

Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Yom Kippur

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The Clarity of Confusion

Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig

In the sixteenth chapter of Vayikra, the Torah presents us with the intense and intricate Beit HaMikdash service for Yom Kippur. In some ways it is stripped down: the kohen gadol doesn't wear his normal clothing, but rather the clothing of an apprentice kohen. In other ways it is built up: the sending of a scapegoat to the howling wilderness of *Azazel* exists on no other day. It is dramatic, unique, and confusing.

We are taught at this moment in the Torah that Aharon and, in turn, his descendants are not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies at any desired moment, but rather must come at appointed times after having followed a set of instructions. In communicating this requirement, the Torah states, "With this shall Aharon enter the Sanctuary: with a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering." In the most immediate sense, 'this' refers to a preparatory service comprised of incense and animal sacrifices. Nonetheless, 'this' creates a degree of confusion; surely an alternative wording could have been more clear and direct. Yet, no such alternative was utilized.

A midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 21:6) presents Rabbi Yudan's explanation: 'this' refers to the merit of numerous mitzvot that accompanied the kohen gadol into the Holy of Holies. Various and diverse merits are all bundled together by the word 'this': The merit of the Torah, which Devarim 4:44 calls 'This'. The merit of Shabbat, which Yeshayah 56:2 calls 'This'. The merit of

Yerushalayim, which Yechezkel 5:5 calls 'This'. The midrashic list continues, but the picture is clear. 'This' has changed the nature of the kohen gadol's entrance into the Holy of Holies. No longer is there just an entrance procedure, there is also a list of merits meant to escort him. One might have thought that the simpler clothing of the kohen gadol on this day would communicate a theme of, "Bring yourself, nothing more." Rabbi Yudan's explanation turns that on its head.

So often in our daily lives we promote simplicity. "Simple is beautiful," "Keep It Simple and Straightforward" and so on. Yet here, in the Torah, on the most momentous day of the year, we seem to promote complexity, which could easily lead to confusion. How can it be that we are meant to be confused at any point in time, let alone when we stand and petition for forgiveness before G-d?

Perhaps simplicity is *not* always the ideal. As hard as it may be to accept, complexity and its associated confusion can be a powerful vehicle for learning. Growing research indicates that confusion can promote better learning. Confusion pushes us to work harder and to think deeper. It backs our rational minds into a corner and challenges us to find a way out. In truth, it can even cause failure, but failure is also a learning tool; in the classroom we even chase after it in order to learn. And now find the kohen gadol standing at the threshold of the Holy of Holies accompanied by

confusion. He stands in the midst of a learning experience, and so do we when we contemplate his situation.

Part of the kohen gadol's entrance procedure into the Holy of Holies was igniting incense. The Torah describes the powder as *dakah*, finely ground. Rabbi Yaakov Baal HaTurim focuses on *dakah*, and notes that it shows up in two places in Tanach: here, and in G-d's rebuke of Eliyahu HaNavi. (Melachim I 19:12) Eliyahu HaNavi had demanded harsh justice for the straying of the Jewish people, and as some explain the passage there, he is taught that G-d isn't found in explosive, fiery rebukes. Rather, His presence is experienced through a *kol demamah dakah*, a still, thin voice. Rabbi Yaakov Ba'al HaTurim fuses these two sources and writes that G-d would reveal His presence, "a still, thin voice," during the Yom Kippur service, in the cloud of smoke from the incense.

The implication of Rabbi Yaakov Baal haTurim's comment is breathtaking. Confusion is deliberately incorporated into this most important of moments. The kohen gadol stands in the Holy of Holies in a cloud of incense smoke, a cloud of confusion. Our experience of Yom Kippur, of forgiveness, of having a relationship with G-d is framed by the confusion that is inherent in life and in our inability to truly grasp G-d. At the highpoint of closeness to G-d we are told to bring our confusion with us, to embrace it, and to grow through it.

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OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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BEIT MIDRASH

We are grateful to
Continental Press 905-660-0311

Akiva: The Story of Rabbi Akiva and His Times (also published as *Akiba*)
By Rabbi Meir (Marcus) Lehmann
Originally published in 1881 in the weekly German Jewish Newspaper *Der Israelit*. Adapted multiple times, most recently by Pearl Zucker, Feldheim Publishers, 2003.

The Author

Rabbi Meir Lehmann was a Rabbi in nineteenth century Germany. A noted scholar, he published an acclaimed commentary on Masechet Berachot in the Talmud Yerushalmi. He received ordination from Rabbi Yehuda Leib Cohen Rappaport, head of the Prague Beit Din, as well as a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Berlin. His novels, including *Akiva*, are meticulously researched and based primarily on Talmud, midrash, and other Jewish sources.

Facing a growing Reform Jewish population rejecting Torah for secular literature, Rabbi Lehmann recognized a need to ensure that the teachings of our sages would be made accessible to all, young and old, beginner and advanced alike. He brilliantly wove together a story while filling each page with Torah, bringing famous and lesser-known stories (aggadot) from the Talmud and midrashim. In putting his story together, Rabbi Lehmann conveys fundamental principles of Torah, the historical disputes between our sages,

and many laws, from the practical to the obscure.

The Book

Akiva is a work of historical fiction about the life and times of one of our greatest sages, Rabbi Akiva. However, it differs from ordinary historical fiction; rather than sacrifice historical accuracy for a more readable story, Rabbi Lehmann is more interested in disseminating Torah through the story, than in telling the story.

Every chapter is filled with Talmud and midrash. A beginner can appreciate the storyline, its imagery and historical personages, which bring a new life and context into many of the historical events about which we learn and which we celebrate on holidays and fast days. A more advanced reader will appreciate the subtlety with which stories, familiar from Torah study, are woven into the book, giving context and understanding which may have otherwise been lacking.

Rabbi Lehmann also utilizes various commentaries to help the reader understand deeper and relevant meanings of a number of more challenging stories. A new chapter will occasionally start by giving background context to the Torah that will follow, ensuring that everything will be properly understood in its place. This may not be the best option

if one is trying to tell a story. However, the story, with its page-turning description of life in ancient Israel, Rome, Egypt, Babylon, and Greece, its clear imagery of fields and valleys, bathhouses and street festivals, empires and palaces and destructive armies, fear, excitement and intrigue, study halls and feasts, is secondary. The main goal is to teach what life was like for the Jews and our sages in those times, and more importantly, to present the Torah that was learned and taught, and how it shaped the Torah we all know and love.

Akiva challenges and empowers each of us to take our Torah learning to a new level, enhancing our Judaism, and our relationship to Torah, Hashem and Israel. *Akiva* teaches us, from his first encounter with Torah to the moment of his murder by Roman General Tinius Rufus, the truth inherent in living life in accordance with the precepts of our Holy Torah.

Room to Grow

Throughout the book I felt that annotation would have been a tremendous benefit for the interested, advanced reader. To not only recognize the story, but to be able to revisit that same story “inside” the original text, and read the various commentaries first hand, would have enhanced my reading experience.

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613 Mitzvot: #401: Consistency

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

G-d told the Jews to bring daily morning and evening offerings of animals, flour, wine and olive oil when dedicating the Mishkan, and to continue these offerings even after that dedication period. (Shemot 29:38-42) Later in the Torah, G-d reiterated and amplified this obligation. (Bamidbar 28:1-8; see Ramban there) This is called the *korban tamid*; *Sefer haChinuch* counts it as the Torah’s 401st mitzvah.

Rambam (Aseh 39) identifies the morning and evening korbanot as a single, unified mitzvah, as the Torah presents them. Ramban views them as two separate mitzvot, morning and evening, because each korban may be brought in the absence of the other. (*Hasagot, Shichichat Lavin*)

The community as a whole is responsible to bring these korbanot when there is a Beit haMikdash, even though the kohanim and communal leaders are the formal overseers. These korbanot may only be brought from communal funds; this is one of the primary purposes of the annual half-shekel collection. Use of communal funds for this purpose was a major point of contention with the Sadducees, who insisted that wealthy individuals could dedicate the korban themselves. (Menachot 65a)

Sefer haChinuch views this mitzvah as part of a collection of mitzvot which preserve, via our actions, continual awareness of G-d. As the mezuzah surrounds our space, so the korban tamid surrounds our time, morning and evening, reminding us of our Creator. Indeed, the morning *korban tamid* is the

first offering of the day, and no offering may be brought after the *korban tamid* in the evening. [There may be rare exceptions; see Tosafot Beitzah 5a, *Lechem Mishneh* to Hilchot Kiddush haChodesh 3:5, and *Minchat Chinuch* 5:6.]

We are taught that the merit of the *korban tamid* kept Jerusalem safe from attack. (Sotah 49b) Indeed, G-d distinguishes this korban from almost any other mitzvah; as noted in midrashim to Bamidbar 28:2, the Torah introduces most mitzvot with a command to “Speak to the Jewish people,” using the verb *emor* or *daber*. For this korban, though, G-d tells Moshe, *Tzav*, “Command”, demanding special alacrity. [But see Psikta Zutrita Vayikra pg. 55b]

Calculating from the start of the Mishkan era to the destruction of the first Beit haMikdash, we conclude that the *korban tamid* was brought daily for a startlingly long period of 850 years. This may explain why the halting of the *korban tamid* on the 17th of Tammuz is included on the same talmudic list of tragedies as the Roman invasion of Jerusalem and the creation of the Golden Calf; the *korban tamid* is central to Jewish religious identity. [For more on the central religious importance of the *korban tamid* and its altar, see Ketuvot 10b, Tanchuma Tetzaveh 10, and Yalkut Shimoni Terumah 373.] This also teaches us a lesson in consistency; 2600 years ago, Lao Tzu said, “A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step,” but before him the Torah said, “A streak of eight hundred and fifty years begins with a single day, morning and evening.”

Biography

Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik
Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik (a.k.a. *the Gri"z* and *the Brisker Rav*) was born in 1886 to a family which may best be described as the 'royal family' of Jewish Lithuanian Torah study. Grandson to the famous Rabbi Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik, who was the author of *Beit HaLevi* and founder of the dynasty, and son of the even more famous Rabbi Chaim HaLevi Soloveitchik, author of a revolutionary commentary on Rambam's Mishneh Torah and head of the renowned Yeshiva of Volozhin, "Velvet" was destined for greatness from youth. He was crowned as the Rabbi of Brisk after the passing of his father in 1918, and he quickly became known throughout Europe for his sharp analytic ability.

At the start of World War II, Rabbi Soloveitchik was trapped in the Polish city of Krynica, where he was staying during a vacation. He succeeded in escaping to Eretz Yisrael, where he became a prominent leader in the Anti-Zionist Haredi community. He opposed strongly the establishment of the State of Israel, and later instructed his disciples not to partake in voting for the Knesset. He even criticized the Chazon Ish for meeting with Prime Minister David Ben Gurion to exempt yeshiva students from army service. Nonetheless, he once commented that while participating in the Israeli elections is not such a mitzvah as to require Rabbi Aharon Kotler to come from the United States (to vote), it is also not such a transgression as to require the Satmer Rebbe to specially come from there (to oppose voting). He also maintained good relations with Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog and Rabbi Moshe Charlap, who were among the leaders of Religious Zionism in his time.

Rabbi Soloveitchik's halachic approach was true to his family line; he aspired to understand deeply the concepts behind all different opinions, and then to try to satisfy all of them. He always strived to understand the text from within itself, never using thoughts or reasoning from without. In a famous eulogy, his nephew, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, identified him as a model for the pure "Brisker" learning method.

Rabbi Soloveitchik passed away in 1959; his *yahrzeit* is on Erev Yom Kippur.

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Torah and Translation

The Fear and Joy of Yamim Noraim

Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik

Chiddushei haGriz al haTorah #75

Translated by Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

בטור הביא הגמרא דאין אומרים הלל בר"ה משום דספרי חיים וספרי מתים נפתחים לפני ואתם אומרים הלל וכו' ומביא להלן המדרש דאין ישראל כאומות העולם שלובשים שחורין וכו' אבל ישראל לובשים לבנים ואוכלים ושותים וכו' ובטוחים שיעשה להם נס. וצ"ב אחר דאין אומרים הלל בר"ה משום דאינם ימי שמחה וא"כ מה זה דשמחים ובטוחים שיעשה להם נס ואיך אומרים שני מאמרים בקנה אחד.

והנראה בזה לפי מה שכתב הרמב"ם בפירושו המשניות להרמב"ם ר"ה פ"ד מ"ו, וזה לשונו לפי שלא היו קוראים הלל בר"ה ולא ביום הכיפורים לפי שהם ימי הכנעה ופחד וכו' ומברח ומנוס אליו יעו"ש. מבוואר כאן שהימים האלו הם ימי פחד מורא והמורא הוא גדול עד כדי בריחה שמחמת גודל המורא צריך לברוח, ואין מקום לברוח כי אם למנוס אליו.

... וביאור הדברים נראה דהנה בעת שאדם נמצא בצרה צריך שיהיה לו ביטחון שיעזרהו ד', אמנם אם לא ידע ויכיר הצרה שנמצא בו ולכן אין לו פחד ויש לו ביטחון הא ודאי לא נקרא ביטחון... ונמצא לפי"ז דכמתד הכרתו בצרתו כן מדת בטחונו ולא יותר, והן הן דברי הרמב"ם, שהימים האלו הם ימי פחד ומורא ופחדו כ"כ גדול עד שאין לו שום אפשרות ומרגיש שמוכרח לברוח ואחר שהגיע להכרת מצבו עד כדי כך יוכל לזכות למדת הבטחון שהוא מנוס אליו באופן נמצא שנמצא דהמנוס אליו שייך רק אחרי שהוא מרגיש שהוא צריך לברוח.

ובזה מבוואר דברי הטור דאה"נ עיקר הימים הם ימי פחד ומורא עד אשר אין מקום לומר שירה כלל, אבל כאשר רק יגיע לידיעה זו ומכיר צרתו אז שמחים ובטוחים בהם ויתברך שיעשה נס, ורק אז הוא דשייך בטחון.

The Tur (Orach Chaim 584) cited the Talmud (Rosh haShanah 32b), stating that we do not recite Hallel on Rosh Hashanah because, "Books of life and death are open, and how could Hallel be recited?" [However,] he then cites a midrash (Yerushalmi Rosh haShanah 1:3) stating that Israel is not like the other nations, who dress black, etc. [when in judgment]. Israel dresses in white, and eats and drinks, etc. for they are certain a miracle will be performed for them. This requires explanation: if we do not recite Hallel for these are not days of joy, where it this joy and confidence that a miracle will be performed for us? How may one declare these two statements as one?

And what seems appropriate here is based on Rambam's commentary to the Mishnah Rosh haShanah 4:6: "Hallel is not recited on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for these are days of submission and fear... and escaping and running to Him." It is explained here that these days are days of fear and awe, and the awe is so great that you must escape, but there is no place to escape, but to run to Him.

... The explanation seems to be that when a man is in trouble he must be confident that G-d will help him. However, if he is not aware of the trouble he faces, and therefore he does not fear, that is certainly not considered trust [in G-d]... We see that to the extent that one recognizes his trouble, such is the extent of his trust [in G-d], and no further. That is what Rambam said, that these are days of fear and awe, and the fear is so great that there is no way out. One feels compelled to flee, and once one comes to recognize his position to this extent, then he will be able to acquire the trait of trust – meaning, to run to G-d. Therefore, running to G-d is only relevant after one realizes he must run.

With this the words of the Tur are explained. Yes, these are days of fear and awe, so that there is no room for singing at all. But when one only reaches this knowledge and understands his trouble, then he is happy and confident that G-d will perform a miracle for him, and only then is trust in G-d relevant.

12 Tishrei is Monday

The second truce following Israeli's 1948 War of Independence left Egyptian forces in the Negev, occupying more than 50% of the land which the United Nations had originally designated for a Jewish state. Count Folke Bernadotte, a UN representative, proposed that Israel surrender the Negev to a new Palestinian state. The resident Egyptian forces attacked IDF posts, captured additional land and denied passage to Jewish convoys.

The Israeli government determined that military action was needed, but they did not want to openly defy the UN. On 12 Tishrei (October 15) 1948, after notifying the UN, Israel sent a supply convoy through the Negev. They exploded a gas tank, triggering deafening noise. The Egyptians took the bait and fired on the convoy, and the IDF responded with Operation Yoav; the operation was named for Yitzchak "Yoav" Dubno, a commander who had died in defending Kibbutz Negba.

General Yigal Allon structured the IDF's activities to take advantage of overextended Egyptian positions in the Northern Negev, and exposed Egyptian supply lines. He began with an Air Force strike on Egyptian planes at El-Arish, giving the IDF air superiority. Commandos then mined railways to disrupt Egypt's forces, and Givati soldiers drove a wedge between Egypt's battalions. Over the course of seven days until a UN-ordered truce, and through additional skirmishes in the ensuing week, Operation Yoav opened access to the Negev. The result was Israeli control over large areas, including Beer Sheva, Beit Guvrin, and Ashdod.

At the time of the truce, soldiers responsible for opening up the approaches to Jerusalem and cutting Egyptian communications were able to see Jordanian-occupied Gush Etzion, but they were ordered not to proceed further. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion also refused to permit an attack into the mountains of Chevron, due to an agreement with King Abdullah and due to fear of British involvement.

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Highlights between Yom Kippur and Succot

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
YOM KIPPUR				
11:30 AM	R' David Ely Grundland	Penetrating the Depths: Understanding the Avodah	Shaarei Shomayim	For teens
Between musaf and minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Introduction to the Book of Iyov (Job)	BAYT Milevsky Beit Midrash	
Sunday Oct. 5				
8:45 AM	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachah:	BAYT	
9:15 AM	R' Shalom Krell	Kuzari	Zichron Yisroel	With light breakfast

Coming up after Succot

The Jew at War
 with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner
 10 AM Wednesdays October 22 - November 26
 at Beth Emeth Bais Yehudah, 100 Elder St. Toronto
 Email rabtannenbaum@sympatico.ca to register; there is a fee

YU Torah MiTzion Midreshet Yom Rishon
 at the Forest Hill Jewish Centre, 446 Spadina Rd. #206
 10 AM Sunday November 9
Yitzchak and Rivkah: Love at First Sight? with Mrs. Sara Munk
The Ice Bucket Challenge: Modern Tzedakah? with Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig

10 AM Sunday November 16
The Lord of the Flies and Amalek with Mrs. Yael Gelernter
Of Birds, Parents and the Shechinah with Rabbi David Ely Grundland

YU Torah MiTzion Medical Halachah
 Refusing Medical Treatment:
 When does Medical Recommendation Equal Halachic Obligation?
 with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner
 8:45 to 10 AM Sunday November 9