

This Shabbat is the 346th day (of 383); the 50th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765 • FOURTH perek of Pirkei Avot this Shabbat

...פי עַל-כֵּל מוֹצֵא פִיָּהּ יוֹזֶה הָאָדָם: דברים ח"ג

Fiery Furnace Revisited

The Mishna in Pirkei Avot tells us that Avraham Avinu was tested with ten tests of faith, and he withstood them all. Rashi defines withstanding such tests as not challenging G-d's "traits", not becoming a skeptic (nor even entertaining sceptism). Commentaries on the Mishna differ in what is included in the list of Avraham's tests. Rambam states that all ten are specified in the text of the Torah. He then proceeds to emunerate them. Others, including Bartenura, include events that are only recorded in the Oral Tradition. Let us take as an example, the first test of faith on Bartenura's list - being thrown into the fiery furnace by Nimrod, for preaching belief in One G-d. The fact that Avraham miraculously survived that experience is not relevant to the nature of the test. Being thrown into a fiery furnace is the test; the result in Avraham's case might be viewed as a reward for his faith... or not. Avraham Avinu was by no means the only Jew thrown into a fiery furnace, literally and figuratively, throughout Jewish history. The question is, what does each person think when confronted by a fiery furnace. One will say Sh'ma Yisrael with what he thinks is his dying breath. Another will ask where is G-d or how can G-d allow such a terrible thing. Another will waver between the two options. Whether or not the person survives the experience is not necessarily indicative of his success or failure in the test. In fact, we might even say that a contradictory or puzzling result of an ordeal becomes a test of faith of its own.

What does that mean? Here's the point. With all of the prayers and chessed and justness of the residence of Gush Katif, Aza, and north Shomron yishuvim, how is it possible that the disengagement plan went through? How is it possible that G-d allows Hamas to assign credit for their "victory" to

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...

It is rare that a mazal stays with this box for five weeks in a row, but such is the fate of Snagglepuss, our stand-in for HaAri, Leo, the mazal of Menachem Av.



21 Av - 87th yearzeit of R' Chaim HaLevi Soloveitchik, also known as Reb Chaim and the Brisker Rav, was a rabbi and Talmudic scholar considered the founder of the "Brisker method", a method of highly exacting and analytical Talmudical study that focuses on precise definition and categorization of Jewish law as commanded in the Torah, with particular emphasis on the legal writings of Rambam.

His primary work was Chidushei Rebbe Chaim HaLevi, a volume of insights on Maimonides' Mishna Torah which often would suggest novel understandings of the Talmud as well...

TORAH Tidbits AUDIO
www.radiou.org and www.israelnationalradio.com
New show from Thursday

OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

The OU Israel Center and Torah Tidbits do not necessarily endorse the political or halachic positions of its editor, columnists, or advertisers, nor do we guarantee the quality of advertised services or products

regular and (earliest)
CANDLE LIGHTING HAYDALA TIMES
Israel Summer Time (DST)

Correct for TT 682 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 8:25pm	
6:35pm (5:50) Jerusalem	7:47pm
6:53pm (5:53) Gush Katif	7:50pm
6:52pm (5:52) Raanana	7:49pm
6:51pm (5:51) Beit Shemesh	7:48pm
6:52pm (5:52) Netanya	7:49pm
6:52pm (5:52) Rehovot	7:49pm
6:32pm (5:51) Petach Tikva	7:49pm
6:51pm (5:51) Modi'in	7:48pm
6:51pm (5:51) Be'er Sheva	7:48pm
6:50pm (5:50) Gush Etzion	7:47pm
6:51pm (5:51) Ginot Shomron	7:48pm
6:35pm (5:49) Maale Adumim	7:47pm
6:50pm (5:50) K4 & Hevron	7:47pm
6:45pm (5:50) Tzfat	7:48pm

Ranges are THU-THU 20-27 Men. Av (Aug25-Sept)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:18-5:23am
Sunrise - 6:10-6:14½am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 9:25-9:26am (8:38-8:40am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:30-10:30am (9:59-9:59am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 12:41-12:39pm
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 1:14-1:12pm
Plag Mincha - 5:51-5:44pm
Sunset - 7:16½-7:08pm (7:12-7:03pm)

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

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

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

Orthodox Union • National Conference of Synagogue Youth
This publication and many of the programs of the Israel Center and NCSY in Israel are assisted by grants from The Jewish Agency for Israel
Produced and printed "in house" at the Israel Center

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
"Early Shabbat" Davening
Mincha 5:35pm (15 min. before Plag)
Shabbat afternoon shiur, 5:00pm
Rabbi Eddie Abramson
Mincha at 6:00pm

suicide bombers and to Islam. The question itself is not a problem. If one finds G-d or his faith in G-d lacking - that is the problem. That is the failure of the test.

We must have total confidence in G-d that He knows what He is doing. We use our finite human intellect to figure things out as best we can, do what we believe to be the right thing, and hope and pray that G-d will help things along the way we'd like them to go. But to know too, that He sometimes says "no".

We can be disappointed in the behavior of people - how true this has been of late - but not disappointed in G-d. Our lives have their share of fiery furnaces. Let us hope that, with G-d's help - we make the right decisions, and He rewards our efforts.



EIKEV STATS

46th of the 54 sedras; 3rd of 11 in D'varim
 Written on 231.83 lines in a Sefer Torah; rank:14
 10 Parshiyot; 6 open, 4 closed
 111 p'sukim - ranks 26th (4th in D'varim)
 Same number of p'sukim as Vayikra, but larger
 1747 words - ranks 16th (3rd in D'varim)
 Same number of words as Ki Tavo; Ki Tavo has more p'sukim; Ekev has more letters
 6865 letters - ranks 14th (3rd in D'varim)
 Ekev's p'sukim are long - 3rd longest in the Torah in words and letters per pasuk. This accounts for rise in ranking in the words and letters categories.

MITZVOT:

8 of the 613 mitzvot,
 6 positive and 2 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 - 1st Aliya - 25 p'sukim - 7:12-8:10

[P> 7:12 (5)] Moshe Rabeinu reiterates the "simple" deal that HaShem offers us: If we observe the mitzvot then He will keep the promises that He made to our ancestors. He will love us, bless us, and see to it that we flourish. We will be the most blessed among all the nations.

It behooves us to consider this fact that G-d repeatedly presents us with the alternative results of our faithfulness to Him and the opposite. This is what makes the second passage of the Sh'ma (see later in this sedra) so important to our daily routine. Although there is much overlap between the first two passages, it is the second one that states "the Deal", and it is supposed to be a daily reminder and warning.

Following this, Moshe issues another of the many warnings against idolatry.

SDT In the context of the opening p'sukim of the sedra, the word EKEV means "in the wake of..." (following G-d's words).

Rashi takes the word to indicate mitzvot that people belittle and crush under their heel. With the careful observance of these mitzvot, G-d will keep His side of the deal.

Baal HaTurim presents a mini-mussar lesson based on the choice of the word EKEV. The heel represents humility, in that it always follows the toes and the rest of the foot (and body). Since it does not initiate action*, it does not run the risk of becoming arrogant. We must realize that humility is an important key in our following G-d's words. Thus, the opening words of the sedra can be saying: "If you are humble and follow G-d's commands, then..." (Note also that the heels support the entire body.)

*This does not suggest that initiative is a negative character trait. Done properly, while safeguarding against arrogance (shall we say), it is admirable and very positive.

[S> 7:17 (10)] Do not wonder how it will be possible to prevail against the many nations in the Land and do not fear them. The miracles witnessed in Egypt (and in the Midbar) will be repeated with other nations. Conquest of Eretz Yisrael will be slow so that the Land will not be overrun by wild animals.

Ponder this... Commentators ask, could not G-d Who split the sea and performed countless other miracles, prevent the problem with animals without drawing out the period of conquest. They explain that the period from Yetziat Mitzrayim until entering the Land was supernatural, filled with miracles, but it was an unnatural time. Food from heaven, miraculous well-water, clothes that we did not out-grow, shoes that did not wear out, and protection from the Clouds of Glory, all demonstrated G-d's special relationship with the People and helped develop within them a special faith in G-d, but was not to be their way of life. Just as the fetus is protected and provided for during gestation and then emerges from the womb into the less perfect but "natural" world, so too Israel is soon to emerge from its womb to face the reality of the natural, "real" world. Hence, the warning about the animals. One can say that by warning us about the length of the period of conquest, G-d is telling us that the period of open miracles is ending (not completely), but a more exciting, more alive period is to come.

No one will be able to stand before Israel. The idols of the nation shall be destroyed and we shall not desire their rich trappings. It is forbidden to derive benefit from the adornments of idolatry, even if they have not been worshiped [428,L22 7:25]. Nor may we have anything to do with idolatry, directly or even peripherally. We may not benefit from that which is consecrated to idolatry [429,L25 7:26].

[S> 8:1 (18)] All that G-d commands us in the Torah is for the purpose of living... in Eretz Yisrael.

SDI *This is an oft-repeated theme of Moshe's words to the new generation that is soon to cross the Jordan River. It emphasizes the interdependence and inseparable nature of the three fundamental events that define the Jewish People - the Exodus, Matan Torah, and entry into Eretz Yisrael.*

Moshe next asks us to remember the experiences of the years of wandering, the miracles as well as the tribulations. That was a testing period which set the stage for real life in Eretz Yisrael.

The Land is beautifully described and the Seven Species are enumerated.

This gives prominence to grain products (bread, pastry, etc.) in the realm of brachot and gives priority to wine and the five special fruits.

The Torah commands us to "bench" after meals [430,A19 8:10].

MITZVA WATCH

Chazal augmented this rule with a wide range of brachot to be recited before and after partaking of food, by which we express our appreciation and thanks to G-d for the bounty of His world. So too, the Sages required us to say brachot before mitzvot, as well as blessings of praise, request, and acknowledgment - to make us constantly aware of G-d and His role in the Creation and continuing maintenance of the world.

Based on the words of the command to say Birkat HaMazon, we are not only thanking G-d for the food, as would be expected, but also for the Land. This is reflected in the texts of Birkat HaMazon and "Al HaMichya" Since Birkat HaMazon is a mitzva which

applies in all places (not just in Israel), commentaries ponder the significance of the reference to the Land.

Ramban says that when one looks back at the oppression in Egypt and remembers the harshness of the Wilderness, and is now enjoying the bounty of the Land of Israel, there is special cause to thank G-d. Even during times of exile, the significance of the Land (and the Torah) to the life of the Jewish People must not be overlooked. To paraphrase a chassidic interpretation of the pasuk which commands us to "bench": One can eat anywhere and be satisfied physically, but to be spiritually satisfied as well - that happens only in THE natural environment of the Jew and his Torah - in Eretz Yisrael. Perhaps this is why Sefer HaChinuch speaks of the brachot for Torah-learning in the same context as Birkat HaMazon. "And you will eat and you will be satisfied..." - this refers to both physical and spiritual food - food of the body and food for the mind and soul.

The implication of Ramban's words is that only in Eretz Yisrael can one be genuinely fulfilled in the performance of mitzvot. One can keep (many) mitzvot outside of Israel, but there is something vital lacking under those circumstances.

In the Midbar, Moshe taught us to thank G-d for our sustenance - the Manna. This is the theme of the first bracha of Birkat HaMazon. When Yehoshua brought the People into Eretz Yisrael, he inspired the 2nd bracha, acknowledging that there is much more to thank G-d for - the Land, the Torah, the Covenant with HaShem. These add the spiritual dimension to the otherwise physical act of eating.

Levi - 2nd Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 8:11-9:3

Until now, the People have periodically displayed lack of faith in G-d in troubled times (hunger, thirst, fear). At this point, Moshe issues a very different kind of warning. When the People will enter the Land, successfully defeat the nations therein, and begin to benefit from the spoils of war and the bounty of the Land, the potential exists to discount G-d's role in their good fortune. Moshe warns: be careful to remember the One Who took us out of Egypt and fed us in the wilderness. Do not say: look what I accomplished with my own powers. Always remember that it is G-d who continuously keeps his promises to our ancestors.

[P> 8:19 (2)] Know well that turning from G-d towards idolatry will result in annihilation, as with other nations. [Perhaps we can infer this additional point: Don't think that the specialness of the relationship G-d had with the Avot and the special relationship He has with us allows us to turn away from G-d and embrace idolatry with impunity.]

[P> 9:1 (26)] Notwithstanding the might of the nations we are about to face, have confidence that G-d will lead us to victory.

Note that the words that Moshe uses to describe the nations that we will face in Eretz Yisrael are very similar to the words used by the Meraglim when they panicked the People with their evil report on the Land. Moshe is not glossing over the difficulties that lie ahead. He is rather instilling confidence in the People that will come from faith in G-d and His promise to fight on our behalf.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 26 p'sukim - 9:4-29

Moshe next "put things in perspective". We must not think that we deserve all that G-d is giving us, but rather we must remember the many times we angered G-d in the wilderness AND even at Sinai!

[Some mitzva-counters consider this ZACHOR to be among the 613; Rambam and the Chinuch do not. This does not, however, minimize the significance of this command. Some people have the custom of reciting a list of 6 or 10 Remembrances daily after Shacharit.]

Moshe now recounts for the People the devastating event of the Golden Calf. How glorious the events should have been when Moshe descended the Mount with the first Luchot. Moshe tells how G-d wanted to destroy the People and how he (Moshe) smashed the Luchot, interceded on behalf of the People, and returned to the mountain for an additional 40 days and 40 nights of fasting and prayer.

Aharon too was subject to G-d's anger.

Rashi explains that G-d was angry at Aharon for "going along" with the People as far as he did. The implication, is that Aharon lost his sons as a result of G-d's anger with him. Moshe's prayers on behalf of his brother were partially successful - Aharon's other two sons lived.

Inter alia, Moshe mentions other places and events where the People angered G-d.

Moshe tells the People that he smashed the Luchot when he saw the Golden Calf. He also tells them of the different "arguments" he put before HaShem to obtain His forgiveness.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 10:1-11

[P> 10:1 (11)] Moshe continues by telling about the second set of Luchot and the ARON constructed to contain them.

Rashi explains that this ARON was not the one made by Betzalel for the Mishkan. That came later. Specifically, the construction of the Mishkan and its furnishings did not take place until after Yom Kippur. Moshe came down with the second set of Luchot on Yom Kippur. Where was he to put them? This ARON was made to contain the LUCHOT until THE ARON would be built. Rashi says that this was the ARON used to accompany the people into battle - the ARON of the Mishkan did not go to war until the time of Eli HaKohen. It should not have, and as a Divine punishment, it was captured by the enemy and kept from us for many years.

He then tells of the travels of the People, the death of Aharon, and the succession of his son, Elazar. Moshe also tells of the special role given to the tribe of Levi as a result of the (improper) behavior of the rest of the People.

SDT *The juxtaposition of the breaking of the Luchot and the death of Aharon teaches us (among other things) that an irreparable, invalid Sefer Torah is to be buried next to a Talmid Chacham. (Baal HaTurim)*

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 10:12-11:9

[S> 10:12 (20)] "And now, People of Israel, what does G-d want from you? ONLY to revere Him, follow His ways, love Him, and serve Him with all your heart and soul. To fulfill all that He commands - for our own good."

Moshe tells the People that even though G-d is the Master of all, He has a special relationship with our ancestors and their descendants (us). We must not be stubborn; we must be good, for G-d is truly great and not subject to bribery.

We are required to especially love the convert [431,A207 10:19] - we know how it is to be a stranger among others.

Revere G-d [432,A4 10:20], serve Him [433,A5 10:20], cling to Him (by adhering to Torah scholars) [434,A6 10:20], and swear in His Name [435,A7 10:20] when necessary to swear.

MITZVA WATCH

Rambam counts the commandment to pray daily as Biblical, based on "and Him you shall serve" and "and to serve Him with all your heart", defining service of the heart as prayer. Ramban, on the other hand, holds that prayer is a rabbinic mitzva altogether, albeit inspired by the p'sukim in the Torah and stories of the Avot, who prayed on various occasions.

At first look, it seems problematic that there is no specific command in the Torah "Thou shalt daven" (or words to that effect). The use of the indirect form - serve Him, serve Him with all your heart, what is service of the heart? Answer: Prayer - leads to different views on exactly what is commanded here.

If you think about it, SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART is the best way to command us to daven, because it tells us clearly the high premium placed on KAVANA in respect to davening. Of course, all mitzvot should be performed with proper intention, thought, and feeling. But if one falls short in the Kavana Department, most mitzvot are still acceptable that way. With davening, kavana is the whole story, not just a component of the mitzva. This is so, specifically because the Torah did NOT command us to pray, but rather to serve G-d with all our hearts.

He is our G-d and He formed a mighty nation from a family of 70 souls. Love Him and do His mitzvot (do His mitzvot out of love for Him). Learn the lessons of Jewish history - the miracles and wonders of the Exodus, the crossing of the Sea, and the punishment of Datan and Aviram (here singled out for their arrogant, unforgivable insult to Eretz Yisrael, as opposed to Korach whom Moshe was able to forgive, sort of).

Once again, Moshe emphasizes that the purpose of mitzvot and the proper environment for Torah is Eretz Yisrael.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 12 p'sukim - 11:10-21

[S> 11:10 (3)] The Land that the People are about to enter is a land that is "accountable to G-d" in obvious (and less obvious) ways. G-d is demanding of it and of its soon-to-be inhabitants (us). The main physical distinction mentioned is Israel's reliance upon rainfall.

G-d is demanding of the Land of Israel and of the People of Israel - always, from one end of the year to the other.

[S> 11:13 (9)] This Aliya concludes with a restating of the "deal" that opened the sedra. This parsha is the second passage of Shma. If we keep the mitzvot then we will have bountiful rain and abundant yields; if not, then...

The juxtaposition of the mitzva of davening and G-d's promise of bountiful rain teaches us to include the mention of G-d as Rainmaker and the request for rain in the Amida.

T'filin, Torah learning, and Mezuzah are restated as is the correlation between mitzvot and long life in the Land. This second portion of the Shema is one of the two passages in a Mezuzah and one of the four portions in T'filin.

Sh'vi'i - 7th Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 11:22-25

[S> 11:22 (4)] Once again, the "deal" that the sedra began with is repeated at its conclusion - If we will keep all the mitzvot, motivated by a love of G-d; if we follow in his footsteps (by performing acts of kindness) and cling to Him... then we will prevail against mightier nations than ourselves. Every place in Eretz Yisrael that we walk upon, will be ours. No one will stand up against us. The sedra concludes with promises of successful conquest of the Land - if we keep our side of the deal. That's all it takes.

These 4 p'sukim are Maftir too.

Haftara - 27 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 49:14-51:3

2nd of the 7 Consolation Haftaras read between 9'Av and Rosh HaShana. G-d's message through the prophet, is that He has not forgotten Zion nor forsaken His People. It might seem that He has abandoned His People and His Land, but there will come a time when the People will return to their roots and be restored to their Land. Exile is not permanent; there was never a "divorce" between G-d and the People of Israel. G-d will help in the battles against the mighty nations that oppress His People. G-d has (will) comforted Zion; the desolated areas will flourish; joy and gladness, thanks and song will be found in Zion.

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

Lesson # 298

Rabbinic-Declared Robbery

We shall IY"H revert to the topic of Dina D'Malchuta Dina in future lessons.

There are many actions that a person may take that are not categorized as robbery according to Torah law, but since this conduct verges on robbery, the Rabbis of the Talmud prohibited these types of behavior. They became classified as Rabbinic-declared robbery.

This lesson sets forth the actions so declared and the underlying reasons for the Rabbis so acting.

The Reasons for the Rabbinic Enactments

All of these decrees were made for the welfare and peace of society, so that people will not get into quarrels with others. In the case of gamblers, the decree was made since they are busy gambling, therefore do nothing to enhance the well-being of society. None of my friends or acquaintances raise or fly pigeons. So why do I devote so much time to the topic of pigeons? First of all, the halacha does, and equally important, it shows how meticulous the halacha is so as not to take things that don't belong to us, even when actual robbery or theft is not involved.

Examples of Rabbinic-Declared Robbery

Gamblers

If individuals play with cards, dice or similar devices, and agree among themselves that the winner of the game receives a certain amount of money from the others, this is deemed Rabbinic-declared robbery. It also applies to racing animals, birds or any other similar wager. This holds true though the winner obtains the winnings with the consent of the loser.

Gambling with a Gentile does not involve robbery, but entails the prohibition of wasting time in useless pursuits, for it is not fitting for a person to spend any part of his life other than on gaining knowledge and furthering civilization. There are those who say that gambling with Gentiles is permitted only if the Jew has a gainful employment, but if he earns his livelihood through gambling, it is also prohibited.

Seizing from traps

If a person laid traps for wild animals, birds or fish and the traps have prey and someone takes them, he is liable for Rabbinic-declared robbery. If the traps have a receptacle and fish are caught therein, then it is actual robbery. As soon as the fish or animal enters the receptacle, it was acquired for the owner of the trap.

Robbing swarms of bees

Bees are ordinarily not under human control. Yet by decree of the Rabbis of the Talmud, one can acquire ownership of them. Thus if one obtains a swarm of bees by robbery and keeps it from the owner when it enters his premises, this is Rabbinic-declared robbery. Accordingly, if a swarm of bees left one person's domain and came to rest in his neighbor's domain, the owner of the swarm has the right to walk across his neighbor's field until he has recovered his swarm. If he does damage he must pay for it, but he may not cut off a branch even though he intends to pay for it.

Unowned fruit from trees

If a poor person is lopping off forgotten olives from the top of an olive tree and another poor person comes and picks them up from the ground, this is deemed Rabbinic-declared robbery. However, if the person on top of the tree after holding them in his hands throws them to the ground, the other commits robbery according to Torah law, for as soon as the person on top of the tree holds the olives in his hands, he acquired ownership of the olives.

A person with a Legal Disability Finds an Object

If a deaf-mute or mentally deficient person or minor find an object, the object would not legally belong to them under Torah law. They do not have the capacity to acquire a thing unless the seller or the employer or donor gives it to them or to some qualified person enable them to acquire the object. But in the case of found objects that have been abandoned by the owner, there is no one to aid them to acquire the object. Thus if an adult were to take the objects they found, the taker would not be robbing them since legally it did not belong to them. The Rabbis of the Talmud, to protect the peace of society decreed that objects found by these classes of people should not be taken away from them and that they may keep that which they find.

Remedies of the Victim

If one has in his possession anything obtained by what is Rabbinic declared robbery, it cannot be extracted from him by a Beth Din. However, such robber is disqualified from taking oaths in Beth Din and as acting as a witness in Beth din.

Pigeon-Related Activities

No one may fly a pigeon in an inhabited area because it may come back attracting non-owned pigeons together with owned pigeons. This is taking other people's property. It is not technically robbery, because the owner of the attracted pigeons is not really the owner unless he raises them in his home or his barn. (The attracted pigeons that he has in his dovecote feed in the fields of others or in public places and the "owner" does not usually have full control over them. However, if the pigeons return to the same dovecote every day and are fed by the owner who trains them and raises them, then if anyone takes such pigeons he is a robber according to Torah law.) If one sends out a male pigeon it may attract female pigeons from someone else's dovecote, or if he sends out female pigeons it may attract male pigeons from someone else's dovecote. All that is said about pigeons applies to any other bird or wild or domestic animal.

Similarly the Rabbis prohibited the catching of pigeons in inhabited areas because they probably belong to someone else. Traps for pigeons may not be set except at a distance of four miles (2.65 miles) from an inhabited area. However, in a region where vines are cultivated, traps may not be set even at a distance of one hundred miles, because the pigeons belong to the owners of the vines. Also a person may not set traps among dovecotes even if they are his own, unless they are a hundred miles away from any inhabited region, since other doves are likely to come to any collection of dovecotes.

A dovecote must be at least 100 feet from a town.

A person may not set up a dovecote even in his own field unless there are at least 100 feet of his own field on each side of the dovecote, so that the young birds will not cause any damage in nearby fields and eat from another's property. However, if someone buys a dovecote, although it does not meet the requirement of the last sentence, he does not have to move it

since the prior owner acquired a prescriptive right to keep it there.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume IX chapter 370 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

Plowing in the Land of Israel

The Mishna in Shabbat enumerates 39 distinct archetypical labors, or melakhot, according to a number of series. The first is the series of making bread, which begins with sowing and is followed by plowing (Shabbat 73a).

The gemara objects that in practice plowing precedes sowing; why does the Mishna reverse the order? The answer: the sage who taught this Mishna "was in the Land of Israel, where one sows and then plows". Rashi explains that the earth in the Land of Israel is unusually hard; thus, even after the initial plowing to enable the seeds to go into the earth, an additional plowing is needed to cover them up properly. The Mishna needs to tell us that even this kind of plowing falls under the rubric of the melakha of plowing.

While Rashi does not say so explicitly, it is fairly clear that without this hint in the Mishna, we would think that this second plowing would be considered an extension of the melakha of sowing, which includes any action done to help seeds sprout or plants grow. The gemara at the beginning of Moed Katan records a dispute between Raba and Rav Yosef regarding the liability of weeding and watering; Raba states that they are a kind of plowing because they incidentally soften the earth, whereas Rav Yosef considers them a kind of sowing because they are primarily intended to help the seeds grow. (See Tosafot MK 2b, d.h. ka.) But in the case of actual plowing, both agree that plowing is the more appropriate category.

Perhaps we can find an interesting hint here regarding the unique nature of cultivating the land of Israel. The land of Israel is a good land, as we say in the Grace after Meals, it is a "land of delight, good and broad".

Yet it is also a hard land, making unique demands on its inhabitants.

There is a certain measure of preparation that we assume, based on our experience in exile, is sufficient. We plow the land, preparing the earth, or the human environment, for a new kind of growth and taking root. We perceive that our preparations are sufficient and we move on to plow a new row, or build a new community. But we are not aware that the land of Israel is hard; we can't just sow and move on; we have to continue the work of plowing, of softening and preparing the environment, even after sowing takes place. Though we have every reason to think that a new planting, a new community, is completely ready to grow on its own, we need to realize that in the land of Israel we need to cultivate the natural and human environment more intensely in order to guarantee that our plants truly take root.

However, when we do take these steps then the very hardness of the earth is our ally. The hard and stubborn earth of the land of Israel holds fast to any plant which is firmly rooted in it, and the sometimes hard and stubborn Jews who live here are well accustomed to holding fast to any part of their country which is adequately prepared, and which they have been properly educated to appreciate.

This doesn't mean we need to apologize for the way we have plowed and sown in the past, as our efforts were based on the best knowledge of cultivation from our experience among the nations. But we do need to learn from our recent experience, as well as from the message of our sages, and adjust our approach to the unique character of the land and the people of Israel.

TANACH

SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE BEREISHIT STORIES by Dr. Meir Tamari

"UNTO YOUR SEED WILL I GIVE THIS LAND"

Instead of the very first revelation vouchsafed to Avraham being a spiritual one as befits the chosen of a new religion, we find two apparently materialistic promises; that of becoming a great nation and that of a special land. Indeed, it is only much later, after going down to Egypt, separating from Lot, the war against the 4 kings, and the birth of Ishmael to Hagar that Avraham received the first intimations of a special religious relationship when he is told: "And I will be their G-d". This was part of the Covenant wherein Hashem spoke to Avraham of the 400 years of galut and the redemption of his descendants. By the time that covenant was made, the designation of the Promised Land was known and its borders detailed and specific. Furthermore, only with the promise of a son to Sarah and Avraham, when Ishmael was already 13 years old, came the first religious commandment, the Brit Mila.

The promise of nation was made when Avraham and Sarah were already old, and both childless; the promise of the land that was made at the same time was vague and nameless, only "The land that I will show you". Then when Lot, his nephew and presumptive spiritual and material heir, separated from him, a revelation came negating the possibility of Eliezer, Avraham's disciple, inheriting, but specifically promising a son. That revelation, while still leaving the actual borders vague, for the first time also specifically promised, "All the land that you see I will give to you and your children for ever. Walk through the land, in the length and breadth of it, for to you I have given it" (B'reishit 12: 14-15). For as long as Lot was with him, there was no such revelation since Hashem had commanded Avraham 'Lech Lecha', go alone without Lot" (B'reishit Rabba 41:8; also Rashi). Later, after the birth of Ishmael, came Brit Bein HaBitarim, the covenant that made the borders of the Promised Land clear, defined and unequivocal. Yet there was still something missing from the nation, land and religious equation, there were no mitzvot and Sarah, wife of Avraham was still barren, so then there came the first mitzva, that of circumcision, the promise to be the G-d of this nation as well as foretelling the birth of a son to Sarah and Avraham who alone would inherit Torah, Land and Abrahamic Nation.

So these 3 elements - land, nation and faith - were intertwined right from the outset, to form something new and specific only to Judaism. All three possess an individual sanctity that was merged together and exquisitely balanced into an integral unity;

nevertheless, they continue to be holy even when they are separated. All three did not originate from the desires, actions, experiences or thoughts of human beings but rather were the workings of Divine Wisdom. The Torah, Israel's Law, was revealed externally from on High, the Nation of Priests did not evolve but was chosen - "Has G-d proved Himself, to come to take a nation unto Himself from the midst of another nation, as G-d, your G-d did before your very eyes" (D'varim 4:34), and the Holy Land was not acquired by them but rather "When the Most High directed the nations to their inheritance, He set the boundaries of the nations, for G-d's portion is His people Yaakov, His inheritance (D'varim 32:8-9)." (S. R. Hirsch).

The founder of this Holy Nation is of a spiritual caliber different from the rest of the nations. "Avraham is called HaIvri; he is on one side and the nations on the other" (B'reishit Rabba 41) [-'avar' being past or other side]. "Those who follow after righteousness, that seek the Lord, look to your father Avraham and to Sarah who bore you; for when he the only one [who would listen] I called him and blessed him" (Isaiah 51:2). "The children of Heth said to Avraham, You are a Prince of G-d in our midst" (B'reishit 23:5). "He will command his children and his household after him that they shall keep the way of G-d to do righteousness as a duty and justice" (B'reishit 18:19).

So too, this Land is spiritually different from any other in that it has a religious and a G-d-orientated soul. "The earth is called 'ereztz' because it runs after the Heavens. These in turn reject the materialism and earthiness of the earth. We know that the more intense the rejection is, the stronger is the desire of the rejected one to pursue the loved one. The power of this rejection and the equally powerful pursuit keeps the earth-heaven relationship in equilibrium. Now Eretz Yisrael is the closest point to the heavens and so its yearning is strongest" (Shem Mi Shmuel). It is, "the land which the Lord, your G-d cares for; His eyes are upon that land from the beginning of the year until the end of the year" (D'varim 11:12). "There are 10 levels of Holiness, each higher than the other, and Eretz Yisrael is the Holiest of all lands. Wherein lies its exceptional holiness? In that we bring from its produce the Omer, the Bikurim and the Two Loaves on Shavuot; these are all brought only from that land' (Mishna Keilim 1:6). Because of its heightened Kedusha, there is also a greater susceptibility to impurity and tum'ah. " You shall not take any ransom for the life of a murderer that is guilty of death so you shall not defile the Land, for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the Children of Israel" (B'midbar 35:21-34). "So that the Land does not vomit you out as it did to the nations that dwelt there before you" (Vayikra 18:27-28).

This is the 96th installment in Dr. Tamari's series on "Tanach and its messages for our times"

MISC section - contents:

- [1] **Vebbe Rebbe**
- [2] **Candle by Day**
- [3] **From Aloh Naaleh**
- [4] **A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit**
- [5] **Some Special P'sukim**
- [6] **MicroUlpan**
- [7] **Parsha Points to Ponder**
- [8] **Torah from Nature**
- [9] **From the desk of the director**

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

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

There is no question this week, just an announcement and an invitation, which we hope will interest our readers. We have been sharing "Ask the Rabbi" questions for more than five years (along with the rest of Hemdat Yamim) and have received very positive reactions from our readers. The questions we have been asked have included many varied and interesting ones. We have tried not only to give answers that instruct people what to do but also to explain the background and give perspective on the halachic process.

We have decided to take the opportunity to gather and re-edit some 250 questions and answers into a book. For one, this will make our existing literature more readily accessible. However, we would like to do more than that. We want the sefer to serve as a significant learning tool. We hope that this can be done on different levels and with different styles to broaden the opportunity for readers to gain according to their needs. Of course, in the learning process, the teacher, the student, and the subject matter all contribute to determining the style of teaching. Since our readership differs in orientation, background, and Torah experience but shares intellectual maturity, we now take the opportunity to ask your advice. How can we re-edit our Ask the Rabbi columns into book form and add to it in order to make it a better educational tool for you and your peers?

In order to give you a point of reference, we will share some of our own existing ideas. One is to help the relative beginner in the world of halachic scholarship in the following manner. We propose including a simple but significant introduction to the development of halachic literature over the centuries. This can highlight the place of the Talmud, Rishonim, Acharonim, etc. We plan to include a glossary, which highlights key terms. Footnotes in the text of the responses can alert the reader to certain noteworthy phenomena. An extensive bibliography, similar to the one found in our Hebrew series, Bemareh Habazak, can be of service to beginner and advanced learner alike.

We have another idea for the more advanced learner, which is a unique idea that modern technology affords us. In order for such a reader/learner to more fully appreciate the topics discussed, it is worthwhile to be able to study the key sources upon which the conclusions are based. This enables the learner to understand the matter better and to draw his own conclusions and compare and contrast them with ours. This writer used this system to study several of these topics with semicha students, and they found the experience very rewarding.

How do we do bring whole texts in the context of a book without making it monstrous? The answer is simple. We hope to transcribe several sources per response on an accompanying CD that will be attached. An index system will connect source sheets to a given response. These source sheets cannot only be of value to the individual learner but can be a wonderful resource for group learning. A rabbi can use it for an adult education class, downloading and photocopying for participants. A school- teacher for various ages and levels of students can

choose a topic appropriate for his forum. These are a few of our ideas. We invite your reaction to them and your own ideas, as well. You can send them to info@eretzhemdah.org

We invite your input in the following matters as well. If you recall an answer with which you had an issue but thought it would not be of value to point it out, you are now invited to do so. This could be a learned comment by those with learning experience. It could also be a report of a custom or a local ruling, to which we did not refer. (Of course, we cannot refer to every, even legitimate, opinion and custom, but we would be happy to hear your reports.) We also would like to hear examples where you feel we did not deal with an issue with the proper sensitivity, even if you have no argument with the ruling and analysis. We thank our readers in advance for their input.

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**

We must be stubborn enough to give a plan a fighting chance, but not so stubborn as to cling to it when it has clearly proved itself unworkable.

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

[3] **CHIZUK and IDUD**

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

A basic natural instinct of every human being is to strive to live as long as possible. Since the beginning of time, people have channeled much of their energies into discovering the secret formula for long life. According to Jewish tradition, living in the land of Israel is a key to longevity. The verse at the end of Parshat Eikev states (Devarim 11:21): "That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which God has promised to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth." Longevity is promised to those who live in Eretz Israel.

It is for this reason that R. Yochanan could not understand how there could be people outside the land of Israel who merited long life. He asked his students in disbelief whether it was really true that there were elderly Jews in Chutz La'Aretz. When they answered in the affirmative, he questioned how could that be since the Torah promises long life only to those who live in Eretz Israel. When R. Yochanan heard that the Jews in Chutz La'Aretz wake up early in the morning to go to shul and come home only late at night after having completed their prayers, he understood. R. Yochanan said that these Jews merit long life because they attend shul.

Why does living in Eretz Israel lead to long life? Residents of Eretz Israel who experience the Shechina every moment find it easier to maximize their spiritual potential. One who maximizes spiritual potential merits longevity. People living outside Eretz Israel who want long life must also strive to live a spiritual existence. This is much more difficult outside the land of Israel where the Divine Presence is not felt as strongly. Only by going to shul twice a day are they able to boost their spiritual existence and merit long life.

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

When R' Naftali became the rabbi of Ropshitz, the first question that was asked of him was one where he would have to rule that the matter was forbidden. He was loathe to begin with a negative ruling, so he answered as follows:

"Had the circumstances been as follows" - and here he spelled out the conditions that would be necessary - "it would have been permitted. Now that the circumstances are not such, you may draw your own conclusions as to what the halacha is."

The Chafetz Chayim would say: One who is haughty is not a sinner, but a fool.

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] **Some Special P'sukim**

The pasuk with the mitzva of Birkat HaMazon (D'varim 8:10) and the pasuk telling us to remember Jerusalem (T'hilim 137:6) have the same g'matriya (3824). Think Ps. 126 or 137 before benching.

Remember: If you are present when there is Birkat Zimun (Rabotai N'vareich), you should answer Y'HI SHEIM HASHEM... whether you are male or female, whether you have eaten or not.

Take a look at these p'sukim (D'varim 8:7-10):

The question is asked: A Land of wheat and barley... plenty of bread... lack for nothing... [A Land whose stones are iron and from whose mountains you will quarry copper.] When you eat and are satisfied, you shall bless G-d for the Land... Food (Seven Species), food (bread), food (no lack), [iron and copper], food (eat, be satisfied, Birkat HaMazon). What are iron and copper doing within the food sequence? One commentator says that the iron and copper represent the vessels and utensils for food - part of the "no lack" and the "satisfied". Got another answer? Let us know. tt@ou.org

Here is an elaboration of an answer suggest by MEY...

That sequence of p'sukim is about the Land that G-d is about to bring the people to. "For G-d is bringing you to a good land, a land of flowing streams and underground springs, flowing from valley and mountains. A land of wheat and barley... A land where you will not eat bread in poverty (different understandings of this phrase), and you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron... When you eat and are satisfied, you must therefore (Rav Aryeh Kaplan's wording in The Living Torah) bless G-d for the good land which He has given you."

The command is NOT to bless G-d for the food He has given you, even though eating is the specific experience to which the

blessing is attached. We do call it Birkat HaMazon - the blessing of the food - but it should be clear from the pasuk - and from the text of the "benching" that our blessing of G-d and our acknowledge of Him goes way beyond food.

The first bracha of Birkat HaMazon does a very good job of thanking G-d for the food which He provides for us. The second bracha - no less a part of Birkat HaMazon than the first - continues the fulfillment of the command of D'varim 8:10 by acknowledging and thanking G-d for the Land of Israel and for Torah and Mitzvot. The third bracha focuses on Jerusalem and the Beit HaMikdash.

The fourth bracha - officially a Rabbinic addition to the Torah-required three brachot - extends the scope of acknowledging and thanking G-d to just about EVERYTHING.

U-VEI-RACH-TA (and you shall bless) is not restricted to the ERETZ CHITA US-ORA pasuk (8:8) and the reference to not eating bread B'MIS-KEINUT (8:9), but for the good land with streams and springs described in 8:7 and the iron and copper of 8:9.

Furthermore, the p'sukim that follow our selection contain a variation of the now familiar phrase, but couched in a warning - PEN TOCHAL V'SAVATA... perhaps you will eat and be satisfied and build and live in good houses, and herds and flocks will proliferate, and gold and silver will increase... and this will lead to a haughtiness that will cause you to forget G-d and forget to acknowledge Him as the source of all blessing.

Food does not stand alone. The promise of a good land mentions grain and fruit and bread, but goes way beyond that. Birkat HaMazon is specifically linked to eating a satisfying meal (by Rabbinic decree, we even say it for less), but includes so much more. A good meal has a context. That context is a comfortable life, Torah and Mitzvot, and Eretz Yisrael. All of this is part of the mitzva of UVEIRACHTA.

[The invitation in the box on page 32 is still open. If you find other explanations for the inclusion of iron and copper in the "food sequence", please let us know (tt@ou.org) and we will share your find with our TTreaders.]

[6] **MicroUlpan**

Here's another useful, everyday, word for your vast store of Hebrew-English. Use it well. Speed trap - MICHMONET

The natural force of attraction between any two massive bodies, which is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. Gravity or Gravitation - K'VIDA

[7] **Parsha Points to Ponder - EIKEV**

1) Why does the Parsha only refer to MISHPATIM, laws which have reasons, when teaching that G-D will reward us for our observing His laws?

2) Why does 8:1 begin ALL THE LAW WHICH I COMMAND YOU in the singular form and end SO THAT YOU WILL LIVE? in the plural?

3) The Torah teaches (10:17) that G-d is the only Divine being and that He DOES NOT TAKE BRIBES. How could anyone have possibly thought that there is a way to bribe G-D thereby necessitating the Torah to teach us this point?

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) The Meshech Chachma answers by pointing to the fact that Moshe was speaking to the generation who lived in the desert. They were on a high level where there was no distinction in their minds between laws with reasons and laws without reasons. Thus, all laws were essentially MISHPATIM for them.

2) The Kli Yakar explains that the first part of the verse is, in fact, addressed to even one person and the last part of the verse is specifically in the plural. This teaches us that just one righteous person choosing to do the right thing has the power to provide sustenance and merit for the entire world.

3) The Ktav Sofer explains that many think they can transgress aspects of the Torah but the large sums of charity they give will save the day in their final judgment. This is the bribery which does not work in G-d's court.

Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman of Beit Shemesh ppp@israelcenter.co.il

[8] Torah from Nature - Caracal

Another mammal of Israel (we've had several in recent weeks), is found in many natural areas around the country - Lachish, north-western Negev, northern part of the Arava... resembles the Lynx in having characteristic dark tufts on its large, pointed ears... the name is pronounced MILRA, ca-ra-CAL... often referred to as the Desert Lynx, however the caracal is not closely related to the true lynx... the caracal is slimmer and less stocky, its legs are thinner and its tail longer... up to a meter long... generally yellowish brown to a darker red/brown, with the undersides of the cat, areas around the eyes and under the chin being white. The backs of its ears are black (its name is from the Turkish for "black eared")... Caracals' ears are each controlled by about 20 muscles to help these hunters better determine where prey is hiding. The tufts of fur offer an added advantage in pinpointing prey... in hunting, the caracal is mainly nocturnal, but will also use the twilight hours to search out its prey... strong and fast... prey include jerboas, sand rat, ground squirrel rock hyrax, it can also bring down a small antelope... also uses its agility and superior jumping ability to catch birds just after take-off... pigeons and guinea fowl... fasted "cats" of their size... mostly terrestrial, also excellent climber and jumper... no set breeding period ... litter is usually between 1-6 kittens after a gestation period of approx. 71 days... reach maturity at about 16-18 months...

[9] Divrei Menachem

Sometimes the words of the Torah and the Prophets need no explanation. In their clarity, they make known to us exactly what we, the Jewish people, are expected to do: "And now Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem your G-d, to go in all his ways and to love Him, and to serve Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul..." (D'varim 10:12).

And they inform us clearly that there is ultimately only one authority to whom the Jew owes allegiance. "For Hashem, your G-d, He is the G-d of the powers and the Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awesome G-d - Who does not show favor and who does not accept a bribe" (ibid 10:17).

From everything written in this week's parsha we can be sure that if we maintain the relationship of subject to King and take heed of these concepts then the nations will be driven from us. However, if we declare that, "My strength and the strength of my hand made me all this wealth," and follow a trend that puts us in league with the nations, the opposite is true.

Like recent events, this week's haftara forces us to confront these notions head on. We can but take solace from the words of the prophet: "For Hashem shall comfort Zion, He shall comfort all her ruins. He shall make her wilderness like Eden and her wasteland like a garden of Hashem. Joy and gladness shall be found there, thanksgiving and the sound of music" (Isaiah 54:11).

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Davening and Learning

Let's revisit the topic that inspired this column in the first place: the prefixed VAV that switches the tense of a verb from past to future (or command).

Let's sing the words from Parshat Eikev that are quoted in Birkat HaMazon. Here is a representation of the way it sounds, with loads of misplaced accents.

ka-a-KA-tuv v'a-CHAL-ta v'sa-VA-ta u'vei- RACH-ta...

Let's start with the first word and get it out of the way. The correct pronunciation is ka-ka-TUV. The extra -a- comes from singing and I don't know if we need get rid of those extra syllables that always come into singing the davening, benching, etc. Reader feedback on that is welcome. The singing of a MIL-RA word as MIL'EIL in this case does not change the meaning of the word, but we should (maybe) try to sing words correctly, in all cases.

But now let's look at the other three words - three verbs. All second person, singular. Each, without the VAV in front of it, would be past tense, and accented MIL'EIL (next-to- the-last syllable). a-CHAL-ta (you ate), sa-VA-ta (you were satisfied), bei-RACH-ta (you benched). The tense-flipping VAV also (usually) sends the accent to the last syllable. v'a-chal-TA, and you shall/will eat. Not v'a-CHAL-ta, like most of us sing it (and probably say it). And this time, the meaning of the word changes. v'a-CHAL-ta means "and you ate" - not what the pasuk is saying. We need to learn to accent these words correctly. As we've said in this column many times in the past, it is hard to change habits that have been reinforced over years of davening and benching, etc. But v'a-CHAL-ta is just as wrong as v'a-TAL-cha would be. Let's get into the habit of saying v'a-chal-TA -- even when we sing it! The same goes for the fourth word above. u'vei (the DAGESH drops out of the BET with the VAV prefixed to the word) rach-TA ET ha-SHEM elo-KE-cha.... And you shall (mitzva) bless G-d... Not "and you blessed", u-vei-RACH-ta.

What about the third word - v'sa-VA-ta? That one stays MIL'EIL. The accent does not shift to the last syllable when the word is at the end of a pasuk or at an ETNACHTA (strong stop, like a semi-colon). Also, if the three-letter root of the word ends with an ALEF or HEI, then the accent stays put when a tense-flipping VAV is attached. u'an-NI-ta (and you will build - root BET-NUN-HEI), stays MIL'EIL. So does v'ka-RA-ta (and you shall call his name Yitzchak, for example). ka-ka-TUV v'a-chal-TA v'sa-VA-ta, u'vei-rach- TA... It's really important to get these kind of words right. The SH'MA has many too.

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.

"He who sees the cities of Judah in their destruction must say 'Your holy cities become a wilderness' and tears his clothes on the left side and says 'Blessed be the Righteous Judge...'"

From the Mikdash Mailbag Challa in Chutz LaAretz

We received this truly WONDERFUL email from Josh Hossein of New Jersey:

I read your article... regarding the Berachot the Kohanim say on the various Mitzvot in the Beit HaMikdash and upon eating T'ruma and other gifts to the Kohanim.

I had been researching a question about separating Challa – Someone forgot to separate Challa from bread that they baked, and wanted to know if it was too late to still separate the Challa from the bread. I remembered that the Halacha outside of Israel is that we may even eat the bread before Challa is separated, and then just leave a little bit over at the end to be burnt as Challa. In Israel this is not allowed.

"As I verified that I had remembered the Halacha correctly, I stumbled across what is written in the Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 322:5. Here is my translation: 'Challa outside of Israel, since it is only a rabbinic Mitzva, is only prohibited to be eaten by a Kohein that has Tum'a (impurity) coming out of his/her body such as a Ba'al Keri, a male or female Zav/ Zava, Nida, and Yoledet (a woman after giving birth - 40 days for a boy, 80 days for a girl). But Kohanim "tainted" with other forms of Tum'a, even Tum'at Meit (a Kohein who came into contact with a corpse - the most severe form of impurity), are allowed to eat Challa. Therefore, either in Syria, or other places outside Eretz Yisrael, one may separate a single Challa, by setting aside 1/48, and this may be eaten by a minor who has not yet seen 'Keri' or a young girl who has not yet become a Nida. One does not need to take a second separation (to be burnt).'"

"And even an adult Kohein who has been to the Mikveh during the daytime, and nightfall has not yet arrived (normally the purification of the Mikveh only applies after nightfall), may eat this Challa, and a second separation of Challa does not need to be taken outside of Israel." The Rema (Rav Moshe Isserles) adds that the custom in Ashkenazic countries is that the Challa is not eaten even by a child Kohein since Challa is not eaten in Israel, and the custom is to take just one separation of Challa and burn that. The Shach (Siftei Kohen) distinguishes between all year round and during Pesach, where on Pesach apparently some do have the custom to give the Challa to a child Kohein to eat (perhaps out of a concern that burning it in the oven might cause it to become Chametz). And according to the Chochmat Adam Shaarei Tzedek 14:4 in Vilna they in fact did have child Kohanim eat the Challa on Pesach following the opinion of the Vilna Gaon. I seem to recall hearing that among the North African Jews (maybe Tunisia) their Kohanim did eat Challa. I am curious to know if there is a record of Jews in any other communities where the Challa was given to the Kohanim to eat. The Yemenite Siddur "Tiklal" still in use today lists the Beracha for a Kohein outside of Israel who is eating Challa. Accordingly, it would seem that Kohanim Sefardim in Chutz La'aretz could eat Challa after reciting the special B'racha

associated with it, and even Ashkenazim could do so on Pesach, but that would be extremely difficult to arrange. As a Kohein who follows the Sefardic Minhag this interested me a lot, since it meant that I could fulfill this Mitzva outside of Israel without much difficulty. I live in New Jersey, and after checking with my Rav (I put this in "bold" for a reason! CS.), I asked my mother-in-law to bake a bread large enough to require separation of Challa but to not burn the portion that was separated. I went to the Mikveh and that night I recited the Hamotzi and then the special B'racha ...Asher Kid'shanu Bikdushato Shel Aharon V'tzivanu Le'echol Teruma. Then I fulfilled the Mitzva by eating the Challa that my mother-in-law had separated."

Mourning in Moderation

"Our rabbis taught, 'When the Mikdash was destroyed for the second time, large numbers in Israel became ascetics, binding themselves not to eat meat or drink wine. R. Yehoshua got into conversation with them and said to them, "My sons, why do you not eat meat and drink wine?" They replied, 'Shall we eat meat which used to be brought as an offering on the altar, now that the altar is in abeyance? Shall we drink wine which used to be poured as a libation on the altar, but no longer? R. Yehoshua said to them, "If that is so, we should not eat bread either, because the meal offerings have ceased. They said, "That is so and we can manage with fruit." He said, "We should not eat fruit either because there is no longer an offering of first fruits." They said, "We can manage with other fruits." He said "We should not drink water either because there is no longer a water libation." To this they could find no answer. He said to them, "...not to mourn is impossible because the blow has fallen. To mourn overmuch is also impossible, because we do not impose on the community a hardship which the majority cannot endure..." (Baba Batra 60b).

"They quoted R. Yehoshua ben Levy, 'The Kadosh Baruch Hu called the ministering angels and said to them, 'A king of flesh of blood, when there is a death, and he mourns, what does he do? They said to Him, 'He hangs sackcloth on his entrance.' He said, 'I too shall do it.' As it is said, 'I clothe the heavens with blackness and I make sackcloth their covering (Yeshiyahu 50:3). He asked them, 'What else does a king of flesh and blood? They said, 'He extinguishes the lights,' He said 'I too shall do it.' As it is said, 'The sun and the moon are become black, and the stars withdraw their shining'" (Yoel 4:15). He asked, 'What else does a king of flesh and blood do?' They said to Him, 'He goes barefoot' He said, 'I too shall do it.' As it is said, 'The Lord, in the whirlwind and in the storm is His way, and the clouds are the dust of His feet' (Nachum 1:3). He asked them, 'What else does a king of flesh and blood do? They said, 'He rends his purple garments.' He said, 'I too shall do it.' as it is said, 'The Lord has done that what He devised, He has performed His word'" (Eicha 2:17). He asked them, "What else does a king of flesh and blood do?' They said to Him, 'He sits and is silent.'" He said, 'I too shall do it.' as it is said, 'Let him sit alone and keep silent because He has laid upon him'" (Eicha 3:28). (Eicha Rabbah)

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

from page 3 PARSHA PIX

Dvarim 8:8 describes E. Yisrael and presents us with the famous list of the Seven Species. Wheat in the upper left; barley between grenade and elephant. Grapes. Pomegranate is the hand grenade, known as a RIMON in Hebrew. The olive is in the martini glass, and there is a date (the 31st) on the calendar. No fig.

The Land is also described as being a land whose rocks are iron (Fe on the piece of rock), and from whose mountains you can extract copper. Penny on the hill.

It is in Parshat Eikev that Moshe recounts for the people the story of the Golden Calf, the breaking of the Luchot, and the second Luchot. Pair of stone tablets and Davka Judaica Clip Art's scene of the Golden Calf.

The second passage of the Sh'ma is in Eikev. It contains the mitzva of Mezuzah and a reminder of the "deal" we have with G-d. If we listen to the Mitzvot (preserve them, keep them, practice them), then we will receive rainfall in its proper time. That's the cloud with drops of rain. But if we don't observe and preserve the mitzvot, then G-d will "lock" the heavens and there will not (G-d forbid) be rainfall, and the ground will not give up its bounty, and we will be lost...

Elephant is a reminder of the many times (in this sedra and elsewhere) that the Torah commands us to remember and warns us never to forget.

Yellow jacket (wasp) is the TZIR'A that G-d says he will send against our enemies.

Loaf of bread and a key below it. The key is not on the loaf, KI LO AL HALECHEM...

Baby and tomatoes. PRI VITN'CHA (the fruit of your womb)

UF-RI ADMATECHA, the fruit of your ground.

XL is Roman numerals for 40. ARBA'IM appears 136 times in Tanach, referring to days and nights or to years. 12 times in Parshat Eikev.

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

Kol HaKavod to Big Deal - Lunz and Geula stores for their donation of toys that were distributed by us to children from Gush Katif who are staying at several Jerusalem hotels and in Kfar Pines

Last issue's (VA'ETCHANAN) TTriddles:

[1] A Litvak-Galitziana bovine misspelled reconciliation

[2] given, seen, called, begun, taught

[3] R' Yehuda HaLevi's second connection to sedra & haftara

[4] that we were slaves (5), the whole way, and ?

[5] not between 4 & 5, used sometimes when 3 is violated

[6] Yisrael 147, Yosef 110, Moshe 120

[7] plus two unexplained items in the ParshaPix

And the envelope, please...

[1] One of those TTriddles that comes from a sequence of words in the sedra that says: make us into a TTriddle. Cow in Galitziana pronunciation of Yiddish is KI (like key). KO is closer to the way a Litvak would say cow. So KI IM KO from the beginning of D'varim 7:5 indicates a bovine (cow) reconciliation, except that the IM that would mean with is spelled with an AYIN, not an ALEF. Get it?

[2] R'EI - see! Of 126 REISH-ALEF-HEIs in Tanach, 29 are in Chumash. Of those, 8 are followed by a verb in first-person singular past form. Four of them are R'EI NATATI, see, I have given... the others are RA-ITI, KARATI, HACHILOTI, and LIMADTI, the last one being in Va'etchanan.

[3] Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi is the composer of the Shabbat day Z'mira - YOM SHABBATON. His second stanza contains the line

CHAKUK BISHNEI LUCHOT AVANIM, MEIROV ONIM V'AMITZ KOACH

The first half refers to SHAMOR, preserve Shabbat, as being engraved on the Luchot, as we read in the sedra of Va'etchanan. The second half of the line is a straight quote from Yeshayahu 40:26, the last pasuk in the haftara of Nachamu.

[4] V'ZACHARTA - And you shall remember... appears 9 times in Tanach, 7 of which are in the Chumash. 5 of those 7 are either KI EVED HAYITA B'MITZRAYIM or B'ERETZ MITZRAYIM, that you (we) were slaves in Egypt. One time, the phrase is And you shall remember KOL HADERECH, the whole way, the journey from Egypt to the Jordan River... And the other one is V'ZACHARTA ET HASHEM... remember G-d... Who gave you strength...

[5] BARUCH SHEIM K'VOD MALCHUTO L'OLAM VA'ED is not between p'sukim 4 and 5 of D'varim 6 (SH'MA YISRAEL...). But it is used after a B'RACHA L'VATALA, which is a violation (opinions differ if it is actually a violation of LO TISA, or something else) of Commandment #3. Sometimes, because there are other violations of LO TISA, such as an oath in vain, which are not associated with BARUCH SHEIM...

[6] It is not enough to say that these are the ages at which each of the individuals died. What's TTriddly about that? The correct solution is ANOCHI MEIT... Yaakov (as Yisrael), Yosef, and Moshe each said those words. No one else did.

[7] One of the unexplained elements of the ParshaPix is a PEN. There are 5 PENs in the sedra and another two U'FENs. Not so remarkable, but they are associated with the remember - don't forget things that Moshe talks about. Hence, the PEN near the reminder string on the finger image in the ParshaPix.

[8] Which leaves the grasshopper. The word K'CHA- GAVIM, like grasshoppers, appears only twice in Tanach. Back in Parshat Shlach, the Meraglim told the people about the giants in the land, "we felt like grasshoppers (compared with them) and so were we in their eyes". Commentaries point critically to this

statement. The other place the word appears is Yeshayahu 40 - the haftara of Va'etchanan- Nachamu. In that context, the inhabitants of Earth are called grasshoppers in perspective of the "One Who sits above the circle of the earth".

This week's TTriddles:

[1] 2 from 13 of 11 of 5

[2] Moshe, Yirmiyahu, Shmuel, Nechemya

[3] Had it been the US instead of Canaan, then one thing that was sent in would be humorous irony

[4] G-d told Moshe to take another two, G-d set aside Levi, and one other who & what?

[5] wordwise matchup of the Land and the week

Gush Katif

POSTSCRIPT to Menachem Persoff's Reflections on a visit to Gush Katif in last week's Torah Tidbits

It is now a week later. Now we can sit shiva for Gush Katif. The last Sifrei Torah were taken out today. Today they also came to remove the contents of Avi and Shira's house from what remains of Neve Dekalim.

I am on my way to see the tent camp set up by the evacuees from Atzmona: Jewish refugees in a Jewish state. Their only sin is that they want to stay together as a community. My children are "safe" in a hotel in Upper Nazareth, that is, until they are thrown out of the hotel with the rest of the yeshiva on Erev Shabbat.

My daughter Dina recovered from her two-day ordeal in the Bet Knesset in Neve Dekalim. Nowadays, she is busy running to the Kotel to meet the evacuees, entertaining some of their children in a hotel in Yerushalayim, or visiting one of her summer campers from Netzarim (who lost 4 family members by terror).

Now the recriminations, now the soul-searching, now the wander at our youth, now the determination to rebuild shattered dreams. Now the resolve to do a Tikkun, now the time to pray, now the time to reach out, now the time to ask questions. Now is the time to pick up the pieces. -- M.P.

FEEDBACK on FEEDBACK

Re Howie Kahn's letter (last week's TT) regarding on my (second) article from Gush Katif, criticizing two statements... I feel obliged to respond.

Mr. Kahn first challenges my reference to a "wave of looting and burglary," during the standoff in Kefar Maimon, because the government siphoned so many forces away from the major cities that it knowingly left them with insufficient police to maintain law and order. In fact, numerous news broadcasts and newspapers corroborated what I stated. Channel 1 ("Mabbat") even showed televised footage from various business

establishments, whose closed-circuit cameras captured thefts in progress. Unfortunately, as the newscasters noted, despite promptly alerting the police to the crimes as they were taking place, there were no officers available to capture the criminals in person.

Mr. Kahn's second criticism concerns my statement that the people of Gush Katif "have already buried, in the young and unnaturally expanded cemetery of Gush Katif, their parents and grandparents and siblings and spouses and children - victims of Arab terror and government indifference." This is clearly an emotionally charged issue. I certainly do not intend to "insult our martyrs", as Mr. Kahn accuses me. However, nothing in my statement could possibly justify his conclusion. Undoubtedly, even the present government occasionally deemed military actions unavoidable, because of the terror threat to Sederot and other communities within the "GreenLine" or to communities Israeli governments built over more than three decades in the Gaza strip. This included posting soldiers in Gaza, to thwart terrorist attacks inside and outside the "Green Line." Obviously, we salute and revere every soldier who answered his people's call and forfeited his life protecting them. But does our holy soldiers' selfless dedication excuse an official policy that was halfhearted or worse? More specifically, do occasional concessions to security considerations absolve this government (or its predecessor) of ongoing indifference to the fate of Gush Katif citizens, during a five-year relentless terror war unilaterally waged against them? I personally witnessed endless artillery shell barrages and even Qassam rockets raining down on Neve Dekalim with nary a firecracker shot back by the IDF in response, because the government forbade it to return fire. I reiterate, too, what I reported in my first article from Gush Katif: Even when two middle-aged grandparents were ruthlessly murdered on the Kissufim road in a hail of bullets, the army remained under orders to refrain from any response. The terrorists were eliminated only by the swift intervention of the local civilian security chief, who was wounded in the process. Mr. Kahn, is there anymore charitable description of this deadly program than "government indifference" - perhaps "criminal negligence" would be a more apt designation? Moreover, having thoroughly compromised the IDF's role in combating and deterring terror, did the government's decisions accomplish anything other than emboldening the terrorists and exacerbating their murderous campaign against us, with inevitable consequences?

Indeed, if Mr. Kahn is truly animated by righteous indignation over those who "insult our martyrs", there is manifestly one address only to which he should direct his rage. This government cynically converted the IDF into an instrument of its political agenda. It is the government's indifference, together with its political machinations, that makes a mockery of our holy, martyred soldiers' supreme sacrifice and the bereaved families they left behind. - Chaim Eisen (edited and shortened by PC)

YOU can help Gush Katif Evacuees!

Please fill in the information below and send by email or fax to the Israel Center. You will be contacted after your form is processed

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Cellphone: _____ Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Town/Settlement: _____

Age-range (circle one): Teenager / Young Adult / Adult / Senior

In my professional capacity, I would like to volunteer as (circle one or more):

Lawyer / Psychologist / Social Worker / Rabbi / Educator / Accountant

I would like to volunteer in the following areas (circle relevant items):

Deliveries: open truck / small truck / large truck • Transport: private car / commercial vehicle

Babysitting • Children / youth activities • Storage: open area / closed area

Text books (and other study materials) • Tutoring / study assistance • Laundry / ironing

Food: private / commercial / supplies / produce

Temporary housing: number of rooms ___ for period of _____ location: _____

I am available on the following days: SUN / MON / TUE / WED / THU / FRI / Motza"Sh

I can volunteer in the: Morning / afternoon / evening.

I have transportation available: Yes / no

I can volunteer in the following region(s): North / Center / South

I can help in the following additional way(s): _____

Send forms to one of the following emails or faxes:

email: secy@israelcenter.co.il

Fax: Goldie, Israel Center: (02) 566-0156

For general information, call: Goldie, Israel Center: 02-5667787 ext. 242

To contribute funds (Israeli tax-deductible):

Join the OU International Campaign to assist the children evacuees from Gush Katif (Gaza) and North Shomron. These funds will be applied to special spiritual and educational needs of the children and youth.

Send checks to the Israel Center, P.O. Box 37015, Jerusalem 91370

The check should be made out to the Israel Center and marked "Children"