

# Toronto Torah

**Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov**

Parshat Vayishlach

17 Kislev, 5777/December 17, 2016

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**This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Shawna and Jeremy Magence and Family marking the yahrtzeits of their grandmothers a”h**

**Raizel bat Shlomo (Rose Lazar), Batsheva bat Herschel Zvi (Bess Fine) and Shayna Ita bat Avraham (Ida Magence)**

**Yisrael By Any Other Name**

**Adam Friedmann**

The events in the parshah trace a transformation in Yaakov Avinu’s character during his years with Lavan. This culminates with the changing of Yaakov’s name to Yisrael, he who “struggles with angels and men and succeeds” (Bereishit 32:29), and “sees G-d face-to-face” (Ibid., 32:31) and survives. However, we find this name change proclaimed twice: once at the beginning of the parshah after wrestling the angel, and again later when Yaakov and his family reach Beit-El. Why the reiteration?

Rashi (Bereishit 32:29) addresses this problem by positing that the angel’s proclamation did not actually constitute the change, but was merely an admission that Yaakov was now worthy of the new name. The renaming itself occurred at Beit-El. However, we find that Yaakov already made use of his new name before reaching Beit-El. Earlier in the parshah, at Shechem, Yaakov builds a *mizbeiach* at which he calls out in the name of “Kel: G-d of Yisrael”. (Bereishit 33:20) Given Rashi’s explanation, we may ask why Yaakov did this. Even if he knew that the change was coming, why did he use the new name prematurely?

Two more questions emerge from Yaakov’s *mizbeiach*-building activities. At Shechem the Torah states that Yaakov built a *mizbeiach*, using the unusual verb *yatzav* (literally “to cause to stand”). This verb is usually used to describe the installation of a *matzeivah*, a single stone used for sacrificial offerings. Its use in conjunction with a *mizbeiach* (a multi-

stone altar) begs interpretation. Then, at Beit-El, Yaakov constructs two altars. First he “builds a *mizbeiach* there” (Ibid., 35:7) (using the more typical verb *banah*), an then, after G-d appears to him, he “stands up a *matzeivah*” (Ibid, 35:14). Why does Yaakov shift from a union of the *matzeivah* and *mizbeiach* in Shechem, to two distinct entities in Beit-El?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (Bereishit 33:20) explains that *matzeivah* and *mizbeiach* symbolize two different modes of religious worship. The *matzeivah* is a single stone. It is not built by Man – Man just rearranges it. It symbolizes a recognition of G-d guiding the seemingly random natural world. The *mizbeiach* is a human construct. It symbolizes Man’s attempt to sublimate all of his capabilities into the service of G-d. A relationship with G-d is achieved by orienting all available energies towards Divine service.

Generally, the *matzeivah* experience is G-d’s prerogative. He decides when and where to reveal Himself in the natural order. The *mizbeiach* reality, conversely, is in Man’s hands. His effort in serving G-d is what, so to speak, “allows” G-d into his life.

Malbim writes (Bereishit 33:20) that after his match with the angel, Yaakov felt that the two modes had fused within him. He could cause the *Shechinah*, the revealed presence of G-d, to rest in any place and time. Perhaps this outlook explains the premature use of “Yisrael” as well. Even if the title had not yet

officially been granted, all that mattered was that Yaakov knew that he was suited for it. This confidence, writes Malbim, led Yaakov to build the *mizbeiach* in Shechem as a presumed fulfillment of the vow, taken at the beginning of Parshat Vayetze, to build a “house for G-d” at Beit-El. There was no need to travel to a location where the *Shechinah* was prone to manifest - the *Shechinah* was with Yaakov, wherever he went! And the ordeal with Dinah, argues Malbim, was a message to Yaakov that this was not so.

The lesson of Yaakov’s need to build a *mizbeiach* specifically at Beit-El, and of his official name change at that time, is that there is a tragic gap between Man and G-d in this world. No spiritual accomplishments, even “struggling with G-d”, can allow Man direct access to the Divine presence. We must each work hard to build a *mizbeiach*, dedicating our efforts, however limited, to G-d. If He desires, then at the right place and at the right time He will recognize our efforts and reveal Himself. Yaakov internalized this lesson which is why, at Beit-El, the *matzeivah* and the *mizbeiach* were separated, correcting his previous mistake.

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*Note: “Beit-El” as written here is a place name and has no sanctity. See Chatam Sofer 6:5, Birkei Yosef Yoreh Deah 276:27, Chevel Nachalato 17:31:3 and Rabbi Shlomo Aviner at <http://www.havabooks.co.il/sms.asp?cat=6>.*

## OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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**We are grateful to  
Continental Press 905-660-0311**

***Sodo shel haRebbe*  
(The Rebbe's Secret)  
Dr. Yechiel Harari  
Hebrew, Yediot 2013**

**About this Book**

The central question this book seeks to answer is: How did Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, "the Rebbe", convert a handful of chasidim into a boundless empire? What is the secret of his charisma?

The book begins by presenting a biography of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh and most recent Rebbe of Lubavitch. It begins with his childhood in Nikolaev, and follows his family's global travels until the Rebbe arrived in the United States. The book also follows the series of events which led to the appointment of Rabbi Schneerson as the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, presenting a complete picture of the tensions surrounding the transition. Throughout, the goal is to understand how these events influenced the worldview of Rabbi Schneerson.

In his search for truth, Dr. Harari characterizes himself as "an objective chasid", although he acknowledges Elie Wiesel's quotation from his grandfather, "An objective chasid is not a chasid."

Harari's book has met great success in Israel, beyond religious and chassidic circles; it was a national best-seller for five months. In Chabad circles it has been received with mixed feelings, with a general consensus that the book is good for a curious reader, but not necessarily for a Chabad chasid.

**The Uniqueness of this Book**

Beyond providing dry research and the basic story of Rabbi Schneerson's life, the book provides a relatively unmediated encounter with the Rebbe, through an abundance of stories and testimonies which gradually flesh out his unique image. Harari brings a range of sources, from normal individuals to heads of state to IDF generals, all speaking of their impressions from their encounters with the Rebbe. Throughout, the point is not only to describe the Rebbe, but

also to demonstrate the deeper impact of encounters with him.

As a chasid of Chabad, Harari gained access to protected archives held by Chabad, and was able to interview the Rebbe's personal secretaries.

**Other works by Dr. Harari**

In 2005, Dr. Harari completed his doctorate on the philosophy of Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, at Tel Aviv University. In the years since then he has drawn closer to Jewish practice, and particularly to Chabad chassidut, and he has published several books on Judaism and chassidic thought.

Last year, Dr. Harari published "*L'natzeiach kol rega meichadash – sichat nefesh im Baal haTanya*" on the psychology of the author of The Tanya, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe; this book has also been a national best-seller in Israel.

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**Israel's Chief Rabbis: *Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Toledano***

**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

**Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Toledano  
1880 Tiberias – 1960 Jerusalem  
Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo, 1942-1958**

**Life**

Born and raised in Tiberias, Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Toledano studied and was ordained in his father's yeshiva. During World War I, the Ottomans exiled the Toledano family, along with 800 Jewish Galileans who held French citizenship. They took refuge in Corsica, where Rabbi Toledano took part in establishing local Jewish institutions.

At the conclusion of the war, Rabbi Toledano returned to Tiberias for several years, before joining the Chief Rabbinical Council in Tangiers in 1926. There Rabbi Toledano established and headed the Rabbinical Court, as well as the *Torat Chaim* yeshiva for rabbinical students. In 1928, Rabbi Toledano became the head of the Rabbinical Court in Cairo; between then and 1942 he also served as Deputy Chief Rabbi in Cairo, Chief Rabbi in Alexandria, and a leading figure on various Egyptian rabbinical courts.

In 1942, Rabbi Toledano returned to Israel as Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo; he remained in this position until 1958, when he became Minister of Religion. He occupied this role until his passing in 1960.

**Legacy**

Already in his youth, Rabbi Toledano was a dynamic political figure; in addition to his studies; he joined the City Council of Tiberias, was head of the local Mizrahi branch, and corresponded with Theodor Herzl and Nachum Sokolov. To strengthen Jewish life elsewhere in the Galil, Rabbi Toledano moved to Pekiin for four years, and he established a Jewish school there. In 1913, Rabbi Toledano spearheaded a

committee to purchase land in the area around the Rambam's grave, and to establish a settlement, Maimonidiya, in his memory. The initiative was put on hold with the start of World War I, but continued thereafter.

An ardent Zionist, Rabbi Toledano wrote extensively on the halachic basis of Zionism, and dealt with practical issues of Jewish communal life in his responsa *Yam haGadol*. He argued against selling arms to non-Jewish neighbours without a peace treaty (#57), in favour of supporting Jewish businesses even when the proprietors are not observant (#92), and in support of the idea that there is a contemporary mitzvah of settling the land of Israel (#97). He also wrote in support of establishing a special Beit Din to renew the practice of authentic *semichah* (ordination).

During World War II, while serving in Tel Aviv-Yafo, Rabbi Toledano joined with Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Isser Yehudah Unterman to establish a special rabbinical court to address cases of *agunah*. He published *Bat Ami* on the war-related *agunah* cases he had handled.

Rabbi Toledano was a dedicated researcher of ancient manuscripts, primarily those from the period of the Gaonim in Spain and North Africa. His most celebrated find is the Arabic manuscript of Rambam's Commentary to Mishnah, but he was involved in many other discoveries, and Hebrew University sent him to represent them in uncovering manuscripts in Morocco in 1950.

Rabbi Toledano was awarded the Rav Kook Prize in 1956-1957; today, the Religious Council of Tel Aviv awards "The Rabbi Toledano Prize" for outstanding Torah literature in his name.

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## Biography

### The Netziv

Rabbi Ezra Goldschmiedt

Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin, also known as the Netziv (1816-1893), was born in Mir, Russia, to a family of Torah scholars. At the age of 13 he married Rayna Batya, daughter of Rabbi Yitzchak of Volozhin, the Rosh Yeshiva of the famed Volozhin yeshiva in Belarus and son of the yeshiva's founder, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin.

After decades of dedicated study, Rabbi Berlin became the Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin yeshiva. Despite many difficulties, including the burning down of Volozhin and its yeshiva on two occasions, enrollment steadily increased under Rabbi Berlin's guidance. During his tenure, the yeshiva produced many future leaders, such as Rabbi Moshe Epstein, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, and Rabbi Shimon Shkop.

Rabbi Berlin's approach to learning was to search for the earliest possible sources on a topic, thereby developing a clear understanding through the roots of our tradition. For similar reasons, he was also a strong proponent of the study of Tanach. Additionally, Rabbi Berlin was an early supporter of the Chovevei Tzion movement and he strongly supported the resettling of Eretz Yisrael.

The *maskilim*, who viewed the Volozhin yeshiva's success as their failure, constantly appealed to the Russian government to disrupt the yeshiva's program. Eventually, their demands for an overwhelming program of secular studies (to take place from the morning until 3:00 PM), the requirement that every instructor hold a secular degree in education, as well as the closing of the yeshiva at night, forced Rabbi Berlin's hand; after leading the yeshiva for forty years, he decided to close it. (It should be noted that Rabbi Berlin had previously, albeit begrudgingly, allowed limited instruction in Russian to the Yeshiva. It was the extent of the demands that made the final version unbearable. See <http://bit.ly/2gsJvxx> for Rabbi J. J. Schacter's full presentation of this incident.)

Rabbi Berlin's life was so intertwined with the yeshiva's existence that its closing had detrimental effects on his health, eventually leading to his passing only two years later.

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## Torah and Translation

### The Travels of Halachah

Netziv, Introduction to Haamek She'eilah

Translated by Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

כתיב בשבט לוי "יורו משפטך ליעקב", וביהודה כתיב "מחוקקי", "מחוקק מבין רגליו". ההפרש בזה, דעיקר הוראה בישראל למעשה היה שבט לוי... אבל כחם לא היה אלא להורות לפי שעה, ואין למורה אלא מה שעניו רואות, ובסיעתא דשמיא מכווני הלכה, אבל לא קבעי הלכה לדורות, להכריח שאי אפשר לזוז מאותה ההוראה... אבל שבט יהודה להיפך, שקול דעתם לא הוי מצליח לכיון אל האמת, אבל זה כחם להוציא להמציא הכרעות על פי חקירה ופפול עד שיצא לאור דינים מחותכים שאי אפשר עוד לזוז ממנה... שבט יהודה המה מחוקקים, ושבט לוי באים אחר הכרעות ומורים למעשה הבא לפניהם, ומתקינים לפי השינויים במזדמן, ולהורות כתכלית הנרצה לעשות בתורה...

וכשבאו לבבל היו נצרכים עוד יותר להזהר באזהרת יאשיהו המלך שלא להורות כי אם על פי חקירה... והטעם משום דבארץ ישראל היה עדיין זכות ארץ ישראל גורם לעמוד על אור ההוראה במעט עיון, מה שאין כן בבל...

וכשנסתם תלמוד בבלי עשו אותו לפלטרין גדול ונורא... והגאונים שבאו אחרי חכמי בבל מחברי התלמוד ידעו כמה שבילי פשוטים בזה הפלטרין, אשר לא נסתפקו בהליכות אלה הלכות מעולם, וזה גרם שלא השתמשו הרבה בכח פלפולם...

וד' חפץ למען צדקו, לשון ברק חרבה של תורה... גלה כבוד התורה מבבל למדינת צרפת ארץ לא ראו אור הקבלה סדורה, והוצרכו למצוא פתח הפלטרין על פי עיון וחקירה, יגעו ומצאו שביל חדש כחמה ברה... ומחשך ואופל הוציאו שלהבת י-ה מאירה...

It is written regarding the tribe of Levi, "They will instruct Your laws to Jacob", while regarding Judah it is written, "My legislators", "the legislator from between his feet". The difference is that the primary practical rulings in Israel were [from] the tribe of Levi... but they only had power to rule for the moment, for the judge has only what his eyes see, and with the aid of Heaven they divine the halachah, but not to establish the halachah for future generations, to compel them not to budge from that ruling... However, the reverse was true of the tribe of Judah. Their assessment was not successful in divining the truth, but rather this was their power: to extrapolate and create rulings on the basis of investigative analysis and intricate reasoning until clear laws emerged from which one could not budge... The tribe of Judah were the legislators, and the tribe of Levi would follow their decisions and rule practically on what came before them, adjusting for the changes of circumstance in each case, so as to decide in accordance with the Torah's desired outcome.

When they came to Babylon it was necessary to be more careful of King Yoshiyahu's imperative not to rule by means other than investigative analysis... the reason being that in Israel the merit of the Land still caused them to be able to perceive the "light of ruling" with slight analysis, but not so in Babylon...

When the Babylonian Talmud was sealed, they made it into a great and awesome mansion... the Gaonim, who followed the Sages of Babylonia, the Redactors of the Talmud, knew many straight and obvious paths in this mansion, and as they never had doubts as to the halachah derived via these paths, they didn't much use their analytical abilities.

But Hashem, Who desires His servants' vindication, to sharpen the blade of the sword of Torah until it flashes like lightning... exiled the honor of Torah from Babylonia to France, a land which had never seen the light of the ordered tradition, which compelled them to find the entrance to the mansion via investigation and analysis. They toiled and found a new path, bright as the sun... and from darkness and fog they produced the illuminating flame of Hashem...

As we discussed in Mitzvah 556, the Torah condemns sexual abuse in the harshest terms, comparing rape with murder.

In presenting the laws for punishing a rapist, Devarim 22:29 states, "And she shall be a wife for him," meaning that the victim has the right to demand marriage, and he would not be able to refuse. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Naarah 1:3) Further, "he can never send her away" in divorce, unless she wishes to end the marriage. Sefer haChinuch lists the commandment to marry and prohibition to divorce as the Torah's 557<sup>th</sup> and 558<sup>th</sup> mitzvot.

It is shocking to think that this marriage would be desirable for the victim of such an attack. In truth, similar laws requiring marriage existed in ancient Near Eastern societies, and it is possible that this was viewed by some as a fate better than living with the stigma of victimhood. However, Sefer haChinuch (557) suggests that one role of this penalty is to act as a deterrent for the attacker; knowing that he will be compelled to marry her, perhaps he will rein himself in.

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**Weekly Highlights: Dec 17 — Dec 23 / 17 Kislev — 23 Kislev**

***Many of our regular classes are on hiatus, but opportunities remain!***

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Dec. 17</b>				
<b>After hashkamah</b>	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
<b>8:50 AM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Parshah	BAYT	<b>Turk Beis Medrash</b>
<b>Before minchah</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<b>Rabbi's Classroom</b>
<b>After minchah</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>6:00 PM</b>	Yaron Perez	Parent-Child Learning	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Sun. Dec. 18</b>				
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachah	BAYT	<b>Third floor</b>
<b>9:15 AM</b>	R' Shalom Krell	Book of Shemuel	Associated North	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>Mon. Dec. 19</b>				
<b>9:30 AM</b>	Mrs. Elliezra Perez	Tefillah (Prayer)	Ulpanat Orot	<b>University women</b>
<b>7:30 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Arvei Pesachim in Depth	Clanton Park	<b>Men</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Gemara Arvei Pesachim	Clanton Park	<b>Men</b>
<b>Tue. Dec. 20</b>				
<b>9:30 AM-Noon</b>	<b>Mrs. Elliezra Perez</b>	<b>Beyond Kashrut I: Your Inner Kitchen</b>	<b>Ulpanat Orot</b>	<b>University women</b>
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Ezra: Who is a Jew?	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Wed. Dec. 21</b>				
<b>9:30 AM-Noon</b>	<b>R' Jonathan Ziring</b>	<b>Beyond Kashrut II: The End of Meat and Milk?</b>	<b>Ulpanat Orot</b>	<b>University women</b>
<b>2:30 PM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of Vayikra	carolleser@rogers.com	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>8:00 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do...?	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>Thu. Dec. 22</b>				
<b>9:30 AM-Noon</b>	<b>R' Seth Grauer</b>	<b>Beyond Kashrut III: Of Kulot and Chumrot</b>	<b>Ulpanat Orot</b>	<b>University women</b>
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: War with Midian	49 Michael Ct.	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Fri. Dec. 23</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Laws of Onaah	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>

**Coming Soon!**

**Sunday December 25, 9:30 AM to Noon: A Chanukah Shiur Marathon at Shaarei Tefillah!**

**Sunday January 1, 9:15 AM to 11:15 AM: Yarchei Kallah at Or Chaim: "Tefilat Shav: Wasted Prayer?"**