

Issues and Comments

The Book of *Bereishit* (Genesis)

[Introduction](#) [Bereishit](#) [Noach](#) [Lech Lecha](#) [Vayeira](#) [Chayei Sarah](#) [Toldot](#) [Vayeitzei](#) [Vayishlach](#)
[Vayeishev](#) [Mikeitz](#) [Vayigash](#) [Vayechi](#) [Haftarot](#)

Note: all quotations and comments refer to the interpolated translation unless otherwise indicated. All comments are by Moshe Wisnefsky unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

Title: *Bereishit*

Some people questioned the advisability of ending this word with a 't' at the end, because of its negative connotation in secular society. So, we looked at a number of Kehos books (e.g., R' Schochet's translations of Likutei Sichot) and found that the use of "Bereishit" was not uncommon. Personally, I thought the whole question was a bit silly, reminded me of being in fourth grade. Here in Israel, sometimes when their teaching kids the 12 pesukim, they change the last word of the one that ends "batachtonim," because in Modern Hebrew "tachtonim" [also] means "underwear." But this is for 7-8 year-olds.

Hebrew: Double *parashiot*

In most Chumashim, the formula is שני כשהם מחוברין. However, in the *Shai LaMora* edition, the formula is שני במחברין. The Hebrew text file we used came using the second version, so that's what we stuck with.

CONCEPTS: The following are some of the specific issues where science and Torah are commonly considered to contradict each other.

I have not included spontaneous generation, because (1) the issue is not raised in the written Torah, and (2) it would have unnecessarily made us look totally wacko.

CONCEPTS: ARCHEOLOGY: In most cases, it is the lack of archeological attestation of particular event or period that is purported to refute the Torah's account.

I have not used the לא ראינו אינו ראיה argument here because we use the argument of לא ראינו against the missing links in the fossil record.

Bereishit

OVERVIEW, INNER DIMENSIONS: There are some desires for which no logical reason can be given.

Unusable quote: "The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of." Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), *Pensees*.

[Before 1:1] The creation account establishes God, the creator, as the true "owner" of the entire world. This sovereignty would allow Him, when the time would come, to expropriate the future Jewish homeland from the people whom He had allowed to settle there in the meantime.

The Rebbe says: It would appear that the non-Jewish nations shouldn't be able to claim that the Jews are robbers, because nations conquer and re-conquer territories from other nations constantly and this is not considered robbery since the conquering nation does not change anything intrinsic in the territory they conquer, the proof being that another nation can come along tomorrow and conquer it again from *them*. But what, then, happens when something *is* robbed from someone? A second robber can always come and rob the robbed article from the first, no? Thus, the difference between robbery and conquest is simply that, as the Alter Rebbe says in *Hilchot Lulav* §649, conquest confers complete ownership of the conquered territory to the conqueror, whereas robbery (at least as long as the owners haven't given up) does not, and if caught, the robber must return the robbed object to its rightful owner. But why should there be this difference? Isn't conquest just robbery on a grander scale? The answer to that, the Alter Rebbe says, is that the sages learned this out from *midrash*. Thus, really, conquest and robbery are the same thing, but there's a special *limud* that makes acquisition by conquest permanent while acquisition by robbery isn't. So, now that we have that distinction, we can say that the non-Jews apparently cannot justifiably accuse the Jews of robbing the Land of Israel. So, why does God need to have an excuse for taking it from them and giving it to us? Because there is another aspect about conquest: a normal conquest does not change the essence of the conquered territory, only its ownership – as evidenced by the fact that a third nation can come along tomorrow and conquer it from the second. In contrast, the Jewish people's conquest of the Land of Israel *does* forever alter the essence of the land, making it irrevocably theirs, such that even if it is conquered and they are exiled from it, this is only a *temporary* aberration. This being the case, the non-Jewish nations can indeed accuse the Jews of being robbers, since by conquering the land they render it intrinsically *unconquerable* by any other nation henceforth for all time. Seeing how complicated all this is, and how abstruse some of the links in the logic, I elected to omit it.

Inside this are the spheres designated for the five planets visible to the naked eye (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury).

Are the other planets (Uranus, Neptune, Pluto [Oops, sorry, Pluto's not a planet anymore]) fixed in the sphere of the stars? What about comets, asteroids, etc.?

All elements of creation are conscious, both as collective "species" and as individual entities. They also possess a certain degree of free choice.

If so, what is the preeminence of mankind? I.e., what is the quantitative or qualitative difference between man's free choice and that possessed by every other creature that defines man as being a *ba'al bechirah* and them not? Furthermore, God consulted with the angels before creating man because they, too have some free choice and it was therefore proper for Him to consult with them before creating other creatures with free choice. But He did not consult with the rest of creation, so this indicates that there is also a quantum difference between the rest of creation's free choice and that of the angels. What is it? See 2:7, below.

RYG says in his lecture on Evolution that there are sources that say that sub-human species only possessed free choice until then next higher level of creation was created. That would mean that the moon lost its free choice when vegetation appeared, and vegetation lost its free choice when humanity appeared. That would solve the whole problem nicely, but the question is if this is Rashi's opinion.

They also possess a certain degree of free choice.

On the other hand, only man and (in the beginning) the snake could talk, so maybe that's the distinction we're looking for. But on the other hand, the creatures can articulate their thoughts in some way (for we see that the water complained to God, the moon complained, etc.). So, if they can think and communicate, what is their inferiority to man? In other words, what exactly is so special about audible speech above and beyond thought-communication (telepathy)?

1:8 Heaven.

In LS 34, pp. 170-171, the Rebbe says that the basic *peshat* of שמים is the spiritual heaven, and that whenever the term is used it must be interpreted according to the context, having either the literal meaning or simply that of “high up” or “the sky.” As examples of it meaning “sky” he cites Genesis 1:20, 26, 28, 30, etc. He does not, of course, analyze every appearance of the word שמים in the Chumash, but in this source and in *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 5, pp. 3029-3032, 3035-3037, and in *Hitva'aduyot* 5746, vol. 1, pp. 460-464 (which are cited in a footnote in that passage of LS), he gives the following examples of this principle:

Deuteronomy 1:28	ובצורות בשמים (רש"י לשון הבאי)	in the sky
Numbers 13:30	עלה נעלה לה (רש"י: סולמות)	[fly up to] the sky
Deuteronomy 11:11	למטר השמים תשטה מים	clouds, sky
Genesis 1:20, 26, 28, 30	עוף השמים	of the sky
Genesis 11:4	וראשו בשמים	very tall, above the clouds, to control the rain (<i>Hitva'aduyot</i> 5746, vol. 1, pp. 463-464)
Deuteronomy 4:32	רש"י: קומתו של אדה"ר עד לשמים	very tall
Numbers 13:33	רש"י: מעניקים את החמה בקומתן	just appears as if (not really)
Exodus 20:19	מן השמים דברתי עמכם	from the mountaintop (but see LS cited on this verse)

But here, the *peshat* is that G-d calls the רקיע – which I've translated as “sky” – שמים, which, according to Rashi, means אש ומים, שם מים, שא מים, all of which are decidedly physical descriptions of the sky or atmosphere. So it's hard to make a case for שמים meaning “spiritual heaven” here, in which case it is somewhat odd that in the verse “defining” the term, it is defined according to its connotative rather than denotative meaning.

As to what אש ומים means, I always assumed it means lightning in rain clouds, but the Rebbe (*Hitva'aduyot* 5746, vol. 1, pp. 457-460) says it means בארבוניא, i.e., now water, now fire, now water, now fire (or: here water, there fire, here water, there fire), in no organized fashion. I'm not quite sure what this is supposed to mean, so I left it as referring to thunder. וה' הטוב יכפר.

Just for fun, although the Rebbe says the Talmud's statement (*Chagigah* 13a) that “from the earth to the sky (רקיע) is a journey of 500 years” is not meant to be taken literally, this is how it would work out if it were, based on Rashi's statement (on Numbers 13:25, as quoted by the Rebbe) that an average man walks 10 *parsah* a day:

$$365 \text{ days/year} \times 500 \text{ years} = 182,500 \text{ days.}$$

$$182,500 \text{ days} \times 10 \text{ parsah/day} = 1,825,000 \text{ parsah.}$$

$$1.825 \times 10^6 \text{ parsah} \times 8 \times 10^3 \text{ cubits/parsah} = 1.46 \times 10^{10} \text{ cubits.}$$

$$1.46 \times 10^{10} \text{ cubits} \times 4.8 \times 10^{-1} \text{ meters/cubit} = 7.008 \times 10^5 \text{ m} = 7,008,000 \text{ km or } 4,354,600 \text{ miles.}$$

1:12 Although the trees' intentions were honorable, the ground was later punished....

Why was the *ground* punished for the *trees'* disobedience?

1:8 נ: “now” or “please”?

See Shai LaMora on 19:2 etc. etc. Rashi on 12:11, almost explicitly says it means “now.”

1:14 Let there be luminaries in the heavenly sky to separate between day and night.

If they were originally equal in size, there wouldn't have been any difference between day and night, unless we can assume that the original plan was to have them both shining during the day and only the stars shining at night (this seems to work, since God assigned the moon to the night only once it was smaller, v. 16). But if they were both the same size and were both to shine during the day, wouldn't that have made things twice as hot on earth (unless they were both half the size of the present sun and God made the sun bigger the same time He made the moon smaller)?

1:16 In the messianic future, the light of the moon will again be as great as the light of the sun.

But doesn't Rashi hold that the primeval light will be restored in the messianic future? What need will there be then of sunlight and moonlight, even restored moonlight? For that matter, if the primeval light was shining during the creation week, what was the original sunlight and moonlight all about? Were they like "a candle by day" until the second week?

1:21 He immediately killed the female and preserved her flesh for the redemption feast....

What happened to the male? Did it die sometime? When?

1:21 God created every particular species of living being that swarms....

I translate here *remes* as "swarm" – because here only marine life is implied, and later as "crawled" – because there land life is implied.

1:25 He did not bless the beasts to be fruitful and prolific.

But they seem to have been fruitful and prolific anyway, no? What would animal life be like if God *had* blessed them?

1:26 Let us make a human in our image.

I will be translating *Adam* as "human" or "human being" as long as he is both male and female, i.e., until Eve is separated from him. Specifically, whenever the Hebrew has the definite article in front of it, even after *Adam* has a name, I will translate it as "the human." Only when *Adam* is without the definite article will I consider it a proper name, *Adam*.

1:30 He also prepared Moses' grave.

Why did this have to be created at twilight? What was there about Moses' grave that transcended nature? The fact that if you were on the mountain it looked like it was in the valley and vice versa (*Sotah* 14a)? This is not brought in Rashi; Rashi only says "to atone for the incident of Peor."

2:5 After having created the beasts and livestock on the sixth day....

The Talmud and Midrashim detail (with significant variations) the hourly events of the sixth day. The Rebbe, however (*Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 1, p. 452; *Sefer HaSichot* 5749, vol. 1, pp. 23-24), holds that Rashi does not follow this description, since it violates *peshuto shel mikra* on several counts.

2:5 So that human bodies would decompose and revert to earth when they died, no matter where they would be buried.

Animals' bodies also decompose no matter where they are buried. ?

2:5 He used earth from the future site of the altar of the holy Temple in Jerusalem.

But the Rebbe says that according to *peshuto shel Mikra* (and such can be inferred in Rashi, too) Adam was not actually created at the site of the Altar (*Sefer HaSichot* 5749, vol. 1, p. 357, note 25).

2:7 Using this mist, **God then formed the human....**

Rashi says here that the extra *yud* in *vayitzer* indicates that God will again form the body at the resurrection. Does this mean that God formed the body *now* with the capability to be resurrected? If so, wasn't man originally intended to live forever? Did God put the ability to be resurrected in man's body "just in case?" Or, perhaps the Torah just alludes to the fact that God will resurrect the body in the future and does not imply that God "programmed" this into the body *ab initio*.

2:7 But also possessing the faculties of understanding and speech.

Animals also understand; how would Rashi define the difference between human and animal intellect?

2:10 A river issued from somewhere in Eden.

I had to add "somewhere in" in order to jibe with Rashi's assertion that *b'Eden mikedem* means "in the east part of Eden." Without them, it sounds like the river left Eden and then watered the garden.

2:18 It is not good that the human be alone, without a helpmate, for this gives the impression that he is a self-sufficient deity, since I, too, have no mate.

Angels have mates? If not, why would the fact that God has no mate make it look like someone without a mate is a deity?

2:18 If he is deserving, she will help him do good; if not, she will oppose his will.

The Biale Rebbe has a wonderful *peshat* here: if he merits, that is, if he's into doing the right thing, she helps him; but if he's into doing the wrong thing, she will oppose him, because she's by nature into doing the right thing and she will oppose his will to do the wrong thing, trying (consciously or unconsciously) to put him back on track. Is there a Chabad source for this?

2:19 In order to make him realize that his unitary state was unnatural.

It is slightly implied by the Rebbe's comment in vol. 5, p. 20, note 32 that God had arranged for Adam to already feel the need for a helpmate before he started naming the creatures, and that the process of naming them was his search for a helpmate. This would imply, however, that God had already made Adam into half a person *before* he started naming the animals, which goes against the straightforward reading of the text (unless we differentiate between the removal of the "feminine consciousness" from Adam and the physical removal of the female part of his body, which occurred after he went to sleep – but this is farfetched).

Therefore, we must say that Adam's imperfection was driven home to him only *after* the naming process and after he was put to sleep and awoke to find Eve. He sought a mate only because he noticed that the animals had mates, not because he felt any intrinsic lacking in himself yet. God showed him how "happy" the other heterosexual animals were, making him want to be like them *even though this would mean forfeiting his self-sufficiency* as a bisexual creature.

2:20 And examined them.

This is how I am translating Rashi's comment that Adam "had relations" with all the animals, because (1) if we are to understand that Rashi indeed means this literally, "examines" can carry that meaning, and (2) if not, then it can just mean "look at," "consider," etc.

If Rashi does mean it literally, that Adam tried to have relations with the giraffe, the bison, the mouse, the iguana, the hippo, etc., (1) how was this possible in so short a time – even if we assume Adam was super-virile? (2) how was this physically possible with regard to creatures that are not anatomically similar to man, e.g., ants, birds, squirrels, etc.?

2:23 Thus Adam completed the process of naming all creatures.

When Adam calls Eve “Eve,” later, is this considered a continuation of the naming affair? Had there been no sin, would Adam have named her this?

2:25 Eve gave birth to twins....

There are Midrashic sources (*Bereishit Rabbah*) that Eve also gave birth to Abel and his two sisters on the first Friday, but we are not forced to say this according to the Rebbe’s understanding of *pehuto shel mikra*. According to Rashi, we just know that Adam separated from Eve because of the sin, and the Rebbe holds that the sin could have happened quite a while after the first creation week.

So we may therefore assume that Eve became pregnant and gave birth to her first brood on the first Friday (and this is additionally borne out by the fact that Adam & Eve’s marital relations are mentioned *before* Rashi explains why the Torah makes a diversion from the events of the first Friday in order to discuss the sin of the Tree of Knowledge), and then conceived again some time after the first creation week and gave birth another time, presumably also on the same day she conceived, since the curse of pregnancy hadn’t been given yet. (?) Thus, the five kids were born as babies and grew up at a normal pace. Sometime after the five kids were born (or maybe just the first two and Eve was only pregnant with the second brood), the serpent did his thing and got them to eat the fruit, and then God expelled them from the Garden of Eden. Once they were expelled, Adam separated from Eve, as Rashi says on 4:1, and they had no more kids for 130 years.

For interest’s sake, I will discuss now how things would work out if we were to adopt the Talmudic/Midrashic view that the births took place on the first Friday:

In *Sanhedrin* 38b, it says, “...two ascended the bed and four descended from it.” This can be understood to mean either (a) Cain and Abel, but no sisters were born with them (this is how Mizrahi understands it), (b) Cain and his sister, but Abel was born later (this is how Tosefos understands it), or (c) Cain and Abel, but the daughters are included, sort of being self-understood that the twin sisters were secondary to the boys (my bochsvora). The second opinion goes along, apparently, with a Midrash I saw quoted in a few places that Adam waited two weeks after Cain’s birth to copulate again with Eve.

But Rashi holds explicitly that (a) Adam separated from Eve after the sin, so Cain and Abel *both* had to be born before the sin, and (b) twin sisters were born with both boys. So, his opinion cannot jibe with this passage from *Sanhedrin* (unless you understand according to my bochsvora); he follows the Midrash (*Bereishit Rabbah* 22:1) where the quote goes “...two ascended the bed and *seven* descended it.”

3:1 He also possessed the means to express his cunningness.

The snake was like this from its creation (LS 10, p. 13). If so, why is man singled out as being capable of speech (*nefesh chayah = deah v’dibur* according to Rashi) if the snake already had it?

3:3 In fact, God had not forbidden them to *touch* the fruit, but Eve thought....

There is no mention in Rashi about Adam having added a “rabbinic” prohibition to the command and not having told Eve about the difference.

3:5 God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened to your own potential.

This “opening of the eyes” cannot mean “knowing good and evil subjectively,” since that is mentioned separately, both in this verse (the snake’s beguiling) and the next one (Eve’s

succumbing). UNLESS we assume that in both case, the phrases are to be read, “your eyes will be opened, i.e., you will know good and evil subjectively.” In the *following* verse (7) Rashi defines “their eyes were opened” to mean that they realized they had transgressed the one commandment God gave them, but its hard to apply that meaning to vv. 5 & 6 (“Eat the fruit, ‘cause if you do, you’ll realize that you’ve transgressed your commandment.” And Eve saw that, indeed, she’d realize this if she ate the fruit, so she ate it). BUT if we interpret this Chassidically, to mean that they will descend from full God-consciousness to self-awareness, it could mean that the snake said, “Eat this and you’ll be an independent being (this actually goes well with his ploy, ‘you’ll create your own worlds’)” and Eve saw that this would happen and liked the idea. And so she ate it, and indeed, she moved down to this type of consciousness, etc. etc.

3:5 You will thus be like God and be able to create worlds, just as He did.

Did the snake mean this literally? After all, as the Alter Rebbe points out, everything else he said was true, so we must presume this is true, too. I understood this, therefore, to mean “create *personalized versions* of the world,” something akin to the subjective knowledge of good and evil I’ve been bantering about. Mrs. Zornberg brings sources that this means this, too.

3:6 ...and she didn’t want to die and leave Adam alive to marry someone else.

Either another wife God would create, or his daughter, or eventually his granddaughter.

3:6 She also fed the fruit to the animals....

why? what was she thinking?

3:6 ...but it did not have any effect on them.

right?

3:8 Attempting to quickly cover their remaining nakedness....

This is a “fringe benefit” from the Rebbe’s explanation that they would have clothed themselves further had they had the opportunity to do so. It helps us answer the question of whether Adam and Eve thought they could “hide” from God in the trees.

3:17 It will produce flies, fleas, and ants....

These did not exist beforehand? They’re not included in 1:24-25, above? Maybe the idea is that these will result from man’s attempt to farm the land, forcing him to use pesticides (natural, of course, such as ladybugs)?

3:16-17 Sources for Chasidic Insights

I wrote these not from anything specific, but from what I put together in my head from the work I did on *The Mystery of Marriage*, plus *Torah Or*, and the logical implications of this stuff on the verses at hand. The idea of patience is mentioned in *Likutei Torah* regarding the three years of *orlah*. In the meantime, then, I will list that reference plus the general discussion of חטא עץ הדעת in *Torah Or*, and will hopefully find more specific references later.

3:19

The Rebbe says (LS 12, p. 7) that it is probable to assume that Adam offered up a sacrifice at some point, for we see later that Cain and Abel did this, and it is most likely that they learned from their father’s example and instruction. If so, the most likely sacrifice Adam offered up was

something to atone for the sin of the Tree of Knowledge or express his gratitude at only being banished from the garden, and nothing more.

However, I did not insert this here because the Rebbe only says this as a supposition (אם תמצוי (לומר).

3:23 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: ...the soul experiences the pristine Divine consciousness it worked for during its lifetime in the physical world, unencumbered by the spiritual limitations imposed by the self-awareness and self-orientation it acquires upon incarnation into this lower, physical world.

So is the flaming fire of the cherubs the “threat” of communicating with God (a la Tabernacle), which scares off the yeshus of the nefesh habehamis?

4:2 When they matured, the boys married their twin sisters.

There does not seem to be any reason, *al pi peshuto shel mikra*, to assume that Cain and Abel and their sisters matured miraculously quickly. So this whole episode could have been, say, in the year 15 or thereabouts.

4:11 Because it opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood....

What was wrong with this? Should it have refused to absorb the blood? Why? What would have that accomplished?

4:12 It will produce even less for you than before.

This is what “it will no longer give you its strength” means, right?

4:12 I will not allow you to settle in one place.

So says Rashi, but maybe he means that since the land will not give its strength, it will not produce enough to sustain Cain in any one place, and therefore he has to wander like a Bedouin in constant search of new arable land?

4:14 You have banished me from the face of the earth....

What does *this* mean? God did not banish him from the earth, only from staying in one place.

4:14 But can I be hidden from Your presence?!

What did Cain mean by this? How was Cain hidden from God’s presence because of God’s punishment? Is someone who lacks a permanent home somehow thereby prevented from being in God’s presence? Maybe it has something to do with v. 16: “Cain left God’s presence...” but what does *that* mean? If the implication is that some locales are considered “in God’s presence” and others not, what are they? Eretz Yisroel vs. the rest of the world? But were they in Eretz Yisroel then? Or: the rest of the world vs. the land of Nod?

4:14 When I sinned, my Divine image was diminished and the animals no longer fear me.

The source of this is Rashi on v. 15. It seems to be that this what the Alter Rebbe is basing is statement on in Tanya, ch. 24:

וכמ”ש ומוראכם וחתכם יהיה על כל חית הארץ וכפי’ רז”ל אין חיה רעה מושלת באדם אא”כ נדמה לה כבהמה. והצדיקים שאין צלם אלהים מסתלק מעל פניהם כל חיות רעות אתכפיין קמיהו כמ”ש בזהר גבי דניאל בגוב אריות.

Above, the most precise explanation for the nebulous term “Divine image” I could come up with was “standing erect with a hierarchy of powers, mirroring the Divine hierarchy of powers.” So, does that mean that Cain here became a crouched-over sub-human (until God restored the Divine image to him), sort of like Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings* (who also became sub-human after having murdered someone – this is probably where Tolkein got the idea.)? It would seem that this is not the case, since animals do attack fully upright human beings. It therefore follows that the removal of the “Divine image” that Rashi and the Alter Rebbe are referring to is a spiritual thing that animals can somehow sense, just as Balaam’s donkey could see the angel.

See on 4:23, below. that Tuval-Cain thought Cain looked like a beast.

4:16 Instead of wandering the earth as he was commanded to.

Yes? Or maybe he wandered for a while and only then settled in the land of Nod?

4:17 Cain knew his wife, his twin sister....

What happened to Abel’s twin sisters? Did Cain marry them in the end, or Seth, or did they live out their lives as spinsters?

4:23 Counting Cain as the first generation....

The sages (*Avot* 5:2) count “10 generations from Adam to Noah and 10 generations from Noah to Abraham,” even though if they are counted the same way (including the both end generations or not) there is one more generation from Noah to Abraham than there is from Adam to Noah.

1	Adam		Noah
2	Seth	1	Shem
3	Enosh	2	Arpachshad
4	Keinan	3	Selach
5	Mahalalel	4	Ever
6	Yered	5	Peleg
7	Enoch	6	Reu
8	Methuselah	7	Serug
9	Lemech	8	Nachor
10	Noah	9	Terach
		10	Abraham

1	Cain
2	Enoch
3	Irak
4	Mechuyael
5	Metushael
6	Lemech
7	kids

It is thus clear that both ways of counting are legitimate, and either may be used when the situation calls for it. In other words, subjectivity wins over objective consistency here, as it does in many places with the sages.

4:23

Note that Rashi does not mention that Lemech and Tuval Cain were out hunting (as is mentioned in *Midrash Tanchuma*, which is apparently Rashi’s source, and *Me’am Loez*). Hunting (as *Eshel Avraham* points out) was presumably forbidden to humanity before the Flood, since they were not allowed to eat meat. Therefore I didn’t mention hunting either. So why did they kill him? They must have been frightened of him. Why were they frightened of him? Unfortunately, for the

reasons mentioned on v. 14, above, and immediately below, it can't be because he looked like an animal to them. It must have been just stam.

4:23 Tuval Cain mistook Cain for an animal.

Torah uFirushah – Eshel Avraham proposes (as I assumed in the first two printings) that this means that God removed the "Divine image" he had restored to Cain in vv. 14-15, and that therefore Cain became again animal-like. But on v. 15, Rashi differentiates between the sign for humans (a letter on his forehead) and for animals (the Divine image), and as I noted on v. 14, above, the "Divine image" here cannot mean physical stature or appearance and must refer to some spiritual aura that animals can sense but humans cannot.

It therefore seems that the explanation must be that Tuval Cain mistook Cain for an animal because of the distance, which is the reason given in *Rashi Kepeshuto* [without attribution] and in the Stern Chumash [from Mizrachi??].

4:24 Lemech's wives refused to cohabit with him....

Mrs. Zornberg makes a nice point about the wives' foreknowledge of the Flood, that they saw the world partially inundated and assumed, since the morality of the world was getting worse rather than better, that a flood was imminent. The problem with this is that Rashi says the partial inundation occurred in Enosh's time, and at this point, neither Enosh nor his father Seth had been born yet (since they were born only after Lemech complained to Adam, etc.). UNLESS these are two different midrashim that operate on different timelines, but I don't want to get into that if possible.

4:24 Lemech's wives refused to cohabit with him....

Cain's line to Naamah (5 generations) lasted until the flood (1656). Na'amah was presumably born around 1050, which would have made her 600 yrs old, like Noah, at the Flood. If so, the average age of the fathers at the birth of the sons in this line was 200.

In the Seth line, most of the fathers had their first kids before 100, but a few had after 100, so this is not so inconsistent.

HOWEVER, Rashi says that Lemech's wives went to Adam and complained, and that Adam admonished him, and that then Lemech said to Adam, what about you? after which, Adam remarried Eve in the year 130 and had kids again. This means that Lemech was an adult by the year 130. This implies two remarkable things:

First, that all the generations from Cain to Lemech occurred within 130 years. This is not so outlandish, since there are only 5 generations and each could have had an eldest son at age 20. Based on this assumption, Lemech was born around the year 110 and was 20 years old when his wives went to Adam to complain.

But then Lemech's daughter Naamah married Noah. This means that either:

1. Lemech had her c. 150 and she married Noah around 1200 (= 1656 - 450), i.e., at age 1050! after which she had three kids! And lived at least until 1660, dying at age 1510! or
2. She married Noah around 1200, as above, but was born around 1150, which means that Lemech waited to have her until he was 1040 (= 1150 - 110).
3. The middle scenario is that Lemech waited to have her until he was, say 600 years old, in the year c. 710, and thus she was 490 when she married Noah, and 846 when she started having kids, and lived to be at least 950. This is at least within the realm of possibility in the context of early Genesis.

(It's also possible that Naamah was Tzilah's daughter by someone else, maybe from the Seth line, so if Tzilah was also from the Seth line, no trace of Cain's seed survived the flood. But this is a bit farfetched.)

Thanks to R. Yehoshua Fieldsteel for raising this issue.

4:26 Then, during Enosh's lifetime, the name of God was invoked profanely.

Rashi says that *likro beshem Hashem* means idolatry. Rambam's description of how this process occurred seems to just flesh this out and make the whole subject more understandable. After all, when we learn as kids that the ancients bowed down to idols of stone and wood, that makes them look pretty stupid, no? If they can do *that*, then how can they be held responsible for anything they do? So, unless there is some reason to assume otherwise, I would assume that Rashi would concur with Rambam's description of how idolatry came to be, and in fact I would say that it does a lot toward taking the Chumash out of fairy-tale realm and move it more toward a believable book.

6:1 Now when humanity began to increase on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them....

Until now daughters were *not* born to them? Interesting, there is no explicit mention of daughters being before this (with the sole exception of Cain knowing his wife). It almost makes one want to presume that there was some kind of asexual reproduction for a while. The causative הוליד is not used until Terach; before that it's only the simple ילד or יילד, almost implying as if the males had their kids by themselves. Weird!

Barring this weird peshat, it must mean that "[v. 1] and daughters were born to them [v. 2] that did not disguise their beauty," i.e., were immodest??

6:2 They would take brides from their wedding ceremonies....

Here we have the Biblical origin of the custom of *Droit de seigneur*, a.k.a. *ius primae noctis* (also *jus primae noctis*). See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_of_the_first_night, <http://www.petalk.com/humanist/jpn.html>, and <http://www.snopes.com/weddings/customs/droit.asp>, etc.

6:2 They also practiced forbidden extramarital relations:

Did they masturbate? practice coitus interruptus? or were Er and Onan the first that did this?

6:2 the princes and judges.

The Rebbe apparently equates the בני האלקים of this verse (1st peshat: princes and judges) with the נפילים of v. 4 (LS 28, pp. 86-87). Rashi says that the *nefilim* of v. 4 were *anakim*, "giants." So, it would seem that the human, mortal princes were giants. See Excursis "The Giants."

6:2 giants much taller.

If the giants were so huge, how did they engage in intercourse with human girls? I once saw a fantasy TV show in which there was a giant who wanted to seduce a human woman; he had to shrink himself to human size to woo her and consort with her. Presumably their offspring would have developed in the lady's womb and been born regular size but would then have either grown to a giant or be born with the ability to shift back and forth between giant size and human size like his father. Is this what was going on then?

6:2 Shamchazai and Azael.

According to the Rebbe, who says (according to Rashi) that the descendants of Shamchazai and Azael survived the flood, it would appear that we cannot say that it is *their* behavior that inspired God to bring the flood – for the flood did not accomplish anything regarding them. (Did it keep them in check somehow? Were they afraid to do anything wrong after the flood? After all, we don't hear about them again until the time of the spies, and never again after that, right?)

6:3 בשגם הוא בשר

The chumashim and Bibles differ as to whether the gimel in **בשגם** should be vocalized with a *kamatz* or a *patach*. In general, the older prints (Soncino, Neter, *Living Torah*) seem to use a *kamatz* and the newer ones a *patach*. Among the newer ones that use the *patach* are all those based on manuscripts (such as R' Breuer's, Koren, JPS, etc.), as well as *Shai laMora*, *Chumash Rashi HaMevoar [Oz veHadar]*, *Zeicher Chanoch [Wagshal]* and Margolin (Feldheim). Artscroll and Gutnick use the *kamatz*.

I asked R' Dovid Lyons of Ashdod (formerly of London, a Lubavitcher who, under the Rebbe's guidance, earned his PhD from the University of London in Mesorah). Here is his response, which I received as a message on my answering machine and transcribed:

Beshagam with a patach is the correct nusach, in the Koren, in Rav Breuer, in the Tikunim, in all good prints of the chumash. I know of the kometz from certain seforim even sixty years ago, and even though maybe in the shuls in London some people would read that, but it's a late error; it hasn't even got the status of an alternative from the time of the early kisvey yados, as far as I understand. How it got in there I don't know. But the correct reading is beshagam hu bosor. I hope that helps you.

Later on that day, I received the following email from him:

I answered you earlier, on the telephone voicemail. But amazingly and providentially I learnt just today a Gemore in Chullin Daf 139b - in which this Posuk is cited.! And in the Schottenstein edition they menacked **בשגם** with kometz! But in fact this is *incorrect*. ותו לא מידי.

In summary: The Tiberian Masoretic vocalized texts, which are authoritative - vowelized the Gimel with Patach.

And when I reported to him the results of my informal survey of the Chumashim in my library, he replied:

Your research proves an interesting fact:: the tendency now in printing Chumash [and Tenach] by those who have an inkling of what is meant by 'Tiberian' [or 'authoritative'] Masora-tradition is to *restore* precise vowelizations etc. By contrast, We must also be wary of ח"ץ "Letteris" [in Great Britain, they used it a lot, בר מינן]. Kol Tuv, Dovid

I also asked R' Shmuel Rabin, who edited the Hebrew texts for our Chumash. Here is his reply:

Shalom R Moshe,

What I generally did for the Chumash we worked on was to follow the majority of 3 sources - Breuer edition, Koren and Torah Temimah. The first two of these have beshagam with patach, so that's what I followed and that's my actual practice.

Torah Temimah however has a kamatz. This is also the case in Mikraos Gedolos Venice 1524 ("Second Rabbinic Bible", edited by Yaakov ben Chaim, on which "nusach hamekubal" is based) and Minchas Shai doesn't comment, which may perhaps imply that he agrees with it.

I would still go with the patach however, especially since "gam" usually has a patach and you would expect some grammarian somewhere to note that this word is an exception would it have a kamatz.

KT

Shmuel

6:7 Instead of destroying humanity altogether...

Normally, we say that when the immorality that characterized the antediluvian world is going on, the result is אנדרליומוסיא, and the righteous get wiped out together with the wicked. Thus, Noah's righteousness itself would not have been cause enough for God to devise a way to save him. The Rebbe (LS 15, pp. 28-32) makes no mention of Noah's righteousness as being a cause for God changing His *thought* of wiping out all humanity into His *decree* to only dissolve those in water; the sole justification for this change in attitude is because אשר עשיתים. Thus, the only reason Noah was saved is because God had to save *somebody* and Noah was just the best candidate.

For the animals, too, we have no indication that there were any "righteous" animals who did not cross-breed, so the only reason the particular ones that were saved were chosen was evidently just because God had to choose *some* representatives.

Noach

OVERVIEW: Nor was He admitting that by flooding the earth, He had made some kind of blunder that He would never again repeat.

In the non-frum discussions of the Torah, this is a favorite perception.

6:13 As deep as can be reached by a plow.

Page: 14

Noah was the one who invented the plow for them, and they were so corrupt that they used this technology (aimed at rectifying the sin of Adam!) for evil.

6:16 I want it to be especially well-lit.

The Rebbe does not here explain *why* God wanted the ark to be especially well-lit.

6:19 The demons.

There are male and female demons? Are there specific “species” of demons, of which Noah had to bring 2 each? And finally, had Noah not brought them into the ark, would they have perished in the flood?! What’s going on here?

7:1 It is not appropriate to enumerate all a person’s merits when addressing him directly.

Why not? So he won’t get a swell head? Then maybe we shouldn’t praise him at all to his face.

7:2 You shall take for yourself seven pairs....

Artscroll quotes *Levush Orah* that the sense here is that Noah offered sacrifices from *all* the pure species, even those (e.g., deer) that are normally not permitted to be offered up as sacrifices, because he inferred from God’s command to bring in seven of these species, too, that that’s what He meant.

7:4 For in another seven days....

Without Rashi, we would have thought that God was telling Noah to gather the animals seven days before the Flood began in order to give him time to do this. Does Rashi’s explanation imply that God would have otherwise told Noah to gather the animals on the same day the Flood began (since gathering all the animals was a miraculous procedure in any case, why not collapse it all into one day), or does it simply imply that were it not for Methuselah’s death causing the delay of 7 days, God would have told Noah to gather the animals 7 days before the “on-time” onset of the Flood?

7:5 Noah did all that God commanded him.

Rashi says this means that he entered the ark. However, on v. 7, Rashi says that Noah did not enter the ark when God told him, but waited until the last possible minute.

Rashi HaMevoar – Shirat haBe’er quotes *Devek Tov*, *Gur Aryeh*, and (maybe) Ibn Ezra, and Artscroll quotes *Ho’il Moshe*, to the effect that Rashi’s *ביאתו לתבה* is different from v. 1’s *בא אל התבה* and v. 7’s *ויבא אל התבה* in that the latter two mean entering the ark while the former means going up to the ark but not entering it. I find this difficult to accept, because how then did Noah “do what God commanded him”? Where do we find that God told him to only come up to the ark and not enter it? What purpose would such a command serve?

Rashi HaMevoar – Shirat haBe'er then quotes Mizrachi to the effect that both this verse (5) and v. 7 refer to the same act – Noah's entry into the ark – but describe different aspects of it. This verse lauds him for obeying God's command, while v. 7 tells us that, nonetheless, he did it half-heartedly and tarried until the last minute, etc. Since this seems to make more sense, I've chosen to follow it.

So, I had to explain what "Noah did all that God commanded him" means, and according to Rashi (according to Mizrachi), it means that he actually went into the ark. But since Rashi says later that Noah didn't just waltz into the ark but hesitated, etc., I have to say that here, splitting up Rashi's comment on v. 7 into two parts: the fact that he hesitated is placed here, when Noah's entry into the ark is first mentioned, and the fact that he actually entered when it started raining (*Defus Rishon* of Rashi says: "when the water reached his ankles") on v. 7, when his entry into the ark actually occurred.

7:8 In contrast...

I.e., in contrast to Noah's hesitation, waiting for the last minute, the animals went straight into the ark, following God's orders without hesitation. Since Rashi only tells us that Noah hesitated, we must assume that the animals did not hesitate (why would they?). Unless we construe that they waited respectfully for Noah to go in first (but why would they?), we therefore have to assume they went in first. Logically, also, if Noah hesitated until the last minute, how did all the animals stampede into the ark *after* the last minute? It could have happened miraculously, of course, but we don't manufacture miracles unnecessarily.

7:9 in pairs...

שניים שניים could mean "by pairs" (i.e., without any reference to how many of each species actually came) or "two each" (i.e., exactly two and no more or less). Rashi clearly takes it to mean the latter, and then has to qualify it by adding "a minimum of."

7:9 of mourning for Methuselah...

I included these words to prevent the reader from thinking that "After seven days" meant "after seven days once Noah and the animals had boarded the ark," which one could think is *peshat* from reading the verses in sequence.

7:20 Above Mount Ararat, the highest of **them** in the region.

It seems obvious that this must be the *peshat* here, because if Mt. Ararat was not the highest mountain in the region and the water was 15 cubits higher than some other, higher, mountain, how could Rashi's calculation in his comment on 8:4 make any sense?

7:22 The fish, however, remained alive.

Someone asked: What about aquatic mammals such as whales, dolphins? What about seals, walrus, otters, penguins, aquatic turtles, sea turtles, mollusks, and amphibians? Were some of these perhaps brought into the ark? Was there an aquarium in the ark?

There are two opinions in the Midrash (*Bereishit Rabbah* 32:11) why the fish didn't die, even though the floodwaters were boiling hot:

(1) The floodwaters were hot only above the ground, not above bodies of water. Therefore, there was no need to save representatives of their species in the ark.

(2) The floodwaters were hot also above water bodies, except for the ocean (because there was nothing there that needed to be wiped out). Therefore, representatives of the fish were originally intended to be saved in the ark, since all the fish that remained in their natural habitats would

have been wiped out by the floodwaters. But instead, the fish “requested” to flee *en masse* to the ocean, and God agreed to this. Thus, there were no representatives saved in the ark.

According to both opinions, the fish were not supposed to be wiped out (*Zevachim* 113b), because they didn’t sin like the animals did since fish do not copulate (*Bereishit Rabbah* 7:2, *Tosefot, Bava Kama* 55a, *s.v. HaMarbia*). The difference between the two opinions is that the first is more charitable in that there was no intention to wipe them out at all, whereas according to the second opinion most of them would have perished (innocently).

Rashi has no problem either way, since he doesn’t mention the fact that the water was boiling hot, and therefore probably does not believe this to be *peshuto shel mikra*, as the Rebbe points out. The fish simply stayed in the water and survived.

However, in any case, the fish were saved not because they were particularly righteous, but only because their physiology is such that they didn’t participate in the sin of cross-breeding. This perhaps implies that all animals that *could* cross-breed *did*, including aquatic animals that copulate. If this was the case, then the question is how were most of these animals wiped out (since the floodwaters were not boiling) and how were the representatives of each species saved (since they couldn’t survive in a dry ark)? Since there is no indication of how this happened in Rashi, it could be fair to assume that according to Rashi (in contradistinction to the Midrash), *all* aquatic animals did not sin, and therefore did not need to be wiped out or have representatives saved. This, in turn, would imply that these animals *did* display righteousness. There is perhaps some textual support for this position, since the verses say (6:7) אַמְחָה...מֵאָדָם עַד בְּהֵמָה עַד רֶמֶשׂ וְעַד עוֹף (6:7) אִשׁוּר כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמַת רוּחַ חַיִּים בְּאִפְיוֹ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר (7:22) כִּי הִשְׁחִית כָּל בָּשָׂר אֶת דְּרָכָהּ עַל הָאָרֶץ (6:12) הַשָּׁמַיִם, and (7:22) כִּי הִשְׁחִית כָּל בָּשָׂר אֶת דְּרָכָהּ עַל הָאָרֶץ (6:12) הַשָּׁמַיִם, with no mention of aquatic life.

Another question: 6:7 states that merely being superfluous is a reason for killing the animals, so why not fish also?

Answers:

1. This is perhaps one reason why Rashi brings this argument as a secondary one.
2. Since fish and people inhabit different ecospheres, the disproportion between the two populations is not nearly as much an issue as that between animals and humanity would be.

Another question: How did penguins from Antarctica or kangaroos from Australia get to the ark? And how did they return after the flood? Did the flood perhaps alter the world topography, or not cover the entire world?

Answer: The whole thing was miraculous, so what’s the big deal? The Midrash actually says that Noah wondered how he could gather together all these animals, so the angel of each animal brought it to the ark.

7:23 and were greatly pained by their isolation.

Where did I get this from?

7:23 The descendants of the giants Shamchazai and Azael, however, survived the floodwaters, and eventually settled around Hebron.

See excursus, “The Giants”

8:6 ...the water began to recede much faster.

Rashi has stated (see interpolated translation to vv. 3-5) that until this point (i.e., the 1st of Av), the water was receding (i.e., the water level was dropping) at a rate of ¼ cubit/day.

It says in v. 13 that took from the 1st of Av until the 1st of Tishrei, i.e., two months, for the water to recede completely and for the surface of the earth to reappear.

Mt. Ararat “has two peaks: **Greater Ararat** (the highest peak in Turkey with an elevation of 5,137 m/16,854 ft) and **Lesser Ararat** (with an elevation of 3,896 m/12,782 ft)” (Wikipedia). Even if today’s Mt. Ararat is not the “mountains of Ararat” in the Bible, we may safely assume that for something to qualify as a mountain – and it seems clear from the Biblical narrative that the ark alighted on the mountain it alighted upon because it was a *high* mountain – it should be *at least* 3500m tall.

$3500\text{m} \div 0.48\text{m/cubit} = 7291$ cubits.

7291 cubits \div 60 days = 122 cubits/day.

And remember, this is a conservative estimate; the mountain was probably much higher.

8:7 On the next day, the 11th of Elul, he sent out the raven

In all the copies and translations I have of *Seder Olam Rabbah* it says explicitly that Noah sent out the raven on the 10th of Tamuz. *Seder Olam* counts the 40 days Noah waited (Genesis 8:6) before opening the window of the ark from the 1st of Sivan, the day the waters began to recede (Genesis 8:3). Rashi (comment to Genesis 8:6), in contrast, counts the 40 days from the 1st of Av, the day the tops of the mountains were first seen (Genesis 8:5), giving the 10th of Elul for the date of sending out the raven.

Seder Olam’s reasoning seems to be that (1) it wouldn’t make sense for Noah to wait so long before opening the window, and (2) the dove didn’t return on its third try because only then (after the 1st of Av) was there some place for it to land.

Rashi’s reasoning seems to be that (1) the sequence of the verses seems to imply that the sending of the raven [v. 8] followed the appearance of the tops of the mountains [v. 7], (2) the reason the dove didn’t come back the third time was because only then was the earth completely dry, and (3) the sequence of the verses seems to imply that the 7 days of the dove’s third flight [v. 12] flow directly into the earth being completely dry on the 1st of Tishrei [v. 13].

In the first printing of Genesis, I wrote the 11th instead of the 10th of Elul, because I was following the commentary in the *Shai LaMora* (Eshkol) edition of the Chumash & Rashi (on 8:3, note 8), but *Me’am Lo’ez* (on 8:14) uses 10th of Elul etc., apparently from *Yafeh Toar* etc., so I changed it to the 10th of Tishrei.

Shai LaMora evidently feels that Noah waited 40 full days from 1 Av before opening the window and sending out the raven *on the following day*. Furthermore, he counts the three 7-day periods of waiting consistently, i.e., beginning on the day of the previous event, and the next event happening the day after the 7-day count. He adds a 30th day to Elul, thus arriving at the date of 2 Tishrei for the last sending out of the dove. Why he adds a 30th day to Elul is not clear to me.

In contrast, Rashi/Me’am Lo’ez are inconsistent in counting the three 7-day periods: For the first, the count begins on the first day of the event (the day of sending out the raven) and the next event (sending out the dove) coincides with the 7th day of this count. Whereas for the second 7-day period, the count begins on the first day of the event and the next event is on the day *after* the completion of 7 days of counting, i.e., on the 8th day.

In *Seder HaDoros*, the original text does not list the specific dates of the raven and dove at all. In the additions of R. Naftali Maskil l’Eitan, he quotes Rashi’s calculation of the 40 days from 1 Av but disagrees with it, opting for *Seder Olam*’s calculation of the 40 days from 1 Sivan.

Thus, the difference in the order of events according to Rashi vs. *Seder Olam* can be summarized as follows (boldface is used for dates both agree upon):

event	<i>Seder Olam</i>	Rashi	Genesis
waters begin to recede	1 Sivan (4:2)	1 Sivan (8:3)	8:3

event	<i>Seder Olam</i>	Rashi	Genesis
Noah waits 40 days	1 Sivan – 10 Tamuz (4:4)		8:6
Ark rests on Mt. Ararat	17 Sivan (4:3)	8:4	17 Sivan (8:4)
Noah opens window & sends raven	10 Tamuz*		
Noah waits 7 days	(4:4)		
Noah sends dove	17 Tamuz		
Noah waits 7 days	(4:4)		8:10
Noah sends dove 2 nd time	24 Tamuz		
Noah waits 7 days	(4:4)		8:12
Noah sends dove 3 rd time	1 Av		
tops of mountains appear	1 Av (4:4)	8:4, 5	1 Av (8:5)
Noah waits 40 days		1 Av – 10 Elul (8:5, 6)	8:6
Noah opens window & sends raven		10 Elul*	
Noah waits 7 days		8:5, 8	
Noah sends dove		16 Elul	
Noah waits 7 days		8:5	8:10
Noah sends dove 2 nd time		23 Elul	
Noah waits 7 days		8:5	8:12
Noah sends dove 3 rd time		1 Tishrei	
Water gone		8:13	1 Tishrei (8:13)
Land dries out			27 Cheshvan (8:14)

In general:

event	<i>Shai LaMora</i> on Genesis 8:3, note 8	<i>Sefer Maaseh Bereishis</i>	<i>Seder Olam</i>	Rashi	Genesis
rain begins to fall (daytime)	17 Cheshvan (daytime)	17 Cheshvan (daytime)	17 Cheshvan (daytime)		17 Cheshvan (7:11)
rain falls for 40 days & nights				1 st day not counted since incomplete (7:12)	7:4, 12, 17
rainfall ends	28 Kislev (daytime) [fell during the night in order to complete 40 days because 17 Cheshvan lacked its night]	28 Kislev (daytime)	27 Kislev (4:2)	28 Kislev (7:12): Cheshvan (חֶסְוֹן) = 12, Kislev = 28. 27 Kislev (8:3)	
150 days of waters	Kislev = 3, Tevet	Kislev 2.5, Tevet		Kislev = 3,	7:24

surging	= 29, Shevat = 30, Adar = 29, Nisan = 30, Iyar = 29. Total = 150 days.	= 29, Shevat = 30, Adar = 29, Nisan = 30, Iyar = 29, Sivan = 0.5. Total = 150 days.		Tevet = 29, Shevat = 30, Adar = 29, Nisan = 30, Iyar = 29. Total = 150 days (8:3).	
waters begin to recede	1 Sivan		1 Sivan (4:2)	1 Sivan (8:3)	8:3
water receded	1-16 Sivan (0.25 cu/day)				
Ark rests on Mt. Ararat	17 Sivan (at beginning of night)	17 Sivan	17 Sivan (4:3)	8:4	17 Sivan (8:4)
tops of mountains appear	1 Av	1 Av	1 Av (4:4)	8:4, 5	1 Av (8:5)
Noah waits 40 days	1 Av – 10 Elul (= 40 full days)		1 Sivan – 10 Tamuz (4:4)	1 Av – 10 Elul (= 40 full days) (8:5, 6)	8:6
Noah opens window & sends raven	11 Elul	10 Elul	10 Tamuz*	10 Elul*	
Noah waits 7 days	11-17 Elul		(4:4)	8:5, 8	
Noah sends dove	18 Elul	16 Elul	17 Tamuz	16 Elul	
Noah waits 7 days	18-24 Elul		(4:4)	8:5	8:10
Noah sends dove 2 nd time	25 Elul	23 Elul	24 Tamuz	23 Elul	
Noah waits 7 days	25 Elul – 1 Tishrei (Elul = 30 days)		(4:4)	8:5	8:12
Water gone, Noah opens door(?)	1 Tishrei	1 Tishrei		8:13	8:13
Noah sends dove 3 rd time	2 Tishrei	1 Tishrei	1 Av	1 Tishrei	
Land dries out	27 Cheshvan	27 Cheshvan	27 Cheshvan		8:14

*Grey dates: not mentioned explicitly in Seder Olam Rabbah but implied there, and mentioned explicitly in R. Weinstock’s commentary. Blue dates: not mentioned explicitly in Rashi but implied by him, and mentioned explicitly in *Me’am Lo’ez*. (from *Yefeh Toar* ?).

Rashi: did the rainfall end on the 27th of Kislev (8:3) or the 28th (7:12)? *Shai LaMora* (on 8:3, note 7) says that when Rashi says the 27th he means that the 27th was the last full day (night + day) of rain, but that the rain also fell on the night of the 28th. The 28th of Kislev does “double duty” as the last of the 40 days of rain and the 1st of the 150 days of surging. It can do this because Scripture does not say “day and nights” of surging as it did for rainfall, only “days.”

8:7 On the next day, the 10th of Elul, he sent out the raven

If this indeed occurred 40 days after the mountaintops became visible, it would mean that only 10 cubits of mountaintops were dry by then. Why wouldn’t Noah be able to see this himself? (Was it still overcast? In Elul (late summer)? And, why wouldn’t the raven find a mountaintop to dwell on, proving nothing about whether or not the water had receded enough for everyone else? And

why didn't Noah calculate the estimate date of total recession using the 1/4 cubit per day formula? Did he not know the figures, or not assume the rate of abatement would stay constant?

Ditto for sending out the dove a week later. By then, even more mountaintop was revealed. Why didn't the dove find a place to rest its feet? All of this makes better sense if we understand the 40 days Noah waited before opening the window to begin from the 1st of Sivan, when the water starts to abate, as *Seder Olam* does. Then the dove stops coming back only when the mountaintops become visible. But I guess Rashi found it difficult to accept that from this time until 1 Tishrei, i.e., 2 months, Noah was content to just wait.

8:7 He sent out the raven:

On 8:8, Rashi explains וישלח as not meaning שליחות, i.e., "sending on a mission," but לשון שילוח, i.e., "banishing" or "sending away." So, the first question is, why doesn't Rashi say this on this verse (8:7)? *Gur Aryeh* says that it's because in v. 7 it simply says וישלח את הערב and nothing more, whereas in v. 8 it says וישלח את היונה מאתו לראות הקלו המים. Thus, in v. 7, there's no possibility that we would think that Noah sent the raven out on a mission, whereas in v. 8 it sounds like he did send the dove out on a mission, so therefore, in v. 8, Rashi has to tell us that this was *not* a mission. The reason Noah did not send either the raven or the dove on a mission, according to Mizrahi and *Gur Aryeh*, is that one cannot send an animal, who is not a בר דעת, on a mission.

The problem is that Rashi on v. 7 says about the raven, ולא הלך בשליחותו, and that certainly sounds like Noah did indeed send the raven on a mission! As can be seen in the excursus on "send," שלח in *piel* definitely has the sense of "sending on a mission" in some cases (although in more cases it seems to mean "send away" or "send forth").

Also, Rashi's choice of words, אין זה לשון שליחות אלא לשון שילוח, seems to imply that "here, it doesn't mean שליחות, as it did in the previous verse, but 'sending away.'"

So, it just sounds as if Rashi meant us to understand שלח in v. 7 to mean "to send on a mission" and in v. 8 to mean "send away."

What was the mission that Noah sent the raven on? We are not told explicitly, but the context strongly implies that it was to see if it would return or not and thereby enable Noah to determine if the water had subsided or not.

If so, why did Noah only send the raven on a mission, but when it came to the dove, he just sent it away (and did not "send it on a mission")? Does this mean that Noah only "sent away" the dove because he learned from his experience with the raven that "sending on a mission" didn't work?

8:11 Noah then knew that the water had subsided.

The Rebbe asks: maybe the dove got the leaf from a tree situated on another mountaintop, in which case there would be no proof that the water had subsided elsewhere yet? But he doesn't seem to answer this, unless the answer is that since the leaf was fresh it means that enough time had elapsed for the water to subside everywhere, even if the tree from which the leaf was plucked was on a mountaintop.

8:13 In the year 1657...the waters had drained off the earth.

From 1 Menachem Av, when the peak of Mt. Ararat became visible, until 1 Tishrei, when the abatement was complete, 2 months, or 60 days, passed. If the rate of abatement was constant, i.e., 0.25 cubits per day, this means that Mt. Ararat was only 15 cubits high! Present day Mt. Ararat is 5165 meters above sea level, i.e., 10,760 cubits. If the water level went from this height to sea level in 60 days, it means the average rate of abatement during that time was 179 cubits (86 meters) per day. Quite a change from 0.25 cubits per day during the previous 60 days!

8:21 I hereby swear....

The Rebbe asks what affirmation does an oath add to something *God* says. I.e., a human being needs to take an oath to keep him from going back on his word. But since God doesn't do this, what need is there of an oath?

8:22 The seasons:

In *Bava Metzia* 106b and *Bereishit Rabbah* 34:11, the order is as follows (the significance of the third column will be explained presently):

חדשים	ב"מ קו, ב; ב"ר לד, יא	רש"י כת"י ודפוס רומי
חצי תשרי, מרחשון, חצי כסלו	זרע	זרע
חצי כסלו, טבת, חצי שבט	חורף	קור
חצי שבט, אדר, חצי ניסן	קור	חורף
חצי ניסן, אייר, חצי סיון	קציר	קציר
חצי סיון, תמוז, חצי אב	קיץ	קיץ
חצי אב, אלול, חצי תשרי	חום	חום

In the standard texts of Rashi, however, the situation is somewhat confusing:

(כב) עוד כל ימי הארץ וגו' לא ישבתו - ו' עתים הללו שני חדשים לכל אחד ואחד כמו ששינונו חצי תשרי ומרחשון וחצי כסליו זרע. חצי כסליו וטבת וחצי שבט קור וכו' בב"מ (ס"א עוד כל ימי כלומר תמיד כמו עוד טומאתו בו): קור - קשה מחורף: חורף - עת זרע שעורים וקטנית החריפין להתבשל מהר. קור הוא חצי שבט ואדר וחצי ניסן:

The two underlined sentences are contradictory. The second underlined sentence accords with the sources, but the first does not.

Chizkuni, Mizrachi, *Gur Aryeih*, and others therefore emend the last word of the first underlined sentence to חרף. *Rashi Kifushto* accepts this without comment. Artscroll uses the first printing version of Rashi's text (see next paragraph) but notes Mizrachi's emendation in footnotes.

In the first printing and Alkabetz editions of Rashi, the first two words of the second underlined sentence appear instead as והוא (and this is the main version in the *Rashi HaShaleim* edition). This solves the inconsistency, but it reverses the order of קור and חום from that given in our texts of *Bava Metzia* and *Bereishit Rabbah*.

In *Rashi HaShaleim*, it says that the Theodor edition of *Bereishit Rabbah* reports a MS in which חורף and קור are reversed, as is also the case in some MSS and the Rome edition of Rashi (see chart). It then says that *Nachalat Ya'akov*, *Yefei To'ar* (on *Bereishit Rabbah*, but in the Fuerth edition [1692] it's 34:14) say that Rashi had this version of *Bereishit Rabbah* and therefore they leave the text of Rashi here as it is in the Rome edition, and that *Targum Yonatan*, *Midrash Agadah*, and *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* 8 support this reading.

It is also pointed out there that Rashi on *Bava Metzia* 106b states that חורף, the season for sowing barley and pulses, is in Adar. This accords *only* with the second, reversed-version of the order (although the *Maharsha* gets out of this by reinterpreting the word חרפי).

Eshel Avraham reports similarly. (The *Oz veHadar Peirush Rashi HaMevo'ar* cites *Nachalat Ya'akov* saying that Rashi wrote his commentary on the Chumash after his commentary on the Talmud, so it's his *mishnah acharonah*.)

All this being the case, I have opted to follow the versions of Rashi that have והוא instead of קור, and thus reverse the order from that given in our texts of *Bava Metzia* and *Bereishit Rabbah*.

9:1 God blessed Noah and his sons....

The promise not to destroy the world in the preceding two verses was said by God "to Himself," i.e., Noah didn't hear about it. So Noah's concern was still in force. But the Rebbe says that God

did not *command* Noah to procreate until He first promised him that He would not destroy the world again (LS 25, p. 34). Since the command is stated in v. 7, God must have informed Noah about His promise before this.

9:5 ...I will punish you in the afterlife.

From *The Bible Unauthorized*. Grafstein says he heard it from Nechama Leibowitz.

9:5 I will settle the account from the hand of every wild beast that kills one of you, by killing it in turn.

What does this add that is not included in v. 2: the dread of the animals will be upon you?

9:15 ...when *no* part of society is behaving that immorally, it will not be necessary for me to cause a rainbow to appear.

A rainbow can be seen only if the sun, the observer, and the cloud/mist are aligned. So presumably this means that in those generations God makes sure that no one is ever lined up with the sun and any mist or cloud that could make him see a rainbow.

9:25 And I no longer want *you* to tend to me.

It would seem that this must be added, for otherwise, why doesn't Noah just make Ham the slave, or at least say that Canaan must serve all three brothers?

10:5 Each with its language...

See comment on 11:1, below.

10:14 Philistines...

There are two ways of reading this verse: that the Kaftorites were the "brothers" of Philistines — both being the product of the wife-swapping between the Patrusites and the Kasluchites — or that the Kaftorites were the "uncles" of the Philistines, and the phrase *אשר יצאו משם פלישתים* is parenthetical, and the Kaftorites, like the Patrusties and the Kasluchites, were sons of Egypt. Although I think some other commentators imply that the Kaftorites were "brothers" of the Philistines, it seems clear from Rashi here that he holds that they were "uncles," since he only speaks of the Philistines as being the product of the wife-swapping.

Perhaps this goes along with his explanation of how the Kaftorites displaced the Philistines in Deuteronomy 2:23, since a people might be more inclined to displace their "nephews" than their "brothers."

10:20 According to their...languages....

See comment on 11:1, below.

10:22 The sons of Shem were Elam, Assyria, Arpachshad....

Arpachshad was born 2 years after the [beginning of the] Flood (11:11), and Shem did not start to have children until after the Flood. He could have only had Elam in Menachem Av of 1657 (9 months after Marcheshvan), Assyria in Iyar of 1658 (9 months later), and thus Arpachshad would have been born a year late, in Shevat of 1659. Perhaps Elam and Assyria were twins. It would be nicer if Arpachshad was the firstborn, for then the whole line from Shem to Abram would be firstborns, but nobody says this, and in fact, *Agadat Esther* (*Panim Acherim* version 2) 1:2 (also found in *Yalkut Shimoni Esther* 1045) says "Shem had five sons, but he only gave greatness to

Arpachshad, for he foresaw that Abraham would descend from him...Elam was Shem's firstborn..."

10:29 Chavilah.

If, as the Rebbe suggests on LS vol. 5, p. 287, Chavilah of Genesis 2:11 is the same Chavilah of Genesis 10:29, then how can Chavilah of Genesis 2:11 be Egypt (the place where flax grows), which was settled by Mitzraim, a son of Ham, while Chavilah of Genesis 10:29 is a son of Yokton, son of Japheth? Any ideas? There is also a Chavilah who is the son of Kush, i.e., Mitzraim's nephew (Genesis 10:7).

10:31 According to their...languages.

See comment on 11:1, below.

11:1 Speaking one language.

We heard above (10:5, 20, 31) that the Japhethites, Hamites, Semites had languages. But as Hirsch points out, the word there was "lashonot" and here it is "safah." So, he says, there were many dialects but still one language. It could also be that this incident occurred before the language-divisions of 10:5, 20 and 31.

11:1 Furthermore, he convinced them....

Can we assume that these two interpretations are related: i.e., that when people said to him that if he challenges God, he'll get punished like the generation of the Flood was, he replied that, bah, humbug, the Flood is just a natural occurrence that occurs every 1656 years, etc. ??

11:2 When they migrated....

Who migrated from the East? Everybody? Rashi quotes 10:30 to prove that they were in the east before this, but 10:30 is talking only about the descendants of Yoktan! (--which, by the way, are placed by Kaplan and JPS in Yemen, which can hardly be considered east of Shinar). For a moment I thought that Rashi was indicating that the dispersion happened only to the Semites, but from his comment on v. 3 that the Hamites were the main instigators here, led by Nimrod. So Rashi evidently understands 10:30 --if not to apply directly to everyone-- to at least be indicative of what everyone was doing, i.e., settling in "the east." The picture thus formed is of everyone living around Ararat after the flood, multiplying into clans and nations together, and then migrating en masse to Shinar (this is supported by Rashi's comment that Assyria defected from the Nimrod when he started the tower), from whence they dispersed only afterward.

11:2 From the mountains in the east....

Presumably the Ararat and Zagros ranges.

11:26 His eldest son was Nachor...

Sefer HaYashar and *Seder HaDorot* say that Terach had Nachor and Haran when he was 38, in the year 1916. The Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 69b) and Midrash (BR 38) say that Terach had Nachor the year after Abram and Haran the year after that. The problem with the latter version is that it means that Haran got married and had Lot at 6, had Milka at 7, and had Sarai at 8, which is a little weird. If we go according to the first version, then we need to assume that this verse is patterned after 5:32 ("Shem, Ham, and Japheth"). It mentions Abram first because he was the most important, and then follows with the first child to be born (Nachor), and then the next child (Haran).

11:26 Nachor, named after his father....

Nachor I died in 1997, when Terach was 119, so he could have named his son Nachor after his dead father. Or, he could have been a Sefardi and named him after his living father.

11:30 And according to Abraham's astrological calculations, he would never have any children through her.

If Abram knew enough astrology to be able to figure out that he and Sarai would not have kids, it would stand to reason that he would have checked this out before marrying her, no? Maybe he didn't think to figure it out until he saw that they weren't having kids, but why wouldn't he have thought of that?

11:31 They left Nachor and Milkah behind in Ur.

Although we find Nachor's child Besuel later in Haran.

11:31 They came as far as Charan and settled there.

Why? I originally (first printing) wrote: "On the other hand, Terach knew that moving all the way to Canaan would entail espousing monotheism publicly, and he was not ready to do this." But then I realized that this is just a conjecture (although I probably had a defensible reason for thinking it when I wrote it), so I took it out. The Rebbe (*Hitva'aduyot* 5745, p. 578) does not offer a reason why their plans to go to Canaan were cancelled once they got to Charan.

11:31 Abram instituted the practice of praying to God every morning.

Rashi says nothing about this, but he says (on 28:10) that Jacob instituted evening prayer, so we can cautiously assume that he holds that Abraham and Isaac instituted *Shacharit* and *Minchah*.

11:32 He had begun to observe these teachings.

Regarding all the patriarchs keeping the Torah before it was given:

Kidushin 82a and *Yoma* 28b only mention explicitly that *Abraham* did this. The Rebbe:

- ♦ quotes *Vayikra Rabbah* 2:10 mentioning this with regard to all the patriarchs (as well as Judah and Joseph) (LS 20, p. 200 n6).
- ♦ assumes it (without attribution) for all the patriarchs (LS 5, pp. 145 and 266; refers to such an opinion in LS 20 p. 188 n29)
- ♦ notes that the Torah (according to Rashi) records specific instances of this, and assumes that this means that they all fulfilled the whole Torah (Abraham: Gen 26:5; Lot: 19:1-3; Isaac: 26:12, 27: 3 & 9; Jacob: 32:5) (LS 5, p. 266, note 20; LS 20, p. 200; LS 22, p. 42, n43)
- ♦ derives from the fact that Abraham educates his children in his ways (Gen 18:19) (LS 5, p. 266)
- ♦ quotes to this effect: *Maharsha*, *Chidushei Agadot* on *Ta'anit* 11a; *Sedei Chemed*, *Kelalim*, Alef 186; *Derishah*, *Tur Orach Chaim* 674; *Tzeidah LaDerech* and *Maskil leDavid* on Genesis 41:50.
- ♦ concludes that for the most part, the tribes also did (LS 5, p. 266; LS 20, p. 200).
- ♦ quotes Rashi on the Talmud (*Chulin* 91a, *s.v. Para Lahen*) that the tribes did (LS 20, p. 200).

Bereishit Rabbah 92:4 also notes that Joseph kept the Sabbath (LS 20, p. 200).

11:32 For the wicked are considered dead.

A bit tricky: inside he was not an idolator; he only lacked the compunction to make his outward behavior conform to his inner convictions. Do we therefore consider him "wicked" and "dead"?

Lech Lecha

12:6-7 gradually conquering it from the descendants of Shem...its rightful owners.

So says Rashi on v. 6, saying that Noah originally assigned the Land of Israel to Shem. But above, 10:19, it says that "the Canaanite borders extended from Sidon...toward Gaza, and toward Sodom, etc." This seems to say that Noah originally assigned the Land of Israel to Canaan, unless the meaning is that "after they started capturing it from the descendants of Shem, the Canaanite borders extended from...to...." But if we examine the area assigned to Shem (10:21, 31 – the eastern side of the Euphrates, as Rashi says), it seems to not include the Land of Israel. Unless, of course, the meaning is that "after they were driven out of the Land of Israel, what remained to them was...."

12:9 in order to eventually reach Mount Moriah

Why was Abram trying to get to Mount Moriah now?

12:11 a woman of beautiful appearance:

There are four instances of this (and related) idiom:

1	Genesis 12:11	Sarah	כִּי אִשָּׁה יִפֶּת מְרֵאָה אֶת:
2	Genesis 26:7	Rebecca	כִּי טוֹבֵת מְרֵאָה הָיָא:
3	Genesis 29:17	Rachel	יִפֶּת תֶּאֱרַר וַיִּפֶּת מְרֵאָה:
4	Genesis 39:6	Joseph	יִפֶּה תֶּאֱרַר וַיִּפֶּה מְרֵאָה:

Thus, Sarah and Rebecca had only מְרֵאָה (Sarah – pretty, Rebecca – good), while Rachel and Joseph also had תֶּאֱרַר, but only what Rebecca possessed was "good"; the others' qualities were "pretty."

On 29:17, Rashi says:

תֶּאֱרַר - הוּא צוֹרֵת הַפְּרִצוּף, לְשׁוֹן יִתְאַרְהוּ בִּשְׂרָד: מְרֵאָה - הוּא זֵיו קְלִסְתֵּר:

He does not define the terms in the other verses. Presumably because this is the first time when both terms are juxtaposed, so there is only here a need to define them. Thus, we can presume that the same definitions should apply to all four passages.

In any case, תֶּאֱרַר is "the form/shape of the פְּרִצוּף." The term *partzuf* is Talmudic Hebrew for "face," but a "face" can also be a "facet," "front," or "side," just as the word פְּנִים can.

For example: דוֹ-פְּרִצוּפִין בְּרָא הַקַּב"ה בְּאֵדָה"ר (Berachot 61a; Eiruvin 18a; Bereishit Rabbah 8:1, Rashi on Genesis 1:27, 2:21); does this mean that only Adam's head had two faces, or does it mean that he had two sides, male and female, or even more drastically, two bodies that were attached back-to-back? (Rashi on Ketubot 8a: שְׁנֵי צוּרוֹת, זָכָר מְלִפְנֵי וְנִקְבָּה מֵאַחֶר. Artscroll Berachot translates:

The Holy One, Blessed is He, created two figures in the first man [Adam], one male and one female, joined back to back. One of these was later separated to form the first woman, Eve, "אחור וקדם צרתני" – as it says: [From the back and the front You have formed me.

And in the footnote (#11) on this passage:

Had this verse referred simply to the back and front of the human body it would be superfluous. Furthermore, logic would demand that the front be mentioned first. The psalmist's point, rather, is that when man was created, he was created *manlike* both back and front, i.e. with a double face (*Ben Yehoyada*).

Unfortunately, this interpolated translation and its footnote make sense either way, i.e., whether we imagine that the original Adam had only two faces (but not a female body-side) or whether he had a male and female side to his entire body. However, further on, on the same *daf*, we have:

“מאי ויבן” **But according to the one who says it was a figure, what is the meaning of the phrase, And [Hashem] built?** Eve’s body was fully fashioned and needed only to be separated from Adam’s.

(This is based on Rashi’s comment: הלא כבר נבנה — מאי ויבן.) And further on, when the Talmud discusses “which one of them went in front,” it is clear that we are talking about two equal bodies, for if there was only one body (with two faces, i.e., two sides to the head), then clearly the single body faced one direction and that determined how it walked.

In his comments on Exodus 25:18 (דמות פרצוף תינוק להם), Isaiah 3:19 (צניף שמצניפות כל פרצופיהם חוץ), Ezekiel 1:5 (מגלגל העין), and Ezekiel 1:5 (דמות פרצופו של יעקב אבינו) Rashi uses the term to just mean “face.” But in his comments on Exodus 26:1 (פרצוף א’ מכאן ופרצוף א’ מכאן ארי מצד זה ונשר מצד זה) and 26:36 (כפרצוף של עבר זה כן פרצוף של עבר זה), he uses the term to mean “side” or “facet.” Artscroll Rashi translates both here and with Adam, “face,” on Exodus 26:1 as “picture” (?), on Exodus 26:36 as “face,” which doesn’t seem to fit the context well. R/S on Genesis 2:21 translates: “They were created with two faces (sides).” Linear Rashi ad loc. translates “Two faces [sides] were created.”

(Not to mention that in Kabbalah, a *partzuf* is clearly an entire human structure, not just a “face.”)

So, based on all this, Rashi’s definition, “the form of the פרצוף,” could either mean just “the form of the face” or “the form of the entire body,” i.e., the “figure.” But if it meant the latter, Rashi would presumably have said הוא צורת הגוף rather than הוא צורת הפרצוף. So that’s how I’ve taken it.

מראה is “the glow of the complexion.” Note that Rashi on the verse about Sarah says that the Egyptians were not used to seeing such a white woman, which implies that his main concern was over her complexion, rather than any other aspect of her beauty. This in fits well with how he defines מראה in Rachel’s case.

Here is how the translations that purport to be according to Rashi translate these phrases, followed by how I decided to translate them:

	כי אשה יפת מראה את:	כי טובת מראה הוא:	יפת תאר ויפת מראה:	יפה תאר ויפה מראה:
Artscroll Rashi	of beautiful appearance	of fair appearance	beautiful of form and beautiful of appearance	handsome of form and handsome of appearance
Margolin	of beautiful appearance	good-looking	[face] was beautifully formed and she was of beautiful appearance	became well formed and of fine appearance
Silverstein	a beautiful woman	very fair	of beautiful [facial] form and of beautiful [facial] appearance	beautiful in form and appearance
Gutnick	an attractive woman	pleasant looking	had beautiful (facial) features and a beautiful complexion.	handsome features and a beautiful complexion
me	of beautiful facial complexion	of good facial complexion	of beautiful facial form and complexion	of beautiful facial form and complexion

On the other hand, it’s a bit farfetched to say that Isaac was afraid that the Philistines would kill him because his wife was “of good facial complexion,” isn’t it? Maybe not.

12:17 God then struck Pharaoh.

If this whole episode happened in one night, as is implied by Rashi on 44:18, why did they stay 3 months in Egypt, especially when Pharaoh told them to get out of there since the Egyptians are lecherous?

13:4 The site of the altar that he had built there at first and where Abram had invoked God. And now again, Abram invoked God there.

When he was here the first time, he invoked God, meaning that he prayed for his descendants. What does invoking God mean now? Did he pray again? for what?

13:7 Nonetheless, Abram could not convince Lot that this argument was erroneous, and that his herdsmen should not let their flocks graze in other people's fields. Despite the fact that he was quite wealthy in his own right, Lot savored the prospect of inheriting Abram's wealth, as well.

I can't remember where, if anywhere, I got this from. Presumably my reasoning was: Why didn't Abraham just tell Lot to tell his shepherds to stop doing this? There's no reason to assume Lot's shepherds wouldn't have listened to him. Therefore, must be that Lot didn't tell them. Why not? Must be that he didn't think they were doing anything wrong.

13:13 INNER DIMENSIONS: Their sinfulness caused the Divine Presence to retreat from the fifth firmament to the sixth.

Although the Egyptians caused the *Shechinah* to ascend from #6 to #7, we may presume that the inhabitants of Sodom had been behaving wickedly for some time before this.

14:15 Abram attacked before midnight, and pursued them as far as Dan—also known as Chovah—which is north of Damascus.

Identifying Chovah as Dan makes things a little problematic, because it means that Abram pursued them until Dan, where (1) his strength failed him because of the future sin, but (2) that didn't matter because this is precisely where he overtook them so he didn't have to pursue them any further anyway.

14:18 Noah's son Shem, who was also known as **Malki-Tzedek** ("My King is Righteousness"), **King of Salem came** to Open Valley and **brought forth bread and wine.**

Otherwise we must assume that the King of Sodom came forth to meet Abram at the Open Valley, and then Abram went to Salem to meet Shem, and then either the Torah backtracks to continue the story of the meeting between the king of Sodom and Abram, or that the King of Sodom accompanied Abram to Salem and spoke with Abram there.

15:1 INNER DIMENSIONS: I am a shield for you....

This whole comment contradicts the comment on 12:9 ("Toward the south"), above.

15:7 When he was in the Land of Israel the first time, on the 15th of Nisan of the year 2018, God appeared to Abram....

Besides all the proofs from *Seder Olam*, Rashi on Exodus 12:40, and the Rebbe's sichos, there is another contextual proof that this passage (15:7-21) is not a continuation of the previous one (15:1-6): We read there that God took Abram out of the tent to look at the stars. In other words, it was already night. Here, in this passage, we are told that the sun was setting, and later that the sun actually set and it became dark. So the two passages seem to have taken place on two different occasions.

15:10 Dividing the animals thus indicated that the gentile nations will eventually cease to exist as nations.

Since the Rebbe says that the non-Jews will not die out in the future (sicha on Balak, karkar kol bnei Shes).

15:17 The sun set....

So what? Abraham was already in the midst of a dream anyway, no?

15:19 which will in the future be occupied by....

The Talmudic/Midrashic sources that tell us who the Kenites, Kenizites, and Kadmonites are simply identify them (according to one opinion) with Edom, Moab, and Ammon, but since these nations are derived from Abraham's grandnephews and grandson, they obviously could not have existed at the time of the Covenant between the Halves. So we must therefore conclude that the KKKs were indeed separate nations (that existed in Abraham's time) that were later displaced or conquered or absorbed by Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

16:3 Hagar the Egyptian

At first I thought that "the Egyptian" should be set off in commas, since it's not an eponym (like "Jack the Ripper" or "Catherine the Great"). I thought whether or not to use commas was a case like the following:

My sister Shellie plays chess.

My sister, Shellie, plays chess.

The first sentence implies that I have more than one sister and Shellie is the one who plays chess; the second sentence implies that I have only one sister. Thus, since Hagar is not the only Egyptian in the world, "Hagar the Egyptian" should take commas. But then I realized that these cases are not similar. In the pair of sentences above, the general term ("sister") comes before the particular ("Shellie"); in our case, the particular ("Hagar") comes before the general ("the Egyptian"). So the rules of one don't necessarily apply to the other.

But is "the Egyptian" in "Hagar the Egyptian" an eponym? After all, the point of "Jack the Ripper" and "Catherine the Great" is that Jack is *the* Ripper and Catherine is *the* Great. But that's not the point of "Hagar the Egyptian"; we're just saying where she's from. Yet, we do say "Joan of Arc" or להבדיל לרבני so-and-so of Such-and-Such without commas. So I'm still not sure, but I left the commas out nonetheless.

16:7 Shur

Abraham at this time was living in Hebron. Shur is mentioned in the following five verses:

1. Genesis 16:7: **next to the spring on the road to Shur.**
2. Genesis 20:1: **Abraham journeyed from there to the Negev and then settled between Kadeish and Shur,** coming to finally **sojourn in** the Philistine city of **Gerar.**
3. Genesis 25:18: Ishmael's descendants **dwelled in the area between Chavilah and Shur, which borders on Egypt,** along the road from Shur **toward Assyria.**
4. Exodus 15:22: **Moses had to make the Israelites set out from the Sea of Reeds. They returned to Eitam and went out into the Shur Desert. They walked for three days in the desert without finding any water.**
5. 1 Samuel 15:7: **Saul smote Amalek from Chavilah as you go to Shur, which borders on Egypt.**

From all these verses, it seems that Shur is near the border of Egypt. In particular, #4 puts it between Eitam and Marah, which Rabbi Schwartz has identified quite precisely.

[But compare Numbers 33:8: “**They journeyed from Penei Hachiroth** (an alternative name for Pi Hachiroth) **and crossed in the midst of the sea to the desert. They walked for three days in the desert of Eitam and camped at Marah.**” Perhaps מדבר שור is a sub-region within מדבר איתם?]

The events in our verse (#1) did not take place at Shur, only on the road that leads to Shur, which could have been quite some distance away from it. In #2, it could mean that Abraham settled in a region located somewhere between Kadeish and Shur, not that his camp extended to both places.

Regarding Chavilah (#3 and #5), we identify it in Genesis 2:11 as Egypt. So the region “between Chavilah and Shur” would seem to be a relatively small area, very close to Egypt, which is problematic. Perhaps Shur (or the Shur Desert) extends as a band across the Sinai peninsula, and only the western edge of it is located at Marah and the border of Egypt. On the other hand, there are two people called Chavilah, one a Hamite (Genesis 10:7, Egypt’s nephew by his brother Kush, which might explain why the country Egypt is also known as Chavilah) and one a Semite (Genesis 10:29, one of the sons of Yoktan). So this might be the solution to this problem.

By the way, the phrase in #3, **עַד שׁוֹר, אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי מִצְרַיִם, בְּאֶחָד אֲשׁוּרָה**, in which the location of Shur is pinpointed as “on the border of Egypt, as you’re going [from Egypt?] toward [i.e., in the direction of] Assyria,” seems sort of like saying that if you want to go from Brooklyn to Manhattan you should take the road that leads in the direction of Seattle, no? I mean, Assyria is quite far away from Egypt. (JPS notes this but offers little help.) It sounds like there was a specific road called “the road to Assyria” (similar to דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִישְׁתִּים); maybe it’s the same road as בְּדֶרֶךְ שׁוֹר in #1 and בּוֹאֵךְ שׁוֹר in #5 but in the opposite direction. Is there any connection between Shur (שׁוֹר) and Assyria (אֲשׁוּרָה)? (For that matter, if *Ashur* is Anglicized to *Assyria*, why isn’t *Shur* Anglicized to *Syria*?)

Artscroll *Bereishis* quotes an unidentified source that says that *Ashur* here refers to the *Ashurim* in v. 3.

The term **בְּאֶךָ** clearly means “toward,” i.e., “in the direction of,” as can be seen in Genesis 10:19 and 10:30, and not “until” (unless the place we are going in the direction of is quite close to where we are coming from, which is apparently the case in Genesis 13:10). There is also the expression **עַד בְּאֶךָ**, which is found in Judges 6:4 & 11:33, 1 Samuel 17:52, 2 Samuel 5:25, 1 Kings 18:46. In all these cases, the meaning is apparently “until,” but then what does **בְּאֶךָ** add to **עַד**? Perhaps **בְּאֶךָ** in these cases means “the road to,” similar to **לְבַא חֶמֶת**, etc.?

Targum Onkelos on #1, #2, #3, and #4 translates Shur as **תְּגַרָּא**. See *Tosafot* on *Gitin* 2a, s.v. *VeAshkelon*.

Shur means “wall” and “to see”; JPS commentary on #1 is fascinating in this respect.

16:12 But although his offspring will be numerous, they will live harmoniously with one another, **so he will dwell near all his relatives.**

If all this means is that he will have many offspring, what is the *chidush* over v. 10? And how could “dwelling near one’s relatives” necessarily mean that one will have a lot of offspring? Can’t one have a lot of offspring who then spread out over a large area so everyone is far away from each other?

16:13 Hagar called the name of <G> who had spoken to her,

We would think that **שֵׁם וְתִקְרָא שָׁם** should be translated “She named,” as if Hagar was naming the angel. But the Targumim clearly interpret this verse as if it read **שֵׁם וְתִקְרָא בְּשֵׁם**, meaning “she called upon.” Here’s the survey:

- ♦ Onkelos: **וְצִלִּיָּאת בְּשֵׁמָא דִּי דִּמְתַּמְלִל עִמָּה אִמְרַת**

- ◆ Yonatan: ואודיאת קדם יי דמימריה מתמלל לה וכן אמרת
- ◆ Yerushalmi: ואודיית הגר וצליית בשם מימריה דיי דאתגלי עלה אמרה
- ◆ Artscroll: “And she called the Name of Hashem Who spoke to her....”
- ◆ Margolin: “She prayed by name to the Eternal who was speaking to her, [saying],....”
- ◆ Living Torah: “[Hagar] gave a name to God who had spoken to her, [saying],....” Footnote: “Or, ‘prayed to God’ (Targum).”
- ◆ Silverstein: “And she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her....”
- ◆ Gutnick: “She called in the name of God, who had spoken to her,....”
- ◆ Fox: “Now she called the name of Yhwh, the one who was speaking to her:....”
- ◆ Friedman: “And she called the name of YHWH who spoke to her....”
- ◆ JPS: “And she called the Lord who spoke to her,....”
- ◆ Reform: “So she called the Eternal who had speaking to her,....”
- ◆ Reform Women: “So she called יהוה who had been speaking to her,....”

The problem with Onkelos’ interpretation is that Hagar’s following words do not seem to be a prayer but an expression of thanks or realization (as is apparently acknowledged by Targum Yonatan’s and Yerushalmi’s preface that she “gave thanks” and then “prayed”). On the other hand, if she was just “naming” God, she would not have said, “You are...,” which is obviously a direct address, not a new name. (This can be reconciled, however.)

Onkelos is evidently following his שיטה of de-anthropomorphizing things, and wants to keep us from thinking that a human can “name” God or an angel. The frei translations are not bothered by this, but neither are Artscroll, Kaplan, or Silverstein; only Margolin and Gutnick adopt Onkelos’ interpretation. Rashi doesn’t say anything, but that could be because we have already seen how things can be named after events surrounding them (11:9, “therefore it was called Babel...”). On the other hand, it could be that he’s simply accepting Onkelos without question.

So, on the basis of the precedent of Genesis 11:9, the desire to differentiate between קרא שם and קרש בשם, and the fact that the majority of the frum translations use the idiom of “name” rather than “call upon,” I have opted for this interpretation.

17:1 You are still not in control over five of the 248 parts of the body.

Problem here: Ohalot 1:8 lists the 248 parts of the body, and they are all bones. The ears, eyes, and bris are not enumerated. And there are no ear-bones, eye-bones, or bris-bones!

17:1 Nor over how your body reacts to erotic stimuli.

It is somewhat implied by Rashi on Nedarim 32b (the source for this) that the issue here is how what a person sees and hears stimulates him sexually. This should be compared with, for example, the vort on “Judges and policeman you shall appoint over all your *gates*,” which is interpreted to apply to the nose and mouth, as well. I.e., here, there’s no mention of not being able to control loshon hora, etc. ALSO, the sign of this covenant, i.e., the granting of this power, is circumcision, which is definitely about sexuality. But there is the matter of smell: it would seem that normally a person is just as much not in control of what he smells as he isn’t in control of what he sees or hears, and there is definitely a prohibition against smelling a woman’s perfume. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that smell is a more spiritual sense than the other four, as witnessed by the laws of Yom Kippur. BUT I could be wrong in all this and “eyes and ears” here refers to *all* forms of bad stimulus, including hearing loshon hora, for example. That would take care of my next comment, too.

17:1 You will be able to ignore inappropriate sights and sounds, and control your erotic drive.

If we can selectively ignore, or train ourselves not to see, inappropriate sexual stimuli, then why is there any need to further control the erotic drive? In other words, if we're not being inappropriately aroused, what is left to control in the bris? Imagination?

17:12 as well as anyone bought for money.

The Talmud (*Shabbat* 135b) says that when you buy a slave he's circumcised on the day you buy him, even if he's not eight days old yet. As pointed out by Artscroll, the *Maharsha* therefore says that Rashi, when he says **שקנאו משנולד** he means "when he was already *conceived*," but you owned the mother already when he was born – in such a case he's circumcised on the eighth day. But to read Rashi this way is a stretch, and we know that Rashi does not have to explain Scripture according to the conclusions of the Talmud or according to *halachah*.

17:13 However....

The explanation of this verse involves determining which version of Rashi to use, and that determines (or is determined by) which version of the Talmud's discussion to use – that of the regular editions or the one of the *She'iltot d'Achai Gaon* (which is also quoted in *Midrash Sechel Tov*). I consulted my usual sources in all this: R/S, Artscroll, *Rashi HaShalem*, *Shai LaMora* (with the *Keter Torah* version), *Chumash Rashi HaMevo'ar*, etc. I decided to go with the version of Rashi that says **שיש יליד בית נמול לאחר שמונה ימים**, because that's the version of most early printings, even though it is not the version of the *sugya* in our printed versions of the Talmud.

Following are the texts of the *She'iltot* as printed and as Rashi quotes it. I have highlighted in blue the differences pertinent to the discussion.

שאלתות דרב אחאי פרשת לך לך שאילתא ט

כתנאי: יש יליד בית שנימול לשמונה, ויש יליד בית שנימול לאחר שמונה, יש מקנת כסף שנימול לשמונה, ויש מקנת כסף שנימול לאחר שמונה. כיצד: לקח שפחה מעוברת ואחר כך ילדה זהו מקנת כסף שנימול לשמונה. לקח שפחה וולדה עמה זהו מקנת כסף שנימול לאחר שמונה. רב חמא אומר: הטבילה ואחר כך ילדה זהו יליד בית שנימול לאחר שמונה, ילדה ותנא קמא לא שני ליה בין הטבילה ואחר כך ילדה בין ואח"כ הטבילה. אלמא אף על גב דאין אמו טמאה לידה נמול לשמונה. בשלמא לרב חמא משכחת לה יליד בית, כדקתני. מקנת כסף שנימול לשמונה, זה שלקח שפחה ואח"כ ילדה נמול לשמונה, לקח שפחה ועוברת עמה נמול לאחר שמונה. אלא לתנא קמא יליד בית שנימול לאחר שמונה היכי משכחת לה, אמר רבי ירמיה כגון שלקח שפחה לעוברת דהא לא קנייא ליה לישראל. הניחא למאן דאמר קניין פירות לאו קניין הגוף דמי, אלא למאן דאמר קניין פירות קניין הגוף דמי מאי איכא למימר, אמר רב משרשיא כגון שלקח שפחה על מנת שלא להטבילה.

רש"י מסכת שבת דף קלה עמוד ב

כתנאי - הא דרב אסי, הכי גרסינן הא מילתא בשאלתות דרב אחאי: כיצד: לקח שפחה מעוברת ואחר כך ילדה זהו מקנת כסף שנימול לשמונה, לקח שפחה וולדה עמה - זהו מקנת כסף שנימול לאחד [לאחר שמונה], לקח שפחה ונתעברה אצלו וילדה - זהו יליד בית שנימול לשמונה, ר' חמא אומר: הטבילה ואחר כך ילדה - זהו יליד בית שנימול [לאחר] שמונה, ילדה ואחר כך הטבילה זהו יליד בית שנימול לאחד, בשלמא לר' חמא משכחת לה יליד בית, כדקתני, מקנת כסף שנימול לשמונה - כגון שלקח שפחה ואחר כך ילדה, נימול לאחד נמי - כגון שלקח שפחה וולדה עמה, אלא לתנא קמא כו', ובספרים שלנו כתיב נימול לאחד נמי - כגון שלקח זה שפחה וזה עוברת, ונראה בעיני דהא דלא גריס בשאלתות כגון שלקח זה שפחה וזה עוברת - משום דקשיא ליה מאי דוחקיה לאוקמיה בשני לקוחות, ולשוני גירסא דסיפא מרישא, דקתני לקח שפחה וולדה זהו מקנת כסף שנימול לאחד.

	text
מקנת כסף שנימול לשמונה	לקח שפחה מעוברת ואח"כ ילדה
מקנת כסף שנימול לאחר שמונה	לקח שפחה וולדה
יליד בית שנימול לאחר שמונה	הטבילה ואח"כ ילדה

	Rashi
לקח שפחה מעוברת ואח"כ ילדה	מקנת כסף שנימול לשמונה
לקח שפחה וילדה	מקנת כסף שנימול לאחד
לקח שפחה ונעברה אצלו וילדה	יליד בית שנימול לשמונה
הטבילה ואח"כ ילדה	יליד בית שנימול לשמונה
ילדה ואח"כ הטבילה	יליד בית שנימול לאחד

יש יליד בית שנימול לאחד - דתרי קראי כתיבי ביליד בית ומקנת כסף, חד כתיב ביה שמונה וחד לא כתיב ביה שמונה המול ימול יליד ביתך ומקנת כסףך ולא מפרש ביה לשמונה ימים, וכתיב וכן שמונת ימים ימול לכם כל זכר לדורותיכם יליד בית ומקנת כסף ומסתברא דהאי דמפרש בה לשמונה - היינו היכא דדמי לישראל מעליא שנולד בביתו של ישראל משקנאו דדומיא דלכם בעינן, דכתיב בההוא קרא ימול לכם כל זכר, והדר יליד בית ומקנת כסף - הלכך, לקח שפחה מעוברת וילדה - הרי זה מקנת כסף, דגוף שלם הוא במעי אמו וקנאו שנימול לשמונה דדומיא דלכם הוא, שנולד ברשותו של ישראל, לקח שפחה וילדה עמה, שכבר ילדתו, ואף על פי שלא עברו עליו שמונה לילדתו - מלו מיד כדכתיב המול ימול וגו' דלאו דומיא דלכם הוא, לקח שפחה ונתעברה אצלו - לא הוי עובר מקנת כסף אלא יליד בית שנימול לשמונה, דדומיא דלכם הוא, ולקמיה מפרש יליד בית שנימול לאחד אליבא דתנא קמא.

ר' חמא אומר - הטבילה לשם עבדות וחלה עליה שם תורת שפחה ישראל דנתחייבה בכל מצות שהאשה חייבת בהן, והויא טמאה לידה - זהו יליד בית שנימול לשמונה.

Notice that Rashi on the *Gemara* does not mention שמונה לאחר at all. Presumably that's because there's no reason why, if we don't require that the baby be circumcised on the 8th day, that we should purposely wait until *after* the eighth day, rather than just circumcise him immediately. The only time waiting beyond the 8th day comes up (in the adjacent *sugya*) is if a child who would normally be circumcised on the 8th day is born on Friday *בין השמשות*, in which case he can't be circumcised on the following Friday, since maybe 8 days haven't passed, and he can't be circumcised on Shabbos, because maybe he was born on Friday. The *sugya* then goes on to discuss how his circumcision could be postpone even further, say, if Sunday was *Yom Tov*, etc. But all of this seems not to have any bearing on this *sugya* (although one could say that since the preceding and following *sugyas* deal with the issue of Shabbos, this one could be construed to do so also even though it doesn't mention Shabbos, but that's a bit of a stretch; we would have to say that throughout this whole passage, the case is of a kid born on Friday *בין השמשות* and the discussion is *solely* whether or not to circumcise him on the next Shabbos or not).

So, what we are apparently left with is that the version of the text in Rashi implies the same thing both way, essentially: there are those babies who require circumcision on the 8th day, and those who don't, whom we circumcise as soon as we can, and sometimes this is on the first day of their lives, sometimes later, even beyond the eighth day. The *Netziv* in *Ha'ameik She'eilah* on the *She'iltot* proposes that the idiom of "after the eighth day" simply means that we shouldn't think that because the Torah does require specifically the 8th day for these babies, it doesn't care if we circumcise them at all; no, it does, and we must circumcise them, even if we do so after the 8th day. But that still seems far-fetched to me, because, au contraire, let the *She'iltot* simply say *לאחד*, to let us know that these babies should be circumcised immediately, and we would understand that if for some reason we can't do it immediately, then we should do it at the first opportunity. There is also apparently no need to tell us that circumcision of these babies does not override Shabbos, either, because if there's no insistence on the 8th day, why should we think that their circumcision would override Shabbos?

In any case, these verse seem to be telling us the following: we would presume that a יליד בית would be circumcised on the 8th day and a מקנת כסף would be circumcised as soon as he's purchased. However, there are cases when a יליד בית is circumcised immediately and a מקנת כסף is circumcised on the 8th day. What are these circumstances?

17:17 Abraham threw himself on his face.

I thought he was already on his face? v. 3.

Vayeira

18:1 This occurred in the Plains of Mamre.

Where else *could* it have occurred? Is Mamre's "reward" the fact that he was specifically mentioned here?

18:1 INNER DIMENSIONS: The fifty gates of understanding.

As to what these gates are, the Raavad on *Sefer Yetzirah* says they are the fifty questions that God asked Job at the end of his book; the *Zohar* and Ramak say they are the fifty times the Exodus is mentioned in the Torah (but you have to know how to count because there appears to be dozens more than 50); the Arizal lists 8 different "locations" (2 in *da'at*, 2 in *Ima*, 2 in *Z'eir Anpin*, and 2 in *Nukva*) of them, and RYG has his own system based on the 50 idioms in the Torah in which the construct form is used before the Name *Havayah* ("the eyes of G-d," "the mercy of G-d," etc.).

18:1 INNER DIMENSIONS: We thus undergo numerous processes of spiritual growth throughout our lifetimes, each one leading us to and through fifty gates of Divine consciousness.

I'm basing this "brash" assumption on the idea that every "spiritual growth process" is a process of going out of Egypt and receiving the Torah on a new level, which, as we know, requires 50 steps.

18:4 Pagans who worship the dirt of their feet....

Is there any corroboration in anthropological or archeological literature about dirt-worship? (True, just about everything else has been worshipped, but I've never heard about this one.)

18:6 Take three *se'ah*....

We would have thought that Abraham had on hand already-sifted flour, in which case he would have said, "take some coarse flour to scrape the scum and 3 *seah* of fine flour to bake." But the words "3 *seah*" come before *kemach*, indicating that they refer to both the fine and course flour. It can mean 3 *seah* of each, since nothing near 3 *seah* of coarse flour would be required to scrape the scum. Hence, I interpolated as I did.

18:7 Ishmael hurried to prepare it.

If we are saying, as the Rebbe does in LS vol. 5, that the angel was just a personification of the natural power of healing, i.e., Abraham would have healed naturally on the third day, then the same would apply to Ishmael, as well. So, if so, why does the Rebbe ask (in *Sefer HaSichot* 5749, vol. 1, p. 48, note 5) why Abraham sent Ishmael even though it was the third day since his circumcision, which is a day of danger? The only way out seems to be that *naturally* only a certain level of healing happens on the third day, and that Raphael healed Abraham *completely*. But that still mitigates somewhat the Rebbe's point in LS vol 5 that the point here is that *mitzvot* must be performed without recourse to supernatural aid.

18:9 as a sign of the blessing he was about to give her for a child.

I originally (first and second printings) wrote "over which they had recited the grace after meals." But in v. 12 we see (from Rashi on v. 8) that because Sarah had menstruated, Abraham did not serve the bread. So how could there have been Grace after Meals and כּוּס של בּרַכָּה?

The Rebbe does not address this issue at all in his discussion of this Rashi (LS 15, pp. 110 ff).

Shirat HaBe'er (in *Chumash Rashi HaMevoar*) quotes *Tiferet Yisrael* who says that when Rashi brings the opinion about *כוס של ברכה* he's going according to *רבנו* in *Bereishit Rabbah* 48:14, who say that there *was* bread in this meal. But this is untenable, since Rashi makes no mention of this opinion, and the Rebbe explains the three reasons for why the angels asked where Sarah was as not being mutually exclusive but as all being simultaneously true.

Biur Setumot Rashi (on 18:9) offers the explanation that there was no bentsching and no *כוס של ברכה*, and that this was a "Y'chaim" over wine that they sent her. This is a nice idea, and it is telling that Rashi does not add the words *של ברכת המזון* after *כוס של ברכה* (as *Siftei Chachamim* does), but the fact that the Rebbe doesn't seem to see any need to take things in this direction in LS 15 is curious. (Footnote 10 on p. 111 does lend itself to understanding *כוס של ברכה* in either way, although again, the fact that nothing is said to keep us from thinking that it carries its usual meaning would lead us to assume that it does in this case. In footnote 37 on p. 115 it seems clear that the Rebbe is assuming that *כוס של ברכה* means that of *ברכת המזון*, but it could be argued that he is just pointing out that the Maharsha does. On the other hand, the second paragraph of section *yud* on p. 115 could be construed to mean that the Rebbe is *not* understanding *כוס של ברכה* to be that of *ברכת המזון* – unless we assume that everyone who bentsched had a *כוס של ברכה* in front of them.) On the other hand, this author did receive considerable encouragement from the Rebbe. Interestingly, he himself notes (note 49, p. 280) that this *sichah* sidesteps the entire issue.

So, for lack any better alternative, I decided to go with his solution.

Siftei Chachamim also posits that had there been bread to serve, Abraham would have served it first, and therefore he has to reconcile how the bread was not served when the butter and meat were being served (presumably because Sarah defiled it) with the fact that Sarah wondered (after this) how she could still bear children (implying that she hadn't yet resumed her menses) by positing that at first Sarah only felt the onset of menstruation but didn't actually menstruate, but nonetheless refrained from touching the dough just in case, and in the meantime it rose and it was Pesach, etc., etc. But since Rashi says that Abraham served each item as it became ready, why can't we just say it took longer to bake the bread than it did to prepare the butter and meat?

18:10 The second angel **said**: "I have come to deliver a message from God to Sarah...."

If they were able to ask Sarah directly about Abraham's health, why here couldn't they address her directly?

18:10 The second angel **said**: "I have come to deliver a message from God to Sarah...."

The Rebbe says (LS 5 p. 320 note 59) that at this point Abraham realized the men were angels, for if not, why didn't he question how they could promise to be back at the same time next year? BUT Rashi says later, on v. 16, that Abraham still thought they were travelers. Of course, the Rebbe knew about this Rashi, but I have not found any place where he explains it in light of what he says here, so I can't "expunge" that Rashi by taking this statement of the Rebbe's into consideration. Mizrahi, Gur Aryeh, Beer Heiteiv, and Nachalat Yaakov (on Rashi there) say that Abraham *did not* conclude from their prophecy that the angels were in fact angels. Tzeidah LaDerech says Abraham didn't know they were angels even though he referred to their heart with only one *beit*, as Rashi says on v. 5. *Shai LaMora* postulates that the fact that they didn't consider the guests angels explains why Sarah laughed, and that God chastised her for laughing not because He accused her of doubting His abilities, but for not hoping that these (mortal) guests' blessing would come true. *Biur Stumot Rashi* says that Abraham assumed they were (not idolaters, but) prophets of some sort. As for Rashi's statement with the Shunamite woman, Elisha naturally referred to the angels as angels because the Torah had already been given and had revealed to everyone that they were, in fact, angels. But Abraham could have thought that they were prophets of some sort and were conveying God's message that *He* would return to them in a year, at which time they would have a son. On the other hand, Be'eir BaSadeh quotes the Zohar

which says that Abraham knew they were angels but escorted them because that was his custom. Fine, but that doesn't fit in with Rashi.

Some time later, I saw that this difficulty was also raised by HaTamim Kalman Nachum Dalvin in *Kovetz Heaoros uViruim Migdal Dovid* #39 (Migdal HaEmek, Chanukah 5771), pp. 48-50. An editorial note there says that this *sichah* was re-edited as a *likut* and printed on pp. 77 ff of the same volume of *Likutei Sichot* (5), and there, this footnote was omitted.

18:12 She laughed at herself....

Although Rashi says בקרבה means "about herself," he seems to also understand it at the literal level, to mean "to herself," "within herself," i.e., "silently," for it is clear he holds that Abraham and the guests did not hear her say "...besides, my husband is old."

18:14 God made a scratch in the wall of the tent....

First of all, didn't they live in tents, as is clear from this whole passage of the narrative? How can you make a scratch in the wall of a tent? Maybe the scratch was made in a supporting beam or pole? Secondly, they were living now in Hebron, and by the time Isaac was born they had moved to Philistia, and didn't move back to Hebron until 25 years later. So if the "scratch" was made in the "wall" of their tent, they would have at least had to set up the tent in exactly the same geographical orientation for the sun to reach it, etc. Maybe they left their Hebron tent where it was—even after they moved away—so *in case* anyone would check they would see that Isaac was born when the sun hit the mark???

18:23 Would You in your anger blot out the righteous along with the wicked?!

In LS 5, p. 190, note 41, the Rebbe says that since the righteous did not protest the deeds of the wicked, they were implicated in their sin and thus culpable; therefore Abraham had to pray for them. Were they not culpable, then Abraham could have gone directly to his next argument (in the next verse): let their zchus save the city.

HOWEVER, what about the idea of when there's zchus, androlomusia wipes out the righteous together with the wicked, as was the case with the Flood? Why don't we say that the righteous perished in the Flood because they didn't protest the actions of the wicked? OR, are these two ideas equivalent? The *nafka mina* seems to be that if we say androlomusia, then even if the righteous protest they still get wiped out; if not, not.

18:23 it would be sacrilegious:

The only source for לעולם הבא – חלילה לך is *Tanchuma Yashan*, where it says:

שתי פעמים חלילה לך, אלא אמר אברהם חלילה לך שאין אתה מעביר דין כל בריה לא בעולם הזה ולא בעולם הבא, לכך הוא אומר חלילה לך חלילה לך.

It is clear from the previous section (10) in this Midrash that the phrase בריה כל מעביר דין means "subject Your judgments to the criticism of any creature." This is the source for how I wrote up the whole passage, even though none of the *mefarshei Rashi* seem to have noticed this [!].

18:39-31 36 righteous people...27 righteous people...18 righteous people.

This interpolated text is based on the fact that Abraham asked for $9 \times 5 = 45$ in v. 28, and Rashi's implied comment of v. 32 that he asked for 9×1 . From this, I deduced that Abraham did the same for the intermediate cases: $9 \times 4 = 36$; $9 \times 3 = 27$; $9 \times 2 = 18$.

Or it could be that Rashi means that when he asked for $9 \times 5 = 45$ and these were not found, it means (not that a total of 5 were not found, but) that even 9 in each of the 5 cities were not found.

But that would seem odd, since if knew already knew in v. 28 that each city individually did not contain 9, why would he ask to spare them if there were *ten* (in 4 cities, v. 29; in 3 cities, v. 30; in 2 cities, v. 31; in 1 city, v. 32)!?

I therefore wrote it up the way I did.

19:1 Gate

See *Hitva'aduyot* 5747, vol. 1, p. 518, as cited in the footnotes.

Rashi comments on **ולוט ישב בשער סדום**: that they appointed him their judge that day, as if the word **שער** implies a “court.” Is the idea that they used to have courts at the gates of their cities, to “judge” who could be let in, how much customs to charge, etc.? Onkelos says **תרעא**.

On 22:17, **וירש זרעך את שער איביו**, Rashi doesn't comment. Here **שער** perhaps means “city” or “habitation” (Onkelos: **קרואי**)? But how would that fit in with **שער סדום**? (JPS: “shall seize the gates of their foes.” Okay, this could be understood to mean that they'll conquer the cities, since he who controls the gate controls the city, but it's not compelling.)

On 23:10, **ועפרון ישב בתוך בני חי...לכל באי שער עירו**, Rashi says the same thing he says on 19:1, that they appointed him as their **שוטר**, perhaps connected to **שער** again. But now we have the construction **שער העיר**, so **שער** by itself can't mean “city” or “habitation.”

On 23:18, **בכל באי שער עירו**, Rashi says, “among them all and in the presence of them all.”

24:60 **ויירש זרעך את שער שנאיו** is similar to 22:17 (Onkelos again **קרואי**). Rashi does not comment.

28:17 **וזה שער השמים**, can't mean anything other than “gateway.” Rashi: the place where prayer ascends heavenward.

34:20 **אל שער עירם וידברו על אנשי עירם לאמר**, the “gate” seems to be a public place, as it was in 23:10 and 23:18. This is possibly connected to **שער** as a place where a judge or **שוטר** would be, also.

34:24 **כל יצאי שער עירו**, probably similar to **כל באי שער עירו** (23:10, 23:18); see Chizkuni for difference, but Rashi doesn't mention this. JPS and *Ariel Chumash* understand it simply to mean “his fellow townsmen.”

Exodus 20:10 **וגרך אשר בשעריך**, Onkelos translates “city” (**בקרורך**), Rashi does not comment.

Exodus 27:16 (and all other similar passages): **ולשער החצר**, entrance.

Exodus 32:26 **בשער המחנה**, **ויעמד משה** **בשער המחנה**, public gathering place, as in Genesis 34:20 etc.

Exodus 32:27 **במחנה לשער** **ושבו משער** **לשער**, sounds like there are lots of gates?

Deuteronomy 5:14 **וגרך אשר בשעריך**, as Exodus 20:10, Onkelos **בקרורך**, Rashi doesn't comment.

Deuteronomy 6:9 **על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך**, Rashi says this includes the gates of courtyards, cities, and towns.

Deuteronomy 11:20 **על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך**, Rashi does not comment.

Deuteronomy 12:12 **והלוי אשר בשעריכם**, Onkelos says **בקרואיכן**; Rashi does not comment.

Deuteronomy 12:15 **בכל קרואיך**, **אשר נתן לך בכל שעריך**, Onkelos says **בקרואיך**; Rashi does not comment.

Deuteronomy 12:17 **בשעריך**, **לא תוכל לאכל** **בשעריך**, Onkelos says **בקרואיך**; Rashi does not comment.

Deuteronomy 12:18 **והלוי אשר בשעריך**, Onkelos says **בקרואיך**; Rashi does not comment.

Deuteronomy 12:21 **בשעריך**, **בכל אות נפשך**, Onkelos says **בקרואיך**; Rashi does not comment.

Deuteronomy 14:21 **בשעריך**, **תתנהה ואכלה**, Onkelos says **בקרואיך**; Rashi does not comment.

Deuteronomy 14:27 **בשעריך**, **לא תעזבנו**, Onkelos says **בקרואיך**; Rashi does not comment.

- Deuteronomy 14:28 בשעריך, והנחת, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 14:29 בשעריך אשר והעלמנה, והגר והיתום, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 15:7 באחד שעריך בארצך, Onkelos says בחדא מקרויך; Rashi translates שער as עיר.
- Deuteronomy 15:22 בשעריך תאכלנו, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi says “outside Jerusalem.”
- Deuteronomy 16:5 באחד שעריך, Onkelos says מקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 16:11 והלוי אשר בשעריך, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 16:14 והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בשעריך, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 16:18 שפטים ושטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך, Onkelos says בכל קרויך; Rashi says בכל עיר ועיר.
- Deuteronomy 17:2 באחד שעריך, Onkelos says מקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 17:5 אל שערך לתרע בית, Onkelos says לקרויך; Rashi says: המתרגם אל שערך לתרע בית דינך טועה שכן שנינו אל שערך זה שער שעבד בו או אינו אלא שער שנדון בו נאמר שערך למטה ונאמר שערך למעלה מה שערך האמור למעלה שער שעבד בו אף שערך האמור למטה שער שעבד בו ותרגומו לקרויך. Thus, he says שער means city in this case.
- Deuteronomy 17:18 דברי ריבת בשעריך, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 18:6 וכי יבא הלוי מאחד שעריך, Onkelos says מקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 21:19 שער מקמו ואל שער עירו על זקני עירו, והוציאו אתו על זקני עירו ואל שער מקמו, public gathering place again. But Onkelos says שער אחר, connecting שער with a court.
- Deuteronomy 22:15 העיר השערה, אל זקני העיר השערה, Onkelos says דין אתרא; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 22:24 והוא העיר, שנהם אל שער העיר, Onkelos does not mention a court; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 23:17 באחד שעריך, Onkelos says מן קרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 24:14 בארצך בשעריך, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 25:7 על הזקנים, ועלתה יבמתו השערה, Onkelos says בית דיא לתרע; Rashi says, “as the Targum has it.”
- Deuteronomy 26:12 ואכלו בשעריך ושבעו, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 28:52 בכל שעריך...בכל, והצר לך בכל שעריך, Onkelos says קרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 28:55 בכל שעריך, Onkelos says בכל קרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 28:57 בשעריך, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.
- Deuteronomy 31:12 עשר בשעריך, וגרך, Onkelos says בקרויך; Rashi does not comment.

From all the above it is overwhelmingly clear that the sense of שער changes between “gate” and “city” according to the context, and Rashi relies on Onkelos in all cases. When it does mean “gate,” it can simply mean the entryway, or it can imply a broader meaning of “public meeting place” or “place where people are likely to be.” In this sense, it can sometimes mean “court” (do we detect here an origin of the word “court [of law]” in “court[yard]”), and Rashi goes along with Onkelos in these cases.

20:1 Shur

See on 16:7, above.

20:12 She is **not** the granddaughter of my mother....

In *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 6, p. 43, footnote 15, the Rebbe discusses whether or not, according to *peshat*, we need to say that Yocheved was Kehot's sister only paternally, but not maternally. According to Rabbi Eliezer (*Sanhedrin* 58ab), it is forbidden for a non-Jew to marry the sister of his father if the two siblings (i.e., the groom's aunt and the father) share the same mother, but not if they (only) share the same father. However, the Rebbe continues, according to *peshat* – and invoking Rashi's statement on *this* verse that **אין אבות לבן-נה** – it is immaterial whether the father's sister is related to him maternally or paternally, and therefore Yocheved could safely be Kehot's sister both paternally *and* maternally (i.e., Levi did not have to have two wives). And indeed, the Rebbe then goes on to explain Rashi on Exodus 6:20 to mean exactly that, i.e., that Yocheved was Kehot's sister both paternally and maternally, and that this fact enhances her lineage, etc..

In the first two printings, I phrased this verse as follows:

In any case, she really can be considered my sister: she is **the granddaughter of my father**, and a person's grandchildren are considered his own children. **But she is not the granddaughter of my mother**, so, since we are related through my father and not through my mother, it was permissible for us to marry, **and she became my wife.**

But after reading footnote 36 on this verse in *Torah uPeirushah – Eshel Avraham*, I agree with him that Abraham probably did not get into the whole *pilpul* with Avimelech. So I changed it accordingly.

21:1 But before God healed Avimelech and the members of his household, **God had** already **remembered Sarah as He had said** to Abraham that he would: she became pregnant.

How did this work? Abraham prayed, nothing happened, he and Sarah conceived Isaac, and then they all went to the bathroom? I would have thought that they would have been cured as soon as Abraham prayed so it would be clear that his prayer healed them.

21:2 There were scoffers who did not believe that the child was Abraham and Sarah's.

But she was visibly pregnant, no?

21:8 Including Shem, Ever, and Avimelech.

What about Arpachshad (died 46 years later) and Shelach (died 76 years later)?

21:14 She gradually reverted to the idolatrous beliefs with which she was raised.

Or maybe immediately, and this lasted only until the angel spoke to her in the next few verses?

21:17 God answered them that since Ishmael's suffering has already atoned for his sins.

For if this is not the case, how could he be righteous now, when Abraham just kicked him out of the house for murder, adultery, and idolatry?!

22:2 Mount Moriah is to be the site of the future Temple, from where Divine instruction [*hora'ah*] will issue to the world. The Temple is also to be the locus of Divine service, the most intense form of which will be the incense-offering, a key ingredient of which will be the myrrh [*mor*]. It is therefore fitting for you to undergo and pass this test on Mount Moriah, for your precedent will inspire future generations to follow My teachings and serve Me with pure devotion.

I am yammering on about this because it appears Rashi is going to lengths in order to explain why Mt. Moriah is called such, and this must have some bearing on *peshuto shel mikra*, or so it would seem.

22:2 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Taking Isaac's life would not have publicized Abraham's devotion to God, since nobody but Isaac was present.

Problem: they could have been told about it, although it is true that if there were no witnesses Abraham's story could always be doubted (maybe he was attacked by a wild animal or fell off a cliff).

2nd problem: G-d asks Abraham to pass this test so no one will think the previous ones weren't real. But if there were no witnesses, how will anyone come to be convinced of this?

I.e., *mimah nafshach*: either they'd believe his story, in which case it could have served to publicize his devotion, or they wouldn't believe his story, in which case how would they know from it that the previous tests were real?

22:3 He took his two young men with him.

Young? Eliezer must have been at least 20 at the War of the Kings (the first mention of him), which would make him 80 now, and Ishmael was 51 now.

22:4 From Hebron to Mount Moriah is less than a day's journey, but it was only **on the third day of the journey that **Abraham raised his eyes and saw** a cloud hovering over the mountain.**

How did this work? Was God telling Abraham where to turn and taking him on a circuitous route? If He was talking to him the whole time, why did Abraham have to deduce that Mt. Moriah was the place by the presence of a cloud over it?

Chayei Sarah

OVERVIEW: Teachers can—and should—always learn from their students, but in order to educate successfully, they must clearly uphold their authority as mentors.

I wanted to say “claim the high ground” but felt that that’s too colloquial.

23:1 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: The time Sarah spent preparing for her Divine mission....

I’ve spent much time researching the distinction between “to spend time doing something” and “to spend time *in* doing something,” and have yet to find any reference work that explains under what circumstances one is to be preferred over the other. The on-line grammar chat rooms note that in more educated circles the latter usage is found much less.

23:2 Even a small amount of the bread she baked would suffice to satisfy hunger.

I was looking for an exact interpretation of what “a blessing was found in...” means. A search in the databases for this idiom led me to *Yoma* 39b, where it says [Soncino translation]: “A blessing was bestowed on the omer, the two breads, and the showbread, so that every priest who obtained a piece thereof as big as an olive, ate it and became satisfied with some eating thereof and even leaving something over.” From this, it appears that the Talmudic idiom “a blessing being found in xyz” means this, rather than something else such as the dough didn’t fall, or its volume increased miraculously, or it tasted extra good, etc.

The passage in Bechukosai (אוכל קמחא והוא מתברך במעיו), while not expressly associated with the idiom of “a blessing found in xyz,” does indicate that this phenomenon was considered a good sign, associated with tzidkus, etc., so it encouraged me to assume that this is what Chazal/Rashi had in mind here, too.

23:4 a foreigner...a sojourner.

Rashi: “If you want I’m a foreigner and I’ll buy it; if you refuse, I’m a sojourner and I’ll take it by law.” Now, if we go along with the opinion of the Midrash and halachically, that God’s promise to Abraham conferred ownership of the land upon him, then fine, the latter half of this statement makes sense (private vs. collective ownership). But if we say, as the Rebbe says Rashi does, that God’s promise was only a promise and did *not* confer ownership of the land on Abraham, then the latter half of this statement is hard to explain according to *peshat*.

The Rebbe gives an inner-dimensional explanation in LS 15 pp. 150-151: The Land of Israel was destined by God from creation to belong to the Jewish people; it was just that most of it came into their possession with the conquest, while certain parts (the Machpelah Cave, Shechem) came into their possession earlier by Divine providence. When Abraham said he’d buy it, he meant that if they agree to relinquish ownership to him, fine; if not, it means that they are forfeiting their role as custodians of the place until it passes to its rightful owners, and this therefore allows him to take it by God’s mandate – presumably forcibly.

If we try to fit this explanation into *peshat*, it would presumably go like this (LS 30 p. 84): If they refuse to sell it to him, it doesn’t mean that he’ll take it forcibly, for doing that without any apparent warrant would be a *chilul Hashem*. Rather, “by force” means “by force of logic,” i.e., convincing them, invoking God’s promise to give the whole land to his future offspring. The Hittites, according to Rashi, were aware that God was going to give this land to the Jews in the future (Rashi on Deut), which is why they made Abraham swear that they would not take Jerusalem (and here we *can* invoke the difference between collective vs. individual ownership since this is after the general conquest in Joshua’s time) as a private estate, only as a public one. So

since they knew about the future fate of their city, Abraham's argument could have been persuasive.

Here are the sources that deal with this issue:

Encyclopedia Talmudit, s.v. Eretz Yisrael (pp. 200 ff)

Likutei Sichot, vol. 15, pp. 103 ff (לך לך ה)

Discusses halachic parameters regarding the acquisition of the Land of Israel by the Jewish people. Does not discuss Rashi although there might be some stuff to check out in the footnotes.

Likutei Sichot, vol. 15, pp. 204-210 (תולדות ב)

Explains that Rashi does not hold that Abraham (or the patriarchs in general) acquired the land legally at all.

Likutei Sichot, vol. 20, pp. 131 ff (ויצא ב)

Explains the difference between Abraham's walking the land and G-d's contracting the land under Jacob to indicate to him that it would be easy to conquer.

Likutei Sichot, vol. 29, pp. 80 ff (ראה ב)

Regarding Rashi on Deut. 12:17, how Rashi holds regarding how Abraham made a pact with the Jebusites regarding Jerusalem.

Likutei Sichot, vol. 30, pp. 36-37 and note 15 there (לך לך א)

Explains that Rashi holds that Abraham's walking throughout the Land of Israel did not serve to acquire it for him, and in general that Rashi does not hold that Abraham (or the patriarchs in general) acquire the land legally at all. (General topic: the three altars)

Likutei Sichot, vol. 30, pp. 82-89 (חיי שרה א)

Differentiates between private and national ownership vis-à-vis the Machpelah Cave and King David's conquest/purchase of Jerusalem. Explains how Abraham could make a pact with the Hittites/Jebusites regarding Jerusalem.

23:9 Machpeilah.

We have:

1. The Cave of Machpeilah (23:9, 25:9)
2. Ephron's field which is in the Machpeilah... (23:17)
3. The Cave of the Field of Machpeilah (23:19, 50:13)
4. The Field of Machpeilah (49:30)

Numbers 1, 3, and 4 can all be harmonized by saying that it's really the field that's called Machpeilah, and the term "the Cave of Machpeilah" is just an abbreviation for "the Cave of [the field of] Machpeilah." But #2 is still problematic, for it implies that also the *field* is *in* the Machpeilah, whatever that could mean. See *Apples from the Orchard*, pp. 109 ff for the Kabbalistic explanation of this. Artscroll *Bereishis* quotes the Ramban who says that the Hittites called the whole area Machpeilah, etc.

24:4 The place where **my family** still lives.

The Rebbe says explicitly that *moledet* means "family" (and not "homeland"). LS 15 p. 158.

24:22 and gave them to her.

I originally ended this sentence, "thereby engaging [or betrothing] her to Isaac," but somebody called me on this and I in fact couldn't find any explicit mention of this, at least as *peshuto shel mikra*.

24:49 “Now, if you want to act in kindness and truth towards my master, tell me. If not, say so, and I will turn to the right, that is, southwest of my master’s home, to seek a wife for my master’s son from among the Ishmaelites, **or to the left,** that is, northeast of my master’s home, to seek a wife from among the descendants of Lot.”

It seems that the orientation here is that we’re standing in Charan looking southward. That’s the only way Ammon and Moab can be construed to be on the left. Although Ishmael was presumably back in Hebron at this time, maybe he returned to the Paran desert after the akeidah, realizing (again) that he was not going to inherit anything with Isaac around. Or maybe he already had some children before he left the Paran desert and they were still there. (More precisely, we seem to be in Hebron, facing southeast, so “right” is southwest and “left” is northeast.)

24:51 Rebecca is here in front of you; take her and go.

The Rebbe asks here: If the custom of the place was to provide a girl 12 months to outfit her trousseau, why did they say, “take her and go,” implying “immediately?” I don’t see that this question was answered in the sicha, however. (If the reason they said, “take her and go” is because Eliezer showed them the document and from this it was clear that there was enough wealth in Abraham’s household to provide for all her jewelry needs, then what caused them to suddenly insist that she be given a year or ten months for this express purpose in v. 55? Could it be that when he gave her the gifts [v. 53] they thought he was starting to *mefarnes* her, and if so, they understood that she would *not* be getting jewelry from Abraham’s estate, which then led them to request the full [or part of the] time? Or perhaps the Rebbe’s point is that in the final analysis “take her and go” does NOT mean “immediately,” but just that they are agreeing to the shiduch without asking her?)

24:52 In order to prevent him from doing so, the angel accompanying Eliezer killed him.

The Rebbe says this happened already at this point. The Midrash, however, says that the angel killed Bethuel by switching the plate of poisoned food Bethuel had intended for Eliezer with Bethuel’s plate. If so, this was during the meal, which took place only in the next verse. Apparently, there’s no reason in *peshto shel mikra* to assume that the angel killed Bethuel in this way.

24:59 Along with her former wet nurse.

Deborah?

24:62 Until then, **he had been living in the southern region,** i.e., in or around Beersheba, but he now moved to Hebron.

When did Isaac move (from Hebron) to the south? Did he stay there after the Akeidah and not go back to Hebron to his mother’s funeral? Or did he just go to Hebron for the funeral and return back to Beersheba immediately? Is this why Abraham stopped off in Beersheba – quite out of the way – on his way back from the Akeidah to Hebron, i.e., to settle Isaac there? Or did Isaac move to “the south” (wherever *that* is) only later, e.g., when he heard that his father was sending Eliezer to get Rebecca for him? Did he need some time to himself to introspect or meditate before getting married?

On the other hand, what is the import of 25:11, in which we are told that after Abraham died, Isaac was living around Be’er LaChai Ro’i? Did he move there only then, or is the verse just contrasting where Ishmael dwelt with where Isaac dwelt? And if he was living in Beersheba, why not just call it that, since it was already given its name by this point?

In any case, (1) it seems clear that in our verse he wasn't living in Hebron and just taking an excursion to Be'er LaChai Ro'i, because if so, what does the end of the verse come to tell us? and (2) Isaac definitely moved to Beersheba at some point, because that's where he sent Jacob to Charan from (28:10).

So, *libi omer li* that for some mysterious reason, Isaac moved to Beersheba immediately after the Akeidah and that's why they went there then.

But then, when he married Rebecca everyone seems to imply that he moved to Hebron, because Rebecca restored the miracles to Sarah's tent – even though Rashi does not imply at all that Rebecca lived in Sarah's tent.

It also makes sense that Isaac lived in Hebron after he got married, for then God could tell him, while he was on his way to Egypt and stopping in Gerar, to stay there and not proceed to Egypt. Gerar is on the way from Hebron to Egypt, but not on the way from Beersheba to Egypt.

25:1 He did not remarry Hagar as a full wife, but rather as a concubine:

I originally prefaced this phrase with “in deference to Sarah,” as an explanation of why Abraham married Hagar only as a concubine rather than as a full wife. But someone pointed out that there is no source for this explanation, and I couldn't find any support for it, so I replaced this explanations with the Ramban's.

25:2 She bore him...

A big deal is made about how Abraham fathered children at 140 plus, but Hagar here was quite old herself. Let's say she was no less than 5 when Pharaoh gave her to Sarah in 2023; this means she was at least 15 when Abraham married her the first time and she gave birth to Ishmael. That would make her now, in 2088, at least 70 years old, and she now had 6 kids!

25:6 Abraham also sent away Ishmael together with Hagar's other sons, but he returned some time before Abraham's death.

Ishmael was married already and was probably around 64 when this happened. Funny that Abraham would send away Ishmael just a few years after remarrying his mother.

25:7 He retained the youthful virility that he had regained before conceiving Isaac until his final days, and he died completely righteous and untainted by sin.

I conflated two mutually exclusive sichos here. In vol 20, the Rebbe says that Abraham's physiology was that of the earlier generations, and he had Isaac naturally at age 100 and other sons at age 140, without recourse to a miracle. The proof is that he had Ishmael at age 86. In vol. 35, the Rebbe says that although Abraham had Ishmael at age 86, he is afterwards described as being old, meaning that he had lost his virility and needed a miracle to sire a son, and that the offshoot of this miracle for Abraham was that he retained his virility until he died. I opted for the later sicha, first of all because it is *mishnah acharonah*, second because Terach had Abraham at 70 so Abraham having Ishmael at 86 is not such a big deal, and therefore not such a proof that he was of the old order physiologically. (I think there's another sicha, that I used also, that says that Abraham and Sarah had to miraculously change back to the old order for them to be a bridge between the old order and the new, Torah-order.) But I used the point from the first sicha that Rashi's comment on this verse includes a reference to Abraham's virility.

25:18 Shur, etc.

See on 16:7, above.

Toledot

25:21 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: she was born without a womb.

This unfortunate medical condition is known as vaginal agenesis, or mullerian agenesis, or Rokitansky syndrome, or Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) syndrome; it affects approximately 1 out of every 4000 girls.

25:22 The prayers of a righteous person who is the child of a righteous parent are more effective than those of a righteous person who is the child of a wicked parent.

Why? because his prayers were backed by both his and his parents' merit, whereas Rebecca's were backed only by her own merit? or because he himself is more of koach because of his yichus? Or is there a difference?

25:22 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: How could the child of two entirely righteous individuals possibly possess a propensity for evil, even *in utero*?

Why is this a question? In ch. 2 of Tanya we're told that the parents are only responsible for the *levush* of the *neshamah*, and that sometimes a high *neshamah* can descend into the offspring of simpletons, so the opposite should also be true, no? Is the answer that since the *Avos* were a *merkavah* for Divinity, they overrode this principle? Or maybe the *levush* is the predilection?

25:27 Esau, although continuing to don the external trappings of righteousness, secretly pursued a life of unbridled sensualism.

In LS vol. 5, pp. 369-370, the Rebbe asks a good question on this and offers a different solution to the 13-15 problem. But I cannot use it, because it contradicts Rashi on 28:9, where he says that Yishamel was 74 when Jacob was born, which means they were born in 2108 (2034 + 74 = 2108). Which again means that they were fifteen when Abraham died in 2123 (2123 - 2108 = 15). See note on p. 278 of vol. 5.

25:32 Esau foresaw that the day would come when....

Esau had *ruach hakodesh*? or maybe he learned this in his Torah studies. But that engenders a whole different issue: if it was preordained that the Levites would inherit the sacrificial service, what's the whole hullabaloo over the firstborn losing it in the sin of the Golden Calf and Levi earning it thereby? I have not made a big deal out of this because *Shai LaMora* and *Torah Ufirusha - Eshel Avraham* notes on this verse that this remark of Rashi's does not appear in a number of manuscripts, nor does it appear in the first edition, and the supercommentaries on Rashi do not mention it. Artsroll says it appears only in the Alkabetz edition.

26:1 Even though it has also been somewhat affected by the famine.

This is how I got out of the dilemma: if it was affected by the famine, as Rashi implies in v. 12, then why did he go there altogether?

26:7 When the local people asked about his wife, he said....

Hello? Jacob and Esau were born already! The locals didn't see that she had kids? Maybe Esau already had left home and was roaming the wilds, and Jacob was away in yeshiva with Shem and Ever? Or maybe they came with their parents, but Isaac told everyone, "Yeah, their mother died" or "we got divorced, and this is their aunt." Also, it's not that far from Hebron to Gerar. Wouldn't everyone have known about Isaac & Rebecca?

26:7 Because she is of beautiful appearance.

She was already over 60 by this time, just as Sarah was 65 when she and Abraham went to Egypt. Since the Torah does not make a big deal about the fact that they were still beautiful enough to be enticing then, it must have been not rare for women of this age to be beautiful (or, standards of beauty might have been somewhat different then, and a slightly aged look was not interpreted as detracting from beauty). Whatever the case, we cannot apply the statement that Sarah was “100 like 20 like 7” to explain this, because (a) no such statement is made about Rebecca, and she was also beautiful at the same age Sarah was when she was abducted, and (b) the Rebbe says that this statement does not mean that she retained her youthful beauty throughout her life; rather, it means that *because of the miracle of Isaac’s birth*, because of which she regained her youthful beauty, she was as beautiful at 100 as she was at 20 and at 7.

26:8 The king did not abduct Rebecca at once.

Maybe because he heard (or remembered, if it was the same guy) what had happened before, with Sarah?

26:15 The wells that his father’s servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham.

Although the wells spoken of there were in Beersheba, not in Gerar, which is some distance away.

26:32 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: the second day of *Rosh HaShanah*, on which Satan’s opposition is less harsh than on the first day—he no longer *contends*, but only *harasses*.

How do we see this? In *Shem MiShmuel* he quotes the Arizal that the first day is on *inyanei elokus* while the second day is on *inyanei olam hazeh*. I think I saw this somewhere in Chabad, too. If so, how is the former “hard” and latter “soft?”

And how is *esek* harsher than *sitnah*?

26:34 Esau called her father the Hittite rather than the Hivite, because he wanted Isaac to think that she was a local girl.

And the Hivites had not yet supplanted the Rephaim as one of the seven Canaanite nations (15:20), yes? The Hivites do not appear on the scene until the incident with Shechem (34:2).

27:1 Because of the ministering angels’ tears that had fallen into his eyes when he was bound on the altar.

The Rebbe points out that, at least from one aspect, these three reasons are mutually exclusive, for he understands the teardrops as having made Isaac blind *immediately* after (or at) the Akeidah, not gradually over time or by delayed reaction 86 years later. OR: he could have gone partially blind by the teardrops and only fully blind later because of the incense.

ANOTHER PROBLEM: the Rebbe says Rashi’s reason for explaining why Isaac went blind was because God had blessed him, so this blessing must have included good health. But this blessing took place after Abraham died and Isaac was 75 -- 38 years after the Akeidah. ALSO: why would angel teardrops blind someone, anyway?

27:3 Your sword and the arrows for your bow....

If he was supposed to shecht the animal, what did he need these for? The arrows for protection against wild beasts?

27:15 Which had belonged to Nimrod.

Nimrod must have been born at least by 1965, which would have made him 158 when Esau was 15 in 2123. Not at all implausible.

27:22 The voice—the manner of speaking—is the voice of Jacob.

Rashi on Numbers 20:16 and 20:20 says that these words are a blessing: that Jacob's power is the prayers he says with his voice, and Esau's power is the physical power of his hands. Did Isaac have this in mind when he said this sentence? It sounds like he's stating an already established fact.

27:27 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Isaac saw visions of the construction, destruction, and reconstruction.

Unusable adjective before "visions": Hegelian. ☺

27:29 Those who curse you shall be cursed, and those who bless you shall be blessed.

Why are the nouns in the plural and the adjectives (adjectival phrases, in the English) in the singular?

27:44 Until your brother's anger has subsided.

Well, which is it? Seven years or until Esau's anger subsides? I.e., what if it takes more (or less) than seven years for Esau's anger to subside?

27:45 I will then send word and bring you from there.

Rashi says that Rebecca sent Deborah to fetch Jacob. When did she send him? If it was at the end of seven years, it means that Deborah hung out for 13 years with Jacob's family until joining them for the return trip. If it was when Rebecca felt that Esau's anger had subsided, then probably Deborah would have told that to Jacob, in which case why all the fretting attending their upcoming meeting? Anyway, it appears *al pi peshat* that Esau did *not* forget about what Jacob did nor forgive him, at least until they met on Jacob's way back. So it appears that Rebecca sent Deborah after seven years. ??? *Sefer HaYashar* says Rebecca sent Deborah after 14 years. Another Midrash says that Jacob didn't want to leave Laban's house (why?) so Rebecca sent Deborah to fetch him. So this would mean that she could have sent her at the end of the 20 years, for a third reason.

28:2 From among the daughters of Laban.

So they were already born at this point. Did Isaac intend for Jacob to go to yeshiva for 14 years now? Evidently not, because otherwise, doing so would not have been considered a potential breach of honoring one's parents. So Isaac intended for Jacob to go straight to Charan and get married. (Rebecca, too, only wanted Jacob gone for 7 years.) So Laban's daughters must have been old enough to get married—following Rebecca's precedent, at least 3. According to *Sefer HaYashar*, they were born in 2164, which would have made them 7 years old now. *Yalkut Shimoni, Vayishlach* 135 has them born in 2170, 1 year before this incident. Rabbeinu Bachaye has Rachel born in 2180, i.e., not even born yet at this point!

28:5 As Abraham had done when he dispatched Eliezer....

The sources just say that Jacob had "possessions" or "wealth" or "money" when Eliphaz caught him. Nothing specifically about camels, jewels, or documents. I wrote what I did because (1) if there were camels and men, what did Jacob do with them for 14 years? (2) if there was just money, why would he cry before Rachel just because he didn't have money? OK, it would have been cause to cry, but not as much as if he was planning on giving her jewels and showing her

brother the inheritance document. (3) It would seem there was an inheritance document, because when Eliphaz dispossessed Jacob, Jacob had nothing left and was therefore considered destitute and therefore considered dead, so whatever it was that Eliphaz took had to not only clean Jacob out of what he had on him but also of whatever he had to his name. (Of course, it is possible that there was no document and the money and jewels Jacob had on him were in fact all he had to his name, and then by Eliphaz taking them he could be considered poor. But it would logically seem likely that Isaac would send a document to Charan to impress them just as Abraham had done.)

Vayeitzei

28:10 He therefore returned to the academy of Ever....

Inasmuch as Shem was Malchitzedek, king of Shalem, which would later be Jerusalem, we may assume that his yeshiva was also in Shalem. Yitzchak never left the Land of Israel and his wife Rebecca went to the yeshiva to ask about her pregnancy, so it was probably not far from where they lived. In Tzfat there's a "Cave of Shem and Ever," but I heard that this was an Arab tradition. On the other hand, it's kind of farfetched to think that Jacob spent 14 years in Salem, and then only later realized he hadn't prayed there. Maybe Salem was located where Ir David is now, and Mt. Moriah was the next hill over.

28:10 Mount Moriah, where his father and grandfather had prayed.

The Talmud implies that Mt. Moriah was the place where Isaac prayed "in the field." But it is highly unlikely in *pehuto shel mikra* that he was living around Be'er LaChai Ro'i and went to *daven* at Mount Moriah and then came back to Be'er LaChai Ro'i or thereabouts and that's where Rebecca's caravan met him. Note that Rashi's statement at the end of his comment on 28:17, where he quotes the Midrash about "Abraham called it a mountain, Isaac a field, Jacob a house" is deemed spurious by Artscroll and Rashi HaShalem. We can therefore, *b'pashtus*, take Rashi's statement here that "my fathers prayed at that place," i.e., Mt. Moriah, to refer to when Abraham and Isaac were both there at the *Akeidah*. Presumably Isaac also prayed when Abraham made the ram-sacrifice.

28:11 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: The "stones" of "that place" thus refer to the lowest element of physical reality, that which displays no sign of Divine life at all.

Is there a level of *physical* reality that *does* display divine life?

28:13 He miraculously contracted the entire Land of Israel into the four square cubits under Jacob's body.

Someone asked: If the entire land was folded under Jacob, this would include the people in the land which would also include Jacob's parents. But wouldn't it be disrespectful for Jacob to be lying on top of his parents, and besides wasn't this uncomfortable for his parents?

Answer: Better question: if the entire land was folded under Jacob, that meant that gaping holes were left in the Earth's surface, which would have exposed the water table and caused floods; also, all the animals and people smashed into a four-by-four cubit area would have instantly died, and the compressed matter would have produced a gravitational imbalance that might have thrown the earth out of its orbit, thereby killing off all life on the planet by hurling it too close to the sun or too far.

28:19 This place was already known as Bethel.

It is possible that it was in fact known only as Luz until this point, and that all the previous references to Bethel are to be understood as "the place that would later be named Bethel" by Jacob. But since it is not so unusual for Biblical characters to "rename" a place with its original name, just adding new or added significance to the existing name thereby, I left it as is.

29:3 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Since, Jacob, however, embodied the synthesis of love and fear, as we have seen, he was able to remove the boulder by himself.

By doing so, Jacob prepared himself spiritually for his confrontation with Laban. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 272-273. If only I had access to that volume of *Or HaTorah*....!

29:16 Now Laban had two twin daughters.

There are all kinds of opinions as to when Leah and Rachel were born, and not all of them say they were twins. But (besides the fact that Rashi usually follows *Seder Olam* unless compelled not to) assuming they *were* twins makes it more plausible that Jacob could mistake Leah for Rachel.

29:17 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Leah cried constantly....

Comment by Yossi Marcus: In the sicha the Rebbe says that Rachel, in contrast, embodied the role of the innately righteous person, whose saintliness is a given.

Leah and Rachel's children followed in their mothers' respective paths: Leah's children embodied the role of penitents. They sinned in selling Joseph and later repented for it. Rachel's children, on the other hand, embodied the role of the perfectly righteous who never sinned. Jacob is essentially introverted and is therefore connected to Rachel. This however contradicts our next comment on verse 18 and the vort on yosef Hashem li ben acher (as the Rebbe points out in fn. 38). I therefore left out this part of the sicha. In other words, based on our next comment on the next verse, Jacob should be associated with reaching out and helping an Esau do teshuvah.

In truth, you could make a pilpul connecting Jacob's role as expressed in the next comment with avodas hatzadikim, as the rebbe explains regarding rabbi yishmael Kohen gadol, in contrast to Rabbi Akiva:

Rabbi Akiva embodies avodas hateshuva because of his past, and is therefore focused on ratzo. Rabbi Yishmael, tzadik, is focused on drawing from above to below, like Jacob.

But the vort in the sicha is that Leah was connected to actual outreach, the opposite of the escape of ratzo, and, again, should be right up Jacob's alley, in a manner of speaking.

29:35 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: The Hebrew names for all the songs of praise in the Bible appear in the feminine gender (*shirah*), with the exception of the last song, composed to be sung at the final Redemption, which is referred to in the masculine (*shir*).

Ten songs of praise (Targum to Song of Songs 1:1):

1. Adam (m!!)
2. Moses (Song of the Sea) (f)
3. Well (f)
4. Moses (Haazinu) (f)
5. Joshua (not *shir*)
6. Deborah (vatashar, no noun)
7. Chanah (vatispalel, not *shir*)
8. David (f)
9. Solomon (Song of Songs) (m!!)
10. The Messiah (m)

30:1 Identical in all aspects....

The fact that two sisters are identical twins doesn't preclude the possibility that one can be fertile and the other infertile for purely physical reasons, does it?

30:14 Duda'im....

The encyclopedias (and I'havdil R' Aryeh Kaplan in *The Living Torah* and *Me'am Lo'ez*) say explicitly that mandrakes were thought to have magical powers in ancient times, but that jasmine is just used to scent tea and make perfume. So it's hard to imagine that Reuben, Leah, and Rachel would have made such a big deal out of these plants just in order to make perfume, since presumably there was no need to entice Jacob to have relations with his wives. (Unless we posit that because

of the perfume they would wear, he would have more desire for them that would increase the quality or quantity of his seed, but in any case we see the infertility problem wasn't his, it was Rachel's [all the time] and Leah's [since she had her last child.] It makes much more sense to assume that they were interested in this plant as a fertility drug. (Could a perfume act as fertility drug? Maybe by relaxing the women or something similar...) So therefore, even though Rashi says that this was "jasmine," I kept with "mandrakes," especially in light of the footnote in Artscroll Rashi, which casts some doubt as to what Rashi actually means by "jasmine" anyway.

30:27 I only had daughters.

Rashi concludes this from the fact that Laban sent Rachel to water the flocks when the shepherds were doing the same. We saw with Rebecca (24:11) that the "daughters of the townsmen" went out in the evening to draw water from the well, and Rebecca was among them. Evidently the women's hours at the well were too late in the day for flock-watering, or else Laban would have presumably sent Rachel to water his flocks then.

30:32 And belts.

These are not mentioned until later, but I had to include them here also, unless we make the unlikely assumption that goats started having white belts only later.

30:32 Remove from there every white-speckled or white-blotched he-goat...

1. Why does Jacob mention the he-goats and she-goats separately, and separate them by the lambs?
2. Why, when he mentions the he-goats, does he mention the speckled ones before the blotched, while when he mentions the she-goats, he mentions the blotched ones before the speckled? Is he mentioning them in the order of their frequency of occurrence?

30:38 Placing them **in the water running through the troughs where the flocks came to drink**....

I.e., rather than stuck in the ground next to the running water, for if that were the case, there would be no opportunity for the animals to be "startled" by seeing the sticks; they would see them long before they approached the watering troughs.

30:38 They were startled.

It is tempting to translate the root *yacheim* as "to be in heat," but it appears that it doesn't mean this, because (1) nobody says the sticks caused the animals to go into heat, only that the sticks influenced how (not when or if) they conceived, or that the sticks impregnated them (but not that it made them ovulate), and (2) later on (v. 41), the first *yacheim* could indeed mean "go into heat," but the second can't mean this, for why would Jacob try to put them into heat if they were already in heat? Therefore, it must mean simply "mate." In v. 38: "the animals mated when they came to drink"; v. 39, "the animals mated via the sticks"; v. 41: "when the robust animals mated, Jacob put the sticks...to have them mate by the sticks."

30:40 After a few mating seasons, Jacob had successfully produced a sufficient quantity of white-marked animals to regulate the breeding naturally, no longer having to resort to the use of the sticks.

I had to say this (rather than implying that Jacob used both the stick-method and the model-method to breed the desired goats), for otherwise, if Jacob continued using the sticks, why did he have to use the technique of parading the properly-patterned models in front of the mating

animals? On the other hand, I couldn't imply that he only used the sticks for one mating season, because v. 41 uses the idiom "whenever," which implies more than once.

31:10 Bucks.

I would have used the word "buck" before to refer to the he-goats, but in most cases I could not, since the word "goat" was in bold (being a translation of *eiz*) and the "he" was not.

31:23 Catching up with him....

There are two different words used for "catch up" here and in v. 25: *d-b-k* and *n-s-g*. Is there a difference? It would seem so, since after *dbk* Laban paused overnight and only *nsg*'d the following morning, right?

Vayishlach

OVERVIEW: Closing the curtain on Esau's relevance to the Torah's narrative until the messianic future.

The cliché version of this would be: "consigning Esau to the dustbin of history."

OVERVIEW: Who possessed the breadth of vision and intricate knowledge of God's will.

All this is supposed to convey the idea of "*da'as torah*."

OVERVIEW: As faithful emissaries, devoted to the study and implementation of the Torah's teachings, we can safely appropriate the untamed, raw power and youthful impetuosity of Esau and channel it into....

Unusable quote here: "Youth is wasted on the young" —George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950).

32:5 Thus shall you say to my master, Esau....

Be'er Mayim Chaim and the *perush* on *Devek Tov* say that Jacob was telling Esau that he shouldn't think that he can throw off his yoke and cease being subservient to Jacob, since according to Isaac's blessing, he can do this only when Jacob doesn't keep the commandments. But this explanation makes little sense, since Rashi has just said that Jacob is trying to convince Esau that Isaac's blessing has not come true yet, so if so, Esau is not yet subservient to Jacob in the first place.

Nachalat Yaakov gets around this by taking these two explanations as mutually exclusive: Either "*garti* — I'm still a nothing and the blessing hasn't come true yet," or "*garti* — it has come true, you are my servant, and because I'm still *frum* you have no right to free yourself from my service."

I based my paraphrase of Rashi here on the Rebbe's *sichah* of 14 Kislev 5737 (*Biurei HaChumash* p. 104).

The *Kli Yakar* has a wonderful way of reading these two explanations of Rashi: "Evidently my trick didn't work, and since Isaac thought he was blessing you, his blessing is going to affect you and not me. The proof is that, as you see, I'm still a nobody. If you argue that this blessing *will* take effect on me and that the reason it hasn't yet is because I have not been worthy of it, then you should know that I kept all the 613 commandments even while I was sojourning with Laban, so that can't explain it. Rather, it must be as I said." But, as the *Kli Yakar* admits, this does not sit well with the fact that Rashi introduces the second comment with *davar acher*, and it is a bit of a kvetch seeing that Rashi does not openly allude to such an understanding. Therefore, I left it as it stands.

32:31 Face to face.

Non-hyphenated, according to American Heritage Dictionary

32:32 The sun rose upon him earlier than it naturally should have.

Was this supposed to make up for that? In other words, did the sun rising early now restore the imbalance that was caused by the sun setting early then? If we consider the movement of the sun in the sky, it appears that things just got worse. After Bethel, the sun was *x* hours ahead of where it should be; after Peniel, it was *y* hours *more* ahead of where it should be.

33:4 For joy.

The only source for this I could find was SR Hirsch; the *midrashim* only say that Jacob wept because Esau was trying to bite his neck and Esau wept because his teeth hurt. But since Rashi does not mention this *midrash*, I obviously can't use it. As to why Rashi does not mention why they wept, we can presume that once he says that Esau did kiss him at least part-heartedly, it's understood that he cried out of being emotionally overwhelmed (and that Jacob was either similarly overwhelmed or overwhelmed at seeing Esau overwhelmed). Yossi Marcus gave the source from *Torah Or*.

33:13 The children are frail....

True, Jacob had just covered the distance from Charan to Gilead (approximately 600 kilometers) in seven days (i.e., going about 87 kilometers/day), and from Penuel to Mt. Seir is only about 160 kilometers, but Jacob was trying make excuses.

33:16 By sparing four hundred of Esau's descendants....

Were these 400 Amalekites their reincarnations? their descendants (a little rough since the Amalekites came from Esau himself not the 400, but anything's possible)? If not, how is sparing them a reward for Esau's 400 men?

33:18 Once Jacob arrived in the Land of Israel....

It would have seemingly made more sense to assume that Jacob paid off Esau when Esau was with him, rather than offering it to him after they parted company, which would have involved sending messengers back and forth, etc. But (1) the Rebbe (LS 25, pp. 168-173) makes no mention of this transaction in the context of this meeting. (2) Jacob himself said to Esau that he couldn't accompany Esau because it would kill all his flocks! (3) Jacob built *sukot* for his livestock when he was in Sukot, so he still must have had it (he couldn't have worked at something else and bought all that livestock in one or two seasons.) (4) The Torah tells us that he came "safely" (*shalem*) to Shechem, and Rashi tells us that he had as much livestock then as he had before his gift to Esau, and the Rebbe says that it was his prolific flocks that replenished themselves after the gift.

It makes sense that getting rid of his Diaspora-flocks would occur to Jacob when he had just crossed the Jordan into the Land of Israel, rather than while he was still at Sukot, which was outside the Land of Israel. We can presume that when he entered the land, Jacob felt its holiness and only then realized that possessions acquired outside the land were not on the same spiritual level, or some such thing. *Nachalat Yaakov* says that once Jacob had some Eretz-Yisrael flocks, he decided he no longer wanted those from *chutz la-aretz*.

This also affords a nice transition into the next verse, in which Jacob demonstrates his *chibat ha-aretz* by buying a plot of land and paying for it with fancy coins.

According to *Shemot Rabbah* 31:17, the transaction occurred when Jacob and Esau were burying Isaac, i.e., exactly 20 years later. But this might not work in *peshuto shel mikra*, because would the same sheep and goats and cows still be alive 20 years later?

Eli Touger suggested the Esau visited Yitzchak occasionally and there would therefore have been numerous opportunities for Jacob to have made this transaction with Esau between the years 2205, when he returned to the Land of Israel, and 2228, when Yitzchak died.

33:18 The wealth he had acquired outside the land....

On the one hand, Rashi says *nichsei chutz laAretz*, meaning anything. On the other hand, he just sold the animals. Or did he also sell all the clothing, pots and pans, tents, etc., too? What did he leave himself with?

33:20 God augmented His earlier promise.

This—God calling Jacob *El*—happened in Shechem. Was this perhaps a portent of how God would soon, in Bethel, give Jacob the name *Yisrael*?

33:20 The same dominion over the entire world.

What is this, exactly: the righteous' power to work miracles? or nullify Divine decrees? Or the power we all possess to conquer our physical urges (which is quite a miracle even if we don't always perceive it as being so)?

33:20 In this sense, **the God of Israel appointed** Jacob the representative of **God** in the world.

I would think that included in this is the fact that since Jacob was the bearer of the message of Divine consciousness in the world, God called him "God," but I haven't seen this explicitly anywhere yet.

The bit about God now augmenting His earlier promise of *ufaratzta* is my own *bochsvora* in order to put things in context.

I have also taken the liberty of combining Rashi's two explanations, again, in order to help put things in a contextual framework.

Meam Loez's peshat about God giving the righteous the power to annul Divine decrees doesn't seem to fit into *peshuto shel mikra*, since why would God give this to Jacob now, and how do we see that Jacob used it?

34:7 For Shechem had committed an outrage to their father Israel.

"Israel" at this point did not mean anything other than "Jacob."

34:13 When Jacob's sons replied...cunningly:

Does this mean all the sons or just Simeon and Levi? The word "cunningly" seems to imply that they were planning on massacring everybody already at this point. So that would mean that either only Simeon and Levi are meant here, or that the other brothers were party to Simeon and Levi's plans, and that those two acted on behalf of them all.

Similarly on v. 27, below: did just Simeon and Levi plunder the city, or all the brothers?

34:17 We will take our daughter.

Dinah was their *sister*. Perhaps they said "daughter" here since everyone was talking about "daughters" during this negotiation.

34:24 and all the males who had come out to the gate of his city had themselves circumcised.

The translations of Onkelos (*Onkelos* and *The Ariel Chumash*) understand him to imply that "those who passed through the gate of his city" circumcised "all the males." If this is so, the Onkelos is changing וימלו from passive/intransitive to active/transitive. (When I read Onkelos, I understood him to imply that "they circumcised [active] themselves," "themselves" being the understood but not articulated object of "circumcised.")

The way I translated the verse requires the insertion of an unarticulated "of" ("And all the males of all those who came out to the gate of his city had themselves circumcised").

34:26 Jacob took up his sword and bow.

Sefer HaYashar says that Jacob and his twelve sons were bolstered by 100 of Isaac's servants who had come to help them. This is not mentioned in the sources (*Bereishit Rabbah* 80:10, 97:6, *Targum Yerushalmi* on Genesis 48:22) or Rashi (on 48:22). On the other hand, it's hard to imagine how one

person (Jacob) could wield a sword and bow simultaneously. Maybe he held his bow to fend them off from a distance, and had his sword ready in case they got close?

34:31 הכזונה יעשה את אחותנו?

Rashi says: הכזונה – הפקר.

(Presumably Rashi translates the word this way [rather than according to its literal meaning, “prostitute”] because Shechem did *not* treat Dinah at all like a prostitute, i.e., they did not pay her for “services” – which she then provided consensually – and then say goodbye. He abducted her and *raped* her, all against her will.¹)

As to how to translate/paraphrase הפקר, I can't use “ownerless,” because that implies that women are generally “owned.”

Relevant synonyms for “ownerless”:

unpossessed, unattached, not belonging
 masterless, ownerless, stray, nobody's, no man's
 not owned, unowned, unappropriated
 unclaimed, disowned
 up for grabs, anybody's
 unheld, unoccupied, untenanted, unleased
 derelict, abandoned, not retained
 unobtained, unacquired, untaken, free, unoccupied, going begging, unwanted

My preference would be for “up for grabs,” but that's of course too idiomatic.

Margolin Chumash has “Should he [have been allowed to] treat our sister like an abandoned woman?” I didn't like this because, again, it implies that women are normally kept under lock and key.

Artsroll Rashi translates הפקר as “wantonly.” I didn't like “wantonly” because its has too many meanings:

1. Immoral or unchaste; lewd.
2. a. Gratuitously cruel; merciless. b. Marked by unprovoked, gratuitous maliciousness; capricious and unjust: *wanton destruction*.
3. Unrestrainedly excessive: *wanton extravagance; wanton depletion of oil reserves*.
4. Luxuriant; overabundant: *wanton tresses*.
5. Frolicsome; playful.
6. Undisciplined; spoiled.²

So therefore it's not precise enough.

I tried “capriciously,” because it means Characterized by or subject to whim; impulsive and unpredictable.³ But it fails to convey the seriousness of the offense.

¹ On the other hand, Chazal often use the word זונה just to mean “an immoral woman,” not necessarily a prostitute. For example, when Joseph was about to do it with Mrs. Potiphar, his father, Jacob, came to him in a vision and said, “Your brothers' names are destined to be engraved on the *choshen*; do you want to forfeit this privilege and instead be associated with זונות?” Now, Mrs. Potiphar was not acting like a prostitute but an adulteress.

So, it could be that when Rashi translates הכזונה as הפקר he is telling us what the word really means, and that the meaning of “prostitute” is actually derivative. In either case, זונה here is, according to Rashi, *not* the word “prostitute” as understood in English.

² *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation. All rights reserved.

So, I therefore translated it as I did.

35:8 So that no one would be reminded of her name and thus be inclined to curse her for having brought him into the world.

But the Torah does mention the death of Isaac. What are we to learn from this, another indication of the pivotal role of women in raising kids?

25:11 I swear to you by My own eternal self....

Rashi on Exodus 32:13 sees this as an oath promising that the Jewish people will be numerous and survive eternally and inherit the land. In context, however, he makes no mention of these ideas here. I have included it anyway, but could it be that, even *al pi peshat*, a verse can assume additional meaning retroactively when there is occasion for it to do so?

35:13-14 Rashi: איני יודע מה מלמדנו.

In *Kulmus* #122, p. 16, the author says that this comment belongs on v. 13, and that its presence on v. 14 is a printer's mistake that is unfortunately both common in printed editions and nonsensical. It appears on v. 13 in the first two preliminary editions, since that's how I got it in the Rashi file I purchased, but I changed it to v. 14 for the third printing.

Shai LaMora does not seem to address this issue, and even says that some editions omit this Rashi entirely, and quotes a תירוץ from the *Gur Aryeh*. In the full edition, he does cite a version that makes it clear that this comment belongs on v. 13, even though he does not seem to have picked up on it.

Rashi HaShaleim (both inside and in the comparative versions in the back) puts it on v. 13, as does the Chavel edition.

35:14 Wine-libation.

Yes?

35:19 God will then promise her that, in her merit....

Wasn't the Babylonian exile limited to 70 years? What was Rachel's merit needed for?

Something about the story also doesn't seem to make sense. The point seems to be that the whereas the patriarchs (and possibly others) could not evoke any response from God, Rachel could, on the merit of her argument regarding having not been jealous of Leah. But if this is the case—i.e., if the patriarchs could pray for the exiles even though they were buried in the Machpelah cave—why did Rachel have to be buried in Bethlehem? If we remove the idea of the patriarchs also praying for the exiles, then we can justify Rachel's burial in Bethlehem in order for her to "notice" the exiles as they pass by. True, it is somewhat farfetched to assert that the patriarchs did not know about the Destruction and the Exile because their graves weren't nearby the scenes of the action, but at least there's no incongruity in the story. In some versions of the story, the point is not that Rachel "notices" the exiles passing her grave and is thus aroused to pray for them, but that the exiles, passing by her grave, are aroused to ask her to pray for them (after having asked the patriarchs at Hebron to pray for them, to no avail). In these versions, there also seems to be no justification for Rachel to be buried in Bethlehem since presumably she could

³The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation. All rights reserved.

have made her same argument from Hebron. The “best” version of the story, from this point, then, is the one in which no mention is made of the patriarchs praying or being asked to pray for the exiles. In other words: if *all* the patriarchs pray for the exiles, there’s no justification for Rachel to be buried in Bethlehem; only if *only* Rachel prays or is asked to pray.

In *Bereishit Rabbah* 82:10, no mention is made of the patriarchs praying for the exiles or the exiles praying at Rachel’s tomb. This seems to be Rashi’s source.

In *Eichah Rabbah*, prologue 24, mention is made of the other partriarchs praying but no mention is made of the exiles praying. In fact, in this source, no mention is made of the fact that Rachel is buried in Bethlehem in order to enable her to pray for the exiles. This seems to support our thesis that when all the patriarchs are depicted as praying for the exiles, there is no point in Rachel being buried in Bethlehem especially.

Now, the Rebbe (*Hitva’aduyot* 5711, vol. 2, pp. 59-61) makes the point that Rachel being buried in Bethlehem is an extension of her giving up on having relations with Jacob (both during Leah’s wedding night and week and on the day that Reuben gathered the mandrakes); i.e., it is an act of selflessness on her part for the benefit of her descendants. But isn’t it sort of circular reasoning to say that she, over the other patriarchs, was able to arouse God’s mercy because she chose to be buried close to their route of exile in order to pray for them, when the patriarchs were equally able to pray for them from the Machpelah cave? In other words, what did her self-sacrifice obtain for her, other than the merit of the gesture?

In *Pesikta Rabbah* 3:4, it says that Rachel is buried there in order that the exiles could pray at her grave and *then* she could arouse mercy on them.

Why did Rachel have to be buried in Bethlehem in order to pray for the exiles?

35:21 Instead of proceeding on to his father’s home in Hebron.

When did Isaac move to Hebron from Beersheba?

35:22 Although he did not confess his misdeed publicly....

Why should he have? Are we supposed to confess our sins to everyone in public?

35:22 poised to become....

I originally wrote “posed to become” here, but someone corrected this to “poised.”

The following is a summary of how the dictionaries define these words (only the definitions pertinent to this discussion are noted):

	pose (trasitive verb)	poise (transitive verb)	poised (adjective)
American Heritage Dictionary, 3 rd edition, 1992	1. To place (a model, for example) in a specific position.	To carry or hold in equilibrium; balance.	
Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2010	3. to put (a model, photographic subject, etc.) in a certain position or attitude	to balance; keep steady to suspend: usually passive or reflexive	
Dictionary.com (based on the Random House Dictionary, 2010)	to place in a suitable position or attitude for a picture, tableau, or the like: to pose a group for a photograph.	to hold supported or raised, as in position for casting, using, etc.: to poise a spear.	2. being in balance or equilibrium: <i>a balloon poised on the nose of a seal.</i> 3. teetering or wavering: <i>to be poised</i>

			<p><i>on the brink of disaster.</i></p> <p>4. hovering or suspended in or as in midair: <i>a bird poised in flight; a helicopter poised overhead.</i></p>
Collins English Dictionary, 2003	1. to assume or cause to assume a physical attitude, as for a photograph or painting	2. (tr) to hold, as in readiness <i>to poise a lance</i>	2. Held balanced or steady in readiness: <i>stood poised for the jump.</i>
Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English	to sit or stand in a particular position in order to be photographed or painted, or to make someone do this	to put or hold something in a carefully balanced position, especially above something else	<p>1 [not before noun] not moving, but ready to move or do something at any moment</p> <p>poised for She waited by the door like a small animal poised for flight.</p> <p>poised on His finger was poised on the camera's shutter release.</p> <p>poised to do something He stood on the edge of the roof, poised to jump.</p> <p>2 [not before noun] completely ready to do something or for something to happen, when it is likely to happen soon</p> <p>poised to do something Spain was poised to become the dominant power in Europe.</p> <p>poised on the brink/edge of something The economy is poised on the edge of collapse.</p>

It is clear from the above that some dictionaries recognize the desired meaning for “poised,” while others do not. None of style/usage reference works I consulted had entries for pose/poise.

So, although the matter is not totally clear, I'm relying on those references above that recognize this meaning for "poised."

35:26 Their half-sisters.

Jacob had fifteen daughters. If we assign ten of them to the ten tribes (besides Judah and Joseph), we have 5 left. Subtract Dinah, 4 left. The Rebbe (LS vol 5 p 269 n 25) says that when Rashi says that [some] of the twins died, it could mean according to the opinion that the twins didn't marry their brothers at all, and the brothers married Canaanite girls, which we are ignoring for the purpose of this Chumash, so far.

35:27 in the city of **Kiryat Arba** in the plain of **Mamrei**.

I reversed these because in English we say "Los Angeles, California," i.e., the particular and then the general, rather than the general location (plains of Mamrei) followed by the particular (city of Kiryat Arba).

36:20 Seir the Horite.

But in v. 2 Tzivon (here a son of Seir) is called a Hivite.

36:22 Lotan's half-sister was **Timna**.

She was also the (half-) sister of Tzivon, Shoval, Dishan, Eitzer, and Dishan; why is Lotan singled out?

36:25 Dishon.

Dishon is also the name of Anah's half brother, the son of Seir. Is there some hanky-panky here, too?

36:31 These kings were not true kings.

How do we see this? And, what about Rome? Can't get any more king-like than them!

36:39 Meheitavel was also known as **the daughter of Mei-Zahav**.

The other possibility is that Matreid was a lady and *she* was the daughter of Mei-Zahav. The way I put it, however, accords with *Bereishit Rabbah* 83:4 and Targum Yonaton, which say that Matreid was Meheitavel's father.

According to Baal HaTurim's and *Be'eir BaSadeh*'s reading of *Bereishit Rabbah* 83:4, the reason the Torah is telling us that Hadar's wife was Meheitavel and she was the daughter of a rich guy was because the rich father spent a lot of money getting Hadar to be crowned as king. My editions of BR don't seem to have this, however.

Vayeishev

37:1 In recognition of this status, Jacob had Judah wear a special, additional cloak.

Question: What's the difference between a robe (Joseph) and a cloak (Judah)?

Answer: Hebrew for robe: כְּתוּנָה. Hebrew for cloak: פְּתִיל, which Rashi translates as שְׂמֵלָה.

37:2 Leah's sons shunned Bilhah's and Zilpah's sons because their mothers had been handmaids.

Meam Loez says that Jacob freed Bilhah and Zilpah before he married them; does Rashi hold this way too?

37:3 Joseph's studiousness was reminiscent of Israel's own studiousness as a youth....

I tried here to (a) relate Rashi's two explanations and (b) explain why Jacob would like Joseph because he resembled him physically.

37:3 This robe aroused the jealousy of Joseph's brothers.

But Jacob also made Judah wear a special garment. Maybe this interpolation is wrong; maybe they weren't jealous at all because of the robe, and the Torah tells us about it only because it was a premonition of his impending misfortunes and that's it? Or maybe the brothers were not jealous of Judah's cloak because they understood Judah's to be an expression of Jacob's appreciation for *their* philosophy, as stated.

37:4 being honest men who could not act duplicitously, **could not speak with him peaceably.**

But for the sake of peace, one is supposed to lie. So if they could not speak peaceably, doesn't this rather indicate a failure in the brothers?

37:14 Corrective suffering.

I'd have liked to use "payback," but its usage in this sense is too informal.

37:23 They stripped him of his shirt and of the fine woolen robe.

If that's what it means, aren't these two then out of order?

37:26 And then have to **conceal** our responsibility for **his death**....

Why would they have to hide the fact of his death from Jacob? In the end, they did not try to trick Jacob into thinking that Joseph was not dead; on the contrary, they tried to trick him into thinking that he *was* dead! They could have killed him and then just tried to trick Jacob into thinking they weren't the ones who did it.

37:32 They sent off the fine woolen robe via an emissary.

Why didn't they just bring it to him themselves?

37:34 God arranged for Jacob to atone for the twenty-two-years in which he did not honor his own parents by attending to their needs while he was away from them in Laban's household and tarried on his return journey.

But Jacob was sent away by his mother in order to get married. This marrying process took 14 years – which was no fault of Jacob’s. So (at least) 14 of the 22 years should not be held against Jacob. Possible answer: he could be faulted for not arranging for caring for their needs *in absentia*.

37:36 Courtier.

Hebrew: *saris*. Are all *sarises* eunuchs? JPS says no.

38:6 In the year 2224....

I’m basing all this on *Seder Olam*. However, see LS vol. 5, p. 192 n53, where the Rebbe seems to ignore *Seder Olam* completely! However, the Rebbe there does not address how Judah’s grandchildren were numbered among those who went down to Egypt (which is what forces *Seder Olam* to say what it says).

38:7 He did not regret his act....

From the fact that *Seder Olam* gives us a whole year between when Er marries and he dies, and similar between when Onan marries and dies, it sounds like they both committed this sin repeatedly.

38:8 For you will name your first child after him.

I always thought that this meant that the kid would be called “Ploni the son of Almoni the dead brother,” but Mizrachi and Ramban (and everyone else?) take it as meaning that the kid will have the same name as the dead brother. I think my way of understanding it fits better with the next verse, because it does not seem that it was customary in those days to name your kid after yourself (Ploni the second), so why would Onan care if his firstborn from Tamar would be named Er? I *can* see him caring that his firstborn would be called Ploni *ben Er* and not Ploni *ben Onan*. Also, it is hard to construe the words “that the offspring would not be considered his” as meaning “would bear his brother’s name.”

38:8 The Torah does not stipulate doing so as part of the institution of levirate marriage.

Rashi on Deuteronomy 25:5 clearly states that *Yibum* means that the *yabam* marries his dead brother’s widow and receives his dead brother’s portion in their inheritance from their father, *and that’s it*. His children from her are his, not his dead brother’s.

Apparently, Judah understood levirate marriage according to the literal meaning of those words in Deuteronomy. Did Judah not know about chazal’s interpretation? Is this blasphemous?

38:14 So he would not recognize her....

But doesn’t Rashi say on the next verse that Tamar covered her face whenever she visited his house? So if he didn’t know what she looked like, why did she need to cover her face now? I guess Judah must have seen her before she got married, or on some other occasion.

38:16 He turned aside.

This does not contradict the notion that he kept the Torah before it was given, as stated in 38:8, since there it merely says that he “attempted to keep the Torah whenever possible,” not that he undertook to do so in any obligatory way, as the Rebbe points out (in the source cited there).

38:24 Bring her forth and have her burned:

Burning is the punishment for a *married* woman who is the daughter of a priest and commits adultery. But Tamar at this point was a *widow* who had not yet remarried. So how is she liable to the death penalty altogether, and to burning in particular?

Divrei David (quoted in *Eshel Avraham*) says that because she was זקוקה ליבם, they judged her, on an ad hoc basis (כהוראת שעה) according to the same rule as a married (or betrothed) woman.

The Rebbe says that the gentiles of that time undertook also to punish daughters of priests with death (by burning) for becoming *unmarried* prostitutes, but not to punish them for one-time acts of promiscuity. Therefore, when they found out that she wasn't a prostitute but had just had one act of promiscuity with Judah, they exempted her from the death penalty.

38:26 Once it was clear that Er and Onan had died because of their own sins rather than because of any fault of Tamar's, Judah married her.

I blended the two contradictory meanings similarly in Numbers 11:25. I wonder if it could mean that he never was intimate with her with the same lust as he had before.

38:26 A CLOSER LOOK: In this case, however, it can be argued that for several reasons the prohibition did not apply to Judah and Tamar

Comment by Yossi Marcus: I deliberately left out the explanation of these reasons, since I believe the reader will be put off by the legal hair-splitting to show that the Torah (on pshat level) would allow an act that is today considered repugnant. But here they are:

- 1) Regarding the prohibition of marrying one's father's wife, Rashi comments: "This includes after the father's death." That this teaching is necessary proves that in *other* forbidden relationships, the prohibition does *not* extend after death. Thus on the level of *peshat*, there is no indication that a man cannot marry his daughter-in-law after the death of his son.
- 2) Even if we were to argue that on the *peshat* level forbidden relationships *do* extend after death, this rule would not apply to the prohibition of marrying a daughter-in-law. This is because the reason the Torah provides for this prohibition – so as not to "mix the seed of the father with that of the son" – does not apply once the son has died (or divorced his wife).
- 3) Even if we were to argue that this prohibition applies even after death of the son (since the daughter-in-law had at one time received the seed of the son), the prohibition would not apply in Tamar's case, since she never received the seed of Er and Onan.

38:29 Since primogeniture is determined by which baby's *head* emerges first.

R' Avraham ben HaRambam, citing R' Shmuel ben Chofni, as quoted in Ariel Chumash (English, p. 308). See also LS 30, p. 187, n32.

38:30 Zerach and Peretz.

The upshot of the sicha in vol. 30 that deals with this (especially note 34 on p. 187) seems to be that although both Zerach and Peretz had unworthy descendants, Peretz also had illustrious ones – the (righteous) kings of the line of David – so therefore, on that merit, he was awarded primogeniture.

39:1 God made Potiphar impotent.

Gur Aryeh and Ramban point out that he couldn't have become completely impotent, for we see that he was having relations with his wife later (v. 19). In addition, *Be'er BaSadeh* points out that if he was impotent, how could she contrive to conceive from Joseph – without being able to attribute her pregnancy to her husband? So, they say, he just became lest lustful.

39:6 After being in charge of Potiphara's house for ten years....

The overwhelming majority of Midrashic sources indicate that Joseph was in Potiphar's house for a year and sentenced to 10 years in jail, to which two years were later added for a total of 12 years. The only source I could find that says he was 10 years in Potiphar's house and 3 years in jail was *Rabbeinu Ba'alei HaTosefot Hadar Zekeinim*, as quoted in *Torah Sheleimah, Vayeisheiv* 40, §12. (He also cites R' DovBer Retner's commentary to *Seder Olam*, ch. 2, which I looked up and his source is apparently Josephus!) (See also *Seder HaDorot HaShaleim* §2217.) The book *Ma'aseih Bereishit* by Rabbi Bentzion Shapiro (2nd edition, p. 56) states that this is a difference of opinion in *Midrash Rabbah*, but I couldn't find any mention of it.

Everyone agrees that 40:4 means that the courtiers spent only one year in prison, so they must have gone into prison 3 years before Joseph was released. Thus, since Rashi says that they were put in prison in order to distract everyone from Joseph's incident with Potiphar's wife, it means that that incident had to have taken place shortly before 3 years before Joseph's release.

It follows that those who say that Joseph was in prison for 12 years total must say that 9 years elapsed between the Potiphar's wife incident and the courtier's incarceration. This goes against Rashi's statement (on Genesis 15:1, 39:7; Proverbs 28:32) that אחר (40:1) always means סמוך.

There are, of course, opinions cited in the Midrash that אחר means מופלג (perhaps this is what was referred to in *Ma'aseih Bereishit*?), but this is not Rashi's opinion in general, and certainly not in this case, inasmuch as he states that they courtiers were incarcerated *in order* to distract everyone from the incident with Potiphar's wife.

39:12 Seed issued miraculously through his fingernails.

In the Oz VeHadar *Bereishit Hamevu'ar, Shirat HaBe'er* commentary on Genesis 49:26 §345, he quotes Musafya, *Teshuvot HaGeonim* §26 (Lyck, 5624) to the effect that the seed did not really issue from Joseph's fingers (see link). Also, in the *Matok MiDevash* commentary to *Tikunei Zohar* 69 (110a, pp. 154-155 in vol. 3 of the *Matok MiDevash* 5764 edition), the author writes that it was not Joseph's seed but his passion (בחינת הבל וחמימות) that issued from the fissures in the digits where the fingernail joins the flesh (מבין בקיעת הצפרנים לבשר), unfortunately not quoting any source for this other than likening it to the case described in *Shevuot* 18a. However, the Maharsha on *Sotah* 36b implies that it was actual seed, and that Joseph was *punished* for this spillage by not meriting to father twelve sons, but only two, the other ten being transferred to Benjamin. Artscroll on *Sotah* 36b mentions *Ben Yehoyada* as understanding this literally, also.

<http://www.hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=43048&st=&pgnum=24>

39:23 Could not find fault in anything that was under Joseph's charge.

Onkelos.

40:14 As I have predicted.

Does the Rebbe mean to imply that Joseph meant to imply that things went well for the cupbearer *because* Joseph so predicted? Certainly what was going to happen would have happened anyway whether or not Joseph would have predicted it, no?

40:15 Kidnapped.

How was he kidnapped/stolen? He was sold. Is it that the brothers "stole" him from their father?

40:23 God postponed Joseph's release from prison from three *days* after the dream to three *years* after it.

Presumably because Joseph had to change, and the word for “year” (*shanah*) comes from the word for “change” (*shinui*), i.e., in order to truly change yourself, you need to apply the new you to a year of (climactic and other) changes.

Mikeitz

OVERVIEW: In such times, it would be crucial for them to follow Joseph's example....

Although not a patriarch, Joseph is one of the seven shepherds. What's the difference between what the seven shepherds give us and what the patriarchs give us? Interestingly, Joseph was removed from the number of tribes, as if he became a quasi-patriarch, an extension of Jacob (*yesod* of *Atzilut* rather than *Beriah*, like the brothers).

OVERVIEW: extricating himself from the depths and soaring to the heights....

Cliché: meteoric rise to fame.

41:2-3 robust cows...scrawny cows.

Nowadays, "fat" is considered a derogatory term. Nowadays, "lean" is a laudatory term.

41:8 Pharaoh's advisors assumed that this detail was one of the inaccuracies that inevitably occur in prophetic dreams.

They knew about this characteristic of dreams but Jacob's sons didn't? Evidently so, perhaps because Pharaoh and his courtiers were used to prophetic dreams, since Pharaoh was ruler who was responsible for the affairs of a great empire, while Jacob's sons didn't have such dreams. Pharaoh certainly seem to have no doubts that his dreams here were prophetic, and neither did his courtiers.

41:43 Pharaoh commanded his subjects to only bend their knees to Joseph and not to prostrate themselves before him (as would befit someone with kinglike authority) because he wanted to retain some indication that Joseph owed his position not to his birth but to Pharaoh's goodwill.

True, the Rebbe (LS 5, p. 207-208) does not say that Pharaoh commanded this, only that this is what everyone did. But the Rebbe notes that Rashi quotes v. 43, which is describing what Pharaoh did to Joseph. Pharaoh is the one who appointed Joseph. Rashi uses this citation to explain how *avrech* means bend the knee. So I sort of made a *hekesh* here and understood that Rashi means that the way Pharaoh appointed Joseph was in a way of *avrech*. It also seems a little far-fetched that all the people should go through the exact same reasoning process simultaneously and all individually conclude that they should only say "Bend the knee to him" instead of "Prostrate yourselves before him." (Although my reverse *hekesh* could also be termed far-fetched, too, I guess.)

41:47 לקמצים.

If this meant "by the handful," it would apparently imply that they did not gather a lot. "by the barrel," "by the wagon," *meila*.

Sefer HaZikaron says that it means that they gather leisurely, unhurriedly. But (1) why would the Torah tell us that; what's the point? (2) His proof text is based on the expression **עַל יָד**, but Rashi says **יָד עַל יָד**, which is different. I therefore opted for *Gur Aryeh's* explanation, "handful after handful," meaning that there was so much that they were falling over each other to store it, so to speak. This would fit into the context of the Torah, which seems to be out to describe how Joseph's prediction of 7 years of plenty came true.

41:45 The people were starving.

How did this work? During the 7 years of plenty, did Joseph collect food for everyone, or did everyone (including Joseph) collect for themselves, and Joseph just oversaw the storage procedures? From the verses (34-35, 40, 47-49), there is no hint that any individual amassed food for himself (except perhaps v. 48, but that would require supplying an illogical singular subject – “he,” the average Egyptian), and it appears as if Joseph did all the amassing. So how suddenly do we read in Rashi on this verse that *שהרקיבה תבואתם שאצרו, חוץ משל יוסף*, which implies that some of the produce was designated as the individual Egyptians’ and some as Joseph’s. (By the way, *של יוסף* couldn’t possibly mean “that which Joseph stored away for himself, his wife, and his two sons,” because if everything rotted except for that it’s unlikely that the whole country could have been fed from such a relatively small store. Did Joseph *plan* on rotting everyone else’s grain and therefore purposely store up enough for the whole country on his own?)

It would thus appear that Joseph did indeed collect and store grain collectively, on behalf of all the people, but that they people as individuals also stored grain for themselves.

But then, if Joseph had stored the grain (that the people gathered and brought to his imperial storehouses) *for and on behalf of* the people, why did he have the right to make stipulations (circumcision, etc.) when they asked him for it? Is that explained by the “curse” supposition of Pharaoh?

Backtrack: If Joseph’s job was, as it appears to have been, to supervise a countrywide amassing of grain to be stored for everyone during the 7 years of famine, and special means were employed in these official storehouses to preserve the grain, etc., then it would seem that the people did not (or could not?) store up food for the 7 bad years themselves (or at most, maybe only for a year or two) simply because they did not have the “technology” (i.e., specially designed and managed storehouses in which grain could be kept from rotting, etc.). So when it says, “everyone’s grain rotted expect for Joseph’s,” that could mean one of two things:

- ♦ that in the storehouses, the grain was stored in private collections, or
- ♦ that everyone stored some grain (a year’s worth or so) in their own homes, and this rotted prematurely. But in the storehouses everything was stored collectively, as government property to be rationed out when the time came.

I am presuming the latter.

42:1 The Land of Israel, whose inhabitants were going hungry.

Presumably, the inhabitants of Canaan also heard about Joseph’s prophecy and his advice to store up grain during the previous seven years. Did they ignore it? Did their grain rot, too? If the latter, did Joseph’s curse (if, in fact, he did curse the grain, since we are never told this definitively – it could be that God made the grain rot) not apply to Jacob’s grain?

42:2 Alluding to the 210 years that they and their descendants were destined to reside in Egypt.

Did Jacob have this in mind, or was it an unwitting prophecy? He certainly didn’t mean to tell the sons that this is what was about to happen, did he?

42:7 He understood that he first had to ascertain whether they regretted selling him and were ready to take the next step in the development of their family into the chosen people.

Why couldn’t he just reveal himself to them and just ask them? Probably because he would then never be sure if they were sincere or they just reacted to his being the all-powerful viceroy. I’ll bet some *mefarsh* says that.

42:22 **And now that it is clear that he is dead, we are being called to account.**

Some commentators interpret the phrase *לְמַן נִדְרָשׁ* to mean things other than “be called to account for his death,” but that involves interpreting *לְמַן* to mean “life-force” or “verve or zest for life,” or a Galen-like conception of one’s physical blood being lessened or affected detrimentally by circumstances, and the like, so I didn’t want to get into this.

42:27 Sack.

Anything about *שק* – sack – vs. *אמתחת* – pack?

43:7 The man kept asking about us and our families, saying, ‘Is your father still alive?’

Where do we see that Joseph asked them this? Is this a case of the Torah not bothering to tell us everything when it happened, or were the brothers telling the story to their father their own way? The next sentence would seem to imply the latter, i.e., that they hid from Jacob the fact that *they* had told Joseph about Benjamin, preferring him rather to think that Joseph had asked about the possibility of another brother himself. But then, why would they make up the detail about Joseph telling them about their cribs? The Rebbe in LS vol. 35 p. 186 note 61 seems to imply that this occurrence was not made up but actually happened.

43:16 In his youth, Joseph had considered them guilty of transgressing the prohibition of eating flesh torn from a living animal.

Two problems here: (1) The Rebbe says elsewhere that, according to *peshuto shel mikra*, the non-Jews did not become obligated to observe the 7 laws of Noah until the Giving of the Torah. Before that, they were obligated only to observe the general principles of humanitarian behavior, plus whatever stringencies society as a whole adopted, and I don’t recall Rashi saying anywhere that humanity undertook to observe *ever min hachai*. So how did *ever min hachai* become one of “the laws they were required to observe”? (2) The Rebbe cites *Parashat Derachim* as explaining Joseph’s argument with his brothers being over whether or not they had the *din* of a *benei-Noach* or a *benei-Yisrael*. The brothers opined that they should behave as *benei-Yisrael*, and therefore they were *meikil* in *ever min hachai*. So, if Joseph knew them to hold that they were obligated to behave as *benei Yisrael*, i.e., that was the essence of their *machlokes*, how could he think they had not undertaken to observe the Torah’s regular laws and keep kosher?!

43:16 Certainly, voluntary observance could in no way obligate them to endanger their lives (by not eating the meat served them by the viceroy of Egypt himself, thereby possibly insulting him and risking making him angry enough to kill them).

Interestingly, the Torah never mentions that they actually ate the meal (only that they drank). LS 35 p. 183.

43:16 He relied on the brothers to do this themselves when they would be served.

What if it’s cooked with the rest of the meat?

43:18 Along with our donkeys.

I always wondered why, *al pi peshat*, OMG they were so worried about their donkeys. ☺

43:33 and how he could sit Benjamin, a Hebrew, next to him.

I did not find any *mefarshim* that address this question.

44:2 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Benjamin personified the glimpse of saintliness that people who are not yet perfectly righteous experience intermittently, during times of spiritual transcendence, such as prayer or meditation.

I'm making up this interpretation of *tzadik tachton*; I hope it's right.

44:3 When the brothers had previously left Egypt, they had taken Simeon's donkey and sack with them....

And were either too stupid or too unbelieving to have thought to bring it along with them now?! I guess they just assumed they'd buy another donkey in Egypt if and when Simeon was released.

In general, are we to understand that on the brothers' trips to Egypt to buy food for their whole household, they only came themselves (no servants), without any extra donkeys (to carry additional sacks of grain), and carried back each time only one sack of grain each? I guess so.

44:3 ...intending to buy another donkey on the way.

For surely he didn't intend to walk on foot all the way back to Canaan, especially if his brothers were all riding donkeys, right?

44:10 For if a stolen object is found in the possession of one member of a group....

The Rebbe (LS 10 p. 156, n30) says that Rashi's use of the word "*ten* among whom is found a stolen object..." is precise even though there were 11 brothers who were "caught," because there were in fact only 10 sacks among them. But if that is the case, then, why was Simeon implicated in the crime, when he had no sack?

44:18 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Committees that will deliberately research the matter and then vote on what should be done and how much it will cost, etc.

Unusable cliché: "fiddle while Rome burns."

Vayigash

44:20 He was afraid that if he told him otherwise, Joseph would demand that they bring him before him.

Why? Couldn't they always answer that they just hadn't found him yet, so they don't know if he's alive or dead?

44:32 One of my other brothers:

I originally wrote, "If you ask why I, the fourth-oldest son, am the spokesman rather than one of my older brothers..." even though Rashi only says "one of my *other* brothers" since it would seem that Joseph would not ask this question (i.e., "why are you doing all the talking, rather than one of your *other* brothers?"), because, after all, *one* of them had to be the spokesman. But one of the editors called me on this, and it is true, Joseph could have asked Judah why he was talking so much, etc.

44:32 Both in this world as well as in the afterlife.

In 43:9, Rashi explains Judah's words to Jacob *kol hayamim* to refer (only) to the World to Come; here, he explains the same expression (to Joseph) to mean both worlds.

Maskil LeDavid explains as follows: Judah had to say "both worlds" to Joseph because had he just said "the World to Come," Joseph could have replied, "So sending Benjamin back will not help you, since a *nidui al tenai* needs to be annulled even if the *tenai* was not fulfilled, and a *neder* (such as this *nidui*) cannot be annulled until it takes effect. So if your *nidui* does not take effect until you die, you can't have it annulled during your lifetime, so sending Benjamin back won't help you.

45:4 He showed them that he was circumcised.

See also v. 12. I could find no explanation in *peshuto shel mikra* why Joseph showed them that he was circumcised. They already believed that he was Joseph in vv. 3-4. So commentators do say that they weren't sure that he really was Joseph, so he had to convince them further, but Rashi doesn't say anything that would indicate this. Rather, he describes it as a continuation of his repetition of his identity in a softer, more entreating tone. R' Pinchas Doron's explanation (i.e., that because he was circumcised, he was bound to walk in G-d's ways and forgive them and not hurt them) is quite forced.

45:9 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: When Joseph realized that he and his father had been separated from one another for exactly twenty-two years, it became clear to him that this was Divine providence's way of rectifying Jacob's failure to honor his parents during the twenty-two years he was in Charan.

In the *sichah*, the Rebbe does not address the issue of how Joseph knew about the 22 for 22 payback, but just takes it for granted. I therefore had to fudge in this way.

45:10 You will settle in Goshen.

It doesn't say that Joseph suggested this specifically to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh nonetheless told Joseph (v. 18), "I will give you the choicest part of Egypt," which Rashi identifies with Goshen, and which it obviously is because in 46:28 it's clear that Joseph told the brothers they were going to settle in Goshen. So maybe between the lines Joseph suggested this to Pharaoh. Yet, in 46:34-47:6 it appears that some subterfuge has to take place in order to get Pharaoh to suggest on his own that they settle in Goshen.

As to the location of Goshen, most classical maps put it directly east of the Nile, but as the *Da'at Mikra* commentary points out (introduction to vol. 1, pp. 68-71), the fact that it is described as ארץ מרעה would imply that it was *not* a land fit for cultivation, which any part of the very fertile Nile delta most certainly would be. So Rabbi Dan Schwartz's location for Goshen as stretching much further east than what is normally depicted could make sense in this light.

On the one hand, Joseph says the Goshen will be near him, which would imply that its western border, at least, should be accessible to the capital in the delta, where Joseph worked; on the other hand, we see from the story of the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh that there was some distance between Goshen and Joseph's residence, and in the Book of Joshua, Goshen is mentioned among his southwestern campaigns, so this would imply that that it extended westward all the way to the south of the Land of Israel, as reflected in R' Schwartz's maps.

45:14 Neck vs. Shoulders (also 33:4).

Here's the survey:

- ◆ Targumim: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ Artscroll: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ Margolin: "neck" here but "shoulders" at 33:4.
- ◆ Living Torah (quoting Shmuel ben Chafni Gaon): "shoulders" in both places.⁴
- ◆ Silverstein: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ Gutnick: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ Fox: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ Friedman: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ JPS: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ Reform: "neck" in both places.
- ◆ Reform Women: "neck" in both places.

Chizkuni writes: משני צדדי הצואר שבשביל שהוא כפול נכתב בלשון רבים.

46:26 And who were **his own issue**.

I presume this means other than slaves, admirers, hired help, etc.

46:34 So that you will be able to settle in Goshen.

Didn't Pharaoh already say (45:18) he was going to settle them in Goshen?

47:10 Jacob blessed Pharaoh....

By making the Nile ascend and overflow at Pharaoh's approach, Jacob was essentially making Pharaoh into the faucet that turned on the water for Egypt, i.e., into a "Pharaoh Faucet." ☺

⁴ In the 1979 MHK edition, it says on this verse, ואמנם התכוון לצוארו, שכן החזה הוא מקום הנשיקה בזמני השמחות, ויחייב זה את ההיפך (הדדיות), לזה התכוון באמרו (שיר השירים ד, ד): כמגדל דוד צוארך וגו'. I'm too much of an ignoramus to understand what החזה could mean here.

47:11 Rameeis

See comments on Exodus 1:11.

Vayechi

47:28 Rashi.

I incorporated Rashi's first explanation below, in 50:21. I am assuming his second explanation is referring to the events described in 49:1 ff. However, the Rebbe (LS 20 p. 234ff) differentiates between them, saying that here Rashi is saying (following the Midrash) that the *keitz* was hidden from Jacob, whereas there (on 49:1), Rashi is saying (following the Talmud) that the *keitz* was *not* hidden from Jacob, only that permission and/or ability to transmit it to his sons was denied him. See footnote 10 there how the Rebbe explains (but does not reconcile) this difference. Since the Rebbe doesn't offer any reconciliation, and says that Rashi's use of the idea that the *keitz* was hidden from Jacob is only to explain the lack of space before the beginning of this *parashah*, I left it out, and just used the idea that permission was denied him to reveal the *keitz*. I put it in Chasidic Insights (at least in the next edition), though.

47:29 I do not want to feel them.

Any precedent or explanation about a corpse feeling what's going on when it's in the grave? Or do we have here a premonition that Jacob knew he would not die, just fall into a deep sleep???

47:29 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Swear that you will do me the following act....

Comment by Yossi Marcus: This same *sicha* is the source for the following. But I took it out since it doesn't teach anything new and is just a *diyuk* in the Hebrew words.

50:25 And Joseph bound the Children of Israel by an oath: "G-d will surely remember you, and you shall then take up my bones from here: Why do Jacob and Joseph use different words to describe their removal from Egypt - Jacob says *unisatani*, (carry me) (47:30) and Joseph uses *viha'alitem* (take up)?

Though both words can mean "to raise," Jacob's word also connotes "exaltedness" while Joseph's means "take up" or "elevate." Jacob remains exalted from Egypt even as he leaves it, while Joseph elevates Egypt and takes the good with him.

48:1 After these above-recounted events....

The Rebbe usually says *אחר הדברים האלה* means "after these words."

48:7 Rachel died on me....

The Rebbe says (LS 30, pp. 238, 240) that without Rachel's act (i.e., foregoing being buried in the Machpelah cave so she could pray on behalf of her unworthy descendants), the redemption could not have occurred. But hadn't there already been beforehand the prophecy of Jeremiah that the exile would be only for 70 years?

48:8 And now that I am asking you to bury me in the Machpelah cave....

The Rebbe says that Joseph's pain over his mother not being buried in the Machpelah cave was aroused now, i.e., when Jacob asked him to bury him there. But Jacob asked him this not now but some time earlier (47:30), while this discussion took place "sometime afterwards" (48:1). I guess relative to the 47 that had passed since Rachel died, these two incidents can be considered to have occurred at around the same time.

48:12 Joseph then withdrew them from between his father's knees in order to later position them to Jacob's right and left....

Why couldn't Jacob have put his hands on the young men while they were still between his knees?

48:19 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: But his younger brother will become greater than he:

Comment by Yossi Marcus: I put this sicha in miketz when Manasseh and Ephraim are born. Here I added "meat" from the sicha in chelek hey. The sicha is written in a very different style than usual, with many Yiddish words that don't commonly appear in Likutei Sichot. It looks like it was written maybe to appear in a Yiddish paper (???). I have attempted to preserve some of that rhetorical flavor in the translation.

48:19 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Jacob therefore wished to give precedence to Ephraim.

Comment by Yossi Marcus: The Rebbe offers another deeper explanation in addition to this, one that explains why Yosef thought Manasseh deserved the right hand. But the biur is very deep and complicated so I left it out....

49:1 Jacob foresaw...

The Rebbe, in footnote 28 of LS 20, p. 231, says that in *peshuto shel mikra* we cannot say that the *keitz* that Jacob wanted to reveal was that of *yetziat Mitzraim*, since the notion that had we merited, the Exodus would have been the Final Redemption is not found anywhere in Rashi. On the contrary, Rashi explains the Covenant of the Halves as alluding to the four exiles, and explains אֵשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה as referring to subsequent exiles after the Egyptian one.

But if the four exiles prophesied in the Covenant of the Halves was common knowledge, then everyone knew that the Final Redemption was far off, so (1) what was Jacob hoping to accomplish by "revealing" this to them, and (2) what did G-d accomplish by preventing him from revealing it?

Perhaps Abraham only revealed to his progeny the prophesy of 400 years of servitude, but not the vision of the four exiles.

Another support for this idea is that in the Song of the Sea, the Rebbe (*Hitva'aduyot 5744*, vol. 2, pp. 877-878, 952-955) says that Moses implied that the Temple that the Jews intended to build upon their immanent entry into the Land of Israel could, if they were to merit it, be transformed into final Temple, making the Exodus from Egypt retroactively into the Final Redemption. This makes sense only if they didn't know about the prophecy of the four exiles.

(On the other hand, maybe even if they did know this wouldn't be a problem, since if they merited it this prophecy could be commuted in some way. This solution could perhaps be applied to the first problem, as well: even though everyone knew about the prophecy of the four exiles, they also knew that it could be commuted if they merited, so Jacob's revelation of the *keitz* being way off in the future would indicate to them that there was not only a prophecy but a clear vision of the *keitz* being way off, and that they would therefore have to redouble their efforts to hasten it.)

49:4 In doing so, not only were you implying that I had acted improperly, you were also implying that God had misplaced His trust in me.

My conjecture as to how this was a *chilul Hashem*. Is it correct?

49:7 In this way, he will have no land inheritance.

How does that separate him from Simeon. On the contrary, were he to have his own, separate territory, he'd have to live there, separate from Simeon, while this way, he can roam wherever he chooses, including into Simeon's territory!

49:9 that no one would dare rouse.

I sacrificed the rhetorical question “Who will [dare] rouse him?” in order to make the connection between לביא and מי יקימנו, i.e., “as fearsome as the type of lion about which one would ask ‘who will dare rouse him?’” If I had left the question phrased as a question, this connection would not have been clear (unless I would have interpolated some awkward connecting words).

49:10 The acknowledged rulers of the Jewish people.

The exilarchy continued in Babylonia until the 11th century.

49:11 By loading the donkey up with the grapes of only one vine.

Wouldn't this be better expressed the other way around, i.e., as “tying a vine to a donkey”?

49:32 Only the progenitors of my twelve tribes shall participate in carrying my coffin from Egypt to Hebron.

Rashi also says that the grandchildren should not carry because they were born of Canaanite women, but since I'm not using this opinion, I can't say that here. The Rebbe (LS 5 *Vayechi* #2) goes further, saying that according to the opinion that the daughters were *not* Canaanites, the grandchildren probably *did* participate in carrying the coffin. But since Rashi takes it as *peshat* in Numbers 2:2 that the arrangement of the camp is derived from the way the sons carried Jacob, I had to keep it in.

49:32 CHASIDIC INSIGHTS: Likewise, when the Jews reached the Holy Land, Levi's descendants did not receive a portion of the land, so that they could remain dedicated to serving God and teaching His ways of righteousness to the rest of the nation.

There is an arichus here on why Menashe and Ephraim replaced and correspond to Joseph and Levi respectively, but I believe the reader is better served without this arichus.

50:10 Which is beyond the Jordan.

Why did they enter the Land of Israel from Transjordan, instead of taking the “way of the Philistines?”

50:23 Ephraim's great-grandchildren.

The Rebbe understands בני שלשים to mean “the son of the son of the son,” i.e., the great-grandson.

50:25 Since Joseph had been viceroy of Egypt, Pharaoh had to respect the oath he made to his father.

Rashi on Exodus 13:19 puts this explanation into Joseph's mouth, but above he said that the only reason Pharaoh let him bury Jacob in the Land of Israel was the threat that Joseph would reveal his ignorance of Hebrew.

50:26 Thinking that its presence in the river would bring blessing to its waters.

This is the reason given in the Talmud. The Mechilta says that the Egyptians knew that the Jews wouldn't leave without it, and therefore hid it in order to keep them from ever leaving.

The Talmud says that Moses needed Serach bas Asher to tell him where the coffin was, so either the Egyptians sunk it secretly (which would make sense if they wanted to keep the Jews from leaving without it, but if so, how did Serach know about it?) or everyone just forgot where they had sunk it by then.

Haftarot

For the first Sabbath of Chanukah: If it is the 30th day of Kislev....

It never happens that Shabbos Chanukah falls on 29 Kislev (*only* Machar Chodesh) or 1 Tevet (*only* Rosh Chodesh).