

## Haftarah Weekly

*For Ashkenazim Hoshea 12:13 – 13:10*

In this weeks Haftarah, Hoshea has words of rebuke for the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes. Hoshea reminds the Jewish people that their idol worshipping is in vain, and man's success is only in Hashem's hands. Hoshea says the kingdom of the ten tribes will be blamed for idol worship, and as a result of their sins, their punishment will be exile and death. Hoshea calls on the Jewish people to do teshuva. Hashem promises the Jewish people that if they repent "I will answer all they ask of me and I will look after them.", The Haftarah concludes with the words "He who is wise will understand these, a discerning person will know them, for the ways of Hashem are just – the righteous will walk in them, but sinners will stumble on them".

Yeravam was the King of Israel at the time, and he began his reign with the best of intentions but he soon abused his authority. Instead of preventing foreign influences he ultimately corrupted his entire kingdom. This eventually culminates in the exile of most of the Jewish nation.

Analysing the events that led to Yeravam's appointment give us an insight into human nature. An incident is quoted in Sefer Melachim where Yeravam took a hard stand and attacked Shlomo Hamelech for using a previously communal plaza outside Yerushalayim as living quarters for his new bride. Yeravam took the initiative and publicly denounced the king for his actions, when others lacked the courage. Hashem rewarded Yeravam for his courageous act and elevated Yeravam to become a king. However, the Rabbis explain Yeravam was also severely punished because he publicly shamed the king. This is because that although Yeravam's intentions were proper, they

were accompanied by arrogance. While Shlomo Hamelech deserved reprimand, this did not include public shame and embarrassment.

We now realize that what began as a subtle insensitivity towards Shlomo Hamelech eventually developed into a grown split in our nation. Hashem granted Yeravam the throne but tested his ability to manage it. Yeravam succumbed to the temptation of power and could not waive his honor. This persistent drive blinded him and misled him, and led to the exile of our Ten lost tribes.

This lesson is appropriate to our Sedra that presents Rachel as the example of human sensitivities. Although Rachel undoubtedly knew the power in spirituality with an exclusive relationship with Yaakov, she was not self absorbed. Her spiritual drive could not interfere with her sensitivity towards her sister, Leah. She, unlike Yeravam, focused on her sister's pain, and assisted her sister in establishing an eternal bond with her own predestined match. Rachel's self sacrifice and sensitivity became an example for the Jewish people who constantly should strive to perfect themselves in these areas.

The Rabbis reveal that Hashem specifically responds to Rachel's prayers on behalf of her exiled children. When Rachel weeps over her children Hashem remembers her incredible sensitivity towards Leah and responds favourably. In her merit Hashem forgives the Jewish people for their insensitivities towards His Glory and guarantees her children's return to their land. Her incredible display of self sacrifice and sensitivity became the character of the Jewish people. In her merit Hashem promises to return her long lost children to their homeland.

You can pick up your copy of the Living Torah in school, online or by email.

Visit [hasmonean.co.uk/livingtorah](http://hasmonean.co.uk/livingtorah), where you can view all past issues online or sign up for the weekly email.

Email us at:  
[livingtorah@hasmonean.co.uk](mailto:livingtorah@hasmonean.co.uk)

### Editorial Team:

Adam Gaventa  
Rafi Katten  
Shimon Levy

### Technical Editor:

Jonny Fishel

### Contributors:

Rabbi D Muster  
Gidon Aarons

### Under the direction of:

Rabbi D Meyer



## The Impact Of A Name

Near the end of the Sedrah, Ya'akov and Lavan prepare to split. They seal a covenant, settling their differences and paving the way for their respective futures. They then set up a monument as a testimony to the fact that Hashem will be the witness of the event. The Pasuk says 'Lavan called it Yegar Sohadasa, and Ya'akov called it Gal Eid.' These names both mean 'Mound of Testimony.' The key difference between them is that Lavan's version is in Aramaic, while Ya'akov's is in Hebrew. So important is this difference that the Posuk uses a whole extra phrase to make it clear to us.

The Sforno explains that this seemingly insignificant act of Ya'akov's ultimately saved the entire Jewish people. We have a principle 'Maaseh avos siman lebanim.' - The deeds of the fathers are signs for the descendants.' We know that, when they were enslaved in Egypt, The Jews fell to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of impurity. Were they to have fallen one level lower, they would have been irredeemable. According to Chazal, the only things keeping them from the 50<sup>th</sup> level of impurity were their determination to keep their Hebrew language, names and clothes. From this act of Ya'akov's; the insistence to call the monument by its Hebrew name, we can understand how the Jews managed to keep their Jewish names and language, and therefore their identity, when at their lowest point in history.

We can perhaps suggest that this detail was put in the Posuk, to help us appreciate the huge impact our actions will have in the future, and to force us to think of the long term repercussions of each thing we say and do.

At the beginning of the Yom Kippur Viduy we recite a seemingly problematic phrase; 'Avol anachnu va'avoseinu chatanu, - but we, and our ancestors have sinned.' What does this mean? Why do we need to justify the sins of our

ancestors when we are being judged on our own merits? The answer can be understood, when we fully appreciate the ramifications of our actions. The Torah teaches (Vayikra 26:39) that we can still be punished for the sins of our ancestors until we repent for them and change our ways. Therefore, we must be careful not to sin, as the effects will continue long after our death, and continue to harm our children.

Perhaps another reason for this mention of the sins of our ancestors is that all Jewish souls are judged on Yom Kippur; whether dead or alive. Souls of dead people are judged for any mitzvos or aveiros that have been caused by any actions they performed in life. For example, R' Meir Shapiro, father of the Daf Yomi movement, will be given merit each year for all the Gemora learnt in his movement. Likewise, if one was to set up a criminal organisation, that lived on after their death, they would still be punished for all future criminal activity of that organisation.

In chapter 3 of the Messilas Yesharim, R' Moshe Chaim Luzzato writes that before performing each deed, one should examine it, and work out whether it is good or bad, and whether there are any negative elements that could be removed from it. Included in this examination, must be the consideration of the long term consequences of the action, and how they may affect people in the future.

We must therefore remember that when performing each action, we must consider the potential long term ramifications of the action, and decide whether it is worth doing the action.

*Written by Gidon Aarons*

## Gematria of the Week

The Gematria of והנה טולם is 202, the same as that of קצה We learn from here that when Ya'akov dreamed of the ladder, HaShem revealed to him when the end of all the exiles would be.

Ba'al Haturim - (בראשית כ"ב: יב)

## Words from the Wise

This week is the yahrtzeit of R'Aharon Kotler, one of the Gedolei HaDor during and just after WW2, who passed away in 1962. He was instrumental in creating Torah institutions in America after the war. The following story shows his dedication to his community.

Every day R'Aharon would travel home from Lakewood Yeshivah, of which he was Rosh Yeshivah, muttering words of Torah under his breath. He would go over his learning, and ponder the problems of his community. He would be exhausted, as every second of his day from early that morning was used properly, so he would look forward to resting from a strenuous day.

Often as he neared his home he would meet one or two of his talmidim waiting to speak to him. He would immediately forget about resting and invite them into his house. He would patiently answer their queries and send them on their way. Only then would he sit down to eat and to rest. Most nights he would also receive at least three phone calls from members of the community, which he would answer with the same patience.

One night, after four talmidim were waiting for

him to return home and five people were waiting for him to return their phone calls, the rebbetzin took action. She reasoned "What will become of R'Aharon's health if he must speak with so many people without even eating one bite of food, especially after such a day as his?"

The next day, she told the waiting talmidim that R'Aharon could not speak with them that day, and told them to try and talk with him during the day. When R'Aharon returned he was surprised when that no one was waiting for him, and even more so when that evening the phone did not ring once.

He immediately noticed something had happened, and discovered that the phone had been disconnected.

He realised his family was concerned for him, but would not accept them turning away any people who needed his help.

He told them "The question is not 'How can so many people keep me from my rest' but rather 'How can I rest when so many people need my help?'"

*Adapted from 'A Story a Day'*

### Riddle of the week

What do the letters נ"ן"נ"ן"נ"ן stand for?

Answer to last week's riddle:

Q) 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?

A) In addition to the *Luchos* (two tablets) being kept in the *Aron Hakodesh*, the set of broken *Luchos* were also kept there. We make a parallel between the *Luchos* and the learning of a Talmid Chochom.

## The Correct Perspective

***"And Rachel and Leah answered him ...have we not been considered as strangers to him? ..." [31:14]***

Ya'akov was told by HaShem that it was time for him to leave the house of Lavan and to return to Eretz Yisroel. He would need to take with him his family which would mean that Lavan would no longer be with his daughters Rachel and Leah. Ya'akov took Rachel and Leah aside and broke the news to them by emphasising that this was a command from HaShem which they all had to obey. Rachel's and Leah's response is surprising, instead of responding by saying that they would listen to whatever HaShem told them, they explained why they wanted to leave anyway. They said that they were more than happy to leave their father, since he had not treated them respectfully when he demanded that Ya'akov should work for seven years in order to marry them. They felt that they had been sold off like slaves. Surely they should have said immediately they would follow HaShem and keep their feelings to themselves?

Rav Moshe Feinstein tztz"l answers this question and teaches us a very important lesson in how we view mitzvos. Rachel and Leah could have

said that even though it would be very hard for them to leave the place in which they were born and in which they had lived their entire lives, they would make the effort for the sake of HaShem. They could have claimed that it would be hard to do the mitzvah but they would make a sacrifice. This would have been the wrong approach. We should not look at mitzvos as difficult things that we keep! Instead they explained to Ya'akov that they would find the mitzvah easy as they wanted to leave anyway. The mitzvah was not a challenge for them as it was something that they wanted to do.

This is also a lesson for us. We should not tell ourselves or our children 'it is hard to be a Jew but we still make the effort.' This gives a negative view of our religion and we cannot be so sure that the next generation will have the strength to face the challenges that we have. Instead we must emphasise the positives: the fact that HaShem looks after those people who do His will, and that doing mitzvos is the easiest and most beneficial way to live. The response of Rachel and Leah teaches us that whenever we have to do a mitzvah we must remind ourselves what benefits we will get from doing this, and how easy it will be to do.

*Written by Rabbi D Muster*

### M'lachah of the Week

**Zoreh – Winnowing:** In the early days of farming, a mixed collection of grain kernels and chaff would remain on the threshing grounds after threshing. It was essential to somehow remove the useful kernels from the waste, so the farmer would take a pitchfork, and throw a mixture of it in the air. The waste would blow away, leaving the heavier kernels. This is called winnowing. This M'lachah is similar to that of *Borer* – sorting (see next week's edition), and *M'rakeid* – sifting, the difference being that Zoreh is through wind power, whereas the other two use different means of separation.

It is forbidden to blow at a mixture of peanuts and their thin coverings to disperse the shells from the mixture. Similarly, taking a tablecloth outside into the wind causing crumbs to become dispersed is prohibited under this M'lachah.