



Parshat Vayeshev 21 Kislev, 5775/December 13, 2014 Vol. 6 Num. 13

To sponsor an issue of Toronto Torah, please email [info@torontotorah.com](mailto:info@torontotorah.com) or call 647-234-7299

**A Tale of Two Tunics** **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

Bereishit is filled with haberdashery, from Eden chic to Esav's treasured garb, to Tamar's costume, to Yosef's palace ensemble. The clothing of Bereishit protects, conceals, deceives and honours. Perhaps the best-known clothing in this book, though, is Yosef's *Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, a.k.a. his *ketonet pasim*.

Yosef's tunic is not the only biblical *ketonet*, though; another *ketonet* is a critical part of the kohen's uniform. (Shemot 28:39-40) Indeed, the Talmud connects these two *ketonet* garments explicitly, saying: "The kohen's *ketonet* atones for bloodshed, as Bereishit 37:31 says, 'And they slaughtered a goat, and they dipped [Yosef's] *ketonet* in the blood.'" (Zevachim 88b)

The talmudic logic seems to be that Yosef's brothers dipped his *ketonet* in blood to provide "evidence" of his death, and so the kohen's *ketonet* atones for bloodshed. This formula is odd on many levels, but here is a basic challenge: We are taught (Rosh haShanah 26a) that an entity which represents a person's criminality cannot also defend him. For example, the Kohen Gadol does not wear gold when he enters the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur; gold is reminiscent of the Golden Calf. So how can the kohen's *ketonet* simultaneously recall the bloody deception surrounding the sale of Yosef, and yet atone for bloodshed?

Let us look more closely at the sale of Yosef. The sons of Leah may have shunned Yosef because of Rachel. (Bereishit 37:2) They may have been turned off by Yosef's reports on their bad behaviour. (ibid.) Certainly, they were antagonized by Yosef's dreams. (ibid. 37:5-11) However, a passage in the Talmud (Shabbat 10b) contends that the sale of Yosef was actually

triggered by two *sela* of wool, which marked his *ketonet* as unique.

As depicted in that talmudic passage and in Rashi's commentary there, Yosef's *ketonet* was not luxurious, and the brothers would not have envied such a small difference. Rather, the brothers were outraged by the fact that there was any difference, that Yaakov had marked this son as holding a **unique role that they could not share**. In their eyes, setting Yosef apart was an unjust attack on their legitimate membership in the family.

Long before the Enlightenment taught humanity to question received tradition regarding class and gender identity, Korach (Bamidbar 16) and King Uziahu (Divrei haYamim II 26) challenged the law that one must descend from Aharon in order to act as a kohen. Today, it is nearly universally axiomatic that "separate but equal" is unjust; as Justice Earl Warren wrote, separate is "inherently unequal." Our moral compass demands that human beings choose their destinations. Thus it is no surprise that Yosef's brothers would resent Yaakov's act of segregation, and that the Talmud would criticize it.

But separation is fundamental to Judaism. At the genesis of Creation, G-d separates light and darkness, land and sea, and He stresses that life forms are to exist "according to their species". G-d separates Avraham and Sarah from their family. G-d says of the Jews, "I have separated you from the nations" (Vayikra 20:26), and then He separates the Levites from the rest of us. (Bamidbar 8:14) How can we expect a humanity that resists segregation to respect a religion that honours it? How can the same *ketonet* represent the flawed separation of Yosef, and the sanctified separation of the kohen?

Perhaps a meaningful difference between flawed separation and acceptable separation is the identity of the Separator. As the Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachot 5:2) notes, establishing distinctions requires intelligence - and establishing distinctions which shape the lives of human beings requires the Supreme Intelligence of Hashem. Hashem is the One who distinguishes between sacred and mundane, between light and dark, between the Jews and the nations, and between the seventh day and the six days of creative activity.

The kohen's *ketonet* highlights Divine separation. True, the *ketonet* represents the bloodshed which resulted from separating Yosef. However, in donning this tunic the kohen restores the power of separation to G-d, righting an ancient wrong. Further, the nation that accepts the kohen demonstrates its acceptance of legitimate, Divine separation. [And see Talmud Yerushalmi Yoma 7:3, which adds that the *ketonet* also atones for *kilayim* - a mixing of species which G-d has deemed separate.]

Realistically, life requires that we assign roles, defining confidants, spouses, political leaders, religious authorities, and so on. We need to define eligibility. But to the extent possible, we must respect the impact of distinctions, and practice humility, minimizing our meddling. G-d has assigned different roles to different nations, to different families of Israel, and to different genders; may we refrain from arrogating the power of segregation and creating novel restrictions and boundaries. May we channel our efforts into accepting our Divinely assigned roles, and fulfilling the tasks vouchsafed to us.

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

**OUR BEIT MIDRASH**

**ROSH BEIT MIDRASH** RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER

**AVREICHIM** RABBI DAVID ELY GRUNDLAND, RABBI JOSH GUTENBERG, YISROEL MEIR ROSENZWEIG

**COMMUNITY MAGGIDEI SHIUR** RABBI ELAN MAZER, RABBI BARUCH WEINTRAUB

**CHAVERIM** DANIEL GEMARA, SHMUEL GIBLON, MEIR GRUNWALD, BJ KOROBKIN, RYAN JENAH, JOEL JESIN, SHIMMY JESIN, AVI KANNER, YISHAI KURTZ, AKIVA MARESKY, MITCHELL PERLMUTTER, ARYEH ROSEN, DANIEL SAFRAN, JESSE SHKEDY, KOBY SPIEGEL, EFRON STURMWIND

**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
TORAH MITZION  
BEIT MIDRASH**

**We are grateful to  
Continental Press 905-660-0311**

***L'Or haHalachah***

**Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin  
Kol Mevasser Publishers**

**First Edition 1946, Second Edition  
1957, Third Edition 2004  
Hebrew**

**About the book**

Most books dealing with Jewish law fall into two categories: 1) books that offer practical rulings and 2) books that contain creative Torah insights. The former establishes whether something is pure or impure, permissible or forbidden. The latter serves to explain and analyze Talmudic texts to understand the concepts and principles contained within. Rabbi Zevin explains that *Le'or haHalachah* does not fall into either of the two categories. His goal is neither to offer practical rulings nor to suggest innovative insights to explain difficult biblical and talmudic passages. Rather, his goal is to present and summarize *halachic* issues and problems as they appear in the Torah, Talmud and rabbinic literature.

The book contains a collection of Rabbi Zevin's articles that were initially written for different journals and newspapers. As a result, there is no thematic connection between the different articles. In each edition, new articles appear, which were written after the previous edition was published. The

latest edition also includes an index of the articles' sources found in the Torah, Talmud and Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*.

The variety of topics included in the book demonstrates how Jewish law permeates every aspect of human life. There are several articles dealing with uniquely Jewish topics such as the laws of *Shabbat*, *Shemittah* and studying Torah, but there are articles that discuss Jewish law regarding global issues like war. There are even two articles analyzing how Jewish Law would view Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

Rabbi Zevin's creativity is evident throughout the book. He organizes and presents the material in a coherent fashion, as he brilliantly weaves together sources in rabbinic literature to paint a full picture of the matter at hand. He also writes on topics that are hard to find anywhere else, such as the status of snow in Jewish law and the legal significance of the number 1,000.

**Rabbi Zevin's genius**

An example of Rabbi Zevin's genius can be illustrated by the following story. On a certain Wednesday in the 1940's, it was snowing in Jerusalem. Those who attended his regular class

were fascinated by the snow, and requested that Rabbi Zevin tell them all the sources related to snow in Jewish law. He agreed to their request and delivered a class on snow. Later that night he wrote an article based on the shiur, and had it published for the upcoming Shabbat. This story portrays Rabbi Zevin's true brilliance for, in a matter of hours, he was able to collect sources relating to snow from areas such as Shabbat, *mikveh*, *netillat yadayim*, covering an animal's blood after its slaughter and ritual impurity, and write a comprehensive article on the matter.

**Other books from this author**

Rabbi Zevin's greatest undertaking was his work as the founding editor of the Talmudic Encyclopedia. The project started in 1946 and continues to this day. He also authored *Moadim le'Halachah*, which is a collection of articles published on the Jewish holidays. There, too, the purpose is to present and summarize different issues related to the Jewish holidays, without offering practical rulings on the issues. Another of his works is *Ishim v'Shitot*, a scholarly work of modern rabbinic biography, which was reviewed in Toronto Torah 6:2.

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

**613 Mitzvot**

**#415: Fearless Judges and Teachers**

**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

We have already studied the care that judges must take in safeguarding a fair judicial process (such as Mitzvot 233, 234, 235). We have also seen a warning to judges not to prejudice their decisions due to bribes and favours they anticipate from litigants. (Mitzvah 83) In addition, the Torah warns judges, "You shall not fear any person." (Devarim 1:17) As a midrash on that verse explains dramatically, "Lest you say, 'I am afraid that this person might kill me, or kill a member of my household, or burn my haystack, or chop down my trees,' the Torah teaches, 'You shall not fear any person.'" (Sifri Devarim 17)

In truth, a judge who feels intimidated is able to avoid handling a case, but he must recuse himself early in the process. As Rambam records as law, based on Sifri (ibid.) and Talmud (Sanhedrin 6a), "Before you hear the litigants' positions, or when you have heard their positions but you still don't have a sense of which way the law leans, you are permitted to say, 'I will not deal with you.'" (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Sanhedrin 22:1 and Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 12:1)

Not all judges may recuse themselves, though. Per Rambam and Shulchan Aruch (ibid.), "A judge who is appointed over the public is required to deal with them." Radvaz (Rambam ibid.) explains that this is because the judge will be defended by the community. Rabbi Yoel Sirkis (Bach Choshen Mishpat

12) explains differently, that the communal judge must address the case because the alternative would collapse the judicial system altogether. [For more, see Rashba 2:344.]

The law mandating fearlessness is applied beyond the narrow case of a judge. As Rambam notes, based on the Talmud (ibid.), it applies to a student who is sitting before the judges and has an insight into the case, and decides not to speak because he is intimidated by the status of the judges. He is required to present his position. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Sanhedrin 22:1)

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilbershtein (Chashukei Chemed to Sanhedrin 6a) applies this verse to entirely non-judicial settings. A teacher of Torah asked Rabbi Zilbershtein whether he is permitted to skip certain sections of Jewish law when teaching a text, if the students would not understand those laws and would take offense. Rabbi Zilbershtein responded that the teacher should teach those laws, and pray for Divine assistance in explaining them properly; he should not fear his students.

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

**Biography**  
**Rabbi Yissachar Teichtal**  
**Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig**

Rabbi Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal was born in 1885 into a Sanzer Chassidic family, in Hungary. After studying under a number of renowned scholars, Rabbi Teichtal became the Rabbi of Pishtian, Czechoslovakia, where he remained until the Nazis invaded in 1938. Upon the invasion of Pishtian, Rabbi Teichtal and others hid in a local Beit Midrash before fleeing to Budapest.

In Budapest, Rabbi Teichtal wrote his seminal work, *Eim HaBanim Semeichah*. In *Eim HaBanim Semeichah*, he sets out to demonstrate the importance of living in Eretz Yisroel and establishing a Jewish state there, arguing that both of these represent the Will of G-d. Written under harsh conditions while hiding in an attic in Budapest, the book represents a tremendous shift in Rabbi Teichtal's outlook on Zionism. Before the outset of World War II, he had been strongly aligned with the fiercely anti-Zionist mindset that had come to define the Chassidic communities of Hungary. However, the shattering of Jewish life in Europe led him to rethink these beliefs and consequently adopt a Zionist approach. It is interesting to note that not all subscribe to this chronology of Rabbi Teichtal's theological shift. For example, Isaac Hershkowitz of Bar-Ilan University posits that the change began earlier. For more, see Hershkowitz's doctoral thesis - <http://goo.gl/Z99IKr>.

Lesser known is Rabbi Teichtal's two-volume collection of halachic responsa, *Mishneh Sachir*, which covers nearly every area of practical halachah. Interspersed throughout the responsa are various thoughts, essays, and speeches on various topics including Jewish thought and holidays. The first volume was published in 1924 and the second in 1940. The title, *Mishneh Sachir*, is a hint to Rabbi Teichtal's name (יששכר-שכיר) as well as to Devarim 15:18, "double the pay of a worker." This is deeply representative of Rabbi Teichtal's dedication to Torah, as a prayer: "G-d, please allow me the merit to serve You both night and day!"

Rabbi Teichtal was murdered on 10 Shevat (January 24) 1945 while on a transport train traveling from Auschwitz to Mauthausen.

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

**Torah and Translation**  
**The Spoils Captured by the Chashmonaim**  
**Rabbi Yissachar Teichtal**  
**Mishneh Sachir II 322:2**

Translated by Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig

בס' יוסיפון (פ"כ) מסופר שכל השלל שלקחו בנצחון האויבים חלקו לעניים ולא לקחו לעצמם מתתיהו ובניו. ונראה לי הטעם פשוט, כמו שמצינו באברהם אבינו בעת שנצח הד' מלכים לא רצה ליקח "מחוט ועד שרוך נעל" (בראשית יד:כג), פירש השל"ה (פ' לך לך, דרך חיים) מפני שכל הנצחון היה מחוץ לטבע ממעשה נסים לא רצה ליהנות ממעשה נסים. כדאיתא במס' תענית (כד, א) דאסור ליהנות ממעשה נסים. כמו כן נצחון של החשמונאים היה מעשה נסים, ע"כ חלקו לעניים כדי שלא ליהנות מהם.

עוד י"ל עפי"ד המלבי"ם, שפי' בטעם שלא רצה אברהם ליקח שום דבר מהשלל, כדי שלא יאמרו שאברהם אבינו ע"ה בשביל הממון ירד למלחמה עמהם, ע"כ לא נטל כלום, ובזה הודיע שיש אלקים שופטים בארץ המציל עבדיו, וכל כוונתו היתה בשביל קידוש ד'. וזה שאמר (שם יד, כב) "הרמותי ידי [אל ד' קל עליון]", ר"ל מה שידו היתה רמה בנצחון בזה נתודע שיש קל עליון קונה שמים וארץ, וזה היתה תכלית כונתו שלחם עמהם, אבל לא חשב כלל על הממון, על כן כל מה שיטול אפילו מחוט ועד שרוך נעל הוא מכל אשר לו, כי הממון אינו שלו שלא ירד בשביל זה כלל, עיי"ש שהאריך בנועם מליצתו בס' ארצות השלום (דרוש א).

וכמו כן הכא במלחמות החשמונאים עם היוונים, כל תכלית כונתם היתה רק משום תורתנו הקדושה ומשום מצוות ד' שרצו לבטל מידינו, ועל זה ירדו למלחמה עמהם, ועל כן אילו נטלו מהביזה היה מקום לחשוב שכונתם לא היתה בעד ד' ותורתו, על כן לא נטלו כלל רק חלקו הכל לעניים, ובזה הודיעו טהרת כונתם שסכנו עצמם רק עבור קידוש שמו יתברך.

The Book of Josephus relates that all of the spoils that [the Chashmonaim] took upon conquering the enemy, they portioned out to the poor. Matityahu and his sons took nothing for themselves. The reason appears simple to me, as we find with Avraham who, when he conquered the four kings, didn't want to take "from string to shoestrap" (Breishit 14:23). The *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* [Rabbi Yeshayah Horovitz] explains that the entire war [that Avraham fought] was beyond the laws of nature, miraculous, and Avraham didn't want to benefit from a miracle, as is taught, "It is forbidden to benefit from a miracle." (Taanit 24a) Similarly, the victory of the Chashmonaim victory was a miraculous event, and so they distributed the spoils of war amongst the poor in order to avoid deriving benefit from them.

We could also view it according to Malbim's explanation that Avraham didn't want to benefit from the spoils in order that people should not accuse him of descending into war for the sake of the spoils. Instead, he took nothing, demonstrating that there is a just G-d in the world who rescues His servants. Avraham's entire mindset was to sanctify G-d's name, as he stated, "I lift up my hand [to G-d]" (Bereishit 14:23), meaning his victory made known the fact that there is a G-d who created the heavens and earth. This was his sole intent in going to war; he didn't think about money at all. Anything that he took, down to the very threads and shoelaces, was from his own possessions, for the spoils were not his as he had not gone to war for them at all. See *Sefer Artzot HaChaim* (Derash 1), where he explains at length in his pleasant language.

Here too, regarding the Chashmonaim's war against the Greeks, their focus was exclusively for our holy Torah and the mitzvot that the Greeks desired to erase from us. For this alone they waged war. Had they taken from the spoils, there would have been potential for people to think that their focus was not upon G-d and His Torah. Therefore, they didn't keep any of the spoils, but instead distributed it all amongst the poor. They thereby demonstrated the purity of their intentions, endangering themselves solely for the sanctification of G-d's Name.

**This Week in Israeli History: 22 Kislev, 1949: Jerusalem, Eternal Capital** **Rabbi David Ely Grundland**

*22 Kislev is Sunday*

Leading up to the establishment of the State of Israel, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted in favour of the Partition Plan for Palestine, dividing British Mandate Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The plan also included a stipulation that Jerusalem would become an international city.

While recognizing the limitations of the partition plan, Jewish leadership agreed to it. The Arab leadership rejected it, declaring an unwillingness to compromise on any level of territorial division. Multiple Arab nations immediately launched a war against the Jewish population, preventing the plan from being officially implemented. David Ben-Gurion declared an independent State of Israel on May 14, 1948. Heavy fighting ensued in Jerusalem between the Jewish state and the Jordanian Legion.

The Jews were pushed out of the old city of Jerusalem, but maintained control over most of the newer areas of the city. In the Fall of 1949, the United Nations started deliberating

on implementing the partition plan as it pertained to Jerusalem. On 22 Kislev 5710 (December 5 1949), Prime Minister Ben-Gurion expressed in no uncertain terms that Israel and Jerusalem were inseparable and called Jerusalem “the eternal capital of Israel”. Referencing the Declaration of Independence, he reiterated that Israel is committed to guaranteeing “freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture. It will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions. It will be loyal to the principles of the United Nations Charter.” Ben-Gurion expressed that the internationalization of the city would not serve to further peace.

One week later, on December 13, 1949, Ben-Gurion further stated that historically Jerusalem had always been the capital of Israel, and only because of a lack of technological infrastructure had the current Israeli government established itself in Tel Aviv. Following Chanukah of that year, the Knesset and all Israeli government offices were moved to their ultimate home, in Jerusalem.

*dgrundland@torontotorah.com*

**Weekly Highlights: Dec. 13 – Dec. 19 / 21 Kislev – 27 Kislev**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Dec. 12-13</b>				
4:10 PM	R' Josh Gutenberg	Parshah and Kugel	BAYT	
6:00 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	The Shabbos App of 1837	Forest Hill Jewish Centre	<b>Young Professionals Dinner</b>
After hashkamah	R' David Ely Grundland	Torah Temimah	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Main Shul</b>
10:30 AM	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	Meshech Chochmah	Clanton Park	
11:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Joseph and his Brothers: Victims of Miscommunitexting	Forest Hill Jewish Centre	<b>Morning Derashah</b>
12:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	How the Internet Alters Torah: The Good, the Bad, the Beautiful	Forest Hill Jewish Centre	<b>Kiddush Luncheon</b>
Before minchah	R' Josh Gutenberg	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Not this week</b>
6:30 PM	R' David Ely Grundland	Parent-Child Learning	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Sun. Dec. 14</b>				
8:45 AM	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachah: Electric Chanukiyah	BAYT	
9:15 AM	R' Shalom Krell	Kuzari	Zichron Yisroel	<b>With light breakfast</b>
10 AM to 11:20 AM	<b>Rabbi Chaim Strauchler</b> <b>Mrs. Rachel Javasky</b>	<b>The Big Story of a Small Miracle Women and The Chanukah Miracle</b>	<b>Bnai Torah</b>	<b>Midreshet Yom Rishon for women</b>
8:30 PM	R' David Ely Grundland	Gemara: Mind, Body, Soul	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Tues. Dec. 16 1st Night of Chanukah</b>				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	The Book of Iyov (Job)	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Thu. Dec. 18 3rd Night of Chanukah</b>				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	The Book of Yehoshua: Fraud Revealed	49 Michael Ct. Thornhill	<b>For women</b>
<b>Fri. Dec. 19 4th Night of Chanukah</b>				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Advanced Shemitah: The Harvest	Yeshivat Or Chaim	