

By Rabbi Yaakov Deutscher

The Presence of Presents

“...Then he took... a tribute to Esav his brother: She-goats, two hundred, and he-goats, twenty; ewes, two hundred, and twenty rams; thirty nursing camels with their colts; forty cows and ten bulls; twenty she donkeys and ten he donkeys.” (Bereishis 32:15)

Rashi mentions in the beginning of the *parsha* (32:9) that prior to Yaakov’s encounter with Esav he readied himself for three things: for prayer, for war, and for gifts. The gifts are referring to the five types of animals, a total of five hundred and fifty, that Yaakov presented to his brother Esav. What is the importance of specifying, not only the numbers of animals given, but also the order in which they were given, as the *pasuk* says, “He put in his servants’ charge each herd separately and said to his servants, ‘Pass on ahead of me and put a space between herd and herd?’” We know that there is no excessive information in the Torah and that everything is mentioned for good reason. What then is the hidden meaning behind the listing of these animals?

The Ba’al ha-Turim (Rabeinu Yaakov *ben* Rabeinu Asher, 1269-1343) explains the relevance of writing the number of animals presented to Esav. Yaakov’s effort to placate Esav, by sending him an outstanding number of animals, displayed somewhat of a lack of *bitachon*, trust in Hashem. Instead of relying on Hashem’s promise to him, as the *pasuk* stated in last week’s *parsha*, “Behold, I am with you; and I will guard you wherever you go...” (28:15) Yaakov decided to take matters into his own hand and send gifts to Esav. In order to atone for Yaakov’s sin, his descendants, *Klal Yisroel*, were commanded to offer exactly five hundred and fifty animals on the *mizbeach*, altar, each year. Thus, by revealing the number of animals Yaakov gave to Esav the Torah is teaching us that even in the direst of times we must trust in Hashem. As we praise Hashem every Rosh Chodesh in *Hallel*, “It is better to take refuge in Hashem than to rely on nobles.” (*Psalms 118*)

Furthermore, the Ben Ish Chai (1832-1909) offers a fascinating explanation to why the Torah stresses the order and spacing when Yaakov sent herds of animals to Esav. In essence, Yaakov could have sent out five hundred and fifty of the same species of animal in order to appease his brother Esav. He opted not to, however, because he wanted to symbolically prophesize the future of *Klal Yisroel*. The first, second and fourth groups of animals listed consist of kosher animals, while the third and fifth groups of animals consist of non-kosher ones. The kosher and non-kosher animals represent *Klal Yisroel* and its enemies, respectively. Additionally, each group of animals sent out corresponds to a distinct time period. Times of ‘kosher animals’ represent times when *Klal Yisroel* will have the upper hand on over its enemies; it will be a time of peace and serenity allowing for spiritual growth and *avodas Hashem*. Conversely, times of ‘non-kosher animals’ represent times when our enemy Esav will have the upper hand over us; it will be a time of suffering and hardship. The order of the animals brought by Yaakov was: kosher, kosher, non-kosher, kosher, and non-kosher. This parallels to the eras of the *Mishkan*, the building of the first *Bais Hamikdash*, the destruction of the first *Bais Hamikdash*, the rebuilding of the second *Bais Hamikdash*, and finally the destruction of the second *Bais Hamikdash*.

The Ben Ish Chai concludes that although the fifth and last group of animals brought by Yaakov was non-kosher animals, which symbolizes adversity for *Klal Yisroel*, one need not be concerned. After Yaakov commanded his servants to present the herds to Esav he tells them to tell Esav, “Moreover- behold your servant Yaakov is behind us.” (32:20) Yaakov was insinuating that no matter how far-removed *Klal Yisroel* will be from the spiritual holiness expected of them, in the end they will be the ultimate victor meriting to see the rebuilding of the third *Bais Hamikdash*. May Hashem accept our *tefillos* and bring the *geula* quickly in our days!



Question Corner– By the Kollel Rabbis

Then Hashem said to Yaakov, 'Your name is Yaakov. Your name shall not always be called Yaakov, but Yisroel shall be your name' (35:10)

The Ramban points out that although Hashem gave Yaakov the additional name Yisroel, at times he would still be called Yaakov. We know that Avraham's name was initially Avram and once it was changed he was never referred to that name again. The same applies to Sarah, once her name was changed she was never referred to as Sarai ever again.

Why is Yaakov different?

Kollel News

1. This Shabbos at the Kollel: Parshas Vayishlach

Thursday, December 8:

8:15 p.m.: Rabbi Biberfeld's Gemarah Yoma Shiur

9:00 - 10:00 p.m.: Rabbi Frand's Weekly Parsha Shiur

9:00-10:00 p.m.: Kollel Erev (NOTE: Kollel Erev will be completing Mesechta Sotah this week- Mazel tov! They are beginning Mesechta Beitza next week. If you want to join a serious chabura and give/hear shiurim with lumdus, come and be part of this special group who meets each Thursday evening. Contact Dr. David Weiss or Dr. Ari Weintraub.)

10:00 p.m.: Maariv

Friday, December 9:

8:25-8:50 a.m.: Rabbi Prupas' Chumash Shiur

4:17 p.m.: Candle Lighting

4:35 p.m.: Shkiya/Sunset

Shabbos, December 10:

8:15 a.m.: Shacharis

Chaburas Chacham Lev

8:56/ 9:32 a.m.: Latest Krias Shema

3:55 p.m.: Mincha

4:35 p.m.: Shkiya/Sunset

5:30 p.m.: Maariv

5:47 p.m.: 72 Minutes

6:30 p.m.: Masmid Program

This week's Masmid Program is sponsored by

Mr. and Mrs. Erwin and Rochelle Nosenchuk AND

Dr. and Mrs. Barry and Eileen Stieglitz in Memory of משה קלונימוס בן משה אברהם מרדכי ז"ל Stieglitz

2. Kollel Chanukah Mesibah with Dessert Reception

from the Famous Kollel Kitchen First night of Chanukah, Tuesday, December 20, Kislev 25, at 8:15 P.M. at the Kollel.

Speaker: Renowned Lecturer Rabbi Yosef Leib Yoffe—For Men and Women. For more information please call 610-668-9557. The Chanukah Mesibah is sponsored by Seth and Leah Yoffe in memory of Leah's mother, Tzivia bas Morris, Mrs. Sally Margulis, a"h. A Siyum will be made in honor of the shloshim.

3. Philadelphia Community Kollel's Eleventh Annual

Dinner Please join us in "Uniting Through Torah" at the Philadelphia Community Kollel's Eleventh Annual Dinner to be held Sunday, January 8th, 2012 at the Lower Merion Synagogue. We feel privileged to honor a diverse array of community members who share the Kollel's ideal of real commitment to learn-

ing and teaching Torah.

Guests of Honor

Dr. Leon and Tova
& Wertheimer

Chavrusa of the Year Award

Rabbi Yaakov Deutscher
Jonathan & Jed Zaslow

Please join us in paying tribute to our worthy honorees and to the Kollel's impact on our community by attending the upcoming dinner and by placing an ad in the dinner journal. Contact the Kollel at 610-668-9557 for an ad and RSVP blank. May your support of Torah learning give you the blessings of Torah.

5. The Chofet Chaim Heritage Foundation presents: Rise and Shine *Wisdom, Inspiration, and Tips for rising above the challenges of your family, home, and life.* **December 17, 2011**
8:15pm At the Kollel FOR WOMEN ONLY

Community News

Bnos of Bala Cynwyd will iy"H meet this Shabbos, Parshas Vayishlach, December 10th, from 2:45pm - 3:45pm at LMS. Remember to pay your yearly membership - \$36/girl! Contact Meira Friedman for info, 610-617-9529.

Torah Youth: 2:45 – 3:45 pm in the LMS Social Hall. Grades K-8th. Torah Youth this week is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Nosenchuk in honor of their grandsons, Meir and Dovid. The Torah Youth Annual Chanukah Mesiba will be on Sunday the 18th, from 2 – 3:30 pm at LMS. If you would like to help sponsor a Shabbos or want more information contact Rabbi Ari Silver at 610-6686-6833 or SilverDollar@verizon.net

Torah Youth Annual Chanukah Mesiba Sunday, December 18th From 2:00 – 3:30 pm Lower Merion Synagogue \$12 a person, \$40 family max. To help sponsor or for more information please contact Ari Silver at 610-668-6833 or SilverDollar@verizon.net

Mazel Tov To:

Rabbi and Mrs. Eli and Sara Back on the birth of a grandson born to Moshe Yitzchok and Ahuva Weil.

Rabbi and Mrs. Naftali and Miriam Shulamis Eisemann of the upcoming marriage of their daughter, Chana Sora, to Meir Oratz.

Mr. Evan Aidman and Mrs. Ayala Balanoff Aidman on the birth of their son, Yonason Dov.

If you would like to receive Menucha Vesimcha by weekly email or to sponsor an issue of Menucha Vesimcha in someone's honor / memory, please contact the editor at: menuchavesimcha@verizon.net

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