

Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Ki Tetze

11 Elul, 5777/September 2, 2017

Vol. 9 Num. 2

**This issue of Toronto Torah is sponsored by Steve and Leah Roth
in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Sonia Roth, Sosha bat Yehoshua z"l**

G-d's Immanence: Cause or Effect?

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

During wartime, soldiers are not usually afforded the luxury of hygiene or ethics. They can go weeks without a proper shower, food, or bed. Life and death decisions must be made with barely a moment's thought. Yet, the Torah demands that those who go to war uphold a high level of sanctity, cleanliness, and morality. It bars certain types of impure individuals from the camp until they immerse in a mikvah (Devarim 23:11), as well as obligates soldiers to bring a shovel to properly cover their waste. Then, the Torah commands the soldier to distance himself from all impropriety. The Torah justifies these difficult demands as follows:

"Since the Lord your G-d moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you, let your camp be holy; let Him not find anything unseemly among you and turn away from you." (Devarim 23:15, JPS translation)

What does it mean that G-d is in the war camp, such that the army must maintain these standards?

One group of commentaries assumes that the law is **responsive**. Meaning, the reality is that G-d is in the camp, and His presence requires a level of sensitivity. Rashbam claims that the *aron*, the ark which held the tablets, would come to battle. This represented an immanence of G-d which had to be respected. Rabbi Yosef Bechor Shor agrees that G-d's presence refers to the holy vessels in the camp. However, noting that the ark was not always

brought to battle, he includes other vessels, as well as the trumpets, as the objects which instantiated G-d's accompaniment of the camp.

A second group (ex. Shadal), however, argue that the law is **proactive**. While it is true that G-d moves through the camp, this presence is not unique to war. However, during war there is more of a need to convince ourselves that G-d is walking among us. Thus, we act with heightened sensitivity to force ourselves to internalize that G-d leads us to battle.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch seems to take a middle approach. On the one hand, he assumes that G-d is present in some unique way in the war camp. On the other, he explains that the purpose of the commandments is to ensure victory, which depends more on our remaining morally steadfast than showing courage to our external enemies.

Elul and the High Holidays force us to grapple with a similar situation. On the one hand, the beginning of the year really is a time when G-d is more immanently present. "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him when He is near" (Yeshayah 55:6)... these are the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur." (Rosh Hashanah 18a) This obligates us to respond with *teshuvah*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah*. On the other hand, even barring that metaphysical reality, the beginning of a new year is a good time to bring G-d deeper into our lives, as introspection and "New Year's

resolutions" are natural responses when the calendar year begins again.

During the period of the High Holidays, we engage in many symbolic acts, or *simanim*. Some commentaries (ex. Meiri) explain that we use objects like the apple in honey to inspire ourselves to get into the season's mood, pushing us to repent. Others (Maharal and Chayei Adam) argue that these *simanim* metaphysically get the ball rolling to ensure our prayers come true. Based on Rabbi Hirsch, perhaps we can suggest that both are true. This time of year indeed has unique spiritual strength. By acting out our prayers, we both respect the power of these days, and ensure our success by instilling in ourselves the recognition of what we can do as the New Year begins.

May we too embrace morality and sanctity, so that we deserve a year in which it is evident that G-d walks among us.

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Mazal Tov to
Elliezra and Yaron Perez
on the birth and brit
of their new baby boy
Mevaser Yitzchak!

May he grow to
Torah, Chuppah
uMaasim Tovim!

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ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

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הורשתם את הארץ וישבתם בה (במדבר לו)

Marking the State of Israel's 70th Year!

Israeli Landmarks: The Knesset, Part 1

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Dreams of the Jewish Parliament Building accompanied the Zionist movement from its very beginning. Already Herzl, in his visionary book *Altneuland* (The Old New Land), which was published in 1902, imagined a "monumental building", which would include a "lofty council chamber built of solid marble and lighted from above through matte glass."

When G-d showed mercy to His people and the Jewish State became a reality, there was no time to construct a "lofty building." The young Jewish settlement was struggling against five Arab armies and the Arabs living in Eretz Yisrael, and during the war, the Jewish Parliament was in Tel Aviv.

In December 1949, after things had somewhat quieted down, the Parliament, now called "Knesset" – after the ancient institution the "Knesset HaGedolah" which guided the Jewish return from Babylon after the first exile – was relocated to Jerusalem, where it wandered from one place to another. It was clear that a permanent location

was needed, an appropriate building to host the Israeli legislative body.

It took seven years to develop the plans, and another two to find funding. Construction took eight years, but eventually, in Elul 5726 (August 1966) the new Knesset building in Givat Ram was ceremonially opened. Later, the original construction was expanded time and again as the Knesset gained employees and administrative units, expanded departments, and gained visitors. Together, these brought the Knesset to triple its original size.

The impressive Knesset building is saturated with symbols of Jewish history from biblical to modern times. These symbols include the Knesset Menorah, situated at the edge of the Rose Garden across from the Knesset building, engraved with figures and events from the tradition and history of the Jewish people. There is a monument of the "burning bush" for fallen soldiers, and tapestries of Marc Chagall in the state hall reflect the

Exodus, Isaiah's visions, and the return to Zion.

The Knesset is also where some of the nation's most important decisions are made. The activity in the Knesset halls and corridors is hard to miss. Whether it be the cafeteria, where, it is said, the most crucial deals are brokered, or the main plenum, where meetings and votes take place, or the Government Meeting Room, where Israel's future is made, the Knesset is bustling with activity.

Upon visiting this junction of past, present and future, it is hard not to be filled with both feelings of gratitude to G-d that He led us back to the land of our ancestors, and the prayers and hope that He should still guide us to the complete redemption. Indeed, "we were like dreamers."

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The Zionist Idea: Compelling Aliyah?

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

While it is not necessarily advisable, a mishnah (Ketuvot 13:11) does license a Jew to compel his or her spouse to make aliyah. The simplest explanation for this remarkable license is that we have a religious duty to live in Israel, and one's spouse should not be entitled to thwart fulfillment of that mitzvah. This is consistent with the view of Ramban (Hosafot l'Sefer haMitzvot 4) and Rivash (#101), who identified a biblical mitzvah of living in Israel. However, other classic halachic authorities, such as Rabbi Yisrael Isserlein (Terumat haDeshen 2:88), contended that there may not be any such mitzvah. According to them, what empowers a spouse to force a move?

Rabbi Moshe Sofer (Chatam Sofer Yoreh Deah 234) contended that the value of living in Israel should not be reduced to a technical obligation. He wrote, "It appears that this power is not because of the mitzvot which depend on being in Israel or Jerusalem, but because of the inherent sanctity of the place, and 'Any who dwell outside Israel are as though they had no G-d.' (Ketuvot 110b)" As Rabbi Isserlein himself wrote of moving to Jerusalem, "There certainly is great praise and a great level for one who dwells in Israel, and certainly in the sacred city, providing benefit in the next world as well as this one."

A third approach may view this as an emotional issue. Rabbi Yom Tov El-Asvili (Ritva to Ketuvot 110b) wrote of the power to move one's family unilaterally that one may do this "even after the destruction [of the Beit haMikdash], for the love of

the land remains." Even in the absence of a religious duty, the magnetism of our land is sufficient.

Finally, Rabbi Eitam Henkin (Techumin 28) noted a fourth possibility, writing, "An additional reason which seems to be at the foundation of our Sages' enactments in this matter is the growth of Israel's population, benefiting the Jewish nation." He cited Rabbi Avraham Danziger's explanation for the Talmud's restrictions against leaving Israel, "Because there are few Jews there, and it should not be left empty of Jews. They pray for all of us, and their prayer is more accepted than ours." (Shaarei Tzedek, Shaar Mishpat ha'Aretz, Chochmat Adam 11:14) And Rabbi Henkin saw in this an explanation for why the Talmud (Bava Kama 80a) marriage in Israel with purchasing a home there; we expect that marriage there will lead to the introduction of new Jewish lives in our land.

We certainly hope that Jewish families will resolve aliyah-related tensions without resorting to this law. However, we can learn from here the multiplanar attachment of the Jew to our heritage. Living in Israel is more than a duty; it is immersion in holiness, it is a loving relationship, and it is a means of supporting our nation as a whole.

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Biography

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

Adam Friedmann

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe was born in Berlin, Germany in 1914. Raised in a non-observant Jewish home, he attended the University of Berlin, and he became interested in Judaism through his association with the Orthodox Students Union. After completing university, Rabbi Wolbe learned in the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary, the Montreux Yeshiva in Switzerland, and then the Mir Yeshiva of Poland under the guidance of Rabbis Yerucham Levovitz and Yechezkel Levenstein. Unable to follow the Mir Yeshiva when it moved into Russia during World War II, Rabbi Wolbe spent the war years serving as a Rabbi in Stockholm, Sweden, where he lived with the family of a yeshiva colleague. After the war, he created a school for Jewish refugee girls near Stockholm. In 1946, Rabbi Wolbe moved to Israel, where he served as the mashgiach of the Be'er Yaakov Yeshiva for thirty years alongside its Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Shapiro. Later, he became the mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshiva in Israel and opened Yeshivat Givat Shaul.

A unique leader, Rabbi Wolbe placed an emphasis on the importance of individuality: that each Jew should not view himself simply as a member of the herd, trying to conform to the general Jewish population. His published ideas reflect a carefully thought-out world view. On child-rearing, Rabbi Wolbe emphasized the need to combine rigorous education (the "building of a child") with the provision of an ideal environment for a child to develop their personal religious feelings and motivations (the "sprouting of a child"). His writings on children's education bespeak a broad knowledge of secular psychology and educational theory. On general religious life, he decried a self-centered emphasis on *frumkeit*, arguing that this approach to Judaism opposes the altruism that is critical to interpersonal relationships from a Torah perspective.

Rabbi Wolbe's politics were staunchly anti-Zionist. He viewed the State of Israel as heretical and did not commemorate its independence. However, this did not hold back his deep love for other Jews and he evidently did not have reservations about speaking at non-religious Kibbutzim or to IDF soldiers. Rabbi Wolbe died in Jerusalem in 2005.

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Torah and Translation

What Today's Student Lacks

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Introduction

Translated by Adam Friedmann

מחיצה עבה מבדלת בין עולם התורה לבין העולם אשר מבחוץ. העומד בחוץ, אף אם הוא שומר תורה ומצוות, אין לו ציור ומושג מהפלא המתחולל בפנים. ויש, אשר גם היושב בין כותלי בית המדרש דומה כמי שנעלמו ממנו טעמי תורה ועדין בחוץ עומד - כשלא שימש תלמידי חכמים.

בדורנו זה הולכים ומתרבים ב"ה לומדי תורה, אך מועטים המה הזוכים לשמש תלמידי חכמים. ספורים הם הרבנים הדומים למלאך ד' צב' שיש לבקש תורה מפיהם, כי עלו על המוקד המה ותלמידיהם נ"ע ה"ד, ורק שרידים נשארו לפליטה אשר הם בבחינת שירי כנסת הגדולה. ובני התורה אשר בדורנו כה התרגלו בלימוד תורה בלי שימוש ת"ת, עד שאינו עולה על דעתם כלל כי יתכן, ועדין בחוץ הם עומדים, על אף הידיעות הרבות שרכשו להם בתורה! "בחוץ" הם עומדים - זאת אומרת שלא הגיעו לפנימיות התורה ולפנימיות עצמם. מהם שאינם עומדים כלל על החסר להם; גם הם זוכים למעמד בתורה ולהיות מתופסי התורה באשר הם שם. אחד נהי' למדן. השני נהי' זהיר מאד בדקדוק במצוות. שלישי בוחר להיות עסקן חרדי. רביעי נמשך לקנאות. אחרים מרגישים כי תורת אמת - מהם והלאה. יקרים אלה מחפשים דרך: הם קולטים פתגם פה, והנהגה שם. במקום החינוך בא החיקוי, ובמקום השימוש - ההבנה השטחית מכלי שלישי ורביעי.

ומה מתחולל במי שנכנס באמת לתוך עולם התורה? "עיר פרא אדם יולד" זה קורה גם מחוץ לעולם התורה. מחנך מובהק יוכל להצליח לחנך "אדם". האדם שזכה להיכנס לתוך עולם התורה באמת - נהפך לאיש אחר. זוהי מהפכה פנימית שלא ראינו כמותה ולא שמענו עלי' מחוץ לכותלי בית המדרש.

A thick division separates between the "world of Torah" and the world which is outside. One who stands outside, even if he observes Torah and mitzvot, has no image or imagination of the wonder occurring within. It happens, that even one who sits between the walls of the study hall can be like one from whom the meaning of the Torah is hidden and he still stands outside - when he does not apprentice to Torah scholars.

In our generation, the numbers of those who learn Torah are, thank G-d, increasing, but there are few who merit to apprentice with Torah scholars. Few are the rabbis who are similar to angels of G-d, from whose mouths we ought to seek the Torah, because they ascended on the pyre, they and their students, their souls in Eden, may G-d avenge their blood. Only remnants are left as survivors who resemble the "remnants of the Great Assembly". The students of Torah who, in our generation, have become so accustomed to Torah study without apprenticing to Torah scholars, that it does not enter their minds at all that possibly they are still standing outside, despite the wealth of knowledge they have amassed for themselves in Torah! They are standing on the "outside" - that is to say that they have not yet arrived at the essence of the Torah nor the essence of themselves. Some do not sense at all what they are lacking; they even merit standing in Torah and to be among those who grasp the Torah, at their own levels. One becomes a scholar. The second becomes very careful in fulfilling the mitzvot. A third chooses to become a *charedi* communal activist. A fourth is drawn to zealotry. Others sense the Torah of truth is beyond them, and these precious ones seek a path. They collect a saying here, a practice there. Instead of education comes imitation, and instead of apprenticeship - superficial understanding from a tertiary and quaternary vessel.

What happens to someone who truly enters the world of Torah? "A wild donkey is re-born as a man" (cf. Iyov 11:12) also occurs outside the world of the Torah. A master educator is successful in educating a "man". The person who merits to truly enter into the world of Torah - is transformed into another person. This is an internal revolution the likes of which we have not seen or heard outside the walls of the study hall.

In Shemot 23:19 and 34:26, as well as Devarim 26:2, the Torah tells us to bring the first produce of our land to the Beit haMikdash. This is the mitzvah of *bikkurim* ("first"); when we have a Beit haMikdash, Israeli farmers bring the first wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates to the Beit haMikdash. Those who live closer bring fresh fruit; those who live farther away may dry them first. *Sefer haChinuch* lists this as the Torah's 91st mitzvah.

Ideally, the season's *bikkurim* are first brought on Shavuot. [One may dedicate them even earlier; Minchat Chinuch 11:3 discusses *bikkurim* that are chametz on Pesach!] The residents of Jerusalem greet parades of marchers, who bring their produce into the city in beautifully decorated baskets.

When the farmers bring their produce to the Beit

haMikdash, they recite biblical verses (Devarim 26:5-10) summarizing Jewish history and thanking G-d for giving them this land; *Sefer haChinuch* records this as the Torah's 606th mitzvah. As *Sefer haChinuch* notes, the reading is only performed by those who can honestly recite it; a legal guardian or agent bringing *bikkurim* for others does not recite it, since G-d did not give him the land in which these fruits grew. The same passage appears, with amplification, in the Haggadah; according to some, the farmers include the Haggadah's additional material in their recitation. (Tzitz Eliezer 17:24) The *bikkurim* are then given to the kohanim, who eat them in Jerusalem.

To be continued...

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Weekly Highlights: Sept. 2 — Sept. 8 / 11 Elul — 17 Elul
Many classes are still on summer hiatus, watch this space for their return!

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Sept. 1-2				
After Hashkamah	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
8:50 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Pre-Shacharit Parshah	BAYT	Turk Beis Medrash
5:25 PM	Adam Friedmann	End of the Summer, End of the Year	Clanton Park	For Women
Before minchah	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	Rabbi's Classroom
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Sun. Sept. 3				
8:45 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	Hebrew
11:00 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Contemporary Halachah	Yeshivat Or Chaim	University men
Mon. Sept. 4				
9:15 AM Breakfast 9:30 AM Learning 10:30 AM Shiur	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Labour Day Yarchei Kallah: The Shofar of Rav Kook	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Please RSVP at www.torontotorah.com/yk or info@torontotorah.com
7:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Great Jewish Thinkers	Terraces of Baycrest	Open to the public
Tue. Sept. 5				
10:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	The Book of Jonah: More Than a Fish Story	Adath Israel	Women; there is a fee info@adathisrael.com
Wed. Sept. 6				
10:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Bobbing for Inspiration Week 1: Apples	Beth Emeth	Register at www.torontotorah.com/rosh
8:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do that?	Shaarei Tefillah	
Thu. Sept. 7				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Samson's Humour	49 Michael Ct.	For women
Fri. Sept. 8				
8:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah	Yeshivat Or Chaim	University men
10:30 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Ribbit	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

Coming Up!

Sunday September 10: MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION & THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

with Lawyer Matthew Friedberg; Dr. Barry Pakes; Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

7:00 PM at Yeshivat Or Chaim, RSVP at www.torontotorah.com/members

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