

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Vayelech

6 Tishrei, 5780/October 5, 2019

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Enjoy this mini-edition of Toronto Torah; we expect to return for Parshat Noach. וגמר חתימה טובה

Bring Your Whole Family!

Rabbi Sammy Bergman

The mitzvah of *Hakhel*, a commandment described in Parshat Vayelech, requires us to gather every member of the Jewish people to hear the Torah read. Surprisingly, we are even instructed to bring along our children (Deuteronomy 31:12). Many commentators struggle to explain why the Torah requires bringing children to hear the reading of the Torah, when they are too young to understand the Torah's contents.

The benefit of the children

Some commentators suggest that the children referred to are old enough to gain from listening to the Torah. Ramban (31:13) suggests that these children are "those in their younger years, who will soon be educated". Similarly, Rabbi Yosef Bechor Shor (31:12) posits that the text refers to

"fourteen and fifteen-year-old [children] who understand what is told to them".

However, Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (*HaKtav v'haKabbalah*) points out that the term "*taf*" utilized here refers to infants elsewhere in the Torah (see Bamidbar 31:17). Further, in 31:13 the Torah describes children who will "listen and learn" with another term, "*Ubneihem*", "their children". This implies that the term "*taf*" indicates younger children whom we are obligated to bring to Hakhel despite their inability to learn from the experience.

The benefit of the parents

Rashi (31:12) quotes the Talmud (Chagigah 3a) which suggests that the Torah commands us to bring our children so that we will be rewarded. However, as Rabbi Ephraim Luntschitz

(*Kli Yakar*) points out, the Talmud's approach is difficult. Why would we be rewarded for dragging infants to Hakhel when they don't gain from it?

Rabbi David Tzvi Hoffman (*ibid.*) suggests that parents who bring their infants to Hakhel are rewarded for demonstrating their commitment to raising their children to live a Torah lifestyle. The children are not ready now, but the parents show their eagerness to begin.

Alternatively, Rabbi Mecklenburg posits that Jewish mothers certainly would bring their children to Hakhel even had they not been commanded to do so. The Torah makes bringing one's infants to Hakhel a mitzvah to reward Jewish mothers for their natural dedication.

sbergman@torontotorah.com

Holy Land Halachah: Fasting on Yom Kippur in the IDF

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Shu"t Kishrei Milchamah 4:29
Rabbi Eyal Karim, IDF Chief Rabbi

Question: How should soldiers who are on-call conduct themselves during Yom Kippur? Is it preferable to fast, and eat only if called into action, or to start eating small amounts (less than the punishable amount) immediately in the morning, so that in case they are called, they won't need to eat larger amounts?

Answer: Rabbi Karim explains that among halachic authorities, there are two distinct approaches to understanding the prohibition against eating on Yom Kippur:

- According to some (e.g. Chatam Sofer and Minchat Chinuch), the primary purpose of the fast is not

the prohibition against eating itself; rather, it is the positive commandment to fast.

- According to others (e.g. Afikei Yam), the prohibition against eating on Yom Kippur is not different from any other food-related restrictions, such as those against non-kosher food.

Rabbi Karim initially suggests that the answer to our question depends on the aforementioned opinions: Those who believe that the prohibition against eating during Yom Kippur is not essentially different from other eating prohibitions, should logically conclude that it is better to eat small amounts during the whole day, and refrain from a more severe violation by eating an amount that is punishable. Those who

see the act of fasting as the primary aspect of the mitzvah, and not the prohibition against eating, may argue that it is preferable not to eat at all, and to keep the fast for as long as possible. Rabbi Karim continues to demonstrate that, indeed, this question, when applied to a sick person, is disputed among halachic authorities.

In the final analysis of our case, Rabbi Karim posits that everyone would agree that it is better for a soldier on duty to eat small amounts, beginning in the morning. The reason is that while a sick person is (usually) in control of his time, soldiers on-call may be required to act immediately, and won't have time to eat properly, risking the entire operation.

bweintraub@torontotorah.com

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Shemot 20:22 warns, “When you make a stone altar for Me, do not make it of hewn stone; you have raised your blade upon it, and desecrated it.” This teaches that we may not cut the stones of the altar with iron.. There is some debate as to whether we may use stones that were cut before their dedication, but certainly, we may not use iron tools to shape the stones once they have been dedicated. (See Tosafot Succah 49a and Minchat Chinuch 40:2.)

Sefer haChinuch counts this as the Torah’s 40th mitzvah, and explains that iron symbolizes the spilling of blood, as well as general destruction. It is inappropriate to build an altar, the locus of atonement and the site at which blessings and peace are generated, with a destructive tool.

We traditionally identify our own dining tables as a form of altar, because the food we distribute to needy people can provide atonement, like a korban. (Berachot 55a) This is one reason why people cover or remove knives during *birkat hamazon*. (Beit Yosef Orach Chaim 180)

It is noteworthy that we do use iron for other mitzvot. For example, the Rambam ruled that the ideal material for a milah knife is iron. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Milah 2:1; see Perishah to Tur Yoreh Deah 264:7 and Chatam Sofer to Shabbat 134b for fascinating related comments.)

torczyner@torontotorah.com

Weekly Highlights: Oct. 5 – Oct. 11 / 6 Tishrei – 12 Tishrei
Most of our classes do not meet this week, but there are opportunities to learn!

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Oct. 4-5				
8:40 AM	Ezer Diena	Parshah	BAYT	TFBM
10:30 AM	R’ Alex Hecht	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	After Hashkamah
After musaf	Ezer Diena	Derashah	BAYT	Main Shul
After minchah	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Sun. Oct. 6				
8:15 AM	R’ Alex Hecht	Waiting After Cheese	Yeshivat Or Chaim	
9:15 AM	R’ Sammy Bergman	Chagigah, Chasidut, Chevra	Shaarei Shomayim	Teens
Tue. Oct. 8				
Erev Yom Kippur				
10:00 AM	R’ Sammy Bergman	Bava Metzia	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced
After Kol Nidrei	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Derashah	BAYT	TFBM
Wed. Oct. 9				
Yom Kippur				
Before Yizkor	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Derashah	BAYT	Milevsky BM
2:00 PM	Ezer Diena	The Psychology of Communal Confession	BAYT	Gruda Bais Medrash
After musaf until minchah	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	The Fast I Choose: The Haftorah of Yom Kippur	BAYT	Milevsky Bais Medrash
Before Neilah	Ezer Diena	Derashah	BAYT	Milevsky Bais Medrash

For University Men, at Yeshivat Or Chaim

10:00 AM Sunday, R’ Aaron Greenberg, Gemara Shabbat

11:00 AM Sunday, Beit Midrash Rotation: Contemporary Halachah: R’ Alex Hecht, Waiting After Cheese

8:30 AM Wednesday, Ezer Diena, Mishlei—Not this week

8:30 AM Friday, R’ Mordechai Torczyner, Parshah—Not this week

WOMEN’S BEIT MIDRASH for University and Adult Women, at Ulpanat Orot, Coming Soon

Seder Boker for Men with Rabbi Moshe Yeres, at Yeshivat Or Chaim

10:00 AM to Noon, Mon. Masechet Megilah, Orot of Rav Kook, Chovot haLevavot

Our “Elul Zman” semester ends with Yom Kippur; “Choref Zman” begins October 28

G-d-willing, Toronto Torah will return for Shabbat Parshat Noach!

COMING UP: INAUGURATION OF THE NUSBAUM FAMILY MEDICAL ETHICS AND HALACHAH INSTITUTE!

7:30 PM Sunday November 3, at Yeshivat Or Chaim, Featuring Rabbi Dr. Edward Reichmann

Free of Charge, Open to All