

GOOD FIRE, BAD FIRE

Personal notes: I do not have any great insights or flashes of inspiration concerning the fire on the Carmel. I am stunned and shocked by the tragic loss of life and by the enormity of the destruction to forest and trees, to homes and possessions. I feel for the families who are mourning the loss of loved ones and join in the prayers to G-d for the recovery of the injured. I salute those countries who helped us fight the fires. I express gratitude to the many, many fire-fighters - professionals and volunteers - who risked their lives in fighting the fire. I don't pretend to second-guess G-d on why all of it happened; I think it is wrong to announce the reason for this - or any other - tragedy. Short of the restoration of true prophecy, the "best" we can do is to practice some serious introspection and resolve to improve our moral, ethical, interpersonal, and religious behavior.

All that said (and a few other things that probably should have been included), we must be struck by the sad irony of such a devastating and destructive fire at the very time that we were lighting the Chanuka candles, and Shabbat candles, and the havdala candle, and most ironically, the NER NESHAMAH, memorial candles for the victims of this disaster. All of that - and more: the burning of



Chametz on Erev Pesach, the fire of the Mizbei'ach in the Beit HaMikdash, the lighting of the Menorah therein...

and still more - are examples of GOOD FIRE, the use of fire for the sake of mitzvot, for the sake of Heaven. Important additional point:

When we refer to BAD FIRE, we are NOT questioning G-d's actions or involvement; we are looking from human perspective.



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Jerusalem Shabbat in/out times for VAYIGASH

4:00pm / 5:16pm (see page 3 for other zmanim)

Checked, double checked, and triple checked for Parshat Vayigash

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ParshaPix Explanations on p.37



Word of the Month With the molad on Monday morning, the first opportunity for Kiddush L'vana according to Minhag Yerushalayim is Thursday night, motza'ei Chanuka. Seven day after the molad people have their first op on Monday night, December 13th. Those who do not insist on 7 days, but usually wait until Motza'ei Shabbat have their best shot on Motza"Sh Parshat Vayigash, December 11th.

• Friday, December 10th is 3 Tevet. That is an interesting date since in some years it is the last day of Chanuka and gets Hallel and no Tachanun. This year, and others like it, with two days of Rosh Chodesh Tevet, the 3rd of Tevet is a "regular" day, with Tachanun.



Candles	VAYIGASH	Havdala	next week
4:00pm	Yerushalayim	5:16pm	4:02 / 5:18
4:18pm	S'derot	5:19pm	4:20 / 5:21
4:15pm	Gush Etzion	5:16pm	4:17 / 5:19
4:15pm	Raanana	5:17pm	4:17 / 5:19
4:16pm	Beit Shemesh•RBS	5:17pm	4:18/ 5:19
4:15pm	Netanya	5:16pm	4:17 / 5:19
4:16pm	Rehovot	5:17pm	4:18 / 5:20
4:16pm	Be'er Sheva (& Otniel)	5:18pm	4:18 / 5:21
4:15pm	Modi'in• Chashmona'im	5:16pm	4:17 / 5:19
4:00pm	Petach Tikva	5:17pm	4:02 / 5:19
4:00pm	Maale Adumim	5:15pm	4:02 / 5:18
4:14pm	GINOT Shomron	5:16pm	4:16 / 5:18
4:14pm	Gush Shiloh	5:15pm	4:16 / 5:17
4:16pm	K4 & Hevron	5:17pm	4:18 / 5:19
4:15pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:16pm	4:17 / 5:18
4:16pm	Yad Binyamin	5:17pm	4:18 / 5:20
4:18pm	Ashkelon	5:19pm	4:20 / 5:21
4:01pm	Tzfat	5:12pm	4:03 / 5:15
4:14pm	Zichron Yaakov	5:15pm	4:16 / 5:18

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - VAYIGASH 5:53pm

**Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
1-10 Tevet • December 8-17**

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:32-5:38am
Sunrise	6:27-6:33am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma	8:58-9:04am (Magen Avraham: 8:20-8:25am)
Sof Z'man T'fila	9:49-9:54am (Magen Avraham: 9:17-9:22am)
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:31-11:35am
Mincha Gedola	12:01-12:06pm (earliest Mincha)
Plag Mincha	3:31½-3:34¼pm
Sunset	4:40-4:42pm (based on sea level: 4:34-4:37pm)

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Thirty-five @ 25; thirteen @ 50;
five @ 100.
How much is Vayigash?

He from mercy; he from anger

Luna, Yaakov, Binyamin

Tied for first with another; beat 17 fivers

No farmer, she plowed backwards

Friday, December 17th is ASARA B'TEVET. It is the only fast day that ever falls on Friday. Under normal circumstances, we break the fast at Kiddush. 10 Tevet falls on Friday about 20% of the time, but the last one was 10 yrs. ago

You mean like phalanges

Rather than writing NMN, he could write SAME

Now, please

David and his great... grandmother

Naftali's Jiminy Cricket

LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

Even with the concept of "all that G-d does is good", WE perceive some things as good and other things as bad. This is acceptable and does not constitute a lack of faith on our part. Even the concept, as expressed in the Mishna, of "Just as we make a bracha on good, so too must we say a bracha on bad. This certainly recognizes good and bad.

But we digress...

Let's learn a Mishna, (a) in memory of the victims of the Carmel Fire, (b) to see that there is mention of Chanuka in the Mishna, even though Chanuka is not presented as its own topic, (c) to see an example of good fire and bad fire, (d) to learn an interesting and, perhaps, important Mussar lesson.

The Mishna is in Bava Kamma, 6:6. It continues on the theme of the previous few mishnayot - namely, damages caused by fire.

גַּם לְשִׁיבָא מִתַּחַת הַפְּטִישׁ וְהַזִּיק חֵיב. גָּמַל שֶׁהָיָה טֵעוּן פֶּשְׁטָן וְעֵבֶר בְּרִשׁוֹת הָרִבִּים. וְנִכְנַס פֶּשְׁטָנוֹ לְתוֹךְ הַחֲנוּת. וְדָלְקוּ בָּנָיו שֶׁל חֲנוּנִי וְהָדִלִיק אֶת הַבֵּירָה. בְּעַל הַגָּמַל חֵיב. הַנִּיחַ חֲנוּנִי נָרוֹ מִבְּחוּץ, הַחֲנוּנִי חֵיב. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר בְּנֵר הַנֶּכְפֶּה פְּטוּר:

A spark that shoots out from under the hammer (of a blacksmith, for example), and causes damage, the one who produced the spark is required (to pay for the damage). We'll leave this alone, because it is the rest of the mishna that is our focus.

Picture this: A camel is laden with flax (or other flammable material). The load

is wide and extends from both sides of the camel. As the camel is being led through a (narrow) public street (let's say, through a shuk), the flax extends into one of the shops lining the street and is set alight by a lamp (oil, gas, whatever) inside the shop. The resulting burning flax set fire to the store. The camel owner is responsible for all damages.

If the shopkeeper had a lamp (with an open flame) outside his shop's door and the flax ignited and set fire to a building, the storekeeper is responsible - for the loss of the flax and any other damage.

Rabbi Yehuda says that if the said lamp was a Chanuka lamp (which is supposed to be placed outside the home, store, etc. near the door), then the storekeeper is exempt from paying damages (since he has halachic sanction, so to speak, to have placed the open flame outside his shop (and the responsibility rests with the camel owner).

Important note: Rabbi Yehuda is disputing the opinion of the Tanna Kamma (first opinion) that the storekeeper is responsible EVEN if the lamps were for the mitzva of Chanuka. The halacha is not like Rabbi Yehuda. Point: Doing a mitzva is NOT an excuse for a dangerous or careless disregard of ramifications of one's act. In the mishna's case, it is irresponsible to place an open flame, even for the sake of a mitzva, where it is likely to cause harm or damage. To put it a well-known way: When your wrap yourself in a Talit - be careful not to whip someone with the tzitzit.

Vayigash stats

11th of 54 sedras; 11th of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 178.07 lines in a Torah, ranks 34

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

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

1480 words - 30th; 5680 letters - 29th

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

MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are found in Vayigash

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 13 p'sukim - 44:18-30

[S> 44:18 (52)] The sedra begins with the dramatic confrontation

between Yehuda and Yosef. Yehuda risks his life when he approaches the "Egyptian leader" in an attempt to save Binyamin. The first Aliya ends with the emotion-filled description by Yehuda of the feelings between Yaakov and Binyamin - "V'nafsho k'shura v'nafsho", and his soul is bound with his soul.

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

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

SDT *The Alshich asks: At the end of Parshat Mikeitz, Yehuda is completely resigned to his (and his brothers') fate. The Egyptian ruler has accused them of stealing his special chalice. Yehuda offers that the one in whose possession the cup is found shall be put to death and that the others would be slaves. When the cup is "found" in Binyamin's possession, Yehuda meekly submits (to the slavery suggestion).*

Yosef (as yet unrevealed) nobly refuses Yehuda's offer and announces that he will take only the "culprit" as a slave - the rest are free to return in peace to their father. That is the "cliff-hanger" ending of Mikeitz. At the beginning of Vayigash, Yehuda changes from the lamb awaiting slaughter, to the lion which becomes the hallmark of his tribe, risking his life in his confrontation with the enigmatic Egyptian leader. What caused the change in Yehuda's demeanor? The Alshich answers brilliantly: As long as Yehuda expected all the brothers to be enslaved, he viewed the events as G-d's punishment for the sale of Yosef. This he could and would accept. When it turned out that only Binyamin would be enslaved - the only one not involved in Mechirat Yosef, Yehuda realized that this was not punishment for what they had done. Now his protective instincts and his promise to Yaakov take over. Yehuda boldly faces this "Egyptian" at the beginning of Vayigash and is prepared to risk all to save Binyamin.

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

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

Ever notice that when Yosef intere-gated the Brothers, he asked them if

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

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

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

Yehuda tells Yosef that Yaakov is likely to die if the brothers return without Binyamin. He adds that he has personally guaranteed Binyamin's return and "how can I return to my father without the lad..." (Remember that Yehuda had previously returned to his father without the other lad, Yosef. The current situation with Binyamin is Yehuda's opportunity for complete repentance for what he had done to Yosef.)

Yosef cannot contain himself any longer and orders the room

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

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

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

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

Some see in it a short but powerful

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

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

Shlishi - Third Aliya 20 p'sukim - 45:8-27

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

Meanwhile, Par'o becomes aware of the reunion and offers his generous hospitality to the family. Yosef gives his brothers clothing,

but gives Binyamin even more (specifically, 5 sets of clothing and 300 silver pieces).

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

The "solution" to the problem of the brothers is not reached by avoiding difficult situations. If there is true repentance, then the brothers can be given the exact circumstances to show their change of heart. Seeing things in a proper perspective, the extra gifts to Binyamin do not evoke the jealousy of the brothers; they have repented.

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

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

Yosef sends his brothers back to

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

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

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

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

SDT *In explanation of why Yosef never communicated with his father in all the years of separation, one commentary suggests that had Yaakov known about the sale of Yosef, he would have considered his sons in violation of the Torah's prohibition against kidnapping. Therefore, Yosef did not tell his father what had happened.*

There are other explanations, as well.

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

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

The Seventy Souls...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Z'vulun (28) and his sons **Sered** (29), **Eilon** (30), **Yachl'eil** (31);

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

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

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

Asher (42) and his children **Yimna** (43), **Yishva** (44), **Yishvi** (45), **B'ri'a** (46), their sister **Serach** (47), and the sons of B'ri'a, **Chever** (48), **Malki'el** (49);

The souls from Zilpa are 16.

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

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

Souls descendent from Rachel are 14.

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

Naftali (66) and his sons **Yachtz'eil** (67), **Guni** (68), **Yeitzer** (69), **Shileim** (70);

Those descendant from Bilha are 7.

The Torah's total is 66 who went down to Egypt (actually 67 counting Yocheved) and Yosef and his sons who were already in Egypt, bring the total - not counting daughters-in-law - to 70. Remember that the "whole world" that came from No'ach was 70 (nations). We now find the same number in Yaakov's descendants. Their 70 became the Nations of the World. Our 70 became the Jewish People.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yaakov's family flourishes greatly.

As mentioned earlier, this is the only sedra that does not end with a parsha break. The significance of this is explained by the commentaries of the opening pasuk of next week's sedra. 3 p'sukim are reread for Maftir.

Haftara 14 p'sukim Yechezkeil 37:15-28

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

people will all keep Torah and mitzvot, the people will return to Eretz Yisrael from the far-flung places of their dispersion, and the Beit HaMikdash will stand in Jerusalem forever, **בב"א**.

Divrei Menachem

The Talmud tells us that if someone should perchance on a friend not seen for a long time, the blessing to say is, "Baruch Mechayei HaMeitim" - "Blessed is the One who revives the dead". So imagine Yaakov's feelings on seeing his long lost and favored son Yosef after a separation of 22 years!

The Torah's account of the repatriation between Yaakov and Yosef makes interesting reading. For when the brothers returned from Egypt and told their frail father that Yosef was alive and had reached fame and fortune, Yaakov failed to believe them. For, after all, the sons had previously deceived Yaakov by telling him that a wild beast had devoured Yosef (Avot DeRabbi Natan).

But now, the Midrash tell us, when Yaakov saw the wagons (AGALOT), "that Yosef had sent him" (in contradistinction to those sent by Par'o), and heard all the words that Yosef had spoken with the brothers, he understood the veracity of their account. For, in their last conversation, he and Yosef had been learning the halachic issues of the EGLA ARUFA of which the wagons were now a clear hint (cf. Rashi).

Now Yaakov's spirit revived and he declared that, "I will go and see him [Yosef] before I die". It was neither Yosef's physical survival that moved Yaakov nor the fame that Yosef had achieved. What gave Yaakov "Yiddische Nachas" was the fact that despite years spent in an alien culture, Yosef was still a G-d-fearing Jew!

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *As a kohen raised in chutz la'aretz, where nesi'at kapayim (duchenen = NK) was a big event and leviyim were eager to wash kohanim's hands, I have been surprised that usually I have to wash my own hands in Israel. Should I say something to the levi'im?*

ANSWER: Firstly, in the many places this respondent has davened in Israel, I have found that leviyim almost always wash kohanim's hands. However, we will present the background on the practice and relate to the situation in your community.

The Beit Yosef (Orach Chayim 128) cites the minhag for leviyim to wash kohanim's hands before NK, tracing the minhag to the Zohar (Naso). The Zohar speaks of adding sanctity into NK by having leviyim, who are sanctified from the time of Moshe and Aharon, wash and thus sanctify the kohanim's hands. The Aruch HaShulchan (Orach Chayim 128:15) adds an additional reason: it is reminiscent of the Beit HaMikdash, where the leviyim assisted the kohanim. The latter reason seems to portray the matter as related to the interrelation-ship between the two groups, whereas the Zohar describes it as an attempt to prepare for NK on the highest level possible. (It is unclear why the Aruch HaShulchan felt a need to add a new, albeit logical reason, to the clear one provided by the Zohar, the classical source the minhag is based on.)

Although important poskim state that one is not required to follow Kabbalistic practices, the normative approach is that when these practices are found in standard sources like the Shulchan Aruch (in this case, OC 128:7) and are followed broadly, they should be kept carefully. The questions arise in regard to cases where it is either difficult to keep the minhag or where keeping it conflicts with another halachic concern. We will explore the poskim's opinion regarding a few such cases.

The correct ruling seems to be that a levi goes to do the washing, even when he will be unable to hear part of the chazarat hashatz and answer Amen, but not if he is needed for the minyan of people answering (see Shevet Halevi VIII, 47 and Teshuvot V'hanhagot III, 48). The greatest discussion is on whether a levi who is a talmid chacham should wash the hands of a kohen who is far from being one, which might be a lowering of the honor he should maintain. The Magen Avraham (128:7) brings a machloket on the matter but says that if one of the kohanim is a respected person, the levi may wash all of the kohanim's hands.

Some of the opinions shed light on the general outlook on the minhag. The Pri Chadash (OC 128:6), who is most against the levi lowering his honor, prefaces his claim by saying that it is not a full necessity for a levi to wash the kohen's hands. In contrast, the Shulchan Aruch HaRav (OC 128:11), in saying that the levi may wave his

honor, says that the levi is not so much serving the kohanim as adding sanctity to the process. Some say that that we cannot assign people to distinct categories based on level in our time, and the Aruch HaShulchan (ibid.) says that doing so could unwarrantedly hurt feelings. In general, the Igrot Moshe (OC IV, 127) while understanding why a levi who feels rushed might not want to fulfill this practice whose source is Kabbalistic, criticizes refusal as the wrong thing. The Yalkut Yosef (OC 128:23), while saying the minhag should be kept, cites the Knesset HaGedola as saying a levi who does not do so is not committing a sin.

As far as advice to you, while we agree that your leviyim seem to be shirking their duties, we think you should not say anything to them, given that it is not a full-fledged obligation. Rather, point out the situation to your rav (or a congregational leader in his absence). An announcement or subtle statement might be made for the sake of the community's NK. In any case, NK when the kohen washes his own hands is not problematic. Ashkenazim assume that firstborns (from their mother) should wash if there are no leviyim (Bach; see Mishna Berura 128:22 and Kaf Hachayim, OC 128:40). Enlisting them might just get the leviyim moving.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE CORPORATION [1] A "Challenges of Money" article by Dr. Meir Tamari

It has been said to me many times that the answers that Judaism has regarding ethical and moral use of our money and business behavior, do not have the same relevance in the modern corporate world as they had to Chazal. Similarly, it has been argued that the multi-national corporations or even the giant national one's whose turn-overs are larger than those of many national states, cannot be related to the ancient simplistic cases raised in our sources. However, size only aggravates the consequences of immoral economic behavior while the translation of these cases into modern business methods is sufficient to make them relevant, since the material desires and lusts of humans have not changed. Rather, almost all of the ethical issues flow from the separation of identity between the corporation and the individual shareholders. This assumption of a corporation as a personality or an entity apart from the identity of the owners has been accepted by almost all the legal systems. Primarily, this is reflected in the nature of the liability of the shareholders which, in contrast to partnerships or single ownership, is limited only to the equity of corporation.

Although the corporate form of business organization is relatively new, it seems this separate entity limiting shareholder liability is recognized in halacha. "Actually, the corporation is simply a partnership like all the other

partnerships or joint ventures except that here the partners have pronounced two conditions. Firstly, at the time of forming the corporation each one invests a certain sum of his own money as do the others [and the sum of this forms the corporate equity which can be enlarged by similar investments]. The second condition is that all the activities and projects of the corporation will be conducted without shi'abud haguf, without any bodily lien, but only a lien against its assets. From this it follows that if there should be losses and insufficient assets to cover them, then the parties will not have to meet any further obligations [from their private assets] since halachically all conditions expressed on monetary matters are binding and therefore [in the limited liability corporation there is no shi'abud haguf" (Mishneh Halachot 6:277, Harav Menashe Klein, NY late 20th century).

At the same time, however, the recognition of this separate legal identity of the corporation creates a corporate veil behind which moral, religious and ethical issues in all societies, may become blurred and ignored. This corporate veil may develop for all or some of the following reasons.

The shareholders, directors and employees tend to view the corporation as a depersonalized economic force devoid of any mutual non-contractual rights or obligations. This permits the directors and managers to relax or ignore the ethical standards and to avoid the social obligations to which they would adhere in their private lives.

The employees, all too often, develop practices in regard to their impersonal corporate employer that they themselves would consider immoral and wrong in relation to an individual employer. Shareholders are able to regard their investment in the corporation as a simple capital investment to yield maximum profits without any regard for any of the ethical questions involved in earning them.

By introducing various degrees of separation between ownership and management, the corporate entity enables shareholders and directors alike to evade responsibility for the ethical and social justice issues facing its operations. The shareholders argue that they have no control over the daily operation of the corporation and often not over its general policy so that they cannot have responsibility for the moral and ethical consequences. In a similar fashion, the directors claim that they have no way to ascertain the moral preferences of their shareholders or that these vary widely or often contradict one another. Therefore their sole yardstick is that of earning maximum profits and securing safe growth; ethical issues involved cannot be made their concern.

The question for us is does such a corporate veil exist in Jewish thought? Does the halakhic acceptance of the corporation limiting its liabilities to its equity without recourse to personal assets of the shareholders, free it from the religious and moral demands that Judaism places on wealth and on its formation? □

VAYIGASH

Forgiveness: A Jewish Value

This has got to be one of the oldest "rabbi" jokes in the entire repertoire of American Jewish humor. It tells us of the young rabbi, fresh from rabbinical school, who addresses his first several sermons to his new congregation on the varied subjects of meticulous Shabbat observance, refraining from malicious gossip, honesty in business, and the avoidance of inappropriately familiar behavior with other men's wives.

After these first several homiletic salvos, the president of the congregation approaches him with the suggestion that these topics are much too sensitive and have upset many of the synagogue's members. The president urges the rookie rabbi to try to find some more acceptable topics to speak about.

The rabbi objects, and asks, "But what, then, do you suggest that I speak about in my sermons?"

To which the president replies, "Judaism! Why not just talk about Judaism?"

Those of us with experience in the pulpit rabbinate typically do not find this story very funny. Each of us has, on more than one occasion, taken on causes in our sermons that our audiences have felt were not in our rabbinic purview, and indeed were somehow "not Jewish".

One of my favorite examples of this phenomenon in my own career has been my attempts, in sermons to the entire congregation, and in more intimate counseling sessions, to encourage forgiveness. I will never forget the first time I made "forgiveness" the theme of one of my sermons, only to be accused by one of the more prominent members of my congregation of preaching Christianity. I urged people to forgive those who have offended them, only to find that, for many Jews, forgiveness is viewed as a Christian, not a Jewish, virtue.

Of course, this is not true. Forgiveness is a major teaching of our own faith. We are encouraged to forgive others who may have sinned against us, and we must seek forgiveness of those against whom we have sinned.

In this week's Torah portion, Vayigash, we have an outstanding biblical example of forgiveness. Yosef, after putting his brothers through tests and trials, finally cannot contain himself. He exclaims, "I am your brother Yosef, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt." And immediately after identifying himself, he unequivocally forgives them: "Now, do not be distressed or reproach yourselves because you sold me hither... it was not you who sent me here, but God..."

It is true that the brothers were "blown away" by this unanticipated revelation of the true identity of their tormentor, and even more astounded by this assertion of total forgiveness.

But this is not the first example of human forgiveness that we find in the Bible. Yosef may have learned about this value from his great-grandfather Abraham's precedent. Abraham, back in B'reishit 20:17, not only forgives his adversary, Avimelech, but offers prayers on his behalf.

What, then, can be the basis for the misconception that forgiveness is a Christian virtue and is not preached by Judaism? I think that the answer can be found in a precious book called *The Sunflower*, by Simon Wiesenthal.

Wiesenthal relates his personal experience of when he was brought to the bedside of a dying Nazi officer by the officer's own mother, who pleaded with him to forgive her son for killing Jews. Wiesenthal had been an eyewitness to this officer's murderous brutality. He found himself confronted with a moral dilemma. Could he deny a mother's tearful entreaties? On the other hand, could he possibly forgive such unspeakable cruelty? And could he forgive on behalf of the victims, of others?

I will leave it for you, dear reader, to discover for yourself what Simon Wiesenthal actually did. But long after the event, he submitted this excruciating dilemma to several dozen philosophers, writers, and political leaders, asking them what they would do. Some of his respondents were Christians, some were Jews, and I believe one was a Buddhist.

The results were astounding. By and large, the non-Jews were able to find justification for forgiveness. On the other hand, most of the Jews could not express forgiveness for this soldier's heinous crimes, convinced that certain crimes were not subject to forgiveness.

For me, the lesson here is one that Judaism teaches well. Forgiveness must be earned, it must be deserved, it must be requested, and above all, it can only be granted by the person who was offended. I cannot forgive you for a sin you've committed against my brother.

In a sense, Yosef goes beyond the call of duty in expressing forgiveness to his brothers. They did not even know who he was, let alone beg forgiveness from him. But he knew from close observation of their concern for each other that they had long transcended their previous petty jealousies and rivalries. He was convinced that forgiveness was in order.

Yosef is an exemplar of how important it is for each of us to forgive those who have offended us. Forgiveness is a practice for all year long, and not just for the season of Yom Kippur. After all, it is not just on that one sacred day that each of us stands in need of the Almighty's forgiveness. His forgiveness is something we need at every moment of our lives.

The prophet Micha (7:18) says:

"Who is God like You,
tolerating iniquity

and forgiving transgression..."

Upon which the Talmud comments (Rosh HaShana 17a): "Whose iniquities does God tolerate? He who forgives the transgressions of another." □

TTTRIDDLES

Last issue's (Mikeitz/Chan.) TTtriddles:

[1] Earth's mouth and parched ears

And the earth opened its mouth VATIVLA, and it (she) swallowed... Korach's rebellious gang (not the 250 incense offerers). And in Mikeitz, in Par'o's second dream, the seven parched ears of corn swallowed the healthy, good looking ones - VATIVLANA. Both of these examples are in the feminine form. One VAYIVLA (masculine form) emerges from a search of Tanach, referring to what Aharon's staff did the staffs of the CHARTUMIM of Egypt.

[2] When asked, Lepa said, "20 questions. Animal, vegetable, and mineral."

Lepa is L.E. FATHER (pa) is, in Hebrew, ELIAV (ben CHEILON). He was the tribal leader who offered his gifts on the third day of Chanuka, this year - Shabbat, which is why he was chosen from among the twelve. When he (or any of the others) is asked what he brought to the dedication of the Mishkan, and he offers the questioner to play 20 questions, he gives the "traditional" opening hint of animal,

vegetable, AND mineral. The gifts included various animals for korbanot (animal), flour, oil, spices (vegetable), and silver and gold vessels (mineral).

[3] He before a king; he to kingship

In Mikeitz, we find that Yosef was BEN SH'LOSHIM SHANA, 30 years old, when he "stood before Par'o". In Shmuel Bet 5 we find that David was 30 years old when he was anointed king. BEN SH'LOSHIM SHANA also shows up several times related to the beginning age for a LEVI's service in the Mishkan.

[4] Yosef:prison::Avshalom:what?

Yosef sat in prison an additional two years, SH'NATAYIM YAMIM, as in VAYHI MIKEITZ... In Shmuel Bet we find VAYEISHEV AVSHALOM BIRUSHALAYIM SH'NATAYIM YAMIM, Avshalom sat in Jerusalem for two years... Yosef is to prison as Avshalom is to Jerusalem.

[5] Beginning of sedra, end of haftara, every week

Beginning of the sedra are the seven cows, the other seven cows, the seven ears of grain and the other seven. At the end of the haftara is a seven branched Menorah. Every week has seven days. The answer to this TTtriddle is SEVEN.

[6] If Beit Shamai's opinion prevailed and if his K'NEGED were perfectly matched, how many candles would a standard box of Chanuka candles contain?

Beit Shamai's opinion is to light candles

on Chanuka in descending order: 8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1. This, to correspond (K'NEGED) the bulls of the Musaf of each day of Sukkot, whose numbers also descended each day. Had the correspondence been perfectly parallel, we would light 13,12,11,10,9,8,7 candles for a total of 70 (just like PAREI HECHAG). That covers the first seven days. What should be lit on the 8th day? Eight candles? Not for Beit Shamai. Descending order is important for his opinion. Six - to keep the arithmetic sequence? No, it doesn't feel right. Probably one single candle, as his opinion does have for the last night. And that will correspond nicely with the single bull (PAR) of Shmini Atzeret. So that will give us a total of 71. Add a SHAMASH for each night and a standard box of Chanuka candles would contain 79 candles.

[7] One ParshaPix Unexplained

In the lower-right corner of Mikeitz's ParshaPix was the outline of a country - Egypt, to be specific. On it was 3/16, a fraction (the specific value of the fraction is irrelevant). In Hebrew, a fraction is a SHEVER, hence a play on KI YEISH SHEVER B'MITZRAYIM, And Yaakov saw that there were provisions (grain, etc.) in Egypt.

[8] MazalPic

The car in the MazalPic is a Pontiac GTO was a "muscle car" built from 1964-1974 (and revived in Australia in 2004-2006). Its nickname was "goat", hence its use as the MazalPic for Tevet, whose Zodiac sign is Capricorn, the Goat. G'DI, in Hebrew. General

Motors did not like that term GOAT for its car that it was portraying as the GTO Tiger. But nicknames often stick. A TTreader guessed that the picture was of a Chevy Caprice, which it isn't, and considered Caprice to be a play on Capricorn. Nice try, but no cigar.

☞ As a rule, it is better to refrain from an act if we fear that we will suspect our motives afterwards.

☞ *Some are least objective when they are most consciously attempting to be so. The more they assert what they think is their objectivity, the more they are asserting themselves.*

☞ It is more difficult to define a problem than to solve it.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

Praying with Passion

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

Excerpted and reprinted with permission of the author

P'sukei d'Zimra: Hodu

Seek HaShem with joy

הַתְהַלְלוּ בַּשֵּׁם קְדוֹשׁ, יְשׁוּמַח לְבַב
מִבְּקִשֵּׁי יְיָ. דְרָשׁוּ יְיָ וְעֲזֹר,

Meaning: translation...

Glory in His holy Name,

be glad of heart, you who seek Hashem. Search out Hashem and His might, seek His Presence always...

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

Connecting through Joy

Seek Hashem in prayer through feelings of joy.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

Wellsprings of Happiness

What is the source of joy from which a person is supposed to draw when he comes to pray? What if his circumstances are difficult and draining?

The joy, even when a person is in dire straits, comes from the knowledge that he is praying to the One and only One Who can, and will, help him. If he consciously connects to that truth, he will be overwhelmed with joy at having been handed the opportunity to express his needs to the One Who can answer them. In the words of Rav Pincus:

“So it is, when a person speaks to his Creator, and mentions His Name, if he only would think for a moment about the meaning of Hashem’s Name*, at that moment an enormous happiness would shine inside... Specifically, the One he ‘meets’ in shul ..., the One to Whom he is now speaking, He has the ability to help the person who is about to daven ... And He (Hashem) assists all who sincerely ask Him for help.”

** Hashem - Master of All, Who Always Was, Is, And Will Be. When one mentions the Divine Name, he should have in mind the meaning of the Name as it is read referring to His Mastery and that He is the Master of all creation.*

The feelings of joy are even greater when one realizes that his connection to Hashem is personal. As the prayer Adon Olam proclaims, V’HU EILI - He is my God.”

To be able to say that Hashem is “my God” is a profound statement of personal connection: “Yes, He created and rules the universe, but He and I are very close.” Imagine the great joy when one realizes that “Not only is Hashem my personal G-d, but also, He promises me that ‘My door is always open’ - I can speak with Him on any matter whenever I want [through prayer].”

Our quest is to see Hashem’s Presence, hear His message and feel His loving guidance in every aspect of our lives. When we develop this perspective, we infuse ourselves, our lives and our prayers with the indispensable ingredient of joy.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

What a Relief!

Shmuel’s business was in big trouble. He had many debts to pay, little credit remaining, he was short on inventory just as the peak season was getting underway and for once in his life, he did not know what to do. When his friend Daniel called, he knew instantly that something was very wrong. He did not have to wait long before Shmuel poured out his whole sad story.

“Don’t worry,” Daniel said. “I’m coming over there and taking care of everything. I’ll get you out of this whole mess. I’ve handled dozens of situations much worse than yours. Relax.”

For the first time in months, Shmuel felt his mind quiet down. His entire being was infused with a sudden sense of elation. It was all under control. Some-

one else was taking charge, someone who knew what to do. All at once, his worries were gone.

Try This:

Your Top Advisor

The sweet relief felt by Shmuel in the above story is a true picture of reality. Everything is under control - under Hashem’s control, and He does take care of everything. This week, imagine the relief and happiness you would feel if someone came along and offered to solve your biggest problem, and recall that feeling when saying the words YISMACH LEIV.

Word to the Wise:

Meaning within the meaning

“Be glad of heart, you who seek Hashem.” In the working world, if someone doesn’t complete the job, the effort he expended is irrelevant. For example, if a caterer was supposed to deliver food in time for a wedding, but did not, because he got delayed in traffic and had other difficulties, his effort would not be sufficient for payment. In Hashem’s world, however, the one who seeks to fulfill a mitzva or to come closer to Hashem and was unavoidably prevented from doing so, is credited as if he had fulfilled it (B’rachot 6a). That is because each person is presumed to be righteous. Therefore, if not for the unavoidable circumstances, it is as though he had fulfilled the mitzva.

Portion from the Portion

Don't have anger on the way

We are all mourning the national tragedy of the Carmel fire - so many innocent people from around Israel who died and others who were hurt. The homes of so many have been burnt to ash. And one of the nicest places in Israel destroyed. Even as the fire still raged, each governmental body was trying to place blame on the other for the lack of preparedness for such a great blaze. The Ministry of Interior blames the Finance Ministry and what about the director of the firefighters or the Prime Minister? There are times when it is appropriate to do an accounting and point fingers and find who is to blame and there are other times when we must work together to solve a problem.

This we can see in this week’s portion. Yosef finally feels that the time is right and he reveals himself to his brothers. His brothers are in shock and are speechless (45:3). Before sending them on their way to bring their father Yaakov to Egypt for the remaining years of the famine, he tells them AL TIRG’ZU BADERECH - Do not have agitation or anger on the way (45:24). What exactly did he mean? What does the root RGZ mean in this context?

Rashi explains that Yosef was afraid that the brothers would take the opportunity of the journey back to Israel to argue about who was to blame for selling Yosef in the first place. He says one brother might say

to the other “You told LASHON HARA about Yosef which caused us to hate him”. Yosef has already overheard such discussions between them in the past - Reuven who says HALO AMARTI ALEICHEM LEIMOR, AL TECHET'U VAYELED, V'LO SH'MA-TEM - ...Didn't I tell you not to commit a crime against the boy (42:22). The brothers began a CHESHBON HANEFESH - introspection about their involvement in the sale of Yosef already. That is what led Yosef to reveal himself to them. At this time when they are on their way to get their father and when there is a famine in the land it is not the time to deal with it any further. That could be done at a later date.

It's true we must find out how to prevent such a catastrophe of a fire raging out of control from happening in the future. There are definitely times appropriate for group introspection which may awaken feelings of RoGeZ - anger. But there are other times when everyone must work together for the general good and topics that may lead to conflicts must wait.

For example, Israelis from all walks of life gathered at the Kotel on Sunday evening to light Chanuka candles and pay their respects to more than 40 people killed Thursday in the fire. Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitz, rabbi of the Western Wall, said in his speech, “This is the time for soul-searching, for each person to examine himself - and not, G-d forbid, to seek out fault in his fellow man. Unity is the basis from which to deal with catastrophes.” That was Yosef's message to his brothers when he instructed them AL TIRG'ZU BADERECH.

Since so many trees were burned last week here is a recipe for Broccoli - which we call in our house “trees”.

BROCCOLI SALAD WITH THAI SAUCE

- ¼ cup creamy or chunky peanut butter
- 1 tsp. Apple juice concentrate
- 1½ Tbsp. hot water
- 1 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. light soy sauce
- 1½ tsp. dark sesame oil
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 2 tsp. oil
- 3 cups broccoli florets
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper
- ¼ cup sliced green onions
- 1 clove garlic, crushed

Combine peanut butter, hot water, apple juice, lime juice, soy sauce, sesame oil and red pepper flakes until well blended; set aside.

Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add broccoli, red pepper, green onions and garlic. Stir-fry 3 to 4 minutes until vegetables are tender, crisp. Remove from heat and stir in peanut butter mixture.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

Sun bear

stands approx. 1.2m in length, making it the smallest member in the bear family. It is often called the "dog bear" because of its small stature... usually weighs less than 65 kilo...Males tend to be slightly larger than females... sickle-shaped claws that are relatively light in weight... large paws with naked soles, probably to assist in climbing... excellent climber... small, round ears and a stout snout... does not hibernate... primarily nocturnal... a.k.a. Honey Bear... omnivore... live in tropical rainforests ...one of 8 species of bear... smallest, but aggressive...

ParshaPix Explanations

- ☞ Top row of the ParshaPix, from right to left, are the TRUP marks for the first six words of Vayigash. See the comment in the Sedra Summary.
- ☞ The basketball player is labeled CHI for Chicago, as in the Bulls.
- ☞ The football player is labeled DET, for the Detroit Lions. Together they represent the clash between Yehuda (Lion) and Yosef (Shor).
- ☞ So too the icons in the footers that flank the page numbers.

The square knot stands for V'NAFSHO K'SHURA V'NAFSHO, and his soul was tied up with his soul (Yaakov and Binyamin). We received an email

from TTreader PTO who noticed in past years that the knot in the ParshaPix, which we identified as a square knot, was, in fact, a granny knot. It looks similar but it tends to slip open, as opposed to a real square knot which better represents the strong bond between Yaakov and Binyamin. We have updated the pic with a real square knot, that's to PTO, and have added another image of a...

- ☞ Fisherman's knot (on the right hand side of the PP), which is reputed to be one of the strongest knots for joining the ropes... and therefore representing V'NAFSHO K'SHURA V'NAFSHO.
- ☞ To the right of the square knot are five shirts, standing for the five changes of clothes that Yosef gave to Binyamin.
- ☞ He also gave him 300 silver pieces, represented by the money sacks marked with the Egyptian hieroglyphics symbol for 100. 3 sacks, 300 silver pieces.
- ☞ There are two of the wagons that Yosef sent to Yaakov, to bring the family down to Egypt... and to remind him of the Torah topic they last studied together.
- ☞ The noble steed, a.k.a. Donkey with 10+10 above him stands for the donkeys (10 CHAMORIM and 10 ATONOT) that Yosef sent to Yaakov with provisions for their trip to Mitzrayim.

📌 The dreidel, purposely a Chutz LaAretz one, with SHIN. The letters of the dreidel rearrange to spell GOSHNA, to Goshen. This, from Vayigash, which is almost always (90%) the post-Chanuka Shabbat.

📌 The number 70, marked with an asterisk, and an arrow pointing downward. This represents the 70 souls who went down to Egypt. The asterisk reminds us that one had gone down much earlier (Yosef) and two others were born in Egypt (Efrayim and Menashe), but are still counted among the 70.

📌 Lower-left corner is a picture of Orde Wingate, British general, ardent Zionist, trained Jewish youth in military tactics. Was removed from Palestine when the British decided he was potentially acting against their interests. Anyway, his first name was Orde, very similar (especially in the Ashkenazic pronunciation of a KAMATZ) to the name of Binyamin's youngest son.

📌 Next to Wingate is an albatross, a.k.a. gooney bird. Sounds like GUNI, one of Naftali's sons.

📌 The two sticks are from the haftara.

📌 25.6 fl. oz. is the quantity of liquor in a bottle known as a "fifth". It is a fifth of a gallon. Here it represents the tax Yosef imposed on the Egyptians.

📌 Half a butterfly (PARPAR) is PAR attached to an O = PAR'O.

📌 Under the fisherman's knot is a piggy

bank, open and empty, with the pig wondering where the money went. This represents the reference to the Egyptians' money drying up during the years of the famine.

📌 In the lower-right corner are a shepherd and some soldiers. These combined represent the sons of Yaakov, who are described to Par'o as both being tenders of sheep (an abomination in Egypt) and ANSHEL CHAYIL, meaning men of stature, but as a play-on-words, also meaning soldiers. When Yosef presented some of his brothers to Par'o, he was concerned about the possibility of their appearing to Par'o as a threat. There are different opinions as to which type of brother Yosef wanted Par'o to see. We've presented both types.

📌 This leaves the town clock scene, which we thought of leaving unexplained and thus challenging the TTreaders (specifically, TTridlers among TTreaders) to identify. Too hard. Nearly impossible unless someone came from the town in question and knew the cloack. It is from Goshen NY and it is in this ParshaPix for obvious reasons.

📌 You can take the bullets of these ParshaPix explanations as a visual TTiddle.

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Indications of Changes in Fertility

In our last column we began discussing the most significant factor in the decrease of fertility amongst women: her age.

Often at Puah we meet women, somewhat older in age, who have been told by their doctors that they cannot become pregnant naturally. They're shocked; they still have a regular menstrual cycle and they find it hard to accept their doctor's dire prediction. Scientifically, what is needed is a method to check their true fertility potential.

One of the basic markers, beyond age, is a hormone test. Hormones are chemical messages that are transported through the blood stream [as opposed to electrochemical messages which are transported by the nerves and the nervous system]. There are several hormones which control ovulation and ovarian activity. Follicle stimulating hormone [FSH] is the hormone usually used as an indication of fertility levels; it is the hormone that stimulates the growth of follicles in the ovaries. Usually one or more of these follicles will develop to contain a mature egg that will be released from the ovary when the follicle ruptures at ovulation.

In a woman who is ovulating regularly, the FSH will increase as the follicles grow and then decrease when ovula-

tion occurs, so that the concentration of FSH in the blood stream is constantly increasing and decreasing. But when the ovary is not ovulating, FSH is released in increasingly greater amounts. So FSH is a good indicator of ovarian activity: The higher the FSH level, the lower the fertility potential. A simple blood test done to check hormone levels in a non-ovulating woman often indicates ten or more times the amount of FSH found in a fertile woman. This can be likened to someone placing the gear of his car in neutral and then pressing on the gas; the revolutions of the engine will increase, but the car will not engage.

It would seem obvious, then, that the way to increase fertility in women who are not ovulating regularly is to reduce their FSH levels. However, in a study performed in Europe some years ago it was found that younger women with high FSH levels were actually more likely to get pregnant than older women with lower FSH levels. So the solution is not so 'simple'.

There is a need to find a more reliable method to determine fertility levels. More on this next time.

The Jerusalem Institute of Jewish Law

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 542

Gift to Unborn Child

The other morning in our shul, a person who does not ordinarily come to shul on weekdays prayed with us. The gabbai gave him an aliya. At the end of his aliya, he asked the reader to make a mishebeirach for his pregnant daughter who was going into the hospital that day to give birth. When he finished his aliya he made a pledge to the shul and then said he would give a substantial gift to the baby after it was born.

Except as noted below, such a gift to an unborn child is ordinarily not binding, even if the mother of the fetus is noticeably pregnant. It does not matter if the transferor states that the current transfer shall become effective when the fetus is born. In those situations where the transferor is the father of the fetus, the transfer is effective even if the father does not state that it should take effect when the fetus will be born, provided that the transferor's wife is pregnant when he makes the transfer and further provided that the gift was not canceled by the father before the birth, and the father is alive when the infant is born.

There is no requirement that she be noticeably pregnant. There is an opinion that the foregoing holds true only if she is at least 40 days pregnant. There is a case in the codes that appears

in Shulhan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 211 concerning three generations, Avraham, the grandfather of Yaakov; Yitzchak, the father of Yaakov; and Yaakov. Avraham loaned \$100 to his son Yitzchak and a note of indebtedness is written that results in Avraham having a lien on Yitzchak's real estate. After the loan was made, Yitzchak sells some of his real estate to David. Then Yitzchak dies and then Avraham dies. Yaakov is Avraham's sole heir. Part of the estate that Yaakov inherited from Avraham is the note of indebtedness evidencing the money that Yitzchak owed Avraham. If Yitzchak's estate does not have the money due from Yitzchak to Avraham, then Yaakov can recover the real estate from David because David bought it subject to the lien that Avraham had on Yitzchak's real estate.

There is another opinion that holds that even if the transferor is not the father, the transfer is effective if when the fetus is born, (1) the transferor is still alive, (2) the transferor did not cancel the transfer, (3) a current act of acquisition was performed on behalf of the fetus; the current act of acquisition has to be performed on behalf of the fetus. It cannot be with a kinyan by hand-kerchief; (4) the item is still owned by the transferor; (5) the item is stored in a place that has been transferred to the fetus when it is born; and (6) the transferor stipulates at the time he made the gift that it should take effect when the fetus is born.

There is an opinion that whenever the transfer to the unborn child is effective, it refers only to personal property and not to real estate.

Parsha Points to Ponder Suggested answers

1) The Ohr HaChayim answers that when they first began to head towards Egypt, the brothers did not think that they would be staying in Egypt for a significant period of time. Therefore, they did not bring all of their possessions and family members with them. However, in Be'er Sheva, G-D told Yaakov that his family would settle and flourish in Egypt. Thus, at that point, the sons took everyone in their families and all of their possessions with them.

2) The Kli Yakar explains that the use of the singular emphasizes that despite the earlier rivalries, jealousies, and hatred, Yaakov's sons were now unified as one unit.

3) Da'at Zekainim MiBaalei HaTosfot teach that Yosef achieved a spiritual elevation in going to greet and give honor to his father. Therefore, the term WENT UP refers not to Yosef physically going up but, rather to his spiritual elevation.

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*

In his bold, yet respectful, confrontation with Yosef for the release of Binyamin, Yehuda continues using the term "go down" when referring to coming from Kena'an to Mitzrayim. He even uses the term when "quoting" Yosef (v. 22): "You then said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, [so that] I may take a look at him.'" In truth - perhaps due to Yosef's role as viceroy of Mitzrayim, and his desire to hide his identity from his brothers - Yosef had said (42:20) "...bring your youngest brother to me." Immediately after dismissing the Mitzrim and revealing himself to his brothers, however, he reverts to "Jewish" terminology (45:9): "Go up quickly to my father... say to him... 'Come down to me - do not delay.'"

Thus, in this Parsha begins Galut Mitzrayim. Understandably, Ya'akov Avinu detests leaving Eretz Yisrael again, having learned from the dangers he encountered with Lavan and until he returned to The Land of his Fathers. Even his "fear" of Eisav was attributed to the latter's having had two advantages over him: his ability to honor his parents, and the fact that Ya'akov did not have the merit of residing in Eretz Yisrael, during those 22 years. Consequently, Ya'akov Avinu hesitates taking his family to Mitzrayim. Hashem had to promise him (46:3,4): "Do not be afraid to go down to Mitzrayim... I will go down with you... and I will surely bring you up..." S'forno: To a better land than it is now...

Indeed, Yerida implies not only descending physically, but spiritually as well. Similarly, Aliya signifies ascending both physically and spiritually.

May the spirit of the recent festival of Chanuka continue emboldening us to inhabit, cherish and protect our dear Land, and to continue enriching ourselves spiritually!

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Iskowitz, Jerusalem

Parsha Points to Ponder

Vayigash

1) Why does the Torah relate that Yaakov's family took all their wives, children and property with them to Egypt in great detail when they leave from Be'er Sheva to Egypt (46:5-6), but not in so much detail when they begin their travels (46:1)?

2) Why does the Torah summarize the number of people in Yaakov's family with the singular SOUL (NEFESH) instead of SOULS (NEFASHOT) in the plural (46:26)?

3) Why does the Torah relate that Yosef WENT UP (VAYA'AL) to greet Yaakov (46:29)? Goshen was not a trip north so why the use of that terminology?

Parsha Points to Ponder

by Rabbi Dov Lipman

Answers are elsewhere in this issue
Ponder the questions first, then check
out the suggested answers

EYE(S)

וְעַיְנֵיכֶם אַל-תֵּזֹס עַל-כְּלֵיכֶם...

B'reishit 45:20 - "and do not be concerned with your belongings"

Literally, the phrase means "let your eye not feel sorry for your vessels".

The first word means your (plural) eye (singular). The plural form for your eyes would be

עַיְנֵיכֶם - EI-NEI- CHEM, a far more

common word in Tanach than

EI-N'CHEM. Even though the word is part

of an idiom and it really makes no difference if one or two eyes are used, still, we must be meticulous in the reading of the word.

The SH'VA NA under the NUN should be kept very short, so it does not sound like a TZEIREI. The point is, the meaning really isn't changed... but it is. EI-N'CHEM.

Maharal on the Sedra

The Message of the Wagons

B'reishit 45:27 - And he saw the wagons which Yosef sent to transport him, and the spirit of Yaakov their father came alive.

Rashi: Yosef sent a message to his father encoded in the agalot [wagons, but can also mean female calves]. Just before their long separation, they had been studying the law of eglarufa [the broken-neck calf], which Yaakov was reminded of by the wagons [agalot].

Gur Arye: There was a reason why Yaakov and Yosef were discussing this particular law. Da'at Zekenim Miba'alei Hatosafot note that Yosef was sent to Sh'chem from "Chevron Valley" [37:14], as Yaakov accompanied him from their home in Chevron to the valley below. Yosef told his father to return and not bother himself, but Yaakov insisted that levaya [accompaniment] is a very important mitzva that averts bloodshed. When a corpse is found between towns [D'varim 21:7], measurements are made to determine the nearest town, and elders of that town must perform the ceremony of the eglarufa in which they

proclaim, "our hands did not spill this blood." The Gemara explains [Sota 46b] that it is not that the elders were suspected of murder, rather that their proclamation avers that the victim did not leave their town unaccompanied, which teaches us that failure to accompany a person out of town is tantamount to murder. As a corollary to this, Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav that if one accompanies his friend four amot in the city, his friend will be protected from harm. As Yosef was departing from Chevron Valley, Yaakov was teaching him this precept, secure that his accompaniment had guaranteed his son's safety. Then Yosef disappears and Yaakov is despondent for 22 years. Yosef signals his father with the wagons [agalot] that the lesson of the eglarufa was true after all, that his father's accompaniment had saved him from harm's way. Yaakov's teaching was confirmed, and his spirit came alive.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhl

After a period of serious lack of rain, when it rains, we thank G-d with the following t'fila. We recommend that you consult with your Rav or follow your shul's guidelines for when this prayer is to be said, how often, etc.

VAANEINU should still be said in the Sh'ma Koleinu bracha of the weekday Amida until the Chief Rabbinate or other Rabbinic body says we should stop saying it. This Modim does not contradict VAANEINU.

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
עַל כָּל טַפָּה וְטַפָּה שֶׁהוֹרְדֶתָ לָנוּ. וְאֵלֹו פִּינוּ
מְלֵא שִׁירָה כִּפּוּס, וְלִשְׁוֹנְנוּ רִנָּה כְּהַמוֹן גְּלִיּוֹ,
וְשִׁפְתוֹתֵינוּ שֹׁבַח כְּמַרְחֵבֵי רִקְיעַ, וְעֵינֵינוּ
מְאִירוֹת כְּשֶׁמֶשׁ וְכִכְרָח, וְיִדְּיֵנוּ פְרוּשׁוֹת כְּנִשְׂרֵי
שָׁמַיִם, וְרַגְלֵינוּ קְלוֹת כְּאֵילוֹת, אֵינן אֲנַחְנוּ
מְסַפְּקִים לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְלִכְרֹךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ, עַל אַחַת
מֵאֵלֶּיךָ אֶלְפֵי אֶלְפִים וְרַבֵּי רַבּוֹת פְּעָמִים,
הַטּוֹבוֹת נְסִים וְנִפְלְאוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
וְעִמָּנוּ מִלְּפָנִים. מִמְצָרִים גָּאֵלְתָּנוּ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
וּמִבַּיִת עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתָנוּ. בְּרַעֲב זִנְתָּנוּ, וּבִשְׁבַע
כִּלְפַלְתָּנוּ, מִחֲרֹב הִצַּלְתָּנוּ, וּמִדְּבַר מְלַטְתָּנוּ,
וּמִחֲלָיִם רַעִים וְרַבִּים וְנִנְאָמְנִים דִּלִּיתָנוּ. עַד הִנֵּה
עֲזָרוֹנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְלֹא עֲזָבוֹנוּ חֲסָדֶיךָ, וְאֵל
תִּטְשֵׁנוּ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְנִצָּחַ. עַל כֵּן אֲבָרִים
שֶׁפִּלְגַת בָּנוּ, וְרוּחַ וּנְשִׁמָּה שֶׁנִּפְחַת בְּאַפֵּינוּ,
וְלִשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַת בְּפִינוּ, הֵן הֵם יוֹדוּ וּיְבָרְכוּ
אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֵל רֹב הַהוֹדָאוֹת.