

# Toronto Torah

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

Parshat Devarim / Chazon

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## **Fasting on the Ninth, Fasting on the Tenth**

**Rabbi Baruch Weintraub**

A mishnah (Megillah 1:3) teaches, "Tisha b'Av... may be delayed, but not advanced." What is the reason for this? Why, when the calendar falls as it does this year, is the fast delayed to Sunday and not advanced to Friday or Thursday?

The Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds give different answers to this question.

- According to the Babylonian Talmud (Megillah 5a), the reason is: "We do not advance punishment." This is a universal idea, not specific to Tisha b'Av.
- According to the Jerusalem Talmud, however, the reason brought in the name of Rabbi Yirmiyah is: "Logically, the fast should [always] be on the tenth, for it was then that [the Temple] was burned; why then do we fast on the ninth [in regular years]? Because it is then that the punishment began." The Jerusalem Talmud holds that the tenth of Av is not just the day after the ninth of Av, but rather a day which deserves its own fast. This view is strengthened by the practice of several sages mentioned a few lines later, who would fast on both the ninth and the tenth day of Av. From this custom we can infer that these sages did not see the ninth and tenth of Av as two possible dates for the fast, but two separate dates which each deserve to be a fast.

Within the view of the Jerusalem

Talmud, what is the difference between fasting on the ninth and fasting on the tenth?

Perhaps an analogy can be made to the tragic story of Dovid HaMelech and his first son from Batsheva. As part of the punishment for King David's sin, the child became ill and died a few days after its birth. During the child's illness, King David fasted and lay on the ground, constantly pleading to G-d to save the baby. After the child's death, however, King David stood up and ate a meal.

King David later explained his behavior to the amazed servants: "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept because I thought: 'Who knows? Hashem may have pity on me, and the child may live'. But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will never come back to me." (Shemuel II 12:22-23) At first, the servants saw the king's actions as stemming from mourning, and thus expected them to increase with the death of the child. King David, meanwhile, was involved in repentance in an attempt to avoid the punishment, and thus he ceased after the punishment was given.

It may be argued that these two possible sources of fasting and crying are also the root of the difference between fasting on the ninth and tenth of Av. The burning began at the ninth of Av, but it was still reversible – so fasting on

the ninth of Av can be understood as an act of repentance. On the tenth of Av, the destruction was completed – so fasting on it can be understood only as an act of mourning.

Such an understanding may also have been behind Rebbe's attempt to do away with the delayed Tisha b'Av. The Talmud (Megillah 5a) teaches that according to one opinion, Rebbe tried to cancel Tisha b'Av when it was delayed from Shabbat to a Sunday. When the fast happened on Tisha b'Av itself, Rebbe accepted the need for a fast of repentance. But in years in which Tisha b'Av was delayed from Shabbat to Sunday, that meant the nature of that fast would be one of mourning, not repentance, and Rebbe thought that this type of mourning was not relevant any more. Of course, Jewish law is in accordance with the Chachamim, who opposed Rebbe on this matter.

Hopefully, this analysis of the nature of Tisha b'Av and its different days will help us to experience it in a meaningful way, and thus bring us closer to the day when Tisha b'Av will become a day of happiness and rejoicing.

*bweintraub@torontotorah.com*

***This is the last "Toronto Torah" of Volume 9; see you in Elul!***

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הורשתם את הארץ וישבתם בה (במדבר לו)

Marking the State of Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> Year!

### Israeli Landmark: Kfar Darom, Gush Katif

Yaron Perez

Gush Katif was a collection of 21 communities in the southern portion of Aza (the "Gaza Strip"); on the eve of the 2005 Disengagement, there were approximately 9000 residents. The first of these communities, which marked the establishment of Gush Katif, was Kfar Darom.

In the 1930's, Tuvia Miller and Moshe Smilansky purchased land from local Arabs, and began to implement their dream of establishing a kibbutz in the area. However, shortly thereafter, the Arab riots of 1936 caused them to abandon the site.

Immediately after Yom Kippur 1946, a group organized by HaPoel HaMizrachi determined to return to the area, establishing "Kfar Darom". This was part of a broader, Negev-wide settlement plan called "The 11 Points", with the goal of including the Negev in the future boundaries of the State of Israel. One year later, local Arabs and Sudanese forces began to attack the local communities, but Palmach fighters arrived to reinforce the

residents, and they succeeded in defending the area.

After the establishment of the State, the Egyptian army invaded. After a pitched battle and a siege against Kfar Darom, the fighters abandoned the site and escaped through the Egyptian front line to Israeli-held territory. Some of the residents then established the *moshav* Bnei Darom near Ashdod.

In 1970, three years after the return of Aza to Israeli control, Prime Minister Golda Meir authorized a Nachal division of Bnei Akiva to establish a settlement in the area. Over time, this became a temporary dwelling for groups awaiting permanent settlement in local communities, including Netzer Hazani, Ganei Tal, Katif, and Gadid.

In 1988, Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin approved permanent settlement in Kfar Darom. The community grew, including the *Machon haTorah v'ha'Aretz* institution applying Jewish law to modern farming. This paved the way for growing bug-free leafy

vegetables, which became popular in Jewish communities worldwide. Over the years, the community dealt with numerous terror attacks and murders, but the demand to live in Kfar Darom rose steadily.

On the tenth of Av, 2005, in the same year when a new Kfar Darom synagogue was dedicated, and during the period when we mourn for the destruction of the two Batei haMikdash by the Babylonians and Romans, the Sharon government began to expel the residents of Gush Katif from their homes. On the thirteenth of Av, Kfar Darom was evacuated, its houses destroyed and its lands delivered to the Palestinian Authority.

May we merit to see the rebuilding of Jerusalem speedily, in our days!

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

### The Zionist Idea: Making Aliyah?

Adam Friedmann

Perhaps the greatest challenge which confronts the contemporary Jew living in the Diaspora, and all the more so the Religious Zionist, is the question of aliyah. What was for many years a distant hope, and then later a powerful goal, has become an all-too palpable reality. Anyone versed in the teachings of the Bnei Akiva system can recount the religious importance of living in the land of Israel:

- The fulfillment of biblical prophecies foretelling the return of the Jewish people from the far-flung corners of the Earth;
- The mitzvah (albeit debated at a technical if not practical level) to settle the Land;
- The ability to fulfill the *mitzvot hateluyot ba'aretz*, the commandments which relate directly to the Land itself;
- The opportunity to participate in Jewish history, where it is being written and lived every day.

And perhaps, beyond all of this, there is the opportunity for a direct encounter with G-d: The Torah tells us that the Land of Israel is not like Egypt which was watered in abundance by the overflowing of the Nile. Rather, it is a country of valleys and hills, irrigated instead by rain. (Devarim 11:10-11) This doesn't sound like praise. Wouldn't we want a country with abundant water in regular supply, rather than having to rely on the uncertainty of rainfall? The Torah follows up with the answer. The regularity of the Nile's overflow conceals the true nature of Egypt's prosperity. The Egyptian farmer has no need to consider how and by Whom his crops are maintained. He is free to attribute the full measure of his success to himself. The Jew, living in the Land of Israel, is acutely aware that his success is by no

means assured. When the rain falls, and he is provided with what he needs, he understands that to claim that his efforts alone have yielded his crop is folly. He senses G-d's direct interaction with his personal life in a way which is impossible anywhere else.

So why don't we all make aliyah? The reasons against may not be as concretely rooted in sources, but they are just as real and just as serious. Making aliyah may mean coming home in a greater sense, but it also means leaving home, in a direct and painful way. It means leaving behind the lifestyle, language, and culture in which one was raised and accepting, at some level, to become a stranger. More than this, it means imposing a great distance on family and friends. The result of these opposing forces is a great struggle, the result of which can be, perhaps rightly, to remain in the concrete home and yearn for the ultimate home from a distance. [See Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, *Diaspora Religious Zionism: Some Current Reflections.*]

Whatever one's conclusion, the question of aliyah demands to be asked.

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

## Biography

### Rabbi Yehoshua Aaronson

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Rabbi Yehoshua Moshe Aaronson was born on Shavuot 5670 (1910), in Warsaw, Poland. He was a son to Rabbi Michael Eliyahu Aaronson, a chasid of the Gur and Sochachov Rebbes, and remained himself a Sochachover chasid throughout the rest of his life.

At the age of 23, young Yehoshua Moshe was married to Tzvia Greenbaum, and four years later the couple were hugging two young children. In 1937, the family moved to Sanok, Poland, where Rabbi Aaronson accepted his first major rabbinical position. The young Rav, who thought that his major challenges would be fighting the spreading secularism and Haskalah, was soon to find a very different struggle lay ahead.

After the Nazi occupation in 1939, Rabbi Aaronson and his congregation were transferred to a forced labor camp in Konin. While in the camp, Rabbi Aaronson guided his community through the disastrous time, giving them spiritual consolation where everything else failed. Furthermore, he took upon himself the duty of a witness, and wrote a diary of what he saw in the camp, including the questions he was asked and the answers he gave. The diary, written in Hebrew, is a unique testimony, brutal and honest, of daily life in the labour camps. He also dealt, in real-time, with the question of why the Jews didn't revolt against their murderers – devoting to it a special chapter in the diary.

After the camp was liquidated by the Nazis, Rabbi Aaronson was deported to Auschwitz, where he lost his wife and sons, HY"D. He himself survived miraculously, experiencing the horrors of Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Theresienstadt.

After liberation, Rabbi Aaronson began immediately to organize the surviving rabbis, and he was appointed as chief rabbi of Austrian DP camps, leading and supporting Jewish life there.

Rabbi Aaronson remarried, and he and his wife Malka Rachel made aliyah in 1951. In Israel, Rabbi Aaronson served as a Rabbi in Petach Tikvah, becoming an expert in mitzvot related to the land. Apart from his writings during the Holocaust, he wrote four volumes of responsa.

Rabbi Aaronson passed away on 12 Kislev, 5753 (1993).

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

## Torah and Translation

### The Horrors of the Holocaust

Rabbi Yehoshua Aaronson, Alei Merorot pg. 248

Translated by Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

בתחילת חודש אייר תש"ה הוליכו אותנו מבוכנוולד לטרזינשטאט בסודעטין געביט. עמדנו תחת השמים בשדה ניר ארבעה עשר יום, מוקפים מכל צד מהגסטאפו ומז'נדמריא אשכנזית. בכל יום, כשהרעב גבר מאד התחלנו לאכול העשבים המרים הגדלים באגם במקום שעמדנו. אבל גם זאת היתה עונש מוות כי האשכנזים מהסביבה באו וצעקו כי אנחנו אוכלם כל הדשא ולא יהיה מרעה לבהמות. ולסיבת הרעב והצמאון מתו בכל רגע כמה וכמה אנשים למאות.

אז פנה אלי אחד מידידי, ז.פ. בשאלתו, להיות שאצלו הרגעים האחרונים כי מרגיש אפיסת הכוחות מסיבת הרעב, ורק עצה אחת עלתה ברעיונו להציל חיותו, והוא: לחתוך חתיכת בשר מגוף אדם מת, ולאכלו להשיב נפשו. ודבר על לבי לעשות מעשה כי באופן זה נוכל להציל כמה מאות ממוות בטוח ביותר, שהיו אז הימים האחרונים של המלחמה והחירות עומדת תחת כתליו, וחבל על כל אדם שמת או נהרג ברגע אחרון זה, אחר עבור עלינו כל משברי שנות המלחמה.

עוד נשמתי בי טרם יצאה מרעב ושברו הלב, נבהלתי למשמע אזני, ובמענה לדבריו הנאמרים באמת לב צדק, התחלתי לבכות ונהמתי מקירות לבי: "רבש"ע קח את נפשי - ואל תביאני למדרגה נמוכה זו ח"ו".

והשבתי לו אמת כי הצדק איתך, ואפשר דמדינא מותר ומצוות פיקוח נפש נמי איכא. הרי מצינו במדרש בזמן החורבן. [איכה רבה א: אילין דהוי חבושין מנהון אכלין בשר קטליהון] אבל שמע נא: יראתי כי יבואו לידי רציחה, שימצאו הרבה שיהרגו להחלשים ביותר כדי להמציא להם אוכלם בהיתר ובהצנע. עוד זאת שבלי ספק ירגישו הס.ס. בזה ויהיה להם עלילה נכונה להרוג הכל באמתלא שהוא נגד צדק, ורק העולם "אוכלי אדם" פראים וברברים... דברי נכנסו לאזניו, ופרש. וכעבור שעה אחת קבלו הס.ס. פקודה להוליכנו לטרזין ונצלנו.

In the beginning of Iyar, 5705 (1945), we were marched from Buchenwald to Theresienstadt in the Sudetenland. We stood beneath the skies in a plowed field for fourteen days, surrounded by Gestapo and German gendarmerie. Every day, as the hunger grew, we began eating the bitter plants growing in the field. However, that also carried a death penalty, as the neighbouring Germans complained that we eat all the grass and there will be nothing left for the animals. Due to hunger and thirst, people were dying every moment, in the hundreds.

Then one of my friends, Z.P., turned to me, asking: as these were his last minutes, for he felt his strength diminishing because of hunger, only one strategy occurred to him: to cut a piece of meat from the body of a dead person, eat it and ease his spirit. He tried to convince me that by doing so we could save hundreds of people from certain death. These were the last days of the war, and liberation was just behind the wall, and it would have been a shame for someone who had survived all of the war calamities through the years, to die or be killed in this very last moment.

My soul was yet within me, and it had not left me from hunger and brokenheartedness, but I was terrified by what I had heard. In response to his words, spoken from a true and just heart, I began to cry, and I cried out from the walls of my heart, "G-d. take my soul, and do not bring me to such degeneration, G-d forbid".

I then answered him: In truth you are right, and it is possible that according to strict law it would be permitted and even required to do so, as there is a mitzvah of saving one's life. Also, we have found this in midrash regarding in the time of the Temple's destruction. [Eichah Rabbah 1: There were people hiding in a cave, eating from the flesh of their dead...] Nonetheless, please hear: I fear that they will come to murder, for many will be found who will murder the weakest, to provide food with permission and secretly. Another thing: undoubtedly the SS men will become aware of this, and that will give them a strong excuse to kill us all, saying it is unjust, and that the Jews are only cannibals, wild and barbaric... My words entered his ears, and he abandoned his plan. After an hour the SS received an order to take us to Terezin, and we were saved.

## Introducing: Rabbi Elihu and Eliana Abbe!

We are glad to welcome Rabbi Elihu and Eliana Abbe!  
Rabbi Abbe will join our Beit Midrash next year

Rabbi Elihu Abbe is from the Upper West Side of Manhattan, New York. After attending MTA, Yeshiva University High School for Boys, he spent three years studying in Israel at Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh, and received a Bachelors in Talmudic Literature. He received semichah (ordination) from Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, and is currently pursuing a Masters of Social Work at Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work.

Rabbi Abbe served as Rabbinic Intern at the Young Israel of Monsey and Wesley Hills, and taught a gemara bekiut class at MTA. He also served as counselor of Camp Morasha Kollel, a summer learning program, for six summers. He recently commemorated his grandmother's first yahrtzeit by celebrating a siyum haShas, marking his completion of the study of the Talmud.

Rabbi Abbe enjoys learning and teaching with a focus on practical halachah, and on developing a joyous personal relationship with G-d.

Rabbi Abbe is married to Eliana Lipsky from West Hempstead, New York. Eliana is a limudei kodesh (Judaic Studies) teacher, and is currently pursuing a Masters of Jewish Education from Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration. They have a daughter, Rochel, and two sons, Yosef and Ephraim.

Rabbi Abbe will serve as Rabbinic Assistant at Congregation Shaarei Shomayim, and is reachable at eabbe@torontotorah.com.



### Weekly Highlights: July 21 – July 23 / 9 Av – 11 Av

**Our "kayitz zman" semester concludes this week; look for us in Elul!**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת July 21</b>				
<b>After Hashkamah</b>	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
<b>After derashah</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	<b>Note the Time</b>
<b>After minchah</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Sun. July 22 Tisha b'Av</b>				
<b>Approx. 9:45 AM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner R' Jonathan Ziring	<i>Shavat Suru Meni Vayikonein Yirmiyahu</i>	BAYT, Perlis Hall	<b>Part of Explanatory Kinot Program</b>
<b>7:00 PM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	"A Burnt House You Have Burnt"	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Part of Torah in Motion Program</b>
<b>7:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah's Six Cries of Woe	BAYT, Perlis Hall	
<b>After late mincha</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	G-d, Don't Judge Them Today	Clanton Park	
<b>8:45 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Tisha b'Av as the Start of Redemption	Aish Thornhill Community Shul	
<b>Mon. July 23</b>				
<b>11:30 AM</b>	R' Jonathan Ziring	Muktzeh Applications	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>

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Kehilat Shaarei Torah ☞ Magen David Congregation ☞ The Marlee Shul ☞ Mizrachi Bayit ☞ The Or Chaim Minyan  
Petah Tikva ☞ Sephardic Kehillah Centre ☞ Shaarei Shomayim ☞ Shaarei Tefilah ☞ Shomrai Shabbos Chevra Mishnayos  
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