

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

In the article entitled 'The power of Mesiras Nefesh' you wrote that Joseph went to visit his brothers in Chevron. Do you have a different version of the Torah in Hasmo than the rest of us?

Dear Editor,

I am writing to complain about the anti-Semitic comment in the haftarah for Parshas Lech Lecha, and I quote 'Avraham's task was to bring the message of G-d to the nations of the world, and he succeeded. So too, the people must never lose hope in exile, as Hashem will help them and eventually overcome them.'

It is bad enough that the anti-Semites want to kill us. Now apparently G-d wants the same thing.

Dear Editor,

In last week's edition you managed to cut off the end of

the story. This is very upsetting, as now I don't know what happened to the cholent!

This is not so gargantuan a technical error as you achieved in the same edition – you described the wrong haftarah, thereby succeeding in misleading the Tzibbur regarding which haftarah should be read. A fiendish move indeed!

Dear Editor,

I hear that one of the editors may be resigning in the near future. Apparently this is because a key line of his dvar Torah was removed during the photocopying process.

Technical Mastermind I think not!

I agree with the disgruntled editor's decision, but wish he had made it sooner, as I know he is responsible for the continued abuse of the apostrophe, insisting that the sheva is written as 'M'lachah' rather than 'Melachah.' He fails to realise that we don't care how the sh'va is written in English!



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The Away Leg

אש תמיד תוקד אל המזבח, לא תכבה. (ויקרא הו).
לא תכבה אף במסעות. (תלמוד ירושלמי, יומא כד).

It is well known that every single word of the תורה serves a purpose. It therefore seems a little strange that after telling us there will be a permanent flame on the מזבח, the תורה goes on to add that it will never be extinguished. One would have thought that the latter was a logical consequence of the former, and as such a superfluous addition. The תלמוד ירושלמי discusses this point, and informs us that the "extra" phrase "it will not be extinguished" teaches us that it may not be extinguished even whilst being transported. There can be no sacrifices offered while the משכן is being transported, and one would therefore have perfectly reasonable grounds to suspect the injunction to keep the fire burning permanently would not have apply in those circumstances.

I would like to talk about a beautiful extension of this idea I saw in the מעינה של תורה in the name of a ספר called הדרש והעיון.

He discusses the comparative situation of a man at home and the same man on a journey. When a man is at home, he is surrounded by normal life. His children will need feeding, correcting, watching etc. His work will be demanding a large portion of his attention. He will be

surrounded by friends and acquaintances. The net effect of all of this will be to keep him reasonably well fixed on the straight and narrow path; if he ever slips off, there will be people and influences around him to remind him to correct his footing. However, this all changes when he goes on a journey. When this happens, the positive correcting influences of his normal life are removed, and he is – in a sense – left to fend for himself. The result is that he may find it easier to slip off the correct path.

In a dazzling insight, the הדרש והעיון quotes the פסוק "praiseworthy is the man who fears ה', who follows in his ways." By removing the comma, we get the alternative translation "praiseworthy is the man who fears ה' when he is on a journey" (his "ways"). In this way, the הדרש והעיון brings out precisely the point we mentioned previously: that the real challenge of belief and faith is on the road, rather than at home. Moreover, he links this in with our discussion of the מזבח in an even more brilliant jump. We said previously that the fire on the מזבח must not be extinguished even whilst being transported. Says the הדרש והעיון, this can be viewed as an analogy to our "inner fire" of belief in ה'! It is no trick to be a שמים ירא at home where it is easy. Our challenge is to keep our "inner fire" burning even when on the road, away from home, where it is more difficult!

Written by Yisroel Greenberg

Jokes of the Week

It says in Yosef's dream that the eleven stars bowed down to him. This refers to his eleven brothers. Where is Dinah his sister? An answer is based on the opinion that Osnat, Yosef's wife, was Dinah's daughter (as opposed to opinions that say famously that Osnat was Potifar's daughter). Therefore it comes out that Dinah was Yosef's mother in law. And a mother in law never bows down to a son in law! (Chabad)

Chazal say that we merited leaving Egypt because of our 'Nashim Tzidkoniot' 'Righteous Women'. Hashem said that since the Jewish people are leaving after only 210 years, 190 years earlier than the 400 years that we were suppose to be slaves. However, the 190 years will be made up by our 'Righteous Woman' in the hard work that they will do in the Pesach clean-up.

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Riddle of the Week

Riddle:

How many debilerate mistakes are there in this week's Living Torah?' Answer at the bottom of the inside right page.

Answer to last weeks riddle:

Will be in the next edition of the Living Torah!

Story of the Week

And it was in the days of King Achashverosh (1), who reigned over 127 countries. When 1 was sitting on his throne, he made a drinking feast for everyone in the 127 countries. There were 180 days of feast, followed by 7 days of feast for the people of Shushan. He wore the eight priestly garments, and showed every day 6 treasures. At this pace it would only take him 180 days to finish showing the treasures. Chazal explain that the Jews were saddened by the temple vessels being used in the feast. So, 1 in his kindness prepared another feast outside for them. His punishment was that he will become saddened by the death of Vashti (Me'am Loez). And also the Queen Vashti made a feast for the woman. Even 1 made sure there was separate seating! Achashverosh then sent for Vashti the queen to come wearing nothing but her crown, but the Queen Vashti refused as she had got leprosy (big difference between Vashti the queen and Queen Vashti, depends on whether you view her title as secondary or as the focus). The Gemara (Megilla 12b) says that she caused 1 to get angry because she responded with scoffing messages. The same Gemara comments on the words of the passuk 'knowers of the time', to be a reference to the Rabbis who knew how to fix the new moons and leap years. 1, like in every big decision, is forced to ask his advisers. You will notice this throughout the whole story. This is why in essence Haman has all the power. So 1 first asked the Rabbis for impartial advice about what to do. They didn't know what to

do because on the one hand if they respond to the King and advise the death penalty, then as soon as 1 will become sober, the decision will be regretted by the King and they will be blamed. But if the Rabbis advised to forgive her, they could be accused of not giving enough honour to the King. Therefore, they opted out by saying that they don't give any more judgement because the Jewish people were exiled and the Temple was destroyed. So 1 asked the other advisers that Haman was a part of (called Memucham here as he was prepared to be destroyed). He advises to kill Vashti, and also to put in force a decree that every man should rule his home and speak the language of the state. In the same Gemara, Raba explains that ironically if it wasn't for this decree, the Jewish people would have been destroyed. This is due to the people responding to this decree in a way that this was no Chiddush (something new). The people said that of course every man should rule his house, so why is 1 making this decree? The Mefarshim explain that the people thought that 1 was foolish. Therefore, when it came to the decree to exterminate the Jews, the people feared that this decree could have also only happened because 1 was intoxicated, but later on he might change his mind. If it wasn't for this the people would have for sure killed the Jews before the date of the decree against the Jews. And this was all because of Haman! Happy Purim!

Gematria of the Week

The first Mishnah in Megillah teaches us that it is possible for the Megillah to be read on the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th or 15th of Adar. The Mishnah goes on to teach

"ולא יתור" that the Megillah cannot be read any earlier or later than these dates. These 5 dates add up to 65, the same as the – "Gematria of Hashem's name of mastery א-ד-ו-ו-י This name is used when He is hidden. The dates surrounding these are the 10th and the 16th – which add up to 26. This is the same as the Gematria of one of Hashem's other names ו-י-ו-ה the name that is used when He is , revealed and visible. We know that throughout the Purim story, Hashem chose to remain hidden and controlled events from behind the scenes. However, 10th and 16th add up to 26, symbolising Hashem's name when He is visible, and since that was not the case in the Purim story, the Megillah cannot be read on those days, or indeed any days other than those stated in the mishnah.

Heard from Rav D Tugentaft

M'lachah of the Week

Potzei'a – Unravelling

There is a Machlokes Rishonim as to what Potzei'a actually is. According to some, it is removing the finished article, the already woven threads from the loom. Additionally, removing excess threads is also called Potzei'a. Therefore, if one has a loose thread hanging out from their clothes, they are forbidden to remove it.

Letter From the 'Technical Editor'

It is not often I have a chance to voice my opinion or spread some Divrei Torah to the readers of this publication, so why start now?

As a Member of the Living Torah team, I would like to compose a short message to our readers on behalf of our school and our publication. As I'm sure you are aware, this publication has been in circulation for many years now, and approximately four students in year 12 every year take on the task of constructing a weekly parshah sheet. It is down to these boys to write a template, construct Divrei Torah, receive Divrei Torah and finally produce the final product. This process, though often burdening, is necessary and brings us great joy when we finish the leaflet. We would like to take this time, a time of simcha for Klal Yisrael to thank all those people who have helped us in the process of producing the Living Torah.

Firstly we would like to extend a hearty thank you to all the bochrin and Rabbeim within hasmonean and out who write our Divrei Torah. May their Torah studies continue from strength to strength. But we would also like to thank the school for all its support and financial backing throughout the year, Rabbi Meyer especially as the person who officially runs the show.

We owe a massive thank you to Rabbi D Rowe, a Rabbi at the school for his constant help at long and short notice; it is the Rebbe that ensures that all the content is

suitable and involves lots of arduous work. We are honoured and privileged to be able to have the Rebbe on our team to help us.

The previous years Living Torah team did much work to make sure that we had an easy and quick start to the year. I also am gratified that if we ever need advice we can just call one of the members of last years team and they will endeavour to help us!

As the other members are unaware that I have written this message, I would like to extend my gratitude to them as they are a fantastic group of people, these 'Editors' work well into the night to ensure that MOST mistakes are removed from the Divrei Torah (it is almost impossible to remove all. Whether it ranges from making sure that all sounding sh'va's have apostrophe's to spelling they are the top of the game. All of us believe that this is a worthy enterprise and are very proud of what we do and of the school we attend.

Lastly, I would like to mention that the Living Torah is nothing without its reader's! That's you lot! And we are all grateful that you still feel that this sheet of Torah is worth a glance and maybe you might learn something along the way, I have.

On that note, the Living Torah Editorial team wish you all a Freilichen Purim and hope that everyone raises a large amount of money for all the charities that they are collecting for.

Written by Jonathan Fishel