



Parshat Vayechi 5769

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Snapshot**Monday:**

- Third annual Emuna Seminar, liylui nishmat Rav Lipman Podolsky, zt"l.

Tuesday:

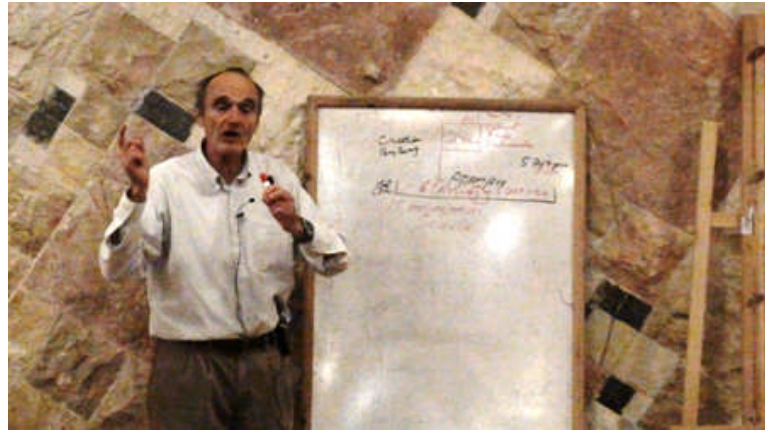
- The entire Yeshiva attended the Levaya of Major Dr. Dagan Wurtman, zt"l, a Golani Brigade Physician.

Thursday:

- Alumni who have come to spend their winter break in Yeshiva went to visit Gedolim here in Eretz Yisrael.

Third Annual Emuna Seminar

On Monday the Yeshiva held its third annual Emuna Seminar, a series of lectures tackling major questions regarding faith. The renowned lecturers spoke on topics ranging from evolution and science, Torah M'Sinai, to practical living as a Jew. The day ended with a moving kumzitz with Shlomo Katz.



Dr. Gerald Schroeder lecturing at the Emuna Seminar

Elisha at YU

The alumni of Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh studying at Yeshiva University were given a big treat with the surprise arrival of Elisha Porath, for whom to some he was their head madrich, while the more recent alumni remember him in his current capacity as "Director of Student Life". Elisha, who flew in for the wedding of former madrich Netanel Munk, elected to make Yeshiva University one of the stops on his short visit. We shared pizza, hugs, and stories from years gone by - a fabulous time was had by all. Thank you Elisha for thinking of us.



Netiv Alumni in YU

Rav Nebenzahl on Parshat Vayechi

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

MISUNDERSTANDING THE ENTIRE TORAH!

IMPETUOSITY DISQUALIFIES

Yaakov Avinu blesses his sons before his death:

"Reuven, you are my firstborn, my strength and my initial vigor, foremost in rank and foremost in power." (*Bereishis* 49:3)



As the firstborn you were worthy of receiving a greater share than your brothers - the *kehuna* and the monarchy, but because of your "water-like impetuosity, you cannot be foremost." (*Ibid.* 4) Because Reuven acted in haste, that additional share was taken from him and granted to others, the *kehuna* to Levi and the monarchy to Yehuda. Where do we find his impetuosity? "Because you mounted your father's bed," (*Ibid.*) referring to the incident recorded in *Parshas Vayishlach*:

"Reuven went and lay with Bilha, his father's concubine." (*Bereishis* 35:22)

Our Sages dispute precisely what took place. Some are of the opinion that, contrary to the literal meaning of the *pasuk*, Reuven was not guilty of illicit relations with Bilha. The *Ksav veHaKabala* shows that a careful reading of the *pasuk* in fact proves that there were no physical relations between them. He points out that when the Torah tells us that someone went - *halach*, it implies he *left* a location. On the other hand, the word *lavo* - to come, emphasizes *arrival* at a specific destination. For example, when Moshe was commanded to meet Pharaoh outside his palace by the river he was told "Go to Pharaoh," (*Shmos* 7:15) while when he was commanded to meet him inside his palace he was told - "Come to Pharaoh." (*Shmos* 7:26, 9:1, 10:1) In the Torah's account of the above incident it says "Reuven went." This seems to indicate quite clearly that no wrongful act took place, for Reuven simply took Bilha out of Yaakov's domain. Had she been brought into his own private domain, the Torah would have said- "Bilha came." What was Reuven guilty of? "He disturbed his father's bed and Scripture regards him as if he lay with her." (This opinion in the Gemara explains that following Rachel's death, Yaakov moved Bilha's bed into his tent. Reuven, viewing this as an affront to his mother Leah's honor, removed Bilha's bed and replaced it with Leah's), (*Shabbos* 55b)

Some of our Sages are of the opinion that Reuven did have relations with Bilha (*Ibid*), which is one of the most severe prohibitions a person can transgress. Although the *pasuk* states clearly that Bilha was not Yaakov's wife, but his concubine, the *Rishonim* dispute the exact status of a concubine. It is either a relationship without *kiddushin* or it is true *kiddushin* but without the benefit of a *kesuba*. The latter definition would classify Bilha as a full-fledged married woman, (See Rashi and Ramban on *Bereishis* 25:6) making Reuven guilty not only of having relations with a married woman, but, in addition, of having relations with his father's wife! Even according to the view that a concubine is an unmarried woman, Reuven was not totally free of guilt. Firstly, R' Yehuda is of the opinion that even a woman who had been raped is forbidden to the rapist's son. How much more so in the case of Bilha, who had a long-term relationship with Yaakov (See *Yevamos* 97a). For Reuven to have relations with her, although not in violation of a *lav* (a negative commandment)- and certainly not of an act punishable by *kares*, is definitely forbidden. Even the Sages who reject R' Yehuda's view, maintaining that a woman who had been raped or seduced is not forbidden to the son, would not permit having relations with any unmarried woman, since she may, for example, be in a state of *nidah*. Even if she were not, the Rambam views relations with any unmarried woman as a violation of the prohibition: "There shall not be a promiscuous woman among the daughters of Israel." (*Devarim* 23:18. See Rambam *Hilchos Ishus* 1:4)

Conversely we may ask, if Reuven's sin was indeed so severe, why did Yaakov use such delicate language as "water-like impetuosity" in his rebuke? Was Reuven's action no worse than that of a child who runs around wildly and falls, tearing a hole in his pants? We are speaking of one of the most serious violations in the Torah! We would have expected much sharper words of admonition than "water-like impetuosity"!

IN THE MERIT OF THIS TESHUVAH ...

The explanation is that Yaakov rebuked him prior to his death, many years after the incident had taken place, which was sufficient time for Reuven to have

undergone a *teshuvah* process involving much suffering and fasting (See Rashi *Bereishis* 37:29). Chazal add that it was in the merit of this *teshuvah* that he became the ancestor of Hoshea, the prophet who implored the Jewish people "Return, Israel, unto Hashem your G-d." (Hoshea 14:2. See *Bereishis Rabba* 84:19) With this understanding, it becomes clear why Yaakov did not use sharper language in his rebuke - Reuven was a *baal teshuvah* and it is forbidden to remind a *baal teshuvah* of his misdeeds (See *Baba Metzia* 58b).

We can now ask the opposite question - if Reuven had indeed repented for his action, why did Yaakov rebuke him at all, even gently? He had done *teshuvah*! What more could be expected of him?

While Reuven may have repented, a *teshuvah* sufficient to eradicate all the damage caused by the sin is very difficult. On the one hand we learn that repenting is not difficult: "The matter is very near to you - in your mouth and your heart - to perform it." (*Devarim* 30:14. See Ramban there) However *teshuvah* is "a ladder set earthward, its top reaching heavenward." (*Bereishis* 28:12) Climbing the bottom rungs of the ladder is an easy task, but ascending to higher rungs becomes progressively more difficult. Reuven may have repented, but Yaakov learned through *ruach hakodesh* that Reuven had not totally cleansed himself from this sin, and he therefore rebuked him.

Even spiritual giants of the world were unable to reach the top of the *teshuvah* ladder. Adam HaRishon, for example, violated the one "easy *mitzvah*" that Hashem gave him - not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (See *Shabbos* 55b). Chazal teach us that "Adam HaRishon was an exceedingly pious man. When he saw that death came into the world because of him, for his sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, he fasted for one hundred and thirty years, and abstained from marital relations for one hundred and thirty years, and wore belts of fig branches on his skin for those one hundred and thirty years." (*Eruvin* 18b) Adam's *teshuvah* was certainly effective, for he was granted life in the Next World, yet it was still not enough to restore the world to its state prior to his sin. He was unable to rescind the decree of "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread," (*Bereishis* 3:16) or that of "For you are dust, and to dust shall you return." (Ibid. 19) People still need to work for a living and they still die at the end of their days.

THE ATONEMENT OF YESHAYAHU HANA VI

Similarly, Yeshayahu HaNavi committed what appears to have been an insignificant transgression. He said of Am Yisrael, "I dwell among a people with impure lips." (*Yeshayahu* 6:5) The very next *pasuk* describes his punishment: "One of the seraphim flew to me and in his hand was a coal; he had taken it with tongs from atop the altar." (Ibid. 6) The coal was so hot that even a *seraph*, an angel who himself is made entirely of fire, was unable to hold it with his hands, but needed tongs to grasp it. My esteemed teacher, HaRav Eliyahu Dessler, *zt"l* explained that this signifies that the coal was on a higher spiritual level than the angel. "He touched it to my mouth." (Ibid. 7) The angel took the high spiritual level of the coal and touched it to Yeshayahu's lips. "He said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity has gone away and your sin shall be atoned for.'" (Ibid) It appears that Yeshayahu's transgression had effectively been removed and his sin had been atoned for, yet Yeshayahu knows that this is not the case and he must now begin the process of completely wiping out his sin (For an elaboration of this subject, see *Titharu*, - HaRav Nebenzahl's *sichot* on the Ten Days of Repentance p. 93).

Immediately thereafter Hashem asked him, "Whom shall I send, and who shall go

for us?" (Ibid. 8) Who will go to rebuke the Jewish nation? (See Rashi there) Although other prophets such as Moshe Rabenu, Yirmiyahu, and Yechezkel all tried to avoid these missions, Yeshayahu volunteered his services: "And I said, 'Here I am! Send me!'" (*Yeshayahu* 6:8) We must realize that a prophet's job involved much more than being honored with *Shlishi* or *Shishi* each *Shabbos*. At times he would need to go out among the people to admonish them, exposing himself to potential suffering and persecution. Yeshayahu himself related, "I submitted my body to those who smite and my cheeks to those who pluck; I did not hide my face from humiliation and spittle." (*Yeshayahu* 50:6) I have taken upon myself the mission of prophecy, knowing full well that I am opening myself up to being smitten, to having my beard torn out, and to being spat at. For eighty years Yeshayahu was willing to suffer all the persecution and suffering involved in this mission in order to eradicate his sin. Presumably he was not persecuted the entire time, for part of his prophecy took place during the reigns of Uziyah, Yotam, and Chizkiyahu, who were righteous kings of Yehuda. The humiliation Yeshayahu was referring to probably occurred when the wicked kings Achaz and Menashe ruled over Yehuda. Furthermore, during those entire eighty years, the *Beis HaMikdash* was standing, meaning that Yeshayahu was prophet for eighty Yom Kippurs in which the *Seir HaMishtale-ach* was sent to *Azazel* (Literally the goat dispatched (into the wilderness) atones for the less severe sins, even when not accompanied by *teshuvah*. See Rambam, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 1:2). (It is probably inaccurate to assume that there was a *Seir HaMishtale-ach* each year, for Achaz had put a stop to the service, (See *Sanhedrin* 103b) but the goat was certainly dispatched during the reigns of the righteous kings.) We do not doubt for a moment that Yeshayahu did *teshuvah* as well. Even with all this, Yeshayahu was not granted complete atonement. At the conclusion of the eighty years, Menashe, king of Yehuda smote him in the mouth and killed him. All this was in retribution for the less than honorable way he spoke of Am Yisrael (See *Yevamos* 49b). Yeshayahu's *teshuvah*, persecution and suffering, and eighty Yom Kippurs in which eighty goats were offered, were not sufficient to provide a complete *tikkun* for his sin. Total erasure of a sin, even one as minor as Yeshayahu's, is very difficult.

A similar phenomenon occurred after the sin of the Golden Calf. Moshe Rabenu meted out justice to those guilty of worshipping the calf, and three thousand people were killed. In addition, Moshe ascended Har Sinai to pray to Hashem to forgive the Jewish nation. While Hashem granted forgiveness, the nation did not return to the level it had been on before the sin. The *teshuvah* and *tikkun* of Moshe Rabenu and the other *tzaddikim* of the generation - Aharon, Yehoshua, and others, was not enough to cleanse the people entirely. It was sufficient to allow *Am Yisrael* to be saved from destruction and to be given the second set of *luchos*, to bring them into *Eretz Yisrael* and build the *Mishkan*, but it could not return us to our previous situation, in which we were free from the clutches of the angel of death and free from the oppression of other rulers (See *Shmos Rabba* 32:1).

"HOW CAN WE LIVE WITH OUR SINS AND OUR INIQUITIES?"

In this light we can understand the dispute that took place between *Am Yisrael* and the prophet Yechezkel. Yechezkel spoke to the people of his generation, saying, "Thus have you spoken, saying, 'Since our sins and our iniquities are upon us and we are wasting away because of them, how can we live?'" (*Yechezkel* 33:10) The people did not believe that *teshuvah* could fully correct the blemishes their sins had caused. They finally believed Yechezkel when he swore in the Name of Hashem, "Say to them: 'As I live - the word of Hashem Elokim - I do not desire the death of the wicked one, but rather the wicked one's return from his way, that he may live. Repent, repent from your evil ways! Why should you die, O House of Israel?'" (Ibid.

11) Why did they not believe at first that *teshuvah* has the ability to correct sins? Because they understood the depths of corruption caused by sin; they could not see how *teshuvah* could possibly change that. We are aware of Yechezkel's prophecy and the many sayings of Chazal relating to the power of *teshuvah*. To us it all seems so easy: we fast on Yom Kippur, recite *viduy*, recite *selichos* (the *Sephardim* for a month, the *Ashkenazim* for approximately a week), and then Yom Kippur is over and we eat a scrumptious meal, as if nothing had ever happened! If we truly repented on Yom Kippur, why has the *Beis HaMikdash* not been rebuilt? Why was it destroyed in the first place? Did the people of that generation not repent every year? While it is good to know that the Gates of Repentance are always open, we must realize that *teshuvah* does not end on Yom Kippur. Even after Yom Kippur, we need to continue working on our *teshuvah*. Complete and total *teshuvah* is very difficult to attain and requires much hard work and effort on our part.

APPLE TRICKS

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev questioned how on Yom Kippur we can make the *bracha*: *Melech mochel vesole-ach laavonotenu velaavonot amcha Beit Yisrael* - "Blessed are You Hashem, the King Who pardons and forgives our iniquities and the iniquities of His people, the Family of Israel." How can we be so sure that this year Hashem will grant us forgiveness? If He does not, we will have recited a *bracha levatala*. R' Levi Yitzchak explained with a parable. Once upon a time there was a child who very much craved an apple. Of course he could have asked his mother for one, but he was afraid that she might not agree to give it to him. After giving the matter some thought, the child came up with a brilliant idea. Standing next to her, he recited out loud: *Baruch ata Hashem Elokenu Melech haolam borei pri haetz!* Of course the mother did not want her beloved son to be guilty of reciting a *bracha levatala*, so she had no choice but to give him his precious apple. When we recite the *bracha*, "The King Who pardons and forgives our iniquities," we are, so to speak, forcing Hashem to forgive us. (I would like to point out that the story of the child and the apple is good for purposes of illustration, but from a purely *halachic* perspective we are not permitted to recite a *bracha* on a food before it is in our hand.)

We know that we are required to recite a *bracha* even on a minimal quantity of food. The same may be said of the *bracha* we recite on Yom Kippur - it applies even to the lowest level of *teshuvah*. Although Hashem forgives us for any level of repentance, we must realize that the fact that *Am Yisrael* has been repenting for so many generations, yet we have not yet merited a total redemption is clear proof that our *teshuvah* is far from complete. *Am Yisrael* not only did not do enough *teshuvah* - they continued sinning!

To return to Yaakov's rebuke of Reuven, there is an additional explanation for Yaakov's chastising him even though he repented. Every sinful act contains two components - the act itself and the negative trait that led to the act (See Rambam *Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:3). It is possible that Yaakov's words were gentle because he was not rebuking him for the act. For that Reuven had indeed repented. Yaakov rebuked Reuven for the character trait that was responsible for the act. When Yaakov accused Reuven of "water-like impetuosity," he was telling him that he may have atoned for his sin, but he had not sufficiently worked on his negative characteristic. It is for this reason that he "cannot be foremost" - he was not worthy of the *kehuna* or of kingship. A king cannot act in haste - he needs to think matters through. A king who acts hastily may lead his people into a war which they have no chance of winning, or he may raise or reduce taxes without justification.

SOBER SERVICE

A *Kohen* too cannot be hasty - he must be fully mindful of his actions and must have the proper intention when bringing offerings, "in order to distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the contaminated and the pure." (*Vayikra* 10:10) The *pasuk* distinguishes between service that is holy and that which has been profaned (See Rashi there). It is for this reason the Torah forbade the *Kohen* to serve in the *Beis HaMikdash* while under the influence of wine (See *Vayikra* 10:9). Similarly a king may not drink too much wine, as we see in Batsheva's criticism of Shlomo: "It is not proper for kings who belong to G-d, it is not proper for kings to drink much wine." (*Mishle* 31:4) A king and a *Kohen* must be sober and self-controlled in order to fulfill their roles. The functions of *kehuna* and *malchus* cannot be carried out impetuously and so they were taken away from Reuven and given to his brothers.

"WHOEVER SAID REUVEN SINNED ..."

Chazal tell us, "Whoever said Reuven sinned is simply mistaken." (*Shabbos* 55b) What does this mean? If Reuven was punished, he must have done something wrong. We mentioned earlier that there is an opinion in Chazal which claims that Reuven did not actually have relations with Bilha, but was simply guilty of moving his father's bed out of Bilha's tent and in to Leah's. Chazal explain: "Reuven sought (to right) the affront to his mother. He said, 'If my mother's sister was a rival to my mother, shall the maidservant of my mother's sister be a rival to my mother?'" (Ibid) Rachel may have been worthy of rivaling my mother Leah, for she too is counted among the matriarchs. But Bilha - Rachel's maidservant! What right does she have to take the place of Rachel? She is not one of our holy matriarchs! He therefore went and moved his father's bed.

Even according to the view that Reuven did indeed have relations with Bilha, events are not as they appear. We are not speaking of a person acting out of lust; rather it was a form of protest against the affront to his mother's honor. Of course, his whole perspective was mistaken. In addition to being his father, Yaakov was Reuven's Rav, the *gadol hador*, and a prophet. Reuven should have relied on Yaakov's judgment. If Yaakov believed that it was appropriate to live with Bilha rather than with Leah, he must have had his reasons (See Rashi's commentary to *Shabbos* 55b, which states that Yaakov was directed by the Divine Presence). At the very least, out of respect for his father, he should have asked Yaakov his reasons and not taken matters into his own hands, either by moving Yaakov's bed or by having relations with Bilha.

When Chazal said "Whoever said Reuven sinned is simply mistaken," they meant that even if he acted literally as the text implies, he was not impelled by the same drives that motivate others to act in such a manner. He intended to defend his mother's honor, although this was not the correct way to go about it.

MISUNDERSTANDING THE ENTIRE TORAH

This leads us to a deeper understanding of "Whoever said Reuven has sinned is simply mistaken." Chazal are teaching us that someone who thinks this is mistaken not only in his understanding of this particular incident but in his approach to the entire Torah! He "is simply mistaken" in his understanding of the Torah, for the Torah teaches us the vast distance between holiness and impurity. An entire world separates them and they cannot coexist. A man who sins with his father's wife, by giving in to his base desires, is not worthy of having his name appear on the

choshen and *ephod* stones worn by the Kohen Gadol as a remembrance before Hashem, as Reuven's did (*Shabbos* 56a). One who does not understand this has missed the point of the entire Torah.

The same may be said of David HaMelech, of whom Chazal too say: "Whoever has said David has sinned is simply mistaken." Here as well, to be "simply mistaken" means to misunderstand the entire Torah. It does not stand to reason that David can be guilty of all the terrible sins which the Tanach seemingly attributes to him - illicit relations, murder, and others - and at the same time be "the anointed one of the G-d of Yaakov, and the pleasing composer of the songs of Israel." Whoever thinks so "is simply mistaken" in his understanding of the entire Torah! The vast distance that separates sanctity and impurity does not permit these things to go hand-in-hand.

The Rambam writes "Prophecy only comes to ... one who is strong in his character, whose inclination will not overpower him with anything in this world, rather his mind can always overpower his inclination." (*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 7:1) David HaMelech was a prophet (See *Moed Katan* 16b and Rashi there). If prophecy can only come to someone who keeps his *yetzer hara* in check, then his failure in any area can only be due to a miscalculation on his part and not due to his *yetzer hara's* getting the better of him.

What did David have in mind (erroneously) in the incident with Batsheva? He saw with *ruach hakodesh* that "Batsheva the daughter of Eliam was suited since the Six Days of Creation to David," (*Sanhedrin* 107a) and that *Moshiach* was destined to descend from her and from himself. What about the fact that she had a husband? Uriah was subject to the death penalty for having rebelled against royalty (See *Shabbos* 56a and see Rashi and *Tosafos* there, who differ regarding precisely in what way he rebelled). In my humble opinion, Uriah's rebellion is in his telling David: "By your life and the life of your soul I will not do such a thing." (*Shmuel* II 11:11) The word for "your life" is generally spelled with two *yuds*, but in this *pasuk* the word contains only one *yud*. A word with a missing letter is referred to as *chaser* - lacking. The implication here is that something was lacking in Uriah; he did not value the life of the king sufficiently. Therefore David sent Uriah "directly in front of the fierce fighting" (*Shmuel* II 11:15) ultimately leading to his death. David was carrying out the punishment that Uriah deserved. We learn in the Gemara, "Whoever goes out to fight a war of the House of David writes a bill of divorce for his wife." (*Shabbos* 56a) If the soldier does not return, the woman is retroactively divorced from the time the *get* was given, therefore Batsheva was not actually a married woman.

A CHILLUL HASHEM

What sin was David in fact punished for? For the great *chillul Hashem* which he caused. "However, because you have thoroughly blasphemed the enemies of Hashem in this matter." (*Shmuel* II 12:14) The enemies of Israel can now accuse David of having killed Uriah in order to take his wife. They do not understand that Uriah deserved the death penalty for having rebelled against royalty. "You should have had him judged via the Sanhedrin." (*Shabbos* 56a) A public trial would have demonstrated to everyone that he was guilty. Sending him to the front line in the war against Amon gave the enemy grounds to claim that "The anointed one of the G-d of Yaakov, and the pleasing composer of the songs of Israel" was a murderer, guilty of illicit relations! This was not the way to carry out justice. There is no greater *chillul Hashem* than this! To this very day our enemies speak this way of David HaMelech.

In his psalm of repentance, David declares, "Against You alone did I sin." (*Tehillim* 51:6) His guilt was only *bein adam laMakom*, in the terrible *chillul Hashem* that he caused (See *Zohar Shmos* 106:2). There was no transgression *bein adam lachavero* - in having Uriah killed and in taking his wife. If we analyze Chazal's comment on the prophet Nathan's rebuke of David, we will gain a clearer understanding of David's sin. "While him you have killed by the sword of the children of Amon." (*Shmuel* II 12:9) Our Sages explain that the prophet is emphasizing that David's wrongdoing was not in having killed Uriah. Uriah had it coming to him. Nathan HaNavi was rebuking David for having Uriah killed via *the sword of Amon* (See *Zohar Shmos* 107:1). The Amonites' custom was to inscribe the symbols of their *avoda zara* on their swords. Whenever a Jew was killed by their sword, they claimed that their god had defeated the G-d of Israel, G-d forbid. Whether or not the symbol of the other nations' *avoda zara* is inscribed on their swords, when they defeat Am Yisrael they proclaim: "Our hand was raised in triumph and it was not Hashem Who accomplished this." (*Devarim* 32:27) This was the great *chillul Hashem*.

From a Jewish perspective, when Jews are killed by non-Jews as happened during the Holocaust and other tragic periods in Jewish history, they are considered as having died *al Kiddush Hashem*. From the perspective of the non-Jews, however, this is a tremendous *chillul Hashem*! They see Jewish people murdered and they believe that their god is superior. They say: "Let us cut them off from nationhood, so Israel's name will not be remembered any longer." (*Tehillim* 83:5)

There is no question that those who died at the hands of the Crusaders died sanctifying Hashem's Name, yet the non-Jews cannot see this. To this very day, the nations of the world ask, "Where was G-d in Auschwitz?" Anyone studying that tragic period cannot but be amazed at how much *Kiddush Hashem* there was. What took place during World War II was the greatest sanctification of Hashem's Name since the days of *Akeidas Yitzchak*. The same may be said of the Communist regime of the Soviet Union. In the eyes of the world, however, this was a desecration of Hashem's Name - so many Jews were killed in Auschwitz and other infamous places. The same applies to the many Jews killed in our Holy Land in war and acts of terror. We refer to them as having died *al Kiddush Hashem* but from the perspective of the Ishmaelites, a *chillul Hashem* has taken place. This was where David erred: he did not take into account sufficiently how the other nations would react to the way Uriah was killed.

After all we have said, we must keep in mind that David and Reuven may have erred, but they remained pure. Reuven's name is still worthy of being inscribed on the stones of the *ephod* as well as on the *choshen*, so that the *Kohen Gadol* carries it as a merit, together with that of the other tribes, in order to protect us. David HaMelech too remained unblemished. and we await, speedily in our day, *Moshiach* who is destined to descend from him and Batsheva. Of course all that we have discussed is only within the limitations of what our minds can grasp. We can never uncover the depths of the thought- processes of Reuven, David HaMelech, or any of the other giants of Israel - we are not fit to judge their actions. May we be worthy that their merit will stand for us and the entire nation of Israel. May we be worthy of David's descendant, *Moshiach*, speedily in our day. Amen.

Staff Dvar Torah
by Rav Dani Bader

In Parshas Vayechi we read of the blessings Yaakov Avinu bestows



upon his children, the twelve tribes. Why did Hashem divide the Jewish nation into twelve tribes? At first glance it appears to only complicate matters. Think of how much friction could have been avoided over the generations had there been only one tribe descending from Yaakov.



Yaakov gave a different blessing to each of his sons corresponding to their varying strengths and talents. In this manner they would be able to contribute to the Jewish people in their own individual way. **Their diversity is what brings about our functionality.** An army is comprised of combat soldiers, office staff, pilots, and cooks - each is vital for the success of any military operation and anyone negligent in their role would spell disaster.

Yaakov was aware that each of his sons was able to make a vital contribution to Klal Yisrael each in their own unique and special way. Many think that everyone in the world should be just like them. In addition to this making the world a boring place, it would be pointless. Just as no two faces are the same, so too everyone has their own unique mission in this world. An important aspect of life is to realize that people are different, not everyone is like you, and yet not only must we live alongside them in peaceful coexistence but we must respect them as well. The Torah provides us with many different ways of serving our Creator.

With Hashem's help we will learn the lesson from this week's parsha that just as the Jewish people is divided into twelve different tribes, so too must we realize that our way is not the only way that is right and we must be tolerant of others. May this renewed commitment to respecting the differences between us bring merit to our people and especially to our soldiers fighting on the front lines.

Student Dvar Torah

by Ilan Casper, Shana Alef - TABC

Upon meeting his grandchildren Ephraim and Menashe, Yaakov immediately blesses them and then blesses Yosef. Yaakov concluded his *bracha* with the words: "*v'ani natati l'cha shechem echad al achecha*" - "I have given you Shechem - one portion more than your brothers" (Bereishit 48:22). What is the meaning of Yosef having received Shechem - one more portion than his brothers? Rashi, Ramban, and Baal HaTurim each offer explanations. Rashi opines that perhaps it is referring to the city of Shechem which is the additional portion Yosef received in *Eretz Yisrael*. Ramban explains that Yosef was given a double portion (being counted as two tribes - Ephraim and Menashe) - the double portion generally given to the firstborn. The Baal HaTurim provides a *gimatria* which can be used to support the Ramban's view, as the *gimatria* of *shechem echad* is the same as the *gimatria* of *chelek bechora* - the portion of the firstborn (*gimatria* 373).



This, however, does not explain the use of the expression *Shechem echad*? The word *echad* generally implies one of several, rather than there being only one. Secondly, where else in the Torah do we find that the word *Shechem* means a portion? We do, however, find elsewhere that the word *Shechem* implies a burden. With this in mind, what is Yaakov blessing informing Yosef? HaRav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that Yaakov is telling Yosef that he is to bear the burden of being the leader of the many family members following Yaakov Avinu's passing, during the remainder of their sojourn in Egypt.

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Announcements from the Yeshiva

Mazal Tov

The Yeshiva would like to wish a Mazal Tov to:

- Adam Steinmetz (5765) on his marriage to Allison Leve.

Visitors

The following people have visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Rabbi Jusha Sarna - Hillel Rabbi at NYU, who spoke to the talmidim
- Andrew Finkelstein (5767)
- Raphael Karlin (5768)
- Alex Holder (5768)
- Hillel Genesove (5767-68)
- Isaac Levy (5768)
- Adam Dachs (5755-56)
- Ari Finkel (5765)
- Noah Senders (5767-68)
- Shmuel Stern (5764)
- Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Crowne (5765-66)
- Joel Markin (5767-68)
- Samuel Kollander (5767)
- Matthew Faigen (5767-68)
- Adam Levie (5767)
- David Benlolo (5768)
- Jeffrey Koppel (5767-68)
- Bradley Goldstoff (5767-68)
- Daniel Sultan (5766-67)
- Seth Avner (5767-68)
- Yossi Davis (5767)
- Michael Fruchter (5764)
- Eitan Bitter (5762-63)
- Sam Lebens (5762-63)
- Yechiel Husarsky (5763-64)
- Joshua Teitcher (5767)
- Evan Cohen (5767-68)
- Michael Oppenheimer (5767-68)
- Dov Poplac (5767-68)
- Stephen Leavitt (5751-52)

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Toiby Yehudit bat Tama Gaisa
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel

- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Yosef ben Latife
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Perla bat Miriam
- Rachel bat Sarah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Nachum Tzvi ben Ratza
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly Bat Yaerah

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, let our office know so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - let us know! We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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