



Cincinnati Torah

תורה מסיני

New & Improved

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Lech L'cha

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

RABBI MECOEL SOROKA

Point of President Precedent

Ma'aseh avos siman l'banim—forefathers' action is a portent for the descendants. (Aphorism, ascribed to the Maharsha)

THE STORIES OF OUR FOREFATHERS ARE symbolic of that which would take place to the Jewish people in future generations. This is a theme mentioned by the Ramban (Nachmanides—see his commentary to 26:20) and others,

in reference to incidents throughout Chumash B'reishis.

B'reishis is primarily composed of the stories of our Forefathers. There are a total of 613 mitzvos, but only three of them are contained within B'reishis. Most of it consists of narrative, filled with stories, conversations, and happenings to our Forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. The stories at times include details that don't seem to have much

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

In this week's Torah portion, Avraham is commanded by G-d to circumcise himself.

As a mohel, I can tell you that it is not uncommon for parents to jump the gun and pull the trigger on b'ris plans for the wrong day. With a little better understanding of the Halachos, one can avoid a potentially embarrassing situation.

A b'ris is performed on the eighth day of a child's life, with the day of birth counting as the first day. Thus, if a child were born on Monday, his b'ris would be the

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DELVING DEEPER

RABBI TZVI FISHMAN

A Test Worth Mentioning

[Hashem] said to [Avram], "I am G-d, who took you out of Ur Kasdim..." (15,7)

HASHEM WAS REFERRING TO THE STORY OF Avram and Nimrod. Nimrod had thrown Avram into a furnace because Avram had refused to worship idols, and he had been miraculously saved by Hashem. That episode had been one of the ten trials by which Hashem tested Avraham.

The obvious question is this: The Torah only mentions that story in passing. Why didn't the Torah expound on this miracle? In contrast, the Torah

repeats the story of the tenth and final test, *Akeidas Yitzchak* (the Binding of Yitzchak) at great length!

What's even more interesting is that the test in Ur Kasdim would seem to have been much more difficult, since it happened at the beginning of his journey of spiritual discovery, when his only knowledge of Hashem was through his study of the world—long before Hashem directly spoke to him. At that point, he also had no followers to support his decision to be thrown into the fire. Yet he still had the strength to do it! On the other hand, by the time of *Akeidas*

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THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

One of the oldest synagogues in the Americas, *Beracha v' Shalom*, was dedicated on **8 MarCheshvan**, 1685, in the Jodensavanne (Jewish Savannah) section of Suriname, a British colony in South America. Jews arrived in Suriname in the 1630's, from Holland, Portugal, and Italy, and established successful sugar plantations. In recognition, the British government granted privileges and political autonomy to the community—making the Jodensavanne the only Diaspora community to achieve autonomy before the founding of the State of Israel.

These privileges were later terminated by the Dutch, who swapped New Amsterdam (today's New York City) with the British in exchange for Suriname.

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

(CONTINUED)

following Monday. However, in Jewish tradition the day begins with the preceding night. Therefore, if a boy were born Monday night, his b'ris would be on the following Tuesday.

Even though a b'ris done after the eighth day is kosher, a b'ris that was performed before the eighth day requires *Hatafas Dam B'ris* (the drawing of a drop of blood), on (or after) the eighth day (Shach, Y.D. 262:2). The same applies to a b'ris done at night (Y.D. 262:1)

The laws regarding a baby that is born during *bein hash'mashos* (twilight) are complicated and detailed. Generally, the b'ris is pushed off to the next day. However, a rabbi or mohel should be consulted.

A b'ris can take place on Shabbos only if it is definitely the eighth day and the baby was born through normal delivery. Consequently, if a baby were born during the twilight of Friday or by C-section, or if the b'ris were postponed, the b'ris would be put off until Sunday.

A b'ris cannot be done on a child who is ill until he is fully recovered (Y.D. 262:2). The slightest ailment or the least pain, as determined by the mohel, rabbi, or doctor, may be cause enough to have the b'ris postponed until the child is healed (Shach, Y.D. 262:2). If the delay is because of an ailment that effects only part of the body (e.g., mild jaundice), the b'ris may be performed promptly after full recovery. However, if a baby contracts an illness which effects the entire body (e.g., a fever, or a situation which requires incubation or a blood transfusion), he must be cured for seven complete days before the b'ris can be performed (Igros Moshe Y.D. II 121).

A b'ris may not be postponed to another day simply for convenience. ❏

A Test... CONTINUED

Yitzchak he had directly communicated with Hashem, and he had many followers, so it was much easier.

Rabbi Chatzkel Levenstein gives the following, phenomenal explanation.

When Avram was willing to be thrown into the fire, it wasn't because of

At the Kollel

EVERY DAY

EVERY WEEK

Sunday *Free brunch!*

👤 **Beginner's Gemara**
(Maseches Sukkah)

Rabbi Ezra Stettin 9:10–10 AM

👤 **Beginner's Halacha & More**
(skills-building)

Rabbi Moshe D. Zeffren.. 9:30–10:30 AM

👤 **Shivti** (Self-contained learning,
geared toward practical halacha)

Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib..... 10 AM–noon

Monday

👤👤 **Torah Treasures for Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis 10:30–11:15 AM

Tuesday

👤👤 **Partners in Torah at the Mayerson JCC**

Rabbi Michael Soroka..... 8 PM

Wednesday

👤👤 **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn at Strauss & Troy**

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis 12–1 PM

Thursday

👤👤 **Halacha**

in the former Back Office

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann..... 9:10–10 PM

Homemade refreshments served.

KEY: 👤 Beginners 👤 Intermediate 👤 Advanced 🧑🧑 for men and women

Chavrusos are available for private and group learning—

speak to Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!

weekdays noon–1 PM • Sun.–Thurs. 8–9:45 PM

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Precedent CONTINUED

significance at all. However, they are significant. For example, Yitzchak dug three wells (26:19–22); this is symbolic of the three Temples which would eventually be built.

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe used to explain that for a tree to grow, a seed must be planted. The type of tree depends on the type of seed—so the most crucial time in the development of a tree is at its inception. Similarly, this is true for the development of the Jewish People, as well. The Forefathers were our “parents” in every sense of the word, and their actions had the ability to affect future generations.

Rabbi Wolbe would add that this ap-

plies in our times, as well. For example, our actions on Rosh Hashanah plant “seeds” for the upcoming year.

On a practical level, as we read through the upcoming Torah portions, keeping this in mind will give us a deeper appreciation of each verse.

We might add that, if this concept is true in the spiritual realm, there must also be an application in the physical realm. The way we honor the Shabbos—the way we connect with our families and our Creator on Shabbos—will not just uplift us on Shabbos; it will effect the entire week ahead! And it won't only affect us. It will continue to sprout within our children. ❏

a direct command from Hashem. Avram understood through his own ideology that Hashem is the only G-d, and he was willing to give up his life for the truth; the trial at Nimrod's hand was designed to show that. But we all know that any person who believes in a philosophy 100% will give up his life for it.

On the other hand, consider the trial of *Akeidas Yitzchak*. Slaughtering one's own son is against human nature, and it was diametrically opposed to everything that Avraham believed and taught. But since Hashem told Avraham to do it, he did. That is an action which is worth expounding on! ❏