

A SPELL OF BROTHERLINESS

by Rabbi Label Lam

Then he (Yakov) went on ahead of them and bowed earthward seven times until he reached him until his brother. Esau ran toward him, embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him; then they wept. (Breishis 33:3-4)

Yakov and Eisav wept and hugged like real friendly brothers! How did that happen? Did they suddenly become fast friends? Why did Yakov bow exactly seven times?

Here's a neat Gematria (look at letters as numbers)! Yitzchok, the father of both Yakov and Eisav, has the numerical value of 208. (Yud-10+Tzadik-90+Ches-8+Kuf-90=208) 208 is 7x's HASHEM's (26) Holy Name. (Yud-10+Heh-5+Vuv-6+Heh-5=26x8=208) Yakov adds up to 182 which = 7x26. (Yud-10+Ayin-70+Kuf-90+Beis-2=182/26=7) Eisav's name has the value of 376. (Ayin-70+Sin-300+Vuv-6=376) The word for spiritual contamination which is Tame' equals 50. (Tes-9+Mem-40+Alef-1=50) Seven times Tame' (50) is 350 plus 26 (THE NAME OF HASHEM) is 376. Now we can see that one part of holiness was directed to Eisav but it was covered with layers of corruption. Yakov who had seven part of holiness from his father bowed seven times. Each bowing penetrated or removed some outer layer until he reached him until he reached his brotherly point deep inside. Then they hugged and kissed!

How long did it last? Maybe not long at all! The rage may even have been present at the time of the kiss, but Yakov's multipronged strategy 1) preparing for the eventuality of war, 2) praying, 3) sending gifts, and 4) exercising extreme humility in front of him to shave away his ego at its desired effect. "Rabbi Shimon says, "It's known Hallacha, a Law of Life, that Eisav hates, Yakov, but at that moment his mercy awake and he really did kiss him wholeheartedly."

What are we to learn from all this? In either- case, and in the best of scenarios the love fest only lasted for a moment and Yakov managed to sidestep danger that day. That was his sole goal. Not to unite or reunite with Eisav but just not to be harmed by him and to escape whole!

There's an old time story about a Polish Jew Moishe who was living under the oppressive rule of a cruel porritz-landlord. The economy shrunk and Moishe like many others found it difficult to make a living. The porritz unyieldingly insisted upon his monthly rent. Moishe fell farther and farther behind. The porritz grew very impatient. The porrtiz came to Moishe's house and threatened him- that if he

did not pay the full amount by Wednesday Moishe would be put into jail and his family would be made to suffer. Moishe knew his threat real. Monday afternoon, in an act of desperation, he piled his family and all his possessions onto his wagon and he began to flee from home. On the single road leaving his village Moishe met the porritz himself.

Looking at Moishe with curiosity he asked where he was going. Moshe quickly and nervously told the porritz that they're going away for a Jewish holiday. Looking quizzically at Moishe, the porritz queried, "Which Jewish holiday?" to which Moishe answered, "Zeman Pleitaseinu" (Literally: The Time of Our escape). Moishe edged by and the porritz continued on his way into town.

When he arrived in town he was surprised to find everyone going about their weekday business. The porritz asked one fellow, "Why aren't you getting ready for the Jewish holiday?" The man answered that he did not know of any Jewish holiday at this time of the year which touched off his suspicion. The porritz told him that Moishe was celebrating something called, "Zeman Pleitaseinu". "Ahhhhhhh", sighed the Jewish peasant, "that holiday is different than other Jewish holidays. Other Jewish holidays we all celebrate together but Zeman Pleitaseinu is different. Everyone celebrates it at a different time. This time it's Moishe's turn. Next it may be mine! Everyone has their own special time to celebrate, "Zeman Pleitaseinu!"

Yakov dodged a bullet when he skirted by Eisav. His strategy worked just long enough to escape, as it would for many generations, charming with **a spell of brotherliness**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.