

VAYISHLACH STATS

8th of 54 sedras; 8th of 12 in B'reishit
 Written on 237 lines in a Sefer Torah; ranks 11
 9 Parshi'ot - 6 P'tuchot; 3 S'tumot
 153 p'sukim - 4th (1st in B'reishit), Same
 number as No'ach, but more words and letters
 1976 words - 6th (4th in B'reishit)
 7458 letters - 6th (4th in B'reishit)

The drop in rank for words and letters is
 because its p'sukim are well below average in
 number of words and letters (but not as low as
 No'ach). In other words, Vayishlach has many
 relatively short p'sukim

MITZVOT:

1 of the 613, the first prohibition of the
 Torah's 365; the only one in B'reishit -
 GID HaNASHEH

The Board and Staff of the Israel Center
 extend our deepfelt condolences to
 Harvey Wolinetz and family upon the passing of
 his beloved father,
Mr. Leonard Wolinetz ז"ל
 המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

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 - 10 p'sukim - 32:4-13

[P> 32:4 (47)] Yaakov sends messen- gers to his brother
 Eisav with a mes- sage of conciliation (and warning?).

SDT Onkeles seems to consider the messengers that Yaakov
 sent to be human (IZGADIN are runners or
 messengers); Rashi states that the word MAL'ACHIM is to be
 taken literally, as heavenly angels. Commentaries point to the
 end of last week's sedra (which tells of Yaakov's encountering
 the "camps" of angels upon his return to Eretz Yisrael) as
 support for Rashi's point of view. Bartenura further explains
 that Biblical references to angels always include something
 they said or a prophetic message. When Yaakov encountered
 the angels, nothing is said. It could be argued, that the Torah
 mentioned the angels in connection with Yaakov's sending them
 to Eisav. Other commentaries say that Yaakov sent angels
 because humans might be affected by Eisav and angels would
 be able to "read" the situation accurately.

One Chassidic Master put it this way: When a Jew is facing a
 threat from an Eisav-type and needs help, he may even bother
 heavenly angels for their support.

SDT One of Yaakov's statements was that he had been living
 with Lavan and was delayed until now. Rashi learns,
 that "he lived with Lavan but did not learn from his evil ways".
 Some see this as a compliment to Yaakov, that he was able to
 maintain his complete adherence to the Torah in such an alien
 atmosphere. Others see an implied criticism: All those years in
 Lavan's home, and he did not learn from Lavan's evil ways...
 how to channel the cunning and enthusiasm he witnessed
 towards his own service of G-d. There are lessons to be learned
 even by negative example.

Yaakov announces to Eisav that he has "oxen, donkeys,
 sheep, servants".

SDT Why does Yaakov tell this to Eisav? Is he boasting
 about wealth that he has amassed in Lavan's house?
 No, just the opposite. Yaakov is telling Eisav that although he
 has much material wealth and large flocks and herds, he does
 not have land. He has not (yet) benefited from the blessing (that
 Eisav felt should have been his) of "from the dew of the heavens
 and the fertility of the ground..." Therefore, Yaakov hoped that
 Eisav would not be angry with him.

Side note: Yaakov is, so far, blessed with the Shehakol
 type of wealth. The other 5 of the 6 brachot for food are
 all related to that which comes from the ground, the
 blessings of TAL HASHA MAYIM & SH'MANEI HA'ARETZ,
 which Yaakov has not yet received.

The report of Eisav's pending arrival with 400 men
 prompts Yaakov into three modes of action. He first
 divides his camp into two, so that one will be able to
 escape if the other is attacked. Then he prays to G-d for
 His help and the fulfillment of promises made. (the third
 phase is in the next portion.)

SDI Commentaries point out that he asks G-d to save him "from my brother - from Eisav". This is not a redundancy. The Jew faces two enemies: The Eisavs of the world who would destroy the Jewish people, and the "friendly brothers" who would gladly permit us to assimilate into their cultures - thereby also bringing about the destruction of the Jewish People. Yaakov prays for salvation from both threats.

Similarly, in the very first pasuk of the sedra, Yaakov sends the angels (or messengers) to his BROTHER EISAV. Yaakov is always aware that Eisav is both, and he must be weary of both persona.

The Beit HaLevi puts it this way. Danger #1 is war. Danger #2 is a treaty with Eisav that can also be disastrous. Does this say anything to us today?

Levi - Second Aliya -

17 p'sukim - 32:14-30

Yaakov next prepares elaborate gifts from his flocks and herds for Eisav to be delivered with a good-will message of appeasement.

SDI Baal HaTurim points out that there are two p'sukim in the Torah in which every word ends with a "final mem". Here in Vayishlach (32:15): 200 she-goats, 20 he-goats... and BaMidbar (29:33): And their (referring to sacrifices) flour-oil offerings, their wine of libation, for the oxen... Is there a connection? Yaakov sent 550 animals as an appeasement to Eisav, even though G-d had assured him that He would protect him. Yaakov's descendants were destined to offer 550 animals per year as Musaf sacrifices. (The numbers need work, and years differ from one another in number of days, but the final results bear out the Baal HaTurim's remarkable observation.)

He instructs his servants what to say when they meet up with Eisav.

During the night before his encounter with Eisav, Yaakov finds himself alone. (This is one of the sources for the rule that a person should not go out alone at night.)

SDI Commentaries tell us that Yaakov had returned across the Yabok River to retrieve small flasks of oil that had been left behind. Some say that this was the oil with which he anointed the altar and monument he built in G-d's honor, and that this flask of oil was the antecedent of the sole flask of oil found by the Hashmona'im many centuries later. This is another of many examples of MAASEI AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM.

Yaakov battles with a "man" (whom we are taught is the guardian angel of Eisav). Yaakov prevails in this struggle but is injured. He receives an unusual blessing from the angel in the form of an additional name - Yisrael.

SDI Yaakov asks the angel who has wrestled with him to give him a bracha. Rashi says that he was asking that the angel acknowledge the brachot that Yaakov had received from Yitzchak, which Yitzchak had intended to give to Eisav. Perhaps what prompts Rashi to this explanation rather than the situation being simply that Yaakov was asking for a new bracha, is the unusual word BEIRACHTANI (which relates to the past) and not BOR'CHEINI (bless me now).

Note that the angel does not declare that Yaakov will no longer be his name, but rather Yisrael. He does say that it will no longer be said that he is a "Yaakov" (one who

holds onto his brother's heel to hold him back) but rather he will be referred to as Yisrael, the one who prevailed before G-d and man. Unlike Avraham, whose previous name is no longer used after he is renamed Avraham, Yaakov carries both names. In fact, the second word after the angel's declaration of the new name is Yaakov. Similarly, when G-d confirms the name Yisrael upon Yaakov, he (Yaakov) is still called Yaakov, and sometimes Yisrael. This is the flavor of Rashi's commentary on LO YAAKOV, which he explains thus: People will no longer call you "the one who held your brother back", but they will acknowledge you as having justly prevailed.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 32:31-33:5

MITZVA WATCH

The perennial battle between Eisav and Yaakov, which this battle typifies, is "commemorated" by the prohibition of "Gid HaNasheh" [3,L183 32:33]. Even though the Torah introduces this mitzva in the context of the story, the mitzva is considered part of the Revelation at Sinai, as if it would have said: "And G-d spoke to Moshe saying - command the People not to eat the Gid..." The only "negative" mitzva in the book of B'reishit is this prohibition against eating the "Gid HaNasheh". Removal of the "gid" and its inner- vating branches in the thigh and leg of the animal, as well as the fats and flesh in the area, is required, and difficult. Further problems result from blood vessels that must be removed from that part of the animal's body. The process of removal of the GID and other vessels is known as "Nikur" or "treiberung". It is, in most cases, not economically feasible to remove the "gid". The whole hind section of the animal is generally sold as non-kosher (thereby removing the GID from the rest of the cow's body). This is the standard practice in the U.S. In Israel, however, where there is not a so readily available non-kosher market, nikur is done. This means that some fancy hind cuts of meat are available to the kosher consumer. (Tenderloin, sirloin, porterhouse...)

Yaakov sees Eisav and his men coming; he pushes his family behind him and repeatedly bows to his brother. Eisav runs towards him embraces him, k*i*s*s*e*s him, and weeps.

SDI Mishlei 24:16 says: For a righteous person will fall seven times and rise up... Baal HaTurim relates this pasuk to Yaakov's bowing 7 times before Eisav.

Finally, Yaakov and Eisav - brothers, twins! - are face to face, and Eisav runs towards Yaakov and embraces him, hugs him, and kisses him. Asterisks on the word VAYISHAKEIHU. The Scribal custom is calling our attention to something important. A message we dare not overlook or ignore. Rashi tells us that our Sages in a Midrashic B'rait'a debate the message of the six dots written above the word. Some explain the dots by saying that the kiss was not sincere. Eisav still resented (hated) Yaakov, and absence did NOT make the heart grow fonder. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai disagrees. But he does not take the opposite point of view. Not exactly. He says (as Rashi quotes him) that it is a well-known truism (a halacha, in the wording of Rashi) that Eisav

(and his descendants, and his spiritual heirs) hates Yaakov. Fact of Life. At this moment of their reunion after so many years of separation, says R' Shimon b. Yochai, Eisav was overwhelmed with brotherly feelings and he kissed Yaakov "with all his heart".

That's nice. It really is. But Eisav still hates Yaakov. And the descendants of Eisav still hate the children of Yaakov. And other people throughout the generations, up to and including today, and probably for a couple of tomorrows as well, still hate the Jewish People. And even when they are pressured and blackmailed into condemning terrorist acts, they proclaim that such acts are not in THEIR best interest, but do not condemn terror out of a desire for peace with Israel. (Just an example.)

Or they say one thing to the English-speaking media and world, and a very different thing to their own people in Arabic (to use another example).

Eisav asks about the women and children and Yaakov prepares to introduce his family to Eisav.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 15 p'sukim - 33:6-20

Yaakov humbles (humiliates?) himself before Eisav as he presents his family to him, all of whom bow to Eisav. Yaakov presented his wives and 11 children.

SDT *Why did Yaakov hide Dina from Eisav? Some explain that Yaakov did not want Eisav to take Dina as a wife and thereby subject her to his wickedness. For this, Yaakov was punished, because Dina might have been (probably?) a positive influence in Eisav's life. (The very next portion of the Torah tells us of the kidnap and rape of Dina and the subsequent debacle of the revenge exacted by Shimon and Levi.) Commentaries ask whether Yaakov should be praised, rather than punished, for protecting Dina. Bartenura says that Yaakov's reason for hiding Dina was not the fear of anything negative happening to her, but the fear that she would succeed in reforming Eisav, which would make him worthy of the blessing that he would dominate his brother.*

Eisav asks about the groups of animals that he met on his way. Eisav at first refuses to accept the gifts, but eventually takes them. Then Eisav suggests that he and Yaakov join together. Yaakov adamantly refuses.

NOTE: At first, Yaakov seems to want to avoid antagonizing Eisav, even to the point of humbling himself before his brother. However, when the possibility of subjecting his family to the influences of Eisav is at issue, Yaakov boldly risks confrontation. Lesson to learn.

[S> 33:18 (3)] Yaakov travels to the Sh'chem area where he purchases land and builds a Mizbei'ach.

The land that Yaakov purchased was later used for the burial of Yosef's remains.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 42 p'sukim - 34:1-35:11

The SDT on the previous page about a connection between Yaakov's hiding Dina and the episode of her abduction is borne out by the juxtaposition of

the two portions, but more so by the fact that VATZEITZEI DINA is a S'tuma, a closed parsha, which means more of a connection to the previous parsha than a P'tucha would indicate. And add to this that the parsha after the Dina episode is p'tucha.

[S> 34:1 (31)] Dina (who had been hidden from Eisav) now goes out to explore the "local attractions". She is kidnapped and raped by Sh'chem who then falls in love with her. His father proposes an alliance with Yaakov's family for the purpose of intermarriage and fusing of their cultures. Shimon and Levi trick Sh'chem and his people into circumcising themselves. When the people are weakened, Shimon and Levi kill them to avenge what was done to Dina. Yaakov is upset at what they have done (perhaps not - some commentaries say he was upset at not being consulted in the first place), but they defend their actions.

[P> 35:1 (8)] G-d tells Yaakov to move to Beit-El and build an altar there. Yaakov rids his household of idols. G-d prevents the locals from pursuing Yaakov and family to avenge the killing of the people of Sh'chem.

Rivka's nurse Devora dies and is buried. (There is a Tradition that Rivka died at this point too. Some suggest that the Torah was silent about Rivka's death because Yaakov was not around to tend to her burial, only Eisav was.)

Who was D'vora, the nursemaid of Rivka? Why does she rate mention by name? Why is her death mentioned? It has been suggested that she was one of Avraham and Sara's "converts", but that they purposely did not take her when they went to Eretz Yisrael, with "the souls they had made there". Rather, they left her as a tutor for Rivka Imeinu, someone to teach her and influence her to become worthy and fitting to be Yitzchak's wife and one of the Matriarchs of the Jewish People.

[P> 35:9 (14)] G-d appears once again to Yaakov and blesses him. He confirms the new name Yisrael (which is used alongside the name Yaakov, each having different connotations).

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 37 p'sukim - 35:12-36:19

G-d reiterates His promise of the Land to Yaakov and his descendants. Yaakov erects another monument to mark the place at which G-d appeared to him. Rachel gives birth to Binyamin (11th of Cheshvan) and dies in childbirth. She thanks G-d with her dying breath for her having a second son. She is buried on the "road to Efrata" and her burial place is marked "even unto this day".

Reuven UNTRANSLATED with Bilha...

SDT *The Gemara states: Anyone who thinks that Reuven actually slept with Bilha, as the literal translation of the pasuk would indicate, is grossly mistaken. Some say that Reuven moved Yaakov's bed from the tent of Bilha - where Yaakov had placed it after Rachel's death - into his mother's (Leah's) tent. The Torah's cryptic description of what he did is considered a sharp rebuke of his actions, which were disrespectful to his father. Nonetheless, he was motivated by protective jealousy for his mother Leah. The Mishna states that*

when the Torah was translated into Aramaic during public Torah reading, this pasuk was not translated. It was read, but it was left without TIRGUM so as not to mislead and confuse the people. This is a glaring example (of which there are many more, as well as more subtle ones) of the inability to understand the Written Word without its inseparable partner, the Oral Torah. This is so for "story" parts of the Torah, as well as Halachic texts. This is the tragedy of the nations of the world clutching their bibles and thinking that they hold in their hands the Word of G-d. They hold only part of the Word of G-d which is so easily misunderstood and perverted in the absence of its Oral part.

[P> 35:23 (7)] ...the sons of Yaakov are 12.

SDT This statement is part of the same pasuk (although it begins a new parsha) as the statement about Reuven's deed. This is considered proof of the Talmudic statement mentioned above. Had Reuven actually sinned, he would not immediately be acknowledged as one of the sons of Yaakov, he would have been ostracized, or worse. Additionally, he is identified as Yaakov's B'CHOR in the very next pasuk.

Yaakov's sons are enumerated. Yaakov returns to his father's home. Yitzchak dies at 180 and is buried by Yaakov and Eisav.

[P> 36:1 (19)] Eisav's descendants are enumerated.

The fact that this is done at this point in the Torah, before the Torah continues with the accounts of the family of Yaakov seems to say: Let's finish up with Eisav first, before we continue with the important line of descent. Eisav is a force in this world, but he is not the reason for its existence. I (says the Torah, so to speak) am not yet ready to continue telling about Israel; I'll get to it after this business is out of the way.

Another reason offered for the detailed presentation of Eisav's lineage is a rebuke of sorts for Yaakov's humbling himself before Eisav. Call him your master and you his servant, says G-d (so to speak), then I will establish him and his line of royalty in their own land many years before you and your descendants are ready for nationhood and their own kings.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 24 p'sukim - 36:20-43

[S> 36:20 (11)] The Torah continues naming the descendants of Se'ir the Chori. These are the people who lived in the land of Edom before Eisav's clan received it. Eisav married Oholivama of Se'ir and Eisav's eldest son Elifaz married (actually, took as a concubine) Timna from Se'ir. Eisav "had a life" in Canaan, and then when the clan moved to Se'ir there are other wives and children who become family heads.

[P> 36:31 (13)] Finally, the Torah enumerates the kings that ruled the city-states of Eisav/Edom/Se'ir, "even before there ruled a king in Israel". Israel must still go through many stages of refinement and pass through many trials and tribulations before they are to emerge as The People of Israel. The last 4 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 21 p'sukim - The book(let) of Ovadya

Some communities read different Haftarat

The ongoing battle between Yaakov and Eisav is the main theme of the prophecy of Ovadya. The prophecy focuses on the ultimate judgment that Eisav's descendants face; G-d will emerge as the true King of all. The Haftara "answers" the question raised in the sedra as to what are the real feelings of Eisav to Yaakov.

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

Lesson # 311

Laws of Informers

We come now to a topic that is frequently used by governmental authorities to obtain information about its citizens, such as offering rewards for information leading to the arrest of a wanted person.

Reuven, either voluntarily or under threat from a brigand, informs the brigand of the location of Shimon's assets (his real or personal property, or money). As a result of the information provided by Reuven, the brigand seizes Shimon's assets. There are times when Reuven is liable to Shimon and there are times when he is not.

The halacha regarding informers differentiates two types threats by brigands, i.e. physical or monetary.

The character of Shimon is irrelevant

The bad or wicked character of Shimon is of no significance in the defense of Reuven the informer, even if Shimon is deemed wicked by the community or if he is one who sins for personal satisfaction. Even if Shimon was mean to Reuven, Reuven may not inform against, him to the brigand.

Furthermore it is a tradition that anyone who is an informer without having been physically threatened has no part in the World to Come. He goes to Hell and never emerges from there.

The community, according to the instruction of Beth Din, may punish whoever is presumed to be an informer, (except one who is physically threatened). He may be punished even before he actually informs, if he only threatens to do so. After proper warnings, such punishments may include beatings, ostracisms, requesting punishment by the secular non-Jewish courts, and other methods that Beth Din deems proper.

Although ordinarily Beth Din may not hear testimony if a party is not present, in the case of an informer, they may accept testimony about him even if he is not present, and may be less strict in deciding a case against him. The informer is not permitted to take any oath in Beth Din that would be beneficial to him.

Whatever sanctions may be taken against an informer may also be taken against one who hired, encouraged, or instructed him to do such an act.

Shimon may employ any means available to save himself from Reuven including causing damage to Reuven's property and inflicting injury on Reuven.

All of the foregoing sanctions against Reuven apply only if he is not physically threatened. If the brigand physically threatens Reuven, he is not liable to these sanctions, although there are times that he has monetary liability to Shimon. Similarly, if Reuven admits to being an informer he is not subject to the sanctions described above, but he must still make the necessary payments to Shimon. In all situations Reuven should consult a competent Rabbi to discuss how he can gain forgiveness from Shimon and the community. Only then can God forgive him. There are times when Reuven the informer is not liable to Shimon. Reuven is free of liability under the following circumstances:

1. If Reuven is threatened by a brigand with physical harm or death to disclose Shimon's assets, and he does so. Reuven must reasonably conclude that if he does not comply with the demands of the brigand to disclose the whereabouts of Shimon's assets, then he risks physical injury or even death at the hands of the brigand. Although one may not save himself by using the assets of his fellow, in this situation the brigand has already fixed his intent to forcibly obtain Shimon's assets; Reuven is not the proximate cause of the loss to Shimon.

2. Shimon seeks to flee paying his debts to his creditors and Reuven informs the creditors who then stop Shimon. Reuven is not an informer since Shimon is indebted to his creditors.

However, if as a result of Reuven informing the creditors, Shimon pays more than his debts, Reuven must compensate Shimon for his loss. Some of the Codes speak of the practice of Beth Din or community leaders to advise merchants regarding those who seek to purchase on credit and do not pay their bills or borrow and do not repay the loans. This extends to all types of business practices, naming those who adulterate company products. Or those who pass off gold plate for solid gold. The Codes speak of this as a commendable practice to be instituted in all communities. It is also maintained that when the Gentiles observe such practice they will respect Jewish beliefs.

Reuven is liable to Shimon for the value of the property or money seized under the following circumstances:

1. Reuven voluntarily informs about Shimon's assets without threat of physical harm to disclose Shimon's assets.

2. As a result of Reuven's actions the brigand knows of Shimon's assets. For example, Shimon retains Reuven to sell a precious stone for him. Reuven decides not to sell the stone and returns the stone to Shimon in the presence of a brigand. The brigand then forcibly takes the stone from Shimon. Another example is if two partners, Reuven and Shimon, loan money to the ruler. The ruler forces Reuven to forgive the entire debt, which he does. In this case Reuven is free of liability to Shimon for his half of the debt.

3. A brigand threatens Reuven with monetary loss if he does not disclose where Shimon is and/or where Shimon has his assets, and Reuven informs the brigand. Reuven is liable to Shimon for the value of the assets and he is liable to Shimon for all of Shimon's suffering.

There is a view that holds that if the brigand threatens Reuven with monetary loss unless Reuven supplies a product such as liquor, without specifying Shimon's liquor, and Reuven tells the brigand where Shimon's liquor is found, Reuven is liable if he has liquor of his own. But if he has no liquor of his own and he tells the brigand of Shimon's liquor, Reuven is not liable.

4. If a brigand threatens Reuven, even with physical harm, to

disclose his own assets, and he shows the brigand Shimon's assets, or if he shows the brigand both his own and Shimon's assets.

5. If the brigand threatens Reuven, even with physical harm, to bring him provisions, without specifying Shimon's provisions, and Reuven tells the brigand that Shimon has such provisions; the brigand takes Shimon's provisions.

6. Reuven physically touches the asset that he hands over to a brigand. This applies even if he was forced by the brigand to do so. For example, Reuven and Shimon are in dispute as to ownership of property, real or personal, each one claiming sole ownership. Reuven turns the property over to a brigand or a government official. Beth Din will compel Reuven to retrieve the property that he handed over and Beth Din will then determine ownership. However, technically Reuven is not an informer, since he had not intended that the brigand would keep the property but would only hold it to preserve it for Reuven. There is authority that Reuven is deemed to be an informer in this situation and is therefore liable to Shimon for the loss.

We shall IYH complete this topic in the next lesson.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume X chapter 388 of A Restatement of Rabbinic Civil Law by E. Quint. Copies of all volumes can be purchased via email: orders@gefepublishing.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

Wisdom of Secrets III

The last two weeks we have been studying the blessing "the wise One of secrets", CHACHAM HARAZIM, blessing God Who knows the secret thoughts and views of each individual. We make this blessing when we see "multitudes" of Israel; then we are specially aware of God's presence and wisdom as each person's unique view- point reflects one aspect of His holiness, just as each color in the spectrum makes up one essential aspect of the white light of the sun (SA OC 224:5, based on Berakhot 58a).

The gemara continues: "Ulla said, we hold that there are no multitudes in Bavel [Babylonia]. It is taught [in a b'raita]: There is no multitude less than 600,000."

The significance of the number 600,000 is that this is the number of adult males counted among the children of Israel at the time of the Exodus. So this number represents a number of souls sufficient to encompass the entire scope of views and characters of the Jewish people. A common theme in Chasidic writings is that at all times the Jewish people comprises this number of individual souls, which are like the primal elements or building blocks from which all subsequent, "compound" souls are created. And indeed the Shulchan Arukh rules that the blessing is only said on 600,000 individuals.

The statement of Ulla regarding Bavel is more controversial. Rambam (B'rakhot 10:11) writes that the blessing is said only in the land of Israel. Although Ulla mentions only Bavel, Bavel is

often the synecdochic term for the entire Diaspora, whose center was there for many centuries.

Rav Kook explains that these two characteristics, number and place, teach us that the unique status of the Jewish people is evident only when we are a nation, not when our multitudes represent only "a party or a faction". [An appropriate thought for this election season.] Nationhood in turn has two conditions: a sufficient number of people, specifically the same number which saw the "birth of a nation" in Egypt, and in addition the land of Israel, which is the only place our national character can flourish. (Olat Rayah I:387.)

However, the Shulchan Arukh, following the Tur, does not rule out making the blessing in the Diaspora. The Beit Yosef mentions a number of possible reasons why the Tur does not rule like the Rambam. One possibility is that Ulla was merely making a factual statement: There aren't enough Jews in Bavel to assemble a multitude of 600,000, so even if you see a huge crowd, don't make the blessing. Another possibility is that Ulla does rule that the blessing can't be made in Bavel, but his ruling is contradicted by the practice of Rav Chanina son of Rav Ika who made the blessing on seeing two Torah scholars in Bavel, as we mentioned in last week's column. We saw last week that the Tur rules in accordance with Rav Chanina that the blessing can in principle be made on an outstanding Torah figure who embodies the many-faceted wisdom of Torah.

However, we also pointed out last week that the Tur himself states that practically speaking there are no Torah scholars of this stature, so the blessing is not made on scholars today. We also explained, based on Rav Kook, that the blessing can't be made on scholars because it acknowledges not only that "their views differ" but also that "their faces differ" in other words, we wonder not only at the amazing variety of personalities but also at the remarkable combination of practical talents. Based on this explanation, we can partially reconcile Ulla's view with the ruling of the Tur and the Shulchan Arukh. There is no actual prohibition on reciting the blessing abroad, but practically speaking "There are no multitudes in Bavel" the unique character of the Jewish people, combining spiritual outlook and practical talents, are destined to be realized only here in the Land of Israel.

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

Avraham, Lot, and S'dom [2]

The two angels, one to save Lot and the other to destroy the cities, came to S'dom in the evening. Their timing was not accidental but explains the different sequences in their welcome by Lot and Avraham. The latter thinking them to be idolaters who worshipped the dust of their feet, first asked them to wash their feet and then to enter his camp. Lot, however, was not concerned with their religious beliefs but rather was worried about the risk of transgressing the laws of S'dom that forbade giving shelter to strangers. Such and allied legislation making

immorality and evil legal, distinguished S'dom from the other nations and made its destruction inevitable. It being evening, Lot could rely on their appearing to be way-farers just passing through which violated no law. However, for such wayfarers to have clean feet would arouse suspicion, so he bade them enter quickly, closed the door and only then bade them wash their feet. Yet no sooner had they entered his home than the whole city gathered there, from young to old, even from the furthest corners of S'dom to demand that the strangers that he had dared take into his house contrary to their laws, should be handed over to them.

The whole subsequent story immediately calls to mind the incident of the mass rape of the concubine in the city of Giv'a that led to a civil war between the Tribes of Israel and the tribe of Binyamin (Shoftim 19). At the outset it should be noted that verse 22 in that story tells us that the evil men of the city gathered around the home that had given hospitality to the stranger and his concubine, whereas in S'dom we are told that all the people, young and old, demanded that Lot hand over his guests; in the former it was an act of some evil individuals, whereas in the latter it was the result of public policy supported unanimously. However, the commentators see further basic differences between the two stories, differences that highlight the underlying idea behind the evil that was S'dom.

"The Torah tells us that S'dom was rich and prosperous. They lived in constant fear that the poor of the neighboring tribes would come and settle in their city and thus detract from its wealth, so they made laws to keep out the strangers" (Malbim). Even today, rich countries limit emigration not only for nationalistic, racial or cultural reasons but also to limit competition for jobs or for natural resources. Halakhically, the entry of non-residents was conditional on their paying their share of the taxes; however, in medieval Franco-Germany the right of the autonomous self-governing Jewish communities to restrict free entry was recognized through the Cherm HaYishuv. Refugees have, unfortunately, been a constant in Jewish history, but although the question of allowing them refuge in the Jewish communities on the grounds of the economic competition they posed did arise, halakhic authorities never allowed denial of entry; the restriction on entry by the community of Rome is the one glaring exception.

"The people of Giv'a had no intention of keeping strangers or poor people out of their town. However, the powerful ones among their leaders were driven by sexual desire to demand that the stranger and his concubine be handed over to them. They had consideration and respect for the old man who had sheltered the stranger and his concubine, and did nothing to his daughter even though she was offered to them together with the concubine. However, when the stranger offered his concubine to placate them, they permitted themselves to rape her as she was not considered a wife and therefore there was no adultery; furthermore, as the text in Shoftim tells us, she had acted promiscuously. So Giv'a did not warrant destruction and all that the Tribes of Israel wanted was that Binyamin should hand over the criminals since they had not fulfilled their obligation as a tribe to judge them. The aim was to make a fence to prevent sexual immorality and this in accordance with the halakha that Bet Din has the power and obligation to beat and prosecute whenever they see that public moral and spiritual welfare is threatened (Yevamot 90b). In their starting war, the Tribes sinned only in not protesting equally the idol of Micah, but later recognized their error and repented of the killing of most of Binyamin.

S'dom was different. There the whole population gathered in front of Lot's house to demand that he hand over the strangers to them as they did not permit entry to strangers. The motivation here however, was not sexual immorality but rather the desire to prevent the entry and settlement of poor strangers, since they considered that it was harmful to their wealth that was equal to the plenty symbolized by Egypt. They had permitted Lot to dwell in S'dom either because he was wealthy [the equivalent of the modern capitalist visas that make entry into all countries easier] or out of respect to Avraham; in both cases he represented no economic danger to them" (Ramban).

It seems that the idea that economic and social oppression as in S'dom was considered a more onerous sin than the sexual immorality that existed there and in Giv'a, may find its parallel in the halakhic ruling brought by Rambam (Mishne Torah, Hilkhos G'neiva 7:12) that the sin of false weights and measures is more serious than sexual immorality; the former being a sin both between Man and G-d and between Man and Man, whereas the latter is between Man and G-d only. "For the latter it is possible to repent and do teshuva, however, the former requires that restitution be made in order to do teshuva. False weights and measures injure many and often unknown parties, so such restitution may prove to be difficult if not impossible. It is this difficulty of true teshuva that makes them more onerous" (Mei'ir Einayim, Choshen Mishpat 131:19).

Nevertheless, the Torah sees sexual transgressing as a cause for galut from Eretz Yisrael.

"This seems strange since sexual morality is not one of the mitzvot ha'teluyot ba'aretz. However, when Hashem took us to be His Chosen People, He announced His Kingship over us, to be fulfilled by our keeping His commandments in the Land chosen by Him for our settlement. So the Torah foretells galut from that Land should the list of forbidden sexual relationships be transgressed" (Ramban, Vayikra 18)

This is the 107th 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: We have a mesh Parochet (curtain) in front of our Aron Kodesh. Some congregants have been questioning whether it is valid since you can see through it. Are there halachot or firm minhagim on the opaqueness required? Please provide sources.

A: This is the type of public question which is the local rabbi's clear domain. However, since the answer is that it is valid and you want sources to clarify the topic, we assume we are not getting involved improperly. Let us first understand the Parochet's function and status.

The gemara (Megila 26b) reports that Rava used to think that a PERISA (our Parochet or close to it) is not imbued with kedusha (sanctity). This is because it is only a tashmish d'tashmish (something that serves an object (e.g., the aron kodesh) that serves a holy object (e.g., the Sefer Torah)). Rava changed his mind when he noticed that people sometimes folded the PERISA under the Sefer Torah. That contact makes the PERISA a tashmish kedusha (something that directly serves a holy object), giving it more restrictions. The Beit Yosef (Orach Chayim 154) and Rama (ad loc.:6) point out that in our times, we never use the Parochet in a way that it comes in direct contact with a Sefer Torah. Therefore, they say that our Parochet is a tashmish d'tashmish and has only the lower status of objects that are set aside for synagogue use.

What does the Parochet serve and how? The Maharam Padova (#82) and others say that it serves the Aron Kodesh. It is appropriate to separate between the holy and the mundane. Just as we put a cloth on the Bima where the Sefer Torah sits to separate between them, so too we put the Parochet to separate between the Aron Kodesh and us.

The Terumat Hadeshen (I, 68) points out that a Parochet is used primarily with the door of the Aron Kodesh closed. Thus, not only does it not touch the Sefrei Torah but does not even directly separate between them and us. This is important in his context, the question whether one can hang a Parochet before the Aron Kodesh on Shabbat. We rule (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 315:1) that it is forbidden to erect a vertical partition only when it serves a defined, halachic function (e.g., the wall of a sukka). The Terumat Hadeshen demonstrates that a Parochet lacks a defined, halachic function but just serves l'tzeni'uta. Tzeni'uta usually means modesty, in such contexts as being properly dressed. In that context, clothes that are see-through are insufficient. However, in our context, there is no prohibition to see the Aron's door or the Sifrei Torah (in shuls that keep the doors open). Rather, the separation demonstrates our reverence for that which is behind the curtain. Although at some point, transparency makes a Parochet meaningless in this regard, we doubt that the one in question is that transparent.

Some say that the Parochet honors the Sifrei Torah, rather than the Aron Kodesh. Still, they are not a tashmish kedusha. Not only do they not touch the Sefer Torah, but they hang before it, not as a layer on top of it (see Machatzit Hashekel to 154:8). Regarding honoring the Sifrei Torah, the aesthetics are more of a factor than the opaqueness.

Another explanation of a Parochet's function is that it is modeled after the Parochet that separated between the area of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) that housed the Aron and the rest of the Mishkan (Perisha, OC 154:5). When a division is necessary and its main purpose is to separate rather than prevent seeing, transparency is not a factor (Berachot 25b).

As we have seen, a mesh Parochet can serve its various, possible functions, certainly when it significantly distorts the view. In general, we should adorn and thus honor our synagogues and their sacred objects. The Parochet may also serve to cover and/or separate. If it is in proper taste and generally finds favor in the eyes of the congregation, it need not be the center of controversy.

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.erezhemdah.org. And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to 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**

When threatened with being roped into things or tied up in knots, rather than cut the rope, one should keep an eye open to see if he may not be able to make some good use of it.

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

*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)

Ibn Ezra explains the reason that the Torah mentions that Yaakov Aveinu purchased a portion of the field in Shechem for 100 kesita was to inform us of the importance of owning land in Eretz Yisroel. That one who has a portion in Eretz Yisroel is as if he has a portion in the World to Come. Perhaps the intention is as follows. The Medrash relates that before G-d commanded Avraham to go to Eretz Yisroel he visited various places to see a good place to settle. He came to Aram Naharayim and saw idol worshippers eating, drinking and partying and beseeched G-d not to give him that land. He then went to Eretz Yisroel and saw idol worshippers planting, plowing and harvesting and he beseeched G-d that this be the land that he would be given. There are two philosophies of life. The secular philosophy is that this world is an end in itself that one should enjoy while he can - eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. However, the Torah philosophy is that this world is a means to reach an end, the place to invest effort in order to earn a share in the World to Come. This is the fundamental difference between Eisav and Yaakov. Eisav was a hunter, someone interested only to seek out a mature animal and capture it and kill it for immediate gratification. Whereas, Yaakov Aveinu was a shepherd who put in effort in raising the animal for future benefit. The Meiri says that Olom Haba and Olam Hazeh are not two different worlds but rather, Olom Haba is the fruit of this world. In this world one plants the seeds by living and

learning Torah and then in the world to come one reaps the results. Avraham Aveinu saw that the environment and atmosphere of Chutz LaAretz is conducive to the philosophy of immediate gratification which would not promote a proper lifestyle. Eretz Yisroel, on the other hand provides an environment and atmosphere conducive to the philosophy toiled now for a future benefit. Yes, it is possible to go against the influence of chutz l'aaretz and live a fine Torah lifestyle there and it is possible to resist the influence of Eretz Yisroel and live a secular lifestyle in Eretz Yisroel. However, one who wants to live a proper lifestyle will be aided in Eretz Yisroel and hindered in chutz l'aaretz. Hence, one who owns a portion in Eretz Yisroel is connected and attached to its environment and is as if he purchased a portion in the world to come. His connection and attachment to Eretz Yisroel will aid him to live a life focused on producing the fruit of Olom Haba from the seeds and toil of this world.

Rabbi Zev Leff, Moshav Mattityahu

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**

Once the mashgiach of the yeshiva came to R' Yosef Leib, the Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe, and complained that a certain student was not praying with kavana, the proper concentration.

"And who", R' Yosef Leib asked him, "does pray with kavana? If we REALLY prayed with kavana, how would we possibly remember to add Ya'aleh V'yavo on Rosh Chodesh or Al HaNisim on Chanuka?"

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 - VAYISHLACH**

1) Why does the Torah give us such a precise description regarding where Eisav was located geographically when Yaakov sent his messengers to him? (See 32:4)

2) Considering the fact that Yaakov had only one brother, why did he use seemingly superfluous words in praying PLEASE SAVE ME FROM THE HAND OF MY BROTHER, FROM THE HAND OF EISAV? (32:12)

3) Why with regards to the death of Avraham is his name mentioned after the description of his death (see 25:8) while regarding Yitzchak the Torah states AND YITZCHAK DIED, with his name coming first? (35:29)

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

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

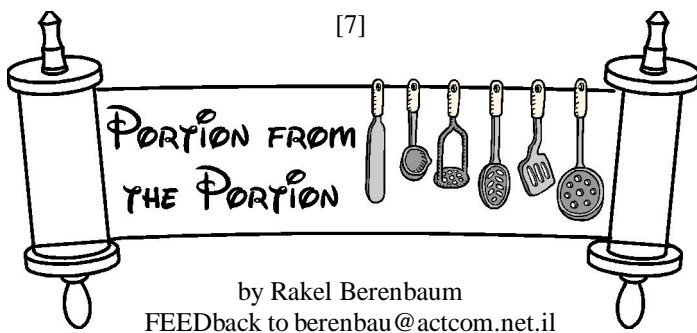
1) The Ohr HaChayim teaches that the three descriptive terms regarding Eisav's location represent the three different relationships the Jewish people will have with Esav through world history. From the time we established ourselves in Israel until the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash the relationship was HIS BROTHER - there was peace between the Jews and Edom. From the time of the destruction until the time of Mashiach, it is THE LAND OF SAIR - we essentially in their land and are under their control. Once Mashiach comes, the land of Sair will no longer be significant and it will simply be THE FIELD OF EDOM which will be plowed and replanted in accordance with the new worldwide beliefs that will come with the Mashiach.

2) The Beis HaLevi answers that Yaakov was praying for salvation from two dangerous aspects of Eisav. One was the fact that he was Eisav - a violent and angry person who could hurt him. There was also the possibility that Eisav would try to befriend Yaakov as a loving brother. This too is very dangerous since Eisav's negative character could influence Yaakov and his family.

3) R' Moshe Feinstein explained after Avraham died he was alive for all of his descendants since even Yishmael, who repented, accepted Avraham's teachings. Thus, his name truly continued on even after he died. However, Yitzchak's life teachings did not fully continue after his death since they were rejected by Eisav. Thus, his name is mentioned before his death but not after since he was partially forgotten.

[6] MicroUlpan

In Hebrew, names for cardinal and ordinal numbers differ only up to 10. ACHAT, RISHON, ASARA, ASIRI. From 11 up, the cardinal and ordinal number is the same (unlike 11, 11th)



"Then Jacob remained alone". Why was Yaakov alone?

Many are familiar with Rashi on this verse, that Yaakov went back for little vessels, PACHIM K'TANIM, that he had left. Me'am Lo'ez relates that he went back for a special vessel of oil, PACH SHEMEN. It was the flask of oil that he had received miraculously when he awoke from his dream of the angels going up and down. He used this flask to anoint the pillar that he set up at the place of his dream. Then by a miracle the flask was refilled with oil. Yaakov realized that this flask was blessed and he carried it everywhere with him. He knew that with this flask of oil the vessels of the Temple would be anointed, and Elisha HaNavi would perform a miracle. (I wonder if this was even the same flask of oil found in the Temple for the miracle of Chanuka). Even though this was such

a special flask, because of all the turmoil around him, Yaakov forgot it and had to go back by himself to retrieve it. That is why he was alone. From here R' Chiya and R' Shimon learned that a person should always go back to check that he didn't forget anything. This is a good lesson for all of us who might forget things (to turn off the lights, to take an umbrella, to turn off the gas)/ We should always give a second check around in order not to forget. Our forefather Yaakov taught us this simple lesson in "memory improvement".

While Yaakov was alone, a "stranger" wrestled with him and touched him at the upper joint of his thigh (loins) thereby dislocating Yaakov's hip joint. Therefore Jews don't eat the displaced nerve on the hip joint, the GID HANASHE. One of many explanations (Daas Z'keinim) for the meaning behind this prohibition is that it acts as a KNAS, punishment for the children of Yisrael because they left their father alone - L'VADO The whole family had been there together. They should not have left Yaakov by himself, someone should have gone with him.

It is possible to remove the sciatic nerve in order to eat the rest of the piece of meat, but it is a very complicated procedure that can only be done by someone trained specifically for this task (treiben in Yiddish, NIKUR in Hebrew). In some communities, since it was easier to sell the whole back part of the animal to non-Jews, Jews did not eat this piece of meat at all. Here is a recipe for sirloin steak, for those who do eat it. The same recipe can be used for Minute or End steak.

Dijon Crusted Sirloin Steak 6 servings

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 kilo boneless (sirloin) steak cut 1½ inch thick
- 2 tbsp. Dijon-style mustard
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 1 tsp. ground pepper
- 1 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 1 cup fresh parsley

Brown steak 2 minutes per side in oil. Place steak on rack in shallow roasting pan.

Combine mustard, garlic and pepper and spread on steak.

Toss bread crumbs and parsley and pat evenly over mustard.

Bake 30-40 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness at 350°F (180°C).

Carve into slices cutting against the grain.

Rakel Berenbaum, our Portion from the Portion columnist, will be talking at the Nefesh conference (Heb.), Jan.18-19 [www.nefeshisrael.com] on Memory Improvement Techniques: from Jewish sources and professional literature. She can also give lectures and workshop son memory improvement.

[8] Torah from Nature

Kangaroos are the largest marsupials (pouched animals), among them, the Great Red Kangaroo can be over 2m tall (7') and weigh up to 100 kg.

The relatively recently discovered shrew-like ningauis is possibly the smallest, some weighing less than a sheet of A4 paper.

Over 250 species of marsupials between.

Ningauis are nocturnal... have a short lifespan of 12-18 months and breed only once in their lives, producing a litter of 5-7 offspring. They are carnivorous, feeding on insects, sometimes larger than themselves.



[9] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Vayishlach offers the Jewish people additional ammunition against detractors from within and without. From within are those who would say that one's fulfillment as a Jew is not predicate on living in the Land of Israel. And from without are those who say that we, as Jews, do not have any ancient rights to Eretz Yisrael.

We refer to Ya'akov's return to Eretz Yisrael after his long sojourn with Lavan and his rapprochement with Esav. The Torah relates that Ya'akov arrived "intact" (Shalem) at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. There- after, "He bought the parcel of land upon which he pitched his tent from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred kesitas" (B'reishit 33:18-19).

The word Shalem is indicative of bodily completeness, in the sense of having overcome physical hurdles, and spiritual harmony, insofar as having spent years in a Diaspora setting, Ya'akov was not found faulty in his Torah knowledge (cf. Rashi on v.18). However, it is this return to Eretz Yisrael that represents the closing of the circle of Ya'akov's vow that if he returned "Shalem" to his father's house, "Hashem will be a G-d to me" (ibid 28:22).

Ya'akov's state of mind is a prototype for further generations. Only in Eretz Yisrael could that ultimate state of fulfillment be reached. Ya'akov's purchase of land, like the acquisition of the Cave of Machpela and the site of the Beit Hamikdash, reaffirmed this inalienable connection between Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael and the G-d of Israel.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH...

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

The Impurity of the Parturient (Yoledet)

"And G-d spoke to Moses as follows: Speak to the Children of Israel, saying, 'When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male child, she shall be impure for a seven day period... as during the days of her separation shall she be impure... For

thirty-three days shall she remain in blood of purity; she may not touch anything sacred and she may not enter the Sanctuary until the completion of her days of impurity. If she gives birth to a female child, she shall be impure for two weeks, as during her separation; and for sixty-six days, she shall remain in blood of purity... (Vayikra 12:1-5). After the initial seven-day period for a male child (fourteen days for a female child), the Yoledet immersed in a Mikveh and was then permitted to her husband, but an additional "waiting" period of thirty-three days for a male child (forty total), and sixty-six days (eighty total) for a female child followed. During this supplementary period, though she was permitted to her husband, she was still banned from Mikdash grounds or from eating Kodashim or "coming in contact" with "anything holy". Rashi notes that during this supplementary period, Biblically, even if she experienced her menstrual flow, she was not considered a Nida. (However today, the Halacha does in fact regard a woman experiencing her menstrual flow during this period as a Nida [Yoreh Deah 194:1]). At nightfall of the forty-first or eighty-first day (the supplementary period actually ended at sunset) she became pure and, if the wife of a Kohein, was permitted to eat Teruma. On the morning of the forty-first day (or the eighty-first day), the Yoledet brought a male sheep and a turtle dove or pigeon to the Mikdash for an Olah and a Chatat. If she was poor, she might substitute an additional turtle dove or pigeon in place of the sheep (Vayikra 12:1-5). Upon offering her required Korbanot, she was permitted to eat Kodashim. The sage R. Simeon ben Yochai explained that the sin offering effected atonement for the Yoledet, not because she gave birth - children are a blessing from G-d - but because of the possibility that in the pain of birthing, she might have sworn never to cohabit with her husband again (Nida 31b). Ibn Ezra posited that the parturient's Olah atoned for blasphemous thoughts she might have entertained because of her pain. (If an Israelite had "forbidden thoughts" - Avon Machshevet HaLeiv - and contemplated such prohibited behavior as blasphemy, the worship of idols, apostasy, etc., after atoning for his sin, he brought an Olah. The concept of bringing an Olah to expiate forbidden thoughts was derived from Iyov (Job) who brought Olot saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned and blasphemed G-d in their hearts" (Iyov 1:5). Rabeinu Bechai suggests that the Chatat brought by the Yoledet expiates for the sin of Eve who, because of her disobedience, brought death into the world.

Why does the birth of a male child engender impurity for only forty days (7+33) while the birth of a female child engenders impurity for eighty days (14+66)? Does this not show "the cultic inferiority of the female sex"? The surprising answer is "no"; this "extra impurity" does not suggest "cultic inferiority" at all. In fact, it indicates the exact opposite because "extra impurity" is usually a sign of greater deference and esteem. Redolent of Kabbalistic imagery, the Or Hachayim Hakadosh illustrates the "origin" of "extra impurity" in a wonderful parable. "Let us assume that we have two containers inside a house, one filled with honey, the other full of refuse. If you take both of these containers outside, you will observe that the container of honey attracts swarms of flies whereas the container of refuse attracts an insignificant number of flies by comparison." Similarly, holiness "attracts all kind of negative spiritual elements. These are the forces of impurity that always attempt to attach themselves to anything sacred because they wish to benefit from the... sweetness of holiness" (Chukat). Far fetched? Consider this Mishna. "The Sadducees (who denied the validity of Torah She'b'al Peh) say, 'We cry out against you O Pharisees (a.k.a. "Chazal") because you declare that the Holy

Scriptures (i.e. hand-written parchment scrolls) render the hands impure, but the writings of Hamiram (i.e., heretical books or the works of Homer) do not render the hands impure." R' Yochanan ben Zakkai reminded the Sadducees that even they would agree, "the bones of an ass are pure but the bones of Yochanan Kohein Gadol render impure." They replied, "As our love for them increases), greater is their (power to engender) impurity.... Using the same principle which the Sadducees themselves accepted, R' Yochanan ben Zakkai responded, 'So it is with the Holy Scriptures: our (greater) love for them is (reflected) in their (greater) ability to generate impurity, whereas the writings of Hamiram which are not precious to us do not engender impurity. (Since we have no love for the writings of Hamiram), "they do not render the hands impure" (Yada'yim 4:6).

If we apply this principle, "the more impurity, the more respect", it would seem that the "extra" impurity engendered by the birth of a female child, if anything, demonstrates the "cultic superiority" of the female sex! With the exception of the eight small "unclean creeping things" specified in Vayikra 11:29-38, the Torah considers carrion of only the larger mammals "worthy" of having the ability of generate impurity. Moreover, the dead human being is the most defiling source of impurity of all! (Water-creatures [and birds] do not contaminate, perhaps because their origin is water [B'reishit 1:20], the very element which engenders purity.)

However, there is something else. The whole cycle of birth and death, which can easily provide the basis of an "alternative spirituality", was banned from the Beit Mikdash - the earthly house of the Eternal One. The religions of the ancient world, Egypt, Canaan, Babylonia, etc., all revolved around the birth and death cycle. Nature came to life in the spring and "died" when the growing season was over; gods were born, died and were "resurrected". "Mother-earth" was so intimately connected with the life, fertility, and death of its inhabitants that earth-cults were inevitable. A widespread ancient myth with hundreds of local variations, told how the goddess Ishtar (or Osiris, Demeter, Attis, etc.) descended to the nether world to seek her lover. The disappearance of Ishtar threatened to end all life on earth because with her departure, all procreation ceased. Many frenzied spring festivals throughout the ancient world celebrated her "return". If man died like the nature gods did, could not a way be found to enable him to return to life again as they appeared to do? These myths and hopes formed the basis of the mystery religions, which were so popular in the latter days of Bayit Sheini. "The female more than the male is involved in the birth-death cycle, and therefore, is a greater focus of impurity, just because she represents a greater potentiality for a different religious orientation."

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



Silhouettes of the animals Yaakov sent as gifts to Eisav. Each animal has the number of males and females sent. The second 30 on the camel is not mentioned in the text, but is based on Rashi, that there were an equal number of males that accompanied the "nursing camels".

The ribbon bow among the silhouettes represents the gift aspect of the animals.

The two ancient-looking jugs are the small vessels that Yaakov went back for after he brought his family across the YABOK river.

Notice between the SOLD sign and the tree is the emblem of the WWF. We do not know if Yaakov and/or the Sar shel Eisav were members, but see if your kids can identify the emblem and make the connection.

The SOLD sign over the FOR SALE sign is for the purchase of the land in the Sh'chem area by Yaakov Avinu for 100 K'sita.

D'vora (the bee) was buried under the crying tree.

The baby carriage is for Binyamin.

Kever Rachel is Kever Rachel.

The sword was used by Shimon and Levi to avenge what happened to Dina.

The die with six dots, for the six dots over VAYISHAKEINU. (In past years it was a visual TTriddle - but now we give it away. You can still use it on your children and guests (if they don't read TT) and see if they can figure it out.

That leaves a soda can with a straw and a knife with a blade. Forget the can. It's the STRAW we're after. And the blade of the knife. KASH and LEHAVA. As in the pasuk from the haftara that compares Beit EWisav to straw and Beit Yosef to the flame of the fire that is Beit Yaakov.

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 (VAYEITZEI) TTriddles:

- [1] Who = No'ach + Lavan, childwise?
- [2] Rachel, Yonatan b. Evyatar, an angel
- [3] Why Bet-El is reluctant to field sports teams
- [4] Going and returning is common to these two sedras
- [5] first 4 here; 1st & 4th with last 2 in last
- [6] plus 3 elements from the ParshaPix, one of which is the T-shirt TTriddle: see further

And the envelope, please...

- [1] Childwise, No'ach is the one person in Tanach identified as having had three sons. (Others had three sons, but with No'ach it specifically says: VAYOLED NO'ACH SH'LOSHA VANIM... And No'ach bore three sons.) Lavan is specifically identified as having had two daughters. (So was Lot, but let's stay with Lavan so that this TTriddle can belong to Vayeitzei.)

One person is identified as having had three sons and two daughters, and that is Chana. Therefore Chana = No'ach + Lavan, childwise.

[2] This is one of those TTriddles born of an unusual phrase. This time, it is ODENU M'DABEIR... he was still talking... (Yaakov to the shepherds), and Rachel came... In Melachim Alef it is Yo'av still saying some- thing to Adoniyahu, when Yonatan b. Avyatar comes... In Melachim Bet, it is Elisha who is talking to the elders gathered to him, which an angel comes...

[3] Yaakov named the place Bet El, but it had been previously known as LUZ. It is possible that no sports team would want to play for a city called LOSE. [The one possible exception is mentioned in [6] below.]

[4] And Yaakov went out from Be'er Sheva and he WENT to Charan. True, at the end of the sedra Yaakov returns, but there is also the command in the haftara of T'SHUVA, return - SHUVA YISRAEL AD HASHEM ELOKECHA... In those years when Rosh HaShana falls on Monday or Tuesday (like this year, 5766), we read Parshat Vayeilechon Shabbat Shuva. So there is also GOING in the beginning of the sedra, and RETURNING in the haftara.

[5] Among the KRI-KTIVs, words written one way and read a different way, we find "here" in Parshat Vayeitzei, a four-letter word that is to be read as two separate two-letter words. BA GAD (in the naming of GAD b. Zilpa by Leah). It is the first 4 letters of the Alef-Bet that are involved in BA GAD. The other example of this type of KRI-KTIV is in the "last" sedra, V'zot HaBracha. There, the letters involved are the first and fourth of the Alef-Bet - ALEF and DALET, and the last two letters, SHIN and TAV. The word(s) is/are read EISH DAT, as two separate words, even though they are written together.

Which brings us to the unexplained elements of the ParshaPix. There are three.

[6] Philadelphia Phillies cap. That team has the ignoble honor of being the losingest team in Major League Baseball. And it goes one step further. They are the losingest team in major league sports (in the US, counting baseball, football, basketball, and ice hockey.) Perhaps, then, they are the modern incarnation of the teams that did play in LUZ.

To be fair to the town of LUZ (Beit El), it is only in TTriddle-land that there is an association with the English word LOSE. LUZ is the hazel tree, one of the sticks that Yaakov used in Vayeitzei at the behest of the angel... LUZ is also the name of the vertebra at the top of the spinal column that is associated with the starting point of T'CHIYAT HAMEITIM. Go Phillies!

[7] Staying with sports, we also have a South Park figure playing dodgeball. (We know it's hard to tell what he's doing.) This is similar to the game MACHANAYIM, as in the concluding word of Parshat Vayeitzei, referring to the twin camps of angels that Yaakov saw upon his return to Eretz Yisrael.

[8] And this brings us to the (unannounced) T-shirt TTriddle. The first correct solution to this Visual TTriddle will get a Torah Tidbits Visual TTriddles T-shirt from Not Just T's - Rechov HaHistadrut, off Ben Yehuda.

T-shirt TTriddle answers should be submitted to us at tt@ou.org or 566-7787 ext. 207. But definitely check out Not Just T's, whether or not you are a TTriddler. Tell them Torah Tidbits sent you.

We will usually announce in advance what the T-shirt TTriddle

is. But readers are encouraged to submit solutions to any TTriddles (don't be discouraged if you get just one - send it in). You never know what wins prizes. Noam Production CDs, Big Deal this and that, and Not Just T's T-shirts.

There is a matador waving his red cape at - not a bull, but a pair of lips. As in the haftara, UNSHALMA FARIM S'FATEINU, and our lips (voices in prayer) will replace the bulls (sacrifices).

Old business — SD wrote for Parshat Vayeitzei: TT min HaTorah minayin? As it says: Tov TT (B'reishit 29:18). In the same pasuk we also find mi-TT. Thanks for noticing, SD. FYI (all TTreaders, not just SD), the TT and mi-TT in Vayeitzei are it for the Torah. In Shoftim and Melachim Alef there is one mi-TT each and in Micha there is a TT. And that's it for all of Tanach.

This week's TTriddles:

[1] Vayishlach, B'shalach, Vayak-heiland even more so, D'varim

[2] proof the middle door is also called a back door

[3] Here it's both; in Divrei HaYamim i'ts a KRI-KTIV

[4] (early Chanuka TTriddle) What Bracha do you say on a confused dreidel?

NEW! Nachman K's Jewish Trivia Question:

What letter appears only once in the regular weekday Amida?



This will be a combination of a halachic review, practical suggestions, useful information, and more. Do not take anything written here as "the last word"; if you have any doubts, check things out with your Rav. The material has been presented before, but has been reviewed, reshaped, and refreshed for Chanuka 5766. And we are including it in the TT of the Shabbat before the Shabbat before Chanuka, so that you can review this material with your family in advance.

Relevant Times

The following are the zmanim that will be referred to repeatedly in the review to come. The chart is for Jerusalem. Following the chart are some notes and the adjustment data for other locations. Significance of the different times will be explained in the pages to come.

JERUSALEM	PLAG	SET	DARK
Sunday, Dec. 25	3:39	4:47	5:07
Monday, Dec. 26	3:40	4:48	5:08
Tuesday, Dec. 27	3:40	4:48	5:08
Wednesday, Dec. 28	3:41	4:49	5:09
Thursday, Dec. 29	3:41	4:49	5:09
Friday, Dec. 30	3:42	A	B
Motza"Sh, Dec. 31	C	D	E
Sunday, Jan. 1	3:43	4:52	5:12

There's a lot of rounding to the minute, sometimes to the nearest minute, sometimes dropping the seconds and sometimes to the next minute.

DARK is an early-ish Stars-out time, i.e. 20 minutes after sunset.

A & B: SET and DARK are irrelevant for Erev Shabbat; we'll use candle lighting time, see further.

C & D: PLAG and SET are irrelevant for Shabbat.

E: Instead of DARK, we'll use Shabbat-out time as on Front Page. See further.

Following is a list of locations that appear weekly in our Shabbat candle lighting and havdala chart on Front Page. After each location are two numbers. The first is an adjustment figure for PLAG MINCHA. The second one is an adjustment for SET (sunset) and DARK (Tzeit HaKochavim for Chanuka candle lighting - NOT for SHabbat-out, and therefore not for Chanuka candles on Motza'ei Shabbat. See further.

Raanana	+1	-5
Beit Shemesh	+1	-4
Netanya	+1	-5
Rehovot	+2	-4
Petach Tikva	+1	-5
Modi'in	+1	-2
Be'er Sheva	+3	-2
Gush Etzion	0	-5
Ginot Shomron	0	-6
Maale Adumim	0	-5
K4 & Hevron	+1	-4
Tzfat	-3	-4
Tel Mond	+1	-5

Examples:

When is PLAG on Friday in Be'er Sheva? Jerusalem chart to the left says 3:42. Adjustment figure above is +3. PLAG in Be'er Sheva on Friday is 3:45.

When is it DARK in Netanya on Tuesday night of Chanuka? Chart says 5:08. Adjustment figure for Netanya is -5. Answer: 5:03pm.

Padding some of the times for safety is recommended. See further for specific suggestions.

Setting up the Chanukiya

It is a good habit to develop, to set up your Chanukiya during the afternoon so that there will not be a delay in lighting at the proper time. If you use oil, setting up early also allows the oil to soak into the wicks well. This is especially so on Friday, Erev Shabbat-Chanuka because things get hectic as Shabbat approaches.

Better still... Some have the custom of preparing the Chanukiya in the morning for the evening (this goes for every day, except Shabbat, of course). This not only serves the practical purpose of being ready to light on time

without delaying to set up your oil or candles, but it also commemorates the practice in the Beit HaMikdash called Hatavat HaNeirot, whereby the Kohen (Gadol) tended the Menora and prepared it in the morning for kindling in the late afternoon. Since our lighting on Chanuka directly commemorates the lighting of the Menora in the Beit HaMikdash, this suggestion provides a nice "added touch" to the mitzva and symbolism of Chanuka lighting.

Weekday lighting:

Sunday, Dec. 25 - first candle

Monday, Dec. 26 - 2nd candle

Tuesday, Dec. 27 - 3rd candle

Wednesday, Dec. 28 - 4th candle

Thursday, Dec. 29 - 5th candle

and

Sunday, Jan. 1 - 8th candle

(see further for Friday and Motza"Sh lighting, which have differences because of Shabbat)

WHEN TO LIGHT

There are two practices as to when is the ideal time to light Chanuka lights during the week (i.e. except for Friday and Motza'ei Shabbat, when different factors affect the timing, as will be presented). Minhag Yerushalayim (which many, but not everyone in Jerusalem follows, and which some people out of Jerusalem do follow) is to light with the setting of the sun, that is, when the body of the sun dips below the horizon. Sunset in Jerusalem for Chanuka week as you can see from the chart on page A is from 4:47pm to 4:52pm over the 8 days.

Note that for Jerusalem, the sunset times take into account Jerusalem's altitude of about 825m. This is why most other places have an adjustment figure of -4 to -6.

The other opinion (that of "the rest of the world") is to light when the "light of the sun has left the sky", i.e. Stars-Out a.k.a. Tzeit HaKochavim; also "the end of sunset". Remember that there are different opinions as to when Stars-Out occurs. Except for Motza'ei Shabbat, most people will use an early-ish Stars-Out time (20 minutes or so after sunset). This time can be found in the chart under DARK.

Those who light with Stars-Out should daven Maariv first (TADIR...), unless they have a fixed time later in the evening for davening with a minyan.

Those who light with sunset should daven Maariv at the appropriate time, after candle-lighting.

HOW LONG

Candles must burn at least a half hour after stars-out. This was the original time period after dark that people were still around outdoors and defined the PIRSUMEI NISA aspect of the mitzva. Although in our day, people are out later than this time, the halacha only requires the half hour after stars-out. However, it is recommended that one use longer candles or more oil to extend this time (one need not go overboard on this issue, but...), in recognition of the expansion of the current-day Pirsumei Nisa time-frame.

TACHLIS: If one lights at the SET or DARK time, or earlier (remember, never before PLAG) then the candles should burn until at least 5:45pm (padded), preferably somewhat longer.

(Since Rabbeinu Tam's Stars-Out is around 6:00pm during Chanuka week (this year), one might try to have his Chanuka lights burn at least until 6:30-ish. This is not required, but it does cover the different opinions concerning Stars-Out.)

For Motza'ei Shabbat and anytime else one lights later than

Tzeit HaKochavim, then the candles must last at least a half hour, regardless of what time one lit. (Preferably longer, as mentioned.)

Examples:

Jerusalem, second night of Chanuka.

One who lights at 4:48pm, the candle should last at least until 5:45pm. Approx. 1 hour minimum. Be aware that the small colorful Chanuka candles we used to get in the mail from an orphan home, with the music for Maoz Tzur on the side, are too small for Minhag Yerushalayim, because they won't last at least an hour. The longer colorful candles that are available here in plentiful supply, are long enough (except for Erev Shabbat).

One who lights at 5:08pm, his candles also need last only to 5:45pm.

One who lights at 5:30pm, the candles have to last at least until 6:00pm.

If you light at 10:00pm, they have to last until 10:30pm.

If you light at 3:45 (due to extenuating circumstances), the candles must last until 5:45pm - two hours!

In all these examples, it is preferable that they last even longer. As mentioned earlier, this is because PIRSUMEI NISA is considered to have extended beyond the original "half hour after dark". Do the candles need to burn hours longer? No. How much is "somewhat longer"? Consult with your Rav.

EARLIEST

For those who must light early, the earliest time one may light is PLAG MINCHA. This year, 3:45pm will work all over Israel and throughout Chanuka. (Except in Be'er Sheva on the last night - 3:46pm.)

This time is padded slightly to avoid someone's being off a bit and lighting too early. Those lighting early should remember that the candles or oil must be able to last until the minimum half-hour after Stars-Out.

OFF TIMES

If, because of one's work or travel schedule, one has to choose between lighting early or late, or between lighting early or appointing someone to light for you at the proper time, or between lighting late and appointing someone to light for you at the proper time - one should consult a Rav for a p'sak based on how early and how late, and any other relevant factors.

Sometimes a less-than-perfect performance of a mitzva is a fine, acceptable "second best". Sometimes, not. Lighting Chanuka candles early or late is a poor second, at best. Lighting early lacks an element of Pirsumei Nisa at the time of lighting - which is when the mitzva is performed - because a candle flame is not eye-catching during full daylight. Lighting late is not so good because of the opinions that the time-period for Pirsumei Nisa from the days of the Gemara remains the optimum time (and some say the ONLY time) for the fulfillment of the mitzva. Although we follow other opinions, and basically allow lighting any time of the night, it is far less than ideal to light late. A "good" excuse makes it okay, but not great. One should consult a Rav especially for recurring situations, such as coming home late from work or school, and the like. Remember that having someone light for you is a valid alternative to your lighting for yourself, and sometimes it is even the preferred alternative. Ask your Rav.

See further for other POINTS that apply to Chanuka-candle lighting.

FRIDAY, Dec. 30 - 6th candle

Morning (or afternoon): In addition to setting up for Chanuka-candle lighting for Shabbat (i.e. before Shabbat), it is a good idea to also prepare for the candles to be lit on Motza'ei Shabbat. This will allow lighting on Motza"Sh without any unnecessary delay, especially since the Motza"Sh lighting is already delayed until after Shabbat. (This is easy to do if you have a spare Chanukiya, and a little trickier if you only have one.) Also, have your Motza"Sh Shamash and matches ready nearby.

Something else that one should try to do on Erev Shabbat-Chanuka is to daven Mincha before candle lighting. This is so because Mincha "belongs" to Friday and candle lighting "belongs" to Shabbat (even though we are lighting when it is still Friday). Furthermore, the lighting of the Menora in the Beit HaMikdash was done after the Tamid sacrifice of the afternoon. All this said, if it means not davening Mincha with a Minyan, it is better to light and then go to shul for Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat & Maariv. However, one should try to daven at a Mincha Gedola Minyan.

With that in mind, we will be davening **Mincha at the Israel Center on Friday, December 30th at 12:12pm**, in the Wolenitz Family Shul Ohel Shmuel, on the ground floor of the Center. (Men and women are invited.)

LIGHTING

We cannot follow the standard weekday timing (sunset or stars-out) on Erev Shabbat, because of the prohibition of kindling and handling fire on Shabbat. So we will have to light early. And this will require longer (or fatter) candles or more oil than usual. Furthermore, the rule is that Chanuka candles are lit before Shabbat candles. Shabbat candle lighting in most places is 18-22 minutes before sunset. This time should not be tampered with. Chanuka candles should be lit a couple of minutes before Shabbat candles (even when different people are lighting). Preferably, they should not be lit a lot before Shabbat candles, but in all cases, never before Plag.

Jerusalem (and Petach Tikva) custom for every Shabbat is to light candles 40 minutes before sunset. (Maale Adumim lights 35 minutes before sunset.) There is a common custom to delay Shabbat candles 15 to 20 minutes after the posted time (remember - Jerusalem and Petach Tikva only (Maale Adumim, make it 10-15 minutes), or other places where the same practice is observed) so that one's Chanuka candles do not have to be lit so early. This matter should be explained well to the family so that misunderstandings do not arise.

Be very careful not to get too close to sunset. Let 4:35pm be a "redline" for lighting candles (Chanuka or Shabbat) - otherwise, one runs the risk of encroaching on Shabbat. If you are late, be absolutely sure the sun is still in the sky - otherwise it is better not to light Chanuka or Shabbat candles.

TACHLIS: Shabbat candle lighting time for Jerusalem on Erev Shabbat-Chanuka is 4:10pm. Either keep to this time for Shabbat candles, with Chanuka candles right before, or wait until 4:25-4:30 to light Chanuka candles followed immediately by Shabbat candles.

Remember, if you are not in Jerusalem (or...), stick to the posted Shabbat candle lighting time - do not delay it.

In all cases, do not light either Chanuka or Shabbat candles before PLAG Mincha, see chart, adjust as necessary.

Also, as mentioned earlier - and this is very important - whenever you light Chanuka candles, they must have enough fuel (oil or wax) to last until at least a half-hour

after stars-out, that is, at least until 5:45pm (padded), preferably (somewhat) longer. For Friday lighting, this could mean 1½-2 hours. Standard (or even the prettier, longer) Chanuka candles will not make it. Recommended are the #16 or #20 Shabbat candles, which will fit most Chanukiyas and will last long enough. For oil users, experience will teach you how much oil you need. If you do not have the experience, it doesn't hurt to experiment a couple of days before Shabbat so you will be ready.

Suggestion: If many Chanukiyot are lit in your home, and you usually have everyone gather for each lighting, you might want to speed things up on Friday by having people light close to simultaneously. (Just a suggestion.)

Suggestion: Hold MA'OZ TZUR for the Shabbat table as one of the Z'mirot, rather than sing it with candle lighting, so you can get to shul right after lighting. It also makes Friday night feel more like Chanuka.

Many shuls will sing L'CHA DODI to the tune of MA'OZ TZUR on Shabbat Chanuka. And, of course, at the table, especially if you have any GAN-age children or grandchildren present, there are many Chanuka songs to add to your usual Friday night repertoire of Z'mirot and other songs. Remember, although Chanuka does not require a SEUDAT MITZVA, any meal with songs, stories, and relevant Divrei Torah (especially, but not only, on Shabbat) becomes a special Chanuka Seudat Mitzva.

MOTZA"SH Dec 31 - 7th candle

Sunset (Jerusalem) is 4:51pm. Shabbat is out at 5:26pm. Although 5:26 is considered Stars-Out (Zeit HaKochavim) as far as Shabbat is concerned, there are earlier times that qualify as Stars-Out for other purposes, such as reciting SH'MA at night. It is recommended (not everyone agrees) that we start davening Maariv at 5:10pm so that we can finish at or shortly after the Shabbat-out time. This will allow lighting Chanuka candles earlier (sooner after Stars-Out) than if we daven Maariv at the usual time for Motza"Sh. Those who say V'YITEN L'CHA should say it after Chanuka candles are lit.

Okay, it's Motza'ei Shabbat and Chanuka (and Rosh Chodesh this year), we're home from shul as soon after Shabbat as possible, what now?

Two mitzvot to perform - Havdala and Chanuka candles. By the rule of TADIR (that which is more frequent should be done first), havdala should be said first. And by logic, one should "finish" with Shabbat and then light candles for the next day of Chanuka, which is Sat. night & Sunday. Many authorities hold that on Motza'ei Shabbat, one should say havdala first and then light Chanuka candles. This opinion is followed by the majority of Chanuka-candle-lighting Jews all over the world. The Maharal (among others) is vehement in his insistence that we cannot possibly consider doing something so "weekday-ish" as lighting Chanuka candles on Motza"Sh, unless we have first said havdala. He rejects any argument to the contrary.

ON THE OTHER HAND... there is a strong argument for lighting Chanuka candles before havdala. First of all, Shabbat is over when it is 5:26pm AND one has said Havdala in davening (ATA CHONANTANU in the Maariv Amida) OR at least said BARUCH HAMAVIDIL BEIN KODESH L'CHOL. The Havdala with wine, spices, candle, is NOT what ends Shabbat - it is what honors the departing Shabbat (and permits eating and drinking). Even so, havdala should go first, except for one very important factor: The prime time (according to some opinions, the only time) for Chanuka candles is ticking away. We cannot, of course, light Chanuka candles when it is still Shabbat. But we should maximize the amount of time of the "half-hour

after" once we are allowed to light. Havdala will wait; Chanuka candles will not. Therefore, the **OTHER** opinion is that Chanuka candles go first and then havdala. This procedure comes with the reminder not to use the Chanuka candles for havdala, since one may not benefit from the Chanuka lights, and the bracha in havdala is specifically upon using the light (hence the examining of fingernails, etc.). "Chanuka candles first" is the opinion of the Vilna Gaon and many others, and is Minhag Yerushalayim. (Remember: not everyone in Jerusalem follows Minhag Yerushalayim and some people elsewhere do.)

This dispute is one of the few in halacha that is resolved in the following manner: "Whichever opinion you follow, you have performed correctly". Either procedure may be followed. Family and community custom should play a deciding role in this issue. Again, a Rav should be consulted, especially if one is considering a change of his/her practice.

Some say that those who light outdoors should follow the custom of lighting before havdala. Those who light indoors can take their pick.

Remember that Shabbat is paramount. In case of doubt as to whether Shabbat is being encroached upon, one should NOT yet light Chanuka candles. It must be DEFINITELY after Shabbat before lighting. But one should not unnecessarily delay the fulfillment of the mitzva of Chanuka candles.

In shul, it is the universal practice to light Chanuka candles before saying havdala, this to maximize Pirsumei Nisa in a situation where everyone present will be leaving for home shortly.

At home, people will still be there for the Chanuka candles, so there is no need to light before havdala (according to those who follow the first opinion).

Those who say havdala first can light the Shamash for the Chanuka candles with the havdala candle before extinguishing it, thus dovetailing two mitzvot.

Those who follow the second opinion can light the havdala candle from the Shamash (but not from any of the mitzva candles), thereby dovetailing one mitzva into another.

On Motza'ei Shabbat, when we light after Stars-Out, it is sufficient for the candles to burn for half an hour. Still, it is preferable that they last longer. This has to do with the fact that in our time, people are out in the streets later than in times past and Pirsumei Nisa (publicizing the miracle) applies later than the original "half-hour after stars-out".

A note for Rabeinu Tam people: Those who follow the Shabbat-out time of Rabeinu Tam (72 minutes after sunset) and consider it to be the correct halachic time, must keep it on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka, even though it means losing "prime time" for Chanuka candles.

Those who keep Rabeinu Tam time as a CHUMRA (a strict measure, but accept the earlier time as halachic), might end Shabbat earlier on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka, in order to fulfill the mitzva of Chanuka candles at their better time. It is advised to check this out with a Rav.

POINTS to keep in mind...

- Brachot (including SHE'HE'CHE' YANU) should be recited BEFORE beginning to light the candles. This complies with the general rule for Brachot of Mitzva, that they be recited immediately before performance of the mitzva, if possible. This means, that even on the eighth night, don't start lighting the candles until you finish both brachot.

- Opinions differ, but a common practice is to place the first candle (or oil cup) in the right side of the Chanukiya. If one lights at the doorpost, then the first candle should be

closest to the doorpost, even if it is the left side of the Chanukiya. From the second night on, the custom (one of the customs) is to "load" the Chanukiya from right to left, but to light it, left to right. At the doorpost, one loads it from the doorpost out, and lights it starting with the candle closest to the doorpost. Loading and lighting direction is not crucial to the performance of the mitzva, but there are reasons for the various practices.

- The essential performance of the mitzva of Chanuka Lights is the lighting of a single candle each night, and the custom that we follow of increasing the number of candles each night is considered HIDUR MITZVA (enhancement of the mitzva). One practice that has developed because of this, is to begin reciting HANEIROT HALALU after the first candle is lit, while lighting the others. Alternatively, one can wait until the lighting is done to say HANEIROT HALALU.

- One should not just light the Chanuka candles and then go on to business as usual, but rather one should look at the candles for a while, ponder G-d's miracles, spend some time with the family talking about the message of Chanuka and how it relates to our time, play a little dreidel, sing a song or two, have a snack, have some Chanuka fun.

- It is recommended to learn some Torah, share a Dvar Torah, have a family shiur, or something like that, right after candle lighting. The decrees of the Greeks included a ban on Torah learning. Our celebration of Chanuka marks our freedom from Greek oppression, including the ability to learn Torah in public without fear. So let's do just that!

- Notice on the "Chanuka Card" (part of this week's TT) that the word SHEL in the first bracha is in parentheses. There is a dispute as to whether the bracha ends NER SHEL CHANUKA or NER CHANUKA. One should follow his own (or family) minhag, if you have one (and remembers it). If not, you might want to ask your Rav which wording you should use. (Those who say NER CHANUKA have a bit of a problem if they sing the brachot, but don't let that determine your choice of wording.)

Indoor/Outdoor

The original place for lighting and displaying of the Chanukiya was outdoors at the entrance to one's courtyard or home. Over many generations in exile, where lighting outdoors was often inconvenient to say the least, and sometimes dangerous, the practice evolved to light indoors. In some circumstances, the lighting was to be done at a window, so that the candles would be visible to passersby in the street. In other cases, the Chanuka lights were lit in a conspicuous location for the attention of the members of the household.

Many people who have come to Israel, still light inside, at the window, as they had in their countries of origin. Others have gone back to the original practice of lighting outdoors. It seems that this is the preferred method in Yerushalayim.

If you are considering changing any aspect of your Chanuka candle lighting routine, (candle to oil or vice versa, sunset to stars-out or vice versa, indoors to outdoors or vice versa, window to door or vice versa, each family member to one for the family or vice versa, etc.) it is advisable to consult a Rav.

AL HANISIM is added to every Amida and all Birkat HaMazon throughout Chanuka. (There is no reference to Chanuka in "AL HAMICHYA" i.e. Bracha Mei'ein Shalosh.) Forgetting AL HANISIM does NOT invalidate either the Amida or Birkat HaMazon. That means that one does NOT repeat either, because AL HANISIM was omitted. However, if one realizes the omission before the end of the Amida, AL HANISIM can be said right before YIHU L'RATZON. In

Birkat HaMazon, an omitted AL HANISIM becomes a HARACHAMAN, right before HARACHAMAN HU Y'ZAKEINU, as follows...

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ נִסִּים וּנְפִלֹאוֹת כְּמוֹ שְׁעֵשֶׂה
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּיָמֵינוּ הַזֶּה. בְּיָמֵי מַתְתִּיהוּ...

(You might find variant texts for this HARACHAMAN in other places.)

HALLEL

Full HALLEL is said on each of the eight days of Chanuka (because there was the manifestation of a miracle on each day).

Torah reading

Day 1 - One Sefer Torah. Three Aliyot. Kohein gets the introduction of the Dedication of the Mishkan portion, from the beginning of Bamidbar 7 (first 11 p'sukim). Some shuls begin the reading 6 p'sukim earlier, to include the Birkat Kohanim parshiyot with the Chanuka reading. This is appropriate because the Chashmona'im were kohanim. Levi and Yisrael Aliyot split the account of the gifts of the leader of Yehuda, Nachshon b. Aminadav, 3 p'sukim each.

Days 2,3,4,5 - One Sefer Torah. Three people to the "Tribal Leader" of the day (from Naso, Bamidbar 7). Each day's portion has 6 p'sukim. The first three are read for the Kohen, the next three for the Levi. The third Aliya is a repeat of the whole portion. (Outside of Israel, the third Aliya is the next day's portion.)

Day 6, Shabbat, and the first day of Rosh Chodesh - This year, THREE Sifrei Torah are taken out. Parshat HaShavua - MIKEITZ (not always, but most often, including this year) is read from the first, to six people (Shishi and Sh'vi'i are combined). In the second Torah we read Sh'vi'i - which is the Musafim of Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh (Bamidbar 28:9-15). Chatzi Kaddish is said between the second and third Torahs. We read Maftir in the third Torah, which is the Chanuka portion - the gifts of Elyasaf b. D'u'el from Gad.

Torah reading is followed by the special Chanuka Haftara, which preempts the regular Haftara of Mikeitz and also that of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh. The reading is from Zecharya, and includes his vision of a golden Menora. (More on the Sedra Summary two weeks from now.)

Day 7, 2nd day Rosh Chodesh - Two Sifrei Torah are taken out. 3 people are called to the first Torah, and the reading is the weekday Rosh Chodesh portion (including the daily sacrifices, the Musaf of Shabbat, and the Musaf of Rosh Chodesh). In the second Torah, the Chanuka portion of Elishama b. Amihud from Efrayim is read.

Day 8, Zot Chanuka - One Torah. Kohein gets the first half (3 p'sukim) of the Chanuka portion of Gamli'el b. P'datzur of Menashe. Levi gets the second half of the Day 8 Nasi. The third Aliya gets days 9, 10, 11, and 12, the summary of all the gifts, and the beginning of B'ha-a'lo-t'cha, i.e. the portion of Aharon and the Menorah.

On top of everything else, enjoy the celebration of HaShem's miracles and victories.

חַנוּכָּה שְׂמֵחַ