

# Toronto Torah

## Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Sh'lach

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**This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Arthur and Bev Herzig for the yahrtzeit of Arthur's mother, Lola Herzig, Leah Malla Chava bat Leibel z"l**

**This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Shloimie and Annie Romberg for the yahrtzeits of Annie's father, Yisrael ben Yosef uMalka Frimet (Isidore Schindelheim) z"l, and Shloimie's uncle and aunt, Pinya and Hendel Rondberg, HY"D, who perished in the Kielce pogrom on 5 Tammuz 1946**

### 12 Failed; 2 Succeeded

### Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

As a survivor of one failed espionage mission, Yehoshua likely thought carefully before sending a reconnaissance team into the city of Yericho, as recorded in our haftorah. (Yehoshua 2) How did Yehoshua shape his mission, and what can we learn for ourselves?

Commentators identify a range of differences between the missions. In particular, Rabbi Meir Leibush picked up on the fact that Moshe sent twelve spies while Yehoshua sent two, as well as the fact that Tanach uses different Hebrew words to describe the missions of the two groups. He explained, "If the nation sends spies to see whether the land is good or not... then they send a leader from each tribe. They do not depend on lesser men, and no tribe depends on another tribe's emissary. Each sends one upon whom they will depend, for he will check to see whether the land is suited for his tribe and its business, whether farming or shepherding or trade or shipping." (Malbim to Yehoshua 2:1) In other words, a central feature of Moshe's mission was that each tribe sent its own spy, not trusting the report of a member of a different tribe. Why was trusting so difficult for us?

A major reason we don't trust is experience; from time to time, others disappoint us. Rabbi Moshe Zvi Veksler, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivot Bnei Akiva in Bnei Brak, adds that people who are not personally trustworthy have difficulty placing faith in others:

"When one acts with righteousness and trustworthiness, not trying to take advantage and not doing things to fool the other, then he also does not suspect others of acting with trickery or being afflicted with a lack of righteousness." ([link](#))

But Judaism itself deserves some of the blame; our religion discourages faith in human beings. Consider the verse, "Cursed is the person who trusts in man," as opposed to trusting G-d. (Yirmiyahu 17:5) Or talmudic advice like, "Many should be those who seek your welfare; reveal your secret to one in one thousand." (Yevamot 63b) Or rabbinic teachings like those of Rabbeinu Bahya in 11<sup>th</sup> century Spain, "The factors which enable trust from one who trusts people are seven... And when we investigate these seven factors, they are not found at all in human beings." (Chovot haLevavot, Sha'ar haBitachon 2)

The problem with all of this distrust, and particularly that which is rooted in Judaism, is that Judaism simultaneously **requires** us to trust. We are charged to assume the best of others (Avot 1:6), and one who suspects people inappropriately is punished and owes them a blessing. (Berachot 31b, Shabbat 97a) We must trust prophets (Devarim 18:19) and sages (ibid. 17:11), and a judge is obligated to trust litigants by default. (Minchat Chinuch 81) All of which leaves us in a dilemma - to trust, or not to trust?

One answer may be to develop a trusting personality, even if we are not to trust in specific situations. As the Talmud teaches, Hashem calls the Jews "believers, descendants of believers." (Shabbat ibid.) It is one thing to believe; it is another to be a believer. While placing trust in human beings may lead to letdown, and may even be theologically disastrous if it comes at the expense of trust in G-d, we must nonetheless learn to trust by default. It is in our own best interest.

A person who is afraid to trust looks for negatives in others, to justify cynicism. A person who is afraid to trust will justify personal impropriety because "everyone is doing it." A person who is afraid to trust others may also lack the ability to trust herself. And a person who does not trust others may also have trouble trusting G-d. [See Maharal, Netivot Olam, Netiv haEmunah 1.] We are labelled "believers" because our ancestors at the Sea placed their trust in G-d and in Moshe; this is a trait we need to cultivate in ourselves.

As we saw from the Malbim, Moshe sent twelve spies because he saw that the tribes did not trust each other. Yehoshua, though, sent only two; perhaps he felt that his generation could trust each other. His decision was vindicated when the two spies came back with a positive report and were trusted by the nation, and so that generation entered the Land with confidence.

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**Summary**

This chapter recounts the less than glorious conclusion of King Shlomo's career. As we began to see in Chapter 3, Shlomo married wives from many other nations, including neighbouring nations such as Amon and Moav. G-d had warned the Jews not to intermarry with these nations for fear of negative religious influences, in addition to the special prohibition for a king to take many wives. (1-3) In his old age, Shlomo is unable to repel the idolatrous influences of his foreign wives. He accedes to their desire to serve the idols of their native lands, and builds altars for this worship on the hills around Jerusalem. (4-8)

G-d is angered by this. After all, He had appeared personally to Shlomo twice and had warned him about following other gods. G-d informs Shlomo that as a consequence of his actions, the kingship will be taken from him and given to his servant. However, out of deference to David, G-d will not do this during Shlomo's lifetime, and will also leave Yehudah and another tribe under Davidic rule. (9-13)

At this point, G-d also unleashes the

kingsdoms of Edom and Aram that had been subdued by David. The respective kings Hadad, and Rezon rise to prominence, and instigate revolt against Israelite dominion. (14-25)

Finally, G-d sends the prophet Achiah the Shilonite to speak to Yeravam, son of Navat. The latter had been an important figure in the bureaucracy of Shlomo's public work projects. Achiah meets Yeravam, and tears twelve pieces out of his new tunic. He gives ten to Yeravam, informing him that after Shlomo's death he will become king over ten of the tribes. As a result of this, Yeravam too instigates revolt against Shlomo. (26-40)

At the end of the chapter, Shlomo dies after a full forty years as king. His son Rechavam becomes king. (41-43)

**Insight**

The text says that Shlomo's heart strayed after idolatry, and that he himself built the altars. However, Chazal (cited in Rashi to 11:7) understood that the king was only peripherally involved. He allowed his wives to carry out this worship without participating himself. The description

of worship supports this, indicating that the wives alone were involved. (11:8)

Shlomo's lack of protest allowed idol worship to root itself in Israelite society with an implicit royal imprimatur. Because he had allowed these things to occur under his watch, they are attributed directly to him, and he loses the privilege to rule as a result.

There is an important lesson here about leadership. A leader's personal behaviour and accomplishments do not shield him from the actions taken by those under his authority. If he has allowed problematic behaviours to persist and a toxic environment to flourish, even by omission of action, he bears the responsibility for this. In King Shlomo's case, his wisdom, great achievements, and personal adherence to the laws of idolatry did not stop G-d from greatly reducing the Davidic reign.

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**The Israeli Farmer: Exporting Israeli Produce****Rabbi Baruch Weintraub**

Although Israel is primarily desert, it has a significant agricultural export industry of nearly 10 billion dollars per year. For example, the Israeli wine industry is estimated at over 50 million dollars annually, and is growing quickly.

However, the permissibility of exporting produce of the Land of Israel overseas is not so simple. The Talmud states, "One may not export produce from Eretz Yisrael of that which is needed for basic sustenance, such as wine, oil, and flour. Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteirah permits export of wine to reduce licentiousness." (Bava Batra 90b) Rambam (Hilchot Mechirah 14:8), followed by Rabbi Yosef Karo (Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 231:26), rejected Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira's opinion and ruled that one is not allowed to export wine from Eretz Yisrael. It is important to note that according to Rabbi Karo's opinion (ibid.), all produce consumed by people have the status of "basic sustenance."

What are the reasons for this prohibition? Three suggestions can be found in the commentators:

1. Rashbam seems to imply that the prohibition stems from the holiness of produce grown in Eretz Yisrael. (Bava Batra 90b, s.v. *l'Fuga...*)
2. From Rambam (ibid.), it seems that the sages tried to keep the price of essential products low for the sake of the poor, so they prevented the loss of supply that would result from export.
3. Rabbi Yehoshua Falk explained that Rabbeinu Asher understood this prohibition as aiming to fortify Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael. (S'ma to Choshen Mishpat 231:44)

These solid reasons notwithstanding, the accepted opinion among halachic authorities seems to be very lenient, based on the following arguments:

1. According to some authorities, produce that was grown for the purpose of export is not fully considered produce of Eretz Yisrael as far as this law is concerned, and therefore, may be taken out of its borders. (Maharsham 1:72)
2. According to others, the prohibition does not apply in cases where there is sufficient supply for local consumption, especially if leftover produce will be destroyed in order to support the price in the local market. (Shevet HaLevi 2:108)
3. Finally, many believe that if exports aid the building of the Jewish settlement in the Holy Land, rather than damage it, export is fully permitted. (Pri HaSadeh 3:181)

Rabbi Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim, in his *Kuntres Oznei Yerushalayim*, supports the tendency towards leniency. He notes Rashi's commentary to Devarim 33:25 (quoting Sifri 335:19), regarding Moshe's blessing to Asher: "All countries will send silver and gold into the Land of Israel; for Israel will be blessed with fruits, and all the countries will be supplied by her, consequently pouring their silver and gold into her."

We may add that, as seen in our parshah's account of the spies, the export of Israeli produce can be either positive or negative for our connection with the Holy Land. May we merit to see G-d's blessings to us continue to overflow to the rest of the world!

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## Biography

### Rabbi Yitzchak Reines

Rabbi Sammy Bergman

Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines was Born in 1840 in Karlin, Beluras to a rabbinic family. He was a childhood prodigy, memorizing numerous tractates of the Talmud at the age of 10. In addition, Rabbi Reines developed an interest in secular wisdom. He writes of an unnamed "mathematical wizard" who began teaching him and his study partner geometry, algebra and logic at the age of 15.

Rabbi Reines received rabbinic ordination at the age of 18. Soon afterward he served as a community rabbi in the towns of Shavkyana and Sventsyan in Lithuania. In 1859, he married Elke Rachel, the daughter of the rabbi of Hordok, Rabbi Yosef Reisen. The couple had two sons named Moshe and Avraham Dov Ber, and a daughter named Gela.

Rabbi Reines was a true innovator. He founded a unique yeshiva which offered students a conventional Talmudic education as well as the study of Russian, German, geography, accounting, and the basics of Russian and Jewish history. Rabbi Reines endeavored to prepare his students for the practical demands of the rabbinate and provided them with instruction in community leadership and sermon preparation. After the yeshiva was closed due to fierce opposition from some of his more conservative contemporaries, Rabbi Reines persevered and moved the seminary to Lida, Russia where he served as the rabbi for many years.

Rabbi Reines developed a love of the Land of Israel from his youth and was very inspired by the Hibbat Zion movement. He joined the World Zionist Congress in 1899 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress and began working on their behalf. Rabbi Reines felt very strongly about the need for Orthodox participation in the Zionist movement. He met with many of the great Orthodox rabbis of his time and attempted to convince them to join the movement. However, his advocacy met intense opposition. In 1902, Reines headed the first Congress of Religious Zionists in Vilna. There, he led the formation of the Mizrachi party, a religious faction within the secular World Zionist Congress. Rabbi Reines passed away in the summer of 1915.

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## Torah and Translation

### The Cause of Anti-Semitism

Rabbi Yitzchak Reines, Or Chadash Al Tzion 2:2

Translated by Rabbi Sammy Bergman

יש לדעת כי הכונה המדויקת של הטבת מצב היהודים והרמת קרנם הוא רק לעמת הרעה והשפלות אשר באו עליהם כתומן באשר הם יהודים, וההטבה הזאת איננה כי אם שלילית, לשלול את הרעה המיוחדת הזאת, שעי"ז תבא ממילא ההטבה.

ובשום אל לב כי גם הרעה איננה עוד סבה כי אם מסובב, כי היא באה לרגלי איזה סבה, מובן ע"כ שיסוד הסרת הרעה הוא הסרת הסבה המסבבת אותה, והסבה היא השנאה המיוחדת שהעמים שונאים את היהודים...

ראוי לדעת כי מכל האמצעים שנעשו עד כה אשר רבים חשובים לאמצעים טובים ומועילים להטבת מצב ישראל בארצות גלות, יש לראות כי שגינו ברואה בעקר יסוד השנאה לישראל, כי הגלות פעלה עלינו להשפיל ערך נפשנו בעינינו, עד להאמין בתמימות יתרה, כי אנחנו במעשים הבאנו עלינו את השנאה הזאת.

יען כי אשמנו מכל עם בושנו מכל לאום, כל העצות וההצעות שהציעו לשנות את דרכי חיינו מצאו להן אזנים קשובות; אלה מפה יעצו להרבות בעם את האומנות והמלאכה ולהאדיר את חרשת המעשה, ואלה מפה הציעו להגדיל בנו את תורת המדעים ולהאדירה, וכל העצות האלה נתמלאו בכל עת במלא מובנן. ובכל זה לא רק כי לא הועילו להטבת מצב ישראל, כי אם הועילו להותו, כי הגדילו עוד את מדורת השנאה לעם יעקב ברוב ארצות תבל, עד כי החלו לגדר דרכי חיינו בגזית ונתיבותינו עון בחקים מעיקים...

ובנוגע להקשר שבין ישראל לארצו כתבתי, שהקב"ה הודיע בזה שאמר לו "כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם" (בראשית טו: יג), שכל עוד שיהיו בארצות אחרות ולא בארצם הקדושה יחשבו כגרים ולא תועיל להם כל השתדלות לקנות לב העמים למען יחשבו אותם לאזרחים גמורים.

It must be understood that the precise intent of improving the condition of the Jews and raising their pride merely opposes the evil and lowliness that came upon them specifically because they are Jews. This improvement is merely negative, to remove this specific evil such that inevitably the improvement will come.

When one considers that this evil is not a cause but an effect which is brought about by a different cause, it is understood that the basis for removing the evil is removing the source that causes it. The source is the unique hatred that the nations have for the Jews...

One should understand that from all the measures that have been taken until now, that many have thought would be good and helpful measures to improve Israel's condition in the Diaspora, one can see that we have erred in perceiving that the main basis of the hatred is from Israel. The exile has affected us by lowering our self-worth in our eyes, to the point that we believe with incredible naïveté that we, with our actions, have brought the hatred upon ourselves.

Because we are the guiltiest of every people, and most ashamed of every nation, all of the advice and suggestions that have been offered to change our way of life have found attentive ears. Some have advised to increase work and craftsmanship within the people and glorify deeds of craft. Some have suggested to increase and glorify the study of science within us. All of these ideas have been fulfilled at each time to their full understanding. And with all this, not only did they not benefit the condition of Israel, but they succeeded in worsening it. Because they further increased the fire of hatred for the people of Yaakov in the world's many lands, until they began to fence in our ways of life with stone and our paths were distorted by oppressive laws...

Regarding the connection between Israel and its land I have written that G-d told of this when He told [Avraham]: "For your offspring shall be a foreigner in a land which is not theirs" (Bereishit 15:13), for as long as they will be in other lands and not in their holy land they will be considered foreigners and no efforts will help them in acquiring the hearts of the nations such that they will consider them full citizens.

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**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Week 2: Ramban**

**Free of Charge; Register at <https://torontotorah.com/sephard>**

**8:00 PM Wed. June 9: Jewish Art: Symbolism or Idolatry?, a 7-part mini-series**

**Rabbi Chaim Metzger, Week 7: The Zodiac**

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**Tues/Thurs: Parshah, Tanach: Melachim**

**WEEKLY**

**Shabbat June 5**

**After minchah at Shaarei Shomayim, Responsa of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, R' Sammy Bergman**

**Sunday June 6**

**9:20 AM Contemporary Halachah: Lashon HaRa Doesn't Speak to Me, Netanel Klein**

**10:00 AM Gemara Shabbat, Rabbi Aaron Greenberg (University)**

**7:30 PM Ketuvot, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men)**

**Monday June 7**

**8:30 PM Gemara Shabbat, Chap. 15, Rabbi Moshe Yeres**

**Tuesday June 8**

**1:30 PM Megilat Ruth, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

**7:30 PM Shemuel Ch. 2, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men)**

**Wednesday June 9**

**6:15 AM Talmud Eruvin, Rabbi Sammy Bergman**

**7:00 PM Pirkei Avot: Admiring the Strong?, Rabbi Alex Hecht**

**7:30 PM Religious Zionism: The Three Oaths, Rabbi Sammy Bergman**

**Thursday June 10**

**8:30 AM Daniel, Rabbi Chaim Metzger (University)**

**1:30 PM Shemuel Ch. 20, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (women)**

**8:00 PM Gemara Beitzah, Rabbi Eitan Aviner (men, advanced)**

**9:30 PM Gemara Bava Metzia, Rabbi Sammy Bergman (University women)**

**Friday June 11**

**8:30 AM Parshah, Rabbi Sammy Bergman (University)**

**10:30 AM Shemitah! with Rabbi Sammy Bergman and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

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