

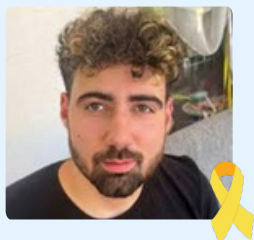


BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

ויקרא - VAYIKRA

Vol. 34 Num.20 (#649) · 7 Nisan 5785 / April 5, 2025

Candle lighting: 7:29pm  Havdallah: 8:40pm (50 minutes after שקיעה)



הנתונים בצרה ובשבירה

גיא בן מירב Guy Gilboa-Dalal

Guy, 24, from Alfi Menashe, was kidnapped from the Nova Festival on 7.10 along with his childhood friend Eviatar David. He loves Japanese culture and sports. His parents, his brother Gal and his sister Gaya are doing everything they can and are waiting for him at home when he returns.

If you would like to sponsor an issue of Toronto Torah, please contact:
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דבר תורה RABBI YEHUDA MANN, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

Seder Night- A Night of Thanks and Giving

When we open the Haggadah during the "Maggid" section, we encounter a profound and evocative declaration:

"Ha lachma anya di achalu avhatana b'ara d'Mitzrayim. Kol dichfin yeitei v'yeichol, kol ditzrich yeitei v'yifsach."

"This is the bread of affliction our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who need join us for the Passover meal."

A natural question arises: Why issue an invitation to guests during the part symbolizing "bread of affliction"? Wouldn't it make more sense to extend this gesture at "Shulchan Orech," when the table is set with festive delicacies?

Rabbi Shlomo Levenstein, a well known orator from Bnei Brak, provides a profound insight. He explains that this timing demonstrates the essence of genuine hospitality. Opening one's home to guests does not mean presenting a flawless facade – a home meticulously cleaned, with gourmet food and perfectly behaved children. Such preparation can feel artificial and staged.

True hospitality invites others into the reality of life, even when it is messy.

It is about offering kindness and warmth despite the imperfections – a home that may not be spotless, a table that may not boast luxurious fare, but a heart that is always open. By inviting others during the "bread of affliction" moment, we embody authentic generosity and demonstrate that hospitality stems from the heart, not the circumstances.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l offers another layer of meaning, drawing from a harrowing story shared by Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi. Levi recounts how, in the final days of the Holocaust, the Nazis abandoned Auschwitz, leaving behind sick prisoners with scarce food and supplies. Amidst this dire situation, one inmate, Toporowski, suggested sharing their meager food with others.

Levi describes this act as transformative. Until then, survival in the camp had demanded hoarding every scrap of sustenance. But the decision to share, even from their meager rations, became an act of spiritual liberation. It was at that moment, Levi writes, that they truly became free.

Rabbi Sacks applies this profound lesson to the Seder night. True freedom is not measured by what we possess but by our willingness to share and support others.

This is why we extend the invitation at the start of the Seder: to emphasize that freedom's ultimate expression lies in the power to give.

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon shared with me a deeply moving story during his visit to Canada. He recounted meeting a wounded soldier in the hospital and presenting him with a gift—the latest iPhone, meant to replace the one he had lost in combat. The soldier was overjoyed but, to everyone's surprise, immediately asked if he could give the phone to a fellow soldier still fighting on the front lines who had also lost his. Of course, Rabbi Rimon agreed.

Rav Rimon's entourage was astonished. "Why didn't the Rav simply offer the other soldier another phone?" they asked. Rav Rimon smiled and explained, "I will, in time. But today, I gave him something far greater: the gift of giving. This soldier, who felt helpless and dependent, now experienced the dignity and empowerment of being a giver. That sense of worth is the greatest gift I could offer."

May this Seder night inspire us to open our hearts and homes, to share not only our resources but also our empathy and care. Through this, may we merit to experience true freedom, enriched by the transformative power of generosity.



A Nation with a Foreign Language

According to the Vilna Gaon, Tehillim 114, *B'tzeit Yisrael MiMitzrayim*, is the *shir shel yom* for the first day of Pesach. We sing it as the second paragraph of Hallel.

The Talmud (Pesachim 118a) lists five themes for Hallel, the first of which is the exodus from Egypt. Tehillim 113 starts Hallel with a prequel to leaving Egypt, and Tehillim 114 launches into the story. But oddly, the opening sentence of Tehillim 114 describes Egypt as *am lo'eiz*, "a nation that spoke a foreign language." Of all the ways to describe Egypt, why emphasize their unfamiliar speech?

One approach is that those who speak a different language are "other". We are foreign to them, they don't even see us as human, and therefore they act upon us without mercy. Similarly, Devarim 28:49 describes a punishment in which Hashem exiles us to a nation whose language we have never heard, and therefore they are bold in harming us.

A second approach, favoured by Ibn Ezra, is that *lo'eiz* here means "foul speech," and not only foreign speech. This fits the way they spoke about the Jews in Shemot 1, alleging that we were treasonous.

But we might suggest a third idea, noting that Tehillim 114:1 also describes our ancestors as "Israel" and as "the house of Yaakov." Perhaps *am lo'eiz* teaches how we were separate from the Egyptians. We descended to Egypt as Yaakov's household, and we left, centuries later, as Yaakov's household.

Yitzchak identified Yaakov by his speech; as Rashi explains, "The voice is the voice of Yaakov" describes not the sound by the content of Yaakov's words. Lavan names a monument in the Aramaic *yegar sahaduta*, but Yaakov uses the Hebrew *gal eid*. This linguistic separation holds true for Yaakov's sons as well; in Bereishit 42:23 we learn that there is an interpreter between the brothers and the viceroy because they maintain their own speech. And when Yosef says to his brothers, "it's my mouth speaking to you," a midrash says that Yosef established that Jews do not deviate from our language. (Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael Bo Pischa 5)

Right from the beginning, Tehillim 114 highlights this separation as a merit that brought us out of Egypt. Therefore, as the text continues to say, "Yehudah became His sanctuary, Yisrael His empire."

Chag kasher v'sameach!



The Authority of Rabbis as Interpreters of the Torah (Part 3)

QS: Rabbi, last time we discussed how Rambam and Ramban disagreed on the exact source of rabbinic authority to create new decrees. Still, both agreed fully on the Rabbis' authority to interpret the Torah. But why did Hashem specifically choose for humans to interpret His Torah, rather than giving us a fully explicit, unambiguous text?

RM: That's an insightful question. At first glance, it seems logical that Hashem could have given us a clear, literal Torah. Yet, our tradition reveals otherwise: Hashem intentionally entrusted the Torah's interpretation to human reasoning. For example, the Gemara recounts how 3,000 halachot were forgotten after Moshe Rabbeinu's passing. When asked to restore these through prophecy, Yehoshua refused, stating, "It is not in heaven" (לֹא הִיא, *(Beshmimim 16a)*). Similarly, in the well-known story of Tanur Shel Achnai, despite miraculous heavenly proofs supporting Rabbi Eliezer's opinion, Rabbi Yehoshua insisted the Torah had already been given to humans to interpret, declaring, "It is not in heaven." Remarkably, Hashem affirmed this human authority, smiling and declaring, "My children have defeated Me" (*Bava Metzia 59a*).

QS: That's incredible—but why would Hashem intentionally leave room for interpretation rather than clarifying everything explicitly?

RM: Our sages explain that the Torah was deliberately divided into Written and Oral components. Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah states that the Written Torah preserves the integrity of the 613 mitzvot and prevents alterations by other nations, while the Oral Torah uniquely distinguishes the Jewish people, safeguarding our heritage and unique understanding of the Torah (*Bamidbar Rabbah 14:10*).

Midrash Tanchuma adds that the Torah's cryptic written form leaves many details for oral explanation, emphasizing that true Torah mastery requires deep personal dedication and self-sacrifice, thus strengthening our covenant with Hashem (*Tanchuma, Noach 3*).

QS: Practically speaking, that makes sense. But philosophically, couldn't this have been achieved without ambiguity?

RM: Philosophically, this structure brilliantly addresses a profound tension: balancing objective truth with subjective relevance. The Written Torah embodies absolute objectivity—eternal truths beyond human limitations. In contrast, the Oral Torah invites continuous human engagement, reflection, and interpretation, making it relevant to each generation's unique circumstances. The Dor Revi'i explains that Hashem intentionally avoided writing the Oral Torah explicitly, allowing flexibility for future generations to adapt and interpret Torah according to their changing realities (*Dor Revi'i, Introduction to Chullin*).

Rav Kook further illuminates this dynamic beautifully. He describes Torah Shebichtav as timeless, objective truth, and Torah Sheba'al Peh as dynamic, subjective insight. The synthesis between these two creates a living Torah capable of guiding every generation harmoniously, bridging the divine and human worlds (*Orot HaTorah 1*).

QS: So, the Torah's dual nature intentionally blends timeless divine truth with adaptable human insight, ensuring its eternal relevance?

RM: Precisely. This balance ensures that Torah remains not only eternal but also vibrant and responsive to humanity's evolving needs. Thus, the partnership between divine truth and human interpretation is not merely practical—it is fundamentally essential for sustaining Jewish life and continuity throughout history.



Erev Pesach Falling on Shabbat: Part 3 – Seudah Shelishit

Question:

Last week, you wrote that on Erev Pesach in Toronto, one must stop eating chametz by 10:31 AM, and matzah is prohibited the entire day. If that's the case, what can we eat for Seudah Shelishit this year?

Answer:

Erev Pesach falling on Shabbat presents a unique challenge for Seudah Shelishit. Halacha ideally requires bread for this meal (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 291:2). However, its proper time begins after mincha gedolah (early afternoon), which is later than the time chametz must already be avoided. Additionally, matzah cannot be eaten on Erev Pesach, as it is reserved for the Seder.

Here are five potential solutions:

1. Egg Matzah-The Shulchan Aruch suggests eating matzah ashira (egg matzah), made with flour and fruit juice, eggs, or oil instead of water.

It is not considered chametz and cannot be used as the matzah required for the Seder. Thus, it is permitted for Seudah Shelishit.

However, Ashkenazim generally refrain from eating egg matzah on Pesach unless for specific needs, such as for the elderly or ill. As a result, for most Ashkenazim this is not a practical option.

2. Meat or Fruit- If bread isn't available, one may fulfill Seudah Shelishit with other foods, such as meat, fish, or fruits. Although bread is preferred, these are acceptable substitutes when necessary. Given the unique challenges of this Shabbat, many rely on this solution.

3. Cooked Matzah Dish (Kneidlach)-

The Mishnah Berurah suggests eating a cooked dish made from matzah meal, such as kneidlach (matzah balls). Since the matzah is cooked and not baked, it is not considered equivalent to regular matzah. However, those who avoid gebrochts (matzah that has come into contact with liquid) during Pesach may not use this option.

4. Splitting the Morning Meal- Another approach, mentioned by the Mishnah Berurah, is to divide the morning meal into two parts. After davening, one should eat a meal with bread, and finish rather early and bench. After a short break, such as taking a walk or playing with children, one should wash again and eat another meal and finish the chametz of the meal by 10:31 AM (Toronto time). This fulfills the mitzvah of Seudah Shelishit, even if it's earlier than the ideal time.

5. Learning Torah Instead- The Magen Avraham quotes Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who would learn Torah instead of eating Seudah Shelishit. The Aruch HaShulchan explains that what the Magen Avraham really means is that in such cases when one cannot fulfill the Mitzvah of Seudah Shelishit properly, there is no obligation for Seudah Shelishit, and one should use the spare time for Torah learning.

Summary:

This year, Seudah Shelishit can be fulfilled by eating meat or fruits, splitting the morning meal, or learning Torah if eating isn't feasible. May we navigate this special Shabbat with clarity and joy!



Korbanot Are Critical, When Offered Properly

The prophets often criticize the Jews for offering Korbanot while still engaging in spiritual and ethical corruption. For example, in the opening chapter of Yeshayahu (the Haftara of Shabbat Chazon before Tisha B'Av)

“What need have I of all your sacrifices?” Says G-D. “I am sated with burnt offerings of rams, and suet of fatlings, and blood of bulls; and I have no delight in lambs and he-goats. That you come to appear before Me – who asked that of you? Trample My courts no more; Bringing oblations is futile, Incense is offensive to Me....Your hands are stained with crime – Wash yourselves clean; Put your evil doings away from My sight. Cease to do evil; Learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice; aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow.... (Yeshayahu 1:11-17, JPS)

The prophet makes it clear that sacrifices must be part of a full religious life, not a replacement for it.

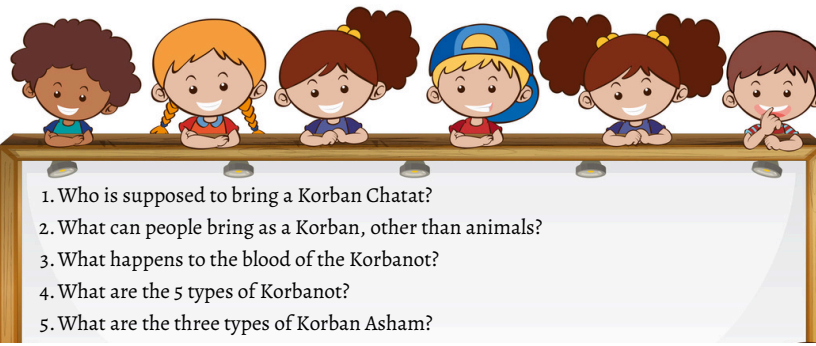
Sefer Vayikra begins the laws of the sacrifices. Thus, the prophecy included in the Haftara is one which seems to call on people to bring sacrifices, criticizing them for ignoring G-d.

“But you have not worshiped Me, O Jacob, that you should be weary of Me, O Israel. You have not brought Me your sheep for burnt offerings, nor honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with grain offerings, nor wearied you about frankincense.” (Yeshayahu 43:22-3)

Da'at Mikra assumes that this must be read in light of the first chapter above – that the Jews have been bringing sacrifices, but due to their corruption, they do not count.

Most commentaries, however, think that just as Yeshayahu can criticize improper offering of sacrifices, he can criticize the lack thereof. Korbanot are important, even if they must be part of a full religious life to be acceptable. Rashi assumes that the Jews were offering to idols, Ibn Ezra understands that the people in Bavel are being criticized (see Abarbanel for how this could be, as no offerings can be brought outside of Israel), and Radak and Metzudot point to the generation of Achaz that stopped offering korbanot.

As we begin Sefer Vayikra, we must remember that offerings are a critical expression of our commitment to G-d, even if, as Yeshayahu notes, only when they do this with integrity, rather than replace worship and become corrupt attempts at bribes.



1. A Korban Chatat is brought by an individual who unintentionally violates specific commandments.
2. People can offer items like grain, drink offerings, and incense.
3. Typically, the blood of the Korban is sprinkled on the Mizbeach.
4. Olah, Shelamim, Chatat, Asham, Mincha.
5. Asham Talui, Vadai, Nazir.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	Rabbi Mann	After Hashkama Minyan
	Gemara	BAYT	Rabbi Gutenberg	Between Mincha & Maariv
Sunday	Men's Semichat Chaver: Business Halacha	Clanton Park	Rabbi Spitz and Rabbi Mann	9:00 AM
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky-Mizrachi)	Rabbi Mann and Rabbi Lax	9:00 AM
Monday	Mizrachi Monday Night Learning	BAYT (Milevsky-Mizrachi)	Rabbi Thau	8:00 PM
	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	Rabbi Mann	8:30 PM
Tuesday	Tzurba - Hilchot Shabbat	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Rabbi Thau	7:00 AM
	Tzurba Chaburah: Niddah	Zoom	Mrs. Sonenberg	10:00 AM
	"Is This the Real Life? Is This Just Fantasy?" Mystic Creatures in Tanach	Zoom	R' Rakovsky	2:00 PM
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	Rabbi Mann	8:00 PM
Wednesday	Tzurba - Hilchot Shabbat	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Rabbi Thau	7:00 AM
	Tzurba - Hilchot Shabbat	Zoom	Mrs. Sonenberg - register at yoatzot.ca/chabura	10:00 AM
	<u>Men's Contemporary Halacha</u>	Clanton Park	Rabbi Mann	8:00 PM
Thursday	<u>Into Pesach</u>	zoom	R' Rakovsky	10:00 AM
	Tanach: Sefer Melachim	Zoom	Rabbi Horovitz	1:30 PM
	Mizrachi Mishmar	BAYT (Milevsky-Mizrachi)	Rabbi Thau	8:00 PM

Pesach learning programs

April 6	Haggadah Morning	Shaarei Tefillah	BMZD speakers	10:00 AM
April 7	Haggadah Night	Shaarei Shomayim	BMZD Speakers	8:00 PM

The upcoming issue of Toronto Torah will be published on

April 26 (28th of Nisan), Parashat Shemini.

Next week, you will find the Seder Companion booklet in your Shul.

This booklet contains inspiring Torah insights for Pesach and includes discussion questions for children, making it a valuable resource for your Seder table.

חג פסח כשר ושמח!



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