

This Shabbat is the 255th day (of 383); the 37th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765 • We read/learn the FOURTH perek of Avot

וְזָכַרְתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית רְאִשִׁימָה... ויקרא כ"ה

Here We Are Again

Many times in the Torah, G-d sets down simple IF-THEN and IF NOT - THEN proposition for His People. Sometimes we are addressed as individuals and sometimes as a Nation. The first more than half of this week's sedra of B'chukotai is one of the more dramatic and emphatic of these Divine deals. Technically, this TOCHACHA is addressed to the Jewish People, but that people is made up of many individuals, so that we should always view ourselves as both individuals and as members of the Jewish People. Because we believe in our being responsible for each other, the distinction between the Jew and Klal Yisrael is often blurred. Take the first pasuk in the sedra. If you will keep My Torah and Mitzvot, G-d says, then I will give you timely rain and prosperous yields of the ground. And peace and security in Eretz Yisrael. Sounds like He's talking to all of us, together. He is, but each of us must take the challenge as if we can make the difference between G-d's wonderful promises and His dreadful threats. This challenge, Rashi reminds us, includes learning and teaching, preserving and doing. We have to improve ourselves. We must properly teach our children and students to follow the proper path, and we must find the best way to influence our fellow Jews to embrace the Torah and its values, and to slowly but surely increase mitzva observance.

This does not mean mechanical performance of the requirements of Judaism; it means a total commitment and immersion in a Torah way of life, motivated by a love of G-d, His Torah, His People, and His Land.

Every mitzva should carry with it a heightened awareness of the greatness of G-d and of the Jewish People.

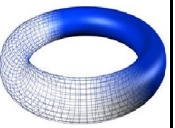
We must grow to respect G-d more, each other too, Eretz Yisrael, the whole world and our fellow inhabitants of this world. Sounds like a lot to do, but it is really simple: IM B'CHUKOTAI TEILEI- CHU... If you will follow My laws...

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...

18 IYAR - Lag BaOmer - Yahrzeit of R' Shimon bar Yochai, student of R' Akiva, one of the teachers of R' Yehuda HaNasi



432nd yahrzeit of Rabbi Moshe Isserles, the RAMA, who amended the Shulchan Aruch to suit Ashkenazi halacha and tradition. (He was 32 years younger than Rabbi Yosef Karo, and died 2 years before the Mechabeir did. The Rama died in his early 50s; the Mechabeir died in his late 80s.)

19 IYAR - 712th yahrzeit of Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg, after 7 years in prison. He was buried only 14 years after his death because he forbade his community to ransom his body for the exorbitant sums demanded. He was among the last of the Tosefists. In addition to Biblical and Talmudic commentaries, we have over 1000 halachic responsa from this Torah giant.

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regular and (earliest)
CANDLE LIGHTING
HAYDALA TIMES
Israel Summer Time (DST)
Correct for TT 669 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 9:00pm

7:02pm (6:10)	Jerusalem	8:19pm
7:19pm (6:13)	Gush Katif	8:22pm
7:19pm (6:12)	Raanana	8:22pm
7:17pm (6:10)	Beit Shemesh	8:20pm
7:19pm (6:12)	Netanya	8:22pm
7:18pm (6:11)	Rehovot	8:21pm
6:59pm (6:12)	Petach Tikva	8:21pm
7:18pm (6:11)	Modi'in area	8:21pm
7:17pm (6:10)	Be'er Sheva	8:19pm
7:16pm (6:09)	Gush Etzion	8:19pm
7:18pm (6:11)	Ginot Shomron	8:21pm
7:02pm (6:09)	Maale Adumim	8:19pm
7:14pm (6:11)	Tzfat	8:22pm
7:16pm (6:10)	K4 & Hevron	8:19pm

Ranges are THU-THU 17-24 Iyar (May 26 - June 2)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 4:39-4:36am
Sunrise - 5:36-5:34am
Sof Z'man Sh'ma - 9:06-9:05am (8:12-8:11am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:16-10:16am (9:40-9:39am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 12:36-12:37pm
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 1:12-1:13pm
Plag Mincha - 6:09-6:13pm
Sunset - 7:41½-7:45½pm (7:36-7:40pm)

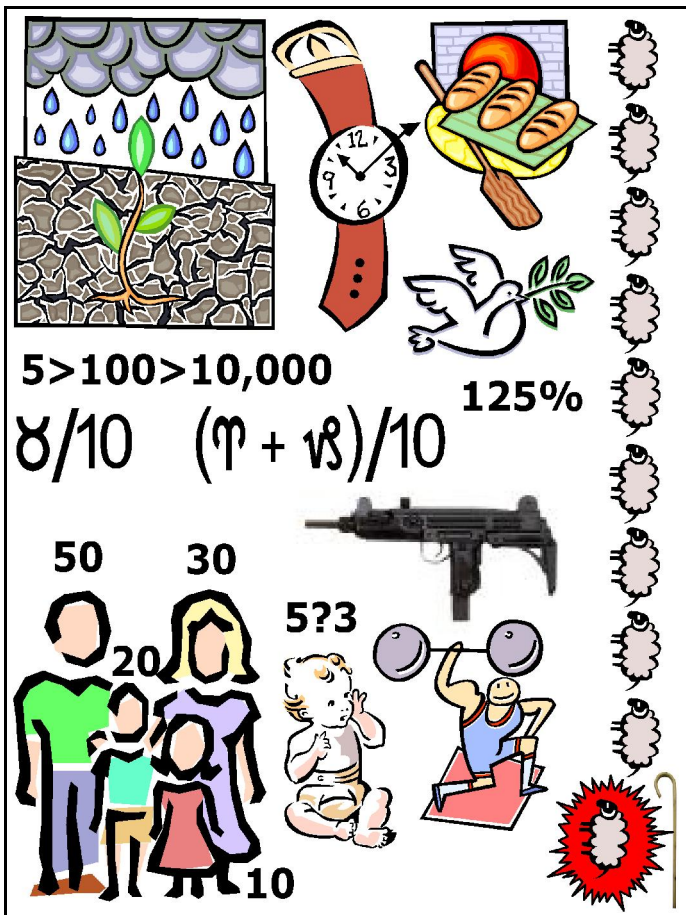
In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
"Early Shabbat" Davening
Mincha 5:55pm (15 min. before Plag)
Shabbat afternoon shiur, 5:00pm
Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Poupko
Mincha at 6:00pm

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B'CHUKOTAI STATS

33rd sedra of 54; 10th of 10 in Vayikra
 Written on 131 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 47th
 5 parshiyot; 3 open, 2 closed
 78 p'sukim, ranks 46th (7th in Vayikra)
 1013 words, ranks 47th (7th in Vayikra)
 3992 letters, ranks 47th (7th in Vayikra)
 Small sedra - only 7 sedras are shorter

MITZVOT:

Contains 12 mitzvot - 7 positive, 5 prohibitions
 Sefer Vayikra: 10 sedras, 36.6 columns, 1537 lines, 859
 p'sukim, 11950 words, 44790 letters, and 247 mitzvot (95 positive, 152
 prohibitions). Vayikra is the smallest Chumash in number of sedras,
 columns, lines, p'sukim, words, & letters. Its sedras (avg) have the
 fewest verses, words, and letters. OTOH, it has more mitzvot than any
 other Book, which is all the more remarkable because of its small size.

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 - 3 p'sukim - 26:3-5

[P> 26:3 (11)] If we keep the Torah and mitzvot, then
 HaShem will provide beneficent, timely rainfall and
 bountiful crops. The yield of the Land will be so great,

that each agricultural season will blend into the next one.
 And we will have plenty to eat - on our own Land.

"If you walk on the path of My statutes..." Rashi comments
 that this is not just another way of saying "keep the
 mitzvot", but rather it points to our task of immersing
 ourselves in a Torah and Mitzvot way of life. Another
 commentator points to the word "walk" and says that it is
 insufficient to just "stand still" within an environment of
 mitzvot, one must take continual strides towards greater
 spiritual heights.

SDT And the tree of the field will give forth its fruit. Rashi
 says this refers to non-fruit-bearing trees that will bear
 fruit when G-d's full blessing will be given. One of the
 commentaries explains why Rashi departs from the simple
 meaning of the pasuk. Since if one says a Borei Pri HaAdama on
 a fruit, his bracha is valid, because fruits grow on trees which
 grow from the ground, then regular fruit are included in the
 previous phrase "and the ground will give forth its yield". The
 phrase referring to trees is superfluous, unless it is as Rashi
 says.

The Gemara says that IM B'CHU- KOTAI TEILEICHU is
 more than just stating the facts: If this, then that; if
 not this, then something else. The Gemara says that
 HaShem is asking us, pleading with us, to keep the
 mitzvot and immerse ourselves in Torah. If He asks,
 how can we not do what He wants - He created us, He
 put us into this world.

SDT The promises of prosperity from the opening p'sukim of
 the parsha are made for Jews who live in Eretz Yisrael.
 The same deal, apparently, does not apply to those who live in
 Chutz LaAretz. This, says Torat Kohanim, in analyzing the word
 - B'ARTZ'CHEM.

Levi - Second Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 26:6-9

Further reward for (or results from) following the Torah
 and keeping mitzvot, will be peace and tranquility in the
 Land (of Israel). Both natural disasters (wild beasts) as
 well as human enemies (sword) will be kept at bay by
 HaShem. And when we do encounter our enemies, G-d
 will grant us the ability to vanquish them mightily. If we
 keep to our side of the deal (so to speak), we will be
 blessed with fertility and G-d will keep His covenant with
 us.

Notice how there is a promise of peace in the land and a
 promise for the might to vanquish the enemy. Peace in
 this context can refer to peace among Jews. Enemies
 from the outside still exist, and we are promised the
 ability to advance upon them.

The promises of blessings in this first part of the sedra
 come in two forms: not only agricultural and military, but
 natural and subtle on the one hand and open and
 obvious, on the other. Beneficial and timely rain - much
 appreciated. Bumper crops - much appreciated (one
 would hope). But rain and growth of produce is part of
 nature. On the other hand, the magnitude of promised
 military success is seemingly more miraculous. Yet (on the
 first hand), nature also consists of no rain and drought
 and failed crops. So unparalleled agricultural success is
 truly miraculous as well.

Shlishi - 3rd Aliya - 37 p'sukim - 26:10-46

The longest Sh'lishi in the Torah

This Aliya begins with the last four p'sukim of the "good" part - the promises for our proper Torah behavior. G-d will be with us; He is the One Who took us out of Egypt, broke the yoke of our oppression, and led us out with heads held high.

[P> 26:14 (13)] But then we get to the "Tochacha", one of two portions of the Torah (there are actually several others, but these are the big two) containing G-d's detailed admonition to the People, warning of the dire consequences that will result from disregard of Torah and mitzvot. Because it is so painful to hear these terrible words - especially realizing how often they have come true - the custom developed to read this portion in a low voice. We are ashamed that G-d needs to threaten us in so graphic a way. There was a time when no one wanted the dubious honor of receiving this Aliya. Today the minhag is to call the Rabbi, Gabbai, or the Baal Korei himself for this portion. (In many congregations, it is the one who gives out the Aliyot who gets the Tochacha, so that no one else can feel slighted by him.) The Tochacha is always contained within one Aliya which begins and ends on "cheerier" notes. This is the reason for the widely disparate distribution of p'sukim among the Aliyot of this sedra. (Almost half of the sedras p'sukim are in this one Aliya.)

On the other hand, there are those who frown on the custom of lowering the voice, because we are supposed to love reproach, since it helps us straighten ourselves out. On the other hand (Tevye from Fiddler), most follow the custom to read the Tochacha in a lower voice. Torah readers should be careful though, not to read too low to be heard properly, and not to fast to be properly heard.

A significant theme of the Tochacha is the connection between the keeping of the laws of Shmita and our hold on the Land. We must always realize that we do not keep Eretz Yisrael without any strings attached. We have a clear commitment and responsibility to keep the Torah and fulfill the mitzvot as individuals AND as a community. Shmita was commanded in the previous sedra. In this week's sedra, we are presented with the dire consequences of the disregard of this important mitzva.

[S> 26:27 (20)] Continual reference is made of both physical and spiritual benefits from observance of mitzvot, and the opposite, for disregard of the mitzvot. This combination of promise of good and threat of bad, together with the body of mitzvot of the Torah, constitutes the covenant between G-d and the People of Israel at Sinai via Moshe.

SDT *Yaakov is spelled with a VAV 5 times in Tanach (Once in this week's sedra and four times in Yirmiyahu). Rashi points out that the name of Eliyahu is missing a VAV five times. It is as if Yaakov takes collateral from Eliyahu to guarantee that he will eventually come to announce the coming of the Moshiach.*

Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Poupko points out several distinctions between the two Tochachot in the Torah. The first Tochacha is part of the Sinai covenant and therefore is contained in B'chukotai, which is read shortly before

Shavuot. The second Tochacha is in Ki Tavo because it is part of the Arvot Mo'av experience. He also points out that the first Tochacha ends with a promise of redemption THAT IS PART OF the Tochacha. The second one does not. Only in the following sedra do you have the promise of Geula. The first is orderly - if you don't listen, then such and such will happen. And if you still don't, then worse. And if... then even worse. The second Tochacha is a series of threats and punishments, one after the other. The first Tochacha relates to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash and the exile that followed it; the second to that of the second Beit HaMikdash. The first Tochacha came from G-d via Moshe; the second came from Moshe.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 15 p'sukim - 27:1-15

[P> 27:1 (8)] In pledging funds to the Mikdash, it is possible to offer the "value" of an individual **[350,A114 27:2]**. The Torah lists amounts for individuals depending on sex and age. In the event that the donor is poor, a kohen may reduce the amount.

[S> 27:9 (26)] If a person pledges an animal to the Mikdash which qualifies as a korban, he may not exchange or redeem that animal (even for one of greater value) **[351,L106 27:10]**. If he attempts to do so, then both the original animal and its substitute (t'mura) are consecrated to the Mikdash **[352,A87 27:10]**. An animal not fit for the Altar is to be evaluated by a kohen **[353,A115 27:11]**, and can be redeemed by adding 1/5 of its valuation.

(Actually, 1/4 of the amount is added, so that the amount added becomes 1/5 of the total amount paid. E.g. An animal was valued at 100 shekel. 1/4 of that is 25. Add that to the first amount, and the person must pay 125. The 25 which he added is 1/5 of the 125. This is how CHOMESH works in all situations that call for it.)

Note: The Parsha marking on p.6, top of second column sh/b S, not P

A person can also offer the value of a house **[354,A116 27:14]**, in which case a kohen (expert in matters of real estate) determines its value, and the house is redeemable by adding 1/5.

Ponder this... If donating the value of a male child between 5 and 20 years of age, for example, is equivalent to a pledge of 20 shekel, then why not just donate 20 shekel? What is the significance of labeling certain amounts as the "value" of a person?

Part of the answer seems quite obvious. We psychologically relate much more strongly to our giving the value of person to the Beit HaMikdash than we would to a mere sum of money. This would be especially so if the person were ourselves or a loved one. Modern fundraising psychology borrows this idea. Compare the emotional connection of contributing, let's say, \$100 to a charitable cause, compared with the same \$100 which is called "foster a child" for a certain period of time. The money is the same. But the emotional response is quite different.

MITZVA WATCH

Notice the unusual, almost unique nature of T'MURA (the exchange of an animal for another sacred animal). Generally, when the Torah prohibits something, an individual is considered to violate that prohibition when he does that which was forbidden. One may not cook meat with milk. Doing so is a violation. One may not steal. Stealing is a violation. Etc. Etc. One may not exchange one animal for a consecrated one (that is fit for the Altar). But one cannot do so. The attempted exchange fails. The sacred animal is still sacred. So in this instance, that which is forbidden is not done. It cannot be done. The attempt itself then is the violation. This is highly unusual. (In addition to the attempted exchange failing, it also carries the additional penalty of the new animal also being considered sacred.) And - T'mura can be punishable by MAKOT (whipping), which makes it more unusual, since no act was done. A prohibition that involved no act is rarely punishable by human courts.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 6 p'sukim - 27:16-21

If a person dedicates the value of his property to the Mikdash, it is to be evaluated by a kohen based on quality and number of years to the next Yovel [355,A117 27:16]. It then becomes redeemable by adding a fifth. If a person did not redeem the land, then Yovel does not release it to him, but rather to the Mikdash as consecrated property. The same applies if the officials at the Mikdash sold the property before redemption. At Yovel, it reverts to the Mikdash.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 7 p'sukim - 27:22-28

If the property in question is not hereditary, but rather purchased, then the rules differ. The land is evaluated in the same way, but at Yovel it reverts to its original owners, and not to the Mikdash.

A firstling is automatically sanctified to the Altar; one may not consecrate it as another korban [356,L107 27:26], because it is already Kodosh. This rule of not switching one sanctity for another, applies to other categories of korban as well.

A non-kosher animal offered to the Mikdash is sold off.

If something itself is consecrated to the Mikdash (rather than its value), it cannot be redeemed; it remains holy.

Sh'vi'i - 7th Aliya - 6 p'sukim - 27:29-34

Consecrated property goes to the kohanim [357,358,359; A145,L110,L111 27:29]. A person under a death penalty has the status of "Cherem" (non-redeemable items). The land's tithe (here referring to Maaser Sheni), is sacred; it is (either to be eaten in Jerusalem or) to be redeemed.

The tithe of the animals (cows, goats, sheep) are to be separated by counting every tenth one regardless of the quality of the animal [360,A78 27:32]. These animals are sacred and must be eaten only in Jerusalem and

under conditions of ritual purity. Maaser B'heima may not be redeemed [361,L109 27:33]. Violation of this rule results in both animals being considered holy.

"These are the mitzvot... at Sinai." This final pasuk of the sedra (and book of VaYikra), closes the section that was opened by the first pasuk of B'har, the usual partner sedra to B'chukotai.



It is customary for the congregation to stand for the concluding pasuk of each book of the Torah. This seems NOT to raise the strong objections that standing for the Aseret HaDibrot does. The Torah-reader reads the final words in a dramatic tone, signalling the congregation to respond with "Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazeik" (Strong, strong, and let us be strengthened). Although most people seem to say V'NITCHA- ZEIK, a more correct pronunciation, based on Shmuel Bet 10:12 - from where the exclamation appears to come - is V'NITCHAZAK.

The reader then repeats that phrase. Some say that the person who receives the Aliya should NOT say the phrase, as this would constitute an interruption between the Torah reading and his concluding bracha, or possibly that it is to him that the congregation says Chazak... It is considered a special honor to receive this Book-completing Aliya.

And what if the Baal Korei gets the Chazak Aliya? Does he too not say CHAZAK... before his bracha? Good question. Any ideas, dear TTreaders? If you know something on this topic, please email us at tt@ou.org

Haftara - 17 p'sukim - Yirmiyahu 16:19-17:14

The words of the prophet contain warnings and admonitions which echo the Tochacha contained in the sedra. The haftara ends with a prayer for G-d's help in keeping us faithful to Him and His Torah.

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW - Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 285 • Theft by a Woman; Penalties for Stealing

There is no difference between the liability to make restitution of a man and that of a woman who stole.

There may be a difference regarding when the payment is to be made by a married woman. Very often a woman has no access to assets of her own for that which she owns is used by her husband according to halacha. So even when she owes money she does not have access to cash to make her payment. If a married woman does have the assets available to her (under the terms of a pre-nuptial agreement) she must make immediate restitution for that which she stole. If the married woman cannot make the payment, the victim of the theft should go to Beth Din to obtain a judgment against the woman and she will have to pay it when she is divorced or widowed.

A thirteenth century case has been cited by many commentaries and codes. The wife of Reuven loaned a silver vessel to the wife

of Shimon. A rumor then arose in the community that the silver vessel was stolen from the home of Shimon. A borrower is liable if the object is lost or stolen and thus the wife of Shimon is liable to the wife of Reuven for the value of the vessel. The wife of Shimon pleads that she does not have any assets from which to pay since all of the assets of the family are owned by Shimon, and he pleads that he is not liable for the debt of his wife. It was held that Shimon is not liable for the debt of his wife. But since there was suspicion in the community that Shimon may know where the vessel was located, Shimon would have to take an oath that he does not know the whereabouts, that he did not use it in a manner otherwise than for which the wife of Reuven loaned it to Shimon's wife, and he was not negligent with the vessel. And the wife of Shimon is obligated to take an oath that the vessel is not in her possession nor under her jurisdiction. The Beth Din wrote a judgment in favor of the wife of Reuven against the wife of Shimon for the value of the vessel to be paid if she should come into any money of her own or if she shall become widowed or divorced, at which time she would be paid her kethuba and would have funds to pay the judgment.

A minor (before bat mitzva or before bar mitzva) is not liable to the victim of the theft or the value of the theft. If he still possesses the stolen object he must return it. He is not liable even when he becomes an adult for restitution for the thefts he committed as a minor. If Beth Din sees that a minor is becoming dissolute and steals continually, it should have him flogged so that he should be cured of his habit of stealing things.

The Torah states "If the theft be found in his possession-whether a live ox or donkey or goat-he shall pay double" (Sh'mot 22:3). "If a man shall steal an ox, or sheep or goat and slaughter or sell it he shall pay five cattle in place of the ox and four sheep in place of the sheep" (Sh'mot 21:37) What emerges from these verses is that a thief (as distinguished from a robber) must pay the double penalty if he steals any object, and he pays additional penalties if the object stolen is a sheep or an ox and that he sells or slaughters, in which event he pays additional penalties.

If there are witnesses who testify in Beth Din that Reuven stole something from Shimon, Reuven must pay to Shimon double the value of the object stolen. Thus if Reuven stole a dollar he must repay two dollars, if he stole a car he must pay twice its value. Reuven loses an amount equal to the value of the object that he stole. However, if he confesses that he stole the object he repays its principle value but is exempt from the double penalty. The same applies to all penalties. The double penalty applies to the thief of any object with the exception of sheep or an ox, when they are stolen and sold or slaughtered, he pays the fourfold penalty for the sheep and the fivefold penalty for the ox. The term fourfold or fivefold may be somewhat misleading, since the first 100 percent is the value of the principle. Thus if the sheep that was stolen and then slaughtered is valued at \$100 at the time of the theft, the thief pays \$400, which includes the principle value of the sheep. All of these laws apply whether the thief is man or a woman. If the thief is a married woman with no assets of her own with which to make payment, she must return the object if it is available and the double penalty becomes a debt and payable when she is divorced or widowed. If the thief is a minor, he is exempt from paying the double, fourfold or fivefold penalty, but the stolen object must be restored to the victim of the theft. If the object is lost, the minor is not liable to pay for the value of the stolen object, not even when he attains adulthood.

If one steals from a Gentile or objects that belong to the Holy Temple, the thief need pay only the principle amount and no penalties. Similarly, if one steals instruments of debt or land, he

is not liable for the penalties; the penalties attach only to movable things that have intrinsic value. If one steals an ox or a sheep in which he has a share, he is exempt from the fourfold or fivefold penalty. If partners steal an ox or a sheep and one of them slaughters or sells it with the knowledge of the other partner, they must jointly pay the fourfold or fivefold penalty; if one sells or slaughters it without the knowledge of the other partner they are exempt from the fourfold or fivefold penalty, but must pay the double penalty. If one steal without lifting the object, such as by pulling it and leaves the stolen object in the victim's premises, he need not pay the double penalty.

Similarly, if he sells or slaughters the stolen sheep or ox on the owner's premises he need not pay the fourfold or fivefold penalty. But if he lifted up the object, he immediately becomes a thief even on the owner's premises and is liable for the corresponding penalties.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume IX chapters 349 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

*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 by **Rabbi Asher Meir***

Four Types of Bailors

The halakhah recognizes three distinct levels of responsibility for a watched object, or bail:

An unpaid bailee is liable only for negligence (SA CM 291).

A paid bailee, or a lessee, is liable for theft or loss, but not in cases of duress (SA CM 303, 307).

A borrower is liable even for duress (but not for normal wear) because "all of the enjoyment is his" (SA CM 340).

In a previous column we related these three levels to three levels of "keeping" or "watching" the commandments. A person who takes little accountability for Torah and evades responsibility for "lost" opportunities to keep mitzvot was likened to an unpaid bailee; one who recognizes the great reward for observance and thus takes greater care, but reconciles himself to great obstacles was likened to a paid bailee; whereas a person who recognizes that "all of the enjoyment is his", that Torah observance is its own reward, will take the utmost steps to help himself perform mitzvot in any circumstance.

Rav Natan of Breslav suggests a similar parallel between keeping Torah and watching a bail, but he draws the likeness in the opposite direction - the motivation for keeping Torah rather than consciousness of the reward.

In Rav Natan's schema, a paid bailee (shomer sakhar) corresponds to someone who keeps the mitzvot in order to obtain a reward. Whereas an unpaid bailee (shomer chinam) corresponds to someone who is not interested in any reward and keeps the Torah solely for its own sake.

Incidences of duress represent damage that a person is aware of; "they occur with a person's knowledge, but he is unable to prevent them". But theft and loss are damage that occurs precisely because a person is unable to exercise perfect supervision; "they occur because of a disappearance of awareness, a kind of faulty consciousness".

The ordinary righteous individual is scrupulous to fulfill mitzvot and is motivated by their reward. This shows that he has fear of God, for he is afraid of losing his reward. Since his fear is complete, Hashem protects him from unpreventable damage, which he would normally have to fear. But he has not completely subdued his consciousness; he is still concerned with how his conscious acts will affect his reward. He is still an independent actor on the earthly scene. Thus, Hashem makes him responsible for his conscious acts, and if there are lapses he will be held responsible.

A few isolated individuals are able to attain the level where the reward for the mitzvot is of no importance to them. These individuals attain such a high level of Divine providence and supervision that no ill befalls them. They have completely subdued their consciousness and their desires; they are not concerned with the consequences of their acts and their instrumentality but only with fulfilling God's will. Such a person does not conceive of himself as an independent actor. Since even their consciousness is completely subordinated to Hashem's service, He provides that no harm will come as a result of lapses in consciousness, such as theft or loss. (They are exempt not only for liability for duress, but are actually exempt from incidences of duress.)

Rav Natan does not relate in this section to a borrower, but we can easily extend the likeness. A borrower does acknowledge that the object is not his and must be returned to the owner; he even feels a sense of gratitude towards the lender. But his focus is on his own needs. This corresponds to a person who does keep Torah, but feels that the mitzvot serve him, rather than contemplating his own role as a servant of Hashem and a supervisor of His world and Torah. His fear of heaven is deficient; since his acknowledgment of Hashem's providence is deficient, he is in effect exposing himself to the vagaries of nature and its accidents instead of trusting in God's protection. Thus he is liable to accidents which we could consider "duress". - (Based on Likutei Halakhot Sefirat HaOmer 2:6)

TANACH

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

Dr. Meir Tamari

"To flee before the Lord" (Yonah 1:1) [2]

Yonah is part of the prophetic tradition whereby the prophets of Israel had revelations for the other nations as well. Yirmiyahu was appointed a prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1:5); he has other chapters devoted to Israel's neighbors (46-51). So too do Isaiah (chap.13-23), Ezekiel (chap.28-33), Amos (chap.1-2) and all the prophets in Trei Asar except Hosea. Sometimes the prophets sent their words by messenger as Yirmiyahu did to the Babylonians, while others went to them, as did Eliyahu to Midbar Damesek and Elisha to Damascus. This is part of our being a light to the nations, so that the world will be full of the Word of G-d and all the peoples will ascend to Zion and the Word of G-d from Jerusalem. This message has to be tempered with the special spiritual role of the Jewish Nation. So there are commentators amongst our Sages such as the Alshich and Abarbanel, who see the reasons for Yonah's fleeing before the Lord in his great love for Israel and his antagonism to its enemies. This is in contrast to those who see as the dominant reason, Yonah's fervent desire, inherited from Eliyahu, to see

Divine Justice untempered by Mercy; unlimited mercy becomes immoral.

"Rabbi Yochanan taught that Yonah was zealous for the son [Israel] therefore he fled to Tarshish" (Midrash). Tarshish, apart from being identified by tradition as Spain [Malbim], has also been seen as Taurur in modern day Turkey [Sa'adiah Gaon], and ancient Carthage in modern Tunis [Abarbanel] and other cites in North Africa [Alshich]; all of them far removed from Eretz Yisrael to separate Yonah from the source of prophecy. He was so devoted to safeguarding the honor and safety of Israel that he was prepared to be cast into the sea and lose his life for them.

[1] Yonah knew that the people of Nineveh would do Teshuva as soon as the prophet of Hashem came to them and warned them of His displeasure at their actions. Chazal taught that the nations of the world are quick to repent. "One of the reasons for including the story of Yonah in the Tanach is to teach us Musar. Even though Hashem over many years sent many prophets to Israel to make them do Teshuva, they did not listen to them. Yet, only one prophet came to Nineveh and all the people repented immediately" (Radak). Indeed a suitable message for Mincha of Yom Kippur.

The honor of Israel would be damaged by the success of Yonah's mission, as then Israel would be unfavorably compared to Nineveh. Rather than that, he fled.

[2] The physical safety of the Jewish People would be endangered by the success of Yonah's mission. Nineveh capital city of Assyria in Mesopotamia was destined to be the future destroyer of the Ten Tribes. Abarbanel writes that Hashem's very purpose in sending Yonah was to temporarily preserve Nineveh, so that they would be His instrument for Israel's deserved punishment.

So by going there and causing them to repent, thus saving Assyria, Yonah would be assuring the Northern Kingdom's destruction. Therefore Yonah fled, hoping to evade that responsibility. [We will see a further example of Yonah's love and pride in his people in his reply to the sailors aboard the threatened ship].

Alongside Yonah's concern for Israel, Radak, summarizing Midrashim, Chazal and later Sages, points out that the very message of the Book of Yonah, is that the Merciful and Just G-d accepts the sincere Teshuva of all Mankind. "Adam asked Cain why he was so happy and Cain answered, 'I did Teshuva [for killing Hevel] and Hashem forgave me'. Adam cried out, 'If I would have known that one can do Teshuva, I would have been forgiven'. He stood and sang 'A psalm (92), a Song for the Sabbath Day' (Bereishit Rabbah). It is true that He punishes all wrongdoing and sin but at the same time it is also true that He has abundant love and mercy; " Hashem is white [chesed] and crimson [din]" (Shir Hakavod). So that the attribute of Justice inherent in His name Elokim, meets the attribute of Mercy inherent in His Name Hashem; "In the day that Hashem Elokim created earth and heaven" (Genesis, 2:4).

The ship on which Yonah wished to make his way to Tarshish was smitten with a storm that Hashem had sent; a storm so severe that, as the text says, 'the ship thought to break up'. Yet see how careful the gentile sailors are not to be guilty of punishing an innocent man and to avoid bloodshed. First they tried desperately to row to the shore, then each prayed to his gods, then they cast off the cargo, then when nothing availed, they cast lots to let Divine Justice determine which of them was deserving of such a punishment. They pleaded with Hashem not to consider them guilty of casting Yonah into the sea; after all,

the lot had fallen on Yonah and he himself had told them to, as he was the cause of the threatening storm. These should all be seen as spiritual preparations for what happened afterwards when the sailors saw that Hashem instead of being angry rewarded their actions by calming the sea. " And they feared the Lord exceedingly [during the storm they only feared exceedingly], they offered sacrifices to Him [in Yerushalayim] and took vows [to give tzedaka]" (Yonah 1:16). According to Chazal they converted to Judaism.

So too, the king and people of Nineveh acted as we should. They and their animals wore sackcloth and fasted. Moreover, they returned any illegally and fraudulently acquired wealth to the rightful owners. "One can fast all day on Yom Kippur, pray fervently and beat his breast; however, if he did not return the chamasa in his hands, he has done nothing".

This is the 84th 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: When many people have to make Birkat Hagomel (e.g. at times when many have traveled) the shul often has one person make the beracha on behalf of the rest. Can one person say thanks to Hashem for what he received and have it count for others?

A: The gemara's (Berachot 54b) story is the basis to answer your question. Rav Yehuda recuperated from a severe illness. Several rabbis visited him and said: "Blessed is Hashem who gave you to us and not to the earth." Rav Yehuda responded that they had exempted him of the need to thank Hashem (i.e. to recite Birkat Hagomel). The gemara asks how Rav Yehuda could have been exempted if he had not made the beracha himself and answers that he had answered, "Amen."

The conclusion one can draw from this gemara is that a person can make Birkat Hagomel for others. Indeed the Shulchan Aruch

paskens (Orach Chayim 219:5): "If one recites Hagomel for himself and intended to exempt his friend and his friend intended to be exempted, he fulfills the obligation even without answering Amen." The fact that Amen is not required should not be surprising, as the rule is that one who hears a beracha from his friend need only listen (Orach Chayim 213:2) although it is proper to also answer.

So why does the gemara require Amen in its case. The Tur (219) cites his father, the Rosh, who says that the problem with Rav Yehuda was that the person who recited the beracha was not personally obligated to make the beracha, yet it was an appropriate reaction because someone he cared about was saved. Under those circumstances, he could not be motzi Rav Yehuda, but by answering Amen, Rav Yehuda was considered to have recited the beracha himself. R. Akiva Eiger (notes to Shulchan Aruch 219:5) says that the issue was that the language of the well-wisher who praised Hashem for helping someone else did not apply sufficiently to him (who should bespeak in the first person.) unless he answered Amen. (See more about the basis of these opinions in Kehilot Ya'akov, Berachot 17).

In any case, it is clear cut in the Shulchan Aruch that one can make Birkat Hagomel on his own behalf and have it carry over to another person. One can ask whether it is better to do it as a group or individually. In principle, when one can make a beracha on behalf of a few, it is better for one to do it. However, the Mishna Berura (213:12) points out that we usually do individual berachot, perhaps out of fear that either the one saying or listening will not concentrate appropriately. Piskei Teshuvot (219:17) says that the same applies to Birkat Hagomel and that this is the accepted practice. We agree that each person usually makes his own Hagomel, but only when there are only a few who need it. If many people need it, it is a matter of TIRCHA D'TZIBURA (inveniencing the congregation) and encourages talking. Thus, it is a common and perfectly acceptable practice for one to recite the beracha after announcing that all others should listen with the intent to be included.

Piskei Teshuvot (ibid.) makes another claim, which we take issue with. He says that the one reciting should do so in the plural, saying "sheg'malanu..." (that Hashem granted us). His source for the matter discussed a case where there was a group salvation, not to a case where one makes a beracha for a personal salvation and others join in his beracha. If the Piskei Teshuvot were correct, one would have expected one of the Shulchan Aruch's commentators to point out that the beracha is different. In fact, the Shulchan Aruch's language strongly suggests not that way. He describes one who recites Birkat Hagomel "for himself and intends to exempt his friend." This clearly implies that his wording was appropriate for a personal beracha and only his intention connects him to his friend. Only in regard to the less formal response of the congregation ("Mi sheg'malcha..."), which is not discussed in this halacha of the Shulchan Aruch, does it make sense to use the plural form to include all of the people in the blessing of continued good fortune.

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] **Candle by Day**

Strong faith is the kind that does not allow itself to be troubled by the one per cent of perverse doubt which constantly lurks within us, attempting to squelch all noble efforts, all great enterprises of body, mind, and soul, attempting to conquer, in effect, the ninety-nine per cent of faith. Strong faith looks this unrealistic doubt in the eye, shouts at it, "You lie!", and crushes it underfoot.

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shruga Silverstein

[3] **CHIZUK and IDUD**

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

The verses that immediately precede the Tocheicha conclude with the words: "I the Lord am your God who brought you out from the land of the Egyptians... who broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk with your heads held high (va'oleich etkhem komemiyut)."

Is komemiyut a form of pride, and if so why does the Torah promise it as a reward? The term komemiyut may be understood as alluding to the radical change that has transpired in the history of the Jewish people in modern times with respect to their relationship to Eretz Israel. Whereas in the past people made Aliya as individuals who felt themselves as mere guests in the land, the 20th century saw the establishment of the new yishuv and the State of Israel where the attitude towards the mitzva of yishuv Eretz Yisrael was one of komemiyut, i.e. dignity, nobility and self-esteem.

Komemiyut is not pride that contradicts and contravenes the idea of Yir'at Shamayim, fear of God. A proper appraisal of God's miraculous intervention in the establishment of the State should stimulate Yir'at Shamayim; our gratitude to the Creator for this miracle, together with the realization that we can now live B'chatzrot Beit Hashem, in the courtyards of the house of God, are both profound sources of Yir'at Shamayim. We are indeed blessed that we have this unique opportunity to experience Komemiyut by actually living in Eretz Israel in the State of Israel.

Carmi Horowitz, 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] **A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit**

A rabbi once spent Shabbat with R' Chaim of Sanz, and was amazed to see that he used an exquisite gold goblet for the Kiddush. He knew that R' Chaim was not a wealthy man, and was certainly not able to afford such an expensive cup.

As they were sitting at the table, he asked R' Chaim, "Rebbe, how is it that you have such a fine goblet?"

"A rich man," R' Chaim told him, "left me the goblet in his will, provided that I make kiddush in his memory."

Some time later the same rabbi was at R' Chaim's for Shabbat, but this time he saw that the goblet was no longer there.

"Rebbe," he asked, "What happened to the beautiful goblet?"

"Well, a poor man was in serious financial trouble, and I gave it to him so that he could support himself," R' Chaim answered.

"But how could you do that?" he asked. "Didn't you promise to

make Kiddush in memory of the rich man?"

"I'm sure that the dead man would agree with what I did," said R' Chaim. After all, he wished me to make Kiddush in his memory so that the merit of the good deed would benefit his soul. I am sure that keeping a Jew alive will be of much greater benefit to his soul."

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

[5] **Parsha Points to Ponder**

for B'CHUKOTAI

1) The Torah states (26:4) that if we follow the will of G-d, He will bless us with an abundance of food. What, then, is the need for the next blessing (26:5 - according to Rashi) that we will have to eat very little to be satiated?

2) Why does the Torah continue with the curses of the TOCHACHA after stating (26:40) that the people will CONFESS THEIR SINS AND THE SINS OF THEIR FATHERS? Shouldn't this confession lead to forgiveness?

3) Why does the Torah state (26:42) AND I WILL REMEMBER THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH YAAKOV, YITZCHAK AND AVRAHAM AND THE LAND I WILL REMEMBER amidst the terrible curses of the TOCHACHA?

Last week's Parsha Points to Ponder (for B'HAR)

(1) Rashi (25:31) explains that the words BEHAR SINAI mentioned in conjunction with the law of SHMITA teaches that just as broad parameters and fine details of Shmita were given at Sinai, so, too, all of the 613 Commandments of the Torah were related at Sinai in all of their detail. Why is this concept taught specifically through the mitzva of SHMITA?

The Chasam Sofer explains that the most fitting mitzva to teach that all mitzvos were given by G-d at Sinai is Shmita since the very essence of the mitzva proves the Torah's Divine origin. How so? The Torah commands that every 7 years the people must refrain from working the land. It acknowledges that they might ask how they will survive with no food in the 7th year and promises that in the 6th year they will receive a double crop. (25:20-21) How could a human author possibly make this promise? Even more perplexing, WHY would a human being write this? The first time a 6th year came without the double crop the religion would be proven false! For that very reason no other religion mandates this type of law or offers such a promise. Only G-d could do this without fear of failure.

(2) Why aren't houses that were sold in walled cities returned to the original owner at YOVEL like all other homes and properties that were sold elsewhere (See 25:29-31)?

The Meshech Chachma answers that since walled cities were used for refuge and protection, the inhabitants had to be familiar with each other and with the hideouts within those cities. If all houses returned to their original owners during YOVEL, this would bring many strangers to the city at once thereby weakening the defense of the city and placing the Jewish people in danger.

3) The Torah concludes the laws of RIBIT (that loans must be interest free) by stating (25:38), I AM G-D WHO REDEEMED YOU FROM EGYPT. Based on this statement, the MIDRASH

teaches that a person who does not accept the laws of RIBIT shows that he denies that G-d took us out of Egypt. What is the connection between these two concepts?

The Ksav Sofer teaches that people might have some difficulty comprehending that they cannot loan their own hard earned money with interest. However, if someone would give them money as a gift with a pre-condition that they cannot loan it out with interest, they would readily accept this arrangement. The Jewish people were slaves in Egypt and had nothing. G-d gave them gold and silver and He gave them a Torah which taught them how to use this money. By extension, all money that we have ultimately comes from G-d and He tells us how to use it. Thus, one who rejects the law of RIBIT ultimately rejects that G-d redeemed us from Egypt and gave us everything we have.

Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman of Beit Shemesh ppp@israelcenter.co.il • Answers will appear in the next issue of TT

[6] G'matriya match plus...

IM B'CHUKOTAI TEILCHU V'ET MITZVOTAI TISHM'RU V'A'SITEMOTAM:

Aside from the actual opposites of this pasuk later in the sedra, there is a G'matriyaTwin that is its opposite

HISHAM'RU LACHEM PEN YIFTEH L'VAV'CHEM V'SARTEM V'A'VDTEM ELOHIM ACHEIRIM V'HISHTACHAVITEM LAHEM:

Each of these p'sukim has a g'matriya of 4183

V'ZACHARTI ET BRITI ET YAAKOV V'AF ET BRITI YITZCHAK V'AF ET BRITI AVRAHAM EZKOR V'HAARETZ EZKOR: (Vayikra 26:42)

G-d will remember the covenant with Yaakov and the one with Yitzchak and the one with Avraham...

The Medrash Rabba says that the words ET in the phrase with each of the AVOT come to include the IMAHOT as well. If so, asks the ADMOR of GUR zt"l, where is the fourth mother? He answers that the fourth one is Rachel, and the Torah has already told us of G-d's remembering her, as it says:

VAYIZKOR ELOKIM ET ROCHEL... (B'resheit 30:22)

[7] MicroUlpan

How do you say Movie Projector in Hebrew? - M'TOLNO'A

[8] Pirkei Avot

EIZEHU ASHIR HASAMEI'ACH B'CHELKO (Avot 4:1)

Who is wealthy? He who is happy (content) with his lot. This is the standard way to render this well-known statement of Ben Zoma's in the first mishna of this week's perek.

Ponder the following: Switch around two of the words. Who is HAPPY? He who is WEALTHY in his lot. He who considers himself to be rich because of what he has, not necessarily financial wealth, but health, family, friends, self-respect, a good sense of humor... he will be happy.

[9] Torah from Nature • BIRDS

Most of the MRMH columns have been about mammals. Let's take a "bird's eye view" of the class of vertebrates known as AVES. The following is from "The Amazing World of Birds [www.earthlife.net/birds]

There are close to 10,000 species of birds divided up into 23 orders... of which, 1 order - Passeriformes, the perching birds (including the true songbirds) - includes more than half of all species of birds (in 46 families). Non-passerines, i.e. the other 22 orders, are further subdivided into 98 families. Passerines are generally smaller than species of other orders. The total number of birds on the planet is very difficult to estimate... may be between 100-200 billion adult or near adult... The Red-billed Quelea of Africa has an estimated adult breeding population of 1.5 billion, reputedly making it the most abundant bird in the world. It is extremely destructive to grain crops. (As a result, an estimated 200 million of these birds are destroyed each year, having no apparent affect on their numbers)... The most widespread commonly seen wild bird in the world is probably the European House Sparrow... largest living bird is the Ostrich ... stands 2.74m (9ft) high and can weigh as much as 160kg... heaviest flying bird is the Kori Bustard of Africa... 19kg... The Royal Albatross... wingspan of 3.5m... The smallest bird in the world is the Bee Hummingbird from Cuba... 1.6g (about as much as 1/3 of a sheet of A4 paper weighs)... Most feathers = Tundra Swan 25,216. Fastest Flying = Falco peregrinus 200kmh in a steep dive... level flight, the Wandering Albatross can maintain 56kmh for 800km... Longest lived (proven claim) = Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, one lived 80 years in captivity... Keenest vision = Peregrin Falcon can see a pigeon at 8km... Keenest hearing = Barn Owls... Fastest Runner = Ostrich, males can easily run at 72kmh (that's twice as fast as the human world record holder for 100m and 3 times the world record for 1500m)...

[10] Divrei Menachem

Parshat B'chukotai contains the seeds of blessing and curse. Idyllic blessings await those who fulfill G-d's will in this world. Curses overcome those who are unloyal and reject Hashem's ordinances. The outcome is, "that you annul My Covenant" (Vayikra 26:14).

The parsha begins with the Hebrew word "Im", meaning 'If'. If you follow (lit. walk in) Hashem's decrees and observe his Mitzvot, then G-d will provide the rains in their time, and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit.

We are in fact being asked to follow Chukim that are not understood, just on the basis of our desire to serve the King. G-d responds in kind, for the tree of the field, notes Rashi, is the barren tree. In return for the "illogic" of our so-called irrational behavior, G-d in turn acts "unnaturally" and produces fruit where none should have been.

This reciprocity is the hallmark of the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. But there is more. Rashi comments that walking in Hashem's ways is more than just observing the unfathomable; it is immersing oneself in Torah study. To which the Chafetz Chaim indicates another unique quality of our relationship to G-d: It appears that even for the effort of Torah study alone, Hashem rewards us. For therein lie the seeds of blessing.

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.

More on Bi'ah Reikanit - The Sh'china

On Shabbat a couple of us were "brainstorming" and trying to understand why the chamber above Kodesh HaKodashim exceeded the Kodesh HaKodashim itself in holiness. (Note Midot 4:5, Tiferet Yisrael 47). We found it hard to believe that the Kedusha (sanctity) of a place depended on how often people entered it. There had to be another reason! Why should the Kodesh HaKodashim, that inner sanctum where the Kohein Gadol entered one day a year to beseech and hopefully obtain atonement for K'lal Yisrael had less sanctity than an upper room where maintenance men passed through. We were speculating (and ONLY speculating), is it possible that the answer depends on the "physical dynamics" of Kedusha and the Shechina itself?

We first noted that "undue familiarity" with the Aron HaBrit (the Ark of the Covenant) can have drastic consequences. After Israel's devastating defeat at the hands of the Philistines at Even-ezer, "the ark of G-d was taken" and the jubilant victors brought the holy artifact back home as a trophy of war. As a result of a series of Divine visitation, the Philistines in desperation decided to return the Aron. The Aron made its way back to Israel and was received by the people of Beit Shemesh irreverently. "And He (G-d) smote of the men of Beit Shemesh, because they had gazed (i.e. treated disrespectfully) upon the ark of the Lord... (I Sh'muel 6:19). Years later after his victories over the Philistines, David decided to bring the Aron to newly conquered Jerusalem. "And they set the ark of G-d upon a new cart (This was wrong! The Aron was supposed to be "carried on the shoulder" by Kohanim, not transported in a cart pulled by oxen. See Bamidbar 7:9) ...And when they came to the threshing-floor of Nachon, Uza put forth his hand to the ark of G-d and took hold of it; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uza; and G-d smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark... (II Sh'muel 6:3-7).

Someone then asked, "These examples indicate the great Kedusha of the Aron, but can we assume that the air space above the Kodesh HaKodashim was so holy because that is where the Shechina (the Divine Presence) hovered? Remember, G-d said to Moses, "It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I shall speak with you from on top of the cover (of the Aron) from between the two Cheruvim that are on the Ark of the Testimonial-tablets, every-thing that I shall command you to the Children of Israel" (Sh'mot 25:22). There is a discussion somewhere as to where Heaven begins and I think that they concluded that Heaven begins 10 tefachim above the ground because that was the height of the Aron." ("And they shall make an ark... and an Amah and a half the height thereof, Sh'mot 25:10. An Amah equals 6 tefachim; 1½ Amot is 9 tefachim plus the one Amah thickness of the ark cover. This does not include the height of the Cheruvim.) I replied, "If the Sh'china only begins 10 tefachim above the floor of an earthly room, the Kodesh Hakodashim, does it also have a "ceiling?" Can we really equate the Sh'china with the 'heavens'?"

It seems that the Amora R. Yosi does equate the two concepts. Basing himself on the Pasuk quoted above, R. Yosi said, "Neither did the Sh'china descend to earth, nor did Moses or Elijah ascend to Heaven as it is written, "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, and the earth has He given to the sons of

men (T'hilim 115:16). But did not the Sh'china in fact descend to earth? Is it not written, 'And the Lord came down upon Mt. Sinai' (Sh'mot 19:20) (the Sh'china only descended) 10 tefachim (above the summit of the mountain). But is it not written, 'And His feet shall stand that day on the Mt. of Olives (Zechariah 14:4)? (He will stand) 10 tefachim (above the surface of the mountain)..." (Sukka 4b,5a). R. Yosi is emphasizing the immutable difference between the domain of the Divine - Shamayim, the heavens - and the realm of the "sons of men" - Aretz, earth, the material world. And even when a man is raised to the level of prophecy as was Moses or when G-d manifests Himself in the lower spheres by revelation (e.g. at Mt. Sinai) or actively intervenes in history (e.g. the miraculous Exodus from Egypt), the gap between the two dimensions is not closed (See Hakoteiv). The Talmudic commentary Yaffei Einayim (R. Aryeh Leib Yellin of Bilsk) quotes a Yerushalmi which accentuates this point, "It is written, 'I will meet with you, and I will speak with you above the Kaporet' (when G-d spoke to Moses in the Kodesh Hakodashim in the Mishkan but did not descend lower than 10 Amot) and elsewhere it says, (describing the revelation on Mt. Sinai where G-d did actually descend to the mountain but remained 10 t'fachim above the summit) 'From the heavens did I speak to you...' Just like in the first case the revelation emanated from a Reshut Acheir, another space, another sphere, another dimension...(above the Aron) so here too, G-d spoke (to Moses as he stood on Mt. Sinai) from a Reshut Achier i.e. from Heaven, 10 Amot above the summit of Har Sinai. But what does the non-physical phenomenon like the Sh'china "look like"? Rambam has said that prophecy is accompanied by a supernal light which is injurious to the corporeal eye (Moreh Nevuchim 1/5). R. Yehoshua ben Levi told the Roman Emperor Hadrian that if he was unable to look at the sun, he certainly was unable to gaze upon the Shechina.

Before the destruction of the Bayit Rishon (the First Temple), as Israel degenerated spiritually, the Sh'china left earth by ten stages over a period of time. "R. Yehuda said, 'This we know from Tradition ...this we know from references in Scripture. It went from the ark-cover to a Chruv and from the Chruv to the threshold (of Kodesh HaKodashim) and from the threshold to the court (Chatzeir), and from the court to the to the (sacrificial) altar, and from the altar to the roof (of the Bayit) and from the roof to the wall, and from the wall to the city, and from the city to the mountain, and from the mountain to the wilderness, and from the wilderness, it ascended to its own place (i.e. in heaven)' ...R. Yochanan said, 'The Sh'china waited for Israel in the wilderness six months in the hope they would repent... (Rosh Hashanah 31a). Yeshiyahu in his famous vision actually describes part of this process! "In the year when King Uziyahu died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the Heichal. And above him stood the Serafim... and one called to another said, 'Holy, holy holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory... (Yeshiyahu 6:1-3). R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch comments, "...the throne was Ram Venisa, "high and lifted up,," The Sh'china was not "enthroned" on the Aron but rather it was "high up, the Throne ranged out above the Temple, and only the lower edges of the Throne filled the Temple! G-d's Glory was already on the point of raising itself above, away out of the terrestrial Sanctuary... and already the myriads of Holy Beings were awaiting him in the Heavens..." <to be continued>

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

Sefer Chareidim, written by R' Elazar Azkari of Tzfat, in the 16th century (really it was the 54th century), a contemporary of the ARI Z"L, deals with the Taryag mitzvot. Mitzvot are organized by positive and negative, and by parts of the person "in charge" of the mitzva. Positive mitzva dependent upon the hands. A prohibition concerning the eyes. Etc. He writes that even though Prayer is essentially a mitzva of the heart, it also heavily depends upon the mouth, since a person has to utter every word of davening with his lips, and with great attention paid to grammar and pronunciation, and with a soft voice, so that he himself will hear what he is saying. The SAMAK (Sefer Mitzvot Katan) writes that one should be careful with each word of prayer as if he were counting gold coins.

The SHLAH HaKadosh exhorts us to pronounce every word of prayer meticulously, careful not to chop off its ending or beginning, careful to properly pronounce all vowels... for if one changes even one dot, it could result in the change of meaning of a word, which can, G-d forbid, occasionally result in disrespect to G-d.

The Beit Yosef writes that there is a custom among S'faradim that after reading the Torah on Shabbat, V'HU RACHUM Y'CHAPEIR AVON... was said to atone for inadvertent mistakes in the Torah reading.

These were a few of the quotes in the introduction to EIM LAMIKRA HASHALEIM by R' Nisan Sharoni of Ashdod, the book which was the original inspiration for the TBDATR column and the mainstay of its content for these past three and a half years. I know that my davening has improved, and not just the saying of the words but the understanding and feeling of davening.



Top left is a graphic of rain falling from a cloudy sky, onto the ground, from which a plant is growing. (Very hard to see in the black and white hard copy ParshaPix, but clearly seen in the color email and website version.) To the right of that image is a watch. Together they represent G-d's promise of beneficial rain in its proper time and that the ground will yield its bounty.

Upper right is another part of the promise - that we will eat bread in abundance.

And below the oven and breads is another part of the promise, peace in the Land.

The non-mathematical statement that 5 is greater than 100 and that 100 is greater than 10,000, is yet another part of the promise for our following Torah and Mitzvot. Namely, that if our enemy were to attack us, five of us would repel 100 and 100 would chase away a myriad (10,000, that is).

Beneath that is a former TTriddle. Zodiac symbol for Taurus, the Bull, represents newborn calves, which are tithed separately from the other two kinds of kosher animals. The sign for Aries represents lambs and that of Capricorn is for goats. The newborns of goats and sheep can be combined for the purpose of MAASEIR B'HEIMA, because both kinds of animals are called

by the collective term TZON.

Speaking of tithing one's newborn animals, along the right side of the ParshaPix is a lineup of ten lambs, counted from top to bottom. The 10th one to pass under the shepherd's crook is designated as holy, hence the star-burst around it.

In the lower left is a family, with each member marked with their ERECH (value) in original shekels. 50 for a male between 20-260, 30 for a female in the same age range. 20 for a boy between 5-20 and 10 for a girl that age. The baby is marked 5?3 because we cannot tell if it is a boy or a girl. Boys from one month to five years are valued at 5 shekels and girls that age are 3 shekels. Not shown are seniors with a value of 15 and 10, male and female respectively.

125% is the total amount one pays to redeem that which carries with it an addition of chomesh. (See Sedra Summary for further details.)

The fellow lifting the barbell with ease must be very strong, as in CHAZAK, CHAZAK...

One item remains unexplained as the visual TTriddle this week.

Speaking of TTriddles, since the TTriddles page was printed, we have received quite a number of solution sets. No one got them all, but all of them were gotten. MM/Bklyn snapped out of a slump with a prize-winning solution set. YYW did a fine job, as did RHM. Two TTriddlers guessed that HBS was Harvard Business School, which would have mixed feelings, perhaps, about some of the economic rules regarding Yovel and redemption of consecrated things. Good one, fellows.

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 (EMOR) TTriddles:

- [1] HBS would have mixed feelings about part of B'har
- [2] Partial fulfillment of Va'eira's opener
- [3] When the previous afternoon is NOT like the day itself
- [4] The Shma-like pasuk makes G-d's intentions clear
- [5] possibly implies not to read Torah Tidbits during davening
- [6] Confused dispute-partner of Amora Rav Yosef
- [7] Maybe it's the 13th year
- [8] Besides Sh'mita, B'har's other Har Sinai connections
- [9] plus one element from the ParshaPix

And the envelope, please...

[1] HBS is Harriet Beecher Stowe. She wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), the most famous piece of anti-slavery literature of the 19th century. She would probably have mixed feelings about the different details of EVED IVRI and EVED K'NAANI towards the end of B'har.

[2] In Va'eira's opening p'sukim, we find the promises from G-d to take us out of Egypt... and to bring us into Eretz Yisrael and give the Land to us. In Vayikra 25:38, G-d says that He took (past tense) us out of Egypt, in order to give (but not yet, at that time) you the Land...

[3] For most days on which Tachanun is not said, we also don't say it at Mincha of the previous afternoon. The exceptions to that rule are Erev Rosh HaShana, Erev Yom Kippur, and Pesach Sheni (this past Monday).

[4] Same answer as [2] above. Different from the last pasuk in Sh'ma, in which G-d tells us that He took us out of Egypt in order to be to us, G-d, in Vayikra 25:38, He "clarifies" His intention of carrying out His full 3-pronged Plan: To take us out of Egypt, to be our G-d and that we shall be His Nation (commitments made at Sinai), and to bring us into the Land and give it to us as a Heritage.

[5] In B'har's haftara, we find the pasuk (Yirmiyahu 32:16) that says, "And I prayed to G-d, after TT..."

[6] R Yosef's main BAR P'LUGTA was RABA (b. Nachmani), who served as Rosh Yeshiva in Pumbadita for 22 years, from age 18 to 40, when he passed away. (Some say he died at 60.) Confused means scramble the letters, of RABA and we get B'HAR.

[7] This refers to Sh'mita year, which of course is the 7th year, but on a TTriddle level, if you misunderstand the pasuk which says, Six years you shall plant your fields and six years you shall tend your vineyards... Six and six makes twelve, so Sh'mita must be the 13th year.

[8] There's a straight answer to this TTriddle, and then a little TTriddler answer. At the end of the sedra, we find G-d's statement (again) that He took us out of Egypt (first commandment at Sinai), that we may not make idols or bow on an EVEN MASKIT (second commandment), and we must keep the Shabbat (fourth). These are all SINAI connections, besides Sh'mita. And here's the TTriddle answer. For Bnei Yisrael are to Me as AVADIM... (Vayikra 25:55), this is the pasuk quoted as the answer as to why an EVED IVRI (Jewish servant) who asks to remain in service "forever" (until Yovel) has his ear pierced. The ear that heard at Sinai, KI LI BNEI YISRAEL AVADIM... and went and acquired a human master... We are to be G-d's AVADIM and not AVADIM to AVADIM. This pasuk from B'har is referred to as the words we heard at Sinai.

[9] Which brings us to a new version of an old PPP (ParshaPixPuzzle). This was a straight (are any TTriddles ever truly straight?) pictogram (a.k.a. pictograph). The letter O, a picture of a dodo bird, and oven, and another dodo, smaller than the first. O DODO O VEN DODO... (Vayikra 25:49)

Also... the smaller dodo can be a male

offspring of the larger one, which makes him a BEN-DODO.

Or if he is a cousin of the other dodo, then he would be BEN-DODO anyway.

As of this writing (very early - Erev Shabbat B'har, would you believe it?), no one has submitted answers, nor was anyone expected to yet submit them. If any good solution sets come in, we'll share that news with you some other place in this issue.

This week's TTriddles:

[1] In a TTriddle-way, it represents all of Mishna & Gemara

[2] This time, the deal is to all of us. For what individual was a similarly worded deal offered?

[3] CD LaZ TU FGF

[4] Newborns: 17 calves, 17 lambs, 17 baby goats • How many animals are MAASER

B'HEIMA?

[5] plus one element for the Parsha Pix

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