From the Torah Tidbits Statistics Department

One week late for Israel; just on time for Chutz LaAretz

The most common pasuk in the Torah is VAYDABEIR HASHEM EL MOSHE LEIMOR.

It occurs 69 times in the Torah - in the books of Sh'mot (10 times), Vayikra (27 times), and Bamidbar(32 times).

There are 31 sedras in these three books; 23 of them have this pasuk at least once.

To be specific, among those 23 sedras, 9 have the pasuk once; 3 have it twice; 3 have it thrice; 3 have it four times; 2 have it five times; 2 have it six times.

If you've been counting sedras, the previous paragraph accounts for 22 sedras. One left. And that is the point of this statistical report.

Parshat Emor has that pasuk 11 times. That's significantly more than any other sedra.

This report does not include any variations of the pasuk - there are many (most common: V'EL AHARON; also this/next week's B'HAR SINAI, and a few other locations before the LEIMOR). If the search drops LEIMOR, there are 22 more results including one in Haazinu). Also not included, VAYOMER HASHEM... (there are five).
It doesn't even include the one time the words of the pasuk are followed by ANI HASHEM, DABEIR EL PAR'O...
Just the 5-word pasuk - 69 times.

The First - and probably Only TT Stats - Gimatriya (sort of) - Pirkei Avot - Math challenge Column

This first part started with the computer-assisted statistics work for the column on page 43. After counting up the VAYDABEIR HASHEMs, I checked the VAYOMER HASHEMs, and then VAYDABEIR ELOKIM and VAYOMER ELOKIM. VAYOMER ELOKIM occurs 21 times in the Torah (another 4 times in the rest of Tanach). Of the 21 times in the Torah, 9 are in the account of Creation in the first perek of B'reishit. That brought to mind the first mishna in Avot 5, which is this week's perek in Israel. That brought to mind the fact that we've been neglecting Pirkei Avot in Torah Tidbits, hence the following.

But before that, let's look at the other 12 VAYOMER ELOKIMs in the Torah. In the first four, G-d is speaking to No'ach. Then, four times to Avraham. Twice to Yaakov (once as Yaakov, once as Yisrael). Once to Moshe. And once to Bil'am.

Now back to B'reishit. Avot 5:1 says: With ten (Divine) Sayings, the world was created... Commentators have no problem counting Sayings number 2 through 9. VAYOMER ELOKIM... let there be light, Raki'a amidst the waters, let the waters gather (forming seas and dry land), vegetation, heavenly bodies, sea life and birds, land animals, and humans.

Number 1 is B'REISHIT BARA ELOKIM EIT

HASHAMAYIM V'EIT HAARETZ. This is counted as a MAAMAR (Divine saying) based on the pasuk in T'hilim (33:6) - BIDVAR HASHEM SHAMAYIM NAASU... By the word of G-d were the heavens made; And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

As to the 10th saying, there are three candidates. B'reishit 1:29, VAYOMER ELOKIM... whereby He gives humans dominance over nature. This too can be seen as part of Creation of the World. Or - 1:28, And G-d blessed them (the humans), VAYOMER LAHEM ELOKIM... be fruitful and multiply... this can be seen as the climax of Creation, by giving humans (and all animals) the ability to procreate, so that the world continues to exist. Or - 2:18, VAYOMER HASHEM ELOKIM... it is not good that ADAM should be alone... This, of course, led to the formation of WOMEN, the culmination of Creation.

Okay, that's the TT Stats and Pirkei Avot. Where's the Gimatriya and math challenge? Read on...

My 7th and 8th grade Rebbi was Rabbi Chaim Segal z"l, a very special person and teacher. Each student had a small note pad into which we would write down commentary and chidushim on the gemara we were learning. If one of the students would say something in class that was contained in one of the gemara's commentaries, the Rebbi would lavish praise on the student and tell us to write down what he said in our notepads. If the explanation was from the GR"A, let's say, we were to write both the GR"A and the name of

the boy who said what the GR"A said in class. Rabbi Segal explained that we didn't hear it or read it in the GR"A; we heard it from Yossi, so his name should be in your notes as well.

Why do I tell you this now? Because of that I want to share with you, which I saw in a small book called PUZZLE TOV! a collection of Jewish brainteasers, puzzles, and enigmas to drive you totally Meshuggeneh! by Peter Weisz. (Geffen Publishing House) I don't know if the following observation is original to the author, but it is he from whom I have taken it.

It is well-known (by those who know it well) that the number 26 is special in Judaism, as it is the gimatriya, the numeric value, of G-d's Four-Letter Name (YUD, HEI, VAV and HEI).

FYI, besides 'regular' gimatriya, there are other types of numeric value calculations, including MISPAR SIDURI, which assigns numbers to each letter in the alphabet according to its position in the sequence of letters. ALEF thru YUD are the same as 'regular' gimatria, namely 1-10. KAF, LAMED, MEM are 11, 12, and 13 in MISPAR SIDURI, rather than 20, 30, and 40, as in 'regular' gimatriya. TAV is 22, rather than 400.

Using MISPAR SIDUI for G-d's name results in the same 26, because His Name is composed of letters from ALEF thru YUD.

Now, let's use MISPAR SIDURI on the English alphabet. A=1 thru Z=26. Take the word GOD. G is the 7th letter in the alphabet, O the 15th, and D is the 4th.

The MISPAR SIDUI of GOD is 7+15+4 = 26.

Interesting, no? We make no further claim for this numeric match, other than it is interesting. But it is.

After pointing out the specialness of the number 26, PUZZLE TOV! author poses a math challenge. As do we.

Use the numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 once each, and three of the four basic math operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) once each, and form an expression that equals 26.

No other operations are permitted, and you cannot put two of the numbers together to form a two-digit number. Parentheses are allowed.

The first three correct solutions submitted to tt@ouisrael.org will win a musical CD.