

# Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshiyot Matot-Masei

2 Menachem Av 5772/July 21, 2012

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Thank you for reading all year! May we soon see the complete rebuilding of Yerushalayim.

## Uncomfortably Numb

Rabbi Ezra Goldschmiedt

An examination of the Torah's passages concerning cities of refuge makes one thing clear: G-d only offers sanctuary to one who kills another accidentally (and even then, only for accidents with a minimal degree of recklessness; see Rambam's Laws of Murder, chapter 6). Strange, then, is the following discussion of the sages concerning the Torah's seemingly inequitable distribution of cities of refuge (Makkot 9b):

"Three cities in Transjordan [and] three in the [much more populous] Land of Israel? Said Abbaye: In the Gilead region [of Transjordan], murderers were common, as it is written: 'Gilead is a city of evildoers, covered with footprints of blood.' (Hosheia 6:8)"

Although Transjordan was populated by fewer tribes, the Torah designated three cities for the region, as many as those designated for the western side of the Jordan. G-d, in His wisdom, felt that the Gilead region's bloodthirsty future necessitated such. But considering that intentional murderers - Gilead's "evildoers" - could not flee to a city of refuge for protection, what can Abbaye's answer possibly mean?

Many commentators struggle to explain Abbaye's answer. Rabbi Yehudah Loew (Maharal), in his work Gur Aryeh (Bamidbar 35:3), offers the following insight: The prevalence of intentional murderers in the Gilead region ultimately served as a cause for

a greater number of accidental deaths as well.

In order to be held responsible for taking a life, one must be somewhat negligent - indeed, taking refuge for completely unforeseeable accidents is unnecessary (Laws of Murder, 6:3) - and negligence is often a product of our surroundings. While one's moral character may be such that a willful act of murder is unthinkable, living in a society that tolerates, or worse, glorifies violence is bound to have an impact on the sensitivity and foresight needed to avoid negligent behaviour. The behaviour of Gilead's worst offenders chipped away at the value each individual placed on human life, and that weakening of values was enough to keep them from paying much attention to the possible consequences of their actions. Surrounded by crime, the average citizen in Gilead may not have become more predisposed to cold-blooded murder, but he was at a greater risk to take liberties with the lives of others.

It doesn't take much thought to draw lessons from Rabbi Loew's words. Living in a world where our news sources flood us with stories of crime and war, and where an overwhelming number of shows, films and video games glorify violence, we are without a doubt more numb to human suffering. Exhaustive research has been conducted to determine whether or not these influences cause active aggression, but

such studies miss the point. More urgent than isolated instances of individuals acting out, the greater population's value of life is at risk. When that is the case, speeding recklessly down the highway (perhaps while texting) is routine, euthanasia becomes plausible and empathizing with a suffering friend is that much harder. Such effects may be difficult to measure or demonstrate, but to whatever extent they exist, they deal a heavy blow to humanity.

To attempt to counteract such influences, we need to be more judicious concerning the messages we absorb from the world around us, and to take measures to better inoculate ourselves from more corrosive elements. Most important is to develop a general awareness of the phenomenon Rabbi Loew has described; moving beyond the focus on violence, we need to admit that we are influenced by our surroundings in a number of significant ways.

On the other hand, this phenomenon can work in our favour just as easily as it can work against us. While concerning many sources of influence there is good reason to be on guard, there are also opportunities to expose ourselves to the more refined values and behaviours of our environment, enabling them to become second nature to us. (For examples, see Berachot 8b and Sanhedrin 39b.) What is crucial is that we take the time to think critically, that we ensure that the initial determination of our influences come from conscious decisions rather than pure circumstance. Recognizing that we are a product of our environment gives us the ability to question the givens that comprise our value system.

May we merit to find success in shaping the world that ultimately shapes us in return.

[egoldschmiedt@torontotorah.com](mailto:egoldschmiedt@torontotorah.com)

**Changes to Toronto Torah are coming in the Fall!**

**Parshah Answers becomes Haftorah Answers  
and  
Ha'Aretz becomes This Week in Israeli History**

**Look for us on Parshat Ki Tetze, September 1!**

באיזה תאריך אירע המאורע כך שמלבד המוטיב של ספר התורה והתקופה בה התרחש האירוע אין לנו מוטיב המקשר בין הדברים. (לפי שיטת ר' אחא בירושלמי שהדבר אירע במעברות לוד, ייתכן ותהיה ראייה נוספת שכן בית חורון שכנה על הדרך העתיקה בין ירושלים ללוד.)

תשובה אחרת שהועלתה מקשרת בין ארוע זה לעשרה הרוגי מלכות. ניתן להציע כי המשנה מתארת את מעשה שרפתו של ר' חנינא בן תרדיון ששרף כשספר תורה עמו (ע"ז י"ח.). תשובה זו תהפוך את העניין למשמעותי ומייצג ביותר אך עדיין תשארה הקושיית בדבר השם השונה (מי שהרג את ר' חנינא היה אדריאנוס, בשמו של טורנוסרופוס), התאריך והעדר כל רמז מלבד שרפת התורה.

לסיום, ננסה אולי להציע רעיון כללי יותר. כפי שראינו ניתן לקחת שם של כמעט כל גוי מהתקופות הקדומות ולהגיד שאפוסטמוס הוא שיבוש של אותו שם. ניתן לצערנו גם למצוא מקרים רבים של שרפת ספר תורה בהיסטוריה של העם היהודי. הגמרא במסכת מועד קטן (כה.) מלמדת אותנו שמתו של כל יהודי מישראל שקול לשרפת ספר תורה. המשנה מנסה אולי ללמד אותנו שלמרות שאנו מתאבלים על אירועים גדולים ומשמעותיים כחורבן המקדש ושבירת הלוחות, אסור לנו לשכוח להתאבל גם על מותו של כל יהודי באשר הוא. האבל על חורבן המקדש לא צריך למונע מאיתנו להתאבל גם על חורבנם של האנשים הפרטיים. המקדש נחרב בעוון של שנתת חינם, עלינו להרבות באהבת חינם ולשים לב גם לשריפה של כל ספר תורה וכל יהודי ולכאוב את כאב אובדנם כחורבנו של בית המקדש.

[hhorovitz@torontotorah.com](mailto:hhorovitz@torontotorah.com)

המשנה במסכת תענית (ד,ו) מציינת כי אחד הדברים אשר ארעו לאבותינו בי"ז בתמוז היה ששרף אפוסטמוס את התורה. כאשר הגמרא מנסה להבין מתי אירע מקרה זה היא נותנת תשובה בת מילה אחת: "גמרא", כלומר יש לנו קבלה מדורות שכך היה. התלמוד הירושלמי מוסיף לנו מעט מידע בצינו כי מיקומו של האירוע היה במעברות (בדרך אל) לוד או במעברות טרלוסא (ירושלמי תענית כ"ג:).

רבים ניסו להבין על איזה מקרה מדובר. היו ששייכו מקרה זה לתקופת החשמונאים כאשר אנטיוכוס אפיפנס החמישי שרף את התורה כפי שמתואר בספר חשמונאים (א',א', נ"ו): "וספרי התורה אשר מצאו קרעו ושרפו באש". תשובה זו תיתכן אולם יש בה מספר בעיות. ראשית כל, השם אינו זהה, במשנה מדובר על אפוסטמוס ולא על אנטיוכוס. דבר זה יכול לנבוע משיבוש לשוני אשר התרחש עם השנים, אך לא ניתן להתעלם מההבדל. קושי נוסף נובע מכך שאין שום תיארוך שתומך בטענה כי מקרה זה התרחש בי"ז בתמוז.

סברה נוספת גורסת כי מקרה זה התרחש בתקופת הכיבוש הרומאי ומתואר על ידי יוספוס פלביוס: "קמה מבוכה חדשה בגלל מעשה שוד. כי בדרך המלך על יד בית חורון התנפלו שודדים על כבודת סטפנוס אחד מעבדי הקיסר הרומי ובזזו את כולה, קומנוס שלח את אנשי צבאו אל הכפרים הסמוכים למקום השוד וציווה לאסור יושביהם (היהודים) ולהביאם אליו. כי מצא בהם עוון שלא רדפו אחר השודדים לתפסם. ואחד מאנשי הצבא תפס את ספר התורה הקדושה באחד הכפרים וקרע אותו והשליכו אל האש....." גם כאן עולות לנו מספר קושייות. ראשית, מעשה זה נראה סתמי ואימפולסיבי עד מאוד ולא נראה כמעשה שמצדיק צום ובכי לדורות. בנוסף אין אנו יודעים מה שמו של הקצין, ואין אנו יודעים

בתענית דף כט, מסיק רב פפא: "משנכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה... הלכך, בר ישראל דאית ליה דינא בהדי נכרי, לישתמיט מיניה באב דריע מזליה".

כלומר, אדם צריך להמנע מלהכנס לדיון משפטי עם גוי בחודש אב, שכן 'מזלו רע'. הראשונים התקשו בדברי רב פפא, שהרי למדנו בסנהדרין סה ע"ב: "מעונן... רבי עקיבא אומר: זה המחשב עתים ושעות, ואומר היום יפה לצאת, למחר יפה ליקח..." כלומר, אסור לו לאדם לומר שיום מסויים מזלו יפה או אינו יפה למעשה מסויים. וכיצד יכול רב פפא לומר, כי חודש אב אין מזלו יפה לדן ודברים עם הגוי? מספר תשובות הוצעו לשאלה זו:

הרשב"א הסביר כי דברי רבי עקיבא אמורים דווקא על הקובעים את הזמנים על פי הכוכבים, ואין איסור לתלות מזל רע בגזירת ד'.

התוספות מסביר כי האיסור קיים דווקא אם מאמינים שהמזל הרע הוא שגורם לרעה. אמנם, כוונת רב פפא היא ש'מגלגלים חובה ליום חייב'. החובה באה מן הקב"ה, ורק מועד הגעתה תלוי ב'מזלו של היום'.

דומה, שניתן להסביר את הגמרא באופן אחר – אם נדייק מדברי רב פפא נראה, כי הוא אינו אומר שבחדש אב קרו אסונות רבים, ולפיכך זהו חודש רע ויש להמנע בו מפעולות מסוכנות. רב פפא אומר, שכיוון שאנו ממעטים בשמחה בימים אלו, לפיכך 'ריע מזליה'. ניתן להסביר, אם כן, שרב פפא אינו רואה במזלו הרע של חדש אב גורם, כי אם תוצאה – כיוון שאנו ממעטים בשמחה בימים אלו, על כן אין לנו את העוצמה הדרושה על מנת לזכות בדן אל מול הגוי.

(ייתכן כי בשאלה האם דברי רב פפא נובעים מדיני האבלות או ממזלו של חודש אב תלויה מחלוקת הפוסקים האם יש להמנע במשך כל חדש אב או רק עד הצום – עיין בנו"כ לשו"ע או"ח תקנ"א).

אם כנים אנו בדברינו, הרי שדברי רב פפא באו ללמד תוצאה; אך נמצאו מלמדים גם על הסיבה. כלומר, דברי רב פפא באו ללמד כי תוצאת האבלות והמיעוט בשמחה הינה חוסר יכולת לזכות בדן מול הגוי – אך הם מלמדים אותנו מהי ההרגשה אליה אנו צריכים להגיע במהלך תשעת הימים. ההבנה של גודל החסר צריכה ללוות אותנו עד כדי תחושה שאין אנו יכולים עוד; שאין שום ערך לכל דבר אחר; ושאיננו יכולים לחתור להצלחה בכל תחום שהוא בתוך העולם החרב בו אנו חיים.

וכל המתאבל על ירושלים, זוכה ורואה בשמחתה.

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

**613 Mitzvot: #185**

**On Tishah b'Av, mourn for Yom Kippur**

**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

We normally think of Yom Kippur in terms of its contemporary mitzvot: Repenting and reciting the apologetic *viduy*, fasting, not wearing leather shoes, not bathing for pleasure, and refraining from marital relations. In generations which have a Beit haMikdash, though, Yom Kippur's central focus is the *avodah* [service] performed therein, as described in Parshat Acharei Mot and incorporated in the Torah's 185<sup>th</sup> mitzvah.

The kohen gadol and several assistant kohanim are the only ones

to actually perform these rites, but the *avodah* has a major impact upon every Jew. Imagine what it must be like, to know that once the kohanim have brought the offerings and performed their associated actions, we are absolved from the sins for which we have repented! This provides the ultimate sense of closure, and the loss of that closure is one of the major reasons we mourn for the loss of the Beit haMikdash.

[torczyner@torontotorah.com](mailto:torczyner@torontotorah.com)

**Torah in Translation****Techelet Today****R' Gershon Henoch Leiner,  
The Radzyner Rebbe****Ein haTechelet, Introduction  
Translated by Yair Manas**

Some of them, out of zealousness, say they do not wish to consider this matter... They saw my previous works and lacked the ability to battle me on the fields of Talmud, and to fool people they say they do not wish to enter the matter. Is this the approach of Torah? To the contrary, whoever knows and has the ability to clarify is obligated to consider this topic. If he does not find a blemish, he is obligated to help one who is engaged in a mitzvah.

This group includes the Gaon, the head of the Beit Din of Brisk, Lithuania [Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, the Beit HaLevi], may he live long, who gave forth his reasons in rejecting the commandment of techelet to one of his followers, to write to me in his name:

His honour [Rabbi Leiner] did not explain what he found after it had been forgotten, whether the fish, or the way to extract the dye. Only after he clarifies, that something had been lost and he has found it, then we will be obligated to listen to him and wear it. However, if the fish was in existence, and extracting its dye was known since the time that techelet ceased amongst the Jewish people, but nonetheless our forefathers did not wear it, then this is as if we have a tradition from our fathers that this fish and its dye is not the chilazon and the techelet, even if the fish has the signs that the Sages gave. Even if the proofs are as numerous as the sand, they cannot negate the tradition. Only after it becomes clear that the fish or the dyeing process was forgotten at any point in time, then the halakhic evidence will serve as proof.

...With all due respect, he demonstrated that he did not look at my two articles, where I wrote explicitly in the name of the Radvaz that although the chilazon was available, we forgot which species of fish it was. We also forgot how to extract the dye, because nations stopped using dye from the chilazon because they found other beautiful blue colors that lasted and were cheaper to produce. We also explained another reason: The Jews became impoverished and went from exile to exile, and drifted far from the coast where the chilazon was found. On

Rabbi Gershon Henoch Leiner, known as the "Radzyner Rebbe," was a grandson and student of the Ishbitzer Rebbe. To Radzyner chassidim, Rabbi Leiner is known as the "Orchot Chayim," which is the name of a sefer he penned in only twelve days, without reference books, while standing trial for a fabricated charge of libel. To the rest of the world, Rabbi Leiner is known as the person who toiled to bring back techelet to the Jewish people.

Unaware that a French zoologist had discovered dye-producing snails in 1858, Rabbi Leiner set out to discover techelet. He traveled to Italy numerous times and identified the cuttlefish, a type of squid, as a likely source for the techelet dye. He could not, however, convert this ink from black to blue, so he consulted with scientists who were able to accomplish this. It is estimated that 10,000 chassidim wore this techelet in Europe before World War II. Rabbi Leiner wrote three books on the subject of techelet. Today, most authorities reject Rabbi Leiner's view.

One issue regarding the reinstatement of techelet is the lack of mesorah ("tradition") for its use. This week's Torah in Translation deals with this issue.

*ymanas@torontotorah.com*

account of their poverty, and the difficulty of the subjugation, they lacked the ability to send to the shores of the sea to acquire the chilazon. Also, decrees existed that only allowed the ruling class to wear techelet, as Ramban mentioned. Once it was forgotten from Israel for one generation, the species of snail was forgotten and the dye-making process was forgotten. We explained that in truth, until now the dye extraction to dye techelet has hidden from us, and this is what we have now found, praise G-d. First, through the characteristics that the Sages provided we now know that this is the chilazon, and second, we now know how to extract the dye

... We have recorded his words to show favour to him, because from his words it is clear that one who looks with a compassionate eye at our words and sees that the Jews did forget this matter, and that we have found this fish that is the chilazon, and that we have found the way to extract the dye, is obligated to wear the techelet of the mitzvah on his tallit.

Har haBayit ("the mountain of the house") is the site of the Beit haMikdash. We are taught that this is where Avraham offered his son Yitzchak to G-d, and that Yaakov visited this place when he fled from his brother Esav. King David purchased the site from Aronah, a righteous member of the Canaanite tribe of Yevus, and dedicated it as the future site of the Beit haMikdash.

A mishnah (Middot 2:1) provides some detail regarding the size of the surface of Har haBayit, but the information included in the mishnah is not applicable for the dimensions of today's mountaintop. Toward the end of the period of the second Beit haMikdash, King Herod expanded the area of Har HaBayit by building retaining walls – including today's "Western Wall" – and filling them in with earth. We are not even certain as to which parts of today's Har HaBayit were occupied by the Beit haMikdash.

Five gates served as points of entry to Har HaBayit in the time of the second Beit haMikdash. Two southern gates were called "Chuldah Gates", perhaps in association with the prophetess Chuldah. The "Tedi Gate" in the north was likely named for its unusual peaked structure, and this was used for passage of impure people, mourners and those who were ex-communicated. The eastern gate faced the Mount of Olives, and in the second Beit haMikdash it bore a mural of Persian Shushan. The western gate was identified with the location of the Shechinah, and it was called the "Head Gate".

The southeastern portion of Har haBayit includes a set of arch-roofed areas known as "Solomon's Stables", but those were built by King Herod rather than King Solomon; the misleading name dates to the era of the Crusades.

May we soon see a re-built Har haBayit, crowned by the Beit haMikdash.

*torczyner@torontotorah.com*

## Why were the Jewish people commanded only to attack Midian, not Moav? (Bamidbar 25:17)

Despite being antagonized by both Moav and Midian, Moshe is instructed to only attack Midian. **Rashi** explains that Moav's attack was motivated by fear as the Jewish people passed through their land. Midian on the other hand, entered a war that they had no part in. That voluntary aggression is why they were singled out for battle.

**Rav Uziel Milevsky** notes that the Jews were commanded not only to kill the Midianim, but to hate them (*tzaror*) as well. This was a response to the intermarriage between the men of Israel and the women of Midian; it was critical to eradicate the "friendship" that lingered between the two nations.

The **Torah Temimah** quotes a midrash from the *Yalkut* which learns from the double expression, *n'kom nikmat* ("You shall take revenge") that revenge should ultimately be taken upon both Midian and Moav. Moav began the fight against the Jewish people, and so Moshe thought to wage war on Moav himself, until Hashem forbade him from doing so. (Devarim 2:9) Moshe was told not to battle Moav yet, because Dovid HaMelech would come from them. Rather, Hashem told him that revenge against Moav would wait for Dovid haMelech.

## Why is it important that Bilaam was killed by the sword? (Bamidbar 31:8)

**Rashi** suggests that Bilaam's death was *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure. When attacking the Jewish people Bilaam chose to curse them verbally, using their power of prayer against them. It was appropriate that Bilaam's life be taken with the skill of his own people, which was the use of the sword.

**Netziv** argues that Bilaam's death was distinct from that of the others killed in the war with Midian, because he did not actually fight. Bilaam was executed via capital punishment, because of his earlier sins against the Jewish people.

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin, author of the **Oznyaim L'Torah**, relates Bilaam's death to the death of the Egyptians at Yam Suf. Chazal teach on the pasuk "*it consumed them like straw*" (Sh'mot 15:7) that the Egyptians were compared to straw floating upon the water because their death was not instantaneous; it was prolonged, so that they would not die before receiving the appropriate punishment. Bilaam, too, was not allowed to die of natural causes; his murder was a precise atonement for his actions.

## What significance is there to naming two cities Novach and Chavot Yair? (Bamidbar 32:41-42)

**Rashi** explains that Chavot Yair was named for Yair, son of Menasheh, because he had no children.

On the verse "*He called her [lah] Novach after his name*" **Rashi** notes that the letter "hey" in "lah" lacks a dagesh (dot), which would have been grammatically appropriate. A midrash deduces from here that, unlike Chavot Yair, the name of the city of Novach would not survive.

In **Maayan Beit HaShoevah**, Rav Shimon Schwab explains that the Torah contrasts the values of Yair and Novach and the ways in which they related to physical property. By naming his city simply "Novach", the conqueror declared that the city was part of his identity, as if they shared the name. However, in naming "the Villages of Yair", Yair emphasized that he was separate from his physical assets. He used his name to demonstrate ownership.

## For children: Which materials require tevilah in a mikvah when purchased from a non-Jew? (Bamidbar 31:22)

Vessels made from gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead all require *tevilah* (immersion in a mikvah) on a biblical level. Our Rabbis instruct us to immerse glass as well. We do not immerse earthenware objects (ie. clay, pottery).

[dzirkind@torontotorah.com](mailto:dzirkind@torontotorah.com)

## Highlights for July 21 - July 27 / 2-8 Menachem Av

*Many of our shiurim are now on summer hiatus, but opportunities remain!*

### Shabbat, July 21

**7:45 AM** R' Baruch Weintraub, Rav Kook, Or Chaim

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

**6:00 PM** Mrs. Elyssa Goldschmiedt, Matot-Masei:

Setting Priorities, BAYT, *women*

**7:10 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Daf Yomi: Niddah 61,

BAYT

**7:55 PM** R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, Pirkei Avot, BAYT

**After minchah** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Korbanot from non-Jews, Gemara Avodah Zarah, BAYT

### Sunday, July 22

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

**6:00 PM** R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic considerations in actual questions in Israel, **Hebrew**, 4 Tillingham Keep *not this week*

**40 Min Before Minchah** R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic considerations in actual questions in Israel, **Hebrew**, Clanton Park, *men*, *not this week*

**8:00 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner (A Groundbreaking Approach to Geulah) and R' Mordechai Scheiner (Navigating the Social Tensions of Jewish Life), Pre-Tishah b'Av Program at BAYT

### Tuesday, July 23

**Boker Iyun** R' Baruch Weintraub, Camp Moshava Ennismore

**1:30 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Trei Asar, Shaarei

Shomayim, *on summer hiatus*

**7:15 PM** R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, Get more out of the Parshah,

BAYT, *on summer hiatus*

**8:00 PM** Hillel Horovitz, Book of Joshua, Part 4, Bnai Torah

### Wednesday, July 25

**9:00 AM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, IPEME, Mount Sinai Hospital

**8:00 PM** R' Mordechai Torczyner, Living Midrash, BAYT, *women*, *on summer hiatus*

**8:30 PM** R' Baruch Weintraub, Hilchot Melachim: Royal Courts?, Shomrei Shabbos, *men*, *on summer hiatus*

### Thursday, July 26

**10:15 AM** R' Aaron Greenberg and R' Mordechai Torczyner, Practical Shabbat, BAYT, *collegiate women*

**Sunday-Wednesday** R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, **Daf Yomi at BAYT**