



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV

TORONTO TORAH

PARASHAT BO

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DVAR TORAH VA'ERA RABBI YEHUDA MANN, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

Not Just Mercy! Kindness Too...

If I were to ask an average person what the greatest miracle that happened to our ancestors during the Exodus from Egypt was, he would surely say to me—the Ten Plagues, maybe the splitting of the Sea, or even the fact that an entire nation of 600,000 people left slavery for freedom is incomprehensible and unparalleled in all of human history!

But for some reason, Rashi chooses to emphasize a particularly insignificant thing as a unique act that Hashem did for us, and we should pay attention to it. The Torah tells us: "Today you are leaving in the month of spring" (Exodus 13:4). Rashi asks why the Torah bothers to tell us about the season, as if we didn't pay attention to the time of the year? Rashi answers: "...but so did He say to them, 'See the kindness [*Chessed*] that I have bestowed upon you, that I took you out in a month that is suitable for leaving, neither too hot nor too cold nor rainy....'" The obvious question is—The greatest kindness of Hashem is the weather? Aren't the other miracles—the Ten Plagues, the splitting of the Sea, and the Exodus from slavery to freedom—more significant, and shouldn't we pay attention to them?

Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Goldvicht [*Assufat Ma'arachot*, Parshat Bo] provides a wonderful

answer. Rabbi Goldvicht says that there are two ways in which a person expresses compassion towards others: mercy [*Rachamim*] and kindness [*Chessed*]. Mercy is the expression of one's compassion for another which is a result of seeing something in that person that arouses compassion and causes them to act. For instance: A poor person comes to me and says he is hungry; immediately, I am moved with compassion, and I act to help him. In this case, there is an external stimulus from which I am moved to have compassion for others.

Kindness [*Chessed*], on the other hand, is something else. Kindness, says Rabbi Goldvicht, is the awakening and desire to help others even without external stimulus; I naturally look for what I can do. I want to support and help others not because they stir me to have compassion for them, but because I naturally seek to help others. I will make sure to say good morning to everyone I see with a smile because I know it simply does good to everyone. I invite my neighbours to a Shabbos meal when they come back from vacation on Friday because everyone would love that! I want to do good even without special calls for help from outside, but because that's who I am—a person looking to do good.

Rabbi Goldvicht says that this is what Hashem teaches the people of Israel when He takes them out of Egypt in the month of spring. When Hashem saved the people of Israel from the Egyptians, and struck them with plagues, and split the sea so that they would safely escape their enemies—that was an expression of mercy, as when a person calls for help, someone is moved to help that person. But there is a higher level: kindness. When one wants to do good to others even without a special need, but because one naturally seeks to help others, that is kindness. Therefore, Hashem took the people of Israel out in a month with excellent weather—the month of spring.

We are now over 100 days into the war in Israel. Initially, it was very easy for us to support and help our brothers and sisters in Israel because we saw their suffering and difficulty, and we felt compassion for them. After 100 days, perhaps we see less of the difficulties, suffering, and the struggle they are going through, and maybe we feel less urgency to help and support them. Now is the time to show kindness [*Chessed*] to our brothers and sisters—to support, help, and assist them not out of mercy, but out of our natural desire to do good for others.



Yirmiyahu 6

Chapter 6 continues the theme of previous chapters: Yirmiyahu rebukes Jerusalem for her sins, and predicts the arrival of the Babylonian enemy.

He begins by calling upon Binyamin to flee, which is odd; Jerusalem is primarily known as a city of Yehudah. Radak explained that Yirmiyahu’s family lived in the Binyamin region (Yirmiyahu 1:1), and so he felt closer to them. Dr. Menachem Bula (Daat Mikra Yirmiyahu) suggested that it’s because Binyamin lived north of Jerusalem, and would be attacked first by the invading Babylonians. Yirmiyahu warns them to take cover, as armies like shepherds with their flocks, were coming (6:1-3).

Yirmiyahu envisions the invaders declaring eagerly, “Let us attack in the early afternoon! But woe is us that the day is already waning!

Let us attack at night, and destroy her palaces!” They are eager in their assault (6:4-5).

Then Yirmiyahu tells the reader why this is happening; the city is full of corruption, as people harm each other. [Yirmiyahu 6:7 is one of the passages brought to prove that *chamas* refers to violent theft; see *Bava Metzia* 59a.] If the residents do not accept rebuke, the city will be entirely depopulated. But no one will listen; Yirmiyahu is filled with Divine rage, but he lacks any audience (6:6-12).

Part of the problem stems from corrupt leaders, one of Yirmiyahu’s favourite targets. False prophets soothe the people, declaring, “Peace, peace!” But there is no peace. Hashem calls the people to pursue a good path, but they refuse; Hashem establishes prophets for them, but they decline to listen (6:13-17).

The result will be punishment, and Hashem declares that He will not be swayed by the incense they import from afar and the sacrifices they bring. Hashem will send the people suffering, and it will afflict parents and children and neighbours. The enemy is coming from the north, a great nation from the ends of the earth. They have great weapons and they are cruel, and the people will only be able to grieve in sackcloth and ashes (6:18-26).

Finally, as explained by Malbim and Dr. Bula, Hashem identifies Yirmiyahu as a purifier of the metal that is the Jewish people. They mix in impurities—copper, iron and lead are blended with silver and gold—and for all of Yirmiyahu’s efforts, they remain a rejected mixture of fine metal and dross (6:27-30).



Week 7: On the Importance of the Derashot Haran 11

The establishment of the State of Israel challenged Torah thinkers, especially those who saw religious value in the State, to think about the role of Torah law in a modern political reality. The Ran’s conviction that Torah always had multiple systems of law, some that followed strict (eternal) Torah law and others that were tasked with responding to the exigencies of the time, allowed some to find the language to recognize the secular state. This was especially important as the majority of the people and leaders of the new state were not committed to Torah law. Combining that with Rabbi Kook’s suggestion that the powers the Torah grants to the king are not limited to that particular legal structure allowed granting religious sanction to the democratically elected government. Thinkers like Rabbi Goren, while not rejecting the importance of Torah law practiced as such, were comfortable with a form of legal pluralism, with the secular state existing alongside rabbinic legal bodies.

On the other hand, other thinkers believed that Torah law

itself was able to function fully at all times, even in the modern world. Thus, they found different ways to directly articulate a Torah vision for the laws of the state, rather than outsourcing it to the secular bodies using the Ran’s approach. This was done through creative interpretation and legislation, though admittedly they were far from successful in getting their models accepted. *Mishpat Ivri*, which only provides Torah inspiration for Israeli courts to draw on, has been more successful than the comprehensive model of decrees proposed by Rabbi Herzog.

Regardless of which model one favors, it is important to acknowledge that the existence of a Jewish State, for those who see this as religiously valuable, forces us to expand our explorations of Torah from personal and communal laws, whether ritual or social, to national laws, ethics of war, and legal theory. To that end, the Derashot HaRan provides an early treatment of these topics that we can draw on to inspire our journey.



Hafrashat Challah II - Baking Dough in Different Weeks

Question: Last week, you addressed the question of whether it is possible to recite the blessing for separating challah when preparing dough with the intention of sharing it with others. I do something different—I prepare a dough that contains 2.25 kg of flour and keep it all for myself. I only bake a portion each week, freeze the rest, and bake another portion each subsequent week. Can I separate challah with a blessing?

Answer: To answer your question, let's quickly review what we learned last week—as we mentioned, in order to fulfill the mitzvah of separating challah with a blessing, you need to knead a dough containing 2.25 kg of flour, and without this specific amount of flour, you cannot recite the blessing for separating challah.

The *Shulchan Aruch* [Yoreh De'ah 326:2] rules that if one prepares dough with

the intention of dividing it, that dough is exempt from separating challah because, since it is made to be divided, we consider the challah as if it has no fixed measure.

There is a dispute on what constitutes dough intended for division. Last week, we mentioned the common opinion that if someone prepares dough with the intention of dividing it into loaves for others, the divided loaves do not join together, and one is exempt from separating challah.

However, another opinion, mentioned in the *Pischei Teshuvah* [Yoreh De'ah 326:2], holds that if dough is prepared with the intention of baking at different times, for example, some in the morning and some in the evening, it is also considered dough intended for division, and one is exempt from separating challah.

According to this, a woman who prepares challahs with the intention of baking some

on this Friday and some in the following weeks is not obligated to separate challah. Rabbi Yehoshua Noewirth, in his book *Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata* [Chapter 42:11], believes that one should separate challah if they intend to bake challah at different times, but it should be done without a blessing.

However, last week, we brought advice from contemporary rabbis that there is a way to fulfill the obligation according to all opinions. If a woman prepares a 2.25 kg dough and immediately bakes 1.6 kg, she can freeze the rest and bake them in the following weeks. The reason for this, as we mentioned, is that some important rabbis believe that one can separate challah with a blessing starting from the quantity of 1.6 kg, and one could rely on them in this situation.

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at ymanntorontotorah.com.



Week 5: The Fear of War



Adjusting Sights
By Haim Sabato
The Toby Press, 2003

"אמר לנו רוני, הנהג של הטנק, שכשנפרד מהם ראש הישיבה קרא להם את מה שפסק הרמב"ם, בהלכות מלכים ומלחמותיהם, שאסור לו לאדם שיירא עצמו במלחמה, ואם עבר על כך, כאילו כל דמי ישראל תליין בצווארו ושפך דמי הכול. ותימה: איך אפשר לו לרמב"ם שיצווה על האדם שלא יתיירא ליבו במלחמה?... אלא שאם נדקדק בלשון הזהב של הרמב"ם נראה שלא כתב לאסור, אלא שלא יירא האדם את עצמו בשעת המלחמה." (תיאום כוונות, עמוד 164)

"[O]ur driver Roni read aloud a passage from Maimonides saying that a man who goes to war mustn't fear. More than that: being afraid, Maimonides says, is like

spilling the blood of Israel. I asked myself: How could that be? How could Maimonides tell anyone not to fear war? ... But if we look closely at Maimonides' always impeccable language, we see that he forbade not the fear of war itself, but the yielding to it." (*Adjusting Sights*, page 141)

In this passage, Rabbi Sabato discusses a difficult passage in Rambam's *Mishnah Torah*. In his description of the laws related to wartime, Rambam rules that a soldier is forbidden from experiencing fear. To Rabbi Sabato and others, such a halacha is impossible to keep. As the artillery shells fall, how could one not experience fear?

Rabbi Sabato explains that the prohibition is not fear of war itself. Such a restriction would be impossible. Rather, it is forbidden to allow the fear to paralyze the soldier. War is terrible and we are right to fear and avoid it. At the same time, it cannot shake our resolve. As FDR said years ago, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

May our resolve not waver and may we soon see an end to this war.

Adjusting Sights can be purchased from Koren Publishers at tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD. Use the code *TorontoTorah* for a 10% discount on this or any other book on their website.



TABLE TALK RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Source: Shemot 11:4

Moshe said, "Thus says Hashem, 'about midnight, I will go out in the midst of Egypt...'"

Rashi:

And he didn't say: At midnight, lest Pharaoh's astrologers be mistaken, and say: Moses is a liar

Questions to Discuss

- Why did Moshe worry about what the astrologers would mistakenly think?

- What is different about this situation, where it was correct to change the language based on the potential mistake of the astrologers, and the text in Bereishit 1:26, where the language was left as "Let us make man" even though the heretics would potentially make a mistake?
- When have you needed to change what you said to be less accurate in order to avoid having your words misunderstood?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at nsonenberg@torontotorah.com to enter our raffle for a \$15 voucher for Tova's Bakery!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Gutentberg
Sunday	Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 AM	Rabbi Shor
	Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Smachot	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz and Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi Beit Midrash)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann and Rabbi Lax
	Sefer Shemot	Yeshivat Or Chaim	NEW: Starting Jan. 28 at 8 PM	David Koschitzky
Monday	The Torah: A Psychic Turn. Psychological Theories in the Eyes of Tanach	Zoom: tiny.cc/idanrak	2:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
	University Women's Beit Midrash	Yeshivat Or Chaim	7:45 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Introduction to Gemara: Learn how to learn	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
Tuesday	Then and Now: Returning to the Land of Israel – a Study in Tanach	Zoom	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Women's Gemara Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:15 PM	Rabbi Mann
Wednesday	Morality, Ethics and Religion	Zoom	10:00 AM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	8:00 PM	Rabbi Mann
	Men's Gemara Bekiut	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Eliyahu HaNavi: A Prophet of Fire & Water	Shaarei Tefillah	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
Thursday	Tanach: Sefer Shmuel	Zoom: tiny.cc/BMZDTanach	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi Beit Midrash)	8:00 PM	R' Diena
Sun-Thu	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim	New Time 8:00–9:00 PM	
	Pre-Maariv Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	New Time 8:45–9:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg

YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash

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