

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...*

of the month. It is not the day of the new month that directly relates to the first opportunity of Kiddush L'vana; it is the time elapsed from the moment of the molad. The molad can be on Rosh Chodesh or a day or two before it. It really depends upon whether Rosh HaShana was fixed on the day of the molad of Tishrei, or if it was postponed a day or two according to the rules for fixing RH. When the first op for KL falls on the eve of the third of the month, some people in shul will argue that it isn't time for KL yet. And it happens that people will argue for KL on the eve of the 4th of the month, when on occasion, that's too early.

This month's molad was midday on Tuesday (first day of R"Ch). First op for 3 day after the molad people would have been Friday night, but we don't say KL on Shabbat unless it is the last op. Hence, Motza'ei Shabbat.

Lead Tidbit cont. from front page

Before you open the Chumash, let's make this clear - the following is for those who believe what the Torah says. For those who believe that G-d created the heavens and the earth. That G-d took the Jewish People out of Israel and gave us the Torah at Sinai. That G-d commanded us to keep Shabbat and observe many other mitzvot and forbids us to violate a whole list of other mitzvot.

If you don't believe in the sampling just presented, then you might doubt the truth of the following as well.

But if the Torah is TORAH EMET (a phrase that occurs only once in Tanach, in this week's haftara), then let's review the following:

In Lech L'cha, after Avra(ha)m arrived in the land to which G-d commanded him to go, G-d tells him that the Land will be given to his (Avraham's) descendants. A promise that is repeated a number of times.

So far so good. But wait. Yishmael is Avraham's son; not only Yitzchak. In Vayeira, G-d makes matters clearer. KI V'YITZCHAK YIKAREI L'CHA ZARA - through Yitzchak will offspring be considered yours. Yes, there is Yishmael. Yes, there are the children of Ketura. But Yitzchak is your complete heir.

Okay, we're still good. No, wait - what about Eisav. Blessings of wealth and position in the world - who got them? Who was meant to get them? Not relevant to the topic of the Land. Yitzchak gave the "bracha of Avraham - which is defined in the end of Toldot as, "that you may possess the land of your sojourns which G-d gave to Avraham." This blessing, this legacy, this gift from G-d of Eretz Yisrael, was given by Yitzchak with "his eyes wide open", to Yaakov. And only to Yaakov.

This gift is in perpetuity. It is forever. We might get kicked out when we turn away from G-d. We might be scattered throughout a long exile. But this land is ours.

When a misguided government gives any of Eretz Yisrael away... when a misguided government forces Jews to leave their homes - the homes and communities the government encouraged them to live in, to use a term other than expulsion is to pervert the truth for political reasons and to futilely attempt to gain something in return.

This is one of the main messages and lessons of sedras of Lech L'cha through Toldot. It is a lesson that is repeated throughout the Torah.

It is a truth just as "In the beginning G-d created..." is. It is as true as Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim and Matan Torah.

If the nations of the world don't believe it or don't want to believe it, or want to change things around to suit themselves... that's their problem.

(Well, it is our problem, but not our biggest one. Not our priority problem. The following is.)

WE, the Jewish people, living in Israel or anywhere else in the world, need to accept and internalize the fact of our claim to the Land of Israel. Arab claim to this land is falsehood. Arab attempt to delegitimize our claim and history here is falsehood. It is obscene.

Sad that so many people around the world swallow the Arab attempts to take away our claim and replace it with one of their own.

Sadder still are the Jews who aren't convinced of the Truth of the Torah.

Some say that the political reality of the world requires us to do this or that. A point to debate. But even with that position, there still must be a clear recognition and acceptance of G-d's gifts to us through the Avot. We must not be ingrates before G-d.

TO-L'DOT STATS

6th of the 54 sedras; 6th of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 172.7 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 36

4 Parshiyot; 2 open, 2 closed

106 p'sukim, ranks 29th (9th in B'reishit)

Tied with Vayigash and Bo, but shorter than each in words & letters and length

1432 words, ranks 34th (10th in B'reishit)

5426 letters, ranks 33rd (10th in B'reishit)

Its p'sukim are below average length

MITZVOT

none of the 613 mitzvot are in Toldot

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

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

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

SDT: Rashi quotes the Gemara that tells that when Yitzchak was born, scoffers said that Avraham and Sara, who were childless for so long, had found a baby and claimed it as their own. Avraham invited the leaders of the nations, their wives and infants, and Sara miraculously was able to wet-nurse all the babies. (The Gemara

points to the plural "banim" in 21:7.) Then the scoffers accepted that Sara bore Yitzchak, but chided Avraham that Avimelech was the father (since Yitzchak's birth followed Sara's abduction). A miracle occurred and baby Yitzchak was the very image of his father Avraham, until the scoffers proclaimed, "Avraham fathered Yitzchak".

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

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

Safe to say that most of us learned from way back that Rivka was three years old when she married Yitzchak. This notion is partially based on the Torah's telling us of the birth of Rivka right after the portion of the Akeida. Yitzchak was 37 at the time of the Akeida and the death of Sara Imeinu. He married at 40, hence Rivka was 3 at the time.

However, Chizkuni (an early commentary of Torah and of Rashi) argues that if Rivka was only 3, there would be a discrepancy in the chronology of the rest of her life. We have sources that indicate she was 133 at the time of her death. Working backwards with various events, we find that she was 14 when she married Yitzchak. The

account of Nachor's family - including Rivka, does not necessarily mean that she was just born at the time of the Akeida. The Torah is just introducing us to Rivka in order to bring her into the picture, so to speak, as Yitzchak is about to take over the mantle of Patriarch-hood from Avraham Avinu.

After 20 years of childlessness (10 until Rivka was of child-bearing age plus an additional 10 years without a child), Yitzchak and Rivka pray to G-d. G-d hears their (actually his) prayer and Rivka becomes pregnant. She is having a "rough time" and goes to Shem b. No'ach (who outlived Avraham, by the way) who tells her G-d's message, that she will give birth to twins who will go in very different ways and become great adversarial nations.

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

Take a look at Rashi. Two great nations - these are Antoninus and Rabbi (Yehuda HaNasi)... It can be suggested that the Divine message to Rivka, was that even though there will great tension and friction between the descendants of the twins she was carrying, Yaakov and Eisav, there will be an example of a Roman (from Eisav) and a Jew who will truly get along and that

is the hope for the future when the nations of the world will all recognize Israel's role in the world and their special relationship with the One G-d Who will then be universally recognized.

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

SDT: There are many different commentaries on these relationships. Note that Yitzchak's love is based on Eisav's providing food for him (or deceiving him - based on various drashot). Rivka's love is unconditional. Pirkei Avot says that only an unconditional love will endure forever.

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

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

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

the Land. G-d also repeats his promises of the Land and of the large nation that will descend from him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SDT: *Brachot 56: Rabbi Chanina said, he who sees a well in a dream, he will see peace... Yitzchak's servants dug and found a live spring, B'EIR MAYIM CHAYIM. This is immediately followed by the peace treaty between Avimelech and Yitzchak. Rabbi Natan continues in the same Gemara. He who sees a well in his dream has found Torah, as it says in Mishlei: He who finds*

Me, finds life... an equation is made between G-d, Torah, and Life.

R' Yehoshua b. Levi adds that one should verbalize the words B'eir Mayim Chayim before he encounters the words from Yirmiyahu 6:7 - K'HAKIR BIYA MEI-MEHA... "As a well keeps its water fresh, so she keeps fresh her wickedness; violence and destruction, grief and wounds..." Verbalizing a dream's interpretation is considered significant; an unexpressed dream is often open to opposite meanings and what is expressed first gives the dream its substance and direction. This is the tip of the iceberg of Dream Interpretation as presented by the Torah T'mima. Don't read too much into the comment here - it is meant only as a brief comment.

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

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

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

Chamishi - 5th Aliya 33 p'sukim - 26:30-27:27

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

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

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

It seems obvious that Yaakov was punished measure for measure for his deception of Yitzchak. The Brothers not only deceived Yaakov concerning the fate of Yosef, but

they used a goat and a garment (exactly the two items that Yaakov used to deceive his father) to bring about their deception. If we accept the idea that Yaakov was supposed to get the bracha that Yitzchak was going to give to Eisav, that it was G-d's will, and even G-d's command according to Onkeles, to Rivka to "set it up", then why was Yaakov punished so severely?

An answer might be suggested in the form of an analogy. When one has to take drastic, life-saving treatments - "serious" medication, radiation, etc., what is done might be absolutely necessary, but there are often harsh side-effects.

Continuing the analogy, was there not a "safer" way for Yaakov to get the b'racha? Apparently not. If there is a medication that is effective and without side effects, why would a person take the medicine that has serious side effects? For whatever reason(s), the way it went is how it was meant to go.

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

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

The blessing invoked by Yitzchak upon Yaakov, for bountiful produce and respected status among

nations, has been borrowed by us to be recited on Motza'ei Shabbat - V'YITEN L'CHA HA-ELOKIM...

'May G-d grant you the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, much grain and wine. Nations will serve you; governments will bow down to you. You shall be like a lord over your brother; your mother's children will prostrate themselves to you. Those who curse you are cursed, and those who bless you are blessed.'

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

Note that Rivka did NOT tell Yitzchak that Eisav wanted to kill Yaakov. Perhaps she felt that it would pain him too much to learn of Eisav's true character. Perhaps, Yitzchak would have refused to believe that his Eisav would contemplate such a thing. Instead, Rivka expresses another concern (legitimate) as her

reason for wanting Yitzchak to send Yaakov away.

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

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 5 p'sukim - 28:5-9

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yaakov & Eisav: Some say Peretz & Zerach

Please have a seat near the b'eir

DIVREI MENACHEM

In Parshat Toldot our forefather Yitzchak is confronted with a famine and he plans, like his father Avraham, to go down to plentiful Egypt. Indeed, he arrives at the border in Gerar when Hashem commands him, "Do not go down to Egypt - settle in the Land that I will tell you."

There is an interesting contrast with Avraham. For Avraham was told: "Lech lecha... el Ha'aretz asher ar'ecka" - 'Go to the Land which I will show you.' In Avraham's case, this was the first of his many trials. Inductively, Avraham recognized Hashem's mastery of the world but now he was to follow several seemingly incomprehensible commands of his Maker.

Initially, Yitzchak follows logic too. Yet he is told, "Sh'chon Baaretz" - to remain in Eretz Yisrael, despite the famine. Perhaps it is unfitting for one who has the mark of a holy sacrifice etched into his soul to leave Eretz Yisrael (cf. Rashi). But there is, perhaps, more to this injunction than meets the eye.

For Yitzchak has to continue and enrich the legacy of Avraham. The term "Sh'chon" evokes the creation of neighborhoods, the establishment of a community, well by well, dunam by dunam. Following our rabbis it also implies that by thus building the Land Yitzchak will bring down the holy Shechina. What a beautiful legacy indeed!

Psychrometer and hygrometer are meteorological devices for measuring humidity in the air. In Hebrew, **מד לחות**. A Barometer measures air pressure. It is called a **מד לחץ**. A rain gague is a **מד גשם**. An anemometer measure the wind. **מד רוח**

More MAD-words: Thermometer is a **מד חום**
(if it is a brown one, then it is a **מד חום חום**, couldn't resist)

Parsha Points to Ponder TO-L'DOT

- 1) Why does the Torah say that Yitzchak took Rivka TO HIM AS A WIFE (25:20)?
- 2) Why does the Torah preface the story of Avimelech looking out the window and seeing Yitzchak and Rivka act as husband and wife with the seemingly insignificant words AND IT WAS WHEN MANY DAYS PASSED THERE (26:8)?
- 3) Why does Yitzchak name the place which was already called BE'ER SHAVA (26:23) the same exact name (26:33)?

Parsha Points to Ponder

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

Herb sits down.

FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VERBE 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 often see people getting aliyot who lean on the bima during their aliya. Isn't that a problem? Shouldn't I tell them to stop?*

A The mishna (Megila 21a) says that one may read Megilat Esther standing or sitting. The gemara (ad loc.) says that, in contrast, Torah reading must be done standing. As support, the gemara cites the pasuk regarding the transmission of the Torah from Hashem to Moshe: "You [Moshe] stand here with Me" (D'varim 5:27). Just as, symbolically, Hashem was "standing," so too later transmitters of the Torah should do the same. Our questions are: what the nature and severity of this requirement are, whether leaning is considered like standing in this regard, and whom it applies to.

The Tur (Orach Chayim 141) says that if one does not read the Torah standing, he has not fulfilled the mitzva, and thus the leaning has to be repeated. He seems to understand the requirement as a fully derived requirement from the pasuk. The Yerushalmi (Megila 4:1) says that it is an element of honor, related to the idea that the Torah must be transmitted with an air of trepidation, not casualness. The Beit Yosef (OC 141) points out that Rashi views the requirement to stand as only l'chatchila, that it is

proper to show respect in that way, but in case he does not do so, the reading is still valid. The matter may depend on the situation regarding Megila reading, as Torah reading is more stringent than it. If the Megilla should l'chatchila be read standing, then Torah, being a step further, is invalid b'di'avad if one did not stand. In any case, the Magen Avraham (141:1) rules that one does fulfill b'di'avad the mitzva without standing, as is evidence from the fact that we allow a king to read while seated. Mishna Berura (141:1) and most recent poskim take this lenient view.

Despite our relative leniency on the matter of standing, the Shulchan Aruch (OC 141:1, based on a Yeruhsalmi, ibid.) says that, at least l'chatchila, one should stand without leaning on anything. This can be understood in two ways: 1) leaning is not considered standing; 2) since one must show proper regard to the Torah's transmission, standing that is not fully austere, i.e., leaning, is thereby wrong. The Magen Avraham (ad loc.:2) says that both issues are true, but in different cases. If one stands with a partial lean so that if the object one was leaning on were removed he would fall, this is not halachic standing. If he stands in a manner that he would not fall, this is generally considered standing but it is

still not standing in awe. Therefore he reasons that the Mordechai's permission for an obese person to lean (Shulchan Aruch, *ibid.*) applies only to partial leaning, as, when his leaning is understandable, it is not a sign of disregard. However, full leaning simply does not fulfill the requirement to stand. The Shaarei Efrayim (3:11) says that it is also customary to allow some leaning when looking at the top lines of a long sefer Torah, which are far away from the readers. He reasons that crouching over in order to see well is not disrespectful to the Torah.

In general, the laws governing Torah reading apply both to the ba'al korei and to the oleh (the one who receives the aliya), and this is no exception (see Shulchan Aruch and Rama, *ibid.*; Sha'arei Efrayim *ibid.*) The Sha'arei Efrayim (*ibid.*) and Mishna Berura (141:5) say that even the gabbai must stand. (Regarding the congregation, there is a major discussion - see Shulchan Aruch and Rama, OC 146:4).

Like many other halachot in whose regard observance is not 100%, a rabbi should find opportunities to educate his congregants. Regarding partial leaning, which is likely not overly haughty and, according to the majority of opinions, does not affect the congregation's fulfillment of the mitzva, one should point out to the oleh only if he is confident it will be taken in the right way. If many people lean in the more severe way, it would be more worthwhile for one who can educate effectively to point out to the olim in a way that does not embarrass them.

Parsha Points to Ponder Suggested answers

1) The Ohr HaChayim teaches that these words explain why Yitzchak did not get married at an earlier age. TO HIM indicates that Rivka was the only match for Yitzchak and, therefore, he had to wait until she was old enough to marry him.

2) The Kli Yakar answers that these words describe why Avimelech decided to specifically spy on Yitzchak. Many days had gone by since Yitzchak arrived in Gerar and Avimelech found it strange that this supposedly single man had not taken any of the local women for marriage. This led to his suspicion that perhaps Yitzchak and Rivka were married.

3) The S'forno points out that it is not the exact same name. The city had been called BEER SHAVA with the vowel kamatz to capture the pact which Avraham had made there. Now, it was also called BEER SHEVA with the vowel segol to also capture the seven wells which were dug there between Avraham and Yitzchak.

Who said: I'll go in the sea?

Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Bamidbar Stories **I pray you, curse this people for me"** (Bamidbar 22:6){4} by Dr. Meir Tamari

It was fitting that miracles should be associated with Bil'am the prophet to the gentiles, and that the nature and character of his prophecy be revealed thereby.

"G-d opened the mouth of the she-ass and she spoke" (Bamidbar 22:28). Onkelos translates the verse, "and man became a 'nefesh chaya" (B'reishit 2:7), as 'a creature with speech' rather than the usual 'a living being'; yet here we have an animal acquiring the most distinguishing characteristic of human beings. Furthermore, this phenomenon was such a major one that our Sages taught, "10 things were created on Erev Shabbat, at twilight, ...the mouth of [Bil'am's] she-donkey" (Avot 5:6).

"Bar Kapara taught: That which cannot normally be seen was seen, as it is written at Matan Torah, 'and all the people saw the sounds' (Sh'mot 20:1); that which cannot normally hear heard, as it is written, 'this stone which heard the words of G-d shall bear witness' (Yehoshua 24:27); that which cannot normally speak, spoke, 'and the she-donkey spoke' (Bamidbar 22:28)" (Midrash Shmuel). "This miracle was greater than the miracle of the opening of the mouth of the earth to swallow Korach and his congregation. There Moshe decreed and the earth obeyed, however, here it is written 'and G-d [Himself] opened the mouth of the she-donkey" (Zohar part 3, 209b).

Throughout Tanach we witness such

miracles, both revealed and hidden, that negate all forms of idolatry, both ancient and modern. Idolatry sees natural phenomena, events and the fortunes or misfortunes of people and nations, either as the results of natural forces or as pure chance and coincidence or as something that can be explained by human wisdom and science. The miracles, however, attest that natural phenomena have no power of their own but merely reflect the will of G-d, their Creator, that there is a Divine Wisdom beyond the limitations of human knowledge, and that there is nothing due to chance or coincidence but rather only to G-d's involvement in the world that He created.

Sometimes the miracles are hidden in the affairs of our daily lives. At other times, G-d in His Wisdom and Mercy changes the workings of nature so that water turns to blood, the Sea is split in two, water flows from the rock, Mannna falls from Heaven, fire and clouds form pillars, and fire comes down from heaven. "No man has any portion in the Torah of Moshe Rabbenu, until he is convinced that all our affairs and chance happenings, just like the routine workings and laws of the universe, in the private, national and public fields, are miracles and are never to be attributed merely to nature" (Ramban).

As to what actually happened with Bil'am and the she-donkey, the commentators are divided in a way that they regard all the other miracles in the

Tanach. Shmuel David Luzzato explains that, "G-d opened the mouth of the ass and it brayed in an unusual manner; there was a miracle but it was a hidden miracle". Rambam held that the miracles do not signify sudden changes by G-d of the laws of creation, which would signify a limitation of G-d's power but they were built into the original plan of creation. "At Creation G-d implanted in nature the potential power of bringing forth all that was necessary; whether the event was something continuous which we then call natural, or something of rare occurrence which we then term a miracle. And so G-d endowed the donkey with speech; not real speech but merely the vision of Bil'am" (Rambam, Avot 5:6). The predominant understanding among commentators is that of belief in the literal miracle; "I believe in all that is written in the Torah. Why should I not believe the verse, 'and the ass said' or the verse, 'and the donkey spoke'" (Ibn Caspi).

All miracles have a purpose and teach us spiritual and religious lessons, so what was the lesson and message of this miracle of the donkey's speech and why does the Torah tell us its story? Surely to comment on the arrogance of sorcerers, to mock the gullibility of those who believe in the power of magic and to expose those who pretend to be able to bless or curse and so to bend supernatural powers to their will. This is exactly what was done by the she-ass to Bil'am, the great sorcerer and arch-type of magicians, of whom Balak had said, "for I know whosoever you bless is blessed and whomever you curse is cursed".

"The she-ass saw the angel of the

Lord, but initially Bil'am did not. Later, we read, 'G-d then opened his eyes'- was Bil'am then blind before that? This comes to teach us that even our eyes are in G-d's power. 'And G-d opened the mouth of the she-ass', to teach him [and us] that if he sought to curse, nevertheless his mouth was solely in G-d's power. The she-ass said to Bil'am, 'you could only kill me if you had a sword in your hand, how then could you believe that you could uproot and curse a whole nation? Bil'am found no answer to this and held his peace. Then G-d in His mercy and respect for His creatures closed the mouth of the she-ass, otherwise man would never have been able to subject a beast with the power of speech. See how the most powerful of sorcerers and wisest of them all, could not withstand the most foolish of beasts". (Bamidbar Rabba 20).

"Bil'am wanted to amend G-d's plan but is blinder than his own animal, he wanted to overcome G-d's wishes but has to accommodate the wish of his own animal, wanted to ruin a whole nation but has to confess his impotence against his own animal; arrogant towards kings and lords he is but a laughing stock before his own servants" (S. R. Hirsch).

The whole story presents two important spiritual perspectives: the validity of natural and supernatural miracles, and secondly, how they relate to the nature and form of Bil'am's role as a prophet.

'There is no divination with Yaakov, neither is there sorcery in Israel" (Bamidbar 23:23): "G-d who can grant speech an animal can also use the mouth of a Bil'am to proclaim His Word" (S. R. Hirsch).

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column: Parshat TO-L'DOT Disillusionment

Disillusionment. I first learned about it on a park bench on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where I attended high school. I learned about it from three old gentlemen, each affected differently by disillusionment, and each with a different lesson to teach.

We frequented that park daily for a round or two of basketball. Few of us noted the shabby elderly trio, who joined each other on a park bench near where we played and engaged in heated conversation in Yiddish and in another language that we later learned was Russian.

A friend and I decided one morning to inquire of these gentlemen as to who they were and as to the topic that so excited them. They told us that they were Mensheviks and expected that we were familiar with that term.

We weren't, but they soon enough educated us about the Russian Revolution and about a group of early communists who split from Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and were known as the Mensheviks, the Russian word for minority.

After the Russian Revolution in 1917, this minority found itself in grave danger. Many, including the park bench companions, emigrated from Russia in the early 1920s. These three settled in the United States, in New York City, on the Lower East Side.

We listened for several weeks to their magnetic story of youthful dreams and grand plans for changing the world. They helped overthrow the Czar and looked forward to a new order of freedom, peace, and total economic equality.

But they became disillusioned. Their youthful dreams came to naught, and the utopia they envisioned turned out to be nightmarish.

One of them never gave up on the dream and told us that he was certain that the day would soon come when he could return to Russia and help lead the ultimate reform. Another, darkly depressed, had turned to alcohol and was only sober in the early morning. And the third abandoned his former beliefs and became, of all things, a Chassidic Jew.

Each experienced disillusionment, and each dealt with it in his own unique way.

Many years later, I became inspired by another story of disillusionment, the story of Rabbi Issachar Teichtal ז"ה, martyred by the Nazis. This man was a disciple of one of the most virulently anti-Zionist pre-World War II Jewish leaders. He was raised to think that Zionism was equal to apostasy, and that participating in the creation of a Jewish State was a terrible sin.

When World War II broke out, Rabbi Teichtal was witness to all the horrors of the Holocaust. He found himself questioning and eventually re-examining his earlier beliefs, and rejected them. Instead, he developed the

contrary perspective; namely, that the failure to adopt Zionism and build a Jewish State was the root cause of the suffering of the Jewish people.

Rabbi Teichtal's erudite treatise, **Eim HaBanim S'meicha** is a fascinating and rare example of a courageous retraction of an earlier held worldview, a public confession of disillusionment.

In this week's Torah portion, Toldot, we learn of the disillusionment of none other than the Patriarch Yitzchak, who labored under the lifelong illusion that his son Eisav was righteous and good. He was ready to bestow his blessings upon Eisav and not upon Yaakov.

Yaakov disguised as Eisav, ultimately received those blessings. When Eisav appears and asks for those blessings, Yitzchak realizes that the Divine Hand has intervened and that he has been wrong all along in considering Eisav to be the son who deserved those blessings. He is, quite literally, disillusioned.

He is stunned to learn that he has been mistaken all along in his assessment of this son, and his shock is expressed in B'reishit 27:33 with these powerful words: "And Yitzchak trembled an exceedingly great trembling". The great trembling of a disillusioned father.

How apt and poignant is Rashi's comment here: "He saw the gates of Hell open before him".

It is indeed hellish to have one's dreams shattered and to have to re-examine the fundamental assumptions that one has made in life. Yet, in

ways significant and trivial, we are all occasionally called upon to do so.

Knowing that even Yitzchak was proven to be in error about the assumptions he made, and that he was dramatically confronted with his mistake, can be of some solace to us all.

It is difficult and painful to garner the courage to turn our disillusionment to advantage and start life again under new assumptions. But it is a choice which we are inevitably called upon to make.

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WISDOM & WIT

by Shmuel Himelstein

Once, R' Yisrael Salanter visited Frankfurt-am-Main, where he was invited to the home of Baron Rothschild. Rothschild, who was extremely wealthy, had a magnificent home. As they walked through his home, Rothschild, a deeply religious Jew, pointed out to R' Yisrael all the care he had taken in ensuring that everything in his home was in total accordance with halacha.

After they had completed their walk, R' Yisrael turned to the baron and told him: "I am indeed most happy with everything I've seen, but if you excuse me, I am forced to say that what I have seen is contrary to what it says in the Torah."

"What is the problem, Rebbe?" said Rothschild. "I will be sure to rectify it immediately."

"You misunderstand me," said R' Yisrael with a smile. "There is absolutely nothing that is wrong with your home. The only thing I saw here is that - contrary to what it says in the Torah, that 'Yeshurun waxed wealthy and kicked away the traces' of Judaism - you have succeeded in maintain the very highest standards of halacha in spite of your wealth."

Ed. note: In the opening passage of Rosh Chodesh Benching, we ask for many things, including CHAYIM SHE-YEISH BAHM YIR'AT SHAMAYIM. Then we ask for a CHAYIM SHET'HEI VANU... YIR'AT SHAMAYIM. Fear of Heaven is the one thing we ask for twice! Why?

One answer is that after asking for it the first time, we ask for a CHAYIM SHEL OSHER V'CHAVOD, a life of wealth and honor. After that, we have to ask for YIR'AT SHAMAYIM again. It is usually harder to achieve in the case of a wealthy person.

R' David of Sheduva once asked a very wealthy but miserly man: "Why don't you give tzedaka to the poor?"

"Rebbe," answered the man, "I would love to give tzedaka, but I only want to give it to a person who is really deserving of it and I haven't yet found one."

"That's funny," said the Rebbe." "When Hashem gave out money to the rich, He did not go to seek a worthy person to receive it, yet you feel that you must seek such a poor person before you give tzedaka."

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What was Yitzchak's tie to the Land of Israel? It was not his ancestral home. His parents had come from Ur. It was not economic. Egypt was far more prosperous and wasn't subject to periodic drought and famine. It was not security. We read of the harassment he suffered from the Philistines. So what was it? The answer is, G-d's command.

We read in this week's parsha (B'reishit 26:1-3): There was a famine in the land, aside from the first famine that was in the days of Avraham; and Yitzchak went to Avimelech king of the Philistines to Gerar. Hashem appeared to him and said, "Do not descend to Egypt; dwell in the land that I shall indicate to you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your offspring will I give all these lands, and establish the oath that I swore to Avraham your father."

There is an apparent redundancy. First Yitzchak is told: "dwell in the land" and immediately after he is told: "sojourn in this land".

The Midrash (B'reshit 64:3) states: "Dwell in the land [implies] cultivate the land, be a sower, be a planter. Another interpretation of Dwell (Sh'chon) in the land is: cause the Sh'china to dwell in the land."

Yitzchak was commanded not only to physically live in the land [sojourn] and not go to Egypt. He was also told to contribute to the development of the land, to sow and to plant. Furthermore, he was to conduct himself in a manner that would bring G-d's presence, His Sh'china, into the consciousness of all

who came in contact with him.

The message of the Midrash is that there are several aspects to our connection to the land of Israel. Not only are we bidden to make our homes here; we are also obligated to develop Israel materially and spiritually. Aliya is not a one time act. It is a continuous process of growth and development. We not only have to "go up" to Israel; we are challenged to be sowers, planters, builders of Israel; and finally, we are called upon to reach new heights in our spirituality. In this way, we will create a society in which G-d's presence is immanent.

Rabbi Yosef Wolicki, Beit Shemesh

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

PUAH

Can He Really Have Two Mothers?

For the past few weeks we have been reviewing the issues of parentage and yichus of a child born by a woman who is not his genetic parent. This is not a purely theoretical case, as we have seen in the case of Sean and Carolyn Savage. This religious christian couple underwent IVF in the USA, and through a lab error, received and was impregnated with the embryos of another couple.

In the past weeks we have reviewed the debate and most commonly used sources of the debate, between those who contend that the birth mother is the halachic mother and those who contend that the genetic mother is the halachic mother. There are certainly valid arguments and recognized authorities on each side of this debate.

There is an additional opinion, based on the fact that that the embryo is halachically considered to be the same as water or fluid until the fortieth day after conception. Therefore, the determining factor of motherhood is the location of the embryo on day 40 after conception, the day when it is no longer considered water - but rather an embryo. If the embryo was implanted on day 3 or 5 as is the case of standard IVF procedure, the embryo would be in the birth mother on day 40 and it is she who should be considered the halachic mother.

This raises an interesting question

regarding frozen embryos. When the embryo is in a frozen state on day 40 after conception, the cryopreservation freezer can obviously NOT be considered the halachic mother. This opinion holds that the freezing of the embryos from further growth, halachically freezes the 40 day counting as well.

In a final approach to the motherhood question, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l, one of the greatest poskim of recent times, claimed that all of the above answers oversimplify the issue. He agrees that the sources seem to suggest that the birth mother is the mother of the child. Yet, he maintains that ultimately there is actually more than one halachic mother in this case and uses the following scenario to explain his reasoning.

What if a woman were to conceive a child, yet suffer from morning sickness so severe that she decides to transfer the fetus growing in her womb to the womb of another woman? The second woman proceeds to carry the child for most of the pregnancy. The first woman, wanting to experience the birth of her child, has the child transferred back to her uterus for the final weeks of gestation and childbirth.

In such a case, who is the mother?

While it is true that this scenario is currently impossible, it may be possible in the future. Think about how far medical technologies have advanced in the past 100 years. Organ transplantation. IVF and other fertility treatments. The list of

advancements is endless. Today, we routinely perform procedures that were considered to be impossible back then; who knows what the future will bring?

Rav Auerbach's scenario may eventually be a reality. The mark of his genius as a posek, was his foresight to try to take into account all possibilities, no matter how impossible they may seem at the time.

Rav Auerbach claimed that this potential scenario requires that we consider both mothers as being the halachic mother. Furthermore, if one of them was not Jewish - the child would need to be converted!

It is clear from our review, that this is a complex issue. When circumstances require it, we have to choose one of the opinions and follow it.

Yet, the case of an embryo mix up (the case that sparked this discussion) does not have to happen. As we will discuss next week in a true story, with the proper supervision this case can be avoided.

To-l'dot

Yes, we've done this before; yes, we're doing it again. The sedras of To-l'dot and Sho-f'tim trigger this review.

We're not going to start this from scratch - just review some of the highlights.

There are two kinds of SH'VAs: SH'VA NACH and a SH'VA NA. They are "sounded" differently and they affect the letter that they are below differently. Things would have been a little simpler if there were different symbols for the two SH'VAs - then people would not confuse the two. Some newer siddurim are trying to help by marking the SH'VA NAs in some way or by using an exaggerated, larger SH'VA when the SH'VA is NA. That's helpful, but people need to WANT to pay attention and then need to pay attention.

In most cases, the difference between pronouncing a SH'VA correctly or not is just a matter of the beauty of the language. Occasionally, the meaning of a word can change.

A SH'VA NACH is silent. In the word for table, SHULCHAN, the SH'VA under the LAMED is NACH and when you pronounce the first syllable, you hear the LAMED, of course, but nothing extra for the SH'VA under it. SHUL. The final NUN doesn't actually have a SH'VA under it, but behaves as if it had a SH'VA NACH as well.

In the name of this week's sedra, the first syllable is TO. The LAMED with a SH'VA NA begins the second syllable and the SH'VA is slightly sounded. L'DOT. SHO and F'TIM.

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 499

Rumors of Kiddushin

Sarah is an unmarried girl. A rumor has been circulating in town that Sarah has been betrothed today to Reuven. We suspect that the rumor might be true and she is considered to be betrothed in doubt. This in spite of the fact that there is no proof to the betrothal. If the rumor is not accepted in Beit Din, no heed is given to it.

How is a rumor accepted in Beit Din? Assume that two witnesses appeared in Beit Din and testified that lights (candles when the Shulhan Aruch was written) were brightly burning, and the tables were set and people coming and going into the house and the women were making her feel merry and say to her "happy betrothal" and say that Sarah was betrothed today. There is enough proof that she was indeed betrothed. If the well wishers did not so speak to the betrothed girl directly but about a betrothed girl, it is not an indication that she is betrothed. Perhaps there was to be a betrothal but it never took place. Rama adds to this last statement that the law is the same, that she is not considered to be betrothed if people said that a certain girl was betrothed but did not state to whom or any other details she is not deemed to be betrothed.

Similarly if two witnesses come to Beit Din and testify that they saw what appeared to be a betrothal celebration and we saw the friends and we heard the

participants and we heard from a person who heard from a person who was present there that Sarah was betrothed to Reuven and the witnesses who were present then went overseas or died so that they cannot be questioned, there is enough of a rumor that she is considered to be betrothed. Rama adds that the rumor is not to be considered unless we heard it from at least two people who were present there, but if only from one person who was present at the celebration it is not enough to consider her betrothed. If she is not considered betrothed, she can get married to another man without having to obtain a Get (divorce) from Reuven.

And further, it is not considered to be a reliable rumor unless it originated in Beit Din. That is, that Beit Din investigated the matter and concluded that there was indeed a betrothal between Reuven and Sarah. If the matter did not come before Beit Din, then the rumor is not relied upon. Beit Din can always order its own investigation and if it concludes that she was indeed betrothed to Reuven, it is not necessary for a formal Beit Din hearing.

These foregoing rules hold true if there was no pretext why these rumors began. But if there was a pretext why these rumors began, the rumors can be discounted. Beit Din must investigate to see if a pretext exists as to why these rumors of her betrothal were started. If there is pretext then Beit Din can discount the rumors. An example of a pretext would be that Sarah was betrothed conditionally, or there was doubtful

betrothal as when it is stated by witnesses that he threw the kiddushin object to her and there is a doubt as to whether the object landed closer to her or to him. If to him, the kiddushin betrothal is not valid, if closer to her it is valid. Or there is now a doubt cast upon the value of the thrown object, was it worth a peruta (like a penny, the minimum value of the object to effect betrothal) or not. The same holds true if the role of Reuven is a minor who cannot effect betrothal and he is not available to be examined. In all of these situations if we have no proof, we rely on the statements of Sarah as to the truth of the matter as to whether she is betrothed. If the people who started the rumor of her being betrothed in their presence come to Beit Din and declare that they started the untrue rumor, then Beit Din moves to suppress the rumor and she is considered not to be betrothed.

If the rumor started because the people saw that Reuven was sending gifts to Sarah, then Beit Din will use this information to squelch the rumors of her betrothal.

Rama adds that in all situations where there is no compelling reason for a strict interpretation as to her status, we should act in a lenient manner.

Assume that Sarah, about whom there are rumors of her being betrothed to Reuven, accepts betrothal from Shimon in our presence. Beit Din has to investigate the alleged first betrothal. If there is convincing proof through testimony of reliable witnesses that she was indeed betrothed to Reuven as alleged by the rumor, then the betrothal of Shimon is not valid. If there is no such proof, we have Reuven give her a Get and she marries Shimon from whom she received the betrothal

gift. If Shimon then divorced her, she cannot marry Reuven. If she lived with Shimon before she obtained her Get from Reuven, she may not ever marry Shimon.

There is a rumor that Leah is betrothed to Levi. Another rumor has it that Leah is betrothed to Yehuda. In this situation one of them has to give her a Get and she can live with the other one.

A rumor was circulating about Rivka that she was betrothed to Naftali who divorced her. She is not prohibited to marry another person because of the part of the rumor that she was betrothed to Naftali. She may not marry a Kohen because of the part of the rumor that she was divorced, since a Kohen cannot marry a divorcee.

Rachel was married to Asher or was betrothed to Asher. Thereafter, a rumor circulated that she was formerly betrothed to Yosef first. This latter type of rumor is not given any credence. She does not need a Get from Yosef. The laws of this paragraph hold true even if the rumor started before her betrothal to Asher, but had not yet circulated in Beit Din. Of course if Rachel admitted that she had been previously betrothed to Yosef, she is prohibited to live with Asher.

We are still discussing the betrothal procedure. Next lesson IYH about conflicting witnesses as to the kiddushin.

**US Sec of D. his wife, 10 sons & wives,
52 grandsons half of whom are married**

TRIDDLES

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

Honors for impressive solution sets for this week's TTriddles go to MM/Bklyn (last week too) and HC who has returned to the Challenge of TTriddles in a big way this week.

Last issue's (Chayei Sara) TTriddles:

[1] Czarist Russian Parliament or an Irish cemetery

This could have been separate TTriddles, each with the same solution, so we decided to put them together. DUMA was "a Russian national parliament during czarist times". DUMA is the name of one of the sons of Yishma'el, as enumerated at the end of Chayei Sara. DUMA is also "An Irish word for burial-ground". We were also going to do a TTriddle about the Drake University Museum of Art, but decided, enough of this Duma guy.

[2] We do it 4 times, three of which on the word that thereby has a double meaning - except when done to camels

During the Amida, we bend our knees and bow our heads at the beginning and end of the first bracha and the Modim bracha. Three of the four times, we bend our knees at the word BARUCH, which means blessing, but also has the same root as KNEE and KNEELING. If kneeling is an act of humility and subjugation, then it first to share a root with blessing and bracha. VAYVARECH, and he blessed, occurs 17 times in the book of b'reishit. One other time, in Chayei Sara, the same letters with different vowels and a different meaning occur. VAYAVREICH, and he caused the camels to kneel, let the camels rest on their knees. Hobbling or hamshackling an animal is to tie it up in such a way that it cannot stand or run away. Aside from B'reishit, the sequence of letters occur only 9 more times in Tanach, with 8 times being related to blessing and once to kneeling.

[3] He, his father, and his prophet - all pals

This would have been a lot easier, had we not shortened a certain word to "pal", giving the impression (intentional misdirection) that it meant friend. In this TTriddle, the word pal was short for palindrome - a word, number, or sentence that reads the same backwards as it does forwards. LEVEL is a palindrome. So is the number 38455483 and so is the sentence MADAM, I'M ADAM. So is DAVID, YISHAI his father, and NATAN, prophet at the time of David HaMelech. NATAN is the only one of the three to be bilingually palindromic. The names OTTO and AVIVA are not only palindromes, but each is a mirror image of itself.

[4] After the Torah reading, find the filling in the BINAYAHU sandwich

Right after each parsha in many Chumashim, we find the number of p'sukim in the sedra and a SIMAN for it. This being a word that has a gimatriya equal to the number of p'sukim. The SIMAN for Chayei Sara with its 105 p'sukim is YEHOYADA. His name is mentioned in the haftara of Chayei Sara (from the first chapter of Melachim Alef). He was the father of BINAYAHU, a loyal general of David's army. Divrei HaYamim records a YEHOYADA ben BINAYAHU. After the Torah portion of Chayei Sara, we find YEHOYADA p'sukim and with a father and son both named BINAYAHU, he (YEHOYADA) is the filling of a BINAYAHU sandwich.

[5] The big roof celebrates the wheel holiday with a pair of fish

Here's HC's solution: If we add up the gimatriya of BIG ROOF (GAG GADOL), which is 49, WHEEL HOLIDAY (CHAG GALGAL), 77, A PAIR OF FISH (SH'NEI DAGIM), 407 (spelling DAGIM without a YUD), we get 533, the gimatriya of CHAYEI SARA. Not at all what was intended. Not at all. Besides, ditching the YUD in DAGIM is not exactly kosher. None of the 7 occurrences of DAGIM in Tanach are missing that YUD. So what is the solution to this silly-sounding TTriddle? HAGAG HAGADOL CHOGEIG (celebrates) CHAG GALGAL IM ZUG DAGIM have a

total of 10 GIMMELS. That would be ASARA GIMELIM (pretty close to Eliezer's ASARA G'MALIM). You may groan now.

[6] The gamut of letters, 3 above, one in, two below

This is one that HC nailed perfectly. He are his words (some of them): Gamut means "range" so the "range of letters" is the alphabet. One of the words in the parsha is AT (the feminine form of YOU)... consists of the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet and represents the "gamut of letters". This word has three (dots) above it (for the SEGOL trop), one (dot) in the TAV (a DAGESH), and two (dots) below it (for the SH'VA vowel).

[7] Yishmael's sharpest son

is CHADAD, related to CHAD, sharp, and to M'CHADEID, sharpener.

[8] She'd lead off the third if her team went down in order in the first 2 innings

Can't resist a baseball based TTriddle. Have been taken to task in years past for Americanizing TTriddles to much with baseball and the like. And, most recently, a TTrreader Survey comment was that I seem to favor the SF Giants and do not present baseball in TTriddles in a more even-handed way.

A team goes down in order when three batters each make an out without anyone getting on base. To do that two innings in a row would mean that the first six batters got out and the batter in the seventh position in the line-up would lead off the third inning. The TTriddle mentioned "she", so we're talking women's baseball. Who would bat seventh in the order? BAT SHEVA, of course. (And she does go to bat on behalf of her son Shlomo in the haftara.)

[9] He dealt with his son and had a great-great-grandson with the same name

Avraham Avinu dealt with EFRON son of TZOCHAR in his negotiations for a burial place for Sara. One of Avraham's great-great-grandsons was TZOCHAR, son of Shimon, son of Yaakov, son of Yitzchak son

of Avraham.

[10] Unexplaineds in the ParshaPix

The pencil sharpener - we've mentioned that in TTriddle [7] - Yishmael's son CHADAD.

Above the Terem logo is the logo of MASA, an Israeli non-profit organization that enables thousands of Jewish youth to spend a semester or a year in Israel in any of over 160 programs, helping them build a life-long relationship with Israel and a firm commitment to Jewish life. MASA is also a brother of DUMA, sons of Yishmael. Different spelling, but very close in sound (especially if you don't pronounce an AYIN gutturally).

Then we have an L and a kite. Kite is also a raptor (predatory bird) in the same biological family as eagles and hawks. Kite in Hebrew is probably the DA'A, listed as a non-kosher bird. ELDA'A was a son of MIDYAN, born to KETURA from Avraham.

[11] Pasuk on Front Page

Every week, there is a pasuk (or phrase) that either comes from the sedra or the haftara, or is related to the calendar. This time (in TT883), we added the words, TTriddle: Why? asking why that particular pasuk was used for Parshat Chayei Sara. The answer is MINCHA. Eliyahu's "victory" over the 450 false prophets of Baal led the people of Israel to proclaim their belief in G-d and in Him alone. Eliyahu's success came at Mincha time, something that the Navi makes a point of. At the end of Chayei Sara, Yitzchak goes into the field before evening to commune (with G-d). We attribute the establishment of Mincha (the afternoon service) to Yitzchak.

[12] The MazalPic of the month

What you see is a kitten with the letter S above it. Putting them together, we get S-kitten. With a slight vowel switch we get SKYTEN which is Swedish for ARCHER or Sagittarius, the Zodiac sign of Kislev. In Hebrew, the name is KESHET, for the archer's bow, rather than the archer himself. This lends to a double meaning of RAINBOW.



📍 Top-left is Yaakov with his lentil stew.

📍 Next to him is one of Yitzchak's workers on a break from digging wells. Or, perhaps, it is Eisav coming in from the field exhausted.

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

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

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

📍 The sword is part of the bracha to Eisav.

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

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

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

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

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

📍 Straus and Keren HaYesod are the streets on which the Israel Center was and is. They are Rechovot, as in the name of third well that Yitzchak dug and the one that was not contested by Avimelech's crowd.

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

📍 Above the truck is the emblem

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

- From the back of the tow truck is an arrow pointing to the computer icon for a DOS prompt. Together it gives the Ashkenazit pronunciation of the sedra, TOW-L' (as in "to", that's the arrow) DOS.
- The emblem of Ben Gurion University stands Be'er Sheva, the city in which it is located.
- Next to it is the emblem of the city of Rehovot - with microscope, book, and orange - is for the well of the same name.
- To its right is a photo of a hand holding a Pygmy Marmoset, the smallest of all monkeys... represents the small KUF (monkey is KOF - KUF/KOF, get it?) in the word KATZTI, that Rivka said in expressing her disgust if Yaakov were to marry a local K'naanit.
- At the bottom of the PP is a secretary bird, a large African raptor (*Sagittarius serpentarius*), the only living bird of prey that hunts on foot. Its Latin name suggests the Mazal of Kislev.

RAKEL BERENBAUM'S
PORTION OF THE PORTION

FEEDback to
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And they called him Eisav - He was given the name Edom

Rivka had a very difficult pregnancy and is finally ready to give birth to her twin boys.

The first one comes out and is described as "ADMONI, KULO K'ADERET SEI'AR - reddish, as hairy as a fur coat". The verse then says "VAYIKR'U SH'MO EISAV - they named him Eisav" (25:25) .

After that the second brother emerged holding on to his brother's heel, and the verse tells us that VAYIKRA SH'MO YA'AKOV - He called him Yaakov (25:26) .

In this naming episode we can ask a few questions. For Eisav it says "they named him" whereas for Yaakov it says "he named him" - who was the they and who was the he and why a difference in the naming of each child? Yaakov seems to be named because he is holding on to his brother's heel but what about Eisav's name? What does it mean and how does it relate to how he is described?

Eisav was born covered in hair. The midrash says that he even had a beard. Everyone came to look at this strange baby and they all called him Eisav because he was finished ASU'I with his hair like an older person. He didn't look like a little baby. According to Rashi, Yaakov, on the other hand

was named either by his father or by Hashem Himself.

The Divrei Shalom says that the name Eisav actually points to his character trait. He looked at himself as a finished product. In his haughtiness he felt that he was perfect and didn't have to work to improve himself in any way. Later he is called EDOM which points to another character trait - his love for blood and killing.

The Degel Machanei Efrayim makes an interesting observation related to the naming episode. He says that Eisav represents falsehood and unfortunately people tend to be attracted by that - that's why everyone was involved in naming him. Yaakov on the other hand, represents Truth as we say "TITEIN EMET L'YAAKOV" - that's why it says, "He named him" in singular - because truth has fewer followers than falsehood. Only select individuals search out the truth.

Since Eisav is called Edom - red - I am including this chicken soup recipe that has a lot of red/orange vegetables in it. This recipe was shared by the elder members of Melabev's new English-speaking center for people with cognitive decline. The group worked together during a therapeutic reminiscence activity and composed this recipe. The recipe was submitted to a recipe contest on the websites

www.netonews.co.il/apage/61548.php
and www.melabev.org/posts/156

Everyone is encouraged to visit the website and leave your comments on the soup. If you would like to help Melabev continue such activities for the elders in their care, join this year's Walkathon, Tuesday to Thursday, Dec.

1-3 [www.melabev.org/posts/125] which includes a 2-day hike in the Western Gallilee, and a moonlight walk along Hof Dor, on the Mediterranean coast. This year there is also a virtual walkathon for those who can't make it physically, but would like to participate in some way: www.melabev.org/posts/151

(RED) CHICKEN SOUP WITH MEMORIES

4 chicken necks

3 carrots cut in rounds

5 onions, diced

2 sweet potatoes, cut into small pieces
piece of pumpkin, cut into small pieces

4 cloves garlic, minced

sprigs of parsley, dill, mint

cinnamon stick

paprika, salt, pepper to taste

olive oil

water

rice noodles (optional)

cloth bag for herbs

Fry onions till golden. Fill pot with water. Add chicken necks, bring to a boil. Add cut vegetables. Place parsley, nana, and cinnamon in a cloth, seal and add to soup. Cook on low flame for two hours. Remove cloth with herbs. Add noodles. Can be served with a bit of olive oil and nana leaves on top.

Dear Editor,

Shavua Tov. Firstly I would like to point out that whether or not Gogol Mogol is a traditional remedy, nowadays consuming raw eggs is considered a real no-no and carries the risk of salmonella infection which can be fatal... Dr MC

A search of the web seems to indicate that there are different sides to the raw egg issue. Nonetheless, since the issue is one of health, we must side with the cautious opinions on this topic. Here's what the "Ask the Doc" column of the Western Wahington University Health Services www.wvu.edu/chw/ask_the_doc

Q: What are the health dangers of eating raw eggs?

A: The primary risk is exposure to salmonella, a bacteria common in chicken intestines, and eggs often are contaminated through microscopic imperfections in their shells. Adequate heating is the only way to kill the bacteria. Salmonella causes a nasty vomiting/diarrhea/fever syndrome and can be fatal in vulnerable populations -- the very young, very old, chronically ill and immune-suppressed.

There is a lot of material on the web; interested readers should Google raw eggs and read their fill.

We thank Dr MC for his email and advise caution to those who use raw eggs in any foods they prepare. If you haven't check out this issue before, do so now and be an informed person.