

This Shabbat is the 38th day (of 383); the 6th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765

...הַתְּהִי לָךְ לַפָּנִי וְהָיָה דְבָרֶיךָ: בראשית י"א

Be More Like Your Parents

Sedras like Ki Teitzei, K'doshim, R'ei, Emor, and others don't need to answer this question: What does this sedra come to teach me. The answer would be MITZVOT. When you ask the same question of the sedras in B'reishit, the answer is different, because the whole Book of B'reishit, with its 12 sedras, with its 2521 lines (24.5% of the Torah), with its 1533 p'sukim (26.2% of the Torah) contain only 3 of the Torah's 613 mitzvot. Lech Lecha with one of those three - B'rit Mila - cannot be explained away by pointing to MILA, since that mitzva also appears in Tazri'a. So what does Lech Lecha (and other sedras like it) teach us?

Part of the answer is that the Torah shows us what G-d asked of the Avot and Imahot and how they reacted, and we are to learn from them what G-d wants of us and how we are supposed to react. Sometimes, the lessons are straightforward and literal. Sometimes they need reshaping and modification for our own situations. Sometimes they are even negative - meaning, don't do the same thing. Learn from the good and... less good, and become a better person and better Jew by being more like the fathers and mothers of our nation.

When G-d commanded Avraham to leave his birthplace, etc. and go to Eretz Yisrael, G-d was speaking to every one of Avraham's descendants who live outside of the Land of Israel.

When G-d told Avraham to "Walk before Me and be complete", He was commanding all Jews to bind themselves to serve HaShem and to be complete of faith by prevailing in all tests of faith that Life throws your way (see Rashi).

When Avraham went to fight a difficult war in order to save his nephew, we learn what we must be prepared to do for our family. When he refused financial reward from the king of Sedom and sanctified G-d's name by his behavior, then we have a role model for our own lives.

What about leaving Eretz Yisrael during hard times? Complicated. Mixed reviews among commentaries. So too with the Hagar and Yishmael episode.

The point is: Torah is not Bible stories; it is lessons for life to be applied, to be lived.

Candle Lighting and Havdala Times
Standard (Winter) Time

Correct for TT 639 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 6:14pm

4:24pm	Jerusalem	5:35pm
4:43pm	Gush Katif	5:39pm
4:41pm	Raanana	5:36pm
4:40pm	Beit Shemesh	5:36pm
4:40pm	Netanya	5:36pm
4:40pm	Rehovot	5:37pm
4:20pm	Petach Tikva	5:36pm
4:39pm	Modi'in	5:36pm
4:41pm	Be'er Sheva	5:37pm
4:39pm	Gush Etzion	5:35pm
4:39pm	Ginot Shomron	5:35pm
4:24pm	Maale Adumim	5:35pm
4:31pm	Tzfat	5:33pm
4:39pm	K4 & Hevron	5:36pm

OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

Ranges are THU-THU 6-13 Cheshvan (Oct.21-28)

Earliest Shacharit - 4:56-5:01am
Sunrise - 5:47-5:52am
Sof Zman Sh'ma - 8:35-8:37am (7:50-7:51am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:31-9:32am (9:01-9:02am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:24-11:23am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 11:54-11:53am
Plag Mincha - 3:50-3:44pm
Sunset - 5:05-4:58pm (5:00-4:53pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
Shabbat afternoon shiur 3:15pm
Rabbi Binyamin Wolff on לך לך

Motza'ei Shabbat, 8:30pm
Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher
on Rain & Brachot

Word of the Month

A weekly feature of Torah Tidbits to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby better fulfilling the mitzva of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...

Rabbi Yishmael teaches:
If Israel would merit greeting the Divine Presence only once a month - it would be sufficient. This is taken as a reference to Kiddush L'vana. As we've mentioned once in a rare while, KL is a special mitzva. Unfortunately, it is often bypassed. For many people, KL is a once in a while Motza"Sh thing. But if it doesn't work out... As we approach the rainy season, there will be cloudy nights which preclude saying KL. One should be diligent and check the sky at different times during the night for the range of nights one can say KL, and say it - even alone.

First opportunity this month was last Sunday night. This Motza"Sh Lech Lecha is a perfect time, weather permitting, if you haven't already said KL. Last up for KL this month is Thursday night, Oct. 28, 8:00pm (Israel time - adjust for your location accordingly).

The OU Israel Center and Torah Tidbits do not necessarily endorse the political, medical, or halachic positions of its advertisers, nor do we guarantee the quality of their services or product.

OU ISRAEL CENTER
Seymour J. Abrams • Orthodox Union
Jerusalem World Center

Yitzchak Fund, President
Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Senior Vice President
Prof. Meni Koslowsky, Vice President
Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Vaad member
Moshe Kempinski, Vaad member
Sandy Kestenbaum, Vaad member
Simcha Rock, Vaad member
Zvi Sand, Vaad member
Menachem Persoff, Director of Programs, Israel Center
Phil Chernofsky, Educational Director and TT editor

22 Keren HaYesod • POB 37015 • Jerusalem 91370
phone: (02) 566 7787 • fax: (02) 561-7432
email: tt@ou.org • website: www.ou.org/torah/tt

Orthodox Union • National Conference of Synagogue Youth

This publication and many of the programs of the Israel Center and NCSY in Israel are assisted by grants from The Jewish Agency for Israel

Produced and printed "in house" at the Israel Center

Lech Lecha Stats

3rd sedra of 54; 3rd of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 208 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 23rd

7 Parshiyot; 3 open, 4 closed

126 p'sukim - ranks 13th - same as R'ei but notably smaller than R'ei in other categories

1686 words - ranks 18th

6336 letters - ranks 19th

Ranks 7th of 12 in B'reishit in all categories

Shorter than average p'sukim

Mitzvot

1 mitzva (positive), namely, Brit Mila



Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Kohen - First Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 12:1-13

[P> 12:1 (9)] G-d tells (note the softer VAYOMER rather than the harsher, and more common, VAY'DABER) Avra(ha)m to leave his land, birthplace and father's home and go to "the Land which I will show you".

SDT "Leave your land, birthplace, father's house." Ramban explains that each "point of departure" was progressively more difficult for Avraham. Leaving one's land is difficult, even more so if he was born there. Leaving one's family is most difficult. Ramban says that the Torah is showing us the great extent of Avraham's love of G-d.

Someone raises a question on this Ramban. What was so difficult in Avraham's leaving the place where he was ridiculed, persecuted and thrown into a fiery furnace for his beliefs. Would he not have left joyfully? The question actually carries the answer. The Ramban was pointing out a significant aspect of human nature. No matter how bad conditions are, how much a person wants a better life, there still will always remain a sadness and regret for the "good old days" and "the old country" - even when they weren't so good. This aspect of human nature explains a lot of Jewish History.

G-d promises that a great nation will descend from him (Avraham) and that he will be a blessing for all (his descendants and all the world).

SDT Avra(ha)m is promised great rewards and benefits for listening to G-d. Yet pasuk 4 states that he went "as G-d had spoken to him". His "aliya" is considered a test of his faith. He passed this test because he came to the Land because G-d asked him to, not for any material promises.

The call to the Jew to come on Aliya continues. THE only real "right" reason to come is because it is a mitzva and this is what G-d wants of us. All blessings that will follow are fringe benefits. And the difficulties one might encounter are parts of the test of our faith. Avraham Avinu led the way when there were no Aliya Shlichim and no Nefesh b'Nefesh to facilitate Aliya and K'lita. Actually, there was One Shaliach Aliya and One supporter, and He is still in that role.

Avra(ha)m was 75 years old at the time he came to Eretz Yisrael with Sarai, nephew Lot and many people who were brought over to monotheism by Avra(ha)m and Sarai.

[P> 12:10 (29)] Driven from the Land by a famine, Avraham and Sara go down to Egypt. Their plan is to say that they are brother and sister, rather than risk Avraham's being killed.

SDT Ramban states that "Avra(ha)m sinned a great sin (inadvertently)" by leaving the land to which G-d had sent him (even though it was due to the famine) and by risking Sarai's life and honor by asking her to say that she was his sister. Ramban also says that as "punishment" for going down into Egypt, Avraham's descendants were destined to go down into Egypt. On the other hand... Other sources teach us that we derive halachic permission to leave Eretz Yisrael in the event of severe famine BECAUSE that's what Avraham Avinu did. And - still on the other hand - we learn that a person can risk his life to save another from Sarah Imeinu saying that she was Avraham's sister thereby risking herself to save Avraham.

Furthermore (still on the same other hand), Pirkei Avot testifies that Avraham Avinu "passed" all his "tests of faith". Being driven out of Eretz Yisrael by the famine and having to subject Sarai to the perils of Paro's Palace are both counted (by some) among the Ten Tests of Faith.

A possible answer might be that how a person behaves in a difficult situation is one thing, and how the situation affects his faith in G-d is another thing. G-d sends someone to a new land, and then hits him with a famine. Regardless of how that someone handles the situation, he might be disillusioned, to say the least. That would mean failing a test of faith. That didn't happen to Avraham. His faith was as strong as ever. Ramban

thinks that he erred in judgment as to what he should do. Avraham chose the self-help, HISH- TADLUS option. His choice was "approved of" by the subsequent halachic ruling. Maybe he should have chosen the stay-put and trust in G-d option. Ramban thinks he should have. An inadvertent sin, says the Ramban. But no deterioration of Avraham's faith.

Levi - 2nd Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 12:14-13:4

In Egypt, Sarai's beauty is noticed by the people and she is taken to Par'o's palace. Avra(ha)m, as her brother, receives many gifts. Par'o and his household are afflicted as a punishment for taking Sarai. When Par'o realizes that Sarai is actually the wife of Avra(ha)m he confronts him, returns Sarai to him and then asks them to leave Egypt.

Avra(ha)m and company, heavily laden with riches, return to Eretz Yisrael via the Negev. Avra(ha)m returns to the Altar he had built and continues to proclaim G-d's Name.

SDT Avraham on the run from his home-town, a stranger in a strange land, has its challenges and tests. Avraham loaded with wealth and prominence, has new challenges and tests. Poverty and famine are tests; so is wealth. And it is hard to know which is harder. In the opening passage of Rosh Chodesh Benching, we ask G-d for many things — long life, a life of peace, blessings, etc. There is one thing we ask for twice - Yir'at Shamayim, fear of G-d. Why? Because after asking for it the first time, we ask for a life of wealth and honor. If we are blessed with that, then we must humbly ask for Yir'at Shamayim again, because wealth sometimes blinds a person to his obligations to HaShem.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 13:5-18

Lot also has great wealth, too much to remain together with Avra(ha)m. Quarrels between their shepherds (caused by disparate ethical standards) lead to a parting of the ways. Avra(ha)m gives Lot "first choice" of territory, and he (Lot) chooses the then fertile area of S'dom and the Jordan Valley. The Torah makes a point of telling us of the wickedness of S'dom society, an obvious criticism of Lot's distorted priorities.

(This, too, is a recurring theme in Jewish life, containing warnings for us all - sadly, many Jews moved away from Jewish neighborhoods to places with country clubs, golf courses, and other "important" things.)

Only after Avra(ha)m is rid of Lot, does G-d once again appear to him, encouraging him to look over the whole land to the north, south, east, and west, which will some day belong to his descendants. G-d also tells him that his descendants will be too numerous to count. (Hidden message: They will sometimes be lowly, like the dust of the ground, trodden underfoot by our enemies.)

Avra(ha)m settles in Hevron and builds an altar to G-d.

SDT One commentary says that although Avraham knew that his spirituality was compromised by Lot's presence, he nonetheless did not chase Lot away until he had no choice. Avraham felt a moral obligation to take care of Lot (including saving him after they parted) even though he knew that G-d was "keeping His distance" with Lot around. There are some interesting ramifications for us, of this behavior of Avraham's.

How do we view time spent doing chessed and kiruv, at the expense of personal growth. Think about it.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 14:1-20

[P> 14:1 (24)] This portion tells of the battle between the Four Kings and the Five Kings and of the capture of the people of S'dom, including Lot. When Avra(ha)m hears (from Og, "refugee" from the Flood) of Lot's capture he sets out to rescue him, taking with him a force of 318.

The Gemara suggests that Avraham took only his servant Eliezer with him to rescue Lot. The numeric value of the name Eliezer = 318. As G'matriya go, this is one of many. What makes it unusual, is that it is based on a number in the text of the Torah.

Avra(ha)m launches a successful surprise attack and frees the people of S'dom. Victory is celebrated with a religious ceremony of thanking and blessing G-d in the presence of Malki-Tzedek (a.k.a. Shem b. Noach). A tithe of the spoils of war is given to this servant of G-d.

Rashi tells us that AMRAFEL, king of Shin-ar is none other than NIMROD who was the one who tossed Avraham into the fiery furnace for challenging polytheism in public and espousing belief in One G-d. Ironic, is it not, that Avraham has this opportunity to do battle against Nimrod.

Malki-tzedek is king of Shalem. Targum Onkeles identifies Shalem as Yerushalayim. Shalem is the part of the city's name contributed by Sheim. Avraham gave it the first half of its name after the Akeida - YERU

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 14:21-15:6

The king of S'dom offers Avra(ha)m great wealth. Avra(ha)m refuses to take as much as a "thread or shoelace".

Avra(ha)m did accept payment on behalf of his allies who helped him.

SDT From here we learn, says the Chafetz Chaim, that one wants to be "machmir" (strict), should accept the strict practice for himself but not impose it on others. Avraham did not want to be a TZADIK at the expense of others.

[S> 15:1 (21)] Afterwards, G-d appears to Avra(ha)m in a vision and again promises him great rewards for his faithfulness. Avra(ha)m, still childless expresses his disappointment, but resignation, that Eliezer will be his heir. G-d assures Avra(ha)m that he will indeed have his own child to follow in his footsteps.

G-d then takes Avra(ha)m outdoors and promises him that his descendants will be as countless (and exalted) as the stars in the heavens.

The GR"A cites the Talmud's mentioning that Avraham Avinu was the first person to address G-d as "Adon" (Master). We acknowledge this by beginning Shacharit - Avraham's davening - with the poem Adon Olam. Furthermore, the reference to a thread and shoelace is linked to the mitzvot of Talit and T'filin, both of which are also associated with Shacharit.

Being compared to dust and sand and to the stars of the heavens is not just a matter of numerousness, but also to the quality of life. The terms reflect the ups & downs of Jewish History.

Shishi - 6th Aliya - 37 p'sukim - 15:7-17:6

This portion begins with "the Covenant between the Pieces". (Part of this experience is actual, part is prophetic vision.) G-d tells Avra(ha)m that his descendants will be oppressed in a foreign land and will subsequently leave there with great wealth. The promise of the Land to Avra(ha)m is reiterated once more.

Both Rashi and Onkeles understand the term M'SHULASH/M'SHULESHET to mean that Avraham took three each of calves, goats, and sheep for the BRIT BEIN HA-B'TARIM. Tos'fot and others define the term as "prime, of the best quality". They hold that there was only one each of the animals. Others say the animals were to be thrid-born or three years old or part of a triplet. (from The Living Torah by R' Aryeh Kaplan z"l)

[S> 16:1 (16)] Sarai, being barren, gives her hand-maiden Hagar to Avra(ha)m to bear him a child. When Hagar becomes pregnant, she taunts her mistress. Hagar then flees from Sarai's retaliation. An angel finds her, promises that her child, too, will sire a countless multitude, that her son to be born shall be called Yishmael, and that she is now to return to Sarai. Yishmael is born when Avra(ha)m is 86 years of age.

[S> 17:1 (14)] When Avra(ha)m is 99, G-d appears to him and asks him to "be complete". G-d changes Avra(ha)m's name to Avraham, symbolizing Avraham's role as father and spiritual guide to great nations. Once again Avraham is promised "countless" progeny.

Sh'vi'i - 7th Aliya - 21 p'sukim - 17:7-27

G-d promises that a special relationship will always exist between Himself and Avraham's descendants, and repeats the promise of the Land. G-d reveals the form that the "Covenant" is to take - the circumcision of all males **[2, A215 17:10]**.

MITZVA WATCH

This mitzva is the first "non-natural" commandment. Until this point, the 7 categories of Noahide mitzvot are all logical, rational, reasonable, common-sense laws. This 8th mitzva, for the 8th day, represents the challenge to the Jew to rise above nature and complete his spiritual form just as he is being commanded to complete his physical form.

The mitzva is ideally performed on the 8th day, counting the day on which the baby was born - even if he was born 5 minutes before sunset. Mila may not take place at night. Only an 8th day Mila (as opposed to a Brit that was postponed because of health reasons, for example) can be done on Shabbat. A baby delivered by C-section on Shabbat, will have his Brit on the following Sunday (the baby's 9th day). Due to a technicality based on the analysis of the text in Tazria, only a Brit of a natural birth can take place on Shabbat.

The mitzva of Mila is "repeated" in parshat Tazria. Its specific wording there, teaches us some details.

With the two texts dealing with BRIT, it is noteworthy that most mitzva-counters count MILA from LECH L'CHA rather than TAZRI'A. Lech L'cha's context is the story of Avraham Avinu. In Tazria we have a straightforward

command — Speak to the people of Israel and say to them... on the 8th day, you SHALL circumcise...

Most significantly in the matter of Brit Mila is this: The physical removal of the foreskin is only part of the mitzva of Mila. This can be seen by looking at the brachot that are said for the Brit. The first bracha is AL HAMILA. This bracha is immediately followed by a second Birkat HaMitzva (very unusual to say two mitzva-brachot for the performance of one mitzva), "to enter him into the covenant of Avraham". This is not just a HINENI MUCHAN U'MEZUMAN type of introduction to a mitzva, not a peripheral concept, but an integral part of the mitzva. The challenge of raising the child to be a good Jew and a good person is an obligation of the parents which is part of MILA (we can say) and THE part of the mitzva that takes much more time and energy than "the cut". The context of Lech L'cha says it all. Its choice as the "official source" of the Mila helps us understand this important mitzva.

[S> 17:15 (13)] G-d then changes Sarai's name to Sarah. Name changes represent changes in character, role, and destiny. G-d promises that Sarah will bear the true heir of Avraham. Avraham laughs with joy upon hearing that he will be a father at 100, and Sarah a mother at 90. He thought that Yishmael was the son that G-d had repeatedly promised him, but G-d assures him that it will be Yitzchak who will fill that role.

Yishmael will also be blessed and give rise to great nations, but the Covenant will be passed down through Yitzchak.

Avraham circumcises himself at age 99, Yishmael at age 13, and the other male members of his household, in fulfillment of G-d's command.

The last four p'sukim of the sedra are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 21 p'sukim - Yeshayahu - 40:27-41:16

This passage is the national counter-part of some of the personal experiences of Avraham. Just as G-d made promises to Avraham Avinu, so He makes promises to the Children of Israel. Just as Avraham tenaciously clings to faith in G-d, so too do his descendants. Endurance, confidence, victory, self-perfection - these qualities are shared by THE ancestor and his descendants, us.

We can see in the sedra-haftara pair a manifestation of MAASEI AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM, the deeds of the ancestors set the patterns for the their descendants.

Lesson # 255 • Unauthorized Use by the Bailee

The unpaid bailee is entrusted with an object to guard, not to use. Of the four bailees, only the lessee and the borrower may use the object, for it was leased or borrowed to be used. Neither the unpaid bailee nor the paid bailee may use the object that is entrusted to them. In a prior lesson it was stated in discussing the liabilities of the unpaid bailee: "He is liable for the non-return of the object no matter what the reason, if he uses it, since any use by an unpaid bailee is unauthorized."

The object may be resting in a place designated by the owner or it may be resting in a place selected by the bailee with the right of the bailee to move the object to another place.

This and the following lesson discuss the unauthorized use of the object by the unpaid bailee. The Torah in discussing an unpaid bailee states, "If a man delivers unto his neighbor money or things to be looked after, and it is claimed that it has been stolen from the house of the man [the bailee], if the thief be found he shall pay double. If the thief shall not be found, then the master of the house [the bailee] shall place himself unto God, if he has not put forth his hands to the goods of his neighbor" (Exodus 22:6-7). The Mishna, in discussing this law, states, "If a person intends to make use of a bailment, Beit Shammai maintains that he is immediately responsible for the object. Beit Hillel maintains that he is not responsible until he actually makes use of the object" (Mishna Baba Metzia 43b). The law as it appears in Maimonides states, "If a bailee makes unauthorized use of an object entrusted to him, either himself or via his son or a slave or his agent, he is deemed a robber and is held responsible for all force majeure damage, and the robbed object is deemed to be in his custody similar to that of all robbers. He is not held responsible for the object until he actually uses it, and not for mere intent alone. Once he has made use of it, he is held responsible. Even if his use does not depreciate the value of the object, but he merely moves the object from one place to another on his premises to make use of it, he becomes responsible for the object, because unauthorized use does not require depreciation" (Maimonides Laws of Robbery and Lost Property, 3:11).

The bailee, when he makes unauthorized use of the object, either takes up the object with the view to keeping it, or just to use it and return it. Even when he takes up the object without authorization, just to use it, the use may depreciate the object, such as using an automobile where there is wear and tear on the tires and motor. Or there is no depreciation of the object, such as standing on a ladder that has been entrusted to the bailee.

There is also another concept similar to that of the bailee making unauthorized use of the object: the concept of the person who "borrows" an object from an owner without the consent of the owner. Shulhan Aruch commences with the general prohibition and the distinctions between these two concepts.

What if the bailee, after making an unauthorized use of the object, decides to return it to its place? Is he restored to being an unpaid bailee with limited liabilities? Or, once he leaves that status is he unable to re-enter that status and, instead, remains absolutely liable the same as a robber of an object?

The Torah prohibits the unpaid bailee or the paid bailee from unauthorized use of the object entrusted to him by the owner. The mere intent, whether or not verbalized, to make unauthorized use of the object does not impose any additional

liability upon the unpaid bailee. This is true even if he declared his intent to witnesses. His intent, coupled with some action on his part, may cause him to be liable in all events of damage to the object, including force majeure. This extension of his intent will place him into one of two categories, that of a bailee who makes unauthorized use of the object entrusted to him, or that of a borrower without authority of the owner.

The bailee intends to make an unauthorized use of the bailment, which use will probably result in a depreciation of the value of the object. As soon as he pulls or lifts the object, he is transformed into a robber of the object, regardless of the fact that he intends only temporary use of the object and that he intends to return the object after its use. He is a robber although he never actually made use of the object after he lifted it or pulled it. Actual depreciation is not required once he intends to use it in a manner that might depreciate it. Thus intent to use it in a manner that might depreciate it coupled with a lifting or pulling of the object makes the bailee into a robber.

The bailee intends to use the object in a manner that will not depreciate the object. He does not become equivalent of a borrower without authority (which is equivalent to being a robber) until he actually uses the object, as distinguished from merely lifting it or pulling it to himself.

The bailee is liable even if he personally did not perform the unauthorized act; he is liable even if the act was performed by his agent. There is an opinion that the bailee is liable if the act to make the bailee liable was performed by the agent only if the agent was not aware that the object was entrusted to the bailee, or the agent is not mentally competent, or the agent does not have the money to pay the owner.

Ordinarily, a principal is not responsible for violations committed by his agent; the agent is responsible for his own violations. He should not have followed illegal orders, but should rather have obeyed the laws of the Torah. This situation is an exception based on a verse in the Torah.

Restoring the object to its place

Assume that the bailee makes unauthorized use of the object and there is no depreciation, or that there is depreciation and he restores it and wants to pay for the depreciation. The object is thereafter stolen, or lost, or damaged or lost through force majeure. Is the unpaid bailee liable? Under ordinary circumstances the unpaid bailee is not responsible for such loss. In the situation being discussed here, he is liable as soon as he lifts or pulls the object to use it in a manner that would depreciate the object. Does his returning the object to the place where it was stored reinstate him in the same position he was in before he lifted or pulled the object?

The majority opinion is that once he has become a robber of the object, his replacing the object does not reinstate him to a role of an unpaid bailee and continues his unlimited liability for the object. There is also a strong dissent that once he replaces the object he is reinstated to his role as an unpaid bailee and has the limited liabilities of an unpaid bailee.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume VIII chapters 292 of A Restatement of Rabbinic Civil Law by E. Quint. Copies of all volumes can be purchased via email: orders@gefepublishing.com and via website: www.israelbooks.com and at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to quint@inter.net.il

MEANING IN MITZVOT by Rabbi Asher Meir

Each week we discuss one familiar halakhic practice and try to show its beauty and meaning. The columns are based on Rabbi Meir's Meaning in Mitzvot on Kitzur Shulchan Arukh

Laws of Acquisitions (part 2) Kinyan Devarim

Last week we explained that the specific laws for acquiring an object have a deeper spiritual message, as elaborated by Rav Natan of Breslav in the section of Likutei Halakhot on these laws.

We mentioned that merely agreeing to transfer ownership of an object does not effect an acquisition (SA CM 189). The original owner remains owner, though he is considered untrustworthy if he reneges on a commitment to sell barring some kind of duress (CM 204). Rather, an acquisition of movable goods is effected only through a specific act of kinyan. This week we will present Rav Natan's explanation of why mere verbal agreement is not enough.

The main insight of Rav Natan is that commerce, no less than production or agriculture, has a critical role in G^d's service. Just as production elevates a purely natural object into one suitable for human use, so commerce helps bring the completed object to the person who is most able to help this object realize its unique providential role.

Rav Natan constantly emphasizes that a critical role in this process is fair dealing. Only when a person is honest and keeps his word, will the process of trade through human interaction be successful in effecting continuous elevation. This also has a clear ethical expression: if people are dishonest in their business relations, then they will not be aware of the unique properties and value of different goods; thus, these will not find their ordained use. That is why a commitment to buy or sell should be reverently honored; honesty is the basis of the entire project.

Even so, the transfer is not completed by a mere verbal commitment. Rav Natan explains this based on one principle of his teacher, Rav Nachman of Breslav.

One of the most fundamental tenets of the teachings of Rav Nachman is that spiritual advancement can never be attained without some degree of temporary retreat or descent. When a person ascends to a higher level of G^d's service, he will at first find himself on the outside; he then needs to penetrate to the innerness, to break through the "shell", in order to actually attain the potential for holiness of the new level (Likutei Moharan 25). We can liken this to a person who changes dwellings; the new dwelling may be better than the old, but the person has to leave the inside of the old house and at first finds himself outside the new one. Even after he moves in, he needs to accustom himself, as "it takes a heap of living to make a house a home".

This same process applies when an object attains a measure of elevation through commerce. The first stage in this process is the clarification, or *berur*, whereby the appropriate owner of the object is determined; this takes place through the preliminary verbal agreement. This begins the object's "journey" to a new level, but at first it attains only the outerness of this level. If this stage were considered final, there is a danger that we would never penetrate the innerness of the new level.

My understanding of this is that it reflects the inadequacy of agreement without commitment. In human relations a truly productive alliance between people requires commitment, which is cemented by a formal act. Even at the practical level, having a couple merely agreeing to live together will never create the

same inner bond attained by a sanctioned marriage, *kiddushin*. A similar process applies at the material level. Using our material possessions in an elevated way requires a committed psychic connection, which can't be created by a mere agreement. It is necessary for the acquirer to carry out a more concrete act of acquisition.

Therefore, while it is dishonorable for the seller to renege on the agreement, it is possible to do so since the buyer has not yet established the committed connection to the object that will certainly enable him to use it in G^d's service in a positive way. In Chassidic terms, this means that the object reverts to the innerness of the lower level, which is still preferable to the mere "outerness" of the higher level of the objects use.

Please note:

The manuscript for Meaning in Mitzvot on the Kitzur Shulchan Arukh is in its final stages of preparation. The book will be distributed IY^H by Feldheim. There still might be an opportunity for anyone who would like to make a dedication or otherwise be a partner in the publication of the first printing of the book. Please contact Rabbi Meir by e-mail: mail@asherandattara.com

Rabbi Meir authors a popular weekly on-line Q&A column, "The Jewish Ethicist", which gives Jewish guidance on everyday ethical dilemmas in the workplace. The column is a joint project of the JCT Center for Business Ethics, Jerusalem College of Technology - Machon Lev; and Aish HaTorah. You can see the Jewish Ethicist, and submit your own Qs — www.jewishethicist.com or www.aish.com

TANACH

Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Historical Books of Tanach; JOSHUA, JUDGES, SAMUEL, KINGS (Nevi'im Rishonim) by Dr. Meir Tamari

Chizkiyahu - A Temporary Halt in the Slow Slide to Destruction and Exile (Melachim Bet 18-20)

During the reign of Ahaz, Divine retribution had caught up with the Ten Tribes of the Kingdom of Israel and they, both those living across the Jordan as well as those in Shomron were exiled and strange peoples were brought by the Assyrians to settle their lands. However, that fate was delayed for the remnant of our people living in the Kingdom of Judah for almost two centuries. Was this simply a showing of Hashem's mercy or was it caused by Teshuva that was sufficient to stop the downward spiral? Perhaps, it was a combination of the two; "The Lord, the Lord, G-d Merciful and Forbearing, slow to anger and quick to forgive..." (Sh'mot 32:8); "He wants the repentance of the sinners not their death or punishment and should they repent, immediately He forgives them" (Machzor Yom Kippur); this teshuva was led by the new king.

Chizkiyahu, the righteous king, was sandwiched between two evil ones, his father Achaz and his son Menashe, both of whom expanded and intensified in Judah the evil originally introduced by the kings of the Northern Kingdom. Our text (18:3) tells us that "He did all that his father David did", and Yeshayahu wrote of him (Yeshayahu 16:5) "And a throne is established through mercy, and there sits thereon in truth in the tent of David, one that judges and seeks justice and is ready in righteousness". "None of the other kings of the Davidic dynasty before him ever achieved the righteousness and fear of G-d of David, as did Hezekiyahu. He even exceeded David in righteousness since he

never sinned in adultery or in bloodshed as did David in the case of Uriha [Melachim Alef 15:5]" (Ralbag and Abarbanel).

His first act was to utterly destroy and uproot the worship at the decentralized bamot that although banned with the building of the Bet HaMikdash, nevertheless continued to exist. Originally these bamot had served only for the worship of Hashem but, such is the nature of non-observance of halakha, they had later become perverted into altars to idolatry.

“Three acts of Hezkiyahu met the approval of the Sages and they were:

1. He hid away the book of REFU'OT [“These were remedies that were to be applied only at certain times and under certain conditions. However, since they were similar to the cures of avoda zara, the population who were unable to distinguish between permitted and forbidden acts, came, through the study of these books, to near idolatry” (Rambam Sefer Hamitzvot)];

2. He ground the brass serpent into dust [This was originally made by Moshe during the plague of serpents in the desert, so that those who were afflicted would remember to pray to Hashem and thus be cured (Bamidbar 21:8; Yoma 3:8). However, it had since been made into an idol and so he destroyed it. Some questioned his right to destroy the serpent because it had been made with Moshe’s private wealth and therefore the king had no authority to destroy it. However, the public good of preventing idolatry superseded the private property right (Avoda Zara 44a). This application of eminent domain is an example of the halakhic right of society in the private property for the public welfare; a right that has many implications for environmental economics today].

3. He had the bones of his father Ahaz, dragged on a stretcher of ropes. [Pesachim, 4:9. Rashi there explains that this was degrading but a Kiddush Hashem because of Ahaz’s evil deeds. Chazal based this on Divrei HaYamim Bet 28:27, where we are told that Ahaz was buried in Yerushalyim; but not in the graves of his fathers the Davidic dynasty].

Three acts of his were not approved of by the Sages and they were:

1. He closed off waters of the Gichon spring. [Actually, the king concerned with an impending siege by Assyria, constructed a tunnel leading under the walls of Yerushalayim to divert the water into the king’s pool (DHY2 32:30). The Shiloach tunnel from which water was brought during Simchat Beit Hasho’eva, is 513m long and was considered a major engineering feat of its time. Although this tunnel denied water to the enemy, the Sages did not agree to Chikiyahu’s act since thereby he ‘wasted it - bal tashchit - by denying it also to farmers and others who habitually benefited from it. [This is similar in reasoning to the ban on destroying fruit trees belonging to an enemy during war (D’varim 20:19-20)] Instead he should have trusted in Hashem to protect the city as promised by Yeshayahu: “For I will defend this city for Mine own sake and for My servant David’s sake” (Meiri).

2. “He gave Sennacherib the Assyrian king as tribute, all the silver in the house for the Lord and in the treasuries of the palace. He stripped the gold off the doors of the Temple and their thresholds and gave them to the king” (18:15-16). [The use of the Temple funds was a desecration of holy money. Here too, he should have had faith in the prophecy of Yeshayahu that Hashem would deliver the city. According to DHY2 29, in the very first year of his reign he had restored the building and purified it after the desecrations by Ahaz of the Temple, and the

gold on the doors and their thresholds were part of that restoration.]

3. He added an additional month of Nissan in Nissan. [“In the second month Chizkiyahu decided together with his counselors to observe the Pesach” (DHY2 30:2). In effect thereby making two months of Nissan, which is halakhically unacceptable since Pesach has to be in Nissan and not in Iyar; if necessary we have to add a second Adar. We have two opinions as to why Chizkiyahu did this. Talmud Bavli (Pesachim 46a, Rashi) based on this verse, explains that the Kohanim had only finished the purification of the Temple on the 16th of Nissan and therefore Pesach could not be observed in time. In the Yerushalmi, they taught that he decided that the people collectively at the correct time of Pesach were either in tumat avoda zara or in tumat met, and therefore like the rule of individuals who were unclean, they should observe Pesach Sheni.)” (Pesachim 46a).

This is the 57th installment in Dr. Tamari’s series on “Tanach and its messages for our times”

MISC section - contents:

[1] Vebbe Rebbe

[2] Touch of Wisdom; Touch of Wit

[3] Candle by Day

[4] From Aloh Naaleh

[5] Raincheck

[6] Torah from Nature

[7] From the desk of the director

[1] From the virtual desk of the OU VEBBE REBBE

The Orthodox Union – via its website – fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and the Israel Center. The following is a Q&A from Eretz Hemdah...

Q I have been told that one can use a utensil once before toveling it (immersing it in a mikveh). May I rely on that opinion?

A It is a pleasure to deal with an area of halacha that was all but forgotten in the previous generation. Indeed there is an undisputed requirement to tovel certain utensils obtained from non-Jews even if they are new (Avoda Zara 75b). This is based on p’sukim describing the process of preparing the spoils from the battle against Midyan (Bamidbar 31:22-23). There is significant dispute whether the derivation is the sign of a Torah law or that it is a rabbinic law.

It is also accepted halacha that at least the owners of the utensils may not use them before the tevilla (Rambam, Ma’achalot Asurot 17:3; Rama on Yoreh Deah 120:8). However, in this regard, there are more opinions that the prohibition to use utensils prior to tevilla is only rabbinic (see, for example, the Biur Halacha on 323:17). So, there could be more leniency on

use of utensils in cases of doubt. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no recognized halachic opinion or clear logic to distinguish between one use and many uses in this regard (see *Tevillat Keilim* (Cohen) 4:(3)). On the other hand, the position you presented is well known. There are a few possible ways to explain the phenomenon of a well known, but undocumented, position. It is possible that someone of stature offered an oral or obscurely published opinion. Other times, because of great need (or the tendency toward *chumra* in certain circles or halachic issues) an obscure, minority opinion gains popularity. Or, as is apparently the case here, laymen misunderstand and misapply a halacha to the extent that the mistake takes on a life of its own. Let's trace the mistake.

The Torah states what substances need to be *toveled* but does not state explicitly the form they need to be in in order for there to be an obligation. The *gemara* (*ibid.*) says that only *klei seuda* (utensils of the meal) need *tevilla*. While there is much discussion as to what is sufficiently connected to a meal to be included, we should take note of the requirement that the object be a *kli* (utensil). There are very complicated halachot on what is considered a *kli*. Most of the applications are in the laws of purity and impurity, which are, for the most part, marginally applicable in a time when there is no *Beit HaMikdash*. One of the characteristics of *keilim*, in the context of impurity and other halachot, is that they are made to be used over and over again. This is important in our age of affluence, when disposable "utensils" are a common phenomenon. There is a consensus among recent *poskim* that "utensils" that are disposed of after one use are not *keilim* that require *tevilla*. (The matter of things that are used only a few times is beyond our present scope.)

It appears that many people, not being overly familiar with the laws of *keilim* (mis)understood that this ruling assumes that *tevilla* becomes necessary only after repeated uses. In fact, this is not the case. A utensil which has the prospect of being used repeatedly is a *kli* from the time of its formation. As such, the obligation to *tovel* it applies. While one who wants to let a *kli* sit in his cupboard (or his store, awaiting sale) is not obligated to *tovel*, its use makes the obligation "kick in" (see *Shach* 120:10). Thus, one is not allowed to create the obligation of *tevilla* by using the utensil and not fulfill that obligation (see *Tevillat Keilim* *ibid.*:(2) in the name of *Rav Sh. Z. Orbach*). Every use, whether one or many, creates an obligation which must be fulfilled by the time of the use, at least under normal circumstances.

While many interesting and practical, related questions remain, we hope that we were able to clear up this common misconception in an area of halacha, which, B"H, has been rediscovered.

Ask the Rabbi Q&A is part of *Hemdat Yamim*, the weekly parsha sheet published by *Eretz Hemdah*. You can read this section or the entire *Hemdat Yamim* at www.ou.org or www.erezhemdah.org. And/or you can receive *Hemdat Yamim* by email weekly, by sending an email to info@erezhemdah.org with the message: *Subscribe/English* (for the English version) or *Subscribe/Hebrew* (for the Hebrew version). Please leave the subject blank. *Ask the Rebbe* is partially funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel

[2] *ArtScroll Series* • *Mesorah Publications Ltd.*

A TOUCH OF WISDOM A TOUCH OF WIT by *Shmuel Himelstein*

A Chasid once came to *R' Yitzchak Meir*, the son of *R' Avraham Heshel of Apta*. *R' Yitzchak Meir* greeted him, and the man just stood staring.

"Why", asked *R' Yitzchak Meir*, "are you staring at me?"

"Rebbe", the man replied, "we are told that looking at a TZADDIK is a SEGULA for becoming God-fearing."

"We are also told", said *R' Yitzchak Meir*, "that all Jews are TZADDIKIM. Thus, you too are a TZADDIK. If you look deeply into yourself, that too is a SEGULA for becoming God-fearing."

Shmuel Himelstein has written a wonderful series for *ArtScroll: Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit; A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit; and "Wisdom and Wit"* — available at your local Jewish bookstore (or should be). Excerpted with the permission of the copyright holder

[3] *Candle by Day*

If we spent less time trying to make this world a better place to live in, and more time trying to make ourselves better persons to live with, the world would be a better place to live in. - From *A Candle by Day* by *Rabbi Shraga Silverstein*

[4] CHIZUK and IDUD (for *Olim* & *not-yet-Olim* respectively)

In *Parshat Lech Lecha*, *Avraham* is commanded by *Hashem* to go to *Eretz Yisrael*. *Avraham* arrives there only to see that there is famine everywhere so he takes *Sarah* and the rest of his household down to *Egypt*. As they are about to enter *Egypt*, *Avraham* says to *Sarah* (12:11-13), "Behold, now I know that you are a beautiful woman and when the *Egyptians* see you, they will say 'She must be his wife' and they will kill me and let you live. So please tell them you're my sister so it will be good for me". How can it be that *Avraham* only realizes that his wife *Sarah* is beautiful now? *Avraham* and *Sarah* had to have been married for a number of years by now. In all those years of being married, did it escape *Avraham's* attention that his wife was beautiful?

And what is it about their situation now, that suddenly makes it so clear to him?

Rashi quotes the *Midrash* which says that on their way down to *Egypt*, *Avraham* and *Sarah* had to cross a stream. In crossing the stream, *Avraham* looked down and saw the reflection of *Sarah* in the water. Upon seeing her reflection, *Avraham* suddenly realized how beautiful his wife *Sarah* was. But the question remains, what about seeing *Sarah's* reflection in a stream made *Avraham* realize her beauty whereas all those years of being married could not accomplish that? In addition, *Avraham* does not say "Now I know", rather he says "Hinei Na Yadati -- Now, I knew". How did this new discovery affect what *Avraham* knew in the past?

In *Judaism* there are two words for beauty 1) "Yofi" and 2) "Chein".

"Yofi" is external, physical beauty. "Chayn" is internal beauty which comes from a person's spiritual attributes. The amazing thing about "Chein" is that it can actually make a person's "Yofi" look better than it really is. Has it ever happened to you that when you first meet someone you don't find them to be so attractive, but then the more you get to know them (i.e. their sweet disposition and good nature) the more beautiful they seem

to become? We explain that phenomena as "His looks grew on me", but really what is happening is that the "Cheinn" in him makes his "Yofi" look better than it did at first.

All throughout their marriage, Avraham saw Sarah's beauty as being a function of both her "Yofi" and "Chein". Avraham never saw Sarah as simply an object of beauty, because he never separated her inner beauty (Chein) from her external beauty. Only when they crossed this stream, for the first time Avraham saw Sarah simply as a beautiful, physical form because when you see a person's reflection in water (or a mirror) you only see "Yofi", not "Chein". So when Avraham saw that Sarah's reflection was so beautiful he exclaimed "Now I have proof that what I always knew is true. I always saw you as beautiful because you had a beautiful inside in addition to a beautiful outside. But if I ever wondered whether or not my judgment of your "Yofi" was true since I also saw your "Chein", now I see that what I knew was right. You are as beautiful on the outside as I always knew you were on the inside".

(Ed. note: Those living in Israel are continually awed not only by its "Yofi" but also by its "Chein". Why don't you come to experience it for yourself?)

Shprintza Herskovits, Jerusalem

P.S. The above is an excerpt from Shprintza's book "Rays of the Sun" -- containing commentary on all the sedras of the Torah. For a copy of the book, please write to: shprintz@actcom.co.il

TORAH THOUGHTS as contributed by Aloh Naaleh members for publication in the Orthodox Union's 'Torah Insights', a weekly Torah publication on Parshat Ha'Shavuah

[5] **Raincheck** - part 2

Reminder: Beginning Thursday night, the eve of the 7th of Marcheshvan, October 21, and until Pesach, we (in Eretz Yisrael) ask for rain in the "Bareich Aleinu" bracha of every weekday Amida, with the words V'TEIN TAL U'MATAR LIVRACHA

Omitting this request invalidates the Amida and requires repeating it. Details not covered by this reminder include: The rules for remembering the omission while still in the Amida, The rule for an Israeli visiting abroad, The rule of a Chutz LaAretz person in Israel as tourist or student

A weekday Amida without TAL U'MATAR (from 7 Cheshvan until 14 Nissan - this year, until 13 Nissan, since Erev Pesach is Shabbat) is invalid and must be repeated.

This means that if you finish an Amida and realize that you forgot T&M, you must say the Amida again.

If you remember that you forgot T&M in the Shacharit Amida, and it is now the middle of the afternoon, then it is as if you didn't daven Shacharit, and you say a second Mincha Amida as TASHLUMIN for Shacharit. In other words, the remembering of your omission does not have to be immediate.

Situations in which you are NOT sure whether you omitted T&M or not, will be presented later.

If you catch your omission when you are still in the Amida, then it depends, as follows:

If one is still in the BAREICH ALEINU bracha (not having yet said G-d's name at the end of the bracha), then back up a little and say V'TEIN TAL U'MATAR LIVRACHA, and continue from there.

If you already said G-d's name, then continue (without going back) and when you get to the SH'MA KOLEINU bracha, say T&M as follows:

SHMA KOLEINU thru AL T'SH'VEINU and then insert V'TEN TAL U'MATAR LIVRACHA and then continue with KI ATA SHOMEA...until the end of the bracha.

This is preferred to repeating one or more brachot, because this too is a good spot for requests (as we know from the other things that are inserted into Sh'ma Koleinu, before KI ATA).

If you pass the point of insertion in Sh'ma Koleinu, but haven't said G-d's name in the end of the bracha, then say T&M and continue with KI ATA SHOMEI'A...

If you finish Sh'ma Koleinu but haven't said the word R'TZEI yet, you can say V'TEN TAL U'MATAR LIVRACHA after SHOMEI'A T'FILA and before R'TZEI. Since you have not begun R'TZEI, it is still considered being in the "brachot of request" section of the Amida, and T&M fits.

Once you say the word R'TZEI (and you haven't asked for T&M yet), you must go back to BAREICH ALEINU and say the Amida straight from there. Although this involves repeated brachot you have already said, this is what must be done.

This rule applies from R'TZEI until you finish the Amida. That point is either when you finish Y'HIU L'RATZON... when you begin taking your first step back. If it is only then that you realize that you have not said T&M, then you must say the Amida all over again. One should be struck by the fact that 19 brachot are being declared invalid, just so that the request for rain can be said in its proper place. This should give us a strong feeling of the value of the prayers of each and every Jew. Our Sages could have reasoned that others would have asked for rain properly and let the one who omitted T&M off the hook, so to speak. But no, every single prayer is important.

Let's say that when you finished the Amida, you aren't sure whether you said T&M or not. The doubt enters you right away.

In this case, our Sages say that if you have not developed a habit to say T&M (defined as 90 times or one month - which are not exactly the same), then you probably did NOT say it, and you must repeat the Amida, just like someone who is sure they forgot it.

After a habit develops, you may assume you said T&M, even if you are not sure.

If when you finished the Amida you did not have a feeling of doubt, but it came to you later, then you can ignore the feeling and assume that you said T&M correctly.

Also, if you remember thinking about saying T&M while you were in the beginning of the Amida, but you now are not sure whether you said it or not, you may assume that you said it.

The halachic rules for SAFEK (doubt) are a bit tricky. In the examples we have mentioned, the person did or didn't say T&M. If he did, fine. If he didn't, then he has to repeat. The problem is that he doesn't know or remember whether he did or not. Halacha therefore tries to maximize the probability that the assumption is as close to the reality as possible. Short of a video replay, we cannot know for sure. So we must follow the halachic guidelines for cases of doubt.

Don't be confused by this next statement. Read it over a few times if necessary. It is just an attempt at being cute.

If you are in doubt as to what to do if you are in doubt, ask a Rav.

The goal is to follow halacha, avoid bracha l'vatala, avoid invoking the opposite of a blessing. Our prayers are REAL. We should take them seriously. Prayer is an important "job" of the Jew. And we each should "pull our weight" by davening with proper care and KAVANA.

As to the situation of a Jew from abroad being in Eretz Yisrael when we begin saying T&M (and the Jews from where he comes do not yet say T&M, until the beginning of December), there are different opinions. Here is one approach.

A CHULNIK (person who lives outside of Israel) who is in Israel for less than a year, asks for T&M like where he comes from, and not from 7 Cheshvan. In other words, a visitor to Israel on a two-week trip, should continue saying V'TEIN BRACHA in Bareich Aleinu, even though we start T&M on 7 Cheshvan. He should avoid being Chazzan, but if he is, then he must say T&M in the repetition of the Amida.

If a CHULNIK did start saying T&M (which he should not have done according to this opinion), then he should continue saying it. Some say, even when he returns "home". This is disputed.

People who are in Israel for a year of learning (which often is much less than a year) should ask their Rav (or Rosh Yeshiva).

A person who is going to be in Israel for the entire period of 7 Cheshvan through Pesach, even though it is less than a year, might be told that he/she can say T&M like a local.

Others are told to say V'TEIN BRACHA in Bareich Aleinu until December, and to say T&M in Sh'ma Koleinu (similar to one who forgot to say T&M).

Of course, after December 4th or 5th, T&M is said in Bareich Aleinu for everyone.

An Israeli traveling abroad (with intention of returning in less than a year), asks for T&M according to the Israel schedule. He too should avoid the Amud (being Chazzan). If he cannot avoid it, then he must follow local practice in the repetition of the Amida.

A few words about our fellow Jews in the Southern Hemisphere. A community "down under" (where seasons are reversed) that gets rain around the year and will not suffer from rain during its summer, asks for T&M just like all other Chutz LaAretz communities.

But if there is a place where rain is harmful during their summer (damages crops, breeds mosquitoes, spreads disease), the Jews there have halachic permission NOT to say T&M from Dec. 4/5 until Pesach.

However, during their rainy season, when we are not saying T&M, they may not either. I.e. in Bareich Aleinu. The result of this is that they say V'TEIN B'RACHA the whole year round.

Some opinions allow them to ask for T&M in Sh'ma Koleinu, if they desperately need rain during our summer.

It's a complicated topic which points to the seriousness of davening. May all our prayers be answered favorably.

[6] Torah from Nature

Muntjac

There are nine existing species of muntjac; the picture below is an Indian muntjac. They are deer (which include about 43 species) of South East Asia.

...coat is short, shiny, and reddish. Antlers, present only in the male, are twin-pronged, with a maximum length of 10-12cm...

Distinctive canine teeth protrude from the upper jaw in males and can reach a length of over an inch. The munjac grows to about 1m in length, 65cm at the shoulder. Its tail is about 20cm more. It weighs up to 15 kilo... usually is solitary and is active mainly at twilight and at night. It feeds on grass, leaves, and fruit. When annoyed or alarmed by the unexpected appearance of an enemy (tigers and other members of the cat family), it emits a distinctive noise like the baying of a dog... When mating occurs, at any time of year, there are often violent duels between males, with the rivals inflicting deep wounds on one another with their horns and canine teeth. Gestation lasts for about six months, after which the female delivers one or two young.

Presence of canine teeth in some deer has led some halachic authorities to question their kashrut, even though they chew the cud and have split hooves. The question is being debated even as you read these words, and the final psak will determine whether certain deer meat enters the kosher market in Israel in the near future.

[7] Divrei Menachem

In Parshat Lech Lecha G-d promises Avraham to "give this land to your offspring" (Bereishit 12:7). Only a few verses later, however, we read that Avraham descends to Egypt to sojourn there on account of a severe famine in Eretz Cana'an.

Ramban comments that Avraham's flight to Egypt placed his wife, Sarah, in extreme danger on account of her beauty. Moreover, Avraham resorts to trickery – calling his wife his 'sister' – in order to protect her from the Egyptian king. How so?

For the Midrash, the descent to Egypt was one of several tests Avraham endured. The fleshpots and dangers of Mizrayim would thus challenge his spiritual resources and contest his trust in Hashem's promise. However, for the Midrash, this journey also foreshadows the exile of Ya'akov's sons to Egypt.

Avraham's behavior is now better understood, for now he preempts the challenge of Diaspora. His sudden awareness of Sara's beauty is a reflection of the debilitating influences of Galut. For Harav Harlap, Avraham's calling Sara his sister is not trickery; it is a way of raising the moral high ground as a pointer for the future. For Avraham understands that only strong ethical principles will serve now to protect Sarah and, later, the Jewish midwives in Egypt. He also teaches us that only the loftiest of moral standards constitute the anti-dote to our enemies – then and now.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH...

A series of articles on Beit HaMikdash-related topics by Catriel Sugarman intended to increase the knowledge, interest, and anticipation of the reader, thereby hastening the realization of our hopes and prayers for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Beit HaMikdash.

Mikdash Mikva'ot - "Ritual Baths" (I)

"R. Akiva said, 'Happy are you, O Israel. Before Whom are you made clean and Who makes you clean? Your Father in Heaven; as it is written, "I will sprinkle pure water upon you and you shall be pure (Yechezkel 36:25). And again it says, 'O Lord, the Hope (Mikvah) of Israel (Yirmeyahu 17:13) - as the Mikvah purifies the impure, so does the Holy One Blessed be He purify Israel.'"

The literal meaning of the term Mikvah (pl. Mikva'ot) is "collection". The term is used in the Torah particularly when reference is made to 'collected' water (Bereishit 1:10, Shemot 7:19, Vayikra 11:36 et al). Today the term usually signifies "ritual immersion bath". Vayikra 11:36 states that only bodies of water which are connected to the ground, "...a spring, or a cistern – a gathering of waters" ("Mikvei Mayim") are not receptive to ritual impurity (note Rashi). These bodies of water, when correctly utilized, can purify those who have become ritually impure (Note Hullin 84a, and Rashi). This ruling was derived from Vayikra 15:16 where it refers to a man in a state of impurity immersing "his entire flesh in THE water (BAmayim)." The sages interpreted this to mean that the water must either "gather together of its own accord" i.e. the natural waters of seas, lakes, and rivers – or be contained within artificially constructed Mikva'ot which meet certain Halachic requirements. Immersion in a valid Mikvah removes ritual impurity from men, women and vessels (Yoma 8:9). If an Israelite came into contact with a human corpse, a portion of a corpse, or a grave, he contracts Tum'at Meit ("corpse impurity"). This more virulent form of impurity required sprinkling with the ashes of a Para Aduma mixed with spring water twice in a 7-day period in addition to immersion in a Mikvah.

The Mishna refers specifically to four Mikva'ot in the Mikdash. One Mikvah was constructed high above the Sha'ar HaMayim ("Water Gate") for the use of the Kohein Gadol, and it was the site of his first Yom Kippur immersion. Located in the northern side of the Azara, a subterranean Mikvah constructed for the use of the other Kohanim was accessible by tunnel from the Beit HaMokeyd. Another Mikvah was located above the Beit HaParva, the Azara chamber where the hides of the sacrificial animals were salted. This Mikvah "was made artistically - similar to an ornamental fountain - and it was not obvious from whence came the water since it was located so far from the aqueduct. The appearance of water in that place almost seemed like magic" (Tiferet Yisrael, diagram, 31). The Kohein Gadol immersed there four times during the course of the Avoda of Yom Kippur. There was a fourth Mikvah (and probably several) located in Lishkat HaMetzora'im (Chamber of Lepers) in the NW corner of Ezrat Nashim for the use of Olei Regel. No Kohein or Yisrael could enter the Azara, even if he was pure, without prior immersion (Yoma 3:3).

It is likely that the water source of the various Mikva'ot in the Mikdash and Har HaBayit came from both aqueducts and rainwater. Water pipes led directly from the aqueducts to the Borot HaMayim - Otzrot HaMayim reservoirs connected to the Mikva'ot of the Mikdash (and environs) thereby circumventing storage tanks. It was crucial that the water entering Mikvah reservoirs pass through pipes having no receptacles, impediments, encumbrances or traps where water might collect and thereby invalidate the Mikvah. This way, the directly channeled water was considered halachically "natural water" and therefore was deemed valid for the 40 Se'ah (minimum) of "natural water" which was required to be stored in the Bor HaMayim- Otzrot HaMayim reservoir of each and every Mikvah. But the initial source of the first 40 Se'ah of natural water for most Mikva'ot constructed over the millennia, comes from rainwater which falls on the roof of the building which houses the Mikvah. The same principle – although on a much larger scale – was also operative in the Mikdash. The roofs of the two floors of the Bayit (and probably the roof of the previously mentioned Sha'ar HaMayim as well) were slanted in such a way as to cause the rainwater to be directed to

underground cisterns and Mikva'ot. The internal construction on the southern side of the first floor of the Bayit included a 3-Ama wide conduit, the Beit Horadat HaMayim, which channeled the water (Midot 4:7, Tiferet Yisrael 68).

Immensely ancient, the intricate laws of Mikvah construction are considered "Halachot L'Moshe MiSinai – laws orally revealed to Moses on Sinai. In 1963 a major archeological excavation headed by Professor Yigael Yadin, was launched to uncover the secrets of Masada. In the course of the excavations, they found "a system of three adjacent pools – one large, one medium and one small. Steps had been built in the two larger pools so one could reach the bottom, and in the wall between them there was a connecting hole through which water could flow between one and the other. Moreover... there was an open, plastered, water conduit leading into the first – the largest pool, and this conduit no doubt served to collect and channel rainwater from the roof of the room and its surroundings... This find immediately suggested that what we had discovered was a ritual immersion bath – (ibid. p164). This announcement caused a good deal of excitement. While ancient Mikva'ot had been unearthed, none had been (yet!) discovered from Temple days which, after all, predated the Mishna by over three generations. Specialists in the complex ... laws of Mikvah construction came to inspect the newly discovered Mikvah... Rabbi Muntzberg immediately went into one of the pools, a tape measure in his hand, to examine whether in fact the volume of this Mikvah was the '40 measures' required by ritual law... when he completed his meticulous study, he announced with a beaming face and to the delight of us all, that this Mikvah was indeed a ritual bath 'among the finest of the finest, seven times seven'" (ibid. p166) ... Here, too, may be seen the carefully installed communicating pipe between the 'pure' water pool (Mikvah reservoir) and the immersion pool... the defenders of Masada were devout Jews so even here, on dry Masada, they had gone to the arduous lengths of building these ritual baths in scrupulous conformity with the injunctions of traditional Jewish law." (Yigael Yadin, Masada; Herod's Fortress and the Zealot's Last Stand, Random House, NY, '66)

That these ancient Mikva'ot built by survivors of the fall of Jerusalem, were constructed exactly according to halachot which generations later would be codified in the Mishna, and are identical to the Mikva'ot found in every observant Jewish community around the world today, serve as a monumental illustration of the authenticity and faithfulness of Jewish traditional law. The sages, when they recorded Hilchot Mikvah (and the other Halachot of Torah Sheb'al Peh, the Oral Law) did not invent anything. They "merely" collected ancient, living traditions in a composition which, after redaction by R. Yehuda Nanasi, became "our (written) Mishna". <to be continued>

Catriel is in the process of writing a book: The Temple of Jerusalem, A Pilgrims Prospective; A Guided Tour through the Temple and the Divine Service

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

V'E'ESCHA L'GOY GADOL V'AV'RACHECHA V'A'GADLA SH'MECHA V'HEY BRACHA: (B'reishit 12:2)

(G-d's promises to Avraham) And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

Look at the next to the last word of this pasuk. It is tricky to pronounce correctly. The first syllable is made of the VAV with

a SEGOL and a HEI with a SH'VA NACH. This means the HEI is aspirated and the first syllable is VEHHH. The second syllable is YEI, and this time, the HEI is silent. The first one is sounded as if it had a MAPIK (dot) in it. A HEI at the end of a word without a vowel is silent, unless it has a MAPIK in it. VEH-YEI.

This is not an uncommon occurrence. In SH'MA (second passage) we find V'LO YIHVVH-YE. First syllable is YUD with a CHIRIK and a sounded HEI with a SH'VA NACH. Many people will mispronounce the word as Y'HI-YE, putting a SH'VA under the first YUD and a CHIRIK under the first HEI - neither of which is correct.

The meanings of the words are not changed, but that should not stop us from learning to pronounce them correctly.

My sister = acho-TI. But in 12:8 the word is followed by a one-syllable word, AT (you, fem.) The accent of acho-TI retreats to the first syllable (NASOG ACHOR) and is accented aCHO-ti AT.

We've had this before. And it isn't only in Torah reading. Remember the bracha for Torah: ...aSHER BA-char BA-nu... v'NA-tan LA-nu. ba-CHAR becomes BA-char and na-TAN becomes NA-tan by the rule of NASOG ACHOR (here followed by a two-syllable MIL'EIL word in the same phrase.

Parsha Pix

Arrow from the birthday stuff into Eretz Yisrael is Lech L'cha... MiMoladt'cha - go from your birthplace to the Land... • Arrows from Eretz Yisrael to the south-west and back again is the round trip to & from Egypt. • The compass on the outline of the map is G-d's instructions to Avraham to walk the Land, its length and breadth, and in all directions. • The arrows branching in opposite directions was Avraham's choice to Lot when they separated. If you go left, I'll go right. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left. • Avraham's oath before the king of S'dom, that he would not even take a thread of a shoelace. • Telescope and stars stand for G-d's promise to Avraham that his descendants will be as countless as the stars of the heavens. • On the right in the lower half of the Pix are crowns representing the war of the five kings against the four. • The father with his little son represents Brit Mila, the only mitzva of Taryag in the sedra. By the way, BRIT is numerically 612, making it equal to all the other mitzvot (besides itself). • There is the tent that Avraham pitched a few times in the sedra (not really a good representation, because it seems to have only one entrance.) • Center-lower half, is a representation of Brit Bein HaB'tarim, with each split animal accompanied by a triangle, standing for the adjective M'SHULASH or M'SHULESHET. The bird at the top was not cut. See the Sedra Summary for details.

TTRIDDLES...

are Torah Tidbits-style riddles on Parshat HaShavua (sometimes on the calendar). They are found in the hard-copy of TT scattered throughout, usually at the bottom of different columns. In the electronic versions of TT, they are found all together at the end of the ParshaPix-TTriddles section. The best solution set submitted each week (there isn't always a best) wins a double prize a CD from Noam Productions and/or a gift (game, puzzle, book, etc.) from Big Deal

Last issue's (No'ach - Rosh Chodesh) TTriddles:

- [1] Pyle Gog Paras Athens Kayin ChochmaJiffy Pop
- [2] His father's northern boundary
- [3] Rosh Chodesh is his foot
- [4] Elokim four times, who else & what?
- [5] and [6] Two elements from the ParshaPix

And the envelope, please...

[1] These are all words associated with the names of some of the sons of YEFET (B'reishit 10:2). Pyle, as in GOMER Pyle, misfit US marine of an old (1964-70) TV series starring Jim Nabors. Gog goes with MAGOG. Paras goes with MADAI, as in Megilat Esther. Athens is the capital of Greece, which is YAVAN in Hebrew. Kayin goes with TUVAL, as in Tuval Kayin. MESECH chochma (R' Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, 5603-5681, known as the Ohr Samei'ach. Wrote commentary on Torah called Meshech Chochma). Jiffy Pop was the first popcorn kit, way before microwave ovens. You held it over a fire, started shaking it when you heard first popping, and then watched it expand and expand until it was finished popping. Corn in Hebrew is TIRAS.

[2] TZIDON was son of K'NAAN and the city of TZIDON (Sidon) is the northern boundary of the Land of Canaan.

[3] Rosh Chodesh means the head (letter) of the word Chodesh, which is the letter CHET. It is the foot of NO'ACH. Other answers received were TERACH, with REISH"CHET (for Rosh CHodesh) as the two last letters of Terach, and YERACH, the meaning of which is related to the moon or a month, in addition to also having REISH & CHET as its feet.

[4] VAYIZKOR ELOKIM ET NO'ACH is the first of the 10 p'sukim of ZICHRONOT from the Rosh HaShana Musaf. It comes from Parshat No'ach. A search of Tanach reveals only 5 VAYIZKORs in Chumash (4 more in the rest of Tanach). 4 of the 5 are followed by ELOKIM, Who is remembering. In addition to No'ach, we find Avraham, Rachel, and the covenant with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. The only other VAYIZKOR in Torah is Yosef, who remembers his dreams when he sees his brothers in Egypt.

[5] Upper right corner of the ParshaPix is a drawing of Jim Nabors. See [1].

[6] This one did not come out well at all in the hard copy, but in the color version of ParshaPix on the website and receivable by email either as part of the .pdf file version of TT or the attached .gif file of the ParshaPix (or both), it could be made out (as MM/Bklyn) did, as a KUSH ball. KUSH is one of the sons of CHAM and the father of NIMROD.

Winner this week is MM/Bklyn, Runners up are EB and YYW, Contact us or stop by for your prizes

This week's TTriddles:

- [1] Source of AM-bracha and Shabbat Day Z'mira
- [2] He's the THOU of the well-known threesome
- [3] Confused hotel is the sedra's penultimate and count
- [4] Targum proves which way he was facing
- [5] Except for Avraham and Yosef, no one said it
- [6] Last week's twins were identical; this week's aren't
- [7] Kalamazoo's starting team divided up for a game that became known as: