

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Shemot

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for Shlomo Baruch ben Rivkah Chayah ז"ל

A Hebrew? Who Knew?

Rabbi Alex Hecht

The Torah does not provide any information about Moshe's childhood. In one verse, we are told that Moshe was "brought to the daughter of Pharaoh and he was a son to her," and the next verse says, "Moshe grew up and he went to his brethren and looked at their burdens..." resulting in him killing an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Jewish slave. (Shemot 2:10-11, Artscroll tr.) According to midrashim, Moshe was twenty-four months old when he was brought to the house of Pharaoh, after he finished nursing from his mother, Yocheved, and was either 12, 20, or 40 years old when he "went to his brethren." (Shemot Rabbah 1:26, 1:30, 5:2)

Were Moshe's Jewish origins known during the years he lived in Pharaoh's house, either to himself or others?

Only the Egyptians knew

Ramban (1:11) understands, "and he went out to his brethren," to imply that the Egyptians may have only recently informed Moshe of his Jewish origins. As a result, he desired to observe their situation. He was so horrified by what he saw, especially the sight of a Jewish man being beaten by an Egyptian taskmaster, that he killed the Egyptian. It is likely that Moshe became especially sensitive to the plight of the Jews when he found out that he was one of them.

A midrash supports the idea that there were Egyptians who knew about Moshe's non-Egyptian origins from his infancy, and were bothered by his presence in the royal home. When Moshe was brought into Pharaoh's

palace, Pharaoh would kiss and hug Moshe, and Moshe would take Pharaoh's crown off his head and place it on his own. Pharaoh's advisors said to him, "We are fearful of this [child] who takes your crown and places it on his head - that he should not be the one that we have been saying is destined to take the throne from you." (Shemot Rabbah 1:26, Artscroll tr.)

Moshe knew

Alternatively, Moshe knew of his origins, and was aware of the Jews' oppression, well before the incident described in the Torah. A midrash records that "Moshe would see their burdens and would cry...and [Moshe] would lend a shoulder and assist each and every one of them...He would set aside his [noble] status and go and rearrange their burdens, and he would pretend that he was [thereby] assisting Pharaoh." (Shemot Rabbah 1:27, Artscroll tr.)

Abarbanel suggests that it was Moshe's mother, Yocheved, who told him that he was Jewish, and that Moshe's relationship with his biological mother continued even after he was brought into Pharaoh's household as a young child.

The Jews knew

A midrash describes how some Jews knew that Moshe was one of them but viewed him with contempt, because he led a royal life while they suffered. "They said to [Moshe], 'Are you not the son of Yocheved? So how [is it that] they refer to you as the son of Batya? Yet, you seek to be a ruler and judge over us?! We will inform on you [regarding] what

you did to the Egyptian [whom you killed]!" (Shemot Rabbah 1:30) It seems that, at this point, Jewish slaves resented Moshe so much that they did not even want his assistance.

Regardless of the extent to which Moshe's origins were known, it is likely that Moshe could have continued to live as Egyptian royalty. By defending his Jewish brethren, he gave up everything; he went from Egyptian royalty to fugitive. Moreover, he was still held in contempt by at least some of his own people. Alienated from everyone, he was forced to flee into the wilderness. Moshe's profound sensitivity, and his readiness to share in his people's suffering - without any self-interest - earned his selection by Hashem to lead the Jews out of Egypt. A midrash records that Hashem said to Moshe, "[Because] you put aside your interests and went to see the suffering of Israel, and acted toward them as brothers, I will leave aside the upper and lower realms, and talk to you." (Shemot Rabbah 1:27)

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Summary

The army of Ammon, under the leadership of Nachash, besieged Yavesh Gilad. The people of Yavesh Gilad attempted to make a truce or pact. Nachash, however, rather than accept tribute or a similar act of subservience, countered that he would only consider making a pact if they would gouge out their right eyes, to humiliate them and the Jewish people. (Ralbag, Abarbanel) The people of Yavesh Gilad requested seven days to find help, before giving in; Nachash accepted this request. Malbim explains that the humiliation of the Jews would only be complete if the Jews were given the opportunity to save Yavesh Gilad from Ammon and failed. Thus, Nachash wanted requests for rescue to be sent.

When the message reached Givat Shaul, the people began to cry. Shaul, who was returning from driving his cattle, inquired as to the cause of their crying. When told, he was gripped by anger and the spirit of G-d, cut up a pair of oxen and sent a threatening message to Jews around the country that if they did not follow him and Shemuel into war, they would face the fate of the oxen. He brought an army of 330,000, of which thirty thousand were

from Yehudah, to save Yavesh Gilad.

When told of the pending rescue force, the people of Yavesh Gilad set a trap for Nachash by telling him they would surrender the next day. Shaul annihilated the Ammonites, leaving only scattered individuals standing. The Jews, convinced of Shaul's right to monarchy, ask Shemuel for those who had rejected Shaul, in order to kill them. Shaul, however, declares it a day of victory, and Shemuel channels the nation's energy into going to Gilgal to establish the monarchy. They go to Gilgal and bring sacrifices, and declare Shaul king.

The deal

The commentaries disagree on the actual intent of Nachash's demand of Yavesh Gilad that they put out their right eyes. Some (Rashi, first answer) understand it literally. However, more midrashic interpretations suggest that Nachash wanted the Jews to surrender a part of the Torah. Rashi (second answer) cites a midrash that he wanted the Jews to give up on the law that forbade male converts from Ammon from marrying Jews. The Chida (Chomat Anach) suggests that he demanded that they give up on the

prohibition against making treaties with the nations of the land.

The shift of power

This chapter highlights the slow shift in power between Shemuel and Shaul. In earlier chapters, not all were willing to accept Shaul as king. After the victory, Shemuel was still the central leader, as evidenced by the fact that the people turned to him to punish those who would not accept Shaul. However, when Shaul insisted that they day be celebrated, he asserted himself as the central leader. Shemuel seemed to pick up on this, and channeled his power to bring the people to firmly establish Shaul as leader. The process culminates in the first verse of the following chapter, in which Shemuel explicitly states that now the king will be the leader, and Shemuel, who has aged, will not serve in that role.

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Holy Land Halachah: Recorded Music at Jerusalem Weddings

Rabbi Sammy Bergman

Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg, Tzitz Eliezer 15:33

Introduction

As a demonstration of mourning for the destruction of the Beit haMikdash, there is a custom in Jerusalem to refrain from playing instrumental music at weddings. This custom was instituted by Rabbi Meir Auerbach (author of Imrei Binah) after he moved to Jerusalem in 1858.

Question: May one play recorded music at wedding in Jerusalem?

Answer: Rabbi Waldenberg permits recorded a cappella music, and possibly recorded instrumental music.

Reason 1: Leniency for A Cappella Music

Rabbi Waldenberg argues that recorded music played on radios or other sound systems has the same legal status as the music had when it was originally recorded. Therefore, in his view, listening to recorded instrumental music is forbidden according to those who generally forbid listening to instrumental music due to the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. By the same token, he contends that recorded a cappella music is the same as live a cappella music, and would therefore be permissible, even at a wedding in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Waldenberg notes that in *Salvat Chaim* (Miscellaneous Topics #100), the author asked Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld if the custom in Jerusalem of refraining from playing instrumental music at weddings would apply to music played on a gramophone. In his question, the author

mentioned that although music recorded on a gramophone often contains only vocals, it sometimes contains instrumental music as well. Rabbi Sonnenfeld replied briefly that the decree forbidding playing music at wedding in Jerusalem also precludes playing recorded music. Rabbi Waldenberg contends that Rabbi Sonnenfeld's answer does not make clear whether recorded a cappella music shouldn't be played at weddings in Jerusalem.

Reason 2: Don't Expand the Decree

Furthermore, Rabbi Waldenberg argues that even if music played on a **gramophone** was included in the decree, one could still argue that the decree doesn't forbid music recorded on cassettes, or other devices **which had not yet been invented** when Rabbi Meir Auerbach originated the decree. Rabbi Waldenberg asserts that there is no need to expand a decree beyond its original scope.

To support his position, Rabbi Waldenberg quotes Rabbi Mordechai Yaakov Breisch (*Chelkat Yaakov*, Orach Chaim #64), who argues that the general prohibition against listening to music after the destruction of the Beit haMikdash doesn't apply to music played on a radio, which hadn't been invented when the decree originated during the era of the Sages. Therefore, Rabbi Waldenberg argues that playing a cappella music at weddings in Jerusalem is certainly permissible, since there is no indication that it was included in the original decree which was instituted by later authorities. Furthermore, he notes that the general custom is to be lenient and allow recorded a cappella music.

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Biography
Rabbi Hillel Rivlin
Rabbi Adam Friedmann

Hillel Rivlin was born in the town of Shklov, Belarus in 1758. His father, Rabbi Binyamin Rivlin, was both a prominent scholar and entrepreneur. Rabbi Binyamin was descended from the Kramer family, and was a cousin of Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer, better known as the Vilna Gaon. Following in his father's footsteps, Rabbi Hillel spent time in Vilna as a young man studying with the Gaon.

At this point, the details of his life become controversial. According to family history, as recorded by his descendant Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, Rabbi Hillel led the faction of students of the Gaon who moved to Israel at the latter's behest in 1809. Rabbi Hillel also led ten students who then moved from Tz'fat to Jerusalem and started a new community there, which eventually grew into the pre-state Jewish community known as the "yishuv hayashan".

According to historian Arie Morgenstern, there is no evidence of Rabbi Rivlin in the initial settlement. Rather, Rabbi Rivlin likely came to Israel in 1832 with his family, and was therefore not part of the original group of students. Once he arrived, he became an important force in the community in Jerusalem. He died in 1838, a victim of a cholera epidemic.

Equally mysterious and controversial is Rabbi Hillel's book, *Kol HaTor*. This volume collects the teachings of the Vilna Gaon about the era of Mashiach ben Yosef, which precedes the final redemption of Mashiach ben David. The book details the theological system which drove the early students of the Vilna Gaon as they moved to and settled Eretz Yisrael. It was published from manuscript sometime in the early 20th century. Academics have questioned the book's historicity, claiming that it is the product of later Rivlin family members. Parts of the Orthodox world have also questioned the book's authenticity, since it implies the Gaon's validation of a secular Jewish state as part of the messianic process. The book has gained popularity with parts of the Dati Leumi community, who see it as a guide for the religious Jew in contemporary Israeli society.

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Torah and Translation
Seven Improvements to Prepare for Redemption
Rabbi Hillel Rivlin, Kol haTor Chapter 5a
Translated by Rabbi Adam Friedmann

כל העבודה של קבוץ גלויות היא הכשרה להקמת וקיום אנשי אמנה, כדי להגיע לדרגת גאולת האמת וקדוש ד' ולתקון עולם במלכות שקי שהיא תכלית הגאולה השלמה. כי בלי קיום אנשי אמנה אין תקוה ח"ו לכל עבודת האתחלתא כי לא חרבה ירושלים אלא בשביל שפסקו ממנה אנשי אמנה. ודרגת אנשי אמנה באה אך ורק עם שבעת תקוני...

תקון ראשון: השתוות... היינו שעל כל אחד להשתוות עם הכלל, לא להתנשא, לא להתגדל על אחרים לא בגשם ולא ברוח...

תקון שני: התעלות... היינו על כל אחד להתעלות ולהתרומם להתרומם מדרגת הבהמות והחומריות השפלה. לעלות ולהתרומם ברוח במידות, ברגש וחינוך...

תקון שלישי: התכללות... היינו שכל אחד, כל פרט בישראל צריך להתכלל בתוך הכלל. אין בפרט אלא מה שבכלל, כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה. כל פרט הוא חלק מהכלל, אין נפרד פרטי בישראל מכל הבחינות...

תקון רביעי: התטהרות... (או התקדשות) - התטהרות מנטיות תאוות טבעיות המשחיתות את הגוף והנפש...

תקון חמישי: התחדשות... היינו אחרי הדרגות הנ"ל צריך כל אחד לחדש חדושים בתורה ומעשים טובים, כי לכל אחד מישראל בעולם הזה יש שליחות מיוחדת, לגלות חדושים בתורה ולחדש וליצור פעולה טובה בעד הכלל...

תקון ששי: התגברות... היינו התגברות על רוח הטומאה הכללית, מי שכבר זכה לכל הדרגות הקודמות יש לו אז הכח להתגבר על כחות הטומאה לא רק במלחמת הגנה אלא גם במלחמת תנופה ל"הגנת ישראל" לבעור רוח הטומאה, שהיא הרוח הרעה של העמלקות, לבערה מקרב ישראל, התגברות גמורה על היצר הרע ועל כל המדות הרעות.

תקון שביעי: התיחדות... עם קוב"ה. אחרי העליה בכל ששת הדרגות הקודמות אפשר להשיג את הדרגה של יחוד קוב"ה ושכינתו והחזרת השכינה לציון ושלמות הגאולה מהרה אמן.

Note: Rabbi Rivlin uses the term "people of amanah". In Shabbat 119b it refers to honest people. In Sotah 48a-b it refers to people of faith.

The goal of gathering the exiles is to prepare for the emergence of people of *amanah*, in order to reach the level of true redemption, and sanctification of G-d's name, and repairing the world under the rule of G-d, which is the goal of the ultimate redemption. Because without people of *amanah* there is no hope (G-d forbid) for the work of the beginning [of redemption], since Jerusalem was destroyed for lack of people of *amanah*. The level of people of *amanah* comes only through the seven improvements...

The first improvement: Equality... Meaning that every individual must align with the whole [nation], not to be haughty, nor to view oneself as greater than others, neither physically nor spiritually...

The second improvement: Elevation... Meaning that each individual must be elevated and rise up above the levels of animal [behaviour] and lowly physicality. To elevate and rise up in spirit, character traits, emotions and education...

The third improvement: Self-incorporation... this means that everyone, each individual Jew, must incorporate themselves within the whole [nation]. "There is nothing found in the individual except that which is found in the whole." "All Jews are guarantors for each other." Each individual is a member of the whole [nation]. There is no detached individual Jew in any sense...

The fourth improvement: Purification... (or Sanctification) - purification from tendencies towards natural desires which destroy the body and soul...

The fifth improvement: Renewal... this means, after the previous levels, each individual must innovate in Torah and good deeds, because each Jew has a unique mission, to innovate in Torah and to innovate and create good deeds for the whole (nation)...

The sixth improvement: Overpowering... this means overpowering the general spirit of impurity. Whoever has already merited the previous levels then has the strength to overpower the forces of impurity not only in a war of defense, but even in an offensive war in "defense of Israel" to destroy the spirit of impurity, which is the evil spirit of Amalek, to destroy it from amongst Israel [through] a total overpowering of the evil inclination and all bad character traits.

The seventh improvement: Unification... with G-d. After ascending the previous six levels it is possible to attain the level of unification of G-d and His spirit, and returning the Divine spirit to Zion, and perfecting the redemption, soon, Amen!

Weekly Highlights: Jan. 18 – Jan. 24 / 21 Tevet – 27 Tevet

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
Daily				
Mon-Thu 8:00 AM	Netanel Klein	Gemara Moed Katan	Clanton Park	Men
שבת Jan. 17-18	Shabbaton at Zichron Yisroel: The Jew in Exile			
Fri. 8 PM Oneg 8:30 PM Program	Ezer Diena	Jewish Anti-Semitism: Then and Now	49 Maimonides Cr.	
After musaf	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Miriam: Role Model for the Exiled Jew	Zichron Yisroel 300 Atkinson	
After minchah	Hillel Horovitz	Exile as a State of Mind	Zichron Yisroel 300 Atkinson	
10:30 AM	R' Alex Hecht	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	After Hashkamah
4:00 PM	R' Sammy Bergman	Sin to Bring Others Closer?	Shaarei Shomayim	Yachad Shabbaton
Before minchah	Ezer Diena	Daf Yomi	BAYT	Rabbi's Classroom
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Sun. Jan. 19				
8:15 AM	Ezer Diena	Pat Yisrael: Chumra or Law?	Yeshivat Or Chaim	
8:45 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Medical Ethics: Seeking Psychological Counseling	BAYT	CME-accredited; Laypeople welcome
9:15 AM	R' Sammy Bergman	Chagigah/Chasidut/Chevra	Shaarei Shomayim	Teens
9:15 AM	Netanel Klein	Heavenly Voices	Adas Israel	Hamilton
Tue. Jan. 21				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah Chap. 28	Shaarei Shomayim	
7:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim Chap. 8-9	129 Theodore Pl.	Men
Wed. Jan. 22				
6:00 AM	Ezer Diena	Gemara Succah	BAYT	WW Room 2, Men
7:30 PM	R' Alex Hecht	Stories from the Talmud	Shaarei Tefillah	
7:30 PM	R' Sammy Bergman	Ancient Texts, Modern Dilemmas	Shaarei Shomayim	
7:30 PM	Ezer Diena	Learn to Read Esther #6	BAYT Boardroom	12-part series
Thu. Jan. 23				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shemuel, Chap. 14-15	49 Michael Ct.	Women
4:15 PM	R' Alex Hecht	Junior Beit Midrash	Netivot haTorah	
8:30 PM	Ezer Diena	Gemara Beitzah	ediena@torontotorah.com	Men, Advanced
8:30 PM	R' Sammy Bergman	Shabbat: Laws of Boreir	Shaarei Shomayim	Advanced
8:30 PM	R' Jeff Turtel	Tzurba meiRabbanan	Shomrai Shabbos	Men
Fri. Jan. 24				
10:30 AM	R' Sammy Bergman	Bava Metzia: Perek 6	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

For University Men, at Yeshivat Or Chaim

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

11:00 AM Sunday, Beit Midrash Rotation: Ezer Diena: Pat Yisrael - Chumra or Law?

8:30 AM Wednesday, Ezer Diena, Mishlei

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, Mon/Wed Masechet Taanit, Orot haTeshuvah of Rav Kook, Pninei Halachah

10:00 AM to Noon, Tue/Thu Parshanut on the Parshah, Sefer Shoftim, Pninei Halachah