



**891**  
**שמות**  
Jan. 8-9, '10 • כ"ג טבת תש"ע



# Advance to Go (collect \$200)

The title of this Lead Tidbit was going to be, "Here we go again!". It's about starting from the beginning, again. That's what Parshat Sh'mot and Sefer Sh'mot bring to mind. The Torah tells us that Yosef and all his brothers and all of that generation died. One of the things that it means is that we are at a new starting point. This time it isn't only the family of Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak, and Rivka, Yaakov and Rachel & Leah - it is the soon to be Nation of Israel, Bnei Yisrael.

For us, it is a new beginning as we read Parshat HaShavua, but it is also a new beginning, as in "Today is the first day of the rest of your life". For us too, as it has been for every generation - the previous generation has passed on and we are to continue. We look back into the Book of B'reishit and we need to learn its lessons. The positive ones and the negative ones. There is a lot of behavior of the Avot and Imahot to emulate. And there are a lot of behavior to shun, warnings of many things NOT to repeat.

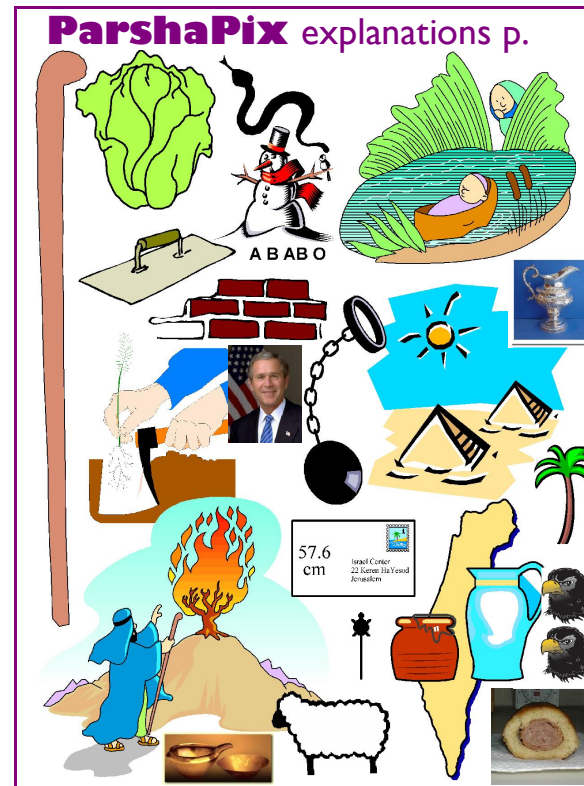
Yes, we might have advanced to Go, but our new beginning is not from scratch - we have a lot to build upon.

With all of the problems from Sefer B'reishit, we're off to a decent start in Sh'mot with the midwives, Yocheved, Miriam, Moshe, Tzipora... With the people calling out to G-d for help.

To put things differently, B'reishit started on a high -

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**OTHER Z'MANIM**  
Correct for Jerusalem  
Ranges are 10 days, WED-FRI  
20-29 Tevet (Jan 6-15)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:46-5:46am
Sunrise	6:41-6:40am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma	9:12-9:14am (Magen Avraham: 8:25-8:27am)
Sof Z'man T'fila	10:03-10:05am (Magen Avraham: 9:31-9:34am)
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:45-11:48½am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:15-12:19pm
Plag Mincha	3:46¼-3:53pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 4:49-4:57pm)	4:54-5:02pm

**Word of the Month**  
This Shabbat we bench Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat, which will be on the following Shabbat. The 23rd of the month is the earliest date for Shabbat M'vorchim... p.3

**Candle Lighting and Havdala times**  
Israel Standard Time

TT 891 • Rabbeinu Tam (J'm) - 6:09pm

4:16pm	Yerushalayim	5:32pm
4:34pm	S'derot	5:35pm
4:32pm	Gush Etzion	5:33pm
4:32pm	Raanana	5:33pm
4:32pm	Beit Shemesh	5:33pm
4:32pm	Rehovot	5:34pm
4:31pm	Netanya	5:33pm
4:32pm	Be'er Sheva	5:35pm
4:31pm	Modi'in	5:33pm
4:16pm	Petach Tikva	5:33pm
4:16pm	Maale Adumim	5:32pm
4:31pm	Ginot Shomron	5:32pm
4:30pm	Gush Shiloh	5:31pm
4:32pm	K4 & Hevron	5:33pm
4:31pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:32pm
4:32pm	Yad Binyamin	5:34pm
4:34m	Ashkelon	5:35pm
4:17pm	Tzfat	5:29pm

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## Lead Tidbit cont. from front page

the highest high possible - G-d's creation of the world. And the potential for EVERYTHING. Things went downhill more than a couple of times, and the Book, despite the bright points of our Avot and Imahot, ended on a down.

Sh'mot is starting from about as low as we've ever been. And once again, we see the amazing potential. It is all in front of the People.

Without going into any of the details of the rest of Jewish History - so far - let's talk about us. Our generation.

We've got the potential. We've got loads of details as to what we should be doing and what we shouldn't be doing. As we've mentioned, previous generations are gone. We are here and we are also working on the next generation or two (or three) in the form of our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. We have a lot to accomplish. We need not be the ones to finish the job (but it would be nice for us to chalk up significant progress towards personal and national strivings for Kedusha and Geula), but we may not slacken from it. This is our challenge. No excuses!

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

R"Ch Sh'vat is always one day, and can fall on any day of the week except for Sunday and Friday.

רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ שְׁבֻט יִהְיֶה בְּיוֹם שַׁבָּת קוֹדֶשׁ  
הַבָּא עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְטוֹבָה:

Molad: F 13h 43m 11p / 1:23pm IST

הַמִּוֹלָד יִהְיֶה בְּיוֹם שֵׁשִׁי, בְּשַׁעֲה אַחַת בְּצִהְרִים, אַרְבָּעִים וְשָׁלֹשׁ דְּקוֹת וְאַחַד-עָשָׂר חֲלָקִים.

**This Shabbat is the 113th day (of 355), 17th Shabbat (of 51) of 5770**

...זֶה-שְׁמִי לְעַלְמֵם וְזֶה זְכוֹרִי לְדָר דָּר: שְׁמוֹת גִּטּוֹ

## Sh'mot STATS

13th of the 54 sedras; 1st of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 215.2 lines in a Torah; rank: 18th

7 parshiot; 6 open, 1 closed

124 p'sukim - 15th (tied w/Emor) (2nd in Shmot)

1763 words - 14th (Emor: 22nd) (2nd in Shmot)

6762 letters - 16th (Emor: 23rd) (2nd in Shmot)

Its p'sukim are above average in length (number of words and letters). Emor was put in for comparison - look at the differences in rank

## MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are in Sh'mot

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[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

17 p'sukim - 1:1-17

[P> 1:1 (7)] Sh'mot begins with the conjunctive VAV to link the birth of the Jewish Nation to the foundation laid by the Patriarchs and "Sh'vatim" in B'reishit. The sons of Yaakov are lovingly enumerated again. The starting

number of "70" is repeated to impress upon us the tremendous growth of the people even (or especially) under Egyptian oppression, as described in the p'sukim.

**SDT:** *The opening words of the sedra /book of Shmot - V'EILEH SH'MOT - form the initial letters of חַיִּיב אָדָם לַלְמוּד וַחֲיַיב אָדָם מִקְרָא וְאֶחָד תַּרְגוּם שֵׁנִים מִקְרָא וְאֶחָד תַּרְגוּם (V'chayav Adam Lilmod Sh'nayim Mikra V'echad Targum) - And a person is obligated to review the Torah text twice and another time in translation. Baal HaTurim extends this acronym to the next two words. His whole statement is: "One who learns the sedra 2+1, singing it pleasantly, shall merit long life." (see p.25 for Shenayim Mikra.)*

**SDT:** *The final letters (sofei teivot) of the opening words rearrange to spell the word T'HILIM. When the People of Israel are in trouble (a play-on-words on Egypt - MITZRAYIM - MEITZARIM), they shall use T'hilim to help them focus their prayers to G-d, thereby meriting redemption.*

**SDT:** *Our first exile was associated with the number 70, the number associated with the members of Yaakov's family who went down to Egypt. The exile following the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash lasted 70 years. The termination of the final exile will be associated with our dominance over, or recognition and respect by the "70 nations" of the world.*

[P> 1:8 (15)] A new king "who does not know Yosef" considers the Jewish people a threat and takes measures to enslave and demoralize them.

Ironically, he is the first one to refer to us as a nation - "Am Bnei Yisrael". Sometimes it is our enemies who tell us who and what we really are. Par'o called us the Jewish Nation even before we felt that and knew that ourselves.

The Gemara tells us of a dispute between Rav and Shmuel as to whether this is really a new king or the same one with new attitudes and decrees. This dispute impacts on a practical halachic issue. If a person sells something as "new" and it was old but renewed (refurbished, renovated, reconditioned), can the buyer claim "false pretenses". Depends on the definition of NEW.

He instructs the midwives to kill the baby boys at birth to prevent the development of his "potential enemies" (and to kill off the potential redeemer of the People). They refuse to do his bidding and save the lives of the boys.

**SDT:** *VA-T'CHAYENA ET HAY'LA-DIM ... and they gave life to the boys". The Midrash says that not only did the midwives defy Par'o by not killing the boys, they also were responsible for saving those that might have died during childbirth. It is natural that some babies do not survive birth. The midwives were concerned that if they happened to deliver a stillborn, it might appear as if they had carried out Par'o's orders. Their prayers were answered and miraculously none of the babies died. Thus they are credited, not just with assisting in the births, but also with giving life to the babies.*

*There is a parallel idea concerning the night of the Exodus. It is said that even the normal deaths that might be expected*

*in a large population did not occur on the night of the Exodus, lest it detract from the miraculous nature of the Night. Thus, we have then similar miracles at either end of the Mitzrayim experience.*

**SDT:** *AND THEY EMBITTERED THEIR LIVES... The trop (Torah notes, specifically, KADMA V'AZLA) on these words seem unduly happy for such sad words. The GR"A points out the "happy" result of the unusually harsh oppression, namely, that G-d reacted to Egypt's excess by cutting down our time in bondage to 210 years from the original prophecy of 400, by counting from the birth of Yitzchak, rather than from Yaakov's descent into Egypt. Understand that this is not just an exchange of 210 years of extra harsh conditions for 400 years of regular slavery. Commentaries say that if we did not get out when we did, we would not have made it to Nationhood.*

## Gimatriya Twins

"And Yosef and all his brothers and all that generation died." This pasuk (1:6) has a gimatriya (numeric value) of 981. There is one other pasuk in the Torah with that same gimatriya - D'varim 4:4 -

וַאֲתָם הַדְּבָרִים הַזֵּה אֶלְהֵיכֶם וְיִיָּם כְּלַכֶּם הַיּוֹם:

"And you who cling to HaShem your G-d, are all alive today." This pasuk is one of the sources of the concept that G-d-fearing people live on after their physical death. The pasuk from the beginning of Sh'mot had a certain finality sound to it. The second pasuk (its G'matriya Twin) testifies that the "Shivtei Kah" live on.

## Levi - Second Aliya 15 p'sukim - 1:18-2:10

When Par'o sees that his goal is not being accomplished, he orders that all male babies (Jew & non-Jew alike) be drowned. The People of Israel miraculously flourish under these adverse conditions.

**[P> 2:1 (22)]** Amram reunites with Yocheved and a baby boy is born. When he is no longer able to be hidden (some say that Moshe was three months premature; that the Egyptians knew when Yocheved was due; therefore she was able to hide him only for those 3 months), Yocheved prepares a water-proof basket and sets him on the river under the watchful eye of his sister.

Bat-Par'o finds Moshe and sends Miriam to bring a wetnurse for the crying infant who apparently will not nurse from an Egyptian breast. Miriam brings Yocheved, Moshe's mother, who takes Moshe until he is weaned. From that point on, Moshe is raised in the royal palace by Bat Par'o (Bitya). She names him Moshe.

**SDT:** *Egyptian astrologers read in the stars that Israel's redeemer was soon to be born. They recommended the systematic drowning of all baby boys (including non-Jews, since they were not sure from what nation this redeemer would come). When Moshe was floated on the Nile, the astrologers reported to Par'o that Israel's redeemer was indeed*

*"cast into the river". As a result of this not quite accurate reading of the stars, Par'o withdrew the decree to drown the boys. [This points to the notion that there is something to astrology, but it is a "power" granted and limited by G-d to some individuals.]*

**SDT:** *On the phrase: VAYEILECH ISH... And a man (from the house of Levi) went... the Baal HaTurim points out the only other occurrence of that phrase, in Megilat Ruth: VAYEILECH ISH MI'BEIT LECHEM YEHUDA... In both cases, a redeemer of Israel results. In our case, Moshe Rabeinu. In Ruth, the progenitor of David HaMelech, his line, to Mashiach ben David. (Had the Baal HaTurim not made this point, there would have been a TTriddle on the phrase!)*

"And she called his name Moshe, for from the water he was drawn."

## Shlishi - Third Aliya 15 p'sukim - 2:11-25

It is amazing how many significant events are packed into the 15 p'sukim of this aliya. Moshe goes out to see what is happening with the Jewish People. He kills an Egyptian who was beating a Jew. He breaks up a fight between two Jews (Datan & Aviram). They had seen him kill the Egyptian and report him to Par'o. Moshe flees to Midyan where he saves Yitro's daughters from danger. Yitro welcomes him to his home (and family). He takes Tzipora as a wife. She gives birth to son Gershom.

**SDT:** *Yosef was identified by the Wine Steward as a NAAR IVRI, a Jewish lad. Moshe was identified by Yitro's daughters as ISH MITZRI, an Egyptian man. Yosef was privileged to have his remains buried in the Land of Israel. Moshe did not have that same "z'chut", although it was mainly Moshe who brought Yosef's remains from Egypt to the threshold of Eretz Yisrael. Gives you pause for thought. No criticism is intended.*

**[P> 2:23 (3)]** Meanwhile, after much time passes, the king of Egypt dies (or maybe got so sick that it was like he died) and the oppression in Egypt is greatly intensified. The People react by calling out to G-d. He too, "reacts"...

**SDT:** *When Moshe realized that Datan and Aviram informed on him to Par'o, the Torah tells us that Moshe was afraid. Rashi says that we can understand that literally, but also on a deeper level. With Jews like Datan and Aviram, Moshe feared that the people of Israel might not merit redemption. (Note that Rashi includes the p'shat (plain) meaning as well as the additional meaning. Both apply in this case. It isn't always so that the plain meaning is retained when there is a drash that is the preferred way of understanding the text.)*

## **R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya**

**15 p'sukim - 3:1-15**

**[S> 3:1 (39)]** Moshe is tending Yitro's sheep. An angel appears to him from a "burning bush that is not consumed". Moshe turns aside; G-d calls to him. He tells

Moshe that He has heard the people's screams and that he is going to take them out of Egypt and bring them to a Land of Milk and Honey.

Moshe asks "why me?". G-d assures Moshe that He will be with him and that as proof of the Divine nature of his mission, Moshe will be bringing the people back to "this spot" (Sinai) to "serve G-d" (and receive the Torah).

Furthermore, Moshe is to "reintroduce" G-d to the People. Moshe asks G-d what he should tell the People when he comes to them at G-d's command. G-d's answer spans nine p'sukim (3:14-22). G-d identifies Himself as EH-YEH ASHER EH-YEH (ALEF-HEI-YUD-HEI is one of the 7 names of G-d that may not be erased. It is probably the least known of the list of seven.)

This name of G-d's has the meaning: I will be with you (Bnei Yisrael) in your time of trouble (in Egypt) as I will be with you in future situations of enslavement and oppression.

**SDT:** *Baal HaTurim points out that the letters of this unusual name of G-d total 21. The initial letters of the first three names of G-d in the Thirteen Divine Attributes are YUD, YUD, ALEF = 21 (HaShem, HaShem, Keil...). The initials of the Patriarchs are ALEF, YUD, YUD = 21. The initials of the Five Books of the Torah are BET, VAV, VAV, VAV, and ALEF = 21.*

At Moshe's suggestion, so to speak, G-d agreed to be identified to the people as EH-YEH, with the more comforting connotation of "I will be with you", without the implication that there will be other periods of oppression in the future (based on Rashi).

G-d gives Moshe detailed instructions as to what to say to the people. He tells Moshe how the people will react and how Par'o will react. He tells him about the plagues and about the "friendly" reaction of the Egyptian people.

## **Chamishi 5th Aliya**

**24 p'sukim - 3:16-4:17**

The prophecy at the Bush continues... G-d tells Moshe: (a) to gather the elders of Israel and tell them that G-d will be taking them out of Egypt and bringing them to the Land of Israel, (b) the elders will accompany Moshe to present the demand for release before Par'o, (c) Par'o will not acquiesce, (d) I will smite Egypt and then they will send you out, (e) the Egyptians will "lend" the People of Israel many belongings.

Moshe asks "on what basis will they believe me?" G-d gives Moshe three signs to perform for Par'o and the People.

The three signs are the staff becoming a snake and then turning back into a staff. His hand inserted into his cloak and

emerging stricken with Tzoraat and then being restored. Taking water from the river and spilling it on the ground and it turns to blood.

**SDT:** *Rashi says that the first two signs were also reprimands to Moshe for speaking against the people and doubting in advance their potential to believe what he would tell them. This is Lashon HaRa, and both the snake and the Tzoraat are associated with Lashon HaRa. The third sign seems to have been specifically selected by G-d (perhaps) to be a bridge and introduction to the MAKOT (plagues), the first of which was an extension, let's say, of the third sign.*

Moshe still questions G-d as to "why me"; G-d gets angry at Moshe for doubting His choice of leader. G-d informs Moshe that Aharon will assist in these matters. Moshe is instructed to have his special staff with him when he presents himself to the People and Par'o.

**SDT:** *The Staff, HaMateh. Baal HaTurim says that there is/was a scribal custom to put Torah crowns on the TET in the word THE STAFF. This, to hint to the fact that Moshe was the ninth (TET=9) righteous individual who had the miraculous staff in hand. (Pirkei Avot tells us that the Staff was one of the items created in the instant between the Six Days of Creation and the first Shabbat B'reishit.) The previous eight are: Adam, Chanoch, No'ach, Shem, Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef.*

The Midrash says that Moshe had many names: Yered, Chever, Y'kutil, Avigdor, Avi-Socho, Avi-Zanu'ach, Tovia, Heiman, Sh'maya. The Midrash further tells us that of all his names, he is only called Moshe - even by G-d - to give honor to the acts of kindness of the one who found him and saved him from the water - Bat Par'o, the future Bitya (not Batya).

Rashi says that Moshe's experience at the Burning Bush and his communication with G-d there lasted for SEVEN DAYS! All during that time, G-d was trying (so to speak) to convince Moshe to undertake his mission.

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya 14 p'sukim - 4:18-31

[P> 4:18 (9)] Moshe returns to Yitro and tells him that he must go to his brethren. Yitro sends Moshe on his way. G-d tells Moshe that it is safe for him to do so. Moshe takes his wife and sons and returns to Egypt. G-d reminds Moshe about the signs he is to use before Par'o, that Par'o will not listen, and that he (Moshe) is to say to Par'o that if he does not release the People, G-d will kill his firstborn. (Thus the last Plague was really the first warning to Par'o. All the other Plagues served their purposes, but all pointed to Makat B'chorot.)

On the way, Tzipora circumcises her son. Commentaries explain that Moshe had neither circum-

cised his son Eliezer because of the danger in traveling when recently circumcised, nor did he postpone his return to Egypt, which would have been in defiance of G-d's command. It seems that he was in error in not having circumcised him, hence his life was in jeopardy until Tzipora did the circumcision.

A question that arises from this episode concerns the acceptability of a female circumcising. Commentaries solve this problem in different ways.

[P> 4:27 (29)] G-d tells Aharon to greet Moshe. Moshe tells Aharon all that has happened. They gather the elders and Aharon tells them what will occur. The People believe what they hear and bow to G-d.

**SDT:** *Rashi says that the donkey that Moshe used to bring his family to Mitzrayim was the same one that Avraham took to the Akeida and the one that the Mashiaich will ride upon. Why not a regular donkey? To tell us that these monumental events were not haphazard, but rather specially prepared parts of G-d's master plan for the world.*

## Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 6 p'sukim - 50:21-26

"And then, Moshe & Aharon go" to Par'o and say to him "Thus says G-d - Let my People go..."

**SDT:** *Notice that the elders are not mentioned. Rashi tells us that one-by-one, the elders "disappeared" (in fear of*

*Par'o) as the entourage was going to Par'o, until only Moshe and Aharon were left. Because of this, it was to be this way at Sinai also. The elders were left at the foot of the mountain and Aharon and Moshe ascended. (Then Aharon stopped and Moshe proceeded to the top.)*

Par'o refuses, questioning who this G-d of Israel is. He then increases the burden on the People (who obviously have too much free time because they ask for a 3-day release) by requiring them to also collect the straw for the raw materials of the bricks they have to make. The leaders of the People bear the brunt of the new edicts and complain to Par'o. Par'o blames Moshe; the People react with anger and disappointment (excusable under their circumstances). Moshe tells G-d that his efforts were counter-productive. G-d says that NOW you (Moshe) will see what G-d will do to Par'o...

Maftir is the last 3 p'sukim.

## Haftara 23 p'sukim Yeshayahu 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23

As the sedra tells of the family of Yaakov in exile, so does the prophet tell of the exiles of the People of Israel. The sedra contains G-d's prophecy to Moshe Rabeinu at the Burning Bush, of the redemption of Israel, the subsequent Standing at Sinai, and the entrance into the Land flowing with Milk and Honey. The

Haftara contains the prophecy that there will come a day when the Great Shofar will sound, and the exiles will come from their places of dispersion, and they will come to serve HaShem and bow to Him in Jerusalem. The sedra speaks of the First Redemption; the haftara of the Complete Redemption.

**UAKARI** is a New World monkey (western hemisphere)... The name is believed to come from the indigenous term for Dutchmen; their red faces apparently reminded the locals of sun-burned Europeans... uakaris are unusual among their type of monkey in that the tail length (15-18cm) is substantially less than their head and body length (40-45cm). Their bodies are covered with long, loose hair but their heads are bald. They have almost no subcutaneous fat, so their bald faces appear almost skull like. ...they have projecting lower incisors. Four species of uakari all found in the north-western Amazon Basin. The Bald Uakari (pictured below) is one of the four species (two of which were only recently discovered). Uakaris are typically lethargic and silent in zoo conditions, but in the wild they are agile and active, capable of leaps of over 6 meters. They have been observed both in small groups and in larger troops of up to 100... Diurnal (active during the day) and arboreal (tree-dwelling)... They have a large repertoire of facial expressions. They are seed predators specializing in large, hard-husked fruits... also fruit pulp, flowers, and insects.

## Divrei Menachem

Parshat Sh'mot introduces us to the very short account of Moshe's upbringing in Egypt. A cursory view of this narrative might remind us of one of the classic fables of our childhood in which near tragedy turns out to have a happy ending.

For a healthy baby is born to seemingly anonymous parents - "A man from the house of Levi and... a daughter of Levi" - destined, of course, to be drowned by Par'o's edict. Then, amazingly, no less than the Egyptian king's daughter rescues the infant from among the reeds and no less than the baby's true Jewish mother is hired to suckle him.

Behind the surface, of course, we see the hand of G-d, Divine Providence that shapes Jewish destiny. For the parents are indeed prestigious leaders (cf. Sh'mot 6:16-21, Midrash). And of the newborn Moshe it is said that, "He was good" (ibid 2:2). This expression mirrors that employed by Hashem when viewing His creations. So no wonder that the Midrash indicates that when Moshe was born, "the entire house [of Israel] was filled with light."

Amazingly, Moshe grew up under the wing of the very king who wished to kill Jewish children. To cite the Artscroll commentary: "Many designs are in a man's heart but the counsel of Hashem - only that will prevail" (Mishle 19:21)

"If a distinguished scientist says that something is possible, he is almost certainly right; but if he says that it is impossible, he is very probably wrong."

- Arthur C. Clarke

Quoted in The Little Book of Humorous Quotations, Parragon

## Parsha Points to Ponder

### SH'MOT

1) Why did Yocheved choose to hide Moshe specifically in the reeds near the sea (2:3)? Wasn't this a dangerous place to place a baby, even with the sister watching?

2) Why does G-D tell Moshe that the Jews will take clothing from the Egyptians AND WILL PLACE THEM ON YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS (3:22)? Isn't it obvious that the purpose of the clothing would be to clothe their families?

3) Why does the Torah relate that G-D told Moshe specifically in Midyan that the people who wanted to kill Moshe had died (4:19)?

### Parsha Points to Ponder

is prepared by **Rabbi Dov Lipman** who teaches at Reishit Yerushalayim and Machon Maayan in Beit shemesh and is the author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and Adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith" (Feldheim) and "TIMEOUT: Sports Stories as a Game Plan for Spiritual Success" (Devora)

His Hagada commentary, "SEDER SAVVY" will be IY"H published by Targum before Pesach  
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Answers are somewhere else in this issue  
Look for them, but only after a good pondering

## FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and the Israel Center.

**Q** *I believe that it is a p'sik reisha (an unintentional but certain result) that a can opener will touch the food while opening the can. Therefore, it would seem to be required to tovel (immerse) the opener before use when it has been obtained from a non-Jew. Yet, I have not heard of people doing this. What is the correct practice?*

**A** Rav Sheshet (in Avoda Zara 75b) seems to have posited that the idea of toveling utensils (keilim) has to do with the fact that they were used and may contain traces of forbidden foods. However, the gemara concludes that even new keilim must be toveled. In response to the question, then, why shearing scissors do not require tevila, the gemara explains that only klei seuda (utensils of meals) require tevila.

The question is: what is special about such keilim? You seem to understand that the issue is that such keilim come in contact with food. Rashi, however, says that the way we can tell the Torah is describing klei seuda is that it talks, in the interconnected topic of kashering keilim, about utensils that come in contact with fire, which, he says, is common specifically for food preparation (or serving) keilim. The Pri Chadash (Yoreh Deah 120:1)

questions the veracity of the claim, as he says that there are plenty of utensils that have nothing to do with food and are used with fire. He therefore, prefers the Rashba's (Torat HaBayit 4:4) explanation that since the same section discusses kashering utensils for kashrut reasons, it refers to keilim with which the possibility of transfer of taste between food and keilim makes a halachic difference. This logical approach encourages the suggestion that you make: that the contact with the food, which could potentially have caused kashrut problems (even though in a specific case everything is cold and there will be no transfer), is what obligates one in tevila.

If we were to look at the matter on that semi-pragmatic level, then one could talk along the lines that you used. If there will definitely be contact between the kli and the food, then we should say that tevila is required. However, the poskim take a different approach. Whatever the exact reason for understanding from the p'sukim that we are discussing klei seuda, the issue is what is considered in that category. It is true that it has to be a utensil that is used directly in relation to the food. Thus, a tripod (or its modern-day equivalent, [perhaps a trivet - Ed.]) that only holds up the pot that

contains the food does not require tevila (Shulchan Aruch, YD 120:4). A pot cover is considered a kli seuda because the steam that emanates and continues to interact with the food touches the cover (Rama, ad loc.:5). However, it is not the touching itself that is the issue, but whether the kli is considered to be used directly in relation to the food.

One of the cases that illustrates this distinction is your question. A can opener is not intended to interact with food but with cans, albeit usually ones that hold food (similar to the tripod above). The fact that there is incidental contact between the can opener and the food while opening is not significant enough to help define the can opener as a kli whose job is to come in contact with food. Therefore, a can opener does not require tevila even if there is a p'sik reisha (Hilchos Tevilla (Cohen) 11:171).

Another case in point, this one going in the direction of stringency, is that of a tray upon which one always places aluminum foil or cookie sheets before putting on the food. In this case, one would view it as the tray is being used to hold the food as it is being baked, just as we would view it if there were not a lining separating between the two of them (ibid. 1:4, based on Rav S.Z. Orbach). Only if the separation would be significant enough to be considered a separate entity, as opposed to a lining, would we say that the tray is not made for holding the food and would it be exempt from tevila (ibid.). While this explanation is

not unanimously held, we believe it to be correct.

### MRMH

Since 1930, the number of planets in our solar system has been 9. Some TTreaders might be familiar with My Very Energetic Mother Just Served Us Nectarine Pie as a mnemonic device for the planets in their order from the Sun.

Well, now she just serves nectarines - Pluto was recently stripped of its status as a planet and given the consolation appellation of "dwarf planet". (Something to do with the finding - and the potential of further findings - of other bodies in the far reaches of the solar system that would also "deserve" planet status. So the guidelines for Planet were changed, and Pluto was demoted.

Be that as it may, the planets that are visible to the naked eye have had Hebrew names for a long time. Mercury is CHAMA, Venus is NOGA, Earth is ERETZ, Mars is MA'DIM, Jupiter is TZEDEK, Saturn is SHAB'TAI.

Uranus and Neptune (and Pluto) had no Hebrew names - just Hebrew pronunciations of their "regular" names. This has just changed for Uranus and Neptune when the powers that be (as far as new Hebrew words and names) together with astronomers and an internet vote, came up with Hebrew names for these distant planets.

Uranus is ORON - אורון, meaning little light (Uranus reflects relatively little light of the Sun at a distance of almost 3 billion km) and Neptune is RACHAV - רחב, named for a sea monster of Jewish legend (consistent with the origin of the name Neptune).

BTW, planets in Hebrew are כוכבי לכת KOCHAVEI LECHET; singular: KOCHAV LECHET

RAKEL BERENBAUM'S

## PORTION FROM THE PORTION

FEEDback to  
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### The Midwives' Important Jobs

Having recently stood by the side of a midwife in the labor room and seen the importance of a competent, caring midwife in the progression of a natural delivery, this week the verses in the portion that talk about the midwives caught my attention. Par'o in his plans to deal with the Jews instructs the midwives to kill all the male babies on the birthing stones.

For someone whose role is to help bring life into the world, being instructed to kill the baby goes very much against the grain. And yet Par'o is the ruler of the country. Who are they to stand up to him? And yet the M'YALDOT did not follow his instructions. The ME'AM LO'EZ even says that PU'A screamed at Par'o for his decree.

But Rashi brings another explanation to this name PU'A (1:15). It is a depiction of the task of the midwife. SHIFRA - M'SHAPERET ET HAVLAD - Her job is L'SHAPEIR - to improve the child. To make sure that the newborn survives and comes out healthy. And PU'A - PU'A UMDABERET LAVLAD - talks to the baby - like those who calm a crying baby. It seems from here that a midwife's job is just about the baby.

The Talmud relates (Shabbat 31a) that one of the questions posed to Hillel the Elder by an annoying potential convert was "why are the heads of Babylonians misshapen - Hillel answered - because they don't have smart midwives. In this story the midwife didn't do the utmost to make sure the baby came out at its best.

But this explanation by Rashi bothered me. In the explanation of the midwives' names according to Rashi we only see one aspect of the midwife's role - that of dealing with the baby's welfare. But having stood next to the midwife and having her give me tasks to do to help the laboring mother progress with labor, I saw that the midwife also deals with the laboring woman. She gives her confidence to continue, helps her conserve her energy and use it efficiently and tries to protect the mother from any physical damage. According to Rashi this aspect of midwifery isn't portrayed in the names of the midwives mentioned in our portion.

So we can ask - "Does the job of the M'YALEDET - midwife have anything to do with the laboring mother? Maybe our translation of M'YALEDET as midwife - "with the woman" - is not really correct? Maybe the midwife's responsibility is just to the baby? Or maybe the Jewish women in Egypt in those days were so special as mentioned by the M'YALDOT themselves to brush off P'aro (1:19) - KI CHAYOT HEINA - Before the midwife got there the Jewish women had delivered their babies by themselves. Maybe they really didn't need the help of a midwife - they were all able to

manage on their own and the midwife's job was just to care for the baby.


I found an answer to my question in two commentators – Abarbanel and Malbim. Both say that there are two aspects to the job of a midwife. The Malbim says that there were two types of midwives – those who sat with the woman to help get the baby out – and the others who dealt with the baby after it was out and cut the umbilical cord and other necessary task.

The Abarabanel sees a hint to the two types of M'YALDOT who worked as a team in their names. One was SHIFRA – the one who would L'SHAPEIR HAVLAD – care for the welfare of the new baby to be born. The other was PU'A – whose job would be to hold the woman in labor, talk to her, calm her, and encourage her to pray. All of these are important tasks in the female profession of M'YALEDET.

## CASTOR OIL OR BLACK LICORICE

A woman whose labor is not progressing may be told by her midwife to take some castor oil. Don't worry - I am not giving you a recipe for castor oil to serve at your Shabbat table but I did read that if you cook any kind of beans with a bit of castor oil, it reduces the chances for flatulence - having excessive gas in the digestive tract. Add a bit of castor oil (up to 2 Tbsp) to your favorite chulent recipe and see if it makes a difference. If you are afraid your pregnant (and overdue) guests might complain

(though they shouldn't taste the difference) you can serve black licorice instead. It contains the chemical glycyrrhizin, which stimulates the production of the hormone prostaglandin, which can induce labor.

 Sometimes the very ugliness of certain problems prevents us from drawing close enough to them to solve them, but those are the kind that are in most crying need of solution. We must force ourselves to overcome our aversion and come to grips with them.

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Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

## Parshat Sh'mot

### Sleepless Nights!

Can you sleep at night? There is so much trouble in the world. Violence, wars large and small, natural disasters, disease. We all personally know many who are suffering at this very moment. Some are friends and acquaintances living in plain sight. Others are individuals in the media, people whose pain we see portrayed daily on the evening news.

It is perfectly understandable to be unable to sleep at night. Yet most of us do manage to sleep quite well. We all have developed a repertoire of defense mechanisms designed to enable us to keep these troubles from our consciousness. We have compartments in our minds into which we can deposit the suffering of others, somehow sealed and kept from immediate awareness.

But there are those among us who cannot sleep, for the pain of others keeps them awake. Their empathy is so great that the suffering of others is their own suffering and cannot be compartmentalized, or even temporarily forgotten.

Indeed, rather than try to shield themselves from others' travails, they seek out those others in order to witness their suffering. They do not stop with mere observation and compassion, but actively attempt to alleviate the suffering they witness.

Such a person was Moshe Rabeinu, to whom we are introduced in this week's Torah portion, Sh'mot.

Moshe was raised in the very lap of luxury. He was reared as a prince in a royal palace, his foster mother the daughter of Par'o himself. He grew up in a protected environment in which he was able to remain unaware of, and could certainly ignore, the plight of his enslaved brothers.

But he chose to do otherwise. The very first self-initiated action of which we read in the account of Moshe's life is his inquiry into the condition of his enslaved kinsfolk. "...When Moshe had grown up, he went out to his brothers and witnessed their labors..." (Exodus 2:11). He did not have to go out; he could have remained in his protected royal quarters. He did not have to "witness"; he could have shut his eyes or used any of the methods we use to shield ourselves against seeing what we go not want to see.

But that was not Moshe. In Rashi's poignant phrase, "He gave over his eyes and his heart to suffer along with them." He could not sleep.

We often wonder about what qualified Moshe for the leadership role he was destined to attain. For that matter, more generally, we speculate as to what qualifies anyone for leadership.

Theories of the elements of good leadership abound. Stephen Covey has written a book on this very

subject entitled The Eighth Habit. In it he offers a chart, briefly summarizing no less than twenty such theories, with a list of hundreds of books on the topic.

The theories range from "great man" theories which contend that leaders are born to leadership because of their innate gifts. But Moshe had innate handicaps which included a speech defect.

Other theories stress the motivations of leaders to lead. Moses insistently and consistently shunned the leadership role.

Still other theories stress the powers of persuasion and the gift of popularity. Neither characterized Moshe. He had no apparent charisma, no formal leadership training, no career aspirations, and no special vision other than the one shown to him by God.

Of all the theories on Covey's comprehensive list, one seems to fit: the theory of "servant leadership", a theory which implies that leaders primarily lead by serving others. The primary characteristics of such a leader include listening and empathy. These were demonstrated by Moshe in his very first venture out of the royal palace.

The characteristics of such leadership also include a commitment to others' growth. Moshe's leadership can be seen as a life-long process of commitment to others' growth: to their freedom from slavery, to their spiritual conditions, to their ordinary needs, and to their moral and ethical

education.

Some of us strive to be leaders. Most of us are content to leave leadership to others yet strive to know God, to know our own souls, and to benefit others in some small way.

The lesson of the life of Moshe is that both the grand leadership that some of us seek and the more modest goals of all who are spiritually motivated can be achieved by "going out to our brothers and witnessing their condition".

It may cost us sleepless nights, but it will bring us enlightened days.

In the words of an anonymous poet:

*"I sought my God and my God I could not find.*

*I sought my soul and my soul eluded me.*

*I sought my brother to serve him in his need,*

*And I found all three - my God, my soul, and thee."*

## The Burning Bush: Symbol of Jewish Suffering and Survival

Guest article by **Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher** Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

Why did G-d first reveal himself to Moshe in a burning thorn bush? The Midrash saw this as evoking a broad range of symbolic themes and prophetic visions for the future destiny of the Jewish People.

Rabbeinu Bachya regards the burning bush as a revelation that our nation, despite its hardships, is eternal. "The burning bush conjures up the image of a lowly nation in iron chains, constantly aflame with suffering. Threatened on all sides, against all odds, the Jewish people continue to endure miraculously among their enemies."

This interpretation is found in Midrash Sh'mot, regarding the Exile in Egypt: "Just as the bush burns but is not consumed, so too, Egypt (and Iran) can't destroy the Jewish people."

Yet another explanation of Rabbeinu Bachya follows the line of Rambam. Seeing the burning bush represented Moshe's striving to conceptualize G-d, which led to his achievement of prophecy. According to Rabbeinu Bachya, the burning bush represents matter in the universe, which remains unconsumed even though it is cloaked in Heavenly fire. Moshe investigated the way that form and matter combine to produce innovation in the universe, and he found G-d the Creator to be the root of all existence.

This interpretation is embodied in the Midrash, as well (Sh'mot Rabba 1:9), "From the burning bush we learn that no place, even a bush, is devoid of the Divine Presence." Nonetheless, here various Jewish schools of thought branch out in different directions.

The Chassidism of the Ba'al Shem Tov understands this idea as meaning that no place is devoid of the Divine Presence, including both light and darkness (good and seemingly negative phenomena). This idea finds clear expression in Degel Machanei Efrayim on Ki Teitzei regarding the verse, "If you come across a bird's nest" (Devarim 22:6).

"I heard from my grandfather and master (the Ba'al Shem Tov) that the Shechina descends from the highest to the lowest level. And that this is the meaning of the verse (Nechemiah 9:6), "You sustain them all". Even when an individual sins, he is still surrounded by the Shechina, without which no person would have the power to perform any act, even to move a muscle. It is that which sustains him, investing him with energy and life. This is, as it were, the Shechina in exile."

This idea aroused great opposition from the Vilna Gaon, and is one of the factors that led to the persecution and excommunication of

Chassidism. At the end of Metzaraf Ha'Avoda, we find quoted a letter from the Ba'al HaTanya who offers an in-depth analysis of the two views. He explains the view of the Vilna Gaon that one should not interpret "No place is devoid of Him" literally, but rather in the sense of Yeshayahu 6:3: "The whole earth is full of His glory," meaning that hashgacha – Divine Providence – is everywhere. He notes that as a result of this contention, the Chassidic works Toldos and Shivchei Ba'al Shem Tov were burned.

The Sefas Emes clarifies this Kabbalistic idea in various ways. For him, the statement "no place is devoid of the Shechina" points to the purpose of galut – exile – namely, that Israel must everywhere reveal the Divine Light. Galut is from the same root as hitgalut – revelation. Through the dispersion of the Jewish people, "G-d's will become revealed everywhere and concerning every matter."

He explains that the burning bush symbolizes holiness burning brightly despite the presence of the "thorns"; i.e., the profane. Moshe was puzzled by the holy fire's endurance in the face of these "thorns", yet G-d wished to demonstrate that even within the very depths of darkness is stored a great light, as in the verse (Sh'mot 1:12), "The more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites proliferated and spread."

Our Sages, interpreting the burning bush, state that just as a rosebush

produces both flowers and thorns, so too the Jewish people produce both great Tzadikim and terrible sinners.

The vision of the burning bush therefore makes clear the historic and spiritual essence of Israel, the phenomenon of good and evil confronting each other and G-d's promise (Vayikra 26:44), "I will not grow so disgusted with them nor so tired of them that I would destroy them."

Moshe was so impressed by the greatness of the vision of the burning bush that he said (Sh'mot 3:3), "I will turn aside to see this great sight." The burning bush, symbol of Jewish suffering, was a harbinger of our future success, i.e. that Israel will exist forever, despite the threats of the President of Iran.

# Press Release from the OU

## OU Shnayim Mikra Program of Aliya-by-Aliya Parsha Study to add Gefen Publishing's New English Targum Onkelos, beginning with Sh'mot

As the annual Torah cycle begins its second book, Shemot (Exodus), the Orthodox Union's new and increasingly popular **Shnayim Mikra program**, in which each weekly portion is studied online aliya-by-aliya, will add a component of Targum Onkelos, the Aramaic translation/commentary on the Torah, to its variety of study materials. The program can be accessed at [www.ouradio.org/mikra](http://www.ouradio.org/mikra)

The OU's **Shnayim Mikra program** derives its name from "Shnayim Mikra v'Echad Targum," "the text twice and the translation once" - the requirement to read each Torah portion twice in the original Hebrew and once in the Targum. Now, select commentaries from the Targum will be added under the heading of "V'Echad Targum", to further enhance one's understanding of the parsha.

The Targum is popularly attributed to a second-century convert named Onkelos, often identified as Aquilas, the nephew of the emperor Titus. According to Rabbi Jack Abramowitz, Associate Director of the OU's Pepa and Rabbi Joseph Karasick Department of Synagogue Services and the coordinator of the program, "Along with Rashi, Targum Onkelos is considered the commentary par excellence on the Torah. It is much more than mere translation; Onkelos sheds new light on the meaning of the verses. The commentary to be provided will explain some of Targum Onkelos' novel interpretations, so people can work them into their learning and gain an

understanding of and appreciation for what exactly Onkelos does."

Targum Onkelos was added to the program when Rabbi Dr. Stanley M. Wagner, co-author with Rabbi Dr. Israel Drazin of the five-volume "Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Bible Text" (Gefen Publishing House, Jerusalem/NY) contacted Rabbi Abramowitz about incorporating material from their heavily-annotated work into the program to encourage people to study Onkelos and thus to fulfill the obligation of Shnayim Mikra to the fullest. "We asked ourselves," Rabbi Drazin explained, "why it was that the Talmudic sages mandated the weekly review of the Chumash through the eyes of this translator? Why did so many of the greatest Jewish commentators – Rashi, Nachmanides and Maimonides among them – rely on Onkelos for their understanding of the Torah? What we discovered was that, despite the proliferation of midrashic works and commentaries, and notwithstanding the exegetical creativity of countless expositors, they felt that it was necessary for all those who love Torah to understand its p'shat, the literal meaning of Scripture. Onkelos was designated as the translator who is most reliable for an understanding of the p'shat."

"But we discovered," Rabbi Wagner added, "that despite the literalness of Onkelos, he veered from the p'shat more than 10,000 times in the Chumash. While he eschewed including legendary material in his translation, or theology, or halachic

decisions, he was so anxious to have his reading audience understand and appreciate Torah that he clarified verses, even if it meant straying from their literal translation. With the addition of this new feature to the OU's **Shnayim Mikra program**, we feel that participants will learn why Onkelos was so highly regarded, and will be enriched by the many contributions he made to understanding the biblical text."

As for why the new material is being added to the **Shnayim Mikra program** starting with Parshat Sh'mot, Rabbi Abramowitz said, "Not only does the start of a new book provide us with a nice, clean segue, the word Sh'mot in Hebrew is an anagram for **Shnayim Mikra v'Echad Targum**."

For further information:  
[www.ouradio.org/shnayim\\_mikra](http://www.ouradio.org/shnayim_mikra)

The one missing from the Seven

LDI, LD2, YL1, YL2, YB2, YL5, YR2, AY3, Peresh

Mount Sinai and a bush on it

Basket, milk node, the earth

Pre-Exodus and when, did they do this?

ArtScroll Series • Mesorah Publications Ltd.  
**WISDOM & WIT**  
by Shmuel Himelstein

Once, R' Avraham of Sochachov was in great distress when he failed to understand a Talmudic passage, and burst into tears. Somehow, he was helped from Heaven and he overcame his problem. From then on, whenever he was faced with major problems in understanding something he was learning, he would pray to Hashem and burst into tears as he beseeched Him for help. Indeed, he was often helped from on High.

Once, as R' Avraham was learning, he was faced with a particularly difficult topic, which he simply could not resolve. Finally, he prayed to Hashem for guidance and began crying bitterly because of his anguish.

Seeing this, his father-in-law, the Kotzker, said to him, "Avraham, when you don't understand something, the solution is not prayer. As difficult as the topic is, you have to use your mind and your logic, and you must solve it on your own."



Once, when two women were walking, Rav Aryeh Levin came up behind them. They slowed down to let him pass, but he had stopped walking. Softly, he told them, "there is a kitten drinking milk ahead of us, and I would suggest we wait a little, so as not to frighten it."

# Praying with Passion

Excerpted and reprinted with permission of the author

This week's focus: **Modeh Ani "It's great to be alive!"**

מוֹדָה/מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ, מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם, שֶׁחֲזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחַמְלָה, רַבָּה אֲמוּנָתְךָ.

**Simple translation:** I gratefully thank You, O living and eternal King, for You have returned my soul within me with compassion -- abundant is your faithfulness.

**Essential concept: Hakarat HaTov** (acknowledging the good)

Gratitude arises when a person acknowledges the good that has been done for him. The word MODEH contains a Jew's acknowledgement that it is HaShem who gives him a new lease on life every morning, and our gratitude for this magnificent daily gift.

**Deeper meaning:** One may wonder, does G-d need our gratitude? If G-d gives to and withholds from Man according to His calculations of what is best in the overall scheme, why should a person be grateful? The answer to these questions is that we, not G-d, benefit from our sense of gratitude. Appreciation of what one is given is the key to finding happiness and satisfaction. One who has no appreciation can never feel satisfied. The Torah is the source from

which we learn that gratitude is good for the one who is grateful -- so much so that he should nurture this feeling even if the recipient of his gratitude cannot perceive it. This is illustrated when G-d told Moshe Rabeinu to command his brother Aharon to initiate the plague of blood in the waters of Egypt. Why is this command to be executed through Aharon rather than directly by Moshe? Rashi explains this is because the river protected Moshe Rabeinu when he was cast into it as an infant. Because it had benefited him, he was not asked to personally cast a plague upon the river. G-d considered Moshe's debt of gratitude to the river to be of such great value that He shifted the mantle of leadership for this epic demonstration of Divine power. Even if doing so would make Moshe appear weaker in his position, the risk was worth the price, just so that the primacy of the trait of gratitude would be illustrated for all time. Obviously, this display of gratitude was not for the river's sake. The river would never know. It was for the sake of Moshe, and all of us who are his

students, to inculcate into our hearts.

**Halacha:** Before getting out of bed (even while still lying down) or starting any other conversation or activity, including washing hands, we declare our gratitude to Hashem for returning us to life. Thinking of and thanking Hashem immediately upon awakening helps ensure that one's day begin with holiness and sanctity.

**More:** One recites Modeh Ani upon awakening in the morning to acknowledge that it is Hashem who has given him a new lease on life. The latter words of Modeh Ani are from the verse in Eicha 3:23, "They are new in the mornings..." The verse means that each morning the Holy One, Blessed be He fulfills his faithful commitment to return souls that were entrusted to Him overnight. Therefore, Modeh Ani refers to the morning awakening and it is the custom not to recite Modeh Ani after a nap taken during the day. However, he should wash his hands.

**Visualize:** "Alive!" the man thought as he rubbed his eyes and shook the cloudiness out of his head. "Alive!" he acknowledged as he listened to the 'whoosh' of his own breath rushing in and out of his nostrils, and felt the strong, steady pounding of the heart in his chest. He sat up in bed, marveling at the mobility of his legs as they swung around to the floor, and the strength of

his back as he pulled up to a sitting position. He heard the birds chirping loudly on the tree branch outside his window. The sun's early morning rays illuminated the drawn shades.

"I'm alive in the world, a part of the living world!" the man exulted. "Today I'll have another day to hug my children, to make my wife smile, to pray to G-d and greet my neighbors and run my business and learn Torah and enjoy a good cup of coffee!"

He knew that maybe it would be a difficult day filled with set-backs and obstacles, or maybe it would be a great day, or a little of both. **No matter what the day would bring**, however, he was thrilled to be a part of it, to have yet another chance to try his best to make his mark on the world.

Before getting out of bed all these thoughts shot through his mind in a few brief seconds. With a heart bursting with gratitude, he spoke his first words of the day: MODEH ANI LIFANECHA...

One might read this description and assume that this man had just recovered from a terrible illness or narrowly escaped death in a near-accident. But why would one assume that? The gift of life is not only precious when it is seen in contrast to the threat of injury or death. It is precious all on its own, every single day; with a few moments of thought, each of us can begin our day filled with the true, all-encompassing happiness that only Hakorat HaTov can bring.

The mission of the **V'Ani Tefillah Foundation** is to increase awareness of the importance and power of tefillah and to provide education, inspiration, and tools for more sincere, powerful, and effective tefillah. ([www.prayingwithfire.org](http://www.prayingwithfire.org))

## The extra-silent ALEF

An ALEF is silent enough, having no consonantal sound; at least it is represented by the vowel sound it is attached to.

But not so for all ALEFs. Some have no vowel (and others have their vowel usurped - but we're not talking about those in this week's column) and are therefore totally silent. They don't contribute to the pronunciation of the word at all. (They still belong there because of verb roots, but that too is another issue.)

Here's an interesting example from Parshat Sh'mot. Interesting, because how the word is pronounced can change the intended meaning of the word.

The midwives (Shifra and Pu'ah) feared G-d.

וַתִּירָאֵן הַמִּיּוֹדוֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים...

VA-TI-RE-NA (accent on the -RE- syllable). Not VA-TIR-ENA, which might be tempting to say, since it gives the ALEF a presence (albeit, unwarranted, in this case). VA-TIR-ENA means and they SAW, not and they FEARED.

• Bat Par'o's name later in Tanach is BITYA, not Batya.

## Parsha Points to Ponder

### Suggested answers

1) The S'forno explains that Yocheved understood that the decree from Par'o to have the baby boys thrown into the sea was somehow a reflection of a decree from God against the Jewish people. Thus, she hoped that placing him in the reeds of the sea would satisfy that decree while also hiding him from being found in the thickness of the reeds.

2) The Kli Yakar explains that they would be taking this clothing on their way out of Egypt after the plague of the death of the firstborn. G-D wanted to remove any fears among the Jews that the Egyptian clothing was contaminated from the plague which went through their homes. Thus, G-D reassured them that they could safely put the clothing on their children.

3) The Ohr HaChayim answers that the Torah is clarifying that when Moshe accepted the mission to return to Egypt, this was not because he felt safe knowing that his pursuers had died. He was first informed of their death IN MIDYAN, after returning to Midyan on his way to Egypt to fulfill this mission.

Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Bamidbar Stories  
**"He Zealously Made My [G-D's] Rights Valid"**  
(Bamidbar 25:11){4b} by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

**continued from last week...**

The priesthood was given only to Aharon and his sons and their future descendants; Pinchas being already a grandson was therefore not anointed together with his (grandfather,) father and uncles. However, the whole tribe of Levi attained their spiritual rank and status as a result of their zealous act against those worshipping the Eigel (golden calf). So too, Pinchas for his zealotry against Ba'al Pe'or was raised to the priesthood by acting as a Kohen, showing the way to the atoning devotion which the Kohanim in the Mishkan and in the Temple symbolically performed.

The covenant of everlasting priesthood for Pinchas, was realized by the fact that all the high-priests during Bayit Rishon were his descendants (Divrei Hayim Alef 5:39-41) while the same was true in Bayit Sheini (Sifri).

However, for many years the nation did not accept him as worthy of that rank. How could a Kohen who has caused death be a source of blessing for the people? Many years after the conquest of the Land, internal war threatened because of the altar that the "two and a half" tribes across the

Yarden had built. Yehoshua thought that they wished to separate themselves from the House of Israel but Pinchas made peace between the tribes. That act of peacemaker of the zealot, led Israel to recognize the priesthood that was his reward.

"We have shown that according to the halacha, a Kohen who has only one hand may not go up for Birkat Kohanim. [Conceptually and spiritually] why are two hands necessary for blessing the people? This is because each hand has a different purpose. While the right hand of the Kohen is for drawing people closer together, his left one keeps the wrongdoers at a distance, thus permitting true peace. It is this true peace that is the essence of Birkat Kohanim" (Avnei Nezer of Sochochow).

Zealotry balanced by Peace.

## **Eco-Rabbi** [www.GreenProphet.com](http://www.GreenProphet.com)

*Excerpts from a weekly blog by Yaakov Reichert, drawing lessons in ecology from Parshat HaShavua*

### **The Burning Bush that is Not Consumed**

Moshe is first approached by God in this parasha. As he is herding his father-in-law's sheep he stumbles upon a "burning bush that is not consumed". When reading this description in light of today's energy crisis the image of the fire burning without fuel truly seems Godly.

This is not the first place in the Torah where God's limitless energy is presented. Back in the beginning of the Torah we read: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." The commentaries explain that THIS is the definition of creation: creating something from nothing. With Einstein's equation that matter and energy are one and the same, these two visions of God are comparable. When God created this wondrous creation, the heavens and the earth - pure energy into form - from nothing.

Similarly in our parsha, when God appears first to Moshe, he appears in the form of a bush that is burning but the bush is not consumed by the fire. The fire around the bush is burning without any fuel. Again the creation of pure energy - fire - from nothing.

We are taught that Man was created in the image of God, so that man could strive for godliness. Today's cleantech industry is doing just this. We need to reach a point where we can have our

energy needs met in a manner that is as fuel efficient as possible - to burn the bush with as little of the fuel being consumed as possible.

At home you too can strive for this godliness as well. We can do this by conserving energy wherever possible, I believe that that act is an emulation of God as well.

# CHIZUK AND IDUD

*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael - Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

Parshat Sh'mot has two personalities at its center: Moshe Rabeinu, and the Jewish nation. In this Dvar Torah the focus will be the Jewish nation.

We learn a number of things about the nation Israel in the parsha.

1. Being outside of their land does not result in their being swallowed up by their surroundings. They remain distinct.
2. They are irrationally perceived as a threat by their hosts, despite their own naive gentility and tranquility.
3. Discrimination and tortuous treatment does not level them. On the contrary, they bounce back from such treatment with increase and proifera-tion.
4. When in tortuous pain, they inevitably turn to God.
5. Their leadership, including the greatest, does not have confidence in the nation. They accuse them of not believing in the truth of God's sending them, of being unworthy of redemp-tion, of not believing in prophecy, and of over-demanding proof of God's willingness to intervene.
6. Their worthy leadership will sometimes irrationally refuse the call, and need be coerced into accepting the responsibility.
7. The truth eventuallly comes out.

They are anxious for worthy leadership. They are awaiting to be called upon by the universal God their patriarchs worshiped. They are ready to return to the land of their fore-fathers, if just given the chance.

May God bless us with our ancestors qualities.

Rabbi Menachem Schrader, Efrat



*The following Chizuk & Idud Dvar Torah was omitted from last week's Torah Tidbits due to lack of space. Here it is now.  
Remember: Think VAYCHI.*

Our parsha contains some of the most beautiful verses about Eretz Yisrael, its scenery, its flora, and its fauna found in the Tanach. As Ya'akov Avinu looks into the his sons' future, he describes the vineyards of the land and the red and white wine that flow from them; the bountiful wheat fields, and the fruitful trees; the seashores and the sailing ships; the sheep and the donkeys, the deer and their fawns, the horses and their foals; the blessings of heaven bring with them the blessings to man "blessings of the breast and womb" so that Israel will multiply and be numerous in the land.

Being here in Eretz Yisrael means experiencing the vibrancy, vitality and vigor of the land, of every road, every field, every mountain and valley and every river and waterfall; indeed of every stone and grain of sand. In every breath that we breathe, the grandeur of Eretz Yisrael is experienced.

Our connection with Eretz Yisrael is

established in our parsha not only in this physical and existential way but historically as well. Ya'akov Avinu, before he dies, repeats to his sons a lesson that was handed down to him from his grandfather Avraham. When Sarah Imeinu dies, Avraham ensures that the burial place for Sarah will be his own legal possession. Despite all of the efforts of Efron to prevent Avraham from purchasing the land, Avraham in the end succeeds to insure that this first legal purchase of a part of Eretz Yisrael will remain as a reminder to his children to keep the DERECH HASHEM that he founded. In our parsha, Ya'akov Avinu exhorts his children, "Bury me with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Efron the Hittite, the cave which is in the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre. In the land of Canaan, the field that Avraham bought from Efron the Hittite for a burial site – there Avraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Yitzchak and his wife Rivka were buried, and there I buried Leah – the field and the cave in it bought from the Hittites."

It sounds like a legal document, but Ya'akov wanted to be as sure as Avraham was, that this first kinyan in Eretz Yisrael is indeed reaffirmed, and that the memory of the Derech HaShem established by Avraham and continued by his sons will not be forgotten. This historical connection, this continuing memory, reaffirms to this day our devotion and allegiance to Derech HaShem and to Eretz Yisrael.

Prof. Carmi Horowitz, Jerusalem

*TORAH THOUGHTS as contributed by Aloh Naaleh members for publication in the Orthodox Union's 'Torah Insights', a weekly Torah publication on Parshat HaShavu'a*

# TRIDDLES

Prizes for best solution sets are furnished by Noam Productions and/or Big Deal.

Last issue's (VAYCHI) TTriddles:

**[1] According to this, an element of the PP is in error**

The element of the PP referred to in this TTriddle is KEVER DAVID on Har Zion. According to the haftara of Parshat Vaychi (which comes from the beginning of Melachim Alef), David HaMelech was buried in IR DAVID. So either David HaMelech is not buried on Har Zion or Har Zion is the Biblical location called Ir David. Or something else. In consulta-tion with a knowledgeable (and licensed) tour guide, the place called Kever David on Har Zion is NOT where David HaMelech is buried. That location has been identified as David's burial place only from Byzantine times. The "word" is - among those who "know" - that the Biblical IR DAVID is the same as the current Ir David and that David HaMelech is buried there, as the p'sukim indicate. In Ir David is a location known as Kivrei Beit David, the burial place of the house of David. This does not necessarily mean that David himself is buried there.

**[2] The 12 sons of Yaakov from Gad to Yissachar**

The 12 sons of Yaakov, in order of birth, are: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Dan, Naftali, Gad, Asher, Yissachar Zevulun, Yosef, Binyamin. In Hebrew alphabetical order they are: Asher, Binyamin, Gad, Dan, Zevulun, Yehuda, Yosef, Yissachar, Levi, Naftali, Reuven, Shimon. And in numeric value of their names, they list from GAD (7) to YISSACHAR (830).

Between these extremes, we find Yehuda (30), Levi (46), Dan (54), Zevulun (95), Yosef (156), Binyamin (162), Reuven (259), Shimon (466), Asher (501), Naftali (570). Average Gimatriya of the 12 sons of Yaakov is 264. The middle of the list is neatly held by Rachel's two sons - Yosef and Binyamin.

### [3] K'vish Rashi #60

No, not Rashi's road. A K'vish Rashi is a principal road. #60 is the main road from Jerusalem to Efrat. It is DERECH EFRAT ("which is Beit Lechem"), as in the location of Rachel's burial place. Yaakov told Yosef about it towards the beginning of Vaychi.

### [4] straight beats a flush

This TTriddle requires a little knowledge of poker, which, having just past Nittel Nacht, is not such an off thing to discuss. Without going into the whole game, the relative value of different hands is crucial to knowing who wins and loses. For example, four-of-a-kind beats a full house and three-of-a-kind beats two pairs. And a flush (5 cards of the same suit) beats a straight (a consecutive sequence of 5 cards, irrespective of suit). But the TTriddle says that a straight beats a flush. The hands have been switched around. As Yaakov did with his hands, placing his right hand on Efrayim and his left on Menashe. SIKEIL ET YADAV.

### [5] Preditory Teddy

Teddy is a pet form of the names Edward or Theodor(e). Let's take Theodor, as in Theodor Herzl. His Hebrew name was Binyamin Ze'ev. Yaakov's bracha to Binyamin begins: BINYAMIN Z'EIV YITROF, loosely translated (very loosely) - Preditory Teddy.

### [6] 2^4 \* 3^2 \* 37 \* 101 \* 229

What you see in the TTriddle is the prime factorization of a number. 2 to the fourth power is 16. 3 squared is 9. If you now multiply 16 x 9 x 37 x 101 x 229 you get 123,231,312 (if you multiplied correctly). This was the original TTriddle until we decided to make it more... fun. To solve, you have to not see this as 123 million, 231 thousand, 312. Rather, it must be seen as three groups of three numbers each: 123 and 231 and 312. 123 will represent the three words of a special pasuk in Vaychi: LISHU-AT'CHA KIVITI HASHEM. In the kabbalistic presentation of this pasuk in K'R'I'AT SH'MA AL HAMITA (and other places), the words of the pasuk are recited with each of three starting points. In addition to the way the pasuk occurs in the Torah (123), we say KIVITI HASHEM LISHU-AT'CHA (231) and HASHEM LISHU-AT'CHA KIVITI (312).

### [7] In Torah: Yaakov twice, Yosef, and Edom

VAYMA-EIN, and he refused... The word occurs 9 times in Tanach, four occurrences of which are in the Torah. Three are in B'reishit: Yaakov refuses to be comforted after Yosef's disappearance and (wrongly) presumed death. Yosef adamantly refuses the advances of Potifar's wife (adamant, because of the SHALSHELET above the word). And Yaakov - in Vaychi - refuses to switch his hands back to the way Yosef had expected them to be. In Bamidbar, the nation of Edom refuses to allow Bnei Yisrael to pass through its land.

### [8] In the beginning, Yehuda are coming are capital

B'reishit, Yehuda, and HaBa'im all head columns in the Torah.

## THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 505a (cont. from last week)

### Injuries caused to or by a married woman

[Many of the laws stated herein regarding divorce was at a time when a man could divorce a wife without her consent.]

The law as it appears in the Shulhan Aruch (Eben haEzer 83) is loosely translated as follows:

If someone injures a married woman the loss of her earnings and medical expenses belong to her husband. Pain payment is paid to her. Regarding humiliation and injury if they are visible as when he struck her in her face or her neck or her arm or her fingers she gets one-third of the payment and two-thirds go to her husband. If injury is not visible, the husband gets one-third and two-thirds to the woman. The husband's portion of the compensation is paid to him immediately and the wife's portion is used to invest in real estate and the husband gets the income of the land so purchased. She cannot waive the payments, not her portion nor his portion of the compensation. If she did waive such payments, it is of no force and effect. But the husband cannot sue on her portion from the assaulter without her permission. This applies when others caused her injury; but if the husband caused the injury to his wife, he must pay her immediately all of the injury and all of the humiliation and all of the pain. This all belongs to the wife and the husband is not entitled to any income such moneys bring to her. She may give these moneys away to

anyone of her choosing. The husband must continue to pay for her healing. Rama in his emendations adds, "if someone insulted her with words although generally if one insults another with just words he does not have to pay compensation, if he insulted her publicly the husband receives two-third of the compensation and she gets one-third. If the insult was not public (but there were two witnesses present) the husband receives one third and she gets two-thirds.








This chapter of the Shulhan Aruch concludes with the following statement "If one injures his wife in conjugal relations he must pay her for her injuries.

Immediately following this chapter in Shulhan Aruch there appears the following law: The objects that a woman finds belong to her husband and if she is now in a state of being doubtfully divorced, the object belongs to her. Tosafot is cited as giving reasons why this is so. One is that this is done because of the sustenance he is required to provide her with. And the other reason is to prevent enmity.







From the foregoing we can see that the halacha sets certain guidelines that are fair to both the wife and husband. As was shown in prior lessons the husband has many responsibilities to the wife and some of these are partially offset by having certain payment go to him.

With the next lesson we shall IY"H return to Rabbinic civil law.

## **ParshaPix** explanations

-  Pyramids under a hot sun = descent into Egypt... and are a symbol of slave labor, both ours and other enslaved people.
-  Lettuce is MAROR from the Seder table. It relates to the pasuk which describes the Egyptian's embittering the lives of Bnei Yisrael. Lettuce, explains the Yerushalmi, is a kind of vegetable that is tasty when picked ripe. The longer it stays in the ground, the more bitter it becomes. That is what happened to the people of Israel. They started out in Egypt with a good, sweet life. The longer they stayed in the "ground", the more bitter their lives became. Lettuce, therefore, is the preferred choice of vegetable (the Mishna lists five different vegetables that qualify for the mitzva of Maror)
-  That same pasuk continues to specify the work with bricks (see the trowel and bricks) and the field work (the planting of the seedling). COmbining: Ball and chain represents enslavement
-  Davka Graphics of baby Moshe floating on the Nile with sister Miriam watching over him
-  Another Davka Graphics of Moshe at the Bush. Point the sheep out to your children and ask them if they know any of the stories about sheep. Don't restrict the discussion to Moshe; extend it back to the Avot.
-  See the MATEH, Moshe's staff?
-  The three signs that G-d gave Moshe to catch Paro's attention. The snake, the hand that turned leprous like snow (represented by the snowman),

and the turning of water into blood (4 common bloodtypes: A, B, AB, O).

-  The goal of the Exodus: the land flowing with milk and honey - Parshat Sh'mot is the first of 14 times the phrase ERETZ ZAVAT CHALAV UDVASH occurs in Tanach.
-  Letter with 57.6cm on it is a pun for Bat Par'o "sending her AMA".
-  See the "borrowed" gold and silver vessels...
-  Two hawks are NEITZIM (plural of NEITZ). spelled the same as NITZIM, what Datan and Aviram were doing when Moshe spoke to them.
-  George Bush is for the Burning Bush.
-  Above the sheep is a screen image of TURTLE GRAPHICS... pictured is the screen turtle cursor having "drawn" a straight line. Allowing for misspellings, we find in the haftara of Sh'mot twice, the phrase: TZAV LATZAV TZAV LATZAV KAV LAKAV KAV LAKAV... TZAV (spelled TZADI-VET) is a turtle and KAV (KUF-VAV) is a line.