



Candles (earliest)	M&M	Havdala	Next week
7:12pm (6:20)	Yerushalayim	8:30pm	7:10 (6:18) 8:27
7:29pm (6:22)	S'derot	8:31pm	7:26 (6:20) 8:28
7:27pm (6:20)	Gush Etzion	8:30pm	7:25 (6:18) 8:27
7:29pm (6:22)	Raanana	8:32pm	7:27 (6:20) 8:29
7:28pm (6:21)	Beit Shemesh	8:30pm	7:26 (6:19) 8:27
7:29pm (6:22)	Rehovot	8:31pm	7:27 (6:20) 8:29
7:30pm (6:22)	Netanya	8:33pm	7:27 (6:21) 8:30
7:25pm (6:20)	Be'er Sheva	8:30pm	7:23 (6:19) 8:27
7:28pm (6:21)	Modi'in	8:31pm	7:26 (6:19) 8:28
7:12pm (6:22)	Petach Tikva	8:32pm	7:10 (6:20) 8:29
7:12pm (6:19)	Maale Adumim	8:29pm	7:10 (6:18) 8:26
7:28pm (6:21)	Ginot Shomron	8:31pm	7:26 (6:19) 8:28
7:27pm (6:20)	Gush Shiloh	8:30pm	7:25 (6:18) 8:27
7:27pm (6:20)	K4 & Hevron	8:29pm	7:25 (6:18) 8:26
7:27pm (6:20)	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:30pm	7:25 (6:19) 8:27
7:29pm (6:21)	Yad Binyamin	8:31pm	7:26 (6:20) 8:28
7:29pm (6:22)	Ashkelon	8:32pm	7:27 (6:21) 8:29
7:19pm (6:21)	Tzfat	8:32pm	7:16 (6:19) 8:29
7:30pm (6:22)	Zichron Yaakov	8:33pm	7:28 (6:21) 8:30

Rabbeinu Tam havdala Matot-Mas'ei (J'lem) - 9:13pm

Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI  
25 Tamuz - 5 Av (July 7-16)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	4:41-4:47am
Sunrise	5:40-5:45am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:17-8:21am)	9:11-9:14am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:46-9:49am)	10:22-10:24am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	12:44-12:45¼pm
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	1:20-1:21pm
Plag Mincha	6:19½-6:17¾pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 7:47-7:45pm)	7:53-7:50pm

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כל המתאבל על ירושלים  
זוכה ורואה בשמחתה  
תענית ל

The white king of Midyan

Hodu before vs. Hodu after  
in South Africa

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch

📖 Things usually turn out all right in the end, not so much in that they turn out differently from what we expected, but in that what we feared is far less awesome in the realization than it was in the imagination.

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## LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

And then comes the reiteration of the command - more, the "bottom line" of our nationhood, of our existence: You are about to enter the land; you shall prevail over all the nations that currently live there; you shall receive the Land; you shall settle the Land.

This is what it was all about. The golden calf and the spies and Korach were impediments to our goal. But we persisted. We persevered.

We exist as a nation in order to live by G-d's Torah. And we exist as a nation in order to conquer, settle, and LIVE in the Land that G-d promised to our ancestors and gave to us.

We have no other reason to exist. We have no other claims to our Chosen-ness.

Yes, we keep harping on this in Torah Tidbits. But the particular focus of this week's Lead Tidbit is the fact that in this summary sedra of Mas'ei, we boil things down to everything we've gone through these last 40 years - not only all of the places (we don't know anything about most of them), but all the things that have happened, were all focused on the NEXT STEP, the coming to the Land.

Ramban counts the mitzva of living in Eretz Yisrael as one of the Taryag Mitzvot, that comes from this week's sedra. Why the Rambam does not count it among the 613 is not our point at the moment. He certainly echoes the Gemara about the neces-

sity of living in Eretz Yisrael. The issue is bigger than either the Rambam or the Ramban. The idea is from the Talmud. And it is from many places in the Torah.

This we've said repeatedly - and it is a reason that it doesn't make a difference if living in Israel is one of Taryag or not - R'TZON HASHEM, it is G-d's will and desire (so to speak) that the Jewish People live in Eretz Yisrael.

The point: If that first population of Jews managed to get to Eretz Yisrael, so can we. It is far easier to make Aliya today than 20 years ago, than 50 years ago, than 100 years ago... than 3300 years ago! And that's exactly what they did. The term ALIYA is not a new one. G-d's first prophecy to Moshe included His declaration that He would go down into Egypt, save us, ULHAALOTO (same root as ALIYA) from there to the land flowing with milk and honey...

Difficult? Costly? So is keeping Shabbat. So is being kosher. So is giving our children a Jewish education.

By the way, lest you make a calculation based on our circulation numbers and realize that most people who are reading these words already live in Eretz Yisrael - so why belabor the point? Know that there are people who do not live here that need to hear these words, and the rest of us need to help convince them, too.

# Matot- Mas'ei stats

	Matot	Mas'ei	M&M
of 54 sedras	42nd	43rd	—
of 10 in Bamidbar	9th	10th	—
lines in a Torah	190	189	379
rank	29th	30th	1st
Parshiyot	9	8	17
P'tuchot	4	6	10
S'tumot	5	2	7
P'sukim	112	132	244
rank (Torah/Bam.)	24/7	12/5	1/1
Words	1484	1461	2945
rank	29/6	32/7	1/1
Letters	5652	5773	11425
rank	30/7	28/6	1/1
<b>Mitzvot</b>	2	6	8
positive	1	2	3
prohibitions	1	4	5

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

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

Not only are M&M the most often combined of the double sedras, their first pasuk each are Gimatriya Twins

## Kohen - First Aliya 16+12=28 p'sukim - 30:2-31:12

[P> 30:2 (16)] "And Moshe spoke to the leaders of the Tribes of Israel..." The first principle of the topic of Nedarim (vows & oaths) is that a person must fulfill the terms of his vow and it is prohibited to "profane one's word" [407,L157 30:3].

On the other hand, built into the Torah's laws are procedures for release from vows. These procedures also constitute a mitzva, viz. HAFARAT N'DARIM [406,A95 30:3]. A girl (12-12½ yrs. old - officially called a NAARA) who makes a vow can have her vows nullified by her father (only on the day he hears of them). Similarly (but with differences), a wife's vows can be nullified by her husband. (In this case, only some vows, those which affect the husband can be nullified by him.)

## MitzvaWatch

In addition to HAFARAT N'DARIM, the nullification of a wife's or daughter's vow by husband or father, there is another aspect of this mitzva, known as **HATARAT N'DARIM**. This is the nullification of one's vows (those that halachically CAN be nullified) by a Rav-expert in the laws of N'darim or a panel of three dayanim (even laymen).

Hatarat N'darim is a rare (but not unique) example of a mitzva that is considered Torah law, although there is no clear supporting text in the Written Word. The Mishna in Chagiga assures us that Hatarat N'darim is no less a Torah concept because of the lack of a written source-text. This is but another in a long series of demonstrations of the absolute necessity of defining Torah as BOTH the Written Word and the Oral Law and Tradition.

[P> 31:1 (12)] G-d next commands Moshe to do battle against Midyan, and then to prepare to take leave of this world. Moshe drafts 1000 men from each tribe for the task.

**SDT:** Commentaries point out that the People were reluctant to comply because they knew that Moshe would die shortly after successful completion of the battle. Moshe, on the other hand, enthusiastically complies with G-d's command, his personal interests to the contrary, notwithstanding.

The Chatam Sofer notes that when G-d commands the battle against Midyan, He calls it *NIKMAT BNEI YISRAEL*, a revenge for Israel's sake. When Moshe calls the people to battle, he refers to revenge for G-d's honor. If the people would be fighting for their own honor, they might forgo the battle and not hasten Moshe's end. But to avenge G-d's honor, they dare not refuse.

Pinchas is sent as "chaplain". The 12,000 strong army succeeded in killing all male Midyanites including five kings and Bil'am.

The women, children, herds, flocks, and possessions of Midyan were taken as booty. The cities and palaces were destroyed. The army returned to the Israelite camp at Arvot Moav.

Note: There is uncertainty among commentaries as to whether the tribe of Levi sent a contingent to fight this war or not. If they did, did Menashe and Efrayim combine as the tribe of Yosef, thereby keeping the total number at 12,000, or were there actually 13,000 who fought. Levi's probable involvement is due to the fact that the war was NOT for the purpose of conquest of territory; had it been, Levi would not be directly involved. If so, Menashe and Efrayim probably fought as the tribe of Yosef in this war against Midyan.

## Levi - Second Aliya 12+17+13=42 p'sukim - 31:13-54

[S> 31:13 (8)] Moshe, Elazar, and the tribal leaders went out to greet the returning army. Moshe was angry that the officers kept the women of Midyan alive since it was they who were instrumental in the downfall of Israel in the Pe'or affair and the consequent plague. The women and male children were killed; the girls remained captive. The soldiers were told to remain outside the camp for seven days because of their ritual impurity as a result of

the war.

**[S> 31:21 (4)]** Elazar HaKohen sets down the laws of purification of vessels. Many of the details of "kashering" and "toveling" (which are not the same thing) of vessels are derived from here.

**[S> 31:25 (30)]** G-d tells Moshe to order a counting of the spoils of war. The booty is to be divided equally between the soldiers on the one hand and the People on the other. Taxes of 1/500 were imposed upon the soldiers. Detailed itemization takes up many p'sukim of this portion. And then the half that went to the people is itemized. A tax of 1/50 (the standard amount for T'ruma) is imposed upon the people. These taxes were turned over to Elazar HaKohen. Detailed itemization takes up many more p'sukim.

The officers approach Moshe with more gifts of gold in thanks to G-d for not losing even one person in battle.

## **Shlishi - Third Aliya** **19 p'sukim - 32:1-19**

**[P> 32:1 (4)]** The Torah tells us that the tribes of Reuven and Gad were heavily laden with flocks of sheep and that they noticed that the lands of Ya'zeir and Gil'ad were particularly suited for raising livestock. The came before Moshe, Elazar, and the leaders of the People and they "mentioned"

that the territory was good for animals and that they happened to have many animals.

**Note the unusual pasuk, 32:3, in which each of its 9 words is the name of a city. Rashi just mentions that these were cities in the former territory of Sichon and Og. Targum Onkeles, interestingly, does not leave the city names as they are in the Torah - which is usually the case, but he renders the names into Aramaic. This has been an observation only.**

**[S> 32:5 (11)]** They then requested permission to settle on the east bank of the Jordan River. Moshe's initial reaction is intense anger, fearing that the request of the two tribes would discourage the People of Israel from wanting to proceed into the Land, repeating the experience of the "spies" of almost 40 years earlier.

**[S> 32:16 (4)]** The key objection on Moshe's part seems to be the potential negative effect on the rest of the People. To this, the tribes replied that they would be prepared to settle their animals and families "here" and they would surely accompany their brethren into Eretz Yisrael and not return to the east bank until all is settled in the Land.

**SDT:** *In addition to the main "dressing down" that Moshe gives Reuven and Gad, there is a more subtle rebuke on another issue. The tribes offer to build enclosures for their flocks and homes for their children. Later, when Moshe gives them*

*permission to establish themselves on the East Bank, he tells them to build homes for their children and accommodations for their animals. Your children go first. Then your property. It is important that we get our priorities straight in life.*

## **R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya** **23+10+39=72 p'sukim -** **32:20-33:49**

The fourth Aliya is always the BRIDGE Aliya between two sedras when they are combined. This particular R'VI'I is THE longest Aliya in the Torah. There are seven whole sedras in the Torah with fewer p'sukim than this Aliya.

**[P> 32:20 (23)]** Moshe's response is the administration of an oath (many details of the proper form of "conditions" are derived from this famous oath of the 2½ tribes) agreeing to the request to settle on the east side of the Jordan iff (that's not a typo; it's the abbreviated form of "if and only if" and is a valid word on its own) the 2½ tribes fight side by side with the other tribes of Israel.

The Torah describes the cities that the 2½ tribes established to settle their families and flocks prior to their crossing the Jordan.

Perhaps the seemingly unnecessary details give us the message that we are dealing with part of Eretz Yisrael, and not just something extra-territorial.

**[P> 33:1 (39)]** The sedra of Mas'ei begins with a summary

listing of the 42 places of encampment during the years of wandering in the Wilderness. Most places are just listed; a few are anecdotal. The present day identity of many of these places is in dispute or unknown. This portion covers the Exodus from Egypt (the city of Ra-m'ses), the passage through the Sea, and the 3-day journey that brought the People to Mara, with its "water problem" (and solution). From there it was back to Yam Suf, before continuing into the Wilderness.

**Travelog** These are the places of encampment and some comments...

*From (0) Ra-m'ses to (1) Sukkot  
to (2) Eitam to (3) Pi HaCherot  
to (4) Mara to (5) Eilim  
to (6) Yam Suf to (7) Midbar Sin  
to (8) Dafka to (9) Alush  
to (10) R'fidim to (11) Midbar Sinai  
to (12) Kivrot HaTaava  
to (13) Chatzeirot to (14) Ritma  
to (15) Rimon Peretz  
to (16) Livna to (17) Risa  
to (18) K'heilata to (19) Har Shefer  
to (20) Charada to (21) Mak'heilot  
to (22) Tachat to (23) Terach  
to (24) Mitka to (25) Chashmona  
to (26) Moseirot to (27) Bnei Yaakan  
to (28) Chor HaGidgad  
to (29) Yotvata to (30) Avrona  
to (31) Etzion Gever  
to (32) Midbar Tzin (which is Kadesh)*

*to (33) Hor HaHar...*

This is where Aharon died at the age of 123, on Rosh Chodesh Av.

Not only is this the only Yahrzeit mentioned in the Torah, but it is interesting that the date is NOT mentioned in Chukat, where we read of Aharon's death. It appears here in the recounting of the episode - on Shabbat M'vorchim Av.

**[S> 33:40 (10)]** The Torah then tells us again that our presence was noted by the K'naani king of Arad in the Negev of Eretz Yisrael. We know from earlier in the Chumash, that the K'naani attacked the people after Aharon's death, but that is not mentioned here. Rather, the list of places then continues...

*to (34) Tzalmona to (35) Punon  
to (36) Ovot to (37) I'yei HaAvarim  
to (38) Divon Gad  
to (39) Almon Divlataima  
to (40) Harei HaAvarim  
to Arvot Moav (41).*

Apparently, the counting of the encampments includes their first point of departure, which we marked as 0. So the number 42 holds. We numbered from 0 to 41 so that Chashmona would could out as the 25th place of encampment and serve as a REMEZ to Chanuka from the Torah (among others).

G'matriya of RA-M'SES = 430, the number of years from the original prophecy to Avraham Avinu in the

BRIT BEIN HA'B'TARIM until the EXODUS (as in Sh'mot 12:40-41).

The first stop out of Raamses is SUKKOT, G'matriya = 480, the number of years from the Exodus until the building of the First Beit Ha-Mikdash - the arrival of the People EL HAMENUCHA V'EL HANACHALA (D'varim 12:9). So just the first leg of the wandering represents (numerically) the major first (and second) leg of the journey of Jewish History.

SUKKOT, says the Baal HaTurim, got its name from the Heavenly Clouds that began "functioning" there.

MIDBAR SIN got an extra YUD (which is TEN) to be SINAI to mark the fact that the ASERET HADIBROT were given there. - Baal HaTurim

The Midrash says that it was at ALUSH that the People first received the Manna and where we spent our very first Shabbat. The Manna was given to the People of Israel in the merit of our mother Sarah, who was asked by Avraham to knead and bake cakes for the angels/guests. Her enthusiastic providing of food for others was repaid by G-d, Who provided food for Sarah's children more than 400 years later. The name ALUSH is a play on the word "I will knead".

RITMA was the place from which the spies were sent, and therefore the place where the decree to wander the wilderness was pronounced. One can imagine a qualitative difference in the mental attitude of the people during

the first 14 encampments contrasted to those following Ritma.

CHASHMONA was the 25th resting place of the People. Centuries later, there was a resting (from battle) on the 25th (of Kislev). The people through whom G-d wrought the miracles of Chanuka were the Chashmona'im. This is considered one of the Torah "hints" to Chanuka.

Rashi points out that with 14 places before the decree to wander, and with 8 places in the final year, there were only 20 places that the People moved to and from in 38 years or so. That is not really all that much. G-d was merciful with the People even as He was punishing them.

## **Chamishi 5th Aliya** **22 p'sukim - 33:50-34:15**

**[S> 33:50 (7)]** G-d speaks to Moshe in Arvot Moav and commands the People to enter, conquer, acquire, and settle the Land, according to the "Divine Lottery". This is one of the 613 mitzvot according to Ramban - The mitzva of YISHUV ERETZ YISRAEL, the mitzva to live in Israel. Ramban says that this mitzva applies in all times, including our own.

Part of the mitzva, explains Ramban, is that the people of Israel may not shun G-d's gift and promise, and go conquer and settle elsewhere. Jews who live anywhere in the world outside of Israel

should always remember their "stranger in a strange land" status. Adopting someplace else as your own and removing Israel from your personal agenda, contravene the spirit (and maybe the letter) of this mitzva.

**[P> 34:1 (15)]** The boundaries of the Land are detailed. These boundaries are now for the 9½ tribes, since Reuven, Gad and half of Menashe have claimed their allotments on the East Bank.

Read the description of the boundaries of the land that is being given by G-d to the Jewish People. To the Jewish People. To the Jewish People. To us. Unlike the identity of many of the encampments, we know where these boundaries are. Eretz Yisrael for the Jewish People goes at least (see next paragraph) from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. The Torah does not seem to indicate that parts of the Promised Land should become a foreign state - regular or demilitarized - or be given to enemies of the State of Israel or the Jewish People.

In G-d's original promise to Avraham Avinu, the land to be given to his descendants was to be "from the Egyptian River until the great river, P'rat". The boundaries described in this week's sedra contain a territory significantly smaller than that which was promised. Our Sages tell us that the original promise includes territory to be added to Eretz Yisrael in the future, in the times of the Moshiach.

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya

14+8=22 p'sukim - 34:16-35:8

[P> 34:16 (14)] Next the Torah lists the new leaders of the tribes who will be in charge of the "Divine lottery" by which the Land will be apportioned.

Elazar and Yehoshua are the overall leaders of the Nation.

Kalev b. Yefuneh is the leader of Yehuda.

Shimon: Shmuel b. Amihud.

Binyamin: Elidad b. Kislou.

Dan: Buki b. Yogli.

Menashe: Chaniel b. Eifod.

Efrayim: K'mu'el b. Shiftan.

Zevulun: Elitzafan b. Parnach.

Yissachar. Paltiel b. Azan.

Asher: Achihud b. Shlomi.

Naftali: P'dah'el b. Amihud.

[P> 35:1 (8)] Following the general plans for dividing the Land, the People are instructed to provide cities for the Leviyim [408, A183 35:2], since they, the Leviyim, do not receive Land as inheritance. The cities and their surrounding areas, number 48, including the 6 cities of refuge.

✓ Note that the measure of 2000 amot as "city limit" was subsequently borrowed by the Sages in fixing the distance outside the dwelling place that a person may walk on Shabbat, known as T'CHUM SHABBAT (even though

the Torah's maximum is much greater).

✓ Rashi points out that there were three cities of refuge on each side of the Jordan River, even though in the western case, they would serve 9½ tribes and in the eastern case, they would serve 2½ tribes. An inference is drawn that there would be more careless homicides on the eastern side of the river.

These cities, to be given by the tribes to the Leviyim, were given proportional to the populations of the tribes.

## Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya

26+13=39 p'sukim - 35:9-36:13

[P> 35:9 (26)] The cities of refuge (and the other 42 Levite cities, with some differences) serve to protect the inadvertent killer. Even a murderer flees to a protecting city pending trial.

It is forbidden to kill a murderer until he stands trial and is found guilty [409, L292 35:12].

The inadvertent killer is sent - or he flees - to a city of refuge [410, A225 35:25]. The Torah presents guidelines for defining murder and inadvertent killing and sets down some of the court procedures, such as the prohibition of a witness also acting as judge in a criminal case [411, L291 35:30]. We are also warned not to permit substitute punishments for a murderer [412, L296 35:31] and the inadvertent killer [413, L295

35:32]. Strict adherence to all rules of justice assure us continued "quality living" in Eretz Yisrael, accompanied by the Divine Presence.

## MitzvaWatch

Mitzvot 412 and 413 basically command us to follow other mitzvot in the Torah that require a convicted murder to be executed and a convicted SHOGEK-killer to be sent to a City of Refuge. How unusual for the Torah to do that. The small Sanhedrin of 23 judges, whose jurisdiction it is to carry out the commands of the Torah in matters of "sentencing" for certain crimes/sins are duty-bound to comply with halacha. Why these extra commands to follow procedures that are already required? It is quite possible for us to rationalize an alternative punishment or treatment of the convicted murderer - intentional or inadvertent. And sometimes, the alternative suggestion will be more appealing, more logical, more beneficial than the Torah-required procedure. Very tempting. So the Torah comes to reinforce its insistence that its procedures be carried out. Ir Miklat is punishment, protective custody, and atonement all rolled into one. And it is the command of G-d. We cannot change it.

[P> 36:1 (13)] Leaders of the family of Menashe to which the daughters of Zelofchad belong, approach Moshe and raise the problem of potential erosion of their tribal allotment if Zelofchad's daughters marry outside their tribe, taking their land with them.

Moshe issues a ruling restricting them from marrying outside their tribe. This is not a law in perpetuity (and therefore, it is not counted as a mitzva among the Taryag); it applies only in this case. In compliance, Machla, Tirza, Chogla, Milka, and No'a marry Menashe-ites.

The Book of BaMidbar ends with the statement, "These are the Mitzvot and the Laws that G-d commanded Moshe to (transmit to) Bnei Yisrael, in Arvot Mo'av on the Jordan (Jericho) River."

## Haftara 28 p'sukim - Yirmiyahu 2:4-28, 3:4

This is the 2nd of the 3 Tragic Haftarot read during the Three Weeks. It is the continuation of last week's haftara. In fact, these two haftaras are the only continuous portions of the Prophets read as haftarot on consecutive weeks.

G-d, speaking through the prophet, chastises the People of Israel for the terrible double-sin of forsaking Him AND turning to gods who are nothingness. Repeatedly, we are asked how it was possible that we turned away from G-d so. Terrible punishment for this betrayal of G-d is prophesied. The haftara ends on the hopeful note that if we return to G-d, then He will return to us and restore His special relationship with us. Some end with 4:1-2

## Now you hear it, now you don't!

We are reviewing the silent and the sounded HEI this week in "honor" of the first portion of Matot that has a very large number of MAPIK HEIs that are particularly irksome to an asthmatic BK (Baal K'ri'a or Korei).

HEI in the middle of a word with a SH'VA under it closes a syllable; the SH'VA is always NACH. The new tribal leader of Naftali is P'DAHHH-EIL b. Amihud. This in contrast to the father of the former tribal leader of Menashe, GAMLI'EIL b. P'DATZUR. He's got a HEI in his name but there is no SH'VA under it and it is totally silent.

HEI at the end of a word, without a vowel under it, comes in two flavors - with a dot in it (the dot is called a MAPIK) and without a dot.

HEI at the end of a word without a dot is totally silent. Like an ALEF. It does not contribute anything to the sound of the word. (Which is why we usually transliterate such words without an H at the end. TORAH is one of our exceptions, just because it is spelled with an H so universally; it can even be found in many English dictionaries.)

With a MAPIK, the HEI adds an aspirated H sound at the end of the word. To her is LAHHH, not LA. Many times (not always), pronouncing a MAPIK-HEI word without the H sound at the end changes its meaning. ISHA is a woman. ISHAHH is her husband.

## DIVREI MENACHEM

In parshat Matot Moshe is confronted with his own mortality. For G-d commands him to take vengeance on the Midianites, after which he will be gathered to his people. Usually an individual faced with such a prospect would find all sorts of excuses to delay implementation of the task, in order to cling to life.

Yet in the very next verse Moshe instructed his people to take arms so that they might, "Execute G-d's vengeance on Midian." Rashi records that Moshe acted with joy and without delay, knowing that this would hasten his death.

If we did not know better we might conclude that Moshe did not value his life that much. For this is the Moshe who also once exclaimed, "Exclude me from your Book!" and who once declared, "Kill me... and let me not look upon my wretchedness."

Rabbi Mordechai Miller notes, however, that this is the same Moshe who begged Hashem insistently to extend his life so that he could enter the Land. Yes! This is the Moshe who implored Hashem to give him the additional opportunity to keep another few Mitzvot - those pertaining to Eretz Yisrael. And because of his love of Mitzvot, he is the same Moshe who rushed to fulfill the will of his Master just before his demise.

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

## MATOT-MAS'EI

### Breaking Promises

It was a typical park bench conversation. I hadn't seen my friend for quite some time, and we both were delighted when we ran into each other by chance that afternoon.

We shook hands, and withdrew to a bench in the shade to spend a few minutes together catching up with each other. As is often the case in such conversations, we found ourselves discussing mutual acquaintances with whom one or the other of us had lost touch. Pretty soon we were discussing Sam.

Sam was a person who had many fine qualities, indeed some outstanding ones. But the one that made the biggest impression upon my park bench partner and me was Sam's impeccable honesty.

"Once Sam says something", my pal remarked, "he never backs out or changes his mind. You can count on him to keep his word." Something deep inside of me, perhaps the ornery part of me, then spoke up. "Is it always a virtue to keep your word and never change your mind? Isn't that a sign of a certain rigidity, which is not always beneficial, and may even sometimes be morally wrong?"

My friend objected. "Surely", he said, "you don't mean to condone lying."

At this point, I realized that our idle conversation was taking a deeper turn. We were beginning to wax philosophical and would soon have to resort to a higher level of discourse than we had bargained for when we initially sat down together.

But before changing the topic of conversation, I was reminded of this week's Torah portion, Matot-Ma'asei and its opening passages which discuss the binding nature of vows and promises, and the circumstances under which those verbal commitments can be annulled.

"When a man vows a vow... or swears an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth" (Bamidbar 30:3).

The binding quality of one's promises is emphasized by many non-biblical authors. The Roman sage Horace writes in his Epistles, "Once a word has been allowed to escape, it cannot be recalled." The Spanish novelist, Miguel de Cervantes, puts these words in the mouth of his hero Don Quixote: "An honest man's word is as good as his bond."

It is apparent that being true to one's words is a universal ethical

standard. The Torah, however, while fully supporting the binding quality of one's promises, also recognizes that there are situations which call for the revocation of those promises. Times change, circumstances are altered, and a reassessment of past commitments is not only permitted but is to be commended. Blind obedience to one's past vows can lead to disastrous consequences.

Whereas the Torah explicitly grants the authority to a father to annul the vows of his daughter, and under certain circumstances allows a husband to abrogate his wife's vows, our sages recognize that every individual must have access to a wise man, a chacham, who can help him assess his verbal commitments, and, when justified, release him from those commitments.

The classic case of misguided adherence to one's words is the story, narrated in the book of Shoftim, chapter 11, of Yiftach. He was a great military leader who, when he embarked upon a battle against the Ammonites, vowed that if God would grant him victory, he would offer "whatever comes out of the door of my house... as a burnt offering." Tragically, it was his daughter, his only child, who came out to meet him. He felt bound by his words and "did to her as he vowed."

Our sages see his blind obedience

to his own words as being a result of his ignorance, and they do not commend his fidelity to his vow. Quite the contrary; our rabbis recognize the complexities of life and understand full well that situations which call for morality can be most ambiguous.

In certain circumstances, a sense of being bound by one's promises is an example of integrity and honesty of the highest order. But even one's promises need to be assessed in the light of changing circumstances. When those circumstances demand a loosening of the bond of verbal commitment, our tradition knows of procedures whereby one can be released even from his most fervent oaths and vows.

The opening passages of this week's Torah portion recognize this complexity. These passages teach that one must be careful never to profane or violate his words. But they also teach that one's words need to be revisited, re-examined, and reassessed. And they teach that, under the guidance of a wise and pious chacham, the bonds of words can be undone, and the chains of past commitments can be loosened.

There is an additional lesson here, and that is the lesson of forgiveness. Sometimes human relationships necessitate certain reactions. My vow to have nothing to do with you may have been based upon the factual consideration that your

behavior was undesirable and might have a negative effect upon me or my family. But I must be ready to say, "That was then and this is now." I must be ready to realize that you have changed and that now our relationship must change.

And when I realize that, I must re-examine my past promises and commitments and be ready to undo them. That is the underlying concept behind the procedure known as HATARAT NEDARIM, the undoing of the bonds of words. That is among the messages of this week's Torah portion.

I am sharing these thoughts with you, dear reader, but didn't share them with my park bench partner. Certain matters are much too important for a park bench. But I am sharing my thoughts with you, and hope you find them meaningful. □

## VEBBE REBBE

### QUESTION

*I (a woman) try to daven Shacharit and Mincha but not Ma'ariv every day. Not infrequently I forget to daven Mincha. When that happens, am I supposed to daven Ma'ariv that night, and if so, once or twice?*

### ANSWER

One thing that this matter depends on

is whether women are obligated in Mincha. The Rambam (Tefilla 1:2) says that women are obligated by Torah law to daven daily. Since the Torah law is for any request once a day and the rabbinic idea that one daven twice or three times a day is time-based, women might not be obligated in the structure of Shacharit and Mincha as we know them. Many women follow this approach (Magen Avraham 106:2). The Mishna Berura (106:4) prefers the Ramban's opinion that tefilla is entirely a rabbinic obligation but because of its importance as a request of mercy from Hashem, the Rabbis obligated men and women equally. According to this approach, women are obligated in at least the essentials of Shacharit and Mincha like men. The difference is in regard to Ma'ariv, which is essentially a voluntary tefilla (B'rachot 27b). While men accepted it upon themselves as an obligation, women did not (Mishna Berura, *ibid.*). Another difference is that women who are especially busy, especially those responsible for the unpredictable needs of small children, may be exempt from Shacharit and Mincha, either by relying on the lenient opinion or because their involvement exempts them (see *Ishei Yisrael* 7:7).

You categorize yourself as one who davens Shacharit and Mincha but not Ma'ariv, and thus your situation is as follows. If you are obligated as men, you should do tashlumin (the makeup prayer) like them. However, tashlumin was instituted as a makeup tacked on

to the set tefilla at the next tefilla slot (in this case, Ma'ariv). In fact, if one does something that shows that the first tefilla was the makeup, preceding the set one, he does not fulfill tashlumin (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 108:1). Thus, if you do not daven Ma'ariv, you will not be able to do tashlumin; it cannot be done at Shacharit, as it must be done at the next tefilla period (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 43:(110) in the name of Rav S.Z. Auerbach).

(One could raise the argument that for a woman, Shacharit is the next tefilla after Mincha, but Rav Auerbach rejects that logic.)

Even if you are not obligated in Ma'ariv, if you decided to daven it, you could then do tashlumin (see Mishna Berura 263:43). However, it is unclear whether you would be required to go so far as to daven Ma'ariv in order to make tashlumin possible (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata, ibid.).

The following claim is INCORRECT. Between Mincha and Ma'ariv a woman is obligated in one tefilla, classically Mincha. If she davens Ma'ariv voluntarily, in effect she got to the correct number of tefillot. The above is incorrect because she had an obligation for Mincha that turned into one for tashlumin for it. A normal Ma'ariv is neither. In fact, once you would daven Ma'ariv, you would be required to do the tashlumin of Mincha (see Ishei Yisrael 36:(15)). Thus, while it is questionable whether you have to daven Ma'ariv, it is a question

of two or nothing.

If one falls into the category of one who has not accepted upon herself the obligation to daven Mincha then she obviously cannot be obligated more in tashlumin than she is in the original tefilla. The question would only be if one tries to daven Mincha quite regularly except when she is quite busy, but on a given day she forgot without a real excuse. In this case, she presumably is not obligated since, in the final analysis, she does not treat Mincha as a full obligation.

Again, in your case, it is unclear whether you should say two Shemoneh Esreis at Ma'ariv. While it is hard to outright require it, it can be worthwhile (see Halichot Shlomo, Tefilla 13:8), especially if it makes you feel better or will help you remember about Mincha in the future.

## **THE CHALLENGE OF MONEY: ADVERTISING AND PRICING [part 2]**

by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

There is no moral problem with advertising or packaging goods and services so as to reflect the truth and to present them in the most favorable and attractive way. At the same time, everybody would agree that false advertising is not business and is forbidden. However, even advertising that is completely true regarding the nature, quality and price of the goods, constantly presents moral problems that require halakhic and spiritual

attention.

There are advertisements that include implications which have nothing to do with the goods themselves but are a major force in selling them. Advertising a well-dressed man and an elegant-looking woman in a well-furnished room with a luxurious car in the background, in order to sell a brand of whisky implies that drinking such whisky places one in a certain status group. So does the Israeli newspaper that sells itself as, 'the paper for people that think', or the one that advertises itself as 'the newspaper of the nation' - fictional but effective. Seemingly ridiculous advertisements such as a motor car ascending a skyscraper, seem to call for Torah protection, even if they are geared to credulous or simple people.

Advertising sale prices without revealing the usual price, or one day sales as 'today the last day of sale', or liquidation sales of firms that have no intention of going out of business seem to need halakhic consultation to determine whether there is G'NEIVAT DA'AT. "One may not extract [refuse] from the top of ground beans [leaving it in the lower portions of the bin] as the purpose here is to deceive the eye" (Bava Metzia 4:12). The mishna continues, "Men [slaves], cattle, and utensils [offered for sale] may not be beautified". While there is no objection to making products attractive and appealing, there is clearly here a temptation LIGNOV ET HADA'AT. The Shulchan Aruch makes it clear that the objection is to dyeing the hair

and beard of an old slave to make him appear young and therefore more saleable or feeding old or sick cattle bran and glossing their coats to hide their defects; a modern equivalent being 'window dressing' or beautifying financial reports. A young man who is prematurely grey would be able to dye his hair for purposes of seeking employment; however, surely his elderly colleague would clearly be deceiving were he to do the same since he is thereby creating a false impression. The same g'neivat da'at would seem to apply to the teacher who, in applying for a post to teach Talmud, included in his C.V. his qualifications for that post but omitted to disclose his degree in Modern Hebrew literature, which that yeshiva would have found objectionable.

There is an aspect of advertising that has religious, spiritual and communal implications far beyond the realm of buying and selling; an aspect that represents one of modernity's major threats to our Judaism, especially since its effects are subtle, difficult to measure or quantify and require powerful educational and religious leadership to contain or to negate.

Consumerism is rooted and fueled by a constant barrage of advertisement in the press, on the internet and even in what are meant to be occasions for chizuk and spiritual enhancement. In addition, there are the effects of built-in-obsolence and the rapid developments of high-tech. All of this screams at us to buy more, tells us that we have an obligation and a right to

enjoy more, and everything should be newer, outstanding and more thrilling. This creates and requires an additional devotion to make more money and is the impetus to spending more time and working harder for material things. The result is that each person is busy with, and operates under a constant drive to satisfy wants and needs that are often imaginary and unaffordable; above all to outdo his or her neighbors in that drive. We should not be blind to the needless jealousy, bitul Torah and greater greed that follow.

It would seem that a religious society would have to place limitations on this type of advertising in view of the Torah's teachings on modesty in consumption and in economic activity. "Now Man, Hashem has told you what is good and what He requires of you; only to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly-modestly with your G-d" (Micha 6:8; haftara of Parshat Balak). □

## *Praying with Passion*

Giving more meaning to our T'fillah...

One Week at a Time

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## **REISHIT CHOCHMA**

(part one)

רֵאשִׁית חֲכָמָה יִרְאֵת ה', שִׁכָּל טוֹב  
לְכָל עֲשִׂיָהֶם, תִּהְלֶתוּ עוֹמְדֵת לְעֵד.  
תהלים קיא: (בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְבוֹד מְלִכּוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.)

Balak's nickname, "Rocky"

Herman is an aspirated woman

### **Translation:**

The beginning of Wisdom is Awe of Hashem; all who fulfill [His commandments] gain good understanding; His praise is ever-lasting.

### **Ed. note:**

Children are often taught this pasuk (and others) to be said right after MODEH ANI. And many of those children continue saying those p'sukim into their adulthood and beyond. Many don't. In conversation with the editors of the new Koren/Sachs/OU Siddur, they explained why they put the p'sukim after Birchot HaTorah rather than after MODEH - Since p'sukim from Tanach are being recited, the brachot for Torah should come first. Although the V'Ani Tefillah Foundation followed its presentation of MODEH with REISHIT CHOCHMA, we (TT) decided to hold it until after Birchot HaTorah (and then we forgot to, until now. So here it is...

### **Insight: Deeper meaning...**

#### **Yir'ah: The Essential Ingredient**

The Gemara teaches that all of a person's spiritual achievements in this world will render him a favorable judgment in the next world only if fear of Hashem was "in his storehouse" throughout his life. The Gemara draws an analogy to a person who tells his agent to bring a measure of wheat to the attic for storage. Afterwards, the person asks the agent if he had mixed preservative into the wheat. When the agent replies in the negative, the person tells him that it would therefore have been better not to have brought the

wheat at all, for it will spoil quickly and the effort will have been worthless.

The acquisition of Torah wisdom and philosophy without a foundation of Yir'at Hashem is similarly flawed. Yir'at Hashem is the preservative that keeps the wisdom fresh and wholesome and enables it to become integrated into the one's being. As Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa states, "Anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will endure. And anyone whose wisdom precedes his fear of sin, his wisdom will not endure."

### **Visualize:**

#### **Bringing the prayer to life**

#### **A Picture of Majesty**

The Rambam guides us in visualizing images that bring us to know G-d:

"When a person contemplates [Hashem's] great and wondrous acts and creations, obtaining from them a glimpse of G-d's endless wisdom which is beyond compare, then he will promptly love, praise, and glorify Him, longing exceedingly to know the great Name of G-d..."

The pen-and-ink drawing depicted a massive mountain crowned by a jagged peak. At the foot of the mountain, there were bare trees whose highest branches reached not even past the sole of the mountain's feet. Beside the grove of trees were two mere specks, represented in the drawing by a small dot and a few sweeping, comma-like marks. They were the people.

"The scene is meant to express the grandeur of nature," the artist

explained to his viewers. "Compared to the mountain, the men are miniscule."

But even this massive mountain is only a speck compared to the earth, and the earth is but a speck in the solar system; man keeps falling further and further away as our mind's eye soars through the cosmos.

And all of it, in its unfathomable vastness, is but an emanation of G-d -- a tiny corner of physicality carved out of unknowable spiritual realms. What are we that G-d deigns to interact with us, that He tends to us and lifts us from our obscure existence?

Rav Shlomo Wolbe tells us that the Rambam says it is not enough to be awed by the wondrous deeds of our Creator.

A person must also view himself in comparison to the infinite greatness of Hashem. From this understanding, Yir'at Hashem is born.

### **Word to the Wise:**

#### **Meaning within the meaning**

The Hebrew word for YIR'AH (awe), explains Reb Tzadok HaKohen, shares the same root as the word R'YAH (seeing)."

G-d cannot be literally seen, of course, but His Presence can be felt or intuited. This is what King David experienced in the following psalm:

"When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have established -- what is man, that You are mindful of him? ... O G-d our L-rd, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!"

What first inspired King David to come to this humbling yet uplifting realization? He looked upon the heavens. Yir'ah means looking and "seeing" G-d, engendering a sense of awe and reverence.

## Tish'a b'Av - the Hidden Festival?

Guest article by

**Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher**

Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

Four days a year Jews fast and mourn, commemorating different historical events of the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. The 17th day of Tammuz is one of the four days, and it began a three week period of limited mourning that climaxes with Tish'a B'Av, the day of the destruction of the Temples. These four days of fasting are found in the prophet Zechariah. Consistent with Judaism's optimism, the Biblical references about the four days, including Tish'a B'Av are not cited as directives to fast and mourn.

Instead, they are stated in a positive context, looking to the Messianic future, when these four fast days will become days of celebration, "The four fasts will become days of joy and happiness, holidays of redemption, and feasts for the House of Judah", (Zechariah 8:19). Thus, Tish'a B'Av is destined to be part of our Halachic tradition, but not as a day of eternal mourning. Rather, it is only a tempo-

rary day of mourning, until it becomes a permanent day of joy in the Messianic Era. In the Scroll of Eicha, which is read on Tish'a B'Av, Yirmiyahu in 1:15 and in 2:22 refers to Tish'a B'Av as MOED a Festival. That is why we don't say Tachanun and Selichot on Tisha B'Av (Shulchan Aruch 559:4). What are the signs of the approaching Messianic Era? And how can we hasten Mashiach's coming? The Talmud states that the Jews returning from exile and the turning of the land of Israel green is the key sign for the beginning of the Redemption. "There is no more clearer sign than when the Land of Israel gives its produce abundantly, then the end of the exile is near (Sanhedrin 98B, Rashi). The Vilna Gaon told his disciples that Mashiach will come after the majority of the Jews in the Diaspora come to Israel. Thus, every Jew who makes Aliya hastens the Mashiach's coming, thereby transforming the Fast of Tisha B'Av into a Feast.

For close to 2000 years our land rejected all would-be conquerors and remained desolate and barren. The Sifra explains that the Torah's curse of the land during our long exile, "I will make the land desolate" (Parshat B'chukotai) is actually a blessing in disguise. We didn't have to worry when we went into exile that our enemies would settle our land. Therefore, the greening of Israel is a clear signal that G-d's decree of "desolation" for the land is over and the Redemption is near. The Land of Israel had to go into "hibernation",

waiting for us, her children, to return from exile.

The prophet Yirmiyahu saw the coming Redemption of the Messianic Era and its celebration as being an even greater event than the celebration of the Exodus from Egypt. As the Prophet says in Yirmiyahu 16:14,15 - "Days are coming, says Hashem, when it will no longer be said, 'As Hashem lives Who took out Israel from Egypt', but rather 'As Hashem lives, Who took out Israel from all the lands where Hashem dispersed them'. And Hashem will return them to their own land, which I gave to their forefathers." According to HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu זצ"ל, we are presently in the dawn of the Messianic Era. If Mashiach should arrive before Tish'a B'Av, then we will be feasting and celebrating on that day, instead of mourning and fasting.

### 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*

Mas'i 33:53 - And you shall drive out the inhabitants of the Land, and dwell therein; for unto you have I given the Land to possess it.

This verse is Nachmanides' source that there is an active mitzva to settle the Land of Israel, as he writes [Criticism of Maimonides' Sefer haMitzvot, positive commandments, mber 4]:

We are commanded to inherit the Land which the exalted God gave to our fathers, Avaham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and not leave it in the hands of any other nation, nor leave it in desolation.

Chatam Sofer [Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1762-1839)] writes that we do not call to the Torah a Jew who violates a mitzva which appears in that aliya. For example, one does not call a Shabbat desecrator to the Torah to read "Remember the Shabbat day, to keep it holy."

Combining Nachmanides' and Chatam Sofer's comments, we can conclude that the only Jew in chutz l'Aretz who may be called to the Torah when our verse is read [r'vi'i, when the Parashot are combined, as this year] is one who lives in Israel and is visiting abroad [or perhaps one who has a firm date for aliya].

David Magence, Jerusalem

### Pirkei Avot: Perek Bet

ב רבן גמליאל בנו של רבי יהודה הנשיא אומר: יפה תלמוד תורה עם דרך ארץ, שגייעת שניהם משפחת עון. וכל תורה שאין עמה מלאכה, סופה בטלה וגוררת עון.

*Rabban Gamliel, son of Rabbi Yehuda the Prince, said: It is good to combine Torah study with a worldly occupation, for the effort involved in both makes one forget sin. Torah study without an occupation will in the end fail and lead to sin...*

DERECH ERETZ is rendered in the

above translation of our mishna as "worldly occupation". And as such, the mishna has what to say.

But we can also reread and relearn the teaching of Rabban Gamliel in a different way - especially for this third round of Pirkei Avot which gives us the background of the Three Weeks for the learning and understanding of the first three chapters of Avot.

Remember that there are four cycles of the 6 chapters of Pirkei Avot, from right after Pesach until right before Rosh HaShana. Each round has a different mood based on the calendar portion that spans its chapters.

The period of mourning the Churban leads us to the other meaning of DERECH ERETZ - common decency, basic manners and behavior. In another teaching, DERECH ERETZ comes before Torah; it is a prerequisite to Torah. Here, they go hand in hand. Both mournful periods of the year are associated with shortcomings in the area of DERECH ERETZ. It is the lack of respect that Rabbi Akiva's students had for one another, that is associated with the Omer period, and it is the Sin'at Chinam, the gratuitous hatred of one Jew for another that is associated with the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. Either way, we must see to it that the Torah that we learn, teach... and live by, is always accompanied by true DERECH ERETZ.

## Fact Sheet

**History & Legal Status:** OU Israel Kashrut Ltd. was founded in 1998 under the leadership of Mr. David Fund and registered in Israel as a commercial limited company. OU Israel Kashrut Ltd. is a subsidiary of the Orthodox Union (OU) headquartered in New York, the world's largest kosher certification agency certifying over 400,000 products in nearly 6000 plants located in 77 different countries around the world.

**Mission Statement:** OU Israel Kashrut seeks to set high and reliable standards of Kashrut in the Israeli marketplace. OU Kashrut Israel is not only committed to improving the quality of Kashrut in Israel, but is also unique in its commitment to social responsibility. Consistent with the philosophy of global OU Kashrut, profits generated by OU Kashrut Israel help fund educational projects of OU Israel.

**Director of OU Kashrut:** Rabbi Yosef Minsky. Rabbi Minsky started his career in Kashrut in 1987 as secretary of the Chief Rabbi of Bucharest, Romania. In 1989 he joined the OU in the US as a kashrut supervisor. In 2002 he returned to Israel and was nominated by the Chief Rabbis as the head of the "Rabbanut LeKashrut Arzit". In 2007 Rabbi Minsky was appointed as the director of the OU Kashrut department in Israel.

**The Local Market:** Although OU Kashrut Israel has been around for over 12 years, it has only recently begun to have a significant impact in the local Israeli market. Originally, the main objective of OU Kashrut Israel, was to service those handful of Israeli companies who were interested in exporting abroad, mainly to the United States. Beginning just a few years ago, inquiries and requests for OU Kashrut Israel supervision have come from a wide variety of local companies, including those who only serve the Israel domestic market. Today, OU Israel Kashrut supervises the products of over 155 companies throughout Israel, including some of the country's leading food manufacturers. Companies such as Tnuva, Osem, Strauss, Unilever (Telma), Angel, Carmel Mizrachi, Tishbi, Fleisch Chicken and Meats and Ben & Jerry's recognize the "Added Value" of being associated with the "world's best known Kosher Trademark" and now are also under OU Israel Kashrut supervision. In Jerusalem, OU Kashrut Israel also gives Hashgacha to selected commercial establishments including hotels such as The Ramada Hotel and The Bayit Vegan Guest House, caterers; Naomi Catering, Plain & Fancy and Schoketino Caterers as well as popular restaurants such as, Papagaio, Pituyim, Moshiko Grill Bar (Mevasseret), Taiku, Mimoola, and Agas V'Tapuach.

**Future Endeavors:** It is the hope of OU Israel Kashrut to continue to

expand its activities in Israel, servicing commercial companies and educating the concerned consumer community. Informative Kashrut Seminars, relevant articles and publications regarding Kashrut and even a future school for Mashgichim are some of the activities in the planning.

## Towards Better Kashrut Awareness

Q&A on various aspects of kosher supervision, from the OU "home office"

**Question:** Every now and then I see products imported from foreign countries that are certified kosher. Is it really true that hashgachot are now so commonly given around the world, or should I be concerned that the hechsher is a forgery?

**Answer:** The world has definitely shrunk over the last few decades, to the point that economies of other countries have become very dependent on one another. This phenomenon has expressed itself as an increased dependency of countries on imports and exports. Kosher certification has not been immune to this trend, as many companies that wish to import or export products also desire kosher certification in order to capture the kosher market. This has resulted in an increased demand for kosher certification in many countries, even those where a kosher market does not exist locally. The fact that a

product may originate from an obscure country, yet still bear a kosher symbol is not a red flag or automatic indication that something is wrong.

**Question:** There are mashgichim that actually go to these places?

**Answer:** Absolutely. Mashgichim travel extensively and have grueling schedules. Very often, they can be away from home for weeks at a time. They usually have meager accommodations, and deal with the many rigors of travelling, such as language barriers and few choices for kosher food (if any). However, they perform their work with the utmost dedication and care as agents of Klal Yisroel.

**Question:** What about Bishul Yisrael? Can I really assume that a product that requires Bishul Yisrael and is manufactured in the middle of nowhere really is Bishul Yisrael?

**Answer:** A reliable hechsher will not certify a product as kosher without taking into consideration Bishul Yisrael. There is no such thing as giving a hechsher for ingredients only, without taking Bishul Yisrael into consideration. Therefore, a proper hashgacha will always assess whether Bishul Yisrael is halachically required, and if so, make the appropriate provisions. If Bishul Yisrael is warranted, it could be handled by a mashgiach temidi during a special production, or other provisions at the factory. This is so even in foreign countries. If you have any specific questions about how a hashgacha

handles Bishul Yisrael for a particular product, you can always feel free to contact them. There are varying halachic opinions when it comes to applying Bishul Yisrael standards, so it is definitely worthwhile to look into. However, you can rest assured that a reliable hechsher will take this important issue into consideration before giving its hashgacha.

**Question:** Is it hard to give a hechsher abroad?

**Answer:** Who said it is easy to give a hechsher domestically?!

**Question:** Is it harder to give a hechsher abroad?

**Answer:** Very often, yes. Mashgichim who travel abroad put in especially long hours and suffer from the many rigors of travel. They teach themselves to adapt to a foreign atmosphere and numerous cultural barriers. Dealing with people and plant personnel is never a simple task, but it can be more of a challenge in a foreign country. However, Rabbanim hamachshirim and mashgichim should understand that they have a responsibility to the tzibur. This means that the same accountability they have in more familiar surroundings is the same in a foreign atmosphere. There is no room for a reliable hashgacha to apply a double standard just because it is

Matot and Mas'ei are combined more than any other pair of sedras. 89.4% of the time all over the world and 79.5% in Israel. (Nitzavim-Vayeilech, next in line, are combined "only" 60.4% of the time.)

more difficult to supervise a plant or production in a more remote location.

**Question:** I went to a store that sells candies and nuts. The store itself is not under kosher supervision, but the store does place a sign next to each station advertising the hechsher of the original source. However, the sign doesn't mention from which company the candies or nuts originated from. Is it acceptable to assume the nuts and candies are kosher?

**Answer:** The only way a consumer can have sufficient assurance that a product is under any particular hechsher is by looking at the original label while the product is still sealed. Once the seal is broken, you can't be sure where exactly the product came from. In the situation you describe, there is no way that you can be sure that the product was manufactured under hashgacha, let alone the hechsher the store advertises.

**Question:** What if they showed me the original packaging that the product came from?

**Answer:** Unless you can somehow verify that the product came from that very package, it doesn't prove much. For all you know, that package or carton was from a product that was purchased three years ago. *to be cont.*

## Portion from the Portion RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE JEWISH NATION

One of my daughters was invited by a relative to go for a few days to Netanya to play on the beach and enjoy the fresh air. She declined because she is running a little day camp for 3-5 year olds for two weeks so she didn't feel that it was appropriate for her to just pick up and leave. The relative said to her to try to see if she could get out of doing the camp. I would have expected her to answer "if you can convince my mom to let me go then I will come." Then I, as the mother, would have had to give a lecture about commitments. Instead she looked at him and said, "If you were a parent and signed up your kids in day camp and then the counselor told you she couldn't do it because she was going away to the beach how would you manage and how would you feel?" She gave all of us a lecture on responsibility in a very nice way.

I tell this story because after it happened, I immediately saw a connection to this week's portion.

After the conquest of the land of Sichon and Og, the tribes of Reuven and Gad ask Moshe if they could take their portion of land as an

inheritance from the land just conquered on the east side of the Jordan river (32:1). And they wouldn't go over to the other side of the Jordan (32:5). Their reason is that this land would be good for the abundance of livestock that they own.

Moshe is not happy by this request, to say the least, and calls them a band of sinners who will bring more of Hashem's anger against Israel (32:14). He scolds them profusely.

What exactly was wrong with the request of these tribes? Numerous answers are given by the different commentators, such as 1) excessive materialism, 2) forgetting that it's G-d who conquers the land and not their own physical strength and 3) a lack in their love for the Holy Land itself. Another suggestion raised is their lack of responsibility for the rest of the nation and separating themselves from the nation.

After hearing Moshe's rebuke, Reuven and Gad pledge to arm themselves and go as an advance guard before the rest of the nation, fighting with them against the enemy nations until they are all conquered and the other tribes can receive their inheritance (32:15). When Moshe hears this promise and sees that they are showing responsibility for their brethren, he agrees to let them have their inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan, but he also gives this portion to half of the tribe of Menashe (32:32). This was to make sure that these two tribes wouldn't get totally separated from the rest of

the nation. If they were coupled with a tribe that was divided - half on one side of the Jordan and half on the other - they would always have some connection to the rest of the nation.

This is the portion that teaches responsibility for and connection to our brethren. Many of the programs of the Israel Center run on this motto as well; such as Lev Yehudi Yisraeli that brings Jewish heritage to Israel's secular communities, or Makom Balev, a youth group with a mission to embrace, empower and inspire Israel's youth, or Oraita, a unique hangout encouraging Jewish identity and social responsibility in Israeli teens. May these programs continue and grow.

Since the tribes of Reuven and Gad pledge to go out as soldiers in front of their brothers from the other tribes, this week's recipe contains soldier beans.

#### SOLDIER BEAN SALAD

- 2 cups black beans
- 2 cups soldier beans
- 2 (7 oz.) jars roasted peppers, cut in 1/2" slices (or just roast them yourself)
- 1/2 cup sliced scallions
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1/3 cup vinegar
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 3/4 tsp. chili powder
- 4 Tbsp. oil

1 tsp. salt

Fresh ground pepper

Blend all ingredients except beans in a blender or food processor until smooth. Pour 1/2 of the sauce on each kind of bean. Marinate separately for at least 2 hours. Arrange on plate using black and white beans to form a contrasting design. Pour any excess sauce over top.

## ParshaPix explanations

- ♫ Father/daughter - see them? He's giving her a bracha, but in the context of Parshat Matot, he (the father) has the power to annul her vows (on the day he hears of them). This applies to a daughter of a specific age - see Sedra Summary for details
- ♫ Husband/wife. This is the other pair that is involved in HAFARAT NEDARIM (Note: HAFARAT, not HATARAT.) There is a significant difference between the husband's setting aside his wife's vow and a father's setting aside his daughter's vow. Again, see Sedra Summary for details.
- ♫ Five crowns + one with a sword under them refers to the five kings of Midyan - EVI, REKEM, TZUR, CHUR, REVA - and Bil'am who saw their end during the battle against

### Parsha Points to Ponder

#### Matot-Mas'ei

1) Why does G-D tell Moshe to take revenge on the people of Midyan and then he can die, seemingly connecting the two (see 31:2)? What does one have to do with the other?

2) G-D commanded Moshe to take revenge against the people of Midyan (31:2), so why did Moshe seem to pass the leadership role in this effort on to Pinchas (31:6)?

3) Why does the Torah list the children of Gad before the children of Reuven, the firstborn, when describing their approaching Moshe to request to live on the other side of the Jordan River (32:2)?

#### Parsha Points to Ponder

by Rabbi Dov Lipman

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

Midyan - by the sword.

- ♫ Face-to-face sheep, cows, donkeys represent the even split of the spoils of war from Midyan, between the army and the people. This is an indicator of the debt of gratitude we owe our soldiers for

protecting us and for fighting for us. It was so then and it is so today vis-a-vis TZAHAL, the police, and security personnel.

- ⌚ Pot of gold refers to the contribution of the officers of the battle in thanks to G-d for the zero casualty rate among them.
- ⌚ Pyramids, the many arrows, and the outline of Israel, of course, stand for the travels of the people from Exodus to Eretz Yisrael...
- ⌚ Lulav for SUKKOT - first location out of Egypt;
- ⌚ logo of YOTVATA dairy company, stands for the place of encampment of the same name;
- ⌚ the choir for is for MAK-HEILATA, another emcampment;
- ⌚ dreidel is for CHASHMONA - which not only sounds like Chanuka's Chashmona'im, but it was the 25th place of encampment, as in CHANU-KAF-HEI;
- ⌚ Pomegranate with P for Rimon Peretz, another place of encampment
- ⌚ The quill refers to the Torah's statement that Moshe wrote down the travelog of Bnei Yisrael.
- ⌚ The map above the Pyramids with a big 3 on each side of the Jordan River refers to the Cities of Refuge to be designated in Eretz Yisrael.
- ⌚ The scales of justice are for the careful attention that the courts must pay in cases of homicide (the

example from this week's sedra) in determining culpability of the guilty party.

- ⌚ The road sign to Hebron is one of the requirements for Cities of Refuge (of which Hevron is one). Roads to them must be well-marked to facilitate the escape to them of one who committed a homicide, regardless of the level of his culpability.
- ⌚ Cow with the horns stands for the rare (this once only) occurrence of the TROP called KARNEI PARA
- ⌚ Big rock under the sword is TZUR, the name of one of the late Midyanite kings. (One we have previously met, but with a different name and a different nation.)
- ⌚ The mathematically incorrect statement, that a quarter is equal to a fifth. A quarter is REVA, one of the five kings (1/5) killed in the Midyanite battle. [There is another meaning for  $1/4=1/5$  which would fit in more than one other sedra, and that has to do with the definition of CHOMESH, the monetary penalty in various situations. For example, a non-kohein inadvertently eats 10 shekels worth of a kohein's T'ruma. He must compensate the kohein by giving him 10 shekels and he must add a fifth of the value as a penalty. One might think that  $1/5$  of 10 is 2 (which it is, but not in this case), but the fifth to be paid is a fifth of the whole amount paid. Therefore, the penalty is 2.50, which is one fifth of the

12.50 total to be paid. 2.50 is a quarter of 10, so  $1/4=1/5$ .]

- ⌚ Another Chatan-Kalla, this times they are with a "x5", representing the daughters of Zelofchad who marry distant cousins to solve the old "land going from one tribe to another tribe" problem.
- ⌚ 2K over the U with a little attachment is a partner of the cow with the horns. ALPAYIM (2K=2000) BA'AMA from Bamidbar 35:5 is the phrase with the rarest TROP marks - YERECH BEN YOMO under ALPAYIM and KARNEI PARA over the word BA'AMA.
- ⌚ The M&Ms in the map of Israel (no significance in their being there specifically - it was just a convenient place to put them) are for MATOT-MAS'EI, which, when read together - as they are most often - are affectionately referred to as M and M. With this Shabbat being M'vorchim, we should have had an additional M&M candy, or perhaps, a roll of Scotch tape or a pad of post-it notes (that company makes many, many other things as well).
- ⌚ Along the right side of the PP are four new and unexplained pix, the first two of which are places of encampment, the next two are people. See how well you do.

## Of Tpyos and other Misteaks

We appreciate compliments and kind words about Torah Tidbits, but we love even more the people who take the time to point out our frequent typos and other mistakes. We just hope those people read the material as well.

Typos are one thing, but in the last two weeks, we inadvertently gave Smicha to two women. Two week's ago it was Rabbi Aviva, with a V replacing the K that should have been there. This is a classic Freudian typo caused by a daughter in Modiin. Then in last week's issue, we confused two different Rubys - one male and one female, with the female one married to a Rabbi and usurping her husband's title. Our apologies.

Then there was the new post-Shabbat ceremony known as HAVADA, which replaced the more traditional Havdala. Fortunately, the times for these two ceremonies are the same. Anyone else catch that one?

You mean there is no E between the them and the selves of themselves?

And, sad to admit, we've had our share of the

### PARIS IN THE THE SPRING

types of mistakes - too bad we can't claim to have done them on purpose just to test the TTreaders. Well, we do try to claim that on occasion... but it usually doesn't work. Believe it or not, no one believes us.

Now about our guset speakers: This is definitely not a typo since guset speakers are not guests but they do speak the guset language. And, NO, Chanie was not born following the film. Etc. Etc. Etc. Ect.

## TTTRIDDLE



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

Last issue's (Pinchas) TTtriddles:

### [1] Muriel is the first either way

When we are first introduced to the daughters of Tz'lofchad, they are listed as MACHLA, V'NO'A, CHOGLA, MILKA, V'TIRTZA. Then, when they stand before Moshe and Elazar, etc. the order is the same but the conjunctive VAVs change: MACHLA, NO'A, V'CHOGLA, UMILKA, V'TIRTZA. No idea why the difference - just reporting. In the book of Yehoshua, they are listed exactly as the first time, above. But, towards the very end of Bamidbar, when they are mentioned again in context of marrying their fellow Menashe cousins, their order changes to MACHLA, TIRTZA, V'CHOGLA, UMILKA, V'NO'A. Just an observation. But for this TTtriddle, the point is that MACHLA is first in either list. And for us at the Israel Center, MACHLA is Muriel P. How many people do you know personally with the names of

## Parsha Points to Ponder

### Suggested answers

1) The Ohr HaChayim explains that Moshe was lacking completion because he failed to act when Kozbi was sinning and Pinchas was the one who found the inner strength to kill Kozbi to sanctify G-D's name. Thus, once Moshe demonstrated that he could take revenge for G-D, he would be complete and could leave this world.

2) Daat Zekeinim MiBaalei HaTosfot answers that Moshe could not be the one to actually fight against Midyan since that nation took him in when he ran away from Egypt and he felt gratitude for their welcoming him and caring for him.

3) The Kli Yakar suggests that the answer to this question lies in the previous verse. The Torah describes that Gad had STRONG flocks (ATZUM) while Reuven simply had a lot (RAV). This indicates that Gad was far more wealthy than Reuven. Wealth often leads to haughtiness and this conceit led them to disrespectfully push their way past the firstborn to make their way towards Moshe.

any of the daughters of Tz'lofchad? Anyone know a CHOGLA?

### [2] The most often read pasuk in Torah. Or which ones according to MY

For most of the Jewish world, the most often read pasuk in the Torah is Bamidbar 28:3 - V'AMARTA LAHEM, ZEH HA'ISHEH... Besides being read

on Shabbat Parshat Pinchas, as all p'sukim are read on their Shabbatot, this pasuk is read on Rosh Chodesh that falls during the week. Which makes it more common that all other p'sukim that are not part of the Rosh Chodesh Torah reading. What makes it unique is that it is read twice on each weekday Rosh Chodesh. This is so because of the need to read a minimum of three p'sukim for each aliya and the guidelines for stopping an aliya close to a parsha-break. Whatever, is pasuk is the most often read pasuk in the Torah. Except for those who read according to MY (Minhag Yerushalayim). Those repeated p'sukim are Bamidbar 28:6,7,8, beginning with OLAT TAMID. These three p'sukim, then, are the most often read according to MY. All this should not be confused with the most common pasuk in the Torah - VAYDABEIR HASHEM EL MOSHE LEIMOR. Although there are 69 of these p'sukim, each one is read fewer times than our record-setters.

### [3] First syllable and acronym for full name

First syllable of the name of the sedra is PI, pronounced like the English word pea. In other words, the N sound, as we have explained elsewhere, belongs to the CHAS syllable. PI - N'CHAS. Pinchas's full name is Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon (HaKohein), making his initials P.E.A.

### [4] Pinchas and his great-great-great-great-great grandfather

Pinchas b. Elazar b. Aharon b. Amram,

b. K'hat b. Levi b. Yaakov b. Yitzchak. The gimatriya of Yitzchak is 208, as is the gimatriya of Pinchas (with the YUD). Someone else with the same gimatriya is HAGAR. Go figure.

### [5] Fat Albert's alter ego's namesake

Fat Albert is a character created by Bill Cosby. Cosby's namesake, as we have pointed out in the ParshaPix explanations elsewhere in this issue, is Kosbi bat Tzur, the Midianite princess that Pinchas killed together with Zimri ben Salu. Bill Cosby is additionally appropriate as a ParshaPix (and TTtriddles) element because the problem with Midyan was based on the advice of BILL (WilliAM), as in BIL'AM.

### [6] Pinchas's numerical sister sedra

As mentioned, the gimatriya of Pinchas is 208. Among the sedra names we find VA'EIRA also adds up to 208, making it the numerical sister sedra of Pinchas.

### [7] 3 Unexplaineds from the ParshaPix

The large wine cup is a KOS SHEL ELIYAHU, appropriate to Parshat Pinchas because of the Midrash that says that Pinchas was Eliyahu.

Below the cup is a road, as in A-ROD (no, not baseball's A-ROD). AROD was ne of the sons of GAD. His brothers were TZ'FON, CHAGI, SHUNI, OZNI, EIRI, and AR-EILI.

And below the road we have a bunch of keys. In Hebrew, the term TZ'ROR MAFTEICHOT refers to a bunch of keys. The command to Moshe was to

TZAROR ET HAMIDYANIM, attack the Midianites and kill them. TZ'ROR and TZAROR.

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## WISDOM & WIT

by Shmuel Himelstein

Before R' David Jungreis, head of the Eidah Chareidis in Yerushalayim, would give a shi'ur (a public Talmudic discourse), he would say the entire discourse aloud to himself. He did not do this in order to memorize the shiur, but rather for an entirely different purpose. During his shi'ur, he would often express original Torah thoughts, but he considered it boastful to mention that these were his own original Torah thoughts. By reciting them to himself in advance, he could in good conscience say, "I heard..." about these original thoughts, without mentioning any source.

During World War I, R' Boruch Ber Leibowitz and his yeshiva were forced to move from Slobodka to Minsk. Minsk was close to the war front, and its streets swarmed with military vehicles.

Once, when R' Boruch Ber and a student went to pray Ma'ariv with R' Chaim Soloveichik, they were forced to wait a considerable amount of time before they could cross the road. As they waited, the two men looked around at the passing vehicles. There was an army barracks nearby and the guards posted outside it became

suspicious of the two strangers and they ordered them to show their papers. While R' Boruch Ber's papers were in order, the student had only his passport with him, but no papers allowing him to remain in Minsk. As a result, the student was placed under arrest and his passport was confiscated.

Using whatever means he could, R' Boruch Ber managed to have the young man released, but was not able to retrieve his passport. This presented a serious problem, as a person without a passport was subject to immediate arrest. Furthermore, anyone harboring such a person in his home would also be subject to arrest as well as to stiff penalties.

At first, the young man decided to remain in the local shul at all times, rather than to endanger anyone else by living in a private house. R' Boruch Ber, though, in spite of the great danger to himself, asked the young man to move into his home. There, the young man was treated in every sense as one of the family. The situation remain this way for a month, while R' Boruch Ber did everything possible to recover the confiscated passport.

Finally, in return for a splendid suit which a local tailor gave the local commander as a gift - paid for by R' Boruch Ber - the passport was returned and the young man was free to leave. As he departed, the entire family came to bid him farewell, as if a family member was leaving their midst.

**THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE**

## OF JEWISH LAW

**Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean**

Lesson # 525

### Going To Secular Courts

Halacha progresses in three ways. (1) commentaries on the texts; (2) codes; (3) responsa literature. In the latter, questions are asked of prominent rabbis and their answers are usually collected and published. In my humble opinion, the greatest of the respondents in the 20th century was Rav Moshe Feinstein. From these responses one often gets a glimpse of Jewish life in the place from where the question arose.

About 50 years ago, Reb Moshe was consulted by the rabbis of Baltimore. It appears that one of the butchers who was selling meat as kosher was actually selling non-kosher meat and claiming it was kosher. Rav Feinstein was asked if the rabbis should take this butcher to the secular authorities who would fine him and possibly put him in jail, or should the rabbis call this butcher before them and work out a punishment for the butcher. Rav Feinstein answers that although the butcher was a great sinner, and is probably not repentant, but until it can be shown that the rabbis in Baltimore cannot handle the matter with the butcher they should not go to the secular authorities, for two reasons. (1) even if the secular authorities would decide the matter exactly as would a Beit Din, it is prohibited to go to the secular courts according to the halacha as enunciated in Shulhan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 26. (2) Undoubtedly, the secular authorities will not adjudicate the problem according to halacha. That being so, the rabbis going to the secular authorities would be guilty of handing over a Jew to secular

authorities, which is forbidden. This is in the prohibition of being a slanderer. If it turns out that the rabbis will have no control of the butcher, then going to secular authorities could be permitted. But he must be warned that the rabbis will take this step if he will not voluntarily appear before them and agree to be bound by their rulings. If he refuses to agree, they must warn him that they will proceed to the secular authorities whose punishments will probably be harsher than that of a Beit Din. This was a severe case in that so many people suffered as a result of the actions of the butcher.

Rav Feinstein continues to explain why the rabbis should avoid going to the secular authorities, if possible, because the secular authorities may make the butcher take an oath that he is telling the truth. And knowing this butcher's reputation he will probably swear falsely in the secular courts. In essence those rabbis who take him to the secular courts may be part of having the butcher take a false; better to get him to abide by their ruling without going to the secular courts.

In conclusion, Rav Feinstein writes, "It thus seems to my humble opinion, that at the outset they should attempt to judge him in the rabbinical courts... and the most important thing is to prohibit him from selling kosher products, and if he does not abide then to go to the secular courts."