

This Shabbat is the 45th day (of 383); the 7th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765

כִּי־בָרַךְ אֶבְרָהָם וַיְהִי אֲרֵבָה אֲרֵבָה אֶת־יִצְחָק... בראשית כב:יז

It's Always in Parshat HaShavua!

We've written about this Rashbam in the past; here it is again. Draw your own parallels spanning 3680 years, if you see them.

The AKEIDA (binding of Yitzchak) is introduced by the words VAIHI ACHAR HAD' VARIM HA'EILEH... - usually translated as "And it came to pass after these things". Rashbam (R' Shimon b. Meir; grandson of Rashi, 4845-4934) states that this phrase indicates a connection between what just happened with what is about to happen. (This might seem obvious, but the Rashbam's view is that the connection is to the immediately previous event, and not just something that happened earlier.) Specifically, Rashbam points to the agreement between Avraham and Avimelech, whereby Avraham gave Avimelech, king of P'lishtim, some of the territory that G-d had promised to Avraham and his progeny... forever. This angered G-d (says Rashbam, based on a Midrash which will be detailed shortly) and He in essence was saying to Avraham, "You were so proud of having a son so that you could make an agreement with Avimelech that was for your children and grandchildren, now take your son and offer him as an Olah on Har HaMoriya and we'll see what good your agreement with Avimelech is." The Midrash mentioned earlier is based on the pasuk (Shmuel Alef 6:1), "And the Ark of G-d was in the fields of P'lishtim for seven months." G-d says to Avraham: You sealed your deal with Avimelech with seven sheep, by your life his children will wage seven wars against yours, and they will win. Another thing: By your life, his children will kill seven righteous ones among your children - Shimshon, Chofni, Pinchas, Sha'ul and his three sons. Another thing: By your life, your children will suffer seven destructions of the Mikdash - the Ohel Moed, and in Gilgal, Nov, Shilo, Giv'on, and the two Batei Mikdash. And another thing: Because of the agreement sealed with the seven sheep, the Aron will be in S'dei P'lishtim for seven months.

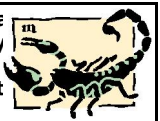
A very sharp Rashbam, taking Avraham Avinu to task for agreeing to give some of Eretz Yisrael to someone else.

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...

Slight correction. More like a fine tuning. Last opportunity for Kiddush L'vana this month (in Israel) is THU Oct 28, 8:00pm. Correct...



except for someone who SAW the lunar eclipse in the wee hours of Thursday morning. AND knows its significance vis-a-vis K.L. It's a long story. Let's go for it. K.L. is said from the time of the month that the moon is MEI'IR LAARETZ, shines onto Earth (3 or 7 days after the molad - dispute - forget this part for now) until it is full (meaning, as long as it is waxing, i.e. growing - after full moon, the moon starts to wane, diminish). The halachic tradition is to use the "average" molad for the purpose of beginning and end of K.L. time (and for the announcement during Rosh Chodesh Benching) and not to use the actual (a.k.a. astronomical) molad and nigud (no moon & full moon). On average, the moon takes 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 1 cheilek cont. on p.2

OTHER Z'MANIM

Correct for Jerusalem
Ranges are THU-THU 13-20 Cheshvan (Oct.28-Nov.4)

- Earliest Shacharit - 5:01-5:07am
- Sunrise - 5:52-5:58am
- Sof Z'man K.Sh'ma - 8:37-8:40am (7:51-7:54am)
- Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:32-9:34am (9:02-9:04am)
- Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:23-11:23am
- Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 11:53-11:53am
- Plag Mincha - 3:44-3:39pm
- Sunset - 4:58-4:52pm (4:53-4:47pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
Shabbat afternoon shiur 3:00pm
Kalman Walker on וירא
Motza'ei Shabbat, 8:30pm
Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Poupko
on Chesed & Gevura

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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

Candle Lighting and Havdala Times	
Standard (Winter) Time	
Correct for TT 640 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 6:05pm	
4:17pm	Jerusalem 5:29pm
4:36pm	Gush Katif 5:33pm
4:33pm	Raanana 5:30pm
4:33pm	Beit Shemesh 5:30pm
4:32pm	Netanya 5:30pm
4:33pm	Rehovot 5:30pm
4:13pm	Petach Tikva 5:30pm
4:33pm	Modi'in 5:30pm
4:34pm	Be'er Sheva 5:31pm
4:32pm	Gush Etzion 5:29pm
4:32pm	Ginot Shomron 5:29pm
4:17pm	Maale Adumim 5:29pm
4:24pm	Tzfat 5:27pm
4:33pm	K4 & Hevron 5:30pm

Vayeira Stats

4th of the 54 sedras; 4th of 12 sedras in B'reishit
 Written on 252 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 5th
 6 Parshiyot; 4 open, 2 closed (pssppp)
 147 p'sukim - ranks 7th (4th in B'reishit)
 2085 words - ranks 2nd (first in B'reishit)
 7862 letters - ranks 3rd (2nd in B'reishit)

P'sukim above average in length (words and letters) explain its rise in rankings from p'sukim to words (and letters). Vayeira is actually 2nd largest sedra in the Torah. (Naso, is #1 with no rival - Bamidbar, Pinchas, and R'ei all take up more lines than Vayeira, but those sedras each have many parshiyot, which means a lot of blank space which adds to the number of lines.)

Mitzvot

None of Taryag are counted from Vayeira but there are mitzva and midot lessons in it.



Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[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 - 14 p'sukim - 18:1-14

[P> 18:1 (71)] And G-d appeared to him (Avraham)

SDT The use of the pronoun "him" rather than using the name Avraham is significant. EILAV (to him) refers us back to the previous parsha - Avraham's circumcision at the end of Lech L'cha, indicating that the purpose of G-d's appearing to Avraham was Bikur Cholim, visiting the sick. Furthermore, the fact that the Torah does not indicate that G-d said anything to

Word of the Month cont.

to go through its cycle of phases. And the calculations we use for Rosh Chodesh Benching, for Kiddush L'vana, and for determining Rosh HaShana in our fixed calendar are based on this average. What it amounts to is starting with a given "molad of Creation" and adding 29d 12h 44m 1p (which is the same as 29d 12h 793p is one doesn't use minutes but rather divides an hour into 1080 parts - same thing) for every month that passes.

Here's the wrinkle. The time it really takes the moon to go through its cycle varies from month to month. This is due to Kepler's second law of planetary motion (i.e. G-d's law of planetary motion, discovered by Kepler), the masses of the Earth and Moon, and a few other factors. Regardless of why it happens, it happens.

The average molad of Tishrei 5765 was TUE 13h 15m 17p. Add 29d 12h 44m 1p gives WED 25h 59m 18p. But 18p = 1m. So we have WED 25h 60m 0p. But 60m = 1h. So we have WED 26h 0m 0p. But 26h = 1d 2h. So the molad of Cheshvan was THU 2h 0m 0p. And Kislev's molad will be FRI 14h 44m 1p (which we get by adding 29d 12h 44m 1p to Cheshvan's molad). And so on and so on.

Not so simple for the real, actual, astronomical molad. The actual molad of Tishrei was TUE 16:29 (Israel Standard Time). Cheshvan's was THU 04:48. That means a lunation of 29d 12h 19m. Close to average, but less. And with Kislev's new moon on a FRI 16:27, it will take the Moon only 29d 11h 39m to go through its phases. The difference between the actual time it takes the Moon to go through its cycle and 29d 12h 44m 1p can be several hours more or less.

More to the point, the time of the molad (not just the duration from one until the next), varies between the average figure and the actual.

At the moment, we are more interested in the NIGUD, which is the midpoint between one molad and the next. Whatever was said about MOLAD applies to NIGUD. The average NIGUD (deadline for K.L.) is gotten by adding 14d 18h 22m (half of 29d 12h 44m) to the molad. Cheshvan's molad (remember?) was THU 2h even. Adding 14 d 18h 22m brings us to THU (Oct. 28) 20h 22m, which is just a little after 8:00pm on Thursday. That was the time we listed as the last op for K.L.

So here's the next wrinkle. The actual NIGUD (known as opposition or full moon) is THU 5:07am - almost 13 hours before the average NIGUD. The moon is really full and on its way down at 5:07 on Thursday morning. Halachically, we may still say KL until 8:00pm because halacha follows the average, not the actual timing. But the moon was full 13 hours earlier? Doesn't matter. (And it still looks full, which is a factor too.)

Some poskim hold that there is an exception to the above. And that brings us - after many words - to our point. A lunar eclipse occurs only at full moon. When one watches the eclipse AND knows that when the eclipse is over (even before) that full moon just took place, then he may NOT say K.L. after that time. Follow this. Knowledge that full moon actually took place (which a person can know easily every month) does not in and of itself preclude saying K.L. after the actual full moon time, but before the halachic deadline, of course.

But EXPERIENCING the full moon does prevent one from saying K.L. afterwards, even though it is before the official halachic deadline. Miss the eclipse? See it and not know what it means? Your K.L. deadline is 8:00pm THU. See and understand? KL only until eclipse begins.

Avraham at this "appearance", tells us that He had another purpose, viz. Bikur Cholim. This how the commentaries teach us that G-d was visiting the sick, even though the written word does not say that at all.

He is sitting at the entrance of his tent (watching for travelers to welcome) in the heat of the day.

SDT *It was unnaturally hot; that was G-d's doing, to spare Avraham the bother of visitors, He removed the sun from its envelope... However, Avraham is distressed by the absence of visitors, so G-d sends three angels to him in the guise of wayfarers. This can teach us something about how to behave towards the elderly and infirm. Sometimes, we insist that they rest or tell them what "conventional wisdom" says is good or bad for them. "No, don't bother with that; I'll do it for you." "I turned up the heat for you." But each person is an individual. Calm, peaceful retirement works well for many older people. But not for everyone. Bed rest and taking things easy is a helpful formula for SOME recovering invalids. But not all. G-d, so to speak, first felt that Avraham needed rest; this would be the norm. But He then "realized" (so to speak) that in Avraham's case, his special activity of Hachnasat Orchim, hospitality, was a far better treatment for what ailed him, than resting.*

Avraham sees the three "men" and runs to greet them, after asking G-d to wait for him (so to speak). (From here we are taught the greatness of the mitzva of Hachnasat Orchim.)

This is one of the ways to interpret the pasuk - that ADO-NAI means G-d, and that Avraham was addressing Him. ADONAI can also mean "my sirs", in which case Avraham could have been speaking to the men/angels. Each possibility causes minor awkwardness in the flow of the p'sukim. The word is considered holy (meaning the first opinion prevails), and Sofrim write it with the Kavana for G-d's name, but some say that one should use a conditional "sanctification".

SDT *"Speak little, but do much." This maxim from Pirkei Avot is manifest in Avraham Avinu's behavior. He offers the angels a bit of water and some bread, but in fact prepares for them (with the help of Sara and Yishmael) a sumptuous meal. The Mishna states that Avraham's meal for the strangers was proportionally greater than even the feast of Shlomo HaMelech in celebration of the building of the Beit HaMikdash. Avraham and Sarah are the ultimate models for hospitality, one of the hallmarks of the Jewish People.*

One of the angels informs Avraham of the pending birth of Yitzchak. Sara's reaction is to laugh (a slight doubt in the ability of a 100 year old to father a child and of a 90 year old woman to give birth). G-d asks Avraham why Sara would doubt His ability to permit an old woman to conceive.

SDT *Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rav (in Bava M'tzi'a): What Avraham did for his guests by himself, G-d did for the People of Israel by Himself; what Avraham did via another, G-d did likewise. Avraham said: YUKACH NA M'AT MAYIM. Rashi explains the strange grammatical form by saying that Avraham did not provided the water to the strangers himself (it does not say K'CHU...) So too, when G-d was to provide water to Avraham's descendants, He commanded Moshe Rabeinu to throw the stick into the water, to strike the rock, to speak to the rock. But Avraham fed the angels himself - "and I will get the bread, etc." When G-d needed to feed the People, He provided us with Manna. Moshe did not bring it about. G-d gave it straight to the People.*

Levi - 2nd Aliya - 19 p'sukim - 18:15-33

Sara would like to deny that she laughed (and doubted), but she cannot.

The three angels each had a single task: One to heal Avraham, one to announce the birth of Yitzchak (both missions accomplished), the third to destroy S'dom. That angel is now accompanied by R'fael, whose new task is to save Lot and family. Avraham escorts the angels on their way to S'dom.

SDT *Once again, we learn the proper behavior of a host from Avraham: part of hospitality is to escort your guests as they leave your home.*

HaShem next tells Avraham of his intention to destroy S'dom. Avraham pleads and bargains on their behalf, but there aren't enough righteous people to save the cities.

The dialog between Avraham and HaShem is an astounding (and unique) example of the close relationship between them.

SDT *Avraham's expression of humility before G-d is "and I am dust and ash". Says the Gemara, because of Avraham's humility, his children merited two mitzvot - the ash of the Para Aduma and the dust of the Sota. Torah T'mima explains that the Para Aduma ash is the epitome of spiritual purity (which can be thought of as the realm of "between the Jew and G-d" mitzvot). The hopeful outcome of the Sota procedure is Shalom Bayit, being a major example of interpersonal relationships. Thus the reward for Avraham covers the whole range of Jewish life.*

Shlishi - 3rd Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 19:1-20

The two angels arrive in S'dom and are taken in by Lot. [The nephew of Avraham Avinu has learned something from his uncle.] The people of S'dom demonstrate their evil nature. It is clear from the p'sukim as well as Midrashim and commentaries, that Lot was not sufficiently pious or believing in his own right, but he compared favorably with the people among whom he lived.

SDT *The word "and he lingered" is read with the rare trup mark, the shalsholet, which musically emphasizes the reluctance of Lot to (believe what he was told by the angels and) leave. The same word is used in contrast to this behavior of Lot, in describing the haste with which the Children of Israel left Egypt at G-d's command, symbolized by the matza which they hastily baked rather than linger for the dough to rise and produce a "proper" bread demonstrating their faith and confidence in G-d. Interesting, is it not, that Lot is described as baking matzot for the visitors. Rashi's comment: It was Pesach.*

Lot is led out of the city by the angels, his wife and two daughters with him. They are told to flee for their lives, without looking back at the destruction of the cities. Lot pleads for permission to seek refuge closer by.

R'vi'i - 4th Aliya - 40 p'sukim - 19:21-21:4

2nd longest R'vi'i in the Torah

Once Lot and family are safely away, the destruction of S'dom takes place. Lot's wife looks back - against orders - and turns into a pillar of salt. (Her punishment is specifically with salt as a measure-for-measure for her

stinginess when guests were around.)

From the episode of Lot's wife, we can draw the following point. Lot and family were worthy of being spared the destruction of S'dom, but they were not worthy enough to be able to witness the destruction.

"And Avraham gets up early in the morning to the place where he STOOD before G-d."

SPT Avraham returns to the same spot to speak to G-d. From here is derived the idea of having a MAKOM KAVUA, a fixed place for prayer. The Talmud says: "he who fixes himself a place for davening, the G-d of Avraham will help him".

Of course, more fundamentally, it is this pasuk and another that combine to "support" the Gemara's statement that Avraham instituted T'filat Shacharit. That AMIDA, to stand before G-d, means to pray is learned from VAYA'AMOD PINCHAS VAY'PALEIL. And Pinchas stood in prayer (we can say) - T'hilim 106:30. The pasuk here in Vayeira links AMIDA with Avraham Avinu and with early in the morning, hence Shacharit.

The Torah reiterates the point that Lot was saved in the merit of his uncle Avraham Avinu (and Ruth, the "mother of royalty" who was to come from Lot - G-d can work merit either from the past or the future).

Lot's two daughters, having witnessed the total destruction of S'dom, assume that they are the sole survivors of mankind. They plot to get Lot drunk and sleep with him in order to continue humanity. Moav and Amon are the results.

Ponder that everything that has happened so far in Parshat Vayeira, make up a single long, 71-pasuk parsha. From the arrival of the angels through the completion of the final task of those angels - the destruction of S'dom. Apparently, the different episodes all belong together more than one would initially think.

[S> 20:1 (18)] Avraham and Sara now travel to G'rar where they again present themselves as brother and sister. Sara is taken to Avimelech, but G-d appears to him and warns him not to touch her. Avimelech confronts Avraham who explains that his fears were based on the lack of "Fear of G-d" in the place.

Avraham then prays on behalf of Avimelech and his people who were stricken with a disease which rendered them temporarily sterile.

From this point (21:1) to the end of Vayeira, is the Torah reading of both days of Rosh HaShana.

[S> 21:1 (21)] G-d fulfills His promise and Sara becomes pregnant. She bears a son to Avraham in his advanced age, and he is called Yitzchak. Avraham circumcises Yitzchak at eight days of age, as G-d has commanded.

Avraham's having prayed on behalf of Avimelech for children is juxtaposed to Sara Imeinu conceiving. Our Sage teach us that selflessly praying for others can sometimes result in the same prayers being answered for yourself.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 17 p'sukim - 21:5-21

Avraham is 100 yrs. old when Yitzchak is born. Avraham makes a great party upon the occasion of his being weaned.

Although the plain understanding of B'YOM HIGAMEIL ET YITZCHAK is "when Yitzchak was weaned" - Rashi says

at 24 months of age, there is a REMEZ (hint/clue) in the word HIGAMEIL to a possible other explanation of the word. HEI+GIMMEL = 8 (days), MEM-LAMED, MAL, was circumcised. It can mean that the party in question was to celebrate Yitzchak's BRIT.

As Yitzchak is growing up, Sara notices the potential negative influence of Yishmael and demands of Avraham that he send Yishmael and his mother, Hagar, away. Blinded by his great "kind heart", Avraham has to be told by G-d to listen to Sara. Hagar and Yishmael once again are on the verge of death in the wilderness, but Yishmael's prayers are answered and they are saved. Hagar is assured by an angel that they will survive.

And indeed they do, and Hagar subsequently marries Yishmael off to a woman from the land of Egypt.

Both Hagar and Yishmael prayed to G-d when Yishmael was dying. G-d heard "the lad's voice". Rashi says, from here we learn that the strongest prayer offered on behalf of someone who is ill are those of the sick person himself (if he is able to pray on his own behalf). And, of course, others should pray on his behalf as well, regardless of whether the person himself is able to daven.)

Shishi - 6th Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 21:22-34

[P> 21:22 (13)] Avimelech and his commander Pichol enter into a pact with Avraham. The pact has to do with wells that Avraham dug, that the servants of Avimelech stole, the return of those wells and the acknowledgment by Avimelech that the wells do actually belong to Avraham. The city of Be'er Sheva receives its name from the double meaning of the 7 sheep used as tokens of the covenant and the oath sworn between them.

Avraham plants an "Eshel" in Be'er Sheva. In addition to being a type of tree, the word ESHEL is considered an acronym of the Hebrew words for Food, Drink, and Lodgings (or Food, Sleeping, Escort). ESHEL AVRAHAM is the symbol of hospitality for all times.

Sh'vi'i - 7th Aliya - 24 p'sukim - 22:1-24

[P> 22:1 (19)] This is the portion of the Binding of Isaac - Akeidat Yitzchak. The Akeida is one of the few passages from the Torah to be incorporated into our daily davening (there are those who did not include it in the davening). It represents the ultimate manifestation of commitment to and love of G-d. It also belong is the portion of the davening called KORBANOT for obvious reasons.

Although none of Avraham's descendants (we, the Jewish People) can ever be tested in so drastic a way (because we have the experiences of our predecessors to give us strength), we do derive tremendous inspiration from this portion of the Torah. It is part of our Heritage and, even more, part of our Essence. Tests of Faith are relative to the individual. Each of us is challenged in different ways throughout our lives. This is also so for us as a Nation. May we be always guided by deep commitment to Torah and Jewish values.

MORE. Akeidat Yitzchak is our identity card. It define who we are... even when our own behavior is contradictory to

our Torah standards. We stand before G-d on Judgment Day - Rosh HaShana, and we blow the Shofar made from a ram's horn. We ask G-d to remember Akeidat Yitzchak and have mercy on His (sometimes undeserving) children. We read the Akeida in the Torah and we refer to it repeatedly in our Rosh HaShana davening and Slichot, to inspire us and to identify us.

[P> 22:20 (5)] The parsha ends with mention of the birth of Rivka, to serve as a link to the next phase of the development of Judaism - viz., the means of its transmission and continuity. Maftir is the final five p'sukim.

Haftara - 37 p'sukim - Melachim Bet - 4:1-37

The sedra shows us the sharp contrast between the kindness and hospitality of Avraham & Sara on the one hand, and the cruel "business is business" and "what's in it for me" nature of S'dom. The haftara is about the widow of a prophet who was facing losing her two children because of her poverty and the twisted state of Israel's society that lost sight of the legacy of Avraham and Sara. The prophet Elisha performs a miracle and the family is spared that plight.

The haftara also tells of the Shunamite woman who prayed so fervently for a son. She had a son but he died. He is miraculously resuscitated by Elisha. This forms a counterpart to the birth of Yitzchak and the subsequent almost- losing him at the Akeida.

(According to a Midrash, the angel did not stop Avraham in time and Yitzchak died. There are prayers that refer to Yitzchak's ashes. This makes the parallel between the sedra and haftara all the stronger.)



On the right is the thermometer with kipa, glasses, and stethoscope, wishing someone who is sick a REFU'A SH'LEIMA. This is one of the lessons we learn from G-d, Who visited the ailing Avraham.

Upper-right are the UGOT that Sarah LUSHled - if they look like matza, that's because the angels' visit was on Pesach.

Upper-left is one of the three BEN BAKAR that Avraham ran to, in order to prepare the most sumptuous dish for the visitors, tongue in mustard sauce.

In the middle of the ParshaPix is Braille writing, reminding us of what the angels did to the people of S'dom who demanded of Lot that he send his visitors out to them (blinded them). The Braille message is probably something the blinded S'domites graffitied on Lot's door (when they finally found it). It says, "NO GUESTS".

The skull is the symbol of acid-rain, a good description of that which destroyed S'dom and the other cities.

Wine? Lot was given wine to make him drunk...

The alarm clock set for very early in the morning, is to remind us of the many times the Torah tells us that Avraham got up early, to enthusiastically do G-d's bidding. (Avimelech too.)

The baby in the cradle represents the birth of Yitzchak.

Drawing of a metal shield is used by many mohalim in their set up for Mila.

Father and son walk hand in hand, VAYEILCHU SH'NEIHEM YACHDAV. Of course, there is an Akeida graphic (from Davka) and a Shofar that is connected to the story of the Akeida.

Dorothy and Co., the chef, the bottle of liquor, the sea cow are for some of Yitzchak's cousins, mentioned at the end of the sedra.

The olive oil is from the haftara.

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

- Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 256 • Unauthorized Use by the Bailee (2)

In the last lesson we began to explore the role of the bailee if he made unauthorized use of the object entrusted to him for safekeeping. We now continue with this subject.

Acts constituting unauthorized use

The Talmud and codes give examples of acts constituting unauthorized use and the extent of the liability of the bailee when there is an unauthorized use of the object, which can be achieved only if the object is lifted or pulled, and those situations where there is some taking of part of the object but there is not a lifting or a pulling of the entire object. There are situations where even in the latter case the bailee will bear full liability for the loss or damage to the object. There are times when the owner will designate a place or the bailee will designate a place for the object to remain to which the owner agrees. The object cannot be moved from that place (except as shown in this lesson). There may be times when no specific place is designated for keeping the object except that the unpaid bailee may not be negligent.

The owner entrusts the bailee with a barrel of wine that is set down in a special place in the bailee's wine cellar. The bailee tips the barrel without moving, lifting, or pulling it from its spot where it rested and removes a quart of wine. If the barrel breaks after the bailee takes the wine from the barrel, the bailee is not liable for the breakage, but is responsible to pay the owner for a quart of wine. Since he did not move or lift or pull the barrel from its spot he is not guilty of unauthorized use. The bailee is liable only for the part of the object that he actually took; the balance still belongs to the owner who bears the responsibility for all loss except for the negligence of the unpaid balance.

However, if the balance of the wine in the barrel turns sour, the bailee is liable for the price of wine for the entire barrel. The wine would not have turned sour if the barrel was full. It was only because the barrel was opened and air came in that the balance of the wine soured. This may not apply to other types of beverage such as whiskeys or juices.

The owner entrusts the bailee with a barrel of wine that is set down in a special place in the bailee's wine cellar. The bailee lifts the barrel to take a quart of wine. The bailee is liable for all loss that will thereafter occur to the barrel of wine even if he does not actually take the quart of wine. The bailee is liable since he lifted the object with the intent to cause some depreciation to the barrel of wine by taking some of the wine. At that moment he is liable for the entire object since he is now deemed to have robbed the wine from the owner.

The bailee takes the entrusted barrel of wine not to drink from it or to use it and the bailee moves the barrel to a place other than where it is left. If the barrel was moved for the sake of the barrel, such as to keep it away from heat, and the barrel breaks while the bailee is handling it or afterward when it was returned to its place or a new place, the bailee has no liability; However, if he moves the barrel for his own purposes, such as to stand on it, the bailee is liable if the barrel breaks at any time. If he moves the barrel to get to the space on which the barrel stood, the bailee is liable if the barrel was then lost or damaged through his negligence but not if through force majeure.

Acts constituting unauthorized use of money

The owner may instruct the bailee that he may not use the money that is entrusted to him. Should the bailee use the money or refuse to return the money to the owner when demanded of him, he is a robber and responsible for the return of the money. Or the owner may permit the bailee to invest the money or otherwise use the money entrusted to him. The bailee may be deemed a borrower or a paid bailee depending upon the circumstances. Absent any agreement, the following laws prevail.

The owner entrusted money with a money changer or a shopkeeper or a person who lends money on interest. This refers to a person who lends money to a non-Jew. If it is contained in a purse that is not sealed nor tied with a peculiar knot, the bailee is permitted to use the money. It is known by all that money lenders, moneylenders on interest, and shopkeepers are always looking to borrow money. He is permitted to use the money since it is assumed that if the owner did not want the money changer or shopkeeper to use the money, he would have tied the money up in a peculiar manner. Since the bailee may use the money, he has the status of a paid bailee regarding the money even before he actually uses the money. If the owner demands the money back, the bailee may give him other money in an equal amount. If the money was lost or stolen or lost or damaged because of the negligence of the bailee, he is liable to the owner; he is not liable if the money was lost through force majeure.

Once the bailee uses the money he has the status of a borrower and is liable under all circumstances. This last law holds true even if the bailee restored the money to the purse, he is liable as a borrower until he restores the money to the owner.

All of the profits made by the bailee belong to the bailee. If the bailee does share the profits with the owner, it is not considered interest to the owner. When the owner makes a demand for the return of the money and tells the bailee that he needs the money to invest it and the bailee does not give the money back to the owner, the bailee is liable for the loss of profits that the owner sustained by not having the money returned to him. The bailee may tell the owner that the money is invested and if the bailee wants to participate in the investment, for loss or for gain, the owner may agree or may wait until the bailee completes his investment. If the bailee advises people that he has invested the money for the owner and if there is a profit, such profits belong to the owner.

If the money was entrusted to the money changer or shopkeeper or a money lender on interest, and the money is contained in a purse that is sealed or tied in a peculiar way, the bailee is not permitted to use the money. If therefore the money was lost through his negligence, he is liable; if lost or stolen or lost through force majeure, he is not liable.

The owner entrusted a bailee who is not a money lender, a lender on interest, or a shopkeeper with a purse of money. The bailee may not use the money. Therefore the unpaid bailee, if he placed the money in a suitable secure place, is not liable for any loss unless there was a loss due to the negligence of the bailee. The non-money-lender bailee lifted the purse to take out one coin or other money a part of the object that is not attached to the other part of the object. The majority view is that the bailee assumes full liability for the entire purse and contents of the money if they are later lost or stolen or lost through force majeure. There is a strong dissent that holds that there is some doubt as to the accuracy of the majority holding: perhaps the bailee is liable only for the money that he took from the purse or perhaps he is liable for the entire purse.

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@gefenpublishing.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 3) - Buying with Money

Over the last few weeks, we have been presenting the insights of Rav Natan of Breslav on the inner, spiritual meaning of the laws of acquisitions. First we explained that commerce is an extension of production: manufacture or cultivation elevates the natural world by transforming the wild into some object of human use; commerce effects a further elevation by bringing the object into the possession of that unique human being who can most perfectly realize the object's potential for holiness. This is symbolized by acquisition through elevation, or lifting the object.

Last week we added that fair dealing is an essential element in this process, since it enables humanity to clarify and discern the qualities of the object and help it find the person who is most in need of it, or to look at it the other way, the person that this object needs to fulfill its role in Providence. But mere verbal agreement is not enough; we interpreted this to mean that in order to fully realize the potential for holiness in our property, we require a sense of attachment and commitment which is cemented by a symbolic act of kinyan (acquisition).

This week we discuss the laws of acquisition through money. According to Torah law, giving money effects an acquisition, but the Rabbis decreed that even after money has changed hands the sides are allowed to renege (SA CM 199). They were worried that when the seller is still in physical possession of the merchandise but is no longer owner (because he received the money) that he might take improper care of the object. But renegeing on such a sale is considered a serious breach of faith – much more serious than going back on a verbal agreement. (CM 204).

In order to present Rav Natan's explanation, we will briefly introduce a common theme in the writings of Rav Natan's master, Rav Nachman of Breslav. Rav Nachman emphasizes the mystical significance of possessions; in a number of places he writes that richness (ashirut) is the "root" of the soul. My understanding of this statement is that the essence of the creation is that the human soul is formed with a potential for the appreciation of Divine beneficence specifically as something that comes from beyond itself. Thus the human being is something separate from G^d, but is able to attain fulfillment only by reaching out to G^d and by experiencing contentment from His goodness, including through bodily and emotional enjoyments.

Rav Nachman also writes that money itself is an offshoot of this supernal root. Money does not embody any specific worldly enjoyment, but rather embodies an abstract power of obtaining worldly goods. We have pointed out before that having money places a person on a higher level in the chain of Providence, since he has an augmented ability to emulate the Creator by channeling possessions towards their ideal recipients. In Rav

Nachman's writings the main vehicle for this exercise of providence is charity; another one frequently mentioned is integrity in business dealings. Thus money is at a high spiritual level, as we read "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold, thus the word of HaShem of Hosts" (Chagai 2:8).

However, this abstract power of money is "leveraged". Just as any specific bodily pleasure can elevate us by giving us an appreciation of HaShem's goodness or alternatively debase us by reducing our concern to our bodies rather than our spirits, so the abstract power of money can be supernal or infernal. Rav Nachman explains that it can turn into paganism, and indeed writes that the acquisitive urge is the root of pagan worship, pointing out that the Scripture often refers to idols as "silver and gold". (See for example Devarim 29:16.)

Now we can complete the presentation of Rav Natan's explanation. We began by stating that an acquisition is finalized when one side has attached himself to his acquisition in a way that will enable him to use it in G'd's service. For instance, he may lift the object up to show his attachment to it and his commitment to elevate it. Obtaining money gives the person an even greater power to elevate nature, because of money's supernal root. Thus giving money should finalize a transaction.

However, in humanity's current fallen state, money is often obtained not in order to provide the wherewithal to provide some specific benefit but rather as accumulation for its own sake. In this case there is no dimension of attachment and commitment, so no acquisition (kinyan) is effected.

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

Temporary Halt in the Slide to Destruction and Exile (2) (Divrei HaYamim Bet 30)

Chizkiyahu's teshuva that earned a respite in the slide to destruction is shown immediately at the very beginning of his reign, in the observance of the great Pesach in Yerushalyim. His call to observe the Chag was answered not only by the people of Judah but also by the Northern Kingdom, whose pilgrimages had been prevented for almost 200 years by the edict of its first king, Yeravam ben Nevat in order to prevent them maintaining contact with the legitimate Davidic dynasty.

The Admor of Kotsk taught that just as we pay an artisan for the preparation of his equipment and the honing of his skill in addition to the actual work done, so too, the mitzvot require not

only fulfillment but also forethought and diligent preparation. All spiritual and religious acts require preparation and thought if they are to be sincere, pure, and have meaning beyond ritual. The very first Pesach that Israel observed in its own land was preceded by the miraculous crossing of the Jordan but also by the act of circumcision of all the males born during the 40 years in the wilderness. Since the result of transgressing the laws of chametz and matzo are so serious and the details inherent in the Chag so intricate and many, our Sages taught; "A month before [that is, immediately after Purim], we start to teach the dinim of Chag HaPesach"; on the seder night itself the obligation is to tell and experience the actual Exodus itself. So too, the Pesach of Chizkiyahu was preceded by the reactivation and rededication of the Beit HaMikdash.

In the very first year of Chizkiyahu's reign, the king called on the Levites to rid the Mikdash of all the Tum'ah and Nidah with which Ahaz his father had filled it and to cast them into Nahal Kidron that lies east of the city, even as Asa had done before. This call included the Kohanim but was meant to exclude the ordinary people who had usurped their calling in order to officiate at the various Bamot. At the same time, they were to rid the city and the country of the altars to the many idols and asherot that the people of Judah had erected. Likewise they rectified all the changes in the physical conditions of the Temple that Ahaz had made. In addition, for many years, the people of Judah instead of lighting the Menorah, offering the incense, and sacrificing the daily obligatory offering [the olah] to HaShem, had used them in idol worship. Now, after relating the evil Judah had done to the consequent suffering and defeats at the hands of their enemies, the king prayed that their present actions would be: "A covenant between us and HaShem and He will turn from His anger with us" (29:10).

The work was started in the first month, i.e. Nissan, and that is not without significance. To make Nissan Rosh Chodashim is the first mitzva we were given (Sh'mot 12:2), that according to some is the day of the Creation, on that date Moshe erected the Mishkan (Sh'mot 40:17), the Nesiim commenced bringing their sacrifices, Aharon HaKohen began to officiate instead of the firstborn, then was given the commandment of the Birkat Kohanim, the sacrifices at the bamot were henceforth forbidden, etc. (Shabbat 67b).

The Kohanim purified the inner courtyard that was out of bounds even to the Levites, while the latter dealt with the outer courtyards and removed the altars to avoda zara erected there. It is significant that many names of both of them recall the names from the Torah and from earlier books of the Tanach; for example- Kehat, Merari, Gershoni, Amashi, Elkana Kish, Bnei Asaf etc.

Chizkiyahu refers to the Temple as the Mishkan of HaShem and indeed the rededication and consecration that he ordered, compares in many respects to the Chanukat HaMishkan in the desert by Moshe. First there was the cleansing and purifying of the desecrated Temple. Then, just as there had been eight days sanctification at the erecting of the Mishkan, so too now the Kohanim started the sanctification of the Temple on the eighth of Nissan and completed it on the 16th. When the purification was complete, the king and the people laid their hands in confession on the Chatat and then the Kohanim offered Olot and Zevachim in gratitude, as they had done in the wilderness. The trumpets were sounded by the Kohanim as required with all sacrifices (Bamidbar 10:16) and the musical instruments that David had prepared on the instructions of the prophets Gad and Natan, were played by the Leviyim while they sung praises;

according to their order as he had arranged as part of his preparations for the building of the Beit HaMikdash.

It should be noted that the singing of the Levites is a separate mitzva and is required for the Avoda. "It is a positive mitzva for the Leviyim to sing while the korbanot are offered [the absence of their songs invalidates the Avoda (Yerushalmi Pesachim 4:2). They and the Israelites accompany the offerings with their musical instruments (Rambam, Klei HaMikdash 3:3).

"The burnt offerings were in abundance.... the peace offerings and the libations... So the Avoda of the House for the Lord was firmly established. And Chizkiyahu and all the people rejoiced because of that which G-d had prepared..." (29:35-36).

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

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[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 want to remove the mezuzah from a doorpost to replace it with a more beautiful mezuzah. When I do so, should I make a new beracha upon affixing it?

A First, let's make sure we are talking about the same thing. If you want to put the same scroll in a new, more beautiful case, then you do not make a new beracha. (If you "inherited" the mezuzah from a previous resident, see below). The mitzva has not been changed significantly, as the mitzva relates to the mezuzah scroll alone. The short break in time is not a factor in a case where one takes it off with the expectation to return it imminently. If you take the opportunity to check the mezuzah before reaffixing it (not a bad idea, as it should be checked twice in seven years) then it is a more complicated question (see Ask the Rabbi, LechLecha 5764).

Regarding switching the mezuzah itself, we do not have early sources on the matter, and the Acharonim expend much energy to find the closest precedent. The Rosh (Tzitzit 20) implies that if one switches garments, each of which is obligated in tzitzit, he makes a beracha when putting on the new one. Is switching mezuzot comparable? There is a difference, as there is a break in the obligation to have tzitzit while no four-cornered garment is

on him, and a new obligation is created when he puts on the new garment. In contrast, by mezuzah, the house generates a continuous obligation of mezuzah, so a new beracha might not be in place.

According to most authorities (see Kaf Hachayim 25:79; Yabia Omer III, YD 17) if one removes a pair of tefillin to replace it immediately with another, he makes a new beracha. This is more similar, in that the fulfillment of the same obligation continues with a different object, and we see that one makes a new beracha. However, this too may not be exactly analogous, as many are of the opinion that there is not a continuous mitzva to wear tefillin all day, as there certainly is for a mezuzah to be on the wall. Therefore, it is less clear that continuing the mitzva of mezuzah with a different scroll is a new enough fulfillment of the mitzva to require a new beracha. Nevertheless, the Maharam Shick (YD 285) says that, assuming one did not have in mind for the second mezuzah while putting on the first (here, the second one may not even have been written when the first was affixed) the earlier beracha does not cover this mezuzah, and one needs a new beracha. Although some argue, Chovat HaDar (11:14) follows this opinion and Yabia Omer (ibid.) leans toward it. (The latter suggests strengthening the need for a beracha as follows. If one waits a few hours between removing one and affixing the other, there is enough hesech hada'at to require a beracha even according to the dissenting opinions (see Ben Ish Chai II, Ki Tavo 8)). If a previous resident affixed the first mezuzah, then he who affixes one now was not involved in the beracha and should make one now even if he removes and returns the same mezuzah (Har Tzvi, YD 287).

There is another issue to consider. The gemara rules that it is permitted to remove tzitzit from one garment in order to put them on another (Shabbat 22a), but the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 15:1) says that it is forbidden if one does not plan to put the tzitzit on another garment. The issue is of disgracing an article used for a mitzva by taking it out of use. Since Rishonim (including Tosafot, Shabbat ibid.) equate removing a mezuzah to removing tzitzit, it is problematic to replace a mezuzah without sufficient justification. There are significant opinions that if one does so in order to replace the mitzva object with a more beautiful one it is permitted (see Mishna Berura 15:3 and Har Tzvi, ibid.). However, it may be best to switch the mezuzah when one promptly affixes the removed mezuzah in a place that needs one (Torah Lishma 244). This works only if the second doorway requires a mezuzah on the same level as the first (sometimes the need for a mezuzah is rabbinic or even just a stringency) (Chovat Hadar 1:9).

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.eretzhemdah.org. And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to info@eretzhemdah.org with the message: Subscribe/English (for the English version) or Subscribe/Hebrew (for the Hebrew version). Please leave the subject blank. Ask the Vebbe 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

When R' Yosef Nobel was the Rav of a town in Hungary, an argument broke out between two brothers. The older one finally swore that he would never again allow the younger one to cross

his threshold. There were many people who tried to make peace between them, but were unsuccessful - the older one refused to be mollified.

One day, as he was home, the older brother heard chopping outside his house. He opened the door and saw a laborer demolishing the threshold, as the Rav stood by supervising the work.

"From now on", the rabbi said with a smile, "your vow is null and void, and your brother can enter your house."

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

Some beautiful edifices have arisen on some pretty sad lots. - From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

[4] CHIZUK and IDUD

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

Rambam describes how Avraham came to recognize God through the beauty and symmetry of nature. My rebbi, HaRav Tzvi Dov Kanatopsky zt"l noted that a careful reading of Rambam reveals that Avraham employed three distinct methods of disseminating the doctrine of God's existence.

As a young man, Avraham arduously searched for the Almighty. When he was convinced of God's existence, he wanted to share his hard-earned discovery with his contemporaries who had been led astray by idolatrous images and figures. He engaged them in debate, declared that their lifestyle was founded on errors and became an iconoclast, orchestrating the destruction of his father's idols. So intellectually overpowering was Avraham that the reigning potentate, Nimrod, attempted to kill him. In Ur Kasdim, he didn't build altars or produce disciples. The first stage, fraught with danger and tension, ends with a fugitive Avraham escaping to Charan.

In Charan, Avraham became an itinerant preacher and lecturer, wandering from place to place and traversing a significant portion of the civilized world. He built altars either as a locus for prayer or as a forum to articulate his ideas.

The third most illustrious stage took place in Eretz Canaan. There he planted an Eishel which epitomized Avraham as the quintessence of Chesed. Here he became the teacher par excellence who is an exemplar of Chesed while simultaneously dialoguing with his contemporaries, sensitive to each individual. Rambam describes how Avraham wined and dined his sought after guests. These characteristic acts of Chesed deeply effected the hearts and minds of listeners, generating thousands of adherents and devotees. This third methodology was eminently successful.

In his sojourns, Avraham had metamorphosed from a young iconoclast, to an itinerant preacher and finally in Eretz Yisroel to a model of Chesed. Avraham had embarked on a journey of self discovery. His odyssey reached its climax when the 'Brit of Chesed' became his overriding guideline. Therefore the Torah only briefly and cryptically alludes to the first two stages of his

career; the ultimate stage, a life of Chesed, was only realized in the land that Hashem had promised him.

Eretz Yisrael is truly a country whose quintessence is Chesed and whose guiding spirit is the Eishel planted by Avraham that spread its roots far and wide. May we exemplify these ideals of Chesed and thereby continue to enhance the inner beauty of Eretz Yisrael.

Rabbi Avishai David, Beit Shemesh; 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] MicroUlpan

We're sure you'll want to know this word. But don't knock it - knowing how to say kettle-drum in Hebrew can be worth thousands of sh'kalim to you. Imagine a game show host stopping you in the street and saying: If you can tell me how to say kettle drum in Hebrew, you will win ten thousand sh'kalim. See? The word is TUNPAN, and the sticks that beat it are MAKOSHIM. <NYK>

Got one of those dish drying racks above your sink? Want to know what it's called in Hebrew? SARIG

[6] Torah from Nature • ZORILLA

...is the diminutive of the Spanish word "zorro", which means "fox". It isn't a fox... a.k.a. striped polecat... lives in dry sub-Saharan Africa... Savanna and open grasslands... On its back there are four large white stripes on a black background. There are also three conspicuous white marks on the face. The dense fur of the tail is mostly white with a black base. The coat is long and soft. The length of the head and body is 30-40cm with a tail up to 30cm. They weigh about 1½ kilo... solitary creature ...strictly nocturnal. It can only be spotted at sundown or dawn before it scuttles off to its burrow among rocks or roots. Sometimes it will use a burrow previously dug by some other animal. It feeds on rodents, birds, snakes, and hares. When necessary it will eat insects and carrion instead. It has two highly developed perianal glands which emit a strong-smelling substance. It can propel this scent a considerable distance, like all American skunks, which these look like & are related to...

[7] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Vayera tends to stir within us very poignant sentiments as we read about the Akeida, the Binding of Isaac. We are amazed at Avraham's fortitude at being prepared to set up his beloved son as a sacrifice, even as this act seemingly contradicted all of G-d's promises to him.

Although Avraham was not commanded to slay his son, our rabbis concur that this step was a natural corollary to the Divine command to "bring him [Isaac] up there as an offering upon one of the mountains" (Bereishit 22:2). With that thought in mind, one of the most striking elements of this episode appears to be Yitzhak's declaration: "But where is the lamb for the offering?"

For Rashi and Rambam the Akeida was the last of ten tests to which Avraham was subjected. It is clear, insofar as Avraham represents the archetype of the Jew, that our determination to serve G-d under the most demanding of circumstances is

similarly being tested today. And as we can in no way rationalize that Yitzhak deserved to die, so we find it difficult to comprehend the sacrifices being made in our times.

Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer describes how the tears of the angels fell into Yitzchak's eyes at the moment of truth. And as we lie on the altar today, perhaps it is appropriate to echo the angels' plea to G-d: "Lo! The knife is at his throat. How long will you wait?"
Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

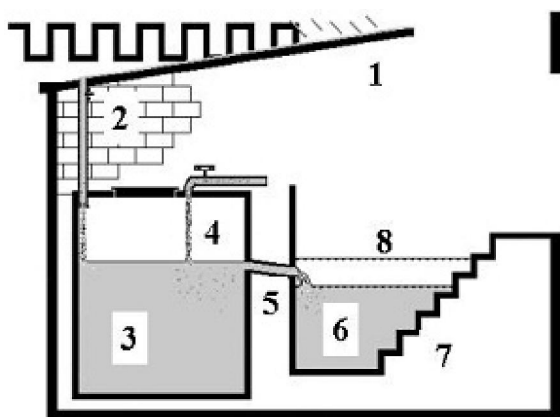
SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH...

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 (II)

While the building of a valid Mikvah which meets the complex Halachic requirements is exceptionally complicated and requires the supervision of experts in the field, the basic principles of its construction are not difficult to comprehend. A Mikvah is comprised of two parts, a storage cistern - the Otzar HaMayim or BorHaMayim - and the actual immersion pool which is connected to the Otzar HaMayim by a pipe. A tank containing 40 Se'ah of water (Pesachim 109, et al), roughly 922L (opinions vary), is the minimum size required for the Otzar HaMayim. The source for the initial 40 Se'ah must be rainwater or spring water that is routed directly into the Otzar HaMayim. It is essential that the water flowing into the Otzar HaMayim pass through pipes and conduits which have no receptacles, impediments, encumbrances or traps where water might collect ("stand") and thereby invalidate the Mikvah. Water piped in this manner is considered Halachically "natural" water and therefore is deemed suitable for the initial 40 Se'ah of water contained in the Otzar HaMayim. An easily accessible filter (the Halachot here can be tricky) positioned and firmly fixed to the end of the pipe strains out unwanted residues. Once the Otzar HaMayim holds the required 40 Se'ah of "natural" water, "ordinary" water from other sources can be diverted into it. (The two sections of the Mikva'ot in the Mikdash in all likelihood were waterproofed with lime mortar so that they retained the collected water.) Over the millennia the initial source of "natural" water for most Mikva'ot came from rainwater that fell on the roof of the building which housed the Mikvah. The same principle - although on a much larger scale - was also operative in the Beit HaMikdash. It is likely that the initial 40 Se'ah of the Mikva'ot in the Mikdash and those located on Har HaBayit came from both aqueducts and rainwater.

The Structure of a "Rainwater" Mikvah



(1) Rain falls on the slanted roof of the Mikvah building. The rainwater is directed to (2) a hole in the roof leading to a pipe which conveys the water to the (3) the Otzar HaMayim - the Mikvah reservoir. When at least 40 Se'ah of rainwater have fallen into the Otzar HaMayim, the entry pipe is closed preventing the entry of additional rainwater. "Ordinary" water (4) can then be added to the Otzar HaMayim. The source of this water is not restricted. As water enters the Otzar HaMayim, the level rises reaching the conduit (5) connecting the Otzar HaMayim with the Mikvah Immersion Pool (6). When the Mikvah immersion pool reaches the proper level, the conduit is plugged with a bung stopping the water flow. The ritually impure person descends the stairs (7) and immerses. When a person immerses the water level rises (8).

The Mikvah immersion pool is always constructed in close proximity to the Otzar HaMayim. The minimum size of a Mikvah immersion pool is one Amah square and three Amot deep (Chagiga 11a, et al) but it could be and usually is considerably larger since it has to be deep enough to enable the water to cover the entire body of the person immersing. When the water stands in the Otzar HaMayim, silt and other impurities sink to the bottom leaving clean water; only pure water flows into the Mikvah immersion pool. The minimum diameter of the slanting connecting pipe which permitted water to flow from the Otzar HaMayim to the Mikvah immersion pool of conduit is one Tefach (approx. 5cm), although these pipes are also usually larger.

In building a valid Mikvah, the intent of the construction workers is crucial. The Mikvah has to be built with the intention that it is to be used as a Mikvah - for purification - and not merely as a bath or hygienic purposes. The Otzar HaMayim, the Mikvah immersion pool, and the connecting pipes may not be made of material which is susceptible to ritual impurity such as metal. The accouterments of the Mikva'ot of the Mikdash were constructed of stone or concrete which were not subject to ritual impurity. Similar Mikva'ot from the Mikdash era have been recently excavated in the "houses of the Kohanim" in the "Upper City (a.k.a. the "Jewish Quarter") and under Yeshivat HaKotel. (There are two methods in building a Mikvah, which vary in some particulars. The method described and pictured above is called Hashaka ("touching"). The other method is called Zeri'a ("seeding") which is beyond the scope of this column. Both methods have been used over the centuries and the Rishonim are divided in their preferences. Rambam and the Ra'avad prefer Hashaka. Rashi, Rabbeinu Tam, Rosh, Tur, Ramban and Rashba maintain that "Zeri'a" is preferable. In choosing Hashaka over Zeri'a to illustrate the basic principles of Mikvah construction, we make no pretense of deciding practical Halacha. When lions contend, let the field mice beware! And truthfully it is difficult to say which method was used in the construction of the Mikva'ot of the Mikdash. In Israel today, most Mikva'ot - except for Chabad's - are now built using two Otzrot HaMayim - thus allowing a combination of both methods.)

Periodically, the Otzar HaMayim and the Mikvah immersion pool have to be cleaned. The water is totally removed and the interior of both structures thoroughly dried. Once dried and cleaned, the Otzar HaMayim is again filled with 40 Se'ah of "natural" water and then "ordinary" water added. The water level rises until water spills through the connecting conduit and refills the Mikvah immersion pool. <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

Two unrelated points...

VA'YITMAHUMA: Well-known word from Vayeira with a Shalsholet. The first HEI with a SH'VA NACH and the second HEI with the MAPIK are BOTH sounded (the same). HEI without a vowel or MAPIK is silent. But with a vowel or MAPIK is sounded.

UL'NINI: NIN in the Torah means son. In modern Hebrew it means great-grandson.

...LI UL'NINI UL'NECHDI: means, to me, and my children and my grandchildren.

Parsha Pix

On the right is the thermometer with kipa, glasses, and stethoscope, wishing someone who is sick a REFU'A SH'LEIMA. This is one of the lessons we learn from G-d, Who visited the ailing Avraham.

Upper-right are the UGOT that Sarah LUSHied - if they look like matza, that's because the angels' visit was on Pesach.

Upper-left is one of the three BEN BAKAR that Avraham ran to, in order to prepare the most sumptuous dish for the visitors, tongue in mustard sauce.

In the middle of the ParshaPix is Braille writing, reminding us of what the angels did to the people of S'dom who demanded of Lot that he send his visitors out to them (blinded them). The Braille message is probably something the blinded S'domites graffitied on Lot's door (when they finally found it). It says, "NO GUESTS".

The skull is the symbol of acid-rain, a good description of that which destroyed S'dom and the other cities.

Wine? Lot was given wine to make him drunk...

The alarm clock set for very early in the morning, is to remind us of the many times the Torah tells us that Avraham got up early, to enthusiastically do G-d's bidding. (Avimelech too.)

The baby in the cradle represents the birth of Yitzchak.

Drawing of a metal shield is used by many mohalim in their set up for Mila.

Father and son walk hand in hand, VAYEILCHU SH'NEIHEM YACHDAV. Of course, there is an Akeida graphic (from Davka) and a Shofar that is connected to the story of the Akeida.

Dorothy and Co., the chef, the bottle of liquor, the sea cow are for some of Yitzchak's cousins, mentioned at the end of the sedra.

The olive oil is from the haftara.

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 (Lech Lecha) 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:

And the envelope, please...

[1] The 14th bracha of BIRCHOT HASHACHAR (the AM brachot) is ...HaNotein LaYa'eif Ko'ach. Similarly, in the Shabbat Z'mira YOM SHABBATON, we find BARUCH HANOTEIN LAYA'EIF KO'ACH. The source of both is Yeshayahu 40:29, from Lech Lecha's haftara - NOTEIN LAYA'EIF KO'ACH...

[2] The well-known threesome is, "A loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and thou". The answer then is the THOU is MALKI-TZEDEK, king of SHALEM, who brought out bread and wine following the conclusion of the war of the 4 kings and the 5 kings.

[3] Hotel is MALON. Confused is the cryptic crossword clue keyword for mix up the letters. The letters of MALON rearrange to spell NIMOLU, which is the next-to-the-last word in Lech Lecha (that's what penultimate means), and it is numerically equal to 126, the count of the p'sukim in Lech Lecha. In those older Chumashim that give a count of the letters at the end of each sedra, the count of p'sukim is followed by a word with the same g'matriya. For Lech Lecha, the word is NIMOLU.

[4] When Avra(ha)m and Lot part ways, Avraham tells Lot that he can choose direction. If you go left, I'll go right and if you go right, I'll go left. Targum Onkeles renders left and right as north and south, attesting to the fact that Avra(ha)m was facing east when he gave Lot his choice.

[5] BIL'ADAI, a hard word to translate. Avraham said that not him, but only those that helped him in battle should receive compensation from the king of Sedom. Yosef said, not him, but G-d has the meanings of dreams. The words "no one" in the TTriddle were an extra clue to the solution. There are two more BILADAIs in Tanach, but only these in Torah.

[6] In the opening pasuk of Parshat No'ach, we find the twin-words NO'ACH NO'ACH. They are identical twins. On the other hand, LECH and LECHA are also twins, being spelled the same way, but they are not identical, vowel-wise.

[7] The Kalamazoo Kings are a professional independent baseball league team. Starting teams consist of 9 players, so the game they play among themselves can be called: The battle of the four kings against the five.

This week's TTriddles:

[1] TTriddle connection between Yitzchak and his tonsils

[2] Indicates that the Greek capital is very hot

[3] For sure, the free-loan society of 1948 is like the nation

[4] Avraham, Yaakov, Yehuda - to whom?

[5] Avimelech's grand gesture

[6] Avimelech's household, Yosef's brothers, and who?

[7] He offered it; he asked for it