



# Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah miTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshiyot Netzavim-Vayelech

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## The King is in the Building

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

The mother of all Jewish conventions, the septennial *hakhel* gathering features an assembly of Jews of all ages. As Devarim 31:12 records Moshe's instruction, "Gather the nation: men, women, children, and the stranger at your gates." After every *shemita* year, on the second night of Succot, all who call themselves by the name Israel must assemble and hear sections of the book of Devarim read aloud. Historically, this reading was done by the king, in an area of the Beit haMikdash.

The Torah's demand that children participate in the celebration is unique among our mitzvot; in no other communal mitzvah does the Torah explicitly require their participation. The Talmud (Chagigah 3a) is sensitive to this quirk, and it suggests that the reason to bring the children is "to provide reward for those who bring them." This seems circular, though; does the Talmud mean to say that G-d created a mitzvah solely for the sake of rewarding those who fulfill it?

One might explain the Talmud to mean that those who bring their children will be rewarded by the very act of bringing them. For example: Sefer haChinuch (612) contends that *hakhel* increases our love of Torah, through the glory of this gathering. Perhaps, then, having our children at *hakhel* rewards the bringers, by inculcating love of Torah into those children.

Alternatively, Ibn Ezra (Devarim 31:12) sees the benefit of *hakhel* as educational; those who attend will be inspired to ask questions, and thereby to learn more throughout the year.

Having our curious children at *hakhel* will inspire them to inquire and learn.

However, a third benefit of bringing children may be linked to the practice of having the king conduct the public reading. Rambam does not list *hakhel* as a king's mitzvah, and indeed the Torah does not identify the reader explicitly. However, our sages (Sotah 41a) took for granted that this should be the king. [See also Yereim 233 and 266, Tosafot Yom Tov to Sotah 7:8, and Minchat Chinuch 612:2.] Certainly, there is added splendour and gravitas when the king leads a ritual, but why this ritual, in particular?

Every seven years, during the period of *shemita*, the normal rules of society cease to function: the fences surrounding fields are broken, the tithes that support the kohanim and leviyim are neglected, the hierarchical relationship between employer and employee is severed, hardworking farmers become men of leisure, and loans are forgiven and forgotten. This can constitute a healthy break for society, and a community's rules can be strengthened by this sort of periodic vacation. [See Jeffrey Rubenstein, *Purim, Liminality and Communitas*.] However, with such a hiatus we risk the possibility that the community falls in love with its lawless vacation, and forgets to return.

This may be part of the role of *hakhel*: To remind the Jewish nation that its existence is still governed by the rules and institutions of the Torah. Thus the nation reads key biblical passages: the fundamentals of our faith; the tithes

given to the kohanim, the leviyim and the needy; the monarchy; and the national covenant into which we enter at the end of the book of Devarim. (Mishnah Sotah 7:8; Tosefta Sotah 7:17) We re-commit ourselves to these obligations, and to our national structure.

Within this context, having the king perform the reading is entirely logical; the king is the heart of the command structure we reiterate with *hakhel*. And bringing our children is its own reward, for even children who are too young to comprehend the reading will realize that the entire community has assembled as one to hear the instructions of its king, and this will create a lasting appreciation for the honour of our government and society's institutions.

In less than one week, we will perform a version of *hakhel* as we gather to mark Rosh haShanah. Among the central themes of this day is the coronation of G-d as King, and this, too, is a necessary reminder. From Yom Kippur to Rosh haShanah there is very little in our lives that declares to us, "*HaShem hu ha'Elokim!*" We can go through much of our year, even while observing mitzvot, without devoting significant thought to the meaning and implications of the Divine Throne. So it is that once each year we set aside time to gather with the explicit aim of coronating our King. May we be personally and communally impacted by this grand celebration – and may we ensure that our children participate in the moment, so that they will be impacted as well.

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### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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**Who is the prophet of our haftorah?**

Yeshayah (Isaiah) was a prophet in the period leading up to the exile of the ten northern tribes of Yisrael by the Assyrians. He lived in the southern kingdom of Yehudah, and he prophesied during the reigns of Kings Uziahu, Yotam, Achaz and Chizkiyahu. According to the Talmud (Sotah 10a), he was a descendant of Yehudah and Tamar.

As the Talmud (Bava Batra 15a) informs us, the book of Yeshayah was compiled by King Chizkiyahu and associates of his. The prophecies of Yeshayah may be classified in two categories, Rebuke and Redemption; the former dominates the early chapters of the book, while the latter occupies the latter portion. The split is not clean, though; portions of the former include redemption, and portions of the latter include rebuke.

**Concluding the seven Haftarot of consolation**

We have mentioned the seven weeks of consolation, *shivah d'nichemta*, running from after Tisha b'Av until the week before Rosh haShanah, in which we read special haftarot. R' David Avudraham explains that this sequence of haftarot presents a dialogue between G-d and the nation of Israel, as expressed in the opening phrases of each haftorah:

1. The first message, "Be comforted, be comforted, My people," is a Divine address conveyed to us via the prophets;
2. To which the second haftorah

replies, "And Zion said, 'Gd has forsaken me.'" The nation of Israel seeks comfort from G-d, not from intermediaries;

3. The prophets convey our dismay to G-d in the third haftorah, which begins, "The distressed pauper is not comforted";
4. In the fourth haftorah, G-d acknowledges our request and says, "I, I am the One who comforts you";
5. G-d expresses this consolation in the fifth haftorah, "Sing, childless woman";
6. And the consolation continues in the sixth haftorah with, "Rise, shine!"
7. The Jewish nation rejoices at this Divine consolation, and responds with the seventh haftorah, "I will certainly rejoice."

**What is the message of our haftorah?**

The prophet begins by speaking on behalf of the Jewish nation, declaring our joy in Divine salvation. Immediately after that short introduction, the voice shifts to that of G-d, and His promise to act on behalf of the Jewish people. He makes three promises:

- 1) You will be restored to your glory, as a desirable city and a place of beauty;
- 2) You will be protected from your enemies, who will take advantage of you no longer;
- 3) Even when you lack all human allies, G-d will crush your foes.

Our haftorah concludes with a brief declaration by Yeshayah that G-d has always been with us, His children. For all eternity, He will carry us forward.

**Getting married?**

Historically, many Jewish communities recited our haftorah on a week of an *aufruf*; this was based on Yeshayah 62:5, which compares the joy of a bride and groom with the joy of the reunion between the Jews and Hashem.

On 'normal' weeks, this haftorah overrode the regularly scheduled haftorah. On weeks which required a special haftorah, such as Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, some communities would read both, while others would eliminate the *aufruf* haftorah. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 285:7, 428:8; Beit Yosef Orach Chaim 144 *medalgin*; Mishneh Berurah 285:20, 425:12; Aruch haShulchan Orach Chaim 285:13)

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**613 Mitzvot: #295-296****Bringing Honour to the Name of G-d**

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

We are taught that Hashem created us so that we might be challenged to grow spiritually, and part of that growth comes through aiding the spiritual development of the world around us. We are given two mitzvot in this regard: a prohibition against doing anything to bring dishonour to G-d's Name (#295), and an obligation to actively bring honour to G-d's Name (#296).

A Talmudic passage (Yoma 86a) defining desecration and sanctification of the Divine Name offers the following practical direction for us: "You shall love HaShem, your G-d" – The Name of Heaven should be beloved because of you. One should read, study and serve Torah scholars, and his interaction with others should be gentle. What will people say of him? Fortunate is his father who taught him Torah, fortunate is his rebbe who taught him Torah. Woe to the people who have not learned Torah. This person was taught Torah, and see how pleasant are his ways, how refined are his deeds! Regarding such a person Yeshayah 49:3 says,

'And He said to me: You are My servant, Israel, by whom I am glorified.'

There is some debate as to the breadth of the mitzvah of sanctifying G-d's Name; does this require us to spread the honour of G-d's Name among non-Jews, or only among Jews? On one hand, the mitzvah of sanctifying G-d's Name comes from a parochial verse, Vayikra 22:32, "And you shall not desecrate My holy Name, and I will be sanctified in the midst of the Children of Israel." On the other hand, Yechezkel 38:23 speaks more broadly, "And I will be elevated and I will be sanctified and I will be known before the eyes of many nations." Likewise, the Rambam's formulation of the mitzvah (Aseh 9) is broad, "We are instructed to publicize this true faith in the world, and not to fear any harm." For more material related to this question, see Sanhedrin 74b-75a and Yerushalmi Bava Metzia 2:5.

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## Biography

### Rabbi Natan Adler

#### Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Rabbi Natan HaCohen Adler was born in Frankfurt, Germany, on December 16, 1741. Already as a child, he was known for his special abilities. When he was eleven years old he met the Chida (Rabbi Chaim David Azulai), who was visiting Frankfurt. The Chida, deeply impressed by the child's wisdom, praised him, using Melachim II 4:9, "Behold, now I know that he is a holy man of G-d".

Rabbi Natan became the disciple of Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk, author of Pnei Yehoshua, and Rabbi David Tebbly Katz, who later became the Chief Ashkenazi rabbi of London. Rabbi Natan felt himself to be a son of Eretz Yisrael; he changed many of his customs from those of Ashkenaz to those of Eretz Yisrael, including using Sephardic pronunciation and the Halebi edition of prayer. He also encouraged kohanim to bless the people every day, as is done in Israel. Rabbi Natan was also deeply engaged in Kabbalistic study and ritual, and is reported by his famous student, the Chatam Sofer, to have performed miracles (Chatam Sofer, Orach Chaim 197).

All of these unusual behaviours alarmed the Jewish leadership of the time, still traumatized by Shabbtai Tzvi's false messianism. Eventually, in 1779, the local rabbis and congregational leaders intervened and prohibited, under penalty of excommunication, assemblies in Rabbi Adler's house. Rabbi Adler moved to Boskowitz, Moravia, but after a few years, in 1785, he was forced to leave his new city. He returned to Frankfurt, and in 1789 the threat of excommunication was renewed. The ban was repealed only a short time before his passing in 1800. Rabbi Adler left behind no children.

After Rabbi Adler's passing, as the name and greatness of his student Chatam Sofer became known all over Europe, the disputes were forgotten and Rabbi Adler's Torah began to spread. This was done almost solely from his students' writing, as Rabbi Natan himself refused to write down his novellae. He is reported to have explained this recalcitrance by saying that writing Oral Torah was only permitted in order to prevent it from being forgotten, and he never forgot anything.

Rabbi Adler's yahrzeit is 27 Elul, this coming Monday.

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## Torah and Translation

### The Passing of Tzaddikim

#### Rabbi Natan Adler

recorded by his student, R' Avraham Yehudah Schwartz  
Derech haNesher II, Parshat Netzavim  
Translated by Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

"אתם נצבים היום כולכם לפני ד' אלוקיכם". כתיב "אנכי עומד בין ד' וביניכם להגיד לכם את דבר ד'... ולא עליתם בהר". על פי מה שקבלתי ממורנו רבי נתן אדלר ז"ל, שכל ימי הרב אין התלמיד זוכה לחזות בתכלית נועמו הראוי לו, כמו שלא זכה יהושע להאיר לפני לבנה עד אחר סילוקו של משה רבינו עליו השלום, ולא נזכרה השראת שכניה על יצחק עד אחר "ויהי אחרי מות אברהם ויברך אלוקים את יצחק". ויעקב כל זמן שהיה בבית אביו לא נודע ממנו דבר ד' עד "ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע אז ויחלום והנה ד' נצב עליו".

הנה כי כן אומר אני, משה רבינו עליו השלום אמר להם אז בהר סיני הייתי אני מעבד שלא זכיתם להתקרב, אבל היום יום סילוקי אין שלטון ביום המות, היו מתקרבים מאד. והיינו בהר סיני אמר "אנכי עומד בין ד' וביניכם" כמחיצה המבדלת, "ולא עליתם בהר" במדרגה שתעלו אל ההר לפני ד' ממש. אבל היום, ביום סילוקי, "אתם נצבים היום כולכם לפני ד' אלוקיכם" בלי מחיצה ומסך המבדל.

ועל דרך זו יתפרש מקרא שכתוב "וידו שמים פלאך ד', אף אמונתך בקהל קדושים" (תהלים פט, ו), כי אמרו חז"ל הקב"ה שמח בבא נפש צדיק למעלה ככלה חדשה, והנה גם למטה נתוסף אור להנשארים. וידוע כי סילוקן של צדיקים נקרא פלא (ישעיהו כט, יד), על כן אמר "וידו שמים פלאך ד'", שהשמים למעלה יודו על פלאך – סילוקן של צדיקים – ככלה חדשה, "אף אמונתך בקהל קדושים" למטה. כל זה אני כתבתי כפי קבלתי ממורנו רבי נתן אדלר ז"ל, ודברי פי חכם חן.

"You are all standing this day before Hashem, your G-d." (Devarim 29:9) It is written (Devarim 5:5), " And I stood between Hashem and you at that time, to tell you the word of Hashem... and you did not go up on the mountain." According to what I received from our teacher Rabbi Natan Adler zt"l, while the Rav is alive, the student does not merit seeing the final pleasantness he deserves. As Yehoshua did not merit to shine like the moon until after Moshe Rabeinu passed away, and as no manifestation of the Shechinah is mentioned regarding Yitzchak until Avraham passed away, after which it says "and G-d blessed Yitzchak (Bereishit 25:11)". Also Yaakov - as long as he was in his father's home, the word of G-d was not known to him, until he left Beer Sheva, and then he dreamed a dream in which G-d stood upon him.

In the same way, I say that Moshe Rabbeinu, let peace be upon him, told them: At Mount Sinai I prevented you from drawing near, but today is my last day, and "there is no authority on the day of death (Kohelet 8:8)," and you shall become very close. That is what he meant by saying that at Sinai, Moshe "stood between you and G-d," as a separating wall, "and you couldn't ascend to the mountain" to a level which would have placed you directly in front of G-d. But today, in my last day, you all stand today before Hashem, without any wall or screen separating.

In the same manner, another verse should be explained: "And the heavens acknowledge Your wonder, Hashem, also Your faithfulness in the congregation of holy ones." (Tehillim 89:6) Our sages have said that Hashem rejoices when a righteous person's soul comes to heaven, as one is happy with a new bride. Also, on earth there is an added light for those who remain behind. It is known that the passing of the righteous is called 'wonder' (see Yeshayah 29:14). Thus Tehillim 89:6 says, "And the heavens acknowledge Your wonder" – the passing of a righteous person is as the arrival of a new bride. And even on earth, "in the congregation of your holy ones." All that I wrote as I received from our teacher Rabbi Natan Adler zt"l, and "the words of a wise man's mouth find favour."

## This Week in Israeli History: Elul 29, 1944 Creation of the Jewish Brigade

Josh Gutenberg

*The 29th of Elul is Wednesday*

At the onset of World War II, the Jews living in Palestine wanted to take part in fighting the German forces. The World Zionist Organization, on behalf of the Jews of Palestine, offered to assist the British army, but requested a separate Jewish battalion that would fight under the Zionist flag. Neville Chamberlain, the prime minister of England, rejected the request, because he was concerned it would give the Zionist movement legitimacy.

Despite the British government's refusal to institute an independent Jewish battalion, many Jews living in Palestine joined the British army. They were dispersed among several different units, and were based in Northern Africa performing guard duty. However, they were unsatisfied. They wanted a more active role in the battle, and wanted to fight as an independent Jewish force.

In 1944, as the atrocities of the Holocaust came to light, Winston Churchill and the British Mandate consented to

the plea of the Zionist Jews. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of Elul, 5704 (September 20, 1944), the British government officially instated the Jewish Brigade Group as an independent battalion under the rule of the British Army. They were the only unit among Allied forces to fight as an independent Jewish force. They were deployed to Northern Italy in 1945 and participated in some of the final battles against the German forces.

The Jewish Brigade Group remained active even after World War II, and served as a source of hope for many of the Holocaust survivors they encountered. They were instrumental in teaching many of the survivors about Jewish life and the Zionist efforts in Palestine. They also helped many survivors immigrate to Israel, and assisted with smuggled weapons for the *haganah*. The Jewish Brigade Group was disbanded in 1946, though not before making significant contributions to the future state of Israel.

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### Highlights for August 31 – Sept. 3 / 25 Elul - 28 Elul

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>SHABBAT AUG. 31</b>				
<b>7:45 AM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Reasons for Mitzvot	Or Chaim	
<b>10:20 AM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Parshah	Clanton Park	
<b>Derashah</b>	R' Yair Manas		Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>6:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
<b>7:10 PM</b>	Adam Frieberg	Are Omens Allowed?	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>Post-minchah</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Kosher Cheese	BAYT	
<b>MOTZAEI SHABBAT</b>				
<b>10:30 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub Mrs. Pnina Weintraub	Can you go home again? Sichah and Violin	Kehilat Shaarei Torah	<b>Selichot to follow</b>
<b>11:15 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Singing to G-d in Silence	Shaarei Tefillah	<b>Selichot to follow</b>
<b>SUNDAY SEPT. 1</b>				
<b>9:15 AM (8:30 Shacharit)</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Parshah Revisited	Zichron Yisroel	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>6:30 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Attributes of Divine Mercy	4 Tillingham Keep	<b>Mixed, Hebrew</b>
<b>After maariv</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Attributes of Divine Mercy	Clanton Park	<b>Men, Hebrew</b>
<b>MONDAY SEPT. 2</b>				
<b>7:30 AM Slichot/ Shacharit</b>	<b>YARCHEI KALLAH with our Beit Midrash</b>	8:45 Rav Shlomo Gemara Chavruta time	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>The shiur is open to men and women</b>
<b>8:45 - 11:30 AM Program</b>		10:30 R' Baruch Weintraub: Shofar: Hear and be Heard		
<b>8:30-10:00 PM After maariv</b>	Avreichim	Chavruta Opportunities	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Community Beit Midrash Night</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Parshah		
<b>9:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner R' Baruch Weintraub	Medical Halachah Principles of Faith		
<b>TUESDAY SEPT. 3</b>				
<b>40 minutes pre-minchah</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Nefesh Shimshon: Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur	Clanton Park	
<b>After maariv</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Rambam's Hilchot Teshuvah	Clanton Park	