

## Haftarah Weekly

*This Shabbos is Erev Rosh Chodesh and therefore, the Haftarah is that of 'Mochor Chodesh' – (Shmuel 1, 20:18-42).*

In the Haftarah, Y'honoson, the Crown-Prince of the B'nei Yisroel and son of Shaul HaMelech met with Dovid to plan a way of determining King Shaul's feelings towards Dovid. The scheme was that Dovid would remain hidden until three days after Rosh Chodesh. They devised a code that Y'honoson would fire three arrows and then send his attendant to go and collect them. If he said to the attendant: "The arrows are on this side of you", then Dovid himself could leave his hiding place and pick up the arrows for it was a sign that Shaul bore no ill feelings towards him. However, if Y'honoson exclaimed "the arrows are beyond you", then it was a warning that Shaul intended to harm Dovid!

Rosh Chodesh arrived and Shaul sat at the customary festive Rosh Chodesh meal. He observed that Dovid was absent but said nothing. However, the following day, Dovid's place remained empty and Shaul grew suspicious. Y'honoson told his father that he had granted Dovid leave for a family feast-offering.

Shaul exploded in rage and told Y'honoson that he knew that Y'honoson was willing to allow Dovid to become king even though Y'honoson himself was heir to the throne. He went on to say that Dovid deserved death. The dialogue continued with Y'honoson asking his father what Dovid had done wrong. Shaul's response was somewhat unique – he threw a spear at him! Y'honoson consequently understood that Shaul definitely desired to harm Dovid. The next morning he went to the field and fired the three arrows. He told the attendant that the arrow was beyond him. The attendant gathered them as commanded but was not aware of the sign that it represented. As Dovid prepared to flee, Y'honoson approached him and with a heart full of love, said, 'Go in peace. may that which we have sworn to each other in

the name of Hashem, be fulfilled. May the Eternal One remain between our descendants forever.' (Shmuel 1, 20: 41-42).

The obvious connection between the Haftarah and Rosh Chodesh is that the first verse of the Haftarah is 'tomorrow is the new moon'. However the deeper connection is that of the storyline itself. Shaul wants his son Y'honoson to continue his legacy and become king after him. However, Y'honoson himself recognises Dovid's superior qualities and is happy to step aside. So too, the old moon is trying to hang on, but by the rules of the Creator, will soon step aside to be replaced by the fresh new moon!

The key message of the Haftarah is that of the ideal friendship. In Pirkei Avos (2:13) Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai asked his five greatest students to determine the main ingredient of a good and noble life. Rabbi Y'hoshua answered that the best way is to be and to acquire a **good friend**. However, the clearest allusion to the brilliant relationship that Dovid and Y'honoson shared is found in another Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (5:19) where it states that the only occasion when love will endure is when it does not depend on a specific reason. The Mishnah then expounds on this by bringing the clearest example of the quintessential friendship, and the example it chooses is Dovid and Y'honoson. Y'honoson who was himself a man of great stature and righteousness, would have been adored by the people if he became king. Yet he still preferred Dovid over himself. Dovid was his rival and a man who his father Shaul wanted executed, so the situation was potentially explosive. In spite of this, their loving relationship was not affected and their judgment of who the next king should be, remained unclouded. As highlighted by Y'honoson's parting words, there was a certain chemistry between them which all friends should crave.

*Adapted from 'ou.org'*

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## Two Different Nations

”ויאמר יקוק לה שני גוים בבטן ושני לאמים ממעריך יפרדו ולאם מלאם יאמץ ורב יעבד צעיר”

**And Hashem said to her: “Two nations are in your womb, and two regimes from your insides shall be separated, and one regime shall become strong from the other regime, and the older shall serve the younger”.** (Bereishit 25:23)

Rashi explains to us that Rivkah was going to ask Hashem about her strange pregnancy at the house of study of Shem When Rivka would pass the entrances of Torah study Ya'akov would toss about in the womb to try and get out, showing his love and desire for Torah. On the other hand, when Rivkah passed places of idol worship, Esav would toss about in the womb and try and get out, showing his desire for Avodah Zara. From the very beginning we can see confrontations between the good and the evil, the spiritual and the material.

The Tur explains the pain in a completely different way: the struggle was purely natural - Esav was hairy which bothered the smooth-skinned Ya'akov. Nonetheless, Chazal explain

our passuk that when the Jewish people rise the Esavs of this world fall. However, if chas veshalom, the Jewish people fall, Esav will rise with either a spiritual or physical fight over us. This is also clear at the blessing of Esav: “when you [Esav] shall be aggrieved, you may remove his [Ya'akov's] yoke from upon your neck” (27:40). Rashi explains the passuk that when the Jewish people transgress the Torah, Esav will have a claim to be aggrieved over the blessing Ya'akov took, and can then 'remove his [Ya'akov's] yoke'.

Throughout history, ever since in the womb, the Jewish people have been clashing with Esav. Esav is called 'Admoni', 'Red', not just because of his red hair, but as Rashi says: 'It is a sign that he will spill blood.

The passuk says, Ya'akov grasped the heel of Esav. Rashi says that this hints that Esav's rule will be taken down by the Jewish people. With Hashem's help, may we see the end of all bloodshed and conflicts.

*Written by Rafi Katten*

## M'lachah of the Week

### Dosh - Threshing

This is derived from separating grain from its husk (outer-covering). It includes removing any wanted item from its unwanted container. Squeezing juice out of a fruit is therefore אסור.

However, it is permitted to suck out the juice since that is squeezing with a shinuy. It is also allowed to squeeze the juice onto another type of food that will absorb it e.g. lemon onto chicken. It is important, however, to be careful when one does this.

## Words from the Wise

The great Chassidic Rebbe, Reb Dov Ber of Radoshitz, was travelling across the Polish countryside. Night fell and the roads would soon be unsafe, so he directed his wagon driver to stop at the first Jewish inn that they could find.

After a short while, they had pulled up in front of a small Jewish tavern. The owner welcomed them in warmly, helped them with their bags, fed and watered their horse, and prepared a special room for Reb Dov Ber which was always reserved for travelling rabbis and noblemen. After praying the evening prayer, Reb Dov Ber retired to his chamber and went to bed exhausted after the long day's journey.

Soon the house was quiet, the fields outside still. Only the occasional barking of a lone farm dog broke the silence of the night. And yet . . . the clock on the wall -- it was ticking in the most amazing way; it wouldn't let Reb Dov Ber sleep. He tossed and turned in his bed. He got up and started pacing the room. Verses from the Books of the Prophets flooded his mind, songs of deliverance and hope. He tried to lie down again, but the clock kept ticking, until he was

forced to rise from bed once more. Thus he spent the night, pacing the room in anxious anticipation.

In the morning, the tired but exhilarated rabbi approached the inn-keeper. "Where did you get that clock in the room?" he asked.

"That clock? Well, several years ago another rabbi stayed in the room, **Reb Yosef of Turchin**, the son of the *tzaddik*, the **Seer of Lublin**. He intended to stay for one night only, but the weather turned bad and he was forced to stay for several days. In the end, he found that he did not have enough money to pay the bill, so he covered the difference by giving me that clock. He said that he had inherited it from his father."

"Now I understand why I couldn't sleep," said Reb Dov Ber. "Most clocks in the world only cause depression, for they count the hours that have passed -- another day lost, another opportunity gone by. But the clock of the holy Seer of Lublin counts the time that is coming - - another minute closer to the final redemption, another second nearer the age of universal peace."

### Riddle of the Week

The Halochoh is that one has to give Kovod – honour to a Talmid Chochom even if he has forgotten his learning. Where is this surprising Halochoh learnt from?

**Previous week:**

*The rishon of which sedra can be leined 9 times a year? And under what circumstances?*

The Rishon of אורחיים can be leined 9 times in the same year according to the following scenario:

When it is a leap year and the first day of Pesach falls on a Shabbos, with Shabbos Acharai following Pesach. In these circumstances it will be read 8 times during Nissan and on Yom Kippur morning.

## The Importance of Words

Every single word in the Torah is there to teach us something. Not a single one is extra. So when we see some words in the text that seem unnecessary, we have to ask ourselves, and then look in the mephorshim, to find out why. At the beginning of the parsha we are introduced to Rivkah as the daughter of Besuel, the sister of Lavan and that she came from Padan Aram. Surely we know all these details from last weeks parsha?

Rashi explains that this information is coming to praise Rivkah by putting her actions into context:

Despite the fact that she was the daughter of a rasha, the sister of a rasha and came from a place where everyone was wicked, nevertheless she resisted following their ways.

The Maharal questions Rashi's explanation:

What is being added by being told that her brother was a rasha? Even without this piece of information we would know how great she was?

He explains by telling us that there are 3 reasons why a person might come to sin:

- 1) Out of fear – when someone powerful wants you to sin and you fear his retribution.
- 2) Love – where one is motivated [to sin] by someone whom one cares about
- 3) Habit – The sin is part of the local culture

The Torah is revealing to us that Rivka managed to overcome these three pulls towards sins:

- 1) Out of fear – her father's displeasure
- 2) Love – her relationship with her brother
- 3) Habit – resulting from the fact that she grew up in Padan Aram, where everyone acted negatively

Thus by repeating these three details concerning her background, the Torah is informing us of her immense spiritual stature in that she was able to rise above all of these influencing factors to become one of the 'Mothers' of the Jewish people.

May we all merit to rise above any negative influences that we experience, and thereby emulate her holy ways.

*Written by Rabbi D Tugendhaft*

### Gematria of the Week

The Gematria of הוליד meaning begot, is 55, equivalent to that of דומה, which means similar. Rashi, based on the Gemoro and Medrash, explains that the scoffing, cynical people of the generation were saying that Yitzchok was actually Avimelech's son. After all, Avimelech did capture Soroh and could feasibly have had a child with her! Furthermore, Soroh had failed to conceive through Avrohom up until now, and bearing in mind his old age, how could they suddenly have given birth to Yitzchok? Consequently, HaShem fashioned Yitzchok's face, הוֹדְמָה – very similar in appearance to Avrohom's to comprehensively prove that Yitzchok was indeed the son Avrohom.

Based on Rashi and Ba'al Haturim (בראשית כה:יט)