

Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah miTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Vayakhel-Pekudei/HaChodesh

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in memory of Larry Roth, who was so dedicated to Torah MiTzion

Moshe: From Outcast to Citizen

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Aharon David Gordon, one of the promoters of Labour Zionism, wrote, "We must do with our own hands all the things that make up the sum total of life. We must ourselves do all the work, from the least strenuous, cleanest, and most sophisticated, to the dirtiest and most difficult." A midrash on this week's parshah seems, at first glance, to support Gordon's ideals. Explaining a complication in the Torah's text, this midrash (Tanchuma Pekudei 11) explains, "Moshe was upset that he had not personally taken part in actually building the Mishkan... Because Moshe was upset, G-d hid information from the people and they could not make the Mishkan stand... until G-d told Moshe, 'Because you were upset about not having an active role in the work of the Mishkan, therefore, those craftsmen could not assemble it in your place.'"

The midrashic image of G-d watching the Jews stumble about helplessly is amusing, if theologically disturbing; the idea that Moshe wanted to have a hands-on role, engaging in the construction personally, is fascinating. However, it's hard to make a compelling case that Moshe valued physical labour. While the Jews were slaves in Egypt, Moshe remained in the palace; Moshe returned to Egypt not to collect straw and form bricks, but to engage in shuttle diplomacy between G-d and Pharaoh; when the Jews battled Amalek, Moshe prayed and Yehoshua led the military. Why, then, was Moshe so insistent upon having a role in constructing the Mishkan?

Last week we read about Moshe's return from Sinai, and his discovery of the Golden Calf. We saw Moshe as judge and executioner, and as third-party supplicant on behalf of the Jewish people; most crucially, we saw Moshe fail to re-integrate into the nation. Moshe must remain outside the camp, veiled, separate even from his wife, in order to communicate with G-d. Like Yonah camped outside of Nineveh, like Eliyahu living in the wilderness, Moshe becomes a pariah. However, our midrash informs us that Moshe's separation from the nation is not willing. He complies with the demands of his spiritual lifestyle, but he also insists on being part of the community.

In his youth, Moshe was forced to live apart from the Jews, in Pharaoh's palace and then in Midian. Despite this imposed distance, Moshe valued community. When Moshe could have remained in Pharaoh's palace, he went out to see his brethren. When G-d wanted to destroy the Jews after the Eigel, Moshe said, "You'll have to kill me first." When Moshe offered his description of the ideal Jewish leader, he described someone who would go out to war as part of the nation and come back from battle with the nation, who would lead as part of the Jewish people.

Community is particularly important in the context of the Mishkan, in which the Jews approach G-d as a nation, pious and not-yet-pious in unison. This theme is evident in many of the Mishkan's laws, and it is particularly striking in a nuance of the laws of shaatnez. As Jews, we are prohibited from wearing shatnez, garments which mix wool and linen. Rabbi Eliezer of

Worms, the 13th century author of the Rokeiach, suggested that wool represents the purity of the heavenly domain, and linen represents the coarse, earthly domain. Normally, we keep these two apart, but they meet in the the belt worn by the kohen. The kohen, through the work performed in the Beit haMikdash, unites Jews of every level, from the purity of the heavens to the coarseness of the earth. This is where Moshe wanted to be – not secluded with G-d in the *ohel moed*, but part of the noble, national Jewish experience, building the Mishkan.

Jews who observe halachah are compelled to stand apart from the rest of the Jewish community in many ways. We eat in kosher restaurants and kosher homes. We dance differently, we sing differently, we learn differently. At the same time, we cannot be Yonah outside Nineveh, or Eliyahu living in the wilderness. Rather, we are summoned to be like the belt of the kohen, to work as Moshe did, and find ways to join in the world around us.

After the Golden Calf, G-d performed the ultimate act of separating Moshe from the rest of the nation: HaShem said, "I'm going to destroy the rest of them, and start a new nation with you." (Shemot 32:10) Moshe dramatically rejected this Divine offer, standing his ground and insisting that his fate would lie with that of the nation. Moshe performed his mitzvot along with Bnei Yisrael, in building the Mishkan. May we, in our mishkan, remain committed to do the same.

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A TRIBUTE TO RAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

8 PM SUNDAY MARCH 10TH
YESHIVAT OR CHAIM 159 ALMORE, TORONTO
SHIUR BY R' BARUCH WEINTRAUB
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Stop any child on the street and ask why we eat matzah, and he or she is likely to quote a version of the paragraph we recite in the Haggadah, "[Matzah] recalls that our forefathers' dough did not have time to rise before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, appeared to them and redeemed them, etc." This is undoubtedly true; it comes from Shemot 12:29, and it is quoted in the Haggadah. However, it doesn't seem to present the entire picture. Hashem instructs Moshe to tell the Jewish people that on the 15th of Nisan, while still in Egypt, they should eat the korban pesach with matzah. The need for matzah had nothing to do with being short on time; the Jews were not leaving until the morning.

Rabbi David Abudraham (Seder haHaggadah uPeirushah) asked this question, and he quoted Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi) to explain that this commandment was given based on Divine foreknowledge. Knowing the future, G-d knew that the Jews would be leaving quickly, without time for the bread to rise, and therefore He told them to have matzah available with the korban pesach even before their rushed exit.

Radak's approach makes sense from G-d's perspective, but what were the Jewish people thinking when they were told to eat matzah with their sacrifice? Wouldn't they have wondered why they were commanded to eat this unleavened bread? Perhaps the Jewish people asked this of Moshe, and perhaps he responded, "Sorry, I cannot give you an answer." This was a test of their faith; would they follow G-d's instructions

without a rational explanation? And their answer, eating the matzah, was positive. This faith, demonstrated by eating the matzah, may be one reason why mystical texts refer to matzah as *lachma d'hemnuta*, bread of faith.

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Beit HaLevi to Shemot 13) said that the inability to have blind faith is the wicked son's essential flaw. This child is not inherently evil, lacking a desire to engage with the Torah community. Rather, his essential flaw is much more subtle, and can be seen from his question. "What is this service to you?" challenges the point of the korban pesach. Isn't this an antiquated practice that has no meaning for our times, and therefore one we should eliminate?

Rabbi Soloveitchik explained that this question reveals this son's belief that the mitzvot must only be followed if their reasons are given, and these reasons make sense to our rational minds. We respond to him by quoting the verse, "Because of *this* did G-d act on my behalf when I left Egypt." "This" means that I ate matzah, as I was commanded; I followed a law that didn't have a rational explanation. We are not punishing him when the Haggadah explains that we are excluding him; rather, we are stating a fact. You wouldn't have done so, and therefore you wouldn't have been redeemed; I was redeemed because I followed the Divine command with faith.

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613 Mitzvot: #248

Gluttony

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Mitzvah 248 prohibits gluttony and uninhibited consumption of food and drink. The prohibition is linked to Vayikra 19:26, "You shall not eat 'with the blood,'" as well as the laws of the *ben sorer umoreh* [rebellious son, from Devarim 21] who is accused of stealing to support a habit of uninhibited consumption.

As the Sefer haChinuch explains, gluttonous eating and uninhibited drinking can lead to impropriety. Aside from diminishing his reverence for G-d and wastefully destroying food, a person who abandons himself to feeding his appetite may

consequently abandon control of his behaviour and speech, and come to harm others.

In pursuit of greater self-control, the Ashkenazi chasidim of eight hundred years ago would fast regularly, or at least refrain from eating to satiation. (Sefer Chasidim 12) Similarly, the Rambam recommended that one not eat to the point of being completely full, but rather one ought to stop upon reaching 75% of satiation. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deiot 4:2)

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הרש"ר הירש מסביר את המילה "פקודי": "הוא בא (לשון פ.ק.ד.) בכל מקום רק במשמעות של מפקד-אנשים ולעולם אינו רחוק ממושג היסוד: חשב." חומש הפקודים הינו ספר במדבר, אם כן מה שייכת פרשה זו בספר שמות? נענה על שאלה זו דרך העלאת נקודה נוספת. ישנן מספר עובדות אשר לא היה ידוע לנו עליהם דבר עד כה שמופיעות בפרשתנו בדרך אגב כעובדות מובנות מאליהן.

"אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות אשר פקד על פי משה עבודת הלויים ביד איתמר בן אהרן הכהן." לא מצינו בשום מקום בתורה עד כאן כי הלויים יעבדו במשכן. אדרבא, אנו יודעים כי הבכורים מוקדשים מלידה לעבודת ד' (סוף פרשת בא), ראינו בפרשת כי תשא כי הלויים יזכו בשכר על פועלם בחטא העגל אך איננו יודעים מה הוא! והנה מגלים לנו בעקיפין את סיפור החלפת הבכורים בלויים, המופיע בפירוט רב בפרשת במדבר. חידוש נוסף מופיע בהמשך: "בקע לגלגלת מחצית השקל בשקל הקדש לכל העבר על הפקדים מן עשרים שנה ומעלה לשש מאות אלף ושלשת אלפים וחמש מאות וחמשים," לראשונה בתורה מופיע מספר מדויק של בני ישראל. מספר זה זהה למספר המופיע בפרשת העוסקת במפקד בני ישראל, שוב בחומש הפקודים, חומש במדבר!

גם סיום הפרשה מוביל ישירות לספר במדבר. המשכן הוקם ואך טבעי יהיה לעבור לציווי הקורבנות בספר ויקרא, אולם הפסוקים האחרונים של חומש שמות הם: "ובהעלות הענן מעל המשכן יסעו בני ישראל בכל מסעיהם. ואם לא ילה הענן ולא יסעו עד יום העלותו. כי ענן ד' על המשכן יומם ואש תהיה לילה בו לעיני כל בית ישראל בכל מסעיהם." פרשה זו ופרשיות המסעות כולן מצויות בפירוט רב בספר במדבר.

ניתן לומר כי ספר שמות פותח שני ערוצים מקבילים. ערוץ אחד לספר ויקרא העוסק בדיני הקרבנות ובדינים רבים נוספים (שנאמרו בהר סיני) וערוץ נוסף לחומש במדבר המתרכז בעם ישראל, בשבטים ובמסע לארץ ישראל. מכאן אולי גם השימוש בלשון המיוחדת של "פקודי". דבר זה בא ללמדנו כי מלבד ההכנה הרוחנית אותה בא המשכן לבסס, קרי, עבודת הקרבנות וקדושת המשכן, בניית המשכן משרתת גם מטרה נוספת והיא סיוע בהליכה הפיסית של עם ישראל לכיוון ארץ ישראל. המשכן לא כאן בכדי לנתקנו מהעולם החומרי כי אם לחברנו ולהדריכנו בעולם, במדבר, בו אנו צועדים יום יום, שעה שעה.

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**Torah in Translation
Tzeniut**

**Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein
Ha'Ishah v'Chinuchah
Translated by R' Ezra Goldschmiedt**

In the sphere of *tzeniut* (modesty), there are conventional and practical problems, as well as questions that are more a matter of education. Concerning the conventional problems, which are relevant on the level of pure halachah, these should be decided in light of specific cases and circumstances. For example: If a question would arise concerning going to movies or to theaters – which will certainly involve some prohibition in light of the fact that today, all dams have burst in these areas, and the most intimate matters are presented boldly – it would be difficult to relate to it without knowing which type of show is being discussed, and what motives exist for going. This is all the more true concerning questions that are at the core of educational values.

It is not possible to unequivocally make every matter into a question of permitted/prohibited. In the realm of *tzeniut*, the concrete issue is not the only one that is important, but that which stands behind it is also important. Toward what end need we educate this girl? Take, for example, the issue of wearing pants. Suppose that one could conclude, as a matter of pure halachah, that today there are pants that are specifically for women, and that this has become widespread among women to the point that there is no prohibition of "You shall not wear." (Devarim 22:5) Nonetheless, there is a particular goal behind a desire to wear pants, and this now becomes a question of values; behind all of this stands a goal of blurring the differences between men and women, so that a parallel phenomenon of wearing more feminine clothes and hairstyles is emerging among many men.

This matter stands in marked contrast to the spirit of Judaism, but I would not say that this is forbidden. There are matters that I am interested in encouraging, and on the other hand, there are matters which I want to minimize and oppose; however, it is not possible to unequivocally say concerning every matter that it is either permitted or forbidden. There are domains which are *devar hareshut*; that is to say, concerning them there is no clear halachah, even when they are certainly not permitted in the absolute sense as if they were neutral domains regarding which Judaism had nothing to say. I accept the viewpoint of Maimonides and Rabbenu Bechaye, that there are hardly any neutral domains that are not related to halachah and its value system in man's life, in that everything which man does has some import.

Born in France in 1933, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein grew up in the United States, studying under Rabbi Yizchak Hutner of Yeshivat Chaim Berlin and Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik of Yeshiva University. Rabbi Lichtenstein received ordination at YU, and a PhD in English Literature at Harvard University.

As one of Rabbi Soloveitchik's most dedicated students, Rabbi Lichtenstein served as a Rosh Yeshiva and Professor of English at Yeshiva University until 1971, when he became a Rosh Yeshiva alongside Rabbi Yehudah Amital of Yeshivat Har Etzion in Israel. Rabbi Lichtenstein is still connected to Yeshiva University, serving as a Rosh Kollel at its Gruss Institute in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Lichtenstein's passionate commitment to rigorous Torah study, combined with his broad worldview, makes him one of the foremost leaders of Modern Orthodoxy and an individual whose opinions are sought by many. He has written on diverse aspects of Jewish thought, and his works are known for their appreciation of nuance and complexity.

Our Beit Midrash will hold a program in Rabbi Lichtenstein's honour, celebrating his 80th birthday, on Sunday March 10th, at 8 PM, at Yeshivat Or Chaim (159 Almore Ave, Toronto).

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The domain of clothing is a domain that has great symbolic significance, and therefore it is a very sensitive matter. It is necessary to be aware of this symbolic aspect on the one hand, yet on the other hand, it is not necessary to exaggerate the matter, to turn the entire foundation of *tzeniut* into matters of dress, and certainly into women's dress alone.

The foundation of *tzeniut* is a fundamental, deeply rooted matter in Judaism. When the sages wanted to describe a man, they would say concerning him that he was *tzanua*, a humble person. This was a fundamental concept, and we are sinners in this regard when we confine *tzeniut* to a few centimeters of cotton. It is said "[What does G-d require of you? ...] *vehatznei'a lechet im Elokecha*," "to walk privately with your G-d." (Michah 6:8) We need to build the topic of *tzeniut* in its entirety. We need to explain how matters of dress and personal appearance are intertwined with this, and then it is possible to reach an understanding of the topic. It is forbidden to center all fear of Heaven and *tzeniut* on dress alone. There is no lesser lack of *tzeniut* when one reveals all the

**This Week in
Israeli History
Adar 29 1948
Operation Nachshon
Rabbi Baruch Weintraub**

29 Adar is Monday

Operation Nachshon was the first time during the wars surrounding Israeli independence that the Jewish side took the initiative into its own hands, rather than simply react to Arab actions. The operation's immediate goal was to remove an Arab siege from the sole road to Jerusalem, enabling supplies of food and ammunition to go through. For that purpose, the hills on the road leading to Jerusalem were conquered.

Two brigades, Givati and Harel, executed the operation. David Ben Gurion, acting as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, saw Jerusalem as the focal point of the war. He ordered the assembly of 1,500 soldiers, a very large number for the Jewish side, for this initiative. He explained that keeping the road open was essential in order to save Jerusalem from enemy hands. In his view, loss of Jerusalem would inflict a mortal blow upon Jewish morale.

In the aftermath of Operation Nachshon, the road was open only for ten days, for the fighters were needed in other places and were compelled to withdraw. However, three convoys reached the city during those days, providing 1,800 tons of supplies and enabling the city to survive until they could open the 'Burma Road', a new road to Jerusalem.

This operation was named for Nachshon ben Aminadav of the tribe of Yehudah, the first Jew to enter Yam Suf before it parted. (Sotah 37a) Nachshon served as an example for this operation, which bravely changed the way that the war was managed. The victory was not only in that the siege was lifted for a short while; the whole military approach shifted. From now on, the Jews would attack the enemy at his own sites, and so, with G-d's mercy, the battle was won.

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depths of his heart in public than when one reveals himself physically. There is a nakedness of the soul, and it too runs counter to "walking humbly."

Who is the prophet of our haftorah?

Yechezkel, son of Buzi, was a priest who was exiled from Israel before the destruction of the first Beit haMikdash. Some suggest that "Buzi" is actually Yirmiyahu. His book begins in Babylon, although the first half of the book (until Chapter 24) records rebukes he had issued before the destruction of the Beit haMikdash, against the sins and corruption of the Jewish nation.

After G-d's decision to destroy the Beit haMikdash, Yechezkel turns to the surrounding nations and prophesies their own destruction as a punishment for the suffering they have inflicted upon the Jewish nation. Then, from Chapter 33 to the end, Yechezkel focuses mainly on consolation for the devastated Jews, predicting their redemption and salvation.

What is the message of our haftorah?

Our haftorah describes Yechezkel's vision regarding a future Beit haMikdash to be built, and the sacrifices to be brought therein on certain special occasions. The first date mentioned is the first day of Nisan, in which a young bull should be sacrificed as a korban chatat ["sin offering"]. The haftorah continues to describe other holidays and their sacrifices, all of which are performed by the *nasi*, a political leader.

The Sages were troubled by the fact that the listed sacrifices are not the ones prescribed for those dates in the Torah itself. For example, Yechezkel says that on the first day of Nisan we will sacrifice one bull as a korban chatat, but the Torah requires us to sacrifice a korban olah ["burnt offering"] on that day.

The Talmud (Menachot 45a) records a disagreement among the Sages as to the resolution of this problem. Rabbi Yosi says that Yechezkel's offerings are special sacrifices, brought as part of the *miluim* investiture of a new Beit haMikdash. According to that view, Yechezkel referred to the dedication of the second Beit HaMikdash, and the *nasi* involved was Ezra. Rabbi Yehudah, in contrast, believes that Yechezkel was describing the service in the third Beit HaMikdash, and at that time Eliyahu will explain to us how to reconcile it with the halachot known to us from the Torah. Perhaps Rabbi Yehudah would identify Eliyahu himself as the *nasi* responsible for these offerings.

What is the connection to Parshat HaChodesh?

The special maftir for "HaChodesh" is read on the Shabbat preceding the first of Nisan, and so the obvious connection between the maftir and our haftorah is the special sacrifice identified in our haftorah for the first of Nisan.

There may be another connection, as well. The maftir of HaChodesh presents the first mitzvah given to the Jews as a nation, to calculate the calendar. This commandment requires political institutions; the ability to decide how to count months and years exists only if the whole nation accepts the authority of those who make the decision. Indeed, the institution of a separate calendar was a major step in the nation's voyage towards independence and self-government.

Our haftorah presents the other side of this coin: the responsibility of the authorities, political or spiritual (see Rashi to Yechezkel 45:17), to the people. As our haftorah says, "And the burnt offerings and the grain offerings and the libations on the Festivals and on the New Moons and on the Sabbaths, and on all the times fixed for meetings of the House of Israel, shall devolve on the *nasi*; he shall prepare the sin offering and the grain offering and the burnt offering and the peace offering, to effect atonement for the House of Israel." (45:17) The *nasi* is assigned a mission of great responsibility, the atonement for the house of Israel.

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Highlights for March 9 – March 15 / 27 Adar - 4 Nisan

Shabbat, March 9

7:45 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Reasons for mitzvot and the parshah, Or Chaim

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

Derashah Yair Manas, Shaarei Shomayim

45 minutes before minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Daf Yomi, BAYT, **not this week**

30 minutes before minchah Adam Frieberg, Choosing Life, Shaarei Tefillah

Seudah Shlishit Yair Manas, The Marlee Shul

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Avodah Zarah, BAYT, **not this week**

Sunday, March 10

9:15 AM Hillel Horovitz, Parshah, Zichron Yisroel, Hebrew (Shacharit 8:30 AM)

8:45 AM Pre-Pesach at Thornhill Community Shul

R' Baruch Weintraub, Seek and Destroy: Bedikat Chametz
Adam Frieberg, Karpas Quandaries

With breakfast

8 PM R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, You Call this Freedom?

Reflections on *Cherut* and Autonomy, BAYT

8 PM Program in Honour of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein

R' Mordechai Torczyner, Introductory Remarks

R' Baruch Weintraub, The Image of the Talmid Chacham

in the Thought and Persona of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein

Yeshivat Or Chaim, 159 Almore Ave, Toronto

Monday, March 11

8 PM Monday night Beit Midrash: Bnai Torah, Clanton Park

8 PM Hillel Horovitz, Melachim I:20-22, Bnai Torah

8 PM R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, Mesilat Yesharim, Bnai Torah, *high school students*

9 PM Hillel Horovitz, Rav Kook's Ein Ayah, Bnai Torah

Tuesday, March 12 Rosh Chodesh Nisan

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Daniel: The

Nevuchadnezzar Tree, Part 2, Shaarei Shomayim, *Mekorot*

8 PM Yair Manas, Chaburah: Sanhedrin, 33 Meadowbrook

8:30 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Rambam's Laws of Kings, Shomrai Shabbos, *men*

Wednesday, March 13

8 PM Pre-Pesach Chaburot Week 3 of 3, BAYT

• Adam Frieberg: A Shiurim Shiur: Matzah

• R' Ezra Goldschmiedt: Pesach Controversies: Quinoa

• Hillel Horovitz: Tell me what to tell my child

• R' Mordechai Torczyner: The Tehillim of Hallel

Thursday, March 14

8:30 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Sotah, Clanton Park

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