




BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

תולדת - TOLDOT

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Candle lighting: 4:24 pm  Havdallah: 5:32 pm (50 minutes after שקיעה)



הנתונים בצרה ובשביה עודד בן בלהה - Oded Lifshitz

Oded is an Israeli journalist and social activist and one of the founders of Kibbutz Nir Oz in the Gaza Strip. Oded and his wife Yocheved were abducted to Gaza on October 7 and held separately in captivity. Yocheved returned to Israel but he is still there. His four children, grandchildren and Yocheved await his return with all their hearts

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Shimon Berglas (30 Cheshvan).

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דבר תורה AVIAD PITUCHEY-CHOTAM, DEAN

The Wisdom of the Past, the Needs of the Present

Application season for schools keeps many of us busy these days – open houses, endless forms, educational dilemmas and much more. For many parents, this period also presents various personal challenges. Recently, I spoke with a friend who was torn about the right high school for his son — the classical Yeshiva, a musical Yeshiva, an environmental yeshiva, a tech high-school, and so on.

As we delved deeper into the conversation, my friend shared his pain at how different his high school experience could have been if only someone had offered him educational tracks other than the traditional and familiar ones.

Many of us are familiar with these ideas and directions, thanks to the theory of multiple intelligences published in the 1980s by the renowned Jewish psychologist, Howard Gardner.

However, a deeper look into this week's Torah portion reveals similar ideas expressed many years ago in the unique commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

The verses briefly describe the maturation process of יַעֲקֹב וְעִשָׂו:

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יָדָע צִיד וְאִישׁ שָׂדֶה וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יָשֵׁב אֲהָלִים

“And the boys grew up, and Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents” (Genesis 25:27).

In just a few words, a whole drama that unfolded in the home of יַצְחָק and רַבִּקָּה is depicted.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, writing in 19th century Germany, expands on this and offers a very interesting perspective:

“As long as they were small, no attention was paid to the differences that lay dormant within them, they were both given exactly the same teaching and educational treatment, and the great, great educational doctrine was forgotten: חֲנוּךְ לְנֶעֱר עַל: to educate each child according to the potential that lies dormant within it and the characteristic that will develop from it for the future, for the one purely human and Jewish thing! The great Jewish Torah task is one and simple in its basic meaning, but in its realization it is as rich and varied as the diversity of human potential and the resulting diversity of life.”

He reminds us as parents, educators, adults, and transmitters of tradition, to find each individual's unique path to engaging with Torah, whether they are אִישׁ שָׂדֶה (a man of the field) or an אִישׁ תָּם (a quiet man), an inquisitive intellectual or a talented musician, an outstanding athlete or a sensitive poet.



Tehillim 137 - By the Rivers of Babylon

Why couldn't the Leviyim play on foreign soil?

Tehillim 137 is found primarily in two places in the Siddur, both as part of evoking grief for the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. Since at least the 11th century, Jews have recited it after Megillat Eichah on Tisha b'Av, based on Masechet Sofrim 18:4. There is also a centuries-old practice of remembering the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash at meals by reciting this chapter before birkat hamazon on days when Tachanun is recited (Yosif Ometz 1:154, Kaf HaChaim 24:54, MA 1:5).

The basis for these associations with destruction is self-evident; the psalm begins, "On the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, we also cried, when we remembered Zion." The Talmud (Gittin 57b) teaches that this was authored by King David.

Hashem showed him the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash by the Babylonians, and the second by the Romans, and this led him to compose this chapter of Tehillim.

The chapter describes our captors mocking us, requesting that we play "from the songs of Zion." Commentators explain that the speakers are the Leviyim, and the "songs of Zion" are the songs they played in the Beit HaMikdash. The Leviyim respond that they cannot play those songs on foreign soil. But why not?

The 19th century Chief Rabbi of Rome, Rabbi Yisrael Moshe Chazan, suggested that in other lands we are influenced by the music of our neighbors, and our independent cultural identity is lost. (Shu"t Krach shel Romi 1). But most commentators understand that the issue is spiritual:

- OThe foreign soil is a land of idolatry (Radak);
- The songs of the Beit HaMikdash channel prophetic inspiration, which requires the land of Israel (Malbim);
- We can only sing to Hashem on land we own (Seforno to Bereishit 33:19);
- Our true spiritual creativity is possible only in Israel (Rav Kook, Orot meiOfel 3).

Rashi offers an entirely different explanation. In his commentary to Kiddushin 69b he writes that the Leviyim sabotaged their ability to play music by severing their thumbs, in a show of resistance against the Babylonians. This is why Ezra found few Leviyim when the Jews returned for the second Beit HaMikdash; the Leviyim felt they couldn't return if they could not play in the Beit HaMikdash.



Conversations in Emunah Achdut Part 4

QS: Last time we concluded that true unity in Torah isn't about uniformity but is achieved through integrating different perspectives. I see the beauty in diversity, but practically, how can we achieve unity when these same differences are what lead to conflict and division?

RM: That's an important question. Rav Kook devoted much of his life to bridging the divide between the different Jewish camps. In his essay "The Journey of the Camps" from Maamarei HaRe'ayah, he discusses the detrimental effects of labeling and segregating ourselves into groups like "charedim" and "chofshim" (secular). He points out that when we affiliate solely with labels, each group views itself as fundamentally separate and superior, which not only hampers unity but also removes individual responsibility. We tend to see the problems of our society primarily in the "other side." Rav Kook explains that "The Charedi, thinking they belong to the group called 'the Charedim,' looks down at the 'chiloni' camp. When issues of self-development and teshuva arise, he immediately thinks they are only relevant for 'chilonim,' who don't keep the Torah, rather than realizing that the issues are within himself. Conversely, someone from the 'chiloni' camp, aligned with what they consider a secular perspective, might dismiss the concept of teshuva and the messages of our traditions as irrelevant to them, viewing it strictly as a Chareidi concern. In the end, both sides remain static, and the question becomes, if it's always the other side's fault, how will we ever develop as a people?" Rav Kook therefore urges us to shed these divisive labels from our camps. He advocates for a broader identity that transcends partisan lines—seeing each other first and foremost as members of Am Yisrael. Our primary focus should be on personal growth not finding fault in the other.

"QS: That makes sense, but doesn't this approach just ignore our differences, focusing instead only on personal growth and not building the integration of diversity that you spoke about before?

RM: You're absolutely right to highlight that. The goal of removing labels isn't to overlook our differences but to harness them constructively. In Orot HaTechiyah 18, Rav Kook provides a blueprint for how we can use these differences to forge a stronger collective whole. He identifies three ideological forces consistently present among the Jewish people: the Holy, the National, and the Universal.

The "Holy" represents the spiritual and religious dimensions of our Jewish life, focusing on the sacred texts, rituals, and observances that deepen our connection to our faith. The "National" pertains to our collective identity as a people, emphasizing political and social autonomy and our shared historical destiny. The "Universal" addresses our role within the wider world, highlighting ethical and moral responsibilities that transcend Jewish identity and appeal to universal human values.

Each of these forces, if taken to an extreme, can become destructive. However, when synthesized, they complement and enhance one another. Rav Kook explains that disunity often stems from demonizing differing opinions and refusing to engage with them, focusing instead solely on perceived negatives. To move past this, we must extend beyond mere tolerance and actively explore the positive contributions that different ideologies can offer.

This proactive approach not only mitigates the potential for extremism within any single viewpoint but also enriches our collective Jewish life, empowering us to act with unified strength and purpose. When we refuse to engage with the other side, all parties risk becoming the worst versions of themselves. Conversely, when these perspectives are integrated, we cultivate a community that brings out the best in each other, forming a robust and harmonious people.



Is Turkey Kosher?

Question: This weekend marks American Thanksgiving, and the "minhag" is to eat turkey. My friend mentioned that there is a halachic issue with eating turkey, and it might not be kosher. Is there any truth to his claim? My entire family, friends, and rabbis eat turkey – are they all mistaken, and is he the only one who is right?

Answer:

You raise an interesting question. It's important to note that your family, friends, and rabbis are not mistaken, as they have valid halachic reasons for eating turkey. However, your friend has indeed touched on a halachic issue that arose with the discovery of the turkey.

In Parashat Shemini, the Torah lists the signs of kosher animals, fish, and birds. When it comes to birds and fowl, however, the Torah does not provide signs but rather lists non-kosher birds, implying that all others are permissible.

Nevertheless, the sages of the Talmud detailed signs for identifying kosher birds in Mishnah Chullin (Chapter 3, Mishnah 6). However, when this Mishnah was codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 82:3), the Rema ruled that these signs alone are insufficient. Only birds with a tradition of being eaten for generations are considered kosher, and this halacha should not be changed. Thus, even if a bird exhibits all the kosher signs, one should avoid eating it without a tradition affirming its permissibility.

This ruling led to significant debate regarding the turkey, which was discovered only after the Americas were found in the late 15th century. Clearly, there was no longstanding tradition of eating turkey by Jews. As a result, prominent rabbis, such as Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, ruled that turkey is not kosher (despite meeting the kosher criteria) due to the lack of a historical tradition.

On the other hand, various rabbis found reasons to permit turkey. For example, the Darkei Teshuvah (Yoreh De'ah 82) explains that the need for tradition applies only to confirming that a bird is not a predator. Since it has been observed over generations that turkeys are not predatory, this suffices as a tradition. In addition, the Netziv in his Meshiv Davar (2:22) argued that since eating turkey has become customary, this itself constitutes a tradition permitting it, even though the practice only began in the 15th century.

In practice, most rabbis today permit eating turkey, so you can enjoy your Thanksgiving meal with confidence. However, there are still rabbis and individuals who refrain from eating turkey due to the lack of an ancient tradition affirming its permissibility.



The Haftara of Toldot

This year the Haftara is the traditional one for the day before Rosh Chodesh. This article will explore the themes of the usual haftara for Parshat Toldot.

The Haftara consists of the opening prophecies of Sefer Malachi. It begins with G-d's declaration that He loves Yaakov/the Jewish people. When the Jews ask in what sense this is true, G-d responds that He accepted Yaakov and rejected/hated Esav. Strikingly, no reason is offered for this rejection of Esav, though some commentaries assume it must be due to his actions (or the actions of Edom, the nation that descends from him). Even if this is the case, the silence of the verses could lead one to believe that G-d's love for the Jewish people is a fact that need not be explained or justified. One might take this farther and think that Jews need not worry about their actions, as G-d simply loves them.

It is for that reason that the continuation of the prophecy is so striking.

A son should honor his father, and a slave his master. Now if I were a father, where would be the honor due Me?

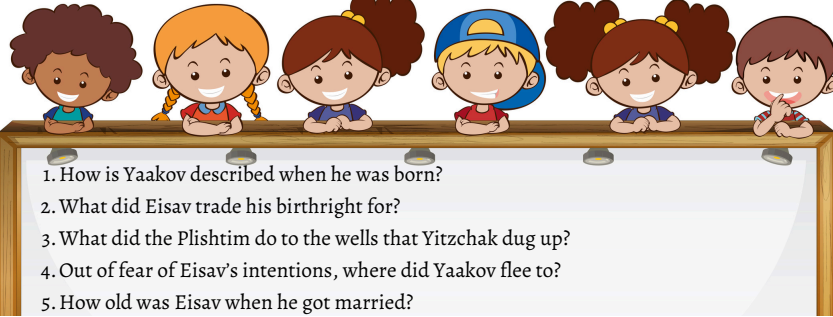
And if I were a master, where would be the reverence due Me? – said the G-d of Hosts to you, O priests who scorn My name.

"But you ask, 'How have we scorned Your name?' You offer defiled food on My altar. But you ask, 'How have we defiled You?' By saying, 'G-d's table can be treated with scorn.' (Malachim 1:6-7, JPS)

The Navi sets up the metaphor that would best explain why the Jews do not need to justify G-d's love of them – they are His children. Just as a parent's love is unconditional, so too is G-d's. Instead, this metaphor is turned into rebuke – if Jews are children, they need to respect G-d, and they have not.

As Ibn Ezra notes, "after explaining how G-d loved Yaakov, he began to rebuke the most respected among them, namely the teachers of Torah, the priests."

It is precisely at the moment when the extent of chosenness is noted, that G-d needs to remind the most privileged that as much as relationship with G-d is a privilege, it is first and foremost a responsibility.



1. How is Yaakov described when he was born?
2. What did Eisav trade his birthright for?
3. What did the Plishtim do to the wells that Yitzchak dug up?
4. Out of fear of Eisav's intentions, where did Yaakov flee to?
5. How old was Eisav when he got married?

1. Yaakov was clutching the heel of Eisav.
2. Lentil stew that Yaakov had cooked.
3. They filled them with dirt, in order to dry them out.
4. He went to Charan, to Rivka's brother, Lavan's house.
5. 40 years old.

Answers:

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Guttenberg
Sunday	Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Seudah	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz & Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann & Rabbi Lax
	Exploring the Siddur- Understanding the prayers	Zoom	10:00 AM	R' Rakovsky
	Tzurba Chabura	Zoom	1:00PM	Mrs Sonenberg - register at yoatzot.ca/chabura
Monday	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
	Mizrachi Monday Night Learning	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	8:00 PM	Rabbi Thau
Tuesday	Tzurba Chaburah: Niddah	Zoom	10:00AM	Mrs. Sonenberg - register at yoatzot.ca/chabura
	Lunch & Learn	Downtown	Bi-Weekly	Rotating BMZD Speakers
	"Is This the Real Life? Is This Just Fantasy?" Mystic Creatures in Tanach	Zoom	2:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:15 PM	Rabbi Mann
Wednesday	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	8:00 PM	Rabbi Mann
Thursday	Tanach: Sefer Melachim A	Zoom: tiny.cc/BMZDTanach	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
Thursday Mishmar	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Shomrai Shabbos	8:00 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Mizrachi Mishmar	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	8:00 PM	Rabbi Thau
	Men's Gemara Iyun - Moed Katan	BAYT Rabbi's Office	8:00 PM	R' Diena
Friday	Kabbalat Shabbat	Netivot HaTorah	Bi-weekly	Young Shlichim
Sun-Thu	Bekiut Gemara - Yevamot	Shaarei Shomayim	7:45 Sunday, 6:30 (Mon-Thurs)	R' Diena

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Shabbaton	29 Heshvan (Nov 30) Parshat Toldot	Shaarei Shomayim
	Kabbalat Shabbat	Shaarei Shomayim Rabbi Pituchey-Chotam
	Friday Night Drasha	Shaarei Shomayim Rabbi Thau
	Youth Tisch	Hosted by the Milevsky Family
	Community Tisch	Hosted by the Berliner Family
	Shacharit Drasha	Shaarei Shomayim Rabbi Mann
	Shacharit Drasha 9:30 Minyan	Shaarei Shomayim Rabbi Thau
	Seuda Shlishit Derasha	Shaarei Shomayim Rabbi Mann

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