

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

S-MORE-GASBORD!

Esav: "I have plenty..."

Yaakov: "...I have everything." (33:9-11)

A buffet is not a Jewish invention.

Have you noticed whenever you eat at a buffet, you always end up eating about twice as much as if you'd been served a meal? The Torah says "And you will eat and you will be satisfied, and you will bless Hashem your G-d." Eat. Be satisfied, and then thank the One who provides food for the whole world.

What does a buffet say? "Don't look at what you've eaten. **Look at what's left!** How can you possibly walk away from this gorgeous spread, these tables groaning under their load of delights? Have you no conscience? Get over here and fill up another plate immediately! (Have you tried the smoked salmon yet?)"

Esav says "I have plenty." Yaakov says "I have everything."

What's the difference between someone who says they have plenty and someone who says they have everything?

Someone who says they have plenty is telling you that they **could** have a lot more! Their focus is not what's on their plate. It's on what's left on the tables of life's buffet.

Someone who says that he has everything is saying that he's happy with what he has, even though he may have but little. His focus is on the portion that the Creator has provided for him. For only He knows the exact size of the helping needed to preserve our individual spiritual health and fitness.

BURNING SOUL

"Please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav." (32:12)

"Then Yaakov looked up and saw Esav coming in the distance; immediately he looked heavenward, cried, and begged for mercy ... until G-d promised to save him from every tribulation by the merit of Yaakov." (Bereishis Rabba 75:13)

Can we ever erase from our minds the terrible frightened faces of the six million? Standing in lines on railway platforms. Dressed in drab European grays and browns.

We will never know how close we came to seeing those ranks of holy martyrs swelled by the gold kaftans of Yerushalmi Jews and the khaki shorts and blue hats of kibbutzniks.

In 1942, Rommel and a huge tank-force stood at the gates of Palestine. Nothing was between him and the *yishuv* (Jewish settlement). The British forces prepared to evacuate Palestine. They started to burn documents.

"The greatest concealment is that the concealment itself is concealed."

At this very moment, Rabbi Kahanaman purchased a lot near Tel Aviv and laid the cornerstone for a new Yeshiva. People thought he was crazy. He responded that G-d hadn't brought him to Israel to be murdered by the Nazis. (Rabbi Kahanaman went on to build the Ponevezh Yeshiva, one of the largest in Israel today.)

In the desert in 1942, the only thing holding the Germans back was a lack of

drinking water. They discovered that the British had laid a water pipe through the desert. The British had just finished this pipeline and they were checking it for leaks. Instead of wasting valuable drinking water, they were pumping sea-water through the pipeline to check its integrity. The Germans guzzled the sea-water from the pipes and surrendered in terrible agony.

A miracle, or a coincidence?

We live in an era where it's very difficult to see Hashem's hand in the world. When you see a wall, you know that something is blocking your view. When there is no wall you can think that you see everything.

The Torah itself tells us that Hashem will "hide His face from us." That we won't see Him. The expression the Torah uses is "*hasteir astir*" — "I will **surely** hide My face." The verb is doubled. It is as though Hashem is telling us that He will hide even the fact that He is hiding.

The greatest concealment is that the concealment itself is concealed.

Yaakov Avinu saw our generation some three and a half thousand years ago. He saw "Esav coming in the distance." He saw Esav executing "the Final Solution." And he saw him fail.

He also saw the other face of Esav, when he pretends to be our brother. Yaakov Avinu saw that Esav would try to smother us with a brotherly embrace. A brotherly embrace that wants to tell the Jewish People that three thousand years of miraculous survival is merely coincidental; that there is no One behind the wall, because there really is no wall at all and we can see everything. We have the technology!

Yaakov Avinu saw this silent holocaust of Jewish souls "coming in the distance." He looked heavenward. He cried and begged Hashem for mercy for his children; that whether Esav would try to burn our bodies or our souls he would ultimately fail.

continued on page four

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Returning home, Yaakov sends angelic messengers to appease his brother Esav. The messengers return, telling Yaakov that Esav is approaching him with an army of 400 men. Yaakov takes the strategic precautions of dividing the camps, praying for assistance, and sending a tribute to mollify Esav. That night, Yaakov is left alone and wrestles with the angel of Esav. Although Yaakov emerges victorious, he is left with an injured sinew in his thigh (which is the reason that it is forbidden to eat the sciatic nerve of a kosher animal). The angel tells him that his name in the future will be "Yisrael," signifying that he has prevailed against man (Lavan) and the supernatural realm (the angel). The brothers, Yaakov and Esav, meet and are reconciled, but Yaakov, still fearful of his brother, rejects Esav's offer that they should dwell together. Shechem, a Canaanite prince, abducts and violates Dina, Yaakov's daughter. In return for Dina's hand in marriage, the

prince and his father suggest that Yaakov and his family intermarry and enjoy the fruits of Canaanite prosperity. Yaakov's sons trick Shechem and his father by feigning agreement — however, they stipulate that all the males of the city must undergo *bris mila*. Shimon and Levi, two of Dina's brothers, enter the town and execute all the males who were weakened by the circumcision. This action is justified by the city's tacit complicity in the abduction of their sister. Hashem commands Yaakov to go to Beis-El and build an altar there. His mother Rivka's nurse, Devorah, dies and is buried below Beis-El. Hashem appears again to Yaakov, blesses him and changes his name to Yisrael. While traveling, Rachel goes into labor and gives birth to Binyamin, the twelfth of the tribes of Yisrael. She dies in childbirth and is buried on the Beis Lechem Road. Yaakov builds a monument to her. Yitzchak passes away at the age of 180 and is buried by his sons. The *Parsha* concludes by listing Esav's descendants.

HAFTORAH: OVADIAH 1:1-21

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The entire book of Ovadiah, the shortest in all of the *Tanach*, is this week's Haftorah. Ovadiah was a convert to Judaism from the nation of Edom.

Esav lived among two *tzadikim*, Yitzchak and Rivka, and failed to learn from them. Ovadiah lived among two

of the wickedest people, Achav and Jezabel, yet he remained a *tzadik*. His prophecy follows Esav/Edom through various periods of history until its eventual downfall in the times of the *Mashiach*.

Our Sages understand ancient Rome as the personification of Edom. There is no historical information of any actual relationship by descent, but if we look into the inner kernel of Rome, we will see the most brilliant realization of the Esav/Edom principle.

Esav was a hunter — "trapping was in his mouth" (*Bereishis 25:28*). He was a hunter not just with a bow and arrow, but "with his mouth." He knew how to feign innocence to

entrap others in his net. Esav's father Yitzchak saw prophetically that Esav would live by his sword (*27:40*). Rome was a society built on the sword, military bravery and strength. Ultimately Rome crumbled because it was rotten within: The twin pillars of its foundation — deception and might — can never form the basis of a lasting civilization.

Rome has always been the implacable enemy of Israel, and the instrument of Israel's Divinely decreed fate. And it is Israel who eternally stands in stark contrast to Rome. For Israel's mission is to carry the G-d given principles of justice, brotherly love and morality down through the ages.

• Rabbi Mendel Hirsch

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by
OHR SOMAYACH
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • 02-581-0315

General Editor:
Rabbi Moshe Newman
Editorial & Web Advisor:
Rabbi Reuven Lauffer
Associate Editors:
Rabbi Mordechai Becher,
Rabbi Reuven Subar
Contributing Writers:
Weekly Daf, Love of the Land:
Rav Mendel Weinbach
Insights, Overview, Haftorah:
Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Web Production: **Lev Seltzer**
Produced and Designed by the Office of Communications
Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director

© 1997 OHR SOMAYACH INSTITUTIONS - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529

* THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS WORDS OF TORAH. PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

OhrNet is available from several sources:
• E-MAIL VIA INTERNET: Write to ohr@virtual.co.il for information.
• WORLD WIDE WEB: Our address is: www.ohr.org.il
• FAX AND REGULAR MAIL WITHIN ISRAEL:
To subscribe, mail us a letter, or fax a request with your name & fax number to 02-581-2890.
• US-MAIL WITHIN NORTH AMERICA:
Call 1-800-431-2272 for subscription information.

* If you have a question about Judaism, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi. Just send your question using E-Mail to "ohr@virtual.co.il" and set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi". We can't include all questions submitted in the column, but we do try to respond to everyone personally.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

KISSING THE EARTH

"For Your servants hold dear her stones and cherish even her dust." (*Tehillim 102:15*)

The touching scene of Jews kissing the earth upon their arrival in *Eretz Yisrael* has its roots in the words of King David and in the actions of our Talmudic Sages. Rabbi



Abba kissed the rocks at the port of Acco. Rabbi Chiya bar Gamda rolled in the dust of the land. Rabbi Chanina went even further by repairing the roads so that his beloved country would not have a bad reputation with those who traveled upon them.

• Kesuvos 112

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What sort of messengers did Yaakov send to Esav?
2. Translate the word “garti.” (32:5)
3. Why was Yaakov both “afraid” and “distressed?”
4. In what three ways did Yaakov prepare for his encounter with Esav?
5. Where did Dina hide and why?
6. After helping his family across the river, Yaakov remained alone on the other side. Why?
7. What was the angel forced to do before Yaakov agreed to release him?
8. What was it that healed Yaakov’s leg?
9. Why did Esav embrace Yaakov?
10. Why did Yoseph stand between Esav and Rachel?
11. What happened to the 400 men who accompanied Esav?
12. Why does the Torah refer to Dina as the “daughter of Leah” and not the “daughter of Yaakov?”
13. Whom should Shimon and Levi have consulted concerning their plan to kill the people of Shechem?
14. Who was born along with Binyamin?
15. What does the name *Binyamin* mean? Why did Yaakov call him that?
16. In verse 35:22 the Torah states “The sons of Yaakov were twelve.” Why?
17. How old was Yaakov when Yoseph was sold?
18. Esav changed the name of his wife, Ahalivamah, to Yehudis. Why?
19. Which three categories of people have their sins pardoned?
20. What is the connection between the Egyptian oppression of the Jewish people and Esav’s decision to leave the land of Canaan?

BONUS QUESTION?

**“Shechem said to her father and her brothers ... ‘let me marry the young woman (Dina).’ ”
“And the sons of Yaakov answered Shechem ... ‘we can’t do this...’ ” (34:11-14).**

Regarding Lavan, his wickedness is apparent from the fact that he answered first, before his father had a chance (*Bereishis* 24:50, *Rashi*). So why in this week’s Parsha did Yaakov’s sons reply before Yaakov?

answer on page six

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

“Two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats” (32:15)

There are two verses in the Torah in which every word ends with the letter “mem.” The verse above, which describes Yaakov’s gift to Esav, and a verse in *Bamidbar* (29:33) describing the festival offerings in the Temple. The connection between these two verses is as follows: Because Yaakov offered Esav 550 animals rather than trust in Hashem’s promise of protection, his offspring were required to offer 550 sacrifices each year in the Temple.

• *Ba'al Haturim*

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 32:4 - Angels.
2. 32:5 - “I lived” (or “resided” or “dwelled”). (See Targum Unkelos.)
3. 32:8 - He was afraid he would be killed. He was distressed that he would have to kill.
4. 32:9 - He sent gifts, he prayed, and he prepared for war.
5. 32:23 - Yaakov hid her in a chest so that Esav wouldn’t see her and want to marry her.
6. 32:25 - He went back to get some small containers he had forgotten.
7. 32:27 - Admit that the blessings given by Yitzchak rightfully belong to Yaakov.
8. 32:32 - The shining of the sun.
9. 33:4 - His pity was aroused when he saw Yaakov bowing to him so many times.
10. 33:7 - To stop Esav from gazing at her.
11. 33:16 - They slipped away one by one.
12. 34:1 - Because she was outgoing like her mother, Leah.
13. 34:25 - Their father, Yaakov.
14. 35:17 - His two twin sisters.
15. 35:18 - *Ben-Yemin* means “Son of the South.” He was the only son born in the Land of Israel, which is south of Aram Naharaim.
16. 35:22 - To stress that all of them — including Reuven — were righteous.
17. 35:29 - One hundred and eight.
18. 36:2 - To fool Yitzchak into thinking that she had abandoned idolatry.
19. 36:3 - One who converts to Judaism, one who is elevated to a position of leadership, and one who marries.
20. 36:6 - Esav knew that the privilege of living in the Land of Israel was accompanied by the prophecy that the Jews would be “foreigners in a land not their own.” Therefore Esav said, “I’m getting out of here — I don’t want the Land if it means I have to ‘pay the bill’ of subjugation in Egypt.”

WEEKLY DAF

SHABBOS 9 - 15

PAIN IN THE GRAVE

Although their father had requested to be buried near his parents, circumstances prevented his sons from immediately fulfilling his wish, and they were forced to temporarily inter him in the city where he died. When they finally were able to transfer his remains to the family plot, there was a serious complication arising out of the decomposing flesh which emitted a terrible odor and was in danger of falling apart. The only solution was to pour lime on the body to hasten the decomposing process. But they were in doubt as to whether they were permitted to do something which would cause pain to their dead father, as Rabbi Yitzchak says: "The worm is as painful to the dead as a needle to the flesh of the living."

This question came before Rabbi Shlomo ben Aderes (*Rashba*), one of the great early Talmudic commentaries. His response, in which he rules that it is permitted to do so in order to fulfill the wish of the deceased father, contains a statement which seems to run counter to the Talmud's explanation of Rabbi Yitzchak's statement.

When Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel offered an explanation for his generation's lack of sensitivity to the miracles they enjoyed he used the expression "The flesh of the dead does not feel the scalpel." This expression is quoted by *Rashba* as a reason for ignoring the consideration of pain caused by pouring lime on the dead body. But this expression

seems to be in direct conflict with the statement of Rabbi Yitzchak, based on a passage in the Book of Iyov, about the dead body sensing the pain of worms. This conflict is resolved by the Talmud by modifying Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel's expression to read "The dead flesh in a living body does not feel the scalpel."

If the Talmud's conclusion is that the dead body does indeed sense pain how does *Rashba* cite the unmodified version of Rabbi Shimon's statement indicating the opposite?

In his "Responsa *Shvut Yaakov*," Rabbi Yaakov Reisha, a later Talmudic commentator, explains that *Rashba's* intention was not to suggest that the dead body feels no pain, but rather that the consideration of being buried together with family outweighs this factor, and it may therefore be assumed that the father's wish was to endure the pain in order to achieve burial in the family plot.

(A completely different approach is used by *Tosefos Yom Tov* in *Mesechta Avos* 2:7, who maintains that it is only the soul which feels the pain of the body being humiliated. There is greater difficulty, however, in reconciling this approach with the conclusion of the Talmud.)

• *Shabbos 13b*

WHEN TO KEEP IT A SECRET

When should you keep a gift a secret and when should you let the recipient know that

you are his benefactor?

"One who gives a gift to his friend should inform him that he has done so."

This statement in the name of the Sage Rav is based on Hashem's order to Moshe Rabbeinu to let His people know concerning the gift of Shabbos "that they may know that I am Hashem Who sanctifies them." (*Shemos* 31:13) Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel extends this concept to the need for one who gives a child some food, to somehow communicate this kindness to his mother.

The reason for all this, explains Rashi, is that if the recipient of the gift is aware of the identity of the giver this will promote a greater affection between the two parties. This approach, points out *Tosefos*, is therefore limited to situations in which the gift is an expression of the feelings of friendship which the giver has for the recipient. Where the gift is made, however, because of the needy situation of the beneficiary, the assumption is that the receiver will feel less embarrassment if he is not aware of the *tzedakah* giver's identity.

This idea is expressed in *Mishlei* 21:14 as "A gift in secret subdues (Divine) anger," and was personified by the Sage Mar Ukva. He used to secretly place a sum of money daily through a slit in the door of a needy Jew in his neighborhood. The Talmud (*Kesuvos* 67b) describes how this sage virtually risked his life to avoid his identity being revealed to this recipient in order to avoid embarrassing him.

• *Shabbos 10b*

continued from page one

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE HOUSEWIFE AND THE CAT

"And Yaakov was very frightened and distressed." (32:7)

Rashi comments that Yaakov was *frightened* lest he or members of his family be killed, and he was *distressed*, that he might be forced to kill others.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein asks: Why was Yaakov distressed that he might be put in a position of having to kill Esav or one of his four hundred wicked companions? Wasn't this an opportunity to rid the

world of evil — a reason to rejoice, and not to be distressed? Reb Moshe answers with the words of Beruria to her husband Rabbi Meir (*Berachos* 10a): "Better to pray that evildoers repent than to pray that the wicked die."

Yaakov was distressed that he might have to kill to remove evil from the world. There is an inherent danger in using undesirable methods to achieve desirable goals — that one can become tainted by the means.

Rabbi Chaim Brisker pointed out that there are two kinds of zealots in the world, comparable to a housewife and a

cat. Both the housewife and the cat want to rid the house of mice. The only difference is that the housewife hopes that there will never be another mouse to eliminate, whereas the cat hopes there will be many more.

Before we are zealous to attack the evils of the world, let us make sure that we are acting as housewives and not cats.

Sources:

Burning Soul - *Devarim* 31:18, *Baal Shem Tov*, *Imrei Shefer*, *Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman*
The Housewife And The Cat - *Rabbi Zev Leff*
in *Shiurei Binah*

Yossi & Co.™

A fascinating adventure into the weekly parsha!

www.ohr.org.il

BLESS ME, SCOTTIE

Heiko Evermann, Hamburg, Germany
<113132.1763@compuserve.com>

wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have a question concerning a greeting found in the Star Trek series, which, as someone told me, has a Jewish origin, and I would like to know more about it. Mr. Spock from the planet Vulcan greets people with "live long and prosper" while holding his hand towards them with a gap between his thumb and first finger, and a gap between his middle and third finger, forming something like the letter "W". I was told that Leonard Nemo, the actor who plays Mr. Spock, has Jewish parents. I have also seen this hand symbol on plaques and souvenirs in Israel when I visited that country last year. It showed two hands forming this sign and around it was a Hebrew blessing, as I was told. I would like to know more about this and thought that you might be able to help me. Thank you in advance for your efforts.

Rachel <orbart@tezcat.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have always heard that there is special relevance as to Jewish tribe concerning the wide separation of the third and fourth finger, and that doing this with both hands has a special mystical meaning. What does it mean if you can do this? What does it mean to be from a certain tribe with the ability to do this, and is this folklore? Tell me as many tidbits as you know, I am very interested.

Dear Heiko Evermann, Rachel and all you Trekkies out there,

Yes, Leonard Nemo is Jewish, and his "Vulcanic" hand-gestures originate from the Torah.

The Torah commands the *kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon, to bless the Jewish people. They are to stand in front of the congregation, raise their hands to shoulder level and pronounce the "priestly blessings" found in the Book of Numbers (6:22): "May G-d bless you and keep you...."

This commandment has been performed by *kohanim* in synagogues until this very day. The prevalent custom today is that the hands are held together palms-down, and the fingers are split such that there are 5 spaces: One space between the thumbs, a space between the thumb and first finger of each hand, and a space between the second and third finger of

each hand. The 5 spaces are an allusion to the verse in Song of Songs 2:8 which states that Hashem "peeks through the cracks in the wall." In other words, Hashem protects and watches the Jewish people even when He is hidden.

As mentioned, a *kohen* is someone descended from Aharon (Moses's brother) and therefore from the tribe of Levi. Even if a Kohen can't split his fingers in the proper manner, he can still give the priestly blessing. The ability to split your fingers in the proper manner is absolutely no indication that you are from the priestly tribe.

By the way, "Captain Kirk" (William Shatner) is also Jewish. (My wife went to the same camp as his daughter.) The phrase "Set your phasers to stun," however, is found nowhere in the Talmud.

Sources:

- Va'ani Avarachaim by Rabbi Yossee Pack, Ch. 32
- Mishnah Berurah 128:45

FISH SOUP

Jacqueline Spiegel

<jackie@petlab.mssm.edu> wrote:

I have read (and I am afraid I cannot give sources, sorry) that: The fish were saved from being destroyed by the flood. The flood water was scalding hot. I was just wondering how this contradictory information is resolved. Thanks so much.

Dear Jacqueline Spiegel,

Good question! In fact, the Ramban wrote about this around 800 years ago. He gives two possible answers:

- The scalding water was in streams (like the Gulf Stream) above the continents only.

- Even if the boiling water was in the oceans, it would rise to the top (because heat rises) and the fish could escape to the depths for the 40 days.

This second answer does not explain how sea mammals — such as whales and dolphins who come to the surface to breathe — were saved.

Sources:

- Ramban, Bereishis 7:23

HU FLUNG CHOW

Norman N. Seif

<NUSSEIF@prodigy.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Can a restaurant that is vegetarian and uses all kosher ingredients, and were to undergo an halachic kashering process, and were to permit regular

rabbinic supervision, ever achieve kosher status if it were to stay open on Shabbat? We are speaking of a non-Jewish (Chinese) establishment that caters to strict vegetarians (they do not even carry fish or cheeses).

Dear Norman,

Although special halachic considerations would make it difficult, a restaurant like the one you describe could theoretically become certified as kosher. In practice, it depends on the policy of the kosher supervisory council. I asked the Orthodox Union (OU) — one of the major kosher supervisors in the United States — if they would ever supervise such a restaurant. They said that their policy is not to give kashrut certification to any establishment that is open on Shabbat.

THE PRIME OF LAVAN

Nison Shleifer, Atlanta, Georgia

<nshleifer@pol.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

A group of us are studying Chumash with the commentaries of the Me'am Loez and Rashi. We are studying the weekly portion "Chayei Sarah" and are impressed with Lavan. It is obvious that Rivka is a very advanced three year-old, but how old is Lavan? He is already attracted to money and some of the commentaries point out that when he went to greet Eliezer, he did so with the intention of killing him and stealing his wealth. Our impression is that he is older than Rivka, but he is still young enough to be around the house and not out in the field working. Can you shed any light on his age? Thank you.

Dear Nison,

Lavan was forty years old.

Lavan's mother Milka was at first unable to conceive. At the same time Sarah conceived Yitzchak, all barren women including Milka were granted conception as well. Therefore, Yitzchak and Lavan were the same age.

We know that at the time of the *akeida*, Yitzchak was thirty seven. At that time, Rivka was born. Three years later, when Eliezer came to Nachor to search for a wife for Yitzchak, both Yitzchak and Lavan were forty years old.

The verse says that Eliezer came to the well at evening time, which would explain why Lavan wasn't in the field.

Sources:

- Midrash HaGadol, Bereishis 22:20
- Seder Olam Rabba I
- Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 31

New Feature!

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ask-the-Rabbi" features.

INVITING DRIVERS FOR SHABBAT

I asked a Rav about inviting people for Shabbos who are going to drive, and he said as follows: If the person lives within possible walking distance — even five or seven miles — there’s no restriction on inviting them. (I once invited my next-door neighbor for a Shabbos meal, and he drove to my house. It was snowing...) If they live too far to walk then it depends: On Friday night you must invite them to come before sunset and offer them a place to spend the night, even if you don’t have a guest room. (I asked the Rav how this is possible and he said “Wouldn’t you give up your bed to a person who suddenly decided to observe Shabbos?”) On Shabbos morning the Rav said it’s not permitted to invite someone who lives too far to walk.

• Laizer Gurkov <lgurkov@juno.com>

FINS ON THE SCALE

With regard to “Fins on the Scale” in Ohrnet Parshat Lech Lecha: I happen to have seen that the rabbis discuss a fish from the Spanish region called “sti(n)cus marinus” which has scales and not fins. They discuss how this fits with the *mishnah* that says “Any fish which has scales has fins,” and whether it is actually kosher. Some Rabbis say that it must have fins at some point in its life, which it sheds, and it is therefore in accordance with the *Mishna*, and is also kosher (*Pri Megadim* Y.D. 83:3). Others hold that it is an exception to the rule which is intended to be a practical rule based on a 99.9 percent accuracy, and therefore it is not kosher (*Kreiti U’fleiti* of Rabbi Yonasan Eibeshitz 83.3 and *Knesset Yechezkel* of Rabbi Y. Katzenellenbogen). How this latter opinion fits with the Talmud which states that there is no practical application for the fin requirement is discussed by *Haktav VeHakabala* (R Y. Mecklenberg, *Vayikra* 11:9.) I wonder what we know about this fish today?

• Dovid Solomon <solomons@mail.netvision.net.il>

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Baruch Sterman <baruch@netmedia.net.il> wrote us with the following riddle:

A Chassidic Rebbe at eight years old, was asked the following riddle: “What verse in the Torah has the first three words the same as the last three words?” He replied, “The verse where Moses did not say *emet* (the truth).” What did he mean?

Answer next week...

continued from page three

BONUS ANSWER!

Since Shechem’s behavior towards Dina was such a disgrace, the brothers felt it was beneath Yaakov’s dignity even to speak to him. Therefore, they were actually showing honor to Yaakov by speaking in his place, saving him the humiliation of negotiating with such a low character.

• Ramban

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

	RAMBAN		SFORNO
32:4	Yaakov’s Error	32:19	Strategy of the Gifts
32:9	Sign for the Future	32:25	The Wrestling Match
32:26	The <i>Gid Hanashe</i>	32:26	Yaakov’s Injury
33:14	The Journey to Seir	32:33	The <i>Gid Hanashe</i>
34:12	Dina	33:4	Surviving Esav
35:8	Rivka’s Death	34:27	The Guilt of Shechem
35:16	Rachel’s Tomb	35:10	The Meaning of Yaakov’s Name
	SEFER HACHINUCH	35:23	The Power of Repentance
3	The <i>Gid Hanashe</i>		

This issue is dedicated by
SARAH POLAK
in memory of her grand-parents MENASHE AND SARAH RIVKA SALENGER,
her uncles, AVRAHAM, SHLOMO, YA’ACOV, YEchezkal AND CHAIM SALENGER
and her aunts, CHANA LEAH NORMAN, ESTER RING, RACHEL, CHAYKA AND ETHEL SALENGER. וְיָ
.ו.ב.ז.ז.ו.