

This Shabbat is the 269th day (of 383); the 39th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765 • We read/learn the SIXTH perek of Avot

וישמע את-הקול מידבר אליו מעל הכפורת... במדבר זיפט

The Seder Experience Continues

Here's an interesting accidental g'matriya discovery: Sh'mot 13:8 contains the mitzva of hagada - V'HIGADTA L'VINCHA BAYOM HAHU LEIMOR... And you shall tell your child on that day saying, because of this G-d did this for me when I left Egypt. The numeric value of the entire pasuk is 2522. This is the same as the numeric value of YOM CHAG HASHAVUOT HAZEH Z'MAN MATAN TORATEINU. This phrase is familiar to us from davening and kiddush of Shavuot. Upon first discovery, the reaction was: too bad it didn't match Pesach. But on second thought, we can make an important statement about Shavuot and its role as the continuation of the Pesach experience. We've said it many times in the pages of Torah Tidbits - Yetzi'at Mitzrayim, the Exodus, started us off as a people. It was our birth as a Nation. But G-d did not say goodbye good luck when we left Egypt, and wish us a good life. He brought us to Sinai and gave us the Torah and He brought us into Eretz Yisrael and gave us a way of life here and a spiritual focus of the Beit HaMikdash. Shavuot represents both of these major components of G-d's plans for us. That Shavuot is Zman Matan To- rateinu identifies it as the day we received the Torah. As Yom HaBikurim, we see Shavuot as also representing entry into Eretz Yisrael and the building of the Beit HaMikdash. We can say, perhaps, that Pesach is the beginning, the Omer period represents the long roller coaster of Jewish History, and Shavuot stands for the realization of our national and spiritual aspirations and destiny.

With the g'matriya above, we can say that in addition to pointing to matza and maror (and IY"H to Korban Pesach) out to our children and proclaiming "Because of these things" G-d took us out of Egypt, we can also point to the Torah, to Eretz Yisrael, and IY"H to the Beit HaMikdash, and tell our children, because of these G-d took us out of Egypt. May we soon be able to offer inter alia the Shalmei Simcha. חג שמח

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...

Molad of Sivan was TUE morning, the first opportunity for Kiddush L'vana according to Minhag Yerushalayim (3 days after the molad) would be Friday night, which is a no-go. This means that Motza'ei Shabbat is really the first op. However, there is an old tradition to say K.L. after Shavuot, which is Monday night (TUE night in Chu"l). Some shuls will say KL on Motza"Sh; others will wait for Motza'ei Chag. Those who follow the 7-days after the molad practice will have their first op for KL on Tuesday night.

On another note, ISRU CHAG Shavuot (Tuesday, 7 Sivan) is called YOM TAVO-ACH. The name originates from the very large number of Korbanot that were offered by people who came to Yerushalayim for Chag. Without a Chol HaMoed for that purpose, 7 Sivan and the rest of the week were heavy korbanot days.

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OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

regular and (earliest)
**CANDLE LIGHTING
Havdala Times**
Israel Summer Time (DST)

These are the times for Jerusalem
see last page for other cities

Friday, June 10th - Candle lighting
7:09pm • Earliest - 6:16pm

Motza"Sh, June 11th - Havdala
8:27pm • Rabbeinu Tam, 9:11pm

Sunday, June 12th - Candle lighting
7:10pm Pref. B'racha first

Motza"ei Chag, June 13th - Havdala
8:28pm Wine & hamavdil only

Ranges are THU-THU 2-9 Sivan (June 9-16)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 4:34-4:34am
Sunrise - 5:33-5:33am
Sof Z'man Sh'ma - 9:05-9:06am (8:10-8:10am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:16-10:17am (9:39-9:40am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 12:38-12:40pm
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 1:14-1:16pm
Plag Mincha - 6:15-6:17½pm
Sunset - 7:49-7:52pm (7:44-7:46½pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)

"Early Shabbat" Davening
Mincha 6:01pm (15 min. before Plag)
Shabbat afternoon shiur, 5:00pm
Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Poupko
Mincha at 6:00pm

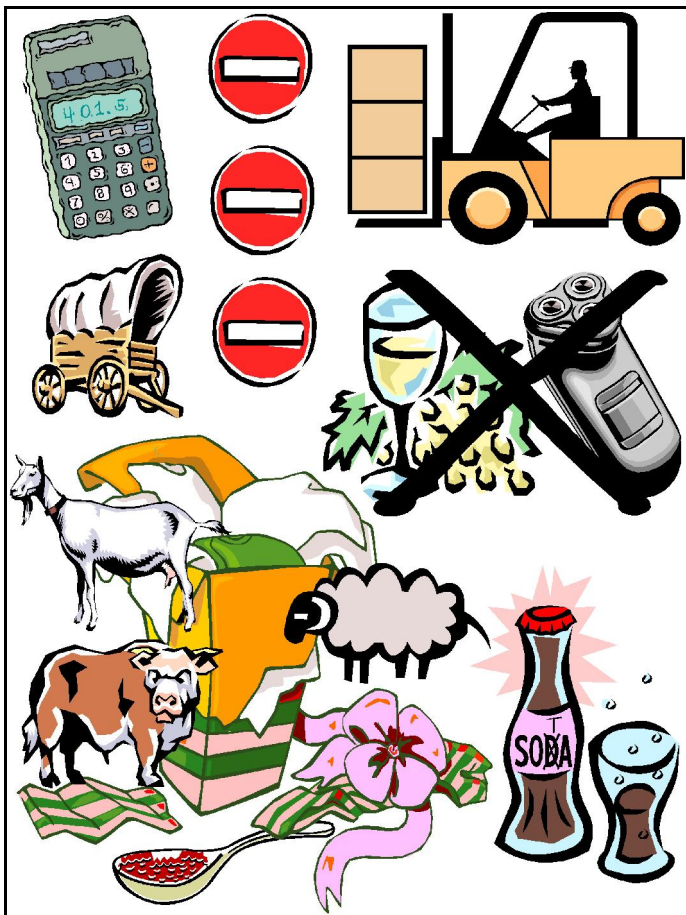
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NASO STATS

35th of 54 sedras; 2nd of 10 in Bamidbar
 Written on 311 lines in a Sefer Torah (7.4 cols)
 26 Parshiyot; 18 open, 8 closed
 only 4 sedras have more parshiyot
 176 p'sukim, 2264 words, 8632 letters
 Indisputably the longest sedra in the Torah,
 however you count length; well below average
 though in length of p'sukim

MITZVOT:

18 mitzvot; 7 positive, 11 prohibitions

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 - 17 p'sukim - 4:21-37

[P> 4:21 (8)] The second count of Levi continues with the family branch of Gershon. The first count was of males from 30 days old and up. This count is of males between 30 and 50 years of age only. That constitutes the work-force for the Mishkan.

Note: The starting age for a Levi's service is 30. In the Beit HaMikdash, there is no maximum age. In the

Mishkan, however, since a Levi's work required carrying Mishkan components in addition to singing and guarding, there was a mandatory retirement age of 50 for the strenuous tasks.

Also note that the family-branch of K'hat was counted and their tasks were enumerated at the end of Bamidbar.

[Speculation: 20 p'sukim earlier looks like it might have been the originally intended beginning of Naso. Although Naso would be even larger than it is, B'midbar would end on a "proper" note, rather than how it ends now.]

Gershon's tasks include: the three coverings of the Mishkan - the Mishkan (intricately woven, multi-colored, first layer), the Ohel (goat's hair, woven middle covering), and the Michseh (outer covering - dyed ram skin and tachash skin); the curtain at the entrance of Ohel Moed (same weave as the Mishkan); the linen curtain material that surrounded the courtyard, and the entrance curtain of the courtyard; the securing stakes and other related tools. Leviyim were to function only as instructed by the kohanim. The supervisor of family Gershon is Aharon's son Itamar.

Question: Look over the list of that which the Gershon family carried. Why isn't the Parochet on the list? Answer is at the end of B'midbar.

[S> 4:29 (9)] Family-branch Merari was also counted - males between 30 and 50 years of age. They were in charge of the wall-boards of the Mishkan, beams, posts, and foundations. Similarly, the courtyard posts, stakes, foundation sockets, and related tools. Itamar was their supervisor too. (Merari used 4 of the 6 wagons - see towards the end of the sedra - and Gershon used the other 2. K'hat used their shoulders.)

The counts of the work-forces of Levi came to: 2750 for K'hat...

Levi - Second Aliya - 12 p'sukim - 4:38-49

[S> 4:38 (12)] 2630 for Gershon, and 3,200 for Merari. The total work-force of Levi in the Mishkan was 8580. (The position of "Sheni" might vary in different editions of the Chumash.)

SDT ...LA'AVOD AVODAT AVODA VA'AVODAT MASA...
 Note the four words in a row with the same root. Rashi says the Avodat Avoda (kind of a strange phrase) refers to playing musical instruments. As far as Avodat Masa is concerned - the Gemara in Chulim comments that only when there is heavy manual labor involved, then there is an age limit for the Leviyim (as was mentioned above). And it seems that the age limit of 50 was only for the carrying. In other words, a Levi was able to continue serving in the Mishkan after 50, but only for SHIRA and SH'MIRA. (Yet the count was only for Leviyim from 30-50. Interesting, no?)

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 5:1-10

[P> 5:1 (4)] People who are ritually defiled from any of three specific types (ZARAAT, ZAV, T'MEI MEIT), are to be excluded from the camp pending purification [362,A31 5:2]. We are taught that the three have different restrictions, as follows: A "m'tzora" is excluded from the

entire camp of Israel and must remain in isolation until purification. The "zav" and "zava" are permitted in the camp of Israel, but are banned from the Levite camp (and, of course, from the area of the Mikdash). [Har HaBayit today, outside the area where the Beit HaMikdash and its courtyard stood, has the sanctity of the Levite camp.] A person who came into contact with a dead body is banned only from the "Camp of the Divine Presence" (Beit HaMikdash and its courtyard) [363,L77 5:3].

[P> 5:5 (6)] A person who sins is required to verbally confess (when repenting) [364,A73 5:6]. He/she must also make restitution (if money was involved) and pay a penalty to the victim.

SDI *Take a close look at the portion in the sedra dealing with repentance. It speaks of a man or a woman sinning and of THEIR (not his) requirement to confess and do T'shuva. It is often the case that when an individual sins, others are somewhat responsible. Perhaps a parent who did not educate the child properly. Maybe someone who made stealing (for example) too easy and/or tempting. Does the society bear some of the responsibility for a sinner's actions, because of misplaced emphasis on the wrong values? A person is primarily accountable for his actions. But the Torah's use of the plural, reminds us of our duty to develop an environment of Torah values that will be conducive for all members of society to enthusiastically follow a Torah way of life. This is part of KOL YISRAEL AREIVIM ZEH BAZEH.*

(We can suggest that the mitzva of EGLA ARUFA illustrates this point - part of the procedure required upon finding a dead body - that met with foul play, as they say - is for the elders of the town closest to the body to proclaim that they didn't kill the person. There is an implication of involvement in the unsolved homicide.

So too, the fact that the death of a Kohen Gadol releases "inadvertent killers" from their cities of refuge, implies responsibility on the part of the spiritual leader of the people for the carelessness that leads to SHOGEG deaths.)

MITZVA WATCH

According to Rambam (and others), this is the one Torah mitzva among the laws of repentance. When a person sins, and repents (not, when a person sins, he is required to repent, and..., but WHEN he repents - this is very significant), in addition to the various elements of T'shuva, including regret for the past, acceptance for the future, changing one's ways), the repentant individual must verbally confess his sins before G-d.

One can suggest that Rambam holds that T'shuva itself is not one of the 613 mitzvot, but rather a natural result of a Jew accepting of G-d's gift - the opportunity for a second chance. When a person sins and does T'shuva... The mitzva is to confess (as part of the process of T'shuva) and not to let the process be exclusively in one's heart and mind.

Other mitzva-counters do include T'shuva among the 613 mitzvot. The whole process of T'shuva should be instinctive and not even require a command — except for the verbal component of the mitzva. G-d knows our thoughts; why do I need to verbalize them? Therefore, VIDUI is a command.

Another way to explain why the mitzva of T'shuva per se is not on Rambam's list of 613 is because it spans all

mitzvot, rather than being a specific mitzva on its own. For example... The Torah forbids doing melacha on Shabbat. If one violates this prohibition, he is required to repent. Repentance is part of the mitzva prohibiting melacha on Shabbat. So too for all mitzvot, positive as well as prohibitions. Bench after a meal; if you don't, repent your non-fulfillment of this mitzva.

T'shuva can be viewed as a VAT tacked on to every other mitzva. As such, it does not get counted on its own among the Taryag mitzvot. (The specific command to verbally confess as part of the T'shuva process does get counted among the 613, because it is specific).

On the other hand, others disagree with Rambam and DO count T'shuva as one of the 613. Some include VIDUI in the mitzva of T'shuva and some count it separately.

R'vi'i - 4th Aliya - 48 p'sukim - 5:11-6:27

This long portion primarily contains the topics of the SOTA (wife suspected of infidelity and duly warned), the NAZIR (one who vows abstinence of a specific type), and Birchat Kohanim.

[P> 5:11 (21)] If a wife is unfaithful to her husband, and there is no proof of her adultery —or— if a man suspects his wife of unfaithfulness and it be unwarranted, he may formally warn her in front of witnesses not to be seen in the company of a specific man. This warning is a precondition to the whole topic of Sota. Suspicion alone, or even actual adultery, do not produce the conditions for Sota without a formal warning by the husband. Once the warning is issued, it is a mitzva (requirement) to proceed with the Sota-process [365,A223 5:12]. The husband must bring his wife to the kohen at the Beit HaMikdash. A barley-meal offering is brought. No oil [366,L104 5:15] or spice [367,L105 5:15] is used with it, since the issue at hand is so serious and unpleasant before G-d.

The kohen prepares a potion consisting of water from the KIYOR (the washing basin in the courtyard of the Beit HaMikdash), earth from the floor of the Mikdash, and the dissolved writing of this portion of the Torah. The kohen administers an oath to the woman asking her to swear to her innocence, if that be the case, or to admit her guilt. The woman is warned of serious adverse effects of the potion which she will be given to drink, if in fact she has committed adultery, and of the favorable effect of the potion if she is innocent.

The seriousness with which the Torah treats the issue of Sota is motivated by G-d's desire (so to speak) to bring harmony between husband and wife (when feasible) and the notion that doubt is extremely detrimental to a relationship. G-d, so to speak, permits (nay, requires!) His Name to be written and erased in order to advance the cause of marital harmony.

There are many details, too numerous to include here, concerning the conditions necessary for the Sota-process to go through to its end. In other words, there would be many situations when the oath and potion would not be used.

[P> 6:1 (21)] A man or a woman may make a Nazirite vow to G-d. This is usually, but not always, for a period of one month. A Nazir is forbidden to drink wine [368,L202 6:3], eat grapes [369,L203 6:3], raisins [370,L204 6:3], grape seeds [371,L205 6,4], and grape skins [372,L206 6:4]. A Nazir may not cut his hair [373,L209 6:5], but rather must let his hair grow long [374,A92 6:5]. A Nazir may not come into contact with a dead body [375, L208 6:6], nor become ritually defiled even from the bodies of a close relative [376,L207 6:7].

The Chinuch explains why the restriction of ritual impurity is greater for a Nazir than for a Kohein. Since a regular Kohen is born with restrictions of ritual purity, it would be unfair to forbid him to be in contact with the body of one of his close relatives. His grief might be too great to handle that level of prohibition. But a Nazir voluntarily accepts his restrictions, knows what he is getting himself into (as would a candidate for Kohen Gadol), and therefore he can be restricted from contact with the body of even his own mother.

If a Nazir does become defiled, he must purify himself (following 7 days of defilement), shave his hair, bring two doves and a lamb as korbanot, and begin his period of Nazir anew. When a Nazir successfully concludes the term of his vow, he brings two lambs and a ram plus various types of flour-oil offerings and wine for libation [377, A93 6:13]. Included with these korbanot is a sin offering. (This implies that it is not entirely proper for one to accept upon himself a Nazirite vow. The Torah often provides extreme measures for one who feels he must live a stricter life in order to correct certain shortcomings, but still reminds us that it is not a preferable way of life.) Part of this mitzva is for the Nazir to shave off his hair, which is put into the fire under his korban. Afterwards, he may drink wine.

[P> 6:22 (2)] Next, the Torah presents the "three-fold blessing" which forms the text of "Birkat Kohanim". (We also say these p'sukim every morning as part of Birchot HaTorah, and we "borrow" the bracha for our children on Leil Shabbat, even though we are not all Kohanim.) When the kohanim pronounce this blessing, G-d will bless them and the people of Israel. Birkat Kohanim is a mitzva upon kohanim, daily [378, A26 6:23]. Unusual as this might seem, each pasuk of Birkat Kohanim is a separate parsha (s'tuma).

[S> 6:24 (1)] The first pasuk.

[S> 6:25 (1)] The second pasuk.

[S> 6:26 (1)] The third pasuk.

[S> 6:27 (1)] And the final statement on this issue from G-d: And they (the kohanim) will place My name on Bnei Yisrael, and I will bless them (either the people or the kohanim or both).

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 41 p'sukim - 7:1-41

The reading from this point until the end of the sedra and into the beginning of the next sedra, constitutes the readings for the eight days of Chanuka. (Some start from the Birkat Kohanim portion at the end of R'vi'i.) Some communities also read "the gifts of the leaders" on the first 12 days of Nissan.

[S> 7:1 (11)] On the day the Mishkan was completed, it and its furnishings, altar and its utensils, were anointed and sanctified. The tribal leaders gave to the Mishkan six wagons and twelve oxen, two to pull each wagon. The wagons were to be distributed to the Leviyim proportional to the tasks of the different families. Gershon received two wagons and four oxen. Merari received four wagons and eight oxen (because their loads were considerably heavier and bulkier). No wagons were given to K'hat, since they were responsible for the sacred articles which had to be carried by shoulder. That the Aron was to be carried on the shoulders of Leviyim from family K'hat is a mitzva [379, A34 7:9].

Next follow 12 portions of 6 p'sukim each, which are practically identical. Each portion contains the name of a tribal leader and a description of the gifts of gold and silver vessels and animals for sacrifices that were presented on one of the twelve days of dedication of the Mishkan.

[S> 7:12 (6)] Nachshon b. Aminadav of Yehuda was the first to present his gifts. Although the gifts were identical, some of the wording is curiously different, aside, of course from the different day, tribe, and leader. For example, the words VAYHI HAMAKRIV precede BAYOM HARISHON. This is different from the other 11 days. And Nachshon b. Aminadav is described as being of the tribe of Yehuda. See other days to compare.

[P> 7:18 (6)] On the second day, the leader of Yissachar presented his gifts to the Mishkan. Here we also find a different wording. On the second day, HIKRIV Netanel b. Tzu'ar, the leader of Yissachar. Then it continues with HIKRIV ET KORBANO... Nachshon was called a MAKRIV, noun, bringer of a gift. For Netanel, the verb HIKRIV is used twice. No one else has that word. Rashi explains that Reuven wanted to go second (probably first, but Yehuda had that honor). Moshe said that it was G-d's command that the gifts be in order of camps. That is, Degesh Machane Yehuda was first, meaning Yehuda, then Yissachar, then Zevulun. Then came Reuven and his camp-partners, etc. Rashi points to the "missing" YUD in HIKRIV, allowing the word to be read HAKREIV, a command to bring his offering on the second day. Rashi further says (from Rabbi Moshe HaDarshan), that Yissachar got second honor because he was the one who suggested that the Nesi'im bring gifts.

[P> 7:24 (6)] On the third day, the leader of Zevulun offered his gifts. This wording - on the so-and-so day, NASI (leader) of the children of so-and-so (tribe), Ploni ben Ploni. His korban... now follows through the rest of the days. From day 3 to 12, the wording fits the same pattern. The differences are found only on the first two days.

[P> 7:30 (6)] Reuven's leader is on the fourth day.

[P> 7:36 (6)], and Shimon's is on the fifth day.

General comment: Although the gifts are identical, there are sources that teach that each leader brought his gifts with special kavanot and symbolisms unique to his tribe.

Note: The gifts of the fifth day conclude the fifth Aliya, CHAMISHI.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 30 p'sukim - 7:42-71

[P> 7:42 (6)] And the gifts of the sixth day begin the SHISHI Aliya. Finishing off the South Camp of Reuven and Shimon is the tribe of GAD, whose leader brings his gifts on the sixth day.

[P> 7:48 (6)] On the seventh day, the leader of Efrayim, Elyasaf b. D'u'el.

[P> 7:54 (6)] On the eighth day, Menashe's NASI, Gamliel b. P'datzur.

Observation: In the sedra of B'midbar, Efrayim is preceded by mention of Yosef. Efrayim and Menashe are separate tribes, but they are bracketed, so to speak by mention of Yosef. In this part of NASO, Yosef is not mentioned.

[P> 7:60 (6)] The camp of the children of Rachel Imeinu conclude their offerings with Binyamin on the ninth day.

[P> 7:66 (6)] The final camp - the north Dan camp, begins its gifts on the tenth day with Achiezer b. Amishadai.

Sh'vi'i - 7th Aliya - 18 p'sukim - 7:72-89

[P> 7:72 (6)] On the 11th day, the leader of Asher brought his gifts.

Notice that for days 1-10, the format is the same - BAYOM HA-whatever, RISHON, SHEINI... ASIRI. For the 11th day, it is B'YOM ASHTEI ASAR YOM. These are just observations. No reasons or explanations known, unless otherwise indicated.

[P> 7:78 (6)] Finally, the leader of Naftali presents his gifts B'YOM SHNEIM ASAR YOM...

[P> 7:84 (6)] Which brings us to the final parsha of NASO, the final six p'sukim, which summarize the gifts of the 12 leaders of the tribes.

Then the Torah presents totals and summaries of the "Dedication" gifts. ZOT CHANUKAT HAMIZBEI'ACH...

The last pasuk seems to go beyond the summary. When Moshe came to Ohel Moed to speak to HaShem, he heard the Voice speaking to him from the KAPORET (lid of the ARON), from between the two K'RUVIM (Cherubs), and that is how G-d spoke to Moshe. All aspects of getting the Mishkan to function are completed. Then the Torah tells us how G-d communicated to Moshe.

The last three p'sukim are repeated for the Maftir.

Haftara - 24 p'sukim - Sho-f'tim 13:2-25

The sedra teaches us the laws of the Nazir. The haftara tells us of a famous Nazir, namely Shimshon. The nazirship of Shimshon is not typical. His was "ordered" by G-d via a heavenly angel and was to be a Nazir from birth, for Shimshon's entire life. "Regular" nazirship is proclaimed by a vow and is for a limited time, usually one month. The nazir's outward appearance - his unshorn hair - should be the external evidence of an inner sanctity. In Shimshon's case, his nazirship was

accompanied by miraculous feats and heroic achievements against the Philistines who were Israel's major adversaries of the time.

The angel instructs Shimshon's mother (wife of Mano'ach of the tribe of Dan) as to how she must behave when she becomes pregnant. She must not drink wine nor eat anything Tamei. Can we suggest this as a demonstration of the fact that alcohol intake of a pregnant woman affects her child?

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

Lesson # 287 • Returning Stolen Objects; Purchase of Stolen Objects

Reuven, the thief, must return to Shimon, the victim of the theft, the object that he steals. The best method of restoring the object to Shimon is to hand it to him at a time and place mutually agreeable. If Reuven steals the object in an inhabited area and returns the object in the desert, Shimon has a choice: he may accept the object, but if not, he may say to Reuven, I will accept it in an inhabited area only, so that it shall not be stolen or robbed another time. Thus Reuven is still responsible for the object until he hands it back in an inhabited area. If Shimon is not aware of the theft and Reuven restores the object or the money he stole, he is no longer responsible for the object. This holds true even if Shimon does not count the money, including the returned money. If Shimon is aware of the theft and if Reuven returns the object or its monetary value indirectly as where he settles an account with Shimon, he is no longer responsible for the object. Or if he puts the money into Shimon's partially filled wallet, Reuven is no longer responsible. The reason is that Shimon will from time to time look into his wallet and will count the money including the money returned to him without necessarily being aware of the return of the money. But if Reuven returns the money to an empty wallet, he remains responsible until he notifies Shimon that he has placed the money in the empty wallet.

If Reuven steals a sheep from Shimon's flock and Shimon knows about the theft, and Reuven returns the sheep to Shimon's flock without Shimon's knowledge, and the sheep dies or is stolen, Reuven remains responsible. Once Shimon counts his sheep and finds them intact, Reuven is henceforth exempt. If Shimon is not aware of the theft, nor of the return, then even if he counts the sheep and finds them intact, Reuven continues to be responsible until he notifies Shimon, so that Shimon can guard the returned sheep.

The Prohibition Against Purchasing Stolen Objects

What is stated regarding stolen objects also applies to robbed objects. It is prohibited to purchase stolen objects from the known thief. It is a grave transgression since it encourages thievery; it is even prohibited to purchase from a known thief an object that might have been stolen. It is also prohibited to aid him in making changes to the object to help him acquire it. If one does purchase a stolen object from the thief or aids him in making alterations to the object, he transgresses the commandment not to place a stumbling block before the blind. (Vayikra 19:14) It is prohibited to derive benefit from stolen property even after the owner has abandoned hope of recovering the object. This applies to the thief himself and anyone else who realizes that the object has been stolen. However, if the thief

owned a part of the stolen object, although most of it was obtained by thievery it is permissible to benefit from it unless one knows for certain that it was stolen. Reuven robs Shimon's house or field. It is prohibited to pass through it or enter it in the summer to keep out of the sun, or in the winter to get out of the rain. Should the robber or someone else live in the house, they must pay rent to Shimon.

For the protection of commerce, the Rabbis promulgated a decree that if Levi purchases the object openly and not secretly as one would from a thief, and Levi does not know that it was stolen, subject to the conditions of the next sentence, Levi owns the object without having to make compensation to Shimon. However, if the sale took place before Shimon abandoned hope to recover the object, Shimon may exercise an option to pay Levi the money he paid Reuven and Levi must return the object to Shimon. There is an opinion that since the reason that the Rabbis promulgated the decree that the purchaser acquires the purchased object is to promote the orderly flow of commerce, that the protection is afforded only to purchasers; it is not afforded to donees from or heirs of Reuven. There is an opinion that donees of gifts from Reuven can also acquire ownership. The decree of the Rabbis to promote commerce does not apply if Reuven is a notorious thief. Levi should not have purchased the object from him and must return it to Shimon without compensation. The fact that Levi did not know that the object was stolen and purchased the object openly is no defense on his behalf. Levi should have suspected that the object was stolen. Levi can sue Reuven for the payment he made to him.

Assume that Levi purchases the object from Reuven, a notorious thief, for \$5 and sells it to Yehuda for \$7. Shimon, the owner, can obtain the object from Yehuda without compensation and Yehuda can sue Reuven for \$7. There is an opinion that Shimon can obtain the object from Yehuda only if he pays him \$7.

In cases of theft, the thief is rarely seen in the act of stealing the object. There must be some way for an owner to prove that a person who possesses his object stole it or bought it from someone who stole it. Assume that (1) Shimon is the recognized owner of an object, who does not sell, lease or lend this type of object; (2) a rumor is circulating in town that the object was stolen from him; (3) Shimon recognizes the object in the hands of another person, Levi. Shimon sues Levi to obtain the object. Levi pleads that he purchased the object from Reuven. If Shimon produces witnesses that the object belongs to Shimon, which testimony is not refuted or contradicted by the witnesses, Levi must take an oath holding a sacred object, stating how much he paid for the object. If he takes such an oath Shimon must pay that amount, and Shimon is given the object.

Assume that (1) Shimon is the recognized owner of an object that does frequently sell; (2) a rumor is circulating in town that the object was stolen from him; (3) the object is also of a type that people do not lease or lend out; (4) the object is in the hands of another person, Levi. Shimon sues Levi to obtain the object. Levi pleads that he purchased the object. Shimon's lawsuit is dismissed. There is no presumption that the object belongs to Shimon, since he may have sold it to Reuven who sold it to Levi. In addition thereto, the probability that Reuven borrowed or leased the object and stole it by selling it does not exist.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume IX chapters 355 and 356 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 halakchic 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

Milk Foods on Shavuot

A custom mentioned in many places is to eat milk foods at Shavuot, particularly in the daytime meal. In a previous column (as well as the forthcoming book) we connected this to the gemara's view that milk is made from coalesced blood. (Nida 9a.) Blood is generally a symbol of our bestial nature; the Jews at the time of the Exodus were close to this level. But after seven weeks of refining their characters, they reached a level of purification suited to holiness; this is symbolized by the transformation of blood into milk, a permissible food. Then they were ready to receive the Torah.

I recently discovered this idea in the writings of Rav Natan of Breslav. Rav Natan incorporates this specific idea into a broader perspective on the Shavuot holiday as the culmination of the period of counting Omer.

Much of Rav Natan's explanation surrounds the following verse in Shir haShirim (5:1): "I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have eaten my wine with my milk. Eat, friends, drink and be drunk, beloved ones".

"Wine and milk", points out Rav Natan, are symbols of Torah, as the commentators explain on the following verse: "O, all you who thirst go to water; and he without money, go and acquire and eat; and go and acquire, without money and without price, wine and milk" (Yishayahu 55:1).

Myrrh is a bitter spice and indeed is often found as a symbol of bitterness; whereas the word used for "my spice" (besami) generally refers to sweet-smelling herbs. The period of counting the Omer is precisely a period of gathering. Indeed, the word "atzeret" often used for the Shavuot holiday means a gathering or ingathering. The souls of all Jews are gathered one by one during this period. This includes those who began on a low spiritual level, the bitter "myrrh" souls, as well as the righteous, the sweet-smelling spice souls (as on Sukkot when the fragrance of the etrog and the myrtles recall the good deeds of the righteous).

Thus the Omer period begins with the Omer offering, which is brought from barley, which is an animal food. This symbolizes the low level of many of the people at the time they were in Egypt, who were at the level of blood or myrrh. The counting period represents a process of widening inclusion; as each day goes by, more and more souls are accounted for and gathered in to those who will be suitable to receive the Torah. By the end of the seven-week period all are included: "For we are occupied in the days of the counting every day to gather them in and to assemble them and to bring them within the numeration and accounting, so that not a single one will be missing, rejected, or lost".

When this process is completed, then "I have eaten my wine with my milk". Rav Natan explains that wine and milk have in common the idea of refinement. As we have already pointed out, milk is formed from blood that is transformed and refined. Wine also has a terrible potential for destruction; it brings out our innermost selves, including our highest but also our lowest drives. "Don't glance at the wine when it is red" (Mishlei

23:31); wine is dangerous when it is red, that is, when it is like blood. But after our characters have been refined during the S'fira period, the red blood has been transformed into white milk, and the wine of drunkenness is transformed into the wine of enhanced fellowship and insight as we are connected with others and with our inner selves.

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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 ז"ל, 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: After staying up all night on Shavout, we have someone who slept say the morning b'rachot on everyone's behalf. Why is this necessary? What happens if we cannot find anyone?

A: We must address different categories of b'rachot, with different reasons and details.

NETILAT YADAYIM and ASHER YATZAR- There are three possible reasons (see Beit Yosef, Orach Chayim 4) for washing our hands with a b'racha upon waking in the morning, before davening: 1) Our hands probably got dirty as we slept (Rosh); 2) Because in the morning we are like a new being, we set out on a process of purification and blessing Hashem (Rashba; see Mishna Berura 4:1); 3) We are affected by a RUACH RA'AH (evil spirit), which is remedied by NETILAT YADAYIM.

Reason 1 does not apply if one did not sleep and kept his hands clean. It is not fully clear whether reasons 2 & 3 apply if one did not sleep. The Rama (4:13) says that although one should wash his hands as usual, he should not make the b'racha out of doubt. By listening to the b'racha of one who slept on behalf of others, we avoid the doubt. One who did not sleep but "went to the bathroom" and in so doing touched covered parts of the body also makes a b'racha (Mishna Berura 4:30). Reason 1 certainly applies to such a person and the others are likely to apply, as the night passed by the time of ALOT HASHACHAR (break of dawn, 72 minutes before sunrise).

ASHER YATZAR can be said by anyone who recently went to

the bathroom.

BIRKOT HASHACHAR - Most of the series of b'rachot thanking Hashem for different elements of our lives were originally described as being done as one received the benefit (e.g. putting on shoes, clothes, straightening the body) (B'rachot 60b). Nevertheless, our practice is to make the b'rachot at one time and whether or not we recently received the benefit (Rama 46:8; see Yalkut Yosef regarding S'fardic practice). Therefore even one who did not sleep and did not renew these benefits can recite the b'rachot, because the praise of Hashem is true in regard to other people. The main issue is with the b'rachot of HAMA'AVIR SHEINA and ELOKAI NESHAMA, which both focus specifically on awaking from sleep and are recited, at least partially, in the first person. The Mishna Berura (46:24) rules that one should hear these b'rachot from one who slept. On the other hand, one who makes these b'rachot despite not sleeping has whom to rely upon (see Ishei Yisrael 5:(40) and Piskei Teshuvot 494:7), especially if no one who slept is available.

BIRKOT HATORAH (=BHT - before the study of Torah) - It is unclear whether the reason one is obligated to make BHT every morning is the fact that it is a new day or THAT his sleep ended the efficacy of the old b'racha. Due to this doubt, the Mishna Berura (47:28) rules that one who was up all night does not make BHT at daybreak, but hears them from someone who slept. (Yechave Da'at III, 33 argues.) However, he accepts R. Akiva Eiger's idea that if one took a reasonably long nap during the previous day, he makes b'rachot the next morning despite staying up in the night, assuming he did not make BHT since he got up. This is because he is obligated according to both approaches, as he has slept and a day has passed since his last BHT. It is better to use such a person (who are common on Shavuot) than one who put his head down for a few minutes at night. Note that one who sleeps at night makes BHT before resuming learning. Thus, he is available to recite them on others' behalf only if he came to shul when they are ready for BHT or if he did not recite them when he arose. (Note: everyone recites the Torah texts after BHT starting with Y'VARECHECA).

TZITZIT - It is unclear if we are obligated in tzitzit at night, and thus whether we need a b'racha in the morning. One should be yotzei with the b'racha on his or another's talit (Mishna Berura 8:42).

What is considered significant sleep may depend on where (bed or chair) and/or how long (opinions range from a minute to a half hour and beyond) he sleeps. The halacha may change from one of the above topics to another (see Ishei Yisrael 6:(64)).

Ed. note: In consultation with a rav (not the VR), the following is a definition of having slept. Half hour of intentional sleep - i.e. lying down in bed with intention to sleep - or - 2 hours of accidental sleep - e.g. falling asleep sitting up. Opinions many vary.

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

[2] **Candle by Day**

Before we ask ourselves what can be done under the circumstances, we must ask ourselves whether we might not be able to change them.

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

[3] **CHIZUK and IDUD**

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

**For the refuah sheleimah of
Moshe Yitzchak ben Devorah Malka**

There is a very interesting difference between Eretz Israel and Chutz la'Aretz in the Tefilat Shacharit recited every morning. While in most of Israel, Birkat Kohanim, the priestly blessing, is given daily by the kohanim themselves, in the Diaspora it is the shaliach tzibur who "requests" this blessing. Only on the holidays is this b'racha extended by the kohanim (Ashkenazi rite).

The Rema Orach Chayim 128:44 explains that throughout the year people living outside of Israel are worried about their livelihood and, therefore, not in a true state of simcha which is necessary for birkat kohanim. Only on Yom Tov at Musaf time when they are about to leave shul and rejoice in the day's celebrations are they in the proper frame of mind for the b'racha.

Aruch HaShulchan Orach Chayim 128:64 has difficulty justifying a custom that allows one of the 613 mitzvot to be skipped over most of the year. "But what can we do", he says, "for it is as if a heavenly voice issued forth stopping us from 'lifting the hands' during the year. I have a tradition that two great Torah authorities attempted to institute it on a daily basis and... they were unable and said that so it has been decreed from Heaven."

Denizens of the Diaspora, don't despair. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach quotes the Sh'lah who wrote from Eretz Yisrael to his family still in Chutz la'Aretz: "...the kohanim raise their hands every day and I keep you in mind and draw the blessing to you."

May we all merit to receive God's threefold blessing of His people.

Rabbi Eliezer Langer, Jerusalem

[4] **A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit**

R' Chaim of Sanz would always give a Torah discourse before reciting the Kiddush on Shavuos.

One Shavuos after davening, he asked his shamash to assemble some of the richest of his chasidim to hear the kiddush.

The men came and found a table laid with all types of delicacies. R' Chaim entered, greeted everyone warmly, and then sat down. The chasidim all waited patiently for the Rebbe to recite the kiddush.

Finally R' Chaim said, "When I was younger, I would give a long, complicated discourse. Now that I am old, I will be brief."

Everyone looked up in anticipation. "I need 1000 thalers for charity," said R' Chaim, "and this particular cause cannot tolerate delay. I will not recite Kiddush until you have arranged to donate that amount, each according to his ability, and I want the amount that you pledge now to be brought in tonight." With that, he rose and left the room.

Soon enough the pledges were made, and the Rebbe returned and recited Kiddush.

"That Shavuos", R' Chaim later recalled, "I gave an excellent speech."

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 NASO**

1) Why does the Torah mandate counting all those who COME to the army for the count of the Leviyim (4:23) while stating to count all who GO OUT to the army regarding the count of the entire nation in Parshas Bamidbar (1:3)?

2) Rashi (6:2) teaches that the laws regarding the Nazir and the Sotah are placed adjacent to each other to teach that ONE WHO SEES THE SOTAH IN HER DISGRACE SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM WINE LIKE A NAZIR. This is perplexing since a person who sees the disgrace of the Sotah should not need to take an additional step to keep from sinning. The sight of the Sotah alone, should be enough to make an impression on him. Why, then, is it suggested that he become like a Nazir?

3) The Torah states simply ET KORBANO - HIS SACRIFICE WAS, regarding the sacrifices of the Princes (see, for example, 7:25). Why, however, when describing the sacrifice of the Prince of Yissaschar, does it add the extra word HIKRIV ET KORBANO meaning HE BROUGHT HIS SACRIFICE WHICH WAS... (7:19)?

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

(1) Why does the census in this week's Parsha count each tribe separately while earlier censuses in Sefer Shemot count the nation as a whole?

Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky explains that the earlier counts took place before there was a Mishkan, a central location which could unify the people spiritually in the service of G-d. Thus, the individual tribes could not be counted since THAT could lead to individual tribes viewing themselves as separate units from the rest of the nation. Once there was a Mishkan, however, the tribes could be counted since the Mishkan unified the people and prevented the disunity which the census could potentially cause.

(2) Why does the Torah repeat the word COUNTING three times while summing up the totals of the census? (1:45, 46, and 47)

The Ksav Sofer answers that this captures the fact that there were three primary purposes for this census: A) For the people to pass before Moshe and Aharon to be identified by name. This is why the first COUNTING references the names of Moshe and Aharon. B) To establish who was worthy to go fight in war. This is why the second COUNTING references the ages of those who qualify for the army. C) To display the greatness of G-D, since we entered Egypt with just 70 people and now we are a nation of more than 600,000 males over the age of 20. Thus, the last COUNTING focuses on the total sum of the census.

3) Why was the tribe of Levi considerably smaller in number than all the other tribes?

Ramban teaches that the Jewish people had a large population because of the miracles G-D performed in blessing them with more children than the norm in Egypt. However, G-D only performed this miracle for those who were working as part of the slavery in Egypt. Since, according to our Sages, the tribe of Levi did not take part in that servitude, they were not the recipients of this blessing and had a more normal sized population.

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] **SDT** (short D'var Torah)

The Chozeh of Lublin said: KO T'VOR'CHU ET B'NEI YISRA'EL... Thus you (kohanim) shall bless the people - with the qualities of Aharon HaKohen, OHEV SHALOM V'RODEF SHALOM, OHEV ET HABRIYOT...

[7] **MicroUlpan**

Double micro-ulpan lesson, for both Hebrew and English. We all know the "at sign" @ from email addresses, among its various uses. In English it is officially the at sign or at symbol, also called ampersat and asperand (not to be confused with ampersand, the and symbol &). @ has many nicknames, including cyclone, whirlpool, snail, cinnamon bun, and strudel. Strudel or shtrudel has become the common Hebrew term for the at symbol. HaAcademiya has taken the strudel nickname, and considers the correct Hebrew term for @ to be K'RUCHIT.

[8] **Pirkei Avot**

Although it is a widespread practice to read/learn Pirkei Avot from the Shabbat after Pesach until the Shabbat right before Rosh HaShana, this was not the original custom.

The original plan was to learn one chapter on each Shabbat during the period of the Omer, from Pesach to Shavuot. The choice of Avot was motivated by its universal appeal. Its ethical teachings were felt to be ideal for the self-improvement program each Jew should undertake while reliving the period from the Exodus until we are worthy to stand at the foot of Sinai to receive the Torah.

There are five chapters in Avot. There are six Shabbatot between Pesach and Shavuot. This led to the "creation" of a special 6th chapter of Pirkei Avot, taken from various Mishna-like writings, on the theme of Torah learning and living. Focusing on the specialness of Torah is particularly appropriate for the Shabbat before Shavuot, the Shabbat Kallah of B'nei Yisra'el, the Shabbat before the "marriage", so to speak, of Torah to Klal Yisrael.

The 6th chapter of Pirkei Avot is known as Kinyan HaTorah, the acquisition of Torah.

The chapter is introduced by a statement: Our Sages taught in the style of the Mishna; Blessed is He, Who chose them and their teachings. G-d entrusted the transmission of Torah - the Written Word and, especially, the Oral Law - to the Sages throughout the generations. B"H He chose well - from Moshe Rabeinu throughout the Chain of Tradition to today... and tomorrow.

[9] **Torah from Nature - Mammals**

One of five classes of vertebrates, the other classes being fish, amphibians, reptiles, and birds. There are 3 subclasses of mammals: monotremes (egg-layers), marsupials (pouched animals), and placental mammals (live-bearers - most mammals are placental). There are 28 orders of mammals - one order of monotremes, 7 of marsupials, and 20 orders of placentals. Some of these 20 orders are Xenarthra (anteater, sloth, armadillo), Primates (lemur, ape, monkey, humans), Rodentia (rodent), Lagomorpha (hare rabbit, pika), Insectivora (shrew, hedgehog, mole), Chiroptera (bat), Carnivora (meat-eating), Perissodactyla (horse, zebra, tapir, rhino), Artiodactyla (all kosher mammals, plus camel, pig) Cetacea (whale, dolphin), Tubulidentata (aardvark), Hyracoidea (hyrax), Proboscidea (elephant), Sirenia (dugong, manatee). Classification often changes.

[10] **Divrei Menachem**

Among the topics found in Parshat Naso, we come across the beautiful instructions as to how the Kohanim are to bless the Children of Israel. Of note is that Kohanim are not specifically commanded to bless Bnei Yisrael. The Torah talks of how this is to be done as if it were the most natural happenstance in the world.

The Zohar explains that the designation of Aharon HaKohen as the role model of he who "loves peace and pursues peace" preempts the need for the Torah to require explicitly that the kohanim offer such a blessing. So powerful is this attribute that the Seer of Lublin suggested that when the text says, "In this manner you should bless Bnei Yisrael" (B'midbar 6:23), it means that the ordinary people should be blessed with that very same priestly peace-loving quality.

Of course, there is much more commentary on the way in which the kohanim offer up this blessing: With hands raised to indicate the importance of words backed up by actions; with bare feet to hint at the holiness of the ground upon which the blessing occurs; and with unconditional love, to demonstrate the equal opportunity for blessing, independent of one's degree of worthiness.

Birkat Kohanim is a special virtue of Eretz Yisrael and Am Yisrael. Today, it seems, more than ever, that we need to imitate the kohanim. And may we very soon be worthy of also reaping the rich contents of this timeless Bracha.

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.

Loose Ends in the Kodesh HaKodashim!

QUESTION from Kiryat Moshe - "Why was there no Amah Traksin wall separating the Heichal from Kodesh HaKodashim in Bayit Sheini? And since there was no dividing wall in Bayit Sheini, why did they continue to use the term?"

Tiferet Yisrael discusses the meaning of Amah Traksin together with one of the major differences between Bayit Rishon and Bayit Sheini (Midot 4:7; Tiferet Yisrael 62). "In the First

Temple, a wall one Amah thick divided the Heichal from Kodesh HaKodashim and they called this wall Traksin - Greek for 'something that faces inward and outward'. There are those who say that Traksin is an abbreviation for 'Trak - sin'; that is to say that it closes ('Trak') on something of Sinai; i.e. the Aron HaBrit, Ark of the Covenant, which contained the two Luchot that Moshe received on Sinai. The height of Bayit Sheini was much greater than that of the Bayit Rishon and therefore the distance between the floor and ceiling of the Heichal and Kodesh HaKodashim was also that much greater. In Bayit Rishon the distance between them was 30 Amot; and in Bayit Sheini, 40. A stable wall could not be built 40 Amot tall with a thickness of only one Amah. Therefore, they were forced to hang curtains to differentiate between the Heichal and Kodesh Hakodashim. A question arose concerning this area of one Amah where the wall used to be; did it have the holiness of the Heichal or the even greater holiness of Kodesh HaKodashim? Their solution was to hang two curtains with the 'disputed Amah' between them."The descriptive use of a Greek word, of course, would be more appropriate for the Second Temple period.

QUESTION from Ramat Beit Shemesh - "In my English Bible, Eitz Shemen is simply translated olive wood. Why do you write it with quotations?"

The Pasuk in question is, "And for the entrance of the Devir (Kodesh HaKodashim), he (King Solomon) made doors of 'olive' wood, the doorpost within the frame having five angles (pentagonal). And as for the two doors of 'olive wood', he carved upon them... Cheruvim... (I Melachim 6:31,32). Eitz Shemen is frequently translated "olive wood" (Onkelos, Rashi etc.) because Shemen - oil - is derived from this tree. But in Nechemya 8:15 the returned exiles are commanded to go to the mountains and bring branches of Alei Zayit - Zayit is the usual word for olive tree - and Alei Eitz Shemen. So they must have been two different kinds of trees! The Mishna notes that Shemen wood was one of three kinds "customarily" used to burn the Korbanot on the Mizbei'ach. On the other hand, the Mishna specifically proscribed olive wood for this use (Tamid 2:3). It is quite possible that the Eitz Shemen was some kind of conifer from which oil could be derived. And in fact the Yerushalmi(R.H. 2:5) identifies Eitz Shemen with the Dadanin, the pine tree. Surprisingly, (considering the exalted use that King Solomon made of the Eitz Shemen), Metzudat David posits that Eitz Shemen is simply an Ilan Srak, a tree which bears no fruit, a wild tree of no particular value at all. The prophet Yeshiyahu assures us that someday G-d will change the wilderness of Eretz Yisrael into forests of cedars, acacia-trees, myrtles and Atzei Shemen (41:19). King Solomon's pentagonal shaped entrance into Kodesh Hakodashim and its aureated Eitz Shemen doors played a dramatic role in the dedication of Bayit Rishon. "When Solomon built the Beit HaMikdash he wanted to bring the Aron into Kodesh HaKodashim but the gates clave to each other and would not open. Solomon uttered 24 prayers yet he was not answered... But as soon as he prayed, '...turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the good deeds of David your servant.' He was immediately answered and the doors swung open... Then all Israel knew that David's sins were forgiven" (Shabbat 30a).

QUESTION from Efrat - "You mentioned that on the floor of Kodesh HaKodashim was a large flat rock which was called the Even HaShetiya, the "Foundation Stone" upon which the Kohein Gadol placed the fire pan with incense when he entered Kodesh HaKodashim on Yom Kippur (Yoma 5:2). What was

this stone?"

It was called the "Foundation Stone" because we are told that this very stone was the first point of Creation, "from it the world was founded" (Yoma 54a). But "Shetiya" can also mean "drinking" or "satiety". Can we say that the entire world "drank from" or was "nourished" by the blessings that flowed from that Beit HaMikdash which housed the Even HaShetiya in its holiest place?

The later Midrashim, e.g. Perkei D'Rabbi Eliezer, add more "biographical details" about the Even HaShetiya. In a Midrashic expansion of Bereishit 28:10-20, Jacob took twelve stones, which stood for the future tribes of Israel, arranged them around his head, and lay down to sleep. He dreamt of angels ascending and descending a mighty ladder which reached to the vaults of heaven. When he awoke, he took the stone - the 12 stones had miraculously united into one - and set it up as a memorial pillar. He anointed the stone with oil and vowed; "If G-d will be with me, and guard me on this way that I am going; will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear; and I will return in peace to my father's house, and the Lord will be my G-d - then this stone which I have set up as a pillar shall become a House of G-d..." After Jacob departed, G-d sank the stone deep into the earth. Hundreds of years later, He raised it to the surface and set it on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. When the Mikdash was built, it became the place of Kodesh HaKodashim where the Ark of the Covenant rested.

QUESTION from Ra'anana - "In the 2nd. Temple, (on Yom Kippur) the Kohein Gadol placed the fire pan "upon" the stone, whereas in the 1st. Temple he placed it "before" the Aron. Interesting distinction. Why would the fire pan not have also been placed before the stone even in the absence of the Aron?"

We do not know how much of Kodesh HaKodashim's floor in Bayit Sheini was taken up by the Even HaShetiya. It is not likely that the Even HaShetiya was just a primeval rock jutting out in the middle of a polished floor; it probably took up most of the floor space. Where was the elevated Even HaShetiya situated in relation to the inner of the two great curtains which separated Kodesh HaKodashim from the Heichal? Would there even have been enough room to place a fire pan filled with glowing coals on the floor "before" the stone without causing a fire hazard by being in too close proximity to the inflammable curtain? We don't know. But I think there is another reason which is even more pertinent. If the Kohein Gadol placed the fire pan "before" the Even HaShetiya, it might imply that we believed that there was a certain inherent holiness attached to the stone itself. The Even HaShetiya, for all its exalted location and history, was still only a stone. It could not be compared in Kedusha to the Aron, whose function and very form were revealed to us in loving detail from On High. Therefore the fire pan was placed "upon" the Even Hashetiya and not "before" it.

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

בְּרַכָּה ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַן:

יִשְׂאֵהוּ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשְׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

Above, of course, are the three p'sukim of the B'RACHA M'SHULESHET, the three-fold bracha known as Birkat

Kohanim. They are found in this week's sedra, which is why we are taking another look at their proper pronunciation. This review is not just for kohanim - we say these p'sukim every morning as part of Birkat HaTorah, fathers (parents) bless their children with this b'racha on Leil Shabbat, and a shali'ach tzibur needs to pronounce the words accurately, so that the kohanim will be properly prompted.

First word, three syllables. Sounds like (oops, old habits...). Y'VA, RE (as in referee), and CH'CHA. The main accent is on the last syllable, i.e. the word is MILRA. There is a shorter, secondary accent on the first syllable. The second syllable is unaccented. We emphasize this, because it is a common error to say y'va-RE-ch'cha. The correct way to say the word is Y'VA-re-CH'CHA, with the stronger accent on the last syllable.

In contrast, the third word is MIL'EL, with the accent on the M'RE. The word is v'yish-M'RE-cha. So too, vi-chu-NE-ka - note that the final letter has a dot in it - ka, not cha. And so too for the twice occurring ei-LE-cha.

Aside from L'CHA, which is a 1-syllable word, all the others are MILRA, accented on their last syllable. a-do-NOI (3 times), ya-EIR, pa-NAV (twice), yi-SA, v'ya-SEIM, and sha-LOM.

Notice in all of the above that letters with a SH'VA NA do not constitute their own syllable but are rather attached to the beginning of the letter/vowel that follow them. Y'VA, V'YISH, M'RE, etc. Remember, this is G-d's b'racha for His people that we utter on His behalf, so to speak. It should be recited carefully. (And so should all davening and Torah reading.)

from page 3 PARSHA PIX

The fork lift stands for the work of the Gershon and mostly the Merari families of Leviyim. Only Kehat might have had a problem using a forklift, since they must carry the sacred vessels on their shoulders. Gershon and Merari were given wagons (also shown) to help in their tasks. A forklift would probably be acceptable for loading the wagons, and Merari would definitely have put one to the best use.

The calculator is for counting the Leviyim.

The Do Not Enter signs are for the three types of ritually defiled individuals who may not enter one camp of another - The Camp of the Sh'china, i.e. the Mishkan and its courtyard, the Camp of the Leviyim which surrounded the Mishkan area on four sides, three each for the family units of Levi and one side (east) for Moshe, Aharon and family.

The grapes, wine, and shaver are Xed out for the Nazir. Not shown: Becoming Tamei, but it too is forbidden to a Nazir.

The SOTA bottle holds the potion for the Sota to drink. The liquid is brown because of the ink and dust of the Mikdash floor that is mixed in.

The animals and golden spoon with Ketoret that are around the opened gift box are part of the gifts of the N'si'im .

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'MIDBAR) TTriddles:

- [1] The Mishkan, Camp, Aron, People
- [2] Alvin "Shipwreck" Kelly's Biblical inspiration
- [3] Estimated to be in the order of magnitude of 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000
- [4] He was not; Yaakov was
- [5] Infamous Levi who "copied" the Mishkan's major keilim
- [6] plus one element from the Parsha Pix

And the envelope, please...

[1] BINSO'A (and UVINSO'A), and when it travels, occurs 5 times in Tanach. That which is described by this word as traveling is the Mishkan, the Camp, (these three times in Bamidbar), once more in B'haalo'tcha (HaAron), and once in Yehoshua (the people).

[2] Alvin Kelly is acknowledged as the world's greatest flagpole sitters. This is a reference to the term ISH AL DIGLO, a man on his flag (B'midbar 2:2)

[3] The haftara describes a multitude of the people of Israel that is uncountable like the sand of the sea. It is true that it is an impossibly large number to count, but the number of grains of sand on all the beaches and shores in the world is somewhere around 10 to the 22nd power, i.e. a 1 with 22 zeros after it. Interestingly, there are many estimates as to the number of stars in the universe, one such estimate being the same 10 to the 22nd power. This is a gross oversimplification of the issue, because estimates of both grains of sand and stars vary widely. But what makes this interesting is that the countlessness of the Jewish people was described to Avraham Avinu in both ways. Neither image is meant to be larger than the other, but they are not interchangeable expressions. Sand is lowly, that upon which people trod. Stars are lofty, heavenly. Our status in the scheme of things throughout history has been some of each - that which is on the beach and that which one cannot reach.

[4] AVIDAN ben GID'ONI was the tribal leader of Binyamin. His name was AVIDAN, literally the father of Dan, which he was not, but Yaakov Avinu was.

[5] The major furnishings of the Mishkan - the Aron, Shulchan, Menora, Mizbei'ach - were all covered with a BEGED T'CHEILET (among other things), a garment of T'cheilet-dyed wool. Korach was the infamous Levi who dressed in a garment of T'cheilet and taunted Moshe Rabeinu with the famous question: Does a garment made totally of T'cheilet require a thread of T'cheilet (on its Tzitzit)? Meaning - does a holy nation need a holy leader.

[6] Several solvers identified garlic and the chemical formula for sucrose, table sugar. The sugar molecule is raised to the third power, or cubed, representing sugar cubes and garlic, something given out at a Pidyon HaBen. It refers to the Levi non-bechor exchange for the non-Levi B'chor, as in B'midbar.

[7] And then there is the silent TTriddle, there, but not

mentioned. Last month there was a torus representing Taurus, the Zodiac sign, the Mazal of Iyar. From this week, there is a baseball cap (sorry EB, et al) of the Minnesota Twins, representing Gemini, the Twins, mazal of Sivan.

This week's TTriddles:

- [1] Shavuot 2, N'si'im 12, Yom Kippur
- [2] the animal of the Galician future
- [3] A name in Sh'mot, B'midbar has 7 of them
- [4] 4.56% and 21.67% more
- [5] Kehati, yes; Ger'shuni, no
- [6] 830 times without a VAV; only 3 with
- [7] Double term common only to this week's readings
- [8] zav, "blessing", sota, Pesach Sheni

Shavuot

SHAVUOT falls on the same day of the week as the second day of Pesach. Calendar rule for first day of Pesach is LO B'DU (not on Monday, Wednesday, Friday); therefore rule for Shavuot (meaning the one day of Shavuot in Israel and the first day in Chu"l) is LO G'HaZ (not on Tuesday, Thursday, or Shabbat).

GREENERY

There is a long-standing custom to decorate the shul and one's home with greenery - grasses and branches (flowers are used, but they are probably a borrowing from other cultures) on Shavuot. Several reasons are given for this custom.

Immediately prior to and during Matan Torah, people and their animals were strictly forbidden to go up Har Sinai, or even to touch it. Our sources tell us that Har Sinai became miraculously adorned with vegetation, the implication being that this was in honor of its function as the venue for Matan Torah. This is why animals had to be specifically banned.

Decorating with tree branches is a reminder that the world is judged by G-d on Shavuot concerning the fruit of the tree. It is appropriate to pray on Shavuot for bountiful yields of fruit.

Moshe Rabeinu was born on 7 Adar and hidden for three months. He was placed in a waterproof basket, floated on the Nile, hidden among the reeds on the day that was to become Shavuot, 80 years later.

Bikurim baskets were adorned and decorated in various ways. Shavuot is Yom HaBikurim.

DAIRY FOODS

Shavuot is a Yom Tov. On Yom Tov we have the mitzva of Simcha. One of the traditional forms of Simchat Yom Tov is festive meals with meat and wine.

(Note for veggies and others who prefer not eating meat: Meat as Simcha is subjective - if you don't like meat, then you need not have it on Yom Tov; if you enjoy eating meat dishes, THEN it is proper to honor and enjoy Yom Tov in that way. This is when we have no Beit HaMikdash. In the time of the Beit HaMikdash, Simcha is associated with the korban called Shalmei Simcha.)

Additionally, we all know of the custom of eating dairy foods on Shavuot. Some people will have a dairy meal on Yom Tov night and a meat meal for lunch. This has a certain logic, since

the nighttime is "more Shavuot-specific and the day is more "generically Yom Tov". Other families will have meat at night and dairy during the day. Still others will make Kiddush and HaMotzi, have some dairy dish (blintzes, perhaps), then bench. Following a short break and a change in table covering, they will wash again, this time for a meat meal.

Each according to his/her custom.

There are many "reasons" for the custom of dairy dishes on Shavuot. Keep in mind that some of the reasons might have produced the custom, while others might be merely additional symbolisms after the fact. Furthermore, some reasons explain why we eat dairy, while others make sense only in the context of having BOTH dairy and meat dishes.

The pasuk in Shir HaShirim (4:11) alludes to Torah as "honey and milk under your tongue". Some mix honey and milk - yogurt or sour cream do well - to match the pasuk.)

To commemorate the first Shavuot celebrated in the Midbar when our ancestors ate only dairy dishes. This is because eating kosher meat after receiving the Torah requires much preparation... (Like a Baal T'shuva eating a lot of cottage cheese until he gets new pots and dishes and kashers his kitchen.)

Mount Sinai is called Har Gavnunim (T'hilim 68:16) and the word GAVNUNIM is similar to G'VINA (cheese).

The numeric value of the word CHALAV (milk) is 40, alluding to the forty days and nights Moshe spent on Har Sinai receiving the Torah.

Having both dairy and meat dishes as mentioned above requires strict attention to the laws of separation of milk and meat. These laws, of course, are based on the Torah's prohibition of "meat in milk" as presented by the phrase "Do not cook a goat in its mother's milk". This phrase (twice) follows, in the same pasuk, the command to bring Bikurim to the Beit HaMikdash. Shavuot, as the beginning of Bikurim-bringing season, is Yom HaBikurim. Therefore, we eat both dairy and meat dishes, with proper attention to the strictures of halacha, specifically on Shavuot.

Halachically (especially when handling food with our hands), it is improper to use the same loaf of bread for both meat and dairy meals because of the food residue that might adhere to the bread. Therefore, a dairy meal and a meat meal will require two loaves of bread, reminiscent of the Two Loaves offering of Shavuot. (In other words, this reason is primarily associated with the Two Loaves offering, the dairy aspect is secondary.)

Some suggest that having a dairy dish and a meat dish is like the "two cooked foods" of the Pesach Seder. Shavuot is not only its own Holiday; it is also the culmination of Pesach - hence, "two foods" on Shavuot as well as Pesach.

According to tradition, Moshe Rabeinu was born on the seventh of Adar and was successfully hidden by his parents for three months. It was on the future Shavuot that baby Moshe was placed in the basket on the river and found by the daughter of Par'o. We are taught that Moshe refused to nurse from an Egyptian wetnurse. This led to Miriam's suggestion that Yocheved, Moshe's mother, be hired to nurse him. He, who was to teach all of Israel the Torah, could not drink "mother's milk" from a non-Jew. We remember this with dairy dishes on the day of Matan Torah.

It might also be suggested that the day of the receiving of the Torah is like the birth of the Nation of Israel, and we have milk to symbolize the spiritual infancy of the People of Israel.

The Torah commands us to bring in the Beit HaMikdash a Mincha Chadasha LaShem B'Shavuoteichem. The initial letters of this phrase spell the word MICHALAV - "from milk". This, too, is considered one of the origins of the custom.

How about this one? Sources tell us that Bnei Yisrael refused to drink milk or eat dairy at all, fearing that milk was EIVER MIN HACHAI, limb from a living animal (which is forbidden to all people). It was receiving the Torah and its explanations that clarified the issue and taught them that milk was permitted. We celebrate this discovery of our ancestors with dairy dishes on Shavuot.

Whether it is cheese blintzes, ½% cottage, yogurt with honey, cheese- cake, or lasagna — dairy dishes on Shavuot provide us with much food for thought.

Megilat Ruth

Many communities read Megilat Ruth on Shavuot morning before Torah reading (outside of Israel the custom is to read it on the second day). Some communities read it in the afternoon. [A recent trend in Vatikin (pre-sunrise) minyanim is to read it before davening.] When read from a kosher megila (Minhag Yerushalayim), the reading is preceded by the brachot ...AL MIKRA MEGILA and SHE'HE'CHE- YANU. When it is read from a printed page, no brachot are recited.

Several varied reasons combine to make Ruth the perfect reading for Shavuot.

The text itself tells us that its story takes place at the time of the "cutting of the wheat". Shavuot is CHAG HAKATZIR.

One of the major purposes of the Book of Ruth is to show us of the lineage of David HaMelech and the Davidic line leading to Moshiach. Tradition tells us that David HaMelech died (and was born?) on Shavuot.

Perhaps most significantly, the story of Ruth is the inspiring story of Kabbalat HaTorah on an individual level, just as Shavuot is the commemoration of Kabbalat HaTorah on a national level. All of Israel were like converts at Sinai.

Ruth is the story of CHESED, acts of kindness. We are taught that the Torah begins and ends with G-d's acts of kindness - clothing Adam and Chava on the one side and burying Moshe on the other.

Akdamot Milin

On Shavuot morning, after the Kohen is called to the Torah, but before his bracha and before the reading begins, it is the Ashkenazic custom to responsively recite AKDAMUT, a 90-line poem praising G-d, His Torah and His People. Written by Rabbi Meir of Worms (one of Rashi's teachers), the poem conveys the spirit of love of G-d and Judaism even in adverse conditions. Rabbi Meir's son was killed by Crusaders and he himself died soon after a "forced debate" with the Christian clergy of his town. The poem celebrates Torah. Each line of Akdamut ends with the syllable TA, which is spelled TAV-ALEF, the last and first letters of the Alef-Bet. Some see this as a reminder of the nature of the Torah itself - as soon as we complete reading or learning the Torah, we immediately begin it again.

S'faradim do not read Akdamut, but they have the custom of reading a poem called the KETUBA, composed by Rabbi Yosef Najara, celebrating the marriage, so to speak, of G-d and Bnei Yisrael, or the Torah and Bnei Yisrael. They read the KETUBA when the Ark is opened, before the Torahs are taken out.

SHIR SHEL YOM

According to Minhag Yerushalayim, based on the opinions of the Vilna Gaon, on Yom Tov, a different Psalm replaced the "regular" Psalm of the Day in the Beit HaMikdash. On Shavuot, it is T'hilim 19. On Shavuot morning (this year), some will say only Monday's chapter. Some will say only Psalm 19, as per Minhag Yerushalayim. Some will say both. Whichever... remember: Shavuot is the yearzeit of the composer of T'hilim, David HaMelech.

Torah Reading

From the first of two Torahs on Shavuot morning, we read from Parshat Yitro, the account of Ma'amad Har Sinai and Matan Torah, from Sh'mot 19 & 20, a total of 48 p'sukim. The reading is divided among 5 Aliyot, as on all Yom Tov days (that don't fall on Shabbat - which Shavuot never does).

The reading begins with the famous pasuk: "In the third month since the Exodus, on THIS day, they (Bnei Yisrael) came to Midbar Sinai." Rashi's two comments on "THIS day" are:

[1] it was Rosh Chodesh Sivan that the People arrived at Sinai, and

[2] the Torah uses the term THIS rather than THAT to teach us that Matan Torah should not be thought of as a "once upon a time, a long time ago" experience, but rather "words of Torah should be fresh in our eyes as if we received it today."

This is such an important concept that it bears constant repeating and constant attention and effort to actualize. Especially when there are so many detractors who proclaim the Torah and its Mitzvot as antiquated, out-dated, and irrelevant, we must be enthusiastic proponents of the opposite view. EITZ CHAYIM HI... the Torah is the living, fresh, vibrant, complete source of the way of life that allows us to live in this world and to invest everything we do and are with spirituality and value.

The second pasuk is no less famous. VAYICHAN SHAM YISRAEL... Israel, as one being with one heart and a singular purpose, camped opposite the mountain. The unparalleled experience of Jewish Unity that gave standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai its everlasting significance becomes one of our special goals of Jewish Life.

Aseret HaDibrot is read in the "upper notes", TAAMEI ELYON, even according to Minhag Yerushalayim (which uses TAAMEI HATACHTON for Parshat Yitro and Va'etchanan. TAAMEI ELYON presents the text as separate commandments, rather than as p'sukim, which is the way we hear it with TAAMEI TACHTON.

Maftir is the Musaf of Shavuot from Parshat Pinchas (Bamidbar 28:26-31).

Haftara is Yechezkel's first chapter and his most vivid and esoteric vision. The level and type of prophecy attained by the the Jews at Sinai has been compared to the visions of Yechezkel.

NAMES

In addition to the various names and nicknames of Shavuot, it is significant to point out that in the main presentation of the cycle of holy days of the year, Vayikra 23, Shavuot has no name of its own, but is presented as the culmination of Pesach-Omer period.

Wordplay on the name: SHAVUOT. With a KAMATZ under the SHIN, pronounced SHAVUOT, the name means WEEKS, as in counting seven weeks from Pesach. With a SH'VA under

the SHIN, pronounced SH'VUOT, the name means OATHS, as in the mutual oaths of commitment between G-d and Israel - His promise that we become a Kingdom of Kohanim and a Holy Nation (and many other promises.), our promise to do and understand all that He commands us.

SIMCHA

Remember: Shavu'ot is many things: Dairy foods, Decorations, Learning all night, Megilat Ruth, Akdamut, Aseret HaDibrot - But it is something else too. It is Yom Tov. And that comes with an important Torah commandment: SIMCHA. A mitzva that is often neglected, Try to see to it that Simcha is on your Shavu'ot agenda.

CHAG SAMEI'ACH

Candle lighting (regular and earliest) and Havdala times - Israel Summer Time (DST)

See first page for Jerusalem times. Here are the other Torah Tidbits cities:

City	Fri. reg (early)	havdala	Shavuot candles	havdala
Gush Katif	7:26 (6:19)	8:30pm	7:27pm	8:30pm
Raanana	7:26 (6:18)	8:30pm	7:27pm	8:31pm
Beit Shemesh	7:25 (6:17)	8:28pm	7:29pm	8:29pm
Netanya	7:27 (6:18)	8:30pm	7:28pm	8:31pm
Rehovot	7:26 (6:18)	8:29pm	7:27pm	8:30pm
Petach Tikva	7:06 (6:18)	8:30pm	7:07pm	8:30pm
Modi'in area	7:25 (6:17)	8:29pm	7:26pm	8:30pm
Be'er Sheva	7:24 (6:17)	8:27pm	7:25pm	8:28pm
Gush Etzion	7:24 (6:16)	8:27pm	7:24pm	8:28pm
Ginot Shomron	7:25 (6:17)	8:27pm	7:26pm	8:30pm
Maale Adumim	7:09 (6:16)	8:27pm	7:24pm	8:28pm
Tzfat	7:21 (6:17)	8:30pm	7:27pm	8:31pm
Kiryat Arba & Hevron	7:24 (6:16)	8:27pm	7:25pm	8:28pm