

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

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Aish.com Holiday Series
"SIEGE OF JERUSALEM"

BY RABBI NOAH WEINBERG Dean and Founder, Aish HaTorah
Friday, January 5, 2001, is the Tenth of Tevet -- a Jewish fast day commemorating Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem 2,500 years ago. In Jewish consciousness, a fast day is a time of reckoning, a time to correct a previous mistake. What happened on the Tenth of Tevet that we have to correct?

Actually, when Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Jerusalem on the Tenth of Tevet, there was little damage on that day and no Jews were killed. So why is this day so tragic? Because the siege was a message, to get the Jewish people to wake up and fix their problems. They failed, and the siege led to the destruction of King Solomon's Temple.

Today we are also under siege. Much of the Jewish world is ignorant of our precious heritage. Children whose Jewish education ended at age 13 now carry that perception through adulthood. The results are catastrophic: assimilation in the diaspora, and a blurring of our national goals in Israel.

So what's the message for us? Wake up and understand. What does the Almighty want? If there's a siege, hear the message now. Don't wait for the destruction.

If the Jewish problem today is a lack of appreciation of our heritage, then the solution is clear: increased love of Torah, love of Jews, and love of Israel and Jerusalem. The Almighty is telling us: The siege will not be lifted until you correct the mistake.

RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH

The Talmud speaks about two sages concerned over the threat of Torah being forgotten by the Jewish people. As a precaution, Rav Chiyah captured a deer, slaughtered it, and gave the meat to orphans. Then he tanned the hides and wrote five separate scrolls, one for each of the Five Books of Moses. He took five children, and taught each of them one book. He then took six more children, and taught each of them one of the six orders of Mishnah, the oral law.

Then he told each of the 11 children: Teach what you've learned to each other. With this, the Talmud says, Rav Chiyah ensured that the Torah would never be forgotten by the Jewish people.

This raises a question: 11 children is a pretty small class. Why didn't Rav Chiyah simply teach all the children all the books? Why did he teach each child only one book?

The answer is, the children having to teach each other was essential to the process. To ensure that Torah should not be forgotten, you have to teach what you've learned to others. That's the secret. You've got an obligation to your fellow Jews. If you know something -- teach it.

Realize that the most destructive, painful, contagious disease of all is ignorance. Ignorance leads to wasted lives and untold suffering.

So if you know the key to happiness, teach it. Do you see human beings walking around depressed, half dead? Give them some joy. If you have the ability, you must help. Otherwise you'll always bear the knowledge of what you "could have done."

This is not about "forcing your opinion" on others. No. A good teacher conveys information that allows the student to get in touch with what he already knows -- and re-discover it on his own. Get others to see and understand it on their own terms.

Don't sell yourself short. You have the ability to make a dramatic impact on others. You don't have to be a U.S. Senator to make a difference. With one piece of wisdom you can help humanity.

SOVIET SYSTEM

The director of Aish HaTorah's Russian Program is Rabbi Eliyahu Essas, a former refusenik from the Soviet Union. He lived there at a time when it was totally illegal to study Torah. Consequently, Rabbi Essas had nobody to teach him, and at the time, he didn't know how to even read Aleph-Bet. So he got a hold of some underground books, hid out from the KGB, and began to teach himself Torah.

After awhile, word got out that Rabbi Essas knew Torah, and people started coming to study in secret. But of 5 million Soviet Jews, Rabbi Essas was virtually the only one teaching Torah. So you can imagine that his time was in great demand. That's why Rabbi Essas made a rule: "Before I begin teaching you, you must agree to teach over what you've learned to others." In this way, Rabbi Essas was able to multiply his effect.

Although we don't live under an oppressive Soviet regime, the concept still applies to us as well. You learned something precious? Say to yourself: "That was fascinating. How did it change me? What did it teach me about living? Now how can I transfer this insight to others?"

Don't forget: Teaching benefits you as well. Until you share an idea, it's not yours. It remains but a hazy notion in your imagination. Having to explain an idea to others forces you to clarify it for yourself. You've taken it out of potential and made it a reality.

When you teach someone, make sure they understand how important it is to teach it over to someone else. If they do, then that's part of your success as a teacher. That's ensuring that Torah would never be forgotten by the Jewish people.

ONE NATION

There's one more lesson to be learned from the story of Rav Chiyah. By teaching the 11 children only one book each, these children knew they had to learn from one another. The Jewish people are one and we're all in this together. Every person is worthy of profound respect, regardless of their beliefs and level of observance, and there is something to be learned from everyone.

We live in serious times. Whether it's assimilation in America, or international forces pressing our holy city of Jerusalem, the message is essentially the same: The siege is on and the clock is ticking. We have to communicate the Torah message to our people. It is a matter of utmost national urgency.

Who is responsible? We who believe in the power of Torah and the eternal mission of the Jewish people are required to act. To teach wisdom and be a "Light Unto the Nations."

On the Tenth of Tevet, when Nebuchadnezzar surrounded the city of Jerusalem, we did not get the message. Will we get the message now? Will we change? Will we wake up to reality?

You've got to care. If you don't make the effort, you don't care enough. You have powers. Are you going to use them?

We must get the message. Before the destruction. Now is the time.

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

Yaakov Listens To His Messages: The Wagons Indicate Yosef Is Still Alive

The pasuk [verse] in this week's parsha reads "And they told him (Yaakov) that Yosef was still alive and that he ruled throughout the land of Egypt. But his (Yaakov's) heart rejected it because he didn't believe them" [Bereshis 45:26]. The next pasuk says that they told him everything that they discussed with Yosef. Finally, the pasuk says that Yaakov saw the wagons (agahlos) that Yosef sent him, whereupon, he believed the brothers and his spirit was revived.

Our Sages make a play on words (agahlah / eglah) and explain that Yosef was indicating to his father that when they were last together they were in the midst of studying the laws of the decapitated calf (eglah arufah). This is why the pasuk says "the wagons that Yosef sent", when in fact the wagons were really sent by Pharaoh.

Rav Nissan Alpert, zt"l, gives a beautiful explanation regarding why this specific message revived Yaakov's spirit. The law of the decapitated calf is invoked when a dead body is found between two cities. The elders of the nearest city come and proclaim their innocence in the matter. They never saw this person; they were not aware of and played no role -- directly or indirectly -- in his murder. As part of this ritual a calf is decapitated as a type of atonement offering by these elders [Devorim 21:1-9].

What is the basic theme of this mitzvah? The fundamental idea is the concept of "All of Israel are responsible for one another" (Kol Yisrael areivin zeh l'zeh). After all, why was it necessary for the elders of the neighboring city to bring an atonement offering? Today, one's next door neighbor could, G-d forbid, be murdered without so much as a shrug from the neighbors. People see others being mugged in the subway and they look the other way. "It's none of my business."

The Torah has a different outlook on life. Even if this person was unknown, even if he was from a different city, if his dead body was found near a city, the residents of that city bear a certain degree of responsibility. This is the meaning of Kol Yisrael areivin zeh l'zeh. We each have a responsibility for our fellow Jew. There is no such thing as "It's none of my business."

That is why the elders bring the atonement offering. In truth it is not only an atonement for that neighboring city. It is brought by that neighboring city as an atonement for the entire Jewish people. In some respect, even the far distant Jews share the responsibility for the tragedy. One Jew's murder is the "business" of every single other Jew.

This, then, was the message of the Decapitated Calf (Eglah Arufah). If we look at the life of the righteous Yosef, we see that he was in fact preoccupied with the idea of his responsibility for his fellow brethren. When the Torah tells us that Yosef brought "evil tidings" about his brothers to his father, what was he telling his father? Our Sages tell us that he reported that they were not treating the sons of the handmaidens properly. The sons of Leah were discriminating against the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah.

True, he could have ignored the matter. He could have said, "This is not my business". But that was not Yosef. His entire being was dedicated to a sense of responsibility for each of the sons of Israel (Yaakov). He literally lived a life of "Kol Yisrael Areivin zeh l'zeh". It is my business.

When Yaakov sent Yosef to check up on his brothers, Yosef knew very well how his brothers felt towards him. He knew it would be a dangerous mission, as it indeed turned out to be. Why then did he go? Because of the sense of responsibility, the sense of "Kol Yisrael Areivin zeh l'zeh".

This is why Yaakov responded with disbelief when he was told that Yosef was alive and the ruler of all the land of Egypt. He could not understand how it could be that Yosef, who was always so concerned with his fellow man, could be in such a powerful position now and have ignored the plight of his father, never writing to tell him of his

whereabouts. "My son Yosef would not ignore his father and family during all the years of famine, not to send them a message, not to send them provisions. The Yosef I knew could not be alive." That is why Yaakov did not initially believe his sons.

But then when they told him "All the words of Yosef," something changed. The brothers told Yaakov that Yosef told them "G-d sent me here for providing you with salvation" (l'michyah shlachani HaShem). When Yaakov heard that Yosef felt that his whole reason for being in Egypt was so that he could take care of his family - even indirectly - then Yaakov began to believe.

And when Yaakov saw the wagons -- when he understood that Yosef still recognized the implicit message of Eglah Arufah - that every Jew is responsible for his fellow Jew - then Yaakov knew for sure that his son Yosef was still alive, and his spirit was revived.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 264, The Bracha for Kings. Good Shabbos! Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrand, Copyright © 2001 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B learn@torah.org Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350 FAX: 510-1053

From: Project Genesis[SMTP:genesis@torah.org] To: lifeline@torah.org RABBI YAAKOV MENKEN

Torah.org LifeLine - "It is a tree of life to all who cling to it." D'var Torah and News from Torah.org - learn@torah.org Volume VIII, Number 10 - Vayigash - Genesis 44:18 - 47:27

"And Yosef said to his brothers: 'I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?' And his brothers could not answer him, because they were stunned before him." [45:3]

When we look at the readings of the last two weeks, leading to this one, says Rabbi Asher Rubenstein, we see an underlying theme of these readings: "G-d runs the world." People make plans, but what actually happens is controlled from above.

Why did Yosef's brothers plot to kill him, and then decide to sell him into slavery? "Let's see what becomes of his dreams!" [37:20]

What action set the process in motion -- the process through which the dreams came to reality? Selling Yosef into slavery! They tried to fight the Divine Plan, and instead caused its fulfillment.

Then, when they came down to Egypt during the years of famine, Yosef recognized them -- and saw that they did not recognize him. "And Yosef remembered the dreams which he had dreamed to them, and he said to them 'you are spies, who have come to see the vulnerability of the land!'" [42:9]

Now, why did the dreams cause Yosef to accuse them of spying? Very simple: the dreams told him that all 11 brothers would bow to him -- and Benjamin was not with them. Yosef realized that he should not fight The Plan, but go in accordance with it. And that meant causing Benjamin to come down to Egypt as well.

So he accuses them of spying, and they respond -- no, we are not spies, we are all brothers -- "the youngest brother is with our father today, and one is missing." And Yosef responds, "exactly as I said, you are spies!" And then he gives them an opportunity to prove that they are not: "your youngest brother must come here." Of course, this makes perfect sense. This will prove that they are not spies -- after all, everyone knows that spies don't have little brothers! "If you are Canaanites, one

brother will stay in prison here, and you go bring your little brother to me, and prove your words..." [42:19-20] This is exactly what it says!

It is ridiculous -- and the brothers recognize it. They see that this could not be a random event. They recognize that it has something to do with their guilt because of their brother. But they still do not understand why these events are happening...

...until "I AM YOSEF!"

Suddenly, what had been an impenetrable fog is brilliantly clear. Everything that had happened was all part of The Plan. This is what Yosef tells them: "You did not send me here. G-D sent me here! When you thought that you were fighting The Plan, you were fulfilling it!"

In our lives, we so often do not understand The Plan. We don't recognize what is happening, or why. But we need to know Who is ultimately in charge, and recognize that He has our best interests in mind.

There is a terrific story that Rabbi Hanoch Teller recounts in one of his books, about a businessman returning to New York from a trip to Chicago. This person was always very punctual, so he was in the waiting area well in advance of his flight. There was also a Rabbi there, obviously from a school in Israel.

Suddenly the Rabbi jumped to his feet, his face ashen. "What is wrong?" asked the businessman, who we'll call Moshe.

"My case! I've been here fundraising for my yeshiva, and my case has over \$20,000 in it -- and I left it in my room!"

Moshe was very familiar with the city, and knew that if he would help they might be able to pick up the case and get back in time for the flight -- without him, the Rabbi (who had never been to Chicago before) was unlikely to succeed. So, anxious as he was to return to New York on time, he ran out with the Rabbi. "In the merit of this mitzvah I am doing, G-d will help me," he said to himself.

Yet when they grabbed a taxi, zoomed across town, grabbed the case, and raced back to the plane -- they found themselves stopped at the gate. The plane was already pulling away, without them!

Moshe was obviously disappointed -- not simply because he had missed the flight, but because he really thought he would merit HaShem's help. After all, he had left only in order to do a mitzvah.

Before leaving the airport, he stopped to call home. He couldn't get through -- the line was busy. Five minutes later, he finally heard a ring at the other end.

"Honey, I'm so sorry -- I missed the flight, and won't be ho..."

"MOSHE! Moshe, you're ALIVE! The plane... it crashed..."

Good Shabbos,

Rabbi Yaakov Menken

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Shabbat-B'Shabbato: Vayigash 5761

Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Parshat Vayigash No 838: 11 Tevet 5761 (6 January 2001)

ALL THE TRIBES OF YISRAEL TOGETHER

by RABBI CHAGAI COHEN, Head of Yeshivat Kinor David, Ateret

The long separation between the tribes of Yisrael started when Yosef's brothers "hated him, and they couldn't talk to him in peace"

[Bereishit 37:4], and it ended when "he kissed all his brothers" [45:16]. It took 22 years of separation to show the brothers that jealousy between the tribes is out of the question, since each of the brothers has a different role to play in building the nation. There should be no hate for one who is different, but rather any differences should be treated as an opportunity to make up for missing traits.

In their renewed meeting, the brothers discovered the importance of Yosef's unique power, as "the provider who was sent by G-d to act as a savior, to give life to many people. He provided physical sustenance for Yaacov and his sons ... And he was integrated among the other nations, with his knowledge of the seventy languages of the world." [Rabbi A.Y. Kook, eulogy for Theodore Herzl]. It is this power which guarantees that Yisrael will be treated equally by the other nations. For example, they do not belittle the strength of Yehuda, which is unique to Bnei Yisrael.

The complementary traits and the mutual cross-fertilization creates the completeness of Bnei Yisrael, as is described by Yechezkel in this week's Haftara. "Behold, I am taking hold of the wood of Yosef, held by Ephraim, together with his colleagues, the rest of the tribes of Yisrael, and I will put it on the wood of Yehuda. And I will make them into one wood, and they will be combined in my hand." [37:19].

The completeness of the nation of Yisrael is not a result of canceling the different strengths, even if some are opposed to others. Just the opposite - when every sector within the nation does not lose its unique character, the result is the full harmony of "all the souls of the house of Yaacov" [Bereishit 46:27]. This can be compared to a concert given by people playing a combination of musical instruments. Clearly, the fine sound of a violin is not the same as the heavy beating of the drums. And these are even further away from the sound of the flute. However, one who listens to a good symphony orchestra, which is made up of all the different instruments, does not sense any conflict. Rather, if violins are missing, the listener will feel that an essential part of the music is lacking.

Love and friendship within the nation of Yisrael, forming us into a single nation with one king for us all (see the Haftara), will bring us to fulfillment of promise "they will dwell on the land ... and I will place my Temple among them forever" [Yechezkel 37:25-26]. Then, when a permanent covenant of peace will be signed between Bnei Yisrael and the Almighty, the unique strength of Yosef will once again be revealed in terms of the relationship between Yisrael and the other nations. "And the nations will know that I am G-d, who sanctifies Yisrael, and my Temple will be among them forever" [37:28].

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/1999/parsha/rtwe_vayigash.html

[From last year]

RABBI MAYER TWERSKY

FREE WILL AND DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Then Yosef said to his brothers, "Come close to me, if you please," and they came close. And he said, "I am Yosef your brother. It is I, whom you sold into Egypt. And now be not distressed or reproach yourselves for having sold me here, for it was to be a provider that G-d sent me here ahead of you. Thus G-d has sent me ahead of you to ensure your survival in the land and to sustain you...and now it was not you who sent me here but G-d; B1

These verses are, primo facie, very problematic. Seemingly, Yosef exonerated the brothers from all responsibility in his sale. Ostensibly, Yosef viewed his trials and travails as divinely ordained, and the brothers as mere involuntary divine instruments. This understanding, however, seems untenable. The Torah's narrative in Parshat Vayeshev describes a natural progression culminating in the brothers' willful sale of Yosef.

When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than all the rest, they began to hate him. Then Yosef had a dream. "Do you want to be our king?" E retorted the brothers. Because of his dreams and words, they hated him even more. His brothers became very jealous of him. They saw him in the distance and before he reached them, they were plotting to kill him. Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover his blood? Let us sell him..2

Moreover, YosefEs own words preclude any possible exoneration of his brothers. In disclosing his identity to his brothers ϕ just moments before he seemingly exonerated them, Yosef himself sharply rebuked them.

And Yosef said to his brothers..EI am Yosef. Is my father still alive?E But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him.3

The Talmud explains that the brothers were silenced by the sting of YosefEs rebuke.

When Reb Elazar would reach this verse he would cry, Φ But his brothers could not answer him because they were disconcerted before him.E The rebuke of flesh and blood is so [forceful] ϕ how much more so the rebuke of the Holy One Blessed be He!4

The Beis HaLevi explicates the words of Chazal.5 YosefEs question regarding "my father" was not an innocent inquiry. The brothers had not returned home since their last audience with Yosef, and thus had no updated information regarding Yaakov. Instead, YosefEs query was accusatory and remonstrative: Is it possible that my father is still alive despite the profound agony you caused him be selling me? Clearly, Yosef considered the brothers culpable in his sale. What then was Yosef expressing when he attributed the vicissitudes of his life to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and disassociated the brothers therefrom?

The answer to this question encapsulates fundamental Jewish teachings regarding human responsibility and divine providence.6 On the one hand, Yahadut adamantly affirms human free will and concomitant responsibility.

Free will is granted to every human being. If one desires to turn toward the good way and be righteous he has the power to do so. If one wishes to turn toward the evil way and be wicked, he is at liberty to do so..This doctrine is an important principle, the pillar of the Law and the commandment...Therefore, a person is judged according to his deeds ϕ if he did good he is rewarded, if he did evil he is punished.7

On the other hand, Yahadut also affirms that divine providence is all-encompassing. I.e., nothing befalls a person haphazardly or by happenstance; everything is divinely ordained.

A person should know and internalize that everything that befalls him, good or bad, is caused by G-d, blessed is He. And from the hand of his fellow man nothing can come about without the will of G-d, blessed be He.8

The TorahEs teachings regarding free will, human responsibility, and divine providence may be summarized thusly: as subjects, people act with unrestrained free will.9 What we do is voluntarily done. Hence, we are entirely responsible for all our actions. As objects, however, people are governed by divine providence. How ϕ if at all ϕ we are impacted by the voluntary actions of others, is determined by divine providence. Hence, human responsibility notwithstanding, Hashem is the true and only cause of everything that happens to us. 10

Of these two propositions, the former is intuitive. We intuitively sense our freedom of action. The latter proposition, however, is unintuitive. Viewed through the Kantian lens of cause and effect, other peopleEs free will appears to impact upon us. Appearances, however, can be beguiling because Hakadosh Baruch Hu oftentimes clandestinely exercises hashgacha peratit through natural channels.

The rabbinic providential lens provides a different perspective, as illustrated in the following Talmudic passage:

But if he did not lie in wait, but G-d caused it to come to his head, etc..As the proverb of the ancient one says, Φ From the wicked comes forth wickedness, etc.E What is this verse talking about? About two people each of whom killed a person. One killed inadvertently, and one killed intentionally. This one has no witnesses and this one has no witnesses. The Holy One Blessed is He arranges that they come to the same inn. The one who killed intentionally site under a ladder, while the

one who killed inadvertently descends the ladder and falls upon him and kills him. The one who had killed intentionally is killed, and the one who killed inadvertently is exiled.11

A seemingly random accident occurred because ϕ and only because ϕ it effected divinely ordained consequences. The exercise of free will is unrestricted, but its effects are divinely determined and choreographed. With striving and sensitivity we can adopt the providential lens and, our vision thereby invigorated and enriched, at times, discern the guiding hand of providence.

Yosef ha-TzaddikEs reaction to his ordeal reflected this subject / object distinction and providential principle. On the one hand, he recognized that his brothers acted voluntarily and accordingly held them responsible for their actions; hence his sharp rebuke. On the other hand, Yosef also understood that Hakadosh Baruch Hu allowed the brothers to implement their designs because ϕ and only because ϕ his ordeal was divinely ordained. Hashem was the true, ultimate cause of his (mis)fortune. Hence, as depicted by the medrash12 he immediately responded to his sale by repenting and never desired revenge. Human nature impels us to seek revenge from those who are responsible for our plight. When we recognize that Hashem is the ultimate and first cause of everything which we, as objects, endure, then the very thought of revenge becomes nonsensical.

Yosef encapsulated this profound teaching in his response to his brothers. He was, at once, remonstrative and reassuring. "Is my father still alive?" ϕ as subjects you acted freely and thus sinned grievously. "It was not you who sent me here, but G-d." ϕ as an object, my destiny was exclusively determined by the will of G-d. And thus do not be disconcerted; I do not seek revenge.

In fact, the Sefer HaChinuch articulates this providential principle as the rationale for the TorahEs prohibition against revenge:

Amongst the reasons for the mitzvah: that a person should know and internalize that anything that befalls him, good or bad is caused by G-d, blessed be He. And from the hand of his fellow man nothing can come about without the will of G-d, blessed is He. Therefore, when someone causes him distress or pain, a person should know in his soul that his sins are the cause, and Hashem may He be blessed decreed this upon him, and he should not train his thoughts to exact revenge from him because he is not the source of his misfortune, because sin is the cause.13

It is worth noting that the foregoing analysis of free will and divine providence also encapsulates a philosophy of history. History unfolds on two levels and accordingly may be properly studied bilaterally.14 History unfolds naturally, its agents acting freely. Accordingly, the natural causes and contexts of their actions may be probed. Simultaneously, history unfolds supernaturally, its course set and steered by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Accordingly, the ultimate causes of historical events are located in the religio-providential realm and, when possible, history ought to be explored accordingly.15

Upon reflection we find instances of such bilateral historical analysis in Chazal:

Rabbi Chama son of Gurya said in the name of Rav: a person should never show favoritism amongst his children because on account of two selaim of choice wool with which Yaakov made a woolen garment for Yosef his brothers became envious and things evolved and our ancestors became ensnared in Egypt.16

Chazal identified the natural trigger for the chain of events culminating in servitude in Egypt. Nonetheless, it is abundantly clear that the ultimate cause was providential, as had been foretold by Avraham:

And He said to Avram, Φ Know that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, and they will enslave and torture them.E17

And, in conclusion, we should note that the providential principle, and Yosef HaTzaddikEs application thereof illustrate a pivotal concept

within yahadut. Yahadut comprised of creed and deed, teaches that belief molds behavior. Case in point: belief in divine providence is not simply an intellectual conviction; rather, as evidenced in the foregoing analysis, it also molds our actions and reactions, undercutting personal animosity and desire for revenge.

1 Genesis 45:4-8, trans. Stone edition of Chumash 2 ibid. 37:4-27, trans. the Living Torah 3 ibid. 45:3, trans. Stone

4 BT Chagiga 4b 5 Beis HaLevi al HaTorah ad loc. 6 In this essay I operate with the conception that divine providence is all-encompassing, as explained in the text. While this view is vigorously and explicitly expounded by some Rishonim and in some maamarei chazal as documented below, it does not represent a consensus omnium. See, inter alia, BT Moed Katan 28a and Hasogas HaReEAvad to Hilchot Tesuva 6:3. 7 Rambam Hilchot Tesuva 5:1,3,4

8 Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 241 9 Those extreme instances in which a person is deprived of his free will as punishment for egregious sinning is not our present focus. See Rambam Hilchot Tesuvah 6:3 10 Of course, the mere mention of divine providence poses the problem of theodicy. That vexing and intricate issue, however, is beyond the scope of this essay. 11 BT Makot 10b 12 Bereishit Rabbah 13 op cit note 8 14 This perspective on history and the study thereof was provided by my revered father zllh"h 15 See, by way of example, BT Yoma 9b, Shabbat 31b ff 16 BT Shabbat 10b 17 Genesis 15:13

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From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@ohr.edu] To: weekly@ohr.edu
Subject: Torah Weekly - Vayigash
* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion
Parshat Vayigash

ON FINAL APPROACH

"And Yehuda approached..." 44:18

It should come as no surprise to anyone that there are deep divisions in the Jewish world. The State of Israel, too, is torn, and has always been torn, by division. As much as we are threatened by an enemy from without, so we are threatened by dissension and baseless hatred -- the enemy from within.

Eventually, all those who have not categorically excluded themselves from their Jewish identity will find themselves united, and we will fulfill our destiny as "one nation in the world" -- the earthly reflection of G-d's Oneness above.

Uncannily, both this week's Torah portion and the haftara predict our present situation:

In the haftara, the prophet's eye sees the Jewish People still divided into the two antagonistic kingdoms of Yehuda and Ephraim.

The historical stamp of the Ephraim Jews is religious nihilism -- enmity towards every specifically Jewish point of view -- and indiscriminate approbation of every non-Jewish religious point of view.

On the other hand, the Yehuda Jews cannot escape the reproach that they pick out those mitzvot they want to keep, and those that they do keep, they keep more or less mechanically.

When these two shattered halves of the Jewish People are again united, it will not be a sad compromise with each side making superficial concessions.

Rather, G-d promises, through the words of His prophet, that both of them will be refined and purified and eventually the Jewish People will be united when these "two wooden slabs" become "one in My hand." (Yechezkel 37:19)

The source for this eventual re-unification is in this week's Torah portion where there is another meeting of two worlds. Yehuda and Yosef. The world of revelation and the world of concealment. Yehuda represents the revealed majesty of Israel -- the royal line of King David -- apparent and clear for all to see.

Yosef is the hidden majesty of Israel. Yosef recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. He is the hidden spark of Israel -- the pintele yid -- which is hidden, burning away in exile, throughout all the "Egypt" of history. Yosef is the Jewish spark that never goes out. The eternal flame. From the outside, Yosef looks like a gentile ruler of a

gentile nation, but inside he is every bit a Jew. So it is with every Jew: However far he may stray from his roots, inside burns the spark of his Jewishness, even if he never learned alef bet. He is bound to his inescapable holiness even when he is dragged through the spiritual sewers of a hostile world.

"And Yehuda approached..."

Yehuda approaching Yosef. Revealed majesty meeting concealed majesty.

Yosef. Like the deep waters of a well, hidden, sealed over by a great stone. Sealed by the constrictions of a physical world and all its cares.

Yehuda. Like a bucket reaching down into the depths to draw up from him the pure still waters. To reveal Yosef to himself.

"And Yehuda approached..." The connection of two worlds. A foreshadowing of the ultimate redemption. Yosef crying as he is reunited with his brothers.

When we cry for Israel, when we cry for all our brothers and sisters who are still in "Egypt," when we cry for all the hate and the violence, we should remember that just as Yosef was revealed to his brothers in tears, so too the ultimate redemption comes in tears. Then, the son of King David, the scion of Yehuda, will gather us from the four corners of the earth, and he will rule in revelation, in majesty with head held high.

Sources: * Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, L'Torah U'Moadim * Rabbi Mendel Hirsch

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From: Nehemiah Klein[SMTP:ndk@hakotel.edu] To: sicha list Subject: Parshat Vayigash 5761

WEEKLY SICHA OF HARAV NEBENZAHL
PARSHAT VAYIGASH 5761

The following is a translation of the sicha delivered by HaGaon HaRav Avigdor Nebenzahl every Monday night in the Beit Midrash of Yeshivat Hakotel. ... Shabbat Shalom, Nehemiah D. Klein

Please say a tefilla for refuah shlema for Baruch Yoseph ben Adina Batya he is the twelve year old son of one of our alumni who is in great need of "rachamei Shamayim".

PARSHAT VAYIGASH "Honoring the Torah and those who Study it"

The Torah relates regarding Yoseph "Only the land of the priests he did not buy, since the priests had a stipend from Pharaoh, and they lived off their stipend that Pharaoh had given them; therefore they did not sell their land" [1] (Bereishit 47:22). The Torah even repeats this: "only the priests' land alone did not become Pharaoh's" [2] (ibid. 26). Why did the Torah need to inform us of this detail, and even emphasize it by repeating it? One explanation brought by the commentaries is in order to stress the following kal vachomer: "if Pharaoh accords such honor to priests who are mere worshippers of avoda zara - he provides them with food and does not confiscate their land, how much more so must we honor our Kohanim - people who serve Hashem in the Beit Hamikdash?" We must do our utmost to care for their needs by providing them with "matnot kehuna" - the priestly gifts.

The priestly gifts should not be viewed as presents or as charity but should be seen as a salary - that the Kohanim have earned their keep. The Gemara tells us "Kohanim, Leviim, and poor who help in the house of the shepherds, the threshing floors, and in the slaughterhouses, we do not give them 'trumah' or 'maaser' as a reward, if they do so they have desecrated them. Regarding them the pasuk states: 'You have corrupted the covenant of Levi' (Malachi 2:8) and the pasuk further states: 'sanctities of the Children of Israel you shall not desecrate, so that you shall not die' (Bamidbar 18:32)" [3] (Bechorot 26b). As we see from the pasuk just quoted, a Kohen who provides any assistance to the person who gave him trumah is liable with the death penalty.

A Yisrael may ask his fellow Yisrael if he would give his "matnot kehuna" to a particular Kohen. In fact, the Yisrael who gives to the Kohen is permitted to accept payment from the Yisrael who requests that the "gifts" be given to a particular Kohen. A Kohen or Levi, on the other hand is forbidden under any circumstances from providing any compensation to the person who gave them the trumah or maaser. We see from the above Gemara that this payment may not even be carried out in a less conspicuous manner such as by assisting the owner with some of his tasks. Why is this so? Does Judaism not encourage one who has

"hakarat hatov" - gratitude and recognition for the good that one has done for him? The owner of the field has done the Kohen a tremendous favor by choosing him over all other Kohanim to be the recipient of these "matnot kehuna". This Kohen may have received a large portion of trumah that theoretically could have been apportioned among many Kohanim. Is some show of appreciation not called for? Hakarat hatov is such an intrinsic part of Judaism, that Chazal even tell us that one who lacks hakarat hatov for his fellow human being, will eventually have no gratitude to Hashem, as it says (Shmot Rabba 1:8) that Pharaoh first "did not know Yoseph" [5] (Shmot 1:8), and he ultimately ended by proclaiming: "I do not know Hashem!" [6] (Shmot 5:2). If hakarat hatov is so basic to our belief, why do we punish the Kohen or Levi who wish to express it?

The answer lies in the Torah's reason for these "gifts" to the Kohen and Levi: "for it is a wage for you in exchange for your service in the Tent of Meeting" [7] (Bamidbar 18:31). The Kohanim and Leviim are not being given handouts, they are salaried employees of the Beit Hamikdash! Providing any form of assistance to the one who gave them "matnot Kehuna", would be a declaration that working in the Beit Hamikdash was not sufficient reason to be compensated. This amounts to a denigration of their work, and of one who does so it is said: "You have corrupted the covenant of Levi" [8] (Malachi 2:8).

I realized today that perhaps this was the sin committed by Korach and his cohorts. Moshe Rabenu asked them: "Is it not enough for you that the G-d of Israel has segregated you from the Assembly of Israel to draw you near to Himself, to perform the service of the Tabernacle of Hashem, and to stand before the Assembly to administer to them? And He drew you near, and all your brethren, the offspring of Levi, with you - yet you seek priesthood, as well!" [9] (Bamidbar 16:9-10). Should Korach not rather have been praised for wishing to serve as a Kohen? His method of asking for this - publicly degrading Moshe Rabenu and his prophecy, may leave much to be desired, but what is wrong with desiring to serve alongside the Kohanim? Is this just cause for punishment?

Based on what we have just discussed, the answer is clear. The work of the Leviim was of great significance, as we can deduce from the Rambam: "just as the Leviim are warned against performing the work of the Kohanim, so too the Kohanim are warned against performing the work of the Leviim" [10] (Rambam Hilchot Klei Hamikdash 3:10). Korach was in fact declaring that being a Levi was not honorable enough, he wished to go one step higher by becoming a Kohen. This denigrating of the tasks of the Leviim amounts to "corrupting the covenant of Levi", an offense punishable by death.

The "matnot Kehuna" as compensation for services rendered, is not a mere philosophical idea. The Ktzot Hachoshen (243:4) claims that this has legal implications. The Gemara (Yevamot 99b) tells us that Trumah may be given to a Kohen who is under age. How is this possible? If a child has no halachic means with which to acquire it, how does the giver fulfill the Mitzvah of giving to a Kohen? The Pri Chadash explains that we apply the principle of: "another mind (i.e. person) transfers ownership" [11] (Baba Metzia 11b) - the child himself need not be able to gain possession. The Ktzot Hachoshen disproves the opinion of the Pri Chadash. He explains that although a child may not make an ordinary acquisition, he may be compensated for a job done (see Tosafot Sanhedrin 68b "katan"). Given that the Kohanim are compensated for tasks performed in the Beit Hamikdash, explains the Ktzot, the child may be the recipient of Trumah and has legally acquired it. (Although a child does not perform any actual function in the Beit Hamikdash, he is given these priestly "gifts" as compensation for work performed by other family members and Kohanim in general).

Although, as we have said, the Kohanim are given a salary for their work, the Torah's intent was not for the Kohanim to work only in order to be compensated. The Kohen's motives must be "leShem Shamayim" - for the sake of Heaven. What significance is there in viewing the payment as compensation for a job performed rather than as a present? There is a major difference! The recipient of a handout is embarrassed by it, it is for this reason that charitable gifts must be given in the most inconspicuous way possible. We do not however find any halachic requirement for an employee to compensate his employees in a discreet manner. The Kohen and Levi have no reason to be embarrassed, for they are employed as workers in the Beit Hamikdash and as such are receiving what they have rightfully earned.

The Chafetz Chaim used to say that there are many people who are lax in their performance of Mitzvot, choosing to rely on the promise - "All Israel has a share in the World to Come" [12] (Sanhedrin 90a). Such a person realizes he will not merit a front row seat alongside Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, but knows he will have some share in the next world. The Chafetz Chaim used the following comparison to explain the fallacy in such an argument: There was once a wealthy factory owner, who also gave generously to charity. Each Rosh Chodesh, on pay day, the factory owner would instruct his treasurer on how to apportion charitable

donations as well as the salaries of the employees. One day, the owner arrived at work, and wished to observe the allocation of the monies. The employees introduced themselves: "I am an engineer, I am the marketing manager, etc.". To one man who had not introduced himself the owner inquired: "and what is your position here?" The man responded that his function is to receive a salary - a donation, every Rosh Chodesh. The nearby crowd burst out laughing, but the poor man was acutely embarrassed. The Chafetz Chaim explains that one who arrives in the next world simply by virtue of: "All Israel has a share in the world to come" [12] and not by having earned his place may indeed attain his share but he will be exceedingly embarrassed. We must keep in mind that any embarrassment suffered in this world is temporary, in the next world it is eternal. One who earns a salary will not suffer embarrassment, one who is given a free handout will.

Just as the priestly "gifts" allocated to the Kohanim and Leviim must be viewed as compensation for services rendered, so must financial support for those who study Torah. Stipends given by the Yeshiva or Kollel are not a present but rather a salary - they are earned - the Jewish nation is in need of people who spend their time studying Torah, just as they require Kohanim to serve in the Beit Hamikdash. It is true that learning only for the sake of receiving a salary transforms the Torah into "an axe with which to dig" (for food) [13] (Avot 4:5)). Torah study "shelo lishma", however, is preferable to not learning at all: "One should always be involved with Torah and Mitzvot even if not for the proper intent, for doing it without proper intent will lead to doing with proper intent" [14] (Pesachim 50b). This we see regarding Balak, Chazal tell us: "in reward for the forty two sacrifices that Balak king of Moav offered he merited having Ruth descended from him, whom Shlomo descended from of whom it is said: 'Shlomo offered up a thousand-offerings on that Altar' (Melachim I 3:4)" [15] (Sotah 47a). This in spite of the fact that Balak offered these sacrifices in order to aid him in cursing the Jewish nation. There is therefore value in learning and performing Mitzvot even "shelo lishma". One who is sincere about his desire to learn, but accepts the stipend in order to be freed from the burdens of having to earn a living, is not learning "for the sake of receiving a reward" [16] (Avot 1:3). The compensation is what enables him to learn, for "if there is no bread, there is no Torah" [17] (Avot 3:17). The Yeshiva provides him with three meals a day, and if he is married then he is given some assistance in supporting his family. The Torah in this case is not an axe with which to dig for food, rather the food is the axe with which to "dig" the Torah.

Just as the Kohen and Levi must value their work and recognize that they are deserving of compensation, so too one who studies in Yeshiva must realize that he is earning his wage. The Torah he learns, in fact is worth far more than what he is receiving: "all desires cannot compare to it" [18] (Mishle 8:11). Not only is he not being given a handout, one who learns Torah is contributing to the Jewish people. We are in great need of people learning Torah, and in even greater need of Gedolei Yisrael. The Tzdukkim incited Yaanai to kill the sages. Yannai asked: "but the Torah what will become of it? (they responded) behold, the Torah scroll is rolled and it rests in the corner, anyone who wishes to study it, let him come and study" [19] (Kiddushin 66a). The Tzdukkim claimed that killing the sages would make no difference because the Torah is always available for people who wish to learn it. The Gemara continues: "this answer is satisfactory for the Written Torah, but what of the Oral Torah?" [20] (ibid.). The Written Torah may be placed in a corner, but without sages and Torah giants to interpret and explain it to us, we cannot possibly understand it. The Tzdukkim posed that argument because they denied the existence of the Oral Torah. We, however, understand that without Torah sages, there can be no one to teach the Torah. Having people devote their lives to the study of Torah is of the utmost importance, and it is up to us to insure that there be a next generation of Gedolim.

In a similar vein, the Gemara tells us: "if either he can study or his son, he takes precedence over his son" [21] (Kiddushin 29b). In other words if at that time it is impossible for both the father and son to learn, for instance if there is work that needs to be done in the house that cannot wait, the father's obligation to learn takes precedence. Rav Yehuda qualifies this: "if his son is diligent, bright, and retains that which he has studied, his son takes precedence over him" [22] (ibid.) (this is in fact the halacha). Why? Although the son cannot fulfill his father's obligation of learning Torah, we have an additional obligation to produce Gedolei Yisrael. Rav Yehuda is of the opinion that this obligation is greater than one's personal obligation to learn. Thus, if the son has the potential to become a Gadol, his obligation takes precedence. Where would we be without Gedolei Yisrael? What would have become of Shabbat observance without the Mishna Brura and Shmirat Shabbata KeHilchata? One can master the entire Shulchan Aruch and still not know whether or not he may answer his telephone on Shabbat. Each generation has new situations that arise, and without Gedolim there would be no one to rule on such issues. One may argue "when in doubt, follow the more stringent view". This

is not always a practical approach, the defense forces as well as hospitals are but two examples in which any possible "heter" is of the utmost importance. Only Gedolim can guide us in these areas and teaching us what is permitted under extenuating circumstances and what is forbidden even in such situations.

We are not only in need of Gedolei Torah, but also of those involved in other holy pursuits: Rabbanim, Soferim, Mohalim, etc. Such people will certainly not arise from the secular element of our population unless they become baalei tshuva speedily in our day. Until the Baga"tz (Israeli Supreme Court) will rule that there can be secular Rabbanim, we will have to produce them from within our ranks. The same goes for Soferim, Mohalim, and Shochatim. Furthermore, the Gemara tells us that one who says: "of what use to us are the Rabbis, they study Scripture only for themselves, and they study Oral Law only for themselves" [23] (Sanhedrin 99b) denies the explicit words of the Torah: "I would spare the entire place on their account" [24] (Bereishit 18:26) - had there been righteous people in Sodom, Hashem would have pardoned the entire population in their merit. People who study Torah are not simply fulfilling their own needs, they are providing for the entire Jewish people: "If My covenant with the night and with the day would not be; had I not set up the laws of heaven and earth" [25] (Yirmiyahu 33:25).

Unfortunately, we are witness to the opposite phenomenon: those who do not study Torah sometimes descend to the depths of depravity such as drugs, satanic cults, etc. "Ki hem chayenu" "For they are our life" is not simply a figure of speech, it is to be taken literally! The Torah is "the tree of life for those who grasp it" [26] (Mishlei 3:18). A drowning man can survive so long as he can keep his head above water by holding on to a tree by the shore, once he lets go of that tree he will drown and die. We really should learn non-stop, for learning is our life. Would someone ever declare: "for the next fifteen minutes I will not breathe, and afterwards I will resume breathing?" Torah is our oxygen, we cannot stop for even a moment. The reason we cannot learn non-stop is because "the Torah was not given to ministering angels" [27] (Kiddushin 54a). We are required to live our lives as human beings. The only stipulation is that we do not waste time unjustifiably. One who takes advantage of every possible moment he has, will never be asked why he did not learn more. Eating and sleeping are necessities and valid reasons for not learning - "Hashem exempted one in extenuating circumstances" [28] (Avoda Zara 54a). Such a person is not only not punished, but he is rewarded for the time spent eating, sleeping, performing necessary errands: "even if a person contemplated fulfilling a mitzvah and was unavoidably prevented from performing it, scripture credits him as if he had fulfilled it" [29] (Brachot 6a). If one, however, wasted his time by involving himself in that which has no purpose, he has revealed where his priorities lie. He is not eating and sleeping out of lack of choice, but because this is what he chooses to do. Such a person will be accountable for every moment he did not learn even if what he was doing was justifiable.

We find such a distinction in the laws of Shabbat. On Shabbat we are forbidden to carry objects in such a way that they are lifted up in the private domain and placed down in a public one. What would the halacha be if one stops in the midst of his journey? The Gemara distinguishes between "omed lakatef" - one who stops in order to straighten out his load thus easing the remainder of his journey, and "omed lafush", one who stops in order to rest. The former is not considered as having placed the object down because his pause is for the sake of the continuing journey, and is thus not considered as having stopped. The latter, however, by stopping is considered as having placed the object down and is thus liable for having violated the Shabbat (see Shabbat 5b).

How would we categorize one who stops at a red light? I would venture to say that the above distinction can be applied as well. If what is going through his mind is "I am in a big rush, when is this light finally going to turn green?", then he is "omed lakatef" and is not considered as having stopped. If, however, he says to himself: "thank G-d I can relax for a moment", then he is "omed lafush".

We can apply the same distinction to "bitul Torah". If one is upset at time "wasted" in eating, drinking, and sleeping, he is "omed lakatef" and is rewarded as if having spent that time involved in learning as well. If, on the other hand, he proclaims: "thank G-d, I am no longer obligated to learn for I must eat and sleep", this sleeping and eating is viewed as wasted time that should have rather been spent in learning. One's intent determines the value of his actions, even if externally the actions are identical.

"Bitul Torah" is a very severe offense indeed. Chazal tell us: "Hashem forgave them for avoda zara, adultery, and murder but did not forgive them for "bitul Torah" [30] (Yalkut Shimoni Yirmiyahu 282). First and foremost, the destruction of Yerushalayim came about as a result of bitul Torah. This was the primary reason, to this was added the nation's guilt at having transgressed the three cardinal sins. But the underlying cause of all their sins was bitul Torah. All of us take great care not to have even a miniscule amount of Chametz in our possession.

How many of us are aware that just as the minutest quantity of chametz may not be consumed, so too the smallest amount of bitul Torah is prohibited as well (barring extenuating circumstances as mentioned above)?

The Torah commands us: "you shall teach them thoroughly to your children and you shall speak of them" [31] (Devarim 6:7), not only "while you sit in your home" [32] (ibid.), but even "while you walk on the way" [33] (ibid.). Travel does not exempt one from the obligation to learn Torah. Is there justifiable reason for not learning while waiting for a bus? One in the midst of actual travel may be forbidden to "analyze" (for reasons of safety), but he is permitted "to recite" [34] (Taanit 10b). Each of us knows something he can recite by heart - perhaps the psukim of the Shma or Ashrei (so long as the area is clean, otherwise reciting any words of Torah would be forbidden). We have an additional obligation to learn ceaselessly - the Jewish people are depending on this, for this is our oxygen.

I would like to make an additional point related to Torah learning. The Gemara implies (Megilla 3b) that according honor to the Torah takes precedence over actual Torah study. We must give our holy books the respect they deserve. The halacha tells us which books may be placed on top of which books - Neviim and Ketubim may not be placed on top of Chumashim, and books of the Oral Law may not be placed on top of Neviim and Ketubim, and certainly not on top of Chumashim. Although our printed Chumashim do not have the same sanctity as Sifrei Torah, nor do the Names of Hashem contained therein, they still are considered the Written Torah and thus books of the Oral Law may not be placed on top of them.

We must take great care not to place the books upside down. A human being would not take too kindly to being turned upside down, with his head down and his feet in the air. Just as we would consider placing a Sefer Torah upside down within the Aron Kodesh, we must view our books in the same manner. In addition, just as: "those who write Torah scrolls, Tefillin, and Mezuzot are not allowed to turn the parchment face down" [35] (Ervin 98a), we may not place our open books face down. If one has to leave the Beit Midrash and feels he will not be able to find the page he is on, he should close the book leaving a marker on that page. Piling up large stacks of books in such a way that one touch will knock them all off the "shtender" or table is certainly disrespectful. How can it be that the Raavad works so hard to knock down the words of the Rambam, and with one wave of a hand we manage to knock down six volumes of his works!

Honoring the Torah is not only an obligation in and of itself, it assists us in our learning. Properly valuing our books, and certainly our live Sifrei Torah - the Talmidei Chachamim, affords us the ability to learn so much more from them. The Gemara relates that Rav Chisda was unsure what the halacha would be in the event that one benefited from that which belongs to another in a situation in which: "this one does not benefit and this one does not lose" [36] (Babba Kama 20a). Rami bar Chama informed him that he can prove from a Mishna what the halacha would be.

When Rav Chisda inquired as to which Mishna was being referred to, he responded that he will answer Rav Chisda: "as soon as you perform a personal service for me" [37] (Babba Kama 20b). It was only when Rav Chisda folded Rami bar Chama's cloak that he was informed of the answer.

Does Rami bar Chama really need Rav Chisda to fold his cloak? Furthermore, Rav Chisda was Rami bar Chama's rebbe, a Kohen (see Brachot 44a), as well as his father-in-law (it is not clear if he was married prior to this incident or not). It was Rami bar Chama who should honor Rav Chisda, not the other way. One explanation for Rami bar Chama's behavior is that he feared that Rav Chisda would not take his words seriously. For Rav Chisda's sake, he first demanded that Rav Chisda perform some task for him cause him to feel some sort of subservience thus making him more open to accept what Rami bar Chama was saying. The Gemara does not tell us that Rava served Rami bar Chama, and he in fact challenged the proof brought. Had Rav Chisda not initially served Rami bar Chama perhaps he too would have questioned Rami bar Chama's proof.

There is a similar story regarding the relationship between Avimai - the rebbe of Rav Chisda, and Rav Chisda. (see Menachot 7a). We are told that Avimai went to Rav Chisda to learn Massechet Menachot. The Gemara inquires, how can this be? Avimai should be teaching Rav Chisda! The Gemara explains that Avimai took ill and during his illness he forgot the entire Massechet Menachot. He decided to ask his student, Rav Chisda to teach it to him. If so, the Gemara asks, why did Avimai have to travel to Rav Chisda's residence, Rav Chisda would have considered it a privilege and an honor to go to Avimai. Avimai felt that he would be more successful in his learning if he were to go to Rav Chisda, that extra effort would make him see Rav Chisda as a true "source of living waters" [38] (Yirmiyahu 2:13). By going to Rav Chisda, Avimai felt that he would more readily accept what Rav Chisda had to say. Although either way, Rav Chisda's shiurim would have the same content, Avimai felt he would be more receptive if he were the one to take the trouble to go to Rav Chisda. This is tremendous "mussar" for

us regarding respecting and valuing our books and those who study the Torah. "A poor man's wisdom is despised" [39] (Kohelet 9:16) - we must properly value our books and Talmidei Chachamim so they are not despised, in that way we will be more open to what they are teaching us.

What we have discussed applies at all times, but especially during these days which are "a time of trouble for Yaakov" [40] (Yirmiyahu 30:7). There is no end to terrorist incidents and other tragedies. Yerushalayim is on the negotiating table and they are asking a favor of Yasser Arafat, if he will at least admit that we too have some sort of religious connection to Har Habayit. I guess the fact that it is written in the Torah, Neviim, Rashi, the Rambam, and all other authorities is not sufficient. We need the "psak" of Rabeinu Yasser as well. We would never, G-d forbid, ask him to relinquish his claim to Har Habayit, that would be far too much to ask for, but he should at least acknowledge that we have some claim to it as well. What a terrible denigrating of the Torah and the Jewish people! Who knows what else they may decree? Perhaps they will announce that from now on we must pray towards Mecca or some other location, G-d forbid!

During these difficult times we must strengthen our learning, we must raise the glory of Torah and perhaps these terrible decrees will be rescinded. During the Chemilniki years there lived a great "mekubal" by the name of R' Shimshon Ostropler, who eventually died "al Kiddush Hashem". He tried his utmost to rescind some of these decrees. The Satan appeared to him saying that he is willing to cancel some of these decrees, he will permit Shabbat observance and performance of all other Mitzvot, on the condition that Torah study still be banned. R' Shimshon refused to pay this price under any circumstances. By the same token, we must realize that Torah study is the best merit we have to withstand these decrees.

While on the subject of "segulot", there is another one that Chazal speak of that my rebbe HaRav Gedalia Eisman Shlit"a often mentions. The Gemara tells us: "Whoever responds "Amen, Yehei Shmei Rabba' 'Amen: may His great Name be blessed" with all his might, the evil decree in judgment against him is torn up" [41] (Shabbat 119b) - many terrible decrees can be uprooted. There are those who claim that "with all his might" refers to proclaiming it in a loud tone, while others opine that it refers to one's kavana - to proclaim that one's entire purpose in life is that the Great Name of Hashem be blessed throughout all the worlds! If we strengthen ourselves in these areas, as well as giving tzedaka, performing acts of chesed, observing Shabbat and Shmirat Halashon properly, and whatever else requires strengthening, then Hashem will help us and watch over the holy sites of Israel. He will guard and protect them not in the way Barak intends, but in His way. We will then merit seeing our true connection to the Har HaBayit built on top of it, speedily in our day. Amen.

APPENDIX (TRANSLITERATIONS OF SOURCES)

[1] "rak admat hakohanim lo kana, ki chok lakohanim me-et Pharaoh, ve-achlu et chukam asher natan lahem Pharaoh, al ken lo machru et admataim" [2] "rak admat hakohanim levadlam lo hayta lePharaoh" [3] "hakohanim vehaleviim vahaanuyim, hamesayim bebeit haroim ubebeit hagraim ubebeit hamitbachim ein notim lahem trumah umaaser bischaran veim osin ken chilelu vaaileihen hakatuv omer 'shichatem brit halavi' veomoer ve-et kodshai Bnei Yisrael lo techalelu velo tamutu" [5] "asher lo yada et Yoseph" [6] "lo yadati et Hashem" [7] "ki sachar hu lachem chelef avodatchem beOhel Moed" [8] "shichatem brit halavi" [9] "hame-at mikem ki hivdil Elokei Yisrael etchem me-adat Yisrael lehakriv etchem elav, laavod et avodat mishkan Hashem, velaamad lifnei haecda leshartam. Vayakrev otcha ve-et kol achecha bnei Levi itach uvikashtem gam kehuna" [10] "keshem shehaleviim muzharim shelo laavod baavodat hakohanim, kach hakohanim muzharim shelo laavod avodat haleviim" [11] "daat acheret makneh otan" [12] "kol Yisrael yesh lahem chelek leolam haba" [13] "kardom lachpor ba" [14] "leolam yaasok adam beTorah uveMitzvot afilu shelo lishma, shemitcho shelo lishma ba lishma" [15] "bischar arba'im ushnayim korbanot shehikriv Balak melech Moav, zacha veyatzta mimenu Ruth, sheyatzta mimenu Shlomo shkatuv bei elef olot yaale Shlomo" [16] "al menat lekabel pras" [17] "im ein kemach ein Torah" [18] "vekol chafatzim lo yishvu ba" [19] "veTorah ma tehei aleha? harei krucha umunachat bekeren zavit, kol harotze lilmud yavo veyilmud" [20] "teina Torah shebichtav, Torah sebe-al peh mai?" [21] "hu lilmud ubno lilmud, hu kodem libno" [22] "Rav Yehuda omer 'im bno zariz umemulach vetalmudo mitkayem beyado, bno kodmo" [23] "mai ahanu lan Rabbenu, ledidhu karu, ledidhu tanu" [24] "venasati lechol hamakom baavuram" [25] "im lo briti yomam valayla chukot shamayim vaaretz lo samti" [26] "etz chaim hee lamachazikim ba" [27] "lo nitna Torah lemalachei hasharet" [28] "onehs Rachamana patrei" [29] "chshav adam laasot Mitzvah vene-enas velo assaa, maale alav hakatuv keilu assa" [30] "viter HaKadosh Baruch Hu al Avoda Zara, ve-al gilui arayot ve-al shfichut damim, velo viter al bitul Torah" [31] "veshinantam levanacha vedibarta bam" [32] "beshivtecha beveitecha" [33] "uvlechtecha baderech" [34] "leiyunei ... lemigras" [35] "kotvei sefarim tefillin umezuzot lo hitiru lahen lahafoch yeria al paneha" [36] "zeh nehene vzech lo chaser" [37] "lechi teshamesh li" [38] "mekor mayim chayim" [39] "chochmat hamisken bzuya" [40] "et tzara hee leYaakov" [41] "kol haoneh 'Amen yehei Shmei Rabba mevora' bechol kocho korin lo gezar dino"

The HaRav Nebenzahl parsha archives can be found at <http://www.hakotel.edu/torah/rn.html> HaRav Nebenzahl's sichot in Hebrew, including the recently published (C) 5761/2001 by American Friends of Yeshivat Hakotel Lists hosted by Project Genesis - <http://www.torah.org>

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Parshas Vayigash Yechezkel 37:15 BY RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

In this week's haftorah we read about the total unification of the Jewish people. The prophet Yechezkel was instructed by Hashem to obtain two blocks of wood and inscribe upon them the names of Israel's two kingdoms, Yehuda and Yosef. Then Hashem said, "Hold them close to each other appearing as one and they will unite in your hands." (37:17) The Radak interprets this to mean that after Yechezkel will hold them next to each other they will miraculously unite and become one solid piece of wood. He explains that this symbolism refers to the miraculous unification of the Jewish people during the era of Mashiach.

Each block of wood represents a distinct segment of the Jews, each being one of the kingdoms of Israel. Although Dovid Hamelech received an unconditional guarantee that his descendants would reign over Israel this did not preclude fragmentation of the Jewish kingdom. Therefore after his grandson Rechavom strayed seriously from the path of his predecessors a severe split in the kingdom did occur. Ephraim, a tribe descending from Yosef, led the Ten Tribes in a powerful revolution against the dynasty of Dovid Hamelech and broke away from the kingdom of Dovid, leaving behind only two remaining tribes, Yehuda and Binyomin. The split was so intense that the seceding camp of Yosef totally severed its relationship with Yehuda never to return throughout all the years of Israel's reign. Yechezkel prophesized that these kingdoms will eventually unite and return to being one entity. Their unification will be so solid and permanent that there will be no trace left of their previous division. Their sense of kinship and unity will be so tangible that the Jewish nation will be likened to one piece of wood, free from any division or fragmentation.

The prophet continues and states in the name of Hashem, "And I will purify them and they shall be a nation to Me and I will be G-d to them...My Divine Presence will rest upon them...forever." (37:23, 27) These passages refer to the final phases of our unity, Hashem's unification with us. The time will eventually arrive when Hashem will return His Divine Presence to His nation. In the era of Mashiach all dimensions of unity will be achieved. The Jewish people will unite into an inseparable entity and Hashem will likewise reunite with us. His unity with us will be likened to ours within ourselves, an everlasting and inseparable one.

It is worthwhile to focus on the specific order in which these unities are foretold. The first step is the unification of the entire Jewish nation and then, and only then, Hashem follows with His unification with His people. The Sefer Hacharedim (chapter 5) shares with us an important perspective regarding this order. He reflects upon the distinct nature of Hashem's oneness and explains that His oneness can only be appreciated through the oneness of the Jewish people. If we are fragmented and divided into factions our perception and experience of Hashem will be, by nature, one of division. Each segment of Jewish people will view Hashem from its perspective and the sense of Hashem's perfect oneness will never be seen. Hashem's brilliant radiance which is reflected through His Torah will appear divided and fragmented. Understandably, Hashem who is one by definition cannot unite with us until we achieve perfect unity, allowing proper expression for His perfect oneness. The lesson of the Chareidim reveals that, in essence, our perfect unity within ourselves is a prerequisite for Hashem's unity with us.

In actuality, the foundation of these unities was established in this weeks sedra. Yosef, through his brilliant scheme, succeeded in silencing his brothers' suspicions and fears and convinced them of their grave misjudgment of him. Once their deep-seeded jealousy and hatred was exposed and removed, the sons of Yaakov united with Yosef and embraced one another. After all these painful years, Yosef and Yehuda were finally united into one family and a true sense of kinship and unity was felt. Although much damage had occurred and a split in the Jewish people was inevitable at some point, the groundwork for unity had already been established. Through Yosef's accomplishment of bringing

the family together, the total unity of our people will eventually be achieved.

The immediate and direct result of Yosef's accomplishment is recorded in this week's sedra. After Yaakov discovered that his son Yosef was alive and well, the Torah states, "And the spirit of their father, Yaakov was restored to life." (Beraishis 45, 27) Rashi (ad loc) quotes Chazal who explain that Yaakov's spirit here refers to the return of Hashem's Divine Presence to Yaakov. Due to Yosef's absence from Yaakov's household Hashem's Divine Presence ceased to rest upon Yaakov. Now, after twenty-two long years the household of Yaakov was finally reunited and the Divine Presence of Hashem returned to Yaakov. This final result is indicative of the future experience of the Jewish people. They will also be divided for thousands of years and Yosef and the Ten Tribes will be lost from Israel. This division, as in the days of Yaakov will force Hashem to remove His presence from amongst the remainder of Israel. But the time will eventually come for the Jewish people to reunite and the kingdom of Yosef and Yehuda will become one inseparable entity. In response to this miraculous development of unity Hashem will return His Divine Presence to the Jewish people and the spirit of Israel will be revived forever.

This lesson is so apropos for our times where so much diversity exists amongst our people. We pray to Hashem for unification amongst ourselves, ultimately yielding our unification with Hashem and the return of His Divine Presence amongst us forever.

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From: Jeffrey Gross[SMTP:jgross@torah.org]
Weekly-halacha for 5761 Selected Halachos Relating to Parshas
Vayigash

BY RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT Rav of Young Israel of
Cleveland Heights

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week.
For final rulings, consult your Rav.

KIDDUSH IN SHUL: PROPER CONDUCT KIDDUSH

Kiddush is recited over a cup(1) of wine or grape juice which holds a
revi'is (3.3. fl. oz.). At least a cheekful (approx. 1.7. fl. oz.) must be
drunk.(2)

There is no requirement for anybody but the person who makes
Kiddush to taste the wine. As long as the listener intended to fulfill the
mitzvah of Kiddush and heard every word of the blessing, he fulfills the
mitzvah. It is, however, desirable (a mitzvah min ha-muvchar) to partake
of the Kiddush cup.(3) For this reason, many people make certain to
drink some wine when attending a kiddush in shul. Doing so, however,
can lead to a problematic situation regarding the correct blessing for any
other beverage which will be drunk at the kiddush. Let us explain:

The blessing of Borei pri ha-gefen automatically includes any
beverage which is on the table or which will be brought to the table
during the kiddush. No shehakol is recited on soda or juice, etc. that will
be drunk during the kiddush.(4)

Even those who did not actually recite Borei pri ha-gefen but heard
Kiddush from another person do not recite a shehakol on other
beverages. This rule applies only if one drank a melo lugmav (a
cheekful) of wine or grape juice.

If one drank some wine or grape juice ? but less than a melo lugmav

? and wishes to drink another beverage, it is questionable(5) if he needs
to recite a shehakol on the other beverages. It follows, therefore, that
those who listen to someone else's Kiddush and partake of the wine and
then want to drink another beverage, must do one of the following(6):
Drink at least a cheekful; Recite a shehakol on a food item; Listen to a
shehakol recited by another person.

KIDDUSH ON SCHNAPPS

It is a common practice to recite Kiddush Shabbos morning over a 1
oz. cup of schnapps [or liqueur.(7)] Although many poskim(8) object, as
Kiddush must be recited over a cup which holds at least a revi'is and at
least a cheekful must be drunk, still there are poskim(9) who defend this
minhag Yisrael.(10) They reason that schnapps is different from wine
since it is normally consumed in much smaller quantities and is therefore
subject to a different set of measurements.(11)

Those who rely on this leniency and recite Kiddush over schnapps,
must also recite a Borei nefashos over the schnapps, even though only a
small amount was drunk. Although one does not recite a Borei nefashos
unless he drinks 3.3. fl. oz. of a beverage,(12) schnapps - according to
this view - is an exception and requires a Borei nefashos even on a much
smaller amount.(13)

When no wine or grape juice is available, there is a way of reciting
Kiddush over schnapps which will satisfy the opinions of most poskim:
Recite Kiddush on a revi'is of schnapps and drink a cheekful or a revi'is,
but instead of swallowing it in one shot, sip it slowly, for a period of up
to 3-4 minutes.(14) When even this is not possible, a next best option is
to share the cheekful with others who are listening to the Kiddush.(15)

KIDDUSH B'MAKOM SEUDAH

Kiddush must always be followed by a seudah (meal). Most
poskim(16) maintain that mezonos eaten at a kiddush is considered a
"seudah" for this purpose.(17) After making Kiddush, at least a k'zayis
(approx. 1.1 fl. oz.) of mezonos must be eaten within a span of 3-4
minutes. One who failed to do so must repeat Kiddush at home before
his meal. A mezonos kugel is considered full-fledged mezonos in regard
to this halachah.(18)

On Pesach or other times when mezonos items are not available, the
preferred method is to eat the seudah immediately after reciting Kiddush.
If that is difficult, one should drink an additional revi'is (3.3 fl. oz.) of
wine or grape juice. If one has no other wine or grape juice, he can rely
on the revi'is of wine he consumed for Kiddush.(19)

There are poskim(20) who maintain that even l'chatchilah, one may
eat fruit or shehakol items after Kiddush is recited if there are no
mezonos items available. But then, Kiddush must be repeated at home
before the meal. Other poskim(21) allow this practice only under special
circumstances, such as the case of a person who is weak and needs to eat
and has no mezonos available.

There is no need to repeat Kiddush at home if the requirements for
Kiddush were met earlier in shul or at the simchah hall, unless there are
other people at home who did not yet hear Kiddush. One who made
Kiddush on schnapps should preferably repeat Kiddush at home over
wine or grape juice.(22)

CHOLENT

The proper blessing over cholent depends on the ingredients:

A cholent which contains beans, potatoes and small pieces of meat or
chicken requires only Borei pri ha-adamah. It is considered a "single
entity mixture" since the entire mixture is eaten together in one spoonful.
Because the ha-adamah ingredients constitute the rov (majority) of the
cholent mixture, they determine the blessing for the cholent
ha-adamah.(23) Even if the cholent has a soupy consistency, no shehakol
blessing is required. The berachah acharonah is Borei nefashos.

When kishke is served along with the cholent, the kishke requires a
blessing of Borei minei mezonos. Since the kishke is generally not eaten
in the same spoonful as the cholent, its blessing does not exempt the rest
of the cholent from the blessing of ha-adamah,(24) and so two blessings

are required.

The other type of cholent is the kind which contains barley in addition to potatoes, beans and small pieces of meat or chicken. This kind of cholent requires only a mezonos blessing. Since it is a "single entity mixture" which contains a member of the five species of grain (barley), the barley assumes the halachic status of ikar (a preeminent ingredient), even if there is less barley than beans and potatoes.(25) The mezonos said over the barley exempts all the other ingredients in the cholent. In order for the barley to be considered the ikar, the following two conditions must be met: The barley must be added to the cholent to enhance its taste. If it is added to the cholent just as a binding or thickening agent,(26) or to give it color or aroma,(27) a mezonos is not said over the barley [or the cholent]; The taste of the barley must actually be noticeable in the mixture.(28) In most cases when barley is added to the cholent, the above two conditions are met. The proper blessing, then, is mezonos. No other blessing should be made over the other ingredients.(29) If, after reciting a mezonos on the barley, one recites another blessing, such as ha-adamah on the potatoes or shehakol on the meat, he may be reciting a blessing in vain (berachah l'vatalah).(30) If one recites ha-adamah or shehakol before the mezonos, he may be reciting an unnecessary blessing(31) (berachah she-einah tzerichah).

An exception to the above rules is when the cholent contains large pieces of meat and chicken which are not eaten together with the rest of the cholent.(32) In that case, a shehakol is said over the meat or chicken after the mezonos has been recited over the cholent.

The berachah acharonah on barley cholent depends on the amount of barley consumed. If one eats a k'zayis of barley (approx. 1.1 fl. oz.) in 3-4 minutes or less, Al ha-michyah is said. No Borei nefashos is required.(33) If less than that amount of barley is eaten, a Borei nefashos is said over the rest of the cholent.

The preferred method when eating a barley cholent at a kiddush is to recite a mezonos over the cake at the beginning of the kiddush while having in mind the cholent as well(34); this obviates the need for a blessing over the cholent. The Al ha-michyah recited over the cake will include the cholent also, thus making it unnecessary to estimate the amount of barley eaten and the time span within which it was consumed.

Note, however, that when barley cholent is served there is no need at all to eat cake, as one may fulfill his obligation of Kiddush b'makom seudah by eating a k'zayis of barley from the cholent.(35)

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FOOTNOTES:

1 Some poskim advise against using a disposable cup for Kiddush (Igras Moshe O.C. 3:39; Minchas Yitzchak 10:23) while others are not particular about that (Harav Y.S. Elyashiv, quoted in Shevus Yitzchak, Muktzeh, pg. 48; Tzitz Eliezer 12:23). 2 Based on the shiur of Harav M. Feinstein. A cheekful is a little more than half a revi'is. 3 O.C. 274:14. There is a minority view (Brisker Rav quoted in Mo'adim u'Zemanim 3:243) that holds that on Shabbos morning one must partake of the kiddush cup in order to fulfill the mitzvah. The poskim, however do not agree with this stringency; see Yechaveh Da'as 5:20. 4 O.C. 174:2. Note, though, that Harav Y.S. Elyashiv is quoted (Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 267) as ruling that only a Borei pri ha-gefen over wine exempts all other beverages; when it is recited over grape juice it does not exempt other beverages. 5 Derech ha-Chayim rules that it is sufficient, but Beir Halachah 174:2 questions that. See Yechaveh Da'as 5:20 and Minchas Yitzchak 8:19. 6 Beir Halachah 174:2. [It is not sufficient to have specific intention that the blessing over the wine should not cover other beverages; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv, quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 100.] 7 Minchas Yitzchak 10:22. 8 Mishnah Berurah 272:30; Aruch ha-Shulchan 272:13; Minchas Shabbos 79:29; Ketzos ha-Shulchan 89:5. 9 Ktzei ha-Mateh (Mateh Efraim 625:99); Eishel Avraham 272:6; Maharsham 1:175; Chelkas Yaakov 1:94. 10 Because the practice was defended (in part) due to the scarcity and expense of wine, some poskim suggest that nowadays, Kiddush should be made over wine or grape juice only, see Nimukei Orchos Chayim 273. 11 This is based on the view of the Taz O.C. 210:1, which is rejected by the latter poskim; see Mishnah Berurah 190:14. 12 O.C. 190:3. 13 Har Tzvi O.C. 159. It follows therefore, that those who follow the majority view and do not recite kiddush on schnapps, do not recite a Borei nefashos when drinking an amount of schnapps less than a revi'is. 14 Mishnah Berurah 271:68. No talking should take place until the minimum amount is drunk. 15 Mishnah Berurah 272:30. 16 Mishnah Berurah 273:25. 17 A notable exception is the view of the G'ra, who maintains that kiddush can be made only when a seudah of bread follows. His view is quoted by the Beir Halachah 273:5 without comment. Aruch ha-Shulchan 273:8 considers

this to be the preferred method. The general custom, however, follows the view of most poskim. 18 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 54:22; Az Nidberu 8:31. See Me'or ha-Shabbos, vol. 2, pg. 576. 19 Mishnah Berurah 273:25, 27. 20 Igras Moshe O.C. 4:63. See also Ein Yitzchak O.C. 12; B'tzeil ha-Chochmah 4:2; 5:115. 21 Mishnah Berurah 273:26. 22 To satisfy the view of the majority of the poskim. 23 O.C. 208:7. Mishnah Berurah 204:57; 207:7; 212:1. 24 Aruch ha-Shulchan 212:2. 25 Mishnah Berurah and Aruch ha-Shulchan 212:1. This is true even if the taste of the barley is not the preferred one. 26 O.C. 208:2. 27 O.C. 204:12. 28 Mishnah Berurah 208:49; Beir Halachah 208:9; Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 212:6; oral ruling from Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in Guide to Practical Halachah, vol. 2, pg. 204). 29 Note that a dissenting opinion (Chayei Adam 51:13; 54:9 and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 54:5) maintains that when each item is recognizable, a separate berachah is made over each. Mishnah Berurah and Aruch ha-Shulchan, however, do not agree, and Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 94) and Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (V'sein Berachah, pg. 63) rule that one need not concern himself with the dissenting view. 30 Mishnah Berurah 168:43. 31 This depends on a disagreement among the Poskim ??see Sha'arei Teshuvah 212:1; Shulchan Aruch Harav 249:4; Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 212:15. 32 Aruch ha-Shulchan 212:2; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 109). 33 O.C. 212:1; Mishnah Berurah 208:48; Igras Moshe O.C. 1:68. 34 The blessing is valid even though the cholent has not yet been served. 35 See O.C. 639:2, Mishnah Berurah 15 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 35. Weekly-Halachah, Copyright © 2001 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishnah Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. Torah.org: The Judaism Site 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B Baltimore, MD 21208

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To: yhe-sichot@vbm-torah.org Subject: Sichah - Parashat Vayigash
Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries of Sichot of the Roshei Yeshiva Parashat Vayigash

Yeshivat Har Etzion extends condolences to its employee Danny Marsha, his wife and entire family, on the tragic loss of their son, Capt. Gad Marsha hy"d, who fell in the line of duty while defusing a terrorist bomb in the Gaza Strip. Ha-Makom yenachem etkhem be-tokeh she'ar avlei Zion ve-Yerushalayim.

Dedicated in memory of Aimee Lefkowitz z"l, whose untimely death has left her family shocked and shattered. She will always be remembered with love.

SICHA OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT" A
TEACHING TORAH TO ONE'S CHILDREN Summarized by Matan Glidai Translated by Kaeren Fish

"And he saw the wagons which Yosef had sent to bring him, and the spirit of Yaakov their father was revived" (45:27).

Rashi explains that Yosef was sending a sign to his father Yaakov. At the time they had separated so many years before, they had been studying together the law of the "egla arufa" (beheaded heifer - the atonement for a murder whose perpetrator is unknown). The wagon ("agala") was meant to remind Yaakov of the "egla." Tosafot, on the other hand, explain that they had been studying the laws pertaining to the wagons in the mishkan. Either way, the sign here was connected to the Torah study in which Yaakov and Yosef jointly had been engaged.

This is reminiscent of Onkelos' understanding of the phrase, "ben zekunim" (lit., son of his old age), which he takes to mean that Yosef was wise, in line with the midrash (84:8) quoted by Rashi:

"R. Nechemia said: All the laws that Shem and Ever had transmitted to him, Yaakov transmitted to Yosef."

The Ramban explains (37:3),

"He transmitted to him wisdom and secrets of the Torah, and found him to be as discerning and able to comprehend esoteric matters as though he were an elderly man."

The fact that Yosef chose to remind his father of their joint Torah study indicates how significant this activity is. What is its significance? First of all, there is an explicit halachic aspect to it:

"Just as a person is obligated to teach his son, so he is obligated to teach his grandchild, as it is written: 'And you shall inform your children and your children's children.'" (Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah 1:2, following Kiddushin 29b-30a)

But there is much more to it than just halakha. One of the sources for a father teaching his child is the command, "And you shall teach them diligently to your children" (Devarim 6:7). Thereafter we are told, "And you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and while you are walking on your way, and when you lie down and when you get up." We are commanded here to engage in Torah study in every place and in every situation; it is central to our lives and touches the soul. This indicates that teaching one's children likewise has an existential element to it, and goes beyond conveying information.

Another source for teaching one's children is to be found in Devarim 4:9-11:
"Only guard yourself and guard your soul greatly lest you forget the things... and you shall make them known to your children and to your children's children, the day when you stood before Hashem your G-d at Chorev when Hashem said to me... and they shall teach their children."

Here, too, the intention is more than just teaching children the commandments and ensuring that they know them intellectually. Parents must convey the very experience of Sinai. The Torah is talking about a feeling, a commitment, and not just knowledge.

Thus, it appears that there is considerable existential significance to the fact that a parent teaches his child. Although the gemara (Bava Batra 21a) teaches that Yehoshua ben Gamla is remembered with favor for having established a network of educational institutions in which children studied from a young age, Rav Hutner explains that this innovation arose as the result of a situation which was less than ideal, where not every father managed to teach his children Torah, and not all children had fathers. Ideally, every father should teach his child himself. This has dual significance: i. If the child learns not in his own home but rather only in school or at yeshiva, then his academic experience is severed from his existential experience. The home is associated with food, shelter and other basic necessities, while study becomes an occupation that takes up part of his day, rather than an existential foundation of his life.

ii. Learning together strengthens and deepens the parent-child relationship. When a parent teaches a child, a powerful and profound bond is created between them. The gemara (Sota 36b) teaches that at the moment when Yosef was tempted to engage in relations with Potifar's wife, the image of Yaakov's face appeared to him. This does not mean that he was reminded of what his father had taught him, but rather that he was reminded of Yaakov himself and of the special bond between them. Yosef felt a closeness to his father, such that he could not engage in this sin.

The whole point of tradition is the handing down of Torah from one generation to the next. This creates an existential connection between parent and child. The gemara (Kiddushin 30a) emphasizes this existential issue: "Anyone who teaches his grandchild Torah is considered as though he himself received the Torah at Har Sinai."

"And he saw the 'agalot'" - Yaakov was reminded of the son whom he had taught, and this is what revived his spirit. Yaakov had no alternative - there were no schools then, and only Yaakov could teach his child. However, as mentioned above, this situation has existential significance even when other possibilities do exist. Today, too, despite the generally accepted educational system, there is great importance attached to parents teaching their children. It is far easier for a parent to instill an existential commitment to Torah than for a school to instill it. Even if a parent is busy and occupied with many other concerns, and even if he has psychological difficulty teaching his child, still - there is nothing more important than this. How can the most important thing that a parent must transmit to his child, his principal task as a parent, be relegated to someone else?

(Delivered at seuda shelishit, Shabbat parashat Vayigash 5752 [1992].)

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From: Kollel Iyun Hadaf RABBI MORDECHAI KORNFELD
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INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF

brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il,
<http://www.dafyomi.co.il> SOTAH 7 (2 Teves) - the Dafyomi study for the last day of Chanukah has been dedicated to the memory of Hagaon Rav Yisroel Zev Gustman Ztz"l (author of "Kuntresei Shiurim") and his wife, Rebbetzin Sarah Gustman (daughter of Hagaon Rav Meir Bassin) on the Rebbetzin's Yahrzeit. Sponsored by a student who merited to study under Rav Gustman's tutelage. SOTAH 8 (3 Teves) - Dedicated by Sid and Sylvia Mosenkis of Queens, N.Y., in memory of Sylvia's father, Shlomo ben Mordechai Aryeh, who passed away 3 Teves 5751/1990. SOTAH 10 (5 Teves) - has been dedicated to the memory of Max (Meir Menachem) Turkel on his Yahrzeit by his children Eddie and Lawrence and their children, and by his wife Jean Turkel/Rafalowicz. *** Please send your D.A.F. contributions to: *** D.A.F., 140-32 69 Ave., Flushing NY 11367, USA

Sotah 7a WORDS NOT FIT TO BE HEARD OPINIONS: The Mishnah (7a) states that the Sotah is told words "that are not fit for her to hear." The Gemara explains that she is told the stories of Reuven and Yehudah, both of whom sinned, admitted their sins, and did Teshuvah. Why are these stories considered "not fit for her to hear?"

(a) RASHI explains that the point of telling her these stories is to convince her to confess her sin. When she hears about the Tzadikim who sinned and confessed their sins, she will be more willing to confess her own sin. The Mishnah says that these stories are "not fit for her to hear," meaning that it is not fit to compare this woman with these great Tzadikim, because their

sins were different, and they admitted their sins and did complete Teshuvah, while this woman is still a suspected adulteress.

(b) The RAMBAM (in Perush ha'Mishnayot) says the opposite of Rashi. The Sotah is told about terrible sins, such as the verse's account of Reuven's sin of living with the Pilegish of his father, and the story of Yehudah who lived with his daughter-in-law. Even though Reuven did not actually sin (Shabbos 55b), we tell her the story according to the way it is written literally in the verses so that she will not be embarrassed to confess her sin (which is a lesser sin than the ones described by the verses about Reuven and Yehudah).

(c) The MEIRI explains that the words in the Mishnah are to be read together as one long phrase -- "we tell her things that she is not able to hear [even when accompanied by] her entire family." The Mishnah means that we present her with a persuasive argument to confess her sin. The argument is so persuasive that even if her family members are present she will not be embarrassed to admit her guilt. Telling these stories does not disgrace her for the sin she committed, but rather these stories make her sin seem less significant (like the Rambam says, as quoted above).

When the Mishnah says that these words are "not fit for her to hear," it means that she is not strong enough to withstand the persuasion to confess.

This is also the explanation of the RAMBAM in the Mahadura Basra of the Perush ha'Mishnayot (Rav Kapach edition).

The Rambam in Mishnah Torah (Hilchos Sotah 3:2) seems to learn this way as well. The Rambam writes that we threaten the woman and try to persuade her when her husband is not present. The Acharonim wonder what the Rambam's source for this is; where does he learn that the woman is threatened while the husband is not present (see KEREM NETA)? According to the Me'iri's reading of the Mishnah, the Mishnah is the source for the Rambam's statement. The Mishnah is saying that we persuade her in such a way that even if her father's family is present, she will not be embarrassed to confess her sin. This implies that her father's family is present, but her husband and his family are *not* present.

Sotah 9b THE SIN OF SHIMSHON QUESTION: The Mishnah says that Shimshon sinned with his eyes by being lured by the beauty of a foreign woman and marrying her. How could Shimshon, a Shofet, judge, of Yisrael, about whom the Gemara (10a) says judged the people of Yisrael like Hashem judges them, have committed such a sin?

ANSWER: The RAMBAM (Hilchos Isurei Bi'ah 13:14-16) asks this question. He explains that Shimshon converted his wife before he married her. Why, then, did his parents protest, and why does the Mishnah chastise him?

The Rambam explains that the Gerus was not performed by a properly ordained Beis Din. A proper Beis Din would first investigate to see whether there were ulterior motives for the Gerus. Shimshon, though, converted the women in the presence of a Beis Din Shel Heduyot, and the women whom he converted were only Megayer in order to marry him. Therefore, they were still prohibited to him. In addition, the Rambam adds that in the end it became clear that they had ulterior motives and had no true intentions to be Megayer, and in such a case the Gerus is not considered valid, since they never really accepted the Mitzvos (Shims hon, though, thought that they would accept the Mitzvos).

Why, then, did Shimshon try to convert these women and accept them as Gerim when it involved such a questionable Gerus? The commentators (see KEREM ORAH) explain that in order to bring the world to its final Tikun and the Ge'ulah Sheleimah, the nations of the world all have to come to recognize the role of Klal Yisrael and their closeness to Hashem, and try to attach and humble themselves to Klal Yisrael. Shimshon -- who judged Klal Yisrael "k'Echad," like Hashem, as our Gemara says, and in the manner of David ha'Melech (like Rashi says in the Chumash) -- had the potential to bring about the Ge'ulah just like the Malchei Beis David and Mashi'ach ben David. In order to do that, though, he knew that he would have to subjugate the nations to Klal Yisrael, and that is what he attempted to do by taking these wives from foreign nations. David ha'Melech had a similar intent when he married women ("Eshes Yefas To'ar") taken during the wars that he fought (see Sanhedrin 21b). This was also Shlomo ha'Melech's intention when he married the daughter of Pharaoh and the other foreign wives whom he converted. (This is similar to what Chazal tell us about Ovadyah ha'Navi, who prophesized the downfall of Edom because he himself was a convert from Edom.)

Even though we know that Mashi'ach must come from the tribe of Yehudah and from the House of David, (as Yakov Avinu hinted in his blessing for Yehudah), the tribe of Dan always has a part in the Tikun together with Yehudah. We find this joint effort with regard to the Mishkan, which was built by Ahali'av (from Dan) together with Betzalel (from Yehudah). Similarly, the Beis ha'Mikdash was built by Chiram (from Dan (maternally)) -- Divrei ha'Yamim II 2:13, and Radak to Melachim I 7:14), together with Shlomo ha'Melech (from Yehudah).

This is further implied by the fact that both Yehudah (in Yakov's blessing) and Dan (in Moshe's blessing) were compared to "Gur Aryeh," a lion. The Beis ha'Mikdash (Midos 4:7) and Hashra'as ha'Shechinah in general (Hoshe'a 11:10; Amos 3:8) are compared to the power of a lion. (The Evil Inclination that directly opposes Hashem's worship in the Mikdash, i.e. that of Avodah Zarah, is also represented by a lion, see Sanhedrin 64a. This, perhaps, is what is alluded to by Shimshon ripping apart a lion with his hands and a beehive filled with sweet honey forming in its carcass.)

Therefore, Shimshon -- from Dan -- wanted to take part in bringing the Mashi'ach. The Midrash says that Yehudah is the most spiritually uplifted of the tribes and Dan is the least, and in order to build the Mishkan and the Beis ha'Mikdash, the two of them must work together. (M. Kornfeld)

Sota 10 TAMAR, THE "GIYORES" AND THE "YESOMAH" QUESTIONS: Tamar assured Yehudah, who thought that she was a Nochrin, that she was permitted to him because she was a Giyores. When he questioned that perhaps her father was Mekadesh her to Er and Onan thus making her Asur to him, she assured him that she was a Yesomah at the time of her Kidushin.

(a) What did Tamar mean when she said that she was a Giyores? The Torah had not yet been given and there were no Jews and no Gerim!

(b) Also, if she was considered a Giyores, why did she have to say that she was a Yesomah in order to answer Yehudah's other concern? We know that a "Ger sh'Nisgayer k'Katan she'Nolad Dami" -- a Ger who converts is like a newborn child (Ye'vamos 97b) -- and thus she has no connection to her Nochri father and he could not have married her off!

(c) In addition, why should the Nochri father be able to be Mekadesh her to someone? The Gemara in Sanhedrin (58b) says that a Nochri only has matrilineal relationship (a Nochri is considered to be related only to his or her mother), and thus a Nochri father is allowed to marry his daughter! Since there is no patrilineal relationship, why is the father permitted to be Mekadesh her to someone?

ANSWERS: (a) RASHI explains that when Tamar said that she was a Giyores, she meant that she did not worship Avodah Zarah, and therefore she was fit to marry Yehudah. RAV YAKOV EMDEN (in Hagahos Ya'avetz) adds that from the times of Avraham Avinu, Avraham and his family were already considered like Bnei Yisrael (see Mishnah l'Melech in beginning of Parshas Derachim). The RA'AVAD in Avodah Zarah (36b) explains that this is the reason why the Beis Din of Shem enacted a prohibition against a Jew or Jewess having relations with a Nochri woman or man (marrying a Nochri or Nochriss is Asur mid'Oraisa). The Gemara cites the verse (Bereishis 38) that describes how Yehudah wanted to kill Tamar as a punishment for transgressing this decree. The Ra'avad explains that even though there was no Torah or Jewish nation at the time of Yehudah, nevertheless the family of Avraham Avinu separated themselves from the other nations and made themselves a unique group dedicated to serving Hashem and rejecting Avodah Zarah. Tamar, the descendant of Shem, was also part of this group.

The BRISKER RAV explains that this is why Yehudah acquitted Tamar of all charges as soon as he realized that he was her suitor. He wanted to kill her as a punishment for having relations with a Nochri, but once he discovered that she had relations with a Jew (himself), he acquitted her because she was guilty of no transgression.

(b) Regarding why the father of a Nochriss should still have the rights of Kidushin of his daughter, the SHEVUS YAKOV (1:177), cited by He'oros b'Maseches Sotah, says that the principle of "Ger sh'Nisgayer k'Katan she'Nolad Dami" does not affect all Halachos, and the rights to marry off his daughter is not affected by this principle.

Another explanation might be that Tamar's father had been Megayer earlier (before she was born), and she meant that she was following the path of her father and serving Hashem. Alternatively, she meant to say that she was Megayer *after* marrying Er and Onan (and at the time that she married Er and Onan, she was still a Nochriss and her father (had he been alive) would have had the rights to be Mekadesh her to them).

(c) Regarding why a Nochri father should have the rights of Kidushin of his daughter if he is not considered related to her, it seems that the rights to marry off a daughter does not stem from familial relationship, but rather from the rights of protectorate that a father has over his daughter. (See Kesuvos 46a, where the Gemara compares the right to marry off one's daughter to the right to sell one's daughter as a maidservant.) Even a Nochri retains such rights of ownership over his minor offspring.

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The Weekly Daf #360 Sotah 11 - 17 By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach
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DELAYED ACTION CONFESSION

To encourage the sotah, the suspected adulteress, to admit her guilt -- and thus eliminate the need to obliterate the parchment containing the Holy Name of Hashem in the potion she must drink -- the Sanhedrin told her of the two great people in history who had the courage to publicly confess their wrongdoing: Yehuda and Reuven.

There is a strong connection, says Rabbi Yonatan, between these two. It was the Yehuda's confession that he had relations with his daughter-in-law Tamar -- whom he mistook for a harlot because of her disguise -- which was the catalyst for Reuven to confess to his father that he was the one guilty of slighting him.

After Rachel's death during the return of Yaakov and his family to Eretz Yisrael, the Patriarch transferred his principal residence from Rachel's tent to that of her handmaid Bilha. Reuven, Leah's oldest son, considered this an affront to his mother. If his mother Leah had only a secondary role to Rachel in Rachel's lifetime, Reuven was certainly not ready to tolerate that she should be secondary to Rachel's maid. He therefore took the initiative of secretly moving his father's bed into Leah's tent. In his parting words to his sons, Yaakov rebuked Reuven for this impetuous rebellion against his decision, a rebellion which caused Reuven to lose the privileges of kingdom and kehuna which otherwise would have been his as the oldest.

Tosefot (Bava Kama 92a) makes an interesting observation connected to the timing of Reuven's confession, which the gemara says was made in order to remove any suspicion that one of his brothers was the guilty party. The Midrash explains that the passage (Bereishet 37:29) "Reuven returned to the pit" (in which Yosef had been placed by his other brothers before they sold him into slavery) refers to Reuven returning from his fasting and sackcloth as repentance for his sin towards his father. The selling of Yosef was many years before the incident with Yehuda and Tamar and Yehuda's confession, and although Reuven was already aware of the need for repentance, his public confession, however, did not come until Yehuda's confession years later.

A careful calculation of the chronology of the aforementioned events indicates that about 25 years transpired between Reuven's misdeed and his confession. The intervening repentance came about nine years after that act and commentaries suggest that the catalyst for it was Reuven's reflection on his brothers' fratricidal plot which he at one stage tried to prevent.

When he observed that they and he at the outset were prepared to slay Yosef without regard for the anguish this would cause their father, he began to reflect on where he had gone wrong in earlier years that could have been the seed of disrespect which now had grown to such proportions. The Midrash says that when Reuven started his repentance, Hashem praised him for "starting repentance at the beginning" because Reuven taught all future returnees that they must go to the root of their errors and repent for their past sins. * Sotah 7b

POETIC JUSTICE

"They were cooked in the pot they prepared for others." This is how Rabbi Elazar explains what Yitro said about the Egyptians drowning in the Yam Suf, the "Red Sea" (Shemot 18:10). They planned to destroy the Jewish people by drowning their male children, and they were punished measure for measure by being drowned.

This theme of poetic justice is taken further by Rabbi Chiya bar Abba. He cites Rabbi Simo's statement that Pharaoh plotted to commit genocide through water in the hope that Hashem would not punish him through water, because Hashem had made an oath to Noah not to bring another world-destroying flood:

"Three people were consulted in that plot -- Bilaam, Iyov and Yitro. Bilaam, who advised implementing it, was eventually slain by the Jews; Iyov, who remained silent, was inflicted with severe bodily pains; and Yitro, who fled, was rewarded with his descendants sitting in the Sanhedrin in the Beit Hamikdash."

These three wise men were certainly capable of pointing out the fallacies in Pharaoh's reasoning which our Sages mention -- that Hashem's oath not to bring a flood was only in regard to the entire world, but not to a single nation, and that there is a difference between flood waters coming upon a land and a nation of pursuers rushing into the water. But to disagree with a despotic autocrat like Pharaoh, even if he accepted their argument, would mean certain death, as in the case of Ketiva bar Shalom and the Roman emperor (Mesechta Avoda Zara 10b).

Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, the Rav of Brisk, offered a beautiful explanation of the measure for measure aspect of the retribution meted out for the various reactions to this challenge. For actively advocating the slaying of Jewish children, Bilaam was slain. Iyov maintained silence rather than protest and flee like Yitro because he felt that Pharaoh's mind was made up and that his outcry would be an exercise in futility. Hashem taught him a lesson by inflicting him with severe boils all over his body. When a person suffers such severe physical pain he cries out, even though his outcry does not in any way heal him. So too, when a person sees mass murder being planned he must cry out, both because it hurts and because there is still the possibility that it may help. Yitro showed great courage in protesting and fleeing for his life because it meant foregoing the great privilege of sitting in the king's palace as a senior adviser. His reward, measure for measure, was that his descendants had the privilege of sitting as judges in the most important royal palace, the Beit Hamikdash. * Sotah 11a

THREE DECREES AND THREE CHALLENGES

In his wicked desire to limit the Israelite population in his land the Egyptian ruler, Pharaoh, issued three successive decrees. First he ordered the midwives to kill every male child born to an Israelite mother. When this proved ineffective because of their lack of cooperation, he appointed officers to cast into the Nile waters every Israelite son. The day Moshe was born, Pharaoh's astrologers told him that the redeemer of the Israelites had come to the world, but they were not certain whether he was Jew or Egyptian. The king thereupon decreed that every child born that day, even those of his own people, be drowned.

When Moshe's father, Amram, divorced his wife as an expression of the futility of bringing children to the world only to have them drowned by the Egyptians, his example was followed by the other Jews because he was the spiritual giant of his generation. His daughter, Miriam, challenged his decision with the arguments which, Maharsha explains, correspond to the aforementioned three decrees.

Your decree, she told him, is more severe than Pharaoh's, because he only decreed against the males and your decree affects females as well. This corresponds to the initial decree of infanticide limited to sons.

His decree, she added, only affected the lives of those children in this world while yours denies these unborn children both this world and the World to Come. (Since they will never be born they cannot enter the World to Come -- Rashi.) This corresponds to the second decree about drowning the children and came to stress the belief that even those who drown will enter the World to Come as is stated in the passage "I shall return (the dispersed of Israel) from the depths of the sea." (Tehillim 68:23 - See Mesechta Gittin 57b where this passage was cited by the oldest of the Jewish children being shipped to Rome for immoral exploitation as an assurance that their martyrdom in leaping into the sea would not deny them entry into the World to Come.)

Pharaoh's decree, concluded Miriam, may or may not be fulfilled while yours is the decree of a tzaddik and will certainly be fulfilled by Hashem as we learned in the Book of Iyov (22:28) "You shall decree and it will be fulfilled." This was directed at the third decree which affected the Egyptians as well. There is no certainty, Miriam pointed out, as to whether the Egyptians will be so patriotic as to go along with a royal decree condemning their own sons to death and they may well bring about the abolition of that decree. Your decree, however, is certain to be fulfilled.

Amram accepted her arguments and remarried Yocheved; following his example, all the other Jews reestablished family life in Egypt. * Sotah 12a

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