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in honour of Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, for the dinner in his honour this week

Hidden Identities

Rabbi Josh Gutenberg

After Bilam fails to curse the Jews, he advises Balak to send the Midianite women to seduce the Jewish men (Talmud, Sanhedrin 106a). The plan works and the Jews engage in illicit relations, and then idolatry. Chaos ensues in the Jewish camp, and the Torah relates a troubling episode. "Behold, a man from the Jewish people came and brought a Midianite woman near his brethren in front of Moshe and in front of the entire assembly of the Jewish people, and they were crying at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting." (Bamidbar 25:6) In a most rebellious fashion, this man publicly displays his disregard for Moshe and G-d's Torah. This horrific episode concludes with Pinchas killing both the man and woman, stopping a plague which killed twenty four thousand people.

Who are this man and woman? Though they are anonymous in our parsha, they are revealed in the beginning of next week's parsha. A mere eight verses later, the Torah states that the man is Zimri, the prince of Shimon, and the woman is Kozbi, one of the Midianite princesses.

Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar, author of *Or HaChaim*, asks: "If G-d desired to reveal the slain, He should have mentioned it at the time of the action...and if the Torah [intended to] hide their names, as it hid the identity of the [wood] gatherer on Shabbat, why did it reconsider and mention their names which required extra words to be added to the Torah?..." (*Or HaChaim* Bamidbar 25:14)

He answers that the Torah initially

obscures the perpetrators' identities, because the Torah does not wish to denigrate sinners. There is precedent for this in the Torah: the wood gatherer on Shabbat, who is killed for his actions, is not mentioned by name.

[Similarly, in Shemot 2:1, Moshe's parents are not mentioned by name. The Torah describes a Levite man who marries a Levite woman. Even though we know that this man and woman are Amram and Yocheved, the Torah obscures their identities. Rashi (Shemot 2:1) explains that Amram and Yocheved had separated in order to avoid having children, and only got back together after Miriam told them that they were worse than Pharaoh because he had only decreed to kill the boys, while their "decree" was even for the girls.]

Yet, the Torah still reveals the perpetrators' identities in next week's parsha, in order to praise Pinchas. Pinchas' act of defending G-d and Moshe would have been praiseworthy, no matter who had sinned. But after G-d blesses Pinchas in next week's parsha and offers him the "covenant of an everlasting priesthood" (Bamidbar 25:13), the Torah tells us that Pinchas was willing to stand up even to the prince of Shimon and a Midianite princess. Pinchas' actions were pure of intent, and he had no reservations despite having to face intense scrutiny for killing such important people.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch offers another suggestion as to why Zimri is initially introduced as "a man from the Jewish people." When we evaluate and judge the terrible sin, we do so assuming that it was performed by an

average Jew. The fact that Zimri happened to be a prince only adds to the sin's severity. He should have been a positive role model to those around him, not a negative one. But, it wasn't only Zimri the prince who had the capacity to disgust G-d, it was "a man from the Jewish people" who also had such an ability. Any Jew who committed such a heinous action deserved this fate.

Rabbi Hirsch's point emphasizes the lesson that each person's actions have great ramifications. This lesson emerges in the Book of Yehoshua as well. After the Jews enter the land of Israel and capture Yericho, they are instructed not to take any spoils from the war. One Jew, Achan, takes from the spoils, and as a result, the entire people are punished.

Though Zimri and Achan exemplify the negative impact one person's actions can have on the entire nation, the opposite is true as well. "A man from the Jewish people" can also accomplish great things and positively impact others. This challenges us to account for our actions and ensure that our behaviour brings honour to G-d and merit to the Jewish people.

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Derech Tevunot

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto

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Perhaps best known for his work of *mussar*, *Mesilat Yesharim*, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto [*Ramchal*] is known to have written considerably more. Unfortunately, many of his writings have been lost, due to time and to his outspoken critics. Of the extant books, *Derech Tevunot* [The Way of Understanding] has been enjoying growing popularity in recent times.

What is the goal of the book?

Derech Tevunot is based on a simple belief held by *Ramchal*: everyone cherishes truth and pursues it. Given the fact that a person naturally desires to seek the truth, it would be sensible for one to refine their truth-seeking skills. With *Derech Tevunot*, *Ramchal* sets out to provide a systematic presentation of how to do just that.

Ramchal explains that these truth-seeking skills are critical since in any given situation there are some facts that are apparent at first glance, and others that require investigation to apprehend. *Ramchal* gives an interesting example of this: the study of a wooden table. We know just by

looking at it that it is a table and that it is made of wood. We do not, however, know how much it is worth or when it was made. To attain this information requires research and exploration. This is true in studying the Talmud as well. Some information will be readily apparent, while perceiving other information requires examination. By isolating facts and breaking them down into their simplest form, we can make these hidden pieces of information apparent.

A glimpse of the contents

Ramchal presents seven categories that are the basic building blocks for the back-and-forth debate of the Talmud, and, in truth, any conversation. They are:

- Statement
- Question
- Answer
- Refutation
- Proof
- Difficulty
- Resolution

It may come as a surprise that *Ramchal* discusses such seemingly elementary ideas as these, but this in and of itself is part of the greatness of *Derech Tevunot*. The book does not deal in broad conceptual essays, nor does it attempt to resolve

contradictions within the Talmud. It is solely focused on explaining the basic building blocks from which the Talmud is built. With each passing chapter, *Ramchal* expands upon what he has already taught. Each of the above-listed seven categories is broken down into subcategories in later chapters. For example, he delineates eleven types of statements.

In addition to setting forth these seven key categories, *Ramchal* also explains that each and every one of them must absolutely be made of two parts: a subject and a predicate. The subject is as it sounds. The predicate is any information that is being stated about the subject. *Ramchal's* example is, "Women are obligated in Kiddush." (Talmud, Berachot 20b) Women are the subject of the statement, and the fact that they are obligated in kiddush is the predicate. A talented pedagogue, *Ramchal* has given us a clear example of this concept. This is critical for, as *Ramchal* notes, the material commonly dealt with while learning Talmud is far more complex. Having a straightforward example as a guide is indispensable.

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613 Mitzvot: #447, 448

Two Facets of Korbanot and Mitzvot

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

The *korban olah* is an offering of great sanctity. This korban may be a voluntary offering, but it is also a requirement when ascending to Jerusalem for the *shalosh regalim* – Pesach, Shavuot and Succot. An *olah* is also brought in various rituals of purification, and it can also atone for missing the opportunity to perform a mitzvah (Bechorot 26b).

The meat of an *olah* is entirely burned on the altar in the Beit haMikdash, perhaps representing the owner's desire to give something entirely to G-d. One may not eat from an *olah*, at any time. The *olah* is property of G-d, and eating from an *olah* violates the special laws of *meilah* [trespass on Divine property], triggering unique financial and sacrificial penalties. This is the Torah's 447th mitzvah, in the count of *Sefer haChinuch*, and it is based on Devarim 12:17.

There are additional prohibitions against use of korbanot for personal benefit, under the laws of *meilah*. Per Rambam, the Torah's passage prohibiting eating from the *olah* is also the source for the other laws of *meilah*. (Sefer haMitzvot, Lo Taaseh 146)

There is a separate prohibition against eating meat from lower-level korbanot, *kodashim kalim*, before their rituals have been performed; this is counted as mitzvah #448 in *Sefer haChinuch*. Unlike mitzvah #447, this would not be a violation of the *meilah* laws of theft from G-d; a lower-level korban is considered the property of the owner until its

rituals are performed. The meat is ours, but the prohibition against eating from the meat is limited to the pre-ritual timeframe. *Sefer haChinuch* suggests that this mitzvah teaches us "to realize that we should always place spiritual benefit ahead of physical benefit."

The contrast between these two mitzvot provides an insight into two sides of the korban: The relationship of korban and G-d, and the relationship of korban and human being:

- Mitzvah 447 identifies the *korban olah* as Divine property, and prohibits us from taking of that which we have given to G-d.
- Mitzvah 448 identifies *kodashim kalim* as an agent of both Divine service and human pleasure, and prohibits us from prioritizing pleasure over improvement.

Perhaps, in an era which lacks a Beit haMikdash, we may employ the same dual approach regarding our mitzvot. Certain mitzvot are like the *korban olah*, performed entirely for G-d, and those should not be subverted for human benefit; an example of this may be prayer. Other mitzvot, such as enjoyment of Shabbat, are like *kodashim kalim*, explicitly incorporating both Divine service and human benefit; in these, we may not prioritize pleasure ahead of the Divine.

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Biography

Rabbeinu Yaakov Baal haTurim

Rabbi David Ely Grundland

Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Asher was the third son of the talmudic commentator and halachic authority, Rabbeinu Asher, also known as the Rosh (whose bio can be found in Toronto Torah 2:22).

Rabbeinu Yaakov was born in Cologne, Spain in 1260, where he lived until the whole family moved to Barcelona, due to threat of persecution. He mainly studied under his father, Rabbeinu Asher, but also studied under his older brothers, Rabbeinu Yehudah and Rabbeinu Yechiel.

While still a student, Rabbeinu Yaakov collected his father's halachic rulings, found in *Piskei HaRosh*, and compiled them into a straightforward treatise under the title *Kitzur Piskei HaRosh* - the abbreviated decisions of the Rosh. The *Kitzur Piskei HaRosh* is printed at the back of standard editions of the Talmud.

Another work of Rabbeinu Yaakov is a two-part Torah commentary. The more well-known section is found in many *Mikraot Gedolot* printings of the Chumash under the title of *Baal HaTurim*. It is composed of *gematria* and some homiletic explanations of the parashah. The second part, available in separate volumes under the same name, is a lengthier and more extensive biblical commentary. The title *Baal HaTurim* is taken from the title of Rabbeinu Yaakov's magnum opus, the halachic work known as the *Arba Turim* ["the four pillars"].

The *Arba Turim* is a halachic compendium of all aspects of practical Jewish Law, broken into four primary sections: Orach Chaim regarding the laws of prayer, Shabbat and holidays; Yoreh Deah regarding various other laws including kashrut, family purity and mourning; Even HaEzer regarding marriage and divorce; and Choshen Mishpat on civil, criminal and procedural law. This work earned Rabbeinu Yaakov the title of "The Tur".

The Tur based his rulings on the Talmud and early halachic authorities, especially those of his father, the Rosh. The *Arba Turim* was widely accepted as an authoritative work. Two centuries later, Rabbi Yosef Karo composed his Beit Yosef as a commentary to the Tur and used the structure of the Tur as the foundation of the Shulchan Aruch.

The Tur passed away on the 12th of Tammuz, either in 1340 or 1343.

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Torah and Translation The 17th of Tammuz Tur Orach Chaim 549

Translated by Rabbi David Ely Grundland

גרסינן בפרק בתרא דתענית "ה' דברים אירעו את אבותינו בי"ז בתמוז, וה' בט"ב. בי"ז בתמוז נשתברו הלוחות ובוטל התמיד והובקעה העיר ושרף אפוסטמוס את התורה והעמיד צלם בהיכל. בט"ב באב נגזר גזירה על אבותינו שלא יכנסו לארץ וחרב הבית בראשונה ובשנייה ונלכדה ביתר ונחרשה העיר שחרש טורנוסרופוס את ההיכל."

ור"ע היה דורש "כה אמר ד' צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיו לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה." צום הרביעי זה י"ז בתמוז שבו הובקעה העיר שנאמר "בחדש הרביעי בט"ב לחדש ויחזק הרעב בעיר" וכתב "ותבקע העיר." ולמה נקרא "רביעי"? שהוא בחדש הרביעי, שמונים אחדשים מניסן...

אף על גב דכתיב בקרא צום הרביעי "בט"ב לחדש הובקעה העיר," האידנא מתענין בי"ז בו משום דמתחלה תקנו תענית בט"ב לפי שבט"ב בו הובקעה העיר בראשונה, ובשנייה הובקעה בי"ז, וכיון דבשנייה הובקעה בי"ז תקנו להתענות בי"ז בו לפי דחורבן בית שני חמיר לן. ומ"מ צום הד' הוא להבקעת העיר ולצרות שהוכפלו בו.

It is written in the final chapter of Taanit (4:6), "Five events happened to our ancestors on the seventeenth of Tammuz, and five on the ninth of Av. On the seventeenth of Tammuz the tablets were broken [by Moshe Rabbeinu upon seeing the golden calf], the Tamid [twice-daily] offering ceased, the city [Jerusalem] was breached, Apostomus burned the Torah and an idol was erected in the sanctuary. On the ninth of Av, it was decreed that our ancestors would not enter the land [of Israel, due to the sin of the spies], the first and second Temples were destroyed, Beitar was captured, and the city [Jerusalem] was plowed over, [specifically regarding when] Turnus Rufus plowed over the sanctuary."

Rabbi Akiva explained (Rosh HaShanah 18b), "Thus said Hashem: the fast of the fourth and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth will become days of joy and rejoice for the house of Judah." (Zechariah 8:19) The fast of the fourth is the seventeenth of Tammuz, upon which the city was breached, as it is written, "In the fourth month, on the ninth of the month, the famine in the city become stronger," and it is then written, "And the city was breached". (Yirmiyahu 52:6-7) And why is it the fast of the fourth? Because it is in the fourth month, as we count the months from Nisan...

Even though the text (Yirmiyahu 39:2) says regarding the fast of the fourth month, "On the ninth of the month the city was breached," now we fast on the seventeenth of the month. Initially the fast was established on the ninth of the month, since the ninth is the day the city was breached in the first [Temple]. However, in the second [Temple] the city was breached on the seventeenth, and so they established [the fast] on the seventeenth. This is because the destruction of the second Temple is harsher for us. In any event, the fast of the fourth is due to the breaching of the city, and for the pains that were multiplied on that day.

This Week in Israeli History: 20 Tammuz 1950

The Law of Return

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

20 Tammuz is Tuesday

The Law of Return was an initiative of Rabbi Dr. Zerach Warhaftig, a Knesset member affiliated with the Mizrahi party. The law grants automatic citizenship to every Jew who is willing to move to Israel.

By passing the law on the 20th of Tammuz (July 5), 1950, Israel fulfilled one of its main purposes: to become a national home for the Jewish people. In Robert Frost's beautiful words, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in... Something you somehow haven't to deserve." (*The Death of the Hired Man*) By opening Israel's gates wide open, the Israeli government also realized a goal set by the League of Nations for the British Mandate in their 1922 charter, a goal which had been intentionally ignored: "The Administration of Palestine shall be responsible for enacting a nationality law. There shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to

facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine."

The law of return was – and still is – a clear miracle, a realization of the prophets' words. Just a few days after the commemoration of the 17th of Tammuz, the day on which Jerusalem fell to our enemies, a law that was set that reminds us of Yeshayahu's prophecies:

"Lift up your eyes all around and see, all of them have gathered, they have come to you. Your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be raised beside [kings]. Then you shall see and be radiant, and your heart shall be taken aback and broadened, for the abundance of the west shall be turned over to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you... Who are these, who fly like a cloud, and like doves to their dove-cotes?" (60: 4-8)

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Weekly Highlights: July 4 – July 10 / 17 Tammuz – 23 Tammuz

Most of our classes are now on hiatus, but opportunities remain!

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת July 3-4				
After hashkamah	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	Meshech Chochmah	Clanton Park	
Before Pirkei Avot	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Daf Yomi Nedarim 41	BAYT	
7:30 PM	R' Josh Gutenberg	The Fast Day Traveller	Zichron Yisroel	
7:45 PM	R' David Ely Grundland	Rav Kook and the Art of Torah War II	Shaarei Shomayim	
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah: Of Mountains and Trees	BAYT	
Sun. July 5	Fast of Shivah Asar b'Tammuz (nidcheh)			
8:45 AM	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachic Issues	BAYT	Not this week
9:15 AM	R' Shalom Krell	Kuzari	Zichron Yisroel	On summer hiatus
10:00 AM	Yarchei Kallah 10 AM Chavruta time, 11 AM Shiur Birkat Kohanim on a Fast Day and Halachic Change Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner at Yeshivat Or Chaim, 159 Almore Ave.			
Wed. July 8				
10:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Jewish Medical Ethics 101 Week 3: Human Dignity	Yeshivat Or Chaim	
Fri. July 10				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Advanced Shemitah: Prozbul, Part 2	Yeshivat Or Chaim	

OUR MISSION: TO ENGAGE, INSPIRE AND EDUCATE THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF THE GREATER TORONTO AREA. WE APPLY OUR TORAH HERITAGE TO THE DAILY LIVES OF MODERN JEWS, THROUGH CLASSES, DISCUSSIONS AND CHAVRUTOT IN OUR HOME BEIT MIDRASH AND OUR BNEI AKIVA SCHOOLS, AS WELL AS THE SYNAGOGUES, CAMPUSES AND WORKPLACES OF THE GTA.

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