

This Shabbat is the 136th day (of 383); the 20th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765

וְאַתֶּם יִתְהַיְוּ-לִי מִמְלַכְתַּת כְּהֲנָנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ... שמורת י"ט:

# He did it with Shabbat

Back in Va'eira, G-d promised to take the People of Israel (us) out of Egypt - to free us from Egyptian bondage - physical and psychological - and to take us out of that land of our oppression. And He did... in Bo and B'shalach.

He also promised to take us unto Him as a nation and to become our G-d. This happened at Sinai, accompanied by thunder and lightning, fire and smoke, the ever-increasing sound of the Shofar, and more so with our hearing G-d speaking first to Moshe and then to all the People. His reiteration of the promise at Sinai can be summed up with the pasuk (Sh'mot 19:6); And you will be to Me a kingdom of Kohanim and a holy Nation. So too, our promise to do all that He commands. Our bonding with G-d and He with us is symbolized - more, demonstrated, encapsulated - by Shabbat.

Shabbat started out belonging to all people. Our first introduction to Shabbat is as the conclusion of Creation. As such, we would expect Shabbat to be reflected in all cultures of the world. And to an extent, it is. Other religions have the concept of six days and a special seventh day, which- ever day of the week that happens to be. The world recognizes this aspect of G-d's creation by having a 7-day week. The week is the only unit of time that is not based on nature per se, or divisions and multiples of the natural units of time - day, month, year.

But Shabbat became much more to us. When we next meet Shabbat, it is in the context of the Manna, the bread from heaven that fed the Jewish People. G-d's Shabbat was personalized for us. It became a symbol of the special relationship that was developing between G-d and His people - as He had promised.

Next comes Revelation at Sinai. The formal commands to sanctify Shabbat and not to desecrate it were given to us - the People of Israel. Later we will see the Shabbat in the context of our day- to-day lives, and related to the building of the Mikdash. BEINI UVEIN BNEI YISRA'EL...

## 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...

This is one of those Shabbatot that are neither M'vorchim nor in the active Kiddush L'vana part of the month, so let's use it for other calendar issues.



"Wow, Pesach is late this year!" "Hey, Rosh HaShana is going to be October 4th and 5th - so late." Same comment, of course. (The proper wise guy retort to these and similar comments is, Pesach is exactly on time - 15 Nissan, just like it is every year. It is April that's early.)

But the "real" answer in general is that dates following a second Adar will be on the late side. Specifically, among the 7 years within a 19 year Lunar cycle (being years 3,6,8,11,14,17,19), it is the 8th year that throws dates the latest. 5765 is the 8th year of the current cycle. Counting this year, there have been 5 two-Adar years within the last cont. next page

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**Candle Lighting and Havdala Times**  
Standard (Winter) Time

Correct for TT 653 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 6:26pm

<b>4:35pm</b>	Jerusalem	<b>5:49pm</b>
4:54pm	Gush Katif	5:53pm
4:50pm	Raanana	5:50pm
4:50pm	Beit Shemesh	5:50pm
4:50pm	Netanya	5:50pm
4:51pm	Rehovot	5:51pm
4:30pm	Petach Tikva	5:50pm
4:50pm	Modi'in	5:50pm
4:52pm	Be'er Sheva	5:52pm
4:50pm	Gush Etzion	5:49pm
4:49pm	Ginot Shomron	5:49pm
4:35pm	Maale Adumim	5:49pm
4:41pm	Tzfat	5:46pm
4:50pm	K4 & Hevron	5:50pm

Ranges are THU-THU 17-24 Shvat (Jan 27 - Feb 3)

Earliest Shacharit - 5:43-5:39am
Sunrise - 6:35-6:31am
Sof Z'man Sh'ma - 9:13-9:12am (8:27-8:26am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:06-10:05am (9:35-9:35am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:52-11:53am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 12:22-12:23pm
Plag Mincha - 4:03-4:08pm
Sunset - 5:14-5:20pm (5:09-5:15pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul  
OHHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)  
Shabbat afternoon shiur 3:30pm  
**Yaacov Peterseil & Co.**  
Mincha 4:30pm  
Motza'ei Shabbat, 8:30pm  
**R' Yaacov Yisroel Bar Chaiim**

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# Yitro Stats

17th of 54 sedras; 5th of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 138 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 46th

15 Parshiyot; 4 open, 11 closed

75 p'sukim - ranks 47th

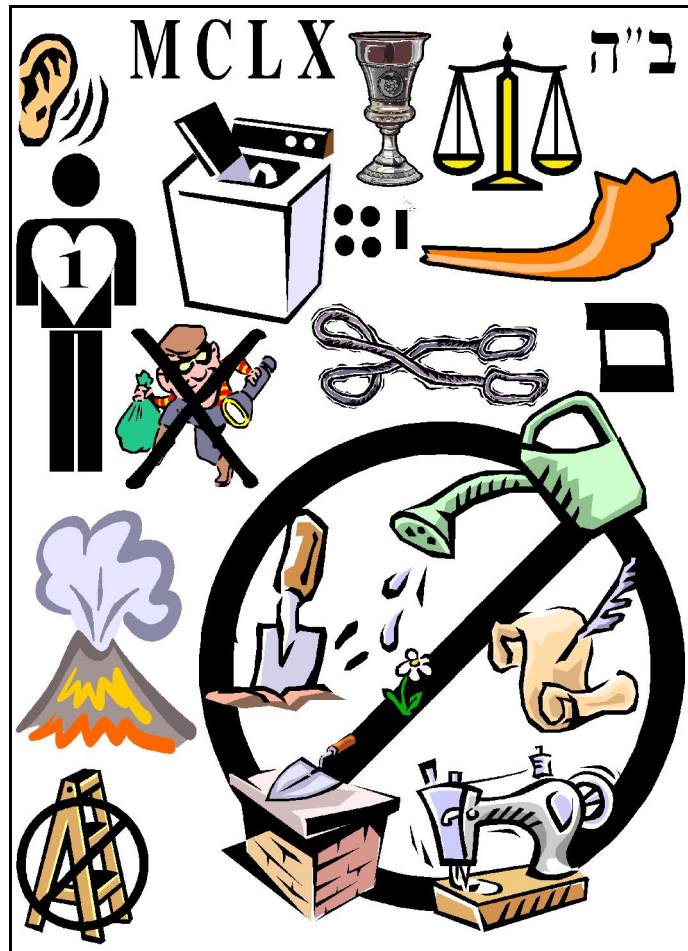
(only 7 sedras have fewer p'sukim)

1105 words, 4022 letters - ranks 46th

Yitro is the smallest sedra in Sh'mot in p'sukim, words, and letters

## Mitzvot:

Yitro contains 17 of the 613 mitzvot; 3 positive and 14 prohibitions; (14 of the 17 are within the Aseret HaDibrot)



## 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 - 12 p'sukim - 18:1-18

[P> 18:1 (27)] Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, hears "all that has happened" to the Children of Israel and comes to Moshe with Tzipora and Moshe's (actually, Tzipora's - that's how the Torah describes them!) two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. Moshe, Aharon, and the Elders welcome Yitro with great honor. Yitro praises G-d for all that He has done for the People.

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11 years. If you take any other 13-month year as a starting point and count backwards, you will find 5 two-Adar years within the past 12 years. Every 12-month year makes the Hebrew dates coming up approx. 11 days earlier, in relation to the secular calendar. Every 13-month year makes the Hebrew dates approx. 19 days later. If you think it out, you will see that during the 8th year in a cycle, after both Adars, the coming dates will be roughly the latest they ever get.

However, this year is a CHASEIR, meaning that Cheshvan and Kislev both had 29 days. If the 8th year of a cycle is K'SEIDER (29/30) or even more so, SHALEIM (30/30), then the upcoming Pesach, for example, will be even a day or two later. Of course, the status of Cheshvan and Kislev of the previous years will also affect how late Pesach will be. That is a much more difficult pattern to factor in to our simplified explanation. And the number of recent February 29ths also affects the secular date of Pesach (in our example).

Let's take a look if any of this matches reality. This year, the Seder will be on Motza'ei Shabbat, April 23rd. Last year it was April 5th. Expected to be earlier because 5764 was not a M'UBERET. The year before, it was April 16th. Late, but not as late as this year. 5760, year 3 of the current cycle, Seder was April 19th - late, but still not as late as this year. 5757 was the 19th year of the previous cycle. April 21st. Still not as late as this year. Going back year by year, finds Seder bouncing around the end of March and beginning of April. Back in 5746 (the 8th year of the previous cycle), it was on April 23rd, like this year. 19 years earlier, in 5727 (right before the Six Days War), Seder was April 24th. Both Cheshvan and Kislev had 30 days that year. Which helps explain the extra day later, compared with this year.

This year is almost the latest it's ever been.

Thank you YM for pushing me into this.

**SOT** The straight reading of this portion indicates that Yitro heard about the Crossing of the Sea and of the battle with Amalek. These are the events recorded in the previous sedra. Other commentaries point to certain textual references about Sinai and are of the opinion that Yitro came after Matan Torah, sometime during the almost one year that the People remained camped near Mt. Sinai. If the latter opinion is correct, then we have an example of "there is no set order in the Torah's account of what happen(ed/s)". And we can add the events of Sinai revelation to the list of what Yitro "heard and came".

VAYICHAD YITRO, Yitro was delighted with all of the good that G-d had done for the people of Israel. That's the "plain" meaning of the word. Rashi mentions another possible meaning of the word - of the skin breaking out in "goosebumps", perhaps a subconscious feeling of mortification for the downfall of his former colleagues. One has to be sensitive and careful with what one says to a convert or potential convert.

### Levi - 2nd Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 18:13-23

On the following day, Yitro observes Moshe judging the People from morning until night. He offers suggestions for a more efficient system. Moshe should teach the People what G-d requires of them, and he should also handle the most difficult questions and disputes. But the bulk of the daily judging should be assigned to qualified individuals who will be in charge of groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand people. Yitro explains that this new system will not only make things easier for Moshe, but the people too will be benefited.

(This portion of the sedra definitely seems to have occurred after Matan Torah, even if you want to say that Yitro's original arrival was before.)

**SPT** "On the following day..." The plain meaning would be, on the day following Yitro's arrival. Rashi, however, quotes the Midrash in saying that the day was the morrow of Yom Kippur, that first Yom Kippur when Moshe came down from the mountain with the second set of Luchot. This makes an important statement, that not only is building the Mishkan an essential part of the "getting back to life following the Golden Calf disaster" period, but so is the every day social and civil functioning of the people.

In the big picture, we see that Parshat Yitro with the main description of Matan Torah precedes Mishpatim with its mundane, everyday, down-to-earth laws. Yet at the beginning of Yitro, we find this out-of- sequence portion of the Mishpatim idea. And at the end of Mishpatim, we have the rest of the story of Maamad Har Sinai. So which really comes first - the lofty, spiritual dimensions of Judaism, or everyday life. We can (and should) look at it as a package deal.

However you look at the first part of the sedra, the story of Yitro seems to be an interruption between the events of the Exodus and the Splitting of the Sea on the one hand, and Matan Torah on the other. It isn't an interruption - it is a pre-requisite for Matan Torah. Moshe's view of the judging process, as he explains to Yitro who asks him what he's doing, is that the people come to him LIDROSH ET HA'ELOKIM, to seek G-d. Yitro's point is that there is a lack of civility among the disputing individuals which must be handled BEFORE they can pursue Knowledge of G-d. This inter- lude about civil justice can teach us that good interpersonal relations allows us to really benefit from Matan Torah. Similarly, DERECH ERETZ KODMA LATORAH.

Here's another way of looking at the "Yitro intro" to Matan Torah. Perhaps the Torah is telling us how to relive the experience of Matan Torah in our own lives. Its suggestion is "be like a convert". Take a fresh view of Jewish life. Marvel at all the things that G-d has done for Bnei Yisrael. Don't take things for granted. Approach your Judaism like Yitro did. Even if you are a Jew by birth, work on being a Jew by choice. G-d put the dramatic stories of the birth of the nation on hold, to let us take a close look at someone who doesn't have the Mountain poised above his head. Matan Torah was the mass conversion of a family-based group that is attaining nation- hood. But the individual still counts. This we can learn from Yitro, the individual.

## **Shlishi - 3rd Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 18:24-27**

Moshe accepts Yitro's suggestions and selects the judges. Commentaries point out that the actual qualifications of the judges that Moshe selected were more "modest" than Yitro had recommended. In theory, the very highest caliber person should be sought after as judge. In reality, we often have to settle for the best we can find in our society.

Moshe sends Yitro off on his journey to Midyan (to convert his family, says Rashi).

Notice that the first three Aliyot are all part of a single parsha, the parsha of Yitro (not to be confused with weekly Parshat Yitro). Pull that parsha out of the Torah for a moment (don't worry, we'll put it back), and the next thing we read about is Israel traveling from Refidim towards Sinai. This follows smoothly from the battle with Amalek which took place in Refidim. Sequen- tially, the removed parsha of the Yitro episode is not missed at all. Therefore, it seems obvious that the Yitro portion is

there for its lesson value alone. Which is fine, and is how we understand the EIN SEDER MUKDAM U'M'UCHAR BATORAH phenomenon. The Torah is not just going to put things out of chronological order for no good reason.

## **R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 6 p'sukim - 19:1-6**

Here begins the Torah reading for Shavuot morning

[P> 19:1 (25)] The Torah now returns to the sequence of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim to Matan Torah. On Rosh Chodesh Sivan (six weeks after leaving Egypt) the Children of Israel arrive at Sinai.

### **A famous point, worth repeating...**

In the third month following the Exodus, on THIS day, they (the Children of Israel) arrived at the Sinai Wilderness. Why THIS day; THAT day is how you tell a story. The Torah isn't a once-upon-a-time-a-long-time-ago story book. The Torah is a living guide for us, to be constantly rediscovered. Every day, each Jew should imagine him/herself at Sinai receiving the Torah anew. Today we have come out of Egyptian bondage; today we stand at the foot of Mt. Sinai eagerly awaiting Divine Revelation and today we commit ourselves to G-d what He asks of us. Today is the first day of the rest of our lives. The words of Torah which we learn and live should never become stale. They should be in our eyes as if TODAY we have received them. We should learn Torah and do mitzvot with the freshness and enthusiasm of a first-time experience. This too fits well with the "Yitro model". The challenge: Be a true Torah Jew all your life, for as many years as G-d gives you, but have an enthusiasm that is more common with converts and Baalei T'shuva.

After settling in at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moshe ascends to G-d (whatever that really means) and G-d tells him what he is to say to the women and men (sequence is intentional and based on the analysis of the terms Beit Yaakov and Bnei Yisrael). A clear connection is made between G-d's having taken us out of Egypt and His taking us to Him as His Chosen People - with the condition that we follow Him and His Torah. It is true that a Jew is a Jew regardless of his keeping the Torah or not, but it is clear that G-d has always demanded of us that we be committed to Torah and Mitzvot in order for our relationship with Him to be mutual and actively positive from both sides.

## **Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 19:7-19**

Moshe presents G-d's words to the Elders (and the People), who answer with a resounding "All that G-d says we will do". Moshe then tells the people to prepare for three days to receive the Torah. During this time, the Mountain was off-limits. On the morning of the third day, the People gather at the foot of the mountain to the accompaniment of the supernatural sounds and sights of the Shofar, thunder, lightning, and smoke. G-d will speak to Moshe in such a manner that the People will be witness to this direct communication. When Moshe will speak, G-d will answer with a "voice" (and not just via a vision or spiritual telepathy).

**SPT** G-d tells Moshe that the People should "sanctify themselves today AND tomorrow". It is relatively easy to sanctify oneself on the day of the great miraculous events of Matan Torah. The challenge to each of us is to sanctify ourselves on the many tomorrows that follow. The days after the wondrous events, the magnificent spiritual experiences. The days when our lives return to "normal". This is what being Jewish is about. We sanctify the mundane. Therefore, there really is nothing that is mundane for us.

## Shishi - 6th Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 19:20-20:14

G-d descends onto Har Sinai (so to speak) and calls to Moshe to join Him. G-d tells Moshe to repeat the warning against approaching the mountain. Moshe then goes down to the people to tell them G-d's words.

**[S> 20:1 (1)]** G-d (Elokim) speaks all the following things, saying...

What follows is/are the Aseret HaDibrot, the Ten Commandments. They are comprised of 13 p'sukim which contain 14 mitzvot out of the Torah's 613. The Aseret HaDibrot can be viewed as both specific mitzvot as well as "chapter headings" for many of the Torah's mitzvot (e.g. LO TIGNOV is specifically the prohibition of kidnapping, and generally, the category of all prohibitions related to stealing - robbing, burglary, cheating in business, pressuring someone into selling you something that he doesn't really want to sell, moving a boundary marker... and others).

**[S> 20:2 (5)]** What we call the first two commandments (or sayings, statements) are combined in a single parsha of 5 p'sukim. They can be seen as two sides of the same coin. You must believe in G-d; you may not believe in other gods...

## MITZVA WATCH

The first commandment sounds like a statement by G-d - an introductory remark, perhaps, to what follows, but is viewed by Rambam, Chinuch, and others as a mitzva to believe in G-d **[25, A1 20:2]**. It is as if the Torah had said: "Thou shalt believe in G-d". Following Rambam's approach, this premier mitzva of the Torah requires us to believe in G-d, to work on that belief by strengthening it and eliminating any doubts that we might have. The mitzva is a full-time, dynamic challenge to continually improve the quality and intensity of our belief.

The second commandment contains several prohibitions related to idolatry. Specifically, not to believe in other gods **[26,L1 20:3]** (this mitzva includes the prohibition of having no belief at all - atheism), not making idols **[27,L2 20:4]**, nor bowing to them (even without believing in them) **[28,L5 20:5]**, nor worshiping idols in any manner **[29,L6 20:5]**. Note that this commandment deals with both the thought and actions of Avoda Zara (idolatry).

**[S> 20:7 (1)]** The third commandment prohibits swearing in vain **[30,L62 20:7]**. This is defined as (1) swearing to the truth of something that is obviously true and well-known - e.g. that the Sun is hot; (2) to swear in denial of an obvious truth - that the Moon is made of cheese (interestingly, this is not considered a lie or a false oath, since everyone (hopefully) knows that the

Moon is not made of cheese. Only when the truth of a matter is unknown do we use the term lie and false oath. A vain oath is just as serious as a false one, so this distinction is largely academic, but it emphasizes the seriousness of being flippant in regard to swearing.); (3) to swear to violate the Torah - e.g. that one will eat pork. Such an oath is immediately void since we are considered to have taken a prior oath (at Sinai) to not eat pork. Hence, the oath is in vain and is a disrespectful use of G-d's name; (4) to swear to do something that is impossible - e.g. to stay awake for a full week. The common denominator of these types of vain oaths is that they all "cheapen" the use of G-d's name and threaten the smooth functioning of society which often must rely on the seriousness of a real oath.

In addition to actual vain oaths, this prohibition is considered by some authorities to include the saying of a BRACHA L'VATALA, and its partner in sin, a BRACHA SHE-EINO TZ'RICHA. Saying G-d's name in vain is forbidden but is not considered part of this Commandment #3. It falls under one or more other prohibitions.

**[P> 20:8 (4)]** Commandment #4 deals with Shabbat and contains the positive mitzva to remember the Shabbat with Kiddush **[31,A155 20:8]**, and the prohibition of all manner of Melacha, specific categories of creative activities **[32,L320 20:10]**. The mitzva of ZACHOR includes saying Kiddush as Shabbat enters, and Havdala as Shabbat leaves. (Officially, K&H are said in davening as a fulfillment of the Torah command, and again with wine, in fulfillment of a Rabbinic command. It's a bit more complicated than that, but this is the basic idea.) The prohibitions of Melacha are divided into 39 categories, each of which contains other related activities, usually with the same goal. E.g., PLANTING is one of the 39 categories; watering, pruning, fertilizing all help the growth of plants and are TOLADOT of PLANTING, and are also considered Torah violations.

**[S> 20:12 (1)]** The fifth commandment is to honor one's parents **[33,A210 20:12]**. Grand-parents, in-laws, older (or possibly oldest) brother (maybe sister too), and teachers are included (with differences). Honor of parents is usually considered to refer to that which one does for one's parents, as opposed to reverence (fear) of parents which include that which should not be done because it would be disrespectful.

**[S> 20:13 (2/11 of a pasuk)]** #6 is the prohibition of MURDER **[34,L289 20:13]**, which is considered the antithesis of Belief in G-d, since murder directly negates creation of human being in His image.

**[S> 20:13 (2/11)]** Commandment #7 against ADULTERY **[35,L347 20:13]** is the prohibition of having relations with a married woman, but as a "chapter heading" it also points to the other forbidden relations.

**[S> 20:13 (2/11)]** #8 is LO TIGNOV **[36,L243 20:13]**, which, as mentioned earlier, is specifically defined as kidnapping, but is also the category header of many mitzvot in the Torah. Maybe they can all be summed up as indicating that the person who violates these kind of mitzvot puts himself above other human beings. It is obvious how this is harmful to society, and to the individual's striving for Kedusha.

**[S> 20:13 (5/11 of a pasuk)]** #9 is the prohibition of "bearing false witness" **[37,L285 20:13]**. We can see in this mitzva, as well as many others, how important it is to G-d, so to speak, that we be able to function as a

society. Both oaths, and to a greater extent, perhaps, testimony, are necessary for the establishment of TRUTH, in the absence of having direct knowledge of the truth ourselves. So much of the dealings between people involves the trust we place in each other's word, especially when backed by an oath, and in the confidence we place in the testimony of witnesses. Without these elements of our inter-personal relationships, we would be incapable of functioning as a society.

**[S> 20:14 (4/15 of a pasuk)]** #10 is the commandment against COVETING **[38,L265 20:14]** sort of sums things up in that it focuses on the thought process that can lead to all types of sins. Being part of "The Big 10" points to the significance of thoughts in the whole picture, which usually consists of deeds.

This 10th commandment is contained in two parshiyot, the first prohibits coveting the "house of your fellow", and the second one...

**[S> 20:13 (11/15)]** specifies the prohibition of coveting one's fellow's wife, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that is his.

Notice that one single pasuk, 20:13, contains 4 of the 10 Commandments, while the 4th commandment, for example, takes up four p'sukim. There are two sets of Torah-notes for the Aseret HaDibrot, known as Taamei HaElyon and Taamei HaTachtan (upper and lower notes). Taamei HaTachtan treats the Aseret HaDibrot as a set of p'sukim, no different from all the other p'sukim in the Torah. Taamei HaElyon "disregards" the p'sukim of the Aseret HaDibrot, and presents the Aseret HaDibrot as a set of Ten Commandments (which they are - but they are also p'sukim in the Torah). Most Jews around the world and in Israel, read Aseret HaDibrot on Shabbat Parshat Yitro, Shabbat Parshat Va-etchanan, and Shavuot morning, using Taamei HaElyon. It is Minhag Yerushalayim (followed by many Jerusalem shuls, but not all, and by some shuls in other cities) to reserve Taamei HaElyon for Shavuot morning, and to use the quieter, plainer, Taamei HaTachtan for Yitro and Va-etchanan.

## Sh'vi'i - 7th Aliya - 9 p'sukim - 20:15-23

**[S> 20:15 (4)]** The People are awe-struck by the supernatural phenomena of the Sinai experience and they keep their distance. They ask Moshe to tell them what G-d wants rather than hearing His Voice directly. Some commentators say that this request came after the first two statements, "I Am..." and "There shall be no other...". Others suggest that G-d "spoke" all "Ten Sayings" first in an incomprehensible manner and then began "spelling them out" one at a time. After the second statement, the People panicked and requested that Moshe tell them what G-d wants, so that they would not hear "G-d's voice" directly. G-d agreed, so to speak, on the condition that we listen to the word of the prophet, with Moshe as the "chief" among the prophets, and his prophecy - the Torah - having the highest authority.

**[S> 20:19 (5)]** G-d tells Moshe to remind the People that they heard G-d speak; that they shall make no graven human images (even for art) **[39,L4 20:20]**; they shall make an altar and offer sacrifices upon it; if the altar be of stone, its stone shall not be cut with metal tools

**[40,L79 20:22]**. Metal implements represent the sword, which shortens life; the Altar represents the lengthening of life. From this rule comes the custom to remove or cover the bread-knife during "benching", since our table is likened to the Altar. (Some authorities say that this minhag applies only during the week, not on Shabbat.) The Altar may not be approached with immodest steps **[41, L80 20:23]** but rather via its ramp.

Rashi points out that with one of the kohein's 4 garments being pants, there really wouldn't be actual immodesty in walking on steps; nonetheless, it has the appearance of immodesty and is therefore inappropriate as an approach to the Mizbei'ach (Altar). Rashi adds that if the Torah showed concern for inappropriate behavior vis-a-vis stones, how much more so must we be careful not to treat our fellow human beings, who were created in the image of G-d, in a deprecating manner.

The last 5 p'sukim are reread as Maftir.

## Haftara - 21 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6

Parallel to the Torah's account of the awesome experience at Sinai, this passage from Yeshayahu describes his first awe-inspiring vision of angels proclaiming Kadosh, Kadosh. Both sedra and haftara present us with "visions" of G-d's awe, majesty, and holiness. Additionally, we sense some parallels between Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayahu HaNavi.

Another common theme between sedra and haftara is the concept of holiness. In the sedra, G-d tells us that we will be to Him a kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation. As Rabbi Jacobs points out in his "A Haftara Companion", it is important to remember the difference between the perfect holiness of angels and the Jews striving towards holiness, with their Free Will and imperfections.

He also points out that smoke is used to hide the Divine Presence from mortal eyes in both the sedra and the haftara.



Upper-left is the hearing ear of VAYISHMA YITRO, and Yitro heard. You can ask and/or answer the famous question, what did he hear that brought him to Judaism.

B"H in upper right was said by Yitro when he heard all the things that G-d had done for Israel. From that we are taught that one makes a bracha on miracles. Who else said BARUCH HASHEM in the Torah?

The scales represent the justice system, Yitro's suggestions, Moshe's response, etc.

One of the outcomes of Yitro's advice was the assignment of "captains" of groups of 1000, 100, 50, and 10 - represented by the Roman numerals M,C,L,X.

When Bnei Yisrael arrived at Har Sinai, they displayed a unity that is captured by the word VAYICHAN, and as Rashi puts it, we were like one person with one heart. That's the graphic under the ear.

The Shofar is one of the symbols of the Sinai experience, as we more than mention on Rosh HaShana.

The washing machine is for the people to clean their clothes during the

preparatory days for Matan Torah.

Wine cup is for Kiddush (ZACHOR) and the negation circle is for the prohibition of Melacha, including writing, watering plants, digging, sewing, building.

Do not steal (the Xed out thief) and do not go up to the Mizbei'ach with steps (the negated ladder) are two other prohibitions in the sedra.

The volcano represents Har Sinai all smoking from the fire of G-d's presence "upon" it.

The tongs are from the haftara. An angel flew to the Heavenly Mizbei'ach and picked up a glowing coal in a pair of tongs. He then touched the coal to Yeshayahu's lips, representing a purifying process that would allow the prophet to speak on behalf of G-d.

The MEM SOFIT, which is better called a "Closed" MEM, appears in the haftara in the middle of a word, rather than at the end, where we are used to seeing that kind of MEM. Not a bad idea to point it out to the Maftir in your shul before he reads the haftara, so he won't mistakenly read it as a SAMACH.

That leaves one additional graphic element as a visual TTriddle. This one isn't going to be easy, but our more experienced solvers should give it a try.

## THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

### Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

#### Lesson # 269 (part two) • Labor Law

There are times when an employer delegates the process of hiring employees to an agent. There are agents who travel to foreign countries to bring workers for industry or to work in agriculture, or there are seasonal employees who follow the harvesting seasons from climate to climate, or there are employment offices setup by employers to hire workers, or there are hiring halls where agents hire employees on behalf of employers. There may be times when the agent deviates from the instructions that the employer gives to him and the employee is not aware that the wages are different from what was told to him by the agent. What are the rights and obligations of the employer, the employee, and the agent?

This lesson also discusses the situation where the employer hires workers to add to those workers who are already working for him and does not discuss the exact wages he will pay them, and the situation where the employer agrees with the employee that he will pay him other than by money and then wants to pay him money. Or the other way around, where he wishes to pay the employee something other than money. There may be an agreement as to what the employer will pay the employee and there may be certain perks that are usually given to the employee; where there is no discussion of such perks but the employer pays the employee more than other employers pay, does this preclude the employee asking for perks?

What if the agent deviates from the employer's instructions as to wages? The employer instructs the agent to hire an employee and to tell him that the wages are \$3 an hour. The agent hires the employee and tells him, "I will pay you \$4 an hour;" or he tells him work for the employer for \$4 an hour, but does not use the words, "The employer will pay you \$4 an hour." The employer need pay only \$3 an hour and the agent must make up the difference of \$1 per hour. There is an opinion that if the prevailing rate is \$4 an hour, then the employer must pay the employee \$4 an hour.

If the agent states, "The employer will pay \$4 an hour," he has deviated from the scope of his employment and is no longer his agent. The employer must pay the customary wage in the community if it is higher than \$3 an hour. If there are those in

the community who receive \$3 an hour and some who receive \$4, he need pay only \$3.

The employer instructs the agent to hire workers for \$4 and he hires workers for \$3 an hour. The employee will receive only \$3 regardless of the words of the agent, whether he said, "I will pay \$3," or "The employer will pay \$3 an hour." This holds true even if the custom in the community is to pay \$4 an hour.

If the agent does not specify the wages, the employer has to pay the customary pay scale in the community for such work. If the employer tells the agent to pay \$3 and the agent does not specify the wages and there are some employees who receive \$3 and some who receive \$4, the employer need pay only \$3.

What if the employer hires additional workers? The employer had workers working for him and hires additional workers and tells them he will pay them the same \$3 that he pays the other employees. The new workers agree to work for the wage that he pays the current workers. It turns out that the current workers receive \$4; he must pay the new workers \$4. There is also a dissent that holds that the new workers receive only \$3 since they commenced to work thinking that they were to get only \$3.

The result is the same if the employer hired the new workers and tells them he will pay them \$3, the same as all other workers in the community, and it turns out that the other workers are getting \$4. The converse is also true where the workers tell the employer that they will work for the same \$4 that the other workers in the community receive and they actually receive only \$3. The employer need pay only \$3 or \$4 according to the dissenting view of the previous paragraph.

### Payment in Kind

Assume that the employer and the employee agree that the wages to be paid will be in kind instead of in money, such as wheat in the field where the worker harvests, or a box of cigars. The employer may change his mind and pay in money. The reason is that the employer must pay the employee the money as soon as the work commences even without any formal kinyan being performed. However, an object, as distinguished from money, cannot be acquired nor promised without a formal act of acquisition being performed; since no such act of acquisition has been performed, the employee has no right to demand the object. If the employer agrees to pay the employee by assigning to him all or part of a negotiable instrument of indebtedness due to the employer, he pays him a part of the note according to its worth at the time when the employee completed his work. If the note has already been collected prior to the completion of the work, the employer must pay to the employee the proportional amount that he collected from the debtor.

If the employee is hired to collect an instrument of indebtedness and to receive a commission of a certain percentage, the employee is to receive that percentage from the amount that he succeeds in collecting from the debtor.

If the employer agrees to pay the employee an object that is not yet in existence, such as fruit that will grow on a tree sometime in the future, the employer may pay him the money equivalent as he may do with any object, as stated above. The money equivalent is that which the future grown fruit will be worth when the time for payment has arrived.

### Payment Higher or Lower than the Average Wage

The employer hires the employee and agrees to pay him \$10 for delivering something, while all other employees receive \$8 for such delivery work and also receive \$1 for trip expenses. The employer and the employee did not discuss the trip expenses.

On his return from the trip the employee demanded \$1 for trip expenses, the same as any other deliverer. The employer replies that he paid the employee more to compensate him for trip expenses. The Beth Din held in favor of the employer. More to come...

*The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume IX chapter 332 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*

### Visiting the Sick

In section 335 of Yoreh Deah, the Tur brings a number of explanations for the requirement of visiting the sick and for the details of this mitzva. All of the explanations come from the early Sages, yet the way the Tur presents them seems to highlight the contrasts and even paradoxes among them.

The Tur cites Shabbat 32a, "R' Yitzchak son of R' Yehuda said, a person should always seek mercy so that he shouldn't fall sick, for if he becomes sick they say to him, present some merit to exempt yourself." This source suggests that getting sick is an omen, a time of heightened judgment.

The Tur then continues, citing Sota 14a, "And once a person is sick, it is a mitzva to visit him, for so we find that the Holy One, blessed be He, visits the sick, as they inferred from the verse 'And Hashem appeared to him [Avraham] in Elonei Mamre' - this teaches that He came to visit the sick". From this source, illness sounds like an occasion for unique Divine closeness and favor. We certainly don't find that Avraham is asked to "bring a merit" to exempt himself, and we would find it hard to imagine what so righteous a person would be judged for.

The Tur mentions a seemingly unrelated reason for visiting, namely attending to the needs of the patient, and then goes back to the first, "ominous" reason. He writes that a visit should be carried out "even he is a cohort, who takes with him one sixtieth of the illness." This idea of a cohort reminds us of a recurring theme in Chazal, namely that members of a group are often judged together. "If one of a group dies, all the members of the group should worry" (Shabbat 106a, SA YD 394:5). By associating himself with the sick person, the visitor includes himself in his "group" and thus judgment; this slightly endangers the visitor but even more does it lighten the judgment of the patient, as the community is always judged more leniently than the individual. (See Rambam Teshuva 2:6.)

Then back again to the Divine favor approach: "[The visitor] should not sit on a bed or chair or bench [high above the patient], rather he should wrap himself and sit before him, for the Shechina is above the head of the sick person".

At the end the Tur mentions the importance of praying for the sick person and encouraging him to mend his ways and take care of any important unfinished business. For instance, perhaps there is money which he borrowed and neglected to return.

One way of understanding this seeming zig-zag in the Tur is to recall that being in God's favor and being in a state of

heightened judgment are not really opposites at all. Part of the privilege which Israel as a whole enjoys is having a unique level of Divine Providence, including a closer level of scrutiny and judgment "The Holy One blessed be He is strict with those surrounding Him even to a hair's breadth" (Yevamot 121b). Note the use of the word "surrounding" specifically those who are close to Him are subject to this strict accounting.

This is one reason that any religious act that has the nature of "approaching" God is done with great awe and trepidation. The heightened scrutiny and judgment involved may be beyond our merits. However, we should certainly not belittle the importance of any such occasion, even if we do not initiate it. As the Tur explains, illness can be a sign of Divine scrutiny leading to a greater degree of judgment, thus the sick person may be asked to present some merit. This scrutiny can apply to the patient and also to those in his family or group. At the same time, this degree of closeness is also a unique privilege, and visitors should be aware that the Divine Presence is above the sick person's head. The visitor should welcome the opportunity to participate to a limited "one-sixtieth" level in this "visitation", with of course an appropriate sense of awe.

The main thing is for the sick person and those around him in his "cohort" or "group" to use the illness as a prod to improve their ways. This includes both their spiritual level, as reflected in the requirement that visitors pray for the sick person and that he should repent, but also everyday acts of righteousness and kindness: taking care of the physical needs of the patient and urging him to arrange workaday affairs such as paying off debts.

*Publication Update: Both volumes of the book have already been through page design, type-setting, and proof reading. It won't be long now, Y"H, that we will see it IN PRINT.*

*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](http://www.jewishethicist.com) or [www.aish.com](http://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**

### Destruction and Exile [1] Melachim Bet 24-25

The long spiritual, religious and moral decline of the first Jewish commonwealth that had started with the division of the kingdom after Shlomo's death, was now to result in its destruction and the exile of its people from their Land. Hashem is indeed long-suffering and merciful but also a true judge. So the punishment, foretold in the Torah for forsaking His Torah, and repeated in the writings of all the prophets, although long delayed, finally came to pass. "The destruction of Sodom should have been in the days of Yitzchak whose merit is Din, rather than in those of Avraham whose merit is that of Chesed. However, that is to teach us that unlimited Chesed and mercy with no consideration of justice and punishment for sin, is evil" (Shem Mi Shmuel).

Actually there were three stages to this punishment. Firstly, there had been the destruction and exile of the Northern Kingdom of Israel of the 10 Tribes by the Assyrians. In Judah, the sins of idolatry and murder of Menashe and of the people

during his long reign were so severe, that neither his own repentance nor the piety of his son Yoshiyahu, were sufficient to prevent national punishment. So then there were two almost equal periods of destruction, following the death of Yoshiyahu.

First, Yehoachaz, the son of the pious king, who was an evil person, was deposed after ruling only for three months, by the same Pharaoh Necho that had killed his father at Meggido. He was called to Antakya in modern Turkey, close to the border with Syria and imprisoned there; later he was taken to Egypt and murdered. His brother Elyakim was a party to his imprisonment and fate. The Egyptian king, who was returning from his defeat at Carchemish at the hands of the Babylonians, the rising power in the Middle East, then set Elyakim, on the throne of Judah. The new king's name was changed to Yehoyakim by Necho, as a sign of his vassalage, and the country was also taxed heavily. Rashi comments that such renaming is a custom amongst the kings, whereby they show that the other party is subservient and actually powerless; Pharaoh changed Yosef's name to Tzafnat Pane'ach, when he made him viceroy of Egypt (B'reishit 41:45).

Unfortunately, the new king was no better than his brother had been, so that there was no change in the religious and moral behavior of the country. The Divine answer was immediate even as Yirmiyahu prophesied: "I sent My prophets to you but you did not listen. Behold I send you to the nations and the empires, that they may destroy and uproot, that they may shatter and obliterate" (Yir. 1:10, 18:7). His 11-year reign was marked by constant incursions and destruction by the forces of the Chaldees, Moav, Aram, and Amon. When he died, there is no mention any- where of his burial, although the text in Divrei HaYamim Bet (36:6-7) does tell that he was put in chains to be taken down to Bavel. Yirmiyahu prophesied, "They shall not lament for him saying, 'Ah my brother! Ah lord! Ah his glory!' He shall be buried the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth from the gates of Yerushalayim" (22:18-19).

His son inherited the throne. Three months later, Nevuchadnetzar of Babylon on his way to conquer Egypt and destroy it so that it disappeared as an independent power, invaded Judah as a reaction to the father's revolt against him. The new Jewish king, Yehoyachin, seeing the power of Bavel, went out of Yerushalayim to surrender the city and thereby save it from destruction. Chazal praised him for this and we know that during the time of Bayit Sheni, there was a gate in the walls of Yerushalayim known as Sha'ar Yechanya [as he is named in the book of Yirmiyahu] to mark where that king went out to surrender [Mesechet Midot]. Nevuchadnetzar took him bound in chains into exile to Bavel, looted the royal and Temple treasuries, and exiled together with their king the nobles, the wealthy families and almost all the artisans with him. Only the small-holder farmers, petty merchants and the workers were left behind. In the British Museum in London, there is a clay tablet, on which Nevuchadnetzar recorded his wars with Judah.

Chazal interpreted the craftsmen and the smiths - the experts and the masters - mentioned in the text, to refer to the Talmidei Chachamim (Rambam, Introduction to Seder Zeraim). The whole religious and spiritual aristocracy of Israel was taken to Babylon, including Ezekiel the prophet and the ancestor of Mordechai (Esther2:5-6). In Babylon, the Jews established a center of Jewish life that was destined not only to include the major part of the nation, but also to rival Eretz Yisrael. From there grew the Babylonian Talmud, the great yeshivot of Sura, Pumpedita and Nehardaa, the literature of the Geonim, and some of our prayers written in Aramaic, such as Kaddish,

Yakum Purkan, and Ha Lachma Anya. Given the great degree of autonomy that Israel enjoyed there, the powerful and ramified communal structure that has been such a characteristic of our social, legal and religious life was able to flourish.

Although they exiled him, Nevuchadnetzar and all the Bavlim referred to Yehoyachin as the king of Judah and granted him a special noble rank in the political and social hierarchy of that country. Indeed the Davidic dynasty continued to provide leadership and government to the Jewish People in exile for approximately 1500 years [Resh Galuta].

Nevertheless, Nevuchadnetzar appointed Metanjah [renamed Hezekiyahu by him], the king's uncle to be his puppet king of Judah. He reigned for 11 years, evil and sinful years, years of which Hashem warned: "As I live, surely My oath that he has despised and My covenant that he has broken, even that will I recompense upon his own head" (Ezekiel 17:19). Hezekiyahu moved Israel to the final stage of the end of statehood, the conquest of Yerushalayim and the destruction of the Temple.

*This is the 69th 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** What is the final halacha regarding whether an aveil (mourner) can/should change his seat in shul on Shabbat? According to the opinion that he does change, why doesn't that violate the principle that one does not do aveilut b'farhesia (mourning in public) on Shabbat? Also, is the halacha the same for women?

**A** The laws of aveilut are the classic example of an area where minhag overpowers classical sources, and we do not intend to change that tendency. If there is a clear minhag where one lives/davens, he should follow it. We will explain the validity of each side of the issue. We do not have access to a reliable survey of practices, but it seems that in America, most aveilim change their place in shul even on Shabbat, whereas in Israel not as many do so. This response focuses primarily on Ashkenazic communities, as your particulars seem to indicate that you belong to one.

The idea of changing places is based on the following gemara. "A mourner, the first week, he does not leave his house; the second, he leaves but does not sit in his place; the third, he sits in his place but does not talk; the fourth, he is like everyone else" (Moed Katan 23a). Thus, our halacha should not even extend for 30 days, yet the Rama (Yoreh Deah 393:2) says that there is a minhag, which is to be followed despite its lack of basis, that mourners change places for their entire period of aveilut. Although the classical sources do not write explicitly where one changes his place, the main place that it is done is in shul (not at home) at least regarding 12 months (P'nei Baruch 22:1; see Chuchmat Adam 167:2).

Indeed there is a rule that one does not display mourning publicly on Shabbat (Shulchan Aruch, YD 385:3). Yet there are classical references to mourning-related activities on Shabbat. The Nimukei Yosef (on Bava Batra 100b) learns from one such source that a mourner changes his place even on Shabbat. However, the Beit Yosef (YD 393) argues because of the issue of public mourning, and in the Shulchan Aruch (393:3), he speaks against the practice. However, the Rama upholds the minhag to change seats even on Shabbat. The ARI Z"L did not change seats on Shabbat, but the Birkei Yosef (ad loc.) suggests that only one who is so respected that his divergence from the minhag would not be seen as haughty should follow the ARI. The standard minhag in America seems to be like the Rama, which is strengthened by Rav Moshe Feinstein's support (Igrot Moshe, YD I, 257). Practice in Israel may be affected by the Geshet Hachayim's (I, 22:3) ambivalence on the topic.

Investigating answers to the question of B'FARHESIA may provide room for distinctions. The Ramban (see Beit Yosef, ibid.) explains the practice in the Beit HaMikdash that mourners entered on Shabbat through a special gateway with their heads covered like mourners as follows. Since they wore shoes, unlike a mourner, it was not considered acting as a mourner. The Shach (393:7) has a thesis that only practices that are reserved for shiva create problems of public mourning on Shabbat, and changing places extends beyond shiva. Neither of these opinions is mainstream (see Pitchei Teshuva 395:7). A more likely possibility is that a person's specific seat need not be a classic sign of aveilut, as different factors affect where one sits (Shut Radvaz II, 662; Shach, ibid.). If this is the logic, then one with a prominent, permanent place, especially the rav of a shul, would be more clearly demonstrating aveilut and has more reason to keep his seat on Shabbat (Pnei Baruch, 22:(12)). Along similar lines, others (Taz, OC 526; R. Akiva Eiger, YD 393) say that one sits in a different place on Shabbat only if he began sitting there before Shabbat. Thus, it is possible that a woman (or a man in that situation) who frequents a given shul only on Shabbat morning and did not establish a new place before Shabbat should not change their seat on Shabbat (based on Panim Me'irof II, 124). Again, all should follow the local minhag if one exists.

*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](http://www.ou.org) or [www.eretzhemdah.org](http://www.eretzhemdah.org). And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to [info@eretzhemdah.org](mailto: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] Candle by Day

We must occasionally recall for review those tasks which in the past we have given up on, to see whether in the course of time we might not have matured into an ability to handle them. -

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

## [3] CHIZUK and IDUD

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

Jewish unity began at Sinai. When each individual Jew agreed to accept the Torah, he put aside his own desires and embraced the agenda set down by God. In so doing, every Jew focused on the same exact thing, the Will of God. This unified state created a new entity called Klal Yisrael. This single entity means that each Jew is part of the other, part of the Klal, and that it is impossible to separate or walk away from the Klal. The Klal, in turn, is part of an unbreakable triangle: "The Holy one, Blessed be He, the Torah and the Jewish people are one."

Never again in history did we ever agree on anything! Yet Sinai was the moment in history that mattered, the one that turned the Jewish people into an inseparable and indestructible entity. As it forged into a single collective, as it united with God and His Torah, the Jewish nation turned into an eternal one.

Notwithstanding this remarkable moment in Jewish history, it wasn't until the Jewish nation crossed the Jordan River that the principle of "Kol Yisrael arevin zeh lezeh," "All Jews are responsible for one another," went into effect. Although Klal Yisroel was formed at Sinai, the deepest level of Jewish unity only began to operate in the Land of Israel.

The process that began at Sinai was only completed in Eretz Yisrael.

**Rebbitzin Holly Pavlov, Jerusalem**

*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*

## [4] MicroUlpan

**מְחִית**

Mash or grind cooked fruits or vegetables gives you puree, e.g. Apple sauce, mashed potatoes. Puree in Hebrew? M'CHIT

IQ, intelligence quotient, was originally computed by dividing a person's tested academic or mental age by his chronological (actual) age and multiplying by 100. (Today IQ is computed differently, but the idea is the same.)

actual age = GIL TIV' = גִּיל טְבְעִי

mental age = GIL SICHLI = גִּיל שִׁכְלִי

IQ = M'NAT MIS-KAL = מִנַּת מִשְׁכָּל

## [5] A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit

R' Moshe Kramer of Vilna owned a store in that city. His wife would mind the store, while he would sit and learn Torah. R' Moshe was a great Torah scholar, and the community eventually asked him to become the Rav of the city. R' Moshe finally consented, but made a single condition - under no circumstances was he to be paid. He would continue to be supported by his store.

Soon R' Moshe began to sense that his family income was greater, and he asked his wife: "How do we suddenly have extra money? Are the community elders paying you anything behind my back?"

"Heaven forbid," she replied, "but ever since you became the Rav, we have had many more customers than before, and that is why our income has grown."

R' Moshe took out a piece of paper and calculated how much the family needed per week, and he told his wife, "I want you to know that we need such and such an amount weekly for our expenses. As soon as you have earned that amount, even if it is still Sunday, you are to close the store for the rest of the week, and are not to open it until the following Sunday. The other storekeepers also need to earn a living."

*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*

## [6] Decalogue Stats

The Shabbat commandment consists of 32% of the words of Aseret HaDibrot, even more than Avoda Zara, commandment #2 (29%).

There are 620 letters in the Aseret HaDibrot of Yitro. (TARYAG + 7 Rabbinic Mitvot.)

The letter with the most occurrences is ALEF, with 68 (11%). Average for ALEF in the whole Torah is less than 9%. The increase in ALEFs is led by the ALEF of ANOCHI and added to by the word LO (LAMED-ALEF) which occurs 12 times.

The only letter of the ALEF-BET that does not appear at all is TET. (Based on the average in the whole Torah, we would expect 3 to 4 TETs.)

The letter ZAYIN appears only once - ZACHOR. Appropriate for Shabbat to begin with ZAYIN, whose numeric value is 7. Also, as the Baal HaTurim points out, The Shabbat commandment begins with the 7th pasuk of Aseret HaDibrot.

There are 2 each of GIMEL and SAMACH. YUD, HEI, and VAV all beat ALEF for the whole Torah, but not here.

## [7] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Yitro is where we first encounter the ten utterances of Hashem at Sinai, better known as the Ten Commandments. If we were to ask which of these commands has had the most profound effect on the Jewish people, we might well respond with the Shabbat. Indeed, it has been said that more than the Jewish people have observed the Shabbat, the Shabbat has preserved the Jewish people.

The Torah tells us that G-d rested on the seventh day and then blessed the Shabbat and sanctified it. Understanding the relationship between blessing and sanctification may help us understand why Shabbat seems to stand out among the other commands.

Rashi explains that the blessing was a double portion of the heavenly Manna before Shabbat; the sanctification was the lack

of Manna on Shabbat so that no one would be forced to gather food. Thus we understand sanctification as something that is separate from normative behaviors, as something that separates our people from other nations. We also appreciate the consequent trust in Hashem who provides for those who keep his Sabbath.

Ramban suggests that Shabbat's sanctification (kedusha) derives from the higher spheres; the blessing is the spiritual nourishment for the rest of the week. Clearly, however, if we imitate Hashem's creative capacities during the week, then the separation of work and rest that constitutes kedusha is in itself a blessing for all those who observe the Shabbat.

**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.*

## The Mikdash Mailbag -- We Get Letters!

*Back in the beginning of July I wrote about about one of the most fascinating personalities on Jewish history - Heleni HaMalka. Queen of a small independent state in northern Mesopotamia, Helena of Adiabene together with her family, embraced Judaism some 40 years before the Destruction. Cited numerous times in the Mishna, Gemara, and associated literature as well as in Josephus, she and her sons became known for their generosity, their devotion to Torah and their love for Am Yisrael. The Mishna relates that, "Heleni HaMalka, Queen Helena, set a golden Nivreshet over the door of the Heichal (Yoma 3:10). I wrote that the Nivreshet was actually a rather unusual timepiece. "When the (rising) sun shined on it, it sparkled (from the reflected light) and then everybody knew that the time had arrived for K'ri'at Shema. (Yoma 37b). Tiferet Yisrael comments, "Since the Bayit was 100 Amot tall (approx. 50m) and it stood on the summit of Har HaBayit (and therefore was visible from all over the city), when the sun rose, the Nivreshet which was made of shiny gold would reflect the sun so brightly that all the inhabitants of Jerusalem knew that the time of K'ri'at Shema had arrived" (Yoma 3:10, Tiferet Yisrael 61). The word Nivreshet is usually mistranslated in English as "candlestick" but the Nivreshet was not a candlestick. The Nivreshet was an elegant burnished mirror constructed of highly polished gold, strategically placed high above the (40 Amot tall) entrance way of the Bayit, to catch and reflect the rays of the early morning sun. Though the original TT article was written in deep summer, it did not discourage R. Halevy from Brookline, Mass. from sending in his comments in deepest winter. Thank you so much.*

R. Halevy writes, "A while ago, you wrote about the mirror-like golden Nivreshes which hung over the Hechal (the Bayit - CS) and signaled the Kohanim as to the exact moment of sunrise. We read in the Mishna (Yoma 37a) that "Heleni, his mother (King Munbaz's) made a Nivreshes of gold over the opening of the Hechal (the Bayit)". Rashi there says on the word Nivreshes, "A Menora. This is similar to what is in the Book (Daniel 5)" where the word, in its Aramaic form Nivreshta, is translated by Rashi and the Metzudos as Menora. Normally "Menora" is translated as a candlestick or lamp. In either case, a Menora is "a source of light". On 37b, however, the Gemara clarifies its

understanding of this Nivreshes. "We have learned, at the hour when the sun shines, sparks emanate from it (the Nivreshes) and everyone knows that the time for K'ri'as Sh'ma has come." Here Rashi says, "It glowed. For the sun shown in the East and (it) inclined over the opening of the Hechal which was to its western side". Rashi further explains that the Mitzva of reciting K'ri'as Sh'ma was at the moment of sunrise as we have learned in Berochos 26a. We see that the Nivreshes was a reflective mirror which reflected the rays of the morning sun. Possibly, it was round like a half ball or ball or even a flat, multi-faceted surface angled to radiate the light in such a way that anyone in the Azara, whether to the East, North or South, could see it. In the unlikely situation that someone was standing in the West, which would have been unusual, he would surely see that others in the Azara would be beginning their recitation and join them. It is unlikely, then, that the Nivreshes was a candle or lamp - highly unlikely - so the word Menora, in our case, cannot be translated as a "source of light". The Nivreshes either was affixed to the wall high above the Hechal entrance or was suspended by some means like a rope, chain, or rod to a protruding beam. The latter scenario fits better with the phraseology in Rashi on 37b that it was "inclined" or slanted. But, what did Rashi mean by "which was to its western side"? This could be simply explained that the lower part of the Nivreshes was tilted inward to the Hechal sort of like this: W / E whether it was flat, multi-faceted or convex. Properly placed, it would have been securely affixed at its bottom point to the Hechal outer wall. The sun's rays, therefore, would not have only been visible if one looked up at the Nivreshes, but even on the ground and walls. It would have been very hard to miss it and, therefore, the moment of sunrise and time for K'ri'as Sh'ma."

Then, perhaps inspired by the recent storm that buried Boston in 20" of snow, R. Halevy adds, "Let's talk real snow in the Mikdash. Okay. So the Ks (Kohanim) couldn't get to wear anything underneath nor above. (The Ks while serving in the Mikdash were permitted to wear only their four priestly garments - CS) But could their clothing be made thicker? What about all the visitors who came to bring their Korbanos? Were they restricted in their clothing too? (No - CS). Except for going barefoot (Since the Mikdash was "holy ground", anyone entering the Azara had to be barefoot. Note Shemot 3:5 - CS), maybe the visitors would come in heavy winter coats with earmuffs and gloves. All of this sounds weird, sloshing in the snow and ice barefoot. We must think of some other solution. What about a heated floor? Even though there may not be sources for this in the Mishna, the Romans did heat their baths in this manner. Why couldn't we have had some sort of subterranean heating system, too? This would have caused snow and ice to melt on contact leaving only a water mess to squeegee away. Strategically placed, this could have both heated the ground and the Ks feet without scalding them. Next solution - temporary covers a la a tarpaulin. Imagine some sort of thick carpet which covered the ground and was pulled away just where the K had to walk. In fact, not all the area had to be covered, but only those exact paths where the Ks had to walk. Much of the other ground could remain snowed over. Another solution - pour boiling water over the snow. Snow melts, ground is kinda warm, Kohein suffers little. Excess water is then quickly squeegeed aside. We tend to picture a lonely Kohein or two busily Shechting (slaughtering), Kaboling (receiving the blood in a Mikdash vessel), Holaching (conveying the sacrificial blood to the altar) and Shpritzing (Zerikat Hadam, the blood application on the altar). Maybe another lonely Kohein cutting

and schlepping (carrying Netachim, the dismembered parts of the sacrificial animal to the altar) and tossing (the parts) on the pyre (the 'Korban- consuming' fire on the altar). I suspect that the Ks worked in teams with one Captain Kohein leading his crew along. Each time another Korban was to be offered, the next crew in line went to work. Working Zareezedly (swifty, skillfully and conscientiously) as they would, any particular sacrifice could have been dealt with in minutes. Said crew flies back to their heated quarters, brushes off the snow, dries their feet and clothing and rests until their turn comes up again. Each crew would be comprised of specialists who, working in tandem, would attack their jobs efficiently and at lighting speed."

Terrific! R. Halevy, thank you again. - See article, "Snow, Snow, Beautiful Snow", TT #560, P'kudei 5763, March 7-8, '03 - CS)

*Catriel's book in progress: The Temple of Jerusalem, A Pilgrims Prospective; A Guided Tour through the Temple and the Divine Service*

## Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

Personal note from me (Phil). What I'm about to review is relatively new to me, although when I mentioned it to some friends, their reaction was: "Of course, I know that." So this might be new to some readers and old for others. I'm hoping for enough of the former to justify this week's column.

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כִּהְיוּ מִדְּבַר יְהוָה אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ בְּהוֹצֵאתָ ה' אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם:

This is the whole first pasuk in this week's sedra. Let's start with the TROP-mark on the word YITRO and the one on the word MINYAN. They look the same... but they are not.

[Personal again. I'm almost ashamed to admit that either I never knew that they are different, or I don't remember ever learning about them. Until last Shabbat, I've been "singing" them the same when I read the Torah. I davened at a minyan two weeks ago where the Bar Mitzva boy who read the Torah was so crystal clear about the distinction between the two notes, that I finally started paying attention.]

The note over YITRO is a KADMA. The one over MIDYAN is a PASHTA. The KADMA is printed over the middle of the main letter of the accented syllable of the word. The PASHTA is printed at the extreme left of the last letter of the word. If the accent of the word is not on the last syllable, a second PASHTA mark is often printed over the accented syllable in addition to the "real" place for the PASHTA - far left. For example...

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-מֹשֶׁה...

The word VAYOMER has a PASHTA at the left end of the last letter, REISH. Since the word is pronounced va-YO-mer, i.e. the word is MIL'EIL, another PASHTA symbol is printed above the YO. This doesn't happen with a KADMA because it is printed above the accented syllable in the first place.

Now for the difference. KADMA is a M'SHAREIT (we've done this before). Meaning that it links its word to the following word, without a pause between the two words (aside from the briefest pause that naturally separates two words. In the current example, it is not YITRO <pause> KOHEIN MIDYAN... but rather YITRO CHOHEIN MIDYAN, as if that is his name. YITRO SCHWARTZ, YITRO SMITH, YITRO CHOHEIN MIDYAN. And that is why the DAGESH KAL drops from the

KAF of KOHEIN. That happens when a BG"D KF"T letter is at the beginning of a word following a VAV (and other certain letters) at the end of the previous word - WITHIN THE SAME PHRASE. YITRO CHOHEIN MIDYAN is a single phrase. As opposed to...

...אֲנִי וְזִמְתֶנָּה יִתְרוֹ בֶּן אֵלֶיךָ...

The word BA is preceded by the word YITRO, yet the ending VAV (CHOLOM) does not cause the BET to lose its DAGESH, because the TROP under YITRO is a TIPCHA, which is not a LINKER but MAFSIK (pauser). Your father-in-law Yitro is a phrase and BA EILECHA, is coming to you, is its own phrase.

Now the PASHTA (on MIDYAN) is not a LINKER (M'SHAREIT), but a PAUSER (MAFSIK). It's a level 3 (out of 4) PAUSER, so the pause that follows it is relatively short, but it is a PAUSER, nonetheless.

A good BK (Torah reader) will distinguish between a KADMA and a PASHTA, not only in the lack of pause or pause following the word, but in the sound of the note as well. If this is new-ish to you, listen for it next time you hear Torah reading. You'll either hear it... or not.

Back to the opening pasuk in Yitro. There is another example of the above in the same pasuk. ASHER has a KADMA (it should be over the SHIN - DAVKA probably put it where it is because the top of the SHIN is too crowded). The word ELOKIM has a PASHTA. See where it is. <TAFN>

## 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 (B'SHALACH) TTriddles:

- [1] A dozen ballpoint pens have them - 5 Iyar thru 15 Tammuz
- [2] Dalfon the Fuller Brush man
- [3] All of Torah and three portions thereof, and one other item
- [4] A question, good food, bad person
- [5] Lavan, Nevayot, Nachshon, Aharon - What and who else?
- [6] Three did this in the Torah: Avraham, Lavan, Par'o

### And the envelope, please...

[1] These could have been presented as separate TTriddles, but they belong together and putting them in the same box made solution easier - based on the number of correct solvers. Ballpoint pens have springs. A dozen pens have 12 springs, as did EILIM - the place Bnei Yisrael camped en route to Sinai. The Torah tells us that there were also 70 date (trees) there. So too, there are 70 dates between 5 Iyar and 15 Tammuz.

[2] Dalfon was one of Haman's sons. He was therefore an Amaleki, like his father. The classic Fuller Brush man was/is a door to door salesman. Together, we has a play on the final words in B'shalach - BA'AMALEK MIDOR DOR.

[3] The TTriddle was amended to three portions thereof. HASHIRA HAZOT - This Song. The phrase appears 10 times in Tanach, 8 of which are in the Torah. The first is in B'shalach and refers, of course, to SHIRAT HAYAM. The Song of the Well and Haazinu are the other two portions of the Torah that are described as HASHIRA HAZOT. Several uses of the term are considered to be talking about the whole Torah. The two references in the rest of Tanach (Shmuel Bet and T'hilim) both refer to the Song of David upon being saved from his enemies.

[4] HEI-MEM-NUN. [Question] G-d asked Adam HaRishon if he had eaten from the tree that He had commanded him not to eat from - HAMIN HA'EITZ... [Good food] HA-MAN, the Manna. [Bad person] HAMAN.

[5] People have names, of course, but they are sometimes described as Joe's brother, Sid's nephew, Shirley's sister-in-law, etc. Five people in Tanach are identified as the sister of someone. Rivka is referred to as ACHOT LAVAN HAARAMI. Eisav took Machalat, daughter of Yishmael, ACHOT NEVAYOT as a wife. Aharon took Elisheva...ACHOT NACHSHON as his wife. Miriam, AHARON'S SISTER took a tambourine in her hand... And, in Shmuel Bet, AVIGAL bat NACHASH is also identified as ACHOT TZ'RUYA

[6] VAYIRDOF, and he chased, pursued. Avraham, Lavan, and Par'o are the three in the Torah who VAYIRDOFed. There are several others from Tanach.

This week's TTriddles:

- [1] What else besides what's in 10?
- [2] Usually 5 on a Shabbat; this Shabbat - 6
- [3] Brit, Birthdays, Shavuot, dirty guy with torn clothes, Pesach
- [4] 747 + dove + hockey team
- [5] Describes part of the Sinai Experience, as well as a Plague Ender and an illness
- [6] Initial upper/lower mirror-image marks
- [7] plus one element from the ParshaPix

TTriddles apology: Due to a computer problem (all right, and a human error), some of last week's TTriddles were missing words in the email versions and on the website. Sorry 'bout that.