

# Toronto Torah

## Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Vayigash

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

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

### What If Yosef Had Restrained Himself?

### Rabbi Chaim Metzger

Yosef struggled throughout last week's parshah to stick to his plan, as his facade as powerful ruler cracked. First, when he heard his brothers admit their guilt to each other over selling Yosef, he turned away and cried. (Bereishit 42:24-25) Yosef cried again when the brothers returned with Binyamin, and this time he was so overcome with emotion that he needed to quickly go into a separate room to cry, wash his face and compose himself. (43:29-31) And then in our parshah, Yehudah appeals to Yosef to free Binyamin, and by the end of Yehudah's supplication, Yosef reveals his identity to the brothers. (45:1) But what if Yosef had held back again? What was Yosef's plan?

#### Living the Dreams

According to Ramban (commentary to 42:9), Yosef's plan the whole time has been to fulfill the dreams from Parshat Vayeshev, of his brothers, father and mother bowing to him.

Rabbi Ovadia Seforno (ad loc.) further explains that Yosef doesn't simply aim for the fulfillment of dreams, but rather he tries to set a precedent for his descendants to unite under a single ruler. In this light, Yosef's failure to fully realize his dreams led to a different future for the Jewish people.

#### New Relationships

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (ad loc.) vehemently disagrees with the approach that the wise Yosef was a slave to the dreams. Rather, Yosef puts his brothers and father through these

difficult situations in order to mend the relationship he had with his father and brothers. First, Yosef needs to see that his brothers have repented, and that they will not allow Binyamin to be separated from their father. Second, the brothers need to see Yosef not as an overly ambitious youth, but as a powerful ruler. To that effect, Yosef seeks to stage a careful revelation to the brothers and to his father.

That it doesn't work out this way is due to Yosef's inability to control his emotions, but his desired effect is nonetheless achieved.

#### A Test

Abaranel (commentary to Bereishit 42:7) views Yosef's initial plan as twofold: to place the brothers into the painful situations that he had personally faced, and well to test the brothers to see if they are worthy of saving. Yosef completely succeeds in his mission; in Yehudah's final remarks, Yosef sees their sincerity as well as Yaakov's sincerity in truly caring for each other. They have all done complete teshuvah at this point. True, Yosef had more planned, but that turned out to be unnecessary, and now Yosef revealed himself to his brothers.

#### Never

There is another possibility: that Yosef planned on concealing his identity forever. Perhaps Yosef knew that once Pharaoh learned of his family's identity, it would have become difficult, if not impossible, for his family to leave Egypt. This may be seen in the Talmud's

description of Pharaoh's reluctance to even allow Yosef to leave Egypt temporarily, for his father's burial. (Sotah 36b) Indeed, Yosef knows that Pharaoh will desperately attempt to recruit the brothers into the army, as we see when he later stresses to them that they should emphasize that they are shepherds. (Bereishit 46:31-34, and see Rashi there)

The only way to save Bnei Yisrael from being stuck in Egypt is for Yosef to remain hidden until the day he dies, secretly martyring himself with no one the wiser. This selfless plan never comes to fruition because Yosef's emotions force him back onto the path of being a Jewish leader, and we merit to have him and his descendants as part of Bnei Yisrael.

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#### Tanach: Book of Illness and Healing

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**Summary**

Shortly after King David leaves Jerusalem due to his son Avshalom's coup, he is greeted by one of Mefiboshet's servants, Tziva. The servant offers him various foods and supplies, and David asks him what his master is doing. Upon hearing that Mefiboshet has joined Avshalom, David declares that all of Mefiboshet's possessions will be transferred to Tziva. (16:1-4, and see next week's chapter for a continuation of this story)

David then travels to Bachurim, where Shimi ben Gera, a descendant of Shaul, throws stones at David and curses him. Avishai ben Tzeruyah, one of David's men, offers to kill Shimi, and asks David why he is acting so calmly in the face of Shimi's rudeness. David informs Avishai that Hashem has decided that Shimi should be cursing David, and that perhaps Hashem will be good with David for continuing to calmly accept the curses. (16:5-13)

At this point, Avshalom reaches Jerusalem, with various political leaders and former supporters of King David, including a man named Chushai Ha'Arki, who was a very close friend of

David. Avshalom, who is aware of this relationship, questions Chushai as to his sudden change of allegiance. Chushai explains that just as he has served David, so too will he serve his son, because Hashem and the people of Israel have chosen Avshalom to replace him. (16:15-19)

After his discussion with Chushai, Avshalom asks Achitofel what a good next step would be to demonstrate his control over the kingdom. Achitofel suggests that Avshalom should sleep with David's concubines to demonstrate to the nation that his break with his father is permanent. Avshalom follows his advice in a very public way. (16:20-22)

**Insight**

The story of David and Shimi ben Gera raises interesting questions about suffering. David appears to tolerate Shimi's curses "because Hashem told [Shimi] to do it" (16:11), and later seems to say that Hashem will repay him for enduring Shimi's curses (16:12). Malbim (commentary to 16:12) writes that had these curses simply been a punishment for an earlier sin, David would have never hoped for

reward for enduring it. However, since David was already punished for his sins by having Avshalom rise against him, the extra embarrassment that he was suffering from Shimi was likely suffering that Hashem had brought on him "out of love", and a righteous person receives reward for enduring this.

Both punishment and unearned suffering play a significant role in many events in Tanach, especially those where an individual is stricken by illness or some other affliction. At 9:30 AM on Sunday, please join Rabbi Alex Hecht as he helps frame some of the philosophical issues surrounding suffering and illness in Tanach. Then stay for the rest of our "Tanach: Book of Illness and Healing" program, to hear thought-provoking perspectives on a number of stories in Tanach in which people are afflicted by G-d for one reason or another. You can access the program from 9:30 AM - 1 PM and 7 - 10 PM on ZOOM at [tiny.cc/tanachday](http://tiny.cc/tanachday).

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**The Israeli Farmer: Tithing By One Who Cannot Hear****Rabbi Alex Hecht**

An [article](#) by Rabbi Avraham Sochobolasky addresses the following question: May one who has lost the ability to hear as a result of an ear infection separate *terumot* and *maasrot* (tithes) from produce grown in their garden?

This question hinges on a mishnah's ruling that a person who is unable to hear, but is able to speak, should ideally not separate *terumah*; however, if he does, the separation is effective. (Mishnah Terumot 1:2) The Talmud Yerushalmi (Terumot 1:1) explains that there is a preference for a hearing person to separate the tithe, because he is able to hear the accompanying blessing as he recites it.

Rabbi Sochobolasky notes a difficulty: According to this reasoning, a deaf person could never discharge his obligation to recite *shema* or *birkat hamazon* in an optimal manner, since it is impossible for a deaf person to hear the recitation!

Rabbi Sochobolasky suggests a distinction between separating *terumah* and these other mitzvot. In the former case, there is an obligation that a text be recited by *someone*, while in the latter case we require that each person recite the text *themselves*.

In other words:

- When tithing produce, no individual has a personal duty to separate *terumah*. Rather, all Jews are required to avoid eating produce that is untithed. The consumer may tithe it, or anyone may tithe it. Therefore, since there is no duty for the person eating the food to tithe it, and since a recitation is considered more complete if the person who recites it can hear it, we prefer to have someone who can hear the blessing do the tithing.
- Regarding *shema* and *birkat hamazon*, each individual is

obligated to recite the text. Disqualifying people who are deaf would mean that they could never fulfill the mitzvah, and this would be unacceptable.

Despite the above, Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin suggested that all views may accept a deaf person's tithing of his own produce; there is no need for this person to outsource the act of tithing to someone else. The mishnah's preference for appointing a hearing person may apply only when the owner of the produce appoints another party as an agent to separate *terumah* on his behalf; that agent must be able to hear. (Responsa Maharil Diskin, Kuntres Acharon 1:181)

Moreover, Rabbi Sochobolasky adds that the obligation to separate *terumah* may, in fact, devolve upon the actual owner of the produce, more than upon others. He supports this contention from the fact that, while there is a rabbinic obligation to separate *terumah* from purchased produce, one is biblically obligated only to tithe produce which grows in one's field, as the Torah specifies "the crop of your planting." (Devarim 14:22, Rambam, Hilchot Maaser 2:1-2) Therefore, it is ideal for a deaf person who can speak to separate *terumah* from his own produce, since it is preferable for one to discharge an obligation personally, as opposed to doing so through an agent. (Kiddushin 41a)

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**Biography**  
**Rabbi Moshe Stern**  
Rabbi Alex Hecht  
*Adapted from a column*

Rabbi Moshe Stern, the Debreciner Rav, was born in Neuhaizal, Slovakia in 1914. His father, Rabbi Avraham Stern, was the Rabbi of the town. Rabbi Moshe left the town to study in Pressburg, in the yeshiva headed by Rabbi Akiva Sofer, a great-grandson of the Chatam Sofer. He would later marry a great-granddaughter of the Chatam Sofer. After his marriage, Rabbi Stern moved to Debrecen, Hungary's second largest city, where he was appointed as a judge in their rabbinical court, and served as a leading halachic authority. During World War II, the city was almost entirely destroyed.

After the war, Rabbi Stern was invited to be the Rabbi of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he stayed for a year. Afterward, he moved to New York and established a community there.

In addition to his role as halachic authority and author of responsa, Rabbi Stern was involved in all aspects of the rabbinate, including kashrut supervision, arranging *gittin*, teaching regular classes, delivering sermons, and serving in a pastoral role. He was known for his sensitivity, and would frequently refer questioners to other halachic authorities who may have ruled leniently on a matter for which he personally ruled stringently.

Rabbi Stern published an 8-volume work of responsa, *Shut Be'er Moshe*, in which he addressed contemporary halachic issues, in addition to giving support to old, lesser-known customs. He also published a short work where he discussed numerous questions involving the interface of electricity and halachah. In his responsa, he frequently summarized his final ruling before presenting his analysis. His responsa are cited by many contemporary authorities.

Rabbi Stern was ideologically conservative. For example, he ruled that one may not have a television in one's home, and that one who owns a television may not lead davening. (*Be'er Moshe* 4:143)

Rabbi Stern [is reported](#) to have refused to repaint or fix up his house, saying, "There's no need to bother. We will soon live in a new home in Jerusalem with Mashiach." Rabbi Stern passed away on 2 Av 5757 (1997).

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**Torah and Translation**  
**Wearing Gloves While Davening**  
**Rabbi Moshe Stern, Be'er Moshe 4:39**  
Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

הנה מצאתי בספרו של מורי ורבי הגאון זצ"ל משוראני זצ"ל הי"ד... הביא מעיקרי הד"ט ומשום מהר"ם פרובינצאלי שאסור לכתוב דברים שבקדושה בבתי ידים אפילו באצבעות חתוכות והוא בכלל מחלל את התורה ויש לאסור אפילו בעשיית התגין כשם שעבודת הקרבנות אסורה בבתי ידים עכ"ל. וע"ז כתב בעל העקרי הד"ט וז"ל "חומרא גדולה, ובפרט אם ידיו מצוננות בימי הסתיו ומניח בתי ידים כדי לחממן ולהישר יותר הכתיבה. ועיין מה שכתבתי (בח"א סי' ה' אות ה' וסי' ל"ג אות כ"ה)" עכ"ל, (ואין ספרו ח"א תח"י לעיין).

שפתי המהר"ם פרובינצאל ברור מללו בטעמו ונימוקו עמו שלמד דינו מעבודת הקרבנות היינו מעובדא דיששכר איש כפר ברקאי, ודברי העקרי הו"ט צריכין ביאור למה כתב שחומרא גדולה.

ונראה לי טעמא דמילתא דבאמת אין לומר על הלוש בתי ידים לכתובה שמכבד עצמו ומחלל קדשי שמים, דמה בזיון איכא באוחז הקולמוס בידו בבתי ידים? ועכצ"ל דלכן לובש הבתי ידים שלא יתלכלכו ידיו מהדיו שכותב בו, ובאמת היכן מצינו שצריך שיתלכלכו ידיו בעת הכתיבה, ובוה לא מצינו שום איסור... וע"כ בצדק כתב העקרי הד"ט שחומרא גדולה הוא...

ולפי"ז חוזר וניערור מה שכתבתי לעיל (ברישי אות זה) דאם לובש בתי ידים בעת שהקור גדול בביהכ"נ ומתפלל כן אין עון בחיקו, ויותר טוב שיתפלל כן אם מזוג רך ואינו סובל הצינה, מלהתפלל בביתו ביחידות בלא בתי ידים...

Behold, I have found in the book of my master and mentor the Gaon the Tzaddik of Shurani zt"l Hy"d... He brought from the Ikarei haDa"t and from Maharam Provencal that one may not record sacred matters while wearing gloves, even if the fingers are cut off. This is in the category of degrading Torah, and it should be prohibited even when putting the crowns on the letters, just as one may not perform the sacrificial service wearing gloves. Regarding this, the Ikarei haDa"t wrote, "This is overly strict, and especially if his hands are cold during the autumn and he wears gloves to warm them and to straighten his script. And see what I have written on this in Volume 1 #5 note 18 and #33 note 25." And I don't have volume 1 of his book with me, to examine it.

The lips of the Maharam Provencal spoke clearly with his reason and explanation, that he learned his law from the sacrificial service, meaning the story of Yissachar of Kfar Barkai [who covered his hands in silks for the service, and was condemned; see Pesachim 57a]. The words of the Ikarei haDa"t require explanation; why did he write that this is overly strict?

It appears to me that the reason is that one should not say of one who wears gloves for writing that he is honouring himself and degrading the sacred province of Heaven. What shame is there in holding the quill in gloves? One must say that [this is if] he wears gloves to keep his hands clean of the ink with which he writes, but in truth, where have we found an obligation to dirty one's hands when writing? We have not found any prohibition against this... The Ikarei haDa"t was correct in writing that this is overly strict...

Based on this, that which I wrote earlier returns: one who wears gloves when it is very cold in the synagogue, and he prays thus, has no sin in his lap. It is better to pray thus if one's nature is weak and he cannot bear the cold, rather than pray at home alone, without gloves...

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**SUNDAY DECEMBER 27**

**TANACH: BOOK OF ILLNESS AND HEALING**

9:30 AM to 1:00 PM, and 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM

Free of Charge!

Full schedule and Dedication opportunities at [torontotorah.com/healing](http://torontotorah.com/healing)  
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**ILLNESS AS EDUCATION**

9:30 AM, Rabbi Alex Hecht: Illness as Punishment?

10:00 AM, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner: The Humbling of King Chizkiyahu

10:30 AM, Netanel Klein: Yaakov Will Never Walk Alone

11:00 AM, Miriam Bessin: When Miriam had to Quarantine

**ACTS OF HEALING**

11:30 AM, Rabbi Sammy Bergman: Bittersweet Medicine

12:00 PM, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner: When Eliyahu Cured Shaul

12:30 PM, Mrs. Lori Grysman: The Healer and the Healed

**ROYAL ILLNESS**

7:00 PM, Rabbi Dr. Moshe Yeres: Saul: Interface of Psychology and Theology

7:30 PM, Rabbi Chaim Metzger: King Asa: The Doctor King

8:00 PM, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner: Nevuchadnezzar: Man, Tree Beast

**THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD**

8:30 PM, Rabbi Sammy Bergman: The Ark Affliction

9:00 PM, Rabbi Seth Grauer: Biblical Blindness and Benevolent Blessings

9:30 PM, Ezer Diena: The Healing Power of the Jordan?

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*Almost all of our regular classes do not meet this coming week.*

*Below are the classes that do meet.*

**Shabbat Dec. 25-26**

After minchah at Shaarei Shomayim, R' Sammy Bergman, Parshah

**Monday Dec. 28**

**8:30 PM Gemara Shabbat, Chap. 15, with Rabbi Moshe Yeres**

**Wednesday, Dec. 30**

**6:15 AM Talmud Ketuvot, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman**

**Thursday Dec. 31**

**8:30 AM Daniel, Rabbi Chaim Metzger (University)**

**Friday Jan. 1**

**8:30 AM Parshah, Rabbi Sammy Bergman (University)**

**10:30 AM Shemitah! with Rabbi Sammy Bergman and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

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