

We thank you, HaShem our G-d...

With these words (usually in their Hebrew form), we begin the second bracha of Birkat HaMazon. We acknowledge and thank G-d for "giving our forefathers a desirable, good, and spacious land... for Your covenant which You have sealed in our flesh, for Your Torah..." Lest one think that this is a random collection of things to thank G-d for, he need just look at the end of this week's sedra.

Perek 19 begins with Avra(ha)m at age 99. G-d tells him: "Walk before Me and be perfect (TAMIM)." Easier said than done, but G-d tells him what is involved. G-d is going to enter into a covenant - a BRIT - with Avra(ha)m. He changes his name to Avraham and promises him many, many descendants. That said, G-d tells Avraham that the covenant is between Him and Avraham and his descendants - not just Avraham alone. And that's where we come in. So listen up. This covenant will be an ever-lasting covenant. For Avraham and his seed. This is repeated over and over.

G-d's part of the deal is that He will be our G-d. And He will give us the land... ALL the land of Canaan... FOR AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION.

Our part of the covenant is HIT- HALEICH L'FANAI... to be faithful to G-d, to serve Him... we would sum this up as "keep the Torah and Mitzvot".

He causes the descendants of Avraham to propagate. He becomes our G-d. He gives us Eretz Yisrael. We follow Him, His Torah, His commands.

And, as part of the covenant and the sign of the covenant, G-d commands us to circumcise our males.

[Included in the "deal" is that Sara will have a son. That Sara will be the progenitor of a multitude. Subsequently, the promises are repeated to Yitzchak and Yaakov, which makes it clear that it is the Jewish People that is the intended partner with G-d in this EVERLASTING covenant. And this part also includes women in the covenant as well. BRITO SHEL AVRAHAM AVINU is not just for half of the Jewish People - it is for all of us.]

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...

As we enter the rainy season, we must be all the more careful to make sure we say KL, since we will often run into cloudy nights when KL is not to be said.



Kiddush L'vana is said from when the moon begins to "Shine its light on the Earth" (which is understood as not including its first few days when the light is not yet bright). The bracha is appropriate as long as the moon is waxing. When it reaches its fullness and starts to wane, KL is not said anymore.

The fact that the moon will appear full to us for a while after it actually is full, justified some authorities' opinions that KL can be said after the half-way mark. However, the prevailing opinion is that the deadline for KL is the midpoint between the previous and the next molad. This month: Mon. Nov.6, 2:22am.

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Correct for TT 738 • Rabbeinu Tam (l'm) - 6:00pm

4:13pm	Jerusalem	5:24pm
4:29pm	Raanana	5:25pm
4:29pm	Beit Shemesh	5:25pm
4:28pm	Netanya	5:25pm
4:29pm	Rehovot	5:26pm
4:09pm	Petach Tikva	5:25pm
4:28pm	Mod'in	5:25pm
4:30pm	Be'er Sheva	5:27pm
4:28pm	Gush Etzion	5:24pm
4:29pm	Ginot Shomron	5:25pm
4:13pm	Maale Adumim	5:24pm
4:29pm	K4 & Hevron	5:25pm
4:14pm	Tzfat	5:22pm

OTHER Z'MANIM

Correct for Jerusalem
Ranges are FRI-FRI • 12-19 Cheshvan • (Nov 3-10)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:05-5:11am
Sunrise - 5:57-6:03am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 8:39-8:42am (7:54-7:56am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:33-9:36am (9:03-9:05am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:23-11:23am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 11:53-11:53am
Plag Mincha - 3:40-3:36pm
Sunset - 4:53-4:48 (4:48-4:43pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)

Shabbat Shiur 3:15pm Mincha 4:15
Rabbi Binyamin Wolff

Motza'ei Shabbat
see BackPages

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This Shabbat is the 43rd day (of 355) and the seventh Shabbat (of 51) of 5767

וְנִתְּנִי לְךָ וּלְרֵעֶךָ אֲזוּרִיךָ... אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן לְאֻזְוֹת עוֹלָם... בְּרֵאשִׁית י"ח

Torah, Eretz Yisrael, and Brit Mila are acknowledged together - as a package deal - that we reconfirm on many occasions and in many ways - including after every meal. Acknowledging and reconfirming is good, but we must also DO IT ALL. Torah & Eretz Yisrael.



[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 - 13 p'sukim - 12:1-13

[P> 12:1 (9)] G-d tells (note the softer VAYOMER rather than the harsher VAIDABER) Avra(ha)m to leave his land, birthplace and father's home and go to "the Land which I will show you".

Ed. note: In last year's sedra summary for Lech L'cha, VAYOMER was referred to as less frequent, in addition to being softer. This year, we decided to count - with interesting results. Searching only for VAIDABER HASHEM and VAYOMER HASHEM, the totals for the Chumash are an amazing 96 times for each. Comment: none. Just an observation. But there is more: VAIDABER HASHEM EL MOSHE... accounts for 91 of the 96 VAIDABER HASHEMs. VAYOMER HASHEM EL MOSHE, 66. For those who cannot stand statistics, we'll stop here.

SDT "Leave your land, birthplace, father's house." Ramban explains that each "point of departure" was progressively more difficult for Avraham. Leaving one's land is difficult, even more so if he was born there. Leaving one's family is most difficult. Ramban says that the Torah is showing us the great extent of Avraham's love of G-d.

Someone raises a question on this Ramban. What was so difficult in Avraham's leaving the place where he was ridiculed, persecuted and thrown into a fiery furnace for his beliefs. Would he not have left joyfully? The question actually carries the answer. The Ramban was pointing out a significant aspect of human nature. No matter how bad conditions are, how much a person wants a better life, there still will always remain a sadness and regret for the "good old days" and "the old country" - even when they weren't so good. This aspect of human nature explains a lot of Jewish History. (For one example, Jews were expelled from France (at least) three times. And each time they were subsequently invited to return. And they did. Go figure.)

G-d promises that a great nation will descend from him (Avraham) and that he will be a blessing for all (his descendants and all the world).

Avra(ha)m is promised great rewards and benefits for listening to G-d. Yet pasuk 4 states that he went "as G-d had spoken to him". His "aliya" is considered a test of his faith. He passed this test because he came to the Land because G-d asked him to, not for any material promises.

The call to the Jew to come on Aliya continues. THE only real "right" reason to come is because it is a mitzva and this is what G-d wants of us. All blessings that will follow are fringe benefits. And the difficulties one might encounter are parts of the test of our faith. Avraham Avinu led the way when there were no Aliya Shlichim and no Nefesh b'Nefesh to facilitate Aliya and K'lita. Actually, there was One Shaliach Aliya and One supporter, and He is still in that role.

Lech L'cha STATS

3rd sedra of 54; 3rd of 12 in B'reishit
Written on 208 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank 23rd
7 Parshiyot; 3 open, 4 closed
126 p'sukim - ranks 13th - same as R'ei but notably smaller than R'ei in other categories
1686 words - ranks 18th
6336 letters - ranks 19th
Ranks 7th of 12 in B'reishit in all categories
Shorter than average p'sukim

מצוות

1 mitzva (positive), namely, Brit Mila

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.

Avra(ha)m was 75 years old at the time he came to Eretz Yisrael with Sarai, nephew Lot and many people who were brought over to monotheism by Avra(ha)m and Sarai.

[P> 12:10 (29)] Driven from the Land by a famine, Avraham and Sara go down to Egypt. Their plan is to say that they are brother and sister, rather than risk Avraham's being killed.

Midrash P'li'a points to this episode as proof that one may violate Shabbat to save someone else's life. The idea that one may violate one Shabbat so that he will be able to keep many Shabbatot of the future - V'CHAI BAHEM - is part of the understanding of the Torah's permission to violate Shabbat to save one's own life. This permission can be seen to be extended by Avraham's request to Sarah that she put herself at risk to save him.

SDT *Ramban states that "Avra(ha)m sinned a great sin (inadvertently)" by leaving the land to which G-d had sent him (even though there was a famine) and by risking Sarai's life and honor by asking her to say that she was his sister. Ramban also says that as "punishment" for going down into Egypt, Avraham's descendants were destined to go down into Egypt. On the other hand... Other sources teach us that we derive halachic permission to leave Eretz Yisrael in the event of severe famine BECAUSE that's what Avraham Avinu did.*

Furthermore (still on the same other hand), Pirkei Avot testifies that Avraham Avinu "passed" all his "tests of faith". Being driven out of Eretz Yisrael by the famine and having to subject Sarai to the perils of Paro's Palace are both counted (by some) among the Ten Tests of Faith.

A possible answer might be that how a person behaves in a difficult situation is one thing, and how the situation affects his faith in G-d is another thing. G-d sends someone to a new land, and then hits him with a famine. Regardless of how that someone handles the situation, he might be disillusioned, to say the least. That would mean failing a test of faith. That didn't happen to Avraham. His faith was as strong as ever. Ramban thinks that he erred in judgment as to what he should do. Avraham chose the self-help, HISH-TADLUS option. His choice was "approved of" by the subsequent halachic ruling. Maybe he should have chosen the stay-put and trust in G-d option. Ramban thinks he should have. An inadvertent sin, says Ramban. But no deterioration of Avraham's faith. Those are two different issues.

This idea is readily applicable for many of the situations we as a community and/or we as individuals find ourselves in, from time to time, during our lifetimes.

How we handle a situation is one thing and what it does to us is another. Both are important. May G-d give us strength to handle both ends of any difficulties well, and may He spare us the difficulties in the first place. May He always be our OZEIR, MOSHI'A, and MAGEIN.

Levi - Second Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 12:14-13:4

In Egypt, Sarai's beauty is noticed by the people and she is taken to Par'o's palace. Avra(ha)m, as her brother,

receives many gifts. Par'o and his household are afflicted as a punishment for taking Sarai. When Par'o realizes that Sarai is actually the wife of Avra(ha)m he confronts him, returns Sarai to him and then asks them to leave Egypt.

Avra(ha)m and company, heavily laden with riches, return to Eretz Yisrael via the Negev. Avra(ha)m returns to the Altar he had built and continues to proclaim G-d's Name.

SDT *Avraham on the run from his hometown, a stranger in a strange land, has his challenges and tests. Avraham loaded with wealth and prominence, has new challenges and tests. Poverty and famine are tests; so is wealth. And it is hard to know which is harder. In the opening passage of Rosh Chodesh Bentsching, we ask G-d for many things — long life, a life of peace, blessings, etc. There is one thing we ask for twice - Yir'at Shamayim, fear of G-d. Why? Because after asking for it the first time, we ask for a life of wealth and honor. If we are blessed with that, then we must humbly ask for Yir'at Shamayim again, because wealth sometimes blinds a person to his obligations to HaShem.*

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 13:5-18

Lot also has great wealth, too much to remain together with Avra(ha)m. Quarrels between their shepherds (caused by disparate ethical standards) lead to a parting of the ways. Avra(ha)m gives Lot "first choice" of territory, and he (Lot) chooses the then fertile area of S'dom and the Jordan Valley. The Torah makes a point of telling us of the wickedness of S'dom society, an obvious criticism of Lot's distorted priorities.

(This, too, is a recurring theme in Jewish life, containing warnings for us all - sadly, many Jews moved away from Jewish neighborhoods to places with country clubs, golf courses, and other "important" things; often the shuls and schools were far away from their new home...)

Only after Avra(ha)m is rid of Lot, does G-d once again appear to him, encouraging him to look over the whole land to the north, south, east, and west, which will some day belong to his descendants. G-d also tells him that his descendants will be too numerous to count. (Hidden message: They will sometimes be lowly, like the dust of the ground, trodden underfoot by our enemies.)

Avra(ha)m settles in Hevron and builds an altar to G-d.

SDT *One commentary says that although Avraham knew that his spirituality was compromised by Lot's presence, he nonetheless did not chase Lot away until he had no choice. Avraham felt a moral obligation to take care of Lot (including saving him after they parted) even though he knew that G-d was "keeping His distance" with Lot around, so to speak. There are some interesting ramifications for us, of this behavior of Avraham's. How do we view time spend doing chessed and kiruv, or Hachnasat Orchim, at the expense of Torah learning and personal growth. Think about it.*

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 14:1-20

[P> 14:1 (24)] This portion tells of the battle between the Four Kings and the Five Kings and of the capture of the people of S'dom, including Lot. When Avra(ha)m hears (from Og, "refugee" from the Flood) of Lot's capture he sets out to rescue him, taking with him a force of 318.

Rashi refers to the Gemara which suggests that Avraham took only his servant Eliezer with him to rescue Lot. The numeric value of the name Eliezer = 318. As G'matriya go, this is one of many. What makes it unusual, is that Rashi says it and bases it on a number in the text of the Torah.

Avra(ha)m launches a successful surprise attack and frees the people of S'dom. Victory is celebrated with a religious ceremony of thanking and blessing G-d in the presence of Malki-Tzedek (a.k.a. Shem b. Noach). A tithe of the spoils of war is given to this servant of G-d.

Rashi tells us that AMRAFEL, king of Shin-ar is none other than NIMROD who was the one who tossed Avraham into the fiery furnace for challenging polytheism in public and espousing belief in One G-d. Ironic, is it not, that Avraham has this opportunity to do successful battle against Nimrod. Malki-tzedek is king of Shalem. Targum Onkeles identifies Shalem as Yerushalayim. SHALEM is the part of the city's name contributed by Sheim. Avraham gave it the first half of its name after the Akeida – YERU

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 14:21-15:6

The king of S'dom offers Avra(ha)m great wealth. Avra(ha)m refuses to take as much as a "thread or shoelace".

Avra(ha)m did accept payment on behalf of his allies who helped him.

From here we learn, says the Chafetz Chaim, that one who wants to be "machmir" (strict), should accept the strict practice for himself but not impose it on others. Avraham did not want to be a TZADIK at the expense of others.

[S> 15:1 (21)] Afterwards, G-d appears to Avra(ha)m in a vision and again promises him great rewards for his faithfulness. Avra(ha)m, still child- less expresses his disappointment, but resignation, that Eliezer will be his heir. G-d assures Avra(ha)m that he will indeed have his own child to follow in his footsteps.

G-d then takes Avra(ha)m outdoors and promises him that his descendants will be as countless (and exalted) as the stars in the heavens.

The GR"A cites the Talmud's mention- ing that Avraham Avinu was the first person to address G-d as "Adon" (Master). We acknowledge this by beginning Shacharit - Avraham's davening - with the poem Adon Olam. Furthermore, the reference to a thread and shoelace is linked the mitzvot of Talit and T'filin, both of which are also associated with Shacharit.

Being compared to dust and sand and to the stars of the heavens is not just a matter of numerousness, but also to the quality of life. We can be like the dust of the ground - stepped on, trodden upon... Or we can be as lofty, wonderous, grand as the stars of the heavens. The terms reflect the ups & downs of Jewish History.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 37 p'sukim - 15:7-17:6

This portion begins with "the Covenant between the Pieces". (Part of this experience is actual, part is prophetic vision.) G-d tells Avra(ha)m that his descendants will be oppressed in a foreign land and will subsequently leave there with great wealth. The promise of the Land to Avra(ha)m is reiterated once more.

Both Rashi and Onkeles understand the term M'SHULASH/M'SHULESHET to mean that Avraham took three each of calves, goats, and sheep for the BRIT BEIN HA-B'TARIM. Tos'fot and others define the term as "prime, of the best quality". They hold that there was only one each of the animals. Others say the animals were to be thrid-born or three years old or part of a triplet. (from The Living Torah by R' Aryeh Kaplan z"l)

[S> 16:1 (16)] Sarai, being barren, gives her hand-maiden Hagar to Avra(ha)m to bear him a child. When Hagar becomes pregnant, she taunts her mistress. Hagar then flees from Sarai's retaliation. An angel finds her, promises that her child, too, will sire a countless multitude, that her son to be born shall be called Yishmael, and that she is now to return to Sarai.

Yishmael is born when Avra(ha)m is 86 years of age.

[S> 17:1 (14)] When Avra(ha)m is 99, G-d appears to him and asks him to "be complete". G-d changes Avra(ha)m's name to Avraham, symbolizing hiss role as father and spiritual guide to great nations. Once again Avraham is promised "countless" progeny.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 21 p'sukim - 17:7-27

G-d promises that a special relationship will always exist between Himself and Avraham's descendants, and repeats the promise of the Land. G-d reveals the form that the "Covenant" is to take - the circumcision of all males **[2, A215 17:10]**.

Mitzva Watch

This mitzva is the first "non-natural" commandment. Until this point, the 7 categories of Noahide mitzvot are all logical, rational, reasonable, common- sense laws. This 8th mitzva, for the 8th day, represents the challenge to the Jew to rise above nature and complete his spiritual form just as he is being commanded to complete his physical form.

The mitzva is ideally performed on the 8th day,

counting the day on which the baby was born - even if he was born 5 minutes before sunset. Mila may not take place at night. Only an 8th day Mila (as opposed to a Brit that was postponed because of health reasons, for example) can be done on Shabbat. A baby delivered by C-section on Shabbat, will have his Brit on the following Sunday (the baby's 9th day). Due to a technicality based on the analysis of the text in Tazria, only a Brit of a natural birth can take place on Shabbat.

The mitzva of Mila is "repeated" in parshat Tazria. Its specific wording there, teaches us some details. With the two texts dealing with BRIT, it is noteworthy that most mitzva- counters count MILA from LECH L'CHA rather than TAZRI'A. Lech L'cha's context is the story of Avraham Avinu. In Tazri'a we have a straightforward command — Speak to the people of Israel and say to them... on the 8th day, you SHALL circumcise...

Most significantly in the matter of Brit Mila is this: The physical removal of the foreskin is only part of the mitzva of Mila. This can be seen by looking at the brachot that are said for the Brit. The first bracha is AL HAMILA. This bracha is immediately followed by a second Birkat HaMitzva (very unusual to say two mitzva-brachot for the performance of one mitzva), "to enter him into the covenant of Avraham". This is not just a HINENI MUCHAN U'MEZUMAN type of introduction to a mitzva, not a peripheral concept, but an integral part of the mitzva. The challenge of raising the child to be a good Jew and a good person is an obligation of the parents which is part of MILA (we can say) and THE part of the mitzva that takes much more time and energy than "the cut". The context of Lech L'cha says it all. Its choice as the "official source" of the Mila helps us understand this important mitzva.

Note too that when a Mohel does the Mila at the behest of the father, the Mohel says the Mila bracha, but the father nonetheless retains the second bracha (and Shehecheyanu). Parents can use an agent to perform the Mila part of BRIT MILA, but the Brit part remains theirs.

[S> 17:15 (13)] G-d then changes Sarai's name to Sarah. Name changes represent changes in character, role, and destiny. G-d promises that Sarah will bear the true heir of Avraham. Avraham laughs with joy upon hearing that he will be a father at 100, and Sarah a mother at 90. He thought that Yishmael was the son that G-d had repeatedly promised him, but G-d assures him that it will be Yitzchak who will fill that role.

Yishmael will also be blessed and give rise to great nations, but the Covenant will be passed down through Yitzchak.

Avraham circumcises himself at age 99, Yishmael at age 13, and the other male members of his household, in fulfillment of G-d's command.

The last four p'sukim of the sedra are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 21 p'sukim - Yeshayahu - 40:27-41:16

This passage is the national counter- part of some of the personal experiences of Avraham. Just as G-d made promises to Avraham Avinu, so He makes promises to the Children of Israel. Just as Avraham tenaciously clings to faith in G-d, so too do his descendants. Endurance, confidence, victory, self-perfection - these qualities are shared by THE ancestor and his descendants, us.

We can see in the sedra-haftara pair a manifestation of MAASEI AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM, the deeds of the ancestors set the patterns for the their descendants.

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

Lesson 353 (part three)

Jurisdiction of a Beit Din

Flogging

Why is it so important to show what is the jurisdiction of the Beit Din? If we did not know what is the jurisdiction of the Beit Din, no defendant would ever submit to it and all the plaintiffs would not have a court in which to sue the defendant. Also many people do not conceive that Jewish Law, going back thousands of years, is so sophisticated to do all those things that courts throughout the world do in the twenty-first century.

This lesson concerns itself with matters that many of us have heard about but don't fully know, the flogging of persons by the Beit Din. This usually results from a transgression against Hashem. In these situations the, objectives of the Beit Din are expiation and deterrence. Accordingly, the remedial power exercised by the Beit Din, public flogging of the violator, stands in sharp contrast to the previous remedies employed in cases involving private litigants. The Mishna states: "Cases involving flogging [are judged] by three." Flogging refers to the public imposition of 39 lashes, unless it is determined beforehand that the person could not survive that number, in which case a lesser amount divisible by three is given. Rambam in his code, enumerates 207 cases wherein one may be flogged. He introduces this discussion by setting forth several general categories.

1. The following incur the penalty of flogging: one who transgresses a prohibition involving the punishment of excision but not death by the court, as when one eats fat, or blood, or chametz on Pesach; one who transgresses a prohibition carrying with it the penalty of death by divine intervention, as when one eats tevel [grain that has not been properly tithed], or when a kohen while unclean eats of the clean heave offering [t'ruma]; one who transgresses a prohibition involving a tangible action, as when eats meat (cooked) with milk, or wears a garment made of wool and linen, all these are subject to flogging. But a prohibition which does not involve a tangible action, such as tale carrying, revenge taking, grudge bearing, or spreading a false report, does not entail flogging.

2. One who transgresses a prohibition, involving no tangible

action, is not punished by flogging save in the following instances: one who takes an oath and does not fulfill it, one who exchanges a beast set aside for a sacrifice, and one who curses by the Name. Any prohibition that is intended as a warning that the violation thereof involves a death sentence by the court, such as the injunction “Thou shall not commit adultery” and “Thou shall not do any manner of work on the Sabbath”, does not carry with it the punishment of flogging; neither is there flogging for a negative command, the breach whereof renders the offender liable to compensation, such as the injunction “Nor shall you rob him:” and “You shall not steal” Nor its there flogging for a prohibition, such as the injunction “You shall not take the dam with the young” and “You shall not wholly reap the corner of your field.” That is unless it becomes impossible to carry out the act enjoined in the positive command.

One controversial issue regarding flogging is the threshold question of whether the Beit Din actually has jurisdiction to hear these cases and to decree this penalty. There is the opinion in the Mishna that Rabbi Yishmael holds that the court of 23 judges should have jurisdiction over these cases. However, the Talmud and the subsequent codes hold that the Beit Din of three judges hear cases involving the flogging penalty.

The fourth and final jurisdiction of the Beit Din deals with the area of marital law.

Slandering the bride

This case arises only immediately after the marriage. This case of slander does not refer to general concept of defamation law, but rather specifically deals with the situation described in the Torah in which a bridegroom brings a formal charge of unchastity against his bride: “And lay wanton charges against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say... ‘I found not in her the tokens of virginity.’” Three general cases are encompassed by this accusation.

(1) where the husband is the accuser and claims that his bride committed adultery between the time of betrothal and the time of marriage. In Jewish law as practiced in Talmudic times, betrothal bound the couple as husband and wife, save for cohabitation and a few other issues, and the marriage took place some time later. (Under current practice, the official betrothal takes place minutes before the marriage as part of the same ceremony.) Should the allegations of the husband be proved (under the appropriate burden of proof in capital cases) then his wife is put to death. Should he fail to prove the allegation of adultery, the husband must pay a penalty of 100 coins to the father of the bride. In addition the husband is further penalized by being forever deprived of the power to summarily divorce her, as he could have done in ancient practice.

(2) where a husband is the plaintiff and he alleges that his wife was not a virgin at the time of marriage. When the husband raises this allegation, the bride may suffer the loss of half of the amount payable to her under the ketuba. The ketuba, generally payable to the wife upon divorce or upon the husband’s death, provides among other things, for the settlement on the wife of a minimum of 200 coins if she is a virgin and 100 coins if she is not a virgin at marriage. The

husband’s allegation of nonvirginity is accepted by the court even upon his mere assertion without further evidence, and the wife’s ketuba is reduced by 100 coins.

(3) Where the bride’s father is the plaintiff and claims the 100 coins penalty after the husband’s allegation of his bride’s adultery in case (1) has not been proven.

Regarding these three situations, the Mishna sets forth two differing opinions as to which court should have jurisdiction. “Cases involving slander by a court of three; so says Rabbi Meir. But the Sages hold that a case of slander requires a court of 23, since it may involve a capital charge.

There is much discussion in the Talmud regarding how many judges are required. Rambam in his code states: “A case of slander is judged in the first instance by a Lesser Sanhedrin [23 judges] because it may involve capital punishment if the allegation of the husband is proved, in which case the wife is stoned to death. If the husband is not believed because his witnesses were shown to be perjured witnesses and the father comes to court to collect the penalty from the husband, the father’s case is judged by three judges.”

IYH, in the next lesson we shall continue with the jurisdiction of the Beit Din in other marital cases.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in Vol. 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

TANACH

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

Yosef and his Brothers [3]

Yosef’s dreams and their interpretation are cardinal to evaluating the spiritual questions of the brothers selling him and the subsequent unfolding of the story of Am Yisrael and its exile.

The Sages have mixed feelings about dreams and their spiritual value or meaning (Berachot 55a). Some hold that dreams have no effect, being merely expressions of the desires of a person’s heart, others, that their significance lies in the mouth of the interpreter, while some hold that they actually foretell good or bad futures. The Rambam (Hilkhos De’ot 7) clearly states that it is one of the forms of prophecy when G-d appears to the prophet in a dream. We have to relate to the whole episode and its consequences in the light of this view of Yosef’s dreams.

We are told of two dreams and each one of them is different not only in its content but also in its interpretation and reception by the brothers and by Yaakov.

The first dream is of the brothers binding stalks of wheat so that they can be collected into larger sheaves. Yosef describes his bundle arising and those of his brothers bowing to it or as walking around it in homage. All the twelve brothers are working together, so that Yosef, unlike his brothers did not see in it a disruption of the principle of the unity of the Abrahamic family, destined to become a nation. "Not only did his bundle

stand up, showing his rise but the text adds 'and it stood erect', of its own accord, showing that Yosef did not desire his greatness nor that they would confer it on him. Rather it was Divine Providence" (Abarbanel). Sforno sees the standing erect as a reference to the length of his reign, 80 years, which is the longest reign mentioned in the Tanach.

The agricultural scene of harvest and gathering of sheaves is part of the spiritual change envisaged by the Patriarchs. "The evil son in the Haggada asks: 'What is this service to you?' The previous generations, Adam, Sheit, No'ach, Shem and Eiver had sought their service of G-d and His Avoda in withdrawal from the materialism of everyday living. Now the Avot, by their involvement in flocks and herds, by digging wells for water, and by their planting and harvesting, were teaching a new kind of Avoda; that Avodat Hashem concerned the sanctification of materialism not its eradication. Such service the Rasha could not envisage" (Shem MiShmuel).

"The ingathering of the wheat sheaves is in conflict with the usual economic activity of the sons of Yaakov who are repetitively shown in the text as shepherds. To them therefore, the dream showed a radical change from their normal life style and social structure and they hated Yosef for foretelling the demise of their present way of life. This is similar, to the hatred by certain circles before the Holocaust, of the religious Zionists teachings that the physical existence, the lifestyle and institutions of Eastern European Jewry faced destruction and change" (Rabbi Yosef Ber Soloveichik, Boston; Iturei Torah).

The brothers understood that this dream symbolized that Yosef's rule over them would be through their dependence on him for their parnasa. A different perspective was introduced by the second dream, where the sun, the moon and 11 stars bowed down to Yosef. Here there was no more allusion to national unity but a definite reference to spiritual superiority symbolized by the involvement of the heavenly bodies. While the brothers could relate with natural hatred to the idea of being dependent on Yosef for their material sustenance, the idea of his spiritual superiority as symbolized by this second dream, filled them with jealousy. " When the brothers saw that Yaakov taught Yosef a special aspect of Torah, they feared that this meant that like Ishmael and Eisav they were merely the husk that would be cast aside, and so were jealous of him". (Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky).

In introducing his dreams, Yosef uses the form of speech used by many prophets introducing their prophecies. This shows that he did not relate to them merely as flowing from the promptings of his own heart or as reflecting a youthful daydream. If there was any such doubt in his mind, we would find evidence of protest at his mission such as we find with Moshe or Yirmeyahu. "Rather, he was convinced that they were words of prophecy. This explains why he found it necessary to tell them to his brothers, even though he knew full well that telling them would only serve to increase their anger and displeasure. However, not to reveal his dreams would mean transgressing the injunction forbidding a prophet to hide his prophecy" (Vilna Gaon).

From this form of speech, we can also learn that despite their hatred of him, he nevertheless wished to engage them in conversation; either in an attempt to be friendly, which the brothers took as hypocritical (Haamek Davar), or because an uninterpreted dream is like an unopened letter (Berachot 55), or because he wished to remove their hatred by showing them that his prophesied rise was not the result of Yaakov's

favoritism but rather the Will of G-d (Chizkuni), or simply because of his youthful immaturity (Sforno).

Their response to Yosef was: "Would you then be a king [as a result of your sustaining us] or a ruler over us [because of your spiritual superiority]?"

"It is written in Ovadia (1:21): "For the Kingdom is G-d's and He rules over the nations"; G-d is now King of Israel since we accept His Kingship willingly, whereas He rules over the nations forcibly. However it is written in Zecharia (14:9): "G-d will be King for ever"; in that day the whole world will freely choose Him as their King" (Vilna Gaon).

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[1] From the virtual desk of the OU

VEBBE REBBE

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

Q We had a chatan (groom) in shul the week after his wedding, and thus we omitted Tachanun and Av Harachamim, respectively. Someone suggested this was incorrect because the bride and groom had both been previously married. Who is right?

A A minyan omits Tachanun in the presence of a chatan, whether it is held in the chatan's home or he comes to shul (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 131:4). This is because those properly joining the chatan's simcha should make the morose subject matter of Tachanun inappropriate. The Beit Yosef (OC 131) points out that it is possible to omit Tachanun because its recitation is regarded as relatively optional.

Generally, a couple is in a festive state during the shivat y'mei hamishteh (seven days of celebration, commonly called Sheva

Berachot week) (see Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha'ezer 62:6). However, the Rama (Orach Chayim 131:4) says that the chatan eliminates Tachanun only on his wedding day. The Shiyarei Knesset HaGedola (131:16) suggests that the Rama only intended that it does not begin prior to the wedding day but he agrees it lasts beyond. In any case, the minhag is that Tachanun is omitted for the full seven days (ibid; Mishna Berura 131:26).

The issue is that Sheva Berachot is curtailed in the case of those who were previously married (even to others). There are two main elements to the status of the week of Sheva Berachot. First, meals the couple takes part in are considered festive ones, warranting special berachot. Additionally, the husband must remain home from work and provide his wife with an atmosphere of simcha (Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha'ezer 64:1). The berachot are recited when either newlywed is in his or her first relationship. However, regarding a couple both of whom had been married, the berachot are recited for only one day (Ketubot 7a; the discussion of how to count that day is beyond our present scope). Regarding staying home, the period of time is reduced to three days, at least regarding a couple who were both previously married. There is a machloket regarding a man who was never married with a woman who was (Shulchan Aruch, ibid.:2).

So we must ask which element determines the exemption from Tachanun? It is generally agreed that when one of them is in a first relationship there is no Tachanun for seven days, as it is considered the days of festivities, as is evident from the berachot. Regarding both spouses who were previously married, although there is only one day of Sheva Berachot, the fact that they are to be happy together is sufficient to eliminate Tachanun for three days (Mishna Berura, ibid.). Ha'elef Lecha Shlomo (OC 60) explains as follows. The reason that a chatan eliminates Tachanun from an entire shul is that he is like a king. He posits that the comparison is in regards to the fact that the ascent to the new status of each causes his sins to be forgiven, which, as is evident from the gemara, applies even in a later marriage.

Chesed L'Avraham (I, OC 10) takes the comparison to the king differently. The king's special status finds expression in the halacha that he is not able to relinquish his right to be honored. So too a first time couple has an objective status that cannot be relinquished; therefore, the chatan brings the whole congregation along with him. Regarding a second marriage for both, the bride can waive the rabbinically imposed obligation for the chatan to create simcha for her (Rama, EH 64:2). Therefore, in this non-objective state of simcha, the chatan cannot bring others along. He rules then that only if the minyan takes place at the place of celebration would Tachanun be omitted. However, other poskim do not accept the Chesed L'Avraham's chiddush.

In summary, in the case you referred to, Tachanun should have been omitted for three days. When Tachanun is left out, Av Harachamim and Tzidkatcha, at their respective times, follow suit (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 284:7; 292:2).

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

We are all custom-made.

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

Go to the land which I will show you (el ha'aretz asher ar'eka). This means, see the land the way G-d wants you to see it, view it from His perspective. "And they set out to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan." This equates the departure with the arrival: just as they knew what they were leaving so, too, they knew what they were coming to. (Chiba Y'tera).

Canaan was not an unknown country in Avraham's day. The cities of the Jordan plain paid tribute to Kedorla'omer and the other kings long before Avraham arrived, and the matter-of-fact, "and they set out to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan" indicates that there was nothing remarkable about the journey. What distinguished Avraham from all the other migrants of his time was that "Avram went as God commanded him" - infused with the Divine will, enthused by the prospect of seeing what God wished to show him.

Similarly, as explained in Parashat Ki Tavo, the pilgrim who brought Bikurim had to make two separate statements. The first: "I have come to the country that G-d swore to our fathers to give us," and the second: "... G-d brought us here, and gave us this country flowing with milk and honey." When recounting G-d's goodness in the second statement, the pilgrim mentioned milk and honey. But when speaking about himself in the first statement, he mentioned only "the country that G-d swore to our fathers." He wasn't motivated by milk and honey but by the desire to receive what G-d had promised.

People come on Aliya for many reasons. Is G-d's will foremost among them?

Rabbi Yehuda Henkin, 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] Wisdom & Wit

Once, when R' Simcha Zissel of Kelm was already a very old man and had great difficulty walking, he had gone quite a distance from his home when he asked the young man accompanying him to come back with him to his home. "Rebbe," said the young man, "I know it's difficult for you to walk back. Let me go back to the house for you and fetch whatever you need. You can wait for me here." R' Simcha Zissel, though, insisted on walking back with him.

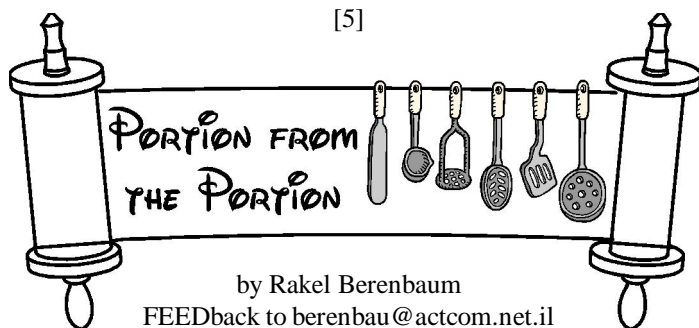
When he came home, he went to his wife and apologized to her profusely, because - unlike his standard practice on leaving his home - this time he had forgotten to say goodbye to her.

#####

When the Gaon of Vilna went to the local bathhouse, he would

make a point of entering as soon as possible and not stand in the doorway. He reasoned that if he kept the door open for any length of time, the heat in the bathhouse would be dissipated, and that would be tantamount to theft from the community.

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



The birds, however, he did not split

In chapter 15 we are told about the "pact between the halves - BRIT BEN HABETARIM", the covenant that G-d makes with Abraham, promising him children and the land of Israel. As a sign of this pact Abraham is told to bring "a prime heifer, a prime goat, a prime ram, a dove and a young pigeon... He split the heifer, goat and ram in half, placing one half opposite the other, but the birds he did not split." Rashi says that this was the way people made covenants. There is a hint in the closely related words of BRIT (covenant) and BATAR (split). It symbolized that just as the two halves of the animal were really one, so to were the two parties making the agreement. Also, just as one side of the animal cannot live without the other side, so the two making the pact can not live without each other (Ralbag). It was also seen as a warning: anyone violating the oath would be ripped apart like the animals (Bachya).

So why didn't Abraham split the birds? Rashi brings verses where these animals are used to refer to the nations of the world and others where birds refer to the nation of Israel. Hashem hints to Abraham that the nations of the world will eventually be split apart like the heifer, goat and ram, but Israel will remain whole throughout history.

Cornish hens with sweet potato

These small birds are served whole.

- 1 kilo sweet potato, squash, or pumpkin
- 3 (500g each) Cornish hens
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 cup apple cider or apple juice
- 1/2 cup pitted prunes (100 g)
- 2 (3-inch-long each) cinnamon sticks

Preheat oven to 190°C.

Cut sweet potato.

Remove giblets and necks from Cornish hens; they can be used to make soup. Rinse and drain hens.

Lift wings toward neck, then fold them under back of hens so they stay in place. With string, tie legs of each hen together. Place hens, breast-side up, in roasting pan; rub with salt and pepper. Put sweet potato in pan around the hens.

Bake for 30 minutes. Add apple cider, prunes, and cinnamon sticks. Bake 45 minutes longer, basting with pan juices occasionally, until sweet potato is tender and juices run clear when fork is inserted between leg and body cavity of hens.

Another "vort" on the parsha:

On the words "LECH LECHA - walk away from your home", Rashi says "LECHA, for your pleasure and for your good." Avraham's leaving home to walk to the Holy Land was for his own good and the good of his descendants. We have an opportunity to follow in the path of Avraham and walk for ourselves and the benefit of others.

Come join us on the 3rd annual "DON'T FORGET US" Walkathon which will benefit people suffering from Alzheimer's disease. See beautiful parts of Israel, meet nice people and do a mitzva. For more information about walking, or sponsoring a walker, such as myself see www.friendsofmelabev.com --RB

[6] Parsha Points to Ponder

LECH L'CHA

1) Why does the Torah teach that Avraham left his home town in 12:4 and then repeat this same point in the very next verse?

2) Why does the Torah state that Avraham and his family both LEFT TO GO TO ERETZ CANAAN and that THEY ARRIVED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN? (12:5)

3) Why does the Torah list slaves and maid servants in the midst of listing other animals when listing the property which Avraham accumulated in Egypt? (12:16)

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) The Ohr HaChayim teaches that in 12:4 the Torah wants to show us how Avraham left his home town without any hesitation the moment G-D finished the command to do so. (It also mentions Lot following Avraham since he did so immediately as well because of his close connection to Avraham.) After capturing that idea by reporting that he left right away, the Torah returns back to describe the details of his trip as it would have without that first interrupting verse.

2) The Chafetz Chayim answers that the Torah is teaching that once Avraham put his mind to going to Eretz Canaan, he made sure that he actually arrived in Canaan. This is in contrast to his father, Terach, who left to go to Canaan (11:31) but paused along the way and never made it there. The eternal message,

says the Chafetz Chayim, is that once a person decides to go to the Land of Canaan (Eretz Yisrael) one must make sure to actually get there and not get caught up in other pursuits.

3) Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky offers two explanations for this peculiarity. First he suggests that the gentiles at that time engaged in bestiality (see Avoda Zara 22a) and, therefore, they gave Avraham slaves together with the donkeys and camels specifically for this purpose. He also suggests that whereas cattle, sheep, and donkeys were viewed as assets, donkeys and camels were owned for the work which they performed. To display this point, the donkeys and camels were grouped together with the slaves and maid servants who also served this function.

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", just re-published by Feldheim ppp@israelcenter.co.il

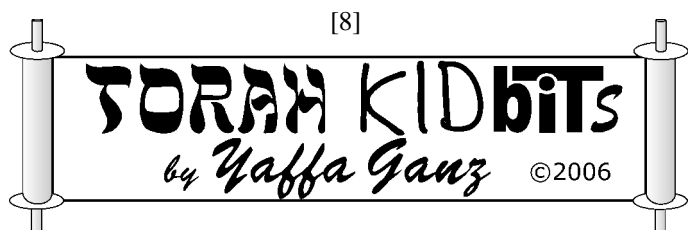
[7] Torah from Nature:

"New" mammals

Late 19th century zoologists confidently stated there were no further large animals left to discover in the world. The 20th century proved this false, with such mammals as the Okapi, Mountain Gorilla, Kouprey, Giant Forest Hog, Bonobo, Iriomote Cat, and Giant Muntjac becoming known to science, to name just a few. 21st century is proving to be no less remarkable, with a host of new species named.

Kouprey

a wild forest dwelling ox found mainly in northern Cambodia... Vietnam... discovered in 1937... very large ungulate, males stand up to 2m tall at the shoulder and weigh as much as 1700kg... large but narrow bodies, long legs and humped backs... grey, dark brown or black. The horns of the female are lyre-shaped... eating grass in the open at night and under the forest cover during the day... estimated to be less than 250 kouprey left in the world. - From Wikipedia



A new Torah Tidbits column with a Parshat HaShavua insight geared towards the young reader... or their parents and grandparents to read to them.

LECH L'CHA...

And G-d said to Avram: Go out by yourself - out of your land, your birthplace, your father's house, to the land which I shall show you. I shall make you into a great nation; I shall bless you, all the families of the earth will be blessed through you.

What a whopping promise! It's the first promise Hashem makes to Avram and to his children - the future Jewish People - who don't even exist yet! How

would you like to receive a promise like that?

But before he can receive this blessing, Avram has to do something very difficult. He must leave his home, his city, his family and go far away, to an unknown place.

It wasn't as if he could just hop into the family car, fill up on gas, open a map and go out for an afternoon drive. Avram was elderly - seventy-five years old - and traveling was difficult and dangerous. It took time. And how can you go someplace if you don't know where the place is? And how could he ever become a great nation if by the age of seventy-five he still didn't have any children?

Like No'ach before him, Avram didn't ask any questions. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, his animals and servants and set out towards the east, in the direction of Canaan. He knew that G-d would show him exactly where to go and what to do. And when he arrived at the land of Canaan, even though the Canaanites were idol worshippers who did not believe in G-d, Avram understood that this was the place Hashem wanted him to be.

Avram went straight to Shechem, an important city right in the center of the country. It was there that G-d appeared to Avram and made His second momentous, eternal promise - To your children shall I give this land! (Remember - Avram didn't have any children yet!) On the very spot where that promise was made, Avram built an altar to thank Hashem. It was the first of many altars Avram's future children - the Jewish people - would build in Eretz Yisrael. (You can bet the Canaanites weren't too happy about this!)

G-d commanded Avram to leave his old country, birthplace and his father's house so that He could give him a new and holy land, "birthplace", home. Avram became Avraham; Sarai became Sarah; and Canaan became the Land of Israel - the eternal home and heritage of Am Yisrael - the Children of Avraham.

That's us!

[9] Divrei Menachem

Parshat Lech L'cha is all about making choices in life. First and foremost Avra(ha)m chose to go to an unknown country on Hashem's command - the first of many tests of faith. By doing so, our forefather gave up his past and his family for the uncertainty of living as a stranger in an alien environment, the initial step in the fulfillment of our national destiny.

Among his other worthy characteristics, Avra(ha)m clearly demonstrates that his choices are steeped in morality, and that what he achieves should, more than anything, result in a Kiddush Hashem, the sanctification of G-d's name.

Thus when Avra(ha)m rescued his nephew Lot (among others) from the hands of Sodom's enemies, he refused to take, "even so much as a thread to a shoe strap," from the King of Sodom, lest the latter should say that he made Avraham rich. What a lesson for so many of our so-called political leaders!

In contrast, we, the rank and file, can learn from Lot what not to do. For when Avra(ha)m offers his nephew the option to choose his own pastures, Lot opts to take the most fertile

territory, even though its inhabitants were the cruelest and most corrupt. And when we later learn of Lot's eagerness to cede his daughters to the local people - "to do to them as you please" (B'reishit 19:8) - we clearly see the corroding effect of associating with those who believe that they are above the Law.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

The Audible HEI

A HEI with a vowel sounds like an H.

HEI without a vowel, both at the end of a word or in the middle - is silent. Like an ALEF. Not heard at all.

HEI with a MAPIK (dot) in it, occurs only at the end of a word, and is heard. HEI with a SH'VA under it - the SH'VA is always NACH and the HEI is sounded - exactly as if it had a MAPIK in it. In Lech L'cha, VEH-YEI, LIH-YOT

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.

Hygros ben Levi Goes Public!

I entered the Mikdash Compound through the Eastern Gate and crossed the always-crowded Ezrat Nashim to the 15 semi-circular stairs that led to the Nicanor Gate. I had been assigned by my paper to interview the sometimes-elusive Hygros ben Levi who "was over the singing" in the Mikdash. Located on both sides of the Nicanor Gate, the well-ventilated underground Lishkot HaShir consisted of a rabbit warren of store rooms for the musical instruments used by the Meshoririm, the Levi Choir, workshops where the Mikdash luthiers and other craftsmen worked, some insulated music rooms and, last but not least, the spacious office of Hygros ben Levi, director of the Meshoririm. I recalled the Mishna, "And there were rooms underneath the Ezrat Yisrael which opened into the Ezrat Nashim (further to the east). There [in these rooms], the Leviyim stored their harps, lyres, cymbals and all other types of musical instruments" (Midot 2:6). As today, in the days of Bayit Sheini, the two entrances to the Lishkot HaShir were adjacent to the Nicanor Gate. When I arrived, an aide of the choirmaster welcomed me warmly, offered me a chair, and requested that I make myself comfortable. The choirmaster would only be a couple of minutes. The Leviyim had already finished singing Shira Shel Yom and were returning to the Lishkot HaShir. A few minutes later, Hygros ben Levi himself appeared, and, opening the door to his massive office, invited me in. He started the interview by pointing to a glass display case that contained a number of antique instruments; they were magnificent. And on his

massive desk was a dazzling Chatzrotzra – a trumpet.

"This Chatzrotzra which we use is a narrow bore trumpet and therefore it produces a brighter, more penetrating sound than the conventional instrument. In fact, all our Klei Neginah are special, nevertheless, as important as musical accompaniment is for our choir, it is the human voice that is the Ikar. The 'Leviyim, who were the singers – Asaf, Heman and Yedutun and their sons and brothers – arrayed in fine linen, with symbols and lyres and harps...' participated in the festivities that surrounded the dedication of Bayit Rishon. In Bayit Sheini, the question arose whether the omission of the vocal singing and accompanying music invalidated the Temidin. The Sages ruled that the Leviyim's voices were sufficient even if they were not accompanied by musical instruments. Note Arakhin 11a. On Shabbat, the Leviyim sang, but were not accompanied by musical instruments. The vocal singing was considered an Avoda and therefore was permissible on Shabbat; the instrumental accompaniment was not an Avoda and therefore was not permissible on Shabbat (Sukka 50a/b). For this reason, while we do not neglect our musicians, we place particular emphasis on the quality of our singers. Remember how the righteous Chezkiyahu HaMelech restored the Beit HaMikdash to Divine service after it was desecrated in the days of Ahaz his father. II Divrei Hayamim (29:25–30) relates how this worthy king 'set the Leviyim in the House of the Lord with cymbals, lyres and harps...' The Leviyim did not only play musical instruments but also 'sang praises with gladness.'"










Sipping some freshly squeezed orange juice, Hygros ben Levi leaned back in his chair and continued, "Choral singers vary greatly in their ability and performance. Our best choral singers and musicians – and our Meshoririm are the best in the world – must possess (among others) the following abilities:

- to sing or play precisely in tune and with a pleasing vocal "timbre" or quality which blends with the other singers;
- to sing or play at precisely controlled levels of volume, matching the dynamics and expression marked in the score or prescribed by me as conductor, and not sing so loudly as to be markedly detectable as an individual voice;
- to sight-read music fluently;
- to sing or play solo passages when required;
- to thoroughly memorize the music, and thus be able to keep eyes on me.
- to remain completely alert for long periods, monitoring closely what is going on either in a rehearsal or in the Azara;
- to accept direction for the good of the group, even when the singer disagrees esthetically with the instructions;
- to be punctual and arrive consistently on time, mentally and physically prepared to sing and play."


"The most important thing is for everyone to remember – and make sure that you emphasize this in your forthcoming article – is that we are not entertainers; our Shira is an indispensable and integral part of the Avoda of the Beit HaMikdash! Know before Whom you stand or in our case, know before Whom you sing or play your musical instrument! We do not go on tour as other choirs do. If I told you the astronomical sums we've been offered to appear at various music festivals abroad, you wouldn't believe me. Absolutely staggering, staggering, staggering!"


“You know that a great number of composers have written choral works. However, composing instrumental music is in many ways different from composing vocal music. The requirements of including text, making it intelligible and catering to the special capabilities and limitations of the human voice makes composing vocal music in some ways more demanding than composing instrumental music. Due to this difficulty, many composers have never composed choral music. However, the greatest composers of them all, David HaMelech and the other inspired composers of T'hilim did not shrink from this daunting task. Tehillim are ideal for vocalists accompanied by instrumental music and the singing is in the antiphonal method.” Mystified, I asked for an explanation. Assuming a professorial air, Hygros ben Levi pontificated, “One group of Meshoririm sings a line to which the second group of Meshoririm responds. This is facilitated by the extreme ‘parallelism’ of T'hilim. ‘Parallelism’ can take a number of forms. Perhaps the most common form of the antiphonal method is ‘synonymous’, where the same thought is expressed in different ways. I’ll give you an example. “Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell upon Thy holy mountain?” (15:1) Then there is the ‘antithetic’ method where the thought is reinforced by means of contrast, ‘For the Lord regardeth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish’ (1:6). Finally, there is the ‘synthetic’ method where the thoughts build up to a crescendo. “Happy is the man that (a) hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, (b). nor stood in the way of sinners, (c) nor sat in the seat of the scornful...” (1:1). Everything has a structure!” I thought, I’ll never listen to the Meshoririm sing Shir Shel Yom the same way again.


from page 3 PARSHA PIX

-  Arrow from the birthday stuff into Eretz Yisrael is Lech L'cha... MiMoladt'cha - go from your birthplace to the Land...
-  Arrows from Eretz Yisrael to the south-west and back again is the round trip to & from Egypt.
-  The compass on the outline of the map is G-d's instructions to Avraham to walk the Land, its length and breadth, and in all directions.
-  Arrows branching in opposite directions was Avraham's offered choice to Lot when they separated. If you go left, I'll go right...
-  Avraham's oath before the king of S'dom, that he would not even take a thread of a shoelace.
-  Telescope and stars stand for G-d's taking Avraham outside to see the stars and to promise that his descendants will be as countless as the stars of the heavens.
-  The crowns represent the war of the five kings against the four.
-  The father with his little son represents Brit Mila, the only mitzva of Taryag in the sedra. By the way, BRIT is numerically 612, making it equal to all the other mitzvot (besides itself).
-  There is the tent that Avraham pitched a few times in the

sedra (not really a good representation, because it seems to have only one entrance.)

 Representation of Brit Bein HaB'tarim, with each split animal accompanied by a triangle, standing for the adjective M'SHULASH or M'SHULESHET. The bird at the top was not cut. See the Sedra Summary for details.

 Tucked in towards the upper-right corner of the ParshaPix is a liver, as in KAVEID (in Hebrew), a word meaning "heavy" and applied in Lech L'cha to the famine as well as to Avraham's wealth.

 Anvil, hammer, nails are from the haftara.

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 (No'ach) TTriddles:

[1] After the flood, No'ach went out to see the world

This one was a challenge to make, since we've used the idea before, more than once. But package it with a new-sounding TTriddle and hopefully it works once again. Here is a restatement of the TTriddle, with crucial extra words in parentheses to give the answer: After (reading about) the Flood (in Parshat) No'ach, (we read a haftara made up of the two haftarot of Parshat Ki Teitzei, that is) WENT OUT (and of Parshat R'ei, that is) TO SEE. (The words "the world" don't really help; they just seemed to be needed to complete the wording of the TTriddle.)

[2] It went and they returned at the same time

MIKETZ ARBA'IM YOM - at the end of 40 days. These words appear three times in Tanach (all in the Torah). In Parshat No'ach, it was the raven who went (was sent) by No'ach in his first attempt of the water recession test. They returned, refers to the Meraglim, who returned to the people after 40 days of scouting out the land of K'naan. It was also at the end of 40 days and 40 nights, Moshe Rabeinu tells the people, that G-d gave him the Luchot to bring to the people. This last occurrence of the phrase is not part of the TTriddle.

[3] they might have the same yearzeit

According to a Tradition, the Flood was held up for the seven day mourning period for Metushelach. The Flood began on the 17th day of the second month, which was likely Cheshvan (rather than Iyar, which became known as the second month only after the Exodus). If we apply today's standard practice of getting up from Shiva in the morning of day seven, then Metushelach might have died on the 11th of Cheshvan. So did Rachel Imeinu. Therefore they (Metushelach and Rachel) might have the same yearzeit - 551 years apart.

[4] Motza"Sh: Speaking of this morning's sedra...

A simple one. Another reminder to say TAL UMATAR beginning on Motza'ei Shabbat, the eve of the 7th of Cheshvan. Speaking of this morning's Torah reading, which contained the account of the Flood, we ask for dew and rain LIVRACHA, for a blessing.

[5] When he has this, there is no yibum

This is another example of a TTriddle we've done many times before and repackaged for this year's turn. When he (that is, a man who dies without children) has this - NO ACH, no brother, then there is no YIBUM.

Among the other ways to ask the same question (actually, a different question, to get the same answer) is: What's the connection between B'NOT TZ'LOFCHAD and this sedra? Answer: NO ACH.

[6] T-43

"The T-43 is a modified Boeing 737-200 used by the US Air Force. Delivered during 1973 and 1974, the primary mission of the T-43 is as a flying classroom for Navigator training. It has stations onboard for twelve navigator students, six instructors, as well as pilot and co-pilot. See what happens when 737 is not anyone's areacode?

[7] When total opposites go on a date together

the TTriddle that got away - The Flood and beginning of drought, both connected to 17 Cheshvan (date)

NachKwestion of the Week

Fill in the first word with as many words as appropriate:

_____ Sh'leima

Refu'ah Sh'leima and Geula Sh'leima are probably the two best known 2-word phrases with the second word being Sh'leima. But take a look at Amos 1:6 and 1:9 where the term GALUT SH'LEIMA occurs.

In the Torah we find the command to keep and use honest measures, with reference to EVEN SH'LEIMA (a complete weighing stone - breaking a piece off a weighing stone and weighing produce to sell to someone, will result in cheating the customer), and EIFA SH'LEIMA, a complete measure for volume (for flour, etc.) Mishlei puts it well: Cheating (false) scales are an abomination to G-d; and a complete (honest) weighing stone is His desire (Mishlei 11:1).

That's it for Tanach, but davening brings us some more phrases. In the Amida we ask G-d to bring us back in T'SHUVA SH'LEIMA, complete repentance. In Birkat HaMazon, we ask to be blessed with B'RACHA SH'LEIMA, complete blessing. And in Rambam's 13 Principles, we declare that we believe B'EMUNA SH'LEIMA, with complete faith. In the Amida of Shabbat Mincha, we speak of MENUCHA in many beautiful ways, including MENUCHA SH'LEIMA, complete rest. In Kri'at Sh'ma al HaMita, we refer to MITATI SH'LEIMA, lit. a complete bed. Similar reference is found in one of the Shabbat day Z'mirot. More to come in further issues of TT. We'll announce prize-winners for this NK too.

[8] More 5, 7, 6, 7

We will report on this one too in future issues, IY"H. Some solvers are into the 70s already, although they are using more symbols (the statement of the challenge allows that) than most people know about.

This week's TTriddles:

[1] Also with Chizkiyahu HaMelech

[2] POT: this Shabbat morning and Shavuot

[3] Avraham needed Mayin Acharomin

[4] mentioned before his father