

מברכים

Shabbat VA'eira is the 117th day (of 354); the 17th Shabbat (of 50) of 5766  
...וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בָּם לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם וְיָשִׁיבוּ עָלַי אֲדָמָתָם... יחזקאל כח:כה

מברכים

## G-d Reveals His Will

"Therefore, say to Bnei Yisrael..." After the intentional "failure", at the end of Parshat Sh'mot, to convince Par'o to let the people go, G-d sends Moshe to the people of Israel (later to Par'o) to tell them of His intentions. He will take us out of Egypt (in particular, but we can generalize this promise/prophecy - based on subsequent promises/prophecies - to reflect the ongoing promise to gather the scattered Jews from the four corners of the world), He will take us unto Him as a Nation and He will be our G-d, we will know that it was He Who took us out of Egypt, and He will bring us to the Land He promised to our ancestors and will give it to us as a Heritage (Morasha). Prophecies that are recorded in the Torah (and all of Tanach) are for us today, not just for the generation that heard it and experienced first fulfillment (so to speak). The prophecy and promises of the beginning of Parshat Va'eira are more than promises of what G-d intends to do. They reveal His will, for that time and throughout Jewish History. We as Jews are duty-bound to do His will as we would do our own, as it says in Pirkei Avot.

This has been a recurring theme in Torah Tidbits over the years, and the phrase, "it goes without saying" keeps coming to mind, except for two things. Something that really goes without saying, should not be said; and this message most definitely should not go without saying, no matter how often it is said and how many different ways it can be put.

G-d not only promised these things via Moshe Rabeinu, He WANTS them to be. He wants us to be His Nation. He wants to be our G-d. He wants us - individually and communally - to accept the Torah, to keep its mitzvot, to live by it, to become more holy thereby. He wants us to live in the Land He promised to our forefathers, and He wants that Land to be ours throughout all the generations since the birth of the Jewish Nation and on and on until the Complete Redemption and beyond.

## Word of the Month



A weekly feature of Torah Tidbits to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby better fulfilling the mitzva of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...

**This Shabbat we bench Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat, which will be IY"Y on Monday. Since Tevet always has 29 days in our fixed calendar, Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat is always one day only. It can fall on all days of the week except Sunday and Friday. TU BiShvat is always the same day of the week, two weeks later.**



ראש חודש שבט יהיה ביום שני  
הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל למוכה:

Molad: SUN 13h 44m 16p (1:24pm)

הפולד יהיה ביום ראשון. ארבעים וארבע דקות וששה עשר חלקים אחרי אחת בצרתם.

In Rambam's notation: א' ימ:תתח

Actual molad: SUN Jan. 29th, 4:15pm (astronomical new moon)

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New shows from Thursday

**OTHER Z'MANIM**  
Correct for Jerusalem

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**Candle Lighting and HAVDALA**  
Standard (Winter) time  
Correct for TT 701 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 6:24pm

<b>4:33pm</b>	Jerusalem	<b>5:48pm</b>
4:49pm	Raanana	5:49pm
4:49pm	Beit Shemesh	5:49pm
4:48pm	Netanya	5:49pm
4:50pm	Rehovot	5:50pm
4:30pm	Petach Tikva	5:49pm
4:49pm	Modi'in	5:49pm
4:51pm	Be'er Sheva	5:50pm
4:48pm	Gush Etzion	5:48pm
4:48pm	Ginot Shomron	5:48pm
4:33pm	Maale Adumim	5:48pm
4:49pm	K4 & Hevron	5:49pm
4:35pm	Tzfat	5:45pm
4:48pm	Tel Mond	5:49pm

Ranges are FRI-FRI 27 Tevet - 5 Shvat (Jan27-Feb3)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:43-5:40am
Sunrise - 6:35½-6:31am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 9:13-9:12am (8:27-8:26am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:06-10:05am (9:35-9:35am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:52-11:53am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 12:22-12:23pm
Plag Mincha - 4:03-4:08pm
Sunset - 5:13½-5:20pm (5:08½-5:15pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul  
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)  
Shabbat 3:30pm (Mincha 4:30pm)  
**Yaacov Peterseil**  
Motza'ei Shabbat 8:30pm  
**David Bedein on the PA**

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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



## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

### Kohen - First Aliya - 12 p'sukim - 6:2-13

**SDT** The two most common names of G-d in the Torah are E-LO-HIM and A-DO-NOI (as an act of respect for G-d's sacred names, these two are generally pronounced ELOKIM and HASHEM respectively, when referred to other than in prayer or Torah reading). ELOKIM is usually considered to be G-d's name of strict judgment, whereas HASHEM carries the connotation of Divine Mercy. Notice that in the accounts of Egyptian oppression, the predominant name of G-d is Elokim (especially in 2:23-25).

Exile is certainly associated with the stricter side of G-d's treatment of His People. If the quality of mercy were dominant, perhaps we would acclimate too well to conditions and lose our yearning for redemption. (See what has happened in modern times when exile is accompanied by G-d's Midat HaRachamim and people are quite comfortable, and therefore, complacent - a regrettable state of affairs. Comfortable is not bad; complacent is - it means "contented to a fault".)

In the opening pasuk of this week's sedra, we find the unusual combination of both names. It is ELOKIM Who speaks to Moshe, G-d Who has judged and treated the People strictly and harshly. (And G-d Who is also speaking harshly to Moshe for his outburst at the end of Parshat Sh'mot). However, His message to Moshe is "I am HASHEM" (which comes with VAYOMER, the softer "tell", rather than VAIDABEIR, the harsher "speak" that began the pasuk). And His words of hope and promise to the People begin with the same declaration, "I Am HASHEM". In this context, we are told that G-d will take the People out of Egypt, save them, redeem them, take them unto Him, be our G-d and ultimately bring us into the Promised Land. These stages of redemption are summed up with the reiteration of the statement, "I Am HaShem". It is as if G-d is saying to the down-hearted People: "until now you've experienced Me as ELOKIM, but rest assured that you will now see HASHEM - the G-d of Mercy - in full measure. The Egyptians on the other hand are being punished by the hand of G-d as ELOKIM. (see 5:15).

**[S> 6:2 (8)]** The sedra begins with G-d speaking to Moshe Rabeinu and telling him of the promises He had made to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Also, G-d tells Moshe that He has heard and is responding to the cries of the People of Israel.

[In other words, G-d will be taking us out of Egypt not only because of promises He had made to the Avot, but because of His feelings for us.]

Therefore, G-d will take the People out from under Egyptian oppression, will save them from bondage, and will redeem them with His might. He will then take the People to Him as a Nation and be our G-d. He will then bring us into Eretz Yisrael.

Moshe relates this to the People, who are too exhausted to listen.

**[P> 6:10 (3)]** G-d then tells Moshe to go to Par'o and demand the People's release. Moshe questions how Par'o

## VA'EIRA STATS

14th of the 54 sedras; 2nd of 11 in Sh'mot  
Written on 221.8 lines in a Sefer Torah; ranks 16  
16 parshiot; 8 open, 8 closed  
(above average for the Torah; avg. for Sh'mot)  
121 p'sukim - ranks 20th (4th in Shmot)  
1748 words - ranks 15th (3rd in Shmot)  
6701 letters - ranks 17th (3rd in Shmot)  
P'sukim are above average in length

## MITZVOT:

contains none of the TARYAG (613) mitzvot  
One of 17 (out of 54, that's 31.5%) sedras  
with no mitzvot counted among the 613

In the first 14 sedras of the Torah, from  
B'reishit through Va'eira, there are only 3 of  
the 613

If we go back four more sedras, we find  
only 5 of the 613 in 18 sedras from Nitzavim  
through Va'eira. Things will change next  
week, IY"H.

Mazal Tov to my Parents \*Aviva and \*Ohad  
Rubin on the occasion of my birth  
\*To me they will IY"H be Ima and Abba,  
when I learn to talk Love, Shoham

can be expected to listen, if the People (Moshe's own people) themselves didn't listen to him.

**SDT** G-d tells Moshe to go speak to Par'o (about letting the People go). Moshe "demurs", using the logical argument known as KAL VACHOMER - if the People of Israel (my own People) didn't listen to me, how is Par'o going to listen to me. Seems logical, but the Torah has told us why the people didn't listen to Moshe - they were utterly exhausted from their unusually difficult labors. If so, it does not follow logically that Par'o would not listen to Moshe. Maybe he would listen, not being exhausted. On the other hand, Moshe's KAL VACHOMER is based on his own statement - "I have a speech impediment".

In trying to understand his failure to reach the people, Moshe finds fault in himself, not in the People. This is how a leader should behave. When a rabbi or teacher fails to communicate an idea to his charges, he should not conclude that the fault lies with them - they are dumb; they are not committed enough; they are not paying attention; etc. He should rather be critical of himself - I probably didn't explain things well; I wasn't patient enough; etc. This is one of the signs of humility that is such a desirable characteristic in a leader. This was one of the many qualities that made Moshe Rabeinu The Leader and Teacher par excellence.

**[P> 6:13 (1)]** (Above Moshe's objections, so to speak.) G-d reiterates to Moshe and Aharon, that they are to tell the People as well as Par'o that the People will be leaving Egypt.

Note that this last pasuk of the first Aliya is one whole parsha. Single- pasuk parshiyot seem to say, LOOK AT ME. Perhaps, G-d is saying to Moshe - all your hesitations and protestations aside, it is time for TACHLIS. You and Aharon are going to tell/command the people and Par'o about leaving Egypt. Period.

## Levi - Second Aliya - 15 p'sukim - 6:14-28

**[S> 6:14 (15)]** The Torah begins to enumerate the names of the tribes and family groups. It is obvious that the intention here is not to review the whole of the nation, but rather to focus on Moshe & Aharon. The Torah starts the list with Reuven and Shimon, and when it gets to Levi, there is much more detail. In this brief section, we meet many of the "main personalities" of the rest of the Torah. The Torah is also giving us the ability to continue to draw the timeline of Jewish history, by giving us the ages at death of Levi (we already know the ages of the three previous generation, those of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov), his son Kehat, his son Amram. That brings us to Moshe and Aharon. We are also introduced to Korach and his sons and Aharon and his family.

**SDT** Although the purpose of this partial genealogy is to identify Aharon and Moshe, the Torah began with Reuven and Shimon before it gets to Levi. A reason offered for this in one of the sources is that since Yaakov Avinu spoke critically of these three sons, the Torah here lists only them, to teach us that they were important tribes despite their progenitors' "mistakes".

**SDT** There is a symbolic "reason" given for our name BNEI YISRAEL, rather than using the name of the other

Fathers or Mothers? YISRAEL is spelled YUD (Yitzchak & Yaakov), SIN (Sara), RESH (Rivka & Rachel), ALEF (Avraham), LAMED (Leah). The name YISRAEL then encompasses the names of all the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. This is not a real reason, but a nice way to look at our main name.

**SDT** When the Torah tells us who Aharon married, she is identified as Elisheva b. Aminadav AND as the sister of Nachshon. Rashi tells us that from here we learn that when a man marries a woman, he should check out her brothers (because children often take after their maternal uncles). The same idea was previously presented in reference to Lavan.

**SDT** On the Torah's statement: HU AHARON U MOSHE, Rashi points out that sometimes (mostly, 34 of 38 times they are mentioned with a connecting VAV) Moshe is mentioned first, and sometimes Aharon is mentioned first, to teach us that they were equals. (That is, on some levels, but on others, Moshe Rabeinu was obviously on a higher standing.)

## Shlishi - Third Aliya - 9 p'sukim - 6:29-7:7

**[S> 6:29 (2)]** After the "digression" of the previous passage, the Torah now repeats that G-d is sending Moshe to Par'o and that Moshe continues to "object" because of his speech-impediment.

BTW, ARAL S'FATAYIM has different meanings in commentaries. Literally, it means: I have uncircumcised lips, it is variously interpreted as, "I have a speech defect", "I can hardly speak", and "I have no self-confidence when I speak".

Rashi says that G-d did not repeat the command, nor did Moshe repeat his objection. It is the Torah that is putting us back where we left off before the genealogical data were presented.

**[P> 7:1 (7)]** G-d tells Moshe that Aharon will do the talking, that Par'o will refuse the repeated requests to free the People, and that He (G-d) will take His people out, and that it will be clear to Egypt (and everyone else) that it is indeed G-d Who is doing every-thing. Moshe and Aharon do as G-d instructs them; they are 80 and 83 years old respectively.

**Observation** When the Torah is specific about ages, it usually is meant to give us an accurate way of constructing a timeline. Perhaps too, in this case, the Torah is pointing out something that we saw very often in the book of B'reishit - namely, the prominence of the younger brother over the older one.

**SDT** How is it that Moshe Rabeinu is able to speak to the People of Israel throughout his "career" as leader, in light of the fact that he complained of being "speech impaired"? When Moshe spoke to the People of Israel, it was the Sh'china that spoke from his mouth. He had no trouble with his speech defect. He was, however, concerned when it came to speaking to Par'o. See 6:30.

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 28 p'sukim - 7:8-8:6

**[P> 7:8 (6)]** G-d tells Moshe and Aharon, that when Par'o asks for a sign, Moshe shall instruct Aharon to

throw down the Staff before Par'o and it will turn into a TANIN. Moshe and Aharon appear before Par'o and do as G-d has instructed them.

Rashi says that TANIN means NACHASH, snake or serpent. Not everyone see it that way. When G-d first had Moshe throw his staff down, it changed into a NACHASH, a snake. Here with Par'o, it changed into a TANIN. Strong possibility is that we are talking about a crocodile, venerated and worshiped by Egypt. Many Pharaohs identified with the crocodile as the ruling animal of the Nile.

Adds the Baal HaTurim, that the Tanin reverting to wood was a message to Par'o that just as the mighty crocodile turns to dry wood, so too will the mighty Par'o turn to dust and food for worms.

**SDI** *Baal HaTurim points out that the pasuk says: G-d says to Moshe that when Par'o will ask for a sign, you (Moshe) shall tell to Aharon to take your staff and throw it (on the ground) in front of Par'o, it shall become a TANIN. It didn't say: AND it will become a Tanin. He explains that the staff was thrown down and then he was to command it to become a Tanin. And that's what happened, to show Par'o the power of speech that G-d has given to Moshe. In other words, the staff did not change upon being thrown down. It changed by a spoken command. That carries a pointed message to Par'o that his wizards aren't even in the same class with Moshe and Aharon.*

Par'o calls his wizards who are able to duplicate (sort of) what Aharon does; however, Aharon's staff (note: not his TANIN) swallows those of the wizards. Nonetheless, Par'o refuses to listen to Moshe and Aharon, as G-d had said.

**[S> 7:14 (5)]** G-d then instructs Moshe to go to the river (Nile) in the morning, where Par'o will be, and to bring the Staff with him. Moshe is to say to Par'o that G-d has sent me (Moshe) to tell you (Par'o) to release the People and you have refused until now. "With this will you know Who G-d is..." Moshe (actually Aharon) will be striking the water of the river, turning it to blood and killing all the fish therein.

**[S> 7:19 (7)]** G-d tells Moshe to tell Aharon to take the Staff and strike the waters of Egypt. Moshe and Aharon do as instructed and the waters turn to blood, the fish die, and the Egyptians cannot drink the water. Par'o's wizards again duplicate what was done, causing Par'o to remain stubborn. Egyptians are forced to dig for water (and/or buy water from the Jews). This first plague lasts 7 days.

**[P> 7:26 (15)]** G-d next instructs Moshe to go to Par'o (at his palace) and warn him that if he does not let the People go, Egypt will be smitten by a plague of frogs. Aharon is to raise the Staff above the river, which he does, and the land is blanketed with frog(s). The wizards are again able to simulate this plague with their magical powers. Par'o calls to Moshe and Aharon to pray to G-d that the frogs be removed, promising that he will let the People go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to G-d. Moshe asks Par'o when he wants the frogs to leave. (A strange question, to which Par'o gives a stranger answer). Par'o says "tomorrow", to which Moshe responds "so be it. And that will serve as proof of G-d's powers".

**SDI** *Why would Par'o ask for the plague to be withdrawn on the following day? He and his people were certainly suffering and would want to rid themselves of the frogs as soon as possible. Par'o (still refusing to see the plagues as Divine, and assuming that there was some natural explanation for them) figured that Moshe came before him when he (Moshe) knew that the frogs would leave. Moshe would give the impression that he (in the name of the G-d of Israel) had power over the frogs. So Par'o tried to trick Moshe by asking the unexpected - do it tomorrow. Moshe's answer was that doing so would demonstrate that it was truly G-d's power that was being observed.*

Egypt saw itself as great because of the Nile and because of the fertile land created by the waters of the Nile. The first plague smote the water. The second was a plague that came from the river and attacked the land. The third smote the land itself.

## **Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 12 p'sukim - 8:7-18**

So it happens, and after the frogs are gone, Par'o reneges on his promise, as G-d had said he would (an oft-repeated phrase to indicate G-d's active role in the events of the Exodus).

**[S> 8:12 (4)]** G-d tells Moshe to tell Aharon to strike the dust of the earth (no warning to Par'o this time). The resultant plague of lice was not able to be matched by the wizards, who acknowledge G-d's might. Par'o remains stubborn.

**[S> 8:16 (13)]** G-d sends Moshe to warn Par'o about the next plague (swarms of insects or wild animals, depending upon which opinion you follow). New element with this fourth plague - the contrast between Egyptian and Jewish experiences.

There was always a contrast between the Egyptians and the Jews - Egyptians had no water during the first plague; the Jews had water. The Midrash even says that if a Jew and an Egyptian drank from the same cup, the Jew would be drinking water and the Egyptian would have blood. Similarly, the Jews did not suffer the plagues and the Egyptians did. Yet it seems that G-d had different messages for each of the plagues. (Or each set of 3 plagues.) AROV was the first plague that the distinction between Goshen and the Jews on one hand, and the land of Egypt and the Egyptians on the other, was so sharp.

## **Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 26 p'sukim - 8:19-9:16**

And so the AROV descend upon the land. Par'o calls for Moshe and gives permission for the people to sacrifice to G-d in Egypt. Moshe says that it must be in the wilderness.

Par'o agrees on the condition that Moshe pray for the removal of the plague. Afterwards, Par'o reneges.

**[P> 9:1 (7)]** G-d next sends Moshe back to Par'o to repeat the demand for the People's release and to warn him of the consequence of his refusal this time, namely DEVER. And so it happens that the livestock of the

Egyptians all die, with not a single loss to the Jews. This Par'o checks on, yet he still remains stubborn.

**[P> 9:8 (5)]** The sixth plague (boils) is brought upon Egypt without warning. Although his people are being seriously beaten, Par'o continues to resist (from this point on, with G-d's help).

**[S> 9:13 (9)]** Moshe is next sent to warn about the seventh (and very powerful) plague.

**SDI** *In warning about HAIL, G-d says (through Moshe) that this time, I will send ALL my plagues... The Vilna Ga'on explains that G-d uses three main weapons, so to speak, to punish those who violate His commands - Fire, Water, and Wind. For example, to destroy Dor HaMabul, G-d used Water. To disperse Dor HaP'laga, He used Wind, and to destroy S'dom, His main weapon was Fire. The plague of Blood used Water. Plague 6 was the burning Fire of Boils on the skin. The locust came on the Wind. But Hail consisted of the whole arsenal - the Hail itself was Water, it had Fire in it, and the Hail was accompanied by strong Wind.*

## **Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 19 p'sukim - 9:17-35**

The threat/warning about hail continues. Never has hail like this been seen. There is also a challenge to the Egyptians in that G-d is allowing servants and animals to be saved by taking them indoors.

**[P> 9:22 (14)]** Moshe raises his hand heavenward and the hail falls. It is extremely destructive, but some plants survive (because they were pliable), as do the animals of those Egyptians who heeded Moshe's warning to bring them indoors. Par'o admits that he has sinned and grants Moshe's demands, if only the hail will stop. When Par'o sees that the hail and thunder have stopped, he yet again reneges, as G-d has said he would. Maftir is the last 3 p'sukim.

## **Haftara - 23 p'sukim - Yechezkeil 28:25-29:21**

The Haftara begins with the prophecy of redemption (as does the sedra). The main connection to the sedra is that the Haftara speaks of the downfall of Egypt, albeit at different times in history. We also find in both the sedra and the Haftara, the extreme arrogance of the Par'o.

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

Lesson # 317 (part five, PIT part 3)

### **Damage caused by a Pit (BOR)**

We continue, as we shall IYH for many lessons, the laws of pit in halacha.

We shall now discuss the extent of liability of the person who dug the pit.

1. Regarding animals who were killed by falling into the pit:

a. If the animal is normal and grown, then there is liability if the

animal fell in at night.

b. If the animal is normal and grown, there is no liability if the animal fell in during the day.

c. If the animal is young, there is liability if the animal fell in during any time, day or night.

2. Regarding animals that were injured (as distinguished from being killed) by falling into the pit: Reuven is liable, irrespective of whether it is day or night.

3. Regarding persons who fell into the pit:

Reuven is not liable if the person was killed, regardless of the person's age or mental or physical capacity and whether day or night.

If the person who fell into the pit was injured (as distinguished from being killed)

a. If the person was normal there is liability if the person fell in at night

b. If the person was normal, there is no liability if the person fell in during the daytime.

c. If the person who fell in and was injured was mentally deficient, or a minor, Reuven is liable, whether day or night.

d. If the person who fell in was killed, there is no liability at any time to any person.

Reuven is not liable for any vessels belonging to Shimon that are damaged or destroyed by falling into the pit, regardless of the depth of the pit. This holds true whether the vessels fell into the pit together with the animal or person carrying them or wearing them, or fell by themselves into the pit when the animal or person fell into the pit. Reuven is liable for damage occurring to the ox, but not to the gear on it.

The highway department, when fixing a road, leaves a large uncovered hole in the road. Shimon drives down the road at less than the maximum speed permitted on that particular road. Shimon does not see the hole in the road and drives right into it. Shimon is killed and the car is destroyed. The highway department has no halachic liability since the tort of pit does not compensate for death caused to a person by a pit and also there is no liability for damages done to vessels (the automobile) that fall into a pit. In many countries there may be liability based on local legislation and that may be binding under the doctrine of Dina d'Malchuta Dina, following the laws of the land.

Aryeh tells Reuven to dig a pit, which Reuven does. Shimon falls into the pit and is injured. Reuven is liable, Aryeh is not. [There is a general principle in halacha that if Aryeh instructs Reuven to transgress the law and Reuven does so, Reuven is liable and Aryeh has no liability.] There is an exception if Reuven does not know that the place in which Aryeh instructs him to dig is a public street and Reuven digs there erroneously assuming it is Aryeh's domain. Aryeh is liable in such a case. Aryeh is also liable if the person he tells to dig the pit is not legally competent, such as a deaf-mute, a mentally deficient person, or a minor.

Instances of non-liability or termination of liability

There are instances where Reuven is not liable for damages caused by the pit that he has dug. Reuven digs a pit in the public street. He then covers the pit with an appropriate cover. Somehow Shimon's ox fell into the pit and is killed. Reuven is free of liability. Even if the cover was on the pit for some time and became worn out or worm-eaten, Reuven is still not liable.

At the time when the law developed an "appropriate cover" was meant to be able to hold the weight of a wagon laden with stones or the traffic that used a public street. Nowadays it would probably mean a cover that could bear the weight of a laden truck. Reuven must anticipate that there might be an extraordinary heavy vehicle that might come through some day, even if it would be remote for such a community. If the cover was appropriate, Reuven is liable, even if the ox fell into the pit was a normal ox. The ox cannot tell the difference between an appropriate cover and one that is not.

Reuven covers his pit with Naftali's cover without permission from Nafatli. Naftali removes the cover. Reuven is liable for any damage subsequently occurring. Reuven covers his pit with a cover that can bear the weight of oxen but not of camels. Camels are heavier than oxen and are more apt to break or roll the cover away. A camel walks on the cover and weakens it. Then Shimon's ox walks on the cover and falls into the pit. Reuven's liability depends upon the frequency of camels coming into that area. If it is unusual, then Reuven is free of liability. If they frequent the area, then he is liable since he should have anticipated the camels coming there and weakening the cover that he placed over the pit. This applies only to Reuven's liability for causing injury or death of the oxen that fall into the pit after the camels have loosened or weakened its cover. However, should a camel fall into the covered pit, he is liable even if the camels are not frequent passersby in the area. If a cover that is not sufficient to hold a camel becomes worm-eaten and an ox falls into the pit despite the cover, Reuven is not liable. There is also an opinion that Reuven is liable under these circumstances.

YH in the next lesson we shall discuss a pit involving more than one person and sub categories of pit.

*The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume X chapter 410 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

## Blessing on the Seven Species

While we are required to make a blessing on any food we eat, there are special rules for the "seven species", the seven kinds of produce mentioned in the Torah as the praise of the Land of Israel: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranate, olives, and dates (D'varim 8:8). These kinds of produce have priority over other kinds in making a first blessing (SA OC 211), and they have a special long after-blessing ("one like three" - SA OC 208).

Rav Natan of Breslav explains how this rule serves to connect all of our blessings to the praise of the Land of Israel. The unique quality of the Land of Israel, writes Rav Natan, is that there we have a heightened perception of God's sovereignty. "The principle characteristic of the Land of Israel is that there it becomes revealed that Hashem created the entire world, and

grants it to whom He wishes". Rav Natan mentions Rashi's commentary at the very beginning of the Torah, where Rashi explains that the importance of the Creation narrative is to fulfill the verse, "The might of His acts He retold to His people, to give them the inheritance of nations" - He told us of the Creation in order that we would understand the legitimacy of our claim to the Land of Israel. Since He created the world, He is able to give of it to whom He wishes.

This has an intimate connection with the gemara's explanation of the source of the obligation to make blessings: one verse states, "The land and its fullness belong to Hashem; the world and all its inhabitants" (T'hilim 24:1). Yet another verse says, "The heavens are the heavens of Hashem, but the land He has given to man" (Tehillim 115:16). The gemara explains that the first verse is before we make a blessing; at first everything belongs to Hashem. The second verse applies after we bless; once we acknowledge His ownership He gives us the right to eat the earth's produce (Berakhot 35a).

Thus, both the land of Israel and the blessing on food remind us that fundamentally the entire world belongs to God, but both also remind us that He desires to grant of His possession to those who do His will, particularly those who have an elevated appreciation of His presence. Thus, He has divided the earth among the nations, and in particular reserved the land of Israel for the people of Israel; and furthermore He allows us to eat food once we make a blessing.

The connection between these two concepts is strengthened by the fact that even the verses referring to food refer also to the land of Israel. Rashi's commentary to T'hilim explains that the "land" in the first verse refers to the land of Israel, while the "world" in the same verse refers to the rest of the world. Before the blessing, the world is divided into the land of Israel, where God's sovereignty is evident, and the rest of the world. But after the blessing only "the land" is mentioned. By making a blessing and acknowledging Hashem's mastery, we in effect draw the sanctity of the land of Israel to the entire world, and thus we experience in all foods the unique level of Providence which is otherwise evident only in the produce of the land of Israel. - (Likutei Halakhot Blessing on Fruit 2)

*Rabbi Asher Meir has two wonderful books in print - Meaning in Mitzvot (ask for it at your local s'farim store) and The Jewish Ethicist, available at some bookstores and through the Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem, (02) 632-0222. Both works are highly recommended*

## TANACH

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

#### "Grant me a burial place" [2]

"And Avraham arose from the presence of his dead and spoke to the sons of Heth"; as the laws of mourning only apply when the body is buried (Ketubot 47b), Avraham was allowed to go out in public, but to busy himself only in attending to her burial, like any other mourner" (Soforno). "According to Sanhedrin (46b), Sarah's funeral was delayed until Avraham's arrival, therefore verse 3 reverses the normal order that is, of first weeping for the dead and then eulogizing them, whereas here Avraham first eulogizes her and then retires to mourn her" (Ha'amek Devar).

Although there were other clans in Hevron, the children of Heth ben Canaan were the leading family there and therefore Avraham addressed himself to them in connection with acquiring a sepulcher in their territory, thereby assuring himself that the Ma'arat HaMachpela would remain the uncontested property of his descendants for ever (Akeidat Yitschak). He consulted the whole community in order to avoid the sale later being challenged by the Din of Bar Metzra, whereby the adjacent property owner or owners has the right of first refusal; a law that is considered an example of Lifnim MiShurat HaDin, not flowing from law but rather a law embodying Chesed. The whole nature of the public negotiations for the purchase and the repeated requests that he makes for the official witnessing and approval of the sale by the proper authorities, highlights his desire to ensure its eternal validity. For the same reason, when summing up the whole transaction, the text (23:17) specifically notes the exact location of the field being bought as 'in Machpela facing Mamre', and clearly delineates that what Avraham bought was the field, the cave and all the trees within its boundaries; nothing is left in doubt as to the legality of the sale. Based on this verse, the Sages taught that one who sells a field must enumerate all its distinctive features and boundaries (Mishna, Bava Batra 68b-69b). "This validity is conveyed by the phrase which sums up the sale VAYAKAM HASADEH (verse 17), meaning that the deed of sale was validated by the signatories (Soforno, following Rambam's interpretation of VAYAKAM). The detailing of the transaction is reminiscent of the halachic principle that real estate, unlike movable property, is not considered an asset that can be stolen since there is always tangible knowledge of ownership.

At the very outset of the transaction we are told: "Then Avraham rose up and bowed to the Am Ha'aretz [a term denoting in Biblical Hebrew, a council of elders] of the sons of Heth [in gratitude not in servitude' (Avraham ben HaRambam)]; to teach us that gratitude was to be shown to them since it was in their honor that Efron who was a member of the council would agree to his request" (Soforno). "Although the Torah avoids unnecessary repetition or explanation, nevertheless, 'the children of Heth' is repeated no less than 10 times [8 times in this chapter and again in 25:10 and 49:32]. This corresponds to the number of the 10 Commandments, to teach that one who helps a purchase by a righteous person is considered as though they have fulfilled the 10 Commandments [since the article bought will now be put to a pure and lofty use]" (B'reishit Rabba). Avraham honored them though they were pagans, even as our sources teach that the verse: "In the presence of an old person shall you rise up" refers to our duty to respect old age irrespective of the person concerned. After all, if Hashem granted them long life, then they must be deserving of His gift. The second part of the same verse: "You shall honor a zaken" (Vayikra 19:32), refers to one who is a sage, irrespective of his age. However, there is no obligation to honor either if they are wicked (Yoreh Deah, 244:1); Rambam taught that we do not mourn for an APIKORES or a MUMAR LEHACHIS (Hilkhos Avel 1:10).

The council of the sons of Heth replies to Avraham that far from being a stranger and a sojourner, he is a veritable 'Prince of G-d in their midst'. "They saw that G-d had made him a king over them" (Ramban); alternatively that, "he was one elevated by G-d and so considered by them" (Radak). "Despite their great respect for him, while everyone of them would be willing to let him bury Sara in their burial places, they could not agree to his request for an achuza - family sepulcher, as their common

law stipulated that only natives could possess such burial sites" (Malbim B'reishit 23:6).

Yet Avraham wanted a permanent sepulcher for his wife; "As we learn in Bava Batra 112a, it is degrading for the righteous to be buried in alien soil" (Ha'amek Davar). "For the Ma'arat HaMachpela signifies that that cave had a special relationship to pairs - MACHPELA, double, as does Hevron being derived from CHAVER, to unite or to attach. So the very first Jewish possession in the Promised Land was a place that stood for the attachment of husband and wife. In later generations the morning service in the Temple could only commence when the lookout there saw the sun's rays strike the tomb of the Avot and Imahot. So the future generations would be linked to their ancestors, teaching that KIBUD AV VA'EM is a necessary preparation for honoring G-d" (Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, (B'reishit 23:19).

*This is the 113th installment in Dr. Tamari's series on "Tanach and its messages for our times"*

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

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

**Q:** I work in a special ed. setting, where the following halachic issues arise. May one answer Amen to the b'racha of a mentally disabled (= MEDI) child, who is not expected to ever be obligated in mitzvot? When teaching them b'rachot, can one pronounce Hashem's name? Is there a point to teach them mitzvot if they will never be obligated in them?

**A:** We cannot discuss which mental handicaps cause people to have which halachic standing; such determinations are too complicated and individual for this forum. Rather, we will use the term "MEDI" for whoever it is that meets your halachic assumptions. We will touch on the laws regarding a CHERESH

and a SHOTEH (loosely rendered as deaf-mute and lunatic, respectively) and a child, who are often bunched together as those who are exempt from mitzvot (Rosh Hashana 29a). We will not deal with your questions in an exhaustive manner, but we hope to add perspective and give some guidelines.

It is inaccurate to say that the Torah's laws do not apply to those who are exempt from mitzvot. For example, it is forbidden to feed non-kosher food to a child (Yevamot 114a), a CHERESH or a SHOTEH (Chatam Sofer (I, 83)). Rather, they are personally exempt from responsibility for mitzvot because they lack the level of understanding that such commitment requires (see Pri Megadim's Peticha Kollelet 2:1). Since people who are exempt from a mitzva receive reward for fulfilling it (Bava Kama 87a), one might posit that there is intrinsic value in the MEDI performing mitzvot. However, the MEDI is worse off than one with a local exemption because his actions lack the level of cognitive intent that others have (see Chulin 12b).

On the other hand, although a minor also lacks full intent (ibid.), he is instructed to perform mitzvot he is capable of (Sukka 42a); furthermore, he does so with b'rachot to which we answer Amen (Shulchan Aruch, OC 215:3). (It is forbidden to answer Amen to an unauthorized beracha - ibid.:5). A possible explanation is that since there is a mandate to train him to perform mitzvot (chinuch), his mitzvot and b'rachot have halachic standing. In contrast, the mitzvot and b'rachot of one whose prognosis is that he will never be obligated in mitzvot (and he thus apparently lack the laws of chinuch - see Encyclopedia Talmudit, XVI, 169) would lack such standing. However, a different possibility is that the mitzvot and b'rachot of anyone who is capable of carrying them out with a basic understanding of He who commands and what He commands is significant.

A test case is a child under "the age of chinuch" (see Rivash 451) who is able to make a b'racha with reasonable understanding. The Mishna B'rura (215:16) and Yabia Omer (II, OC 13) say that one should not answer Amen. However, Rav Bakshi (Binyan Av I, 8) notes that most people answer Amen to pre-schoolers' b'rachot and substantiates the approach that the child's basic understanding of what he is doing makes this appropriate. He mentions that the same is likely true for a CHERESH and SHOTEH. Rav Sh. Z. Orbach is reported to have answered Amei, without the "n," in an inconspicuous manner (Halichot Shlomo 22:20).

Rav Orbach has two important ideas that enable one to teach and respond to b'rachot of MEDI. First, he says that at least many of them should not be compared to a SHOTEH, whose problem are psychological, or to a CHERESH, who has a specific condition the Torah addresses. Rather, MEDI is analogous to a child. One of bar mitzva age who is on the level of PE'UTOT (an average six year old or so) is obligated in mitzvot, although he is not culpable like others (Minchat Shlomo 34). (Thus, one should train them even as children - Nishmat Avraham V, pg. 80 in Rav Feinstein's name). He is also quoted as saying that one can use Hashem's Name in teaching severely MEDI (but not answer Amen) because it is of value to enable them to fit into their surroundings as much as possible (Halichot Shlomo 22:(70)).

## BONUS Q&A

**Q:** It has become popular to buy necklaces containing a passage from the Torah that is pertinent to the wearer.

Does this cause problems and, if so, how does one solve them?

**A:** The Rambam (Shut 268) was asked about a talit with p'sukim embroidered on it. The Rambam, whose ruling was accepted by the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 284:2), objected to the matter on two grounds (we are lenient on the first - Taz, YD 284:1; Shach ad loc.:3). His major issue is that we need to fear that one will enter the bathroom with the talit, thus disgracing the p'sukim. One could use this source to prohibit the jewelry in question outright. However, there are poskim who have allowed people to wear scrolls hanging from their body (see some sources in Tzitz Eliezer XVI 30). We should note that most of the poskim discussed people who wore p'sukim for the specific purpose of Divine protection, which is not usually the case these days. Also most people we have asked who wear this jewelry have admitted that they not infrequently enter the bathroom without taking the necessary steps (see below). Thus, this jewelry appears to be against the Rambam's and poskim's spirit, if not letter, of the law.

How should one who does wear it act? One cannot bring a Sefer Torah into a bathroom even after covering it (Shulchan Aruch, YD 282:4). Under normal circumstances, one can take T'filin into a bathroom only with two coverings, one of which is not naturally used for them (Mishna Berura 43:24). However, the Magen Avraham (43:14) permits bringing Torah scrolls with a lower status than that of a Sefer Torah or T'filin into a bathroom with one covering. The Radvaz (III, 513) shares this view, although he recommends relying on one covering only when the article was written in a script other than K'tav Ashurit (block, Hebrew characters used in a Sefer Torah). The Shulchan Aruch (ibid.:6) also says that one may bring an amulet, which includes words of Torah and/or names of Hashem, into a bathroom in a leather covering. Most poskim assume that amulets and leather coverings are just common examples of a general rule (see Tzitz Eliezer XI 5). The Mishna Berura (43:25) brings the Magen Avraham but mentions those who require two coverings.

All writings on Torah topics have kedusha and cannot be discarded disrespectfully (Shulchan Aruch, ibid.:5) or brought exposed into a bathroom. However, those that contain one of Hashem's names are on a higher level. For example, teachers write and erase Divrei Torah and p'sukim on boards, which they could not do if Hashem's names appeared (Minchat Yitzchak I, 18, citing the Tashbetz). We also write Divrei Torah in notes but only hint at His name for fear of what might become of it. Thus, leniency in the aforementioned issues is easier when His name doesn't appear.

It is difficult to claim that the issues apply only to a full pasuk. Various laws of respect for Torah texts apply to even three or four words (see Shulchan Aruch, YD 283:3 & 284:2). If the words express a coherent Torah thought, it is no less than Divrei Torah that are not p'sukim. There is one exception, which may apply in some cases at hand. If the words are borrowed from the Torah to be used as a catch phrase to describe a friend(ship) (e.g., ani l'dodi...), they may have no restrictions (based on Shulchan Aruch, ibid.; some argue - see Shach, ad loc.). However, usually the phrase is intended to recall its Torah content (e.g., "im eshkaheich...").

We often attempt to justify customs even when their correctness is questionable. However, not every practice is a custom, and the rabbinic reaction to a practice helps determine whether it becomes a custom. It is nice to see how popular Torah has become. However, our "vote" is that p'sukim are better in sefarim than on jewelry (or T-shirts). This fashion causes

halachic problems for all and is forbidden for one who is not careful. If one does wear this jewelry, she can bring it into a bathroom covered by clothes or something else (two covers are preferable but not necessary). Hashem's names should not be spelled out, and it is better if Torah letters are not used.

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

## [2] Candle by Day

One who is more aware of the workings of the evil inclination will be less likely to succumb to it, not only in that he is thereby better able to combat it, but also in that his pride will revolt against his being taken in by what he can recognize as an obvious maneuver to take him in.

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

*A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World Of Chazal by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein, Now available at 054-209-9200*

## [3] CHIZUK and IDUD

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

Parshat Sh'mot ended with God's criticism of Moshe: "Now you will see what I will do to Par'o. Through a strong hand he will send them away..." But who doesn't feel for Moshe and the Jewish people, of whom it says, "Their spirit was broken"? The message: Once the process of redemption begins, even if it seems as if we are moving back-wards, we are not, though this may not be evident until we have reached the final end.

The Vilna Gaon taught that regarding the redemption, there is no going backwards. Some things happen that seem to be acts of mercy, while others appear to be the very opposite. Don't worry, taught the Vilna Gaon, they all contribute to the redemption of the Jewish people.

These words are profoundly relevant today. For 50 years we had lived with the belief that the return of Eretz Israel to Jewish control was part of the final redemption. After portions of that land were given up last summer, it was easy to become distraught and to entertain doubts.

However, a deeper understanding reveals the following: It is precisely because Jewish control of the Holy Land is part of the redemption process that opposing forces have arisen to interfere with our progress. This is to discourage us from continuing our holy work of settling the land.

Despite the signs of "kotzer ru'ach" in our own time, may we, God willing, soon witness the fulfillment of God's promise of a Final Redemption.

**Rabbi Pinchas Winston, Telz Stone**

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

A rabbi who was collecting money for hachnasat kalla came to R' Akiva Lehrn of Amsterdam and asked him for a donation. R' Akiva discovered that he was a great Torah scholar, and they spent much time talking in learning. Finally, R' Akiva gave the man a very generous gift, and said:

"I want you to promise me that when you reach Frankfurt you will see Baron Rothschild and tell him how much R' Akiva of Amsterdam gave you."

The rabbi was astonished at this request, for he couldn't understand how a man as righteous as R' Akiva could be conceited. R' Akiva, though, insisted on this condition, and would not let him go until he had promised to fulfill it.

The rabbi arrived in Frankfurt and met Baron Rothschild. "Excuse me sir, but R' Akiva Lehrn insisted that I promise to tell you what I would have preferred not mentioning." He then told the baron of the amount that R' Akiva Lehrn had given him.

"Do not worry," said the baron. "R' Akiva and I have an agreement. He knows that I am very busy and am unable to take the time find out who represents worthy causes. R' Akiva has taken upon himself that whenever he finds someone worthy he will let me know how much he gave, and I will give the man ten times that amount."

*Shmuel Himmelstein has written a wonderful series for ArtScroll: Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit; A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit; and "Wisdom and Wit" — available at your local Jewish bookstore (or should be). Excerpted with the permission of the copyright holder*

## [5] Parsha Points to Ponder - VA'EIRA

1) Why does this week's Parsha record the names of Moshe's parents, Amram and Yocheved, while in Parshat Sh'mot, when Moshe was born, they were described as simply A MAN OF LEVI and A DAUGHTER OF LEVI with no mentions of their names?

2) Why does the Torah use the word VAYITZ'AK to describe Moshe's prayer to end the plague of frogs (8:8) while to end the plague of AROV (wild animals) the word VAYE'TAR is used? (8:26)

3) The Torah relates that during the plague of dever, FROM THE FLOCK OF THE JEWS NOT ONE (ECHAD) DIED." (9:6) Why does the Torah add the word AD when Pharaoh checks to see if the Jews were spared during this plague by relating AND BEHOLD FROM THE FLOCKS OF THE JEWS THERE DID NOT EVEN ONE (AD ECHAD) DIED?" (9:7)

## THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

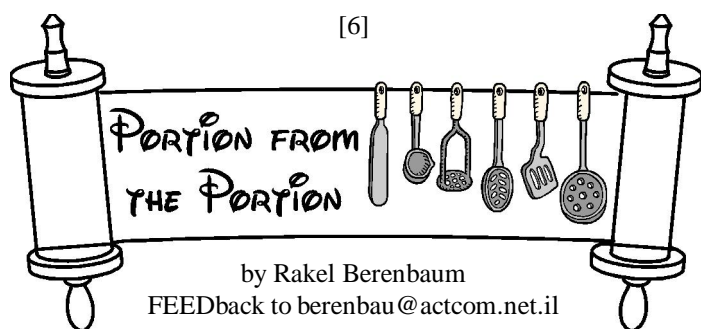
Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) Rav Moshe Feinstein answers that the Torah is emphasizing that when a child is born, no credit should be given to the parents since the child only has potential at that point in time. Therefore, their names are insignificant at that time. However, once the child matures and begins to accomplish in life, as Moshe certainly did by the time he appeared before Pa'ro, then the names of their parents are very significant. They deserve credit for all of their hard work in helping the child to achieve success in life.

2) Our Sages teach (Yevamot 64) that the prayers of the righteous are called VAYE'TAR based on the word ETAR which means a shovel. Just like an ETAR turns over crops from one place to the other, so, too, the prayers of the righteous turn over the attribute of G-D from anger to compassion. Based on this, the Chatam Sofer explains that at the conclusion of the plague of frogs, the anger of G-D was not completely transformed to mercy since when the frogs died, there remained a terrible stench which continued to serve as some element of punishment. Therefore, the word VAYE'TAR could not be used. However, the plague of AROV was removed in its entirety so the word VAYE'TAR was appropriate.

3) The Vilna Gaon answers based on the story later in the Torah (Vayikra 24:10-23) regarding a man who cursed G-d. He was the child of an Egyptian father and a Jewish mother - the only Jewish woman who strayed in this manner. Ramban teaches that prior to the giving of the Torah, Jewish genealogy was determined based on the father. Therefore, this fellow was an Egyptian and, as a result, his flocks died during this plague. Thus, in reality NOT ONE of the Jewish owned animals died. Pa'ro did not know that this man, who lived in the Jewish camp, was the child of an Egyptian father. Therefore, from Pa'ro's perspective, there was one Jew whose animals died. The Torah records what Pa'ro saw - in the Jewish camp NONE AD ECHAD which also means NONE UNTIL ONE died meaning the animals of one did die. As a result, the next verse records that Pa'ro's heart became hard, since he saw that Jewish owned animals also died.

*Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman Mashgiach Ruchani, Yeshivat Yesodei HaTorah in Bet Shemesh, author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith", soon to be republished by Feldheim - ppp@israelcenter.co.il*



During four of the ten plagues; frogs, harmful creatures, locusts and hail, Pa'ro asked Moshe to pray to Hashem to remove them from his land. Each time Moshe prayed and the plague was lifted. For the plague of frogs it says that Moshe "cried out" in prayer VAYITZAK.

This word is used in many places to refer to prayer (Sh'mot 17:4, Bamidbar 12:13). But there are ten words that are used to refer to prayer. What is the Torah trying to teach us by choosing this specific word, "screamed", for prayer, in this place? The frogs were everywhere in Egypt, "in your palace, in your bedroom, and even in your bed. (They will also be in) the homes of your officials and people, even in your ovens and kneading bowls. When the frogs emerge, they will be all over you, your people, and your officials." (Sh'mot 7:28-29) The noise level of all those croaking frogs was unbearable for the Egyptians. This part of the plague was a punishment MIDAH NEGED MIDAH, measure for measure, tit-for-tat for the

Egyptians' shouting at the Jewish people to work faster. Or because the Jewish women had been afraid to shout out during child labor, in case the Egyptians would hear them and take away their babies.

Since the frogs were croaking so loudly, Moshe wouldn't have heard himself if he had prayed in a regular voice. Therefore he screamed out his prayer.

That brings us to a practical question about our own prayers. How much do we ourselves need to hear the words that we are praying? The Gemara in Brachot says that for Kriyat Shema and Birkat Hamazon "one should let his ears hear what his mouth is uttering", and should be said in a loud voice. The Amida (Sh'mona Esrei), on the other hand, is said in a quiet voice, as we learn from the prayers of Chana, Sh'muel HaNavi's mother, who "spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard" (Sh'mu'el Alef 1:13).

All this we learn from the use of the word VAYITZAK - he screamed out.

The following salad recipe is not made with real frogs' eyes, but is so named because the little pastas look like frog eyes. Maybe you can fold your napkins origami style to look like frogs.

## FROGS-EYE SALAD

- 1 cup acini di pepe macaroni (soup macaroni, little o-macaroni) P'TITIM
- 1 can crushed pineapple, drained (20 oz. / 568 ml.)
- 1 can mandarin oranges, drained (11 oz. / 313 ml.)
- 1 can chunked pineapple, drained (20 oz. / 568 ml.)
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 c. pineapple juice
- 1 beaten egg
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 cups whipped topping
- Optional: 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- Optional: ½ cup coconut

Cook macaroni with a drop oil and salt, drain.

To make dressing, combine sugar, flour and salt. Gradually stir in juice and egg. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Add lemon juice and cool to room temperature. Stir cooled dressing into cooked and cooled macaroni. Chill in refrigerator overnight in airtight container. Stir in remaining ingredients when ready to serve. Toss well. May be kept as long as a week in the refrigerator. Serves 12.

## [7] Torah from Nature

If the 4th plague AROV was Wild Animals (there are different opinions), then be aware of the following:

The most ferocious biters among mammals aren't lions, tigers, or wolves, but meat-eating marsupials, a new study says.

Scientists in Australia estimated, for the first time, the bite force of a wide range of mammalian carnivores. The researchers found that, pound for pound, the Tasmanian devil is the most powerful biter alive today.

## FROGS

There are around 3,900 species of tailless amphibians, or Anura, also called Salientia, including the frog and toad. Besides them, there are tailed amphibians (salamanders and newts) and worm-like amphibians... When a frog swallows a meal, his bulgy eyeballs will close and go down into his head! This is because the eyeballs apply pressure and actually push a frog's meal down his throat... Most frogs have teeth of a sort... ridge of very small cone teeth around the upper edge of the jaw... and on the roof of their mouth... frogs range 1-30cm. and more.

## [8] MicroUlpan

**Laissez-faire** (remember this from 6th grade social studies?) Noninterference in the affairs of others (particularly, of gov't in private enterprise). In Hebrew?

## SHEV V'HANACH

## [9] Divrei Menachem

In this day and age when alliances are made with nation states and Israel leans on its international partners for its safety and security, we would be wise to take counsel from the words of the haftara (additional portion) of this week's parsha, Va'eira.

In a clear reference to the approaching demise of ancient Egypt spelt out in our parsha, the prophet Yehezkiel relates to Israel's treaty with Egypt in later days whereby the Jewish people depend on the Egyptians to defend them against their common enemy, Babylon.

However, the prophet envisions that like the former Pharaoh of Egypt, who in his arrogance proclaimed himself to be the god who created the Nile, the then Pharaoh - an inflated and bogus ally - would be banished by the Babylonians to his homeland, chastened and powerless. The goal is more than the ruin of a major power, however. In addition to its diminishment, Egypt would, "No more be for the House of Israel a guarantor... and they [the Egyptians] shall know that I am the Lord, G-d" (cf. Malbim on Yehezkiel 29:16).

But that is not enough. For even as Israel is vindicated and the House of Israel dwells securely in the Land and G-d executes judgment on those who disdain his Chosen People - therein lies a message: Because, then, the Jewish people will internalize where the real alliances lie, "For they [too] shall know that I am Hashem" (ibid 29:21).

**Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff**

## Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

YL pointed out a spelling mistake that made last week's TBDATR incomplete.

VA-TI-RENA, they feared

VA-TIR-ENA, they saw

VA-TIR-E\*NA, they grazed

All in Tanach, sound similar but different.

K'R'I'AT SH'MA - focus on SH'VA NA

Remember that a SH'VA NA adds a slight vowel sound to the letter it's under; a SH'VA NACH does not. There are 92 SH'VA NAs in SH'MA. 74 of them are at the beginning of a word and cannot really be read incorrectly. SH'MA, not SHMA. Another 11 follow a SH'VA NACH. These too cannot be said wrong. NAF-SH'CHA. NACH under the FEI, NA under the SHIN. That leaves only 7 SH'VA NAs to focus on. Two are under letters with a DAGESH CHAZAK. HADD'VARIM. The DALET is stressed and there is a short vowel sound with it. Almost as if the syllables are HAD and D'VA-RIM. Not HAD-VARIM. M'TZAVV'CHA. This one is more common to say incorrectly. Not M'TAV and CHA, but M'TAV connected to V'CHA. The remaining five are often read carelessly. L'VA-V'CHA (not L'VAV-CHA), V'TI-RO-SH'CHA (not V'TIROSH-CHA), B'SA-D'CHA (not B'SAD-CHA), HI-SHA-M'RU (not HI-SHAM-RU), V'NA-T'NU (not V'NAT-NU).

Sometimes, a "sloppy" pronunciation of a word, stressing the wrong syllable in a word, even pausing in the wrong place in a verse can cause the meaning of the words to change. This is a "serious" error and in the case of Torah Reading needs correction by rereading a phrase or verse correctly.

NACHing a SH'VA NA or NAing a NACH can make a difference in meaning, as in VA-YIR-U, and they saw, in contrast to VA-YI-R'U, and they feared. (The former is spelled with one YUD; the latter is most often spelled with two. But there is at least one instance in Tanach where VA-YI-R'U is spelled exactly like VA-YIR -U and the only distinction between the words is the SH'VA NA and NACH under the REISH.

The 7 words from Sh'ma that were flagged do not change meaning is their SH'VAs are NACHed. These would not be classified as "serious" error, merely "sloppy" pronunciations. But when we read the Torah, recite the Sh'ma, or talk to G-d in prayer, we should be diligent.

## 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.*

## Meir Enters the Beit HaMokeid - A Story

The Kohanim of the Mishmeret had gathered outside the northern side of Beit HaMokeid (Chamber of the Hearth) when suddenly the massive doors swung open revealing the jovial Rosh Mishmeret. "B'ruchim Haba'im Be'sheim Hashem". Not

surprisingly, the minute the Kohanim crossed the threshold, they suddenly became quiet. True, strictly speaking, they were not yet on holy ground, but even so, the Kohanim were longer part of this mundane world. The Mikdash had worked its magic! Though he had been serving in the Mikdash for decades, Meir suddenly felt a familiar sense of awe. Cognizant of the awesome responsibility he "and his brothers the priests" bore, he promised himself that he would be the best and the most conscientious Kohein he could. He would make his ancestor Aaron proud of him! He knew before Whom he was standing! The Rosh Mishmeret interrupted Meir's reverie when he started reading a list of names from a sheet of paper. No one was missing.

A large domed building, Beit Hamokeid was so named because of the fire that was continually kept burning there. Preparations for the daily Avoda began before dawn and the Kohanim who rose long before sunup slept there. The walls were lined with stone step-like structures upon which they would sleep; the older Kohanim would sleep on top, the younger Kohanim would sleep lower down, and the youngest slept on the floor. Balancing his mattress, one of the novices leaned over and whispered to Meir, "What's that big metal ring jutting out of the floor?" Meir explained that the keys of the Mikdash were kept in a hollow underneath. "Every night, the Segan (Deputy Kohein Gadol), the Rosh Mishmeret, and the Ish Har HaBayit, who is charge of Mikdash security (Midot 1:2), make the rounds of the Mikdash and make sure all the doors are locked. When they are finished, they bring the keys here. They lift a slab of stone by means of the ring, slip the keys into a hole underneath, and replace the stone. Then one of the younger Kohanim will sleep on top of it (Midot 1:9). At night we seal the doors of Beit HaMokeid shut from the inside and Leviyim stand guard outside." Without further ado, the Rosh Mishmeret led them through a small chamber located in the northwest corner of Beit HaMokeid and down a winding, illuminated stairway, which led to a large underground hall called the Chamber of Immersion. The Kohanim used the Mikva'ot there even if ritually pure because no Kohein, Levi or Yisrael could enter the Azara unless he had previously immersed (Yoma 3:3). The au naturel Kohanim lined up and one after the other plunged into the freezing water. Meir screamed. He had forgotten how ice-cold the subterranean Mikva'ot could be! Shivering, the Kohanim towed themselves dry and dressed. Fortunately, the Leviyim always kept a roaring fire going for the benefit of the freezing Kohanim! There were also bathrooms for their use.

Leading the parade, the Rosh Mishmeret led his charges into the Azara where Lishkat Pinchas HaMalbish was located. Built into the wall north of the Nicanor Gate, this storeroom contained the Bigdei Kehuna, the priestly garments. Meir was explaining to one of the younger Kohanim. "There are 96 compartments in Lishkat Pinchas HaMalbish... where they keep the Bigdei Kehuna. Each Mishmeret has four compartments, making 96, since there are 24 Mishmarot. The name of each Mishmeret is inscribed on its four compartments and they are always kept locked. Each Mishmeret has four compartments, one for each different priestly garment. When Kohanim of a new Mishmeret arrive, the "Keeper of the Vestments", together with the Rosh Mishmeret, open the Mishmeret's compartments and distribute the garments." (Note Rambam, Hilchot Klei HaMikdash 8:8,9). The Keeper of the Vestments and his efficient staff were very busy. The Mishmarot are divided into a number of Batei Av (family units), and daily, new groups of Kohanim arrive at Pinchas

HaMalbish, and the Keeper of the Vestments supervises their outfitting. (He also has to make sure that the Kohanim return their Bigdei Kehuna before leaving Mikdash grounds so they can be sent to the Mikdash laundry for cleaning and repairs.) When the Kohanim donned their Bigdei Kehuna, they sometimes found that some garments were too big and some were too small. Experienced by now, the Kohanim traded among themselves and miraculously, everyone ended up with garments that fit. ("Mikdash Central Supply" never seemed to understand that the garments that they provided had to fit the Kohanim perfectly, and Kohanim, by nature, come in different sizes. If a Kohein performed the Avoda wearing Bigdei Kehuna that were either too long or too short, the Avoda was invalid!)

Suitably garbed, the Kohanim returned to Beit HaMokeid and got a tour of the building. "Do all of you see these marking on the floor? South of the markings is holy ground. Do not sit down or do anything else inappropriate south of the markings. Your living space is north of the markings." Then they sat down for their evening meal and the first time ate Kodashim. The Rosh Mishmeret reminded them, "Don't forget. Even though you are pure and you just immersed in a Mikve, before eating Kodashim, you still must immerse your hands in a Mikve." After they finished their repast and said Birkat HaMazon, the Segan, who had joined them, got up and said a few words. He then invited the Kohanim to ask any questions they might have on the Avoda. The Rosh Mishmeret made a few announcements and then brought up a point about which there had been a misunderstanding. After acknowledging that the language of the "Mikdash Manual of Instruction (Revised Edition)" was unclear, he explained that before retiring, the Bigdei Kehuna were to be folded and placed near their heads not under them" (Tamid 1:1, but note Rambam etc.). He noted that the priestly garments contained Kil'ayim, the mixture of linen and wool which are forbidden for ordinary use (Note Vayikra 19:19 and Devarim 22:10). He continued, "While it is a Mitzva for you to wear Bigdei Kehuna containing Kil'ayim during Avoda, you are not permitted to derive any other benefit from them. Therefore, you cannot wrap them up and use them as pillows. Furthermore, the use of priestly garments for pillows might be construed as showing disdain if not outright contempt for the holy vestments. Besides, if you use the garments as pillows, it will wrinkle them and the resultant creases will detract from their beauty. So fold them carefully and put them near your head, not under it." Later that evening, the Segan, the Ish Har Habayit, and the Rosh Mishmeret made sure that all the doors in the Mikdash complex were locked and that nothing was amiss. Nightly routine completed, the Rosh Mishmeret returned to Beit HaMokeid and gave the keys to Meir. Meir returned them to their hole in the floor and covered them with a slab of stone and the Rosh Mishmeret assigned one of the young Kohanim to stretch his mattress over the covering stone slab. There he would sleep. The Kohanim recited K'ri'at Sh'ma together and settled down for the night. They were excited. Tomorrow, they would be performing the Avoda in the Temple of the Most High!

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

# from page 3 PARSHA PIX

7 of the 10 images from the Davka Judaica graphic of the 10 plagues. The final three are in next week's sedra. (BO = BET+ALEF = 2+1 = 3 final plagues.)

Notice the Staff, prominent in the middle of the ParshaPix.

Above it is a sword. This can represent Z'RO'A N'TUYA, the "outstretched arm" with which we were to be taken out of Egypt. Also, the sword is prominently mentioned in the Haftara as that which will befall Egypt.

Next to the staff and sword is a shovel used by the Egyptians to dig for water - only way to get a drink during the plague of Blood.

The oven is what some frogs went into, producing a Kiddush HaShem and a lesson to us that G-d is still in charge of nature - He renews, every day, the acts of Creation. (Each element of nature that was used by G-d in the process of the Plagues and Exodus sanctifies G-d's name because we see His control and involvement in this world. Famous re the non-barking dogs, but frogs, etc. too.)

The Staff is burping from its recent meal of Wizard Staffs (see Sedra Summary for details).

Four cups of wine corresponding to the Four Terms of Redemption, which we find at the beginning of the sedra.

Triple-S J, Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, slogan was Let My People Go.

Pictorial representation of Par'o's heart strengthening, as is mentioned in several places in the sedra and next week's.

Upper-right corner - the emblem of the Hogwarts School. Par'o's wizards might have been dropouts from Hogwarts since they were not able to cope with the plague of KINIM.

Hold this date  
Mark your calendars  
Watch for developing details

## Third Annual Israel Center Gala Dinner

Leil Yom Yerushalayim,  
Thursday, May 25th '06  
at the Jerusalem Renaissance

IY"H, one of our honorees will be  
Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau

Further details to come...

Below BARAD (hail) are the standing wheat and the broken barley in the aftermath of that plague.

That leaves five unexplained elements, which are visual TTriddles. And the Mazal TTriddle. And the special one held over from last week.

Also, there was a hidden TTriddle in plain site on the front page of last week's TT. It's still active.

### 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 (SH'MOT) TTriddles:

- [1] 34 to 4 but it means they're equal
- [2] For openers, who (female) and what?
- [3] Father-in-law, son and grandson of Y's son and brother, and whose father?
- [4] all of a sudden it's a supply center
- [5] 5th and then first
- [6] ma, mama, mama
- [7] one visual TTriddle in the ParshaPix
- [8] Special visual TTriddle, Separate prize for its correct solution, Personal challenge to the great PPP solvers of the past (including MS) or anyone wanting to join their ranks (see hard copy of TT, or website)

### NachKay Jewish Trivia Question:

Tanach names in the regular weekday Amida - CDs from Noam Productions for the best lists

### And the envelope, please..

- [1] The phrase MOSHE V'AHARON occurs 34 times in the Tanach. AHARON U'MOSHE occurs 4 times. The first time AHARON is mentioned first, Rashi points out that sometimes Moshe comes first and sometimes Aharon does, to teach us that they are equal to each other.
- [2] The give-away clue was "for openers". This leads to the word VATIFTACH, and she (female is specified) opened. The word VATIFTACH occurs only 4 times in Tanach. The first instance is in Parshat Sh'mot. Bat Par'o opens the basket in which Moshe was placed. Twice in Bamidbar there is reference to the Earth opening her(its) mouth to swallow Korach and co. And in Sho'ftim (the book, not the sedra) it is Ya'el who opens the flask of milk to give to Sisra.
- [3] R'U'EL is Yitro, Moshe's grandfather. Next we have another R'U'EL, who is the son and grandson of Y's (i.e. Yitzchak) son and brother. Meaning the son of Yitzchak's son (i.e. Eisav) and the grandson of Yitzchak's brother (i.e. Yishmael). R'U'EL was son of Eisav and Ba-s'mat. Whose father? Obvious answers, but

disqualified because they just repeat the two R'UEls so far, would be Tzipora and her sisters (daughters of Yitro) and Nachat, Zerach, Shama and Miza, sons of Eisav's son. The "correct" answer is another R'UEL, father of ELYASAF, tribal leader of GAD.

[4] Simple play on words. All of a sudden is PIT'OM. A close sound-alike is PITOM (and RAAMSES), supply city that Bnei Yisrael were forced to build in the beginning of Sh'mot. And remember, that's RA-AM-SES, in contrast to the city they lived in, RA- M'SES. Same spelling, different vowels.

[5] The FIFTH word in the Torah reading of Sh'mot is HABA-IM. Then, when we (Ashkenazim) read the haftara, it is the first word.

[6] ma = one mother; mama = 2 mothers. The p'sukim at the beginning of Sh'mot that name the sons of Yaakov list: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda (all from Leah). Yissachar, Zevulun, Binyamin (Leah and Rachel). Dan, Naftali, Gad, Asher (Bilha, Zilpa).

[7] The visual TTriddle in the ParshaPix was an envelope or postcard with 57.6cm on it. That is the measure in centimeters of an AMA according to the Chazon Ish measurements. This stands for VATISHLACH ET AMATA, and she (Par'o's daughter) sent her maiden, or stretched out her arm. Or in TTriddlese, posted an AMA. And her connection with Helen Parr?

[8] Special visual TTriddle is being held over for another week. Hint: The insignia is British - not, as guessed by several attempted solvers, Israeli or Egyptian. And not the fire department, as they might have been called to extinguish the SNEH. (DM)

## **And now... the NachKup Jewish Trivia Question: Tanach names in the regular weekday Amida**

It has been tough evaluating the many solutions we've received so far. Here's what we are going to do. We will set the bar (as in a high jump or pole vault) at the list of names we received from Zevi Reich of RBS. He receives a CD from NOAM (call to arrange pick up or other method of receipt). His list follows. The NKJTQ is hereby extended for another week, Monday noon the official deadline, for TTreaders to send in more names not on this list. Your comments and challenges to our decisions are welcome too. We will be flexible in judging solutions. Prizes will be awarded to the best extension of this list. Got it? We are looking for Tanach names not on the following list or mentioned in by the way comments. Here goes.

The obvious ones:

[Avraham], [Yitzchak], [Yaakov], [Yisrael] (although he is the same person as Yaakov, we will accept ZR's comment that the NKJTQ said names, not people). [David] and [Yehuda] (from Elokai, Nitzor... - even though it is technically an add-on to the Amida) are the other obvious ones. Some of the following might be obvious to some people, but we are not including them in the obvious section, because they are not used as names in the Amida. That, in itself, makes then harder to find. Top of the list: [Adam] and [Enosh] from ATA CHONEIN. [Baruch], scribe and trusted companion of Yirmiyahu is mentioned more often in the Amida than any other name. There are three other Baruchs in Tanach, by the way, but that is irrelevant to this NKJTQ. Will accept [Asher], even though in the Amida it is

part of the word KAASHER, and the ALEF has a CHATAF-PATACH rather than a KAMATZ. [Chanun] (KAMATZ rather than PATACH) is mentioned in Shmuel Bet several times. Chanun b. Nachash was an Ammonite king. [B'racha] (male) was a warrior from Binyamin who fought with King Shaul, then deserted to join David's forces. [Tzur] was Kozbi's father, a Midyanite leader. [Tzemach] seems to be another name for Zerubavel in the book(let) of Zecharia. [Melech] was a son of Micha, descendants of Shaul HaMelech. [Sachar] was the fourth son of Oveid-Edom. [Tov] - we'll accept this one with an asterisk - according to some commentaries was the name of the GO'EL, redeemer mention in Megilat Ruth. And here's a real tough one: [Arba] According to Rashi on Yehoshua 14:15, Arba was the name of the father (or possibly grandfather) of the giants Achiman, Sheishai, and Talmi.

If you want to count the names on this list, the [brackets] will be of help. There are 18 names on this list. As mentioned above, the best list of other names not on this list will win a CD.

Names we have disqualified are Moshe and Aharon from Birchat Kohanim, Mordechai, Esther, and Haman from Al HaNisim for Purim, and so too Yochanan (Matityahu is not in Tanach) from the Chanuka Al HaNisim. Not the same Yochanan, but we're not counting him anyway, because he isn't mentioned in the "regular weekday Amida".

There are more names in the Amida - we're not saying how many. That's for you to find.

Some solvers tried for Yerushalayim, since we did not say names of people, just names in Tanach. Yerushalayim definitely qualifies. But let's keep it to people, anyway. That will leave G-d's names off the list, which surprisingly no one submitted (yet).

### **This week's TTriddles:**

- [1] Forefathers of all kohanim except one**
- [2] mouth, tongue, heart, and 4 plagues**
- [3] person, company, city, street**
- [4] the alliterative Levi**
- [5] his name and birth-sedra have the same g'matriya... and so does his great-(x5)-grandfather**
- [6] pledge his father to help non-date**
- [7] 42,44,45,46,47,48,49,84,85,87,88**
- [8] Torah's common term (sort of) for army and covey**
- [9] tended victim of fire; was almost a victim of fire (separate prize)**
- [10] Also in ALARCACTINKYMANHJNYOHUTVA**
- [11] Special visual TTriddle from last week's issue. Separate prize for its correct solution, Personal challenge to MS and all TTriddle solvers. Hint: British insignia - (see hard copy of TT, or website)**
- [12] - [16] That leaves five unexplained elements, which are visual TTriddles. And [17] the Mazal TTriddle.**
- [18] Also, there was a hidden TTriddle in plain site on the front page of last week's TT. It's still active.**