

Lessons of Absolute Value

Part of the title of this Lead Tidbit is borrowed from math. For those who need a refresher: The absolute value of a number is its numeric value without taking its sign into account. The absolute value of +7 (written $|+7|$) is 7, and the absolute value of -5 is 5. Put differently, the absolute value of a positive number is the number itself, and the absolute value of a negative number is the number itself, as well, meaning that it is also positive. Whereas if we add +7 and -5 we get +2, if we add the absolute values of +7 and -5, we get 12. When we add positive and negative numbers, the negatives make the sum smaller. But when we add the absolute values of numbers, even the negative numbers contribute to produce a higher sum.

Now let's borrow this concept and apply it to the lessons we learn from our forefathers and four mothers (pun intended). Because of Parshat Lech L'cha, we'll take Avraham Avinu as an example.

Avraham Avinu came to belief in the One G-d on his own. This, from an upbringing and environment of idolatry, paganism, Avoda Zara, that was almost universal during his early years. We do not have the same background and environment that Avraham had, but we certainly can and should learn from him by personalizing and internalizing belief in G-d with our own intellect and emotions, and let our commitment to Torah and Mitzvot be our own in addition to whatever we get from our more immediate forebearers. Recognizing the differences between FFBs, Baalei T'shuva, and Geirei Tzedek (people born into a Torah observant family, those who came to it despite their non-religious upbringings, and completely sincere and committed converts to Judaism), each one

goto p.4

In Israel
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Jerusalem Shabbat in/out times for Parshat Lech L'cha
4:31 pm / 5:43 pm (see page 3 for other zmanim)

ParshaPix Explanations on p.37



Word of the Month

First Kiddush L'vana (Minhag Yerushalayim) was Monday night, Oct. 11th.

7 day people and those who usually say KL on a Motza'ei Shabbat, will say (or will have said, depending upon when you are reading these words) KL on Motza'ei Shabbat Parshat Lech L'cha. Weather permitting. We are in that time of the year when our prayers for rainfall clash with our desire for a clear evening to be able to say KL. Perhaps if we ask for rain but with a brief break in the clouds for KL, we will merit the best of both factors.



Candles	Lech L'cha	Havdala	next week
4:31pm	Yerushalayim	5:43pm	4:24 / 5:36
4:49pm	S'derot	5:46pm	4:42 / 5:38
4:47pm	Gush Etzion	5:51pm	4:39 / 5:36
4:48pm	Raanana	5:44pm	4:40 / 5:37
4:48pm	Beit Shemesh	5:44pm	4:48 / 5:44
4:48pm	Rehovot	5:45pm	4:40 / 5:37
4:48pm	Netanya	5:44pm	4:40 / 5:37
4:47pm	Be'er Sheva	5:45pm	4:39 / 5:38
4:47pm	Modi'in	5:44pm	4:40 / 5:36
4:31pm	Petach Tikva	5:44pm	4:24 / 5:37
4:31pm	Maale Adumim	5:43pm	4:24 / 5:35
4:47pm	Geit Shomron	5:43pm	4:39 / 5:36
4:46pm	Gush Shiloh	5:43pm	4:38 / 5:35
4:47pm	K4 & Hevron	5:44pm	4:40 / 5:36
4:47pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:43pm	4:39 / 5:36
4:48pm	Yad Binyamin	5:45pm	4:40 / 5:37
4:49pm	Ashkelon	5:46pm	4:42 / 5:38
4:35pm	Tzfat	5:41pm	4:26 / 5:34
4:47pm	Zichron Yaakov	5:44pm	4:39 / 5:36

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - Lech L'cha - 6:18pm

Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
5-14 Marcheshvan (Oct 13-22)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	4:51-4:57am
Sunrise	5:41-5:48am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 7:57-7:59am)	8:33-8:35am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:00-9:01am)	9:30-9:31am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:25½-11:23¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	11:56-11:54am
Plag Mincha	3:57¼-3:49¼pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 5:09-4:59pm)	5:14-5:04pm

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LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

has his/her own challenges and different levels of difficulty. But it is not easy for anyone. So many people say, Sure I believe. But how deep and how personal and how complete is that belief - that's the real question.

There are many more things to emulate from Avraham's deeds. Let's not forget the name of the sedra - LECH L'CHA. Avraham received a direct command from G-d to leave his homeland and go to the future Eretz Yisrael. He is certainly not the only Jew to receive that command. In fact, every Jew that does not already live in Eretz Yisrael receives that command from G-d - repeatedly, in many places in the Torah. "G-d said to Avraham..." G-d talked directly to Avraham Avinu. He talks to each of us via His Torah.

Here is not the place and now is not the time to enumerate all of the p'sukim that show us clearly what G-d wants of us. Suffice it to say that He wants us to follow Him, to keep the Torah and Mitzvot, to live in Eretz Yisrael. Avraham did all of the above in an exemplary fashion. It is our task and sacred goal to do the same.

So far, we have positive behavior to follow. Now to apply the absolute Value rule to lessons from Avraham Avinu.

Avraham was confronted by a famine in the Land and he decided to go down to Egypt rather than stay and suffer.

Shall we emulate that? Ramban does

not seem to think so. Ramban says that Avraham sinned a great sin, albeit on a Shogeg level (inadvertently), by leaving the Land to which G-d had sent him. Even those commentaries who do not use such strong language as the Ramban, "admit" that it is not a proper thing to have done... or to do. So here, maybe is a negative lesson. Something not to emulate, but something to learn from nonetheless. If we can learn what not to do, in addition to what yes to do, then we turn the negative into a positive and it adds to the sum total, rather than subtract from it.

Should Avraham have risked Sara's life and honor by asking her to say that they were brother and sister? Again, the Ramban says that it was a wrong thing to have done. Another negative experience to turn into a positive lesson - not by copying it, but by recognizing that it is not the proper thing to do.

Not only was Avraham a strong, total believer in G-d, but he didn't keep it to himself - he was the first Jew into KIRUV. If you have discovered the truth, do not keep it to yourself; inspire others to also make that discovery.

What Avraham did to save his estranged nephew Lot! Family is important. Care and concern for others is important. We shouldn't blindly copy the deeds of our forebearers, ancient or recent. We should learn all our lessons from them well.

He took with one O and with two

Words spelled VAV-YUD-SHIN-VET occur over 200 times in Tanach. Only one is VAYA-SHEIV (B'rei. 15:11). And he drove them away.

If it were checkers, how many were already removed?

He had no teacher's aide or teaching assistant; he was...

וְיִהְיֶה בְרַכְּבָהּ: - and you shall be a blessing. The syllables are VEH and YEL. The SH'VA under the HEI is NACH and the HEI is sounded like a MAPIK. (Not VEYEI and not V'HEYEI)

In honor of the baseball playoff games and the upcoming World Series... Outfield, infield, left field, center field, right field = שְׂדֵה חִיצוֹן, שְׂדֵה פְּנִימִי, שְׂדֵה מִצְרָיִם, שְׂדֵה שְׂמָאלִי

Laughter in his and his son's name

318 > 300 + 1 + 70 + 3 > 60 + 70 + 1 + 90 + 2

Obama's desired multilingual outcome

We read of all three this Shabbat

☞ Some manage to gain some semblance of order in their own lives only to fall into all their old blunders in attempting to live through their children

☞ It is not so much wasting our time that we mind, as being aware of the fact that we are doing so.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

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Lech L'cha stats

3rd sedra of 54;

3rd of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 208 lines in a 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

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.

This week's LECH L'CHA is only the first of two that G-d commanded Avraham. The phrase occurs again with G-d's words to Avraham leading up to the Akeida.

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 (requirement) 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. In other words, not only can one violate (most) mitzvot to save himself, one may also violate mitzvot to save someone else.

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 again 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 a different 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, HISHTADLUS 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... they seem to have made the Lot choice.)

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 title 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 men-

tion 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 shoestraps 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.

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...

Notice that the previous pasuk told us that Avra(ha)m was 86 years old, and the current pasuk "jumps" forward 13 years, to Avraham's being 99 years of age. What happened during those years that are contained in the tiny blank space between these two p'sukim? The answer - or the point - is

Trivia: At least 23 of the 50 US states have a city, town, village, or other census-designated place named SALEM. Arkansas has two Salems. The largest Salem is in Oregon, its capital, with a population just under 150,000. Many countries around the world have Salems too. There are also many New Salems.

that whatever took place during those 13 years (and other periods of the lives of the Avot and Imahot that the Torah doesn't tell us about) has nothing to teach us. No point in telling us.

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

If mayors were kings... Janet Taylor

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.

- Note that the gimatriya of the word B'BIT is 612. Add the one mitzva of MILA for a total of 613. We can say that the mitzva of circumcision combines the single mitzva of MILA with a commitment to educate and bring the child up to know, love, and observe the other 612 mitzvot, for a grand total that represents the complete Torah. This echoes the idea that G-d asked Avraham to become complete before Him, and that Mila is the sign of that completeness.

[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 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.

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.

Divrei Menachem

Parshat Lech L'cha relates how Avraham was very laden with livestock, silver and gold while his nephew Lot - who lived nearby - also owned flocks, cattle, and tents. In consequence, "there was quarreling," between the shepherds of the respective landowners, leading Avraham to suggest to Lot that, "there not be strife between me and you."

Our rabbis were quick to notice the consecutive terms employed by the Torah to describe the feuding between the shepherds. The first describes the dispute as a RIV, a quarrel. The implication is that this was a somewhat passing, spontaneous, and local argument between competing shepherds eyeing the same pastures for their flock.

However, the term MERIVA employed by Avraham implies a major confrontation, a conflagration of tempers that erupts into a major feud and a continuous, untenable state of strife between families. The conflict between the workers had now spread to the landowners, affecting no less than the respective heads of the clan.

From little acorns do oak trees grow; from minor altercations, wars may stem. No wonder that the Shelah HaKadosh remarked that the switch from the masculine form for argument (RIV) to the feminine term MERIVA clearly indicates the fertile, and negative, consequences of baseless argument.

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *May I bake together uncovered chicken and fish (not for a milk meal) in an oven?*

ANSWER: The Gemara (Pesachim 76b) says that one should not eat fish that was roasted together with meat because of the danger of leprosy. The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 116:2) codifies this in regard to eating meat and fish together. The Rama adds not to roast meat along with fish because of reicha (the aroma) but says that if this was already done, the food is not forbidden.

Your case seems to be like the Rama's. The idea behind his compromise is as follows. In the context of roasting kosher and non-kosher foods together (Yoreh Deah 108:1) and baking bread near meat with the intention of eating the bread with milk (ibid. 97:3) we say that roasting things near each other facilitates only minor taste transfer (reicha) between the foods. While these situations are to be avoided, food does not become forbidden without more direct contact, including by cooking in the same pot, when the process produces zeiah (significant water vapor) in the oven, or when the foods touch. While one should avoid even roasting meat and fish together in an oven, it is fine if one of them is covered reasonably well (Shulchan Aruch, YD 108:1).

Even in your case, there is room for leniency as we will explain. The Maharshal (Chulin 7:15) allows one to roast meat and fish together in one oven, at least in a relatively large oven (like most of ours). He claims, based on the Rambam (Maachalot Assurot 9:23) that the prohibition referred to cooking the two together in one pot, whereas in one oven there is no danger. The Taz (116:2-3) cites the Maharshal but relies on his leniency only in regard to bread baked in the same oven with meat to be eaten with fish (not fish and meat together). The Shach (YD 116:1) cites the Maharshal leniency regarding our case as well, apparently even in a small oven. On the other hand, he also cites an opinion that it is forbidden even b'dieved (after the fact) without clearly favoring one opinion. There is an agreed upon issue regarding meat and fish that is more lenient than regarding matters of standard "religious" prohibitions: one can use the same utensils for meat and fish (Taz 116:2). In other words, not in all cases of transference is there deemed to be danger. On the other hand, there are opinions that we are stricter for meat and fish than we are regarding standard prohibitions, based on the rule that "danger is more severe than prohibitions." See the Pitchei Teshuva (YD 116:3) who cites various opinions as to whether to apply the rule of nullification by 60 in this context.

As far as the propriety of following the lenient opinion, it seems that we have to decide how severely the concern of

danger should be viewed. For one, is there an issue of a Torah law? Rav Kook (Da'at Kohein 55) writes that the prohibition to inflict on oneself a non-life-threatening danger is only rabbinic. Rav O. Yosef (Yabia Omer I, YD 8) says that while it is forbidden from the Torah to damage oneself, it is only rabbinically forbidden to eat meat and fish, as it only creates the possibility of mishap. Both see the rabbinic status as reason to rule leniently (each in their own context). Furthermore, many notice the Rambam's (the famous rabbi/physician) apparent ignoring of this halacha. The Magen Avraham (173:1) sees this as support for his suggestion that the danger is not prevalent in our times and places. The Chatam Sofer (II, 101) raises an additional possibility that it applies only to a specific species of fish. (There is a rejected opinion that it does not apply to fowl - see Pitchei Teshuva, YD 116:2). While few go as far as ignoring the idea of not mixing meat and fish, many poskim factor these opinions in when looking for leniency in gray areas.

Therefore, while it is halachically safer to not roast meat and fish uncovered in the same oven, it seems reasonable to do so in a regular, large oven when there is a need.

The name Avraham occurs 175 times in Tanach (Avram occurs 61 times).
Avraham lived 175 years.
Coincidence? Maybe. Maybe not.

"BOTH A LENDER AND A BORROWER BE"

(part two)

THE CHALLENGE OF MONEY

by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

"One who lends his money at interest transgresses SIX Biblical injunctions, the borrower transgresses three, the witnesses, the one who stands surety or is a scribe, transgress two mitzvot, while an agent or a middleman [like them] transgresses V'LIFNEI IVEIR" (Hilkhos Malveh v'Loveh 4:2). The Rambam stipulates that all those connected with the act of interest, whether they benefit thereby or are merely facilitators, act contrary to the Torah's well-known injunctions. It is important to try and understand the ideology that lies at the source of these injunctions.

At the outset, it should be clear that the injunction against interest earned on monetary loans is not an anti-capitalist ideology. Halachically, it is permissible to earn a return [interest, rent, rental] on capital in the form of land, houses, draught animals, machinery, equipment, and even in the form of knowledge and technology; however, it is only on capital in the form of money that the Torah forbids earning interest. Furthermore, the rate of interest is halachically irrelevant. It is the element of charity and benevolence that is involved here, rather than any anti-wealth philosophy or acts of robbery and fraud. While one may

declare property hefker in order to save the thief from sinning, a borrower may not waive the protection that the Torah's injunction against ribit gave him.

"If your brother becomes poor you shall support him. Take no interest from him and fear your G-d, and your brother shall live with you. I am HaShem your G-d who took you out of Eretz Mitzrayim to give you the land of Canaan, to be your G-d" (Vayikra 25:33-35). "The use of interest is beneficial both to borrower and lender. 'Your brother shall live with you applies to both of them" Torah Temima). These verses in Vayikra prohibiting interest follow those regarding Sh'mita and Yovel and must be seen in the same ideological light. In the former, usually permitted economic activity is to be superseded by a spiritual dimension while the latter forbids the permanent transfer of ownership of real estate. So too, here an otherwise lawful, legitimate economic act beneficial to both sides, is forbidden so that brothers in the Holy Nation could become a kingdom of Priests.

Amongst Jews and non-Jews alike, the permission to borrow and to lend interest-bearing loans from non-Jews, has been held as a prime example of a double standard of morality and even of racist discrimination. However, in reality, this permission is perhaps the best proof that interest is not evil per se, but only forbidden between Jews because the Torah said so. This distinction does not exist in any of the

laws dealing with intrinsically evil or immoral acts. Both Jew and non-Jew are forbidden to worship idols and to rob, steal or kill, all of which are intrinsically evil and immoral, are forbidden whether done to Jew or non-Jew alike. G'NEIVAT DAAT applies to both, as does V'LIFNEI IVEIR. Jews are obligated to extend tzedaka to the non-Jewish poor alongside the Jewish ones.

If there is nothing immoral with interest-bearing loans and it is mutually beneficial, why did the Torah forbid them to Jews? This is an injunction that is purely an expression of the Divine demand for acts of mercy and righteousness geared to refining and purifying Israel. This is shown in the linkage in Vayikra between the Exodus and this injunction. The Exodus teaches G-d's mastery both over the forces of nature and the affairs of men. From it people have to realize and acknowledge that He provides for the needs of all His Creatures, so that, while they increase their economic wealth through their own efforts, G-d is really the source and owner. One who lends money at interest does so because of the worry that there will not be enough for his future otherwise. He thereby shows that he does not trust in G-d's bounty; the interest charged is a sign of refusal to do for others the acts of mercy that G-d granted him, thereby denying Yetziat Mitzrayim.

The Rosh and Rabbi Yosef Karo did not place the laws of ribit in their logical place together with those of borrowing and lending, as Rambam

did. They placed them in Yoreh Deah together the laws against idolatry, those of kashrut and those of nida. "This is because just as those things are not kosher so too is this money of ribit" (Menachem Mendel of Kotsk). □

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

LECH L'CHA

Walking with and Walking before

When I was still a pulpit rabbi back in Baltimore, I would meet with a group of teenagers from time to time. The agenda was open-ended, and my goal was to encourage the group to share their feelings and attitudes freely. One of the favorite topics chosen by the kids was their school curriculum and what they found wrong with it.

I learned many things from this group of adolescents, whose critique of the curricula of the schools they attended was sharp and accurate. I particularly remember the outburst of one exceptionally creative young man. Let us call him Josh. He was a student in a very academically oriented high school which put its major emphasis upon textual study. "What am I supposed to do with my creativity", he asked. "Where is there room in the school for me to express my artistic talents?"

I was hard-pressed to come up with an answer for Josh's pained query. All I could say was that he was personally experiencing a tension which pervades the history of our religious faith. It is the tension between conformity to the rules and regulations of our sacred texts versus the natural and powerful human need for creative expression and innovation.

Our religion reveres tradition and continuity. Attempts to question tradition and to stake out new spiritual turf have been typically viewed in our history as heresy and rebellion. Is there no room for creative novelty in our faith?

I think that there is room for such creativity, and I think that it is none other than Avraham himself who is the first example in the Torah of innovative ingenuity, within the context of religious service.

In this week's Torah portion, Lech L'cha, we find God Himself describing Avraham as one who "walks before Me", HIT-HALEICH L'FANAI... (B'reishit 17:1). Our Sages contrast this description of Avraham with an earlier description of No'ach, to be found in last week's Torah portion. There we read, "No'ach walked with God", ET HA-ELOKIM (6:9). No'ach walked with God, Avraham walked before Him.

No'ach walked with God and required Divine support to live his religious life. He was not able to walk before God. He could not take the initiative and strike out on his

own. He needed to be certain of God's will before he could act.

Avraham, on the other hand, walked before God. He stepped out on his own and risked acting independently and creatively. He was confident in his own religious judgment and did not require God's prior approval for all of his actions. Indeed, he dared to challenge God's own judgment.

Thus, we never find No'ach speaking out in defense of his generation, nor does he pray for their salvation. Avraham, on the contrary, forcefully defends sinful Sodom and Amora and prays even for his adversaries.

Of Moshe too, it can be said that he walked before God. He broke the tablets on his own initiative, and, according to our Sages, added a day to God's own timetable for giving the Torah. In both cases, we are told that G-d congratulated him for his bold creative actions.

I remember reading an anecdote about Rav Kook, the first chief Rabbi of the Holy Land, which illustrates his preference for the creative genius over the person who just conforms. Rav Kook once had to decide a halachic issue by resolving a disagreement between two great Talmudic authorities. The dispute was between the author of Darchei T'shuva, a monumental anthology of halachic dicta, and the Maharsham, who authored many volumes in response to questions arising from the circumstances of new technological inventions.

Rav Kook decided in favor of the

Maharsham over Darchei T'shuva. He argued that whereas the latter was a gaon me'asef, a genius at recording the opinions of others, the former was a gaon yotzeir, an inventive genius. Creative authority trumped the expert anthologist.

One of the areas of psychology which has always fascinated me has been the research on the phenomenon of human creativity. One line of that research suggests that there are two modes of thought of which we are all capable, although some of us are better at one and some are better at the other.

There are those of us who are convergent thinkers. Our ideas connect and ultimately merge with the ideas of our predecessors and peers. Others think divergently, and their ideas veer from earlier norms and carve out new paths and different solutions.

The contrast between Avraham and No'ach suggests that although Avraham was the model of ultimate obedience to God's will, he nevertheless was capable of divergent thinking. He was able to walk before God. No'ach, however, could only think convergently and, figuratively speaking, needed to hold God's hand.

It is important that we realize that creativity is not at odds with spirituality and with faithful adherence to meticulous religious observance. We must not be afraid of our own powers of creative thinking.

The realization that there is a place for creativity in the worship of the

Almighty is especially essential for those who are responsible for the curricula of our educational institutions. They must be on guard never to stifle the wonderful creative impulses which typify youth. They must cultivate those impulses and allow for their expression within our tradition. And we must allow for the development of contemporary Avrahams, and not be satisfied to raise a generation of mere No'achs.

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

BRCA and Shidduchim

In our previous column we wrote about genetic testing for the BRCA mutation, which is associated with certain types of cancer. Since it is a dominant - not recessive - gene, a woman who tests positive will know that she is at higher risk of contracting the disease. Testing, then, can encourage a woman who is at high risk due to family history to adopt a more healthful lifestyle, thereby possibly preventing occurrence of the disease.

The question now is: Must a woman who has been tested and found to be a carrier of the BRCA mutation reveal this information when introduced to a potential shidduch?

The answer depends on our approach: Do we view BRCA as a 'blemish', since there is a higher probability that such a woman will contract cancer? Or is it unfair to label the mutation a

'blemish' since it in itself is not a disease, but rather, a risk factor? In essence one could argue that being at higher risk for contracting a disease does not drastically change a woman's actual status, since it is not at all certain that she will get ill - just as there is no guarantee that someone who is healthy today will remain so, or that people who are not high risk will not become ill.

Another related question is whether one ought to dissolve a marriage if he were to discover that his wife was a BRCA carrier, a fact he did not know beforehand.

It is important to stress that there is no blanket rule: Every case is different and needs to be examined on its own. In certain societies, BRCA is considered a serious condition and a 'blemish' in a shidduch, and serious enough to warrant the dissolution of a marriage. In such a case, the pertinent information must be revealed to a potential shidduch. In other societies, while being a BRCA carrier would certainly be considered serious, it would not be grounds for divorce, and therefore need not be revealed before a shidduch.

Again, every case needs to be examined individually. While it may not be required, it is obviously commendable to share relevant information before getting married for the sake of trust and honesty and the well-being of the relationship. This must be done with appropriate guidance, wisdom and sensitivity.

Praying with Passion

Giving more meaning to our T'fillah
• One Week at a Time

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Birchot HaShachar

(part eight)

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, המעביר שנה מעיני ותנומה מעפעפי. ויהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, שתרגילנו בתורתך, ודבקנו במצותיך, ואל תביאנו לא לידי חטא, ולא לידי עברה ועון, ולא לידי נסיון, ולא לידי בזיון, ואל תשלט בנו יצר הרע. והרחיקנו מאדם רע ומחבר רע. ודבקנו בקצור הטוב ובמעשים טובים, וכוחך את יצרנו להשתעבד לך. ותננו היום, ובכל יום, לחן ולחסד ולרחמים בעיניך, ובעיני כל רואינו, ותגמלנו חסדים טובים. ברוך אתה ה', גומל חסדים טובים לעמו ישראל.

Translation:

Blessed are You, HaShem our God, King of the Universe, Who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids. And may it be Your will, HaShem our God and God of our ancestors, to accustom us to Your Torah, and make us attached to Your commandments. Lead us not into error, transgression, iniquity, temptation or disgrace. Do not let the evil instinct dominate us. Keep us far from a bad man and a bad companion. Help us attach ourselves to the good instinct and to good deeds and bend our instincts to be subservient to You. Grant us, this day and every day, grace, loving-kindness and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us, and bestow loving-kindness upon us. Blessed are You, HaShem, who bestows loving-kindness on His people Israel.

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

How to Avoid Sin

Hashem will help us in our effort to avoid sinning against Him.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

Why We Need Hashem's Help

The Gemara teaches that everything is in the hands of Heaven except for fear of Heaven (spiritual matters) *B'rachot 33b* - that is in the hands of Man.

It would seem, then, that in our effort to steer clear of transgression, we are on our own. We must do it ourselves, for that is the one factor of our lives that Hashem has left in our control. Of what use is it, in that case, to pray to Hashem, "Do not bring us into the power of error or the power of transgression"?

The Maharsha answers this question, by citing Chazal's (Yoma 38b; Hilchot T'shuva 6:5) promise that, "One who comes to purify himself receives siyata d'Shmaya - Divine assistance, and without Divine assistance it is impossible to withstand temptation."

The person praying for spiritual assistance is, in effect, coming to purify himself, and will receive Heavenly assistance that enables him to ascend far beyond his personal spiritual limitations.

Rav Matisyahu Salomon explains that a prayer for help in this area, when said with sincerity, can be the fulfillment of the phrase "haba l'taheir - he who comes to purify [himself]." That is because someone who deeply desires purity expresses that desire by praying

for it. He "comes to purify himself" and merits Heaven's help. Therefore, prayer appears to be the key to success.

Prayer is a preventive medicine that inoculates against a myriad of sins. Rav Chaim Volozhin taught his students that prayer could protect them from encountering such challenges as anger, lashon hara, looking at improper things, and other sins which may cross one's path uninvited. He advised, "Pray before there is a misfortune, because that ... is what will save [the person] from the test..."

In the spiritual realm, we all try, but we do not always succeed. The factor that provides the leverage - the extra help in lifting ourselves up by our own bootstraps, is *Siyata d'Shmaya*, help from Heaven. When we pray that Hashem should "not put us in the power of sin", we pray that our efforts to live good, righteous lives will be rewarded with His help. Without it, we know that our efforts can easily dissipate into thin air, resulting in nothing more than frustration.

But because this prayer tells us that we are not alone in our efforts, it always behooves us to keep trying. King Solomon (Mishlei 24:16) said, "The Tzaddik falls seven times and rises." He gets up each time he falls and he tries again, until finally, Hashem brings him to a level beyond that which his own power could ever achieve.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Wandering Into Dangerous Territory

Aryeh arrives in Yerushalayim for his first year as a student there. He gets settled and, eager to explore, sets out with his friend Gershon for a long walk through the busy streets and into the Old City. They walk and talk, absorbing the atmosphere, not realizing that they are wandering into a neighborhood that seems distinctly hostile.

Some Arabs begin yelling words at them which, while they cannot understand them, are clearly not words of greeting. Which way should they turn to get out of this neighborhood? If they try to reverse their route, they will have to walk by all those who are now staring so menacingly at them. They look at the street to their left, the one to their right and the path straight ahead. They choose a right turn that seems to lead to a wider, more populated street where maybe they will be a little safer.

What they don't know is that every other direction would have led them to certain disaster. The crowd behind them was discussing what they might be able to achieve in ransom, should they grab these boys off the street. The path to the left would have led them to a gang of young thugs who would have robbed them and probably knifed them as well. Straight ahead, just out of view, was an anti-Israel demonstration. The path they chose led them to an IDF soldier there on a

security mission, who directed them safely out of the neighborhood.

Like these boys, we know the world is filled with dangers – spiritual dangers – into whose clutches we can easily wander.

We pray that Hashem will guide our path to circumvent these temptations and tests of our spiritual fortitude, for without His guidance, we can easily lose our bearings.

CHIZUK AND IDUD
*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael -
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

What is it about Avraham Avinu that makes him the ultimate role model of the Oleh?

There is a fascinating midrash that defines the eighth trial of Avraham as follows: When Avraham was 99 years old, Hashem instructed him to "walk before me and be perfect". I.e. the challenge was not the circumcision per se; it was the fact that he had to undertake a new path at such a late stage of life.

After successfully completing the eighth trial, he was labeled perfect by God. Yet he went on to face two more challenges - including Akeidat Yitzchak!

Let us turn our attention to his wife, Sara. The Midrash, states that Sara was as beautiful at 20 as she had been at seven.

On the surface, this is a very strange statement. Is it really praise to say of a 20-year-old woman that she looks like a seven-year-old?

Upon reflection, the meaning is clear. There is a beauty to a child that most adults do not possess. It is the fact that they are constantly meeting new challenges, evolving and growing. Sara possessed this beauty even as an adult, just like Avraham.

When it was time for Bnei Yisrael to enter the Land of Israel, the majority of our great leaders failed and brought about one of the gravest of sins of Jewish History, Cheit HaMeraglim. Its essence was the failure to face new challenges and to grow. They refused to move forward from the existence of the wilderness to that of Eretz Yisrael.

The paradigm for what was needed then, and now, is Avraham, who throughout his life moved from plateau to plateau, ever forward.

Aliyah requires embracing change, i.e. growth. This is the road travelled by Avraham and Sara. It is the true path of the Jew.

R. Yitzchak Twersky, Neve Daniel

Towards Better Kashrut Awareness

Articles on various aspects of kosher supervision, from the OU "home office" written by Rabbi Dovid Bistricher, Rabbinic Coordinator, OU Kashrut

Let's examine a situation, that requires some "kashrus street smarts"...

On an exceptionally hot day, you wander around looking for something cool that will help you beat the heat. You happen to notice an attractive looking franchise ice cream store with a multicolored appearance, which should certainly do the job. Excitedly entering the store, you anxiously begin to search for the kosher certificate that is supposed to be in the window, but somehow magically isn't. Apprehensive and somewhat impatient, you approach the smiling man behind the counter with the all important question, "Are you kosher?" The man's smile grows slightly wider and confidently responds, "Of course! Plenty of kosher Jewish people eat our ice cream". Not satisfied, a desperate dialogue ensues, "Well, where's the kosher letter?", "Letter? The ice cream is OU", "No, I meant a kosher certificate", "Certificate? No problem!" The man pulls out a few papers that appear to be a kosher certificate covering the multitude of ice cream varieties the store claims to be selling. After taking a quick look at the kosher letter, it's time buy some ice cream and cool off...

STOP! Let's analyze this situation for a minute. The store itself does not appear to be under any sort of kashrus supervision. This should immediately be cause for concern. The man behind the

counter is making a claim that the ice cream is kosher, but accepting his word just because he says the ice cream is kosher and has a copy of a kosher certificate in his possession is not enough. Whether or not the ice cream is kosher and was originally made under hashgacha can only be confirmed by actually seeing a siman kashrus. It is entirely within the realm of possibility that even if some of the ice creams sold at the store were actually made under a reliable hashgacha, the store may sell other flavors side by side that aren't kosher.

But let's assume that the certificate will be looked at responsibly and carefully and matched with a tub that has a kosher symbol. Is that sufficient? There still could be other potential areas of concern. This includes: a) shared ice cream scoops between kosher and possibly non-kosher tubs, b) toppings (syrops, etc.) that would definitely require hashgacha, and c) if an ice cream cone is preferred over an unexciting plastic cup/dish, this would also require hashgacha.

It is very easy sometimes to make a mistaken assumption that if the store displays or show you a kosher certificate that it covers the store. This is not correct, as they may just be presenting a letter of the ice cream manufacturer that they have gotten a hold of. The kosher letter would not cover anything more than what appears on it, which may not include all the other kinds of ice cream sold at the store or any of the "extras".

If the kosher certificate is read carefully enough, the language of the letter will clearly indicate whether it covers the actual store, or is a letter of a manufac-

Maharal on the Sedra **Miracles are Made to Appear Natural**

B'reishit 14:14 - And he armed his 318 acolytes, and gave chase as far as Dan.

Rashi: Acolytes refers to Eliezer, whose numerical value is 318.

Gur Arye: In his terse midrashic note, Rashi hints at the meaning of the war of the 4 kings and the 5 kings and Avraham's divinely aided, measured response. Avraham's pursuit and conquest of the kings was due to his exalted status. The four kings were external forces coming from four sides to oppose Avraham and his message, monotheism and ethics. He was the basis and root of civilization, unique and singular. In opposition were the four sides or extremities, deviant aspects of reality, represented by the four kings.

Avraham had a servant Eliezer who fittingly had an exalted status in servitude to match his master's uniqueness. These two, without the help of another person, were capable of defeating the enemy. However, they did not want something natural to appear miraculous, and also the enemy would take strength from the small number opposing them. A miracle can be strengthened through natural means. So he took his acolytes, but he took the exact number as Eliezer's gematria. He did not need them, but he did not want the victory to appear as a naked miracle, and he wanted the meaning and essence of Eliezer, that is, "my God helps," to be hidden in his force of acolytes.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr

Parsha Points to Ponder **LECH L'CHA**

1) Why does G-D simply begin speaking to Avraham the first time He revealed Himself to him (12:1) instead of first appearing to him and then speaking as he does with all other people?

2) Why does G-D say AND I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU and then finish the phrase with AND THOSE WHO CURSE YOU I WILL CURSE (12:3) instead of being consistent and ending with AND I WILL CURSE THOSE WHO CURSE YOU?

3) How can the Torah say that Avraham was 75 years old when he left Charan (12:4)? There were 30 years between brit bein habitarim (the covenant between the parts) and the birth of Yitzchak (based on explanation of the 430/400 years timing of the Egyptian experience) and Avraham was 100 at the birth of Yitzchak. This means that he was 70 at the covenant which took place after he left Charan so he could not have been 75 when he left Charan!

Parsha Points to Ponder by **Rabbi Dov Lipman**

teacher at Reishit Yerushalayim and Machon Maayan in Beit Shemesh; author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and Adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith" (Feldheim); "TIMEOUT: Sports Stories as a Game Plan for Spiritual Success" (Devora); "SEDER SAWY" (Targum)
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Answers are elsewhere in this issue • Ponder the Qs first, then...

ture that has been misappropriated and is being misused. In the case of the latter, consumers should be aware that the hashgachos whose letters may be presented at the store do not endorse the kashrus of the store. When made aware of this kind of situation, a responsible hechsher will follow up and contact the store to ensure that they stop misrepresenting themselves as under their kosher supervision.

To be continued...

Ed. note: If the scenario presented in this kashrut article seems more likely in the States than in Israel, you might be right. But don't think that similar things don't occur in Israel. A while ago, I was in the Central Bus Station in Be'er Sheva. I found a falafel store with a hashgacha that was tastefully framed and mounted on the back wall of the store. I asked about the kashrut of the store and the proprietor pointed to the framed certificate. Something compelled me to ask for a closer look. A request that I was reluctantly granted by the fellow behind the counter. What I saw was a kashrut letter concerning the ice cream that was sold in the store. No word about the falafel - neither wholly nor for any of the ingredients. The falafel store had NO kashrut supervision and was passing itself off as certified kosher with a misleading framed certificate that was intentionally placed at a distance from customers that made it unreadable to all but Superman with his super-vision. (No pun intended to kashrut supervision.)

In another case (in Jerusalem), a candy store with a large, conspicuous BADATZ emblem over its door sold many varieties of candy, most of which was Badatz, some of which had other hashgachot, and

a few types were definitely not kosher. When challenged, the storekeeper defended his use of the Badatz emblem by saying that MOST of the candies were indeed under Badatz supervision. And most of the candies that did not have a Badatz had some other hashgacha. "And what about this candy, which is treif?"

His response? "I don't sell that candy to people; if they want, they buy it from me."

Great answer, no?

Bottom line: Look for a kashrut certificate. If you don't see one, ask about it. When it is shown to you, read it. Don't assume anything, even if religious people patronize the store or restaurant. Be an alert & knowledgeable kosher consumer.

ParshaPix explanations

- Arrow from the birthday stuff into Eretz Yisrael is Lech L'cha... MiMoladt'cha... (from your birthplace)
- Arrows from Eretz Yisrael to the south-west and back again is the round trip to & from Egypt.
- Compass on the map of Israel is for G-d's instructions to Avraham to walk the Land, its length and breadth, and in all directions.
- Arrows branching in opposite directions was Avraham's offered choice to Lot when they separated.
- Avraham's oath before the king of S'dom, that he would not even

take a thread or a shoelace.

- ✈ Telescope and stars stand for G-d's taking Avraham outside to see the stars and to promise that his descendants will be as countless as the stars.
- ✈ Crowns represent the war of the five kings against the four.
- ✈ Father with his little son represents Brit Mila.
- ✈ Tent that Avraham pitched a few times in the sedra.
- ✈ Brit Bein HaB'tarim, with each split animal accompanied by a triangle, standing for the adjective M'SHULASH or M'SHULESHET. There are different understandings of the term - see Sedra Summary
- ✈ The bird above the "split" animals was not cut.
- ✈ Liver, as in KAVEID (in Hebrew), a word meaning "heavy" and applied in Lech L'cha to the famine as well as to Avraham's wealth when he left Egypt.
- ✈ Anvil, hammer, nails are from the haftara.
- ✈ CBS logo, an EYE as in the city AI, mentioned many times in the book of Yehoshua, but once in LECH LECHA as well.
- ✈ Hagar the Horrible, at least spelled in English like Hagar, if not exactly pronounced the same way.
- ✈ Superman, played by the late actor Christopher Reeve, as in the RIV

between the shepherds of Avraham and those of Lot.

- ✈ The leaves to Superman's left are from the European nettle tree, which is also known as European Hackberry or Lote tree (*Celtis australis*). The reason it is in the ParshaPix is because of that last name, Lote (obviously).
- ✈ The digital alarm clock with the time 3:18, for the number of people Avraham took with him to fight to save Lot. Or just Eliezer, gimatriya 318. Perhaps Avraham launched the rescue mission at that time of the early morning, for maximum surprise value. Or not.
- ✈ Seder plate reminds us of the prophecy of going down to Egypt.
- ✈ CDs are for EIMEK HA-SIDIM.
- ✈ ESHKOL (cluster of grapes),
- ✈ A NEIR (a candle),
- ✈ and a MEM-RAY are for Avraham's three allies.
- ✈ In the upper-right are the letters R and W. However, the W in that particular font looks like the Hebrew letter SHIN, giving - right to left - SHINAR, the kingdom (probably a city-state) of Amrafel, one of the four kings who joined to wage war against the five kings.
- ✈ Below that is a blue-ribbon winning lamb, which can be called an A-LAM, for the kingdom of K'DARLA'OMER, another of the

four kings.

- ✈ Skipping the next two images - which go together, and are a Visual TTriddle for you to solve, we get to the three doors crossed out and an arrow pointing to the DOR R'VI'I, the fourth generation that is mentioned in the Covenant between the Pieces, the generation that will return to the land, following the exile in Egypt.
- ✈ We'll leave the pictogram in the lower-right unexplained, making it a visual TTriddle too.

Speaking of visual TTriddles and Unexplaineds... even though the TTriddles Report this week is quite a bit longer than usual, we forgot to include the explanations of last week's Unexplaineds.

🌀 The picture was of a ringing alarm clock and the hint we offered was: **The sound of the alarm clock** In the haftara for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, we find the phrase, KOL SHA'ON MEI-IR, a tumultuous sound comes from the city... However, if we switch the ALEF of SHA'ON with the AYIN of MEI-IR, as is hinted to by the switch of the A and O from alarm and clock, we get another KOL SHA'ON MEI-IR, the sound of a clock that wakes people up.

🌀 And then there was the letter o and the numeral 4. If you read the numeral in Yiddish, but keep the latter in English, you get OFIR

(spelled in the Torah without a YUD in this one case), one of the 13 named sons of YOKTAN, son of PELEG ben EIVER ben SHE-LACH ben ARPACHSHAD ben SHEIM ben NO'ACH.



THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 535 (part three)

Jurisdiction of the Beit Din

With this lesson we will conclude the subject for now and the next lesson shall IYH begin a new topic.

When one maims another there are five elements of damages for which he may be liable. These are permanent injury, pain and suffering, embarrassment, loss of earnings, and medical expenses. We will now deal with the last two, loss of earnings and medical expenses.

Rambam (1135-1204), Laws of Sanhedrin 5:10 holds that non-ordained judges may award a judgment for loss of earnings and medical expenses, while Asheri (1250-1327, T. Baba Kama, 8:2) holds that they may not. The question arises as to the source of Rambam's holding that non-ordained judges may award judgments for loss of earnings and medical expenses. The Talmud does not expressly make such an exception when it says that injuries caused by one person to another are not judged by non-ordained judges since they do not occur frequently. Radvaz (1164-1574) answers that what Rambam means is that loss of earnings and medical

expenses are judged by non-ordained judges only in those cases where there is no permanent injury, since non-permanent injury cases are frequent occurrences. Although Alfasi (1013-1103) and Asheri both quote the Talmudic text neither expressly discusses the case of loss of earnings and medical payments to specify whether non-ordained judges have jurisdiction over them. There is a whole array of sources giving opinions as to what Rambam holds and to what they hold on this question. R' Yosef Karo, author of Shulhan Aruch (1488-1575) concludes that the law is as stated by Rambam since Rambam specifically includes loss of earnings and medical expenses in those cases over which non-ordained judges have jurisdiction. Rama in his opening words to Shulhan Aruch Choshen Mishpat in his emendations to Yosef Karo's code initially records the opinion that non-ordained judges may not award damages for loss of earnings and medical expenses. As to the status of the law, Rama writes that it is not the practice to have non-ordained judges make awards for loss of earnings and medical expenses. He adds that pressure is put upon the person who caused the injury to make such restitution as appears appropriate in the case. It appears that the best conclusion to be drawn from the many authorities (only a small fraction are cited above) and disputes in this matter, and analyses of the authorities: in accordance with the trend toward liberalizing the jurisdiction of non-ordained judges and its underlying rationale, non-ordained judges are permitted to award damages for loss of earnings and medical expenses both in cases where the injured person suffered

permanent injury and in cases where he did not. This is because both cases fulfill the jurisdictional requirements of frequency and monetary loss.

The Beit Din of non-ordained judges also has jurisdiction over cases in which it is alleged that the defendant is the indirect cause of the damages.

Portion from the Portion

On the Mountain

In the portion of Lech L'cha we meet the first of our three forefathers, Avraham. Throughout the book of B'reishit we will get to know these leaders better. We will see that each of our ancestors stood out in a different area and was known for different qualities.

This is what Rabbi Elazar tries to teach us in the Talmud (Pesachim 58.) when he explains the verse in Yeshayahu (2:3) that says, "To the House of the G-d of Yaakov, EL BEIT ELOKEI YAAKOV". He wants to know why it is called the house - BAYIT of the G-d of Yaakov - why specifically a house and why specifically Yaakov - why not one of the other fathers?

There he says the verse refers to the house of Yaakov because house signifies Yaakov's character. It does not say to the House of the G-d of Avraham because Avraham is more associated with the word mountain as the verse in B'reishit says that Avraham called the place "Hashem Yireh in the mountain of Hashem Yeira-eh" (22:14), and the verse didn't say to the house of Yitzchak because he is more associated with a field as

we see from the verse, Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field, VAYEITZEI YYITZCHAK LASUA'CH BASADEH (24:63). Rather, the verse said the house of the G-d of Yaakov because Yaakov is mentioned with a house as the verse in B'reishit says "he called the name of the place the house of G-d, BEIT-EL" (28:19).

This teaching from Rabbi Elazar leaves us with more questions than answers - but one thing is clear, that in some way each of our forefathers is different - Avraham is related more to a mountain, Isaac to a field and Yaakov to a house.

Chanan Porat in his commentary on B'reishit - ME-AT MIN HA'OR tries to explain what is unique about a mountain as compared to other geographical locations such as the plains or the valley and how that is related to our father Avraham. The mountain is very lofty. It requires great strength, determination and hard work to get to the top. But the person who puts in all that effort and succeeds is rewarded with clean fresh air and a beautiful view that he could never have had from any of the lower locations. Being on the mountains above everything else encourages one to look even higher and contemplate the universe. Avraham, after hearing G-d's call to him of LECH L'CHA, is the one who leaves his home in the lowlands and goes up OLEH to the land that Hashem will show him. Leaving his home requires not only a physical exertion but a spiritual journey as well. As we say in T'hilim (24:3-4) MI YAALEH B'HAR HASHEM? Who can ascend to the mountain of Hashem?

... A person who has clean hands, and a pure heart..." The mountain of Hashem is for a person who has perfected himself.

The mountain is uncultivated. It hasn't been planted like a field and no houses have been built on it. Dealing with the field and the house will be left for the other fathers, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Avraham is the one who ascends the mountain and becomes the lighthouse up high that signals to the world to follow him on this journey because up high in the mountain is where "BEHAR, HASHEM YEIRA-EH - In the mount Hashem will appear".

Now that it's winter time (sort of) there's a long night to have a nice Melave Malka. Here's a simple milky recipe related to the portion to serve then.

MOUNTAIN POTATOES

- 6 large potatoes
- 2 Tbsp oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ½ cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 6 Tbsp grated yellow cheese
- paprika to taste

Cook potatoes about 20 minutes till a fork inserted into potato goes in easily. Drain. Beat potatoes with fork or electric mixer till they are smooth. Add oil, salt, pepper, milk, and egg. Beat till light and fluffy. Spoon 6 mounds of mashed potatoes, each about 3 inches high, onto a baking sheet. Use a rubber spatula to shape the potatoes into a mountain. Use a spoon to make a crater at the top of

each. Fill each with a tablespoon of grated cheese. Bake till the cheese melts and browns lightly

And if we are talking about mountains - now is the time to sign up for Melabev's 7th Annual Walkathon, to be held Nov 23-25 in the Carmel mountain range where one can be truly inspired.

www.melabev.org/posts/243 If you can't make it for the whole walk join just for the moon-light walk in Nahal Kesalon or sponsor one of our walkers.

TTTRIDDLES

Last issue's (**NO'ACH**) TTtriddles:

Ed. note: I was going to put this note at the end of the TTtriddles report, but then it would be read only by people who usually read the TTtriddles report. This not is for you, who don't. TTtriddles are meant to challenge and are meant to be fun. The report in the following week's TT is not just to supply the answers; it is meant to teach all kinds of different things. Even if you don't try to solve TTtriddles (or even if you never notice them), these reports contain tidbits (pardon the term) of interest to the TTreader (we hope).

[1] Sukkot - 22 = Rosh Chodesh

On each day of Sukkot, we say full Hallel. For Rosh Chodesh, we subtract (skip) 22 p'sukim - the first 11 p'sukim of T'hilim chapters 115 and 116.

To elaborate: Hallel consists for 6 chapters of T'hilim: 113 (8 p'sukim), 114 (9), 115 (18=11+7), 116 (19=11+8), 117 (2 p'sukim - shortest perek in T'hilim, and in all of Tanach),

and 118 (29 p'ukim). Half Hallel (a misnomer), called Hallel B'Dilug (Hallel with skipping - a more accurate name), is said on days 2-7 of Pesach and on Rosh Chodesh (except for Tevet's Rosh Chodesh, which gets Chanuka's full Hallel, and Tishrei's Rosh Chodesh, which gets no Hallel because of Rosh HaShana). Since we've mentioned the 22 p'sukim that are skipped, we should mention (just to be fair and thorough) the p'sukim that are doubled or supplemented. All the extras are in perek 118, which runs from Hodu to Min Hameitzar to Ana HaShem and Baruch haba, Keil HaShem, Keli ata, and Hodu. Hodu LaShem Ki Tov... is added to the first four p'sukim. P'sukim 21-24 (Od'cha, Even, Mei-eit, and Zeh HaYom) are doubled. Each half of pasuk 25 (Ana HaShem Hoshi'a Na Ana HaShem Hatzlicha Na) is doubled. And the last four p'sukim are also doubled. Add a B'racha at the beginning and another (Y'hal'lucha) at the end, and you get HALLEL.

[2] Rosh Chodesh but the end of the sedra

The "Rosh" (head, first letter) of Chodesh is CHET. Said letter is the end of the word NO'ACH.

[3] wind blown oil

Wind is RU'ACH. Oil is SHEMEN. Blown is the clue to scramble the letters. If you do that correctly for RU'ACH and SHEMEN, you get the name of the month we started on Shabbat - MARCHESHVAN.

[4] The word that contained a name

Word in Hebrew is mila or TEIVA. Teiva also means box and is the term in the Torah for No'ach's ark. That TEIVA contained a person named SHEIM, which means "name".

[5] Math done last week, now you do it

This TTtriddle was answered in the Sedra Summary. There, it was pointed out that in Parshat B'reishit, the 10 generations from Adam to Noach were listed with age at which they first had a child, the number of years after that that they lived (and produced sons and daughters), and their total number of years. The Torah does the math. In Parshat No'ach, the 10 generations from No'ach to Avraham are named, their age when they first had children, and the number of years they lived after that. If you want to know how long PELEG lived, for example, you have to add 30 years (at which age his son R'U was born) to the 209 years he lived after R'U was born and come up with 239 years, on your own. You do the math.

If any TTreaders have seen an explanation as to why there is a difference, or if anyone has a theory of his/her own - please let us know (tt@ou.org). We don't really think this is the answer, but how about this: In B'reishit, the Torah is teaching us basic arithmetic; in No'ach, we get a quiz to see if we learned last week's lesson. Just being flippant - looking for a real reason.

[6] His father; his, together with his brothers; his; his great-great-great-great-great-great-grandson

The phrase EILEH TO-L'DOT (specifically spelling the word TAV-VAV-LAMED-DALET-TAV) occurs four times in Parshat No'ach (once more in Parshat To-l'dot and again in Bamidbar, and that's it for Tanach). If we focus on the occurrences in Parshat No'ach and use SHEIM (No'ach's son) as the point man, then the four times include his father, as in EILEH TO-L'DOT NO'ACH, his TO-L'DOT together with his brothers (V'EILEH TO-L'DOT B'NEI NO'ACH...), his alone (EILEH TO-L'DOT SHEIM), and his great times six grandson TERACH. Moving the VAV, adding a VAV, dropping the VAVs result in other occurrences.

[7] He is the singular to the plural of his first-cousin-once-removed

LUD is mentioned as one of the sons of SHEIM. MITZRAYIM is listed as one of the sons of CHAM. That would make LUD and MITZRAYIM first cousins. From MITZRAYIM came LUDIM, the plural of LUD and his first cousin once removed.

[8] The cousins who collaborated on bourbon

In this TTtriddle, the term cousin is used colloquially. The two people in mind are technically first cousins once removed, as were LUD and LUDIM in the previous TTtriddle. Bourbon is a whiskey distilled from a fermented

mash containing not less than 51% corn... Therefore, we point to Yefet's son TIRAS (means corn) and SHEIM's grandson MASH as the original distillers of Bourbon.

[9] No'ach was different from Yaakov, Par'o, Par'o, and Shimshon

VAYIKATZ, and he awoke. This word occurs with Yaakov once (after his famous dream of the Ladder), with Par'o twice (after his two-fold dream of the seven and seven), and with Shimon in the Book of Shoftim. VAV-YUD-YUD-KUF-TZADI produces one more result in a search of Tanach - VAYIKETZ (SEGOL under the KUF rather than PATACH), as in No'ach awoke from his wine (drunken stupor), making No'ach different from the other awakers.

[10] G-d, No'ach, and Avraham did this

Rare (rather than unique) occurrences of words often lend themselves to TTriddles. VAYITA, and he planted, occurs only three times in Tanach. G-d planted a garden in Eden, No'ach planted a vineyard, and Avraham planted an EISHEL in Be'er Sheva.

[11] Did you see that guy? He's a 6th generation Noahide

The 6th generation from No'ach is R'U. A sound alike with a different

spelling of "See!" Hence, the misspelling of SEA-SEE.

[12] We say Hallel on 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,15, 16,45,(46) seedtime

Following the MABUL, which was a tremendous disruption of the natural course of the world, to say the least, G-d declares that from now on, ZERA V'KATZIR, V'KOR VACHOM V'KATITZ VACHOREF, and day and night shall not rest. The six terms describe seasons of the year, each of which is two months long. Rashi says that ZERAH (seedtime) runs from mid-Tishrei through mid-Kislev. If we divide Tishrei's 30 days in half, ZERAH begins on the 16th of Tishrei. The first 7 days of Seedtime are days on which we say Hallel (2-7 of Sukkot and Sh'mini Atzeret). Days 15 and 16 of ZERAH would correspond to the two days of Rosh Chodesh of Marcheshvan, on which we say Hallel. Day 45 and possibly 46 (which is why it is in parentheses) are Rosh Chodesh Kislev, which can be one or two days, depending upon whether Marcheshvan has 29 or 30 days.

[13] From 69 to 12 to 66

69 is really 6:9, referring to B'reishit 6:9, the beginning of Parshat No'ach. 12 is Perek 12 where Lech L'cha begins, so No'ach is 69 to 12. 66 refers to chapter 66 of Yeshayahu, where the Haftara of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is found. The TTriddle is incomplete because we left out Bamidbar 28:9-15 for the Maftir.

[14] MazalPic

Representing the month of Marcheshvan this year is the lovable Disney character, Pluto. Pluto the Pup (as he was originally called, before his name was shortened to Pluto) was introduced in 1930, but was not

named until about a year later. Significantly, he got his name a few months after the discovery of the (former) planet, Pluto. Disney oldtimers "don't remember" if the cartoon dog was named after the planet or not.

of Which brings us to the planet ^{the} Pluto. As mentioned, it was discovered in 1930, at which point our solar system went from having 8 planets to nine. 76 years later, in 2006, astronomers agreed to demote Pluto to the status of Dwarf Planet, of which there are now around 45, with hundreds more expected to be discovered. Pluto's demotion was a result of redefining the term PLANET, whose new definition fits only the other eight planets.

Interesting (if you like this sort of thing), but what's the connection to Marcheshvan? The Mazal, Zodiac sign of Marcheshvan is Scorpio, the scorpion. AKRAV in Hebrew. In astrology (we'll discuss the whole topic B"N another time), each Zodiac sign has a ruling planet. Some of the planets rule more than one sign - the relative number require that. Traditionally, Mars rules Aries and Scorpio. In more modern charts, the three modern planets of Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto were assigned to three of the Zodiac signs, to relieve some of the double duty. (With 9 planets and the Sun and Moon, only one body has to double up.) Accordingly, Pluto rules Scorpio, according to some astrologers. How will Pluto's demotion affect that? Who knows.

By the way, a new verb has crept into English dialect (even if it hasn't made the dictionaries of the language yet). To pluto something means to demote it.

Pluto's demotion, by the way, has found disfavor in the eyes of many. And besides, who would rather be just served nectarines by their very energetic mother, rather than nectarine pie?

In Israel, on Thursday night, Oct. 14th, the eve of the 7th of Marcheshvan, we begin to ask G-d for blessed rainfall, in the weekday Amida, with the words:

V'tein Tal u'Matar Livracha

From Thursday night, October 14th, the eve of the 7th of Marcheshvan, until Pesach, we (in Eretz Yisrael) ask for rain in the **BAREICH ALEINU** bracha of every weekday Amida, with the words **V'tein Tal U'matar Livracha** [hereafter, **T&M**].

A weekday Amida without **T&M** (from 7 Cheshvan until 14 Nissan) is invalid and must be repeated. This means that if you finish an Amida and realize that you forgot **T&M**, you must say the Amida again.

This means that if any time after you finish an Amida - even hours later - you realize that you omitted **T&M** (not unsure, but positive that it was omitted), then the Amida is invalid and must be repeated. If you are still in the time-frame of that davening, then you can say the Amida. If it is during the

next davening timeslot that you remember your omission, then you wait until the next davening and say the Amida twice - the second one being TASHLUMIN (make-up) for the one you invalidated.

If you catch your omission when you are still in the Amida, the following rules apply:

If one is still in the **BAREICH ALEINU** bracha (not having yet said G-d's name at the end of the bracha), then back up and say **V'TEIN TAL U'MATAR LIVRACHA**, and continue from there.

If you already said G-d's name of **M'VAREICH HASHANIM**, then continue (without going back) and when you get to **SH'MA KOLEINU**, say **T&M** as follows:

שִׁמְעֵנוּ קוֹלֵנוּ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ,
וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרַצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ, כִּי אֵל
שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת וְתַחֲנוּנִים אַתָּה, וּמְלַפְנֵיךָ,
מְלַכְנוּ, רִיָּקִים אֵל תִּשְׁיַבֵּנוּ. וְתוֹן טַל וּמָטָר
לְבָרְכָהּ, כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּרַחֲמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

Because **Sh'ma Koleinu** is an appropriate b'racha for additional requests, saying **T&M** here is preferable to repeating (and thereby nullifying) one or more b'rachot, which is what would happen if we had to go back to **BAREICH ALEINU**.

If you pass the point of insertion in **Sh'ma Koleinu**, but haven't said G-d's name in the end of the bracha, say **T&M** and continue with **KI ATA SHOMEI'A...**

If you finish **Sh'ma Koleinu** but

haven't said the word R'TZEI yet, you can say **V'tein Tal U'matar Livracha** after **SHOMEI'A T'FILA** and before R'TZEI. Since you have not yet begun R'TZEI, it is still considered being in the "brachot of request" section of the Amida, and **T&M** fits.

Once you say the word R'TZEI (and you haven't asked for **T&M** yet), you must go back to **BAREICH ALEINU** (not just SH'MA KOLEINU) and say the Amida straight from there. Although this involves repeating brachot you have already said, this is what must be done.

This rule applies from R'TZEI until you finish the Amida. That point is either when you finish יהוה לרצון אמרי פי והגיון אלהי צורי וגואלי or when you begin taking your first step back. If it is only then that you realize that you have not said **T&M**, then you must say the entire Amida from the beginning.

If one is unsure whether he said **T&M** or not, the halacha goes by probability based on habit. If **T&M** has not been said 90 times, we assume a habit has not yet formed and consider **T&M** not to have been said. After 90 times, we may assume it was said (unless you are certain it was omitted). Furthermore, one must deal with a doubt only if it enters his mind immediately, not "sometime later".

A visitor from CHU"l to here...

Some poskim hold that if one intends to return to Chu"l within the year, then he follows the Chu"l timing even here. If this is so, then he should avoid

being the Shali'ach Tzibur because he is still saying V'tein B'racha until the beginning of December. If he "must" go to the Amud, then, of course, he must say T&M in the repetition.

Others hold that a Ben Chutz LaAretz who is here before 7 Marcheshvan but intends to return to Chu"l before Pesach, should say V'tein B'racha in Bareich Aleinu but should say T&M in Sh'ma Koleinu.

There are other variations on this theme and a person in this situation should ask a Rav for guidance. So too for students in yeshivot and seminaries who will be returning abroad before Pesach.

Points to Ponder: When we are supposed to say T&M and neglect to do so, the whole Amida of 19 brachot is voided (so to speak) for the missing two words, Tal u'Matar. But what did the person say instead of T&M? He asked G-d, V'TEIN B'RACHA, give us your blessing. One might say, that's not so bad, why repeat the whole thing? Aren't we concerned with unnecessary brachot?

Of course, our Sages know very well the seriousness of wasted brachot. And yet they were very concerned that the bracha that asks G-d to bless us with beneficial rain, with bountiful produce of the land, with prosperity, with parnasa, sustenance - should be said exactly the way it is supposed to be said. This means that our prayers are real and should be taken seriously. If forgetting T&M will invalidate 19 brachot, then we should be extra-careful when we daven not to forget.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

1) The Ohr HaChayim suggests two answers. One is that Avraham is the only person who spent significant time finding G-D on his own so that by the time G-D spoke to him he was already familiar with G-D and G-D could simply begin speaking to him. A second approach suggests almost the opposite. Avraham was the first in many generations to believe in G-D and G-D wanted to see how committed Avraham really was before actually appearing to him. The future generations all had belief in G-D ingrained in their lives from the beginning so G-D could just appear to them.

2) The Kli Yakar explains that regarding the blessing, G-D places I WILL BLESS first to indicate that G-D blesses those who simply think of blessing Avraham since G-D rewards people just for having a thought to do a good thing. However, when it comes to the curse, the person has to actually curse Avraham to be cursed by G-D since G-D does not punish for a thought to do something wrong. Thus, first it mentions the person actually cursing Avraham and only then that G-D will curse that person.

3) Daat Z'kainim MiBaalei HaTosfot teaches that Avraham left Charan twice. First, at 70, he left with Lot, Lot was captured, Avraham fought the kings, and experienced the covenant with G-D. Immediately after the covenant, Avraham returned to Charan, and was there for five years leading up to G-D's command of LECH L'CHA. (Perhaps he went back to try to get people from his homeland to join his new faith - my suggestion)