

A chain starts with the second link

One link is only a ring. It's the second link, when attached to the first, that makes the beginning of a chain. Avraham Avinu is our first link. He rediscovered One G-d and began spreading that teaching in the world. Last week's sedra showed us the vital importance placed in finding a proper match for Yitzchak, thus assuring not only the second link, but allowing for future links to be added to the Chain of Jewish Tradition. As great as Avraham was, we wouldn't exist as a people without Yitzchak Avinu, Yaakov Avinu, and every other link in the Chain since then, to this day, and IY"H forever. • And it wasn't (and isn't) an easy process. Avraham was a one-of-a-kind. He fathered Yishmael, and later other children from Ketura (Hagar). Earlier there were the "souls they (Avraham with Sara Imeinu) made in Charan". But it was only through Yitzchak that the Chain was to continue. Rivka was unique too. Look at her brother Lavan. And even though Yitzchak and Rivka had twins, it was only through one of them - Yaakov avinu - that the Chain would continue. • We can say, perhaps that Avraham Avinu created Judaism, but it was through Yitzchak that it was able to perpetuate. Every generation has its Yitzchaks, to learn from their parents and teachers, and add a strong new link to the Chain. • As we learn in Pirkei Avot (5:1), the world was created with ten Divine statements. Count them. Take the VAYOMER ELOKIMs of Creation, add B'REISHIT BARA as the first of the Divine statements, and you still come up with only nine. What is the tenth statement of Creation of the World? It is (according to several opinions) G-d's creation of Women to partner with Man. G-d's command to Adam and Chava to be fruitful and multiply. This is not His part in Creation, so to speak, but ours. Creation is meaningless without the continuation of it throughout time. Avraham is great, not just for who he was, but because he produced a Yitzchak, and succeeded in transmitting to G-d... and the ability to pass it all to the next generation. • We must be true and not lose sight of the vital significance of our being the strongest links we can between the previous generation and the next.

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...

See p.2 for the correct molad of Kislev. We hope that our error in last week's issue did not cause problems. At least the wording of the announcement was correct.



The Rosh Chodesh Benching TT insert, usually in the B'reishit issue, was in the Vayeira issue this year.

With the molad of Kislev being Monday night at 8:44pm Israel Time, first op for Kiddush L'vana would be 3 days later, on Thursday night. However, on Thursday, the moon will have set by 6:30pm, and KL could not be said until 8:44pm. So Thursday is out. So is Friday, since we don't say KL on Leil Shabbat unless it is the last op.

Therefore, first op for KL this month according to Minhag Yerushalayim is Motza'ei Shabbat Parshat To-l'dot, Nov. 25th. 7-day people: Mon. after 8:44pm.

him a set of beliefs, a commitment to spiritual heirs of the Avot and Imahot, and the previous generation

Torah Tidbits Audio
www.ouradio.org • www.israelnationalradio.com

Candle Lighting
and **HAVDALA**
Standard (Winter) time

Correct for TT 741 • Rabbeinu Tam (l'm) - 5:51pm

4:01pm	Jerusalem	5:14pm
4:16pm	Raanana	5:15pm
4:17pm	Beit Shemesh	5:15pm
4:16pm	Netanya	5:15pm
4:17pm	Rehovot	5:16pm
3:56pm	Petach Tikva	5:15pm
4:16pm	Mod'in	5:15pm
4:19pm	Be'er Sheva	5:17pm
4:15pm	Gush Etzion	5:15pm
4:16m	Ginot Shomron	5:15pm
4:01pm	Maale Adumim	5:14pm
4:17pm	K4 & Hevron	5:15pm
4:02pm	Tzfat	5:11pm

OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

Ranges are FRI-FRI • 3-10 Kislev • (Nov 24 - Dec 1)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:22-5:27am
 Sunrise - 6:15-6:21am
 Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 8:50-8:54am (8:03-8:07am)
 Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:42-9:45am (9:10-9:14am)
 Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:26-11:28am
 Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 11:56-11:59am
 Plag Mincha - 3:31½-3:31pm
 Sunset - 4:41-4:40 (4:36-4:35pm)

ברוכים הבאים
to all the participants in the
OU National Convention
at the Renaissance Jerusalem Hotel
Special welcome to the OU President & officers

The OU Israel Center and Torah Tidbits do not necessarily endorse the political or halachic positions of its editor, columnists, or advertisers, nor do we guarantee the quality of advertised services or products

OU ISRAEL CENTER
Seymour J. Abrams • Orthodox Union
Jerusalem World Center

Yitzchak Fund, President
 Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Senior Vice President
 Prof. Meni Koslowsky, Vice President
 Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Vaad member
 Stuart Hershkowitz, Vaad member
 Moshe Kempinski, Vaad member
 Sandy Kestenbaum, Vaad member
 Zvi Sand, Vaad member
 Harvey Wolinetz, Vaad member



Rabbi Avi Berman, Director-General, OU in Israel
 Menachem Persoff, Director of Programs, Israel Center
 Phil Chernofsky, Educational Director and TT editor
 22 Keren HaYesod • POB 37015 • Jerusalem 91370
 phone: (02) 566 7787 • fax: (02) 561-7432
 email: tt@ou.org • website: www.ou.org/torah/tt
 Orthodox Union • National Conference of Synagogue Youth
 Torah Tidbits and many of the projects The Israel Center are assisted by grants from The Jewish Agency for Israel
 Produced and printed in-house at the Israel Center

This Shabbat is the 64th day (of 355) and the tenth Shabbat (of 51) of 5767

וְהָרַבִּיתִי אֶת-זְרַעְךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנָתַתִּי לְזַרְעֲךָ אֶת כָּל-הָאָרֶץ הַאֲרָצוֹת הָאֵלֶּה... בְּרִאשִׁית כ"ד



Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SDT Commentaries say that Rivka was unaware that she was carrying twins; she thought the turmoil within her existed in a single baby - this had her very upset; she was somewhat calmed by the Divine message of her carrying twins. Another commentator suggests that Rivka knew she'd have twins but did not see the benefit of bringing a Yaakov into this world if it meant also having an Eisav. Part of the reply to her question "why do I need this", is that her conclusion was wrong.

Take a look at Rashi. Two great nations - these are Antoninus and Rabbi (Yehuda HaNasi)... It can be suggested that the Divine message to Rivka, was that even though there will great tension and friction between the descendants of the twins she

To'l'dot STATS

6th of the 54 sedras; 6th of 12 in B'reishit
Written on 172.7 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank 36
4 Parshiyot; 2 open, 2 closed
106 p'sukim, ranks 29th (9th in B'reishit)
Tied with Vayigash and Bo, but shorter than both in words & letters and length
1432 words, ranks 34th (10th in B'reishit)
5426 letters, ranks 33rd (10th in B'reishit)
Its p'sukim are below average length

דסעזומ

None of the TARYAG are found in TO-L'DOT

CORRECTION & APOLOGY

In last week's TT, in the Word of the Month box, Rosh Chodesh benching, the words of the molad announcement were correct, but the short-cut notation, equivalent Israel time, Rambam notation, and actual molad were all from Cheshvan, not Kislev. This is what should have been:

The molad is **MON 21:5:8 (8:44pm Isr.)** which is announced as follows:

המולד יהיה ליל שלישי,
חמש דקות ושמנה חלקים אחרי תשע.

In Rambam notation: ג'צ"ח

Actual molad: **TUE 12:18am Israel time**

was carrying, Yaakov and Eisav, there will be an example of a Roman (from Eisav) and a Jew who will truly get along and that is the hope for the future when the nations of the world will all recognize Israel's role in the world and their special relationship with the One G-d Who will then be universally recognized.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yitzchak dwells in Gerar. (This is one of the three-word p'sukim in the Torah. There are 13 or so such p'sukim, and they are treated specially.)

Yitzchak and Rivka pose as brother and sister (as did Avraham and Sara, and for the same two reasons). After a while, Avimelech discovers that they are actually husband and wife and complains to Yitzchak about the deception. Avimelech orders his people to leave Yitzchak and Rivka alone. Yitzchak and family flourish in Gerar and G-d blesses them.

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

TAKE A LOOK... The first famine that drove Avraham and Sara to Egypt, when Par'o discovers their true relationship, he sends them away. The second time,

when they went to Gerar and said they were brother and sister, and then they were "found out", Avimelech gives them many things and invites them to stay. (Par'o had given Avraham great wealth, but it was before he knew.) Yitzchak and Rivka also say they are siblings, but no one takes Rivka. When they are "found out", they stick around.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 26:13-22

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

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



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

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

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

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

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 33 p'sukim - 26:30-27:27

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

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

disgusts both Yitzchak and Rivka.

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

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

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

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 23 p'sukim - 27:28-28:4

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

As Yitzchak finishes blessing Yaakov, Eisav returns from the hunt. He prepares food for his father and presents it with a request (demand) of the blessing. Yitzchak trembles when he realizes that the bracha went to Yaakov. When Yitzchak explains to Eisav that Yaakov received (and rightly so) the blessing, Eisav bitterly cries out and asks his father for a blessing too. Yitzchak gives Eisav a blessing (not as exalted as Yaakov's). Eisav decides to kill Yaakov for this, the second time he has taken something away from him. Rivka hears (how? Ru'ach HaKodesh, perhaps?) of Eisav's plans and encourages Yaakov to flee to Rivka's hometown until Eisav's wrath subsides. Rivka suggests to Yitzchak that he send Yaakov away to find a proper wife.

Note that Rivka did NOT tell Yitzchak that Eisav wanted to kill Yaakov. Perhaps she felt that it would pain him too much to learn of Eisav's true character. Perhaps,

Yitzchak would have refused to believe that his Eisav would contemplate such a thing. Instead, Rivka expresses another concern (legitimate) as her reason for wanting Yitzchak to send Yaakov away.

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

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

Yitzchak sends Yaakov off to Padan Aram to Lavan b. B'tu'el, the brother of Rivka who is the mother of Yaakov and Eisav. (Unusual ID.) Eisav sees that their father has sent Yaakov to find a wife, because he does not want him to take a Canaanite wife. Yaakov goes on his way and Eisav takes as another wife, the daughter of Yishmael. And Eisav takes Machalat b. Yishmael...

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

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

Haftara - 21 p'sukim - Mal'achi 1:1-2:7

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

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

Know Your Uncle

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

The Midrash says that Eisav greatly resembled Yitzchak physically.

The Gemara says that Eisav did not rebel during Avraham's lifetime (which was cut short by 5 years -

175 and not the 180 that Yitzchak reached so that Avraham would not see Eisav's wickedness).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lesson 356

Ordination of Judges

In order to sit as a judge on the Great Sanhedrin or on the Lesser Sanhedrin, the judge had to be ordained. Subject to a few exceptions as shall be discussed in these lessons, in order to be a judge on the Beit Din, the judge had to be ordained. The basis for the requirement of ordination for judges of the court system is derived from the opening verse of the portion of the Torah known as Mishpatim (Judgments): "And these are the judgments which thou shall set before them" (Sh'mot 21:1). The Talmud (T. Gittin 88b) interprets the phrase "before them" as an exclusive one, meaning only before them (that is, ordained judges) and not before non-ordained judges.

The chain of ordination began when Moshe Rabeinu ordained Joshua, as described in the Torah "And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge" (Bamidbar 27:23). Moshe also ordained the other members of his court. After Joshua's ordination, the procedure did not involve placing one's hands upon the person to be ordained. Instead the ordainers conferred the title "Rabbi" upon him and declared that he is ordained and is permitted to judge all types of cases, including those involving penalties. Ordination can be conferred only in the Land of Israel. There must be at least three men present when a person is ordained, at least one of whom has himself been ordained. Ordainers may confer ordination upon many people at one time. The practice of ordination lapsed in the middle of the 4th century c.e. The (current use of the term ordination merely describes the process of empowering modern-day rabbis to adjudicate ritual questions and is not in any way connected with the jurisdiction and authority which was empowered under the original ordination.) Although ordination could be conferred only in the Land of Israel. Once received, the judges could

travel abroad and still retain their authority to judge case outside the Land of Israel. There is a difference of opinion in the Talmud whether according to Torah law, judges who preside over commercial cases have to be ordained. One opinion holds that the general requirement of ordained judges applies to commercial cases as well. The other opinion is that the Torah does not require ordained judges in commercial matters. Both views, however, are in agreement that by Rabbinic enactment, three laymen (that is unordained judges) may judge commercial lawsuits.

There was thus a relaxation of the ordination requirement in commercial cases. A problem, however, emerged with regard to other types of cases. Since the practice of ordination was permitted only in the Land of Israel, and it was rare for ordained judges to hold court on a regular basis outside of the Land of Israel, the ability to dispense justice in the autonomous Jewish communities of the diaspora was frustrated. Moreover, even in the Land of Israel, the very existence of a court system was threatened by two events. The first was the banishment of the Great Sanhedrin and the Lesser Sanhedrin in the first century, so that all that remained of the court system was the Beit Din. However, as previously noted, the jurisdictional basis of the Beit Din generally required ordained judges. Accordingly, the second event, the lapsing of ordination in the fourth century, put into jeopardy the very existence of the Beit Din and necessitated a restructuring of its jurisdiction. In response to this critical need, a body of law began to evolve which extended the jurisdiction of the nonordained judge of the Beit Din. There thus developed a variety of cases which could be decided by non-ordained judges. According to Rashi, this development arose from two independent occurrences. The first was the liberalization of the law by Rabbinic enactment so as not to require ordained judges in commercial matters. The reason for the liberalization was to "avoid closing the door to commerce". In distant parts of Israel and certainly in communities outside of Israel where ordination could not take place, ordained judges would seldom appear. If potential creditors felt they would have to wait for ordained judges to come to their community to adjudicate their claims, they would be reluctant to engage in credit transactions. If they knew, however, that there were tribunals available for a rapid disposition of their claims, they would be more inclined to extend credit. Accordingly, authority was given to courts composed of non-ordained judges to judge such cases. Other types of cases, however, still required ordained judges. Thus there remained a wide variety of situations such as robbery and assault cases which might be without remedy. A second occurrence therefore took place. By Rabbinic enactment non-ordained judges were given jurisdiction over other types of cases. Specifically the types of cases covered by this subsequent enactment were those which both occurred frequently and involved a loss of money. According to Tosafot, however, there was only one enactment which removed the requirement of ordained judges in the type of cases which both occurred frequently and involved a loss of money. The liberalization so as not to close the door to commerce and the enactment to permit non-ordained judges to hear these types of cases were one and the same.

Both during the period of ordination and after ordination lapsed, the rationale for authorizing non-ordained judges to preside over cases formerly limited to ordained judges was that the non-ordained judges acted as the agents of the ordained judges. In T. Gittin (88b) an incident is related where Abaye, one of the authorities of the Talmud, met R. Yosef, who was coercing a man to divorce his wife who wanted a divorce. They were living in Babylonia, and R. Yosef was not ordained. When Abaye asked R. Yosef how he could compel this divorce since only ordained judges could employ coercion to effectuate a divorce, R. Yosef answered that the non-ordained judges were acting as the agents of the ordained judges. The question arose that the non-ordained judges could do the bidding of the ordained judges while there were still ordained judges. But once ordination lapsed how could the non-ordained judges do the bidding of ordained judges. Tosafot answers that when the Talmud speaks of doing the bidding of the ordained judges, it refers to the ordained judges of old. From the foregoing it is apparent that the non-ordained judges act as agents of deputies of the ordained judges of old in order to carry out the mandate pursuant to Rabbinic enactment which authorizes them to act in such cases.

In the next lesson we shall IYH begin to discuss the jurisdiction of the courts of non-ordained judges, which is the situation today.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in Vol. 1, Chapter 1 of Jewish Jurisprudence by Emanuel Quint and Neil Hecht. Copies of both volumes can be purchased at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to quint@inter.net.il

TANACH

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

Yosef and his Brothers [6]

We find in the continuation of the story of Yehuda and Tamar important revelations of basic Jewish ideas - the purity and nobility of marriage, the obligation to always fulfill ones promises, to publicly acknowledge ones faults and not to embarrass people.

The Rambam's clarification of K'DEISHA, that the text calls Tamar, is crucial for a correct moral view of the actions of both players. "Before Matan Torah, if a man met a woman in the market, if she consented, he paid her hire and consorted with her and went on his way. She is known as a K'DEISHA. After the Torah was given, a k'deisha was forbidden" (Hilkhos Ishut 1:4).

"The story of Yehuda and Tamar is a testimony to the Jewish concept of marriage, with sexual morality; marriage that is aimed at the creation of stable and functional families and the fulfillment of P'RU VRVU. Yehuda has only one wife and when she dies he sets out to find the continuation of his family through founding another. Similarly Tamar endangers her life to assure that the dead have their memorial in the establishment, by close relatives, of the family life that was disrupted" (Rabbi S. R. Hirsch).

"Yehuda and the sons of Leah's whole way of worship and

spirituality, was not hidden or secret but rather always public, open and direct. This is in contrast to Rachel, who gave Leah secret signs and hid the terafim of Lavan, and her descendants, Yosef with his dreams, Binyamin who did not reveal his brothers sale of Yosef, Shaul who was hidden amongst the baggage and Mordechai and Esther in Purim where even the name of Hashem is hidden" (Shem Mi Shmuel). Nowhere else perhaps, in the whole of Tanach does this form of leadership emerge as clearly as in Yehuda's reactions in the story of Tamar.

The Torah (38:15) refers to Tamar as a harlot, one who prostitutes herself to anybody, but later in verse 20, refers to a kedeisha; according to the Raivid, the equal of a concubine. Yehuda had promised Tamar a young goat and, although as a kedeisha she had no rights to a ketuba, nevertheless, he immediately sends the goat as payment. This is to teach us that one may not waste or endanger the rights assured to a wife under her ketuba. This is a ratification of the Torah's classing as me'ila, treachery against G-d, the denial of loans, and pledges, the personal use of funds entrusted to one or not returning lost articles (Vayikra 5:21). "Why is this treachery against G-d? Rabbi Akiva says that these are all cases where knowledge of the obligations is limited to the parties concerned and to G-d, so that one denying his obligations is denying G-d Himself" (Sifra).

As king and leader, Yehuda presides over the court that condemns Tamar to death for adultery of her pregnancy. To that accusation she replies, "haker na [identify please], to whom these belong I am with child", using the identical phrase whereby the brothers had shown Yosef's blood-soaked coat to their father; mida keneged mida (measure for measure). "One should cast themselves into a fiery furnace rather than shaming another in public, as did Tamar when she risked death but would not accuse Yehuda directly" (Sota 10b). Yehuda's words on seeing his seal, shawl of office and stave, "She is more righteous than I am" (26), have become the classic public admission of fault and acceptance of responsibility. "I intended merely to satisfy my desires but she desired to do chesed to the dead. She acted for the sake of Heaven while I acted out of lust" (Haketav v'ha- kabbala). "She defrauded me into thinking that she was a kedeisha while I dealt with her in honesty by hastening to pay my promise of the goat. However, her purpose was to ensure the continuation of the species while mine was for my own honor to redeem my signs of office [and our Sages taught, more praiseworthy is the aveira for the sake of Heaven than fulfilling a mitzva for an ulterior motive]" (Soforno).

"Yosef who sanctified G-d's Name in secret, merited the addition to his name of one letter of G-d's Name (T'hilim 81); Yehuda who did so publicly, merited bearing all the letters" (Sota 10). "Yaakov's blessing of Yehuda, 'Your brothers shall acknowledge you', refers to the righteous who conquer their desires and acknowledge their actions; one who does so merits the world to Come" (B. Rabba 85:12). "Yehuda merited thereby that he ruled over the brothers and that his descendants were kings" (Yalkut Shimoni). Why all the rewards? Surely that is the way of all the righteous leaders? However, we know that to admit errors and accept responsibility for failures is a rare ability. "[Religious, political and business] leaders, even when they are conscious of their own errors, at the best try to rectify them secretly, to blame others for physical errors, to rationalize the causes and even to claim that Chilul Hashem or other damage that will result from disclosure, outweigh the morality of public acknowledgement of responsibility" (Or Yahel).

Potifar's wife sought to entice Yosef as she saw that a Mashi'ach was to be born to him and she wanted to bear that son. Tamar also sought questionable means to ensure the continuation of the royal house of Israel and its redeemers. The moral difference lies in that the former sought to harm Yosef in revenge for his rejection, whereas Tamar was prepared to die when the results of her actions became known.

The pledges asked for by Tamar, his seal, shawl and staff, were signs of her future descendants. The seal was the sign of the kings of the Davidic dynasty, the threads or shawl the sign of the Sanhedrin (Ralbag) and the staff, a sign of the Mashi'ach.

In doing aveirot for the sake of Heaven there is a danger that if there is the slightest hint of self-interest or a minimal defect in the motivation, then the act remains an aveira. Zimri wanted to secure through Kozbi, the sparks that existed in Moav, later redeemed by Ruth, but his intentions were flawed and his actions considered a sin. Tamar was aware of the danger so she concentrated on three things that limit ones actions and thoughts; kingship that limits the individuals for the common good, Sanhedrin who through Torah limit sin and evil, and Mashiach in whose day G-d will be King" (Shem MiShmuel).

MISC section - contents:

- [1] **Vebbe Rebbe**
- [2] **Candle by Day**
- [3] **From Aloh Naaleh**
- [4] **Wisdom and Wit**
- [5] **Portion from the Portion**
- [6] **Parsha Points to Ponder**
- [7] **Torah from Nature**
- [8] **Torah KidBits**
- [9] **MicroUlpan**
- [10] **Theft? and more...**
- [11] **From the desk of the director**

[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...



When I hear a chazzan repeating words to fit into tunes during tefilla, it upsets me. Am I correct to react that way?



The Mishna (B'rachot 33b) says that one who says "Modim modim" is silenced. The reason is that he appears to be addressing two deities, k'vayachol. R. Zeira (Gemara, ad loc.) extends this halacha to Sh'ma. The Gemara asks from a Baraita that calls repeating Sh'ma "meguneh" (derogatory), implying that we do not go as far as to silence him. The Gemara answers that it depends whether one repeated the statement as a whole or word by word. Rashi explains that to utter a coherent statement twice in succession may be taken as addressing two deities; repeating each word twice "only" appears like a mockery, which is a less serious affront. The Rif learns the opposite: repeating words looks like speaking to two deities and repeating sentences is generally "only" derogatory. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 61:9) does not decide between the opinions, stating only that it is forbidden to repeat Sh'ma in either form. Only if one feels that he had insufficient concentration is it proper to repeat a section (Mishna B'rura ad loc.:22).

The problem of looking like addressing two deities does not apply to most passages of Kri'at Sh'ma and tefilla (Beit Yosef, OC 61). Yet, many poskim write that the derogatory nature of unnecessarily repeating words exists throughout tefilla. The Maharam Shick (OC 31) objects on five grounds. The most serious one, which applies to parts of tefilla where one may not talk, is the matter of hefsek (extraneous interruptions). Rav M. Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, OC 22) while objecting to repeating words, says that is not always a hefsek. If one keeps the order of words intact, it is not a hefsek. His proof is from the fact that we allow one who did not concentrate when saying certain words to repeat them even though he was already yotzei. However, he reasons that if one repeats out of order, at least when meaning is lost, it is a hefsek which requires returning (see OC 104 regarding how far to return).

The Aruch Hashulchan (OC 338:8) uses this approach of finding justification for common practices that seem to contradict halacha when the people will not change their ways. He suggests that perhaps the problem of repeating words applies only in the places the Gemara mentions.

Some of the Maharam Shick's objections are subjective, such as that it is a less effective way to present our thoughts and needs to Hashem. Chazzanim will claim that the inspiration gained by using moving tunes to reach the tefilla's ultimate goals justifies some repetition. Skeptics will counter that similar gains can be made without it and apply the Shulchan Aruch's (OC 53:11) complaints about certain chazzanim showing off their voices for the wrong reasons. Of course, no two cases are precisely the same.

After summarizing that a little repeating of words in a way that does not change meaning, while far from ideal, is vaguely justifiable, let us say as follows. In an ideal world, a congregation would not allow its chazzanim to repeat words. However, many congregations include dear Jews who may not be aware of or careful about every halachic intricacy. There, it may not be realistic or worthwhile to take issue with those who repeat. Likewise, in a congregation where people do not generally repeat but a guest or someone who "missed the hint" repeats words, it does not pay to hurt feelings over it. A rabbi may want to teach the halacha in a way that avoids hurting feelings. In general, we should criticize others very sparingly. This is especially true in our society, where people are used to freedom and react to criticism negatively (at times with severe consequences). Only regarding a person or a setting (like a yeshiva) where people are willing to learn improved ways of performing mitzvot would we suggest correcting (privately)

one who is unaware of these objections. Certainly, when nothing can be done about it, it is a shame to upset yourself.

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

Boys will be boys -- even when they are men.

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

And Yitzchak called Ya'akov and blessed him and charged him and said to him: ...And G-d Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply that you may be a congregation of peoples and give you the blessing of Avraham, to you and your seed with you, that you may inherit the land of your sojournings which G-d gave to Avraham. (B'reishit 28:1-4)

Rivka's devious plan to secure for her son Ya'akov the blessing of the aged Yitzchak was well intentioned. In addition to her love for Ya'akov, Rivka, knowing well the character and strengths of both her sons, believed that Ya'akov was best suited for the great Patriarchal blessing.

It turns out in the end that Rivka was mistaken regarding the nature of the blessing Yitzchak intended to bestow. The blessing Yitzchak actually gives to Ya'akov (thinking he is Esav) consists of material prosperity and familial and political dominance. (B'reishit 27:28-29). The compensatory blessing that Yitzchak gives Esav repeats the material prosperity and the possibility of "breaking loose from his brother's dominance" (B'reishit 27:39, 40). The reader is left with the question as to whether a blessing acquired under false pretenses can have any effect at all!

However, the really significant blessing which was the concern of Rivka, is the "blessing of Avraham" which is to become the next link in producing the nation that will inherit the land and be a blessing to all the families of the earth. And this blessing is freely given by Yitzchak to Ya'akov before he leaves for Padan Aram (see the verses above).

Throughout the Torah, the the popular concepts of "birthright" (bechora) and "blessing" (b'racha) remain rather indeterminate as to their significance, their power and who is deserving of them. However, the word b'racha always means something good. The question is to what particular condition can we properly assign that term!

Of course, most people would consider material prosperity and political power a blessing, and right they are. Thus our Jewish brothers and sisters living in America must be considered truly blessed. However, our father Ya'akov learned that although he had already received the blessing of material prosperity and

being "lord over your brothers," he was only at the beginning of his journey. For a Jew, then and now, truly significant blessing is always the "blessing of Avraham" which involves the land "for you, (personally) and your seed with you."

Rabbi Shubert Spero, Jerusalem

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

[4] Wisdom & Wit

R' Isser Zalman Meltzer explained that he had learned from the Alter of Novardok how to overcome laziness.

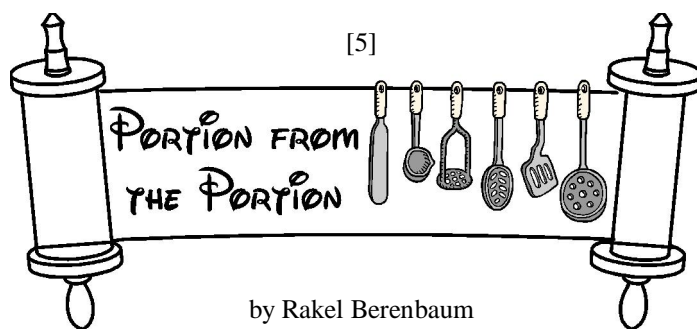
When a noted person came to Novardok, the Alter would work out for himself whether it was proper from him to go to greet the other person, or whether the correct thing to do was wait for the other person to come to him. In order to ensure that laziness was not a factor in his decision, he would first get dressed, walk to where the person was staying, and only then - before proceeding - would he think out whether to visit the person or to wait for the person to visit him.

"I now apply that same reasoning in my life", said R' Isser Zalman". If someone asks me to write a haskama (letter of endorsement) for a sefer, I immediately write it. Only afterwards do I decide whether I will give the person the haskama. In this way, I neutralize any effect that laziness might have on my decision."

#####

Why is it that when there is ice on the streets everyone walks slowly and carefully out of fear of slipping physically, while in their daily lives people are not afraid of slipping spiritually?

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



Two Nations are in Your Womb

Rivka was barren. Finally Hashem answered Yaakov's prayers and she became pregnant. But this was no ordinary pregnancy - "the children clashed inside her". The midrash says that when Rivka stood near a house of Torah, Yaakov tried to get out and when she walked by a house of idol worship, Esav tried to get out. She was so distraught that she went to seek a message from Hashem as to why her pregnancy was so unusual. She was told that from their births these boys would be total opposites - Yaakov would follow the spirit while Esav would go for power. They had two very different natures.

R' Shimshon Rafael Hirsch writes a lengthy and beautiful treatise on this episode(25:24, 28:27). He says that the difference between the two "grandsons of Abraham" was not only because of their inborn qualities, but rather because of the faulty education they received. When they were young, no one paid attention to the differences in their characters and they received the same education. But they both had different needs and they should have been educated as we are taught in Mishlei (22:6) "Educate the child according to his way". The education should be adapted to the needs and inborn qualities of each individual. To quote Rabbi Hirsch, "The purpose for every Jew is one (to follow Hashem), but the ways to reach this goal are as numerous as the various characters of people, and the way they lead their lives... one must educate towards the one big goal (following Hashem) using the unique path that is right for each person. The educator who puts Yaakov and Esav on the same school bench and teaches them exactly the same way is sure to fail with one of them. According to R' Hirsch, if Rivka and Yitzchak had educated Esav in a manner that was appropriate to his nature, there would have been peace between the brothers to this day.

For all of you Americans who still eat Turkey on "Thanksgiving", I have included a Turkey recipe. It has a stuffing inside like Rivka had the two boys inside her womb.

Stuffed Turkey

- 1 whole Turkey
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 1 cup water
- ½ tsp salt

Basting

- ¾ cup oil
- 1 Tbsp Paprika
- salt & pepper

Line broiler pan with celery and onion pieces. Add water and salt. Stuff turkey loosely so it will not burst. Wrap any extra stuffing in foil and bake.

For a nicely browned turkey, baste the skin with oil, salt, pepper, and paprika. Place turkey, breast side down, in pan. Bake at 325°F for 30 minutes per pound (½ kilo). Turn turkey over every 45 minutes, basting each time.

Stuffing

- 1 cup kasha
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup oil (or margarine)
- 1 large onion, diced
- ½ cup celery, diced
- ½ cup carrots, diced

- ½ cup mushrooms
- 2 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 tsp tarragon (optional)
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg (optional)

Beat egg, mix into kasha and add salt. Set aside.

Saute the chopped vegetables in oil, add kasha mixture and the broth. Cook for 15 minutes. Add seasonings.

Adapted from the Spice & Spirit of Kosher-Jewish Cooking

[6] Parsha Points to Ponder

TO-L'DOT

- 1) What does Yaakov mean when he tells Eisav to sell him the birthright KAYOM which means AS THIS DAY?" (25:31)
- 2) What everlasting message can we find in the seemingly insignificant story of Yitzchak digging the wells (26:18-22)?
- 3) Why did Yitzchak want to give the special blessings to Eisav? Is it conceivable that Yitzchak was completely unaware of Eisav's evil nature?

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

- 1) The Seforno explains that through these words Yaakov revealed why the birthright was worthless to Eisav. Eisav was so preoccupied and tired from his work that he could not identify the lentils and called them "the red things" (25:30). A person like this is only interested in the selfish needs that come upon them for THIS DAY and they are not living with a perspective of beyond the now and beyond this world. Thus, the birthright with deals with the spiritual is of no interest to such a person.
- 2) The Chafetz Chayim answers that this episode teaches the lesson of hard work and perseverance in all of our pursuits. Just as Yitzchak did not give up when he came upon failure and obstacles in his desire to dig for water, so, too, we should be persistent in pursuing our spiritual and physical goals in life despite the many challenges which almost always come along the way.
- 3) Rav Dessler explains that it was specifically because of Eisav's evil nature that Yitzchak wanted to bestow him with these blessings. The purpose of the blessing was to help the recipient succeed in spiritual matters. Yaakov was already succeeding spiritually without the assistance of the blessing. Yitzchak determined that it was better for Yaakov to continue without the blessing thus accruing more reward for his spiritual successes. Eisav, on the other hand, could only succeed with the help of these blessings, so Yitzchak wanted to bestow the blessings on him.

Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman, who teaches at Reishit Yerushalayim, Tiferet, and Machon Maayan in Beit Shemesh and RBS and is the author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith", just re-published by Feldheim ppp@israelcenter.co.il

[8] Torah from Nature

• ARCHERFISH

Any of five species of Indo-Pacific fishes noted for their ability to knock their insect prey off overhanging vegetation by shooting it with drops of water expelled from their mouth. Archer fishes are elongated and have a relatively deep body that is almost flat from the dorsal fin forward. The head is pointed, the mouth is large, and the dorsal and anal fins are placed toward the back of the body. Different species are spotted or vertically banded with black. Archer fishes live in both fresh and salt water, usually remaining near the surface. One well-known species (jaculatrix) grows to about 18cm long. Archerfish can shoot their waterarrows as far as 12ft. (more than 3m.), and seem to be able to correct their aim after a first miss.



A new Torah Tidbits column with a Parshat HaShavua insight geared towards the young reader... or their parents and grandparents to read to them.

Learning Torah means asking questions. And usually, there are many different answers and explanations to our questions. But each answer is part of the truth of Torah.

The Torah is compared to light, and light is made up of different colors which all blend into one. If you hold a prism to the light, it will divide the light into separate rays so that you can see each color and shade, just like in the rainbow. Chazal held up a "prism" to the light of Torah and saw all the possible colors and shades, the many possible answers and explanations. All are part of Torah, and like rays of light, they unite and blend to become one.

Parashat Toldot is full of questions - difficult questions. You probably asked some of them yourself.

Why didn't Rivka want Esav to receive the bracha? - After all, he was the firstborn son! Was disguising Yaakov and sending him to receive Esav's bracha the right thing to do? - Should Yaakov have obeyed his mother? - Did Yaakov lie to his father? - If Yaakov was supposed to receive the blessing, why didn't Hashem arrange it in the first place?

These are only a few of the many questions in this parsha and it will take you a long time to study and learn all the answers. There is one matter, however, that we can learn about right now.

Esav is a "hairy" man while Yaakov is smooth skinned. When Yaakov comes to Yitzchak, he wears Esav's clothing and covers his arms with skins from the young goats Rivka had prepared. Yitzchak feels the skins and says something which becomes a prophecy for the Jewish People for all time: The voice is the voice of Yaakov but the hands are the hands of Esav.

What's the difference between our hands and our voice? Hands are a symbol of strength. They can be

used for either good or bad things. But Eisav's hands are "hands" of force and violence. He uses his hands to conquer the world. They are hands to hurt, to steal, to kill and to make war.

Voices can also be used for both good and bad, but Yaakov uses his voice for Torah and prayer. It is a voice of holiness and love. Sometimes, even Yaakov must use his hands to fight evil or to make war. But the real strength of Yaakov is in his "voice" - the voice of Torah and prayer.

So next time you daven or learn Torah, remember: Yours is the Voice of Yaakov and a very important sound it is! The Torah is Light, and we are its Sound.

[9] Micro-Ulpan

A clip is a clip is a clip. But not in Hebrew. Paper clip is a M'HADEK. A bulldog clip is an ETEV. So is a clothespin - ETEV KVISAH. The clip on a pen or mechanical pencil that holds it to the shirt pocket (or whatever) is a TEFES.

[10] Theft? and more...

If a person takes food from a person without the person's knowledge, and feeds it to the person (thereby technically giving it back), is that considered theft?

One posek says yes, based on the fact that Rashi makes a point of telling us that Rivka sent Yaakov to take goats from her own flock, not Yitzchak's

#####

Stuart Plaskow, Netanya, discovered the following:

The Torah tells us that Rivka is about to have twins.

וַיִּמְלְאוּ יָמֶיהָ לָלֶדֶת וְהָיָה תוֹמָם בְּבִטְנָהּ:

Notice that every word of the pasuk carries twins.

#####

The g'matriya of Yitzchak and Pinchas (with a YUD) are the same (208). So too Hagar. And 35 other words in Tanach. Significance? HGAC (haven't got a clue).

[11] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Toldot is very much about the difference between two cultures as personified by Ya'akov and Eisav. On obtaining manhood, Eisav became a hunter and idol worshiper, and Ya'akov, a man of the tents. Eisav came to represent the race for immediate gratification while Ya'akov became morally "wholesome".

When Eisav returns from the field, his hands bloodied from the hunt, he asks his brother to literally pour down his throat a hot, red lentil soup that Ya'akov made to symbolize the lament at the passing of their grandfather Avraham. For Eisav, however, it was business as usual; his lack of concern at Avraham's death characterized his evil demeanor.

People tend to describe Ya'akov's conditional sale of the soup for Eisav's birthright as a sign of Ya'akov's scheming character. However, Ya'akov understood that only one of

their father's children could be the authentic heir to Israel's mission (cf. Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 10:7). And recognizing that Eisav's murderous nature was not conducive to the spiritual responsibilities incumbent on a first-born, he thus persuaded Eisav to forego the birthright (Rashi).

Interestingly, we could spare ourselves this explanation. Because a careful reading of the Hebrew phrase in B'reishit 25:34 renders, "[And] Ya'akov HAD given Eisav bread and lentil stew." First and foremost, Ya'akov was a Ba'al Chessed - then he attended to "business."

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

וַיְהִי כִּי יֵרֵד יַעֲקֹב מִצְרָיִם

Notice the CHTAF-PATACH under the first TZADI. Unusual, but there are many such occurrences of CHATAF- PATACH (CH-P) under non-guttural letters. Three opinions as to how to pronounce them. Minchat Shai and others say to pronounce them like a SH'VA NA. Others say, like a CH-P. Still others say that when the CH-P is under the first of two same letters (as in our example), or when the word relates to eating (TO'CHAL'NA) or blessing (M'VAR'ECH'ECHA), then it is pronounced like a CH-P, otherwise like a SH'VA NA.

#####

Clarification (and correction) - thank you EB and others

Last week, we presented the issue of walking in front of someone saying the Amida, within 4 Amot (approx. 2-2.3m, depending upon opinion). Unless there is something blocking between the davener and the walker. That object must be at least 10 t'fachim (80-96cm) tall and 4 t'fachim wide(32-38.4cm) wide. A regular chair is not enough. A standard table is just a bit too short. Pillars and shtenders are usually good. We're checking out benches.

#####

Two names with similar structures (one in this week's sedra): BA-S'MAT and A-S'NAT (wife of Eisav, but also daughter of Shlomo HaMelch) and wife of Yosef. Bos-mat and Os-nat are both mispronunciations). The SH'VAs are NA, the KAMATZes are GADOL. BA-S'MAT, A-S'NAT

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.

Distance Learning at the Mikdash!

The rain had stopped. The Tamid Shel Boker had been sacrificed and now it would be the turn of Am Yisrael to offer their Korbanot. Unknown to the ever-increasing number of jostling people in the Azara nudging their way forward to get a "good" place in line after the sacrificing of the Tamid, there

also was a minor exodus from the Azara. The Segan and his administrative staff, Meir Hakohein, Zacharia (the patriarch of Beit Avtinan), choirmaster Hugros ben Levi, members of the Sanhedrin and of the Beit Din Shel Kohanim, in short, all the "movers and shakers" of the Mikdash Community, were leaving the Azara and proceeding to the cavernous conference room on Har Habayit. It was said that even the Kohein Gadol himself was planning to make an appearance. There was a real air of excitement and anticipation as the spacious room filled up. With difficulty, the Segan and Meir Hakohein pushed their way in and succeeding in reaching the massive conference table and assuming their seats at the head. A number of chairs near the head of the table were left vacant for the guests of honor, the members of Mikdash Committee for Distance Education (MCDE). It was rumored that their preliminary report would be sensational!

A bit of background: Two years before, the Segan had authorized the MCDE to establish a revolutionary project - a pilot study to examine the use of the internet to maintain close contact with Kohanim outside of the "Mikdash Community", especially those residing in Chutz La'aretz. Everyone in the Mikdash community understood that there was a problem. The Mikdash community needed to keep in close contact with Kohanim around the world and educate them in their priestly heritage, theoretical and practical. Even experienced Mikdash-Shlichim and their families abroad admitted a certain inevitable disconnection with the Mikdash while they were serving in Chutz La'aretz. Worse, when their children returned to Eretz Yisrael, they frequently had difficulty reintegrating into the Mikdash Yeshivot. Ein Torah K'Torat Eretz Yisrael! The Yeshivot in Chutz La'aretz are just not the same! There is an essential ingredient missing! Increasingly, the question arose in the Mikdash Community. Would it be possible to exploit the new developing technologies available for distance education to address the problem? The prophecy Ki MiTzion Teitzei Torah Ud'var Hashem Mirushalayim would take on an even greater importance!

Some two years ago, a "chance" remark eventually led the Segan, Meir Hakohein and a few "visionaries" from the Mikdash computer department to the plasma screen-lined spartan office of Chaya Devora, the legendary expert in the fast developing field of distance education. Flanked by humming banks of computers, Chaya Devora leaned back and attentively listened as the Mikdash delegation outlined their concerns. Could the new field of distance education effectively meet their needs? Chaya Devora nodded and said, "Basically, there are two kinds of distance education; synchronous and asynchronous. In synchronous distance education (SDL), those registered in an on-line course simultaneously log into the same site and listen to the teacher 'together' even though they are physically in different locations. The advantage of SDL is that, if used properly, it can almost approximate a classroom atmosphere, thereby creating a real feeling of community and 'presence'. Use of a special program developed here in Eretz Yisrael allows the students seated at their computers all over the world not only to listen, but also to speak and ask questions. The student's questions are heard by all the other participants, thereby adding to the sensation of being present in an actual classroom. The way it works is as follows: by clicking on an icon, a student can 'raise his hand' in order to request permission to speak. Once permission is granted, the student can ask his questions by speaking into his microphone. The lecture is broadcast live as a web cast; if desired, the lecture can be stored on a website and viewed later 'on

demand'. The undeniable disadvantage of SDL is that it can be very difficult to organize, the technical requirements are formidable and expensive, and remember: people who live in different parts of the world also live in different time zones. An asynchronous setup, on the other hand, is much more flexible and easier to set up and run. Participants log in at their own convenience and download previously uploaded materials. These materials can include text, pictures, PowerPoint presentations with or without recorded narration and audio recordings. Online quizzes can also be included in order to test the participant's knowledge and understanding of the material being presented. The danger of the asynchronous approach is that the individual participant may feel isolated. This feeling can be somewhat mitigated by various approaches such as discussion groups and text or audio chat sessions that build an online community. To meet your specific needs - the needs of the Mikdash - I would suggest a system that incorporates the best of both methodologies. Now, I ask you, what do we want to accomplish?" "Well", the Segan answered, "we want to impart basic information and we want to create a feeling of a world-wide Mikdash community." Meir Hakohein added, "Above all, we want to convey to our people in Chutz La'aretz the "Chavaya" - a bit of the ambiance - of the Mikdash and as much as possible make the Mikdash part of their daily lives."

Facing her audience, Chaya Devora challenged them to expand their horizons. "Imagine an 'on-line Yeshiva' bridging the gap between the Mikdash and the Galut with on-going shiurim with interaction between Magidei Shiur and their far-flung students. In addition, students from all over the world could learn with a Chevruta from the Mikdash community! Basic information can be imparted by various self-learning programs available at any time. There are an infinite number of possibilities! For the Shiurim, the pre-registered Kohanim in Chu"l simply turn on their computers, connect to the internet at the designated time, put on their headsets and instantly they will be 'in' the Beit Midrash on Har Habayit! The on-line Magid Shiur will greet them and they will respond. A Kohein sitting on Har Habayit will reach out and teach his students scattered from Monsey to Melbourne! Alternatively, picture the impact when the Kohein Gadol broadcasts his weekly shiur online to a global audience and people can ask him questions LIVE. I envision the broadcast of the Tamid on the internet accompanied by the Meshor'rim. Imagine if you will, separate self-study modules for each Korban, containing PowerPoint presentations, video recordings, Mekorot, and quizzes. There would be an Olah module, a Chatat Module, etc." So mesmerized were the attendees comprising the Mikdash leadership by her presentation that they did not even notice when the Kohein Gadol came into the room! That was two years ago. Now once again, the Mikdash administration was assembled. This time they came together to hear of the stunning success of the pilot project. <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

from page 3 PARSHA PIX

☞ Top-left is Yaakov with his lentil stew.

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

☞ Continuing across the top, we come to a Seder plate. Rashi tells us that it was the first night of (the future) Pesach that Yaakov presented himself to Yitzchak for the bracha. Rivka told Yaakov to bring her two goats. Just to feed Yitzchak, you need two goats? Rashi answers that one was for the main dish and the other for Korban Pesach. Similarly, commentaries mention the wine that Yaakov gave to Yitzchak as being part of a "Seder", and that his cleverness (mentioned in Rashi) was feeding Yitzchak Korban Pesach, so he could not eat Eisav's food also. Realize that these ideas exist on a different level of Torah from plain P'SHAT.

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

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

☞ The sword is part of the bracha to Eisav.

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

☞ The tow truck is another pun - Yitzchak lived in GERAR.

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

☞ The teddy bear is holding aloft the number 7 in one paw and an upraised hand in the other. There are two meanings to the name Be'er Sheva. One is from the seven sheep that Avraham gave Avimelech as a token of the covenant between them, and the other is for the oath(s) that were taken in that agreement. SHEVA has both connotations.

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

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

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

☞ Above the truck is the emblem of NAHAL, a part of IDF. Combined with the truck it reads NACHAL GERAR, the place where Yitzchak settled after Avimelech kicked him out of Gerar.

☞ From the back of the tow truck is an arrow pointing to the computer icon for a DOS prompt. Together it gives the Ashkenazit pronunciation of the sedra, TOW-L' (to, that's the arrow) DOS.

TTRIDDLES...

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

Last issue's (Chayei Sara) TTriddles:

[1] Congratulations to Pippin III and Bertrada of Laon on their marriage

Pippin the Third, a.k.a. Pippin the Short, was king of the Franks (751 - 768 the first king of the Carolingian dynasty and the father of Charlemagne. There's more, but that will do. He married Bertrada of Laon, a.k.a. Bertha of the Big Foot or Queen Goosefoot, in 740c.e. That makes this a Footer TTriddle, meaning one whose answer is the issue number of Torah Tidbits.

[2] High School reunion for alumni of the Mesivta of Zanesville, this Motza'ei Shabbat, not to take place at the Israel Center, Jerusalem Ir Kodsheinu

This was another Footer TTriddle - actually a double one. Several solvers got the easier part; HC got them both. Kol HaKavod. Zanesville is a city of 25,000 people in east-central Ohio. We doubt very much that it has a Metifta, but Zanesville's areacode is 740, which is the only reason this notice appeared in last week's Torah Tidbits. That Jerusalem is Ir Kodsheinu, our holy city, is true enough, but the reason for that description of the city was used because the numeric value of IR KODSHEINU is... you guessed it - 740.

[3] Namesakes, 10 generations apart, they each had 4. What?

This one is NOT a Footer TTriddle. The namesakes referred to are MILKA, wife of Nachor, mother of Betuel, grandmother of Rivka, great-grandmother of Yaakov Avinu. His great-grandson was Machir b. Menashe. Machir had a son Cheirer, whose son Tzelofchad was the father of the daughters of Tzelofchad, one of whom was MILKA, separated by 10 generations from her namesake. The younger Milka had four sisters. The earlier one had four... what do you call the children of your co-wife, or the children of your husband's Pilegsh? Well, whatever you call them, she had four - Tevach, Gacham, Tachash, and Maacha.

[4] In the B'reishit Man race, he beat him 9-8. Who? Whom?

The B'reishit Man race consists of who is called HA-ISH in the book of B'reishit, and how many times. The word HA-ISH occurs 70 times in the Torah; we are concerned only with the 28 times in B'reishit. Among those, Avraham, Yizchak, and Yaakov are called HaIsh once or twice. Binyamin once (although the brothers did not know they were referring to him at the time they said the word), twice it refers to the person who told Yosef where to find his brothers. In third place with 4 references as HaIsh, is the head of Yosef's household in Egypt - perhaps Menashe? Yosef is called HaIsh 8 times, and the winner is Eliezer, with 9 times being called HaIsh.

[5] Biblical counterparts of Marion Jones and Lauryn Williams, one aspect

The two women mentioned are both internationally known champion runners. What comes to mind in the Biblical connection, is the word VATARATZ, and she ran. The word occurs only four times in all of Tanach. With Rivka, twice. Once with Rachel. And once with the wife of Mano'ach,

mother of Shimson (who would be the Biblical counterpart of other Olympics and World champions).

[6] The singer's nephew is a sharp, questioning Oriental

A favorite feeding ground for TTriddles are the names in Tanach that are not the well-known ones, the oft-repeated one. Parshat Chayei Sara has two groups - the offspring of Ketura and those of Yishmael. The singer is ZIMRAN, first mentioned son of Avraham from Ketura. His nephew, i.e. Yishmael's sons CHADAD (sounds like the Hebrew for SHARP), TEIMA (a question kind of word in Aramaic), and KEIDMA (meaning Eastern, as in Oriental).

[7] What do Tzivya's son and Shlomo's mother have in common?

Tzivya was the mother of Y'ho-ash, king of Yehuda who ascended the throne at the age of seven, as it says: BEN SHEVA SHANIM Y'HO'ASH B'MOLCHO. Shlomo HaMelech's mother was BAT SHEVA (as mentioned in the haftara). So there is the connection - BEN SHEVA and BATSHEVA. Sneaky, no? HC got it.

[8] Sounds like heavy

Now we're back to Yishma'el's sons, this time, the three found in a rare three-word pasuk: USHMA, V'DUMA, UMASA. They each in turn sound like the Hebrew words for SOUNDS (SH'MA), LIKE (DOMEH), and HEAVY (MASA, a weight).

[9] Zodiac Mazal TTriddle

Reference to page 2, the Word of the Month box. The picture of a fish reminds one of ADAR, which it isn't yet. But ADAR would be two fish anyway. As in MAZAL ADAR DAGIM (plural). This fish for Kislev is the archerfish, as in Sagittarius, the Zodiac sign for Kislev. The Hebrew term, by the way, is KESHET, which refers to the bow, rather than the archer. Speaking of archerfish, its vertical position was meant to indicate what it was, even if one could not tell by its appearance. Read on in "Torah from Nature"

This week's TTriddles:

[1] Not a cheap handgun easily obtained and concealed, but...

[2] 1904-10 Ave. N, 78-15 Parsons Blvd...

[3] could 2612 have been in 5634?

[4] demitasse spoon last week; pygmy marmoset this week - sort of

[5] 1 of 39, Eisav (Yaakov) and who?