

M'vorchim

Vayeishev is the 82nd day (of 354); the 12th Shabbat (of 50) of 5766

...וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶעֱשֶׂה הַרְעָה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְנִזְטַאתִי לֹא לְהָיִם: בראשית לט:ט

מברכים

A Holiday Waiting to Happen

The Gemara in Avoda Zara tells us that for the first few months of Adam HaRishon's life, he noticed that the day was getting shorter and shorter and the night, longer and longer. He feared that this meant that the World was returning to TOHU VAVOHU and Darkness, and that he was the cause of it. G-d had said that if he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he would die. And he thought that this is what G-d had meant. (Remember that he had no experience yet with the cycles of nature, nor with death.) He accepted upon himself eight days of fasting and prayer. Then he noticed that the days were getting longer and realized that this was the way of the world, not Divine punishment and the destruction of the world. He celebrated an eight day festival. His celebration was "for the sake of heaven", but future generations perverted this mid-winter festival to the worship of idolatry.

Fast-forward almost 2500 years. Bnei Yisrael are commanded to build the Mikdash (Mishkan). They gather materials, make furnishings, weave fabric, and more. Tradition tells us that the Mishkan was ready to be put into operation on the 25th of Kislev. Dedication was held for Rosh Chodesh Nisan, the birthdate of Yitzchak Avinu, whose being brought to the Akeida makes him the symbol of Mikdash service.

Each of the Tribes participated in the dedication of the Mishkan (CHANUKAT HAMIZBEI'ACH), except Levi.

About 1100 years later - 3600 years after Adam's first festival - the Chashmona'im, Kohanim (from Shevet Levi), rededicated the Mikdash on the 25th of Kislev and an 8-day mid-winter holiday was declared. The light of the Menora dispelled not only the darkness of the winter nights, but that of Malchut Yavan (Greek empire and culture), which is identified with the primordial Choshech (darkness). Chanuka was a holiday waiting to happen. Enjoy.

Word of the Month



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

39.4% of the years, Rosh Chodesh benching for Tevet is the Shabbat before Chanuka (as it is this year... this Shabbat!) The other 60.6% of the time, we bench Rosh Chodesh on Shabbat Chanuka (not like this year).



ראש חדש מיבת יהיה ביום שבת קודש ולמחרתו ביום ראשון הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל למוכה:

Only correct situation for ולמחרתו; should not be used for other 2-day Rosh Chodesh situations, just Shabbat-Sunday

המולד יהיה ביום שבת קודש (הבא).
חמישה עשר חלקים אחרי אחת בבוקר.

Molad: Shabbat, Dec. 31, 1h 0m 15p (12:40am)
Rambam notation: ש' ז'טו'

Actual molad: Shabbat 5:12am

TORAH Tidbits AUDIO
www.radiou.org and www.israelnationalradio.com
New shows from Thursday

OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

Candle Lighting and HAVDALA
Standard (Winter) time
Correct for TT 696 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 5:59pm

4:05pm	Jerusalem	5:21pm
4:20pm	Raanana	5:22pm
4:21pm	Beit Shemesh	5:22pm
4:20pm	Netanya	5:22pm
4:21pm	Rehovot	5:23pm
4:01pm	Petach Tikva	5:22pm
4:21pm	Modi'in	5:22pm
4:23pm	Be'er Sheva	5:24pm
4:20pm	Gush Etzion	5:21pm
4:19pm	Ginot Shomron	5:21pm
4:05pm	Maale Adumim	5:21pm
4:21pm	K4 & Hevron	5:22pm
4:11pm	Tzfat	5:18pm
4:20pm	Tel Mond	5:21pm

Ranges are FRI-FRI 22-29 Kislev (Dec. 23-30)
Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:42-5:44am
Sunrise - 6:36-6:37am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 9:07-9:10am (8:19-8:22am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:57-10:00am (9:25-9:28am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:38-11:42am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 12:09-12:12pm
Plag Mincha - 3:38-3:42pm
Sunset - 4:46-4:50pm (4:40½-4:45pm)

Important note: Chanuka candle lighting times in last week's Chanuka guide are fairly accurate. Those who light at the early-ish TZEIT time should probably also daven Maariv after, to assure proper SH'MA time.

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Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

Kohen - First Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 37:1-11

[P> 37:1 (36)] Yaakov has spent years away from home and now has returned. The Torah indicates that it is through Yosef that Yaakov's legacy continues. 17 year old Yosef brings bad reports about his brothers to Yaakov. Yaakov loves Yosef above his brothers and gives him a special (striped) coat. As a result, the brothers hate Yosef and cannot talk civilly to him. Yosef's two dreams (and especially, his telling his brothers about them) increases their hatred and jealousy, and this alarms Yaakov.

SDI *These are the TO'L'DOT of Yaakov: Yosef... Should not the Torah have started with Reuven? This comes to show us, says the Gemara, that Yosef should have been Yaakov's firstborn, but G-d's mercy for Leah put her before Rachel in giving birth.*

SDI *Talmud Yerushalmi wonders what Yosef reported about the brothers to Yaakov. R. Meir says, that they ate "limb from a living animal"; R. Yehuda says that they belittled the sons of Bilha and Zilpa and mistreated them; R. Shimon says that they cast their gaze upon the local women. R. Yehuda b. Pazi quotes the pasuk from Mishlei: "The scales and weighing stones of justice are HaShem's..." (the name-pasuk for Pinchas), meaning that a person is punished (or rewarded) measure for measure. (Sources explain that the brothers did not do these things; Yosef misinterpreted what he saw.) In Yosef's case, the slaughter of a goat was instrumental in his abduction and the deception of his father; he was belittled and enslaved; he was accused of immoral behavior with Potifar's wife.*

Yosef's second dream, of the Sun, Moon, and stars bowing to him, added fuel to his brothers' hatred. Yaakov pointed out the absurdity of the dream, since Rachel, the Moon, had already died and would therefore not be bowing to Yosef.

Rashi says two different things: (1) The dream was referring to Bilha who raised Yosef in Rachel's absence; and (2) even "true" dreams have an element of nonsense. These seem to be mutually exclusive statements - if the Moon represents Bilha, then the dream contained no nonsense. Yaakov seems to have purposely voiced the second option in order to diffuse some of the brothers' anger.

SDI *Why did the scholars of Bavel dress up so grandly? The Gemara in Shabbat asks. And it answers that they were not "Bnei Torah". External polish to compensate for internal lack. Says the Chatam Sofer, Yaakov gave Yosef a fancy coat so that the brothers would NOT be jealous of him, that they would view Yaakov's pampering of Yosef as a sign of his inferiority. Others suggest that the brothers were supposed to realize that the special treatment of Yosef was because his mother had died, and they should be sympathetic, rather than jealous. (P.S. It didn't work.)*

VAYEISHEV STATS

9th of 54 sedras; 9th of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 190 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 28th

4 Parshiyot; 3 open, 1 closed

112 p'sukim - ranks 24th (8th) tied with Matot; more words & letters than it, same line count

1558 words - ranks 24th (8th) tied with Vayakhel; fewer p'sukim & letters than it. Vayakhel is more than 20 lines longer

5972 letters - ranks 24th (8th) tied with D'varim; more p'sukim & words than it, but fewer lines

Only sedra tied with others in all 3 categories

Average sized sedra, relatively longish p'sukim

MITZVOT:

contains none of the TARYAG (613) mitzvot

לז"נ
ר' משה יצחק ב"ר מרדכי
 ז"ל
 on his 7th yahrzeit, NER SHENI
Love you and miss you, Dad, Grandpa
You'd love the 7 spouses (so far) and the 13 little ones (kein yirbu)

Levi - Second Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 37:12-22

The brothers are tending sheep near Sh'chem. Yaakov sends Yosef to them. A stranger (some say, the angel Gavriel) helps him find them.

(In the whole story of Yosef and his brothers, one can see that G-d has a plan which proceeds with the unknowing help of the brothers and other individuals. And yet, each person involved acts of his own free will, and is therefore accountable for his actions.)

When the brothers see Yosef coming, they (some say, Shimon and Levi) suggest killing him. Reuven talks them out of it by suggesting that they not spill his blood, but throw him into a pit instead. The Torah testifies that Reuven really intended to save Yosef.

A point must be made about the concluding pasuk of this Aliya, which gives credit to Reuven for saving Yosef. Commentaries say that Reuven could have talked the brother out of the whole thing; instead, he suggested the snake- and scorpion-infested pit. Nonetheless, Reuven is credited for his intention to save Yosef.

Rashi says that Reuven truly intended to come back and save Yosef - that's good - but his reason was that he, as oldest, would be blamed - that's not really a nice reason. Nonetheless, he gets the credit for the good deed he planned on doing - even though it wasn't accomplished AND even though his motives were not pure. It gives us something to think about. What credit must there be for proper motives, and actual success.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 37:23-36

When Yosef arrives, the brothers remove his coat and throw him into a deep pit. The brothers sit to eat. (This is considered a sign of callousness towards what they have done.) When a caravan of Ishmaelites approaches, Yehuda suggests that it would be wrong to kill Yosef (Reuven's intentions notwithstanding, the brothers expected Yosef to die in the pit); they should rather get rid of him by selling him into slavery. Through a series of transactions, Yosef ends up in Egypt as a slave to Potifar. When Reuven returns to the scene and discovers Yosef missing, he rends his garment and expresses his distress to the others. The brothers slaughter a goat, smear Yosef's multi-colored, striped coat in its blood, and send it to Yaakov to identify.

SDT Commentaries point out that just as Yaakov had deceived his father with a goat and a garment (goat & coat), so too was he deceived with a goat and a garment. The dish prepared by Rivka for Yaakov to serve his father was made from goat-meat. Rivka dressed Yaakov in goatskins and in Eisav's special garment. The brothers took Yosef's special garment - the K'tonet Pasim - and smeared it with goat's blood. This is a stark example of "Mida k'neged mida" - measure for measure.

Yaakov is inconsolable. (This is considered an indication that Yaakov subconsciously knew that Yosef was alive; one naturally accepts consolation for the dead after a time, but not for the missing.)

Think of the terrible anguish of the families of Israel's missing soldiers. Because of Yosef's story, Vayeishev is designated each year as SHABBAT SH'VUYEI V'NE'EDAREI TZAHA"l.

SDT Rashi gives us another aspect of the "Measure for Measure" punishment of Yaakov. The pasuk says that he "mourned for his son MANY DAYS." Rashi says that it was 22 years! Yosef was 17 when he was sold. He was 30 when he stood before Par'o. That's 13. Seven years of plenty and the first two years of famine before father and son were reunited. That makes 22 years that Yaakov was without Yosef. This, says Rashi, is the exact length of time that Yaakov was away from Yitzchak. It includes the 20 years with Lavan, a year and a half in Sukkot, and six months in Bet El before Yaakov returned to his father's house. Remember that Yaakov had various good excuses, nonetheless...

The measure for measure idea continues to the next generation. Baal HaTurim points out that just as Yehuda asked his father HAKEIR NA, recognize this garment as Yosef's, so too was he asked HAKEIR NA by his daughter-in-law Tamar. He was deceived exactly the way he deceived Yaakov. And there was a goat and garment in the Yehuda-Tamar story too. See further.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 30 p'sukim - 38:1-30

[P> 38:1 (30)] Subsequently, Yehuda leaves home and befriends an Adullamite named CHIRA.

SDT Why is the story of Yosef interrupted to tell us about Yehuda's situation? Rashi tells us that Yehuda was no longer looked up to by his brothers. After they saw the terrible effect on Yaakov of the Yosef business, they blamed Yehuda for not talking them out of the whole idea. Hence the term "And Yehuda went down from his brothers..." has a double meaning.

There he meets and marries the daughter of Shu'a, who bears him three sons. He marries off his eldest, Er to Tamar. When Er dies, the next brother Onan, marries his brother's widow. The Torah tells us that Onan refused to have a child with Tamar, because that child would "belong" (so to speak) to Er. This G-d took seriously (so to speak) and Onan also dies, Tamar is left to wait for the third son, Shela.

Then Yehuda's wife dies. Yehuda travels to the area where Tamar lives. When she hears of his arrival and realizes that she has not been given to Shela yet, she disguises herself. Yehuda, thinking she is a prostitute, sleeps with her. She asks and receives three items as security that he will send her payment (a goat). When it becomes known that Tamar is pregnant, Yehuda is summoned. Assuming that she has acted sinfully, he is prepared to have her punished. Tamar produces the three items and announces that she is pregnant by their owner.

SDT The Gemara teaches that one must avoid embarrassing another at all costs - it is better to be thrown into a fiery furnace than embarrass someone. We learn this from Tamar, who did not denounce Yehuda, even though she would have been considered guilty of immorality had Yehuda not owned up to his actions.

[Commentaries explain that prior to Matan Torah, any close relative could take the childless wife of the deceased; after the Torah was given, only a brother qualifies for YIBUM.]

Yehuda recognizes that he is the guilty one, not Tamar, and he admits it. She gives birth to twins (one extending his hand first, the other actually being born first). They are named Peretz (ancestor of King David) and Zerach.

Note the repeat of the confused firstborn theme. It pervades the Book of B'reishit.

OBSERVATION... Yaakov deceives his father with a garment (Eisav's) and fans the jealousy of his son's against Yosef with the "coat of many colors". He is deceived (and devastated) by that same coat when the brothers bring it back to him all bloodied. Yehuda is "troubled" by his garment which he gave to Tamar as one of the three securities for his promise to pay her with goats. (P'tilim, says Rashi, refers to Yehuda's cloak.) Yosef, the victim (but not free of guilt in the matter) has his coat grabbed by Potifar's wife. Yosef leaves it in her hands as he runs from the house; the coat becomes the damning piece of evidence against him. Interesting, no?

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 6 p'sukim - 39:1-6

[S> 39:1 (23)] In "meanwhile back at the ranch" style, the Torah returns us to the story of Yosef. Yosef serves in Potifar's house and brings success to his master. He is well-liked by all, and is given much responsibility. Then the Torah makes a point of telling us that Yosef was exceedingly good-looking.

SDI *The Midrash says that Yosef was aware of his looks and became too comfortable in Potifar's house. Things were going well, he had good food and drink, and he began "curling his hair". G-d (so to speak) said to Yosef: Your father is in agony over your disappearance and sup- posed demise and you are enjoying your- self? I shall make things rough for you too.*

SDI *The portion of Yosef in Potifar's house is juxtaposed to the episode of Yehuda and Tamar, and is further linked because the parsha of Yosef is S'tuma, meaning it continues on the same line (in a Sefer Torah) as the previous parsha (Yehuda & Tamar) ends. The standard explanation is that the sale of Yosef caused Yehuda to lose the respect of his brothers. Rashi gives another, intriguing, explana- tion. He says that it is to equate Tamar and Potifar's wife - both of whom acted "for the sake of Heaven". Potifar's wife, says Rashi, saw via astrology that she was destined to have descendants that came from Yosef. She thought that she was the one to produce them and so she tried to seduce him. She was just a bit off; it was, in fact, her daughter As'nat that would bear Yosef's children.*

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 17 p'sukim - 39:7-23

Potifar's wife casts her eye upon Yosef. She repeatedly attempts to seduce him. His constant refusal angers her.

She grabs him on a day when no one else is in the house. Yosef flees, leaving his coat behind. (This is the second time his coat has been left in the hands of others!) Potifar's wife denounces Yosef to all who will listen, and Potifar has no choice but to have Yosef imprisoned.

G-d "favors" Yosef in prison, and Yosef becomes well-liked and respected there too. Even in his troubled circum-

stances, Yosef is watched over favorably by G-d.

SDI *Commentaries see the episode of Potifar's wife as an appropriate punishment for Yosef: (a) having been vain about his good looks, (b) having reported to his father that his brothers had been "lifting their eyes" to the local girls, and (c) experiencing libelous accusations against himself, as he had reported the "evil- doings" of the brothers to their father. Baal HaTurim adds that Yosef spent 10 years in prison corresponding to the 10 brothers he reported on.*

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 23 p'sukim - 40:1-23

[P> 40:1 (23)] The last portion of Vayeshev tells of the dreams of the wine steward and the baker, both of whom had been imprisoned by Par'o for misdemeanors. Both dream on the same night and awake in morning very agitated. After Yosef interprets the wine steward's dream in a positive manner, the baker asks Yosef to interpret his dream as well. Yosef predicts death for him. Both dreams come true: the wine steward is restored to his position of honor and the baker is hanged. Yosef asks the wine steward to be remember him to Par'o, but alas, he forgets Yosef and his promise to him.

Rashi tells us that Yosef was to spend another two years in prison for relying on the Wine Steward to get him out of prison. This raises the question in our minds of the line between BITACHON, trust in G-d, and HISHTADLUS, effort a person expends to get himself out of a tough situation. Could it not have been viewed that G-d set up the whole dream situation with the Wine Steward and the Baker, so that Yosef would do exactly what he did, and the Wine Steward would then be in a position and willing state of mind to help Yosef and put in the good word to Par'o? Why is Yosef faulted for taking the opportunity to try to get out of prison via the Wine Steward, when one can claim that G-d had sent the Wine Steward to Yosef (so to speak) for exactly that purpose.

It is possible that the spiritual level of Yosef required different behavior than would be reasonable and proper for "the rest of us". It is possible that under the circumstances, namely that Yosef had just credited G-d repeatedly for his ability to interpret dreams, that the Wine Steward received the "wrong message" from Yosef when Yosef asks him to remember Yosef favorably. Something like: "Hey, your G-d can interpret dreams but can't even get you out of this dump without you asking me for a favor". Perhaps there is a Chilul HaShem factor to consider in each situation. The specific situation can sometimes dictate or indicate that a specific behavior is called for, even though in other circumstances, the opposite behavior would be appropriate.

To illustrate this point, take a look at two Questions and Answers to/from Rav Ephraim Oshry z"l, Rav in the Kovno Ghetto, from "Respona from the Holocaust" (English translation of part of a much larger work). He was asked if a person might purchase a baptismal certificate, which, if he could escape to the forest, would enable him to join the partisans. Rabbi Oshry ruled that having a baptismal certifi- cate would indicate that the person had forsaken Judaism and therefore one could not do such a thing, even if he expected to save his life with it.

On the other hand, a Jew in the ghetto, with a non-Jewish name and appearance, and a German passport, wanted to escape from the ghetto and hide among the gentiles. To this end, he needed to write the letters R.C. on his passport, which would give the impression that he was Roman Catholic from birth. Rabbi Oshry permitted him to do so, since R.C. can mean other things. It is up to you, the reader, to mull this over and see if it helps understand the end of the sedra.

The last 4 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 19 p'sukim - Amos 2:6-3:8

28½% of years, Vayeishev is Shabbat Chanuka - either alone (10.1%) or as one of two Shabbatot Chanuka (18.4%). In those years, the regular haftara of Vayeishev is pre-empted by the haftara for Shabbat Chanuka. The other 71½% of the time (like this year), Vayeishev is the Shabbat before Chanuka and its regular haftara is read.

Amos was an early prophet (and a sheep farmer - whatever that is), shortly after the kingdom split into Israel and Judea. He lived in Tekoa, Judea, but prophesied mostly in the Kingdom of Israel, where he tried to warn the people of the tragic end they faced. Amos warns the people that their behavior is repugnant before G-d and that He has already destroyed some of the neighboring nations for their misdeeds. The first pasuk is the perfect connection to the sedra; mentioning the sale of Yosef by his brothers. Rabbi Jacobs in his A Haftara Companion points to several other textual and conceptual connections.

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

Lesson # 312 (part two)

Laws of Informers

In the last lesson we began the laws of informers. In this lesson we conclude this topic.

In the previous lesson it was stated that if a brigand threatens Reuven even with physical harm to disclose his own assets and he shows the brigand Shimon's assets, Reuven, the informer, is liable to Shimon. There is a dissent that holds that if Reuven is coerced by threat it does not matter whether Reuven actually physically touches Shimon's assets or if he only tells the brigand where it is located, either way Reuven is not liable.

When Reuven is liable to Shimon, he is liable:

(a) for the entire loss caused by him being an informer; Reuven is the proximate cause of the loss to Shimon. Reuven's mere words make him liable.

(b) in spite of the fact that he did not touch the property (real or personal) or money, or have any contact with Shimon regarding the property or money;

(c) whether he actually pointed to the property or money, or merely stated where the property or money was located and the brigand seized the property or money from that place;

(d) to make payment from IDIT (the best of his real estate) if he pays from real property. Halacha divides real estate into three categories regarding payment of debts. If the debt arose from a tort and Reuven, the tort-feasor, does not have money to pay compensation, Shimon, the victim, can levy on Reuven's real estate for payment. Assuming that Reuven has all three types of real estate, the Torah stipulates that the payment must be from the IDIT. If payment is made in kind from Reuven's personal property any kind of such property may be paid.

Oath of the victim

Assume that there is no question that Reuven did inform against Shimon to a brigand, causing Shimon damages; but there is a question as to the amount of the damages. Shimon must prove his damages in Beth Din. The informing and the damages can be proven either by witnesses or by Reuven's admission.

Assume the witnesses testify as to the amount that the brigand seized from Shimon and Reuven admits that the brigand took that amount. However, Reuven also alleges that part of it was for a debt due from Shimon to the brigand; or that there is some sort of conspiracy between Shimon and the brigand to extract money from Reuven by their pleas; or that Shimon could have transferred less money to the brigand and the brigand would have been satisfied. Shimon may take an oath that he had no debt to the brigand, that he could not have settled with the brigand for a lesser amount, and that there was no plot between the brigand and himself. If Shimon takes such an oath he will obtain a judgment against Reuven for the full amount lost.

Assume that there are no witnesses to help Shimon prove his case against Reuven, the informer, regarding the amount of the damages. There is a difference of opinion as to whether Shimon can take an oath determining the damage that he suffered as a result of Reuven's informing on him. One view holds that Reuven's plea is to be considered. If Reuven denies the amount of damage then Shimon must prove his case. However, if Reuven pleads that he does not know the amount of damage then Shimon may take an oath and wins the lawsuit. A second view holds that in all events Shimon must prove his case and he cannot avail himself of the oath to win the lawsuit.

This dispute concerns monetary losses suffered by Shimon. However, if Shimon suffers physical injuries resulting from Reuven's informing on him and Shimon has no witnesses to prove his case, then he can rely on taking the oath to win the lawsuit.

Oath of the informer

Shimon has no witnesses as to being informed on and Reuven denies that he informed against Shimon. Reuven takes a HESSET oath and wins the lawsuit. If Reuven admits to part of Shimon's claim and denies the balance, he must pay the amount to which he has admitted. Reuven takes a HESSET oath as to the balance and obtains judgment regarding the balance. The same holds true if Reuven admits to part of Shimon's claim but denies having knowledge of the balance; Shimon takes a HESSET oath as to the balance and wins the lawsuit. There is a dissent that Reuven takes a Torah oath as do all those who admit part of a claim and deny the balance, or when there is one witness who testifies as to the defendant's liability. The reason for the view held by the majority is that Reuven takes only a HESSET oath because the essence of a claim against an informer does not involve money; the money issue only arises from the words of the informer.

There is authority that when Reuven takes the HESSET oath it must be in the presence of Shimon. It may be that Shimon's presence will embarrass Reuven thereby encouraging him to tell the truth. If Shimon pleads that he does not know who informed on him and he produces one witness who claims that it was Reuven, Reuven may take a HESSET oath of denial and the complaint against him will be dismissed. The one witness produced by Shimon may even be a Gentile who is known to be trustworthy.

Assume that the role of Reuven is performed by more than one person. Reuven and Levi, for example, informed on Shimon resulting in a brigand seizing assets from Shimon. Both Reuven and Levi are liable to Shimon. He may collect the entire amount in any way possible; if Reuven or Levi pays more than his half share to Shimon, the one who did so may seek restitution from the other.

If after Reuven informs a brigand, causing Shimon damages, Levi also informs the brigand about Shimon, Reuven must compensate for the entire damages, except if as a result of Levi's informing Shimon lost more than he would have lost had only Reuven informed the brigand. In this latter event, Levi must pay the overage. In a situation in which Levi does not have to make forced payment to Shimon, he is still classified as a wicked person; Levi must undergo the same penance as Reuven.

If Reuven, the informer, dies, Shimon can collect the damages he suffered from Reuven's heirs to the extent that the heirs have inherited real estate from Reuven. There is an opinion that holds that Shimon can collect in this manner provided he had sued Reuven while Reuven was still alive.

Assume that a woman informs against Shimon. A woman's assets are given to her husband to use during their marriage. If she causes damages, the victim generally has to wait until she or her husband dies. If her husband dies first the victim can collect from her ketuba. If she dies first the husband must pay the victim out of the assets that he inherited from her.

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@gefenpublishing.com and via website: www.israelbooks.com and at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to quint@inter.net.il

Meaning in Mitzvot

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

Rabbi Asher Meir

Benefit from Chanuka Light

Two of the best-known candle-lighting customs are the Chanuka lights and the candle by which we search for chametz on Pesach eve.

On the face of it these two mitzvot could not be more opposite. The candle at Pesach eve is entirely utilitarian, in order to help us find chametz, and its entire character is determined by the need for usefulness: if it is too big, the seeker may fear starting a fire, if it is from tallow he may fear soiling his dishes, if it is an oil lamp it may spill, etc. (SA OC 433).

By contrast, the Chanuka lights are entirely anti-utilitarian; it is forbidden to benefit from their light (SA OC 672), and the entire character of the mitzva is determined by this fact: The lights have to be separate so that they won't appear like a torch; it is preferable for the lights to be low so that they are not useful (OC 671); an extra candle (the shamash) is lit so that any use will be by its light only (OC 673), we customarily don't light the candles one from another (OC 674), and so on.

Yet the Sefat Emet draws a likeness between these two mitzvot. The likeness is based on the Scriptural source which the gemara finds for the candle-light search on erev Pesach:

Rav Chisda said, we learn finding from finding, and finding from seeking, and seeking from seeking, and seeking from candles, and candles from candle. Finding from finding: Here it is written "Seven days leaven will not be found in your houses" (Sh'mot 12:19), and there it is written "And he sought beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and [the goblet] was found" (B'reishit 44:12). And finding from seeking from itself [the verse begins "And he sought"]. And seeking from candles, as it is written "At that time I will seek Yerushalayim with candles" (Tzefania 1:12). And candles from candle, as it is written, "The candle of Hashem is the soul of man, which searches all crevices of the innards" (Mishlei 20:27).

The Gemara goes on to explain that the last verse clarifies that the candlelight search is not a less thorough one seeking with candles instead of a torch to overlook minor transgressions, but rather a more thorough one, just as the lone candle of the soul of man illuminates and penetrates all his innermost parts (Pesachim 7b).

The Sefat Emet explains that the Chanuka light is also meant to help us with a search, but it is an inner search:

For the meaning of the Tabernacle and the Temple is found in every person of Israel as well, as it is said: "And I will dwell within them". [The term betocham is usually translated "among them", but the Sefat Emet understands it to mean "within them", a grammatically appropriate rendering.] And this is to the extent that a person clarifies to himself that all of his vitality is from the soul... there is a pure point in every person of Israel, but it is hidden and stored away. But when the Temple was in existence it was revealed that all vitality was from God; and this is the significance of the indwelling of the Sh'china (the Divine Presence), a testimony that Hashem dwells among Israel. But now that the Tabernacle is hidden, even so it can be found by searching with candles.

This is the parallel from the Gemara in Pesachim, which explains that we seek Yerushalayim with candles. We seek within ourselves the unique holiness which was revealed then in Yerushalayim, with the help of the Chanuka candle.

The Sefat Emet goes on to explain that just as the actual light of the Temple was lacking in the time of the Maccabees, but miraculously the light was sustained as a testimony to God's presence, so nowadays we have special Divine aid to find God's presence within us with the help of the Chanuka lights, which bear a glimmer of the original miraculous light. (Sefat Emet, Chanuka 5631, second night)

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 [3]

"The place where he, Avraham had stood before Hashem' (B'reishit 19:29), from this we learn that Avraham fixed a place for his prayer" (Berachot 6b). So too, one should have a fixed place for his prayer since the place becomes sanctified through his prayers. One who does not do this, shows arrogance in that he considers that he has the spiritual power and merit to sanctify any place at any time" (Yalkut Yehuda). This verse is followed immediately by: "G-d remembered Avraham so He sent Lot from amidst the destruction". "We see that even in His anger, Hashem remembers the righteous ones, so Lot is taken out of Sodom in the merit of Avraham Avinu" (Berachot 54a). Yet: "Avraham did not save Yishmael even though he was his son and Yitschak did not save Eisav, so why should the memory of Avraham save Lot who was only a nephew? From this we learn of Lot's own merit" (Sanhedrin 104b). So the Midrash teaches: "Remembered? Hashem remembered the kindness that Lot did in that he remained silent in Egypt when Avraham said that Sarah was his sister" (B'reishit Rabba 41). To which Ramban adds: "Hashem remembered the chesed that Lot did with the Tzaddik in that he went with Avraham to Eretz Yisrael". However we still have to find out what was the purpose of saving Lot over and above his relationship with Avraham. We know that although earlier they had parted company, nevertheless Avraham later went to war to redeem Lot. Yet Lot had gone back to S'dom thus showing that he had left the Avrahamic path, so what was the point of saving him?

The stories in Bereishit are the story of the preparation of the Abrahamic family for its subsequent role as the Holy Nation, a Kingdom of Priests. As such they are a spiritual progression in purified holiness from universal Adam and Noah to the descendants of Shem, a particular family in Haran. As an integral and essential part of that progression, Avraham had left that family to go to the destined Land and Lot had gone with him. Ideas, merits and sparks of that progression resided also in Lot even though he dwelled in S'dom, as we see from his chesed towards the strangers. These sparks of holiness that were destined to be part of the Abrahamic Nation could not remain there, so Lot had to be saved from the destruction of that city. The other sparks of holiness and chesed that still remained in Haran were enhanced by bringing Rivka, sister of Lavan the Aramean as a wife to Yitschak and by the mission of Yaakov to find Rachel and Leah the daughters of Lavan, as brides.

Since sexual relations with daughters are permitted to a Noachide (Sanhedrin 59b) halakhically Lot did not sin. Nevertheless, a fine soul would regard it as depraved and remove himself from such lusts; not everything that is legal may be done - morality starts where the law ends. There are many examples of acts that are halakhically permitted to Jews, but refined and religious people distance themselves from them: "Legally, rabbinic interest need not be repaid, yet one who is careful about his soul will return it (Shulchan Arukh Baal HaTanya). So too, "G-d extracts payment from one who reneges on an agreement even where it is legal and where no loss is caused to the other party" (Choshen Mishpat). Furthermore, the Rabbis saw as an additional blemish that Lot, seeing what had happened after his drinking on the first night, did not refrain from any wine on the second, hinting that the second incest at

least, was intentional on his part.

So it is difficult to understand how sparks of holiness and sanctity could be brought out through incest between Lot and his two daughters. This can be explained by the distinction between men and women in the law that Ammon and Moav are forbidden from entering Israel through marriage. While the reason lies in their hiring Bil'am to curse us, and because they did not return the chesed that Avraham had shown to their ancestor Lot, yet these two traits have their true source in the mamzeirut that Lot begot. "Mamzeirut is a blemish that remains for generations, even as it is written, (B'reishit 19:37): 'He is the ancestor of Moav... and of Ammon until this day. It leads to a corruption of the soul since its root lies in arrogance that regards egoistical desires as desires that may be satisfied at all costs" (Meshekh Chochma).

The Torah's restriction on intermarriage does not apply to the women of these two nations. Not only is this so because the negative traits that caused the restriction are not commonly within women's spheres of influence, but also because regarding the incest there are redeeming features among the women that were absent by Lot. "The daughters of Lot thought that the whole world had been destroyed as during the Flood and therefore if they did not seduce their father all Mankind would disappear (Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Rashbam). "They said 'let us do this thing, perhaps Hashem in His mercy will grant us a boy and a girl and through them the world will be rebuilt'; as it is written (T'hilim 89:3) 'through mercy the world is built'" (Ramban).

"The whole story is told in order to show the antecedents of Ammon and Moav, descendants of Lot, to whom Hashem gave an inheritance because of what he gained from Avraham. Israel en route to Eretz Yisrael, was commanded not to make war against Moav and even not to oppress Ammon; this favorable distinction is made because of the younger daughter naming her son Ben Ami, concealed Lot's disgrace" (Radak).

Those sparks of the Avrahamic Nation that were brought out of S'dom, were destined to be magnified beyond their origin in Lot. "When one learns some Torah from a Tzaddik, that Torah develops, increases and is even enhanced over time" (Baal Shem Tov, Avot 6:3); in the future these sparks came home to that Nation through the descendants of Lot, Ruth of Moav who brought the Chesed essential to the Jewish concept of Kingship and Naama the Ammonite, the wife of Yeravam who inherited the throne of Shlomo HaMelech.

This is the 108th 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: At the Jewish school where I teach, we plan to end the school days of Chanuka as follows. We will daven a late Mincha in a classroom, followed by a d'var Torah. Then we will light Chanuka candles with the berachot and dismiss the class. May we blow out the candles for safety reasons?

A: Regarding your question, even the Chanuka candles that are lit in a shul should preferably remain lit for a half hour (Mishna Berura 675:6). However, it is probably not responsible to leave the candles unattended in a school building. Therefore, we suggest that you extinguish the lights before leaving, which most poskim allow under such circumstances. (See Mikra'ei Kodesh (Harari), Chanuka 10:28, who cites Rav Eliyahu as saying that one should stipulate before lighting that he plans to extinguish them.)

Allow us to raise issues related to your assumption that you should light the candles with berachot. The Gemara does not mention lighting Chanuka candles in shul, but by the time of the Rishonim it was an accepted minhag. The Beit Yosef (Orach Chayim 671) cites the Kol Bo that it is intended to fulfill the mitzva of those who do not light at home and to increase the level of *pirsumei nisa* (publicizing the miracle), which is the heart of the mitzva. The Rivash (#111) develops the latter reason beautifully. Originally, the candles were lit in front of everyone's house. Because fear of non-Jews forced the lighting inside, the minhag developed to "spread the light" at least in shul. The Rivash explains that we recite a beracha, as we do for certain other minhagim, and this is the broadly accepted practice (Shulchan Aruch, OC 671:7). Others explain that since a shul corresponds to the Beit HaMikdash, where the original miracle occurred, it is appropriate to also perform the commemoration there.

Acharonim debate whether it is appropriate to light Chanuka candles with a beracha in public gatherings other than in a shul. Some claim that since the minhag is so novel, we may not extend it further (Minchat Yitzchak VI 65). Others counter that the important matter is publicizing the miracle, wherever that may be. If there are also people present who have not yet fulfilled their mitzva (see Piskei Teshuvot 671:15) and/or there will be a minyan for Ma'ariv (Torat Hamo'adim (Yosef) 7:16), there are stronger grounds to extend the minhag.

It appears that the classroom you mention is considered a shul, certainly if there is a regular minyan there. However, the timing is not simple. The minhag is to light the candles between Mincha and Ma'ariv (Rama, OC 671:7), even when this is earlier than one would light at home (Mishna Berura 671:46). This facilitates proper *pirsumei nisa* throughout Ma'ariv, after which people run out (Shev Yaakov 22). Therefore, one can question whether your classroom is like a shul in this regard, when you are not davening Ma'ariv, which is the time to light. One might consider lighting the candles before the d'var Torah,

so the children will be seeing them during the next several minutes. If the d'var Torah is to begin before sunset and finish after it, it probably pays to light after sunset (see Torat Hamo'adim 7:(4)). There is also a question whether one needs a real minyan to light in shul (see Mikraei Kodesh, ibid.:6). (We don't know the children's ages.)

Depending on the details, there are likely halachic reasons to prefer lighting the candles without a beracha, which also makes blowing them out simpler. However, you may decide that the educational factors tip the scale in favor of doing a regular lighting. (One major factor is the presence of children whose parents do not light at home.) Your email indicates that you are a rabbi. Not only can you decide the halachic elements, but you, who "live" the children's education, should also factor in educational elements of the experience. Whatever you decide about the berachot, you may extinguish the candles for security reasons.

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**

A man's job is not to be in complete control of all situations, but to be in control of himself in all situations.

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)

For I have been stolen from the land of the Hebrews (B'reishit 40:15).

In his plea to enlist the aid of the royal butler in securing his release from prison, Yosef informed the butler that he had been kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews.

Rabbi Yonatan Eybeshitz [Yaarot Dvash Drush 14] explains why Yosef found it necessary to mention his kidnapping from the land of the Hebrews.

In this statement, Yosef expressed his true motivation for requesting parole. Yosef understood that he could realize himself only in the Land of Israel. One can maximize his potential and achieve the highest level of personal perfection only through clinging to God. In turn, one who truly wishes to cling to God must ascend to Eretz Yisrael, which is, as it were, God's abode. Yosef wished to reach his ancestors' level and become a "throne and chariot for God". This could be accomplished only in Eretz Yisrael. Thus, in essence, Yosef is saying: "my goal in requesting release from prison is not to achieve freedom per se, rather to be allowed to return to the land of the Hebrews, where I can achieve the highest level of self actualization."

R. Yonatan concludes with the following comments: Yosef's statement demonstrates the extent to which one must desire to ascend to Eretz Yisrael, as the Shila has written, "one's heart must always be filled with desire and longing for Eretz Yisrael". A Jew who resides outside Eretz Yisrael must always understand that he is incomplete. Being outside the Holy Land precludes one from full self-actualization. A Jew abroad must always feel saddened by the fact that the essential aspect of spiritual life is lacking.

David Magence, Har Nof, Jerusalem

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

R' Meir of Lublin once came to a city to raise money for his yeshiva, Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. He spoke in the shul about the importance of supporting those who learn Torah, and aroused the congregation to donate generously.

After he had finished his speech, R' Meir saw a child standing in the crowded shul. "My child", R' Meir asked him, "did you understand my speech?"

"No", answered the child truthfully, "I didn't. I only understood one thing: that one must give money."

"If you caught that," said R' Meir with a smile, "you understood my speech better than many of your elders."

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

[5] **Parsha Points to Ponder - VAYEISHEV**

1) The Torah relates (37:3) that Yaakov loved Yosef more than the other brothers because he was the BEN ZEKUNIM - classically understood to mean the son born when Yaakov was old. If this was the reason for Yaakov favoring Yosef, shouldn't Yaakov's love have been for Binyamin who was born even later than Yosef?

2) Yosef had two dreams relating to his brothers bowing to him - one with sheaves of grain and one with stars. (See 37:5-9) Why was it necessary for him to have two different dreams and visions to convey the same exact message?

3) There is well known teaching from our Sages that the pit where the brothers through Yosef had no water as the Torah relates (37:24), but it did have snakes and scorpions. If so, weren't the brothers essentially killing Yosef by throwing him there?

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) The Ramban explains that it was the custom of elders to choose one of their younger sons to serve them and be with them at all times. They were called BEN ZEKUNIM not because they were the last child but because they would serve the father in his old age. Yaakov chose Yosef to be this special son and, thus, showed him favor.

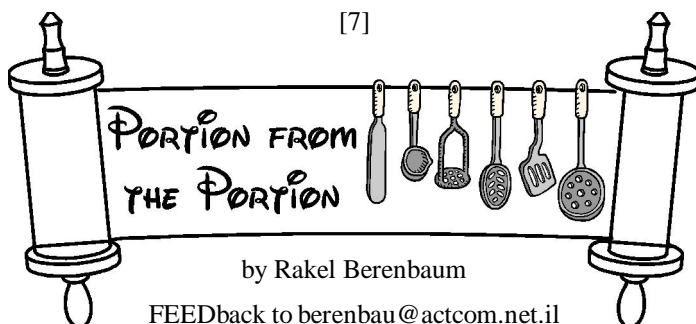
2) The Bais HaLevi explains each dream conveyed a different message. The first dream, with the sheaves of grain, represents the fact that the brothers would have to rely on Yosef for their physical sustenance. The stars in the second dream allude to the constellations which represent spiritual forces. This dream taught that the brothers would have to rely on Yosef for spiritual leadership as well.

3) The Vilna Gaon points to the fact that the word BOR (pit) is written twice in the verse with different spellings. When describing that they threw him into the pit the word BOR is spelled without a VAV, which indicates something lacking. This hints to the understanding of the brothers that the pit was completely empty. However, when relating that the pit had no water, the Torah writes BOR in the full way with a VAV to indicate that while it was lacking water it was full with something else, namely snakes and scorpions. This shows that the brothers were unaware of the dangers inside of that pit.

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

[6] **MicroUlpan**

An egg has a pointier end and a blunter end. In Hebrew, The pointier end is a CHOD. The blunter end is a KOD. As adjectives, it would be CHAD and KAD. HAKATZE HACHAD V'KATZE HAKAD



The brothers looked up and saw a Ishmaelite caravan coming from Gil'ad. The camels were carrying, n'chot, tz'ri, and lot), transporting them to Egypt (37:25). What were the camels carrying and why is it significant for us to know this? Why did the Torah tell us this?

Rashi asks this same question and answers that these type of traders would usually have carried neft vataran (petroleum oil) which smells bad. Instead they were carrying things with good smells;

N'chot is wax or gum that is usually identified with tragacanth, the aromatic sap of a species of Astragalus shrub. The Midrash Lekach Tov says it is carob. Rashi says it is the generic word for spices.

Tz'ri is a gum resin extracted from the sap of the tree Commiphora apobasamum, and it is used for incense and perfume.

Lot is usually identified as labdanum, a soft dark resin derived

from various bushes known as rockroses. It is used for making perfume. The midrash defines it as the resin of the mastic tree, a member of the pistachio family. The Targum renders it letum which is identified as chestnut (Rambam) (See Aryeh Kaplan The Living Torah for pictures, he translates the verse : the camels were carrying gum, balsam, and resin.).

Rashi says that the verse is coming to teach us about G-d's love for his servants and how He "rewards them". For whatever reason Yosef had to go down to Egypt, he was deserving of some type of punishment, but Hashem didn't add any extra hardship to this sentence. Hashem takes care not to hurt us unnecessarily. He is merciful in his judgment, ,RAV CHESED V'EMET.

From this Pasuk we also see a hint of G-d's method of punishing MIDAHAH K'NEGED MIDAHAH. The brothers sold Yosef to people carrying these spices and later on (in Miketz) they have to bring these same objects to Yosef as a gift from Yaakov to buy Yosef's forgiveness (43:11). "Take some of the land's famous products in your baggage, a little balsam, a little honey, and some gum, resin, pistachio nuts and almonds."

We can learn so much about Hashem's relationship with us in His world if we take the time to read the Torah carefully and pay attention to each and every word.

For this Shabbat you can serve pistachio nuts, roasted chestnuts, carobs or give everyone a piece of gum, "mastic". Nowadays mastic gum comes from the Greek Island Chios. In Cyprus and all Arab countries it is considered the most essential spice. It is proven to absorb cholesterol and is good for oral hygiene and as an antiseptic for the mouth. You may want to have some mastic if you serve carobs as the midrash Lekach Tov says, they are called charuvim because they MACHRIVIN HASHINAYIM, destroy the teeth.

Chicken breasts with mastic and pistachio crust

1 chicken fillet

5 Tbsp. dried bread crumbs

5 grains mastic (buy at a spice store called Mastic Teimani in Israel)

6 Tbsp. margarine (or oil)

5 Tbsp. crushed pistachio nuts

Salt

Bake the chicken in the oven with a little margarine or oil till the meat tightens.

Crush the mastic with the salt by hand or in a blender and turn into a paste with the margarine, breadcrumbs and pistachios.

Spread the paste over one side of the chicken to form a centimeter thick layer.

Bake for 10 minutes at 200°C.

Note: I tried the recipe and it tastes good.

Mastic adds a bit of a tangy taste, don't add too much or it might taste like turpentine.

If you can't get mastic (most people haven't even heard about it), the recipe tastes good without it as well.

Speaking of pistachio nuts... Iran is the main location of the pistachio... formerly, it existed only in SW Asia, but has been introduced and is cultivated in other parts of the world... The pistachio shell splits open when the fruit is ripe (so that's how it's done!)... shell is naturally beige, but used to be commonly dyed red. This was done to hide blemishes on the shell, which hardly occur today with machine-picking of the nuts. Hence red ones are no longer common...

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 workshops on memory improvement.

[8] Dream...

CHALOM (dream) and verb variations appear in Vayeishev 20 times. Dreams are very significant in this sedra

[9] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Vayeishev opens with a fitting sequel to the years of wandering of our forefather Ya'akov. In simple language the Torah tells us that Ya'akov settled in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

Initially, we take note that the Land is associated with Yitzchak who was commanded not to leave Eretz Yisrael. As if to tell us that Ya'akov's departure from Canaan was an unfortunate necessity and certainly not the preferred action for our forefather, or any Jew, for that matter.

While the Torah refers to Yitzchak's experience in Eretz Yisrael as 'sojourning' (that implies wandering and transience), the term Vayeishev attributed to Ya'akov suggests settlement and permanency. The Midrash explains that Ya'akov now yearned to live securely and in tranquility in the Land. But it was not to be; the anguish of Yosef's kidnapping would shortly overwhelm him.

For Rabbi Gedaliah Schorr, the Mid-rash indicates that Ya'akov's mission was not yet fulfilled. It was not enough that he fathered the twelve tribes and emerged from his confrontations with Esav and Shechem. The ensuing events were to pave the way for the people of Israel. And Ya'akov would now teach us that despite the travails, a Tzaddik is willing to sacrifice temporary peace for the sake of the eternal elevation of his offspring.

Shabbat Shalom and Chanukah Sameach, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

Note that the standalone word for the garment Yaakov gave Yosef is KUTONET. Most of the time, the word is part of a phrase, in which case it is K'TONET, as in K'TONET PASIM, K'TONET HAPASIM, K'TONET YOSEF, K'TONET BINCHA, K'TONET B'NI. All in Vayeishev. Elsewhere we find K'TONET SHEISH, K'TONET TASHBEITZ. Plural is similar. KUTANOT, stand-alone word. But KATNOT KOHANIM. All four words are spelled the same:

כְּתוֹנֶת כְּתוֹנֶת כְּתוֹנֶת כְּתוֹנֶת

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.

He Was Not Embarrassed! (I)

The noted historian F.E. Peters accurately summarizes the situation in the East after the death of Alexander the Great (323 BCE). "The successor states of Alexander's empire present a dreary historical chronicle of endless wars provoked by the burgeoning ambitions of enfeebled men and their armies." Ptolmey, one of Alexander's generals, succeeded in founding a strong dynasty in Egypt with its capital in the new city of Alexandria. Seleucus, another general, created a much larger though unwieldy conglomerate which included most of most of Alexander's conquests in Asia. Seleucus' dominion encompassed Asia Minor, Phoenicia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. There were many wars between these two emergent kingdoms with Eretz Yisrael a major prize. In a twenty year period, Jerusalem and Judea changed masters no less than seven times - in 320 BCE, twice in 318, once in 315, once in 312 and again in 302 BCE. Finally after decades of war, Ptolmey succeeded in defeating his Seleucid rival, and Eretz Yisrael became part of the Ptolemaic kingdom for over a century (312-198BCE). Following Alexander's unfortunate precedent, the Ptolemies established numerous Greek cities in Eretz Yisrael - particularly on the Mediterranean coast and east of the Jordan River. These Greek cities became serious economic, political and demographic barriers to Jewish expansion. Nevertheless, the period of Ptolemaic suzerainty in Eretz Yisrael was unique in history; the Jewish population enjoyed four generations of peace! Despite a corrupt beaucracy and heavy taxes, the Jewish community prospered. Scholars estimate that under the Ptolmies, the flourishing Jewish population more than doubled and possibly even tripled. The resultant overcrowding in Judea impelled many Jews to leave the rocky enclave around Jerusalem and migrate to the outlying areas of Eretz Yisrael. However, these Jews were not ordinary immigrants and they soon made it clear that they had no intention of assimilating into the local population. It was common knowledge that the Jews had once ruled all of Eretz Yisrael (at least theoretically) and that they considered the entire country as their divine patrimony.

After a long cease-fire, Antiochus III (201 to 198BCE) renewed the war against the Ptolmies. Decisively defeating them, he added southern Syria and Eretz Yisrael to his kingdom. His erratic successor Antiochus IV, arrogantly and foolishly, tried to suppress Judaism in Judea and thereby set the stage for the familiar "Chanukah story". Peters notes, "Religious scandal, cultural shock, xenophobia, family ambitions, and the tax rate were all weapons in the Maccabean arsenal and they used them to bring the Seleucids down."

Few people realize how small Judea was when Yehuda HaMakabi raised the banner of revolt. Judea extended from Beit-Horon to Beit-El in the north, Beit-Zur in the south and from (but not including) Gezer, Emmaus, to Modi'in in the west. The eastern border was the Jordan River, the area of Jericho and the Dead Sea - a total area of less than two thousand, eight hundred square kilometers. While Yehuda HaMakabi succeeded in driving the foreigners and their Jewish

sycophants out of Jerusalem (except for the Akra, a fort in the heart of the city) and the Judean hill-country, he was unable to pierce the hostile iron ring choking the little country. However, Jonathan, one of Yehuda's brothers, later succeeded in liberating Ekron, the first Maccabean conquest in the Shefeila plus three Samaritan districts. Another brother, Simon freed Beit Tzur, a key fortress in the south, Gezer and most important, the port of Jaffa. Judea would no longer be landlocked. Though they were hardly angels, it was the three much maligned later Maccabees, Yochanan Hyrcanus, Yehuda Aristobulus and Alexander Yannai who transformed "Palestine" into Eretz Yisrael.) The Jewish historian Joseph Klausner comments, "But for these victories, a Jewish Eretz Yisrael could never have come into being: the Jewish state must have remained a tiny district called 'Judea' lost within the greater expanse of Syria... It was through these Maccabees alone that... 'Philistia' became the Land of Israel." Because of their military prowess and political savvy, Am Yisrael was able to break out of the confining Judean hills and spread throughout Eretz Yisrael. The ideology of these three leaders was that of their indefatigable predecessor Simon HaMakabi. When "ordered" to "return" newly liberated Jaffa and Ekron to the Seleucids, Simon did not pontificate about "security needs". Unlike some of his modern descendants, he was convinced of the righteousness of his cause. He believed that Eretz Yisrael belonged to Am Yisrael and refused to give it away. And unlike some of his modern descendants who prefer to cower behind concrete walls, Simon HaMaccabee was not embarrassed to say, "We have not taken foreign soil, but only the inheritance of our fathers, which fell into the hands of our foes unjustly, and now the land has returned to its first owners" (I Mac. 15:33,34). Klausner rightly concludes, "But for the heroism of the Maccabees, the heathen must, finally, have swallowed up the Jews." -to be continued

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



Lower-left is the Davka Graphic of Yosef's dreams.

The snake and the scorpion are what was in the pit into which Yosef was thrown.

The animals at the bottom-right are the sheep, as in the sheep that were being tended by Yosef's brothers when he was sent by Yaakov to inquire about their well-being. The camel represents the passing caravans, and the goat is, of course, for the goat that the brothers slaughtered to cover-up their terrible deed. It also represents the goat that Yehuda sent to Tamar.

Speaking of whom, we have the staff (close, it's a cane), the seal (play on words), and the hooded coat, which is close to the meaning of p'tilecha, that Yehuda gave to Tamar as security for the payment of the goat.

See the wine and bread, representing the Wine Steward and the Baker, whose dreams were similar, but their interpretations and results were so different.

The snow flake in the upper-left corner: Twice, once after the brothers saw that Yaakov loved Yosef the most, and once after he told them his dream, the Torah tells us, VAYOSIFU OD

SNOW OTO, and they further hated him. (These happen to be the only SNOWs in Tanach. Shoftim 15:2 is close.)

The birthday cake is for Par'o (end of the sedra).

The insignia below the cake is that of the Israel Prison Service. The one who wears this insignia can represent SAR BEIT HASOHAR.

That's a butcher in the upper-right. He stands for the SAR HATABACHIM.

Below the seal is the symbol for Gemini, the Twins. They represent Peretz and Zerach.

The Shofar at the top and the roaring lion (between the seal and the butcher) are from the haftara: If a shofar blows in a city... A lion roars, who wouldn't be frightened...

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 (VAYISHLACH) TTriddles:

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

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

[3] Here it's both; in Divrei HaYamim it's 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?

And the envelope, please...

[1] There are four sedras (of 54) in the Torah that have a mitzva or two, none of which are positive commands - only prohibitions. Vayishlach is the first like that, with only the prohibition of Gid HaNasheh. B'shalach has only the prohibition of going outside T'chum Shabbat. Vayak-heil has only the prohibition of Sanhedrin's carrying out punishments on Shabbat. D'varim is more so with two prohibitions and no Mitzvot Asei. That's it. The remaining 361 prohibitions are in sedras that also have positive commands. To be specific, those 361 prohibitions are found in 27 different sedras. That means 31 sedras all together contain the 365 prohibitions. Which also means that 23 sedras have no prohibitions. This includes 17 sedras with no mitzvot at all and six sedras with only positive commands. ANYK (And now you know!)

[2] Reference is to attenuated buses (long buses) with a front door, middle door, and back door. The basis on which to call the middle door a back door too comes from the pasuk that describes the presentation of Yaakov's family to Eisav. He (Yaakov) put the S'fachot (Bilha and Zilpa) and their children first (RISHONA), and Leah and her children last

(ACHARONIM), and Rachel and Yosef last (ACHARONIM). This does not mean that if you are at the middle door of a long bus and you get to your stop and the driver has not opened your door, that you should call out "DELET ACHORIT NEHAG". It might not work, even though the pasuk indicates that it should get the door open for you. REGA, REGA might work better.

[3] P'NU'EL & P'NI'EL. A search of Tanach for each, PEI-NUN-VAV-ALEF-LAMED and PEI-NUN-YUD-ALEF-LAMED results in the following: P'NU'EL occurs 8 times, once in Vayishlach, 4 times in Shoftim, once in Melachim Alef, and twice in Divrei HaYamim Alef. P'ni'el shows up only twice. Once here (Vayishlach) and once in Divrei HaYamim. Here it is another name, or another pronunciation of the name of the same place. In Divrei HaYamim it is the way the name of the place is written, but the word is to be read P'NU'EL.

[4] Confuse the letters of a dreidel, meaning - mix them up, and you can spell HAGAFEN, that being the bracha said on a confused dreidel.

That's it for the TTriddles per se. We also had the first Nachman K Jewish Trivia Question.

The correct answer is FEI-SOFIT, which appears in the ELOKAI, NITZOR passage at the end of the Amida. The word TIRDOF. (There happens to be another FEI-SOFIT in Modin D'rabanen and one in the Al HaNisim for Purim. But the wording of the question would leave both of those out, with only on FEI-SOFIT found in the regular weekday Amida.)

A" C t not only submitted the correct answer, but also attached a Dvar Torah "explaining" the lack of FEI-SOFIT in general, and the presence of the one specifically. Words like AF, SHETZEF, KETZEF all have a connotation of G-d's anger, and give the FEI-SOFIT a bad reputation, so to speak. Its singular appearance in the AMIDA is in the phrase, "Let my soul pursue Your mitzvot", UVMITZVOTECHA TIRDOF NAFSHI. A word like that is an appropriate setting for the Amida's sole FEI-SOFIT.

Ed. note: Let's not take this connotation-of-a-letter thing too far. Lots of nice words end in FEI-SOFIT: Yosef HaTzadik, for one. The FEI-SOFIT in Musaf appears in the Shabbat and Yom Tov davening, etc.

All TTriddles and the Trivia Question were answered, most by more than one person. No one, as yet, has gotten them all.

This week's TTriddles:

[1] Yaakov (2), Yosef, Edom, Shaul, Asa'el, Amnon, Ish (2)

[2] Eliezer, Yaakov, Yosef, Par'o, Moshe, Haman and ?

[3] He's probably the thou

[4] The T-shirt TTriddle is the Mazal TTriddle and it's deeper than it looks

Nachman K's Jewish Trivia Question:

3 married couples in Tanach, all names starting with an ALEF

more on Chanuka...

Why do the brachot say NER rather than NEIROT - for Shabbat, Yom Tov, and Chanuka? Because ONE is the minimum for each mitzva. Although the accepted practice is to use a minimum of two candles for Shabbat and Yom Tov, halacha requires only one. Similarly, our practice of adding candles each night of Chanuka is a HIDUR (enhancement of the mitzva), the minimum requirement is one.

To elaborate on something mentioned in the Chanuka Guide in last week's TT...

There are different opinions as to the exact text of the bracha for Chanuka candles. The Gemara says: L'HADLIK NER SHEL CHANUKA. Many poskim, including Rambam, agree. Shulchan Aruch and others, including the ARI Z"L, the GR"A, Aruch HaShulchan, write L'HADLIK NER CHANUKA. Mishna B'rura adds that those who use the word SHEL should combine it with the word Chanuka. SHLECHANUKA, rather than SHEL CHANUKA. He then adds that "the world" does not make the distinction.

Some siddurim have SHEL, some don't; others put SHEL in parentheses.

A nice reason is given for not saying SHEL. Candles for Shabbat are candles by all definitions - they give light and warmth, for example - that are used to honor Shabbat. To light up one's home. They are NER SHEL SHABBAT. Candles of or for Shabbat. But Chanuka candles are not candles by standard definition. We have no permission to use them for any normal use of candles, only to look at them. So rather than identify them as candles of/for Chanuka, the name Chanuka Candles, NER CHANUKA, seems to fit better.

Even if you like this explanation, don't change your practice without consulting a Rav. Both forms of the bracha have solid backing. If you change, make it an informed decision.

See separate PDF file for the fold-up Chanuka card