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Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

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The Goal of It All

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig

The conclusion of Vayikra is, on the surface, anticlimactic. After the terrifying suffering portrayed in the *Tochachah*, the Torah suddenly shifts to a brief, chapter-long description of *Arachin*: valuations, of people, animals, and houses.

with the *Tochachah* that precedes it. Instead, *Arachin* seems to be closely related to the laws of Yovel delineated in Parashat Behar, as well as the laws discussing optional offerings found in the opening chapter of the book.

- C – Things which make one impure, how to become pure (11-15)
- D – Yom Kippur (16-17)
- C1 – Maintaining purity (18-20)
- B1 – Priests, sanctity of time, and sanctity of space (21-26)
- A1 – Closing chapter (27)

Rabbi Menachem Leibtag notes that Sefer Vayikra on the whole deals with two basic themes: the sanctity of the Mishkan (ch. 1-17) and the sanctity of the nation and land (ch. 18-26). The overwhelmingly harsh *Tochachah* would have been a staggering conclusion to a book so focused on the observance of sanctity; this would have emphasized the gravity of all that had preceded it. Ending with *Arachin* instead seems misplaced and tangential at best. While one could argue that ending Vayikra on a note as dramatic as the *Tochachah* would have been awkwardly abrupt, the question still stands – why end with *Arachin*? Why is it here?

Further, from a thematic perspective, both the opening and ending chapters of Vayikra discuss an individual who has dedicated an item of monetary value to the Beit Mikdash, be it for a required offering or an optional one.

At the very core and centre of Sefer Vayikra is the Yom Kippur service. Perhaps the message is that each day should be treated as though it is Yom Kippur. That is to say – each day is an opportunity to strive for purity, each day is a new beginning, and most importantly, each day is a pristine occasion to achieve closeness to G-d through our actions. Connecting this to Rabbi Leibtag's suggestion that the bookends of Vayikra emphasize the importance of the individual results in a powerful lesson. We each have a place in the world, our own "plot of land." At the same time, we are all members of something far larger than our own selves: the Jewish nation. By properly balancing our individual autonomy and our identity as a part of the whole can we attain the central goal of Sefer Vayikra: Yom Kippur, and the model of purity, renewal, and closeness to G-d that it represents.

To explain this, Rabbi Leibtag notes further that this final chapter of Vayikra closely resembles the opening chapter of this book in its "misplacement". The opening chapter of Vayikra discusses the laws of an individual's *korban olah* [elevation offering]. This placement is strange, given that it isn't until Parashat Shemini (Vayikra 9-11) that the Mishkan is dedicated. Contextually, it would have made sense to place these laws after the dedication of the Mishkan, the place where the sacrifices would be offered. Similarly, the final chapter of Vayikra, discussing *Arachin*, seems out of place; it doesn't appear to have any clear connection

Based on these links between the beginning and end of the book of Vayikra, Rabbi Leibtag argues that the fact that Vayikra, which focuses on the sanctity of the Mishkan, Eretz Yisrael, and nation of Israel as a whole, begins and ends with the individual, suggests that it is imperative that each member of the Jewish people find a balance between becoming a part of the whole and maintaining their autonomy as unique individuals. Doing so enables us as individuals and as a community to maintain the high level of sanctity described in Vayikra.

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Headlines: Halachic Debates of Current Events

Rabbi Dovid Lichtenstein
OU Press, 2014

The Author

Rabbi Dovid Lichtenstein is the founder and CEO of The Lightstone Group, a prestigious real estate firm. He is also a Torah scholar, who shows a vast depth and wide scope of Torah knowledge and understanding. He delivers weekly shiurim on contemporary halachic subjects on Shabbat afternoons, regarding technological advances or simply the “issues of the day”. He clearly connects and analyzes traditional sources and brings them to life by relating them to contemporary issues, using a style that is both understandable to the layperson and illuminating to the scholar.

Contemporary

Headlines deals primarily with contemporary halachic issues from, as the title implies, news headlines. As the book was published in 2014, most of the issues are from 2011-2013 and relatively fresh in our memories.

In the first two sections, Lichtenstein

addresses many issues in society and the Jewish family that resonate today, such as:

- Socialized medicine and communal responsibility for public health;
- Stand-your-ground laws;
- Redeeming captives, and its application to a Jew who was convicted of a crime;
- Blessing a non-Jewish leader;
- Parenthood when there are multiple mothers or fathers;
- Forcing a husband to give a get.

In the section on Israel, Rabbi Lichtenstein discusses the forced draft of yeshiva students and the dilemma of trading many terrorists to achieve the release of a Jewish prisoner. In the section on Shabbat and Holidays, he questions the validity of inviting non-observant guests for a meal when there is a likelihood they will drive. In the technology section, Rabbi Lichtenstein explores whether a test tube cheeseburger is kosher, and analyzes halachic issues raised by webcams. Finally, in the business section, he questions the validity of receiving tzedakah from a criminal endeavour, the unauthorized use of an open wi-fi signal, file sharing, and the

issue of who bears responsibility for damage by a computer virus.

In the introduction, Rabbi Lichtenstein notes that the book is not meant to give halachic rulings. The book is dedicated to exploring various halachic approaches to these issues.

Structure

In remaining true to the book’s title, each halachic discussion is preceded by an excerpt from an actual news article, often sourced from a mainstream print newspaper and other times from on-line news sources. Either way, the book makes the effort to remind us that the issues being dealt with are real. After the news article, the author follows by summarizing the article and delineating exactly which questions will be explored over the course of the deliberation.

Recommendation

This book, while very readable, is also incredibly well thought out and presented. Anyone interested in halachah will benefit greatly from learning about the Headlines.

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613 Mitzvot: 517-519: False Prophets

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Every civilization establishes a set of institutions to govern its national life; examples of these are courts, legislatures, police and militaries. Because of the critical need for these centres of authority, the highest penalties are established for those who violate society’s trust in these institutions.

Aside from courts, legislatures, police and militaries, the nation of Israel depends on the religious institution of prophecy. We have already seen (Toronto Torah Behar 5776, Mitzvah 516) the Torah’s instruction to the Jews to heed their prophets, as well as its prohibition against testing trusted prophets (Toronto Torah Yitro 5775, Mitzvah 424). We have also seen a separate mitzvah, prohibiting listening to the message of one who claims to offer prophecy in the name of idolatry. (Toronto Torah Bereishit 5776, Mitzvah 456) In addition, in Devarim 18:20-22 the Torah warns against abuse of power by our prophets.

Sefer haChinuch codifies these warnings in three mitzvot:

- One may not speak falsely, claiming that G-d gave him a message which G-d did not give him (Mitzvah 517);
- One may not convey a message in the name of idolatry (Mitzvah 518)
- The nation must execute a false prophet (Mitzvah 519)

Sefer haChinuch (#517) explains the seriousness of the mitzvah of listening only to a true prophet: “A human being cannot achieve true knowledge in this world beyond the truth of prophetic knowledge, which is knowledge that cannot be challenged for it comes from the wellspring of truth. Few people in this world merit this and ascend to it, for the ladder is very long, its feet on the ground and its top reaching heavenward. Who is it who reveres G-d and merits and

ascends to the mountain of G-d, and stands in His sanctuary? One in thousands of myriads of people achieve this level, and then only in a generation which is suited for this. Therefore, the Torah commanded us that when a member of a generation does reach this level, and he is known to us for his involvements and the propriety of his conduct, then we must believe this prophet, and listen to all that he commands, for he knows the true path and guides us on it. We dare not muster ourselves to rebel against his word and dispute with him, for arguing against him in any matter would be total error, and a deficiency in our knowledge of truth.”

Because of the level of trust mandated by the Torah for our prophets, the prophet is held to the highest of standards. Not only is the prophet warned against bending to temptation and issuing his personal command in the name of G-d, but even adopting the message given by another prophet, presenting it as his own prophecy, is prohibited and punished. (Sanhedrin 89a)

It is not for nothing that Rambam stresses that achieving prophecy requires not only intellectual perfection, but perfection of character as well. (Shemonah Perakim, Chapter 7) At its core, our national connection with G-d relies not upon signs and miracles, but upon the total integrity of a human being.

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Biography

Rabbi Shlomo Goren

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Rabbi Shlomo Goren was born as Shlomo Goernchik in Zamborow, Poland, at 1917. His family made Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael – then under the British mandate – in 1925. A year later, Shlomo moved with his family to Jerusalem, and began learning in the famous Talmud Torah “Etz HaChaim”. He was soon acknowledged for his unique intellect, and before his bar mitzvah he began to study in Yeshivat Chevron, one of the greatest yeshivot in Eretz Yisrael at that time. At the age of seventeen he published his first book, ‘Nezer HaKodesh’, securing enthusiastic letters of approval from such distinguished Torah scholars as Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer and Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook.

At the age of twenty-two, after a more than a decade in Yeshivat Chevron, he enrolled in Hebrew University, studying Greek, philosophy and math, and completing his studies with excellence. At the age of twenty-seven he married Tzvia Cohen, the daughter of Rabbi David Cohen [the Nazir of Jerusalem].

In 1948, with the establishment of the IDF, it became clear to Rabbi Herzog, the new state’s Chief Rabbi, that he needed to appoint a Chief Rabbi for the IDF. He asked Rabbi Goren to take the responsibility upon himself, and Rabbi Goren served in this role for more than twenty years. In this position, he fought vigorously both for enabling religious soldiers to keep faith to halachah, and to train the Jewish army in appropriate Jewish conduct – kosher kitchens, shuls, and rest from training on Shabbat at all bases, regardless of the actual presence of observant soldiers.

Being Chief Rabbi of the first Jewish army in two thousand years was not an easy task, and Rabbi Goren had to make decisions on matters with almost no halachic precedent: from allowing soldiers in besieged Jerusalem to eat non-kosher meat, to recruiting yeshiva students to dig anti-tank tunnels, to burial of non-Jewish soldiers.

In 1972, Rabbi Goren was appointed Chief Rabbi of Israel, but in collective Israeli memory, he will always be remembered as the Chief Rabbi of the IDF, blowing the shofar at the Kotel in the Six Day War.

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Torah and Translation

Diary: The Liberation of Jerusalem

Rabbi Shlomo Goren’s Personal Diary Entries

Translated by Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

רגעי השחרור

ברכתי בשם ובמלכות ברכת “שהחיינו” וברכת “מנחם ציון ובונה ירושלים”. אמרתי מזמור תהלים פ”ד “מה ידודות משכנותיך ד’ צבקות” ו”אשרי יושבי ביתך”, אחרי כן אמרתי “קדיש” לנשמות החללים, וסיימתי ב”קל מלא רחמים” לעילוי נשמות הקדושים שנפלו במלחמה “הזאת”, מאחר שלא נקבע עדיין שם למלחמה. בעת אמירת “קל מלא רחמים” פרצו הנוכחים בבכי. הדמעות חנקו את גרוני והייתי נאלץ להפסיק באמצע. לבסוף גמרתי את האזכרה ואז עמדו כולם דום ושרנו “התקווה”. התנשקתי עם אלוף הפיקוד ועם קצינים ולוחמים אחרים והתחלתי לשיר “לשנה הזאת בירושלים הבנויה” (שיניתי בזאת את הנוסח המקובל בתפילת נעילה ובהגדה של פסח, ובמקום “לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה” אמרתי “לשנה הזאת בירושלים הבנויה”)...

בינתיים התמלאה רחבת הכותל עם חיילים ואזרחים מועטים. בהגיע השעה 12:11 דקות שלפי החשבון הגיע אז שעת מנחה גדולה, התחלתי להתפלל מנחה כשאני עובר לפני הקהל. שיניתי את נוסח התפילה והוספתי בחזרת הש”ץ תפילת “נחם” שרגילים לומר במנחה בתשעה באב, ואשר היא מסתיימת בברכת “מנחם ציון ובונה ירושלים”. הכנסתי שינויים בתוך תפילת “נחם” עצמה ובמקום את “העיר האבלה והחרבה והבזויה וכו’” אמרתי “העיר השמחה הצוהלת מנצחונו של ישראל”, והמשכתי “לבי לבי על חללי הצנחנים מעי על חללי צה”ל, כי אתה ד’ באש הצתה ובאש אתה עתיד לבנותה כאמור: ‘ואני אהיה לה נאום ד’ חומת אש סביב ולכבוד אהיה בתוכה.”

אחרי חזרת הש”ץ אמרתי ברכת “הלל” בשם ומלכות וגמרתי “הלל השלם”. לאחר התפילה יצאנו בריקוד “לשנה הזאת בירושלים הבנויה” ו”שייבנה בית המקדש”. באמצע התפילה הגיע לרחבת הכותל הרב הצבאי של חטיבת מחוז ירושלים, הרב זמל, והביא אתו ארון קודש נייד של הרבנות הצבאית עם שלט גדול “בית כנסת צבאי”.

After repeating the Amidah, I said the blessing of Hallel, invoking G-d’s Name and monarchy, and completed the full Hallel. After the prayers we began dancing, “This year in Jerusalem, rebuilt!” and “May the Temple be built!” As we were praying, the chaplain of the Jerusalem division, Rav Zimmel, came, bringing with him a portable Aron Kodesh of the IDF Rabbinate, with a big sign: “Military Synagogue”.

The Moments of the Liberation

I blessed, invoking G-d’s Name and monarchy, the blessing of *Shehechyanu* and the blessing of “Consoler of Zion and builder of Jerusalem”. I said Chapter 84 of Tehillim, [which includes the passages] “How beloved are Your dwelling places, Hashem Tzevakot”, and “Fortunate are those who sit in Your home.” Then I said *Kaddish* for the souls of those killed, and finished with *Kel malei rachamim*, to elevate the souls of those who fell during “this war”, as it is still unnamed. As I recited *Kel malei rachamim*, those present began to cry. Tears choked my throat and I had to pause in the middle. Finally I finished the memorial prayer, and then we all stood at attention and sang *HaTikvah*. I kissed the general and other officers and combatants and began to sing, “This year in Jerusalem, rebuilt!” (I altered the standard version of Neilah and the Haggadah of Pesach, saying “This year in Jerusalem, rebuilt” instead of “Next year in Jerusalem, rebuilt.”)...

In the meantime, the Kotel plaza filled with soldiers, and a few citizens. At 12:11, when according to my calculations the time for the earliest Minchah came, I began to pray minchah, leading the congregation. I changed the edition of the prayer, adding to the repetition of the Amidah the prayer of *Nachem*, which is usually recited at Minchah of Tishah B’Av, which ends with “Consoler of Tzion and builder of Jerusalem.” I made changes in *Nachem* itself: Instead of saying “the mourning, desolated and degraded”, I said “the happy city, rejoicing from the victory of Israel”. And I continued, “My heart, my heart [aches] for the paratroopers who were slain, my innards, my innards [ache] for the slain soldiers of the IDF. You, Hashem, have ignited here with fire, and You shall in the future rebuild her with fire, as it is said: ‘And I shall be for her, says Hashem, as a surrounding wall of fire, and I shall provide glory within her.’”

This Week in Israeli History: 29 Iyar 5727 (June 8 1967)**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner****The Sinking of the USS Liberty***29 Iyar is Monday*

One of the most tense moments in American-Israeli relations occurred on June 8, 1967, the third day of the Six Day War. The Israeli Air Force and Navy responded to reports of shelling from the area of El-Arish, and in the process accidentally fired upon an American ship, the USS Liberty. 34 sailors were killed, and 171 were wounded.

Causes of the tragic Israeli mistake included:

- An American declaration at the United Nations, on June 6, that they had no ships within “hundreds of miles” of the war zone;

- The ship’s speed, which was consistent with that of a warship;
- Lack of clear markings on the USS Liberty.

US President Lyndon Johnson accepted the immediate Israeli apology and explanation that the sinking had been a mistake, and this has been confirmed by more than a dozen investigations by both American and Israeli authorities. However, conspiracy theorists continue to seek evidence that the attack was intentional, despite the clear lack of any motivation for such an attack.

*torczyner@torontotorah.com***Weekly Highlights: June 4 – June 10 / 27 Iyar - 4 Sivan**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
June 3-4 <i>שבת</i> “Walking in Jerusalem” Shabbaton at BAYT				
8:50 AM	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Jerusalem: Never Divided?	BAYT	<i>Turk Beis Medrash</i>
After hashkamah	R’ Yisroel M. Rosenzweig	City of Stringency?	BAYT	<i>Rabbi’s Classroom</i>
Derashah	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	A City Surrounded by Walls	BAYT	<i>Main Shul</i>
7:00 PM	R’ David Ely Grundland	Har haBayit	BAYT	<i>Simcha Suite; Hebrew</i>
7:15 PM	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<i>Rabbi’s Classroom</i>
8:00 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Pirkei Avot: City of Miracles	BAYT	<i>Main Shul</i>
Seudah shlishit	R’ Yisroel M. Rosenzweig	Ezra and Nechemiah	BAYT	<i>Rebbetzin Taub Hall</i>
After minchah	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<i>Simcha Suite</i>
Sun. June 5 Yom Yerushalayim				
9:15 AM	R’ Shalom Krell	Book of Shemuel	Associated (North)	<i>Hebrew</i>
10:00 AM to 11:20 AM	Mrs. Yael Gelernter R’ David Ely Grundland	A Red Heifer Redemption Fire on the Mountain	Midreshet Yom Rishon Shaarei Tefillah	<i>For women Refreshments served</i>
Mon. June 6				
9:30 AM	Mrs. Ora Ziring	Women’s Beit Midrash	Ulpanat Orot	
7:30 PM	R’ David Ely Grundland R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Daf Yomi Highlights Medical Halachah	Shaarei Shomayim	<i>Beit Midrash Night</i>
Tue. June 7 Rosh Chodesh Sivan				
9:30 AM	R’ Yisroel M. Rosenzweig	Chabura: Disappearing Meat	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<i>University Chaverim</i>
10:00 AM	Mrs. Ora Ziring	Women’s Beit Midrash	Ulpanat Orot	
10:30 AM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Moshe and the Angels	Adath Israel	<i>Women; there is a fee info@adathisrael.com</i>
1:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Iyov: Divine Reward?	Shaarei Shomayim	
Wed. June 8 Yom haMeyuchas				
2:30 PM	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of the Exodus	Location: Contact carollesser@rogers.com	<i>For women</i>
8:00 PM	R’ Yisroel M. Rosenzweig	Burial: Ancient & Modern	Shaarei Tefillah	
8:00 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Halachah v. Human Ethics	BAYT	<i>Thornhill B’Yachad</i>
Thu. June 9				
11:30 AM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Eruvin	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<i>Advanced</i>
1:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Devorah Begins	49 Michael Ct.	<i>For women</i>