

# Toronto Torah

## Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Emor

13 Iyar, 5782/May 14, 2022

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Paul and Chavi Jacobs to commemorate the yearzeit on Lag ba'Omer of Paul's father, Harold M. Jacobs, Tzvi Meyer ben Yechiel z"l

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Moishe and Nicole Posner to commemorate the yearzeit of Nicole's grandfather, Chalom Ouanounou ben Yakov & Freicha z"l (16 Iyar)

### Celebrating Together

### Rabbi Chaim Metzger

Why are the mitzvot of leaving gifts for the poor - *leket* (stalks forgotten while reaping), *shichichah* (bundles forgotten while collecting), and *peah* (leaving a corner of the field) repeated this week in the middle of talking about the holidays? Indeed, Pesach and Shavuot are described on one side and Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur on the other; why is this in the middle?

Rashi (Vayikra 23:22) quotes Rabbi Abdimas, son of Rabbi Yosef, to explain that giving these gifts to the poor properly is considered the equivalent of building the Beit HaMikdash and offering the korbanot for the holidays inside of it.

But what is so unique about these gifts to the poor that they can give such merit? *Leket* and *shichichah* are but forgotten crops, barely noticeable in their quantity. *Peah* can be fulfilled with but one stalk. (Mishnah Peah 1:3). So why the great reward?

Rabbi Yehudah Loeb (Maharal) of 16<sup>th</sup> century Prague, in his *Gur Aryeh* commentary on the Torah, explains that these are greater than ordinary charity. When giving tzedakah one experiences compassion, but for *leket*, *shichichah* and *peah*, which are commanded and have no personal connection, the act is far harder. The reward is commensurate with this difficulty.

But what does charity have to do with the holidays specifically? Aren't they about being happy and thanking G-d?

The popular Yom Tov song of *V'sa-machta b'chagecha*, "And you shall be happy on your holidays, and you shall only be happy" implies just that. But the roots of the song paint a very different picture.

The words of the song come from Devarim 16:14-15, in the context of Succot, but the verses include several words that are not in the song. Verse 14 includes "you, your sons, daughters, servants, maidservants, the Levite, the convert, widow and the orphan that are in your gates." Verse 15 begins, "For seven days you will celebrate for Hashem, your G-d, in the place that G-d will choose, for G-d has blessed you through all of your grain and all of your deeds," before closing with "and you shall only be happy."

The omitted words in verse 14 also appear in a slightly different form in Devarim 16:11 when describing Shavuot, as well as earlier in Devarim 12:11 regarding bringing korbanot in the Beit HaMikdash, and in 12:18 and 14:26-27 regarding bringing the *maaser sheni* tithe and other gifts to be eaten in Jerusalem. Notably, each time also has the word *sameach* - happy. But what connection is there between the happiness that an individual experiences at the spiritually uplifting festivals and the Levite, convert, widow, and orphan?

True joy isn't simply in gastronomical pleasure or spiritual feeling. Rather, it is when every single individual can experience that joy together, no matter

their circumstances. This phenomenon can only occur when all of the conditions are met - when we are in the right place, and at the right time, doing the correct thing with everyone in service of G-d.

True, it is certainly enjoyable to celebrate and serve G-d anywhere in the world. But when celebrating together with everyone else in the place G-d chooses, Jerusalem, in His House, the Beit HaMikdash - that is when and where and with whom we will experience a whole new level of joy and happiness.

While the mitzvot of *leket*, *shichichah*, and *peah* may seem small initially, they are the first and perhaps most difficult step towards the utopian vision seen in Devarim for celebrating holidays in the Beit HaMikdash. Ensuring the well-being of those around us might begin with what seems to be a coincidence at first glance, dropping stalks of grain or missing bundles when collecting them. But when we take the opportunity to properly see G-d behind even in the smallest of stalks, we can build a world where everything works and everyone can enjoy the fruits of Israel together.

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The book of Yeshayahu opens by relating that Yeshayahu prophesied during the reign of four Davidic kings (of the southern Kingdom of Judah): Uziah, Yotam, Achaz, and Chizkiyahu. (1:1) According to many, however, this chapter is one of Yeshayahu's **final** prophecies, with the chronologically first chapter being chapter 6. [See, for example, Rashi to 1:1.]

Yeshayahu calls on the heavens and earth to listen to G-d's declaration that He raised his children (the Jews) but they rebelled. (2) This seems to invoke the song of Ha'azinu (Devarim 32) in which the heavens and earth are called on to be witnesses, and perhaps enforcers, of the Jews' covenant with G-d. As the Jews are now being punished for violating that covenant, Yeshayahu summons the original witnesses.

G-d clarifies that the Jews fail to think about G-d, their master, when even animals pay heed and are aware of those who feed them. The Jews are called sinful (and several synonyms) for forsaking G-d, and not turning back despite the extensive physical punishments they have endured. (3-6)

Furthermore, the land has been burnt and laid waste by enemies.

Yerushalayim is left alone (presumably as the rest of Judea was destroyed by the Assyrians). G-d further notes that the Jews would have faced utter destruction like Sodom and Amora, had G-d not chosen to leave survivors. (7-9)

Picking up on the invocation of the destruction of Sodom and Amora, Yeshayahu now compares the leaders of the Jews to the leaders of those cities, thus equating their sins with those committed by the sinful cities. G-d says He has no need or delight in the sacrifices brought by the Jews, and considers their visits to the Temple as "trampling My courts." He deems their various sacrifices as pointless and offensive. (10-14)

G-d further rejects their prayers, as their hands are stained with crime. Thus, He calls on them to "wash themselves clean," to learn to do good and be just. This echoes the qualities for which G-d originally chose Avraham, knowing that He would pass these "ways of G-d" on to his children. (Bereishit 18:19) They must further take care of the widow and orphan. If they repent, then their sins, even if red, will become white as snow and they will be rewarded with all good

things. If they do not, however, they will be devoured by the sword. (15-20)

The city that used to be filled with justice, compared to a faithful wife, is now compared to a harlot, filled with murderers. The money of Jerusalem is compared to dross, because the leaders are immoral, acting unjustly, stealing, and not taking care of those on the outskirts of society. (21-23)

G-d promises that he will take revenge and purify them, bringing back the old, worthy leaders, and returning the city to a righteous, faithful city. Jerusalem will be redeemed with justice and righteousness. The sinners, however, will be crushed and shamed for their sins, the wealth and the wealthy burnt away. (24-30)

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## **It Happened in Israel: Rebbe's Suffering**

**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi was the religious and political leader of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael in the early third century CE. Living in Tzipori in northern Israel, he was both the canonizer of the Mishnah and the chief liaison with Rome; Jews simply called him "Rebbe". When he passed away, it was a case of such grief that the sages declared, "If anyone says that Rebbe has died, he shall be pierced with a sword!" (Ketuvot 104a)

Despite Rebbe's great stature, the Talmud records a story of a momentary moral failing which brought upon him Divine punishment: A calf was being brought for slaughter, and it hid its head under Rabbi Yehudah haNasi's garment. It was crying. Rabbi Yehudah haNasi said, "Go; you were created for this." In Heaven they said, "Since he does not have mercy, let suffering befall him." The Talmud reports that he suffered for thirteen years, first with *tzamirta* and then with *tzafirma*. According to Rashi, these were kidney stones and a mouth ailment, respectively. The pain only ceased when Rebbe saw a maid sweeping rodents out of his home, and he told her, "Leave them be, for it is written, 'His mercy is upon all of His creations.'" (Bava Metzia 85a)

From the above, it seems that Rebbe suffered as a punishment for his sins. Nonetheless, the same talmudic passages states, "Throughout the years when Rebbe suffered, the world did not lack rain." This is puzzling; if Rebbe was punished for his deficiency, why should his suffering lead to benefit for the world around him? His condition did not reflect merit!

One answer may emerge from Rebbe's response to the suffer-

ing. As the Talmud records, he said, "This suffering is beloved for me," and he accepted the experience. Rebbe's acceptance of the pain converted it from Divinely sent misery to a voluntary growth experience.

We must add one note whenever we discuss such a story and lesson. The well-known 19<sup>th</sup> century Galician Rabbi Shlomo Kluger had a grandson who was also a rabbi named Shlomo Kluger. The younger Rabbi Kluger, in a eulogy for his father, wrote, "When a person suffers tragedy which only afflicts him and his flesh, then any [victim] who has awe of G-d within him... is obligated to accept the Divine verdict as just and to bless for the bad as he does for the good... But if harm comes upon a person and upon others... then one person, who may even suffer more than others, may not calm himself and avoid feeling the pain of others... saying that he accepts it upon himself with love. This is a repugnant trait and an ugly path. One may not accept with love the ailment, pain and trouble of others!" (**Siach Shlomo**)

Rebbe set a remarkable example, accepting suffering and learning its lesson. His merit was so great that it saved others from their own potential suffering. But when we observe others in pain, our reaction must be the opposite, empathizing and comforting and seeking to mitigate their suffering – as Rebbe even did for the rodents in his home.

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## Biography

### Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin was born in Lithuania in 1881; his father and mentor, Rabbi Ben Zion Sorotzkin, was the rabbi of their town of Zagarine.

Trained in Volozhin and Slobodka, and married to Sara Miriam, daughter of Rabbi Eliezer Gordon (the Telzer Rav), Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin was considered the obvious choice to take over the Telz yeshiva when his father-in-law passed away in 1910. Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin declined this option, though, and instead became rabbi of Voranava, Belarus, where he developed a close bond with Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, one of the premier halachic authorities of the early twentieth century.

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin then became the rabbi of Zhetel, birthplace of the Chafetz Chaim, and, indeed, the Chafetz Chaim referred to him as “My Rav.” During World War I he moved temporarily to Minsk, where the Chazon Ish rented a room from him. In 1930 Rav Sorotzkin became Rabbi of Lutzk, where he served until he moved to Israel at the start of World War II. Rabbi Sorotzkin served as Vice Chairman of Israel’s Agudath Israel after the passing of Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, and became the first head of Chinuch Atzmai in 1953. He passed away on the 9th of Tammuz in 5726.

Rabbi Sorotzkin published on diverse areas of Torah, always with an easy-to-read style despite the complex concepts he sought to transmit. Among his most popular works are volumes of his *derashot* (*HaDe’iah v’haDibbur*), his *HaShir v’haShevach* Haggadah, his *Oznaim laTorah* commentary to the Torah and Tehillim, and his responsa collected in a work entitled *Moznayim laMishpat*. The latter work covers a diverse array of topics, including *eruv*, divorce, mourning practices during the *omer*, and study of *torah sheb’al peh* for women.

*HaDe’iah v’haDibbur* may be found at <http://www.hebrewbooks.org/38552>, and *Moznayim l’Mishpat* may be found at <http://www.hebrewbooks.org/973>.

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## Torah and Translation

### Make Sure Children Have the Right Teachers

Rabbi Z. Sorotzkin, *Oznayim LaTorah to Vayikra 21:1*

Translated by Rabbi Jared Anstandig

אמר... ואמרת. להזהיר את הגדולים על הקטנים (יבמות קיד).

ולמה הוזהרו הגדולים על הקטנים במצוה זו? מפני שיש בקבורת המתים מצוה, והעוסק בה פטור מן התפילין ומק"ש ותפילה, ומכל מצות האמורות בתורה ומבטלן ת"ת להוצאת המת. וכשמוהירין את הכהנים שלא יטמאו למתים מבטלן אותם ממצוה גדולה והדבר נראה בעיניהם כתמוה שהכהנים שריבה בהם הכתוב מצות יתירות, אינם רשאים להתעסק בגמ"ח זו עם החיים והמתים. ואיש פשוט... לא ישמע לנו. לכן הוזהרו "הגדולים", היודעים את ערך הקדושה ואת ההפסד של הטומאה לבאר ולהזהיר את "הקטנים" על הטומאה...

אבל עלינו לשום אל לב שיש ב' מחנכים (לילד: א) ההורים או שלוחם המורה, (ב) "הרחוב" הסביבה אשר בה נמצא הילד. וכן אמרו חז"ל, הרבה שכנים הרעים עושים (סוטה ז') ובאבות (פ"ב) אמרו, שהדרך הטובה שידבק בה האדם והוא חבר טוב או שכן טוב, ושם (פ"א) אמרו וקנה לך חבר. הרי שהאדם ובפרט הילד מושפע מאד מחבריו ושכניו ולומד מהם הרבה (אולי יותר מהוריו ומרבותיו). ולכן באה האזהרה על הטומאה בלשון "אמר... ואמרת" ... להדגיש על הקושי שיש בחינוך הקטנים להשמר מכל טומאה בסביבה... ומהאזהרה הכפולה האמורה לכהנים בדבר חינוך בניהם לקדושה וטהרה, עלינו ללמוד עד כמה מחויב האב להשגיח על חונק בניו בזה? אשר בעוה"ר התורה נשמרת רק בבתי יראי ד', אבל ברחוב נתקל הקטן בכמה דברים שהם נגד תוה"ק...

**Say [to the Kohanim] and you shall say [to them].** [This is here] to warn the adults regarding children [that the adults should ensure that their children do not become impure through contact with the dead] (see Yevamot 114a).

And why are the adults warned about children regarding this mitzvah? Because burying a dead body is a mitzvah, and one who engages in this mitzvah is exempt from wearing tefillin, reciting she-ma, and praying, and from all the mitzvot written in the Torah, and one refrains from learning Torah to escort a dead body. So, when warning the kohanim against contracting impurity from a dead body, we block them from a significant mitzvah and this appears shocking in their eyes since the kohanim, for whom the Torah gives many mitzvot, are not permitted to engage in this act of kindness towards the living and the dead. And the simple person... will not listen to us... Therefore, the “adults,” who know the value of holiness and the loss brought through impurity, are charged with explaining and warning the “children” about impurity...

But we must recognize that a child has two teachers: 1) parents or their agent, the teacher; 2) the “street” that surrounds the child. And so say the Sages, “Bad neighbours cause much [harm].” (Sotah 7a) And in Pirkei Avot (2:9), they say the good path to which a person should cleave is a good friend or a good neighbour. And there (1:6), they say, “Acquire for yourself a friend.” Behold, any person – and particularly a child – is influenced by their friends and neighbours and learns a lot from them (maybe more than from their parents and rabbis). Therefore, the warning against impurity comes with the language of “Say... and you shall say” ... to stress the difficulty of educating young children to protect them from all the impurity in their environment... And from this double warning told to the kohanim regarding the education of their children in holiness and purity, we can learn the extent to which a parent is required to oversee their children’s education nowadays, since due to our many sins, the Torah is only kept in the homes of those who fear G-d, but in the streets, a child can stumble in many things that are against our Holy Torah...

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All times ET. Classes are free & open to all, unless otherwise noted.

### Monday-Thursday

10:00 AM - Noon: Adult Seder Boker with Rabbi Moshe Yeres on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/sederboker> (men)  
Monday/Wednesday: Talmud Succah, Orot of Rav Kook  
Tuesday/Thursday: Parshah, Tanach: Sefer Melachim

### Shabbat May 13-14 SHABBATON AT CLANTON PARK & THE OR CHAIM MINYAN: KIBBUTZ GALUYOT

#### SHABBATON: THE INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

Shiur after Hashkama, Clanton Park: Rabbi Chaim Metzger, *Languishing Languages and Leining*  
Derashah, Clanton Park: Rabbi Jared Anstandig, *The Spiritual Israeli Salad*

Shiur after Kiddush, Or Chaim Minyan, Rabbi Steven Gotlib, *Cultivating Jewish Culture*

5:30 PM Women's Shiur, Clanton Park, Rabbi Chaim Metzger, *Communities in Translation*

7:30 PM Pre-Minchah Shiur, Or Chaim Minyan, Rabbi Jared Anstandig, *An Ashkenazi Married to a Sephardi*

7:40 PM, Avot, Clanton Park, Rabbi Yehuda Mann, *Jews and Their Neighbours*

Seudah Shlishit, Or Chaim Minyan, Rabbi Chaim Metzger, *A Choir of Communities*

Seudah Shlishit, Clanton Park, Rabbi Steven Gotlib, *Rebuilding Jewish Unity*

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Ketuvot, BAYT (Gruda Beis Medrash) (men)

### Sunday May 15

9:00 AM R' Zev Spitz & R' Yehuda Mann, Semichat Chaver Program, Clanton Park (men)

9:15 AM Idan Rakovsky, The Torah of Rav Shagar, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

9:30 AM Nusbaum Family Medical Ethics and Halachah Program  
FAMILY PLANNING IN JUDAISM, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner  
With CME credit; Laypeople welcome; on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/mtethics>

### Monday May 16

A New Parshah Podcast: Parshat Behar

Apple <http://tiny.cc/apodcast>, Google <http://tiny.cc/gpodcast>, Spotify <http://tiny.cc/spodcast>

8:45 AM Idan Rakovsky, Likutei Moharan of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

2:15 PM Idan Rakovsky, Ethical Issues & Pirkei Avot #2 of 3, Beth Tikvah & ZOOM <http://tiny.cc/idanrak>

8:50 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park

### Tuesday May 17

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, King Solomon's Arc, Shaarei Shomayim & ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

7:00 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 14), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men)

### Wednesday May 18

6:15 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Talmud: Avodah Zarah, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/idolsarebad>

10:00 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, S. Y. Agnon's "Circles of Justice" #3 of 3

Fee: \$30; Register at <https://torontotorah.com/wednesdays>; On ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

12:30 PM The Ethical Challenge (with CPD credit for accountants), Week 2

R' Yehuda Mann On ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/bmlunch>, Register (free) at <http://torontotorah.com/business>

12:30 PM R' Jared Anstandig, The Life & Legacy of Rabbi Akiva, Grandmothers/Granddaughters at Ulpanat Orot

8:15 PM Idan Rakovsky, The Laws of Shabbat, Shaarei Tefillah

8:45 PM R' Chaim Metzger, Introduction to Midrash, BAYT (Library) & ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/chaimmetzger>

### Thursday May 19

9:00 AM Idan Rakovsky, Mei haShiloach, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 25), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women)

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Gemara Beitzah, email [ymanntorontotorah.com](mailto:ymanntorontotorah.com) for rotating location

### Friday May 20

9:00 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Parshah, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, R' Mordechai Torczyner, R' Yehuda Mann, Bava Batra Perek 2 advanced  
In-person at Yeshivat Or Chaim, on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>