

ADDENDUM: Warning ... Tochachah Ahead! (Read with Care)

This author has received virtually ZERO feedback on his offerings of Torah, very little support, but much silence, which is almost deafening! If this author is wrong about the conclusions he has drawn, then it must be shown to him with more than a few flippant words that dismiss his concerns without even addressing them, let alone the silence that seems to be the status quo response.

On the other hand, if the reader agrees with our *hashkafah* then this author would like the reader to respond in order to let him know where he has been successful, and where his words of Torah need more clarification.

This author has put in a whole lot of time and effort in his recently written pages, but his ‘Torah’ seems to be falling on ‘deaf ears.’ (If anyone out there is reading his ‘stuff’ at all!?!?)

Much of what this author writes comes under the category of admonition, but admonition is a commandment found within HaShem’s Torah:

Arachin 16b reads, “From where do we know that if a man sees something unseemly in his neighbor, he is obliged to reprove him? Because it is said (*Vayikra* 19:17): **You shall surely rebuke. If he rebuked him and he did not accept it, whence do we know that he must rebuke him again?** The text states: ‘surely rebuke’ all ways. [*Lit.*, ‘**rebuking you shall rebuke**’. *The repetition of the word indicates the obligation to repeat the reproof, even though it was not accepted when administered first.*] One might assume [this to be obligatory] even though his face blanched, therefore the text states: ‘**You shall not bear sin because of him**’. [We must refrain from embarrassing him in public.]

It was taught [in a Baraita]: R. Tarfon said, **I wonder whether there is anyone in this generation who accepts reproof**³², for if one says to him: **Remove the mote from between your eyes, he would answer: Remove the beam from between your eyes!** R. Eleazar b. Azariah said: **I wonder if there is one in this generation who knows how to reprove!** **R. Yochanan b. Nuri said: I call heaven and earth to witness for myself that often was Akiva punished through me because I used to complain against him before our Rabban, Gamaliel Beribbi, and all the more he showered love upon me, to make true what has been said: Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; reprove a wise man and he will love thee.** (*Mishlei* 9:8)”

But what about a mere *ger* admonishing Jews who have studied Torah their whole lives, rabbis with *s’michah*, *klal Yisroel* as a whole? The Gemara again:

Bava Metzia 31a reads, “One of the Rabbis said to Raba: [You shall not hate thy brother in your heart:] **hokeah tokiah** [you shall surely rebuke] thy neighbor. (*Vayikra* 19:17) Perhaps **hokeah** means once, **tokiah** twice? — He replied, **hokeah** implies even a hundred times. As for **tokiah**: I know only that the master [must rebuke] the disciple: **whence do we know that the disciple [must rebuke] his master**³³? From the phrase. ‘**hokeah tokiah**’, implying under all circumstances.”

³² **Yevamos 65b** reads, “R. Ile’a further stated in the name of R. Eleazar son of R. Simeon: As one is commanded to say that which will be obeyed, [*Vayikra* 19:17, “**You shall surely rebuke your neighbor ... the repetition implies ‘rebuke only where rebuke will be effective**’. (*V. Rashi*).] **so is one commanded not to say that which will not be obeyed.** [No rebuke should be addressed to one who is sure to ignore it.] R. Abba stated: It [“**not to say that which will not be obeyed**”] is a duty; for it is said in Scripture, **Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; reprove a wise man and he will love thee.** (*Mishlei* 9:8)

³³ **Bava Metzia 33b** reads, “R. Judah son of R. Ila’i expounded: What is the meaning of, **Show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins?** (*Yishayahu* 58:1) **‘Show My people their transgression’ refers to scholars, whose unwitting errors [Through inadequate application to the study of the Talmud] are accounted as intentional faults;** [*Sins through ignorance, in the case of scholars, are accounted as intentional, since had they studied more thoroughly they would not have erred*] ‘and the house of Israel their sins’ — to the ignorant,

Now that we have examined the Torah texts regarding reproof, on with this author's warning for *Klal Yisroel* to have an *hashkafah* check regarding Mashiach, lest we all undergo the Birth-pains that are sure to follow if we do not.

As we have stated before, the destruction of the Temple and the Exile of the Jewish people from their homeland has been likened to the sinking of a great ocean liner, with all of the survivors occupying a single lifeboat. One of the passengers in the lifeboat pulls out an auger and begins drilling a hole in the bottom of the boat. One of the other passengers notices, and says, "Hey, what are you doing? You'll sink us all!" The one with the auger responds, "This is my seat, and I'll do as I please. So mind your own business." The lesson taught by the analogy is that **all of Israel are responsible for one another**³⁴. A sin done by an individual can have consequences for the entire nation³⁵.

This analogy of Israel in Exile, though, only works if we picture a lifeboat so massive that it is possible that one group of Jews can go unseen by another group – thus allowing for the differences in *minhagim* that have developed between varying groups of Jews³⁶. These differences have – regrettably – led to differing 'Judaisms,' each claiming the true adherence to HaShem's Torah. These differing 'Judaisms' of the Exile, coupled with the concept of **the diminishment of the generations** (*Shabbos*

whose intentional sins are accounted to them as unwitting errors. And that is the meaning of what we learnt: R. Judah said: *Be heedful of the [Talmud], for an error in Talmud is accounted as intentional.*"

³⁴ Sanhedrin 27b "Are not children then to be put to death for the sins committed by their parents? Is it not written, *Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children?* (*Shemos* 34:7) — There the reference is to children who follow their parents' footsteps. [*Lit., 'who hold in their hands the deeds of their parents.'*] As it has been taught: *And also in the iniquities of their parents shall they pine away with them,* (*Vayikra* 26:39) [i.e.,] if they hold fast to the evil doings of their fathers. Yet you say: Yet perhaps it is not so, but true even if they do not hold fast to their [evil] doings? [*I.e., that they are still held accountable for their fathers' iniquities.*] When Scripture states, *Every man shall be put to death for his own sin,* (*Devarim* 24:16) [it must refer to those who do not hold fast to their fathers' ways. Then how shall we interpret, *And also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them?* (*Vayikra* 26:39) — As referring to *those who continue in the ways of their fathers.* [B'rachos 7a] But do they [really] not [suffer for the sins committed by others]? Is it not written, *And they shall stumble one upon another,* (*Vayikra* 26:37) meaning, One [will stumble] through the sin of the other, which teaches that **all are held responsible for one another?** [*Showing that the iniquities of one may be borne by the other.*] — *There the reference is to such as had the power to restrain [their fellowmen from evil] but did not.*"

Shevuos 39a "...it is written (*Vayikra* 26:37), *And they shall stumble one upon another*, one because of the iniquity of the other; this teaches us that **all Israel are sureties one for another!** [Hence in the case of all transgressions the whole world (of Israel) is punished, because all Israelites are responsible for one another, and bound to prevent wrongdoing!]

Cf. Rosh Hashanah 29a – Saying a *b'rachah* for another Jew even though the recite has already said the *b'rachah* for himself!

³⁵ *Yehoshua* 7:1, 10-12 "But **the people of Israel committed a trespass** in regard to the devoted property, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, **took of the devoted things**; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people of Israel ... And the Lord said to Joshua ... "**Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them**; for they have taken of the devoted things, and have also stolen, and also lied, and they have put it among their own stuff. **Therefore the people of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed...**" (Cf. Sanhedrin 44b)

Cf. *Haftaras Parashas Bechukosai, Yirmiyahu* 17:5 "Thus says the Lord; **Cursed be the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.**"

³⁶ We began, at Sinai, with one Torah; but (*Sefer HaChinnuk, Devarim* 17) "**Different individuals will have differing opinions on subjects,**" and if HaShem had not built a system into His Torah to keep it One, after giving it over to flesh and blood there is no doubt that the Torah would have [*and, unfortunately, did – because of our Exile*] fragmented into many Torahs.

112b ‘R. Zera said in Raba b. Zimuna’s name: *If the earlier [scholars] were sons of angels, we are sons of men; and if the earlier [scholars] were sons of men, we are like asses*), combined with a literal understanding of the *Aggadata* of the Torah, have left Judaism with ‘Opinions and Beliefs’ that – in this author’s opinion – are far afield of what Rav Sa’adia Ga’on codified in his ‘*Emunas V’De’os*,’ and what our Sages had in mind when they codified the Gemara and Midrashim.

In the *mikvah* this author was asked if he accepted all of the *mitzvos* of HaShem’s Torah as well as the Rabbinic enactments (fences) that guarded His Torah. He was warned that the Jewish people were a people who are currently in exile, and thus subject to persecution. (Much akin to the lifeboat analogy above!) But what he was not told was the differing ‘Beliefs and Opinions’ held by varying groups of Jews. He was not told that these different ‘Judaisms’ each claimed to hold the Truth of HaShem’s Torah. Nor was he told that this fragmentation was not soon to be repaired. But if Torah Observant Judaism does not recognize that there is a problem, then a solution will never offer itself!

In *Devarim 17* we learn about the Sages of each generation. The *passukim* (*Devarim 17:8-11*) read, “If there arises a matter too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between plague and plague, being matters of controversy inside your gates; then shall you arise, and get to the place which the Lord your God shall choose; And you shall come to the Priests the Levites, and to the Judge who shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall declare to you the sentence of judgment; And you shall do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall declare to you; and you shall take care to do according to all that they inform you; According to the sentence of the Torah which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do; you shall not decline from the sentence which they shall declare to you, to the right hand, nor to the left.” In the Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah 25b*) we read, “. . .to teach you that the most worthless, once he has been appointed a leader of the community, is to be accounted like the mightiest of the mighty. Scripture says also: *And you shall come unto the Priests the Levites and to the Judge that shall be in those days.* (*Devarim 17:9*) *Can we then imagine that a man should go to a judge who is not in his days?* This shows that you must be content to go to the judge who is in your days. It also says; *Say not, How was it that the former days were better than these* (*Kohelles 7:10*).” In this author’s opinion, one of the lessons of *Devarim 17:9* and *Rosh Hashanah 25b* is not just that we need to be satisfied with the sage that we go to, but rather that *each Generation needs a Sage who is capable of leading that Generation. Each Generation needs its own “Rashi.” Each Generation needs a Sage (or Sages) who can relate HaShem’s Torah to that generation in words that their ears and minds can comprehend.*

The problem is that we have been in the 2000 years of Mashiach for the past 1769 +/- years³⁷ since we began the 2000 years of the Mashiach. According to Gemara (*Sotah 49b*), “**IN THE**

³⁷ **ArtScroll Gemara (Sanhedrin 97b) Foot Note:** That is, the world without Torah (Rashi, here, and to *Avodah Zarah 9a*).

It is evident from Scripture that **two thousand years after the creation of Adam, Abraham was fifty-two years old.** (The calculation is given by Rashi to *Avodah Zarah 9a*.) Tradition teaches that at that age Abraham began to spread the message of the Torah and to influence people to follow its ways, as the verse state (*Genesis 12:5*) *and the souls they had made in Charan*, which the Targum renders *and the souls they had subjected to the Torah in Charan* (Rashi).

Avraham sought to place HaShem’s Name in their mouths, so that the people would acknowledge Him. **Rashi, Bereshis 24:7 – The Lord, God of the heavens, Who took me from my father’s house** But he did not say, “*and the God of the earth*,” whereas above (verse 3) he said, “*And I will adjure you [by the Lord, the God of the heaven and the God of the earth].*” He said to him, “Now He is the God of the heaven and the God of the earth, because I have made Him familiar in the mouths of the people, but when He took me from my father’s house, He was the God of the heavens but not the God of the earth, **because mankind did not acknowledge Him, and His name was not familiar on the earth.**”

FOOTSTEPS OF THE MESSIAH [*Just before his advent*] INSOLENT WILL INCREASE AND HONOUR DWINDLE; THE VINE WILL YIELD ITS FRUIT [ABUNDANTLY] BUT WINE WILL BE DEAR; [Through the spread of drunkenness; ‘drunkenness is an allusion to *avodah zarah*; *Devarim* 29:16-18 “*And you have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them; Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turns away this day from the Lord our G-d, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood; And it should come to pass, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.”] THE GOVERNMENT WILL TURN TO HERESY [The Roman Empire will go over to Christianity] AND THERE WILL BE NONE [TO OFFER THEM] REPROOF; THE MEETING-PLACE [OF SCHOLARS] WILL BE USED FOR IMMORALITY; GALILEE WILL BE DESTROYED, GABLAN DESOLATED, AND THE DWELLERS ON THE FRONTIER WILL GO ABOUT [BEGGING] FROM PLACE TO PLACE WITHOUT ANYONE TO TAKE PITY ON THEM; **THE WISDOM OF THE LEARNED WILL DEGENERATE**, FEARERS OF SIN WILL BE DESPISED, AND THE TRUTH WILL BE LACKING; YOUTHS WILL PUT OLD MEN TO SHAME, THE OLD WILL STAND UP IN THE PRESENCE OF THE YOUNG, **A SON WILL REVILE HIS FATHER, A DAUGHTER WILL RISE AGAINST HER MOTHER, A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW, AND A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD** (*Michah* 7:6); THE FACE OF THE GENERATION WILL BE LIKE THE FACE OF A DOG [Impervious to shame], A SON WILL NOT FEEL ASHAMED BEFORE HIS FATHER. **SO UPON WHOM IS IT FOR US TO RELY? UPON OUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.**”*

This author would understand this Mishnah to be teaching that as soon as the possibility of the Advent of the Mashiah became a reality, all of the things described in the above Mishnah began happening. These events include “**THE WISDOM OF THE LEARNED WILL DEGENERATE.**” (See the lengthy footnote below.) We do not point this out to disparage the Sages who lived after the year 242 C.E., but rather to augment the statement from *Shabbos* 112b, ‘R. Zera said in Raba b. Zimuna's name: *If the earlier [scholars] were sons of angels, we are sons of men; and if the earlier [scholars] were sons of*

³⁷ **ArtScroll Gemara Foot Note (continued):** As stated ... the two millennia of Torah began when Abraham was fifty-two years old. The following two thousand years can be calculated as follows:

- 48 years later, Isaac was born.
- When Isaac was 60, Jacob was born.
- Jacob was 130 when he and his family went down to Egypt.
- The Egyptian exile lasted 210 years.
- The First Temple was built 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt (I Kings 6:1).
- The First Temple stood for 410 years. (This can be calculated on the basis of the king's reigns.)
- The Second Temple stood for 420 years.

This yields a total of 1828 years. Thus, **the 2,000 years of Torah ended 172 years after the destruction of the Second Temple** (Rashi).

The above computations equate to 242 C.E. (2011 – 242 = 1769)

The *Baraisa* does not mean that Torah came to an end after four millennia. It uses the term “two thousand years of Torah” for the sake of contrast with the preceding phrase “two thousand years of nothingness [i.e. no Torah]” (Rashi). When the *Baraisa* says “Torah,” it means “**Torah before the Messianic era**” as opposed to “**Torah during the Messianic Era** (see Rashi to *Avodah Zarah* 9a).

According to *Maharsha*, however, the *Baraisa* means that Torah *flourished* during those two thousand years. **One hundred and seventy-two years after the destruction of the Second Temple, the study of Torah deteriorated significantly.** Following the death of Rebbe [in the year 3,952], which marked the end of the *Tannaic* era, the tribulations of the exile grew more severe, and the centers of Torah study declined (*Maharsha*; see also *Hagahos Yavetz*).

men, we are like asses.” In other words, we have to acknowledge that the level of scholarship amongst even the Sages was diminished, but still (*Rosh Hashanah* 25b) holds true, “...Scripture says ... ***And you shall come unto the Priests the Levites and to the Judge that shall be in those [your] days.*** (*Devarim* 17:9) ***Can we then imagine that a man should go to a judge who is not in his days?*** This shows that you must be content to go to the judge who is in your days. It also says; ***Say not, How was it that the former days were better than these*** (*Kohelles* 7:10).” **The reason we have introduced this line of reasoning is to chide all who might read this that they have to look into the words of our Sages, and that they cannot just rely upon the p’shat of their holy words, because their p’shat was simple to them, but to us – mere donkeys when compared to them – their words will make little sense without great struggle to ascertain their true meaning.**

Additional evidence of the diminishment of scholarship in the Pre-Messianic Era is found in *The Handbook of Jewish Thought* by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan contains the following insights (based upon the teachings of our Sages) regarding the last 1769 years that the Advent of the Mashiach was possible:

24:12 “...There is a tradition that the Jewish people will split into various groups, each laying claim to the truth, making it almost impossible to discern true Judaism from the false. This is the meaning of the prophecy (*Yishayahu* 59:15), “***Truth will fail.***” (*Sanhedrin* 97a³⁸, “truth will be divided into flocks.”)

Today’s Torah leaders need to recognize that no matter how far above the crowd they are in their learning and observance, they are but “servant animals” when compared to the Sages of the Mishnah. Torah scholars of today need to go deeper into the facets of Torah, buoyed by the Rambam’s Thirteen Principles, then we have a chance of attaining the lessons our Sages attempted to teach their students’ students’ students.

This author has presented many ‘confrontational views’ on Torah, most of which are available at www.tumms.org, but all of them he has backed up with words from our Sages of the past. In “*Yud-Ches Sha’arim*” we have challenged *Klal Yisroel* to adjust their *hashkafos* regarding Moshe Rabbeinu and the Mashiach. In “*Meriting Mashiach*” we have shown the perils of failing to learn the lessons of the Golden Calf and continuing to look for flesh and blood to be our king, redeemer and savior. But as of now (25 May 2011) this author is going to stop sending out his Torah and he will resign himself to publishing his insights on his web site. The main reason is that he feels either no one is reading (listening), or that his audience is too stubborn to be moved by his D’vei HaTorah (no matter how many ‘proof texts’ he provides). This action, too, is based on HaShem’s Torah:

Yevamos 65b reads, “R. Ile’a further stated in the name of R. Eleazar son of R. Simeon: As one is commanded to say that which will be obeyed, [*Vayikra* 19:17, “*You shall surely rebuke your neighbor ... the repetition implies ‘rebuke only where rebuke will be effective’.*” (V. Rashi).] ***so is one commanded***

³⁸ Sanhedrin 97a “R. Yochanan said: in the generation when the son of David [i.e., Messiah] will come, ***scholars will be few in number***, and as for the rest, their eyes will fail through sorrow and grief. Multitudes of trouble and evil decrees will be promulgated anew, each new evil coming with haste before the other has ended ... R. Yehudah said: in the generation when the son of David comes, the house of assembly [*where scholars assemble*] will be for harlots, Galilee in ruins, *Gablan* lie desolate, the border inhabitants wander about from city to city, receiving no hospitality, the wisdom of scribes in disfavor, G-d-fearing men despised, people [*Lit., ‘the face of the generation.’*] be dog-faced, [*I.e., brazen, without shame of each other*]. and ***truth entirely lacking***, as it is written, ***Yes, truth fails, and he that departs from evil makes himself a prey.*** (*Yishayahu* 59:15) What is meant by ‘yes, truth fails’? — The Scholars of the School of Rav said: **This teaches that it [the Jewish people] will split up into separate groups and depart. [Probably meaning that there will be so many conflicting opinions as to what is the truth as to render it, for all practical purposes, inaccessible.]** What is the meaning of ‘and he that departs from evil makes himself a prey’? — The School of R. Shila said: ***He who departs from evil will be dubbed a fool by his fellow-men.***

not to say that which will not be obeyed. [No rebuke should be addressed to one who is sure to ignore it.] R. Abba stated: It [“not to say that which will not be obeyed”] is a duty; for it is said in Scripture, Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; reprove a wise man and he will love thee. (Mishlei 9:8)