

BS"D

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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYIGASH - 5763

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RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER  
GALUS HASHECHINA

In this week's parshah we see that Yaakov was very concerned about leaving Eretz Yisroel. Hashem appears to him and tells him not to worry. He Himself would go down to Egypt with him, and would return the Jewish people to Eretz Yisroel at the proper time. Hashem's gdescending into galus is with klal yisroel is known as "galus hashechina".

This concept of "galus hachechina" has been understood in the classic literature on several different levels:

Firstly, the Torah tells us that when someone kills accidentally, he must run away to stay in one of "the cities of refuge". But it is not necessary that he suffer there. Quite the contrary. The Torah says, "he should live there" (until the death of the high priest.) The connotation of that phrase is that the murderer should have a pleasant stay there. It is for this reason that the rabbis of the Talmud commented that if the murderer is one who enjoys learning Torah, we must provide him with a shiur. His rabbi must also visit the "city of refuge" to present Torah lectures for the enjoyment of the murderer. The punishment of going into galus is bad enough, and should not be made worse by having him miss his regular Torah studies.

Similarly, when Hashem punishes the Jewish people and sends them into galus He personally accompanies us into that galus so that we will not suffer more than is necessary, and so that our stay will not be too terrible.

Secondly, the Talmud recalls instances when the rabbis had to place a cherem on a Torah scholar (for having violated sins), and would simultaneously put themselves into cherem. This was in order to remind themselves to be "mattir" the cherem on the Talmid Chochom at the same time they would be "mattir" their own cherem.

So too, Hakadosh Baruch Hu goes into galus along with us, "suffering along with Am Yisroel" so to speak. He will certainly not be able to forget about redeeming us from galus, since He will need to redeem Himself from the galus.

In the Tanya, Kabbalistic sources are quoted where a totally different understanding of the term (galus hasheshchina) is presented. When Hashem created the entire world ex nihilo, the basic and fundamental nature of all things was nothingness; that nothing else existed (outside of Him). Even when everything in the world was brought into existence, if not for the continuous will of G-d that all these things continue to exist, everything would revert to the state of non-existence. (Ramban on Parshas Bereishis understands that this is the meaning of the phrase which is oft repeated, "G-d saw that everything was good", i.e. He willed that everything should continue to exist). This continued will of G-d is referred to as "sparks of sanctity" (nitzotzos of kedusha).

These "sparks of sanctity" preserve all things that continue to exist in the world – holy (people and objects), secular, and profane alike. In this sense there is a galus hashechina, because these "sparks of holiness" are "arrested" (so to speak) in unholy things, places, and people. One can truly refer to this state as one of "melech assur borehotim" (as if the King is imprisoned). Everything in the world yearns (so to speak) to have a meaningful existence. This will only come about if and when each created item will serve to heighten the glory of Hashem; i.e., if it will be used in the performance of some mitzvah or another. This is the symbolic meaning of the Talmudic comment as to what positive result was accomplished by sending the Jews into galus? Many non-Jews converted to Judaism, i.e., more of the secular world became involved in the observance of mitzvos, and had thereby attained a meaningful existence.

<http://www.vbm-torah.org/parsha.61/12vayechi.htm>

Parshat HaShavua Yeshivat Har Etzion

THE PATH OF REPENTANCE:

A RESPONSE TO RAV YOEL BIN-NUN

BY RAV YA'AKOV MEDAN

Adapted by Rav Zvi Shimon

I would like to critique the theory offered by Rav Yoel Bin-Nun in last week's shiur and to offer an alternate explanation.

I) CRITIQUE OF RAV BIN-NUN'S THEORY

I find untenable Rav Bin-Nun's thesis that Yosef suspected that his father had rejected him and had approved of the brothers' actions. Yosef knew that he was, after all, his father's favorite son, and that his father had made him the striped coat. He also knew that his father had loved Rachel more than his other wives. Above all, would a man like Ya'akov behave so deceitfully, sending Yosef to his brothers on the false pretext of ascertaining their well-being, intending in fact that they sell him as a slave? Is there a son who would suspect his father of such a deed? This assumption is totally unrealistic.

It also remains unclear why Yosef, surprised that his father did not seek him out, came to harbor the kind of suspicions attributed to him by R. Bin-Nun. How could he be certain that his father knew of the sale, but refrained from searching for him? Why did it not occur to him that his father regarded him as dead? To this day, a person who disappears without a trace is presumed dead. Why should we assume that Yosef did not believe that the brothers were lying to his father? It was precisely because the brothers did not habitually report their actions to their father that Yosef found it necessary to tell his father all their misdeeds (37:2).

In addition, R. Bin-Nun claims that Yosef's stubborn silence was broken upon hearing Yehuda report Ya'akov's words: "He was surely devoured and I have not seen him since" (44:28). Yosef realized at this point that his father had not deserted him. However, according to the simplest reading of the text, Yosef's resistance broke down when Yehuda offered himself as a slave instead of Binyamin:

"... Therefore, please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord instead of the boy, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father unless the boy is with me? Let me not see to the sorrow that would overcome my father! ...

Yosef could no longer restrain himself." (44:32-45:1)

R. Bin-Nun claims that Yosef's feelings of rejection by his family are the foundation for the naming of his first born "Menashe," meaning, "G-d has made me forget my hardship and my father's home" (nashani = made me forget).

In my opinion, the meaning of the verse is different. "My hardship" (amali) is to be understood as follows (see Ibn Ezra, Bereishit

6:13): "G-d has made me forget completely my hardship and the HARSHIP of my parental home." Yosef does not offer thanks to G-d for having made him forget his parental home, but rather offers thanks for enabling him to forget his tribulations in his father's house. It is only after Yosef rises to the throne that he is able to make sense of his suffering in the two previous episodes, in prison ("amali") and in his father's house ("beit avi").

## II) AN ALTERNATE EXPLANATION

Abarbanel offers the following explanation for Yosef's not contacting his father while in Egypt:

"Even after Yosef tested his brothers by accusing them of espionage, he was still not certain whether they loved Binyamin or whether they still hated Rachel's children, so he focused on Binyamin to see whether they would try to save him." (chap. 42, questions 4 & 6)

Yosef's behavior is part of an overall scheme to test the brothers and provide them with an opportunity to repent fully for selling him into slavery. The sin of Yosef's brothers is one of the more serious sins related in the book of Bereishit. Both the Torah (Shemot 21:17, 20:13; see Rashi *ibid.*; Devarim 24:7) and the Prophets (Yoel 4, Amos 2:6-10 and many others) equate this sin of selling a free man into bondage with the gravest of sins. The penitence of Yosef's brothers is not an incidental event appearing as part of another story, but a major theme of the narrative.

Reuven and Yehuda were vying for the family leadership, Ya'akov having effectively ceased playing the leadership role (see for example 34:5, 34:13-14, 35:22, 43:5). After Shimon and Levi are excluded from the race for leadership, the struggle continues between Reuven and Yehuda. It finds expression in their argument as to Yosef's fate (37:22,26-27), in the recognition of the sin of his sale (42:22 vs. 44:16), in the assumption of responsibility for Binyamin in Egypt (42:37 vs. 43:8-9) and in additional verses in the Torah.

Reuven and Yehuda were each engaged in a process of penitence for similar sins, Reuven for having slept with his father's wife (as appears from the simple textual reading), Yehuda for having lain, albeit unknowingly, with his son's wife. It seems clear that their individual repentance is also part of the leadership struggle.

At first glance, there seems to be no connection between Reuven's sin with his father's wife or Yehuda's sin with his son's wife and the selling of Yosef. This, however, is misleading. According to the simple reading of the text, Reuven's intention when committing his sin was to inherit his father's leadership role during his father's lifetime, like Avshalom who slept with David's concubine. His attempt to rescue Yosef and Yosef's dreams of royalty (37:20) are part of his repentance for his sin with Bilha. The proximity of the story of Yehuda and Tamar to the selling of Yosef indicates a connection as well. The chain of disasters that strike Yehuda, the loss of his wife and two sons, is apparently a punishment for selling Yosef. Reuven later advances the strange suggestion that Ya'akov kill his two sons, should he fail to return Binyamin from Egypt (42:37). It would seem that he was influenced by the punishment Yehuda had received for selling Yosef - the death of his two sons. This terrible punishment for a terrible sin is branded into Reuven's consciousness. Reuven is ready to receive the same punishment if he deserts Binyamin in Egypt.

Initially, Yehuda did not imagine that his sons died due to his sin, believing instead that "Tamar's fate is that her husbands will die" (Yevamot 34; see also Bereishit 38:11). Finally, Yehuda realizes that Tamar was in the right and he admits, "She is more righteous than I" (38:26). Only at this stage did he realize that she was not destined to have her husbands die, but rather that it was his

destiny to lose his sons. The sin was his. From this recognition he rebuilds his shattered home.

The process of repentance accompanies the brothers wherever they go. When the Egyptian viceroy commands them to bring Binyamin, the second son of Rachel, the brothers are immediately reminded of the sale of Yosef. The two contenders - Reuven and Yehuda - respond in character. Reuven sees only the punishment for the crime, and he does not suggest any means of rectification. "And Reuven answered them: 'Did I not tell you, Do not sin against the child; but you did not listen, and now his blood is being avenged.'" (42:22)

Yehuda acknowledges his sin, but also suggests a positive path of repentance for the evil done. He is not satisfied with sackcloth and fasting, which are merely expressions of mourning and acceptance of the verdict.

"And they tore their clothes ... And Yehuda said, 'What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? G-d has revealed the sin of your servants; we have become my lord's slaves.'" (44:13-17)

And further on, Yehuda suggests firm action:

"Let your servant stay instead of the boy as a slave to my lord and let the boy go up with his brothers." (44:33)

From Yehuda's speech, it is apparent that when he said, "G-d has revealed the sin of your servants," he was not confessing to stealing the cup. He considered the whole episode of the stolen goblet as a fabrication. Otherwise there is no sense in his recounting of Binyamin's to Egypt, nor in his suggesting that he replace Binyamin. Rather, "G-d has revealed the SIN of your servants" undoubtedly refers to the selling of Yosef.

Similarly, Yehuda's words to his father, "If I bring him not to you and set him before you, then I shall have SINNED to you for all days" (43:9), indicate his understanding of the connection between Yosef's being brought down to Egypt and Binyamin being brought down to Egypt. Binyamin's abandonment in Egypt would be a continuation of his grievous sin of selling Yosef. Otherwise, how can we understand what sin he is referring to and why he should be punished if Binyamin is taken forcibly? We must therefore view the necessity of bringing Binyamin down to Egypt as a consequence of the sin. For Yehuda, protecting Binyamin at all costs is the atonement demanded for the selling of Yosef. In offering their respective propositions, Reuven and Yehuda remain faithful to their personalities: Reuven through acceptance of the punishment, and Yehuda through confrontation with the sin itself.

Our assumption is that Yosef too was plagued by his brothers' sin and, consequently, with the future of the house of Israel, no less than with his own fate. From the time he was sold, he had begun to rebuild not only his own life, but his family's unity. This unification was not to be forced upon his brothers, but rather achieved by willingness and love. Yosef desired a unification born of his brothers' regretting their sin, a product of wholehearted repentance. Yosef believed in his own ability to initiate such a process or at least to test its existence.

Yosef had commanded his brothers to bring Binyamin to Egypt. When the brothers actually brought Binyamin to Egypt, despite the danger, in order to redeem Shimon and to buy food, Yosef, who was unaware of Yehuda's assumption of guardianship and its importance, presumably saw the brothers' action as yet another failure to meet the test and challenge that he had set before them.

Yosef cries three times. The first two times he cries in private, and then restrains himself. The third time he breaks down totally and cries, openly and without control. R. Bin-Nun cites the third episode as proof that Yosef was taken by surprise by the developments, and therefore concludes that this outcome had not

been planned by Yosef. However, R. Bin-Nun ignores the obvious connection between the three instances. Let us examine these three episodes.

#### A) First Tears:

The brothers are subjected to an intensive interrogation during three days of imprisonment, inducing them to repent for their sin and accept the punishment and suffering, with Reuven in the lead (42:21,22).

"On the third day, Yosef said to them, 'Do this and you shall live, for I am a G-d-fearing man. If you are honest men, let one of you brothers be held in your place of detention, while the rest of you go and take home rations for your starving households; but you must bring me your youngest brother, that your words may be verified and that you may not die.' And they did accordingly. They said to one another, 'Alas, we are being punished on account of our brother [Yosef], because we looked on at his anguish, yet paid no heed as he pleaded with us. That is why this distress has come upon us.'

Then Reuven spoke up and said to them, 'Did I not tell you, Do not sin against the child; but you did not listen, and now his blood is being avenged.'

They did not know that Yosef understood, for there was an interpreter between him and them. He turned away from them, and wept. But he came back to them and spoke to them; and he took Shimon from among them and had him bound before their eyes." (42:18-24)

We have previously defined this kind of repentance as "Reuven's repentance," a repentance which involves submission and acceptance of the verdict, but lacks a program for improvement and change. Yosef is prepared to accept his brothers' confession and their submission. He witnesses the beginning of the ten brothers' reconnection to the sons of Rachel, and he cries (42:24). But this is not sufficient for him. He requires a fuller, deeper repentance.

#### B) Second Tears

Yosef expected that the brothers would return to him empty-handed, placing themselves in danger by explaining to him that they had decided not to endanger Binyamin for the sake of Shimon and were willing to suffer the shame of hunger. This is what would have happened, had Ya'akov had his way. Thus Yosef was disappointed when it became clear to him that the brothers had brought Binyamin in order to redeem Shimon, despite the danger to their youngest brother.

"Looking about, he saw his brother Binyamin, his mother's son, and asked, 'Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?' And he went on, 'May G-d be gracious to you, my boy.' With that, Yosef hurried out, for he was overcome with feeling toward his brother and was on the verge of tears; he went into a room and wept there." (43:29-30)

Yosef is still unaware of Yehuda's assumption of responsibility for Binyamin. His mercy is aroused when he realizes that his younger brother's fate is to be no better than his own - Yosef views Binyamin's being brought to Egypt as a recurrence of his own sale. True, in this case it is brought on by hunger and is not the outcome of jealousy or hatred. Nonetheless, this was not the total repentance that was expected in the wake of the confessions he had heard from the brothers and Reuven previously.

The verse tells us that Yosef feels compassion towards Binyamin, and weeps in private. Yosef believes that Yehuda, the man who had proposed his sale, had prevailed over Reuven, the man who had tried to save him. This is the only possible explanation of Yosef's crying over Binyamin, his tears being tears of mercy for Binyamin and not tears of happiness at the event of their meeting. Why else should the exiled brother, who had spent a third of his

life in prison, have pitied his thirty-year old brother, who had remained with his father and raised a large family?

#### C) Third Tears

Yosef decided to test his brothers once more. This time, however, the test would be more difficult. He makes his brothers jealous of Binyamin in the same way that they had once been jealous of him. He displays more outward affection for Binyamin than for them and increases his portion five times over, as well as giving him a striped coat (and five other garments, 43:34). He also attempts to arouse the brothers' hatred towards Binyamin for having stolen his goblet, an act that re-implicated them for the crime of espionage. Yosef's aim is to test their reaction to the prospect of Binyamin's permanent enslavement in Egypt. The brothers rend their garments (parallel to Yosef's coat, 37:23). Yehuda says, "G-d has revealed the sin of your servants," and then offers himself into permanent slavery as atonement for his lifelong sin towards his father.

"Yehuda approached him and said: '...Now your servant has pledged himself for the boy to my father, saying, If I do not bring him back to you, I shall have sinned to my father for all days. Therefore, please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord instead of the boy, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father unless the boy is with me? Let me not be witness to the woe that would overtake my father.'

Yosef could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, 'Have everyone withdraw from me!' So there was no one else about when Yosef made himself known to his brothers. His sobs were so loud that the Egyptians could hear, and so the news reached Pharaoh's palace." (44:32-45:2)

At this point, Yosef is convinced of their total repentance.

Yehuda's act combines two kinds of repentance. The first form of repentance is that required by the early mystics (foremost, Rabbi Eliezer of Worms, author of the Sefer Rokeach), whereby penance must counterbalance the crime. Yehuda, in a torn garment as a permanent slave in Egypt, is in the exact position he had placed Yosef. Secondly, we have the repentance as defined by the Rambam:

"What is complete repenta? When a person is confronted with the opportunity to repeat his sin but restrains himself because of repentance, and not because of fear or weakness." (Hilkhot Teshuva 2:1)

Yehuda now is prepared to give his life to save Binyamin. Yosef comes to realize his mistake in crying for pity over Binyamin. He understands that Binyamin's being brought down to Egypt was not the result of the brothers' disdain for Binyamin but rather the result of Yehuda's becoming Binyamin's guarantor. Yehuda's repentance, including his attempt to amend the past, is a continuation and completion of Reuven's atonement. Yosef's weeping for the third time is a continuation of his weeping the first time, when Reuven submitted to the divine punishment.

When the repentance is complete, Yosef is no longer capable of restraining himself, and he weeps openly. At this stage, the brothers' repentance for selling Yosef into slavery is complete and Yosef can reveal himself to them.

(This presentation of Rav Medan's ideas is abridged from a much longer article in Megadim, vol. 2.)

#### RAV BIN-NUN RESPONDS:

After carefully reading Rav Medan's detailed arguments, I nevertheless maintain that my presentation of the events is the correct one.

There is clearly a process of repentance and rectification on the part of Yosef's brothers, and this is our guide to understanding the affair. But all this is G-d's plan, not Yosef's. All of R. Medan's evidence proving a process of repentance is correct; but there is no reason to credit Yosef with this.

At the end of Bereishit (50:15-21) we find the brothers, after Ya'akov's death, prostrating themselves before Yosef and offering themselves as slaves. This indicates that their prior repentance had not been complete, and they did not regard Yosef as having orchestrated (and accepted) their repentance earlier. Thus, the challenge of repentance offered the brothers regarding Binyamin is a challenge issuing from G-d. Yosef himself was forever acting according to natural, human considerations, as I explained. It should be noted that R. Medan gives an extremely contrived interpretation of the verse explaining Menashe's name, "For G-d has forced me to forget all my tribulations and my father's house." The verse seemingly coheres with my explanation. He also totally ignores the significance of Yehuda's quotation of Ya'akov's words, "You have know that my wife bore me two; one departed from me and I said he was surely devoured." There is no proof that Yosef's inability to restrain his tears was due solely to Yehuda's final words and not to Yehuda's speech as a whole.

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From: Rabbi Yisroel Ciner [ciner@torah.org] Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2002 11:53 PM To: parsha-insights@torah.org Subject: Parsha Nights - Vayigash  
Vayigash By RABBI YISROEL CINER

This week we read the parsha of Va'yigash. In last week's parsha, the brothers, including Binyamin, came down to Mitzrayim {Egypt} and prostrated themselves before Yosef. This fulfilled Yosef's first dream/prophecy of the bundles of grain, representing the brothers, bowing down to his bundle. Afraid to send Binyamin back with the brothers until he was convinced of their love for him (Ramban 42:9), Yosef, before their return trip, had his goblet planted in Binyamin's bag. The brothers began to travel home but, once they were 'caught' with the goblet, they were brought back to Mitzrayim. The parsha ended with Yosef's declaration that he will keep Binyamin as his personal slave and the other brothers may return to their father.

Our parsha begins: "Va'yigash ailav Yehuda {And Yehuda drew close to him} [44:18]," to argue the case of Binyamin before Yosef. Yehuda relates the effect that Binyamin not returning will have on their father Yaakov. He relates how he had pledged to excommunicate himself in both this world and the eternal one if Binyamin would not return (Rashi 44:32). Finally he offers himself as a more able slave in the place of Binyamin.

Upon witnessing this display of brotherly love between Yehuda, the son of Leah, and Binyamin, the other son of Rachel, Yosef realizes that the animosity that they had toward him was not felt toward Binyamin. Overcome with emotion he orders all of the Egyptians to leave the room. Yosef, crying, turns to his brothers and reveals his true identity. "Ani Yosef -- ha'ode avi chai {I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?} [45:3]." The brothers, unable to answer him, stood there in a shocked and embarrassed silence. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: Woe to us on the day of judgment... Woe to us on the day of reproof... If the brothers were unable to answer Yosef, who was the youngest of the Tribes, then when Hashem will come and give us reproof, we'll certainly have no answer to give [Yalkut Shimoni 152]. Rav Chaim Shmuelovitz zt"l asks what rebuke did Yosef give to his brothers?

He simply said was that he was Yosef and asked if his father was still alive! Where was the reproof?

He explains that we have a misconception when it comes to giving someone reproof. We think that we have to really 'blast' the person -- really let him have it. In fact, the essence of reproof is revealing the mistake that they have been making. Such a recognition is by far the most powerfully unsettling feeling that anyone can experience.

"I am Yosef!" The young brother you sold as a slave now stands before you as the leader of Mitzrayim. You thought you'd stymie the dreams by selling me -- it was that very sale which brought about the actualization of the dreams. You were all making a terrible mistake. I was not the 'dreamer' you accused me of being... I was right... I was a prophet... You all came to bow down to me. You made a terrible mistake.

That is the point that Rabi Shimon ben Elazar is learning from this incident. Look at the shocked embarrassment of the Tribes when their little brother demonstrated their mistake. Imagine the feeling we'll have when we'll be confronted by Hashem. The clear realization of the degree to which we fooled ourselves and the mistakes which didn't remain simply as intellectual errors but became the faulty foundation upon which we based our lives. With this, Rav Chaim Shmuelovitz lends insight to another fascinating chaza"l. After Yitzchok had given the blessing to Yaakov, Esav arrived from the field ready to receive his blessing. "Va'yecherad Yitzchok charadah gedolah {And Yitzchok trembled tremendously [27:33]}." Rashi explains that Yitzchok trembled because he saw gehinom {hell} open up beneath Esav. Whereas Gan Eden {paradise} had entered along with Yaakov, gehinom had opened up beneath Esav. The Medrash teaches that Yitzchok trembled at that point even more than he had trembled at the akeida -- when his father Avrohom had bound him on the altar in order to offer him as a sacrifice. All of his life Yitzchok thought that Esav was the tzaddik {righteous individual} -- that Esav, not Yaakov, was deserving of the blessings. Gehinom opening beneath Esav showed Yitzchok the terrible mistake that he had lived with. All of his life he had been wrong. His whole body began to tremble...

Very often, we choose to knowingly fool ourselves in order to be able to live and act as we wish. So as not to lock ourselves into restrictions and a lifestyle that we might not feel totally comfortable with...

A close friend and colleague of mine, Rav Avrohom Falk, shared with me the following incident. A student approached him with a complaint. He felt that the Yeshiva wasn't really dealing with and answering the questions and difficulties that he had with Judaism. Our perspective was that, in fact, a lot of time was being spent with this particular student, however he didn't seem ready or willing to listen.

Rabbi Falk told him as follows: "If you want, there's a person in Yerushalayim {Jerusalem} that I can take you to. He's amazing... He can show it all to you. You'll see the plagues brought upon Mitzrayim, you'll witness the splitting of the sea. You'll stand at the foot of Har Sinai {Mount Sinai} and you'll hear Hashem say: 'I am Hashem your G-d.' You'll have no doubts, no questions, it will all be as clear as day.

"However, if you go to him and you see all of this, then your life will have to change drastically. No more girlfriends, no more parties, no more wasting time. Prayer - three times a day, blessings - on everything you eat, learning - every spare moment. You'll have seen the truth. You'll have to go full steam ahead. No more messing around, no more nonsense. Are you ready to see him? Would you agree to go?"

The student smiled sheepishly, understanding that there was no such person but recognizing the point that was being made. The issue was not his questions -- it was his unwillingness to hear answers. We'd prefer to knowingly fool ourselves rather than be locked into a position that we don't feel comfortable with.

This Shabbos, when we hear the reading of the Torah portion, may the words "Ani Yosef {I am Yosef}" serve as the reminder we all need to be true to ourselves...

Good Shabbos, Yisroel Ciner

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2002 4:40 AM To: yhesichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT63 -11: Parashat Vayigash Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries Of Sichot Of The Roshei Yeshiva Parashat Vayigash

HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein will be speaking on Sunday morning, December 15th at 10 A.M. at The Jewish Center - 131 West 86th Street. All are invited to attend. Attention Alumni - The Annual Alumni Shabbaton with HaRav Lichtenstein will take place this Shabbat, December 13-14th in Great Neck. Reservations can be accepted until Wednesday afternoon. Please call the office 212-732-4874 for further information.

MORALITY OR DIVINE CHARGE?

SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A

Summarized by Dov Karoll

Our parasha opens with Yehuda pleading with Yosef to release Binyamin. A central aspect of his plea is based on the suffering that would be caused to Yaakov were Binyamin not to return with the brothers. The real question is how could Yosef act in a way that caused Yaakov so much suffering? Commentators throughout the ages have dealt with the question of why Yosef did not write home in the years after he ascended to greatness. In my opinion, none of these explanations seem to answer satisfactorily how Yosef could justify the suffering caused to Yaakov in the interim.

To give but one example: the Or Ha-chayim (45:26) explains that Yosef did not want to embarrass his brothers by telling Yaakov what happened, because of the severity of embarrassing another. This is based on the Gemara (Bava Kamma 59a) stating that one should rather be thrown into a furnace than embarrass someone. The problem is that the suffering caused to Yaakov was so great! I would think that this suffering would outweigh the problematic aspect of embarrassing his brothers. It is true that "he who embarrasses his fellow is considered as if he killed him," but was not leaving Yaakov to suffer also comparable to killing him?

Rather, what appears to me to be the best explanation is that Yosef was convinced that the Divine plan was being executed through him. Yosef was convinced that G-d had placed the responsibility for carrying out His plan on Yosef's shoulders. Accordingly, Yosef felt that he needed to accomplish certain goals, as revealed to him in his dreams, regardless of the consequences, even for his beloved father Yaakov.

In a similar vein, returning to the sale of Yosef, the brothers were convinced that they, the children of Leah, were the chosen ones, and Yaakov and Yosef were blind to this reality. They were convinced that the Divine plan required throwing Yosef out of the family.

Only people convinced they are acting on Divine orders, charged with carrying out G-d's plan, are capable of acting in the way that Yosef and his brothers, respectively, acted. They had not received direct divine commands, but they saw it as their responsibility to bring about a certain situation which they believed to be desired by G-d.

However, the Torah strongly criticizes Yosef for acting as he did. The Torah describes the intense pain and suffering caused to Yaakov throughout the many years Yosef was away. It also makes clear how difficult it was for Yaakov to allow Binyamin

to go down to Egypt, despite the fact that over twenty years had passed, and the fact that Binyamin was a grown man with many children of his own. The inclusion of these descriptions in the Torah's presentation of the story clearly indicates that the Torah views Yosef's plan negatively.

Yosef may have been convinced he was acting in accordance with a Divine plan, but apparently he was meant to act on the human plane, and was meant to follow regular moral norms. He should have acted reasonably, and shown compassion for his father, rather than acting as one who is convinced that he knows with certainty the Will of G-d. G-d can bring about the realization of His plans, and does not require of yman to forsake human and moral considerations.

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By: YEHUDA NAJMAN

As Yosef's brothers plan their return to Canaan, Yosef prepares them for the trip. The Torah records, "[T]o them all he (Yosef) gave a change of clothes; and to Binyamin, he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothes." (Ber. 45:22).

The Gemara, in Megilla 16b, seems perplexed. When Yosef received the special coat from his father, Yosef fell victim to the anger and jealousy arising out of Ya'acov's favoritism. How could Yosef create a situation that would expose Binyamin to the identical threat which destroyed his own family years earlier? The Gemara offers the answer of Rav Binyamin bar Yefet. He asserts that Yosef gave Binyamin five garments as a hint to Binyamin that a descendent of his [Mordechai] would one day wear the five royal vestments (see Esther ch.9).

The likely ramifications of favoring Binyamin could not have escaped Yosef. What motivated Yosef to commit this act of overt provocation? One approach to this question rejects the provocative nature of Yosef's gesture. It shows how the brothers' jealousy remained unaroused despite the fact that Binyamin received something that they did not. An alternative approach justifies Yosef's act in spite of its provocative nature. One way to explain this second approach is to demonstrate that extenuating circumstances necessitated Yosef's act of favoritism. Another way to justify Yosef's gesture to Binyamin is to show that there was some value to inciting the brothers to jealousy.

The Vilna Gaon adopts the approach denying that provocation would result from Yosef's act. He claims that the five garments Binyamin received were equal in value to the one garment received by each of the other brothers. Inasmuch as the brothers recognized that each received equal value, no jealousy arose. The Torah Temimah bolsters this position with the Midrash Rabbah on Parashat Ki-Tissah. There, the Midrash Rabbah extrapolates from the elliptical spelling of the word for tablets, luchot - tcvl - (minus a second 'vav'), that both tablets retained equal value. The Torah Temimah applies the Midrash's principle to verse 22. He notes that the word for changes (as in changes of clothes), chalifot - tfvpylc, is spelled complete, when referring to the brothers; but it appears incomplete, (tpylc) without the 'vav,' when referring to Binyamin. This incomplete form indicates that the garments of Binyamin and of the brothers were valued equally. Knowing that Yosef was merely hinting to Binyamin

about his future kingship, presumably, the brothers had no cause for jealousy.

The Chizkuni, seems to justify Yosef's act of favoritism on the grounds of external necessity. Yosef needed to discharge a personal obligation to Binyamin. The Chizkuni claims that Yosef owed Binyamin five sets of clothes: One, Binyamin tore K'riah with all the brothers. Two, Binyamin was the son of Rachel. Three, Yosef falsely accused Binyamin of theft. Four and Five, Yosef plotted to convict Binyamin of theft, thereby obligating him to pay double the value of the stolen object. Yosef's plot served to impute the penalty intended for Binyamin onto himself. These explanations leave certain questions unsolved. First, even if the values of all the garments were equal, the mere hint of kingship ought to have sufficed to stir up the jealousy of the brothers. Secondly, why was it so crucial to inform Binyamin now, and in plain view of the others, that kings would emerge from him? After all, Y'OHudah sired a royal dynasty as well as Binyamin. Third, that Binyamin was the son of Rachel, the favorite wife, would not serve as a justification to the brothers for an extra portion to him. On the contrary, such a reason would be more likely to incite jealousy than prevent it. Apparently, Yosef needed to accomplish two goals. He needed to communicate to his brothers the essence of the Sons of Rachel. He also needed to elicit complete repentance from his brothers.

Yosef understood that the cloak chronicled his experiences. The coat of his father caused him to end up in Egypt. Similarly, his cloak in the hands of Potiphar's wife landed him in jail.

Furthermore, Yosef's rise was marked by references to clothing. When Yosef was brought to Pharaoh, he was given new clothing.

And when he was appointed viceroy, Pharaoh gave Yosef vestments of kingship.

Moreover, key events in the lives of Yosef's descendants are emphasized through the use of sartorial imagery. In addition to Mordechai's ascent, which the Gemara itself invokes, King Sha'ul's demise is marked by pointed references to clothing. After the infamous battle with Amalek, Sha'ul tries to keep his dynasty; "And as Shemuel turned about to go away, he (Sha'ul) laid hold of the corner of his (Shemuel's) robe, and it tore." (I Samuel, 15:27). The robe is used again, as the literary device to communicate the inevitability of David's succession to Sha'ul, "...[T]hen David arose and secretly cut off the corner of Sha'ul's robe." Yosef's hint to the brothers makes them realize that the physical trappings (harm tpyv rat tpy) of Rachel and her progeny would comprise a major thread in the fabric of Jewish destiny. Aware of the role that B'Onei Rachel would assume, Yosef uses this occasion to enable his brothers to repent fully for what they did to him. Yosef's reference to Binyamin's kingship not only reenacted the episode of the coat, but it reenacted the dream in which Yosef declared to his brothers that he would rule over them. Thus, the brothers found themselves in precisely the position that existed when Yosef was sold. Only by fabricating this scenario could Yosef force his brothers to choose once again between submitting to jealousy and overcoming it. It remains as no surprise, that Yosef's parting words to his brothers were, "Don't get angry on the way (back to Canaan)." That is, "Don't make the same mistake with Binyamin that you made with me."

Yosef knew the provocative effect of giving five garments to Binyamin. Yosef deliberately maximized the potential for jealousy, thus placing the brothers in the optimum position to atone for their earlier crime. Simultaneously, Yosef communicated to Binyamin the primary characteristics that later defined their role as Sons of Rachel within the destiny of B'nei Yisrael.

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<http://www.koltorah.org/volume10/vayigash2001.htm>

Intellectual Honesty

by RABBI HERSHEL SOLNICA

Parshat Vayigash is the climax of the story of Yosef as Yosef reveals himself to his brothers. It is not simply the playing out of a soap opera, but rather a profound Mussar Haskel, eternal ethical message, that should strike us deeply.

"And Yosef said to his brothers: 'I am Yosef, is my father still alive?'" (45:3). The Seforno notes Yehuda's inconsistency. Yosef knew that Yaakov was still alive (Yaish Lanu Av Zaken, 44:20); however, he derisively points at Yehuda and says, Ee Efshar Shelo Mait Midaagato Ailai, "How is it possible that you did not worry about father's health when you sold me?"

The Yalkut Shimoni (45:154) says: Amar Rav Shimon Ben Elazar Oy Lanu Miyom Hadin...Yosef Ketano Shel Shevatim Haya Velo Yochlu Echav Laanot Oto...Kisheyavo hakadosh Baruch Hu Veyochiach Lanu...Al Achat Cama Vecama, "Rav Shimon ben Elazar says, 'Woe to us on the day of judgment...Yosef was the youngest of the tribes, and the brothers could not respond to him...when Hashem comes to rebuke us, how much more so [will we not be able to answer]?!'"

The Seforno and the Yalkut Shemoni ought to scare us to tears when we think of our intellectual dishonesty. How can we preach Derech Eretz when we practice so little of it? How do we expect our young ones to speak decently and cleanly when we abuse, curse, and lack Shemirat Halashon? How do we expect our children to pray with respect when we go to Shul and talk to our friends about the Mets and the stock market instead of talking to Hashem? How do we expect the new generation to respect the Torah, the Shul, or Taharat Hamishpacha when we are simply indulges in lip service? Oy Lanu, "Woe is to us." The day of judgment is not necessarily the end of our lives; perhaps it can refer to the middle of our lives when we see the foolishness of our hypocrisy.

Let the story of Yosef not simply be the text of a Broadway musical, but the framework of how we should live our lives, teach our young ones, and be role models for all of Klal Yisrael. Vayinashek Lechol Echav Vayevk...Veacharei Chein Dibro Echav Ito, "And Yosef kissed all of his brothers, and he wept...and afterward his brothers spoke to him" (45:15).

It is time to show love to all and weep for our errors, and then the dialogue will begin and we can rightly expect redemption.

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From: ohr [ohr@ohr.edu] Sent: Sunday, December 08, 2002 3:01 AM To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Vayigash \* TORAH WEEKLY \* from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu Highlights of the weekly Torah portion Parshat Vayigash For the week ending 14 December 2002 / 9 Tevet 5763

The Wisdom of Happiness

"He sent Yehuda ahead of him..." (46:28)

We live in a world where depression has become as common as table salt.

Statistics report that between 9 and 10% of American schoolchildren are clinically depressed. That's an amazing statistic. And that doesn't include those who are just above the cutoff point of what's called clinically depressed. And it also doesn't take into account those who haven't sought professional help because their symptoms aren't recognized. And we haven't even started to talk about their parents.

Why, in spite of a level of physical comfort of which our great-grandparents could only dream, are we more and more subject to depression?

During the reporting of the Nixon/Kennedy Presidential elections, 40% of "sound bytes" (an uninterrupted monologue by a reporter) were one minute or longer. By the time Bush took on Dukakis, a sound byte had shrunk to 9.8 secs, and not one was as long as a minute.

I have the distinct feeling that since George Bush Senior strode the telewaves as President the national attention span has not exactly increased. (Are you still reading this?)

An instant society of drive-thru-everything teaches that haste is a virtue in its own right.

Western society educates our children to be impatient. If it takes me longer than a minute it ain't worth it.

No being in the universe has a bigger yetzer hara (evil inclination) than a baby. A baby is all self. A baby is quite happy to wake up a continent at the most distant rumble of hunger in its tummy. Being a baby has everything to do with having no patience. In the long and difficult ascent to adulthood, we certainly don't need society's help in keeping us babies.

Being unable to see beyond the end of our nose, of not being able to see the big picture, is both a cause and an effect of depression.

So how do we combat this?

A movie film consists of hundreds and thousands of still pictures. When presented with separate images in rapid succession, the brain ceases to discern them as separate images and links them together. This anomaly is called "the persistence of vision." The result is the illusion of movement, motion pictures. Persistence of vision accounts for our failure to notice that a motion picture screen is dark about half the time. A bit like day and night.

In other words, the reality of the movie does not exist in the film itself, it exists in the mind of the beholder connecting separate moments into one flowing existence.

To a small child, every moment is a different world, a different existence. There is no direction in things, no assembly leading towards an overall reality. First this moment happens, then this moment, then this. Being small, however, isn't limited to being a child.

In Hebrew the word for small is katan. Katan comes from the word katua, meaning "cut". Someone who is small, or whose perception of the world is small, cuts life's flow into small segments and treats each of those segments as though that was the whole of reality.

The definition of maturity is that we perceive our entire life as a whole single direction. We take all the disparate events of life - its ups and downs - and unify them into a single cogent direction. Every frame of existence is joined together into the film of our life. The Hebrew word for adult, gadol, comes from the root meaning, "that which continues" (Bereishet 49:19). The wisdom of happiness tells us that things are joined together. That's being an adult. Despite our problems we perceive everything as single system, a single route map, a single film. Happiness means having persistence of vision.

Similarly, during the week in our weekday prayers we say of our Creator "How many are Your works." On Shabbat we say "How great are Your works". We take all the separate "manys" of the weekday world and unify them into one "great" - a view that everything is connected. That's the "great" of Shabbat. It's the road map of time.

The essence of taking the wisdom of happiness into the despair of depression is to see that the day and night of our emotions and moods are as connected as day and night itself. Day inevitably follows the night just as night inevitably follows day. Realizing that

we have an emotional clock that turns constantly from day to night gives us the perspective to deal with our feelings of disconnection. However black and disconnected we feel, we can remind ourselves that the darkest hour is just before dawn. For several years I have had the privilege to teach young men who have grown up on a diet of MTV. One of the things that never fail to amaze me is how these same young men who have been trained to have attention span of about two minutes and 43 seconds - the average length of a pop song - can sit down and learn Talmud in depth. Learning the Talmud demands the ability to "hold kop" - to hold in one's head several pieces of information, to compare them and make very fine distinctions between them, the mental equivalent of juggling balls that are constantly changing their weight, shape and direction. And yet they do it. How?

In this week's Torah portion, Yaakov prepares to descend into the darkness of exile in Egypt. The light is about to go out and nearly two hundred years of slavery are about to begin. Before Yaakov goes to down to Egypt he sends before him his son Yehuda to open the Egyptian equivalent of a Yeshiva. Everything the patriarchs did is a spiritual beacon for their descendents till the end of time. Yaakov was showing us that even in the blackest spiritual darkness of Egypt, the Torah could still be learned. Moreover, the very nature of Torah learning, the mental effort required to assemble all the pieces together, is the very antidote to the "smallness of mind" that the darkness brings. Learning Torah allows us to see the big picture. It takes the darkness of depression and transforms it into the wisdom of happiness.

Sources: Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Rabbi Dovid Olesker  
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PARSHAT VAYIGASH

When Yaakov and family depart for Egypt, they appear to be planning just a short visit, i.e. to see Yosef and to survive the famine. Yet, for some reason, they never return to Eretz Canaan (not at least for the next several hundred years)! Was life in Egypt simply too good? Could it be that the 'Promised Land' was not important to them? Could it be that Yaakov's family did not care about G-d's covenant with Avraham & Yitzchak? [See for example Breishit 26:1-4!] While answering these questions, this week's shiur will also lay the groundwork for our study of the thematic transition from Sefer Breishit to Sefer Shmot.

INTRODUCTION In Parshat Va'yigash, G-d appears to Yaakov Avinu - one last time - prior to his departure to see Yosef. In our study of Sefer Breishit thus far, we have shown how each "hitgalut" [revelation] to the Avot has been thematically significant. Therefore, we should expect for this final "hitgalut" to be no less significant. We begin our shiur with a study of the events that lead of to this "hitgalut", in an attempt to uncover its message and importance.

EVERYONE HAS A PLAN As soon as Yaakov hears that Yosef is still alive, he immediately decides to go visit him: "And Yisrael said... my son Yosef is still alive; I must go and see him before I die" (see 45:28).

Does Yaakov plan to return immediately to Eretz Canaan after this visit? Was there any reason why he shouldn't? Even though it is not quite clear what Yaakov's original intentions may have been, Yosef had already informed his brothers concerning the framework of his original 'invitation': "... Quickly go up to my father and tell him, thus says your son Yosef: G-d has made me master over all of Egypt. Come down to me, do not stay [in Canaan], for you should dwell in the land of Goshen to be near me; you and your children... And I will provide for you there, for ANOTHER FIVE YEARS OF FAMINE still remain, lest you PERISH, you and your entire household..." (45:9-11).

Clearly, Yosef intends for his family to stay for more than just a 'long weekend'. However, he makes no mention that he intends that they make Egypt their permanent home. It seems more likely that his invitation is for five years, as he states specifically "because FIVE years of famine still remain, lest the family perish!"

What will be once the famine is over and economic conditions in Canaan improve? Most likely, Yaakov and his family plan to (& should) return to their homeland. Even though Yaakov, Yosef, and the brothers may not have been quite sure how long this visit would last, G-d had a very different plan - a plan that He reveals to Yaakov in a "hitgalut" before his departure from Eretz Canaan.

To better appreciate G-d's plan, let's take a careful look at the opening psukim of chapter 46: "And Yisrael traveled with all that was his, and came to BEER SHEVA, and he offered 'ZEVACHIM' (sacrifices, peace offerings) to the G-d of his father YITZCHAK" (46:1).

When studying this pasuk, several questions arise: · Why does Yaakov stop specifically at BEER SHEVA? In fact, we could ask, why does he stop at all? · Why does he offer these sacrifices specifically to the "G-d of his father YITZCHAK"? [Is He not the G-d of Avraham, as well? / See 32:10 where Yaakov prayed to the G-d of both Avraham AND Yitzchak!] · Why does he find it necessary at this time to offer korbanot? · Why does he offer specifically ZEVACHIM? · Why is Yaakov's new name - Yisrael - used in this pasuk?

To answer these questions, we must first consider Yaakov's predicament at this point in time. First of all, it should be clear that Yaakov is quite worried. To prove this, simply note the opening words of G-d's response to Yaakov's offering: "Don't worry..." (see 46:1-3) Most probably, Yaakov is worried first and foremost because he is leaving Eretz Canaan. Recall that his father Yitzchak, even in times of famine, was not permitted to leave the land: "And there was a famine in the Land... and G-d appeared to him (Yitzchak) and said to him: Do not go down to Egypt, stay in the Land that I show you..." (see 26:1-3).

In that very same 'hitgalut' to Yitzchak, G-d even explained the reason why he could not leave - because he was the 'chosen' son of Avraham Avinu: "... reside in this Land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and your offspring I have given these Lands, and I will fulfill the OATH which I have sworn to Avraham..." (26:3-4).

Although Avraham himself was permitted to leave the Land during a famine, Yitzchak, his CHOSEN son, was required to stay in the Land. Understandably, then, Yaakov had reason for concern prior to his settlement in Egypt. Even though Yaakov himself had once received permission to leave Eretz Canaan (in Parshat Vayetze, see 28:10-20), his situation then was quite different, as he faced immediate, life-threatening danger (see 27:41-43). And even then, Yaakov still required divine reassurance that ALTHOUGH he was leaving Eretz Canaan, G-d would continue to look after him and BRING HIM BACK: "And behold I will be with you and take care of you on your journey, and I WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THIS LAND..." (28:15). [Note

that on that first journey from Eretz Canaan, Yaakov also left specifically from BEER SHEVA (see 28:10)!]

Now (in Parshat Vayigash), Yaakov's situation is quite different. Survival in Eretz Canaan, however difficult, is still possible, as food could be imported from Egypt. Furthermore, if it was so important for Yosef to see his father, why couldn't Yosef come to visit Yaakov in Eretz Canaan? Was it absolutely necessary for Yaakov to resettle his entire family in Egypt at this time? On the other hand, he and his entire family had received an open invitation from his 'long lost son'. How could he say no? Unquestionably, Yaakov has what to worry about.

APPLYING FOR AN EXIT VISA This analysis provides us with a simple explanation for why Yaakov first stops in Beer Sheva before departing to Egypt. As he fears his departure may be against G-d's will (or possibly even threaten his 'bechira'), Yaakov stops to pray to G-d, 'asking permission' to leave Eretz Canaan.

Now we must explain why Yaakov stops specifically at Beer Sheva. The commentators offer several explanations: \* Rashbam (46:1) explains that Beer Sheva was the site of Yitzchak's place of prayer. [See 26:25, where Yitzchak builds a mizbeiach in Beer Sheva. Note also that G-d offers him reassurance at that site - see 26:24!] \* Ramban (46:1) adds to Rashbam's explanation that Yaakov chooses Beer Sheva to parallel his first excursion outside Eretz Canaan (from Beer Sheva to Charan /see 28:10). \* Radak considers Beer Sheva the 'official' southern border of Eretz Canaan, thus the appropriate place for Yaakov to 'apply for an exit visa'. [See also Seforno 46:1 (like Radak) and Chizkuni.]

Although each commentator quotes different sources to explain why specifically Beer Sheva is chosen, they all concur that Yaakov's primary worry is indeed his departure from Eretz Canaan.

This background also explains why Yaakov prays at this time specifically 'to the G-d of YITZCHAK'. Considering that Yitzchak had not received permission (when he faced a very similar situation), Yaakov now prays to 'the G-d of Yitzchak [i.e. who did not allow Yitzchak to leave]. [See Radak & Seforno.] [Note that Ramban offers a different approach (based on what he calls 'sod'), that Yaakov recognizes that his departure to Egypt marks the beginning of the long historical process of 'brit bein ha-btarim' and hence their future enslavement by the Egyptians. Realizing that this process may entail terrible suffering (including G-d's 'midat ha-din'), Yaakov prays specifically to 'pachad Yitzchak', the manifestation of G-d's providence through 'midat ha-din', in hope that his children will suffer as little as possible.]

THE FIRST 'ZEVACH' Similarly, this backdrop can also help us understand why Yaakov may have offered specifically 'zevachim'. Significantly, this is the FIRST instance in Chumash where we find the offering of a 'zevach' to G-d. As Ramban (on 46:1) points out, until this time the children of Noach (and Avraham as well) offered only 'olot'. [The technical difference between an 'olah' and 'zevach' is quite simple. In Sefer Vayikra we learn that an 'olah' is totally consumed on the mizbeiach (chapter 1). In contrast, the meat of a 'zevach' - alternately referred to as 'shlamim' (see Vayikra 3:1, 7:11) - can be eaten by the owner, while only a small portion is offered on the mizbeiach. Conceptually, its name - 'shlamim' implies a certain 'shleimut' - fullness or completeness, that this voluntary offering can express a feeling of 'completeness' in one's relationship with G-d. Although it is unclear if at this time Yaakov actually ate these 'zevachim', it is significant that the Torah refers to them with the term 'zevach'.]

There are three other seminal events in Chumash where specifically 'zevachim' are offered: 1) The KORBAN PESACH (at Yetziat Mitzrayim) 2) Brit NA'ASEH VE-NISHMA (at Ma'amad

Har Sinai) 3) YOM ha-SHMINI (the dedication ceremony of the Mishkan).

At first glance, these three examples appear to involve joyous and festive occasions, quite the opposite of Yaakov's current situation (worrying about leaving Eretz Canaan). However, if we look a bit more closely, all three examples share a 'common denominator', which can help us appreciate Yaakov's offering of 'zevachim' at this time. Note how each event marks the COMPLETION of an important process:

1) The KORBAN PESACH, called a "ZEVACH pesach I-Hashem" (see Shmot 12:27), marks the COMPLETION of the process of Yetziat Mitzrayim. [See Shmot 11:1->12:14. Note also that Chazal include Korban Pesach under the general category of 'shlamim'.]

2) At Ma'amad Har Sinai, Bnei Yisrael offer special 'zevachim' as part of the ceremony where they accept the mitzvot: "Moshe wrote down G-d's commandments, and then, early in the morning, he set up a mizbeich... and they offered ZEVACHIM, SHLAMIM to G-d..." (Shmot 24:4-5).

Here we find the COMPLETION and fulfillment of the ultimate purpose of Yetziat Mitzrayim - Bnei Yisrael's readiness to accept G-d's commandments.

3) On YOM ha-SHMINI, upon the COMPLETION of the dedication ceremony of the Mishkan, Bnei Yisrael offer a special korban 'shlamim': "And behold on the 8th day, G-d commanded Moshe [to offer special korbanot] ... and an ox and a ram for a SHLAMIM - liZVOACH - to offer..." (see Vayikra 9:1-4)

As the name 'shlamim' implies ['shaleim' = complete], a ZEVACH SHLAMIM usually implies the completion of an important process. But if we return to Yaakov, what 'process' is being completed with his descent to Egypt? Why does Yaakov offer 'davka' [specifically] ZEVACHIM?! One could suggest that Yaakov's offering of 'zevachim' relates to an entirely different perspective. However anxious (and fearful) Yaakov might have been prior to his journey to Egypt, he was also very THANKFUL that Yosef is alive (and that he even has the opportunity to visit him). In this regard, these 'zevachim' could be understood as a 'korban TODAH' - a THANKSGIVING offering. [Note that the 'korban TODAH' is a subcategory of 'shlamim' (see Vayikra 7:11-12).] By offering 'zevachim' at this time, Yaakov may actually be thanking G-d for re-uniting his family.

Furthermore, considering that the purpose of Yaakov's descent to Egypt was not only to visit Yosef, but also to RE-UNITE his twelve sons, this journey could also be considered the COMPLETION of the 'bechira' process. Without Yosef, the 'bechira' process was incomplete, as a very important 'shevet' (tribe) was missing. Now, by offering 'zevachim', Yaakov thanks G-d for re-uniting the family and hence COMPLETING the 'bechira' process.

Finally, this interpretation can also explain why the Torah refers to Yaakov as YISRAEL in this pasuk. As we explained in our shiur on Parshat Vayishlach, the name YISRAEL reflects G-d's choice of Yaakov as the FINAL stage of the 'bechira' process.

In contrast to the previous generations where only one son was chosen, ALL of Yaakov's children have been chosen to become G-d's special nation. Now, as Yaakov descends to Egypt to re-unite his twelve sons, it is only appropriate that the Torah uses the name YISRAEL.

THE END, AND THE BEGINNING... Even if we consider these 'zevachim' as a thanksgiving offering (for the completion of the 'bechira' process), we must still explain why Yaakov is fearful at this time. Let's take another look at G-d's response to Yaakov's korbanot: "Then G-d spoke to YISRAEL... Fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will make you there a GREAT NATION. I Myself will

go down with you and I Myself will also BRING YOU BACK..."(46:2-4)

G-d's response adds an entirely new dimension to his departure, a dimension that most likely catches Yaakov totally by surprise: Let's explain: Yaakov, we explained earlier, may have been planning only a 'short visit' to reunite the family. Yosef was planning for the family to stay for several years to survive the famine. Now, G-d reveals a totally new plan. Yaakov and family are departing on a journey of several HUNDRED years. They will not return until they have first become a great NATION in the land of Egypt. G-d Himself brings them down, and there the family is now commanded to remain in Egypt until they emerge as a populous nation. Then, when the proper time comes, G-d Himself will bring them back. Hence, when Yaakov goes down to Egypt, not only will the prophetic dreams of Yosef be fulfilled, but so too G-d's promise to Avraham Avinu at Brit Bein Ha-btarim (see Breishit 15:13-18). The long and difficult process of Yetziat Mitzrayim has begun.

In this manner, G-d informs Yaakov that although his descent to Egypt involves leaving Eretz Canaan, it does not constitute a breach of the Divine covenant with his family. Rather, it forms a critical stage in His master plan of transforming Yaakov's family of 'seventy souls' into G-d's special Nation. [The fuller meaning of this final 'hitgalut' of Sefer Breishit will be discussed in our introductory shiur to Sefer Shmot.]

FROM "TOLDOT" TO "SHMOT" To support understanding, we conclude our shiur by noting the 'parshia' that immediately follows this final 'hitgalut' to Yaakov. After its brief description of the family journey down to Egypt (see 46:5-7), the Torah then devotes a special 'parshia' to the enumeration of the seventy members of Yaakov's family: "These are the names ['ve-eileh shmot'] of Bnei Yisrael who were coming to Egypt..." (see 46:8)

The header of this special 'parshia' - "ve-eileh SHMOT..." - may be reflective of this conclusion of the 'bechira' process, for it will be from these seventy 'nefesh' (souls) that the Jewish nation will emerge. Recall that at each stage of the 'bechira' process thus far, Sefer Breishit has always introduced each list of children with the phrase: "ve-eileh toldot". Now, for some reason, the Torah prefers to introduce this list with "ve-eileh shmot". This new phrase may mark the fact that the 'bechira' process is now complete. As such, the Torah presents the chosen family with the word "SHMOT" instead of "TOLADOT". This observation can also explain why Sefer Shmot begins with this very same phrase "ve-eileh shmot". Note how the opening psukim of Sefer Shmot (see 1:1-4) actually summarize this 'parshia' (i.e. 46:8-27).

Furthermore, the first primary topic of Sefer Shmot will be how G-d fulfills His promise of Brit Bein Ha-btarim. We will be told of how these seventy 'nefesh' multiply, become a multitude, are enslaved and then how they are finally redeemed. Even though there remain a few more 'loose ends' in Sefer Breishit (i.e. 46:28->50:26 /e.g. the relationship between the brothers, Yosef and Egypt, etc.), it is from this point in Sefer Breishit that Sefer Shmot will begin. From these seventy souls, G-d's special Nation will emerge.

shabbat shalom, menachem

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From: Kollel Iyun Hadaf [kornfeld@netvision.net.il] Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2002 12:00 PM To: daf-insights; Yehudah Landy; Avi Feldman; DPKINZ@aol.com Subject: Insights to the Daf: Sanhedrin 90  
INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF THE MORDECAI (MARCUS) BEN ELIMELECH SHMUEL KORNFELD MASECHES SANHEDRIN  
brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il>

SANHEDRIN 90 (5 Teves) - has been dedicated to the memory of Max (Meir Menachem ben Shlomo ha'Levi) Turkel, on his Yahrzeit by his children Eddie and Lawrence, and his wife Jean Turkel/Rafalowicz. Max was a warm and loving husband and father, and he is sorely missed by his family.

Sanhedrin 90

WHAT IS "OLAM HA'BA" OPINIONS: The Mishnah teaches that a person who denies Techiyas ha'Mesim has no share in Olam ha'Ba. The Gemara cites a number of verses as sources for Techiyas ha'Mesim. One of the sources is the verse that discusses giving Terumah to Aharon after Techiyas ha'Mesim. The Gemara explains that the logic behind the Mishnah's teaching is based on the principle of Midah k'Neged Midah, measure for measure: because a person denies that the dead will come to life at Techiyas ha'Mesim, he will not return to life.

There are a number of points in this Gemara that need clarification. First, the Mishnah says that a person who denies Techiyas ha'Mesim has no share in "Olam ha'Ba", the "World to Come". According to the Gemara's logic, though, the Mishnah should have said that he will not have a share in "Techiyas ha'Mesim". How does Midah k'Neged Midah provide an explanation for why he does not receive a share in Olam ha'Ba as a punishment for denying Techiyas ha'Mesim?

If we suggest that the period of Techiyas ha'Mesim is synonymous with Olam ha'Ba, then how are we to understand the verse that says that we will give Terumah to Aharon at the time of Techiyas ha'Mesim? The Gemara in Berachos (17a) tells us that in Olam ha'Ba there is no eating and no drinking, but that the Tzadikim subsist on the "Ziv ha'Shechinah." Accordingly, how will we be giving Terumah to Aharon in Olam ha'Ba? What will he do with the Terumah?

Second, we find in the Gemara a description of the Se'udah of the Livyasan. How can there be a Se'udah in Olam ha'Ba?

In order to understand these points and many others, it is necessary to define what the different stages will be at the time of the final redemption, as well as what are all the different rewards and punishments that a person receives after his death.

The three different stages of the final redemption, the Ge'ulah, are "Yemos ha'Mashi'ach," "Techiyas ha'Mesim," and "Olam ha'Ba." Besides these stages, Chazal refer to "Gan Eden" and "Gehinom" as places of reward and punishment. Here, we will attempt to summarize the opinions of the major Rishonim regarding what each of these stages involve, and whether these stages apply to the soul alone or to the body together with the soul.

(a) RAV SA'ADYAH GA'ON in EMUNOS V'DE'OS (7:9) explains that after Techiyas ha'Mesim a significant period of time will pass. During this time (which will come after the arrival of Mashi'ach), the Tzadikim who will be brought back to life will live at the same time that the others who will be living at the time that Techiyas ha'Mesim occurs. During this time, there will be universal peace in the world, people will live long lives, and people will still live normal lives with eating and drinking. Presumably, it is during that period that Terumah will be given to Aharon and that the Se'udah of the Livyasan will take place. People will give birth to children. He mentions that the Tzadikim who come to life will not die again, as the Gemara says (end of 92b). However, he writes that those who were alive at the time of Techiyas ha'Mesim will die. At a certain point, Hashem will make a new world called "Olam ha'Ba" (or "Gan Eden"). The Tzadikim who are worthy of it will be transported to that world together with their bodies. The wicked of all the generations will be sent at that time to Gehinom, with their bodies. The point at which Olam ha'Ba starts is the "Yom ha'Din ha'Gadol," the Day of Final Judgement, referred to at the end of Zecharyah.

The BE'ER SHEVA (end of DH Kol Yisrael) gives a similar description of the sequence of events in the World to Come. He explains that according to this sequence, when the Mishnah says that a person who denies Techiyas ha'Mesim is punished with the loss of Olam ha'Ba, the words "Olam ha'Ba" refer not to the final reward after the Yom ha'Din ha'Gadol, but rather to the period that immediately follows Techiyas ha'Mesim, during which the Terumah will be given to Aharon, and during which people have the same physical lives as they have in the present world.

(b) The YAD RAMAH at the beginning of this chapter and the CHIDUSHEI HA'RAN answer the question about Techiyas ha'Mesim by saying that when the dead return to life, the life that they live "is" Olam ha'Ba. Therefore, Techiyas ha'Mesim and Olam ha'Ba refer to the same period. When, though, is the Terumah going to be given to Aharon, and when is the Se'udah of the Livyasan in which the Tzadikim will partake, if there is no eating in Olam ha'Ba? The Yad Ramah answers that there will be two different sets of Techiyas ha'Mesim. The first Techiyas ha'Mesim occurs at the beginning of the period of Yemos ha'Mashi'ach (see Sotah 48b, "until the dead come to life and Mashi'ach comes," implying that Techiyas ha'Mesim is in the times of Mashi'ach); this is similar to the Techiyas ha'Mesim described by Rav Sa'adyah Ga'on. However, the Yad Ramah adds that not all of the dead come to life at the same time during the times of Mashi'ach, but rather each one comes to life according to what he deserves. During that period, some of the wicked will also be brought back to life in order to be punished. At this stage, people will still be eating and drinking as they do in the present stage of the world.

The second Techiyas ha'Mesim will occur later, at the time of the Yom ha'Din ha'Gadol, at which point all of the Tzadikim and Resha'im will come back to life at once in order to receive their just rewards or punishments. They will receive their rewards or punishments while in their bodies that they occupy in the present world, but there will be no eating or drinking, but only reward and punishment.

(Other Rishonim also mention the concept of two sets of Techiyas ha'Mesim. See RITVA in Ta'anis 30b, and the RADVAZ 2:639, and 3:1069.)

(The reward and punishment of the Yom ha'Din ha'Gadol apparently is what Chazal refer to as "Gan Eden" and Gehinom.)

(c) The RAMBAN in SHA'AR HA'GEMUL has perhaps the most extensive and comprehensive discussion of the different stages of reward and punishment. The Ramban does not mention the second Techiyas ha'Mesim that the Yad Ramah discusses. However, the Ramban agrees to the Yad Ramah that Olam ha'Ba immediately follows Techiyas ha'Mesim at the Yom ha'Din ha'Gadol.

When, then, according to the Ramban, does the Se'udah of the Livyasan take place? The Ramban explains that immediately after coming to life, people will still eat and drink, and the Se'udah of the Livyasan will take place, and immediately after that they will be elevated to the level of Olam ha'Ba, at which time there will be no eating and drinking (Sha'ar ha'Gemul, sections 89 and 106, Sofer edition, 1998, Jerusalem; this edition is divided into 122 short sections). The RASHBA also writes this explicitly in his PERUSH HA'AGADOS to Bava Basra (74b). Olam ha'Ba will still involve the body in both the person's reward and punishment. However, the body will be elevated in such a manner that it will not need food or drink to survive.

The Ramban adds that in addition to the reward and punishment of Olam ha'Ba, there is another set of reward and punishment which occurs immediately after death. This is what Chazal refer to as "Gan Eden" and "Gehinom." The Ramban proves (section 62) that the wicked is punished immediately after death from a number of sources. The Mishnah in Eduyos (2:10) teaches that a Rasha suffers only twelve months in Gehinom. The Gemara in Kidushin (31b) says that for this reason, after twelve months after the death of one's father, one does not have to say "Hareini Kaparas Mishkavo" (see Insights to Sukah 20:2), because if he needed punishment, his punishment happens immediately and ends within twelve months. We see from here that the punishment starts right away. In addition, the Gemara in Ta'anis (11a) says that at the time a person passes from this world, Hashem shows him all of his actions, and the Gemara concludes that the person acknowledges that he has been judged correctly. Third, we find many Agados in the Gemara that discuss how it was revealed to living people how people of previous generations are being punished (see Bava Basra 74a, regarding the punishment of the congregation of Korach, and Chagigah 15b, regarding the punishment of Elisha ben Avuyah). We find other Midrashim which describe how the angels announce that the souls of the wicked are to be given rest each week on Shabbos; they are taken out of Gehinom for Shabbos. The same applies with regard to the reward of a Tzadik -- immediately after a Tzadik dies, his Neshamah goes to Gan Eden to receive reward even before the Yom ha'Din ha'Gadol.

The Ramban (section 117) writes that it is obvious that since this is occurring before Techiyas ha'Mesim, the reward and punishment of Gan Eden and Gehinom involve the Neshamah alone, and not the body. After Techiyas ha'Mesim, a Tzadik receives a different type of reward together with his body, in accordance with the analogy that the Gemara says (91a-b) with regard to the lame man and the blind man (i.e. that the body also deserves reward).

The punishment of the Rasha at that time is either that he will not experience Olam ha'Ba at all, or that he will be brought back to life and face the disgrace of not being together with the Tzadikim, or that he will receive further punishment.

This also seems to be the intention of the BARTENURA here, and of TOSFOS in Rosh Hashanah (16b, DH I'Yom ha'Din), who also mention an earlier stage of Olam ha'Ba which affects only the Neshamah, and a later Yom ha'Din in which the body and soul are rewarded together.

Even according to the Ramban, the words "Olam ha'Ba" are sometimes used to refer to Yemos ha'Mashi'ach, as in the Agadah at the end of Kesuvos, where the Gemara discusses the large size of fruits in "Olam ha'Ba" (BE'ER SHEVA).

(d) The RAMBAM in PERUSH HA'MISHNAYOS here and in his letter regarding Techiyas ha'Mesim (and partially in Hilchos Teshuvah) does not acknowledge that there is a future Yom ha'Din ha'Gadol at which point reward and punishment will be administered. It is administered immediately upon death. Furthermore, he does not acknowledge that there is reward and punishment for the body. Rather, "Olam ha'Ba" and "Gehinom" refer to the reward or punishment that a person's soul receives immediately after death and thereafter. It is not related to Yemos ha'Mashi'ach or to Techiyas ha'Mesim in any way.

What role does Techiyas ha'Mesim play? The Rambam explains that Techiyas ha'Mesim is a miracle like any other miracle promised by the Navi. During Techiyas ha'Mesim, certain Tzadikim will be brought back to life (during Yemos ha'Mashi'ach) in order to give them the opportunity to perform more Mitzvos.

The Yad Ramah questions the Rambam's interpretation from the Mishnah in Avos (4:22). The Mishnah there says that "all who live will die, all who die will be brought back to life, and all who are brought back to life will be judged." The Mishnah clearly implies that there will be a final judgement which will take place when the dead return to life. In addition, the Yad Ramah questions the Rambam's interpretation from our Mishnah, which says that a person who denies Techiyas ha'Mesim is not granted a share in Olam ha'Ba, and the Gemara says that this is Midah k'Neged Midah, measure for measure.

The SEFER HA'IKARIM (4:31) answers that, according to the Rambam, the words "Techiyas ha'Mesim" can be used to refer to the judgement of the Neshamah after it leaves the body, since the Neshamah was in the person who died, it is now "coming back to life," so to speak, in order to be judged. This explains why the Mishnah here and the Mishnah in Avos refer to Olam ha'Ba as "Techiyas ha'Mesim," coming back to life.

The Be'er Sheva challenges this answer based on the Gemara here that says that after Techiyas ha'Mesim, Aharon ha'Kohen will eat Terumah. This obviously cannot apply to the world of the Neshamos after death, in which there is no body.

Perhaps the Ramban will answer the question from our Mishnah in the following manner. When a person denies Techiyas ha'Mesim, it is because he believes that nothing remains after a person dies, since a person is an entirely physical being. After the body disintegrates, nothing remains of it, and thus even if the body would come back to life, it would be a new body altogether and not the original body. A person who subscribes to such a school of thought will obviously deny the existence of the world of the Neshamos as well, since he does not accept that a Neshamah governs the body.

That is why he is punished with both the loss of Olam ha'Ba \*and\* Techiyas ha'Mesim, measure for measure.

The Rambam bases his explanation of the afterlife on logical grounds. What point is there, he writes, for Hashem to bring the body back to life if the body will serve no purpose in the World to Come, since it will not need any of its physical functions? Hashem certainly would not create something that has no use. Hashem would not bring to life something that has no use.

The Rishonim offer a number of answers to this question.

1. The RAMBAN (Sha'ar ha'Gemul, section 106) explains that immediately after coming back to life, the bodily organs will be used (see (c) above, regarding the Se'udah of the Livyasan). Therefore, their creation is not useless. (This certainly is true according to Rav Sa'adyah, who writes that a long period of time passes between the time of Techiyas ha'Mesim and the time of Olam ha'Ba, during which time the physical bodies will be used the same way they are used in the present world.)

2. The Ramban adds that the body is not simply a collection of physical functions and processes. There are many things in this world that involve physical objects and that, at the same time, represent spiritual entities in a higher realm. Therefore, the body will have a role even if it does not use its physical processes, because it will have corresponding spiritual entities. This is a theme discussed extensively by the Ramban (in Bereishis 3:22), the RASHBA (in Perush ha'Agados, Berachos 34b and Bava Basra 74b), and RABEINU BACHYEI (in Kad ha'Kemach, in his discussion of "Ner Chanukah").

3. The YAD RAMAH gives the answer that Rabbi gave to Antoninus (91a): since the body and soul sinned together, they deserve to be punished together. (The Rambam might have learned that Rabbi answered Antoninus according to Antoninus' line of reasoning, but not in accordance with his own view.)

The Yad Ramah questions this Gemara. Why should the body be any different than a sword or an arrow? If the soul is the part of the person that decides to sin and it uses the body to accomplish its goals, then it should be the same as a sword or arrow that a person uses to sin. There is no point in punishing the sword or arrow!

The Yad Ramah answers that the comparison of the body to an inanimate instrument is not accurate for a number of reasons. It seems from his words that his intention is to differentiate based on the fact that a body is self-conscious and is aware of what it is doing, while a sword has no awareness of what it is doing. In addition, the sword will not feel the punishment, whereas the body will feel it.

It seems that the argument between the Yad Ramah and the Rambam is that the Yad Ramah is defining the Neshamah as only the decision-making process of thought and cognition. However, the vitality that a person shares with animals, which enables a person to be aware of what his body is doing and to feel with his senses, is part of the body. The Rambam, in contrast, defines the body as only the material that comprises the physical body itself.

(See also MICH'TAV ME'ELIYAHU, vol. 4, pp. 153-156, who discusses in depth what role the body will have in the World to Come.)

Sanhedrin 91b

WHEN DOES THE YETZER HA'RA ENTER A PERSON QUESTION: Antoninus taught Rabbi that a person receives a Yetzer ha'Ra only upon exiting his mother's womb. His proof was that if a child has a Yetzer ha'Ra in the womb, he would kick his way out of the womb. Rabbi cited a verse to support this view.

How can this be reconciled with what RASHI writes in Parshas Toldos (Bereishis 25:22)? Rashi writes that when Rivka was pregnant with Yakov and Esav, she felt Yakov kicking to get out when she passed a Beis Midrash, and she felt Esav kicking to get out when she passed a house of idol worship. Similarly, the Tanchuma (Parshas Ki Seitzei) states that Esav, in his viciousness, destroyed his mother's womb as he exited. This implies that even before a child is born, he has a Yetzer ha'Ra! We find a similar incident recorded in the Gemara in Yoma (82b-83a), which tells about a pregnant woman who had a strong craving for food on Yom Kipur. Her craving could not be quelled, and so they fed her. When the baby was born, he grew up to be a Rasha. The Chachamim said of him, "Zoru Resha'im me'Rachem" -- "The wicked are estranged from the womb" (Tehilim 58:4). This also implies that a person has a Yetzer ha'Ra even in the womb.

ANSWERS: (a) The BE'ER SHEVA explains that since we find that a child learns Torah in the womb (Nidah 30a), it is evident that he has a Yetzer Tov. If he has a Yetzer Tov which normally comes later (at the time he becomes mature), then he certainly should have a Yetzer ha'Ra. What, then, does our Gemara mean?

Our Gemara means that there are two levels to the Yetzer Tov and Yetzer ha'Ra. The first level is an active Yetzer ha'Ra which causes a person to do evil deeds. The second is a Yetzer ha'Ra that causes a person to have evil thoughts. In the womb, the Yetzer Tov and Yetzer ha'Ra only cause a person to have good thoughts or evil thoughts. When the person exits the womb, he acquires an additional Yetzer ha'Ra, which entices him to do evil deeds.

The MARGOLYOS HA'YAM points out that the PISKEI TOSFOS in Nedarim (#62) does not seem to accept this approach. He infers from the Gemara in Nidah that in the womb a child has a Yetzer Tov, but when he is born the Yetzer ha'Ra comes and banishes the Yetzer Tov until the person matures and becomes wise, at which time the Yetzer Tov returns.

(b) The MAHARAL in GUR ARYEH (Bereishis 8:21, 25:22; see also 6:6) explains that sometimes a child does evil not because his Yetzer ha'Ra drives him to do it, but because that is his natural tendency. This is not related to the persuasion of the Yetzer ha'Ra. (A possible source for this might be the Gemara in Shabbos 156a, which discusses how children born at certain times have tendencies towards evil. See the Gemara there on 156b, where the mother of Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak was told,

before her child was born, that her child would have the qualities of a thief. He was saved from this destiny only because he kept his head covered.)

Yakov and Esav, and the Rasha mentioned in Yoma, were following their natural tendencies and were not being driven by the Yetzer ha'Ra.

(c) The SEFER CHASIDIM (#1137) and RAV YAKOV EMDEN here explain that there are certain Resha'im Gemurim, absolutely wicked people, whose Neshamos come from a source of Tum'ah such that even the Neshamah is blemished. Rav Yakov Emden adds that these are not real Neshamos, since a real Neshamah has its source in the Kedushah and Taharah of Hashem. The Sefer Chasidim explains that these are the 974 generations of souls that were uprooted from being created, as the Gemara mentions in Chagigah (end of 13b), from which the most brazen people of each generation are derived.

Such Neshamos have evil tendencies even in the mother's womb. (According to the Tanchuma mentioned above, Esav did, in fact, "kick his way out" of his mother's womb, tearing his way out violently.) Antoninus' proof that a child does not have a Yetzer ha'Ra in the womb is from the majority of people, who do not tear their way out of the womb.

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