

B'S'D'
INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON TOLDOS - 5761

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YU Eynayim L'Torah Vol 15 No. 7 Toldos
THE ONE AND ONLY BRACHA
BY RABBI MOSHE DOVID TENDLER

The text in Parashas Toldos omits any details of the controversy between Yitzchak and Rivkah concerning their sons, Yaakov and Esav. The existence of such a disagreement is hinted to in the enigmatic verse: Vayeahav Yitzchak es Esav v'Rivkah oheves es Yaakov (Bereishis 25:28). Was Yitzchak unaware of the reality that Esav was a ruthless Ish Sadeh whereas Yaakov was a Yosheiv Ohalim and therefore more deserving of this love and respect? The Malbim [27:5] deduces from the blessing given unwittingly by Yitzchak to Yaakov, that he hoped to encourage Esav the Ish Sadeh to lead a more moral life by showering him with material wealth. Yaakov, the Yosheiv Ohalim, was best left to continue upon his chosen path, commuting between the ohalim of Shem, Ever, and Avraham [Vayishlach, 9]. It was Yitzchak's plan to arrange a Yissacher-Zevulun pact between his sons, in an attempt to dissipate any latent hostility between the brothers, satisfy Esav's egoism, and provide for Yaakov's sustenance.

Rivkah did not concur with Yitzchak's plan. She feared Esav's evil. She feared for Yaakov's life and soul, lest intimate association with Esav would lead her younger son away from his destined goal of being a Yosheiv Ohalim, the progenitor of the twelve Shivtei Hashem.

After Yitzchak realized that he had mistakenly given Yaakov the bracha intended for Esav, he sensed that Divine intervention affirmed the truth of his wife's position, and therefore exclaimed lGam Baruch Yihyeh (27:33) But his subsequent behavior is in need of careful analysis. Why did he exacerbate Esav's animosity by refusing to give him his own blessing? Despite Esav's plea, Barcheni gam ani avi, Yitzchak refused, claiming that he had no ability to give him his blessing Ulcha eifo mah e'eseh bni (27:37-38).

Why? As Esav pleadingly inquires of his father, Ha'Bracha achas l'cha avi? Was Yitzchak authorized by Hashem to give but one bracha and no more? Yitzchak did finally respond with a magnanimous bracha, Mishmanei Ha'Aretz uMital HaShomayim (27:39). But why the expressed reluctance of Yitzchak to bless Esav, further kindling Esav's anger against Yaakov?

Yitzchak had but one unique bracha to transmit to his son. This sole bracha was the lBircas Avraham to which he was heir, not the Bircas Av of a dying father which he had in limitless abundance for Yaakov and for Esav. Hashem had blessed Avraham with a lone and only bracha that of Ein Mazal BEYisroel (there are no celestial signs holding sway over Israel [but rather Hashem's hashgacha and providence]), as a component of the covenant of the Bris Bein Ha'Bsarim.

As the Gemara relates: Amar Avraham Lifnei HKBH Nistakalti b'itztaginus sheli v'eini ra'uyi l'holid ben. Amar leih, tzai m'itztaginus shelcha p'shein mazal b'Yisroel Avraham said before HKBH I have already consulted my astrology, and I see that I am not fit to bear a son! [HKBH] said to him: Go outside your astrology, for the celestial signs

hold no sway over Israel! [Shabbos 156a].

Jewish survival throughout the millennia was guaranteed by this bracha to Avraham. Your children will not be subject to the natural law governing all the nations. Which nation ever survived 2000 years of exile from their homeland, resisting homogenization by the dominant and pervasive cultures, and continual efforts to physically destroy them? The blessing of Mishmanei Ha'Aretz can be shared by both sons of Yitzchak. But only Yaakov was to inherit the Bircas Avraham of Ein Mazal B'Yisroel, and with it the Divine right to claim Eretz Yisroel as an inheritance unto eternity.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/1999/parsha/rwil_toldos.html [From last year]

RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG
BARUCH SHEPETARANI

The parsha of Toldos contains the source for the bracha made on the occasion of a Bar-Mitzvah. When Esav and Yaakov reached manhood (vayigdal), Esav became a hunter, while Yaakov entered the tents of study. The midrash comments that from this verse we derive that a father must attend to his son until the son turns thirteen. At that time the father says, "Baruch shepetarani meonsho shel zeh" (Blessed is He who exempted me from the punishment of this [boy]).

The Magen Avraham (255:5) explains that after Bar-Mitzvah a father is no longer punished for the sins of his son. The Levush interprets that after Bar-Mitzvah the son is no longer punished for the sins of his father. Both understandings share the same difficulty: Why isn't the same brocha recited for a daughter and by a mother? The Pri Megadim (op.cit) raises this question and answers based on very questionable assumptions.

Perhaps the bracha can be explained differently based on the first halacha of the Rambam's Hilchos Talmud Torah: "Women, slaves, and children (ketanim) are exempted from Talmud Torah, but a father is commanded to teach his young child (katan) Torah." Two questions can be raised. First, why does the Rambam mention only a katan? Isn't a father required to teach his son after Bar-Mitzvah? Second, why does the Rambam begin with exemption? Wouldn't it be more logical to state the obligation before the exemption?

It would seem that according to the Rambam, one cannot be commanded to teach someone who himself is obligated to learn. Therefore, it is necessary to mention the fact that ketanim are exempt from talmud torah before stating the obligation of the father to teach him. While a father is certainly responsible for his son's education beyond Bar-Mitzvah, this obligation does not fall under the specific mitzvah of teaching. (Velimadetem. Compare Chazon Ish 152:1).

In this light, the bracha is the father's statement of gratitude that he has completed his mitzvah of velimadetem and is no longer punishable for it. This interpretation is supported by the context of the bracha's midrashic source: A father must care for his son for thirteen years, after which the son himself must choose the tents of study over the hunting field. Since velimadetem does not apply to daughters or mothers, the bracha is not needed for or by them.

The Magen Avraham (ibid:4), citing the Zohar, requires that a father make a festive meal when his son becomes Bar-Mitzvah just as he makes for his son's wedding. The Machtzes Hashekel (op.cit) equates this with the Maharshal's view that a Bar-Mitzvah seudah celebrates the boy's becoming commanded to do mitzvot (metzaveh veoseh Sec B.K. 87a). The equation is questionable for it seems that while the Maharshal requires the son to celebrate, the Zohar's obligation relates to the father. The Zohar's comparison to a wedding reflects a father's mitzvah to celebrate whenever he has completed one of his obligations towards his son, namely milah, pidyon haben, teaching him Torah and marrying him off (Kiddushin 29a).

This analysis leads to a compromise view concerning Bat-Mitzvah celebrations. The Yechaveh Daas (II, 29), citing the MaharshalEs reasoning, which applies equally to girls., equates Bar and Bat-Mitzvahs. Igros Moshe (O.C. I.104: II.97) states that a Bat-Mitzvah party is not a seudat mitzvah at all. It would seem that the MaharshalEs reason does, in fact, apply and therefore the girl is required to make a party for her close friends and family. However, a wedding-like feast, which reflects the completion of the fatherEs obligation of velimadetem, applies, like the bracha of Baruch shepetarani, to a Bar-Mitzvah only.

From: torahweb@torahweb.org Subject: Chanukah Yom Iyun - Dec. 17
The TorahWeb Foundation presents..... A Yom Iyun on Inyanei
Chanukah Sunday, December 17

Location: Cedarhurst Shul: Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst
Address: 8 Spruce St. (corner of Broadway and Spruce) Speakers:
Rabbi Mordechai Willig - 8:30 pm Rabbi Herschel Schachter - 9:15
pm

Location: Bergenfield Shul: Beth Abraham Address: 396 Westminster
Ave. Speakers: Rabbi Michael Rosensweig - 8:00 pm Rabbi
Mayer Twersky - 8:45 pm
The shiurim are open to all members of the community.

From: Rafael Salasnik[SMTP:rafi@brijnet.org]
Subject: daf-hashavua Toldot 5761/2000
U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L O N D O N (O)
Shabbat ends in London at 16:48
THE SECRET OF SHABBAT
CHIEF RABBI PROFESSOR JONATHAN SACKS

The great civilisations are, among other things, languages of the imagination. The best way of understanding what is unique about them is to look at the words they contain that are untranslatable into other languages. About this, Jewish tradition tells a remarkable story.

It took place some 2,300 years ago. Israel was under the rule of the Ptolemies of Egypt, heirs of Alexander the Great of Greece. In the third century BCE, Ptolemy II ordered a translation of the Torah into Greek for the great library of Alexandria. According to a document known as the Letter of Aristeas, seventy two Jewish elders were selected to do the work, which became the first translation of the Torah into another language. Tradition, however, notes that there were certain sentences that the elders felt they could not translate literally. They knew they would not be understood. One was the verse: 'And on the seventh day, G-d finished the work which He had made'. Instead of writing 'on the seventh day', they wrote 'the sixth day'.

What was it that they felt the Greeks would not understand? The idea of Shabbat as a creation, a work of art, something G-d made. The ancient world was familiar with the idea of holy days. None, however, had a day like Shabbat whose holiness consisted in not working. Indeed, several Greek and Roman authors accused Jews of keeping Shabbat merely because they were lazy. They could not enter into the mindset of a day that is the still point of the turning world, one in which we become masters of time, not its slaves.

Jews contributed many ideas to civilisation but few more extraordinarily than Shabbat. In an age of slavery, it was an assertion of freedom. At times of suffering, it became the day when Jews, however poor, dressed and celebrated like princes. In an age of pressure, it has become the day without phones and faxes, traffic jams or shopping, a stress-free zone. In an era of ecological awareness, it is a reminder of the limits to our exploitation of the environment.

Like the manna in the desert, for each of us it has a different taste, its own flavour, but remains the great moment when, instead of rushing to make a living, we pause to enjoy life. It sets limits to our striving. A friend of mine, who used to take long walks, told me that the secret of

endurance is to take a regular rest. Perhaps that applies to life as a whole.

History delivered its verdict. At the time of Ptolemy II, Greek civilisation was at its height. Its achievements in art, architecture, philosophy and drama were awe-inspiring. Yet within two centuries, Greece had begun its decline. Its hour on the world's stage was over. Yet Jews and Judaism survived. That is a strange and moving fact. Perhaps, just as an individual can suffer from burnout, so can a civilisation, even one as great as ancient Greece. The elders who translated the Torah into Greek had touched on the central failing of its culture. It knew much, but it did not know the secret of rest.

Today, Western civilisation is showing the signs of strain. Families are fragmenting, marriage is in decline, divorce is high, communities are becoming more tenuous, and the pressures of work ever more stress-inducing. There is no more powerful antidote than Shabbat - the day we take time to celebrate together as a family and worship together as a community. Achad ha-Am was right when he said: 'More than the Jewish people has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish people'. On this special United Synagogue communal Shabbat, may we be reminded again of its blessing and delight. It was, and remains, one of G-d's great gifts to us.

Hosted by Shamash: The Jewish Network <http://shamash.org>

<http://www.torah.org/learning/dvartorah/5756/toldos.html> [Old]
Parshas Toldos

by Guest Contributor:
Chaim Ozer Shulman

The end of this Parsha describes how Yitzchock wanted to bless Eisav before he died, and told him:

"Hunt for me delicacies the way I like them so that I may bless you before I die." (27:2-4) Why did Yitzchock need to eat his favorite dish in order to bless Eisav? We are actually told earlier in the Parsha that Yitzchock loved Eisav because he enjoyed the meat that he hunted for him. (25:28) Again, it is strange that he should love Eisav because of the food!

From Chazal we see that Yitzchock loved Eisav, not because he enjoyed his food, but because Eisav was so zealous in Kibud Av (honoring his father). As the Midrash tells us (Bereishis Rabbah 65):

Our teacher Shimon Ben Gamliel stated: "All of my days I served my father, and I didn't accomplish even 1/100th of the degree to which Eisav honored his father. When Eisav served his father he served him (wearing) royal garments." Even Raban Shimon Ben Gamliel's Kibud Av did not compare with that of Eisav. Similarly, it is brought down from the Zohar that there was no one in the world who honored his father like Eisav did, and that Zechus (merit) protected Eisav in this world. Yaakov, on the other hand, was not as careful as he could have been with Kibud Av. This is seen from the fact that he had to mourn his son Yosef whom he thought dead for 22 years as a punishment for the 22 years that Yaakov was away from his father; 20 years hiding from Eisav in the house of Lavan, and 2 years on the way back. (37:34)

What remains to be understood, though, is why was it so important that Eisav be involved in Kibud Av at the same time that he receive the blessing.

I would suggest that there is a direct connection between Kibud Av and the blessing of Veyiten Licha Elokim Mital Hashamayim Umishmanei Haaretz (may G-d give you from the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth) (27:28). This is a blessing for the material gifts of this world. Kibud Av, the Sefer Hachinuch tells us, is a Mitzvah of Hakaras Hatov (appreciation) to our parents for bringing us into this world. And in fact, in the Aseres Hadibros (Ten Commandments) we're told that we should honor our father and mother "so that it will lengthen your days". If we honor our parents we will be rewarded with a long life. Long life is

an appropriate reward, Midah Keneged Midah (measure for measure), for one who shows appreciation for life by honoring one's parents who gave life in the first instance.

Because Eisav was zealous in Kibud Av his father thought that he should get the blessing of Olam Hazeh (the physical world) as a reward for recognizing the value of life and parents. It is therefore understandable why Yitzchok felt that in order for such a blessing to take effect Eisav must be involved in Kibud Av at the very moment of the Bracha.

Several commentators point out that Yitzchok always intended to give what is known as the "Birchas Avraham" (blessings of Avraham) to Yaakov. Before Yaakov leaves for Lavan, Yitzchok blesses him as follows:

"May He give you the blessings of Avraham for you and your children..." (28:4) This "Birchas Avraham" is the promise given in Parshas Lech Lecha, "and I will make you a great nation," that Avraham's descendants will become the Am Hanivchar (the chosen people). The Birchas Avraham, is in a sense the spiritual blessing, while "may He give to you from the dew of heaven, and the fat of the land" is the physical blessing. Yitzchok always intended that the spiritual blessing of Avraham should go to Yaakov. Although Yitzchok felt that the blessing of material wealth should go to Eisav, Rivka felt that even the worldly blessing should go to Yaakov. Rivka was right. In fact Yitzchok in the end draws this same conclusion when he finds out that Yaakov stole the blessing, and he says "Gam Baruch Yihiyeh" (even he shall be blessed) (27:33). He saw that when Yaakov entered the room the smell of Gan Eden (paradise) entered with him, while when Eisav entered he saw Gehenam (hell) open up under him. He also saw that Yaakov spoke in a soft respectful manner - Kum Na (please sit up), while Eisav spoke in a commanding manner - Yakum Avi (rise father). Thus, Eisav was lacking in Morah Av (reverence), which Yaakov had. The Talmud says in Tractate Kidushin (30):

"The Torah equates reverence of parents with reverence of G-d." Fear of one's parents comes with fear of G-d. Eisav could never achieve this fear. Thus, the Torah acknowledges that Yaakov properly merited not only Birchas Avraham (the blessings of Avraham) but also the physical blessing of Mital Hashamayim Umishmanei Haaretz (the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth). Good Shabbos!

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<http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2000/11/30/Columns/Columns.16573.html>

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SHABBAT SHALOM: WITH BOTH WISDOM AND CUNNING
BY RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(November 30) The Bible teaches us that that which may superficially appear to be dishonest - an act of deception - may provide the necessary ingredient which ultimately creates grandeur.

According to the interpretations of the Malbim and of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, this understanding supplies the motivation for what appears to be Rebekah's deception of Isaac in this week's portion of Toldot.

The most obvious question is why Rebekah had to deceive her husband by dressing her younger son Jacob in the garb and skins of her older son Esau. Why couldn't she simply explain to him that Esau, although the elder brother, was simply not worthy of the birthright?

From a textual perspective, this doesn't seem to have been a difficult task. After all, just before Isaac summons Esau, requesting venison as the hors d'oeuvre of the blessing, the Bible records that Esau had committed the one great sin of the patriarchal period: He married two Hittite women, which was "a bitterness of soul to Isaac and to Rebekah." (Genesis 26:35)

In addition, during her difficult pregnancy, Rebekah had heard from the Almighty Himself that "the elder son would serve the younger." (Gen. 25:23)

The Malbim suggests that such a conversation between husband and wife did indeed take place. Isaac explained to his wife that he was aware of Esau's shortcomings. In fact, he understood that the spiritual blessing of family leadership - the blessing of Abraham which we know as the birthright - must certainly go to Jacob. And so it is that when Jacob is forced by Esau to leave his home and go into exile, he is blessed with the messianic dream of becoming a congregation of nations, and is given the blessing of Abraham, to inherit the Land of Israel (Gen. 28:5).

Nevertheless, Isaac felt that he must make a split between the blessing of spiritual leadership and the other blessing of material prosperity and political domination (Gen. 27:29). He argued that the bookish, naive and spiritual Jacob (ish tam, yoshev ohalim) would not begin to know how to maneuver in an economically driven, militaristically guided society. Give Esau the oil and the sword; give Jacob the books and the Temple.

Rebekah strongly disagreed. If religious leadership is to emerge supreme, it requires economic stability. In an imperfect world of aggression and duplicity, even leading spiritual personalities must sometimes wage war in order for the good to triumph. Rebekah understood the real world because she came from the house of Laban and Bethuel, masters of deceit and treachery.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch suggests that Rebekah saw that it would be pointless to engage in a theoretical argument with her beloved husband. The only way she could hope to convince Isaac would be by demonstrating that Jacob had the capacity to use Esau's forked tongue (Gen. 25:28) and the hunter's strong arm.

REBEKAH understood that a true leader of Israel needs Jacob's pure voice and soul, in addition to Esau's convincing words and aggressive hands. Even a religious personality in an imperfect, not-yet-redeemed world must resort to warfare to secure what is rightfully his; naive and inept pacifism will only abandon the world to the forces of evil.

Isaac ultimately understood his wife's message, because after he learned of Jacob's deception, he nevertheless confirmed: "Indeed he [Jacob] will remain blessed." (27:33)

Isaac has known all along that the blessing and birthright should ideally have gone to the same individual; he merely questioned Jacob's ability to successfully utilize the material, political and military cunning which are unfortunately crucial in the world as it is.

It is fascinating that, in the next generation, Jacob's wife Rachel, in addition to her great spiritual gifts of kindness and humility (remember that she gave the secret signs to her sister under the nuptial canopy in order not to embarrass Leah), also had the practical ability to steal the household gods.

In the ancient world of Mari and Nuzu - peoples contemporary with the Patriarchs - these gods belonged to the inheritor of the birthright. When Rachel stole the gods she was securing her husband's rights, because after all it was Jacob who was responsible for Laban's material success.

She also knew how to cover up her actions when her father began his search. And it is no accident that her son Joseph rose to greatness, not only because of his great moral qualities, but also because of his practical wisdom and his ability to take advantage of every situation.

We should remember that the King Messiah, the progenitor of whom is King David, is both the sweet singer of songs with the voice of Jacob, and the great warrior of Israel with the hands of Esau.

King David's strength as well as his weakness is derived from the aspect of Esau, which is part of his personality; every Jacob must learn to use, tame and ultimately sanctify the necessary hands of Esau, without which it is impossible to triumph.

The great prophet Ezekiel insisted that only when Judah (the

personification of Torah and Jacob's voice) merges with Ephraim son of Rachel (who was the most prosperous and military of the tribes of Israel) will it be possible for redemption to arrive (Ezekiel 36).

Without the understanding and wisdom of Rebekah, the State of Israel would never have been born, and it will not be able to survive.
Shabbat Shalom

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [SMTP:ryfrand@torah.org]
"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Toldos
Dedicated This Year Le'eluy Nishmas Chaya Bracha Bas R.
Yissocher Dov - in memory of Mrs. Adele Frand

People Only Contemplate Life Under The Shadow Of Death

In this week's parsha we learn about the famous story of the sale of the birthright. A ravenously hungry Eisav saw his brother Yaakov preparing lentil soup. Yaakov negotiated a trade of soup for the rights of the first born in the family. Eisav agreed to the deal and Yaakov bought the bechorah [birth right of the eldest son].

Our Sages tell us that Yaakov was cooking lentil soup because on that day, the patriarch Avraham had died. Yitzchak was observing the mourning practices for his father, and the custom was that lentil soup was served to the mourner. That is why Yaakov was cooking this particular food.

Does it not seem strange and inappropriate that at this particular moment in history, the question of the birthright should emerge? Even if Yaakov really wanted this right, could he not have chosen another opportunity to enter into negotiations with Eisav?

Imagine - this was a house of morning. The grandfather, Avraham, had just died. Yitzchak was sitting Shiva. Yaakov was preparing the meal for the mourner. Eisav entered. What was on Yaakov's mind at this time? "Sell me the birth right." Why did Yaakov raise the issue of who will be considered the Bechor, now, at this juncture?

The Beis Av suggests the following interpretation: Our Sages teach us that we serve lentils to a mourner because of the symbolism of their shape. Lentils are round. Life is a wheel that is forever turning around in the world. The round lentils symbolize the cyclical nature of the cycle of birth and death that is the way of all flesh. Mourning is a virtually inescapable condition that everyone must face sooner or later. Hopefully, it will be a child for a parent - after the parent has lived a long and fulfilling life.

People often first begin to think about life precisely at a time of mourning and death. That is when people think of death's inevitability. It is then that people think of their own mortality. Often, people only really contemplate life under the shadow of death.

This incident is teaching us that the way a righteous person views life and the way a wicked person views life are diametrically opposed. Yaakov looked at life as "What do I have to accomplish? What are my responsibilities?" The status of Bechor determined more than who would receive a double inheritance. The status of bechor included responsibilities. Who would be the spiritual heir in the world? Who would do the Service of G-d in the world? When Yaakov contemplated death and thereby contemplated life, he was goaded on to seek the spiritual responsibility that comes with family leadership.

On the other hand, when a wicked person contemplates life, his attitude is "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we may die. Yes. Death is inevitable. What does that tell me to do? Enjoy the good life while I can! Indulge now, before it is too late." Specifically now when Eisav was thinking about the death of his grandfather and the Shiva of his father, he first began to think - "I do not want the responsibility of being the firstborn. I do not want to 'waste' my life in servitude to G-d. I want to enjoy life, now. I want freedom from the responsibility of being the firstborn."

Therefore it was at this precise moment that the sale was consummated. This was when the status of the first born came into focus. Yaakov decided that he must acquire the bechorah now. Eisav decided that he must be rid of it now.

Sending Children Away From Home: The Monthly Check, the Bank Account, or the Credit Card

When Yitzchak gave the blessings to Yaakov he said, "May the L-rd (Elo-kim) grant you from the dew of heaven and from the fat of the earth" [Bereshis 27:28]. "Elo-kim" does not seem to be the appropriate name of G-d to use for a blessing. G-d has different Names, which connote different methodologies of how G-d deals with us. Elo-kim is the Attribute of strict and severe Judgment. It appears strange to invoke this Name in the blessing that requests from G-d the dews of heaven and the fat of the earth.

Rashi on this pasuk [verse] makes a very important comment. Rashi says that these blessings come with a string attached. Yaakov is not being promised that the blessings will be his, no matter what. Yaakov must deserve the blessings. The Attribute of Mercy will not be granting you these blessings. The blessings will come from the Attribute of Judgment.

Rashi points out that the wording of the blessing to Eisav indicates that he was to gain his blessing regardless of whether he was righteous or wicked. Elo-kim was not mentioned in Eisav's blessing. No strings were attached. Is this fair? Is the sinner to prosper? The matter can be understood with a parable.

Many of us are familiar with the experience of sending children to learn in a school in another city. Of course, along with this experience comes another experience - the need to occasionally send spending money. There are three methods that a parent can use to send money to their children. The parent can send a periodic check - weekly, biweekly, or monthly. That way, the parent can be confident that at least every so often the son or daughter will get in touch with them.

The second method is to open up a checking account for the child, so they can write their own checks. Still, occasionally, a deposit will have to be made. There will have to be an occasional phone call home to request a deposit of additional money in the account.

The third option is to give the child a credit card. With this option there is no guarantee that the child will ever keep in touch.

I am not trying to be facetious. When G-d showers us with gifts - giving us a livelihood, life, health, providing all our needs - those gifts are not an end in and of themselves. G-d creates us with needs because He - as it were - wants us to keep in touch. G-d wants us to feel that we have needs in life, because that will force us to keep in touch with our Creator. This is essential for a human being.

This is the meaning of the blessing said after foods (other than grains and special fruits) "who creates many souls and their needs" (borei nefashos rabbos, v'chesronon). We understand the praise implicit in the fact that G-d creates many lives, but where is the praise in the fact that He creates them with needs?

The fact that G-d creates us with needs is a tremendous praise, because via those needs we always maintain our connection and return to our Creator. If we always had everything set and ready for us on the table, with no needs we would be like the kid who has the credit card and never calls home - because he has nothing further to ask for.

The beauty of our relationship with G-d is that we inherently need Him. That is why the blessing concludes, "Blessed be the provider of life in (two) worlds" (Baruch Chei haOlamim). This is how G-d secures for us two worlds - this world and the world to come - via the fact that he guarantees our attachment to Him, by creating us with constant needs which require that we keep in touch.

The Sefas Emes (1847-1905) explains that G-d gave the ultimate curse to the snake by telling him "you will walk on your stomach, eating

dust all the days of your life" [Bereshis 3:14]. The Sefas Emes asks that on the surface, this curse seems like a great benefit for the snake - to have his meals always available wherever he goes. Every other creature in the universe has to scrounge for food. The snake has it all there.

The Sefas Emes explains the powerful aspect of this curse. G-d disassociated himself permanently from the snake, telling him "Goodbye, snake. We have nothing to do with each other from now on. You always have your food, you never have to keep in touch."

This is the meaning of our Rashi in reference to the blessing to Yaakov. The Attribute of Justice will be the source of your blessing. "You must behave. In order to receive your blessing, you must maintain a close and proper relationship with your G-d. Then, and only then will you receive the blessing". G-d's relationship to Eisav however, would be akin to His relationship with the snake - no need to keep in touch. "Take your credit card, and do what you want with it! I do not need you. You do not need me. Go have a good life."

This is not the same quality blessing as that of "May Elo-kim grant you..." As bad as sickness is, as bad as poverty is - they have a silver lining. They force us to remember that there is a G-d out there. Our prayers become different; our actions become different. As a result, we become different. This is a blessing, not a curse.

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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 259, Sorfin Al Chazakos - The Concept of Chazakah. Good Shabbos! Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21208

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Parshat Toldot

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5 Kislev 5761 December 2, 2000 Daf Yomi: Nazir 46

(These items are in elaboration of Torah which appeared in my volume on Breisis "There Shall Be Light") Yitzchaks Brachos to his two sons (27:28:33)

When we finally reach these verses, and read the Brachah that both brothers were so anxious for- what do we find? The Brachah emphasizes prosperity, power and dominion - and a beautiful conclusion, blessing those who bless him, and cursing those who curse him. Compared to the Brachah Yitzchok later gave Yaakov as he left home (28:3-4):-"May G-d bless you...become a host of nations...give you and your seed the blessing of Avraham...inherit the land...which G-d gave Avraham"-the original Brachah pales in comparison. Many commentators have analyzed what is really obvious from observation. Yitzchok always knew that Yaakov was the great spiritual personality - that he was the worthy recipient of the legacy of Avraham - and the final Bracha had been reserved for him. Yitzchak's error was that he conceived of his sons as a partnership: while Yaakov would be dedicated to sanctity and Torah, Aisav would be a great provider- and protector-as the civil head of their combined hegemony.

(In a cogent psychological observation, Rav Chanoch Ehrentroi, in his masterful volume Kometz Hamincha, feels that Yitzchak's appreciation of Aisav was based on his own entirely non-belligerent nature. While Avraham had fought a war against a mighty army, Yitzchak did not even defend his wells against some shepherds! Seeing

that Yaakov was also a "sitter in tents" and totally spiritual, he found the aggressive nature of Aisav attractive, for people are often impressed by traits that they themselves feel they lack, but would wish to attain.) Yitzchak thus saw in Aisav an image of a powerful leader, and therefore expected Yaakov to bow to his elder brother as the head of government. (This partnership would be similar to the Yissachar-Zvoolun partnership agreement, so well-known in Rabbinic literature.) It was Rivkah - forewarned by the message she received while pregnant - who knew that Aisav had no place in Jewish history, and wanted Yaakov to receive any and all of the blessings of Yitzchok.

At what moment does the full truth finally dawn on Yitzchak? - to see Aisav exactly for what he is? In verse 33, when Aisav identifies himself to Yitzchak, after Yaakov took the Brachah, Yitzchak "trembled a great trembling - very much" and a most insightful Midrash (quoted in Rashi) says: "he saw hell open beneath him (i.e. beneath Aisav)". These powerful expressions are meant to inform us that Yitzchak has finally had the cathartic experience - no more delusions, or fatherly excuses - he sees his son clearly for the first time. For the balance of the Sidra, he tries to thwart Aisav's desire for a Brachah, and finally throws him a crumb - a weak two-verse "blessing" without the mention of G-d in it all. Finally, Yitzchok sees the situation as Rivkah knew it for years. (based on several volumes of 19th and 20th century commentators). It is worthwhile to examine more carefully this "Brachah" to Aisav. Verse 39, without an introductory "may G-d give you", is quite limited, in comparison to Yaakov's similar verse (28) where Yitzchak added "and much grain and wine". In verse 40: "you will live by the sword and serve your brother" - neither phrase can be called Brachah, "and it will come to pass, when you will be sorrowful (following Rashi, Ramban, Sforno, Rashbam...), you will cast off his yoke from your neck". An alternative rendering of the verb (TARID) is from the root "RADA" (to rule): "when you gain power, you will cast off..." Accepting this interpretation, the K'li Yakar emphasises the severe limit of this concession to Aisav. Now Yitzchak knows all, but is also aware that Yaakov can lose his Brachah if he does not follow Torah faithfully. Even so, he denies Aisav's dominion over Yaakov in such circumstances, but only permits him to break the yoke! Thus, in totality there is no Brachah here at all.

We must also note the wonderful discussion of the Chofetz Chaim (on Torah), based on Rashi's remarks about the use of G-d's name only in Yaakov's Brachah. This name - E-lokim - represents G-d as law (i.e. pure justice and truth, exactly as one deserves). Rashi explains that for the tzaddik Yaakov (and his future generations), these blessings are conditional on his proper behavior, but for Aisav no conditions are made! Why? If the wicked suffer they immediately cry foul and rant against G-d, but the tzaddik will always accept the judgement of Heaven and never complain. So too, King Shlomo requests of G-d that when Gentiles come to the Bais HaMikdash to sacrifice and/or pray, G-d accepts their prayer unconditionally, but for B'nai Yisroel -give what they deserve!

[In the Musar volumes, this point is clarified: Just because the tzaddik does not complain, let him suffer? Of course not. The basic premise is that the tzaddik's problems in this world clear the way for his great reward in the World to Come - his faith despite suffering only adds to the reward. But the Rasha, who complains over any hardship and demands good times in this world, is obliged - so as to (not only silence his ranting), but to leave him bereft of any credit in the other world where he will receive his appropriate punishment.] Thus, says the Chofetz Chaim, we must be firm on our absolute faith in G-d's judgments. If an observant Jew finds he is financially in hard straits, he should understand that G-d knows that affluence will be a curse to him, and that instead his reward in the Olam Haba will be that much greater. (Thus, the phrase V'tzaddik Beh-Emoonaso Yichyeh" - states that with full faith the tzaddik will live - both survive the tribulations of this world - and earn life for the next.)

A well-known story of the Chofetz Chaim is of the Jew whom he asked how it was with him. The Jew answered, in Yiddish, "es hut gekent zein besser" ("it could be better"). This astonished the Chofetz Chaim, who asked in his profound and complete faith, "How can you say that? Surely whatever G-d had given you is for the best, for only He knows what is truly best for you." (Rav Yisroel Meir Kagan - Chofetz Chaim Al HaTorah)

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Prologue: V'HaAretz Nasan L'Bnei Adam. Hashem created this great world for man. Clearly one would be a Kofer (heretic) if one were to assume that the gift of the world to man implied that G-d's involvement in this world had ceased (See Rambam Hil. Yesodei Hatorah). G-d is active in the world and is the supreme ruler of it. What then is implied in the verse from Tehillim? Commentaries suggest that the world was given to Bnei Adam to enjoy. In the process of that enjoyment, man is to recognize the source of his enjoyment and have the opportunity to thank and bless that source. This is where the concept of Berachos is so critical to basic Eemunah issues. At the same time, this area, that of Berachos and Hanaah (enjoyment) is the place where one can show great arrogance and possible Kefira ("Kee Sonei Hashem Kol Gevah Lev"). By forgetting to bless Hashem for the providing Hanaah, one suppresses his dependence on Hashem for his daily existence in the world. Thus, food for the body is essential as food for the soul.

Maybe it is in this sense that one can examine the distinct contrast between Esav's understanding of the food/Beracha connection to that of Yitzchak. The Torah tells us that after receiving his meal, eating it and drinking from it, Esav got up and hated the Bechora. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin (Oznayim L'Torah) notes that Yaakov specifically made sure that Esav ate well and was able to walk away afterward so that he not be able to claim he was drunk and coerced into giving up the Bechora. However, the drinking (See Bava Basra 16a) was part of the Minhag of the time, to share wine in a Beis Avel. Esav could not even see Dayan Haemet in THAT situation and was able to drink almost to the point of excess.

Conversely, prior to Yitzchak's offering of the Berachos to the son he believed to be Esav, the Torah tells us that he was brought wine and he drank. The note over the word prior to the one telling us he drank (VaYesht) is a Mercha Kefula, a note that is extended to a certain extent. The Meshech Chochma explains that Yitzchak did not drink all the wine at one shot because that would be gluttony. The purpose of the food was Ba'Avur Tivarech, in order to allow Yitzchak to bless his son. Blessing comes in moderation when one is able to recognize G-d's involvement and sovereignty in the world, not in its excess.

There has been a major discussion of excess Beracha in key areas of Jewish expression. Sometimes the Beracha of Simcha is brought to excess and might preclude other Berachos. This week's Chaburah begins a series on one area of Beracha that could easily become a Klala without an eye to Halacha. It is entitled:

VaYaKom VaYelach: SMORGASBORD AND HALACHA (Part 1)

Jewish Simchos give us great opportunities to celebrate. The wine flows, the food is abundant and the joy, hopefully boundless. However, prior to every Simcha, there must be a reality check with Halacha. The smorgasbord is no different. How does Halacha examine the rule of the smorg? This week's Chaburah will begin the discussion by examining whether one invited to a wedding (or Bar Mitzva) must make a Beracha Achrona after eating at the Smorg before entering the main hall for the meal.

The Rishonim differ as to the nature of food that is served prior to a meal being subsumed under the Beracha Achrona of the meal itself. The Rashba (Berachos 41a) notes that if one begins a bread-based meal after partaking from other foods at that same period of time, that which he has eaten prior does not count as part of the meal and would need its own Beracha Achrona. Hagaon Harav Nissan Alpert ztl. (Kovetz Beis Yosef Shaul II) notes that this position seems to be based upon a Machlokes of the Yirushalmi (Berachos 6:4). Accordingly, the Rashba assumes that no matter whether that which is eaten before the meal is eaten in order to satisfy hunger or to whet one's appetite for the upcoming meal, it is irrelevant to the meal and needs its own beracha. This is consistent with the Rashba's opinion concerning the eating of fruit during a meal that is not considered part of a meal that the Rashba requires one to make a Beracha over. Thus, according to the Rashba, that which is eaten at a smorgasbord must have its own Beracha Achrona as it is not

considered part of the meal.

The Rosh (Arvei Pesachim 25) maintains that which is eaten in order to whet one's appetite for the meal is covered by the Beracha Achrona of the meal. In this issue, the Rosh contrasts these types of foods with a dessert which has no connection to the meal at all and thus needs its own Beracha Achrona. The whetting of appetite connects the meal to the prior foods allowing one to recite one Beracha Achrona on them. Accordingly, one could assume that the Rosh would allow the Bentching at a wedding to cover that which is eaten at a smorgasbord. To this Rav Nissan ztl. suggests that that the Rosh would argue. The Kula of the Rosh applies to foods on HIS table. At a Smorgasbord, the foods are on different tables than the meal is eaten on. Accordingly, Rav Nissan suggests a separate Beracha Achrona even according to the Rosh.

The Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Orach Chaim 176) makes a different distinction. He sees a difference between the food that is eaten for complete Hannah and that which is eaten to literally, open the belt holes for the bigger meal to come. The former would require its own Beracha Achrona, the later subsumed under the same Beracha Achrona of the meal that it is helping prepare for. This opinion is cited by the Mishna Berurah (176:2) and Aruch Hashulchan (176). In fact, the Aruch HaShulchan suggests that foods that are eaten "a long time" prior to the actual meal MUST be eaten L'Taanug (for their own Hannah) and would need their own Beracha Achrona. A Shmorg at a wedding would be one such example.

L'Halacha, the Mishna Berurah (174:24) seems to feel that in order for something to be subsumed under the Beracha Achrona of a meal, it must be close to the meal. A Chuppa between a smorgasbord and a meal clearly separates the two ideas. Similarly, the Aruch HaShulchan (174:8) notes that one can make one Beracha Achrona on Kiddush recited at the same table with the meal where he eats Mezonos after Kiddush and prior to Washing Hamotzee. The Bentching would cover both as the meal follows the Kiddush in close proximity of time and place. A Smorgasbord would be different and would need a Beracha Achrona for each type of food item eaten during the period and the Bentching of the meal cannot cover it.

In the future, we will examine the issue of Shinui Makom at the Smorgasbord.

Battala News

Mazal Tov to Hagaon Harav Mordechai and Rebbetizen Willig shlita and family upon the engagement of Miriam to R. Gidon Shoshan.

Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Eliyahu Akiva Resnick and the Resnick, Blau, Ebbner and Grossman family upon the birth of a baby girl.

From: RABBI MORDECHIA KORNFELD kornfeld@netvision.net.il

Subject: Insights to the Daf: Nazir 39-41

THE GISI TURKEL MASECHES NAZIR INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il>

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Nazir 41b

USING A SCISSORS TO SHAVE QUESTIONS: The Gemara explains that according to the Rabanan the verse of "Rosho" (Vayikra 14:9) teaches that Hakafah of the entire head is considered Hakafah, and that the shaving of a Metzora overrides the Lo Ta'aseh of Hakafas ha'Rosh (a Lo Ta'aseh which is not Shaveh ba'Kol). We cannot learn, though, from "Rosho" that the Mitzvah of Gilu'ach of a Metzora must be done with a Ta'ar (razor). TOSFOS (DH Hashta, and in Shevuos 2b, see previous Insight) proves from here that the Isur of Hakafas ha'Rosh is not limited to a Ta'ar, but it also includes doing Hakafah of the head with scissors.

(a) Why should Tosfos have to prove that Hakafas ha'Rosh is prohibited with scissors? Why would we have thought that it is not prohibited? The verse says merely, "Do not circle your head [by removing your hair]" (Vayikra 19:27). What implication is there in the verse that it is prohibited only with a Ta'ar?

(b) REBBI AKIVA EIGER (in Gilyon ha'Shas to Shevuos 2b, and in a question written to the CHASAM SOFER, printed in Teshuvos Chasam Sofer YD 139) asks that according to Tosfos, it should be prohibited for any person to comb his Pe'os. The Mishnah (42a) states that a Nazir may not comb his hair because it is inevitable ("Pesik Reshei") that hair will be pulled out. It is even prohibited for a Nazir to pull out hair with his hands. According to Tosfos, who says that the prohibition of Hakafas ha'Rosh is not limited to a Ta'ar, it should be prohibited for any man to pull out the hair of his beard or Pe'os with his hand, and it should be prohibited to use a comb on his Pe'os because it is a "Pesik Reshei" that he will pull out hair! Yet we do not find that anyone prohibits such a thing, and everyone uses combs.

ANSWERS: (a) REBBI AKIVA EIGER (in Gilyon ha'Shas; see also Teshuvah of the Chasam Sofer loc. cit.) suggests that Tosfos reasoned that Hakafas ha'Rosh should be prohibited only when done with a Ta'ar because the Torah puts the Isur of Hakafah in the same verse as the Isur of Gilu'ach ha'Zakan (shaving one's beard), comparing the two Isurim.

Why does Tosfos only discuss whether Hakafah is prohibited with scissors? Tosfos should be equally in doubt whether Melaket and Rehitni are prohibited, and yet Tosfos (Shevuos 2b) seems to take for granted that they are prohibited! Rebbi Akiva Eiger answers that the verse which compares the Isur of Hakafah to the Isur of Gilu'ach says "Lo Sashchis Es Pe'as Zekanecha" (Vayikra 19:27) -- one should not do "Hashchasah" to his beard, and the Gemara says that this implies that one should not cut it at the root, like the way a Ta'ar, Melaket, and Rehitni cut. Therefore, we might have thought that Hakafah is only prohibited when done "b'Derech Hashchasah," but cutting the hair with a scissors -- which does not cut the hair off at the root -- it is permitted. (Even though we learn from another verse that Gilu'ach is not Asur when done with a Melaket or Rehitni but only with a Ta'ar, nevertheless since *this* verse of Gilu'ach does not clearly permit Melaket and Rehitni, we might have thought that Hakafah is Asur with a Melaket and Rehitni, and it is only permitted when done with scissors.)

From Tosfos in our Sugya it seems that there is an additional reason why he assumes that it is permitted to do Hakafah with scissors. The Mishnah describes Hakafah as "leveling the area from the forehead to behind the ears" by making the skin above the ears as bald as the skin on both sides (the forehead, and behind the ears). This implies that the Hakafah must make the sides of the head entirely hairless. Tosfos cites a Tosefta to this effect which says that Hakafas ha'Rosh is only prohibited when it is done "k'Ein Ta'ar," in the manner that a Ta'ar cut hair. The Gemara tells us that scissors does not cut the hair at its root, for the scissor-action requires that it leave behind the width of the bottom blade (40b, Tosfos DH d'Tanya). Therefore, perhaps cutting hair with scissors is not called Hakafah. Melaket and Rehitni, though, remove the hair at the root, so they are certainly included in the Isur of Hakafah. In fact, TOSFOS RID permits using scissors to cut the Pe'os for this reason. However, Tosfos proves that even scissors are included in the Isur of Hakafah, for we find that the Gemara earlier (40b) implies that scissors are a valid form of Gilu'ach (that is, had the verse not excluded scissors from the Isur of Gilu'ach ha'Zakan with the phrase, "Lo Sashchis," it would have been prohibited to shave with scissors). Since the Mitzvah of Metzora is "v'Gilach," it follows that if the Torah does not tell us otherwise, the Gilu'ach of a Metzora may be done with scissors. If the Torah permits a Metzora to be Docheh the Isur of Hakafas ha'Rosh, the Gemara should learn from this that a Metzora may *not* use scissors. It must be that Hakafas ha'Rosh cannot be done with scissors either, and therefore we do not have any proof that a Metzora may not use scissors. Even though scissors leave a little bit of stubble, the amount is so little that the scissors' action can be called "k'Ein Ta'ar." This is clear from the Mishnah earlier (39a) which teaches that a Nazir is Chayav Malkus for cutting his hair with scissors even though he is only Chayav Malkus for cutting the hair "k'Ein Ta'ar" (see Tosfos 39b, DH Tanu Rabanan). (This is what Tosfos means when he says at the end of DH Hashita that even cutting with scissors can be called "k'Ein Ta'ar.")

(b) Regarding Rebbi Akiva Eiger's question why is it permitted to comb the Pe'os, the CHASAM SOFER points out that the wording of the Mishnah (42a) implies that only a Nazir is prohibited from combing his hair; a normal person may comb any part of his hair, including his Pe'os. Apparently, even if the prohibition of Hakafas ha'Rosh includes using scissors or Melaket and Rehitni, it does *not* include plucking hairs from the head. Plucking hairs ("Korchah") is not a normal form of hair removal and cannot possibly be included in the Isur of Gilu'ach ha'Zakan or the Isur of Hakafas ha'Rosh. What, then, is the difference between using a Melaket or Rehitni and plucking hair? RASHI (Shabbos 97a, Kidushin 35b) explains that Melaket and Rehitni are both tools similar to a plane used for smoothing down rough surfaces. They are comprised of a metal blade that cuts the hair and does not pull out the hair. Pulling out the hair, though, perhaps is permitted. This would be consistent with the fact that when the Mishnah (39a, 42a) discusses the Isurim of a Nazir it says that a Nazir may not "pull out" hair, rather than saying that he may not use a Melaket or Rehitni, and yet when discussing the Isur of Gilu'ach, the Beraisa says only that one may not use a Melaket or Rehitni.

However, the RAMBAM seems to have learned differently. The Rambam (Perush ha'Mishnayos, end of Makos; see also Aruch, Erech "Melaket") writes that Melaket and Rehitni are forms of tweezers which pluck out hair. If plucking out hairs constitute the Isur of Gilu'ach ha'Zakan, then plucking out hairs should also constitute the Isur of Hakafas ha'Rosh.

The Chasam Sofer himself points out that the Tosefta (Makos 4:4) clearly states that it is possible for a person to transgress multiple Isurim by plucking out two hairs, including the Isur of Hakafas ha'Rosh and the Isur of Gilu'ach of a Nazir.

Why, then, according to the Rambam, is it permitted to comb one's Pe'os? First, the Rambam (Hilchos Avodah Zarah 12:6) rules that the Isur of Hakafas ha'Rosh is to cut the hair with a Ta'ar, but it is permitted to use other means of cutting the hair, such as with scissors. Second, the Rambam there writes that Hakafas ha'Rosh requires that one leave at least forty hairs. It seems that the Rambam only prohibits Hakafah in a case where one removes so much hair that less than forty hairs remain. (See Chasam Sofer.)

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