

Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Ki Tetze

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by

**Steve and Leah Roth in memory of Sonia Roth, Sosha bat Yehoshua z"l,
on the occasion of her yahrzeit.**

**And by the Shapiro family in honour of the wedding of Beit Midrash Chaver Zack Mincer to Kayla Halberstadt.
May they merit to build a בית נאמן בישראל!**

Jari Kurri, Wayne Gretzky and the Jews

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

One Sunday evening, Reuven drew up his wagon at a local inn and went inside to inquire about a vacancy. When he emerged, Reuven was stunned to see his horses galloping down the road, driven by a thief. On Wednesday night, he caught up with the thief – who proclaimed, “It’s about time; I’ve been exercising your horses for three days! That’ll be \$500.” (cf. The Maggid of Dubno, *Mishlei Yaakov*, Parshat Ki Tetze)

Of course, we don’t actually reward a thief’s unintended “service”, but we do reward unintended tzedakah. Parshat Ki Tetze teaches, “When you harvest in your field and forget grain in the field, do not return to retrieve it. It shall be for the stranger, the orphan and the widow, so that Hashem your G-d will bless you in all of your deeds.” (Devarim 24:19) This is the mitzvah of *shichichah*, and it is fulfilled unconsciously.

One might contend that *shichichah* is fulfilled only when the field’s owner intentionally elects not to retrieve the forgotten grain, but Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah viewed the mitzvah differently. He applied our verse to accidental tzedakah: “If one loses a coin from his hand, and a pauper finds it and is supported from it, the text views it as though [the person who lost it] has acquired merit.” [Sifri Ki Tetze 73; see Rashi to Devarim 24:19 for an alternate text.]

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah’s observation highlights the role of the recipient, without whom an act of tzedakah does not exist. At the moment our gentleman dropped his coin, he was a *schlemiel*. But then the pauper picked up the coin – and now, instant philanthropist! Indeed, this is one reason why we do not recite a blessing upon giving tzedakah; the success of the mitzvah depends upon the recipient’s response. (Responsa of Rashba 1:18) The importance of the recipient demonstrates that a halachic “deed” does not end with our personal thoughts, words or motions; the people whose lives we impact are also part of our deed. We function as interlocking puzzle pieces, nanomachines whose cooperative contributions create collective success in the mission of fulfilling Torah. Thus my participation in listening to a class turns the speaker into a teacher of Torah; when I bring a korban to the Beit haMikdash, I enable the kohen to fulfill his duties.

This interlocking activity can also be negative, of course. Hearing someone speak positively about a third party, and responding negatively, can turn that intended compliment into a form of *lashon hara*. (Chafetz Chaim, Hilchot Lashon Hara 9:1) In a bare minyan, failure to respond to a blessing in the repetition of the *amidah* almost renders it a blessing recited in vain. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 124:4) We are obligated to use our interactivity positively, to give others an assist in

their mitzvot; this is the principle of *arevut*. (Shevuot 39a-b) In a sense, we are required to play Jari Kurri and Scottie Pippen, assisting the Gretzkys and Jordans who are our scorers. [You may update this to including post-1980’s athletes.]

In the weeks before Rosh HaShanah, we are summoned to *cheshbon hanefesh* – an autopsy of our conduct during the past year. However, we must also examine our role in the conduct of others. Have we helped others with their mitzvot, directly or indirectly? Have we been a positive influence? Have we been Jari Kurri, enabling them to achieve their goals?

Our comparison to Jari Kurri highlights another important fact: Establishing the duty to assist others in their mitzvot does not reduce the importance of performing mitzvot of our own. Just the opposite – those who turn their talents and focus to assisting others often see results in their own mitzvot. Undoubtedly, Kurri was a great support for Wayne Gretzky, assisting on hundreds of his goals, but the two NHL career leaders in assists-per-game are actually two of the greatest goal scorers of all time: Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux. (<http://bit.ly/2vHJw6n>)

May we dedicate our energies in 5779 to turning others into leaders in mitzvot, and may we merit to become leaders in mitzvot as well.

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Summary

Sefer Yehoshua, the first book of the set of Nevi'im (Prophets), begins right where the Torah concludes. At the very end of Sefer Devarim, Moshe, the leader of the Jewish nation from the time of the Exodus through the entire 40-year period that the nation camped in the wilderness, died (Devarim 34:5). Following the national month-long mourning (Devarim 34:8), the nation was now primed for a new leader, one who would be able to take them in to the Land of Israel, the land they had been waiting to enter for so long.

On that note, Hashem now instructs Yehoshua, Moshe's right-hand man, that it is time for him to lead the nation across the Jordan River into the land of Israel. Hashem reassures him that the nation will successfully conquer the Land. (1:1-6) However, Yehoshua is also reminded of the importance of following the Torah's laws, and is told that the nation's successes are contingent upon this. (1:7-9)

Yehoshua then begins preparations to enter the Land; he orders officers to alert the population that they should prepare to soon cross the Jordan, (1:10-11) and he personally engages in

discussion with the tribes of Reuven, Gad, and a portion of Menasheh, to remind them of the agreement they had made with Moshe to lead the battalions entering the Land. (1:12-15) The leaders of these tribes are very agreeable and give Yehoshua their full support, even going so far as to say that anyone who disobeys him will be put to death. (1:16-18)

For Thought

Although Sefer Yehoshua follows Sefer Devarim, it would be remiss not to mention that much of the phrasing and word choices are strikingly similar. This was noted as early as the second century by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Bereshit Rabbah 6:14), and it is especially noticeable in this first chapter, where Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun (<https://www.929.org.il/page/188/post/5478>) notes six verses that share wording with counterparts in Sefer Devarim. But what lesson or message can be gleaned from this?

The answer can perhaps be found in another saying credited to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, that service of Torah is greater than its study. (Berachot 7b) When Yehoshua is introduced, the reader is told neither

of some great personal accomplishments, nor of any fantastic leadership qualities. Yehoshua is simply described as Moshe's aide. His greatness came through his service of Moshe, not from his own personal study.

Yehoshua's preparation for becoming the leader was due to the assistance he provided Moshe, and as a result, his every move was guided by that same mentor, Moshe. Therefore, the similarity in writing style and the persistent quoting of Sefer Devarim is not only expected, but it also suits the opening of Sefer Yehoshua. A simple student could not have filled the shoes of their teacher, but a devoted servant, Yehoshua, fit right in to them, with the ability to fulfill the legacy that his teacher was not permitted to complete.

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The Law of the Land: Yovel in the Modern Economy**Rabbi Jonathan Ziring**

Dr. Yossi London has argued that the early Zionist leaders were almost all utopian thinkers. Their vision for Israel was not just a society for Jews, but an ideal society. Thus, they expended great efforts developing visions for the most basic elements of human life, such as politics and economics. Many saw in Yovel (the "Jubilee") and its return of all ancestral lands to the original owners a model for a unique Jewish perspective for economics. [See <https://orot.ac.il/sites/default/files/8-6.pdf>].

What is unique about Yovel? Professor Erel Segal has documented no fewer than twelve policy suggestions that would incorporate the insights of Yovel into an Israeli economic system (<http://tora.us.fm/trvg/mamr/jubilee1.html>). For example, Theodor Herzl in *Altneuland* saw the inability of selling land forever as proof that Judaism supported a socialist worldview. He advocated that periodically land should be returned to the government. [This was instituted into law with the Israel Land Association, whereby most land in Israel is leased rather than bought.] On the other hand, Zeev Jabotinsky (*The Jubilee: The Biblical Plan for Expanded Ownership*) noted that Yovel actually is more capitalist than socialist. It allowed for the pursuit of personal wealth during the fifty years between each Yovel, thus recognizing that "free economic competition is one of the most powerful motivations in life. Let people struggle, lose and win. It is only necessary to cushion the arena with soft grass, so that whoever falls will not be too painfully injured..." He contended that Judaism did not want to prevent inequality, but rather ensure that it did not spiral out of control. Thus, the Torah instituted a periodic leveling of the playing field.

Several rabbinic figures agreed with Jabotinsky's general vision, and sought ways of making Yovel meaningful in a non-agricultural society. Rabbi Elazar Melamed for example, has claimed that land represents two things – natural resources, and capital. Therefore, he suggests that all natural resources be divided (or at least part of it), and the profits channeled toward professional education programs for all, as education is what gives people the leg up that land or capital once did. Following Jabotinsky's "periodic correction theory", he suggested that a percentage of accumulated wealth should be divided every fifty years and used for education to ensure that wealth inequality does not become too great. He used these insights to provide guidance for Israel's approach to its natural gas discoveries (<http://revivimen.yhb.org.il/2016/05/20/the-vision-of-yovel-for-our-generation/>).

Others, as cited by Professor Segal, have noted that Rabbi Melamed's view is problematic, as Yovel actually preserves the notion of private ownership more than communal, as it is meant to maintain ancestral holdings. From that perspective, Yovel is also only about land, as the Torah knew about other forms of capital and did not expand it; the latter are not ancestral. These attempts at expansive readings of Yovel may therefore be misguided. However, the question of how to apply Yovel's lessons is still critical.

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Biography

Rabbi Avraham Pam

Rabbi Elihu Abbe

It is reported that a homeless man spent considerable time in the beit midrash of New York's Yeshivat Torah Vodaath. Most people found it difficult to be near him, but Rabbi Avraham Pam befriended him and would often provide him with a meal. One Tisha B'Av, Rabbi Pam was spotted leaving a box of matzot and eggs in a section of the beit midrash that was out of view, then quietly telling the homeless man to use it as his meal. (Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, *The Life and Ideals of Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov HaKohen Pam*) This episode epitomized Rabbi Pam. Not only did he engage in kind deeds for others, especially for the unfortunate, but he was also exceedingly thoughtful in observing the needs of others. He knew that nobody would be inviting the homeless man over to their house for a meal on Tisha B'Av. At a time when others were focused on a variety of other personal religious needs, Rabbi Pam was thinking about how he could help another person.

Rabbi Pam was born in the town of Salok, Lithuania in 1913. In 1927 his family moved to the United States, and he was enrolled as a student at Torah Vodaath. At the age of 25 he began teaching a 9th grade Talmud class, and at the age of 30 he married his wife, Sarah Balmuth. In 1981, Rabbi Pam was accepted as Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaath, and in 1982, he was invited to join the Moetzet Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Great Rabbinic Leaders). He held these positions until his passing in 2001.

One of Rabbi Pam's most significant contributions was his founding of "Shuvu". In the 1990's, hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews made aliyah to Israel. Having lived under the Soviet Union, they had been unable to obtain a Jewish education. Shuvu's role was to provide a Jewish education for these Russian Israelis.

Another significant contribution was Rabbi Pam's emphasis on the study of Tanach. In an address to a Torah uMesorah convention, Rabbi Pam argued that to develop a feeling of connection to the Jewish people and a sense of our national destiny, it is essential to invest oneself in the study of Tanach.

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Torah and Translation

"Great in Kindness and Truth"

Rabbi Avraham Pam, Atarah laMelech pg. 177

Translated by Rabbi Elihu Abbe

בין י"ג מדות של הקב"ה נמנו חסד ואמת, כדכתיב "ורב חסד ואמת", ובר"ה (יו): איתא: אילפא רמי, כתיב "ורב חסד", וכתב "ואמת" (כלומר, אמת הוא דין וחסד הוא לפנים משורת הדין, ותרתי דסתרני נינהו). ומשני: בתחילה "ואמת", ולבסוף "ורב חסד". ופירש"י: כשרואה הקב"ה שאין העולם מתקיים בדין, אז הוא נוהג בהם במדת החסד.

וקשה, א"כ היה צריך לכתוב כסדר: ורב אמת וחסד. ועוד קשה, א"כ אין חסד ואמת כאחת אלא או זה או זה, ובשעה שדנין במדת החסד לקתה מדת האמת. וביותר קשה, הלא י"ג מידות הן מידות של רחמים וחנינה, ואיך נמנה אמת שהוא דין כאחת המידות. וכבר הקשו המפרשים כל זה (הרי"ף בע"י, הנוב"י בדורש לציון ד"ד, הנתיבות בנחלת יעקב, ועוד).

ולע"ד יתכן לבאר את הענין עפ"י הגמרא בשבת קנ"א, דאיתא שם: תניא ר"ג ברבי אומר, "ונתן לך רחמים ורחמך והרבך" (ראה), כל המרחם על הבריות מרחמין עליו מן השמים. הרי מבואר להדיא שפירשו חז"ל "ונתן לך רחמים" דהיינו שהקב"ה מזמין לאדם איזה ענין של רחמים שירחם על הבריות כדי שיזכה בזה לרחמי שמים.

ולפי זה עולה יפה הזיווג של חסד ואמת-דהיינו כשהקב"ה רוצה להיטיב עם אדם ואין לו זכויות לכך, הקב"ה מתחסד עמו להמציא לו זכויות ונותן לו הזדמנות להיטיב לזולתו, כדי שיזכה הוא עצמו לכל הטוב, ובדין. נמצא שחסד ואמת מתקיימין כאחד, ואתי שפיר מה שנמנו שניהם ביי"ג מידות של רחמים...

The thirteen Divine Attributes of Mercy include both Kindness and Truth, as (Exodus 34:6) records, "And great in Kindness and Truth." In the Talmud (Rosh HaShanah 17b), we find, "Ilfa asked: It is recorded, 'And great in Kindness,' and it is [also] recorded, 'and Truth!'" [Meaning: 'Truth' refers to justice, and 'Kindness' extends beyond the obligation of the law, and these are contradictory attributes.] And the Talmud responds: "At first it is 'And Truth', and in the end, 'Great in Kindness.'" Rashi explains: When G-d sees that the world cannot endure with Justice, then He acts with the trait of Kindness.

This is difficult; if so, then the text should have recorded them in order: "Great in Truth, and [then] Kindness"! It is further difficult, for if so, then Kindness and Truth do not function together, but either one or the other, and when [G-d] judges with Kindness then Truth suffers! And it is even more difficult: Aren't the "Thirteen Attributes" attributes of mercy and graciousness? How could Truth, which is justice, be counted as one of the Attributes? And commentators have asked all of this. (Rif in an old manuscript, Noda b'Yehudah in Doreish l'Zion, Netivot in Nachalat Yaakov, and more)

In my humble opinion, one could explain the matter via a talmudic passage (Shabbat 151): "Rabban Gamliel son of Rebbe said: Devarim 13:18 says, 'And G-d will give you mercy, and have mercy upon you and multiply you.' All who are merciful to creatures, Heaven is merciful upon them." It is explicit that our Sages explained "will give you mercy" to mean that G-d provides a person an opportunity for mercy, to be merciful to creatures, so that he will thereby merit the mercy of Heaven.

Based on this, the pairing of Kindness and Truth fits well. When G-d wishes to benefit a person, but he lacks the merit for it, G-d is kind to him, providing him with merit and giving him the opportunity to benefit others. Thus he merits all of those benefits personally, as justice. Thus Kindness and Truth are fulfilled as one, and it fits that both are counted among the thirteen Attributes of Mercy...

Moshe warned the Jews regarding Pesach, “For seven days, sourdough shall not be found in your homes; any who eat *machmetzet*, they shall be cut off... You shall not eat all *machmetzet*” on Pesach. (Shemot 12:19-20) Our Sages drew from the word “all” that the prohibition includes mixtures which contain any element of chametz. (Pesachim 43a) This is the Torah’s twelfth mitzvah, according to the count of Sefer haChinuch.

The Talmud records a debate regarding the punishment for eating foods which contain a minority of chametz (Pesachim *ibid.*):

- Ramban (Shemot 12:20 and Hasagot to Lo Taaseh 198) contends that the prohibition is rabbinic and there is no court-administered punishment.
- Rambam (Lo Taaseh 198) adopts the view that this is a biblical prohibition with a penalty of lashes, but agrees that there is no penalty if the ratio of chametz to non-chametz is sufficiently small.

Sefer haChinuch (12) notes that this entire discussion relates only to a grain mixture of which only some becomes chametz. If a separate measure of chametz were to fall into non-chametz, the entire mixture would be prohibited, regardless of ratio.

The Torah’s care in prohibiting even mixtures with small quantities of chametz may teach us a lesson regarding laziness. Chametz results when a baker is slow to process his dough; when we are slow to perform a mitzvah, the resultant loss of the opportunity is considered “chametz” at any time of year. Just as we avoid any product with the slightest bit of chametz on Pesach, so we should avoid any degree of laziness in our mitzvot all year long.

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Weekly Highlights: August 25 – August 31 / 14 Elul – 20 Elul
Most of our classes are still on summer hiatus, but opportunities remain!

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Aug. 25				
After Hashkamah	Ezer Diena	Minchat Chinuch: Sell a Pet to Pay Shul Dues?	BAYT	Rabbi’s Classroom
5:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Blood On Our Houses?	BAYT	For Women
Before Avot	Ezer Diena	Daf Yomi	BAYT	Rabbi’s Classroom
After minchah	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Wed. Aug 29				
10:00 AM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	The Psychology of Change	Beth Emeth	<i>Fee \$10. Register at torontotorah.com/change</i>
Thu. Aug. 30				
11:30 AM	R’ Elihu Abbe	Gemara Kiddushin: Introduction	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced
8:30 PM	R’ Elihu Abbe	Gemara Beitzah 26a	eabbe@torontotorah.com for location	For Men

For University Men, at Yeshivat Or Chaim
8:30 AM Friday, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, The Book of Yeshayah
For University Women, at Ulpanat Orot—On Summer Hiatus

Seder Boker for Adult Men with Rabbi Moshe Yeres!
10:00 AM to Noon, Mondays/Wednesdays
Masechet Rosh HaShanah and Sefer Yonah
10:00 AM to Noon, Tuesdays/Thursdays
Akeidat Yitzchak and Agnon’s Yamim Noraim

MOTZAEI SHABBAT SEPTEMBER 1: PRE-SELICHOT SESSIONS!
11:15 PM at Shaarei Tefillah, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner
Selichot: An Opportunity to Do Your Worst
12:30 AM at Aish Thornhill, Ezer Diena
When G-d Repented
12:30 AM at Clanton Park, Rabbi Alex Hecht
Mercy: A Two-Way Street

SUNDAY MORNING SEPTEMBER 2: MIDRESHET YOM RISHON FOR WOMEN!
10:00 AM to 11:20 AM at Shaarei Shomayim
Rav Kook’s Teshuvah: A Return to Perfection (Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner)
Repentance: A Joint Venture of G-d and Israel (Ezer Diena)