

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT TOLDOT

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

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?

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28TH CHESHVAN 5785

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15:41pm

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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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. 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 non 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.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

YOUR CHILD'S BEST FRIEND

When Yaakov came to receive Yitzchak's blessings while disguised as Esav, Yitzchak noticed something unusual. Yaakov's speech was marked by politeness, as seen in his use of the word נא—"please"—and his frequent mention of G-d's name, כי הקרה ה' אלוֹקֵיךָ לפני—"because the Lord, your G-d, brought it before me." These traits were uncommon in Esav's manner of speaking. However, a third distinction reveals an essential lesson about parenting. Yaakov addressed Yitzchak in the

second person, נא—"please rise," while Esav used the third person, יקם—"will my father rise." Rav Natan Adler and the Chatam Sofer explain that while Esav's tone may appear more respectful, Jewish tradition prioritizes closeness, which is expressed through direct and familial language.

This closeness is underscored in Parashat Re'eh, which describes a seducer who tempts someone away from G-d, listing potential offenders: "אָחִיךָ... בֵּן בְּנֵיךָ... רֵעֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּנַפְשְׁךָ"—"your brother, your child, or your friend who is like your own soul" (Devarim 13:7). Rashi interprets "your friend" as referring to one's father, highlighting

that a parent should also be a child's confidant. Similarly, when Yosef tells his brothers that he has become אָב לְפָרְעוֹה—"a father to Pharaoh"—Rashi explains "לחבר", meaning that Yosef was Pharaoh's trusted advisor (Bereishit 45:8).

The Chida notes that Yaakov even referred to his children as "brothers," reflecting a respectful and egalitarian relationship. This principle teaches that parenting is not just about authority but about cultivating friendship and trust. By blending closeness and guidance, parents fulfil their role as their children's greatest allies, fostering love and harmony in the home.



JACOB BOYDEN, TAL Schools Educator

The power of Mincha

TWO FACES OF G-D

וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׂוּחַ בַּשָּׂדֶה לַפְּנּוֹת עֶרֶב וַיֵּשֶׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה גְמָלִים בָּאִים:

And Isaac went out to converse in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching.

Explains Rashi: לְשׂוּחַ TO MEDITATE – this means “to pray” (Genesis Rabbah 60:14), as we find (Psalms 102:1) “[A prayer of the afflicted ...] when he poured out his conversing. In last weeks Parsha Yitzchak goes out to the field to pray in the late afternoon. He lifts his eyes and sees camels coming towards him. Who was with the camels? Rivka his future wife.

The Keli Yakar a medieval commentator (1550) explains that from here we see the power of prayer. He emphasizes the special importance of the Mincha (afternoon) prayer. The Kli Yakar explains based upon a Talmudic saying, that Yitzchak was praying to

G-D to find a good fitting wife. He is standing in the field davening to G-D, he then lifts his eyes and immediately sees results to his prayer.

The Keli Yakar then goes on to explain the importance of Mincha. It's the most challenging prayer out of the 3 daily prayers that Jews do. The time to say Mincha is 30 minutes after Halachik midday until sunset. In these winter months that often leaves us with 4 hours to pray. These 4 hours are in the middle of the workday, and everyone is busy. Some in meetings, carrying out projects or listening to lectures. A person needs to be strong to find time to pray. The Gemara in Berachot says from this episode of Yitzchak we learn out that he in fact created Mincha. Its no coincidence that it was Yitzchak who created Mincha, in Kabbalah Yitzchak represents Gevurah- might as he was willing to be sacrificed for the will of G-D. To pray this prayer, you need might. Since this is the most challenging of all the prayers it's obviously the most precious in the eyes of G-D.

We learn a fundamental lesson from

Yitzchak. He was from prestigious family; he had wealth and excellent character traits which gave him a reason to believe that he could have had success by himself in matchmaking. Still nonetheless he looks towards G-D for his success, he recognised that success is a gift from God and isn't based upon his personal work. Of course, the person needs to put in the effort but ultimately what gives greatness is God. He decides your scenarios, who you interact with and who gives you the opportunities. Therefore, fundamentally we need to believe that everything comes from him.

Prayer is hugely significant in Judaism and is highly relevant in our lives. If we want success in all areas of life, our studies, financial dealings and social life we need to turn to God for that success. We need to believe in asking him to help us be greater. It's my blessing to everyone that they should try their best to improve in prayer and hopefully form a greater relationship with God through that prayer.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

The Time-Frame Within Which Consuming a Large Amount of Cake or Cookies Requires Birkat Ha'mazon

If one eats 216 grams or more of "Pat Ha'ba'a Be'kisnin" (the precise definition of which will be discussed in a separate context), such as an entire box of cookies, then he must treat the cookies as bread with respect to Halacha. He thus washes Netilat Yadayim, recites "Ha'mosi" before eating, and recites Birkat Ha'mazon after eating. And, he does not recite Berachot over other foods or beverages he eats with the cookies, just as one does not recite Berachot over foods or beverages in a meal once he recited "Ha'mosi" over bread.

Normally, one recites a Beracha

Aharona after eating only if he ate a "Ke'zayit" within the time-frame of "Kedeh Achilat Pareess," which, according to Hacham Ovadia Yosef, is a period of 7.5 minutes. In the case of one who eats 216 grams of "Pat Ha'ba'a Be'kisnin," Hacham Ovadia ruled that he treats the product as bread if he eats each "Ke'zayit" within 7.5 minutes, and that there is no break in his eating of 7.5 minutes or more in between the consumption of one "Ke'zayit" and the other. For perspective, 216 grams of cake or cookies consist of approximately 7.5 "Ke'zetim." As long as each "Ke'zayit" is eaten within 7.5 minutes, and there is no 7.5-minute break between one "Ke'zayit" and

another, one must wash Netilat Yadayim, recite "Ha'mosi" before eating, and recite Birkat Ha'mazon after eating.

Summary:

If one eats 216 grams of cookies or cake, then he must treat the cookies or cake like bread with respect to Netilat Yadayim, the recitation of "Ha'mosi," the recitation of Birkat Ha'mazon, and an exemption from reciting Berachot over other foods eaten during the meal. This applies only if the person eats each "Ke'zayit" of cake or cookies within a period of 7.5 minutes, and there is no break in eating of 7.5 minutes or more.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Toldot

After 20 years of marriage, Yitzchak's prayers are answered, and Rivka conceives twins. The pregnancy is extremely painful. Hashem reveals to Rivka that the suffering is a microcosmic prelude to the worldwide conflict that will rage between the two great nations descended from these twins, Rome and Israel. Esav is born, and then Yaakov, holding on to Esav's heel. They grow, and Esav becomes a hunter, a man of the physical world, whereas Yaakov sits in the tents of Torah, developing his soul. On the day of their grandfather Avraham's funeral, Yaakov is cooking lentils, the traditional mourner's meal. Esav rushes in, ravenous from a hard day's hunting, and sells his birthright (and its concomitant

spiritual responsibilities) for a bowl of lentils, demonstrating his unworthiness for the position of firstborn.

A famine strikes Canaan and Yitzchak thinks of escaping to Egypt, but Hashem tells him that because he was bound as a sacrifice, he has become holy and must remain in the Holy Land. He relocates to Gerar in the land of the Philistines, where, to protect Rivka, he has to say she is his sister. The Philistines grow jealous of Yitzchak when he becomes immensely wealthy, and Avimelech the king asks him to leave. Yitzchak re-digs three wells that were dug by his father, prophetically alluding to the three future Temples. Avimelech, seeing that Yitzchak is blessed by Hashem, makes a treaty with

him.

When Yitzchak senses his end approaching, he summons Esav to give him his blessings. Rivka, acting on a prophetic command that the blessings must go to Yaakov, arranges for Yaakov to impersonate Esav and receive the blessings. When Esav in frustration reveals to his father that Yaakov has bought the birthright, Yitzchak realizes that the birthright has been bestowed correctly on Yaakov and confirms the blessings he has given Yaakov. Esav vows to kill Yaakov, and so Rivka sends Yaakov to her brother Lavan where he could find a suitable wife.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



1. Why was it important that Yitzchak look like Avraham?
2. Why does the Torah stress that Rivka was Betuel's daughter and Lavan's sister?
3. What are the two differences between Tamar's pregnancy and Rivka's pregnancy?
4. Why was Esav named Esav?
5. Who gave Yaakov his name?



1. 25:19 - So everyone would agree that Avraham was indeed his father.
2. 25:20 - To praise her, that even though her family was evil she was righteous.
3. 25:24 - Rivka gave birth at full term to two children, one righteous and one wicked. Tamar gave birth after seven months to two righteous children.
4. 25:25 - He was born fully developed. The name Esav is based on the Hebrew word for "made".
5. 25:26 - G-d.



"... and Rivkah his wife became pregnant. And the children struggled inside her ..." (Bereishis 25:21-22)

When she passed a place of Torah study Yaakov struggled to get out.
When she passed a place of idol worship Esav struggled to get out. (Rashi)

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