

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Behaalotcha

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Our Shul

Rabbi Yehuda Mann

This week's parshah includes the descriptive phrase, "On the day the tabernacle was erected." (Bamidbar 9:15) The Talmud deduces from "on the day" that the Beit haMikdash may only be built during the day. (Shevuot 15b) The Rambam brings this as law, and in the same line he adds that all Jews are obligated to build the Beit haMikdash, men and women. Rabbi Yosef Karo explains that this is because the Mishkan was built by everyone, women and men alike. Even children are commanded in this mitzvah, but we don't close the schools in order for the children to build, because of the importance of their Torah study. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit haBechirah 1:12, and Kesef Mishneh there)

In recent centuries, authorities have raised an obvious question: if the Beit haMikdash must not be built at night, then this is a time-bound commandment, and therefore women should be exempt. If so, how does the Rambam say that women are obligated in the mitzvah of building the Beit haMikdash like men? [See Rabbi Yaakov Kanievsky, *Kehillot Yaakov*, Shevuot 10 for some discussion of this issue.]

Perhaps women are obligated because the mitzvah of building the Beit HaMikdash is not a mitzvah incumbent upon the individual, but rather it is a mitzvah incumbent upon the public. As the Sefer haChinuch says, "And this is among the commandments that are not impingent upon the individual, but rather upon all of the community." (Mitzvah 95) Perhaps we distinguish between men and women only

regarding mitzvot that are upon the individual; then we examine if this individual is male or female, young or old. But once this is a mitzvah upon the public, then all who are part of the public are obligated.

We may support this idea from the mitzvah of *brit milah*. The Talmud says that the father has precedence in the mitzvah of *brit milah*, and he has the right to circumcise his son before anyone else. The Talmud also says that the mother is not obligated in the mitzvah of circumcising her son. (Kiddushin 29b) However, if the father does not circumcise his son, the mitzvah is now set upon the beit din. Rabbeinu Asher (Chullin 6:8) claims that placing the mitzvah upon the beit din doesn't mean it is upon only those few rabbis. Rather, it is a mitzvah for the entire public. The beit din is a vessel for the public's responsibility to perform particular commandments. Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz explains that because of this, the mother is obligated in the mitzvah as well. (*Panim Yafot Lech Lecha*)

We see from here that during the time the mitzvah of *brit milah* was incumbent upon the individual father, we distinguished between men and women, but once the mitzvah became a mitzvah of the public, women became obligated as well.

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau (Yachel Yisrael #5 and #21) explains that this may be why children would be obligated to build the Beit haMikdash, if not for our concern about their Torah study. Since

when are children who are not in the age of mitzvot obligated in a mitzvah? He answers that because the obligation of building the Beit haMikdash is a mitzvah that is incumbent upon the public, children are included in that public as well.

The message we can learn from here is that the Beit haMikdash is a place that all of the Jewish people have a part of - men, women and children. Today we don't have a Beit haMikdash, but we have a *mikdash me'at* - our shuls. And like the Beit haMikdash, we have to make sure that our shuls are welcoming to all - men, women and children - and make sure that they are all benefiting and growing spiritually in them.

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Summary

There are multiple approaches to this chapter; we will follow the explanations brought in Rabbi David Altschuler's *Metzudat David*.

G-d tells Yeshayahu to take a scroll, and write in it the four words, "*L'maher shalal, chash baz*," "The spoil speeds; the prey hastens. (Koren tr.)" Moreover, G-d tells Yeshayahu to recruit two witnesses: Uriah HaCohen and Zecharyahu ben Yeverchayahu. (8:1-2)

Yeshayahu marries a woman, and she gives birth to a child, who receives the name that is written in the scroll. The meaning of the name, as Yeshayahu reveals, is that in the future, even before this son will say "Mom" or "Dad", Damascus and Samaria will be taken by the King of Assyria. (3-4)

G-d continues to speak to Yeshayahu, telling him that the people of Israel refuse the water of Shiloach, which is calm and slow, representing the kingdom of Yehudah. The people of Israel prefer the northern kingdom of Israel and their ally, Aram. Therefore, G-d will bring upon them the stormy waters of

the Chidekel, representing Assyria. The symbol of Assyria is changed in the middle of the prophecy from water to a predatory bird, with wide wings that will cover the entire land. Nevertheless, G-d will be with the people of Israel if they will be with G-d, and He will guard Yehudah against this storm. (5-10)

G-d warns Yeshayahu against partnering with these alliances, even if most of the leaders (led by a man named Shevna) will be in favor of the alliance. Rather, they should trust in G-d that he will help and save them. As a consequence, those who trust in G-d will be favored and those who prefer not to listen to G-d and to join the alliance with Assyria will be doomed. (11-14)

G-d tells Yeshayahu to save this scroll and teach it to everyone so they will not forget these instructions, as this is their path to salvation. Yeshayahu longs for salvation from G-d, and he testifies himself as a sign of the kingship of G-d. (15-18)

Yeshayahu then warns the nation not to follow those from the kingdom of

Israel who try to falsely convince them to ignore G-d's words; he swears that they are speaking falsely. If they do follow them, G-d will punish them harshly with starvation, and no prayers to G-d or human leaders will help. Assyria will not be too tired to execute their plans, and even if the first wave of combat will be somewhat easy, the third will be very hard. (19-23)

Insight

Commentators debate who is the new baby born to Yeshayahu. Rashi argues that this baby is actually not another son, but a new name for Yeshayahu's first son, Emanuel. According to his calculations, this prophecy was said in the same year that Emanuel was born, and it isn't possible that Yeshayahu's wife gave birth twice in that year. Malbim disagrees with Rashi and suggests two other answers. One of them is that this new son was born to a different couple, to King Achaz and his wife. According to the Malbim, this is also the meaning of what that is written in verse 18, "The children whom G-d has given me as a sign." This child isn't Yeshayahu's, but a sign.

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It Happened in Israel: The Decline of Israeli Fruit**Rabbi Adam Friedmann**

The Jerusalem Talmud includes a series of stories about the amazing produce of the Land of Israel. Yet, among these anecdotes praising the Land and its fruit, we read of a sad decline in their quality. The following three passages, taking place during the 2nd - 3rd century CE, describe this change:

Rabbi Avahu, Rabbi Yose ben Chanina, and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish passed by the orchard of Doron. The sharecropper brought them one peach; they and their donkeys ate from it and left some over. They estimated it to be like a dish from Kefar Chananiah that contains a seah of lentils [meaning: it was very large]. After a time they passed by there, he brought them two or three peaches in one hand. They said to him, we would like some from that [original] tree. He said to them, they are from it. On that, they quoted (Tehillim 107:34): "A fruit-bearing land into salt flats, because of the evil of its inhabitants."

Rabbi Yochanan said, the second-quality fruit we ate in our youth tasted better than the peaches we ate in our old age, because during his lifetime the world changed.

Rebbe [Rabbi Yehudah haNasi] said to Rav Periri: Would you show me the bunch of grapes in your vineyard? He said to him, if you come out, I will show it. When he was still far away, he spied something like an ox. He said to him, does not the ox destroy the vineyard? He said to him, what you take for an ox is the bunch of grapes. He quoted for it (Shir HaShirim 1:12): "As long as the King was at his round table, my nard gave its fragrance;" the Temple is destroyed and you [the land of Israel] persist in your obstinacy? Immediately, they looked for it [the bunch of grapes] and it was never found again. (adapted from Heinrich W. Guggenheimer translation, Jerusalem Talmud, Peah 7:3)

Insight

Each of these stories includes a different explanation for the fruit's decline, so we can view this section of Talmud as a broader philosophical reflection on this phenomenon.

In the first story, the Rabbis attribute the smaller peaches to sins of Israel's inhabitants. If the Jewish People sin, we don't merit blessing in our crops. This is described many times in the Torah; see Vayikra 26:15-44.

In the second story, the cause is natural. The Land of Israel is affected, at least to some degree, by larger shifts in the natural world. There is a parallel description in the Babylonian Talmud. (Bava Metzia 105b)

In the final story, the cause is the lack of a palpable presence of G-d in the Land. Rebbe is saying that Israel only produces ideally when "the King is at His round table," i.e. when the Temple stands. The exceptional qualities of the Land of Israel are rooted in the exceptional relationship of the Jewish people with G-d. When this relationship is properly expressed, the qualities of the Land express themselves fully as well.

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Biography

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak

Rabbi David Teller

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev (1740-1809), also known as the Berdichever and the Kedushat Levi (the title of his treatise on the weekly Torah Portion, holidays and general thought), was a beloved Chassidic leader known for his love for, and relentless defense of, the Jewish people.

The young Levi Yitzchak studied with his father until his marriage, when he moved to his wife's hometown of Levertov to study under the tutelage of Rabbi Shmelke Horowitz. At Rabbi Horowitz's insistence, Reb Levi Yitzchak traveled to Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch (the Maggid of Mezeritch), who had assumed leadership of the Chassidic movement after the passing of the Baal Shem Tov in 1760. Reb Levi Yitzchak became a devoted follower of the Maggid and is known as one of his foremost disciples.

Reb Levi Yitzchak was appointed to rabbinic positions in Ritschwil, Pinsk and Zelichov, but anti-Chassidic sentiment in each town forced him to frequently relocate. In 1785 he assumed the rabbinic mantle in Berdichev and remained the leader of the community for 25 years.

Reb Levi Yitzchak was known as the "defense attorney" for the Jewish people, and is remembered for his legendary love for every Jew regardless of their level of religious observance. He emphasized that since Hashem has chosen the Jewish people to be His nation on Earth, no person possesses the right to pass negative judgment on any member of Klal Yisrael. A famous story is told, that the Kedushat Levi once saw a young Jewish boy eating a bar of chocolate on Tishah b'Av. He approached the boy and gently told him that he must have forgotten what day it was. The boy shook his head and said that he had not forgotten. The Kedushat Levi tried again, assuming that the boy must have been granted permission from a doctor to eat, and he advised the boy that it would be better to do so in private. The boy harshly responded that no doctor gave him permission, and that he wanted to specifically eat chocolate on Tishah b'Av and in public. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak looked heavenward and exclaimed, "Master of the Universe, who is like Your nation, Israel? Your children display such unwavering honesty, regardless of the circumstances!"

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Torah and Translation

How Could the Script of the Torah Change?

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, Kedushat Levi, Purim #2

Translated by Rabbi Chaim Metzger

דנהה אמרו בגמרא דסנהדרין כא: "אמר מר זוטרא ואיתימא מר עוקבא, בתחלה נתנה תורה לישראל בכתב עברי ולשון הקודש, חזרה ונתנה להם בימי עזרא בכתב אשורית... [רבי יוסי אומר] ראוי היה עזרא שתנתן התורה על ידו לישראל כו', ואף על פי שלא נתנה על ידו התורה נשתנה על ידו [הכתב]...-מדוע נשתנה הכתב, שידוע דבאורייתא ברא קודשא בריך הוא עלמא (זוה"ק ח"א ה, א; ב"ר א, א)..."

ונמצא תמונת האותיות הוא האיך האורות העליונים בתוך גוף האדם הוא עולם הטבע. ולכן, בימי עזרא שהיה תיכף אחר הנס דמרדכי ואסתר, כמו שכתבנו שנתקן עולם הטבע ונזדככו, לכן ניתן להם בכתב אשורית הוא כתב של ספר תורה שלנו. שכיון שנתקן עולם הטבע, בודאי היה מאיר בעולם הטבע, הוא עולם העשייה, אורות עליונים כראוי להן, וכיון שהם מאירים בעולם הטבע הוא עולם העשייה כמו שצריכין להאיר בדרך הישר, הם מאירים כדמות האותיות שלנו. אבל קודם הנס דמרדכי ואסתר, דעדיין לא נתקנו עולם הטבע, שכן היה 'מודעא רבה לאורייתא' כאשר ביארנו לעיל בקדושה ראשונה, לכן לא היה כתב אשורית. אבל בימי מרדכי ואסתר שנעשה נס בתוך הטבעים, ואחר כך בשנה שנייה ששלחה אסתר לחכמים לקבוע אותם לדורות וקיימו וקבלו היהודים לקבוע קריאת מגילה בכל שנה ושנה... שעל ידי קריאת המגילה נזדככו הטבעים, לכן אחר כך בשנה שאחריה זכו שניתנה התורה על ידי עזרא בכתב אשורית, כי תמונת האותיות הוא, האיך שעושים השכליות והשפע מאלקי האלקים פעולתן בתוך הגשמיות והטבעים...

וכיון שנעשה הנס בתוך הטבעים שלא נשתנו הטבעים, לכן על ידי קריאת המגילה נתעוררו צרופי אותיות הקדושים והשמות, שהם והשפעתם מאלקי האלקים. ולכן קבלו התורה אז בימי מרדכי ואסתר, ועל ידי זה זכינו שנשתנה התורה לאותיות כתב אשורית, כי האותיות מרמזים על השפעת אלקים שבתוך עולם הזה עולם הטבע, לכן זכינו לאותיות הקדושים כאשר ביארנו.

For they said in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 21b), "Mar Zutra, or some say Mar Ukva, said that the Torah was given initially to Israel in *ktav ivri* [Paleo-Hebrew script] and in the Hebrew language, and was then given again in the times of Ezra in *ktav ashuri* [the Hebrew script used in a Torah today] ... Rabbi Yosi says that Ezra was worthy to have the Torah given by his hand to Israel, and even though he didn't give them the Torah he changed the script"... Why did the script change, as it is known that from the Torah G-d created the world (Zohar, Bereishit Rabbah)...

We find that the images of the letters are how the upper lights manifest in the physical world of man, the natural world. Therefore, in the times of Ezra immediately after the miracle of Mordechai and Esther, as we have written, the natural world was fixed and purified, therefore we were given the *ktav ashuri* of our Sefer Torah. Since the natural world was fixed, certainly it would illuminate the natural world, the world of action, as we need to enlighten the correct path, enlightening it with the shape of our letters. But before the miracle of Mordechai and Esther, when the natural world had yet to be fixed, there was a declaration against the Torah [that it was accepted under duress and inadmissible because G-d lifted the mountain over our heads], as we explained earlier in Kedushah #1, therefore there was not yet *ktav ashuri*. But in the days of Mordechai and Esther, when the miracle occurred from within nature, then in the second year when Esther sent to the Sages to establish for perpetuity and "the Jews fulfilled and accepted" to establish reading the Megillah every year... through reading the Megillah we purified nature, therefore the following year we merited to receive the Torah by the hands of Ezra in *ktav ashuri* because the image of the letters is how we make the spiritual sparks and overflowing Divinity from all-powerful G-d actualize into the physical and nature.

Since the miracle was done through nature and nature did not change, therefore by reading the Megillah the moulds of the holy Letters and Names awoke, for they and their effect are from G-d... Therefore they accepted the Torah anew in the days of Mordechai and Esther, and by this merited to change the letters of the Torah to *ktav ashuri*, because the letters hint to G-d's influence in this world, the natural world, therefore we have merited the Holy Letters as we have explained.

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Monday-Thursday

10:00 AM - Noon: Adult Seder Boker with Rabbi Moshe Yeres at Yeshivat Or Chaim

Monday/Wednesday: Talmud Succah, Orot of Rav Kook, Tuesday/Thursday: Parshah, Tanach: Sefer Melachim

Shabbat June 18 SHABBATON AT BAYT: FROM BESHT TO BATHURST: THE CHASSID'S PERSPECTIVE

Friday night before maariv, R' Mordechai Torczyner, *Yitro's Divine Eyes*

Shiur after Hashkamah, R' Jared Anstandig, *Preparing to Sin?*

8:30 AM Minyan R' Chaim Metzger, *Chassidut: To Follow?*

Bais Medrash Minyan R' Steven Gotlib, *From Choices to Chances*

Young Families Minyan Idan Rakovsky, *The 5th Part of the Shulchan Aruch*

Main Shul R' Yehuda Mann, *The Enlightening Message*

6:00 PM Women's Shiur R' Jared Anstandig, *The Chassid's Menorah*

6:45 PM Panel Discussion: Lessons from the Chassidic World

Panelists: R' Steven Gotlib, Idan Rakovsky, R' Mordechai Torczyner; Moderator: Rabbi Daniel Korobkin

8:05 PM Idan Rakovsky, Pirkei Avot, *Alone and At Night*

Seudah Shlishit R' Chaim Metzger, *Confronting Science*

Sunday June 19

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)

10:00 AM-11:20 AM MIDRESHET YOM RISHON FOR WOMEN!

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Mrs. Ruth Lecount: Who Owns Time? ∞ Mrs. Michal Horovitz: Enjoy the Sun Without Getting Burned

Light Refreshments Served! No charge, All women welcome!

Monday June 20

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

2:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, Into the Song of Songs, ZOOM <http://tiny.cc/idanrak> #2 of 5

7:00-8:30 PM ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MEDICAL DECISION-MAKING, with R' Mordechai Torczyner
With CME credit; Laypeople welcome; AT SHAAREI SHOMAYIM and on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/mtethics>

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

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Rescue in Halachah, Shomrai Shabbos (men)

Tuesday June 21

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

7:00 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 15), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men)

Wednesday June 22

6:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Talmud: Avodah Zarah, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/idolsarebad>

10:00 AM R' M Torczyner, When will the Messiah come? Yeshivat Or Chaim / ZOOM <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> #2 of 2

7:45 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park

7:50 PM Idan Rakovsky, The Laws of Shabbat, Shaarei Tefillah

Thursday June 23

9:00 AM Idan Rakovsky, Mei haShiloach, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

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

7:30 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Time-Bound Mitzvot: Berachot, Shaarei Shomayim (university women)

Friday June 24

9:00 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Parshah, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10:30 AM R' J Anstandig, R' M Torczyner, R' Y Mann, Bava Batra, Yeshivat Or Chaim & <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>