

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Vayikra / HaChodesh

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Lean On Me

Rabbi Dovid Zirkind

As we begin the third *sefer* of the Chumash we are immediately introduced to a variety of korbanot and the intricate details encompassed within each one. The first procedure we are told of is the act of *semichah* (specifically for a korban olah), placing one's hands on the animal and leaning on the korban prior to its slaughter.

In the opening of Parshat Vayikra the Torah writes "*V'samach yado* - and he will lean his hand" (1:4). The commentaries struggle with this seemingly direct imperative as it appears to contradict the rules of *semichah* as taught by the Sages. A mishnah in Menachot (93a) states clearly that *semichah* requires **two** hands. This rule is based on the Torah's description of the Yom Kippur service, where the phrase "And he shall place his **hands**" is used (16:21). Why, then, does our parshah state that *semichah* is performed with one hand alone?

Ramban is convinced that the principle set out in the mishnah is unchanged. Our pasuk agrees that *semichah* must be done with both hands, but emphasizes "**his** hand" to reject the possibility that *semichah* could be done via a *shaliach*. Although many mitzvot may be performed with a representative (and one might have thought the same regarding *semichah*) the pasuk demands that *semichah* be done strictly by the owner.

However, Kli Yakar suggests that a distinction can be drawn between *semichah* for the korban olah described with one hand in Parshat Vayikra and the *semichah* for the goat of Yom Kippur described with two hands. He notes that sins can be divided into two categories: actions and thoughts. Man can sin in his mind without acting, but a sin of action is not a sin without premeditation. Therefore, an active sin is twice as problematic, because it contains both an improper thought as well as inappropriate behaviour. The korbanot of Yom Kippur are brought to atone for the active sins of the nation, and one hand of the kohein parallels the people's intent and the second hand parallels their actions. The korban olah of Parshat Vayikra, on the other hand, is a sacrifice brought by someone who never acted on his sinful thoughts; this less-problematic transgression only requires a one-handed *semichah*.

The act of *semichah* appears in a second context in Chumash, namely the ordination of a student by his teacher. When Hashem instructs Moshe to appoint Yehoshua as his successor, Moshe is told to perform *semichah* on this trusted pupil. Here, the instruction and Moshe's implementation appear to be incongruous. Hashem commands Moshe, "You shall place your **hand** on him" (Bamidbar 27:18) but Moshe appears to disobey the command as he

places both of his **hands** on Yehoshua (ibid 27:23).

Although the two contexts are quite different, the Kli Yakar extends his novel understanding of *semichah* upon korbanot to explain Moshe's behaviour. Yehoshua is described in the pasuk as the appropriate leader because he is "a man in whom there is spirit" (ibid). Rashi explains this to mean that he had the skills to treat each person according to his unique spirit or personality. The average leader, lacking Yehoshua's interpersonal sensitivity, could never be expected to understand the souls of his flock. Such a leader could persuade his nation to **behave** in the proper way, and he could even coerce them to do so, but he could never truly understand their mindset. Yehoshua, a man of spirit, had the ability and responsibility to engage the Jewish people in an intimately emotional way. Therefore, says the Kli Yakar, when Hashem instructed Moshe to place a hand on Yehoshua, His intention was for Moshe to place the hand of thought upon him. Moshe, though, understood that if Yehoshua had the skills to affect the people's *machshava*, surely he had a responsibility for their actions as well. Therefore Moshe deemed it appropriate to add his second hand in ordaining his student as the new leader. Moshe conveyed a confidence in Yehoshua, that he possessed the skills with which to play a transformative role as the second leader of Israel.

Parshah Questions

R' Meir Lipschitz

Answers to the questions appear on the back page

- Why was salt supposed to be added to a korban, while honey was not allowed? (Rashi, Ramban, and Netziv to Vayikra 2:11-13)
- Why does the Torah use the word "asher" rather than the more common "im" when describing the transgression and korban of a nasi (leader)? (Rashi, Sifte Chachamim, Ba'al HaTurim, Ramban, Seforno, and Netziv to Vayikra 4:22)
- Why does the Torah use the term "nefesh" when describing the sin-offering, as opposed to the term "adam" which had been used previously? (Ramban, Ohr HaChaim, Rabbeinu Bachaye, Alshich, Mincha Belulah, and Tzror Hamor to Vayikra 4:2)
- For children: Why is the opening word "Vayikra" written with a small letter aleph? (Ba'al HaTurim Vayikra 1:1)

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The connection between these two semichot speaks volumes of Yehoshua as a leader, and it simultaneously demands greatness from every Jew who engages Hashem through the bringing of Korbanot, and performance of mitzvot more generally. While the Torah expects compliance from its followers, it also demands a metamorphosis of sorts. Through the fulfillment of mitzvot we choose to not only behave in a manner befitting a Jew, but to develop the personality of a devoted servant of Hashem.

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להתפלל בשבת הרי גם בתפילה לדעת המקובלים יש ברירת ניצוצות ולכאורה גם זה צריך להיות אסור:
"וקיימא לן בורר אוכל לאלתר שרי. מה שאין כן בברכת האילנות שאינה צריכה לאותה שעה, שהרי יכול לברך ברכה זו בכל חודש ניסן, והרי זה כבור לצורך אחר זמן שאסור".

ניתן להתפלל בשבת מאחר שהתפילה נעשית לאלתר-מיד, אחד הדינים במלאכת בורר הוא שכאשר הדבר נעשה מיד וללא כלי המיוחד לברירה הדבר מותר, התפילה שהיא מצוות היום נחשבת כמעשה מידי ולכן זוהי ברירה מותרת אולם ברכת האילנות שניתן לעשות גם ביום חול אינה נחשבת כעשייה מיידית ולכן נחשבת כאדם שבורר בשביל זמן מאוחר יותר ומשום כך הדבר אסור.

על ערוב הלכה וקבלה, כתב החתם סופר (שו"ת או"ח נא) כך:
"ואני אומר כל המערב דברי קבלה עם הלכות פסוקות, עובר משום לא תזרע כרמך כלאים פן תקדש המלאכה".

ונתן לעיני גם בשו"ת הרדב"ז (חלק ד' סי' קח) שכתב כך: ואל תאשימי ותחשדני שאני פוסק הלכה ומורה הוראה על פי דרך הקבלה וכו', ומרן החיד"א בספר מראית העין בחידושי לסנהדרין (ק"א) כתב, שאין להוציא דין על פי סודות. אולם בכדי לא להכניס את ראשו במחלוקת בין ענקי עולם, האם ניתן לערב דברי קבלה בדברי הלכה, נאמר שהרב עובדיה בשו"ת יחוה דעת (ח"א ס"ב) דחה את דברי כף החיים ופסק שניתן לברך ברכת האילנות בשבת, ולא צריך לחשוש לאיסור בורר.

חשש נוסף שהועלה הוא שמשום שאת הברכה נוהגים לברך "בגנות ובשדות" (לשון הרמב"ם), כאשר יצא מחוץ לעיר אנו חוששים שאולי יטלטל עימו סידור ויבוא לידי איסור, ביחוד דעת פסק כי גם לזה לא חוששים ויכול לברך ברכת האילנות בשבת אולם לכתחילה עדיף לברך בחול וכן מובא בפסקי תשובות (רכ"ו) ומוסיף שם שאם לי ניסן (יום אחרון לברכה) יוצא בשבת עדיף לברך בשבת ולא לחכות לאחר חודש ניסן.

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"האי מאן דנפיק ביומי ניסן וחזי אילני דקא מלבלבי אומר: בורך שלא חיסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות להתנאות בהן בני אדם". (ברכות מג:)

היוצא לשדה בתקופת ניסן רואה כיצד לאחר החורף מתחילים האילנות לעטות מעטה לבן ולהתחיל שנה חדשה, מברך את ברכת שלא חיסר ברכת האילנות. הב"ח בסימן רכ"ו כותב שברכת האילנות מברכים רק פעם אחת בשנה ולא כל שלושים יום כמו בברכת הראייה הרגילות שכן ברכת האילנות היא לא ברכת הראייה אלא ברכת ההופעה, כלומר מברכים על התופעה של התחדשות הטבע בתקופת ניסן. וכמו כן פוסק המש"ב (רכ"ו, א') שבארצות בהם מאחרת הפריחה לאחר ר"ח ניסן ניתן לברך בפעם הראשונה שרואה לבלוב הפירות ולא רק בחודש ניסן.

השנה יוצא ראש חודש ניסן בשבת ונחלקו הפוסקים האם ניתן לברך על האילנות בשבת. כתוב בכף החיים (י"עקב סופר):
"בשבת ויו"ט אין לברך ברכת האילנות, שמא יקח בידו הפרחים להריח בהם, או שמא יתלוש... ונראה שלפי המקובלים שעל ידי ברכת האילנות בורר ניצוצי קדושה מן הצומח, יש איסור בורר בשבת, ולכן אסור לברך ברכת האילנות בשבת וביי"ט".

אם כן שתי טענות מעלה "כף החיים", אחת גזרה שמא יתלוש ושנית שמא יש כאן בורר. מובא בגמרא במסכת סוכה (ל"ז ע"ב):
אמר רבה, הדס במחובר מותר להריח בו, אתרוג במחובר אסור להריח בו. מאי טעמא, הדס דלהריח קאי אי שרית ליה לא אתי למגזייה, אתרוג דלאכילה קאי אי שרית ליה אתי למגזייה.

הגמרא מדברת לגבי חשש של שמא יתלוש ואומרת כי בפירות הגזרה שייכת משום שהם עומדים לאכילה ולכן אנו חוששים שאדם ישכח כי הוא רק מריח את הפרי ויבוא לתלוש אותו, משום כך נראה אולי לאסור את ברכת האילנות בשבת. הרב עובדיה יוסף (יחוה דעת ח"א סעי' ב') פוסק, כי אנו חוששים לדבר בברכת הריח שכן הוא יתקרב להריח את הפרי אולם בברכת האילנות שאנו מברכים על הראייה אין אנו חוששים לכך שאדם יבוא ויתלוש ומשום כך לא נאסור לברך בשבת.

נמשיך אם כך לדון באיסור בורר. בשו"ת באר מים חיים, המשיך כף החיים לדון מדוע ניתן

Hitoriri: Jewish Spirituality Three Torahs! R' Mordechai Torczyner

Time is valuable, but it is only a currency to be traded and spent rather than hoarded. A moment of time has no independent worth; the value of time is realized when it is invested in a relationship, in spiritual growth, in education, or in community.

Unfortunately, we easily mistake our valuable currencies for commodities; as a natural outgrowth of our need to acquire currency, we come to view it as an end unto itself. This is how we become obsessed with amassing money, and it is also how we become obsessed with protecting our time. Much as people spend what they must for perceived necessities and stint on spending for other items, so people spend time on perceived necessities, and stint on the time they spend for other pursuits, including davening, Shabbat meals and learning.

This point is particularly relevant today, when we invest our time in reading from three sifrei torah. What a beautiful moment - the confluence of Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh, and the onset of Nisan, the month which leads all others in the Torah's calendar! We withdraw three scrolls of our sacred heritage from the Aron Kodesh and parade them through the synagogue, the silver polished and shining, the gathered children awed by this unusual display of religious grandeur, hands reaching out to press once, twice and three times the velvet cases enwrapping sanctified parchment. We celebrate the riches of our synagogue, and express a great communal appreciation of the blessing revealed to us at Sinai.

But in the midst of this pomp, some of us might turn to our neighbours and sigh, "Three Torahs - we won't be out of here until 12:30!" This reaction stems from a view that time is a commodity to be hoarded. Better to recognize that those minutes of Shabbat morning could not be used in a more worthwhile way, that the time during which we honour our tripled Torah, listen to its tripled words and comprehend its triple message, will be time well-spent, and will bring us and our children great returns. Knowing how to spend our time positively, rather than hoard it, will help us live more fruitful and inspired lives.

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613 Mitzvot: #147 Stay off the fat! R' Mordechai Torczyner

Mitzvah 147 distinguishes between two types of animal fats, *chelev* and *shuman*, and prohibits eating the former kind. *Chelev* includes fat surrounding the kidneys, fat covering the abdominopelvic cavity, and fat around some of the digestive organs. Removing the fat is part of a practice called *traybering*; this is accompanied by removal of forbidden veins. For video of a *traybering* session, see <http://ouradio.org/ouradio/channel/C675/>.

The *Sefer haChinuch* (Mitzvah 73) writes that all non-Kosher foods are forbidden because they are dangerous. The Torah omits mention

of the specific danger lest people erroneously think that they can find a way around the danger.

Other authorities offer different explanations. Some explain that non-kosher food is physiologically safe, but G-d instructed us to sanctify our diets by dedicating them to G-d, following Divine instructions as to what we eat and what we refrain from eating.

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Torah in Translation Writing G-d's Name

without intent for sanctity

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin

Meishiv Davar 2:80

Translated by R' Ezra Goldschmiedt

[Note: In publishing, proofs are the preliminary versions of publications created for proofreading and copyediting purposes.]

Concerning publishing house proofs [of Torah works] in which most of the pages are thrown into the trash and also trampled upon, and non-Jews denigrate them [by using them] in their kitchens, etc. Is one permitted to burn or [otherwise] actively destroy them?...

The leniency is primarily because of this: Even though it is assumed that one creates them for a holy purpose, nevertheless, if one explicitly intends that his work not become sanctified, it certainly contains no holiness of the Name. This is similar to Maimonides' statement (Hilchot Tefillin UMezuzah V'Sefer Torah 1:13) that Torah scrolls written by a *min* [one who does not believe in G-d] should be burned with their Names of G-d because they were not written for His sake; the author considers them like any mundane matter. Therefore, when it is better that the Name not be sanctified we do not automatically treat this as a text written for His sake...

This same logic can be applied concerning the holiness of G-d's Names. It would be better that the names in chumashim and siddurim be sanctified to make them more effective for learning and prayer, as seen from a great episode involving R' Chiya (Bava Metzia 85b), that he sanctified [the Torah he personally created] more than demanded by law in order that it assist in the students' learning. Similarly, the Torah specifies that the King's [personal] Torah scroll be written by the Priests/Levites, i.e. Torah scholars, in order to better assist its moral purposes. Therefore, it is presumed that these texts are invested with holiness. However, it would be better that a siddur which is not for reading or learning not be sanctified. Therefore, the Names written without specific intent are not sanctified. Therefore, there is no prohibition concerning the burning of the Name in these proofs, which had not been printed for use in learning...

Because these were initially written with this intention, one may actively burn publishers' proofs; it is even a mitzvah to do so, so that these not lead to stumbling in the great disgrace of having them in the garbage, with non-Jews abusing them...

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, also known as the Netziv (1816-1893), was born in Mir, Russia, to a family of Torah scholars. At the age of 13 he married Rayna Batya, daughter of Rav Yitzchak of Volozhin, the Rosh Yeshiva of the famed Volozhin yeshiva in Belarus and son of the yeshiva's founder, Rav Chaim of Volozhin.

After decades of dedicated study, Rabbi Berlin became the Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin yeshiva. Despite many difficulties, including the burning down of Volozhin and its yeshiva on two occasions, enrollment steadily increased under Rabbi Berlin's guidance. During his tenure, the yeshiva produced many future leaders of Klal Yisrael, such as Rav Moshe Epstein, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, and Rav Shimon Shkop.

Rabbi Berlin's approach to learning was to search for the earliest possible sources on a topic, thereby developing a clear understanding through the roots of our mesorah. For similar reasons, he was also a strong proponent of the study of Tanach. Additionally, Rabbi Berlin was an early supporter of the Chovevei Tzion movement and strongly supported the resettling of Eretz Yisrael.

The maskilim, who viewed the Volozhiner Yeshiva's success as their failure, constantly appealed to the Russian government to disrupt the yeshiva's program. Eventually, their demands for an overwhelming program of secular studies (to take place from the morning until 3:00 PM), the requirement that every instructor hold a secular degree in education, as well as the closing of the yeshiva at night, forced Rabbi Berlin's hand; after leading the yeshiva for forty years, he decided to close it. Rabbi Berlin's life was so intertwined with the yeshiva's existence that its closing had detrimental effects on his health, eventually leading to his passing only two years later.

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In truth, if it was possible to print without publishers' proofs, it would be better, just as we don't dedicate [possessions to the Temple] nowadays. However, just as the Hasmonean government allowed the Name to be written in legal documents for the needs of the moment (Rosh HaShanah 18b), here too [we can allow this]; since it is impossible to publish without proofs, it is permitted because of [the principle of] "It is a time to act for G-d, [and therefore] they have cancelled Your law." (Psalms 119:126)

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Ha'Aretz Hamat Gader R' Baruch Weintraub

The area of Hamat Gader offers healing baths which have been in use since the time of the Mishnah, in the 2nd century CE. The springs themselves, per our Sages (Sanhedrin 108a), have been there since the time of the Flood, remnants of the channels G-d opened in the earth to drown the generation of the Flood.

Hamat Gader is in the Yarmuk Valley, south of the Golan Heights, about 150 meters below sea level. The name "Hamat" comes from the Hebrew word "*ham* [hot]", because the water is hot. "Gader" is the nearest city; today it is under Jordanian control. There are four mineral-rich hot springs; the water comes from a depth of more than two kilometres below the ground.

Apparently, there was a strong Jewish population in the area during the Second Temple period; historians record that the local Jews inflicted heavy casualties upon Roman forces in the invasion that led to the destruction of the Temple. Jews continued to frequent the site afterward; the remains of a fourth century CE synagogue are found near the site. Further, the Talmud Yerushalmi (Shabbat 4:2) records that Rabbi Yehudah haNasi stayed there with his students, and the Talmud Bavli discusses bathing at Hamat Gader on Shabbat (Shabbat 109a) and travelling to and from the baths on Shabbat (Eruvin 61a).

Hamat Gader was abandoned from the time of the Crusades until the start of the twentieth century, when Sheikh Suleiman bin Nachif was licensed by the British government to operate the site. It is said that Suleiman received this right as a reward for his aid to the Jewish underground NILI group, which supported the British against the Turks in World War I. The financing came from a Jew named Zev Sapir.

During the War of Independence the Syrians conquered Hamat Gader. When Israel liberated Hamat Gader from the Syrians in 1967, the rights to the springs were transferred to the surrounding kibbutzim of Mevo Hamah, Kfar Charuv, Afik and Meitzar. Each year, more than 600,000 tourists visit the site.

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Why was salt supposed to be added to a korban, while honey was not allowed?

Rashi only addresses the issue of the salt, stating that salt was added to korbanot because of an agreement between HaShem and the sea from the days of Creation. The agreement was that if the waters would recede to allow dry land to be seen, then water and salt would be offered on the *mizbeiach*.

Ramban refers us to Moreh Nevuchim where Rambam explains that honey is prohibited because idolatrous practices involved honey, and salt is included because idolaters didn't use salt in their rituals. Additionally, it is not appropriate to offer bland foods to HaShem, and so we add salt.

In **Netziv's** opinion, honey and salt represent improper and proper approaches towards G-d's divine control over the world. He explains that honey is an additive which changes the natural flavor of a food, which is the equivalent of saying that the food was not good enough the way HaShem had created it, and we need to make it better. Salt, on the other hand, is an additive which enhances the natural flavor of a food item. Salt is independently poor-tasting, but it can be used to make things better – much in the same way that HaShem's control of the world sometimes seems bad, but actually makes things better.

Why does the Torah use the word “*asher*” rather than the more common “*im*” when describing the transgression and korban of a leader?

Rashi, citing Horiyyot 10b, explains that the word *asher* is similar to *ashrei*, which means praiseworthy or fortunate, as if to say: How fortunate is a generation whose leader publicly recognizes, and atones for, his accidental transgressions.

Seforno claims that the usage of *asher* is to suggest the inevitability of a transgression on the part of a Nasi, as opposed to *im* (if) of a regular person. Similarly, **Netziv** explains that it is fundamental to the nature of the Nasi's leadership position that he will sin.

On a separate point, **Ba'al HaTurim** explains that this phrase is juxtaposed with the sins of the nation, to teach us that one who has the ability to protest the actions of others (like a communal leader), and does not try to stop them, is responsible for those actions.

Why does the Torah use the term “*nefesh*” when describing the sin-offering, as opposed to the term “*adam*” which had been used previously?

Ramban claims that the term *nefesh* is used because the *nefesh* (spirit) is responsible for the thought process which led to the person to transgress. He also quotes the midrash (Torat

Kohanim) which explains that the word *nefesh* is broader than *adam*, including parties who would not have been included in *adam*.

Ohr HaChaim quotes the same midrash as Ramban, but notes that *adam* does naturally include women, even though the term *adam* is often limited to the masculine.

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that *nefesh* refers to the whole person, the combination of the physical and spiritual elements. He claims that there would have been no difference had the Torah used the word *adam*, and it is merely a substitution of one synonymous word for another.

For children: Why is the opening word “*Vayikra*” written with a small letter aleph?

Ba'al HaTurim, basing himself on a midrash, claims that Moshe—due to his extreme level of humility—wanted to write the word without the *aleph* at all, so that it would be read as *vayiker*, which denotes happenstance, that HaShem happened to speak to him. Moshe did not want it to seem that HaShem spoke to him directly, but rather that HaShem addressed him through dreams. HaShem commanded Moshe to write the full word, and so in his humility Moshe wrote it with a small *aleph*.

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Schedule for March 24-30 / 1 - 7 Nisan

Shabbat March 24 Rosh Chodesh Nisan

7:45 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Rav Kook on the Parshah, Or Chaim

10:20 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Parshah, Clanton Park

After Hashkama Hillel Horovitz, Bnai Torah, Divine Mercy and Human mercy (Hebrew)

1 hour before minchah Yair Manas: Gemara Sukkah, Mizrahi Bayit

45 minutes before minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Daf Yomi: Keritut 4, BAYT

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Selling Homes in Israel: Gemara Avodah Zarah, BAYT

Sunday, March 25

9:15 AM Hillel Horovitz, Parshah, **Hebrew**, Zichron Yisroel

11:00 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Hilchot Melachim, Or Chaim, *collegiates*

After maariv R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic issues in Israel: Drafting Yeshiva Students, **Hebrew**, Clanton Park, *men*

7:00 PM Mrs. Ariella Zirkind, “And she took from its fruit”: Moving Past Sin, Shaarei Shomayim, *women*

8:30 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic issues in Israel: Drafting Yeshiva Students, **Hebrew**, 4 Tillingham Keep, *mixed*

Monday, March 26

8:30 PM Hillel Horovitz, In-Depth Siddur, Clanton Park, *men*

Tuesday, March 27

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Zecharyah: The End, continued, *Mekorot*, Shaarei Shomayim

7:15 PM R' Ezra Goldschmidt, Ramban, BAYT

8:00 PM Hillel Horovitz, Shemuel 5: Who is Shaul?, Bnai Torah

8:00 PM Mrs. Elyssa Goldschmidt, Malbim, TCS, *women*

8:15 PM Yair Manas: Minchat Chinuch, Clanton Park

Wednesday, March 28

10:00 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Dramas of Jewish History: The Emancipation, BEBY, with Melton

8:00 PM R' Dovid Zirkind, Gemara Beitzah, 2nd Perek, Shaarei Shomayim

8:00 PM Hillel Horovitz, “Pre-Pesach: Hillel and the Sons of Beteirah”, Bnai Torah

8:30 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Hilchot Melachim: Too much silver and gold?, Shomrai Shabbos, *men*

Thursday, March 29

9:15 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Women's Shiur at 36 Theodore, *on hiatus until after Pesach*

Friday, March 30

8:00 AM R' Dovid Zirkind, Friday Parshah Preview, Village Shul

End of Choref Zman; See you after Pesach!