuot is a time designated for growth in *avodat Hashem*. We count towards the holiday of Shavuot, the day on which we stood at the foot of the mountain, and in an unprecedented display of *hashra'at haShechinah* Hashem presented His holy treasure, the Torah, to mortal man. Using these weeks as a time of religious growth and development can be a repeat experience of the spiritual journey of *bnei yisrael*, in which we morphed from a conglomeration of slaves suffering spiritual dearth, to a pure, holy and unified Nation, in just forty-nine days.

On an individual level, these are days for refining our *middot* and maturing and developing in our *avodat Hashem*. This is one of the reasons why during the six weeks between the conclusion of Pesach and Shavuot we have an age-old custom of learning *Pirkei Avot*, the section of Mishnah which deals

exclusively with refining one's character.

Along similar lines, *sifrei chasidut* note that *Sefirat HaOmer*, unlike the counting of the years of the *shemita* cycle, is a mitzvah which is incumbent upon the individual. One mass counting for the Jewish People does not adequately fulfill the Torah obligation, “*usfartem lachem*” And you shall count for yourselves.” Indeed, many *acharonim* (See Biur Halacha 489:1) note that counting the *Omer* is different from most other verbal mitzvot: Generally, as in the case of *kiddush*, one who listens to a recitation by another person fulfills his own personal obligation. *Sefirat HaOmer* is different, though; this individualistic mitzvah can never be fulfilled through someone else's recitation. This symbolizes that the growth during this period is very personal, requiring introspection and personal attention.

Amidst the focus on our personal growth as individuals and our communal growth as a Nation, we are forced to cope with a national tragedy of enormous proportion, which threatens to knock us off course.

Describing the loss of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva, the *gemara* in *Yevamot* describes the world as desolate; the Torah scholars were completely eradicated. But the count must go on. Our count towards religious growth and strengthening our *avodat Hashem* can't be put on hold for a few days as we try and comprehend the loss. We pause, we reflect, we analyze and discuss, but the count must continue.

Throughout life, countless distractions and events require our attention and can set us off course from our growth-oriented trek. One lesson we can learn from *Sefirat HaOmer* is that growth must never take a break. No matter what else we are dealing with, and what life throws our way, we must continue the climb towards a more complete, spiritual existence.

The Rambam writes in *Hilchot Talmud Torah* that every single person has a responsibility to learn Torah. Whether one is rich or poor, old or young, healthy or ill, the responsibility to learn remains. Similarly, as we climb the spiritual and religious ladder we must remain focused, continue to reach higher and higher in our religious commitment, and continue to strengthen our personal relationship with Hashem.

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## Parshah Questions

R' Meir Lipschitz

(Sources are provided to help the reader research answers)

- Is עֲזָזוֹל a person, place, or thing?  
(Rashi, Ramban, and Ba'al Haturim to Vayikra 16:8)
- What is the mitzvah of קְדוּשֵׁי הַיּוֹם?  
(Rashi, Ramban, Ralbag, Da'at Zekeinim Miba'alei HaTosafot, Ba'al Haturim, Sifte Chachamim, Netziv, Ohr HaChaim, and R' S.R. Hirsch to Vayikra 19:2)
- Why does the Torah say that one may not curse a deaf person?  
(Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Ramban, Rabbeinu Bachaye, Rekanti Seforno, Kli Yakar, Sifte Chachamim, Netziv, R' S.R. Hirsch, Shaarei Aharon, and Da'at Mikra to Vayikra 19:14, and Sefer HaChinuch 231)
- For children: Should a Jew want cheeseburgers?  
(Rashi to Vayikra 20:26)

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### Save the Date!

**R' Meir Goldvicht**

Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva  
University/Yeshivat Rabbeinu  
Yitzchak Elchanan

**Leil Shabbat, May 7**

Tisch at Ayin L'Tzion

**Shabbat Day, May 8**

Derashah at Ayin L'Tzion



Yeshiva University  
Center for the Jewish Future

**Torah**  
**מִצִּיּוֹן**  
**Religious Zion Kollel**  
כוללים ציוניים בתפוצות

# A Love/Hate Relationship

Russell Levy

ואהבת לרעך כמוך, רבי עקיבא אומר זה כלל גדול בתורה

Love thy neighbour as thyself: Rabbi Akiva says: This is an important rule of the Torah.

Important rules abound in our literature; the Mishnah describes them for Shabbat and Shvi'it [the sabbatical year]; the Yerushalmi applies one to ma'asrot [tithes]. However, by far the most famous one is that which occurs in our Parsha, "Love thy neighbour as thyself".

Though each of these are described as an important or great rule, it would seem the others are more limited. The other principles are limited to a specific subcategory of halachot -- "This is an important rule of shabbat/shvi'it/ma'aser". However, with respect to loving your neighbour, R' Akiva did not state, "This is an important rule of interpersonal relations", but a rule of the entire Torah.

Many mitzvot govern interpersonal relations. What makes this rule an overarching theme of the Torah, more than any other rule?

In addition to this statement of R' Akiva, we have a similar statement of Hillel the Elder in the Talmud [Shabbat 31a]. A potential convert wanted the entire Torah explained to him on one foot. After being shooed from Shammai with

a measuring rod, he approached Hillel with the same question. Hillel immediately responded, "That which you hate, do not do to your neighbour. The rest is commentary -- go and learn it."

Many have traditionally melded these two statements into one overarching principle: Be nice to others. However, Rashi on the Gemara hints that we ought not combine these two mitzvot; he explains that Hillel was not paraphrasing a verse in Kedoshim, but one from Mishlei. It would seem that each rule has a distinct message, both for the times of Hillel and R' Akiva, and ours.

It would seem that Hillel was speaking to his generation, not only teaching a lesson for the ages. Living before the destruction of the Beit haMikdash, Hillel would have seen rampant sectarianism in Judaism. Each sect tried to assert its authority in its own way, and to any outside observer, it would seem that the Torah taught us to hate those who are different. This was similar to any other Western religion at the time, as is seen in the persecutions Jews and other minorities received at the hands of the dominant empires for the hundreds of years around Hillel.

Hillel understood that this was not what Judaism was about. When he argued with anyone, be it Shammai or sectarian Jews, he was not doing this to assert his

authority, but as Pirkei Avot describes, it was "l'shem shamayim", for the sake of Heaven. He understood and argued that this is the message that must be conveyed: If we see an action as hateful, it is antithetical to Judaism to do this to another.

Unfortunately, this message and warning was not heeded by the Jewish community. Around 60 years after Hillel passed away, the Beit haMikdash was destroyed because of sinat chinam, baseless hatred. It was in this world that R' Akiva was the spiritual leader of the Jewish people, one in which people should have realized their error of sinat chinam, and for this world Rabbi Akiva formulated a separate overarching principle: Love thy neighbour.

Even if the generation had learned the lesson not to hate their neighbour, the Talmud informs us that they did not achieve the heights they could have achieved in loving their neighbour. The Talmud explains [Yevamot 61b] that 24,000 students of R' Akiva died during the Omer because they did not show honour to each other. It would seem that the issue was not baseless hatred -- they did not hate each other, and did nothing that they would see as hateful to their fellow man. However, they did not achieve the heights of love, either.

R' Akiva, unlike his students, realized that when a cup breaks, you cannot just put the pieces back together without glue; one cannot assume that what would work before the destruction (avoiding hatred) is enough to merit the rebuilding after it has been destroyed. In every relationship, be it with our parents, our spouses, our children, our friends, or Hashem, the amount of effort needed to continue good rapport is much less than we require after the relationship is hurt in some way.

R' Akiva realized that after the destruction, after our relationship with Hashem was damaged, we needed to do more than blot out hatred from the world. We are required to the extra step and to respect, to love other Jews, just as we want to be loved. Today, this is the great rule of the Torah, and it is through following this rule completely that we will merit a rebuilding of the Beit haMikdash. [rlevy@torontotorah.com](mailto:rlevy@torontotorah.com)

## The 613 Mitzvot – Mitzvah 32 : Refraining from Melachah on Shabbat

The word *melachah*, as used in the context of Shabbat, refers to the tasks performed in the mishkan (Shabbat 49b; Bava Kama 2a). All of these tasks, and tasks which have similar purposes or methods, are prohibited on Shabbat, as an outgrowth of the Torah's instruction, "You shall perform no *melachah*."

The sages have identified many benefits of refraining from performing *melachah* on Shabbat:

- One reason, as brought by the *Sefer haChinuch*, is that we are meant to

spend Shabbat thinking about HaShem's creation of the universe.

- On another level, Shabbat commemorates our freedom from slavery in Egypt. A slave cannot rest; we are given a day of rest to show that HaShem made us into free people.
- In yet another approach, Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch suggested that on Shabbat we cease creating in order to recognize that we are not unlimited masters of this world, to manipulate it as we choose.

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# Ha'Am V'Ha'Aretz

## Maharshah-R' Shlomo ben Yechiel Luria

R' Mordechai Torczyner

### Torah in Translation Following the Zohar Responsa of Maharshah 98

[Note: Of course, there are other halachic points of view. We do not cite this as a halachic ruling.]

You asked whether I don the hand-tefillin while sitting or standing, because you have seen many careful people do it while seated.

Know, my friend, that new people have come from nearby, wishing to be among the kabbalists, those who analyze the secrets and whose eyes are too weak to see, but they have never seen the light of the Zohar and know not its rising and setting and intent, only that they have found this in the books of Rabban Shimon bar Yochai.

Know, my friend: I saw that all of my holy mentors and ancestors, who served the great ones, practiced only the words of the Talmud and halachic authorities. If Rabban Shimon bar Yochai would stand before us and scream that we should alter our ancestral custom, we would not listen; the halachah does not follow most of his rulings, as Rav Yosef Karo wrote. There is proof in that he wrote great secrets and marvelous cautions against reciting two berachot on the head and arm tefillin, and we pay him no attention and we recite two berachot. He also wrote that one who dons tefillin on chol hamoed is liable for death, and we don tefillin and recite a berachah upon them! Granted that Israelis do not don tefillin on chol hamoed at all, for the Rashba nullified the practice based on the view of the R"i, but that was not solely because of the Zohar.

Do not say that our ancestors lacked knowledge of the apocryphal works which were found before the kabbalists;

the Agur recorded that he found three laws in the Zohar, one of which is the one we have mentioned, and all of our ancestors studied and analyzed greatly that work [the Zohar], and yet they were not concerned for it. The Agur himself wrote that he did not find this law in the work of other writers in his day. Open your eyes and see! If this ruling had substance, it is impossible that it would not have been mentioned by some author, that all hints in Talmud Bavli or Yerushalmi, Sifra, Pesikta or Sheiltot would have been lost. Rav Yosef Karo's position was accurate, in bringing many things from the Zohar but not bringing this law; he was not concerned for it.

Further, know that Rabban Shimon bar Yochai's intent was to distinguish between the hand and head tefillin, as though they were built on two separate foundations, the hand tefillin linked to seated prayer and the head tefillin linked to standing prayer... One who comes to analyze will analyze, but the truth will show its path, and one who does not know how to grasp its secret properly will come, swiftly, to cut the saplings [meaning, to err in fundamental matters].

I have also found [see commentary of the Rokeiach to Shma] that one must don tefillin while standing because there is nothing more sacred than this act; it is like a servant before his master, accepting his seal of servitude. They do not distinguish between the hand and head tefillin, and it also seems clear that one should stand immediately to receive

Rabbi Shlomo ben Yechiel Luria (Maharshah) was born in approximately 1510 in Poland, to a rabbinic family which traced its roots to Rashi. He was a cousin of Rav Moshe Isserles, with whom he engaged in on-going halachic and philosophical disputes, and he studied with some of the greatest halachic minds of the generation.

Rabbi Luria served as rabbi in Brisk and other communities before coming to Lublin to head a yeshiva, in 1567, where he remained until he passed on in 1573. Rabbi Luria was independent in his thinking, researching every halachic idea to its core and accepting nothing as a given, and he criticized the stances of others without asking or giving any quarter. He wrote, "Many are ordained, but few know anything."

Maharshah's published works include commentaries to the Talmud, to the Sefer Mitzvot Gadol and to Rashi on the Torah, in addition to halachic responsa.

this seal, for the essential seal is in the hand-tefillin, as it is written, 'Like a seal upon his [sic] arm.'

Therefore, my friend, do not go with them upon the path; you have no involvement in the hidden matters of those who arrogantly create new phenomena as though they knew and understood the secrets of Torah. I wish they knew the revealed parts of Torah!...

I will also tell you that I received from my great father-in-law, R' Klonymus z"l, who received from the great chasid Rabbi Daniel z"l, disciple and servant of the Terumat haDeshen z"l, who saw that his custom matched ours. Therefore, practice your custom and they will have theirs, but know that all who alter have the lower hand. We have the upper hand.

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# Summer Morning Kollel For Women

*Mondays and Thursdays  
Monday May 3 - Thursday June 10*

9:15 AM	Preparation Time
10:00 AM	<b>Shiur</b>  <i>Mondays:</i> Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner: Hilchot Tevilat Kelim  <i>Thursdays:</i> Rabbi Aaron Greenberg: Sefer Bamidbar - The Turbulence of Traveling
10:45 AM	Shiur Ends

**Free! \* Located in Thornhill**  
**summerkollel@torontotorah.com**  
**or call 416-781-1777 to register**

## Schedule for the Week of April 24, 10 Iyyar

### Shabbat, April 24

**Derasha** R' Mordechai Torczyner *Ateret Mordechai*

**7:50AM** R' Azarya Berzon, Ramban al haTorah, *Or Chaim*

**Following Hashkama** R' Azarya Berzon, Clanton Park

**5:30PM** Women's Shiur, R' Mordechai Torczyner *BAYT*

**6:40PM** R' Azarya Berzon, Mizrahi Bayit

### Sunday, April 25

**Community Beit Midrash, FHJC:** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Am I Butting In, Or Am I Doing You A Favour?

**9:15AM** Itamar Zolberg, Shiur B'Ivrit *Zichron Yisrael*

**8:30PM** R' Azarya Berzon: Masechet Kiddushin *Shaarei Shomayim*

### Monday, April 26

**8:35PM** R' Azarya Berzon: Hilchot Talmud Torah *Clanton Park*

### Tuesday, April 27

**11:00AM** R' Azarya Berzon: Masechet Pesachim, Clanton Park *Men*

**1:30PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner: Sefer Amos with *Mekorot*, Shaarei Shomayim *Women*

**8:15PM** Russell Levy: Big Questions, Westmount

**7:00 PM** Itamar Zolberg, Megilat Ruth, Shaarei Tefillah

**8:30PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner: Minchat Chinuch *off this week*

### Wednesday, April 28

**9:15AM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Pirkei Avot, 239 Franklin, **Babysitting provided Women**

**7:30PM** Rabbi Meir Lipschitz, Ramchal's Derech Hashem, Kehillat Shaarei Torah *Men and Women*

### Thursday, April 29

**11:00AM** R' Azarya Berzon: Masechet Sukkah (Advanced), Clanton Park *Men*

**3:40PM** R' Azarya Berzon: Hilchot Muktzah (Advanced), Clanton Park *Men*

**8:30PM** R' Azarya Berzon: Halachah and Life Issues, Clanton Park *Men*

**9:00PM** Russell Levy: Contemporary Halachah: Converting for Marriage, B'nai Torah

**9:15PM** R' Azarya Berzon: Halachic Man, Clanton Park *Men*

**Our separate men's and women's Summer Kollel programs for young adults start May 3. To sign up or for more information, call 416-781-1777 or e-mail [summerkollel@torontotorah.com](mailto:summerkollel@torontotorah.com).**