

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Ki Tetze

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by the Goldman Family on the yahrtzeit of Mr. Jeffrey Goldman z"l, לעילוי נשמת ר' יעקב זאב בן ר' ארי' צבי הכהן ז"ל זי"ע

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Dr. and Mrs. Albert and Janice Kirshen In memory of Janice's father Shalom Yosef ben Chaim z"l, on his fifth yahrtzeit

Kiddushin & Get: A Match Made in Heaven?

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

In the midst of discussing the Jewish family, Devarim 24:1 begins, "When a man transacts with a woman, etc." The Talmud teaches that this introduces the practice of *kiddushin*, in which a man and woman agree to initiate a marriage relationship. (Kiddushin 2a) However, when we look at more of this verse it seems like an odd place to teach about *kiddushin*.

Our verse continues (paraphrased), "When a man transacts with a woman and marries her, if she does not find favour in his eyes because he discovers a matter of immoral conduct, he shall write for her a document of separation, etc." In other words, this verse teaches the institution of divorce! Why would the Torah inform the reader about *kiddushin* in the same breath as divorce? In order to answer this, we need to grasp the role of *kiddushin*.

The Rambam presents a history of marriage: "Before the Torah was given, a man would meet a woman in the market, and if he and she wanted to marry, he would bring her to his home, live with her privately, and she would be his wife. Once the Torah was given, Israel was commanded that if a man wishes to wed a woman, he must transact with her first in front of witnesses, and then she will be his wife, etc." (Hilchot Ishut 1:1)

Rambam continues, "Before the Torah was given, a man would meet a woman in the market, and if he and she wanted, he would pay her and live with her

by the fork in the road and leave; this was called *kedeishah*. Once the Torah was given, *kedeishah* was prohibited, etc." (ibid. 1:4)

Similarly, Rabbi Menachem Meiri writes, "Before the Torah was given, they did not have [halachic] marriage. Rather, when a man met a woman in the market and she was good in his eyes, he spoke with her about marriage. If they were amenable to each other he would bring her into his home and she would stay with him and she would be his wife, and so when they fought with each other he would leave, this one this way and that one that way." (Introduction to Masechet Kiddushin)

From this rabbinic perspective, there was no permanence or commitment in marriage relationships in the ancient Near East until the Torah introduced it. The goal of the Torah's model of marriage is to create a relationship in which both parties make a commitment, and feel confidence and faith in each other. As Rabbi Menachem Meiri continues, "When the Torah was given, they were commanded to have [halachic] marriage **with a strong bond**, with *kiddushin* and *nisuin* and witnesses and a *ketubah*, and the man could not send her away without a *get*."

We might then ask: why does the Torah allow divorce? Instead of making divorce formal with a *get*, shouldn't the Torah protect the commitment of *kiddushin* by eliminating the possibility of divorce

altogether? Our verse shows that Hashem chose a different path, providing the *get* process for ending a marriage. Perhaps Hashem knows that the possibility of an end to an intolerable situation enhances the strength of *kiddushin*. People have greater confidence in every kind of relationship, and certainly in the intimate context of marriage, when they know that they cannot be abused. There is a clear setting of expectations, a check on the other's behaviour, and a route to safety if need be.

This may be why the Torah presents *kiddushin* and the *get* together. In one verse, the Torah teaches us what the Rambam and Meiri say was a new idea in the time the Torah was given – marriage is a commitment and a demonstration of faith, starting with *kiddushin*, and enabled by the possibility of divorce.

There is much more to be said about the Torah's laws of marriage and divorce, as well as their horrific abuse when one spouse refuses to cooperate with the *get* outlet the Torah provided. May each of us work to build up our homes with the commitment and mutual confidence the Torah envisions – in marriage, in parent-child relationships, in sibling relationships – and may our efforts extend beyond our homes, to our community at large.

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Summary

This chapter, as its heading indicates, prophesies the destruction of Damascus, the capital of Aram. The city will be destroyed and cease to be a city. Arero will become deserted, and sheep will graze in it. (17:1-2)

Damascus and the exiled northern tribes of Israel are compared, although the meaning of this comparison is debated by the commentators. (3) Malbim (17:1-2) suggests it is to highlight the fact that although Aram allied itself with those northern tribes, the tribes would receive another chance, and Aram would not.

The glory of the Jews of northern Israel will diminish. Instead of being like healthy harvests, they will be comparable to the leftover gleaning of grain and olives. (4-6)

After this destruction, the Jews will repent and return to G-d and reject their idolatry. The destruction that they will face will be similar to that of the cities they left uninhabited when they first conquered Israel. The Jews, while they plant, will be unable to reap produce, as punishment for leaving G-d. (7-11)

The chapter closes by describing the nations who will be terrified by G-d and

driven away for having plundered the Jews. (12-14)

Organization

As Amos Chacham notes (Yeshayahu, Daat Mikra edition), there are two ways to interpret this chapter. Either, one can take each of the above units as a stand alone thought. Or, they may be connected. The meaning of these units would then be:

- 1) Damascus will be destroyed and, as part of the process, the northern Jewish kingdom will also weaken.
- 2) The Jewish kingdom will weaken and few will be left.
- 3) The Jews will then return to G-d.
- 4) The fortified cities that the Jews built, either for idolatry or as an expression of hubris, and their agriculture, will be destroyed.
- 5) However, at the end, the nations that fought Israel will be punished.
- 6) The destruction of these nations will become known throughout the world.

This prophecy is then continued in the next chapter.

When?

As with many similar prophecies found in Yechezkel, Tzefaniah, and other prophets, one can understand that some of the prophecies were already

fulfilled in the time of King Chizkiyahu. The destruction was wrought by the Assyrian armies who dominated and destroyed the entire region. However, some of the events seem not yet to have occurred and thus are likely messianic. This is further emphasized by the comparisons that can be found between the prophecies in Yeshayahu and those in Yechezkel that focus on Gog and Magog.

The Purpose

As Rav Yoel bin Nun [points out](#), the purpose of the political and economic destruction is to force/enable the Jews to turn their eyes back to G-d. This combats two of the sins that are mentioned by the prophets in this period, that of idolatry and that of hubris. Similarly, the repetitious cycle seen in the book of Shoftim emphasizes that the purpose of punishment is not simply retributive, but to encourage the people who have left G-d for idolatry to turn back to Him. This makes them deserving of being saved.

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Siddur Insights: Ashrei

Ashrei, otherwise known as Tehillim chapter 145, is recited three times across the daily prayer services. The chapter is organized as an acrostic of the Aleph-Bet. The content is praises of G-d, attributed to King David. According to Rambam (Hilchot Tefillah 7:12), this chapter was the kernel out of which the entire practice of *Pesukei D'zimra*, the verses of praise recited before reading the Shema, developed.

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 51:7) rules that one must have specific intention for the verse that begins with the letter *peh*. Namely, "You open Your hand, and satisfy the desire of all living things." If one forgot to focus on the meaning of the words, the line must be repeated. How did this chapter become so central to the daily prayer service? Why is the verse of "You open Your hand..." so important?

The basis for reciting this chapter is the Talmud. (Berachot 4b) Rabbi Avina says that whoever recites this chapter three times a day is assured a place in the World to Come. The Talmud tries to figure out what makes this chapter so unique. If it is the special acrostic style, it would be better to recite Tehillim 119, since that chapter is an acrostic with eight verses for each letter. And, if the important element is the verse of "You open Your hand," then it would be better to recite Tehillim 136, which also contains a praise of G-d's providing for all creations.

The Talmud concludes that what makes Tehillim 145 special is the confluence of both factors, the acrostic style, and the

message of "You open Your hand." But this only leads to a further question: what is the significance of these elements?

Rabbi Shemuel Eidels (Maharsha) explains that the letters of the acrostic represent the letters of the Torah and the greatness of Torah study. "You open Your hand" declares our trust that G-d is taking care of our needs. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook (*Ein Ayah*, Berachot 1:21) rounds out this comment by explaining how it applies to the first part of Rabbi Avina's statement about meriting the World to Come. Every Jew has to try to draw intellectual and spiritual enlightenment from the Torah to the best of their abilities. However, this pursuit succeeds only to the extent that one's mind is at ease and isn't strained by worries about physical sustenance. Therefore, the letters of the acrostic, representing the Torah, are insufficient without "You open Your hand," representing our trust in G-d's providence. When a person combines both elements, they are ready to achieve the kind of spiritual enlightenment that makes them worthy of the World to Come.

By saying Ashrei regularly throughout the day, every day, we inculcate these important and fundamental concepts within ourselves. This is why this chapter has such a central place in our daily prayer service, and why the verse of "You open Your hand" requires special intent.

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Biography
Rabbi Yehuda Amital
Russell Levy

Rabbi Yehuda Amital was born in 1925 in Transylvania. As a boy he studied in *heder* and yeshiva, and had virtually no formal secular education. In 1943, the Nazis deported him to a labor camp; the rest of his family perished in Auschwitz. After his liberation, he arrived in Eretz Yisrael at the end of 1944, on Chanukah 5705.

When he arrived in Israel, Rav Amital continued his yeshiva studies in Jerusalem and received Semichah from HaGaon HaRav Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l. While in yeshiva, he joined the Haganah. Rav Amital fought in the War of Independence, in the battles of Latrun and western Galilee. After the war, Rav Amital became a Ram in Yeshivat HaDarom.

Rav Amital predicted that exemptions for Yeshiva students from army service would both increase the friction between the religious and secular community and lead to emotional and ideological distance between the students and the State of Israel. Upon formulating the idea of Yeshivot Hesder, he took an active role developing the first hesder group, at Yeshivat HaDarom.

After the Six Day War, he was called upon by Mr. Moshe Moskovic - a survivor of the 1948 battle for Gush Etzion - to found a Yeshivat Hesder in Gush Etzion. Founded in 1968 with 30 students, the yeshiva has grown to more than 450 students.

For many years Rav Amital represented Yeshivot Hesder in the Army network, holding the rank of Captain in the Armored Corps. Rav Amital also served as Minister without Portfolio from November 1995 until July 1996.

Rav Amital passed away at the age of 85 on the 27th of Tammuz, 5770 (2010).

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Torah and Translation

The Generation That Doesn't Ask
Rabbi Y. Amital, Alon Shvut Bulletin, March 2020
Translated by Idan Rakovsky

אם נשאל את עצמנו מהו הסוד שדווקא בזמן האחרון זכו גישתו של ר' נתן מברסלב ותופעת "מנייני השמחה" הללו לעדנה, הרי שכמה תשובות אפשריות ובודאי שאין לנתק תופעה זו מכלל התופעה העולמית, של נטישת הרציו והבריחה למיסטיקה...

באותו עניין אני מבקש להצביע על נקודה משמעותית, שלדעתי מאפיינת היום את הדור ובעיקר את הדור הצעיר. הרשיתי לעצמי להשתמש במונח "דור", אע"פ שאני רחוק מהכללה, מכיוון שמדובר בתופעה רחבה למדי.

לפנינו תופעה של דור שאינו יודע לשאול, ולא סתם אינו יודע לשאול אלא אינו יודע לשאול לכתחילה, פרי אידיאולוגיה חינוכית. "אינו יודע לשאול" הפך להיות אידיאל חינוכי ברמות חינוכיות שונות. הרובד שהיה אחראי לחינוך הדור הצעיר בקהילת הציונות הדתית ראה במודע ושלא במודע בטיפוח האידיאל של אינו יודע לשאול ערובה בטוחה להמשך דרכה התורנית והציונית בקרב הנוער.

נוער, שמעצם טבעו יודע לשאול, למד להסתפק בשאלות בתחומים מצומצמים למדי, תחומים בהם השאלות הן לא משמעותיות והן בעיקר טכניות ופורמליות וודאי לא שאלות קיומיות. מעבר לתחומים הללו הפנים הנוער את המסר החינוכי שהשאלות, אם לא ממש אסורות, ודאי שאינן רצויות, וכך נוצר תהליך בקרב חלק נכבד מבני הנוער שחדל לשאול, לא משום שחושש לשאול אלא פשוט אינו יודע לשאול...

אנחנו מאמינים שלתורתנו הקדושה יש מסרים רלוונטיים בכל דור... דור דור ודורשיו, כל דור צדיקיו, מוריו ורבותיו. בכדי שאלה יתאמצו ויתעמקו עד שיגלו את ההבנה החדשה הדרושה לדור, יש צורך שיתמודדו עם שאלות הדור ובעיותיו, שאלות הנשאלות מתוך כנות. רק שאלות מצמיחות תשובה. דור שאינו יודע לשאול, גם צדיקיו אינם יודעים להשיב...

If we ask ourselves what is the secret behind the fact that the approach of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov and the phenomenon of "Happy Minyanim" have recently merited rejuvenation, we could provide several possible answers. Certainly, we cannot disconnect this phenomenon from the worldwide phenomenon of rejecting rationalism and fleeing to mysticism...

In the same matter, I wish to point to a meaningful point, which I believe characterizes the generation, specifically the young generation. I allow myself to use the term "generation", even though I avoid generalizations, because we are speaking of an unusually broad phenomenon.

Here we have a phenomenon of a generation that "doesn't know how to ask", and not only does it not know how to ask, but it intentionally does not know how to ask, the fruit of an educational ideal. "Doesn't know how to ask" turned into an educational ideal at various educational levels. The level which was responsible for education of the young generation in the Religious Zionist community saw, consciously or unconsciously, that supporting an ideology of "doesn't know how to ask" would provide a secure guarantee of continuing its religious and Zionist path among the youth.

Youth, who naturally know how to ask, learned to suffice with questions in very narrow areas, areas in which the questions are not meaningful, mostly technical and formal, and certainly not existential questions. Beyond these boundaries, the youth internalized the educational message that questions, if not actually prohibited, are certainly not desirable, and so a path developed in the midst of a significant portion of the youth who have stopped asking - not out of fear of asking, but simply because they don't know how to ask...

We believe that our holy Torah has relevant messages for every generation... Each generation and its seekers, each generation its righteous people, teachers and mentors. In order for them to make efforts and learn deeply until they reveal the new understanding needed for the generation, there is a need to deal with the questions of the generation and its problems, questions asked sincerely. Only questions lead to answers. A generation that does not know how to ask, its righteous people also don't know how to answer...

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

Shabbat Sept 9-10

After hashkamah R' Yehuda Mann, Halachah from the Parshah, Clanton Park

7:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Pirkei Avot, Clanton Park

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

Sunday Sept 11

TISHREI IN A DAY!

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Elul

10:00 AM Rabbi Yehuda Mann, The Gift of Teshuvah

10:30 AM Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, L'David: Understanding the Minhag & Meaning

Rosh HaShanah

11:00 AM Mrs. Sharon Fixler, A Closer Look at the Poetry of the Rosh HaShanah Prayers

11:30 AM Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Approaching Rosh HaShanah with a Mission

12:00 PM Pizza Lunch and Learn

The Great Lulav-Succah Debate, with Rabbi Jared Anstandig

Yom Kippur

1:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, Diving with Whales in the Ocean of Truth

1:30 PM Rabbi Steven Gotlib, A Recipe for Good Judgment

Succot

2:00 PM Rabbi Dr. Seth Grauer, Hakhel: Mitzvah & Messages for 2022

2:30 PM Rabbi Dr. Moshe Yeres, The Craft to Graft Super Citrons

Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah

3:00 PM Rabbi Jared Anstandig, Prayin' for Rain

3:30 PM Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Shemini Atzeret: A Holiday About Nothing?

Also broadcast at <https://youtube.com/torontotorah>

Monday Sept 12

8:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Prozbul: History and How-To, with Mizrachi at BAYT

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Getting Ready for Tishrei, Shomrai Shabbos (men)

Tuesday Sept 13

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Wisdom of King Solomon, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men) *Week One!*

7:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 16), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men)

Wednesday Sept 14

6:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Talmud: Avodah Zarah, Shaarei Shomayim

10 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Rosh HaShanah and the Role of the Satan, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>
There is a \$10 fee; register at <https://torontotorah.com/wednesdays>

After maariv R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park

Thursday Sept 15

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 27), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women)

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Gemara Beitzah, email ymannt@torontotorah.com for rotating location

Friday Sept 16

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

10:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, R' Mordechai Torczyner, R' Yehuda Mann, Ketuvot Perek 1 *advanced*
In-person at Yeshivat Or Chaim, on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>