

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This week's Parasha is sponsored Lirfuat Rav Yona Ben Chava Betoeh Shaar Cholei Yisrael

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



SONS AND FATHERS

A Rabbi said to a precocious six-year-old boy, "So, you tell me that your mother says your prayers for you each night. That's very commendable. What does she actually say?"

The little boy replied, "Thank G-d he's in bed!"

Leading a life in the 21st century as a parent is never easy. We find ourselves working during the day to make the necessary income, and in the evenings to ensure a good upbringing of our children.

The secret is giving them over real time and personally investing in their education.

Our Parasha is called Toldot which means generations or offspring.

The Parasha opens: "And these are the offspring of Yitschak the son of Avraham – Avraham fathered Yitschak."

As is well known, the title of a Parasha is taken from the first key word of each Parasha. Sometimes this is the very first word, but can occasionally be up to fourteen words later, as we find in Parashat Kedoshim.

Our Parasha commences with the words – "Ve'eleh Toldot Yitschak ben Avraham".

Toldot is therefore a very apt name for the Parasha.

However there is a similar Parasha which also begins with the words Ve'eleh Toldot – that of Noach.

Yet there we find that the Parasha name is called Noach and here it is called Toldot.

Perhaps Noach should be called Toldot and Toldot should be called Yitschak, why the difference in titles?

Noach was a righteous man who was primarily interested in himself. Even though it took 120 years to build the ark, he was never able to change any of his generation or encourage them to repent. This was in contrast to Avraham who later was able to bring the masses under the worship of the One G-d.

Avraham was able to earn the name of an Av – forefather.

Three times a day we begin the most holy of our prayers with the famous words, "Blessed are you G-d, the G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitschak, and the G-d of Yaakov".

The Gemara (Berachot 16b) teaches that only three individuals have the title 'Avot'.

Rabenu Bechaye explains that the source for this comes from a Pasuk when Hashem introduces himself to Moshe at the burning bush as – "The G-d of your fathers, the G-d of Avraham, The G-d of Yitschak and the G-d of Yaakov" (Shemot 3:15).

This was the way that G-d introduced Himself to Moshe and this, explains the Torah Temimah, is the reason we introduce our most holy prayers in this manner. ►

KISLEV 1st 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:39 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 4:53 PM

> MAZAL TOV

Tali Von Huth & Avi Garson
on their engagement



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

*"Life doesn't require
that we be the best,
only that we try our best."*

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2ND Dec Wisdom & Knowledge Series
- 9TH Dec Guest speaker for YP Ladies

For our upcoming events check our website www.torahactionlife.com



DVAR TORAH

Sons and Fathers
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

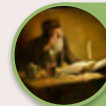
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Avraham, through his life's ten tough tests, was able to withstand and become the prodigy of a nation.

Yet there is even more behind the scenes.

Many commentaries wonder why the Torah mentions that Avraham was the father of Yitschak, a fact that we surely know.

R' Menachem Mendel Krochmal z"l (17th century Poland) offers the following explanation:

The Midrash Tanchuma teaches: Sometimes a son suffers degradation because of his father, as the righteous King Yoshiyahu suffered degradation because of his father, the wicked King Amon (Melachim II chapters 21- 22).

Similarly the righteous King Chizkiyahu suffered degradation because of his father, the wicked King Achaz (Melachim II chapter 16).

On the other hand, a father sometimes suffers degradation because of his children, as the prophet Shmuel did because of his sons, and the Kohen Gadol Eli did because of his sons (see Shmuel I 8:3 and 2:22).

However, concludes the Midrash, neither Avraham nor Yitschak ever suffered degradation on account of the other. To the contrary, each one was made more distinguished because of his association with the other. Perhaps, writes R' Krochmal, this is the message of our verse. Yitschak was proud to be Avraham's son, and Avraham was proud to be Yitschak's father.

We find similarly that Moshe and his father-in-law Yitro each took pride in his relationship with the other.

R' Krochmal adds: It is the way of wise men and it is a sign of righteousness to always attribute one's accomplishments to others. Avraham attributed his accomplishments to Yitschak, and Yitschak, to Avraham.

In married life Yitschak took on the same character. After many years of not being able to have children, the Torah relates that Yitschak would pray opposite his wife. The Pri Tsadik explains this to mean that he would pray to have children in her righteous merit and she would pray to have children in his righteous merit. Each one recognised the others

virtues to an extent that their grandeur and achievements in life were down to the other.

When there is such respect in a father and son or husband and wife relationship, then we have the necessary ingredients for continuity.

We can now understand why our Parasha which deals with Yitschak and his offspring is called Toldot.

Noach lived in a tough generation but was self focused. His offspring was himself and that Parasha is named after him.

But as far as Yitschak was concerned it was the Toldot – generations that mattered.

The lesson is profound; ultimately what matters most is not the extent to which our name is in print, but rather how successful we are in guaranteeing the continuity of our faith.

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI YITSCHAK HACHOEN TAWIL - MIR KOLEL, JERUSALEM



PARASHA INSIGHTS

"Yitzchak was caused to love [VAYE'EHAV] Esav for he hunted/ensnared with his mouth, and Rivka loves [OHEVETH] Ya'akov" (25:28).

Rashi, citing the Medrash, explains to us how Esav would cunningly ensnare his father Yitzchak with his mouth. He would ask many complicated Halachic questions to his pious father Yitzchak, fooling his father to believe that he, Esav, was righteous and pious!

R. Nathan Ordman notes that when the Torah describes the love that Yitzchak had towards Esav, the causative form of the verb "VAYE'EHAV" is used. This fits in beautifully with the Medrashic explanation of the continuation of our verse "for he [Esav] ensnared [his father Ya'akov] with his mouth". By pretending to be pious even under the most challenging surroundings as a hunter, adhering so firmly to the Halacha even under the most rigorous of environments, Esav succeeded

in purchasing his father's love, persuading his father that he was the one truly deserving of blessing. Little did Yitzchak realise, Esav was a cunning falsifier - it was Ya'akov who was the truly pious son. Rivka however was armed with the female sixth sense of reading behind Esav's pious deception. She realized immediately that Esav was a false front, and always loved Ya'akov, her truly pious son. The constant ongoing love that Rivka had towards Ya'akov is hinted to in our verse by expressing her love towards Ya'akov in the present tense "OHEVETH".

From this episode emerges for us a number of significant guiding principles. Even if one may find himself in the worst of environments, one must bravely and confidently combat the negative influences surrounding him, and adhere firmly to Torah Study and Mitzvot. This is the only possible way to overcome the many persuasive challenges of his surroundings. One who does so is indeed deserving of reward. However to willingly place oneself in a challenging environment, inviting upon himself a temptation to sin is most definitely an approach to be discarded. Although once already in danger man must endeavor to do all he can to escape, he must not willingly place himself in jeopardy! Doing so will inevitably result in a fall!

Ya'akov, the truly pious son of Yitzchak preferred to "sit secluded in tents" studying Torah, rather than actively place himself in spiritual danger. We don't look for challenges – indeed, we pray that G-d doesn't put us to the challenge, as, more often than not, we unfortunately easily succumb to temptation. However, when G-d does place us through challenge and trial, and life is full of them, it is because G-d knows that if we truly want and make the effort, we are capable to combat temptation and thereby earn for ourselves eternal reward. This is the purpose of life, to withstand temptation and combat our ego, serving G-d diligently via Torah Study and Mitzvot. Life is full of decisions, both in quality and quantity - every moment has its trial, every second of life must be filled up wisely!

In Ethics of the Fathers (Chapter 5) we are taught that "love dependant on something doesn't endure, love independent on anything external endures!" We see this principle apparent in our episode. Yitzchak's love for Esav was dependant, "because Esav ensnared him with his mouth", and did not endure. Rivka's love for Ya'akov was truly constant and pure, this love endured!

■ Shabbat shalom

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI TSEMAH TSARFATI

Rabbi Tsemah Tsarfati was the leader of the Rabbanim of Tunis. He founded a great spiritual center and taught Torah to numerous students that came to imbue themselves with his wisdom. Rabbi Tsarfati renewed the study of the Gemara with the Tosafists and implanted in his students a love of study for various commentators.

On the eve of every holiday and Shabbat, he would pass by the shops and pressed merchants to close their businesses in order to tranquilly welcome Shabbat. Rabbi Tsarfati united in his person astonishing wisdom with purity and holiness. His courteousness and nobleness were well-known, to the point that even non-Jews respected and esteemed him well.

Rabbi Tsemah devoted his days and nights to the study of Torah. Yet every night, when he prepared himself to study quietly, the problem of lighting confronted him. It was difficult for him to obtain a new tallow candle or a little oil for a wick each time that he needed it.

One night, Rabbi Tsemah did not have a way to light his candle. Yet he was not about to forsake a long night of study. He went outside in the darkness, headed to the nearest bakery, and asked the baker's assistant to help him light his candle. The assistant joyfully did so, and Rabbi Tsemah began to feel reassured: Hashem had come to his aid and he had not lost hours of study in vain!

While he was walking back, the candle blew out. Rabbi Tsemah returned to see the employee and, excusing himself for bothering him, asked him to kindly light the candle once again. The candle blew out several times while on route, and each time the employee relit it. Eventually, sadness began to take hold of Rabbi Tsemah's heart. Perceiving that such was the case, the employee took the candle and brought it himself to the Rav's home in order that it not get blown out while on route. "For a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light," and the tiny flame warmed Rabbi Tsemah's heart. He placed his hands on the head of the employee and uttered a blessing, wishing him great wealth.

One day, while Rabbi Tsemah was traveling through Istanbul on his way to Eretz Israel, Hashem placed an extremely wealthy Jew on his path – none other than the baker's assistant! In his generosity he gave the Tzaddik a donation, a sizeable amount in fact, so that he could settle peacefully in Eretz Israel and study Torah.

One year, a trying epidemic struck Tunis, producing numerous victims. Cries of distress rang out from every home. There was not one house that was not touched by illness.

Rabbi Tsemah, who could no longer tolerate seeing the suffering of his people, invited the Angel of Death to come to his Beit Midrash. His students were stunned when he signaled to them with his hand that the angel had arrived. Rabbi Tsemah rebuked the angel in front of everyone, and while holding a bag of beans in his hand, he ordered him to immediately leave the city and its inhabitants alone for as many years as there were beans in the bag.

Pushed by curiosity, one of the students dared to ask the Rav for the bag in order to count the number of beans inside. Eighty were found.

That same day, the epidemic ceased and the inhabitants of Tunis breathed easier. They had seen with their very eyes that "the Tzaddik decrees and G-d executes."

And in fact, eighty years later the epidemic once again struck the city, but Rabbi Tsemah was already in the world where only goodness reigns.

Near the end of his life, Rabbi Tsemah fell gravely ill. He suffered terribly for two years, without any remedy for his ills being found. The Jewish community implored Hashem, Who heals the sick, and begged Him to have pity on their Rav.

Rabbi Tsemah himself related that during those difficult times, the Prophet Elijah appeared to him and gave him the remedy to his sickness: If he studied Gemara and the Poskim on the eve of a Brit Milah in the home of the baby's mother, he would be healed.

Rabbi Tsemah agreed to do this, and he was quickly healed. From that day on, he wandered near the doors of the Jews of his city and was invited into each home in which a boy was born. There he prepared himself to study Torah until daybreak.

Since that time, the custom among the Jews of Tunis has been to gather a minyan of Chachamim in the home of the baby and to study until daybreak.

To the great regret of all those that loved him, Rabbi Tsemah Tsarfati passed away in Jerusalem in 5477 (1717), receiving at his death all the honors due a Tzaddik. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

THE BERACHA FOR MASHED POTATOES, EDDGE, FRENCH FRIES, PRINGLES, AND POTATO CHIPS

The practice among Sepharadim is to recite the Beracha of "Boreh Peri Ha'adama" on mashed potatoes. Even though mashed potatoes do not resemble a potato, nevertheless, they require the Beracha of "Ha'adama" because they have the same taste as an ordinary potato. This applies as well to "edde" (potato pancakes), which is prepared by frying grated potato, as well as French fries and potato chips, which are fried slices of potato. Although these products do not have the form or appearance of a potato, they nevertheless require the Beracha of "Ha'adama" because they taste like potato.

The more complex question relates to Pringles, which are prepared from potato flour, and not from actual pieces of potato. Some Halachic authorities maintain that even Pringles require the Beracha of "Ha'adama," because they have the taste of potato. However, the Yalkut Yosef (Berachot, vol. 3, p. 42) notes that a Pringles chip is comprised of only 42 percent potato; the rest of the chip is made from other ingredients. And therefore, since only the minority of the product is potato, the proper Beracha is "She'hakol," and not "Ha'adama." A separate question arises with regard to the barbeque flavored Pringles, which contain flour. Foods that contain flour could require the Beracha of "Mezonot," depending on the function the flour serves in the mixture. As the function of the flour in barbeque flavored Pringles is unclear, the Yalkut Yosef rules that one should eat this product only after reciting both "She'hakol" and "Mezonot" on other foods, in order to avoid this Halachic question.

Summary: According to Sephardic custom, the proper Beracha for mashed potatoes, potato pancakes, French fries and potato chips is "Ha'adama." Over Pringles potato chips, however, one recites "She'hakol." It is uncertain whether the barbeque flavored Pringles chips require "Mezonot" or "She'hakol," and therefore one should eat this product only after reciting both "She'hakol" and "Mezonot" on other foods. ■

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TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why did the Philistines plug up the wells?
- ❷ Why did Yitzchak lose his sight? (three reasons)
- ❸ At what age should one anticipate his own death?
- ❹ Why did Rivka ask Yaakov to bring two kid goats?
- ❺ Why did Esav leave his special garments with Rivka?

his wives might steal them.
 - One for Yitzchak and the other to offer as a korban Pesach. ❷ 27:15 - He suspected that
 years from the age his parents were when they passed away, until five years after. ❹ 27:9
 akeda; c) In order for Yaakov to receive the blessings. ❸ 27:2 - When he reaches five
 supply. ❷ 27:1 - a) From the smoke of the incense offered by Esav's wives
 to their idols; b) From the angel's tears which fell into Yitzchak's eyes at the time of the
 wells, or if attacking for other reasons, they would use the wells as a water
 supply. ❶ 26:15 - They felt that either marauders would attack to capture the

Answer



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