

The Giants win the pennant!

That's a quote from the excitable Russ Hodges, of 59 years ago. The correct tense now would be, the Giants **WON** the pennant. And so did the Texas Rangers in the American League.

And what is baseball doing as the topic of the Lead Tidbit? Reasonable question. The answer is personal (Phil here; I'll be using first person singular for this LT, rather than the "editorial we") - but hopefully meaningful to you, dear TTreaders, as well.

A number of years ago, on a field exercise in milu'im, I was returning to my unit's tent with the garden shovel I had just used for both practical reasons and in fulfillment of the Torah's command to keep a military camp clean and Kadosh. In order to put it back in my duffel bag, I took my Tallit & T'filin in hand. I turned to a non-observant milu'im friend and remarked that with these (referring to the Tallit and T'filin) I perform mitzvot, and with this (extending the shovel) I also do mitzvot. His questioning look led to my offering and his accepting the reading of a chapter in Dinei Tzava u'Milchama, which subsequently led to his attendance at a Parshat HaShavua shiur given - and until then, ignored by him - at his workplace. This led to his making Kiddush on Friday night (when he told me about the Kiddush, he "assured" me that it wasn't being done for religious reasons - only that he thought his children should see Kiddush). We lost touch soon after that, so I don't have a follow up to this story. But the point is - and it is one that religious and non-religious Jews both must realize - that there is holiness and spirituality and moral lessons to be learned in the most mundane situations and from the most mundane objects. It's what we learn in Pirkei Avot, Who is truly wise? He who learns from everyone... and, we should add - from anything.

gato p.4

Jerusalem Shabbat in/out times for **Chayei Sara**

4:17pm / 5:29pm (see page 3 for other zmanim)

ParshaPix Explanations on p.37



Word of the Month

Regular years have 353, 354, or 355 days. 13-month years (Shana M'uberet) have 383, 384, or 385 days. This year, 5771, has 385. In years with 353 or 383 days, both Marcheshvan and Kislev has 29 days. In the "in order" years (354 or 384 days), Marcheshvan has 29 days and Kislev has 30. In the full years, with 355 or 385 days, both Marcheshvan and Kislev have 30 days. The 30th of Marcheshvan occurs in 45% of years. It is unique in that it can fall on only three different days of the week - Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday. (296 dates can fall on 4 days, 59 can fall on 5 days, and 29 can fall on 6 days.)



Candles	Chayei Sara	Havdala	next week
4:17pm	Yerushalayim	5:29pm	4:11 / 5:24
4:35pm	S'derot	5:32pm	4:29 / 5:27
4:32pm	Gush Etzion	5:30pm	4:26 / 5:24
4:33pm	Raanana	5:30pm	4:27 / 5:25
4:33pm	Beit Shemesh•RBS	5:30pm	4:27 / 5:25
4:33pm	Netanya	5:30pm	4:26 / 5:25
4:33pm	Rehovot	5:31pm	4:27 / 5:25
4:32pm	Be'er Sheva (& Otniel)	5:31pm	4:26 / 5:26
4:33pm	Modi'in• Chashmona'im	5:30pm	4:27 / 5:24
4:17pm	Petach Tikva	5:30pm	4:11 / 5:25
4:17pm	Maale Adumim	5:29pm	4:11 / 5:23
4:32pm	GINOT Shomron	5:29pm	4:26 / 5:24
4:31pm	Gush Shiloh	5:29pm	4:25 / 5:23
4:33pm	K4 & Hevron	5:30pm	4:27 / 5:25
4:32pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:29pm	4:26 / 5:24
4:33pm	Yad Binyamin	5:31pm	4:27 / 5:25
4:35pm	Ashkelon	5:32pm	4:29 / 5:27
4:19pm	Tzfat	5:27pm	4:13 / 5:21
4:32pm	Zichron Yaakov	5:29pm	4:26 / 5:24

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - CHAYEI SARA - 6:05pm

Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
19-28 Marcheshvan (Oct 27 - Nov 5)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:00-5:07am
Sunrise	5:52-5:59am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:00-8:03am)	8:37-8:40am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:02-9:04am)	9:32-9:34am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:23-11:22¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	11:53-11:53am
Plag Mincha	3:45¼-3:39pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 4:54-4:46pm)	4:59-4:51pm

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LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

Back to baseball, and more importantly, to the lessons that we can learn and teach from it.

Rabbi Aharon Rakeffet - despite his being a rabid Yankees fan - is a master at deriving "Jewish" lessons from baseball, and an inspiration for the broader concept of teaching Torah values using non-Torah-conventional models.

Rabbi Dov Lipman, our Parsha Points to Ponder columnist, has written a book called "Time Out - Sports Stories as a Game Plan for Spiritual Success", in which he uses examples from many different sports to teach Torah values.

Rabbi Nachum Amsel has developed lesson plans and lectures that accompany movies, movie clips, and TV shows, to teach a wide range of Torah values and lessons via video presentations.

In a recorded shiur, Rabbi Rakeffet uses Al Gionfriddo to illustrate the teaching in Pirkei Avot, not to disparage any person, because there is no person that doesn't have his "hour". Al was a MLB player for a brief, 4-year career. He would have been virtually unknown except for a catch in the 1947 World Series, robbing Joe Dimaggio (a player who will always be known, even to people who don't drink coffee) of a home run. That was the moment that gave Giofriddo his "hour".

Rabbi Rakeffet tells the Jackie Robinson story to illustrate EIN DAVAR OMEID BIFNEI HARATZON, nothing stands in the way of the will. He contrasts the batter and the pitcher as defining differ-

ent personalities. He takes baseball way beyond baseball. And that's the point of this Lead Tidbit. A Chumash teaches us much. So does Rashi. And so do many of the experiences of everyday life.

When my parents נ"ע passed away, they had 15 grandchildren, none yet married. When their eldest grandchild - my eldest niece - became engaged, I gave her chatan a special gift to welcome him into the family. The gift was a baseball, and it went along with a mini-shiur on different hashkafa points that are derivable from baseball. To date, I've given 12 baseballs to the spouses of my parents' grandchildren, KEIN YIRBU (in good time). One nephew asked my to present his future wife with the baseball at their Vort, and to give a D'var Torah (in Hebrew) about baseball. If this Lead Tidbit is way offbeat, let's go one step further and tie this vort to the shiduch of this week's sedra - Yitzchak Avinu and Rivka Imeinu.

A newly married couple is like a batter, who steps up to home plate by himself, to face nine opposing players who are all intent on getting him out. One facing nine. But, he is not really alone. Down the first base line in a box in foul territory is the chatan's parents, sending him coaching advice. And down the third base line are her parents. His teammates a shouting encouragement and support from the dugout and other friends and family are cheering from the stands. The Manager is the guiding force of it all, as is G-d in our lives. We are not alone. We have the Torah to guide us in all we do.

How much of a full connection
between Sarah and Yechezkeil

Just about the only one in the Torah

More baseball terms, in honor of the SF Giants and Texas Rangers who are playing in the World Series...

Home plate, batter's box, catcher's box...

ת' התופס • תחום החובט • תחנת הבית

The batter is the חובט; the bat is מחבט the knob (that's what it's called) at the end of the handle is the טבעת-מחסום (which prevents "flying off at the handle", an expression that does not come from the baseball bat) So where does the expression come from?

A sudden burst of anger is as dangerous as a loosened wooden handle of hammer or axe allowing the "head" to "fly off the handle"

And G-d... VAV/PATACH before G-d's name, 100 times in Tanach, no sound under the ALEF. VADO- not V'ADO-.

It is sometimes our awareness that a problem can be solved which keeps us from its solution. It is often the fear that we are confronted with an insoluble problem which rushes us into a solution of it.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

Nachor, Yishmael, Yaakov, the Galbreths

The fourth Mersenne prime
and the first nice Friedman number

the king, his prophet, sedra opener

Chayei Sara has more than 35% of all what in Tanach?

shekels, entourage, pomegranates

Chayei Sara stats

5th of the Torah's 54 sedras;

5th of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 171 lines in a Torah, rank 37th

4 Parshiyot; 3 open, 1 closed

105 p'sukim - ranks 32nd (11th in B'reishit)
same as D'varim (which is longer)

1402 words - ranks 37th (11th in B'reishit)

5314 letters - ranks 36th (11th in B'reishit)

Shorter than average p'sukim in a sedra with
slightly below average number of p'sukim means
a smallish sedra

MITZVOT

none of the 613 mitzvot are in Chayei
Sara, however, as mentioned often, there
are Midot and values and other lessons
to be learned.

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 16 p'sukim - 23:1-16

[P> 23:1 (20)] The parsha begins
by telling us that Sara died in
Kiryat Arba, which is Hevron. But
first it tells us that she lived a full,
long life of 127 years.

SDT: *With the last theme of Vayeira
being the AKEIDA, the juxtaposition of
Sara's death supports our Tradition that
Sara died as a result of the Akeida. The
Midrash says that the Satan informed
Sara about what Avraham was intending
to do with Yitzchak, when they went
towards Har HaMoriah. The shock was
too great for an old woman, and she died.
Some commentaries give an interesting
twist to this. They say that Sara died, not
from fear that Avraham would offer
Yitzchak as a Korban, but rather that he
might not! She remembered Avraham's
reaction when she told him to banish
Yishmael (and Hagar). She was afraid
that Avraham's love and kindness
towards Yitzchak would prevent him from
carrying out G-d's command, and that
Avraham would thus fail this ultimate test
of faith. When she saw (or heard) that
Avraham was returning with Yitzchak still
alive, she thought her fears were realized
and she died.*

Avraham comes (some say from
the Akeida, that is from Har
HaMoriah; some say from Be'er
Sheva; either way, it was appar-
ently to Hevron that he came) to
eulogize Sara and to cry for her.

SDT: *V'LIVKOTAH, and to cry for her,
is written with a small KAF. Some take
this as a reminder that the crying was
"small" since Sara had lived such a long
life (Baal HaTurim). There is more crying
when a person dies young.*

*Some say that the KAF points to the 20
in the way that the Torah tells us how old
she was when she died: 100 years and 20
years and 7 years.*

*Others say that the small KAF allows us
to reread the word with regular-sized
letters only to obtain a different under-*

*standing, on a REMEZ (hint) level. And
Avraham came to eulogize Sara
ULVITAH, and for her daughter. This
correlates with the opinions that
Avraham and Sara had a daughter, but
she died when Sara did. (Some even say
that her name was BAKOL.)*

Avraham next makes the arrage-
ments for providing a suitable
place to bury Sara. (There is a
Tradition that Avraham was aware
of the burial place of Adam and
Chava, and that is the piece of
land he was interested in.) He
turns to the people of CHEIT, one
of whom is known as EFRON.
They all exchange niceties and
the people offer Avraham any
land he wants. He insists on
paying full price and that is what
he does for the field and cave of
Machpela.

Pirkei Avot made famous that
Avraham was tested 10 times. But the
mishna does not enumerate the ten
tests. There are different opinions as
to which of Avraham's experiences
are considered tests of his faith. Most
lists of the 10 end with the Akeida, as
implied from the p'sukim themselves.
Rabeinu Yona finds a test after the
Akeida - Avraham's experience in
providing a burial place for Sara. The
question on this is obvious - What
was so difficult about that, that it
should qualify as a test of faith -
especially after the Akeida?

Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that
after the Akeida, Avraham still had a
couple of difficult things to go through.
Wasn't the Akeida and everything that

preceded it enough? No, not finished
yet. This can test a person,
sometimes, more than terrible trials
and tribulations.

Surviving the Holocaust did not
guarantee a person that he would
have an easy life from then on. Some
were blessed with trouble-free lives
after their terrible ordeals, but most
had many more difficulties to face in
the years to come.

We do not know how G-d works.
Why must we suffer trials and
tribulations in this world? It has
something to do with making us
better people. With challenging us.
With testing us. With preparing our
souls for the World of Truth. And
probably a lot more.

There is another approach to answer
the same question. Eulogizing his wife,
acquiring a burial place, finding a
"shiduch" for Yitzchak - even remarry-
ing Hagar (Ketura) are all "regular",
mundane experiences. Can one who
spoke repeatedly to G-d, ascended
Har HaMori'ah, had a special relation-
ship with G-d - can such a person
return to being a "normal" human
being? This too is a test, and Avraham
passed with flying colors. These
commentaries point to the pasuk at
the end of the Akeida portion, "And
Avraham return to the lads..." as an
indication that he was able to "come
back down to earth".

SDT: *If a father insists that his son
marry or not marry a particular woman,
the son is not duty-bound to listen to his
father. Meshech Chochma says that we*

learn this from the fact that Avraham gave instructions and administered an oath to Eliezer about a wife for Yitzchak, but did not command Yitzchak himself on the matter.

Levi - Second Aliya **13 p'sukim - 23:17-24:9**

The field, cave, trees, etc. become the lawful property of Avraham, after which he buries Sara.

[S> 24:1 (67)] Avraham is now at an advanced age and has been blessed greatly by G-d. "And G-d blessed Avraham BAKOL", with everything.

The word **BAKOL** screams out for explanation. And, sure enough, there are many suggestions as to what this extra blessing of **BAKOL** is. (Every time we say Birkat HaMazon, we ask G-d to bless us as He blessed our forefathers - BAKOL... Mikol and Kol are terms associated with Yitzchak and Yaakov.)

The numeric value of **BAKOL** 52, the same as **BEN**, son. This alludes to the ultimate blessing that Avraham received - his son Yitzchak.

R. Meir says that Avraham was blessed by NOT having a daughter. In Avraham's time and in his unique circumstances, who would she have married? What would have happened to her? In this case it was a bracha not to have had a daughter.

On the other hand... R. Yehuda says that Avraham's extra blessing was that

he DID have a daughter. There is even an opinion that his daughter's name was BAKOL.

Rabbi Eliezer HaModai says that Avraham was blessed with the art/skill/power of astrology and that he was consulted by noblemen from far and wide. (Even when G-d told Avraham that he would have a child, Avraham resisted because he had seen in the stars that he was not going to have children. G-d "explained" to Avraham that it is possible to rise above one's "mazel", and in fact, that is the special quality of the nation that will come from him. **אין מזל לישראל**. Ibn Ezra says in the name of our Sages z"l, true, but only as long as we keep the Torah.)

R. Shimon bar Yochai says that Avraham had a precious stone with curative powers that would heal all who gazed upon it.

These last two opinions identify BAKOL as Avraham's prominent position in the world. This fits with his role as "father of many nations".

Some suggest that Eisav's not sinning (until Avraham died) and Yishmael's repentance, both during Avraham's lifetime are the extra blessings.

There are still other explanations.

From the variety of explanations of BAKOL, it is quite clear that the unique status of Avraham's as the one who restored belief in One G-d to the world did not go unrewarded. We can see in this list of blessings, different

kinds of blessings that can be ours, the spiritual heirs of Avraham Avinu.

The one major task remaining, which will forge the next vital link in what promises to be a great people and a great Chain of Tradition, is finding a suitable "shidduch" for Yitzchak. Everything now will depend upon Yitzchak. However great Avraham was, unless there is "solid" continuity, all will be lost. To this end, Avraham calls upon Eliezer to swear that he will faithfully carry out his task, that he will return to Avraham's family and hometown, and find a wife for Yitzchak there. And that Yitzchak is not to leave Eretz Yisrael (having been consecrated on the Mizbei'- ach during the Akeida).

Shlishi - Third Aliya **17 p'sukim - 24:10-26**

Eliezer (who is exclusively referred to as "The Servant" or "The Man", as opposed to by name - **his name never appears in Parshat Chayei Sara**, where we would have expected to find it repeated over and over) takes ten camels laden with a splendid assortment of goods and travels to Avraham's hometown. Upon arrival, he ties the camels up near the well (and spring), towards evening, at the time that the local girls come to draw water. He asks G-d to be kind to his master Avraham. Eliezer asks for a sign -

the girl who will offer him drink and also for his camels, she will be the one sent by G-d. Almost before he finished speaking, Rivka bat Betu'el of Avraham's family arrives on the scene with her water container on her shoulder. Eliezer runs to her and asks for a bit of water. She immediately gives him his fill and then draws water for his camels. Anxious to find out whether she was "the one", Eliezer waits until the camels have their drink and then presents Rivka with gifts of jewelry. (On the one hand, he has seen her kind nature and tireless act of chesed; on the other hand, he has not even asked her who she is.) When Rivka tells Eliezer that she is indeed from Avraham's family and invites him to stay at her home, he prostrates himself before G-d in grateful acknowledgment.

The Gemara in Taanit states that Eliezer servant of Avraham did not ask (something of G-d) properly, but he was nonetheless answered in a fine manner. His "sign" could have resulted in an unsuitable shidduch for Yitzchak, but G-d sent Rivka to him instead. Some sources fault Eliezer for relying on an omen or sign - especially (or specifically) because he did not ask who she was before giving her "gifts".

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya **26 p'sukim - 24:27-52**

Eliezer also says a blessing to G-d for not abandoning Avraham or withholding Divine Kindness from him. Rivka runs home to tell her family what has happened. Lavan (filled with ulterior motives, our sources tell us) runs to greet Eliezer. The gold jewelry adorning Rivka catches Lavan's eye, and he "graciously" offers Eliezer hospitality. Eliezer is served food but refuses to eat until his "business" is completed.

Eliezer proceeds to tell the story of his mission. He tells of Avraham and Yitzchak and of being sent to find a wife for Yitzchak. When he asks for Rivka's hand on behalf of his master, Lavan and Betu'el (commentaries point to Lavan's pushing himself before his father as an indication of a negative personality trait) accept all as G-d's will.

Eliezer again prostrates himself before G-d in grateful acknowledgment of the success of his mission.

Chamishi 5th Aliya **15 p'sukim - 24:53-67**

Eliezer gives more gifts to Rivka and her mother and brother, then they all celebrate with food and drink, and Eliezer and his party

stay overnight. In the morning, Eliezer asks his leave. Rivka's family asks that she remain for a year, or at least ten months (as was the custom in olden times) but Eliezer insists on leaving immediately (and taking Rivka with him). Rivka is consulted and she agrees to leave right away. They send her off with a "maid" (later identified as Devora) and bless her.

This blessing has been repeated countless times to Jewish brides throughout the generations. Ironic, is it not, that we use Lavan's words for such a special occasion.

Finally the entourage leaves for Canaan.

Meanwhile, Yitzchak (having gone to bring Hagar back to Avraham) is in the Negev area and goes "into the field to commune, before evening". (This, we are taught, was the model for Mincha.) As the Rivka-Eliezer caravan approaches from a distance, Rivka sees Yitzchak, jumps down from her camel, and asks Eliezer who that man is. She covers her face with a veil when she is told that the man is her intended husband.

Eliezer tells Yitzchak everything that has occurred. Yitzchak takes Rivka as his wife and she becomes a comfort to him for the loss of his mother. For us, she later becomes Rivka Imeinu.

Rabbi Sholom Gold speculates as to how a girl growing up in the house of

Betuel and Lavan can so quickly step into Sara Imeinu's shoes. His answer (beautifully developed in a shiur) is that it was D'vorah, Rivka's nursemaid, who was her teacher and influence in the ways of Sara. D'vorah was left behind when Avraham and Sara "made Aliya", for just this purpose.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya **11 p'sukim - 25:1-11**

[P> 25:1 (11)] Avraham, having successfully provided for the continuity of what will become the Jewish Nation, now lives out the remainder of his life as a "private citizen", so to speak. He takes for himself a wife named KETURA (which we are taught was HAGAR) and fathers six more children. He gives them gifts, but Yitzchak remains Avraham's exclusive spiritual heir. (We can really say that in some ways, other peoples of the world followed Avraham's lead in living monotheistic lives, but the Torah's definition of Avraham's lineage is Yitzchak.)

On the question of the different treatment of Yishmael (banishment) and the children from Ketura (gifts), it can be explained that there was a crucial difference between Yishmael and Ketura's children. Yishmael challenged Yitzchak's inheritance. He claimed (and in some ways continues to claim) Avraham's legacy. When G-d told Avraham to listen to Sara, He

told him to banish them, BECAUSE in Yitzchak will be called your offspring, your descendants. This point had to be made, and a farewell party and lavish provisions for the journey would not have made the point. No such problem with Ketura's children. They made no such claim. They did not dispute Yitzchak's role. They received gifts.

Avraham dies at the "ripe old age" of 175 (actually, this is 5 years short of the complete 180 that Yitzchak later reached - various reasons are given for the "lost" 5 years). His was a graceful, good, and fulfilling life (despite the tough times he had). He is buried in the Cave of Machpela, where he had buried Sara. Both Yitzchak and Yishmael take care of the burial.

The Torah implies that Yishmael had repented his ways and had become righteous. What greater "nachas" for a father than that!

G-d blesses Yitzchak after Avraham's death.

From the fact that Avraham took Ketura only after Yitzchak was married, the Baal HaTurim says that this is the proper thing to do - Marry off your children, before you yourself remarry.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 7 p'sukim - 25:12-18

[P> 25:12 (7)] The descendants of Yishmael are now enumerated. Yishmael is identified fully as the son of Avraham and Hagar the Egyptian maiden of Sara who bore Yishmael "to Avraham". (This is quite parallel to the description of Yitzchak's connection to Avraham as stated in the beginning of next week's sedra. This might further indicate Yishmael's T'shuva in his later years. On the other hand, commentaries point out that the word TO-L'DOT in the Yishmael context is spelled without any VAVs, indicating a lesser status to Yishmael.) It is noteworthy that Yishmael fathered twelve sons, not like Yitzchak, but rather like Yaakov. Note that both Nachor and Yishmael had their 12 descendants before we did (so to speak). This indicates a tougher life for the Jewish people (something that has been borne out over and over again in the course of Jewish History, right up to current events).

Yishmael dies at the age of 100 and 30 and 7 years. The wording in the Torah (seems to) purposely parallels that which was used to describe Sara's lifespan, a further indication (perhaps) of the change for the better in Yishmael. Rashi says that the age of Yishmael is included to help us compute the

chronology of Yaakov.

The last 3 p'sukim are reread for Maftir.

Haftara 31 p'sukim Melachim Alef - 1:1-31

The sedra tells of the aging Avraham and his task of providing for the continuity of his beliefs through his son Yitzchak (even though there were other potential heirs). The Haftara parallels this theme by telling us of the aging King David with many potential heirs, providing that it would be his son Shlomo who would be the next link in the Davidic line. This, fulfillment of a promise made to Shlomo's mother, Batsheva - similar to the promise made to Sara that her son would inherit. The starting points are Avraham Avinu and David Hamelech. But no matter how strong their personalities were, the chain ends with them unless the next generation is as strong as a Yitzchak Avinu and a Shlomo Hamelech.

Parsha Points to Ponder CHAYEI SARA

1) The Torah usually describes the process of mourning as crying followed by eulogizing (BECHI, then HESPED) which makes sense since first there is the initial crying and then one gathers the strength to give a eulogy. Why, then, does the Torah describe Avraham as first being involved in the eulogy and then crying afterwards (VAYAVO AVRAHAM LISPOD L'SARA V'LIVKOTA - 23:2)?

2) Why does the Torah state AND SHE FINISHED GIVING HIM TO DRINK instead of AND HE FINISHED DRINKING when it describes Eliezer's drinking at the well (24:19). Of course, she already gave him to drink and now it was simply a matter of him finishing to drink!

3) The Torah relates that Rivka waited for Eliezer to finish drinking before offering for the animals to drink (24:19). Why couldn't she ask him whether his animals needed to drink while he was drinking? Why was it specifically when his drinking was completed that she asked the question?

Parsha Points to Ponder by Rabbi Dov Lipman

Divrei Menachem

In Parshat Chayei Sara much attention is given to the process by which Avraham acquired the parcel of land that incorporated the Ma'arat HaMachpela, in order to bury his wife Sarah. With much pomp and ceremony, the greedy Hittite Efron wheedles out of Avraham an extortionate price for the, "Field and the cave within it and all the trees in the field within all its surrounding boundaries" (B'reishit 23:17).

Why would the Torah go to such lengths to describe every detail of the purchase? And why in the following verses are we told so specifically a fact that we already know, namely, that Avraham buried his wife, "In the cave of Machpelah facing Mamre, which is in Chevron, in the Land of Canaan"?

Perhaps (Artscroll), to inform us that through this purchase, the cave etc. was confirmed (VAYAKOM) as an estate for a burial site; that is, as an everlasting possession (ibid, v.19). And for the Ha'emek Davar the detailed geographical description gives notice of the meritorious privilege of burial anywhere in Eretz Yisrael.

But one thing is certain: In common with the sites of the Bet HaMikdash and Yosef's tomb, the Machpela was purchased legally. Consequently, there is no question, and there cannot be any question, as to Jewish rights to Eretz Yisrael.

Webbe Rebbe

QUESTION: *When pieces of the cover or binding fall off an old siddur or sefer, can it be left on the floor or thrown away?*

ANSWER: The Baraita (quoted by the Gemara, Shabbat 61b) says that if one has a Name of Hashem on the handle of a utensil, he cuts that section off the utensil and puts it in geniza (disposing of it in an honorable manner, usually through burial). This ruling, accepted by the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 276:13), assumes that only the part that has Hashem's Name requires geniza and cannot be used, as is explicitly stated in Arachin 6a. If so, one would think that certainly the blank parts of papers that have only prayers and p'sukim without the Names written out should not require geniza.

However, there is another concept that seems to imply otherwise. The Gemara (Megila 26b) says that tashmischei kedusha (things that serve holy items, most specifically sacred texts) require geniza when one finishes using them. Even the cover of a sacred text fits this bill (see Living the Halachic Process, vol. II, G-6 for some parameters). Therefore, it would seem simple that the page that the words are written on should be no less than that. It is true that the Masat Binyamin (100) says the margins of books do not have kedusha and he allows printers to cut off and use extra paper from the sides of the pages. He gives several explanations: the most extreme explanation assumes

that only the minimum necessary margins needed for halachic articles such as a sefer Torah and Tefillin have sanctity. The Mishna Berura (334:50) accepts the premise that printers can use the parts of the pages they cut off in the process. However, his justification is for cases where the seforim have not yet been used and based on the assumption that the sanctification process does not apply to the parts that are made to be cut off.

How then are we to understand the aforementioned Baraita, which states that only the part of the utensil that has Hashem's Names written on it is subject to geniza? The Gemara in Arachin (6a) cites the Baraita in question in the context of a case in which a non-Jew donates an object for the Beit HaMikdash with a Name of Hashem written on it. The Gemara says that one can remove the Name and use the object for another purpose if the donor left its use up to the Jews who receive it. The Gemara, in explaining why the rest can be used, says: "a Name, not in its place, is not holy." Rashi has two ways of reading this Gemara: 1) when the sanctity is due to a Name, the section away from the Name is not holy; 2) when a Name is put in an inappropriate place, there is no sanctity. In any case, poskim (see Shvut Yaakov I,81; Piskei Uziel 26) learn from here, among other places, that the Name of Hashem itself must be treated respectfully and not destroyed even if it were written by a non-Jew or written not for the purpose of ritual sanctity. That is a special law regarding the Names. However, in regard to the

normal rules of sanctity of texts and items, there is no kedusha. That, is why the rest of the utensil may be used (Aruch Hashulchan, YD 276:26; Chavot Yair 16).

In contrast, regarding a properly prepared sefer, the entire sefer would receive sanctity and the margins and cover (see Birkei Yosef, Orach Chayim 154, Shiyurei Beracha 1) would be at least tashmischei kedusha. The Kevod HaSefarim (9:2) cites the same ruling from Rav Chaim Kaniefsky. (The latter is famous for giving one word answers, so we would not know if his reasoning is similar). According to some of the explanations of the lenient, aforementioned Masat Binyamin, the margins would not be sanctified, and this would presumably apply to the binding as well. It is unclear whether he would say they could be disgraced, and, if not, what should be done to prevent that. (See Living the Halachic Process vol. II, G-8) regarding religious articles that do not have sanctity but should be shown respect anyway.)

"BOTH A LENDER AND A BORROWER BE" (part 4) THE CHALLENGE OF MONEY by Dr. Meir Tamari

In any discussion of the injunction against interest, it is necessary to have a clear definition of what constitutes interest according to halakha. In the same way as what is kosher in food is not always what is perfectly healthy

from a biological or veterinary viewpoint, so too, halachic ribbit is not always the same as interest in the economist's definition.

The economist sees two elements in interest:

Time factor: The supplier of the money is unable to use it for as long as the loan is operative and so loses the alternative use of his money in other ventures. Basically the interest paid compensates him for the time his money is not available; *hamtanat ma'ot*.

Risk factor: Any loan or investment contains an element of risk. There may not be any resultant profit, the debtor-entrepreneur may delay payment, thus causing the creditor-investor a cash-flow difficulty, or he may not pay back at all. The creditor-investor will want to be paid for the risk involved; the higher the risk the higher the interest rate. The halakha differentiates between these two, between merely waiting for repayment and the risk factor, creating two definitions of ribbit; *Ribbit d'Oraita* and *Ribbit d'Rabbanan*.

Ribbit d'Oraita, interest forbidden by the Torah, is where the recipient of a loan is liable to pay a known sum for the use of money, which the lender receives to compensate him for the time that he lost the alternative use of his money, *hamatanat ma'ot*. There is apparently no mechanism for permitting *Ribbit d'Oraita*. Furthermore, "*Ribbit d'Oraita* can be reclaimed [by the borrower] through the Beit Din. The court will force and beat him [the lender] until he expires [or repays the interest he

received. This is similar for the transgression of other mitzvot for which Beit Din can impose physical punishment]. Even [when the interest] is less than a shaveh p'ruta [the smallest sum for which legal redress may be had], there is still the negative injunction [miztvat lo ta'aseh], though this may not be reclaimed through the court. [This is similar to the case of theft which is forbidden even for sums less than shaveh p'ruta, but legal redress is only to be had for sums greater than this]" (Yoreh Dei'ah 161). It is worthwhile noting that ribit even less than a shaveh p'ruta is forbidden, irrespective of whether it is for a loan [ribit d'Oraita] or in the form of a commercial transaction, except that the latter is only forbidden by rabbinic law [d'Rabbanan] (Rama, Tur).

"In those cases where the reward [interest] is paid for a business transaction [buying, selling or investing that are not merely hamtanat ma'ot] it is avak ribit and is forbidden by rabbinic law, this is ribit d'Rabbanan" (Shulkhan Aruch Ba'al HaTanya, hilkhot ribit, halakha 4). These are not ribit d'Oraita where the lender is being paid for loss of alternative use of money or where he does not participate in the risk. Nevertheless, in order to protect the Jew from transgressing the sin of ribit, the rabbis extended the prohibition to include any type of business ventures which are similar to, yet not exactly like those prohibited by the Torah. There exist halakhic instruments formalizing rabbinic interest, heter iska; none of them release us from the obligation to make interest free loans.

The problem of rabbinic interest exists in almost every aspect of market activity; changes in price levels, currency rates of exchange, buying on credit, mortgages, the method of buying or selling in the stock markets trading in commodity or other futures and even in buying government bonds. Within our framework, it is neither possible nor desirable to treat them all, only to discuss the moral and ethical issues raised by some of them and the principles of the heter iska that regulates all of them. Human ingenuity is so creative, markets so dynamic, and business so varied, intricate and imaginative that there is a religious and spiritual need to ensure that in each case the heter iska represents a real and genuine business venture and not simply an ingenious attempt to avoid the Torah's prohibitions.

It is still necessary to bear in mind the words of the Shulkhan Aruch Ba'al HaTanya: "Wherever one erred and took avak ribit [that cannot be claimed in Beit Din by the borrower], [the lender] should return the interest, to cleanse himself before Heaven" (Hilkhot Ribit 4). □

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

CHAYEI SARA

To Eulogize and to Weep

Kindergarten children are delightfully oblivious to the distinction between what adults call reality and the imaginary world. For these youngsters, there is no difference between

the people in their actual lives and the people they learn about in the stories they hear.

For most adults, the heroes of the Bible stories are historical figures, and although they exist in our imagination, we know that they are long gone. These heroes and heroines, however, are as real to kindergartners as their parents and siblings are.

This hit home with me many years ago when my oldest daughter was a kindergarten student. She is now herself a grandmother, so that tells you just how long ago this was.

As all children in a Jewish religious kindergarten, by this time of year she had heard many stories about Sarah. She knew about Sarah's journey to the Promised Land, of her trials and tribulations in Egypt, of the fact that she was barren, and of the joy she experienced with the birth of Yitzchak.

On the Friday before the Shabbat of this week's Torah portion, Chayei Sarah, she came home from school distraught, with tears flowing down her little cheeks. "Mommy, daddy," she cried. "Did you hear? Sarah died, Sarah died!" She was in the grips of a sadness very close to real grief; for Sarah had become a living figure for her, much to the credit of the teacher who told her Sarah's story. Few of us adults will exhibit emotion this week as we read of Sarah's demise. But I wager there are numerous kindergarten age boys and girls in Jewish schools who will shed tears.

For those of us who study the Torah portion weekly, death and dying are not unfamiliar. From the first human being who died, ironically through murder, until the near death of Yitzchak of which we read last week, the Torah has reported dozens of deaths to us.

But there is something especially poignant and moving about Sarah's death, even to us jaded adults. This is partly because, for the first time in the Torah, we have the report of another person's reaction to the death of a loved one. We read of a bereaved Avraham, a loving husband who comes "to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her." (B'reishit 23:2)

For the first time, we learn of the human capacity to express emotions through eulogy.

The Talmud has a fascinating discussion over the nature of eulogy, of hesped. "Is a eulogy designed to benefit the dead?" asks the Talmud. "Or is it for the benefit of the living survivors, the mourners?"

The Talmud has its own conclusion, but there can be no doubt that from a psychological perspective, the eulogy does both. It honors the dead, and it provides the mourner with the opportunity to give vent to his grief and to achieve a degree of catharsis.

Perhaps this is why Abraham both "eulogizes" Sarah and "cries for her". In his "eulogy" he honors her person, her character, her achievements in life. By "crying for her", he gives voice to his profound sense of the

loss of his life's partner.

I can never forget the powerful experience I had long ago in a workshop led by the famed psychologist, Virginia Satir. She asked us to each retreat to a private corner of the large room and to devote a quiet hour to meditate upon, and if we wished, to record in writing, the eulogy that we imagine would be written for us when we died. I remember silently adding to those instructions the words "...after 120 years".

This exercise forced us to look deeply within ourselves and to determine what was permanent and worthy in our lives, and how we wished to be remembered by others. After a few moments into the exercise, the initial silence was broken by sobs, by sighs, by weeping. After that hour, the group gathered and many shared extremely moving feelings, and reported much self-discovery and self-revelation.

I don't recommend this experience to you, dear reader, unless you can do so in the presence of a trusted friend, preferably a person trained in coping with the feelings that can possibly emerge from such an exercise. But I do draw upon the experience I had that day to understand what others go through in the inevitable process of grief and mourning. I do continually go back in my memory to that day to understand myself and to evaluate my own life and its successes and failures, accomplishments and frustrations.

And I do rely upon the reactions I

witnessed and personally underwent that day to understand our patriarch Avraham and his need to both "eulogize Sarah, AND to cry for her." □

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

More on BRCA...

As we've stated in our past few columns, the BRCA mutation has been associated with a higher risk for contracting certain types of cancer. We have been discussing whether it is obligatory to reveal that one is a carrier of the BRCA mutation when entering into a shidduch. We now turn to a related question concerning the possibility of preventing the passing on of the BRCA mutation.

We have already discussed various aspects of a procedure called pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), which affords the possibility of assessing embryos during an IVF procedure, and transferring only the desired ones.

True, PGD is not applicable to each and every genetic disposition. Where there is a clear genetic marker, however, we have the medical knowledge and know-how to use it. The halachic and ethical question then becomes whether we ought to employ this technology. It is important to remember that PGD requires undergoing in-vitro fertilization, an intensive and invasive procedure which itself raises many halachic questions. Many poskim will not allow an elective PGD due to

possible complications of the IVF. In light of this we must ask whether PGD which is done to discover and eliminate the BRCA mutation ought to be considered elective, or not. Are there situations in which it would not be permitted to undergo IVF?

Being a carrier of the BRCA mutation is not an illness in and of itself, but may be associated with a higher - even significantly higher - risk of contracting cancer. While it is certainly true that not everyone who is a carrier will get cancer, and not everyone who gets cancer is a carrier, the two may be linked. We can therefore empathize with a couple that wishes to undergo the procedure in order to reduce the risk that their children might contract the disease and possibly become carriers.

In our discussions with the major poskim, almost all said they would permit a couple to undergo PGD for BRCA mutation. The small number that do not allow it claim that IVF is permitted only in cases of infertility, and not for genetic disorders. They would allow IVF and PGD for life-threatening genetic abnormalities such as Tay-Sachs disease, but not for elective procedures - such as for BRCA mutations.

However, most of the poskim do permit PGD and the accompanying IVF for BRCA mutation, since these procedures can assure that the couple will have a healthy child. They will then be reassured and more eager to have additional children.

The question then remains: Is it obliga-

tory for a woman who is a BRCA carrier to undergo PGD? Must she undergo treatment in order to ensure that she has healthy children?

We will discuss this question in our next column.

Maharal on the Sedra

The Hidden Meaning of Eliezer's Gifts

B'reishit 24:22 - The man took a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels.

Rashi: Beka [half shekel] is an allusion to the beka per head donation to the Mishkan [Sh'mot 38:26]; the two bracelets allude to the two tablets of the covenant, and the ten shekels to the Ten Commandments upon them .

Gur Arye: The midrash quoted by Rashi [B"R 60:16] is derived from the apparently superfluous detail of the description of the gifts. Why allude to something Rivka could not possibly understand? The answer is her mazal [celestial counterpart] understood [Megila 3a]. Eliezer hinted at the beka commandment, the donation for the offerings, because he saw her to be a person of kind deeds [Rashi 24:14]. The sacrifices produced a "pleasant aroma" [Sh'mot 29:25] hinted at by the nose ring, for the nose senses aroma. Also, the half shekel was used for the avoda, the service of Hashem in the Mishkan. The two bracelets hinted at the two tablets, representing Torah. Now we

have Shimon HaTzadik's three pillars on which the world stands - Torah, Service, and Good Deeds. Once he witnessed her good deeds, one of the pillars, he hinted to her she could merit the other two.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr

Praying with Passion

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

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Birchot HaShachar

(part ten)

יְהִי רַצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי,
שֶׁתִּצְיִלֵנִי הַיּוֹם וּבְכָל יוֹם...

Translation:

May it be Your will, HaShem my God and God of my ancestors, to save me today and every day,

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

Our Only Protection

It is only through Hashem's grace that we are protected from the many dangers, both physical and spiritual, that lurk around us.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

Keeping Us from Harm

Look at the world around you for a moment. The air is filled with microbes. The city streets harbor legions of felons. On the highways, drivers who are tired, distracted or

just don't drive very well speed along at 110 km an hour. It's a miracle that a person makes it through a day.

Looking at the world from a Jewish perspective, it is indeed a miracle - a miracle wrought by our daily prayers. The "answer" to our prayers we are looking for when we pray is all around us, in the disasters that don't happen, the diseases that don't strike, the enemies that don't attack. Hashem answers us in ways we cannot readily perceive.

The Bnei Yissaschar explains the following verses with this important concept: Praise Hashem, all nations; praise Him, all the states! For His kindness has overwhelmed us, and the truth of Hashem is eternal" (T'hilim 117:1-2). Why would the nations praise Hashem for His goodness on our behalf? How do they even know of the favor that Hashem bestows on His people?

The fact is that the nations of the world are actually more aware than we of Hashem's kindness toward us, because they know of the plots being planned against us - schemes of which we are completely ignorant. That ignorance stems from the fact that Hashem prevents the misfortune of those evil plots from even approaching us.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

How Hashem Helps

SCENARIO #1

A man is accosted by a criminal who waves a gun in his direction and demands his wallet. Suddenly, a police officer on a routine patrol notices the crime in progress and rescues the victim.

SCENARIO #2

Another young man is walking down the street, when he notices the commotion in an alleyway as the police arrest the criminal. Had he left his home a minute earlier, he would have been the victim!

SCENARIO #3

A pedestrian decides to take the longer "scenic route" through the park to work. He'll never know that a criminal had been lying in wait along his usual route.

At the conclusion of birkat Avot (first bracha of the Amida) in our daily Shemoneh Esrei, we say that Hashem is a Helper (Ozeir), a Savior (Moshi'a) and a Shield (Magen). Rav Dessler (Michtav Mei'Eliyahu vol. 4, page 65) explains that these words represent the three levels of Heavenly Help a person may receive. Hashem can help a person in the midst of danger; He can save the person from the impact of danger; or, He can provide a shield, behind which the person lives in tranquil security. Thus, even though we are completely unaware of it, we may be benefiting greatly from Hashem's help.

Try this:

Imagine a huge corporation whose workers are blissfully unaware that a major downsizing is being considered as a means of improving the company's bottom line. At the last moment, the top executives spare the staff of the dreaded "axe."

A Jewish employee fervently praying for his livelihood in prayer on a daily basis has no idea that Hashem responded to his heartfelt prayers by enabling him to keep his job. Vividly imagine the profound sense of relief and gratitude that would flood your heart if you heard that the business' owners were contemplating laying off workers in this 'down economy', but then changed their mind. Take that feeling of relief with you when you say the words SHETATZILEINI HAYOM UVCHOL YOM, rescue me today and every day.

Different from the last of the Birchot HaShachar, which is a communal prayer, this Y'HI RATZON is the individual's request of Hashem for protection when he, personally, not having the communal merit, is threatened by impending danger (Rav Schwab on Prayer, page 47)

WISDOM & WIT

by Shmuel Himelstein

The Brisker Rav went to Switzerland for health reasons, where he stayed at a Jewish resort. While there, he met a man named Sternowitz. The Brisker Rav jumped at the mention of the name. "Sternowitz? Are you by any chance from the village of so-and-so?" "No, Rebbe," said the man.

"Do you by any chance have relatives who lived there?" persisted the Brisker.

"Well, I did," said the man, "but they were all killed in the Holocaust. I am the only one of the entire family who is still alive."

Upon hearing this, the Brisker Rav told the resort owner, "This is a cause for a festive meal. I have finally found Sternowitz!" The Brisker Rav then related the following story.

Shortly before World War II, the Brisker Rav and his son were in a certain town, when word came that the war had begun. People dropped everything and fled before the German onslaught. The Brisker Rav and his son purchased train tickets with all the money they had, and when their train arrived at the destination on their tickets, they were completely stranded, with no money to continue on their journey. The Brisker Rav, with total faith, told his son that there was nothing to worry about, and sure enough - even though this isolated place did not have any Jews - a Jew named Sternowitz disembarked from the next train. Hearing of their distress, he took out his

wallet and lent them the money needed to complete their journey. The Brisker Rav told the man that he would repay the money when he arrived at his destination, but by the time he arrived there, the war had engulfed the entire country, and there was no way to move about. The debt remained unpaid.

Ever since that time, for fifteen years, the Brisker Rav had tried to find a way to repay that loan. It had caused him countless sleepless nights: "How can I ascend to our Father in Heaven and have an unpaid debt?" he kept repeating.

Now, that he had found the only living heir of the Sternowitz family, he was finally able to pay back that debt. It was indeed a cause for celebration.

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*

There is no doubt that one of the most difficult aspects of aliya is leaving behind family and loved ones when moving. This is true today in the era of instant global communication, and was certainly the case in previous generations when traveling to Israel meant lengthy, if not permanent, separation.

In many ways the avot and imahot are our models for aliya. It is interesting to note, however, that of all the olim among them, only one moved to Israel on her own. While Avraham and Sarah came as a family together with Avraham's nephew, Lot, and Yaakov - a toshav chozer - returned with his

wives and children after many years living in the Diaspora, only Rivka comes on her own to create a new life in Israel.

In our parsha we find a lengthy, repetitive, description of Avraham's servant's experiences as he arranges for Rivka to be taken as a wife for Yitzchak. These negotiations end with the question being posed to Rivka: "Will you go with this man?" to which she replies in a single word "Yes". She is ready to leave her family and friends and embark on a new life in Israel.

And in a single passage, the Torah hints at her success in establishing herself in this new environment. Upon her arrival in Israel, Yitzchak brings her into his mother's tent, an act that the midrash interprets as meaning that she replaced Sarah in four ways:

- The permanent cloud that stood above the tent returned - indicating the Divine Presence,
- The doors of the tent were open for all to enter - indicating community service and commitment,
- There was a "blessing" in the dough that was baked - indicating financial success,
- There was a candle burning from Friday night to Friday night - an indication of shalom bayit, of successful family life.

Were these things easy to accomplish? We know from next week's parsha that at least some of them were not. But the picture of an olah hadasha who

finds success -- economically and spiritually, together with communal and familial fulfillment, in ways that she could not have done "back home" -- serves as a model for us today.

Rabbi Shalom Z. Berger, Efrat

CHAYEI SARA Adapted from
Unlocking the Torah Text
by **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

Why Go Back?

Context: As Avraham's life draws near its end, he turns to his trusted servant (identified by the rabbis as Eliezer) and instructs him to return to his homeland, Aram Naharaim, in order to find a wife for Yitzchak. He specifies that he does not want Yitzchak to marry a woman from the Canaanite nations that surround him. (Aram Naharaim is generally identified as the area bounded by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Padan Aram, mentioned in the text as the birthplace of Rivka and the home of her extended family, refers to a specific region within Aram Naharaim.)

Questions: Avraham's decision seems completely counterintuitive. Why does he send Eliezer back to Aram Naharaim to find a match for Yitzchak? After all, isn't this the very land that Avraham himself was commanded to leave at the dawn of his career? The patriarch's own journey was launched when God commanded him to separate himself from his homeland, his birthplace and the home of his father. What possible reason could there now be to return to that land?

Complicating matters is the fact that

there would seem to be absolutely no moral difference between the inhabitants of Canaan and the inhabitants of Aram Naharaim. Both locations are populated by idol worshipers.

It cannot be said that Avraham does not want his son to intermarry; there are no Hebrews in either location.

Approaches:

A. Some commentaries suggest that Avraham specifically wanted a wife to be chosen for Yitzchak from his own family.

The Midrash Hagadol suggests two reasons for this preference. Firstly, Avraham reasoned to himself, "The people I should first convert to Judaism are the members of my own family." Secondly, Avraham believed that the members of his family were "nearer to repentance."

One possible problem with this interpretation lies in the fact that Avraham does not directly refer to his family in his instructions to Eliezer. He simply tells his servant to return to his land and his birthplace.

Eliezer, on the other hand, during his negotiations with Lavan and Bethuel (Rivka's brother and father), does mention that Avraham wanted him to choose a wife from the patriarch's own family. The commentaries note that this is one of a number of variations between Avraham's instructions and Eliezer's repetition of those instructions. These variations demonstrate Eliezer's diplomatic skill as he endears himself to Rivka's family.

B. A number of commentaries, among them Rabbeinu Nissim Ben Reuven (the Ran) do suggest a fundamental moral contrast between the inhabitants of Canaan and those of Aram Naharaim.

While both cultures were idolatrous, Canaanite society was particularly marked by its evil practices. Over and over again, the Torah speaks of the abominations perpetrated by the nations of Canaan. Rashi states, "The nations [of Canaan] conquered by the Israelites were more corrupt than any other."

Forced to choose between two idolatrous societies as the source of a potential mate for his son, Avraham avoids society marked by immoral behavior.

Given the evil nature of Canaanite society, one might ask why God commanded Avraham to relocate specifically to Canaan. Two answers might be proposed:

1. The land itself embodied a special sanctity in spite of the evil nature of its inhabitants.

2. Avraham was safer in a society that was more clearly evil than in his homeland, where the danger was subtle and the culture potentially more attractive.

C. Perhaps, however, a totally different explanation for Avraham's decision to send Eliezer back to Aram Naharaim might be proposed. This approach depends upon seeing Parshat Chayei Sara as a cohesive unit with one overarching theme that marks the culmination of Avraham's career.

Chayei Sara can be neatly divided into two major sections: the purchase of the Cave of Machpeila as a burial site for Sara and the selection of Rivka as Yitzchak's wife. As we have noted elsewhere, however, beneath the surface of the first section lies an even more important narrative: Avraham's dramatic negotiation for self-definition as a ger v'toshav, a stranger and a citizen.

We have also discussed how Avraham, through this two-word phrase, not only

describes himself but also delineates the place his descendents will take in society throughout the ages. To survive and to succeed the Jew must be both a stranger and a citizen in in any country where he lives, participating in the culture that surrounds him while maintaining his own unique identity.

Having arrived at his own self-definition, perhaps Avraham now looks towards the future and begins to fear: "I have been able to strike the balance necessary for my survival because I began in this land as a stranger. I came from a foreign land, and have always been able to maintain my distance from those within Canaan. Yitzchak, however, is different. My son was born here. He is too close to those around him. He is familiar only with this culture, with this population and with this land. How do I know that he will learn to discern the dangers that surround him? How do I know that he will be able to distance himself from elements of this society counter-productive to his spiritual development? How do I know that he will maintain the appropriate balance and truly be a ger v'toshav?"

Avraham then sets about guaranteeing the continuation of his legacy. He determines that at least one member of the next generation must make the same journey that he made, from Aram Naharaim to Canaan. More important than the physical journey, however, will be the philosophical journey. Yitzchak's wife will, it is to be hoped, be able to see herself as a ger v'toshav. She will begin with a natural distance from the Canaanites surrounding her. Given her foreign background, she will have a head start in maintaining the perspective needed to discern and confront the dangers around them.

In short, Avraham does have a deep ulterior motive for sending Eliezer back to his birthplace to find a wife for Yitzchak. The patriarch hopes that his son's wife will ensure the survival of the Jewish people by maintaining the delicate balance of self-definition that he himself has achieved.

Towards better Kashrut Awareness

Excerpted from an article in the OU's
Behind the Union Symbol

Easy to Eat; Complex to Certify The Yogurt Story

YOGURT WAS FIRST PRODUCED thousands of years ago. Dairy history and legend indicate that yogurt originated in Iran or Turkey... In 1900, a Russian biologist, Dr. Ilya Metchnikoff, of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, was able to isolate bacillus cultures for yogurt production, marking the beginning of modern yogurt manufacture. Dr. Metchnikoff demonstrated that yogurt's bacteria fought dangerous germs in the colons of mammals, and he theorized the positive effects of yogurt bacteria cultures on humans... Yogurt is popular today because of the variety of tastes and because of health benefits...

Yogurt is an ultra-pliable food which can be manipulated, filled, thickened and flavored in countless ways. Unlike most dairy products, yogurt has virtually no bounds... The health benefits of yogurt are quite unique. Its bacteria cultures assist in the digestive and gastrointestinal tracts, and they enhance overall immunity by attacking disease-promoting

organisms throughout the body's food trail. It is even suspected that some infections and pre-tumorous conditions may be killed by yogurt's live bacteria.

Of all dairy products, yogurt is among the most complex in terms of its kosher requirements and proper supervision.

Basic Production All yogurt begins with milk. The milk's fat ratio may be adjusted by adding cream or non-fat dry milk. Afterwards, sugar or artificial sweetener may be added. Stabilizers - which create the desired consistency - are then batched into the yogurt mix. Then, the mix is usually pasteurized, subsequent to which it is dosed with acid-based dairy cultures... the mass is left to incubate for a specific amount of time in closed yogurt vats.

Following incubation, fruit filling, flavors and even colorants may be added. The product is then filled into cups or tubs and is ready to go. (It is important to note that the only hot phase is pasteurization. The rest of the process is cold, ambient or warm.)

This all seems pretty straightforward. Why, then, did we make certification of yogurt out to be so complex? Let's go through some of the above steps again more carefully, this time from the perspective of a kosher certifier.

Ingredients Milk is milk. No kosher problems here.

Cultures, however, are another story. Most dairy cultures are grown in labs that handle kosher and non-kosher materials beyond the imagination. Some cultures are grown on surfaces which are non-kosher, and some are nourished with non-kosher nutrients. Cultures are

kosher only when their environments and nourishments are fully kosher. Thus, we are working with pretty sensitive issues.

Cream and non-fat dry milk, used to adjust yogurt fat ratios, are also kosher-sensitive. Some cream (called "whey cream") can derive from whey, which is often non-kosher, and even regular cream (called "sweet cream") frequently shares equipment used for non-kosher whey cream manufacture. Nonfat dry milk can be dried in spray towers also used for processing non-kosher meats, cheeses, etc. Thus, proper kosher supervision for cream and non-fat dry milk is definitely necessary!

When we get to stabilizers, we approach the most hazardous area of yogurt certification. The recent trend in the yogurt industry has been to increase the thickness of product, creating a "Swiss-style" consistency. The most common stabilizer to achieve this result is gelatin, most of which comes from the bones and hides of non-kosher animals. It is for this reason that many varieties of yogurt bear no kosher symbol or just feature a generic "K", which is commonly used by some kosher agencies that permit the consumption of gelatin derived from non-kosher sources in kosher products. Most widely-accepted kosher agencies, however, will not certify such yogurts, due to the presence of non-kosher gelatin... Stabilizers present in kosher-certified yogurt are exclusively starch- or gum-based. These stabilizers need proper kosher certification, as they can be processed on non-kosher equipment and can even contain trace amounts of gelatin, if not properly supervised.

Fruit fillings, flavors and colorants are often non-kosher...

Kosher Production The first step in certifying the kosher status of yogurt is to ascertain that all ingredients are kosher. The next task is to determine if the plant also makes non-kosher product and - if so - to evaluate whether or not the plant can handle a kosher program in light of its non-kosher production...


There are five categories of non-kosher issues: (1) batching, (2) pasteurization, (3) post-pasteurization, (4) formulas and (5) kosherization.

[Ed. note: We have omitted the paragraphs explaining each of the five stages of production as mentioned above, due to lack of space. The whole article and the rest of the magazine can be found at www.oukosher.org/pdf/BTUSsummer.pdf - many other articles of interest can be found there as well.]

We now have a better understanding of the various kosher issues that pertain to yogurt. Additives, stabilizers, cultures, flavors and equipment make yogurt into a complex product.

Complex...but delicious.


ParshaPix explanations


 Upper-left: 400 silver pieces that Avraham handed over to...


 EFRON (pencil = IPARON, heteronym* of EFRON)


** One of two or more words that have identical spellings but different meanings and pronunciations... E.g. lead, the soft metal, and*


lead, as in what a leader does. Heteronyms are more common in Hebrew when we spell without NIKUD (vowels)


 Pencil sharpener is a M'CHADEID, to sharpen = L'CHADEID, one of Yishmael's sons, CHADAD


 V'LIVKOTAH is written with a small KAF - under the pencil - a small kaf, a.k.a. a demitasse spoon


 G-d blessed Avraham BAKOL. There is an opinion that this blessing included a precious gem that had miraculous curative powers. That's it under the B'H


 There's a speech-bubble with a chain in it, standing for VAYOMAR, and he (Eliezer) said, which is read with the SHAL- SHELET (chain) note


 BARUCH HASHEM was said by Eliezer (Others in Chumash who said B"H are No'ach and Yitro. Lavan got close, by using the phrase B'RUCH HASHEM. So did Avimelech to Yitzchak. Notice the common factor in those who said B"H).


 Dakva's scene of Rivka at the well (or was it a spring?)


 One of the gold rings Eliezer gave to Rivka


 The Xed out turkey platter is Eliezer's refusal to eat before he had completed "business."


 Good thing, too, because Lavan had poisoned the food (poison symbol)


 CHUPA is for Yitzchak's marriage to Rivka (also Avraham's to Ketura - unless a PILEGESH doesn't have a CHUPA)


 Gift for Rivka and her family, as well as the gifts Avraham gave to the children of the "PILAGSHIM"


 The word TEREM appears eight times in the Torah, twice in Chayei Sara. That's the logo of Terem (it was in last week's ParshaPix too, but lying on its side)

 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 one of the sons of Yishmael. Different spelling, but very close in sound (especially if you don't pronounce an AYIN gutturally).


 NEVIOT water is for the sound-alike of the first born of Yishma'el


 Another son of Yishmael was KEIDAR, spelled the same and sounding similar to KADAR, which is a potter, as in Harry Potter


 The army insignia (between the camel and the Terem logo is a chevron. Capitalize the C and think of Kiryat Arba - Chevron.


 There are two dots forming a SH'VA - this is a sound-alike for a

grandson of Avraham's via Ketura


 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


 The animals are mentioned in the haftara - In modern Hebrew, a M'RI is a buffalo (bison? or maybe water buffalo). Likely that the haftara is referring to a different member of the bovine family or a description of a bull or cow.


 The question-marked chair is from the haftara - who will sit on David's throne after his death


 The arrow is from CHAVILA to SHOR

 The badge is Agent 99's of Control. She was a SOCHENET, a term describing Avishag in the haftara.


 Top-right is Charlie the tuna, the tuna that was never quite good enough for Chicken of the Sea. Here he stands for Y'TUR NAFISH whose name always sounds like your tuna fish.

 Lower-right is, of course, today's Mearat HaMachpeila in Chevron

 Above it are the 400 shekels that Avraham paid to Efron for the field and the cave and surroundings

 This leaves three Unexplaineds along the right side of the Parsha-

Pix - consider then visual TTriddles

 And the plant below the bottle of water?

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 537

Third Party Liens

There is in halacha a concept known as "the lien of R. Nassan". It works as follows: Reuven owes \$100 to Shimon; Shimon owes \$100 to Levi. Levi can go to Reuven to collect the \$100. This of course is an over simplification of a complex halachic concept.

Recently the Beit Din of Jerusalem had a case in which this concept was applied. Reuven owed \$100 to Shimon for a loan made by Shimon to Reuven for \$100, which debt was evidenced by a note of indebtedness. This loan was to be repaid on January 1, 2010. After Shimon made the loan to Reuven, Shimon borrowed \$100 from Levi to be repaid on July 1, 2010. There was no promissory note written to evidence this loan. On July 1, 2010 Shimon did not repay to Levi the \$100. Levi, realizing that Shimon probably does not have the assets to repay the \$100 wants to go after Reuven to collect the \$100 which is due from Reuven to Shimon. Reuven realizes that Shimon is not the type of person to pursue him for the \$100, defends against the law suit brought by Levi by stating that the \$100 due from Reuven to Shimon is not an asset of Shimon upon which Levi

can make a demand and collect in Beit Din. The question presented to the Jerusalem Beit Din, is the note held by Shimon against Reuven an asset that Levi can collect from Reuven? Or perhaps it only represents evidence that money is due from Reuven to Shimon? If on the one hand it is not an asset that Levi can collect from, can Levi compel Shimon to sue Reuven to collect the \$100 so that he will have money to pay Levi? The Beit Din began by stating that there is an important view that Levi cannot compel Shimon to institute a law suit in Beit Din to sue Reuven for the moneys so that he will have money to pay Levi. But it would be not in keeping with the spirit of halacha for Shimon not to sue Reuven to collect the money to pay Levi. However, if the money was given by Shimon as a deposit rather than a loan, then the money Reuven is holding is deemed to be in the constructive possession of Shimon and Levi can sue Reuven to get the money as well as being able to sue whatever source is holding money belonging to Shimon as distinguished from a loan made by Shimon to Reuven.

Portion from the Portion The Life of Sarah

Chayei Sara - the Life of Sarah - seems to be a funny title for a portion in which we are told that Sarah dies. But the verse is trying to teach us things about how she lived her life, so we can apply it to our own lives.

The verse (B'reishit 23:1) says that the life of Sarah was 100 years and 20 years and seven years. The word years is repeated each time. We are all familiar with the Rashi that at 100 years she was like a 20 year old who never sinned and at 20 years she was like a 7 year old for her beauty.

The Rav (Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik tz"l) explains that if we look closely at Rashi's words we can learn more about the greatness of Sarah. "The years of Sarah's lifetime: all were equal for the good." She was 100, she was 20, she was 7. Most people pass from one stage of their lives to the next, leaving the previous stage behind, and changing. Each one of these ages -- 100, 20, 7 -- has something special about it. The 7 year-old has innocence; the 20 year-old has strength; the 100-year-old has wisdom. The secret of the greatness of Sarah was that throughout her entire life she was 100 and 20 and 7. All of Sarah's years were equal. At every point in her life, she remained the same. She was always as innocent as a 7-year-old, with the strength, determination and idealism of a 20-year-old, and always possessed the wisdom of a 100-year-old.

This wisdom we witnessed in last week's portion. She was able to see the true character of Yishmael through the games he played. Verse 21:9 states that she saw Yishmael METZACHEK - playing. The Tosefta brings a drash in the name of Rabbi Akiva. This drash is brought in Rashi on the verse and teaches that the word METZACHEK hints to the fact that Yishmael did the three big sins -

AVODA ZARA, GILU'I ARAYOT, and SHFICHAT DAMIM. But even if Yishmael was just playing, in the conventional sense of the word, a lot can be learned about a child by how he plays.

Last Motza'ei Shabbat I heard Rabbanit Yemima Mizrahi describe how Jewish mothers today must continue in the path of our matriarch Sarah and scrutinize the games our children play to make sure they are on the right path. Do they spend all their time playing by themselves in front of the computer using video games where the object is to kill others. I've even seen games where the scene is a nursing home and the goal is to grab the elders in their wheelchairs and snatch them from their rooms and attack them. What does such a game teach children about V'HADARTA P'NEI ZAKEIN, respecting one's elders?

There are also some children who play violent games that they invent themselves. They may take an insect and dissect it or a cat and pull its tail. These games of ZTA'AR BA'ALEI CHAYIM can hint to us about the character of the child and alarm us about his future.

Instead of these types of games, our children should be playing interactive, cooperative games where they learn how to lose, or even win, graciously and how to give in - some times. They learn the importance of honesty - because if they constantly win, with the help of a bit of cheating, no one will ever play with them again. They should also play thinking games like those that our family played this past motzaei Shabbat at the Israel Center games night. We all learned three new

games - that I had never even heard of. Some people may think that playing games is nonsense and a waste of time. Watching how our children play is a way to learn about them and playing games with our children is a way to teach them many important lessons about life and about how G-d wants us to behave.

TTTRIDDLES

Last issue's (VAYEIRA) TTtriddles:

[1] The letter without one has two

In B'reishit 18:9, the angels visiting Avraham ask him where Sara is. The pasuk begins with the words VAYOM'RU EILAV, and they said to him. The word EILAV is written in a Sefer Torah with a dot above the ALEF, YUD, and HEI. The letter without one (the LAMED has no dot over it) has two dots over it, the trop-mark for the word - namely, a KATON (which looks like a colon).

[2] No relation to Reb Hirsch Leib Berlin

Reb Hirsch Leib, which are his Yiddish names, was also known by his Hebrew names, Reb Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin. His well-known acronym is the NETZIV. In Parshat Vayeira, the NETZIV is Mrs. Lot (Edit or Irit was her name, according to the Midrash) - who became a pillar of salt - NETZIV MELACH - for looking back on the destruction of S'dom, against the instructions of the angels. As far as we

know - not related.

[3] Yishmael's mother, Mordechai's cousin, Yiftach's daughter, Shimshon's wife

VATEIVK - and she cried. Hagar raised her voice and she cried (when she and Yishmael were banished from Avraham's house). Esther fell to Achashveirosh's feet and cried, begging the king to rescind Haman's decree. Yiftach's daughter asked for - and was granted - two months alone to lament her fate, during which time she cried for the plight to which her father condemned her. Shimshon's (first) wife (before Dalila) cried to him that he should tell her the solution to the riddle (honey, lion).

[4] LE: Rick's and GB's brother?

Rick Shaw (a small two-wheeled cart for one passenger; pulled by one person) and George Bernard Shaw, might have had a TTiddle-brother named L.E. Shaw, as mentioned in the haftara of Vayeira (Elisha HaNavi).

[5] Last week this week once.
This week last week twice

Last week = Lech L'cha; this week = Vayeira. The words v'Lech L'cha occur once in Parshat Vayeira. The word Vayeira occurs twice in Parshat Lech L'cha.

[6] He sat there; who was told to stand there

Avraham sat at the entrance of his tent (PETACH HA-OHEL) in the heat of the day, as we read in the beginning of

Vayeira. Sisra told Yael to stand at the entrance of the tent and tell anyone that asks if he is there, that he is not. Instead of doing as Sisra demanded, she, having given him sleep-inducing milk rather than the water he asked for, drove a tent-peg through his head via his temple.

[7] Golfing news? He didn't make par

A young bull is most often described in the Torah as a PAR BEN BAKAR. Avraham took a BEN BAKAR (perhaps a male calf) and gave it to Yishmael to prepare for the guests (angels). So Yishmael did not make a PAR, just a BEN BAKAR. Not exactly golfing news, hence the question mark.

[8] Donkeys and turbans

VAYACHAVOSH. The word occurs five times in Tanach. Four times, it is used for saddling a donkey (CHAMOR or ATON). Once it refers to putting turbans on the heads of Aharon's sons.

[9] Unexplained(s) from the ParshaPix

Okay, there was a whole piece on Grover Cleveland, but what is he doing in the ParshaPix for Parshat Vayeira? US dollars come in ones, twos, fives, twenties, fifties, and hundreds. \$100 is the highest denomination in circulation. Once upon a time there were \$500 and \$1000 bills (and even higher), but they are not printed nor used

anymore. The last \$1000 bill was printed in 1945 and carried the portrait of Grover Cleveland. Avimelech gave many gifts to Avraham and Sara, including ELEF KESEF,

literally, 1000 silver pieces, but \$1000 money works TTriddle-wise, hence the picture of Grover Cleveland. This was your weekly dose of trivia, courtesy of the lighter side of Torah Tidbits. And one more: President Nixon signed an executive order in 1969 suspending distribution of high-denomination notes as a way of fighting organized crime by making it harder to move large amounts of currency. This was years after the were no longer being printed.

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

A partial review of the flipping VAV

In Biblical Hebrew, a VAV is not only conjunctive (joining), it is also used to flip the tense of a verb from past to future or from future to past. In B'reishit 24:51 we find Lavan and Betuel telling Eliezer to take Rivka U'T'HI ISHA, and she shall be a wife (to the son of your master). T'HI, she shall be. U'T'HI, and she shall be. Future tense remains. No flip. But in 24:67, Yitzchak took Rivka into his mother's tent, he married her, VA-T'HI LO L'ISHA, and she became his wife. The VA flips T'HI to past.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

1) The Kli Yakar answers that when a truly special person passes away, it takes time for the degree of the loss to sink in and, as the mourners begin to recognize the degree of the loss, the crying increases. Thus, Avraham

eulogized Sarah first and then, over time, the crying increased as he realized what Sarah's loss meant to the world.

2) The Ohr HaChayim explains that we see from these words that Rivka literally held the pitcher and poured the drink into Eliezer's mouth so that he would not have to put forth the effort of holding and pouring the pitcher after his long journey. Thus, he completed to drink when she finished giving him to drink.

3) The S'forno teaches that Rivka demonstrated her awareness of the dangers of speaking while eating and drinking, and her care and concern led her to wait until he was finished before causing him to talk to prevent him from possible harm.