

# עֵפְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

## פרשת תולדות

שבת מברכים

כ"ט מרחשון תשס"ה

November 13, 2004

Candle Lighting: 4:22

Latest שמע: 9:11

Latest שחרית: 10:13

Earliest הבדלה: 5:26

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ATERES H<sup>A</sup>SHAVUA  
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## SIGHT FOR SORE EYES

Avi Lieberman, 12th Grade

ויהי כי זקן יצחק ותכהין עיניו מראת [כז:א]

AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN YITZCHAK HAD  
BECOME OLD, AND HIS EYES DIMMED FROM SEEING

Towards the end of this week's parsha, the Torah tells us that Yitzchak became blind in his old age. Rashi lists three reasons as to why he became blind, with the first reason being because of the smoke from the incense which the wives of Eisav offered to their *avodah zarah*. If this is so, why wasn't Rivkah affected by the constant smoke like her husband was? One answer given is that Rivkah grew up in a house of idol worship and was impervious to the smoke, making her immune to the "sacrifices" brought by the wives of her own son. On the other hand, Yitzchak grew up in the home of Avraham Avinu and wasn't in an atmosphere of *tumah*, which is why he was affected by his son's actions compared to his wife who grew up with it.

Rabbi Breslow, *shlit"א*, Rosh Yeshiva of Scranton Yeshiva, learns out an amazing lesson from Rivkah's age at the time she was exposed to the idol worshipping. It is a lesson from which we must all learn.

At the beginning of our parsha, Rashi learns that Rivkah was three years old when she married Yitzchak. As we learned in last week's *sedrah*,

Rivkah was a great *baalas midos*, someone whose character stood out from her family's. In fact, Rashi says that Rivkah didn't like her household's atmosphere at all, and when asked if she wanted to go back with Eliezer to marry her future husband, she stated "אלך, I will go." Rashi says there that Rivkah meant, *מעצמי ואף אם אינכם רוצים* - Even if you don't allow me, I'm going anyway! She couldn't stand it there!

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## A POT OF GOLD

Moshe Golombeck, 9th Grade

This week's parsha begins and ends with the relationship between the twin brothers Yaakov and Eisav; from their bickering in their mother's womb, to Yaakov's flight from his brother's wrath after taking the blessing Yitzchak intended for Eisav.

Eisav's rebellion and mocking of Judaism started at a very young age. Rashi, quoting the Medrash explains that Eisav's departure to idol worship started immediately after his Bar Mitzvah. Eisav was fifteen on the day of his grandfather Avraham's death when he came in from the field and demanded the lentil soup. He ignored the family's mourning and continued with business as usual; Rashi points out that Eisav had come back exhausted from a murderous rampage in the fields. Upon his return, he saw Yaakov cooking lentils and commanded, "Pour that red stuff into me." Yaakov understood the value of the birthright, and the very important responsibility and privilege it carried of serving in the Beis HaMikdash. Recognizing that the evil Eisav was not a man intent on a life of Hashem's service, he asked, "Sell me the rights of the firstborn." Eisav responded, "I am dying; what do I need it for?" and he spurned his birthright. It almost seems dishonest to trick Eisav into selling such a valuable commodity for a mere pot of lentils. Wasn't Yaakov's tactic deceptive?

Rabbi Eliyahu Mishkovsky answers this question with a *moshol*. A man, struggling to put together enough money to marry off his daughter, came to his Rebbe for a blessing. The tzaddik blessed him and advised that he should accept the first business offer he received. On his way home, the man stayed at an inn also attended by a group of businessmen. He observed a group of men heatedly debating various matters. One of the men approached him, offering "I'll sell you my portion in the World to Come for a ruble."

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Mazal Tov to  
RABBI & REBBETZIN  
SHOLOM GREENSPAN  
upon the engagement  
of their son Aryeh Leib  
to Yehudis Shapiro  
of Monsey

## Rabbi Sholom Mordechai HaKohen Schwadron *zt'l*

THE MAGGID OF YERUSHALAYIM  
25 Sivan 5762/1912 – 22 Kislev 5758/1997



- Shlomo Mordechai Schwadron was born on a Monday in Sivan 5762, to a poor family whose household was filled with an atmosphere of *yiras shomayim* (fear of heaven) and *siyata dishmaya* (faith in Hashem).
- His father, Rav Yitzchak Schwadron passed away in the year 5680 (1920), leaving behind a widow and six small children, including young Sholom Mordechai who was seven years old at the time.
- The passing of Rav Yitzchak began a period of great difficulty for the Schwadron family. However, young Sholom persevered and by the age of twelve began learning in the Yeshivas Tzion Rav on a regular basis.
- His rosh yeshiva, Rav Yaakov Elenbogen took a special interest in this young boy and began to learn with him *bichavrusa*.
- At the age of fifteen young Sholom went to learn at the Lomze Yeshiva in Petach Tikva where the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Eliyahu Dushnitzer guided and taught him the many values of life which Reb Sholom would share with others many years later in his soul-stirring *drashos*.

- Due to a strong fear of Arabs in Petach Tikvah, Sholom Mordechai transferred to the Chevron Yeshiva in Yerushalayim at the start of winter in 5690 (1930).
- It was in the Chevron Yeshiva that Sholom reverently attached himself to “*Der Rebbe*,” Rav Leib Chasman, never missing one of his mussar talks. He held to this even if it meant walking out of a friend’s wedding and making the long trek all the way back to yeshiva; such was his thirst for the words of his revered rebbe.
- Many of Rav Sholom’s friends from this period in his life often recall his amazing love and drive for Torah and *mussar*, comparing it to a blazing fire.
- Between the years 5691 and 5693 (1931-1935) under the auspices of R’ Meir Chodosh, a group of bachurim including young Sholom Mordechai accepted the challenge of learning and completing all of *shas*. Rav Sholom explained many years later that it was with Hashem’s help that they reached their goal in a short span of time (three years).
- Rav Sholom used to show his grandsons the notebooks he kept from that period. “Look in here and see how much ground we covered! How much we learned! In quantity and quality, in depth and in sheer volume!”
- During Chanukah 5696 (1936) Rav Sholom became the first son-in-law of Rav Chaim Leib Auerbach when he married his daughter Leah.
- From the early days of his marriage, Rav Sholom fasted every Monday and Thursday, spending the day wrapped in Tallis and Tefillin, learning in his room.



Rav Sholom at 16



Passport photo 1961

- Apart from this, Rav Sholom further instituted a *taanis dibur* (refraining from speech except when learning Torah) every *erev Rosh Chodesh*, on most Shabbasos and during the forty days between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Motzei Yom Kippur.
- Immediately after his Sheva Brachos, Rav Sholom joined the famous Ohr Torah Kollel where he became acquainted with such *gedolim* as Rav Shmuel Halavi Vosner, Rav Eliezer Waldenberg and Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv among others.
- During those years, Rav Sholom taught an early-evening gemarah class to the local residents of Shaarei Chesed, after which he learned late into the night with his esteemed brother-in-law Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l*.
- In 5703 (1943), Rav Sholom took part in starting Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi and became their Mashgiach Ruchani. This position allowed him to have a major

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We come back to this week's *parsha* which opens by telling us that Yitzchak was sixty when his wife gave birth – twenty years after he married Rivkah, who, according to our calculations, was presently twenty three – *twenty* years after she left her idol-filled land. Furthermore, Rashi tells us that from birth, you couldn't tell the difference in character between Yaakov and Eisav. Only when they reached the age of thirteen does Rashi tell us, זה פירש לבתי מדרשות וזה פירש לעבודה זרה – *This one (Yaakov) went to the Beis Medrash, and this one (Eisav) went to worship idols.*

If we gather up all this information, it seems clear, according to Rashi, that Yaakov and Rivkah weren't introduced to Eisav's incense till Yitzchak was seventy three, and Rivkah was thirty six – *thirty three years* since she had last been exposed to idol worshipping in *her* home.

Rabbi Breslow points out that we see here that it was possible for the incense which was burned on an altar *thirty three years before* to still have a great effect on Rivkah, so much so that her husband went blind while she was unharmed!

This is amazing! Rivkah couldn't stand the

atmosphere of idol worship, as we see from her great desire to leave her home. She must have avoided the incense being offered, and yet *thirty three years* later this still left an impact on her; one so powerful as to blind her husband!

My dear friends, can we claim to be greater than Rivkah Imeinu? Are we in such control that we can willingly open ourselves up to sights and sounds which a Jewish *neshama* is crying and screaming to get away from and say, "It won't affect us?" When we come to the point of not even feeling our *neshamos* crying inside us – we *know* how much we've already been affected! We mustn't think that nothing affects us, for if Rivkah gained such a resistance that lasted many years, leaving her immune to the *tumah* brought into *her* home by Eisav's wives – shouldn't it make sense not to bring today's *tumah* into *our* homes? Let us work in this area by protecting our senses in what comes into our homes, as well as where we look when outside in the streets. Through our adherence to this fortification, may we be *zoche* to the final redemption and the *geulah shleimah*, speedily in our day.

Remembering his Rebbe's words he accepted without hesitation. Immediately, the merchant pulled out a sheet of paper and wrote out the bill of sale and, with mocking glee, signed it before his fellow merchants. The poor man headed home, a ruble poorer, with contract in hand.

The merchant, still laughing, told his wife the funny story of how he sold his portion in the World to Come and he even got a ruble out the deal. His wife stiffened; "Go buy it back." The businessman looked at her; "You're not serious are you?" "You bet I am. I am not living with someone who sold his portion in the World to Come!"


Humiliated, but without options, the merchant left to find the man with whom he had made the sale. Once again, he was surprised; the man would not sell it back. "A deal is a deal." The merchant tried raising the price, but the poor man stubbornly held his ground. There was only one solution left. The businessman went to speak to the man's Rebbe. After hearing both sides the Rebbe said, "You know, the man is right - a deal is a deal; there's nothing to be done. However, perhaps for the right price he will sell it back to you! He is about to marry off a daughter. If you were to offer to pay for all the expenses, maybe I could convince him to change his mind." The merchant agreed, as did the buyer, and the matter was resolved.

The merchant was perturbed, "How can this be justified. I sold it to him for a ruble and now I must pay thousands to get it back?" The Rebbe answered, "These are two separate transactions, each done at fair market value. Yesterday when you mocked your World to Come, you considered it a joke and therefore it was worth even less than a ruble. Today you were willing to pay thousands for it - and now your Olam Habah is priceless."

With this parable we gain insight into the transactions between Yaakov and Eisav. There was no trick. Eisav knew what was included in his birthright, but he placed no value in it. He even mocked it. Eisav sold it for what at the time was to him a fair market value. But after he lost the Divine blessing transmitted by his father Yitzchak, he began to appreciate the true value of that which he had scorned. The regret he felt was intense, but it was too late.

The Torah's message is timeless and applies directly to us. How often do we undervalue matters of spiritual importance? Do we not trade the eternal, more meaningful pleasure of a Divine relationship for the "happiness" offered by the mundane, finite pleasures of the temporal physical world about us? We need to maintain a focus on what has true value, so we do not sell it for a "pot of lentils". In this merit, let us be *zoche* to live a meaningful life and ultimately bring the final redemption.

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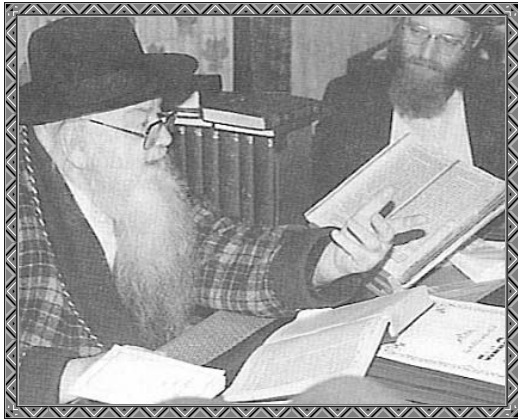
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influence over numerous young bochorim and be *mashpiah* on them in the ways of *yiddishkeit*.

- Rav Sholom left the kollel in 5708 (1948).
- The year 5710 (1950) saw Rav Sholom appointed Rosh Yeshiva of Mekor Chaim, a yeshiva specifically for boys of Sephardic background, and a position that he held for ten years.



- The Brisker Rav, Rav Velvel Soloveitchik *zt'l* urged Rav Sholom to involve himself in the spiritual rescue of Jewish children who had immigrated to Israel; Rav Sholom subsequently became a vocal figure in the organization Peilim (a.k.a. Lev Le'achim).

- Rav Sholom was known as "The Maggid of Yerushalayim," delivering *drashos* and fiery speeches through Eretz Yisroel, America and Europe. He was most famous for his *drashos* given Friday nights at the Zichron Moshe shul. The talks always started with halachah and wound up with compassionate and elevating *mussar* that touched the hearts of thousands who came to hear him.

- For twenty-five years Rav Sholom delivered the evening shiur in gemara for the residents of Sharei Chesed. These

classes were very popular, and were interwoven with words of *mussar*. Many, many families changed as a result of listening faithfully to Rav Sholom's insights and encouraging words.

- He published many seforim, mostly the works of his ancestors and rabbeim. One such *sefer* is *Lev Eliyahu*, based on the teachings of Rav Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l*.

- Rav Shalom Mordechai HaKohen Schwadron *zt'l* returned his holy soul to his Master on 22 Kislev, 5758 (1997). His commitment to the public and giving personality woven with the pearls of Torah were the essential core of his being. May his merit protect us.



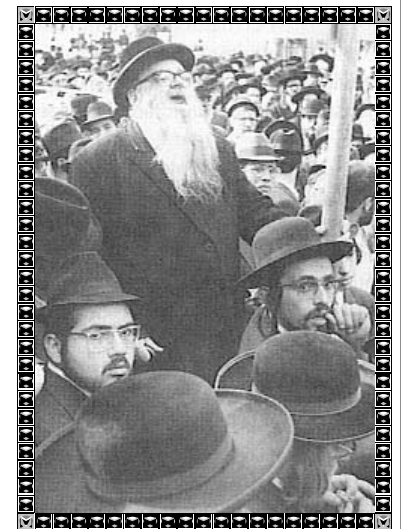
- Rav Sholom Schwadron's daughter once told him that she had purchased a new baby carriage and asked if he knew of anyone who needed the old one. "I want to get the mitzvah of passing it on to someone in need" she said. Rav Sholom asked, Why not keep the old one and give some poor person the new one?"

- Rav Sholom Schwadron used to enjoy relating the following. "During the half-year I stayed with Rav Eliya Lopian in Kamenitz, there was an occasion when I cried over my spiritual state. As was his custom, Rav Eliya was quiet and did not interrupt. When I stopped talking, he asked, 'Are you finished?' I answered in the affirmative, whereupon he stood up, took hold of my beard, and said, 'Rav Sholom! Rav Sholom! If I only had a black beard like yours. . . if I had your black beard!' and he sat down.

From these words, I derived subject matter for many *shmuessen* [sermons]. I could still work to change whatever needed to be changed!"

- Controversy broke out in a certain Torah institution, and along with several other prominent *gedolim*, Rav Sholom Schwadron – much against his will - was forced to become involved.

"One day, during the month of Elul," an acquaintance recalls, "I drove Rav Sholom back home from that institution. Rav Sholom was sitting silently beside me [from Rosh Chodesh Elul till Motzei Yom Kippur, Rav Sholom always held a *taanis dibur*]. I decided to seize the moment to denounce a certain talmid chacham who was part of the controversy. I began with a soft terminology, but my words soon turned harsh. Rav Sholom signaled sharply for me to stop speaking in this vein about a *gadol baTorah*, but I persisted in explaining my position anyhow.



As a rule, Rav Sholom Schwadron was soft as butter. This time, he hardened like a rock. With a motion of his hand that could not be misunderstood, he let me know that he wanted me to stop the car. 'I'm getting out,' he

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stated. I stopped.

Rav Sholom lifted himself up with some difficulty, stepped out of the car, and began to walk. I drove after him, trying to persuade him back into the car. It was clear that walking was not easy for him. Pity overwhelmed me and I regretted ever having brought up the subject – but it was no use. Rav Sholom walked all the way home.”

- Rav Sholom Schwadron never made a decision without consulting with *gedolim*, such as his brother-in-law Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l*, Rav Leib Chasman *zt'l*, Rav Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* and more. The following is an incident which took place on one of Rav Sholom’s visits to the home of Rav Chaim Kanievsky *shlit”a*.

The line of people waiting started from where Rav Chaim sat, all the way to the front of the door. Rav Sholom stepped inside the house and asked, “Who’s last?”

“The honored Rav Schwadron can go in immediately,” the others responded together.

As if he had not heard, Rav Sholom asked again, “Who is last in line?” “I’m last,” someone answered finally. Rav Sholom sat down on a chair to one side of the room.

One of those ahead in line, when his turn came to meet with Rav Chaim Kanievsky, told him, “Rav Sholom Schwadron is waiting outside.” Rav Chaim rose at once and went out into the waiting area to see what Rav Sholom had come to see him about. Rav Sholom stood up to greet him, raised both hands, and said, “No! No! I’m waiting my turn. A line is a line! I will go in when my turn comes.”

His protests were to no avail. Rav Chaim led him into his office. Outside, in the waiting area, awed onlookers repeated details of the incident, until it became widely known.



Rav Sholom with Rabbi Paysach Krohn



## STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Rav Akiva Eiger, known for his great Torah genius and amazing works on *gemara*, was also known for his *chesed* towards his fellow Jews. He would often go to the homes of all the sick people in the town and bring them blessings and comfort.

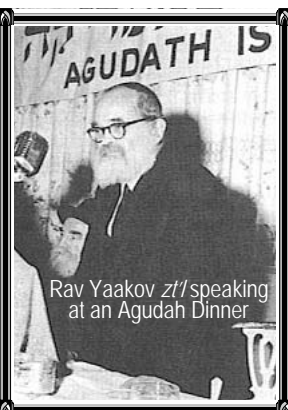
One time, Rav Akiva Eiger visited someone with a very rare disease. None of the local town doctors could pinpoint the illness and stated that the patient had no hope. At that time, the king’s royal physician was passing through the town, and Rav Akiva pleaded with him to see the *choleh*. The royal physician finally agreed and examined the patient. He was able to diagnose the disease but concluded that unfortunately there was no hope for the patient. Rav Akiva Eiger asked the royal physician if he would have responded the same way if the king had just been diagnosed with the same disease, to which the physician responded that the king would have gotten a more favorable response. The doctor explained that the king had the means and the manpower to capture an extremely rare bird that was the only known cure for this illness.

When the doctor left, Rav Akiva Eiger davened to Hashem and pleaded, “Hashem you are our King and we all are Your children, why should a mere king of flesh and blood have cures available to him that Your own children do not?” At that point the extremely rare bird flew through the window. Rav Akiva Eiger had the bird caught and prepared it for the *choleh*. He instructed the one preparing the bird to preserve a few feathers to give to the royal doctor, as a sign so he should know that every Jew is a child of the True King, and with the proper *tefillos* can receive the same care as a king of flesh and blood.

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks an often overlooked question on *sefer Bereishis*. While we find several *parshiyos* that discuss the lives of Avraham and Yaakov, there is very little said about the life of Yitzchak. Even this week's *sedrah* which talks about Yitzchak more than any other *parsha*, deals more with the life of Yaakov than with the life of Yitzchak. Additionally, the Rambam



[ג] goes into great detail with regard to the ways in which Avraham drew people close to Hashem, and the ways in which Yaakov taught Torah. However, all the Rambam writes about Yitzchak is that he gave over the *mesorah* to Yaakov. It seems from the Rambam that Yitzchak's accomplishments were few and far between as compared to those of Avraham and Yaakov. Avraham and Yaakov had many *talmidim*, and spread Torah throughout the world, while Yitzchak's only *talmid* was Yaakov. Why was this so?

Rav Yaakov answers, that each of our forefathers were responsible for transmitting a different trait that Klal Yisroel would require for future generations; Avraham, the *midah* of *chesed*, Yitzchak, the *midah* of *gevurah*, and Yaakov, the *midah* of *emes*. The *derech* of Avraham was that he would invite people to his home, and serve them a nice meal. When his guests would thank him for his hospitality, he would explain to them that this was part of his *avodas Hashem*. Hashem bestows kindness on the world, and we must emulate Hashem, and show kindness as well. This was an idea that was easy to relate to, and as such Avraham was able to gather many students.

Similarly, Yaakov's path was the learning of Torah, and the unrelenting quest for absolute *emes*. While not as innate in a person as the concept of *chesed*, this is still an idea that a person can relate to. Even a child can understand the difference between *emes* and *sheker*, and as such Yaakov's *derech* also attracted many followers.

On the other hand, the *midah* attributed to Yitzchak is very different. The *derech* of Yitzchak was absolute *gevurah*, total dedication to *avodas Hashem*. This devotion extended beyond the norm, to the willingness to sacrifice one's own life *l'sheim shomayim*. This was a plateau that Yitzchak reached only at the *akeidah*. This concept was one that most of the people in Yitzchak's generation could not relate to. As such, Yitzchak was *zoche* to have only one *talmid*, namely Yaakov, and as such the details of Yitzchak's life in his generation are largely left out of the storyline.

However, the ultimate goal of the *avos* was not the gathering of *talmidim*, but the inculcation of their various *midos* in Klal Yisroel. In this regard, the accomplishments of Yitzchak were no less than those of Avraham and Yaakov. Each of the *avos* succeeded in instilling their respective *midos* into future generations, despite the fact that the generation of Yitzchak could neither embody nor relate to it. All three of these *midos* together have sustained Klal Yisroel as a nation. May we be *zoche* to ingrain our forefathers' *midos* and develop them in ourselves, thus meriting the *geulah shleimah*, speedily in our day.

Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l was once the *mesader kiddushin* at a wedding where the *kesubah* was misplaced. While everyone else panicked and rushed around trying to locate the missing *kesubah*, he spent his time trying to keep the chassan and kallah from joining in the general agitation. "Apparently the *mazeldike* time has not yet arrived," he told them.

Part of the secret of Reb Yaakov's self control was never letting himself be concerned about anything other than what the Torah considers important. Someone once asked him how he had escorted his children to the *chupah* - the fathers together with the groom and the mothers with the bride, or with each set of parents escorting their child. His answer: three times one way and three times the other way. The deciding criterion: whatever the *mechutanim* (in-laws) wanted.

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