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subject: Torah Wellsprings - Vayishlach 5780 Collected thoughts of
RABBI ELIMELECH BIDERMAN SHLITA Compiled by Rabbi Boruch
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Kibud Av Ve'Em

The Daas Zekenim (32:8) writes on the pasuk, "Yaakov was very afraid..." "He was afraid that Eisav would be helped in the merit of his kibud av ve'em. Yaakov didn't do this mitzvah for over twenty years." The Gemara (Kiddushin 31) tells us that the mitzvah of honoring parents is an extremely difficult mitzvah to keep. Rashi writes, "It is impossible to honor one's parents sufficiently, and he will be punished because of this."

A father said to a rosh yeshiva: "Maybe you can help me. You know that my son is baruch Hashem learning well in the yeshiva, and that he has yiras Shamayim. But at home, he doesn't honor his parents." "I will see what I can do," the rosh yeshiva promised. The next day, he met the bachur and asked him whether he'd be interested in learning together on Fridays. "That would be a great honor," the bachur replied, excitedly. "What does the rosh yeshiva want to learn?" "Well, we learn Gemara all week. I was considering to learn halachah." "Halachah is fine," the bachur said. "Which halachos does the rosh yeshiva have in mind?" "Hilchos kibud av ve'em" the rosh yeshiva said. The bachur replied, "Kibud av ve'em? Shouldn't we learn halachos that are applicable in our times?" The bachur didn't know how applicable these halachos are.

The Pela Yoetz writes: "Each mitzvah has its mazal. People are ready to spend a lot of money for the the rights to open the aron kodesh, or to be a sandak, etc., although these aren't even actual mitzvos — not from the Torah, and not from the rabbanan. They are a chibuv mitzvah [a gesture, showing love to the mitzvos]. Ashreihem Yisrael [they are fortunate]! However, each time one obeys his father or his mother he is doing a mitzvah

from the Torah! But the fools transgress and they will be punished."

Reb Yechezkel Levinstein zt'l used to tell bachurim to study hilchos kibud av ve'em thirty days before the end of the zman. He said, "Just as one must study the halachos of a yom tov thirty days before the yom tov, so too, one should study hilchos kibud av ve'em thirty days before going home. It is written in sefarim that when one doesn't honor his parents, he loses his yichus. The specialness of Klal Yisrael is our heritage, descendants of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov, and the tzaddikim of generations past. But when one doesn't honor his parents, he is cutting away from his own past, and thereby he loses his yichus, and this is a tremendous loss.

The Ohr HaChayim (Shemos 20:12) writes, "The mitzvah of kibud av ve'em is mesugal for longevity in addition to the reward that Hashem will give for keeping this mitzvah. There are mitzvos that have wonderful segulos to them in addition to the reward that Hashem plans to give for each mitzvah. And for this mitzvah [of kibud av ve'em], the Torah revealed [that the segulah is long life]."

The Rabbeinu b'Chaya writes, "We clearly see that those who honor their parents live long, or they have success and serenity in all their ways."

The Beis Ahron of Stolin zt'l said that he attained his spiritual levels from the mitzvah of kibud av ve'em. Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev zt'l was once by the Baal Shem Tov zt'l. Rebbe Michel said had he been one more Shabbos together with the Baal Shem Tov, Moshiach would come. "So why didn't you go another Shabbos?" someone asked him. Rebbe Michel Zlotchever replied, "My father asked me not to go." "Is that a reason not to go?" the man asked. "Wouldn't it be worthwhile to go against your father's wishes just this one time, and thereby save klal Yisrael from galus?" Rebbe Michel answered, "If I went against my father's will, I wouldn't be Rebbe Michel." In other words, what made Rebbe Michel a tzaddik and worthy to bring Moshiach was his adherence to all the laws of the Torah, among them, keeping the great mitzvah of kibud av ve'em. Going against his father's will and travelling to the Baal Shem Tov couldn't bring Moshiach.

Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l once saw a father carrying tables and chairs on Shabbos for a Kiddush. His older son was standing nearby wearing his tallis, talking with a friend, and he wasn't helping. Reb Shlomo Zalman couldn't understand why he wasn't helping his father schlep the heavy furniture. He asked the yungerman, "Why don't you help your father?" He replied, "I don't carry on Shabbos." There was an eiruv in Yerushalayim, but they followed the stringent opinions that refrains from carrying. For the next three days, Reb Shlomo Zalman didn't say his shiur in his yeshiva. He simply couldn't; he didn't have peace of mind. What he saw, so greatly disturbed him. It bothered him to see a yungerman callously allow his father to work hard due to a chumrah, while he did nothing at all.

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Weekly Parsha Vayishlach

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

Our father Jacob and his family face two great crises that are recorded for us in this week's Torah reading. The first is the long-awaited encounter with his jealous and dangerous brother, who decades later still smarts over the deal that he made in selling his birthright to Jacob. Jacob is aware that his brother has the potential to destroy him and his family, and he prepares three different avenues of salvation — a financial settlement, the invocation of heavenly protection through prayer, and finally, the preparation of physical means of self-defense. In the end, his brother accepts the financial gifts offered him and departs, never again to really become part of Jacob's family and destiny. Jacob does not escape unscathed from this encounter, for he is crippled by the heavenly representative of his brother who wrestles with him to a draw. Yet Jacob feels himself relieved that, at least temporarily, his brother is no longer a mortal threat.

Throughout the ages, the Jewish people have always attempted to mollify their enemies with financial gifts and contributions to the general non-Jewish society. This has always proven to provide a temporary stay of violence with little long-lasting consequences. The Jewish people relied on praying to heaven for protection as their sole avenue of escape from destruction. They were in no position to physically defend themselves from crusades and pogroms. This pattern in Jewish history has repeated itself over and over until our very day.

The second incident of violence against the family of Jacob is recorded for us in the story of the kidnapping and rape of Dina. Here Jacob unaccountably appears to us as being passive and having no real plan for Dina's salvation and for punishing the evildoers. It will be Shimon and Levi that will respond violently and save Dina from her captors, showing that violence, even justified violence, always comes with its own costs. It is interesting to note that the Torah does not record for us any appeal from Jacob to Heaven. He apparently accepted that this tragedy occurred to him and his daughter somehow justifiably, and that there was no necessity for an appeal to Heaven after the fact. Jacob is aware that the judgement of heaven is always inscrutable to humans as the Talmud itself states: those matters that Heaven has hidden from our understanding, humans should not attempt to understand."

Jacob will later criticize Shimon and Levi for their behavior and their actions. Yet, the Torah itself leaves the correctness of the behavior of Shimon and Levi without judgement and throughout the ages, the commentators have debated the matter of contention between the father and the sons. Suffice it to say, that Shimon, as the teachers of Israel, and Levi, as the priests of Israel, remain heroic figures in Jewish history and current Jewish life. In our time, through the independent might of the state of Israel, these three avenues of salvation that Jacob had in the encounter with his brother, once again exist in terms of Jewish survival and success. They should be employed very judiciously.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

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No Longer Shall You Be Called Jacob (Vayishlach 5780)

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

One fact about this week's parsha has long perplexed the commentators. After his wrestling match with the unnamed adversary, Jacob was told: "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings Divine and human, and have prevailed" (Gen. 32:29, JPS translation). Or "Your name will no longer be said to be Jacob, but Israel. You have become great (sar) before God and man. You have won." (Aryeh Kaplan translation).

This change of name takes place not once but twice. After the encounter with Esau, and the episode of Dina and Shechem, God told Jacob to go to Beth El. Then we read: "After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel.' So He named him Israel" (Gen. 35:9-10).

Note, first, that this is not an adjustment of an existing name by the change or addition of a letter, as when God changed Abram's name to Abraham, or Sarai's to Sarah. It is an entirely new name, as if to signal that what it represents is a complete change of character. Second, as we have seen, the name change happened not once but twice. Third – and this is the puzzle of puzzles – having said twice that his name will no longer be Jacob, the Torah continues to call him Jacob. God Himself does so. So do we, every time we pray to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. How so, when the Torah twice tells us that his name will no longer be Jacob?

Radak suggests that "your name will no longer be called Jacob" means, "your name will no longer only be called Jacob." You will have another name as well. This is ingenious, but hardly the plain sense of the verse. Sforno says, "In the Messianic Age, your name will no longer be called Jacob." This, too, is difficult. The future tense, as used in the Torah, means the near future, not the distant one, unless explicitly specified.

This is just one mystery among many when it comes to Jacob's character and his relationship with his brother Esau. So difficult is it to understand the stories about them that, to make sense of them, they have been overlaid in Jewish tradition with a thick layer of Midrash that makes Esau almost perfectly evil and Jacob almost perfectly righteous. There is a clear need for such Midrash, for educational purposes. Esau and Jacob, as portrayed in the Torah, are too nuanced and complex to be the subject of simple moral lessons for young minds. So Midrash gives us a world of black and white, as Maharatz Chajes explained.[1]

The biblical text itself, though, is far more subtle. It does not state that Esau is bad and Jacob is good. Rather, it shows that they are two different kinds of human being. The contrast between them is like the one made by Nietzsche between the Greek figures of Apollo and Dionysus. Apollo represents reason, logic, order, self-control; Dionysus stands for emotion, passion, nature, wildness and chaos. Apollonian cultures value restraint and modesty; Dionysian ones go for ostentation and excess. Jacob is Apollonian, Esau, Dionysiac.

Or it may be that Esau represents the Hunter, considered a hero in many ancient cultures, but not so in the Torah, which represents the agrarian and pastoral ethic of farmers and shepherds. With the transition from hunter-gatherer to farmer-and-herdsman, the Hunter is no longer a hero and instead is seen as a figure of violence, especially when combined, as in the case of Esau, with a mercurial temperament. It is not so much that Esau is bad and Jacob good, but that Esau represents the world that was, while Jacob represents, if sometimes tentatively and fearfully, a new world about to be brought into being, whose spirituality would be radically different, new and challenging.

The fact that Jacob and Esau were twins is fundamental. Their relationship is one of the classic cases of sibling rivalry.[2] Key to understanding their story is what Rene Girard called mimetic desire: the desire to have what someone else has, because they have it. Ultimately, this is the desire to be someone else.

That is what the name Jacob signifies. It is the name he acquired because he was born holding on to his brother Esau's heel. That was consistently his posture during the key events of his early life. He bought his brother's birthright. He wore his brother's clothes. At his mother's request, he took his brother's blessing. When asked by his father, "Who are you, my son?" He replied, "I am Esau, your firstborn."

Jacob was the man who wanted to be Esau. Why so? Because Esau had one thing he did not have: his father's love. "Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebecca loved Jacob."

All that changed in the great wrestling match between Jacob and the unknown stranger. Our Sages teach us that this stranger was an angel in disguise. After they fight, he tells Jacob that his name would now be Israel. The stated explanation of this name is: "for you have wrestled with God and with man and have prevailed." It also resonates with two other senses. Sar means "prince, royalty." Yashar means "upright." Both of these are in sharp contrast with the name "Jacob," one who "holds on to his brother's heel." How then are we to understand what, first the stranger, then God, said to Jacob? Not as a statement, but as a request, a challenge, an invitation. Read it not as, "You will no longer be called Jacob but Israel." Instead read it as, "Let your name no longer be Jacob but Israel," meaning, "Act in such a way that this is what people call you." Be a prince. Be royalty. Be upright. Be yourself. Don't long to be someone else. This would turn out to be a challenge not just then but many times in the Jewish future.

Often, Jews have been content to be themselves. But from time to time, they

have come into contact with a civilisation whose intellectual, cultural and even spiritual sophistication was undeniable. It made them feel awkward, inferior, like a villager who comes to a city for the first time. Jews lapsed into the condition of Jacob. They wanted to be someone else.

The first time we hear this is in the words of the Prophet Ezekiel: “You say, ‘We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone.’ But what you have in mind will never happen” (Ez. 20:32). In Babylon, the people encountered an impressive empire whose military and economic success contrasted radically with their own condition of exile and defeat. Some wanted to stop being Jews and become someone else, anyone else.

We hear it again in the days of the Greeks. Some Jews became Hellenised. We recognise that in the names of High Priests like Jason and Menelaus. The battle against this is the story of Chanukah. Something similar happened in the days of Rome. Josephus was one of those who went over to the other side, though he remained a defender of Judaism.

It happened again during the Enlightenment. Jews fell in love with European culture. With philosophers like Kant and Hegel, poets like Goethe and Schiller, and musicians like Mozart and Beethoven. Some were able to integrate this with faithfulness to Judaism as creed and deed – figures like Rabbis Samson Raphael Hirsch and Nehemiah Nobel. But some did not. They left the fold. They changed their names. They hid their identity. None of us is entitled to be critical of what they did. The combined impact of intellectual challenge, social change, and incendiary antisemitism, was immense. Yet this was a Jacob response, not an Israel one.

It is happening today in large swathes of the Jewish world. Jews have overachieved. Judaism, with some notable exceptions, has underachieved. There are Jews at or near the top of almost every field of human endeavour today, but all too many have either abandoned their religious heritage or are indifferent to it. For them, being Jewish is a slender ethnicity, too thin to be transmitted to the future, too hollow to inspire.

We have waited so long for what we have today and have never had simultaneously before in all of Jewish history: independence and sovereignty in the state of Israel, freedom and equality in the diaspora. Almost everything that a hundred generations of our ancestors prayed for has been given to us. Will we really (in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s phrase) throw away our shot? Will we be Israel? Or will we show, to our shame, that we have not yet outlived the name of Jacob, the person who wanted to be someone else? Jacob was often fearful because he was not sure who he wanted to be, himself or his brother. That is why God said to him, “Let your name not be Jacob but Israel.” When you are afraid, and unsure of who you are, you are Jacob. When you are strong in yourself, as yourself, you are Israel.

The fact that the Torah and tradition still use the word Jacob, not just Israel, tells us that the problem has not disappeared. Jacob seems to have wrestled with this throughout his life, and we still do today. It takes courage to be different, a minority, countercultural. It’s easy to live for the moment like Esau, or to “be like the peoples of the world” as Ezekiel said.

I believe the challenge issued by the angel still echoes today. Are we Jacob, embarrassed by who we are? Or are we Israel, with the courage to stand upright and walk tall in the path of faith?

Shabbat shalom

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VaYishlach: Ancient Agronomists

Rav Kook Torah

Inhabitants of the Land

The Torah reading of VaYishlach concludes with a list of Esau’s descendants and chieftains. Since Esau married into the Canaanite family of Seir, settling in his hill country in the south, the text records the sons of Seir,

“the inhabitants of the land” (Gen. 36:20).

Why does the Torah refer to them as “the inhabitants of the land”? We could ask humorously, as the Talmud does: Did everyone else live in the sky and only Seir’s clan lived in the land?

The simple explanation is that Seir and his family were the original residents of the region. But the Talmud opted for a different interpretation: these Canaanites were true inhabitants of the land. They were unparalleled experts in farming, having acquired a remarkable knowledge of which crops were best suited for each type of soil.

“They would counsel: plant olive trees in this field, grapevines in this field, and fig trees in that one.

They were called ‘Chorites’ because they could smell (merichim) the soil [to assess its suitability for various crops]. And they were called ‘Chivites’ since they would taste the soil like a snake (chivya).” (Shabbat 85a)

Why does the Torah emphasize the agricultural expertise of the Canaanites? And a more basic question: why did God place these idolatrous nations in the Land of Israel? Would it not have been simpler for the Jewish people to acquire Eretz Yisrael without having to conquer it from the Canaanite nations?

The First Settlers

God meant for man to work the land, “to till the ground from which he was taken” (Gen. 3:23). But acquiring an intimate knowledge of the land requires tenacious dedication to this area of study. How could humanity gain the necessary skills to work the land when occupied with higher spiritual goals? The pioneers of agriculture would only succeed if undistracted by other pursuits.

These “first settlers” (Deut. 19:14) tilled the land before the light of Torah was revealed in the world. Without higher aspirations, they could invest all of their energies to the study of agriculture and farming. The Canaanites were truly “inhabitants of the land.” Their ties to the land enabled them to establish the foundations of agrarian society. This prepared a solid economic basis for future - and morally superior - generations.

Agrarian Culture

Their mastery of agriculture included detailed knowledge of the optimal conditions for each crop. Interestingly, the Talmud cites their cultivation of three crops: olives, grapes, and figs.

Even farmers who share the Canaanites’ absorption in agricultural pursuits have a culture and a spiritual life. They create an earthy society that appreciates beauty, festive joy, and physical pleasures.

While the Canaanites were experts in growing staples such as wheat and barley, their expertise extended to crops that highlight these cultural aspirations. The olive represents external beauty and aesthetics, “to make the face radiate from olive-oil” (Psalm 104:15). The grape embodies joy, “Wine gladdens a person’s heart” (ibid). And the fig, a natural source of sweetness, is a symbol of physical pleasures.

Laying the Foundation for Future Generations

Of course, the Canaanites’ deep connection to the land was not an end to itself. They set the stage for a more advanced society. These ancient agronomists were “relieved” of their holdings, as the Talmud writes, “They are called ‘Chorites’ because they were freed (bnei chorin) from their possessions.” (Shabbat 85a)

Humanity was not meant to be forever mired in earthiness. An idolatrous and immoral society established a thriving agricultural economy, but it was not meant to possess the land for all generations. As human civilization advanced, it lost these deep, primal ties to the soil. The artificial freedom of a base, earthy culture is a freedom that brings with it exile, as it is superseded by a society with higher goals and moral standards.

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Vayishlach - No News is Jews News

Yaakov's family faced a tremendous crisis. While passing through the city of Shechem, Dena, their sister was attacked and was violated by Shechem, the son of King Chamor, who bore the same name as the city. Shechem later claimed that he desperately wanted to marry her! No one in the entire city brought the prince to justice and Yaakov's sons were not going to ignore that behavior.

They were not ready for open warfare either, and so they developed a ruse. They claimed that they were ready to form a harmonious relationship with the entire population of the city of Shechem. "We will give our daughters to you, and take your daughters to ourselves; we will dwell with you, and become a single people" (Braisheis 34:16). However, there was one condition. Every male of Shechem had to circumcise. Yaakov's children insisted that it would be a disgrace for the daughters of Abraham to marry uncircumcised men. Upon direction from King Chamor and Prince Shechem the entire town agreed, and three days later, when the people of Shechem were in painful recuperation from their surgery, Yaakov's children avenged Dina's honor. Despite Yaakov's consternation, they attacked the male population and wiped them out.

The question is simple: Why ask the people of Shechem to circumcise? If Yaakov's children wanted to attack them, why go through a process of converting them? They should have asked them to fast for three days. That would have made them even weaker. They could have asked them to hand over all their weapons. Why ask them to do an act so blatantly Jewish? On September 30, 2000, the word intafada was almost unknown to the average American. And then the riots began. On one of the first days of what has now been over three years of unceasing violence, against innocent Israelis, The New York Times, Associated Press and other major media outlets published a photo of a young man who looked terrified, bloodied and battered. There was an Israeli soldier in the background brandishing a billy-club. The caption in everyone of the papers that carried the photo identified the teen as an innocent Palestinian victim of the riots — with the clear implication that the Israeli soldier was the one who beat him. The world was in shock and outrage at the sight of the poor teen, blood oozing from his temple crouching beneath the club-wielding Israeli policeman. Letters of protest and sympathy poured in from the genteel readers of the gentile world. The victim's true identity was soon revealed. Dr. Aaron Grossman wrote the NY Times that the picture of the Israeli soldier and the Palestinian on the Temple Mount was indeed not a Palestinian. The battered boy was actually his son, Tuvia Grossman, a Yeshiva student from Chicago. He, and two of his friends, were pulled from their taxicab by a mob of Palestinian Arabs, and were severely beaten and stabbed. The Israeli soldier wielding the club was actually attempting to protect Tuvia from the vicious mob.

All of a sudden the outrage ceased, the brutal attack was almost ignored and a correction buried somewhere deep amongst "all the news that is fit to print" re-identified Tuvia Grossman as "an American student in Israel." It hardly mentioned that he was an innocent Jew who was nearly lynched by Arabs. This blatant hypocrisy in news coverage incidentally help launch a media watchdog named Honest Reporting.com.

Rav Yonasan Eibeschitz, ז"ל, explains that Yaakov's children knew something that was as relevant in Biblical times as it is in today's "New York" times. Yaakov's sons knew the secret of society. Have them circumcised. Make them Jews. Then you can do whatever you want with them and no one will say a word. You can wipe out an entire city — as long as it is not a gentile city. If Shechem had remained a gentile city had the people not circumcised according to the laws of Avraham then Yaakov's children would have been condemned by the entire world. But Yaakov's children knew better. They made sure that the Shechemites, went through a Jewish circumcision. Shechem now was a Jewish city; and when a Jewish city is destroyed, the story becomes as irrelevant as an American student attacked by a Palestinian mob in Yerushalayim! Unfortunately it is that simple and that old.

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:
Davening with Talit or in Minyan

Q: For someone who forgot his Talit at home, is it preferable to Daven in Shul without a Talit or at home with a Talit?

A: At Shul.

Short Cut through Yerushalayim

Q: If one is driving from one city to another, is it permissible to pass through Yerushalayim, or is it forbidden to take such a short cut just as it is forbidden to take a short cut through a Shul?

A: We do not find such a prohibition (And Ha-Rav Elchanan Printz, author of Shut Avnei Derech, wrote us: "There is no problem". And an important Torah scholar wrote us: "How fortunate are we that one is so sensitive to the holiness of Yerushalayim").

Abba or Ha-Rav

Q: My father is a Rav. Should I call him Abba or Ha-Rav?

A: Abba.

Torah Scholar and Tzadik

Q: What is the definition of a Torah scholar?

A: It depends on the generation and the location.

Q: What is the definition of a Tzadik?

A: One who fulfills all of the Halachot. See Mesilat Yesharim Chapters 2-9. Sefer Torah Written by Robot

Q: Is a Sefer Torah written by a robot considered Kosher?

A: No. A man must write it, and with proper Kavanah. This is unlike Matzah or Tzitzit, which also require being made with proper Kavanah, but do not need to be fully made by man (See here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAYelh_VXUA).

Blood Donation from One Who Eats Non-Kosher Food

Q: Is there a problem to receive blood from someone who eats non-kosher food?

A: No. Blood is not food. It is also permissible to have a transplant from a non-Kosher animal.

Q: Then why shouldn't a baby nurse from a woman who ate non-Kosher food (Rama and Gra, Yoreh 81:7)?

A: 1. It is a stricture. 2. It is food.

Expulsion from Gush Katif

Q: What was the basis of Ha-Rav supporting the expulsion from Gush Katif? "Dina De-Malchuta Dina – the law of the land is the law"?

A: The general principle "The law of the land is the law" does not apply when it contradicts the Torah. The expulsion was a severe prohibition. This is what I, the lowly one, said then and still say now. I wrote 20 articles in the weekly Parashah sheets and gave approximately 100 classes about it. It seems you have mixed me up with someone else. Be-Ezrat Hashem, we will return to Gush Katif.

Egg and Sugar

Q: What is the source for giving a woman an egg and sugar when she comes home after giving birth?

A: There is no source. It is a superstition.

Who Takes Precedence – The One Entering or the One Leaving

Q: If two people meet at the door of a Shiva House, one entering and one leaving, who takes precedence in going through the door first?

A: The one entering, since he is going to perform a Mitzvah (And once Ha-Rav Meir Ha-Levi Soloveitchik, Rosh Yeshiva of Brisk in Yerushalayim, was leaving a Shiva house and saw women coming, and he let them go through the door first. Everyone thought that it was for reasons of modesty,

but he explained that since they were on their way to perform a Mitzvah, he did not want to delay them. In the book "De-Chazitei Le-Rebbe" Meir Volume 1, p. 20).

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**Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Vayishlach
Connection Between Kibud Av, Bechorah & Gid HaNasheh
The Ponevezher Rav Learns a Lesson from This Week's Parsha**

The Ponevezher Rav (Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman 1888-1969) was once on a trip to New York. He was riding the subway when he found himself in a car with a bunch of hoodlums that he feared might have their eye on him with the intent of attacking him. Besides being an outstanding Talmudic genius and besides being one of the greatest fundraisers in the history of Yeshivos, it is clear from many stories told about him that the Ponevezher Rav was very fast on his feet as well.

The Ponevezher Rav was alone on a subway car with hoodlums eyeing him. He was in fact carrying a lot of money on him. What is he going to do? (Today we cannot imagine someone like the Ponevezher Rav travelling around New York City in the subway, but this story took place well over fifty years ago!) The Ponevezher Rav took out a slip of paper from his pocket that had an address written on it. He went over to these hoodlums and said to them "Can you help me find which stop I get off at for this address?" The hoodlums wink to themselves and say, "We'll take you there. Get off at the next stop with us and we'll take you to that address." The train pulled into the next stop, the doors open, the hoodlums walk out. The Ponevezher Rav walks slowly behind them. He exits from the car, but as the doors are about to close, he steps back in and the train pulls away with the gang of hoodlums left behind at the station.

The Ponevezher Rav, in telling over the story, explained: "Where did I come up with this idea? I got it from Parshas Vayishlach!" How? Eisav said to Yaakov, "Come with me to Seir." Yaakov agreed. He said, "Yes. I will go with you, but I need to walk at my own pace..." Eisav heads off to Seir and Yaakov is still headed there to this very day. The Ponevezher Rav said, "I learned from this incident in Chumash that in a time of danger, it is best to let the person think you are going with him and then you wave good-bye."

The Reason the Children of Israel Do Not Eat from the Gid HaNasheh

This week's parsha contains the famous incident when Yaakov was left alone with Eisav's Guardian Angel (described by the Torah simply as a 'Man') and wrestling with him until dawn. This was an epic battle of great symbolism. The Torah states that they fought the entire night. Finally, Eisav's Angel touched Yaakov's thigh while wrestling with him, causing Yaakov to limp away from the scene. The Torah records that because of this incident, "... the Children of Israel do not eat the displaced sinew on the ball of the thigh bone to this day, because he struck the ball of Yaakov's thigh bone on the displaced sinew." [Bereshis 32:33]. Because of this incident, we are prohibited from eating the Gid HaNasheh (sciatica nerve).

There are many different ways of explaining this incident. Virtually all of the commentaries see great symbolism in this epic battle. I do not know how many years I have been studying Chumash. Even as a student in day school, I imagine I learned Parshas HaShavua every year. It amazes me that after all these years of studying Parshas Vayishlach, I saw an explanation of the incident this week that I never saw before. I never even heard a hint of such an interpretation!

It is an explanation given by not only the Rosh, but also by the Chizkuni (who was also an early Chumash commentary), and by the Sefer Chassidim. The Chizkuni asks—what is the connection? Just because Yaakov fought with the Angel and was wounded there, we cannot eat the sciatica nerve?

In terms of practical Kashrus, not eating the Gid HaNasheh has tremendous implications. Because of this theoretically very limited prohibition, Jews who observe the laws of Kashrus do not eat the entire hindquarters of an animal. Since it is a very labor-intensive process to thoroughly remove the Gid HaNasheh from the animal, virtually all Kosher slaughterhouses have arrangements with a non-Kosher meat packing company such that the Kosher production company takes the forequarters of the animal and the non-Kosher company takes the hindquarters of the animal. I am told that the tastiest meat comes from the hindquarters of the animal. People talk about a porterhouse steak. Have you ever had a porterhouse steak? I hope not! Sirloin steak, the tastiest part of the animal, comes from the hindquarters of the animal.

So the pasuk, "therefore the Children of Israel do not eat the sciatica nerve..." has great implications to this very day. We are stuck, nebach, with the rib steak. It is very tasty, but it does not compare to porterhouse steak! The Chizkuni explains that it is only right and proper that we cannot eat the Gid HaNasheh. Why? It is because the Children of Israel left their father alone and unprotected, as it says, "And Yaakov remained by himself..." [Bereshis 32:25]. What kind of business is this? Your father is Yaakov Avinu and you leave him alone? You let him cross the river at night by himself? Where are you?

The Chizkuni continues that the children were strong. They should not have let their father go unattended, but should have accompanied him to see if he was in need of any help. They failed to escort him and because of that, he was injured. From this point forward, this should be a reminder to them to fulfill with alacrity the commandment of accompanying someone who might face potential danger.

We need to pay the price because our ancestors failed to provide Yaakov with Levaya (accompaniment). There is a mitzvah called Levaya – to escort a guest. The Rambam writes [Hilchos Avel 14:2] "The reward of accompaniment is greater than all [the acts of kindness involving interpersonal relationships mentioned in the previous paragraph]..." They failed to do that, consequently we need to pay the price.

The Sefer Shabbos U'Moadim takes this idea and explains it on a deeper level. There is a sequence of events over here. Yaakov went back to get small vessels. He is left alone. The Angel of Eisav attacks him. The Angel of Eisav smites him on the thigh. Therefore, we cannot eat the Gid HaNasheh. The Drashas HaRan explains why the Angel of Eisav came to attack Yaakov specifically now. It is because right now the Angel of Eisav is trying to retrieve the Blessings that were stolen from Eisav. The Saro shel Eisav did not forget Eisav's complaint of decades earlier: "...He cheated me twice—he took my birthright and now he took my blessings..." [Bereshis 27:36]. He wants it back. Why now?

The Drashas HaRan points out that the story in Parshas Toldos—the day Eisav sold his birthright—was the day that Avraham Avinu died. Yaakov was cooking lentil soup to offer as a meal of consolation for his father, Yitzchak, who was in mourning. Eisav apparently was not around at the time of Avraham's passing at all. His grandfather died. Eisav had learned Torah by him as a young boy. Where was Eisav that day? What kind of grandchild does not go to his Zeide's funeral? Eisav was out in the field hunting that day. The Drashas HaRan says that Eisav did not even shed a tear for his grandfather. He was not distressed at the fact that his father was in mourning. He comes into the tent in a boorish fashion. When he sees his brother cooking lentils and his father sitting on the floor in mourning, one would think he would react with some kind of empathy or compassion. Instead, all he can focus on is, "Give me some of that red stuff you are cooking! I'm hungry!" What kind of an uncouth individual is this who has no respect for his grandfather or father!

When Yaakov saw the disrespect that Eisav showed to his father and grandfather, he recognized that Eisav was not deserving of the status of first-born. The whole status of the Bechor is based on the fact that the imprint of the father is most visible in his first-born son. Yaakov realized that clearly

his brother Eisav did NOT reflect the essence of his father. Yaakov said, since I show compassion for my father and am comforting him in his hour of sorrow, I am more deserving of the birthright than Eisav. "Sell me, therefore, this status." You are not the heir apparent of Yitzchak. I am! These are the words of the Droshas HaRan.

Yaakov's entire claim why he felt he should be the Bechor is that he knew what Kibud Av meant. He honored his father, and he would teach his children how to honor their father. Therefore, the Angel of Eisav appears precisely at that time because Yaakov is left all alone. Where was their Kibud Av? Apparently, Yaakov never taught his children how to show proper respect for their father! Yaakov, your entire claim for taking the birthright from Eisav has now been undermined by your own children's lack of concern for your welfare! You were worried that Eisav would fail in his mission of teaching his children; Yaakov, you failed in your mission! Therefore, the Angel saw this moment as the proper time to wrestle back the birthright from Yaakov Avinu. The pasuk thus concludes, "Therefore the Children of Israel do not consume the sciatica nerve." This is because the Angel was able to "touch Yaakov in the thigh." What does the "thigh" represent? The Talmud states "Brah Karei D'Abuha"—children support the father. There is a Talmudic idiom to describe offspring as "Yotzai Yereicho"—those who emerge from his thigh.

The clap the Angel gave Yaakov on his thigh symbolized the fact that his descendants were lacking a proper quality. Consequently, it is appropriate that those descendants be punished somehow for their misdeeds and therefore they do not eat the Gid HaNasheh. We have to pay the price for not accompanying our father in his time of need.

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Ohr Somayach

Insights into Halacha

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

Ohr Somayach :: Insights into Halacha

For the week ending 28 November 2015 / 16 Kislev 5776

The Gid Hanasheh Incongruity

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

In Parshas Vayishlach, after Yaakov Avinu's epic battle with Eisav's guardian angel[1], where he got injured in his hip socket[2], we are given a Biblical commandment, the third and last of the whole sefer Bereishis, that Bnei Yisrael may not partake of the Gid Hanasheh, the sciatic nerve, of any animal. Additionally, there is a Rabbinic prohibition on eating from the outer sinew of the animal's thigh tendon[3]. The Sefer HaChinuch[4] writes that this mitzvah actually serves as a constant reminder that eventually we will be redeemed from this protracted exile.

To fulfill this mitzvah properly, every last trace of said nerves and the fat covering the sciatic nerve must be removed as well. This act is called nikkur, a.k.a. treibbering, deveining, or porging the forbidden nerves and fats, and it takes an expert to do it properly[5].

Trouble was the Traveling Treibberer

One of the most outstanding experts in hilchos nikkur known was Rav Yonason Eibeshutz zt"l (1690 - 1764), one of the greatest Torah giants of his period and famed author of 89(!) works[6], including the renowned Yaaros Devash, Urim V'Tumim, and Kreisi U'Pleisi. In the latter sefer, in his commentary to the laws of Gid Hanasheh[7], Rav Yonason recorded a fascinating historical incident, which posthumously sparked a raging halachic controversy.

He related that an expert porger came to town (Prague) claiming that the sinew that Jews have been removing for centuries was the wrong one! This

treibberer alleged that a different sinew was the true Gid Hanasheh. The ramifications of his claim were gargantuan, for if it were deemed accurate, consequently all of World Jewry would have chas veshalom been eating non-kosher from time immemorial!

Rav Yonason writes that he showed this fellow the error of his ways as the sinew this porger was referring to was found exclusively in male animals, and could therefore not possibly be the correct one, for it states in the "SMAg (ostensibly the Sefer Mitzvos Hagadol, written by Rav Moshe of Coucy in the 13th century, Negative Commandment 139) that the prohibition of Gid Hanasheh applies to both males and females". With his vast knowledge and expertise, Rav Eibeshutz thus averted potential communal disaster. He concludes his passage reiterating the importance and necessity of a porger's proficiency and capability.

Kreisi Controversy

However, as many puzzled people later pointed out, this logic seemed inherently flawed, as this quote does not actually appear in the SMAg! The SMAg in his actual quote (Mitzvos Lo Sa'aseh 139) was referring to people, not animals! In other words, he wrote that women were similarly obligated in keeping this prohibition as men do[8]. They wondered, is it possible the great Rav Eibeshutz could have made such a simple mistake? And, if so, what was it that the Kreisi U'Pleisi showed this traveling treibberer that refuted his taynos? Many scholars over the years searched for a proper solution to this perplexing conundrum.

One suggestion was that the porger was unlearned, and Rav Yonason wanted to expose his ignorance and therefore set a trap and easily refute him[9]. The issue with this is that, by Rav Yonason's own testimony, the porger was a "Talmid Chacham and expert", which would negate this solution.

The Pischei Teshuvah[10] cites the Toldos Adam, who takes a different approach and makes an example out of this story as proof that even Gedolim can err. Following this would mean that one may not partake in eating said meat without removing both sinews. Although the Toldos Adam's intent was merely to uncover the truth, he unwittingly fueled the fires of the Haskalah, as one of their primary goals was the undermining of Rabbinic authority[11]. In fact, this author personally heard noted historian Rabbi Berel Wein aver that the Haskalah used this story as propaganda to sway the masses.

On the other hand, many Rabbinic luminaries wrote responsae[12], including a tremendous pilpul by the Chasam Sofer[13], not only defending the Rav Eibeshutz's words from attack, but actually each citing different proofs and logic how his shittah is truly correct, that the Gid Hanasheh must be present in both male and female animals.

Several authorities[14] wrote that it must be a printing mistake and the correct point of reference was the S - H - G (ס"הג), referring to the Sefer Halachos Gedolos, a ninth century Halachic code which contains a section on hilchos treifos[15], who actually does imply that the Gid Hanasheh is found in both male and female animals. Others[16] feel that he meant "a sefer mitzvos gadol", meaning a big book of mitzvos, possibly referring to the Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzva 3), who implies this as well.

"VeHetzdiku es HaTzaddik"

However, the whole truth did not actually come out until 1930, when a rabbi in Los Angeles, Rabbi Shlomo Michael Neches, wrote in the Shaarei Tzion Torah Journal[17] that he had in his possession an original manuscript of the Kreisi U'Pleisi, and the words SMAG were crossed out by Rav Yonason Eibeshutz himself, and written on top of them were the letters S - H - N (ס"הנ, which stood for Seder Hilchos Nikkur, referring to the Seder HaNikkur of the Baal Hatur[18]. There it was written explicitly that the Gid Hanasheh that both men and women are forbidden from consuming is found in both male and female animals. Finally and justly, a Gadol Hador was vindicated - 165 years after his death[19]!

Although we had to wait over a century and a half to attain clarity on this halachic mystery, it is imperative that we realize that our true mesorah (in this case - all the way back to Yaakov Avinu!) is rock solid and our chachamim are given special siyatta dishmaya to arrive at the correct

halachic conclusions. It might take a century or even a millennium, but in the end we clearly see why our chachamim are called "Einei HaEidah"[20]. Postscript: Interestingly, and quite apropos, this fascinating historical episode has had a recent, and equally fascinating, addendum. Apparently, Rabbi Neches' sefarim, including his original copy of the Kreisi U'Pleisi, were donated to the UCLA Research Library. Several scholars traveled there to see Rav Eibeshutz's original amendment and came upon an astonishing discovery. It turns out that it was not the handwritten correction of that renowned Rav Yonason Eibeshutz, but that of another, later Rav Yonason Eibeshutz, who lived at least a century after the first. This second Rav Eibeshutz, a Torah scholar of note, was the Av Beis Din of Lashitz, Poland, and author of Shu"t Tiferes Yonason. Apparently, this was his personal copy of Kreisi U'Pleisi, and he was the one who made the amendment which was later proven accurate in shedding light on the original Rav Yonason's puzzling citation, and not the author himself[21]. Either way, and whichever Rav Eibeshutz, we manifestly see the Divine orchestration involved in clearing up this complicated complexity of historical record.

[1] Bereishis (end of Ch. 32). This follows Rashi's understanding (ad loc. 25, end s.v. vaye' aveik ish), based on the Midrash Rabbah (ad loc. 77: 3) and Midrash Tanchuma (ad loc. 8; who adds that the guardian angel of Eisav was Sama-el). However, there is another opinion, cited in Otzar HaMidrashim (ad loc.), that it was really the ma'alach Michoel that Yaakov fought, and not Eisav's guardian angel, in order to prove to Yaakov that he had nothing to fear from Eisav. [2] Due to the dictum of 'Maaseh Avos Siman L'Banim' [see recent article titled 'Mysterious Omens and our Forefathers'] we are still feeling the repercussions of this act nowadays. See Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah to this parshah. [3] Gemara Chullin (Ch. Gid Hanasheh, 91a - 93b); Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 65, 8). [4] Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 3). Several Rishonim, including the Ramban (Bereishis Ch. 32: 26), Rabbeinu Bachaya (ad loc.), Rashba (Chiddushei Agaddos, Chullin 91a), and Ra'ah (Pekudas HaLeviim, Brachos 33b), as well as the Midrash Rabba (Parshas Vayishlach 78, 5), also imply this message. See the Machon Yerushalayim version of Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 3, footnote 3) at length. [5] See Shulchan Aruch and Rema (Yoreh Deah 65, 13 & 14), and their commentaries. [6] See preface to sefer 'Chacham HaRazim - Rabbi Yonason Eibeshutz'. [7] Kreisi U'Pleisi (Yoreh Deah 65, Kreisi 16). [8] See for example, the Baruch Taam's glosses to the Kreisi U'Pleisi ad loc. Although others, including the Tzemach Hasadeh (on Yoreh Deah 65, pg. 41), assumed he meant the SMAK, it is also not found there; neither is it in the Ramban's Sefer HaMitzvos (Mitzvos Lo Sa'aseh 183). See also Rav Shmuel Ashkenazi's Alpha Beta Tinyeisa D'Shmuel Ze'ira (vol. 1, pg. 195 - 196). [9] See Hegos B'Parshiyos HaTorah by Rabbi Yehuda Nachshoni, on Parshas Vayishlach, pg. 137. [10] Pischei Teshuva (Yoreh Deah 65, 2), citing the Toldos Adam (Rav Yechezkel Feivel Wolfe of Vilna; vol. 2, Ch. 15, pg. 237). [11] Paraphrase from Professor Shnayer Zalman Leiman's excellent "Rabbi Jonathon Eibeshutz and the Porger" (pg. 16). Thanks are due to Rabbi Eliezer Brodt, author of Bein Kesseh L'Essor and Lekutei Eliezer, for providing me with this important source. [12] Including the Mahar"i Assad (Shu"t Yehuda Ya'aleh, Yoreh Deah 102), Rav Shlomo Kluger (Shu"t Tuv Taam V'Daas, Mahadura Kama vol. 1, 100) [neither of whom actually approved of the Chasam Sofer's pilpul], the Butchatcher Gaon (Daas Kedoshim, Yoreh Deah 65, Hilchos Giddin HaAssurin 4; see explanation in Gidulei HaKodesh there, 1), the Ginzei Yosef (Shu"t 96, 2, quoting the Einei Yisrael), the Mahar"i HaLevi (Shu"t vol. 1, end 36, s.v. mah shetamah), and the Arugas Habosem (Shu"t Yoreh Deah 64, 4). See also Rav Moshe Yosef Shapiro of Prague's 'Bris Avraham' (Parshas Vayishlach) who, quite thoroughly argues on the whole premise of those who questioned Rav Eibeshutz, as once the Torah wrote that Bnei Yisroel may not partake of any Gid Hanasheh, it is patently obvious that it must occur in all kosher beheimos, with no differentiation between male and female. Additionally, as the Ramban writes in his preface to his Pirush HaMishnayos regarding the Torah's 'Pri Eitz Hadar' being identified as the Esrog, once we have a Mesorah L'Doros dating back to Moshe Rabbeinu, all other so-called 'proofs' to the contrary immediately fall off. Therefore, he avers, the same would apply here as well regarding the Gid Hanasheh. [13] Shu"t Chasam Sofer (Yoreh Deah 69), cited approvingly by the Pischei Teshuva (ibid.) and Shu"t HaRava"z (Yoreh Deah 111). The Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh Deah 65, 25, in the brackets) might be referring to this solution as well. [14] Including the Mishmeres Shalom (Yoreh Deah 65, Mishbetzos Zahav); Rav Avraham Shimon Traub, the Kaidan Gaon, in a new edition of Sefer Halachos Gedolos (pg. 296) that he published; the Ginzei Yosef (ibid.); and Rav Yosef Adler (cited in Shu"t Mishnah Halachos vol. 3, 67). The Tzitz Eliezer (Shu"t vol. 8, 25, 2 and vol. 18, 63, 6 s.v.v'ani) actually prefers this amending to the later one, opining that Rabbi Neches must not have been able to read Rav Yonason's handwriting clearly.

[15] BeHa"G (61, Hilchos Treifos pg 129a; exact location cited in Maadanei Hashulchan, Yoreh Deah 65, footnote 118). Still, others feel that the BeHa"G's words are also not entirely clear that he was referring to female animals; see Haghos Rav Eziel Hildesheimer to the BeHa"G (ad loc.), Chadrei De'ah (ad loc. 8), Giluy Daas (ad loc. 7), and Daas Yonason (glosses on the recent Zichron Aharon version of the Kreisi U'Pleisi 65, 16). [16] See Shu"t Mishnah Halachos (vol. 3, 68, s.v. u'mah). One can also infer this from the Minchas Chinuch's comments (Mitzva 3, 13). [17] Shaarei Tzion Torah Journal (Choveret HaYovel 1930, 25) - under the title "VeHetzdiku es HaTzaddik" - "The Tzaddik Was Justified" (Devarim Ch. 25, verse 1); also printed in HaPardes Journal (vol. 4, Journal 1: 10 pg. 18 - 19). This important historical tidbit is found in Pardes Yosef (Parshas Vayishlach, 33 s.v. uv'kru"p), as well as in Torah Shleimah (Parshas Vayishlach, 169), and Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer (ibid.). It is also added as an important footnote in many recent editions of the Shulchan Aruch, some printed with the words "mitzvah l'farsem". [18] Seder HaNikkur (Shaar HaRishon, Hechsher HaBassar 8b - exact location cited in Maadanei Hashulchan Yoreh Deah 65, footnote 118), also brought in the Tur (end Yoreh Deah 65), as well as in Rabbeinu Yerucham (Nesiv 15, 14, pg. 128b). According to Professor Leiman (cited above) the version Rav Eibeshutz showed the porger was the 1577 version with the glosses of Rav Tzvi Bochner, a master treibber and contemporary of the Rema, as there are those [see Prishah (Yoreh Deah 65, 56) and Shu"t Mishnah Halachos (vol. 3, 68 s.v. bram and s.v. mevuar)] who explain that in other versions, the words "male" and "female" are actually referring to types of muscles, not the gender of the animals. [19] Also thereby proving that Rav Eibeshutz chose the right name for his sefer, Kreisi U'Pleisi - See Gemara Brachos (4a) and Rashi (ad loc. s.v. shekorsim). [20] Parshas Shelach (Bamidbar Ch. 15, verse 24). Interestingly, this author has seen it averred that history has proven that in the whole sefer Kreisi U'Pleisi on all of Yoreh Deah only one (!) actual mistake was found, but it turns out that it was clearly an error in Geometry - see Kreisi U'Pleisi (Tiferes Yisrael, Yoreh Deah 190, 14) and the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's Lechem V'Simlah (ad loc. Simlah 11). This will Bezr"H be addressed fully in this author's upcoming maamar in Kovetz Eitz Chaim (vol. 25). [21] See Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok HaKohen Miller's maamar in Kovetz Hama'ayan (vol. 215; Tishrei 5776, pg 100 - 102), with pictures of the title page and amendment of Rabbi Neches's copy of Kreisi U'Pleisi. Thanks are due to R' Moshe Boruch Kaufman and R' Dovid Wasserlauf for pointing out this startling recent development in the saga of Rav Eibeshutz and the traveling treibber. Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority. L'iluy Nishmas the Rosh HaYeshiva - Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben R' Yechezkel Shraga, Rav Yaakov Yeshaya ben R' Boruch Yehuda, and l'zchus for Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam and her children for a yeshua teikef u'miyad! For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu. Rabbi Yehuda Spitz serves as the Sho'el U' Meishiv and Rosh Chabura of the Ohr Lagolah Halacha Kollel at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim. He also currently writes a contemporary halacha column for the Ohr Somayach website titled "Insights Into Halacha": http://ohr.edu/this_week/insights_into_halacha/. © 1995-2019 Ohr Somayach International

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**The Ox and the Donkey: An Invincible Force
 Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky**

And Yaakov sent angels, before him, to Esav his brother... "tell my master Esav, so has spoken Yaakov your servant, I have lived with Lavan,... and acquired an ox and a donkey"

The message from Yaakov to Esav is interpreted as either:

- a) Appeasing; i.e. I haven't gained any of the wealth that our father promised and therefore you have nothing to be upset about;
- b) Bribing; as the Ramban interpreted it, as hinting at a possible bribe to keep Esav satisfied;
- c) A show of strength; i.e. "I may seem quite helpless but I've dealt with Lavan and bettered him at his game, and can do the same with you" (see Ba'al Haturim Ha'aruch.)

The Midrash Tanchuma (1) also interprets it as a show of strength, but in a more spiritual sense:

... "I begot an ox" – I need not fear you, for Yosef who is called an ox has been born, as it says about Yosef, "he is a first born, an ox" (Devarim 33); while "a donkey" alludes to moshiach ben Dovid, as it says, "a poor man riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9.)

The Midrash also discusses the fact that these two tribes of Yehuda and Yosef have particular references regarding their ability to vanquish Esav. The Midrash's interpretation that this passuk refers to some spiritual strength, implies that the issue being addressed in the passuk is a spiritual struggle, i.e. Esav embodying both the force of evil inclination leading Israel astray, and simultaneously embodying the Satan who demands Israel's annihilation because of their misdeeds (as the Zohar explains at great length regarding the yom hadin. Our parsha, says the Zohar, is alluding to Esav's showing up at the yom hadin and demanding that Israel be made to suffer for their sins.) We therefore may understand Yaakov's boast about Yosef. He is the "ox" which is a paradigm of strength, as Rashi explains regarding the metaphor which compares Yosef to an ox, "he is as powerful as an ox in conquering various kingdoms" (Devarim 33:17.)

But what is expressed by having Yehuda compare to a donkey? A donkey poses neither the beauty and grace of a horse nor the strength of an ox; the donkey is a just a plodding wretched creature. The passuk that the midrash uses about an impoverished moshiach riding on a donkey, represents an Israel at its nadir. What is there to boast about?

The answer is that the Midrash is actually revealing to us the secret of successful struggle with the forces of evil. That struggle, in order to be truly successful, requires two different, almost opposite, strengths. The first strength is the courage to proactively fight that which is bad, as Chazal tell us, "Raish Lakish said, 'a person should always use his good inclination to confront his evil inclination'" (Berachos 5a.) This requires strength and courage, best represented in the form of an "ox" proactively charging ahead with his powerful body pushing hard. A person should not spend his life guarding himself from the more base elements of his nature; rather he should proactively keep changing and developing his character.

But that alone is not enough, for no matter how hard a person tries, he will inevitably fall at various times. And each fall adds more and more "baggage", mental and emotional. He will have to struggle with the weight of his misdeeds that are dragging him down. It is human nature that even if a person fights energetically when winning; if he begins to suffer defeat, he becomes demoralized and loses his will to continue fighting or even going on at all. This is where the strength of the donkey comes into play. It is not the charging strength of an ox, rather it is the strength to bear burden on top of burden and still continue onwards.

Moshiach will eventually come riding on a donkey, for the final redeemer will be the one who can take a nation, perhaps overwhelmed by its wrongdoings over the millennia, and have it keep plodding on. The donkey may seem slow and ungainly, but it will continue onwards and eventually cross the finish line.

Yes, it is only when Yaakov had begotten the powerful charging strength embodied in Yosef Hatzaddik, along with the strength of bearing that Yehuda, the quintessential ba'al teshuva, brought to Klal Yisroel, was Yaakov assured that he will someday triumph over Esav.

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

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Vayishlach

פרשת וישלח תשפ

ויותר יעקב לבדו

Yaakov was left alone. (32:25)

Chazal (*Bereishis Rabbah* 77) quote the *pasuk* in *Devarim* (32:25), *Ein ka'Keil Yeshurun, rocheiv Shomayim b'ezarecha, u'v'gaavaso shechakim*; "O, Yeshurun, there is none like G-d, riding through the heavens to help you, and in His majesty through the upper heights." Chazal teach, "There is none like G-d, and who is like G-d? Yeshurun, the most pleasant and praiseworthy (straight and upright), pursuing their lives in undeviating duty." (When a Jew achieves the level of Yeshurun in complete devotion to Hashem, he becomes "G-d-like," achieving a level in this world that has no peer.) The *Midrash* concludes, "Who is like G-d? Yisrael Sabba (grandfather/Patriarch Yisrael/Yaakov, as it is written, "Vinisgav Hashem asher levado, 'None but Hashem will be exalted in that day' (Yeshayah 2:17). For, concerning Yaakov, it is also written, Vayivaser Yaakov levado; 'Yaakov was left alone.'"

Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl, explains that Chazal are teaching us a vital principle concerning our *avodas ha'kodosh*, service to Hashem. One who reads the story of Yaakov *Avinu* remaining alone might think that our Patriarch was alone because no one remained with him. Chazal intimate that this was not the case. *Levado*, alone, independent of others, disregarding peer pressure, is the loftiest level that one can (and should) achieve. Indeed, Chazal teach that the *levado* of Yaakov was similar to the *levado* of Hashem. Yaakov personified the ability to be alone, to be distinct, independent, connected and clinging only to Hashem, regardless of what the rest of the world thinks, says or does. This is the opposite of Eisav who was a man of the field, ownerless, irresponsible, open to everyone.

The *Tanna* in *Pirkei Avos* (4:1) asks: *Eizehu gibor*, "Who is strong?" *Ha'koveish es yitzro*, "He who conquers/quells his (evil) inclination." The *Tanna* teaches us that a true *gibor*, strong person, is one who is alone, whose adversary is within him: his inclination. He stands alone, uninfluenced by external pressure, in complete devotion to Hashem, acting on his own, without peer pressure, but doing what is appropriate to achieve. This is what he strives to do. He will settle for nothing less and will not allow anything or anyone to stand in the way of his relationship with Hashem. Such a person is a true *gibor*.

Such a person, a "levado Jew" is unique. It means, first and foremost, that one is true to himself. He serves Hashem with neither fear of public judgment, nor yearning for public acclaim. While being yourself seems obvious, our world, sadly, does not work this way. We tend to stifle our authentic selves in order to fit in with the crowd. Thus, we suppress our creativity, ingenuity and self-awareness, thereby diminishing our spiritual potential and hampering our relationship with Hashem. This is what we termed a lack of spiritual integrity, of spiritual authenticity. While at first to swim against the tide is difficult, the rewards of self-awareness, self-worth, self-confidence – all of which allow one to seek and achieve higher goals – are not only well-worth the effort, but they will ultimately engender a happier, more creative self, an individual who is true to his own identity.

Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, travelled to the United States from Kletsk, Belarus, to raise badly needed funds for his *yeshivah*. He traveled to various Jewish communities (there were not many prior to World War I) to meet Jews who would listen and open their wallets to help his students. Somehow, he erred and ended up in a small city, far from the larger Jewish circles. He sought a place to spend *Shabbos*. He did some research and discovered that, indeed, this city was host to a very small Jewish community. While its members were biologically Jewish, their religious observance was far from commendable. The meat that passed the barometer of *kashrus* supervision was not acceptable. There was one positive caveat: the *rav* of the community was a *yarei Shomayim*, G-d-fearing, Torah scholar of repute. There was one problem, however: the *rav* did not associate in any way with his members. He remained secluded in his house, refusing to leave even to attend services in the local *shul*. He was a total recluse.

When *Rav* Aharon realized that *Shabbos* was quickly approaching, he decided that he would pay the *rav* a visit. Perhaps the *rav* would invite him for *Shabbos*. He knocked on the door and finally the *rav* answered. He

asked if he could host him for *Shabbos*. The *rav* refused sternly, “No.” *Rav* Aharon did not know what to do. On the one hand, he could not take a chance on eating spuriously kosher meat; on the other hand, he could not fast the entire *Shabbos*. He decided to knock again. This time, he would reveal his identity. Perhaps the *rav* would change his mind.

“My name is Aharon Kotler, and I serve as the *Rosh Yeshivah* of the *yeshivah* in Kletsk. I have no place to spend *Shabbos*. Will you please provide me with hospitality?”

The *rav* replied, “You claim to be a *Rosh Yeshivah*. I will ask you five questions (in *halachah*). If you reply correctly, I will know that you tell the truth.” *Rav* Aharon was an extraordinary genius, having earned a reputation even then as a peerless *talmid chacham*. He related that the questions were extremely difficult. He was able to answer one of the questions only because he had once visited a community and learned in its *bais hamedrash*. While there, he opened up a *sefer* and noticed this question, and the author’s brilliant solution. He related it to the *rav*. The remaining four questions, he was able to answer despite the fact that their source was in obscure passages in *Talmud Yerushalmi*, which were not his focal point in Torah study. Nonetheless, he passed the test and spent a wonderful, spiritually-elevated *Shabbos* with the *rav*. They passed the time studying and speaking together concerning Torah-related topics. Indeed, *Rav* Aharon was greatly impressed by the *rav*’s encyclopedic knowledge of *shas*, the entire *Talmud*.

During *Shalosh Seudos*, the closing *Shabbos* meal, *Rav* Aharon asked the *rav* why he had chosen this isolationist approach to Judaism. He had no interaction whatsoever with anyone. The *rav* replied, “I was compelled to leave the European *shtetel* for America. My goal was to find employment such that I could sustain myself while I pursue my Torah studies. After speaking to the leaders of the community, I gathered that *kashrus* was not part of their religious agenda. They observed what they wanted (which was very little). When I visited the *shul*, I realized that speed was much more important than quality. It was all about money. Get to work as early as possible in order to garner a few more pennies. I understand that I had little choice concerning what to do, if I were to survive spiritually in the community. This is why I live in total seclusion. No one sees me, so no one can disturb me.” *L’vado*, alone. He had no relationship with his employers: “I learn here; I *daven* here; I eat and sleep here. I have no interaction with anyone in the community. Thus, I plead with Hashem that He should grant me the ability to live as a Torah Jew. To achieve this plateau, it is incumbent that I remain isolated from everyone. This is my only protection.”

ויאמר עשו יש לי רב ויאמר ויעקב... וכי יש לי כל

And Eisav said, “I have much, And Yaakov said, I have everything.” (33:9,11)

The *Chafetz Chaim*, *zl*, states that the varied comments concerning their individual material bounty that Yaakov *Avinu* and Eisav *ha’rasha* expressed define their individual outlook on *olam hazeh*, this world. Eisav contended that he had much; a term that implied he could use more. With such an attitude, he would always seek more. One who has one hundred is dissatisfied. He now wants two hundred. He never has enough. On the other hand, Yaakov declared that he had everything. Material assets had little worth to Yaakov. He got by on what he had and what he had was all that he needed. Indeed, a Jew may say, “I want.” No end exists to what a person might seek. He may not, however, say, “I need,” because this implies that Hashem has not provided him with his needs.

A man had two sons. He owned a large, expensive diamond which he entrusted to one of his sons for safekeeping. He did not divulge this to anyone. Shortly thereafter, the father’s soul went to its eternal rest. That son was an upright and honest man. This was demonstrated by the utmost care that he showed for the diamond. Since no one other than his father was aware of the whereabouts of this diamond, the son went to his brother and shared this piece of information with him. He said, “Since the diamond now actually belongs to both of us, let us sell it and split its value.” When the

brother heard about the diamond, he had other thoughts regarding its disposal. This brother was unscrupulous and was not interested in sharing what otherwise would not originally have been his. He purchased a worthless glass counterfeit diamond which, to the untrained eye, appeared no different than the real thing. He then suggested to his brother that, since he, too, had received a diamond from his father, it would be much easier for them to place each diamond in a box and draw lots as to who would get which diamond. The upright brother agreed. It sounded like a plan.

The brother whose actions were less than noble purchased two boxes of similar size and appearance. He then placed a hidden mark on the box containing his fake diamond, so that he would recognize it. He suggested that they obtain two witnesses to monitor the proceedings, so that no one would ever claim that he was cheated. The upright brother asked why witnesses would be necessary; after all, they were loving brothers who were splitting up their father’s inheritance, which was comprised of two diamonds of equal value and appearance. The other brother insisted that there be witnesses. He went out to search for two such men. Meanwhile, out of boredom, the other brother took the diamonds out of their respective boxes. He stared at the shine of the diamonds. When he was done, he returned the diamonds to their boxes, not realizing that he had unknowingly mixed the two boxes. Hence, the real diamond was now in the box that had a black mark on it, and the counterfeit diamond was in the box that had been the repository of the expensive diamond.

We all know the outcome of the story. The brother who had marveled at the stones had unknowingly placed the expensive stone in the box reserved for the fake. The swindler picked the wrong box, and, thus, to his chagrin, ended up with a worthless piece of glass. “Had I been an upright person like my brother, this would not have happened,” he lamented.

In his prayer, which precedes the daily *Shacharis*, morning service, *Horav Elimelech*, *zl*, *m’Lizhenk* asks, “And spare us from the jealousy that one might have for his fellow; and never should envy enter our hearts... and place in our hearts the positive observation of our friend’s positive character traits; and we should all follow the righteous and just path; and not harbor any resentment toward our fellow.” Beautiful and meaningful words – if we would only listen.

It is all encapsulated in the inspiring immortal words of the *Tanna* (Ben Zoma) in the *Mishnah* (*Shabbos* 32a) (*Pirkei Avos* 4:1), “Who is rich?” *Ha’sameach b’chelko*; “he who is happy with his lot.” Regardless of the “portion” that one receives, he should accept it as Hashem’s gift. When one recognizes the Source of his gift, he should realize that it was not a subjective or arbitrary gift from a mortal, but a profound gift from Hashem Who knows what He is giving, to whom and why. Furthermore, *sameach* is happiness that emanates from the heart, as opposed to *sasson*, which is joy that is articulated and expressed publicly/externally. Joy from the heart is cognitive joy. One thinks it through, understands its depth, and realizes its meaning and purpose.

Contemporary life is unfortunately replete with yearning, striving and unrest. We never seem to have enough. If this would be the case concerning spiritual matters, it would be a good thing. Sadly, we seem to be satisfied with whatever status quo we achieve in the realm of spirituality and “chomp at the bit” when it involves physical/material matters.

Life is filled with challenges. Our grandparents and parents had their set of challenges; we have our challenges, which are endemic to our lifestyle and era. They had hardships; we, too, have hardships. While their sense of adversity was different than ours, one thing remains the same: the ability to cope with adversity. Our coping skills, however, are greatly diminished when they are hampered by a negative state of mind. In other words, our attitude determines whether we will triumph over the challenge, or if it will be the converse, with the challenge getting the better of us.

A person who has a positive outlook on life understands that true joy emanates from appreciating all that he has, even if it is not as much as he wants. There is a well-known anecdotal story about a poor man who lived in

a tiny house with his mother, wife and six children. The noise was superseded only by the crowded atmosphere. It was impossible for the man to think, because it was difficult to find a quiet place in the house where he could possibly be alone long enough to think. He went to his *rav* to seek advice on how to relieve his anxiety.

The *rav* listened to his tale of “woe,” and surprisingly suggested that he purchase and bring home several animals: a chicken, a rooster, a duck and a goose. After “they” were settled, the *rav* told him to go back and purchase an old goat and a cow. The man was surprised with his *rav*’s advice, but, as was common many years ago, he listened to his *rav* and, despite the added difficulty that it presented, purchased and brought home the shopping list of animals. After about a week of the added crampedness and noise, the man returned to his *rav* and complained even more. He begged for help. The *rav* suggested that he purchase a dog and bring it home. The man now had a menagerie of animals, with the stench and varied noises that accompanied it. He was about to go out of his mind. What did the *rav* seek to achieve with his advice? It was impossible to go home. He was more comfortable sleeping in the street.

The man returned to the *rav* and pleaded with him for help in resolving his now even worse situation. The *rav* said to remove one animal each day until he had none left and then return to him. A week passed, and, understandably, the challenges presented by his extra “guests” became a thing of the past. So, too, was the man’s negative attitude. “*Rebbe!* Thank you so much for your advice. I finally had a decent night’s sleep. Life is sweet. With just my family in the house, we have so much room. It is a pleasure!”

Madison Avenue teaches us to want, to seek more and more. Advertisements clamor to tell us that life could be so much more meaningful if we would only have what they are selling. We fall prey to their wiles, not realizing that the greatest joy is derived when one is content with his life. Their goal is to make us feel miserable, when, in fact, we should be happy with what Hashem has provided for us. Sadly, we do not realize our good fortune until it is taken from us. Then, a black piece of dry bread becomes a lavish banquet, and a trip to the park becomes a vacation.

A psychologist once counseled: “A person must always be lighthearted and happy. Even when circumstances are clouded by sadness, one must fight to smile. Somewhere among all the sad thoughts, he must have some recollection of better days which may curve his lips into a smile, and, in turn, brighten his spirit; and a bright spirit cannot be defeated by sadness.”

In conclusion, we all have wonderful aspects of our lives that either elude us or we ignore them. Quite often, the most positive attributes are right under our nose. The reason that we do not notice them is that we are too busy either complaining or looking with envy at our neighbor to realize that we are very fortunate.

A man decided to sell his home, and he consulted a real estate broker. After visiting the house, the agent wrote an elaborate description of the house – no fabrications – only the truth in a positive light. He then gave it to his client for approval. “Is that my house?” the client asked. “If it is, I have changed my mind about selling. It is just the house that I have always wanted, and I never realized that I had it all the time.” As I said, right under our nose.

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Weekly Halacha :: Parshas Vayishlach

Honor And Respect For The Sefer Torah

Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

A Sefer Torah, which is the living testimonial of God’s covenant with the Jewish people, must be treated with the highest degree of respect and dignity. Accordingly, there are special halachos which are associated with the removal and returning of the Sefer Torah when it is taken out of the Aron ha-Kodesh for Kerias ha-Torah, the Reading of the Torah. The following is the proper procedure:

The sheliach tzibbur should not be the one to take the Torah out of the aron.

To accord the Torah due respect, another person is appointed to open the aron, 1 take out the Torah and hand it to the sheliach tzibbur to carry to the bimah. 2 If no one was appointed to the task, the sheliach tzibbur may “rush to grab this mitzvah for himself.” 3

The Torah is taken out of the aron with one’s right hand although the left hand may be used to help. A left-handed person may take out the Torah with his left hand. 4 But the Torah is always handed, received and held with one’s right hand 5 even if it is being given, received or held by a person who is left-handed. 6

At the time that the Torah is being taken out of the aron, it is customary 7 to recite Berich Shmei, 8 which is a section of Zohar written in Aramaic. 9 Some recite Berich Shmei before the Torah is removed from the aron, 10 while others insist that Berich Shmei be said only after it has been taken out. 11 One who neglected to recite Berich Shmei at the proper time may recite it until the Torah is unrolled. 12

When the sheliach tzibbur recites Shema and Echad he should face the congregation. He then turns to face the aron, bows slightly, and recites Gadlu. 13 He should raise the Torah slightly when reciting each of these verses. 14

One is required to stand, 15 without leaning, anytime the Torah is “in motion.” [Many poskim attempt to give the benefit of the doubt to those who sit on Simchas Torah during the hakafos even though the Torah is in motion. 16 Still, it is proper for a God-fearing person to stand during the hakafos unless he himself is holding a Torah. 17] Thus when the Torah is being carried from the aron or being raised for hagbahah, one is obligated to stand until it is placed on the bimah or until it is no longer within view. 18

[When the Torah is not “in motion” the following rules apply 19 : 1) If the Torah is in the aron and the aron is closed, if it is placed on the bimah or is being held by someone who is sitting down, there is no reason to stand. 2) If it is being held by someone who is standing up (e.g., during Keil maleh rachamim), or it is standing upright in the aron and the door of the aron is open, it has become standard practice to honor the Torah by standing—even though one is not required to do so. 20 3) If, while being carried, the person carrying the Torah stops to rest, one is required to remain standing, as this is considered “in motion” 21 .]

As the Torah makes its way through the right-hand side of the shul towards the bimah, it is considered proper for the congregants to honor it by following behind and escorting it 22 as it passes by them. 23 Others hold that it is considered “haughty” to do so and it should not be done. 24 All agree that there is no point for those who are not in the path of the Torah (e.g., their seat is behind the bimah) to come to the front of the shul so that they can follow the Torah.

It is customary and considered correct chinuch for people to bring their young children forward so that they can respectfully kiss the Torah mantle. 25 Some have the custom that adults also kiss the Torah when it passes, 26 while others frown upon this custom and allow only touching or pointing at the Torah and then kissing that hand. 27

When some people carry the Torah to the bimah, they detour or bend down

to allow those who are not within reach of the Torah to kiss it or touch it. Some poskim refer to this as an act of degradation, and those who do so should be strongly reprimanded. 28

When two or more Sifrei Torah are taken out of the aron, the ones that are not currently being used are entrusted to a responsible individual to hold until they are to be used. It is improper to allow a child to hold the Torah, 29 and it is prohibited to leave a Torah unattended even if it is left in a safe place. 30

It is prohibited to turn one's back to a Torah. 31 Accordingly, those who sit in front of the shul directly in front of the Torah must turn around during Kerias ha-Torah. When, however, the Torah is read from a bimah³² [or from a table which is over forty inches high³³], this prohibition does not apply. Often, those holding a second or a third Sefer Torah (e.g., on Yom Tov) sit behind the Torah reader or the person being called to the Torah, who are then turning their backs towards those Sifrei Torah. While some poskim disapproved of this, 34 the custom to do so is widely accepted. 35 All agree that while reciting Yekum Purkan, Av Harachamim or Ashrei the sheliach tzibbur should be careful to move to the side of the bimah so that his back does not face the Sifrei Torah³⁶.

After the keriah is over, a half-kaddish is recited. Whenever there is a maftir aliyah the kaddish is recited before maftir; when there is no maftir the kaddish is recited after the last aliyah³⁷. This kaddish should be recited by the Reader. 38 If a mourner or one who has a yahrtzeit received the last aliyah (shelishi on a weekday or the last aliyah on Shabbos or Yom Tov) he may recite this kaddish³⁹. Other poskim maintain that this kaddish belongs to a mourner or one who has a yahrtzeit even if he was not called up for the last aliyah⁴⁰, and some congregations follow this opinion. 41

If, by mistake, the kaddish was omitted before maftir, it is recited after the final blessing after the haftarah. 42 If, on a day that three Sifrei Torah are used, the kaddish was mistakenly recited after the keriah of the first sefer, the kaddish is repeated before maftir. 43

Sources: 1. It is considered a *segulah bedukah* for an easy labor, for the husband of a woman in her ninth month of pregnancy to receive the honor of opening the aron; Chida, *Avodas ha-Kodesh*, *Moreh B'etzba* 3:4. 2. *Aruch ha-Shulchan* 282:1, based on *Mishnah*, *Yuma* 68b. 3. *Sha'arei Efrayim* 10:2. 4. *Sha'arei Efrayim* 10:2. 5. *Rama*, *O.C.* 134:2. 6. *Mishnah Berurah* 282:1. *The Chazon Ish* held that the "face" of the Torah should be towards the person who is holding it (*Tefilah K'hilchasa*, pg. 312), but many people hold the Torah facing away from themselves. 7. German communities do not recite *Berich Shmei*; *Siddur Avodas Yisrael*, pg. 122. Many *Sefaradim* recite it only on *Shabbos*; *Ben Ish Chai*, *Toldos* 15. 8. Several *Kabbalists* attach great importance to the recital of *Berich Shmei*, since the time when the Torah is removed from the aron is considered an *eis ratzon* (auspicious time) in which one's prayers are more readily answered; see *Yeshurun Torah Journal*, vol. 2, pg. 579. 9. Since *Aramaic* prayers may be recited only *b'tzibur*, it is important to recite *Berich Shmei* together with the congregation; see *Mishnah Berurah* 101:19. See also *Yesod v'Shoreish ha-Avodah* 5:8 who says that an individual should recite *Berich Shmei* even in middle of *Ve'hu rachum* (during the week). Other poskim disagree with that; see *Ishei Yisrael* 25, note 48. All agree that during *Pesukei d'Zimrah* or *Birchos Kerias Shema* one should not stop to recite *Berich Shmei*; *Teshuvos Maharshag* 1:52. 10. *Darhei Chayim v'Shalom* 196. This also seems to be the view of *Aruch ha-Shulchan* 282:1, and is the custom in many places. 11. *Mateh Efrayim* 619:48; *Rav Pealim* 3:8; *Igros Moshe*, *O.C.* 4:70-9, based on *Sha'arei Efrayim* 10:1; *Az Nidberu* 8:48. *Rav S.Z. Auerbach* (*Halichos Shelomo* 1:12-9) maintains that either way is acceptable. 12. *Mishnah Berurah* 134:13. *Pischei She'arim* to *Sha'arei Efrayim* 10:1 maintains that it may be said during *hagbahah* as well. 13. *Aruch ha-Shulchan* 282:1. See *Ketzos ha-Shulchan* 25:6. 14. *Mishnah Berurah* 134:13. 15. "Stand" means that if one is sitting he must stand up and if one is walking he must stand still (until the Torah passes by); *Aruch ha-Shulchan*, *Y.D.* 282:3. 16. See *Aruch ha-Shulchan*, *Y.D.* 282:5; *Shulchan ha-Tahor* 149:2; *Minchas Shelomo* 1:33; *Halichos Shelomo* 1:12-13; *B'tzeil ha-Chochmah* 5:139; *Teshuvos v'Hanhagos* 2:319 and *Tzedakah u'Mishpat* 16, note 37. 17. *Orchos Rabbeinu*, vol. 2, pg. 308. 18. *Mishnah Berurah* 146:17, based on *Y.D.* 282:2. According to some opinions, the requirement is to stand as long as one can sense that the Torah is being carried, even if it is not visible to him. 19. Based on *Sha'ar ha-Tziyun* 146:18; *Igros Moshe*, *O.C.* 5:38-4; *Minchas Shelomo* 1:33. 20. Accordingly, a weak or ill person may sit; *Meishiv Halachah*, *O.C.* 248. 21. *Shach*, *Y.D.* 282:2. 22. Some poskim mention that it is proper to follow until it reaches the bimah (*Chayei*

Adam 31:42), while others write that it is sufficient to follow along "a bit" (*Sha'arei Efrayim* 10:4; *Halichos Shelomo* 1:12, note 17). 23. *Mishnah Berurah* 149:7. 24. *Aruch ha-Shulchan* 149:3; 282:1. 25. *Rama*, *O.C.* 149:1. 26. *Sha'arei Efrayim* 10:4; *Kaf ha-Chayim* 134:10; 149:10. 27. *Pischei She'arim* 10:4 quoting *Kitzur Shelah*; *Siddur Tzelosa d'Avraham*, pg. 375; *Rav Y.E. Henkin* (*Eidus l'Yisrael* 63); *Rav Y.S. Elyashiv* (*Ashrei ha-Ish*, vol. 1, pg. 133). 28. *Teshuvos Yad Yitzchak*, quoted by *Beis Baruch* 31:171; *Teshuvos Rivam Shneituch*, quoted in *Tzitz Eliezer* 12:40. [Possibly, if the detour is for the sake of a person who is unable to come to the Torah, i.e., a handicapped person, it would be permissible.] 29. *Mishnah Berurah* 147:29. 30. *Igros Moshe*, *O.C.* 1:38. 31. *Y.D.* 282:1. 32. *Rama*, *Y.D.* 242:18; *Mishnah Berurah* 150:14. 33. *Taz*, *Y.D.* 242:13. See, however, *Pischei Teshuvah*, *Y.D.* 282:2, who seems to imply otherwise. See also *Minchas Yitzchak* 5:78. 34. *Mishnah Berurah* 147:29. 35. *Halichos Shelomo* 1:12, note 21. 36. *Eimek Berachah*, pg. 43. 37. Whenever a *keriah* takes place before *Shemoneh Esrei*, the *kaddish* is delayed until after the Torah is returned to the aron. 38. *Mateh Efrayim* (*Kaddish* 3:1); *Sha'arei Efrayim* 10:9. 39. *Ibid.* *Rav S.Z. Auerbach* explains that this *kaddish* was specifically reserved for those who passed away and do not have a relative to say *kaddish* for them. This *kaddish*, therefore, is not to be recited by an individual mourner or someone who has a *yahrtzeit*, unless he was called for the last aliyah (*Halichos Shelomo* 1:12-27). See *Sdei Chemed* (*Aveilus*, 163). 40. *Elef ha-Magen* (*Kaddish* 3:3). 41. *Orchos Rabbeinu*, vol. 1, pg. 72; *Shevet ha-Levi* 8:163-3. 42. *Mishnah Berurah* 282:29. 43. *Igros Moshe*, *O.C.* 1:101. *Weekly-Halacha*, Text Copyright © 2013 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. Rabbi Neustadt is the *Yoshev Rosh* of the *Vaad Harabbonim* of *Detroit* and the *Av Beis Din* of the *Beis Din Tzedek* of *Detroit*. He could be reached at dneustadt@cordetroit.com *Weekly Halacha* © 2019 by *Torah.org*