

DELVING DEEPER

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

Praying for the Opposite



Yitzchak prayed to Hashem for (*l'nochach*) his wife.

THE EXACT MEANING OF THE WORD *L'NOCHACH* is the subject of dispute. Rashi explains that Yitzchak davened "opposite" his wife, meaning each stood in his or her own corner.

Rashbam, however, translates *l'nochach* as "on behalf of." According to Rashbam, why did Yitzchak only pray on his wife's behalf, and not on behalf of himself?

Meshech Chochma explains that once Hashem had told Avraham (at the end of Lech Lcha) that he would have a son, Yitzchak, and that He would maintain his covenant with Yitzchak and his children, there was no longer any doubt that Yitzchak would have children. As Rambam writes (*Hilchos Yesodei haTorah* 10:4), once

a prophet has prophesied a good thing, Hashem will not rescind this prophesy—so there was no doubt in Yitzchak's mind that he would have children.

What was not clear, though, was whether those children would come from Rivka or from some future wife. Yitzchak therefore focused all of his efforts *l'nochach*, on behalf of, his wife Rivka.

Later in this week's Torah portion, we find Yitzchak fearing for his life when his family travels to the land of the *P'lishtim*. The reason he is concerned, writes *Meshech Chochma*, is that this occurs after the birth of his children. Hashem's promise can now be kept through Yitzchak's children, and his own life is no longer guaranteed! 🙏

A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

AVRAHAM HAD DIED THAT VERY DAY... AND YAAKOV WAS COOKING LENTILS TO [SERVE TO] THE MOURNERS. (RASHI, COMMENTARY TO 25:30, QUOTING B'REISHIS RABBAH 11-12)

SAID RAV YEHUDA, IN THE NAME OF RAV: A MOURNER IS FORBIDDEN TO EAT HIS OWN BREAD ON THE FIRST DAY [OF MOURNING]. (TALMUD, MO'ED KATTAN 27B)

The first meal eaten by mourners when they return home from a funeral is called *Se'udas Havra'ah*, the meal of

➡ CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE ➡

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

In Paris, on 3 Kislev, 5658 (1897), the French newspaper *Le Figaro* announced that Officer Charles Esterhazy was "the doorway to France and its army"—in other words, Esterhazy, not Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus, had sold French military secrets to the Germans.

Dreyfus had been accused in 1894 of spying for the Germans, and had been sentenced to life imprisonment. When this new evidence emerged, Dreyfus was given a retrial. However, after evidence was suppressed and falsified papers were used to make new accusations, he was sent back to prison. When word of this injustice was publicized by Émile Zola in *J'accuse*, the government again reopened the Dreyfus case.

Not until 1906 was Dreyfus exonerated and reinstated. He actually served in WWI, but the army did not publicly declare his innocence until 1995. 🙏

A RIDDLE FOR YOU



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I'm too young to be *pareve*. Who am I?

The answer will appear next week's edition.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE:

Q The names of **two** sets of grandfathers and grandsons are mentioned in the weekday *Shemoneh Esrei*. Who are they?

A Avraham and Yaakov, in the first blessing, and Adam and Enosh, in the fourth ("*Atta Chonen*"). 🙏



A recent siyum by Michael Fried & Rabbi Heinemann—two years in the making! "Mazal tov!" to Michael and to his father, Zvi Fried.

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with great appreciation for Rabbi Heinemann and the entire Kollel staff

Cincinnati Torah

is distributed weekly to local shuls and the community e-mail list.



A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

(CONTINUED)

recovery or condolence. It is a private meal for the immediate family members, in which they are forbidden to eat their own food; rather, it is provided by the community, neighbors, and friends. (Y.D. 378) In addition to bread or bagels, it is customary to serve peeled hard-boiled eggs, which are round and symbolize the cycle of life. Only after eating these may a mourner eat other foods, such as pastries and fruit, of his own. (*Aruch haShulchan* 378:2)

A mourner is permitted to eat his own food for a later meal, even on the first day of mourning (Y.D. 378:1)

If the first meal does not take place on the same Jewish calendar date as the burial (e.g., if a mourner doesn't arrive home until after dark), there is no *Se'udas Havra'ah* (Rama, 378:3)

There are several reasons given for this halacha; let me share with you three:

- 1) In his grief over the passing of a loved one, a mourner does not want to eat, for he wishes that he, too, were dead. Therefore Hashem commands others to bring him food and see to it that he eats. (Rabbeinu Yerucham)
- 2) This mitzvah is an act of consolation. It shows the mourner that we are concerned for his welfare and that he is not alone. (*Ateres Z'keinim* 378)
- 3) If a mourner were left to himself, he might seek to drown his sorrows in drink and become intoxicated, which would dishonor the deceased. If others feed him, however, self-respect will force him to eat and drink moderately. (*Sheivet Yehuda* 378). 🥂

GREAT ACTS OF SIMPLE PEOPLE

LIFE HAD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN FOR YEHUDA Bernstein (not his real name). His three-year-old son, Sholom, had been diagnosed with cancer. Over the next year, Sholom had undergone grueling treatments and a bone marrow transplant.

One of the greatest challenges was coaxing Sholom to take his medication, which he resisted. Sholom resented being in the hospital, which he viewed as a place of suffering.


One Friday, when the situation seemed

At the Kollel

EVERY DAY

EVERY WEEK

Sunday *Free brunch!*

👉 **Boys' Learning Program** 
for fourth, fifth, & sixth graders—
Mishnayos (Mas. Pe'ah and Sukkah),
and Sh'muel I

Rabbis Moshe Fuchs
and Izy Newmark..... 9–10 AM
Parents who are interested can e-mail
rabbicheinemann@gmail.com

👉 **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

DAVENING TIMES CAN BE FOUND AT CINCYKOLLEL.ORG/MINYAN-SCHEDULE/

PARASHA PONDERABLE

 **New!**

ALTER RAUBVOGEL

...YITZCHAK WAS SIXTY YEARS OLD WHEN [RIVKA] BORE [EISAV AND YAAKOV]. (25:26)

Rashi explains that Yitzchok had married at forty, then waited ten years for Rivka to come of age. He had waited ten more years for her to conceive, like his father had for Sarah. Then Yitzchak (and Rivka) prayed for children, and the twins were born.

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe points out (*Shi'urei Chumash*, B'reishis, p. 217) that Yitzchok didn't pray until he knew it was impossible for Rivka to conceive naturally. Rabbi Wolbe adds that we don't need to follow this precedent, and he leaves it at that.

Why did Yitzchok wait? Why not pray for things that can come about naturally, as we do? Please share your thoughts. 🥂

bleak, help arrived in a most unexpected way. As Sholom was refusing his medication, the door suddenly opened, admitting a group of young men from the local yeshiva. Within seconds, the sounds of guitar music and song filled the room, as the bochorim broke into a spirited dance and drew Sholom into their circle. A broad smile spread across the boy's face, and the bochorim cheered him on as he swallowed his medication with pride. The nurses watched in astonishment, wondering

how these teenagers had developed such rapport with the child, and how they had arrived precisely when they were needed.

"Most teenagers are concerned only with themselves and have a hard time empathizing with others," a nurse remarked to Yehuda. "It is remarkable that these boys are able to connect with a three-year-old child with such care and compassion. Mr. Bernstein," she concluded with a statement that would reverberate in Yehuda's ears long after, "you are lucky to be part of the Jewish family." 🥂