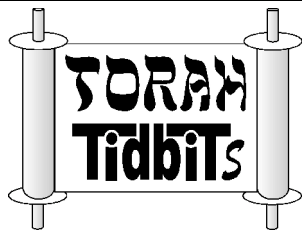




702



שבת פרשת

בו

ו' שבט תשס"ו

February 3-4, '06



Shabbat Parshat Bo is the 124th day (of 354); the 18th Shabbat (of 50) of 5766

...בְּעֵרֵינוּ וּבְזִקְנֵינוּ יָלַךְ בְּבֵנֵינוּ וּבְבָנוֹתֵנוּ... שמות י"ט

Pre-Requisite of Nationhood

Yaakov's family went to Mitzrayim as technical B'nei No'ach. That means that they officially were bound to keep the mitzvot included in the Seven Noahide Laws. As the Exodus drew near - as a much, much larger family/nation, they received the commands related to their first Pesach - not exactly the same as Pesach L'Dorot, the Pesach that would be part of the Torah and Mitzvot to be observed by the Jewish People in perpetuity - but an additional set of commands, nonetheless. On their way out of Egypt they received several more mitzvot, and then came the Sinai Experience - Matan Torah, where and when the people received all of the Torah (although it was spelled out to them - us - over the years that followed).

One mitzva stands out and grabs our attention in Parshat Bo, the mitzva that Rashi said would have been the logical starting point of the Torah, had it been only our code of law. That mitzva is Kiddush HaChodesh, the setting up of the Jewish Calendar. It would have been hypothetically possible for G-d to have commanded the people about the Korban Pesach and everything that went with it, and hold off on the Calendar mitzva until Sinai. But He didn't wait. The Torah makes a point that G-d spoke to Moshe and Aharon about this mitzva, when they were still in the Land of Egypt.

This (perhaps) makes Kiddush HaChodesh more than a "regular" mitzva, more even than a fundamental mitzva and principle of Judaism; it makes it a Pre-Requisite of Nationhood.

Of course, for practical reasons, if the Korban Pesach was to be offered on the 14th of Nisan, the people must know what Nisan is. But there is more to it than that.

Many nations existed before Bnei Yisrael became a nation. And many more have come and gone since. They were, are, and will be "merely" nations. we are G-d's partners. He sanctifies time and taught us to do so as well. Part of what makes us a holy nation is our Calendar. It still is. Always will be.

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 molad on Sunday afternoon means first opportunity for Kidush L'vana this month is Wed. Feb.1 for those who say K.L. for those



days after the Molad. Many will wait for Motza'ei Shabbat Parshat Bo, the eve of the 7th of Sh'vat. Strict 7-days-after-the-molad people will have their first op on Sunday night. As we've said before, it is preferable to take an early op during the winter, when many nights are cloudy or rainy. (Unless you follow the strict 7 day opinion.)

January and Tevet were in synch (date-wise). Add 2 to February's dates to get the day of the month of Sh'vat. Because February has 28 days and Sh'vat has 30, Adar and March will be in synch for 29 days and then Nissan will be 2 ahead of April. The last Jan/Tevet//Mar/Adar synch was 1930/5690. 76 years ago!

TORAH Tidbits AUDIO

www.radiou.org
and
www.israelnationalradio.com
New shows from Thursday

OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

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

Candle Lighting and HAVDALA
Standard (Winter) time

Correct for TT 702 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 6:30pm

4:39pm	Jerusalem	5:54pm
4:55pm	Raanana	5:55pm
4:55pm	Beit Shemesh	5:55pm
4:55pm	Netanya	5:55pm
4:56pm	Rehovot	5:55pm
4:35pm	Petach Tikva	5:55pm
4:55pm	Modi'in	5:55pm
4:57pm	Be'er Sheva	5:56pm
4:55pm	Gush Etzion	5:54pm
4:54pm	Ginot Shomron	5:54pm
4:39pm	Maale Adumim	5:54pm
4:55pm	K4 & Hevron	5:55pm
4:42pm	Tzfat	5:51pm
4:55pm	Tel Mond	5:55pm

Ranges are FRI-FRI 5-12 Shvat (February 3-10)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:40-5:35am
Sunrise - 6:31-6:26am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 9:12-9:09am (8:26-8:24am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:05-10:04am (9:35-9:33am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:53-11:53am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 12:23-12:24pm
Plag Mincha - 4:08-4:13pm
Sunset - 5:20-5:26pm (5:15-5:21pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)

Shabbat 3:30pm (Mincha 4:30pm)
Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Poupko

Motza'ei Shabbat 8:30pm
Roger Mehl on a Roll

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

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

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

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



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 - 10:1-11

[P> 10:1 (11)] G-d once again (pre- viously with Frogs and "Dever") sends Moshe to Par'o (in his palace) to warn about the Locust.

SDI *The signature of this week's sedra - BO EL PAR'O is a phrase that occurs three times, each as an introduction to one of the Plagues. Specifically, G-d said to Moshe to "come before Par'o" for the middle plague of each 3-plague set - FROGS, DEVER (animal disease), and LOCUST. Baal HaTurim points out that when G-d sends Moshe to the royal palace, He uses the term BO. When He sends him to the river to find Par'o there, He uses the term LEICH.*

This time, however, it is with the additional statement that G-d has hardened Par'o's heart so that His wonders will be evident to all, and that all will know Him. Moshe and Aharon warn Par'o of the potential devastation (the description of which is noticeably longer than for other plagues). Par'o's servants (advisors?) pressure Par'o into agreeing to release the People. Par'o offers Moshe the adults. Moshe's reply (which becomes a Jewish hallmark for the ages - pun intended) is that our religious experiences must include ALL Jews, young and old. (Judaism places a premium on Chinuch.) The continuity of Judaism depends upon the relationship of one generation to the next. Par'o rejects this and expels Moshe and Aaron from his presence.

Locust were sent by G-d to punish Egypt by devouring the produce of the land. This was "measure for measure" punishment for the excessive field and planting work that Par'o imposed on the People of Israel in order to demoralize them and to prevent them from having a normal family life.

Commentaries point out that Par'o and the Egyptians continually "overdid" their oppression and enslavement of the Jews. Even if we were to suggest that punishment is unfair to those who were acting according to G-d's wishes, so to speak, and carrying out His Plan, it is for the excesses that they are being held strictly accountable. "Yes, I told you to rough them up, but I never said anything about beating them so mercilessly." (This does not mean to suggest that people who "play a part in G-d's plans" are not held account- able for their "regular" actions. They are. But there is special emphasis on the excesses. Having the people slave at making bricks is one thing. With- holding straw for the purpose is excessively cruel. Etc.)

On the other hand, the excessive cruelty of the Egyptians is partially responsible, so to speak, for G-d's switching to His Midat HaRachamim in judging the people, from the Midat HaDin which might have kept us

BO STATS

15th of the 54 sedras; 3rd of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 205.67 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank: 24

14 parshiot; 8 open, 6 closed

106 p'sukim - ranks 29th (7th in Shmot) tied with Toldot & Vayigash; larger than each one

1655 words - ranks 21st (5th in Shmot)

6149 letters - ranks 20th (6th in Shmot)

Rise in rankings from p'sukim to words & letters is a result of BO's p'sukim being much longer than average for the Torah (longest in Sh'mot).

MITZVOT:

BO has 20 mitzvot;

9 positive, 11 prohibitions

For the TTreader who asked, and others who might not know...

Parshiyot come in two forms in the Torah, P'tucha (open) and S'tuma (closed).

P parsha begins on its own line; where the previous parsha ends, the rest of the line is left blank.

S parsha begins on same line as previous one ends, separated by a blank space.

More on Parshiyot... P-types generally start a new topic; S-types continue the theme of the previous parsha. Sometimes it is easy to see this, sometimes not. But that's pretty much the story.

in Egypt longer. The original prophecy to Avraham Avinu called for 400 years. Actual time spent in Egypt (not even in slavery) was "only" 210 years. The inclusion of the years from Yitzchak's birth is (can be seen as) a result of the excessive harshness of the Egyptian experience.

Levi - Second Aliya - 12 p'sukim - 10:12-23

[S> 10:12 (9)] G-d tells Moshe to raise his hands over the land. Moshe raises his staff and the locust come. So overwhelming is this plague, that Par'o "hurries" to call for Moshe and Aharon, admits to them that he has sinned, and asks them to pray for the removal of this terrible plague. Moshe does so, and a "reverse" wind causes the locust to disappear completely. G-d once again hardens Par'o's heart.

[P> 10:21 (9)] Plague #9 - Darkness (just like #3 - Lice and #6 - Boils) is brought without warning.

The thrice repeated pattern is (1) find Par'o at the Nile and deliver the warning, (2) go to his palace and bring the warning "closer to home", and (3) twice-warned is sufficient; he won't let the People go, bring the next plague without additional warning. Additionally, there is an escalation in severity from the first to the second to the third plague in each set of 3 plagues.

Darkness, an unusual, unnatural, tangible darkness (not merely the absence of light), descends upon the Egyptians for a paralyzing 3 days (Rashi indicates that it was of a duration of six days). In the Jewish neighborhoods, there is light.

Let's define "natural" darkness as the absence of light. Consistent with the other Makot, the plague of Darkness was not natural. Some of the unnatural qualities of the Darkness of Egypt was that it was substantive, and that lighting a fire would not dispel it. This was a supernatural darkness. Perhaps, a darkness like pre-Creation darkness. Along these lines - but different - is an explanation attributed to the Vilna Gaon. Darkness as well as Light is a creation; it is not just the absence of light. One of the laws of nature that G-d created is that light dispels darkness. During Makat Choshech, nature was turned upside-down and darkness dispelled light.

SDT *"Man did not see his fellow, nor did a person rise from his place..." The Chidushei HaRim writes that this is a description of the worse kind of darkness in human life, when a person does not see the suffering of his fellow. Not only does he not extend his hand to help the other, but the ultimate result is the inability of the individual to even help himself. The People of Israel had light throughout their dwellings. May we always be able to see the plight of our fellow Jews and respond with acts of Chesed worthy of our Heritage.*

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 9 p'sukim - 10:24-11:3

Par'o calls for Moshe and tells him to go, even with the children, but to leave the livestock behind. Moshe insists that ALL will leave.

SDT *Moshe's words to Par'o are: "We will also take our animals with us, for from them we will take to serve G-d."*

The plain understanding of the pasuk is that Moshe was referring to korbanot, sacrifices. The Malbim has another beautiful interpretation of Moshe's statement to Par'o. "From the animals we will take lessons in how to serve G-d - from the cat we will learn modesty, from the doves fidelity, from the ants industry and honesty, etc." Had we not received the Torah, which teaches us proper conduct, we would learn these lessons from our animals. (And even with the Torah to teach us, we can see practical examples of its lessons in nature.)

Par'o once again refuses, and this time he threatens death (he had Moshe's in mind - G-d "took it" in a different way) if he sees Moshe again. He thus inadvertently prophesies his own death. This is part of the "topsy turvy" aspects of the Exodus.

[P> 11:1 (3)] G-d "reminds" Moshe that there is one more plague (the "real" one; the one that was presented up front, the one mentioned before all of the others) and then Par'o will send the people on their way.

G-d tells Moshe to tell the people to "borrow" things from their neighbors. He says that the people will miraculously feel kindly towards the Jews (even though the Jews are responsible, in the eyes of the Egyptians, for the hard times they have been suffering). G-d even implanted in the eyes of the Egyptians an admiration and respect for Moshe.

Rashi points out the unusual way that G-d instructs Moshe to talk to the people. He says, "please". DABER-NA. Rashi explains that G-d did not want Avraham Avinu to "complain" that the oppression prophesied should come true, but not the promise of leaving Egypt with great wealth. Hence, Moshe, please speak to the people and have them take from the Egyptians...

Targum Onkeles, on the other hand, translates NA as NOW.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 27 p'sukim - 11:4-12:20

[S> 11:4 (5)] Moshe says, in G-d's name, that He (G-d) will kill ALL Egyptian firstborns, that the screaming from the killings will be unprecedented, and that in total contrast, utter tranquility will reign in the Jewish area.

[S> 11:9 (2)] G-d says that Par'o will once again refuse even this threat, so that the full course of wonders and miracles will benefit the People of Israel.

SDT *One commentator says that Moshe was distraught by the extent to which Par'o went in his refusal to let the People go. Such dedication to wickedness in the face of such devastating punishment was truly disheartening to Moshe. How can the power of evil be so strong? How can someone fight against it and hope to win? G-d's answer was that it was He Who hardened and strengthened Par'o's heart. Left on his own, Par'o would have given in long before. Theoretically, G-d could do this to punish us, but in this case it was for our benefit.*

SDT *The S'fat Emet marvels at the fact that only G-d would give the power to a wicked person to oppose Him. Why would G-d give Par'o the ability to defy Him? In order to bring about the marvels and wonders of the Exodus, so that the People of Israel shall know beyond doubt that G-d has taken them out of Egypt.*

SDT *The Torah describes the tranquility of the Jewish area with the state-ment "a dog didn't even bark". Dogs usually sense death and instinctively react. To highlight the contrast between the Egyptians and the Israelites, the dogs were miraculously silent. In "tribute" to the dogs for their role in bringing greater honor and appreciation to G-d on the night of the Exodus, the Torah rewards them by telling us (elsewhere) to throw our "treif" meat to the dogs. (This applies only when a forbidden food is NOT also forbidden to derive other benefit therefrom - in which case it must be discarded without any benefit whatsoever. Feeding one's own animals, or even animals in the wild is considered HANA'A, benefit.) Thus we have an unusual lesson in HAKARAT HATOV, acknowledging the good that another does for you.*

[S> 12:1 (20)] G-d commands the setting up of the Jewish calendar **[4,A153 12:2]**.

He then commands the taking of a lamb or goat for each household (or so). The animal was to be taken on the 10th of Nissan (this rule was for "Pesach Mitzrayim" only, and not for future Pesachs; therefore it is not counted among the mitzvot of the Torah) and held for the 14th of the month, when it was to be slaughtered in the afternoon **[5,A55 12:6]**. Its blood was to be smeared on the doorposts and lintel (only that first Pesach). The sacrifice is to be eaten on the night of the 15th of Nissan **[6,A56 12:8]**, having been roasted, with matza and maror (this being part of the mitzva "for the generations", but not counted separately among Taryag); that is, neither cooked nor partially done **[7,L125 12:9]**, but roasted whole. No part was to be left over until morning **[8,L117 12:10]**; any leftovers were to be burned **(43,A91 12:10 - not counted from Parshat Bo)**. It was to be eaten with "belt tied", in haste, ready to leave (these details are for Egyptian Pesach only).

MITZVA WATCH

Korban Pesach is a kind of rare example of a piece of text in the Torah that mixes episode with mitzva. Much more often, we find either/or. It is a bit confusing to distinguish between the details of the mitzva of K.P. for all generations and those elements of the story of the Exodus which were meant only for that first Pesach. In fact, it is not just confusing; it is impossible to accurately differentiate between the two categories of details... WITHOUT the Oral Law. The Talmud informs us as to what constitutes the mitzva of K.P. The Written Word is not complete. Our Torah consists of two inseparable parts - the Written Word and the Oral Law (embodied in the Talmud and other sources). This is a fact that is reinforced over and over again throughout the Torah. If one attempts to understand the Written Word without the Oral Law and Tradition, there will be confusion at best and distortion and perversion of G-d's Word, at worst.

Then G-d will "pass through" Egypt on that night, kill the

firstborns, and "pass-over" the Jewish home with the blood-marks. This shall become a holiday for all generations. Matzot are to be eaten for 7 days and on Erev Pesach, Chametz is to be eliminated from our homes **[9,A156 12:15]**. (Eating Chametz on Pesach is a rejection of membership in Klal Yisrael, hence the punishment of "excision".)

The basis of Yom Tov is set down in 12:16, — specifically that Melacha is prohibited, as on Shabbat, except for "that which is needed for food".

The Oral Law and Rabbinic legislation combine to define that which may be done on Yom Tov. It is far more complicated than would seem from the pasuk. Logic cannot always explain the way things work out. For example, picking a fruit from a tree (to eat the fruit on Yom Tov) is not permitted, yet it seems logical that it would be considered permissible because of OCHEL NEFESH (food). And carrying a Siddur to shul (where there is no Eruv) is permitted, even though such a Melacha is not being performed for food. Obviously, we need the Oral Torah to help us out (to say the least).

The source of "sh'mura" matza is in 12:17. The mitzva of eating matza on seder night **[10,A158 12:18]** is followed by the prohibition of owning of chametz during all of Pesach **[11, L200 12:19]**. Foods containing chametz are forbidden **[12,L198 12:20]**.

MITZVA WATCH

Because the prohibition of chametz and the mitzva of matza are linked to each other in the same pasuk, we do not view Matza as a purely positive time-related mitzva. Women are not exempt. In fact, women are obligated to perform other Seder mitzvot as a package deal with matza. Specifically, women are obligated on the mitzva of Hagada - they should not be silent observers at the Seder, but should participate in transmission of the story and details to their children and guests. Women are also obligated to drink four cups of wine, which is a Rabbinic command.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 12:21-28

[P> 12:21 (8)] Moshe gathers the elders of the People and relays G-d's instructions. He also tells them that when the People get to Eretz Yisrael, they will continue to commemorate the events of the Exodus, with questions and answers from one generation to the previous one. The People do as commanded. Note the familiarity of the text (think Hagada) but also note the different combinations of questions and answers between the Torah and the Hagada.

Moshe tells the people that which G-d had previously commanded him to tell them. Here it says: Take a bundle of hyssop (EIZOV), dip it in the blood of the Korban Pesach, and daub it on the lintel and the two doorposts.

Notice this. Not only is going into Eretz Yisrael part of the Promises of Redemption, but in the statement of the laws of Korban Pesach there is reference to "when you will come to the Land..."

SDT *The Torah tells us that when G-d will pass through Egypt smiting their firstborns, and He will see blood on the doorposts and lintels of the Jewish homes, He will not let the "Destructive Force" (MAL'ACH HAMAVET, Angel of Death) to come to your homes... What was the MASHCHIT doing in Egypt on that night, when the Hagada states that it was G-d Himself. Some explain that the MASHCHIT was in charge, so to speak, of "regularly scheduled deaths". G-d did not allow him to enter a Jewish home that night so the contrast with Egypt would be total.*

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 23 p'sukim - 12:29-51

[S> 12:29 (8)] It comes to pass at exactly midnight, that the Egyptian firstborns are smitten, and that the Egyptians shower the Jews with gifts, and hurry them on their way.

[P> 12:37 (6)] And so the People of Israel leave Egypt. The People leave in such haste that they take quick-baked breads with them without taking the time to let the dough rise. Approx. 600,000 men, plus women and children leave Egypt, together with many Egyptians who are smart enough to flee with them. Thus ends a 430 year period of exile (according to some opinions, this is the time from the Covenant between the Parts and the Exodus - this is another way of explaining when the "enslavement began"). That night shall be a special night for all of Israel throughout the generations.

[P> 12:43 (8)] The Torah now shifts from relating the story of the Exodus back to the rules for the Korban Pesach. Jews who have "left Judaism" and embraced another religion **[13,L128 12:43]**, non-Jews, even those who are committed to the Seven Noahide Laws **[14,L126 12:45]** may not eat Korban Pesach. The Korban must be eaten in one place; removing it from its place is forbidden **[15,L123 12:46]**, as is breaking a bone in it **[16,L121 12:46]**. Only Jews participate. An uncircumcised Jew may not eat of the KP **[17,L127 12:48]**. A true convert to Judaism is equal to a born-Jew. The People did as commanded.

[S> 12:51 (1)] On the very day in question the multitude left Egypt.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 16 p'sukim - 13:1-16

[P> 13:1 (10)] As a commemoration of the Exodus (specifically plague #10), we are to sanctify firstborns (human, kosher farm animals, and donkey. Each type of "b'chor" is treated differently) **[18,A79 13:2]**. The Torah sets down the yearly observance of Pesach, even after entry into Israel.

MITZVA WATCH

In Parshat BO, we have the general command concerning the sanctity of the firstborns and the specifics about one type - the firstborn donkey.

Elsewhere are the details about firstborn humans and those of the 3 types of domesticated animals - cow, goat, sheep.

Chametz may not be eaten **[19,L197 13:3]** nor even owned **[20,L201 13:7]** on Pesach. It is a mitzva to relate the story of what happened **[21,A157 13:8]** at the Seder. T'filin also serve as a reminder of the Exodus. Pesach must be in the spring, the time of renewal of nature.

This requires Sanhedrin to add an extra month from time to time to "push" Pesach into the spring. When there is no Sanhedrin, we have a fixed pattern for 13-month years; when we have a Sanhedrin, it has discretionary leeway within specific guidelines.

[P> 13:11 (6)] A first-born-male donkey must be redeemed **[22,A81 13:13]** (by giving a sheep or its value to a kohen) or destroyed **[23,A82 13:13]** (a less desirable alternative).

The Torah reiterates the significance of the younger generation asking and receiving answers and explanations about the origin of the Nation.

The T'filin connection is also repeated.

The two final portions of BO (all of Sh'vi'i) join the two first portions of the Sh'ma as the four passages of the Torah contained in each of the two T'filin (written together on a single strip of parchment in the "shel yad" and on four separate parchments inserted into four distinct chambers in the "shel rosh").

Haftara - 16 p'sukim - Yirmiyahu 46:13-28

Parallel to the sedra, Egypt's downfall (at the hands of Bavel) is prophesied. (It is quite rare that a prophecy to another nation is used as a Haftara.) Israel, however, shall not fear; G-d is with us! The pasuk that assures us about the Ultimate Redemption mentions that it might happen in the distant future. Nonetheless, we shall not despair. This can be seen in context of the well-known notion that the Mashiach will either come "in his appointed time", or sooner. It depends upon us.

The Babylonian army is compared with the countless nature of swarms of locust. Thus Egypt falls to locust again - and there is another connection to the sedra.

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

Lesson # 318 (Damages, part six; PIT part 4)

Damage caused by a Pit (BOR)

As stated in previous lessons, the topic of "pit" is a very wide topic and covers so many aspects of our daily lives. A few days ago I was walking on King George Street and saw a man trip on a crack in the sidewalk. I offered to help him up but he got up by himself and got into a cab that sped away. Had he remained I might have interviewed him for this lesson and asked him how he felt about tripping in a BOR BIRSHUT HARABIM a pit in the public domain, a topic about which I was writing.

This lesson begins with a discussion of a pit involving more than one person.

Let's say that Reuven finds a pit dug by Levi, covers the pit, and then uncovers it. Levi is liable for damages caused by the pit and Reuven is not liable. This holds true even if Levi sees Reuven covering the pit and does not see Reuven take the cover off the pit. However, if Reuven had filled the pit dug by Levi with earth and then removed the earth, Reuven is liable for damages caused by the pit and not Levi. The reason is, that as soon as Reuven filled the pit with earth, Levi's original act is deemed undone. This holds true even if Levi does not know that Reuven filled the pit with earth.

Assume that Reuven and Levi jointly own a parcel of real estate and both dig a well on the parcel. Reuven draws water from the well without covering it. Levi then draws water from the well and also does not cover it. Reuven continues to be liable for the pit since he left it uncovered when he left. However, if when Reuven left he handed the cover to Levi, Reuven is no longer liable for damages that Shimon may suffer when his animal falls into the well; only Levi is liable if he does not cover it. If Reuven covers the pit and then Levi finds it uncovered and does not cover it, Levi is liable. Levi remains solely liable until the point in time that Reuven learned of the pit being uncovered and has had time to cover it or to engage workmen to make a cover and cover it. If Shimon's animal falls into the pit during this time interval only Levi is liable; once such time interval has passed, both Reuven and Levi are liable.

Reuven is the sole owner of the pit that he left uncovered. Levi, a non-owner of the pit, comes along, covers it and then uncovers it. Thereafter Shimon's animal falls into the pit. Reuven is liable and Levi has no liability. There is an opinion that holds that if Reuven was informed that Levi had covered the pit, Reuven no longer has responsibility until he is informed that Levi had uncovered it. A second opinion holds that even if Reuven knew that Levi had covered the pit he is still liable if Levi uncovers the pit, even if he had not been advised the Levi had uncovered it. However, if Levi fills the pit with earth and then removes the earth, Reuven is not liable for any damages the pit might cause.

Reuven, the sole owner of the pit turns a pit over to Levi to guard. Levi becomes liable for any damages that the pit causes, even if Reuven entrusted the pit without a cover on it. However, if Levi is mentally incompetent or a minor, Reuven continues to be responsible.

Sometime there may be more than one factor that combines with another to cause the damage. Aaron's ox pushes Shimon's ox into Reuven's pit and Shimon's ox is killed. There are many scenarios as to the damage depending upon whether Aaron's ox was a forewarned ox or an innocuous ox (remember from many lessons ago?) This is one of the many questions raised in jointly causing damage by pit.

There are subcategories of pit. For example, a knife, a stone, a package, a bundle of straw (these are the traditional examples) and almost any type of object that is placed by Reuven in a public street. If such an object causes injury to a person or death or injury to an animal tripping over it or banging into it, Reuven is liable.

Reuven is liable even if he did not place the objects in the public street. For example, Reuven places an object on his roof and a normal wind blows the object from his roof onto the street. This is similar to the pit cause of injury, since the object

rests and does not move from the place in the street where the wind blew it. Shimon thereafter trips over the object. Reuven is liable if Shimon is injured or if Shimon's animal is injured or killed by tripping over the object. Reuven is liable even if he renounces ownership of the object that is in the public street. Assume, however, the object is blown from Reuven's roof by an extraordinary wind and lands in a public street. If the object causes damage while in flight, or even after it lands but there is not sufficient time for Reuven to retrieve the object from the street, Reuven is not liable for injury caused. The amount of time that is deemed sufficient is for Beth Din to determine in each case. Beth Din must determine if Reuven could remove the object by himself or must hire workers to remove a large object from a public street following a hurricane or tornado. After such time has elapsed, Reuven is liable for injury caused by his object. However, if Reuven renounces ownership of the object blown by an extraordinary wind he is not liable for injuries occurring thereafter.

Reuven's object falls from his roof with an ordinary wind and lands in the public street or Reuven himself places the object in the public street. The object causes no injuries in that place. However, the object is kicked by people or animals and it rolls to another place where it comes to a rest. And there it causes injury. Reuven is liable for the injury. The person or animal that kicks the object is not the direct cause of the injury caused to Shimon's ox. It could be argued that perhaps if they had not kicked the object and it had remained in its original place it would not have caused the injury, Reuven is nevertheless liable because he is the original cause of the injury.

Shimon kicks Reuven's object and while it is rolling about, it causes injury. Shimon is liable for the entire injury.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume X chapter 411 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 7 Species (part 2)

As we mentioned last week, there are special rules of blessing for the "seven species" mentioned in the Torah as the praise of the Land of Israel: Wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranate, olives, and dates (Devarim 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).

We explained that according to Rav Natan of Breslav, all blessings in effect connect us to the Land of Israel. The land of Israel, which was a special gift of Hashem given to the Jewish people who do His will, reminds us that all worldly enjoyments are really a benefice provided by God to those who do His will, particularly those who acknowledge His sovereignty by making blessings. We showed how Rav Natan connects the verses teaching the requirement to make blessings on food with the

special status of the land of Israel.

Afterwards Rav Natan draws an additional connection, also based on the gemara. From the verse in Devarim mentioning the seven species, the gemara learns that these types of produce have priority in making a blessing. Yet Rav Chanan objects that these species are mentioned for a different reason. Each one is mentioned to teach a specific measure needed for some Torah commandment. For example, wheat teaches that the amount of time needed for "eating" is the duration of eating a certain quantity of wheat bread. Barley teaches us that human bones cause defilement only if they are the size of a barley corn. Olives teach us that for most intents and purposes (significant) "eating" takes place only when we eat the volume of an olive (Berakhot 41a,b).

Rav Natan explains that these two aspects are actually intimately connected. We can understand his explanation by pointing out that Chasidic thought often emphasizes the paradox that the only way we can perceive the infinite light of the Divine is through the occlusion effected by the material world. If we try to apprehend the Divine presence directly, we will be blinded by the light, destroyed by its intense lambency. (This is sometimes referred to as "the shattering of the vessels".) Yet if we are too much sunken in worldly matters, the Divine light is excessively occluded; we have a diminutive, insufficient appreciation of God's presence. The commandments of the Torah create a balance between the two extremes of blindness and occlusion, giving us a way of approaching and apprehending holiness without being overcome by it, through the fulfillment of Divine precepts via aspects of our material existence.

This balance is particularly exemplified by the concept of measures. Measurement invariably implies limitation. Indeed, our Sages tell us that "blessing does not inhere in anything weighed or anything measured or anything counted, but only in that which is hidden from the eye" (Taanit 8b). Yet while blessing does not inhere in that which is finite and measured, only something finite and measured can serve as a conduit for blessing. When Elisha performed a miracle for the poor woman whose creditors were about to enslave her sons, he told her to borrow all kinds of vessels from her neighbors; all these were miraculously filled with oil (Melachim Bet 4). Now this miraculous blessing was dependent on the fact that no specific amount of oil was promised; rather, as long as there were vessels to receive the blessing, it continued. Yet the finite vessel was a necessary precondition for the miracle; Elisha did not make miraculously create a vat of oil.

The Land of Israel is the ultimate conduit for Divine blessing; indeed, Rashi explains that the blessing of the entire world is obtained through the blessing and Providence of the Land of Israel (Commentary to Devarim 11:12). So we give precedence in our blessings to those species which characterize the Land of Israel, which are simultaneously those species which themselves exemplify the idea of a Torah measure, constituting, like the Land itself, a conduit through which Divine blessing can be realized in the material world. - (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" [3]

"The reason that the story of the purchasing of Ma'arat HaMachpela with all its commercial dealing and bargaining is mentioned in the Torah in such detail, is to make known the spiritual superiority of Eretz Yisrael both for the living and the dead. It also tells of Hashem's fulfillment of His promise that that Land would be Avraham's inheritance" (Ibn Ezra). "It emphasizes that burial anywhere in Eretz Yisrael is a merit, even if not as great as in the Ma'ara itself" (Ha'amaek Davar). These two comments are in keeping with the age old tradition that those who did not merit living in the Land still make great efforts to at least be buried there. It is also indicative of the efforts made by Jews to purchase land there to live on. A little known fact of late 19th and early 20th Zionist history is the numerous corporate bodies founded by Chassidic groups for the purpose of land acquisition and settlement. The following ruling by the first Admor of Sochotsowis an expression of the halakhic thinking behind such actions. "One does not fulfill the mitzva of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael, if one lives there but does not earn their livelihood there" (Avnei Nezer, Yoreh De'ah, 444); "You ask if there is a mitzva in working, as it is written, Six days shalt thou labor (Shmot 20:8). Regarding one who dwells in Chutz LaAretz, the answer is not clear, but when living in Eretz Yisrael as a fulfillment of Yishuv Ha'Aretz there is a definite mitzva" (Chatam Sofer).

"Avraham buried Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpela facing Mamrei, which is Hevron" (B'reishit 23:10). Kiryat Arba, Mamrei, Hevron, All these names refer to the history of the city. Mamrei, an ally and a friend of Avraham's [14:13] built a town facing Hevron which was a Hittite city. Later the giant Arba conquered it and named the whole area Kiryat Arba after himself, then when Israel conquered the Hittites, they renamed it Hevron. According to some, Machpela refers to the couples who are buried there, others see the name referring to the fact that it contained two chambers one above the other (Rav and Shmuel, Eruvin 53a). "Hashem bent Adam double so that the extremely tall Adam would fit into the cave and then He buried him there" (B'reishit Rabba 55:10). Ramban suggests that the whole place was known as Machpela; perhaps that's why the Hittites, ignorant of the cave's significance, called the cave by the same name.

Contrary to the normal nature of markets throughout history, nowhere in the protracted negotiations does Avraham haggle over the opening price asked for by Efron. Ramban explains that the 400 silver shekels asked for was the current market price, whereas Chazal saw this as price oppression, ona'a. In the case of movable goods, anything in excess or below market price by one-sixth or more, is grounds for invalidating the sale, irrespective of whether seller or buyer are the aggrieved party. There is no such ona'a in regard to real estate; although the Rosh and other halachic authorities hold that there is ona'a even in real estate where there are excessive price differentials, 100% instead of the normal benchmark overcharge of one-sixth (Tur, Choshen Mishpat). Perhaps Efron was guilty of price oppression in that he demanded an exorbitant price for the field, thus exploiting Avraham's need to acquire a burial place. Furthermore, Efron demanded good silver coins acceptable by

banker or merchant; according to Rashi (verse 16, following Bava Metzia 87a), the pure silver shekels paid by Avraham were equivalent to 1 million ordinary shekels whose silver content varied widely. Despite the exaggerated price demanded, Avraham did not ask for credit or a delay in payment; to act otherwise would have been a Chilul Hashem, as we learn: "Rava said it is Chilul Hashem when somebody of my [spiritual] status buys on credit [people's assumption being that either there is something irregular in the sale or that he is beholden to the sellers and will therefore favor them in communal affairs or in judgement]" (Bava Batra). At the end of the protracted negotiations, we are told that after Avraham buried Sara there, the field and the cave actually passed into his ownership; "from this we learn that although he had already paid the purchase price, they only became an achuza, a permanent possession of his when he dug her grave thereby completely finalizing the kinyan" (Rashbam).

"There are three places concerning which the nations of the world cannot defame Israel by saying: "You are thieves". They are:

Ma'arat Hamachpela - as it is written, " And Avraham listened to Efron and weighed out 400 silver shekels. And Efron's field passed to Avraham" (B'reishit 23: 16-17).

Kever Yosef in Sh'chem; as it is written, "He, [Yaakov] bought the parcel of land upon which he pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, father of Sh'chem for 100 Kesita" (B'reishit 33:19). There later, Yehoshua buried the bones of Yosef (Joshua 24:312).

Har HaMoria; as it is written, "So David gave to Ornan for the place [the site of the Temple] 600 shekels of gold" (Divrei HaYamim Alef 21:25).

Like Ma'arat Hamachpela, in the other two cases the full price in recognized acceptable currency was paid, there was no bargaining and no negotiation.

Disproving the antagonism of the nations is not the only result of the eternal nature of ownership through the purchase and settlement of land in Eretz Yisrael by Jews. "The mitzvot hateluyot ba'aretz [those laws to be observed only in Eretz Yisrael], apply only to those areas that were settled by the returnees from Bavel and not to the original conquests by Yehoshua. This is because that first sanctification was brought about by conquest and so was subsequently lost by the conquest which led to Galut Bavel, whereas the sanctification by the settlement of the returnees, could never be negated" (Rambam, Hilkhos Beit HaBechira 6: 17).

This is the 114th installment in Dr. Tamari's series on "Tanach and its messages for our times"

MISC section - contents:

[1] Vebbe Rebbe

[2] Candle by Day

[3] From Aloh Naaleh

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

[5] Parsha Points to Ponder

[6] Portion from the Portion

[8] From the desk of the director

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

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



I am a young rabbi; I have begun looking for rabbinical positions. I have tried to work on anava (humility), but now people advise me to write an impressive resume and stress my talents to potential employers. Should I be leading this double life, or is there some fallacy here?



The attribute of anava is extremely important, and according to some, is the most important one (Avoda Zara 20b). The Rambam writes that it is the one area where one should not follow the golden mean. That being said, by understanding the nature of humility, one can apply it in a livable manner.

Going through classical sources on anava and its opposite, ga'ava, (such as in Maharal's Neivtot Olam and Orchos Tzadikim), one finds clearly that humility is primarily related to what one thinks and feels, rather than what he says. Speech is just one way in which one's feelings become known to others. The offense of haughtiness is not only in the way it makes others feel but, philosophically, in how one views himself within Hashem's world. A perfect G-d created a world in which each person has the potential to leave his mark, but he does not become the ruler or the center of the little world around him. Failure to understand this is an affront to the Creator and Ruler Who commanded him to think about other individuals and community.

Let us give two of many sources that illustrate some of these ideas. R. Yochanan says (Sota 4b) that whoever is haughty is as if he denies the existence of Hashem, as it says: "...and your heart will be high, and you will forget Hashem, your G-d." This puts haughtiness in the theological realm as we have posited. The gemara (Megila 31a) says: "Wherever you see Hashem's greatness, you see His humility." It then brings p'sukim that extol Hashem's greatness, followed by a pasuk that Hashem loves and helps the stranger. If humility depends on what one says about himself, this makes no sense. How is Hashem humble if He says in His Torah that not only is He great, but He also cares for the weak? Rather, the gemara means that Hashem does not use his greatness to build Himself up but to help others. Ga'ava, then, is about being self-centered. To think just about oneself and look down on others but speak humbly is hypocrisy, not humility.

However, there are guidelines for speech. It says in Mishlei (27:2): "Others should praise you, but not your mouth." Yet, the gemara (Nedarim 62a) says that in a place where a Torah scholar is not known, he may identify himself as such. When there is another to point out who he is, it is improper to speak about oneself. Tosafot (Kidushin 30a) brings a contradiction. Bava Metzia 23b says that one can/should lie rather than tell how much Torah he has learned. Kidushin 30a says that when one is asked a question, he should answer with confidence, not

hesitantly. This implies that he should show his greatness in Torah. Tosafot answers that when there is no purpose for the counterpart to know of his scholarship, he should hide it. When others should know that one is a talmid chacham, he should let it be known. If one is lucky, he will not have to say so himself, which is uncomfortable for one with internal humility. If he needs to, he should find the appropriate way to let out the information.

Using a resume and a confident (not haughty) presentation of one's accomplishments and qualifications is appropriate to secure a job. (It is better to hint or cite facts than to make a self-appraisal.) A rabbi must ensure that his class or congregation knows it can rely on his expertise. An institution that needs money to continue its work has an obligation to its projects and dependents to convince potential donors that it is a wise philanthropic choice. If they do so too openly, they will be viewed as lacking anava. If they do not feel uncomfortable doing so, they may have lost their internal anava. So "show what you've got," as necessary, now and in the future, and continue to feel uncomfortable about it.

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

[2] **Candle by Day**

Some consciously shun inspirational experiences in order not to burden their mediocrity.

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)

The Talmud (B'rachot 4a) questions why Moshe told Par'o that the death of the first-borns would take place "kachatot halaila" - at about midnight - rather than the exact time of midnight. Surely, Moshe could have been accurate to the nanosecond. The answer: Perhaps Par'o's wise men would make a mistake in their reckoning of the time and then say: "Moshe is a liar."

This interpretation would seem to fly in the face of all reasonable thought. After all, Moshe had correctly predicted nine terrible and unusual events that had literally plagued the Egyptian people. He then predicted the most terrible of all - the death of Egypt's first-borns. Imagine that he had said that this would take place exactly at midnight. Let's assume that the palace clocks were inaccurate and according to their time all the first-borns died at midnight plus twenty seconds. What is the response of Egypt's best and brightest? "You see how Moshe is nothing but a liar."

The level of self deception and refusal to face facts is so mind boggling that we might well wonder at the sanity of such wise men or, alternatively, at what the Tamudic sages were trying to

tell us in this seemingly odd interpretation.

Perhaps the lesson to be drawn from this discussion is that the Rabbis profoundly understood the true nature of man and the depths of his psyche:

- 1) We don't like to face unpleasant truths.
- 2) The power of rationalization to substitute good reasons for real reasons is boundless.
- 3) Man will grab at the thinnest of straws to deny the reality which stares him in the face.

Should we be surprised by the ancient Egyptian think tank's reaction? After all, modern Jewish history has seen its Egypt and their wise men, perhaps those Ph.D.s who met at Wansee or commanded Einsatzgruppen. It has witnessed the birth of a Jewish State in which Jews no longer have to live under non-Jewish rule, in which Torah flourishes, and in which we are called to help shape our destiny.

Is it possible there are yet those wise and many who are more than wise who are still waiting because they think that this great drama of Reishit Tzemichat Geulateinu is but an illusion? Do their sojourns in the Egypt of Jewish History continue because the details of the Reishit do not meet their redemption clocks?

May it be that those who dwell in Goshen's darkness see a great light.

Moshe EMET - it is we who may miss the mark.

Rabbi David Ebner, PhD, Jerusalem

TORAH THOUGHTS as contributed by Aloh Naaleh members for publication in the Orthodox Union's 'Torah Insights', a weekly Torah publication on Parshat Ha'Shavuah

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

In Kovno, as in many other cities, there was a special building known as HEKDESH, a community-owned building where the poor could sleep. But it had fallen into a terrible state of disrepair. It was damp, and the poor had to spend the night in filth. No one, though, seemed to care, for the community had many other demands on it.

R' Yisrael Salanter found out about this. One night, he went to the HEKDESH, lay down on the ground, and slept there that entire night.

In the morning, they saw that R' Yisrael had spent the night there, and a commotion arose in the city. The community leaders immediately began to repair the building.

* * * * *

R' Zvi Ashkenazi, the Chacham Zvi, would on occasion take out the different letters which he had received from people throughout the world, and would reread the various titles and praises about himself contained in these letters.

"Rebbe," he was asked, "why do you do this?"

"When I read these," replied R' Zvi, "I realize how people regard me, and I resolve to be careful not to sin out of respect for the writers."

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

[5] Parsha Points to Ponder - BO

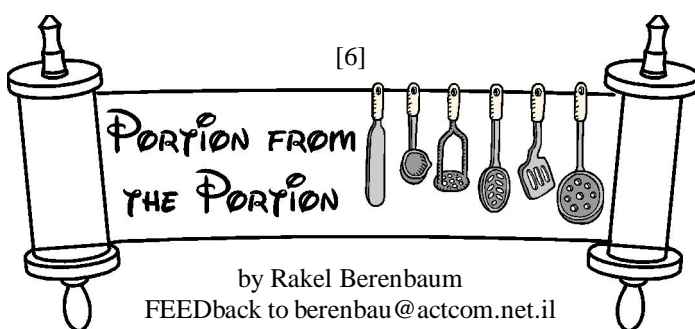
- 1) The Torah records that on the night of the last plague, NO DOG WAG HIS TONGUE TOWARDS THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (11:7). What is the significance of this?
- 2) The Haggadah emphasizes that G-D carried out the plague of Makkat Behorot alone without the aid of any angels. How can this be reconciled with the passuk (12:23) which states that G-D did not let THE DESTROYER enter the homes of the Jews during that night?
- 3) The emphasizes THIS DAY that we left Egypt three times (12:51, 13:3,4). Why?

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

- 1) Rav Yehuda HaChasid explains that our tradition teaches that dogs bark at a dead bodies because they can perceive the angels and forces involved with the death of a person. The dogs not only bark but they become aggressive and difficult to control. Although Egypt was full of dead bodies and all of these forces of death, G-D changed nature and the dogs remained quiet and unaggressive out of respect for the Jewish people.
- 2) The Vilna Gaon answers that the DESTROYER here refers to the angel responsible for regular non-plague related deaths. G-D made sure that no Jews died from even natural deaths during that plague to insure that the Egyptians had no opening to suggest that Jews were also subject to this plague.
- 3) The S'forno teaches that Nissan that year fell in the spring time. G-D and Moshe are telling the Jews of all generations make sure that the Pesach always be similar to that day. They should do so by establishing the necessary leap years. By doing so, every Pesach will be like THIS DAY.

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



The darkness of Egypt and the light of the Jews

The plagues touched every aspect of the physical world, to show the Egyptians that Hashem alone controls all forces of nature (not that there are many different forces as the Egyptians believed).

In the ninth plague the Egyptians were hit by darkness. Why did Hashem bring this plague?

For one thing, it is very hard to do anything without light. That is why a blind person, who is in the dark all the time, is

considered as dead. He is cut off from connection with everything in the world; objects, people, even in some ways himself because he can not see himself. That is why light was the first thing that Hashem created.

The midrash Shmot Rabba relates a practical reason for the darkness. There were some wicked Jews who had become wealthy in Egypt and did not want to leave with their brethren. Hashem brought on the darkness so that He could kill those Jews without the Egyptians noticing. Otherwise the Egyptians would say that the Jews died for the same reason as the Egyptians (and not because they were wicked in their own way).

The Chidushei Harim teaches us a moral lesson from the plague of darkness. He says that the worst type of darkness is when one Jew doesn't want to see the sorrow of his fellow Jew and doesn't lend a helping hand. That's how the Avnei Ezel explains Chazals words that the darkness had the thickness of a gold coin. Running after money increases a person's selfishness and makes it hard for him to see the hardship of others.

The Jewish people did not suffer from any of the plagues. Therefore while the Egyptians were blinded by the thick darkness, the Jews were basking in the light. The Rebbe from Kotzk says that Hashem even let them enjoy the special light, created on the first day of the world, that had been hidden immediately after its creation so wicked people could not benefit from it. In Egypt, since all the wicked people were sitting in the dark, Hashem let out this unique light for the Jews. May we "see" the plight of our brothers and help each other in whatever way we can so we may be worthy of this special light speedily in our day.

DARK & LIGHT COOKIES

Cookie 200 gm. margarine
1 cup sugar
2 tsp. vanilla
½ tsp. salt
2 eggs
3 cups flour

Mix margarine and sugar. Add all the dry ingredients. Gradually add eggs. Make balls and press down one side to flatten. Place on baking sheet at distance of 2 cm. Bake 15 minutes at 160C.

Icing Dark (Black)
¾ cup powdered sugar
4 tbsp. cocoa
2 tbsp. hot water
1½ Tbsp. oil

Light (white or add food coloring for yellow)
1 cup powdered sugar
¼ tsp. vanilla
2 Tbsp. hot water
1 Tbsp. oil
1 drop lemon juice

Cover the flat side almost completely with dark icing (for the darkness of the Egyptians) and a tiny area of the flat side with white or yellow icing (for the light of Israel).

[8] **Divrei Menachem**

Among the events in Parshat Bo is the command to prepare the Korban Pesach, the Paschal Lamb. On the tenth of the month of Nissan this lamb was to be selected personally by the head of each household, to be tied to his bedpost and to be held in the house for four days, prior to the slaughtering.

The technical reason for withholding the lamb, offered by Rashi, is that the lamb would need to be checked for blemishes, a process that normally takes four days. However, since the Egyptians considered the sheep a deity, the rabbis note that the tethering of the lambs was designed to induce their curiosity, if not their anger at their (former) slaves. Miraculously, the Egyptians not only refrained from reprisals, they allowed the Jews to leave with their silver and gold utensils appropriated during the plague of darkness.

A Chassidic interpretation of this 4-day delay stresses the self-sacrifice made by the individual, in the light of what could have been a disastrous act on the part of the Jewish householder. Moreover, the goal was to take an object of extreme idol worship - with which the Jews were highly accustomed - and to transform it gradually into an object of holiness.

In the natural course of events, eating turns food into the very essence of the individual, to blood that is associated with the Nefesh or soul. Thus, it is not surprising that, in that fashion, the consumption of the Korban Pesach in those ancient times marked the beginning of the spiritual journey of Bnei Yisrael, characterized by sacrifice, in every sense of the word.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

Last week we focused on the SH'VA NAs in the SH'MA. We "dismissed" 75 of the 92 SH'VA NAs as being at the beginning of a word, and therefore naturally said with a slight vowel sound, which is correct. Words like V'HAYU, V'SHINANTAM, L'TOTAFOT, Y'MEI- CHEM, K'DOSHIM... and the like are hard to mess up. The opening consonant needs a brief vowel sound to get you to the next letter.

But this is not always so. It isn't always easy to pronounce a letter with a SH'VA NA at the beginning of a word properly - especially for native English speakers. And this is because of our experience with "initial consonant blends". words with B and R as the first two letters are correctly pronounced in English with the B and R blended smoothly. We say BRUNCH, not b'runch. BREAD, not b'read. But in Hebrew, when a word begins with BET and REISH, with a SH'VA under the BET, the BET and REISH sounds are NOT blended. The word for blessing is B' RACHA, not bracha. Many (most?) English-speakers find this difficult. GLIDE in English, but G'LIDA is Hebrew for ice cream, not glida. There are many consonant blends in English and each challenges us to separate them in Hebrew, even as we must blend them in English. The first word of SH'MA presents that challenge. One of several Yiddish words that have made their way into English is SHMOOZE. This is an initial consonant blend of the digraph SH and the letter M. In Hebrew, they are slightly separated by the slight vowel sound of the SH'VA NA. SH'MA. Not shma. And not an exaggerated SHEMA either. All SH'VAs under the first letter of the word do not allow a consonant blend.

One ALMOST exception...

The feminine form of the word for 2, a very old dispute. Some say that the first letter of SHTEI and SHTAYIM and SHTEIM-ESREI is a SHIN with a SH'VA NACH and that the TAV that follows it has a DAGESH KAL. That would allow the SH and the T sounds to blend, like they do in the English slang word from Yiddish, SHTICK. The other opinion is that the SHIN's SH'VA is NA, like ALL initial letters, and the words are pronounced SH'TEI, SH'TAYIM.

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.

From the Mikdash Mailbag

"I am trying to understand why you and all of us have this great fascination and focus on Bayit Sheni. It seems that this focus has been inbred into the Jewish consciousness, perhaps based upon tradition or because archeology also focuses on the past. Is it not the case that when the Mashiah comes, Bemheira V'yameinu, and Bayit Shlishi (the Third Temple) is built, that this soon to be rebuilt Beit Hamikdash will look different from Bayit Sheini? Did not Yechezkel HaNavi describe how it would look? Several commentators discuss Bayit Shlishi. Therefore, should not our time and efforts be spent on focusing on their insights, which will help us prepare for what will be? This fascination with our past, although part of the Mitzva of Limud Torah, and as enjoyable as it might be, certainly deflects from our focusing on understanding the vision of Yechezkel and Bayit Shlishi." —Onondaga YE

To YE: Your letter raises a very significant point. These Beit HaMikdash-related articles have several goals. 1. We want to increase the general knowledge of our readers about the Mikdash, an essential subject in Yahadut which, unhappily, many of our people know precious little about. This includes Mikdash architecture, Hilchot Korbanot, Tum'a and Tahora, the Kehuna, etc. How many Mishnayot, Gemarot, and Rambams are simply incomprehensible without a working knowledge of Mikdash procedure? This is not surprising when you consider that over one third of the Written Torah deals with Mikdash-related subjects! It behooves us to know these things. However, there is one more thing. "...When they read (the order of sacrifices), I will deem it if as if they had offered them before Me and I will forgive them for all their sins" (Ta'anit 27b). The Midrash says, "...The Holy One Blessed be He said to Yechezkel, '...reading (Chukei Korbanot and laws of the Mikdash) is equivalent to building (the Mikdash). Go and tell them to concern themselves with the study of the form of the Mikdash as it is explained in the Torah. As a reward for their study, I will deem it as if they actually built the Beit Hamikdash" (Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 14). 2. We place particular emphasis on Mikdash history because for too many people, it is a mélange of unrelated, irrelevant, and meaningless trivia. Nothing can be further from the truth! History, and especially Jewish history, is dynamic in that the influence of incidents that occurred centuries and millennia ago live on - for good and for evil. They affect our lives today. Only by loyalty to the Torah, and by the understanding and the appreciation of our

unique history, can we justly establish our claim to be a nation in Eretz Yisrael, our G-d-given land. In his final address to Am Yisrael, Moshe Rabeinu said, "Remember the days of yore, understand the years of generation after generation" (D'varim 32:7). Am Yisrael is a people commanded to remember. 3. Finally, IY"H, as we as a people, collectively "raise our Temple consciousness" we will be better able to play our apportioned role in the fulfillment of the glorious future foretold by the Navi. "And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the Mountain of the House of G-d will be established at the top of the mountains and will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will flow to it. Many peoples will go and say, 'Come. Let us go up to the mountain of G-d, to the House of the G-d of Jacob. And he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of G-d from Jerusalem'" (Yeshiyahu 2:2, 3).

Dear Catriel, I remember some of the articles you wrote about Tzara'at ("leprosy"). You said that the laws of Tzara'at had some interesting peculiarities. If the Tzara'at symptoms covered the Metzora's entire body, he was pure, but when he started to heal, he became unclean. (Nega'im 13: 3). I recall a Midrash about that but I can't remember the details. Do you know it?
—RB

To RB: The Sages were fully aware of the anomalous nature of this very strange ruling. In a Midrashic rendition of Korach's rebellion against Moshe (Bamidbar 16), Korach asks Moshe a number of questions with the intention of making him look ridiculous in front of Am Yisrael. One of Korach's questions concerned this Halacha. "If", asked Korach, "a man had on his skin a bright spot the size of half a bean, is he pure or impure?" Moshe, of course, answered that he was impure. Then Korach asked, "If the symptoms spread over his whole body and he became completely white, what was the law?" Moshe answered that that then he would be pure. Korach retorted that laws so irrational could not possibly be of Divine origin and therefore Moshe was an impostor and Aharon was not the legitimate Kohein Gadol (see Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 10, 27b-28a). This is actually the third of three questions that Korach posed to Moshe in our sources. The first question was if a garment was made completely of Techelet (blue) would it need Tzitzit? (Bamidbar 15:37-40) The second question was; would a room filled with holy books need a Mezuzah on the doorpost? The much better-known version in the Tanchuma has Korach asking only the first two questions. Rashi, while quoting the Tanchuma, refers to only the first question. I hope this helps.

"How did the Kohanim wash (sanctify) their Hands and Feet in the Mikdash?"

At night, the vessel of the Kiyor (laver) which actually contained the water was lowered into an underground pit to prevent the water from being disqualified for sacred use. This pit was connected to the Temple underground plumbing system and there was always contact between the lowered vessel and flowing fresh water. (Note Yoma 3:10, Tiferet Yisrael 57) Early in the morning while it was still dark, the Kohein, who had been previously selected by "lot" to start clearing the Mizbei'ach, raised up the vessel again (Yoma 2:2). As he approached the Kiyor, he was warned: "'Be careful that you do not touch the fire pan that is used to clear (burnt coals from) the Mizbei'ach before you have sanctified your hands and feet from the Kiyor' (Tamid 1:4). "...how was the precept of 'sanctification' done? The Kohein placed his right hand on his right foot and his left hand on his left foot and sanctified (poured water on) them" (Zevachim 19b). The Kohein poured

water on his hand and foot simultaneously. Considered an Avoda, the sanctification could only be done standing. The Mitzva was accompanied by its B'racha. "Blessed art Thou O Lord our G-d, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aharon, and Who has commanded us on the sanctification of hands and feet." The Mishna continues. "The Kohein then washed his hands and feet and took the silver fire pan and went up to the top of the Mizbei'ach and cleared away the cinders and scooped up the burnt coals and descended..." (Tamid 1:4). "When his brethren, the priests, saw that he had come down from the Mizbei'ach, they speedily ran over and sanctified their hands and feet at the laver" (Tamid 2:1). The new day's Avoda had begun.

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

From the upper right, reading right to left, we find ARBEH (locust), a black rectangle representing CHOSHECH (darkness), and a sword representing MAKAT BECHOROT. In this case the sword has a double meaning: It can represent the killing of the first borns and/or the killing BY the first borns of others in anger over Par'o's repeated refusal to yield to the threat made by Moshe (in G-d's name) against the first borns.

The word BO (in Hebrew) is not just the name of the sedra, but also the number (BO = 2+1 = 3) of MAKOT in the sedra. There were seven plagues in Va'eira and another three in Parshat BO.

In addition to the word BO, there is also a BOW (as in bow and arrow) and a BOW as in a bow of ribbon.

The clock reads almost midnight. That was the phrase Moshe used to describe G-d's intention of Makat B'chorot at exactly midnight.

The lamb in the doorway is the Korban Pesach which was to be brought into the homes from the 10th of Nissan.

Matza is matza.

The barking dog is from the Egyptian neighborhoods, because in the Jewish areas, not a dog barked its tongue.

Their reward is that we "throw" them our non-kosher meat. The can above the dog can be dog food.

But the can has another meaning. In Hebrew, canned goods are called SHIMURIM, as in LEIL SHIMURIM.

The yo-yo represents Par'o's erratic behavior. Call for Moshe and Aharon. Get them out of my sight. Bring them immediately. If I see you again, you will die. Quick, get them...

The bull with an O between its horns is PAR-O

The bone is for the prohibition of breaking a bone in Korban Pesach. It is also for the word that appears a few times: B'ETZEM HAYOM HAZEH...

Above the bone is the symbol on a weather map that indicates total cloud cover and a strong easterly wind. That represents the plague of locust that arrived on a strong easterly wind and covered the sky like heavy clouds.

T'filin are t'filin. Two of the four parshiyot inside T'filin come from the end of Parshat BO

The baby, goat, and donkey stand for the three types of B'CHOR, firstborns - human, kosher domesticated animals, and donkey.

The axes and the sword are mentioned in the haftara.

As is the EGLA YEFEI-FIYA, here represented as a prize-winning (obviously beautiful) calf.

The plant in the ParshaPix is the hyssop, EIZOV, used to apply the blood of the Korban Pesach to the doorposts and lintels of the Jewish homes in Mitzrayim.

Coca Cola (COKE) with the OKE in the font used by CocaCola and the C made from a snake, becomes a play on the words in the haftara of Parshat Bo - Yirmiyahu 46:22, KOLAH K'NACHASH... its sound is like a snake's... (or Cola like a snake).

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

New format for TTriddles. Let us know if you like it this way or the "And the envelope please" old way

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, honorees will include

Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau

Ruby Davidman

Pearl Borow

Further details to come...

Last issue's (VA'EIRA) TTriddles:

[1] Forefathers of all kohanim except one

This TTriddle came from a tape of a Motza'ei Shabbat shiur of Rabbi Yisrael Reisman on the topic of Riddles. This is a modified form of the riddle. Defining Kohein as Aharon and all his descendants (without broadening the definition to include Malki-Tzedek or Moshe Rabeinu or anyone else), an obvious answer is Aharon, who is the forefather of all kohanim except for himself. Since the TTriddle asked for forefathers, we add another forefather of all kohanim except Aharon, who was mentioned in the sedra (Va'eira) - namely, Aminadav, father of Elisheva, wife of Aharon and foremother (it is a real word) of all kohanim except for Aharon. Since the TTriddle asked for forefathers, the answers are Aharon and Aminadav. And, as one solver pointed out, We know the names of several more "forefathers of all kohanim except one" - Ram (Aminadav's father), Chetzron, Peretz, and Yehuda. We cannot go further back to Yaakov, because he is a forefather of ALL kohanim. But Tamar's father, for example, would be a proper answer and so would many others. We've mentioned all the named people who fit the question.

[2] mouth, tongue, heart, and 4 plagues

KAVEID (or a variant of the root KAF-BET-DALET). Moshe referred to himself as a K'VAD PEH and K'VAD LASHON (mouth and tongue). Par'o's heart was KAVEID. And four of the plagues are described with that adjective KAVEID, severe - AROV, DEVER, BARAD (twice), and ARBEH.

[3] person, company, city, street

In Karnak the Magnificent style, the question would be "Who are (sons of Kehat) Amram, Yitzhar (Israeli vegetable oil company), Chevron (city), and Uziel (street in Bayit Vegan).

[4] the alliterative Levi

Merari, whose sons were Machli and Mushi.

[5] his name and birth-sedra have the same g'matriya... and so does his great-(x5)-grandfather

PINCHAS, whose birth was mentioned in VA'EIRA, has a numeric value of 208, as does Va'eira. As does YITZCHAK Avinu, Pinchas's great-great-great-great-great-grandfather.

[6] pledge his father to help non-date

In similar style to [3], the answers here are Aharon's sons - NADAV (pledge), AVI (father of) HU (him), EL (to) AZAR (help), I-TAMAR (non-date).

[7]42,44,45,46,47,48,49,84,85,87,88

The sons of Korach are mentioned in Va'eira. There are 11 chapters of T'hilim in their honor. These are the chapter numbers.

[8] Torah's common term (sort of) for army and covey

Groups of animals have special names - a gaggle of geese, a swarm of bees, flock of sheep, murder of crows... A group of frogs is an army. A group of quail is a covey. The word CHOMORIM is used for the piles of frogs (Va'eira) and the piles of quail (in B'haalotcha).

[9] tended victim of fire; was almost a victim of fire (separate prize)

MISHA'EL was one of the nephews of Aharon that took care of the bodies of Nadav and Avihu after they were struck dead by a

heavenly fire. A different MISHA'EL, with Chananya and Azarya, was thrown into a fiery furnace by Nevuchadnetzar (book of Daniel) and were miraculously saved.

[10] Also in ALARCACTINKYMANHNJNYOHUTVA

In addition to GOSHEN in Egypt, there are towns named GOSHEN in 13 different states in the U.S. The long string of letters in the TTriddle are the 13 official 2-letter abbreviations of Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Indiana (largest population of the Goshens with 24,000-ish; most have a few hundred people each), Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York (5000+ people, home of the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, passed on the way to the Catskills from NYC), Ohio, Utah, and Vermont.

[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)

All right, this one didn't work out. The insignia is of the British police rank Deputy Chief Constable, known as DCC, which in Roman numerals is 700, the issue number for the Sh'mot Torah Tidbits. Oh well, we tried.

[12] - [16] That leaves five unexplained elements, which are visual TTriddles. And [17] the Mazal TTriddle.

There is a compass with the needle pointing north - EL-TZAFAN b. Uziel, brother of Misha'el (see [9]) and Sitri.

C (atomic number 6, atomic weight 12.01) is the symbol for carbon, the main ingredient in the furnace soot that Moshe and Aharon used to bring about the plague of SH'CHIN (boils). [One solver said it stood for the KORBAN we asked to sacrifice...]

The flag is that of Vietnam. The key makes it KINAM, a.k.a. KINIM, plague #3. (The lice are referred to as KINIM 3 times and KINAM twice.)

In the lower-left are shoes known as Crocs. Besides being very comfortable, they represent the TANINIM (crocodiles) that the staffs of Moshe and the Chartumim of Egypt turned into.

Elazar b. Aharon HaKohein married one of the daughters of PUTI'EL; they had Pinchas. Elazar's wife was BAT-POOH-T-L.

In the Word of the Month box on page 2 (page 1 of the PDF file), is the Zodiac symbol (mazal) for Sh'vat. It is a picture of the MOVIL ARTZI, Israel's National Water Carrier. The Water Carrier is Aquarius, the mazal of Sh'vat.

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

For the last two years plus, we've had a pasuk (verse) from the sedra or haftara in a box on the front page of TT. For issue #700, the pasuk had no connection to Parshat HaShavua. Rather it was from Divrei HaYamim, part of HODU from P'sukei D'zimra. The g'matriya (numeric value) of the pasuk is 700. EB wins a CD (or cassette) for getting this one.

The NachKay Jewish Trivia Question (NKJTQ) was a continuation of the previous week's. We were looking in the regular daily Amida for names of people in Tanach.

Last week we published 18 names and challenged readers to find more. The 18 are: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yisrael, David, Yehuda, Adam, Enosh, Baruch, Asher, Chanun, B'racha, Tzur, Tzemach, Melech, Sachar, Tov, Arba.

The prize of a CD from Noam Productions was awarded to Zevi Reich of RBS.

Additional prize this week to Hadar Crown for more additional names from the Amida than any other solver.

Some of these "new" names were also submitted by others, but HC takes the prize.

SHEIM b. No'ach. GESHEM, an Arab who plotted against Nechemya. BAAL (aside from the diety) there are two mentioned in Divrei HaYamim, one from Reuven and one from Binyamin. TIKVA, father-in-law of the prophetess Chulda. D'VIR, king of Eglon. (also a name for the Kodesh HaKodashim of the Beit HaMikdash.) CHEIN b. Tzefanya. YEITZER b. Naftali (word appears in ELOKAI, N'TZOR in the extra part said in Nusach S'fard.

HC, EB, and others also submitted some partial names and different-vowels-same-letter names. We won't put them on "the list", but they earned EB another prize. Some of these extras include B'EN-CHESED, MALKI-TZEDEK, SHALUM, BAKOL (some say she was a daughter to Avraham and Sara), GAD, NUN, and others.

KOL HAKAVOD to all who submitted lists of names for this fun NKJTQ.

Another suggestion for a past NKJTQ. Shimon Lebowitz posits that in Beit HaMikdash, a kohen offers K'TORET and says a bracha. In practice, each kohen did K'toret only once in his life. Hmm. Maybe. Good possibility. CD to you. (Be in touch.)

On the bottom of two pages last week, the word Zap appeared. This too was a TTriddle of a type we've had in the past, but not for many (at least 15) weeks. Zap is a small town (pop. 231) in North Dakota. It just so happens that Mrs. Sylvia Samson a"h (wife of Julius Samson, the first and long-term chairman of the Israel Center) came from Zap. As a matter of fact, Sylvia Samson might have been the first baby ever born in Zap. A Jew from North Dakota is rare enough, but a religious Jew from Zap! So what's Zap doing in the TT footer last week? Its area code is 701.

A TTriddle that was hidden in the TTriddle report of TT701 was found and solved by ZR (he solved others too) and wins him another CD this week. Helen Parr was/is Elastigirl, who can do what might have happened to Bat Par'o when she stretched her arm.

The following also win CDs from Noam Productions for their TTriddle work: RHM, Rosalie K. and Hillel Sabba M. & gds. TTriddles prize to AW/Cranford NJ

This week's TTriddles:

- [1] 1956 jazz album by Miles Davis
- [2] Brother [sic], want a festive omelet?
- [3] 2nd question, answered 8 times after the 4th
- [4] E&M/M&E, everyone/adults, prophets/Moshe, wizards/prophet
- [5] Par'o's question in my bread and water
- [6] part of envy

NachKay Jewish Trivia Question

Find a pasuk in the Torah which contains a five-word phrase repeated three times verbatim