

# Toronto Torah

## Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshiyot Vayakhel-Pekudei/Parah 23 Adar, 5775/March 14, 2015

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לזכר נשמת אבינו מורינור ' משה בן דוד שלמה ז"ל

### United We Stand

Rabbi David Ely Grundland

"United we stand and divided we fall". When Aesop taught this message at the conclusion of his *The Four Oxen and The Lion* fable, he made a point that has been a defining feature of nations, and of Israel. Thankfully, in contrast to the fable, it is often the case that when faced with a "lion", we Jews unite. Unfortunately, when there is no perceived "lion" we are divided.

As we read news and opinions regarding the upcoming Israeli election, we are often saddened by the deep divisions that permeate all sectors of Israeli society. However, we can be simultaneously inspired in that almost everyone shares the goal of a flourishing nation – albeit, with very different approaches toward their attainment. Those differences need not divide us; as shown by classic sources as well as great Chassidic insights into Parshat Vayakhel, our differences can actually unite us.

As told in our parshah, Moshe Rabbeinu singles out his great-nephew, Betzalel, to be the chief artisan of the mishkan. A midrash (Tanchuma, Vayakhel 3) relates that the nation complains to Moshe, accusing him of nepotism in his appointments. Moshe responds by declaring that Hashem has appointed Betzalel (Shemot 35:30; and see Berachot 55a). One might ask why Betzalel was chosen, though, given the potential for challenge. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra (Shemot 35:32) explains that while many craftsmen were masters of their respective trades, each one contributing to the mishkan in their own ways, Betzalel was a master of all

trades. It was under Betzalel's leadership that the nation could unite.

Rabbi Mordechai Yosef from Izbitz (Mei HaShiloach I Vayakhel) adds that when it came to building the mishkan, no one could look disparagingly upon another. Upon each person's completion of their best work, they were enamoured, not by their own craftsmanship, but by the way in which everything came together into a single structure, as though completed by a single person. They recognized that each person's work contributed to the whole, such that if any piece – whether a joint or the Ark – was missing, the Divine presence could not dwell there.

The concept of each individual having a specific role is the case not only in building a physical structure, but also in the loftiest of spiritual pursuits. The Talmud (Chagigah 13a) teaches that some talmudic sages were proficient in *Maaseh Merkavah* (Account of the Divine Chariot) and had no knowledge of *Maaseh Bereishit* (Account of Creation), and vice-versa.

Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib of Gur (Sfat Emet, Vayakhel 5637) takes this complementary unity a step further. He explains that at our source we are already united. It was only through the sin of the Golden Calf that we became divided, and it was through the building of the mishkan that we were reunited. He learns this from a very interesting juxtaposition in last week's and this week's parshiyot.

Immediately after enumerating all the vessels of the mishkan, and preceding

the creation of the Golden Calf, the Torah teaches about the eternal covenant between Hashem and Israel: Shabbat. (Shemot 31:16-17) Despite the fact that we already learned about Shabbat in Parshat Beshalach and Parshat Yitro, in Parshat Vayakhel the Torah again teaches us about prohibited labour on Shabbat, and its correlation to the labour of the mishkan. (Talmud Bavli Shabbat 70a, Talmud Yerushalmi Shabbat 7:2). The Sfat Emet explains that just as we reunited through the building of the mishkan, so we can reunite through the observance of Shabbat after the construction process is concluded.

Shabbat is a unique opportunity when even the most mundane physical actions become elevated to holiness. Eating a Shabbat meal, putting on nice clothes, walking to shul or spending a little extra time together with friends and family, our individual actions are united in building a mishkan through our observance of Shabbat. We each observe with our own unique actions, and Shabbat unites us as a nation, under Hashem. Together, let us build Hashem a dwelling!

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### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

#### ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

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**Festival of Freedom – Essays on Pesach and the Haggadah**  
**Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik**  
**Ktav 2006**

**Who is the author?**

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt”l (1903-1993), or “The Rav”, as he was reverently known by his numerous students, does not need any introduction. A proud, worthy descendent to generations of great Torah scholars and a once-in-a-generation Jewish thinker, Rabbi Soloveitchik headed RIETS, the rabbinical seminary of Yeshiva University, for almost half of a century, a period during which RIETS ordained more than two thousand rabbis. The memory of his personality, and the force of his teachings, are still carried and cherished by many in our communities, who had the merit to learn from him first-hand.

**Why is this book unique?**

While all of Rabbi Soloveitchik’s books, on halachah or aggadah, are wonderful treasures, his posthumously collected essays about Pesach, *Festival of Freedom*, deserves a special place among them. Pesach, as the Rav declares in the essay opening the book, was a festival that attracted him from a very young age – “I used to feel stimulated, aroused, inspired... to

surrender to a stream of inflowing joy and ecstasy.”(pg. 1) He concludes this personal note, stating, “All these memories are at the root of my religious *weltanschauung* (view of life - BW) and experience.”

The first essay, like the rest of the book, is dedicated to connecting these experiences, named by the author as *halachah shebalev* – halachah of spiritual perceptions, with the *halachah shebasechel* – an intellectual, formal and abstract form of learning for which the Rav was famous.

Thus, apart from providing an excellent source of ideas and teachings about Pesach, this book also affords us a glimpse into the inner experiences and thoughts of a spiritual giant; indeed, to trace the emotional aspects which lie behind the abstract structures.

**What is the book’s central theme?**

As its name suggests, the book’s main theme is Freedom – what does it mean, and how is it attained. The Rav repeats, again and again, that freedom is not measured by the things I can do, but by the things I can do but refrain from doing. In his words: “There is only one way for man to free himself from all his restrictions, from all his fears, from all his phobias. Surrender

to G-d frees man... all man has to do is to exert his ability to give up pleasure.” (pg. 51)

Hence, the freedom meal – the Seder – is an exercise in strict order. “Only when man displays the unique ability of withdrawing from positions of triumph can his food become the bread of G-d.” (pg. 12) Indeed, according to the Rav, this message is an essential part of the exodus story. “Fear of slave upheaval haunted all the tyrants... the brutish drive for vengeance, for gratification of the satanic in man, was irresistible. Did anything of that kind happened on the night of the exodus? ... Nothing of the sort. Not one person was hurt, not one house destroyed. The liberated slaves had the courage to withdraw, to defy the natural call of the blood. ‘None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.’” (pg. 36).

Finally, this concept is not only a teaching of the past or a mission for the present, but also our hope for a better future, when the human state would “no longer be equated with the field or the jungle. It has been redeemed by human moderation, teleology, and generosity.” (pg. 172)

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**613 Mitzvot: #430: Birkat haMazon**

**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

After describing the support G-d gave us in the wilderness, including the manna, Moshe told our ancestors of the bounty they would find in the Land of Israel. He then instructed them, “You shall eat, and you shall be full, and you shall bless Hashem, your G-d, for the good land He has given you. (Devarim 8:10)” Rambam (Sefer haMitzvot, Aseh 19) and *Sefer haChinuch* (Mitzvah 430) take this as a biblical mitzvah to “bless” G-d when one eats a meal involving bread, or a filling, grain-based meal.

The concept of “blessing G-d” is theologically challenging; our normal concept of a blessing is that we pray to G-d to help the recipient of the blessing, and how could this apply when offering a blessing to G-d? How are we to understand our blessings, as well as talmudic passages like the account of Hashem requesting that Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha offer Him a blessing (Berachot 6b)?

*Sefer haChinuch* (430) suggests that our blessing is actually an act of making ourselves worthy of blessing: “It is only a declaration meant to awaken our souls via the words of our mouths, [to recognize] that He is the blessed One, combining all that is good. As a result of this... we merit, through this good deed, to draw His blessings upon ourselves.”

Per Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (Horeb 672-673), the blessing is a means of dedicating ourselves to our missions as G-d’s delegates in this world, whether in the biblical

blessing after meals or in other, rabbinically instituted blessings: “Our Sages regarded it as their duty not only to call us from the turmoil of life to a gathering to G-d but to approach us in *life itself* in order to make vivid for us the thought of G-d in life and to help us towards an active life in the service of G-d... The thoughts of G-d acquired in the Divine inner worship must be held on to firmly in active life, so that life be not divided for us into hours of prayer and hours of activity, standing before G-d in the former but in the latter not walking before Him. What would the Divine inward worship be worth if it did not return us to active life in a holier, stronger, more G-d-filled state, and if it did not transform our whole life into Divine service?”

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (Nefesh haChaim 2:2-3) explained the concept of blessing G-d mystically. He rendered “Baruch” as a word associated with growth and multiplication, so that our blessings are actually prayers that G-d’s presence in this world should grow and spread.

In a fourth vein, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein contended that our blessing is actually a means of triggering Divine gifts for ourselves. He wrote (Aruch haShulchan Orach Chaim 5:1), “It is not that the Blessed One needs our blessing, G-d forbid; rather, it is like reflected light, causing Him to send His blessings to us... for all affairs depend upon our actions.”

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## Biography

### Rabbi Yoel Sirkis

#### “Bach”

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Rabbi Yoel Sirkis was born in Poland in about 1561, and he grew up in Lublin. His family was scholarly, and connected with leading rabbinic figures; as a youth he once read the Haftorah on the last day of Passover before the great Rabbi Shlomo Luria [Maharshah]. His family's last name was actually “Jaffe”, but it was changed to “Sirkis” in reference to his mother, Sarah.

Married twice, Rabbi Sirkis had at least two sons and three daughters. His sons became scholars of note, and two of his sons-in-law went on to become dayyanim [communal judges]. One of them, Rabbi David haLevi, wrote the important “Turei Zahav [Taz]” commentary to Shulchan Aruch.

A leading halachic authority, Rabbi Sirkis is famous for his “Bayit Chadash [Bach]” commentary on the classic halachic work Tur. Rabbi Sirkis also wrote the “Hagahot haBach” textual notes on the Talmud, and hundreds of published responsa. Rabbi Sirkis served as Rabbi of several Polish communities, including Lublin, Brest-Litovsk and Cracow. His primary love, though, was his work of teaching pupils, whom he often supported from his own funds. His students included the authors of the great halachic texts Tzemach Tzedek, Nachlat Zvi and Avodat haGershuni.

Rabbi Sirkis passed away in 1640, in his native Poland. His son, Shmuel Zvi, wrote of his father's dream of travelling to Israel, but this dream was not realized. A few years ago, Rabbi Elijah J. Schochet published a biography of this Torah giant, “Bach: Rabbi Joel Sirkis - His Life, Works and Times”.

The yahrtzeit of Rabbi Sirkis is the 20<sup>th</sup> of Adar.

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## Torah and Translation

### Selling Chametz but Keeping it at Home

Rabbi Yoel Sirkis, Bach Orach Chaim 448:2

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

כתוב בתרומת הדשן בסימן קי"ט ראוי להורות לתת לגוי מחוץ לבית וכו' משמע שצריך שהחמץ עצמו יהא חוץ לבית וכ"כ במהרי"ל שלא יהא הישראל כמו נפקד בחמץ מן הגוי...

ובמדינה זו שרוב משא ומתן הוא בין שרף ואי אפשר להם למכרם לגוי מחוץ לבית בפרט למחזיקים באורג"א יש להתיר בענין זה שימכור לגוי כל החמץ שבחדר וגם החדר עצמו ימכור לגוי.

אלא כיון דקיימא לן דאין הגוי קונה קרקע אלא בשטר עם נתינת הכסף כדאיתא בפרק קמא דקידושין (יד ב) וטריחא מילתא לכתוב שטר גם אולי יעלה על דעת הגוי להחזיק בחמץ שלא להחזירו כיון שהשטר בידו ואיכא הפסד מרובה צריך שיחא מתנה עם הגוי ושיאמר לו אני מקנה לך גם החדר בכסף זה שאתה נותן לי אף על פי שלא כתבתי לך שטר על מכירה זו דאמירה זו מהני דקני לה וכדמשמע בחושן משפט סוף סימן קצ"ד...

ומיהו צריך למסור לגוי גם המפתח דאם לא כן כיון דדעת ישראל לחזור ולקנות חמץ זה אחר הפסח הוה ליה כמשכיר ביתו... ותו כיון שהמפתח ביד ישראל ויכול ליכנס לחדר וליטול החמץ משם לא סמכה דעתיה דגוי דמכירה גמורה היא...

כל שכן שלא יניח הישראל חותמו על החדר שלא יכנס בו הגוי הלוקח שאם כן אין כאן מכירה שהרי מעשיו שמניח חותמו על החדר הם מבטלין האמירה שאומר לגוי הריני מוכר לך במכירה גמורה ויש לכוּפן ולנדותן על כך...

It is written in Terumat haDeshen 119, “One should instruct them to give the chametz to the non-Jew outside the house,” indicating that the chametz itself must be outside the home. And so wrote Maharil, that the Jew should not be as one who is charged with holding the non-Jew's chametz...

In this land, where most commerce is in whisky and one cannot sell it to a non-Jew outside the home, and especially for those who hold a license for selling liquor, there is room to permit sale to a non-Jew of all chametz in the room, as well as the room itself.

However, since we rule that a non-Jew only acquires land with a deed and presentation of payment (Kiddushin 14b), and it would be burdensome to write a deed, and because this [presenting a deed] might also lead the non-Jew to hold the chametz and not reverse it since he is holding a deed, which would involve great loss, therefore, one must make a condition with the non-Jew. One should say to him, “I am assigning this room to you in exchange for the money you are giving me, even though I have not recorded a deed for this sale.” This declaration will be effective for this transaction, as per Choshen Mishpat 194...

Still, one must give the non-Jew the key as well. Otherwise, since the Jew intends to re-purchase this chametz after Pesach, he would just be as one who has rented out his home... Further, since the Jew holds the key and can enter the room and remove the chametz, the non-Jew does not view it as a full sale...

Certainly, the Jew may not place his seal on the room so that the non-Jewish purchaser will not enter. Were one to do this, there would be no sale, for his deed – placing his seal on the room – would cancel the “I sell to you completely” declaration he makes to the non-Jew. One should compel and ex-communicate them for such conduct...

## This Week in Israeli History: 23 Adar, 1959 Night of the Ducks

Rabbi Josh Gutenberg

### 23 Adar is Shabbat

In the late 1950's, tensions were high on Israel's borders with Syria and Egypt. To test the army's readiness for war, the IDF organized several drills requiring reserve troops to report to their units. These exercises were publicized well in advance, and the reservists were always waiting near a radio for the announcement to begin mobilizing. However, the IDF's top staff wanted to simulate an emergency situation to see how the reserve troops would react without previous notification of the drill.

At 9 PM on 23 Adar, 5719 (April 1, 1959) Israeli radio stations announced the call-up of several units, concluding with code words indicating where they should go. The country went into hysteria. Many believed that Israel was at war with Egypt and Syria. International radio stations spread the news that Israel was preparing to go to war. In response, the Egyptian and Syrian armies called up their

own troops to prepare for battle. The government was then required to invest much effort to calm the nation and convince the international community that they were not going to war.

Several factors contributed to the hysteria. Unlike the previous drills, mid-level officers were extremely energetic in their activities. Also, the call-up announcement was made in nine different languages. Further, it took several tries for the Prime Minister to contact the army's Chief of Staff, which delayed the assurances of the Israelis and the international media that this was only a drill.

Two high ranking army officials, Meir Zorea and Yehoshafat Arkabi, were forced to resign from their posts after the incident. The night was named the "Night of the Ducks" because "duck" was a code word used to call up the troops.

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## Weekly Highlights: Mar. 14 – Mar. 20 / 23 Adar – 29 Adar

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>Mon/Tues/Wed</b>				
<b>6 AM, 8:20 AM</b>	R' Josh Gutenberg	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<i>Rabbi's Classroom</i>
<b>שבת Mar. 13-14</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	Meshech Chochmah	Clanton Park	
<b>Before minchah</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<i>Rabbi's Classroom</i>
<b>After minchah</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah: The Temple Institute	BAYT	<i>West Wing Library</i>
<b>Sun. Mar. 15</b>				
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachah: Kitniyot Questions	BAYT	<i>Third floor</i>
<b>9:15 AM</b>	R' Shalom Krell	Kuzari	Zichron Yisroel	<b>with light breakfast</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R' David Ely Grundland	Gemara: Mind, Body, Soul	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Mon. Mar 16</b>				
<b>8:00 PM</b>	<b>R' Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Legal Ethics: To Sue or to Settle?</b>	<b>Shaarei Shomayim</b>	<b>CPD-approved Non-Lawyers Welcome</b>
<b>Tues. Mar 17</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Book of Job: End of Round 1	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Wed. Mar. 18</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Sociology and the Synagogue	Beth Emeth	Week 4: Breakaways
<b>12:30 PM</b>	<b>R' Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Jew vs. Jew in Secular Court</b>	<b>Miller Bernstein 5000 Yonge St.</b>	<b>Lunch served RSVP to cchoi@millerbernstein.com</b>
<b>Thu. Mar. 19</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	The Book of Yehoshua: Dividing the Land	49 Michael Ct. Thornhill	<b>For Women Only</b>
<b>Fri. Mar. 20</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Advanced Shemitah	Yeshivat Or Chaim	

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