

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
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RELATIONSHIPS

Alexandros III Philippou Makedonon commonly known in the West as Alexander the Great King of Macedon (336-323 B.C.E.), was the most successful military commander of ancient history, conquering most of the known world before his death.

Our Sages relate the story of how Alexander The Great was about to conquer the land of Israel. Incited by enemies of the Sages, Alexander intended to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem. In the past, wherever he had trodden he made sure to put a massive statue of himself in the holiest place of the land. His intention was clear; all should know about and respect him.

As he arrived closer to Yerushalayim, the sages sent out a delegation headed by Shimon Hatsadik to meet him.

How were they going to defend against such a mighty warrior, and how were they going to ensure that no idols be left in the Holiest Place – the Bet Hamikdash.

They approached the mighty warrior and their answer was astounding.

Let's take a closer look at our Parsha first.

VeEleh Toldot Yitschak Ben Avraham, Avraham Holid et Yitschak -

These are the generations of Yitschak the son of Avraham, Avraham bore Yitschak.

Rashi asks why there seems to be a superfluous repetition here. If Yitschak is the son of Avraham, of course Avraham was his father?

Rashi explains that the Letsaney Hador (jokers/slanderers of the generations) saw how Sarah wasn't able to have children for many years.

Suddenly she was taken by Avimelech and then shortly after at the age of 90 she had a child.

Word got around that the real reason she was able to have a child was perhaps because it was to do with Avimelech?

Of course this had nothing to do with Avimelech and Hashem clarified the matter through a miracle that Yitschak would look exactly like Avraham.

Thus the torah stresses it was Avraham and not Avimelechs son.

There is an even deeper level of understanding.

In the olden days if someone wished to refer to someone else, they wouldn't ask him for his surname – that never existed.

How would they refer to him?

They would say – whose son are you?

We can see this from when Eliezer met Rivka he asked her - Bat Mi At – whose daughter are you?

A person was known as the son or daughter of so and so.

For example when people would hear that a persons name was Shimon Ben Yakov then people would know who he really was.

Avraham was an exception.

He was known as Avraham Halvri.

Why? Because he came from the other side of the river – he came from Mesopotamia. ►

4th Kislev

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:50 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 4:55 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"Tears come from the heart and not from the brain"

> UPCOMING EVENTS LIVE

- ▶ 23rd NOV MONDAY NIGHTS WITH RABBI TAWIL
- ▶ 25th NOV PARASHA PEARLS WITH RABBI TAWIL
- ▶ 26th NOV COOKING WITH TAL

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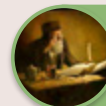
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Furthermore he believed in One G-d whereas the rest of the world worshiped idols. He was an Ivri – on the other side of the world to others.

He wasn't known as Avraham Ben Terach – Avraham the son of Terach because he was not proud of his father. His father was the top priest of Avoda Zarah.

Thus his status was Ivri.

Later on in life, this status of Ivri, took a change. Avraham stopped being known only as Avraham Halvri and took on a new status.

When Yitschak was born – Avraham would now be known as “Avraham the father of Yitschak”. That is to say, Yitschak was such a Tsadik that Avraham was proud of being called his father – Avraham Holid Et Yitschak.

The Talmud (Yuma 69a) ascribes righteousness to Alexander the Great.

Incited by enemies of the Sages, Alexander intended to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem. On the way, he was approached by R' Shimon HaTzadik who headed a delegation of rabbis. When Alexander saw him, he got off his horse and bowed on the ground at his feet. The enemies of the Sages questioned why “The Great” should prostrate before the lowly. He replied that at the head of all his conquests he was led by the image of a righteous man, and this image was the countenance of none other than R' Shimon. The rabbis asked Alexander, “Is it conceivable that your enemies should mislead you into destroying the House in which prayers for your success and for that of your kingdom are offered?” At which point Alexander recalled his soldiers and turned over the enemies of the Sages to the Jews.

Yet there was still the predicament of the statue of Alexander being placed in the Holy Temple.

When the sages were faced with the biggest problem in their times, they approached Alexander and made him an offer.

Putting the statue is a great honour, they told Alexander, but we have something even better than a statue.

We can offer you that every Jewish child that is born this year will be called Alexander after you!

And so it was he accepted and whereas nowadays the statues of the greatest warrior are far and few, his name lives on (even in our community) forever.

Our Children are our future. Let us invest and take pride in them and may they be an ever lasting merit to us - their parents and ancestors forever.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI BORUCH BOUILLOVSKY - RABBI OF YOUNG ISRAEL OF NORTH NETANYA



HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER

The moment when Esau pitifully begs his aging father for a blessing after all, bitterly weeping (Genesis 27:38), can easily kindle our sympathy. Does any of his textually recorded behavior or character trait justify his woeful fate? Is our traditional animosity towards Esau not exaggerated and disproportional? Indeed, we do find rabbinic sources that acknowledge to some extent the validity of Esau's grievance¹. Nevertheless, the Haftara decisively declares ‘... I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau’ (Malachi 1: 2 – 3). Where in the biblical text is there any evidence of Jacob's moral superiority over his brother Esau?

I believe that a careful reading of the closing passage of our Parsha might highlight a fundamental difference between the characters of Jacob and Esau.

After acquiring the blessings, seemingly dishonestly, Jacob leaves his parents' home to escape from Esau and to find a wife. It is Rebecca who warns Jacob of the danger and persuades Isaac to instruct Jacob to travel to her family in search of a wife. The Parsha then concludes with Esau's journey to find a nonlocal wife after learning of his father's disapproval of the local population's daughters.

5: And Isaac sent Jacob, and he went to Padan aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

6: And Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan aram, to take himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him, he commanded him, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan’.

7: And Jacob listened to his father and his mother, and he went to Padan Aram.

8: And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing to his father Isaac.

9: So Esau went to Ishmael, and he took Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth, in addition to his other wives as a wife.

(Genesis 28: 5 – 8)

In this context, several textual difficulties arise. Firstly, why is it necessary to emphasize (verse 5) the by now very well-known genealogical fact that Rebecca is the mother of Jacob and Esau? Indeed, the great French medieval Torah commentator Rashi commented on this phrase, ‘I don't know what this is teaching us’. Secondly, why does the Torah tell us that Jacob went to Padan Aram twice, once in the fifth verse and again in the seventh? Additionally, verse seven seems completely out of place. If it were removed, the entire passage would seem far better structured. The Torah would finish telling us about Jacob in verse five, continuing till the end of the passage discussing Esau exclusively. Instead, the two are strangely intertwined! Finally, verse eight

seems to only repeat, albeit in different words, what we already know from the sixth verse!

Perhaps this passage, at its heart, exhibits the difference between Jacob and Esau regarding the respect they showed their mother. Accordingly, the passage highlights that Rebecca is the mother of both Jacob and Isaac. Rather than unnecessarily repeat information, verses seven and eight clearly contrast Jacob with Esau in this regard. Verse seven stresses that Jacob ‘listened to his father and his mother’. Esau on the other hand, as demonstrated in verse eight, was only motivated by his father's concerns, whilst ignoring those of his mother².

Esau discriminated between his father and mother, as opposed to Jacob who honoured both. It is Jacob who exemplifies that respect and obedience must not be selective and discriminatory, but graciously awarded to both parents. This value is then codified in the fifth commandment requiring us to honour both our father and mother.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

¹For instance, see Abarbanel's commentary to Deuteronomy 23:2

²It is possible that the reason Jacob is listening to his father and his mother is because he is journeying to Padan aram for two separate reasons. Firstly, to escape Esau as suggested by his mother, and secondly to find a wife as explicitly encouraged by Isaac. (The issue of why Rebecca did not tell Jacob directly to travel in search of a wife deserves a separate treatment.) Nevertheless, this approach does not explain all the textual irregularities raised. Finally, it is of course possible that after losing the blessings because of his mother's plot, Esau understandably felt he no longer needed to honour her. However, we have no evidence that Esau knew that Rebecca was involved at all. Additionally, this approach too does not satisfy the textual questions raised.

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI YITZCHAK ELCHANAN, THE RAV OF KOVNO

Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector, who was known as the Rav of all Israel, was the Rabbi of Kovno. He was born in 1817 (5577) and died in 1896 (5656). He led various communities, amongst others the city of Novardok from 1851 to 1864 (5611 to 5624). Yet his renown in the Jewish world comes essentially from the last place where he served as Rav, the city of Kovno, where he remained for more than 30 years.

He became the leader of his generation, and regardless of the domain, be it communal good or individual life, nothing was done without his advice or his consent. Questions were asked of him from all corners of the world, and a great part of his thousands of responses were compiled in his books *Beer Yitzchak*, *Nachal Yitzchak*, and *Ein Yitzchak*.

The *Natziv* (Rabbi Naphtali Tzvi Judah Berlin) of Volozhin said that Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector had merited all this because of his exception diligence in Torah study. "He is the greatest matmid [diligent one in Torah study] of our generation," said the *Natziv*, who was also known for his exceptional diligence.

Indeed, when we read the story of his life it is impossible not to marvel at the great work ethic that he demonstrated from his earliest age. To give an idea of the attention that he drew, even in the eyes of the greatest of matmidim, we shall give a few examples.

It goes without saying that from his earliest youth, Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan was plunged into study practically without any stop. Even when, for whatever reason, he had to leave the Beit Midrash, he would begin leaving the hall while still reading a book, continuing to do so until he approached the table closest to the exit. There he would lay it down open to the page that he had been studying. When returning to the Beit Midrash, he would pick the book up and once again begin studying where he left off, without the least delay.

When he arrived early at his father-in-law's for lunch and the meal was not yet ready, without losing a moment he would wash his hands and quickly eat a piece of dry bread left on the table. Even before those of the household had the time to ask him to wait for the meal, he was already off to the Beit Midrash.

At the end of Yom Kippur, he would leave synagogue running. He would then arrive home, perform Havdalah without waiting, and then eat something and run out once again to the Beit Midrash – even while the last of the faithful still hadn't had time to leave!

These are but a few examples that point to the nature of his study, which allowed him to become a great teacher in Israel.

Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan was the greatest authority of his generation. People the world over addressed themselves to him. One of the areas for which he was most sought was that of agunot (married women whose husbands had disappeared, and who could not remarry without proof that their husbands were dead), where he worked wonders. The pain of women in misery, whose husbands had disappeared without leaving a trace, shook the heart of the Rav of all Israel. In order to find a way to liberate these women in accordance with the law of the Torah, he invested all of his energy into every question brought before him, without leaving himself any time to eat or sleep. And when G-d allowed him to find a legal allowance to allow a woman to remarry, his joy was very great. In numerous cases involving agunot, the strength of his Torah demonstrated itself and everyone could see that Heaven was in agreement with him.

When he was still leading the community of Novardok, he was presented with a question concerning an agunah whose husband was presumed to have drowned in the Mediterranean ("waters without end"). He was asked to see if there existed any doubt as to whether the husband could have managed to reach the coast on the other side of the sea. He remained studying this question for days and nights, and came to the conclusion that the husband was in fact dead and that the woman had the right to remarry without hesitation.

It happened that on the following day, people found the body of a man who had been washed ashore. In carefully examining his clothes, a set of keys was found that definitely belonged to the missing man.

In another case, there was an agunah whose husband had disappeared, and the Rav of the city where this woman lived had not found a way to liberate her from her status. The question was brought before the Rav of Kovno, and he examined it for a long time. In the end he allowed the woman to remarry. When the Rav of the woman's town found out about this decision, he expressed many doubts. He even went to Kovno to challenge the decision itself. Rav Yitzchak Elchanan listened with great patience to this Rav, who himself was great in Torah, yet in the end he said, "I gave this woman complete permission, and I do not want to come back to it."

When the Rav returned back to his home, it happened that his city decided to excavate certain areas around town. During this operation, the body of a man was discovered at one of the excavation sites, and it was later identified by its clothing as being that of the missing man. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

SOAKING ONE'S FEET IN HOT WATER ON SHABBAT TO INDUCE SWEATING

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 326:2) writes that although one may not bathe his entire body on Shabbat, even with water that was heated before Shabbat, it is permissible to bathe with "Hameh Teverya" – the natural hot springs in Tiberias. Since these springs are naturally heated, the Rabbis did not enact a prohibition against bathing in this water.

In the next passage (326:3), the Shulhan Aruch cites two views as to whether this is allowed even in an indoor area, meaning, if a building was built around such a spring. According to the first view cited by the Shulhan Aruch, going into this structure is forbidden because it will, invariably, cause a person to sweat, and the Rabbis forbade intentionally inducing a sweat on Shabbat (as the Shulhan Aruch discusses later, 326:12). The second opinion, however, rules leniently in this regard, asserting that the prohibition against inducing perspiration on Shabbat applies only in situations where it is forbidden to bathe on Shabbat. Since bathing in "Hameh Teverya" is allowed on Shabbat, intentionally inducing a sweat in the area of "Hameh Teverya" is also allowed. Therefore, even indoors, where a person will perspire, bathing in these springs is permissible on Shabbat.

The practical application of this debate is the situation of a person who has the chills and wishes to relieve his chills by soaking his feet in hot water, which will induce perspiration. Although Halacha forbids bathing one's entire body on Shabbat, it is permissible on Shabbat to wash a part of one's body, such as soaking one's feet. This, then, is a situation where a person seeks to induce a sweat in a circumstance where bathing is permitted. According to the second opinion cited above, therefore, it should be permissible to soak one's feet in hot water with the specific intention of inducing perspiration. Hacham Ovadia Yosef writes that the Halacha follows the second opinion cited by the Shulhan Aruch, since the Shulhan Aruch cites both views with the expression "Yesh" ("there are those"), and when the Shulhan Aruch presents two different opinions with this formulation, Halacha follows the second opinion cited. Therefore, Hacham Ovadia Yosef ruled that it is permissible on Shabbat to bathe one's feet in hot water – assuming, of course, that the water was heated before Shabbat – in order to induce a sweat.

Hacham Ovadia added that even if a person wishes to soak his feet for medicinal purposes – such as to alleviate his chills – this nevertheless does not fall under the category of forbidden medical procedures on Shabbat. Even healthy people soak their feet in hot water for warmth, and thus doing so does not overtly appear as a medical procedure. As such, it does not violate the prohibition of Refu'a (medical procedures) on Shabbat.

Summary: Although it is generally prohibited to intentionally induce perspiration on Shabbat, it is permissible on Shabbat to induce perspiration by soaking one's feet in hot water that was heated before Shabbat, such as in the case of a person seeking relief from the chills. ■

KidsTime



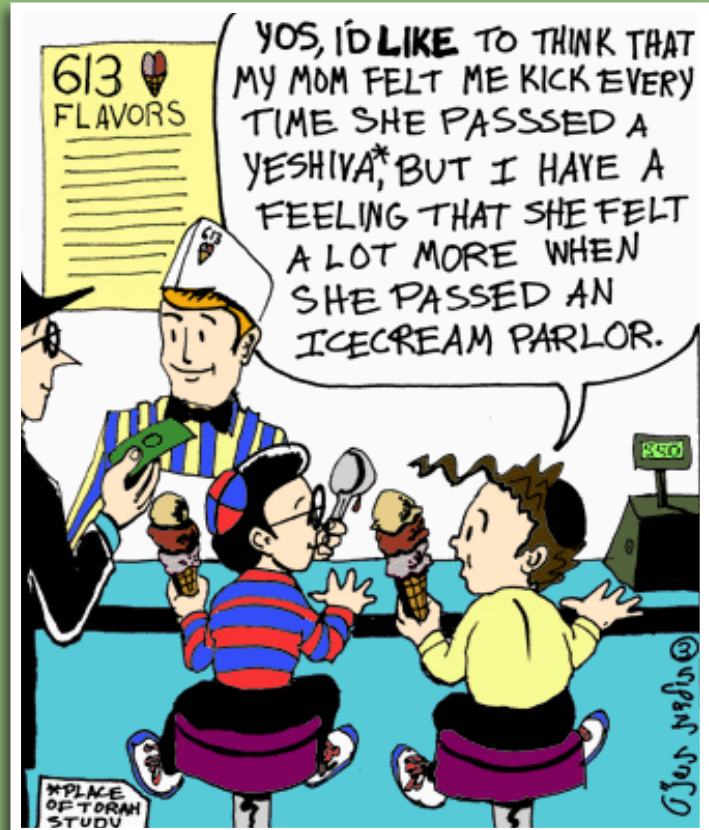
TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why was it important that Yitzchak look like Avraham?
- ❷ Why does the Torah stress that Rivka was Betuel's daughter and Lavan's sister?
- ❸ What are the two differences between Tamar's pregnancy and Rivka's pregnancy?
- ❹ Why was Esav named Esav?
- ❺ Who gave Yaakov his name?

Answer

❶ 25:19 - So everyone would agree that Avraham was indeed his father. ❷ 25:20 - To praise her, that even though her family was evil she was righteous. ❸ 25:24 - Rivka gave birth at full term to two children, one wicked. Tamar gave birth after seven months to two righteous children. ❹ 25:25 - He was born fully developed. The name Esav is based on the Hebrew word for "made." ❺ 25:26 - Hashem.

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