

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshiyot Acharei Mot - Kedoshim

8 Iyar, 5783 / Apr. 29, 2023

Vol. 14 Num. 29 (#573)

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Rabbi Aaron Katchen
in honour of the members of the Beit Midrash

Are Hybrids Bad for Nature?

Rabbi Jared Anstandig

According to the Torah, hybrids are so bad that the prohibition involving them spans three different domains. In one verse, the Torah prohibits *kilayim* - crossbreeding domesticated animals, crossbreeding plants, and sewing garments with a mixture of certain fibres (Vayikra 19:19).

At first glance, there appears to be no rhyme or reason for these prohibitions. In fact, Rashi (Vayikra 19:19) likens these particular commandments to, "decrees of the king, about which there is no reason." According to Rashi's formulation here, it appears that there is no meaning at all behind these prohibitions.

Ramban (Vayikra 19:19) clarifies that this is not the case. Rather, he explains that Rashi's intention is to equate these mitzvot to, "decrees of the king that he decrees on his kingdom **without revealing their reason** to the nation." According to Ramban's explanation of Rashi, these prohibitions have a definite rationale and reason. It is only that the Torah does not directly reveal the reason to us.

Ramban and Rashi's interpretations notwithstanding, many traditional and contemporary commentaries venture suggestions as to the reason for the prohibition of *kilayim*, and specifically when it comes to animals and crops.

As he so often does, Rambam argues that these prohibitions are in order to **distance us from idolatry**. For instance, in the *Moreh Nevuchim* (3:37) he explains that a common pagan ritu-

al included grafting different species of trees together. Accordingly, he writes that "the Law, therefore, prohibits us to mix different species together, i.e., to graft one tree into another, because we must keep away from the opinions of idolaters and their abominations." (adapted from Friedlander 1903 translation) By refraining from crossbreeding, we deny the fundamental practices of pagans.

Many commentators avoid Rambam's approach and instead suggest that mixing species is inherently chaotic and works against G-d's intentions for creation. Rabbi Dovid Zvi Hoffman, for instance, notes that in the account of the creation of the world, the Torah stresses that animals and plants were created *l'mineihem*, in accordance with their species (see Bereishit 1:11, 21, and 24). To blend them together is to introduce disorder into an otherwise ordered world.

Ramban, in his commentary here, picks up on a similar theme but uses even stronger language. He writes (Vayikra 19:19) that one who crossbreeds is making "improvements" to creation. Such a person is acting "as though he thinks that G-d did not completely perfect His world, and so he wants to help Him in His creation and add creatures to it." For us to crossbreed and generate new species would be a challenge to His perfection. Had G-d wanted a hybrid animal or plant, He would have created one.

The Maharal (Gur Aryeh to Vayikra 19:19) takes strong issue with this ap-

proach. He cites a midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 11:6) which states the opposite of Ramban's assertion. This midrash states, "Everything that is created in the world requires work." [In the version Gur Aryeh quotes, he has "improvement" instead of "work".] As an example, the midrash points to the act of baking bread, which requires an alteration of the natural form of wheat. Would we say that baking bread is an affront to G-d's perfection? Certainly not! Accordingly, it cannot be that *kilayim* is prohibited because it is a creative act.

Perhaps one could defend Ramban by conceding to the Maharal that, in principle, we are indeed encouraged to perfect the world in which we live. However, Ramban may argue that there are exceptions. As a primarily agrarian society, the domesticated animals with which Bnei Yisrael worked and the crops they sowed were among their most valuable assets. Perhaps it is precisely in these two areas that G-d prohibits intermingling of species. In nearly every area of our lives, we ought to see ourselves as partners with G-d in creation, helping Him perfect His world. But regarding the tools we use to survive, G-d wants us to check our hubris. There is a limit to our abilities. Our success, at its core, cannot be engineered by our own creativity. Ultimately, we rely on G-d's benevolence. The prohibition of *kilayim* forces us to recognize G-d's care in our lives.

janstandig@torontotorah.com

OUR BEIT MIDRASH

ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER

SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

RABBI JARED ANSTANDIG, RABBI YEHUDA MANN

AVREICHIM

RABBI STEVEN GOTLIB, IDAN RAKOVSKY

ISRAELI CORRESPONDENTS

RABBI ADAM FRIEDMANN, RABBI JONATHAN ZIRING

MEN'S POST-HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

YEHOSHUA BENDAYAN, DAVID KROO, ANDER MOSS, SHIMMY NAUENBERG, DANIEL SHEINIS, ELI WELTMAN

WOMEN'S POST-HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

ORLY AZIZA, ATARA GASNER, CHAYA JUNI, MAXINE LEE-EWASCHUK, AILEEN MORRIS, HADASSAH NAUENBERG, YEJIDE OMOTOSO, FEIGA WERNER, RIVKA WERNER, KINNERET WITTY



An affiliate of
Torah MiTzion and YU

Find Toronto Torah online at
tiny.cc/torontotorah

We are grateful to
Continental Press

Summary

The prophet opens with the words of comfort from Hashem, telling the Jews that they shouldn't worry; Hashem will always rescue them. Through fire and water, Hashem will always be there to help and save them. So too, in the future Hashem will gather the Jews from east and west and bring them back to Israel. (43:1-6)

The prophet says that Hashem is the creator of the world, and because of that He has the power to save us. He is also surprised that we don't have faith in Hashem. Other nations of the world cannot believe in Hashem since they never received prophecies, but we have received prophecies and we have seen them fulfilled. The Jewish people are the witnesses of the presence of Hashem in the world, seeing Him saving them, and consequently they should understand that there is no savior other than Hashem. (43:7-13)

The prophet briefly explains how they will be redeemed from Bavel thanks to Cyrus, and that's why Hashem will give Bavel to Cyrus. Hashem is our King, and He won't let us be harmed. (43:14-15)

The prophet mentions miracles of the

past, such as the splitting of the sea and the vanquishing of Sancherev, and says that Hashem will perform greater miracles in the future, such as making roads through rivers and rivers in the desert. Even the animals in these empty places will thank Hashem for these miracles. The prophet concludes the words of Hashem: I have created this people, they shall come to recognize and declare Hashem's praise. (43:16-21)

The prophet now opens with words of rebuke to the Jews. We did not reach out to Hashem, and did not invest effort in worship. The nation ceased giving sacrifices in the Beit HaMikdash and instead busied themselves with transgressions. Hashem erases these transgressions for His sake, in order to prevent *Chillul Hashem*. Hashem says that even if one does good things, that isn't enough; if the majority of one's deeds are sinful then they will still be punished. (43:22-28)

This chapter includes the end of the haftorah of Parshat Bereishit (for Ashkenazim), and the beginning of the haftorah of Parshat Vayikra.

Insight

In this chapter there is an extremely

inspiring description of the Jewish people as *edai*, "My witnesses." (43:10, 43:12)

A simple explanation for this description may be that we have witnessed Hashem's miracles and the fulfillment of His prophecies. However, one might suggest that the Jewish people's existence in the world is itself evidence and testimony of Hashem's existence. As Rav Yaakov Emden wrote, the fact that the Jewish people were in exile for thousands of years, constantly persecuted, and nevertheless still exist, is a more compelling argument about the existence of the Almighty than all the miracles of Egypt and Israel. (Introduction to Siddur Beit Yaakov)

yumann@torontotorah.com

Siddur Insights: Av HaRachamim**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

On Shabbat mornings, after the Haftorah, synagogues around the world recite *Av HaRachamim*, a prayer of pain and passion. *Av HaRachamim* beseeches Hashem to remember righteous people who gave their lives to sanctify Hashem's Name, and it calls upon Hashem to avenge their blood, punishing their murderers. Among other biblical verses, it quotes the last sentence in Yoel, in which Hashem pledges that even though He will forgive many sins, he will never forgive those who shed Jewish blood. (Rashi to Yoel 4:21)

This prayer was the original form of Yizkor, established in Ashkenazi communities after the First Crusade to provide a public religious context in which to express pain, anger and grief for our many losses. At first it was recited specifically during the Omer period, which was when the massacres took place, but then it spread to the rest of the year. (Piskei Teshuvot 284:17) By the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries it had evolved into the Yizkor prayer recited on Yom Tov. It also spread beyond Western Europe into Sephardic countries as well. [For examples of the evolution of this prayer, see Machzor Vitry 190 and 312; Maharil, Seder Tefillot Chag haSuccot 13; Levush 490:9.]

Because of its themes of grief and pain, *Av HaRachamim* is omitted on festive occasions, including: days on which Tachanun would be omitted if it were a weekday, the Shabbatot of four special Torah readings in the build-up to Purim and Pesach, and the Shabbat on which we announce the new month. (Ishei Yisrael 36:69) However, many communities recite *Av HaRachamim* on the Shabbatot when we announce

Iyar and Sivan, because of the aforementioned relevance for this time of year. (Mishneh Berurah 284:18)

Av HaRachamim describes Jewish martyrs with phrases from King David's eulogy for King Shaul and Shaul's son Yehonatan. Shaul's story is very apt as a model for those who died in the Crusades; Shaul knew that he and his sons would die in that battle, but he went to war in order to defend the Jews and to fulfill his Divine mission. In fact, a midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 26:7) contends that Shaul's decision to pursue this doomed war was so powerful that it redeemed him for his errors and placed him in the prophet Shemuel's portion in the Next World.

As part of the citation from King David's eulogy, we describe the martyrs as "beloved and pleasant in their lives, and inseparable even in their deaths." Radak (Shemuel I 1:23) notes that in the eulogy for Shaul and Yehonatan, this verse may be read on two levels. One, Shaul and Yehonatan had great love for Hashem, and they never wavered in that love. Second, Shaul and Yehonatan had great love for each other and they did not leave each other. Both of these may also apply to the martyrs for whom we recite *Av HaRachamim*.

torczyner@torontotorah.com

Biography

Rabbi Yaakov Ettlinger

Rabbi Josh Gutenberg

Rabbi Yaakov Ettlinger was born in Germany in 5558 (1798). He received his early education from his father, who served as the rabbi of Karlsruhe, and subsequently studied under Rabbi Asher Wallerstein, son of Rabbi Aryeh Leib ben Rabbi Asher, author of the *Shaagat Aryeh*. He then traveled to Wuerzburg, where he studied under Rabbi Avraham Bing, from whom he received his rabbinic ordination. While living in Wuerzburg, Rabbi Ettlinger enrolled in the local university. He completed three years of study, but he was unable to complete his degree for he was forced to flee the city due to anti-Jewish riots. Rabbi Ettlinger was among the first German Orthodox rabbis to have received formal academic training.

In 5586 (1826), Rabbi Ettlinger was appointed as Rabbi of Ladenburg. Ten years later, he was appointed as Rabbi of Altona, where he served until his death. In both cities, Rabbi Ettlinger opened yeshivot and had numerous disciples. Among his most famous students are Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, intellectual founder of the “*torah im derech erez*” movement, and Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer, founder of the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary.

Rabbi Ettlinger was a strong opponent of the Reform movement, and he authored several letters and articles voicing that opposition. He also organized a protest of 173 rabbis against the Rabbinical Conference of Brunswick, a conference for Reform leaders in which they called for the abolition of Kol Nidrei and the easing of intermarriage laws.

In addition to his rabbinic duties, Rabbi Ettlinger authored several *sefarim*. He is the author of *Aruch LaNer*, a commentary on several tractates in the Talmud. He also published a collection of responsa called *Binyan Zion*.

Rabbi Ettlinger passed away in Altona on the first night of Chanukah, 25 Kislev 5632 (1871).

jbgutenberg@gmail.com

Weekly Halachah: Kosher Milk in Bahrain / UAE

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

A mishnah prohibits drinking milk that was milked by a non-Jew without a Jew seeing. The Talmud explains that the rationale for the prohibition is that the non-Jew might mix in non-kosher milk. The Talmud clarifies, however, that a Jew need not actually see the milking process, but if he could see it by standing up, that suffices.

The commentaries distinguish between whether the prohibition is categorized as a formal decree against milk that was milked by a non-Jew, or merely as a concern that non-kosher milk may be mixed in. The central difference between these two formulations is whether milk is prohibited even when there is no substantive concern that non-kosher milk has been mixed in. If the issue is merely a concern for non-kosher milk, the milk would be permitted. If, however, the decree is formal, the milk would be forbidden because a Jew did not view the milking. This happens when no non-kosher animals are present.

Most modern authorities assume that the prohibition is formal. Nevertheless, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein argues that the existence of government supervision that prohibits non-kosher milk (or that requires that such milk be labeled), suffices to count as **seeing**. Thus, he writes that “company milk” (or what has become to be known as *chalav stam*) is **chalav Yisrael**. Nevertheless, he writes that those who are strict and only drink milk when a Jew actually saw the milking are praiseworthy, and he encourages educational institutions to be strict. Among those who reject Rabbi Feinstein’s position, there is a dispute as to whether supervision through webcams would suffice as “seeing”.

In Bahrain and the UAE, there is substantive concern regarding non-kosher milk as there is a large market for camel milk. As such, I was informed in personal correspondence by the OU that none of the above leniencies apply in these countries and it is thus prohibited to drink milk not certified as kosher.

Sources: Avodah Zarah 35b; 39b; Torat HaBayit 3:6; Mordechai Avodah Zarah 826; Radbaz 1147; Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 115 with commentaries, especially Pri Chadash and Aruch HaShulchan; Shut Chatam Sofer YD 107; Igrot Moshe YD 1:47-49, 2:38, Chazon Ish YD 41:4; Chelkat Yaakov 2:34-35; Divrei Yisrael; and Rav Mordechai Gross about webcams available: <https://tinyurl.com/vc46sbxt>; email with Rabbi Avraham Gordimer

Sefer haChinuch, Mitzvah 25:

Techum Shabbat: The Shabbat Boundary

By Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

In the wilderness, after some of the Jews attempted to collect manna on Shabbat, Hashem warned, “No one shall leave his place on the seventh day.” (Shemot 16:29) This is understood as the basis for the mitzvah of *techum*, which prohibits travel beyond a certain boundary outside of a residential area on Shabbat. Sefer haChinuch counts this as the Torah’s 24th mitzvah.

Sefer haChinuch explains that this mitzvah is part of the Torah’s legislation against non-Shabbat-oriented activities, enabling us to focus on Shabbat as testimony to Divine Creation.

Because of the law of *techum*, we don’t travel more than 2000 *amot* – approximately one kilometer – from the edge of town. We measure from the last house in town, beyond which there are no houses. If two towns are contiguous, they are considered as one town for this law.

The Talmud (Eruvin 35b) debates whether *techum* is actually a biblical law or a rabbinic law. See also Tosafot Sotah 30b, and Ramban Shabbat 2a and Shabbat 87b, among many other sources. In addition, there is debate regarding the actual distance of the *techum* limit; see Yerushalmi Eruvin 5:4, among other sources. Rambam rules that the biblical *techum* is twelve *mil* (about 13.2 km); the rabbinic *techum* is the aforementioned 2000 *amot*. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shabbat 27:1-2)

torczyner@torontotorah.com

COME LEARN WITH US!

Click Underlined Links to Open Zooms; clickable links also at <http://tiny.cc/torontotorah>
All times ET. Classes are free & open to all, unless otherwise noted.

Shabbat Apr. 28-29

After hashkamah R' Yehuda Mann, Halachah from the Parshah, Clanton Park

6:00 PM R' Yehudah Mann, Women's Shiur, Clanton Park

30 min pre-minchah R' Steven Gotlib, Big Topics, Village Shul

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Ketuvot, BAYT (Milevsky Bais Medrash) (men)

After minchah, Idan Rakovsky, Halachah in the Parshah, Shaarei Tefillah

Sun. Apr. 30

9:00 AM R' Zev Spitz & R' Yehuda Mann, Semichat Chaver, Clanton Park (men): New Zman—Hilchot Seudah!

9:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Unity Through Diversity, at Limmud, 78 Queens Park, limmud.ca

3:00 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, The Ethics of Commercial AI, at Limmud, 78 Queens Park, limmud.ca

Mon. May 1

2:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, Megillat Ruth, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/idanrak>

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Non-Jewish Help in Halachah, Shomrai Shabbos (men)

Tues. May 2

8:00 AM R' Steven Gotlib, Sefer Emunah uBitachon, Village Shul

9:00 AM Idan Rakovsky, Tzidkat ha'Tzaddik, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university men)

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Wisdom of King Solomon: Kohelet, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

7:00 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 19), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men)

8:30 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Adventures Through Shas, Shaarei Shomayim (university women)

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park (women)

Wed. May 3

9:00 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Halachic Philosophy of the Rav, Or Chaim (university men)

10 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Jewish Migrations: Origins of Ashkenazim and Sephardim, Week 1 of 4
On ZOOM @ <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> Register @ <https://torontotorah.com/wednesdays>, there is a fee

12:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Business Ethics #1 of 3: The Minimum Wage and the Living Wage
With Continuing Education credit for Accountants, on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/bmlunch>
Registration at <https://torontotorah.com/business>

8:00 PM R' Steven Gotlib, Ashkenazi and Sephardi Differences, The Village Shul

8:15 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park

8:30 PM Idan Rakovsky, Megillat Ruth, Shaarei Tefillah

Thurs. May 4

8:00 AM R' Steven Gotlib, Jewish Mysticism, Village Shul

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 31), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women)

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Beitzah (advanced), for location: ymann@torontotorah.com

8:30 PM Idan Rakovsky, Sefer haChinuch, Shaarei Tefillah Beit Midrash Night (men)

Fri. May 5

9:00 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Parshah, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, R' Mordechai Torczyner, R' Yehuda Mann, Ketuvot Perek 1 *advanced*
In-person at Yeshivat Or Chaim, on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>

COMING UP!

10 AM to 1 PM Sunday May 14: ISRAELI IYAR!

6 Classes About Yom haZikaron, Yom ha'Atzmaut, Yom Yerushalayim - Come for 1, or all 6! All Free of Charge!
At Yeshivat Or Chaim, 159 Almore Ave. Full schedule and registration at <https://torontotorah.com/iyar>