



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

PARASHAT KI TISA

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This issue of Toronto Torah is sponsored by Robert & Karyn Goldberger in memory of Robert's mother Judith Goldberger z"l on her 9th yahrzeit, and by Yossi and Rebecca Salmon to commemorate the recent yahrzeit of their grandfather, Avraham ben Yisrael—Alan Salmon z"l.



DVAR TORAH KI TISA RABBI YEHUDA MANN, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

Go Down Moshe...

In this week's parasha we read about the story of the sin of the Golden Calf—that after the uplifting experience of receiving the Torah, the Israelites create and worship the Golden Calf.

When the G-d informs Moshe of the bitter news, He tells him the following words: "Go down," meaning, descend from the mountain to the People of Israel. But the Midrash [*Shmot Rabbah* 42] adds another dimension to the meaning of the words "go down"—"It is not for your honour that you ascend here, but for the honour of the people. When Israel are righteous, they ascend and their emissaries ascend with them, and when they descend, they and their emissaries descend." In other words, now that the people of Israel have spiritually descended, you too are not entitled to remain at the high spiritual level at which you stand here with me.

Rabbi Yaakov Kranz, the Maggid of Dubno, says that the Midrash does not tell us about a "punishment" given to Moshe, but rather a "lesson" for Moshe on how he should behave as a leader now that the people of Israel have sinned. The Maggid of Dubno says, by way of analogy, that a person needs clothes that fit him—not too big and not too small—otherwise, it will not be comfortable and

the clothes will not be useful. Similarly, says the Maggid of Dubno, this is how the relationship between the leader and the people under him should be: the leader should be like a garment. He shouldn't be too big to wear, and he shouldn't be too small. A leader who is at a lower level than the people beneath him is unable to fulfill their needs. But at the same time, a leader who is at a level higher than his audience cannot lead effectively because they are not at the same

The People of Israel need a leader at their level

level as he is, and it won't be natural for them to do things beyond their level. Take, for example, a community rabbi—he may very much want to deliver deep Torah lessons on *Ketzot HaChoshen* and *Chidushei Rabbi Chaim Halevi*, and his lessons may be wonderful and fascinating—but if no one in his congregation understands his lesson, what's the value in that? The Maggid of Dubno says this is the depth of the Midrash's words, that Moshe had to descend following the sin of the Israelites with the Golden Calf. Now that the People of Israel have descended spiritually, they need a leader who will also descend a bit; if Moshe remains at his high

level, the people will not be able to accept from him the proper leadership. They need a leader at their level, and therefore Moshe is forced to sacrifice some of his spirituality and descend as well.

Last week, in Parashat Tetzaveh, I heard a similar idea from Rabbi Isaac Berenstein z"l in his explanation of the verse appointing Aharon as a priest—"And you (Moshe) shall bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel...." Rabbi Berenstein asks: What is the meaning that Aharon and his sons are "from among the People of Israel"? And are we to think that they are from another people? Rather, says Rabbi Berenstein, the Almighty is teaching Moshe that now that he is going to appoint a leader for the People of Israel, the priests who are supposed to connect the people to the holiness in the Tabernacle and the Temple, the men who are supposed to lead and elevate the people, and these leaders need to be "from among the People of Israel," familiar with the level at which the people are in order to connect with them and meet their needs in the best way possible. Because if the leader is not "from among the People of Israel" and does not recognize their needs, he will not be able to lead effectively.



Yirmiyahu 12

The eleventh chapter of Yirmiyahu ended with the kohanim of Anatot—Yirmiyahu's own relatives, in his hometown—plotting against him and threatening to kill him if he would not abandon his Divine mission. Despite the protection Hashem promises to Yirmiyahu, the twelfth chapter opens with his complaint, "Why is the path of the wicked successful, why are the traitors at peace? They develop roots, they bear fruit!" (12:1-4; see Rashi, Radak and Sanhedrin 96a regarding how to read 12:4). With this, Yirmiyahu joins the ranks of great prophets who could not abide the success of evildoers; others include Eliyahu, Hosheia, Yonah and Chavakuk.

Hashem responds by validating Yirmiyahu's suffering. The corruption of the nation, seen in Yirmiyahu's own family but extending throughout Judea, is so terrible

that Yirmiyahu should not trust anyone, regardless of how nicely they speak with him. Competing with them is like trying to race against a horse; it is too much for Yirmiyahu (12:5-6).

This is about more than Yirmiyahu's pain, though. Hashem describes the people driv-

Why is the path of the wicked successful?

ing Him out from His own house and portion, causing Him to forsake it. They have laid waste the vineyard—and so Hashem will give it over to the enemy. In 12:7 we also see the origin of the term *yedid nefesh*—it is a description of the Beit HaMikdash, which Hashem is now abandoning to the foe (12:7-12).

Hashem acknowledges that righteous prophets perform mitzvot, "planting wheat," but counters that they only grow thorn—the corruption of the nation. This harvest sickens the prophets, for their work yields nothing (12:13, per Radak).

The voice of Hashem then turns to the enemies of the Jews, "My evil neighbours." Radak lists in this group the Philistines, Amon, Moav, Tyre and Tzidon. They attack the Jews now, and eventually Hashem will punish them. But Hashem offers them a way out: "If they will learn the ways of My nation, to swear in My Name, by the life of Hashem, as they taught My nation to swear by Baal, then they will be built up among My nation." However, failure to join the Jews will lead to their destruction (12:14-17).



Week 6: The Liturgical Expression of R' Yosef Albo's Principles

Rabbi Yosef Albo, as we saw last week, treated *ikkarim* not as **dogmas** but as **fundamentals** of faith, those beliefs that are necessary to make religion coherent. He identified only three: the belief in God, Torah from heaven, and reward and punishment. Interestingly, he claims that Chazal captured these beliefs in the liturgy of the High Holidays, specifically in the Mussaf of Rosh Hashana.

Most prayers during the year have at their core the nineteen blessing *Amidah*, colloquially known as *Shemona Esrei* (eighteen, as the blessing against heretics was added later in history). On Shabbat and holidays, the *Amidah* has seven blessings, the standard first three and last three and one central blessing relating to the holiness of the day. However, the *Mussaf* of Rosh HaShana has nine blessings. The first and last three are the same as any other *Amidah*. However, the middle consists of three blessings, *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofarot*, the blessing of kingship, remembrance, and shofar.

Rabbi Yosef Albo claims that Chazal used these three to teach

the core beliefs at the start of each new year. The blessing of *malchuyot*, about God's kingship, teaches about the existence of God. Hence, the blessing highlights the destruction of idolatry and the commitment to God, as well as the hope that one day the entire world will accept Him. *Zichronot*, which records that God remembers all that has happened, all people have done, and treats them accordingly, reflects the belief in reward and punishment. *Shofarot* begins with the shofar blasts heard when the Torah was given on Har Sinai, thus reflecting the belief in the Torah.

It is worth noting that Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks noted (in a lecture at YU) that Chazal did not write philosophical treatises. Rather, they incorporated central beliefs into the siddur so that every Jew would have access to them, not only philosophers. Further, he argued that it was the transformation of the Rambam's principles of faith into liturgy that made them popular. Rabbi Albo's understanding of the Rosh Hashana prayers is an expression of precisely this thesis.



The Beracha for Chocolate

Question: Dear Rabbi, I recently heard a disturbing halacha: I always bless the blessing of "shehakol" when eating chocolate but someone told me that I am mistaken and the blessing should be "borei pri ha'etz"—could it be that I've been wrong all these years?

Answer: That's a good question, and indeed some authorities instruct to bless the blessing of "borei pri ha'etz" on chocolate, but the prevalent custom is to bless "shehakol," and you should not deviate from your custom unless your Rabbi instructs you otherwise.

The reason some argue for the blessing of "borei pri ha'etz" is based on the *Shulchan Aruch* in Orach Chaim 203-7. It is stated there that if there are ground spices mixed with sugar, the main part of this mixture are the spices, and one should bless on this mixture as the beracha of the spices. The *Mishnah Berurah* explains that this applies even if the spices have completely lost their form and are entirely

crushed and dissolved because this is the way these beans are eaten.

Based on this law, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and others wanted to say that technically one should bless on chocolate "borei pri ha'etz." Since we do not usually eat cocoa beans as they are but only when they are crushed and mixed with sugar, milk, and other ingredients, therefore the blessing should be "borei pri ha'etz" because that is the only way to eat cocoa beans.

However, some authorities disagree with Rabbi Auerbach and believe that there is a distinction between chocolate and the case of ground spices mixed with sugar. In the case of ground spices mixed with sugar, one crushes the spices and consumes them as they are with the additional ingredients, which is not the case with chocolate. Cocoa beans are not crushed and immediately used, but rather go through an additional process until they become sweet, and only then are they mixed with additional

ingredients. Because of this additional processing, the blessing should be "shehakol" and not "borei pri ha'etz" because there is no longer a trace of the original cocoa.

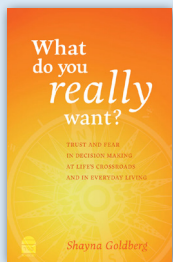
In practice, most halachic authorities, including Rabbi Auerbach himself, believe that one should continue to bless "shehakol" on chocolate. However, they note that if you are faced with chocolate or an apple, whose blessing is "borei pri ha'etz," even though we usually prefer to bless first on the fruit of the tree and then on the "shehakol," in this case, you should prioritize the chocolate, because perhaps you may fulfill the blessing on the fruit and not be able to say a blessing on the chocolate. Therefore, it is better to first bless "shehakol" on the chocolate, and then "borei pri ha'etz" on the fruit.

These Halachot are brought down from the Dirshu Mishna Berura, Siman 203, Note 19.

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at ymann@torontotorah.com.



Week 4: Faith in Ourselves and Our Decisions



What Do You Really Want?
By Shayna Goldberg
Maggid Press, 2021

our decision. But, Goldberg writes, over time we learn to have faith in ourselves.

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov dedicated much of his writing to the idea of believing in ourselves. In *Sichot HaRan* 140, Rabbi Natan of Nemirov quotes Rabbi Nachman as rebuking him as having little

"Being able to fully trust ourselves and have confidence in what we want often takes time ... We should not be afraid to give ourselves however much time we need to make a good decision. We should trust that we know how to guide ourselves to good things and that, if we are allowed space and the time to listen to ourselves, we will find clarity in our decisions" (*What Do You Really Want*, page 31)

When we confront difficult decisions, even after we have weighed all the factors and arrived at our conclusion, we still face a major challenge—trusting

faith. When Rabbi Natan questions this, Rabbi Nachman responds, "ואם יש לך אמונה, אין לך אמונה בעצמך." Even if you have faith, you do not have faith in yourself." Rabbi Nachman's point is that a Jew must have faith—not only in Hashem but also in oneself.

Rabbi Natan proceeds to explain that one of the most fundamental truths of Judaism is that one must believe in himself or herself. He concludes, "והכלל המובן מדבריו: שהאדם צריך שיהיה לו אמונה בעצמו," "The principle understood from his words: that one must have faith in oneself."

As Goldberg writes, it takes time to develop faith in ourselves and in our decisions. When we see that our minor and less impactful decisions worked out well for us, we can slowly trust that we know how to make good choices. If we start small, we can incrementally build up our faith in ourselves so that when it comes to big decisions, we already have faith. In line with what Rabbi Nachman taught, may we have faith not only in God, but in ourselves, as well.

What Do You Really Want? can be purchased from Koren Publishers at tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD. Use the code *TorontoTorah* for a 10% discount on this or any other book on their website.



TABLE TALK RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Source: Rashi (Shemot 32:5)

Aaron saw many things; he saw Hur, his sister's son, who had reprimanded them, and whom they had killed ... He also saw and said: It is better that the offense should attach itself to me than to them. He further saw that if they build this altar themselves ... their work will be accomplished all at once; through myself building it and being slow in my work, in the meantime Moses may come.

Questions to Discuss

- Aaron had good intentions that were considered to mitigate the sin yet was criticized for his actions. What could he have done differently?
- When have you acted in a way that you thought would bring positive results only to later realize that your best intentions weren't enough?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at nsonenberg@torontotorah.com to enter our raffle for a \$15 voucher for Tova's Bakery!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Gutenberg
Sunday	Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 AM	Rabbi Shor
	Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Smachot	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz & Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann & Rabbi Lax
	Sefer Shemot	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	David Koschitzky
Monday	The Torah: A Psychic Turn. Psychological Theories in the Eyes of Tanach	Zoom: tiny.cc/idanrak	2:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
	University Women's Beit Midrash	Yeshivat Or Chaim	7:45 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Introduction to Gemara: Learn how to learn	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
Tuesday	Then and Now: Returning to the Land of Israel – a Study in Tanach	Zoom	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Women's Gemara Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:15 PM	Rabbi Mann
Wednesday	Exploring the Characters in Megillat Esther	Zoom	10:00 AM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	8:00 PM	Rabbi Mann
	Men's Gemara Bekiut	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Eliyahu HaNavi: A Prophet of Fire & Water	Shaarei Tefillah	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
Thursday	Tanach: Sefer Shmuel	Zoom: tiny.cc/BMZDtanach	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	8:00 PM	R' Diena
Sun–Thu	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim Clanton Park	Sun–Mon, Wed–Thurs: 8:00–9:00 PM Tues: 8:00–9:00 PM	
	Pre-Maariv Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	New Time 8:45–9:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Midreshet Yom Rishon with Rabbi and Mrs. Sonenberg	BAYT	Sunday, March 17, 2024	10:00–11:30 AM
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YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash

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