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The Years Fly By

In this parashah, we learn about the formation of the Jewish camp as they traveled through the desert. Twelve tribes encamped around the Mishkan, with three tribes stationed on each side. This arrangement also dictated the order in which they traveled throughout their forty-year journey.

There is a well-known story about a child who was reading the Torah before the [Satmar Rav](#) and mispronounced a word in Bamidbar 2:16. Instead of reading “*ushneyim*” (ושנים)—referring to the second camp setting out on its journey—he read “*ushanim*” (ושנים) as if it meant “years are journeying.” In his characteristic quick-witted way, the Satmar Rav immediately responded to the crowd around the child, saying: “You should know, the child is right! The years of our lives are also journeying quickly. We must recognize this and seize every moment.”

This message is particularly relevant, as this parashah is always read shortly before Shavuos, the time when we reaccept the Torah. Part of that acceptance includes recognizing the value of time and ensuring that we devote ourselves to Torah study in the way we are meant to—never wasting even a moment. This is one reason behind the custom of staying up the entire night of Shavuos—to train ourselves in the realization that each

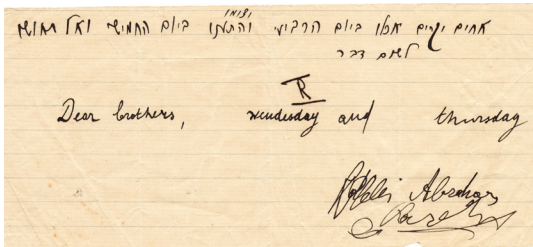
moment should be utilized meaningfully, and excessive sleep can be unproductive.

One way to easily continuously delve into Torah study is through appreciation. It is essential to remember that there is no such thing as wasting time when learning Torah—a person receives credit for every second of engagement, whether or not they ultimately arrive at the correct conclusion. Torah study is not results-driven, like other academic subjects where only mastery of the material matters. In Torah learning, the journey itself is a fulfillment of a mitzvah, whether one is grappling with the initial thought processes of the Gemara or even studying areas that may not seem immediately relevant to daily life. Additionally, what may appear impractical now could become critical later.

When the Mir Yeshiva arrived in Japan during World War II, the bochurim were unsure which day was Yom Kippur, as Jewish law dictates that the correct date depends upon the placement of the international dateline. They were not able to fast for two days in a row, though some did observe Shabbos for two consecutive days out of halachic uncertainty. Desperate for guidance, they sent a telegram to Eretz Yisrael to consult the great halachic authorities. Upon hearing the question, the [Chazon Ish](#) immediately requested his notebooks. He reviewed what he had previously written on the topic and sent a telegram: “Precious brothers, eat on

ר' יואל טייטלבוים

R' Yoel Teitelbaum, (1887-26 Av 1979) was a son of the Kedushas Yom Yov and a grandson of the Yetev Lev. R' Yoel served as Rav of Siget and Kruhl before taking on the mantle of Satmar in 1934. R' Yoel survived the war by escaping with the famous Kazsner train, and went to Eretz Yisrael after the war for a short time before coming to America and building up the Satmar Chassidus. He had three daughters who pre-deceased him. Esther passed away in her youth (12 Elul 1921); Rachel shortly after she married (2 Nisan 1931) and Chaya Roisa (15 Cheshvon 1953).



TELEGRAM FROM THE CHAZON ISH TO KOBE, JAPAN REGARDING THE INTERNATIONAL DATELINE. WRITTEN BY HIS NEPHEW, R' SHMARYAHU GREINEMAN

Wednesday and fast on Thursday. Do not be concerned about anything.”

This story teaches many profound lessons. One of them is that the Chazon Ish likely never anticipated personally confronting this question—he was living in Eretz Yisrael, with no plans to travel abroad. He probably never imagined that he would need to address it on behalf of refugees fleeing Europe. And yet,

when he had sat down years earlier to study the theoretical halachah of the international dateline, he delved into it deeply, ensuring he could determine the correct ruling for every possible scenario. His approach to Torah study was clear: learning is not about immediate practicality alone. One studies Torah not merely to resolve present-day questions but to understand Hashem’s will and how He wants us to act, no matter the circumstances.

Knowing what Hashem wants brings us closer to Him and helps us understand how to serve Him better. The Chazon Ish studied the laws of *korbanos*, *tum’ah*, and *taharah*—matters that were not practically applicable in his time. When it comes to Torah study, there is truly no such thing as “wasting time”—everything is relevant in some way. Hopefully, we will be redeemed *bimeheirah biyameinu* and all of the laws will be relevant.

What is Suffering?

The Midrash (*Yalkut Rus* 594) explains that we read Megillas Rus on Shavuot because it tells a story of immense suffering—just like the Torah was given through immense suffering.

The *Nachlas Yosef* elaborates on this Midrash, noting the similarities between the stories of Rus and Iyov. The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 14b) categorizes both as “books of punishment,” as they each begin with immense suffering. Rashi explains that Rus’s story opens with hunger, exile, poverty, and death, and Iyov’s life takes a dramatic downturn early in his *sefer*. Both Rus and Iyov were extraordinary individuals who endured enormous hardship.

However, there is a significant difference in how we read these two *sefarim*. Rus is read on Shavuot in an uplifting, almost celebratory manner, while Iyov is permitted to be read during a week of mourning, when all Torah study is prohibited because it brings joy to

the heart. The fact that Iyov is an exception indicates that its reading does not cause joy; rather, it evokes somber and sad feelings. The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 14b) explains the distinction between these two seemingly similar narratives that the key difference lies in the resolution of their suffering—Rus’s suffering ultimately leads to a positive ending.

Tosafos states: Both stories appear to end positively—Rus creating the Davidic dynasty, including Moshiach, and Iyov being blessed by Hashem with far more than he originally had (*Iyov* 42:12). If both conclude with blessings, why are they classified differently? Why is one considered a mournful *sefer*, suitable for reading in times of grief, while the other is considered an uplifting *sefer*, read on Yom Tov?

The *Nachlas Yosef* explains that the positive endings of these two stories are fundamentally different. Iyov’s blessings at the end of his story are not directly linked to his suffering. His sufferings and his rewards are two separate

חזון אי"ש

R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, known as the Chazon Ish (11 Cheshvan 1878 – 15 Cheshvan 1953), was born into an illustrious family of Torah giants. Among his eight siblings, one brother married the daughter of the Cheshk Shlomo, another was the editor of *Knesses Yisrael*, and one sister married the Steipler Gaon. In 1905, he became close with R' Chaim Ozer Grodzensky. In Vilna in the early 1930s, he met the Chofetz Chaim, who urged him not to remain hidden from public view. In 1933, the Chazon Ish moved to Bnei Brak, Eretz Yisrael. Although he never held an official position and rarely spoke publicly or left Bnei Brak, he was deeply involved in all communal decisions, serving as an influential leader.

events. While the blessings seem uplifting, they do not erase the pain of his earlier suffering. Rus's story begins with hardship, but those hardships are the foundation for her ultimate redemption. Her difficult years are integral to the creation of her positive ones. Thus, in hindsight, all of it is seen as good, and appropriate to be read on Yom Tov.

The example that he gives is of a sunny day that suddenly turns cloudy. The dark skies create unease and anxiety. When the clouds eventually dissipate and the sun returns, people feel relieved. However, the clouds were ultimately pointless, they did not contribute anything positive, only disrupted an otherwise beautiful day. The day had two distinct parts: the sunny moments and the cloudy ones. If it had rained, it would have seemed worse, but ultimately produced positive

results—watering fields, fostering growth, and creating abundance. Without the “negativity” of the storm, the positive outcome could not exist.

This is why Megillas Rus is sung like a song, even though it recounts tragedy—because the suffering ultimately contributes to the triumph. The negative events serve as steppingstones to the positive ones, making the entire narrative uplifting. Iyov's story, in contrast, remains divided. Though he is blessed in the end, his earlier suffering was not essential to those blessings. Like a cloudy day that later becomes sunny, his positive conclusion does not negate his past pain.

This insight connects the story of Rus to Matan Torah on both a personal and national level. Just as Rus's suffering led to greatness, the toil of Torah is the

key to personal growth. One who diets or exercises experiences discomfort but understands that these challenges directly contribute to self-improvement. Though difficult, they are part of a greater picture, making the struggle worthwhile.

On a national scale, our greatness is forged through Torah. From the moment we received the Torah at Sinai, the world began to despise us—Sinai is linked to the word “*sinah*” (hatred). Much of our suffering throughout history stems from the resentment other nations feel toward our acceptance of the Torah. Regardless of the deeper reasons behind this hostility, it shaped us into a nation worthy of redemption through the Davidic dynasty—whose origins are found in the story of Rus. Thus, Rus and the Torah share striking similarities, far more than Rus and Iyov.

Every Detail is Counted and Hashem Runs the World

In the first *passuk* it states, “A man went from Beis Lechem Yehudah to sojourn in the fields of Moab, with his wife and two sons.” Immediately afterward, the text specifies his name, Elimelech, his wife's name, Naomi, and the names of his two children. This structure seems unusual, why introduce him in such vague terms only to provide the details one *passuk* later? Why not simply state the facts from the beginning?

The Midrash teaches that the Heavenly Court was initially in judgment of this family for leaving their people to travel to a foreign land amid a famine.

At first, the Heavenly Court chose not to reveal their identity to “protect” the guilty party. This suggests that there was something positive—or at least understandable—about their actions that warranted protection. However, when the court ultimately prosecuted them and found them guilty, their names were disclosed. This means that the first two *pesukim* are not simply a case of secrecy followed by revelation; rather, they present two sides of the argument.

The *Nachalas Yosef* reminds us that these were not ordinary citizens, but rather leaders. They were—as the first *passuk* notes—from the *shevet* of Yehudah and had the potential to establish the Davidic dynasty. Instead, the dynasty was formed through Boaz, their relative. It is essential to recognize that



NACHALAS YOSEF: RAV YOSEF ZEV LIPOWITZ

they were not simple individuals; their actions must have had some logical, even commendable, qualities.

According to basic law, a person is not only permitted to leave a country

experiencing famine but is encouraged to do so in search of better conditions. This precedent exists in Jewish history—our forefathers also left Eretz Yisrael during periods of famine. The unnamed family introduced at the start of the story of Rus certainly had a strong defense they could have presented before the Heavenly Court.

Another Midrash compares them to foxes hiding in the shadows and were held accountable for failing to daven for the people and for the famine to end. Elimelech's judgment was harsh because, although his reasoning may have been justified for a private individual, as a leader of the Jewish nation, his responsibilities were different. His people depended on him, and in that position, he had an obligation to daven for them and lead them through the crisis. Shevet Yehudah, known as the lion, is meant to lead from the front. By abandoning the nation, Elimelech acted selfishly—his personal survival took precedence over communal responsibility. He was a fox hiding in the shadows.

His failure to daven stemmed from his loss of hope in Bnei Yisrael. The nation understood here was a leader who could

have gathered them, guided them toward teshuvah, and helped them improve spiritually, which in turn could have ended the famine. Instead, he fled. More than that, he fled to Moav, a nation long hostile to the Jewish people, infamous for refusing food to Bnei Yisrael in the wilderness. His departure left the Jews who remained behind in desperation—they felt their leader had abandoned them.

Remarkably, despite his unfavorable judgment and tragic fate—perishing in a foreign land with no progeny, disappearing entirely from history without even a known burial site—his name appears in the opening *pessukim* of Megillas Rus, a story that ultimately leads to the creation of the Davidic dynasty. This teaches us a profound lesson: even though individuals may be held accountable for their actions, Hashem directs the course of history. These individuals were, nonetheless, catalysts in shaping destiny. The dynasty could have emerged through another path, but it did not—because, in some way, Elimelech and his family initiated the unfolding story.

This principle is even broader. Sometimes, historical events occur through people whose intentions are completely negative.

Take, for example, the sale of Yosef into slavery—his brothers acted with ill intent, yet Yosef was the one who ultimately saved them during the famine. No matter what happens, the outcome will always be what Hashem wants.

Fascinatingly, the phrase “and a man went” appears only twice in the Torah: once here, when Elimelech left Eretz Yisrael during famine, and once when Amram remarried his wife during the harshest period of the Egyptian exile—leading to the birth of the savior, Moshe Rabbeinu (*Shemos* 2:1). Amram's remarriage instilled hope among Jewish slaves, while Elimelech's departure led to despair. Yet both actions ultimately set the stage for redemption—Moshe leading Bnei Yisrael from Egypt to Sinai to receive the Torah, and Elimelech's departure initiating the events that would result in the Davidic dynasty and, ultimately, our final *geulah*.

On a practical level, this teaches us an invaluable lesson: no matter how bleak a situation appears, the result will always align with Hashem's will, which eventually will be revealed to the entire world, with Him dwelling openly among us, *bimeheirah biyameinu*.

ר' יוסף זאב ליפוביץ

Rav Yosef Zev Lipowitz (1889 - 8 Nisan 1962) was born near Bialystok to Rav Baruch a chasid of Kotzk. At 16 he joined the Slobodka Yeshiva where Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein recognized the dazzling talents and allowed him into his inner circle. He became Rav Moshe Mordechai's substitute in the town shiur when Rav Moshe Mordechai was unavailable. He was also very close with the Altar of Slobodka and lived with his approach of *gadlus ha'adam* and aspire to greatness. Because of these two relationships he became great in torah and halachah and deep thinking mussar.

In 1912, Rav Yosef Zev spent time with the Meshech

Chochmah when the latter came to Kovna (across the bridge from Slobodka). In the back of Nachlas Yosef they published the handwritten letter with it's glorious titles that the Meshech Chochmah bestowed upon Rav Yosef.

He married Baila from Rutiva and when married, she opened a store and with the money they earned, he opened a yeshiva there that produced great talmidim.

In 1924 they emigrated to Tel Aviv - and fulfilled his mission to bring people closer to Torah. When Rav Ehrenson opened a yeshivah he became a leading rebbi there until 1935 when health issues prevented him from continuing. But he continued giving shiurim including in Yeshivas Ohr Zoreah in Yafo.

His original thoughts continued to flow from him. The shiurim enthralled the listeners. The peoples inner souls connected to his passionate words that captured them.

To earn money, they opened their home as a “room and board” which became a place for talmidei chachamim to gather and enjoy each other's company.

After he passed, his wife sold her belongings to help publish his sefarim. This sefer uses the Midrash to bring out the beauty of the story of Rus and it's underlying practical lessons that we can use today. Rav Aaron Lopiansky gave shiurim on Rus from this sefer and published it under the title, Seed Of Redemption.