



Memphis

ממפיס

# Shabbat Shalom from Torah MiTzion

Brought to you by Memphis Torah MiTzion - memtorahmitzion@gmail.com

By our Rosh Kollel, Rabbi Avi Goldberg

## Our days slavery & Freedom!

How do we start? Where does the first spark come from?

This week we learn that a Jewish slave is released after 6 years. However if the slave decides he would like to stay in slavery he is entitled to do so, but he has to go through a special ceremony:

"But if the slave shall say "I love my master. My wife, and my children – I shall not go free. Then his master shall... bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore through his ear with the awl, and he shall serve him forever (until the Jubilee)." (Shmot 21, 5-6)

Many questions arise as we read through these verses. Why does the Torah open the list of laws with this one? Why is the slave pierced in his ear if he decides to continue his friendship and his slavery with his master? What is the significance of the ear, and what is the meaning behind the doorpost? If a slave should be pierced in his ear, why don't we do so for every slave, why only for a slave that prefers to stay on with his master?

As we said – many questions.

Rashi quotes from the Yerushalmi with the following statement:

"And why was the ear chosen to be pierced more than other organs in the body? Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai said – "The ear that heard at Mount Sinai – "You shall not steal!" and went and stole should become pierced. And if he sold himself to be a slave – the ear that heard at Mount Sinai "for me (G-d) the children of Israel are slaves" and has gone and enslaved himself to another master should be pierced!"

The question we can understand. Why the ear? But what is the meaning of this answer? Rabbi yochanan Ben Zakai has found two commands that were taught on Mt. Sinai, and a Jewish slave might have transgressed. By not obeying to these commands, the ear that heard the commands will be pierced.

This answer is rather difficult! We heard many commandments at Mt. Sinai, but we never find the punishment of piercing when one is transgressing one of them except for the case we are dealing with – a slave! What does Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai mean by that? What is he answering?

There are several answers, and I would like to focus

on one of them.

An interesting command was given to Moshe & Aharon in Egypt just before the beginning of the plagues. The Torah writes:

"And G-d commanded them (Moshe & Aharon) to the Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and to the children of Israel – to redeem the children of Israel from Egypt." (Shmot 7, 13)

The commentators try to explain this verse. While it seems logical to command Moshe & Aharon to tell

**In order to become free, we first of all need to recognize our ability to become free!**

Pharaoh the he has to free the children of Israel, it doesn't make so much sense to command such a thing towards the children of Israel. What does it mean to tell the children of Israel to free themselves from Egypt? Is it in their hands? Is it up to them?

I once heard a beautiful explanation for this! The children of Israel also, and

maybe even more so, have to hear such a command. Yes, it is no totally up to them to free themselves, but I they don't even give it a chance, if they themselves don't believe that they will become free – it will not happen!!!

In order to become free, we first of all need to recognize our ability to become free! Anyone who doesn't believe in the possibility of him to improve, to become free, to take control over his actions, is a slave – and will not be able to become free.

A drug addict has to believe and recognize his ability to overcome his addiction before he even starts his long process for freedom from the drug.

Someone who is ill has to believe and must have the hope that he can overcome his illness in order become healthy.

And a person with bad habits, one who needs to improve his deeds (all of us!), has to believe such a process is possible in order to really improve.

Real freedom is the possibility to change, to take responsibility over our actions. We are all somewhat in slavery, trying to break free of our bad behaviors and bad character traits. The first step in the path of improvement is the simple belief that it is possible. We can Change! We have free will!

The Torah decides to open all the details, all the social and civil laws, with the rules of a Jewish slave because understanding the essence of slavery is the key for any behavior and improvement. If we really understand the concept of slavery, we are moral people. We don't believe in free will, we don't be-



### Kollel news:

• **Bnei Yaakov**— this Shabbat at 5:00 pm at Baron Hirsch. Join the fun!

• **Hebrew classes at Hil-lel**—resumed last Tue. At 6:30. There are two levels—reading for beginners, and conversational. All are welcome to join for free! Another group of conversational is scheduled to open in east Memphis. For more information contact Rabbi Goldberg - 901-218-2174.

### Shabbat Times

	Memphis	Jerusalem
<b>In</b>	5:05pm	16:35
<b>Out</b>	6:04pm	17:48

## 1679 DAYS

Please daven for

**Gilad Shalit**  
[Gilad ben Aviva]



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# Din Torah: Withdrawing Money Paid Into Building Committee Fund

Courtesy of: Mishpetey Eretz Institute, Ofra. [www.dintora.org](http://www.dintora.org)

## Question

My parents reside in a building which contains a storage room and a unit of rooms that belong to all six of the residents. The unit is leased to a dentist and the rent is used for the ongoing expenses of maintaining the building (cleaning of the stairway, electricity in the hallway, etc.) stairs etc). In general, each resident receives on a monthly basis a surplus in the sum of several hundreds of shekels from this money. For around two and a half years now, the money has been collected and the surplus has not been divided amongst the residents, in order to renovate the building in the future. Over NIS 20,000 have accumulated in the communal fund. My parents have now sold their apartment, and my question is whether they are able to claim their proportionate share of this money, or whether, from their standpoint, the money is lost.

## Answer

Part of the money that was collected for the sake of renovations from the surplus rent belongs to your parents, and they

are entitled to receive it. They are not required to contribute to the expenses of the renovation, because they will see no benefit from this, whereas the new residents will be required to pay for the renovation expenses. An accounting should be made of their share up to the moment of delivering the key to the new residents, and this share belongs to them. That said, it is possible that, had the new residents known that a very large sum of money would be collected from them for the purposes of renovation, they would not have purchased the apartment in the first place, and if indeed this is the case it may be that there are grounds here to annul the sale on account of *mekach ta'ut* – a transaction that is made in error (see also *Emek HaMishpat, Shecheinim*, 42-43).



## Our days slavery & Freedom/

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lieve in our ability to improve and correct our ways, we reach the most immoral behaviors.

The slave has to be pierced in his ear when he decides to stay in slavery because he had rejected the possibility to go free. He is pierced in his ear because that is exactly the ability he is giving up – the ability to listen, the ability to consider other ways, to evaluate his ways.

The “*Sfat- Emet*” – the Rabbi of the Gur Chasidim (from “Gura-Kalivara”, a small town near Warsaw, Poland) adds another level. Based on the concept of the good being greater than the bad (“גדולה”) (“*Sfat-Emet*” says the “*Sfat-Emet*” that if one that chooses to be a slave and give up his freedom – one who chooses to have a human master instead of been enslaved only to G-d, loses his ability to really listen, so even more so – one who does accept G-ds’ kingship and acknowledges the creator as our master receives a higher level of hearing. By accepting G-d as our master we can understand more, we can connect more, we can reach higher levels of hearing.

Let’s try to accept G-d as our king. Those of us who don’t recite the “*Shema*” (the paragraph in which we accept G-d as our king) twice (or more) a day, should try to do so. Those of us who do recite the “*Shema*” should try and learn more of it. Those who know the meaning of the words of the “*Shema*” should try and improve their “*Kavana*” – intentions while reciting it.

Returning to our initial question – where do we start? Where does the first spark of belief come from?

It comes from the acceptance of G-d. The first level, the first stage is to acknowledge the creator. By doing so – we will merit the increase of hearing, we will reach higher levels of true freedom and of understanding.

Shabbat Shalom

## Chicago Kollel / *Continued from page 3*

festival programming – such as Succot and Chanukah parties, a Tu B'Shvat *seder*, pre-Pesach workshops, Shavuot night learning, a Lag BaOmer celebration, a Yom HaZikaron ceremony (the only one is Chicago!), and much more.

Furthermore, the Kollel organizes monthly learning sessions in Chicago’s other educational institutions – two elementary schools, a yeshiva high school, and a special event for high school girls from two different schools.

### Torah MiTzion’s unique role

First and foremost, the Torah MiTzion *shlichim* are an integral part of the Kollel – both inside and out.

One of their primary roles is to develop and emphasize the Israeli-Zionist bond through the prism of *Torat Eretz Yisrael* and religious-Zionism.

Within the Kollel, the *shlichim* are able to engage and learn Torah together with their American counterparts, who will eventually become rabbis and educators in different communities (if they do not make *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*). And, of course, outside the Kollel, the *shlichim* serve as a living and passionate connection to *Eretz Yisrael* and the State of Israel – as they learn and teach *Torat Eretz Yisrael* (ideally, in Hebrew).



## Introduction to: The Chicago Kollel

A joint program of Yeshiva University and Torah MiTzion, the Chicago Kollel includes six American *avreichim* (married fellows – including the Rosh Kollel) and two Israeli *avreichim*. The partnership is manifested in the Kollel's underlying vision, goals, and activities.

### Kollel members

- Yeshiva University graduates: Rosh Kollel Rav Reuven Brand, Rav Michael Teitcher, Rav Noah Baron, Rav Mordechai Turoff, Rav Dovi Bergman, and Rav Dovid Asher.
- Torah MiTzion *shlichim*: Rav Ephraim and Tzippi Rimel from Yeshivat Har Etzion and Rav Hagay and Naama Elitzur from Yeshivat Ohr Etzion.

The Kollel is involved in Chicago's Orthodox Jewish community, which numbers some 40,000 Jews and is concentrated in three main areas: Skokie, West Rogers Park, and Lincolnwood. These vibrant communities enjoy numerous Jewish activities, including Torah learning, shul functions, programming at the schools, and much more.

The Kollel is located in the local high school, which has about 400 students, and meets on Sundays at Congregation Or Torah in Skokie.

### Vision and activities

The Kollel's mission is to enrich and engage the community with inspired Torah living and learning based on a religious-Zionist/modern-Orthodox outlook. Our objectives are to create a "community of Torah learners" who adhere to this worldview and to strengthen the community's bond to the Torah and to the State of Israel. In order to achieve these goals, the Kollel maintains high standards of Torah learning and is thereby able to influence the community via its assorted activities.

Our daily schedule includes two intensive learning sessions (from



9:00 am to 5:30 pm)  
*b'chavrutot* (in study pairs)  
– which are dedicated to advanced Talmud study and Jewish law. In addition, we have a weekly *shiur* on every topic (including occasional video lectures by rabbis from Yeshiva University or Is-

rael) as well as periodic examinations on the material covered. These tests focus on practical halachic rulings as well as rigorous Talmudic analysis.

We also spend one hour each day learning with the high school students *b'chavrutot*. Moreover, our evening session (8:00-10:00 pm) is devoted to learning *b'chavrutot* with members of the community. The goal is to create an active *beit midrash* where people can come learn with the Kollel fellows or among themselves. Also, in the evenings, some of the Kollel fellows occasionally deliver various *shiurim* in the community.

On Sunday mornings, we run a community *beit midrash* in Skokie's Congregation Or Torah, and on Shabbat, the Kollel fellows give *shiurim* at several of the city's shuls.

### Additional activities

Once a month, the Kollel organizes a morning of Torah learning with outside speakers. The program is a huge success and generally attracts about 150-200 participants!

The Kollel also runs dozens of other events throughout the year. These programs include Shabbat activities, Torah learning evenings for children and adults, colloquies, various *shiurim*, and especially

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## Looking Back: Colonel Ilan Ramon z"l (1954-2003)

Eight years ago, Colonel Ilan Ramon - Israel's first astronaut and a fighter pilot in the IAF (Israel Air Force) - was killed when the Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated during reentry on 29 Shvat 5763 (February 1, 2003).

Ilan mesmerized the entire country and swept us up in his enthusiasm for space travel. He trained extensively for the mission and worked together with Israeli scientists on various research projects, which accompanied him into space. Throughout the 16-day mission, everyone witnessed his exuberance and delight in floating weightlessly around the shuttle's cabin and watched Ilan and his crewmates at work. He described Israel's beauty as seen from space and marveled at our planet's splendor.

While training in Houston's Johnson Space Center, Ilan wrote:

"Both space exploration and educating children and adolescents nourish each other and dwell under the same roof.

"On one hand, children and adolescents are drawn to space, because it is distant, uncertain, different and completely dissimilar to life on Earth, difficult to grasp and comprehend; it stimulates the imagination [and is] unknown. Who among us has not been drawn to the unknown...?"

"And at the same time, there is a relatively small group (about 400 people, as of today) of astronauts who were there and experienced this experience, and they are a source of emulation and admiration.

"And on the other hand, children and teenagers are the future of advances in space research - mainly, because they are open to new ideas, creative, and not limited by prejudice, and therefore, they are so important to our future in space."



We all surely remember where we were when we heard the terrible news about the tragedy. The Columbia disaster and the loss of the crew - including Israel's first astronaut - was devastating for every one of us. We will never forget Ilan and his crewmates.

The State of Israel continues to focus on space research - via satellites, by analyzing data from space crafts and telescopes in partnership with other space agencies, and at Israeli space observatories. And in the not-so-distant future, there will be another Israeli astronaut, and who knows? Maybe one of today's students will become the second person to wave our blue-and-white flag in space.

*The small Sefer Torah that Ilan took with him to space*

Much has been written about Ilan Ramon's life and many contributions.

**(Based on the Center for Educational Technology's web-site)**



### Kabalat Shabbat at BSSS

Every Friday, the kollel participates in the 5-8th grades' BSSS Kabalat Shabbat, and runs an activity in reference to the Parsha. Today, we dealt with the Mitzvah of Charity, and how we are commanded to help the closest to us first. When we want to change the world we need to start from the basics and build our close environment first as a strong root. (As the Pyramid)



### "Gush katif day"

The educational system in Israel commemorated yesterday, Thursday, Shvat 22<sup>nd</sup> as the "Gush Katif" day. Also here, the kollel made a stand, and spoke about it in MHA FYOS.

Gush katif and North Samaria included 1850 families in 24 settlements. Those areas were unbelievable story of success.

Economically, the combined assets in Gush Katif were estimated at 23 billion dollars. Ecdudatinaly, tens of institutions raised a generation installed with the combination of "Torah Veavoda".

On the summer of 5765 (2005) they were evicted from the area and their homes demolished as part of Israel's unilateral disengagement plan. Although large parts of the nation disagreed with the plan, unity continued even in the hard moments.

We learn from the story of "Gush Katif" how in only a few years a wilderness can become a prospering land, and how we can connect all kind of Jews and create a great model of a well developed state according to the torah.

