

# Toronto Torah

## Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Ki Tetze

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by the Goldman Family on the yahrtzeit of Mr. Jeffrey Goldman ז"ל, לעילוי נשמת ר' יעקב זאב בן ר' ארי' צבי הכהן ז"ל זי"ע

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Janice and Albert Kirshen on the yahrtzeit of Janice's father Joseph Joseph, Shalom Yosef ben Chaim v'Leah ז"ל

### Fake News

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Want a long life? Moshe told us how:

1. Observe all of the mitzvot (Devarim 4:40, 5:29-6:3, 11:9, 32:46-47), or
2. Observe specific mitzvot:
  - Honour your parents (Shemot 20:12; Devarim 5:16)
  - Send away a mother bird before taking her young (Devarim 22:6)
  - Maintain honest weights and measures (Devarim 25:15)

We can see why fulfilling the entire Torah could earn long life. Ditto for honouring one's parents, a feat which the Sages describe as virtually superhuman. (Kiddushin 31b) Perhaps honest commerce earns an unusual reward because civil society requires commercial trust. But why should sending away a mother bird, a brief and inexpensive act of momentary mercy, earn such a lofty reward?

In an unpublished sermon, Rabbi Nissan Shulman explained that, "Many brushstrokes, one after the other, finally make up the masterpiece... Training a child to say 'please' and 'thank you' will help make the total gentleman and lady once that child grows to become an adult." So sending away the mother bird is important as **training us in personal sensitivity and generosity.**

Similarly, Rambam emphasized the influence of the small moment in his guidance for tzedakah. He wrote, "Great qualities will not be achieved via great deeds, but via a great number of deeds... For example: One who gives

1,000 dinar to a suitable recipient, once, to one person, will not achieve generosity via this one great deed, as will one who gives 1,000 dinar over one thousand occasions, each one generously." (Commentary to Avot 3:15)

However, perhaps the Torah associates long life with a brief and inexpensive act for another reason: More than preparing us for big moments, **small moments are the true substance of our lives.**

Rabbi Meshulam Dovid Soloveitchik noted a midrash which shows how small moments of sensitivity defined our great leaders: "G-d does not elevate someone before testing him with a small matter, and only then does G-d elevate him. Two giants, G-d tested them with a small matter and found them faithful, and then He elevated them to greatness. He tested David with sheep, and [David] led them to the wilderness, to distance them from theft... And so with Moshe it says, 'And he led the sheep into the wilderness' to remove them from theft, and G-d took him to herd Israel, etc." (Shemot Rabbah 2:3; and see ibid. 2:2 as well)

We see the same in G-d's choice of King Shaul; we meet Shaul when he is searching for his father's lost donkeys. During that pursuit, he addresses his servant humbly and respectfully. His food runs out, and still he persists on his family's behalf. He only halts out of concern that his father might start worrying about the search party. (Shemuel I 9, Tosefta Berachot 4:18)

The Talmud supports the idea that small moments are significant in themselves, teaching that one of the questions we must answer when we face Divine judgment is, "Did you establish fixed times for Torah study?" (Shabbat 31a) The emphasis is not on a grand deed of studying for sixteen consecutive hours. Our goal is to maintain consistency, even on a low level.

This is one of the pitfalls of reading the news; headlines miss small moments. A few stories dominate the news cycle: nations wage war, governments fight internally, and athletes perform on-field achievements or off-field antics. These events matter, but they convey an inaccurate view of our world. Life is local. The great influences on lives, relationships and moods are family and friends, the bus driver, the customer, the neighbour, the schoolteacher. Witness the fact that when people pass away, their eulogies generally focus far more on what they did in those small moments than on any headlines with which they were involved.

Understandably, we will always be attracted by the impressive home run, which quickens our pulse and arouses our imagination. Our fairy tales and Marvel™ movies will portray the heroic rescue leading to love, fame and fortune. But in the real world, the big news is when we send away the mother bird, living a life of sensitivity, generosity, and loyalty to Hashem.

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

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### Summary

Our chapter begins the infamous episode of the “Concubine in Givah,” during a period when Israel was without a king. [According to Rashi to 18:1, this was shortly after the death of Yehoshua.] We are told of a Levite man who lived in Mount Ephraim and had a concubine from Bethlehem. For unstated reasons, she left him, and returned to her father’s house. The man traveled to Bethlehem to appease his concubine, and was greeted warmly by her and her father. After staying with his concubine and her father for four days, the man and the concubine set out to return to Mount Ephraim. On their way, they sought to stay overnight in Givah, which was inhabited by the tribe of Binyamin. After waiting in the town square and receiving no offers of hospitality, the travelers were eventually invited by an old man to spend the night.

After they settled in the old man’s house, a mob started banging on the door, seeking to violate the Levite man. The old man pleaded with them to take his own daughter and the concubine instead of his male guest. The mob persisted, and the Levite man grabbed

his concubine and pushed her outside. The men of Givah violated her all night, and she was left dead on the doorstep of the old man’s house.

Upon seeing her corpse, the Levite man cut it up into twelve pieces, and sent them to the other tribes to rouse them to protest the actions of Binyamin.

### Analysis

The similarities between the people of Givah and those of Sodom are striking (see Bereishit, Chapter 19). The local populations of both places were hostile to visitors and had no compunctions about violating them. Why, then, was Sodom destroyed by G-d, while Givah was not?

Malbim answers that the mob in Givah acted cruelly out of lust, whereas in Sodom, cruelty was enshrined into law:

- In Sodom, the law dictated that visitors not be allowed to pass through, and if they did, they were to be violated. In Givah, hosting guests was clearly not illegal, since the old man invited the travelers publicly.

- In Sodom, “all the men of the city” (Bereishit 19:4) gathered around Lot’s house to enforce their laws against visitors, whereas in Givah, only the “lawless people” (Shoftim 19:22) surrounded the Levite man’s house. This indicates that the people surrounding Lot’s house in Sodom were actually upholders of the law.
- The people of Sodom would forcefully enter homes, whereas the people of Givah would not.
- The people of Givah considered these types of behaviours to be disgusting, as evidenced by the old man’s plea (ibid. 19:23), whereas those of Sodom did not.

Nevertheless, this episode shows that the product of a society in which the decent majority does not tend to the needs of the vulnerable, and is unwilling to rein in its delinquents, is similar to the product of a society in which immorality is legally sanctioned.

*ahlecht@torontorah.com*

## Holy Land Halachah: Voting in Israel

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

As Israel approaches Election Day, it is worth addressing the potential halachic value of voting in Israeli elections. Rabbi Dovid Stav, chief Rabbi of Shoham, addressed this question in a brief responsum (<https://www.tzohar.org.il/?p=2458>)

Question: Besides the privilege to vote, is there a mitzvah to vote? Is someone who refrains from voting derelict in his halachic obligation?

After emphasizing the unique privilege to vote in a Jewish state after 2000 years without sovereignty, he notes that the reality Jews lived in historically caused there to be little halachic material that directly addresses questions of this nature. At first glance, it would seem that the civil duty of the citizen in a democratic state is not connected to halachah. Yet, he notes, anecdotally, many great rabbis indeed viewed this act as halachically significant, and even permitted voting before davening, even though one is forbidden from engaging in any personal activities before prayer. However, these stories do not provide explanations. At the other end of the spectrum, anti-Zionists would argue that it is sinful to participate in any act that recognizes the state. Furthermore, there is obviously no explicit mitzvah to vote.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Stav offers four possible halachic reasons to vote in Israeli elections. The first of his reasons may be relevant in any society, while the next three apply more, or exclusively to, a Jewish community, and in the case of his final reason, only in Israel:

- *Hashavat Aveidah* (the mitzvah to return lost objects): While the primary obligation refers to returning material property, Rabbeinu Yonah (Shaarei Teshuvah 3:70-71) expands the concept. He argues that if one is capable of

saving someone by providing advice or simply helping out, he is obligated to, and will suffer Divine punishment if he or she fails to do so. Rabbi Stav understands this to mean that one is forbidden from being apathetic to the needs of others. Rabbeinu Yonah adds that there should be leaders in every community who volunteer to help others. Voting is a way of ensuring that the right kinds of people are in power to accomplish similar goals.

- *Rebuke*: There is an obligation to prevent those who are about to sin from sinning. Voting in a way that ensures proper leaders will be elected, who will provide proper oversight in society, is a way of providing “communal rebuke”.
- *Kiddush Hashem* (sanctifying G-d’s Name): Any act a Jew does, especially in public, has the capacity to sanctify or desecrate G-d’s Name. By voting for people who are honest and upright, rather than the opposite, one helps to sanctify G-d’s Name.
- The commandment to establish a king: Without explicitly mentioning Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, who argued that both monarchy and democracy draw on the same halachic basis, Rabbi Stav argues that establishing even a democratic government is a fulfillment of this commandment.

After articulating these reasons, he concludes by reiterating the privilege it is to vote in the Jewish state.

*jziring@torontorah.com*

## Biography

### Rabbi Klonymus Shapira

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Rabbi Klonymus Kalman Shapira was born in Grodzisk, Poland in 1889. Part of a rabbinic family, he could trace his lineage back to Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk (Noam Elimelech), the Chozeh of Lublin, and the Maggid of Kozhnitz.

Orphaned at the age of three, Rabbi Shapira nonetheless grew in Torah scholarship from childhood, and was appointed Rabbi of Piaseczno, in central Poland, at the age of twenty. Rabbi Shapira's wife, Rochel Chaya Miryam, helped him write his books.

In addition to his rabbinate, Rabbi Shapira led a yeshiva, *Daat Moshe*. He wrote a book on education, *Chovat haTalmidim* (The Duty of the Students), in which he emphasized the importance of self-respect and self-confidence for scholastic success.

Rabbi Shapira lost his only son, his daughter-in-law and his sister-in-law, in the Nazi bombing of Warsaw; his only daughter also died during the war. After the Nazi invasion he was interned in the Warsaw Ghetto. A collection of the stirring speeches he delivered in the ghetto, acknowledging and addressing the suffering and the religious doubts of Jews around him, has been published under the name *Eish Kodesh* (Sacred Fire).

While in the ghetto, Rabbi Shapira was approached by young men who wished to grow in their spirituality; in response, he authored a book called *Bnei Machshavah Tovah* (literally: People of Good Thought). In this book, Rabbi Shapiro prescribed ways to develop sensitivity to G-d in our lives and daily activities. Rabbi Shapira felt that *Bnei Machshavah Tovah* was a special work; he sent the manuscript to his brother in Jerusalem, so that the first copies would be printed in that holy city. Further, he prohibited all copying of the book without his permission, a decree which was only broken after his death at the insistence of several Chassidic Rebbeim. (For more on this book, see Toronto Torah 6:22.)

When the Ghetto was liquidated, Rabbi Shapira was transferred to the Trawniki work camp; offered the opportunity to escape, he refused to abandon his community. He was shot to death, along with the rest of the Jews there, on November 3 (5 Cheshvan), 1943.

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

## Torah and Translation

### Defining "Chinuch"

R' Klonymus Kalman Shapira, *Chovat haTalmidim*, Chap. 1

Translated by Rabbi Sammy Bergman

שלמה המלך אמר במשלי (כ"ב ו') "חנוך לנער ע"פ דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה". זה הוא עיקר החינוך שלא בלבד בשעה שהנער נער, ויד אביו עודה תקיפה עליו ישמע לו ויעשה כמצותיו, רק גם כשידגל והוא ברשותו, אף כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה. כי החינוך לא צווי לבד הוא, לא הרגל בלבד הוא, שמרגילו לעשות מעשים טובים, יותר גדול ויותר פועל מן הציווי ומן ההרגל הוא החנוך, ושני אלה הציווי וההרגל רק כלי תשמישו הם, שהמחנך מוכרח להשתמש בהם, לצוות ולהרגילו, כדי לחנכו בדרך ד'...

לא על האומנות והמלאכה רק על האדם, על ההכשרה אשר נמצאה בכח בקרב האדם למלאכה זו או זו... נופל לשון חינוך... תיבה לעצמה היא תיבת חנוך, ונאמרה על הוצאת ההכשרה אשר באדם או בכלי מן הכוח אל הפועל, אם לא נוציאה תשאר בהעלם וצריכים אנו להוציאה ולחנך את האיש הזה שיעשה לבעל מלאכה זו...

וכשנאמרה תיבה זו על חינוך הבנים, אז הכוונה היא לגדל ולפתח את טבעו והכשרתו של הילד שנמצאה בו במדה קטנה או בכח או בהעלם לבד ולגלותה. וכיוון שהאיש הישראלי עוד בילדותו רוח ד' נשמת שקי טמונה וגנוזה בו, צריכים לגדל ולחנך אותו להוציאה לגלותה ולהפריחה והי' ליהודי נאמן עובד ד', בתורתו מעצמו יחפץ, ומדרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור. ועל זה צוה שלמה המלך חנוך לנער וכו', תחנכו, אל קרבו תחדור, ואת קדושת ישראל אשר בו בהעלם תגלה ורק אז גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה.

*Note: The word Chinuch normally means "education". We have left it as chinuch because Rabbi Shapira will re-define it below.*

King Solomon said in Proverbs (22:6): "Provide *chinuch* for the young man according to his path. Even when he gets old, he will not deviate from it." This is the essence of *chinuch*: that not only when the boy is young, and his father's hand still has power over him, will he listen and perform his commands. Rather, even when he grows up and is in his [own] domain, "even when he becomes old, he will not deviate from it." For *chinuch* is not merely instruction, in which he instructs his son or student, "Do such and such." It also isn't merely training, in which he trains him to do good deeds. *Chinuch* is greater and more active than instruction, or training. These two, instruction and training, are merely its tools, which a *mechanech* needs to use, to instruct him, and to train him, in order to be *mechanech* him in the way of G-d...

[*Chinuch*...] doesn't relate to the craft or the work, but rather to the person, to the capability that exists in the potential of a person for a particular job... *Chinuch* is its own word and is used regarding bringing the capability of a person or tool from potential to actual. If we don't bring it out it will remain hidden, and we need to bring it out and be *mechanech* this man so he should become the master of [his] craft...

When this word is said about the *chinuch* of children, its meaning is to raise and develop the nature and capability of the child that are present in a small measure, or potential, or merely hidden, and to reveal it. Since when a Jewish man is still young the spirit of G-d and soul of the Lord is buried and hidden within him, we need to raise and be *mechanech* him, to bring it out, reveal it and cultivate it, and he will be a loyal Jew who serves G-d. He will desire His Torah on his own, and from its path he will not deviate even when he is old. Regarding this King Solomon commanded: "Provide *chinuch* for the young man". Provide *chinuch*: penetrate inside of him, and reveal the hidden Jewish holiness inside of him and only then "even when he is old, he will not deviate from it."

## Weekly Highlights: Sept. 14 – Sept. 20 / 14 Elul – 20 Elul

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
Sept. 13-14 שבת	<b>“The Psychology of Teshuvah” Shabbaton at Shomrai Shabbos!</b>			
Hashkamah	R' Alex Hecht	Regret vs. Despair	Shomrai Shabbos Chevra Mishnayos	<i>Marder Bais Medrash</i>
Derashah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	The Trap of Anxious Teshuvah		<i>Main Shul</i>
Young Marrieds Minyan	R' Sammy Bergman	Identifying Changes or Changing Identities?		<i>Reiter Bais Medrash</i>
5:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Can a Suffering Jew Do Proper Teshuvah?		<i>Women Only, Social Hall</i>
6:15 PM	Ezer Diena	United We Stand		<i>Main Shul</i>
Seudah shlishit	R' Alex Hecht	Do We Really Deserve a Second Chance?		<i>Social Hall</i>
Before maariv	R' Sammy Bergman	The Conundrum of Guilt		<i>Main Shul</i>
After minchah	Hillel Horovitz	Topic TBD	BAYT	<i>Simcha Suite</i>
<b>Sun. Sept. 15</b>				
8:45 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Medical Ethics: Blood and Live Organ Donations	BAYT Simcha Suite	<i>Laypeople welcome</i>
9:15 AM	R' Sammy Bergman	Chagigah, Chasidut, Chevra	Shaarei Shomayim	<i>Teens</i>
10:00 AM to 11:20 AM	R' Eitan Aviner Ezer Diena	Hidden Meaning of the Rosh Hashanah Torah Reading Curses of the Old Year	Midreshet Yom Rishon Bnai Torah Ferman Social Hall	<i>Women Light Refreshments</i>
<b>Tue. Sept. 17</b>				
10:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Swinging a Chicken?!	Adath Israel	<i>Women; there is a fee info@adathisrael.com</i>
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah: Review	Shaarei Shomayim	<i>The New Year Begins!</i>
7:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Book of Shoftim, 4	129 Theodore Pl.	<i>Men</i>
8:00 PM	Ezer Diena	Did it Really Happen, #1 UNetaneh Tokef	BAYT	<i>Gruda Bais Medrash</i>
8:00 PM	R' Alex Hecht	Halachah in Modern Israel: Two-State Solution?	RSVP to ahecht@torontotorah.com	
<b>Wed. Sept. 18</b>				
10:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Jonah: More than a Fish, 2	Beth Emeth	<i>torontotorah.com/jonah</i>
8:00 PM	R' Alex Hecht	Health #3: Mental Illness	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>Thu. Sept. 19</b>				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	The Book of Shemuel	49 Michael Ct.	<i>Women</i>
8:30 PM	Ezer Diena	Gemara Beitzah	ediena@torontotorah.com	<i>Men, Advanced</i>
<b>Fri. Sept. 20</b>				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Bava Metzia	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<i>Advanced</i>

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

**10:00 AM Sunday, R' Aaron Greenberg, Gemara Shabbat**

**11:00 AM Sunday, Beit Midrash Rotation: Contemporary Halachah: Rabbi Sammy Bergman, Halachic Wills**

**8:30 AM Wednesday, Ezer Diena, Mishlei**

**8:30 AM Friday, R' Mordechai Torczyner, Parshah**

**WOMEN'S BEIT MIDRASH for University and Adult Women, at Ulpanat Orot, Coming Soon**

**Seder Boker for Men with Rabbi Moshe Yeres, at Yeshivat Or Chaim**

**10:00 AM to Noon, Mon./Wed. Masechet Megilah, Orot of Rav Kook, Chovot haLevavot  
10:00 AM to Noon, Tue./Thu. Parshanut on the Parshah, Sefer Yehoshua, Pninei Halachah**