

A Taste of Torah Language Barrier

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

True or False: the entire Torah is written in Lashon HaKodesh (the Holy Tongue, i.e. Hebrew).

If you answered true, you're wrong.

Towards the end of this week's parsha, Yaakov and his father-in-law/uncle Lavan make a covenant. To mark their pact, they erect a pile of stones and solemnly agree that neither of them shall cross the monument for the purpose of harming the other.

The Torah tells us that Lavan called the rocks "Yigar Sahadusa", while Yaakov called it "Galaid." "Galaid" means "a mound of testimony," and Rashi comments that "Yigar Sahadusa" has the same meaning in Aramaic. Hence, we are faced with the only Aramaic words in the Torah.

This, of course, begs the question: Why did the Torah see fit to provide the Aramaic translation of a name, something that is not done anywhere else in the Torah?

First, a bit of analysis of Lavan's mindset at the aforementioned covenant. Lavan desperately wanted to be the "zayde" (grandfather) of the twelve tribes of Bnai Yisroel. Not merely genealogically, but an influential force in the formation of the nation. Yaakov, obviously, had no intention of allowing his wicked, conniving, idolatrous father-in-law to have any part in shaping the worldview of his children.

Lavan, trying to prove that he had indeed influenced Yaakov's family, points to the fact that someone had stolen his idols. Obviously, someone in Yaakov's family has an interest in idolatry; what greater proof of their leanings towards their grandfather's way of life could there be? Yaakov vehemently and vociferously denies the accusation and challenges Lavan to verify his claim by finding the idols. Lavan searches every inch of Yaakov's tent, but is unsuccessful in producing the idols. (Rochel, Lavan's daughter, had, in fact, taken them in the hope that once deprived of his idols, her wayward father would mend his ways.)

In a last-ditch attempt to have some imprint on his son-in-law's family, Lavan names the monument erected as a sign of the covenant "Yigar Sahadusa," using Aramaic. Not Lashon HaKodesh, the sacred tongue of the Jewish people, but Aramaic, a gentile language. Let something of my culture remain with them, he hopes.

Yaakov is undeterred in his mission to keep Lavan out of Bnai Yisroel. He immediately counters with "Galaid," a name with the same meaning, but with one critical difference: it is in Lashon HaKodesh.

The Torah, with this narrative, wishes to display the effort expended by our Patriarchs in shielding their progeny from foreign words and influences. A message whose relevance and importance rings clear and true until this day.

Ask the Rabbi Take a Shot at It

From: Jeff Levin in Lakewood NJ

Dear Rabbi,

Are we required to immunize our children? Since the scientific knowledge is not 100% accurate and there is

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Stories For The Soul

20/20 Vision

Yaakov was repeatedly subjected to deceitful dealings on the part of Lavan, yet he was always able to anticipate and prepare for his father-in-law's crookedness. Although one would think that a righteous individual would be naive and gullible, it has been proven that the biggest Tzaddikim could read the crooked best.

Three men were traveling, each carrying a huge sum of money. They stopped for Shabbos and hid their money together in one spot where it would be safe until after Shabbos. When they came after Shabbos to dig up the money, it was gone.

Since no one else had witnessed the hiding of the money, it seemed probable that the thief had been one of the three, but nothing could be proven. They decided to bring their case before the wise Shlomo HaMelech.

"Before I judge your case, I want to ask your advice on another puzzling case that I am working on," said the King, "The details are as follows:

A young boy and girl swore that they would marry each other when they grew up. They agreed that if either of them ever wished to marry someone else, they would ask permission from the other. Years passed and the girl wished to marry another man, but first had to receive the first youth's consent. Taking a large sum of money, she went to her childhood friend and asked that she be released from her promise. Being a kindhearted person, he agreed, but refused to accept any money. 'It is

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Kollel Happenings

FATHERS-AND-SONS PROGRAM SUN., NOV. 21 AT EDOS

The next Fathers-and-Sons learning program will be held on Nov. 21 at EDOS. Breakfast begins at 9 a.m. with learning following. For information, contact Rabbi Yehuda Amsel at 303-820-2855 or email rya@denverkollel.org



CHERRY CREEK MUNCH AND LEARN, MON., NOV. 22

The next Cherry Creek Munch and Learn for men, led by Rabbi Yehuda Amsel, will be held on Mon., Nov. 22, at 12:30 p.m. at Colorado Capital Bank, 55 Madison Ave. The class focuses on Pirkei Avos. For information, contact Rabbi Amsel at 303-820-2855 or at rya@denverkollel.org



LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING THURS., NOV. 25

The next legal holiday learning program will take place on Thanksgiving, Thurs., Nov. 25 at two locations. The Zera Avraham program is for men only and will start with Shacharis at 8 followed by breakfast and a class from 9-10. \$125 sponsorship is still available. For information, call 303-820-2855 or email rye@denverkollel.org. At Aish, men and women are invited to davening at 8:15 followed by breakfast and a debate at 9:15. For information, call 303-820-2855 or email rmh@denverkollel.org

Interpersonal Issues Learning Values

Despite the fact that stealing something worth less than a p'rutah (the smallest monetary unit in Talmudic times) is not considered theft, it is nonetheless forbidden.

Stealing an object that belongs to many partners is full-fledged theft, even if the total loss of each partner is less than a p'rutah, since the total value of the object exceeds the value

of a p'rutah. The same applies to a corporation, despite the fact that it is legally considered a distinct entity; stealing from it is halachically regarded as stealing from all of the shareholders.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

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proof that they are hazardous, are we allowed to vaccinate children?

Dear Jeff Levin,

Our Sages teach that in medical matters we should rely on the experts in each generation. Today, there are differences of opinion among doctors concerning immunizations. Therefore, as with any medical issue, you are required to find a doctor with sufficient

expertise in the subject such that his opinion may be relied upon.

There's no blanket answer concerning all vaccines, but some are almost proven to be successful. Smallpox, for example, was a great killer of children, and is today very rare. On the other hand, some vaccinations are highly questionable. Find a doctor you trust to help select the proper immunizations for your child.

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Stories for the Soul

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enough that you kept your promise and asked my permission. You owe me nothing else. Go marry your heart's choice.'

With great joy, she returned home, but along the way was attacked by bandits who stole the large sum she was carrying. The girl turned to the head thief and said to him, 'This money should have belonged to a young man whom I promised to marry. Through the goodness of his heart he not only freed me from my oath, he refused to accept the money. Look how noble he was and how selfish you are!'

The thief, moved by her touching words, returned the money and went on his way.

Shlomo HaMelech asked the men, "Which of the three people in this episode is most praiseworthy: The young

man, who released the girl from her vow without taking any money, the young lady who would not marry without permission, or the robber who returned the money and let the girl go."

Each man chose a different character in the story whom he felt was most praiseworthy. When one of the men expressed admiration for the thief who had returned the cash, Shlomo HaMelech turned to him and exclaimed, "You are the thief. If you think that a robber who returns money that he never should have stolen in the first place, is to be congratulated, then you show how important money is to you and how little theft means to you. You stole the hidden money. Return it immediately.

Reluctantly, he admitted his guilt and returned the money he had stolen.

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman