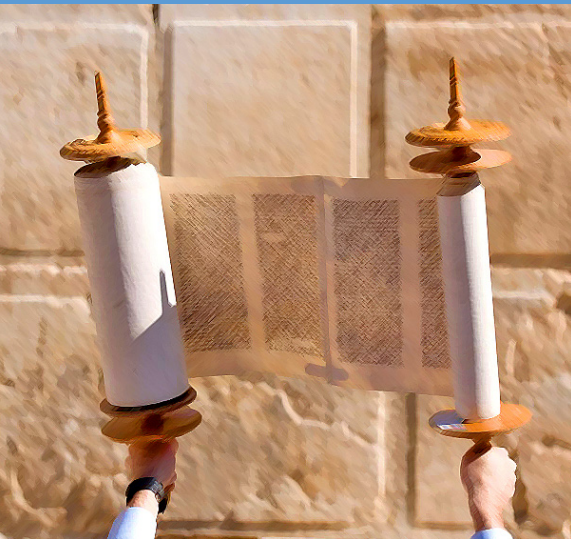


A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



A SEFER TORAH OR LIVING TORAH

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion describes Yaakov as a "Yoshev Ohalim" (Bereishis 25,27). Our Sages explain that this means that Yaakov would sit in the Tents of Shem and Ever to study Torah.

Our Sages teach us that when we study Torah we draw down a hashpa'a, a spiritual energy, that brings blessings to the entire world. Our Sages similarly teach that when HaShem created the world, He "Looked into the Torah and Created the World". The Sfias Emes explains that this teaches us that HaShem studied Torah and used that hashpa'a to create and sustain the world. We do the exact same thing when we study Torah. We draw down a hashpa'a that sustains and blesses the entire world.

This leads us to the following true story.

Avigdor and his wife Elisheva unfortunately were never blessed with children. When they were in their seventies they decided that even though they didn't have children, they wanted to do something that would be a zechus (merit) for them after they leave this world.



THE JOB DESCRIPTION

In this week's Parsha, Toldos we find two distinctly different visions for the Jewish people. We have Yitzchok's pre-blessing vision and Rivka's vision to which Yitzchok conceded in the end. As children of this incredible people let us familiarize ourselves with these visions.

Both Yitzchok and Rivka understood that their children would be the people chosen by HaShem to bring the world to its state of perfection. That was to be accomplished by being a Nation of Priests and a light unto the nations. They both understood that Yaakov was to be the spiritual leader of this nation. Yaakov was a man of Torah study while Eisov was a man of the field. Yaakov was a man of spirit while Eisov was a man of material.

Their point of contention was regarding Eisov's role. Yitzchok believed Eisov was a fine soul. Although he was attached to the material world, nevertheless, that did not conflict with the mission of the Jewish people. As long as we exist in this world of material reality we must live with it as such. Just as every Yeshiva has an administrative arm which runs the material side of the Yeshiva, so too, the Jewish people require an administrative arm to care for the economy, the military, governance and other necessary auxiliary material needs. This would be Eisov's role. In Yitzchok's vision he saw Eisov running the admin arm and Yaakov would be the Rosh Yeshiva. As such, there was no need for Eisov to be a man of spirit, it was not in the job description.

MITZVA MEME

Avigdor said to Elsheva. "I have an idea. We have \$50,000 in our savings account. Let's use the money to purchase a Sefer Torah for the nearby Yeshiva. The Sefer Torah will be used every week for many years, perhaps even a hundred years. This way even after we leave this world, we will have the tremendous zechus of Torah study with us for many years to come.

Elisheva listened attentively, and replied as follows: "You are right, Avigdor that we should do something that brings about the support of Torah, but here is another idea. A sefer Torah is a tremendous mitzvah, but it is not a living thing. Maybe we should use the money to pay for the salary of the biggest masmid (one who is extremely diligent in his Torah study, never wasting a moment) and Talmid Chacham in the Kollel. The money will support this Talmid chacham for an entire year of Torah learning. Although it will be only a year of learning, I think supporting a person learning Torah would be greater than paying for an actual Sefer Torah."

"But Elisheva", Avigdor countered, "The Sefer Torah will last much, much longer. Supporting a Talmid Chacham will only be for one year."

"Yes", Elisheva responded. "It will only be a year but I think a year of Torah study is greater than an actual Sefer Torah."

This question was brought to Rav Zilbersten. Which is a greater zechus?

Buying a sefer Torah that will be used and read from for decades, or supporting the Torah study of a talmid chacham for one year?

What do you think?

See Chashukei Chemed Megillah Page 335

If you have a true mitzvah dilemma that you would like us to share, please email it to rabiweiner@gmail.com



Rivka understood that while that model may work, Eisov was not going to fill that position. In order to properly fill that position, the admin must recognize their role as secondary to the role of the Rosh Yeshiva. It is the Rosh Yeshiva who carries the mission of the Yeshiva. The admin's role is only to be the support. Eisov, however, saw the material world as the purpose of life to the exclusion of spiritual achievements.

In Rivka's model, there was certainly a place for an administrative arm. However, it was to come from the children of Yaakov. Rivka understood that our nation must have doctors, accountants, lawyers and businessmen, but all of them must find themselves in Yaakov's camp. Even those running the admin office must be people who are driven to spiritual achievements.

As we look around today at our beautiful nation we find men in all lines of professions studying Torah as our father Yaakov did.

While the amount of time dedicated to Torah study may fluctuate there is no distinction in the primacy they place on Torah study and observance.

How fortunate we are that the beauty of Torah and the love for her is available for every member of our people irrespective of the role they play in the larger scheme. It is part of every Jew's job description.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE CHIMP

Last week we discussed a very intelligent animal, the Hyena. This week let us explore another smart animal, the Chimpanzee. Male chimpanzees weigh 88–132 lbs and females weigh 60–110 lbs. A large Chimpanzee can reach as much as 200 lbs. They stand 3.3 to 4.6 ft tall. It is estimated that there are about 170,000 to 300,000 chimpanzees in the wild. The arms of a chimp are longer than its legs, and can reach below the knees. The hair of a chimp is typically black but can be brown or ginger. As they get older, white or grey patches may appear, particularly on the chin and lower region. Their skin may range from pale to dark and females can develop pink skin. Chimps move on all fours by “knuckle-walking.” The average lifespan of a wild chimpanzee is usually less than 15 years. Captive chimps however have been recorded to live up to 63 years.

In contrast to a human, a chimp’s gestation period is eight months. The infant is weaned at about three years old, but usually maintains a close relationship with its mother for several more years. Newborn chimps are helpless; their grasping reflex is not strong enough to support them for more than a few seconds. For their first 30 days, infants cling to their mother's bellies. When they reach five to six months, infants ride on their mothers' backs. They remain in continual contact for the rest of their first year. When they reach two years of age, they are able to move and sit independently. By four to six years, chimps are weaned and infancy ends.

The chimpanzee is an omnivore. It prefers fruit above all other food items but also eats leaves and leaf buds, seeds, blossoms, stems, pith, bark and resin. It will also eat insects, birds and their eggs, and medium-sized mammals, including other monkeys.

Leopards prey on chimpanzees in some areas. Interestingly, there is at least one record of a group of chimps killing a leopard cub, after mobbing it and its mother in their den.

Chimpanzees live in groups which range in size from 15 to 150 members, although individuals travel and forage in much smaller groups during the day. These smaller groups can have specific purposes. For example, an all-male troop may be organized to go hunting, while a group consisting of nursing females serves to act as a “nursery group” for the young.

The species lives in a strict male-dominated hierarchy, where disputes are generally settled without the need for violence. Males maintain and improve their social rank by forming coalitions with other chimps. Being in a coalition al-

lows males to dominate a third individual when they could not by themselves. Chimpanzees wage wars with other packs to conquer their land. Patrol parties from large groups take over a smaller group's territory, gaining access to more resources, food, and females.

Chimpanzees are extremely strong. One female chimpanzee was able to lift 1,260 pounds with one arm. A human could only lift about 1/6th as much. This is due to higher content of fast twitch muscle fibers, one of the chimpanzee's tools for climbing and swinging.

The chimpanzee has an advanced “map in its brain” of its home range and can repeatedly find food. Where do they sleep? The chimpanzee makes a night nest in a tree in a new location every night, with every chimpanzee in a separate nest. Infants sleep with their mothers.

Nearly all chimpanzee populations have been recorded using tools, modifying sticks, rocks, grass and leaves and using them for hunting and acquiring honey, termites, ants, nuts and water. Despite the lack of complexity of these tools, forethought and skill are apparent in how they create these tools. When foraging for honey, chimps use modified short sticks to scoop the honey out of the hive. For hives of the dangerous African honeybees, chimps use longer and thinner sticks to extract the honey to protect themselves from getting stung. Chimps also fish for ants using the same tactic. West African chimps crack open hard nuts with stones or branches. Chimps also use leaves as sponges or spoons to drink water. West African chimpanzees in Senegal sharpen spears with their teeth, being used to spear Galagos (small primates) out of small holes in trees. An eastern chimpanzee has been observed using a modified branch as a tool to capture a squirrel.

A 30-year study at Kyoto University's Primate Research Institute has shown that chimps are able to learn to recognize the numbers 1 to 9 and their values. The chimps further show an aptitude for photographic memory. In controlled experiments on cooperation, chimpanzees show a basic understanding of cooperation, and recruit the best collaborators.

One species of chimps have attacked humans. In Uganda, several attacks on children have occurred, some of them fatal. Human interactions with chimpanzees may be especially dangerous if the chimpanzees perceive humans as potential rivals. A chimpanzee's strength and sharp teeth mean that attacks, even on adult humans, can cause severe injuries.

Thank you Hashem for showing us your wisdom!

IMMERSED IN TORAH

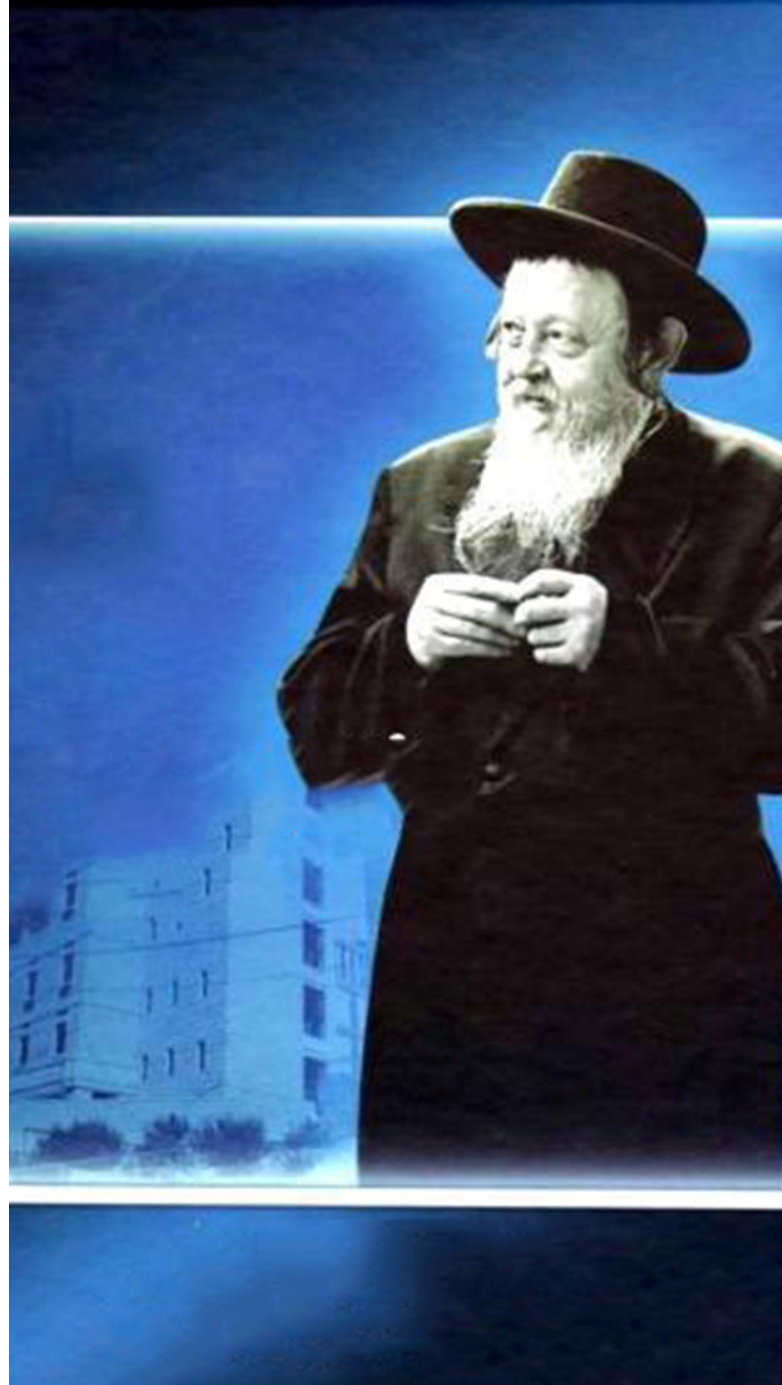
The Tchebiner Rav, Rav Dov Berish Weidenfeld, was known as the Sar Hatorah. He was an incredible masmid and knew much of the Torah on his fingertips. Interestingly, for much of his life he was not a "Rabbi" but a successful businessman. Only after many years in business did he agree to become a Rav. The Tchebiner Rav would relate the following beautiful anecdotes about his own father Rav Yaakov Weidenfeld, known as the Kochav MiYaakov.

The Kochav MiYaakov would wake up in the middle of the night; sometimes several times a night. As soon as he awakened he would quickly wash his hands, and proceed to his library, pick a Gemara or sefer and peruse it briefly before returning to bed. Once a student stayed in the Kochav MiYaakov's house for a period of time. He saw that Rav Yaakov arose and learned for two hours straight before returning to bed. The next morning the bachur asked why he stayed up so long in the middle of the night. The Kochav MiYaakov replied that a teaching of Chazal had popped into his mind that night, but he couldn't pinpoint the exact source where that statement came from. Finally he recalled that it was in Yerushalmi Terumos. "I felt so bad that I forgot my Torah, even momentarily, that I decided to immediately review the entire masechta of Yerushalmi Terumos. That's why you saw me up last night"

When Rav Yaakov was in his fifties, he was ill. The family observed his lips moving constantly. His daughter asked her father frantically if he needed something, but he reassured her that she needn't worry, and that he was merely reviewing Shas by heart. Ironically, rather than calm her, his response had the opposite effect, and she feared for her father's life. This was because the Kochav MiYaakov had stated more than once that a Yid must review and be fluent with all of Shas prior to his passing, in order to fulfill the words, "Ashrei mi sheba l'kan vsalmudo b'yado. Fortunate is one who comes here, to the heavenly court, fluent in his Torah learning" (Pesachim 50a). Sure enough, he passed away shortly thereafter.

The Tchebiner Rav had a similar hasmada and passion for learning. Once the Tchebiner Rav traveled to Krakow to attend the wedding of his great-niece, the daughter of his nephew Harav Aharon Rappaport. At the entrance to the hall he met Harav Avraham Tzvi Rommelt, Rosh Yeshivas Bobov and author of Eretz Tzvi. The two gedolim immediately fell into an animated discussion in learning. The conversation continued, at the entrance of the wedding hall, leaping from topic to topic. Before they knew it, dawn broke over the horizon. The two gedolim were appalled to discover that they were so immersed in their Torah discussion that they had completely missed the wedding! They decided that to make it up they would both remain an extra day in Krakow to participate in the first sheva brachos.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of distributing the money equally to all of the children, Rav Zilberstein wrote that if the parents think that by keeping her close to the family she might return to the Torah path, then they should give her as well.

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