

Toronto (Purim) Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Vayikra/Zachor

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This week's edition of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Dan and Karen Valter in honour of the Chag haSemichah of their son, Rabbi Yishai Zvi Valter. Mazal tov!!

The Durability of Purim

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Surveys consistently identify three events as the most popular parts of the Jewish calendar: Yom Kippur, the Pesach Seder, and Chanukah. And yet, our Sages have said that the most durable Jewish holiday will not be any of those three; that title goes to Purim.

This idea first appears in the Jerusalem Talmud (Megillah 1:5), regarding Megillat Esther:

Rabbi Yochanan said: The Prophets and the Writings will be cancelled, but the five books of Torah will not be cancelled. Why? It is written [at Sinai], "A great voice, and it did not cease. (Devarim 5:19)"

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Megillat Esther and Halachot [Mishnah] will also not end. [At Sinai] the Torah says, "A great voice, and it did not cease," and [in Megillat Esther] it says, "And the memory of these events will not cease from their descendants. (Esther 9:28)"...

Rambam applied this idea to both Megillat Esther and Purim itself (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Megillah 2:18):

All of the books of the Prophets, and all of the Writings, will be cancelled in the days of Mashiach. The only exception is the book of Esther, which will still stand, like the five Chumashim and like the laws of the Spoken Torah, which are never cancelled.

Although the memory of suffering will be cancelled, as it is written (Isaiah 65:16), "For all of the first troubles have been forgotten, and have been hidden from my eyes," the days of Purim will not be cancelled, as it is written (Esther 9:28), "And these days of Purim will not

pass from among the Jews, and their memory will not cease from among their descendants."

What does this mean? Why should a rabbinically created festival, commemorating an event which did not culminate in true redemption, endure forever?

1: Megillat Esther is Unlike Mashiach

Rabbi Shlomo haKohen of Radomsk compared celebrating Purim in Olam HaBa with celebrating Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh. The *musaf amidah* of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh includes unique elements of each distinct day, and Purim and Olam HaBa will co-exist because each contributes something special. Megillat Esther instructs us to celebrate Purim by sending gifts of food and giving tzedakah; this generosity illuminates the day with a unique radiance. (*Tiferet Shlomo: Rimzei Purim; Likutim Chadashim; Parshat Terumah*)

2: Megillat Esther is Like Mashiach

Others argue that the Book of Esther will survive specifically because its message relates to the time of Mashiach. Most of the books of the Prophets teach lessons of moral improvement, but Megillat Esther is about thanking Hashem for miracles. This will remain relevant even in the time of Mashiach, and so we will continue to read Megillat Esther as a community. (See Raavad and Maggid Mishneh to Hilchot Megillah 2:18.)

3: Megillat Esther Predicts Mashiach

Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner contended that Purim will endure in the time of Mashiach because Megillat Esther predicts the arrival of Mashiach. Esther's request, "Let the king and Haman come today (Esther 5:4)," reflects this world,

in which Haman is elevated. But Esther continues, "And tomorrow I will do as the king orders (ibid. 5:8)." "Tomorrow" is like the "tomorrow" when we battle Amalek. (Shemot 17:9) Megillat Esther emphasizes this "tomorrow," as Haman says, "I am summoned with the queen to the king tomorrow (Esther 5:12)," and Esther asks Achashverosh to give the Jews of Shushan an opportunity to extend their defensive battle "tomorrow." (ibid. 9:13) Megillat Esther is all about that "tomorrow" of Mashiach. (*Pachad Yitzchak: Purim*)

4: We did it

In addition, we should keep in mind the verses that sparked the Jerusalem Talmud and Rambam: "The Jews upheld and accepted upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, without exception, to practice these two days as they are recorded and at their times, annually. And these days shall be remembered and practiced in every generation, every family, every nation, every city. And these days of Purim will not pass from among the Jews, and their memory will not cease from among their descendants. (Esther 9:27-28)"

The durability of Purim may be because we upheld and accepted this celebration. It is only rabbinic, and it did not yield triumphant freedom. But we were under dire threat, we embraced Hashem together, we were miraculously saved, and we celebrated as a unified nation. We love this story, because it represents a national height. May we continue to embrace this day, to reenact its celebrations, and to hold it aloft as a sign of success and a beacon for our future.

OUR BEIT MIDRASH

ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER

SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

RABBI JARED ANSTANDIG, RABBI YEHUDA MANN

AVREICHIM

RABBI STEVEN GOTLIB, IDAN RAKOVSKY, RABBI CHAIM METZGER

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Continental Press

Yes, this is meant as Purim Torah...

Summary

An anonymous individual (named Guy-am-I according to the [non-canon Net-flix series](#)) sits, minding his own business reading his newspaper (page 3). Out of nowhere, a small person comes by riding on an animal, carrying a sign identifying himself as Sam or, alternatively, Sam-I-am. (pages 3-6) Having been disturbed by Sam, Guy declares that he does not like Sam. (page 9)

As if intending to make their relationship worse, Sam offers Guy a plate of green eggs and ham. (page 10) [Note: while the green coloration might be seen as indicating that the food is spoiled, contemporary commentators suggest that the food was fresh but genetically modified to appear green; look on yutorah.org for a shiur that Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner probably gave on the subject of genetic modification, such as [here](#).] Very respectfully, Guy declines. (pages 12-13)

Sam ignores Guy's polite refusal and instead begins to ask if the latter would eat the ham and eggs in a variety of different places. Beginning with "here or

there" (pages 14-15) and ending on a boat (pages 44-45), Sam offers the man **fourteen** different options of locations at which Guy may ingest this food (see page 46 for a comprehensive list). In every single one of them Guy declines.

Finally, as the two are effectively drowning in the sea, Guy offers to try the eggs and ham, on condition that Sam desist from continuing to pester him. (pages 54-55) After examining and chewing the food (pages 56-57), Guy decides that he does, in fact, like the taste of green eggs and ham, much to Sam's delight. (pages 58-59) Guy proceeds to express his interest in continuing his meal in the **very same fourteen locations** that Sam had initially offered. (pages 60-61) The book closes with Guy expressing his gratitude to Sam. (page 62)

Insight

Amateurs and experts alike debate the significance of the fourteen locations in which Sam insists that Guy eat the ham and eggs. Some note that the Gematria of "David" is also fourteen, suggesting that Dr. Seuss was actually a Sabbatean who intended for Sam to

represent Shabbtai Zvi, the infamous false Messiah of the 17th century.

Others offer that the fourteen locations represent the fourteen volumes of Rambam's Mishnah Torah. According to them, Sam was trying to convince Guy that the Halachah follows Rambam in all areas.

Personally, I believe that the fourteen is a reference to the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, otherwise known as Purim. Just as the Purim story has a twist ending (spoiler alert), so too Guy surprises everyone by finally trying (and liking!) the green eggs and ham. As with the Jews of Shushan, so too with Guy – what at first glance appears tragic results in *venahafoch hu* and good fortunes. Like them, may we merit this as well (but sans the ham)!

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It Happened Everywhere: The Talmud of 2922

Idan Rakovsky

...And this is meant as Purim Torah, too

It is believed that 900 years ago, planet Earth was struck by a mysterious virus called COVID-19 that spread all over the globe. For us, the citizens of Mars, it sounds almost fictional. How can a small virus impact an entire planet?! However, we do have some evidence, mostly recorded in the Talmud, that testifies to this event.

The Talmud (Tractate *Cyber* page 74b) discusses the story of a virus that wasn't, surprisingly, a virtual one:

The Sages taught: When Rabbi Cyborg ben Alexa fell ill, Rabbi Amazon ben iPhone went to visit him. The Talmud raises a challenge: How could Rabbi Amazon do such a thing? As we have learned in a mishnah (Symptoms 7:2): "One who feels symptoms or was exposed to someone who has tested positive must isolate himself for fourteen days!" Rather, we must say that he visited him and stood at a distance.

What distance is considered sufficient? Rabbi Crypto says: Six feet. Rabbi Bitcoin says: 1.8288 metres. The Talmud asks: What is the difference between the two opinions? We know that 1.8288 metres are six feet, because Google says so! This is indeed a question.

The story continues: Before Rabbi Amazon ben iPhone left, Rabbi Cyborg ben Alexa asked him: "Can you tell me what you learned today in Yeshiva?" Rabbi Amazon answered: "I would love to, however, we learned on Zoom today and my internet connection wasn't good enough, so I couldn't hear the Rabbi talking." Rabbi Cyborg insisted: "Please, share with me something new." Rabbi Amazon said in the name of Rab-

bi Google, and some say he said it in the name of Public Health: "What is the meaning of the verse (Psalms 23:2). "He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters?" Does G-d lie us down in green pastures? Rather, don't read it as "lie down," read it as "make kiddush"- Our kiddush should be outdoors on green pastures, beside still waters.

Insight

The Talmud tells us about a mysterious case of "illness". Rashi_2 there explains: "Fell ill: had the flu". However, Tosafot_2 disagree and explain differently. They write, "Fell ill - According to Rashi_2 this means he had the flu. However, this answer is difficult. Why would one with a flu need to quarantine for fourteen days? Rather, we must say this illness was what is called 'coronavirus,' believed to be a virus spread from bats in China."

As we see, Tosafot_2 have a different reading of the story. They believe that Rabbi Cyborg ben Alexa was infected with a mysterious virus called coronavirus. Rabbi Justin Trudeau comments on this Tosafot that this "coronavirus" is the same as COVID-19. In his article, "[Purim, G-d, and the Freedom Convoy](#)" he writes that there are many similarities between coronavirus and Covid-19, and therefore this story from the Talmud is evidence that this virus existed 900 years ago.

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Biography
Rabbi Yosef Dov
Soloveitchik

You know Rabbi Soloveitchik needs no introduction. But since we have the space, here is a biography based on a column by Rabbi Ezra Goldschmiedt:

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993; known to many as “The Rav”) was born into a family of highly accomplished Torah scholars. Grandson of Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik (the Brisker Rav) and son of Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik, the Rav spent his early years learning in the traditional Eastern European system. His great intellect, however, did not go unnoticed, and he also received private tutoring in Talmud and other subjects to supplement his studies.

In 1926, Rabbi Soloveitchik entered Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin, ultimately graduating with a doctorate in philosophy in 1932. Rabbi Soloveitchik was one of the pioneers in bridging the Eastern European world of Jewish learning and modern Western thought. Upon completing his doctorate, the newly married Rabbi Soloveitchik moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where he served as Chief Rabbi and pioneered many aspects of his community’s growth.

In 1941, Rabbi Soloveitchik succeeded his deceased father as a Rosh Yeshiva of RIETS (Yeshiva University’s Rabbinical Seminary) while also retaining his Chief Rabbi position, regularly traveling between Boston and New York. In addition to those responsibilities, Rabbi Soloveitchik taught Jewish Philosophy in the Revel Graduate School and served important leadership roles in the Rabbinical Council of America and Mizrahi.

Although Rabbi Soloveitchik did not publish many books in his lifetime, his teachings have spread since his passing via books collecting his essays and classes. Popular titles in English include *Halakhic Man*, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, *On Repentance*, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*, *The Seder Night: An Exalted Evening*, *Festival of Freedom*, *Family Redeemed*, and *Community, Covenant and Commitment*.

Rabbi Soloveitchik’s legacy as a leader of Modern Orthodoxy is marked by his meticulous dedication to halachah, as well as his passionate synthesis of religious and secular thought. Decades after his passing, his students are rabbinic leaders in Israel, North America and around the world.

PURIM Torah and Translation
Why Are People So Confusing?
Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Halakhic Man
Translated by Rabbi Steven Gotlib

Original Text

Halakhic Man reflects two opposing selves; two disparate images are embodied within his soul and spirit. On the one hand he is as far removed from *homo religiosus* as east is from west and is identical, in many respects, to prosaic, cognitive man; on the other hand he is a man of G-d, possessor of an ontological approach that is devoted to G-d and of a worldview saturated with the radiance of the Divine presence. For this reason it is difficult to analyze halakhic man’s religious consciousness by applying the terms and traits that descriptive psychology and modern philosophy of religion have used to characterize the religious personality...

Halakhic Man is an antinomic type for a dual reason: 1) he bears within the deep recess of his personality the soul of the *homo religiosus*, that soul which, as was stated above, suffers from the pangs of self-contradiction and self-negation; 2) at the same time halakhic man’s personality also embraces the soul of cognitive man, and this soul contradicts all of the desires and strivings of the religious soul. However, these opposing forces which struggle together in the religious consciousness of halakhic man are not of a destructive or disjointed nature.

Halakhic man is not some illegitimate, unstable hybrid. On the contrary, out of the contradictions and antinomies there merges a radiant, holy, personality whose soul has been purified in the furnace of struggle and opposition and redeemed in the fires of the torments of spiritual disharmony to a degree unmatched by the universal *homo religiosus*. The deep split of the soul prior to its being united may, at times, raise a man to the rank of perfection, which for sheer brilliance and beauty is unequalled by any level attained by the simple, whole personality who has never been tried by the pangs of discord.

Translation

People who live halakhically have two sides. On one hand, they’re different from stereotypical ultra-religious people. On the other hand, they’re also different from people who only look at the world scientifically. They still care deeply about serving G-d and feeling His presence. So it’s hard to judge them by the standards of modern psychology and philosophy...

Halakhic people are confusing for two reasons: 1) they have a *yiddishe neshamah* that doesn’t do well with conflict; 2) they like logic too much to be too religious.

But this conflict doesn’t need to end badly. Rather, it can end with a bright, holy personality whose soul was cleansed by the flames of conflict more than the stereotypical religious person. There’s nothing more whole than a broken heart, which results in more beauty than any simple person who never really felt challenged in their life.

COME LEARN WITH US!

Click Underlined Lines to Open Zooms. Clickable links also at www.torontotorah.com/letslearn
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 11-12

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)

After minchah Idan Rakovsky, Introduction to Sefer Vayikra, Shaarei Tefillah

Motzaei Shabbat 7:30 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Parent-Child Learning at Shaarei Shomayim, Last one this year!

Motzaei Shabbat 8:30 PM Megillah Marathon at Shaarei Shomayim! Brief presentations on each perek, including:

8:40 PM Perek 2—Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner: Did Achashverosh Want a Queen At All?

8:50 PM Perek 3—Rabbi Jared Anstandig: Why Didn't Mordechai Just Bow?

10:00 PM Perek 9—Ezer Diena: The Purim Trade-off

10:10 PM Perek 10—Mrs. Sarit Anstandig: Where Do We Go From Here?

Sunday March 13

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 Drug Abuse, The Pandemic and the Jewish Community
Rabbi Yechezkel Grysman, David Kaufman (JACS), Dr. Michael Kirzner

Moderator: Rabbi Chaim Metzger

At BAYT, and on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/chaimmetzger>

10 AM R' Aaron Greenberg, Talmud Eruvin, YOC or ZOOM: <http://bit.ly/jliczoom> 613613 (univ)

Monday March 14

A New Parshah Podcast: Parshat Tzav

Apple <http://tiny.cc/apodcast>, Google <http://tiny.cc/gpodcast>, Spotify <http://tiny.cc/spodcast>

8:45 AM Idan Rakovsky, Likutei Moharan of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

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

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

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Hilchot Purim Week 3, Shomrai Shabbos (men)

Tuesday March 15

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 5-6), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

7:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 12-13), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men)

Wednesday March 16 Fast of Esther

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

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

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah Chabura, Clanton Park *not this week*

Thursday March 17 PURIM

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 25), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women) *not this week*

Friday March 18 Shushan Purim

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>

SAVE THE DATE: HAGGADAH NIGHT RETURNS!

8:15 PM MARCH 28 AT BAYT, 8:15 PM APRIL 4 AT SHAAREI SHOMAYIM