

Lech L'cha is the 40th day (of 354); the 6th Shabbat (of 50) of 5766

...וְאֶבְרָכְךָ וְאֶתְּדַלְּךָ שְׂמֵךְ וְיְהִי בְרָכָה: בראשית יב:ב

# This is not about Aliya

This will teach you not to always rely on headlines to tell you what the Lead Tidbit is about. Of course it is about Aliya. Why shouldn't it be. G-d told Avra(ha)m to go to the Land that He will show him. That was and is Eretz Yisrael. But more than G-d telling Avraham to go to Eretz Yisrael, He told US that He told Avraham to go to Eretz Yisrael. [Go ahead - reread that sentence until it sinks in. Then proceed.]

Take a look at B'reishit 16:16. And Avram was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to Yishmael... Now look at the next pasuk, 17:1. And Avram was 99 years old... There is a 13-year gap between these two p'sukim. What happened during those 13 years? We don't know. And do you know why? Because G-d didn't tell us about those years. And that is because whatever happened during those 13 years has nothing to teach us. Whatever the Torah tells us is there to teach us things. If it's in the Torah, we have something to learn. If it isn't there, there's nothing for us to learn.

Which brings us back to G-d telling Avraham to go to Eretz Yisrael and giving the Land to him in perpetuity - AND to His telling us.

This (Eretz Yisrael) is where He wanted Avraham and Sarah to be, to live, and to become the progenitors of the Jewish People. And this is where He wants us to be too. It's almost as simple as that.

Of course, it isn't just living here. It is committing ourselves to G-d, His Torah, the way of life He wants us to follow.

When you have guests and they leave, do you escort them to the door and walk them out a little? If you do, you learned it from Avraham Avinu. If you don't, you should. Because that is one of the lessons G-d wants us to learn from Avraham. Did you leave your native country, your hometown, your father's house and come to live in Israel? Good. Just what HaShem wants of us. Not yet? Don't wait too long.

## 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...

Last week, we mistakenly wrote that the first opportunity for Kiddush L'vana for those who wait 7 full days after the molad would be Tue. night Nov. 8 after 11:12. The moon set that night at 10:40pm. The first op, therefore, was Wednesday night. Sorry about that. 7 Cheshvan - we in Eretz Yisrael begun asking for TAL UMATAR LIVRACHA in the weekday Amida.



8 Cheshvan is the 678th yearzeit of R' Asher b. Yechiel Ashkenazi, better known as the ROSH. Among the giants of the Rishonim, his commentary to the Talmud, and his halachic rulings served as a major source of his son, the Baal HaTurim and the and other significant codifiers of Jewish Law.

11 Cheshvan is the 3559th yearzeit of Rachel Imeinu.

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and  
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New shows from Thursday

**OTHER Z'MANIM**  
Correct for Jerusalem

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Halachic Times for Jerusalem		
Israel Winter Time (Standard Time)		
Correct for	TT 690 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm)	5:56pm
<b>4:07pm</b>	Jerusalem	<b>5:20pm</b>
4:22pm	Raanana	5:21pm
4:23pm	Beit Shemesh	5:21pm
4:22pm	Netanya	5:21pm
4:23pm	Rehovot	5:21pm
4:02pm	Petach Tikva	5:21pm
4:22pm	Modi'in	5:21pm
4:24pm	Be'er Sheva	5:22pm
4:22pm	Gush Etzion	5:20pm
4:21pm	Ginot Shomron	5:20pm
4:07pm	Maale Adumim	5:20pm
4:23pm	K4 & Hevron	5:21pm
4:14pm	Tzfat	5:17pm

Ranges are FRI-FRI 9-16 Cheshvan (Nov 11-18)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	- 5:12-5:17am
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)	- 11:23¼-11:24¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	- 11:54-11:55am
Plag Mincha	- 3:36-3:33pm
Sunset	- 4:47-4:43½pm (4:42-4:38pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul  
OHHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)  
**Shabbat afternoon Shiur**  
3:00pm, followed by Mincha  
at 4:00pm  
**Kalman Walker**

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## LECH L'CHA STATS

3rd sedra of 54; 3rd of 12 in B'reishit  
 Written on 208 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 23rd  
 7 Parshiyot; 3 open, 4 closed  
 126 p'sukim - ranks 13th - same as R'ei  
 but notably smaller than R'ei in other categories  
 1686 words - ranks 18th  
 6336 letters - ranks 19th  
 Ranks 7th of 12 in B'reishit in all categories  
 Shorter than average p'sukim

## MITZVOT:

1 mitzva (positive), namely, Brit Mila

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

[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 - First Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 12:1-13

[P> 12:1 (9)] G-d tells (note the softer VAYOMER rather than the harsher, and more common, VAY'DABER) Avra(ha)m to leave his land, birthplace and father's home and go to "the Land which I will show you".

**SDT** "Leave your land, birthplace, father's house." Ramban explains that each "point of departure" was progressively more difficult for Avraham. Leaving one's land is difficult, even more so if he was born there. Leaving one's family is most difficult. Ramban says that the Torah is showing us the great extent of Avraham's love of G-d.

Someone raises a question on this Ramban. What was so difficult in Avraham's leaving the place where he was ridiculed, persecuted and thrown into a fiery furnace for his beliefs. Would he not have left joyfully? The question actually carries the answer. The Ramban was pointing out a significant aspect of human nature. No matter how bad conditions are, how much a person wants a better life, there still will always remain a sadness and regret for the "good old days" and "the old country" - even when they weren't so good. This aspect of human nature explains a lot of Jewish History.

G-d promises that a great nation will descend from him (Avraham) and that he will be a blessing for all (his descendants and all the world).

**SDT** Avra(ha)m is promised great rewards and benefits for listening to G-d. Yet pasuk 4 states that he went "as G-d had spoken to him". His "aliya" is considered a test of his faith. He passed this test because he came to the Land because G-d asked him to, not for any material promises.

The call to the Jew to come on Aliya continues. THE only real "right" reason to come is because it is a mitzva and this is what G-d wants of us. All blessings that will follow are fringe benefits. And the difficulties one might encounter are parts of the test of our faith. Avraham Avinu led the way when there were no Aliya Shlichim and no Nefesh b'Nefesh to facilitate Aliya and K'lita. Actually, there was One Shaliach Aliya and One supporter, and He is still in that role.

Avra(ha)m was 75 years old at the time he came to Eretz Yisrael with Sarai, nephew Lot and many people who were brought over to monotheism by Avra(ha)m and Sarai.

[P> 12:10 (29)] Driven from the Land by a famine, Avraham and Sara go down to Egypt. Their plan is to say that they are brother and sister, rather than risk Avraham's being killed.

Midrash P'li'a points to this episode as proof that one may violate Shabbat to save someone else's life. The idea that one may violate one Shabbat so that he will be able to keep many Shabbatot of the future is part of the understanding of the Torah's permission to violate Shabbat to save one's own life. This permission can be seen to be extended by Avraham's request to Sarah that she put herself at risk to save him.

**SDT** Ramban states that "Avra(ha)m sinned a great sin (inadvertently)" by leaving the land to which G-d had sent him (even though there was a famine) and by risking Sarai's life and honor by asking her to say that she was his sister. Ramban also says that as "punishment" for going down into Egypt, Avraham's descendants were destined to go down into Egypt. On the other hand... Other sources teach us that we derive halachic permission to leave Eretz Yisrael in the event of severe famine BECAUSE that's what Avraham Avinu did.

Furthermore (still on the same other hand), Pirkei Avot testifies

that Avraham Avinu "passed" all his "tests of faith". Being driven out of Eretz Yisrael by the famine and having to subject Sarai to the perils of Paro's Palace are both counted (by some) among the Ten Tests of Faith.

A possible answer might be that how a person behaves in a difficult situation is one thing, and how the situation affects his faith in G-d is another thing. G-d sends someone to a new land, and then hits him with a famine. Regardless of how that someone handles the situation, he might be disillusioned, to say the least. That would mean failing a test of faith. That didn't happen to Avraham. His faith was as strong as ever. Ramban thinks that he erred in judgment as to what he should do. Avraham chose the self-help, HISH-TADLUS option. His choice was "approved of" by the subsequent halachic ruling. Maybe he should have chosen the stay-put and trust in G-d option. Ramban thinks he should have. An inadvertent sin, says the Ramban. But no deterioration of Avraham's faith. Those are two different issues.

Let's carefully apply this idea to the recent, lamentable tragedy to befall Israel - the Disengagement. So many fine people prayed very hard that the government's plan would fail to go through. So many people worked hard at different levels of protest. So many people believed that G-d would not allow it to happen, partially because of the perseved Chilul HaShem, with Moslems claiming victory thanks to their God and their terrorists and mocking Israel and the Jews. But it happened.

There are two things to examine. The first is did one do everything he/she was supposed to do to try to achieve one's goal. Was this okay? Was that too extreme? Should we have...? Refuse orders, not refuse orders. Defy the authorities, actively, passively, not at all? Etc. All of the above and more are part of the first issue - how should I act, etc.

The other very different issue is what the whole experience does to one's Emunah. How do I feel about G-d in light of my great disappointment and frustration with how things worked out? To oversimplify, if you are upset with, disappointed in, angry at G-d - you failed your test of faith. If you maintain belief that "He knows what He's doing", but I don't get it - then you passed your test.

Again - this is a gross oversimplification. Agree or not, you have an interesting discussion topic for your Shabbat table.

## **Levi - Second Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 12:14-13:4**

In Egypt, Sarai's beauty is noticed by the people and she is taken to Par'o's palace. Avra(ha)m, as her brother, receives many gifts. Par'o and his household are afflicted as a punishment for taking Sarai. When Par'o realizes that Sarai is actually the wife of Avra(ha)m he confronts him, returns Sarai to him and then asks them to leave Egypt.

Avra(ha)m and company, heavily laden with riches, return to Eretz Yisrael via the Negev. Avra(ha)m returns to the Altar he had built and continues to proclaim G-d's Name.

**SDT** Avraham on the run from his home-town, a stranger in a strange land, has his challenges and tests. Avraham loaded with wealth and prominence, has new challenges and tests. Poverty and famine are tests; so is wealth. And it is hard

to know which is harder. In the opening passage of Rosh Chodesh Barching, we ask G-d for many things — long life, a life of peace, blessings, etc. There is one thing we ask for twice - Yir'at Shamayim, fear of G-d. Why? Because after asking for it the first time, we ask for a life of wealth and honor. If we are blessed with that, then we must humbly ask for Yir'at Shamayim again, because wealth sometimes blinds a person to his obligations to HaShem.

## **Shlishi - Third Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 13:5-18**

Lot also has great wealth, too much to remain together with Avra(ha)m. Quarrels between their shepherds (caused by disparate ethical standards) lead to a parting of the ways. Avra(ha)m gives Lot "first choice" of territory, and he (Lot) chooses the then fertile area of S'dom and the Jordan Valley. The Torah makes a point of telling us of the wickedness of S'dom society, an obvious criticism of Lot's distorted priorities.

(This, too, is a recurring theme in Jewish life, containing warnings for us all - sadly, many Jews moved away from Jewish neighborhoods to places with country clubs, golf courses, and other "important" things; often they shul was far away from their new home - but, hey, can't have every- thing.)

Only after Avra(ha)m is rid of Lot, does G-d once again appear to him, encouraging him to look over the whole land to the north, south, east, and west, which will some day belong to his descendants. G-d also tells him that his descendants will be too numerous to count. (Hidden message: They will sometimes be lowly, like the dust of the ground, trodden underfoot by our enemies.)

Avra(ha)m settles in Hevron and builds an altar to G-d.

**SDT** One commentary says that although Avraham knew that his spirituality was compromised by Lot's presence, he nonetheless did not chase Lot away until he had no choice. Avraham felt a moral obligation to take care of Lot (including saving him after they parted) even though he knew that G-d was "keeping His distance" with Lot around, so to speak. There are some interesting ramifications for us, of this behavior of Avraham's. How do we view time spent doing chessed and kiruv, or Hachnasat Orchim, at the expense of Torah learning and personal growth. Think about it.

## **R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 14:1-20**

**[P> 14:1 (24)]** This portion tells of the battle between the Four Kings and the Five Kings and of the capture of the people of S'dom, including Lot. When Avra(ha)m hears (from Og, "refugee" from the Flood) of Lot's capture he sets out to rescue him, taking with him a force of 318.

Rashi refers to the Gemara which suggests that Avraham took only his servant Eliezer with him to rescue Lot. The numeric value of the name Eliezer = 318. As G'matriya go, this is one of many. What makes it unusual, is that it is based on a number in the text of the Torah.

Avra(ha)m launches a successful surprise attack and frees the people of S'dom. Victory is celebrated with a

religious ceremony of thanking and blessing G-d in the presence of Malki-Tzedek (a.k.a. Shem b. Noach). A tithe of the spoils of war is given to this servant of G-d.

Rashi tells us that AMRAFEL, king of Shin-ar is none other than NIMROD who was the one who tossed Avraham into the fiery furnace for challenging polytheism in public and espousing belief in One G-d. Ironic, is it not, that Avraham has this opportunity to do successful battle against Nimrod.

Malki-tzedek is king of Shalem. Targum Onkeles identifies Shalem as Yerushalayim. SHALEM is the part of the city's name contributed by Sheim. Avraham gave it the first half of its name after the Akeida – YERU

## **Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 14:21-15:6**

The king of S'dom offers Avra(ha)m great wealth. Avra(ha)m refuses to take as much as a "thread or shoelace".

Avra(ha)m did accept payment on behalf of his allies who helped him.

**SDI** *From here we learn, says the Chafetz Chaim, that one who wants to be "machmir" (strict), should accept the strict practice for himself but not impose it on others. Avraham did not want to be a TZADIK at the expense of others.*

**[S> 15:1 (21)]** Afterwards, G-d appears to Avra(ha)m in a vision and again promises him great rewards for his faithfulness. Avra(ha)m, still child- less expresses his disappointment, but resignation, that Eliezer will be his heir. G-d assures Avra(ha)m that he will indeed have his own child to follow in his footsteps.

G-d then takes Avra(ha)m outdoors and promises him that his descendants will be as countless (and exalted) as the stars in the heavens.

The GR"A cites the Talmud's mention- ing that Avraham Avinu was the first person to address G-d as "Adon" (Master). We acknowledge this by beginning Shacharit - Avraham's davening - with the poem Adon Olam. Furthermore, the reference to a thread and shoelace is linked the mitzvot of Talit and T'filin, both of which are also associated with Shacharit.

Being compared to dust and sand and to the stars of the heavens is not just a matter of numerousness, but also to the quality of life. The terms reflect the ups & downs of Jewish History.

## **Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 37 p'sukim - 15:7-17:6**

This portion begins with "the Covenant between the Pieces". (Part of this experience is actual, part is prophetic vision.) G-d tells Avra(ha)m that his descendants will be oppressed in a foreign land and will subsequently leave there with great wealth. The promise of the Land to Avra(ha)m is reiterated once more.

Both Rashi and Onkeles understand the term M'SHULASH/M'SHULESHET to mean that Avraham took three each of calves, goats, and sheep for the BRIT BEIN HA-B'TARIM. Tos'fot and others define the term as "prime, of the best quality". They hold that there was

only one each of the animals. Others say the animals were to be thrid-born or three years old or part of a triplet.

(from The Living Torah by R' Aryeh Kaplan z"l)

**[S> 16:1 (16)]** Sarai, being barren, gives her hand-maiden Hagar to Avra(ha)m to bear him a child. When Hagar becomes pregnant, she taunts her mistress. Hagar then flees from Sarai's retaliation. An angel finds her, promises that her child, too, will sire a countless multitude, that her son to be born shall be called Yishmael, and that she is now to return to Sarai.

Yishmael is born when Avra(ha)m is 86 years of age.

**[S> 17:1 (14)]** When Avra(ha)m is 99, G-d appears to him and asks him to "be complete". G-d changes Avra(ha)m's name to Avraham, symbolizing Avraham's role as father and spiritual guide to great nations. Once again Avraham is promised "countless" progeny.

## **Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 21 p'sukim - 17:7-27**

G-d promises that a special relationship will always exist between Himself and Avraham's descendants, and repeats the promise of the Land. G-d reveals the form that the "Covenant" is to take - the circumcision of all males **[2, A215 17:10]**.

# **MITZVA WATCH**

This mitzva is the first "non-natural" commandment. Until this point, the 7 categories of Noahide mitzvot are all logical, rational, reasonable, common- sense laws. This 8th mitzva, for the 8th day, represents the challenge to the Jew to rise above nature and complete his spiritual form just as he is being commanded to complete his physical form.

The mitzva is ideally performed on the 8th day, counting the day on which the baby was born - even if he was born 5 minutes before sunset. Mila may not take place at night. Only an 8th day Mila (as opposed to a Brit that was postponed because of health reasons, for example) can be done on Shabbat. A baby delivered by C-section on Shabbat, will have his Brit on the following Sunday (the baby's 9th day). Due to a technicality based on the analysis of the text in Tazria, only a Brit of a natural birth can take place on Shabbat.

The mitzva of Mila is "repeated" in parshat Tazria. Its specific wording there, teaches us some details.

With the two texts dealing with BRIT, it is noteworthy that most mitzva- counters count MILA from LECH L'CHA rather than TAZRI'A. Lech L'cha's con- text is the story of Avraham Avinu. In Tazri'a we have a straightforward command — Speak to the people of Israel and say to them... on the 8th day, you SHALL circumcise...

Most significantly in the matter of Brit Mila is this: The physical removal of the foreskin is only part of the mitzva of Mila. This can be seen by looking at the brachot that are said for the Brit. The first bracha is AL HAMILA. This bracha is immediately followed by a second Birkat HaMitzva (very unusual to say two mitzva-brachot for the performance of one mitzva), "to enter him into the covenant of Avraham". This is not just

a HINENI MUCHAN U'MEZUMAN type of introduction to a mitzva, not a peripheral concept, but an integral part of the mitzva. The challenge of raising the child to be a good Jew and a good person is an obligation of the parents which is part of MILA (we can say) and THE part of the mitzva that takes much more time and energy than "the cut". The context of Lech L'cha says it all. Its choice as the "official source" of the Mila helps us understand this important mitzva.

**[S> 17:15 (13)]** G-d then changes Sarai's name to Sarah. Name changes represent changes in character, role, and destiny. G-d promises that Sarah will bear the true heir of Avraham. Avraham laughs with joy upon hearing that he will be a father at 100, and Sarah a mother at 90. He thought that Yishmael was the son that G-d had repeatedly promised him, but G-d assures him that it will be Yitzchak who will fill that role.

Yishmael will also be blessed and give rise to great nations, but the Covenant will be passed down through Yitzchak.

Avraham circumcises himself at age 99, Yishmael at age 13, and the other male members of his household, in fulfillment of G-d's command.

The last four p'sukim of the sedra are reread for the Maftir.

## **Haftara - 21 p'sukim - Yeshayahu - 40:27-41:16**

This passage is the national counter-part of some of the personal experiences of Avraham. Just as G-d made promises to Avraham Avinu, so He makes promises to the Children of Israel. Just as Avraham tenaciously clings to faith in G-d, so too do his descendants. Endurance, confidence, victory, self-perfection - these qualities are shared by THE ancestor and his descendants, us.

We can see in the sedra-haftara pair a manifestation of MAASEI AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM, the deeds of the ancestors set the patterns for the their descendants.

## **THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW - Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean**

Lesson # 306 (part three)

### **TORTS**

In the last lesson we continued to describe the torts (civil wrongs) that someone, or his property may commit against another and/or the other's property. We discussed the importance of the place where the tort occurred. We discussed the torts that were committed on the property of Shimon, the victim of the tort.

We begin this lesson by examining torts that are committed on the property of Reuven, the person committing the tort.

Reuven, without knowing that Shimon is on Reuven's domain, inadvertently or accidentally injures Shimon. Reuven is free of liability. If, however, Reuven knows that Shimon is on his domain and he injures him even accidentally or inadvertently,

Reuven is liable. If Reuven intentionally injures Shimon, even on Reuven's domain, Reuven will be liable for the compensation paid to those who are injured by the acts of others.

Assume that Shimon, without Reuven's permission places his objects in Reuven's domain and Reuven intentionally injures Shimon and/or damages Shimon's objects. Reuven is liable for the injury and/or for the damages caused. Shimon can successfully plead that Reuven should have removed his object or evicted him but did not have the right to injure him and or damage his objects. However, if the objects are damaged inadvertently or by accident, Reuven is not liable. If Reuven is injured by tripping over Shimon's object, Shimon is liable.

There may be domains where both Reuven and Shimon have the right to be or neither has the right to be on the domain. In these two situations, if Reuven intentionally injures Shimon, Reuven is fully liable for all the injuries. If Reuven and Shimon are damaged each by the other, or if their objects are damaged each by the other, when each was not aware of the location of the other, then neither is liable. When one is aware of the other's presence the former is liable to the other even though there was no intent too cause injury or damage. Therefore if Reuven and Shimon are both running or walking in the public street and they bump into one another, causing damage to one another's property, if they did not see one another walking or running, each is free of liability to the other. If they saw each other then they are both liable for the damages or injuries caused. When both are walking or running in the street, Reuven accidentally bumps into Shimon, and Reuven is injured thereby, Shimon is not liable to Reuven. If Reuven injures Shimon by bumping into him, Reuven is liable for injuring Shimon. If Reuven injures Shimon by bumping into him, Reuven is liable.

Reuven is running in the street and Shimon walking. Reuven bumps into Shimon and injures him. Reuven is liable for injuring Shimon. (This situation is the equivalent of Reuven injuring Shimon in Shimon's domain.) If Reuven is also injured in the collision, Shimon is free of liability unless he intentionally injured Reuven. There is an exception to this rule; if Reuven is running in the street when it is close to dusk on Friday evening, Reuven is exempt from liability because people are running at that time to complete their Shabbat preparations. If it can be proved that Reuven's running was unrelated to his Shabbat preparations, then Reuven is liable for injuring Shimon. This exception applies to a very limited number of situations, such as going to rescue a kidnapped person, extinguish a fire, save someone from drowning, or other life threatening situations. It would not apply to someone who is running to perform a mitzva where there is no life in danger.

Some of the following is included here to show the reader some of the topics that were traditionally include in these discussions.

Just as a person may not run in the street, so he may not ride his horse in the street faster than the pedestrian traffic will tolerate. This includes a horse that is pulling a wagon. If the horse is speeding faster than is reasonable under the circumstances and a person is injured or objects damaged, then the horse rider must compensate for the damages and/or injuries. In an oft-cited 13th century case, there were two people, Reuven and Shimon riding on their horses in the street. Reuven hit Shimon's horse causing damage to the horse. Reuven had to pay Shimon the diminished value of Shimon's horse. In another reported case Reuven was riding on his horse-drawn wagon in a one way street at a pace that was proper for the pedestrian traffic. Shimon was walking in the street against the direction of the traffic. The wagon struck and injured Shimon. It was held that Shimon was walking

against traffic and the speed of the wagon was reasonable, Reuven would be free of payment to Shimon. This was subject to Reuven producing witnesses or taking an oath that the speed of the wagon was reasonable. The application to automobiles is obvious.

Reuven is riding his horse in the street and his horse knocks over a vessel belonging to Shimon that had been placed in the street. If Reuven will produce witnesses or take an oath that Shimon's vessel was placed in a spot in the street that was open to pedestrian traffic, then Reuven will be free of liability for breaking Shimon's vessel. However, if Reuven's horse while walking causes damages to Shimon's unattended animal, Reuven will have to compensate Shimon for damages caused. If Shimon's animal was on a street where only pedestrians are permitted and Reuven unintentionally damaged the horse, then Reuven is free of liability. If, however, Reuven intentionally caused the damage to Shimon's horse then he is liable. Here too, the application to automobiles is obvious.

In places where it is customary to hold celebrations (such as weddings) in the street, in the course of which people ride their cars in the street at a fast pace, the riders are not ordinarily liable, for damages or injuries caused.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume X chapter 378 of A Restatement of Rabbinic Civil Law by E. Quint. Copies of all volumes can be purchased via email: [orders@gefenpublishing.com](mailto:orders@gefenpublishing.com) and via website: [www.israelbooks.com](http://www.israelbooks.com) and at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to [quint@inter.net.il](mailto:quint@inter.net.il)

## Meaning in Mitzvot

*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 by*

### Rabbi Asher Meir

## LOCAL CUSTOM

A primary principle of Torah jurisprudence is that agreements are presumed to be according to local custom. This is learned from the mishna in Bava Metzia which states that when we hires workers, they may begin and end work at the hours customary in their area; likewise, if the local custom is to provide them with food then the employer is obligated to feed them (BM 83a, SA CM 331).

The mishna continues that if the employer offers to feed the workers in a place where the custom is already to give them a basic meal, he is obligated to give them a full and satisfying meal so much so that Rebbe Yochanan ben Matia opined that "even if you give them like Shlomo in his day, you have not fulfilled your obligation, for they are the children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov." But most Rishonim rule in accordance with Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel who states that agreeing to provide meals doesn't add to the existing custom but merely restates it (Beit Yosef).

The gemara continues further with the theme of adhering to custom: "Rebbe Tanchum ben Chanilai said, One should never deviate from custom, for we see that Moshe ascended on high and didn't eat bread, whereas the angels [who visited Avraham] descended below and ate and drank" (BM 86b).

It is possible to view these two aggadot as presenting two different approaches to the idea of custom. The approach of

Rebbe Yochanan ben Matia views custom as merely an implicit agreement, a widespread understanding. Really, any member of the Jewish people is worthy of a meal fit for a king; if we offer them "a meal" of our own volition, nothing less will suffice. But given that local custom is to provide a minimum amount, we may assume that the workers don't demand any more and so the employer is exempt.

By contrast, Rebbe Tanchum ben Chanilai views custom as something of inherent importance and suitability. Moshe could easily have explained to the angels on high that he is only a human being, and thus he is compelled to deviate from their custom by eating and drinking. But the heavenly dwelling of the angels is a place where eating and drinking are completely out of place; as the commentators point out, it is a realm of the intellect and the spirit, which are eternal and not dependent on material nourishment. The angels also could have found some excuse not to eat with Avraham, but they realized that in this world of matter the only way to honor someone is with the benefits appropriate to this world, including food and drink. Thus, Rebbe Tanchum ben Chanilai urges us to never deviate from custom.

The Tur writes that "It would seem that halakha is according to the first opinion, but the Rama [Rabbi Meir Halevi Abulafia, a prominent Rishon], ruled according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel." The Beit Yosef adds that most other Rishonim also seem to rule according to Rabban Shimon.

The Bach explains that there is a firm basis for ruling according to the first opinion. For one thing, the mishna provides a logical explanation: since they are already entitled to a meal due to custom, stipulating a meal would seem to imply an addition. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel merely states, "All is according to custom", without an explanation. For another thing, the gemara discusses this opinion, and on the whole discussions are generally recorded on authoritative opinions.

Perhaps the aggadot themselves lend support to the consensus ruling. Rebbe Yochanan ben Matia brings a proof from the story of Avraham, who slaughtered three animals in order to feed his three guests. We see that in the house of the Patriarchs there was a custom of having splendid meals.

Yet Rebbe Tanchum points out that this very story teaches us the immense value of custom, for the entire meal would have been superfluous if not for the fact that Avraham's guests, the angels, were scrupulous to adhere to local custom and take part in this meal.

In a technical, legal dispute, aggadic stories are not appropriate proof texts. But in this case, the entire question is one of logic and reason which approach to custom is better defended? The Biblical stories of Avraham and the angels, or of Moshe ascending on high, are valid instances of the inherent importance of conforming to certain accepted standards of our surroundings.

*Rabbi Asher Meir has two wonderful books in print - Meaning in Mitzvot (ask for it at your local s'farim store) and The Jewish Ethicist, available at some bookstores and through the Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem, (02) 632-0222. Both works are highly recommended*

# TANACH

## SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE BEREISHIT STORIES by Dr. Meir Tamari

### HAGAR and YISHMAEL [1]

Three times Hashem had revealed Himself to Avraham, promising sons, a great nation and Eretz Yisrael, still Avraham and Sarah remained childless. Two revelations came while Lot was still with them and it was easy to assume that he would inherit these promises. When the third came [BRIT BEIN HABITARIM, the Covenant between the Pieces] Avraham assumed that his disciple-servant Eliezer would inherit, only to be told that Avraham's son would inherit him; yet he still remained childless. The text tells us that after ten years of their sojourn in Eretz Yisrael, Sarah, seeing their bareness as due her shortcomings, took all the initiative to give Avraham a son through her handmaiden Hagar, the Egyptian princess given to her by Pharaoh. "One who was married to a woman who did not give birth, may divorce her and give her the value of her ketuva. Even though the verse is a not a proof for this ruling, nevertheless it alludes to it. Furthermore, from the reference in the verse to Eretz Cana'an we learn the special sanctity of that Land makes the many years of their marriage spent in chutz la'aretz, spiritually irrelevant" (Yevamot 65a). In her religious and spiritual zeal to make that Divine promise come true, Sarah initiated and brought about the introduction of her maidservant into their marriage. She intended either to rear the son in the Abrahamic way or perhaps to bear her own son in the merit of her action. This was a prototype action, later followed by Rachel who gave Yaakov, Bilha her handmaid and by Leah who gave Zilpa to him, both of them in their zeal to fulfill the destiny of the Twelve Tribes. Avraham, who was passive in the decision, was quite prepared to await the fulfillment. He only acquiesced in order to please Sarah and to do her will. "It is written, 'Avraham hearkened to Sarah's voice', but it does not say 'Avraham took Hagar', rather Sarah gave her servant to him (Ramban); another example of the Avraham-Sarah love story.

The Midrash gives us many examples of Hagar's behavior, all of them mocking Sarah's suffering through her barrenness; this was ONA'AT D'VARIM. "You shall not oppress your fellow" (Vayikra 28:17), this is verbal oppression; for example one who sees another's misery and suffering and tells him that the suffering comes because he is not a tzaddik" (Bava Metzia 58b) or "goes into a store without any intention of buying anything and inquires as to the prices etc." (Choshen Mishpat 228).

Whilst all our commentators note the selflessness, nobleness and religiosity of Sarah's initiative and actions, they are less unanimous about the righteousness and morality of her treatment of Hagar when she became pregnant and forgot her subservient role as Sarah's maidservant. Broadly speaking, there are two schools of thought, the one radically castigating Sarah while the other, paying close attention to the wording of verses 5-6, finds legal and ethical justification for her actions.

First, Sarah upbraids Avraham for ignoring the slights and insults of Hagar, who, seeing herself pregnancy whilst Sarah remained barren, forgot their separate roles. "Sarah said, 'The CHAMAS [small wrongs, petty needling, slights and insults] that I endure rest on you', for you do not rebuke her and do not stand up for me against her. I thought only of you and the Divine Promise to you when I gave her to you. You, however, asked G-d about the promise and were told you'd have a son, yet you forgot to pray for me]. 'Let the Lord judge between us',

from this we learn that whomever insists on MIDAT HADIN, is himself judged by the full severity of justice; Sarah deserved to live as long as Avraham yet Avraham lived longer and came to eulogize her" (B'reishit Rabba 44:5).

Then when Avraham told her that she could deal with Hagar as she saw fit, Sarah dealt with her rigorously until she (Hagar) fled to the desert.

"Sarah Imeinu sinned grievously in this regard, as did Avraham in not preventing her, therefore Hashem heard Hagar's cries and gave her a son who persecuted their descendants" (Ramban). "Sarah exaggerated and dealt too harshly with her and made her work rigorously. In this she behaved neither morally nor with righteousness. It is not fitting that one should deal harshly with those subject to one's authority; "how pleasant is forgiveness when one has power" (Ibn Gavirol). We see that her behavior was not good in the eyes of Hashem from the words of the angel "G-d has seen you travail" and from the promise of wellbeing in place of her suffering. Although Sarah's acts were wrong in the eyes of Avraham, he did not prevent them, because of SHALOM BAYIT" (Radak).

In contrast to these criticisms, there are the voices who claim that Sarah was completely justified. "According to the text we see that Sarah released her maidservant to Avraham but did not relinquish her own rights in her maid. Avraham refers to Hagar as 'your maidservant' even though she was given to him as a wife, while Hagar herself tells the angel that she is fleeing from her mistress; the angel then instructs her to return and continue to be subservient to 'Sarah, your mistress'. Furthermore, in regard to the words of the Ramban, there is no evidence that the descendants of Ishmael behaved worse towards Israel than they did to other nations whenever they had power over them or that we suffered more at the hands of Ishmael than at the hands of the Christian world" (Netziv). "Sarah sought to draw out the P'SOLET, spiritual impurity that still remained within Avraham and pass it on to Yishmael through Hagar. When Avraham agreed that she was still a maidservant, Sarah dealt harshly with her" (Or Hachaim). "We often have to punish people who are behaving incorrectly in order to turn them back to the correct path, so too Sarah acted. She only intended to teach Hagar good MIDOT of humility and respect" (Haketav ve Hakabalah).

"The whole story is related in the Torah in order to inculcate in us the good midot and to teach us to avoid the bad ones" (Radak).

*This is the 102nd 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...*

**Q** Often one who wants to give tzedaka (charity) to collectors but lacks sufficient small change “makes change” from the shul’s tzedaka box. Many people are careful not to take full change but to leave a donation in the box. Is this required?

**A** The gemara (Arachin 6a) says: “[If one declares]: ‘This coin shall go to tzedaka,’ before it reaches the gabbai’s hand (the one in charge of tzedaka), it is permitted to change it. Once it reaches the gabbai’s hand, it is forbidden to change it.” The gemara asks from the story of Rabbi Yannai, who borrowed tzedaka money after it reached the gabbai. It explains that he did so in order to tell others that there were no liquid funds, and people would give more. Thus, his borrowing helped the poor. Rishonim differ as to the meaning of “changing” money. Rashi and Tosafot (ad loc.) explain that the donor could lend the money to himself or to others before he gave the assigned money to the gabbai. Rambam (Matnot Ani'im 8:4) seems to relate the gemara to switching the coins to different ones of the same cumulative value. The Beit Yosef (Yoreh De'ah 259) finds difficulty fitting the Rambam’s explanation into the gemara and incorporates only Rashi’s into his halachic work (Shulchan Aruch YD 259:1).

There is much discussion among Acharonim on the question if the status of a tzedaka box is like that of a gabbai or not. Without delving deeply into this question, most treat it like a gabbai (see Tzitz Eliezer XVI, 29 and Tzedaka U'Mishpat 8:(25)). It might seem then that our question depends on the differing approaches to the gemara. According to Rambam, it is forbidden even to switch the coins in a tzedaka box. According to Rashi, which the Shulchan Aruch accepts as halacha, perhaps it is forbidden only to borrow the money, but it is permitted to simply make change. After all, tzedaka money does not have intrinsic holiness, making it religiously forbidden to use (Rama, YD 259:1). Rather, the poor have rights to the money. On the other hand, the Rif (Bava Kama 18b) seems to agree with the Rambam that after the tzedaka has reached the gabbai, its coins cannot even be exchanged. Furthermore, it is likely that the Shulchan Aruch argues with the Rambam only regarding the gemara’s interpretation, not regarding halacha (Aruch HaShulchan, YD 259:1). It is likely the same as using a friend’s money without his permission.

Indeed, is one permitted to use money that someone entrusted in his hands? The Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 292:7) rules that it depends on whether the watchman is one who deals in coins regularly and on whether the owner hinted as to his feelings on the matter, but, as a rule, he may not borrow it. He does not explicitly address the question of exchanging coins, which Acharonim dispute (see Pitchei Choshen, Pikadon 5:(67)). Therefore, it is unclear if one can use a tzedaka box to make change even when we know of no specific reason that the recipients will thereby lose. This justifies the stringent practice

you cited. When leaving even a small donation, the act is considered giving tzedaka rather than taking change, and it is permitted.

Besides the fact that not all agree to the stated reasons for stringency, additional factors play a role. Regarding a general tzedaka box which the shul’s gabbai administers at his discretion, there may be an understanding that the money can be used for such things as getting change (see similar cases in Netivot Hamishpat 301:9; Tzedaka U'Mishpat 8:8). This may depend on local practice. We should also recall the gemara’s idea that when the poor gain from the money’s use, it is permitted. The question is whether by using the tzedaka box to get several coins in order to distribute (some of) them to the poor one will give the poor more tzedaka. One must also factor in whether he has left behind enough coins to enable the next person to give a donation that requires change.

Thus we have seen the logic behind the stringent practice you reported and possible grounds for leniency, especially under certain circumstances.

*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](http://www.ou.org) or [www.erezhemdah.org](http://www.erezhemdah.org). And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to [info@erezhemdah.org](mailto:info@erezhemdah.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*

## [2] **Candle by Day**

G-d causes events to coincide, and we call them "coincidences".

**From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein**

*Limited Offering: A Candle by Day, The Antidote, and The World Of Chazal by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein are now available at 054-209-9200*

## [3] **CHIZUK and IDUD**

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

At the beginning of Lech L'cha, Avram and Sarai become the first olim, leaving their birthplace for the eternal homeland. They arrive in a country similar to the modern State of Israel, one that awaits redemption and return -- as the Canaanite nations "still" inhabit the Land (12:6). This raises a question that remains timely, what advantage is there for a Jew to live in Eretz Yisrael if this is not yet the appointed time?

The Sifre answers this question by contrasting similar scriptural incidents involving Avraham and Moshe. "There are two viewings, a pleasant one and a painful one. By Avraham it says: 'Please raise your eyes and look out from where you are' [B'reishit 13:14]; this is the pleasant viewing. By Moshe it says: 'Ascend to the top of the cliff and raise your eyes' [D'varim 3:25]; this is the painful viewing."

When Avraham viewed the Eretz Yisrael of future promise, the one to be inhabited by his children, he was already standing within its borders. Although this vision would not be fulfilled in his lifetime, from where he stood, elevated by the holiness of the land, Avraham's view was pleasant. (See also Meshech Chochma).

In order for Moshe, then 120 years old, to get even a fleeting glimpse of the land, he first had to climb a tall mountain. Moreover, at the very moment he gazed so longingly upon it, he was fully aware that he would never enter Eretz Yisrael. This was, no doubt, a painful viewing.

The advantage to living in Israel today, as we learn from this Sifre, is that from within its borders we may merit to see the world through the pleasant "rose colored glasses" of the future geula, redemption, in spite of the intensity of our present, continuing galut, exile.

**Rabbi Steven Ettinger, Chashmona'im**

*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*

## [4] **A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit**

Throughout the time that R' Chaim was the rabbi of Brisk, the community supplied him with basic necessities, including wood to heat his home in the winter.

Once, the community leaders noticed that the expense for the rabbi's firewood was five hundred rubles per year, whereas even the richest person never used more than fifty rubles of firewood in any year. Why was the firewood costing them so much? They checked and found that the firewood was kept in an unlocked shed behind R' Chaim's house, and that the poor had been coming in and taking firewood whenever they needed. The leaders then put a lock on the shed and gave the key to the shamash.

When R' Chaim found out about this, he had the lock removed, and again the poor came to take firewood.

The community leaders came to R' Chaim to complain.

"Rabbi," they said, "the community cannot afford to supply firewood to all the poor in town."

"If that is so," said R' Chaim, "I want you to stop heating my house as well. How can I sit in a warm house when all the poor are sitting in the freezing cold?"

*Shmuel Himmelstein 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*

## [5] **Torah from Nature - Clarification**

A few weeks ago, we wrote about a shofar from the horn of a GEMSBOK. The gemsbok is a large antelope of arid regions of southern Africa, having long sharp straight horns, a tufted tail, and distinctive black and white markings on the head. It is the largest of three species of ORYX. Their horns are straight or slightly curved back. They (oryx, including gemsbok) are kosher and their horns qualify for the mitzva of shofar, although only B'DI'AVAD, since they are not bent nor are they rams, the preferred (and according to Rambam, the only) source of the Shofar. The oryx is identified by Prof. Yehuda Felix as the R'EIM or the ZEMER, each a kosher CHAYA mentioned in Torah and elsewhere in Tanach.

## [6] **Parsha Points to Ponder - LECH L'CHA**

1) Why does G-D tell Avraham AND I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU, speaking of Himself first, and then switch the order to AND THOSE WHO CURSE YOU I WILL CURSE? (12:3)

2) Why does the Torah relate the seemingly irrelevant information of where precisely Avram pitched his tent? (12:8)

3) Why does G-D tell Avraham to LIFT UP YOUR EYES when telling him to look at Eretz Yisrael which would eventually belong to Avraham and his children? (13:14-15)

## **THESE ARE THE ANSWERS**

Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) The Kli Yakar answers based on the teaching that G-D rewards people for simply thinking to do something good without actually doing the act, while one is not punished for simply thinking about doing something wrong. Thus, people will be blessed for simply thinking of blessing Avraham as indicated by G-D's blessing being mentioned in the verse before the person actually blesses. However, with regards to the curse, one would have to actually curse Avraham before being cursed, as indicated by first mentioning those who actually curse.

2) The Chafetz Chayim teaches that Avram carefully chose that specific location, at the crossroads between the two major cities of Beth El and Ai to pitch his tent and build his altar. This would insure high visibility and contact with everyone traveling anywhere in that area. Thus, by recording the specific location, the Torah is capturing Avram's complete focus on maximizing outreach and teaching about monotheism.

3) The Meshech Chachma explains that had Avraham looked at the actual land around him at that time, he would see a land filled with pagans and impurity. This would not excite him about G-D's promise to give him this land. However, if he would lift up his eyes, and look beyond the physical world that he saw before him and focused on the spiritual realm, then he could see the holiness of the land and recognize that it was a special gift.

*Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman Mashgiach Ruchani, Yeshivat Yesodei HaTorah in Bet Shemesh, author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith", soon to be republished by Feldheim - ppp@israelcenter.co.il*



## [7] MicroUlpan

## דג מלוח

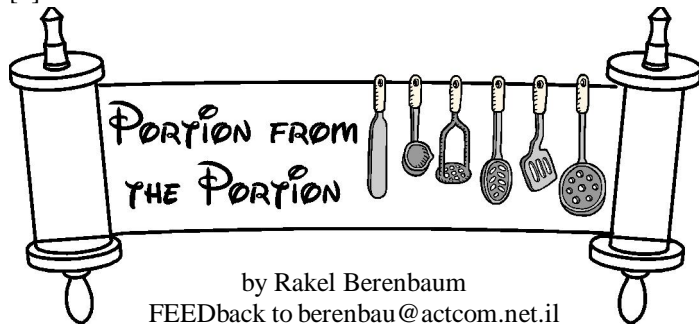
DAG MALU'ACH - Lit. salty fish, refers to herring.

Also is the name of a children's game similar to Red Light - Green Light.

Also slang for a very narrow necktie.

Partly from Dictionary of Israeli Slang, R. Rosenthal, Keter

[8]



In the middle of the story of Abraham and the King of Sodom, the text tells us that the King of Sodom went out to meet Abraham "VA'YEITZEL... LIKRATO" (14:17) and only 4 verses later (14:21) does it tell us what the king said "VAYOMER MELECH S'DOM... In between verses 17 and 21 the Torah relates a different encounter between Avraham and another King - Malkitzedek, king of Shalem (Jerusalem). Why are these verses about Malkitzedek introduced in the middle of the story of the king of Sodom? What are they coming to teach us?

The Or HaChayim says that the episode of Malkitzedek is to teach us the difference between good people and bad people and to give credit to the good people. The King of Sodom (a wicked person) went out empty handed to welcome Avraham, although he was under obligation to repay him generously for his military effort on his behalf. Malkitzedek (a righteous person) on the other hand, with no obligation to Avraham, behaved generously and welcomed Avraham with bread and wine knowing that Avraham was exhausted from fighting.

In other places in Tanach we also see that welcoming people with food is an action that signifies peoples goodness, or lack of it. Next week we will hear how much effort Avraham put in to preparing food for the three angels - he teaches us the mitzva of inviting guests. On the other hand, the nations of Amon and Moav are forbidden to enter the congregation of Hashem LO YAVO B'KAHAL HASHEM because of the crime of neglecting the elementary duty of giving food to the weary - "they didn't meet you with bread and water on the way when you came out of Egypt ASHER LO KIDMU ETCHEM BALECHEM U'V'MAYIM (D'varim 23:5).

So we learn from these three verses in our portion that Malkitzedek was righteous. The Rabbis even teach that he was Shem, son of Noach, the one who ran the Yeshiva of Shem & Ever. He taught Avraham lessons in Avodat Hashem - worship of G-d. He was a Kohen and our sages see the bread and wine that he gave to Abraham as holy. They symbolized the bread offering - LECHEM HAPANIM, and the wine offering - NESACHIM - that the Jews would later bring to G-d every day in the Mishkan and later in the Beit HaMikdash - may it speedily be rebuilt in our time.

## BREAD

Make your favorite chalah recipe or use this one, which is enough for six loaves.

Try making one of the loaves into a special shape - made of 12 individual rolls baked all together in one pan. Call it a LECHEM HAPANIM CHALA, like the bread of Malkitzedek.

Divide the dough into 12 equal balls.

Arrange all the balls in a round baking tin - make sure all the balls are close to each other and stuck together. Bake. Remove from pan before serving.

DOUGH: 2 kilo flour

2 tbsp salt

4 tbsp dry yeast

1 to 2 cups sugar ( to taste)

4 cups warm water

2 eggs

1 cup oil

Mix the flour and salt

Add the remaining ingredients in order

Knead till you get a smooth, soft dough (you can add more flour if you need)

Cover with a towel and let rise till double in bulk - about an hour.

Take Challah - The bracha...

(Ashkenazim)

אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתָיו

וְצָנוּ לְהַפְרִישׁ חֻלָּה [מִן הָעֶסָה].

(Sefaradim)

אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתָיו

וְצָנוּ לְהַפְרִישׁ חֻלָּה תְּרוּמָה:

## [9] G'matriya Match

KI ET KOL HAARETZ ASHER ATA ROEH LECHA ET'NENA ULZARACHA AD OLAM: (B'reishit 13:15)

G-d promised Eretz Yisrael to Avraham Avinu and his descendants (through Yitzchak) in perpetuity.

But one of the necessary conditions to our acquisition of the Land is to always remember Amalek and join G-d, so to speak in the perennial battle against Amalek.

ZACHOR ET ASHER ASA LECHA AMALEK BADERECH B'TZEITCHEM MIMITZRAYIM: (D'varim 25:17)

One can say that one of the keys to Eretz Yisrael is our attention to the mitzvot of remembering Amalek, never forgetting, and destroying its remnant.

These two p'sukim have the same g'matriya - 2999.

[Assignment: Check out B'reishit 13:17 and Sh'mot 21:1, and say something about this GM.]

## [10] **Divrei Menachem**

Lech Lecha always invokes a sentimental attitude towards Eretz Yisrael. For it is universally recognized that when G-d tells Avraham to, "Go to the land that I will show you", He is referring to the Land of Israel.

Why, it is often asked, did G-d not point out the name of the Land up front, as it were? Why was Avraham - and we, in a sense - left in suspense? According to the Mei HaShilo'ach, it was important for Avraham to contemplate that very question, to yearn for that unknown location. Avraham was to ask where is that unique place where his spiritual closeness to Hashem (Deveykut) could be actualized.

The Mei Hashilo'ach suggests that the fact that Eretz Yisrael was (later) shown to Avraham by G-d is reason for us to understand that that is where our search for Hashem should begin and end. The significance of this quest was also noted by Rav Meir Yechiel of Ostrovatsa. As the first divine command ever given to a Jew, "Lech Lecha" is the foundation of the Mitzva to settle in Eretz Yisrael.

So that we might internalize the meaning of all this better, let us dwell on the comment of the Yismach Moshe: "Until Avraham entered Eretz Yisrael, G-d had only spoken to him. On his entry to the Land it is written that G-d appeared to Avraham." May we be worthy of the same merit.

**Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff**

### **Towards better Davening and Torah Learning**

Let's have another look at the Hebrew word LAMA (why?), LAMED-MEM-HEI.

Not an uncommon word in Tanach, it also appears occasionally in davening, which makes it a good study for this column. It is unusual among words in that it is accented the two different ways - MIL'EIL and MILRA. Usually, the MEM has a DAGESH CHAZAK in it and the word is accented on the first syllable (which is the next-to-last one), MIL'EIL. Lamma. When it is followed by a word that begins with a letter that does not ever (almost) get a DAGESH - ALEF, HEI, CHET, AYIN, REISH, then the DAGESH drops out of the MEM and the accent shifts to the last syllable. la-MA. MILRA. There are exceptions to the rule, but it mostly holds. In the Torah reading for fast days (from Ki Tisa), we find both accentings in close proximity (consecutive p'sukim). la-MA (no DAGESH in the MEM) HaShem... (in Sh'mot 32:11). Remember that G-d's name behaves like a word that begins with an ALEF, based on our pronunciation of the Name, rather than like a word that begins with a YUD, which is the way it is written. 32:12 begins with Lamma yo-m'RU mitz-RA-yim and the MEM has a DAGESH. LAMA is not the only word that behaves this way.

### **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.*

#### **"Inner Sin-Offerings" - Par Kohein Mashiach [3]**

"He (the Kohein Gadol) slaughtered the Par (bullock) and received its blood in a Mizrak (Mikdash bowl) and gave it to

one who would stir it ... so it would not coagulate." The Kohein Gadol immediately dropped the knife so he could receive the sacrificial blood. After leaving behind the firepan with Ketoret, (incense) in the Kodesh Hakodashim, he retrieved the Mizrak containing the blood of his Par from the Kohein who had been stirring it all this time. The Kohein Gadol reentered the Kodesh Hakodashim and sprinkled blood with his finger taken from the Mizrak eight times towards the Aron (or in Bayit Sheini, where the Aron would have been) one up and seven down counting as he did so "Achat, Achat Ve'achat..." Once he completed sprinkling the blood, he exited the Kodesh Hakodashim and placed the Mizrak on a gold stand outside the two Parachot which separated the Kodesh Hakodashim from the Heichal. Upon exiting the Bayit, the Kohanim presented him with the "Hashemgoat" which he quickly slaughtered and received its blood. The Sa'ir (goat) was also an "inner sin-offering" and would be burnt outside the Mikdash together with the Par. As the Par atoned for Kohanim who entered the Mikdash and ate Kodashim in a state of ritual impurity, the Sa'ir atoned for similar transgressions by the rest of Am Yisrael. <to be continued>

### **From the Mikdash Mailbag**

From Avi (and others) in Ramot - "Now, we've read about Par Kohein Mashiach (TT 688), could you tell us more about the Kohanim Gedolim who served in the latter days of the Beit HaMikdash? The descendants of Tzadok (appointed by King Solomon) served as Kohanim Gedolim in Bayit Rishon and Bayit Sheini for 850 years until Antiochus IV removed the last officiating High Priest of the dynasty. While the right of succession was from father to son (Sifri, Parshat Shoftim, Hil. Klei Mikdash 4:20), when the legitimate Kohein Gadol had no son the office apparently devolved on his brother. During Bayit Rishon until the days of Yoshiyahu HaMelech, Kohanim Gedolim were embrocated with Shemen HaMishcha, but in the days of Bayit Sheini, this holy oil was no longer available and the Kohein Gadol was inaugurated by simply being invested with the eight garments of the Kohein Gadol. The newly appointed Kohein Gadol would don the "many garments" and remove them everyday for a week (Yoma 4a). After this 7-day investiture, his legitimacy as Kohein Gadol was acknowledged and he could perform all the Avodot required by his office. Theoretically, only the Great Sanhedrin - the Court of Seventy One - had the authority to appoint or to confirm a Kohein Gadol (Tosefta, Sanhedrin 3). He was to "be the greatest among his brethren in strength, in beauty, in wisdom and in riches" (Yoma 18a), but unfortunately these idyllic criteria rarely met the harsh reality of late second Temple times. Kohanim who served in the Mikdash required proof of priestly descent and archives of priestly genealogy were scrupulously maintained and constantly updated. A Kohein could not marry a divorcee, a convert, or a freed woman and usually they married women from priestly families. The family trees of Kohanim were carefully scrutinized to ascertain that their lineage extended all the way back to Aaron - the primogenitor of the priestly line - or at least as far back as they were able to check. A Kohein who wanted to take a wife who was known to be of priestly stock was required to verify her maternal decent four generations back (Kiddushin 4:4). A woman whose father had served as a Kohein in the Mikdash, or who was or had been a member of the Sanhedrin or who had served in a public office, was accepted without any further search. The maternal lineage of a woman, not of priestly stock, had to be traced back for five generations (Kiddushin 4:4). One of the major responsibilities of the Great Sanhedrin

was to "sit and judge the priesthood" (Midot 5: 4). Even though ideally, the Kohein Gadol held office for life, in the latter days of Bayit Sheini, the civil authorities usually followed the unfortunate precedent set by Antiochus IV, and appointed and disposed Kohanim Gedolim at will. In the 33 years of King Herod's rule, seven High Priests were appointed and removed. In two-years, Herod's son Archelaus, named two. Collaborationist High Priests were appointed by the Roman authorities, by Agrippa I, by Herod of Chalcis and by Agrippa II. This blatant interference in the administration of the Mikdash by the hated Roman rulers and their toadies, which resulted in the recurrent appointment of obviously unworthy men greatly reduced the prestige of the High Priesthood. In the eyes of the people, the Kohein Gadol became little more than a "religious functionary" of the government. "This dependency was further emphasized when the secular authorities insisted, to the wrath of priests and people, on holding on to the High Priest's garments without which he could not carry out the full glory of his role in the Temple." Though the sources do not relate that the Romans ever refused to allow the Kohein Gadol to use his vestments when so requested, nevertheless, the very retention of the sacred garments was provocative and this calculated humiliation lowered the prestige of the office of the High Priest. The Gemara preserves a popular "street ballad" about these Herodian and post-Herodian High Priests which showed the contempt and enmity of the people for these sacerdotal stooges.

Woe is me, for the house of Boethus: woe is me because of their clubs!

Woe is me, for the house of Annas: woe is me for their whispering!

Woe is me, for the house of Katros: woe is me for their pen!

Woe is me for the house of Ishmael ben Phiabi: woe is me for their fist!

For they are the High Priests, and their sons the treasurers; their sons-in-laws

are Temple Officers, and their servants beat the people with their staves." (Pesachim 57a).

These "spiritual leaders" foisted upon the people by the Roman and Herodian authorities, were well known for their violence and their insidious denunciations of their opponents to the Roman and Herodian authorities. Historian Joseph Klausner correctly notes that "there could be scarcely a more dreadful and hateful picture of the High Priests and their families." Even so, Avodat HaMikdash required the ministrations of an acknowledged Kohein Gadol. The awesome Avoda of Yom Kippur was invalid without an officiating High Priest. As his ancestor Aaron before him, he was the man who entered the Kodesh Hakodashim and implored forgiveness for the sins of Am Yisrael. No matter how defective his moral state may have been, and no matter how sordid were the circumstances of his appointment, he could not be ignored.

*Catriel's book in progress: The Temple of Jerusalem, A Pilgrim's Perspective; A Guided Tour through the Temple and the Divine Service*

# from page 3 PARSHA PIX

Arrow from the birthday stuff into Eretz Yisrael is Lech L'cha... MiMoladt'cha - go from your birthplace to the Land..

Arrows from Eretz Yisrael to the south-west and back again is the round trip to & from Egypt

The compass on the outline of the map is G-d's instructions to Avraham to walk the Land, its length and breadth, and in all directions.

The arrows branching in opposite directions was Avraham's offered choice to Lot when they separated. If you go left, I'll go right. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left

Avraham's oath before the king of S'dom, that he would not even take a thread of a shoelace.

Telescope and stars stand for G-d's taking Avraham outside to see the stars and to promise that his descendants will be as countless as the stars of the heavens.

The crowns represent the war of the five kings against the four.

The father with his little son represents Brit Mila, the only mitzva of Taryag in the sedra. By the way, BRIT is numerically 612, making it equal to all the other mitzvot (besides itself).

There is the tent that Avraham pitched a few times in the sedra (not really a good representation, because it seems to have only one entrance.)

Representation of Brit Bein HaB'tarim, with each split animal accompanied by a triangle, standing for the adjective M'SHULASH or M'SHULESHET. The bird at the top was not cut. See the Sedra Summary for details

Which leaves two unexplained items, which are 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 (NO'ACH) TTriddles:

- [1] None and far too much on the same date
- [2] two years before and after
- [3] 7th a.k.a 3rd
- [4] 600 = 1047 = 756 = Washington's final initials
- [5] Right! What's a cubit?
- [6] yak, divi, tatu, patru, pet, vets, yedi, otto, ni, deset - Appropriate for whom?
- [7] plus the TTriddles-Zodiac symbol for the hopefully wet month of Marcheshvan

## **And the envelope, please..**

[1] According to the mishna in Taanit, if it didn't rain by the 17th of Cheshvan, individuals would accept three fasts (Monday, Thursday, Monday) upon themselves... [NONE]. The Torah tells us that on the 17th of Cheshvan (one opinion as to what the Torah means by the second month) the Flood began... [FAR TOO MUCH]. Samedate.

[2] The Torah tells us that Sheim bore Arpachshad two years (SH'NATAYIM) after the Flood. Baal HaTurim points out that the phrase SH'NATAYIM ACHAR... appears twice in Tanach. It doesn't; the one in Parshat No'ach is the only one. What Baal HaTurim was referring to was a similar phrase, SH'NATAYIM LIFNEL... Two years BEFORE. There is only one of those. Two years after the Flood and two years before the RAASH - earthquake.

[3] The Ark rested on Mt. Ararat on the 17th of the 7th month. Rashi says that it is Sivan that is referred to here as the 7th month, counting Kislev as the first month, for in Kislev, the rain stopped. So the 10th month (Sivan) is also known as the 3rd month, in the way we count months.

[4] And No'ach was SHEISH MEI'OT years when the Flood came. The g'matriya of SHEISH MEI'OT is  $300+300 + 40+1+6+400 = 1047$ . In Targum (Aramaic) 600 is SHIN-YUD-TAV MEM-ALEF-HEI =  $300+10+400 + 40+1+6 = 756$ . In Roman numerals, 600 is DC, the final initials of Washington, as in Washington DC.

[5] Bill Cosby, back in his stand-up comic days, had a routine called "Noah and the Lord", which was not only funny, but was surprisingly insightful at times. When told to build an ark, and that it should measure 300 cubits by 50 cubits by 30 cubits, Noah's response was, "Right! What's a cubit?" The reason I considered this worthy of a TTriddle was to be able to take the opportunity in this TTriddles report to share one of the more profound of Cosby/Noah's comments. When told to remove one of the hippopotamuses (hippopotami is acceptable, but seems to be the less preferred plural of river horses) and bring in another, the exhausted and frustrated Noah asks why he has to do such a difficult and seemingly senseless thing. The response is, "because they are both male". "So change one of them", Noah suggests. Cosby as the Lord answers, "You know I don't work like that!" And the fact is, that G-d does not (generally) do that kind of thing, although definitely capable of it. EIZEHU CHACHAM, HALOMEID MIKOL ADAM.

[6] This is a variation on a theme we've used in TTriddles and ParshaPix to represent DOR HAP'LAGA, the generation of the Tower of Babel. The TTriddle consists of a mixed up (language-wise, not numerically) counting of one to ten. This might be an appropriate way for PELEG (great-great-great-grandson of No'ach and great-great-great-grand-father of Avraham Avinu, putting Peleg right in the middle of the generations from No'ach to Avraham) who was named for the event that NIFLIGA HAARETZ in his time. The languages of Peleg's one to ten are (in order, obviously): yak (Farsi), divi (Latvian), tatu (Swahili), patru (Romanian), pet (Bulgarian), vets (Armenian), yedi (Turkish), otto (Italian), ni (Sino-Japanese), deset (Czech)

[7] And, as several TTreaders correctly observed, the symbol for Cheshvan in the Word of the Month box on page two is a picture of the home built scorpion helicopter.

Kol HaKavod to MM/Bklyn for his faithful participation in solving TTriddles (and sending his solutions to us). We hope

you enjoy the latest CDs your brother and fellow TTriddle-solver brought to you on his recent visit and look forward to more TTriddles solutions from you.

## **This week's TTriddles:**

**[1] Bera can be bad for the eyes if you don't spell or pronounce words accurately**

**[2] He lived in Shreveport?**

**[3] The Anti-Lebanon Mountains**

**[4] Avram-Sarai; Adoniyahu-BatSheva**

**[5] plus 2 elements from the ParshaPix**