

To-l'dot is the 61st day (of 354); the 9th Shabbat (of 50) of 5766

וַיִּתֵּן לְלֶדֶת הָאֵלֹהִים מִטָּל הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְרֹב הַדָּגָן וְהַיִּרְשָׁה: בראשית כז:כח

Required: Reading and Hearing

Read: Yaakov is cooking food; Eisav comes home tired and hungry, asks his brother for some food; Yaakov gives him food in exchange for the Birthright.

Hear: Yaakov was preparing the mourner's first meal for his father Yitzchak, since Avraham Avinu had died that very day; Eisav returns home, having committed several serious sins, and Yaakov succeeds in getting the B'chora, which should be his, from Eisav, who is totally unworthy of it.

Read: Do not cook a baby goat in its own mother's milk.

Hear: Do not cook the meat of cow, goat, or sheep in the milk of cow, goat, or sheep. Do not eat such mixtures. Do not derive benefit from such mixtures.

The Torah is read by many people, among whom are non-Jews and Jews who are not committed to the Oral Law and Tradition. They read, but they don't hear. And therefore, their reading is very often a distortion of the Truth of the Torah. The Torah was never meant to be just read. It is not meant to be understood without the combination of the Written Word and the Oral Torah.

That this is so, is patently obvious to Torah-true Jews, from countless examples in both the halachic aspects of Torah (like the meat-in-milk) and in the Aggadic aspects of Torah (like the Yaakov-Eisav example).

There is a Midrash P'li'a that says that when G-d dictated the pasuk to Moshe about the baby goat in its mother's milk and explained to him about the laws of meat-in-milk, Moshe requested to write "Meat in Milk", rather than the cryptic G'DI BACHALEIV IMO. G-d said: K'TAV L'CHA ET HAD'VARIM HA'EILEH, You write these exact words. People must READ the Torah and they must HEAR its meaning and understanding from the bona fide links of the Chain of Tradition - the Jewish sages and scholars throughout the generations. Torah was always meant by G-d to be transmitted teacher to student, from Moshe to Yehoshua... to each of us.

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...

First op for Kiddush L'vana is Sunday night, Dec. 4th, according to Minhag Yer. For 7 days after the molad people, first op is Thu. the 8th.

IMPORTANT: For those without a firm minhag, even if you usually wait for 7 days, it is advisable (and permissible) during the winter season to say KL after three days. This is so because of the likelihood of a string of cloudy nights that might result in missing KL altogether.

Only if your minhag is strictly 7 days no matter when, should you wait for the later date.

Those who generally wait for Motza'ei Shabbat are advised not to wait this month because of the real possibility that cloudy nights will deprive one of this mitzva. So write some poskim.



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Candle Lighting and HAVDALA
Standard (Winter) time

Correct for TT 693 • Rabbeinu Tam (l'm) - 5:52pm	
4:00pm	Jerusalem 5:15pm
4:15pm	Raanana 5:15pm
4:15pm	Beit Shemesh 5:16pm
4:15pm	Netanya 5:15pm
4:16pm	Rehovot 5:16pm
3:55pm	Petach Tikva 5:15pm
4:15pm	Modi'in 5:15pm
4:17pm	Be'er Sheva 5:17pm
4:15pm	Gush Etzion 5:15pm
4:14pm	Ginot Shomron 5:14pm
4:00pm	Maale Adumim 5:14pm
4:15pm	K4 & Hevron 5:16pm
4:06pm	Tzfat 5:11pm

Ranges are FRI-FRI 1-8 Kislev (December 2-9)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:28-5:33am
Sunrise - 6:22-6:27½am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 8:55-8:59am (8:07-8:11am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:46-9:50am (9:14-9:18am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:28½-11:31½am
Mincha G'dola (earliest) - 11:59am-12:02pm
Plag Mincha - 3:32-3:33pm
Sunset - 4:40-4:40½pm (4:35-4:35pm)

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In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
Shabbat afternoon Shiur
3:00pm, followed by Mincha
at 4:00pm
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TO-L'DOT 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 Taryag are 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 - First 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.

SDI *In last week's TT we referred to the dispute as to whether Avraham (and Sara) had a daughter or not. S'fat Emet (a.k.a. S'fas Emes) suggests that something in this week's sedra seems to say that they had a daughter. Yitzchak 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 Yitzchak 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.*

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.

Shlishi - Third 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.)

SDI *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 CHA- YIM. 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 - Fifth Aliya - 33 p'sukim - 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.

SDI *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".*

Shishi - Sixth 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 Motzaei 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, 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 too 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 The Jewish People.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh 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 - 21 p'sukim - Mal'achi 1:1-2:7

There is speculation as to whether Mal'achi is the name of an individual, or a description of "My messenger". Some say that Mal'achi was Ezra. Mal'achi is known as the last of the prophets. Mal'achi brings G-d's message to the people that He loves Yaakov (and his descendants), and hates Eisav, even though Yaakov and Eisav are brothers. Thus, the Haftara echoes the rivalry and relationship between the two brothers that is the substance of the sedra To'l'dot. The haftara refers to the respect a son has for his father. In this regard, Eisav was exemplary.

Mal'achi criticizes the kohanim of the time for not being careful in the offering of korbanot. We can see this as a preparation for the building of the new Beit HaMikdash in the hopes that it will function properly and be a true honor to G-d.

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. 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 Yitzchak's lifetime, but then they stopped observing Mila.

Reuven Damages Shimon's Animal

Sometimes I meet a person who has read my articles in Torah Tidbits and she or he will tell me that the last time he heard a discussion of the subject matter of the article was over 50 years ago in yeshiva. This week's article will refresh many recollections as to what was learned in Baba Kama.

This article discusses the laws that are unique to situations where Reuven with his own hands, directly or indirectly causes death or injury to an animal belonging to Shimon. Reuven either: (a) actually touches the animal causing its death or injury; or (b) does not actually touch the animal with his hands, but his act results in death or injury to the animal.

Just as Reuven is liable for damages caused to Shimon's inanimate chattel, so is he liable for damages or death that he causes to Shimon's animals.

Assume that Reuven places a burning ember on Shimon's ox near the heart and the ox is burned to death. The halacha remains the same whether Shimon was close by, observed when this happened and did not remove the burning ember, or was not close by. There are two opinions as to the liability of Reuven:

1. Reuven is liable only if the ox was tied up and could not move about to shake off the burning ember. If the ox was not tied up and it could have shaken off the burning ember, therefore Reuven is not liable, whether or not Shimon was present when this took place. While according to this view, Reuven has no liability in Beth Din, he is liable to Shimon in the judgments of Heaven. A person is not forgiven in Heaven unless he makes payment on Earth to the injured party.

2. Reuven is liable to pay for the destruction of Shimon's ox even if the ox was not tied up and whether or not Shimon was present. Not every ox would shake itself to remove a burning ember on its hide. Reuven can successfully plead that Shimon, if he was present, had a duty to remove the burning ember from his ox. [The monetary obligations do not take into account the wickedness of both Reuven and Shimon who let the ox die by burning. See A Restatement of Rabbinic Civil Law, volume 9, chapter 338 which discusses prohibited conduct by people against animals.]

In the example above, Reuven placed a burning ember close to the heart of the animal. Assume that Reuven pushes Shimon's animal into a lake, the animal cannot get out and drowns. Or Reuven pushes the animal into an enclosure from which it cannot escape the blistering heat and dies of the heat. In both of these instances Reuven touched the animal and is therefore liable to Shimon for the death of the animal. If the animal could have managed to get out of the water or the sun but did not do so, then Reuven is free of the liability from Beth Din but is liable to the judgments of Heaven. Assume that Reuven does not touch the animal and the animal by itself falls into the water or enters the enclosure from which there is no respite from the sun. Thereafter, Reuven by physically touching the animal prevents the animal from escaping the water or the heat. Reuven is liable for he directly caused the death of the animal. However, if Reuven does not touch the animal after it enters the water or enclosure of its own volition, Reuven locks the door so

that the animal could not escape the water or the heat, and the animal dies, then Reuven is not liable since he did not touch the animal.

If more than one person causes the loss they are both liable. Assume that both Yehuda and Reuven throw Shimon's animal into a deep lake and the animal drowns. Shimon can sue both of them and obtain a judgment against both Reuven and Yehuda for the full value of the animal, but he can only collect the value once. Thus if Reuven pays the entire amount, Shimon cannot levy against Yehuda. Reuven can look to Yehuda for a contribution toward the payment that he had made.

Assume that five persons loaded bundles on Shimon's mule, and the mule is able to carry the load. Reuven then places another bundle on the mule and mule collapses and dies. If when Reuven placed his bundle on the mule as it was walking and when he placed the bundle on it, the mule stopped and collapsed, then Reuven is solely liable. The other five persons are not liable. Conversely, if before Reuven placed his bundles on it the mule was faltering because of the bundles or the original five persons, then the five are liable and Reuven is free of liability.

Reuven's property is threatened by Shimon and to escape damage to his property, Reuven damages Shimon's animal. Reuven is free of liability if he could not have saved his own property in any other manner. This in spite of the fact that Reuven could have sued Shimon for damages inflicted by Shimon on Reuven's property. However, if in order to save his own property from damages not threatened by Levi, Reuven damages Levi's animal, then Reuven is liable to Levi. A person may not save himself or his property by damaging someone else's property and is therefore liable for the damage caused.

Shimon, in order to save his own jug filled with wine, leans it against a vessel belonging to Reuven so that Shimon's jug should not fall. Reuven thereafter removes his own vessel and in doing so Shimon's jug is broken. Reuven is liable for the damages that Shimon suffered to his jug and wine. Reuven should not have removed his vessel causing Shimon's jug to break; he should have waited until he could find another vessel to rest Shimon's jug thereon and only then removed his own vessel. If Reuven did provide another vessel to support Shimon's jug and the jug broke, Reuven is not liable.

It has been held that the following is a similar situation: Two men, Shimon and Levi are fighting and Reuven trying to stop the fight pushes Shimon away. Shimon is injured as a result of being pushed away. Reuven is liable if he could have pushed Shimon away in a gentler manner. If Reuven could not have saved Levi without pushing Shimon, then Reuven is not liable to Shimon. If Shimon is much stronger than Levi and Reuven saves Levi by pushing Shimon, then Reuven is free of liability.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume X chapter 383 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

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

Wise in the Hidden

One who sees a multitude of Israel blesses Hashem, "the wise one of the secrets" (SA OC 224). What is this unique wisdom? The gemara explains that "their views are not alike, and their faces are not alike". Rashi elaborates that God knows what is in the heart of each one (Berakhot 58a).

Praising God's wisdom specifically when we see a multitude emphasizes the wonder and importance of the astonishing variety of people. In many places the Sages teach us that we perceive Godliness among mankind specifically through the multitude of human beings. This is hinted at in the story of the Creation: The verse stating that man was created in God's image (B'reshit 9:6) is closely followed by the commandment to be fruitful and multiply (B'reshit 9:7); from this we see that God's image is augmented when there are more people (Yevamot 63b). In another place, the gemara tells us that originally man was created singly so that no person could take pride in his descent; but seems to take for granted that Hashem desired to create many people (Sanhedrin 37a). After all, the prophet informs us that Hashem "created the world for inhabitation", not for desolation. (Yishayah 45:18.)

A good metaphor is that of light. The Divine light is a pure, white light; yet white light is actually made up of an infinity of different colors which appear white and pure when they are united. (See chapter 60 of my book, Meaning in Mitzvot where this metaphor helps explain the laws of the benediction on the rainbow.) Likewise, the pure light of the Divine is apprehended specifically through the joining together of diverse individuals and opinions.

At the same time, the wording of the blessing draws our attention to the fact even though we gain a special appreciation of the divine through encountering many individuals and being conscious of their varying personalities, we ourselves are not really able to discern and fathom their points of view. This is seemingly reserved only for Hashem, "the wise one of secrets".

Yet in other places we learn that this unique empathy is also shared by a small number of inspired leaders. When Moshe prays for a suitable replacement, he addresses God as "the God of the spirits". Rashi, citing the Midrash, points out the use of the plural, and explains that Moshe wanted a leader who could understand and empathize with the individual point of view of each Jew, just as Moshe could. (Bamidbar 27:16.) In Chasidic thought Moshe is sometimes referred to as a "general spirit" who encompasses the souls of all Israel. (Note that the blessing is only said on a crowd of 600,000 Jews - the number of adult males in the congregation at the time of Moshe's leadership.) An inspired tzaddik or Rebbe is also a general spirit but to a lesser extent; his spirit may encompass many souls, those of his followers, but not all Israel.

Now we can understand the ruling of many Rishonim who state that the blessing "Wise one of secrets" is also made on a Torah scholar of surpassing wisdom (Tur OC 224, based on B'rakhot 58b). Evidently this refers to a Torah leader who is not only steeped in legal wisdom, but also is gifted with the ability to empathize and resonate with others; his followers instinctively

feel that he understands them. (This ruling is not cited in the Shulchan Arukh, probably because the Tur himself mentions that we no longer have leaders who attain this remarkable stature.)

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 [4]

Avraham was wandering with his encampment from Hebron southward to the Negev, between the edge of the Philistine settlements in the West and the wilderness on the East. From here, once again we find Hagar wandering in the desert. However, this time she is not alone but with the son she bore to Avraham; moreover, this is not a voluntary act but rather the result of being expelled from the tents of Avraham and Sara. Furthermore she was armed with the Divine promise that her son would be the beginning of a mighty nation, earned by merit of being a son of Avraham's and the Brit done by Ishmael at the age of 13. Now that he is 16 and Yitschak has been born and the scene was set for the next step in the building of the Abrahamic Nation, not through a nephew, nor through a disciple nor through a son, but rather only through a son born to Sara and Avraham.

"And Sara saw the son of Hagar which she had born to Avraham, mocking (B'reishit 21:9). Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught: Rabbi Akiva saw this in a negative way and I see this as a positive. Rabbi Akiva said, 'metzachek' means sexual immorality as Potiphar's wife said: "the Hebrew slave [Yosef] that Potiphar brought to play about with us" (B'reishit 39:14). Rabbi Yishmael taught that it signifies idolatry as it is written (Sh'mot 32:6): "and they [by the Golden Calf] rose up letzachek". Rabbi Eliezer ben Yosi HaGalili taught that it signifies bloodshed as it is written (Shmuel bet 2:14) "Let the young men arise and play [in battle] before us"; Ishmael used to take Yitzchak to a field and aim arrows at him saying it was only in jest. Yet I say that the mockery referred to the question of inheritance. Ishmael mocked Yitzchak by saying that after their father Avraham died he, as his first born would inherit, to which Sara Imeinu told Avraham that the son of Hagar not only would not inherit but would not even share in the inheritance of Yitzchak" (B'reishit Rabba 23:11).

In this midrash we have two different views of Sara's reason for expelling Hagar and her son. The first one finding in Ishmael's character and behavior the cause of his being unsuitable for the inheritance and therefore deserving expulsion. Then there is Bar Yochai saying that even were Ishmael a paragon of virtue, the mere fact of his not being her son was the sole factor. It is important to note that there are no opinions here, unlike when Hagar fled, faulting Sara's action. HaShem supports Bar Yochai when He says to Avraham, "In Yitzchak will seed be called unto you". The Sforno offers an explanation that seems to merge the two opinions in the midrash: "Sara saw that Yishmael mocked the great feast that Avraham made when Yitzchak was weaned saying that Avivemelech the Philistine was actually the

father and this behavior of Yishmael angered her. She understood that Yitzchak was the heir to Avraham's spiritual inheritance so that the presence of Yishmael with his inferior midot would damage the purity of that inheritance".

At first sight, it would seem more moral to justify the expulsion because of a character blemish of Yishmael rather than the question of his parentage, yet when we consider the mission and duty of the descendants of Avraham, "to teach his sons and members of his house after him to do righteousness and justice" (B'reishit 18:18), then we become aware of the importance of purity of descent and of Jewish insistence on it throughout the ages. Perhaps Chazal's teaching that Yishmael later did teshuva, but nevertheless he is still considered ineligible to share in the Abrahamic spiritual inheritance of Nation-Land-Relation to G-d, supports this idea.

"And the matter appeared bad in Avraham's eyes, on account of his son'. The last words of the verse are a compliment to Avraham as it shows that it was not in his desire for his concubine that he considered Sara's words wrongful but solely because of Yishmael, his son" (Ramban). "Further- more, Avraham was deeply concerned that if Yishmael was problematical whilst still under the influence of his encampment, how much worse would be when left only to the influences of Hagar" (S. R. Hirsch).

Sara was not concerned about the inheritance of Avraham's material wealth as are most heirs but solely about the Divine Promise of Nation, Land and His special relation with Israel. She saw that these were indivisible and so there could not be two heirs but also they required a spiritually pure seed and so this excluded Yishmael. Similarly Rivka saw that Birkat Avraham was not divisible so that there could not be two equal heirs; furthermore it had been foretold to her: "And the elder shall serve the younger", so she labored that the blessing should be Yaakov's. Here too, the issue was not the inheritance of material wealth since we see that that was promised to Eisav when Yitzchak thought that he was actually blessing him, whereas knowingly he gave to Yaakov the Birkat Avraham.

"If Hagar would have remained in Avraham's house, then she would be considered as an equal wife and her son, even if sent away, an equal heir; many sons leave home and wander far but do not thereby lose their share in the father's wealth. Sarah did not want that after Avraham's death, Hagar's son should share the wealth" (Abarbanel). There is no contradiction between this view that Sara was rightly concerned with Avraham's material wealth and the spiritual dimension of the Abrahamic inheritance. There is an important spiritual difference between making somebody one's heir and giving others gifts and present on one's death. The former is a spiritual connection even though it takes a material form while the latter is purely material. We see that Avraham made Yitzchak his heir, but only gifts to the sons of his concubines, Ketura and Hagar, when he sent them from the presence of his son Yitzchak (B'reishit 25:6).

"Everything that Sara says to you, obey her voice' - from this we learn that Sara was at a higher level of prophecy (Tanchuma). We know however, that all the revelations were given to Avraham, yet Sara reached a higher level since she had faith in the prophecy that Avraham received" (HaEmek Davar).

This is the 105th 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: In our religious summer camp, some items were apparently stolen, and there were grounds to suspect a specific camper. We considered searching the camper's belongings to try to catch him, return the stolen objects, prevent future thefts, and perhaps educate the offender. We decided not to do the search, but could we have?

A: Psychological and educational issues need to be addressed in such a case by those who are familiar with the case's dynamics. We will concentrate on the halachic principles.

Moving another's possessions around while searching is not stealing, which is defined as taking something away from its owner, even temporarily (Rambam, Gezeila 1:3) or using it physically without permission (ibid. 3:15). Simply moving an object to another place where its owner maintains access is not stealing. However, going through another's belongings compromises his right to privacy, a right that halacha defends. The gemara (first perek of Bava Batra) discusses in detail the concept of avoiding HEZEK RE'YIA (damage by seeing sensitive matters). Rabbeinu Gershom rendered a cherem (ban) against reading a friend's letters without permission. According to many poskim, the prohibition to do so preceded the ban, which just strengthened the matter (see Encyclopedia Talmudit on Cherem Rabbeinu Gershom, 18).

May one invade a thief's privacy in order to catch him? As a rule, one may take the law into his own hands to legitimately protect his interests. One who recognizes his stolen object in the thief's property may enter his property and take it forcibly, if opposed (Bava Kama 27-28; Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 4:1). (According to one opinion, he should not do so surreptitiously and thereby look like a thief.) Presumably, this

allows suspending other of the thief's "civil rights", including his privacy. The Chikekei Lev (I, Yoreh Deah 49) leaves as an unsolved question whether Beit Din can allow one who suspects that a letter contains improperly damaging information about him to read it in order to know how to act. The prominent dayan, Rav Shlomo Daichovsky (Techumin, vol. XI, pp. 299-312) discussed the matter regarding listening devices. He says that the Chikekei Lev would agree that one who has strong grounds to expect being damaged can use such a device to protect his interests. He says that this is all the more so when one has the opportunity to prevent another from sinning. In our case, it is a sin to possess stolen goods or steal more, and the staff might have been able to help facilitate the youngster's receiving counseling that he likely needs.

One problem is that barring definite knowledge of the suspect's guilt, one could be acting improperly toward the innocent. However, we have precedent in this regard, as well. The gemara (Bava Metzia 24a) tells of Mar Zutra, who suspected a certain yeshiva student of stealing a silver goblet, because he showed disregard for someone else's property. Mar Zutra physically pressured the student until he admitted to the crime. Panim Meiros (II, 155) brings some more recent rulings in this vein of physical steps based on strong suspicions.

Another issue is that, classically, it is the one with the personal interest who may take steps to protect himself, whereas others should not (see Halacha Pesuka, Dayanim 4:16). However, this is apparently to prevent people who should not be involved from "sticking their nose in" without judicial authority. In our case, it is improper to allow an apparent victim to act based on his suspicions alone (see warning in Chafetz Chayim, Lashon Hara 7:14). The camp's responsible staff members, who are mandated to supervise the campers' welfare and conduct, are the proper people to be involved.

Thus, if the staff's higher echelon, in consultation with its rabbi(s), were convinced that the suspicions justified a search, they could have halachically done so. (We would urge people to consult legal counsel regarding the legality of their actions and consider all relevant concerns.)

*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*

[2] **Candle by Day**

Quiet is the honey of the soul.

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

Limited Offer: A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World Of Chazal by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein, Now available at 054-209-9200

[3] **CHIZUK and IDUD**

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

In Parshat Toldot we are presented with the blessing that Yitzchak gave to Yaakov: "May Hashem give you of the dew of

the heavens and the rich bounty of the earth" (B'reshit 27:28).

What was so unique and important in this blessing that Esav began to cry when he realized that he had not received it? Esav did, in fact, receive what seems to be a similar blessing, albeit in reverse order: "Behold, the rich bounty of the earth shall be your dwelling place and the dew of the heaven from above." How are the two blessings different?

The Kli Yakar in his insightful wisdom suggests that Yitzchak blessed each son with his own priority. Yaakov whose emphasis was on God's help and support, was blessed with dew coming from the heavens as the primary source of his well-being, while Esav received a blessing attuned to his philosophy of life whereby the significant support comes from man himself, thereby "the rich bounty of the earth" is primary.

I once read that the late Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz referred to these blessings in homiletical terms - that there is nothing wrong in requesting both spiritual and material achievements, but many times parents put the emphasis for their children on getting a good job and fulfilling their materialistic needs, while pushing off the child's spiritual growth until it is too late.

For our unique people "the dew of the heaven" must come before "the rich bounty of the earth." This is why parents must realize that the holiness of Eretz Yisrael should take priority over the "rich bounty of the (Diaspora) earth".

Rabbi Chanoch Yeres, Yemin Moshe

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

R' Meir Leibush, the Malbim, was appointed the rabbi of Bucharest. The first Shabbos he was there, he took a walk and saw that Jewish stores were open and were conducting business. That afternoon, the city notables came to visit their new rabbi. The Malbim said to them:

"Gentlemen, I am afraid I may be forced to resign and leave the city."

"Why?" asked the leaders, taken aback.

"I am afraid," said the Malbim, "that I will not receive my wages."

"Rabbi," they protested, "why should you be worried about that? Have we ever failed to pay our rabbi what he agreed to?"

"The reason for my concern," said the Malbim, "is that when you appointed me rabbi of the city, you offered me a fine salary. I therefore said to myself: this is obviously a well-off community, which can afford to pay so fine a salary. Now that I see that your people are so poor that they cannot survive by working only six days a week and are forced to work even on Shabbos, how can you possibly have the money to pay me?"

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

[5] Parsha Points to Ponder - TO-L'DOT

- 1) What did Yaakov mean when he asked Eisav to sell him the birthright KA'YOM - THIS DAY? (25:31)
- 2) What is the everlasting significance of the story of Yitzchak and his servants digging wells, enduring disputes over them and then digging more wells until he had his own water? (See 26:18-22)
- 3) Yitzchak declared THE VOICE IS THE VOICE OF YAAKOV AND THE HANDS ARE THE HANDS OF EISAV. (27:22) The Midrash teaches based on this verse that when Jews are properly making the sounds of Torah study and prayer (the voice of Yaakov), then the hands of Eisav are weak. How is this derived from this verse which seems to indicate that both the voice of Yaakov and the hands of Eisav are functional simultaneously?

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

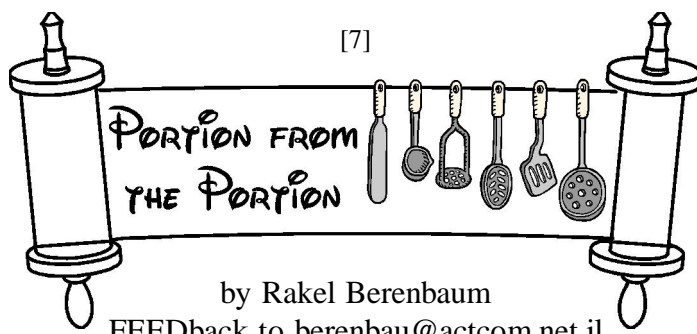
- 1) The Seforno teachers that Yaakov was hinting to his reason for assuming that Eisav had no interest in the birthright. Eisav was a person who only focused on the now - what is happening THIS DAY. Yaakov was telling Eisav to sell him the birthright since this status is only meaningful to one who looks at eternity and not the now.
- 2) The Chofetz Chayim explains that we learn a very important lesson from Yitzchak's perseverance to dig the wells that had previously been stopped up, digging new wells, losing those, and his continuing to dig. In both spiritual and Earthly matters, we will always have struggles and challenges. We learn from Yitzchak that a person should never give up in any pursuits. One should keep striving to achieve goals under all circumstances and eventually success will come.
- 3) The Vilna Gaon answers that the source of the Midrash is a missing VAV in the word KOL (voice.) Read without the VAV, the words spells out KAL which means lax or light. Thus, the verse can be read that when the voice of Yaakov is weak, the hands of Eisav have their strength. However, when the word KOL is spelled in its proper and complete form, then the inference would be that Eisav's hands are weak.

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

[6] MicroUlpan

Here's what seems to be a very common mistake in pronunciation. The color VIOLET is SAGOL, not segol, having the vowels as the other colors: ADOM, KACHOL, YAROK, TZAHOV, AFOR, KATOM, SHACHOR... SAGOL

SEGOL is the name of the vowel that is NOT under the SAMACH in SAGOL (violet), but is under the SAMACH in the name of the vowel, SEGOL.



On a first glance in this week's parsha, Yaakov Avinu doesn't seem to be so righteous. First he takes advantage of his brother, Eisav who was tired and hungry and convinces him to sell his birthright. Later, it seems that he tricks his father and steals the blessings meant for his brother. Trickery, deceit, and mercilessness are not qualities that we would expect in one of our ancestors (and certainly not ones we would want to emulate).

That is why our sages teach us that Eisav was wicked and was not worthy of the b'chora (birthright) and the b'racha (blessing). From reading the p'shat, we might think that Yaakov is the bad guy and Eisav the good guy. But our Sages see hints in the text that point to Eisav's wickedness. They even say that on that same day he committed five horrible sins murder, adultery, denying G-d, denying resurrection of the dead, and despising the birthright.

If Eisav wasn't worthy of the b'chora and b'racha then it seems justified for them to end up with Yaakov.

Chaza"l teach us that G-d ended Avraham's life on that very same day, in order to spare him the heartache of seeing his grandson straying from his path. This explains why Yaakov (who was usually in the house of study and probably not in the kitchen) was cooking a lentil stew - the consolation meal for his father Yitzchak.

Eisav seems at first to be polite saying HALITEINU NA, please give me a swallow of some

of that red stuff. But Rav Mordechai Yehuda Leib says that here tb means raw - like in

the verse telling the Jews how to eat the Korban Pesach AL TOCHLUM MI'MENU NA..., do not eat it (the Korban Pesach raw" (Exodus 12:9). Eisav was so hungry that he couldn't wait until the lentils were cooked; he wanted them right away, even if they were raw. That explains how the dish was HA'ADOM HA'ADOM HAZEH, this red stuff. Raw or semi-raw lentils remain red, whereas cooked lentils turn yellowish (as you'll see if you make the recipe this week). Eisav asked just for the lentils but Yaakov also gave him bread. Oznayim LaTorah says this is so that in the future Eisav wouldn't be able to say that he sold the b'chora under duress (hunger), he had already filled his stomach with bread (given to him by Yaakov) before he sold the b'chora (birthright) for the lentil dish.

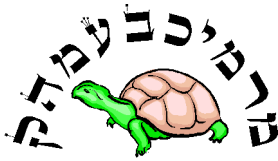
Majadra - a Middle Eastern rice and lentil dish

- 1 cup lentils (pre-soaked)
- 3 onions sliced thinly
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 cup rice
- 1 dessert spoon salt
- ½ dessert spoon cumin
- 1½ cup vegetable stock
- Pepper to taste

Steam the onions with the oil in a covered pan
 Add the rice and lentils, and fry for 2 min. stirring constantly
 Add the stock and the spices.
 Reduce the heat and cook for about 30 min. until rice is ready and the lentils are soft

[8] **Torah from Nature**

The pasuk whose initial letters form the name of this column - MA RABU MAASECHA HASHEM (T'hilim 104:24), is followed by the pasuk that mentions CHAYOT K'TANOT IM G'DOLOT, animals small with large. Let's marvel at some of the extremes of size in the animal world.



Smallest mammal is Kitti's Hog- Nosed Bat, a.k.a. bumblebee bat, measuring about 3cm long and weighing about 2g. That's about as long as this paragraph is tall, and a weight that is less than half a sheet of A4 paper. It is native to Thailand, and has a wingspan that would reach across this page.

Largest mammal is the Blue Whale, the largest of which weighed in at 187 tons. They can reach lengths of more than 30m (100 ft).

Compare that with an African bush elephant, largest land mammal, weighing in at only 12 tons.

Birds range from the bee hummingbird to the ostrich (6-270cm).

Fish from the Stout Infant fish (less than a cm.) to the whale shark (15m).

Smallest reptile: Dwarf gecko, Dominican Republic (1.6cm). Largest Australian Seawater Crocodile (7m).

[9] **Know Your Uncle and more...**

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. 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 Yitzchak's lifetime, but then they stopped observing Mila.

The Or HaChayim says that Rivka avoided speaking Lashon HaRa and R'chilut by telling Yitzchak that the reason she wanted Yaakov to leave town was her disgust for the local women, rather than tell him about Eisav's wanting to kill Yaakov.

[10] **Divrei Menachem**

Parshat Toldot establishes the ongoing tension between the Jewish people and our enemies, symbolized by the rivalry between Ya'akov and Esav. Our rabbis note that this animosity surfaced from the moment the two brothers emerged from the womb, with consequences that spilled over through the generations.

The ruddy Esav is associated with the other side: he is self-serving, the embodiment of evil. His red complexion is indicative of his murderous nature. While his base instincts could have been used for good, Esav let his nature run rampant, becoming the eternal symbol of cruelty.

In contrast to Esav, Ya'akov is a "dweller in tents", the personification of righteousness. Rivka knew that the brothers represented two nations and that Esav would serve his younger brother Ya'akov. While she understood that Ya'akov must receive the firstborn's blessing, Yitzchak favored Esav, convinced that he could turn his ugly traits to the service of Hashem.

Because of his faith in Esav, the blind Yitzchak was deceived. He hears the voice of Ya'akov but feels the hands of Esav. According to Rashi, Yitzchak heard Ya'akov invoking the name of G-d but believed it was Esav reaching new vistas. Of course, in our times, the opposite holds: we must beware of those who claim to be Ya'akov, speaking in G-d's name when they actually epitomize those conniving hands of Esav.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Davening and Torah Learning

אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה שְׁנַתָּת בִּי טְהוּרָה הִיא. אֲתָה
 בְּרֵאתָה, אֲתָה יִצְרָתָה, אֲתָה נִפְחָתָה בִּי, וְאֲתָה
 מִשְׁמְרָה בְּקִרְבִּי, וְאֲתָה עֵתִיד לְטֹלָה מִמֶּנִּי,
 וּלְהַחְזִירָה בִּי לְעֵתִיד לְבוֹא. כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה
 בְּקִרְבִּי, מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ, ה' אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי
 אֲבוֹתַי, רַבּוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הַמַּחְזִיר נְשָׁמוֹת לְפָגְרִים מֵתִים.

Most people have memories of being told when they were little, to say "thank you", and then being "coached" as to how to say it nicely, politely, correctly, etc. And then, more recent memories of teach our children the same things. As much as children don't like to be told, "Say thank you", "say you're sorry", etc. we hope that our training in that direction is character building. All

this in long introduction to a close look at the proper pronunciation (and meaning) of the way we say Thank You to G-d every morning. Not the quick, Thanks, be right back after I wash, etc. But the full version of MODEH ANI, the one we append to either ASHER YATZAR or to Birkot HaTorah.

First of all, The first word means "My G-d", it is a salutation, and if followed by a comma - which means pause. We don't say ELOHAI NESHAMA... we say ELOHAI <pause> NESHAMA SHENATATA BI... My G-d, the soul which you have placed in me is pure, T'HORA HI. Period. End of the first sentence. Native English speakers tend to shift too many accents to the earlier syllable. We should be careful. Not neSHama, for soul, but n'sha-MA. Most of the words in this b'racha are MILRA, accented on the last syllable. Exceptions are marked with a circle above the accented next-to-the-last syllable. she-na-TA-ta, mi-ME-ni, l'fa-NE-cha. Because Hebrew has no neuter gender, and because n'sha-MA (soul) is feminine, when we say to G-d, You created it, we say a-TA v'ra-TAHHH, the HEI has a MAPIK in it and is therefore aspirated (sounded). There are 6 words referring to the soul that end in MAPIK/HEI and we should learn to sound them all. You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me, and You preserve it within me, and You will in the future, take it from me, and return it into me at some point in the further future. We tend to rush b'rachot and prayers, especially the familiar ones. Try not to. You are talking to G-d. Say it like you mean it. Say it slowly. Say it correctly. Of course, this should go for all davening and brachot, Third sentence: KOL Z'MAN... as long as the soul is within me, MODEH ANI (finally, we get back to those words that we started our day with), I express my thanks before YOU, HaShem my G-d and the G-d of my forefathers, Lord of all works, Master of all souls.

Blessed are You, the One Who returns souls to dead bodies.

Note that in addition to being a bracha that thanks G-d for our being alive, this is also a statement of belief in the T'CHIYAT HAMEITIM, Revival of the Dead. This too should be in our KAVANA when we say ELOKAI, N'SHAMA.

Note the two BETs that lost their DAGESHes and became VETs. v'ra-TAHHH and v'kir-BI.

A word to those who daven in Ashkenazic pronunciation. Just because a TAV without a DAGESH is pronounced like an S rather than a T, doesn't mean that we can misaccent words. v'ra-TA becomes v'raw-SAWHHH, not B'RAW-saw. Etc. Etc.

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.

Kohanim, T'fila (Prayer) and the Beit Hamikdash

"And hearken Thou unto the supplication of Thy servant, and thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place, yea, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and when Thou hearest, forgive..." (I Melachim 8:30)

The moving prayer offered by King Solomon at the dedication of Bayit Rishon does not mention Korbanot at all; the king referred to the new Beit Hamikdash as a House of Prayer several times (I Melachim 8:12-61). For this reason, it is remarkable that T'fila plays almost no part in the Avoda of the

Kohanim in the Mikdash. The Mikdash has rightly been called the "Kingdom of Silence". Traditionally, the placing of the Lechem HaPanim (showbread) was seen as a silent prayer for sustenance, but nowhere was this thought explicitly expressed in prayer. While early Christian writings may note that "multitudes of people prayed without (in the Temple Court) at the time of incense", the Kohein actually sprinkling the Ketoret upon the glowing coals on the Mizbach HaZahav, the golden incense altar, did so in complete silence. The Kohein quietly recited the particular B'racha over the offering of the incense acknowledging the divine origin of the Mitzva, but he did not audibly recite a special prayer of supplication for Am Yisrael or even utter words of praise when he did so. Similarly, the Kohanim trimmed, cleaned and lit the lamps of the Menora in total silence. "Why did the Torah enjoin us to offer an Omer (of barley) on Pesach? Because Pesach is the season of produce. Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, 'Bring before Me an Omer on Pesach so that your produce in the fields be blessed. Why did the Torah enjoin us to bring two loaves on Shavu'ot? Because Shevu'ot is the season for the fruit of the tree. Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, 'Bring before Me two loaves on Shavu'ot so the fruit of your trees will be blessed. (The farmers did not bring their Bikurim - first fruits - to the Mikdash before Shavu'ot.) Why did the Torah enjoin us to pour out water (on the Mizbei'ach) on Sukkot? The Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'Pour out water before Me on Sukkot, so your rains may be blessed...' (Rosh Hashanah 16a). The Kohanim poured water on the Mizbei'ach on Sukkot; they did not recite Tefilat Geshem. The Gemara speaks of Avodot Hamikdash that consisted of acts and deeds, not prayer.

In Bayit Sheini, the Levitical choir accompanied Korbanot Tzibur (communal sacrifices) with instruments and the singing of T'hilim (Psalms). II Divrei Hayamim 20:21 refers to the Levitical music as Hadrat Kodesh - the beauty of holiness. The Leviyim played musical instruments and "sang praises with gladness" but they did not offer prayer. (Interestingly enough, while many T'hilim were composed by Leviyim, none were composed by Kohanim.) When the Kohanim slaughtered the sacrificial animals, received the blood and conveyed it to the Mizbei'ach, Kohanim chanted no prayers or hymns. Nor is it recorded that they prayed on behalf of the farmer who brought his Bikurim to the Mikdash as ordained. The Kohanim merely received the basket of Bikurim from the farmer and silently placed it next to the Mizbei'ach. (In D'varim 26:5, only the farmer articulates the declaration found in the Torah, the Kohein is silent. However, many farmers were unable to recite the required declaration (D'varim 26:1-12) unaided. Embarrassed, this inability to fulfill the Mitzvah caused many of them to stop bringing their Bikurim to the Mikdash. The Sages therefore ordained, "Those who could recite and also those who could not recite would repeat" the declaration word by word after the Kohein [Bikurim 3:7]). Neither did the Kohanim pray for the healed Metzora ("leper"). It is instructive that the elaborate rites for the purification and the atonement of the Metzora began only after the Kohein pronounced him healed. The many Avodot performed by the Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur, with the exception of a "short prayer" (Yoma 5:1) were all performed in silence. This prayer was not an organic part of the Avoda and there is no mention of such a prayer in the Torah. Moreover, it is significant that the Kohein Gadol recited his "short prayer" only after he exited the Kodesh HaKodashim. Perhaps the divinely ordained Avodot in the Beit HaMikdash - where the celestial worlds intersected with the terrestrial - had such an exulted aura of holiness that the prayers

of mere mortals would only serve to distract.

Yet, despite the conspicuous absence of prayer in the Mikdash, there was a regular "morning Minyan" in the Azara! Every day, the Kohanim "betook themselves to Lishkat Hagazit (the Chamber of Hewn Stone, the seat of the Sanhedrin) to recite the Shema" (Tamid 4:3). This "Mikdash Minyan", which met in Lishkat Hagazit, was well organized; it even had officials. "The Chazzan of the synagogue would take a Scroll of the Law and give it to the head of the synagogue and the head of the synagogue would give it to the deputy Kohein Gadol who in turn would give it to the Kohein Gadol (to read in the Azara on Yom Kippur before Am Yisrael)... (Yoma7:1). What was the role of the Mikdash "shul president"? Bartenura thought that the "head of the synagogue" was the "Gabbai". He decided, "who said the Maftir... and who went before the Teiva and 'conducted services'". However, the Gemara in B'rachot posits that the deputy Kohein Gadol was the real decision maker. "The deputy Kohein Gadol said to (the Kohanim), 'Say one benediction (Ahava Rabba) and they said the benediction and then they recited the Ten Commandments, the Shema (and Ve'ahavta), Vehaya Im Shamo'a, and Va'yomer and three benedictions with the people, Emet Ve'yatziv, Retzei, and Birkat Kohanim. (This "Mikdash minyan" probably also included Leviyim; they had to say the Sh'ma too! Public recitations in the Azara were not part of the Avoda!) On Shabbat, they said an additional benediction; the outgoing Mishmar (of Kohanim) blessed the new company of incoming Kohanim. 'May He who caused His name to dwell in this House cause to dwell among you love and brotherhood and peace and friendship'" (B'rachot 12a).

When the Mikdash was destroyed, the Sages tried to find connections between prayer (the "alternative Avoda" of the Sages, so to speak) and the "original" Avoda of the Mikdash. "Why did they say that the morning prayer could be recited up to midday? Because the regular morning sacrifice (Tamid Boker) could be brought until midday... Why did they say that the afternoon service might be brought until evening? ...Because the regular afternoon offering (Tamid Bein Ha'arbayim) could be brought until the evening... And why did they say that for the evening service, there is no limit (i.e. it could be said until morning). Because the limbs and the fat (of the Korbanot), which could not be consumed on the Mizbei'ach by evening, could be burnt all night... Moreover, why did they say that the additional prayers (Musaf said on Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Chagim) could be said all day? Because the Musafin (on these days) could be brought during the entire day...." (B'rachot 26b).

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



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.

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.

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.

There are also 2 new Visual 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] Avraham : Sara :: Ido : whom?
- [2] Among many others, only these... Ada, Hagar, Sara (twice), Bilha, Zilpa (twice), [3] Rachel, Ada, Maacha
- [4] Nine extroverts in the beginning
- [5] Avraham, Yehoshua, David
- [6] At least twenty million
- [7] That leaves the Zodiac TTriddle
- [8] Two unexplained elements in the ParshaPix

And the envelope, please...

[1] The TTriddle should have read: Avraham is to Sara as who is to Ido? Avraham came LISPOD, to eulogize Sara. Only one other occurrence in Tanach of someone coming to eulogize someone. It is in Melachim Alef 13. A "man of G-d" (Rashi says it was Ido the prophet) delivers a message from G-d and performs a miraculous sign to King Y'rav'am. He (Ido) is then deceived by a false prophet and disobeys G-d as a result. Consequently he dies, and the false prophet regrets what he did, laments Ido's death, and he LISPODs him. Something like that.

[2] Among the many women that give birth in Tanach, this is the short list of the times it says [VATEILED name of the women]. It does say it twice in reference to Sara Imeinu, but the two ADAs on the list are different people. One is one of the wives of Lemech, blind killer of Kayin; the other is a wife of Eisav. These are the children named after VATEILED so-and-so: YAVAL, Yishmael, Yitzchak, Naftali, Gad and Asher each follow a VATEILED ZILPA, Binyamin, Elifaz, Peresh. Remember, there are many more VATEILEDs, but only these 8 women's names directly for the word VATEILED.

[3] Extroverts are outgoing people. In the Beginning means B'reishit. In this TTriddle, reference is to people in the Book of B'reishit whose names follow the word VAYEITZEI. They are: Kayin, No'ach, Bera (king of Sedom), Lot, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Eisav, Chamor (father of Sh'chem), Yosef.

[4] The sedra contains the unusual phrase to describe Avraham's advanced years: ZAKEIN, BA BAYAMIM. The haftara uses the same phrase for David HaMelech. Anyone else? Just Yehoshua. Twice. That's it. Interesting, there ages at death were 175, 70, and 110 respectively. So the phrase means more than advanced years.

[5] Lavan's blessing to Rivka (which is used for brides at weddings unto this day) included, May you be the mother of thousands of myriads. Thousands is plural. Minimum plural is two. so Lavan's blessing was for Rivka to be the ancestries of at least 2000 ten-thousands, which is 20,000,000 or twenty million.

[6] For several months now, in the Word of the Month box on page 2, we have been using a TTriddles version of the mazal of the month (Zodiac symbol), rather than the traditional symbols. We switch to the new month on the Shabbat of Rosh Chodesh Benching. Kislev's month symbol is old time actor Errol Flynn (1909-1959) in the role of Robin Hood, who was an expert archer. The mazal of Kislev is Sagittarius, a.k.a. the Centaur, a.k.a. the Archer.

[7] In the ParshaPix, there is an arrow from the gift package to the bull. The represents the phrase at the end of the sedra describing where the families from Yishmael traveled and dwelt - from CHAVILA (package) to SHUR (homograph of SHOR).

[8] DING, DING, DING. This is not just a visual TTriddle. This is the first Not-Just-T's TTriddle, the first submitted solution thereof wins a custom made T-shirt from Not-Just-T's. What you have in the lower-left corner of the ParshaPix is a badge. No, not the police or even the FBI, it is a badge of that special organization known as CONTROL. (Just found a terrific website www.wouldyoubelieve.com, and searched it to find out what CONTROL stood for. It didn't. It's just the word. In contrast to KAOS.) The badge belongs to Agent 99, played by Barbara Feldon. And finally, we come to the TTriddle. As a female agent, 99 was a SOCHENET, a word that appears twice in the haftara of Chayei Sara, in reference to Avishag. These are

the only two appearances of the word in Tanach.

[9] In Chayei Sara: Sara (11), Yitzchak (13), Eliezer (by name, 0), HaIsh (9) Eved (13), Avraham (37). This was NOT a TTriddle, but it might have looked like one. It is the number of occurrences of various names and monickers in Chayei Sara. Noteworthy is the fact that Eliezer is never called by his name, just the Servant, Avraham's servant, and the Man, a total of 22 times. Let's add a couple more names to fill out the picture. Rivka (13), Lavan (3), Betuel (4), Yishmael (6). Notice the balance with 13 Yitzchaks and 13 Rivkas. Also balanced are Ha'Ish and Ha'Eved at 9 each. What does it mean? Does it mean anything? Maybe something.

This week's TTriddles:

[1] The T-shirt TTriddle:

To which Jerusalem neighborhood did Rivka send Yaakov?

First correct answer wins a T-shirt from Not Just T's, Rechov HaHistadrut, off Ben Yehuda. Whether or not you get this TTriddle, it's K'DAI to check out Not Just T's. Tell them Torah Tidbits sent you.

[2] Two others who prayed the same way

[3] Gerar, Charan, Timna

[4] Author of N'KUDOT HAKESEF

[5] plus two elements from the ParshaPix