

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON VAYISHLACH - 5760

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SHIUR HARAV ON PARSHAS VAYISHLACH

"And G-D said to Yaakov go up to Beth El and stay there. Make an altar there for the G-D who appeared to you when you fled from Esav your brother"

In the next posuk Yaakov tells his family to discard the idols which they have in preparation for the ascent to Beth El, where he would build an altar for 'the G-D who answered me in my time of need and was with me on the path which I traveled.' The question is obvious: why did Yaakov change the description of G-D from that which G-D himself had used?

There is a Mussar Haskel to be learned from the above. It is a lesson in Vhalachta Bdrachav, emulating the ways of Hashem. The humility of Hashem is clearly demonstrated by the way Hashem asks Yaakov to pay his vow. Hashem only reminded Yaakov of the vow that he had taken upon awakening from the vision of the ladder. Yaakov promised that he would give thanks to Hashem if Hashem would return him home in peace to his father and provide him with the bare physical necessities of life (clothing and food). As it turned out, not only was Yaakov saved from Esav, but many miracles were done on his behalf and he returned home a wealthy man. However Hashem (Breishis 35:1) only asked Yaakov to build an altar in thanksgiving for his delivery from Esav, i.e. to fulfill the conditions of his original vow. Hashem did not ask for the complete Hakaras Hatov (recognition for all the kindness of Hashem) which would have included such major miracles as the defeat of Shechem, protection from reprisals of the neighboring lands, his deliverance from Lavan and the wealth he amassed. Yaakov understood on his own that he owed Hashem a tremendous Hakaras Hatov. Hence his announcement to his family that he was to build an altar to Hashem who answered him in all the times of trouble and who accompanied him throughout all his travails. the Mussar Haskel is for us to emulate the ways of Hashem and the response of Yaakov. One who is in a position to grant a favor to another should not limit his largesse to the minimum amount requested. In turn the one requesting should show proper Hakaras Hatov that recognizes the complete scope and extent of the favors that were done for him (e.g. the concept of Chesed Shel Emes).

When Avrohom defeated the four kings the posuk says "Do not fear, Avrohom, your reward is very great". The Ramban comments that Avrohom was afraid that the kings whom he had just defeated would regroup and attack him. About this G-D tells him not to worry. When Moshe was about to enter into battle with Og G-D told him not to fear him. However, when Yaakov fears Esav "and Yaakov was very afraid and it pained him" G-D does not tell him not to be afraid!

The Rov (Rabbi Soloveitchik z"l) explained that in the cases of Avrohom and Moshe each was concerned about a one time conflict. (Ed: Hashem anticipated the fear of Avraham and Moshe and calmed them before they could even express the fear they felt). Yaakov however foresaw a conflict down through the ages. "Until I come to my master to Seir" upon which the Medrash, noting that there is no posuk stating that Yaakov actually came to Seir, refers this to the coming to Seir in the times of Moshiach "and the redeemers will ascend Mt Zion to judge the mountain of Esav". Yaakov fears, and expresses his fear of, the struggle with Esav which begins here and stretches out across the millenia. Of this struggle it cannot be said not to be afraid; the conflict is too long

B'S'Dind bitter.

Chazal interpret the displacement of the thigh of Yaakov as the loss of Jews to the Jewish nation in the time of shmad. Can Yaakov be reassured not to fear Esav in such a protracted struggle? Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi and Antoninus were the closest of friends, yet when Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi went to see this "friend" he first consulted the parasha of Vayishlach. The struggle is too long and the gap between Yaakov and Esav is too wide and unbridgeable. This is why Yaakov was afraid, yet G-D could not reassure him.

The Rav concluded this shiur with the following observation: "Vayira Yaakov M'od Vayetzer Lo". Rashi comments Vayira Yaakov that he should not be killed and Vayetzer Lo that he should not kill others. The Rav commented that Yaakov knowing that the conflict with Esav will continue through the ages was afraid that Bnay Yisrael would not in turn adopt the modus operandi of Esav, that of Yadayim Y'dei Esav, and sinking to the level of an Esav.

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From: Kenneth Block [SMTP:kenblock@worldnet.att.net] NCYI  
Weekly Divrei Torah - Parshat Vayishlach

RABBI HERSCHEL KURZROCK Young Israel of Kensington, NY

Yaakov's purpose in sending messengers to his brother Esav was to inform him that he is on his way to meet him and is seeking to effectuate a reconciliation between them. As Rashi explains the expression of Yaakov "...to find favor in your eyes" (32:6) as "I (Yaakov) am at peace with you and seek your affection." Despite the fact that Yaakov was frightened by the messenger's report that Esav was on his way to him with a large force of 400 men and Yaakov felt that he and his family were in grave danger, he persisted in trying to mollify Esav by sending a large gift through various servants, preceding his planned encounter with Esav. Yaakov ordered each servant leading a part of the gift for Esav to express his master Yaakov's subservience to Esav and his desire to honor him with a large gift. Yaakov even offered Esav a choice of whatever he wanted to take from his possessions (Ramban 32:6).

Although Yaakov fervently prayed to the Al-Mighty to be saved from the hands of Esav, as per HaShem's promise to him, and also prepared for a war with him as a last resort (Rashi 32:9), his main objective was to seek peace and reconciliation with Esav in a natural manner. In fact, according to the midrash (Breishit Raba 75:11) the Al-Mighty was angry with Yaakov for humbling himself to the extreme before Esav by calling him "adoni" - my master - eight times. He told him that in retribution for demeaning himself before Esav, as his master, Esav will merit royalty and eight kings will reign from Esav's children before Yaakov's progeny will develop to a nation of kings (also see Ba'al Haturim 36:31). Yet it seems that Yaakov's fear and overreaction to the possible threat from Esav was really due to spiritual reasons. Yaakov was apprehensive due to the great zchuyot, merits, that Esav possessed, because he lived in Eretz Yisrael and honored his parents all the years that Yaakov was living with Lavan and his family. As the midrash states (Breishit Raba 76:2), Yaakov's fear was that these two zchuyot might outweigh all Yaakov's zchuyot.

It is interesting to note here that regardless of the fact that Esav didn't really perform these two mitzvot for the sake of Heaven (Rashi 5:27) honestly and sincerely, his zchut was so great that Yaakov feared him, attesting to the outstanding significance of these two mitzvot. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the Gaon from Ostrovitz (Reb Mayer Yechiel, z'l) once stated, "how great is the mitzva of settling and living in Eretz Yisrael for this was the first mitzva and command from

HaShem to a Jew - Abraham; 'Leave your land and go to the land that I will show you [meaning Eretz Yisrael] (Breishit 12;1).'"

As we mentioned above, regardless of Yaakov's fear and mistrust of Esav, he made every effort to attain a reconciliation with Esav by humbling himself and offering generous material gifts. Yaakov went through the motions of showing submissiveness and obeisance to Esav, in various ways and at different times, until meeting with him. When sending messengers, he used the expression "to find favor in your eyes" (32;6). The servants bringing the gifts to Esav constantly referred to Esav as "my master" in Yaakov's name (32;19-20). Upon finally coming face to face with Esav, Yaakov answers a question by Esav again using the expression "to find favor in my master's eyes" (33;8). And the ultimate act of subjection on the part of Yaakov to Esav, as well as an expression of inordinate praise to him, is found when Yaakov beseeches Esav to accept the gift and remarks again, "if I found favor in your eyes" and utters the excessive praise of, "seeing your face is as if I am seeing an angel" (Rashi, 33;10). Commentaries struggle to understand this expression of Yaakov and most interpret it as referring to "sar shel Esav" - the angel representing Esav in heaven with whom Yaakov fought on the way to Esav (Midrash Breishit Raba 76;3, Ba'al HaTurim 33;11).

And Yaakov succeeds: Esav accepts the gift and reconciles with Yaakov and even forgives him for his trickery in receiving the blessings from Yitzchak that were meant for Esav (Midrash Breishit Raba 78;11).

After all the above introduction, it is very difficult to understand Yaakov's answer to Esav when Esav first offers, in good faith, to travel with Yaakov and his group, at Yaakov's pace of travel (Rashi 38;12). Upon Yaakov's hesitation, Esav offers, at least, to have a group of his people travel with Yaakov to help him. Yaakov answered Esav and refused his gesture with the very same words he used all along to curry favor with Esav! Yaakov says, "Why should I find favor in the eyes of my Master" (33;15).

Yaakov's whole approach to the situation was to find favor in the eyes of Esav. To act humble, submissive and to seek Esav's friendship was his goal. His expression now could possibly rekindle Esav's ire and cause a rift between them again. Why say these words at this time?

It seems that Yaakov's actions and words were really consistent with his religious principles and convictions. True, he was willing to go above and beyond in order to win over Esav and make peace with him. But, only if it meant humbling himself before Esav, offering material gifts to pacify him and giving him extravagant praise and honor; because, honors and material wealth were not important to Yaakov. However, when Esav offered to travel together, or to have a group of his people remain together with Yaakov, this he outright refused with the very same expression "Why find favor in your eyes": Implying that under no circumstances would he agree to become one group with Esav, and thus expose his family to the irreligious and immoral type of living on the part of Esav and his people. The type of people in Esav's band would have a detrimental spiritual influence on Yaakov's family. This chance Yaakov would not take even if it meant to lose favor in the eyes of Esav. He was willing to have a friendly encounter giving gifts and act subservient to Esav, but not to merge as one at any cost.

Ma'asei avot siman libanim (Midrash Tanchuma Lech Lecha 9) - "Deeds and actions of the patriarchs are to be seen as a sign and omen to their progeny." This teaching stresses our sacred duty to emulate the avot in their way of life of serving HaShem by strictly adhering to their religious principles and convictions at all times. As our Sages tell us in Pirkei Avot 1-7 "Further yourself from a bad neighbor and don't consort with evil people." Yaakov, our forefather, practiced this and would not forgo or even compromise on his religious principles.

Yaakov's answer to Esav was also that, he will ultimately meet up with him - "avoh el adoni seira" I will reach my master in Seir. The

Ba'al HaTurim (33-14) beautifully says that in these words was a sign and message to Esav. The last letters from the Hebrew words of "avoh el adoni seira" form the word Eliya (the prophet). This alludes to the day when Eliyahu will come and then we will finally meet for a day of judgement. Thus Esav went with his people on his way to Seir and Yaakov traveled with his group separately to Succot. The final verse states "And Yaakov arrived 'shalaim - whole' to the city of Shchem." The midrash states whole in body, material wealth and with his Torah way of life intact (Breishit Raba 78). This was only due to his willingness to remain steadfast and resolute in upholding principle and convictions at all costs. "Ma'asei avot siman libanim" is the message.

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From: Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom

List[SMTP:parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] SHABBAT SHALOM: PARSHAT VAYISHLACH BY RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Efrat, Israel - - Have you ever been disappointed that observant Jews are prohibited from eating filet mignon - generally considered the choicest, juiciest and thickest variety of steak available (cholesterol consideration aside, naturally)? Fascinatingly enough, the source for this prohibition stems from this week's Torah portion - and the nature of its context certainly requires an explanation.

The Bible records that after two decades in the Diaspora with his Uncle Laban, Jacob - together with wives, children and livestock - returns to his ancestral home, the land of Canaan. However, Esau, his estranged brother, is lying in wait to destroy him. Jacob attempts to appease him with gifts - and the night before the expected confrontation, a mysterious vision-struggle occurs between the Patriarch and an anonymous assailant: "And Jacob remained alone - and a personage (ish) wrestled with him until the rising of the morning star. And he saw that he could not conquer him...so he dislocated the sinew of Jacob's thigh -bone in his wrestling with him...and he said, 'Not Jacob shall your name be called anymore, but Yisrael, because you have struggled with G-d (powers) and men, and have achieved mastery...and Jacob called the name of the place Peni El, for I have seen G-d face to face and my soul has been saved. And the sun shone for him when he passed Peni El, and he was limping because of his thigh. Therefore the children of Yisrael may not eat the dislocated sinew which is on the flat side of the thigh until this very day - because he damaged Jacob's thigh bone at the dislocated sinew [Gen. 32:25-33]."

This account is one of the strangest and most enigmatic of any of the Biblical incidents. Did a wrestling match actually take place - or was it a nocturnal vision? Who is Jacob's anonymous assailant - could it have been G-d Himself? And why does it result in a food prohibition for all subsequent Jewish generations - the taboo against file mignon? After all, the commandments have not yet been given on Mount Sinai! Until this point, we only have a general command for all humanity to "be fruitful and multiply" and a specific commandment to the House of Abraham to be circumcised - an obligation which is repeated for the entire Jewish people much later on in the Book of Leviticus [12:3]. Why should only this mysterious occurrence warrant a prohibition which binds all future generations of Jacob-Israel's descendants? What hidden eternal message lies in the sinew of the thigh bone?

One of the major principles of Biblical interpretation is that "the incidents of the Patriarchs foreshadow and presage the history of their descendants." Rav N.Z.Y. Berlin (Neziv), in his Biblical Commentary HaAmek Davar, makes the point that the place of the mysterious wrestling match is first called Peni El - "I have seen G-d [Gen. 32:31]" - and is then called Penu El - "they have seen G-d [Gen. 32:32]," a fascinating switch from the first person singular to the third person

plural; the message of this grammatical change in person is that what initially is experienced by Jacob will eventually be experienced by his future generations.

Jacob, the most clearly drawn of the Patriarchs and the bearer of the tradition of Ethical Monotheism as a legacy from both his father and grandfather, faces two life-threatening challenges: internal assimilation which poses a danger to his soul and mission, and external destruction which poses a danger to his body and physical existence. Both stem from Esau. Jacob is understandably jealous of his elder sibling, whose hedonistic appetites, external aggressiveness and mellifluousness of tongue ("entrapment was in his mouth") seems to have won him his father's love and approbation! Jacob not only acquiesces to his mother's plan by assuming the garb and appearance of Esau in the presence of his father, he veritably becomes an Esau-like personality during his twenty years with Laban, when he seems to have forsaken his dream of Divinely sent angels connecting heaven and earth for a dream of speckled, striped and spotted sheep [Gen. 31:11, 12]. Moreover, Esau has vowed to murder Jacob for having received the birthright from Father Isaac, which includes the Land of Israel as well as the Keys to ultimate world redemption.

"The incidents of the Patriarchs foreshadow and presage the history of their descendants." Jacob's life-and-death struggle with Esau is to characterize all of subsequent Jewish history. The night will be long and the battle will be intense. At stake is supremacy in both worlds, comprising Jewish sovereignty over the Land-State of Israel as well as the truest path to eternal life. The angels seeking to link to worlds, to establish the proper ladder between heaven and earth, are ascending and descending; the climb is not to be a steady ascent, Jacob's mastery over Esau will not begin by his disadvantaged grasping at Esau's heel and from then on his advancing excelsior, ever upwards. Much to the contrary, the angels will fall in descent as well as rise in ascent, the graph will slide as well as soar, Jacob will grope in the darkness of the night before he senses victory and salvation when the yellow-orange-red of the sun-rays begin to push back the darkness and the clouds.

The struggle on earth between Jacob and Esau reflects a Divine battle as well, a life-and-death contest for the soul of humanity and the ultimate destiny of the Universe. Will humankind opt for the specious materialism of Marx and Stalin, for the gods of power and genetic purity of Hitler and Goebbels, for the conquest of the sword of fundamentalist Islam - or for the Ethical Monotheism of a G-d of loving-kindness and tolerance preached by Moses?

Jacob will falter in the midst of his wrestling match. He will fall prey to the blandishments of assimilation, the Uncle Labans of the Diaspora summoning him to enjoy Esau's mess of pottage and forsake his mission of purity; he will have mourn twice his loss of sovereignty over Jerusalem and Israel, and even the road to ultimate return will have many potholes and land-mines along the way. Indeed, the sinew of his thigh-bone will become dislocated! The thigh is the Biblical symbol of and euphemism for the place of the organ of propagation, the source of future generations and subsequent history. Many Jewish children will be lost to Judaism through acculturation and intermarriage; many of our best and brightest will be murdered in pogroms and killed in wars of defense fought over our right to the State of Israel. Jacob will limp, will be maimed and diminished as a result of these losses and setbacks.

But we are enjoined to eternally remember the struggle with the unnamed, powerful forces - on earth and even reaching to the very heavens - against whom Jacob battled during the Biblically recorded night of nights; to remember and therefore never to despair. Indeed, the sinew of Jacob's thigh bone is dislocated - but the morning star of redemption does rise, and Jacob does achieve mastery.

Jacob's ultimate victory is reflected in his new name, our new name, Yisrael - which has 3 possible meanings: he has conquered the divine-like forces, he has struggled with people and with G-d and has

won, and G-d Himself, the G-d of tolerance and justice, has emerged victorious. And Jacob's message to his descendants never to despair is reflected in the prohibition against their eating the sinew of the thigh bone "until this very day." We may be diminished, but we will never be destroyed; we may lose many battles, but we will eventually win the war. And whenever you participate in an especially robust and 'filled minyan' (a healthy number and strongly spirited quorum of Jews at prayer), remember that it is due, at least in part, to their rejection of filet mignon.

Shabbat Shalom

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at:  
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#### PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM PARSHAS VAYISHLACH ...

Timna was a concubine to Elifaz the son of Eisav. And she bore to Elifaz, Amalek. (36:12)

Chazal tell us that Timna was a "bas melachim" princess, who descended from an "illustrious" pagan lineage. Yet, she sought to convert. She came to each of the Patriarchs with her request, but they each refused her. She then went to Elifaz, the son of Eisav, and became his pilegish, concubine. She said, "I would rather be a maidservant to this nation than be a queen by another nation. The product of this union was Amalek, the archenemy of the Jews. Why? Why did we deserve to have AmaZlek descend from her? It is because the Patriarchs should not have distanced her. They should have brought her under the wings of the Shechinah by converting her. Imagine the depth of judgement to which Hashem subjects His devotees. Hashem takes the Avos to task for a decision that was probably justified because the Avos certainly saw Amalakean middos, character traits, within Timna. Perhaps, however, they could have worked on purging those negative character traits. They could never find out who she might have become if they did not try. For this, we have suffered over the millennia at the hands of Amalek and his descendants. We still have a question that should be addressed: What was so bad about Timna that they refused to try - to attempt to set her straight, to have the light of Torah reach into her innermost being and illuminate the darkness? Is that not the essence of Torah? What was there about Timna that precluded all attempts at saving her?

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, cites a story that occurred concerning the Chafetz Chaim that gives insight to the Patriarch's decision. The Chafetz Chaim permitted a student who was suspected of transgressing a number of sins to remain in the yeshivah. A short time later, a woman came to complain that one of the yeshivah students who ate his meals at her house was a mechutsaf, insolent. The Chafetz Chaim immediately had the student dismissed from the yeshivah. When asked why he kept a student whose shortcomings amounted to much more serious sins than chutzpah, the Chafetz Chaim responded by citing the Mishnah in Avos 5:20 that says, "Az panim, the brazen-faced is headed for Gehinom; boshes panim, the one who is a shame-face will go to Gan Eden." What is the Mishnah teaching us? If the az panim does not repent, he will certainly be punished; if he performs teshuvah, why should he not be accepted in Gan Eden? Furthermore, why does the Mishnah emphasize the "az-panim" in this case more so than any other sinner? Does not anyone who sins go to Gehinom? The Chafetz Chaim explained that while teshuvah ostensibly "works" for every sin, the chances are that one who is brazen will probably not repent. This is indicated by the text that stresses the az panim, one who is brazen, as opposed to azus panim, brazenness. The person who is brazen, who is steadfast in his brazenness, will not repent. In order to perform teshuvah, he must purge himself of brazenness and arrogance.

Veritably, the student whose sins go far beyond chutzpah might

presently be faced with a formidable challenge in his quest for teshuvah. There is, however, hope. The one who is an az panim, whose brazenness is uncontrolled - will not repent. He will continue along his negative path, arrogantly doing whatever he wants, unconcerned with the people he is hurting. Undoubtedly, if the "az panim" repents, his teshuvah will be accepted. Unfortunately, such a person rarely repents. He sees nothing wrong with what he is doing. Even if he were able to be introspective, his arrogance would never permit him to acknowledge the reality.

Amalek's most significant negative character trait is chutzpah. He is not "nispael", impressed, by anything. He fears no one and constantly demonstrates his insolence. The entire world feared Klal Yisrael when they left Egypt. Yet, Amalek was the first to challenge them. The Avos perceived in Timna, his mother, this tinge of "azus panim." They understood that one who possesses this middah will not repent; she will not be able to conform sincerely to Judaism. Thus, they did not accept her.

In memory of our beloved parents and grandparents: Rabbi Louis Engelberg z"l Mrs. Hannah Engelberg z"l Etzmon and Abigail Rozen and Family

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From: Shlomo Katz [SMTP:skatz@torah.org] HAMAAYAN / THE TORAH SPRING EDITED BY SHLOMO KATZ Vayishlach Today's Learning: Bikkurim 3:3-4 Orach Chaim 201:2-4 Daf Yomi (Bavli): Chagigah 23 Begin Seder Mo'ed on Thursday

"Then Yaakov sent angels before him to Esav his brother . . ." (32:4)

R' Elyah Lopian z"l (1872-1970; Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Etz Chaim in London - see page 4) asks what is added by the words, "before him." He explains as follows:

We are taught in Avot (Ch. 4): "One who does a mitzvah acquires one advocate. One who commits a sin acquires one prosecutor." In other words, from every mitzvah that a person does, a "good" angel is created. For example, it is well documented that R' Yosef Karo z"l (author of the Shulchan Aruch and other works) was regularly visited by an angel who identified himself as "The Mishnah." (R' Yosef Karo had undertaken a special study of mishnah, and, after a time, this angel began to speak to him on a regular basis.) The good angels that are created by a person's mitzvot go before the Divine Throne and lobby on the person's behalf. On the other hand, from every sin that a person commits, an impure angel is created who attempts to harm the person.

This sheds light on the meaning of the words "before him." Yaakov did not want to "trouble" angels from Heaven to go to Esav. He therefore chose his own angels, who were "before him" as a result of the mitzvot that he had performed, to send to Esav.

(Esav, too, had angels that were created as a result of his deeds, in his case, bad deeds. It was from these that he chose the 400 "men" who were traveling with him to meet Yaakov.)

From the above, a person should realize that his fate is in his own hands. A person has the ability to create good angels to assist him in his spiritual and material endeavors and he has the ability to create impure angels to harm him. Each person can make this choice for himself.

The gemara (Berachot 15b) says: "If one reads Shema and is meticulous in pronouncing its words, Gehinnom is cooled down for him." What would a person not do to escape from even a moment in Gehinnom? Here the gemara demonstrates to us that one's fate is within his own control. (Lev Eliyahu: Ma'amar "Ki Malachav Yetzaveh Lach")

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RABBI DR. LORD IMMANUEL JAKOBOVITS Z"L (Harav Yisrael ben Harav Yoel)

This week marks the shloshim of Rabbi Dr. Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the

British Commonwealth from 1967 to 1991. Rabbi Jakobovits was born on February 8, 1921 in Königsberg, Germany (now Kaliningrad in Russia). His father, Rabbi Julius (Yoel) Jakobovits, fled from Nazi persecution to England where, until his death in 1947, he was a member of the bet din of the United Synagogue in London.

Young Immanuel arrived in England in 1936, two years before his father. He studied at the Jewish Secondary School, Jews' College and Yeshiva Etz Chaim in London (where he received semichah), and also earned a Ph.D. degree at London University. His rabbinic career began in London at the age of 20, soon becoming Rabbi of the Great Synagogue in East London. In 1949 he accepted a call to Dublin as Chief Rabbi of the small Jewish community in Ireland (a position previously held by Rabbi Dr. Yitzchak Isaac Herzog z"l, later Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel).

In 1958, Rabbi Jakobovits became the first rabbi of the new Fifth Avenue Synagogue, a small, but wealthy orthodox congregation in New York. He would later write of his years there: "My challenge has been to make Orthodoxy elegant and fashionable and to show that you don't have to live in squalor to be a strictly traditional Jew." In 1967, he returned to London to become British Chief Rabbi. The search for a Chief Rabbi to succeed the retiring Rabbi Israel Brodie came as the authority of the Chief Rabbi was being assailed by both the right and left wings of orthodoxy as well as by the Reform and Liberal sections of the community. Rabbi Jakobovits was a staunch upholder of the German Jewish tradition of R' Samson Raphael Hirsch z"l, and in his induction sermon in April 1967, he made clear his unyielding adherence to Tradition. He would uphold the belief in Torah min hashamayim/the divine origin of Torah, but at the same time would "do all within my power to close the gaps within our people." (Rabbi Jakobovits was the first Chief Rabbi to abandon the uniform worn by his predecessors in favor of the kapote/coat worn by Central and Eastern European rabbis.)

Within the Anglo-Jewish community, R' Jakobovits' main contribution was the expansion of facilities for Jewish education through a trust of which he was the founder and principal fundraiser. It has been said that he saw himself as the chief executive of the community and he involved himself in administrative, organizational and political issues as well as spiritual, for he saw no valid boundaries between the various manifestations of organized Jewish life. By the 1970s, Rabbi Jakobovits was becoming well known outside of Judaism for his advocacy of traditional moral values. In 1981 he was knighted and, in 1988, he became a member of the House of Lords, the upper house of the British Parliament. In his speeches there, Lord Jakobovits (as he was known) frequently spoke in support of what Americans call "family values."

Rabbi Jakobovits was the author of Jewish Medical Ethics, and was a frequent writer and speaker on that subject. He also published several volumes of collected speeches, sermons and articles. Other books included Jewish Law Faces Modern Problems (1965), Journal of a Rabbi (1966), The Timely and the Timeless (1977) and If Only My People . . . Zionism in My Life (1984).

In 1949, Rabbi Jakobovits married Amalie Munk, daughter of Rabbi Elie Munk of Paris. They had six children. (This article is primarily based on an obituary in The Times of London, November 1, 1999.)

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From: Rabbi Yisroel Ciner [SMTP:ciner@torah.org] Parsha-Insights  
Parshas Va'yishlach This week we read the parsha of

Va'yishlach. "Va'yishlach Yaakov mal'a'chim l'fanav el Esav a'cheev {And Yaakov sent messengers/angels before him to Esav his brother}. [32:4]"

Yaakov, his wives and his children are on their way back from the house of Lavan to Eretz Yisroel {the Land of Israel}. Yaakov will now have to deal with Esav whom he knows has plans to kill him. He therefore sends messengers (actually angels) with a conciliatory to message to Esav to gauge his reaction. They report that he and the four hundred henchmen he has in tow are not exactly exuding feelings of brotherhood.

Yaakov then makes the necessary preparations for this impending showdown. He prepared three means with which he'd deal with Esav: gifts, prayer and war.

The Ramban writes that, in addition to the many things that are taught to us by this parsha, it is a forecasting of what we, the descendants of Yaakov, will have to deal with throughout the generations with the descendants of Esav. We must, he writes, learn from Yaakov's method of dealing with Esav in order to successfully maneuver ourselves through the long Esav-exile that we will find ourselves in.

On the way to meeting Esav, Yaakov encounters and is accosted by the 'Sar' {ministering angel} of Esav.

Every nation, in order to exist in this physical world, must have a spiritual entity. That entity represents the spiritual potential contained by this nation, either in what it itself can accomplish or that which it can bring out in others.

"And Yaakov was alone and a 'man' struggled with him until the breaking of dawn. And when he (the angel) saw that he could not prevail against him (Yaakov), he touched his (Yaakov's) thigh (where it connects to the hip) and it became dislocated. [32:25-26]"

"And the sun rose upon him (to heal Yaakov's lameness-Rashi) and he was limping upon his thigh (when the sun arose-Rashi). [32:32]"

The Sefer HaChinuch writes that this battle between Yaakov and the angel was actually a microcosm of the battle that will rage between Israel and the nations, stretching throughout history until the time of the redemption. That angel tried to utterly destroy Yaakov, he wanted an early 'Final Solution,' but he was unable to. He did, however, cause Yaakov much pain and suffering, as the nations will later cause to us. But, when the penetrating, clear light of sunrise arose, Yaakov was healed. So too, when we reach the stage of the redemption, when the understanding of all that transpired throughout our history will become as clear as day, we will be pure and healed, carrying no wounds from our struggle throughout history.

It is fascinating to see how the different twists and turns throughout our history are manifested in the different forms that our 'Shmoneh Esray' {the silent 'amidah' prayer} assumed.

The 'Shmoneh Esray', established by the Men of the Great Assembly, begins with praises to Hashem based on the prayer that Moshe had offered. Hashem is referred to as 1) 'Gadol', literally meaning 'big' and referring to His attribute of Kindness through which the world continues to exist; 2) 'Gebore', meaning powerful and referring to the many miracles Hashem used to protect His nation, Israel, from the many who tried to rule us and 3) 'Norah', meaning awesome and referring to Hashem having an awe-inspiring presence in the world.

The Talmud [Yuma 69B] teaches that the prophet Yirmiyahu [Jeremiah], upon seeing the nations dancing victoriously in the holy Temple they had destroyed, omitted the term 'Norah' {awesome} from his praises to Hashem. Similarly, Daniel, upon seeing the nations enslave Hashem's children, omitted the praise 'Gebore' {powerful}. This was the situation until the Men of the Great Assembly came along. They taught that, on the contrary, Hashem showing patience and allowing the nations to enslave us (as part of the heavenly plan leading toward redemption) is the greatest possible show of power. Hashem maintaining the one nation, Israel, amongst the seventy others, as a lamb existing amongst seventy

wolves, is the most awesome thing possible. They therefore reinstated all three praises and established them as the foundation of our 'Shmoneh Esray'.

The Maharsha there explains this according to the historical changes that we were going through. Moshe, who saw Hashem's revealed miracles and His protection of Bnei Yisroel {the children of Israel} from the nations, praised Hashem as being 'Gebore' and 'Norah'. This status continued until the time of the destruction of the first Temple. Yirmiyahu saw the nations dance irreverently in the Temple and felt that the 'Norah' awe-inspiring fear was gone. He omitted it. Not having witnessed the nations actually enslaving Bnei Yisroel, he didn't omit 'Gebore' {Powerful}.

Daniel, who lived during the time of the actual exile which followed the destruction of the Temple, and saw Bnei Yisroel being led away in slavery, asked: Where is His power? He omitted 'Gebore'. However, being that he didn't see the nations dancing in the Temple, he didn't omit 'Norah'.

The Men of the Great Assembly, who lived at the end of the seventy-year exile and who witnessed our being saved (the miracle of Purim, etc.) recognized that Hashem didn't cease to be 'Gebore' and 'Norah'. Rather, from the time of the destruction, the power and awesomeness of Hashem had gone through a transformation. His power no longer manifested itself in open, miraculous displays of strength. It now manifested itself in the more subtle display of Hashem's willingness to 'sit back' patiently and let things appear as if the nations are actually in control but actually using them as pawns in bringing about the ultimate redemption. His awesomeness no longer manifested itself in His not allowing any nations to control us. It now manifested itself in His maintaining the sheep among seventy wolves. Being under the control of nations wanting to destroy us but keeping them at bay.

We stated above that one of the ways that Yaakov prepared for his encounter with Esav was prayer. Our present day prayer represents the understanding that our ups and our downs are all awesome displays of Hashem's strength as He shapes history to bring about the realization of Yaakov's glory. When the clarity of sunrise will chase away the confusion that the long night of exile had wrought.

Good Shabbos, Yisroel Ciner  
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From: Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky [SMTP:rmk@torah.org] Subject: Drasha Parshas Vayishlach -- Animal House RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

Hutz 'n' plutz. That was a fictitious name my mother would give to a place where everything was bliss and very simple. It was the home of Chaim Yankel or whoever the mythical Jewish character of a given fable lived. But believe it or not, there was a place called Huts 'n' plutz. Of course, the 'n' plutz suffix was not added, nor was the place actually called Huts in the English language. It did however take the name in Hebrew. And it was called Sukkos. And a Sukkos are huts. After Yaakov departed peacefully from his brother, he dwelled in a place for 18 months. When he arrived he built a quasi-infrastructure -- homes for his kin and sukkos, huts, for his great herd. Then he named the city. He did not call it for the homes he built, rather for the myriad structures that he built for the animals -- Sukkos, Huts. Many commentaries are puzzled as to why Yaakov chose a name representing the temporal, animal structures as opposed to calling the city Houses or Batim, referring to the permanent dwellings he erected for his kin. After all, is it not more appropriate to name a village after the human abodes as opposed to the animal ones? Some answer that naming the city Sukkos was a symbolic expression of the paradox of all worldly permanence. Yaakov was saying that every abode, from glorious mansions to marble edifices, is only temporal. They are all Sukkos. Thus

he named the town Sukkos.

My grandfather, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory, once offered a very practical approach. After Yaakov constructed homes for both his children and livestock, the dominant feature of the landscape was myriad huts scattered across the countryside. Gazing at the amazingly transformed dessert, he appropriately named the town after the scene. He called it Huts. But why tell us that? Who cares? Perhaps both questions can be answered as one.

In the northern part of Israel, Yeshiva K'far Chasidim had established itself as a prominent center of Torah scholarship. Students flocked to the Yeshiva to gain from the spiritual nourishment that the Mashgiach, Dean of Ethics, Reb Elya Lopian offered. But the Yeshiva attracted more than students seeking spiritual nourishment. The basement in which the, pasta, flour and other dry goods were stored also attracted those seeking nourishment. It had become infested with rodents! The students decided on a simple solution to their problem of diminishing food supply and the health hazard. They scoured the rubbish piles of the city and brought a stray cat back to the campus. Every day it would play in the yard and each evening they would bring back to the basement where it would earn its keep, receiving room and board simultaneously. Within a few weeks there was not a rodent to be found. But the cat remained. The boys lapsed in their commitment to its welfare and even forgot to feed it. One evening it scratched on the screen door of the aged Mashgiach HaGaon Reb Elya Lopian's home. He was puzzled. Not informed about the extermination stratagem of the student body, he wondered where the cat came from. One of the younger students explained the problems of the mice and their ingenious solution. With that, the boy explained the presence of the cat that had made its way to the sage's home. "Are there still mice?" asked Reb Elya. "No," exclaimed the student, "there hasn't been a rodent in days!" Then he smiled while looking down at the cat and added, "thanks to this fellow." "And since there are no mice, what has he been eating?" The boy just shrugged. He simply did not know. "Ahh," sighed the sage. "You have been lax in your responsibility and gratitude. I will show you how to feed a cat." With that, Reb Elya, a man in his eighties, went into his kitchen, poured milk into a saucer and placed it down for the hungry feline. At that moment a young student named Kavinsky captured the moment on film. The picture of the white-bearded Torah giant bending down and feeding a cat remains one of the most popular pictures among thousands of youngsters in America and Israel. It has become Reb Elya's proud testament that even G-d's simplest creatures must be cared for, even by a sage in Israel.

Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai, a Sefardic sage who lived in the latter part of the 18th century, better known as the Chida, offers a brilliant and revolutionary explanation to the peculiar name Sukkos. (I purchased this set of the Chida's writings after being encouraged by a reader, Boruch Meir (Bobby) Ohrbach, and I am grateful for the wealth of knowledge I have since attained. Thank you!) The Chida explains that Yaakov Avinu did something unprecedented for that era. Realizing that he would be spending a year and a half in unsheltered terrain, he built a sanctuary of protection for animals! Others would have left them in the cold, caring selfishly for only their own welfare and that of their kin. Yaakov was proud of building huts for the animals and he expressed that pride in naming the entire city, not after the act that any husband and father would do for his family. He did not enshrine the town after his labor of love that would be personally enjoyed by members of his family. He did not call the village Levittown or Jacobsville. He called it after the labor of love sweated for his temporal flock. He gave a name to tell the world that he not only cared for his flesh and blood. He named the town in honor of what he had done for the beings who had no one else to depend upon. He declared the compassion one must accord to the simplest beings, even a cat.

Dedicated by the Schulman family in memory of Milton Schulman of blessed memory If you would like to be on a shiur update list which sends messages regarding Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky's various lectures in NY City and Long Island and other locations, please send a blank email to [rmkshiur-subscribe@jif.org.il](mailto:rmkshiur-subscribe@jif.org.il) You will receive bulletins about those classes. Good Shabbos 1 1999 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Drasha is the email edition of FaxHomily which is funded on an annual basis by the Henry and Myrtle Hirsch Foundation Mordechai Kamenetzky Yeshiva of South Shore 1170 William Street Hewlett, NY 11557 <http://www.yoss.org/> - [rmk@torah.org](mailto:rmk@torah.org) 516-374-7363 x114 Fax 516-374-2024 <http://www.torah.org/learning/drasha> Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350 FAX: 1351 [learn@torah.org](mailto:learn@torah.org) <http://www.torah.org/>

From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il] Simcha's Torah Stories Parshat Vayishlach 5760

OVERCOME THE SURROUNDINGS  
Leah, have you done your homework yet?

Not yet, Mommy.

Why not, Leah dear?

Because there is too much commotion in the house Mommy. Rivka's friend is here, the baby is crying, and Chani is practicing the piano. Who can do homework in this tumult?

I see your point, Leah. Let me tell you something that we learned about Jewish Law in our halacha class last night.

I am always interested in learning Torah, Mommy.

There are two types of situations in halacha (Jewish Law). "Li-chat-cheela" describes the ideal situation. "Bi-dee-eved" is a less-than-ideal situation. Under the less-than-ideal circumstances, the person is not always expected to fulfill all of the conditions of the halacha to the same degree as in the ideal situation. Now, Leah dear, would you call the situation in the house today "li-chat-cheela" (ideal) or "bi-dee-eved" (less-than-ideal) for doing homework.

That's an easy question to answer Mommy. It was "bi-dee-eved" in the house today. That's why I could not do my homework.

Hmmm. Let me tell you a story Leah, dear, about someone who was in a "bi-dee-eved" situation. You will see what he accomplished. Yaakov Avinu, our father Yaakov left his home to go live with his uncle, Lavan. He stayed with Lavan for twenty years. During that time he married, raised a family, and worked for Lavan as a shepherd. Let me tell you something about Lavan.

I already know, Mommy! We talk about him during the Pesach Seder. He is in the Hagaddah.

Very good Leah! What do we say about Lavan?

We say that he was worse than Pharaoh was. Pharaoh only wanted to destroy the Jewish men, but Lavan wanted to destroy us all.

Excellent Leah! I see that you know how badly Lavan treated Yaakov. Now, let me ask you something. Would you call Yaakov's situation in Lavan's house "li-chat-cheela" or "bi-dee-eved"?

That's an easy question, Mommy. The conditions were terrible. That is surely "bi-dee-eved".

Very good, Leah dear. In such a "bi-dee-eved" situation, how would you expect someone to react? How would he observe mitzvos? Could he be expected to fulfill mitzvos as well as if he were in a good situation?

Surely not, Mommy. Not under those circumstances.

Very good, Leah. Now, look in the Book of Bereshis, chapter 32, verse five and Rashi's commentary and tell me if you can see how Yaakov performed mitzvos in Lavan's house.

Hmmm. Let's see. Oh! I found it!

Great Leah! What does it say?

The verse says, "I lived with Lavan". Rashi explains that the word "lived" in Hebrew ("garti") has the same gematria (numerical value) as the word "taryag". "Taryag" is the word used to describe the 613 mitzvos of the Torah. Yaakov is telling us that although he lived with Lavan he still observed 613 mitzvos and did not learn from Lavan's evil deeds.

Excellent Leah! Do you see what Yaakov Avinu accomplished? He was in a very difficult situation and still managed to perform all of the 613 mitzvos. That should be an inspiration to all of us.

It surely helps me Mommy. If Yaakov Avinu could observe the mitzvos for twenty years in Lavan's house, I can surely do my homework in our home.

Very good, Leah. Daddy and I try to give you a good environment that helps you learn. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we don't. When the home is a bit topsy-turvy, you have to try extra hard. That is the time to be like Yaakov Avinu. Put in that extra effort to do the right thing.

Mommy, I am going to try to be like Yaakov and do well no matter what.. Leah, you're wonderful.

Simcha's Quiz Question of the Week A man decides to buy a nice horse. He pays \$60 for it, and he is very content with this strong animal. After a year, the value of the horse has increased to \$70 and he decides to sell the horse. A few days later he regrets his decision to sell the beautiful horse, and he buys it again. Unfortunately he has to pay \$80 to get it back, so he loses \$10. After another year of owning the horse, he finally decides to sell the horse for \$90. What is the overall profit the man makes? Send your answer to [simchag@netvision.net.il](mailto:simchag@netvision.net.il)

Answer to last week's quiz question: What is the closest relation that your father's sister's sister-in-law could be to you? The Answer! YOUR MOTHER Written and Compiled by Simcha Grossman General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Ohr Somayach International 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180, Israel E-Mail: [info@ohr.org.il](mailto:info@ohr.org.il) Home Page: <http://www.ohr.org.il>

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From: Mordecai Kornfeld[SMTP:kornfeld@netvision.net.il]  
INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun  
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Chagigah 15b THE FATE OF ACHER AGADAH: The Gemara relates that when Acher died, the heavenly tribunal was at a loss for what to do with him. On one hand, he could not be judged in Gehinom, because he had been deeply involved in Torah study during his life. On the other hand, he could not be brought to Olam ha'Ba, because of his sins. Rabbi Meir, Acher's student, exclaimed, "It is better that he be judged in Gehinom in order to eventually be brought to Olam ha'Ba. When will I die and be able to make smoke rise from his grave!" Indeed, when Rabbi Meir died, smoke rose up from the grave of Acher.

Subsequently, Rabbi Yochanan declared that he wanted to end Acher's punishment; no one in Shamayim would stop him from bringing Acher to Olam ha'Ba, Rabbi Yochanan said, if he took him there personally (after death).

How was Rabbi Meir able to cause Acher to be judged in Gehinom (symbolized by smoke rising from his grave)? Why was Rabbi Meir unable to bring Acher directly to Olam ha'Ba, without first being judged in Gehinom? After all, enabling Acher to enter Olam ha'Ba was Rabbi Meir's objective, as he said ("It is better that he be judged in Gehinom in order to then be brought to Olam ha'Ba").

RAV ELIYAHU DESSLER zt'l explains as follows (Michtav me'Eliyahu 4:193). Tosfos (15a) says that when Acher's father brought him to learn Torah, his intention was Lo Lishmah. Acher's father had seen the respect given to Talmidei Chachamim, and he wanted his son to have the same respect. Consequently, Acher, all his life, learned Torah she'Lo Lishmah.

The Yerushalmi (cited by Tosfos) says that one of two things caused him to turn wayward. One opinion says that he saw a person die while honoring his father (which the Torah says is rewarded with a long life) by sending away a mother-bird from the nest in order to take the chick (which the Torah also says is rewarded with a long life). Another opinion says that he saw the tongue of Rabbi Yehudah ha'Nachtom being dragged by a dog, after Rabbi Yehudah ha'Nachtom had spent his entire life learning and teaching Torah (see also Bavli, Kidushin 39b). Since Acher perceived the purpose of learning Torah as being a means of gaining respect, when he saw that one could learn Torah and not receive honor for it (in this world), and even be disgraced for it, he could not tolerate the incongruence. This is why he went wayward.

Judgment in Gehinom means that a soul realizes the terrible void that characterized one's life in this world due to the Aveiros that he committed. This terrible shame continues until the soul has suffered enough for all of the Aveiros that the person did. Then, the soul is cleansed of the Aveiros, and the person is able to receive reward for all of the Mitzvos that he did Lishmah.

Since Acher had learned so much Torah and had excelled to such great heights in his Torah learning, even though it was Lo Lishmah, his soul could not experience the feeling of void and lacking that is the Gehinom experience. Since his soul could not be purged of his Aveiros, he could not enter Olam ha'Ba. Rabbi Meir, therefore, decided that he would help Acher.

Rabbi Meir excelled in learning Torah Lishmah. It was Rabbi Meir who said, "One who has learned Torah Lishmah merits many things" (Avos 6:1). Since Rabbi Meir's learning was totally Lishmah, when Rabbi Meir died and Acher saw the difference between his learning and Rabbi Meir's, his soul finally felt the lowliness of the way he had learned Torah while he was alive. Thus, it was through Rabbi Meir that Acher was able to experience Gehinom and be cleansed of his Aveiros, and then be rewarded for his Mitzvos.

Rabbi Yochanan, though, wanted to bring Acher directly to Gan Eden. We find that through learning Torah, a Talmid gives merit to his deceased Rabbi. Rabbi Yochanan often quoted teachings that he heard from Rabbi Meir, and it is likely that he pointed out that their source was Acher. (See TOSFOS in Sotah 12a, DH Acherim Omrim, who says

that when the Gemara quotes the opinion of "Acherim" throughout the Gemara, it refers to Rabbi Meir who heard that teaching from Acher.) By giving over the teachings of Acher, Rabbi Yochanan was able to arouse the Zechus of Acher.

When Rabbi Yochanan died, people quoted his teachings that he taught in the name of Rabbi Meir and Acher, and thus he was able to raise Acher out of Gehinom and bring him to Olam ha'Ba. (Rav Dessler explains Rabbi Yochanan's strategy for saving Acher somewhat differently.) Rabbi Meir, though, could not bring Acher to Olam ha'Ba in that manner. Since Rabbi Meir lived in the same generation as Acher, he could not quote Acher and give honor to Acher's teachings, because he did not want others to respect Acher and learn from his ways (even after Acher's death). Therefore, the only way Rabbi Meir could cause Acher to go to Olam ha'Ba was to be judged for his Aveiros. Rabbi Yochanan, though, lived later, in a generation when people could not possibly have known Acher personally, so he had nothing to fear by quoting him.

Chagigah 16 THE PROBLEM WITH INVESTIGATING PRE-CREATION QUESTION: The Gemara says that one may not inquire what existed before the world was created. The Gemara compares it to a king who built his palace on top of a garbage heap; the king does not want people mentioning what was there before the palace.

What disgrace is there by mentioning what existed before the world was created? There was nothing there! Why should it be disgraceful? In what way can it be compared to a king who built his palace on a garbage heap?

ANSWERS: (a) The MAHARSHA answers that the disgrace is the very suggestion that there was something else that existed before Hashem created the world. In that respect, the analogy is not entirely accurate, because here, the disgrace is the thought that something existed before the world was created, and not that there was actually something disgraceful there.

(b) The Maharsha quotes the YEFEH MAR'EH on the Yerushalmi who explains this Gemara based on the words of the RAMBAN in the beginning of Parshas Bereishis. The Ramban says that when Hashem created the world, He first created a form of matter or energy called "Hiyuli" (from the Greek "hyle," which means "matter"). Hashem created the world only after creating this matter or energy and forming the world from it. The "Ashpah" in the analogy was this "Hiyuli," which was the unfinished, unformed matter or energy. Since it lacked form, it is a disgrace to delve into it.

(c) The YA'AVETZ says that our Gemara is alluding to the Midrash (Bereishis Rabah 3:7) that states that Hashem created a number of worlds before this one and destroyed them all until He created this world and decided to keep it. The earlier worlds that did not satisfy Him are like the "Ashpah" on which the king built his palace.

(d) RAV MOSHE FEINSTEIN in DARASH MOSHE (cited by the Yosef Da'as) explains that it is a disgrace to Hashem when a person wants to go searching into the primordial and pre-creation facets of existence in order to discover evidence for the hand of Hashem in the design of the world, when that evidence is readily available in everything that exists in the natural world today. The fact Hashem created the world is evident in the infinitely brilliant design of every object that exists in the natural world today. The Gemara compares it to praising a king for what he built his palace on, when there are many greater things in the day-to-day life of the kingdom for which the king prefers to be praised.

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From:Mordecai Kornfeld[SMTP:kornfeld@netvision.net.il] THE DAFYOMI DISCUSSION LIST brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld daf@dafyomi.co.il

Chagigah 015b: Rebbi Meir as the Talmid of Acher

Chaim Ozer Shulman <cshulman@cahill.com> asked: 1) How does the Gemara know Reb Meir was Acher's talmid? The questions posed on 15a were posed by Acher to Reb Meir?

It looks like Acher was asking rhetorical questions from Reb Meir and Reb Meir was trying to avoid the subject, and only addressed Acher's status as a rasha when Acher showed from Reb Akiva that the Psukim were talking about reshaim. Do you agree? Again, no real mention of Rebbi Meir being Acher's talmid.

Although Reb Meir followed Acher on the horse on Shabbos, maybe he was just trying to get Acher to do Teshuva. Again no proof that he was his talmid.

2) If indeed Reb Meir was Acher's talmid is it possible that "Maan Acherim Reb Meir" that is stated numerous places in Shaas is a hint that these statements came from Acher & Reb Meir?

Yasher Koach Chaim Ozer Shulman

The Kollel replies: 1) You are asking how the Gemara knew that Rebbi Meir learned Torah from Acher, until it asked how he was permitted to do so. Perhaps he just rebuked him and the like. It could be that the Amora'im here had a tradition that Rebbi Meir had been a Talmid of Acher; Rebbi Meir was near the last generation of Tana'im and certainly the Amora'im were familiar with those Tana'im's histories.

2) TOSFOS in Sotah 12a writes what you suggest, that when the Gemara (end of Horiyos) says that "Acherim" is Rebbi Meir, that means Rebbi Meir stating Halachos that he had heard from Acher. (Tosfos later rejects this approach.) Mordecai

Chagigah 015a: Acher doing Teshuvah

Barry Leff <barry@tek-law.com> asked: In the story about Acher and R. Meir which appears in the Midrash, Acher does do teshuva before he dies; the version in our Gemara is quite different. Any thoughts on why he does teshuva in the Midrash and not in the Gemara? My guess was that with the Gemara presumably being later the rabbis had some other motivations for not wanting to see Acher do teshuva at the very end.

The Kollel replies: The story in the Midrash, as recorded here by Tosfos in the name of the Yerushalmi, does not say clearly that Acher did Teshuvah before he died. Rather, it says merely that he cried before he died. Rebbi Meir judged him favorably and said that "it appears that he repented." It says there, though, that a flame descended from the heavens and burned his grave, and thus even if he did do Teshuvah, it was not a complete and absolute Teshuvah. Mordecai

CHAGIGAH 015b: Zemer Yevani

Julian Hurwitz <julian@netactive.co.za> asked: Shalom, Whats the modern day equivalent of zimrei yevani visa vis Acher,please explain according to the different halachich authorities,I believe that there is teshuvah of R' M.Feinstein concerning types of music to which a ben torah may listen to.

The Kollel replies: Rav Moshe Feinstein in Yoreh De'ah (2:56) forbids singing and listening to songs composed for non-Jewish religious liturgy ("used in their houses of worship"). He adds that any music they composed based on verse from Tehilim was most likely composed for such purposes. It is therefore forbidden to sing or to listen to these songs even on a cassette (i.e. not live).

Rav Moshe brings as one source for this prohibition the Maharsha on our Sugay. Although Rashi explains that "Greek songs" (which casued Acher's fall) are forbidden in recognition of the Churban [as stated in Gitten 7a], the Maharsha asks many questions on this explanation. The Maharsha explains that Acher used to sing songs of Avodah Zarah. This

shows us the extent and nature of this sin.

Aside from this prohibition, Rav Moshe discusses (OC 1:60:166) the prohibition of listening to music during a banquet or dinner (see Gitten 7a and Rashi there). Chazal also prohibit music when waking up or going to sleep (see Tosfos there - based on the Yerushalmi - and see also the Tur OC #560) because of the Churban. Excluding these times listening to music is permitted. This applies both to musical instruments and singing without instrumental accompaniment.

According to the Rambam (Ta'anis 5,14), though, the prohibition of instrumental music applies at all times and all places. The Rambam holds that in banquet halls even singing without instrumental accompaniment is prohibited.

In one of his Teshuvos (quoted in the Tur cited above) the Rambam was even stricter, stating that even singing without instrumcments is forbidden anywhere.

HALACHAH: The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 560,3) rules as the Rambam: Instrumental music is always forbidden, singing is forbidden in banquets and upon waking up and going to sleep. The Rema is more lenient, and rules that even instruments are prohibited only during banquets or upon waking and sleeping.

But Rav Moshe (ibid.) rules very stringently in this matter and concludes that the opinion of the Shulchan Aruch (the Rambam) is the majority opinion (not to listen to instruments ever). He adds that a "Ba'al Nefesh" should not even listen to singing without instruments anytime, as the Rambam rules in his Teshuvah. For a Devar Mitzvah, though, music is permitted. Mordecai

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