



# BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

## PARASHAT TAZRIA

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**DVAR TORAH TAZRIA** RABBI YEHUDA MANN, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

## Not Leaving Anyone Behind

Last week, the city of Toronto had the great privilege of hosting Rav Moshe Weinberger *shlita*, the Rabbi of the Aish Kodesh community in Woodmere.

At the main event that took place at the BAYT, he presented a question raised by the Chassidic masters of Amshinov: Moshe Rabbeinu is referred to as "*Ra'aya Meheimna*"—the faithful shepherd. Just as he was a faithful shepherd to his flock of goats, so too was he a faithful shepherd in leading the Jewish people. How is his being a faithful shepherd expressed? Once, one of the goats in the flock went missing, and he went to search for it. The pressing question is: if he went to search for the lost goat, who watched over the rest of the flock? After all, he is a faithful shepherd—how could he neglect the entire flock to find one lost goat? Rabbi Weinberger answered: the reason Moshe Rabbeinu went after the lonely goat is because it was a solitary goat. Alone. Friendless. Without anyone to support and help it. This lonely goat is in the greatest danger; others at least have each other to support one another, even if the shepherd is absent...

In our Torah portion, we learn much about the *metzora*, who, due to his condition, must

dwelt "alone outside the camp." The Sages count in the Talmud in *Nedarim* 64b certain people who are "considered dead" even though they are alive. One of those counted is the *metzora*. Rabbi Chaim Shmuelvitz (*Sichot Mussar*, Article 63) explains at length that the reason the *metzora* is considered as dead is not because of the sufferings he undergoes due to his leprosy, but rather because of the commandment to "dwell alone outside the camp" (Leviticus 13:46). A person who is isolated, without companionship and support, is considered as dead. When a person is alone, his suffering is unimaginable.

Rabbi Shmuelvitz further expands and says that another person counted in the Talmud in *Nedarim* who is considered as dead is the blind person. Why is the blind person considered as dead? Rabbi Shmuelvitz says it stems from the same idea, that in a certain sense, the blind person is disconnected from society. When Moshe Rabbeinu leaves Pharaoh's palace and observes the suffering of the Jewish people, the Torah says, "He went out to his brethren and observed their burdens" (Shemot 2:11), and Rashi explains what "observed their burdens" means: "he set his eyes and heart to be distressed for them." The purpose of having eyes is so that

a person can see what is happening with his fellow, understand his needs, and with this knowledge in hand, he can support, assist, and help. The blind person is considered as dead because he is separated from society, but this time he is considered as dead not because no one helps him, but because he lacks something meaningful for life: he has difficulty fully seeing the pain of others, and as a result, he lacks the ability to give, provide, and assist others.

On the upcoming Passover holiday, we are all planning to celebrate the holiday together with family and friends. But we must pay attention to those in the community who may be alone during the holiday. Being alone is the greatest distress, a distress that the Torah says about leprosy, "considered as dead." Like Moshe Rabbeinu, who worried about the goat that went astray because he understood that when one is alone, one is in the greatest spiritual, emotional and physical danger, so too we need to seek out those who are lonely and ensure they are not alone during the holiday and merit the joy of the holiday. And thus, not only will we give them life, but as Rabbi Shmuelvitz says, we will fulfill our purpose in life—to give and support others.



## Yirmiyahu 17

The previous chapter left off with a declaration that Hashem expects our repentance to come about when we are punished. Our chapter begins by explaining why: the love of idolatry is embedded in us, engraved as though with an iron stylus. Remembering our idolatry is like calling our own children to mind. Therefore we will lose our wealth and our land, and serve our enemies in foreign places (17:1-4).

In a classic passage, Yirmiyahu then contrasts the faithful and the faithless. He curses those who place their faith in man, and predicts for them a hopeless desert existence. On the other hand, he blesses those who place their trust in Hashem, and pledges that they will be like a tree rooted by a stream, safe from drought and endlessly fruitful. Hashem knows the hearts of each group, and those whose hearts are

not with Hashem will end up losing their fortunes to others (17:5-11).

Yirmiyahu then turns to Hashem, invoking the glory of the Divine throne and declaring Hashem the true and sole hope of Israel. He appeals to Hashem with words which are the basis for the berachah of

**Heal me, Hashem, and  
I will be healed!**

*Refa'einu* in the weekday *amidah*: “Heal me, Hashem, and I will be healed!” But this healing is not physical; it’s a remedy for the suffering that has come with his prophecy. Since the start of his prophecy, Yirmiyahu longed for his visions of punishment to change to visions of a positive future for the Jews. Even as the people mocked Yirmiyahu for his predictions of

punishment, asking, “When will this come to pass?” Yirmiyahu sought to bring them back to Hashem so that they would never suffer. But now he has reached a limit, and he wishes for his tormentors to suffer the long-promised punishment (17:12-18).

But Hashem does not respond to Yirmiyahu’s plea here; instead, Hashem sends him a new mission. The prophet must go to the gates of Jerusalem, and rebuke the kings and citizens for failing to honour Shabbat. If they will guard Shabbat and cease their business on that day, then the city will be protected and elevated. Royalty will come from afar and bring offerings in the Beit HaMikdash. But if they fail to observe Shabbat, then the city will burn in a fire that shall not be extinguished.



## Week 11: Were the *Ikkarim* Accepted as Halacha?

While many halakhic authorities do define the formal terms of heretic or apostate, they usually draw on the definitions set out in legal texts, such as those provided by Rambam in *Yesodei HaTorah*. While these are similar to the presentation in the *ikkarim*, they are not identical. Some *poskim*, following opposition to the idea of *ikkarim* as a distinct category (as articulated by Abarbanel) reject the entire notion that *ikkarim* should be enumerated as different from the obligation to accept the entire Torah. Thus, Radbaz (1:346) rejected the importance of the counting of *ikkarim* and rejected the recitation of *Yigdal*. Some accepted the content of the beliefs, but denied that they held special importance. Thus, Yeshuot Yaakov (OC 126:1) writes that one is only a heretic if he denies the three *ikkarim* of Rabbi Yosef Albo, while those who reject the others of the Rambam’s *ikkarim* he deems evil, but not heretical.

Others rejected the content of some of the *ikkarim*. Rabbi Yaakov Emden (*Migdal Oz* 26b) rejected the notion that the Torah would never change (as did Rabbi Yosef Albo). Earlier, Rabbi Moshe

Taku in *Temim Deim* (in)famously denied God’s incorporeality.

In liturgy, many did accept the *ikkarim*, but that may not indicate acceptance of the Rambam’s particular formulations. For example, Shela (*Shaar HaOtiyot*, Alef 13) expresses the belief in reward and punishment as an *ikkar*, but while Rambam speaks of reward in the world to come, Shela speaks of the inherent reward and punishment that comes from performing mitzvot or aveirot. Thus, he organizes himself around the *ikkarim*, but does not commit himself to the Rambam’s own formulation.

Much has been written about what is entailed by other *ikkarim*. For example, the Talmud (*Kiddushin* 30a) writes that we are not experts in knowing which words are written with a vav or yud and which are not, thus opening the possibility that our Sifrei Torah have mild differences from those of Moshe. Does that violate the Rambam’s rules? Some formulations imply yes, but that does not square with the Talmud. This thus demands more careful analysis.



## Soft Matzah on Pesach

**Question:** Pesach is approaching, and I will be honest- I don't really enjoy eating the hard "cracker-like" matzah. A friend of mine from Israel told me that there's no need to break my teeth, it's permissible to eat soft matzah. Is he correct?

**Answer:** Indeed, there are Sephardic communities where it's customary to eat soft matzah, and Rabbi Asher Weiss (*Minchat Asher*, Volume 3, Siman 44-45) demonstrates that there is no doubt these matzot are kosher. However, the custom among Ashkenazi Jews is not to eat them. Let me explain.

There is no doubt that in the past, there was a custom to eat soft matzot. Rabbi Weiss provides several pieces of evidence:

1. The Tur (Orach Chaim, Siman 475) writes that in Ashkenaz and France, there was a custom to make three matzot from the size called "Isaron," which in our times is approximately 1600 grams. Rabbi Weiss argues that from 1600 grams, it is

impossible to make three thin and hard matzot as we eat today because otherwise, it would be approximately ten times the size of the matzot we commonly eat. It is more reasonable to assume that they were thicker and consequently softer.

2. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim, Siman 460-5) says that the matzah should not be thicker than a tefach (approximately 8 to 10 centimeters). If the thickness of the matzah was 8 centimeters and it was as hard as our matzot, undoubtedly, it would break the teeth and be impossible to eat. Therefore, it must be referring to thicker and softer bread. The Rema comments on this, saying that the Ashkenazi custom is to make it thinner, and the Be'er Heitev comments that it should be the size of an "Etzba" which is at least two centimeters thick, which is also much thicker and softer than our matzot.

3. Other Rabbis prove it from the *Mishna Berura* (Siman 486-3) stating, "If the matzah

is soft like a sponge, there is no need to squish it to measure its size." It shows that even in his time, 120 years ago, there were seemingly soft matzot.

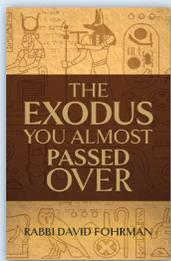
Despite all the aforementioned, Rabbi Weiss says that the Ashkenazi custom is to continue eating their traditional hard and crisp matzot. He even notes that there was a ban by certain communities against eating soft matzot because they didn't know how to prepare them properly. Nevertheless, Rabbi Weiss concludes that if someone has a condition that makes it difficult for them to digest regular matzah, and it would be easier for them to eat soft matzah, it should be permitted for them after doing "*Hatarat Nedarim*"—annulment of vows.

\*Please note: this is the *psak* of Rav Asher Weiss Shlita, but there are other opinions among other Rabbonim and one is encouraged to follow the *psak* of their Rabbi.

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



## Week 2: Why is it called Passover?



*The Exodus You Almost Passed Over*  
By Rabbi David Fohrman  
Maggid Press, 2021

pointed to some kind of larger idea or mission." (*The Exodus You Almost Passed Over*, page 5)

In this passage, Rabbi Fohrman lays out his essential question: What does the name of Pesach tell us about the meaning of Pesach? As Rabbi Fohrman points elsewhere, the rabbis indeed refer to it

as "*zeman cheiruteinu*," the time of our freedom." However, this is notably not how the Torah refers to this holiday.

And so, Rabbi Fohrman explains, since the holiday is named after the experience of the tenth plague, *makat bechorot*, and how Hashem "passed over" us, this must be a crucial part of what we are commemorating and celebrating. Throughout the rest of the book, Rabbi Fohrman lays out his theory as to what that deeper meaning is.

In order to enhance all of our Pesach experiences this year, I will be leading a discussion about Rabbi Fohrman's book this upcoming Thursday night (April 18th) at 9pm in 3000 Bathurst St., Apt 403. Whether you have read the book or not, I hope you will join me in an enlightening discussion about the deeper meaning of Pesach.

The *Exodus You Almost Passed Over* 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 Vayikra 13:2

It is an enactment of Scripture that the uncleanness and purification of leprous plagues are pronounced only by the mouth of a priest.

### Pirkei Avot 1:12

Hillel used to say: be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and drawing them close to the Torah.

### Questions to Discuss

- What is the connection between the character of Aaron and the Kohen's necessity in the determination of leprosy?
- Who is the ideal person in your life to offer direction and guidance when you are in need of correction?
- What makes them particularly appropriate for this task?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at [nsonenberg@torontotorah.com](mailto:nsonenberg@torontotorah.com) to enter our raffle for a \$15 voucher for Grodzinski Bakery!

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

THE BEIT MIDRASH WILL BE ON PESACH BREAK FROM THURSDAY, APRIL 18TH AND WILL RESUME THURSDAY, MAY 2ND.

<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 & Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann & Rabbi Lax
	Sefer Shemot	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Resumes after Pesach	David Koschitzky
<b>Monday</b>	The Wisdom of Solomon: Eshet Chayil	Zoom: <a href="https://tiny.cc/idanrak">tiny.cc/idanrak</a>	2:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
	Introduction to Gemara: Learn how to learn	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Resumes after Pesach	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>	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	Resumes after Pesach	Rabbi Mann
	The Torah's Insights on Building a Just and Equitable Society	Zoom	Beginning May 1	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Men's Gemara Bekiut	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Resumes after Pesach	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Exploring the Plagues	Shaarei Tefillah	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
<b>Thursday</b>	Tanach: Sefer Shmuel	Zoom: <a href="https://tiny.cc/BMZDtanach">tiny.cc/BMZDtanach</a>	Resumes after Pesach	Rabbi Horovitz
	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Resumes after Pesach	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	Resumes after Pesach	R' Diena
<b>Sun–Thu</b>	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00–9:00 PM	

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Haggadah Night	Shaarei Shomayim	Monday, April 15	8:00–9:00 PM
The Exodus You Almost Passed Over	3000 Bathurst St., Apt 403	Thursday, April 18	9:00 PM
Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust	Toronto Holocaust Museum	Tuesday, May 7	8:00–9:00PM
Shabbaton	Shaarei Tefilla	Shabbat, May 11	8:00–9:00 PM

## YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

### Rosh Beit Midrash

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