

Yeshivas Frankfurt A.M

A weekly newsletter with insights from
Gedoley Ashkenaz

Parshas Devorim | Vol 10



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Rav Schwab on this week's Parsha

R' Yaakov de Wolff, London

וְגַם יִדְּהוּ הַיְתֵהָ בָּם לְהַמֵּם מִקֶּרֶב הַמַּחֲנֶה עַד תִּמָּם

“Hashem’s hand struck showed itself upon them, to snatch them away suddenly from the midst of the camp, until they have now died out” (Devorim 2:15). Rashi explains that the generation of the midbar died within the forty years, so their survival would not be a reason for delay.

The gezeiro is discussed in Gemoro in Bovo Basro 121a, where the Rashbam (ד"ה שכלו בו מתי מדבר) explains further what happened during those years, based on a Midrash in Eicho Rabbo (pesichta 33). Every year on erev Tish'a be-Av it was announced: “Let everyone go out!” Every person would dig a grave and sleep there for the night. In the morning it was announced: “Let the living and the dead be separated!” Each year it was found that 15,000 (one fortieth of 600,000) and a few more (ופרוטרוט) had not survived the night. In the final year in the midbar everyone followed the same procedure, but the following morning everyone had survived. Out of concern that the date had been miscalculated, the procedure was repeated every night until the full moon on באב ט"ז was taken as a sign that Tish'a be-Av had clearly passed, and that the terrible gezeira had been annulled. Tosfos on the Gemoro there (ד"ה יום שכלו בו מתי מדבר) addresses a number of issues arising from the Midrash. One of them is that if in one of the years nobody died, the number of deaths during the remaining years would have needed to be closer to 16,000 each year.

Rav Schwab זצ"ל explains that the Rashbam’s explanation only works if his version actually used the figure of 16,000. That way, the entire generation of the midbar would have died by the fortieth year, in line with Rashi’s explanation on our posuk.

"Be of the pupils of Aharon"

From the writings of Rav Aharon Fuld Rosh Yeshiva
and Dayan in Frakfurt A.M.
edited by Rav Aryeh Feuchtwanger (Kiryas Sefer)

ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה

The midrah says I lit the fire in the Beis Hamidosh and I will rebuild it in the future as it says שלם ישלם והמבעיר את הבערה. We may ask since we are His servants whatever a servant owns belongs to his master, so why must He pay for the destruction? In Baba Basra 10 Turnesefus Harasha said it should be prohibited to give tzedoko as a king who expelled a servant would be mad at someone who harbors him. Rabbi Akiva answered that we are His sons and when a king expells a son he is glad if someone harbors him. Now we understand ציון במשפט תפדה The din requires the mazik pay since we are called sons proven by the fact that we give tzedoko. ושביה בצדקה.

In Memory of Rav Shlomo Zalman Breuer zt"l R' Mordechai Perlman (Yerushalayim)

Moreinu HaRav Shlomo Zalman Breuer zt"l was born on the 17th of Tammuz 5610/1850 in Pilisvörösvár, Hungary, into a family of German-speaking merchants. His father, Mordechai Breuer, was a student of the Yeshivos of Hungary. His mother, Sara, was the daughter of HaRav Shimon Wiener, a student of the Chasam Sofer and a Musmach of both the Chasam Sofer and HaRav Mordechai Banet of Nikolsburg.

HaRav Shlomo Zalman Breuer was taken at the age of four to study with his maternal grandfather HaRav Shimon Wiener. At the age of twelve he entered the Yeshiva of Nitra, but returned to study with his grandfather until he could enroll in the Pressburg Yeshiva, then headed by HaRav Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin Sofer (Ksav Sofer). After a number of fruitful years of study under the Ksav Sofer, he left the Yeshiva to pursue a general education in the University of Vienna. He returned to the Yeshiva before leaving again to study in the University in Mainz. He became acquainted there with HaRav Meir Lehmann who prevailed upon him to enroll in advanced studies at the University of Heidelberg. He never attended formal classes but did acquire sufficient proficiency in the areas of Semitics and Philosophy to earn a doctorate. By his own admission, he never opened a secular work after he passed the examinations.

Rav Breuer married Sophie, the youngest daughter of Maran HaRav Samson Raphael Hirsch of Frankfurt, in 5636/1876, and soon after accepted the rabbinate of Pápa in Hungary. HaRav Hirsch passed away in Teves 5649/1888, and HaRav Breuer succeeded him as the Rav of the Frankfurt Austrittsgemeinde in 5650/1890.

In Frankfurt he participated in the Freie Vereinigung, a national organization of Orthodox communities, and created its rabbinical representative body, the Verband der orthodoxen Rabbiner Deutschlands (Union of Orthodox Rabbis in Germany). He would later also be one of the founding members of Agudas Yisroel, and was a strong opponent of political Zionism; he viewed participation in the Zionist movement as an implicit approval of the idea that a Jewish state can replace Jewish religious identity.

As part of his efforts to foster Jewish education in Frankfurt, HaRav Breuer opened a Yeshiva, the Torah Lehranstalt, in 5653/1893, which he modeled after the Yeshivos he had attended in Hungary.

Little of HaRav Breuer's work remains in writing. Collected sermons were published in English under the title Chochmo u'Mussar in three volumes between 5732 and 5737 by his grandson R' Jacob Breuer, and some of his Responsa appear in the Hebrew volume Divrei Yosef, which mainly contains the work of his son Rav Yosef Breuer.

HaRav Breuer had eight children. Shimon died in childhood. HaRav Raphael Breuer was Rav in Aschaffenburg. HaRav Yosef Breuer taught at the Torah Lehranstalt and recreated the Frankfurt community in New York City. Dr. Yitzchok Breuer, a lawyer, was an ideologue of Agudas Yisroel. Moshe Breuer was a linguist. Samson Breuer was a mathematician and actuary. Dr. Yehoshua Breuer was a paediatrician. His daughter Hannah Breuer married Edmund Meyer, a lawyer in Cologne.

On Shabbos Chazon, the 6th of Av in 5686/1926, HaRav Breuer, the Kosel Ma'arovi of Jewry (an epithet given him by HaRav Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld of Yerusholayim), passed away in Frankfurt at the age of 76.

תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים עם נשמות צדיקים וצדקניות שבגן עדן אמן

The OR ZARUAH chelek Alef (752:9)

You wrote that I should impart to you the source for the practice of those fools, who recite Kiddush in the synagogue as part of the conclusion of the Friday night service despite not being able to fulfill their Kiddush obligation thereby and despite there being no guests that will be partaking of their Shabbos feast in the synagogue:

I grieve for you and I am so upset that you have allowed your mouth to bring guilt upon you. I am baffled that a man of wisdom and insight such as yourself would have permitted such filth to proceed from your mouth.

Surely you are aware that our supremely holy Sages from Mainz, Worms, and Speyer, were known as superlative geniuses in the company of geniuses. Torah went forth to all of Klal Yisroel from the Yeshivos that they led.

From the time of the establishment of all the holy communities of the Rhineland, of all the German-speaking countries, and of all our hegemonies, the sagacious scholars among our righteous and holy ancestors have carried out the practice of reciting Kiddush in the synagogue as part of the conclusion of the Friday night service. This is the correct Halacha, and yet you call those who do so: Fools?!

And now, know this: Since our ancestors who repose comfortably in Gan Eden have conducted themselves in this manner, **do not dare to change from the customs of your ancestors.** It is not a hollow or meaningless thing. If it appears to someone so, it is because he is mentally unbalanced and demented.