



שבת פרשת לך לך
881
 י"ג חשוון תש"ע • Oct. 30-31, '09



This Shabbat is the 43rd day (of 355), 7th Shabbat (of 51) of 5770
 ...להודיע כמה חבתו של אברהם אבינו עליו השלום: אבות ה'ג

LECH L'CHA kama; LECH L'CHA batra

DAYEINU (in the Pesach Hagada) is made up of many parts, each of which can stand on its own as something to thank G-d for. And after the list of items - from the Exodus to the building of the Beit HaMikdash, we put them all together and consider the whole group of G-d's acts - taken all together - to be an even greater reason for our praising and thanking G-d.

So too it is with the tests of Avraham's faith, which Pirkei Avot numbers at 10. Each one stands on its own as an indicator of Avraham's love of and commitment to G-d. Taken as a full unit of 10, our admiration and appreciation of Avraham Avinu is even greater.

Candle Lighting
 and **Havdala** times
 Israel Standard Time

TT 881 • Rabbeinu Tam (J'm) - 6:04pm

4:16pm	Yerushalayim	5:28pm
4:34pm	S'derot	5:31pm
4:31pm	Gush Etzion	5:29pm
4:32pm	Raanana	5:29pm
4:32pm	Beit Shemesh	5:29pm
4:32pm	Rehovot	5:30pm
4:31pm	Netanya	5:29pm
4:31pm	Be'er Sheva	5:30pm
4:31pm	Modi'in	5:29pm
4:16pm	Petach Tikva	5:29pm
4:16pm	Maale Adumim	5:28pm
4:31pm	Ginot Shomron	5:28pm
4:30pm	Gush Shiloh	5:28pm
4:32pm	K4 & Hevron	5:29pm
4:31pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:28pm
4:32pm	Yad Binyamin	5:30pm
4:34pm	Ashkelon	5:31pm
4:18pm	Tzfat	5:26pm

Although different commentaries have different lists of the 10 tests of Avraham, the most common list begins and ends with a Lech L'cha.

For those not familiar with Talmudic Aramaic, KAMA means the former or ealier of two or more items and BATRA is the latter. LECH L'CHA KAMA gives this week's sedra its name. G-d told Avraham to leave his homeland cont p.10

Shabbat Shiur 3:15pm
Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Poupko
 "The Right Response to Hagar's Harrassment"
Mincha at 4:15pm



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OTHER Z'MANIM
 Correct for Jerusalem

Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
 10-19 Cheshvan (Oct 28 - Nov 6)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:01-5:08am
Sunrise	5:53-6:00am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma	8:37-8:41am (Magen Avraham: 7:52-7:55am)
Sof Z'man T'fila	9:32-9:34am (Magen Avraham: 9:02-9:04am)
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:23-11:22½am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	11:53-11:53am
Plag Mincha	3:44¼-3:38pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 4:53-4:45pm)	4:57-4:50pm

Word of the Month
 Last opportunity for Kiddush L'vana this month is all night, Sunday (to Monday), Nov. 1-2. Even though many people prefer Motza'ei Shabbat for KL, p.3

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Lech L'cha STATS

3rd sedra of 54; 3rd of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 208 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 23rd

7 Parshiyot; 3 open, 4 closed

126 p'sukim - ranks 13th - same as R'ei but notably smaller than R'ei in other categories

1686 words - ranks 18th

6336 letters - ranks 19th

Ranks 7th of 12 in B'reishit in all categories

Shorter than average p'sukim

MITZVOT

1 mitzva (positive), namely, BRIT MILA

WORD of the MONTH

cont. from p.2

A weekly TT feature to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby enhancing our appreciation of G-d's gift to us of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...

it is not advisable at all to wait until a Motza'ei Shabbat so close to the KL deadline. Friday night is still not an option, unless it is the last op - which it isn't, this month.

People who are very "makpid" on KL, especially the aspect of doing it as soon as possible from the first op onward, often have to say KL on their own - which is permissible, albeit not ideal. However many people say KL when whole congregations are saying it, there are relatively very few who will do it on their own. Or who will go out late at night when the sky was cloudy earlier in the evening, to check for a "clear shot" at the Moon. We hope that our "focus" on Kiddush L'vana in this column has ignited an enthusiasm for KL in some of the TTreaders. If KL is considered a reception for the Sh'china, then it deserves nothing less than enthusiasm and full commitment.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

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

Kohen - First Aliya 13 p'sukim - 12:1-13

[P> 12:1 (9)] G-d tells (note the softer VAYOMER rather than the harsher VAIDABER) Avra(ha)m to leave his land, birthplace and father's home and go to "the Land which I will show you".

SDT: "Leave your land, birthplace, father's house." Ramban explains that each "point of departure" was progressively more difficult for Avraham. Leaving one's land is difficult, even more so if he was born there. Leaving one's family is most difficult. Ramban says that the Torah is showing us the great extent of Avraham's love of G-d.

Someone raises a question on this Ramban. What was so difficult in Avraham's leaving the place where he was ridiculed, persecuted and thrown into a fiery furnace for his beliefs. Would he not have left joyfully? The question actually carries the answer. The Ramban was pointing out a significant aspect of human nature. No matter how bad conditions are, how much a person wants a better life, there still will always

remain a sadness and regret for the "good old days" and "the old country" - even when they weren't so good. This aspect of human nature explains a lot of Jewish History.

G-d promises that a great nation will descend from him (Avraham) and that he will be a blessing for all (his descendants and all the world).

SDT: Avra(ha)m is promised great rewards and benefits for listening to G-d. Yet pasuk 4 states that he went "as G-d had spoken to him". His "aliya" is considered a test of his faith. He passed this test because he came to the Land because G-d asked him to, not for any material promises.

The call to the Jew to come on Aliya continues. THE only real "right" reason to come is because it is a mitzva and this is what G-d wants of us. MITZVAT HASHEM and R'TZON HASHEM. All blessings that will follow are fringe benefits. And the difficulties one might encounter are parts of the test of our faith. Avraham Avinu led the way when there were no Aliya Shlichim and no Nefesh b'Nefesh to facilitate Aliya and K'lita. Actually, there was One Shaliach Aliya and One supporter, and He is still in that role.

Coming on Aliya via an EL AL plane is easier than Avraham and Sara had it. But it is no less of a command by G-d to the descendants of that special first couple of the Jewish People.

Avra(ha)m was 75 years old at the time he came to Eretz Yisrael with Sara(i), nephew Lot, and many people who were brought over to monotheism by Avra(ha)m and Sara(i).

[P> 12:10 (29)] Driven from the Land by a famine, Avraham and Sara go down to Egypt. Their plan is to say that they are brother and sister, rather than risk Avraham's being killed.

Midrash P'li'a points to this episode as proof that one may violate Shabbat to save someone else's life. The idea that one may violate one Shabbat so that he will be able to keep many Shabbatot of the future - from V'CHAI BAHAM - is part of the understanding of the Torah's permission to violate Shabbat to save one's own life. This permission can be seen to be extended by Avraham's request to Sarah that she put herself at risk to save him.

SDT: Ramban states that "Avra(ha)m sinned a great sin (inadvertently)" by leaving the land to which G-d had sent him (even though there was a famine) and by risking Sarai's life and honor by asking her to say that she was his sister. Ramban also says that as "punishment" for going down into Egypt, Avraham's descendants were destined to go down into Egypt. On the other hand... other sources teach us that we derive halachic permission to leave Eretz Yisrael in the event of severe famine BECAUSE that's what Avraham Avinu did. Furthermore, Pirkei Avot testifies that Avraham Avinu "passed" all his "tests of faith". Being driven out of Eretz Yisrael by the famine and having to subject Sarai to the perils of Paro's Palace are both counted (by some) among the Ten Tests of Faith. How do we understand these seemingly contradictory views of what Avraham did?

A possible answer might be that how a person behaves in a difficult situation is one thing, and how the situation affects his

faith in G-d is another thing. G-d sends someone to a new land, and then hits him with a famine. Regardless of how that someone handles the situation, he might be disillusioned, to say the least. That would mean failing a test of faith. That didn't happen to Avraham. His faith was as strong as ever. Ramban thinks that he erred in judgment as to what he should do. Avraham chose the self-help, HISH-TADLUS option. His choice was "approved of" by the subsequent halachic ruling. Maybe he should have chosen the stay-put and trust in G-d option. Ramban thinks he should have. An inadvertent sin, says Ramban. But no deterioration of faith for Avraham. Those are two different issues.

This idea is readily applicable for many of the situations we as a community and/or we as individuals find ourselves in, from time to time, during our lifetimes. How we handle a situation is one thing and what it does to us is another. Both are important. May G-d give us strength to handle both ends of any difficulties well, and may He spare us the difficulties in the first place. May He always be our OZEIR, our MOSHI'A, and our MAGEIN.

Levi - Second Aliya 11 p'sukim - 12:14-13:4

In Egypt, Sarai's beauty is noticed by the people and she is taken to Par'o's palace. Avra(ha)m, as her brother, receives many gifts. Par'o and his household are afflicted by G-d as a punishment for taking Sarai. When Par'o realizes that Sarai is actually the wife of Avra(ha)m he confronts him, returns Sarai to him and then asks them to leave Egypt.

Avra(ha)m and company, laden

with riches, return to Eretz Yisrael via the Negev. Avra(ha)m returns to the Altar he had built and continues to proclaim G-d's Name.

SDT: Avraham, on the run from his hometown, a stranger in a strange land, has his challenges and tests. Avraham loaded with wealth and prominence, has new challenges and tests. Poverty and famine are tests; so is wealth. And it is hard to know which is harder. In the opening passage of Rosh Chodesh Benching, we ask G-d for many things -- long life, a life of peace, blessings, etc. There is one thing we ask for twice - Yir'at Shamayim, fear of G-d. Why? Because after asking for it the first time, we ask for a life of wealth and honor. If we are blessed with that, then we must humbly ask for Yir'at Shamayim again, because wealth sometimes blinds a person to his obligations to HaShem.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 14 p'sukim - 13:5-18

Lot also has great wealth, too much to remain together with Avra(ha)m. Quarrels between their shepherds (caused by disparate ethical standards) lead to a parting of the ways. Avra(ha)m gives Lot "first choice" of territory, and he (Lot) chooses the then fertile area of S'dom and the Jordan Valley. The Torah makes a point of telling us of the wickedness of S'dom society, an obvious criticism of Lot's distorted priorities.

(This, too, is a recurring theme in Jewish life, containing warnings for us all - sadly, many Jews moved away from Jewish neighborhoods to

places with country clubs, golf courses, and other "important" things; often the shuls and schools were far away from their new home... but hey, you can't have everything.)

Only after Avra(ha)m parts company from Lot, does G-d once again appear to him, encouraging him to look over the whole land to the north, south, east, and west, which will some day belong to his descendants. G-d also tells him that his descendants will be too numerous to count. (Hidden message: They will sometimes be lowly, like the dust of the ground, trodden underfoot by our enemies. Contrast this with the later comparison to the stars of the heavens, which has the opposite, positive, connotation.)

Avra(ha)m settles in Hevron and builds an altar to G-d.

SDT: One commentary says that although Avraham knew that his spirituality was compromised by Lot's presence, he nonetheless did not chase Lot away until he had no choice. Avraham felt a moral obligation to take care of Lot (including saving him after they parted) even though he knew that G-d was "keeping His distance" with Lot around, so to speak. There are some interesting ramifications for us, of this behavior of Avraham's. How do we view time spent doing chessed and kiruv, or Hachnasat Orchim, at the expense of Torah learning and personal growth. Think about it.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 20 p'sukim - 14:1-20

[P> 14:1 (24)] This portion tells of the battle between the Four Kings and the Five Kings and of the capture of S'dom, including Lot. When Avra(ha)m hears (from Og, "refugee" from the Flood) of Lot's capture he sets out to rescue him, taking with him a force of 318.

Rashi refers to the Gemara which suggests that Avraham took only his servant Eliezer with him to rescue Lot. The numeric value of the name Eliezer = 318. As G'matriya go, this is one of many. What makes it unusual, is that Rashi says it and bases it on a number in the text of the Torah.

Avra(ha)m launches a successful surprise attack and frees the people of S'dom. Victory is celebrated with a religious ceremony of thanking and blessing G-d in the presence of Malki-Tzedek (a.k.a. Shem son of No'ach). A tithe of the spoils of war is given to this servant of G-d.

Rashi tells us that AMRAFEL, king of Shin-ar is none other than NIMROD who was the one who tossed Avraham into the fiery furnace for challenging polytheism in public and espousing belief in One G-d. Ironic, is it not, that Avraham has this opportunity to do successful battle against Nimrod.

Malki-tzedek is king of Shalem. Targum Onkeles identifies Shalem as Yerushalayim. SHALEM is the part of the city's name contributed by Sheim. Avraham gave it the first half of its name after the Akeida - YERU.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya **10 p'sukim - 14:21-15:6**

The king of S'dom offers Avra(ha)m great wealth. Avra(ha)m refuses to take as much as a "thread or shoelace".

Avra(ha)m did accept payment on behalf of his allies who helped him.

SDT: *From here we learn, says the Chafetz Chaim, that one who wants to be "machmir" (strict), should accept the strict practice for himself but not impose it on others. Avraham did not want to be a TZADIK at the expense of others.*

[S> 15:1 (21)] Afterwards, G-d appears to Avra(ha)m in a vision and again promises him great rewards for his faithfulness. Avra(ha)m, still childless, expresses his disappointment, but resignation, that Eliezer will be his heir. G-d assures Avra(ha)m that he will indeed have his own child to follow in his footsteps.

G-d then takes Avra(ha)m outdoors and promises him that his descendants will be as countless (and exalted) as the stars in the heavens.

The GR"A cites the Talmud's mention that Avraham Avinu was the first person to address G-d as "Adon" (Master). We acknowledge this by beginning Shacharit - Avraham's davening - with the poem Adon Olam. Furthermore, the reference to a thread and shoelace is linked the mitzvot of Talit and T'filin, both of which are also associated with Shacharit.

Being compared to dust and sand

and to the stars of the heavens is not just a matter of numerousness, but also to the quality of life. We can be like the dust of the ground - stepped on, trodden upon... Or we can be as lofty, wonderful, grand as the stars of the heavens. The terms reflect the ups & downs of Jewish History.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - **37 p'sukim - 15:7-17:6**

This portion begins with "the Covenant between the Pieces". (Part of this experience is actual, part is prophetic vision.) G-d tells Avra(ha)m that his descendants will be oppressed in a foreign land and will subsequently leave there with great wealth. The promise of the Land to Avra(ha)m is reiterated once more.

Both Rashi and Onkeles understand the term M'SHULASH/M'SHULESHET to mean that Avraham took three each of calves, goats, and sheep for the BRIT BEIN HA-B'TARIM. Tos'fot and others define the term as "prime, of the best quality". They hold that there was only one each of the animals. Others say the animals were to be thrice-born or three years old or part of triplets.

(from The Living Torah by R' Aryeh Kaplan z"l)

[S> 16:1 (16)] Sarai, being barren, gives her hand-maiden Hagar to Avra(ha)m (after 10 years in K'na'an) to bear him a child. When Hagar becomes pregnant, she taunts her mistress. Hagar then flees from Sarai's retaliation. An angel finds her, promises that her

child, too, will sire a countless multitude, that her son to be born shall be called Yishmael, and that she is now to return to Sarai.

Yishmael is born when Avra(ha)m is 86 years of age.

[S> 17:1 (14)] When Avra(ha)m is 99, G-d appears to him and asks him to "be complete". G-d changes Avra(ha)m's name to Avraham, symbolizing his role as father and spiritual guide to great nations. Once again Avraham is promised "countless" progeny.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya **21 p'sukim - 17:7-27**

G-d promises that a special relationship will always exist between Himself and Avraham's descendants, and repeats the promise of the Land. G-d reveals the form that the "Covenant" is to take - the circumcision of all males **[2, A215 17:10]**.

This mitzva is the first "non-natural" commandment. Until this point, the 7 categories of Noahide mitzvot are all logical, rational, reasonable, common-sense laws. This 8th mitzva, for the 8th day, represents the challenge to the Jew to rise above nature and complete his spiritual form just as he is being commanded to complete his physical form.

The mitzva is ideally performed on the 8th day, counting the day on which the baby was born - even if he was born 5 minutes before sunset. Mila may not take place at night. Only an 8th day Mila (as opposed to

a Brit that was postponed because of health reasons, for example) can be done on Shabbat. A baby delivered by C-section on Shabbat, will have his Brit on the following Sunday (the baby's 9th day). Due to a technicality based on the analysis of the text in Tazria, only a Brit of a natural birth can take place on Shabbat.

The mitzva of Mila is "repeated" in parshat Tazri'a. Its specific wording there, teaches us some details.

With the two texts dealing with BRIT, it is noteworthy that most mitzva-counters count MILA from LECH L'CHA rather than TAZRI'A. Lech L'cha's context is the story of Avraham Avinu. In Tazri'a we have a straightforward command - Speak to the people of Israel and say to them... on the 8th day, you SHALL circumcise...

Most significant in the matter of Brit Mila is this: The physical removal of the foreskin is only part of the mitzva of Mila. This can be seen by looking at the brachot that are said for the Brit. The first bracha is AL HAMILA. This bracha is immediately followed by a second Birkat HaMitzva (very unusual to say two mitzva-brachot for the performance of one mitzva), "to enter him into the covenant of Avraham". This is not just a HINENI MUCHAN U'MEZUMAN type of introduction to a mitzva, not a peripheral concept, but an integral part of the mitzva. The challenge of raising the child to be a good Jew and a good person is an obligation of the parents which is part of MILA (we can say) and THE part of the mitzva that takes much more time and energy than "the cut". The context of Lech L'cha says

it all. Its choice as the "official source" of the Mila helps us understand this important mitzva.

Note too that when a Mohel does the Mila at the behest of the father, the Mohel says the Mila bracha, but the father nonetheless retains the second bracha (and Shehecheyanu). Parents can use an agent to perform the MILA part of BRIT MILA, but the BRIT part remains theirs.

[S> 17:15 (13)] G-d then changes Sarai's name to Sarah. Name changes represent changes in character, role, and destiny. G-d promises that Sarah will bear the true heir of Avraham. Avraham laughs with joy upon hearing that he will be a father at 100, and Sarah a mother at 90. He thought that Yishmael was the son that G-d had repeatedly promised him, but G-d assures him that it will be Yitzchak who will fill that role.

Yishmael will also be blessed and give rise to great nations, but the Covenant will be passed down through Yitzchak. Avraham circumcises himself at age 99, Yishmael at age 13, and the other male members of his household, in fulfillment of G-d's command.

The last four p'sukim of the sedra are reread for the Maftir.

The father bumped into the coffee table hard. What got hurt?

Yerachmiel and Chetzron

Haftara - 21 p'sukim Yeshayahu - 40:27-41:16

This passage is the national counterpart of some of the personal experiences of Avraham. Just as G-d made promises to Avraham Avinu, so He makes promises to the Children of Israel. Just as Avraham tenaciously clings to faith in G-d, so too do his descendants. Endurance, confidence, victory, self-perfection - these qualities are shared by THE ancestor and his descendants, us.

We can see in the sedra-haftara pair a manifestation of MAASEI AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM, the deeds of the ancestors set the patterns for the their descendants.

Lead Tidbit cont. from front page

his place of birth and his father's house on go to the land which G-d will show him (Eretz Yisrael).

The test which most commentaries consider to be the final one, the tenth one - and this is supported by G-d's statements in the Torah - is the Akeida, which is our LECH L'CHA BATRA, where this time, the destination is ERETZ HAMORIYA, the Temple Mount, where Avraham is to offer Yitzchak as an OLAH.

Even though each test stands on its own and even though the portion of the Akeida at the end of next week's sedra does not relate directly to all the previous tests, it is not a stretch to suggest that the portion of the Akeida reminds us of the Ten Tests, not just the tenth one. (Maybe this is similar to calling the third Shabbat meal SHALOSH SEUDOT - or the

Yiddishized version, Shaleshudes, rather than Seuda Sh'lishit. Yes, it's the third meal, but it represents the three meals of Shabbat.)

To quote from the Koren-OU siddur, with commentary by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks...

On the basis of Jewish mystical tradition... we have the custom of saying daily the Torah passage recounting the Binding of Yitzchak, the supreme trial of faith in which Avraham demonstrated his love of G-d above all other loves.

Parshat HaAkeida is said right before Korbanot, because it represents the willingness of Avraham and Yitzchak - and all the Jewish people - to sacrifice themselves for the sake of G-d and His Torah.

We have a practical recommendation for you.

If you say Parshat HaAkeida every day, then, fine - the most we can suggest is paying more attention to it and internalizing its messages.

If you don't say it, how about giving it a try. At least for the week of Parshat Vayeira. From Sunday, Nov. 1st through Shabbat, the 7th, say it in its place in davening - or any time of the day. Use your siddur or the handy text to the right. Clip it and carry it with you, pull it out on the bus or during a break at work or school. And, maybe if you get really "into it", you'll making it a part of your day even after the week is up. Don't just say it; be inspired by it. Be proud to be a Jew.

Let him decide: BaOmer or LaOmer

וְיִהְיֶה אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נֹסָה אֶת־אֲבִרָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲבִרָה וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר־אֵהְבֶתְךָ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמִּדְבָּר וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׁכַּם אֲבִרָה בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחְבֹּשׁ אֶת־חַמְלוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּבְקַע עֶצֶי עֹלָה וַיִּקַּם וַיִּלְךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים: בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲבִרָה אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מְרוֹחֵק: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִרָה אֶל־נַעֲרָיו שְׂבוֹ־לָכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמוֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנְּעָר גִּלְכָּה עַד־כֹּה וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁבַּח אֱלֹהִים: וַיִּקַּח אֲבִרָה אֶת־עֶצֶי הָעֹלָה וַיִּשֶׁם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֹת וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אֲבִרָה אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּנִי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וְאִיֵּה הַשֵּׁה לְעֹלָה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִרָה אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֵה־לוֹ הַשֵּׁה לְעֹלָה בְנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיִּבְאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְנֶה שָׁם אֲבִרָה אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לְעֵצִים: וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִרָה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֹת לְשֵׁהֹט אֶת־בְּנֹו: וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מֵלֶאֶד ה' מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִרָה | אֲבִרָה וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנְּעָר וְאֶל־תַּעַשׂ לָו מְאוּמָה כִּי | עַתָּה יָדְעֵתִי כִּי־יִרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה וְלֹא חֲשַׁבְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי: וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲבִרָה אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה־אֵיל אַחֵר נֹאחֲזוּ בִּסְבָךְ בְּקִרְבּוֹ וַיִּלְךְ אֲבִרָה וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֵיל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה תַחַת בְּנֹו: וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִרָה שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא ה' | יִרְאָה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר הַיּוֹם בְּתֵר ה' יִרְאָה: וַיִּקְרָא מֵלֶאֶד ה' אֶל־אֲבִרָה שְׁנֵית מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נֹאם־ה' כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא חֲשַׁבְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ: כִּי־בִרְךָ אֲבִרְכֶךָ וְהִרְבָּה אַרְבֵּה אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ כְּכֹוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכַחֲוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שֵׁפֶת הַיָּם וַיִּרֶשׁ זֶרְעֶךָ אֶת שְׂעַר אֲבִינֹו: וְהַתְּבָרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ לְקַב אֲשֶׁר שְׁמַעְתָּ בְּקִלִּי: וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲבִרָה אֶל־נַעֲרָיו וַיִּקְמוּ וַיִּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל־בְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲבִרָה בְּבֵאֵר שָׁבַע:

CHIZUK AND IDUD

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim)

Ordinarily, the differences in Halacha between Israel and the Diaspora focus on agricultural commandments like terumot and ma'aserot. One striking difference that parents notice upon moving to Israel is in an entirely different category. When fulfilling the mitzva of b'rit mila, in Israel the father adds an additional b'racha that is not made in the Diaspora - the blessing of shehechyanu.

This tradition is codified in the Shuchan Aruch (see Yoreh De'ah 265:7), where we find that the Rambam is quoted as ruling that a father does say shehechyanu, which is the practice in Israel and surrounding areas like Syria and Egypt. The Ramah rules that in Diaspora communities it is not recited at all.

While suggestions are raised as to why shehechyanu may be omitted - for example, because of the pain suffered by the baby - none of the commentaries attempt to explain the difference in practice between Israel and the Diaspora, nor of the inclusion of Syria and Egypt within the Israeli practice.

Perhaps this tradition is rooted in a basic foundation of the mitzva of b'rit mila as it is commanded in our parsha. We find that the mitzva appears immediately after the promise of the land of Israel - from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates - to Avraham and his descendants that appears in the b'rit bein habetarim (15:18). The mitzva of b'rit mila as described in perek 17 includes a reminder that part of the covenantal relationship between God and Avraham's family is a permanent


place in this land (see pasuk 8) - Rashi goes so far as to suggest that only in Israel will a Jewish person truly have a relationship with God. Clearly, there is a deep connection between the mitzva of b'rit milah and the promise of the Land of Israel.

Thus, when a person performs a b'rit mila in the Diaspora, it symbolizes only a partial fulfillment of the covenant. Only in Israel - according to its broadest borders, including Egypt and Syria - will the b'rit be complete, and therefore deserving of an additional blessing (of joy).

Rabbi Shalom Z. Berger, Ed.D., Bar Ilan

Do you know your camera?
מַצְלֵמָה, but you knew that.
What about the shutter?
סֵגֶר. And the shutter release button?
מַחְשָׁף.
Got a flash on your camera?
How do you say FLASH in Hebrew? **מְבֹזֵק**
And do you remember the **קוֹבֵיט מְבֹזְקִים**
(We just through the flashcube in for nostalgia.)
Finally, the TRIPOD - **חֲצוּבָה**

Carabiner: An oblong metal ring with a spring clip, used in mountaineering...
רֶכֶס קְפִיצִי

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DIVREI MENACHEM

Parshat Lech L'cha informs us categorically of our rights of possession to Eretz Yisrael.

First, the Covenant of the Pieces indicates to Avraham that, "I am Hashem who brought you out of Ur Kasdim to give you this land to inherit it", and that, "To your descendants have I given this land" (Breishit 15:7, 18).

Later, Hashem notifies Avraham that he will ratify His covenant between, "Me and you... and [that] I will give... to your offspring after you... the whole Land of Canaan as an everlasting possession; and I shall be a G-d to them" (ibid. 17:1-8).

Covenants, however, need partners. Our overriding commitment is to conduct Brit Mila on the 8th day after birth (in contrast to the 7th day that represents a natural cycle). The removal of the "Orla", the foreskin - or symbolically, the "unfeeling barrier" to an elevated life-style (Vayikra 26:41) - serves not only as a sign of Hashem's promises to us. It also reminds us that continuity of Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael is contingent on our ability to raise ourselves to spiritual heights that defy the natural order of things (Maharal).

Where did the G"G promise come to fruition?

Follow up

Last week's column was about words with different meanings depending upon the presence or absence of a DAGESH CHAZAK in one of its letters. The example we gave was AMA and AMMA (the double M represents an emphasized MEM due to its DAGESH CHAZAK). Without a DAGESH in the MEM, the word means "maidservant". With a DAGESH, it means the measure known as a cubit.

Tasya emailed to refer us to Rashi on Sh'mot 2:5. There, Par'o's daughter sees a baby floating in a basket on the Nile out of her reach and she sends AMATAH (her AMA) to get it. The MEM is unDAGESHed and therefore the straight meaning of the verse is that she sent her maid to retrieve the basket.

Rashi then says that our Sages in the Gemara and Midrash interpreted ET AMATAH as "her arm" and say that a miracle occurred that her arm extended to a great length until she was able to reach the basket. Rashi objects to this interpretation because of the lack of a DAGESH in the MEM, thus "agreeing" with what we wrote last week.

[Note: AMMA, the measure, is the length of the arm from elbow to tip of the extended middle finger (which is also called AMMA). In other words, AMMA meaning arm or the middle finger or the cubit all come from the same word.]

Although the lack of a DAGESH supports the plain meaning (P'SHAT), the DRASH from the Gemara and Midrash still stand and they teach us something - that one should never say something is impossible

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.

Q *I want to put cold but cooked soup on a hot plate right before Shabbat. I have heard that putting things up at that time is particularly stringent. Considering that it is forbidden to reheat cooked liquids on Shabbat, is it also forbidden right before Shabbat?*

A We will first introduce the stringency of "right before Shabbat" that you refer to and then apply it to your case.

There are two categories of cases regarding having foods on a flame (irrespective of the melacha of actually cooking): shehiya and hachazara.

Shehiya means leaving a pot/food on the flame, after putting it there to cook or to heat up before Shabbat. In certain cases (about which there is a major machloket for thousands of years), one must do something to the system to reduce the chance that he will "stoke the coals" or its equivalent. The bottom line is that blechs and non-adjustable hot plates fulfill the halachic requirement, when necessary.

Hachazara means returning a food/pot to a heat source after it had previously been removed. The classic case is when one does so on Shabbat. Hachzara is a more severe case than shehiya (for reasons beyond our present scope) and

in order for it to be permitted in the classic case, five basic requirements must be met: 1) The food must be fully cooked before returning it. 2) The heat source must be covered. 3) The pot should remain in one's hand since being removed. 4) The remover should have had in mind to return it. 5) The food should still be warm. Only condition #2 applies to shehiya.

The general assumption, that the difference between shehiya and hachzara is that the former is when the food is left from before Shabbat and the latter is on Shabbat, is challenged by the following gemara (Shabbat 38b). "According to the one who says people may do hachzara (as we pasken), he may do hachzara even on Shabbat." This implies that there is a case of hachzara that is not on Shabbat (and is easier to permit). Tosafot (Shabbat 36b) say that this refers to putting the food back on the flame so close to Shabbat that if the food were cold, it would not have a chance to become hot before Shabbat. Although several Rishonim disagree with Tosafot, the Rama (Orach Chayim 253:2) says that it is good to follow Tosafot's opinion.

If putting food on the flame at that time is hachzara, does that mean that all of the aforementioned five conditions of hachzara are needed? Your question

raises the possibility that the food needs to be warm at the time of this Erev Shabbat hachzara or at least that the food has to be fully cooked. (While the soup is fully cooked, reheating liquid is forbidden like cooking uncooked solid foods.)

This is actually not the case. The five conditions of classic hachzara can be broken up into a few categories of the problems they solve. One is that putting the food on the flame should not violate bishul. This applies to condition #1 and #5. However, one will not violate bishul when he puts food on before Shabbat, and we have no source to extend this rabbinically to Erev Shabbat. Within the remaining three conditions, the covered flame (#2) is a matter of standard concern, whereas keeping the food in the hand and having intention to return it are special stringencies regarding hachazara. The Rosh (Shabbat 3:2) says that the stringency of hachazara soon before Shabbat applies to #2 no matter what state the food is in, which is not the case regarding shehiya (see Shabbat 36b and Shulchan Aruch, OC 253:1)) However, the other requirements do not apply before Shabbat (Mishna Berura 253:72). Since a non-adjustable hot plate is no worse than a blech (which solves #2), you do not have a problem.

Let us point out that regarding non-adjustable hot plates, significant poskim allow returning fully cooked food (dry, or liquid if still warm) even on Shabbat. Also, exactly what time one has to put up the food in order to avoid Tosafot's stringency is a topic for discussion. However, in the case you described, you can ignore this stringency.

Glimpses into the world of OU kashrut supervision

Q Can I look at the ingredient statement of a food to determine if it is kosher?

A No. These statements are not designed to provide kosher information. Many ingredients, such as glycerin, may be derived from either kosher or non-kosher sources, and one cannot tell which from the label. Moreover, some ingredients may incorporate sub-ingredients that the label is not required to list at all. What exactly is in that "natural flavor", anyway? Even if a product is made from all-kosher or all-pareve ingredients, it can be rendered non-kosher or dairy by the processing equipment.

Case in point - VEGETABLE OIL

The belief that vegetable oil can only be vegetable oil coupled with the notion that animal fat can't be produced on the same equipment has sown some confusion in this area. It is definitely true that the consumption and use of animal based fats have dropped dramatically over the past decade... However, this does not mean that the non-kosher oils and fats are not produced on the same equipment as vegetable oil...

The only time that there is no common equipment issue is in the crush plants. This is where the vegetable or bean of choice is brought to be extracted... Animal fat is not extracted in the same way, so at the crush plant there would be no concern of commonality...

After the oil has been manufactured into the crude state, it is either refined in the same plant or transported to a different plant for refining. Both of these possibilities, refining and transportation, present a

possible problem from a kashrus perspective.

Refining is the process by which crude oil is made ready to be used for human consumption by removing impurities from the crude oil. The refining of oils involves a number of different procedures... (such as Alkali Refining, Bleaching, Deodorization - any remaining materials in the oil that can cause spoilage or unpleasant odors are removed through the process. Oil is pumped into a deodorizer which is a very large piece of equipment that heats the oil in a vacuum.

All of these processes are performed hot and can be done to both animal fat and vegetable oil.

The kashering of a deodorizer is extremely difficult... The preference is to use vegetable oil from all-vegetable plants. A deodorizer is approximately six stories high... oil is pumped, heated and centrifuged at temperatures as high as 700°. It is difficult to clean because after each deodorization process a film of oil adheres to the deodorizer and is not easily removed... kashering is very labor intense.

Animal fat can be refined and processed in any of the same ways that vegetable oil is in the post-crush processes. This leads us to the problem of transportation. Vegetable oil, whether it be crude, partially refined or fully refined can leave the processing plant in one of several ways.

It could be piped into the hold of a ship. This hold may have contained treif liquids which would then render the holds themselves non-kosher. This is because treif animal fats are stored while hot. It is like cooking treif fat in a pot and then using that pot either to store kosher oil or to cook kosher oil. Kosher vegetable oil can sometimes be kept at temperatures

considered hot. Even without the heating element, another problem would be "kavush". Kavush takes place when a cold liquid sits in a utensil for 24 hours or more, and it by Halacha is viewed as being cooked there...

A third concern is the medium of heat, which often is recirculating steam. If steam that was used to heat treif animal fat is then recirculated to heat kosher vegetable oil, the Kosher status of the vegetable oil will be compromised. To address these issues, Kashrus agencies have taken these steps to maintain the integrity of the kosher certified product.

1) Kosher oils may only be shipped in holds that have been used exclusively for kosher products for the last three shipments. 2) Adjacent holds may only contain kosher products. 3) Recirculating steam must be chemically treated with a caustic like chemical which will render the steam PAGUM (foul tasting). Something which is "pagum" can't make something else treif...

Here's another potential problem... hydrogenated oils... Hydrogenation increases the shelf life and flavor stability of products containing these oils... vegetable shortenings, margarine, crackers, cookies, pretzels and any other food made with or fried in oil. Hydrogenation presents a kashrus concern because tallow (cattle, sheep or horse fat) and lard (hog fat) can also be hydrogenated. Thus the commonality of equipment issue has again surfaced.

The next time you take a bite of your favorite snack food, think about all the effort of the Kashrut agency to make sure that all of the components are Kosher.

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column: for Parshat Lech L'cha

“One Day We Will All Be Together”

I picked him up at the airport. He was arriving in Baltimore, where I was then a rabbi, to deliver an address and then return home to New York.

The plane was late, so that when he came, I told him that we would have to hurry to be at our destination on time. He was already showing signs of age, so that walking quickly was hard for him. We moved rapidly past the gates, at which other flights were disembarking, including one at which the arriving passengers were being welcomed warmly by friends and family.

That is where he stopped, transfixed. He could not take his eyes off the scene of the small crowds embracing and kissing each other tearfully and emotionally.

Reluctantly, he responded to my rude insistence that we move on, and together we rushed to his appointment.

He was Rav Avrohom Pam, of blessed memory, the late lamented sage, Yeshiva dean, mentor to hundreds of rabbis and scholars, and above all, gentle soul. When we finally were in the car and on our way, I asked him what it was about the airport scene that so fascinated him.

His response was the greatest lesson of the many I learned from him. "The

saddest of all human happenings is separation", he said. "And the most wonderful of all is reunion. Whenever I see people, of whatever religion or background, who are joyfully coming together after a long separation, I feel 'spellbound' (that was the word he used), and I must stand by and witness that pure innocent joy as long as I can."

What a powerful teaching! Separation is the greatest human tragedy, although a very common one. Reunion is the greatest joy, rare though it often is.

This week's Torah portion, Lech L'cha, allows us to further reflect upon the phenomenon of separation, in Hebrew, p'reida. The Torah describes the close relationship between Abraham and his nephew, Lot. It is a relationship which began in the "old country" and continued through Abraham's adventurous journey to and through the Land of Canaan. As both prospered, we are told, "Thus they parted from each other; Avram remained in the land of Canaan, while Lot... pitched his tents near S'dom."

This decision to separate was a fateful one for Lot. He settled in S'dom, rose to a prestigious position there, and we will yet learn more about his new life in next week's portion. He tried to mitigate the effects of the separation by remaining loyal to the precepts he learned in Avraham's tent, a difficult challenge in his new circumstances.

At the same time, Abraham did not forget his nephew. Even after the separation, he stayed in touch with

him from afar and rushed to his aid when Lot was captured by a marauding army.

This dramatic story of the separation of two close companions may be the first on record, but it is certainly not the last. Subsequent separation dramas are themes of great literary fiction, and of real human life, which is even stranger than fiction. Sometimes the separation results in estrangement and alienation; sometimes, despite the distance, the separated parties end up in remarkably similar places.

Personally, I have long been intrigued by the stories of siblings separated at an early age who rediscover each other later in life. Often, they learn how different they have become. One example is the reunion of the 90-year old Torah sage, Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky, who, after a 70-year separation, rediscovered his sister in the former Soviet Union. He was steeped in traditional Judaism; she had become totally removed from any semblance of Jewish religion. When one of Reb Yaakov's sons tried to explain to his long-lost aunt what her brother had accomplished in his life, she could only respond that it was a shame that a lad with such youthful promise grew up to become a mere melamed, a school teacher.

But there are poignant examples of separated individuals who, despite growing up in radically different environments, end up so similarly. How well I remember an adolescent psychotherapy patient of mine who was adopted in infancy by a professor of physics and his wife, a noted art

historian. They were frustrated by this teenager, who was interested neither in intellectual nor cultural pursuits, but whose goal in life it was to become a fireman, and who spent all his spare time as a fire department volunteer.

After several years, I received a call from the young man telling me that he had since successfully located his biological father. Wouldn't you know that his father was a veteran fireman!

Separation is part of human life, so much so that in Jewish mystical liturgy this world is called the "world of separation", *alma d'piruda*.

Reunions, planned or serendipitous, are thrilling experiences but are frightening because we fear finding out how different we have become from those with whom we once shared such similarity. Avraham and Lot once were very similar. They separated, intentionally.

Yet there were bonds that linked them, invisible and mysterious bonds. Of some, we read in the Torah portions of this week and next, but others surface generations later, with the story of Ruth, the descendent of Lot's grandson, Moab, and her reunion with Avraham's people. Ultimately, King David himself becomes the symbol of the reunion of the uncle and nephew of whose separation we read this Shabbat.

No wonder then, that the mystical text that calls this world the *alma d'piruda*, calls the next, better world the *alma d'yichuda*, "the world of reunion", the world in which we will all be together.

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WISDOM & WIT

by Shmuel Himmelstein

An old woman once came to the home of R' Chaim Falaji to ask a halachic question. The Rav was in the midst of his meal, and without telling him that a woman wanted to see him, the Rav's servants sent her away and told her to come back later.

When the Rav heard what had happened, he immediately got up and walked to the old woman's home, in order to hear what she had to ask.

Later, when he discussed this story, he would refer to the *Mechilta*, which discusses the ten great Sages who were killed by the Romans. The *Mechilta* notes that as R' Yishma'el and R' Shimon were being taken to their execution, R' Shimon asked R' Yishma'el: "Rebbe, what sin did I commit that I have been sentenced to death?" R' Yishma'el answered: "Did anyone ever come to you with a halachic question which you did not answer immediately, but waited until you had finished what you were drinking or putting on your shoe, or putting on your garment? The Torah demands that one must answer a person who comes to ask immediately, and if there is a delay in one's answer, it is irrelevant whether it is for a short time or for an extended time. Both are forbidden." The *Mechilta* concludes with R' Shimon's response: "Rebbe, you have consoled me."



R' Yisrael Salanter noted: "As I walked outside, I saw birds flying, and I realized how similar we are to them. If we want, we have the power to rise up higher and

higher. We learn from the birds, though, that to remain high, the bird must constantly flap its wings. The human, too, has to be constantly and actively engaged in maintaining the level he has reached in *Yiras Shomayim*. If he stops trying at any time, he will plunge downward to the earth."



"Many modern inventions," remarked R' Yitzchak Zelig of Sokolov, "enable us to exert greater control than ever before. The train enables us to control distance, the telegraph allows us to control time, while the plane enables us to control the air. With all of these, we often forget that the thing that most needs controlling is ourselves."

Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Bamidbar Stories

I pray you, curse this people for me" (Bamidbar 22:6){1} by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

"And Balak saw everything that Israel did to the Emorites" (Bamidbar 22:2); this verse is the prelude to the whole story of Bil'am, his mission to curse Israel and its transformation into a soaring poetic blessing.

The Emorite kings, Sichon and Og, had previously respectively conquered parts of Moav and parts of Midian. Now Balak saw the defeat of these two powerful nations that were the northern defense line both of his kingdom of Moav and of the neighboring Midian, and became justifiably fearful of the future. This was exactly the same effect that the view of the encampment of Israel opposite Jericho had on that city: "Your terror has fallen upon us for we have heard what you did to the two kings of the Emori whom you utterly destroyed" (Yehoshua 2:10).

"Balak saw through his magicians and fortune-tellers that Israel was destined to suffer through him and that 24,000 men would die as a result of a plague [when they sinned with the daughters of Moav]" (Bamidbar Rabba 20:7). "He saw the misfortunes that would come on Israel more clearly than any other of their enemies who tried to oppose them by armed conflict, so he sought to eradicate a whole nation through the words and the breath of Bil'am, the soothsayer" (Tanchuma Yashan Balak 2).

Every problem and decision that lies before people is never monolithic but has a range of often conflicting physical, spiritual, moral, economic,

cultural, social, religious and psychological aspects. Balak understood therefore that the military and security issue was overlaid with religious spiritual ones, especially in view of G-d's miracles which had accompanied Israel's Exodus from Egypt, the Splitting of the Red Sea, the Manna, Matan Torah and their 40 years wanderings in the desert. To Balak's pagan mind, this spiritual and religious dimension called for divination, something magical, supernatural or wizardly that would break the occult laws that limited their deities. They consult the dead, oracles, heavenly omens, and even the innards of birds and beasts in search of security and knowledge. Thereby men believed that they could somehow foretell the future and evade the fates in store for them; human arrogance, self-confidence and ambition that their own wisdom can make them into sorts of gods. Rabbi S. R. Hirsch points out in numerous places in the Torah that even in monotheism, misguided people see the korbanot and rituals as a means of bribing G-d on their behalf.

"Behold, Moav and Midian were always antagonistic to one another and warred with each other constantly, however, here their fear and hatred of Israel united them" (Tanchuma 3); an oft-repeated phenomenon of Jewish history where opposing classes, factions and nations become united through their common anti-Semitism that overrides all other political,

economic and social interests. Although Moav and Midian had sorcerers and soothsayers of their own as witnessed by the charms of divination that they brought with them to persuade Bil'am, Balak sent for the great soothsayer Bil'am to cast a spell over Israel that would bring curses upon them instead of the blessings that at present covered them.

Bil'am's sorcery was well known; Balak says, 'For I know he whom you bless is blessed and whom you curse, is cursed'. Just as important, however, as his greatness was his origin. "Bil'am was Cushan-rishatayim who lorded over Israel in the days of the Judges (Shoftim 3:8-9); Bil'am was Lavan who oppressed Yaakov; he was the one who tried to curse Israel in the days of Balak. They all came from Aram Naharayim" (Chelek 108b). Aram Naharayim in Mesopotamia was in antiquity a place of great pagan spirituality, scientific wisdom and occult knowledge. The Abrahamic family's roots are closely intertwined with this place and with its people in its cultural, religious and spiritual heyday. Aram Naharayim was the place that Avraham left to go to Eretz Yisrael, it was the place from which Eliezer brought Rivka as a bride for Yitschak, and it was the home of the Matriarchs Rachel and Leah. So Balak wisely sought somebody close to the roots of the Abrahamic family through which to try and destroy Israel.

Balak in his message to Bil'am said, "Peradventure I shall prevail and may drive them out of the Land". He does not call for the destruction of Israel nor does he wish to conquer and rule over them, only to drive them out of the Land. It is essential to understand why

the settlement by Israel of its Land should constitute a threat and danger to Balak, especially since that Land was not part of the territory of Moav, nor was Moav one of its Seven Nations. Furthermore, there was a clear commandment to Israel not to harm Moav nor to infringe its territory, so why was Balak fearful and why did Israel's entry into the Land constitute a danger to him?

"While Israel was wandering in the desert they lived in a purely miraculous and spiritual manner, where G-d Himself provided Manna from Heaven water from Miriam's well, and guarded them with Clouds of Glory. Such miraculous religious existence was normal to Balak's religious and spiritual understanding so that he could be at ease with their existence. The Mishkan, Kohanim, Leviim, prophets, sacrifices and song could easily be understood and accepted. However, once Israel entered the Land, their whole religious and spiritual life was to change. Now war and peace, livelihood and economy, and housing, water and food were all to be created and earned through natural and human endeavor but yet to be sanctified through G-d's commandments. Balak feared that he and the nations of the world would then also be required to sanctify themselves through the material, natural and mundane living in this real and everyday world" (Shem MiShmuel).

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 496

Betrothal on condition

The Talmud and the codes discuss betrothal on condition and also along the way discuss conditions in other types of agreements. These are the topics of these current lessons.

A man said to a woman become betrothed unto me with this coin, “on condition that I will act as your workman.” Or “I will speak on your behalf to the governor”. If there are witnesses that he acted as her workman or he did speak to the governor on her behalf, she is surely betrothed to him. If there are no witnesses except his word that he did these things, then she is doubtfully betrothed to him.

A man gave nothing to the woman but said to her “become betrothed to me for the value of the work that I shall do on your behalf”, or “will speak on your behalf to the governor”, she is not betrothed. The reason is that wages are earned as he progresses in his work and it is thus the same as betrothing her with a promissory note.

A man said to a woman “be betrothed unto me on condition that I have a net worth of \$1000”. If it is known by way of witnesses that he has a net worth of \$1000, the betrothal is valid. If there are no such witnesses she is doubtfully betrothed to him even if he admits that he does not have such a net worth.

A man said to a woman “be betrothed unto me on condition that I have \$1000 that is being held for me by my friend

Shimon.” If there are witnesses that he has deposited with his friend Shimon \$1000 there is a valid betrothal. If it is not known if he has \$1000 deposited with Shimon, there is doubtful kiddushin. This holds true even if Shimon declares that the man has nothing on deposit with him.

A man said to a woman “be betrothed unto me on condition that Shimon says that I have \$1000 on deposit with him”. If Shimon so states there is a valid betrothal. If Shimon does not so state, there is no valid betrothal.

A man states that he betroths the woman “on condition that he has \$1000 in a certain location”. If he has such money in that place there is a valid betrothal. If he does not have money in the place that he stated there is a doubtful betrothal. We suspect that he may have the money there but said he does not have it to make matters bad for the woman.

A man states to a woman “be betrothed to me on condition that I show you \$1000”, she is not betrothed to him until he shows her the \$1000 that belongs to him. If he shows her \$1000 but it does not belong to him there is no valid betrothal even if he shows her money deposited with him by business associates. This holds true even if his share of the business profits is \$1000, there is no valid betrothal. If he showed her \$1000 although he owes \$1000 to a creditor who has a lien on the \$1000, the betrothal is valid. If he did not have the money when he spoke to her but afterwards he earned the money and showed it to her, there is an opinion that the betrothal is valid.

If he stated to her that “I have \$1000” and he does not have it, the betrothal is not valid.

A man said to a woman “become betrothed unto me on condition that I own a beis kor (about 5-6 acres of land)” she is betrothed providing he owns such an amount of land as can be attested to by two witnesses. If there are not two witnesses there is a betrothal in doubt; perhaps he does own such a piece of land and now states that he does not own it in order to make matters bad for the woman.

A man said to a woman “become betrothed unto me on condition that I show to you a beis kor of land”. If he shows her such an area the betrothal is valid. If he show her land that he leases from others or he is working as sharecropper, the betrothal is not valid. The land must be located in one place and cannot have crevices or other things wrong that would make the land not usable as an entire beis kor.

A man betrothed a woman on “condition that he is wealthy” and it turns out he is poor or he betrothed her “on condition that he is poor” and it turns out he is rich, or “on condition that he is a kohen” and he is a Levi; or that “he is a Levi” and he is a Kohen, or “he is a city dweller” and he lives in a rural area or that “his home is close to the bathhouse” and it is far away, or that “his house is far away from the bathhouse” and it is really close to it. On condition “that he has a maid servant” or “a grown daughter” or “he has a baker” and he has none of these things or in all of these cases he stipulated that he does not have and he really does have, or he betrothed her with what he said was a cupful of wine and it was found to

contain honey, or he stated it was a cup of honey and it was a cupful of wine; in all of these cases and similar cases there is no valid betrothal even if she states that I made up my mind to become betrothed in all of these situations even if the condition was not fulfilled; there is not a valid betrothal. It does not matter whether she in person accepted the betrothal or if it was done by way of her agent.

If a man betrothed a woman and thereafter stated “I betrothed her thinking she was from the tribe of Kohanim” and she is from the tribe of Levi; or “that she was from the tribe of Levi” and it turns out she is from the tribe of Kohanim; or else he now says “I betrothed her thinking that she was rich” and she is really poor; or “she was poor” and it turns out she is rich, in all of these cases the betrothal is valid.

We see from these cases and laws that there are some conditions that the betrothal depends upon the condition being fulfilled and other conditions that deal mostly with a state of mind and some of these conditions will be disregarded. More on these conditions IYH in the next lesson.

TRIDDLES

Prizes for best solution sets (when awarded) are furnished by Noam Productions and/or Big Deal.

Last issue's (No'ach) TTriddles:

[1] go out and see - what?

The answer is: The Haftara of Parshat No'ach. It consists of the haftara of KI TEITZEI (go out) and that of R'EI (see). This is a unique situation, that a sedras haftara should be the combined haftarat of two other sedras. Related is the fact that on either Vayeishev or Mikeitz, whichever is Shabbat Chanuka (or the first, if there are two) we read as the haftara the exact haftara reading of B'haalot'cha. And technically, that is not unique because when Rosh Chodesh Av is Shabbat, which is Parshat R'ei, we read the haftara for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh. Then, two weeks later, for Parshat Ki Teitzei, the haftara is its own plus the one for R'ei, which is continuous with it in Yeshayahu. That means that in those years (11.5% of the time - same years as Tripple Purim and Erev Pesach on Shabbat), No'ach and Ki Teitzei get the identical haftarat, as do Vayeishev or Mikeitz (either is possible in that kind of year) and B'haalot'cha. And here's one more TTriddle on the same topic, while we're at it: **What does No'ach and Seuda HaMafseket have in common?**

[2] This time, read it the way it is

This refers to the pasuk from the haftara of No'ach (and R'ei): V'CHOL BANAYICH LIMUDEI HASHEM, V'RAV SHALOM BANAYICH. On Friday night (Nusach Ashkenaz) at the end of BAMEH MADLIKIN, we say, "Read not BANAYICH (your children), but rather BONAYICH (your builders). We say this piece of gemara (B'rachot 64a) again after the Musaf Amida at the end of Pitum HaK'toret. This gemara notwithstanding, when we read it in the haftara, we should not change the word BANAYICH, but read it the way it is.

[3] GF/GS namesakes

Parsha Points to Ponder LECH L'CHA

1) Why does the Torah repeat that Yishmael was WHOM HAGAR BORE when Avraham names him? The very same verse actually says AND HAGAR BORE A SON FOR AVRAHAM! (16:15)

2) Why does G-D say AND YOU, referring to Avraham, when He was already clearly speaking to Avraham (17:9)?

3) Why does the Torah state that Avraham circumcised his family AS G-D TOLD HIM (17:23)? We already know that this is why Avraham did this?

Parsha Points to Ponder

is prepared by

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Answers are somewhere else in this issue Look for them, but only after a good pondering

Of course, this would have been easier if the initials were written out fully: Gradfather and grandson namesakes. The answer: NACHOR, which is the name of Terach's father and the name of one of his sons.

[4] What No'ach found can be found where?

The last pasuk in B'reishit is: V'NO'ACH MATZA CHEIN B'EINEI HASHEM, And No'ach found CHEIN (perhaps, favor) in HaShem's eyes. Besides finding CHEIN in HaShem's eyes, we read in Yirmiyahu (haftara of the second day of Rosh HaShana), So said HaShem: MATZA CHEIN BAMIDBAR. The Midbar

is the place in which to find what No'ach found - CHEIN.

[5] No'ach can say that his sons are, "from my family" in more ways than one. Count them.

Well one way to understand such a statement by No'ach is the straight understanding of any of several p'sukim that tell us that No'ach's sons were SHEIM, CHAM, and YEFET. But - and the hint was "count them" - if you take the gimatriya of SHEIM (340), CHAM (48) and YEFET (490) and add them together, you get 868, which is the same gimatriya as MIMISHPACHTI, from my family.

[6] He started with the end and ended with callo

YEFET. He started with the end, meaning that his first son is GOMER (as in finish), and ended with TIRAS, his seventh named son.

[7] The TEIVA and two in the TEIVA

G-d said to No'ach: Make yourself an Ark of gopher wood... In addition to the TEIVA being GOPHER, there were two GOPHERs in the TEIVA as well.

[8] 7th gen worked with 10th & 2nd

ADAM, KAYIN, CHANOCH, IRAD (no connection to A-ROD), M'CHUYA'EIL (a.k.a. M'CHIYA'EIL), M'TU-SHA'EIL, LEMECH, TUVAL-KAYIN who was the seventh generation from KAYIN, was he who "sharpened all cutting implements of copper and iron". He worked with copper, NECHOSHET, which is spelled NUN-CHET (No'ach, 10th generation from ADAM) SHIN-TAV (Sheit, 2nd generation from ADAM)

[9] Adam, Mahalaleil, Avraham, Yaakov

This was a TTriddle in the Shabbat B'reishit issue and became a special challenge in the No'ach issue. Disappointingly, no one got it yet, so we will reword this challenge by going down one generation for each name mentioned: KAYIN, YERED, MIDYAN, REUVEN. That's the new challenge, if you can call it

that. So we are not answering this one yet again and will give CDs to the first correct solutions.

[10] Street on which the Nigerian Institute of Management is located

The Nigerian Institute of Management was established in 1961 when a general meeting of top managers in Commerce, Industry and Government was convened to discuss the formation of a management Institute in Nigeria... It is known by the acronym NIM, and its Management House is located at Plot 22, Idowu Taylor Street, Victoria Island, Lagos. But for TTriddle purposes, it is located on NIM Road.

Apologies for there not having been ParshaPix explanations of late. We have had packed issues and that column has paid the price more than once. Here's an abridged version of last week's ParshaPix explanations. Worms come in apples, but all the other animals came in pears (pairs). A fish to remind us that fish were not taken on the Teiva, but survived the Mabul in a column of water under the Teiva that did not have the destructive forces of the rest of the floodwaters. Triceratops, a rhinoceros-like dinosaur did not survive. Dove with olive branch... cloud with rainbow... cloud with rain. Grapes and wine flask are references to No'ach post-Flood occupation. People figures represent the proliferation of human beings after the Flood. Tower of Babel is accompanied by words of many languages. The words all mean WATER, the main theme of the first part of the sedra. languages are: Luxembourgish, Zulu, Chinese, Swedish, Tamil, Gaelic, Italian, Carib, Finnish, Welsh, Hungarian, Albanian, Bengali, Korean, Indonesian. TIRAS, KUSH ball; GOMER Pyle; an OVAL, SH'VA, 12" ruler is for PUT, as in U'FOOT. KAFTORIM, CHAVILA The RAF plane called the NIMROD MR2. Rank-insignia of a major in the IDF. RAV SEREN, abbreviated RESEN.

PUAH...

Who is his Mother?

In the past couple of weeks we have discussed the troubling story of the Savage family. Having been impregnated with the wrong embryo, they decided to carry the baby to term and have since delivered and given the baby to his genetic parents.

Although Sean and Carolyn Savage are non-Jews, the story has renewed interest in the hypothetical discussion of parentage in halacha. If this was a Jewish couple, what would the status of the child be and who are his halachic parents?

First off, without knowing the specifics of the case, it should be noted that it is possible (although certainly not guaranteed) that a couple could find a heter to permit them to terminate such a pregnancy. However, that is not within the scope of our discussion, which will be limited to the issues raised if such a pregnancy were brought to term.

There is a halachic principle that is used when discussing the relationship between a father and his son that states, "most of the relations are from the husband" (Sotah 27a). In other words, when discussing parentage, we assume that the husband is the father of his wife's child. Therefore, there is no need to verify paternity through DNA testing or other similar tests. This holds true even when there is some question or doubt regarding paternity.

However, our case does not contain

any question or doubt; there is not only a clear third party involved, there is outright evidence demonstrating that the husband is not the father. This evidence extends to the mother as well, raising clear questions as to halachic maternity.

When one woman carries a child of another woman there are four possibilities as to who is the halachic mother of the child. Either a) the genetic mother is the mother, b) the birth mother is the mother, c) neither woman is the mother or alternatively d) both women are the mother. The case for either woman is intuitive. Either as the bearer of the child or the provider of its genetic materials, each woman has an understandable claim to maternity of the child.

Furthermore, it is possible that in order to be considered the halachic mother a woman must contribute the genetic material as well as give birth to it. Since neither woman satisfies this requirement, it is possible that the child is halachically motherless. Or, it may be possible that the satisfaction of either requirement leads to halachic status as the mother. In our case, each woman satisfies one of the requirements and thus the child has two halachic mothers.

Ordinarily, when faced with a situation for which there is no clear halachic determination, the vast annals of Talmudic literature are searched for precedents upon which to build a logical decision. This question has in recent years been debated among the poskim, but there is no real definitive answer.

Many believe that the woman who contributes the genetic material is considered the halachic mother. They base their reasoning on various Talmudic sources, including the Gemara that states that there are three partners in the formation of a child. God provides the soul, and the mother and father each provide their genetic materials. One posek recently told me that in his opinion this argument makes the most sense and therefore there is no need for a more direct talmudic source.

However, many poskim disagree and claim that the woman who gives birth to the child is the mother. We will discuss some of their sources next week.

Arise, walk through the land in its length and in its breadth; for I will give it to you. (B'reishit 13:17) G-d's promise to Avraham of Eretz Yisrael.
And these are the judgments which you shall set before them. (Sh'mot 21:1) Mishpatim, the gamut of civil law which we must follow in order to hold onto Eretz Yisrael.

These two p'sukim have the same gimatriya (1992)

Nothing much, what's GNU with you?

Punchline of an old joke. Let's review the Gnu (culled from the internet)...

Either of two large African antelopes having a drooping mane and beard, a long tufted tail, and curved horns in both sexes. Also called wildebeest (which means wild beast)... grazing animals that live in herds on open grassland... constantly move in an effort to locate new pastures. The sight of a gnu migration, with its distinctive style of movement, is perhaps the most impressive group event in the animal kingdom... they stand higher at the shoulder than at the rump, reaching a shoulder height of about 135cm. Its heavy head and humped shoulders resemble those of a buffalo, while the compact hindquarters are like those of a horse. The southern African form, the white-tailed gnu, or black wildebeest, is dark brown with long black tufts on the snout, chin, throat, and chest, and a black mane and flowing white tail... Scarce, exists only in national parks and preserves. The brindled gnu, or blue wildebeest, is reasonably abundant over much of central and South Africa. It is silvery gray with dark vertical bands on the sides and has a black mane, tail, and face, whitish cheeks, and a tuft of dark hair on chin and throat. Both sexes of both species have large horns that curve down, outward, and up. The gnu is a kosher animal.

Hidden in the Sand

Gimatriya Matches

[See also the Gimatriya match in the box on page 33.]

B'reishit 2:7 tells us (again) of the creation of the first human being.

וַיִּצְרֶה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפָר
מִן-הָאָדָמָה וַיִּפְּזוּ בְּאָפְיוֹ נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

And HaShem formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Is there a pasuk epitomizes POTENTIAL more than this one? At the positive extreme of that potential is Avraham Avinu, the one who rediscovered One G-d and loved Him with a passion we can only try to emulate. Avraham's reward was the nation he fathered and the Land he was given on behalf of his descendants.

כִּי אֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה רֹאֶה
לְךָ אֶתְנַנְנָה וְלְזַרְעֶךָ עַד-עוֹלָם:

For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed forever.

The negative extreme is Amalek and all he/it represents. We are commanded,

זְכוֹר אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂהָ לְךָ עַמְּלֶכָךְ בְּהַרָּה
בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם:

to remember Amalek, never to forget what it did and to wipe out its remnant from under the heavens. It is actually a condition of the realization of the promises to the Avot.

All 3 p'sukim have the same gimatriya.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

1) The S'forno answers that these words capture the two reasons why Avraham named his son, Yishmael. One was because G-D heard his own prayers but the other was because the angel had told Hagar that this would be his name.

2) The Kli Yakar teaches that since the purpose of the circumcision was to perform an external action to bring internal purity to the heart, Avraham, who already attained that purity of heart did not really have to circumcise himself. G-D only commanded him to do so for his family to learn from him and for the world to see. Thus, G-D must emphasize AND YOU must also perform this mitzva yourself.

3) The Ohr HaChayim explains that G-D specifically wanted Avraham to circumcise himself first and only then the others in his family since the mohel must, himself, be circumcised. These extra words indicate that Avraham not only performed the Mila but that he did so according to this specific rule.