

# Toronto Torah

## Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Miketz

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

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

### When Yosef Met Matityahu

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

The holy Sh'lah, in an introduction to the portions of Vayeshev, Miketz and Vaygash, encourages his readers to try to find a connection between Chanukah and the Torah portions which are usually read during the holiday. Following his lead, we will identify a problem which underlies both the story of Yosef and his brothers and the story of Matityahu and his enemies: the problem of extremism and compromise.

When the Egyptian viceroy (Yosef in disguise) jails Shimon, we find a curious text describing the brothers' reaction: "And they said to each other: But we are guilty for our brother, for we saw his deep distress when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear. This is why this trouble has befallen us." (Bereishit 42:21). The text takes us by surprise, because we don't remember hearing Yosef when he was thrown to the pit! Indeed, this detail is completely omitted from the Torah's description of Yosef's sale. The reason for this omission seems to be simple: the sale is reported from the brothers' point of view. The brothers may have heard Yosef's pleadings with their ears, but not in their hearts. Only years later, as the brothers found themselves in a similar stressful situation, did they finally recognize Yosef's suffering for what it was.

It is not surprising that the challenge of listening went both ways; Yosef seems to have faced the same challenge as his brothers. At the start of the sibling rivalry, we cannot but

wonder why Yosef thought it necessary to tell his brothers about his dreams. Couldn't he see that this path would only lead to more hatred and enmity? Both Rabbi Meir Leibush Weiser ("Malbim") and Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin ("Netziv") answer similarly: Yosef was completely unaware of his brothers' feelings towards him, even though they disliked him to the degree that "they could not speak with him peacefully" (Bereishit 37:4)!

To heal this gaping wound, both Yosef and his brothers would need to learn to hear the other and attend to his opinions, ideas and needs. In the course of this week's parshah and next week's parshah, Yosef learns that leadership is not the acceptance of bows but the serving of others, and the brothers learn that their very survival is dependent on the man whom they saw as their archenemy. In short, the story of Yosef and his brothers is a call for compassion, understanding and inclusion even in times of disagreement and strife.

Chanukah, on the other hand, seems to convey the exact opposite message – celebrating the inflexible, uncompromising and determined resolve of the Hasmoneans, who waged war against Hellenistic culture without distinction between a Hellenized Syrian and a Hellenized Jew. As a matter of fact, according to the Book of Maccabees, the first person to be killed by Matityahu was indeed a Jew! The war of the Hasmoneans was against their Jewish Hellenized brothers,

followers of the Hellenized high priest Menelaus, no less than a war against the Hellenized Syrian forces led by Antiochus. The miracle allowing them to use pure oil for the menorah seems to teach the same lesson about the importance of uncontaminated purity.

The question posed to us by the juxtaposition of Yosef's story with that of Chanukah has been confronted by the Jewish people many times during our history: when should we put aside our ideological and religious differences and cooperate, and when should we wage a symbolic or sometimes, G-d forbid, real war?

Obviously, a short article is hardly the right place to analyze such a complicated issue, but we may point to some relevant sources:

- Should we take the "Hasmonean attitude" against any approach we deem heretical? See the Netziv's introduction to Bereishit for the pitfalls of such a stance.
- Should we take the "Yosef attitude" if our opponent means well, regardless of his positions? Rabbi Eliezer's tragic rejection in Bava Metzia 59b seems to argue for standing on principle.
- Should the answer to this question differ according to time and culture? See Chazon Ish Yoreh Deah 2:16, where the author argues that in our era, only love can strengthen the Jewish faith.

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### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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## Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg, Tzitz Eliezer 7:24-25 (1962)

The Talmud discussed a rabbinic prohibition against raising “light” animals, like sheep and goats, in Israel. (Bava Kama 79b) As Rambam explained, the sages were concerned that the animals might invade other people’s property in pursuit of food. (Commentary to Mishnah Bava Kama 7) This law was brought in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Shulchan Aruch, with a disclaimer that it does not apply “today”, when it is uncommon for us to own fields in Israel. (Choshen Mishpat 409:1) What about in our day, though – does the prohibition return, now that Jews again own fields in Israel?

A century ago, Rabbi Zvi Pesach Frank, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, was lenient. He contended that once the law ceased to be applicable, it would not return automatically. (Har Zvi to Tur Choshen Mishpat 409) However, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef prohibited. (Yabia Omer 3:Choshen Mishpat 7)

Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg wrote two responsa addressing a case in which an animal’s products were needed for health purposes. He ruled leniently, where the animals would be

guarded carefully. Among his reasons:

- The Rashba contended that one may raise such animals under the guard of a shepherd, because the shepherd does not have any financial interest in letting them graze on others’ land. (Rashba to Bava Kama 79b)
- Rabbi Menachem of Fano argued that the entire prohibition applies only to animals which roam free, and not to those which are raised in a guarded facility. (Rama miFano 85)
- The communities in which the animals would be raised are established as agricultural communities, with a plan to use such animals for the economic welfare of the whole. In such a case, the residents accept the risk of invasive grazing.
- The Talmud records that Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa held fowl for someone, and he sold their products for goats to keep for the owner of the fowl. (Taanit 25a) Rabbi Waldenberg explained that Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa assumed that the merit of the mitzvah would help avert any invasive grazing, and so this was permitted.

Rabbi Waldenberg contended that the combination of lenient views and his own lenient arguments was reliable, given society’s need.

## Weekly Highlights: Dec. 28 — Jan. 3 / 30 Kislev — 6 Tevet

**Most of our classes do not meet this week, but there are opportunities to learn!**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Dec. 27-28</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh</b>			
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R’ Alex Hecht	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>After minchah</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Simcha Suite</b>
<b>Sun. Dec. 29</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh</b>			
<b>9:15 AM</b>	R’ Sammy Bergman	Chagigah, Chasidut, Chevra	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Tue. Dec. 31</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah, Ch. 25	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>7:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Book of Shoftim, Ch. 7	129 Theodore Pl.	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Wed. Jan. 1</b>				
<b>9:15 AM Breakfast 9:40 AM Learning 10:30 AM Shiur</b>	<b>R’ Sammy Bergman</b>	<b>Yarchei Kallah Quitting in Halachah</b>	<b>Yeshivat Or Chaim</b>	<b>Please RSVP at</b> <a href="http://www.torontotorah.com/yk">www.torontotorah.com/yk</a> or <a href="mailto:info@torontotorah.com">info@torontotorah.com</a>
<b>7:30 PM</b>	Ezer Diena	Learn to Read Esther #2	BAYT	<b>Boardroom</b>
<b>7:30 PM</b>	R’ Sammy Bergman	Ancient Text, Modern Dilemmas	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Thu. Jan. 2</b>				
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Book of Shemuel	49 Michael Ct.	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Ezer Diena	Gemara Beitzah	<a href="mailto:ediena@torontotorah.com">ediena@torontotorah.com</a>	<b>Men, Advanced</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R’ Sammy Bergman	Shabbat: Laws of Boreir	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>In Depth</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R’ Jeff Turtel	Tzurba MeiRabbanan	Shomrai Shabbos	<b>Men</b>
<b>Fri. Jan. 3</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Bava Metziah: Perek 6	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>

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

**Sunday classes for university men resume January 12**  
**8:30 AM Wednesday, Ezer Diena, Mishlei—Not this week**  
**8:30 AM Friday, R’ Mordechai Torczyner, Parshah**

**Seder Boker for Men with Rabbi Moshe Yeres, at Yeshivat Or Chaim**  
**10:00 AM to Noon, Tue./Thu. Parshanut on the Parshah, Sefer Shoftim, Pninei Halachah**