

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Korach (Diaspora)

5 Tammuz, 5780/June 27, 2020

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Rabbi Dr. Moshe & Esty Yeres

on the *yahrzeit* of their daughter Batsheva a"h (9 Tammuz) לעילוי נשמת בתשבע בלימה בת הרב משה יוסף הלוי ואסתר
and the *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Yeres' mother Shaindel Yeres a"h (15 Tammuz) לעילוי נשמת חיה שיינדל בת אלכסנדר הלוי

This week's issue is dedicated by Tova and Allan Gutenberg on the *yahrtzeits* of Tova's parents,
Rabbi Joseph and Mrs. Ruth Kelman ז"ל הרב חיים יוסף בן יהודא ורחל בת חיים ז"ל

The Value of Arguing Directly

Ezer Diana

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, a noted British Torah scholar, was once fundraising for a yeshiva. He brought two very upstanding English gentlemen into the yeshiva to observe the students they were interested in supporting. As they entered the Beit Midrash, they were shocked to see two adults yelling belligerently at each other. They turned to their tour guide, Rabbi Abramsky, in shock – how could the religious elite, studying Hashem's Torah, speak in such a manner? Why couldn't the two students sit and reason calmly with one another?

Rabbi Abramsky responded calmly to the gentlemen, and asked: If a burglar had entered your house, and was stealing money from a safe in your bedroom, would you approach the thief calmly to reason with them, and request nicely that they return your money? This, explained Rabbi Abramsky, was exactly what was taking place in the yeshiva halls – these students viewed the Torah as so precious that they could not help but protest angrily if they felt the other had misrepresented a particular idea.

This story is one of many that illustrates a long history of passionate arguments that surround matters of Torah study and religious practice. The Talmud (Kiddushin 30b) talks about those who study Torah together seeming like enemies to each other (although the Talmud predicts that they will end up friendly), and it is clear from many other talmudic

passages that there were various strong disagreements in those days as well.

One would therefore think that passionate arguments about religion and the leadership of the Jewish People should be praised. Yet, when Korach did so, G-d's response showed that He was particularly unhappy with Korach's actions. Why is that so?

Additionally, Pirkei Avot (5:17) writes that the disagreement of Korach and his group was not for the sake of Heaven, and thus, did not "endure". This stands in contrast to the disagreements between Hillel and Shammai, which did last. What does it mean for an argument to "endure"?

Perhaps a look at the nature of the arguments between Korach's group and Moshe can shed some light on this question. A close look at the text reveals that Korach very rarely speaks to Moshe, and certainly not by himself – he is generally preaching to his group of people when he does so. Datan and Aviram, the other culprits, refuse to even appear before Moshe. Even when Moshe talks to the various parties involved in the dispute, it is usually to inform them of what he would like them to do, and often, he does not even address them directly. What we see is that although there was an "argument" here, neither side of it was ever heard or discussed. There was little to no direct interaction between the two parties, and even where there was, there was never any substantive discussion.

The ideal disagreement in Avot, one which is "for the sake of Heaven", is heard and discussed in its entirety. But any argument which is not for the sake of Heaven tends to be cut short in this manner – it does not "endure" – people miscommunicate or do not make their points clear to one another, and the argument itself, a valuable process, cannot take place! The tragedy of the negative disagreement is that it doesn't happen – there is little or no discussion between the two parties, and as a result, will inevitably end badly.

However, an argument or dispute that is for the sake of Heaven, such as the argument of the yeshiva students, will be fully developed and discussed. Each party will communicate their points clearly, and the resulting lengthy disagreement will allow for the proper development of that relationship, and the resolution of the problem altogether, whether through agreement, or through the famous rabbinic saying "*Eilu V'Eilu Divrei Elokim Chaim*", "both of these are the words of the living G-d" (Eruvin 13b).

ediana@torontotorah.com

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Summary

The previous chapter ended with the growing relationship between [King] David and his Philistine host, King Achish; Achish thought that David had betrayed the Jews, and would even fight on his side against his own brethren. Now, Achish told David that he should join in a battle against the Jews, and be his personal guard; David told him, “You know what your servant will do.” (27:7-28:2)

Our chapter then offers two notes of preface to explain what follows: (1) Shemuel had passed away, and (2) Shaul had campaigned to eliminate sorcery from Israel. (28:3)

The Philistines attack, and Shaul is terrified. He seeks the counsel of “dreams, the *urim* [of the kohen gadol, but see Berachot 12b] and prophets,” and none offer any guidance. At a loss, Shaul contravenes his own campaign, seeking the aid of an *ov* – a necromancer – to summon the spirit of Shemuel. Shaul disguises himself and goes to the *ov* his servants locate, in En-Dor. (28:4-8)

At first, the *ov* refuses to help, for fear of the royal decree. Shaul, still disguised, swears that she will be safe,

and she successfully summons Shemuel. In the process, the *ov* learns that her client is actually Shaul; our Sages teach that she learned this from the way Shemuel’s spirit appeared to her. (Vayikra Rabbah 26:7) The *ov* is also intimidated by the spirit of Shemuel, who appears clothed in the *me’il* (tunic) which is a key part of Shemuel’s career and legacy. [See Shemuel I 2:19, 15:27, 18:4 and 24:4, and Shemuel II 13:18-19.] (28:9-14)

Shaul tells Shemuel of his fear and his lack of Divine support. At last, Shaul does what he was meant to do from the start – rather than follow his own instincts, he seeks a prophet’s counsel. But Shemuel replies that Shaul has waited too long; the Philistines will win the war, and Shaul and his sons will die. (28:15-19)

Shaul collapses, due to both fear and fasting. The *ov* provides him with a great meal, which Shaul eats only upon the insistence of his servants and the *ov*. (28:20-25)

Insight

The Torah makes clear, [in multiple ways](#), its belief that the soul survives the body’s death. However, our Sages have presented multiple views

regarding whether an *ov* is capable of communication with that soul. This leads to (at least) four views of what Shaul experienced in our chapter:

- 1) An *ov* can channel the dead, and she did (See Ramban Devarim 18:9, and Shu”t Radvaz 3:642)
- 2) The *ov* did not channel Shemuel; Hashem sent Shemuel to convey an important message to Shaul (Rav Saadia Gaon and Rav Hai Gaon cited in Radak to Shemuel I 28:4)
- 3) The *ov* did not channel Shemuel, but cleverly realized it was Shaul and figured out what he wanted to hear (Rav Shemuel bar Chofni Gaon cited in Radak to Shemuel I 28:4)
- 4) Shaul experienced his own prophecy here. (Ralbag to Shemuel I 28:19)

Regardless of which approach we take, the Talmud (Chagigah 4b) believes that Shemuel’s spirit indeed spoke here. Further, 28:15 says that Shemuel was agitated, and the Talmud adds that disturbing a burial site causes the associated soul to fear that the Day of Judgment has arrived. This is brought as a halachic reason to avoid exhuming bodies. (Yoreh Deah 363:1 and Shach ad loc.)

torczyner@torontotorah.com

Holy Land Halachah: Asynchronous Torah Readings

Rabbi Natan Gestetner, L’horot Natan 3:12-13

When Shavuot is on Friday, on the following day Israeli communities read the normal weekly parshah. Jews outside Israel observe a second day of Shavuot on Shabbat, and so they miss the weekly parshah. They remain behind Israel’s reading until close to Tishah b’Av.

May an Israeli who leaves Israel receive an *aliyah*, or serve as the Torah reader, for a parshah that was already read in Israel? What about a non-Israeli who visits Israel and has not yet heard the previous week’s reading?

Rabbi Natan Gestetner suggests that this issue may be similar to that of a resident of an unwalled city (who is obligated to read Megillat Esther on the 14th of Adar) reading Megillat Esther for a resident of a walled city (who is obligated on the 15th).

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Megillah 2:3) rules that one may not discharge a ritual obligation on behalf of another, unless they are also currently obligated. According to this reasoning, one might suggest that an Israeli outside Israel could not receive an *aliyah* for a parshah he had already heard. However, Rabbi Gestetner argues that this reasoning should not be applied to our question, since one who receives an *aliyah* is not discharging any obligation on behalf of others. Therefore, he need not have an outstanding obligation to hear the Torah portion being read in order to receive an *aliyah*. Furthermore, there is no concern of a blessing recited in vain, since the blessings recited during an *aliyah* are primarily to give

honour to the Torah, and not to discharge an obligation to read that portion.

The question of an Israeli serving as the reader for this parshah may depend on whether every individual is actually obligated to *read* the Torah – and the Torah reader fulfills that obligation on their behalf – or whether the individuals are only obligated to *hear* the Torah reading. If we assume the former, it may be necessary for the reader to have a personal obligation, whereas if the reader is merely providing the “sound” of the Torah reading for others to hear, there may not be a need for personal obligation. However, a mishnah indicates that on Rosh HaShanah, the shofar must be blown by someone who is obligated in the mitzvah, even though many contend that this is also a mitzvah of *hearing*. (Rosh HaShanah 3:8)

Rabbi Gestetner contends that an Israeli may read for others, for a separate reason: there is no obligation to read a specific parshah, only to read from the Torah. Therefore, an Israeli still shares the obligation of communal Torah reading with the local congregation, and may serve as their reader.

Conversely, a non-Israeli who visits Israel may receive an *aliyah* and serve as the Torah reader, even though he has missed a parshah. However, since there is an established practice to finish the entire Torah annually, Rabbi Gestetner (based on Or Zarua II 45) recommends that a minyan of non-Israeli Jews combine the previous parshah with the one currently being read in Israel.

ahecht@torontotorah.com

Biography

Rabbi Avraham Shimon HaLevi Engel Horowitz

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

Rabbi Avraham Shimon HaLevi Engel Horowitz, known as Rabbi Shimeleh Zhelechover (1886-1943) was born in Zelichow, Poland. His father was a Koznitzer chassid, and Rabbi Shimon studied under the Koznitzer Rebbe for ten years, from a young age. After he married, he moved to live near his father-in-law, but eventually returned to Zelichow to work in vinegar production and other business ventures. During this time, he studied in the yeshivot of Tzanz (Nowy Sacz), Koshnov and Stolin, and eventually became Rosh Yeshiva in Warsaw in Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim. He also became a chassid of the Levertover Rebbe.

Rabbi Horowitz is most famous as his role as a teacher, and later Mashgiach, in Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin under Rabbi Meir Shapiro. He required that his students master Tanach, Mishnah, and Talmud before they would be permitted to study deeper Chassidic and Kabbalistic texts, and he was known for his phenomenal memory and mastery of all of these texts.

He left the Yeshiva after the death of Rabbi Shapiro, moving to Cracow and teaching a small group of students, while supported by wealthy members of the community. He was killed along with many of the Jews of Cracow after being sent to the death camps in 1943. Much of his Torah was collected by his student Rabbi Yerachmiel Yisrael Yitzchak Domb in Naharei Ei"Sh.

Rabbi Horowitz had many several prominent students, including the great posek Rabbi Shemuel HaLevi Wosner, who would eventually become the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin in Bnei Brak. In the 1970's, when a book was published by Rabbi Shaul Boiman, it carried the original letters of approbation of the Levertover Rebbe and Rabbi Shimileh Zhelechover, as well as a new letter by Rabbi Wosner, who wrote that once Rabbi Zhelechover had praised the book, "there is nothing needed after his holy words."

jjziring@torontotorah.com

Torah and Translation

Learning Impractical Torah

R' Horowitz, Naharei Ei"sh, pp. 209-210

Translated by Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

רוב הלכות תורה אינם נוגעים למעשה אפילו במצות הנהוגות בזה"ז, רובם של הלכות אלו לא התרחשו בשום פעם. רבינו הביא כמה דוגמאות מן הלכות בש"ע כמו טריפות עצמות ביור"ד סי' ל"ג ועוד, אפילו שאר הלכות בש"ע שלכאורה נראה נוגעים למעשה, אבל כשתעיין בהם אפשר לראות כי רק חלק קטן מהם היו נמצאים למעשה, וגם זה לפעמים רחוקות, אבל רוב הלכות התורה מעולם לא היו בפועל לשאלו עליהם ההלכה.

והביא בשם אבות דר' נתן (לה:ה) שמעולם לא הי' פיגול בבהמ"ק, אף על פי שחלק גדול מסדר קדשים נוגע אל הלכות פיגול בקרבן או במנחה. הגע עצמך וכי באפשר שימצא כהן רשע כ"כ שיחשוב מחשבת חוץ לזמנו או חוץ למקומו במזיד לעבור על לאו ד"לא יחשב", כי בשוגג אינו פיגול, וגם בחוץ לזמנו שיקבע בפיגול, צריך שיקרב כל מתיריו כל עבודות הדם בהכשר כהרצאת כשר כך הוצאת פסול, ויעשה גם עבירה זאת לזרוק הדם בפסול.

הידיעה של הלכות התורה שהן הם רצון הבורא ית' נותן התורה, בעת לימוד התורה, המחשבה של אדם מישראל במוחו הגשמי מתאחדת ומתדבקת ברצון הבורא ית' בעת לומדו הלכות התורה של בקר לעולה וסולת למנחה, ארבעה שומרים וארבעה אבות נזיקין, מראות נגעים והלכות אהלות, הכל רצון הבורא בתורתו, זאת ההתדבקות והתקשרות של שכל הגשמי בבורא עולם, וכל מהותו של אדם מישראל מתעלה ומתקדש בלומדו הלכות התורה מעלה מעלה עד אין שיעור, אף על פי שבשום פעם לא יהיו הלכות אלו באפשר לקיימם בפועל במעשה.

Most of the Torah's laws are not practically relevant, even those commandments that apply nowadays. The majority of these laws have not occurred at all. Our teacher brought many examples from the laws in Shulchan Aruch of the *treifot* of bones (Yoreh Deah 33), and more. Even the rest of the laws in Shulchan Aruch that seem to be practically relevant, when you study them in depth, you can see that only a small part of them actually happened practically, and sometimes only rarely, but most of the Torah's laws never actually happened, that one asked about them as [practical] Halachah.

He brought from Avot D'Rabbi Natan (35:5), that there was never *pigul* in the Temple, even though much of the section of Kodashim deals with the laws of *pigul* in sacrifices and meal offerings. Think about it: is it possible to find such an evil kohen who would plan [to eat the sacrifice] outside of its time or out of its place, intentionally, to violate the law of "it shall not be considered"? For if it is done inadvertently, it is not *pigul*, and even if one intends to eat it at the wrong time, making it *pigul*, one must offer all the parts that license [the offering], all of the offerings of the blood properly, the acceptance of the invalid sacrifice like that of a kosher one, and he would do such a sin to sprinkle the blood in an invalid manner?!

The knowledge of the laws of the Torah – which are the will of the Creator, the Giver of the Torah – when studying Torah, the thought of a person from Israel in his physical mind is reunited with the will of the Creator, when he studies the laws of the cattle for a burnt offering or flour for a flour offering, the four guardians, and four categories of tort law, seeing *tzaraat*, and the laws of tents: all of it is the Creator's will in His Torah. This is the clinging and connection of the physical mind with the Creator of the World. And all the essence of a Jew is elevated and sanctified with his learning of the Torah's laws to an immeasurable degree, even if there will never be a time that the laws can be actualized in practice.

This Week on Zoom!

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or look for clickable Zoom links at www.torontotorah.com/letslearn**

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

Wednesday July 1

Canada Day Learnathon! <http://tiny.cc/canadathon>

Dedicated by Nathan Kirsh

in loving memory of his parents Lou and Ruth Kirsh z"l and his brother Jerry z"l

10:00 AM EDT, EZER DIENA

THE KASHRUT OF MAPLE SYRUP

10:30 AM EDT, R' SAMMY BERGMAN

ARE JEWS ALLOWED TO PLAY HOCKEY?

11:00 AM EDT, R' MORDECHAI TORCZYNER

SOCKS IN THE HOME: KEEPING IT CLEAN OR DANGEROUS AYIN HARA?

11:30 AM EDT, R' JONATHAN ZIRING

TO BE POLITE OR BRUTALLY HONEST?

DAILY

Adult Seder Boker, with Rabbi Moshe Yeres

Mondays-Thursdays at 10:00 AM EDT (men)

Mondays and Wednesdays: Gemara, Orot haTeshuvah

Tuesdays and Thursdays: Parshah, Tanach

WEEKLY

Sunday June 28

9:15 AM EDT Contemporary Halachah with Netanel Klein: May You Ever Tell a Lie?

10 AM EDT Gemara Shabbat for university students, with Rabbi Aaron Greenberg (pwd: 613613)

11 AM EDT Contemporary Halachah Rotation (university): Shivah Visits on Shabbat, R' Mordechai Torczyner

8:00 PM EDT Gemara Avodah Zarah, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men) (note new time)

Monday June 29

8:45 AM EDT She'arim baTefillah Chabura for university students, with Rabbi Alex Hecht

8:30 PM EDT Gemara Shabbat, Chap. 13, with Rabbi Moshe Yeres

Tuesday June 30

1:30 PM EDT Yeshayah, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner—Last session

8:00 PM EDT Shoftim, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men)

Wednesday July 1

7:00 PM EDT Stories from the Talmud, with Rabbi Alex Hecht

Thursday July 2

1:30 PM EDT Shemuel, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (women) - Summer Hiatus

2:15 PM EDT Haftarat of the Three Weeks for university students, with Ezer Diena - New Topic!

8:30 PM EDT Gemara Beitzah, with Ezer Diena (men)

9:00 PM EDT Gemara b'Iyun: Laws of Yom Tov for university students, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman (women)

Friday July 3

8:30 AM EDT Parshah Chabura for university students, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

10:30 AM Bava Metzia Perek 6, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

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