

# **KOLOTHAMIZRACH**

The עלון חגים of Mizrachi Canada

Bo 5778 • January 2018



A special edition of Kolot Hamizrach in honour of the Kollel Torah MiTzion Shabbaton

### Kollel Torah MiTzion of Montréal

#### Rabbi Yedidya Noiman

Rosh Kollel

Parshat Bo we are not introduced to the concept of a mitzvah. In addition, as we know from the famous Rashi in the beginning of Bereshit, in some ways we might consider this parsha as the real start of the Torah. The first mitzvah is finally revealed, starting the obligation and mission to obey and fulfill Hashem's will on a national level. The mitzvah that was chosen to be the first, then, is obviously unique and should be studied in depth in order to understand what

Rav Tzadok HaKohen M'Lublin (*Resisei Layla*, Ch. 25) states that the mitzvah of sanctifying the moon and counting the months and years according to it symbolizes a deep and important state of mind in Jewish life. The moon, unlike the sun, does not shine constantly, but rather has ups and downs. In fact, the moon is only a big plain rock that acts as a giant mirror. The moonlight that we see is only a reflection of the sun's light, which is why we only see it from specific angles and alignments. This, says Rav

merits it possesses to warrant it being

the first.

תורה TORAH תורה MITZION מציון MONTREAL



Torah MiTzion was established with the goal of strengthening Jewish communities around the globe and infusing them with the love for Torah, the Jewish People and the State of Israel

Tzadok, symbolizes the real connection between mankind and Hashem.

Am Yisrael happily and willingly recognizes itself being the moon receiving the light from Hashem; we don't pretend to be the owner or the producer of light and spirituality in the world. Our mission is simply to reflect the light and goals we manage to learn and reveal from the constant presence of the strong sun, Hashem. In contrast, other nations and religions refuse to recognize this concept, claiming that

the world can stand on its own, with no need to constantly be in touch with Hashem's ways and ideals.

Rav Tzadok continues and adds that this connection to the moon affects us as a community and as individuals. The cycle that is typical of the moon gives us a deep understanding of human drawbacks and differences. Knowing that we are all reflections of Hashem's will and guidance gives us a new perspective in how to deal with them. Instead of getting frustrated by the dissimilarity between people and communities, we can learn from the moon and realize that we are all reflections of a big and powerful source. Each person, group, or tribe has a unique and different character, and they all combine together to a spectacular scene.

Am Yisrael is committed to showing ourselves and the entire world that our mission is to reflect and fulfill Hashem's way in the world, just like the moon reflects the sun, and that is why the inaugural mitzvah is that of sanctifying time by the moon.

# Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Kollel of Chicago

Rabbi Yoav Bar Kochva Shaliach

If someone were to ask us what the redemption should look like, we would probably say it should be like the ultimate peaceful vacation, with plenty of free time, where we could leisurely eat plenty of amazing food.

In Parshat Beshalach (Shemot 12:11) we read about the redemption from Egypt and find an interesting and surprising description: יְבֶּרֶים חֲאָרֵים חָאָרִים אָתוֹ מְתְנֵיכֶם הַאָּרִים אַתוֹ בְּיַרֶּכֶם וַאָּכֵיְתֶם אֹתוֹ בְּיַרֶּכֶם וַאָּכֵיְתֶם אֹתוֹ בְּיַרְכֶם וּמְקְּלֶכֶם בְּיַדְכֶם וַאָּכֵיְתֶם אֹתוֹ פַסְח הוּא לַהֹי (This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a passover offering to the Lord."

Bnei Yisrael were waiting for this day for many years, they would finally be freed of their slavery in Egypt, and now they are instructed to eat unleavened bread in a rush, and to be ready to travel at a moment's notice.

What's the hurry? Why should the Jews be so nervous? After bringing the ten plagues and demonstrating His almighty strength, couldn't Hashem



have arranged a more convenient and less abrupt way in which to leave?

We will start to look for the answer in Rashi: פסח על שם הדילוג והפסיחה שהקב"ה, "The offering is called noo in allusion to the springing and passing over... by way of springing and leaping over [hastily].

Rashi teaches us that the redemption from Egypt had to involve jumping.

The S'fat Emet (Vayikra/Pesach) adds that it wasn't only G-d's leaping, but also a jump within the Jews: חספ נקרא על שם הדילוג, דכתיב: מדלג על ההרים... רק שזה הדילוג עשה רשימה גם בנפשות בנ"י. כמ"ש משכני אחריך נרוצה. שגם

who are used to being slaves need a change in their whole perception of reality in order to truly be free, and when a person needs to make such a big change, there is a concern that he might hesitate or delay. Therefore, Pesach had to be in hurry."

We can learn from the redemption from Egypt about the redemption in our days. Taking part in the redemption isn't always easy, but we should acknowledge that merely continuing our regular routine will not create a big change, and in order to fully own our freedom, we need to be willing to change. This is true in our private lives, but also as a part of the Jewish nation. Every Jew must ask himself what he can do for his nation, and the answer will not be the same for each person. If we want to be part of the redemption of the nation of Israel in its historical land, we need to be willing to go out of our way and do things that are not always comfortable, and do them without hesitation.

The Yeshiva University Kollel Torah MiTzion of Chicago programming for all ages. In the evenings, they learn

was founded in 1996. The Kollel is comprised of eight families of avreichim from across Israel. The core of the Kollel is the Beit Midrash, located in Ida Crown Jewish Academy. The avreichim engage in intensive study of Talmud, Halacha and Jewish thought in the mornings and afternoons.

The Kollel avreichim spread Torah throughout the community with weekly Shiurim on a wide range

with community members of all levels at Congregation KINS and on Sunday mornings at Congregation Or Torah.

NILI - Chicago Institute of Women's Learning, is a unique initiative of the Kollel that provides learning opportunities to women of all ages and backgrounds in the greater Chicago area. The highlights include its annual Women's Health Forum and the two day

of topics, one-on-one chavrutot, and special community Women's Learning Conference in the summer.

# Kollel Torah MiTzion of Memphis

#### Rabbi Refael Azugi Rosh Kollel

It was two years ago, just after Chanukah, before the kindergartens were filled with paintings of trees and fruits. I was walking along the streets of a rainy Jerusalem when my daughter asked me: "Those poor trees, instead of having a Rosh Hashanah like ours, in the summer when it's warm, they have a Rosh Hashanah when they are cold and have no leaves at all. And it's raining on them all the time. Why didn't they have the New Year together with us?"

I walked around with that question on my mind for a few weeks, and I found the answer in our Parsha.

In Parshat Bo, Bnei Yisrael are commanded to eat the Korban Pesach, and to eat it hastily. The Gemara demands that only in Egypt should the korban be eaten hastily, but not for



generations to come. The future redemption is a redemption that comes little by little, naturally, and so our patience is required.

Many times in life we want immediate results, and cannot muster the patience to enjoy the journey. We have grown up in the microwave generation: two minutes and the dish is ready to eat.

Tu Bishvat, the Sages discovered, is the date when the trees start to put forth their fruit; this is the moment that the process of growth begins. If you look at the trees at this time, it looks as though nothing is there. The trees stand naked, weathering all kinds of difficulties, rain, wind and cold, without any adornment—no fruits, flowers or even leaves! And just at that moment, in the peak of darkness, starts an inner growth whose end will be fruit.

The world mistakenly thinks that only those who see immediate results—only those trees who look beautiful and are blooming with fresh fruits—are worthy of respect, and those who aren't will certainly not succeed. The Korban Pesach and Tu Bishvat come to teach us that the process of redemption happens slowly, and it begins in the dark, when nothing can be seen, but the process will bear fruit by the end. Despite the fact that we cannot always see it, inside something is constantly growing.



The Memphis Kollel includes the Azugi family (Rabbi Raphael, Rebbetzin Orit and their children, Hallel, Shevut, David and Roy), the bachurim Shai, Gilad, and Yosef, and Bat Ami girls Reut and Renana.

The Memphis community is small, warm, and very friendly. Our work is divided between the Kollel, the school, and the community. In the school, we learn Torah and Hebrew subjects with students, and organize various activities. We live with the students at the dorm, which strengthens our connection. Within the community we have programming in a variety of fields and for all ages, including evening chavrutas with community members, Hebrew lessons for adults and Shabbat activities.



Kollel Torah MiTzion Montréal, marking its 20th anniversary this year, is an educational center based in the heart of Côte St-Luc with a core faculty of graduates from Hesder Yeshivot in Israel who come to serve as teachers and role models in our community. The Kollel Beit Midrash program features a full schedule of classes, and serves as a drop-in center with a warm atmosphere where all can feel comfortable, regardless of background. The program emphasizes the eternal connection between the State of Israel and the Diaspora, and between Torah study and Israel. The Kollel, based in the Lieberman Beit Midrash at Hebrew Academy, allows for a strong educational connection between the Kollel and the school.

### Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov of Toronto

#### Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Rosh Beit Midrash

In 19th century Germany, Karl Graf and Julius Wellhausen argued that most of the book of Devarim was published in the era of King Yoshiyahu in the first Beit haMikdash, and that the "Priestly Code" (parts of the first four chumashim, the end of Devarim, and part of Yehoshua) was published centuries later. As the theory went, one of the central goals of this "Priestly Code" was to centralize service of G-d around the Beit haMikdash.

In 1903, Rabbi Dovid Zvi Hoffmann published a lengthy challenge, noting inconsistencies in the theory. His first note addressed the Korban Pesach.

In our Parsha (Shemot 12), Moshe tells the Jews to sacrifice the Korban Pesach at home. However, Devarim 16:5 instructs, "You may not slaughter the Pesach at one of your gates," but rather at the communal Sanctuary. If a goal of Shemot 12 as part of the "Priestly Code" was to centralize korbanot, why would the alleged editors of the Torah take our founding ritual, already decreed to be performed at the site of the Beit haMikdash (Devarim 16:5), and already performed there (Melachim II 23), and provide reason to celebrate it at home?

Graf-Wellhausen aside, we need to consider a problem within our own, traditional read of the Torah's text. Parshat Bo clearly places the Korban Pesach in the home. Why, then, did the Torah move the Korban Pesach to the Sanctuary?

#### Private or Public Korban?

Indeed, the Korban Pesach is ambiguous; Rambam described the Korban Pesach as "a private korban which is like a public korban". The Korban Pesach is brought by private groups.



However, it overrides Shabbat and ritual impurity, like a communal korban! (Yoma 50a-51a) The transition of the Korban Pesach from the private home to the public Sanctuary seems to be part of a greater picture, while naturally private, it displays elements of public ceremony. Understanding why the Korban moved from *house* to *House* may help us understand this mixed celebration.

#### 1. Grandeur

Sefer haChinuch (#487) justifies use of a national site, stating, "The honour and publicity of the mitzvah is greater when it is performed in a designated location, with everyone together..." In other words, the Korban Pesach is fundamentally private, but adorned with trappings of a communal korban to elevate its status.

#### 2. National identity

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (Devarim 16:5) offers an opposite perspective, writing, "Each person must include himself and his household in the communal structure of a national network... Only afterward can one joyfully recognize the value of his own home." Per Rabbi Hirsch, the Korban Pesach is fundamentally communal. The home celebration in Egypt was an anomaly, in which "the doorposts and lintel filled the place of the [communal] altar."

#### 3: Private and Public

We might suggest a third possibility:

the Korban Pesach of Egypt was private, but afterward it gained a dual identity.

The initial Korban Pesach inhabited a Jewish world which was not a covenantal nation, but rather a prolific clan. Therefore, each family celebrated at home. Soon after, though, our nation's shared history began with the brit at Sinai. In the second year, as evidenced by Bamidbar 9:10's concern for being too far from the Mishkan, the Korban Pesach could be celebrated only as part of our national community. The personal identity remained, as each group brought its own korban, but the national identity became dominant, overriding Shabbat and ritual impurity, and setting the Sanctuary as the site for this ritual.

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein *z"I* wrote that Jewish identity entails both a personal relationship with G-d and a national experience of "the vertical historical axis, bonding with the full range of Jewish existence, across the millennia, from our incipient national cradle to the epiphany of our metahistorical vision." So it is that conversion to Judaism, for example, includes acceptance of both personal religious obligations and membership in the Jewish nation. These two themes are present in the Korban Pesach.

When we bring the Korban Pesach—as we will in just a few months, G-d-willing—we will mark our personal relationship with G-d, as we did in that first year. However, we will also recognize "the full range of Jewish existence", our national identity, and so we will leave our homes and bring our private korbanot to the site of the Beit haMikdash, in Jerusalem.



#### Part One: A Beit Midrash

Come to the Beit Midrash at Yeshivat Or Chaim on a random morning and you will encounter a mix of adults and high school students, rabbinical students and veteran educators, filling the room with the noise of Torah study. This is a true centre of Torah for our community.

### Part Two: Chaverim: University Students and Young Adults

Our Chaverim are more than a dozen young men, mostly in university, who come to study in our Beit Midrash in the course of the week. In tandem with JLIC and Ulpanat Orot, we staff and fund a daily Women's Beit Midrash for female university students at Ulpanat Orot. Managing the vicissitudes of York University, University of Toronto and Ryerson schedules, among others, these students work hard to include Torah study as part of their daily lives, and they serve as fine role models for the students of Yeshivat Or Chaim and Ulpanat Orot. In addition, the Beit Midrash partners with JLIC and Rabbi Aaron Greenberg to create programs for students on campus and around the community.

#### Part Three: High School Students

On any given morning, several shiurim from Yeshivat Or Chaim share the Beit Midrash with us, preparing sources for their classes. Returning in the afternoon, the Grade 12 students break up into 4-man *chaburot* with each member of our Beit Midrash, to study from primary texts. Every few weeks, we provide special *chabura* learning experiences for groups of students from other grades, as well. Our role is not limited to Yeshivat Or Chaim, though; with programs at Ulpanat Orot and teaching assistantships at CHAT, we spread our reach beyond our home base.

#### Part Four: Adult Education

In an average week, our Beit Midrash provides more than 20 public and private shiurim and *chaburot* in venues around Toronto, from shuls to workplaces to homes; more than 300 unique individuals participate in these weekly opportunities. Our avreichim serve as Rabbinic Assistants at shuls, augmenting those institutions with divrei torah and chavruta learning and programming.

In particular, we emphasize Women's Education. Our flagship Midreshet Yom Rishon program attracts from 30 to 70 women on Sunday mornings each month, and we regularly partner with the Mekorot Institute of Torah Study for Women and with Nishmat as well. We also hold three weekly shiurim for women, in Thornhill, Clanton Park and the Bathurst-Lawrence area.

We reach beyond the Orthodox community, with miniseries for more than 40 women each week at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda, and monthly classes for the Sisterhood at Adath Israel.

Our Shabbatonim bring communities together to learn at shuls around the city, and our weekly Toronto Torah, featuring articles on traditional Torah topics as well as biographies and a column on Israel's rabbis, circulates to more than twenty GTA synagogues.



#### Part Five: Professional Education

One of our unique features is our program of Continuing Education classes for professionals. Doctors, dentists, financial service professionals and lawyers all benefit from these classes in their specialties, blending the Torah's laws and ethics with the particulars of each profession. We are formally accredited for Continuing Medical Education for medical professionals and Continuing Professional Development for lawyers.

These are our parts. Together, they comprise a community of Torah learning, growth and inspiration promoting the ideals of Yeshiva University and Torah MiTzion: Torah excellence, Religious Zionism, and an embrace of the world as a whole.

# Kollel Torah MiTzion of Mexico City

#### Rabbi Guy Tal

Rosh Kollel

In our Parsha we encounter the story of the Exodus from Egypt, and at the end of the story Bnei Yisrael are required to be ready to transmit the story of the redemption to the future generations.

After Moshe commanded Bnei Yisrael to share with their descendants the experience of leaving slavery to redemption, Moshe prepares them for the sons' questions (Shemot 12:26): "And when your children will ask you: what is this work to you?" The Midrash comments on this verse, "the Jewish people received the bad news, that the Torah will one day be forgotten."

Moshe informs them: A day will come, and sons will arise who will not ask questions out of interest, but will announce rhetorical declarations without waiting for answers: "Your children will say to you." And what will be the content of their saying? "What is this work for you?" They will exclude themselves from the collective; they will perceive G-d's commandments as 'work'—a tedious effort. In short, we are first meeting the "wicked son" of the Haggadah.

But it is interesting that the written Torah's response to the question of wicked son is different from that of the



Haggadah, which represents our oral tradition. Here the Torah does not state, "If he were there he would not have be redeemed", but rather, "It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, and He saved our houses". We remind him of how Hashem skipped over the houses of the Bnei Yisrael during the Plague of the Firstborn, of the profound difference between Israel and Egypt. How even though, at the time, we were steeped in idolatry, we were spared and the Egyptians punished. This, then, is the Torah's answer to the wicked son: like it or not, you are still a part of the Jewish nation, you cannot escape your identity, even if you leave the Torah.

The Oral Law adds another practical dimension: It is not enough to try to bring the wicked son closer and tell him that he belongs to the Jewish people, you have to criticize him, too. If he bites with his teeth, their sting should be

blunted, and be made clear that if he were "there," he would not have been redeemed. But since he is not "there," in Egypt, but "here," in the Land of Israel, he is redeemed against his will.

Therefore, it is understood why the Torah opens with the term והיה, the language of joy. It is also understandable why, after Bnei Yisrael heard the promise of these sons, they responded by bowing down (Shemot 12:27), "on the gospel of the sons that they shall have." Because these sons, even if some of them will be wicked, "in any case are called sons", as the Midrash states: "At that point the Jewish people received good news, that in the future they will see their children and children's children as it says, "the nation bowed down."

As shlichim in the Jewish communities around the world, we are privileged to work with Jews from all walks of life. Every Jew we meet is at a different point in their Judaism and in their life, and we embrace each one equally, for all of us are part of Bnei Yisrael. We are all brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, and as shlichim we humbly toil to unite all Jews, in the Land of Israel, and with the Torah of Israel.

Kollel Torah MiTzion in Mexico City is led by Rosh Kollel Rabbi Guy Tal, who also serves as the rabbi of the Yavneh community. The bachurim are Yair Zini (23), of the Hesder Yeshiva in Haifa, and Eyal Nissim (23) from Yeshivat Maalot.

During the day we teach in the Yavneh School, both oneon-one and in larger groups. We



also help children prepare for their Bar Mitzvah. In the evening there are dozens of chavrutot with community members, as well as seminars for Bnei Akiva madrichim. On Shabbat and Chagim we lead Bnei Akiva activities and hold shabbatonim for high school students.

### Kollel Torah MiTzion of St. Louis

#### Rabbi Tal Midler

Rosh Kollel

All the Makot are brought through voices, from the voice of Hashem in the episode of the *s'neh* (burning bush), to the voice of Moshe who introduces each of the plagues, to the sounds of the frogs during the second plague. All these voices represent the Divine voice, who comes to us and demands that we be shlichim in our communities.

Humans want to live their lives and to enjoy what this world offers us, but sometimes a mission arrives, a *shlichut*. This is exactly what happened to Moshe. He was looking after Yitro's flock of sheep, when G-d called him. Suddenly there was a mission for him, and of course Moshe responded "", "here I am." Moshe is the shaliach of G-d, an "Aspaklaria Meira", a clear mirror that is the channel for the Divine presence in the world.

In our Parsha we encounter Moshe's petition, שלח את עמי, "send My people" and Pharaoh's answer, את עמך לא אשלח, "I will not send your people." Pharaoh does not send Bnei Yisrael because he does not recognize the mission of the people of Israel. As he said to Moshe, אל מי ה' אשר, "I did not know G-d," אשמע בקולו "Who is G-d that I should listen to Him?"



He just didn't believe that Bnei Yisrael have a shlichut in this world.

In the Makot, we see that animals also fulfill their mission in the world, even giving themselves up to die for Hashem's will. In Parshat Bo we encounter a plague of locusts. Millions



of creatures join together and create darkness. They eat everything because they are busy and care only about themselves. The plague also represents the darkness of people, a reality where no one sees their friends, where people are preoccupied with the private path of their lives, and perhaps even destroy the lives of their friends without noticing.

The people of Israel are the opposite of the locusts. We are a spiritual *klal* (entity) that unites around the details of Godliness in this world. We have a special unity that is expressed on Pesach. The Passover sacrifice was

eaten in groups, and not just each family on its own, resulting in a large amount of different people sitting together to finish the entire korban until midnight. These guidelines teach us that we must see each other and take care of each other, we must search for where I can perform my mission in this world, and how I can express my devotion to this great nation.

The people of Israel are here to create something else in this world. We are a nation committed to a Godly ideals and values. We are here to work hard in our Avodat Hashem, as we are the messengers, the shlichim, of Hashem in this world.

Now in its 14th year in St. Louis, Torah MiTzion shlichim, along with community volunteers, provide educational activities in schools and synagogues that aim to strengthen Zionism and Jewish identity in all sectors of the Jewish community. Our shlichim are idealistic, dedicated and learned young men and women who serve several years in St. Louis



as teachers and role models of *midrash u'ma'aseh* (study and action). They also partner with our B'not Sherut, two young women who come here to volunteer to develop personal relationships with the children of St. Louis and serve as role models actively linking children with Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people.

# Kollel Torah MiTzion of Greater Washington

#### Rabbi Itiel Oron

Rosh Kollel

The Midrash on our Parsha makes an interesting comment regarding the mitzvah of matzah, שמירת מצה. It says: ושמרתם את המצות: ר׳ יאשיה אומר אל תקרא. "And you shall keep the matzot: Rav Yeshaya says do not read it like that, rather 'and you shall keep the commandments (mitzvot)".

By adding the letter "vav" to the Hebrew word "matzot" and creating the word "mitzvot", the midrash tells us that the commandment of matzah is actually one of the foundations for keeping all of the mitzvot, and therefore a better understanding of the mitzvah of shmirat matzah specifically will enhance and improve our understanding of what is expected from us in shmirat haMitzvot in general.

The main goal of shmirat matzah is to ensure that the matzah will be one hundred percent guarded and protected from becoming chametz. This is why, according to some opinions, this mitzvah is relevant from as early as the time of harvesting the wheat for the matzah. Knowing this, we would then assume that the way to fulfill it would



be to avoid any contact between the grain and water, however the halacha is exactly the opposite. In Masechet Pesachim (40a) Rava says that sprinkling water over the wheat after the harvest is a condition for the fulfillment of shmirat hamatzot. In other words, this mitzvah cannot be fulfilled unless there is water on the grain.

At first glance this would seem to be going against the purpose of the mitzvah: we are supposed to protect the matzah from becoming chametz, but instead, we're actually creating the risk that it might. Yet, upon deeper reflection, it makes perfect sense. The mitzvah of shmirah is to actively guard and protect; one cannot actively protect from a danger if that danger is not present. If there will be no water present, the matzah will indeed be protected, but no actual guarding will take place. Creating a contact between

water and wheat presents the risk of chametz, but at the same time brings a potential for making a kosher matzah, and our duty is to the latter.

This analogy that Chazal draws between shmirat matzah and shmirat mitzvot teaches us a profound message: just as an ideal matzah is a product of a successful struggle, so too the ideal Avodat Hashem is the triumph over challenges. Avodat Hashem should not be based on avoiding tests and conflicts, although that may seem to be the easy and safe way. On the contrary, we are called to wisely engage the difficulties presented to us, aware of the risks, but also aware of the potential.

We believe that this is also true about living our dream and destiny. Living in the State of Israel and participating in her development comes with a lot of hardship, frustration, and challenges both physical and spiritual, and yet, the ideal life for us as a nation can only be achieved by engaging successfully with the circumstances, securing a Jewish present and a Jewish future for generations to come.

Kollel Torah MiTzion of Greater Washington is centered around the Berman Hebrew Academy and its main feeder communities of Kemp Mill and Potomac. Being situated within a school puts the Kollel in a unique position of both everyday



learning in chavrutot, and of organizing extracurricular activities using the already existing platform of the school. The Kollel reaches all ages from preschool through high school, with Parsha and songs, oneg, chavrutot, and activities.