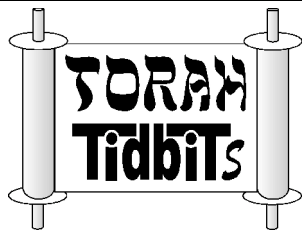




707



שבת פרשת
תצוה
זכור
י"א אדר תשס"ז
March 10-11, '06



T'tzaveh-Zachor is the 159th day (of 354); the 23rd Shabbat (of 50) of 5766

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּיַד עַל-פֶּסֶס זֶה מִלְחָמָה לָּהּ בַּעֲמֻלָּהּ מִדֵּר דֵּר: שְׁמוֹת יוֹט

Purim Wears a Mask

We are not referring to people who wear masks on Purim, as per the popular custom for Purim. We are not talking about the play on the name ESTHER, referring to HESTER PANIM, G-d's hidden face (so to speak) when He operates behind the scenes of world and Jewish history. G-d's wearing of a mask, so to speak, is a classic image of the Purim story. The absence of His name in Megilat Esther is the classic symbol of HESTER PANIM, and the custom of disguising oneself with a Purim costume partially alludes to that aspect of the Purim story.

No, we are not referring to that either. We might say, as the title of this Lead Tidbit does, that Purim itself is wearing a mask, or perhaps that PURIM is a mask. Take your pick of titles; here's what we mean.

Purim is the joyous celebration of victory over our would-be oppressors in the Persian kingdom. Purim is the celebration of the vanquishing of Haman and his sons per se, and as descendants of Amalek, their demise is also the fulfillment of the Torah's command to erase Amalek "from under the heavens". (In fact, we can say that our Sages ordained the reading of Zachor, which contains the mitzva of TIMCHEH (to wipe out Amalek) to be on the Shabbat before the day that marks a fulfillment of that mitzva.)

What is hiding behind the Purim Mask, the Mask that is Purim, is the where and when of the Purim story, and the significance of the where and when.

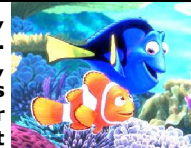
First Beit HaMikdash was destroyed by Nevuchadnetzar in 3338 from Creation. There were several waves of exile that preceded the Churban. More than 50 years after the Churban and longer after Exile for many, Nevuchadnetzar and his evil sons were gone and a new king, Koresh, came to power.

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 was TUE, Feb.28, at 2:08am, Isr. time. 14 days, 18 hours, and 22 minutes later is the last opportunity for Kiddush L'vana. That comes to 8:30pm on Tuesday night, March 14th, which is Megila night in Yerushalayim. For North America, last op for KL is the night of regular Purim, Monday, March 13th



Taanit Esther is 13 Adar, Monday, 13 March. The fast begins at dawn, 4:40am in Jerusalem. The fast ends at 6:10pm. For those who hear Megila on Monday evening, it is preferable not to break fast until after Megila reading. One who feels weak from the fast and fears that his/her concentration for Megila will be compromised, may eat and/or drink a little bit after the time and before Megila. Taanit Esther is not a sad day like the Four Fasts, but is a serious day.

TORAH Tidbits AUDIO
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OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

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Candle Lighting and HAVDALA
Standard (Winter) time
Correct for TT 707 • Rabbeinu Tam (I'm) - 6:56pm

5:08pm	Jerusalem	6:21pm
5:24pm	Raanana	6:22pm
5:24pm	Beit Shemesh	6:22pm
5:24pm	Netanya	6:22pm
5:25pm	Rehovot	6:22pm
5:04pm	Petach Tikva	6:22pm
5:24pm	Modi'in	6:22pm
5:25pm	Be'er Sheva	6:22pm
5:23pm	Gush Etzion	6:21pm
5:23pm	Ginot Shomron	6:21pm
5:08pm	Maale Adumim	6:20pm
5:24pm	K4 & Hevron	6:21pm
5:11pm	Tzfat	6:20pm
5:24pm	Tel Mond	6:22pm

Ranges are FRI-FRI 10-17 Adar (March 10-17)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:06-4:57am
Sunrise - 5:56-5:47am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 8:52-8:47am (8:08-8:02am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:51-9:47am (9:21-9:17am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:49½-11:47½am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 12:20-12:18pm
Plag Mincha - 4:30-4:34pm
Sunset - 5:48-5:53pm (5:43½-5:48pm)

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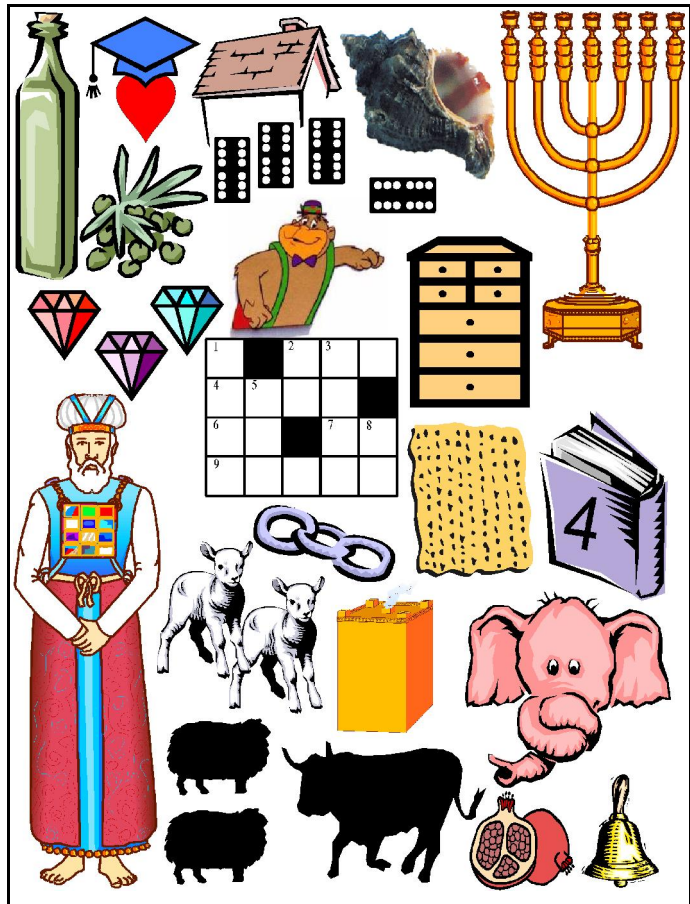
Orthodox Union • National Conference of Synagogue Youth
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In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
Shabbat 4:00pm (Mincha 5:00pm)
Yaacov Peterseil & Co.
Motza'ei Shabbat 8:30pm
David Bedein on Elections

Koresh, thinking that the 70 years of prophe- sied exile for the Jews was over, decreed that the Jews of his empire could return to Eretz Yisrael and rebuild the Beit HaMikdash.

A pitifully small number of people came back to Eretz Yisrael. Many of the Jews that remained in exile enjoyed their lives too much to think of returning. And then there is the issue of Achashveirosh's party and how the Jews enjoyed themselves, in spite of the fact that Achashveirosh was arrogantly parading around in the garments of the Kohen Gadol and showing off other plunder of the Beit HaMikdash - as a sign of his superiority to the G-d of Israel.

That's some of what's hiding behind the Purim Mask. By all means, enjoy Purim. But don't forget to look behind the mask and see if anything fits today's situation the Jewish world finds itself in. And resolve to do something about it, so that we can proceed to the Geula Sh'leima with the Jews returning to Torah and Zion.



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 - 14 p'sukim - 27:20-28:12

[S> 27:20 (2)] Moshe (his name conspicuously missing from this sedra) is told by G-d to command the people to take pure olive oil in order to light the Menora's lamps. The Menora, to be located in the main section of the Mishkan, outside the Parochet, shall be tended and kindled on a daily basis [98,A25 27:21]. The lights shall shine from evening until morning, this being a perpetual law throughout the generations.

SDT *The People of Israel are likened to the Olive - just as the olive shows its greatness (its oil) only after being crushed and squeezed, so too does Israel show its special qualities after being subjected to the trials and tribulations of Jewish History. And Israel is compared to the oil of the olive - just as oil does not mix with other liquids, but rather floats above them, so too Israel does not (should not) mix with the nations of the world. And if we remain faithful to G-d, we will rise above the nations (or groups) who seek to hurt us.*

[S> 28:1 (5)] Moshe is next told to bring Aharon and his sons "front and center" to serve G-d as Kohanim. Special garments are to be made for the Kohen Gadol's glory and honor [99,A33 28:2].

SDT *Some say that glory and honor refer to G-d's and the People's, not (just) the Kohen Gadol's.*

There are different meanings to the Torah's phrase "for honor and splendor". Ramban gives it a straight-forward meaning - that the garments of the Kohen Gadol were for his glory. They were royal garments befitting the position of the Kohen Gadol, who was like royalty. With his special garments, the Kohen Gadol projected a perfect image. The garments helped present the Kohen Gadol to the People with great and appropriate dignity. This would help the People understand and relate to the Kohen Gadol as the vehicle of the Divine Presence among them.

On a different level, we can say that the objects of glory were G-d and the People themselves. When the Kohen Gadol wore his special garments, and the people see him in his splendor, then there is an increase in honor to G-d. The special garments

T'TZAVEH STATS

20th of 54 sedras; 8th of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 179.2 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank: 33rd

10 Parshiot; 2 open, 8 closed

101 p'sukim - ranks 35th (8th in Sh'mot)

1412 words - ranks 35th (8th in Sh'mot)

5430 letters - ranks 32st (7th in Sh'mot)

MITZVOT:

Contains 7 mitzvot; 4 positive and 3 prohibitions

As often happens in the Torah, there are other mitzvot in a sedra besides the ones that are counted among the Taryag. This is so in T'tzaveh.

The numbers don't always give us an accurate "Mitzva-Picture" of a particular sedra

also increase our awareness of the Sanctity of the Beit HaMikdash, and we are inspired to repent.

"Clothes make the man." In the context of the Beit HaMikdash, the Kohen in general, and the Kohen Gadol in particular, is himself filled with awe and will take his responsibilities more seriously. In addition, each specific garment reminds the Kohen (Gadol), and us, of a different aspect of Jewish Law and Life. Thus the Kohen's thoughts and intentions increase in purity.

Even without a Beit HaMikdash, we are affected by the lessons of many Mikdash-related mitzvot. One should dress especially nicely for Shabbat and Yom Tov. One's own clothes, even during the week, should reflect the dignity of a Torah way of life. Modesty and neatness, plus the positive message we project to others are all part of our daily deportment.

Talented artisans are to do the work. The garments are: the CHOSHEN (Breastplate), EIFOD (decorative apron or cloak), ME'IL (robe or poncho), KUTONET (linen tunic), MITZNEFET (turban), and the AVNEIT (belt or sash).

Note: the TZITZ (forehead plate) and MICHNASAYIM (short pants worn under the Kutonet) are among the garments but are not mentioned at this point in the Torah. This can be explained. The pants are for modesty, not glory and honor. And, perhaps, the Tzitz is for G-d's honor and to humble the Kohen Gadol, so it too isn't part of the list of the garments that are for the K.G.'s honor and glory.

The artisans were to take the gold, dyed wools, and linen (for the purpose of making the garments).

[P> 28:6 (7)] The Eifod is to be woven from yarn made of threads of gold, three colors of dyed wool (blue, purple, crimson - the colors and shades are the subject of centuries of debate) and linen in an intricate style. The Eifod has two shoulder straps. The belt of the Eifod is made in the same manner as the Eifod itself, and is an integral part of it (not a separate piece that was attached).

It is interesting to note that some of the furnishings of the Mishkan and some of the garments were explicitly to be "of a single piece", rather than attached. Not all the items of the Mishkan, nor all the garments, but the point is emphasized in the Torah for those items to which the rule must apply.

Two onyx stones (Shoham) were set on the shoulders, upon which were engraved the names of the tribes. These stones with the names serve as an eternal reminder for the Kohen Gadol.

SDT Talmud Yerushalmi states that the name of Binyamin was engraved on both shoulder-stones, BIN on one and YAMIN on the other. This idea is supported by the language of the Torah - "From six of their names..." rather than "six of their names". In V'ZOT HABRACHA, when Moshe is blessing the tribes, the Torah says of Binyamin that "he will dwell between the shoulders, "U'Vein K'teifav Shachen".

Levi - Second Aliya - 18 p'sukim - 28:13-30

[S> 28:13 (2)] Gold settings and chains are to be made for the Eifod.

[S> 28:15 (16)] The Choshen is made in the same intricate style and manner of the Eifod. It is rectangular (double square) which when folded (which was the way it was worn) made a square measuring 1 ZERET (a span, which is half an Ama) on a side. Gold settings were woven into the Choshen to receive the twelve precious stones in four rows of three stones each. Straps and fasteners were made to firmly attach the Choshen to the Eifod. They must not be detached from each other **[100,L87 28:28]**. The Urim V'Tumim (parchment with the Divine Names on it) was inserted into the fold of the Choshen, and gave the Choshen its miraculous powers.

SDT The letters of CHOSHEN rearrange to spell NACHASH, meaning "snake" but also meaning divination through the occult and black magic, powers in this world which are anathema to Torah and Judaism. L'havdil, the Choshen is one of our legitimate tools for revealing hidden things. Significant that these opposite "forces" are actually two sides of the same coin. (Or anagrams of each other.)

CLARIFICATION

The yarn for the Eifod and Choshen was produced as follows: Six stands of T'cheilet-dyed wool (blue, opinions vary as to the shade) were twisted with a strand of gold to produce a thread. The same was done with Argaman-dyed wool (purple, blue-purple, other opinions) and gold, Shani-dyed wool (red, crimson) and gold, Sheish (white linen) and gold. Each thread was made of 7 strands - 6+1 of gold. Then the four threads were twisted together to form the yarn from which the Eifod and the Choshen were woven.

Another CLARIFICATION

Note that these garments (and some others) were Shaatnez. Yet rather than be forbidden, it was a mitzva for the Kohen Gadol to wear these garments. No contradiction here. He Who said not to wear Shaatnez, commanded the K.G. to wear these garments. He who said that it is forbidden to slaughter an animal on Shabbat, commanded that the daily korbanot and the Musaf be done on Shabbat. He is the Boss. Forbidding something in general and commanding the same thing in a specific situation underscores the idea of G-d's mastery of all.

Here's an idea about Shaatnez in general, and its use in the Kohen's garments in particular. This is not a reason for the prohibition of Shaatnez, nor for its use in Bigdei K'huna. It's just a point to ponder. Wool is the chief fiber from the animal kingdom. Flax is (or at least was) the chief fiber from the plant kingdom. Garments are the chief use of fibers. If so, we can say that one of the manifestations of human dominance over nature is our ability to take fibers from both plants and animals, process them and use them for our own benefit, comfort, and adornment. And taking the most prestigious of each kingdom, and weaving them together, and wearing garments made from the combination of wool and linen is one of the ultimate signs of our top position on the nature pyramid. Comes the Torah and tells us that we have limits. Yes, we may take from nature to clothe ourselves. But not limitlessly. Not the ultimate demonstration of complete dominance. Because WE do not completely dominate. Only G-d does. Perhaps, the prohibition of Shaatnez is a mitzva meant to humble us, and rein us in, if just a little.

But when G-d commands us to fashion garments for the Kohen Gadol for G-d's (and the KG's) splendor, then the opposite is seen. G-d told us to purposely go "all the way".

It might be similar to not building a private dwelling that matches or surpasses the beauty of the Beit HaMikdash. It might be similar in message to giving Bikurim and T'ruma, etc. Think about it.

There are different opinions as to how the names of the tribes (really, it's the sons of Yaakov, rather than the tribes, since Levi and Yosef appear, rather than Efrayim and Menashe) were engraved on the Choshen (and the Eifod's shoulder stones).

לוי רהם	שמעון ב	ראובן א
זבולן ז	יששכר ז	יהודה י
גד שבטי	נפתלי ב	דן ק יעק
בנימין	יוסף ון	אשר ישר

This arrangement is the opinion of Chizkuni, a Rishon from France who lived more than 700 years ago. He wrote a commentary on the Torah based on Rashi. He says that all of Leah's sons were first, then Bilha's, then Zilpa's, and finally Rachel's. Rashi, however arranges the names in order of birth, so Reuven, Shimon, Levi, and Yehuda are on the same stones as Chizkuni has them, as are Yosef and Binyamin. Rashi puts Dan, Naftali, Gad, and Asher before Yissachar and Zevulun.

Rambam has the same arrangement as Chizkuni, but he puts the names Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov on the Reuven stone, and the words Shivtei Kah on the Binyamin stone.

Note that in addition to the names of the tribes, there are additional letters that spell the names Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, & Shivtei Yeshurun (another name for Bnei Yisrael). These additional letters are added to each successive stone so that each stone will end up with six letters engraved on it (according to Chizkuni).

Furthermore, all letters of the Alef-Bet are now represented, so that the Kohen Gadol can receive Divine communication via the Urim V'Tumim and the letters on the stones of the Choshen, which were illuminated and then interpreted by the K.G.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 28:31-43

[S> 28:31 (5)] The Me'il was made of T'cheilet wool (some shade of sky blue). Its neck was especially reinforced to prevent tearing, which is prohibited [101,L88 28:32]. This prohibition applies to all Kohen garments, but is commanded in the context of the Me'il. The hem of the Me'il was adorned with gold bells and multi-colored pome-granates of wool and linen.

[S> 28:36 (8)] The TZITZ was to be made of pure gold with the words KODESH LASHEM, Holy unto G-d, hammered out as raised letters from the Tzitz. The Tzitz was secured to the Kohen Gadol's head by bands of T'cheilet wool.

The Kutonet - tunic and the Mitznefet (or Migba'at) - turban - were made of pure linen.

The Avneit, belt was woven from the wools and linen. There is a dispute as to whether only the Kohen Gadol's belt was Sha'atnez or those of all Kohanim as well.

SDT *The Avneit was 32 Amot long, approx. 16m of belt. It took a long time to put on and it produced a large bulge that the Kohen always felt when he put his arms at his sides. Similarly, the Kohen's turban was wound from 16 Amot of linen strip and probably "sat heavy" on the kohen's head. Sources say that a kohen saw his turban whenever he raised his eyes. Similarly, the Kutonet was long sleeved and almost floor length, so the kohen always noticed his garments during Avoda. This "guaranteed" that the kohen would have proper Kavana during his sacred service.*

For Aharon's sons (and all active kohanim), there were four garments - tunic, turban, belt, pants. The regular kohen's garments were also for honor and glory. Aharon and his sons were to be dressed in their garments and anointed to serve as kohanim. The linen pants of the kohanim, from waist to knees, was for modesty. Rambam says there were loops at the waist for a rope-belt. Rashi says the Michnasayim resembled boxer shorts in that they were not tight-fitting.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 18 p'sukim - 29:1-18

[S> 29:1 (37)] The consecration ceremony for Aharon and his sons is described in this portion. Sacrificial offerings included a bull (this very first offering in the Mikdash is the symbolic father of the Golden Calf and came as an atonement for his son /that sin) and two rams, various types of matza-crackers made from flour and oil (and water (almost always an ingredient, but not mentioned in the text). The kohanim-to-be immersed in a mikve, were dressed in their special garments, and were anointed with special oil.

The Torah goes to considerable detail in describing the dressing of Aharon and his sons for the Kehuna. Earlier in the sedra was the command to make the garments - and that was counted as a mitzva among the 613. Here is the command to follow through with the garments by dressing the kohanim in them. Although this is also a command, it is NOT numbered among the Taryag Mitzvot. And neither is the command to anoint the kohanim. Sometimes, certain commands and the acts that follow when the commands are complied with, are considered to be part of the main mitzva to follow. Here, that might be the service in the Mishkan. The command to make the garments, on the other hand, stands on its own in such a way that it is numbered among the 613.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 19 p'sukim - 29:19-37

The intricate details of the seven-day ceremony for the Mishkan are presented. The Kohanim are required to eat

the meat of the sin-offering and guilt-offering (Chatat and Asham). This command applies not only during the consecration ceremony, but is a mitzva for regular Temple service [102,A89 29:33]. Many of the procedures of the first week of offerings were "one-shot-deals". Other practices became standard operating procedure in the Mikdash.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 29:38-46

[S> 29:38 (9)] Daily procedures on the Altar are to include the sacrificing of two lambs as Burnt-Offerings, one in the morning and the second one in the late afternoon. These daily sacrifices are accompanied by flour and oil "mincha" and wine for libation. [The mitzva of the T'midim is #401 from Parshat Pinchas.]

In response to our consecration of the Kohanim, HaShem Himself will sanctify the Mishkan, Altar, and Kohanim. "And I will dwell among the People of Israel and be their G-d" (29:45). This pasuk is the companion of the pasuk that began the whole portion of Mikdash. In that first pasuk, the idea of G-d living among us, so to speak, and not merely in the Sanctuary that we construct for Him, is alluded to by the grammar of the word in the pasuk - B'TOCHAM. In this pasuk at the end (almost) of the instructions for making the Mikdash and everything in it and about it, the matter is spelled out.

Rabbi Yaakov Auerbach z"l points out that the G'matriya of that whole pasuk is 2449, the year from Creation in which the Mishkan was first dedicated.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 30:1-10

[P> 30:1 (10)] The Incense Altar is to be constructed of acacia wood, 1 ama wide by 1 ama long by 2 amot tall. It is to be plated with gold and adorned by a decorative border of gold. Two gold rings were attached to opposite edges for the carrying poles, themselves made of wood covered with gold. This Altar was placed in front of the Parochet and was used primarily for the daily offering of incense [103,A28 30:7] (and for part of the Yom Kippur Avoda), in the morning when the Menora was tended. Incense was offered towards evening too. No other use of the Golden Altar was permitted [104,L82 30:9].

There is a dispute as to whether the Golden Mizbei'ach was hollow or solid. All agree that the Copper Mizbei'ach was hollow. It was filled with earth each time the people encamped. Not so, the Gold Altar. Some say that it was a solid block of acacia wood, covered with gold. This gave it a stability and strength it would not otherwise have. Others insist that the description of the top of the Mizbei'ach as a GAG, roof, implies it was hollow.

Maftir - second Torah 3 p'sukim - D'varim 25:17-19

Generally, the mitzva to hear Torah reading is rabbinic. Parshat ZACHOR is the only portion of the Torah the hearing of which (with Kavana) is the fulfillment of a mitzva from the Torah. The 3-pasuk portion contains the mitzvot to Remember what Amalek did, to destroy the remnant of Amalek from "under the heavens", and never to forget.

There is debate as to who is required to fulfill TIMCHEH - individual, community, and other options - and when. But the reading of ZACHOR relates to the commands to remember and never forget. We know well that there was Amalek and there were, and are, its spiritual heirs. Remembering should not be a goal, but a means to behaving in such ways that history will not repeat itself and that Amalek will never succeed.

Haftara - 33 p'sukim - Shmuel Alef 15:2-34

S'faradim begin one pasuk earlier

The Haftara consists of the command through the prophet Shmuel to King Shaul to destroy Amalek, and of Shaul's incomplete compliance with his orders.

The Maftir tells us what we must do. The Haftara shows us what happens when it isn't done properly. Purim and Megilat Esther shows us what happens when it is done right.

But the battle goes on... until the time of Mashiach. G-d too "fights", so to speak. And we must do our part.

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

Lesson 323

Assaults (part 1)

Reuven transgresses a Torah commandment when he assaults Shimon. This is derived as follows: Regarding the person who is to be punished by Beth Din by lashing, the Torah states, "Forty shall he strike him, he shall not add" (D'varim 25:3). If a person who is being punished cannot be struck in excess of the prescribed amount of lashes, how much more so does the verse apply to the person who strikes an innocent person. (See Maimonides Sefer haMitzvot, negative commandment 300.)

It is forbidden for a Jew to wound himself or another Jew. I would think that because of the laws of living in tranquility with our neighbors, this prohibition would extend to not striking non-Jews. The prohibition not to strike another person is true not only if the assault results in Reuven wounding Shimon, but even if there is no resulting wound. It is forbidden for Reuven to even lift up a hand against Shimon. If he does, he is deemed wicked, even if he does not actually strike him.

If a person strikes his wife his punishment in the eyes of Heaven is greater than when he strikes Shimon, for a person is commanded to honor his wife. If Reuven strikes his wife, in addition to making all of the payments that any other victim would be entitled to, the husband - after one warning- is to be beaten by the officers of the Beth Din and at the request of the wife, Beth Din can order him to divorce his wife. (In a future lesson IY"H we shall discuss if the husband and wife physically beat each other. We shall IY"H also discuss in the future, the situation where Reuven may be guilty of a punishment in addition to the monetary payment to be made.) Ordinarily, if a person is flogged by Beth Din, he does not make a monetary payment; in the case of assault the Torah instructs that he pay the victim instead of being flogged. If Reuven strikes Shimon, but the compensation as determined by Beth Din is less than a peruta (the smallest coin in circulation), there is no compensation to be paid. However, Reuven is to be flogged. Generally, if one transgresses certain types of negative Torah commandments he may be relieved of the punishment of flogging, if the victim can be made whole by the payment of money. The money payment undoes, as it were, the effects of the assault of Reuven on Shimon. Since there is no monetary payment to be made if the amount is less than a peruta, there is no undoing of the initial assault by Reuven on Shimon. Reuven is thus flogged by Beth Din.

Although it is prohibited, Shimon beats himself. Seeing this Reuven beats Shimon. Reuven is liable for the blow.

Reuven throws a stone and Shimon is nowhere to be seen. After the stone leaves Reuven's hand Shimon puts his head out of a window and the stone strikes Shimon. Reuven has no liability.

We now come to the famous Mishna that almost every child learns in school.

Reuven strikes Shimon. Reuven is liable to Shimon for up to five different categories of payment:

1. permanent injury (to be called injury in these lessons.) This category does not include injury that is not permanent;
2. pain and suffering (to be referred to as pain);
3. medical expenses (to be referred to as healing);
4. loss of wages during the healing period (to be referred to as "loss of income");
5. humiliation.

There are times when Reuven is liable to Shimon for all five categories, times when he is liable for only four, three or two or one of the categories and times when he is not liable at all.

For example, Reuven inflicts a non-permanent type of injury on Shimon. Reuven need not pay for injury but may be required to pay for up to four of the other categories. Reuven does not have to pay for pain if Shimon, because of a disorder, does not suffer pain. Reuven need not pay for medical expenses if Shimon belongs to a medical plan that does not charge Shimon for healing. Reuven need not pay for loss of income if Shimon is retired and does not lose income because of the injury. Reuven need not pay for humiliation if Reuven did not intend the act that caused the injury. Thus, in many of the cases, some of the categories of payment may be present and other categories not.

Some examples of liability are:

Reuven cuts off Shimon's hand, foot or even a finger; or

Reuven blinds his eye or deprives him of any limb that will not grow again. Reuven must pay for up to all five categories of compensation. The law is the same if Reuven knocks out Shimon's tooth. Reuven must pay for up to all of the five categories. The reason is that the mouth is certain to be sore for some time. Although the tooth is beyond treatment, the gums require treatment. The law is the same if Reuven tears the skin of Shimon or wounds him so that there is a break in the skin on Shimon and blood flows; he is liable for up to all five categories. The skin may not grow again and leaves a scar.

If Reuven strikes Shimon on his hand so that it swells but will eventually return to its normal size, or to his eye so that it becomes inflamed but will eventually heal, Reuven must pay for up to four categories, namely, pain, healing, loss of income, and humiliation. Reuven does not pay for injury since it is not permanent and when the swelling goes down Shimon will be the same as he was before.

If Reuven strikes Shimon on the head so that it swells but will eventually return to its normal size, Reuven must pay for three categories, namely, pain, healing, and humiliation.

If Reuven strikes Shimon on a spot that is not exposed, such as the knee or back, Shimon does not lose any income and no person witnessed the assault, Reuven must pay for up to two categories, namely pain and healing.

Reuven strikes Shimon with his handkerchief, or with a document, or the like. Reuven must pay only for humiliation, if it is present. There is an opinion that this holds true only if a third party witnesses the assault.

Next lesson will IYH continue with other examples of liability and begin a discussion of appraising the injury.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume X chapter 420 of A Restatement of Rabbinic Civil Law by E. Quint. Copies of all volumes can be purchased via email: orders@gefepublishing.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

Please note that in past years, Rabbi Meir's pre-Purim column consisted of "Purim Torah", light-hearted spoof in the Purim spirit. The following column, although on a Purim topic, is totally serious.

Dressing Up on Purim

One of the most prominent customs practiced today on Purim is to dress up in costumes, and this custom is mentioned already in the Rishonim. The Rema mentions that it is acceptable even for men to dress up as women (although there are dissenting opinions), even though this seemingly violates the prohibition of "A man's clothes shall not be on a woman, and a man shall not wear women's clothes" (D'varim 22:8). Others mention that it is customary to dress up as non-Jews, although this seemingly violates the prohibition "don't go in their ways" (Vayikra 18:3).

Here is one explanation of this custom.

The prohibition to be likened to non-Jews exists at several levels. In general, this prohibition, like other Torah prohibitions, should not stand in the way of danger, and indeed the Shulchan Arukh writes that a person may dress up like a non-Jew to avoid being identified as a Jew if Jews are being attacked (YD 157:2). However, if there is a decree for Jews to dress like non-Jews in order to make us lose our distinctiveness, then we are forbidden to change our dress even in the face of danger (YD 157:1).

Likewise, entering a place of idolatrous worship is normally forbidden; however, it is permissible in order to escape danger, but forbidden if the danger arises from a decree against Jewish worship.

In other words, the degree of prohibition depends on the motivation of hostile non-Jews. If their objective is to make us give up our traditions, then we must resist at all costs. But if their enmity is irrespective of our customs, then we can be more lenient. I heard from a prominent Rav that in the time of the Holocaust the rabbis were particularly lenient, because the object of the Nazis was not at all to make us give up our customs; on the contrary, they explicitly included in their mass killings people of Jewish background who did not even identify themselves as Jews.

At the time of Purim, the decree of Haman was directed against all Jews. It is true that the stated reason behind the decree was Haman's claim that we were a people who didn't keep the king's laws (Esther 3:8), but this was not Haman's true motivation, and in any case the decree applied to all Jews.

In this case, dressing up as a non-Jew would have been permissible. So the custom to dress up as non-Jews reminds us that this practice would have been permissible at the time of the original miracle, due to the unique nature of Haman's decree.

Another possible explanation is that the non-Jews at that time likened themselves to Jews, as the Megila states "And many of the common people Judaized themselves" (Esther 8:17). We commemorate and mock this insincere, purely external adherence to Judaism by adopting a purely external likeness to non-Jews while internally remaining fully devoted to our faith.

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

"To find a wife for my son, for Yitzchak" [5]

This search for a wife, expresses the essence of the first two Matriarchs of the Abrahamic Family-Nation, superficially so different from each other yet in reality so similar, that indeed Rivka could be brought into the tent and it was Sara's.

Judaism is an exquisite balance between spirituality and materialism, between prescribed acts and grace or faith, between Justice and Mercy, between ritual and inner feelings, between Nationalism and Universalism, between Olam HaZeh and Olam HaBa, between Heart and Brain, between truth and chesed. These two Matriarchs provide such balance to the

merits of the Patriarchs.

"All the years that Sara was alive, there was a cloud at the entrance of her tent... the doors of the tent stood wide open... there was blessing in the dough of the bread... There was a light burning from one Shabbat eve to the next" (B'reishit Rabba 60:10). That tent Sara had made into a place of sanctity, so that the Shechina rested on it. This is as, "and when Moshe came to the tent [the Mishkan] to speak with G-d the cloud of glory stood at the entrance" (Sh'mot 33:9), and as, "And Avraham saw the place from afar - he saw a cloud hovering over the mountain" (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer B'reishit 22:4). All three were expressions of a religious dialogue between human beings and G-d. The tent that spoke of hospitality to wayfarers is often considered a characteristic of Avraham only, yet it was to Sara's tent that he hurried and said: "Make ready quickly and three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes", so it was her zealotness in feeding the hungry and the strangers that brought the blessings in the dough.

Eishet Chayil that was Avraham's eulogy for Sara, speaks of: "she opened her mouth in wisdom and Torat Chesed is on her tongue; she possessed the wisdom to balance her and Avraham's chesed when needed. "Why did the destruction of Sodom have to be in Avraham's time and not in Yitschak's whose Mida is Din and Gevura? To teach him that sometimes Chesed has to be limited by Din" (Shem Mi Shmuel). Distinguishing that there could be no shaatnez in the Abrahamic Nation, she demanded that Ishmael ben Hagar bat Ham be sent away despite Avraham's love; and Hashem agreed. Her wisdom was not relegated to spiritual or religious matters: Chazal learn from, "she planned to buy a field", that hers was the plan to buy Marat HaMachpela, the eternal possession of Jews in the Promised Land.

Avraham's mission was to bring the knowledge of Hashem to the whole world, and Sara shared in that mission; "the souls that they created in Haran - Avraham converted the men and Sara the women" (B'reishit Rabba 39:14). Yet she has two attributes that balance Avraham in that mission. The idea that Sara was greater than Avraham in prophecy is an often-quoted one, but the Netziv sees her rather as having an additional dimension to that prophecy. "It is difficult to see how Sara was greater than Avraham in prophecy when she received only one, whereas all the others were given to him and only relayed to her. Nevertheless, she had the Ru'ach HaKodesh to believe in the visions that were granted to him; therein lies her greatness" (Haameik Davar, B'reishit 23:1). Furthermore, Avraham had ten tests, yet had no real suffering, whereas Sarah did. Twice she was threatened by the abduction of kings, she had to suffer the ignominy of giving her handmaiden to Avraham, it was she that suffered the arrogance of Hagar, it was her life that was the shorter of the two, and she suffered all the anxiety and uncertainty of the Akeida. She added to the Abrahamic Nation the strength to withstanding suffering (Siach Sarfei Kodesh).

Although like Sara, Rivka made her way from the pagan world of Aram Naharaim and the Abrahamic family to Eretz Yisrael, yet she did it alone, without a husband; showing the appropriate strength when she answered her family's question: "Will you go with this man?" with: "I will go"; this even though she was at the most 14 years old coming to a husband who was 40 years old, while there were only 10 years between Avraham and Sara. Like Sara, Rivka too, was a Baalat Teshuva, yet she had to join a husband who was not one, but a tzaddik ben tzaddik, thereby balancing his spiritual inheritance with her own free discovery, zeal, passion and wonderment. At home she had been familiar

with evil and idolatrous people, so she had the wisdom to recognize the evil that was Eisav and not be blinded by his hunting of his father.

Yitschak, the embodiment of Din and of Gevura needed the balancing Chesed of Rivka. Yet she knew that Chesed needs to be balanced therefore she had the wisdom to realize, as had Sara, that the Abrahamic mission of Torah, Land and Nation was not divisible. She also had the strength and initiative to make sure that its future remained unified, so could plan and execute the trick that would reveal the shaatnez that was Eisav, so that the blessings of Avraham would descend only on the tzaddik, on Yaakov.

"And Yitschak brought her into the tent of Sara his mother. He married Rivka, she became his wife, and he loved her. And thus was Yitschak consoled after his mother" (B'reishit 24:67). "It is normal for most men to love their wives, but when Yitschak saw her spiritual merits, he loved her with a greater love because of them. They were indeed the merits of Sara, so when he brought Rivka into her tent [all four Matriarchs had their separate independent ones from their husbands' tents], lo and behold it was in reality the tent of Sara" (Radak). "Why tell us that it was Sara's tent? To teach that while Sara's tent was left empty for the three years after her death as a mark of the Kibud Eim of Yitzchak, now he saw that when Rivka came to that tent it became Sarah's again [since all four blessings that had been there now returned]" (Ramban). "He mourned his mother for three years but when he saw that Rivka was like Sara he was comforted" (Radak); "A peace came to him from that love and so he was comforted" (Netziv). "So that, in the specific Jewish attitude to marriage, Yitschak could first be married and then grow to love the wife who was so like Sara" (S. R. Hirsch).

This is the 119th 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...



I may have to be out of town on Shabbat Zachor in a place where there is no shul to hear the reading of Parshat Zachor. Is it sufficient that I heard the same p'sukim on Parshat Ki Teitzei and will read about the actions of Amalek on Purim morning?



Many sources indicate that there is a mitzva from the Torah to read Parshat Zachor from a Sefer Torah, from the end of Ki Teitzei (D'varim 25:17-19). Rishonim (including Tosafot, Megila 17b; Rosh, Berachot 7:20) base themselves on the gemara (Megila 18a), which derives that Megilat Esther must be read from a proper scroll. It does so by means of a scriptural comparison to the mitzva to remember the actions of Amalek, which Hashem commanded Moshe to write down in a "book". The gemara continues that although one can fulfill the mitzva not to forget what Amalek did by reading silently, we must read it aloud because the Torah also says to remember, which indicates a further action. The Terumat Hadeshen (I, 108) understands from the Rosh (ibid.) that the Torah requirement includes the need for a minyan. Therefore, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 685:7) says that because of the mitzva from the Torah, people should go to a place with a minyan for Shabbat Zachor to hear the Torah reading. This seems to be your situation.

Let us see if there are mitigating circumstances that lessen the obligation or provide alternatives. Not all the Rishonim who mention the Torah-level obligation to read Parshat Zachor indicate that the obligation can only be met at the time and in the manner that we normally do. The Sefer Hachinuch (#603) says that the Torah law can possibly be fulfilled by reading every couple of years, before one comes to forget the story. Others explain that Chazal felt it necessary to institute the reading once a year because one forgets things after twelve months (based on Berachot 58b). (See the Chatam Sofer's solution for the problem that in a leap year there are thirteen months between readings of Zachor in Maharam Shick, Sefer Hamitzvot 605.)

The Magen Avraham (685:1) notes that, in his times, people were not so careful to hear Parshat Zachor. He justifies that based on the fact that they heard the story of Amalek in the Kri'at HaTorah on Purim morning (Sh'mot 16: 8-16). Many take issue on him because that reading does not connect the story to the mitzva to fight Amalek (see Mishna B'rura 685:16). If this is the only issue, one can solve the problem by hearing the p'sukim of Zachor in Parshat Ki Teitzei. However, this solution has complications. Firstly, one probably has to have in mind to fulfill the specific mitzva to remember Amalek at that time and likely even has to inform the ba'al korei (see Mikra'ei Kodesh (Frank), Arba Parshiyot 6). (The Taz (685:2) says that the berachot are also an absolute requirement, so, according to him, the oleh might also have to have him in mind.) If you plan to use this method this coming year but did not do so last year, 18 months will go by in between readings, which we saw is problematic.

The Rama (OC 685:7) says that if one was unable to make it to a public reading of Zachor, he should read it by himself. This should ideally be done from a Sefer Torah (Mishna B'rura 685:17), which is probably not available to you. However, one

should at least accomplish the mitzva not to forget Amalek's actions by any clear review of the subject matter. Although Chazal established a specific time and manner to fulfill the positive mitzva, it is likely that one can fulfill the Torah obligation by individually reading the p'sukim from a Sefer Torah before or after your visit (see Sha'ar HaTziyun ad loc.:5).

Despite the mitigating factors and alternatives, the Shulchan Aruch's simple ruling still seems to require you to make every reasonable effort to be in a place where you can hear the public reading of Parshat Zachor at its time. There are circumstances where a person cannot arrange to fulfill a mitzva. It is hard to give exact guidelines; we can address your situation if you send us more details.

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 Rebbe is partially funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel

[2] **Candle by Day**

We must sometimes permit ourselves to begin things badly, just so that we begin them. Those who spend too much time preparing graceful entrances, often never get to make them.

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)

One of the special garments worn by the Kohen Gadol was the Choshen Mishpat, the "breastplate of judgment". It was called by this name because it was used to present questions to God and the Kohen had to use his own judgment to understand the answer.

The Choshen contained twelve stones each inscribed with the name of a different tribe. Inside the Choshen was the Urim V'Tumim, a parchment containing Divine name that caused the letters to shine in response to a query by the Kohen. Ramban (Sh'mot 28:30) explains how it worked. Shoftim 1:1 states that an inquiry was made "who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites," i.e. which of the twelve tribes was to fight first. The Ramban says that the Kohen Gadol fixed his thoughts on the Divine names and the name Yehuda lit up, together with the letters Yod, Ayin, Lamed, Hei, spelling the word Ya'aleh - he shall go up.

Of course the four letters could have formed other words but the Kohen was operating with Ruach HaKodesh and thus understood the message as Yehuda Ya'aleh.

Jews ask themselves today "Me ya'aleh," who will go up? Who will make Aliya? As people say: "Aliya and death are two of the most talked about topics but it always happens to someone else."

When Yehuda went up first to fight the Canaanites, this did not

exempt the other tribes from fighting, but made it easier for the others to follow. So too today, many have already made Aliya making it so much easier for others to follow.

If we consult our own personal Urim and ask, "Me Ya'aleh," there is no doubt the lights will shine and say "Yehudi Ta'aleh" - Jew go up.

If only we would see the light.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Roness, 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**

R' Moshe Landau of Uman, a descendant of the Noda BiYehuda, became involved in the haskala movement, and would often address meetings of Jews, where he would try to stress the importance of learning the language of the country.

Once, in an effort to prove his point, he noted that Mordechai, by knowing the language of the country, was able to foil the plot of Bigsan and Teresh. This, he said, proved that the Jews of the time knew other languages in addition to their own.

"That's very poor proof," one of the Chasidim present called out. "Had the Jews of the country all known its language, Bigsan and Teresh would never have dared to talk openly in front of Mordechai. This proves that Mordechai was the exception, not the rule."

R' Yisrael, the Maggid of Kozhnitz, would say: If all the Jews would make peace among themselves and link hands, the hands would reach all the way up to G-d's Throne of Glory.

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 - T'TZAVEH**

1) Why does G-D tell Moshe that the Jews should bring oil TO YOU? (27:20) It is quite obvious that the materials gathered for the Mishkan would be brought to Moshe and then established in its proper place in the Mishkan!

2) G-D commands that the Kohein wear pants TO COVER THE FLESH OF HIS NAKEDNESS. (29:1) How are we to understand this considering the fact that he was already wearing a robe which covered his legs down to his feet?

3) Why does the Torah teach about the incense altar in this week's Parsha (see 30:1-7) after the laws of the clothing of the Kohanim and not with the rest of the vessels of the Mishkan which were taught in last week's Parsha?

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

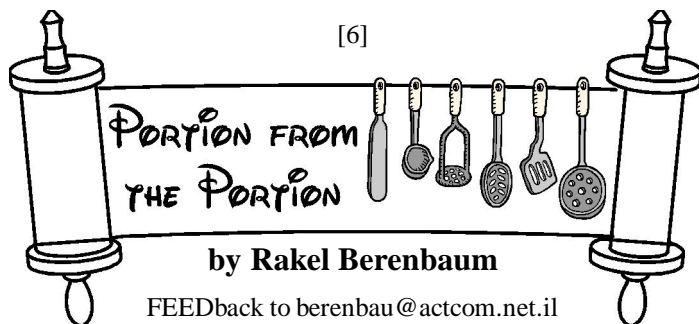
Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) The Baal HaTurim answers that G-D was clarifying that the light of the Menora was not needed to simply illuminate the Mishkan. Rather, it represented the light and inspiration of G-D which each person was to tap into and use at a spiritual guide throughout life.

2) Rav Shternbuch teaches that this comes to teach that true TZNIUT is internal and something which a person should feel and a way a person should act regardless of whether other people around to see.

3) Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that the incense altar being taught after Aharon was established as a spiritual leader teaches that the symbolism of the service on this altar relates directly to spiritual leadership. What is this symbolism? Rav Moshe explains that the service on this altar was creating the smell of the incense. All smells are unique in that they travel long distances, they come upon a person by force, and they can serve as an early warning for dangerous things such as spoiled food. So, too, a Jewish leader like the Kohein Gadol must be able to influence those who are far away, must be able to influence those who are not specifically looking to be influenced, and he must be alert and aware of spiritual dangers in the world.

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



Dressing the Kohen Gadol and dressing up on Purim

A whole chapter - almost 40 verses - is used to describe the commandments regarding the clothes of the Kohen Gadol and the kohanim, and we hear about them in this parsha as well as in Vayak-hel & Pekudei. What is the significance of these clothes specifically, and clothes in general?

Ramban in his pshat (more superficial) explanation, compared the KG's vestments to those worn, in those days, by royalty. We see this in the story of Yosef's colorful coat, and in the Megila where Mordechai goes out in the clothes of the king" (8:15). The same colors mentioned in the KG's garments are mentioned there. These clothes acted to enhance the dignity and prestige of the wearer and his sacred office in the eyes of the people.

The Kohanim in the Mikdash do not serve Hashem in their everyday clothes. The service in the Temple is not a spontaneous "natural" activity, but planned and deliberate. God wanted a distinction between the sacred and the profane. He

therefore commanded Moshe to make them holy garments for "splendor and beauty".

Nechama Leibowitz a"h points out that just as the kohanim were consecrated for their holy mission by their clothes, so too the human race was raised up for their mission by clothes. God Himself clothed Adam and Chava "Hashem made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them" (B'reishit 3:21). Clothing is not merely an ornament or a protection against cold. It is the primary and necessary distinguishing mark of human society. It sets man above the animals. The status and glory of man are reflected in the character of his attire ("L'habit ne fait pas le moine." "Kleren maken de man"). The fact that Hashem Himself clothed Adam and Chava shows that clothing is not just a social convention but an extension of the work of creation.

A few words on one specific garment that the Kohein Gadol wore. The robe (me'il) was made completely out of sky-blue wool. The bottom of the robe had 36 or 72 sky blue, dark red and crimson wool pomegranates (pom- poms) and 36 or 72 golden bells. The bells were placed either inside the hollow pomegranates (Ramban) or were alternated between pomegranates (Rashi). The bells actually made noise when the Kohen walked.

The bells ringing audibly reminded the Kohen before whom he was about to enter and from whom he was taking leave. It also announced his presence in the Mikdash. Rabbi Yochanan learned from this that one should always knock on the door even of his own house, before entering. This is one of the seven directives that Rabbi Akiva gave to his son Rabbi Yehoshua, "Don't enter your own house suddenly; all the more so, the house of your neighbor (Psachim 112a).

And what about Purim, why do we change our clothes on Purim? Why do we "dress up"? One reason we dress up is we dress like Goyim to be able to accomplish "not knowing the difference between Haman and Mordechai". When people change their clothes we won't know who they really are, a Haman type or a Mordechai type.

Here's a recipe that has Bell peppers and pomegranates like the robe of the Kohein Gadol.

Pomegranate and Roasted Bell Pepper Salsa

- 3 pomegranates, peeled and seeded
- 6 red peppers
- 1 medium red onion, diced very small
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped mint
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 limes, juiced
- Salt and pepper

Cut pomegranate in quarters and remove seeds. Extract the juice from the pomegranate seeds by placing the seeds on a strainer or bowl and pressing down with a ladle or mallet.

Roast the red peppers, place in a bowl, cover with plastic for 8 minutes, and then peel, seed, and dice the roasted red pepper into very small pieces.

In a mixing bowl, combine the pomegranate juice, diced roasted red pepper, diced red onion, chopped mint, olive oil, and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper.

[7] Torah from Nature

TT Reader Feedback - Tachash

MK wrote: My own pet theory as to the identity of the Tachash is a type of fish known in Hawaii as "Mahimahi" (a.k.a. Dorado and dolphin fish - it's a fish, not a mammal like a dolphin is)... Because Some Torah translations render "Tachash" as seal, manatee, etc. [as you pointed out], which is what first got me thinking along the lines of sea life... Rashi comments that the Tachash was a multi-hued creature; the Mahimahi goes through a rapid series of color changes after it's hauled out of the water. And it is a fact that in various cultures fish skins are used as a type of "leather"... some Arctic culture... Dorado are found in the Mediterranean and Red Sea. Ed. note: 2m long, kosher! fish.

[8] G'matriya Match

Here's a nice G'matriya Match that you can say something about on you're own. Want to work it into a Shabbat table Dvar Torah, please, be our guests. We start with the opening pasuk in this week's sedra:



וְאֵתָהּ תִּצְלֶינָה | אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ אֵלֶיהָ עֵמֶן
זֵית זָה פְתִית לַמָּאֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד:

And you shall command the people of Israel, that they bring you pure beaten oil olive for the light, for the lamp to burn always.

One other pasuk in the Torah shares its G'matriya of 5288. Vayikra 26:42.

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי יַעֲקֹב וְאִף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי יִצְחָק
וְאִף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אַבְרָהָם אֶזְכֹּר וְהָאָרֶץ אֶזְכֹּר:

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

[9] TT Reader Feedback

Last week's Consider this... column (can we call it a column after only one appearance?) raised the issue of important reasons for not crossing against a red light, beyond the legal issue and that of personal safety. The focus was on the fact that others waiting to cross the street often will do so in "follow the leader" style, without paying proper intention themselves.

Here's what MA wrote: Apropos to the idea that others are watching... Since I have become a parent, I have made a concerted effort not to cross the street on red. ...if we tell kids that something is forbidden, and we nonchalantly continue to do it, they will notice; they are very good at catching inconsistencies. So to engrain in myself this idea of being consistent, I just about never cross against the light whether with my kids or not. More related to your anecdote, I tell myself that even if my kids aren't around, maybe some other kid will watch me and learn that it is really safe to cross on the red. I wouldn't want the faintest possibility that an accident would occur because of something I did...

Similarly, MK wrote: good point; I would also add the following -- Whether you're aware of it at the time or not, the

kids are watching -- yours, or someone else's, doesn't matter. The point is, kids learn by watching the grownups in action. Better that they should see us adults carrying out good safety habits [crossing only on green, using seatbelts, etc.] so that they, too, will adopt the good habits.

Ed. comment: The saying, "Do as I say, not as I do" first appeared in print in 1654. Despite the fact that people have been using it for over 350 years, it just doesn't work. No matter how many times a person makes it safely across the street against the red, it only takes once... We have enough to worry about when crossing on the green...

[10] MicroUlpan

מְקוּוּן

Online = Connected to a computer or computer network. How do you say online in Hebrew? MEKUVAN, Offline? LO MEKUVAN

[11] Divrei Menachem

One of the most significant symbols of Jewish life is the Menora that recalls the seven-branched candelabrum that was situated in the south side of the Sanctuary. Based on the opening verse of our parsha we know that the clear and beaten olive oil of the Menora burned continually.

As understood from the following verse, the lamps were lit from evening until morning. For Rashi, the concept of continuity meant that the Menora was lit every day, even on Shabbat. This can also be indicative of the center flame that, of all the seven lights, was traditionally left burning all day. In the First Book of Shmuel (3:3) there is a reference to the Ner Elokim (the Lamp of G-d), which evokes this idea. And it is to the memory of this continuous light that we kindle a Ner Tamid in synagogues today.

Another interpretation offered by Rashi of the act of causing the light to burn continually is that, "[the Kohen] must kindle the light until the flame ascends by itself" (cf. Shabbat 12a). There is, of course, a distinctive lesson to be learned here: Every day the kohen had to painstakingly clean out the residue left after the night's burning. And then, when the pure oil had been prepared in its place, it took but a fleeting act of kindling to set the flame alight.

In this context, the Sefat Emet poignantly reminds us that after years of dedicated physical effort it can take just one second to bring light into the world.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH...

A series of articles on Beit HaMikdash-related topics by Catriel Sugarman intended to increase the knowledge, interest, and anticipation of the reader, thereby hastening the realization of our hopes and prayers for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Beit HaMikdash.

"Order and Method" in the Mikdash - cont.

Standing behind a lectern in the Beit HaMokeid, Meir began to speak to the hundreds of Kohanei Beit Bilga who were sitting in front of him. "The Olah precedes the Asham (the guilt-offering)

which in turn precedes the offering of Shelamim" (Zevachim 10:2). As the Bilgaites nodded, Meir continued, "We all know that when slaughtering a sacrificial animal, both the Shocheit and the ministering Kohanim must have Kavana, proper intent. They must be mindful that the sacrifice is according to G-d's will, a "pleasing, sweet savor" (Vayikra 1:9). Since Shechita, slaughter, is not an Avoda per se, a Kohein is not required to slaughter the sacrificial animal. That we Kohanim slaughter the Korbanot Tzibur (public Korbanot) is merely a matter of custom. Moreover, ideally, a private person who brings a Korban should slaughter it himself. However, not every person is able to do so. He may lack the necessary prerequisite knowledge or simply be squeamish. You may remember how we trained hundreds of Leviyim as Shochtim to help the Ba'alei Korban who were unable to slaughter their own Korbanot." Meir quoted, "If a man slaughtered the sacrifice (e.g. Sh'lammim) with the intention of sprinkling the blood outside (of the Azara) or even if he intended to sprinkle only some of the blood application outside, or to burn its sacrificial portions or even to burn only some of the sacrificial portions outside... or to eat of its meat or only an olive's bulk of its meat outside (the designated area), the sacrifice becomes invalid... But if he had in mind to sprinkle the blood (on the Mizbei'ach) the next day - after the permitted time... or to burn its sacrificial portions... the next day, or to eat the meat... on the next day (after the permitted time), the sacrifice becomes Pigul - an abomination - and entails Kareit for those who eat of the meat' (Zevachim 2:2). A mere thought can invalidate the Korban and cause someone who eats of the sacrificial meat to be subject to Kareit!"

Meir continued, "When a Kohein or a private individual slaughters a sacrificial animal (Menachot 110a): [1] He must remember what Korban he is sacrificing. Is the Korban an Olah, a Chatat or Sh'lammim? [2] If the Korban in question is a Chatat or an Asham, the Shocheit must be aware of the nature of the transgression that necessitated bringing it. [3] If the Ba'al Korban does not slaughter his own sacrificial animal, the Shocheit who takes his place must be aware of the Ba'al Korban's identity. [4] The Shocheit must be mindful that the slaughtered animal is being offered as a Korban on the Mizbei'ach and is not going to be used for ordinary human consumption." Getting up from his seat, a young Kohein objected, "Isn't all this obvious? If I slaughter an animal in the Azara, the animal could only be used as a Korban." Meir answered that people, even Kohanim during Avoda, can get disoriented. "Remember, a stray thought can invalidate a Korban." Satisfied, the Kohein sat down. Meir continued, "[5] A Kohein - or any Shocheit - must remember that the Emurim (innards of sacrificial animal burnt on altar) must be burnt completely on the Mizbei'ach and not simply roasted. [6] He must recall that Korbanot are burnt on the Mizbei'ach and not somewhere else (Zevachim 2:2). However, the Sanhedrin ruled that these intentions should not be audibly voiced so to prevent the possibility of error and the resultant invalidation of the Korban. You know that the Azara can be a very noisy place and people can get confused. It is the wrong intention of the ministering Kohein that can invalidate the Korban, not a wrong intention of the Ba'al HaKorban. Who knows how many Korbanot are inadvertently invalidated? Realizing the problem, the Sanhedrin set up a standing committee to study the matter and make practical recommendations to ameliorate the situation. The committee consisted of members of the Sanhedrin, experienced Kohanim, and efficiency experts. At the urging of my Rosh Mishmeret, I had the honor of serving on the

committee. The findings of this committee formed the basis of the new regulations laid down by the Sanhedrin governing sacrificial procedure. All private Chatot would be offered first and only when the Kohanim finished offering the Chatot, they would offer the Ashamot followed by the Shelamim. Korbanot would no longer be offered haphazardly, and as a result, the Ba'alei Hakorban would not be held up unnecessarily. Our committee recommended that anyone who wanted to bring a Korban would pre-register by email and be given a number. Leviyim would verify the details of the Ba'al Hakorban (name, Te'udat Zehut, type of Korban to be offered etc.), enter them into the Mikdash computer, and then by return email inform the Ba'al Hakorban exactly when he was to appear in the Beit HaMikdash with his Korban. Though the Halacha demanded that the Shocheit and the officiating Kohein know the nature of the transgression that necessitated the bringing of a Chatat or Asham, the Mikdash authorities took precautions to spare the Ba'al Hakorban any unnecessary embarrassment.

As he spoke, Meir's enthusiasm was palpable. "Imagine", he said, "at the specified time, the pre-registered Ba'al Korban appears at the Eastern Gate with his Olah and presents his computer printout (his "electronic ticket") to the waiting Leviyim. Without further ado, they verify his name and Te'urah Zechut number and direct him to the quickly moving "Olah line". After immersing in one of the Mikva'ot in the Lishkat HaMetzora'im, he enters the Azara where he is met by a friendly Kohein who explains the procedure. While escorting the Ba'al Hakorban to the Beit HaMitbachayim north of the Mizbei'ach where Olot (and all sacrifices of a higher level of sanctity) are slaughtered, he puts the Ba'al Hakorban at ease. After explaining the symbolism of the Olah and what it represents, the specially trained "greeter-Kohein" (with a warm smile) gently helps the Ba'al Hakorban organize his thoughts and verbalize any words of praise or confession of sin that he wishes to say over his sacrifice. We have found that the vast majority of Ba'alei Korban appreciate this added attention very much. When the Ba'al Hakorban approaches the Beit Hamitbacha'yim with his sacrificial animal, he presents his computer printout to the ministering Kohanim. That way, they have all the pertinent information in front of them when they perform the Avoda. (The printout even notes that the Emurim were to be burnt completely on the Mizbei'ach and not somewhere else.) If the Ba'al Hakorban would rather not slaughter his Korban himself, a Levite will immediately be summoned. In either case, a Kohein will be on hand to receive the blood from the slaughtered animal, take it to the Mizbei'ach and "toss the blood". In addition, a pre-designated team of Kohanim will be available to flay and wash down the sacrificial animal, dismember it, and take the Netachim to the Mizbei'ach. Every Mishmeret will have a "floor captain" who will ensure the Kohanim's efficiency. However, Kohanim by nature are Zarizim - agile, quick, conscientious, and most of all, enthusiastic!"

Who would have believed it? The Kohanim of problematic Beit Bilga stood up and gave Meir a standing ovation. Meir smiled modestly.

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

The sedra begins with the command to take pure olive oil and use it to light the Menora daily in the Mikdash, so that it will burn (at least) from evening until morning. (Upper-left and upper-right.)

The shell to the left of the Menora is Murex Trunculus, the snail which is thought, by a growing number of scholars and rabbis, to be the source of T'CHEILET, mentioned often (8 times) in our sedra in connection with the garments of the Kohen Gadol.

The gemstones under the olive oil are for the CHOSHEN. 3 of the 12 are shown here.

The chain (below the crossword puzzle) is for connecting the CHOSHEN to the EIFOD.

Of course, that's the Kohen Gadol on the bottom-left. This is one of Davka's Judaica Graphics. So is the Menora and the Mizbei'ach HaZahav.

The silhouettes (middle-bottom) of the bull and two adult male sheep (a.k.a. rams) are the inaugural korbanot of the kohanim.

The matza represents the Mincha offerings that accompanied the animal sacrifices. Most, but not all, Menachot were halachically matza.

At the Kohein Gadol's elbow are two lambs for the twice-daily T'MIDIM. Although the mitzva to bring the T'midim is learned from Parshat Pinchas, the T'midim are also mentioned here in T'tzaveh.

We can also consider the lambs and sheep to represent the animals of Amalek that Shaul brought back with him, supposedly to offer korbanot to G-d. Shmuel made it very clear to him that he was greatly mistaken in what he did.

Besides the sheep, Shaul also made the fatal error of keeping the king of Amalek alive. AGAG was his name, and he is represented by the roof (top- middle) which in Hebrew is A GAG.

Between the lambs and the knotted elephant is the Golden Altar, a.k.a. the Incense Mizbei'ach and the Inner Altar. The command to make this Mizbei'ach does not appear in T'rumah with the rest of the main items of the Mishkan, but rather in T'tzaveh.

The heart with the graduation cap (upper-left) represents the CHACHMEI LEIV, the skilled weavers, etc. who did the work on the garments and other Mikdash requirements.

The pomegranate and bell (lower-right) are for the bottom of the ME'IL of the Kohein Gadol.

The book marked with a 4 is section 4 of the Shulchan Oreich, known as CHOSHEN MISHPAT.

The crossword is TASHBEITZ in Hebrew, the word in the Torah for the weave of the linen garments.

The chest of drawers is a dresser, which is what Moshe was during the week of Mishkan inauguration.

The elephant with his trunk tied in a knot. The simple explanation is ZACHOR, since it is well-known that elephants never forget. But we can go a little further. Tying a knot is a

traditional way to give yourself a reminder of something. So if elephants never forget and a knot is to remember, the elephant with a knot in his trunk is a depiction of both mitzvot related to Amalek - ZACHOR and LO TISHKACH.

Joining the other elements of this ParshaPix is Magilla Gorilla. His first name is in honor of Purim's main mitzva, the reading of the Megila. (His second name could represent Chanuka and the guerilla warfare tactics of the Chashmona'im.)

And a remaining unexplained visual TTriddle.

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 (T'RUMA) TTriddles:

[1] Bigger or further apart

This was less a TTriddle and more a question of figuring out what it refers to. The first covering of the Mishkan, known as the Mishkan, was made of 10 woven panels, five of which were sewn together, as were the other five, and the two units were joined with 50 loops and buttons. The second covering, called the Ohel, was made of 11 panels of woven goat hair, sewn into two units of five and six panels, and also joined by 50 loops and buttons. The length of the connection formed was 28 amot for the Mishkan and 30 amot for the Ohel. So the loops of the Ohel were either bigger or further apart (or both) than those of the Mishkan.

[2] they got along, but no fishing for them

The haftara tells us that there was peace between Shlomo HaMelech and Chiram king of Tyre. So they obviously got along. The word SHALOM, however, is spelled without the VAV, so without a hook they couldn't go fishing. (This is a TTriddle way of calling attention to the way the word Shalom is spelled. Per- haps the absence of the VAV is significant, in light of the comments about the word Shalom in Parshat Pinchas, with the broken VAV. Or maybe not.)

[3] Yehu in the Shomron lengthwise

28. Not the most common number in Torah or NACH. A search turned up 128, 328, 628, 928, 28,600, but very few 28s. 28 was the length of the woven panels of the Mishkan. 28 was the years that YEHU reigned in Shomron, hence Yehu in Shomron length- wise. We should have also added sons of Rechav'am - maybe next time.

[4] In Anatot of the third millennium

In Anatot, in Hebrew, B'ANATOT. Numeric value: $2 + 70 + 50 + 400 + 6 + 400 = 928$. The year 928 of the third millennium from Creation is 2928, the year that Shlomo HaMelech commenced the building of the Beit HaMikdash, 480 years after the Exodus (as stated in the haftara of Parshat T'ruma).

[5] Yosef's brothers, hungry Israelites, anti Aliya rallyists, and what in our sedra?

The phrase ISH EL ACHIV occurs 13 times in Tanach. That's usually too many occurrences for a good TTriddle. But only six times are from the Torah, and three of those are in the same context. Good TTriddle material. The phrase is used three times to refer to conversations among Yosef's brothers. Once, it is used to describe the people's reaction to the MN (manna). When it first fell (they were hungry Israelites), they said, a person to his brother, hey look at this interesting and tasty stuff (or words to that effect). In Parshat T'ruma, the phrase describes the K'ruvim atop the Aron, facing each other. And those who were discouraged by the Meraglim and joined the anti-Aliya call, said to each other, let's choose a new leader who will take us back to Egypt.

[6] kids will have mixed feelings

This refers to the title of the Shabbat within the period of the Four Parshiyot on which no special parsha is read, as a HAFSAKA. School children know the word well for recess. Something they get positively excited about. However, this hafsaqa refers to Shabbat, when there is no school. Hence the mixed feelings of kids towards Shabbat being a Hafsaka.

[7] carpet capital of the world # V'CHAFTOR # Tuesday # 1DH429 # Avrech # Mano'ach's wife's description of Peli

These were six "sort of TTriddles" scattered around last week's issue of Torah Tidbits, mostly in the footers. The separator in the list above was purposely chosen to give a hint. That's the SULAMIT, a.k.a. pound sign, hash, crosshatch, chicken scratch, gridlet, octothorpe, and the number sign, a hint that each of these elements refers to the issue number of Torah Tidbits rather than the sedra. Although one of them points to the sedra too. Let's begin. The carpet capital of the world is Dalton, Georgia (USA). The area code for Dalton and other parts of north and northeastern Georgia is 706. The word V'CHAFTOR, and a KAFTOR (orb), one of the decorations on the Menora, has a g'matriya of 706. The word is significant in that there is a pasuk in T'ruma (and in Vayakhel) that begins with V'CHAFTOR, and repeats a five-word phrase three times in a row. So that's a connection between the issue number and the sedra. Which brings us to Divrei HaYamim Alef 4:29. A pasuk with no connection to anything, except its total numeric value is 706. Avrech, a term used for young married yeshiva and kollel students, is a contraction of AV B'CHOCHMA RACH B'SHANIM, mature in wisdom, soft in years. The g'matriya of that phrase is... surprise - 706. Mano'ach's wife was the mother of Shimshon HaGibor. An angel appeared to her a few times and her husband was a little uptight about it. He did not take the visits as smoothly as she did. He asked the angel his name. The angel seems to have been annoyed by the request, but the NAVI tells us that his name was PELI. Mano'ach's wife described the angel as UMAR'EIHUK'MAR'EI MAL'ACH HA'ELOKIM. His appearance was like the appearance of an angel of G-d. G'matriya: 706.

NachKwestion of the Week

What is the most often-paraphrased passage from the Talmud in davening?

Approximately how many times is it said in the course of 5766?

The answer is (our answer is)...

Y'HI RATZON MILFANECHA HASHEM ELOKEINU
V'ELOKEI AVOTEINU SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH

BIMHEIRA V'YAMEINU, V'TEIN CHELKEINU
B'TORATECHA.

This is from the fifth chapter of Pirkei Avot and is said at the end of the Amida. With three times a day, four on Shabbat and Yom Tov, five on Yom Kippur, and it is said at the end of Korbanot (the prayers/recitations between the Morning Brachot and P'sukei D'zimra), and some people say it after counting the Omer, it is most probably the most often-quoted passage of Talmud. And the original question was going to refer to this as the most often-quoted passage. But that would be problematic. We needed to change the wording in the Kwestion to most often-paraphrased, because the above words appear in the Siddur's version of Pirkei Avot, but NOT in the actual Mishna Avot. In several editions of Mishnayot, this is what we found:

Y'HI RATZON MILFANECHA HASHEM ELOKEINU
SHETIVNEH IRCHA BIMHEIRA V'YAMEINU, V'TEIN
CHELKEINU B'TORATECHA.

And how many times do we say it in 5766? Let's keep it to Korbanot and each Amida. Start with 4 times each day of the year, for 5766 with 354 days, that's 1416 times. Another time for each Musaf of the year. That's 50 Shabbatot, 17 Yom Tov and Chol HaMoed days that are not Shabbat, another 15 Rosh Chodesh days that are not Shabbat, and one more for Ne'ila makes a total of 1499 times. Add two more for Chutz LaAretz Yom Tov days that are not Shabbat - 1501 times. There still is 49 times more if you say it for S'firat HaOmer, and one more time for each Chazanut concert you go to (just kidding).

So we say it approx. 1500 times in this year 5766.

Interesting, though, how the wording in the Mishna was changed for the use in davening. Best guess is that it was taken for the Siddur's version of Pirkei Avot from the davening, but maybe it was vice versa.

And another interesting point. The Vilna Gaon was of the opinion that this Y'HI RATZON was supposed to be at the end of the fifth chapter of Avot, which is the end of the original Masechet (the sixth chapter being a collection of Mishna-like writings that were formed into a sixth chapter of Pirkei Avot to facilitate the learning/recitation of Pirkei Avot on the six Shabbatot between Pesach and Shavuot). In a real GR"A siddur, Y'hi Ratzon is indeed found at the end of chapter five. If anyone can shed more light...

Re the old NachKwestion about three consecutive different words in davening all with the same root... following the strong petition of BT and others, we have decided to consider Birkat HaMazon as part of davening, and therefore accept BAKOL, MIKOL, KOL as one of the correct answers to the NachKwestion.

This week's TTriddles:

[1] Moshe/the people, Yehoshua/Kohanim - verbs please

[2] Question about or demonstration of?

[3] 11 of this species and 14 hitters of a different species wore three each; in Tanach, one of the former and two of the latter species wore one each. Explain. (based on BT's submission)

[4] plus one element from the ParshaPix

NachKwestion for Purim:

Find three consecutive words in davening, Tanach, or Shas, where none of the three is between the other two.

Winner will receive a CD of Nachman Kay singing the Moroccan National Anthem from the gate of Har HaBayit

Women & Zachor

The Torah commands us to remember what Amalek did to us on our way out of Egypt. On first thought, this command should apply to women as well as men. We all came out of Egypt; we were all attacked by Amalek. We should all be obligated to hear the public reading of Parshat Zachor.

On the other hand, the mitzva of Zachor is specifically observed on the Shabbat before Purim, making it a Time-Related Positive Mitzva from which women are exempt. (At least many of those kind of mitzvot. There are exceptions.) So maybe women are exempt.

First of all, Zachor is NOT a time-related mitzva in its original presentation. The Torah does not say when to do the mitzva. Only to do it. The Sages determined that the mitzva should be observed yearly, and specifically on the Shabbat before Purim, in order to link Amalek and Haman. But at its core, Zachor is not time-related and therefore women should not be exempt.

However, there is another issue to this question. There is a school of thought that the mitzva of Zachor is linked to the positive command of TIMCHEH, to destroy Amalek. This opinion considers only those who are obligated to fight in wars (i.e. men) to also be obligated to Remember what Amalek did. Therefore women are exempt.

On the other hand, there is the school of thought that each mitzva of Parshat Amalek stands on its own. True, TIMCHEH is in the domain of the men, but Zachor is for everyone.

The dispute about whether ZACHOR and TIMCHEH are linked or not, impacts on another issue. Need one hear ZACHOR from the end of Ki Teitzei to fulfill the mitzva, or can one hear VAYAVO AMALEK at the end of B'shalach instead. It too serves as a reminder of Amalek.

The dispute remains and a man is obligated to hear ZACHOR and not rely on VAYAVO AMALEK. But for a woman, the dispute works out differently. If the mitzvot are linked, only ZACHOR counts, but a woman is exempt. If the mitzvot stand apart, then a woman is obligated, but can hear either Amalek reading to fulfill the mitzva.

Bottom line: A woman should make a serious effort to hear Parshat Zachor this Shabbat. If circumstances prevent that, then she should refocus her efforts on Purim morning when VAYAVO AMALEK will be read.

Ashkenazim are generally more insistent on this for women than S'fardim are.

But, exempt or not, hearing Zachor still fulfills a mitzva.

In the merit of our fulfillment of ZACHOR - may we be privileged to see the end of Amalek and its battles against the Jewish people.

Taanit Esther

Some say that we fast on Taanit Esther because of the fast that Esther declared upon the Jews of Shushan before she approached the king to plead for her people. It is likely that the name of the fast day comes from that episode in the Megila, but not the fast day itself.

Some say that on days when the Jewish People wage battles, they fast and pray for Divine help and guidance. Such a day was the 13th of Adar, the date of Taanit Esther.

Some say that the fast is actually mentioned in the Megila, which speaks of ...DIVREI HATZOMOT V'ZA'KATAM - ...the matters of the fasts and the wailing.

And some suggest that the fast was instituted as an atonement and TIKUN (repair) for the Jews of Shushan attending the parties of Achashveirosh, at which he flaunted the plunder of the Beit HaMikdash and at which he belittled G-d. The Jews had no business enjoying those parties. Therefore, abstaining from food and drink serves as an atonement and TIKUN.

And, ironically, so does the eating and drinking of Purim day. There are two ways to atone for sins of eating and drinking. One is to fast, and the other is to indulge in food and drink, even to an excess... that is L'SHEIM SHAMA- YIM, for the sake of Heaven and for the fulfillment of a mitzva.

Taanit Esther serves as a sobering reminder not to indulge in food and wine for the wrong reasons on Purim. Taanit Esther embodies the serious side of Purim, which we tend to ignore or overlook on Purim day itself.

Six "mitzvot" of Purim...and more

[1] To read the Megila (or hear it read) once at night and once during the day. The daytime reading is considered to be DIVREI KABALA, a higher level obligation than the Rabbinic rule of reading it also at night. Obviously, everyone - man, woman, child - should hear Megila night and day.

[2] AL HANISIM is inserted in each Amida and Birkat HaMazon of Purim. Omitting AL HANISIM does not require repeating either the davening or benching, but in each case there is a second place to insert AL HANISIM if you forgot to say it in its "official" place. For the Amida, one would say AL HANISIM right before YIH-YUL'RATZON IMREI FI... Going back is not an option once you finish the bracha within which AL HANISIM is said. Similarly for benching. Once you conclude AL HAARETZ V'AL HAMAZON, don't go back,

but say AL HANISIM as a HARACHAMAN, towards the end of the benching. In this case, a modified intro is used. It goes something like this (texts vary):

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ נִסִּים וְנִפְלְאוֹת כְּמוֹ שְׁעָשָׂה
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּיָמֵינוּ הַזֶּה.

Then continue with בְּיָמֵי מַרְדְּכָי וְאַסְתֵּר

[3] Torah reading. After the Amida of Shacharit, before Megila reading, a 9- pasuk portion (Sh'mot 17:8-16) from the end of B'shalach is read (3 Aliyot), beginning with...

וַיָּבֹא עִמְלֵק וְיִלְחָם עִם-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִפְיָדָם:

Note that with a minimum requirement of 3 Aliyot and a minimum of 3 p'sukim per Aliya, this 9-pasuk reading is the shortest possible. No other reading suffices with the minimum. The plain reason is that the portion of the Amalek battle is only 9 p'sukim long. The "extra touch" reason is that Amalek and Haman receive no more Torah reading than is absolutely necessary.

[4] Matanot LaEvyonim - gifts to the poor. Giving money to a Tzedaka fund that will not be distributing money to poor people on Purim day itself, is NOT an ideal way to fulfill this mitzva, and should be a last resort, when one has no access to poor people on Purim day. The requirement is to give to a minimum of two poor people. If one gives gifts to poor people on Purim eve, or even a couple of days before Purim, and the poor people will use the money on Purim day, there are opinions that this fulfills the mitzva of Matanot LaEvyonim. Ideally, the gifts to the poor should be given early in the morning of Purim day, so that the recipients can use the money for their Purim Seuda needs. This mitzva can be fulfilled with money or food. Ideally, one should give an amount equal to the value of a meal, even though a much smaller amount technically fulfills the mitzva. Some say that the gifts should be significant enough - or special enough - to bring joy to the recipients. One should not use "Maaser money" for Matanot La- Evyonim. Since women are also obligated on this mitzva, they should do it, or if they are relying on their husbands, the husband should have in mind that he is doing his mitzva, and for his wife. Children should do this mitzva on their own and not rely on their father's giving. When one spends a significant amount of money for his Purim Seuda and Mishlo'ach Manot, he should not just do Matanot LaEvyonim in a token fashion, but should do it generously.

[5] Mishlo'ach Manot. Main reason given for this mitzva is to show that Haman's statement about the Jewish people is a terrible lie. He said that we are a scattered people who don't care about each other. That we lack unity. This mitzva of giving gifts of food to fellow Jews, providing them with Purim delights, sharing with them, all point out Haman's lie. Some say that the mitzva of Mishlo'ach Manot should be done specifically through a SHALI'ACH, an agent. In other words, you give gifts of food to someone who will give them on your behalf to the intended recipient. Others do not consider a Shali'ach to be

necessary. Sender and receiver should be aware of who will receive and who sent, respectively. Sounds obvious, but there are situations that this rule addresses. For example, you bring Mishlo'ach Manot to someone who isn't home. You leave it on the door handle. If you don't identify the package as coming from you, or if the person does not get the package until after Purim, there is something lacking in this particular giving. Usually, people give to more than the minimum one recipient, so if there is something technically lacking in some of the Mishlo'ach Manot, it is most likely that the mitzva is fulfilled in some of the other Mishlochos. Some opinions hold that the sender and recipient need both be observing Purim on the day in question. This is particularly an issue for Yerushalmim sending to open-city folk and vice versa, when one is observing Purim on the 14th and the other on the 15th of Adar. Make sure that at least one person you send Mishlo'ach Manot to is observing Purim on the same day that you are, and on the same day you send the gifts. Manot is plural, and the practice is to send at least two different food items as Mishlo'ach Manot. The food should be ready to eat, rather than require cooking or baking, etc. before the recipient can enjoy it. Another reason for two gifts, besides the pluralness of the word MANOT, is to commemorate the two gifts that Achashveirosh gave to Esther - Beit Haman and his royal ring. Most opinions say that drink can be counted as one (or both) of the gifts; others say that drinks - even wine - do not count for the two gifts. In "normal" situations, it is considered a proper practice to send Mishlo'ach Manot back to those who sent them to you. It is considered preferable to send back something different from what one received. This way, one's joy is increased in the receiving and sending. Some hold that one should fulfill the mitzva of Mishlo'ach Manot before he eats breakfast. Right after davening in the morning is ideal, because Shehecheyanu before Megila goes for the other mitzvot as well.

[6] Seudat Purim. This is a Purim Day mitzva, and a seuda at night is not considered a fulfillment of the mitzva. Nonetheless, one should also eat something special on Purim night. Although one can fulfill the mitzva of Seudat Purim in the morning, it is the widespread practice (except when Purim is on Erev Shabbat) to have the seuda after davening Mincha. The main fulfillment of Seudat Purim is during the day, but the common practice is to extend the seuda into the night. For 14th of Adar people, this has the advantage of also including the 15th as part of the Purim period. For 15th of Adar people, it is less clear that it is praiseworthy to extend their seuda into the night. In either case, there are differing opinions as to where in Birkat HaMazon to say AL HANISIM when one is benching at night when it is officially not Purim anymore. Some say to say it in its normal bracha, NODEH; others hold that it should be said as a HARA- CHAMAN. One should have something special to eat on the other day of Purim (Tuesday for Wednesday people and vice versa). Seudat Purim should definitely have HaMotzi (even though some sources claim that it is not a requirement). Ideally, one should have wine at his seuda (more than he

usually has on other occasions). Wine is such a significant feature of the Megila, from the wine mentioned at the early parties of the king to the parties that Esther used to plead before the king. Some say that the "mitzva" of drinking applies only to wine. Others give a slightly different reason for drinking, and that can be fulfilled by other intoxicating beverages as well. According to some opinions, meat should be on the menu, because of its being part of the traditional definition of Simcha.

Part of the mitzva of (eating and) drinking is to reach a point of not being able to distinguish between Blessed is Mordechai and cursed is Haman. Some say that this is achieved by becoming inebriated. Others hold that drowsiness or sleep from the wine, accomplishes AD D'LO YADA.

IMPORTANT: If there is any fear that one's drunkenness will cause improper frivolity or a disrespect or disregard for any mitzva or cause the person to be insulting or disrespectful of others - it would be forbidden to get drunk. Far better to go with the drowsy-sleep opinion to stay within the boundaries of SIMCHA MITZVA. Special foods, enjoyable guests, and Divrei Torah all add to the SIMCHA that is be part of the Seuda.

People who do not enjoy eating meat, should eat foods that they do enjoy. Those who don't enjoy wine should at least have a little.

One should wear Shabbat & Yom Tov clothes on Purim, in honor of the day. (It seems reasonable to say that a costume is also in honor of the day, but not regular weekday clothing.)

According to Minhag Yerushalayim, there is a special chapter of T'hilim to say on Purim day, instead of the "regular" Song of the Day. Others will say both the regular one and the special one. Some add to the special one another one or two chapters (124 and/or 69). We include here just AYELET HASHACHAR, T'hilim 22, which is the Shir Shel HaYom for Purim. This Psalm is said on the day you observe as Purim. Some say this at night too.

תהלים כב לְמִנְצַחַת עַל-אֵילַת הַשַּׁחַר מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי לְמָה עֲזַבְתָּנִי רְחוֹק מִיִּשְׁוֹעָתִי דְבַרֵּי שְׁאֲנַתִּי: אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה תַעֲנֵה וְלַיְלָה וְלֹא-דוֹמִיָּה לִי: וְאַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ יוֹשֵׁב תְּהַלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל: בְּךָ בָטַחוּ אֲבֹתֵינוּ בָטַחוּ וְתַפְלְטָמוּ: אֱלֹהֵי זַעֲקוּ וְנִמְלָטוּ בְךָ בָטַחוּ וְלֹא-בִשְׂוֹן: וְאַנְכִי תוֹלַעַת וְלֹא-אִישׁ חֲרַפַת אָדָם וּבְזוּי עָם: כָּל-רָאִי יִלְעָגוּ לִי וּפְטִירוּ בְשִׁפְהָ יִנְיֵעוּ רָאשֵׁי: גַל אֱלֹהֵי יִפְלְטֵהוּ יַצִּילֵהוּ כִי חָפֵץ בּוֹ: כִּי-אַתָּה גָחִי מִבְּטָן מִבְּטִיחִי עַל-שְׂדֵי אֲמִי: עֲלִידָה הִשְׁלַכְתָּ מִרְחֹם מִבְּטָן אֲמִי אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָתָה: אֶל-תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי כִי-צָרָה קְרוּבָה כִּי-אֵינִן עוֹזֵר: סִבְבוּנֵי פָרִים רַבִּים אֲבִירֵי בָשָׁן כַּתְרוּנֵי: פָּצוּ עָלַי פִּיהֶם אַרְיֵה טָרַף וְשֹׁאֵג: כַּמִּים נִשְׁפַּכְתָּ וְהִתְפָּרְדוּ כָל-עֲצָמוֹתַי הָיָה לִבִּי כַּדּוֹנָג נָמַס בַּתּוֹךְ מַעֵי: יָבֵשׁ כַּחֲרָשׁ | כַּחֵי וְלִשְׁוֹנֵי מְדַבֵּק מִלְקוֹחֵי וְלַעֲפַר-מֹתֵי תִשְׁפָּתֵנִי: כִּי-סִבְבוּנֵי כָלְבִים עַד־תִּמְרָעִים הַקִּיפּוּנֵי כַּאֲרֵי יְדֵי וְרַגְלָי: אֶסְפָּר כָּל-עֲצָמוֹתַי הֵמָּה יְבִיטוּ יִרְאוּ כִי: יִחַלְקוּ בְגֵדֵי לֵהֶם וְעַל-לְבוּשֵׁי יַפִּילוּ גֹרֵל: וְאַתָּה ה' אֶל-תִּרְחַק אֵילוֹתַי לְעֹזְרֵי חַוְשָׁה: הַצִּילָה מִחַרְבַּב נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד-כָּלֵב יַחֲדָתִי: הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי מִפִּי אַרְיֵה וּמִקְרָנֵי רַמִּים עֲנִיתָנִי: אֶסְפָּרָה שִׁמְךָ לְאַחֵי בַתּוֹךְ קָהֵל אֲהַלְלֶךָ: יִרְאֵי ה' | הַלְלוּהוּ כָל-יֹרֵעַ יַעֲקֹב כַּכְדוּדָהוּ וּגְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כָל-יֹרֵעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל: כִּי לֹא-בָזָה וְלֹא שִׁקֵּץ עֲנֹת עֵנִי וְלֹא-הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ וּבִשְׁוֵעוֹ אֱלֹהֵי שִׁמְעוּ: מֵאַתָּה תִּהְלָתִי בְּקָהֵל רַב נְדָרֵי אֲשַׁלֵּם נֶגֶד יִרְאִיו: יֹאכְלוּ עֲנֹוִים | וְיִשְׁבְּעוּ יַהֲלִלוּ ה' דְרָשׁוּ יַחֵי לְבַבְכֶם לְעַד: יִזְכְּרוּ | וְיִשְׁבּוּ אֱלֹהֵי כָל-אֲפִסֵי-אֶרֶץ וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל-מְשַׁפְּחוֹת גּוֹיִם: כִּי לְה' הַמְּלוּכָה וּמִשָּׁל בְּגוֹיִם: אֲכָלוּ וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ | כָּל-דְּשֵׁנֵי-אֶרֶץ לְפָנָיו יִכְרַעוּ כָּל-יִרְדֵי עֶפְרַי וּנְפֹשׁוּ לֹא חֵיהָ: זָרַע יַעֲבֹדֵנוּ יִסְפָּר לְאֹדְנֵי לְדָוִד: יָבֹאוּ וְיִגִּידוּ צַדִּיקְתּוֹ לְעַם נוֹלָד כִּי עָשָׂה:

There are only two cities mentioned in the Megila: Shushan, where the action took place, and Yerushalayim, mentioned as the place from which Mordechai was exiled to Shushan. Jerusalem at the time of the Purim events was in ruin. We can even say that we were vulnerable to Haman's threats and plot BECAUSE it was in ruin and devoid of its inhabitants. Almost as a prayer for the future Complete Geula, Jerusalem was given a special prominence in the celebration of Purim. It is today the prime celebrant of Shushan Purim. To give Jerusalem that status and honor, the focus was shifted to the time of Yehoshua, the first one to do battle against Amalek. As joyous as Purim is, it is sorely lacking rebuilt Jerusalem, may we see it soon.