

This Shabbat is the 374th day (of 383); 54th Shabbat (of 55) of 5765 • 3rd & 4th p'rakim of Pirkei Avot this Shabbat

בְּרִיךְ אֶתְּהָ בְּבֹאֶךָ וּבְרִיךְ אֶתְּהָ בְּצֵאתְךָ: דברים כח:

# IY"H Soon with the fruit too

The mitzva of Bikurim consists of two components: the bringing of the firstfruits to the kohen in the Beit HaMikdash and the recitation of the Bikurim declaration, as set down in the beginning of this week's sedra. The mitzva of Bikurim is applicable only in the time of the Beit HaMikdash.

However... there is a dimension of the mitzva that we can apply in our own time. Bikurim, says the ARI z"l is the TIKUN for the sin of the Meraglim. The Meraglim took beautiful fruits from Eretz Yisrael, showed them to the generation of the Wilderness, and then spoke against the Land and against G-d's Plan for the People of Israel to go there to conquer, settle, and live. For that sin, the 10 scouts were struck dead. For that sin, the adult male population of that generation (not including Kalev and Yehoshua) were decreed to wander in the Midbar and die out over a 40 year period, before the new generation would be able to cross the Jordan River into Eretz Yisrael. The bottom line of the sin of the spies is that the Meraglim said: It's a nice place to visit, but we wouldn't want to live there. That sin is repeated and compounded by every Jew who says those words. Cheit HaMeraglim is sadly alive and well in our time.

The TIKUN, repair, atonement for that sin is epitomized by every Jew that lives in Eretz Yisrael and feels and says what the Bikurim-bringer says: Baruch HaShem that G-d brought us to this place and gave us this Land.

There is a third component of Bikurim. It comes in the last pasuk of the Bikurim parsha. V'SAMACHTA... and you shall rejoice in all the good that G-d has given you... and not selfishly, but with others, including the less fortunate and the stranger in your midst.

We might not be able to bring the fruits now, but we certainly can and must work on the TIKUN of the sin of the spies, and always be thankful to G-d.

## 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...

The following really belongs in next week's TT, but that one might be too crowded with other material. So here is a head's up on a calendar curiosity...

In our fixed calendar, Rosh HaShana is fixed on a particular day, based on the molad of Tishrei and four rules of postponement. RH begins on the day of the molad of Tishrei, unless... [1] if the molad is after noon, then RH is set for the following day. [2] If the day is SUN, WED, or FRI, then RH is the following day. Either [1] or [2] can postpone RH by a day (from the day of the molad), or they can both cause a 2-day postponement. RH is the day of the molad less than 25% of the time. [1] and/or [2] account for over 70% of the postponements of RH. 2 other rules: 1 occurs 3.3% of the time and the fourth rule, the one that fixes RH this coming year on TUE occurs a bit more than 1/2%. cont. p.2

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

5:59pm (5:19)	Jerusalem	7:10pm
6:16pm (5:21)	Raanana	7:11pm
6:15pm (5:20)	Beit Shemesh	7:11pm
6:16pm (5:21)	Netanya	7:12pm
6:16pm (5:21)	Rehovot	7:12pm
5:55pm (5:21)	Petach Tikva	7:11pm
6:15pm (5:20)	Modi'in	7:11pm
6:16pm (5:21)	Be'er Sheva	7:11pm
6:14pm (5:19)	Gush Etzion	7:10pm
6:15pm (5:20)	Ginot Shomron	7:10pm
5:59pm (5:19)	Maale Adumim	7:10pm
6:15pm (5:20)	K4 & Hevron	7:10pm
6:08pm (5:18)	Tzfat	7:09pm

Ranges are THU-THU 18-25 Elul (Sept. 22-29)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:37-5:42am
Sunrise - 6:27-6:31½am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 9:29-9:30am (8:44-8:45am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:30-10:29am (10:00-10:00am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 12:32-12:29½pm
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 1:03-1:00pm
Plag Mincha - 5:20-5:13pm
Sunset - 6:40½-6:31½pm (6:36-6:27pm)

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22 Keren HaYesod • POB 37015 • Jerusalem 91370  
phone: (02) 566 7787 • fax: (02) 561-7432  
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**"Early Shabbat" Davening**  
Mincha 5:05pm (15 min. before Plag)

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## KI TAVO STATS

50th of the 54 sedras 7th of 11 in D'varim  
 Written on 233 lines in a Sefer Torah (rank: 13)  
 21 Parshiyot; 5 open, 16 closed  
 (ranks 7th, tied with Vayikra and Va'etchanan)  
 122 p'sukim - ranks 17th (2nd in D'varim)  
 Same number as Vayakhel & Va'etchanan;  
 Ki Tavo is larger than Vayakhel, smaller than  
 Va'etchanan  
 1747 words - ranks 16th (2nd in D'varim)  
 Same as Ekev. Ekev is a bit larger than Ki Tavo  
 6811 letters - ranks 15th (4th in D'varim)  
 P'sukim are longer than average for the Torah,  
 short for D'varim

## MITZVOT:

6 of the 613; 3 positives and 3 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 - 11 p'sukim - 26:1-11

[P>26:1] When we come to the Land and settle it, we

## Word of the Month cont.

The 4th D'chiya (postponement of RH from the day of the molad) rule: In a year following a 13-month year, if the molad of Tishrei is Monday morning after 9h 32m 13p, even if it is before noon, RH is set on Tuesday. Last occurrences: 5688, 5519, 5441, 5194.

If RH would stay on MON, the day of the molad of Tishrei, the previous year, 5765 would have only 382 days, which cannot be. By moving to TUE, it gives 5765 its 383 days.

are commanded to take of the First Fruits [the mitzva of Bikurim has already been counted back in Parshat Mishpatim] of the "Seven Species", put them in a basket and go to The Place (the Be'it HaMikdash). We are to go to the kohen on duty, announce our presence and present him with the basket. He shall take it and place it before the Altar. We are then to recite the "Bikurim passage" [606,A132 26:5].

## MITZVA WATCH

It is said of Bikurim: "Do this mitzva, for in its merit you will enter the Land". As mentioned in the Lead Tidbit, the ARI HaKadosh singles out Bikurim as the mitzva which is the "tikun" (repair) for the Sin of the Spies. Bikurim has a Torah-ordained, built-in recitation that helps us to focus our thoughts in a particular direction. With this recitation, the Jew identifies himself with his Jewish Heritage and announces to one and all the centrality of Eretz Yisrael in G-d's plans for the People of Israel. Bikurim makes the statement that we are glad to be here. Being happy about being in Eretz Yisrael grants us the "z'chut" to be here. Joyfully thanking G-d for our being here helps "repair" the opposite attitude as expressed by the 10 spies and echoed by the multitude. The Sin of the Spies was committed by what the Meraglim SAID, and it was while they were displaying fruits that they brought from the Land, no less. Bikurim is the mitzva that is performed by what the Bikurim bringer SAYS (in addition to bringing the fruits), and while he displays fruits that he brought from the Land. "A perfect match!" (in opposites). Bikurim is a prime example of "Hakarat HaTov", recognition and acknowledge- ment of the good that was done for us by G-d. This lesson too must be applied to other areas of mitzvot and life in general. May we soon be privileged to bring Bikurim with all the joy and Jewish pride that says that we are truly pleased to be chosen by G-d as His People and that we are genuinely thankful for this wonderful Land.

The first four p'sukim of the Bikurim recitation form the main text for the Pesach Seder; they summarize the Egyptian enslavement and subsequent Exodus. The fifth pasuk speaks of coming to Eretz Yisrael. This corresponds to the fifth term of redemption and is represented by the cup of Eliyahu.

We all bring Bikurim (including the Levi and the convert) with feelings of joy and thanks to G-d for all we have.

**SDT** *If Lavan is the Arami referred to in the pasuk (as many commentaries hold), then the pasuk implies that Lavan was responsible for our going down into Egypt. Yet Yaakov returned to his father's house after the time spent with Lavan, and only many years later ended up in Mitzrayim. Commentators point out the following sequence: Lavan*

deceived Yaakov and gave him Leah as a wife instead of his beloved Rachel. When Yaakov subsequently married Rachel too, there developed a rivalry between the two sisters. This rivalry transferred to the next generation in the form of the problems between Yosef and his brothers. Yaakov's giving the Striped Coat led to Yosef being sold into slavery. His descent into Egypt later brought the whole family down there. Therefore, Lavan IS the appropriate beginning of that process that found us in Egypt, hence the pasuk: ARAMI OVED AVI, VAYERED MITZRAIMA.

The Bikurim recitation is perfectly suited to form the heart of the story of the Exodus, more so than any of the original passages from Sh'mot. The editors of the Hagada found in ARAMI OVEID AVI the "whole" story in only four p'sukim - something we are all capable of handling at the Seder table. The original material is too copious. There are other factors that also favor the Bikurim parsha.

## Levi - Second Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 26:12-15

[S>26:12 (4)] After one has completed proper separation and distribution of Truma, Ma'aser, and Ma'aser Ani (during the third and sixth year of a Shmita cycle), one is required to formally declare that none of the "holy produce" remains in his possession and that it was actually given to its intended recipients [607,A131 26:13]. This declaration is made on the last day of Pesach in the 4th and 7th year.

Vidui Maaser implies that there is something wrong in our performance of the mitzvot mentioned. Yet the statement specifically says that we did everything that we were supposed to do. In fact, a person who might have transgressed does not make the statement. Only someone who did not sin at all. Why then, do we get the impression that something was not 100%? Rav Soloveichik zt"l pointed to the word K'CHOL (like all), which is mentioned twice. The implication is that our performance was almost perfect, but not quite. Also, the statement implies that the individual did only that which he was required to do, and did not (often) go beyond the call of duty. Or perhaps we did a mitzva sort of like it is supposed to be done, but maybe without full KAVANA. These implications might be responsible for the title VIDUI. What an important message this is as we approach Rosh HaShana, when we have to answer for what - AND HOW - we do mitzvot.

It is forbidden to eat Maaser Sheni (the second tithes of years 1, 2, 4, 5 of a Shmita cycle, which remain the owner's property but which must be eaten "with sanctity and ritual purity" in Jerusalem - or be redeemed) while one is a mourner (here it refers to the status of the mourner before burial of the dead - ANINUT) [608,L151 26:14] or in a state of ritual impurity [609,L150 26:14] (the person and/or the food). It is also forbidden to use the redemption money of Ma'aser Sheni for purposes other than food and drink in Jerusalem [610,L152 26:14].

The literal meaning of this prohibition is not to use the money for "the dead". This can narrowly apply to shrouds, casket, etc., but is also generalized to include all non-food uses.

We next call upon HaShem to "look down" upon His People from on high and bless us and the Land of Israel. [We have kept our promise, we say to G-d (so to speak), now You keep Yours.]

Many a Baal Korei raises his voice and emphasizes the word HASHKIFA. This is based on the Talmud Yerushalmi.

## Shlishi - Third Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 26:16-19

[S>26:16 (4)] This short portion is a summary of our relationship with G-d. We are to keep, preserve, observe, practice all the mitzvot, statutes, laws which Moshe has reiterated for us, with all our hearts and souls. We have pledged allegiance to G-d, promised to follow His ways [611,A8 26:17] and to listen to Him. He pledges to take us as His "Chosen Nation" and to elevate us above the nations of the world - IF we keep His mitzvot.

## MITZVA WATCH

To follow in G-d's footsteps means to develop and practice various traits that are attributed to G-d. As He is merciful, so too shall we BE merciful. As He is holy, so too must we behave in ways that lead to our becoming holy. From general traits, we can also use specific examples - as G-d clothed the naked, visited the sick, buried the dead, comforted the grieving... so too must we. There are mitzva-counters who define this mitzva as Bikur Cholim, visiting the sick, in addition to generalizing to include all types of acts of kindness.

## R'VI' - Fourth Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 27:1-10

[P>27:1 (8)] Moshe Rabeinu and the Elders command the People concerning the inscribing on 12 pillars of stone the words of the Torah (parts thereof; the Book of D'varim or parts of it); this to be done upon crossing the Jordan.

Subsequently, another set of pillars is to be erected and inscribed on Har Eval where a Mizbei'ach is to be built (of whole, uncut stones) and sacrifices are to be offered.

[S>27:9-10 (2)] Moshe and the Kohanim next declare to the People that they have grown into complete nationhood at this point, with all the mitzvot of the Torah having been reviewed. Privilege of nationhood goes hand-in-hand with the responsibilities of keeping the mitzvot.

**SDT** *Moshe, the Kohanim and Leviyim, say to all the people, "on this very day you have become G-d's nation". Rashi says that the Torah emphasized THIS VERY DAY, to teach us that our commitment to Torah and mitzvot should be as if we have entered into a covenant with HaShem on this very day - i.e. everyday. We are challenged to refresh our Judaism continually. This, of course, is not the only place this is learned from. But that fact just reinforces the significance of the idea.*

## Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 22 p'sukim - 27:11-28:6

[S>27:11 (4)] Moshe describes what will happen after the People enter the Land. Six tribes will stand on Mt. Grizim and six on Mt. Eval. There they will hear the blessings and curses that will be the fate of those who keep or don't keep Torah and mitzvot.

Twelve curses are enumerated in this portion touching upon many diverse areas of Jewish life including "between Jew and G-d" as well as interpersonal mitzvot. Each K'LALA is a pasuk long and its own parsha stuma (almost). To each curse, the people are to respond AMEN...

[S>27:15 (1)] he who makes idols...

[S>27:16 (1)] he who degrades his father or mother...

[S>27:17 (1)] he who encroaches on his neighbor's boundary...

[S>27:18 (1)] he who misleads a "blind" (it's figurative) person...

[S>27:19 (2)] he who perverts the judgment of orphan or widow... he who sleeps with his father's wife... (Note that these two curses share a parsha.)

[S>27:21 (1)] he who engages in sexual behavior with animals...

[S>27:22 (1)] he who sleeps with his sister (or half-sister)...

[S>27:23 (1)] he who sleeps with his mother-in-law...

[S>27:24 (1)] he who secretly strikes his fellow...

[S>27:25 (1)] he who takes a bribe and an innocent person is killed...

[S>27:26 (1)] he who does not uphold the words of the Torah to do them...

[P>28:1 (14)] Once again, Moshe Rabeinu tells us that following G-d's commandments will earn us superior status among the nations of the world. We will also be showered with blessings for hearkening to G-d's voice. We will flourish economically and agriculturally, and be blessed with a healthy increase in population. Our every coming and going will be blessed.

*The blessings begin with the letter BET - BARUCH. The curse begin with the letter ALEF - ARUR. This is how some commentators explain the large BET of the opening word of the Torah - B'reishit. G-d wanted to start the Torah on a note of blessing, not the opposite.*

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 63 p'sukim - 28:7-69

Longest of the 378 Aliyot in the whole Torah

The blessings continue with the promise of victory over our enemies. G-d will "command" His blessings upon us and the Land, and will establish us as a holy nation... on condition that we keep the mitzvot and follow His ways.

[The Torah's expression "Vehalachta b'drachav" is repeated here - emulating G-d is defined as being kind,

merciful, charitable, etc.]

The nations of the world will see the special relationship we have with G-d, and be appropriately reverent towards us and fearful of us. G-d's heavenly treasure-house will open for us and we will flourish. G-d's blessings are conditional upon keeping the mitzvot.

[P>28:15 (54)] "But, if we don't listen to G-d..." Thus begins the "Tochacha". The admonition against disobedience of Torah.

There is a custom to read this part in a low voice because of how devastating it is to realize that G-d needs to warn us in such graphic terms, what will happen if the Jewish People do not remain faithful to Him. Unfortunately, we need these harsh words of reproach. Unfortunately, they have turned out to be prophetic more than once. The Tochacha is contained within one Aliya (resulting in the longest Aliya in the Torah) so as not to prolong the discomfort in hearing it.

The first portion of the Tochacha is the negative mirror image of the blessings previously pronounced in the Torah. The p'sukim then proliferate and describe in shocking and grisly detail that which will occur if we do not remain faithful to G-d. The final pasuk of the Aliya reiterates the "simple" but eloquent covenant with G-d: Keep the Torah and all will be good, if not...

The contrast between the "good times" that Bikurim brings to mind and the terrible times as described in the Tochacha is overpowering and frightening. It is the difference between contentment and respect on the one hand, and devastation, despair and degradation, on the other. Prosperity in our own Land vs. poverty and exile. The key to the difference is Torah & Mitzvot.

**SDT** *One of the famous "sum it all up" p'sukim in the Tochacha is 28:47, which says that many of the terrible things will happen to us because we did not serve G-d with joy and a good heart (even while we still had all good things). The Kotzker Rebbe gives this pasuk an interesting spin. Because, not only did you not serve G-d, but the not serving Him was with simcha. When a Jew does mitzvot, there is the extra aspect of doing them "with a smile". And, conversely, when a Jew sins, there is the extra aspect of sinning with a smile. Does one who eats non-kosher cry about his betrayal of G-d (probably not), or does he lick his fingers with relish and joy (sadly, probably yes). And if and when the joy of sinning leaves a person, or is driven out by him, then and only then will the person be on the path to T'shuva.*

[S>28:69 (1)] After all those dreadful p'sukim of the Tocheicha, this long aliya is concluded with the statement: These are the words of the covenant that G-d commanded Moshe to make with the people of Israel in the territory of Moav - besides the covenant of Sinai (Chorev).

## Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 29:1-8

[P>29:1 (8)] Moshe Rabeinu calls to the People, and tells them that they now have seen (and know) all that has happened from the Exodus through the forty years of wandering until this very moment. It is incumbent upon us to keep our "deal" with G-d. "And G-d did not give you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, until

this very day." This realization comes only after living all the miracles of the 40 years of wandering.

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

## **Haftara - 22 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 60:1-22**

This is the 6th of the Seven Haftaras of Consolation, all coming from the book of Yeshayahu, from chapter 40 on, where he changes mood from a prophet of tragedies to a prophet of consolation and redemption.

The uplifting message of the haftara is the coming of the Geula, when G-d will restore His People to the Land and the nations and peoples of the world will flock to Jerusalem to pay homage to G-d and His People.

The concluding words of the haftara are enigmatic: "...I Am G-d, in its (the redemption's) time, I will hasten it." Will the Mashiach come in his appointed time, or sooner? That depends upon us. If we enhance the overall conditions of Jewish Life, increase Torah observance, improve relations between Jew and his fellow - then we might be privileged to an "early" arrival of the Mashiach and the Geula. If we do not lay the proper groundwork for his coming, then he will come in his (pre-ordained) time.

This is a major part of our Elul challenge. Let's put it this way — the first level of our Elul-time task is personal, individual. This adds another level, that of the community, of Klal Yisrael. Rambam in Hilchot T'shuva "suggests" that we each consider ourselves, and our community, and the entire world to be precariously balanced between merits and demerits. One tiny mitzva on our part cannot only tip our personal scale to the good side for us, but that of our community and that of the whole world as well. One person can make a difference. Each of us has the power to hasten the Mashiach. So, let's do it.

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

Lesson # 302 (part seven)

### **Dina D'Malchuta Dina**

#### **Abiding by the Laws of the Land**

In the last lesson we continued with examples in the area of real estate, dealing with the doctrine of Dina D'Malchuta Dina, abiding with the laws of the land.

Some more examples:

Under halacha, if a tenant is to vacate his apartment, he must give the landlord a certain amount of notice. Under the laws of the State of Israel the period of notice from the tenant to the landlord is shorter. R. Waldenberg held that the shorter period is in effect under the Dina doctrine, which laws were in effect when the lease was signed between the landlord and tenant. (See R. Eliezer Waldenberg; Israel; 1917-; Tziz Eliezer, volume 10, response 52.)

Reuven built a house with the windows facing the street.

Sometimes later Shimon wishes to build a house across the street so that his windows will face the windows of Reuven's house, which is prohibited in halacha. It is prohibited as being an intrusion of privacy and blocks light and air. R. Levi ben Chaviv held that under the laws of that land (as well as under the halacha) it was prohibited and under Dina D'Malchuta Dina he prohibited Shimon from building his house (R. Levi ben Chaviv; Spain; 1488-1545, Maharlbach, response 44).

In a similar case, Reuven bought a house from a Gentile and enlarged his house by adding a second floor and balconies and his Gentile neighbor did not object. Then the Gentile sold his house to Shimon, who now wants to enlarge his house by adding a second floor and building balconies, which would block the light from the balconies of Reuven. While what Shimon wanted to do was permissible under the laws of the land they were in violation of halacha. R. Moses Trani held that Dina D'Malchuta Dina would prevail in favor of Shimon who had the same rights that the Gentile had before he sold his house to Shimon. (R. Moses Trani; Israel, Turkey; 1563-1639; Mabit response 25) A similar case came before R. Meir b. Baruch, who held that there is no presumption for windows under the laws of the land and thus Dina D'Malchuta Dina did not apply. (R. Meir b. Baruch of Rothenberg; Germany 1215-1293, Maharam m'Rothenberg, part 4, response 28; Prague edition.)

Reuven purchased a house from Shimon. The government then seized the house from Reuven because Shimon had not paid his taxes on the house. Reuven sues Shimon to recover the purchase price. Shimon pleads that Reuven should have conducted a title search to see if there were any taxes due, and received permission from the taxing authorities before he bought the house, something not required under halacha. R. haKohen held that Dina D'Malchuta Dina applied and Reuven was remiss in not following the procedures of the land (R. Solomon b. Abraham haKohen; Greece; 1520-1601; Maharschach, part 2, response 81).

Reuven sold his real estate to an officer of the government in what was an apparently forced type of sale; the officer sold the real estate to Shimon. Reuven wanted the Beth Din to compel Shimon to restore the real estate to Reuven, and Reuven would pay Shimon what Shimon had paid. R. Tzahalon held that since Shimon purchased the real estate under the laws of the land, Dina D'Malchuta Dina applies and Shimon does not have to restore the real estate to Reuven (R. Yom Tov Tzahalon; Israel; 1559-1630; Maharitz, response 35).

Reuven sold a field to Shimon for \$100. Ordinarily the deed would be written by the Beth Din, but this deed was written and signed in the Gentile secular courts. Reuven died before Shimon took possession of the field. Shimon sues to obtain the field from the heirs of Reuven. The heirs claim that the deed to Shimon is not valid since it was written and signed in the secular court rather than in the Beth Din. The Beth Din suggested a compromise, that Shimon reconvey the field to the heirs of Reuven upon the heirs paying to Shimon \$110, which they did. Once the heirs obtained the deed to the field they instituted a lawsuit against Shimon in a second Beth Din to recover the \$10 that they said constituted interest and which is illegal. The second Beth Din held that the sale to Shimon was legal under Dina D'Malchuta Dina and thus the resale by Shimon to the heirs of Reuven was also legal and the heirs owned the real estate and Shimon kept the \$10.

In Yemen the pasha made a redistribution of the land, taking from some of the Arabs and giving it to others. The Jews wanted to know if they could buy a lulav for Succot from the

current owners of the land since the old owners lost their land by decree of the pasha. R. Tzalach held that under Dina D'Malchuta Dina, the pasha could do as he pleased with the land. Furthermore, the old owners probably gave up hope of recovering the land and this coupled with the sale of the lulav, which is a change in ownership is enough to permit the Jew to purchase his lulav from the Arabs. (R. Yichya Tzlach; Yemen; 18th century; Pe'ulat Tzadik, part 2. response 98.)

The king executed Reuven for treason and seized his real estate. The real estate was given to one of the king's officers. The officer sold the real estate to Shimon, and Reuven's heirs sued Shimon to recover the real estate claiming that Shimon had no right to buy the real estate from the officer and that Reuven's heirs had priority in the purchase. R. Sasson held that Reuven was executed under the laws of the land and Dina D'Malchuta Dina applies in disposing of the assets of Reuven and thus the officer had good title to the real estate and Shimon was within his rights to purchase the real estate from the officer. (R. Aaron Sasson; Turkey; 1550-1626; Torah Emet, response 147.)

From the foregoing lessons it can be seen that the doctrine of Dina D'Malchuta Dina, abiding by the laws of the land definitely apply to real estate transactions since the land belongs to the sovereign who permits citizens to exercise control of individual parcels.

*The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume IX chapter 369 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

#### S'lichot prior to Rosh HaShana - part one

The custom of reciting selichot (penitential prayers) in the days preceding Rosh HaShana is quite ancient, and is mentioned already in the early Rishonim. The custom of the Sefaradim, as mentioned in Shulchan Arukh (OC 581), is to recite selichot from the beginning of Elul; the Rema adds that the custom of the Ashkenazim is to begin the week of Rosh HaShana, or if there are only a few days that week, the week before. This year Rosh HaShana falls on Tuesday, so Ashkenazim will start saying selichot this Motzaei Shabbat.

The Ran (on Rif Rosh HaShana 3a) gives the reason for these two customs. The custom of saying selichot from the beginning of Elul has its source in the ancient tradition that Moshe Rabbenu ascended Mount Sinai to receive the second tablets on Rosh Chodesh Elul, and descended on Yom Kippur. (We mentioned this tradition a few weeks ago as the source for blowing the shofar during Elul.)

What about the custom of beginning before Rosh HaShana? The Ran describes a similar custom: "The custom in Barcelona and the surrounding area is to rise early in the morning from the 25th of Elul onwards." The reason, he explains, is that this is when the world was created. The gemara records two opinions as to the creation of the world: according to Rebbe Eliezer the world was created on the first of Tishrei, whereas according to Rebbe Yehoshua the world was created on the first of Nisan.

But the Ran cites the Midrash, which explains in a number of places that actually their dispute relates to the sixth day of creation, when man was created. According to Rebbe Eliezer, the first day of creation was actually five days earlier, corresponding to the 25th of Elul. (It would be inexact to refer to this day as actually being the 25th of Elul, since the moon itself was not created until several days later. The GR"A on OC 581 explains why this custom was modified to begin always on Motzaei Shabbat, which may be a bit before or a bit after the actual 25th of Elul.)

This doesn't quite solve the problem. Rosh HaShana was established on the first of Tishrei for the precise reason that the creation attains significance for man only because of our own creation. If the Day of Judgment depends on our creation, then why should the beginning of our special prayers coincide with the creation of the natural world?

Perhaps this shows that our level prior to Rosh HaShana is similar to the level of the world before the creation of man. In a sense, the world lacked meaning before man's creation; man is not only the pinnacle of creation but in fact its entire object. Yet we see that Hashem did not create the world in a single utterance and then plopped man into it; rather, the order of creation is described at length in the Torah. It seems that the exact preparations for mankind's spiritual workplace are of immense importance.

Likewise, within this world our objective is righteousness, to attain a level of goodness which merits a favorable judgment from G<sup>d</sup>. This is the level we aspire to attain on Rosh HaShana (or at any rate by Yom Kippur). However, the degrees ascending to this level are of great, even critical importance. Repentance is not an "afterthought", a tragic necessity due to a bizarre breakdown in the world's makeup, namely, the sin of Adam and Chava. Rather, repentance, the process of perfecting and educating ourselves, is part of the essential structure of the world.

The careful precision of the order of creation was inherently necessary to make it a suitable abode for mankind; likewise, the process of repentance is an inherent necessity in our quest for righteousness. Our penitential prayers thus begin about the day of the creation of the natural world, to show that the preparations for Rosh HaShana bear an importance that is inherent, and not merely incidental.

**Rabbi Meir's books: Meaning in Mitzvot and the Jewish Ethicist are highly recommended, and available at your favorite bookstore. If they don't have them, maybe they don't deserve to be your favorite.**

## TANACH

### SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE BEREISHIT STORIES

by Dr. Meir Tamari

#### Avraham and Sarah in Egypt [2] (B'reishit 12:10-13:4)

Avraham's reaction to the second test that he faced in Egypt was in essence similar to his reaction to the test of famine that led him to leave Promised Land shortly after coming there; both seeming contradictions to the blessing that he was promised

were met with the same unquestioning acceptance of G-d's will. Yet here too our commentators raised spiritual and ethical eyebrows. It is of great importance that, irrespective of how Chazal and later sages explained the behavior of biblical characters, we should realize their awareness and acknowledgement of such spiritual and ethical issues made evident by their very questioning. For example, it would appear self evident, just and reasonable for Moshe to kill the Egyptian taskmaster who beat a Hebrew slave. Yet Chazal question how could Moshe Rabbeinu kill a person without due process of law or without a Divine command. Answers in justification of his behavior such as the obligation imposed by DIN RODEF or even that the text does not mention killing only smiting so that Moshe used his staff and left the fatal decision to Heaven, should not blind us to the sages' moral questioning. Avraham and Sarah are on their journey to Egypt because of the famine and as they draw near Avraham says, "Behold now I know that you are a beautiful woman". Only now after many years of marriage did he? Rashi, Abarbanel and Rabbi S. R. Hirsch relate his statement to the fact that the children of Ham, the Egyptians were ugly so that while in comparison with the daughters of Shem she was not especially beautiful, with regard to the Egyptians her beauty stood out and would be noticed. "We know (Megila 13) that Queen Esther was green and not beautiful, the stream of chesed on her made her beautiful. However, Sarah's was a natural beauty and now when Avraham saw that despite the journey and the difficulties that natural beauty preserved, he made his statement" (GR"A). Irrespective, her beauty became a danger both to her and to Avraham since all the tum'ah accumulated during the 10 generations from Noah to Avraham became concentrated in Egypt (Shem MiShmuel). So a way of protection had to be found since that was a country where a man could be killed for his wife and a woman easily raped or taken by another especially by a person of power such as a king.

Yet how could Avraham ask her to say that she was a sister, even though she was a half sister, nevertheless it was untrue since it denied their marital status? We find a legal justification for his behavior; "The Rambam teaches that according to Bnei Noach, a marriage could be dissolved simply by mutual consent without any form of divorce, therefore by consenting to say she was only his sister, Sarah was dissolving their marriage in an appropriate manner" (Ketav VeKabala).

Was he morally justified in endangering her? For the Ramban, "A great sin our father Avraham committed thereby. Why even the most coarse and uncivilized of men would do everything, even die to prevent her suffering. Rather Avraham should have depended on G-d to save them". The Netziv writes: "The promise, 'And he who curses you I will curse', was seen by him as applying only in the Land of Israel and he had no fears as long as he was there, however, he was concerned that it did not apply in Chutz LaAretz. That explains rationally why he feared the contact with Egypt and why the story was repeated with Avimelech of Philistia; Yitzchak followed his reasoning when he came with Rivka to Avimelech" (HaEmek Davar). "Avraham believed that the righteousness of Sarah justified a miracle for her, but he did not believe that he himself was worthy of one" (Shem MiShmuel). Perhaps the comment of the Shem MiShmuel sounds too pious or too mystical for us? I thought the same when I saw his question as to what Potiphar's wife wanted of Yosef. To me, her immoral purpose was quite clear. Then I realized the spiritual difference between us. He simply could not envisage such gross or physical behavior and therefore sought the spiritual perspective that she desired that the Messiah that

was descended from Yosef should be born through her.

Avraham's words, "that I may be treated well because of you", seem like the hope of material rewards for him. This is strange behavior for the man who refused any benefit from the king of Sodom. The Netziv points out that the text reads 'that He may treat me well', the hope that G-d would save him because of Sarah's merit. Many others see Avraham's request in the light of the principle MAASEI AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM whereby the Avot paved the way for the future of Israel thus strengthening them and enabling them to meet the challenges and difficulties. By his request, Avraham was preparing for the realization of the Divine Promise that after the Exodus from Egypt, they would go out with great treasures.

It is of great spiritual and religious value to note the different reactions of Pharaoh and Avimelech the Philistine to the repetition of the same incident. Pharaoh asks only, "why did you not tell that she is your wife"? Avraham does not answer that he fears the king would have him killed for his wife and Pharaoh does raise any doubts about that suspicion; in immoral Egypt such action was quite plausible so that he admitted by silence that the fear was justified. On the other hand Avimelech, in righteous anger queries Avraham's moral right to suspect such behavior in Philistia. The Philistines saw themselves as cultured and ethical people; their whole culture was closely related to the early Greek tribes. He asks, "what did you see that that you did such a thing". To which Avraham replied, "Because I said, there is no fear of G-d in this place and they will kill me because of my wife".

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

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

**Q:** When I daven at the Kotel or another place where one hears other minyanim at the same time, can/should I answer Kedusha and other prayers from other minyanim?

**A:** We have to analyze the question based on its halachic components and also deal with the issue as a practical whole.

This matter's classical sources relate to Kedusha of Chazarat HaShatz (repetition of the Amida). The Rama (Orach Chayim 125:2) rules that if one who already said Kedusha enters a Beit Knesset where they are reciting it, he recites it again along with them. Although his source (Shut Harashba I 249) comes to say that it is permitted to repeat Kedusha, poskim understand that one generally should do so. Some explain that if one did not repeat Kedusha with the congregation, it would appear as if he did not agree with the concepts expressed therein, which is a disgrace (see Yabia Omer VI, OC 20). (When hearing the first pasuk of Kriat Shema, all agree that this is an issue (Shulchan Aruch, OC 65:2)). Others say that the opportunity to sanctify Hashem's Name obligates one to do so (Igrat Moshe, OC III, 89). Both pieces of logic apply to Kaddish and Borchu, where the congregation joins together to sanctify Hashem's Name (see *ibid.* and Mishna Berura 65:9).

The laws of hefsek (interruption) allow one to answer these sections during the great majority of one's prayer, including P'sukei D'zimra and Kriat Sh'ma and its berachot (Shulchan Aruch 66:2 and Mishna Berura 51:8). This applies to Kedusha's main p'sukim of "Kadosh..." and "Baruch..." and not the introductory passages (Mishna Berura 66:17). ("Yimloch" depends on where you are). It also applies to "Amen, Y'hei Sh'mei Rabba..." and Amen on "...da'amiran b'alma" in Kaddish. During Shmoneh Esrei, one may not answer these tefillot, but he can listen silently (Shulchan Aruch 104:7). During Chazarat HaShatz, he may answer (Ishei Yisrael 24:15).

Using simple logic, it should follow that when hearing a passage that one is supposed to answer at a place that he is allowed to respond, he certainly should do so. However, other factors are involved. Firstly, in the midst of one's own tefillot, one can likely apply the concept that one who is involved in a mitzva is exempt from performing a different mitzva (Yabia Omer, *ibid.*; Tzitz Eliezer XI, 3). Also, the matter of looking like not participating in the congregation's praise of Hashem does not apply when it is clear that he is part of a different minyan, which either has or will soon recite the same tefillot. It is also not clear that there is an absolute obligation to answer that which he hears from others (Ishei Yisrael 24:(62) in the name of Rav Sh. Z. Orbach). This is all the more so if one hears the tefilla from a distance and/or in a different room (see Tefilla K'hilchata 13:(119) in Rav Elyashiv's name).

These factors reduce the urgency to respond to the tefillot in question. It is also problematic to respond to different minyanim, certainly to the extent that exists at crowded times at the Kotel. Tzitz Eliezer (*ibid.*) cites Rav Chayim Palagi, who was stringent on the requirement to answer but bemoaned the need to interrupt tefillot. The latter thus urged avoiding places where this situation arises. (Of course, the inestimable positives of davening at the Kotel preclude such a recommendation.) There can be a halachic problem regarding Chazarat HaShatz, since at least nine people must listen to and answer all of the berachot (see Ishei Yisrael 24:(63)). Poskim also factor in the confusion of one's own tefilla and the impact on each minyan's cohesiveness when people's concentration is pulled in multiple directions. As many are generally challenged to concentrate, this factor is compelling.

Therefore, we suggest that a normal person should not answer tefillot of different minyanim in the midst of his own minyan's

davening. During lulls where his concentration on his tefilla and minyan will not be compromised, it is proper to respond to the "peripheral tefillot."

*Ask the Rabbi Q&A is part of Hemdat Yamim, the weekly parsha sheet published by Eretz Hemdah. You can read this section or the entire Hemdat Yamim at [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org) or [www.erezhemdah.org](http://www.erezhemdah.org). And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to [info@erezhemdah.org](mailto: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 Vebbe Rebbe is partially funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel*

## [2] **Candle by Day**

Sometimes we are better off when things are going badly than not particularly well; for in the first instance, we generally undertake to straighten things out, whereas in the second, we often wait for them to straighten themselves out. It is easier to solve a big problem by working at it than a small one by doing nothing about it.

**From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein**

## [3] **CHIZUK and IDUD**

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

You will go to the priest who will be in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to Hashem your God that I am come to the Land that Hashem swore to our fathers to give us.' (D'varim 26:3)

Imagine. Hundreds of years after the exodus, when the Beit HaMikdash stood, farmers would bring the first fruit of their harvest as offerings. They would stand before the Altar, tell the story of their ancestors and how they had become a nation in spite of tremendous hardships and how Hashem had saved the nation at every turn. Then, with hearts overflowing with gratitude, each person would publicly affirm his individual relationship to the land of his fathers: "I declare today... that I come to this Land"

Each individual would acknowledge that, though he had labored intensively in his fields, the resulting fruits were a gift from God, and that his life and those of his ancestors were guided from the beginning by the One Above. The start of his harvest would recall the beginning of his existence as a Jew.

These fruits were brought to the Beit HaMikdash because they were more than mere physical sustenance: They were a Divine gift, no less a gift than redemption from bondage in Egypt, miracles at the sea, and even the gift of the land itself. The first fruits of the land of Israel served as a reminder to "rejoice in every good thing which Hashem has given you" (D'varim 26:11).

**Rebbetzin Holly Pavlov, Jerusalem**

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

R' Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev prepared himself for the blowing of the shofar. He immersed himself in the mikveh and put on the white cotton kittel that is worn by the one who blows the shofar. He said the chapter of Tehillim seven times, and the congregation said it with him. He said the verses from the Zohar, took the shofar in his hand... and waited. Everyone waited expectantly for the blessing and the blowing of the

shofar, but in vain.

"My friends," said the rebbe, "near the door there is a Jew who was forced to spend most of his life in the Czar's army, and who doesn't know how to pray. When he saw everyone else praying, he became very jealous. He began crying and pouring out his heart to Hashem. And this is what he said as he cried, 'Merciful father, You know that I am not able to pray. In fact I don't know anything at all except the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. I want to recite them for You: Alef, Beis, Gimmel... You, in Your great mercy, fit them together into a proper prayer.'

"Now Hashem is busy fitting together the letters of that holy man, and we must wait for Him to finish."

*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] G'matriya Match

TRUMOT, specifically the gifts from produce to a kohein from Yisra'eilim and Leviyim, ULMAASROT, and to the tithes - these two words have the same g'matriya (1052). In the merit of these mitzvot (and others), we guarantee our hold on Eretz Yisrael, the land flowing with milk and honey. The g'matriya of the phrase (which appears 14 times in Tanach): ERETZ ZAVAT CHALAV UDVASH is 1052.

## [6] Parsha Points to Ponder - KI TAVO

1) What is the connection between the conclusion of last week's Parsha, Amalek, and the beginning of this week's Parsha, the mitzva of Bikurim.

2) Why does the person doing VIDUY MA'ASER use the double language of LO AVARTI M'MITZVOTECHA V'LO SHACHACHTI - I have not transgressed your command and I have not forgotten? (26:13)

3) The Torah teaches CURSED IS THE ONE WHO DOES NOT KEEP THE WORDS OF THIS TORAH. What is the meaning of the next seemingly superfluous words TO DO THEM? (See 27:26)

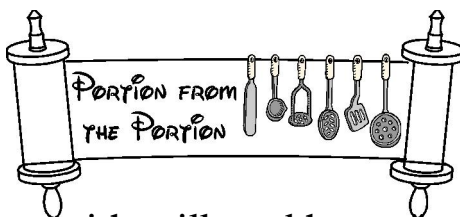
**Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman of Beit Shemesh [ppp@israelcenter.co.il](mailto:ppp@israelcenter.co.il)**

## [7] MicroUlpan

It's an egg separator. It is used to separate the yolk & the white of a raw egg. He separated the egg. In Hebrew? HU CHILMEIN ET HA'BEITZA

[8]

by  
Rakel Berenbaum  
FEEDback to  
[berenbau@acrcom.net.il](mailto:berenbau@acrcom.net.il)



"Land flowing with milk and honey"

Mentioned three times in Ki Tavo (14 times in all of Tanach, 11 of which are in the Chumash), the most in any one sedra. These

words appear in conjunction with the Bikurim (26:9), the tithe declaration (Vidui Maasrot, 26:15), and with the stones G-d told us to set up in Eretz Yisrael upon entering it (27:3).

Abarbanel asks a good question - what is the point of the tithe declaration? We don't have that for all mitzvot. Why should we boast orally that we separated the tithes and dues from our produce and have not withheld any of them from their rightful recipients?

He explains that this public recitation is to act as an incentive to the performance of this mitzva. Just as an oath safeguards a person from sin, this public confession serves to discourage us from disparaging these obligations involving loss of money. It helps us overcome our selfishness.

In the first fruit recitation the individual lists what G-d has done on behalf of Bnei Yisrael. As a sign of gratitude, the individual brings from what G-d has given him to the Beit HaMikdash. On the other hand, in the tithe confession, the individual lists what he himself has done and not done, in order to demonstrate the acceptance of the yoke of G-d upon himself. He says that he has done exactly what "You have commanded me". (Nechama Leibowitz)

When we give tzedaka, that is the time to ask Hashem to hashkifa - to look down on us - and to pray that, as a reward, our Land will indeed be fruitful - flowing with milk and honey. This is the way to enter the new year.

What exactly is chalav and dvash mentioned in the verses? Rabbi Zvi Shwartz, from Yeshivat Yamit in Neve Dekalim, wrote that this phrase could be an abbreviation of the 7 species. If so, chalav would not refer to milk from animals but to chelev dagan, the choice wheat (or maybe even a liquid from grain) and honey would refer not to bee honey, but the honey-like substance that exudes from the fruits of Israel, such as dates and figs. Then you have "a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, and pomegranates, a land of oil olives and honey [dates]" all included in Eretz Zavav Chalav Udvash.

Taking my husband's suggestion, I have included recipes with chalav - a liquid from wheat, and dvash - a liquid from dates.

## Wheat Milkshake

Sprout soft white wheat

Blend with water

Strain to remove pulp

Blend liquid with bananas and honey

## Date Honey (Silan)

Silan is a syrup or date juice concentrate that is made by cooking dates and squeezing out the juice. It is a liquid similar to honey but it has a lighter taste. It is used a lot in marinades, cakes or just as a spread on bread. Buy some for this Rosh Hashana or try this marinade on any of your meat or vegetable recipes.

4 tbsp. date honey (Silan)

1 tbsp. bee honey

2 cloves garlic crushed

1 tsp. ginger

1 chili pepper finely chopped

## [9] **Divrei Menachem**

Parshat Ki Tavo reintroduces us to the command to bring First Fruits to the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. This ritual was accompanied by much pomp and ceremony as the throngs gathered from all around the country for the poignant moment at which they would present their fruit baskets to the Kohen. The ceremony would climax in a moving declaration of gratitude to G-d for his eternal role as the Guide of Jewish history.

Indeed, one of the central themes picked up by the commentators is that of Hakarat HaTov, the declaration of thanks for Hashem's bounty. But it is more than that. The Torah begins with the word "Bereishit" - 'in the beginning' - implying, according to the Midrash Rabbah, that the world was created for the Reishit, these first fruits brought by Bnei Yisrael.

Abarbanel explains: More than any other Mitzva, this command infuses into man's consciousness that, "The earth, and all that is in it, is the Lord's" (Psalms 24:1). By recognizing that the Source of everything is Hashem, one is intrinsically accepting the yolk of Heaven. That is one of the key elements of Judaism, one of the pillars on which all faith rests.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe noted that there is reciprocity involved in the ceremony. For by bringing the First Fruits to the Temple and displaying to G-d the product of His fields, Hashem, in return, confers His blessings on the people. May it be His will.

**Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff**

## **THESE ARE THE ANSWERS**

### **Ponder the questions first, then read here**

1) Rav Yitzchak Prague answers based on the fact that the essence of the mitzva of Bikurim is recognizing the good which G-D has bestowed upon us. Our Sages teach that Amalek attacked the Jewish people because we rejected the good which G-D gave us, presumably by complaining about the Manna. Thus, Bikurim comes to correct the flaw that led to Amalek's attack, thereby explaining the connection between the two parshiyot.

2) The Sfat Emet answers that there are two aspects to a mitzva. One is the actual performance of the command and the second is the thought of connecting to G-D through the action. The person here proclaims that he not only performed the commands, but he also did not forget about G-D and establishing a connection to Him through the mitzva.

3) The Akeidat Yitzchak explains that there are people who perform mitzvot for ulterior motives such as achieving honor in the eyes of others. The words TO DO THEM indicate that this curse applies to these people since a person should perform mitzvot because G-D said TO DO THEM, and for no other reason.

## **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.

## **Herod Builds**

Jenni Menashe, a senior guide at the Kotel Tunnels, emails, "The stones (in the Herodian construction, C.S.) on average are 1.2m cubed and weigh on average ½ ton (there are both bigger and smaller than these sizes but those are the calculated average size and weight). Only two of the stones are longer than 12m and the largest stone (which is part of a series of 4 stones that act as a buttress) is 13.6m long, 3.5m high (because part of it was destroyed) and 4.5m deep and weighs 570 tonnes (metric) which is 628 imperial tons... We usually denote that this measurement (600 tonnes) is approx the weight of 200 elephants which is a far easier weight for the general public to grasp. It is not the largest building block in the world, it is probably 6th or 7th in the world, but it is the largest found in Israel. - The length of the Western Wall is 488m and it is the longest of the four walls of Har Habayit (of which only 57m is the section at the Western Wall Plaza, that we think of as the 'Kotel' today)."

Josephus noted that Herod "got ready a thousand wagons, that were to bring stones for the building." Smaller blocks were conveyed from the quarry to the building site by two wheeled wagons drawn by two oxen. Some- what larger blocks were transported in four-wheeled vehicles drawn by four oxen. Though they are very strong and harnessed teams of oxen pull incredible loads, they also are very slow. Under normal circumstances a team of oxen can pull a heavily loaded wagon roughly 1.5 km/h. If there are obstacles, considerably less. The wheels for such wagons were made from criss-crossed planks of wood and iron rims protected the wood from wear. Some of the "medium sized" stones were conveyed in extraordinary ways. J.D. Landels in his Engineering in the Ancient World (p.183) describes some of them. Sometimes "it was necessary to transport abnormally heavy loads overland without using wheeled vehicles at all... One ingenious method was to use a column shaft or column drum (which could be roughed out round at the quarry) as a roller by constructing a wooden frame around it, and fixing short iron spigots at each end (by making a socket and pouring in lead) and fixing bearings in the wood frame in which the spigots turned. The frame was then hitched to a team of oxen and pulled along like a heavy road-roller..." Square or rectangular blocks could not be rolled along. "Accordingly two wheels were made about 3.66m in diameter, probably of the cross-bar type with heavy bars and broad felloes (rims), so they did easily sink into the ground. The ends of the... blocks were 'enclosed' in the wheels (probably between the cross-bars) and fitted with a spigot at each end which... turned in a bearing mounted in a wood frame..." The transporting of the more massive stones to the building required a more "primitive" solution - teams of oxen were lined up in tandem pulling a single rope attached to a stone was positioned on top of rollers. As the stone slowly inched forward leaving rollers behind, workers picked them up, carried them to the front of the stone and placed them in its path so it could continue moving on the rollers. Sometimes the more massive stones were transported by men utilizing pulleys. Max Schwartz (The Biblical Engineer pg. 28) writes, "To pull heavy stone blocks across the ground, the workers anchored one pulley block to a wooden pile driven into the ground and the second to the block. They reeved, or strung, the rope between the two pulley blocks and pulled the end, either by men, oxen or capstan. The number of pulleys used amplified the pull on the rope. For example five ropes reeved between the two pulley blocks increased the force at the end of the rope almost fivefold. Before lifting a heavy stone block, the rigger figured its weight, then selected the size

and number of ropes needed to carry that load. Then he chose the number of blocks and size of pulleys. Finally, the rigger determined how to pull the rope."

Some of the smaller blocks were lifted into place by the utilization of pulleys. Very sophisticated cranes lifted and positioned the heavier stones in place. Over 400(!) years earlier, "hi-tech" cranes lifted architrave sections of the Parthenon weighing 9 tons each a height of 10.5m for positioning on the columns. The columns were built of 11 drums, each one weighing 8 tons which had to be lowered accurately onto a central spigot. Paraphrasing the ancient engineer Vitruvius who was a contemporary of Herod and the source of much of our knowledge about ancient technology, Landels writes, "Two beams are required (for one type of crane) for the jib (the projecting arm of a crane), their thickness depending on the maximum probable load. They are fixed together on top with an iron bracket, and separated at the base like an inverted V... Ropes are attached to the head of this jib and arranged 'all around' to keep it steady. A pulley block is suspended from the top with two wheels, one above the other; the hoisting rope passes over the highest of these, down and around the (single) wheel of the lower block which is attached to the load, up again and around the lower pulley of the upper block, and down again to an eye on the lower block. The other end is brought down between the legs of the jib to a windlass turned by handspikes... From the lower pulley block iron forceps are suspended, the teeth of which fit into holes in the blocks of stone to be lifted." Frequently stones were hoisted by means of ropes hooked around bosses, stone protrusions in the blocks which were later removed. A forgotten few bosses still protrude from retaining wall ashlar. How were these powerful cranes powered? By manpower! While oxen are much stronger than men are, they are almost impossible to coordinate. Swartz writes, "The Romans hoisted loads with large tread wheels. These were similar to water wheels in which flowing water rotated the wheel. The tread wheel was wide enough to allow one or more men to continually climb the rungs. Their weight rotated the wheel and drum, thereby exerting the pulling force." A man climbing a large tread wheel could produce a pull of almost ten times his weight and therefore "increasing the number of men in the wheel magnified the pull proportionally." Spurred on by Herod's intense interest and the efforts of thousands of workers, the massive retaining walls of Har HaBayit slowly took shape - their massive retaining walls rose, course by course. Terrace-like, each course was slightly recessed from the one to ensure its stability. Josephus comments about some of Herod's construction techniques. "He also built a wall... and at the south side (and no doubt elsewhere -CS) he laid rocks together and bound them with lead and included some of the inner parts, until it proceeded to a great height and... both the size of the square edifice and its altitude were immense, and until the vastness of the stones in the front were plainly visible from the outside, yet so that the inward parts were fastened together with iron, and preserved the joints immovable for all future times" (Antiquities 15:11;3)

(Incidentally, the marvelous English website of the Western Wall Heritage Foundation - [www.thekotel.org](http://www.thekotel.org) - aside from other invaluable material, features an animated movie about how the Har HaBayit retaining walls were built. Check it out!) <to be continued>

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

# P from page 3 PARSHA PIX

Upper-right is the Bikurim story. Basket of first fruits placed at the side of the Mizbei'ach. The bringer is smiling the ultimate smile, as the Torah commands us to rejoice in all that G-d has given us. And smile is reciting (speech bubble) about going down to Egypt and about being brought out of Egypt and taken to Eretz Yisrael.

Upper-left is HASHKIFA... G-d, look down upon us from on high...

One of the blessings mentioned in the sedra is that if we keep the Torah, then we will be "heads" not "tails". See the two shekel coin images.

Lower-left are the 12 stones upon which were engraved the Torah (or parts of it).

Lower-right is the opened treasure, as we ask of G-d. That treasure is in the form of beneficial and timely rains, and the bumper crops that result from good and plentiful rain.

The skate is for the word HASKEIT. It is a unique word in Torah and Na"Ch. Words that appear only once are often difficult to translate, since they provide only one context with nothing to compare it with. HASKEIT is rendered as "pay attention" or "be silent" or "form groups". It is followed by USHMA, and listen, hence the different possibilities for HASKEIT.

The successful basketball shot is for BARUCH TAN- ACHA, blessed is your basket (i.e. fruit, Rashi).

Thumbs up pointing to a city scape and a field is BARUCH ATA BA'IR UVARUCH ATA BASADEH.

That leaves 5 (that's a lot) unexplained items, a.k.a. visual TTriddles or ParshaPixPuzzles.

## 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 (KI TEITZEI) TTriddles:

- [1] grass, meat, grapes; but she?
- [2] his A or B; his B or C - whose? what? what not?
- [3] All boys, in Tanach, only OVEID and ?
- [4] The mother bird and whose water?
- [5] Samuel Irving - 1895-1979
- [6] As a word, it appears only twice; as 5/7 of an acronym, it completely pervades all scrolls
- [7] Key man from a misspelled mourner

[8] NUN Ki Teitzei, CHET R'ei

[9] Mitzva fringe benefit for army exemptee

### And the envelope, please...

[1] V'ACHALTA, and you will eat, appears 15 times in Tanach, all in Chumash, 13 of the 15 times are in D'varim. A few of those times, the object of the eating is a specific food, as presented in the wording of the TTriddle: the grass of the field (G-d's words to Adam after his eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), grapes (Ki Teitzei), meat (R'ei). One additional time, a word spelled the same way, but in feminine form occurs. It is in Megilat Ruth and it is she who is told V'ACHALAT, and you will eat... what? Bread dipped in vinegar.

[2] HIs (your brother's) donkey (A) or ox (B) fallen, his (brother's) ox (B) or sheep (C) lost -- that's the whose and what so far. The what not is to ignore the situation. (See D'varim 22:1,4)

[3] All boys at their BRIT are given a name, referred to as SHMO B'YISRA'EL, his name in Israel. In Tanach, the phrase appears only twice. Once in the book of Ruth, when she gives birth to OVEID, David HaMelech's grandfather. The other reference is not to a name of a boy, but to the Chalitz process (D'varim 25:10): BEIT CHALUTZ HANA'AL.

[4] Many TTriddles originate from an unusual word that catches attention. In the portion of SHILU'ACH HAKEN, the term used for the mother bird's sitting on her eggs or chicks is ROVETZET. The feminine form of ROVEITZ, it appears only thrice in Tanach. Besides with the mother bird, it refers to deep waters, in the bracha of Yaakov to Naftai and the bracha of Moshe to Shevet(s) Yosef. (ROVEITZ appears four times in Chumash.)

[5] Samuel Irving Newhouse... Just a play on the family name, as in BAYIT CHADASH (22:8).

[6] SHAATNEZ. Again, unusual word leading to a TTriddle. As the mixture of wool and linen, the word appears only twice (K'doshim and Ki Teitzei). But add a GIMEL and a TZADI and you have the acronym SHAATNEZ GATZ, for the 7 letters (plus the second form each of the NUN and TZADI) upon

whose square heads are placed the triple-Tagim in STAMM (Sefer Torah, T'filin, Mezuzah, Megila).

[7] The word KI (key), the word ISH (man), and the word MEI-AVEL (from a misspelled mourner, because this AVEL is spelled with an AYIN, rather than an ALEF) - all follow the phrase LO YIKACH, he shall not take. Those are the only three times LO YIKACH appears in Tanach. (LO TIKACH is more common, with 10 occurrences.)

[8] An old TTriddle rephrased. The haftara of Ki Teitzei is RANI AKARA... (Yeshayahu 54:1-10). The haftara of R'ei is ANIYA SO'ARA... (54:11-55:1). The combined portions (54:1-55:1) is the haftara of Parshat No'ach. So Ki Teitzei is marked with the NUN of No'ach, and R'ei is marked with the CHET.

[9] One of the people who is exempted from army service (except for a "mitzva-battle") is a groom in his first year of marriage. The accompanying mitzva is his requirement to rejoice with his wife.

[Ace solver YYW (this week's prizes-winner) puns that the fringe benefit is Talit, worn from the time one marries, according to some (but not all) customs. This is not just TTriddle stuff; the source of the custom to put Talit on from marriage, rather than Bar Mitzva (and before), as with many other mitzvot, is the juxtaposition of the repeat command to put tzitzit on the four corners of a garment (D'varim 22:12) to the words: When a man takes a woman...]

### This week's TTriddles:

[1] who'd we tell it to before the kohen?

[2] HaShem (3), Torah (7), Shira, and who?

[3] Ark, Place, Kohein/Kohanim, King

[4] Shiur: One over basket

[5] obverse, not reverse

[6] It has alchemits drooling

[7] your fathers, my family, the Land, where, where, and whom?

[8] plus 5 elements from the ParshaPix

## Please note:

**The hard copy of Torah Tidbits this week contains a Candle Lighting and Havdala Chart for the coming year, a Tashlich 4-pager, and a Shofar 4-pager. Some of the English texts of the 2 Rosh HaShana Pull-Outs are included in the .txt file. This PDF file does not have that material; rather there are three additional PDF files this week.**