

שבת פרשת יתרו  
**752**  
 שנת ה'תשס"ז



ל"ו

כ"ב שבט תשס"ז • Feb. 9-10, '07

This Shabbat is the 141st day (of 355) and the 21st Shabbat (of 51) of 5767

וּבָאוּ כָל־אֵלֶּם בְּבְרִית יְחִיד, נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע אָמְרוּ כְּאֶחָד "יום שבתון"

# Remember the Shabbat anew

ZACHOR - remembering the Shabbat - is more than saying Kiddush on Friday night in davening and with wine at the dinner table, and as it leaves with Havdala in davening and with wine, spices, and candle. Those are the primary way of fulfilling the mitzva of "remembering" Shabbat, but Chazal described many other ways that we remember, honor, and enjoy Shabbat. Some of those ways are considered included in the Torah's mitzva of ZACHOR, and others "belong" to the Rabbinic dimensions of KAVOD and ONEG, honor and enjoyment.

Perhaps there is also another way that we should include in our "Shabbat observance" - appreciating the Shabbat. And this appreciation of Shabbat should not be a one-time thing, nor even an every-week thing that just repeats itself week after week. Our appreciation should be dynamic, not static. It should grow and vary as we grow and vary. Let's start the process of remembering Shabbat

anew, appreciating the wonderful gift and treasure that G-d has given us by pondering the following:

Our first introduction to Shabbat is as the concluding act of the Creation of the World. We recite the passage from the beginning of B'reishit 2 in our silent Amida of Leil Shabbat, we then repeat it as a congregation, and then we introduce Kiddush at the table with that same passage. And we call Shabbat a ZEICHER L'MAASEI V'REISHIT, a reminder of Creation.

goto p.3



Correct for TT 752 • Rabbeinu Tam (J'm) - 6:34pm

<b>4:44pm</b>	Jerusalem	<b>5:59pm</b>
5:00pm	Raanana	6:00pm
5:00pm	Beit Shemesh	6:00pm
5:00pm	Netanya	6:00pm
5:01pm	Rehovot	6:00pm
4:44pm	Petach Tikva	6:00pm
5:00pm	Modi'in	5:59pm
5:02pm	Be'er Sheva	6:01pm
5:00pm	Gush Etzion	5:59pm
4:59pm	Ginot Shomron	5:59pm
4:44pm	Maale Adumim	5:58pm
5:00pm	K4 & Hevron	5:59pm
4:47pm	Tzfat	5:56pm

In the Wolinetz Family Shul  
 OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)  
 Shabbat Shiur 3:45pm • Mincha 4:45pm  
**Dr. David Luchins on Yitro**  
 Motza'ei Shabbat 8:30pm  
**HOWIE KAHN SING ALONG**

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# OTHER Z'MANIM

Correct for Jerusalem

Ranges are FRI-FRI  
21-28 Shvat • (February 9-16)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:36-5:30am
Sunrise	6:28-6:21am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma	9:10-9:07am (Magen Avraham: 8:24-8:22am)
Sof Z'man T'fila	10:04-10:02am (Magen Avraham: 9:34-9:32am)
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:53-11:53am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:24-12:24pm
Plag Mincha	4:12-4:16½pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 5:19-5:25pm)	5:24-5:30pm

## Word of the Month

Let's have a preview of the upcoming ARBA PARSHIYOT, the four special Shabbatot on which a special Maftir and Haftara is read. The ones that take place in and slightly before Adar. cont. p. 3

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Phil Chernofsky • (02) 566-7787 ext. 207  
 tt@ouisrael.org • www.ou.org/torah/tt

Advertising: Ita Rochel  
 ttads@ouisrael.org • (02) 566-7787 ext. 204  
 TT Distribution • ttdist@ouisrael.org • 0505-772-111

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 Menachem Persoff, Director of Programs, Israel Center  
 Phil Chernofsky, Educational Director and TT editor

22 Keren HaYesod • POB 37015 • Jerusalem 91370  
 phone: (02) 566 7787 • fax: (02) 561-7432  
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## Lead Tidbit cont.

Our next encounter with Shabbat is in connection to the MN (mahn, manna) in Parshat B'shalach. Because the people were given some command of Shabbat at this point, and they were taught about the significant difference between Shabbat and the rest of the week, we are able to say/sing in Dayeinu, that had G-d given us the Shabbat and not (yet) brought us near Har Sinai, we would have sufficient cause (one understanding of the term DAYEINU) to acknowledge and thank Him.

Yet it was not only on the way to Sinai that we were taught of Shabbat. Shabbat is one of the "Big Ten". In fact, the Shabbat commandment takes up almost a third of the whole Aseret HaDibrot, with 203 letters of the 620 - the Avoda Zara command has 185.

That's not all! In next week's sedra of Mishpatim, we meet Shabbat again, this time with the positive command to abstain from melacha - this being the definition of resting on Shabbat.

We will further encounter the Shabbat as we journey through the Torah, in connection with the Mikdash, in more than a few contexts.

And a significant body of Shabbat practices (both what we do and what we don't) are derived from the presentation of Shabbat in the Navi (Yeshayahu).

Add to all of the above a rich treatment of Shabbat in Rabbinic literature throughout the generations and it behooves us to do more than "merely" keep the Shabbat. We must savor it and appreciate anew its many facets.

## Word of the Month cont.

*A weekly Torah Tidbits feature to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby enhancing our appreciation of G-d's gift to Am Yisrael of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...*

The Arba Parshiyot (4P) always span 5 or 6 Shabbatot. In other words, there is always one or two Hafsakot within the weeks of the 4P. Sh'kalim is the Shabbat of or before Rosh Chodesh Adar (the second Adar when there are two). This year, Sh'kalim falls on the 29th of Sh'vat, Erev Rosh Chodesh, Parshat Mishpatim. The following Shabbat is a Hafsaka - 6 Adar, T'ruma only. Then comes T'tzaveh and Zachor on the 13th, followed by Para (Ki Tisa) on the 20th, and HaChodesh on 27 Adar with Vayakhel-P'kudei. This year's arrangement of the 4P is one of four possible arrangements (a result of the Lo AD"U ROSH rule for Rosh HaShana) and is coded BET-VAV, meaning when the first of Adar is on Yom BET, Monday, then there will be a break in the 4P on VAV (6) Adar.

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## Yitro STATS

16th of 54 sedras; 4th of 11 in Shmot

Written on 215.33 lines in a Torah, ranks 17

14 parshiot; 9 open, 5 closed

116 p'sukim - ranks 23rd (6th in Sh'mot)

1681 words - ranks 19th (4th in Sh'mot)

6423 letters - ranks 18th (4th in Sh'mot)

## MITZVOT

B'SHALACH contains a single mitzva of the 613, the prohibition of leaving one's Shabbat boundary - T'CHUM SHABBAT (T'chum Shabbat's membership in the family of Taryag is disputed - details in MitzvaWatch)

## 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 - 12 p'sukim - 18:1-18

[P> 18:1 (27)] Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, hears "all that has happened" to the Children of Israel and comes to Moshe with Tzipora and Moshe's (actually, Tzipora's - that's how the Torah describes them!) two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. Moshe, Aharon, and the Elders welcome Yitro with great honor. Yitro praises G-d for all that He has done for the People.

**SDT** *The straight reading of this portion indicates that Yitro heard about the Crossing of the Sea and of the battle with Amalek. These are the events recorded in the previous sedra. Other commentaries point to certain textual references about Sinai and are of the opinion that Yitro came after Matan Torah, sometime during the almost one year that the People remained camped near Sinai. If this is so, then we have an example of "there is no set order in the Torah's account of what happen(ed/s)". And we can add the events of Sinai to the list of what Yitro "heard and came".*

VAYICHAD YITRO, Yitro was delighted with all of the good that G-d had done for the people of Israel. That's the "plain" meaning of the word. Rashi mentions another possible meaning of the word - of the skin breaking out in "goosebumps",

perhaps a subconscious feeling of mortification for the downfall of his former colleagues. One has to be sensitive and careful with what one says to a convert or potential convert.

## Levi - Second Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 18:13-23

On the following day, Yitro observes Moshe judging the People from morning until night. He offers suggestions for a more efficient system. Moshe should teach the People what G-d requires of them, and he should also handle the most difficult questions and disputes. But the bulk of the daily judging should be assigned to qualified individuals who will be in charge of groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand people. Yitro explains that this new system will not only make things easier for Moshe, but the people too will be benefited.

(This portion of the sedra definitely seems to have occurred after Matan Torah, even if you want to say that Yitro's original arrival was before.)

**SDT** *"On the following day..." The plain meaning would be, on the day following Yitro's arrival. Rashi, however, quotes the Midrash in saying that the day was the morrow of Yom Kippur, that first Yom Kippur when Moshe came down from the mountain with the second set of Luchot. This makes an important statement, that not only is building the Mishkan an essential part of the "getting back to life following the Golden Calf disaster" period, but so is the every day social and civil functioning of the people.*

*In the big picture, we see that Parshat Yitro with the main description of Matan Torah precedes Mishpatim with its mundane, everyday, down-to-earth laws. Yet at the beginning of Yitro, we find this out-of-sequence portion of the Mishpatim-related concept. And at the end of Mishpatim, we have the rest of the story of Maamad Har Sinai. So which really comes first - the lofty, spiritual dimensions of Judaism, or everyday life? We can (and should) look at it as a package deal.*

However you look at the first part of the sedra, the story of Yitro seems to be an interruption between the events of the Exodus and the Splitting of the Sea on the one hand, and Matan Torah on the other. But it is definitely NOT an interruption - it is a pre-requisite for Matan Torah. Moshe's view of the judging process, as he explains to Yitro who asks him what he's doing, is that the people come to him LIDROSH ET HA'ELOKIM, to seek G-d. Yitro's point is that there is a lack of civility among the disputing individuals which must be handled BEFORE they can pursue Knowledge of G-d. This interlude about civil justice can teach us that good interpersonal relations allows us to really benefit from Matan Torah. Similarly, DERECH ERETZ KODMA LATORAH.

**SDT** *Here's another way of looking at the "Yitro intro" to Matan Torah. Perhaps the Torah is telling us how to relive the experience of Matan Torah in our own lives. Its suggestion is "be like a convert". Take a fresh view of Jewish life. Marvel at all*

*the things that G-d has done for Bnei Yisrael. Don't take things for granted. Approach your Judaism like Yitro did. Even if you are a Jew by birth, work on being a Jew by choice. G-d put the dramatic stories of the birth of the nation on hold, to let us take a close look at someone who doesn't have the Mountain poised above his head. Besides, Matan Torah was the mass conversion of a family-based group that is attaining nation-hood. But the individual still counts. This we can learn from Yitro, the individual.*

## Shlishi - Third Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 18:24-27

Moshe accepts Yitro's suggestions and selects the judges. Commentaries point out that the actual qualifications of the judges that Moshe selected were more "modest" than Yitro had recommended. In theory, the very highest caliber person should be sought after as judge. In reality, we often have to settle for the best we can find in our society.

Moshe sends Yitro off on his journey to Midyan (to convert his family, says Rashi).

Notice that the first three Aliyot are all part of a single parsha, the parsha of Yitro (not to be confused with weekly Parshat Yitro). Pull that parsha out of the Torah for a moment (don't worry, we'll put it back), and the next thing we read about is Israel traveling from Refidim towards Sinai. This follows smoothly from the battle with Amalek which took place in Refidim. Sequentially, the removed parsha of the Yitro episode is not missed at all. Therefore, it seems obvious that the Yitro portion is there for its lesson value alone. Which is fine, and is how we understand the EIN SEDER MUKDAM U'M'UCHAR BATORAH phenomenon. The Torah is not just going to put things out of chronological order for no good reason.

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 6 p'sukim - 19:1-6

*Here begins the Torah reading for Shavuot morning.*

**[P> 19:1 (25)]** The Torah now returns to the sequence of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim to Matan Torah. On Rosh Chodesh Sivan (six weeks after leaving Egypt) the Children of Israel arrive at Sinai.

**A famous point, worth repeating...**

In the third month following the Exodus, on THIS day, they (the Children of Israel) arrived at the Sinai Wilderness. Why THIS day; THAT day is how you tell a story. The Torah isn't a once-upon-a-time-a-long-time-ago story book. The Torah is a living guide for us, to be constantly rediscovered. Every day, each Jew should imagine him/herself at Sinai receiving the Torah anew. Today we have come out of Egyptian bondage; today we stand at the foot of Mt. Sinai eagerly awaiting Divine Revelation and today we commit

ourselves to G-d and what He asks of us. Today is the first day of the rest of our lives. The words of Torah which we learn and live should never become stale. They should be in our eyes as if TODAY we have received them. We should learn Torah and do mitzvot with the freshness and enthusiasm of a first-time experience. This too fits well with the "Yitro model". The challenge: Be a true Torah Jew all your life, for as many years as G-d gives you, but have an enthusiasm that is more common to converts and Baalei T'shuva.

After settling in at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moshe ascends to G-d (whatever that really means) and G-d tells him what he is to say to the women and men (sequence is intentional and based on the analysis of the terms Beit Yaakov and then Bnei Yisrael). A clear connection is made between G-d's having taken us out of Egypt and His taking us to Him as His Chosen People - with the condition that we follow Him and His Torah. It is true that a Jew is a Jew regardless of his keeping the Torah or not, but it is clear that G-d has always demanded of us that we be committed to Torah and Mitzvot in order for our relationship with Him to be mutual and actively positive from both sides.

## Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 19:7-19

Moshe presents G-d's words to the Elders (and the People), who answer with a resounding "All that G-d says we will do". Moshe then tells the people to prepare for three days to receive the Torah. During this time, the Mountain was off-limits. On the morning of the third day, the People gather at the foot of the mountain to the accompaniment of the supernatural sounds and sights of the Shofar, thunder, lightning, and smoke. G-d will speak to Moshe in such a manner that the People will be witness to this direct communication. When Moshe will speak, G-d will answer with a "voice" (and not just via a vision or spiritual telepathy).

**SDT** *G-d tells Moshe that the People should "sanctify themselves today AND tomorrow". It is relatively easy to sanctify oneself on the day of the great miraculous events of Matan Torah. The challenge to each of us is to sanctify ourselves on the many tomorrows that follow. The days after the wondrous events, the magnificent spiritual experiences. The days when our lives return to "normal". This is what being Jewish is about. Yom Kippur is special and holy. Our additional challenge is to sanctify the day after Yom Kippur. We sanctify the mundane. Therefore, there really is nothing that is mundane for us.*

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 19:20-20:14

G-d descends onto Har Sinai (so to speak) and calls

to Moshe to join Him. G-d tells Moshe to repeat the warning against approaching the mountain. Moshe then goes down to the people to tell them G-d's words.

**[S> 20:1 (1)]** G-d (Elokim) speaks all the following things, saying...

What follows is/are Aseret HaDibrot, the Ten Commandments. They are comprised of 13 p'sukim which contain 14 mitzvot out of the Torah's 613. The Aseret HaDibrot can be viewed as both specific mitzvot as well as "chapter headings" for many of the Torah's mitzvot (e.g. LO TIGNOV is specifically the prohibition of kidnapping, and generally, the category of all prohibitions related to stealing - robbing, burglary, cheating in business, pressuring someone into selling you something that he doesn't really want to sell, moving a boundary marker... and many others).

**[S> 20:2 (5)]** What we call the first two commandments (or sayings, statements) are combined in a single parsha of 5 p'sukim. They can be seen as two sides of the same coin. You must believe in G-d; you may not believe in other gods...

## Mitzva Watch

The first commandment sounds like a statement by G-d - an introductory remark, perhaps, to what follows, but is viewed by Rambam, Chinuch, and others as a mitzva to believe in G-d **[25, A1 20:2]**. It is as if the Torah had said: "Thou shalt believe in G-d". Following Rambam's approach, this premier mitzva of the Torah requires us to believe in G-d, to work on that belief by strengthening it and eliminating any doubts that we might have. The mitzva is a full-time, dynamic challenge to continually improve the quality and intensity of our belief.

The second commandment contains several prohibitions related to idolatry. Specifically, not to believe in other gods **[26, L1 20:3]** (this mitzva includes the prohibition of having no belief at all - atheism), not making idols **[27, L2 20:4]**, nor bowing to them (even without believing in them) **[28, L5 20:5]**, nor worshiping idols in any manner **[29, L6 20:5]**. Note that this commandment deals with both the thought and actions of Avoda Zara (idolatry).

**[S> 20:7 (1)]** The third commandment prohibits swearing in vain **[30, L62 20:7]**. This is defined as (1) swearing to the truth of something that is obviously true and well-known - e.g. that the Sun is hot; (2) to swear in denial of an obvious truth - that the Moon is made of cheese (interestingly, this is not considered a lie or a false oath, since everyone (hopefully) knows that the Moon is not made of cheese. Only when the truth of a matter is unknown do we use the term lie and false oath. A vain oath is just as serious as a false one, so this distinction is largely academic, but it emphasizes the seriousness of being flippant in regard to swearing.); (3) to swear to violate the Torah - e.g.

that one will eat pork. Such an oath is immediately void since we are considered to have taken a prior oath (at Sinai) to not eat pork. Hence, the oath is in vain and is a disrespectful use of G-d's name; (4) to swear to do something that is impossible - e.g. to stay awake for a full week. The common denominator of these types of vain oaths is that they all "cheapen" the use of G-d's name and threaten the smooth functioning of society which often must rely on the seriousness of a real oath.

In addition to actual vain oaths, this prohibition is considered by some authorities to include the saying of a BRACHA L'VATALA, and its partner in sin, a BRACHA SHE-EINO TZ'RICHA. Saying G-d's name in vain is forbidden but is not considered part of this Commandment #3. It falls under one or more other prohibitions.

**[P> 20:8 (4)]** Commandment #4 deals with Shabbat and contains the positive mitzva to remember the Shabbat with Kiddush **[31,A155 20:8]**, and the prohibition of all manner of Melacha, specific categories of creative activities **[32,L320 20:10]**. The mitzva of ZACHOR includes saying Kiddush as Shabbat enters, and Havdala as Shabbat leaves. (Officially, K&H are said in davening as a fulfillment of the Torah command, and again with wine, in fulfillment of a Rabbinic command. It's a bit more complicated than that, but this is the basic idea.) Prohibitions of Melacha are divided into 39 categories, each of which contains other related activities, usually with the same goal. E.g., PLANTING is one of the 39 categories; watering, pruning, fertilizing all help the growth of plants and are TOLADOT of PLANTING, and are also considered Torah violations of equal seriousness to the parent melacha - Planting.

**[S> 20:12 (1)]** The fifth commandment is to honor one's parents **[33,A210 20:12]**. Grand-parents, in-laws, older (or possibly oldest) brother (maybe sister too), and teachers are included (with differences). Honor of parents is usually considered to refer to that which one does for one's parents (provide them with food and drink, escort them, clothe them), in contrast to reverence (fear) of parents which include that which should not be done because it would be disrespectful (sitting in their seat, calling them by first names, contradicting them... being disrespectful).

**[S> 20:13 (2/11 of a pasuk)]** #6 is the prohibition of MURDER **[34,L289 20:13]**, which is considered the antithesis of Belief in G-d, since murder directly negates creation of human being in His image.

**[S> 20:13 (2/11)]** Commandment #7 against ADULTERY **[35,L347 20:13]** is the prohibition of having relations with a married woman, but as a "chapter heading" it also points to the other forbidden relations.

**[S> 20:13 (2/11)]** #8 is LO TIGNOV **[36,L243 20:13]**, which, as mentioned earlier, is specifically defined as kidnapping, but is also the category header of many mitzvot in the Torah. Maybe they can all be summed up as indicating that the person

who violates these kind of mitzvot puts himself above other human beings. It is obvious how this is harmful to society, and to the individual's striving for Kedusha.

**[S> 20:13 (5/11 of a pasuk)]** #9 is the prohibition of "bearing false witness" **[37,L285 20:13]**. We can see in this mitzva, as well as many others, how important it is to G-d, so to speak, that we be able to function as a society. Both oaths, and to a greater extent, perhaps, testimony, are necessary for the establishment of TRUTH, in the absence of having direct knowledge of the truth of something ourselves. So much of the dealings between people involves the trust we place in each other's word, especially when backed by an oath, and in the confidence we place in the testimony of witnesses. Without these elements of our interpersonal relationships, we would be incapable of functioning as a society.

**[S> 20:14 (4/15 of a pasuk)]** #10 is the commandment against COVETING **[38,L265 20:14]** sort of sums things up in that it focuses on the thought process that can lead to all types of sins. Being part of "The Big 10" points to the significance of thoughts in the whole picture, which usually consists of deeds.

This 10th commandment is contained in two parshiyot, the first prohibits coveting the "house of your fellow", and the second one...

**[S> 20:13 (11/15)]** specifies the prohibition of coveting one's fellow's wife, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that is his.

Notice that one single pasuk, 20:13, contains 4 of the 10 Commandments, while the 4th commandment, for example, takes up four p'sukim.

There are two sets of Torah-notes for the Aseret HaDibrot, known as Taamei HaElyon and Taamei HaTachton (upper and lower notes). Taamei HaTachton treats the Aseret HaDibrot as a set of p'sukim, no different from all the other p'sukim in the Torah. Taamei HaElyon "disregards" the p'sukim layout of the Aseret HaDibrot, and presents the Aseret HaDibrot as a set of Ten Commandments (which they are - but they are also p'sukim in the Torah). Most Jews around the world and in Israel, read Aseret HaDibrot on Shabbat Parshat Yitro, Shabbat Parshat Va-etchanan, and Shavuot morning, using Taamei HaElyon. It is Minhag Yerushalayim (followed by many Jerusalem shuls, but not all, and by some shuls in other cities) to use Taamei HaElyon only on Shavuot morning, and to use the quieter, plainer, Taamei HaTachton for Yitro and Va-etchanan.

## Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 9 p'sukim - 20:15-23

**[S> 20:15 (4)]** The People are awe-struck by the supernatural phenomena of the Sinai experience and they keep their distance. They ask Moshe to tell them what G-d wants rather than hearing His Voice directly. Some commentators say that this request

came after the first two statements, "I Am..." and "There shall be no other...". Others suggest that G-d "spoke" all "Ten Sayings" first in an incomprehensible manner and then began "spelling them out" one at a time. After the second statement, the People panicked and requested that Moshe tell them what G-d wants, so that they would not hear "G-d's voice" directly. G-d agreed, on the condition (so to speak) that we listen to the word of the prophet, with Moshe as the "chief" among the prophets, and his prophecy - the Torah - having the highest authority.

[S> 20:19 (5)] G-d tells Moshe to remind the People that they heard G-d speak; that they shall make no graven human images (even for art) [39,L4 20:20]; they shall make an altar and offer sacrifices upon it; if the altar be of stone, its stone shall not be cut with metal tools [40,L79 20:22]. From this rule comes the custom to remove or cover the bread-knife during benching, since our table is likened to the Altar. (Some authorities say that this minhag applies only during the week, not on Shabbat.) The Altar may not be approached with immodest steps [41, L80 20:23] but rather via its ramp.

Rashi points out that with one of the kohein's 4 garments being pants, there really wouldn't be actual immodesty in walking on steps; nonetheless, it has the appearance of immodesty and is therefore inappropriate as an approach to the Miz- bei'ach. Rashi adds that if the Torah showed concern for seemingly inappropriate behavior vis-a-vis stones, how much more so must we be careful not to treat our fellow human beings, who were created in the image of G-d, in a deprecating manner.

The last 5 p'sukim are reread as Maftir.

## **Haftara - 21 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6**

Parallel to the Torah's account of the awesome experience at Sinai, this passage from Yeshayahu describes his first awe-inspiring vision of angels proclaiming Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh. Both sedra and haftara present us with "visions" of G-d's awe, majesty, and holiness. Additionally, we sense some parallels between Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayahu HaNavi. (At least the reminder that there is a continuity of prophets after Moshe.)

Also common to sedra and haftara is the concept of holiness. In the sedra, G-d tells us that we will be to Him a kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation. As Rabbi Jacobs z"l points out in "A Haftara Companion", it is important to remember the difference between the perfect holiness of angels and the Jews' striving towards holiness, with their Free Will and imperfections. He also points out that smoke is used to hide the Divine Presence from mortal eyes in both the sedra and the haftara.

# **THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW**

**Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean**

Lesson #367 (part two)

## **Taxing members of the community**

### **Who may be taxed?**

We continue with the topic of taxing members of the community. We have discussed in the prior lesson external taxes, internal matters for which taxes may be levied, and who may vote in the election of the council that will levy the taxes.

Very few people are fond of paying taxes. We shall now discuss who may be taxed in this halachic community.

As was stated in the last lesson, for external taxes all of the inhabitants, whether or not they are permanent residents, can be taxed. By external taxes it was meant taxes imposed on the Jewish community by the secular ruler of the country where the Jews resided (usually with his permission) and internal taxes are those taxes that the Jewish community imposed on its own residents for the normal operations of governmental functions. Regarding internal taxes, the residents of the community are responsible for all of the normal taxes for the functioning of the community. The nonresidents are not responsible for such taxes except for such taxes that benefit them directly. If a person resides in the community for 12 months, even if he is only a renter, he is considered a resident. If a person remains in the residence due to outside forces, such as becoming sick or being unable to leave the community because of a war raging outside of the community that prevents him from leaving to return to his own home, such periods are not included in the 12 month period. However, while he remains there because of such external forces he does business in the community and profits from it, he must pay his share of the taxes. If a person purchases a residence and resides there, he is immediately considered a member of the community for tax purposes. If a person inherits a home or an apartment, or receives it by gift, he is given a reasonable amount of time to decide if he wants to reside there, or to be a non-resident home owner. If a person owns a home or an apartment in the community but actually resides in another community, there are certain exemptions from the full tax paid by the members of the community who reside in the community. If the tax moneys also pay for matters that are beneficial only to the residents of the community, the non-residents should be given an abatement in their taxes. In all these matters, if there is a custom in the community regarding such matters, the custom is controlling. If a person becomes subject to a tax, he may not avoid the tax by removing himself from the

community. This is true even if the taxpayer leaves his community to go live in the Land of Israel. He is even responsible for external taxes that were imposed by the ruler within thirty days after he leaves the community. The reason is that the ruler generally takes more than thirty days to impose the tax and thus he imposed it based on the inhabitants who were in the community within 30 days before the tax was imposed. If the person who left the community pleads that he paid to the ruler his share of the external tax before he left the community and the ruler denies the allegation that the tax was paid, then the tax must be paid to the community. If the community for any reason does not collect or under collects a tax from one of the residents or non-residents, there is no statute of limitations and the tax may be collected at any time.

### **Certain exemptions from taxation**

Those taxes that are allocated for the protection of the inhabitants of the community must be paid by all the inhabitants, including orphans; the only exception being Torah scholars. The theory being that the scholar's Torah study will act as his protection. In other matters, the Torah scholar must also participate in the payment of taxes. (A person is considered a Torah scholar for the purpose of the exemption if his main occupation is the study of the Torah in its many aspects. It usually meant a person who devotes the majority of his waking hours studying the Talmud and its commentaries.) In some communities the synagogue functionaries are also exempt from some or all of the internal taxes. There are no exemptions from external taxes imposed on all the inhabitants. In these communities where members dig sewers and do other such tasks, the Torah scholar is exempt from such work. He need not pay to have a substitute do the work on his behalf.

### **Graduated Tax**

The tax that is levied on the community is sometimes a graduated tax, with an increasing percentage tax corresponding to wealth; where the tax is not graduated, wealthier persons still pay a larger tax than the less wealthy, because even a flat rate for all the persons the taxable base of the wealthier persons is greater resulting in a greater absolute tax. There is also another criterion in levying the security tax where there is a wall around the city. Those who receive more protection from the security services pay a higher tax. Where crime comes from outside the community, those living at the outskirts of the community need more protection than those close to the hub of the city. Therefore, those closer to the outskirts pay a higher tax than those in the center of the community. Also, since robbers are more apt to rob the rich than the poor, the wealthier persons pay a higher tax than the less wealthy. Combining those two standards, sometimes a wealthy person in the center of town pays about as much as a poor person on the edge of town. All these issues have to be decided by the Beit Din in the community. In times of war, when the walls of the city

offer little protection, and the nearness to the walls is not a factor in determining the tax; then the criterion is the wealth of the inhabitants. The wealthy members of the community also pay a greater portion of the tax in matters in which they do not receive greater proportion of the benefit or in which they do not have any need at all, such as hiring teachers for the children of the community whose parents cannot afford to pay for such education, appointing a cantor for the synagogue, building a synagogue and building a wedding chapel.

*The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in volume 5, chapter 163 of A Restatement of Rabbinic Civil Law by Emanuel Quint. Copies of all volumes can be purchased at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to [quint@inter.net.il](mailto:quint@inter.net.il)*

## **Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the B'reishit Stories**

### **YAAKOV BLESSES HIS SONS**

#### **[2] by Dr. Meir Tamari**

It is pertinent to discuss at the outset the spiritual and political role of the first-born in order to fully understand the blessings given to Yosef. There is a mystique attached, whether acknowledged or subconscious, to the first son like to anything first; school, job, harvest, home, spouse. It is therefore easily understood why in almost all societies, ancient and modern, the first-born son occupied a very special role. In ancient society the prerogatives of priesthood, political leadership and property were vested in the eldest son, and in the modern period, for instance, British history until the 20th century was determined by the titles and estates passing to the eldest son, while the clergy and the army were led and the empire settled by second and third sons. Yaakov blessed Yosef by granting him the first-born's distinction that in reality was Reuven's, of receiving a double portion of a father's estate, in this case, Eretz Yisrael. Then, he makes a distinction between Yosef's two sons when he blesses them, giving precedence to Efrayim over Menashe in that blessing despite the latter being Yosef's first-born.

"The first born is the recognized representative of the family and has the responsibility of such. As such he receives a double portion of the inheritance and this would indicate that material power and spirituality should go hand in hand, yet the history of the world shows that in reality there is constant conflict between material power and godly spirituality. The spiritual aspect of the firstborn is disregarded and advantage taken of the material preference. Judaism, however, insists that the material power and the spiritual should always go hand in hand" (Rabbi S. R. Hirsch).

Many mitzvot, in order to teach us that the real source of everything in our lives does not lie in birthrights, accident, luck, cleverness or nature - but in G-d, require that the "Reishit" be devoted to holiness; b'chorim [pidyon haben, peter rechem], reshit hazez, bikurim and orlah. So whenever the ideal integration of power and

spirituality is not observed, then we find that throughout Tanach the b'chorim are disregarded. Kayin is rejected and Hevel accepted, Yishmael gave place to Yitschak, and Eisav to Yaakov, Reuven to Yosef, Menashe to Efrayim, Aharon to Moshe, and Gideon was a younger son and his clan the poorest in Menashe, while David the founder of Jewish kingship was the youngest of his family.

Yosef saw that his father gave precedence to Efrayim and protested, since Menashe was the first born. He feared that this was a replay of the love and favor shown by Yaakov to him that led to so much jealousy and suspicion between the brothers and had ultimately resulted in his sale and the descent of Beit Yaakov to Egypt. In the case of Efrayim and Menashe, however, there was no hint of the younger son supplanting the elder, but simply of achieving greater spiritual and therefore leadership power. Menashe and Efrayim both were given flags and separate places in Israel's encampment and wanderings in the desert, both received their share in the tribal allocations of Eretz Yisrael, yet Efrayim was destined to be greater. He was the leader of the three tribe group in the desert, and he preceded Menashe in the order of the korbanot at chanukat hamishkan. The whole of the nation is sometimes referred to as Efrayim. "This greatness was not a prophecy of numerical superiority since we know from the various censuses in the Torah that the tribe of Menashe was larger than Efrayim. Rather Yaakov wished to demonstrate the principle of the priority of quality over quantity" (Meshech Chochma).

"Nevertheless, the verse (48:20) tells that Yaakov put Efrayim before Menashe, this was not for the honor of Efrayim, but rather out of respect for Menashe. In other verses we find that to put before somebody means to honor them. So Efrayim was enjoined to respect his older brother. Yaakov wishes to instruct Efrayim that despite his future greatness he should be careful of his elder brother's honor" (Rabbeu Bachya). Halakhically, the eldest brother has to be honored, a derivate of kibud Av vaEim.

"In Parshat Nitzavim we read: "You are standing this day before Hashem, all of you, the heads of your tribes, your elders and your officers", whereas Yehoshua reversed the order, placing the elders first. Moshe, seeing as Israel would have to endure long periods of galut outside Eretz Yisrael, gave precedence to the communal leaders who would be responsible for dealing with the governments and populace of those galuyot. Yehoshua, on the other hand was preparing the people for life in their own homeland, and there the leadership of the elders and sages would have to be paramount, therefore he gave them precedence" (Yerushalmi, Horayot 3).

"What was the kernel of the machloket between Yosef and Yaakov over the question of the precedence of Efrayim over Menashe? They both knew full well who Yosef's first-born was and they both knew of the inability of the Tribes to subjugate themselves to authority that had led to Mechirat Yosef. However, as we may see from the names Efrayim and Menashe, their differences lay in the proper sequence in Divine worship of the verse: "Sur mei-ra va'asei tov". Yosef named his first born Menashe,

as Hashem had enabled him to separate himself from the evil that befell him. Efrayim was named after the fruitfulness that Hashem had given, *asei tov*. So Yosef held that *sur mei-ra*, departing from evil ways, has to come before one is able to do good and righteousness. Yaakov taught that the opposite was the proper way for ones *avodat Hashem*" (Shem MiShmuel). The Shem Mi Shmuel sees the same question behind the machloket of Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel regarding Chanuka. Shammai holds that *sur mi-ra* has precedence and since the first efforts are the most difficult and require most effort, we should first light 8 candles and then descend each night. Bet Hillel, *asei tov*, hold that at the outset *sur mei-ra* is impossible, whereas a little *asei tov* is within our reach, so first one should light 1 candle and then increasing the *asei tov* we also add lights each night. However, at the end of days, when we are more holy, the agreed halacha will be like Beit Shammai.

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## 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...*



Can I use the same mechanical knife sharpener for milchig and fleishig knives? (same for grinding stone, knife honing tool, etc.)



We must address two different scenarios. If you are the first to use the sharpener, then a simple precaution will prevent problems from arising. As long as you make sure the knife's blade is clean when sharpening, there will be no transfer of ta'am (absorbed taste) from the knife to the sharpener, which will remain "pareve." This is because ta'am is not transferred from one kli (utensil) to another without a proper medium (Rama, Yoreh Deah 92:8). (By the way, as the sharpener comes in contact only with knives, not with food, it does not require tevillat keilim.)

Before continuing, we should mention that it is not simple to take the cleanliness of knives for granted, even when one intends it to be clean. The gemara (Chulin 111b) says that a radish that was cut with a knife that is used to cut meat is assumed to be fleishig. Rashi (ad loc.) explains (as a secondary point) that a knife often has a thin layer of fat on it, which may come off onto the radish when one cuts it. One can, thus, claim that our standard knife has fleishig residue on its surface, which can be transferred to the sharpener with the help of the friction and heat which are present during the sharpening process. However, poskim assume that it is possible to clean the knife so that no residue remains. Only when one does not clean it right away and allows the fats to dry up onto the knife, is it insufficient to wash it clean, and n'itza b'karka (plunging the knife repeatedly into firm earth) is necessary (see Rama, Yoreh Deah 94:7 and Darkei Teshuva (ad loc.:102).

If the sharpener was used without care taken that the knives were clean, a problem can exist. During sharpening, surface meat or milk residue can get onto and/or into the sharpener. Even so, if you subsequently clean the sharpener and the knives to be sharpened before use, its future use will not transfer ta'am back into the k'li, as explained above. However, if the sharpener remains soiled on its surface by, say, milchig residue, this may be transferred into, say, the wall of a fleishig knife that is being sharpening. If the sharpener is cleaned after being made milchig but another knife being sharpened has food on its surface, the ta'am can be transferred from the sharpener to the food and, simultaneously or subsequently, to the knife. Admittedly, if the now clean sharpener has sat unused for 24 hours, ta'am that emanates from it is assumed to give off a bad taste and the matter is far less problematic (details are beyond our present scope). However, this factor is insufficient to allow unrestricted, continual use.

The question is whether we can be optimistic as to how the sharpening will occur or we need to assume the worst. Hag'alat Keilim (Cohen) (see 13:(260)) cites an opinion that does not allow giving knives to a non-Jewish to sharpen out of concern that the sharpeners will have a residue from non-kosher meat or fats. However, he points out that, in our times, people regularly give knives to be sharpened when they are clean. Furthermore, he implies,

even regarding the time of the Rishonim, that indications are that few poskim were concerned about this matter. For example, the Mordechai (Avoda Zara 833), discussing the danger of giving a knife to a non-Jew for sharpening, raises only the concern that the craftsman will use it for his own personal use, not that the sharpening itself is problematic. Rav Cohen concludes that it is proper and sufficient to carefully clean one's sharpener before using it for Pesach.

In conclusion, while it is conceivable that using one knife sharpener for both milchig and fleishig could cause problems, it does not seem necessary to be concerned that this will occur. The key to being careful on the matter is taking note that the knives we sharpen are clean at that time and to note that the sharpener itself appears clean.

*Ask the Rabbi Q&A is part of Hemdat Yamim, the weekly parsha sheet published by Eretz Hemdah. You can read this section or the entire Hemdat Yamim at [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org) or [www.erezhemdah.org](http://www.erezhemdah.org). And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to [info@erezhemdah.org](mailto: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

**Many live life in the same way they watch a movie. They may be deeply moved by the film, even moved to the point of tears; but ten minutes out of the theater and it is as if they had never been there at all. They remain unchanged. They had cried at an onion. They live in the same manner. Certain experiences affect them deeply, but almost as soon as the experience has passed, it is as if it had never occurred. We must learn to make the thoughts and feelings of our lives a part of us if we are to have lived at all, and not merely laughed at laughing gas and cried at onions.**

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

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## [3] CHIZUK and IDUD (atypically long)

for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively

## Why Ten Commandments

Judaism has much to say about numbers. Beyond the use of an accepted numerical system for purposes of distinguishing quantitative values, numbers are used to attach significance to the subject at hand. We are all familiar with the workings of "Gematria" as being a cute tool employed to reveal sub-strata ideas in the Biblical text. We find, as well, specific numbers that seem to appear throughout the Bible in various contexts. Examples of such 'typological' numbers include: 3, 4, 7, 40, and 70. However, it would seem that the most resounding of all would be the number '10'. The use of the number '10' in describing the Aseret HaDibrot goes way

beyond representing the numerical sum total of commandments found in this text. Something very symbolic surrounds the number '10', which adds deeper understanding and appreciation to the very concept of the 'Ten Commandments'.

Students of Kabbala will speak of the 'seven spheres', representing the seven concentric points of spiritual elevation in drawing oneself closer to G-d. These include: Chesed, Gevura, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malchut. However, there are, to be sure, three additional rungs on this ladder of spiritual ascent known as: Chochma, Bina, and Da'at (acronym: CHABAD). All told, the nearly impossible task of achieving full rendezvous with G-d ('Deveikut' in Chassidic literature) demands movement through ten unique dimensions of spiritual existence. The number '10' represents totality and absolute perfection. Only G-d, the One and Only, could possibly fit this description. Hence, the human struggle to engage in such an encounter with G-d requires setting the number '10' as his goal.

R' Sa'adia Gaon is credited with saying that the 'Ten Commandments' are to be understood as headlines for the entire listing of the 613 Biblical commandments. Moshe, at Mt. Sinai, received in a compact format the entire Torah. Our Sages (B'rachot 5a) offer a tradition that the 'Ten Commandments' contain within them the full spectrum of Torah including the entire Bible, the Mishnah, and the Talmud! The revelation of G-d's Torah to His people would necessarily be

total, complete, and perfect. It is no accident that the numerical value attached to this act of revelation would be the number '10'. Of course, to G-d, nothing could be considered divisible.

This is the basis of Rashi's comment in Parshat Yitro (Sh'mot 20:1) that all of the 'Ten Commandment' was given as "one utterance" (B'DIBUR ECHAD). Our great teacher, HaRav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik ZT"L, once pointed out that in referring to the first set of the tablets, the Torah uses the singular form to describe the stone of the tablets (Sh'mot 31:18, LUCHOT EVEN). While the reference to the second set of the tablets, we find the description of the stone to be in the plural form (Devarim 9:10, LUCHOT AVANIM). Unity would permeate the Divine-made tablets as opposed to the segmented man-made second version.

The number '10' shows up once again in the internal design of the Musaf for Rosh HaShana. Each section of the three central b'rachot - Malchiyot, Zichronot, and Shofarot - carries with it the requisite ten Biblical citations (three from the Torah; three from Tehillim; three from the Neve'im; and a final quote from the Torah). There are actually ten items on that particular Musaf prayer agenda. However, an oral tradition has it that we get it all in by reciting only nine blessings and not the full ten. (As a matter of fact, a three-way dispute amongst the Sages exists as to how one goes about organizing ten items into nine structured blessings!) Again, HaRav Soloveitchik explained that regarding that which G-d teaches (i.e. the Biblical citations), one

certainly can use the number '10'. However, when mortal man speaks to G-d in prayer, he can only strive to attain '10', but must ultimately recognize the futility in its

absolute achievement. Therefore, in prayer, we will only use a nine blessing framework in spite of the ten items on our prayer agenda. (This, incidentally, also serves as the rationale behind the insistence of the Vilna Gaon that the final (i.e. the tenth) expression of praise of G-d uttered by man in the saying of Kaddish - VAYITHALAL - should be deleted!).

A most famous teaching of the Zohar spells out an equation linking G-d, His Torah, and the His nation - the Jewish people. We have seen that the number '10', representing totality and perfection, is associated with G-d himself. By extension, the number '10' can be applied to the Torah as well, being the revealed Will of G-d Himself. Hence, we have the 'Ten Commandments'. It, therefore, should come as no surprise that the Halachic quorum necessary to form a 'Minyan' would be the same number '10'. A 'Minyan' for purposes of public prayer is not to be understood as a gathering of ten individuals. A 'Minyan' is a representative body of the entire nation of Israel, covering the past, the present, as well as the future. The Talmud (Megila 23b) derives the number '10' for 'Minyan' purposes from the ten wicked spies episode, connecting those verses with Vayikra 22:32 - "And I will be sanctified amongst the Children of Israel". All of the Halachic examples requiring a 'Minyan' are acts of 'Kiddush Hashem' performed, in a sense, in the presence - and in the midst - of the eternal Klal Yisrael. The numerical value assigned to designate the group of individuals now representing the entire Jewish people is borrowed from G-d Himself. Hence, the 'Minyan' consists of the number '10'.

Rambam, in his Book of Commandments (Positive mitzva #153), teaches us that the very definition of the community of Israel relates only to those Jews who inhabit Eretz Yisrael. While in his Mishna Commentary (B'chorot 4:3), Rambam goes so far as to give the precise minimum number to the "Kahal" status of the Jewish people in the Land. He speaks there of at least ten such residents! (L'FI SH'BNEI ERETZ YISRAEL HEIM ASHER NIKRAIN KAHAL, V'HASHEM KORAM KOL HAKAHAL, V'AFILU HAYA ASARA ACHADIM)). Bearing in mind that the division of Eretz Yisrael did not include two of the tribes (Reu'ven and Gad opted out), one must recognize that the occupants of that part of Eretz Yisrael endowed with that special virtue of being the "land flowing with milk and honey" would number exactly ten tribes!

This, too, was apparently not an accident.

The triangular slogan of Religious Zionism, (as coined by Rav Ze'ev Gold Zt"l): ,ERETZ YISRAEL, L'AM YISRAEL AL PI TORAT YISRAEL, revolves around the number '10' on all levels. Each component, nurtured

by the Divine Himself, contributes to the cohesive whole as dictated by the Giver of the 'Ten Commandments'.

**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler, Jerusalem  
and Tiferet Yisrael, Zurich**

*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**

A man came to R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld in Yerushalayim and asked for his aid. The man needed to raise money for a worthy cause, and wanted R' Yosef Chaim to speak to R' Mordechai Leib Rubin, the Av Beis Din of Yerushalayim, the next time the two met, in order to have R' Mordechai Leib become involved in this cause.

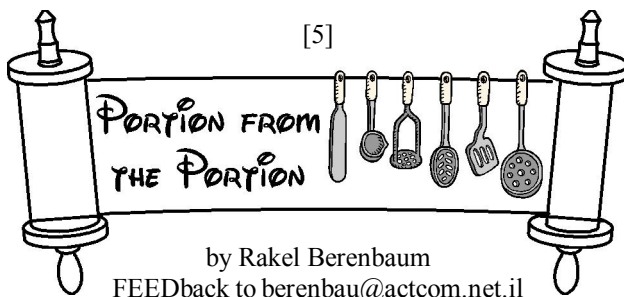
"I will IY"H be seeing him tomorrow," said R'Yosef," and I'll discuss the matter with him.

The next morning, snow fell in Yerushalayim, a very rare occurrence in that city. Looking out the window, the man who had made the request saw R' Yosef Chaim trudging in the snow toward the home of R' Mordechai Leib, which was some distance away.

Running out into the street, the man came over to R' Yosef Chaim and said to him, "Rebbe, this matter can certainly wait a day or two until the snow has melted. There is no need for you to go to R' Mordechai Leib today."

R' Yosef Chaim was surprised: "Just because there is snow on the ground is not enough of a reason for me not to do what I had said. The principle is that 'if a mitzva comes your way, you should not tarry, but should perform it as soon as possible.'" Surely the fact that it has snowed does not detract from the need to act according to that principle."

*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*



## **Is it possible not to want what others have?**

Before we discuss the last of the Ten Commandments let us try to understand a bit about the general layout of all the commandments together. Most people are familiar with the division of the tablets into MITZVOT BEIN ADAM LAMAKOM (between man and G-d) on the first tablet and those that are BEIN ADAM L'CHAVERO (interpersonal) on the second tablet. But the Ibn Ezra in his lengthy introduction to the Aseret HaDibrot proposes a threefold division: 1) mitzvot of the heart, 2) mitzvot of the tongue, and 3) mitzvot of doing. These are arranged on the two Luchot as follows:

The first five commandments start with commandments of the heart, progress to a precept connected with human speech "don't take G-d's name in vain" and conclude with those that require action, namely Shabbat and honoring parents. This format teaches us that our attitude to G-d must first be determined in our hearts, then it surges forth to govern our speech and, ultimately, direct all our activities. Religious beliefs and convictions are not sufficient, unless they are expressed in word, deed and family relations.

The last five commandments, begin with the prohibition of deed - don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, proceed to that of word: don't bear a false witness, and conclude with one of the most puzzling of all the Ten Commandments "do not covet", a prohibition of thought and feeling. From this layout we learn that good deeds and social justice in every day life are not in themselves sufficient, if they signify nothing more than strict observance of the laws governing society. Man must also control his speech and even the inner feelings of his heart.

But is it possible for man to be in such control of his feelings? We are talking about humans, not angels. Does G-d expect us not to desire someone else's things - a new piece of jewelry, the newest digital camera or Palm? Isn't this too much to expect? Wouldn't it have been enough for G-d to prohibit adultery? How can He expect someone not to "covet your neighbor's wife?"

According to Ibn Ezra, man can overcome his desires by being fully aware of what is prohibited. He brings a parable of a pauper who would never dream of coveting the King's daughter because he knows full well she is out of his league, she is off limits. If we acquire this feeling of "off limits" towards the objects of others then we would not covet them.

The K'tav V'haKabala, on the other hand, says that a person can fulfill the command not to covet by fully, "with all his heart", loving that which is permitted to him, that which is all important and deserving of his affections, Hashem and the Torah. If one's heart is full to the brim with love of good, there is no room for coveting bad. We can achieve proper observance of the prohibition "though shall not covet" by concentrating our desires on the values that G-d wants us to cherish. (For a more detailed study on this commandment see Nechama Leibowitz).

## **"I Want Some" Ice Cream Recipe**

- 4 cups chocolate ice cream
- 1 cup mini-marshmallows or regular marshmallows cut small
- 1 cup crushed honey flavored graham crackers

Let ice cream stand at room temperature 45 minutes or till softened. Combine softened ice cream, marshmallows and graham crackers in chilled bowl. Cover & freeze.



## [6] Parsha Points to Ponder

### YITRO (a.k.a. Yisro)

1) The Torah relates that Moshe named his first son Gershom because Moshe was a stranger in a foreign land and his second son Eliezer because the G-D of his father helped him and saved him from Paro (18:3-4). Shouldn't it have been the other way around with Moshe first giving thanks for being saved from Paro and being able to run away and then reflecting on his being stuck in a foreign land for the later son?

2) Yisro asks Moshe why he does not use other judges (18:14). Why does Moshe then seem to simply repeat exactly what Yisro had said instead of answering Yisro's question? (18:15-16)

3) At Har Sinai, the Jewish people were able to see the sounds of this awesome event (see 20:15 and Rashi). Why did G-D make this seemingly unnecessary miracle?

## THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) The Chafetz Chayim explains that Moshe named his first son Gershom because he felt he needed to remind himself that he was a stranger in a foreign land to survive spiritually. At that point in time, Yisro was still a pagan priest and Moshe needed to have the constant reminder before him through his son's name that he was a stranger and should not let down his guard and be influenced by Yisro. Once that name was in place, Moshe could express his thanks through the name of his second son.

2) The Ohr HaChayim points to the subtle wording of Yisro's question to explain how Moshe answered Yisro's question. Yisro wanted to know why YOU DO THIS TO THE NATION, implying that Moshe was forcing the people to come to him and not to any other judges. Moshe, therefore replied that THE NATION COMES TO ME, which means they come to me on their own. The reason they do so is because they know they are getting the correct decision due to Moshe's connection with G-D.

3) Rav Moshe Feinstein answers that through this miracle G-D teaches all generations that when one is learning and teaching Torah, one must strive to make the material as clear as one is seeing it in person.

*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*

eventually Gemara, you are guaranteeing the existence of the Jewish people. Without you, we would never have received the Torah. And without the Torah, there would be no world! So you see, you're pretty important.

Hashem chose us to be a Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation. When we follow His Torah, we are His special Segula - His beloved treasure. If we want to continue being His special treasure, the best way to do it is for you to keep learning Torah!

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

PARSHAT YITRO is the parsha of Matan Torah - the Giving of the Torah on Har Sinai. Did you know that we were able to receive the Torah because of the Jewish children? And they have a special job to fulfill - even though they aren't "grown up" yet. Even if they aren't bar or bat mitzva. Even if they are still very young children who are just learning how to read.

Before giving the precious gift of the Torah to the Jewish people, Hashem asked if they would keep the Torah once they received it. They answered, "Yes, of course." But Hashem asked for a guarantee. The Jews thought the Avot - Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov - would guarantee their promise, but Hashem wasn't satisfied. Then they said, "Our children will be our guarantors." But when they promised that the future generations - children who were not even born yet! - would keep the Torah, Hashem agreed.

How could they promise that their children would keep the Torah? How did they know? They knew because they themselves would teach the Torah to their children! Your parents are the connection between Matan Torah and you. You will be the connection between the Matan Torah and your children.

The best way to make sure this connection is not broken is to remember the commandment: Honor Your Father and Mother. They learned Torah from their parents; you learn Torah from them; your children will learn from you. So long as each generation receives the Torah from its parents and passes it on to its children, Am Yisrael continues to exist. If the connection were chas v'chalila, ever broken, the entire Torah - would be lost.

That means that when a you begin your day with Modeh Ani and end it with Sh'ma Yisrael, when young children learn brachot and the Alef Bet, when you continue to learn Chumash, Shulchan Aruch, Mishna and

## [8] **MicroUlpan**

קהוי

Would you like your photos glossy or matte? Glossy is MAVRIK. Matte is not MAAT, at least not in real Hebrew. Try KAHUI.

## [9] **Aseret HaDibrot**

As a REMEZ (hint, allusion) that the Aseret HaDibrot are representative of and include all mitzvot, the number of letters they comprise is 620, representing TARYAG, the 613 mitzvot of the Torah plus the 7 mitzvot d'Rabbanan.

620 is the numeric value of the word KETER, crown (of the Torah). We can say that the mitzvot all together form the Crown of Torah, with the Aseret HaDibrot as the crown jewel. Bnei Yisrael who wear that crown and keep the Torah, descend from Yaakov and his wives, Rachel, Leah, Bilha, and Zilpa. Yaakov = 182, Rachel = 238, Leah = 36, Bilha = 42, and Zilpa = 122. Total: 620.

CHOCHMA BINA VADA'AT, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, are the rewards, so to speak, for living a Torah life, studying Torah and doing mitzvot. Their combine g'matriya is 73+67+480=620.

Some of the above comes from a new sefer (5767) SHAAREI NISIM by Niim Paniri, with his permission.

Only one letter of the Alef-Bet is not found in the Aseret HaDibrot - TET

The Yitro version of the Aseret HaDibrot has 172 words, 112 distinct words, of which 23 occur more than once.

Most common word? LO (12 occurrences).

Although LO is the most common word in the Aseret HaDibrot, G-d's name occurs more often (14 times) in different

## [10] **Torah from a Talmid(a)**

### **Who are the Jewish people?**

What is their purpose? An answer to this question can be found in Parshat Yitro. The Jewish people prepare for Har Sinai in Sh'mot 19 and receive the Aseret HaDibrot in Sh'mot 20. At the beginning of the preparation, Hashem tells the Jewish nation, (Sh'mot 19:5-6). If they obey Hashem and keep the Brit, they will be a SEGULA MIKOL HA'AMIM, A MAMLECHET KOHANIM and a GOY KADOSH. These are G-d's definition of the Jewish people, but what do these terms mean?

The first phrase is SEGULA MIKOL HA'AMIM. The Daat Mikra translates SEGULA as CHAVIVIM. The Jewish nation is more special to Hashem than any other, implying that they

are different than the other nations. We are still left with the question, however,

how are the Jews different?

The next phrase, MAMLECHET KOHANIM answers this question. Ibn Ezra compares this

task of the Jews to that of a Kohein. A Kohein models the way to serve Hashem and, through his example, the Jewish people recognize the worship of G-d. The Jewish people must act like kohanim and be a model for the other nations in order to demonstrate G-d's existence. We know that the Jewish people are different because they are a model for the other nations, but how does their model illustrate G-d's existence?

The last phrase, GOY KADOSH answers this question. Ramban explains that the Jewish

people must cling to Hashem who is Kadosh (holy). He quotes K'DOSHEM TI'YU KI KADOSH ANI HASHEM (Vayikra19:2). In this pasuk, Hashem declares that He is Kadosh. The

Jewish nation becomes a GOY KADOSH by emulating Hashem.

How do the Jewish people emulate Hashem? They must follow all the laws that Hashem commands them at Har Sinai. These laws form Brit Sinai which exemplifies the values of G-d. An example of this can be found through the fourth commandment, ZACHOR ET YOM HASHABBAT L'KADSHO (Sh'mot 20:8), which serves as an ,OT symbolizing the Brit. Hashem worked six days and rested on the seventh day, thereby establishing the day as KADOSH. The Jewish people emulate Hashem by working six days and resting on the seventh, making it KADOSH as well. This is an explicit replication of G-d's actions. It must be explicit because it is the ,OT and symbolizes the entire purpose of the ,BRIT – to emulate Hashem. While the Jews cannot replicate all the actions of Hashem, they can and are obligated to live by His model and His values. By following Hashem's example, the Jewish people serve as a model to the other nations and are special to Hashem; V'HIYTEM LI SEGULA MIKOL HA'AMIM V'ATEM TI-YU LI MAMLECHET KOHANIM V'GOY KADOSH

by Shani Zitter, Midreshet Lindenbaum

*Midreshet Lindenbaum is an advanced preuniversity Beit Midrash learning program that combines intensive Torah study with emphasis on religious and spiritual growth. Midreshet Lindenbaum students develop a strong connection to Eretz Yisrael and a greater love of Am Yisrael, as they engage in a deep appreciation of Torat Yisrael.*

## [11] **Divrei Menachem**

Parshat Yitro records for us the first stirrings of Jewish independence. No longer slaves, Bnei Yisra'el is now searching for leadership, for someone to answer their myriad of questions.

Yitro, who has thrown in his lot with the Jewish

people, is most acutely aware of the burden placed on his son-in-law Moshe, who alone bears the responsibility of answering these questions and judging the people. Ostensibly, Yitro advises Moshe to distribute the burden so that he should not be worn out from fatigue, but notably he adds, so that, "this entire people... shall arrive at its destination in peace."

In a period where we are so conscious of the state of our leadership, several comments alluded to by Yitro appear particularly pertinent. Firstly, Yitro calls upon Hashem, "to be with you [Moshe]"; then he addresses Moshe as the, "representative of G-d", who will teach the people the path in which they should go. Moreover, Moshe is to discern with divine insight (Rashi) rather than choose the judges who, among their various other commendable qualities, fear G-d and despise money (cf. Sh'mot 18:13-27).

O, that in our time our leaders would heed to these criteria so that we, too, might arrive in peace to our destination!

**Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff**

## **Towards better Davening and Torah Reading**

In the last of the Dibrot we find:

V'AVDO VA'AMATO V'SHORO VACHAMORO...

Note that a connective-VAV usually is voweled with a SH'VA NA, but before a CHATAF-PATACH it is voweled with a PATACH. V'AVDO - because the AYIN has a "regular" vowel, but VA-AMA- TO and VACHAMORO because the ALEF and the CHET have a CHATAF-PATACH under them. It doesn't change the meaning, but using the right vowel makes the words sound better. (Same for davening.)

### **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.*

### **The Korbanot - "Accoutrements" of Holiness**

There is a well-known Mishna, "Kol Hatadir Meichaveiro, Kodem Et Chaveiro" (Z'vachim 10:1) which roughly means, "Whatever Korbanot are more 'common' (i.e., they are offered more often in the Mikdash), take priority and are offered before the "less common" Korbanot. This pithy Mishnaic extract serves as an introduction to practical "Korbanics" because it explains the sequence that must be followed in the Mikdash when the Torah ordains that two or more types of Korbanot are to be offered on the same day. Basing itself on this rationale, the Mishna continues, "The T'midim (daily Olot brought every morning and afternoon) precede the Musafim (additional offerings).

The Musaf of Shabbat precede the Musafim of Rosh Chodesh. (Shabbat is weekly while Rosh Chodesh is monthly.) The Musaf of Rosh Chodesh precede the Musaf of Rosh Hashana, Rosh Chodesh being monthly and Rosh Hashana being but once a year. Therefore, when Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbat, the Tamid Shel Boker is offered first. It is followed by the Musaf of Shabbat and only then by the Rosh Chodesh Musaf.

However, Z'vachim 10:2 institutes another standard of measurement (for primarily private sacrifices) in determining which Korban has precedence. "Whatever [Korban] is more holy proceeds the other (Korbanot that are less holy)." Rashi, in essence, comments that a Korban that has an additional "indication" of holiness is intrinsically superior to a Korban that does not have this additional "indication" of holiness. For this reason, the "superior" Korban that possesses extra "accoutrements of holiness" has precedence in the order of sacrifice. The Mishna continues, "The blood of the Chatat (sin offering) precedes the blood of the Olah (burnt offering) because it effectuates atonement." The sacrificial blood placed on the four Karnot Hamizbei'ach, the unique blood application of the Chatat, atones for inadvertent transgressions of specific serious prohibitions. In contrast to the Chatat, the Kohein makes only two (non-atonement) blood-tossing applications on the altar for the Olah. He first tosses blood on the northeast and then the southwest corner of the altar. Even though the blood does splatter on the edges of all four sides, the blood is considered as tossed only twice, or in the language of the Sages, "Shtei Matanot Shehein Arba". Therefore, if a Kohein performing Avoda must choose between applying the blood of a Chatat or an Olah to the Mizbei'ach, he must do the Chatat first because the "blood of the Chatat" possesses these extra "accoutrements of holiness". However, "the Eivarim (cut up parts of the sacrificial animal) of an Olah precede the Emurim of the Chatat. They are burnt on the altar first because, (unlike the meat of the Chatat), the Eivarim of the Olah are "completely consigned to the flames". In contradistinction to the Olah which is completely devoted to G-d, aside from the Emurim, the meat of the Chatat is eaten by Kohanim, obviously a lower level of holiness.

The Mishna continues, "The Chatat precedes the Asham (the guilt offering) since its blood is sprinkled on the four Karnot Hamizbei'ach... While the Chatat and the Asham both atone for specific sins, the inadvertent sins atoned for by the Chatat are considerably more serious than the various transgressions atoned for by the various Ashamot. The Chatat has a visible extra accoutrement of holiness, which the Asham lacks; the blood application of the Chatat consists of four applications while the Asham, similar to the Olah, only has two blood applications. "The Asham precedes the Toda (thanksgiving offering) and the ram of the Nazarite because [the Asham is a member of the group of] Korbanot called Kodshei Kodashim – the sacrifices of a higher level of authority and the Toda and the ram of the Nazarite are only Kodashim Kalim, sacrifices with a lower level of sanctity. "The Toda and the ram of the Nazarite precede the Shelamim (peace offering) since they are eaten on the same day and require a bread offering." Interestingly, even though the Kohein tosses blood on the corners of the altar twice for Shelamim (and the Korban Toda which in reality is a

particular type of Shelamim), apparently, this is outweighed by the fact that the Toda and the ram of the Nazarite were eaten only on the day of slaughter and required a bread offering. The Shelamim was eaten on the day of slaughter, the following night and the next day and did not require a bread offering.

"Shelamim precedes the Bechor (firstling) because its blood offering requires a four-fold sprinkling (four in the context of "Shtei Matanot Shehein Arba" that is) and the laying on of hands (Semicha), and libation-offerings (Nesachim), and the waving of the breast and thigh." The fact that Shelamim are eaten "by any person" and that the Bechor "was eaten [only] by Kohanim" does not seem to be a factor and is outweighed by the Shelamim's extra "accoutrement of holiness", i.e., the more elaborate blood application and the additional Mitzvot associated with it. The next Mishna continues this theme. "The Bechor precedes Ma'aser [Beheima, animal tithes] since it (Bechor) is holy from the womb, and is eaten [only] by the Kohanim. Ma'aser precedes the Bird-Offerings since it is an animal offering, and its blood, and its sacrificial portions are most holy" (in the sense that they are burnt on the altar). This is very strange because Bird-Offerings can only be Chatot or Olot, both of which are Kodshei Kodashim, sacrifices of a higher level of sanctity, while Ma'aser is Kodashim Kalim, sacrifices of a lower level of sanctity. Even the meat of the Bird-Chatat which is eaten by the Kohanim is classified as Kodshei Kodashim and may be eaten only in the Azara, which is not the case with Ma'aser meat. This would indicate that the Bird-Chatat has a higher level of sanctity than Ma'aser whose meat is only Kodashim Kalim and eaten "by any man (i.e. a Yisrael, man or woman in a state of purity) anywhere in the City [Jerusalem] (Zevachim 5:8). However, the Emurim (sacrificial portions) of all animal sacrifices are burnt on the Mizbei'ach; on the other hand, not all Bird-Offerings are burnt on the Mizbei'ach. Bird-Olot are burnt on the Mizbei'ach, but Bird Chata'ot are not burnt on the Mizbei'ach. Since Ma'aser is a slaughtered sacrifice, in contradistinction to Bird-Offerings which are "dispatched" by Malika ("pinching of the head – the "bird equivalent" of Shechita), as well as the fact that two of its components are offered on the Mizbei'ach (blood and Emurim) in contradistinction to Bird-Offerings, where – at least sometimes – only one component (blood) is offered on the altar, outweigh the bird-offering's designation as Kodshei Kodashim. The next Mishna reads, "The Bird-Offerings precede the Meal-Offerings because they are included in the class of blood offerings ..."

**What does all this teach us? That everything in the Mikdash had its ordained order.**

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

# from page 3 PARSHA PIX

- 🕒 The Hearing ear of VAYISHMA YITRO, and Yitro heard...
- 🕒 B"H was said by Yitro when he heard all the things that G-d had done for Israel. From that we are taught that one makes a bracha on miracles
- 🕒 The scales represent the justice system, Yitro's suggestions, Moshe's response, etc.
- 🕒 Yitro's advice included the assignment of "captains" of groups of 1000, 100, 50, and 10 - represented by the Roman numerals M,C,L,X
- 🕒 Bnei Yisrael's arrival at Har Sinai is described by the word VAYICHAN, as Rashi puts it, we were like one person with one heart. That's the graphic under the ear.
- 🕒 The Shofar is one of the symbols of the Sinai experience, as we more than mention on Rosh HaShana.
- 🕒 The washing machine is for the people to clean their clothes during the preparatory days for Matan Torah
- 🕒 Wine cup is for Kiddush (ZACHOR)...
- 🕒 and the negation circle is for the prohibition of Melacha, including writing, watering plants, digging, sewing, building.
- 🕒 Do not steal (the Xed out thief)...
- 🕒 and do not go up to the Mizbei'ach with steps (the negated ladder) are two other prohibitions in the sedra.
- 🕒 Volcano represents Har Sinai smoking from the fire of G-d's presence "upon" it.
- 🕒 Tongs are from the haftara. An angel flew to the Heavenly Mizbei'ach and picked up a glowing coal in a pair of tongs. He then touched the coal to Yeshayahu's lips, representing a purifying process that would allow the prophet to speak on behalf of G-d
- 🕒 MEM SOFIT, which is better called a "Closed" MEM, appears in the haftara in the middle of a word, rather than at the end, where we are used to seeing that kind of MEM
- 🕒 Three dots and a short vertical line are the difference in the 4-commandment pasuk between the TAAMEI TACHTON form and the TAAMEI ELYON
- 🕒 Max Baer Jr. played Jethro (Yitro) for 9 years on the Beverly Hillbillies
- 🕒 1-18 is LOW on a roulette wheel, tea, saw as in LO TISA, commandment #3
- 🕒 If you number the images on the right of the PP 1-6 from top to bottom, you have the following visual TTriddles: 1, 1-2, 3, 4&6, 5.

## 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 (B'shalach) TTriddles:

#### [1] aside from 5 2s, there are 4 5s, a 3, and another 2

This is a description of the last pasuk in B'shalach, the one with five consecutive words of two letters each. KI YAD AL KEIS KAH. Aside from those five words, the pasuk has four 5-letter words, one 3-letter word and another 2-letter word.

#### [2] only twice in Tanach - this week's sedra and haftara

In creating TTriddles, we often pick a word in the sedra and search Tanach to see how many times the same word occurs. The word this time was VAYAHOM (or VAYAwHAWM in Ashkenazic pronunciation), describing the reaction of the Egyptian camp to the experience of their chariot wheels bogging down and falling off in the seabed. The word seemed on the rare side, and so it proved. One other occurrence - in the haftara of Parshat B'shalach, from the book of Shoftim. G-d caused that same confounding and confusion with Sisra, his charioteers, and his whole army, causing them to flee from Barak and his army. They were pursued to the last man and killed by sword, except for Sisra (correctly pronounced SI-S'RA, not Sis-ra), who was killed by the tent peg wielded by Yael.

#### [3] Had he been Jewish, where might Sisra's funeral have been?

This was a TTriddle born from its answer, Jeopardy style. The answer is a word in the haftara - SHAMGAR. The TTriddle is the question.

#### [4] They are in the coccyx position

The coccyx is "a small triangular bone at the base of the spinal column" of humans and tailless apes. Being at the bottom of a column, it makes it the location of CHEIL PAR'O (Par'o's army), which are the last words at the bottom of the column in a Sefer Torah. The next column is the SHIRA column, headed by the word HABA'IM.

#### [5] baked bean curd - when?

Friday. Erev Shabbat, that is. On that day each year during the wandering in the Midbar, the MN (mahn, manna) fell in double amounts, and the people were told to eat on that day what they needed and the rest was to be prepared for Shabbat. Cook what you cook and bake what you bake - EIT ASHER TOFU EIFU... Tofu? Yes, baked bean curd. Friday.

#### [6] Bob Dylan's featured number from Bringing it All Back Home (f)

The Dylan song referred to in the TTriddle is Mr. Tambourine Man. (f) means female, so that would be Mrs. Tambourine Woman, viz. Miriam.

#### [7] The Ramón José Trilogy

Come to think of it, most TTriddles are created with the answer coming first. Sometimes, the resulting TTriddle is cute and easily solvable. Sometimes it stretches even the most warped (meant in a good, positive way) minds. But we try. This one started from the fact that B'SHALACH has the same root in its name as two other sedras, VAYISHLACH and SH'LACH. The three sedras make up a SENDER TRILOGY. Ramon Jose Sender (1902-82) was a Spanish novelist, essayist, and educator whose works deal with Spanish history and social issues.

#### [8] twice in the AM, once in the PM

Sh'mot 15:11, MI CHAMOCHA... MI KAMOCHA... is a pasuk that we say twice in Shacharit - once in AZ YASHIR (where it comes from in the first place) and then again in the GEULA bracha after SH'MA (and juxtaposed to the AMIDA. In the evening, we say it once in Maariv in the first of the two post-Sh'ma brachot, GA'AL YISRA'EL.

#### [9] Yosef was Yocheved's alter ego?

This TTriddle was a twist of a "Bible riddle" found on [www.anvari.org/fun/Ethnic\\_Jewish/Bible\\_Riddles.html](http://www.anvari.org/fun/Ethnic_Jewish/Bible_Riddles.html) It's corny, but it lent itself to this TTriddle. At the beginning of B'shalach, the Torah tells us that Moshe took Yosef's remains with him out of Egypt in fulfillment of promises Yosef extracted from Bnei Yisrael. The words in the pasuk are: VAYIKACH MOSHE (and Moshe took) ET ATZMOT (the bones of) YOSEF IMO (correct reading: YOSEF with him); TTriddle mis-reading: YOSEF HIS MOTHER. If Yoesf was Moshe's mother, as was Yocheved, that makes Yosef the alter ego of Yocheved. The question mark at the end of the TTriddle says: Not really.

## This week's TTriddles:

#### [1] 2 the same, 2 almost, all in B'reishit

#### [2] HaTorah: Significant theme of Yitro, and what else?

#### [3] Rav Yitzchok Summer's place

#### [4] Moshe & Yitro, each of us & others

### Plus the Visual TTriddles