

# Ki Tisa

21st of 54 sedras;  
9th of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 245.17 lines in a Torah (8th)

14 Parshiot; 10 open, 4 closed

139 p'sukim (10th), 1st in Sh'mot

2002 words (5th), 1st in Shmot

7424 letters (8th), 1st in Sh'mot

Large sedra in general plus relatively long p'sukim, which explains the jump in rank from 10th for p'sukim to 5th for words. Only 4 other sedra have more than 2000 words.

## MITZVOT

7 mitzvot; 4 positives, 3 prohibitions

9 mitzvot; 4 pos, 5 prohibitions

9 doesn't seem like very many mitzvot, but only 17 of the other 53 sedras (less than a third) have more mitzvot



[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

# Kohen - First Aliya

## 45 p'sukim - 30:11-31:17

There are three whole sedras that have fewer p'sukim than the first Aliya of Ki Tisa (can you name them without checking?). It's the longest First Aliya in the Torah, by far (but not the longest for Monday, Thursday, and previous Shabbat Mincha reading, since we don't read all of this first Aliya at those times - Eikev's is the longest in that category, or Mas'ei according to the opinion that we should read all of the "travelog" - also something to challenge othersw at your Shabbat table).

[P> 30:11 (6)] The first 6 p'sukim of the sedra are the portion of the Mitzva of the Silver Half-Shekel [105,A171 31:13], which is also read as the Maftir for Parshat Sh'kalim.

## MitzvaWatch

The silver half-shekel was used to count the People and to create the fund for the purchase of communal offerings throughout the year, as well as other sacred needs of the community. The half-shekel was required of males from age 20 and up. It was optional for women. (Since the half-shekels were used to count the standing army, it was necessary to keep separate records of the optional contributions of women. Nonetheless, women could fulfill this mitzva.) Although Kohanim were also required to give a half-shekel, they were not forced by the courts in the way that non-kohanim were, as a courtesy to their standing and function in society. Sh'kalim were NOT accepted from non-Jews. (There were funds in the Beit HaMikdash to which a non-Jew may contribute, but NOT the half-

shekel. It is sort of like membership dues in Klal Yisrael - for members only.) Collection took place in Adar, so that the fund would be ready for Nissan, the beginning of the "Beit HaMikdash year".

The mitzva applies during the time of the Beit HaMikdash, when even Jews living abroad contribute(d).

Without the Beit HaMikdash, we do not perform the mitzva, but we have commemorative practices, namely the reading of Parshat Sh'kalim (on the Shabbat of or right before Rosh Chodesh Adar (Sheni), which was when Sh'kalim were "announced") and the giving Zeicher L'Machatzit HaShekel before Megila reading (there is a connection between our mitzva of Sh'kalim and the sh'kalim that Haman promised the king in return for permission to kill the Jews in the kingdom).

We can say that participation in the mitzva of the Half-Shekel indicated that a person wanted to be part of Klal Yisrael, thereby including the individual in the atonement of the People.

Remember: Today we don't give Machatzit HaShekel, we just commemorate it. This is an important distinction.

**[P> 30:17 (5)]** The next portion deals with the Laver and its stand (KIYOR V'CHANO), for the Kohanim to wash their hands and feet before their sacred Avoda **[106,A204 30:19]**. A kohen who does not wash (sanctify) his hands and feet before doing "service" in the Beit HaMikdash is liable to "death from Heaven" and the korban he has brought is invalid.

**What might this say to us?** Our Sages have commanded us to wash our hands before eating a bread-meal. There are several p'sukim in the Torah that are considered to be the inspiration for the mitzva to wash our hands. This is one of them, based on the famous concept that our (dining) table is like the Altar. We are challenged to elevate the mundane act of eating and invest it with a spirituality which is the hallmark of Judaism and a Torah way of life.

Before we approach our "Altar" to serve G-d, we too wash our hands. Just like the Kohen. Well, not really. We wash hands only - not our feet. And more importantly, not with the same penalty for not washing properly (thank G-d). Could you imagine a Heavenly death penalty for not washing for HaMotzi? No. But the comparison SHOULD prompt some serious reflection on our part, and hopefully, an improvement of the way we relate to this everyday mitzva.

Concerning our Netilat Yadayim, a person should examine his own observance of mitzvot. First, am I careful about washing for HaMotzi? I am? Good. Am I careful to dry my hands BEFORE washing, so that the water has its intended purpose of removing ritual impurity in the best way. And do I properly dry my hands after washing? And do I complete the bracha before my hands are completely dry? Am I careful not to speak between washing and HaMotzi? Of course. Good. I don't talk until after HaMotzi (actually, there should be no talking until after the first swallow of the first bite of the HaMotzi).

But silence can also be an interruption (less severe). The point is, to THINK about what we do and why we do it, and HOW we do it. Washing for HaMotzi is an example of a mitzva that is easy to take for granted, to go on "automatic pilot". Let's wash better, bench better, daven better, do mitzvot better, treat each other better. Let's be thinking and feeling Torah Jews all across the board.

Next follows the command to take specific quantities of various spices, mix them with olive oil, and prepare the special "anointing oil". The Kohen Gadol and kings of Israel are to be anointed with this oil [107,A35 30:31], as were the sacred vessels of the Mikdash. It is forbidden to use this oil for personal use [108, L84 30:32], or even to dare dishonor the Mikdash by copying the spiced oil for personal use [109,L83 30:32].

[S> 30:34 (5)] We are next commanded to compound the K'toret, the incense offered twice daily in the Mikdash. The mitzva of K'toret is presented and counted in T'tzaveh; here we have the prohibition of compounding the same formula for personal use [110, L85 30:37].

[S> 31:1 (11)] G-d tells Moshe that B'tzalel shall be in charge of the actual construction and fashioning of the Mishkan and its contents. His assistant shall be Aholiav of Dan, and a team of skilled artisans shall join in the work. All the objects in and of the Mishkan are enumerated, as the task-list of B'tzalel and his team.

[P> 31:12 (6)] At this point, G-d reminds Moshe that the Shabbat may

not be violated, even for the construction of the Mishkan. (We might have thought otherwise, due to the sacredness of the endeavor, hence, this reminder.) Shabbat is the eternal sign between G-d and the People of Israel.

**SDT** Shabbat and Mikdash "rub elbows" several times in the Torah. They complement each other, in that Mikdash represents the Sanctity of Place, and Shabbat represents the Sanctity of Time. One may not build the Mikdash on Shabbat, but the Shabbat "steps aside" for the Mishkan to function. And we learn many rules and details for Shabbat from the construction of the Mishkan. There is an equation of sorts, certainly a link established, with the twice-occurring pasuk - My Shabbats you shall preserve, and my Mikdash you shall revere.

**SDT** We know that Shabbat steps aside for Piku'ach Nefesh (life-threatening situations) and for Communal Offerings in the Beit HaMikdash (and for testifying for Kidush HaChodesh). That these things are able to be done on Shabbat, we learn from specific sources in the text of the Torah. That Shabbat steps aside for ANYTHING is learned from the passage here - ACH ET SHABTOTAI TISHMORU. The word ACH - but, however - is generally considered to be limiting. My Shabbats you shall keep, would mean, with no exceptions. ACH - indicates that there are situations when that which is usually forbidden on Shabbat is to be done. Again, what the specific things are, we learn from other p'sukim. The ACH here teaches us the general state

of affairs - Shabbat can be "violated", in specific cases. [Note It is not the word ACH that teaches us its meaning; it is our Oral Law that teaches us the meaning of the ACH, when it applies and when it doesn't.]

## **Levi** - Second Aliya 47 p'sukim - 31:18-33:11

The longest Second Aliya in the Torah, tied with that of Parshat Pinchas in number of p'sukim, but longer in words and letters.

**[S> 31:18 (7)]** The Torah now returns to telling us of the last part of Matan Torah, which was "interrupted" (so to speak) by the parshiyot of the Mishkan, i.e. all of T'ruma and T'tzaveh and the first third of Ki Tisa. G-d gives Moshe the Tablets of stone... (meanwhile, back in the camp...) When the People saw (or thought) that Moshe was delayed in returning from Sinai, they feared that they would be leaderless, and they appealed to Aharon to do something. Exactly what he did is the subject of different opinions, but his delaying tactic resulted in the emergence of the Golden Calf. Most of the people were confused and did nothing (which was part of the problem), but 3000 men arose and reveled in the Calf, declaring it the god of Israel.

**[P> 32:7 (8)]** G-d told Moshe to look at what the People were doing in his absence. G-d indicates to Moshe that the People are deserving of destruction.

The first part of Moshe's reaction is PRAYER. (This isn't always first on his list, but it is here. Part of the greatness of Moshe Rabeinu is his

knowing when to pray long, when short, and when to take action immediately and leave prayer for later. This is something that we should try to learn from him). His petition before G-d starts with the practical argument, "What will Egypt say?". Then Moshe mentions the Avot and asks G-d to forgive the people because of them, and the promises G-d had made to them. The combination of these two points seems to succeed, because Moshe is "rewarded" with G-d's expression of regret (so to speak) for what He had said He would do to the people.

**[P> 32:15 (21)]** Next, Moshe turns and descends the mountain with the Luchot in his hands. When he sees the calf, the Tablets either slip from his hands and break or he intentionally smashes them (opinions differ). He seizes the calf, destroys it, spreads its ashes over the water, and prepares a potion for the people to drink. He asks Aharon what happened.

He calls to those "who are on G-d's side"; the Leviyim rally to his call and kill those who dared "worship" the Calf.

On the following day (the exact sequence of events is debated by commentators), Moshe castigates the people, tells them of the enormity of their sin. Then he tells them that he is returning to G-d (so to speak) up the mountain, to continue pleading Israel's case before G-d. G-d promises to punish those at fault.

**[S> 33:1 (11)]** As a result of the Golden Calf, G-d distances Himself from the People. He does, however, reiterate His promise to give them (us)

the Land. And, He tells Moshe to have the people continue towards Eretz Yisrael, but without G-d in their midst. The People are distraught by G-d's words. Moshe too removes himself and his tent from the midst of the camp. Moshe remains in direct contact with G-d... and Yehoshua was constantly in the Tent.

## **Shlishi** - Third Aliya 5 p'sukim - 33:12-16

[P> 33:12 (5)] Moshe argues that G-d must remain in the midst of the People in order to demonstrate that He truly chose us. One senses the unique relationship between G-d and Moshe that permits Moshe to speak to Him the way he does. At the same time that our relationship with G-d was changing because of the Golden Calf, Moshe was asking G-d for a more intimate understanding of the Divine Essence.

## **R'vi'i** - Fourth Aliya 7 p'sukim - 33:17-23

[P> 33:17 (7)] G-d agrees to Moshe's request, because of His special feelings towards Moshe. Then Moshe asks that G-d reveal more of Himself to him (Moshe). G-d tells Moshe that such a revelation is impossible, but that Moshe will be able to experience more of G-d's essence. This, with the understanding that it won't be everything. The p'sukim in this portion of very enigmatic.

**Here's a thought...** Is it not strange that specifically when Bnei Yisrael is/are in the midst of a very rough time that Moshe asks G-d to reveal Himself to

Moshe more than He already has? Perhaps Moshe had a bit of a "spiritual panic" in that G-d, Who had been so close to the people at Sinai was about to distance Himself from us. And Moshe feared that he too would lose out. Mixed with his efforts on behalf of the people, Moshe wants to safeguard and enhance the relationship that he has with HaShem. This will also help in his pleading for and leading the people.

## **Chamishi** 5th Aliya 9 p'sukim - 34:1-9

[P> 34:1 (26)] This portion (also read on Fast Days) contains the 13 Divine Attributes. One can say that not only did G-d forgive the People for the Golden Calf, but He also gave them (us) the method of approaching Him in prayer. Not only are we to recite these 13 Attributes, but we must emulate as many of them as possible. "Just as He is merciful, so too must we be merciful..." In this way we will KNOW His Attributes, live by them, and not just mechanically recite them.

G-d next tells Moshe to cut new stones to replace the ones he has broken. Moshe again ascends Sinai to receive the Luchot, the Attributes, and Divine Forgiveness. This 40 day period - Elul through Yom Kippur, become days of special closeness between G-d and us for all times.

## **Shishi** - Sixth Aliya 17 p'sukim - 34:10-26

Our position relative to other nations is conditional upon our keeping of the mitzvot. We are forbidden to make

covenants with the nations in Eretz Yisrael. Specifically, we are forbidden to eat or drink of idolatrous offerings [111 34:15 - this is the only mitzva counted by the Chinuch that is not on Rambam's list (there is one Rambam mitzva that the Chinuch doesn't count)]. All this to avoid falling to their temptations and to avoid inter-marriage. We must destroy their idols.

We are commanded to keep Pesach in the Spring. (This is one of the p'sukim responsible for our two Adars - 7 times in each 19-year cycle - not as rigid a pattern when we set the Calendar by Sanhedrin). In a direct link to the Exodus, we have three types of B'CHOR mitzvot - human (who must be redeemed), kosher farm animals (which are given as a gift to a kohen and may not be redeemed, but are holy and to be brought as a korban), and donkey (which should be redeemed - PIDYON PETER CHAMOR, with an unpleasant and less preferred alternate) Shavuot and Sukkot complete the cycle of the Pilgrimage Festivals; males are required to appear at the Beit HaMikdash (and not empty-handed). This mitzva (and others) guarantees our hold of the Land. Shabbat and the Land's Shabbat, Sh'mita [112, A135 34:21], are mentioned.

Korban Pesach may not be brought in the Mikdash while its owner owns Chametz, nor may we leave Korban Pesach over until the morning.

Bikurim are to be brought to the Mikdash and meat-milk mixtures (that are cooked together) may not be eaten [113,L187 34:26].

## MitzvaWatch

The Torah prohibits the cooking of meat in milk, three times. We are taught that there are three prohibitions of meat and milk mixtures that are cooked together: the act of cooking meat with milk, per se, regardless of what will be done with the food, the eating of such mixtures, and the deriving benefit of any kind from such cooked mixtures. Rabbinic law further prohibited the eating of mixtures of milk and meat even if they have not been cooked.

There is a midrash (in Midrash P'li'a) that says that when G-d told Moshe that the Written Torah would contain the prohibition of LO T'VASHEIL G'DI BACHALEIV IMO, and He explained to Moshe the laws and details of Meat in Milk which were to be transmitted to the people orally, Moshe asked G-d's permission to write LO T'VASHEIL BASAR B'CHALAV, thou shalt not cook meat in milk. [One presumes that Moshe Rabeinu foresaw that the enigmatic phrase G'DI BACHALEIV IMO might confuse some people. It would seem to some that the Torah only prohibits cooking meat in the milk of the mother of the animal from which the meat came. This is not correct - meat and milk cannot be cooked together by Torah law, even if the animals from which the meat and milk came didn't even know each other. This actually happens often; people do misunderstand the mitzva because of the wording.] G-d replied to Moshe, You write these specific words! The

Written Torah is intentionally worded by G-d just the way it is, and the Oral Law is the faithful transmission of the explanations of the mitzvot, as G-d taught Moshe. This is a very important part of Torah Judaism and needs constant re-enforcement. One still can ask why G-d chose a specific wording. We will try to make some suggestions on that.

## **Sh'VII** Seventh Aliya 9 p'sukim - 34:27-35

[P> 34:27 (9)] G-d commands Moshe to write the Torah (and not the Oral Law and explanations, which must be transmitted orally). Moshe spent 40 days and nights on Har Sinai, not eating or drinking, during which time, the second set of Luchot were written.

When Moshe came down from the Mountain, he was unaware of the spiritual radiance that glowed on his face. Aharon and the People were afraid to approach. Moshe called to Aharon and the Leaders of the People, and spoke to them words of Torah and their explanation. Then all the people came to Moshe to be taught what G-d had spoken to him at Sinai.

When Moshe finished speaking to the people, he covered his face with a hood (mask/veil), which he removed whenever he spoke to G-d. He would then transmit G-d's words to the people.

This would be repeated over and over again. Moshe would cover his face until the time he communicated with G-d.

## **Maftir** - 2nd Torah 22 p'sukim; Bamidbar 19

Parshat Para is read on the Shabbat before Parshat HaChodesh which presents us with the mitzvot of Korban Pesach, because the most common and important time for ritual purification on the part of most of the people was around the beginning of Nissan, as part of one's preparation to be in Jerusalem for Pesach and to bring and eat KP. Parshat Para from Parshat Chukat, contains the mitzvot of Para Aduma - that is, the preparing of the potion from the ashes of the Red Heifer, the general mitzva of the concept of ritual limpurity from contact with a corpse, and the mitzva of purifying oneself with the Para Aduma potion.

## **Haftara** 33 p'sukim Yechezkeil 36:16-38

S'faradim end 2 p'sukim earlier

The Haftara takes the concept (from the Maftir) of an individual becoming TAMEI and requiring purification with special water as an analogy for the people of Israel who defiled themselves with the sin of idolatry and other sins, and their (our) need for a purification process with "G-d's spiritual waters of the Torah".

[In Va'eira, we find G-d's promise to take us unto Him and then He will bring us to Eretz Yisrael, in the haftara, the order is switched.]

There is a "hard" message in this haftara, among others.

G-d expresses His great disap-

pointment with the people of Israel. And He punished them (us) very harshly. But then He says that His name was being desecrated among the nations of our dispersion, because the nations mockingly asked about the great nation of G-d and how low it had sunk.

So G-d decides, so to speak, and announces that He will redeem the people of Israel, even if they (we) don't deserve it, for His own sake.

This is hard reproach, indeed. But rather than discourage us, it should spur us on to put the lie to this prophecy - so to speak - by being worthy of redemption on our own merit.

The last p'sukim refer to a multitude of sheep - for sacrifices... This is a reminder of the large number of sheep brought to Yerushalayim for Korban Pesach.

## **PROBING the PROPHETS**

The navi Yechezkel delivers his words of prophecy to the exiled nation living in Bavel. His prophecies deal with the events that were - or would be - taking place during his time, including the punishments that would befall the enemies of Israel. He also prophesies of "Bayit Shlishi" the future, eternal, Beit HaMikdash and its service. Clearly, however, he spends time revealing to the nation those sins that caused them to be exiled and a plea for them to return to Hashem.

The special haftara read this Shabbat deals directly with tum'ah and tahara, defilement and purification, which is the theme of our maftir reading, the laws of the Para Aduma. Yechezkel explains to the nation that the return to their land is not a "merit-based" reward but, rather, an act meant to prevent any further desecration of G-d's name amongst the nations. The return would have the effect of sanctifying His holy name before the nations of the world and also of reinvigorating the spirit of the Jewish nation. Significantly, the return to the Land of Israel and the ongoing life there would then lead to the purification of the people and an economic resurgence in the land. The prophecy ties in closely to the message of the very next chapter of Sefer Yechezkel, the vision of the dry bones that would be brought back to life with a new spirit infused into them.

And yet, although the haftara is remembered for its message of

purification, it is the other message that is especially moving in this generation. The nevu'a that reassures us of our return to the land also explains that only once we are back, can complete purification take place. We have seen in our own time the fruition of the predicted economic surge and blossoming of the desert as well as the rebuilding of the once-desolate cities.

We now look forward to the resurgence of our spiritual values, a resurgence that has already begun, so that we will be able to witness the realization of the prophet's final words V'YAD'U KI ANI HASHEM, the world will know that Hashem is the One G-d.

*Probing the Prophets, weekly insights into the Haftara, is written by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler, author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)*

## **Eretz Yisrael in the Haftara**

by Rabbis Ethan Eisen and Tuly Weisz

### **Parshat Para - The True Kiddush Hashem of the 1935 Aliya Olympics**

*This Dvar Torah is in honor of the Bar Mitzva of Avika Weichholz, son of Devori & Dani Weichholz of Ramat Shilo - Mazal Tov!*

In 1935, hundreds of Jewish athletes from 28 different countries traveled to Tel Aviv to participate in the Second Maccabiah games. Jewish pride swelled around the world as first-rate competitors showcased their talent. The British Mandatory government put up strong opposition to these games, for fear of illegal Jewish immigration in contravention of the White Paper. In truth,

their fears were well-founded, as many athletes from Germany and Poland, as well as the entire 350-strong Bulgarian delegation - who sent home just their equipment - remained in Israel. As a result, the Second Maccabiah games were dubbed the "Aliyah Olympics".

As outlined in the Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzva 295-296), we often think about the concepts of "Kiddush Hashem" and "Chilul Hashem" as they relate to individual actions as a reflection of God's presence in the world. We proudly declare a "Kiddush Hashem" when a Jewish athlete wins a big game, and we shake our heads bemoaning the "Chilul Hashem" when reading about a Jewish criminal in the newspaper. The haftara for Parshat Para (Yechezkel 36:16-38), however, provides a very different understanding of Kiddush and Chilul Hashem, particularly as it relates to the larger Jewish community.

Yechezkel lived in exile following the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash. Hashem appeared to the prophet grieving over the sad state of the Jewish People, dispersed to the four corners of the earth, "I scattered them among the nations... but when they came to those nations, they caused My holy name to be profaned, VAYCHAL'LU ET SHEIM KODSHI, in that it was said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, yet they had to leave His land' (36:20)".

The Navi repeats the phrase "Chilul Hashem" twice more in the subsequent two verses before offering the definition of "Kiddush Hashem": "I will sanctify My great name, VIKEDASHTI ET SH'MI HAGADOL ...I will take you from

among the nations and gather you from all the countries, and I will bring you back to your own land" (v. 24). Yechezkel teaches that on a communal level, there can be no greater desecration of God's name than to witness the Jewish people in exile, dispossessed of their Promised Land. On the other hand, the ultimate sanctification of God's name is the Jewish people's settlement of the Land of Israel, in fulfillment of the covenant with our forefathers. Indeed, Rashi (v. 20) quotes a Midrash that, "Hashem accompanies the Jews in exile and overhears the nations saying that these are God's people yet even He can't save them" and bring them back to their homeland.

The lesson of this Midrash is confirmed by history. Christianity's early Church fathers came to this exact conclusion when they saw the lowly state of the Jew and determined that they had superseded us, following the destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash. God had, chas v'shalom, rejected the "Old Israel" for the "New Israel" and replaced the "Old Testament" with the "New Testament". This doctrine, known as "Replacement Theology," is the ultimate Chilul Hashem and has led directly to centuries of Christian anti-Semitism and the loss of countless Jewish lives.

The founding of the State of Israel and the return of the Jewish people from exile forced many Christian theologians to rethink, and ultimately reject, Replacement Theology. It became clear to not only Jews, but non-Jews as well, that God had kept His promise to the

Jewish people as promised by our passage in Yechezkel as well as many other places throughout Tanach.

The haftara continues with the pasuk connecting it to Parshat Para, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean... Then you shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, and you shall be My people and I will be your God" (v. 28). As we read Parshat Para we are not only recalling the ancient ritual of the red heifer in preparation of the upcoming holiday of Pesach Nowadays especially, we can have in mind the purity necessary for the final Beit HaMikdash and the great Kiddush Hashem occurring with the return of the Jewish people from all over the world back to Israel.

Surely, we should all be proud when Jewish sports stars impress the world with their athletic feats. The Second Maccabiah "Aliyah Olympics", however, were a true "Kiddush Hashem" through the fulfillment of the verse in our haftara, "I will sanctify My great name... I will take you from among the nations and gather you from all the countries, and I will bring you back to your own land" (v. 24).

## THE COMMONEST PASUK

[Yes, we know it's most common, but commonest is more fun.]

Parshat Ki Tisa begins with the pasuk, VAYDABEIR HASHEM EL MOSHE LEIMOR. So do nine other sedras. This is the most common pasuk in the Torah. It occurs 69 times in Sh'mot, Vayikra, and Bamidbar. And nowhere else in Torah or Tanach. There is one other longer pasuk that begins with VYEML.

Among the three books of Chumash with this pasuk, Bamidbar has 32, Vayikra 27, and Sh'mot, only 11. Emor is the top sedra, with 11 VYEMLs. No other sedra has more than 6. There are 31 sedras in this range, 8 of which have no VYEML.

There are many variations to this pasuk, but this has been a picture of VYEML only. If we search for VAYDABEIR HASHEM EL MOSHE, for example, we find another 21 p'sukim.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It is well-known that Moshe's name is conspicuously missing from the sedra of T'tzaveh.

Among the reasons suggested by commentaries, is the statement that Moshe made to G-d in this week's sedra of Ki Tisa. Moshe says to G-d that if He won't forgive the people for the sin of the golden calf, then

...מִיִּזְנֵי זֶה מִסְפָּרָה אֲשֶׁר פְּתַבְּתָּ:

erase me from the Book which you have written. Rabeinu Bechaye says that the negative suggestion of a wise person (a great person, a tzadik) will (can) stand, even when made conditional (and the condition did not come true) and even on himself.

So even though G-d spared the People, He did erase Moshe's name in token form, from one sedra. That sedra is T'tzaveh - some say - because it most often falls around 7 Adar, Moshe's birthday and yahrzeit.

Others suggest that G-d was reluctant, so to speak, to erase Moshe's name, so He didn't do it right away (meaning from Ki Tisa), but waited through the whole cycle of the Torah and did it in the last possible sedra (think of the cycle starting from Ki Tisa), namely T'tzaveh.

Other m'forshim give a positive explanation for Moshe's name not occurring in T'tzaveh. Moshe, in his modesty and his love for his brother Aharon, stepped back out of the spotlight, so to speak, so Aharon would have center stage in the sedra that features his special garments of Kohein Gadol, which were made L'CHAVOD ULTIFERET, for the honor and glory of Hashem and/or the people and/or Aharon.

Others give this last reason a different spin by saying that Moshe was originally supposed to be the Kohen Gadol, but because of his hesitations to go to Mitzrayim to take the

people out, G-d took the kehuna from Moshe and gave it to Aharon. It would therefore be embarrassing (so to speak) for Moshe to be named as the one who was commanded to make and dress Aharon in the special garments of the Kohen Gadol.

So far, you have read the background to the following details, some or all of which you might not know.

First, let's clear up a misunderstanding that some people have: T'tzaveh is the only sedra from Parshat Sh'mot until the end of the Torah that doesn't have Moshe's name. Not so! It's the only sedra in Sh'mot, Vayikra, and Bamidbar without his name. Since most of the Book of D'varim is Moshe speaking in first person, his name is relatively scarce in that Book. In fact, five of the 11 sedras in D'varim have no occurrences of his name: Eikev, R'ei, Shof'tim, Ki Tavo, and Nitzavim. Moshe's name occurs in the other 6 sedras of D'varim a total of 38 times.

Here's a picture of the Moshes in the Torah. His name occurs 647 or 648 times, 615 as Moshe and another 33 with a prefixed letter or two.

(There might be only 613 stand alone Moshe's, which would make it a significant number. We will have to recount to see.)

The Book of Sh'mot has 290 Moshes. Vayikra, only 85. Bamidbar has 234.

The most Moshe-filled sedra is Ki Tisa. His name occurs 49 times in the very sedra that he said to G-d: if not, erase me from your book. The next big Moshe sedras are Va'eira (47), B'haalot'cha (43), B'shalach (42), Yitro (38), Sh'mot (37).

On the other side of the list, it is interesting that not only does his name not occur in T'tzaveh, but T'ruma has only one occurrence, in its first pasuk. So from the first pasuk on T'ruma until the first pasuk in Ki Tisa, there is once one mention of Moshe's name.

Also on the bottom of the list are B'har (1), Tazri'a (2), K'doshim (2), and M'tzora, B'chukotai, Balak, D'varim, and Haazinu with 3 times each.

And it is interesting to note that the sedra from which Moshe's name is absent, has the greatest number of occurrences of the name Aharon. Of approx 300 times Aharon is mentioned in the Torah (some of those being b'nei Aharon, referring to kohanim in general rather than specifically Aharon), T'tzaveh has 37 Aharons. No other sedra has more than 26.