



BS"D

To: parsha@parsha.net
From: cshulman@gmail.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYECHI - 5774

In our 19th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net>. It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored in memory of
Chaim Yissachar z"l ben Yechiel Zaydel Dov

To sponsor a parsha sheet (proceeds to tzedaka) contact cshulman@parsha.net

<http://www.vosizneias.com/149084/2013/12/12/>
<http://ohr.edu/5621>

Halachic Musings: Fasting On Friday? **Rabbi Yehuda Spitz**

New York - An interesting calendrical anomaly is set to happen this week. One that's appearance is quite sporadic and actually quite unique on the Jewish Calendar. I am referring to the upcoming Fast of Asarah B'Teves, which this year falls out on a Friday. Exclusive to this fast, is that it is the only one that we do actually observe as a fast on a Friday. Even Tisha B'Av, which commemorates the actual destructions of our Batei HaMikdash, gets pushed off. Yet, this Friday, for a fast best known for being the year's shortest (for everyone in the Northern Hemisphere), all of Klal Yisrael will fast.

Why This Fast?

The reason given for fasting on Asarah B'Teves is that it is the day that the wicked Babylonian king, Nevuchadnetzar, commenced his siege of Yerushalayim, foreshadowing the beginning of the end of the first Beis Hamikdash, which culminated with its destruction on Tisha B'Av several years later. Therefore, Chazal declared it a public fast, one of four public fast days that memorialize different aspects of the catastrophes and national tragedies associated with the destruction of both Batei HaMikdash.

What makes Asarah B'Teves's Friday observance even more interesting is that there is a whole debate in the Gemara (Eiruvin 41a) about how to conduct fasts on a Friday, when we also must take kavod Shabbos into account, implying that it is a common occurrence. However, according to our calendar, a Friday Fast is only applicable with Asarah B'Teves, and it happens quite infrequently. The last few times Asarah B'Teves fell out on a Friday were in 1996, 2001, and 2010. The next expected occurrence is in 2020.

Yet, obviously, to maintain this distinction of being the only Fast Day that we actually do observe and fast on Friday, there must be much more to the Fast of Asarah B'Teves than meets the eye. It turns out that

Asarah B'Teves has several exceptional characteristics that are not found in any other fast day.

A Shabbos Fast?!

Possibly, the most important attribute of Asarah B'Teves is that according to the AbuDraham, if Asarah B'Teves would potentially fall out on Shabbos, we would all actually be required to fast on Shabbos! (Notwithstanding that with our calendar this is an impossibility.) He cites proof to this from the words of Yechezkel referring to Asarah B'Teves (Ch.24, verse 2) that the siege transpired "B'etzem HaYom HaZeh", implying that the fast must always be observed on that exact day, no matter the conflicting occurrence. This would also explain why it observed on Friday, as opposed to any other fast.

Yet, the AbuDraham's statement is astounding, as the only fast that halachically takes precedence over Shabbos is Yom Kippur, the only Biblically mandated fast. How can one of the Rabbinic minor fasts push off the Biblical Shabbos? Additionally, Asarah B'Teves commemorates merely the start of the siege, and not any actual destruction. How can it be considered a more important fast than Tisha B'Av, which commemorates the destruction and loss of both of our Batei HaMikdash? In fact, the Beis Yosef questions this declaration of the AbuDraham, stating that he "does not know how the AbuDraham could know" such a ruling. As an aside, this does not seem to be the actual halacha, as other Rishonim, including Rashi and the Rambam both explicitly state that if Asarah B'Teves falls out on Shabbos then it gets pushed off.

Commencement Is Catastrophic

Several authorities, including Rav Yonason Eibenschutz and the Bnei Yissaschar, understand the AbuDraham's enigmatic statement as similar to the famous Gemara in Taanis (29a) regarding Tisha B'Av. It seems that historically the Beis HaMikdash only started to burn toward the end of the 9th of Av (Tisha B'Av) and actually burned down on the 10th. Yet, Chazal established the fast on the 9th, since Aschalta D'Paranusah Adifa, meaning that the beginning of a tragedy is considered the worst part. Likewise, they maintain, that since the siege on Asarah B'Teves was the commencement of the long chain of tragedies that ended with the Beis HaMikdash in ruins and the Jewish people in exile, its true status belies the common perception of it as a minor fast, and potentially has the ability to push off Shabbos.

The famed Chasam Sofer takes this a step further. He wrote that the reason Chazal established a fast for the siege on Asarah B'Teves as opposed to every other time Yerushalayim was under siege over the millennia, is that on that day in the Heavenly courtroom it was decided that the Bais HaMikdash was to be destroyed a few years hence. There is a well known Talmudic dictum (Yerushalmi Yoma Ch. 1, 1; 6a) that any generation in which the Beis HaMikdash has not been rebuilt, is as if it has been destroyed again. Therefore, he explains, every Asarah B'Teves the Heavenly court convenes and decrees a new Churban. That is why the fast of Asarah B'Teves, even though it is considered a minor fast, nonetheless has the potential to possibly override Shabbos. These explanations would also certainly explain why we would fast on a Friday for Asarah B'Teves.

Three Day Fast?

According to the special Selichos prayers said on the fast, an additional unique aspect of Asarah B'Teves is that we are actually fasting for two other days of tragedy as well; the 8th and 9th of Teves. In fact, both the Tur and Shulchan Aruch assert that if possible one should try to fast on all three days. Nevertheless, of the three, only Asarah B'Teves was actually mandated as a public fast day.

The 8th of Teves

On the 8th of Teves, King Ptolemy II (285 - 246 B.C.E.) demanded and forced 72 sages separately to translate the Torah into Greek (the Septuagint). Although miracles guided their work and all of the sages made the same slight, but necessary amendments, nevertheless this work is described as "darkness descending on the world for three days", as it

was now possible for the uneducated to possess a superficial, and frequently flawed understanding of the Torah, as well as providing the masses with a mistaken interpretation of true morality.

The 9th of Teves

Although several decisors write that the reason for fasting on the 9th of Teves is unknown, nonetheless many sources, including the Kol Bo and the Selichos recited on Asarah B'Teves, as well as many later authorities, explain that this is the day that Ezra HaSofer (as well as possibly his partner Nechemiah) died. Ezra, the Gadol HaDor at the beginning of the time of the Second Beis HaMikdash, had a tremendous impact upon the nascent returning Jewish community of Eretz Yisrael. He drastically improved the spiritual state of the Jewish people and established many halachic takanos, many of which still apply today. With his passing, the community started sliding from the great spiritual heights Ezra had led them. Additionally, since Ezra was the last of the prophets, his passing signified the end of prophecy.

Other sources attribute fasting on this day due to the passing of other specific Tzaddikim, including Shimon HaKalphus, 'who saved Klal Yisrael during the days of the Pritzim', and whom 'Nishmas' is attributed to (it has been surmised that he was a Jewish pope, placed by Chazal to infiltrate the early Christians, to ensure that Christianity became a separate religion), and Rav Yosef HaLevi, son of Rav Shmuel HaNaggid, who was assassinated on the 9th of Teves in 1066, thus ending a Golden Age for Jewry in Spain. Another interesting reason rationale posited, dating back to the 12th century Sefer HaAvor, by R' Avraham bar Chiya, is that the real reason for fasting on this day is that the 9th of Teves is the true birthday of 'Oso Halsh', the founder of Christianity, in whose name myriads of Jews over the millennia were r' murdered. An additional reason for fasting on this day is cited by the Rema in his commentary to Megillas Esther (Mechir Yayin, Ch. 2, 16) that this was the day that Esther was forcibly taken to Achashveirosh's palace.

The Sefer HaToda'ah posits that it's possible that "the darkness descended on the world for three days" alludes to the triple woes of these three days: the 8th, 9th, and 10th of Teves.

Halachos of a Friday Fast

The halachos of a Friday fast generally parallel those of a regular fast day. In fact, even though there is some debate in the Rishonim as to the Gemara's intent that 'Halacha - Mesaneh U'Mashlim - a Friday fast should be completed' whether one may be mekabel Shabbos early and thereby end the fast before nightfall, nonetheless, the halacha follows the Shulchan Aruch and Rema that since Asarah B'Teves is a public fast (taanis tzibbur) and not a taanis yachid, one must fast the whole day and complete it at nightfall (Tzeis HaKochavim) before making Kiddush. There are those who maintain it is preferable to daven Maariv earlier than usual this Friday Night to enable us to make Kiddush, and break our fast, exactly at Tzeis HaKochavim.

The Rambam famously exhorts us to remember the real meaning underlying a fast day. It's not just a day when we miss our morning coffee! The purpose of fasting is to focus on the spiritual side of the day and use it as catalyst for inspiration towards Teshuva. In this merit may the words of the Navi Zechariah, that the "Fast of the Fourth (month, 17th of Tamuz), the Fast of the Fifth (month, Tisha B'Av), the Fast of the Seventh (month, Tzom Gedalyah), and the Fast of the Tenth (month, Asarah B'Teves), shall be (changed over) for celebration and joy for the household of Yehuda", be fulfilled speedily and in our days.

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz serves as the Sho'el U' Meishiv and Rosh Chabura of the Ohr Lagolah Halacha Kollel at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim. For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu .
Copyright © 1999 - 2013 VINNews.com - All rights reserved.

<http://halocho.blogspot.com/2010/12/halocho-710-asara-btevet-on-friday.html>

December 13, 2010

Halocho #710 - Asara B'Tevet on Friday

In the year 3,338 the wicked King Nebuchadnezzar laid siege against Jerusalem which culminated in the destruction of the first Bet Hamikdash, a year and a half later. As a result we will fast this Friday. Asara B'Tevet is the only fast that can fall on a Friday. Pregnant and nursing mothers do not fast, as well as anybody unwell, after consulting with a Doctor.

Keep in mind that Mincha will be earlier than usual, since it includes the Torah Reading and Haftara for fast days.

One gets ready for Shabbat as usual:

- One may shower as usual, but one should not rinse one's mouth, if possible.

- One can cut one's nails.

- One puts on Shabbat clothing before candle lighting, which is at the regular time; 20 to 40 minutes before sunset depending on your communities custom.

However, one may not eat until after nightfall; even if one has already finished Ma'ariv prayers.

Source: Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:6

Danny Schoemann

from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>

to: weeklydt@torahweb2.org

date: Thu, Dec 12, 2013 at 10:20 PM

subject: **Rabbi Mayer Twersky - The Fast Path to Teshuva**

Rabbi Mayer Twersky

The Fast Path to Teshuva

What is our immediate association when we think of "Asarah be-Teves"? A fast day, no eating or drinking. Tzom Gedalyah, the seventeenth of Tamuz and the ninth of Av trigger the same [unwelcome?] association. And while that association is obviously correct, it is woefully inadequate.

There are days on which the Jewish people fast on account of the tragedies that occurred thereupon, in order to arouse the hearts and open the pathways of teshuva ... these are the fast days: the third of Tishrei ... , and the tenth of Teves... [Rambam, Hilchos Ta'anios 5:1,2]

Undoubtedly we abstain from food and drink on the tenth of Teves. But fasting is not and end unto itself. Fasting induces frailty. Frailty, in turn, generates humility, the necessary mindset for feelings of remorse and contrition, and teshuva.

Our association with Asarah be-Teves is fasting. Our association should be repenting. While fasting is compulsory for all [with the obvious exception of those whom the halacha exempts], ta'anis without teshuva is hollow, a body sans soul.

Copyright © 2013 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved

http://www.rabbisacks.org/c_c_archive/bereishit-5772/

Orthodox Union / www.ou.org

The Last Tears

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

At almost every stage of fraught encounter between Joseph and his family in Egypt, Joseph weeps. There are seven scenes of tears:

1. When the brothers came before him in Egypt for the first time: They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come on us" ... They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was

using an interpreter. He turned away from them and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again. [42: 21-24]

2. On the second occasion, when they brought Benjamin with them: Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there. [43: 29-30]

3. When, after Judah's impassioned speech, Joseph is about to disclose his identity:

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. [45: 1-2]

4. Immediately after he discloses his identity:

Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. [45: 14-15]

5. When he meets his father again after their long separation:

Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time. [46: 29]

6. On the death of his father:

Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed him. [50: 1]

7. Some time after his father's death:

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept. [50: 15-17]

No one weeps as much as Joseph. Esau wept when he discovered that Jacob had taken his blessing (Gen. 27: 38). Jacob wept when he saw the love of his life, Rachel, for the first time (29: 11). Both brothers, Jacob and Esau, wept when they met again after their long estrangement (33: 4). Jacob wept when told that his beloved son Joseph was dead (37: 35). But the seven acts of Joseph's weeping have no parallel. They span the full spectrum of emotion, from painful memory to the joy of being reunited, first with his brother Benjamin, then with his father Jacob.

There are the complex tears immediately before and after he discloses his identity to his brothers, and there are the tears of bereavement at Jacob's deathbed. But the most intriguing are the last, the tears he sheds when he hears that his brothers fear that he will take revenge on them now that their father is no longer alive.

In a fine essay, "Yosef's tears,"^[1] Rav Aharon Lichtenstein suggests that this last act of weeping is an expression of the price Joseph pays for the realisation of his dreams and his elevation to a position of power. Joseph has done everything he could for his brothers. He has sustained them at a time of famine. He has given them not just refuge but a place of honour in Egyptian society. And he has made it as clear as he possibly can that he does not harbour a grudge against them for what they did to him all those many years before. As he said when he disclosed his identity to them: "And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you . . . God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God" (45: 5-8). What more could he say? Yet still, all these years later, his brothers do not trust him and fear that he may still seek their harm.

This is Rav Lichtenstein's comment: "At this moment, Yosef discovers the limits of raw power. He discovers the extent to which the human

connection, the personal connection, the family connection, hold far more value and importance than does power – both for the person himself and for all those around him." Joseph "weeps over the weakness inherent in power, over the terrible price that he has paid for it. His dreams have indeed been realised, on some level, but the tragedy remains just as real. The torn shreds of the family have not been made completely whole."

On the surface, Joseph holds all the power. His family are entirely dependent on him. But at a deeper level it is the other way round. He still yearns for their acceptance, their recognition, their closeness. And ultimately he has to depend on them to bring his bones up from Egypt when the time comes for redemption and return (50: 25).

Rav Lichtenstein's analysis reminds us of Rashi and Ibn Ezra's commentary to the last verse in the book of Esther. It says that "Mordechai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by most of his brethren" (Est. 10: 3) – "most" but not all. Rashi (quoting Megillah 16b) says that some members of the Sanhedrin were critical of him because his political involvement (his "closeness to the king") distracted from the time he spent studying Torah. Ibn Ezra says, simply: "It is impossible to satisfy everyone, because people are envious [of other people's success]." Joseph and Mordechai/Esther are supreme examples of Jews who reached positions of influence and power in non-Jewish circles. In modern times they were called Hofjuden, "court Jews," and other Jews were often held deeply ambivalent feelings about them.

But at a deeper level, Rav Lichtenstein's remarks recall Hegel's famous master-slave dialectic, an idea that had huge influence on nineteenth century, especially Marxist, thought. Hegel argued that the early history of humanity was marked by a struggle for power in which some became masters, others slaves. On the face of it, masters rule while slaves obey. But in fact the master is dependent on his slaves – he has leisure only because they do the work, and he is the master only because he is recognised as such by his slaves.

Meanwhile the slave, through his work, acquires his own dignity as a producer. Thus the slave has "inner freedom" while the master has "inner bondage." This tension creates a dialectic – a conflict worked out through history – reaching equilibrium only when there are neither masters nor slaves, but merely human beings who treat one another not as means to an end but as ends in themselves. Thus understood, Joseph's tears are a prelude to the master-slave drama about to be enacted in the book of Exodus between Pharaoh and the Israelites.

Rav Lichtenstein's profound insight into the text reminds us of the extent to which Torah, Tanakh and Judaism as a whole are a sustained critique of power. Prior to the Messianic age we cannot do without it – consider the tragedies Jews suffered in the centuries in which they lacked it. But power alienates. It breeds suspicion and distrust. It diminishes those it is used against, and thus diminishes those who use it.

Even Joseph "the righteous" weeps when he sees the extent to which power sets him apart from his brothers. Judaism is about an alternative social order which depends not on power but on love, loyalty and the mutual responsibility created by covenant. That is why Nietzsche, who based his philosophy on "the will to power," correctly saw Judaism as the antithesis of all he believed in.

Power may be a necessary evil, but it is an evil, and the less we have need of it, the better.

Notes

1. In Alei Tziyon (Vol. 16, Iyar 5769): Special edition in honour of HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein, 109-128. Also available online: www.vbm-torah.org/alei/16-04yosef-final.rtf

Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com
subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

In My Opinion :: Rabbi Berel Wein
The Difficulty Of Change

The old witticism about “How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but the bulb has to want to be changed!” resonates deep within me. After over a half-century in the rabbinate and in Torah education I have witnessed the truth of this shrewd observation time and again. Change is rarely accomplished by purely outside pressures, legislation or even coercion. It requires inner will and a commitment to somehow alter one’s course or to rethink one’s position on issues and challenges.

If the bulb is unwilling to be changed then one hundred psychiatrists will be unable to change it. It is true that the great changes in Jewish life over the past three centuries were all stimulated by outside pressures and changes in the general society. Yet these changes were, in the main, really generated internally by the inner dissatisfaction of Jews with the status quo of their spiritual and physical state of being.

Chasidut spread quickly in Eastern Europe in spite of the fierce objections of great and revered rabbinic leaders, because the inner Jew en masse hungered for some sort of emotional attachment to Torah over and above pure intellectual attainment and knowledge.

The Mussar movement in nineteenth century Lithuanian Jewish society gained traction because many of the great Torah scholars felt an inner urge for creating a higher form of Torah society and education. Mussar, so to speak, was the “Chasidut” of Lithuanian Torah scholarship, the drive to achieve self-improvement and a value-oriented Torah society. These movements were self-generated stemming from the desire of the Jewish ‘bulb of the time to be changed. Thus both Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov and Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant respectively had fertile ground in which to implant enormous change in the Jewish world of their times.

The other great changes in Jewish life in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries were also driven by inner forces, albeit certainly influenced by the outside zeitgeist of their age. Reform in Germany was a product of the inner Jewish drive to be emancipated from persecution, discrimination, ghettos and poverty.

No amount of bans and threats could still that drive for change and it seemed then that there was no other avenue of change available except for Reform. The same is certainly true for Eastern European Jewry’s love affair with Socialism, Marxism, Communism and the ideas of the Left generally, an affection that still has not waned completely in our current times.

The inward Jewish drive for fairness and equality, the utopian dream of a just and equitable society that would banish war and poverty forever propelled millions of Jews into the Left in all of its forms and secularized them completely. The drive for change in Jewish society overwhelmed all barriers and even eradicated traditions of faith and religious observance that existed.

The same is certainly true for Zionism, again in all of its different permutations. The drive to end the Exile and to have an independent Jewish state established in the homeland of the Land of Israel struck a deep chord within the Jewish masses. Against all odds and opposition – religious and secular – they succeeded in achieving the improbable if not even the seemingly impossible. The bulb wanted to be changed.

The growth of Torah study and education that has taken place in post-Holocaust Jewish life is also a product of inner impetus within the soul

of many Jews. Jewish young men and women wanted to study Torah and were and are willing to sacrifice greatly in order to do so.

The love of Torah that exists within Jews brought about this great change. The nineteenth and even the twentieth centuries possessed great Torah scholars and luminaries. But they did not affect the change in Jewish society that our current rabbis and educators have achieved. The inner drive to achieve this change was lacking then and for some reason is now present.

The same is true regarding the slow but steady return to tradition and observance that has overtaken Israeli society over the past number of decades. Left-wing kibbutzim that have now instituted synagogues, kosher kitchens, Torah study sessions as part of their societies and life-style have done so due to soul searching and not because of outside coercion or legislation.

And the slow, gradual and yet inexorable change that is taking place in the religious world of Israel and its integration into general Israeli society – charedi colleges, organized army service, over forty percent now in the workforce, etc. - are also due to an change in mindset. That bulb also wishes to be changed. One should never underestimate the strength of inner change and of the eternal attachment of the people of Israel to its Torah and land.

Shabat shalom

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com
subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha :: Rabbi Berel Wein
Vayechi

Our father Yaakov lived for seventeen years in the Goshen area of the land of Egypt. These were undoubtedly the most peaceful, serene and happiest years of his long and troubled life. He is reunited with his beloved son Yosef who has risen to power and greatness, albeit in a strange land. No Eisav, no Lavan, no Shechem, no Canaanite neighbors are present to disturb his peace and security. And, with his family in all of its many generations surrounding him, at peace with him and, superficially at least, with one another, Yaakov is content.

Yaakov is finally vindicated in his life’s work and can enjoy the last years of his life. In effect we can understand why the parsha begins – vayechi Yaakov – for it is in these seventeen years that Yaakov truly lived, finally achieving satisfaction and harmony.

The Talmud records for us that the great Rabi Yehuda HaNassi –Rabi – lived in the city of Zippori for seventeen years and the Talmud explicitly connects Rabi’s seventeen year sojourn in Zippori with Yaakov’s seventeen years of life in Egypt.

Aside from the apparently magic number of seventeen being involved in both instances, what connection is there if any between these two events, especially since they took place millennia apart? The seeming word games of the Talmud, linking like words that appear in the Torah, always have deeper meaning attached to them. There is an underlying motif and relevant message to all generations in this Talmudic assertion. It certainly should demand our attention and study.

Rabi was the editor and publisher of the Mishna, the one book that guaranteed the survival of the Jewish people throughout the long exile that stretched forth and that he saw in his mind’s eye. Rabi saw himself, as did his ancestor Yaakov, ensconced in a rare bubble of serenity and opportunity, freed temporarily from the constant persecution of Rome due to his personal friendship with the Roman emperor.

He grasped the moment and exploited the opportunity to codify the Oral Law of Sinai and preserve it for all eternity amongst the Jewish people. Those seventeen years of serenity in Zippori afforded him the

opportunity to do so. Yaakov's seventeen years of family harmony and spiritual strengthening in the land of Goshen enabled him to provide the necessary guidance and insights to his family that would enable them to weather the long night of Egyptian bondage and exile.

The last seventeen years of Yaakov's life were the preparation for the centuries of hardship that would follow. Yaakov's ability to shape and guide his family so that they would remain loyal and true to God's covenant with them was matched by the seventeen years of the development of the Mishna by Rabi in Zippori many millennia later. The actions of the forefathers became the instructional template for the later generations. Thus the lives and patterns of behavior and events of Yaakov and Rabi are bound together over the vast passage of time. Just as Yaakov lives so does Rabi live. And this living is not constricted by years or time but is endlessly eternal.

Shabat shalom

from: Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>
to: weekly@ohr.edu
subject: Torah Weekly

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Vayechi
For the week ending 14 December 2013 / 11 Tevet 5774
by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com
Insights

The Scrapbook of Eternity

Reminiscing through an ancient family album, I came across some photos I had completely forgotten about. Moments long-presumed lost smiled up at me from the yellowing pages. Others had not fared so well; abducted from their rightful place in history their memory was preserved by a faded oblong and four browning "photo corners."

History is so selective. This moment survived; this one didn't.

How many photographs do I possess of my parents as young children? Very few. And even fewer of their parents and siblings. A few smiling faces have survived, and so many other smiles captured for eternity will smile no more. And how many of the myriad dedicated pixels our own life will endure the ruthless editing of time? And more: when I look back at the photographs of my youth, of my parents' lives in black and white excursions to the Kursaal in Westcliff or Canvey Island, I think the same. How many moments there are that I never saw, of which I will never know, that have vanished!

There are two worlds. The world in which we live each and every moment of our daily lives – and then there are those few moments which will be eternalized as scrapbook memories.

The name of this week's Torah portion is "Vayechi" which means, "And Yaakov lived." You might think the title a bit ironic because it is in this week's portion that Yaakov's dies. Another thing. Sarah, the mother of the Jewish People passes from this world in the weekly portion entitled "The Life of Sarah."

The word for life in Hebrew is a plural noun. It's not by coincidence. There are two lives. The life we live in this world — and the life that we live in the next world. This world is called in Hebrew Olam Hazeh, and the next world is Olam Habah. Grammatically, the corollary of Olam Hazeh — "This World" — should be Olam HaHoo — "That World." Why then is the next world called Olam Habah? Habah literally means "that comes." The World-to-Come is just that – a world that comes as a direct result of what we do in this world. Nothing can exist in the World-to-Come that was not done in this world.

This life is like a factory. A factory has no other purpose than to produce. This life has only one purpose. To produce. To produce the next life. The biggest mistake you can make in this life is to mistake the factory for the product.

The fact that deaths of Yaakov and Sarah are found in Torah portions whose titles mention life teaches us a lesson. It teaches us that the essential life of a righteous person is not in this world but in the World-to-Come, for the righteous take every moment in this world and paste it into the scrapbook of eternity.

© 2013 Ohr Somayach International - all rights reserved

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org>
reply-to: ryfrand@torah.org
to: ravfrand@torah.org
subject: Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Vayechi **Two Special Attributes of Yehudah**

In reference to the blessings that Yaakov gave his sons, the pasuk says: "Yehudah, you your brothers will praise (ata yoducha achecha) Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down before you..." [Bereshis 49:8]. There are many interpretations for the phrase "Yehudah, ata yoducha achecha". Both the Targum Yonasan ben Uziel as well as a Medrash we will quote shortly say this expression refers specifically to the incident of Tamar. The expression is translated (at least homiletically) as "Yehudah, you admitted in the incident with Tamar."

Yehudah had a daughter-in-law named Tamar. His previous two sons had died. Tamar was not supposed to marry outside of the family. Tamar disguised herself and tricked Yehudah into performing a form of levirate marriage with her. She became pregnant. Yehudah, who did not realize that she had been impregnated by him, suspected her of being like the daughter of a priest who committed adultery and sentenced her to death. As she was about to be burned alive, she picked up the deposit Yehudah had left her when he visited her thinking she was a harlot and showed it to him. He admitted "she is more righteous than I".

This pasuk in Vayechi referring to Yehudah's admission relates back to that incident. The Medrash generalizes that this pasuk is referring to righteous people who conquer their evil inclinations and they admit when they are wrong. "For everyone who confesses his (improper) deeds merits the world to come." The Medrash describes the Almighty telling Yehudah: "You saved Tamar and her two sons (she was pregnant with twins) from being burnt by fire, by My Life I will save your sons as well."

Let's recast this scenario. Everyone thinks Tamar is guilty. Yehudah, who occupied a position of power announced, "This woman has to be put to death". She is taken out to the stake and the fires are lit. Yehudah is standing there in front of everybody. Tamar announces she is pregnant from the person who gave her the tokens she presents. Yehudah admits that she is more righteous than he. The Medrash says for this he merits the world to come and a great many blessings.

But let us remember that three people's lives were on the line here.

Would we not have expected any moral person to do exactly what Yehudah did? What is so noble about his confession, which saved him from having the unjust killing of three individuals on his conscience? Wouldn't any of us have done the same thing?

The answer to this question is a resounding 'NO!' We would not have done the same thing. Let us examine the other side of the coin. Look at all the rationalizations that Yehudah could have gone through. "If I admit that I was the one who did this, it could be a catastrophic desecration of G-d's Name!" For Yehudah, the pride of the Tribes, to admit that he had promiscuous relations with this apparent prostitute would be a tremendous Chilul Hashem. Not only that, but "If I admit that I did this, it will be so devastating to my father that he is not going to survive. My father has suffered so much already. If I cause a Chilul Hashem now, who knows what this could do to him! Therefore it is 'Pikuach Nefoshos' (a matter involving saving of life) NOT TO ADMIT! It is a Chilul Hashem TO ADMIT. Everything argues in favor of "DON'T ADMIT!" All of these rationalizations went through Yehudah's mind.

But were these really moral options? Would he allow 3 people die? Did he have no decency or conscience?

The answer is that Yehudah really had another option: He could have suddenly announced "New evidence has been uncovered. We need to halt the execution and start a new investigation." He could have dragged out the investigation for six months or a year. In the meantime, Tamar and her children would be saved, and ultimately people would forget about the tumult and he would never need to incriminate himself. This is wh at most of us, if not all of us would have done.

To have the strength of character to admit the truth and let the chips fall where they may, took rare moral courage. This is what Yehudah did. About this Yaakov said in his blessing: Yehudah ata yoducha achecha. But this is only part of the greatness of Yehudah, because Chazal say another thing: "Yehudah admitted and he was not ashamed." Let us continue the scenario. Yehudah admits: "I did it." What would happen to most people? For most people, such an experience would break them. They would never recover from it. They would be so humiliated they would crawl into a hole and live out the rest of their life in anonymity. "How can I ever show my face again?"

But what did Yehudah do? He did not crawl into a hole. He dusted himself off, got up, and went on with his life. He became the patriarch of the King of Israel. The Sefas Emes writes a beautiful comment. The pasuk refers to Yehudah as a lion who lies down and crouches. The Sefas Emes writes that the greatness of Yehudah is that even in his moments of "lowness" -- when he is crouching down as it were, even when he has suffered defeat, even when he is humiliated, he still retains the dignity of a lion.

The pasuk refers to Yehudah not as a "lion who roars" but as a "lion who crouches", the lion who is sitting down. Yehudah remains a lion despite the terrible fall and humiliation he suffered. He remains strong and majestic. Anyone who has ever seen a picture of a lion knows that when a lion sits, it still looks like a lion. It still has the majesty of a lion. It is still the king of the jungle even when at rest.

This is a lesson that all of us need to learn. In the course of a lifetime, we all have our setbacks, whether they are financial or personal or family related. There is an inclination to say "I can never recover from this. I can't show my face. How can I go on?" This is not the attitude of Yehudah and this should not be the attitude of any Jew.

The Sefas Emes concludes by explaining that all the Children of Israel are called Yehudim (tracing themselves to their ancestor Yehudah), because this attribute is the strength of the Jewish people. No matter what defeats they have suffered, they go on. If one thinks of the defeats that we have experienced as a nation on the national level, they are staggering. Nevertheless, we have persevered. This is not only a quality that applies to us as a people; it applies to each of us as individuals as well. Each and every one of us is called Yehudah. Each of us has this capacity of Yehudah that despite the terrible, terrible incident, he survived and remained a lion. He was crouching, he was in a state of lowness, he was down -- but he remained a lion.

These were the two strengths of Yehudah: The ability to recognize and admit the unvarnished unadulterated truth, rather than rationalize and fabricate self-serving justifications and excuses; and the capacity that no matter how devastating the setback one has suffered, the ability to brush oneself off and go on with life.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>

to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com>

subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Parshas Vayechi

Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt... and the days of Yaakov - the years of his life. (47:28)

The popular adage, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life," rings true in the ears of the committed who are acutely aware of the meaning of every moment of G-d-given life. We have no guarantees. Life is short, and it is up to each and every one of us to make the most of every minute. This is unlike the attitude of some who believe that everything belongs to them.

Parashas Vayechi deals primarily with the last mortal days of Yaakov Avinu: how he prepared for death, and the blessings he gave his children before he left this world. It is, therefore, surprising that a parsha which deals with death should be

called Vayechi - "And he lived!" Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita, suggests that the Torah alludes to the notion that the greatness of a tzaddik in life is his ability to focus on his own death. A great person understands that true life is not lived in this world, which is only a vestibule to Olam Habba, the World to Come. That is where life is lived - in the world of truth. Thus, Yaakov's entire life was spent in preparation for the moment of death, when he would enter into true life. This teaches us that true life is a life in which one prepares himself for his Heavenly meeting with the Almighty. One who lives without giving a second thought to his ultimate demise is not really considered to be living. Thus, the parsha which addresses Yaakov Avinu's death is called, Vayechi Yaakov, "And Yaakov lived."

When the Torah mentions Yaakov's age, it says, Vayehi yemei Yaakov - shnei chayav, "And the days of Yaakov, the years of his life." If the Torah is interested in relating Yaakov's age, why does it mention the "days" of his life? Would not his age in "years" be more appropriate? Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz explains that the Torah is teaching us an important principle. Despite the Patriarch's advanced age, every day of his life had great significance to him. Contrary to popular opinion, one should not question the value of "another day" once someone has attained longevity, since every day that one is granted by G-d is a precious treasure of incalculable value. It must be appreciated, valued and utilized appropriately.

Veritably, when a person reaches a point in life during which he begins to realize that his days are numbered, he becomes less focused on the affairs of this world, as he transitions to thinking primarily about his "future" in Olam Habba. Rav Gamliel quotes Horav Gershon Shtamer, zl, who says that a person thinks when he approaches old age and eventually takes leave of his mortal self, that this is his moment of death. The truth is, that from the very moment of birth, with every day that passes - another day of his life has died. Man dies daily! It is just that when the final moment arrives, his mortal remains are interred in the ground. This is his final moment, but, actually, we die a little every day. Yesterday is gone. We can do nothing about it. Time is a gift that, if wasted, can never be returned.

When writing about life and death, I feel it incumbent on me not to end on a somewhat morbid note. Thus, I take the liberty of quoting a story which, although it ends in death, is the kind of story that makes one proud to be mizera ha'Yehudim, a Jew. It was common knowledge that those who were sent on the transports to Auschwitz were forbidden to take any seforim, Hebrew books, with them. There was a certain Jew who obstinately refused to part with a small Sefer Torah that he kept with him, even as he was being taken to the transport train. When the Nazi fiend saw that this man was not giving up his scroll, and that he obviously was not smuggling in anything, he let him go. After all, he knew exactly where this Jew was going to end up.

Upon arrival at Auschwitz, everyone was told to leave all of their possessions on the cattle cars which had served as their transport. This Jew was not waiting for them to search him, so he immediately ran off the train with his precious Torah scroll in his arms. He ran right into the furious opposition of a group of German officers. They reviled him, cursed him, beat and mocked him, but he seemed oblivious to everything. He completely ignored them, as he embraced the scroll in his arms.

At this point, another soldier came over, took out his revolver and pointed it at the man's heart, threatening to shoot him unless he gave up the Torah. The Jew continued ignoring him, absolutely refusing to be separated from his Torah. If he would be shot as a result of this - so be it. He was not frightened. Without the Torah, his life was not worth living. He was prepared to die. The soldiers looked at each other and shrugged, as if to say, "Let him keep his Torah. It will not be for much longer." Indeed, the Sefer Torah never left his embrace until he entered the gas chamber.

A Jew who had long been alienated from Torah and mitzvos viewed this scene and the impression left such an impact on him that, from that moment on, he changed his mind about the "Orthodox fanatics." He now understood why they would never forgo any point of the Torah. He joined the faith that he had reviled for most of his life, asking for his Creator's forgiveness for his errant ways and resolutely committed himself to a life of Torah and mitzvos. One Jew died - one Jew returned to life: One Jew proudly left a world of falsehood and entered a world of truth; another Jew returned to the world of falsehood, armed with the truth.

Efraim and Menashe shall be mine like Reuven and Shimon... but progeny born to you after them shall be yours; they will be included under the name of the brothers with regard to their inheritance. (48:5,6)

According to Rashi, Efraim and Menashe are considered among the total of the other sons, thus receiving an equal portion in Eretz Yisrael in the same manner as their counterparts among the actual sons of Yaakov Avinu. In the Talmud Bava Basra 121b, Chazal debate whether the new status of Shevet, Tribe, accorded to

Efraim and Menashe had any bearing on the amount of land they received in Eretz Yisrael. Rashi and Ramban continue this debate. Rashi is of the opinion that, while Eretz Yisrael would be divided into twelve parts, these portions would not be equal in size. The size of a tribe's population determined the amount of land it received. Therefore, Yosef's sons, Efraim and Menashe, received the same amount of land, regardless of their individual tribal status. Accordingly, Yosef's sons received their father's portion in the land, and then it was divided.

Ramban disputes this, claiming that it impugns the integrity of Yosef, a b'chor, firstborn. As such, he should have received a double portion in the land. Therefore, he feels that all twelve tribes received equal parts. Consequently, large and small tribes each received the same amount of land. Actually, the individual member of each tribe received less if he belonged to a large tribe than the individual member who hailed from a smaller tribe. Efraim and Menashe individually received an equal portion of Eretz Yisrael, the same size as that of the other tribes. Thus, Yosef did receive a double portion.

It would seem from Rashi's view that the status of Efraim and Menashe as tribes was more honorary than actual tribal status. Ramban points this out, citing it as the reason that he disagrees with Rashi. Horav Arye Leib Heyman, zl, suggests that Rashi is also in agreement with the idea that Yaakov's designation changed the status of Efraim and Menashe, but it was much more than honorary. It was a transformation of their essence. He notes the syntax of the pesukim in support of his thesis.

The Torah begins, "Efraim and Menashe shall be like Reuven and Shimon." This is followed in the next pasuk with a sort of interruption, relating that Rachel Imeinu had died in "Canaan on the road." In the very next pasuk, Yaakov notices Yosef's sons and asks, "Who are these?" Rashi explains that Yaakov wanted to bless them, but the Shechinah, Divine Presence of G-d, had departed from him. This was due to the wicked progeny that would descend from them: Yaravam and Achav would descend from Efraim; Yeihu and his sons would descend from Menashe. This awareness provoked Yaakov to ask: "Who are these/from where did these who are unfit for blessing emerge?" The question is obvious: Why did Yaakov suddenly become aware of Efraim and Menashe's future offspring? Did his vision change once he had granted them tribal status?

Rav Heyman explains that, indeed, it did. Blessing is to be defined as adding something, an increase, augmentation concerning the subject of the blessing. Yaakov granted Efraim and Menashe tribal status, which sparked a spiritual transformation within them. They were no longer simple people; they had become members of the Shivtei Kah, which was an entirely new designation. As Yaakov was about to bless them, thus concretizing their newly formed position, he observed that their exemplary status would catalyze the birth of such wicked people as Yaravam, Achav and Yeihu.

Yaakov was acutely aware that, with greatness, comes greater challenge. "He who is greater than his fellow, his yetzer, inclination, is likewise greater." As one's spiritual persona develops and grows, so, too, does the evil-inclination that must now work harder to bring him down. One must strive for a balance. With tribal status, Efraim and Menashe became exposed to an entirely novel series of challenges. Their wicked progeny was not necessarily a direct consequence, but rather, the result of greater challenge.

Yaakov Avinu elevated his grandsons, not only in name alone, but also in essence. He created two entirely new individuals who now had tribal status. Rav Heyman supports this idea with an anomaly in the flow of the text in Parashas Shelach, which records Moshe's selection of the meraglim, spies. In mentioning the tribe of Efraim, the Torah says L'Match Efraim, Hoshea bin Nun, "For the tribe of Efraim, Hoshea bin Nun (Bamidbar 13:8)." When the Torah mentions Menashe, it writes, "L'Match Yosef, l'match Menashe, Gadi ben Sussi, "For the tribe of Yosef, for the tribe of Menashe, Gadi ben Sussi" (ibid :11). Why, concerning Hoshea/Yehoshua, does it not first mention his origin from the tribe of Yosef, as it does concerning the origin of Gadi ben Sussi from the tribe of Menashe?

Rav Heyman posits that this is a clear indication that Yehoshua did not belong to the tribe of Yosef. He originated from a new creation rendered by Yaakov. Had Yaakov not elevated Efraim to tribal status, someone of Yehoshua's distinction would not have descended from him - just as there would not have been an Achav or a Yaravam. They are the products of an illustrious lineage. This does not imply that Menashe was any less notable - he simply did not have such an illustrious descendant. Veritably, Yaakov elevated Efraim over Menashe. This could have been the reason that the former was the progenitor of Yehoshua.

The Torah alludes to this idea when Yaakov told Yosef, while it is true that Menashe is the b'chor, first born, "His younger brother will be greater than him." Rashi explains that this distinction will translate itself in his descendant, Yehoshua, who will take Klal Yisrael into the Holy Land and, as successor to Moshe Rabbeinu, will serve as the next link in the chain of Torah transmission to the

Jewish People. This suggests that the capacity for producing an individual of such unique spiritual persona as Yehoshua was derived from Efraim's gadlus, distinction, which took on a new perspective when Yaakov elevated him to tribal status.

We may add that, with greatness, comes greater responsibility and accountability. The individual who has it within him to produce Yehoshua must guard himself against also producing a Yaravam or an Achav.

Issachar is a strong-boned donkey; he rests between the boundaries. He saw tranquility that it was good... yet, he bent his shoulder to bear and he became and indentured laborer. (49:14,15)

The Torah's characterization of the talmid chacham, Torah scholar, using the simile of a strong-boned donkey, implies Yissachar/the Torah scholar's spiritual role as the bearer of the yoke of Torah and the cultivator of the nation's spiritual treasures. As the donkey toils day and night without resting its weary body, so, too, does the Torah scholar incessantly apply himself to his books. The Chafetz Chaim explains that the donkey never tires to the point that it lay down in such a manner that it must have its load removed. It sleeps standing, with its bags still on it. Likewise, the Torah scholar devotes himself constantly to the Torah, never allowing for a well-deserved rest.

Bein ha'mishpesaim, resting between the boundaries, is a reference to the talmid chacham, Torah scholar, who, upon concluding a Meseches, Tractate, celebrates the milestone with other scholars - and then moves on to the next Meseches. The next passage, Va'yaar menuchah ki tov... va'yet shichmo lisbol, "He saw tranquility that it was good... yet, he bent his shoulder to bear," presents us with an anomaly. Why would we think that Yissachar views his Torah obligation as some kind of load which he must bear? The Torah's wisdom is as sweet as the sweetest honey. No true Torah scholar views the time he spends studying Torah as toil, as a load he must tolerate. Torah study is the sweetest thing in life to him.

Furthermore, as the Chafetz Chaim notes earlier, the Torah characterizes Yissachar as a strong-boned donkey who rests under the most difficult circumstances. Now, Yaakov implies that the Torah is a heavy load which Yissachar is committed to carrying. If he seeks tranquility, why is he carrying a heavy load?

The Chafetz Chaim elucidates this by employing an analogy. There was a wealthy man who made his fortune through the sale of precious stones. He took a business trip to a far-off country, taking with him 3000 rubles with which to purchase jewels. He took another 400 rubles for traveling expenses. He concluded his business and was prepared to return home when he met another broker who had an excellent purchase for him. He explained to the broker that despite the wonderful opportunity, he had used up all of his money; all he had left was his traveling money, an amount with which he could not really part if he wanted to return home. The broker explained that the government was after him on some trumped-up charges. If he did not get rid of the stones now, he would lose them along with everything else. He was prepared to take a monetary loss on the stones, but he needed to do so immediately.

The wealthy jeweler replied that, while it was true that he could not pass up a good deal, he had only 200 rubles left from his original expense money. He was willing to invest 180 rubles in the broker's stones, leaving him only twenty rubles with which to return home. He would be relegated to sitting in the cattle car with the other poor folk, but it was worth it, if he would realize a handsome profit. The broker agreed, and they closed the deal.

The return trip was rough. He was used to sitting in a lounge car, sleeping on a bed, and eating the finest foods on exquisite dishes. Now, he sat on the floor of the cattle car, ate whatever scraps he could scrounge, but, in his mind, it was worth it. Once he returned home, he would sell the jewels, and he would have his heart's desire. At one of the stops, he met one of his associates, also a wealthy man, who was shocked to see his friend descending from the cattle car. "What are you doing here with the poor people?" he asked. The jeweler replied, "It is true that now I am having it quite rough, and I am relegated to sitting with the poor, but just wait a few weeks. I will be richer than ever."

"This may be true," the other man countered, "but for a man who is used to the finer things in life, how do you tolerate the poverty and hunger to which you are being subjected?"

"You are absolutely correct," the jeweler said. "I do have pain and I miss being in the lap of luxury, but every time I open up that box of precious stones which I purchased for almost nothing and realize the great profit I will make when I return home, I am able to live with the poverty and hunger." The Chafetz Chaim continues, "True, the Torah is of greater value than the most enviable riches. It is more precious than the most precious stones. There is one catch, however. In order to succeed in Torah study, one must relinquish a life of luxury in this world. He must toil day and night, plumb its profundities and delve into its intricacies. Yes, he

must be like the donkey who rests only between the boundaries. Veritably, such self-abnegation, such renouncement of this world's material/physical pleasures, provides nothing for one's neshamah, spiritual soul. What about his guf, body? Man has a physical dimension that seeks enjoyment, that craves pampering. How is man to remain satisfied? How is he to deal with the inner conflict raging within him? The answer is that he sits back and realizes that it is only for a short while; it is only during his present sojourn of life in this world that he must relinquish his luxuries. In the next world, he will be duly rewarded manifold for his patience.

"Thus, Yaakov told Yissachar, 'Be patient. Think about the eternal rest you will enjoy. Think about Gan Eden, that little box of precious stones which will bring you great reward. This will keep you focused even in this world.'"

We might add that it requires someone like Yissachar, who understands the value of Torah, to maintain his spiritual focus in this world. Imagine a person who has no idea concerning the value of jewelry. He will look at this box of stones and say, "I would rather have a nice bologna sandwich." Only someone who is astute and knows value when he sees it relinquishes temporal physical pleasure for a first class seat in Gan Eden.

Yehudah - you, your brothers shall acknowledge. (49:8) A charming son is Yosef. (49:22)

In Yaakov Avinu's blessings to his sons, we see the Patriarch delineate the specific area of avodas Hashem, service to Hashem, of each individual tribe. Together, their service coalesces and the purpose of Creation is realized. Each tribe's personality was different. This variation reflected a different approach to avodas Hashem. Yaakov's blessing ensured that the shefa, spiritual flow from Above, would be endemic to the requirements of each individual shvet, tribe.

The blessings of the Patriarch singled out two tribes for monarchy: Yehudah and Yosef. Each was uniquely suited for his role of leadership, based upon his individual character traits. Horav Chaim Friedlander, zl, explains that the character of their individual monarchies was founded in their unique character traits - as observed by their father, Yaakov.

Yehudah, atah yoducha achecha, "Yehudah - you, your brothers shall acknowledge" (49:8). Chazal explain that Yehudah received the monarchy as a result of his ability to confess his role in the episode of Tamar. He conceded that it was none other than he with whom she had her liaison. This took exemplary character. To be able to admit his role publicly and risk public censure takes incredible strength of character. An individual who executes such amazing control over himself, who takes responsibility for his actions - despite what the opinion of others might be - such a person is capable of leading the nation. One who rules over himself can rule over others. Yehudah's distinction was derived from his self-effacement, his ability to lower himself when necessary. One who arrogates himself over others does not function as an effective leader.

From where did Yehudah derive such character? His mother, Leah Imeinu, named him Yehudah, using the words, ha'paam odeh es Hashem, "This time let me gracefully praise Hashem" (Bereishis 29:34). Odeh connotes the root that means thankful and praise - the basis of Yehudah's name. Hodaah al ha'emes, the ability to concede to the truth, and hakoras ha'tov, acknowledgement of and offering gratitude, have the same source: the ability to deflate oneself. Hachnaah, the ability to lower oneself - to act inobtrusively, not to call attention to himself, to self-abnegate for the sake of others - is a prerequisite for concession. One who is unable to concede is likewise unable to acknowledge that he is the recipient of another fellow's favor. Before one can say, "Thank you," he must first concede that someone has done something to benefit him.

This character trait was later exhibited by Yehudah's grandson, David Hamelech, with his immortal words in Sefer Tehillim (136:1), Hodu l'Hashem ki tov, "Give thanks to Hashem, for He is good." Indeed, the entire book of Tehillim is a book of praise to the Almighty. The Davidic dynasty, heralding back to Yehudah, is founded in the middah, character trait, of hachanaah. This was inherited from Leah, who Chazal describe as, Tafsah pelach hodaah, "She grabbed the domain of concession." Leah understood the meaning of acknowledging others, of paying gratitude when and where it is due.

Yosef also achieved monarchy, but from an entirely different source. Ben pores Yosef, "A charming son is Yosef" (ibid 49:22). Targum Unkeles translates those words as, Bri d'yisgei Yosef, "A son who has achieved, who has exemplified himself, is Yosef." Yosef became a monarch due to his perfection, his greatness, his exemplary character and righteousness. He became the king because of his unique qualities. Yehudah achieved monarchy as a result of his acquiescence. Malchus Yosef, the monarchy of Yosef, is founded on sheleimus, perfection; the malchus of Yehudah is based upon hachnaah, submissiveness. Every honor that Yosef received from Pharaoh was reward for his perfection in areas of morality. He elevated every organ of his body to serve Hashem by rejecting sin with Potifar's

wife. Hashem rewarded him with incredible powers granted by the Egyptian king. Perfection, however, is a difficult plateau to achieve. Not everyone can scale the heights that lead to such lofty wholesomeness. Indeed, the level of Yosef is on a higher plane than that of Yehudah. Only a select few are able to achieve sheleimus. As with all high achievements, they are difficult to attain and even more difficult to maintain. Shaul Hamelech is a prime example of an individual who achieved monarchy because of his high level of sheleimus, but could not hold on to it for long. Shaul sinned once concerning Agag, King of Amalek. This one sin was held against him, causing him to lose his place as monarch over Klal Yisrael. David Hamelech achieved his position due to his submissive character, his ability to back out of the limelight. Thus, despite the fact that Chazal recorded two indiscretions on his part, he was still able to maintain the meluchah. What is the difference? Shaul became melech, king, as a result of his perfection. The flip side is that it does not take much to taint something, thereby rendering it imperfect. David Hamelech was a scion of Yehudah, inheriting his distinguished forebear's ability to subdue himself, to act with simple modesty, to concede his error, to accept the blame and assume responsibility. More leeway exists to work with someone who has achieved his position as a penitent, as a meek, subdued person who is not filled with "himself."

The Jewish People are called Yehudim after Yehudah. The kiyum, survival of our people, is based upon the characteristics endemic to Yehudah. The ability to lay low, not to call attention to ourselves, to accept our destiny with acquiescence and hope, to continue to serve Hashem under all circumstances - regardless of their toll on our physical, material and emotional dimension - is what Yehudah represents. This is what we are - and why Hashem will be with us until the advent of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

Sponsored in memory of Dovid ben Yaakov niftar 22 Teves 5762 by the Schulhof and Winter Families

www.matzav.com or www.torah.org/learning/drasha
Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Project Genesis <genesis@torah.org>
Copyright © 2013 by Torah.org
Torah.org: The Judaism Site
Project Genesis, Inc.

**Drasha Parshas Vayechi
by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**

Supply Side Diplomats

After Yaakov's passing the brothers were worried. After all, Yosef was the ruler of Egypt and their father Yaakov was now gone. And so the Torah tells us at the end of this week's portion, "Yosef's brothers perceived that their father was dead, and they said, 'Perhaps Joseph will nurse hatred against us and then he will surely repay us all the evil that we did him.' So they instructed that Joseph be told, 'Your father gave orders before his death, saying: Thus shall you say to Joseph - 'O please, kindly forgive the spiteful deed of your brothers and their sin for they have done you evil; so now, please forgive the spiteful deed of the servants of your father's G-d.'"

The Torah continues by telling us that "Yosef wept when they spoke to him. His brothers themselves also went and flung themselves before him and said, 'We are ready to be your slaves. But Joseph said to them, 'Fear not, for am I instead of G-d? Although you intended me harm, G-d intended it for good - in order to accomplish -- it is as clear as this day -- which a vast people be kept alive. So now, fear not -- I will sustain you and your young ones.' Thus he comforted them and spoke to their heart." (See Genesis 50 15-21)

Yosef seems very benevolent. He committed himself to sustain his brothers, despite their having sold him into a life of slavery. Yet, maybe they truly wanted some form of retribution. After all it is quite hard to bear the burden of guilt for the rest of your life, and if that is the case, perhaps Yosef's benevolence may have defeated the purpose of their request.

An old yarn that I heard as I was still unmarried has the wealthy father of the prospective bride interviewing her suitors before they got a chance to meet her. Each one of the young men who discussed their anticipated financial plans was rebuffed.

One said that he would be going to medical school another was going to law school, and yet a third was waiting for an inheritance that would come any day. Each eager beau was barraged with a series of questions about the details of his future life and none had the proper answer.

Finally, a young Yeshiva fellow came to see the tycoon's daughter. After talking to the young man for twenty minutes, the man was beaming. He proudly introduced

the prospective groom to his daughter with the highest recommendation. His wife and assistants were all astounded. What had this young man said that the others had not?

The man was still beaming when he repeated the conversation. "When I asked him where he plans to live when he first gets married he replied, 'G-d will provide!' When I asked him how he plans to feed a family if he is sitting and studying he looked at me and declared, 'G-d will provide!' When I asked when there are children, how does he plan to pay for their education and welfare, he beamed once again and exclaimed, 'G-d will provide!'"

The man's entire household was baffled. "Why do those responses please you so much?"

The man smiled as he puffed out his chest, "He thinks I'm G-d!"

It is said that Yoseph Dov HaLevi Soleveitchik of Brisk once remarked in wit that Yoseph was telling the brothers, "If you are afraid of retribution, I will provide you with the sweetest revenge. I will be your sole source of support and you will have to rely upon me for your sustenance."

The Talmud in Beitzah 32 states, "R. Natan ben Abba also said in the name of Rav: If someone is dependent on someone else's table, the world looks dark to him, for it says, 'He wanders about for food-where is it?'- he realizes that the day of darkness is ready, at hand" (Job 15:23). The Rabbis taught: One of three whose life is no life, is a person who is dependent on someone else for his meals."

And so, Yoseph was telling his brothers, perhaps I will not employ physical retribution but perhaps your greatest punishment will be that your livelihood will be dependent on the little brother you thought was only worthy of a place in a pit. In the Grace After Meals we beseech the Almighty, "Please do have us rely upon the gifts of flesh and blood, but rather sustain us from Your hand." To live a life dependent upon others is no blessing. So according to this insight, Yoseph gave them something the brothers may really have asked for - the sweetest and most benevolent punishment they could have desired.

Good Shabbos

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore and the author of the Parsha Parables series.

Questions or comments? Email feedback@torah.org. Project Genesis, Inc.

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/>

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites

The blessing of unity and concession

By Shmuel Rabinowitz

December 12, 2013 Thursday 9 Tevet 5774

Since the dawn of humanity – the days of Cain and Abel – brothers were high on the list of disputes and arguments.

One of the most beautiful and moving rituals that repeats itself in Jewish families every week is when the father of the family returns home from the synagogue after Friday night services, and before he goes to make Kiddush, he gathers his sons and daughters around him and blesses them.

This Friday, the 10th of Tevet, will mark two years since the passing of Fima Falic, of blessed memory. He was a special man, a Kohen, a lover of the nation of Israel and the Land of Israel, a lover of Jerusalem and a friend of the Western Wall. Much has been written and much is yet to be written about this man and the family he left behind. But one of the things I often recall is his blessing of his children and grandchildren every Friday evening. From the sidelines, I was always moved by seeing that while doing so, his heart was filled with glory and pride, tears and joy. May this be for the transcendence of his soul.

Besides the personal blessings that the father wishes his descendants from the depths of his heart, he blesses his sons and daughters using the ancient Jewish text. He blesses his daughters – May G-d bless you to be like Sara, Rivka, Rachel and Leah – the mothers of the nation of Israel; he blesses his sons – May G-d bless you to be like Ephraim and Menashe.

Who were Ephraim and Menashe that they were privileged to be included in the lexicon of Jewish blessings? They were the sons of Yosef, born to him in Egypt. This version of the blessing was created by Ya'acov Avinu in his old age, when he met the grandsons he had not known since he had been living in the Land of Israel, then Canaan, and they were born and lived in Egypt. He conveyed his appreciation for them using the following words: "With you, Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh.'" (Genesis 48:20) The question that arises when we read about Ya'acov's blessing of his grandchildren is deep and leads us to take a closer look at this pair of brothers. Why did Ya'acov not bless his

sons with "May G-d bless you to be like Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'acov" – the forefathers of the Jewish nation? Why were Ephraim and Menashe chosen to be the symbol and example whom a father wishes his sons to emulate, rather than Ya'acov's other sons? We get the answer to this question when we read the verses that come before this one and discover that before the blessing, Ya'acov ran a little test on his grandchildren Ephraim and Menashe.

Yosef, their father, placed his sons in front of Ya'acov with Menashe, the firstborn, standing across from Ya'acov's right hand, and Ephraim, the younger son, standing across from Ya'acov's left hand. This was done purposely so that Ya'acov would place his right hand, symbolizing strength and courage, on the head of Menashe, the oldest son, during the blessing. But Ya'acov surprised everyone by purposely placing his right hand on the head of the younger brother and his left on the head of the firstborn.

Yosef could not understand why his father was behaving this way, and he tried to put Ya'acov's hands back to the natural order in which the firstborn is the one who continues the family legacy. But Ya'acov insisted on switching the order. Also in the text of the blessing, Ya'acov changed the order and did not say "May G-d make you like Menashe and Ephraim," but had the younger brother precede the older. Why did Ya'acov do this? He was testing his grandsons to see if they were worthy of his blessing. Are they unified? Is the older brother capable of surrendering his place to his younger brother? When Ya'acov saw that they did not begin to fight, he recognized the value of these grandchildren whom he had not met since their birth, and put them into the text of a Jewish father's blessing of his sons.

Since the dawn of humanity – the days of Cain and Abel – brothers were high on the list of disputes and arguments.

Brothers, who are among the closest to each other biologically, tend to be competitive and jealous of one another, resulting in hatred. It is human nature, and we see it around us every day. Family disputes are the most difficult, since the closeness and similarity act as a stimulus for hatred and separation.

The father about to bless his children thinks about what the most appropriate blessing would be. What could he wish them that would benefit them the most?

What would contribute to their future in the most efficient way? Ya'acov Avinu taught us that the best things we can wish our children are unity, peace and compromise. These are what we wish to pass on to the following generations, and in this way, we convey our love for our sons.

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites.

All rights reserved © 1995 - 2012 The Jerusalem Post.

from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com>

to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com>

subject: [Rav Kook List]

mailing list: rav-kook-list.googlegroups.com

Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Preparing for Prayer

Ashrei - "Fortunate Dwellers of Your House"

This beautiful psalm expresses our deep yearnings to be close to God and His holy Temple. "My soul longs and pines for God's courtyards!" (Ps. 84:3). Yet its most famous verse opens with the word "Ashrei" - "fortunate":

"אַשְׁרֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵּיתְךָ - עוֹד יְהַלְלֶךָ שְׁמֶךָ"

"Fortunate are those who dwell in Your house. They will continue to praise You, selah." (Ps. 84:5)

This verse was designated to introduce Psalm 145 in the daily prayers. (In fact, it is customary to refer to the recital of this chapter as Ashrei, after this verse.)

Who are these fortunate "dwellers" in God's house? Would it not be preferable to pray there, rather than just sitting in His house?

Preparations for Prayer

The Sages knew that sincere prayer requires mental preparation. "One should not rise to pray until one has acquired a reverent state of mind" (Berachot 30b). We cannot make the sudden switch from our everyday activities to heartfelt prayer without a sincere effort to clear our thoughts and focus the mind.

The Talmud in fact describes two levels of mental preparation before prayer. The minimal level, expected from all people, is to attain a general attitude of solemnity and reverence. The Sages referred to this state of mind as *koved-rosh*, literally "heavy-headedness." We need to do away with any light-headedness and frivolous imaginings, and direct our thoughts towards eternal truths.

However, the chasidim rishonim, the saintly pious of ancient times, would undertake a more intensive preparation. They would reflect and meditate for a full

hour before each prayer. They would not begin their prayers until they knew that "their hearts were fully directed toward their Father in heaven."
Why did these chasidim need so much time to prepare for prayer?

Directing Both Mind and Heart

The minimal level - focusing the mind on lofty matters - does not necessitate such a lengthy preparation. In a relatively short time, one can direct the mind with positive and holy images.

But the pious of old also worked on uplifting their hearts - "until their hearts were fully concentrated." Full control of one's feelings and desires is a far more complex matter. Personality traits and emotions, wants and desires, are connected to our physical side. It takes time and effort to analyze our feelings and inclinations, and guide them towards holy objectives.

The ancient chasidim based their lengthy preparations on the verse, "Fortunate are those who dwell in Your house." The psalmist is not referring to those who make a quick visit to God's house. This is not just the rapid focusing of the mind on holy matters. Rather, the verse speaks of those who dwell in God's house. These individuals meditate at length, uplifting their feelings and refining their basic nature to be in harmony with the mind's enlightenment. This intensive preparatory effort requires a lengthy stay in the realm of the spiritual and the eternal.

Spiritual Stability

The verse concludes with the assurance that those who dwell in Your house "will continue to praise You, selah."

The Sages taught in Eiruvim 54a that the word selah indicates something of a continuous or eternal nature. Those who dwell in God's house, as they work to elevate their hearts and emotions, attain a more stable level of holiness. Their unity of heart and mind enables them to continually "praise You, selah." They achieve a consistent level of holiness and God-awareness.

Now it is clear why this verse was placed at the beginning of Ashrei, to be recited at the start of the prayer service. We are reminded to prepare our state of mind before praying, and take inspiration from those remarkable chasidim of old who would 'dwell' in God's house, as they focused their minds and directed their hearts. (Adapted from Ein Eyah, vol. I, pp. 127, 154)

Comments and inquiries may be sent to: mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com

From Jeffrey Gross <jgross@torah.org>

reply-To neustadt@torah.org, genesis@torah.org

To weekly-halacha@torah.org

Subject Weekly Halacha

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt (dneustadt@cordetroit.com)

Yoshev Rosh - Vaad HaRabanim of Detroit

Weekly Halacha

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Proper Respect for Sefarim

Sifrei kodesh, sacred scriptures, vary in their degree of kedushah, holiness, and consequently, one accords them varying degrees of honor. A Sefer Torah is given the most honor, followed closely by other Sifrei Tanach written on parchment. All other sefarim, including the Talmud, its commentaries and codes, do not have the level of kedushah that a Sefer Torah has, but still they must be treated with respect and dignity. In many cases, the Rishonim rule that sefarim are to be accorded the same level of respect and honor as tefillin.¹

With the advent of the printing press in the fifteenth century, the Torah authorities of the time debated whether printed sefarim had the same level of kedushah as handwritten works. The consensus of the poskim was that a printed sefer is to be treated no differently from a handwritten one. The Taz,² one of the great Torah luminaries of the time, warned that one who demeans the holiness of printed sefarim will suffer the consequences in the World to Come. With few exceptions, this has become the accepted halachah.³

During the following days we will review some of the halachos that pertain to the proper treatment of sefarim.

Sefarim are treated with dignity and respect. Thus:

* A sefer should be handed from one person to the other; it may not be thrown or tossed around.⁴

* A sefer should not be placed face down. If it is found in this position it must be turned face up.⁵

* A sefer should not be stood upside down. If it is found in this position, it must be stood right side up.⁶

* A sefer may not be placed, either lying or standing, directly on the floor.⁷

* A sefer that fell to the ground must be picked up immediately, even if one will

have to interrupt his Torah learning to do so.⁸ If a sefer falls to the floor during Shemoneh Esreh and that interferes with one's concentration, he may pick it up after finishing the blessing that he is reciting,⁹ even if it entails taking a few steps.¹⁰ If, however, the fallen sefer does not disturb his concentration, then he may not pick up the sefer during Shemoneh Esreh.¹¹

* One may not sit or lie on a chair, bench, couch or bed if a sefer is lying (or standing)¹² directly¹³ on it.¹⁴ If, however, the bench or couch is made of "split (separate) seats" it is permitted to sit on any seat other than the one that is holding the sefer.¹⁵

* Some poskim prohibit sitting on top of a bench, chest or chair that has sefarim stored underneath,¹⁶ while other poskim permit it.¹⁷ In order to satisfy both opinions it is recommended that there be at least a tefach of space between the seat and the sefer.¹⁸

* One should not place any other sefer on top of a Chumash,¹⁹ or any sefer other than a Chumash on top of a Nach.²⁰ (Although some poskim maintain that this halachah pertains only to Chumashim and Nachim that are on a scroll, not to printed and bound Chumashim and Nachim,²¹ it is customary to be stringent in this halachah.²²) All other sefarim and siddurim, however, are permitted to be placed randomly.²³

Sefarim are treated with kedushah. Thus:

* It is prohibited for males (over the age of nine) or females (over the age of three) to be completely unclothed in the presence of a sefer.²⁴ But it is permitted to learn from a sefer in an area where there is a swimming pool.²⁵

* It is prohibited to enter a restroom or a washroom with a sefer in hand, unless the sefer is concealed in at least one covering. Preferably, the sefer should be inside two coverings, e.g., one bag encased in another bag, or an envelope inside an attaché case.²⁶

* A child should not be diapered or toilet-trained in a room full of sefarim. But it is permitted to diaper or train a child in a room where there is an occasional sefer or bentscher, etc.²⁷

Sefarim are for the purpose of learning only; they may not be used for other purposes. Thus:

* It is prohibited to place anything,²⁸ except chidushei Torah, inside a sefer²⁹ or on top of a sefer.³⁰

* When learning from a sefer, it is permitted to use another sefer (of equal or lesser kedushah) to raise the height of the sefer one is learning from.³¹

* It is prohibited to use a sefer for personal protection, e.g., to shield oneself from the sun's rays, or to block another person's view.³² However, one is permitted to cover his face with a sefer so as to block a forbidden sight from his eyes.³³

* It is permitted, when no other item is available, to use another sefer to block the sun from shining on a sefer from which one is learning.³⁴

* When needed, it is permitted to use a sefer as a hard surface for writing Torah-study notes.³⁵

* One may not place a sefer on his lap and lean on it with his elbows.³⁶ One should also not lean or sleep on top of a sefer.³⁷

After learning is over . . .

* It is prohibited to use a sefer as a bookmark by placing it inside another sefer.³⁸

* Some poskim permit folding a page-corner of a sefer so that it serves as a bookmark,³⁹ while other poskim forbid it.⁴⁰

* One should avoid leaving a sefer open if he is leaving the room for an extended period of time⁴¹ because it is considered degrading to the sefer. In addition, the poskim quote the chachmei ha-Emes as saying that doing so may cause one to forget his learning.⁴²

* Although there is no known source in the poskim for the practice of kissing a sefer after learning from it,⁴³ this custom is brought down in sifrei Kabbalah.⁴⁴

* When a sefer ages and is no longer usable, it must be put aside in a safe place or buried in the ground. It may not be burned or thrown out.⁴⁵

1 Tosafos and Rosh, Berachos 26a, quoted in Beis Yosef, O.C. 240:6.

2 Y.D. 271:8. See also Beir Halachah 83:5, s.v. ein, where the Chafetz Chayim tells of a severe punishment that befell a particular family because they were not careful with the kedushah of their sefarim.

3 Mishnah Berurah 40:4. A minority view, led by the Chavos Yair and Eliyahu Rabba, disagrees and maintains that printed matter is on a lower level of kedushah than handwritten material; *ibid.* In extenuating circumstances, we take this opinion into consideration; see Kaf ha-Chayim 40:16 and Shevet ha-Levi 2:143, 6:8. In addition, some authorities hold that sefarim in offset print are on yet an even lesser level of kedushah since offset is merely a photograph of the print; see Maharasham 3:357 and Sefer Shevilei Taharah, pgs. 176-180.

4 Y.D. 282:5.

5 Rama, Y.D. 282:5. See Shiyurei Berachah *ibid.*, who bemoans the fact

that many people are not aware of this strict prohibition.

6 Beis Lechem Yehudah, Y.D. 282:7, quoting Maharil; Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:11.

7 Rama, Y.D. 282:7. Rav Y.S. Elyashiv and Rav C. Kanievsky are quoted (Nekiyus v'Kavod baTefillah, pgs. 97 and 187) as ruling that placing a bed sheet or a newspaper on the floor is not sufficient. See Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 163, which states that Rav Y.Y. Kanievsky was careful not to place sefarim within a tefach of the ground. See also Chut Shani, Ribbis, pgs. 167-168.

8 Bais Lechem Yehudah, Y.D. 282:7; Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:11. It is customary to kiss a sefer after picking it up from the floor; *ibid*.

9 Mishnah Berurah 96:7.

10 Be'er Moshe 3:13.

11 Mishnah Berurah 96:7, based on Pri Megadim.

12 Rav M. Feinstein (oral ruling quoted in Ginzei ha-Kodesh 2, note 15); Rav S.Z. Auerbach (oral ruling quoted in Mevakshei Torah, vol. 4, pg. 124); Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avnei Yashfei 1:16); Rav N. Karelitz (Chut Shani, Ribbis, pg. 168); Rav C. Kanievsky (written response published in Nekiyus v'Kavod baTefillah, pg. 188).

13 If the sefer is lying or standing on an object which is at least a tefach high, it is no longer considered as if it is lying or standing on the bench or chair; Shach 282:8 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:12.

14 Rama, Y.D. 282:7. [In a crowded beis midrash where it may be difficult to observe this halachah, some poskim permit sitting on a bench together with the sefarim; see Shach 282:9. A rav should be consulted.]

15 Shevet ha-Levi 3:11. Some poskim permit sitting on the same bench with sefarim so long as there is a barrier between them; Teshuras Shai 2:169, quoted in Tzedakah u'Mishpat 16, note 61.

1. 16 Taz, Y.D. 282:4. If the chest or bench is nailed to the wall, it is permitted even according to this view; *ibid*.

16 Nekudos ha-Kesef and Shiyurei Berachah, Y.D. 282:7; Pischei Teshuvah 282:8.

17 Mishnah Berurah 40:13.

18 Y.D. 282:19.

19 Sefer Chasidim, quoted by Beis Lechem Yehudah Y.D. 283:1.

20 Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 282:22, based on Rama, Y.D. 283:1. See also Beis Baruch 31:187, who agrees with this opinion.

21 Rav S.Z. Auerbach, written ruling, published in V'aleihu Lo Yibol, vol. 1, pg. 269).

22 Chazon Ish (quoted in Dinim v'Hanhagos and Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 162).

23 Mishnah Berurah 45:5, 75:23. But this prohibition applies only to ervah mamash; we do not invoke tefach b'ishah ervah concerning this issue; Rabbi P.E. Falk (Kol ha-Torah, vol. 46, pgs. 187-194).

24 She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 5:8; Ishei Yisrael 53:28.

25 Mishnah Berurah 43:25. Putting a sefer into one's pants pocket is considered one "cover." When the pocket is covered with a jacket or an overcoat, it is considered as two coverings; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Nekiyus v'Kavod baTefillah, pg. 94). [See Machazeh Eliyahu 8:30, who opines that a pocket with a lining is considered a double covering.]

26 See Machazeh Eliyahu 5-8 for an entire review of this subject. See also Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:137.

27 One should not place parts of torn pages from one sefer in between the pages of another sefer; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Avnei Yashfei 1:202).

28 See Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 282:17; Mishnah Berurah 154:31; Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 282:23. This includes blank sheets of paper which will be used for chidushei Torah. See, however, Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:72, who permits placing blank paper intended for chidushei Torah in a sefer.

29 Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:72.

30 Mishnah Berurah 154:31, 315:30.

31 Mishnah Berurah 154:31.

32 Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Nekiyus v'Kavod baTefillah, pg. 100).

33 Mishnah Berurah 154:31.

34 Mishnah Berurah 154:31.

35 Rama, Y.D. 282:7.

36 Chazon Ish (quoted in Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 161); Rav N. Karelitz (Chut Shani, Ribbis, pg. 169).

37 Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 282:17; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Avnei Yashfei 1:202).

38 Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Avnei Yashfei 1:203). Some recommend that the page should be folded on the margin, not on the spot where there are words

printed; Beis Baruch 31:186.

39 Chazon Ish (quoted in Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 162).

40 Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 277:2. See also Da'as Kedoshim 277.

41 Shach, Y.D. 277:1.

42 Rav C. Kanievsky (Nekiyus v'Kavod baTefillah, pg. 189).

43 See Ohr Tzaddikim 22:17.

44 Mishnah Berurah 154:24. See Chelkas Yaakov 3:161, which maintains that a sefer which is no longer in use but is still usable may not be buried in the ground; it must be put aside in a safe place. See, however, Ginzei ha-Kodesh 8:2 and Ashrei ha-Ish, vol. 1, 29:16, who quote Rav Y.S. Elyashiv as permitting the burial of sefarim that are not going to be used even if they are still in relatively good condition.

Weekly-Halacha, Weekly Halacha, Copyright © 2013 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr.

Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org.

Rabbi Neustadt is the Yoshev Rosh of the Vaad Harabbonim of Detroit and the Av

Beis Din of the Beis Din Tzedek of Detroit. He could be reached at

dneustadt@cordetroit.com