

מחר חודש

This Shabbat is the 59th day (of 383); the 9th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765

ויקנין לך את-ברכת אברהם לך ולירעך אתה... בראשית כח:ד

מברכים

We Must Believe it All

The Torah is not a pick & choose deal; we aren't supposed to believe the first pasuk, that G-d created the world, and then go ahead and ignore other p'sukim. Torat Emet... The Torah is Truth. Some of the truth is easier to accept than other parts of it, but it is all true. And that gives us both encouragement and mussar from this week's sedra (among all the sedras of the Torah).

Whether Yitzchak knew it was Yaakov he was blessing or he thought it was Eisav, is irrelevant to the other bracha he gave Yaakov at the end of the sedra. And Yitzchak called to Yaakov and he blessed him... May G-d bless you and cause you to be fruitful and multiply and become a nation... May He give you the Blessing of Avraham to you and your descendants with you to acquire your Land that G-d gave to Avraham. Earlier, the Torah made it clear that it would be through Yitzchak that the Heritage and Legacy of Avraham would pass, as would the Land of Israel. And NOT through Yishmael. And NOT through Eisav. If these statements are politically incorrect in some circles, it is those circles that need fixing, not the statements and not the Torah from which they come. Eisav was given land elsewhere; not here. And when anyone says: Get real, Bush has an agenda and the UN and EC have their agendas and the Arabs have theirs... The answer is, this is real. The Torah is real. It doesn't become defunct because people say this and claim that. Whatever happens, wherever we go from here, this has to be our starting point, our basis, our truth.

But we also must see the blessing Yitzchak gave Eisav, when he knew exactly what was going on. That bracha contains a warning to us, the descendants of Yaakov, the Jewish People. If and when we disregard the Torah, its teachings, its mitzvot, its values, then we can lose the high ground position, so to speak, and Eisav can and will take advantage of that situation. When we strengthen our commitment to Torah and Mitzvot and spread that to our fellow Jews, then we will see the fruition of all the

Word of the Month



A weekly feature of Torah Tidbits to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby better fulfilling the mitzva of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...

All months have a fixed number of days - either 29 or 30. Except Cheshvan and Kislev, whose number of days vary. In a "normal" year, Cheshvan has 29 days and Kislev has 30. In a "full" year, both have 30. In a "diminished" year both have 29 days. 5765 is a 13-month diminished year with 383 days



ראש חודש פסלו יהיה מחר ביום ראשון
הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל למובה:

By the time we bench Rosh Chodesh, the Molad will have occurred, specifically on FRI 14h 44m 1p (which is 2:23pm Israel Time). Therefore, the announcement of the molad uses the less common HAYA, past tense.

המולד היה אחמול יום ששי ארבעים וארבע
דקות וחלק אחד אחרי שמים בעתים.

First op for Kiddush L'vana (Minhag Yer.) is Monday night, Nov. 15, eve of 3 Kislev.

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OTHER Z'MANIM

Correct for Jerusalem

Ranges are THU-THU 27 Chesh. - 5 Kislev (Nov. 11-18)

- Earliest Shacharit - 5:12-5:18am
- Sunrise - 6:04-6:10am
- Sof Z'man K. Sh'ma - 8:43-8:47am (7:57-8:00am)
- Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:36-9:39am (9:06-9:08am)
- Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:23-11:24am
- Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 11:54-11:55am
- Plag Mincha - 3:36-3:33pm
- Sunset - 4:47-4:43pm (4:42-4:38pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
Shabbat afternoon shiur 3:00pm
Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher
Mincha at 4:00pm
Motza'ei Shabbat, 8:30pm
Melave Malka Concert

Candle Lighting and Havdala Times		Standard (Winter) Time	
Correct for TT 642 • Rabbeinu Tam (l'm) - 5:56pm			
4:06pm	Jerusalem	5:19pm	
4:25pm	Gush Katif	5:24pm	
4:22pm	Raanana	5:20pm	
4:22pm	Beit Shemesh	5:20pm	
4:21pm	Netanya	5:20pm	
4:22pm	Rehovot	5:21pm	
4:02pm	Petach Tikva	5:20pm	
4:22pm	Modi'in	5:20pm	
4:24pm	Be'er Sheva	5:22pm	
4:21pm	Gush Etzion	5:19pm	
4:21pm	Ginot Shomron	5:19pm	
4:06pm	Maale Adumim	5:19pm	
4:13pm	Tzfat	5:17pm	
4:22pm	K4 & Hevron	5:20pm	

Blessings.



Toldot Stats

6th of the 54 sedras; 6th of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 172.7 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 36

4 Parshiyot; 2 open, 2 closed

106 p'sukim, ranks 29th (9th in B'reishit) Tied with Vayigash and Bo, but shorter than both in words & letters and length

1432 words, ranks 34th (10th in B'reishit)

5426 letters, ranks 33rd (10th in B'reishit)

Its p'sukim are below average length

Mitzvot

None of the TARYAG are counted from TO-L'DOT

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Kohen - 1st Aliya - 21 p'sukim - 25:19-26:5

[P> 25:19 (16)] This is the history of Yitzchak b. Avraham; Avraham fathered Yitzchak.

SDT Rashi quotes the Gemara that tells that when Yitzchak was born, scoffers said that Avraham and Sara, who were childless for so long, had found a baby and claimed it as their own. Avraham invited the leaders of the nations, their wives and infants, and Sara was miraculously able to wet-nurse all the babies. (The Gemara points to the plural "banim" in 21:7.) Then the scoffers accepted that Sara bore Yitzchak, but chided Avraham that Avimelech was the father (since Yitzchak's birth followed Sara's abduction). A miracle occurred and baby Yitzchak was the very image of his father Avraham, until the scoffers proclaimed, "Avraham fathered Yitzchak".

SDT Earlier, the Torah tells us of the generations of Yishmael b. Avraham. That seems to be in balance with the beginning of this sedra, which speaks of Yitzchak, except: [1] the Torah makes a point that Yishmael is the son of Hagar the Egyptian, the maidservant of Sara. In other words, Yishmael was NOT the real To'l'dot of Avraham; and [2] To'l'dot (in the Yishmael context) is spelled without a vav, implying that something was missing. To'l'dot of Yitzchak b. Avraham; it was Avraham who fathered Yitzchak. And the word To'l'dot is spelled with its vav.

Yitzchak is 40 years old when he marries Rivka (3 years after the Akeida). The Torah emphasizes Rivka's family background.

After 20 years of childlessness (10 until Rivka was of child-bearing age plus an additional 10 years without a child), Yitzchak and Rivka pray to G-d. G-d hears their (actually his) prayer and Rivka becomes pregnant. She is having a "rough time" and goes to Shem b. Noach (who outlived Avraham, by the way) who tells her G-d's message, that she will give birth to twins who will go in very different ways and become great adversarial nations.

SDT Commentaries say that Rivka was unaware that she was carrying twins; she thought the turmoil within her existed in a single baby - this had her very upset; she was somewhat calmed by the Divine message of her carrying twins.

Another commentator suggests that Rivka knew she'd have twins but did not see the benefit of bringing a Yaakov into this world if it meant also having an Eisav. Part of the reply to her question "why do I need this", is that her conclusion was wrong.

Take a look at Rashi. Two great nations - these are Antoninus and Rabbi (Yehuda HaNasi)... It can be suggested that the Divine message to Rivka, was that even though there will great tension and friction between the descendants of the twins she was carrying, Yaakov and Eisav, there will be an example of a Roman (from Eisav) and a Jew who will truly get along and that is the hope for the future when the nations of the world will all recognize Israel's role in the world and their special relationship with the One G-d Who will then be universally recognized.

Eisav and Yaakov are born, Yaakov clutching the heel of Eisav. The boys grow and develop different personalities - Eisav is the hunter and outdoorsman; Yaakov, the mild, studious "tent-dweller". Yitzchak loves Eisav; Rivka loves Yaakov.

SDT There are many different commentaries on these relationships. Note that Yitzchak's love is based on Eisav's providing food for him. Rivka's love is unconditional. Pirkei Avot says that only an unconditional love will endure forever.

Yaakov is preparing a lentil stew for his father. (The Gemara tell us that this was the day of Avraham's death; Yaakov was preparing the traditional mourner's meal for Yitzchak.)

Eisav returns from the field in a state of exhaustion. He asks Yaakov for some of the food. In exchange for the food, Yaakov acquires the birthright, which is insignificant in Eisav's eyes, but meaningful to Yaakov.

[P> 26:1 (33)] A famine hits the Land (like the one in Avraham's time - this is one of the many similarities between the lives of Avraham and Yitzchak) and Yitzchak goes to Avimelech in Gerar. G-d appears to Yitzchak and reminds him that he must not leave the Land. G-d also repeats his promises of the Land and of the large nation that will descend from him.

Levi - Second Aliya - 7 p'sukim - 26:6-12

Yitzchak dwells in Gerar. (This is one of the three-word p'sukim in the Torah. There are 13 or so such p'sukim, and they are treated specially.) Yitzchak and Rivka pose as brother and sister (as did Avraham and Sara, and for the same two reasons). After a while Avimelech discovers that they are actually husband and wife and complains to Yitzchak about the deception. Avimelech orders his people to leave Yitzchak and Rivka alone. Yitzchak and family flourish in Gerar and G-d blesses them.

TAKE A LOOK... The first famine that drove Avraham and Sara to Egypt, when Par'o discovers their true relationship, he sends them away. The second time, when they went to Gerar and said they were brother and sister, and then they were "found out", Avimelech gives them many things and invites them to stay. (Par'o had given Avraham great wealth, but it was before he knew.) Yitzchak and Rivka also say they are siblings, but no one takes Rivka. When they are "found out", they stick around. This has been just an

observation.

Shlishi - 3rd Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 26:13-22

Yitzchak thrives in Gerar, which creates jealousy among the locals who fill in the wells that Yitzchak has dug. (There is great symbolism in the Torah's account of the wells, their names, their failures, and then their successes.) Yitzchak is driven away from Gerar. A new well that Yitzchak digs is taken over by the shepherds of Gerar, as is yet another well. Only the third well called Rehovot permits Yitzchak to live in relative peace.

(Some see this as a hidden reference to the 1st and 2nd Beit HaMikdash, which fell, and the 3rd which will stand forever. May we see it soon in our time.)

SDT *Brachot 56: Rabbi Chanina said, he who sees a well in a dream, he will see peace... Yitzchak's servants dug and found a live spring, B'EIR MAYIM CHAYIM. This is immediately followed by the peace treaty between Avimelech and Yitzchak. Rabbi Natan continues in the same Gemara. He who sees a well in his dream has found Torah, as it says in Mishlei: He who finds Me, finds life... an equation is made between G-d, Torah, and Life.*

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 7 p'sukim - 26:23-29

Yitzchak sets himself up in Be'er Sheva. G-d appears to him and reiterates the promises for prosperity made to Avraham. Yitzchak builds an altar to G-d and continues to prosper. Avimelech, realizing that his own prosperity was due to the presence of Yitzchak, comes with a delegation to Yitzchak in order to enter into a covenant with him.

(Not a rare experience through the generations - Jews are expelled from a country, which subsequently regrets its actions because of the decline they experienced without the Jews in their midst. And we, somehow, kept going back.)

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 33 p'su. 26:30-27:27

Yitzchak and Avimelech partake of a meal and exchange oaths. Be'er Sheva is reaffirmed as "the city of the Avot" by Yitzchak's actions. Another example of the similarity between Yitzchak's life and Avraham's.

[S> 26:34 (2)] Eisav marries at 40 years of age - a (sub)conscious attempt to emulate his father. However wicked Eisav is, he is genuinely respectful and loving of his father. On the other hand, Eisav's choice of a wife disgusts both Yitzchak and Rivka.

[S> 27:1 (55)] Yitzchak is old and blind and calls to Eisav to prepare for him a special meal and then receive a special blessing. While Eisav is in the fields doing his father's bidding, Rivka prepares Yaakov to receive the blessing instead of Eisav. She tells Yaakov to bring her two goats and she would prepare the dishes that Yitzchak loved. Yaakov hesitates for fear that Yitzchak will feel his smooth skin and realize that Yaakov has come to deceive him. Rivka dresses Yaakov in Eisav's garments and places a goat-skin on his neck to give it a rough feel. She gives Yaakov the food to bring to his father.

It seems obvious that Yaakov was punished measure

for measure for his deception of Yitzchak. The Brothers not only deceived Yaakov concerning the fate of Yosef, but they used a goat and a garment (exactly the two items that Yaakov used to deceive his father) to bring about their deception. If we accept the idea that Yaakov was supposed to get the bracha that Yitzchak was going to give to Eisav, that it was G-d's will, and even G-d's command according to Onkeles, to Rivka to "set it up", then why was Yaakov punished so severely? An answer might be suggested in the form of an analogy. When one has to take drastic, life-saving treatments - "serious" medication, radiation, etc., what is done might be absolutely necessary, but there are often harsh side-effects.

Shishi - 6th Aliya - 23 p'sukim - 27:28-28:4

The blessing invoked by Yitzchak upon Yaakov, for bountiful produce and respected status among nations, has been borrowed by us to be recited on Motzai Shabbat - V'YITEN L'CHA HA-ELOKIM...

As Yitzchak finishes blessing Yaakov, Eisav returns from the hunt. He prepares food for his father and presents it with a request (demand) of the blessing. Yitzchak trembles when he realizes that the bracha went to Yaakov. When Yitzchak explains to Eisav that Yaakov received (and rightly so) the blessing, Eisav bitterly cries out and asks his father for a blessing too. Yitzchak gives



Eisav a blessing (not as exalted as Yaakov's). Eisav decides to kill Yaakov for this, the second time he has taken something away from him. Rivka hears (how? Ru'ach HaKodesh again, perhaps?) of Eisav's plans and encourages Yaakov to flee to Rivka's hometown until Eisav's wrath subsides. Rivka suggests to Yitzchak that he send Yaakov away to find a proper wife.

Note that Rivka did NOT tell Yitzchak that Eisav wanted to kill Yaakov. Perhaps she felt that it would pain him to much to learn of Eisav's true character. Perhaps, Yitzchak would have refused to believe that his Eisav would contemplate such a thing. Instead, Rivka expresses another concern (legitimate) as her reason for wanting Yitzchak to send Yaakov away.

Yitzchak calls for Yaakov and gives him another blessing and sends him off to Padan Aram to find a wife from Rivka's family. He gives Yaakov "the blessing of Avraham", thus providing for the continuity of the Chain that becomes Judaism.

Sh'vi'i - 7th Aliya - 5 p'sukim - 28:5-9

Yitzchak sends Yaakov off to Padan Aram to Lavan b. B'tu'el, the brother of Rivka who is the mother of Yaakov and Eisav. (Unusual ID). Eisav sees that their father has sent Yaakov to find a wife, because he does not want him

to take a Canaanite wife. Yaakov goes on his way and Eisav takes as another wife, the daughter of Yishmael. And Eisav takes Machalat b. Yishmael...

Talmud Yerushalmi exclaims that this is Bosmat, and asks why her name was changed. The astonishing answer is that all Eisav's sins were forgiven when he took a wife intended to please his parents. The Talmud generalizes and gives this as the source that the sins of a CHATAN (and KALLA) are forgiven when they marry. Strange source for an important concept.

The final 3 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 25 p'sukim - Shmuel Alef - 20:18-42

When Rosh Chodesh is Sunday (or Sunday and Monday), then the special Haftara for Erev Rosh Chodesh preempts the regularly scheduled Haftara of the week.

The connection between the Haftara and Erev Rosh Chodesh is obvious. The opening words are: And Yonatan said to him, tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh...

The real question is why the Sages decided on a special Haftara for Erev Rosh Chodesh in the first place. No other "erev" gets a special reading. Why does Machar Chodesh?

Perhaps it is because Rosh Chodesh is so understated and often ignored. This became a way - in addition to Rosh Chodesh benching - to say: Hear ye hear ye, tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh.

From this reading we see that Rosh Chodesh was celebrated with a special meal which was to be eaten in a state of ritual purity. Many have the custom today of marking Rosh Chodesh today with a special meal. The Haftara also serves as a source of the minhag of abstaining or reducing one's work on Rosh Chodesh...

With Israel's history resembling the waxing and waning of the Moon, we see Machar Chodesh as a hopefilled message of a brighter tomorrow. The cycle continues until the Complete Redemption, when the Moon (and Klal Yisrael) will be completely restored.

Know Your Uncle

The following comments about Eisav from the Talmud and Midrash are taken from the book ISHEI HATANACH by Yisrael Yitzchak Chasida

The Midrash says that Eisav greatly resembled Yitzchak physically.

The Gemara says that Eisav did not rebel during Avraham's lifetime (which was cut short by 5 years - 175 and not the 180 that Yizchak reached so that Avraham would not see Eisav's wickedness).

Targum Yonatan says that Eisav killed Nimrod (and took his special garment - some say it was the leather garment made by G-d for Adam & Chava).

The Midrash says that Eisav encouraged his grandson Amalek to take revenge against the children of Yaakov, since he did not succeed in vanquishing Yaakov.

The Zohar says that there was never a person who so honored his father as did Eisav to Yitzchak. This earned him domination in this world. Targum Yonatan adds that Eisav's honoring of Yizchak is what caused Yaakov to fear him, especially since he (Yaakov) spent so many years away from his father.

The Zohar says that Eisav's tears at losing the bracha caused Bnei Yisrael to go into Galut.

The Gemara says that he lived with two righteous individuals and didn't learn from their deeds.

The Midrash says that Eisav's male offspring were circumcised during Yitzchak's lifetime, but then they stopped observing Mila.

Top-left is Yaakov with his lentil stew. Next to him is one of Yitzchak's workers on a break from digging wells. Continuing across the top, we come to a Seder plate. Rashi tells us that it was the first night of (the future) Pesach that Yaakov presented himself to Yitzchak for the bracha. Rivka told Yaakov to bring her two goats. Just to feed Yitzchak, you need two goats? Rashi answers that one was for the main dish and the other for Korban Pesach. Upper-right is a king on his father's back. The hand is pointing to the father, who would be AVIMELECH. This is not the only pun in this week's ParshaPix, as you will see. The rain cloud is part of the bracha that Yaakov received. The sword is part of the bracha to Eisav. The lion cub on the map of Israel is another pun - GUR BAARETZ HAZOT. Actually, live in this Land... The tow truck is another pun - Yitzchak lived in GERAR. Tow is also a reminder of the first syllable of the name of the sedra. TO-L'DOT, rather than the more common (but mistaken) TOL-DOT. The passport is for Yaakov who is being sent abroad by both Yitzchak and Rivka. Yitzchak never needed a passport, but Yaakov did. The teddy bear is holding aloft the number 7 in one paw and an upraised hand in the other. There are two meanings to the name Be'er Sheva. One is from the seven sheep that Avraham gave Avimelech as a token of the covenant between them, and the other is for the oath(s) that were taken in that agreement. SHEVA has both connotations. And in the lower-right is the Davka Judaica Graphic of Yaakov, the studious ISH TAM, dweller in the tent of Torah study, and Eisav, the ISH SADEH, the man of the field, the hunter. Straus and Keren HaYesod are the streets on which the Israel Center was and is. They are Rehovot, as in the name of the well. C is 100 in Roman numerals. With a gate inside the C, you get ME'AH SHE'ARIM. 3 new visual TTriddles.

The Standard of Care Required

Assume that the owner of an object has entrusted it to a paid bailee to watch. For example, the owner delivered it to a warehouse man to watch in his warehouse. The object was damaged or lost while in the possession of the warehouse man, a paid bailee, and cannot be restored to the owner at all or in the condition it was in when it was entrusted to the bailee because it was damaged, lost, or stolen. If the paid bailee watched the object according to community standards for watching such objects, he is not liable. If he failed to meet such standards, he is liable. Since most communities do not have such set standards, the halacha proposes standards to help guide Beth Din. As was stated above, he is liable for theft of the object, which includes not only the obvious type of theft as, for example, the object was stolen because the bailee failed to close the door or because he fell asleep while he was guarding the object. Theft also includes the situation where the bailee locked the door properly and yet the object was stolen or lost. He is not liable if it cannot be restored because it was damaged, lost, or destroyed by force majeure. The paid bailee will be absolved of liability if the object was lost in a manner completely unexpected and beyond the control of the bailee such as where armed robbers come upon him and seize the object and he does not have the ability to fend them off, and in similar cases. If a fire broke out, as was often the case in the restricted ghetto Jewish areas in Europe, where fire consumed neighborhoods, and the object was burned, the paid bailee is not liable if he could not have saved the object even if he exerted effort to do so or even if he hired others to do so. However, if the object could have been saved if he exerted himself, he is liable. If he could save either his own objects or that of the owner and he saved his own, he is liable to the owner. The paid bailee is free of liability only if he takes an oath that the object was consumed by the fire. Very often in the wake of large conflagrations, there is looting in the burned out homes and businesses. It may be that the object was not consumed by the fire but was stolen by thieves after the fire, in which event the paid bailee is liable. It may be that the bailee is not able to know with certainty whether the object was lost to the fire or was lost to thieves and thus he cannot take an oath. In this situation he is liable to the owner.

However, if the only people who looted were armed robbers, the bailee is free of liability in either event, the fire or armed robbers having caused the loss of the object, both of which are force majeure; his oath will be in the alternative that either armed robbers or the fire caused the loss of the object. Upon taking such an oath the paid bailee is free of liability.

Regarding the care of animals by the paid bailee if they are lost or destroyed as a result of force majeure, he is not liable, otherwise he is liable. Assume that the animal he is watching is attacked by wild animals, he is liable if he made no attempt to save the animal according to conditions that prevailed, depending upon the type and size of the attacking animals. If he did make an attempt and was not successful, this is the highest degree of force majeure, and he takes an oath and is free of liability. In all of the cases the shepherd is free of liability only when they [the wild animals or the armed robbers] came upon the place where the shepherd happened to be. However, if the shepherd led his flock to a place where there are wild animals or

armed robbers, these are not cases of force majeure and he is liable.

In a reported case, a shepherd challenged armed robbers and showed that he did not fear them and told them that there were many shepherds in the vicinity and they had many weapons. Using the information as to the whereabouts of the flocks, the robbers overcame the shepherds and carried off the flocks. The shepherd is liable for the loss since he provoked the robbers by challenging and informing them.

A shepherd who pleads that he helped save the animal of the owner with the help of other shepherds whom he hired for that purpose and there are no witnesses as to how much he spent, takes an oath how much he spent and he can make a claim only up to the value of the owner's animal. If the shepherd abandoned his flock and went to the close-by town, whether or not during the time when shepherds usually go to the town, and wolves or a bear came by and attacked the flock and tore the animals, we do not automatically say that had he been there he would have saved the flock.

Rather, the situation is assessed to determine whether with the assistance of other shepherds and sticks he could have rescued the flock. If he could have, he is liable to the owner; if he could not have, he is absolved of liability; If beth din could not determine whether or not he could have saved the flock, he is liable to the owner.

Similarly if the shepherd leads his flock over a bridge and one animal pushes another animal, causing it to fall into the river rapids below; he is liable since he should lead the animals over the bridge one at a time, for he is being paid to guard the animals in a competent manner.

Because he is negligent at the outset by leading all of the animals together over the bridge, although when the animal falls it was because of an outside force majeure, he is liable. If the animal in the custody of the paid bailee dies a natural death, it is deemed a case of force majeure and the bailee is free of liability; However, if he starves the animal and it dies, it is not a case of force majeure.

If the animal flees from him and ascends the peak of a slope and then flees again and falls down, it is a case of force majeure. The animal ascends to the top of a hill and dies there of natural causes or the paid bailee is negligent in permitting the animal entrusted to him to go to a meadow where the animal dies a natural death. The bailee is not liable because it was not the animal's leaving the bailee that caused its death. However, if the animal is stolen by a thief from the meadow and dies a natural death in the thief's custody the bailee, even an unpaid bailee, is liable to the owner.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume VIII chapters 303 of A Restatement of Rabbinic Civil Law by E. Quint. Copies of all volumes can be purchased via email: orders@gefenpublishing.com and via website: www.israelbooks.com and at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to quint@inter.net.il

MEANING IN MITZVOT

by **Rabbi Asher Meir**

Each week we discuss one familiar halakhic practice and try to show its beauty and meaning. The columns are based on Rabbi Meir's Meaning in Mitzvot on Kitzur Shulchan Arukh

"Urging Vows"

A vow (neder) is a kind of oath that works by imposing a prohibition on a particular object by likening it to a sanctified item. For instance, instead of swearing that he will not eat cake (shevu'ah=oath), a person may prohibit cake to himself (neder) (SA YD 204).

If a person regrets a vow he can go to a Torah scholar and have it released, by explaining that if he had known the difficulties he would have in fulfilling the vow he would never have made it. This uproots the vow since it reveals that the person never really had wholehearted intention to keep it under the actual circumstances (SA YD 228). However, the Mishna states that four kinds of vows don't require a release; these vows don't apply at all. It is clear from the beginning that there is no true intention to abide by them (Mishna Nedarim 3:1, SA YD 232).

One kind of "stillborn" vow is an "urging" or "prodding" vow (nidrei zeruzin). An example is haggling over a sale; the seller vows that he will not accept less than four (otherwise he forswears any benefit from the object); the buyer likewise vows that he will never give more than two.

The mishna explains that all along both have in mind that they will compromise on an intermediate price; the vow is only meant to nudge the other side into softening his bargaining stance.

The simple explanation, as mentioned in the commentaries, is that all vows have force only if the person sincerely intends them ("his mouth and his heart are one"). Why then can't a person get out of any vow by explaining that he didn't mean it? Because we generally assume that a person is sincere in his words. But in this case it is well known that hagglers use such vows only as a way of prodding the other side; thus, we have a firm basis for believing that the vow is insincere. Some commentators add an additional rationale: the vow is not really nullified, it is merely inexact. When the seller vows not to sell for less than four, his actual intention is that he won't go so low as to sell for two. According to these opinions, if he were actually to sell for two or for less the seller would indeed transgress his vow. Likewise, the buyer vows not to pay the full four demanded by the seller.

However, we can also discern a profound human insight based on the foundations of the laws of vows and commerce alike.

We have written in previous columns that there are two different levels of da'at, or commitment. One level is where a person has sufficient judgment to fully comprehend a commitment made to himself; the other is where a person can comprehend a commitment made to another. The second level is more complex and interpersonal and hence more advanced. In this way we explained a unique law of vows: In general, a person is considered to attain da'at only at the age of mitzvot: twelve for girls and thirteen for boys. At this age a person can engage in commerce. However, a year earlier, a mature child can make a valid oath or vow (SA YD 233). Since an oath or vow is a personal commitment, it requires a somewhat lower level of maturity.

We have also written that the "meeting of the minds" which is the distinct characteristic of a commercial transaction can be viewed as an end in itself. Our material interdependence was created by HaShem to provide an incentive for human interaction and understanding.

In the case of nidrei zeruzin, the vow itself represents understanding is at the immature level of a selfish commitment.

The underlying desire to prod the other side into making a transaction at a mutual agreeable level represents understanding at the advanced level of a mature meeting of the minds. Therefore, the commitment of the vow is subordinate to the higher level of commitment inherent in the intended sale.

Please note: The manuscript for Meaning in Mitzvot on the Kitzur Shulchan Arukh is in its final stages of preparation. The book will be distributed IY"H by Feldheim. There still might be an opportunity for anyone who would like to make a dedication or otherwise be a partner in the publication of the first printing of the book. Please contact Rabbi Meir by e-mail: mail@asherandattara.com.

Rabbi Meir authors a popular weekly on-line Q&A column, "The Jewish Ethicist", which gives Jewish guidance on everyday ethical dilemmas in the workplace. The column is a joint project of the JCT Center for Business Ethics, Jerusalem College of Technology - Machon Lev; and Aish HaTorah. You can see the Jewish Ethicist, and submit your own Qs — www.jewishethicist.com or www.aish.com

TANACH

Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Historical Books of Tanach; JOSHUA, JUDGES, SAMUEL, KINGS (Nevi'im Rishonim) by

Dr. Meir Tamari

A Halt in the Slide to Destruction and Exile (3)

The Pesach of Simcha (*Divrei HaYamim Bet 30*)

The Admor Simcha Bunim of P'shischa, one of the fathers of Polish Chassidut, taught that simcha [not joy or happiness as is all too often translated but more correctly] is the overflowing of kedusha. It is exactly that simcha which we see in the Pesach that Chizkiyahu called on Israel to celebrate after the purification and consecration of the Beit HaMikdash was completed.

The text at the end of the previous chapter (29:36) tells us that, "Chizkiyahu and all the people rejoiced because of that which the Lord had prepared for the people; for the thing [of the Temple] was done suddenly"; Hashem had prepared their hearts to want to do this thing and it was sudden, both in that it took only 16 days to purify and consecrate the Temple and clean the country of idolatry but also that the change from the evil of Achaz the father to the piety of Chizkiyahu the son, was speedy and dramatic; remember that it was the very first year of the latter's reign.

It is true that the purification of the Temple had only begun at the beginning of Nissan so that its completion passed the 14th of that month, the appointed date of Chag HaPesach. Furthermore, the nation was ritually impure either because of avoda zara or because of non-observance of the laws of tum'a and therefore required time to purify themselves. So, contrary to the opinions of Chazal, Chizkiyahu made the second month of that year Nissan as well and called on all the tribes in both kingdoms, to ascend to Yerushalayim, to celebrate the Pesach that marks our beginning as the nation that serves G-d.

That that call is indeed meant as a further step up in the path of repentance and spirituality may be seen in the way Chizkiyahu phrased it. "Return unto the G-d of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yisrael [using that name instead of Yaakov, as did Moshe when he prayed for forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf (Ex. 32:13), as did Eliyahu when called on HaShem to show the

people that He alone was G-d (Melachim Alef 18:36) and as did David when he blessed the people. Yaakov is the Jewish People at a lower spiritual level - destined to hold onto the (Ekev) heel, downtrodden, exiled or secondary - as compared to Yisrael - Yeshurun who has power with G-d and with men - realizing true potential]. Be not, as your fathers and your brothers who betrayed the G-d of their fathers" (6-8).

Despite all the years of idolatry and evil kings, they answered his call in a way that shows that their sins were nothing more than superficial and temporary; this is a phenomenon similar in essence to the teshuva movement that we are witnessing in our own time. The text shows their response to have been a massive demonstration of their deeply-rooted religious and spiritual loyalty." And there gathered a great multitude of people [from Efrayim, Menashe, Zevulun, Asher and from Judah] prepared to go to Yerushalayim to offer the Pesach. And they arose and took away the altars that were in the city and the altars for incense and cast them in to Nachal Kidron". There were many who had not even by then purified themselves, yet they brought [incorrectly] the Korban Pesach. Swept aside perhaps by the wave of teshuva, Chizkiyahu prayed for their forgiveness, even as Shlomo HaMelech had done at the consecration of the Temple. "If Your People sin against You; for there is no man that does not sin... Then if they return unto You with all their hearts and pray towards this House, then hear their prayers and supplications in Heaven and forgive Your people" (Melachim Alef 8:46-50).

So the people observed the Pesach for 7 days with great joy sang Hallel on every day, while the Kohanim sounded the musical instruments and trumpets. The text uses a singular and special phrase to describe the instruments: 'klei oz', lit. instruments of strength, to "ascribe strength to the Lord" (Tehilim 68:35) or "so that Honor and Majesty are before Him; Strength and gladness are in His place" (Divrei HaYamim Alef 16:27). Then something unprecedented happened that puts the purification of the Temple and the observance of Pesach in a special light and show the spiritual and religious effects of Chizkiyahu's teshuva movement.

According to the Torah, every Jew fulfilled his Pesach obligation - the penalty for non-observance is Karet severance from the Jewish people - by coming to the Temple offering and eating the Pascal lamb, then on the morrow he may return home continuing to observe the ruling against chametz. The rest of the Chag. Then the people remained all 7 days of Chag HaPesach in Yerushalayim in praise and in simcha. But before they could go home, Chizkiyahu asked to remain another week and to add holiness and spiritual elevation to that which they already had done. "And the people agreed and made another 7 days of Simcha" (23). They brought sacrifice and offerings, and the princes and leaders also brought their offerings. There were offerings of Toda and Sh'lamim, of thanks and peace offerings in which Heaven [through the portion burnt on the altar], and the Kohanim and their owners all are shared; Korban Peasach is known as Zevach Pesach, the family feast of Pesach."There had never been such great simcha in Yerushalayim since the days of Sholomo HaMelech"; alluding to the festivities made after the consecration of his Temple.

The simcha was really an overflowing of kedusha, since after that the people broke down the remaining altars to avoda zara, cut down the asheiros used in fertility rites, and shattered the stone pillars used in individual worship. Truly as the text concludes: "Then each person returned unto his inheritance and

portion", both literally to their villages and homes but also spiritually unto their behavior as G-d's People.

This is the 58th installment in Dr. Tamari's series on "Tanach and its messages for our times"

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[1] From the virtual desk of the **OU VEBBE REBBE**

The Orthodox Union – via its website – fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and the Israel Center. The following is a Q&A from Eretz Hemdah...

Clarification: During our discussion of door knockers (last week's TT), we did not mention the practice of a knocker or bell that is specially put up for Shabbat. Indeed the Mishna Berura (338:7) mentions the practice, which Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (23:46) also justifies. As we had no recollection of ever seeing one, we concentrated on what we considered more common applications of the halacha. Our apologies to anyone who has such an apparatus or remembers one from their youth (and thanks to those who raised the issue).

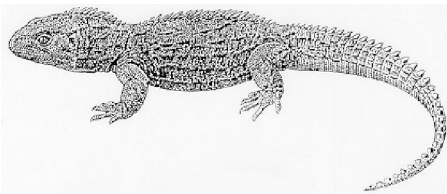
Q Many people have a special, pareve bread knife. Is that halachically required?

A The application of the halacha in this matter has developed over time. After seeing relevant halachic sources, we can discuss the phenomenon of which this practice is a part.

A knife creates special kashrut concerns for two reasons. 1) The action of cutting involves friction, which aids in transferring taste between foods and utensils (see Chulin 8b). 2) It often has grease residue that is hard to detect and clean (see Avoda Zara 76b & Rashi, Chulin 112a). One or both factors are responsible for the need for a butcher to use three knives (Chulin 8b) and for the following passage in the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 89:4): "It is forbidden to cut cheese (even if cold) with a knife that is usually used to cut meat. Furthermore, even bread that is eaten with cheese, you should not cut with a knife used for cutting meat. Rama: ...However, by plunging [the knife] into hard earth it is permitted, but all of Israel already has the practice to have two knives and to mark one of them..."

What is halachically important is that one not cut the bread with a knife of the opposite type from that of the meal he is eating. One may cut bread for a dairy meal with a dairy knife and vice versa. (It is generally forbidden to bake milchig or fleishig bread (Shulchan Aruch, YD 97:1). However, in addition to several exceptions mentioned ad loc., there is generally no requirement that bread remain pareve until eaten.) However, more recent Acharonim, starting with the Pri Chadash 89:24 (300 years ago) and picking up steam since, cite and praise the practice of "those who are careful" to have three knives, including a pareve one to cut bread. Few sources discuss the exact reason, but we can mention a sampling among several, practical advantages. One does not have to remember what knife he used to cut the bread. There is no fear that after cutting off half a loaf at a dairy meal, he may eat the soiled other half at a meat meal. The exact reason can affect our application of the practice of using a pareve knife. While there is logic to trying to answer specific questions like whether one needs to use the pareve knife if he plans to finish the loaf in one sitting (as Badei Hashulchan on 89:4 attempts), it almost misses the point, as we will explain.

Our Rabbis throughout the ages have tried to create halachot to reduce chances that people will sin wantonly or accidentally. Their binding g'zeirot (injunctions) take on many forms. Yet there are areas of potential pitfalls in which, for various reasons, they decided not to legislate prohibitions. On the other hand, punctilious individuals or groups may develop practices and arrangements to avoid certain situations as a matter of policy, not halacha. This is the case with the pareve knife, which at this point in history, in our communities, is rabbinical encouraged but not mandated. In fact, it is possible that the practice developed from wise housewives rather than poskim. In general, the concept of pareve utensils is rarely mentioned in classical halachic literature. It is a logical kashrut convenience and precaution that developed, aided by changing socioeconomic factors. A similar thing can be said about switching all



utensils for Pesach, rather than kashering. In kitchens that have every imaginable convenience, doesn't it make sense to have pareve knives to make careful compliance to the laws of kashrut easier?

The practical difference of viewing the issue of a pareve knife as policy rather than halacha is that it is up to the individual and that he also should use common sense to fit his situation. For example, it would be counterproductive to be "machmir" to keep a "pareve" knife in the middle of a fleishig table to make sure that no one cuts bread with a flesihig knife when children with grimy, fleishig fingers will make it dirty. More importantly, one should not look askance at someone who does not have or use a pareve bread knife. Apparently, the Rama didn't use one either.

Ask the Rabbi Q&A is part of Hemdat Yamim, the weekly parsha sheet published by Eretz Hemdah. You can read this section or the entire Hemdat Yamim at www.ou.org or www.eretzhemdah.org. And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to info@eretzhemdah.org with the message: Subscribe/English (for the English version) or Subscribe/Hebrew (for the hebrew version). Please leave the subject blank. Ask the Vebbe Rebbe is partially funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel

A TOUCH OF WISDOM A TOUCH OF WIT by Shmuel Himelstein

A rabbi once wrote to R' Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor and complained:

"I have a tremendous problem with a certain sugya (topic) in gemara. I have struggled with it and cannot solve it. As a result, I am simply unable to continue further."

R' Yitzchak Elchanan sent him a short reply: "Look up Tractate Menachos, page so and so, the Tosafos that begins with words such and such."

The rabbi took out his gemara and checked the reference, but found that it was on a completely different topic.

Again he wrote to R' Yitzchak Elchanan: "I have checked the source you gave me and found nothing to help me with my problem. The Tosafos you indicated discusses an entirely different topic, asks a question, and does not answer it." I wonder if you possibly gave me the wrong reference."

R' Yitzchak Elchanan replied: "That was exactly what I meant. Even the Baalei Tosafos sometimes ask a question for which they had no answer. Yet as you can see, there is another passage of Tosafos immediately after this. They didn't stop their learning just because they were left with an unanswered question."

Shmuel Himelstein has written a wonderful series for ArtScroll: Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit; A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit; and "Wisdom and Wit" — available at your local Jewish bookstore (or should be). Excerpted with the permission of the copyright holder

[3] Candle by Day

Our respect for a great person should not diminish when we consider that in his nature, too, there is an "animal" part. Our estimation of him should rather grow through a consideration of the heights to which he has risen in spite of that aspect of his nature. - *From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein*

[4] CHIZUK and IDUD

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

Ba'al haTurim comments that the gematriya (numerical value of the letters) of the name Esav equals the gematriya of the word Shalom (peace).

While Ba'al haTurim's comment is certainly true (both Esav and Shalom equal 376), the obvious question is what Ba'al haTurim wants to teach us. After all, one hardly considers Esav to be a paragon of peace.

My father explained Ba'al haTurim's comment. To say that Ya'akov stands for peace is true and perhaps even self-evident. However, ultimately it is irrelevant. Peace depends on the aggressor's willingness to accept it. Until or unless Esav is ready for peace, Ya'akov alone cannot achieve peace. This is the significance of "Esav b'gematriya shalom".

It is clear and obvious that in Eretz Yisrael we are Ya'akov and the Arabs are Esav.

David Magence, Har Nof, Jerusalem

TORAH THOUGHTS as contributed by Aloh Naaleh members for publication in the Orthodox Union's 'Torah Insights', a weekly Torah publication on Parshat Ha'Shavuah

[5] MicroUlpan

How did you do with finding people who knew that the Hebrew word for internet was MIRSHELET? Okay, here's another word, in the same category. "What?", you will exclaim. "There's a word for that?!" You bet your sweet bippy there is, as they used to say on Laugh-In. How do you say world wide web in Hebrew? Ready for this one?

מִיְרְשֵׁלֶת or מִיְרְשֵׁלֶת for short.

[6] Torah from Nature TUATARA

rare medium-sized lizard-like reptile...oldest existing reptile, last survivor of its reptilian order which flourished before the rise of the dinosaurs. Also called SPHENODON... once lived throughout NZ but have survived in the wild only on some offshore islands. These islands are characteristically free of rodents and other introduced predators which are known to prey on eggs and young as well as compete for invertebrate food. The islands are usually occupied by colonies of breeding seabirds that contribute to the fertility and hence the richness of invertebrate and lizard fauna needed by tuatara... olive colored, yellow- speckled... up to 2 ft (60 cm) or more. very lizard-like in external form, with a crest of spines down its neck and back. However, its internal anatomy, its scales, and the attachment of its teeth are quite different... it possesses a vestigial third eye (pineal eye) on top of its head... probably not sensitive to light. Tuataras usually inhabit the breeding burrows of certain small petrels. They feed on small animals, especially insects, and reproduce by laying eggs... The female lays 8-15 eggs in a shallow hole in the ground. The eggs are not cared for in any way by the parents. It takes 12-15 months for the young to hatch. The female may only lay eggs every 3-4 years. Captive tuataras mature in about 20 years, and it appears that their life span may exceed a century...

[7] Know Your Uncle

The following comments about Eisav from the Talmud and Midrash are taken from the book ISHEI HATANACH by Yisrael Yitzchak Chasida

The Midrash says that Eisav greatly resembled Yitzchak physically.

The Gemara says that Eisav did not rebel during Avraham's lifetime (which was cut short by 5 years - 175 and not the 180 that Yitzchak reached so that Avraham would not see Eisav's wickedness).

Targum Yonatan says that Eisav killed Nimrod (and took his special garment - some say it was the leather garment made by G-d for Adam & Chava).

The Midrash says that Eisav encouraged his grandson Amalek to take revenge against the children of Yaakov, since he did not succeed in vanquishing Yaakov.

The Zohar says that there was never a person who so honored his father as did Eisav to Yitzchak. This earned him domination in this world. Targum Yonatan adds that Eisav's honoring of Yitzchak is what caused Yaakov to fear him, especially since he (Yaakov) spent so many years away from his father.

The Zohar says that Eisav's tears at losing the bracha caused Bnei Yisrael to go into Galut.

The Gemara says that he lived with two righteous individuals and didn't learn from their deeds.

The Midrash says that Eisav's male offspring were circumcised during Yitzhak's lifetime, but then they stopped observing Mila.

[8] Various SDTs

- In last week's TT we referred to the dispute as to whether Avraham (and Sara) had a daughter or not. S'fat Emet (S'fat Emes) suggests that something in this week's sedra seems to say that they had a daughter. Yitzhak and Rivka "pose" as brother and sister. Avraham was well known. Especially to the people and king of Gerar. He would know if Avraham had a daughter or not. Since Avimelech apparently accepted Yitzhak and Rivka as brother and sister, until he discovered otherwise, it seems reasonable to support the opinion that Avraham (and Sara) were indeed blessed with a daughter.

- When the Torah tells us that Yaakov gave his father wine to drink, the TROP note under the word LO (to him) is a MEIRCHA CH'FULA (double meircha). This rare note, suggests the Meshech Chochma reminds us of the proper way to drink a cup of wine - not gulping it down in one shot, but rather finishing it in two "installments".

[9] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Toldot introduces us to the life of our forefather Yitzhak Ben Avraham. While our rabbis clearly distinguish between the overriding qualities of Avraham (Chesed, Kindness) and Yitzhak (Gevura, Judgment), there is no question that Yitzhak's life is bound up very closely with that of his father.

One example that comes to mind is Yitzhak's decision to go down to Egypt, as did Avraham, in the face of a famine in Eretz Yisrael. For some time Yitzhak sojourns with Avimelech, king of the Philistines (as did his father). But now G-d appears to Yitzhak, saying, "Do not go down to Egypt!" (Bereishit 26:2).

Rashi explains that in the aftermath of the Akeida, Yitzhak was akin to an unblemished offering (Olah Temima) and it was thus not befitting that he should live outside the Land. Just as a burnt offering may not be removed from the Temple courtyard, so Yitzhak was forbidden from leaving the sacred soil of Eretz Yisrael.

Moreover, Hashem reiterates to Yitzhak the oath given to Avraham that his children will inherit these lands, while yet asserting that this gift is attributed to Avraham's loyalty in obeying His word (ibid 26:3-5). Thus Avraham and Yitzhak are inherently bound to Eretz Yisrael, each on his own merit. And now, 3700 years later, we fervently pray that Hashem will recall both His ancient promises and our forefathers' merits.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH...

A series of articles on Beit HaMikdash-related topics by Catriel Sugarman intended to increase the knowledge, interest, and anticipation of the reader, thereby hastening the realization of our hopes and prayers for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Beit HaMikdash.

Mikdash Mikva'ot - Ritual Baths (IV)

The Sages forbade entrance to the Ezrat Nashim (the Court of the Women to the east of the Azara) to the ritually impure. Even those who were not completely impure were barred. The Mishna notes, "The Ezrat Nashim is still more sanctified (than Har HaBayit) because a Tevul Yom may not enter therein... (Kelim 1:8). (A TevulYom - lit. "one who had immersed himself that very day" - is an Israelite who has incurred ritual impurity for which the Torah ordains that he immerse in a Mikva. Having immersed, he must wait until stars-out before his purity is complete. The next morning he may enter the Ezrat Nashim.) Philo of Alexandria, the Hellenic-Jewish philosopher, notes that the Levites were entrusted with the purity of the Mikdash (On the Laws 165). If, on approaching the Ezrat Nashim, the Oleh Regel assured the inquiring Levites at the gate that he had immersed and that he was not a Tevul Yom and that he was pure, he was admitted at once.

"No man was permitted to enter the Azara to perform Avoda even if he was pure unless he first immersed himself" (Yoma 3:3). The Yerushalmi adds that the prohibition applied even if he did not intend to perform an Avoda (Y. Yoma 3:3). Rambam rules, "This is the general rule in the Mikdash, 'No one may enter the Azara for Avoda even if he is ritually pure - unless he first immerses (Hil. Bi'at HaMikdash 5:4). However Rashi and the Ba'alei Tosafot emphasize the Yerushalmi's ruling. Upon entering the Ezrat Nashim, the Olei Regel proceeded across the courtyard and at the NE corner, the men turned right and entered Lishkat HaMetzora'im (the "Chamber of Lepers") to immerse for the a second time. Unlike the other three Lishka'ot located in the four corners of the Ezrat Nashim, the Mishna in Midot 2:5 does not specify the function of this chamber. However, the Gemara in Yoma 30b asks, "Why was it called Lishkat HaMetzora'im? Because Metzora'im - lepers - immerse themselves there. R. Yehuda says, "They said this not only about Metzora'im but about all men who enter the Azara". (Actually Lishkat HaMetzora'im is a misnomer. Before the 'leper' was admitted to Lishkat HaMetzora'im, the symptoms of Tzara'at - 'leprosy' - had long vanished and a Kohein had already orally verified this after a visual inspection (Vayikra 14, Nega'im 14). The chamber was called Lishkat HaMetzora'im because the "ex-Metzora" waited by its entrance with his three Korbanot, until a Kohein came and escorted him up to the Nicanor Gate for his final atonement rite.) But could thousands of Olei Regel immerse in a chamber which only measured 40 by 40 Amot (Midot 2:5)? No doubt there were a number of Mikva'ot in that limited space and these Mikva'ot (and their approaches) were designed to accommodate crowds. Interestingly enough, there are several sources that describe "double path" Mikva'ot. The most well-known is a fascinating Mishna in Shekalim 8:2. "All utensils found in Jerusalem on the path leading down to the place of immersion must be deemed impure; but (if they are found) on the path leading back, they may be deemed pure. The path by which they are taken down is not the same as that by which they are brought back...". The Letter of Aristaeus (106) also describes such a Mikva. "...some of the men went on the upper path and some on the lower. They are careful to keep a distance, one from the other, so those who are in a state of purity will not touch anything that is forbidden (and become impure again). Another source, a Oxyrrhynchus papyrus,

records, "...the Kohein asked, 'Who gave you permission to be on Mikdash grounds (the Ezrat Nashim) since you are not pure?'" He replied, "I am indeed pure. I immersed in the David Mikva. I descended one ladder (stairway?) and ascended another (after I immerseded)..." Though a number of "double path" Mikva'ot have been unearthed in the vicinity of Har HaBayit, the best preserved (and easily accessible) is adjacent to the Herodian street opposite the foot of Robinson's Arch behind the "four shops". This Mikva is carved into the rock and lined with waterproof plaster. A low partition divides the stairs, separating those entering the Mikva for purification from those exiting after immersion. This was to avoid any contact between the impure descending on one side before immersion and the pure ascending on the other after immersion. Unquestionably, the few Mikva'ot that could be jammed into Lishkat HaMetzora'im were Mikva'ot of this kind. Nevertheless, even if there were numbers of "efficiency" Mikva'ot in Lishkat HaMetzora'im, there must have been severe bottle-necks. Under the watchful eyes of Levites assigned to keep order, lines of barefoot Olei Regel, numbering in the thousands, crowded down the stairs to immerse in the Mikva'ot. Swiftly disrobing, they threw their white pilgrim robes on the parapet before they entered the water. The waters of the Mikva had to reach every part of their bodies without any interpositions of foreign substances (clothes, jewelry etc.). Pausing and catching their breath, the Olei Regel stood on the floor of the Mikva, bent down and plunged beneath the surface. Emerging from the water, they dried themselves as best as they could, and swiftly throwing their robes back on, they raced up the "exit stairs". Everyone moved at a quick pace. Mobbing the NE corner of the Ezrat Nashim, multitudes of other Olei Regel were (patiently?) waiting their turn. The Mishna also reads, "...in the four corners of the court (Ezrat Nashim), there were courts enclosed (one was Lishkat HaMetzora'im)" (Yechezkel 46:22), and enclosed means that they were not roofed" (Midot 5:2). In winter, the open-aired Mikva'ot could be very chilly!

Who looked after the sacrificial animals while the Olei Regel were immersing? Did Levites fulfill this function? How did they prevent the animals (and birds) from getting mixed up? On Erev Pesach, what did the Olei Regel do with the knives that they brought with them to slaughter their Korbanot Pesach? Did they do something similar to what the Olei Regel did on a Pesach that came out on Erev Shabbat? "He whose (Korban) Pesach was a lamb stuck it (the knife) in its wool; he whose (Korban) Pesach was a goat, stuck it between its horns (Pesachim 66a). How very congested the Ezrat Nashim must have been during the Shalosh Regalim and especially on Erev Pesach! On Sukkot, where did the Olei Regel leave their Etrogim and Lulavim when they immersed? Did they take their Arba Minim with them as they descended the stairs, perhaps leaving them in especially designated cubbyholes on the parapet, and taking them in hand again after immersion, as they exited? We have no way of solving these logistical problems; our sources are silent.

With a strong current, the water flowed directly from the aqueducts which supplied water to the entire Temple Mount. Lishkat HaMetzora'im immersion pools. Sprung from the water, it coursed through pipes having no impediments, receptacles, or traps. As fast as the water streamed in, it drained out and there was a constant supply of swiftly moving fresh water. Halachically defined as Ma'ayanot, "springs", these "efficiency purity pools", were even more efficacious for purification than were ordinary 40 Se'ah Mikva'ot. (Mikva'ot 1:1,7,8).

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

Couple of fine-tuning points from TO-L'DOT.

- First, the name of the sedra... again. This comes up a lot. Many people say TOL (first syllable) DOT (or DOS, second syllable). Wrong. The first syllable is TO. The CHOLAM is (most often) a strong enough vowel to be in an open syllable with its letter (the one before it), and not get the next letter as a closer of the syllable. TO - L'DOT. SHO - F'TIM. It's not just the "problem" of taking a letter into one syllable that belongs to another. It's the changing of the SH'VA from a NA to a NACH. The LAMED of L'DOT and the FEI of F'TIM have a SH'VA NA under them. Wrongly saying TOL or SHOF makes the SH'VA a SH'VA NACH. There are many examples of this in davening. Take the weekday Amida, for example. Check out these words. SHO-F'TEINU (not SHOF-TEINU); O-Y'VECHA (not OY-VECHA); SO-F'REIHEM, HABO - T'CHIM. It happens with other vowels too, but we'll stick to the CHOLAM examples, in honor of Parshat TO - L'DOT. (And, no, it doesn't change the meaning of the words- not usually, at least - but it still is nice to pronounce words, especially of LASHON HAKODESH, and especially in davening and Torah reading.

- B'reishit 25:21. And (Yitzchak) prayed... VAYE-TAR. There is a SH'VA NACH under the AYIN. Ashkenazim don't hear from that AYIN. Resist the temptation to say VAYE-E-TAR, as if there is a CHATAF-SEGOL under the AYIN, which there occasionally is, but not here.

- ANOCHI is usually MILRA, i.e. ano-CHI. When the word comes at the end of a pasuk or at an ETNACHTA (full stop in the middle of a pasuk), the accent shifts to MIL'EIL. So in 25:22, where Rivka is having a tough pregnancy and finds out why, she says, LA-ma ZEH aNO-chi.

ParshaPix

Top-left is Yaakov with his lentil stew.

Next to him is one of Yitzchak's workers on a break from digging wells.

Continuing across the top, we come to a Seder plate. Rashi tells us that it was the first night of (the future) Pesach that Yaakov presented himself to Yitzchak for the bracha.

Rivka told Yaakov to bring her two goats. Just to feed Yitzchak, you need two goats? Rashi answers that one was for the main dish and the other for Korban Pesach.

Upper-right is a king on his father's back. The hand is pointing to the father, who would be AVIMELECH. This is not the only pun in this week's ParshaPix, as you will see.

The rain cloud is part of the bracha that Yaakov received.

The sword is part of the bracha to Eisav.

05-What?

Of course you know that cell phone numbers have 7 digits, and the number that follows is now 7 digits instead of 6.

How many cell phone numbers do you have? Want to update them correctly in a few seconds?

The passport is for Yaakov who is being sent abroad by both Yitzchak and Rivka. Yitzchak never needed a passport, but Yaakov did.

The teddy bear is holding aloft the number 7 in one paw and an upraised hand in the other. There are two meanings to the name

The lion cub on the map of Israel is another pun - GUR BAARETZ HAZOT. Actually, live in this Land...

The low truck is another pun - Yitzchak lived in GERAR. Tow is also a reminder of the first syllable of the name of the sedra.

TO-L'DOT, you have an upraised hand in a few seconds?

TO-L'DOT, you have an upraised hand in a few seconds?

The passport is for Yaakov who is being sent abroad by both Yitzchak and Rivka. Yitzchak never needed a passport, but Yaakov did.

The teddy bear is holding aloft the number 7 in one paw and an upraised hand in the other. There are two meanings to the name

Yaakov did.

of options, so the program will do what YOU want it to. It's a great

headache saver.

Be'er Sheva. One is from the seven sheep that Avraham gave Avimelech as a token of the covenant between them, and the other is for the oath(s) that were taken in that agreement. SHEVA has both connotations.

And in the lower-right is the Davka Judaica Graphic of Yaakov, the studious ISH TAM, dweller in the tent of Torah study, and Eisav, the ISH SADEH, the man of the field, the hunter.

Straus and Keren HaYesod are the streets on which the Israel Center was and is. They are Rechovot, as in the name of the well.

C is 100 in Roman numerals. With a gate inside the C, you get ME'AH SHE'ARIM.

3 new visual TTriddles.

TTRIDDLES...

are Torah Tidbits-style riddles on Parshat HaShavua (sometimes on the calendar). They are found in the hard-copy of TT scattered throughout, usually at the bottom of different columns. In the electronic versions of TT, they are found all together at the end of the ParshaPix-TTriddles section. The best solution set submitted each week (there isn't always a best) wins a double prize a CD from Noam Productions and/or a gift (game, puzzle, book, etc.) from Big Deal

Last issue's (Chayei Sara) TTriddles:

- [1] Gave to the seven year old
- [2] His sons are 4,3,5,4,4,4,3,3,4,4,4,4; his nephew's are 5,5,3,5,5,5,2,5,2,3,4,6
- [3] If the vowels were different, we could say this is talking about T'filat HaDerech
- [4] There are only 5 or 6 others like this one
- [5] Only Rivka and Tamar
- [6] Avra(ha)m, gifts, Shimon, Efrayim & Menashe
- [7] [8] and [9] 3 elements from the ParshaPix

And the envelope, please...

- [1] Play on words from the haftara, Melachim Alef 1:11. Vayomer NATAN (the prophet or gave) EL BAT SHEVA (wife of David HaMelech, mother of Shlomo or 7 year old)...
- [2] The TTriddle was meant to point out that both Yishmael (uncle) and Yaakov (nephew) had twelve sons. The numbers are the number of letters in the names of the sons.
- [3] B'reishit 24:11 says VAYAVREICH HAG'MALIM MICHUTZ LA'IR... And he (Eliezer) settled the camels (made them kneel) outside the city... Change the vowels of the first word and you get VAY'VAREICH... MICHUTZ LA'IR... and they said a bracha outside the city. That could describe T'FILAT HADERECH.
- [4] This one refers to Chayei Sara, a sedra with a two-word name. There are 5 or 6 other sedras like that. Lech Lecha, Ki Tisa, Ki Teitzei, Ki Tavo, V'zot HaB'racha, and maybe Acharei Mot (only maybe, because many call it just Acharei).
- [5] TZA'IF is a veil. The word appears only twice in the Chumash (and not at all in the rest of Tanach). The two who covered themselves with veils were Rivka Imeinu and Tamar.

[6] VAYOTZEI... and he took out something or someone. G-d took Avra(ha)m outside to show him the stars. Eliezer took out silver and gold objects (gifts) for Rivka and her family. Yosef took Shimon out of jail and gave him back to the brothers. Yosef took Menashe and Efrayim out of Yaakov's lap to formally present them to Yaakov for a bracha. There are other VAYOTZEIs, but these are the five from the book of B'reishit.

[7] There were three unexplained items in the ParshaPix for Chayei Sara. There was a compass with the east marked on it, representing KEIDMA, the last-named (presumably the youngest) son of Yishmael.

[8] And there was a scarf, representing the TZA'IF that Rivka covered her face with when she was about to meet Yitzchak for the first time.

[9] And then there was "greater than or equal to 2 times 10 to the 7th power, which is 20 million, but more to the point, it is the minimum of ALFEI R'VAVA i.e. thousands of myriads, as in 24:60.

This week's TTriddles:

- [1] Menucha v'Simcha, Ma Yedidut, and Yom Zeh Mechubad particularly on this Shabbat
- [2] Yitzchak's servants came... and who what?
- [3] flayed animals without using hooks
- [4] plus 3 elements from the ParshaPix

Cellphone numbers in Israel have been changed.

The first three digits have been replaced by four digits Check the chart below.

The last 6 digits of the number remain the same.

was	is now
050	050-5
051	050-7
052	052-2
053	052-3
054	054-4
055	054-5
056	050-6
057	057-7
058	052-8
064	052-4
065	052-5
066	054-6
067	054-7

