

# Toronto Torah

## Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Pinchas

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### Novel Consistency

Rabbi Alex Hecht

A midrash (quoted in the introduction to *Ein Yaakov*) records a discussion among four sages about which verse in the Torah captures its “foundational principle”:

- Ben Zoma says: “Hear O Israel: Hashem is our G-d; Hashem is One.” (Devarim 6:4)
- Ben Azzai says: “On the day that G-d created man, in His likeness He made him.” (Bereishit 5:1)
- Ben Nanas says: “And you shall love your fellow as yourself.” (Vayikra 19:18)
- Finally, Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi cites a verse from our parshah: “The one lamb you shall bring in the morning, and the other lamb you shall bring in the afternoon.” (Bamidbar 28:4)

Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi’s opinion seems a bit out of place. Whereas the other sages propose verses describing acceptance of G-d’s sovereignty, the special nature of humankind, and the mandate to treat our brethren properly, Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi cites a verse about the *korban tamid*, the twice-daily sacrifice! And to make matters more perplexing, this midrash rules that the law is in accordance with Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi’s opinion. What is it about the *korban tamid* that earns it the supreme status as the “foundational principle of the Torah”?

The *korban tamid* teaches the importance of consistency. The *tamid* was simple: it consisted of only one sheep, and it was brought during the same two times every day. It may not have evoked the same level of elation as the awesome Yom Kippur service or the unique *korbanot* of the Festivals.

Nevertheless, the *tamid* was, without exception, brought day in and day out.

The goal of this twice-daily ritual was to strengthen our bond with G-d. Sefer HaChinuch (401) writes that the *korban tamid* is brought before and after our busy days spent labouring and meeting our physical needs. It therefore serves as a reminder to us that everything we have is from Hashem, and that everything we do – even that which we consider mundane – must be in His service. If even a single day goes by without this awareness being reinforced, it will inevitably be dulled.

However, our sages understood the pitfalls of a daily observance: The mishnaic sage Rabbi Shimon said, “When you pray, do not make your prayer a fixed routine, but rather [beg for] compassion and supplication before the Omnipresent.” (Avot 2:18, Artscroll tr.) In another mishnah, Rabbi Eliezer said that one who makes his prayer “fixed” has failed to offer genuine supplication. (Berachot 4:4) These teachings suggest that a routine performed identically at prescribed times each day, like the *korban tamid*, may lack essential elements of *Avodat Hashem* [service of G-d].

Of course, as the Talmud notes, the deficiency of “fixed” prayer does not necessarily stem from frequency, but from our attitude. Therefore, “fixed” means that a person treats prayer like a burden they wish to quickly unload, does not recite his prayer or a form of supplication, or does not introduce a novel element based on personal needs. (Berachot 29b) Nonetheless, it is

certainly challenging to avoid performing frequent mitzvot by rote. What can we do to avoid this problem?

Our sages indicate that one way to sustain enthusiasm for mitzvot is via preparation. A mishnah describes how the “early pious ones” would wait and reflect for an hour before beginning to pray, in order to properly direct their concentration to Hashem. (Berachot 5:1) In order to concentrate properly during prayer, it is necessary to remove extraneous thoughts from one’s mind, which can only be accomplished with deliberate preparation. (Rambam, Hilchot Tefillah 4:16)

This brings us back to the *korban tamid*, which had an extensive preparation process. Although the sacrificial service was performed in the morning, the animal was inspected, coveted roles were assigned through lotteries, and the altar was prepared, before morning arrived – and the Kohanim waited in excited anticipation of sunrise. (Tamid 28a, 30a-b)

Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi’s contention that the verse describing the *korban tamid* is the “foundational principle of the Torah” conveys that genuine service of Hashem is not primarily expressed through the occasional extraordinary action, but rather by a steadfast and enthusiastic commitment to our everyday goals and obligations. Nevertheless, this consistent service requires deliberate preparation, and the realization that each time we perform a mitzvah, a novel opportunity is presented to connect with Hashem in new ways.

### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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**Summary**

In Chapter 29, [King] David and his men sought to accompany the Philistines to a battle against the Jews, but ended up leaving before the war. When David and his men returned to their base in Tziklag, they discovered that the Amalekites had raided the town, taken their wives and children (including David's two wives), and burned the city. The soldiers cried in anguish and despair. (30:1-5)

David called Evyatar the Kohen to inquire of G-d, using the Ephod, whether he should chase the Amalekites and whether he would be successful. G-d answered in the affirmative. (30:6-8)

David took six hundred men to pursue the Amalekites. Two hundred halted at the Besor wadi, too weak to go on. While continuing, David and his men found an Egyptian man. They fed him and inquired who he was. He responded that he was a slave of an Amalekite who had been with them when they burned Tziklag; his master had abandoned him when he fell ill. David asked if he would take him to the Amalekite camp. After gaining assurance that David would not return him to his master, the Egyptian

agreed. David and his men fought the Amalekites and killed all but four hundred young men, who escaped on camels. They retrieved their families and property and discovered no one missing. (30:9-19)

When they returned from the battle, the fighters wanted to deny spoils to the soldiers who had remained behind. David, however, instituted a rule that spoils would be divided between both the soldiers who fought and those who remained behind to guard property. David also sent some spoils to leaders of the tribe of Judah. (30:20-31)

**Insight**

Rabbi Dr. Shraga Bar-On notes that central to David's success was the humane way in which David treated the slave, as contrasted with the way the Amalekites had. The Amalekite master had abandoned him due to his illness. David and his men revived the slave by providing him food, before they understood how strategic he would be. This act of kindness motivated the slave to guide David's army to the Amalekite army, leading to their victory. (<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/as-a-well-robbed-by-buckets-the-battle-for-the->

[human-spirit-in-the-days-of-covid-19/](https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/as-a-well-robbed-by-buckets-the-battle-for-the-human-spirit-in-the-days-of-covid-19/))

David's uniqueness also stands out in that he recognized the value of contributions to society other than those provided by force. Thus, David instituted a law that all who contributed to the war effort, whether as active soldiers or not, would have their contributions recognized and would share in the spoils. Rabbi Dr. Bar-On notes that the text refers to the successful warriors who wanted to deny the other soldiers their share as "evil".

It is worth noting that David's unique sensitivities emerge as a foil to the Amalekites, who throughout Tanach are described as taking advantage of the weak. David thus takes care of even starving slaves and recognizes the contribution of the weaker soldiers, setting him apart from the perennial moral enemy of the Jews.

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**Holy Land Halachah: Entering the Kotel Plaza While Tamei****Rabbi Sammy Bergman****Rabbi Ovadia Yosef****Yabia Omer Volume 9 (Yoreh Deah):11**

Question: Is a person who is *tamei* (impure) from a bodily secretion permitted to visit the Western Wall without immersing in a mikvah?

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef rules that such a person may enter the Kotel Plaza.

He begins by addressing a historical question: which structure was the Western Wall originally part of? He cites Rabbi David ibn Abi Zimra (Responsa of Radbaz 2:691) and Rabbi Avraham Danzig (Chochmat Adam, Laws of the Land Chapter 8), who held that the Western Wall was part of the wall surrounding the courtyard of the Temple itself. According to this approach, Rabbi Yosef notes that the Kotel Plaza would have the status of the Temple Mount itself. A mishnah (Kelim 1:8) dictates that a *niddah* is forbidden from entering the Temple Mount, and the Talmud (Pesachim 67a) extends this prohibition to a man who is *tamei* due to certain bodily emissions. Therefore, if we followed the opinions of the Radbaz and the Chochmat Adam, people with these types of *tumah* could not enter the Kotel Plaza.

However, Rabbi Yosef notes that "our own eyes observe that no one is careful" about these restrictions. Therefore, he concludes that the opinion of Rabbi Avraham Bornstein (Responsa of Avnei Nezer 450), who argues that the Western Wall is a remnant of the wall around the entire Temple Mount, is correct.

Rabbi Yosef supports this from the words of the Radbaz

himself, who claims (ibid.) that the rock under the Islamic shrine known as the Dome of the Rock is the same as the Foundation Stone which was located at the western end of the Holy of Holies. Rabbi Yosef quotes "experts" who estimate that the Dome of the Rock is about 80 meters - more than 160 cubits - away from the Western Wall. However, the wall of the Temple court was at most 38 cubits away from the Foundation Stone! Therefore, the Western Wall must be a remnant of the wall around the Temple Mount, which means the Kotel Plaza is outside the Temple Mount, and may be used by people who have these forms of *tumah*.

Although the Western Wall is not part of the Temple Mount, Rabbi Yosef notes that thousands of Jews gather to pray in the Kotel Plaza daily and that it, therefore, has the status of a synagogue. He points out that some Jews have had a custom for a *niddah* to avoid entering a synagogue. Nevertheless, Rabbi Yosef quotes Rabbeinu Yerucham ben Meshulam (26:3) and Rabbi Yosef Karo (Beit Yosef Orach Chaim 88), who argue that there is no basis for this custom. Therefore, having these forms of *tumah* would not prevent anyone from praying at the Kotel Plaza.

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**Biography**  
**Rabbi Moshe Chaim**  
**Luzzatto**  
Rabbi Adam Friedmann

Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707-1746) was born in Padua, Italy. He was recognized as a prodigy from a young age, quickly mastering Jewish rabbinical literature and Kabbalah, in addition to training in science and general literature. Early on, Moshe Chaim and a group of other aspiring Kabbalists formed a fellowship called "Mevakshei Hashem" (seekers of G-d). This group engaged in intensive study of mysticism together with other Torah knowledge, eventually setting up their own beit midrash.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim (Ramcha"l) first reported being visited by a *maggid*, an angel who revealed Kabbalistic secrets to him, at the age of twenty! However, the combination of Rabbi Moshe Chaim's youth, the cultic appearance of the "Mevakshei Hashem" group and lingering concerns of Sabbateanism caused a backlash. Ramcha"l was forced to give up his chest of writings and swear to stop writing and teaching Kabbalah. Ultimately, the controversy caused him to leave Italy in 1735 and settle in Amsterdam, where a more liberal atmosphere would allow him to continue his intellectual pursuits unhindered. In 1743, Ramcha"l left Amsterdam with his family and moved to Israel, settling in Akko. He and his family died there two years later, in a plague.

Ramcha"l's literary output was prodigious and multifaceted. His work has proved so influential, in such varied spheres, that he is one of the most important rabbinic figures in the modern era. He wrote literature including plays, poems and stories in a biblical style. This work was hailed by the early Haskalah writers as the source of modern Hebrew literature. Ramcha"l's most famous book, *Mesilat Yesharim*, was adopted by the mussar school and became one of the central texts of Jewish ethics. His *Derech Hashem* became a foundational text in modern Jewish philosophy.

Ramcha"l's Kabbalistic thought profoundly influenced one of his greatest contemporary admirers, the Vilna Gaon. The ideas in Ramcha"l's *Ma'amar haGeulah*, which outlines the redemption process, are also found in works of the Vilna Gaon's school (e.g. *Kol haTor*), Rav Kook (e.g. *Orot haKodesh*), and contemporary Kabbalists such as Rabbi Chaim Cohen (Chalba"n, - see his work *Hakitzu veRaninu*).

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**Torah and Translation**  
**The Transition from Exile to Redemption**  
R' M. C. Luzzatto, *Ma'amar haGeulah*, Excerpts of Ch. 3, 8  
Translated by Rabbi Adam Friedmann

בשעה שיצאו ישראל בגלות נפרש מסך גדול ומחיצה רעה ביניהם ובין אביהם שבשמים. וזהו שכתוב "כי אם עונותיכם היו מבדילים" וגו', ונתפרש המעשה ביד ירמיה הנביא "סכותה בענן לך" וגו'. ומפני רחמי ה"ה שהוא מרחם את ישראל - נתגבר אור הקדושה ובקע את המחיצה הזאת בקיעות רבות, ונמצאו הבקיעות האלה כמו חלונות - כמו חרכים פתוחים במחיצה הזאת. אבל הפתח הגדול שהיה פתוח בראשונה לא היה פתוח אחרי כן. והנה על אלה הבקיעות נאמר "משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרכים"...

והנה, החלונות האלה מאז נפתחו - ניתן להם חק וגבול לעמוד פתוחים כל ימי הגלות ולא יסגרו פן יחרב העולם רגע אחד, וכאשר תבוא גאולתינו במהרה בימינו, הנה יפתח השער הסגור שנית, והחלונות לא יזכרו. והאמת כי כבר כלו פעולתם והלכו להם. וכבר נאמר 'דָּבָר אֶחָד לְדוֹר וְלֹא שְׁנֵי דְבָרִים לְדוֹר' ועל כן בבא ממשלת השער לא תעמוד ממשלת החלונות כלל, וסוד הענין 'אין מלכות נוגעת בחברתה אפילו כמלא נימא'...

ונמצא שהשער יהיה נבנה - אבל למעלה, ולא נודע ממנו למטה עד תום ממשלת החלונות כאשר ניתן להם בראשונה. והבן מאד כי הדברים עצמים ומושרשים בעמקי החכמה. ועל כן האור יהיה הולך ומחשיך כי החלונות נסתמים, ואור השער לא נגלה. והנה בשעה אחד ישלימו להסתם החלונות ותתגלה מיד פתיחת השער. ונמצא שאין בין זה לזה כלום - אלא זה נכנס וזה יוצא, שאם לא כן באותו הרגע היה העולם חרב. אך עם כל זה, כיון שכבר יגיעו החלונות לסתימה הזאת נראית פעולתם למטה, והיא עת חשכה גדולה, והוא לא יעמוד הרבה כי פתיחת השער יתחזק וישוב האור חזק מבראשונה.

When the Jewish people went into exile, a great veil and partition was stretched out between and them and their Father in Heaven. This is [the meaning of] the verse "for your sins separated... (Isaiah 59:2)". This reality was explained by Jeremiah the prophet, "you have covered with a cloud... (Eichah 3:44)". And because of the mercy of G-d who is merciful to Israel - the light of holiness was strengthened and burst through this partition in many breaches, and these breaches became like windows - like open cracks in this partition. However, the big gate [opening] which was originally open was not open afterwards. Regarding these breaches it is written, "He watches through the windows; He peeks through the cracks (Song of Songs 2:9)"...

Behold, from the time that these windows were opened - they were given a rule and boundary to remain open all the days of the exile and not be closed, lest the world be destroyed in a moment. And when our redemption comes, quickly in our days, the closed gate will open again, and the windows will be forgotten. And the truth is [that at this point] their usefulness will already have passed. And it has already been stated, "One leader for a generation and not two leaders for a generation (Sanhedrin 8a)" and therefore when the regime of the gate arrives, the regime of the windows will not remain at all. And the secret of the matter is "One kingdom does not overlap with its fellow even by a hair's breadth (Berachot 48b)" ...

Although the gate will be built above [i.e. in higher spiritual realms], we won't know of it below until the end of the regime of the windows, as was prescribed for them originally. Understand [this] well because these are great words rooted in the depths of wisdom. Therefore, the light will continue to darken because the windows are closing, and the light of the gate has not been revealed. And in one moment the windows will close completely, and immediately the opening of the gate will be revealed. It turns out that there will be no time between one and the other at all - rather, this one enters and that one exits, because otherwise, in that moment, the world would be destroyed. Nevertheless, since [at that time] the windows [will] have already closed, their effect will be perceived below, and it [will be] a time of great darkness, but it will not last [long], since the opening of the gate will increase and the light will become stronger than it was originally.



## **This Week on Zoom!**

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### **SPECIAL PROGRAMMING**

**Sunday July 12**

**10 AM EDT: Grieving for Zion: Four Perspectives**

**<http://tiny.cc/threeweeks>**

**Dedicated by Rabbi Avraham Aryaiah Witty and Laya Etta Witty, and Rebbetzin Shulamith P. Witty,  
in memory of Rabbi Yitzchak Witty ז"ל נה הלוי ז"ל ר' נח הלי ז"ל**

**RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER, TANACH: CHAZON: WHO ASKED YOU TO TRAMPLE THROUGH MY YARD?**

**RABBI ALEX HECHT, PRAYER: KINOT: DESPAIR OR HOPE?**

**RABBI DR. MOSHE YERES, HALACHAH: TURN DOWN THE MUSIC; THE TEMPLE IS BURNING**

**EZER DIENA, HISTORY: ANNOUNCING A FAST? WHAT FOR?**

**Tuesday July 14**

**8:30 PM Rosh Kollel Swap with the YU Torah MiTzion Kollel of Chicago**

**THIS WEEK: RABBI REUVEN BRAND, STAYING IN TOUCH: GREAT RABBINIC LETTERS**

**Wednesday July 15**

**10 AM EDT Clashes in Jewish Publishing**

**With Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Week 2: The Copyright Battle for the Rambam**

### **DAILY**

**Adult Seder Boker, with Rabbi Moshe Yeres**

**Mondays-Thursdays at 10:00 AM EDT (men)**

**Mondays and Wednesdays: Gemara, Orot haTeshuvah**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays: Parshah, Tanach**

### **WEEKLY**

**Sunday July 12**

**9:15 AM EDT Contemporary Halachah with Netanel Klein** not this week

**10 AM EDT Gemara Shabbat for university students, with Rabbi Aaron Greenberg (pwd: 613613)**

**11 AM EDT Contemporary Halachah Rotation (university)** not this week

**8:00 PM EDT Gemara Avodah Zarah, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men)**

**Monday July 13**

**8:45 AM EDT She'arim baTefillah Chabura for university students, with Rabbi Alex Hecht**

**8:30 PM EDT Gemara Shabbat, Chap. 13, with Rabbi Moshe Yeres**

**Tuesday July 14**

**8:00 PM EDT Shoftim, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men)** (abbreviated due to 8:30 program listed above)

**Wednesday July 15**

**7:00 PM EDT Stories from the Talmud, with Rabbi Alex Hecht**

**Thursday July 16**

**2:15 PM EDT Haftarot of the Three Weeks for university students, with Ezer Diena**

**8:30 PM EDT Gemara Beitzah, with Ezer Diena (men)**

**Friday July 17**

**8:30 AM EDT Parshah Chabura for university students, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

**10:30 AM Bava Metzia Perek 6, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

### **NOW ON SUMMER HIATUS**

**Tuesdays: 1:30 PM EDT Yeshayah, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

**Thursdays: 1:30 PM EDT Shemuel, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (women)**

**Thursdays: 9:00 PM EDT Gemara b'Iyun: Laws of Yom Tov, university students, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman (women)**

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