

This Shabbat is the 348th day (of 354); the last Shabbat (of 50) of 5766 • We all read/learn the 5th & 6th p'rakim of Avot
פיי-קרוב אליך הדיבר מאד בפניך ובלבבך לעשותו: דברים ל"ד

G-d's Rosh HaShana Card to us

Maybe it's more like a letter a father might write to his children, but reference here is to Parshat Nitzavim. Remember that Nitzavim is ALWAYS the weekly portion read on the Shabbat before Rosh HaShana. ALWAYS. Sometimes, with Vayeilech and sometimes without, but always the Shabbat before Rosh HaShana belongs to Nitzavim. So we can view this week's sedra as G-d's message to us at this special time of the year.

He writes: "My dear children - You are all standing before Me this day - all of you. Together. The great and the near great. And the not so great. Men, women, and children. All of the Jewish People. And you all will be principals in the renewal of the covenant between us. By us, I include you who are living now, those who preceded you and those who will follow you.

"But beware, My children, not to turn away from Me. Each of you and all of you collectively. If you do stray - and you will - and are punished and exiled because of your sins, you will be able to come back to Me - and you must. And I will help you with your T'shuva, and I will bring you back to the land I gave to your ancestors. This return might involve hard work, but it is very doable. Return is accessible to you; take advantage of the opportunity. And do it with heart and soul. For you see, My children, I have given you the ability to choose between Life and Death, between Good and Evil, between Blessing and Curse. And I implore you to choose Life. (Remember, I will always be there for you - sometimes My presence will be obvious; other times, when you will have angered Me, I will hide My face. But I'll be there. You might not always understand what's happening, but trust Me and in Me. I want only good things for you. Just keep faith with Me and you will always have the Land I promised and gave to your ancestors and to you."

It doesn't say it exactly like this, but one can see G-d signing the letter or card (so to speak) with an "I love you very much, my dear children." What a feeling to take into the Yamim Nora'im.

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...

Since we don't announce Rosh Chodesh Tishrei (several reasons why not), we will leave the TT Mazal graphic for Elul for this issue and change it IY"H for the Rosh HaShana issue.



Even though we will not announce the molad of Tishrei this Shabbat (or any other time), it is an important molad for our calendar. Perhaps the most important of moladot. Our fixed calendar depends upon the molad of Tishrei. It will determine on which day Rosh HaShana begins. The molad of Tishrei 5767 will be next Friday night, 19h 37m 6p. In Rambam's notation, the molad is SHABBAT 1h 672p. The rule for RH is that it is fixed on the day of the molad of Tishrei. There are four different "unless" rules, but none of them apply this year. Rosh HaShana 5767 is Shabbat (and Sunday). Simple, this time.

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Regular and (earliest)

CANDLE LIGHTING & Havdala times
Israel Summer Time

Correct for TT 732 • Rabbeinu Tam (l'm) - 7:57pm

6:10pm (5:29)	Jerusalem	7:21pm
6:27pm (5:30)	Raanana	7:23pm
6:26pm (5:30)	Beit Shemesh	7:22pm
6:27pm (5:30)	Netanya	7:23pm
6:27pm (5:30)	Rehovot	7:23pm
6:06pm (5:30)	Petach Tikva	7:22pm
6:26pm (5:30)	Modi'in	7:22pm
6:27pm (5:30)	Be'er Sheva	7:22pm
6:25pm (5:29)	Gush Etzion	7:21pm
6:26pm (5:29)	Ginot Shomron	7:22pm
6:10pm (5:28)	Maale Adumim	7:21pm
6:25pm (5:29)	K4 & Hevron	7:21pm
6:14pm (5:28)	Tzfat	7:21pm

Ranges are FRI-FRI • 22-29 ELUL • (Sept. 15-22)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:33-5:37am
Sunrise - 6:23-6:27am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 9:28-9:29am (8:43-8:44am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 10:30-10:30am (10:00-10:00am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 12:34½-12:32pm
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 1:06-1:03pm
Plag Mincha - 5:29-5:21pm
Sunset - 6:50-6:41pm (6:45½-6:36pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
Early Shabbat Minyan
Mincha 5:15pm (before PLAG)
Shabbat Shiur 5:00pm Mincha 6
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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 - 3+3+14 p'sukim - 29:11-28

[P>29:11] Having so recently heard the frightful Tochacha and the curses that are invoked against those who betray G-d, Israel is understandably "nervous" about its future, to say the least. Nitzavim therefore, begins on the positive, reassuring note that we are ALL standing before G-d and entering again into a covenant with Him. These opening p'sukim call our attention to the "inclusiveness" of the People of Israel. We are made up of scholars and leaders, judges and functionaries, men, women, and children, converts, wood cutters and water gatherers (Ashkena- zim and S'faradim, religious and secular, Mitnagdim and Chasidim). But together they all stood to reaffirm their commitment to G-d. Jewish Unity has always been our strength, its lack, our greatest weakness.

SDT Rav Aharon of Karlin pointed out that ATEM is made of the letters of the word EMET, truth. This, he said, is the only way to achieve LIFNEI HASHEM, to stand before G-d.

SDT The Alshich points out that the Torah describes the People as "all of you, before G-d", and then proceeds to delineate different types of Jews. Before G-d, we ARE all the same. Whatever differences might exist pale into insignificance in comparison with the fact that we are all G-d's creations. Differences become important from our perspective. We view some people as more valuable than others. But we really have no way to know how G-d views us. In His eyes we are all standing erect this day...

And there is more. The second three-pasuk set proclaims that it is not just the entire People of Israel who were alive at the time, who are making this covenant with G-d, it is also our ancestors to whom G-d made His special promises, and to the generations of Jews in the past AND the future, whose spirit (souls) were present at this covenant.

Perhaps this is the meaning of the prophecy to Avraham Avinu that his descendants will be as countless as the stars of the heavens. Take the millions of Jews alive today, add the millions who have preceded us, add the - how many more? - future generations, and we can truly be called "without number". Nations that have come to an end, can be numbered. An eternal people cannot ever be counted.

As he has done several times before, Moshe Rabeinu presents both sides of the covenant with G-d before the People: You have been in Egypt and you are aware of

NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH STATS

	Nitz	Vayei	N & V
of 54 sedras	51st	52nd	—
of 11 in D'varim	8th	9th	—
lines in a Torah	87	72	159
rank	52	53	41
Parshiyot	4	3	7
P'tuchot	1	2	3
S'tumot	3	1	4
P'sukim	40	30	70
rank (Torah/D'varim)	53/10	54/11	—
Words	657	553	1210
rank	51/8	53/10	—
Letters	2575	2123	4698
rank	51/8	53/10	—
MITZVOT	0*	2	2
positive	0*	2	2
prohibitions	0	0	0

* Some count T'shuva from Nitzavim

N & V are the shortest sedras in the Torah, but their p'sukim are the longest in the whole Torah.

Nitzavim and Vayeilech are read separately when Rosh HaShana is Monday (and Tuesday) or Tuesday (and Wednesday). They are combined when RH is Thursday (and Friday) or Shabbat (and Sunday). cont. p.4

their abominable practices and those of the other nations which you have encountered. Perhaps there is a rebellious individual among you who will turn from G-d and embrace another faith.

SDT *The phrase describing what we would today refer to as a "rotten apple" is "Shoresh Poreh Rosh V'laana", literally a poisonous root of gall and wormwood. The initial letters of this phrase rearrange to spell SHOFAR, the antidote to this negative facet of Jewish life. The Shofar must awaken the one who stray and start him on the road of T'shuva.*

A person who turns to another religion will be severely punished, even if he thinks otherwise. These p'sukim are a miniature version of the Tochacha from last week's reading.

The portion concludes with the statement that there are mysteries of this world that are G-d's and there are revealed truths that belong to us and our children. Our challenge is to remain faithful to the Torah.

Rashi interprets this pasuk in the narrow context of the punishments presented in the previous p'sukim. However, this pasuk also has wide applications. In all areas of human knowledge - science, math, history... - there are mysteries and there are revealed truths. But remember, today's mysteries can be revealed tomorrow, next year... or never.

And/or we can apply the concept of the pasuk to things that happen in this world that we don't understand. Whether it is the classic, "TZADIK V'RA LO...", that righteous people some- times have a very hard life, and wicked people seem to enjoy their lives, or coping with the death of a child, or 9-11 questions, and a myriad of things that strike us as unfair, things that prompt us to "question G-d" - for all of the above, this pasuk succinctly tells us that there are mysteries in this world that are understood by G-d only, and that which He chooses to reveal to us, become ours to understand. This concept does not "answer" nagging questions, but it must become part of our belief system, because it is a truth that can help us cope, and understand that we are not capable of under- standing everything. People resist this notion, but it is no less true because of that.

Levi - Second Aliya - 6 p'sukim - 30:1-6

[S>30:1 (10)] From the perspective of absolute justice, if we break the terms of our agreement with G-d, punishment should be swift and complete. But we could not survive such an existence. This portion of Nitzavim tells us that if (when) we break the covenant and are dispersed among the nations as punishment, all hope is not lost. We have the golden opportunity to return to G-d - and He will help the process along. This too becomes part of the agreement with G-d. The concepts of return in a physical and spiritual sense are intermingled in this Torah portion.

The wayward Jew turning back towards HaShem and the Torah, and the exiled Jew to a distant land coming back to Israel are presented simultan- eously. This represents

the dual nature of T'shuva. What a wonderful oppor- tunity beckons each Jew - and the Jewish People as a whole - in being given a second chance to live a true Torah life.

The mixing of Return in a spiritual sense and the physical return to Eretz Yisrael is more than a play on words. Torah and Eretz Yisrael were the two gifts offered by G-d to the Jewish people. They are the reasons for our existence. When we turned our back on G-d, we were exiled from the Land. Therefore, Return is on both levels.

MITZVA WATCH

Rambam and Sefer HaChinuch (and others?) do not count T'SHUVA per se among the 613 mitzvot. Sefer HaCha- redim, the SMA"K, and others do count T'SHUVA as one of TARYAG.

One can say that Rambam counts only specific, distinct mitzvot. A command which is all-inclusive, such as "Keep My mitzvot", "Be holy", "Be straight- forward with G-d", is not numbered on its own, because it is really part of all other mitzvot. T'shuva can be viewed the same way. Part of the mitzva to Recite the Sh'ma is that if one does not, or does it without kavana, then he must repent his ways and say the Shma correctly. Part of the prohibition of eating non-kosher is that if one does, then he must repent. More than T'shuva being its own mitzva, it is an add-on to all the others.

Or, we can look at T'shuva as a gift from G-d. He doesn't HAVE to com- mand it. He just has to let it be possible. And we should jump at the opportunity. The Torah does not have to command us to breathe. We do it because it is helpful to living. So is T'shuva. The Torah doesn't have to tell us to repent, just how to do it. On the other hand, there is one aspect of T'shuva that IS counted by Rambam as a mitzva among the 613 - Vidui, verbal confession. This is a specific aspect of T'shuva that DOES "qualify" for the Rambam's count. And yet, as mentioned earlier, some mitzva-coun- ters DO count T'shuva among the 613. Just know that whether T'shuva is numbered among the 613 or not, it is an extremely important mitzva, always applicable - but especially at this time of year.

The last pasuk of the portion contains one of several ELULS, in the form of Rashei Teivot, initial letters. And G-d will circumcise ET LVAVCHA V'ET LVAV zar'echa, your heart and the heart of your children. Baal HaTurim actually says that this is why we say Slichot during Elul.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 4+4 p'sukim - 30:7-14

If we return to G-d, then G-d will rain the curses upon our enemies. We have only to be faithful to HaShem and keep His mitzvot, and all His blessings will be showered upon us. Again a "pitch" is made for T'shuva. And again. And the T'shuva should be completely sincere.

[S>30:11 (4)] But how can we hope to keep our part of the agreement? Is not the Torah so exalted and remote that a mere mortal has no chance of attaining spiritual

heights? The answer is eloquently stated in the famous words of the Torah - For this mitzva is not in the heavens nor is it across the ocean. It is so very close and attainable that every Jew can feel confident in taking up its challenges. It is up to us to make the commitment, feel it in our hearts, and ACT upon it.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya -

6+3+3 p'sukim - 30:15-31:6

The fourth Aliya is ALWAYS the bridge between the two parts of a double sedra.

[S>30:15 (6)] The concept of Free Will is beautifully expressed in the concluding portion of Nitzavim. It marks the difference between human beings and all other creations. The sun and the moon "fulfill" G-d's commands without conscious decisions. A bee doesn't think things out and decide to pollinate a flower. Nor does a lion attacking a weak zebra evaluate the morality of his act. Only humans have the choice to do good or evil. G-d recommends and pleads with us to choose Life and Good, but He leaves the choice to us. That is why we are accountable for our actions; and that is why we stand before G-d in judgment on Rosh HaShana - animals do not. The choice is offered, but not only does G-d "command" us to choose Life, He warns us again of the devastating results of the wrong choice. Heavens and Earth are called upon to witness this most significant fact of human existence. It is the Land of Israel that is the "prize" for choosing wisely, as G-d had promised Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. G-d reconfirms His covenant and promises to us.

We have Free Will. We can be whatever kind of people we choose to be. We have His recommendation and encouragement to choose Life over Death, Good over Evil. Our proper choices will earn us long life and a firm hold on the Land that He promised our ancestors.

Let us heed the warnings of Nitzavim, let us be inspired by the beautiful challenges of Nitzavim, let us be uplifted by the lofty messages of Nitzavim, and let us have a "successful" Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, and a happy & healthy year of peace & prosperity.

[P>31:1 (6)] Moshe Rabeinu concludes his words to the People and tells them that at his age of 120 years, he is no longer able to lead them.

And that G-d has told Moshe that he will not be crossing the Jordan River, so his journey is truly over. He tells them that G-d will be with them, destroy the nations that they will encounter in Eretz Yisrael, and that Yehoshua will be the one to lead them. Moshe reminds the People of the victories they have had, and tells them to be strong and courageous. G-d won't abandon them.

This is so, because when RH is Monday or Tuesday, t Nitzavim and Vayeilech are read separately when Rosh HaShana is Monday (and Tuesday) or Tuesday (and Wednesday). They are combined when RH is Thursday (and

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya -

3+4 p'sukim - 31:7-13

[S>31:7 (7)] Moshe then speaks to Yehoshua in front of the assembled people, and asks him to be strong, for he will be leading the people and he will be in charge of conquering and settling the Land. G-d will be guiding you "every step of the way".

When Moshe finished writing the Torah, he gave it over to the Kohanim, "the carriers of the Ark".

Moshe next commands the People concerning the mitzva of "Hak'hel" [612, A16 31:12]. On Sukkot following a Sh'mita year, when the people gather in Jerusalem for the Chag, the king shall read (parts of) the Torah to the multitude. The people are to gather at the Beit HaMikdash - men, women, and children - in order to learn, to fear G-d, to hear and understand, and to commit to fulfill all the teachings of the Torah. And the youngsters who have not yet learned, will hear and learn to revere G-d "all the days they shall live in the Land your are about to enter".

Shishi - Sixth Aliya -

6 p'sukim - 31:14-19

[P>31:14 (17)] G-d calls to Moshe to take Yehoshua and appear with him at the "Ohel Moed". G-d's Presence descended to the Tent in the form of a Cloud.

G-d tells Moshe that after his death, the people will rebel against Him, stray from the proper path, and embrace other gods. G-d announces that He will show His anger by "hiding His Face" from them. This is a reference to the well-known "hester panim" which manifests itself as G-d "working behind the scenes" only, in hidden, subtle ways.

This prophecy by no means "obligates" that generation, or any generation, to turn to idolatry. It is possible for the prophecy never to come true. And this would not impugn the truth of Torah or Moshe's status as a prophet. We always have the challenge not to turn away from G-d, and the ability to remain faithful to Him.

Next is the command to write "The Song" (namely the whole Torah), to teach it to the people, so that it should serve as a testament among the People of Israel. This is the last mitzva of the Torah [613, A18 31:19], to write a Sefer Torah.

MITZVA WATCH

Our Sages include in this mitzva the significance of acquiring Sifrei Kodesh (holy books) from which to learn. Since the Torah itself specifies that the "purpose" of writing a Torah scroll is to learn and teach from it, then writing, buying, acquiring all learning texts would be in the spirit of this mitzva.

The RO"Sh (Rabeinu Asher) takes this idea one significant step further - he says that since in our day,

the Torah scroll has been relegated to the Aron Kodesh in shul and is used for public reading, but not as a teaching text - the MAIN fulfillment of this mitzva "to write a Sefer Torah" is the building of a personal Torah library (that will be used). Buy Torah texts from which to learn and teach. He adds that it is also praiseworthy if one is privileged to write a Sefer Torah as well. This is an unusual turn-about, which emphasizes the importance of buying sforim - AND USING THEM.

"...and teach it to the People of Israel - place it in their mouths." From here the Gemara teaches us that one must review and review his teachings with his students until they understand. It is not sufficient to just teach; one must work very hard until his students really understand, until it is in their mouths.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 31:20-30

Because, G-d explains, I am bringing the people to a Land flowing with milk & honey, the People will eat in contentment and turn from G-d. The Torah, however, will not be completely forgotten from the lips (and hearts) of future generations. (This will be "their ticket back".) Moshe wrote the Torah on that day (Rambam says that he wrote 13 Torahs - one for each tribe and one in the care of the Kohanim/Leviyim) and taught it to the People. G-d "commanded" Yehoshua to be strong and courageous in his new role as leader. Moshe completed the writing of the Torah. (Some say that Moshe even wrote the final 8 p'sukim of the Torah, which discuss his death; others disagree.) Moshe commands the Leviyim to take the Torah and place it at the side of the Aron. (Some say that the Torah was in the Aron; others say that it was on a shelf attached to the side of the Aron.) Moshe asks for the leaders of the People to assemble for his final words to them. Moshe tells of the prophecy/prediction of the rebelliousness of the People. Moshe speaks the words of the Song - here probably referring to Haazinu - to all the people, in its entirety. 3-pasuk Maffir.

Haftara - 23 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 61:10-63:9

Final of the 7 Haftarot of Consolation. Yeshayahu prophesies of the time to come when there will be universal peace and Jerusalem will not only be rebuilt, but will be the center of universal worship of G-d. But not only will the nations of the world recognize The One G-d, they will also acknowledge the People of Israel as His People. The idea of universal acceptance of G-d fits well with our notion that ALL people are judged by G-d on Rosh HaShana, not just the Jewish People.

But when RH is Thursday or Shabbat, then there is no Shabbat between YK and Sukkot, and that extra sedra is not needed. This is all done so that we finish the Torah with V'zot HaBracha on Simchat Torah.

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

Lesson 348 (part one)

The Beth Din System

Baruch Hashem and also thanks to Phil, 347 lessons have appeared in Torah Tidbits, which is probably one of the most widely read weekly Torah publication in the English-speaking world.

Most of these lessons have focused on various aspects of what is called substantive law, that is, what is the law in this particular field. I thought that I would embark on some lessons on what is known in law as procedural law, that is what is the procedure in which rights are enforced in Beth Din. Some of these matters have been included in passing in prior lessons, but I think it would be worthwhile to familiarize the readers with the procedure in enforcing the rights of the parties in getting to an adjudication of rights. Also the readership of Torah Tidbits have expanded tremendously the last few years.

I thought we can begin with a historical overview of the court system as envisioned in the Torah, both Oral and Written. The judicial system as set up in the Torah was three tiered.

We shall begin with the Great Sanhedrin. In the first chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin, the Mishnayot describe the composition and jurisdiction of the highest Jewish court, known as the Great Sanhedrin. The court's jurisdiction is broad and varied, serving numerous significant functions in the maintenance of the nation. There is general agreement that the number of individuals comprising the Great Sanhedrin is 71. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether all 71 are judges or whether only 70 serve as judges and the 71st is the court's presiding officer. These differing views appear in a Mishnaic text, in which the proponents of both viewpoints derive their views from an analysis of G-d's command to Moshe to create a Great Sanhedrin "Gather unto Me seventy men" (Bamidbar 11:16). The opinion that all 71 are judges holds that Moshe was also to be included in the Great Sanhedrin, making a total of 71 judges. The other opinion holds that the 70 were to be appointed but that Moshe was not to be counted as a judge; rather he was to be considered a presiding officer. One of the commentaries that explains the latter view maintains that there are only 70 judges in total, with no presiding officer over them. The prevailing view is that the Great Sanhedrin is comprised of 71 judges and all of them are members of the court. The court sits in a semi-circle so that each judge can see the other judges. The Great Sanhedrin has a permanent meeting place in the city of Jerusalem, the meeting site is known as the Chamber of the Hewn Stone. In its construction, half of the Chamber was situated on holy ground in the Holy Temple, and half was located on unconsecrated ground. Thus the court fulfilled the commandment of the Torah to sit in the place where the Lord would choose, close to the altar and the Divine presence, the source of Justice. In addition, Yaakov's blessing to Yehuda that a lawgiver would not depart from Yehuda was fulfilled by the chamber's location in the geographic area belonging to the tribe of Yehuda. The exact area in the Chamber where the court sits is in the unconsecrated section, since only kings descended from the House of David are authorized to sit in the consecrated part.

On Shabbat and Holy Days when no trials are permitted to be held, the Great Sanhedrin does not meet in the Chamber of Hewn Stone; otherwise it might appear that they were sitting in judgment. On those days the Great Sanhedrin meets in the study hall on the Temple Mount. The importance of the place where the Great Sanhedrin meets is that if the Great Sanhedrin does not meet in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, there may not be capital punishment meted out by any court in the judicial system. As a result, the Great Sanhedrin can by this procedural device, vary the imposition of such sentences. Thus in approximately 30 C.E., forty years before the destruction of the Second Holy Temple, the Great Sanhedrin left the Chamber of Hewn Stone and began to meet at Hanuth. The reason for this move was the judges of the Great Sanhedrin saw that the lawlessness attendant upon the extreme Roman oppression was both inevitable and prevelant, they did not wish to permit their courts to become instruments of capital punishment. Accordingly, they decided "Rather let us be exiled from place to place than pronounce them guilty of capital offenses." After the Great Sanhedrin left the Chamber of Hewn Stone, it wandered to ten different places of banishment, the last being Tiberias, from which, according to Rabbi Yochanan, they are destined to be redeemed. As described in the Mishna, the court of 71 judges has a broad and varied jurisdictional base. Its jurisdiction may be conveniently divided into three general functional categories: judicial functions; nonjudicial functions; and administrative functions. In all three categories, the Great Sanhedrin deals with the most important and difficult cases. In the Mishna, the judicial functions of the great Sanhedrin are discussed first, beginning with the most serious of crimes, major transgressions by groups or individuals. The first such case mentioned in the Mishna is the case of a tribe which has sinned. The Talmud, in discussing the Mishna, tries to ascertain the specific violation of which the tribe is accused. After eliminating a number of possible transgressions, the Talmud concludes that the Mishna must be referring to a trial where a majority of the tribe is accused of idolatry, a capital offense. This sin of idolatry striking at the very essence and existence of the Jewish people, is so serious a national matter when it involves such a substantial group that it must be dealt with by the highest court. The jurisdiction of the Great Sanhedrin in this area is an extension of the jurisdiction that court has over a city which is accused of being guilty of idolatry. If a majority of a city is accused of idolatry their trial is before the Great Sanhedrin, because of the seriousness of the breach and its possible repercussions to the nation. The Talmud finds support for these views based on Torah verses. Based on the foregoing it can be said that perhaps the most serious matter over which the Great Sanhedrin has jurisdiction is over a tribe or city accused of being guilty of idolatry.

IYH next lesson continues the jurisdiction of the Great Sanhedrin.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in Volume 1, Chapter 1 of Jewish Jurisprudence by Emanuel Quint and Neil Hecht. Copies of both volumes can be purchased at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to quint@inter.net.il

Religious and Ethical Challenges of Money [2] by Dr. Meir Tamari

"When Israel left Egypt G-d blessed them with much wealth and then at Sinai He gave a Torah to educate them how to earn and use it" (Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, Sh'mot 3:12). Therein lies our way out of the spiritual morass into which money, wealth and economic assets can lead us, a way that presents us with two paths; the legal demands of halakha, but equally so, the spiritual requirements to act beyond the letter of the law and to do that which is good and straight in the eyes of G-d. It is Judaism's combination of the two paths that make it unique in money matters as in all spheres of life.

1. The Divine Wisdom created for us a halakha within which the earning and spending of money could become not merely moral but holy.

THEFT: Not to steal money or possessions, to have courts to judge and punish thieves; to consistently see that one has true weights and measures; not to do injustice with weights and measures; not even to possess defective weights and measures; not to encroach on another's property [understood to include competition that deprives another of his livelihood]; not to steal humans and sell them (Rambam, Torah, introduction to Hilkhot Geneiva)'.

ROBBERY: Not to forcefully take another's property, not even a debt owed to one; not to oppress by denying a debt or to abuse funds entrusted to us; not to withhold wages; not to badger and press people legally to sell something which they do not wish to sell; not to covet; to return a lost article [which applies also to the protection from loss due to conniving of others] (Rambam, introduction to Hilkhot Gezeila).

ONA'AH: Price fraud through over-charging; oppressing workers through withholding wages and benefits; not to prevent a worker eating of the produce he is working with but forbidding gluttony and transfer of the benefit [this seems relevant also to benefits provided by modern labor relations]; not to muzzle animals to prevent them eating.

SHOMRIM - BAILIES: This refers to a person's degree of responsibility for property entrusted to them whether as agents, craftsmen, executive officers and certain classes of employees; for imposing responsibility for damages to property or causing financial loss. It is essential to pay for bodily damage, however, that is insufficient for T'shuva. For that we are required in addition to appease the injured person.

It should be noted that one is equally obligated to prevent damage caused by his body or property, but also to the removal of dangerous objects even from the public thoroughfare.

BORROWING & LENDING: The obligation to make interest free loans [this includes rich people suffering from temporary illiquidity]; not to oppress by demanding repayment from one who cannot repay; not secure debts through coercion; to return an essential article taken as security whenever the poor require it; not to demand a lien from a widow, irrespective of whether she be rich or poor; not to insist as security, tools and equipment required for

sustenance; not lend money at interest or to serve an agent or a scribe or a witness for such transactions (Rambam introduction to Hilkhos Malveh v'Loveh).

LAWS OF BUYING AND SELLING: Not to defraud the buyer or the seller by false advertising or by non-disclosure of defects, nor by creating the illusion that the goods or services confer status or any other desired but irrelevant effects.

2. "AND YOU SHALL DO THAT WHICH IS RIGHT AND GOOD IN THE EYES OF G-D" (D'varim 6:18-19).

"Reuven has been operating a liquor store for many years, now Shimon, who is wealthy and has no dependents, wishes to open a similar firm. By law, Shimon cannot be prevented. However, according to the Bach (Teshuvot sec 12) the court can force Shimon to refrain from opening, LIFNIM MI SHURAT HADIN, since to act otherwise is an act of Sodom. Even were it not so, the court should at least use verbal pressure not to permit the store" (Tsemach Tzedek, Choshen Mishpat 418:11).

"If the buyer has not yet drawn the merchandise into his possession, either party can withdraw. Nevertheless the person who retracts at this point is subject to the public imprecation of 'He who punished'" (Choshen Mishpat 198:1, 204:1).

"One has a benefit and the other suffers no loss": "One who dwells without permission in a house that is not normally for hire and now the owner tells him to leave, does not have to pay rent, since the owner suffered no loss" (Choshen Mishpat 367:6).

Upon entering the Land, the Tribes made 10 enactments, all based on this principle. For example, everybody, irrespective of tribe, may catch fish in the Kinneret [even though it belonged to the tribe of Naftali] provided they only use a line and hook, ensuring that there is no loss; it is permissible for anyone to graze their sheep in a privately owned forest [without permission from the owner or payment to him] provided the grazing does not harm the trees. (Rambam, Nizkei Mamon 5).

"When one sells ground or a house or a store, then if the adjoining neighbor wishes to buy it, he has precedence before all people. It is G-d's desire that people do to each other that which is good and honest and there is nothing more honest or correct than this since the seller suffers no loss by giving preference to his neighbor" (Aruch Hashulchan, Chosen Mishpat 175:1).

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Vayikra 17:18) is a major principle in Torah. One who loves his neighbor will not steal his money, will not commit adultery with his wife, will not oppress him financially, will not encroach on his livelihood and will not harm him in any way" (Sefer HaChinuch, mitzva 243). "These are the generations of man' is a greater mitzva, for G-d made man in His Image" (Sifra). When we oppress, defraud, or harm others, we are acting against Him, in whose Image man was created.

"One who wishes to sensitize himself spiritually, will break his yetzer for money and will extend his hands gracefully to others. Everything he does for their welfare he will do with pleasure and grace" (Yoreh De'ah 248:8).

It is of this merger of these two ways that Maimonides writes in his will; "Nothing can protect one like the helmet of TRUTH and the shield of JUSTICE".

MISC section - contents:

[1] **Vebbe Rebbe**

[2] **Candle by Day**

[3] **From Aloh Naaleh**

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

[5] **Parsha Points to Ponder**

[6] **Portion from the Portion**

[7] **More TT Reader Feedback**

[8] **Micro-Ulpan**

[9] **There's nowhere I'd rather be**

[10] **From the desk of the director**

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

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



It is hard for me to say Selichot very late at night or early in the morning. What are the factors involved in the issue of the timing of Selichot?



Much of the issue of the timing of the minhag to recite Selichot in the days before Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur is based on mystical considerations. These can be found in the Gemara and in kabalistic writings, which are not within our area of expertise. However, we can discuss the basic ideas as filtered through the poskim.

Different times of the day have different characteristics, making them more or less appropriate for certain types of religious activity. The first part of the night possesses the characteristic of DIN (strict judgment). The second part of the night is an EIT RATZON (a time when requests are more readily accepted). Thus, the latter is the time when Selichot, which are specially formulated prayers to elicit mercy from Hashem, are most appropriate. Several of the piyutim (liturgical pieces) even refer to the timing as late at night.

Several classical sources (including Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 581:1) talk of Selichot at ASHMORET HABO- KER, the few hours leading up to ALOT HASHACHAR, which itself is around 72 minutes before sunrise. At this time, Hashem is hovering specifically over our world (Magen Avraham 581:1,

based on Avoda Zara 3b), making it an EIT RATZON. There are also sources that indicate that CHATZOT (astronomical midnight) is a special EIT RATZON (see Yechave Da'at I, 46). Therefore, the optimal times to say Selichot are either at CHATZOT or in the pre-dawn hours. Rav M. Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, OC II 105) points out that when people were "early to bed and to rise," the latter was more convenient and common, whereas nowadays it is often easier at CHATZOT. One should not infer a clear preference between these times. Only on the first night (for Ashkenazim), on Motza'ei Shabbat, there may be a preference to say Selichot at CHATZOT, when more of Shabbat's impact remains (see Piskei Teshuvot 581:(15)).

The main objection is to saying Selichot at night before CHATZOT, a time of DIN. Selichot, and especially the Yud Gimmel Midot (13 Divine Attributes), which is their most basic component, request mercy in a manner that incites the MIDAT HADIN. Therefore, kabalistic sources say that it is spiritually dangerous to recite them at that time (Magen Avraham 565:5; Birkei Yosef, OC 581:1). One can identify Rav Feinstein with the camp that does not put a strong emphasis on kabalistic sources in making halachic decisions. He rules (Igrot Moshe, ibid.) that even though much positive effect is missing at Selichot in the early night, it is better to recite them then, lacking a feasible alternative, than to deprive the congregation of their inspiration in preparing for the YAMIM NORA'IM. If one does so, he prefers reciting Selichot at a change of ASHMOROT, one of which is approximately 2 hours before CHATZOT. However, others say it is better to avoid the strongly detrimental situation that the kabalists describe even when there is no easy alternative (Yechave Da'at, ibid.). Some suggest that early night in America is not so bad because it is after CHATZOT in Israel. However, it seems that most authorities relate DIN and EIT RATZON to each place according to its astronomical situation (see ibid.).

The more "pareve" approach is to say the Selichot in the morning (or even before Mincha - ibid.) While it is not especially an EIT RATZON, it is not a time of DIN either and the time of the year is itself an EIT RATZON (see Igrot Moshe's (ibid.) reaction to the questioner's thesis). The general approach is that it is worthwhile to sacrifice a modest amount of quality and quantity of learning to enable one to say Selichot (Sha'arei Tehsuva 581:1). However, one has to make the difficult evaluation of whether he is capable of fulfilling his daily responsibilities while dedicating time to reciting Selichot at the right time.

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

[2] Candle by Day

Progress should be measured not by reference to our starting points but by reference to our goals.

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

Next Shabbat, Jews all over the globe will usher in Rosh HaShana 5767, which begins the Ten Days of Penitence. This is the period set aside for reflection, for introspection, for asking ourselves serious questions, who are we, what is our value system, and what guides our lives.

Rabbi Mordechai Grinberg, Rosh Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavne, in his recently published Sefer, "Kerem L'Shlomo" cites the talmudic discussion in Sanhedrin 97b regarding three verses in this week's parsha. The Torah states in D'varim 30:2 - "And you will return to the Lord, your God," then in verse 3, "...the Lord ...will gather you from all the peoples wherein you have been scattered", and finally in verse 10, "...if you will turn unto the Lord your God." The discussion revolves around the difference of opinion between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua regarding the sequence of events. Does the redemption of the Jewish people of Israel depend upon their prior repentance, or not? According to Rabbi Yehoshua, the first verse relates to repentance which will result from the difficult events in the life of the people, whereas the last verse relates to repentance out of the desire of the people to return to God out of love and attachment, rather than fear.

Rabbi Yehoshua further adds that the first verse relates not only to a return to God, but also to a return to Eretz Israel out of desperation and suffering in the lands of the dispersion. The last verse relates to a return to Eretz Israel out of a love and longing for the Holy Land.

In our time, we have seen both expressions of Aliya; those who have returned to Eretz Israel because of oppression, and those who have returned out of an inner love of the Land.

During these Days of Penitance, while contemplating the need to return to God, maybe we ought to consider not only who am I, but where I am as well.

Rabbi Yaakov Zev, Jerusalem

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

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

R' Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev was looking for a baal tekiyah - someone to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana. Many people vied for the honor of blowing the shofar for him, and he set about interviewing the various candidates. He called each one in and asked him, "What do you think about when you blow the shofar?"

Each one tried to show how he had lofty thoughts that were rooted in the kabbala, and yet R' Levi Yitzchak was not satisfied.

Finally, one answered, "Rebbe, I'm not a learned man. I have four daughters who are all of marriageable age. When I blow the shofar, I think: 'Lord of the universe! I have done whatever You wanted, and have obeyed all Your commandments. Now, please do what I want, and help me find husbands for my daughters.'"

R' Levi Yitzchak was overjoyed, and said, "Your thoughts are true ones. You will blow the shofar for me this Rosh Hashana."

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 -- Nitzavim-Vayeilech

1) When Moshe Rabbeinu described the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai, he told the Jewish people that he was standing between G-D and them? (D'varim 5:5) Why, then, does Moshe tell them in this week's sedra that all of them are standing directly in front of G-D? (29:9)

2) Why does the Torah mention the word V'SHAV - referring to our return to Israel - twice in the same verse (30:3), implying that there will be two returns at the time of the redemption?

3) Why was Sukkot after the sh'mita year chosen as the time for the mitzva of Hakhel when all the Jews would gather to hear the king read from the Torah? (See 31:10)

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

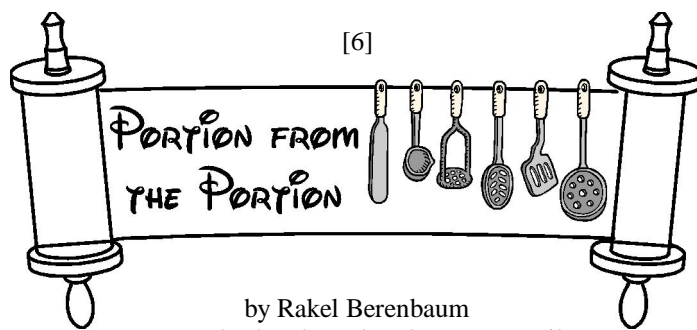
Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) The Chatam Sofer explains that while a person is in the presence of their Rebbe, the growth of the student is stunted. Thus, for example, we find that G-D's presence did not rest on Yitzchak until after Avraham's death and Yaakov did not encounter G-D directly until after leaving Yitzchak's presence. As long as Moshe was functioning as the teacher of the Jewish people, as he was at Har Sinai, his presence prevented the Jews from growing to be right in front of G-D. However, now, at the time of his death, Moshe was moving to the side and the people could emerge and achieve full growth. Hence, his declaration that they now stand in front of G-D.

2) The Meshech Chochma teaches that there will, in fact, be two different types of returning to the Land of Israel in the time of the redemption. First, people who are fleeing the exile will return. These are people who want to return either because they are being persecuted or they simply feel like strangers in foreign lands. They come because they no longer want to be in exile and G-D has compassion, as the verse relates and brings them back to Israel. Then, at some point, there will be a second returning of those who became comfortable in the lands of exile and had no real desire to return to Israel. G-D will bring those people back as well, regardless of their lack of desire or need for it.

3) The Kli Yakar answers that the essence of the mitzva of Hakhel was the unity of the Jewish people, and Sukkos right after sh'mita was the best time for a mitzva of unity. Why so? During the year of sh'mita, the most impoverished person and the wealthiest person were on equal footing. In addition, all loans were forgiven. All of this led to a general feeling of peace among the people. Sukkos adds to this feeling even more since we all leave our permanent dwellings for temporary ones. Thus, Sukkos after a year of generating this feeling of equality which led to unity, was! the best time for this mitzva of unity.

Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman, who teaches at Reishit Yerushalayim, Tiferet, and Machon Maayan in Beit Shemesh and RBS and is the author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith", soon to be re-published by Feldheim ppp@israelcenter.co.il



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"Today you are all standing before G-d... even your woodcutters and water drawers"

This portion is always read the last Shabbat of the year and it has topics in it that are related to Rosh Hashana. Chapter 30 verses 1-10 deal with repentance and returning. Even the first verses (of the sedra) which describe how we are all standing before G-d - "your leaders, your tribal chiefs, your elders, your law enforcers, every Israelite man, your children, your women and the proselytes in your camp, even your woodcutters and water drawers" - has some connection to the new year when we all stand before Hashem and pass before Him one by one to be judged.

Many commentators have been perplexed by the wording at the end of verse 10. It says "from the woodcutter to the water drawer". Usually when it says "from...to", the examples that are brought are from opposite extremes. We would have expected here to have examples from the highest person in society to the lowest person in society, but that doesn't seem to be the case in our verse. Both a woodcutter and a water drawer are at the lower end of society.

Harav Shmuel Avidor in his book Likrat Shabbat brings an interesting explanation on this question. If we look carefully at the two types of people mentioned, we will see that their actions are very different. The tree cutter destroys living trees by chopping them down. He destroys the view and nature by uprooting them. He uses an ax, a tool of destruction to accomplish his job. Alongside the benefits of his actions are many detriments.

The water drawer on the other hand, brings up the water from the depths where we wouldn't have been able to benefit from it at all. The water that he brings up brings life to people as well as animals and plants.

If we look deeper at how these two people actually carry out their specific tasks we will also find a difference. A woodcutter has to distance himself from the tree in order to swing the ax. The further he is able to lean his body backwards away from the tree, the stronger his blow will be on the tree. Not so with the water drawer. When he wants to draw water he has to get closer to the water and bends in towards the well. The more water he wants to bring up the more he must bend and lower himself.

Now we can understand better why the Torah brought these two laborers as an example. The woodcutters symbolize the lowest elements of society that only know how to destroy the world around them. The water drawers, on the other hand, symbolize all the creative

people who try to save the world and others around them. Both types of people as well as all the other types in between stand before Hashem on Rosh Ha-shana and must give a reckoning of their actions with the hope that Hashem will forgive all and write them in the Book of Life for a good year.

Cauliflower (tree) Salad

- 1 small head of lettuce
- 1 box of frozen green peas
- Mayonnaise to cover
- 1 head of cauliflower
- 1 pkg. Italian salad dressing mix (dry)

Shred lettuce in bowl, break cauliflower into small pieces. Thaw peas and drain, place on top of lettuce and cauliflower. Sprinkle package of dry salad dressing mix all over the mixture. Seal by spreading mayonnaise over top. Cover bowl tightly and refrigerate for 24 hours. Toss before serving.

If you don't have dry Italian dressing mix you can just replace with the spices of the dressing: 1 tsp. salt, ½ tsp. garlic powder, ¼ tsp. parsley flakes, a pinch of oregano and red pepper flakes.

[7] TTreader Feedback

Several people called our attention to the inaccuracy of last week's Lead Tidbit title and springboard. It was not Peter Pan and Robin Hood but Peter Rabbit and Robin Hood. In the late 60s musical, You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, one of the songs was about a Book Report. The kids were assigned to write about Peter Rabbit. Linus wrote this intellectual analysis of the story. Lucy suffered through the assignment, counting words as she went along, and adding several extra "very"s to stretch her total. Charlie Brown kept putting off the assignment in true procrastinator form, and it was the Beethoven playing Schroder, who could think of what to write about Peter Rabbit, so he wrote about Robin Hood, claiming that Peter Rabbit reminded him of Robin Hood. Thanks to those who emailed on this important issue, and especially to the friend who sung the lyrics of the song to me on Shabbat morning after shul. Hard to argue with someone who knows the song that well.

[8] MicroUlpan

סִבִּיט ♦ סְפֵרָה בִּינָרִית

SIBIT - bit is a computer term short for binary digit. Its Hebrew equivalent is short for SIFRA BINARIT



In this newly revived column, we present anecdotes which are meant to give you that warm feeling about living in the most special place on Earth. Or to feed your longing to do so... as the case may be. TTreaders are invited to submit.

My Grandsons and their War Effort

My youngest daughter and her family (including four little boys) live in Tsefat - a city frequently under concentrated rocket attack during the recent war. They spent most of the war in their fairly sheltered apartment. The steady stream of air raid alarms followed by loud booms was something they had to cope with. My daughter and my son-in-law helped their children construct special "rockets" of their own. Made of decorated cardboard (toilet- paper) tubes with aluminum-foil cones at their tips, they became repositories for little strips of paper describing the mitzvot the boys had performed. Each child was proud to accumulate a rocket-full of mitzvot. Whenever the alarms sounded, the boys ran to a (sheltered) window to aim their rockets out and "shoot" the mitzvot into the airspace of Tsefat as a counter-force to the evil Katyushas and help "save" their neighbors. Besides being good hinukh for the little boys, it served to allay potentially traumatic fears. -YL

[10] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Nitzavim opens with a stark comment, namely that, "You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d." If we contemplate that sentence for but a few seconds, we surely must be overwhelmed by its import.

It is the last day of Moshe's life when he makes this statement. It is as if he is conveying to us in one final breath the summation of all that he has taught us up to this point. It is clear from the conciseness of the message (and the following text) that no-one is excluded from this existential state. The loftiest of people share the same destiny as the lowliest in the social strata.

The Ohr HaChayim suggests that by including every member of Bnei Yisrael under the banner of His Covenant and by indicating later that the "revealed [sins] are for us and our children forever" (D'varim 29:28), Hashem is signifying that we are all responsible for each other to maintain the high standards demanded from us as Jews.

Moshe mentioned the people by categories as if to say that each of us within our own particular domain has the power to affect others. While our rabbis may sway over large congregations, the rank and file can influence family, friends and co-workers - each within his or her power to do so. And as we consider the state-of-the-nation today, this unquestionably presents us with an incredible challenge.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Torah reading and Davening

With Slichot beginning (for Ashkenazim) this Motza"Sh (S'fardim have been saying Slichot since the 2nd of Elul), we will be saying the YUD-GIMMEL MIDOT, the 13 Divine Attributes a lot in the next two weeks plus. The introductory passage to it includes the p'sukim that precede Hashem, HaShem... in Parshat Ki Tisa. And G-d descended (so to speak) in a cloud, and stood there (with Moshe), and He (or he - different opinions) called out with the Name: HASHEM. ...VAYIKRA V'SHEIM (pause) HASHEM. In this context, keeping VAYIKRA and V'SHEIM together, then pausing before saying G-d's name, conveys the correct meaning of the words. There is a similar phrase - but different in meaning, in Lech Lecha, when Avraham calls out in G-d's name - ...VAYIKA pause B'SHEIM HASHEM. It's good to pronounce and accent things correctly all the time, but the YUD- GIMMEL MIDOT deserve an extra effort on our part. Of course, that effort should not be limited to saying the words correctly; we must commit ourselves to live by those attributes of G-d that He wants us to emulate: Mercy, Patience, Kindness, Truth... The YUD-GIMMEL MIDOT are a very potent part of Slichot and Yom Kippur prayer. So powerful that they require a Minyan. They demand our extra care and attention.

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.

Yom Kippur is on the Horizon - a Story [2]

The sun had risen and set over Yerushalayim several times since the Segan had told Meir Hakohein that the Kohein Gadol was not well and that it was more than likely that the Sanhedrin would declare him incapacitated and physically incapable of performing the Avoda on Yom Kippur. Everyone knew that if the Kohein Gadol was incapacitated, the Segan would be expected to perform the Avoda in his place. If things come to that, the Segan told Meir "I want you at my side". Meir replayed this conversation in his mind repeatedly. However, there was something else. Once someone served as Kohein Gadol even for a single day, when his period of service was terminated, something of the aura of the Kehuna Gedola remained with him.

It was very early morning and it was just getting light. "Meir, come! They're waiting for you at the Lishkat Tela'ei Korban." Located in the southwest corner of the Beit Hamokeid, north of the Azara (Midot 1:6), Lishkat Tela'ei Korban was a small stable where at least six lambs destined for sacrifice were always kept. The Kohanim checked these animals daily to ascertain that they remained physically perfect and that they did not somehow acquire any disqualifying Mumim, blemishes. When Meir and his escort entered the Lishkat Tela'ei Korban, they saw several young white-clad Kohanim inspecting one lamb in particular. Meir smiled as he recalled the Mishna, "...they gave the [lamb that was to be] the Tamid to drink from

a cup of gold. Although it [the lamb] had been inspected in the evening of the day before, they inspect it again by the light of torches" (Tamid 3:4). How extraordinary! In this era of laser beams, cell phones, computers and whatnot, they still inspected the sacrificial lambs by the light of torches! And there, in the flickering light, a Kohein offered the lamb water in a golden cup! As the lamb was drinking, Dovid Yehuda, the Segan, dispatched a young Kohein to the night watchmen's command post "to see if the time for slaughtering [the Tamid] has come." After a few moments, a cry reverberated through the silent Azara. It was the watchman. "Barkai! Barkai! The whole of the eastern sky is lit up!" Noting approvingly the brightening glow in the east, the Segan cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted back, "Has the light reached Chevron?" "Y-e-s-s-s-s" was the distant reply. (Meir chuckled. Just a couple of days ago, his wife Yehudit had put him in his place about that very subject. She had asked him why they "Dafka" mentioned Chevron. He had patiently explained to her that they mentioned Chevron as a means of invoking the Zechuyot, the merits, of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov who were buried in Chevron. "Indeed?" Yehudit had retorted, "Didn't the Imahot, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah have Zechuyot as well?" Shouldn't their Zechuyot be invoked as well?") Thoroughly inspected and found to be blemish-free, a young Kohein led the lamb to the Beit Hamitbachayim, the place of slaughter north of the Mizbei'ach.


After the Levitical choir finished singing Shir Shel Yom, the Segan and Meir ambled over to the Lishkat Hagazit, the seat of the Sanhedrin. Meir: "How is the Kohein Gadol doing?" Segan: "No change." Meir: "Dovid Yehuda, as Segan, you must start thinking about the Avoda of Yom Kippur. You must prepare just in case the Kohein Gadol IS incapacitated," Segan: "Meir old friend, I've been thinking of nothing else. Even contemplating the responsibility of representing Am Yisrael before HaKadosh Baruch Hu on Yom Kippur is overwhelming." Meir: "I'm sure. Come to my office. It's less hectic there and we'll review the Avoda together."


They sat down and Meir pulled out a dog-eared copy of the "Order of the Avoda of the Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur" He turned to "The Avoda" and glanced at it. "Beit Avtinas will teach you how to enter the Kodosh Hakodashim and offer Ketoret. It's difficult but I don't see any real problem there." The Segan was quiet. Meir let his mind roam and he recalled a heart-warming incident that happened three or four years earlier. Once while in the Azara, he saw a Ba'al Hakorban slaughter an Olah incorrectly. Sacrifice invalidated, the Ba'al Hakorban was visibly devastated. Then suddenly a kindly Oleh Regel standing next to him who had not yet slaughtered his own sacrificial animal, came over and asked him if he would like to become his partner; they would offer up his Olah together, in partnership. The Ba'al Hakorban jubilantly agreed and the two men performed Semicha on the head of the sacrificial animal, first one and then the other, both saying words of praise. The kindness of that Oleh Regel had brought tears to Meir's eyes. Meir turned to the Segan, "Dovid Yehuda, tell me the truth. When is the last time YOU slaughtered a sacrificial animal?" "It's been a while", the Segan confessed. The Segan, busy man that he was, never got around to attending the mandatory refresher courses for Kohanim that he himself had instituted. "OK. We're calling in Naftali to give you a crash course in Shechita. Naftali teaches Shechita in Avoda 101." When Naftali finally arrived, he did not waste time. "No philosophizing now! We're talking Tachlis, practicalities. If you serve in place of the Kohein Gadol, you'll have to slaughter all Korbanot


ordained for Yom Kippur. The knives used for slaughter, must be extremely sharp, smooth and without notches. I will be responsible for them. To be valid, the Shocheit - the slaughter - YOU - must cut through both the animal's windpipe and gullet. The Sages have condensed Hilchot Shechita into five classifications. If you, while slaughtering, make any of the following errors you invalidate the Shechita."


Naftali continued. "Shehiya (delay or pause). You may not pause or delay in the act of slaughtering. You must keep the knife in continuous motion forward and backward until the windpipe and gullet are completely cut through. Derasa (pressing the knife). You must gently draw the knife horizontally across the neck of the sacrificial animal. Do not press down! Chalada (passing the knife under cover). Your knife must be drawn over the throat. Every part of the knife must be visible at all times. Hagrama (cutting in a slanting direction). The knife may only be drawn across the area between the large ring in the windpipe to the upper lobe of the lungs when they are inflated. Slaughtering above or below these limits invalidates the slaughter. Ikur (uprooting or tearing loose). If either the windpipe or the gullet is removed or torn from its regular position during the Shechita, the slaughter is invalid. Hey! Are you with me?" The Segan coughed and rolled his eyes heavenward. Not noticing, Naftali went on, "Normally the Shocheit must examine his knife again after slaughtering. If he found a disqualifying notch on his knife, the Shechita was invalid. In addition, the Shocheit must examine the throat of the animal and ascertain that the windpipe and gullet were indeed cut through completely. And of course, the innards and especially the lungs must be thoroughly checked for disqualifying flaws. However, you do not have to worry about that. I will be doing it for you." <to be continued>


from page 3 PARSHA PIX


 The family in the upper-left represents the beginning of Nitzavim that describes all who are standing today before G-d. Included are men, women, and children, and all types of people, including the woodcutter (George Washington, as in the cherry tree) and the water-drawers (Jack & Jill, or is it water fetchers?).


 The family also stands for those who were to participate in HAK-HEL - men, women, and children. HAK-HEL is also represented by the crowned Torah-reader - the king, and by the Torah in the Sukka, in the lower-right.

 The feather writing letters is for the mitzva to write a Sefer Torah. That mitzva is also represented by the open gemara.


 The Xed out moon, planets, and stars is LO BASHAMAYIM HI.


 The acid rain symbol is for the description of the punishment for turning away from G-d.

 The Megila is for the hidden "clue" to Esther in the Torah - HESTEIR PANIM.

 The questioned road signs is the choice of choosing Life or Death, Good or Evil.

 The plant growing a Tzedaka box is from the haftara, referring to G-d, YATZMI'ACH TZEDAKA.

 The Chatan and Kallah under the Chupa is also from the haftara.

 And the chemical expression is sulfur and salt burning...

TTRIDDLES...

are Torah Tidbits-style riddles on Parshat HaShavua (sometimes on the calendar). They are found in the hard-copy of TT scattered throughout, usually at the bottom of different columns. In the electronic versions of TT, they are found all together at the end of the ParshaPix-TTriddles section. The best solution set submitted each week (there isn't always a best) wins a double prize a CD from Noam Productions and/or a gift (game, puzzle, book, etc.) from Big Deal

Last issue's (KI TAVO) TTriddles:

[1] Chester would qualify for both

Chester is a city in England, the seat of Cheshire county, south of Liverpool, on the River Dee. Chester is also an industrial suburb of Philadelphia, in south-east Pennsylvania. It's on the Delaware River (sort of a River D, too. The latter was named for the former. Being cities, Chester represents, in TTriddle terms, BARCH ATA BA'IR. Being the first half of the name Chesterfield, it qualifies for BARUCH ATA BASADEH too. Chesterfield is also a city in England, Idaho, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, South Carolina, a township in New Jersey, a county in Virginia, and neighborhood in West Valley City, Utah, as well as being a single- or double-breasted overcoat, usually with concealed buttons and a velvet collar. And an overstuffed davenport with upright armrests, and an unmentionable item that misguided individuals smoke. Now you know.

[2] A day, A month, All Mitzvot

SHAMOR (with and without the CHOLOM) occurs only 5 times in Tanach - all in the book of D'varim. (This does not include the more common SH'MOR.) Three times, it is all the mitzvot that we are commanded to "guard" or "preserve". Once it is the Shabbat day, and once it is the month of AVIV, the spring, i.e. Nissan.

[3] Connected to all three legs

The mitzva of bringing Bikurim (beginning of Ki Tavo) is connected to each of the SHALOSH REGALIM, the three "legs". Shavuot is the beginning of Bikurim season, so to speak. Bikurim brought until Sukkot is accompanied by the recitation of the Bikurim declaration. And the declaration was borrowed by the editors of the Pesach Hagada, from which we know it well.

[4] Repeated several hours later

Our answer for this is the verse quoted in the introductory mishna to each chapter of Pirkei Avot. All Israel has a share in the World to Come... as it says (in Yeshayahu 60): V'AMEICH KULAM TZADIKIM. The pasuk is found in the haftara of Ki Tavo and we repeat it several hours later when we say/learn Pirkei Avot. HC got that answer (and others) and added another answer to this TTriddle. He correctly observes that the phrase ET KOL DIVREI

HATORAH HAZOT appears seven times in Tanach - all in the book of D'varim. Three times in Ki Tavo and once in the Shabbat afternoon (and Monday and Thursday) reading for Nitzavim. So we repeated it several hours later.

TTriddles prize awarded to HC this week (and many others in the past) for his solutions and additions to some of the TTriddles.

NachKwestion of the Week

Alef-Bets in Tanach and near Alef-Bets

To revisit this old (not that only) NachKestion of a few weeks ago, two TTreaders found another near Alef-Bet in Tanach that we did not include in the report a couple of weeks ago. T'hilim perek 37 is the most erratic of the alphabetical chapters. There are 40 p'sukim in the chapter. The first begins with L'DAVID - to David...then continues AL TITCHAR BAM'REI'IM... There's the ALEF - AL. The initial letters of the following verses follow the ALEF-BET: 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, no AYIN pasuk, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, and no TAV pasuk. Pasuk 39 comes close. Anyway, thank you to our astute TTreaders for this addition.

This week's TTriddles:

- [1] **Big split; this not**
- [2] **Placed before us, in hand of Tongue**
- [3] **indivisibility jibing with it**
- [4] **Beis Midrash Govoah**
- [5] **It might have been at the top anyway**