

SDT: stands for Short D'var Torah, and is a long-standing feature of Torah Tidbits. Usually interdispersed within the Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary, they make a short point about a single issue in the sedra. Many an SDT have been shared at Shabbat tables throughout Israel (and abroad, via the internet) for many years. Here is one for Parshat Yitro:

The mitzvot contained within the Aseret HaDibrot (there are 14 of them, with a 15th from the Va'etchanan version of the Big 10) are both specific mitzvot as well as being chapter headings for many other mitzvot that are found elsewhere in the Torah.

Take, for example, LO TIGNOV. Generally translated as Thou shalt not steal, the traditional understanding is that it is the prohibition of Kidnapping, i.e. stealing a human being.

But it is unavoidable to see LO TIGNOV as a large category of mitzvot from the Torah - including stealing, robbing, cheating in business, moving a boundary marker to take land from a neighbor, taking excessive profit on sales, denying that one has the possession of another, keeping a found object that one must attempt to return, deceiving others - even merely with words, perhaps collecting interest on a personal loan, copying proprietary computer programs, stealing ideas, stealing someone's time, or sleep... the list goes on and on.



ParshaPix on page 2; explanations on pp 41,42

Jerusalem Shabbat in/out times Parshat Yitro
4:41 pm/5:56 pm (see p.3 for times in other locations)

ParshaPix

Explanations on page 41

sweet salty

MCLX ב"ה

sour bitter

1-18

Word of the Month

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...

"People are accustomed to look at the heavens and to wonder what happens there. It would be better if they would look within themselves, to see what happens there."

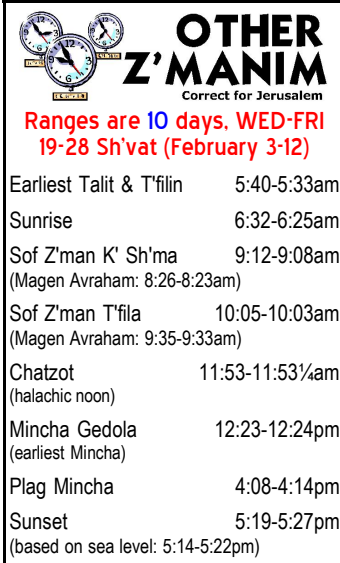
Statement (among many) attributed to R' Menachem Mendel Morgensztern of Kotzk - The Kotzker Rebbe, whose 151st yearzeit is this Shabbat, 22 Sh'vat.



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

TT 895
Rabbeinu Tam
6:31pm (J'm)

Candles	Parshat YITRO	Havdala	Next week
4:41pm	Yerushalayim	5:56pm	4:47/6:01
4:59pm	S'derot	5:58pm	5:05/6:04
4:57pm	Gush Etzion	5:56pm	5:03/6:02
4:57pm	Raanana	5:57pm	5:03/6:02
4:57pm	Beit Shemesh	5:57pm	5:03/6:02
4:58pm	Rehovot	5:57pm	5:04/6:03
4:57pm	Netanya	5:56pm	5:03/6:02
4:57pm	Be'er Sheva	5:58pm	5:03/6:03
4:56pm	Modi'in	5:56pm	5:03/6:02
4:41pm	Petach Tikva	5:57pm	4:47/6:02
4:41pm	Maale Adumim	5:55pm	4:47/6:01
4:56pm	Ginot Shomron	5:56pm	5:02/6:02
4:55pm	Gush Shiloh	5:55pm	5:02/6:01
4:57pm	K4 & Hevron	5:56pm	5:03/6:02
4:56pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:56pm	5:02/6:01
4:58pm	Yad Binyamin	5:57pm	5:04/6:03
4:59pm	Ashkelon	5:58pm	5:05/6:04
4:43pm	Tzfat	5:53pm	4:50/5:59



OTHER Z'MANIM
Correct for Jerusalem

Ranges are 10 days, WED-FRI
19-28 Sh'vat (February 3-12)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:40-5:33am
Sunrise	6:32-6:25am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:26-8:23am)	9:12-9:08am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:35-9:33am)	10:05-10:03am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:53-11:53¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:23-12:24pm
Plag Mincha	4:08-4:14pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 5:14-5:22pm)	5:19-5:27pm

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Headquarters: 11 Broadway, New York, NY 10004
212-563-4000 • website: www.ou.org

Produced, printed*, collated, and folded in-house
Phil Chernofsky • (02) 560-9124
tt@ouisrael.org • www.ou.org/torah/tt

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ttads@ouisrael.org • (02) 560-9125

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22 Keren HaYesod • POB 37015 • Jerusalem 91370
phone: (02) 560-9100 • fax: (02) 561-7432
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Lead Tidbit: **A Note on Notes...**

The Aseret HaDibrot comes with two different sets of Torah notes (cantillation marks, TROP). One set, known as TAAMEI HATACHTON (lower notes) presents the 13 p'sukim that make up the Aseret HaDibrot as just that - 13 p'sukim among the 5846 p'sukim of the Torah. They sound no different and not more special than all the other p'sukim of the Torah. And that's good, because the Aseret HaDibrot have been over-venerated by many people - Jew and non-Jew - to the point that our Sages took measures to "close the mouth of the apostate" who claimed that G-d gave us only the Aseret HaDibrot and that the rest of the Torah was written by Moshe Rabeinu on his own. Without further elaboration on this point - and without bringing up the issue of "to stand or not to stand" when the Aseret HaDibrot are read (perhaps we will have space to discuss that issue too) - the "lower" notes "tone down" the drama of the Torah's presentation of the Sinai Experience.

On the other hand, the TAAMEI HA'EL-YON (upper notes), present the Aseret HaDibrot as distinct DIBROT (D'varim or Commandments, as they are popularly referred to), with a dramatic flair that reflects their specialness in and of themselves and in context of the whole episode of Matan Torah.

[Side point: the names ELYON and TACHTON refer to the fact that some Torah notes are printed above the word they mark, and others are printed below their word. Both sets of TAAMIM for the Aseret HaDibrot have both kinds of notes, but the TAAMEI HA'ELYON has

more upper notes. And these notes generally add the abovementioned flair to the reading.]

Officially, the TACHTON set of notes is to be used when reading the Torah in private; the ELYON set is for public reading. This means that most of the Torah-reading Jewish world uses the "upper" notes when the Aseret HaDibrot are read in shul on Shabbat Parshat Yitro, on Shabbat Parshat Va'etchanan (there are interesting changes in the Torah's two versions - this, some other time), and on Shavuot morning when we read from Yitro. And what does "private" mean? When you sit at home with a Chumash on Friday night and go over the sedra, and you read with Torah notes, you use the TAAMEI HATACHTON.

Minhag Yerushalayim is to use TAAMEI HATACHTON when the Aseret HaDibrot are read in Parshat HaShavua. Only on Shavuot morning, when there is more of the idea of re-enacting Maamad Har Sinai, we read with the ELYON notes.

With all this said, let's draw an important lesson from the above, that goes beyond and deeper than how the Aseret HaDibrot sound.


Since Parshat Va'eira, the Torah reading has been "flying high". Prophecy, miracles, wonders, more miracles, and miracles within miracles. Suspension of the laws of nature. Spiritually - the highest we go.

But look at the beginning of Parshat Yitro (and look at most of next week's sedra of Mishpatim, until the restatement of the Sinai Experience). It's about as down to earth as you can get. Mundane, every-

day questions and disputes. All kinds of little things that Moshe (and our court system) has to deal with. Your dog gets scratched up by your neighbor's rose-bushes that he is ruining (because no hydrant was available). Who pays for the damages? This is comparable to a fiery and smoky Sinai with G-d's presence accompanied by the ever-increasing sound of a Shofar?

The answer is - YES! The Asaeret HaDibrot and all of Torah and Mitzvot that they reflect come with two sets of notes: UPPER and lower. Each has its place. Both complement each other. Jewish life has its spiritually uplifting moments. And it has many more everyday moments. And each of all these moments are addressed by the Aseret HaDibrot and by the whole Torah.

This Shabbat, some of us will hear the Taamei HaElyon and some will hear the Taamei HaTachton. But all of us will hear and vicariously experience Matan Torah. And we should recommit ourselves to Torah and Mitzvot on all levels - from the mundane to the sublime... and back again.

 We never become reconciled to the same things from which we were estranged, but to things which have undergone some change - in fact or in our minds.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

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This Shabbat is the 141st day (of 355), 21st Shabbat (of 51) of 5770

וַיַּעַנְנוּ כָּל-הָעָם יוֹזְדוּ וַיֵּאמְרוּ... נְעֻשֶׂה... שְׁמוֹת יִט:

YITRO STATS

17th of 54 sedras; 5th of 11 in Sh'mot

Written on 138 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 46th

15 Parshiyot; 4 open, 11 closed

75* p'sukim - ranks 47th

(only 7 sedras have fewer p'sukim)

1105 words, 4022 letters - ranks 46th

Yitro is the smallest sedra in Sh'mot

*Tradition is that Yitro has 72 p'sukim, not 75.

We'll TRY to say more on this in a box inside.

How many p'sukim in Yitro?

As we mentioned on page 5, most Chumashim have 75 p'sukim in Parshat Yitro. The "traditional" count is 72. (The "siman" for that number is YONADAV - ben Shim'a, a nephew of David HaMelech's.)

If you combine the first two p'sukim of the Aseret HaDibrot, as some sources do, there will be 74 p'sukim in Yitro. If we count DIBROT rather than p'sukim for the Aseret HaDibrot, then the number drops to 72 (from 75) and that might reconcile the difference. But not quite. Because when we read the Aseret HaDibrot with TAAMEI HA'ELYON (as Dibrot), there are only 9 p'sukim/dibrot, since the first two are definitely combined. Total - 71. So?

MITZVOT

Yitro contains 17 of the 613 mitzvot;

3 positive and 14 prohibitions;

(14 of the 17 are within the Aseret HaDibrot)

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-counts of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition) - Rambam counts positives (248) and prohibitions (365) separately. X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva is counted.

[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 12 p'sukim - 18:1-18

[P> 18:1 (27)] Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, hears "all that has happened" to the Children of Israel and comes to Moshe with Tzipora and Moshe's (actually, Tzipora's - that's how the Torah describes them!) two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. Moshe, Aharon, and the Elders welcome Yitro with great honor. Yitro praises G-d for all that He has done for the People.

SDT: *The straight reading of this portion indicates that Yitro heard about the Crossing of the Sea and of the battle with Amalek. These are the events recorded in the previous sedra. Other*

commentaries point to certain textual references about Sinai and are of the opinion that Yitro came after Matan Torah, sometime during the almost one year that the People remained camped near Sinai. If this is so, then we have an example of "there is no set order in the Torah's account of what happen(ed/s)". And we can add the events of Sinai to the list of what Yitro "heard and came". Of course, when the Torah does not follow chronological sequence, there are reasons... and sometimes we get insight into what those reasons might be.

VAYICHAD YITRO, Yitro was delighted with all of the good that G-d had done for the people of Israel. That's the "plain" meaning of the word. Rashi mentions another possible meaning of the word - of the skin breaking out in "goose-bumps", perhaps a subconscious feeling of mortification for the downfall of his former colleagues. One has to be sensitive and careful with what one says to a convert or potential convert.

Levi - Second Aliya 11 p'sukim - 18:13-23

On the following day, Yitro observes Moshe judging the People from morning until night. He offers suggestions for a more efficient system. Moshe should teach the People what G-d requires of them, and he should also handle the most difficult questions and disputes. But the bulk of the daily judging should be assigned to qualified individuals who will be in charge of

groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand people. Yitro explains that this new system will not only make things easier for Moshe, but the people too will be benefited.

(This portion of the sedra definitely seems to have occurred after Matan Torah, even if you want to say that Yitro's original arrival was before.)

SDT: *"On the following day..." The plain meaning would be, on the day following Yitro's arrival. Rashi, however, quotes the Midrash in saying that the day was the morrow of Yom Kippur, that very first Yom Kippur when Moshe came down from the mountain with the second set of Luchot. This makes an important statement, that not only is building the Mishkan an essential part of the "getting back to life following the Golden Calf disaster" period, but so is the every day social and civil functioning of the people.*

In the big picture, we see that Parshat Yitro with the main description of Matan Torah precedes Mishpatim with its mundane, everyday, down-to-earth laws. Yet at the beginning of Yitro, we find this out-of-sequence portion of the Mishpatim-related concept. And at the end of Mishpatim, we have the rest of the story of Maamad Har Sinai. So which really comes first - the lofty, spiritual dimensions of Judaism, or everyday life? We can (and should) look at it as a package deal. (See too, Lead Tidbit)

However you look at the first part of the sedra, the story of Yitro seems to be an interruption between the events of the Exodus and the Splitting of the Sea on the one hand, and Matan Torah on the other. But it is definitely NOT

an interruption - it is a pre-requisite for Matan Torah. Moshe's view of the judging process, as he explains to Yitro who asks him what he's doing, is that the people come to him LIDROSH ET HA'ELOKIM, to seek G-d. Yitro's point is that there is a lack of civility among the disputing individuals which must be handled BEFORE they can pursue Knowledge of G-d. This interlude about civil justice can teach us that good interpersonal relations allows us to really benefit from Matan Torah. Similarly, DERECH ERETZ KODMA LATORAH.

SDT: *Here's another way of looking at the "Yitro intro" (catchy!) to Matan Torah. Perhaps the Torah is telling us how to relive the experience of Matan Torah in our own lives. Its suggestion is "be like a convert". Take a fresh view of Jewish life. Marvel at all the things that G-d has done for Bnei Yisrael. Don't take things for granted. Approach your Judaism like Yitro did. Even if you are a Jew by birth, work on being a Jew by choice. G-d put the dramatic stories of the birth of the nation on hold, to let us take a close look at someone who doesn't have the Mountain poised above his head. Besides, Matan Torah was the mass conversion of a family-based group that is attaining nationhood. But the individual still counts. This we can learn from Yitro, father-in-law of Moshe Rabeinu - the individual.*

Shlishi - Third Aliya 4 p'sukim - 18:24-27

Moshe accepts Yitro's suggestions

and selects the judges. Commentaries point out that the actual qualifications of the judges that Moshe selected were more "modest" than Yitro had recommended. In theory, the very highest caliber person should be sought after as judge. In reality, we often have to settle for the best we can find in our society.

Moshe sends Yitro off on his journey to Midyan (to convert his family, says Rashi).

Notice that the first three Aliyot are all part of a single parsha, the parsha of Yitro (not to be confused with weekly Parshat Yitro). Pull that parsha out of the Torah for a moment (don't worry, we'll put it back), and the next thing we read about is Israel traveling from Refidim towards Sinai. This follows smoothly from the battle with Amalek which took place in Refidim. Sequentially, the removed parsha of the Yitro episode is not missed at all. Therefore, it seems obvious that the Yitro portion is there for its lesson value alone. Which is fine, and is how we understand the EIN SEDER MUKDAM U'M'UCHAR BATORAH phenomenon. The Torah is not just going to put things out of chronological order for no good reason (mentioned earlier).

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 6 p'sukim - 19:1-6

Here begins the Torah reading for Shavuot morning

[P> 19:1 (25)] The Torah now returns to the sequence of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim to Matan Torah. On Rosh Chodesh Sivan (six weeks after leaving Egypt) the Children of Israel arrive at Sinai.

A famous point, worth repeating

In the third month following the Exodus, on THIS day, they (the Children of Israel) arrived at the Sinai Wilderness. Why THIS day; THAT day is how you tell a story. The Torah isn't a once-upon-a-time-a-long-time-ago story book. The Torah is a living guide for us, to be constantly rediscovered. Every day, each Jew should imagine him/herself at Sinai receiving the Torah anew. Today we have come out of Egyptian bondage; today we stand at the foot of Mt. Sinai eagerly awaiting Divine Revelation and today we commit ourselves to G-d and what He asks of us. Today is the first day of the rest of our lives. The words of Torah which we learn and live should never become stale. They should be in our eyes as if TODAY we have received them. We should learn Torah and do mitzvot with the freshness and enthusiasm of a first-time experience. This too fits well with the "Yitro model". The challenge: Be a true Torah Jew all your life, for as many years as G-d gives you, but have an enthusiasm that is more common to converts and Baalei T'shuva.

After settling in at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moshe ascends to

This week, not 5 but 6 times!

G-d (whatever that really means) and G-d tells him what he is to say to the women and men (sequence is intentional and based on the analysis of the terms Beit Yaakov and then Bnei Yisrael). A clear connection is made between G-d's having taken us out of Egypt and His taking us to Him as His Chosen People - with the condition that we follow Him and His Torah. It is true that a Jew is a Jew regardless of his keeping the Torah or not, but it is clear that G-d has always demanded of us that we be committed to Torah and Mitzvot in order for our relationship with Him to be mutual and actively positive from both sides.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 13 p'sukim - 19:7-19

Moshe presents G-d's words to the Elders (and the People), who answer with a resounding "All that G-d says we will do". (Not yet with the famous Naaseh V'Nishma - that comes next week.) Moshe then tells the people to prepare for three days to receive the Torah. During this time, the Mountain was off-limits (to people and to animals). On the morning of the third day, the People gather at the foot of the mountain to the accompaniment of the supernatural sounds and sights of the Shofar, thunder, lightning, and smoke. G-d will speak to Moshe in such a manner that the People will be witness to

this direct communication. When Moshe will speak, G-d will answer with a "voice" (and not just via a vision or spiritual telepathy - so that the people could be part of the experience).

S> *G-d tells Moshe that the People should "sanctify themselves today AND tomorrow". It is relatively easy to sanctify oneself on the day of the great miraculous events of Matan Torah. The challenge to each of us is to sanctify ourselves on the many tomorrows that follow. The days after the wondrous events... The days when our lives return to "normal". This is what being Jewish is about. Yom Kippur is special and holy. Our additional challenge is to sanctify the day after Yom Kippur. We sanctify the mundane. Therefore, there really is nothing that is really mundane for us.*

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 20 p'sukim - 19:20-20:14

G-d descends onto Har Sinai (so to speak) and calls to Moshe to join Him. G-d tells Moshe to repeat the warning against approaching the mountain. Moshe then goes down to the people to tell them G-d's words.

[S> 20:1 (1)] G-d (Elokim) speaks all the following things, saying...

What follows is/are Aseret HaDibrot, the Ten Commandments. They are comprised of 13 p'sukim which contain 14 mitzvot out of the Torah's 613.

[S> 20:2 (5)] What we call the first two commandments (or

sayings, statements) are combined in a single parsha of 5 p'sukim. They can be seen as two sides of the same coin. You must believe in G-d; you may not believe in other gods... Some Chumashim consider the ANOCHI pasuk and LO YIHYEH... to be a single pasuk. In Taamei HaElyon they are definitely joined into a single pasuk.

MitzvaWatch

The first commandment sounds like a statement by G-d - an introductory remark, perhaps, to what follows, but is viewed by Ramban, Chinuch, and others as a mitzva to believe in G-d **[25, A1 20:2]**.

The second commandment contains several prohibitions related to idolatry. Specifically, not to believe in other gods **[26, L1 20:3]** (this mitzva includes the prohibition of having no belief at all - atheism), not making idols **[27, L2 20:4]**, nor bowing to them (even without believing in them) **[28, L5 20:5]**, nor worshiping idols in any manner **[29, L6 20:5]**. Note that this commandment deals with both the thought and actions of Avoda Zara (idolatry).

[S> 20:7 (1)] The third commandment prohibits swearing in vain **[30, L62 20:7]**. This is defined as (1) swearing to the truth of something that is obviously true and well-known - e.g. that the Sun is hot;

(2) to swear in denial of an obvious truth - that the Moon is made of cheese (interestingly, this is not considered a lie or a false oath, since (hopefully) everyone knows that the Moon is not made of cheese. Only when the truth of a matter is unknown do we use the term lie and false oath. A vain oath is just as serious as a false one, so this distinction is largely academic, but it emphasizes the seriousness of being flippant in regard to swearing.); (3) to swear to violate the Torah - e.g. that one will eat pork. Such an oath is immediately void since we are considered to have taken a prior oath (at Sinai) to not eat pork. Hence, the oath is in vain and is a disrespectful use of G-d's name; (4) to swear to do something that is impossible - e.g. to stay awake for a full week. The common denominator of these types of vain oaths is that they all "cheapen" the use of G-d's name and threaten the smooth functioning of society which often must rely on the seriousness of a real oath.

In addition to actual vain oaths, this prohibition is considered by some authorities to include the saying of a BRACHA L'VATALA, and its partner in sin, a BRACHA SHE-EINO TZ'RICHA. Saying G-d's name in vain is forbidden but is not considered part of this Commandment #3. It falls under one or more other prohibitions.

[P> 20:8 (4)] Commandment #4 deals with Shabbat and contains the positive mitzva to remember

the Shabbat with Kiddush [31, A155 20:8], and the prohibition of all manner of Melacha, specific categories of creative activities [32, L320 20:10]. The mitzva of ZACHOR includes saying Kiddush as Shabbat enters, and Havdala as Shabbat leaves. (Officially, K&H are said in davening as a fulfillment of the Torah command, and again with wine, in fulfillment of a Rabbinic command. It's a bit more complicated than that, but this is the basic idea.) Prohibitions of Melacha are divided into 39 categories, each of which contains other related activities, usually with the same goal. E.g., PLANTING is one of the 39 categories; watering, pruning, fertilizing all help the growth of plants and are TOLADOT of PLANTING, and are also considered Torah violations of equal seriousness to the parent melacha - Planting.

[S> 20:12 (1)] The fifth commandment is to honor one's parents [33, A210 20:12]. Grandparents, in-laws, older (or possibly oldest) brother (maybe sister too), and teachers are included (with differences). Honor of parents is usually considered to refer to that which one does for one's parents, in contrast to reverence (fear) of parents which include that which should not be done because it would be disrespectful.

[S> 20:13 (2/11 of a pasuk)] #6 is the prohibition of MURDER [34, L289 20:13], which is considered the antithesis of Belief in G-d, since murder directly negates creation of human being in His image.

[S> 20:13 (2/11)] Commandment

#7 against ADULTERY [35, L347 20:13] is the prohibition of having relations with a married woman, but as a "chapter heading" it also points to the other forbidden relations.

[S> 20:13 (2/11)] #8 LO TIGNOV [36, L243 20:13], which, as mentioned earlier, is specifically defined as kidnapping, but is also the category header of many mitzvot in the Torah.

[S> 20:13 (5/11 of a pasuk)] #9 is the prohibition of "bearing false witness" [37, L285 20:13]. We can see in this mitzva, as well as many others, how important it is to G-d, so to speak, that we be able to function as a society. Both oaths, and to a greater extent, testimony, are necessary for the establishment of TRUTH, in the absence of having direct first-hand knowledge. So much of the dealings between people involves the trust we place in each other's word, especially when backed by an oath, and in the confidence we place in the testimony of witnesses. Without these elements of our interpersonal relations, we would be incapable of functioning as a society.

[S> 20:14 (4/15 of a pasuk)] #10 is the prohibition of COVETING [38, L265 20:14] sums things up in that it focuses on thoughts that can lead to all types of sins. Being part of The Big 10 points to the significance of thought, where the usual focus is on deeds. The second part of this commandment is in its own parsha...

[S> 20:13 (11/15)] specifies the prohibition of coveting one's fellow's wife, his male or female

servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that is his.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 9 p'sukim - 20:15-23

[S> 20:15 (4)] The People are awestruck by the supernatural phenomena of the Sinai experience and they keep their distance. They ask Moshe to tell them what G-d wants rather than hearing His Voice directly. After the second statement, the People panicked and asked Moshe to tell them what G-d wants, so that they would not hear "G-d's voice" directly. G-d agreed, on the condition that we listen to the word of the true prophet who speaks in G-d's name.

[S> 20:19 (5)] G-d tells Moshe to remind the People that they heard G-d speak; that they shall make no graven human images (even for art) [39, L4 20:20]; they shall make an altar and offer sacrifices upon it; if the altar be of stone, its stone shall not be cut with metal tools [40, L79 20:22]. The Altar may not be approached with immodest steps [41, L80 20:23] but rather via its ramp. Maftir is the last 5 p'sukim.

Haftara 21 p'sukim Yeshayahu 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6

Parallel to the Torah's account of the awesome experience at Sinai, this passage from Yeshayahu describes his first awe-

inspiring vision of angels proclaiming Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh. Both sedra and haftara present us with "visions" of G-d's awe, majesty, and holiness. Also, in the sedra, G-d tells us that we will be to Him a kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation. In the haftara we see a model of K'dusha (the angels), and also a glimpse of a potential Moshiach.

What do you call the stripe on a matchbook on which the match is lit. Friction strip = פס־חִיכּוּךְ

Divrei Menachem

Parshat Yitro introduces us in great measure to the Mitzva of both remembering and observing the Shabbat. Our rabbis teach us that the terms ZACHOR (Remember) and SHAMOR (Observe) were uttered by Hashem in one and the same breath and are inseparable elements of Shabbat.

Shabbat is a sign of our special relationship with Hashem. It is a constant reminder that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. We remember Shabbat by reciting Kiddush, dressing and eating in the finest manner, and devoting the day to prayer, song, and Torah study. And we observe Shabbat by refraining from Melachot - work and practices - that would diminish the sanctity of the day.

But what is meant by saying that Hashem rested on the Shabbat, since the concept of rest is really germane as far as Hashem is concerned? The Ohr HaChayim teaches us that in this context "rest" is independent of any physical exertion, per se, but is in fact an intrinsic aspect of Shabbat itself.

Rest means being totally immersed in the spiritual, oblivious of daily concerns, and unmindful of achieving productively within the confines of Halacha. Since the Melachot were primarily based on the building of the Mishkan in the Wilderness, we might consider that as we rest from those activities we are actually building a sanctuary in time.

OU VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: My infant has conjunctivitis. A pediatrician I saw in shul on Shabbat morning suggested expressing mother's milk directly into the eye over standard eye drops (although he was totally fine with either system or beginning treatment at night). Is that permitted on Shabbat? [Note: this was answered orally on Shabbat and transcribed afterward.]

ANSWER: According to the great majority of authorities, human nursing, not only milking a cow, is a Torah violation, at least in many cases. We obviously allow a baby to nurse on Shabbat, but usually it is the baby who performs the very important, "problematic" act. Is it permissible for a woman to express milk for her baby's needs, classically, or, in this case, for medicinal purposes?

It is easiest to say it is forbidden. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 328:34) says that a nursing mother may not express milk into a cup to feed her child (it is permitted to express to relieve an oversupply in a manner that the milk is immediately lost). However, there are instances where expressing milk is permitted, which may shed light on our case.

The Shulchan Aruch (OC 328:35) rules that a woman may express milk (into the baby's mouth - Mishna Berura 328:112) in order to interest him to nurse. Most understand that this is not a level of need that we can consider life threatening, so why is it

permitted? Similarly, the Shibolei Haleket (123, see Beit Yosef, OC 328, and (slightly altered) the Rama, OC 328:35) says that a woman may not squirt someone who is under the influence of a strange malady because there is neither danger nor extreme pain. This implies that it would be permitted if there were such pain. Why?

The Magen Avraham (ad loc. 40) and Mishna Berura (ad loc.:113) explain the implied leniency by saying that this expressing is a melacha she'eina tzricha l'gufa (=mstlg), which usually means that the object that the Shabbat violation produces is not itself used in a classical, positive way. Once reduced to a rabbinic violation, it is then permitted on Shabbat to relieve significant pain (see Shabbat 107a; Ketubot 60a). While it is difficult to understand how mstlg applies there, it is hard to dismiss an approach posited by such prominent proponents, and this seems apply to our case (realize that even non-illness needs of a small child are equivalent to those of sick adults (Rama, ibid.:17)). In fact, the Kaf HaChayim (328:209) says, based on the above, that a woman may express milk into the ear of someone with a serious earache (assuming it has therapeutic value).

The Tosefet Shabbat (328:59), not seeing a mstlg in the above, suggests that expressing milk from a woman in a way other than nursing is an unusual form of mefarek, and thus rabbinic, similar to a person "nursing" from a cow (Ketubot 60a). Such reasoning would also make this case permitted.

While the Mishna Berura is skeptical of this approach, the Magen Avraham's explanation and leniency that he cited and this one are the main explanations of the Shulchan Aruch's accepted leniency for expressing (see Sha'ar Hatziyon 81).

Other possible grounds for leniency may be related to the small amount of milk that will be expressed and the fact that it is being used immediately (see Yalkut Yosef, OC 328:(35)). This respondent has thought of at least one other novel approach that would apply to this case (but it is not sufficiently developed to share in this forum).

We have seen significant grounds to permit the pediatrician's suggestion although it is far from unanimous (see Ketzer HaShulchan 138:30, for one; we have also spoken to important poskim whose initial reaction was to not allow it). Since the eye is an area where halacha tends to be liberal about the possibility of danger (Shulchan Aruch, ibid. 9) and we are also very careful regarding such a young baby, we would be lenient at the "bat of an eye" if there was any urgency to the suggestion. However, you indicate that other effective medicinal alternatives exist and the doctor does not think that it is of even remote importance to favor mother's milk. Therefore, it is halachically preferable, because of doubt and because it is better to avoid the rabbinic mefarek when there are good alternatives, to not use the system of expressing mother's milk on Shabbat.

Parshat YITRO

Fathers-in-Law

Very much has been written about most family relationships. There are books about fathers and sons, fathers and daughters, mothers and sons and daughters. Many volumes have been written about relationships, typically rivalrous, between siblings.

But comparatively, little has been written about the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law. Often, admittedly, there is little or no relationship between them. But just as often the relationship is an important and rewarding one.

I know that I personally have benefited immeasurably from my relationship with my father-in-law, of blessed memory. As is most often the case, I did not know him at all until my young adulthood, when I began to date his daughter. Unlike the father-son relationship, the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law usually begins in maturity and is, therefore, more of a relationship between equals, more man to man.

My father-in-law modeled his relationship to me after the precious relationship he had with his father-in-law. He would often joke that whereas a father couldn't

choose his son, he could choose a son-in-law, to which I would usually respond, "Yes, true, and a son cannot choose his father, but a son-in-law can choose his father-in-law."

In this week's Torah portion, Yitro, we read of a very rich relationship between a son-in-law, Moshe, and his father-in-law, Yitro. Of course, we first read of their connection much earlier on in the book of Sh'mot. But in this week's portion, the relationship begins to sound much more familiar to those of us who have "been there".

Yitro travels to meet Moshe and is the one who reunites Moshe with his wife and children. They converse with animation and in great detail, each one narrating his story to the other. Moshe narrates the story of the Exodus, of the splitting of the sea, and of the war with Amalek.

Yitro too tells a story, but it is a very different one. He tells of his religious quest, of his search for a God he can believe in. He informs Moshe that he has dabbled in every conceivable type of idol worship. He has seen it all. And "now he knows" who the true God is.

Every son-in-law tells his father-in-law his story, although I suspect that often some of that story is suppressed. And every father-in-law, that is, every father-in-law worth his salt, shares his narrative

with the young man who requests his daughter's hand.

I remember telling my father-in-law some of my story. I remember some of the questions he asked me, and his disappointment when he discovered that I did not share his fascination with the game of chess.

But I can never forget the story he told me; not once, but throughout the more than forty years that we knew each other. His was a story of pre-Holocaust Eastern Europe, of a culture that is no more, a culture that he never ceased to mourn.

It is no wonder that the Torah characterizes the dialogue between Moshe and Yitro by the word VAYSAPeir, which means to tell a story. Most relationships consist of stories told by one party to the other. In the case of the father-in-law and son-in-law relationship, these stories become essential and, at least in my case, were lifelong narratives.

Yitro models another essential aspect of this unique relationship: He offers counsel, he gives advice. Not that Moshe asked for Yitro's opinion as to how he should conduct the judiciary system for his people. But Yitro assumed that it was his prerogative as a father-in-law to gently and constructively find fault in his son-in-law's approach to things and offer reasonable alternatives.

I number myself among those fortunate sons-in-law whose father-in-law did not hesitate to occasionally criticize him, but who did so lovingly. He offered wise and practical suggestions which indeed were often drawn from his own past and sad, personal experiences.

It has been pointed out that the Hebrew word for a son-in-law is chatan, a bridegroom. I am convinced that this is because in the relationship between son-in-law and father-in-law, the former always remains the young bridegroom and the latter, the sage elder.

In the end, Moshe asks Yitro to remain with him, the ultimate tribute that a son-in-law can pay to his father-in-law.

I would like to close with an original thought, and if it is theologically daring, or in some other way off the mark, I beg the reader to forgive me.

It is a truism that God is our Father, and we are his sons and daughters. It strikes me that, in a certain way, God is also our Father-in-Law.

God as Father is the God with whom we began a relationship in our infancy. God as Father-in-Law is the God whom we freely choose, sometimes repeatedly, at later stages of our lives.

God is also our Father-in-Law because we have taken, so to

speak, His daughter as our bride. The Torah has been described, by prophets and rabbis, as God's daughter. And we, who have accepted the Torah, are betrothed to the daughter of God Himself. He entrusted His beloved princess to our inadequate and unreliable care.

But we asked for her hand. We accepted the Torah and committed ourselves to "doing and listening" to her words. If we are faithful to the Torah, we are demonstrating to our "Father-in-Law" that we deserve his daughter.

Only then we can claim a close relationship to Him, closer even than the relationship I had with my father-in-law, may he rest in peace.

Parsha Points to Ponder

YITRO

1) Why does the Torah mention the seemingly not relevant words ACHAR SHILUCHEHA (AFTER HE SENT HER AWAY) when describing Yitro bringing Moshe's wife with him to the Jews in the desert? (18:2)

2) Why does the Torah repeat DO NOT TOUCH IT WITH YOUR HANDS (19:13) after it just mentioned that ANYONE WHO TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN WILL DIE (19:12)?

3) We have all been taught that the first five commandments include laws between man and G-D while the second five consist of laws between man and his fellow man. In fact, this teaching has led to a variety of commentaries explaining why honoring parents is included in the laws between man and G-D. Is there any indication in the Torah, itself, that the first five laws are between man and G-D and the second five between man and man?

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"Y published by Targum before Pesach
ppp@ouisrael.org

Answers are somewhere else in this issue
Look for them, but only after a good pondering

Astrology & Judaism

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

In Judaism, different attitudes have been expressed towards astrology. Most Talmudic sages believed in the decisive role played by celestial bodies in determining human affairs. It was possible, they thought, for astrologers to predict the future by consulting the stars but also for them to err in understanding the contents of their forecasts. According to the Talmud, everyone has a particular star (mazal) which is his patron (Shabbat 53). Mazal - מזל does not mean luck. The word comes from נוזל - NOZEIL, which means the heavenly flow of each person.

A number of Rabbis held the view that the power, which stars had over ordinary mortals, did not extend to Israel. Thus, Rabbi Yochanan said: "Israel is immune from the flow and of the "influence" of the constellations (EIN MAZAL L'YISRAEL, Shabbat 156a:). On the other hand, Rava said: "Length of days, children, and finances do depend upon destiny" (mazal; Moed Katan 28a).

Why do the stars form an important link in the chain of G-d's Providence over the world? G-d's Providence works through angels, but the angels work through the stars because the angels are like souls to the stars. The Abrabanel in D'varim 18 explains that just like the human soul needs a body to accomplish its mission in the world, so too angels need a body to

accomplish their mission. Thus, each star is actually a body of an angel. But why are the angels and stars necessary in the link between G-d and man? To test us, does the angel or star have its own independent power, which is classic idolatry - hence the term עבודת עכו"ם, כוכבים ומזלות, in acronym form: עכו"ם - or are they merely a tool of G-d, like a hammer in the hand of a carpenter. When the carpenter builds you a cabinet, do you thank him or his hammer? Our task is to distinguish between the Creator and his creations, which include astrology.

The only major scholar to reject astrology completely was Rambam (1135-1204) who regarded it as a vain superstition unworthy of being called a science. Asked by the rabbis of southern France whether it was possible to combine the theories of astrology with the principles of Judaism, he replied that astrology was no science at all and that it behooves us never to engage in it. Of Rava's statement, quoted above that it's all about mazal, he says: "It is possible that it was said only as a momentary ruling because of a particular circumstance at that time." He found astrology to be forbidden by the Torah in the command: "You shall not observe these times" (Vayikra 19:26,

**Gold: HaShem (by far!); Silver: David;
Bronze: Moshe, Shaul (tie)... also ran: Yitro**

LO T'ONEINU; Hilchot Aku"m 11:9), and criticized the Jews of antiquity for their superstitious faith in astrology, thereby bringing upon themselves the destruction of the Temple and exile.

Astrology has to some extent penetrated even the Shulchan Aruch.

One explanation of the custom of fasting on the anniversary of a parent's death (yahrzeit) is that on that day the destiny or fate of the child is bad (re'a mazlei; Be'er Hetev to Yoreh De'ah 402:12).

It was also the custom in some communities to prepare a bed and table in a mother's room on the eve of her son's circumcision so that the child should enjoy good mazal (Be'er Hetev ibid. 178:3).

A Jew should try to postpone litigation with a non-Jew in the inauspicious early part of the month Av (Orach Chayim 551:1).

[Many have the custom to move house only on a Tuesday because it is considered a more mazal-dic day, in that the phrase KI TOV is used twice in the Torah's account of Creation that took place on the third day.]

A vestige of astrology remains even today. The fact that mazal means "constellation", "planet", "fate", or "destiny", does not inhibit us on joyful occasions in individual and family life from wishing fellow Jews MAZAL TOV, which means may you merit a good heavenly flow.

[Ed. note (as is the bracketed paragraph above): When G-d told Avraham

Avinu that he will have descendants, he told G-d that he saw in the stars that he was fated not to have children. G-d assured Avraham that if he followed Him - and so too for his descendants - he (Avraham - and the Jewish people) would be able to rise above their mazal. In other words, they would be able to change their fate.

Even if we say that there is "something to" astrology, we can apply the idea in a limited way. If astrology indicates, for example, that a person will commit murder - this we do not, must not, accept as fact in any which way. If, however, the person - because of his astrological "make up" is considered to have a tendency towards bloodshed - then we may pay attention to this idea. The person might have a temperament that could result in murder. But, perhaps, if he were to become a SHO-CHEIT, those inborn tendencies can be channeled into a productive, positive outlet. The Rambam might still say the whole thing is baloney (as we used to say in Brooklyn), but others might give it some credence and take it into account.

One is not allowed to act upon a horoscope reading or prediction. Nor is one permitted to refrain from doing something he was going to do because of some sign supposedly indicating failure or disaster.

But are Tauruses stubborn? Maybe. Bad trait? Depends how you apply it. That's the bottom line to the permitted aspects of astrology.]

CHIZUK & IDUD

I am HaShem your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. - Exodus 20:2

Our verse is the first sentence spoken by God to the Children of Israel as they stood at Mount Sinai.

Rashi and Ramban explain "the house of bondage" as referring to Egypt.

Based upon a Midrashic comment seemingly unrelated to our verse, Ohr haChayim offers a novel explanation of the phrase "the house of bondage". Our Sages taught that God entrusted the care of each land, other than the Holy Land, to one of his ministering angels, while He Himself cares directly for the Land of Israel. Thus, Ohr haChayim suggests that "the house of bondage" [literally "the house of servants (or slaves)"] does not refer specifically to Egypt, but to a land which is supervised by one of God's servants, an angel. In His first direct communication with His chosen people, God hinted that the purpose of taking the Israelites out of Egypt was specifically to bring them to the Holy Land, where they would be under His direct supervision.

During the period of S'firat haOmer, we count the days between the Exodus from Egypt and receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai in order to stress the fact that the goal of the Exodus was to bring Israel to receive the Torah. It is certainly not by chance that Yom haAtzma'ut [Israel's Independence Day] falls during the Omer period. Rather, it is a reminder that entering the Land of Israel with Torah as the national

constitution is the completion of the purpose of the Exodus from Egypt.

David Magence, 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

After R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel moved to Chevron, he would often go for extended walks in the early morning hours along the road leading to Yerushalayim. Those who accompanied him saw how he often stopped along the way to remove rocks that lay in the road. Those who were with him assumed that his actions were meant to prevent injury to others who might walk on this road. When a brave soul finally asked him why he did this, R' Nosson Tzvi said that what he did was simply in accordance with R' Chanina's actions. We are told that R' Chanina would remove obstacles on the road, and, as Rashi explains, he did so because of his great love for Eretz Yisrael. It was his desire not to allow anyone who walked on the road in Eretz Yisrael injured.



"When I was seven years old," said R' Moshe David of Chortkov, "I promised myself that I would never wish anything bad on any other person."

"And what do you do when an anti-Semite torments Jews?" he was asked.

"I pray that the Jews will so gain so greatly in stature, that no anti-Semite would dream of starting up with them," he replied.

Machon Puah Designer Babies

In 2004, American author Jodi Picault's novel "My Sister's Keeper" became a bestseller (it has since become a major motion picture). The main character of the novel was born to her parents in their attempt to provide umbilical cord blood for the treatment of an older sister who was suffering from leukemia. Incredibly, the story is based on true scientific realities; Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (or "PGD"), the technology for the creation of such a child exists and is in regular use today. For example, we recently participated in Shaarei Tzedek hospital's celebration of the birth of their 100th child conceived through PGD in their PGD lab.

We have previously discussed ethical, moral and halachic issues pertaining to the appropriate use of this technology. With this specific use of PGD, the deliberate engineering of a child to be used as a source of donor materials to save another person's life, additional halachic issues arise.

In the 10th Annual Puah Conference on Medicine and Halacha held in Jerusalem last month, Rav Yaakov Ariel, the Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan discussed this issue and raised a number of questions, both from the perspective of the mother/parents of the children as well as that of the unborn child.

In normative situations, couples conceive and bear children for the purpose of having a family under the framework of the mitzva of P'RU URVU (procreation). As such, each pregnancy, be it natural or physician assisted, is undergone with the goal of having a child as a member of the family. The establishment of families in this framework is the reason that women are permitted to put themselves in the danger of childbirth, which does have medical risks (albeit less so in today's age).

In this case, the pregnancy and childbirth is being undergone not for the purpose of procreation, but rather for the purpose of saving the life of the older sibling. The treatment requires injections to stimulate egg production, the extraction of eggs and other invasive actions that entail some measure of risk. Is the mother halachically permitted to endanger herself with this pregnancy for a purpose other than procreation? Furthermore, as regards the unborn child, although the initial treatments may consist of utilizing umbilical cord blood, there is no guarantee that they will be limited to such. In the fictional case of the book, the initial treatments failed and the sibling was thrust into serving as a repository of organs and materials for the treatment of her sister's illness. Are we permitted to put a child under the age of adulthood (bar/bat mitzva) in danger in order to save someone else's life?

As regards the parents, Rav Ariel noted that although mitzvot are

generally fulfilled only when there is a clear intention to fulfill the mitzva, this may not apply in this situation. When discussing the mitzva of procreation, many opinions, such as the Minchat Chinuch, maintain that conceiving, bearing and giving birth to the child are not the requirements of the mitzva. They maintain that the mitzva is not in the action of creation, but rather in the result, the existence of the child.

As such, the motivation of the parents for creating the child are irrelevant halachically. Although they are acting primarily to save their sick child, the future existence of the sibling would fulfill the mitzva of procreation. Accordingly, the same dispensation that allows any woman to become pregnant and deliver a child (with or without fertility treatments) applies in this case and the pregnancy is permitted halachically.

Next week, we will discuss the ethical and halachic ramifications of forcing a newborn infant or minor child to serve as a donor in medical treatments used to save another person's life.

TAV heads 60%

male and female form are both female

Dotting ... and... T

Sh'mot 20:12 is a very unusual pasuk in that it consists of 4 distinct parshiyot (all S'tumot). Specifically, we are talking about DIBROT (D'varim, commandments) 6, 7, 8, and 9. The ones prohibiting murder, adultery, kidnapping, and "bearing false witness".

When the Aseret HaDibrot are read in the "lower cantillation", Taamei HaTachton, this pasuk, these four commandments, are read as a single pasuk. Because of the differences in notes, there are slight differences in the way the words are pronounced.

These differences are actual in the Ashkenazic pronunciation, but not in the Israeli Hebrew pronunciation. Nonetheless, there are differences.

Taamei HaTachton (Ashkenazic): LO SIRTZACH LO SIN-AwF; LO SIG-NOV, SAANEH V'REI-ACHA EID SHAwKER.

Taamei HaElyon: LO (slight pause, and therefore the DAGESH goes back into the TAV) TIRTZAwCH. (The PATACH became a KAMATZ under the TZADI because rather than a TIPCHA, the TROP is now a SOF PASUK (of sorts). LO (pause) TIN-AwF. LO (pause) TIGNOV. LO SA-ANEH V'REI-ACHA EIN SHAwKER (the TAV stays without a DAGESH because the words LO and SAANEH are connected with a MAKAF. In the Israeli pronunciation, both forms sound the same.

He did it without CHET; he without REISH. Who with both?

Portion from the Portion

Our Relationship with Amalek & Yitro

Thirty days before the holiday one learns the laws of the holiday - SH'LOSHIM YOM LIFNEI HAREGEL DORSHIM B'HILCHOT HACHAG (P'sachim 6a). In that case, since TU Bishvat is behind us, it would be appropriate to start learning about Purim. But what does this week's portion of Yitro have to do with Purim? How can we tie in this week's Torah verses to the story and rules of Purim?

Actually there is some connection. The portion begins with the story of Yitro - how he brought Moshe's wife and children to join the Jewish nation in the desert and how he advised Moshe on an efficient way to govern the nation. But some of the commentators question the placement of this story at this point in the Torah (Ramban). They feel that it is not in chronological order. According to them, Yitro did not come before the giving of the Torah, but after it. In that case why is this story written where it is in the Torah?

We do know that there is a theory EIN MUKDAM UM-UCHAR BATORAH - that sometimes things in the Torah are written out of chronological order. But when that happens there must be a reason why. So why would this story of Yitro coming to the Jews in the desert be written out of historical

sequence?

We can find an answer by looking backwards at last week's portion of B'SHALACH. The portion ended with the story of the battle of AMALEK against the Jewish nation. We actually can find some hints of a connection in similar words that are used in relating both events - In the story of Amalek it says "Y'DEI MOSHE K'VEIDIM" (17:12) and here it says "KI KAVED MIMCHA HADAVAR" (18:18). There it said "B'CHAR LANU ANASHIM" (17:9) and here it says "VAYIVCHAR MOSHE ANSHEI CHAYIL" (18:25). So what is the connection?

Amalek came from behind and attacked the weakest part of the nation. They showed utter contempt for G-d and his people, Israel. This week's portion begins, on the other hand, with the story of Yitro joining the Jewish nation and even helping them by giving Moshe good advice. IBN EZRA explains that the Torah had a message to teach when placing the episode of Yitro next to that of Amalek. The Torah described in detail the wickedness of Amalek and told us that we have an obligation to wipe out their memory and this is a perpetual fight in every generation "KI MILCHAMA LASHEM B'AMALEK DOR DOR" (17:16)

We have an obligation to wipe out Amalek in every generation - but we must not get carried away and destroy all non-Jews in the process. Some non-Jews are kind to us and help us. That's why the Torah juxtaposes the story of Amalek to that of Yitro. Yitro came of his own will to

be with the Jewish people. He was happy for us for all the goodness that Hashem had done for us - "VAYI-CHAD YITRO AL KOL HATOVA ASHER ASA HASHEM L'YISRAEL" (18:9). Yitro even gave Moshe good helpful advice that Moshe implemented. Yitro was different from Amalek. He was on our side. Especially since we are obligated to continue the battle against Amalek, the story of Yitro is told here. We are not allowed to forget the kindness of Yitro. His descendants happen to have lived close to Amalek during the time of Shaul the King. Shaul, before attacking Amalek, warns the KEINI (descendants of Yitro) that because of a CHESED - a goodness that they (Yitro) had done, they should move away from Amalek so they wouldn't be destroyed with them - "LECHU SURU R'DU MITOCH AMELEKI PEN OSIF'CHA IMO" (Shmuel I 15:6).

The message of these two episodes being next to each other is that not every "goy" is like the other. There are righteous gentiles who hid Jews like my father-in-law during the war and there are those who want to destroy us physically, like Hamas and spiritually like missionaries who come to Israel. It is up to us to decipher who is friend and who is foe and then act accordingly.

Since it is still in the year of losing my father I would like to say a word L'ILUYI NISHMAT Kalman ben Meir quoted from my cousin Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld from the National Synagogue in Washington DC, who visited his grave this past Motzaei Shabbat and quoted from this week's portion - Yitro told Moshe (18:21) to seek out

"capable G-d-fearing men, men of truth, who hate injustice." Rabbi Herzfeld said that my father was such a person.

Amalek , came from Gobolitis and Petra to the north of Sinai. Here is a recipe for Manakish which would be served in that area - it is a dough topped with cheese or meat or zaatar. It is similar to pizza.

MANAKISH WITH THYME (Zaatar)

- ½ package active dry yeast
- 1½ cups flour
- ½ cup warm water
- ½ tsp salt

Topping:

- 1 cup dried thyme (zaatar)
- 1 Tbsp sesame seeds (optional)
- 3 Tbsps olive oil

Whisk together the yeast, 1 tablespoon of flour and ¼ cup warm water and let stand until mixture develops a creamy foam - about 10 minutes. If mixture does not foam, throw out and start over with new yeast.

Next, stir together the salt and ¾ cups flour, add yeast mixture and rest of water. Stir until smooth, then mix in another ½ cup flour. If dough sticks to your fingers, stir in just enough flour to make the dough start to pull away from the side of the bowl. (This dough may be wetter than Italian pizza dough that is more familiar.

Knead the dough. Keep surface and hands floured when dough becomes too sticky. Work the dough about 10 minutes -until it is smooth, soft and elastic. Form dough into a ball, then generously dust with flour and put in a medium bowl. Cover and let rise till doubled in size; about 1 to 1-¼ hours.

While dough is rising, combine thyme and sesame seeds (optional) and olive oil to form a paste.

Place fully risen dough on a floured surface, and press down to form a round shape. Spread with the zaatar mixture and bake at 350 for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the dough is crispy and brown. Serve warm.

ParshaPix

NOTE: Many of the items in a Parsha-Pix are straightforward graphic representations of things from the sedra (or haftara). Others are anything but straightforward. Some are former visual TTriddles or PPPs (ParshaPix-Puzzles). Don't be discouraged if you can't figure them out without help. They are fun to try on others at your Shabbat table after you peek at the explanations.

- Hearing ear of VAYISHMA YITRO, and Yitro heard...
- B"H was said by Yitro when he heard all the things that G-d had done for Israel. From that we are taught that one makes a bracha on miracles
- The scales represent the justice system, Yitro's suggestions, Moshe's response, etc.
- Yitro's advice included the assignment of "captains" of groups of 1000, 100, 50, and 10 - represented by the Roman numerals M,C,L,X.
- Bnei Yisrael's arrival at Har Sinai is described by the word VAYICHAN, as Rashi puts it, we were like one person with one heart. That's the graphic under the ear.
- The Shofar is one of the symbols of the Sinai experience, as we more than mention on Rosh HaShana.
- The washing machine is for the people to clean their clothes during

the preparatory days for Matan Torah

- Wine cup is for Kiddush (Zachor) and the negation circle is for the prohibition of Melacha, including writing, watering plants, digging, sewing, building.
- Do not steal (the Xed out thief) and do not go up to the Mizbei'ach with steps (the negated ladder) are two other prohibitions in the sedra.
- Volcano represents Har Sinai smoking from the fire of G-d's presence.
- An angel flew to the Heavenly Mizbei'ach and picked up a glowing coal in a pair of tongs. He then touched the coal to Yeshayahu's lips, representing a purifying process that would allow the prophet to speak on behalf of G-d
- MEM SOFIT, which is better called a "Closed" MEM, appears in the haftara in the middle of a word, rather than at the end, where we are used to seeing that kind of MEM
- Three dots and a short vertical line are the difference in the 4-commandment pasuk between the two sets of TROP-notes
- Max Baer Jr. played Jethro (Yitro) for 9 years on the Beverly Hillbillies
- 1-18 is LOW on a roulette wheel, tea, saw as in LO TISA, Dibra #3
- Upper right: take two wings of the eagle and the four NHL Detroit

Redwings and you get six wings, as in Yeshayahu's vision of the heavenly angels, as we read in the haftara of Parshat Yitro.

- Many hospitals are named Mt. Sinai, as the one pictured in Manhattan
- Two different symbols for UV, ultra-violet light or radiation. In Hebrew, AL-SEGOLI. Feminine form for the color violet is SEGULA, as in G-d's promise that we will be for Him the AM SEGULA above all other nations - hence, ULTRA-SEGULA.
- Above Jethro and to the right is a montage of characters from Scholastic Press's Goosebumps series... When Yitro came to Moshe, having heard about the Splitting of the Sea and the battle against Amalek (and maybe about Matan Torah), Moshe detailed all that had happened to Bnei Yisrael. The Torah describes Yitro's reaction with the words VAYICHAD YITRO. Rashi says that the plain meaning of the word is that Yitro rejoiced because of all the things he heard. Rashi gives a second possible explanation of the word VAYICHAD. That Yitro's skin erupted in goosebumps. A nervous or frightened reaction, perhaps, to what happened to the Egyptians, to whom he had been allied and with whom he possibly identified. From here, our Sages tell us, we learn to be extremely sensitive to the convert, who has changed his life completely by

becoming Jewish, but still has memories and feelings about his former life.

- Ehud Barak is for the BARAKIM that are mentioned in the relating of the Sinai experience.
- Tommy Lapid, similarly, is for the LAPIDIM in the same description.
- The can of bug spray represents one specific brand, whose name is a word that occurs in the sedra twice and two other times in the Torah, besides 9 more times in the rest of Tanach.
- The fat heart is a reference in the haftara.
- The words at the top and bottom of the left-hand side of the Parsha-Pix will be a TTriddle for you to work out together with your children and/or guests.

172 words in the Aseret HaDibrot - 118 distinct words. 12 LOs, 15 G-d's names

Next Tuesday, the 25th of Sh'vat is the 127th yahrzeit of the father of the Mussar movement, **HaRav Yisrael Salanter** ל"ז

Of 620 letters in the Aseret HaDibrot, 68 are ALEF (11%). Not one is a TET.

Laws of Inheritance

We are in the midst of discussing the laws of intestacy - that is, of people dying without leaving a will; how is their estate to be divided according to halacha?

I STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT EVERYONE HAVE A WILL. There are many lawyers who can help you prepare a will according to halacha taking into account your own wishes as how to distribute your estate and the laws of the land where one resides.

The halacha assumes that every Jew has relatives surviving him, (that is, except for a proselyte who dies without leaving surviving children or the descendants of his children. They are his heirs only if the children were conceived after his conversion into Judaism.) Assume that Reuven dies without a will and not having made gifts disposing of his assets. Priority is given to the descendants of the decedent and failing to leave surviving descendants, the chain of inheritors first goes up one generation to the father of the decedent and then to the descendants of the father. Failing that, the chain goes to the grandfather of the decedent and then to his descendants. This continues until there are heirs of the decedent. All descent is through the father and not through the mother of the decedent. Reuven's widow is not an heir of Reuven. The mother is not an heir of her children, nor does she confer heir status on persons who are only related through her. Thus brothers by the same mother do not inherit each other. Brothers by the same father inherit each other whether or not they have the same mother. In this respect there is no difference between a brother

by the same father and mother or a brother by the same father only. Thus if a child is born and his father is not known and therefore there are no relatives from his father's side, the members of his mother's side are not his heirs. If he leaves no descendants, then his property is ownerless, the same as that of a proselyte who dies without heirs. The halacha describes 28 distributees if a person dies without a will.

Heirs of a woman who was married

Sarah dies. Either she was married at the time of her death or was a widow or a divorcee at the time of her death. A husband is the heir of his wife. If he is not alive her estate is inherited by her sons and their descendants. If she left no sons or descendants of sons surviving her, her estate is inherited by her daughters and their descendants. Is she left no descendants, her estate is inherited by her father. If she is not survived by her father then her father's sons inherit her. These are brothers who have the same father that she has. There are many combinations of heirs as can be seen from the foregoing. It is best to write a will and thus the descendants will inherit according to the wishes of the decedent. Failing that, in families where the heirs want to abide by halacha, they will consult with a rabbi and lawyer who are knowledgeable in these matters. In the next lesson there shall IYH be a short discussion of the laws of primogeniture.

ASHER YATZAR Wonder of Wonders

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר יצר את האדם בחכמה, וברא בו נקבים נקבים, חלולים חלולים. גלוי וידוע לפני כסא כבודך, שאם יפתח אחד מהם, או יסתם אחד מהם, אי אפשר להתקיים ולעמוד לפניך. ברוך אתה ה', רופא כל בשר ומפליא לעשות.

Simple translation: Blessed are You, HaShem our God, King of the Universe, who formed man in wisdom and created in him many orifices and cavities. It is revealed and known before the throne of Your glory that were one of them to be ruptured or blocked, it would be impossible to survive and stand before You. Blessed are You, HaShem, Healer of all flesh who does wondrous deeds.

Theme: The essence of the prayer

Appreciate the wonder of the human body as an expression of Hashem's unfathomable wisdom.

Insight: Deeper meaning...

Man is created with "many openings and many cavities." The Midrash Tanchuma notes that the numerical value of the Hebrew words "chalulim chalulim -- cavities, cavities" is 248, which is also the number of organs in the body. If even one of the cavities, such as the heart, stomach, or intestines were ruptured; or if one of the openings, such as the mouth, nose or anus were blocked, one's body could not function properly.

We conclude the blessing, "Blessed are You, Hashem, Who heals all flesh and acts wondrously." Rav Yonasan Eibeshutz explains that recognizing the wisdom and

wonder of the human body creates a powerful awareness of Hashem: "One who is proficient in anatomy recognizes Hashem's great love for man and the wisdom involved in his creation. One becomes aware all his needs are performed by different organs -- some are hard while others are soft, some are dry while others are moist -- and yet they work together precisely. 'How great are Your works, Hashem, You make them all with wisdom!'

"If one would contemplate this, he would purify his heart from all iniquity, and he would insert in his heart a love and awe of Hashem..."

Halacha: During the day, after relieving oneself, one must wash his hands and recite the bracha ASHER YATZAR immediately (Mishneh B'rura 165:2), to praise Hashem for His wondrous creation of the human body. B'di'avad, he may recite it until he feels the urge to go to the bathroom again (Mishneh B'rura 7:1). By reciting ASHER YATZAR we acknowledge that the delicate balance of the organs in our body is a miracle, as is the human being's unique fusion of the spiritual soul with the physical body.

Visualization: Images that bring prayers to life...

The following is an essay written by Kenneth M. Prager, M.D. about the blessing "Asher Yatzar" as seen from the eyes of a doctor.

There was one unforgettable patient whose story reinforced the truth and beauty of ASHER YATZAR for me forever. Josh was a 20-year-old student who sustained an unstable fracture of his third and fourth cervical vertebrae in a motor vehicle crash. He was initially totally quadriplegic but for weak flexion of his right biceps.

A long and difficult period of stabilization and rehabilitation followed... With incredible courage, hard work, and an excellent PT, Josh improved day by day. In time, and after what seemed like a miracle, he was able to walk slowly with a leg brace and a cane.

But Josh continued to require intermittent catheterization... The urologists were very pessimistic about his chances for not requiring catheterization. They had not seen this occur after a spinal cord injury of this severity. Then the impossible happened. I was there the day Josh no longer required a urinary catheter. I thought of Abayei's ASHER YATZAR prayer. Pointing out that I could not imagine a more meaningful scenario for its recitation, I suggested to Josh, who was a yeshiva graduate, that he say the prayer.

He agreed. As he recited the ancient bracha, tears welled in my eyes. Josh is my son.

Q & A

Question: I often wake up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom. Must I wash negel vasser (Netilat Yadayim) and recite ASHER YATZAR? Should I wait

until the morning to recite the bracha?

Answer: If a person wakes up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom, he should immediately thereafter wash negel vasser (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 4:1,3) and be sure to recite the ASHER YATZAR blessing. One should not wait until Shachris to recite ASHER YATZAR, because if he takes care of his needs again upon re-awakening in the morning (which is most common), he will have missed the original ASHER YATZAR opportunity. The reason is that the "window of opportunity," for ASHER YATZAR is only until the next time he takes care of his needs (Mishneh B'rura 4:3 and 7:6)

[Ed. note: Even though you wash with a cup, etc. during the night, you do not say the AL NETILAT YADAYIM bracha until you awake in the morning.] *to be continued*

TTTRIDDLES

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

Last issue's (B'SHALACH) TTtriddles:

[1] **185 barred in the past; 6 coloned to come**

This one is like a Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading column. G-d tells Moshe to raise his staff above the sea and the waters will part, and Bnei Yisrael will go through the sea on dry land. Then HaShem says that Par'o will go in after them in pursuit. Twice, the word for "And they will go" is used - future tense. Then it happens as G-d said, and the Torah switches tense to the past - "And Bnei Yisrael went... and Par'o went in pursuit. YAVO-U means "they will go". VYAVO-U, with a SH'VA under the initial VAV, means "and they will go". VA-YAVO-U, on the other hand (or on the other tense) means "And they went". The PATACH under the initial VAV switches the tense of the verb from future to past. Throughout Tanach, there are 185 occurrences of the word VAYAVO-U. The TTtriddle refers to that word as barred in the past, because the PATACH is like a bar under the VAV. VYAVO-U, occurs only 6 times. The SH'VA under the VAV looks just like a colon - coloned to come.

[2] **This year: 8, 10, 13, and 15 of the 11th, 14 & 15 of the 12th, and 21 of the first**

Only one solver got [1], but several got this one. These are the dates on which we read part of Parshat B'shalach. The 11th (month) is Sh'vat. This year, we read the first part of B'shalach at Shabbat

Shabbat Mincha - that was the 8th of Sh'vat. On Monday and Thursday morning - the 10th and 13th of the month, and Shabbat Shira was the 15th. On the 14th and 15th of Adar (the 12th month), we read the end of B'shalach - VAYAVO AMALEIK, the Purim Torah reading. And we read the bulk of B'shalach on the last (7th) day of Pesach, the 21st of the first (month, Nissan).

[3] **First, fifth, seventh, eleventh, twelfth**

Rabbi Macy Gordon inadvertently gave the answer to this TTtriddle away in his Friday night talk at our Shira - TU Bishvat Shabbaton. These are the months that have something on their 15th day. Nisan - Pesach. Av - TU B'Av. Tishrei - Sukkot. TU Bishvat (Sh'vat is the 11th month). And Jerusalem (a.k.a. Shushan) Purim in the 12th month. Rabbi Gordon added the 15th of Iyar on which (at night) the Korban Pesach Sheni was (and will be) eaten. And on the 15th of the first of two Adars, the 15th is Shushan Purim Katan.

[4] **After singing and postmortem**

This one was a bit obscure. After Miriam took the women and sang at the sea, the Torah records that we had no water to drink. After Miriam dies (recorded in Parshat Chukat), the people are again thirsty for water.

[5] **Advanced Military Training Academy will lead to this**

From the haftara of B'shalach, we read of Sisra, the SAR TZAVA of YAVIN, the general of King Yavin's army. Play on the name YAVIN, which also means "will understand". Graduates of the Advanced Military Training Academy will learn.

[6] **The rabbi who certifies that we**

can carry in our location on Shabbat

Many got this one too. It is a play on the words EIREV RAV, the Egyptians who left Mitzrayim with the Bnei Yisrael. Sounds very close to the EIRUV RAV.

[7] Two that had tough pre-dawns

The final blow came to Egypt B'ASH-MORET HABOKER. That's either very early in the morning, or pre-dawn. There is only one other use of the phrase. It's in Shmuel Alef, when Sha'ul HaMelech defeats AMON. The answer then is MITZRAYIM and AMON.

[8] Place commercial for Michelin here

One of the very dramatic p'sukim in the Torah is the one that describes the mighty and arrogant Egyptian elite army corps panicking when their chariot wheels get bogged down in the sea and their wheels fall off. They all received a miraculous "puncture".

[9] Was Willie Saunders from Omaha?

Only 11 racehorses have won the Triple Crown. One of them was a horse named Omaha. His jockey was Willie Saunders. They represent SUS V'ROCHBO - horse and rider, mentioned twice in the Torah reading of B'shalach.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

1) The Ohr HaChayim teaches that this serves to demonstrate the greatness of Yitro. Moshe had sent his wife, Tzipora, back to Midyan. Yitro could have easily taken this action as a justification to keep Tzipora and her sons with him in Midyan and to raise them based on his faith. But, he did not do so. He brought Tzipora and the boys to the Jewish people despite the fact that this was AFTER HE SENT HER AWAY.

2) The Da'at Z'kainim MiBaalei HaTos'fot explain that these words do not refer to the command not to approach the mountain. Rather, they relate to the punishment of death which the Torah just mentioned and then continues right after these words describing how a violator should be stoned. These words teach that they should take care to stone the person from far away and not risking coming close to the mountain to kill him lest they accidentally come to touch it.

3) The Kli Yakar answers that in every one of the first five commandments, including honoring parents, there is mention of HASHEM YOUR G-D, while in the last five commandments G-D is not mentioned once. This indicates that the first five relate to man and G-D while the second five have nothing to do with man and G-D.