

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Yom Kippur

10 Tishrei, 5772/October 8, 2011

Vol.3 Num. 4

This issue is sponsored by Nathan Kirsh in memory of his parents יהודה פסח בן נפתלי הכהן ז"ל and רחל בת מרדכי ז"ל

Nature, Nurture or ?

R' Ezra Goldschmiedt

Across a large variety of scientific disciplines, twin studies are fairly common. Using identical (monozygotic) twins in experimental studies, one can usually understand the impact of genetics on whatever is being tested; comparing identical twins to each other, fraternal (non-identical) twins or randomly selected individuals gives a fair indication of how much our genes form our identity. Entire journals are devoted to the results of twin studies, and the wide scope of such studies include the determinants of autism, IQ, and even taste in music.

One result of these studies is a deeper understanding of the way nature and nurture work together to shape our identities. Neither element paints the whole picture of a person, and there's often a complex, two-way interplay between them. To suggest that one is more important than the other is misleading – when asked which plays a greater role, Canadian psychologist Donald Hebb responded, “Which contributes more to the area of a rectangle, its length or its width?” Twin studies have demonstrated rather clearly that we humans are complicated creatures – yet beyond nature and nurture, there's even more to who we are.

To be sure, a Jew can and should believe in the fact that genetics and up-

bringing influence his or her decisions and identity – it's why we value our children's education and the neighbourhoods we choose to live in. “The interaction of our character traits, upbringing and environment is what sets before us that which we call 'life' - goodness and truth, as well as 'death' - evil, and falsehood.” (Michtav MeEliyahu 1, page 114).

Nevertheless, a foundation of our faith and the teshuvah process is something that is neither nature or nurture: It's our ability to rise above those deterministic factors and exercise our *bechirah*, our free will. The first step in returning to G-d is acknowledging our responsibility for distancing ourselves from Him, but without free will, the very concept of such responsibility would be absurd. Understandably, Maimonides devotes an entire chapter of his Laws of Teshuvah to explaining and defending the concept of free will and its importance in our belief system.

On Yom Kippur, our ultimate day of teshuvah, G-d also places significant emphasis on free will. The service of the goats, “one lot for G-d and one lot for Azazel” (Vayikra 16:8) is designed to symbolize the implications of our free will. The Mishnah (Yoma 6:1) tells us that the goats selected should be “alike in appearance, height and value” – as physically similar as possible. They

should be “simultaneously purchased” - bought together from the same seller, perhaps even raised by the same individual and exposed to the same environment. The service of the day is to conduct the most probing “twin study” possible, “testing” for the presence of something beyond genetics and upbringing.

The “results” of the study are striking. Despite the goats' similarities, their ends could not be further apart. One becomes the most exalted offering to G-d – it is brought by none other than the *kohen gadol*. Having prepared a whole week to bring this offering with the highest level of purity, he performs its service in the innermost portion of the Beit haMikdash, the most holy of spaces. In contrast, the goat “for Azazel” is unique in its rather “unholy” treatment. Rather than being offered in the Beit haMikdash, it is taken to a barren, uninhabited area. It can be brought there by anyone – its escort does not need to be a *kohen*. Its death is grotesque, too, as recorded in Mishnah Yoma 6:6.

One last element – unlike other offerings, the goats' designation for their part in the Yom Kippur service is not to be determined by the *kohen*, or any other human hand. The drawing of lots is unique to this offering; it is an independent architect, much as our free will independently chooses our direction.

The message is clear: Our choices belong neither to our DNA, nor to the family that raised us. With these choices we can reach the highest spiritual levels or the lowest of the lows. As Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaya declared, “The matter depends upon me alone!” (Avodah Zarah 17a)

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Parshah Questions

R' Meir Lipschitz

- Is *Azazel* a person, place, or thing? (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, Chizkuni and Ba'al HaTurim to Vayikra 16:8)
- What is the meaning of Yom Kippur's title, *shabbat shabbaton*? (Ibn Ezra, Meshech Chochmah, and R' S.R. Hirsch to Vayikra 16:31)
- What is learned from the words, *vachai bahem*, “You shall live through them”? (Onkelos, Rashi, Rashbam, R' S.R. Hirsch, Ma'ayan Beit HaShoeivah, and Shaarei Aharon to Vayikra 18:5, and Sanhedrin 74)
- For children: Was the fish which swallowed Yonah male or female? (Rashi to Yonah 2:1)

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When discussing which fruit is the correct species to take on the holiday of Succot, the Gemara (Succah 35a) analyzes the verse which describes it as a "Pri eitz hadar – fruit of the hadar tree" (Vayikra 23:40). All four approaches to the word *hadar* taken in the Gemara arrive at the conclusion that the correct fruit is the etrog, but for very different reasons. For example, R' Abahu suggests that *hadar* means a fruit "that dwells" because the etrog can remain fresh or 'dwell' on its tree for more than one season. Ben Azai sees *hadar* as a reference to the Greek word *ὑδωρ* or *hydor* (meaning water) because the etrog is dependent on both irrigation and rain water to grow.

Noting both the ambiguity of this verse and the wide range of suggestions offered to explain it, the Rambam (Introduction to Commentary on the Mishnah) and Ritva (Succah 35a) suggest that the identity of this fruit was in fact never in question; our tradition has always been to use the etrog as part of this Succot ritual. Rather, the Sages of the Talmud are suggesting a few ways in which the *written* Torah's *hadar* can be understood to refer specifically to the etrog as opposed to other 'beautiful' fruits. After all, beauty is the Torah's only descriptive characteristic of the etrog. [See Ramban (Vayikra 23:40), who adds that the name *etrog* derives from an Aramaic root meaning 'desirable' as well.]

Whether in building a succah, wearing tzitzit or writing a sefer torah, all

mitzvot are ideally performed in the most beautiful way possible. The Gemara (Shabbat 133b) derives this from the verse "This is my G-d and I will beautify Him" (Shemot 15:2).

This charge to perform mitzvot beautifully is not absolutely necessary for fulfillment of the mitzvah; even if a mitzvah is not done beautifully, it is still a mitzvah. However, Rashi seems to contradict this principle (Succah 29b) when he rules that a dry Lulav or etrog is invalid because it is not "beautiful."

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik suggested that the description of the etrog as *pri eitz hadar* is the key to understanding Rashi. As a general rule for mitzvah fulfillment, an aesthetically beautiful performance is a way in which one can show additional passion for the mitzvah in which he is engaged. However, by describing the four species as *hadar*, the Torah declares that beauty is essential to the commandment itself. If it is not beautiful, the Lulav or the etrog is not fit for the mitzvah.

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613 Mitzvot: Mitzvah 106
Washing the hands of the Kohanim
R' Mordechai Torczyner

Mitzvah 106 instructs kohanim to wash their hands and feet before entering the Beit haMikdash to perform the avodah (service). This mitzvah is not about removing dirt; a kohen who stays up all night still washes when entering the Beit haMikdash to serve in the morning.

As explained by Rambam (Moreh haNevuchim 3:45), and the Sefer haChinuch, the point is to display respect for the Beit haMikdash and its service. Ramban (Shemot 30:19)

imputes mystical elements to this washing, too.

Our practice of washing the hands of kohanim before Birchat Kohanim is not rooted in this mitzvah; rather, it stems from the passage in Tehillim 134, "Raise your hands in sanctity, and bless Gd." (Sotah 39a)

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Hitoriri:
Jewish Spirituality

הרוצה בתשובה
הלל הורוויץ

כל יום חול בתפילתנו חותמים אנו את הברכה החמישית בתפילת שמונה עשרה במילים "הרוצה בתשובה".

חתימה זו שונה מהחתימה הנהוגה בכל הברכות האחרות משום שבברכות התפילה אנו לרוב חותמים את הברכה בשבחו של ד', כגון: "גואל ישראל", "חנון המרבה לסלוח", "בונה ירושלים". חתימות אלו אינן רק ביטוי שבחו של הקב"ה, אלא הן מציינות פעולות שד' עושה בשביל עם ישראל: ד' הוא רופא חולי עמו ישראל, ד' מצמיח קרן ישועה, כלומר פעולה שכיוונה הוא מהקב"ה אל עם ישראל. לפי הגיון זה היינו צריכים לחתום את הברכה במילים "המחזיר בתשובה" או משהו בעל משמעות דומה. מדוע איפה מסתיימת ברכה זו של התשובה במילים "הרוצה בתשובה"?

בכדי לענות על שאלה זו נצטרך להבין מה מהותה של התשובה. כאשר אדם עושה מעשה שעליו הוא צריך לעשות תשובה הוא מעוניין בעצם להחזיר את ה"גלגל" אחורה, לשנות את אשר נעשה ולשוב אל הזמן שלפני החטא. דבר זה אינו נתפס - וכי אנחנו יכולים לשנות את אשר נעשה!?

התורה בספר דברים (כ', י"ט) משווה את האדם לעץ באומרה, "כי האדם עץ השדה". האדם משול לעץ, וכמו שהעץ יונק משורשיו בכדי לגדול ולפתח את חיותו, את ענפיו ואת פרותיו, כך האדם ניוזן משורשיו בכדי לגדול בדרכיו ובמעשיו. במשל זה נראה כי המעשים אותם האדם עושה הינם הפירות של העץ, ורצונותיו של האדם ומחשבותיו הם שורשיו של העץ. כאשר האדם משחית את מעשיו, את פירות עמלו, לא ניתן לשנות זאת, אולם אם אותו אדם יגדע את שורשיו של הפרי ממילא הפרי כבר לא יהיה מיוחס לאותו עץ ולא יוכל לינוק ממנו עוד חיות, ויעלם כלא היה.

כך גם במעשיו של האדם, אין ביכולתנו לשנות את מעשיו שכבר היו ונעשו, אולם אם נשנה את רצוננו, את עצם הווייתנו, למצב שבו איננו רוצים בחטא שחטאנו, אותו רצון שהיה בתוכנו בתחילה כאשר חטאנו כבר אינו קיים וממילא אנו אנשים שונים מאותם אלו שחטאו, כבר אין בנו את הרצון את השורש של החטא.

כך גם נבין מדוע בתפילת שמונה עשרה אנו חותמים בנוסח של "הרוצה בתשובה", משום שהתשובה תלויה ברצון שלנו וברגע שאנו משנים את רצוננו רק אז ניתן לחזור בתשובה. "רחמנא ליבא בעי", ד' רוצה בתשובה שלנו שבאה מתוך הלב, מתוך הרצון, וכאשר אדם חוזר ומשנה את הרצון שלו באמת אז זוכים אנו לקיום הפסוק "השיבנו ד' אליך ונשובה" כאשר ד' רוצה בתשובתנו משום שאנו רוצים באמת לשוב אל ד', התהליך מתחיל מד' אלינו ויכולים אנו באמת לחזור בתשובה וממילא אותו רצון שלנו הוא זה שמעורר את רצונו של הקב"ה.

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**Torah in Translation
Foreign and Hebrew Names
Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim 4:66
Translated by Yair Manas**

Regarding foreign names and my statement that although they are disgraceful there is no prohibition involved: This is why we have seen many foreign names from each country used during the long exile, as we passed from country to country. Even though [the Rabbis] presumably protested at the outset, the names set in among Israel, to the point where the names are referred to as Jewish names, and moreso among women, so that since we are Ashkenazi our names are Ashkenazi, and the Sephardic exiles have Sephardic names. We see it among the leading sages of the great Rishonim, like the Maggid Mishneh, whose name was Rabbeinu Vidal, and among Gaonim as we find in early responsa, as well as the father of the Rambam, Maimon, which appears to be foreign. Therefore, Heaven forbid us to say that they did not act properly; after Israel became accustomed to using these names, there is no longer a connection to the [original] disgrace. A person should not veer from naming his son or daughter after male and female ancestors who had foreign names, for this is a matter of family honour. Even regarding previous generations it is incumbent upon their descendants to honour them, and all the more so if a person needs to name the child after a parent, whom he is commanded to honour. Further, the Sages, in a number of midrashim, say that we name our sons and daughters after previous generations, and so one must name as they were named, even if the name is a foreign name, without changing it. Therefore, when your wife gives birth, at a good and successful time, if the child is a girl, call her after your mother, peace be upon her...

There is room to say that when the Sages praised [the Jewish people] when they were exiled in Egypt for not changing their names, this was before the giving of the Torah, when there was no distinction [between the Jewish people and the non-Jews] in keeping the Noachide laws, especially as a large part of the Jewish people worshipped idolatry, and most did not circumcise their children until close to the Redemption... On account of the belief that they would be redeemed, they wanted to be recognized as Jewish, so they were strict regarding not changing their names and their language... However, after the presentation of the Torah, we have no obligation from the Torah [to keep our names], nor is it part of being careful and proper. Rather, we have the 613 mitzvot...

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Rabbi Moshe Feinstein was born in the city of Uzda, near Minsk, Belarus, on the 7th of Adar in the year 5655/1895. He was born into a rabbinic family, descendants of Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller. Rabbi Feinstein studied in several yeshivot before becoming rabbi of Luban, where he served for sixteen years. During his time in Luban, Rabbi Feinstein wrote prolifically, sending responsa to communities far and wide and to the Torah giants of the day. He also led his community despite the crushing persecution of the Communist regime.

Rabbi Feinstein fled the Soviet regime in 1936, barely escaping a pogrom in which his home was destroyed. Along with his wife Sima and three children (another died of whooping cough), Rabbi Feinstein came to New York and became rosh yeshiva of Mesivta Tiferet Yerushalayim in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Rabbi Feinstein was already known for his erudition and analytic skill; on American shores, his reputation only grew.

Recognized across the broad spectrum of Orthodoxy as the generation's leading *posek* (halachic authority), Rabbi Feinstein was consulted on every major issue of his day. Among his most widely circulated responsa and public letters on popular issues were his positions on the role of Jews in a non-Jewish society (such as vis-à-vis holiday celebrations and political involvement), on the status of Reform and Conservative approaches to Judaism, and on the evolving roles of women in the Jewish community.

Communal organizations sought out Rabbi Feinstein for leadership roles. He served as president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, and he chaired the Moetzes Gedolei haTorah of Agudath Israel of America for the last quarter-century of his life.

Rabbi Yosef Dov haLevi Soloveitchik and Rabbi Feinstein were first cousins once removed, and they spoke frequently. Rabbi Feinstein wrote a warm approbation for *Kvod haRav*, the sefer published in honour of Rav Soloveitchik's eightieth birthday.

Rabbi Feinstein passed away on Taanit Esther 5746/1986, but his halachic legacy lives on. First, his sons Rav Dovid Feinstein and Rav Reuven Feinstein, as well as his son-in-law Rav Dr. Moshe Tendler, are recognized as halachic authorities of the first order. Second, his volumes of published responsa (*Igrot Moshe*), as well as his commentaries to Talmud (*Dibrot Moshe*) and Chumash (*Darash Moshe*) are studied around the

One of the central elements of the Yom Kippur avodah service is the Sa'ir la'Azazel, or Scapegoat. A pair of identical goats are set aside, and one of them (Sa'ir laShem) is brought as a korban in the Beit haMikdash while the other (Sa'ir la'Azazel) is sent out of the Beit haMikdash, brought by a lone agent to the wilderness. This is described in the Torah in Vayikra 16:21-22; the gemara (Yoma 67a) adds that the goat is pushed off a cliff.

According to the gemara, the site of this cliff is 90 *ris*, or between 13 and 14 kilometers, from the location of the Beit haMikdash. Some suggest that this is the place known today as Mount Muntar or Mount Azazel, a mountain in the northern part of the Judean Desert, located about 14 kilometers southeast of Yerushalayim, 12.5 kilometers east of Ramat Rachel.

The name "Muntar" is Arabic, and it refers to a lookout. The mountain is well-named; as you can see from photos at <http://littmann613.blogspot.com/2010/11/mount-azazel.html> and <http://www.shishvil.com/2010/11/12/jabel-muntar-and-mar-saba/>, the peak (524 meters above sea level) offers views of Yerushalayim, the Dead Sea, the Mountains of Moav, the Judean Hills, the Jordan Valley and more.

An aqueduct remains on the mountain from the time of the Chashmonaim; it once served a fortress on the site. In February 1918, the mountain was the site of a battle between the Turks and the British; British trenches are still visible on the site. Today, though, the site is more tranquil, used by Bedouins to graze sheep.

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world. To this day, resolution of major issues like determining the moment of death and engaging in artificial insemination hinges upon how his writings are parsed.

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Is Azazel a person, place, or thing?

- **Rashi** claims it is a strong, harsh mountain, with a high cliff.
- **Ibn Ezra** explains that it is a mighty mountain. He also cites one opinion which suggests that it is near Sinai.
- **Ramban** disagrees with Rashi's interpretation, and then cites mystical and kabbalistic sources to explain the true nature and meaning of Azazel. These are best seen in the Ramban's commentary.
- **Chizkuni** explains that it refers to Sama'el, and the goat is a gift to him so he will not nullify the Yom Kippur service (See Ramban for a more in-depth discussion).

What is the meaning of Yom Kippur's title, *shabbat shabbaton*?

- **Ibn Ezra** notes that according to some authorities the double expression of *Shabbat* refers to a rest for both the body and the soul, while others suggest that it means the highest level of *shevitah*.
- **Meshech Chochmah** suggests that the plural mention of *shevitah* hints at the multiple behaviors from which we refrain on Yom Kippur. As explained by Rabbeinu Nisim to Yoma 74a, citing the Rambam, the Torah prescribed general *innui* (oppression) for Yom Kippur, and left it to the

sages to define the specific proscriptions which would create *innui*: bathing, anointing one's skin and marital relations. These are included in *shabbat shabbaton*.

- **R' S.R. Hirsch** explains that refraining from melachah on Shabbat is an expression of G-d's Kingship. On Yom Kippur, though, we express not only G-d's sovereignty, but also our own unworthiness for our gifts and existence. *Shabbat* highlights our lack of justification for the power given to Man, and *shabbat shabbaton* highlights our lack of justification for Man's existence itself. This is why we afflict ourselves on Yom Kippur; we refrain not only from exercising our creative power through *melachah*, but also from eating and drinking, our means of existing.

What is learned from the words *vachai bahem*, "You shall live through them"?

- **The gemara, in Sanhedrin 74**, deduces from this verse that it is better for one to violate a Torah command than to give up his life, since the commands were given in order that, "You shall live through them." (The classic exceptions to this rule are: Idolatry, illicit relations, murder, and public violation of any command.)
- **Onkelos** reads the phrase as referring to life in the world to come; you will

"live" if you observe the commandments.

- **Rashi** reads it as Onkelos does, noting that it can't refer to this world since Man is destined to die.
- **Rashbam**, presumably in response to his grandfather's logical argument above, suggests that this phrase *does* refer to life in this world. He says that one who violates these laws will have his life cut short, and so, in a manner of speaking, one will be granted life for following these laws.
- **Ma'ayan Beit HaShoeivah** asks how Onkelos/Rashi and the gemara can learn two opposing ideas from the very same verse. His answer, though too long to be recorded here in its entirety, is that life in the world to come and the rule stated in the gemara are actually the same point.

For children: Was the fish which swallowed Yonah male or female?

Rashi, based on the change of gender in the verses, suggests that Yonah was originally swallowed by a male fish. Because he had space, though, Yonah felt no need to pray for HaShem's help. Therefore, HaShem had the male fish spit him into the mouth of a female fish where Yonah had less space due to her fetuses (or eggs according to some), and so he davened for HaShem to save him.

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Schedule for October 8-22, 10-24 Tishrei

Shabbat October 10, Yom Kippur

Break: R' Baruch Weintraub, Yom Kippur and Shabbat: Head-on Collision or Complementary Kedushah?, Clanton Park

Break: R' Mordechai Torczyner, The Book of Chaggai: Inspiration for Today's Jew, BAYT Milevsky Beit Midrash

Tuesday October 18

7:30 PM Tikkun Leil Hoshana Rabbah with Rav Herschel Schachter, followed by a shiur by Hillel Horovitz, at Bnai Torah

9:00 PM Hoshana Rabbah Tisch at The Village Shul

Look for our Weekly Shiurim after Yom Tov

Sundays

9:15 AM Hillel Horovitz, Parshah Issues **Hebrew**, Zichron Yisroel

11:50 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Rambam, Or Chaim, *collegiates*

Mondays

8 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Talmud Yerushalmi: Peah, Clanton Park, *men*

Tuesdays

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Chaggai, for Mekorot, Shaarei Shomayim

8:00 PM Mrs. Elyssa Goldschmiedt, Malbim on Chumash, TCS, *women*

8:00 PM Yair Manas: Minchat Chinuch, Clanton Park, *men*

Wednesdays

10:00 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Dramas of Jewish History, BEBY, with Melton

8:00 PM R' Dovid Zirkind, Gemara Beitzah chaburah, Shaarei Shomayim

8:30 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Rambam, Shomrai Shabbos, *men*

Thursdays

9:15 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Supernatural vs. Superstition, 36 Theodore in Thornhill, *women*

8:00 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Sugyot in Avodah Zarah: From Terach to Today, Clanton Park, *men*

Fridays

8 AM R' Dovid Zirkind, Friday Parsha Preview, Village Shul

Shabbat

7:45 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Orot haTeshuvah, Or Chaim

10:30 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Parshah, Clanton Park

1 hour before minchah Yair Manas, Gemara Sukkah, Mizrachi Bayit

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Avodah Zarah, BAYT