

Va'etchanan

STATS

45th of 54 sedras; 2nd of 11 in D'varim

Written on 249 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank: 7th

21 Parshiyot; 5 open, 16 closed, rank: 7th (tied)

122 p'sukim - ranks 17th (2nd in D'varim)

same as Vayak'hel & Ki Tavo; Va'etchanan is larger

1878 words; ranks 10th (2nd in D'varim)

7343 letters; ranks 10th (2nd in D'varim)

Va'etchanan's p'sukim are longer than average, hence the jump from 17th to 10th in rank.

MITZVOT

12 of 613 mitzvot, 8 positive and 4 prohibitions and many more that are counted elsewhere

WORD of the MONTH cont. from p.2
A weekly TT feature to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby enhancing our appreciation of G-d's gift to us of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...

Yom Kippur, when many people say Kiddush L'vana (except the GR"A folk again), for after Tish'a b'Av, one should preferably break his fast first (and put on leather shoes, if possible) and then say Kiddush L'vana. This is not necessary for Yom Kippur.

If there will be a problem keeping a minyan together for KL because people are having their juice and cookies first (because root beer soda was unavailable), then KL can be said before breaking the fast.

The ARI Z"L felt that KL on Motza'ei Tish'a b'Av is a sign of belief and confidence in the forthcoming Geula, because the texts of KL speak of the restoration of the Moon to its original light, as a MASHAL to the restoration of Israel at the time of the Geula.

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

11 p'sukim - 3:23-4:4

[S> 3:23 (7)] Moshe Rabeinu continues his farewell words to the People. He tells them that he had asked G-d to rescind His decree banning Moshe from entry into the Land of Israel.

SDT: *The Baal Shem Tov commented that Moshe, who had learned the entire Torah, Written Word and Oral Law, from G-d Himself, used the term "You have begun to show me Your greatness..." The more one learns Torah, the more one learns about G-d, the more one will realize that he has just begun to understand Who G-d is.*

G-d refused this request and forbade Moshe to ask again. Moshe ascended a mountain from where he saw the Land. G-d then told him to transfer the authority of leadership to Yehoshua.

According to the Vilna Gaon's analysis of D'varim, this ends the first section of Moshe's message to the People.

[P> 4:1 (24)] He (Moshe) proceeds to review the laws and statutes (Torah and mitzvot) by which the people are now to live... in Eretz Yisrael.

Neither should the Torah be added to nor detracted from [these mitzvot are counted elsewhere].

Another warning against idolatry follows. Then, "And you who cling to G-d are all alive today". (The Gemara teaches that this is one of the many references to T'CHIYAT HAMEITIM in the Torah.)

MitzvaWatch

The twin prohibitions of neither adding nor subtracting from the Torah, are mentioned in Va'etchanan and again in R'ei (where they are counted among the 613). The Vilna Gaon points out that the plural form is used one time and the singular form is used in the other case. This, he says, alludes to two different aspects of these prohibitions. It is forbidden to add to or subtract from a particular mitzva - for example, one may not take 5 species or 3 species on Sukkot for the fulfillment of the mitzva of "Lulav & Etrog". Nor may one add or subtract to the total of the mitzvot. To treat a Rabbinic mitzva as a Torah law, or vice versa, would be an example of the other aspect of these prohibitions. The spirit of these prohibitions (if not the actual definitions) would include treating (and/or teaching) a CHUMRA as if it were required, or vice versa (claiming that something that is prohibited is "only" a chumra or custom). Aside from people who

intentionally do this (very wrong), it is more common to find people doing it one way or the other inadvertently, either because of ignorance or because of a sincere (but slightly misguided) desire to enhance the observance of mitzvot. This is especially important for parents and teachers of young children.

Don't say ASUR if you mean, strictly speaking it isn't actually forbidden, but it is considered a proper thing to abstain for doing such and such. It sounds more complicated, but it is more "honest" and therefore it is the more proper way to transmit Torah to your children and students. (Obviously, when a child is very young, you have to simplify matters. But don't forget to upgrade the child's level of understanding as he or she grows older.)

Levi - Second Aliya

36 p'sukim - 4:5-40

Once again, Moshe emphasizes that the mitzvot are meant to be kept in Eretz Yisrael. (This not only applies to Land-related mitzvot, but to the entire range of mitzvot.)

There is repeated reference in the book of D'varim, and especially in Parshat Va'etchanan, to Eretz Yisrael being THE reason for our having been taken out of Egypt, formed into a Nation, and given the Torah and mitzvot.

Prolonged exile has taught us that the Torah can be kept, must be kept, no matter where a Jew finds himself. This was one of the reasons that the Torah was given at Sinai, prior to entry into the Land. On the other

hand, one should not lose sight of the fact, repeated often by Moshe Rabeinu in D'varim, that G-d has always intended us to observe His mitzvot IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL. Are there more mitzvot to keep in Israel than outside? YES. But maybe more significantly, every mitzva - even those that are performed all over the world, can reach their full potential ONLY in Israel. This is a message that each of us has to realize, understand, and internalize. Then we must spread this message to family and friends abroad who feel that they "have everything we need to be fully Jewish" in their respective religious communities around the world. AND the vital significance of Torah AND Israel to our lives as Jews must be taught to those less committed Jews here in Israel and abroad.

On the other hand, we must not forget that Israel today is not the realization of The Dream, but rather a step on the road to the Complete Redemption, the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, and the coming of Mashiach. This idea helps us refocus after the mourning period that ends with the 10th of Av, and is an appropriate theme to usher in the period of consolation and T'shuva.

Let's put it like this: T'rumot and Maasrot - do not apply outside of Israel. They are observed in real but token fashion in Israel today. They will IY"H be able to be fully observed when Yovel comes back into active observance, when we will have a Sanhedrin, ability to become TAHOR from all forms of defilement, etc. Shabbat: Observance in Chutz

LaAretz required. Potential maximum fulfillment of the mitzva 50%. In Eretz Yisrael today: max. possible fulfillment is 80-85% (percentages are made up for illustrative purposes only. The point is that Eretz Yisrael is where G-d has always wanted us to be. That means something even in our time). IY"H in the time of the Mikdash, etc. Maximum potential of fulfillment of Shabbat and all other mitzvot - 100%.

We must be careful to preserve and perform the mitzvot because (among other reasons) it is the mitzvot that project Judaism as an intelligent religion to the nations of the world. This in turn, sanctifies G-d's Name. We must be infinitely careful to remember and transmit to our children, the "Sinai Experience".

Moshe describes for the new generation the details of Matan Torah. He includes a specific warning against the potentially idolatrous thoughts caused by the combination of the magnificent, tangible universe in which we live and the invisible, intangible G-d.

A primary cause of idolatry is the natural human tendency to relate better to something concrete, visible, tangible rather than something abstract and intangible. The Sun is in the sky. It's hot, full of energy, gives us light, and sustains life as we know it. People found Sun-worship easier to accept than the worship of He Who created the Sun and everything else, but cannot be seen. True worship of the One G-d was what Avraham and Sara taught many people. And, as OR

LAGOYIM, a light unto the nations, it is what we are supposed to teach and show the world.

G-d had taken us out of Egypt in order to make us His Nation. He got angry at me, says Moshe, and forbade me to enter the Land. Again, Moshe warns the People against abandoning the covenant with G-d after his (Moshe's) passing.

[P> 4:25 (16)] The next portion is read on Tish'a b'Av morning... In spite of the many warnings against idolatry, Moshe prophesies (predicts) that there will come a time when the People will turn from G-d and be exiled from their Land. It will then come to pass that the People will seek out G-d and return to Him. Moshe emphasizes the uniqueness of the People of Israel and their special relationship with G-d and beseeches the People to remain faithful to Torah and mitzvot. One can hear a pleading in his voice, as if he is begging the people not to go in the direction of his prophecy.

This theme is oft-repeated in the Torah. Do what G-d asks of you. Don't turn away from Him. If you remain faithful to Him, wonderful things will happen to and for you. If you turn away from Him, terrible things will happen. You will turn away from Him; terrible things will happen; and then you will turn back to Him...

The Torah keeps presenting this to us, many times. Sometimes it is long

Right after Tish'a b'Av & right before Rosh HaShana

& heavy (Tochacha) and sometimes shorter and milder. And we read through the entire Torah in a year and we read the Torah year after year, and we hear the prophecies and the challenges and the commandments. So...

Shlishi - Third Aliya **9 p'sukim - 4:41-49**

[P> 4:41 (9)] Although the cities of refuge will not function as such until conquest and settlement of Eretz Yisrael, Moshe (with enthusiasm to do G-d's bidding, even though he knows what's coming soon thereafter) designates the 3 cities on the East Bank - Betzer in the Mishor Wilderness area for Reuven, Ramot in the Gil'ad area for Gad, and Golan in the Bashan area for Menashe.

These (the mitzvot about to be presented) were taught by Moshe to the People following the Exodus in the lands on the East Bank of the Jordan.

(Note the detail in the description of the location of the people, the repetition of their successes in conquering the "east bank" lands. It seems meant to be encouraging to the people.)

V'zot HaTorah... said when the Torah is lifted, comes from D'varim 4:44. In the Siddur, the words AL PI HASHEM B'YAD MOSHE are added. That phrase appears four times in Bamidbar, but 9:23 seems the one from which it is taken.

9:00, 12:00, 6:00, 3:00

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya **18 p'sukim - 5:1-18**

[P> 5:1 (5)] Moshe begins the review of mitzvot with a restatement of the Aseret HaDibrot. He emphasizes that the Covenant at Sinai was not just between G-d and the previous generation, but between G-d and all generations of Jews to come.

MitzvaWatch

The most well-known difference between the two presentations of the Aseret HaDibrot is "Shamor v'Zachor" of Shabbat. Generally, "Zachor" is interpreted as referring to the positive mitzvot and aspects of Shabbat, whereas "Shamor" is a command to preserve Shabbat by not violating the prohibitions. The traditional minimum of two Shabbat candles (although one candle satisfies the halacha), are said to represent these two facets of Shabbat.

It is this intertwined nature of the positive aspects of Shabbat and its prohibitions that is "responsible" for Kiddush on Friday night being obligatory upon women. Rather than treat Kiddush as a pure "time-related positive mitzva" which would (probably) mean that women would be exempt (as they are from the mitzva of Sukka, for example), we view Kiddush as part of the whole Shabbat package, which means full and equal obligation for men and women. The two sides of Shabbat were commanded B'DIBUR ECHAD and are inseparable.

On a hashkafa level, we can see the prohibitions of Shabbat as more than a restrictive list of DON'Ts. Abstinence from Melacha can be seen as Dayan Grunfeld z"l puts it in The Sabbath -- as laying G-d's gifts of creative activity to us at His feet (so to speak) in homage to the Creator and Master of All. This, on a weekly basis, so that we will not take these gifts for granted nor assume that our abilities and talents are self-produced. There is a subtle difference between not doing Melacha and abstaining from Melacha. If we understand and appreciate the distinction, our Shabbat observance and enjoyment can be greatly enhanced.

MitzvaWatch

The Aseret HaDibrot in Yitro contains 14 of the 613 mitzvot. (The 2nd commandment has four prohibitions related to idolatry, the 4th has two mitzvot related to Shabbat, and one each from the other 8.) The first 9 commandments in Va'etchanan contain the same 13 mitzvot as their counterparts in Yitro. Those mitzvot are counted from Yitro. The 10th is worded differently here and is counted separately (in addition to "Thou shalt not covet") as the prohibition of "lust and unhealthy desire" [416,L266 5:18]. Although the first part of the tenth commandment uses the term LO TACHMOD (covet), the second part introduces a new term which deals exclusively with thoughts and feelings; its counterpart in Yitro involves acting on those feelings. V'LO TIT'AVEH in a way, completes a set of prohibitions, that starts with obviously sinful acts

- murder, stealing, etc. to a feeling in the heart (LO TACHMOD) which can, and often does, lead to acts which are "milder", but nonetheless "problematic". For example, if a person is jealous of a friend's pocket computer, and comments about it often enough, the friend might just feel uncomfortable enough to give it to the jealous friend. Nothing wrong, per se, in complimenting someone's PC, but in this case it is part of the prohibition of LO TACHMOD. And V'LO TIT'AVEH is the feelings even without anything else happening as a result of the envy.

The Aseret HaDibrot lay out in the following manner:

[S>5:6 (5)] Anochi and Lo Yih-yeh L'cha, which we consider the first two "dibrot" are contained within a single parsha s'tuma.

[S>5:11 (1)] The prohibition against taking G-d's name in vain (vain oaths) is its own parsha s'tuma. [S> 5:12 (4)] The Shabbat commandment is its own parsha s'tuma. Not only does this command begin with SHAMOR (in contrast to ZACHOR of Yitro), but the "reason" for Shabbat given here is to serve as a reminder of having been slaves and having been freed by G-d (in contrast to Creation as the "reason" in the Yitro version). Both of these ideas are mentioned in our fulfillment of this mitzva - namely, Kiddush on Friday night. We refer to Shabbat as ZIKARON L'MA'ASEI V'REISHIT, commemorative of Creation, and ZEICHER LI-TZI'AT MITZRAYIM, commemorative of the Exodus. Shabbat's

commandment is a Parsha P'tucha in Yitro. [S> 5:16 (1)] Honoring parents is a s'tuma. [S> 5:17 (¼)] Do not murder, [S> 5:17 (¼)] And do not commit adultery, [S> 5:17 (¼)] And do not steal (kidnap), [S> 5:17 (¼)] And do not bear false witness. These four dibrot are each a separate parsha s'tuma, all in the same pasuk! [S> 5:18 (½)] And do not covet another man's wife and [S>5:18 (½)] and do not lust after anything that another person possesses are each a s'tuma, from the same pasuk, and counting as a single (the 10th) dibra (or dibur). In general, we see that Dibrot, Parshiyot, and P'sukim don't match or line up the way one might have expected.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya **15 p'sukim - 5:19-6:3**

[S> 5:19 (15)] Moshe next reminds the People that those who were present at Matan Torah were afraid to continue hearing G-d's Voice and agreed to listen to the words of a prophet speaking in G-d's Name in lieu of direct communication. (Actually, take a look at the pasuk right before the Aseret HaDibrot and you'll see that Moshe Rabeinu was saying the same thing "right up front".)

This is a very crucial episode in understanding our Chain of Tradition and the method of transmission of the Oral Law. It made not only Moshe Rabeinu vital to our hearing and understanding of G-d's Word,

but so too the Moshe Rabeinus of every generation. This is so for prophets, during the period of prophecy, and also extends to this day in the way Tradition is passed from one generation to the next. We can say that we have a serious obligation to accept Torah from our parents and teachers, precisely because those that stood at Sinai did not want to hear G-d's voice directly beyond the first two commandments.

Moshe emphasizes that G-d agreed to the People's request.

And yet again, Moshe links observance of mitzvot with the only proper environment for Jewish life - Eretz Yisrael. (This idea is actually expressed in THREE different ways in the final p'sukim of this Aliya.)

Shishi - Sixth Aliya **22 p'sukim - 6:4-25**

[P> 6:4 (6)] The first portion of this Aliya is the first parsha of SH'MA. "...HaShem is One." This statement of Jewish faith is also considered the mitzva to believe in the unity and uniqueness of G-d **[417,A2 6:4]**.

Note that G-d's unity is also part of the mitzva to believe in Him **[25,A1 Sh'mot 20:2]**, but warrants its own mitzva to emphasize this essential element of belief, in contrast to many other religions.

"Love" G-d with your entire being **[418,A3 6:5]**. (Many mitzvot, Jewish practices and the attitude

with which we do mitzvot are all considered manifestations of Love of G-d.) We must study and teach Torah **[419,A11 6:7]** (for practical purposes AND purely for the sake of learning). We are to recite the Sh'ma twice daily **[420,A10 6:7]**, wear T'filin on the arm **[421,A13 6:8]** and front-center on the head **[422,A12 6:8]**, and put a Mezuzah on our doorposts **[423,A15 6:9]**.

SDT: *The mitzva of learning and teaching Torah can be fulfilled with one's head, one's intellect. Tell someone a Dvar Torah and you both have fulfilled V'SHINANTAM L'VANECHA. But, tell that same Dvar Torah in an animated way that shows love of G-d and that ignites the emotion of the listener, so that he not only adds to his knowledge of Torah, but his excitement and enthusiasm for Torah and Mitzvot has increased, then you have fulfilled an additional mitzva, VAHAVTA ET HASHEM ELOKECHA, to love G-d with all your heart (Sefer HaChareidim).*

We can generalize this aspect of AHAVAT HASHEM to include all mitzvot. Shabbat, for example. Someone can go through all the motions and not violate the Shabbat; but do it with love and that fulfills V'AHAVTA, in addition to Shabbat.

[S> 6:10 (6)] Now we are issued another warning. You'll go into Eretz Yisrael, have big homes filled with all good things, that you did not work for... Still remember that G-d took you out of Egypt... don't turn away from Him...

It is said that a wealthy person has a harder time with faith in G-d than a poor person. A poor person tends to turn to G-d, to complain, but also to express his faith that his lot will

improve. A wealthy person tends towards patting himself on the back and taking credit for that which he should be thanking G-d. (Generalizations, of course, but something to think about, nonetheless.)

[S> 6:16 (40)] Do not test G-d... (as you did repeatedly in the Midbar). Understood as the prohibition of overly challenging a true prophet and demanding signs from him (beyond what is reasonable to determine his claim as a true prophet) **[424,L64 6:16]**. Keep the mitzvot... be straight with G-d... so that things will be good for you in Eretz Yisrael... (there it is again!)

[S> 6:20 (6)] When your child will ask you tomorrow... tell him "we were slaves to Par'o in Egypt and G-d took us out... and He commanded us... and it will do us good to listen..."

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya **11 p'sukim - 7:1-11**

[S>7:1 (11)] Finally, Moshe tells the People that the nations in Eretz Yisrael whom we will encounter are mightier than Israel. But G-d will give them over into Israel's hands. We are required to destroy the "Seven Nations" **[425,A187 7:2]**, not to show mercy to idolaters in the Land **[426,L50 7:2]**, and certainly not to intermarry with them **[427,L52 7:3]** or any other non-Jews.

Regardless of how secure one is in one's belief, intermarriage and other close contact with alien cultures will

Lead Tidbit cont. from front page

The whole book of D'varim is Moshe Rabeinu's farewell message to the people. It is multi-faceted, including a review of the basics of Judaism, a review of the mitzvot of the Torah, a review on the brief but colorful history of the People.

In Va'etchanan, Moshe expresses his concern and even anxiety that the people might "go off the derech", to use a current phrase. Specifically, he expresses concern based on the fact that the people did not see any image of G-d on the day He spoke to them at Choreiv (Sinai). This, combined with the many tangible and visible elements in the world might lead people to venerate various elements of nature to an extent that would constitute idolatry. "But you shall greatly beware for your souls... lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image... and lest you raise your eyes to the heaven and you see the sun and the moon and the stars... and you be drawn astray and bow to them and worship them..."

Moshe's warning to the people is in the form of "Spiritual danger - be very careful!"

One who takes Moshe's warning seriously, might think that the best course of action is not to study nature too closely. Dangerous. It can corrupt us and take us away from G-d. Probably not what Moshe would recommend, but Yeshaya spells out what we should do. "Raise your eyes on high and see Who created these (stars, etc.)" By all means, study science and nature. But never forget Who created it all and Whom we venerate and worship.

have an adverse effect upon the individual Jew and on the Jewish People. In addition to the Torah-prohibition against intermarriage, there are many Rabbinic prohibitions geared to restrict social contact with non-Jews.

We must destroy the idolatry in the Land. We must always keep in mind the basis upon which G-d has built His relationship with us.

It is because of G-d's love for us and His promises to our ancestors that He has taken us out of Egypt.

Know that G-d is trustworthy to keep His promises and reward those who properly follow His ways, as well as punish those who do not.

The final 3 p'sukim of the sedra are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 26 p'sukim Yeshayahu 40:1-26

First of the 7 Haftarot of Consolation, (all of which come from Yeshayahu). Yeshayahu as a prophet of destruction and Divine punishment for faithlessness, can be seen in ch.1 which was the haftara last Shabbat, and in subsequent chapters through 39. With our haftara this week, ch. 40, we see another side of the prophet. G-d commands the prophets (through Yeshayahu) to bring the message of comfort and the end of Babylonian captivity. How appropriate a choice as the haftara for the Shabbat following 9'Av.



When reading parshat Va'etchanan we are transfixed by Moshe's description of the revelation at Har Sinai whereby the all the people heard Hashem's voice emanate from the fire that arose from the smoking mount.

Moshe indicates that there were several aspects to this phenomenon: The people gathered at the mount in order, "to learn to fear Me all the days that they live on earth - and [in order that] they shall teach their children" (D'varim 4:10). Moshe implores the people not to forget what their eyes have seen and further urges them to safeguard and perform all the decrees (Chukim) and ordinances (Mishpatim). Why? So that, inter alia, the other peoples should say: "Surely a wise and great nation is this great nation... that has a G-d who is close to it."

For those who study the growth of Jewish identity and spiritual intelligence, there is a lesson to be learned. For while empirical experience, emotional associations, and collective memory surely contribute to the internalization of our cherished Jewish values, it seems that what others say about us is another, intriguing, factor that influences the development, dissemination and preservation of the sacred body of knowledge that informs the very essence of our holy nation. This most unquestionably imposes upon us a great responsibility.



FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE
OU VEBBE REBBE

ORTHODOX UNION
תורה ומצוות

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.

Q *When I was a katan (under bar mitzva) I made tzitzit for myself. Someone told me that they are no longer valid, now that I am fully obligated in mitzvot. Is that so? If it is, may I untie one knot and upon retying it as a gadol (above bar mitzva), fix them, or must I do something else?*

A The gemara (Menachot 42a) cites Rav's statement that a non-Jew may not make tzitzit for a Jew, based on the pasuk regarding tzitzit that addresses BNEI YISRA'EL, which excludes non-Jews. Tosafot (ad loc.) comments that this implies that women would be able to make kosher tzitzit, as only non-Jews are excluded, and this is how the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 14:1) rules. On the other hand, the gemara (Gittin 45b) learns from the p'sukim "You shall fasten... You shall write..." (Devarim 11:18,20) that only those who are involved in putting on tefillin can write tefillin, mezuzot and sifrei Torah, not non-Jews, women, and children. Tosafot (ad loc.) cites Rabbeinu Tam as saying that this is part of a general rule that only those who are obligated in a mitzva can create the halachic object needed for the mitzva. Therefore, he says, tzitzit tied on to a garment by a woman, are not valid. Tosafot dispute this based on the aforementioned

gemara and the one that validates a sukka made by a non-Jew. The Rama (OC 14:1) mentions the strict opinion and recommends being careful in the first place not to have a woman make tzitzit. He says that if it was done, then b'dieved they are valid.

The Magen Avraham (14:2) suggests another reason why women should not make tzitzit: the words "the Sons of Israel" often exclude not only non-Jews but also the "daughters of Israel". The Pri Megadim (ad loc.:3) says that while, according to Rabbeinu Tam, the issue of not being obligated in the mitzva excludes minor males as well, the limitation on the daughters of Israel does not apply to minors, to whom the mitzva of tzitzit applies even if presently they are too young to be fully responsible for any mitzvot. In any case, the Magen Avraham equates between women and children in this matter, giving your tzitzit of a questionable status. The Mishna Berura says that it is proper to avoid a katan making tzitzit for a gadol (apparently only for Ashkenazim). However, he also says (Bi'ur Halacha, ad loc.) that once the tzitzit were made when one was a katan, when he must decide if he can, as a gadol, use them, it is a question of b'dieved and he can use them as is.

In at least one way, a katan lacks what a woman possesses: the ability and reliability to do things in a kosher way. Regarding the physical element, one can check to see if it was done properly. However, what about the required kavana (intention) to act to create valid tzitzit? The gemara (Sukka 9a) says the threads of the tzitzit must be spun lishma (on behalf of the mitzva). The Rambam (Tzitzit 1:12) says that this is not a requirement for the attaching to the garment, but the Rosh says attaching must also be done lishma, and we try to follow the latter position (Shulchan Aruch, OC 14:2). Therefore, even regarding b'dieved, only if an adult was standing with the katan and training him to have in mind lishma would the tzitzit be valid (see Mishna Berura 14:4 and Biur Halacha, ad loc; see Gittin 23a). In your case, the situation is significantly better. You don't have to convince someone else that you had proper intention. Rather, if you are confident that you had in mind that the tying was being done for the mitzva of tzitzit (which is highly likely), you can continue to use them (Bi'ur Halacha ibid.; Tzitzit (Cohen) 14:8). If you are not confident that you had the right intention or if you want to follow the opinions that are stricter than what we presented, you should undo the tzitzit fully so that the whole tzitzit will be formed properly.

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TRIDDLES

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Last issue's (D'varim) TTriddles:

[1]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Shabbat	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chol	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

 ?

The presentation of this TTriddle was in the form of a line score for a baseball game between the Shabbat team and the Chol team. Shabbat "scored" once in the top of the second and Chol scored three times in the bottom of the third. With the writing of this solution comes the realization that Shabbat also scored once in the bottom of the third and Chol scored only twice. That, of course, would ruin the TTriddle - had this error (good choice of word, under the circumstances) been realized, this TTriddle would never have existed. Too bad, the idea is a good one. The TTriddle revolved around the pasuk D'varim 1:11, which is read as the first pasuk of the second Aliya, making it a "score" in the top of the second. On Monday and Thursday mornings, that pasuk is read as the last on in the third Aliya, "last of the third". Monday and Thursday account for two of the three times the first part of D'varim is read. The other time is Mincha on the previous Shabbat. Okay, how's this: let's rename the teams Chazon and Before; then the TTriddle can stand as it is presented. The point is, the pasuk belongs at the end of the first Aliya but is held back on Shabbat to start the second Aliya so that the Aliya does not begin with the word (and tune of) EICHA. Oh well, nice try.

[2] They hum while they calculate

In D'varim 2:20, the Torah tells us that the Amonim called the R'fa'im ZAMZUMIM. ZIMZUM is humming, a very onomatopoeic word. Targum Onkeles renders ZAMZUMIM as CHUSHBANAI, a word that seems related to CHESHBON, so these R'FA'IM hum while they calculate.

testify about sorrel soup?

[3] The questions' follow up: אאבהההייעשית

The questions refer to EICHA, as in Parshat D'varim, the Haftara of Chazon, and in the opening of Megilat Eicha. In the Torah, the question EICHA is followed by the word ESA - Moshe asks how he can continue to "carry" the people by himself. In the Haftara, it's EICHA HAYTA. And in Megilat Eicha, the question is EICHA YOSH'VA, how did Jerusalem come to sit alone, to be abandoned. If you take the letters of ESA, HAYTA, and YOSH'VA all together and alphabetize them, you get the sequence of letters in the TTriddle.

[4] And two of the twelve

The book of Yeshayahu and the Haftara of Shabbat Chazon begin with the words CHAZON YESHAYAHU... For which other prophets do we find the word CHAZON preceding their names? The answer is OVADYA and NACHUM, two of the twelve so-called minor prophets of the book of TREI ASAR.

[5] two lunar cycles

A lunar cycle is 19 years. The pattern of 13-month years is found in the lunar cycle. Years number 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of each cycle have 2 Adars; the other 12 years have one Adar, 12 months each. Two lunar cycles is 38 years. Because we keep using the number 40 for the years of wandering in the Midbar, we sometimes overlook the reference in D'varim 2:14 - "And the time from our leaving Kadesh-Barnea, until we came over the brook Zered, was thirty eight years..."

[6] three others and, two

Parshat D'varim begins with the words EILEH HAD'VARIM. Which other sedras begin similarly? EILEH TOL'DOT NO'ACH (NO'ACH). EILEH F'KUDEI HAMISHKAN (P'KUDEI). EILEH MAS'EI V'NEI YISRA'EL (MAS'EI). AND, TWO refers to two other sedras that begin with V'EILEH - namely, SH'MOT and MISHPATIM. But so does TOL'DOT, so there are three - another error on our part. Sorry about that.

2 and 5 from the same but different - huh? When else?

[7] he's "(the) man"

D'varim 3:11 - "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of Refa'im; behold, his bed was a bed of iron. Is it not in Rabbat of the sons of Ammon? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the cubit of a man." On the final words of this pasuk, Rashi says B'AMAT ISH, B'AMAT OG. OG is (the) man, in this context.

[8] UNEXPLAINED in ParshaPix

The photo is that of lecturer and guide Barnea Selavan, who recently spoke a couple of times at the Center together with David Willner and Asher Altshul on the topic of the ELAH FORTRESS. Barnea as in Kadesh-Barnea occurs 10 times in Tanach, 6 times in the Torah and 4 more times in the book of Yehoshua. 3 of the 6 times in the Torah are in Parshat D'varim.

[9] UNEXPLAINED in ParshaPix

At the bottom of the ParshaPix is a photo of the TATE Britain, one of four art museums in the Tate Gallery network. The word TEIT, spelled TAV-TAV, occurs 14 times in the Tanach, of which, 3 are in the Chumash, of which two are in Parshat D'varim. The word seems to jump out at you when you read it of hear it. It has the highest gimatriya of all two-letter words, 800 (obviously). Equally obvious are the lowest gimatriya of any words in Tanach - AV and BA, spelled ALEF-BET and BET-ALEF respectively, with a numeric value of 3.

[10] Bullet of the ParshaPix explanations

Sometimes (most often) the bullet used of the explanations of the ParshaPix elements has a connection to the sedra. Speaking of two-letter words, another one that jumped out in D'varim was REISH, spelled REISH-SHIN (not to be confused with the spelling of the letter REISH which is REISH-ALEF-SHIN). ALEI REISH (in D'varim 1:21) is translated as GO UP AND POSSESS, related to Y'RUSHA, inheritance.



- ⑩ Upper left is a plus and minus in a negation circle. The Torah forbids (a few times) adding to the Torah or detracting from it.
- ⑩ Once again, the Torah tells us of the mitzva to designate cities of refuge - 3 on the east side of the Jordan (and 3 on the west side).
- ⑩ The LUCHOT in the TORAH on the mountain stands for the repetition of the Aseret HaDibrot (with differences) and reminds us that the whole Torah was given by G-d at Sinai, not just the Big Ten.
- ⑩ Mezuzah is one of the mitzvot from Va'etchanan, from the first parsha of the SH'MA.
- ⑩ Shabbat candlesticks represent SHAMOR and ZACHOR. They are contained B'DIBUR ECHAD, in one speech-bubble.
- ⑩ The hearing ear represents SH'MA, not just the famous one, but the many times the Torah commands us to listen (and understand).
- ⑩ The warning lights represent Moshe's warnings to us to remain faithful to HaShem and not to be confused by what we witnessed but cannot totally comprehend.
- ⑩ The big number 1 is for HaShem Echad, as well as the other pasuk that emphasizes G-d's Unity, 4:35, ...there is none besides Him.
- ⑩ The reminder-finger is for the command to never forget the Sinai experience and to pass on the

memory to future generations.

- ⑩ The Seder plate is for the Chacham's question and the answer of We were slaves to Par'o in Egypt... both of which are found in Va'etchanan.
- ⑩ The Simchat Torah scene is for the pasuk ATA HOR-EITA LADA'AT... which is associated with Simchat Torah (for Nusach Ashkenaz daveners; in Nusach S'fard, the pasuk is said on all Shabbatot and Chagim).
- ⑩ The speaker and an Xed out video monitor: On that great day of Revelation at Sinai, we HEARD what was said, but we did NOT SEE any image. This is mentioned more than once, and is a reason for Moshe's deep concern and warnings to the people.
- ⑩ The (clock) face in the face is for the term PANIM BIFANIM, the description of the direct, intimate communication of G-d to the people of Israel.
- ⑩ The space telescope is for Yeshayahu's words at the end of the Haftara: Lift your eyes heavenward and see Who created these... This serves as positive motivation for our study of nature...
- ⑩ The pen is for the 5 PENs in the sedra and another two U'FENS. Not so remarkable, but they are associated with the remember - don't forget things that Moshe talks about. Hence, the PEN near the reminder string on the finger image in the ParshaPix.
- ⑩ Then there is the grasshopper. The word K'CHAGAVIM, like grass-

hoppers, appears only twice in Tanach. Back in Parshat Shlach, the Meraglim told the people about the giants in the land, "we felt like grasshoppers (compared with them) and so were we in their eyes". Commentaries point critically to this statement. The other place the word appears is Yeshayahu 40 - the haftara of Va'etchanan - Nachamu. In that context, the inhabitants of Earth are called grasshoppers in perspective of the "One Who sits above the circle of the earth".

- ⑩ Extended pinky is for V'ZOT HATORAH... said when the Torah is lifted at the conclusion of each Torah reading. The words are from Va'etchanan.
- ⑩ The palm is for the way Ashkenazim cover their eyes for the first pasuk of Sh'ma.
- ⑩ The three fingers form the letter SHIN and is the way S'faradim cover their eyes for Sh'ma. The three-fingered SHIN on their forehead and the pinky and thumb tips in the corner of each eye.

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 486

Betrothing With Money

Throughout some of these lessons dealing with betrothal with money the term "dinar" will be used. It is a coin of considerable value, while we shall use the p'ruta to indicate the coin of the smallest value. There are 144 p'rutot in a dinar.

The most common way to betroth is for a man to say to a woman you are betrothed to me with this dinar, or other thing of value, such as a gold ring.

Assume a man says to a woman "you are betrothed unto me with this dinar on condition that you return this coin to me." That is not valid kiddushin (betrothal); there is not even a hint of kiddushin and she does not require a Get (divorce) to be free to marry anyone else.

In the following situation there is valid kiddushin. A lady gave the man a ring on condition that he return it to her in 30 days. She gave it to him so that he could

use it to betroth her in this 30 day period. He did give it to her within this 30 day period to betroth her with it, the kiddushin is valid.

Sarah said to Reuven, "Give a set sum of money to Shimon and I will be betrothed to you with this giving of the money." He gave the money to Shimon and when giving the money said to Sarah "You are betrothed unto me with the benefit that you have in my giving the money to Shimon on your instructions" - it is valid kiddushin. There is an opinion that even if he did not say that "You are betrothed unto me etc" but gave her money to Shimon while they were discussing getting betrothed and she gave him the aforesaid instruction, it is valid kiddushin. The sequence must be that she first told him to give the money to Shimon and then he gave the money to him and said the words of betrothal.

Similarly if she said to Reuven, "Lend \$100 to Shimon and I will become

betrothed to you” and he loaned the money to Shimon and while lending the money to Shimon said to Sarah, “You are betrothed to me with the benefit that you derive from my lending the money to Shimon”, the betrothal is valid. But if Shimon already owed money to Reuven and he said to Sarah, “I will extend Shimon’s time to pay the debt to me and with this extension of time you are betrothed to me,” it is not a valid kiddushin.

Sarah said to Reuven, give a dinar to Shimon and I will become betrothed to Shimon with this giving of the dinar to Shimon, and Shimon said to Sarah, “you are betrothed to me with this benefit you have from Reuven’s giving me the dinar”, there is valid kiddushin and Sarah is betrothed to Shimon.


Reuven gave a dinar to Sarah and said to her “become betrothed with the acceptance of this dinar to Shimon” and Shimon had appointed Reuven to be his agent for the kiddushin, she is betrothed to Shimon. Even if Shimon had not appointed Reuven his agent but Shimon said to Sarah be betrothed to me with the money that Reuven gave to you, it is valid kiddushin.

Shimon said to Sarah “Become betrothed to me with a dinar, but I do not have the dinar now, but take this object as collateral security that I will give you the dinar”, it is not valid kiddushin. Similarly it is not valid kiddushin if he gave her a promissory note to secure the money for kiddushin that he does not have to give to her. Of course, if he said to her “become betrothed to me with this object that I give to you”, it is valid kiddushin. If he said to her become betrothed to me with the dinar that is in the value of the

collateral that I give to you to hold, it is valid kiddushin, if the value of the object is worth a least a dinar.

Reuven said to Sarah “become betrothed to me with 100 dinars”, and he gave her one dinar, she is betrothed if she accepted the dinar; he still owes her 99 dinars. She can sue him for the 99 dinars. The result is the same if he gave her 99 dinars or 100 dinars and one of them is rusty and worthless. There is also a view that disagrees and holds she is not betrothed until she receives the entire 100 dinars. The foregoing view that she is betrothed holds true if he did not say to her with these 100 dinars, then she is not betrothed until they count and see that there are 100 dinars in his hands to give to her. Either party may stop the procedure until the entire 100 dinars are counted out and given to her. Even if she agrees to take the lesser amount he may change his mind because the kiddushin had not yet been completed.

Reuven says to Sarah, “Be betrothed to me with this cup”, if it was filled with water, the betrothal is valid for we say that the value of the cup and its contents is worth a p'ruta. If it was filled with wine we look to see if the cup was worth a perutah without taking into account the value of the contents. If it was filled with oil we look to see if the contents were worth a p'ruta.

 There is no such thing as fighting a losing battle with the evil inclination. In that battle, as long as one is fighting, he is winning.

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Jewish Law cont. from previous page

Shimon had several vessels in front of him or types of food or other objects, and Sarah said to him “give me some of these” and he replied “if I give them to you will you become betrothed to me with this transfer of objects to you?” and if she said “yes” and he gave her the objects, they are betrothed. But if she had replied give them to me, there is no betrothal if he gave her the objects, since

she did not respond to him in the affirmative. Even in this latter case if as he gave her the object he said to her become betrothed to me with this object and she accepted the object there is a valid betrothal. The context of the conversation governs to see if she agreed to become betrothed with the object that he is giving to her. But in all of these instances if he utters the words of betrothal and she accepts the object, there is a valid betrothal.

CHIZUK AND IDUD (for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

"Let me go over, I pray Thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly hill country and Lebanon. (D'varim 3:25)"

Thus Moshe beseeched God to be allowed to enter western Eretz Yisrael. Our Sages teach us that Moshe’s desire to enter the Land was motivated by a spiritual need: Rabbi Simla’i expounded: Why did Moshe wish to enter Eretz Yisrael? Did he need to eat of its fruit or fill himself of its goodness? Rather, Moshe said: “Many mitzvot have been commanded to Israel and can be fulfilled only in Eretz Yisrael; I will enter in order to fulfill these mitzvot.” (Sotah 14a)

Or HaChayim (R. Hayyim ben Attar, 1696-1743) relates Moshe’s request to the Talmudic statement: “One who walks four cubits within the Land of Israel is guaranteed that he is a ‘son of the World to Come’” (Ketubot 111a). Moses wished to enter the Land for the “benefit of his soul and for the desired pleasure, which is the World to Come.”

Iyun Ya’akov, in turn, relates this Talmudic statement to another: “The Holy One, blessed be He, has only the four cubits of Halakha.” He explains that one who walks the four cubits of Halakha within the Land of Israel, whose atmosphere conveys wisdom, is guaranteed the World to Come, as our Sages say: “One who repeats Halakha on a daily basis is guaranteed the World to Come.”

We wish to suggest another explanation, based upon the approach of the Maharal of Prague, who comments that “four cubits” represents one’s personal space. Walking four cubits represents leaving one’s space. Thus, the Talmud is saying: One who takes advantage of the Land of Israel to further himself spiritually is indeed guaranteed that he is a “son of the World to Come.”

Shani Taragin, Jerusalem

Fertility Preservation Technologies

We have been discussing the halachic issues of male fertility preservation, a process in which a terminally ill patient facing possible sterility has his sperm preserved for future use. Male fertility preservation is a relatively simple process, since freezing sperm is a straightforward and easy process that has been in use since the advent of fertility medicine.

Female fertility preservation and the freezing of human egg cells for future use is a much more complicated process than the freezing of sperm cells. Human egg cells are the largest cell the human body produces (sperm is the smallest). The genetic materials contained with the cells are essentially identical with the difference between the two types of cells being the amount of cytoplasm contained within.

Cytoplasm is the liquid inside the cell, as opposed to the genetic material which is contained within the nucleus of the cell. The cytoplasm reacts to temperature similar to water. Unlike other materials, Cytoplasm (and water) expands when it is frozen. In a small cell, such as sperm, the expansion of the cytoplasm is insignificant. However, the much more significant amount of cytoplasm contained in the egg expands to such a significant degree that the surface of the egg is ruptured, making it unviable. Furthermore, standard freezing processes lead to the formation of ice crystals, which also destroy the egg.

Thus, although it was possible to safely and successfully freeze other cells, including fertilized eggs, unfertilized human eggs could not be frozen and saved for future use. Fertility preservation has therefore been a viable option for male candidates as well as married females, for whom fertilized eggs could be preserved for future use. Unfortunately, single women did not have an option to preserve their unfertilized eggs and were not eligible for fertility preservation.

Recently, technology advanced to allow for the freezing of unfertilized egg cells. This new technology, called vitrification, utilizes either a rapid freezing method and/or the employment of special beads of glass that are used in the freezing process. These methods retard the expansion of the cytoplasm, preventing the egg membrane rupture. Vitrification has successfully frozen unfertilized human eggs that have later been thawed and used for fertilization.

Another recently invented method of freezing eggs involves using cryoprotectants to protect the egg and its membrane so that it will not be damaged during the freezing and thawing process.

Due to these methods it is now possible to offer egg freezing as a viable method of female fertility preservation. Fertility preservation is therefore an option that is available (according to the vast majority of poskim) to all terminal patients, regardless of their gender or marital status.

The Puah Institute for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems. Puah offers free counseling in five languages, halachic supervision, and educational programs. Puah has offices in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles and Paris. To contact the Puah Institute please call (02) 651-5050 in Israel or in the US 718-336-0603. website: www.puahonline.org

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column: The Person in the Parsha for Parshat Va'etchanan

“Answering Unanswered Prayers”

Did you ever really pray for something you wanted? I mean, really fervently, desperately, pray hard for something that was vitally important to you?

If you did, and I think we all pray this way at moments of urgency, you violated an anonymous piece of wisdom: "Be careful what you pray for, because you just might get it."

I have not been able to determine who said that. But I know clearly what he meant. In my own life, I have had more than one occasion to look back at answered prayers, which achieved what turned out to be very trivial objectives. And I have certainly been disappointed in prayer, only to learn that in the long run, I was much better off without the benefits of whatever I prayed for so earnestly.

We think we know what is good for us, we think we know what we need, but we really don't. Often, we are much the better for having certain prayers rebuffed, and we frequently discover that the things we thought were important are not important at all.

In the Torah portion this week, Va'etchanan, Moshe confides to us how he powerfully beseeched the Almighty, begging Him to reverse His decision to frustrate Moshe's greatest dream, that he be permitted to enter the Promised Land. Moshe uses a synonym for prayer, CHANAN, which

connotes imploring, pleading for the undeserved favor, MATNAT CHINAM.

But Moshe is denied his dream. His petition is torn up in his face. His is the archetypal unanswered prayer.

Joel Cohen, in his book Moses, a Memoir, puts these poignant words in the mouth of Moshe:

"I lowered my knees and begged Him once again. I could muster no tears this time... I needed badly to reach and walk about the land He promised to Abraham for us, so long ago... My work is incomplete. My prophecy has achieved no reality for me in my lifetime... There will be no future for me. My staff, the instrumentality of miracles against His enemies, is powerless against His will."

Beautifully put, by this author of a book I recommend to you all.

What are we to learn from the story of the unanswered prayer of the humblest, but greatest, of men? Many things, in my opinion.

We learn that the gates of prayer are not always open. In the words of the Midrash, they are sometimes open but sometimes closed. And we are not to rely upon them exclusively. Rather, we are to do our own part to achieve our objectives in mundane ways.

Judaism insists upon a balance between faith in the divine and the exercise of practical human effort. It acknowledges that while ~~there must~~ be "bitachon", trust in G-d, there must also be "hishtadlus", old-fashioned hard work on our part. As the rabbis have it, never rely upon miracles.

We can never allow prayer to become a substitute for our doing all we can do. We must not simply expect the Almighty to achieve Jewish sovereignty for us, but must do our parts politically and militarily. We cannot expect manna from heaven, but must earn our livelihoods by dint of the sweat of our brow. And when we are ill, yes, we must pray, but we must also diligently seek out competent medical assistance.

There are other lessons, to be sure, to be learned from the un-answered prayer of Moshe Rabeinu. His grave remains a secret, so that it not become a shrine and that he not be idolized or heaven forbid, deified. For another important lesson about prayer from the Jewish perspective, is that we pray to the One Above only, and not to saints and holy men, be they alive or be they dead. Cemeteries are not synagogues.

By not granting Moshe his request, the Master of the Universe was in effect telling him that he did all that he could, and that no more is expected of him. Humans are expected to do all they can, and not necessarily to accomplish everything.

"It is not necessary for you to complete the task, but neither are you exempt from doing all that you can."

Moshe is being told, "You did all you could, even if you did not achieve all of your personal ambitions." No human is complete, no man is perfect.

And then there is a final lesson, one that we learn from the very fact that Moshe persisted in his prayer,

although he knew well that his request would be spurned. He modeled the importance of hope, even in the face of impossible odds.

Jewish history contains a long list of Moshe-like figures, whose vision it was to enter the Holy Land. They include men like the Gaon Elijah of Vilna, who longed to spend the last years of his life in Eretz Yisrael. And closer to our time, the great sage Yisrael Meir Kagan, the Chofetz Chayim, prayed and carefully planned to live out his life in Israel.

Ironically, they, like Moshe, had their dreams frustrated by the Hand of Providence. Like Moshe, they were ready to try almost anything to realize their ambitions. And like Moshe, who was told that he would not enter the land but his disciple Yehoshua would, various leaders of Jewish history, however reluctantly, took comfort in the fact that their disciples realized their dream in their stead.

This is possibly the most important lesson of all. When our prayers go unanswered for ourselves, they may yet be answered for our children and grandchildren.

Unanswered prayers are mysteriously answered, in inscrutable and unpredictable ways.

בְּהֶן, אֲצִבֵּעַ, אִמָּה, קִמְיָה, זֶרֶת = 1118
The fingers that cover our eyes for Sh'ma = the gimatriya of the pasuk for which we cover our eyes

Dvarim, D'varim, D'varim, Nechemia, Nechemia

ט"ו באב • TU b'Av

In the last Mishna of Taanit, Rabban Shimon b. Gamliel tells us that there were no more joyous festivals in Israel than TU b'Av and Yom Kippur. In the middle of this "tragic" month, the month whose entrance was accompanied by the diminishing of our joy, we find the most joyous of festivals.

If you will ponder the various reasons for TU b'Av, you can see in each one a message of consolation and promise... and joy.

- In the aftermath of the "Sin of the Spies", G-d decreed that the entire adult male population of that generation should die out during 40 years of wandering. Not only was this decree handed down on Tish'a b'Av, but the "sentence" was carried out on Tish'a b'Av each year. Tradition tells us that each year on the 9th of Av, the men of Israel would dig graves and sleep in them. In the morning, Moshe would announce "let the living live separate from the dead". Each year, approximately 15,000 men were thus buried, the others living on for at least another year. In the final year of wandering, none of the remaining 15,000 dies. Not on Tish'a b'Av eve, nor the next night, nor the next. The people thought they had erred in the calculation of the days of the month, but when the full moon of Av took its place in the sky, all joyously realized that the decree against the remaining men had been rescinded through G-d's mercy. The 15th of Av was thus marked as a day of joy. It marks the existence of forgiveness, even from very serious sins.

- TU b'Av was the end of the season for wood-gathering for the Mizabei'ach. After this date, the power of the sun begins to diminish due to the shortening of the day. Since it is essential that the wood for the fires of the Mizbei'ach be free of worms and insects, it was feared that after TU b'Av the wood might not sufficiently dry out to avoid infestation. The end of the wood-gathering season was an occasion for special korbanot in the Mikdash, and TU b'Av was

celebrated as a family festival by those involved in this mitzva.

Note that just as Tish'a b'Av and TU b'Av were opposite sides of the same coin vis-a-vis the Sin of the Spies, so too are they here - in that Tish'a b'Av marks destruction of the Temple; TU b'Av celebrates wood gathering for the Beit HaMikdash.

- Following the terrible episode of the "pilegesh from Giv'a", there was a ban on marrying into the tribe of Binyamin. This ban was lifted on a TU b'Av.

- For a long period of time, due to a misunderstanding in the rulings concerning who the daughters of Tz'lofchad should marry, there was little or no inter-tribal marriage. After a later Sanhedrin clarified the issue, inter-tribal marriages became commonplace. This reuniting of all of Israel, was associated with TU b'Av, and the cause of great joy.

- The mishna referred to above, tells us that the young maidens of Jerusalem would wear borrowed white dresses, so as not to embarrass one who had no dress... and they would dance in the vineyards.. (so that eligible young men might choose their brides).

The two items mentioned above, and the fact that there have not been weddings during the Three Weeks (or at least the Nine Days), combine to make TU b'Av a special day for Shidduchim and marriages, and a truly joyous day.

- Following the fall of Beitar about 65 years after the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash (on a Tish'a b'Av, non-coincidentally), the Romans did not permit the bodies of the dead Jews to be buried, as a punishment for rebelling against and resisting Rome. A few years later, a new emperor allowed burial of the bodies. Tradition records that this was on the 15th of Av. The bodies were found not to have decayed in the years that they lay unburied. The Sanhedrin at Yavne declared this a miracle and composed the fourth bracha of Birkat HaMazon - HaTov V'haMeitiv, to thank G-d for His kindnesses, even in darkest of times.

V'NISHMARTEM M'OD L'NAFSHOTEICHEM

In the summer we hear of many tragedies of kids who drown at the beach, in pools, or on their way to fun adventures. A verse in this week's portion is very appropriate to keep in mind during the remaining weeks of vacation.

"Watch yourselves very carefully, since you did not see any image... at Choreiv "V'nishmartem M'od L'nafshoteichem" (4:15). The Midrash asks what is the verse talking about? What kind of watching? From what? What is the connection with the rest of the verses? The word here used is NEFESH - soul, but if we are being instructed to guard our soul it should have written Ush-martem M'od et Nafshoteichem. For that reason the Rabbis learned that this verse is referring to guarding our physical well being (B'rachot 32:). But the verse is written in such a way to teach us that by safeguarding our physical health we are also protecting

T'hilim 20:10 is a statement - among many others - of our belief: HaShem hoshiya, G-d, save! May the King answer us on the day we call. The we may - nay, must pray to G-d and our firm belief in His hearing our prayers, are fundamentals of Judaism. This pasuk joins a special pasuk in Va'etchanan that is also a major statement of our belief: SH'MA YISRAEL, HASHEM ELOKEINU HASHEM ECHAD These p'sukim are gimatriya twins (1118)



our spiritual health. (Mayana shel Torah).

The Chofetz Chayim is famous for his books on Shmirat HaLashon whose purpose is to help people protect their spiritual health with his guidance on how not to speak gossip - but some people might not be aware how much he stressed the importance of guarding one's physical health as well. In his Yeshiva he insisted that his student's got enough sleep. He used to say that the evil inclination will try to have someone study late into the night for a while so he would become weak and not be able to study later on.

I even heard of a case where a Rabbi refused to officiate at the funeral of an over-zealous congregant who fasted on Yom Kippur even after his doctor and Rabbi told him that he shouldn't for health reasons. He died as a result of the fast, and the Rabbi told the family not to sit shiva because the man in effect had taken his own life. Extreme case, but it reminds us how careful we must be to protect ourselves from all types of health hazards.

So how should we take care of ourselves?

Drive safely, swim only where there is a lifeguard, do physical exercise, (such as joining Melabev's walkathon), keep up your brain health and memory - in a place like Brainspa, as described in a recent lecture at the Israel Center www.brainspa.co.il, get enough sleep, and be sure to eat well, such as the Mediterranean diet. The Mediterranean diet, characterizing the traditional cooking style of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, incorporates the basics of healthy eating - fruits, vegetables, fish and whole grains, olive

oil, and a bit of red wine - and limits unhealthy fats.

This week's recipe for paella, a rice dish originating in the coastal regions of Spain, is an example of Mediterranean cooking. It usually contains shellfish which is not kosher, so here is a vegetarian version. It is served in a "paellera" - a round flat pan with two handles - which is then put on the table. If you don't have such a pan use the widest and shallowest pan you have.

VEGETARIAN PAELLA

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 5 cloves minced garlic
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cups rice
- 4 medium tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped
- 1 small red bell pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1 small green bell pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1 cup green peas
- 2 cups artichoke hearts, tough outer leaves removed and quartered
- 1 lemon
- Lemon wedges, to garnish

Heat the olive oil in a paella pan and saute the onion and garlic until the onion is tender and translucent. Heat the broth in a separate saucepan till it simmers.

Pour the rice into the pan and saute for about 3 minutes. Add the bell peppers and tomatoes and cook for a further 3 minutes. Add the simmering vegetable broth and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes or until almost tender and almost all the liquid has been absorbed. Stir in the peas.

Sprinkle the artichoke hearts with a few drops of lemon juice and arrange over the rice in a nice pattern. Continue cooking until the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is tender.

Serve the paella straight from the pan, garnished with lemon wedges.

D'varim 4:4 - "But you who held fast to HaShem your God are alive every one of you this day."



The gemara "darshens" this pasuk: You who cling to G-d are not only alive today, but even if everyone else were dead, you would be alive. You are alive today, and so will you be in the world to come. The gemara concludes with, "from here we learn that T'CHIYAT HAMEITIM (revival of the dead) is a concept from the Torah.

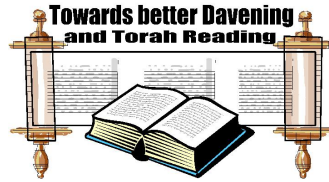
Torah T'mima (the other TT) explains that the people to whom Moshe is speaking are certainly alive "this day". Rather, we can understand the verse as saying, You who cling to G-d will be alive in the world to come as you are alive today.

Note that the word for LIFE in Hebrew is plural. This is so only for Hebrew. And this fits with our belief in Olam HaBa and T'chiyat HaMeitim.

Sh'mot 1:6, "And Yosef died, and all his brothers, and all that generation." These two p'sukim have the same gimatriya. They died... but they live!

Concerning G-d's names and other issues from Va'etchanan

• G-d's four-letter name occurs over 6800 times in Tanach. Over 98% of the time, the name is pronounced as if spelled ALEF-DALET-NUN-YUD.



Around 130 times, the name is pronounced as if it were spelled ALEF-LAMED-HEI-YUD-MEM (ELOKIM). In a Sefer Torah or in KLAF-scrolls of the books of NACH, the names are indistinguishable. In printed Chumashim and Tanachs, different NIKUD (vowels) are used to distinguish between the two pronunciations.

The "regular" YUD-KEI-VAV-KEI (as it is called) is vowelized with a SH'VA, CHOLOM CHASEIR, and KAMATZ for the first three letters. In many editions, no vowels are used at all, for this name. For the ELOKIM pronunciation, a CHATAF-SEGOL, CHOLOM CHASEIR, and CHIRIK are used for the first three letters, matching the vowels of the name ELOKIM in its regular spelling.

Of the 130 or so ELOKIMs in the four-letter form, only four occur in the Torah - one is in Va'etchanan and another next week in Eikev, which is why we are reviewing this topic in this particular issue. Most of these names are in Yechezkeil, some in Yirmiyahu, and the remaining few in other books of NACH.

(When we print up Torah reading and Haftara at the Israel Center, we use a HEI with an apostrophe - commonly referred to as a SHMICHIK - with nothing under it for the ADO*** name and a CHATAF-SEGOL when it is pronounced ELOKIM. הֵי

• Here's a good pasuk to use as a review of NASOG ACHOR. D'varim 4:25 (the first pasuk of the Tish'a b'Av morning reading). "When you shall give birth to children and grandchildren, and will have been long in the land, you will grow corrupt and make (VA'ASITEM) a graven image, a likeness of anything, and you will do (VA'ASITEM) evil in the sight of the HaShem your God, to anger Him."

Notice that the two identical words are accented on different syllables: the first is MIL'EIL (on the next to the last syllable) and the second one is MILRA, on the last syllable. The correct accenting of the word is MILRA (va'asi-TEM). The first occurrence of the word in the pasuk is followed by the word PE-sel (idol), which is pronounced MIL-EIL. Because va-aSI-tem and PE-sel are in the same phrase, the accent on va-asi-TEM regresses to the next to the last syllable and becomes va-aSI-tem. This is called NASOG ACHOR.

The phrase that follows va-aSI-tem PE-sel also has a NASOG ACHOR. "A likeness of anything", t'MU-nat KOL (rather than t'mu-NAT, which would be the regular accenting of the word). In this case of NASOG ACHOR, the second word (that causes the accent of the word before it to NASOG ACHOR) is monosyllabic.

This pasuk, then, has the two situations for NASOG ACHOR - a two-syllable MIL-EIL word and a one syllable word, linked to the previous word in a phrase.

• D'varim 4:39 is quoted in ALEINU. It is important when reading it in the Torah and when saying it in davening, to pause before the last two words and say them distinctly on their own.

וַיְדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְהַיּוֹמִים וְהַיּוֹמִים אֲלֵי-לְבָבְךָ כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים
בְּשֵׁמִים מְפֹעֵל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתְנַחֵם אֵין עוֹד:

Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Bamidbar Stories by Dr. Meir Tamari: **Korach & Co.** {1}

All our sources make it clear that Korach and those gathered around him in their revolt against Moshe, were important, influential and gifted personalities in Israel. In addition, they stress that these were not merely a scattered few individuals but actually an assemblage congregation, a gathering of leaders and opinion makers. This is consistent with bearing in mind that all the people that the Tanach deals with or describes or reports about, are outstanding, powerful and important ones, even the most evil and sinful ones amongst them.

"Our sages taught that Korach was a great and wise man who had merited being one of the bearers of the Aron HaKodesh and the vessels of the Mishkan on their very shoulders. VAYIKACH, this means to draw people by temptation; Korach drew around him by his speech all the great of Israel, the Sanhedriot, the special men of the community, the famous ones known to all, and the wise ones who knew how to determine the leap years and sanctify the months of the year" (Bamidbar Rabba 18:2-3;8).

Together with all this, Korach and his faction have, throughout the ages, been seen as the epitome and the symbol in Judaism of controversy, divisiveness, and strife. The very opening word of the whole story VAYIKACH, conveys the self interest and presumption of their revolt. "This verb designates an unjustified procedure in one's own interests. Just as Avshalom (Shmuel Bet 18:18) 'took',

that is assumed to himself the right to presumptuously erect a monument to himself during his lifetime" (S. R. Hirsch). However, at the same time, it would be a serious spiritual loss for us to see those involved only as ambitious egoists, or as simple seekers of power and control, or as mere political opportunists. Undoubtedly these negative factors existed; Chazal sees each of the parties to Korach's revolt as having his own agenda. Nevertheless, we should not thereby lose sight of the important spiritual, religious and communal questions and issues that were raised by the various personalities that led this congregation. Similar questions and issues have been at the root of the communal and religious movements that have rebelled during the centuries, as did Korach and his Eida, in essence, against Torat Moshe.

"Which is a controversy for the sake of Heaven? Such was the controversy between Hillel and Shammai. Which is a controversy not for the sake of Heaven? Such was the controversy of Korach and all his gathering" (Avot 5:20).

"This mishna and the following two mishnayot teach us the truth of divine reward and punishment. One who disagrees with his fellow, not to simply opposes him, but solely to discover the truth, will find that his opinions will be sustained. Whoever brings people back to the straight and true path will be rewarded by G-d, and kept from sin" (Rambam's commentary on the Mishna).

World history and Jewish history alike are replete with examples of movements, individuals, schisms and revolutions that originated in a desire to solve religious, social and ethical questions or to promise redemption from the troubles of the world. However, just as frequently, some arrogance, some degree of self-interest or some attempt to thereby earn material or political power have created hatred, injustice or immorality often greater than anything they came to change. "How can we distinguish between those disagreements that are for the sake of Heaven and those that are not? Those in which the disputants do not hate or persecute each other but rather like Hillel and Shammai, display friendship and cordiality to each other, are for the sake of Heaven" (Rabbi Yehonatan Eybeschutz). "It is not mere assumption or pious apologetic claim that their controversy was above personal rancor or rivalry. There is actual evidence: despite the differences on matters of marriage, the families of the two schools intermarried; despite differences in questions of tum'a v'tahara, they borrowed and lent each other their vessels" (I. M. Bunim, Ethics from Sinai).

It has been very common in modern times to view the halakhic controversies of Hillel and Shammai simply as the reflection of the differences in their personalities with Hillel as the moderate and kind sage whereas Shammai is the narrow uncompromising ritualist. Alternatively, Shammai has been portrayed as representing the rich classes, while Hillel represents the poor and working classes. Thereby both of the views as well as the many variations of them, simply deny that

these controversies were simply for the sake of Heaven in order to find G-d's truth; they are simply variants of Korach and his factions.

"Every time the Gemara refers to a controversy of Hillel and Shammai it ends with by saying 'the halakha is according to Bet Hillel', showing us that their purpose was truly only to determine the halakha" (Rivash). This concept that these were purely halakhic differences becomes even clearer if we take an example of such a controversy. "According to Beit Shammai, we kindle all 8 candles of the first night of Chanuka, decreasing the number on each successive night; Beit Hillel argued that since we rise in holiness, on the first night there is one light and we increase the number on each subsequent night. This is because they maintain that man is unable to SUR MEI-RA, depart from evil, all at once, whereas he can do a little good each day (ASEI TOV) until he finally achieves SUR MEI-RA. Beit Shammai taught that to do good without having first left off evil is worthless. The first steps require maximum effort and spiritual strength so the first night there are 8 lights, but afterwards they decrease as less effort is required. At the present, because of our weaknesses, the candles are according to Beit Hillel, but in the future, people will be able to SUR MEI-RA first and the halakha, as in all cases, will be according to Bet Shammai" (Shem MiShmuel).

His is no mixed choir

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WISDOM & WIT
 by Shmuel Himmelstein

As the Rav of Ponevezh, R' Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman was involved in all communal and domestic matters.

Once, a man came to him and demanded a divorce from his wife. His wife, he said, left their home in a complete mess, and he - who was a stickler for neatness - simply couldn't live with such disorder in his home. R' Yosef Sholomo eventually sent the man home to think things over, but when the man returned he was as insistent as before. Again the Rav sent him home, and again he returned, reiterating his demand for a divorce.

This time, R' Yosef Sholomo sent him away, but asked him to return the next morning to the Rav's house, rather than to the shul, where they had been meeting each time until now.

That night, the Rav and his wife turned their home upside down - insuring that it looked as if a cyclone had struck it.

The man returned the next day and looked around the Rav's house - it was in a far worse state than his own home. "Well," said R' Yosef Shlomo, "do you think that I should divorce my wife as well?"

There are many people who believe that Hashem is in Heaven, but the true believer believes that Hashem also rules this world.

-- R' Chanoch Henich of Alexander

Shmuel Himmelstein 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 permission

The man was pacified, and consequently shelved his demand.

A young man was about to be drafted into the Russian army. For a Jew service in the Russian army was incomparably worse than for a non-Jew, with blatant discrimination and physical abuse heaped upon the Jews in the army. He came to R' Chaim Ozer Grodzinski and asked R' Chaim Ozer to bless him, that he not be drafted.

"Do you wear tzitzis?" R' Chaim Ozer asked him. "Rebbe, I won't lie to you," replied the young man. "I don't wear them."

"And do you lay tefillin?" Again the young man replied that he did not.

"And Shabbos? Do you keep Shabbos?"

"Rebbe, I don't keep those laws either," said the young man. By now, he was convinced that all that he would receive would be a tongue-lashing from R' Chaim Ozer. Instead, R' Chaim Ozer said to him: "I hope that the Russian army is as disappointed in you as I am."

A few weeks later, the young man returned to R' Chaim Ozer with the good news that the army had turned him down. This time, though, he was wearing tzitzis, and he soon adopted a religious life style.

Pirkei Avot fourth perek

טז רבי יהודה אומר: הוי זהיר בתלמוד,
ששגגת תלמוד עולה זדון.

R. Yehuda says, Be cautious in teaching, for an error in teaching may amount to presumptuous sin.


Alternately: Be careful when you study, for an inadvertent error in study is tantamount to intentional sin.

If we allow TALMUD to mean either study or teaching - and more likely, both - then we see this Mishna as a warning to teacher and student alike - which means all of us.

To be sure, when one teaches young children, the blame for careless errors in teaching rests on the teacher's head. With older students and adults, some of the blame can be shared, but the teacher has an awesome responsibility to be as thorough and as accurate and as clear as possible to minimize the misunderstandings that can lead a person to serious error.

Even a perfect teacher - they don't exist - still runs the risk of a student's not understanding, confusing, or in some other way walking away with a piece of mis-knowledge that is not at all what the teacher thought he was teaching.

This mishna is not meant to discourage teacher or student; it is meant to warn each to be very careful in transmitting knowledge on the teacher's part and to ask for review and clarification when there is any doubt as to what the student thinks he learned.

Merak and Dubhe in the Big Dipper are known as the "pointers". They point to the North Star, a.k.a. the Pole Star,  **MicroUlpan** a.k.a. Polaris, the alpha star of Ursa Minor, the Little Bear. The North Star in Hebrew is **הדובה הקטנה** in **כוכב הקוטב**

Speaking of the North Star and of Yeshaya's words שמ"ע - It is not particularly bright, but it is the only star in the sky that remains in the same place (just about) from our perspective. At Jerusalem's latitude (approx. 32°N), the Pole Star is 32° above the horizon. This is so for all northern latitudes. At the North Pole, the Pole Star is directly overhead - i.e. 90° above the horizon, just as the latitude of the North Pole is 90°. The North Star is not visible from the Southern Hemisphere of the Earth.

Apropos Yeshayahu 40:26 (Haftara of Shabbat Nachamu):
β Ursa Minor, a.k.a. Kochab, HR 5563, HD 131873