

# Toronto Torah

## Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Haazinu

3 Tishrei, 5778/September 23, 2017

Vol. 9 Num. 5

**This issue is dedicated by Jeffrey and Rochel Silver**

**in tribute to Rabbi Torczyner and Rabbi Ziring for an insightful and inspiring Elul Zman**

### Constant Vigilance, Eternal Vision

**Adam Friedmann**

The Torah refers to the song in parshat Ha'azinu as a "witness". (Devarim 31:19) Its purpose is to be a constant refrain and reference point in our lives, imparting an ever-pertinent message. According to the Rambam, the presence of the song within the Torah scroll generates several halachic responsibilities for us. Notably, the responsibility of a person to write a Sefer Torah and have it in one's home is because it contains this song. The rest of the Torah is pulled along with Parshat Ha'azinu! (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Sta"m 7:1) What is the message of this song? What is it that requires this constant reminder?

Ha'azinu is a story of sin, punishment,

and reconciliation. Bnei Yisrael stray from G-d and are punished for this. Ultimately G-d forgives them, redeeming them for His own sake. Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun notes that there are divergent perspectives on the scope of the story presented in Ha'azinu:

- According to Ramban, it is about a broader historical picture. Ha'azinu is about the ultimate history of G-d and the Jews, and promises a final and total redemption. The feature that distinguishes it from the Torah's other instances of *tochachah* – Divine rebuke – is that the redemption in this song is not predicated on repentance. G-d will redeem us, even without *teshuvah*.

- On the other hand, Rashi views Ha'azinu as having a much more immediate message, relevant in an on-going way. We must be constantly vigilant and aware of our national past. Otherwise, we may forget about G-d. Nevertheless, we are promised that G-d will never totally destroy us.

These two perspectives need not contradict. On the one hand, Ha'azinu is a message of hope. Despite what we see around us at any point in history, ultimately our relationship with G-d will become whole. On the other hand, Ha'azinu is a reminder to stay constantly aware of our actions, lest the cycles of our history repeat themselves.

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

### The Zionist Idea: Salvation Need Not Be Perfect

**Rabbi Jonathan Ziring**

Does redemption have to be carried out by righteous people to be considered an act of G-d? Many non-Zionist religious Jews have argued that it does. Thus, as many founders of the Zionist movement were secular or even anti-religious, some have viewed that movement as a step away, rather than towards, redemption.

Rabbi Aharon Soloveichik, in a shiur given at Yeshiva University on Yom HaAtzmaut 1966 (published as "Israel's Independence Day: Reflections in Halachah and Hashkafa") took up this challenge. He noted two episodes which indicate that G-d sends aid even using imperfect tools. The first is the story of the "Four Lepers" (Melachim II 7). The Jews were under siege by the Arameans and were starving to death. A group of four lepers, in a desperate attempt to find food, went to the Aramean camp. There they found that G-d had miraculously caused the Arameans to flee, leaving a laden camp with enough food to satiate the hungry Israelites. They conveyed this message to the king, thus saving the Jews. Our Sages identify these lepers as Gechazi and his sons, sinners who, at least in the case of Gechazi, had no portion in the World to Come. Yet, these figures announced G-d's miracle.

Similarly, Melachim II 14 records that Yeravam son of Yoash, an evil, idolatrous king, conquered much land, expanding our country. According to the Talmud Yerushalmi, this land either equaled or exceeded Yehoshua's acquisitions. Despite Yeravam's personal wickedness, G-d declared His wish to use this king to save the Jews.

From this, Rabbi Soloveichik derived his defense of Religious Zionism: "...G-d does not exclude any Jew from salvation and He may therefore designate even spiritual outcasts as the messengers of relief and deliverance for the people of Israel. Consequently, we cannot ignore the significance of the establishment of the State of Israel simply because Jews who stand a substantial distance from any form of observance of mitzvot were at the forefront of founding the State. Perhaps the fact that nonobservant Jews are in the forefront today is a penalty for Orthodox Jewry's failure to play the most important part in the formation of the State."

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

### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

**ROSH BEIT MIDRASH**

RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER

**SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH**

RABBI JONATHAN ZIRING

**AVREICHIM**

ADAM FRIEDMANN, YARON PEREZ

**CHAVERIM** NADAV GASNER, NADAV HAMES, MICHAEL IHILCHIK, JAY KARON, ARIEL KELMAN, BJ KOROBKIN, AVISHAI LIGHTSTONE, COBY LYONS, ZACK MINCER, RONI PEREZ, JOSH PHILLIP, AARON ROSENFELD, MORDECHAI ROTH, DANIEL SAFRAN, URIEL WEISZ, BARUCH WISE, YECHIEL ZOBERMAN

**WOMEN'S BEIT MIDRASH**

MRS. ORA ZIRING, MRS. ELLIEZRA PEREZ



**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
TORAH MITZION  
BEIT MIDRASH**

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

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

## The 613 Mitzvot: #310, 311—Rosh HaShanah as Yom Tov     Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

In addition to Rosh haShanah's status as the *Yom haDin* (Day of Judgment) and the day on which we blow shofar, Rosh haShanah is a Yom Tov, like Pesach, Shavuot and Succot. However, we do not see Rosh haShanah's identity as split; rather, the judgment aspect of the day is what we celebrate with this Yom Tov.

The Sefer haChinuch explains, "Among the kindnesses performed by G-d for His creations is that He observes them, calling their deeds into account on one day each year, so that they will not increase their sins and so that they will have an opportunity for atonement. He is of great kindness and He inclines the verdict toward kindness, and since their accumulated sins are few [in the brief annual interval], He forgives them. If, perhaps, they need cleansing, He punishes them little by little... If He would not punish them until a longer interval had passed, their sins would increase to the point that the world would be almost liable for destruction, G-d forbid. This honoured day sustains the world. Therefore, it is appropriate to make this day a Yom Tov, counted among the precious special occasions of the year."

This view of Rosh HaShanah as a day for joy already appears in Tanach, in a message from the leader Nechemiah to an assembly of Jews on Rosh HaShanah in the early years of the second Beit haMikdash. Upon hearing a public Torah reading, the Jews cried; commentators explain that

their grief was either due to awareness of their general spiritual deficiencies (Rashi to Nechemiah 8:9), or to their fear of the Day of Judgment (Malbim ibid.). To this Nechemiah responded, "Today is sacred to Hashem your G-d! Do not mourn and do not cry. Go eat rich foods, and drink sweet drinks, and send portions to those who do not have any ready, for today is sacred for our Master. Be not sad, for joy in G-d is your strength. "

Because of this imperative, we are instructed to create a Yom Tov atmosphere by abstaining from the actions labelled in the Torah as *melachah*; this involves an active mitzvah of creating a special Yom Tov atmosphere (#310) and a prohibition against *melachah* (#311). As the Tur writes (Orach Chaim 581, citing Talmud Yerushalmi Rosh haShanah 1:3), "What nation is like this nation, to know its G-d's ways! Normally, a person facing judgment wears black and cloaks himself in black and grows his beard and does not cut his nails, for he does not know how his judgment will emerge. The Jews are not like this, though; they wear white and cloak themselves in white and shave their beards and cut their nails and eat and drink and celebrate on Rosh haShanah, for they know G-d will perform a miracle on their behalf."

*torczyner@torontotorah.com*

### Weekly Highlights: Sept. 23 — Sept. 29 / 3 Tishrei — 9 Tishrei Many classes are off until after Succot, watch this space for their return!

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Sept. 22-23</b>				
<b>After hashkamah</b>	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
<b>After musaf</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Derashah	BAYT	<b>Main shul</b>
<b>5:05 PM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<b>Rabbi's Classroom</b>
<b>After minchah</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Simcha Suite</b>
<b>Sun. Sept. 24     Fast of Gedaliah</b>				
<b>9:00 AM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	
<b>Mon. Sept. 25</b>				
<b>7:00 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Great Jewish Thinkers	Terraces of Baycrest	<b>Open to all</b>
<b>Wed. Sept. 27</b>				
<b>8:00 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do that?	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Yaron Perez	ממה בורח יונה הנביא? Yonah's Flight	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>In Hebrew</b>
<b>Thu. Sept. 28</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yonah's Mission	49 Michael Ct.	<b>Women</b>
<b>Fri. Sept. 29</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Ribbit	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>

#### For University Men, at Yeshivat Or Chaim

**11:00 AM Sundays, Contemporary Halachah, Rotation of Rabbis—This Week: Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**  
**8:30 AM Mondays, Nefesh haChaim with Rabbi Jonathan Ziring**  
**8:30 AM Fridays, Yeshayah with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

#### For University Women, at Ulpanat Orot

**9:30-11:30 AM Monday, Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, Topic: Elul**  
**9:30-11:30 AM Tuesday, Mrs. Ora Ziring, Topic TBD**  
**9:30-11:30 AM Wednesday, Mrs. Ora Ziring, Topic TBD**