

# Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Beshalach

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## The First Step

Adam Friedmann

The parshah details the harrowing account of the Egyptians, chariots battle-ready, chasing Bnei Yisrael into a seemingly inescapable trap at the sea. The Jews cry out to G-d, then turn to Moshe to express their fear of perishing. Moshe reassures the people: "Do not fear. Stand and see the salvation of Hashem that He will do for you today." (Shemot 14:13). Moshe's encouragement sets the stage for the dramatic and climactic event of the splitting of the Yam Suf. What comes next is somewhat jarring. G-d asks Moshe, "*Mah titzak eilai?* Why cry out to Me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and they will go forward (ibid. 14:15)," but the text does not include any prayer from Moshe. Some associate the "crying out" here to that done by Bnei Yisrael earlier on (see Ibn Ezra). However, our Sages (Mechilta DeRashbi) and many commentators (see Rashi, for example) assume that after completing his remarks Moshe had begun to pray, and G-d reacted by asking him why he was doing so.

Two questions emerge here. First, given Moshe's initial confidence that G-d would intervene, we may ask why he subsequently found it necessary to pray at all. Did he suddenly become uncertain? Second, if he did indeed feel the need to pray, why was this wrong? The moment was one of extreme danger for the whole community. What more fitting circumstance is there to pray to G-d for help?

Ramban (14:15) addresses the first question by explaining that while Moshe was confident that G-d would

save them, he didn't know how this was going to happen. Suddenly, he found himself and Bnei Yisrael in desperate straits, and therefore he cried out to G-d for help. Ramban answers the second question by arguing that in this context the desperation implied by "crying out" was inappropriate. Moshe had already been told that Pharaoh would pursue Bnei Yisrael. His request should have been a calmer one, which simply sought instructions about how to proceed.

Perhaps one might suggest a similar, though distinct, explanation by considering Moshe's previous instance of crying out. During the plague of Frogs Moshe mollified a panicked Pharaoh by telling him that he would pray to G-d for the plague to end. There, too, the Torah uses the verb *tzaakah*, to cry out. The cry there described the turn to G-d for help in an otherwise impossible situation. Moshe was demonstrating that it was G-d, and G-d alone, who had the power to end the plague. G-d will intervene to save man, but only after man develops humility, acknowledging that he is utterly powerless to help himself. [See Rambam, Laws of Fasts 1:1-3 and *Ikar* #5 of his Introduction to *Perek Chelek* in Sanhedrin.] The *tzaakah* is the cry of the Jew, ravaged by the forces of cruel fate and despairing, calling out to his Father in Heaven to save him. Moshe assumed that the same approach was called for at the sea, which was as desperate a situation as possible. G-d would intervene fully and save Bnei Yisrael once they had initiated the interaction with *tzaakah*.

This explanation dovetails nicely with Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's reading of these verses. (Shemot 14:15) He notes that in reassuring the people, Moshe emphasized that they need not act. They can "stand" (*hityatzvu*) and watch G-d's salvation unfold. Moshe therefore engaged in crying out.

G-d's response served to educate Moshe that with the freedom of Bnei Yisrael, the situation had changed. Bnei Yisrael were now called upon not only to cry out to G-d, but to express their trust in G-d through tangible action, and, by doing so, to become partially responsible for shaping their own destiny. Bnei Yisrael had to take the first steps into the sea, attempting, however feebly, to save themselves. Only after this attempt would G-d intervene.

This perspective is reflected in Rashi's comment: "Speak to Bnei Yisrael and they will go forward – All they need to do is go forward because the sea is not [actually] standing in their way. The merits of their ancestors and their having faith in Me and leaving [Egypt] are enough to split the sea for them." (Shemot 14:15) With hearts full of faith, we can trust that G-d will be there to guide Bnei Yisrael through even the most menacing terrain, provided we are ready to take the first step.

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

### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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**Musar For Moderns**

**Rabbi Elyakim Krumbein**

**Ktav and Yeshivat Har Etzion, 2005**

**Who is the author?**

Rabbi Krumbein is a 1972 graduate of Yeshiva University. Upon graduation, he made aliyah, first joining the Kollel in Yeshivat Har Etzion (Gush) and later teaching in different Yeshiva programs – a role he continues to this day, and in which this reviewer had the merit to study under him. In addition to this deep immersion in the sea of Torah, Rabbi Krumbein is also an expert in pedagogy, serving as the pedagogical counselor at Yaakov Herzog Teacher's College. His extensive and thorough knowledge of our tradition, and understanding of contemporary psychology and teaching techniques, enable him to reexamine Jewish educational tradition and translate it into terms suitable for modern readers.

**What is the book's goal?**

As is apparent from the book's name, the main goal is to convince the modern person that studying 'Musar' (morality and ethics) is relevant to him, and to give him the right tools to do so effectively. However, while these goals

are presented and addressed throughout the book, another purpose also emerges. It is not only the modern man who needs the old Musar books such as Mesilat Yesharim (Path of the Just), rather, it is also the world of Musar which needs to be revisited and maybe rebalanced. On topic after topic, Rabbi Krumbein delicately hints that some of the classical Musar views show a strong tendency towards "sternness, severity, [and] withdrawal from the world 'out there' and its temptations." (pg. x) While not denying the merits of such an approach, Rabbi Krumbein's efforts are directed towards the cultivation of a supplementary thread – one which emphasizes "openness... general humanity... and man's innate intelligence as a source of moral imperative." (pg. ix)

Thus, Rabbi Krumbein treats many of the topics discussed in classic moral literature – the relationship between this world and the next, humility and courage, and also methodological topics such as how to learn Musar – in a balanced and careful way, many times arriving at practical conclusions quite different from what may be

considered the 'typical' Musar approach.

**To whom is the book addressed?**

This book can serve as a welcome resource for anyone interested in self-improvement, either in the realm between man and G-d or between man and his fellow. Its neat structure and self-contained chapters make it a comprehensible and enjoyable read.

Nonetheless, a word of warning is due. While the book is written for 'moderns', confronting the specific challenges of our times and using a systematic and almost scientific approach, it is in no way a book for beginners. Periodically, the writer uses Hebrew and Aramaic words and concepts without translation or explanation, and mentions books and the names of rabbis without elaboration. This is under the assumption that the reader is either knowledgeable, or at least familiar enough with the material to search for explanations by himself. Perhaps a better name for the book, albeit less catchy, would have been "Musar for the Modern *Ben Torah*".

*bweintraub@torontotorah.com*

**Israel's Chief Rabbis: Rabbi Tzefaniah Drori**

**Yaron Perez**

**Rabbi Tzefaniah Drori**

**b. 1937, Israel**

**Chief Rabbi, Kiryat Shemonah 1977-present**

**Life**

Rabbi Tzefaniah Drori was born in Israel in 1937; he was raised in the Sdeh Yaakov *yishuv* in the Galil. He attended yeshiva high school in Kfar haRoeh, and he was among the students who established Yeshivat Kerem b'Yavneh. After some time he went to Yeshivat Mercaz haRav, where he was among the close students of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook. He was ordained by Rabbi Yitzchak Arieli, Mashgiach of Yeshivat Mercaz haRav, and Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Nisim.

In 1968, Rabbi Drori was sent by Rabbi Kook to live in Kiryat Shemonah, in Israel's north, to help strengthen Judaism in the region. In 1977 he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Kiryat Shemonah. Simultaneously, he established a local Yeshivat Hesder together with Rabbi Haim Onzi z"l. He remains Rosh Yeshiva today, with Rabbi Yisrael Kirshtein.

**Legacy**

Rabbi Drori has become a communal leader for the overall population of the north, especially among the non-observant kibbutzim in the area, and in this capacity he has seen his role expand beyond establishing classes for study. He is careful to serve as a role model for the broad community in all of his activities, and the pleasantness of his ways. He has remained in the city during its toughest times, including periods of rocket fire from Lebanon, and he has harnessed the student body of the yeshiva to aid local residents.

Rabbi Drori is considered one of the leaders of the Religious Zionist community in Israel. For many years, he headed the

conversion courts in the north, and he participated in the commission to establish the new Conversion Law in Israel. He was among the founders of the *Agudah l'Hitnadvut* (the first agency for national service for women), he was among the founders of the Tzohar rabbinical organization, and he was among the founders of the Takanah Forum for addressing sexual abuse by community leaders.

Rabbi Drori's educational philosophy, absorbed from Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, is to blend the holy and the mundane in daily life. He was one of the founders of *Yeshiva laTze'irim* in Jerusalem; the school blends high-level Jewish studies with the national *Bagrut* curriculum. In 2014, Rabbi Drori published *Hegyon Libi Lefanecha*, a commentary to Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook's philosophical *Orot haTorah*.

Regarding the long-standing Religious Zionist debate about mixing of genders, Rabbi Drori has published his view that there is an advantage to having mixed groups despite all of the challenges involved, and that this should be done. He especially opposes separation in family settings.

Rabbi Drori ascends Har haBayit (the Temple Mount) with his students annually. In 2014, he declared, "Ascending to Har haBayit is a biblical mitzvah. Over the years after the destruction of the Temple, great rabbis, including Rambam and Ramban, went to the mountain. When we are there, we are close to the site of the Temple, and even after the destruction of the Temple the site remains sacred. This has not changed in thousands of years, and it is no different today. There is a mitzvah to ascend Har HaBayit." (<http://www.kipa.co.il/now/59444.html>)

*yperez@torontotorah.com*

**Biography**  
**Rabbi Yaakov Ariel**  
Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

Rabbi Yaakov Ariel was born in Jerusalem in 1937. He studied in the Yeshiva of Kfar HaRoeh, Midreshet Noam in Pardes Chana, and Mercaz HaRav. He became one of the close students of Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook, the Nazir, and Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli; he derived his methodology of halachic decision making from Rabbi Yisraeli.

Rabbi Ariel is a leading halachic authority in the Religious Zionist community, and his many students hold important posts in yeshivot and communities throughout Israel. As a respected authority, he has issued many public halachic positions on a series of important, and often controversial matters. He is the current Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan, the president of Yeshivat Ramat Gan, and the head of a rabbinical court. He was one of the founders of the rabbinic organization Tzohar, and served as president until 2013. Tzohar is dedicated to making the Rabbanut friendly for the average Israeli, and especially for secular Jews.

Rabbi Ariel previously served as the Rosh Yeshiva in Yamit (an abandoned settlement in the Sinai Peninsula) and the rabbi of Kfar Maimon, and he was the founder of the Machon HaMikdash. He has attempted to become the Chief Rabbi of Israel, but has failed twice, once due to opposition by Charedim and the second time due to his advanced age.

He has written many books, including commentaries on the Talmud, halachic responsa, books on the holidays, and a record of the building and destruction of the Yamit settlement. He has also published weekly thoughts in newspapers and taught in Bar Ilan University, thus extending his influence beyond the confines of his yeshiva or city.

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

**Torah and Translation**  
**Using Electrical Devices on Shabbat**  
Rabbi Yaakov Ariel, B'Ohalah shel Torah 2:23  
Translated by Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

כמדומני שדעתו של הגרש"ז אוירבך זצ"ל היא המקובלת להלכה ע"י רוב פוסקי דורנו. שבהפעלת מכשיר חשמלי יש איסור **דרבנן**, אלא א"כ המכשיר עושה מלאכה **דאורייתא** - כגון חולב- מגלח- מדליק אש וכדו'.

אמנם דעת החזו"א שהאיסור בהפעלת מכשיר חשמלי הוא **מהתורה**. ולדעתו יש כאן שני איסורים, בעצם סגירת המעגל חשמלי המאפשרת זרימת זרם בחוטים יש משום **בונה**, ובהפעלת המכשיר כתוצאה מכך יש משום **תיקון כלי** האסור מהתורה, מדין בונה או מכה בפטיש...

והגרש"ז א"כ חלק עליו... ואם יורשה לי לרדת לסוף דעתו הגדולה, הוא חשש, ובצדק רב, שאם יותרו מכשירים אלו תיעשה השבת חול חלילה. הוא הבין לפי רוחב דעתו, דעת תורה, שהתורה לא הסכימה מן הסתם להתיר שימוש במכשירים חשמליים. ולכן נלע"ד לומר שגם החולקים על החזו"א וסוברים שאין בהפעלת מכשירים חשמליים מסויימים אלא איסור דרבנן, כונתם רק בהפעלה **מקריית** של מכשיר בודד. אך יתכן שיש בהפעלת מספר רב של מכשירים חשמליים בשבת איסור **דאורייתא** ע"ד מש"כ הרמב"ן בפירושו לתורה (ויקרא כג: כד) שנצטוונו מן התורה להיות לנו מנוחה ב"ט אפילו מדברים שאינן מלאכה, לא שיטרח כל היום למדוד התבואות ולשקול הפירות... ולפנות הכלים וגם האבנים מבית לבית וממקום למקום... יהיו עומסים על החמורים... וכל משא יביאו ב"ט ויהיה השוק מלא לכל מקח וממכר ותהיה החנות פתוחה והחנוני מקיף... ויהיו הפועלים משכימין למלאכתן ומשכירין עצמם כחול לדברים אלו וכיוצא בהן... לכך אמרה תורה "שבתוך" שיהיה יום שבייתה ומנוחה, לא יום טורח.

והדברים יפים דוקא לדורנו, כשהטכנולוגיה התפתחה והתקדמה וגם ביום חול רוב בני האדם אינם טורחים ועמלים בגופם, אלא יושבים ולוחצים על כפתורים...

It seems to me that the opinion of the Gaon Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l is the accepted law according to most authorities in our generation. Namely, that using an electric appliance involves a **rabbinic** prohibition, unless the appliance performs a biblical *melachah*, such as milking, shaving, lighting a fire, and the like.

However, the opinion of the Chazon Ish is that using an electric appliance is forbidden **biblically**. According to him, there are two prohibitions – the very closing of the electric circuit that enables the current to flow through the wires is **building**, and using the appliance as a result of this is **fixing a vessel** which is biblically prohibited, either because of building or delivering the final hammer blow...

The Gaon Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach disagreed with him... If I am allowed to presume to grasp the depths of his great opinion, he was worried, quite correctly, that if these appliances would be permitted, the Shabbat would, G-d forbid, become a weekday. He understood, with the breadth of his knowledge, the knowledge of Torah, that the Torah would presumably not agree to permit use of electric appliances. Therefore, it seems to me that even those who disagree with Chazon Ish, [holding] that there is only a rabbinic prohibition in using certain electric appliances, they mean this only with a single, **incidental** use. However, it is possible that using many electric appliances on Shabbat would involve a **biblical** prohibition, based on what the Ramban wrote in his commentary to the Torah (Vayikra 23:24): We are biblically commanded to rest on Yom Tov even from those activities that technically do not qualify as *melachah*. We should not strain all day to measure grain, weigh fruit... to move utensils, and even stones, from house to house and place to place... to load up donkeys... And all packages would be delivered on Yom Tov; and the marketplace would be filled with ongoing commerce... and the workers would arise for their duties and hire themselves out like the rest of the week, and so on... Therefore, the Torah commands us "Shabbaton"-- that these should be days of rest and cessation of work, and not days of labor and toil.

This is specifically true for our generation. As technology has developed and moved forward, and even during the week most people do not toil and work with their bodies, but rather they press buttons...

Devarim 23:25-26 commands, “When you enter your peer’s vineyard, you shall eat grapes as you wish, to satiation, but do not put them into your vessel. When you enter your peer’s standing grain, you shall pick ears with your hand, but do not raise a sickle upon your peer’s standing grain.” As the Talmud (Bava Metzia 87a-b) explains, this is addressed to a worker who is hired to work with crops. Per Sefer haChinuch, there are three mitzvot here:

- A worker may eat from the crops with which he is working (Mitzvah #576);
- A worker may not take more than his fill (#577);
- A worker may not stop harvesting to eat (#578).

These mitzvot balance expectations between employer and employee. The owner of the field is expected to accommodate the needs of the labourer, rather than maximize profits on his back. On the other hand, the worker is expected to be judicious in weighing what to take, and to restrict his eating to times when it will not harm the overall enterprise. Each is expected to deal fairly, to the ultimate benefit of both parties.

Regarding these mitzvot, Sefer haChinuch (576) writes, “Curses and bad things stick to the bad, and good things to the good, each with its own kind.”

*torczyner@torontotorah.com*

**Weekly Highlights: Feb. 11 – Feb. 17 / 15 Shevat – 21 Shevat**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Feb. 10-11</b>	<b>Tu b'Shevat</b>			
<b>After hashkamah</b>	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
<b>Before minchah</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<b>Rabbi's Classroom</b>
<b>After minchah</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara: Hammering Idols	BAYT	<b>Simcha Suite</b>
<b>Sun. Feb. 12</b>				
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>Mon. Feb. 13</b>				
<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>Adam Friedmann</b>	<b>Jewish Philosophy 2: Prayer</b>	<b>The Terraces of Baycrest</b>	
<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>R' Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Medical Ethics: Logotherapy &amp; Judaism</b>	<b>Shaarei Shomayim</b>	<b>CME-approved Open to laypeople</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	<b>R' Jonathan Ziring</b>	<b>Halachah &amp; Modernity 6: Women Voting</b>	<b>Shomrai Shabbos</b>	<b>Men</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Gemara Arvei Pesachim	Clanton Park	<b>Men</b>
<b>Tue. Feb. 14</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Ezra: The Poison Pen	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>8:30 PM</b>	<b>R' Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Agnon: The Banished One</b>	<a href="mailto:info@torontotorah.com">info@torontotorah.com</a>	
<b>Wed. Feb. 15</b>				
<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>R' Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Science and Torah 6: Spontaneous Generation</b>	<b>Beth Emeth</b>	<b>Register at <a href="http://torontotorah.com/science">torontotorah.com/science</a></b>
<b>2:30 PM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of Vayikra	<a href="mailto:carollesser@rogers.com">carollesser@rogers.com</a>	
<b>8:00 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do that?	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Yaron Perez	Parshah: הפרשה ואני	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>Thu. Feb. 16</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Revolt Crushed	49 Michael Ct.	<b>Women</b>
<b>Fri. Feb. 17</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Biblical Ribbit	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>

**Our Men's Beit Midrash for University Students at Yeshivat Or Chaim offers:**

- Sundays: 10:00 AM, Gemara Chullin, Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, 11:00 AM, Machshavah, Rabbi Elan Mazer
- Tuesday 8:30 AM, Nefesh haChaim, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring
- Friday 8:30 AM, Yeshayah, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

**Our Women's Beit Midrash for University Students at Ulpanat Orot offers:**

- Monday 9:30 AM to Noon, Middot haNefesh through Chassidut, Mrs. Ellieza Perez
- Tuesday 9:30 AM to Noon, Gemara Chullin / Hilchot Kashrut, Mrs. Ora Ziring
- Wednesday 9:30 AM to Noon, Hilchot Bein Adam laChaveiro, Mrs. Ora Ziring
- Thursday 9:30 AM to Noon, Netivot Shalom on the Parshah, Mrs. Ellieza Perez