

# Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah MITzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Netzavim

28 Elul, 5776/October 1, 2016

Vol. 8 Num. 6

This issue of Toronto Torah is sponsored by Nathan Kirsh

in loving memory of his parents "ל רחל בת מרדכי ז"ל and יהודה פסח בן נפתלי הכהן ז"ל

## The Drama of Tashlich

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

We embrace reenactment; witness the Pesach seder, the Chanukah menorah lighting, and our simchat beit hashoevah celebration on Succot. Some of these rituals call forth feelings of gratitude, and others are principally educational. Sometimes we collectively re-live seminal events as prayer – and this may explain the location and script of Tashlich.

Tashlich may be traced to medieval references to praying near water on Rosh HaShanah; by the end of the thirteenth century, Tashlich as we know it was an established practice in Ashkenazi lands. As the Maharil (Rosh HaShanah 9) explained, Jews would “walk to seas and rivers on Rosh HaShanah, after the meal, to cast all of our sins into the depths of the sea.” Other early sources included recitation of Michah 7:18-20, “Who is a G-d like You, Who pardons sin and overlooks transgression for the remnant of His heritage? He does not maintain His wrath forever, for He desires kindness. He will once again show us mercy, He will suppress our iniquities. You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Grant truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham, as You swore to our forefathers in days of old.”

This combination of venue and verses is unique in our prayers. We may see Tashlich as a performance highlighting three major components of our national search for forgiveness: the merit of our ancestors, the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy, and the Divine promise of future redemption. The first component is **the merit of**

**our ancestors**, as we reenact the walk to the *akeidah*. Maharil (ibid.) writes, “This commemorates the *akeidah* in which Avraham Avinu crossed a river until his neck and said, ‘Save me, G-d, for the water has come to my life!’ The Satan became like a river in order to keep him from the *akeidah*.” We walk to a body of water to remind G-d of that historic willingness of the Jew to sacrifice his life at Divine command. However, we do not simply **mention** the *akeidah* and its river; we **reenact** it, demonstrating our personal commitment to following in our ancestors’ footsteps. We do not merely *mention* Avraham – we *are* Avraham.

Having established our merit, we then adopt the **petitionary words** of the prophet Michah as our own. However, our choice of Michah’s words is surprising; in Shemot 34:6-7, after the Golden Calf, G-d provided us with the definitive prayer for forgiveness, the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy! All through the selichot preparation for Rosh HaShanah we employ G-d’s words to Moshe, and on Yom Kippur we repeat that original text many times over. Why do we use Michah’s words at Tashlich?

The answer may lie in our motif of reenactment. The text in Shemot is declared by G-d, not the sinner. Further, the petitioner addressed by G-d was Moshe, not a sinner but a spiritual broker seeking forgiveness for others. Michah, on the other hand, presented his version of the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy as part of the sinful nation despite his personal innocence, speaking in the first person for much of the chapter in which those words

appear. Michah’s declaration is that of a personal penitent, ideal for our reenactment. We are Michah, and we reenact his petition to earn forgiveness.

After emulating Avraham and Michah, we take on a third role: Nechemiah, praying for **future redemption**. Rabbi Reuven Margoliot pointed out that our waterside Tashlich evokes the image of Nechemiah addressing the Jews who had built the second Beit haMikdash, by the Water Gate on the Temple Mount. On Rosh haShanah, Nechemiah encouraged the penitent nation, declaring, “Go eat rich foods and drink sweet drinks, and send portions to those who have none prepared, for today is sacred to our Master. Do not be sad; the joy of G-d is your strength.” (Nechemiah 8:10)

Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov explained that this gate was known as the Water Gate because, “There the water trickles, and it will exit from beneath the threshold of the House.” (Middot 2:6) Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov was referring to Zechariah’s prophecy (14:8) of a messianic time, in which a great flow of water would emerge from the Beit haMikdash. This spot is associated with more than forgiveness; it is associated with future redemption. At Tashlich, we place ourselves in Nechemiah’s shoes, and declare our hope for the ultimate forgiveness and redemption.

May our evocation of Avraham, Michah and Nechemiah this Rosh HaShanah earn us an inscription for a shanah tovah.

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

## OUR BEIT MIDRASH

**ROSH BEIT MIDRASH**

RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER

**SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH**

RABBI JONATHAN ZIRING

**AVREICHIM**

ADAM FRIEDMANN, YARON PEREZ

**WOMEN’S BEIT MIDRASH**

MRS. ORA ZIRING, MRS. ELLIEZRA PEREZ

**CHAVERIM** EZER DIENA, NADAV GASNER, RYAN JENAH, SHIMMY JESIN, ELISHA KELMAN, BJ KOROBKIN, AVI MENZELFSKY, ZACK MINCER, MOSHE OSTRIKER, RONI PEREZ, YOEL RIABOY, MORDECHAI ROTH, EZRA SCHWARTZ, DAVID SUTTNER, DAVID TOBIS, DAVID ZARKHINE

**CHAVEROT** YAKIRA BEGUN, NOA BORDAN, MAYTAL CUPERFAIN, LEORA KARON, RIVKA SAVAGE, KAYLA SHIELDS, ARIELA SNOWBELL, SARAH WAPNER



YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
TORAH MITZION  
BEIT MIDRASH

Find our upcoming shiurim on-line at  
[www.torontotorah.com](http://www.torontotorah.com)

We are grateful to  
Continental Press 905-660-0311

**Torah and Western Thought**

**YU Press / Maggid 2015**

**Dr. Stuart Halpern, Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik, Rabbi Shlomo Zuckier**

**What is the book?**

This book is a collection of essays focusing on the intellectual biography (with some biographical discussion) of ten leading Orthodox Jewish thinkers from the twentieth century, both from Israel and the Diaspora:

- Dr. Daniel Rynhold on secularism in the thought of Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook
- Rabbi Dr. Itamar Wahrhaftig on Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog’s approach to modernity
- Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik about the contributions of both Rabbis Joseph and Aharon Soloveichik
- Yael Unterman on Nechama Leibowitz’s revolution in Bible study and interpretation
- Dr. Alan Jotkowitz on Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovitz and the creation of Jewish Medical Ethics
- Rabbi Reuven Zeigler and Dr. Yehudah Mirsky on the thought of Rabbi Yehuda Amital
- Rabbi Dr. David Shatz on the role of Torah study in the ideology of Torah U’Madda of Rabbi Norman Lamm

- Rabbi Dr. Carmi Horowitz on Rabbi Isadore Twersky’s blend of academia and traditionalism
- Rabbis Shalom Carmy and Shlomo Zuckier on the place of liberal arts education in the thought of Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein

**The Essays**

Each essay is thoughtfully written, outlining the contributions of the thinkers while avoiding hagiography. Some focus almost entirely on aspects of the thinkers’ intellectual contributions, such as Rynhold’s article on Rabbi Kook, while some integrate more biographical detail, especially when the personality under discussion was a celebrated teacher, such as in Unterman’s treatment of Nehama Leibowitz. In the latter cases, how the thinker conveyed his or her ideas to a broader audience is integral to understanding the influence they had. While stressing the impact of each personality, the authors highlight when they were not successful, and even when the author believes the thinkers were incorrect.

**The Benefit**

Though the book avoids the term “Modern Orthodoxy”, and most of the

thinkers discussed would not have used that self-description, the book presents a worldview for that community. As Rabbi Dr. Gil Perl astutely notes in a recent review (<http://bit.ly/2cu98Y2>), the book “makes a compelling case for the notion that Modern Orthodoxy ought not to be about people—people who live in a certain place, dress a certain way, affiliate with certain institutions—but about a set of ideas that animate the way in which a segment of the Jewish community view their relationship with G-d, His Torah and His creations.”

While many “gedolim biographies” have been written, the Modern Orthodox community has traditionally refrained from highlighting the extraordinary people and scholars that have shaped its ideology. But as Rabbi Lichtenstein notes, though the Modern Orthodox community often eschews the notion of “Daat Torah”, it requires great people who stand behind its ideals to truly have legitimacy. (*Leaves of Faith*, v. 2, pp. 279-308) *Torah and Western Thought* tells the story of precisely those people.

*jziring@torontotorah.com*

**Israel’s Rabbis: Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel**

**Rabbi Baruch Weintraub**

**Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel**

**Born in 1880, in Ottoman Jerusalem**

**Died in 1953, Jerusalem**

**Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel 1939-1953**

**Biography**

A son to Rabbi Yosef Rephael, Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Jerusalem, Rabbi Uziel was singled out early on for greatness. By age twenty he was already teaching in Yeshivat Tiferet Yerushalaim, and he soon became a Rosh Yeshiva himself. Ten years later he became the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Yaffo, and he befriended Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel. Their intimate relationship contributed to the relaxation of tension between their different communities.

After a short period as a rabbi in Salonika, Greece, he returned to Israel, and was appointed the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv in 1923, and, in 1939 the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of the Mandate of Israel. He served in many roles in various Jewish institutions, and was a member of the Mizrachi. He wrote many books and numerous articles on a variety of Jewish topics – from Halachah to philosophy and from matters of national Jewish interest to universal principles. Rabbi Uziel passed away on Elul 24, 5713, on Erev Shabbat.

**Legacy**

In many ways, Rabbi Uziel’s legacy is best embodied in his own words, written just two days before his death – “I have kept in the forefront of my thoughts the following aims: to disseminate Torah among students, to love the Torah and its precepts, Israel and its sanctity... the bringing

of peace between every man and woman of Israel—in body, in spirit, in speech, and in deed, in thought and in meditation, in intent and in act, at home and in the street, in village and in town; to bring genuine peace into the home of the Jew, into the whole assembly of Israel in all its classes and divisions, and between Israel and its Father in Heaven.”

Many of Rabbi Uziel’s rulings were driven by this very notion of uniting the people of Israel under G-d’s banner, the Torah. Rabbi Uziel firmly believed that Halachah can, should and must be a connecting factor and not, G-d forbid, a reason for walls and separation. In that spirit, he acted for unification and standardization of Nusach HaTefillah [the text of prayer] between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews; acceptance of a universal standard of Shechitah (Kosher Slaughter); leniency in accepting converts who were already spouses of non-observant Jews; and voting rights for women.

All of the above-mentioned rulings were not just issued as if by fiat; rather, Rabbi Uziel argued for his positions based on a wide array of halachic sources, so that even his many opponents had to concede that he was a legitimate authority.

As we near Rosh Hashanah, when we ask Hashem to help us become one unified group to worship Him in truth, Rabbi Uziel’s vision of one united Jewish nation can serve as a beacon of light.

*bweintraub@torontotorah.com*

**Biography**  
**Rabbi Shneur Zalman**  
**of Liadi**  
Adam Friedmann

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, also known by many other titles such as the *Alter* (older) *Rebbe*, *Admor HaZaken* (“old rebbe” in Hebrew) and the *Baal HaTanya* (author of the “Tanya”), was the spiritual father and founder of the Chabad Chassidic dynasty. Born in Liozna in 1745, a descendant of the Maharal of Prague, a young Shneur Zalman bewildered his teachers as a flowering child prodigy. Though he studied under many, he is especially known as one of the foremost students of Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch, the successor of the Baal Shem Tov in the Chassidic world.

After Rabbi Dov Ber’s death, Rabbi Shneur Zalman became one of the two heads, and later the head of Chassidism in Lithuania. He faced strong opposition from the *mitnagdim* (opponents of Chassidism), chief among them the Vilna Gaon who issued a *cherem* (rabbinic ban) against those upholding Chassidic practice. Rabbi Shneur Zalman served as the *Maggid* (preacher) of Liozna for a large part of his career. Later in his life he moved the base of his operations to Liadi, which became the locus for his Chassidic community until his death in 1812.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman produced an impressive body of writing, which formed the philosophical framework of Chabad thought that his successors would develop for generations. His most famous work is titled *Likkutei Amarim*, though it is more popularly known as the *Tanya*. This work was groundbreaking as a systematic presentation of Chassidic-Kabbalistic thought presented in a topical style. This is as opposed to other contemporary works, which were organized based on the *parshiyot* in the Torah and which therefore discussed topics in a disparate manner.

In addition to his philosophical works, Rabbi Shneur Zalman also produced his own *Shulchan Aruch* in which, demonstrating his Talmudic and Halachic mastery, he codified anew large sections of Halachah reflecting the opinions of decisors who wrote after the original *Shulchan Aruch* as well as Chassidic custom. This work, popularly called *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, is an authoritative text both within the Chassidic world and without.

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

**Torah and Translation**  
**Teshuvah from the Depths**

**Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi**  
**Likkutei Torah, Discourses for Rosh HaShanah 44**  
Translated by Adam Friedmann

אבל מצות עשה שהם המשכות אברין דמלכא, ומאחר שפגם וגרם חסרון השפעתם במה איפוא יתוקן על ידי התשובה להיות שלימות השפעתם ומילוי חסרונם?

אך הנה כתיב “ממעמקים קראתיך ד”, פירוש ש’להיות’ קראתיך, מההעלם אל הגילוי להיות בחינת הוי’, דהיינו המשכות והשפעות בחינת אברי דמלכא, הוא על ידי ממעמקים, דהיינו עומק העליון הוא רצון העליון שלמעלה מעלה מבחינת השתלשלות המתגלה באתערותא דלתתא בעומקא דלבא רצון העליון שבנפש.

דהיינו על ידי שיעמיק בלבו ענין המרירות בנפשו על גודל הפגם והחסרון שגרם ולצעוק אל ד’ בצר לו... מקרב איש ולב עמוק מאד מאד מכאשר תוכל נפשו שאת מפני שאין כח בנפשו להכיל גודל המרירות. ולכן אין צעקה זו אלא בלב, שכל מה שהנפש מכילה עדיין ויכל להוציא בשפתיו ורוח פיו, משאין כן כשתגדל המרירות בנפשו במאד מאד עד שאין כח הנפש להכיל, אזי אי אפשר לכלוא את הרוח, וצועק הלוך וגעו עד שאין לו כח לדבר ולהוציא בשפתיו ורוח פיו, ואין לו אלא צעקת הלב לפי שנגעה עד מיצוי הנפש ממש...

לפי שעל ידי בחינת תשובה זו מעומקא דלבא בחרטה ועקירת הרצון במסירת הנפש ממש הרי על ידי ביטול רצון זה בבחינה זו גורם ומעורר למעלה רצון העליון ב”ה שלמעלה מעלה מבחי’ השתלשלות.

However, positive commandments are expressions of the “limbs of the King” (i.e. an expression of G-d’s actions in the world). Once one has trespassed and caused damage to their influence in the world, how can teshuvah undo this damage and perfect their influence?

But it is written, “From the depths I have called you G-d”, that is to say that I called you (as it were) to ‘being’ from the hidden places to the revealed to ‘be’, on the plane of existence. This means that the outpouring and influence of the “limbs of the king” is accomplished by means of “the depths.” This is referring to the highest ‘depths’, that is the “Supernal Will” which exists far above the aspect of “extending downward” (i.e. the usual pathways for expression of G-d’s creative Will in the world). [This Supernal Will] is expressed in terms of “awakening from below” (i.e. man’s own religious experience) in the depths of the heart [which is a reflection of] the Supernal Will in the soul [of man].

That is to say that [teshuvah is accomplished] by deepening in his heart the bitterness in his soul in regard to the magnitude of the damage and deficiency he has caused, and by crying out G-d in his distress... from the depths of his person and from a very deep part of his heart, such that it is too much for his soul to bear because his soul cannot encompass that much bitterness. Therefore, this cry is one that is purely from the heart. Anything the soul can encompass can still be expressed by his lips and breath. This is not the case when the bitterness is so extreme that the soul cannot encompass it, then it is impossible to encompass his spirit, and his cry increases in intensity until he cannot speak and express [the bitterness] with his lips and breath, and he has nothing except the cry of the heart because his soul is totally exhausted...

By means of this aspect of teshuvah from the depths of the heart, with regret, and by uprooting one’s own desires [in the face of G-d’s desires] in an act of true self-sacrifice, by means of this self-nullification, this aspect [of teshuvah] awakens the Supernal Will above, along the chain of connection.

Sandwiched between laws of helping other people with their animals, and sending away a mother bird before taking her young, Devarim 22:5 commands, “There shall not be a man’s *kli* upon a woman, and a man shall not wear a woman’s garment.” This is understood as a prohibition against cross-dressing; the word *kli* includes ornamental accessories as well. Sefer haChinuch lists the prohibition for women as the Torah’s 542<sup>nd</sup> mitzvah, and the prohibition for men as the Torah’s 543<sup>rd</sup> mitzvah.

The sages identified different goals for this mitzvah. Per Rashi (Devarim 22:5), the concern is that one might try to pass as another gender in order to engage in immorality. Rambam (Sefer haMitzvot, Lo Taaseh 40) adds another dimension: concern for venturing into pagan worship practices involving cross-dressing. Indeed, Rambam records these laws in his “Laws of Idolatry” rather than among laws relating to sexual morality.

Rambam (Hilchot Avodah Zarah 12:10), Tur and Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 182) state that gender-specific garb is

defined based on the popular practice in a particular region. Rabbi Akiva Eiger (Yoreh Deah 182:1) notes that some authorities believe this includes non-Jewish practice; if non-Jewish men and women both wear a particular garment, it has neutral status for the purpose of this law.

Ashkenazi Jews have dressed in costumes on Purim for centuries, and early halachic authorities recorded the practice of men dressing in clothing and jewelry associated with women. Writing in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbi Yehudah Mintz (Mahari Mintz 15) justified the practice, explaining that licentiousness is not the intent of these Purim costumes. He added that since Purim only occurs for a limited, fixed time each year, there is no fear that this practice might spread to other times

*torczyner@torontotorah.com*

**Weekly Highlights: Oct 1 – 7 / 28 Elul – 5 Tishrei**

**Many shiurim are off this week, but opportunities remain!**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Oct. 1</b>				
<b>After hashkamah</b>	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
<b>After musaf, downstairs</b>	Yaron Perez	Between the Day of Judgment and the Day of Joy	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>5:00 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	UNetaneh Tokef	BAYT	<b>Hebrew Shiur; Simcha Suite</b>
<b>After minchah</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	The Art of Piyut	BAYT	<b>Simcha Suite</b>

**לשנה טובה נכתב ונחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום**

**MAY WE BE INSCRIBED AND SEALED FOR A YEAR OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS AND TORAH AND SHALOM AND BLESSING!**

<b>Mon. Oct. 3</b>	<b>Rosh HaShanah 1</b>			
<b>5:45 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<b>Rabbi’s Classroom</b>
<b>Tue. Oct. 4</b>	<b>Rosh HaShanah 2</b>			
<b>5:45 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<b>Rabbi’s Classroom</b>
<b>Wed. Oct. 5</b>	<b>Fast of Gedalyah</b>			
<b>2:30 PM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of Exodus	Location: Contact carolleser@rogers.com	<b>For women</b>
<b>Thu. Oct. 6</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Meet Midian	49 Michael Ct.	<b>For women</b>
<b>Fri. Oct. 7</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Issues in Onaah	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>

**Coming up: 7:30 PM Sunday October 9<sup>th</sup>  
at Yeshivat Or Chaim, 159 Almore Ave.  
Ethical Work, Meaningful Life  
Rabbi Jonathan Ziring**

**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.**