

# Toronto Torah

## Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Ki Tavo

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in commemoration of the yearzeit of Sonia Roth, Sosha bat Yehoshua z"l  
and by the Goldman Family in memory of Mr. Jeffrey Goldman z"l,  
לעילוי נשמת ר' יעקב זאב בן ר' ארי' צבי הכהן ז"ל זי"ע

### The Forty Year Curriculum

Rabbi David Ely Grundland

Parshat Ki Tavo begins by describing mitzvot that apply once we enter the Land of Israel, including the offering of first fruits (*bikkurim*) and the separation of tithes from our crops. We are then commanded to write and display the Torah in a way everyone will be able to see and understand (Sotah 32a) and we are reminded repeatedly about the importance of learning and observing Torah and mitzvot. Then, Moshe explains to the Children of Israel the blessing which will result from listening to Hashem's Torah, and the harsh reality that will ensue should we not listen.

In the concluding verses of Parshat Ki Tavo (Devarim 29:3-5), Moshe declares that G-d has performed great wonders for the Jews, and then he comments, "And Hashem did not give you a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear, until this day." Moshe then reminds the people that, after forty years, their clothes have never worn out and that they have received all of their food from G-d, miracles that were done in the desert specifically to provide knowledge of Hashem.

Moshe's statement about G-d not giving the Jews heart, eyes and ears - the tools for comprehension - is hard to understand. Why would Hashem perform miracles so that Israel would know Him, but prevent their gaining that knowledge?

The Talmud (Avodah Zarah 5b) explains that Moshe was not only calling to mind G-d's miracles to

rebuke the nation for their ingratitude. When Moshe said, "Until this very day," and he continued to say, "I brought you through the wilderness for forty years," he was also explaining the natural learning process. Even after forty years, they had indeed not yet gained a heart, eyes and ears to appreciate that which G-d had done for them. Indeed, Rashi explains that even Moshe had not taken to heart all that Hashem had done until that day. From this, the Talmudic sage Rabbah concludes that it takes forty years until a person understands what they have been taught.

Why are forty years needed? One possible approach is that we need forty years to contemplate that which we have learned; Rabbah is saying that we need forty years of study to understand what our mentors have been trying to teach us. However, another approach is also possible.

In a separate context, the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 19b) states that one cannot teach until one is forty years old. Similarly, our sages teach, "One who reaches the age of forty achieves understanding." (Pirkei Avot 5:21) From this standpoint, the value of forty years is not the contemplation that goes on during that time, but the life experiences which mature us. Part of gaining knowledge must be the experience of living what is learned, and stumbling and making mistakes.

The Jews in the wilderness experienced Hashem's miracles for decades, but it

was only after forty years of wonders that they knew and understood that Hashem had been with them in the desert and would be with them throughout history. Only after forty years of experiences and mistakes, after seeing and hearing so much, did the Jews come to truly see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and know the truth in their heart.

Like the Jewish nation entering Eretz Yisrael, we are responsible for putting forth our best efforts both in material and spiritual matters. Sometimes we are successful and feel blessed; sometimes we struggle and feel cursed. May we always strive to see Hashem with our eyes in all of our experiences, and listen to what Torah tells us with our ears. May we use our heart to learn that everything that happens is according to Hashem's Will, and may we merit to witness the day when the hearts of "the world will be full of the knowledge of Hashem." (Isaiah 11:9)

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### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
TORAH MITZION  
BEIT MIDRASH**

We are grateful to  
Continental Press 905-660-0311

**In His Mercy: Understanding the Thirteen Midot**  
**Rabbi Ezra Bick**  
**Maggid Press, 2011, English**

**Who is the author?**

Rabbi Ezra Bick is a Rabbi at Yeshivat Har Etzion, where he has taught since making aliyah in 1979. Rabbi Bick is well known in the Yeshiva for his analytically rigorous shiurim, and for his unique blend of ‘close reading’ on the one hand and highly abstract, philosophical understanding on the other.

Our book, based on a series of lectures given over twenty years by Rabbi Ezra Bick, applies this forceful approach to the “thirteen *midot*”, the attributes of Divine mercy listed in Shemot 34:6-7. These are invoked in a primary and prominent prayer, which gains special importance in the weeks leading up to Yom Kippur.

**What is the book’s genre?**

The thirteen *midot* can be handled in two very different ways. As attributes of G-d, their understanding can be seen as a theological project, which aims at a better comprehension of the Divine (see, for example, Guide for the Perplexed 1:54). Rabbi Bick takes a different course, and chooses to see the thirteen attributes mainly as a prayer. While not shying away from theological

discussions such as the meaning of Divine mercy or the definition of G-d’s image, Rabbi Bick only approaches them in order to give context to the prayer. In doing so, Rabbi Bick follows the talmudic approach of Rabbi Yochanan, who vividly described the revelation of the thirteen *midot*.

Had the verse not been written, it would have been impossible to say [such a thing] – this teaches that the Almighty wrapped Himself as a *sh’liach tzibbur* [leader of the public prayer service] and showed Moshe the prayer service. He said to him, “Any time Israel sins, let them perform this service before Me and I shall forgive them.” (Rosh Hashanah 17b)

By treating the *midot* as a prayer, Rabbi Bick manages to achieve two important goals:

One is avoiding, to a large extent, the problematic nature of theology, in which human beings, armed only with human minds and using human language, attempt to define G-d. Rabbi Aaron Segal, in an excellent review of this book (The Torah u-Madda Journal, Vol. 16), has surveyed at length the benefits and costs of this approach.

The second, and more important achievement, is that the book does not deliver a philosophical perspective,

divorced from life experience. Rather, it is a very practical tool for enhancing our understanding and performance of a daily prayer. Indeed, Rabbi Bick ends each chapter with a short summery, aimed directly at giving the reader a simple and concrete understanding of the *midah* discussed – an understanding that can easily serve as one’s intention when reciting the prayer.

**What could be the next step?**

While reading the book is a wonderful learning experience which has significantly uplifted this writer’s prayer, I eagerly await what would be – in my mind at least – a well-deserved sequel. Rabbi Bick beautifully explains how the different attributes, such as mercy or kindness, are expressed by G-d. But as we well know, our understanding of G-d’s attributes is only an opening point; what must follow is our imitation of them (see Hilchot Deot 1:6). This writer would be glad to see Rabbi Bick apply his sharp and artful understandings of the Divine *midot* to the human realm, demonstrating how and when we can realize these necessary traits.

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**613 Mitzvot: #452:**

**Eating a limb taken from a live animal**

**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

Devarim 12:23 instructs, “Be strong and refrain from eating the blood, for the blood is the spirit, and do not eat the spirit with the flesh.” “Eating the spirit with the flesh” is explained by the Sages (Sifri Re’eh 76) to refer to eating a limb which had been cut from an animal while the animal was still alive; the halachic term for this is *eiver min hachai*. This is mitzvah 452 in the count of *Sefer haChinuch*; *eiver min hachai* is also discussed as part of the 73<sup>rd</sup> mitzvah.

The Torah already prohibited all human beings from eating *eiver min hachai*, in Bereishit 9:4, but it is repeated here so that it remains as a mitzvah for Jews and non-Jews alike. (Sanhedrin 59a) Because this mitzvah applies for non-Jews, Jews must be careful not to provide non-Jews with *eiver min hachai* to eat. The Torah’s warning against putting a stumbling block before the blind prohibits causing any human being to sin. (Avodah Zarah 6a-b)

*Sefer haChinuch* (452) suggests that one benefit of this mitzvah is that it helps avoid the desensitization and cruelty that can come with eating animal flesh. He writes, “This is so that we will not teach ourselves the trait of cruelty, which is an especially disgraceful trait. In truth, there could be no greater cruelty than cutting a limb or flesh from a living creature before us, and eating it... Good adheres to good, and the benevolent G-d wishes to provide good for us, and

therefore He instructed us to choose the good.” Rambam (Moreh haNevuchim 3:48) adds that the practice of severing flesh from animals and eating it was popular among non-Jewish kings, and it was part of idolatrous ritual.

The Talmud (Chullin 33a) suggests a startling ramification for this mitzvah. The act of *shechitah* involves severing the trachea and esophagus, and is not complete until both are cut. If so, then when the *shocheit* cuts the trachea before cutting the esophagus, that renders the lungs *eiver min hachai*, and therefore they should not be kosher! The Talmud responds that the Torah’s mitzvah of *shechitah* overrides *eiver min hachai* and permits the lungs for us. Most commentaries assume that this is also sufficient to permit the lungs for non-Jews, but it is worth noting that Rambam (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 9:13) disagrees. A similar question is raised regarding the permissibility of eggs for non-Jews. (Tosafot Chullin 64a; Chatam Sofer Yoreh Deah 19)

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## Biography

### Rabbi Moshe Cordovero

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

The fifteenth century ended on a devastating note for the Jewish nation. In 5252 (1492) the great Spanish Jewish community was decimated, as the Spanish king and queen, led by the church, forced all Jews to either convert or be expelled from their land.

This event threw the Jewish world into turbulence, looking for something to keep them strong. In these troubled times, the Kabbalah, once an esoteric knowledge the mere existence of which was concealed from many, became a strong driving force in the nation's spiritual life. In Kabbalah, it seemed, one might find the answers to questions that Halachah did not or could not address – what is the meaning of history; when and how redemption will come, and most important, are we already there.

Of the formative years of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, we know next to nothing. We do know he was born in 5282 (1522), 30 years after the expulsion, and his family name strongly hints of Spanish origins. We also know that he was the brother-in-law of Rabbi Shlomo Elkavatz (author of Lecha Dodi), who taught him Kabbalah, and a student and a friend of Rabbi Yosef Karo (author of Shulchan Aruch), who taught him Halachah. He was known as a genius with a gift for lucid explanation, and when *semichah* (formal rabbinic ordination) was renewed by Mahari Bei Rav, he was the youngest to be ordained.

His formal Kabbalah training began at the early age of 20, and just six years later he completed a revolutionary encyclopedic work, *Pardes Rimonim* (Orchard of Pomegranates). In this work, the young scholar organized all of the Kabbalistic themes from the time of creation to his own days, in a systematic fashion. Furthermore, Rabbi Cordovero, known since then as Ramak, attempted to reconcile various early schools with the conceptual teachings of the Zohar, to demonstrate an essential unity and internally consistent philosophical basis for Kabbalah.

Ramak's disciple and colleague, HaAri HaKadosh, turned Kabbalistic thought toward a somewhat different path; nonetheless, Ramak's figure and works remain monumental landmarks in the serious study of Jewish mysticism.

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## Torah and Translation Divine Tolerance

### Tomer Devorah, Perek 1

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Note: This passage is **not** recommending that one endure dangerous abuse.—MT

האדם ראוי שיתדמה לקונו, ואז יהיה בסוד הצורה העליונה, צלם ודמות, שאילו ידומה בגופו ולא בפעולות, הרי הוא מזויב הצורה ויאמרו עליו "צורה נאה ומעשים כעורים." שהרי עיקר הצלם והדמות העליון הן פעולותיו, ומה יועיל לו היותו כצורה העליונה, דמות תבנית אבריו, ובפעולות לא יתדמה לקונו?

לפיכך ראוי שיתדמה אל פעולות הכתר שהן י"ג מדות של רחמים עליונות. ורמוזות בסוד הפסוקים (מיכה ז: יח-כ) "מי קל כמודך." "ישׁוב ירחמנו." "תתן אמת." א"כ ראוי שתמצאנה בו י"ג מדות אלו. ועכשיו נפרש אותן הפעולות י"ג שראוי שתהיינה בו:

#### ה'א' - מי קל כמודך

מורה על היות הקב"ה מלך נעלב, סובל עלבון מה שלא יכילהו רעיון. הרי אין דבר נסתר מהשגחתו בלי ספק, ועוד אין רגע שלא יהיה האדם נזון ומתקיים מכח עליון השופע עליו, והרי תמצא שמעולם לא חטא אדם נגדו שלא יהיה הוא באותו הרגע ממש שופע שפע קיומו ותנועת אבריו. עם היות שהאדם חוטא בכח ההוא לא מנעו ממנו כלל, אלא סובל הקב"ה עלבון כזה להיות משפיע בו כח תנועות אבריו, והוא מוציא אותו כח באותו רגע בחטא ועון ומכעיס והקב"ה סובל. ...

ועם כל זה שהכח בידו להחזיר הכח הנשפע ההוא, והיה לו לומר, "כיון שאתה חוטא נגדי, תחטא בשלך לא בשלוי!" לא מפני זה מנע טובו מן האדם אלא סבל עלבון, והשפיע הכח והטיב לאדם טובו. הרי זה עלבון וסבלנות מה שלא יסופר... והיינו אומרו "מי קל כמודך", אתה קל בעל חסד המטיב, קל בעל כח לינקם ולאסוף את שלך, ועכ"ז אתה סובל ונעלב עד ישוב בתשובה.

הרי זו מדה שצריך האדם להתנהג בה, רצוני הסבלנות וכן היותו נעלב אפילו למדרגה זו ועכ"ז לא יאסוף טובתו מן המקבל:

Man is suited to resemble his Creator, and through this he achieves the secret of the higher form, *tzelem* and *demut*. If he were to resemble physically, but not in his actions, he would be making the form into a lie. They would say of him, "This is a pleasant form, but ugly deeds." The essence of the higher *tzelem* and *demut* is in His actions, and of what good is it to be like the higher form, the form of His "limbs", and to not resemble his Creator in his actions?

Therefore, it would be suitable for a person to resemble the acts of *Keter*, which are the thirteen higher attributes of mercy, hinted in Michah 7:18-20, "Who is a powerful G-d like You..." And now we will explain those thirteen deeds which one should possess.

#### 1. "Who is a powerful G-d like You"

This teaches that G-d is a shamed King, bearing incalculable shame. Without doubt, nothing is hidden from His oversight, and there is no moment when a person is not nourished and supported by the higher force that flows upon him, so that there was never a person who sinned against G-d without G-d, at that very instant, flowing into him his existence and his ability to move his limbs. Even though this person sins with that force, G-d does not withhold it at all. G-d endures this shame, flowing into the person the power for his limbs to move, and the person using that power at that moment for sin and iniquity, and to anger G-d, and G-d endures it patiently...

Even though He has the power to withdraw that flowing force, and He should have said, "Since you sin against Me, sin with your own strength, not with Mine," He does not withhold good from a person for this. Instead, He endures the shame and flows strength and gives a person of His goodness... This is the meaning of, "Who is a powerful G-d like You" – You are a powerful G-d, giving and benefiting, and a powerful G-d, with strength to take revenge and take back what is Yours, and yet You bear and are shamed until the person repents.

This is a trait one must follow, meaning patience and being shamed, even to this extent, and yet not to withhold one's aid from the recipient.

**This Week in Israeli History: 26 Elul 1972**  
**The Munich Massacre**

**Rabbi Jonathan Ziring**

*26 Elul is Thursday*

One of the most traumatic incidents in Israeli history was the Munich Massacre. While the Olympics are intended to show unity between nations, the brutal attacks carried out against the Israeli athletes at the German Olympics was a harsh reminder that deep hatred still exists.

On 26 Elul (September 5), 1972, eight terrorists from the group “Black September” infiltrated the apartments of Israeli Olympians in Munich, Germany. Two Olympians were killed during the break-in; nine others were taken hostage by the terrorists. The terrorists demanded the release of 234 prisoners held in Israel, and two held in Germany. Israel’s policy was to refuse to negotiate with terrorists under any circumstances. Germany attempted to save the Olympians through a combination of negotiations and armed rescue attempts. The last of these attempts was to take place during a ruse, in which the terrorists were led to believe they would be allowed to escape Germany, with their hostages, to Egypt. However, the attempts were

unsuccessful, and all nine remaining Olympians died, either murdered by the terrorists, or by gunshots, explosions, or smoke inhalation during the failed rescue attempt.

The attack spurred countries to take terrorism more seriously, initiating anti-terrorism units in their security forces. Israel responded with an operation known as *Mivtza Za’am haKel* (Wrath of G-d), a series of attacks against the perpetrators and planners of the Massacre over two years. Many of these were carried out with symbolic elements – such as shooting a terrorist with eleven bullets, one for each Olympian killed. Ehud Barak, who commanded some of the operations, said that the goal was to instill fear and break the will of terrorists.

While the Israeli Olympic team commemorated the events in the 1976 Olympics, requests for the international community to commemorate the events at the Olympics have been turned down by the International Olympic Committee. However, in 2014 the IOC agreed to donate \$250,000 towards a memorial.

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**Weekly Highlights: Sept. 5 – Sept. 11 / 21 Elul – 27 Elul**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Sept. 5 and Motzaei Shabbat</b>				
<b>After hashkamah</b>	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	Meshech Chochmah	Clanton Park	
<b>Before Pirkei Avot</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
<b>After minchah</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara: From Church to Shul?	BAYT	
<b>10:15 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Selichot: Our Prayer or G-d’s?	Bnai Torah	
<b>10:30 PM</b>	R’ David Ely Grundland	The Art of Being Yourself	Beth Lida	
<b>11:15 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Rav Kook on Teshuvah	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>11:30 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Re-invigorating the Everyday	BAYT	
<b>12:15 AM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Rav Kook on Teshuvah	Aish Thornhill	
<b>Sun. Sept. 6</b>				
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Fundamentals of Faith	BAYT Boardroom	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R’ Josh Gutenberg	Showering on Yom Tov	BAYT	<b>Third floor</b>
<b>9:15 AM</b>	R’ Shalom Krell	Kuzari	Zichron Yisroel	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>10:00-11:20 AM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner R’ Jonathan Ziring	In the Image of G-d The Rich, the Poor & the Evil?	Midreshet Yom Rishon at Shaarei Tefillah	<b>For women</b> <b>Light Refreshments</b>
<b>Mon. Sept. 7</b>				
<b>8:30 AM Shacharit Chavruta, Shiur</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Yarchei Kallah: Is a Camping Succah Needed?	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Breakfast served</b>
<b>8:00 PM</b>	R’ David Ely Grundland	Delving into the Machzor I	Shaarei Tefillah	<b>Part 2: Sept. 21</b>
<b>Tues. Sept. 8</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shai Agnon on The Eve of Rosh HaShanah	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>8:10 PM</b>	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	“If I am here, all are here”	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Tuesday Beit Midrash</b>
<b>Wed. Sept. 9</b>				
<b>8:00 PM</b>	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	The Hydroponic Etrog	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>Thu. Sept. 10</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Yehoshua: A Review	49 Michael Ct.	<b>Women</b>