

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Pekudei

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Mark Mietkiewicz in loving memory of his late mother Helen Mietkiewicz z"l, חיה בת חיים שמואל ז"ל, whose 48th yahrtzeit is on Shabbat

This edition of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Arthur Herzig to commemorate the yahrtzeit of Arthur's father, David Herzig, Moshe David ben Shabtai Yehoshua z"l and by Arthur's children, Shira, Atara, Shmuel, Leora and Yosef, to commemorate the yahrtzeit of their mother, Tali Herzig, Talia Rivkah bat Shmuel David z"l

Many Fires, Many Clouds

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

"G-d went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, to guide them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, that they might travel day and night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people." (Shemot 13:21-22, JPS 2006)

"For over the Tabernacle a cloud of G-d rested by day, and fire would appear in it by night, in the view of all the house of Israel throughout their journeys." (Shemot 40:38, JPS 2006)

The dual image of G-d's presence manifest in the cloud and fire is well known, appearing first before the splitting of the Yam Suf, and again in the closing verse of Sefer Shemot. However, that familiarity obscures important differences between these stories.

Several midrashim note that these two instances are part of seven "clouds of glory" that appear to the Jews, clearly marking them as different. Rabbi Yaakov Mecklenberg (*Ktav V'HaKabbalah* 40:38) asserts that the former verses record a temporary phenomenon which ceased, thus requiring a new cloud and fire later. A close read of the verses highlights several differences:

- 1) The first cloud and fire **lead the people**; the latter set reflect G-d's presence.
- 2) In the first case, the cloud and fire are **distinct** entities. Midrashim (cited by Rashi) emphasize that they would overlap for a moment so that

the Jews would never be without at least one of them. The implication is that they were distinct. But in the second case, this is unclear. The verse says that "fire would appear in it." As Ibn Ezra notes, "it" could refer to the Mishkan or the cloud, and he prefers the latter. [See also *Ho'il Moshe*.] If so, the second cloud was constant, and a fire was embedded in it at night to provide light.

- 3) Rabbi Avraham ben HaRambam argues that the second fire was merely **the image of fire, a non-physical fire**. He seems to believe that the fire was in the Mishkan and thus a true fire would have burned it. He connects this miraculous image of fire to the burning bush. If so, then the fire that appeared at Yam Suf may have been real, while the latter was not.

What explains these differences? Perhaps their purposes were distinct. When the Jews first left Egypt and faced an onslaught by Pharaoh's army, they needed pragmatic leadership, direction and protection. G-d, therefore, provided them with objects that matched their needs. But as Sefer Shemot closes, the drama focused on whether G-d would maintain His relationship with the Jews after the Golden Calf, dwelling in the Mishkan and among the Jewish people. Throughout Tanach, G-d's presence, expressing relationship and connection, is represented by a cloud. For example, G-d appears at Sinai in a cloud, and appears in the Holy of Holies when the Kohen Gadol brings the Ketoret on Yom

Kippur. Thus:

- 1) The former verses focus on G-d's leadership, the latter on His presence.
- 2) To lead and protect the Jews, G-d provides either the cloud or the fire. But to instantiate His intimate presence, the cloud is always present.
- 3) The second fire itself may be like that in which G-d first spoke to Moshe.

Midrash HaGadol (40:38) records that when the Jews first saw the cloud on the Mishkan, they rejoiced. However, when they saw the fire surrounding the Mishkan (unlike the view of Ibn Ezra above), they began to weep, believing that G-d had burned up the Mishkan and all their efforts had literally gone up in flames. However, when they saw the cloud in the morning, they became even more joyous, realizing that this expressed G-d's great love for the Jewish people. This seems to capture the development above. Fire, despite its presence early in their journey, was ominous. Only when they saw that G-d's presence was constant did they realize that both the cloud and fire represented a new paradigm in their relationship with G-d, one that goes beyond pragmatism and celebrates our eternal bond. A fitting end to the Sefer indeed.

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Summary

Note: Our chapter's stories also appear, with variations, in Yeshayahu 38-39 and Divrei haYamim II 32.

King Chizkiyahu fell ill, and seemed to be dying; Yeshayahu came and told him to prepare for death. [This seems to have occurred during the Assyrian invasion recorded in the previous two chapters.] Chizkiyahu appealed to Hashem for mercy on the basis of his career of service. (20:1-3)

Hashem told Yeshayahu to tell Chizkiyahu that he would be healed, in his own merit and in the merit of his ancestor, King David. Hashem gave Chizkiyahu an additional fifteen years; the Sages debate whether this was a restoration of his original lifespan or a bonus. (Yevamot 49b-50a) Yeshayahu then prescribed a topical fig treatment for boils Chizkiyahu suffered; midrashim see this as a miracle cure (Mechilta d'Rashbi 15:25), but Don Isaac Abarbanel (commentary to Yeshayahu 38:22) contends that it was natural. (20:4-7)

Chizkiyahu asked Yeshayahu for a sign that he would be healed, and Yeshayahu replied that the sun would move forward ten degrees. Chizkiyahu replied

that it would be more miraculous for the sun to retreat ten degrees, and Yeshayahu made this happen. (20:8-11) [Yeshayahu 38 records a song of thanks that Chizkiyahu then sang.]

A delegation came from Babylon to visit the ill King Chizkiyahu. [Divrei haYamim II 32 seems to say they came because of his miraculous recovery.] Chizkiyahu showed them all of his wealth, which included the treasures of the Beit haMikdash. (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 52) Yeshayahu criticized Chizkiyahu, and warned that all of this wealth would be taken by Babylonians, and his descendants would serve the Babylonian king. Chizkiyahu accepted the Divine verdict, giving thanks for the promise that this would not happen in his own day. (20:12-19)

Our chapter concludes by describing Chizkiyahu's greatness, including providing a water supply for Jerusalem. His son Menasheh succeeded him. (20:20-21)

Insight

The text does not explain why Hashem inflicted illness upon Chizkiyahu. One talmudic view contends that it was meant to bring Yeshayahu and Chizkiyahu together, after they had

been estranged. (Berachot 10a) However, the dominant view, seen in the Talmud and in Chizkiyahu's prayer, is that this was a punishment. But for what?

The Sages (Berachot 10a-b) blame Chizkiyahu's on multiple decisions he made, including:

- Sealing Jerusalem's Gichon against the Assyrian use of the water, as seen in Yeshayahu 22 and Divrei haYamim II 32:4 (but see Divrei haYamim II 32:30 and Avot d'Rabbi Natan I 2);
- Sending the gold doors of the Beit haMikdash to Assyria as a bribe to forestall war (Melachim II 18:16);
- Adding a month to the calendar after Nisan began (Divrei haYamim II 30:2-4, 13-15);
- Choosing not to have children, as he had been told that his son would be evil. [For biblical support, listen to the class [here](#).]

These decisions share one element: lack of faith in Hashem to take care of the future. This is a theme throughout the biblical monarchy; the task of kings is to carry out the Divine will and lead the nation to trust Hashem. For much of his career, Chizkiyahu succeeded in this mission, but he was punished when he came up short.

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It Happened in Israel: Priorities in Tzedakah

Rabbi Jared Anstandig

Many are blessed with the following problem: Where should I distribute my tzedakah money? There is no shortage of worthy causes to which we can donate; how do we determine who takes precedence? The following two talmudic stories (Yerushalmi Shekalim 5:4) offer a perspective for making this decision:

Rabbi Hama bar Hanina and Rabbi Hoshaya were once touring the synagogues of Lod. Rabbi Hama bar Hanina said to Rabbi Hoshaya: How much money my forefathers invested in building synagogues here! Rabbi Hoshaya said to him: How many souls your forefathers invested in building synagogues here! The money they spent actually harmed people spiritually rather than helping them. Rabbi Hoshaya explained his comment: **Weren't there people who would have exerted themselves in the study of Torah** if only the money used for the construction of these buildings had been donated to them instead?

In another case, **Rabbi Avun** donated money for **building the gates of the great study hall**. When **Rabbi Mana** came to visit him, Rabbi Avun, proud of his donation for this building, **said to him: Look at what I did** and the greatness of my contribution. Rabbi Mana **said to him:** Your attitude reminds me of the verse: **"For Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built palaces"** (Hosea 8:14). How could you focus upon the gates? **Weren't there people who would have exerted themselves in the study of Torah** if they only had the money? You could have given them that money instead of using it to build structures (William Davidson Translation).

Insight

Rabbi Hama and Rabbi Ayun were both very proud of the impact their ancestors made in donating money for synagogues and study halls. No doubt, we value our places of learning and worship, and beautifying these buildings is an expression of *hiddur mitzvah*, beautifying our mitzvot. Rabbi Hama and Rabbi Ayun are appropriately proud to be connected to the benefactors of such important institutions. Nonetheless, Rabbi Hoshaya and Rabbi Mana both highlight that there are additional values in Judaism. Namely, support for those who dedicate their lives to Torah.

Rabbi Shimon ben Zemach Duran (a.k.a. Tashbetz, d. 1444) in a responsum (3:190), presents a slightly modified version of this talmudic passage. In addition to the words, "Weren't there people who would have exerted themselves in Torah," Tashbetz has the following: "Weren't there ill people sitting on trash heaps?" According to Tashbetz's version, the impoverished ill and Torah scholars both take precedence over building a synagogue and study hall.

The essence of Rabbi Hoshaya and Rabbi Mana's critique, according to either version, is that we cannot ignore the struggles of those in need. Our religious buildings and institutions are essential for a thriving Jewish community, and we are indebted to those who support them. Still, this story cautions us against becoming too narrow in our gifts. May those who are fortunate to be able to give, continue to give, and may we all prioritize our giving appropriately.

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Biography
Rav Tzaddok haKohen
Rabbi David Ely Grundland

Rabbi Tzaddok haKohen Rabinowitz (Rubinstein), colloquially known as “Rav Tzaddok”, was born in 1823 in Lithuania. His father, Rabbi Yaakov, was the Rabbi of Krizburg. It was very clear from a young age that Rav Tzaddok was a child prodigy, with a brilliant grasp of Talmud and rabbinic thought. In 1843 he arrived in Poland, where he met many great Chassidic leaders. After meeting Rabbi Mordechai Yoseph Leiner of Izbeza, who is known mostly for his work *Mei HaShiloach*, Rav Tzaddok accepted his approach to Torah and became a student of chassidut. He learned together with Rabbi Leiner and Rabbi Yehuda Leib Eiger, grandson of Rabbi Akiva Eiger.

Following the death of Rabbi Leiner, Rav Tzaddok rejected the mantle of Chassidic leadership, instead encouraging Rabbi Yehuda Leib to take the position.

Rav Tzaddok relocated to Lublin, where he began to write books of Chassidic thought in accordance with the method of his mentor. He is most famous for his book *Tzidkat haTzaddik*, which was published in 1848. For most of his life, Rav Tzaddok avoided rabbinical posts, instead focusing on his writing. Upon Rabbi Eiger’s death in 1888, Rav Tzaddok agreed to take his place as Rebbe in Lublin.

Rav Tzaddok authored numerous works in all areas of Judaism, including halachah, chassidut, kabbalah, and ethics. His books on Jewish Law include his *Tiferet Tzvi* collection of responsa, and *Otzar haMelech* on Maimonides’ code of law. The *Pri Tzaddik* series collects his sermons as edited by his students; publication of the series began in 1901.

Rav Tzaddok was already famous as a child. In *Otzar HaMelech* (Laws of Torah Study 2), he quotes his thirteen-year old self: “A homiletic idea which I said on Shabbat Parshat Shekalim 5566, the chapter of my Bar Mitzvah when I turned thirteen and one day: I said some opening words for my homiletic to explain the above talmudic passage.”

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Torah and Translation
Drawing Close to G-d Through Torah
Rav Tzaddok haKohen, *Tzidkat haTzaddik* 210
Translated by Rabbi Steven Gotlib

כשרוצה לכוין כ' תר"י בברכות (פ' ה כה ע"ב) בשם הקדמונים שיפשוט גופו מנשמתו... ובטוש"ע סי' צ"ח נקרא זה התפשטות הגשמיות ושהוא קרוב לנבואה. ובאמת זהו מדרגת הנביאים כמ"ש במ"נ...

ודבר זה כבר ניטלה ומ"מ אמרו בב"ב (יב). מן החכמים לא ניטלה כי ע"י תורה ג"כ נא' "באהבה תשגה"... והוא בהתפשטות הגשמיות ע"י דביקות בתורה, זה אפשר גם בזמה"ז. ובאמת זהו עיקר הדביקות בהש"י כמ"ש (כתובות קיא): "וכי אפשר לידבק בהש"י? אלא המשיא כו"ז וזהו בעם הארץ כשנדבק לתלמיד חכם. והתלמיד חכם כשדבוק בתורה הוא דבוק בהש"י כי אורייתא וקוב"ה חד, כי הש"י הוא וחכמתו ורצונו אחד, כמ"ש הרמב"ם בהל' יסה"ת (ב:), והתורה היא חכמתו ורצונו, והדבוק בה דבוק בהש"י ובאותו עת הוא במדרגת נבואה.

רק חכם עדיף. ובזוהר שמות ו' סע"ב הטעם דלנביא הוא רק לזימנין כו' והיינו כי התפשטות הגשמיות ע"י דביקות בהש"י בהכרת הנוכח זה א"א כלל להיות בתמידות... משא"כ התורה נקרא "לחם" ו"מזון" ו"עץ חיים" שהיא הנותנת קיום לאדם ע"י שמחתו בחכמתו. ולכן נאמר בה "לא ימוש וגו'" שיכול להיות דבוק בה שלא יתבטל אפי' רגע א'.

When one wants to concentrate [on prayer], the students of Rabbeinu Yonah wrote (Berachot 25b) in the name of the earlier sages that one should remove their body from their soul... And in the Tur and Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 98) this is called removal of the physical, and it is close to prophecy. And in truth, this is the level of prophecy, as is written in the Guide for the Perplexed...

And this [level] has already been taken away. But nevertheless it was said (Bava Batra 12b) that “It was not taken from the sages.” For it is also said of the Torah, “Be infatuated with her love always...”. (Mishlei 5:19, and brought in Eruvin 54b) This happens through the removal of physicality by cleaving to Torah which makes it possible even in our day. And in truth this is the essence of connection with G-d. As it says (Ketubot 111b) “But is it possible to cleave to G-d? Rather, anyone who marries [his daughter to a Torah scholar]” and this is referring to an ignorant person who cleaves to a Torah scholar. The Torah scholar, when he cleaves to Torah, cleaves to G-d, for the Torah and the Holy One Blessed be He are one. For G-d, His wisdom, and His will are one, as Maimonides wrote in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah (2:10). The Torah is G-d’s wisdom and His will. And one who cleaves to it cleaves to G-d. At that moment, he reaches the level of prophecy.

Only a sage is better. The Zohar (Shemot 6:2) explains that the reason is because the prophet is only temporarily at that level. Removal of physicality through cleaving to G-d and knowing His presence is impossible to do continuously... This is not the case with Torah, which is called bread, food, and a tree of life. It gives existence to a person through his joy in his knowledge. And therefore it is said (Joshua 1:8), “Let not the book of the Torah cease from your lips; recite it day and night.” One can cleave to it and not halt it even for a single moment.

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All times ET. Classes are free & open to all, unless otherwise noted.

Monday-Thursday

10:00 AM - Noon: Adult Seder Boker with Rabbi Moshe Yeres on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/sederboker> (men)
Monday/Wednesday: Talmud Succah, Orot of Rav Kook ∞ Tuesday/Thursday: Parshah, Tanach: Sefer Melachim

Shabbat March 4-5

After 8:00 AM shacharit R' Yehuda Mann, Halachah from the Parshah, Clanton Park

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Ketuvot, BAYT: Gruda Beis Medrash (men)

Motzaei Shabbat 7:15 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Parent-Child Learning on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/parent-child>

Sunday March 6

9:00 AM R' Zev Spitz & R' Yehuda Mann, Semichat Chaver Program, Clanton Park (men)

9:15 AM Idan Rakovsky, The Thought of Rav Shagar (university)

10 AM to NOON: PRE-PURIM LEARNATHON!
IN PERSON AT AISH THORNHILL! Or on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/purimthon>
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner: Haman Used a Lottery. So What?
Rabbi Steven Gotlib: Torah - An Offer We Can't Refuse?
Rabbi Jared Anstandig: Did Esther Fast on the Fast of Esther?
Idan Rakovsky: Amalek 2022
Light Refreshments Served

10 AM R' Aaron Greenberg, Talmud Eruvin, YOC or ZOOM: <http://bit.ly/jliczoom> 613613 (univ) *not this week*

Monday March 7

A New Parshah Podcast: Parshat Vayikra, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman and Rabbi Jared Anstandig
Apple <http://tiny.cc/apodcast>, Google <http://tiny.cc/gpodcast>, Spotify <http://tiny.cc/spodcast>

2:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, On Parents and Children in the Book of Genesis 5 of 5, ZOOM <http://tiny.cc/idanrak>

7:30-9:00 PM Legal Ethics Seminar, with CPD Professionalism Credit (laypeople welcome)
R' Mordechai Torczyner, Ethical Competition for Clients
Register at <https://torontotorah.com/cpd> / ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/mtethics>

7:30 PM Prielle and Idan Rakovsky, Song of the Week, ZOOM <http://tiny.cc/weeklysng>

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Hilchot Purim Week 2, Shomrai Shabbos (men)

Tuesday March 8

9:00 AM Idan Rakovsky, Likutei Moharan of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, King Solomon's Arc (Melachim I 5), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

7:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, A Shiur 50 Years in the Making, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/50birthday>

Wednesday March 9

6:15 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Talmud: Avodah Zarah, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/idolsarebad>

10:00 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Jews and Food #5 of 5: Vegetarianism, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

7:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, Introduction to Jewish Philosophy Week 5 of 5, Shaarei Tefillah

8:15 PM R' Chaim Metzger, Substance Use/Abuse: Purim Drinking, BAYT & ZOOM <http://tiny.cc/chaimmetzger>

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah Chabura, Clanton Park

Thursday March 10

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 25), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women)

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Beitzah, at BAYT (Gruda BM), email ymann@torontotorah.com for ZOOM options (men)

8:00 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Gemara Bava Batra, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/torontowbm> (university women)

Friday March 11

8:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Parshah, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, R' Mordechai Torczyner, R' Yehuda Mann, Bava Batra Perek 2 *advanced*
In-person at Yeshivat Or Chaim, on Zoom at <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>