Of Frogs and Apples

Remember the famous Beit Yosef’s Question - One day supply of oil that miraculously lasted for 8 days, therefore there were 7 days of miracle. How come we celebrate Chanuka and light Neirot Chanuka for 8 days?

Dozens and dozens of answers have come down to us throughout the last 400-500 years. Some are better than others. This Lead Tidbit is using one of those answers to make its point.

“Seven days to celebrate the beyond-nature miracle of a one day supply of oil lasting 8 days, plus one day to celebrate (and thank HaShem) for the miracles of nature - that oil burns so nicely in the first place.

5:30pm • Maariv in the Ganchrow Beit Midrash (one flight up)

Jerusalem
in/out times for ShabbatParshat Vayigash
רבינא 5:50 PM

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Kiddush L’vana for Tevet 5776: Minhag Yerushalayim followers had their first op right after Chanuka. Those who follow the 7-days-after-the-molad rule will have their first op on Motza’ei Shabbat Parshat Vayigash. Last opportunity for KL is technically Leil Shabbat Parshat Vaychi (Dec. 25th) until 1:21am Israel Time. Remember that we usually do not say KL on Leil Shabbat or Chag, unless it is the last opportunity, as it is this month. Important to keep in mind that in our rainy months, we often have cloudy (or rainy) nights when we don’t get a clear (or any) view of the Moon. So keep checking.
In the short story, The Bet by Anton Chekov, the protagonist is a young man who voluntarily enters solitary confinement for 15 years - in order to win a bet.

At the end of the 15 years, he intends to leave his confinement minutes before the deadline and forfeit his pay-off. This, because of his disdain for humanity and its warped values. Among his many complaint about people is - to paraphrase - they would be amazed if an apple tree bore frogs but they are not amazed that an apple tree bears apples.

This particular answer to the Why Eight question is not unique to Chanuka, but the miracle of the oil gives us pause to ponder and hopefully come to a greater appreciation of all of G-d's wonders - the ordinary as well as the extraordinary.

For eight days - very recently (exactly how long ago depends upon when you are reading these words), we said AL HANISIM 26 times in the Amida and a bunch more times in Birkat HaMazon (exact number varies). We said Hallel 8 times and the bracha of SHE'ASA NISIM also 8 times.

And since Monday night (Dec. 14th), we stopped saying AL HANISIM and SHE'ASA NISIM until Purim - usually 2½ months from now, but this year 3½ month.

Take a look, though, at what we left behind in the Amida, which we will continue saying three times a day (4 times on Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh, and Yom Tov and 5 times on Yom Kippur. We say:

We give thanks to You, for You are HaShem our G-d... We will give thanks to You and declare Your praise for our lives which are committed into Your hand, and for our souls which are in Your charge, and for Your miracles, which are daily with us, and for Your wonders and Your benefits, which are wrought at all times, evening, morn and noon...

As AL HANISIM highlights and thanks HKB"H for the miracles and victories of Chanuka, the MODIM we say every single day of the year, acknowledges and thanks HKB"H for the everyday, mundane, natural wonders and miracles which the Creator continues to provide us with all the time.

AL HANISIM is said on 9 days of the year; MODIM is said at least three times a day - every day of the year, every day of our lives.

Sometimes it takes a supernatural miracle with oil to help us appreciate regular oil. The splitting of the sea should lead us to appreciate the sea, its waves, its teeming life... on so on.
VAYIGASH

Ilth of 54 sedras;
Ilth of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 178.07 lines (ranks 34th)

Vayigash is composed of 3 parshiyot, all closed, one VERY closed. Actually, Vayigash has only 2.89 parshiot; it ends after 34 p'sukim of a 38-pasuk parsha; Vayigash is the only sedra that does not end with a parsha break. (This shows up in a printed Chumash by there not being a תב (25 pts) or תב (50 pts) between Vayigash and Vaychi.)

106 p'sukim - ranks 28th; tied with To'lidot and Bo. Actually it is considerably smaller than Bo, and a bit larger than To'lidot

1480 words (30th); 5680 letters (29th)

9th (of 12) in B'reishit in all 3 categories

MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot in Vayigash - one of 17 sedras without mitzvot

Kohen - First Aliya
13 p'sukim - 44:18-30

[S> 44:18 (52)] The sedra begins with the dramatic confrontation between Yehuda and Yosef. Yehuda risks his life when he approaches the "Egyptian leader" in an attempt to save Binyamin. The first Aliya ends with the emotion-filled description by Yehuda of the feelings between Yaakov and Binyamin - "V'nafsho k'shura v'nafsho", and his soul is bound with his soul.

SDT Yehuda confronted the as-yet-unrevealed Yosef as an equal. It can be said, that whenever one approaches a confrontational situation, it is best to think in terms of facing one’s adversary on equal footing. Thinking oneself inferior will often create a self-fulfilling disadvantage. One will tend not to fight with sufficient confidence because of the expectation of defeat. Feeling superior to one’s adversary will often lead to over-confidence. Remember not to under-estimate your enemy... or yourself.

THE TORAH NOTES on the opening words of the sedra explain what was going on.

KADMA V'AZLA R'VI'I, ZARKA MUNACH SEGOL (see top row of the PP p.2). The 4th (son) went forward (to confront Yosef), because he had thrown away his place among the Chosen (Nation) (by guaranteeing the safe return of Binyamin) - attributed to the GR”A

In 46:26, the Torah states that the total number of people ha-ba-A... accent on last syllable and the word is present tense - are coming (66 people) goto 16
The Alshich asks: At the end of Parshat Mikeitz, Yehuda is completely resigned to his (and his brothers’) fate. The Egyptian ruler has accused them of stealing his special chalice. Yehuda offers that the one in whose possession the cup is found shall be put to death and that the others would be slaves. When the cup is "found" in Binyamin’s possession, Yehuda meekly submits (to the slavery suggestion). Yosef (as yet unrevealed) nobly refuses Yehuda’s offer and announces that he will take only the "culprit" as a slave - the rest are free to return in peace to their father. That is the "cliff-hanger" ending of Mikeitz. At the beginning of Vayigash, Yehuda changes from the lamb awaiting slaughter, to the lion - which becomes the hallmark of his tribe, risking his life in his confrontation with the enigmatic Egyptian leader. What caused the change in Yehuda’s demeanor? The Alshich answers brilliantly: As long as Yehuda expected all the brothers to be enslaved, he viewed the events as G-d’s punishment for the sale of Yosef. This he could and would accept. When it turned out that only Binyamin would be enslaved - the only one not involved in Mechirat Yosef, Yehuda realized that this was not punishment for what they had done. Now his protective instincts and his promise to Yaakov take over. Yehuda boldly faces this "Egyptian" at the beginning of Vayigash and is prepared to risk all to save Binyamin.

Yosef heard his father referred to as "your servant - my father" ten times (5 from Yehuda and another 5 from the interpreter) and he did not object and/or reveal his identity to prevent the humiliation of his father. For this, commentators say, Yosef lost 10 years of life and died at 110, younger than any of his brothers.

Chassidic masters see a "layer of messages" for us beneath the wording of Yehuda’s plea. "...and (if) he leaves his father, he will die." If a person abandons his Father (G-d), forsakes the Torah, then he will die a spiritual death.

Ever notice that when Yosef interrogated the Brothers, he asked them if they had a father or brother. Not if they had a mother. Baal HaTurim
says it was because he knew that their (and his) mother had already died. Let’s call this even a subconscious omission. The Torah tells us of Rachel’s passing. According to Tradition, Leah died about six years after Rachel did. By the time of the sale of Yosef, both were long gone.

**Here’s a thought...** When they were younger, and when they perceived that Yaakov loved Yosef above all, the brothers were dangerously jealous. Here, Yehuda speaks of the special love bond between Yaakov and Binyamin, and does not seem to be jealous, but rather protective (and fond) of the other son of Rachel - Yehuda’s mother’s rival. T’shuva? Maturity?

**Levi - Second Aliya**  
11 p'sukim - 44:31-45:7

Yehuda tells Yosef that Yaakov is likely to die if the brothers return without Binyamin. He adds that he has personally guaranteed Binyamin's return and "how can I return to my father without the lad..."

( Remember that Yehuda had previously returned to his father without the other lad, Yosef. The current situation with Binyamin is Yehuda’s opportunity for complete repentance for what he had done to Yosef.)

Yosef cannot contain himself any longer and orders the room cleared of all "outsiders". He bursts with
emotion and announces to his dumb-struck brothers that he is Yosef. Immediately, Yosef asks, "Is my father still alive?" Yosef repeats his shocking revelation, with details, so the brothers will believe what they are hearing. He then admonishes them not to be angry with each other, since it was G-d's plan that should be properly positioned to save his family from the famine.

Torah T’mima (the original TT) brings the Gemara in Chagiga in the name of Rabbi Elazar who makes the following powerful observation: If the children of Israel were not able to respond to Yosef’s short statement of reproach, imagine how much more so it will be difficult for us to respond to G-d’s reproach for the myriad wrongdoings as individuals and as a community.

**PONDER THIS** The sale of Yosef was a monstrous sin, regardless of how G-d planned things to turn out (and regardless of Yosef’s calming words to his brothers). The Midrash says: G-d said to the People of Israel - You sold your brother into slavery. I swear by your lives that every year you will say, AVADIM HAYINU L’FAR’O B’MITZRAYIM, we were slaves to Par’o in Egypt.

When Yosef finally reveals himself to his brothers, he makes a compound statement: "I am Yosef - Is my father still alive?" Many commentaries ask why Yosef would ask that question in this way and at this dramatic moment - especially since he has been hearing about Yaakov from the brothers all along.

Some see in it a short but powerful reproach to the brothers, as if to say, "is it possible that my father can still be alive after what you’ve put him through?" If this is indeed the meaning of his question, then Yosef too must bear some of the burden and shame, since he also caused Yaakov suffering by not having communicated with him that he was alive during his years as prime minister in Egypt. (Although there are various reasons given in the sources as to why Yosef did not inform Yaakov of his well-being, it is difficult not to throw some criticism in Yosef’s direction.)

Another interpretation suggests that Yosef might have assumed that his brothers had been lying to him about their father. They might have told him that Yaakov was alive to elicit sympathy, but he might have been dead. Therefore, now that he has told his brothers who he really is, Yosef asks the most important question on his mind - Is my father really still alive?
Shlishi - Third Aliya  
20 p’sukim - 45:8-27

Yosef again tells the brothers that it wasn’t they who sent him to Egypt, but rather it was G-d. He then sends them to bring their father down to Egypt (to Goshen) where the family will be well-cared for during the remaining years of the famine. The brothers embrace and cry. Only then are the brothers able to talk to Yosef.

Meanwhile, Par’o becomes aware of the reunion and offers his generous hospitality to the family. Yosef gives his brothers clothing, but gives Binyamin even more (specifically, 5 sets of clothing and 300 silver pieces).

Observation... Notice that once again a son of Rachel is being favored by being given a special garment. The first time, the results were disastrous for Yosef and his brothers. Why would Yosef even consider doing this?

The “solution” to the problem of the brothers is not reached by avoiding difficult situations. If there is true repentance, then the brothers can be given the exact circumstances to show their change of heart. Seeing things in a proper perspective, the extra gifts to Binyamin do not evoke the jealousy of the brothers; they have repented. (On the other hand, we know of nothing Binyamin did to cause jealousy or hatred.) Be careful in applying this lesson...

This same idea can be seen in Vaychi. Yaakov favors Efrayim over Menashe. This time, Yosef gets very upset. Again we can say that the idea is not to avoid anything that would make one brother jealous, the other arrogant. Menashe and Efrayim showed praise-worthy characteristics in the way they handled their different statuses. This is one of the reasons that we bless our sons, "may G-d make you like Efrayim and like Menashe..."

A parent has two tasks in this respect. First, he/she should try to avoid situations that create unhealthy jealousy among the children. Second, a parent must educate his/her children to deal with those situations that do arise...
that can cause bad feelings between siblings.

Yosef sends his brothers back to Yaakov with wagons (which is a personal coded message between son and father based on the topic they were studying at the time of the Sale of Yosef) and gifts. The brothers tell Yaakov all that has happened. He refuses to believe that Yosef is really alive, until he sees the wagons. Yaakov's spirit is revived.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 8 p'sukim - 45:28-46:7

Yaakov tells his sons to hurry with their preparations so that he can get to see Yosef before he (Yaakov) dies. On the way to Egypt, they stop at Be'er Sheva where Yaakov offers sacrifices to G-d. G-d appears to him and assures him that He will protect him and accompany him on his sojourn. The family continues its trip and arrives in Goshen.

Rashi points out that G-d promised that Yaakov would be brought back to Eretz Yisrael for burial. The promise of becoming a great nation was not enough to calm Yaakov.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 20 p'sukim - 46:8-27

[S> 46:8 (20)] The Torah now lists the names of the "70 souls" (including Yosef and his sons) who went down to Egypt with Yaakov. (The seed is planted; the harvest many years hence will be the Nation of Israel.)

The 70 Souls...

Note the atypical mention (and counting) of female offspring - Yaakov's daughter Dina (from Leah) and Serach bat Asher. Tradition attributes to Serach great longevity - she was the oldest person to leave Egypt, making her an eyewitness to the entire Egyptian experience. (Perhaps Yocheved too.)

Notice the label of B'CHOR (first-born) for Reuven, here and in other places in the Torah. Although Levi, Yehuda, and Yosef each ended up with a "feature" that we would identify with the firstborn, these roles being taken away from Reuven because of his short-comings, he
nonetheless is repeatedly identified as Yaakov's B'CHOR.

**Reuven** (1) and his sons **Chanoch** (2), **Palu** (3), **Chetzron** (4), **Carmi** (5);

**Shimon** (6) and his sons **Y’mu’el** (7), **Yamin** (8), **Ohad** (9), **Yachin** (10), **Tzochar** (11), **Shaul** (12); (Rashi says that Shaul was Dina's child from Shi’chem, raised by Shimon as his own);

**Levi** (13) and his sons **Gershon** (14), **K’hat** (15), **M’rari** (16);

**Yehuda** (17) and his sons Eir and Onan (both of whom who died in Canaan, but are mentioned here, though not counted among the 70), **Sheila** (18), **Peretz** (19), **Zerach** (20), and Peretz's sons **Chetzron** (21), **Chamul** (22);

**Yissachar** (23) and his sons **Tola** (24), **Puva** (25), **Yov** (26), **Shimron** (27);

**Z’vulun** (28) and his sons **Sered** (29), **Eilon** (30), **Yachel’el** (31);

These are Leah's children plus **Dina** (32).

The Torah says the total from Leah is 33. Rashi says that the 33rd of Leah's "children" is **Yocheved** (33), daughter of Levi, who was born as they entered Egypt (or conceived in Eretz Yisrael and born in Egypt, hence, "brought down" to Egypt). **That's 33 souls from Leah.**

**Gad** (34) and his sons **Tzifyon** (35), **Chagi** (36), **Shuni** (37), **Etzbon** (38), **Eiri** (39), **Arodi** (40), **Areili** (41);

**Asher** (42) and his children **Yimna**

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OU Israel Center TT 1163 ☝ page 11 🕒 Vayigash 5776
The souls from Zilpa are 16.

Yosef (50) and Binyamin (51); Yosef’s sons who were born in Egypt (they are nonetheless included in the 70 Souls) from A-s’nat - Menashe (52) and Efrayim (53);

Binyamin’s sons Bela (54), Becher (55), Ashbel (56), Geira (57), Naaman (58), Eichi (59), Rosh (60), Mupim (61), Chupim (62), Ard (63)

Souls from Rachel are 14.

Dan (64) and his son(s) Chushim (65); Dan’s one son is identified with B’NEI, plural. The Gemara explains the use of the plural as a glimpse into the future of a large tribe that descended from Dan.

Naftali (66) and his sons Yachtz’eil (67), Guni (68), Yeitzer (69), Shileim (70).

Souls from Bilha are 7.

66 went down to Egypt (actually 67 counting Yocheved) and Yosef and his sons who were already in Egypt, bringing the total - not counting daughters-in-law - to 70.

Remember that the "whole world" that came from No’ach was 70 (nations). We now find the same number in Yaakov’s descendants. Their 70 became the Nations of the World. Our 70 souls multiply to become the Jewish People, AM YISRAEL.

Another possibility for the "missing" person: Count Yaakov among the 70 souls and not Yocheved? Total is still 70 with all the names actually mentioned in the text. (But then Yaakov would be part of the Leah sub-total, which doesn’t work too well.)

Shishi - Sixth Aliya
17 p'sukim - 46:28-47:10

[S> 46:28 (34)] Yaakov sends Yehuda ahead, to complete preparations for the family’s descent to Egypt. Yosef sends a royal chariot for his father.

When Yaakov and Yosef meet, Yosef embraces Yaakov and cries.

Yosef then prepares (some of) his brothers to meet Par’o. It is a sensitive issue because Yaakov and family are shepherds (and sheep are deified by Egypt). Yosef presents his father and five brothers to Par’o. Par’o again offers the best of the land to Yosef’s...
family. Par'o asks Yaakov how old he is. Yaakov says that he has lived 130 bitter years and that he does not expect to live as long as his father or grandfather. Yaakov blesses Par'o (having done so when first presented to Par'o – Rashi says that these were courtesy greetings to royalty) and Yaakov takes his leave.

Rashi brings a Midrash that says that Yaakov’s bracha to Par’o was that the Nile should rise above its banks when he approaches it. And so it was, from then on.

**Sh'VII Seventh Aliya 17 p'sukim - 47:11-27**

Yosef sets up his family with the best the land has to offer. Meanwhile, the famine intensifies in Egypt. Yosef carefully controls the
food supplies and before long has amassed for Par'o all the wealth, possessions and land (except for that of the clergy) of the people. Finally, the peoples of Egypt become slaves to Par'o in exchange for sustenance. Yaakov's family flourishes greatly.

As mentioned earlier, this is the only sedra that does not end with a parsha break. The significance of this is explained by the commentaries of the opening pasuk of next week’s sedra.

3 p'sukim are reread for Maftir.

**Haftara 14 p'sukim**

**Yechezkeil 37:15-28**

The antagonism in the beginning of Parshat Vayigash between Yehuda and Yosef is the fore-runner of the split of the Jewish People into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel (represented by Efrayim, Yosef's son). In this portion from the Prophets, G-d tells Yechezekiel to take two sticks - one marked for Yehuda and one for Yosef/Efrayim - and hold them together until they merge into one. When the people ask the meaning of this, the prophet is to tell them about the reunification of the tribes. This reconciliation, which is also the theme of the sedra, will produce the One Nation that will once again be the "dwelling place" of G-d. We will know that, as will the nations of the world. As happy as is the reconciliation of the brothers in the sedra, both the sedra and haftara remind us of rough times to come, throughout Jewish History. The "pot of gold" is at the end of the perverbal rainbow, the time of the Complete Geula, when the people will be united, the people will all keep Torah and mitzvot, the people will return to Eretz Yisrael from the far-flung places of their dispersion, and the Beit HaMikdash will stand in Jerusalem forever. נ"א.

**Probing the Prophets**

The climax of the Yosef saga is presented to us in this week's parsha as Yosef, moved by the words of his brother Yehuda, reveals his true identity to his brothers and a tearful reunion ensues. A similar dramatic reunion is predicted by the navi Yechezkel in this week's haftara as he sees the two kingdoms of Israel,
The reunification of the tribes of Israel is not a result of redemption but a necessary requisite for the ultimate geula. This was true of the past as well, for the Book of B’reishit would not have come to a fitting conclusion nor could AM Yisra’el, the nation of Israel, have been formed, nor would the Israelites have been redeemed from Egyptian slavery without the family of Ya’akov becoming an inseparable unit, as once it had been.

The overreaching theme of Yechezkel’s prophecy in this haftara is the reunification of our people and it is especially interesting to note that this nevu’a follows Yechezkel’s well-known prophecy of the valley of the dry bones. There, the navi shares Hashem’s promise that, although the post-churban generation sees itself as lacking any hope for the future (“avda tkvateinu”), G-d will breathe life into them and bring them back to their land. This following prophecy indicates that the redemptive process would continue with a re-connection of the
long-fractured nation, for only then could the geula process and the return to the land be complete.

Hashem’s cry that none should be left behind speaks to us today. The challenge of creating an inclusive atmosphere within Klal Yisra’el is one that we dare not fail to meet. It is a necessary component to hasten our redemption. We must do more than sing and pray for Mashiach.

We must bring us all together.

Probing the Prophets, our new weekly insight into the Haftara, is written by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler, author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)

Kohelet teaches us: Two are better than one...

The following two p'sukim, which are Gimatriya Twins (they have the same numeric value), brings this teaching to mind.

In Parshat D’varim, Moshe Rabeinu laments -

אֲכָלָה אֲלֵי לְבָנִי טְהַרְכִּסִיָּם וּרְכִסָּם

How can I myself alone bear your weight, and your burden, and your strife?

From the Exodus through Matan Torah and beyond, we are in awe of Moshe's alone-ness. But these words give us a different feeling. We can empathize with Moshe's lament.

In contrast, we have a pasuk in Vayigash which shows us the power and emotion of the reunion of two brothers who were tragically separated many years earlier.

וַיַּפְלُ בַּעַל-פַּרְאָר בֶּן-מֵעָרָי-אָבִיהָ יְבִטָּה וּבִכֵּי מְנַנִּים

And he fell upon his brother Binyamin’s neck, and wept; and Binyamin wept upon his neck.

In the next pasuk (46:27), the Torah states that the total number of people including Yosef and sons, and uses the past tense ha-BA-a... (70 people)
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Why Are You Not Eating

This week we will see one last example of couples in the Tanach who faced fertility challenges and investigate how they dealt with their infertility.

Chana also suffered from infertility, and it was even worse, as her husband, Elkana, was married to another wife, Penina, and she was very fertile. Elkana and Penina had ten children and Chana was extremely depressed from the situation. She accompanied her husband and the rest of the family to the Mikdash in Shiloh but she was glum and refused to eat.

Despite his responsibility to his other wife and her large family, Elkana was not oblivious to Chana's state and he saw that she was suffering and depressed. He gave her a special portion of the food that he distributed to his other wife and her children. "Why are you crying and why are you not eating and why are you so sad? I am better for you than ten children" (Shmuel Alef1:8).

The Tanach does not relate Chana's response but the next verse tells us that after she ate and drank she went to pray and pour out her heart. Eli the Kohen Gadol heard her and she explained her plight and eventually was promised and delivered a baby boy, Shmuel the prophet.

It appears that Elkana's words hit their mark and were able to enable her to overcome the lethargy induced by her situation. What did he say that moved her?

First of all, he noticed her situation, he saw that she had stopped eating and had given up hope. The fact that he noticed was in of itself significant; she felt alone and distant from the rest of the family and especially from her husband. But he told her that he was with her, he noticed her and wanted to make her happy.

The second thing he said was that she should eat and stop crying; she should not lose hope. Many couples have given up hope of having a baby and sometimes they get the impression from medical professionals that there is nothing that can be done. One of the most important things to give them is hope. In many cases a solution can be found within the framework of halacha.

We should be careful to give real hope and not barter in false hopes which only contribute to a couple's conviction that nothing can be done. But raising a couple's spirit is a huge contribution to their wellbeing and their resolve to undergo treatment.

More on this next week.

Rabbi Gideon Weitzman

The Puah Institute is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems. Puah offers free counseling in five languages, halachic supervision, and educational programs. Offices in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles, Paris. Contact: (02) 651-5050 (Isr) • 718-336-0603 (US) • www.puahonline.org
As in previous Parshiyot, so in this week’s Parsha, Yehuda is prominent. Yehuda was the brother who suggested selling Yosef rather than murdering him. Yehuda is the one who confessed to his sin with his daughter-in-law Tamar. And we know that the offspring of Yehuda’s illicit relationship with Tamar yet fathered the Davidic dynasty and gave rise to the messianic line.

Yehuda, like King David, displayed a remarkable and rare characteristic in leaders, namely, the ability to say, "I sinned; I was wrong." In our parsha, Yehuda demonstrates another quality shared with David - that of preserving the unity of Am Yisrael. In Tehillim 122. David describes Yerushalayim as a city "united together", the inference being that the Beit HaMikdash is the focal point of all the tribes gathering as one. Conversely, the Beit HaMikdash, as we are taught, cannot be sustained unless there is unity among brothers.

Now, when Yehuda stands before Yosef to beg for the life of Binyamin, he proclaims before "the Egyptian ruler", that he, Yehuda, is AREIV for his brother. This term may mean that Yehuda is responsible for the welfare of Binyamin. But more so it expresses, as the narrative demonstrates, that Yehuda is willing to put himself in Binyamin’s place to serve the Egyptian oligarch. Or, as the Lubavitcher Rebbe submits, Yehuda’s self-sacrifice was aimed at preserving the integrity of all the tribes - of Am Yisrael.

Yes, for the Rebbe, and perhaps for us, the one who sees himself as part of the totality of Klal Yisrael reflects the notion that there is no distinction between one Jew and another that, to cite Chazal, "Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Lazeh" - 'All of Israel is responsible, one for the other'. May we be so inspired.
Taking Off Challah on Shabbat

Question: My sons were guests in Bnei Brak. The hosts forgot to do hafrashat challa before Shabbat. On Shabbat, the ba'al habayit separated some challa to be burnt after Shabbat. Was it okay for my sons to have eaten?

Answer: It is not clear what you mean by "separated some challa", and the situation for your sons depends on that.

Among the mishna's (Beitza 36b) long list of Rabbinic prohibitions of Shabbat and Yom Tov is taking terumot and ma'asrot, which includes the taking of challa (which is likewise theoretically slated to go to a kohen). Therefore, if your sons' hosts did hafrashat challa on Shabbat, they apparently acted improperly. We do find leniency for taking ma'asrot in a case where one does not have alternative food to eat for Shabbat, due to the mitzva of eating on Shabbat (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 261:1; see Mishna Berura ad loc. 4). However, that is only to do so during bein hashemashot (twilight, at the time when it is a doubt whether it is day or night). (One can contemplate some leniency as to when bein hashemashot ends in regards to this question, considering the issue is a Rabbinic prohibition, but we will not analyze all the opinions as to specifics.) On Yom Tov, it is permitted to take challa if the obligation began (with kneading) on Yom Tov (which is prohibited on Shabbat) or by making more dough and taking off from it on the existing dough/challa (Shulchan Aruch, OC 496:3).

However, regarding your sons, even if their host did hafrasha improperly, they were still allowed to eat the challot. This is because if one took ma'asrot improperly on Shabbat unintentionally (including out of ignorance of the halacha), the food may be eaten (Gittin 54a). (It is a fascinating question why we do not say that since when Shabbat started the food was not fit to be eaten, it should be muktzeh. However, it apparently is not muktzeh - see Tosafot, Shabbat 43a, Shut R. Akiva Eiger II:103; Minchat Shlomo 62.11).
Perhaps the hosts did not actually take challa but left enough of the challa (loaf) over to take challa from it after Shabbat. (There is a discussion among the Rishonim whether one may eat everything except the part that will become challa or whether he must leave over enough to take challa off and still have some bread that is permitted to eat - see Tosafot, Beitza 9a.) This practice has a strong basis, but if this is what they did, they misapplied it. Shmuel says (Beitza 9a): "Regarding the taking of challa of chutz la'aretz, one may eat now and take off the challa later." This is different from the situation regarding ma'asrot, where until the ma'aser has been taken, the produce is forbidden as tevel.

Shmuel clearly states that this halacha is true specifically regarding challa la'aretz, not Bnei Braq. However, one might want to suggest that it might apply even in Israel of our time, for the following reason. The Tur (Yoreh Deah 323) explains that Rabbinic-level challa has several leniencies, including that it does not have a status of tevel, as above. Challa outside Eretz Yisrael is certainly only Rabbinic (Rambam, Bikurim 5:8). However, there is significant Talmudic machloket as to whether challa is of Torah or Rabbinic level in Eretz Yisrael (or parts thereof - see Rambam ibid.) of our times. The more accepted opinion is that even in Eretz Yisrael, challa is now Rabbinic (see Beit Yosef, YD 322). So can we consider being lenient to eat the bread from which challa will be taken later in Israel of our times? The answer is that we cannot be lenient. The Beit Yosef (YD 323, and in the Shulchan Aruch, ad loc.) rejects the above reading of the Tur and proves that, even if both are Rabbinic, challa in Eretz Yisrael is of a higher level and is modeled after the Torah law which did (and will) exist there. This is in contrast to challa in chutz la'aretz, which has "no root in Torah law". Therefore, if challa was taken only on Motzaei Shabbat, then that which your sons ate had a Rabbinic status of tevel, which of course is forbidden to eat.

Rav Daniel Mann, Eretz Hemdah Institute
Questions? emailinfo@eretzhemdah.org

Having a dispute?
For a Din Torah in English or Hebrew contact 'Eretz Hemdah - Gazit' Rabbinical Court: 077-215-8-215 • fax: (02) 537-9626 beitdin@eretzhemdah.org
Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

VAYIGASH
"Wagons, Calves, and Responsibility"

I have been blessed with many fine teachers. She was one of the best.

Her name was Mrs. Lachmann. I no longer recall her first name. She taught an advanced course in world literature at the college I attended, and she insisted that we call her Mrs. Lachmann, although, as I later discovered, she had earned a doctorate with honors at a very prestigious European university.

The course was an elective, and I was motivated to take it because of my fondness for literature, which I developed quite early in my childhood. I was already familiar with some of the authors of our assigned readings, all of whom were 19th century Russian or German writers, and assumed that the course would be an easy one for me.

I was a philosophy major then and was particularly impressed by her assertion, in the very first class session, that great literature is an important source of philosophical ideas. In fact, she insisted that a work of literature bereft of philosophical lessons could not qualify as great literature.

As the course progressed, two things became apparent. First of all, it was not going to be nearly as easy a course as I had anticipated. Furthermore, it was not philosophy in general that was her sine qua non for great literature. It was one specific concept that mattered so much to her. That was the concept of ethical responsibility.

I can still hear her, with her central European accent, making the case that great writers of fiction portray their characters in light of whether or not they meet their responsibilities.

"Several central questions are posed in all works of literature", she would say. She would then proceed to list those questions:

"How do the heroes or villains of the novel define their responsibilities? Do they consider the long-term consequences of their actions? Do
they feel accountable to others? To what degree is their sense of responsibility central to their personalities?"

She would quote the words of Fyodor Dostoevsky, who wrote The Brothers Karamazov, which was, in her opinion, the greatest novel of all time: "We are all responsible for all... for all men before all, and I more than all the others."

I remember her remark at the end of her final lecture: "The theme of all great literature is the theme of responsibility."

Over the years, I have come to realize that Mrs. Lachmann's insight was not limited to the Russian and German writers of the 19th century. It applies even more to biblical literature. Indeed, I am convinced that the theme of personal responsibility is the core theme of Sefer B'reishit.

One example of the theme of responsibility can be found in a verse in this week's Torah portion, Vayigash (44:18-47:27), as explained by Rashi.

In the story, Yosef finally revealed himself to his brothers. They journeyed back to Canaan and informed Yaakov that Yosef is still...
alive. Initially, Yaakov did not believe them. The verse then reads:

"But when they recounted all that Yosef had said to them, and when he saw the wagons [Hebrew: agalot] that Yosef had sent to transport him, the spirit of their father Yaakov revived. 'Enough!' said Yisrael. 'My son Yosef is still alive! I must go and see him before I die.'"

Rashi wonders what it was about the wagons, the AGALOT, that convinced Yaakov and revived his spirit. Rashi tells us that these wagons were a sign sent by Yosef to Yaakov, recalling the subject of their learned conversation when they first parted ways so long ago.

That subject is the ritual of the "calf [EGLA] with a broken neck", the details of which are described in the first several verses of D'varim 21. Yosef was apparently confident that Yaakov would see the connection between the word for wagons, agalot, and the word for calf, egla.

The reader of Rashi's words cannot help but ask with astonishment: Is this some game, some bizarre wordplay? Agala calls to mind egla? What connection can there be between the ritual of the calf and Yaakov's parting words of instruction to Yosef before sending him off on his mission to his brothers, never to see him again until this moment?

To answer this question, we must reflect upon the meaning of the ritual of the "calf with a broken neck". It is a ritual that is performed by the elders of the city nearest to a discovered murdered corpse, whose murderer is unknown. The elders must wash their hands over the calf whose neck was broken and declare that they did not shed this blood.

The Mishna asks, "Can we possibly suspect the elders of the city of murder?" The Mishna answers that they must declare that they did not allow the victim to pass through their city unfed, nor did they allow him to be part their city without escorting him along his way.

The early 17th century commentator Kli Yakar understands this to mean that the elders must declare that they treated the victim decently and humanely. Had they not done so, they would be, however indirectly, responsible for the murder. Their failure to treat their fellow properly would render them
responsible for his tragic end. The theme of responsibility for the long-term consequences of one's interactions is the dominant theme of this ritual.

As the Kli Yakar explains, if the elders of the city are not hospitable to the wayfarers who frequent the city, the criminals who populate the environs of the city will assume that this wayfarer is of no import, and they will therefore take liberties with him, even to the point of shedding his blood. Were these villains to observe that the wayfarer was significant enough to the elders of the city to be treated graciously, they would have refrained from harming him.

This is the nature of responsibility. The elders are not suspected of actual murder. But if they treat their guests improperly, they set in motion a process by which those guests are dehumanized, becoming easy prey to malicious persons. That is how far the demands of responsibility extend.

When Yaakov sent Yosef on his dangerous mission, continues Kli Yakar, he escorted Yosef part of the way. By doing so, he was teaching Yosef the lesson of the "calf with a broken neck", the lesson of the importance of escorting the traveler, thus demonstrating the human value of that traveler. Yosef signaled to his father that he learned that lesson well and knew the responsibility entailed in dealing with one’s fellow.
Yaakov realized that it was Yosef who personally had a hand in sending the wagons of Par'o, thereby escorting his brothers part of the way back to Canaan. Yaakov took note of those wagons and therefore knew that Yosef had learned that a minor gesture of considerate behavior to others may have long-term consequences. He signaled that he had learned the crucial importance of taking responsibility for all one's actions, however insignificant they may appear. And so, "The spirit of their father Yaakov revived."

Agalot and egla are not just words in a linguistic game. Rather, they allude to the profound lesson about personal responsibility, which is the basis of the requirement of the elders to proclaim their innocence of murder.

Let's return to Mrs. Lachmann, may God bless her soul. The reunion of Yaakov and Yosef contains the implicit theme of which she spoke with such lasting impact so many years ago.

Recall the questions that Mrs. Lachmann listed. "How do the heroes or villains of the novel define their responsibilities?" Yosef defines his responsibilities in terms of the need to be sensitive to other human beings.

"Do they consider the long-term consequences of their actions?" Yosef certainly does.

"Do they feel accountable to others?" Again, Yosef can answer with a resounding "Yes."

"To what degree is their sense of responsibility central to their personalities?" Yosef demonstrated that his sense of responsibility was part of his very essence.

If, as Mrs. Lachmann contended, a profound sense of responsibility is the test of the true hero, Yosef certainly passed that test.
The reconciliation between the brothers in this parsha is just as dramatic as the beginning and sequences of their hatred and quarrel. It also poses as many differences in commentary and understanding.

"I am Yosef, your brother" - this revelation comes after the accusation that they were spies, after the imprisonment of Shimon, and after the discovery of Yosef's stolen goblet in Binyamin's sack. These false accusations were mida naged mida: spying, in punishment for their accusation of lashon hara, the imprisonment for their throwing him in the pit, and the accusation of theft, the punishment for which was slavery, for selling him. "They were not meant by Yosef as punishments but to bring Binyamin to Egypt, thus ensuring that his dreams of the 11 sheaves would be fulfilled. Ya'akov would follow and then the second dream would be fulfilled" (Ramban). "Yosef wanted his brothers to test him so he showed them that despite his dreams which they had feared, he was still the same Yosef. He also wanted to test them by seeing their reaction to Binyamin's plight. Through the success of these tests he restored the unity of the family" (S. R. Hirsch). "Yosef was very wise and knew that there was a divine plan to everything, nevertheless, the brothers were responsible for their free-will choice. He wanted to punish them for wanting to kill him, even though their plan had not succeeded; their evil intention still required punishment and t'shuva" (Abarbanel; Kli Yakar).

Vayigash is not just about their
reconciliation but also marks the descent of Yaakov and the tribes into galut; galut Mitzrayim which is the symbol or arch-type of all our exiles.

"Yisrael journeyed [to Egypt] and came to Be'er Sheva and offered zevachim to the G-d of his father Yitschak" (B'reishit 46:1). "Noachides offered olot, elevated offerings but he offered shlamim, peace offerings, as he was being reunited with his whole family" (S.R. Hirsch). "He prayed, 'G-d of Yitschak', rather than, 'G-d of my fathers', because of his sorrow at leaving Eretz Yisrael which Yitschak had not left" (S'forno). "'G-d of Yitschak', because he was afraid that the midat hadin of Yitschak would prevail on his descendants during their galut" (Ramban). "Yaakov feared that by leaving Eretz Yisrael his descendants might be killed and so not become a nation and that Hashem might not watch over them amidst the idolatry of Egypt" (Abarbanel).

"Hashem appeared to him in the vision of the night using the name Yaakov which symbolizes bondage to another nation, to let him acknowledge that the darkness, both spiritual and physical, of galut was descending" (HaAmeik Davar). However, to also tell him that even in the darkness of galut the Sh'china would accompany him (Meshech Chochma). "I will go down with you and will surely bring you up again" (B'reishit 46:4). It was this promise that gave Israel the strength to withstand galut but also the faith to believe Moshe when he came and said that Hashem was redeeming them. "In Mitzrayim they had scrolls telling of the Brit bein HaBetarim and of this promise to Yaakov. They used to gather together to read them and this prepared them to follow Moshe" (Sh'mot Rabba).

"So that you may dwell in the land of Goshen" (B'reishit 46:34). Goshen was to be the first ghetto, the first of a pattern for Jewish life in galut. Yosef created it to keep the tribes apart from the Egyptian people so that they could live Jewishly. The ghetto also had other results. "Living apart would make the Egyptians hate them" (Ha'ameik Davar). "The dislike of the nations was the first means for the preservation of that race destined for an isolated path through history. The barriers raised and the false impressions fostered against us have served to protect us from being infected by the barbarism and
The ghetto walls, whether self-erected or forced, were always meant to keep Jews from forming close ties to non-Jews, their culture, values and life style. Nevertheless, gradually they succumbed and became part of the land of their exile. "The land was filled with them" (Sh'mot 1:7); they filled the theaters the circuses and the marketplaces" (Abarbanel). "They flaunted their wealth and their power; many acquired Egyptian business partners and patrons" (Sh'mot Rabba Bo; Torah Sh'leima). "The galut gradually perverted the tribes and their children assimilated much of Egyptian idolatry and culture. So 80% refused to leave Egypt with Moshe and had to be killed during the plague of darkness" (Torah Sh'leima). Hashem had to shorten the 400 years galut otherwise there would have been nothing left to redeem. "If He would not have taken us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, we and our descendants would still be slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt" (Haggadah). ★
One of my students asked my advice about adopting a baby girl. His question has inspired me to write this article.

Halacha has very strict regulations restricting physical contact between members of the opposite sex. Halacha rules that a man and a woman not married to each other are not to be secluded in a room. It also prohibits an unmarried couple from engaging in any physical contact. Of course, these laws do not apply to immediate family members, such as one's parents, grandparents, siblings, spouse and children.

However, a problem arises in the case of adopted children. Since such children are not the biological offspring of their adoptive parents, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, like most other contemporary Gedolim, concluded that once a girl becomes Bat Mitzva (age 12), and a boy Bar Mitzva (age 13), all Halachot of separation of the opposite sex apply.

This Halacha is most notable in the prohibition of being alone in a room, and the prohibition of physical contact with the opposite sex. For example, a woman would be prohibited from hugging and kissing her adopted son once he turns 13. Also, a man would be forbidden to be alone in a room with his adopted daughter once she turns 12, nor would he be able to hug or kiss her. Thus, the Lubavitcher Rebbe discouraged adoption.

Rabbi Saul Berman, a close disciple of Rav Soloveitchik, was discussing the issue of adoption in Halacha with the Rav. Rav Soloveitchik, contrary to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, ruled that the functional parent/child relationship, was sufficient to eliminate all the problems of Yichud and of Negiah (physical contact), despite the absence of a biological relationship between the adoptive parents and child. Rabbi Berman noted the contrary position of the Lubavitcher Rebbe against Yichud with adopted children.

The Rav asked Rabbi Berman what he thinks the Lubavitcher Rebbe does when there is a couple in his community whom the Rebbe himself believes ought to adopt children. Rabbi Berman relates that the Rav smiled and said, "Then the Rebbe sends them to me to give the Halachic okay to adopt children, without being concerned about Yichud."

This is what the Talmud in Eruvin 13 means, that when Spiritual Halachic Giants disagree, a Heavenly Voice proclaims, "These and those are both the words of the living G-d."
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**Mondays, 6:30pm**
Emotions Anonymous
Faigy 02-571-0632
Pre-10 Tevet - see page 32top

**Asar' Tevet**
Shiur-Mincha
mini-shiur-Maariv
Refreshments - see p.60
### WEDNESDAY

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| 9:00am| Phil on the Calendar  
subbing for Rabbi Adler            |
| 9:45am| (no charge)  
Reuven Wolfeld  
Sedra Treasures        |
| 10:15am| Rabbi Anthony Manning  
Halachic and Hashkafic  
Foundations of Mitzvot  
Bein Adam L'Chaveiro   |
| 11:15am| L'Ayila  
Rabbi Shmuel Herschler  
In-depth Trei Asar      |
| 12:15pm| L'Ayila  
Rabbi Shmuel Herschler  
Hilchot Shabbat         |
| 2:00pm| (two hours)  
Rebbetzin Pearl Borow  
The Book of Zecharia  
Chumash with M'forshim  |
| 7:00pm| Rabbi Yonatan Kolatch  
Topics in Parshanut     |
| 7:30pm| Rabbi Chaim Eisen  
Different Parsha Shiur  |

### THURSDAY

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| 9:00am| Rabbi Ari Kahn  
Parshat HaShavua                                                      |
| 9:00am| Dr. Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg  
Psychological Insights into the weekly Parsha      |
| 10:00am| Dr. Hayim Abramson  
Midrash Hashavua                                                   |
| 10:15am| Rabbi Baruch Taub  
resumes IY"H, Jan. 7th                |
| 2:00pm| Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher  
Current Events in the Weekly Haftara       |
| 7:00pm| Rabbi Yonatan Kolatch  
Topics in Parshanut     |

### SCHEDULE NOTES

#### In the Ganchrow Beit Midrash...

Sun/Tue/Thu  
11:15am  
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld  
Masechet Taanit  
Rabbi Bienenfeld's shiur is in tribute to  
Rabbi Fred Hollander z"l

Sun thru Thu  
11:15am  
RCA DAF YOMI  
Rotating Magidei Shiur  
Daf Yomi shiur is in tribute to Rabbi Yitzchak Botwinick z"l

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| 2:00pm| Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher  
Current Events in the Weekly Haftara       |

#### See page 60 for more

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OU Israel Center TT 1163 🐐 page 35 🐐 Vayigash 5776
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Dear Rabbi Wolicki,

We really miss your weekly parsha shiurim!

Your choice of one deep topic each week - with diverse meforshim, openness to questions and comments - gave us so much food for thought.

The fact that your extensive preparations (never repeating a shiur) were done just for us, and that you began each shiur promptly, made us feel very special indeed.

Wishing you and your entire family only good health and b'sorot tovot - ad me'ah v'esrim!

Respectfully, Sincerely, and Fondly,

Your lonely Wednesday morning parsha students."

Ed. note:

Please be aware that the OU Israel Center will be hosting a Hakarat Hatov Luncheon for Rabbi Yosef Wolicki on Wednesday, January 6th at 12:30pm

Further details in next week's Torah Tidbits
The opening verses of this week’s Torah reading are among the most dramatic and challenging in the entire Torah. The two great powerful personalities in the house of the children of Yaakov, Yehuda and Yosef, engage in a clash and debate of epic proportions. At first glance it seems obvious that Yosef has the upper hand in his struggle. After all, he is the viceroy of Egypt, the commander of the palace guard who are armed and ready to do his bidding. On the other hand, Yehuda has very limited options as to what to say and what to do in order to obtain the release of Binyamin. Yosef's position of power appears to prevail but the impassioned plea and tone and contents of the words of Yehuda are not to be easily ignored. So in a sense one could say that Yehuda will himself prevail over Yosef. But in a clear analysis one should come to the conclusion that neither of the two great antagonists, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, is the victor in this clash of ideas and worldview. The true champion that will emerge from this entire baffling and fascinating story is the old hoary Yaakov, seemingly isolated back there in the land of Canaan, mourning and despondent as to what has happened to his family. In anguish, he shouts: "Yosef is no more, Shimon is no more, all of them will be lost to me!" It is that image of their father that haunts both Yehuda and Yosef. And each therefore in his own way, wishes to do justice to their father and to everything that he represents. And it is this image of Yaakov that brings Yosef to the climax of the story and his ability, nay, necessity to reveal and reconcile himself with his brothers.

Jewish rabbinic thought over the ages has always attempted to make the story of Yosef and Yehuda relevant to each individual generation of Jews. I think that the most relevant message that all of
us can gain from this great narrative is that it is the image of our ancient father Yaakov that truly hovers over all of our current struggles. It is our task, not merely to win the debate with our other brothers or even with outside powers that are seemingly stronger and greater than we are, but rather to somehow remain faithful to the old man that we can no longer see but somehow is always with us. What gives both Yehuda and Yosef troubling pause in the midst of their impassioned debate is the question as to what their father thinks of their words and their actions. It is this unseen presence of Yaakov that drives the brothers to reconciliation and to restoring a common purpose in their lives and those of their families. In effect they are thinking: "What would our father think of this conversation and of this confrontation?" Father Yaakov has looked down all of the generations of the Jewish people and in one way or another every generation has been forced to ask itself what would Yaakov think of us, our words and our behavior. It is that ever-present idea in Jewish life that has been an aid and a boom to our seemingly miraculous survival as a people and as a faith. We may not see him but we can be certain that he is there with us today as well.

Viteiv, Misof, Ukrav, ______
From the S'forno Jacob Solomon

When his sons return to Ya'akov with the news that Yosef was alive, well, and directing the affairs of the Land of Egypt, the Torah records that he received the news with:

His heart rejected it, he did not believe them (45:25).

Only after they gave the details of Yosef's words and indicated the wagons all set and prepared to take him down to Egypt:

The spirit of their father Ya'akov revived (45:26).

Indeed, the Torah does recount Ya'akov's receiving the news in meticulous detail.

Midrashic sources fit the details into the tradition that Serach, daughter of Asher (46:17) returned to Ya'akov in advance of the brothers and played the harp with a moving song that Yosef was still alive, and he blessed her for having made him a happier man. That was to put him in the right mood for the brothers' entry declaring that yes, Yosef was still alive. But Ya'akov did not believe them. Were Yosef still in this world, it would have shown that the brothers lied when his coat of many colors had been sent back soaked in blood. And those that lie were not to be believed in the future. But their details of Yosef's words struck the note of authenticity with Ya'akov, demonstrating that they could have come from nobody other than Yosef, and so "the spirit of their father Ya'akov revived".

The S'forno carefully examines the series of Ya'akov's reactions and brings knowledge of natural sciences and medicine to his unique explanation. Bear in mind that the S'forno studied at the University of Rome in the early years of the Renaissance, graduating in medicine in 1501.

When Ya'akov heard the news: "Yosef is still alive", his "heart rejected it". S'forno writes that his pulse dropped, and his heartbeat slowed as happens when a person faints. He was fainting even though he did not believe his sons. Thus the sequence of events is:

(a) "Yosef is still alive": the mere mention of his name was sufficient to reactivate his deep grief, putting his "heart" in a state of "reject", fainting.

(b) "For he did not believe them" actually helped Ya'akov as it tempered
what otherwise would have been extreme emotion. The S'forno notes that the shock of sudden joy as well as sudden grief can cause death. In doing so, he recognizes the fundamental relationship between the workings of the mind and the workings of the body. Medics would term the deceleration of the heart being tempered with acceleration as prophylactic.

(c) "They told him details of Yosef's words" included the information of the continuation of the famine "there will be another five years of neither plowing nor harvest" (45:6) which tempered the good news with some bad news. And thus:

(d) "The spirit of their father Ya'akov revived". What made that possible was his extreme joy being reduced by the suffering that would take place in the immediate years ahead.

Thus "the spirit of their father Ya'akov revived" means "he was healed from his (potentially fatal) fainting spell by gradually mixing the joy with worry".

Indeed, people should be aware of the need for showing due consideration to not only those who have suffered tragedy, but also extreme, sudden joy.
He said the SH’MA

Rashi tells us, following the rabbinic sages, that when Yosef and his elderly father Yaakov finally met again, the pious old man said the Sh’mah (B’reishit 46:29).

Perhaps it was because his first thought was to thank God that the long-cherished dream of reunion with his son had finally come true.

Others suggest that it was as a challenge to Yosef, as if to say, “All these years that we have been apart, I had so many vicissitudes, but I let nothing come in the way of my faith in God. But what about you – are you still a believer? Has power weakened your emunah, has life in the palace made you forget to say your prayers and live as a Jew?”

What did Yosef do? He wept, maybe because of the sheer joy he felt at being with his father again, maybe because his father had suspected him.

Imagine how many times this scene has repeated itself when parent and child, separated for many years and by life-forming experiences, found one another again.

You may recall the tragi-comic story of the old father from Poland who meets up with his American son after years apart and hears how life in America is different and people say they can’t keep Shabbat or kashrut any longer, and then the father says, “But tell me, son: are you still circumcised at least?”

Rabbi Apple served for 32 years as the chief minister of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, and was Australia’s highest profile rabbi and leading spokesman for Jews and Judaism on the Australian continent. He is now retired and lives in Jerusalem. He blogs at www.oztorah.com
Neutralizing Terrorists

The wave of violence in recent months raises the question of how terrorists here in Israel should be neutralized. Videos of Israeli citizens attacking subdued terrorists have circulated on the Internet, creating much controversy and stirring debate.

How should terrorists be treated according to Jewish Law?

Jewish Law is clear that one has the obligation to protect his life and the life of others. The mitzva of piku'ach nefesh, saving life, takes precedence over all the mitzvot in the Torah except for three. As the Talmud states, "And you should live by them' - and not die by them" (Sanhedrin 74a).

The Mishna (Sanhedrin 8:7) teaches that a Rodef, one pursuing his fellow in order to murder him, is to be killed before he has the opportunity to transgress. Concerning a burglar who tunnels into a home, the Talmud teaches "If someone comes to kill you, rise to kill him [first]" (Sanhedrin 72a).

As Jews, we are merciful, the
children of the merciful. It would seem against our very nature to be cruel, even to terrorists. But showing mercy when the times call for a show of force is also wrong: "Rabbi Elazar said, all who show mercy to the cruel will eventually be cruel to the merciful" (Tanchuma, Metzora 1).

In fact, all those who have the ability to save a life, but instead do nothing, are in violation of "Do not stand idly by the blood of your fellow", and "Your eye shall not show pity" (Rambam, Hilchot Rotzei'ach 1:14-15).

There is, however, a dispute as to whether it is preferable, when possible, to neutralize or subdue the murderer or pursuer, instead of killing him.

Tosafot (Sanhedrin 73a, s.v. AF) questions the difference between the burglar who tunnels in, and the law of the Rodef, as taught by the Mishna, and explains that while it is permissible to kill the burglar, one is obligated to kill the Rodef.

But according to the Rambam, one must try to subdue the Rodef, if possible, by disabling him. If one kills the Rodef when he could have subdued him instead, it is akin to murder. Rambam writes: "All who are able to save [a life], by [causing injury to the rodef's] limbs, but do not, and instead save by [taking] the life of the Rodef, and killing him - it is murder - and one is obligated with the death penalty. But a Beit Din does not put him to death" (Hilchot Rotzei'ach 1:13).

The Shulchan Aruch rules in accord with the Rambam, that when possible one should disable or subdue the Rodef, instead of killing him (Choshen Mishpat 425:1).

Neutralizing terrorists poses a dilemma: Terrorists left alive may still be a threat even after subdued, as we have seen in recent weeks. In this situation, even the neutralized terrorist would still be considered a "rodef", posing an immediate threat to human life. In addition, experience has shown that convicted
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terrorists may re-offend if released from prison. Even following their incarceration, they still may pose a threat.

The Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 425:5) states that it is prohibited to kill a gentile with whom we are not at war. The Sema (ad loc.) comments that when we are in a state of war, however, it is mitzva to kill the enemy. The Sema continues and cites a number of earlier authorities that concur. Given the current security situation here in Israel, some argue that we are indeed in a state of war today, which would inform how we must respond to terrorists.

Recently, a number of leading rabbis ruled on how terrorists should be dealt with. Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu and Rabbi Ben Tzion Muzafi both ruled that terrorists should be shown no mercy and killed on site.

Concerned about a "moral breakdown", Rabbi David Stav, however, called upon Israeli citizens to show restraint and not harm terrorists "who have already been neutralized and no longer pose a threat". Rabbi Yaakov Ariel concurred and added, "death does not necessarily deter violence, since the one killed is typically portrayed as a martyr [by terrorists and their sympathizers]." Rabbi Shlomo Aviner too agreed that civilians must not take action against subdued terrorists who no longer pose a threat. Instead, Rabbi Aviner urged civilians to rely on
security forces to handle the situation.

According to Israeli Law, security forces and civilians alike may not kill terrorists, once subdued.

Worth noting, a number of rabbis have called upon the State of Israel to institute the death penalty for terrorists. They believe this would stop citizens from taking the law into their own hands and attacking neutralized terrorists.

Our hope and fervent prayer is that the violence cease and there be no more war. We long for the day when we can beat our "swords into plowshares". Until then, we must have the courage to stand up to terror and protect ourselves.

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**Philosophical Considerations in Halachic Discourse**
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- Rabbi Dr. Zvi Leshem

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- Rav Binyamin Miller

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**Come for a session, a day or the whole seminar!**
Top row from right to left, are the TROP marks for the first six words of Vayigash. See the comment in the Sedra Summary • The basketball player is labeled CHI for Chicago, as in the Bulls; the football player is labeled DET, for the Detroit Lions. Together they represent the clash between Yehuda (Lion) and Yosef (Shor) • Fisherman's knot which is reputed to be one of the strongest knots for joining ropes... represents V’NAFSHO K’SHURA V’NAFSHO, the bond between Yaakov and Binyamin • five shirts represent the five changes of clothes that Yosef gave to Binyamin • He also gave him 300 silver pieces, represented by the money sacks marked with the Egyptian hieroglyphics symbol for 100 • two of the wagons that Yosef sent to Yaakov, to bring the family down to Egypt... • Donkey with 10+10 above him stands for the donkeys (10 CHAMORIM and 10 ATONOT) that Yosef sent to Yaakov... • The dreidel, purposely with SHIN. The letters of the dreidel rearrange to spell GOSHNA, to Goshen, a word in Vayigash • 70, marked with an asterisk, and an arrow pointing downward. This represents the 70 souls who went down to Egypt. The asterisk reminds us that one had gone down much earlier (Yosef) and two others were born in Egypt (Efrayim and Menashe), but are still counted among the 70 • Orde Wingate, British general, ardent Zionist, trained Jewish youth in military tactics. Was removed from Palestine when the British decided he was potentially acting against their interests. Anyway, his first name was Orde, very similar (especially in the Ashkenazic pronunciation of a KAMATZ) to the name of Binyamin's youngest son • Next to Wingate is an albatross, a.k.a. gooney bird. Sounds like GUNI, one of Naftali's sons • The two sticks are from the haftara • So too the twin-stick popsicle • 25.6 fl. oz. is the quantity of liquor in a bottle known as a "fifth" (of a gallon). Here it represents the tax Yosef imposed on the Egyptians • Half a butterfly (PARPAR) is PAR attached to an O = PAR'O • Piggy bank, open and empty, with the pig wondering where the money went. The Egyptians' money dried up during the years of the famine • shepherd and soldiers = sons of Yaakov, who are described to Par'oh as both being tenders of sheep (an abomination in Egypt) and ANSHEI CHAYIL, meaning men of stature, but as a play-on-words, also meaning soldiers • The town clock scene is from Goshen, NY • The smiling fellow shares a name with one of Shimon's sons - Ohad • The coat of arms is for a town in southern Slovak Republic called Sered, son of Zevulun • The Kiddush cup is for Becher, second son of Binyamin (not for the cup that framed Binyamin in Mikeitz) • What do the footer icons have in common?
In this week's Parsha, we are given a glimpse of the meeting and conversation between Yosef's brothers and Par'o, the king of Egypt. One can only imagine the brothers' deliberations as to how best introduce themselves to the all-powerful leader who has just granted them entry into his land. Standing before Par'o, they choose to stress the temporary nature of their intended stay in the land of Egypt, saying: "We have come to sojourn in the Land for there is no pasture for our flocks and the famine is severe in the land of Canaan" (B'reishit 47:4).

Chizkuni explains that the brothers introduce themselves as temporary dwellers, wishing to make it clear from the outset that they have no intention whatsoever of abandoning their homeland. They will stay only for as long as is necessary, waiting for the very first opportunity to return home. They have come to benefit from the pasture land, but in no way is this to be seen as a permanent move. Once the Almighty causes the situation to change, and the severity of the famine will abate, they will immediately return to their land. This indeed is how the Pesach Haggadah understood VAYAGOR SHAM , we didn't come to strike roots, rather we came for a while.

Fast-forwarding to the last pasuk of...
the parsha we stare dumbfounded at the words of the Torah, as they seemingly present some alternate reality completely at odds with that which we would have expected: "And Yisrael settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen, Vayei'achazu Vah, and they acquired property there..." (47:27). They settled there - what ever happened to the notion of coming temporarily?! Straight out the window...

The simple meaning of Vayei'achazu Vah is that they settled in the land, and yet the words can also be understood as if it was the land which took possession of them: 'and Israel was held within the land's vise-like grip'. They were taken in - seduced - by the land and its promise of riches. In this vein, the Kli Yakar explains this verse as an indictment of the children of Israel. The Almighty had promised Abraham that his children would be Geirim, strangers and temporary dwellers, in the Diaspora, yet they chose to settle there. Thus, we see that the Jewish people's descent into Galut was channeled through their desire for this-worldly possessions, their holdings, or settlements in a land which is not theirs. Although they had presented themselves to Par'o as temporary dwellers, they went back on their word striking permanent roots deep into the Egyptian soil and bedrock. The Kli Yakar continues to draw the line between this verse and the rabbis' description, found in the Midrash, of how the Almighty had to ultimately forcefully remove them from the land of Egypt, with those who refused dying in the days of darkness.

This dynamic did not come as a complete surprise to those who had the power to see. In B'reishit 46:4 we learn that Yaakov was afraid to go down to Egypt - what did he fear? The Beit HaLevi explains that although Yaakov knew that the Galut was necessary to fulfill G-d's covenant with Avraham (Brit Bein Habetarim) nonetheless, when he realized that the Galut was to be in Egypt - a major center of immorality and idolatry - he feared lest his children sink into the depths of Egyptian depravity. The Netziv similarly writes of Yaakov fearing that the 'pintele yid' (Nekuda Yehudit) would be lost in Egypt.

Yosef had hoped that the spiritual danger could be contained by directing the Jews to live together in the 'ghetto' of Goshen. Over time, however, there were many who chose to leave the ghetto, and as they dispersed all over Egypt they found themselves living side by side with their "neighbors and friends" (thus during the tenth plague we are told that "G-d passed over the
entrances of the Jewish homes" (Sh'mot 12:23) - the Jews had "made it", they now lived alongside their gentile neighbors...).

History has a strange way of repeating itself. The pattern we saw above is clearly apparent throughout time: Jews venture into Galut as sojourners, temporary dwellers. Having become firmly entrenched in a given land, they then refuse to leave, and Hashem must literally force them out. This mold can be seen clearly when we contemplate parallel historical eras such as the Spanish Inquisition or Germany's Third Reich. Jews who had risen to the highest echelons of society, are suddenly declared to be persona non-grata, brutally ousted from their positions of prominence and influence. Two cases in point would be that of Don Isaac Abarbanel, the head financial advisor to royalty in Spain, or Walter Rathenau, the Jewish foreign minister assassinated in 1922 in Germany. The personal fate of these individual Jews who rose to positions of power and leadership only to be "shot down", is emblematic of the catastrophic trajectory experienced by the entire Jewish community of their day.

This vicious cycle of Jewish history - beginning in Egypt and rearing its head in modern times as well - need not repeat itself forever: We have the power to break out of this mold. We can do so by tearing ourselves away from the spiritual threat of the Diaspora and choosing to "Make it" by coming to Israel to live alongside our fellow Jews in our homeland!

Rabbi Yerachmiel Roness, Ramat Shiloh, Beit Shemesh
TRUE LOVE

Father and son are about to meet. They haven't seen each other in 22 years. Yaakov is coming to Egypt and will be reunited with his "favorite" son Yosef. Close your eyes for a minute and imagine how this meeting would be. We would imagine seeing the strong emotions that Yaakov had for Yosef bursting out in hugs, kisses, tears. Yosef was his firstborn son from Rachel, the beloved wife. He hadn't been able to hold him, talk to him for so long. Yosef had been dead - and now Yaakov will be able to see him. We expect to see an intense expression of affection from Yaakov towards Yosef mixed with other sentiments such as joy.

We see Yosef going to greet his father - "he harnessed his chariot and went up to Goshen to greet Yisrael, his father" (46:29). We can feel Yosef's excitement in his rushing to see his father. The verse continues, "and he appeared to him and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck continuously." The verse is a bit ambiguous who exactly is crying. Are they both crying? Is just Yosef crying? Is just Yaakov? Rashi says that Yaakov did not fall on Yosef's neck and did not kiss him. Why? Because at that moment he was reciting Sh'ma. This seems strange. He must have been waiting so long for this moment - to see his beloved son. Couldn't he have said Sh'ma before or after? Was Yaakov so uncaring that he didn't have any emotions to relay to his son?

This was the photo op of the century - Yaakov being reunited with Yosef, who was now the second in command in Egypt. The whole family would remember this moment. Yaakov felt great love for his son, Yosef. But at that moment he also felt great love for God who brought about this reunification. Yaakov felt that this was the perfect time to be saying Sh'ma,
which is the prayer where we show our love for God. His saying Sh'ma just at that moment taught his family that his love for Yosef is very strong - but so is his love for God. This is a very high level. But Rashi reminds us this lesson from our forefather Yaakov - how strong our love for God must be.

**SINCE WE TALKED** about crying on the neck, here is a recipe with "crooked neck" or "straight neck" squash. You can use DOLARIT.

**STUFFED CROOKED NECK SQUASH**

- 6-8 crooked neck squash
- 500g ground turkey, chicken or meat
- ½ cup raw rice
- 1 onion, diced
- salt, pepper, garlic to taste
- 340g tomato juice
- 1 small can stewed tomatoes

Crumble ground meat in pan with onions and spices and brown, add rice to this mixture. Put in colander and drain grease off and pat as much off as possible with paper towel.

Cut squash in half and take out seeds. Stuff squash with meat/rice mixture, replace second half of squash on top and place in pan. Pour stewed tomatoes and tomato juice with 1 cup water over squash and cook (bring to boil then turn back to simmer) for about 1½ hrs.
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Fast begins 5:17am • ends 5:09pm
2:45pm
Shiur by Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher
Who Builds the Third Temple
- G-d or us?
4:00pm
Slow-paced Mincha
4:45pm
Mini-shiur - Phil
5:05pm
Maariv followed by refreshments

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• Why most of your money should be in Israel & how to do it best
• Managing Personal Wealth – Learning from the Wealthy

For further information: (02) 580-7013 • info@isrenet.com or www.frnisrael.com/Contact_English.html
Previous (Mikeitz-Chanukah) TTriddles:

[1] When you spin four dreidels or 1 dreidel 4 times, the result will be...

1. All the same or 2. All different or 3. 2 pairs or 4. Three the same and one different or 5. Two the same and twodifferent

Rank these five possible outcomes in order of most to least likely.

Most likely result is 2. All the same and 2 different. This occurs more often than all the other options put together. Probability = .5625

Next is 3. three the same and one different. P = .1875

Then comes 4. two pairs. P = .140625

Next is 5 all four different letters, P = .0625

Finally, the rarest outcome - 6. all the same. P = .015625 (1/64).

We didn't list the outcomes in reverse order on purpose, but that's how they came out.


Kindergarten is GAN spelled GIMEL, NUN. Here is PO, spelled PEI, HEI. Letters on ther dreidel.


Initials are GHNP, the letters on the dreidel. It's in India.

[4] Cows and times both follow what?

The phrase SHEVA PAROT gave rise to this TTriddle. Searching the Torah for SHEVA followed by a word beginning with the letter PEI, resulted in 17 hits - 5 times in Mikeitz for 7 cows and 12 times in six different sedras for SHEVA P'AMIM, 7 times.

[5] Math Challenge: Take the numeric values of the letters of the word CHANUKA, i.e. 8, 50, 6, 20, 5. Use plus, minus, times, divide, and parentheses with all five numbers to make expressions which equal for 0 to 25. E.g. (8+6)*5-(50+20) = 0. Now you...

There are different ways to get each of the sums from 1 to 25. Here you will find the submission of Chadder (who submitted a very fine Solution Set for the TTriddles.

1 = (20*5/50+6)/8
2 = (8*6)+20/5-50
3 = (50-8*20/5)/6
4 = (50/5)+8+6-20
5 = 20/(50-8*6)-5
6 = (50+6)/(20/5)-8
7 = (50+20)/5/(8-6)
8 = 20-(50/5)-8+6
9 = (50/20)*8-5-6
10 = 20-(50-8*6)*5
11 = 50-6-8-20-5
12 = (50+20)/5+6-8
13 = (8*6)+20-50-5
14 = (20+50)/(8+6)+9
15 = (50+6)/8*5-20
16 = (50+20)/5+8-6
17 = 20+(50-(8*6))-5
18 = (5+6)*8-(20+50)
19 = 20*50/8/5-6
20 = (50/20)*8*(6-5)
21 = (50/20)*8*6-5
22 = (50+6)/8-5+20
23 = 20-(50-8*6)+5
24 = 20-(50/5)+8+6
25 = 20/8*6+(50/5)

Beautiful job! CDs await you - call.

[6] **Edwidge Danticat's story of Haiti**

She is a Haitian-American author, one of whose books is called: 8 Days: A Story of Haiti. Remember that the TTriddle was in the Shabbat Chanuka issue and the reason becomes obvious.

[7] **Jack of Clubs**

We mentioned historic French cards whose "court cards" (Kings, Queens, and Jacks or Knaves) represented specific figures from history or legend. There is a MACHLOKET about this card, but some say it represented YEHUDA HAMAKABI.

[8] **Top of front page challenge**

Usually, we have the FPTL (front page top left) TTriddle. This time, the Front Page TTriddle was the entire top part. Take all the letters in Hebrew. Starting in the upper-right, you find LAMED-HEI-VAV (which stands for LASHEM HAARETZ UMLO'AH) = 41. The OU ISRAEL logo was changed to OU YISLATAL, a made-up word that had the numeric value we needed for this TTriddle. If noticed, it could have served as a hint.

YUD-SAMACH-LAMED-TET-LAMED D = 139. So far, 180. Below the logo was the date - LAMED KISLEV = 30+20+60+30+6 = 146. Sub-total 326. MIKETZ adds 40+100+90 = 230. And REISH CHET for Rosh Chodesh adds another 208. So far, 764. Within the Chanuka letters that spell MIKEITZ R"Ch are three dreidels that are showing PEI and NUN (the originals had SHINs which we painstakingly replaced with PEIs). That's 130 x 3 = 390. 1154, so far. And there is one dreidel with a GIMEl and HEI showing. Bringing the total to 1162.
Maharal on the Sedra

Three Kinds of Love between People

B'reishit 44:30 - ...and his soul [Yaakov's] is bound up with his [Binyamin's] soul.

Derech Chaim 5:417 - Consider three categories of love - father and son, man and woman, and love between two unrelated people. The latter, exemplified David and Yonatan, is said to be unconditional, not dependent on any factor beyond the love itself [Avot 3:17]. “Your love is more amazing to me than the love of women”, says David [Shmuel Bet 1:26]. The pure affection between them was beyond sexual attraction or any potential benefit to either of them. The Mishna states such a bond is eternal.

The bond between man and wife is part and parcel with Creation. “Therefore a man should leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they should be as a single flesh” [B'reishit 2:24], for the bond with one’s mate supersedes the bond with one’s parents. In what way is the marital bond depended on something else? If it were just benefit [pleasure] it would be insufficient to break the essential parental bond. It must be the matter of “helpmate against him” [2:18], a clear essential help to him, about which it could be said that the love between them depended on another factor. So David can say his love of Yonatan is greater than the love of women.

We ask of Hashem to have mercy on us “the way a father has mercy on his children” [T'hilim 103:13], which is a spiritual bond of soul to soul. A father’s mercy redounds back to himself for he sees himself in his son.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr
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IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SHLOSHIM OF
EZRA SCHWARTZ HY”D

WIFFLE 4 EZRA

Ezra, a student at Yeshivat Ashreinu, was murdered a few weeks ago on his way to do Chesed. Amongst many of Ezra’s passions was playing wiffle ball with his younger brothers for hours in his backyard. Please join us and klal yisrael in an epic wiffle ball tournament with the Schwartz family in Ezra’s memory. Funds raised will go to the Ezra Schwartz Scholarship Fund.

Friday, December 25th, 2015
10am - 1pm at Gan Sacher
For Boys & Men (ages 8 and up)
Register at www.wiffle4ezra.myevent.com

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Duvdevani 40, Bayit Vegan
For Girls & Women (all ages)
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