

Toronto Torah

YU Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Vayigash

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Malka and Allan Rutman in memory of Gedaliah ben Yitzchak Rutman z"l, Yitzchak ben R' Avraham Yaakov Rutman z"l, and Chaya Sarah bat Simcha Bunim Teigman z"l

And by Robbie and Brian Schwartz
in memory of Brian's father, Ephraim ben Noach z"l

Yehudah's Leadership Training Program

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

"My son, Yosef, yet lives! I will go see him, before I die." (Bereishit 45:28) But first, Yaakov makes one move: "And he sent Yehudah before him, *l'horot* before him, to Goshen." (ibid. 46:28) A midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 95:3) notes that *l'horot* can mean "to guide", suggesting that Yaakov sent Yehudah to establish residences, but it can also mean "to teach", suggesting that Yaakov sent Yehudah "to establish a place of gathering (*beit va'ad*), where [Yaakov] would teach Torah and the tribes would study."

The latter explanation is fascinating. As noted in Bereishit Rabbah (63:6), there were no public study halls in those days. The "yeshiva of Shem and Ever" in which Yitzchak and Yaakov studied (Megilah 17a; Bereishit Rabbah 56:11, 63:10, 68:5) seems to have been a private facility. Avraham and Yitzchak proclaimed monotheism to the world, but it appears that intense knowledge of G-d was transmitted within the family. [See Yoma 28b, and Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avodah Zarah 1:2-3.] Yehudah's *beit va'ad* appears to be the first open, public place to study. Why did Yaakov establish this system now?

Also: Why was Yehudah the one sent to open this place of study, when per Rambam (Mishneh Torah ibid.) it was Levi who would receive Yaakov's mantle of teaching?

On a simple level, we could suggest that changes in milieu and numbers

necessitated a change in method. Our ancestors in Canaan lived as small families in tents removed from the populations of Chevron, Beer Sheva and Grar. Children learned from their parents. In Egypt, though, even in their dedicated space in Goshen, the influence of Egypt would be strong. Further, the twelve families would each need exposure to the message of Avraham and Sarah. Yaakov decided to establish a public environment in which the tribes could mix and learn from him, and which would influence the evolving Jewish community. But why did Yaakov turn to Yehudah for this?

We might suggest another model: Yaakov saw a need to develop leaders. In earlier times, Noach's son Shem, and Shem's great-grandson Ever, acted as authorities; according to midrashim, they reined in sin and defended Avraham, explained his family's legacy to Yitzchak, and answered Rivkah's questions about her pregnancy. (Bereishit Rabbah 52:11, 56:11, 63:6) The very existence of these midrashim about Shem and Ever testifies to the need for religious authority; we have only the most minimal biblical identification of Shem and Ever in this role, but our sages understood that Avraham's survival, Yitzchak's training in the message of Avraham, and Rivkah's seeking "the word of G-d" made sense only if there were religious authorities who answered questions and provided guidance.

But by the time Yaakov's family

descends to Egypt, the old leaders are gone, and new authorities must emerge. Rather than expect each family to train its own children and develop its own leaders, Yaakov creates a joint *beit midrash*, in which the tribes will receive tradition, debate and discuss, and so new, cross-family authority would emerge from within the young nation. Indeed, this is what happened; the Talmud teaches that this *beit midrash* was the incubator for the elders whom Moshe would later gather. (Yoma 28b)

Perhaps this is why Yaakov appoints Yehudah to establish this *yeshiva*; after defending Binyamin, Yehudah leads Yaakov's children. Through the *yeshiva*, Levi would also become a leader in scholarship, and then we would witness what Rambam described: "Our ancestor Yaakov taught all of his children, and he separated Levi and appointed him the leader and established him in *yeshiva* to teach the path of G-d and to guard the commands of Avraham, and he instructed his sons that leader after leader not cease from the descendants of Levi, so that these lessons would not be forgotten." But at this stage, Yehudah was the relevant authority.

This idea highlights a key reason for the existence of *yeshivot*. In addition to their pure study, the furious, peer-driven debate inherent in a *yeshiva* environment provides an incubator in which future leaders are identified. May we merit to produce new authorities who are worthy of the role.

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Outline

Following the previous chapter's description of how Moshe distributed land east of the Yarden, the fourteenth chapter of Yehoshua introduces allocation of land west of the Yarden. In 14:1-5, we are told that a lottery will be used to divide up the land among 9.5 tribes.

Yehudah receives their portion first, and in 14:6-12 Kalev ben Yefuneh is the first member of the tribe to claim land. Kalev does not work through the lottery, though; instead, he lays stake to Chevron, as promised to him by Moshe. Because Kalev remained loyal to G-d when he was sent with the *meraglim* [spies] to investigate Canaan, Moshe promised that he would receive "the land where he had walked," and this was Chevron. [See Bamidbar 13:22. Radak notes that Kalev cannot claim the city itself, as it is designated a city of refuge, controlled by the tribe of Levi. Kalev receives land on the outskirts of Chevron.]

Kalev notes that dangerous giants live in the area of Chevron, but he contends that his personal strength has not waned. [A midrash found in the Cairo Genizah claims that Kalev was

punished for this apparent boast with the loss of his strength, as indicated in Yehoshua 15:16.] In 14:13-15, Yehoshua gives Kalev the land.

Insight

Use of a lottery to distribute the land is problematic. Bamidbar 26:54-56 commanded, "To the many you shall give a greater lot, and to the few you shall give a smaller lot; each according to his numbers, his portion shall be given. Only via a lottery shall the land be divided, according to the names of the tribes of their fathers shall they take a portion. According to the lottery shall his lot be divided, between great and few." We see two competing goals: To demonstrate Divine authority by use of a lottery, and to work pragmatically by assigning land based on need. But how could they simultaneously use a lottery, **and** fulfill a command to give larger portions to larger populations?

Rashi (Bamidbar 26:54) explains that G-d managed everything; the human managers of the lottery recorded twelve uneven plots on pieces of paper, and the lottery assigned them to the tribes for whom they were appropriate, based on their size. However, this fails to

explain why G-d would have instructed the people themselves to divide the land based on need; what was the purpose of this instruction?

Many other commentators contend that there was a general lottery to demonstrate Divine authority, and then human beings adjusted the results based on need:

- Ramban (Bereishit 48:6) - The tribes received equal portions, each large enough for the biggest tribe, and then human authorities gave individual families portions within that share, based on their size.
- Ralbag (Yehoshua 18:4) - The tribes received equal portions, and then human authorities adjusted these tribal portions as needed per size.
- Radak (Yehoshua 17:14) - The tribes received equal portions, and those who received better areas paid compensation to those who received poorer areas and needed more resources.
- Raavad (Malbim to Yehoshua 14:1), Abarbanel (Yehoshua 14:3-4) - The lottery assigned each tribe a region in which to live, and then the human authorities were able to assign actual territory as needed.

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Law of the Land: Kingship and the Modern State of Israel

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

The classic political model described in the Torah is that of kingship or monarchy. The talmudic and medieval authorities dispute whether the establishment of a monarchy per se is an obligation or not. The description in Parshat Shoftim, at first glance implies that it is, as the Torah writes *Som tasim alekha melech* – you shall surely place a king upon you. (Devarim 17:15) However, in the book of Shemuel (I Chapter 8), Shemuel is infuriated by the people's request to appoint a king. While G-d acquiesces, Shemuel is enabled to perform a miracle to illustrate the error in the request.

This tension leads to a dispute in the Talmud as to whether appointing a king is an obligation or not. Rav Yehuda rules that it is, while Rav Nechemiah rules that it is not (Sanhedrin 20b). Many Rishonim follow Rav Yehudah, most notably Rambam (Hilchot Melachim 1:1), while some early authorities, most notably Abarbanel (in his comments to Shoftim and Melachim), rule like Rav Nechemiah that is in merely an option.

If one takes the position that this is only an option, the grounding of a democratic government in modern Israel is easier. However, Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook (Shut Mishpat Kohen 144) argued that one could ground contemporary democratic authority using the model of monarchy. He claims that all forms of government essentially derive their authority from the will of the people. Thus, in the absence of an actual king, the power returns to the people and they can then invest it in any authority they desire. Therefore, he argues, the democratically elected government of the State of Israel holds the halachic authority of a king.

My teacher, Rabbi Moshe Lichtenstein, has argued that this is based on an understanding that there is a difference between *melech* and *malchut*, a king and kingship. Rav Kook is positing that the democratic government may gain the authority of the kingship, but presumably would not argue that any member of this government gains the personal status of *melech*. That requires a descendant of King David and anointment with the unique *shemen hamishchah* (oil of anointment), and it carries many legal implications.

As he writes, "...[A]ll halakhot which are a function of personal status do not apply to a present-day head of state in the State of Israel, who is not a king and especially not a Davidic monarch, nor do the halakhot of personal status apply to the government as a whole. However, those elements of Hilkhot Melakhim which establish the authority of the malkhut, whose function is to provide for a working government, should apply to present-day governments. The state has replaced the court as the arm of government; however, the function and authority of both serve similar purposes. Therefore, regarding taxation, foreign policy, use of the Urim ve-Tumim, treason, etc., the authority of contemporary governments should be recognized by Halakha." (<https://www.etzion.org.il/en/past-and-present-governments>)

However, Rabbi Lichtenstein notes that this does not negate the messianic wish for a king – it merely grounds the practical authority of the current system. (<https://www.etzion.org.il/en/special-status-davidic-dynasty>)

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Biography

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

Rabbi Elihu Abbe

"The Mashgiach [a name commonly used to refer to Rabbi Wolbe] and his Rebbezin would often host [Rabbi Raphael Wasserman], despite the strenuous effort it entailed. Their apartment wasn't very large. They had to bring a mattress into the dining room for his brother to sleep on. This was not notwithstanding it doubling as a study for the mashgiach, who did everything possible not to disturb his young guest's slumber." (Rabbi Moshe Wittow, *Profiles in Greatness*, page 153).

Rabbi Wittow also relates (page 155) that a taxi driver once told Rabbi Wolbe that he very much wanted to wear tefillin, but could not afford a pair. Rabbi Wolbe quickly went into his apartment and returned with enough money for the driver to purchase a pair of tefillin.

Rabbi Shlomo (Wilhelm) Wolbe was born in Berlin in 1914. He was raised in a secular home, and attended the University of Berlin. After becoming observant through the Jewish Student Union, Rabbi Wolbe went on to study at the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary, founded by Rabbi Dr. Azriel Hildesheimer. From there, he went to a yeshiva in Switzerland, and finally to the Mir Yeshiva in Poland.

In the introduction to his work on personal growth, *Alei Shur*, Rabbi Wolbe describes the powerful impact that the Mashgiach of the Mir Yeshiva, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz, had on his life. He writes, "The author of this book, when he was a young man, was brought by a 'storm wind' into the company of a man who was great among the (spiritual) giants... As a result he was transformed into a different person...and saw with his own eyes the lifegiving dew of the Torah of man [presumably a reference to personal growth and character perfection]."

In 1946 he moved to Israel and married Rivka Grodzinski. Four years later, he founded the Beer Yaakov yeshiva together with Rabbi Moshe Shemuel Shapira. Rabbi Shapira served as Rosh Yeshiva, and Rabbi Wolbe served as Mashgiach Ruchani until 1981. He then became the mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshiva in Yerushalayim, and ultimately founded Yeshivat Givat Shaul, a yeshiva that focused on the study of personal growth. He passed away in 2005.

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Torah and Translation For the Sake of Heaven

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur I pg. 326

Translated by Rabbi Elihu Abbe

בעומקה של קירבת אלקים מתעוררת הרגשה דקה ועולה: אני זכיתי לעמוד לפני בורא כל העולמות, ומעתה אדע כי לא לעצמי אני חי אם כי אם כי ובחמי צרי' להתגלות כבוד בוראי, ובשביל זה אני חי! מי שהרגיש פעם הרגשה זאת, עמד על הסוד הגדול של ה"שםה".

אך שה"שם שמים" הוא בפי כל העולם וכאליו הוא מהדברים הפחותים ביותר, ראיינו לקבעו בסוף חיבורנו, כי הוא באמת "הכלל" הגבוה מכולם והיסודות העמוק ביותר מכל הנאמר בספר זה.

"ומביא גואל לבני בנייהם למען שמו - באחבה": לימדונו אנשי הכנסת הגדולה בזיה, כי גilio שמו יתברך בעולם הואicia אהבתו יתברך אליו, אשר לאדם לכארה פלא, אלא "אהבה" פירושה "למען הנאהב", אך בבראה יתברך זהה אהבתו אליו, שנוטן לנו שמו יתברך.

אין רומיות גדולה מזו, שיתגלה שמו ותברך בעולם. בתוך גilio שמו יתברך ימצא כל נברא את מקומו ופקודתו, כי יידע כל פעול כי אתה פעלנו, ויבין כל יצור כי אתה צרתנו, וידע כי גם בו ועל ידו תגלה שמו יתברך. אך גilio זה לא תהיה שום מדלות וגאות דמיוניות, אלא דוקא התבטלות גמורה לפניו יתברך: "ויאמר כל אשר נשמה באפו ד' אלקינו ישראל מלך, ומלכותו בכל משלה". על גilio זה ועל התבטלות זאת כתוב המשילת ישרים, כי הוא "התעונג האמתי והעידון הגדול בכל העידונים שיכולים להמצא".

"לא לנו די לא לנו כי לשמכך תן כבוד, על חסיך ועל אמתיך" (תהלים קטו) - זהה תפלו של הכלל ישראל אשר ה"שםה" הוא מעיקרי תוכנות נפשו.

In the depth of closeness to G-d, an inspirational, elevated, and fine feeling arises: I have merited to stand before the Creator of all the worlds. Now I am aware that I do not live for myself, rather through me, and my life, the honor of my Creator must be revealed. This is why I live. One who has once sensed this feeling has understood the great secret of [serving G-d] "for His sake."

Even though everyone speaks of "for the sake of Heaven," as if it was something exceedingly simple, we have decided to place it at the end of our composition because it is, in truth, the "general principle" that is most elevated, and the deepest foundation of anything discussed in this book.

"And [G-d] brings the redeemer to their descendants for the sake of His Name, with love": The Men of the Great Assembly taught us with [these words], that the revelation of His Name in this world, is the pinnacle of His love for us. To man this is seemingly astonishing, as "love" [usually] means "for the sake of the one who is loved". But with the Creator, this is His love for us, that He gives us His Name.

There is no greatness greater than the revelation of His Name in the world. Through the revelation of His Name, every creature will find its place and its role. For "Every creature will know that You are its Creator, and everyone who has been fashioned will know that it is You who fashioned it." And he will know that also through him, His Name will be revealed. But through this revelation there will be no imagined arrogance. There will be only total negation before Him. "And all those with a soul will say, 'Hashem the G-d of Israel is king, and His reign is over all authority.'" About this revelation and self-negation the Mesilat Yesharim writes that it is "the true pleasure and the greatest enjoyment that could possibly exist."

"Not for our behalf, Hashem, not for our behalf. Rather, for Your Name give honor, for Your kindness and Your truth." (Tehillim 115) - This is the prayer of the Jewish People, for whom "for the sake of Heaven" is a primary character trait.

The 613 Mitzvot: #24 - The Shabbat Boundary

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

After some of the Jews attempted to collect manna on Shabbat, Hashem warned, "No one shall leave his place on the seventh day." (Shemot 16:29) This is understood as the basis for the mitzvah of *techum*, which prohibits travel beyond a certain boundary outside of a residential area on Shabbat. Sefer haChinuch counts this as the Torah's 24th mitzvah. The *Sefer haChinuch* explains that this mitzvah is part of the Torah's legislation against non-Shabbat-oriented activities, enabling us to focus on Shabbat as testimony to Divine Creation.

Because of the law of *techum*, we don't travel more than 2000 *amot* – approximately one kilometer – from the edge of town. We measure from the last house in town, beyond

which there are no houses. If two towns are contiguous, they are considered as one town for this law.

The Talmud (Eruvin 35b) debates whether *techum* is actually a biblical law or a rabbinic law. See also Tosafot Sotah 30b, and Ramban Shabbat 2a and Shabbat 87b, among many other sources. In addition, there is debate regarding the actual distance of the *techum* limit; see Yerushalmi Eruvin 5:4, among other sources.

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Weekly Highlights: Dec. 15 – Dec. 21 / 7 Tevet – 13 Tevet

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
Mon. Dec. 14-15				
8:50 AM	Ezer Diena	Pre-Shacharit Parshah	BAYT	TFBM
10:30 AM	R' Alex Hecht	Post-Hashkamah Parshah	Clanton Park	
Before minchah	Ezer Diena	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Simcha Suite
6:30 PM	R' Elihu Abbe	Parent-Child Learning	Shaarei Shomayim	
Mon. Dec. 17				
7:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Medical Halachah: The CPAP Machine	Shaarei Shomayim	CME accredited; Laypeople welcome
Tue. Dec. 18	Fast: The 10th of Tevet			
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah: Chapters 7-8	Shaarei Shomayim	
7:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yehoshua: Chapter 15	129 Theodore Pl.	Men
Wed. Dec. 19				
7:30 PM	R' Alex Hecht	20 th Century Controversies	Shaarei Tefillah	
7:30 PM	Ezer Diena	Ripped from the Headlines	BAYT	
8:00 PM	R' Elihu Abbe	The 7 Habits: Sharpen the Saw	Shaarei Shomayim	
Thu. Dec. 20				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shemuel: Chapter 5	49 Michael Ct.	
8:30 PM	R' Elihu Abbe	Gemara Beitzah	eabbe@torontotorah.com	
Fri. Dec. 21				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Kiddushin	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

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: R' Alex Hecht: Kiruv and Shabbat Invitations
 8:30 AM Tuesday, Ezer Diena, Stories and She'ilot
 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, Wednesday - Masechet Megilah and Eim haBanim Semeichah
 10:00 AM to Noon, Tuesdays/Thursdays - Parshanut on Parshah and Pninei Halachah
 Special Program this Monday with Rabbi Alex Hecht and Rabbi Elihu Abbe