

# Toronto Torah

## YU Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Miketz

30 Kislev, 5779/December 8, 2018

Vol. 10 Num. 14 (#392)

This issue of Toronto Torah is sponsored by Rabbi Dr. Moshe and Esty Yeres

on the yahrtzeit of Esty's father, Rabbi Dr. Yisroel A. Frankel zt"l

לעילוי נשמת הרב ד"ר ישראל אריה בן הרב אשר ישעיהו פרנקל זצ"ל נפטר ה' טבת תשל"ה

### The Holiday of Darkness and Light

Rabbi Adam Friedmann

The miracle of the oil, which forms a basis for the eight-day length of Chanukah, is a familiar story. The Talmud (Shabbat 22b) recounts that when the Greeks entered the sanctuary of the Beit haMikdash, they rendered all of the oil inside impure. When the Chashmonaim regained control, they found only a small container of oil sealed with the stamp of the Kohen Gadol (and therefore ostensibly pure). This oil, which should have been enough to light the menorah for only one night, sufficed for eight. The following year these eight days were established for praise and thanksgiving to G-d.

While the story is familiar, commentators throughout the ages have pointed out its many halachic problems and general oddities:

- In times when pure materials are unavailable, halachah allows for using impure materials for Temple service, meaning that the Menorah could have been lit with impure oil (Pnei Yehoshua, Shabbat 22b)
- The story indicates that the oil was stored in the sanctuary of the Beit haMikdash, when, in fact, the oil was stored in a separate area (Gilyon haShas, Shabbat 22b)
- Impurity can be imparted by carrying a vessel, without opening it. Therefore, the seal of the Kohen Gadol alone was not proof that the container remained pure. (see Tosafot Shabbat 22b s.v. *shehayah*)

Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun points out that this story bears striking resemblance to another talmudic description about

founding a holiday: The ancient pagans celebrated a sixteen day holiday surrounding the winter solstice. The Talmud (Avodah Zarah 8a) explains that the foundation for these holidays was laid by Adam haRishon. During the first winter on Earth, Adam realized that the amount of daylight was decreasing each day. He feared that this was a consequence of his sin and that eventually the sunlight would end altogether. When he later saw that the days were lengthening again, he realized that this was a natural phenomenon, structured by G-d. *The following year* he established the *eight* days before and after the solstice as holidays. The pagans later corrupted these days by consecrating them to the worship of the heavenly bodies.

These features of the oil story indicate that aside from a historical account, Chazal were communicating a deeper message as well, by way of analogy. What is that message?

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook (Ein Ayah to Shabbat 22b) argues that the story of the oil hints at the cultural miracle which underscored the events of Chanukah. The oil represents the ideological fuel which drives the Jewish nation. When the Jews absorbed the Hellenistic worldview into their core beliefs (their sanctuary), even only somewhat, it affected all of their motivations, rendering them impure. It seemed that the Jewish nation was fated for oblivion. Their sin of turning from a pure service of G-d, even partially and momentarily, had left them damaged. However, one small

corner of national spirit remained unconditionally devoted to G-d. This is represented by the small container of oil, stamped with the seal of the Kohen Gadol, the man whose whole life was consecrated to G-d. The miracle of Chanukah was the redemption of Israel's national spirit. The small container of oil, that final ounce of untainted dedication to G-d, was able to overcome the Hellenistic onslaught, to purify and rededicate Israel's commitment to G-d.

Looking at the story in this way brings the parallel to the holidays of Adam haRishon into focus. Adam feared that his sin had sent him spiralling into spiritual and physical darkness. His actions had caused a breach between him and G-d which would widen until it was all that he could experience. He was relieved to discover that the light and the dark, the closeness and distance from G-d, were part of the natural order, unrelated to his sins. The pagans then corrupted this revelation by worshipping the system itself. In the days of the Chashmonaim, the Jews redeemed the holiday of darkness and light by taking Adam's revelation one step further in their rebellion and purification. Man does not need to wait for G-d to come close and dispel his spiritual darkness. We can reach into ourselves and discover a part of ourselves which is as close to G-d as ever, bringing it to the fore. When faced with the darkness of the natural order, we can light a candle.

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

#### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

<b>ROSH BEIT MIDRASH</b>	RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER
<b>SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH</b>	RABBI ELIHU ABBE
<b>AVREICHIM</b>	EZER DIENA, RABBI ALEX HECHT
<b>ADULT SEDER BOKER DIRECTOR</b>	RABBI MOSHE YERES
<b>WOMEN'S BEIT MIDRASH</b>	MRS. ELIANA ABBE
<b>ISRAELI CORRESPONDENTS</b>	RABBI ADAM FRIEDMANN, RABBI BARUCH WEINTRAUB, RABBI JONATHAN ZIRING
<b>UNIVERSITY CHAVERIM</b>	YONI BLUMENFELD, NAFTI DIENA, NADAV GASNER, COREY KAMEN, YEHUDA LEVI, COBY LYONS, JACOB POSLUNS, MORDECHAI ROTH, ARI RUBIN, URIEL WEISZ, ELI WELTMAN, MARK WERNER, BARUCH WISE



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

We are grateful to  
Continental Press 905-660-0311

**Summary**

At last, after seven years of conquest, in the thirteenth chapter of Yehoshua the Jews are ready to distribute land to their tribes. [The chronology is based on Yehoshua 14:10; and see Arachin 13a.] At the start of the chapter (13:1-6), G-d informs Yehoshua that much of the land remains to be conquered. Southwestern lands are under the control of the Philistines, and Canaanites dominate land in the south and mountainous regions up north. G-d informs Yehoshua that he should distribute the land despite the lack of Jewish control.

The description of distribution begins by detailing Moshe's assignment of the land east of the Yarden (13:7-32). In truth, this distribution was described in Bamidbar 32, but it is reiterated here to emphasize that the land east of the Yarden is part of Israel, and the Jews who live there remain part of the Jewish nation. Chapter 12 also referenced this distribution, but Don Isaac Abarbanel explains that Chapter 12 described the conquest, and Chapter 13 describes the tribes' acceptance of their portions.

The distribution is:

- The southernmost area is assigned to

Reuven; this land had originally been under the control of Sichon, and many of its cities are listed as Jewish cities on the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE Moabite "Mesha Stele".

- North of Reuven is Gad; they receive a mountainous area, which broadens as it extends eastward. Per a midrash (Sifri Devarim 355), the widening makes the land look like a lioness, facing outward to defend against the enemy; this matches the description of Gad in Moshe's blessing. (Devarim 33:20) This is also the portion in which Moshe is buried. (Yerushalmi Sotah 1:10)
- Menasheh receives the northernmost area, which appears to be the largest of the regions. The text states that there are sixty cities in this portion, although it does not name them.

The chapter concludes (13:33) by reiterating a point that was also made earlier in the chapter, that the tribe of Levi does not receive a portion. Malbim explains that this is repeated because there are two separate issues involved: (1) Levi does not receive a share in the lottery assigning land to the tribes, and (2) Levi does not receive their individual cities until after all of the other tribes receive their land. The

reason for this delay is that the cities of the Levites are viewed as a tithe taken from the cities of the tribes, and a tithe is only separated once one has received a portion to tithe.

**Insight**

One might have expected G-d to wait for the Jews to conquer the land entirely, before dividing it up among the tribes. Why did G-d instruct Yehoshua to distribute land we did not yet control?

- Don Isaac Abarbanel suggests that this was a pragmatic decision: if Jews lived across the land, with each tribe taking responsibility for its area, then the local kings could not band together to attack us;
- One might also suggest that there is value in having us spread through the land; G-d told Adam and Chavah to "bear fruit and multiply and fill the land" before mentioning "and conquer it".
- Alternatively, perhaps G-d wished Yehoshua to serve as distributor of the land, because of his unique attributes and his pedigree as Moshe's protégé.

*torczyner@torontotorah.com*

**Law of the Land: Religious Participation in Secular Government**

**Ezer Diena**

Many of the State of Israel's modern halachic problems are focused around interaction between religious and secular Jews, and cooperation within the context of government to achieve certain religious goals. While many of us believe that these endeavours are extremely important, is there something wrong with associating with non-religious (and at times, anti-religious) establishments and individuals?

A good starting point for this discussion is the relationship between Yehoshaphat, a G-d-fearing king of Yehudah, and Achav, an evil king of Israel (one of the villains we will be talking about at our "10 Heroes and 10 Villains" event on December 25). After Yehoshaphat's religious, political and personal successes, he feasts together with Achav, and agrees to ally with Achav to attack Ramot Gilad. Yehoshaphat even ends up marrying off his son, Yehoram, to Achav's daughter! Yehoshaphat barely survives this battle, and Achav is killed, and following the battle Yehu the Seer reprimands Yehoshaphat for joining together with Achav for any purpose. "Shouldst thou help the wicked, and love them that hate the Lord? for this thing wrath is upon thee from before the Lord." (Divrei HaYamim II 19:2, JPS)

Similarly, in Pirkei Avot (1:7) we are warned, "Do not attach yourself to an evil person". Based on sources such as these, many have objected to activities such as voting, taking part in the Israeli government, or even dealing politically with secular establishments. A champion of this cause was Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, who wrote many letters to various politically involved individuals and groups about this prohibition. [See his *Kovetz Ma'amarim Ve'Igrot*, pages 133-155.] In one case (pg. 155), he even quotes the Chafetz

Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan Poupko) as saying that even if most of the yeshivot would be closed if we would not transgress this prohibition, that still would not permit us to do so.

However, many authorities limit the scope of this prohibition severely. The Chazon Ish suggested that it would not be considered a "connection to evil" if one was doing so as to oppose the evil deeds performed (ibid., page 151; many others, including Rabbi Wasserman, make somewhat similar statements). He also noted (ibid. and page 152) that this rule is not expressed halachically by later authorities, and we therefore have no right to apply it in our day and age, as we no longer rule directly from the Talmud. [See Responsa R"i Migash 114.]

Additionally, Belzer Rebbe Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rokeach is quoted as saying (in the name of the previous two Belzer Rebbes) that this prohibition applies only when there is a choice of two ways to accomplish a goal, where one requires association with wrongdoers and the other does not. But when there is only one option for communal activism, and it will exist whether they participate or not, participation is encouraged! He also notes that this was standard in Europe for many years, where "heretics, enlightened [Jews], and [secular] Zionists sat together on councils with Chassidim and [G-d] fearing Jews". (Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rokeach, Motza'ei Simchat Torah 5742 (1981) address, <https://www.otzar.org/wotzar/book.aspx?153812>, page 312)

*ediena@torontotorah.com*

## Biography

### Rabbi Moshe Sofer

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

One of the most prominent halachic authorities of the past 300 years, a committed mystic, staunch conservative, ardent supporter of *aliyah* and architect of a powerful rabbinic dynasty, Rabbi Moshe Sofer remains one of the most influential leaders of modern Judaism – all without publishing a single book during his lifetime. Rabbi Sofer is also known as “Chatam Sofer”, the name of the posthumously published books of his talmudic teachings and responsa.

Rabbi Moshe Sofer was born on 7 Tishrei in 1762, in Frankfurt am Main. He studied under Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz, Rabbi of Frankfurt, and Rabbi Nathan Adler, a leading halachic authority as well as mystic. Rabbi Sofer’s father passed away in 1779, and in 1782 Rabbi Sofer moved to Moravia to accompany Rabbi Nathan Adler in his own journey. In Moravia, Rabbi Sofer married Sarah Yervitz, a middle-aged widow of well-known righteousness. He became Rabbi of Dresnitz in 1794, and then of Mattersdorf in 1798. After accepting the Mattersdorf offer he was invited to serve a larger city, Prossnitz, but he declined because he had given his word to Mattersdorf.

Beginning in Dresnitz and then with greater strength in Mattersdorf, Rabbi Sofer took public positions on the issues of the day, such as drafting of Jews into non-Jewish armies, inequitable distribution of the communal tax burden, public support for Torah study, and the sects of Sabbateanism and Chasidism. Rabbi Sofer did not get involved in battles

with the Haskalah [“Jewish Enlightenment”], though. In 1802 Rabbi Sofer accepted a rabbinic position in Waag Neustadt, but when a fire then decimated Mattersdorf he felt obligated to remain there.

In 1806, Rabbi Sofer accepted a rabbinic position in Pressburg (a.k.a. Bratislava), a large stage with a Haskalah-friendly population. Rabbi Sofer did not attempt to change the citizens directly; instead, he increased the size of the local yeshiva to 150 students, appointed Rabbis to teach interested community members, and gave frequent public lectures. He avoided public bans - such as during the attempt of reform-minded rabbis to repeal the prohibition against *kitniyot* in 1810 - but he did take stances against modern philosophy, critical study of Judaism, and the use of translations in education.

In 1812, Rabbi Sofer’s first wife passed away; a few months later he married another widow named Sarah, daughter of the well-known Rabbi Akiva Eiger.

Today, Rabbi Sofer is remembered as a staunch opponent of innovation within Judaism. The claim largely comes from his 1819 responsum regarding the construction of a Reform temple in Hamburg. This responsum catapulted Rabbi Sofer [who always signed his name, “Moshe the small”] to his greatest fame; he was now consulted on every major issue, and his students served as rabbis across Hungary. Hungarian Jewry became divided between Haskalah and the students of Rabbi Moshe Sofer, who passed away in 1839 but whose influence remains strong to this day.

## Torah and Translation

### The Rumour Mill

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, Shu”t Chatam Sofer 6: Likutim 59

Translated by Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

דע בני ותלמידי שי' כי כל ימי הייתי מצטער על המקרא הזה "והייתם נקיים מד' ומישראל" וב' חובות אלו נקיות מד' יתב' והנקיות מישראל עמו הם שני רוכבים צמדים על גבנו. ויותר אפשרי לצאת ידי החוב הראשון היינו ידי שמים יותר הרבה ויותר מלצאת ידי הבריות, כי הם חושבים מחשבות זרות ונושאים ונותנים מוזרי' בלבנה. ועונשו יותר קשה מאד מאד עד לאין מספר ממי שאינו יוצא ידי שמים ח"ו.

והוא מש"ס פ"ה"כ בענין חלול ד' דאין לו כפרה כלל ר"ל, ושיעור חלול ד' כגון רב דשקיל בשרא ולא יהיב דמי לאלתר, ובער"ה שכיח בדברי הבריות למדן כזה יעשה דבר זה והוא שגור בפייהם, ואפילו על חשד סברא בעלמא, והשתא אי נמי הי' אותו הלמדן עושה כשורה ויצא ידי שמים בכל יכולתו בחיק האפשרי אלא שלא נזהר עד שטעו בו אלו שותי שכר ועשאוהו מנגינותם, הרי הוא כבר נלכד במצודתם, על זה ידו כל הדווי' והכתוב צווח "הרכבת אנוש לראשנו."

ואני הרהרתי כמה פעמים אם אפשר שקיים אדם בעולם מקרא זה על מתכונתו, ואולי על זה כיל שלמה המלך ע"ה "אין אדם צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא," וצונו לומר שאפי' בעשייתו כל טוב א"א שלא יחטא עכ"פ באופן השני הנ"ל ביציאת ידי הבריות.

[Note: It is worth considering how true this statement is in the age of social media.]

[K]now, my son and student, that my whole life I have been troubled by the verse, “And you shall be clean in front of G-d and Israel,” and these two obligations we have - to be clean from G-d and clean from Israel His nation - are two paired riders on our backs. But it is much easier to fulfill the first obligation, meaning, [innocence] in the eyes of G-d, much, much more than to fulfill one’s obligation regarding people, for they think strange thoughts [suspicions of wrongdoing], and the weavers speak of them by moonlight. The punishment [for failure to be innocent in the eyes of humanity] is quite severe, to no end, more than one who does not fulfill his obligation to Heaven, G-d forbid.

This emerges from the Talmud at the end of the chapter *Yom HaKippurim* (Yoma Chapter 8) regarding desecrating G-d’s Name, [which says] there is no atonement, “such as where a rabbi purchases meat but does not pay right away.” In our great iniquity, people commonly talk about how such a studious person did such and such. It is common in their mouths - even if it’s just a suspicion. And in this case, even if the studious person acted properly in the eyes of G-d as much as possible, but not carefully enough, such that some drunkards made a mistake about him, and wrote mocking songs about him, he has been caught in their trap. On this, all sufferers shall grieve, and the verse screams, “You have let men ride over us.” (Tehillim 66:12).

And I have wondered many times if it is even possible that a person in the history of the world has fully fulfilled this verse. Perhaps this idea is included in what King Shlomo said, “There is no righteous person in the world who does only good and no wrong” (Kohelet 7:20) - which means to say that even if his deeds were all good [in the eyes of G-d], it is impossible to not sin in the second way, regarding fulfilling the obligation [to be innocent in the eyes of] people.

torczyner@torontotorah.com

**A Heroes and Villains Preview: “Nimrod, Mightiest of Hunters”, by Ezer Diena**

The Torah (Bereishit 10:8) tells us that Kush, Cham’s son, gave birth to a child named Nimrod. Nimrod is identified by some (<https://bit.ly/2KShlIZ>) as the Babylonian king Hammurabi; other scholars suggest he was the ancient Assyrian king Belus. Either way, Nimrod was “a mighty hunter before Hashem” (Bereishit 10:9), but what does that tell us about his character?

Rashi (ad loc.) understands this to mean that Nimrod rebelled against G-d. In the same vein, various midrashim paint Nimrod as the archenemy of Avraham. Rashbam (Bava Batra 91a) tells us he jailed Avraham for 10 years, and a midrash in Bereishit Rabbah (38:13) describes Nimrod casting Avraham into a fiery furnace. Join us at Yeshivat Or Chaim at 9:30AM on December 25<sup>th</sup> to learn more about Nimrod’s other identities, hear the details of his next confrontation with Avraham, and much more! Then stay to learn about the rest of the 10 villains and 10 heroes we have selected to celebrate our Beit Midrash’s 10<sup>th</sup> year!

**Weekly Highlights: Dec. 8— Dec. 14 / 30 Kislev — 6 Tevet**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Dec. 7-8</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh</b>			
<b>After Hashkamah</b>	<b>Ezer Diena</b>	<b>Minchat Chinuch: Nittel</b>	<b>BAYT</b>	
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R’ Alex Hecht	Post-Hashkamah Parshah	Clanton Park	
<b>Before minchah</b>	Ezer Diena	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
<b>After minchah</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Simcha Suite</b>
<b>6:30 PM</b>	R’ Elihu Abbe	Parent-Child Learning	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Sun. Dec. 9</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh</b>			
<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>R’ Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Legal Ethics: Romance and the Elderly Client</b>	<b>BAYT</b>	<b>Simcha Suite</b> <i>Non-lawyers welcome</i>
<b>10:00 AM to 11:20 AM</b>	<b>R’ Elihu Abbe</b> <b>Mrs. Sara Munk</b>	<b>Lessons of the Supernatural Chanukah Across History</b>	<b>Midreshet Yom Rishon KST</b> <b>2640 Bayview Ave.</b>	<b>For women</b> <b>Light Refreshments</b>
<b>Mon. Dec. 10</b>	<b>Chanukah, Day 8</b>			
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Chesed: Tzedakah Priorities	Shomrai Shabbos	<b>Men</b>
<b>Tue. Dec. 11</b>				
<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>R’ Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>The Menorah of Judith</b>	<b>Adath Israel</b>	<b>Women; there is a fee</b> <i>info@adathisrael.com</i>
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah: Chapters 6-7	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>7:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Yehoshua: Chapter 16	129 Theodore Pl.	<b>Men</b>
<b>Wed. Dec. 12</b>				
<b>7:30 PM</b>	R’ Alex Hecht	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Controversies	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>7:30 PM</b>	Ezer Diena	Ripped from the Headlines	BAYT	
<b>8:00 PM</b>	R’ Elihu Abbe	The 7 Habits: Synergize	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Thu. Dec. 13</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shemuel: Chapters 4-5	49 Michael Ct.	
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R’ Elihu Abbe	Gemara Beitzah	eabbe@torontotorah.com	
<b>Fri. Dec. 14</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Kiddushin	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>

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

**10:00 AM Sunday, Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, Gemara Shabbat—not this week**

**11:00 AM Sunday, Contemporary Halachah—not this week**

**8:30 AM Tuesday, Ezer Diena, Stories and She’eilot**

**8:30 AM Friday, R’ Mordechai Torczyner, The Book of Yeshayah**

**For University and Adult Women, at Ulpanat Orot**

**9:30 AM Tuesdays, Mrs. Eliana Abbe: Sefer Devarim**

**9:30 AM Thursdays, Mrs. Eliana Abbe: Tefillah**

**Seder Boker for Adult Men with Rabbi Moshe Yeres**

**10:00 AM to Noon, Mondays/Wednesdays - Masechet Megilah and Eim haBanim Semeichah**

**10:00 AM to Noon, Tuesdays/Thursdays - Parshanut on Parshah and Pninei Halachah**