



# BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV

# TORONTO TORAH

## PARASHAT CHAYEI SARA

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by  
Allan and Malka Rutman in memory of Yoseph Matisyahu ben R' Avraham Yitzchak and Laya bas R' Chaim Dovid and  
לזכר נשמת אהרן מיכל בן חיים מאיר (Aron Frankel A"H) by beloved wife, Miriam Frankel, and children; Mark and Judy, Ralph and Gitty, and Esty and families.



**DVAR TORAH CHAYEI SARA** RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

## According to the Effort is the Reward

The Gemara in Taanit (4a) tells us that Eliezer, Avraham's servant, made an improper request when he prayed for Divine assistance finding a wife for Isaac. Eliezer set up a test that seems to effectively determine the degree of compassion and kindness that were present in a potential spouse:

*May it be that the young lady to whom I say, 'Please, tilt your pitcher so I may drink', and she says, 'Drink and I will give your camels to drink, too', it is she whom You have selected for your servant, for Yitzchak... (24:14)*

Any person who would not only provide him water but also of their own accord be aware of the need of the animals and commit to the arduous task of bringing them water certainly has good character traits and would be an ideal candidate for marriage. And yet, despite the reasonableness of this approach, the Gemara says that what he did was inappropriate. The Gemara explains that even though she might be compassionate, there was still the possibility that she had other flaws that were not immediately apparent which would have made her unfit as a spouse for Isaac. Instead of invoking a miraculous Divine

intervention, Eliezer should have made a proper, thorough inquiry to gain a more complete understanding of the woman he would be making an offer of marriage to on behalf of his master's son. The rush to complete his task and his lack of desire to go through the tedious process can be seen in the text when he says, "Bring me good fortune today" (24:12). He had just arrived

**True success...  
requires effort**

and had yet to put in any personal effort and as such, it was wrong to expect Hashem to do the task for him.

The Gemara brings another example of an improper request made by the Jewish people in the time of the prophet Hosea. After experiencing suffering due to their sins they desired to return to Hashem: "And let us know, eagerly strive to know the Lord ...and He will come to us as the rain" (Hosea, 6:3). They wanted to gain knowledge of and connection with Hashem quickly like a downpour of rain. Hashem tells them that to return to Him in a manner that will be effective they need to approach the process like dew: "I will be as the dew to Israel"

(Hoea, 14:6). Rain brings a lot of water quickly and even when it isn't destructive, there is often a large amount of water that runs into the rivers and streams with the benefit not seen in the area where it fell. Dew, on the other hand, stays local and is cumulative; its benefit is seen daily and grows over time. Less water arrives in each occurrence but the lasting impact can be greater and is more pleasant to those who receive it.

We would all like to find success quickly and easily in every area of our lives but at the same time we know that true success—whether in business, in our relationships with people or with Hashem—requires effort. Eliezer himself was aware of this, as can be seen by the musical cantillation that is attached to the opening of his request of Hashem. The note of a shalsholet indicates that the action being described was done with hesitation. He knew it was inappropriate to look for the easy way but was unable to resist the temptation. May we merit to develop lasting and meaningful connections with our peers, our family and with Hashem based on consistency and an awareness of the value of our personal effort.



## Yeshayahu 64

Chapter 63 envisioned a Jewish nation that was suffering in ways that Yeshayahu never personally experienced; this may have been a prophecy of the coming destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and the Babylonian exile. The last sentence in Chapter 63 initiated a plea to Hashem, declaring that, in our suffering we have become like a nation that has never been intimate with Hashem, and has never known miracles. His implicit prayer for the return of miracles continues throughout the brief, but powerfully poetic, Chapter 64.

Yeshayahu recalls that there was a time when Hashem tore open the heavens and liquified mountains. This may refer to when Hashem gave us the Torah, or when Hashem fought our battles in our early years in Israel, or both (Radak). Nations heard of Hashem, and quaked. No one had ever seen such wonders (63:19-64:3).

But Yeshayahu laments that the most enthusiastically righteous of us are now gone, and the ones who could have successfully beseeched Hashem for mercy are no longer to be found. Those who remain are impure, and their deeds are revolting like bloodstained clothing. We are like fallen leaves, our sins carrying us along

***You created us, we are Your material and handiwork!***

like the wind. In this state we have no one who prays to Hashem and embraces Him; Hashem is hidden, and we are melting away (64:4-6).

Yeshayahu prays to Hashem: “You are our Father! You created us, we are Your material and handiwork! Do not hold on to our guilt forever; look at us, for we are Your

nation.” Yeshayahu describes the sacred cities of Israel as a wilderness; Jerusalem as desolate; the Beit HaMikdash has been burned. And Yeshayahu demands of Hashem, “Will You still restrain Yourself and be silent?” (64:7-11). Parts of this passage are recited when tearing keriach upon seeing the ruins of the Beit HaMikdash (Moed Katan 26a, Orach Chaim 561:2).

Our Sages saw a positive layer in Yeshayahu’s description of the unprecedented miracles Hashem once performed for us. Yeshayahu said, “No eye had ever seen these, but You” (64:3). Commenting on this, Rabbi Yochanan declared that even the glorious visions of reward depicted by our prophets did not describe the reward coming for Torah scholars and the world of Olam HaBa; these have only been seen by Hashem (Berachot 34b).



## Week 5 • Modern Implications of Ramban: Electricity on Shabbat

As the classic activities forbidden by melacha have become rarer—as few of us are regularly involved in agricultural labor—the message of Ramban has given language for the modern challenge of Shabbat. Arguably the most common questions concerning Shabbat arise from modern technologies, those that use electricity and are often paired with voice activation or sensors. Some rule that the use of electricity is itself biblical, either because of *boneh*, building (of the circuit) [Chazon Ish], or *makeh b’patish*, striking the final hammer blow (understood expansively, as by Rabbis Asher Weiss and Rabbi Shmuel Wosner), others do not. Some rule it is rabbinic (Rabbi Yitzchak Shmelkes) or a violation of the rabbinic prohibitions against weekday activity, *uvdin dechol* (Rabbi Nachum Rabinowitz).

Rabbi Yaakov Ariel, however, has suggested that the proper source for the prohibition is the Ramban’s call for Shabbaton. Everyone agrees that using electricity to perform a melacha (such as using an electric lawnmower) is biblically prohibited.

However, when it comes to the use of electricity per se, Rabbi Ariel argues as follows: A single use might be rabbinical prohibited or technically permitted; however, one should avoid it as if it would be biblically forbidden (barring security or medical emergencies) because consistent use would destroy Shabbat, thus violating Ramban’s call for Shabbaton. He writes:

*This is specifically true for our generation. As technology has developed and moved forward, and even during the week most people do not toil and work with their bodies, but rather they press buttons, listen and talk and make decisions, and all is done with virtually no work, but with psychological stress. And thank G-d, Who gave his nation of Israel Shabbat and the holidays, when the world’s Sambatyon rests for us. No phone, no fax, no computer, no radio, no car, and no other appliance. Just the holy Shabbat! How lucky we are, how good is our portion, and how great is this gift that the Holy One Blessed be He gave us, the One who gives his nation of Israel Shabbat and holidays for holiness and rest, for Torah and joy.*



## V'ten Tal U'matar When Visiting Israel

**Question:** People are planning to visit Israel to volunteer and help our fellow Israelis in the Holy Land. However, there is a difference in the prayer between Israel and outside of Israel. In Israel, they have already started saying "V'ten Tal U'Matar," while outside of Israel, they haven't started it yet. How should one pray when in Israel during this time?

**Answer:** Indeed, in Israel they started saying "V'ten Tal U'Matar" on the 7th of Cheshvan, whereas those who live outside of Israel will start saying it on the sixtieth day after the autumnal equinox, which is typically the fifth of December. What should a Canadian do these days in Israel? There are two opinions on this matter (Mishna Berura 117-5). According to the Pri Chadash, only if a person intends to live in Israel during that year, should they pray according to the Israeli custom even if they

are currently arriving from abroad. However, if they plan to return to their home country, they should follow that country's custom, not saying "V'ten Tal U'Matar" until it is said in their home country.

The other opinion, Birkei Yosef, suggests that a person should pray according to the location they are in, so if they are in Israel at the time when "V'ten Tal U'Matar" has started there, they should recite it, and if they are outside of Israel, they should not recite it.

The practical advice provided by contemporary Rabbis [Tefilah Kehilchata 12-48] is that a person visiting from abroad who is in Israel during this period should say "V'ten Berakhah" in their regular prayer, but in the "Shome'a Tefillah" blessing, they can add a personal request for rain specifically for the benefit of the people of Israel. However, if they will stay in Israel

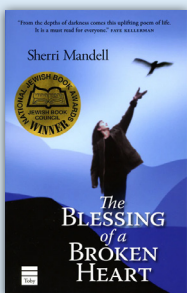
until December 5th, when they start saying "V'ten Tal U'Matar" outside of Israel, then they should start saying it once they arrive in Israel.

What happens if an Israeli visits these days in another country, like Canada. Should he change his nusach? It is brought down in Mishnah Berurah Dirshu edition 117 (footnote 9) that if they have already started saying "V'ten Tal U'Matar" in Israel, the visitor should continue to do so during their stay in Canada. However, for those who wish to be stringent and cover all opinions, they can also say "V'ten Bera-khah" in their prayers and add a mention of "V'ten Tal U'Matar" for the people of Israel in the "Shome'a Tefillah" blessing.

*Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at [ymanntorah.com](mailto:ymanntorah.com).*



## Week 5: Something to Give



*The Blessing of a Broken Heart*  
By Sherri Mandell  
The Toby Press, 2003

*"Sometimes people say to me—I don't know what to say. But a neighbor who didn't know what to say came to my house and washed my clothes, cleaned my house, hung my laundry ... You may not have words, but everybody has something to offer those in grief, something essential from their own being. There is something inside of everybody to give—if they are not afraid of the pain on the other side." (The Blessing of a Broken Heart, page 145)*

Halacha mandates that in a shiva house the visitor does not begin the conversation. Instead, the visitor waits until the mourner begins to speak (See Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 376:1). There could be multiple reasons for this rule. Most obviously, it allows the

mourner to "run the show." Just because now is a convenient time for a person to visit the shiva house, does not mean that the mourner is in the mood to talk.

Perhaps another reason is in what Mandell writes above. The halacha of waiting for the mourner to speak reminds us that speech is not the only thing we have to offer. In fact, for many of us, our speech is worth much less than our actions. Instead, as Mandell writes, we can offer to help. As she notes, "everybody has something to offer." As long as it comes from the heart, anything can be a meaningful comfort. Whether it is helping with household chores, after-school pickups, or meal preparation—as the saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words."

*The Blessing of a Broken Heart can be purchased from Koren Publishers at [tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD](http://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: Rashi, Bereishit 23:1

At the age of one hundred [Sara] was as a woman of twenty as regards sin—for just as at the age of twenty one may regard her as having never sinned, since she had not then reached the age when she was subject to punishment, so, too, when she was one hundred years old she was sinless—and when she was twenty she was as beautiful as when she was seven.

### Questions to Discuss

- What is the secret to aging gracefully both physically and mentally?
- In which areas of our lives should we seek to change and develop and in which areas should we aim to stay the same?

*After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at [nsonenberg@torontotorah.com](mailto:nsonenberg@torontotorah.com) to enter our raffle for a challah and six bilkas from Richmond Bakery to enjoy at your Shabbat table next week!*

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

<b>Shabbat</b>	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Gutenberg
<b>Sunday</b>	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
<b>Monday</b>	War Issues in Halacha	Zoom: <a href="https://tiny.cc/war2023">tiny.cc/war2023</a>	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	NEW - Nov 20 at 8:30 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
<b>Tuesday</b>	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	8:30 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:15 PM	Rabbi Mann
<b>Wednesday</b>	Finding Meaning and Connection in the Psalms from the Siddur	Zoom	10:00 AM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	After Mincha/Maariv	Rabbi Mann
	Men's Gemara Bekiut	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Eliyahu HaNavi: A Prophet of Fire & Water	Shaarei Tefillah	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
<b>Thursday</b>	Tanach: Sefer Shmuel	Zoom: <a href="https://tiny.cc/BMZDTanach">tiny.cc/BMZDTanach</a>	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
<b>Thursday</b>	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Milevsky/ Mizrachi Beit Midrash)	8:00 PM	R' Diena
<b>Sun-Thu</b>	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30–9:30 PM	
	Pre-Maariv Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	9:15–9:30 PM	

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Shabbaton                      Shaarei Shomayim                      December 1-2, 2023

## YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

### Rosh Beit Midrash

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