



HEBREW

Eliezer ben Yehuda's birthday is the 21st of Tevet. For that reason this week is designated the week of the Hebrew Language.

If you go to the Kanyon be sure to notice the big signs in Hebrew with word games, tongue twisters and other language trivia. These gimmicks are not to make someone money - but to endear the Hebrew language to all of us. Instead of saying "hi" or "bye" in Hebrew, words borrowed from other languages we should say "Shalom" a very nice Hebrew equivalent.

That's easy for me to say - I write a column in English - not in Hebrew. (Even the Torah verses aren't in Hebrew letters.)

What is the connection with this weeks Torah portion.

The Rabbi's teach that the - the zechut that allowed the Jews to be redeemed although they were on a low spiritual level similar to the Egyptians was "LO SHINU SH'MAM, L'SHONAM, UMALBUSHAM" they didn't change their name (they had Hebrew/Jewish ones) their language (Hebrew) and their clothing.

This is the week to make an effort to

talk more Hebrew, listen to a shiur in Hebrew. I'm all for speaking English (my job in the family is to remind my married children to speak English to each other and to the grandchildren so they will "have the same opportunities as you did.") "English, English English" is heard constantly from my mouth. And yes I believe that one should know as many languages as possible - Mordechai, as all members of the Sanhedrin, understood 70. But we must know Hebrew just as well, if not better than the others. We must feel comfortable with it - how else can we truly express ourselves in our Hebrew prayers.

This week is an opportunity to work on this area. לדבר רק עברית א

Ed. note: As of publication deadline, we have not received a recipe from Rakel for this column. So we started thinking of an appropriate recipe for us to attach to the D'var Torah. Seven of the ten plagues are in Va'eira, so that's where we started thinking. BLOOD? No, big big prohibition. Frogs legs? No. Lice? Not a kosher insect. Only some locust would qualify - but ARBEH is in next week's sdra. Wild animals? None are kosher. Dever made the kosher animals of the Egyptians sick, which would probably render them Treifot. Boils? - we did a pun with that in the ParshaPix already. See there. BARAD, hail. Only possibility. Barad is what we call the snow cones, slushy icy drinks with loads of sugar and food coloring. So, no recipe this week. YET...