

# Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Naso

12 Sivan 5772/June 2, 2012

Vol.3 Num. 33

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## Nazir, Narcissus, and Sacrifice

R' Mordechai Torczyner

Ancient Greeks told the story of a young man named Narcissus, who was so remarkably handsome that even a deity, Echo, fell in love with him. One day Narcissus was admiring his own reflection in a pond, and he declared to himself, "I love you." Echo saw him, and repeated, "I love you." Narcissus thought his reflection had spoken, and he remained there, gazing at himself in the water, until he died.

Our sages (Nazir 4b) also report a story about a young man staring at himself in water, but with a very different ending: At some point during the early years of the Second Beit haMikdash, a young man of beautiful appearance and long, braided hair told the sage Shimon haTzaddik that he had just completed a term as a nazir, and was now going to comply with the laws of nezirut by shaving off all of the hair on his head. Shimon haTzaddik asked him, "What made you decide to take this vow and destroy this beautiful hair?"

The anonymous young man replied, "Once, when I went to draw water from a spring, I began to gaze at my reflection, and my evil inclination asserted itself and urged me to abandon the Torah. I rebuked myself, saying, 'Empty one! You arrogantly claim the pleasures of this world, which is not yours - you will end up rotting in the grave! Instead, I will shave off all of your hair for the sake of Heaven!'" Shimon haTzaddik reacted by praising this young man. Narcissus and the talmudic nazir present two stories with

very different endings; where Narcissus is a target for mockery, our nazir is a spiritual superhero, an UberJew wresting control of himself, and Shimon haTzaddik judges him praiseworthy.

Surprisingly, the sages generally did not admire the nazir. Instead, the gemara noted that a nazir brings a sin-offering upon completing his nezirut, and one sage, Rabbi Elazar haKappar, explained that the nazir sinned in swearing off wine, denying himself a permitted pleasure! Even though the Talmud (Sotah 15a) acknowledges that the nazir's offering is not truly atonement for sin, numerous rabbinic commentators have echoed these harsh words. How could they condemn our spiritual superhero?

One approach is to distinguish between suffering and sacrifice.

Suffering has no inherent meaning; one pays a high price without acquiring goods to show for it. There is no nobility in pain. This is the act of the nazir who is criticized by Rabbi Elazar haKappar.

Sacrifice, on the other hand, is a goal-oriented, constructive act of self-engineering, a statement of our capacity to stimulate and direct our own growth. There is plan, will and purpose. This is our anonymous nazir's initiative, the anti-Narcissus, forsaking an obsession with personal beauty. He knew the person he wished to become, and singlehandedly transformed himself into

that person. This is the nazir who earns the praise of Shimon haTzaddik. There is no dignity in suffering unbidden pain, but there is awesome nobility in choosing to sacrifice.

One difference between suffering and sacrifice is that sacrifice requires a plan; we do not impulsively abandon randomly selected pleasures in order to emerge as better people on the other side. King Solomon (Kohelet 5:4) condemned the practice of freely taking vows; this self-engineering requires careful consideration. In our own day, sacrifice might be a person identifying a weakness for harmful speech, and deciding to abandon all speech for a day, or a period of days, to gain control. Sacrifice might be a frugal person recognizing his unwillingness to give, and contributing extra cash to tzedakah to defy his wallet-tightening impulses. Sacrifice is calculated; we strip away some diseased, destructive or dysfunctional part of our lives in order to build up what remains.

The nazir teaches us that we will be much better off when we look at ourselves, when we understand and take seriously the importance of self-engineering, and - through sacrifice rather than suffering - grow into our better selves.

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**We regret to inform you of the passing of**

**Ronny Horovitz ז"ל**  
**חיים מנוח בן מרדכי הלוי ז"ל**

**beloved father of our avreich, Hillel Horovitz**

**המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים**  
**May the family be comforted**  
**among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem**

## Jealousy in Relationships

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

אם כך, פשוט הוא שלדעת רבי עקיבא אין צורך בתהליך הקינוי עבור הגירושין, וחוזרת השאלה – מה עניינה של מצות הקינוי?

נראה, שדווקא מתוך דעתו של רבי עקיבא לגבי גירושין, נוכל ללמוד ולהבין את דעתו לגבי קינוי. רבי עקיבא סובר, כי עיקר הנישואין הוא במערכת היחסים שבין בני הזוג, וביחס המיוחד שביניהם. עצם העובדה כי אדם מוצא לו אחרת אותה הוא רואה כנאה מאשתו, מצביעה לדעתו על בעיה יסודית בחיי הנישואין. זאת, בניגוד לדעת בית הלל ובית שמאי באותה המשנה, הרואים כסיבות ראויות לגירושין דווקא מקרים שקרו בפועל, מזנות לדעת בית שמאי ועד כשלון בבישול לדעת בית הלל.

נראה שהדברים נכונים גם לגבי אדם ש'עבר עליו רוח קנאה', כפי שמצינת התורה. אדם שהגיע למצב כזה, לדעת רבי עקיבא, אינו יכול לשתוק, ולתת לחשדותיו לצמוח בתוכו, תוך הריסת מערכת היחסים שבינו לבין אשתו. במצב כזה עדיפה שיחה גלויה בין בני הזוג, שיחה שמטרתה בניה וטהרה, ולא הרס וטומאה. ואכן, הרמב"ם שפסק כרבי עקיבא, ניסח את דבריו באופן זה:

"מצות חכמים על בני ישראל לקנות לנשיהן שני וקנא את אשתו, וכל המקנא לאשתו נכנסה בו רוח טהרה, ולא יקנא לה לא מתוך שחוק ולא מתוך שיחה ולא מתוך קלות ראש ולא מתוך מריבה ולא להטיל עליה אימה, ואם עבר וקנא לה בפני עדים מתוך אחד מכל הדברים האלו הרי זה קינוי" (סוטה ד, יח).

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בפרשתנו אנו מוצאים את פרשת סוטה. נחלקו התנאים כיצד לראות את השלב הראשון שבפרשה – הלא הוא שלב הקינוי, בו מזהיר הבעל את אשתו שלא תתייחד עוד עם אדם מסוים.

"וקנא את אשתו - רשות, דברי רבי ישמעאל, ורבי עקיבא אומר חובה" (סוטה ג"א).

הגמרא ממשיכה ומסבירה את מקור המחלוקת. שיטת רבי עקיבא היא הפשוטה יותר, שכן מלשון הפסוק משתמע כי מצוה היא – "ועבר עליו רוח קנאה וקנא את אשתו" (במדבר ה, יד). כלומר, משעברה עליו רוח קנאה חייב הוא לקנא את אשתו. רבי ישמעאל, לעומת זאת, טוען כי לא ציווי לפנינו כי אם היתר; כיוון שהתורה אסרה 'אסרה לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך', על כן היה צורך להתיר באופן מיוחד את הקינוי לאשה, במקרים בהם הבעל מעוניין בכך.

מהי המצוה שבקינוי? הירושלמי מקשר את המחלוקת האם הקינוי הוא חובה או רשות, לשאלת הסיבה הראויה הגירושין. הסוברים שהקינוי הוא חובה, מבאר הירושלמי, אומרים כך כיון שלדעתם אין לבעל דרך אחרת לגרש – אסור לו לבעל לגרש עד שלא יוכיח כי אשתו נאפה. על פי שיטה זו, השאלה האם הקינוי הוא מצווה או רשות הוא האם הקינוי הינו חובה כחלק מתהליך הגירושין. הסוברים שקינוי הינו רשות, כוונתם שעל הבעל לגרש אף קודם הקינוי.

אמנם, בבבלי לא ניתן לבאר כך. בניגוד לירושלמי, המביא את השיטות השונות בשם רבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע, הרי שבבבלי אנו מוצאים את רבי עקיבא כמי שסובר שהקינוי הוא מצוה. והלא במשנה בסוף גיטין מובאת דעת רבי עקיבא כסובר שמותר לאדם לגרש אשתו "אפילו מצא אחרת נאה הימנה"!

## Hitoriri: Jewish Spirituality Little Things R' Dovid Zirkind

Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon went to visit his teacher, Rabbi Yosi Ben Kisma, who was on his deathbed. There, they discussed Rabbi Chanina's decision to disobey Roman orders and teach Torah, a decision which put his life at risk. When the conversation ended, Rabbi Chanina asked if he would merit experiencing the world to come. Rabbi Yosi proceeded to inquire if Rabbi Chanina had ever done a significant act that would warrant such a reward. Rabbi Chanina replied in the positive, referring to a situation when his personal money had become mixed in with Purim *matanot la'evyonim* and he had decided to give it all to charity, ensuring he would not mistakenly take that which was not his. Upon hearing of that act, Rabbi Yosi guaranteed that he would receive great reward. (Avodah Zarah 18a)

Rabbi Chanina's inquiry, and Rabbi Yosi's hesitation, are both quite surprising. Surely Rabbi Chanina was someone who would merit great reward in Olam Habah! He risked his life for Torah - ultimately he was captured and killed for teaching it. Was that insufficient? Furthermore, if his devotion to Torah was insufficient, why did a single act of tzedakah change his fate?

In his Michtav M'Eliyahu (Volume 3, pp. 107-108), Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler suggests that our core personality is defined not by the way we behave during the most dramatic moments of our life, but how we deal with smaller, day to day challenges. Very often we make the big decisions correctly, but in private, we cut corners just to save a few bucks. For this reason a midrash says: "Hashem does not grant greatness to a person until He examines him with something small." (Shemot Rabbah 2:3) When Rabbi Yosi heard how scrupulous Rabbi Chanina was with even the smallest amount of his money, only then was he completely confident in his student's righteousness.

This week, as we move beyond Sefirat HaOmer and Shavuot, we enter a period of the year absent of great fanfare and celebration. It is easy to perceive a season such as this to be less important than other times of the year, but in truth it is our opportunity to shine.

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## 613 Mitzvot: #159-161, 166, 169, 175, 177-183

### What is Tumah?

R' Mordechai Torczyner

The Torah's laws include a series of mitzvot defining taharah (purity) and tumah (contamination), and prescribing processes for becoming tahor (pure).

We use the term "contaminated" to describe something which is tamei, but there is no connotation of filth or infection; rather, this is a state of ineligibility for certain sacred rituals. Thus, dirt does not bring on a state of tumah, and non-ritual washing does not introduce taharah. Indeed, these laws do not relate to any physical characteristic we can identify, and

the Torah does not offer any explicit rationale for these laws.

Some attempt to explain tumah as a phenomenon associated with loss of potential life. Thus, for example, tumah is manifest in a man who emits seed or a woman who gives birth, parting with the life that had been gestating within her. Others associate tumah with a loss of free will, as experienced in death. Still others link tumah with temporary or permanent damage done to the soul. The explanations are legion, perhaps reflecting our weak comprehension of this aspect of Judaism.

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**Torah in Translation  
Of Kindness and Compassion  
R' Chaim Zundel Maccoby**

**Drashot Imrei Chaim, pp.128. 139  
Translated by R' Dovid Zirkind**

Commenting on the verse "In the beginning Elokim created" (Bereishit 1:1) Rashi explains why the Torah begins with Elokim rather than state "Hashem created." Originally G-d intended to create the world with the trait of judgment but He saw the world would not last; therefore He introduced mercy prior to judgment. This is indicated in the verse "... on the day Hashem Elokim created Heaven and earth." (Bereishit 2:4) This explanation is difficult. How can this be said about G-d, who knows what the future will bring? One should not say that G-d was initially unaware and became aware only later, because He gazes until the end of all the generations!

Truthfully, we should analyze the Talmudic passage (Pesachim 119a) which discusses why "Ki l'olam chasdo - because his kindness is eternal" is recited twenty six times in "The Great Hallel" (Psalms 136): "These twenty-six praises, to what are they referring? They refer to the twenty six generations which G-d sustained prior to [humanity] having accepted the Torah." ... In principle, our Sages understood Torah to be the reason for creation; consequently the sustenance of the first twenty-six generations was a result of kindness alone.

If this is so, it should be asked - Why did Hashem not give the Torah to Adam? This is addressed by the Midrash which claims, that since G-d saw that Adam would eat from the tree of knowledge (to not eat was within his ability because everything is dependent on man's free will ...) therefore He did not give the Torah to Adam, rather He waited twenty-six generations. This then, is the meaning of [Rashi's statement] "Initially G-d wanted to create the world with judgment" - that man should have accepted and fulfilled the Torah immediately - then, even the first twenty-six generations would have been sustained in justice. However, once man had transgressed the sole mitzvah he was given, the giving of the Torah to mankind was delayed twenty-six generations, resulting in the need for humanity to be sustained through G-d's kindness alone - by His trait of mercy...

"His brothers saw that his father loved him more than all his brothers..." (Bereishit 37:4) Being precise let us ask, why does it not state "his father loved him more than **them**"? It can be said that in their chastisement we

Born in Russia in 1858, Rabbi Chaim Zundel Maccoby, known as the Maggid of Kaminetz, was one of Europe's great religious orators. From the early age of 13 he began to lecture in public, and was privileged to a quality education both in religious and secular subjects. Chovevei Tzion of Moscow engaged the Maggid to be their agent in supporting the colonization of Palestine, a position he accepted at the age of 25. His success on their behalf was only hampered by the suspicion it aroused in the Russian government, which led to his fleeing for London in 1890.

Upon his arrival, Rabbi Maccoby continued to advocate for Palestine through his public talks and was appointed Maggid of the Federation of Synagogues in 1894. He held the position until his death in 1916.

In addition to his passion for Eretz Yisrael, the Maggid spoke frequently of his belief in vegetarianism. He refused to eat meat and wear leather shoes and often referred to respect for animals in his inspirational talks. He declined the nomination to serve as a member of the religious court in London as well, being uncomfortable participating in the kashrut supervision involved in ritual slaughter.

The maggid's health deteriorated - likely due to the intensity with which he traveled and lectured - leading to his early death at the age of 58, one year prior to the signing of the Balfour Declaration. By request of Chief Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits, the Hall of Education Library at Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel was dedicated in Rabbi Maccoby's memory in 1975.

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see their greatness. Each of them did not hate him because of their personal jealousy; i.e. why should Yosef be loved by our father more than us? Rather, each of them was jealous on behalf of his brothers, but his own honour he was able to forgo. Each one was angered that his brothers were loved less than [Yosef], therefore they became jealous of him. ... not for themselves, for each of them saw himself as less than Yosef, but equated his other brothers to him.

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**Ha'Aretz  
Karmiel  
Yair Manas**

Karmiel, established in 1964, is located in the Beit Kerem Valley in northern Israel. It is approximately 32 kilometres west of Tzfat, 20 kilometres east of Akko, and 45 kilometres northeast of Haifa. Construction started in 1963 as part of the Central Galilee Development Project, with the goal of developing a line of contiguous Jewish settlement near the Akko-Tzfat road. The first sixteen families settled there in 1964, and it grew quickly from there.

Karmiel achieved city status in 1986, and today the city has approximately 45,000 residents. Karmiel expects to have 120,000 residents by 2020.

Since 1990, Karmiel has absorbed about 20,000 immigrants, mostly from the former Soviet Union. About 40% of Karmiel's residents are immigrants, from about 75 countries. There is an English Speakers Club, whose members are mostly retirees. Recently, a number of young Anglo olim have moved to Karmiel, largely as a result of the Go North program of Nefesh B'Nefesh. Arab families have also moved into the community.

South of Karmiel, Nachal Hilazon ("Hilazon Creek") flows from east to west. This body of water is named for the snail from which techelet-dye is produced; the snail is found near the port of Akko, where Nachal Hilazon meets the Mediterranean.

Karmiel contains Orthodox, Conservative and Reform synagogues, with about 15% of the residents claiming religious affiliation. There are a number of kollelim in the city, including a Religious Zionist kollel. The amphitheatre in Karmiel is recognized as the largest in Israel; it is able to seat 25,000, and it hosts events including Yom ha'Atzmaut celebrations and an annual summer dance festival.

A resident compares living in Karmiel to living in a "thriving 'out-of-town' suburb in North America."

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Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University and  
the YU Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov  
invite you to an

# Evening of Tribute

Please join us in honouring  
**Eli and Renée Rubinstein**  
Community Leadership Award Recipients  
&  
**Rabbi Dovid and Ariella Zirkind**  
Torah Leadership Award Recipients

Keynote Speaker:  
**Rabbi Efrem Goldberg**  
Senior Rabbi of the Boca Raton Synagogue

Tuesday, June 19, 2012, 8:00 pm  
Shaarei Shomayim, 470 Glencairn Ave

## Schedule for June 2 - 8 / 12 - 18 Sivan

### Shabbat, June 2

**7:45 AM** R' Baruch Weintraub, Rav Kook, Or Chaim  
**10:20 AM** R' Baruch Weintraub: Parsha Shiur, Clanton Park

**6:45 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Pirkei Avot for collegiate women, 320 York Hill Blvd

**7:35 PM** Yair Manas: Gemara Sukkah, Mizrahi Bayit  
**7:45 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Daf Yomi, BAYT *not this week*

**After minchah** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Buying a Parah Adumah: Gemara Avodah Zarah, BAYT

### Sunday, June 3

**8:45 AM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Medical Halachah with CME: Shabbat Conferences, BAYT

**9:15 AM** R' Baruch Weintraub, Parshah, Zichron Yisroel, Hebrew

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

**6:00 PM** R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic considerations in actual questions in Israel, **Hebrew**, 4 Tillingham Keep  
**40 Min Before Minchah** R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic considerations in actual questions in Israel, **Hebrew**, Clanton Park, **men**

### Monday, June 4

**8:30 PM** Hillel Horovitz, Siddur: In-Depth, Clanton Park, **not this week**

### Tuesday, June 5

**1:30 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Habbakuk: The Man who Challenged Gd, Chapter 1, *with Mekorot*

**7:15 PM** R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, Ramban on the Parshah, BAYT

**8:00 PM** Hillel Horovitz, Early Prophets, Bnai Torah, *not this week*

### Wednesday, June 6

**10 AM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Dramas of Jewish History: Zionism, BEBY, with Melton

**12:30 PM** Yair Manas, Business Ethics Lunch 3 of 4: Is Owning Stock in McDonald's a "Kosher" Investment, at Zeifmans, 201 Bridgeland

**7:50 PM** Yair Manas, Responsa, Clanton Park, **men**

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

**8:30 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Living Midrash: Describing Creation, BAYT, *women*

**8:30 PM** R' Baruch Weintraub, Hilchot Melachim: Mored BaMalchut,, Shomrei Shabbos, **men**

### Thursday, June 7

**10:15 AM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Practical Shabbat 1 of 3, BAYT, *collegiate women*

### Friday, June 8

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