



פרקי אבות ה-ו
(שבת נצבים-וילך)

**Double
or Triple
Issue**



לפי"ו
ישראל
Connecting
the Jewish People
from
5770
to
5771

- This issue - TT 922 - covers Nitzavim-Vayeilech, Rosh HaShana, and Shabbat Shuva (Haazinu)
- No TT during Rosh HaShana week
- TT 923 IY"H for Yom Kippur
- Shabbat in/out chart for 5771 IYH in next TT (923)
- Last op for submissions: Mon Sep. 6
- TT 924 for Sukkot, folding IYH on Mon & Tue, Sep. 20-21
- Last op for submissions: Sun Sep 12
- Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5:00pm **Yaacov Peterseil & Co.** 6:00pm Mincha
- Motza'ei Shabbat:
9:30pm Pre-Slichot shiur
10:30pm SLICHOT
11:30pm Pre-Slichot shiur
12:30pm SLICHOT

see BackPages for details

*Wishing you and yours
a healthy, happy, prosperous,
and peace-filled year*
כתיבה וחתימה טובה

Shabbat Shuva Drasha

Parshat Haazinu
3 Tishrei

September 12th
5:00pm

Rabbi Dr.
Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Exec. Vice President Emeritus,
Orthodox Union

Mincha
6:00pm

Jerusalem Shabbat in/out times for **Nitzavim-Vayeilech**
6:25pm (plag: 5:41) / **7:37pm** (other times see p3 and pull-out)

MOSHIKO

NEW Grill-Bar @ Mevasseret Zion

Sderot Hachotzvim 9 • 579-7744

ParshaPix Explanations on p.43



Word of the Month (more Word of the Year)

This Shabbat we would be benching Rosh Chodesh Tishrei if we did bench Rosh Chodesh Tishrei. But we don't. The hidden nature of Rosh HaShana is partly responsible, and "confounding the Satan" gets into the act, as well. But Tishrei still has a molad, which in addition to being part of the Kiddush L'vana timing, is crucial to establishing the day on which Rosh HaShana falls, and in its wake, the way the year's calendar unfolds. The molad of Tishrei 5771 is WED (Sep 8) 19h 36m 1p (approx. 8:15pm Israel Summer Time) p.4



The times that are usually found in this box are on one of the Pull-Out sheets this week.

There you will find seven times for each of our 19 locations: Regular candle lighting and earliest candle lighting (PLAG), and Havdala for Shabbat Nitzavim-Vayeilech, candle lighting for each night of Rosh HaShana, and the candle lighting and havdala times for Shabbat Shuva - Haazinu.

All those times of Summer time, which will end for this year in the wee hours of Motza'ei Shabbat Shuva (technically, on Sunday morning, September 12).

For many years, Israel decided each year when Summer time began and ended - without too much consistency. A number years ago they passed into law a fixed "formula" for Summer time. Sha'on Kayitz begins on the Friday morning before April 2nd and ends on the Sunday morning before Yom Kippur.

Ranges are 17 days. WED-FRI
22 Elul - 9 Tishrei (Sep 1-17)
Subtract one hour from Sep. 12

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:23-5:34am
Sunrise	6:15-6:25am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:40-8:43am)	9:26-9:28am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:59-10:00am)	10:30-10:30am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	12:39¼-12:33¾pm
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	1:12-1:05pm
Plag Mincha	5:43¼-5:25¾pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 7:03-6:42pm)	7:07-6:47pm

www.ttidbits.com
for PDF files of TT (whole,
lite, XL), ParshaPix, text file,
Palm version, Torah Tidbits
Audio mp3 files... and more!

The three follow and mimic Ki Tavo

וּ Is this one of them?

ZEBRA CROSSING GUIDE

Deer in confused from

Woody, Jack & Jill

The lonely letter says it ain't so

I will rejoice - in what? Torah

His tools are mixed up

The one that would be there even if all the others weren't

starts, ends, both, neither

Last ones of last two are the same

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN - which is the odd man out?

👉 The trick is to keep one's nose
TO the grindstone - but OFF it.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World of Chazal
by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein
Now available at 054-209-9200

LEAD TIDBIT not cont. from the front page but "bumped" from it

Had we been able to produce a Torah Tidbits for the last Shabbat of the year on its own, then this Lead Tidbit would probably have a different focus. As would the following TT, which would be for the first Shabbat of the year.

But rather, this issue is for the last Shabbat of 5770, the Rosh HaShana (and Rosh Chodesh, albeit, unannounced and downplayed) of 5771, and the first Shabbat of the new year - all rolled into one.

Come to think of it, we think in terms of an old year ending and a new year beginning only because of the way we count years - from Tishrei to Tishrei, from Creation. If we think in terms of months of the year, we are ending the 6th month and beginning the 7th - making this merely the crossing of the midpoint (actually not so this year because the Tishrei through Adar "half" will be seven months long - but that's another issue).

And the opening mishna in Rosh HaShana further defuses the sharp focus of transition from one year to the next by telling us of four Roshei Shana. And the second mishna presents

us with the four times the world is judged. So even the concept of Judgment on Rosh HaShana is defused by the other three junctures when we stand judgment - yes, we - not grain, fruits, and water. It is we that need favorable judgment on all four times of the year.

Do we say these things to lower the awe held for Rosh HaShana? G-d forbid. Perish the thought.

In fact, the other three times the world is judged are for the whole world - and each of us as an inhabitant thereof. But Rosh HaShana - even with its universal theme, even with a feel for our membership in Klal Yisrael, and our attention to interpersonal mitzvot and relationships - is something we tend to take personally - as we should.

Maybe the Rambam's description of how we should view our lives is helpful to plug us in to our community, our nation, and all of humanity - while still allowing us to focus on ourselves as individuals, in addition to being part of the whole. We dare not ignore any of the roles we have. **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**

Word of the Year cont.

What we would call Wednesday evening, is considered in halachic terms to be LEIL CHAMISHI, the eve of Thursday. When the molad of Tishrei is anytime from after noon on Tuesday until noon on Thursday (and under specific circumstances, even at an earlier point on Tuesday morning), then RH is fixed for Thursday (and Friday). This year's example is the simplest: Molad of Tishrei on Thursday = RH on Thursday. Next Tishrei's molad and the fixing of RH 5772 based on it, helps determine the status of Cheshvan and Kislev, which this year (5771) both have 30 days. The M'uberet-P'shuta pattern determines that 5771 will have 13 months.

Nitzavim-Vayeilech

STATS	Nitzavim	Vayeilech	N & V
of 54 sedras	51st	52nd	—
of 11 in D'varim	8th	9th	—
lines in a Torah	87	72	159
rank	52	53	(41)
Parshiyot	4	3	7
P'tuchot	1	2	3
S'tumot	3	1	4
P'sukim	40	30	70
rank (Torah/D'va.)	53/10	54/11	(48)
Words	657	553	1210
rank	51/8	53/10	(42)
Letters	2575	2123	4698
rank	51/8	53/10	(39)
MITZVOT	0*	2	2
positive	0*	2	2
prohibitions	0	0	0

*Some Mitzva-counters count T'shuva from Nitzavim

N & V are the two shortest sedras in the Torah, but their p'sukim are the two longest in the Torah. Look at the (hypothetical) rank of the combined N/V and notice the jump from p'sukim thru words to letters.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

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

Kohen - First Aliya

3+3+14 p'sukim - 29:11-28

[P>29:11] Having so recently heard the frightful Tochacha and the curses that are invoked against those who betray G-d, Israel is understandably "nervous" about its future, to say the least. Nitzavim therefore, begins on the positive, reassuring note that we are ALL standing before G-d and entering again into a covenant with Him. These opening p'sukim call our attention to the "inclusiveness" of the People of Israel. We are made up of scholars and leaders, judges and functionaries, men, women, and children, converts, wood cutters and water gatherers (Ashkenazim and S'faradim, religious and secular, Mitnagdim and Chasidim). But together they all stood to reaffirm their commitment to G-d. Jewish Unity has always been our strength, its lack, our greatest weakness.

SDT: Rav Aharon of Karlin pointed out that ATEM is made of the letters of the word EMET, truth. This, he said, is the only way to achieve LIFNEI HASHEM, to stand before G-d.

SDT: The Alshich points out that the Torah describes the People as "all of you, before G-d", and then proceeds to delineate different types of Jews. Before G-d, we ARE all the same. Whatever differences might exist pale into insignificance in comparison with the fact that we are all G-d's creations. Differences

become important from our perspective. We view some people as more valuable than others. But we really have no way to know how G-d views us. In His eyes we are all standing erect this day...

And there is more. The second three-pasuk set proclaims that it is not just the entire People of Israel who were alive at the time, who are making this covenant with G-d, it is also our ancestors to whom G-d made His special promises, and to the generations of Jews in the past AND the future, whose spirit (souls) were present at this covenant.

Perhaps this is the meaning of the prophecy to Avraham Avinu that his descendants will be as countless as the stars of the heavens. Take the millions of Jews alive today, add the millions who have preceded us, add the - how many more? - future generations, and we can truly be called "without number". Nations that have come to an end, can be numbered. An eternal people cannot ever be counted.

As he has done several times before, Moshe Rabeinu presents both sides of the covenant with G-d before the People: You have been in Egypt and you are aware of their abominable practices and those of the other nations which you have encountered. Perhaps there is a rebellious individual among you who will turn from G-d and embrace another faith.

SDT: The phrase describing what we would today refer to as a "rotten apple" is "Shoresheh Poreh Rosh V'laana",

literally a poisonous root of gall and wormwood. The initial letters of this phrase rearrange to spell SHOFAR, the antidote to this negative facet of Jewish life. The Shofar must awaken the one who stray and start him on the road of T'shuva.

A person who turns to another religion will be severely punished, even if he thinks otherwise. These p'sukim are a miniature version of the Tochacha from last week.

The portion concludes with the statement that there are mysteries of this world that are G-d's and there are revealed truths that belong to us and our children. Our challenge is to remain faithful to the Torah.

Rashi interprets this pasuk in the narrow context of the punishments presented in the previous p'sukim. However, this pasuk also has wide applications. In all areas of human knowledge - science, math, history... - there are mysteries and there are revealed truths. But remember, today's mysteries can be revealed tomorrow, next year... or never.

And/or we can apply the concept of the pasuk to things that happen in this world that we don't understand. Whether it is the classic, "TZADIK V'RA LO...", that righteous people sometimes have a very hard life, and wicked people seem to enjoy their lives, or whether it is coping with the death of a child ל"ר, or attempting to understand the SHO'AH, and a myriad of things that strike us as unfair, things

that prompt us to "question G-d" - for all of the above, this pasuk succinctly tells us that there are mysteries in this world that are understood by G-d only, and that (only) those He chooses to reveal to us, become ours to understand. This concept does not "answer" nagging questions, but it must become part of our belief system, because it is a truth that can help us cope, and understand that we are not capable of understanding everything. People resist this notion, but it is no less true because of that.

Levi - Second Aliya

6 p'sukim - 30:1-6

[S>30:1 (10)] From the perspective of absolute justice, if we break the terms of our agreement with G-d, punishment should be swift and complete. But we could not survive such an existence. This portion of Nitzavim tells us that if (when) we break the covenant and are dispersed among the nations as punishment, all hope is not lost. We have the golden opportunity to return to G-d - and He will help the process along. This too becomes part of the agreement with G-d. The concepts of return in a physical and spiritual sense are intermingled in this Torah portion.

The wayward Jew turning back towards HaShem and the Torah, and the Jew exiled to a distant land coming back to Israel are

presented simultaneously. This represents the dual nature of T'shuva. What a wonderful opportunity beckons each Jew - and the Jewish People as a whole - in being given a second chance to live a true Torah life.

MitzvaWatch

Rambam and Sefer HaChinuch (and others?) do not count T'SHUVA per se among the 613 mitzvot. Sefer HaCharedim, the SMa"K, and others do count T'SHUVA as one of TARYAG. There is no need to "justify" counting Repentance as one of the mitzvot in the Torah - The Torah commands, V'SHAVTA AD HASHEM ELOKECHA, And you shall return to HaShem, your G-d. But how do we explain the absence of T'shuva from the some list of mitzvot.

One can say that Rambam counts only specific, distinct mitzvot. A command which is all-inclusive, such as "Keep My mitzvot", "Be holy", "Be straightforward with G-d", is not numbered on its own, because it is really part of all other mitzvot. T'shuva can be viewed the same way. Part of the mitzva to Recite the Sh'ma is that if one does not, or does it without kavana, then he must repent his ways and say the Shma correctly. Part of the prohibition of speaking Lashon Hara is that if one does, then he must repent. More than T'shuva being its own mitzva, it is an add-on to all the others.

Or, we can look at T'shuva as a gift from G-d. He doesn't HAVE to command it. He just has to let it be possible. And we should jump at the opportunity. The Torah does not have to command us to breathe. We do it because it is helpful to living. So is T'shuva. The Torah doesn't have to tell us to repent, just how to do it.

On the other hand, there is one aspect of T'shuva that IS counted by Rambam as a mitzva among the 613 - Vidui, verbal confession. This is a specific aspect of T'shuva that DOES "qualify" for the Rambam's count. And yet, as mentioned earlier, some mitzva-counters DO count T'shuva among the 613. Just know that whether T'shuva is numbered among the 613 or not, it is an extremely important mitzva, always applicable - but especially at this time of year.

The last pasuk of this portion contains one of several ELULs, in the form of Rashei Teivot, initial letters. And G-d will circumcise ET L'VAVCHA V'ET L'VAV zar'echa, your heart and the heart of your children. Baal HaTurim actually says that this is why we say Slichot during Elul.

Shlishi - Third Aliya

4+4 p'sukim - 30:7-14

If we return to G-d, then G-d will rain the curses upon our enemies. We have only to be faithful to HaShem and keep His mitzvot,

and all His blessings will be showered upon us. Again a "pitch" is made for T'shuva. And again. And the T'shuva should be completely sincere.

[S>30:11 (4)] But how can we hope to keep our part of the agreement? Is not the Torah so exalted and remote that a mere mortal has no chance of attaining spiritual heights? The answer is eloquently stated in the famous words of the Torah - For this mitzva is not in the heavens nor is it across the ocean. It is so very close and attainable that every Jew can feel confident in taking up its challenges. It is up to us to make the commitment, feel it in our hearts, and ACT upon it.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya

6+3+3 p'sukim - 30:15-31:6

The fourth Aliya is ALWAYS the bridge between the two parts of a double sedra.

[S>30:15 (6)] The concept of Free Will is beautifully expressed in the concluding portion of Nitzavim. It marks the difference between human beings and all other creations. The sun and the moon "fulfill" G-d's commands without conscious decisions. A bee doesn't think things out and decide to pollinate a flower. Nor does a lion attacking a weak zebra evaluate the morality of his act. Only humans have the choice to do good or evil. G-d recommends

and pleads (so to speak) with us to choose Life and Good, but He leaves the choice to us. That is why we are accountable for our actions; and that is why we stand before G-d in judgment on Rosh HaShana - animals do not. The choice is offered, but not only does G-d "command" us to choose Life, He warns us again of the devastating results of the wrong choice. Heavens and Earth are called upon to witness this most significant fact of human existence. It is the Land of Israel that is the "prize" for choosing wisely, as G-d had promised Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. G-d reconfirms His covenant and promises to us.

We have Free Will. We can be whatever kind of people we choose to be. We have His recommendation and encouragement to choose Life over Death, Good over Evil. Our proper choices will earn us long life and a firm hold on the Land that He promised our ancestors.

Let us heed the warnings of Nitzavim, let us be inspired by the beautiful challenges of Nitzavim, let us be uplifted by the lofty messages of Nitzavim, and let us have a "successful" Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, and a happy & healthy year of peace & prosperity.

[P>31:1 (6)] Moshe Rabeinu concludes his words to the People and tells them that at his age of 120 years, he is no longer able to

lead them.

And that G-d has told Moshe that he will not be crossing the Jordan River, so his journey is truly over. He tells them that G-d will be with them, destroy the nations that they will encounter in Eretz Yisrael, and that Yehoshua will be the one to lead them. Moshe reminds the People of the victories they have had, and tells them to be strong and courageous. G-d won't abandon them (us).

Chamishi 5th Aliya **3+4 p'sukim - 31:7-13**

[S>31:7 (7)] Moshe then speaks to Yehoshua in front of the assembled people, and asks him to be strong, for he will be leading the people and he will be in charge of conquering and settling the Land. G-d will be guiding you "every step of the way".

When Moshe finished writing the Torah, he gave it over to the Kohanim, "the carriers of the Ark".

Moshe next commands the People concerning the mitzva of "Hak'hel" **[612,A16 31:12]**. On Sukkot following a Sh'mita year, when the people gather in Jerusalem for the Chag, the king shall read (parts of) the Torah to the multitude. The people are to gather at the Beit HaMikdash - men, women, and children - in order to learn, to fear G-d, to hear

and understand, and to commit to fulfill all the teachings of the Torah. And the youngsters who have not yet learned, will hear and learn to revere G-d "all the days they shall live in the Land your are about to enter".

Shishi - Sixth Aliya **6 p'sukim - 31:14-19**

[P>31:14 (17)] G-d calls to Moshe to take Yehoshua and appear with him at the "Ohel Moed". G-d's Presence descended to the Tent in the form of a Cloud.

G-d tells Moshe that after his death, the people will rebel against Him, stray from the proper path, and embrace other gods. G-d announces that He will show His anger by "hiding His Face" from them. This is a reference to the well-known "hester panim" which manifests itself as G-d "working behind the scenes" only, in hidden, subtle ways.

This prophecy by no means "obligates" that generation, or any generation, to turn to idolatry. It is possible for the prophecy never to come true. And this would not impugn the truth of Torah or Moshe's status as a prophet. We always have the challenge not to turn away from G-d, and the ability to remain faithful to Him.

Next is the command to write

"The Song" (namely the whole Torah), to teach it to the people, so that it should serve as a testament among the People of Israel. This is the last mitzva of the Torah **[613, A18 31:19]**, to write a Sefer Torah.

MitzvaWatch

Our Sages include in this mitzva the significance of acquiring Sifrei Kodesh (holy books) from which to learn. Since the Torah itself specifies that the "purpose" of writing a Torah scroll is to learn and teach from it, then writing, buying, acquiring all learning texts would be in the spirit of this mitzva.

The RO"Sh (Rabeinu Asher) takes this idea one significant step further - he says that since in our day, the Torah scroll has been relegated to the Aron Kodesh in shul and is used for public reading, but not as a teaching text - the MAIN fulfillment of this mitzva "to write a Sefer Torah" is the building of a personal Torah library (that will be used). Buy Torah texts from which to learn and teach. He adds that it is also praiseworthy if one is privileged to write a Sefer Torah as well. This is an unusual turn-about, which emphasizes the importance of buying sforim - AND USING THEM.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 11 p'sukim - 31:20-30

Because, G-d explains, I am bringing the people to a Land flowing with milk & honey, the People will eat in contentment and turn from G-d. The Torah, however, will not be completely forgotten from the lips (and hearts) of future generations. (This will be "their ticket back".) Moshe wrote the Torah on that day (Rambam says that he wrote 13 Torahs - one for each tribe and one in the care of the Kohanim/Leviyim) and taught it to the People. G-d "commanded" Yehoshua to be strong and courageous in his new role as leader. Moshe completed the writing of the Torah.

(Some say that Moshe even wrote the final 8 p'sukim of the Torah, which discuss his death; others disagree and say that Yehoshua wrote those verses.)

Moshe commands the Leviyim to take the Torah and place it at the side of the Aron.

(Some say that the Torah was in the Aron; others say that it was on a shelf attached to the side of the Aron.)

Moshe asks for the leaders of the People to assemble for his final words to them. Moshe tells of the prophecy/prediction of the rebelliousness of the People. Moshe speaks the words of the Song - here probably referring to Haazinu - to all the people, in its entirety.

The last 3 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara 23 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 61:10-63:9

Final of the seven Haftarot of Consolation. Yeshayahu prophecies of the time to come when there will be universal peace and Jerusalem will not only be rebuilt, but will be the center of universal worship of G-d. But not only will the nations of the world recognize The One G-d, they will also acknowledge the People of Israel as His People. The idea of universal acceptance of G-d fits well with our notion that ALL people are judged by G-d on Rosh HaShana, not just the Jewish People.

Divrei Menachem

The Jewish people are about to enter into a Covenant with Hashem that will apply for generations to come. So, naturally, Nitzavim's opening words address the entire nation - "All of you, from the heads of the tribes... to the drawer of water."

A question now surfaces regarding the responsibilities of the individual to the wider community. For while the text initially speaks to the nation, it quickly slips into the use of the singular mode indicating that each individual must pass into that Covenant, whereby Hashem will be his G-d - "In order to establish you as a people to Him."

Clearly, the whole is the sum of its parts; each of us has a stake in the destiny of the entire Jewish people. We each share the privileges and responsibilities. And, as recent history proved, even when individuals imagine they can remove themselves from this Jewish equation, misfortune eventually catches up with them.

This notion is perhaps better understood with reference to the Torah's incisive description of the self-serving "outsider" as, "A root that bears gall and wormwood." For Ramban, this term refers to one who denies his true identity and considers himself immune from the Torah's decrees. However, like the sick plant, that person will, in time, produce noxious and bitter fruit with all its attendant ills for both the individual and the Jewish community.

Uebbe Rebbe

QUESTION: *Why does the Shulchan Aruch say that a non-Jew can bury a Jew on the first day of Yom Tov (Orach Chayim 526:1) but that a non-Jew may not bury a Jew on Shabbat (ibid.:3)? Also does anyone bury on Yom Tov anymore?*

ANSWER: The gemara (Beitza 6a) says that if one dies on the first day of Yom Tov, when melacha (forbidden work) is a Torah level prohibition, he is to be buried by non-Jews on that day. If he dies on the second day (or there was not an opportunity to do it on the first day), Jews do the burial on the second day of Yom Tov. The Shulchan Aruch's claim that on Shabbat (and Yom Kippur) Jewish burials are not performed is easier to prove than to explain. The gemara (Rosh Hashana 20a) says that one reason to avoid certain calendar arrangements is to avoid Yom Kippur falling right before or right after Shabbat, in which case there would be two days without burial, with the prospect of decay and disgrace to the deceased.

While the laws of Shabbat are significantly stricter than those of Yom Tov, when it comes to having the melacha done by non-Jews, there does not need to be a difference. Asking a non-Jew to do the work is only a rabbinic prohibition and there are several scenarios, including for the needs of someone who is sick but not

dangerously so, that one may ask a non-Jew to do even a Torah level melacha (Shulchan Aruch, OC 328:17). Burial is one of the needs that is taken with utmost urgency by halacha (see B'rachot 19b). So halachically, there could have been room to allow non-Jew's doing the burial even on Shabbat. An early source who gives an explanation is the Ramban (Torat Ha'adam, pg. 80 in Mossad Harav Kook edition). He says that we do not want there to be a disgrace for the deceased in that Shabbat was desecrated for his burial. While one could make the same claim about Yom Tov, the Aruch HaShulchan (OC 526:4) explains that on Yom Tov there are anyway melachot that are permitted, so to permit this type of burial would not "raise eyebrows" in the same way.

On the second day of Yom Tov, as mentioned, Jews may do the burial themselves. However, Ashkenazic practice (Rama, OC 526:4) is that non-Jews, if available, do the full-fledged violations of Yom Tov. (The details of who does what are beyond our present scope.)

Regarding practice nowadays, there is not unanimity. One of the leading chevrot kaddisha in Israel told us they still follow the classic halacha with one caveat. They will perform a first day burial only if they are confident no one will violate Yom Tov in order to take part in the funeral. This brings us to the next point.

There are major authorities who oppose doing funerals on either day of

Yom Tov. Of prominent note, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, OC III, 76) says that two things have changed from Talmudic times. One is that there is now refrigeration, which prevents serious decomposition and odors. He claims that had that been the case then, Chazal would not have allowed the burials and would have said that it would be disrespectful to the deceased to bury on Yom Tov. He admits that once they permitted the matter, it might not make a difference that times have changed. However, he points to another halachic phenomenon that was classically applied sparingly but now may apply more broadly. People from a certain town were forbidden to bury on Yom Tov because they were not careful in their Torah observance and thus the permission might be abused (Shabbat 139a). While this approach was not applied broadly in the past (see Tosafot 6a), Rav Feinstein felt that it should be applied in America of his time. As he acknowledged, not all agreed.

One can also point out that nowadays when people come from significant distances to take part in funerals and when, again, refrigeration makes waiting feasible, few people want to do a funeral on Yom Tov. Therefore, even if the Gemara's and Shulchan Aruch's rules apply theoretically, you are correct that their implementation is uncommon.

THE CHALLENGE OF MONEY: ELUL

by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

(The series on WAGES AND LABOR;
EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE continues
next issue)

In the Chassidut of P'shischa they taught that preparation for mitzvot is almost as important as the mitzva itself and the parshiot that we read weekly, are often preparation for the chagim. Between Purim and Pesach we have the Four Parashiot detailing the mitzvot connected with them. During the Three Weeks we read Pinchas, Mattot-Masaei and Devarim describing the conquest and tribal allocation of the Land, the t'shuva for the sins that caused the destructions of this period. Now in Elul we had Shoftim and Ki Teitzei with 118 mitzvot dealing the imperatives for a just, moral and merciful society. They are followed by Ki Tavo with its blessings and curses that are the national rewards and punishment for non-observance of these divinely ordained imperatives. These parashiot in concert with the call of the Shofar and the reciting of S'lichot are fitting preparation for the judgement and atonement of the Yamim Noraim that follow.

Hashem is slow to anger and merciful to forgive mistakes and our sins; this knowledge provides the hope and faith for our t'shuva and atonement. Yet His long suffering of our sins only applies to those misdeeds against Heaven; those against man are punished swiftly and fully. Atonement for the latter

requires first rectifying the deeds and appeasing the injured party, only then does He forgive. The arrogance against Heaven of Dor HaP'laga was punished only with dispersion and multiplicity of languages while the social sins of the five cities of S'dom brought utter destruction. Nineveh fasted and wore sackcloth yet in their t'shuva they never became more merciful of Israel nor did they relinquish idolatry, so what did they repent with? They returned the chamasa that was in their hands. This restitution of chamasa, money that is earned through violence or through scheming and devious methods, made their teshuva acceptable and earned them atonement. Punishment for the idolatry of the Eigel was postponed and meted out gradually, whereas Bayit Rishon and Sheini were destroyed for a multitude of social sins that disrupted the just, moral and merciful society called for in Shoftim and Ki Teitzei, as promised in Ki Tavo.

In essence, this just and merciful society requires a Jewish perspective on having and spending money, since uncontrolled and unrestrained wealth destroys any such society. "One who says mine is mine and yours is yours", this is an average attribute; many say this is the attribute of S'dom" (Avot 5:13). Private property is a legitimate part of human nature and all the strata of government, law courts, judges and policing are meant to ensure that the rights, persons and property of the citizens are protected; this is the commencement of Parshat Shoftim. However, any concept of absolute and

unlimited private property leads to selfishness and egoism; these are the attributes of S'dom which called for the destruction of that society. So the Torah then details all the mitzvot that come to inculcate the merits of mercy and kindness essential for the society that Israel is to construct in its Promised Land.

Human beings, created in the image of G-d, are the pinnacle of His creation and how they use everything in that creation will determine the degree of mercy and kindness in their societies. So Shoftim and Ki Tetzei came to extend our behaviour beyond the negation of damaging and harming others and their property that was taught in Mishpatim. For that, we require mercy and kindness in our dealings not only with people in our power or in difficulty, but even animals and trees, both in our possession and those outside of our property. Our kindness and mercy for G-d's creation reflect His Chesed and Rachamim for us and all that He has created; the Chesed and Rachamim that we pray for and require on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

All the 24 sins mentioned in Ashamnu, the vidui that we recite in the s'lichot, deal with financial and monetary sins that require forgiveness and Divine Atonement. Of the 11 verses in Ki Tavo describing the acts that bring blessings or curses upon the Jewish national society, five have to do with kosher money and four with sexual morality, twin foundations for the just and merciful society.

"These are the mitzvot whose fruits a person enjoys in this world while their principal remains for him for the world to come" (Shabbat 127a). These are all mitzvot requiring human justice and mercy that are doubly rewarded compared to all other mitzvot, rewarded only in the world to come. □

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

Nitzavim-Vayeilech

"Denying Death or Facing It"

All men are mortal.

Yankel is a man.

Therefore, Yankel is mortal.

You have just read a basic lesson in logic, one that appears in almost every textbook on the subject.

It is undoubtedly true that all of us, Yankel or Yentel, are mortal and will someday die. Yet it is also true that we deny our mortality and live our lives as though death was not inevitable.

Our tendency to exclude our deaths from our awareness leads to some peculiar results. For example, in the graduate program which was designed to prepare me for a career as a psychotherapist, death was not part of the curriculum. The entire topic of death and dying was not something discussed in the graduate

psychology programs of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

How well I remember attending a workshop by the then little known Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross which introduced me and numerous other mental health professionals to the issues of death and dying. Her book - On Death and Dying - became the first in a flood of similar works designed to train professionals to be aware of the psychology of the dying person, and of the ways in which people coped with the death of loved ones. That book continues to occupy a place of prominence on my personal bookshelf.

The Jewish tradition encourages us to contemplate our ultimate end. Especially at this time of year, so soon before the days of awe and judgment, death preoccupies our consciousness. Those of us who are familiar with the Rosh HaShana liturgy can already hear the cantor chant, "Who will live and who will die?"

This week, we read two Torah portions, Nitzavim and Vayeilech, the first of which contains the last public address which Moshe made before his death, and the second of which tells us so much about his inner feelings as he prepared to die.

A careful reading of these two parshiyot demonstrates that in Parshat Nitzavim, Moshe stands before a huge audience, all of Israel, judges and chieftains, and the lowly wood choppers and water fetchers, and delivers a powerful inspirational

message.

Then, Parshat Vayeilech opens with the phrase, "And Moshe went and spoke..." The commentaries tell us that Moshe left the podium from which he addressed the public and went down to the people, visiting each of them individually. He did this in order to take leave of each person, and to assure him that his death did not mean that the people's mission would fail.

He told them that like every other mortal he was about to die and that he could no longer "go out and come in". He was exquisitely conscious of his waning powers and wanted to use his final moments to say his goodbyes to his people face to face.

Rashi tells us that by saying, "I can no longer go out and come in", he was indicating that "the traditions and wellsprings of wisdom" were no longer available to him. He sensed that he no longer had access to his inner sources of inspiration and creativity. What a lucid glimpse into the emotional experience of our great shepherd, during his last hours on earth!

As you may know, Rashi is so great a biblical commentator that there are commentaries written upon his commentary. These are known as "supercommentaries," and one of them, Sifte Chachamim, offers us an even more profound insight into Moshe's psyche. This author suggests that as Moshe realized that his wisdom was failing him, he was

better able to accept his impending death, for a life without wisdom would not be worth living.

Toward the end of this week's Torah reading, indeed just at the point where maftir begins (D'varim 31:28), we find Moshe asking that all the elders again be assembled for him to address them. Here Rashi wonders why Moshe did not simply call for the trumpets to be sounded, signaling that assembly was in order. After all, throughout the sojourn in the wilderness, Moshe would gather the people to him by sounding the chatzotzrot, the silver trumpets. Rashi suggests that at this moment, just before his death, Moshe no longer had the symbols of power and authority available to him. He quotes Kohelet (8:8), "There is no authority in the day of death."

One of the lessons I learned from Dr. Kubler-Ross so very long ago is the importance of the helper, be he or she a family member or a professional, to help the patient reach this stage of acceptance of impending death. To help teach us about this stage of acceptance, she quoted the following poem by the Indian poet Tagore:

I have got my leave. Bid me farewell, my brothers!

I bow to you all and take my departure.

Here I give back the keys of my door -- and I give up all claims to my house. I only ask for last kind words from you.

We were neighbours for long, but I

*received more than I could give.
Now the day has dawned and the lamp that lit my dark corner is out.
A summons has come and I am ready for my journey.*

Studying Parshat Vayeilech gives us a unique opportunity to learn about what a man's life is like in his last moments, as he prepares for his death. True, that man is Moshe, and we cannot all aspire to his example. But there is, nevertheless, much to learn from this greatest of men, not only about how to live, but about how to die. □

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*

Six particular verses in Netzavim (D'varim 30:1-6) are called by Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda of Volozhin (the Netziv) Parshat HaGeula, the Portion of the Redemption, because it is the most concise and unerring prediction of the different phases of the final redemption - much of which has already actually unfolded in the recent past.

"And it shall come to pass when all these things will have come upon you, the blessings and the curses..." Our generation in particular has witnessed the persistent curse of anti-Semitism culminating in the Holocaust, as well as the blessings of Jewish creative survival and the flowering of Jewish scholarship.

"And you shall ponder this among all the nations where HaShem your God has driven you" (30:1). The significance of these abiding curses and blessing for the meaning of Jewish existence and identity has indeed triggered a great deal of discussion and soul searching among Jews always and everywhere with mixed results.

"And you shall return unto HaShem your God and hearken to His voice..." (30:2). It did not seem to us that this was what was happening. But after all, "The secret things belong unto HaShem our God..." (29:28) and perhaps He sees things differently. "Then HaShem your God will turn your captivity V'SHAV and have compassion upon you." An early phase of the redemption will be an easing of conditions for Jews in some of the lands of the dispersion. Jews will ultimately gain civil rights in countries that are democracies and today in the U.S. are received as equals in every way.

"And (He) will return (V'SHAV) and gather you from all the peoples where HaShem your God has scattered you (30:3). Even if any of you that are dispersed, be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there will HaShem your God gather you and from there will He fetch you" (30:4).

I take this to mean that no matter how far away, geographically, spiritually or generationally, a Jew may have wandered, he will ultimately experience stirrings of Jewish identity and Jewish nationalism, so that in spite of

all the distance and alienation, a sense of basic Jewish unity can take root.

"And HaShem your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed and you shall possess it and He will do you good and multiply you above your fathers" (30:5). Indeed here we are after 62 year of sovereign statehood with close to 6 million Jews with undivided Jerusalem as our capital in a better position perhaps than at any other period in our history.

Finally "HaShem your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed to love HaShem your God with all your heart and all your soul that you may live" (30:6). Says the Netziv, this cannot mean 'live and not die' (for this has been stated earlier) but rather that only here in Eretz Yisrael will you experience the spiritual delight of love of God and self fulfillment, something, says the Netziv that is not possible outside the land. We anxiously await this phase.

Rabbi Shubert Spero, Jerusalem

Praying with Passion

**Giving more meaning to our T'fillah
One Week at a Time**

Excerpted and reprinted with permission of the author

Birchot HaShachar

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הַעוֹלָם

...אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָה.

...עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַפְאָרָה.

Translation:

Blessed are You, HaShem our God,
King of the Universe,

...who girds Israel with strength.
...who crowns Israel with glory.

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

G-d's Holy Nation

The people of Israel hold a place of honor and glory as G-d's holy nation.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

Standing Apart from the World

Originally, the blessing OZEIR YISRA'EL BIGVURA was intended to be said when we put on our belts (or close the top button of our pants), and the blessing OTEIR YISRA'EL B'TIF-ARA referred to covering the head when dressing (B'rachot 60b).

Head coverings of all sorts, and belts of all descriptions are worn by people in many nations of the world. Why do these two blessings of Birchot HaShachar relate the donning of these items to such exalted terms as "might" and "splendor?"

The Torah states, DABEIR EL KOL ADAT B'NEI YISRA'EL V'AMARTA ALEIHEM - K'DOSHIM TIHYU (Vayikra 19:2) "Speak to the whole congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: you shall be holy."

What does it mean to live a life of holiness? As we learn from Vayikra Rabbah, the root meaning of the word

KADOSH, holy, is 'separate'. Rashi explains that this means separation from the forbidden.

Rav Isaac Sher offers another understanding of holiness: CHASHIVUT, importance. Hashem emphasized to Moshe that His message of holiness was to be given to the entire congregation. Every one of us is part of the holy nation, meant to stand apart from baseness, coarseness and cruelty. Our status must influence our actions whether we are alone, with our families or at school or work.

As we prepare to meet a new day, we may not feel all that regal. Yet these two blessings remind us that we are indeed part of G-d's royal family. When a Jewish man covers his head, he is not seeking to protect himself from wind, rain, cold or sun. He is seeking to identify himself with G-d's holy nation. Similarly, when he "girds himself" with a belt, he is not just putting the last touch on his outfit. He is girding himself with strength - the strength a Jew exercises in maintaining the self-control to turn away from the base temptations all around him and within him. In doing so, he brings honor to the nation whose "uniform" he wears, as well as to G-d and the Torah.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Proving Our Pedigree

There was a king who was overthrown and banished from his land. His usurper offered one means

by which the king could redeem his throne: if he could convince the people among whom he wandered that he was indeed a king, he could return and resume his rule. However, he was not permitted to bring any of his royal clothing or signs of power along with him on his journey.

At first, he tried to convince the people among whom he wandered that he was a deposed king by simply telling them so. He regaled them with stories about royal life and his great military victories. They all thought he was delusional.

Realizing that words would never suffice to support his contention, he stopped telling his story. Instead, he conducted himself with the utmost dignity, charity and courage. Little by little, people began to gravitate toward him, to rely on his judgment and follow his lead. Ultimately, they realized that he was indeed a king, for his manner was unmistakably that of a regal person. He not only regained the throne in his own kingdom, but was crowned by his adopted land as well.

Might and honor are royal attributes. The people of Israel are girded like warriors and crowned like princes. When a person identifies himself as a Jew by his manner of dress, he declares his royal status to himself, and thereby commits himself to upholding it as he makes his way through the encounters and events that comprise his day.

Try this:

Imagine the feeling a king or queen has

upon being coronated. Try to vividly feel the transforming moment at which the weight of the crown settles upon the regent's head, conferring unlimited honor, power and responsibility. Think of this feeling as your say the words OZEIR YISRA'EL BIGVURA and OTEIR YISRA'EL B'TIF-ARA.

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Medical Secrets

Treatment for BRCA

In our last article we discussed the complex halachic question of whether a woman is permitted to remove her ovaries if she is found to be a carrier of the BRCA mutation. Since this mutation is associated with ovarian and breast cancer, the removal of the ovaries could be a significant contributor to her health and well-being.

The removal of a woman's ovaries, however, can have other major medical implications. It could cause a hormonal imbalance and create symptoms similar to menopause - possibly even more extreme - related to cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, and changes in other areas of her lifestyle, as well as that of her husband.

Any woman considering this procedure needs to carefully weigh the benefits to her health as opposed to the possible negative effects, and

whether the possible risk justifies undergoing the procedure; obviously every case is different.

In recent years the medical community has developed hormone replacement therapy (HRT) - medicines that restore the hormonal balance which has been upset due to the removal of the ovaries. There has been a large and sometimes ferocious debate within the medical community about the use of such HRT's. Evidence has been presented to suggest that these treatments may not be as safe as was previously thought. The specific type of HRT, when it is administered, and the duration of treatment must be considered, and each case decided accordingly.

It is imperative for a woman in this particular situation to discuss all her questions and concerns with her doctor in order to receive the most comprehensive answers applicable in her specific case.

BRCA Testing: Is it an Obligation?

We have been discussing the BRCA mutation, a common genetic condition that affects the body's ability to correct or to destroy damaged DNA. When a woman carries this mutation she is at a much greater risk for getting certain types of cancer - particularly ovarian or breast cancer - due to this inability to correct her DNA.

As with Tay-Sachs disease, the BRCA mutation is more common in the Jewish community than in the general

society. The question therefore must be asked: does the Jewish community have an obligation to encourage all women to check whether they are carriers of the BRCA mutation?

Genetic testing consists of a simple blood test; the blood cells are then analyzed in the laboratory and results can be provided within a few weeks in order to determine whether or not a person is a carrier of one or more genetic abnormalities. In the past, when genetic testing was first suggested as a way to combat genetic diseases, some Rabbis came out quite strongly against it. Some were afraid it would create panic in the community if people discovered that they were, indeed, carriers. There was also concern as to whether this information would adversely affect the carrier and his family when it came time to seek shidduchim.

The solution that has been adopted is to test for genetic abnormalities and to present the person tested with an identity number, but not the results. When the time comes for such a person to get married, he can check his number against the number of his prospective shidduch. If the computer shows that there is no clash in the results, and the two of them are not both carriers of the same genetic abnormality, there should be no impediment to their marriage. If it can be ensured that couples who are carriers of a certain genetic abnormality do not get married, we can be assured that no children with

these diseases will be born. Over the course of one or two generations, these diseases would then disappear. In this ingenious way the Orthodox Jewish community has come extremely close to eradicating many common genetic Jewish diseases.

In light of this we could suggest that we should do the same for BRCA: if we test for the BRCA mutation we should be able to eradicate the effects of the disease. However, the picture is much more complex than it appears; we will explain why, next time.

Rosh HaShana Torah Readings & Haftaret

First Day

First Torah 34 p'sukim B'reishit 21:1-34

This is the total for the reading in the first Torah; it is not broken down Aliya-by-Aliya style. Five people are called to the Torah.

According to Tradition, Sara Imeinu was "remembered" on Rosh HaShana. She became pregnant, and subsequently gave birth to Yitzchak, despite her advanced age of 90. On the first day of Rosh HaShana we read perek 21 of B'reishit, from Parshat Vayeira, about the birth and early years of Yitzchak, and about the Sara-Hagar-Yishmael episode.

The last part of this reading is about the treaty made between

Avraham and Avimelech. Commentaries point out that it was in the merit of the prayers of Avraham on behalf of the people of Avimelech's household, that his (Avraham's) and Sara's prayers for themselves were also answered. This fits with one of the powerful themes and messages of RH, namely the power of prayer, in general, and of communal prayer, in particular. Almost always, we pray in plural.

2nd Torah, 6 p'sukim Bamidbar 29:1-6

Then the Maftir is called to the second Torah and the first 6 p'sukim of Bamidbar 29 (in Parshat Pinchas) are read. The reading is about the Musaf of Rosh HaShana (mentioning that the Musaf of Rosh Chodesh is also brought on RH - a rare mention on Rosh HaShana of the fact that it is also Rosh Chodesh Tishrei) and the mitzva of hearing the Shofar blowing.

Haftara, 38 p'sukim Shmuel Alef 1:1-2:10

The Haftara of the first day of Rosh HaShana echoes and reinforces the theme of the Power of Prayer, as well as giving us another example of the "barren matriarch" who conceived after praying. It is the story of Chana, mother of Shmuel HaNavi.

The silent nature of the Amida is

attributed to Chana and the way she prayed at the Mishkan.

In a different way, we can add Yosef HaTzadik, who was also "remembered" by G-d. Tradition tells us that he was removed from prison to appear before Par'o on RH. Since Yosef's removal from prison and his successful experience before Par'o can be seen as the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn of the family of Yaakov - who became the People of Israel... and everything that followed - we could say that the Yosef-RH connection can explain the statement in Kiddush on RH eve that it is a commemoration of the Exodus.

Second Day

First Torah 24 p'sukim B'reishit 22:1-24

In the first Sefer Torah, we continue reading from where we left off on the first day of RH. Five people are called to the Torah in the first Sefer. Perek 22 is the portion of the Akeida. It is arguably the most dramatic and emotion-evoking portion of the whole Torah. Tradition tells us that the Akeida took place on Rosh HaShana. ZICHRONOT (remembrances) is one of the three major themes of Rosh Hashana, and the Akeida is the main element of ZICHRONOT. Not only is it the topic of the Torah reading, but it is the basis of the choice of Shofar -- namely, the Ram's Horn -- and it is an oft repeated theme in davening.

We stand before G-d on Yom HaDin and we proclaim that we are not only the biological descendants of Avraham and Yitzchak (and Yaakov), but their spiritual heirs as well. We are not just telling stories; we are inspired to emulate our forefathers and develop a total commitment to G-d and Torah.

2nd Torah, 6 p'sukim Bamidbar 29:1-6

Same as the first day. See there.

Haftara, 19 p'sukim Yirmiyahu 31:2-20

Again, we find one of the matriarchs who was without child for a long time. This time, Rachel Imeinu represents the people of Israel, more specifically, the kingdom of Israel, under the flag of Efrayim, who are in bad shape in their countries of Exile. The closing words of the Haftara contain G-d's promise of mercy.

The return of the people to Eretz Yisrael - as in, V'SHAVU VANIM LIGVULAM, is one meaning of T'SHUVA, and is seen as going hand-in-hand with the "other" form of return - of the people to G-d.

The readings of Rosh HaShana are not just Bible stories and we shouldn't take them as such. We read about an amazing love relationship between G-d and His people, us. Emotion is the key.

We need to "open up" on Rosh HaShana, so that we can see the vital nature of T'shuva and of our membership in Klal Yisrael. And it is not just we who must warm to the relationship between HaShem and Am Yisrael. G-d too, so to speak, will hopefully respond to the feelings He has always had for us, and relate to us as He related to the Avot and Imahot.

Ha'azinu STATS

53rd of the 54 sedras; 10th of 11 in D'varim
Written on 92 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 51st
3 Parshiyot; all open (extra open!)
52 p'sukim - ranks 51st (8th in D'varim)
614 words - ranks 52nd (9th in D'varim)
2326 letters - ranks 52nd (9th in D'varim)
P'sukim are among the shortest in the Torah

MITZVOT

The Chinuch does not count any mitzvot in Ha'azinu; Rambam counts one - YAYIN NESECH. This is the only mitzva on Rambam's whole list of 613 mitzvot that the Chinuch does not count.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

Kohen - First Aliya 6 p'sukim - 32:1-6

[P>32:1 (43)] Moshe Rabeinu begins his farewell "song" to the People by calling upon the heavens and the earth to be witnesses to

what he will be saying. He asks the people (in a very poetic way) to listen well to his words. Moshe tells us that G-d is completely fair and just; it is we who are responsible for "messing things up"

"When I (singular) call G-d's Name, you (plural, minimum 2) praise G-d for His Greatness." From this pasuk we learn that when three people eat together, one calls to the other two to "bless G-d" - ZIMUN.

This pasuk is borrowed from here to introduce the Musaf, Mincha, and Ne'ila Amida. (for Shacharit and Maariv, it is considered to be an interruption between GEULA and T'FILA, because of its later inclusion in the davening.)

Levi - Second Aliya 6 p'sukim - 32:7-12

Moshe asks us again to remember the "early history" of this unique nation of Israel and the special ancestors who established for us our close relationship with G-d.

There is no generation gap in real Jewish life; the older generation teaches the new one, the new generation gains by asking questions of their elders and learning from them.

G-d structured the world in parallel to the developing nation of Israel, and granted us special protection and guidance - "like an eagle protects its young..."

SDT: *The lessons of Torah are compared to dew, rain showers, and downpours. All water (oft-compared to Torah), but different intensities and speeds. So too Torah, for different people.*

Some need Torah in small, easily digested doses, or else they "overload". Others can handle a steady stream. Still others can learn Torah with the intensity of a downpour. The analogy between Torah and water has many levels.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 6 p'sukim - 32:13-18

Notwithstanding the protection and nurturing that G-d provided us in the Wilderness, we rebelled. This happened and continues to happen. Moshe's words can be seen as a description of Dor HaMidbar as well as being a poetic prophecy of the people becoming too complacent in Eretz Yisrael and abandoning G-d from their positions of opulence and security.

R'VI - Fourth Aliya 10 p'sukim - 32:19-28

Much of the content of Haazinu is a poetic formulation of ideas previously presented in the book of D'varim.

Moshe tells us that G-d's reaction to our disloyalty is HESTEIR PANIM - the hiding of "G-d's Face", so to speak. He also tell us that there have been several times when G-d had wanted to destroy the People of Israel but did not, so as not to give the nations of the world cause to doubt the power of the "G-d of Israel".

It is striking how similar are the words of reproach and how different the presentation.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 11 p'sukim - 32:29-39

Our challenge is to contemplate the above and understand the many lessons contained in G-d's (and Moshe's) words. The bottom line is that although Israel strays from the proper path, G-d will not abandon us, and He will rally to our side in the face of our enemies. If we would only realize this and appreciate the awesome power of G-d.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 4 p'sukim - 32:40-43

In this concluding portion of the song part of Haazinu, we see G-d's oath and Moshe assurances of G-d's eternal nature and His promise to avenge Israel against the other nations.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 9 p'sukim - 32:-44-52

[P>32:44 (4)] The Torah goes back to the regular columnar format for this last portion of Haazinu.

Moshe, in front of Yehoshua, tells the people to heed the warning of this SHIRA and to keep the Torah, which in turn, will keep them.

An important point that has been off-repeated in the book of D'varim is this: We did not receive the Land of Israel with "no strings attached". We must always be worthy of holding on to Eretz Yisrael. Sometimes that reminder is subtle;

sometimes it is heavy-handed. Here it's: Take the Torah seriously, because it is the basis upon which we will have a long (everlasting) tenure in the Land.

[P>32:48 (5)] G-d then tells Moshe to ascend Har Aravim-Nevo, see the Land from there, and die there, as Aharon had done earlier (the Torah reiterates the reason that both Moshe and Aharon couldn't enter Eretz Yisrael - namely, the incident when Moshe hit the rock rather than speak to it, missing an opportunity to sanctify G-d's name), rather than enter the Land which the People of Israel will enter.

Haftara 22 p'sukim Hoshea 14:2-10 • Yoel 2:15-27

SHUVA YISRAEL AD HASHEM... These opening words of the Haftara give the Shabbat its name and basically say it all. Return to G-d. The following pasuk emphasizes the power of prayer in the T'shuva process. The command to repent is accompanied by wonderful promises (prophecies) of redemption and restoration of the former glory of Israel. The passage from Yoel gives us a Shofar connection to T'shuva. Another encouraging note as we face the task of returning to G-d, is His assurance that He is among us - even before our T'shuva. And that He will not shame His people ever.

The last pasuk in Hoshea states, "Who is wise who understands this, an intelligent person will know: G-d's ways are straight, the righteous will walk upon them and the sinner will trip on them."

Notwithstanding the fact that the Haftara was not "chosen" because of the sedra, they do have some points in common. One example: The sedra

speaks of rain in a figurative, spiritual sense and the Haftara mentions its more literal meaning in connection with prosperity. The prosperity angle is particularly interesting, since it appears in the sedra as a criticism and in the Haftara as a sign that G-d has forgiven His people.

אַשְׁרֵי הָעָם יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה...
Fortunate (or happy) is the nation that KNOWS the T'ru'a...

This pasuk in T'hilim does not say, "hears" the shofar; it says KNOWS the sound of the Shofar.

There's a big difference, even though the same word is used for both hearing and knowing (or understanding). LISHMO'A. To hear. And sometimes (often, actually) it means to understand.

Our commitment at Sinai, for example, was NAASEH V'NISHMA. "We will do, and we will understand (what G-d wants of us)". Not just "we will hear".

Might we suggest that the bracha for Shofar - LiSHMO'A KOL SHOFAR, implies that understanding is essential to the mitzva, not just hearing the sounds.

We have to hear, and understand, and not misunderstand. And we have to react appropriately. Everyone except for the totally deaf, can HEAR the sounds of the shofar. But do you straighten with pride of membership in the Jewish people when you hear the T'KI'A? Are you humbled and broken when you hear the broken wail of the T'RU'A or the sob of the SH'VARIM. Does the T'KI'A remind you of the experience of MATAN TORAH? Do the broken sounds inspire you to introspection and set you on the path

to T'shuva.

It is not enough to merely hear the sounds of the Shofar; we must understand them too. Imagine standing at a crosswalk waiting to cross the street. To your right, a truck is standing at the curb. As you are about to enter the road, your hear an insistent beeping sound. It is the warning sound that the truck automatically emits when it is put into reverse. The truck is slowly rolling towards you, and you are warned by the beeps - Do not step into the road; it would be a dangerous thing to do.

You hear the sounds - but you do not know what they mean! Maybe you think it is a car alarm, or a sound coming from the nearby construction site, or maybe you just aren't thinking at all. You hear the sound, but it doesn't dawn on you that you are being warned of some danger. And you step into the road, just as the truck backs up. Fortunately B"H, the truck driver sees you in his rearview mirror and applies the breaks just in time. He jumps out of his truck and yells at you: "Hey! Didn't you hear the warning beeps!?" "Yes", you answer, "but I didn't understand them."

So too, it is with the sound of the Shofar. Many, many Jews go to shul to hear the Shofar. They hear the sounds, but do they know what the sounds mean? Do we heed the warning of the Shofar? Are we moved to rise to the challenge of T'shuva? Are we inspired to strengthen our commitment to Torah and Judaism? Are we going to work harder to improve ourselves as individuals and as a community, so that we will do our share in hastening the Moshiach? Or will we continue walking into the path of the oncoming truck?

ASHREI HA'AM YO'D'EI T'RU'A... Happy (or fortunate) is the Nation who KNOWS the T'RU'A... We must hear the Shofar, must understand its meanings, must let its sounds and meanings penetrate to our minds, hearts, and souls. The Shofar must bring about a SHIPUR (a spiritual improvement). Then we may consider ourselves truly fortunate and happy to be the Nation that KNOWS the T'RU'A.

Note to TTreaders of the web version of Torah Tidbits.

If you are reading these words, then that's exactly who you are - an eTTreader.

We just wanted you to know that the piece on the previous page did not make it into the hard copy of TT. We ran out of room and out of time. This week's double issue was very time- and paper-consuming.

So if you know people who only read the hard copy, you can share this "vort" with them.

Also know that the order of the pages of the e-version is different from the hard copy. Specifically, the pages with the RH readings and the sedra summary of Haazinu are together towards the end of the e-version. Not so in the hard copy. And you get the BackPages in left-to-right order. Not so in the hard copy.

Also, you have a TTriddle that was not in the hard copy. There was one that appeared twice and I replaced it with a new one, just for you.

No big deal; just wanted to tell you.

More importantly, thank you for reading and may you and your family and all of Klal Yisrael have a happy, healthy, prosperous, and peace-filled year.

Shana Tova Umtuka

K'tiva VaChatima Tova

Phil - for the TT team

ArtScroll Series • Mesorah Publications Ltd.

WISDOM & WIT

by Shmuel Himelstein

What do you mean "his"?

Upon finding a Jew in some type of distress, whether physical or emotional in nature, R' Moshe Leib of Sasov would relate so closely to the other person that he would even feel the other's pain.

He was asked: "Rebbe, how is it possible for you to always share the other person's distress the way you do?"

R' Moshe Leib would answer, "What do you mean 'share'? And what do you mean 'the other person'? We Jews are all parts of a single body, and how can I not feel that distress?"

R' Yehuda Chasid of Regensburg would say: As long as I remain silent, I control my tongue. Once I start speaking, my tongue controls me.

Shmuel Himelstein's Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit; A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit; and "Wisdom and Wit" - available at your local Jewish bookstore. If not - ask for it.

ParshaPix explanations

Combined Nitzavim-Vayeilech and Haazinu - that's the meaning of going (5770) and coming (5771) at the top of the ParshaPix.

☞ The family in the upper-left represents the beginning of Nitzavim that describes all who are standing today before G-d. Included are men, women, and children

☞ I I dots above Lanu Ulvaneinu...

☞ and all types of people, including the woodcutter (George Washington, as in the cherry tree)

☞ and the water-drawers (Jack & Jill, or is it water fetchers?)

☞ The family also stands for those who were to participate in HAK-HEL - men, women, and children.

☞ HAK-HEL is also represented by the crowned Torah-reader - the king,

☞ and by the Torah in the Sukka, in the lower-right, since Hak-hel takes place on the Sukkot after Sh'mita.

☞ The feather writing letters is for the mitzva to write a Sefer Torah.

☞ That mitzva is also represented by the open gemara, since acquiring S'farim to learn from is also part of the mitzva.

☞ The Xed out moon, planets, and stars is LO BASHAMAYIM HI, it is not in heaven...

☞ The acid rain symbol is for the description of the punishment for turning away from G-d.

☞ The Megila is for the hidden "clue" to Esther in the Torah - HESTEIR PANIM.

☞ The questioned road signs is the choice of choosing Life or Death, Good or Evil.

☞ The plant growing a Tzedaka box is from the haftara, referring to G-d, YATZMI'ACH TZEDAKA, will cause tzedaka to grow...

☞ The Chatan and Kallah under the Chupa is also from the haftara.

☞ And the chemical expression is sulfur and salt burning...

☞ The musical note is, of course, for HASHIRA, the Song, which is a poetic way the Torah refers to the Torah. Interesting that the word HASHIRA occurs only 10 times in Tanach, 8 of which are in the Torah, 5 of which are in Parshat Vayeilech. Aside from the Torah referred to as HASHIRA, we find that in B'shalach and Chukat, HASHIRA refers to the Song of the Sea and the Song of the Well, respectively - both water, which is very often a "code word" for Torah. Note too that the word SHIRA does not appear in the Tanach, only with the HEI as HASHIRA, THE Song, making the case for its meaning the Torah even stronger.

☞ The other musical note is for the Song which Haazinu is.

☞ The Shofar is not for the Shofar blown during Elul or for the Shofar

about to be blown on Rosh HaShana (well, it could be, but...) It was intended to point to the RASHEI TEIVOT (initial letters) of the phrase SHORESH POREH ROSH V'LAANA, a reference to bad people among us - something like the rotten apples in a barrel - in the "warnings of Nitzavim". The Shofar is a call for SHIPUR (same root), improvement, of ourselves, our community, and all of Klal Yisrael - and stands in opposition to its Rashei Teivot "namesake".

☞ The YO-YO, also known as a RETURNING top, represents T'SHUVA, return. Specifically, the fact that a person can stray and sin, return, stray again, return, and again and again... and G-d is still eager (so to speak) for the T'SHUVA rather than punishing the person. The Yo-yo keeps coming back too. But beware: if the string breaks, the yo-yo keeps getting further and further away and return is not very probable.

☞ Butterfly in Hebrew is a PARPAR. That makes it 2 PARs, or PARIM (lit. bulls) in Hebrew. The butterfly goes with the lips, which have replaced the PARIM, as stated in the haftara of Shabbat Shuva. This does not mean that davening relaces korbanot on a permanent basis. Nor does it mean that when we have a Beit HaMikdash and korbanot that we won't daven anymore. Davening was not "invented" to take the place of korbanot. It has always been with us and will continue to be with us.

It is doing double duty during the time that we are without a Beit HaMikdash. Some of the text of davening will change when we have a Beit HaMikdash, but T'fila - prayer - davening is a mitzva, a precious possession, and our way of talking to G-d.

☞ The scene with sky and ground and an ear on each is for Haazinu HaShamayim... and V'tishma ha-Aretz...

☞ The cloud with rain (gently) falling from it is one of the poetic images in Haazinu for the lessons of Torah

☞ The negated wine is for the prohibition of YAYIN NESECH, sacramental wine. According to the Rambam, it is the one prohibition of the Torah that is found and counted from Haazinu. Interestingly, the Chinuch does not count it (one of only two times that he does not follow the Rambam in mitzva-counting), but includes it in idolatrous offerings.

☞ Apple of the eye - K'ISHON EINO

Parsha Points to Ponder Nitzavim-Vayeilech

1) Why does the Torah spend so many words describing the destruction of S'dom when relating the destruction G-D will bring upon us when we do not heed His commands (29:22)?

2) Why does the Torah first describe our exile as G-D PUSHING us (HIDICHACHA 30:1) and then switch to describing it as His SCATTERING us (HEFITZCHA 30:3)?

3) What is the meaning of the double words used to describe choices of good and bad throughout the parsha - CHAYIM (Life) / TOV (Good) and MAVET (Death) / RA (Bad) in 30:15 and then in 30:19 CHAYIM (Life) / BRACHA (Blessing) and MAVET (Death) / K'LALA (Curse)? Why are two descriptions of the good and bad needed?

Parsha Points to Ponder

by Rabbi Dov Lipman

teacher at Reishit Yerushalayim and Machon Maayan in Beit Shemesh; author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and Adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith" (Feldheim); "TIMEOUT: Sports Stories as a Game Plan for Spiritual Success" (Devora); "SEDER SAVVY" (Targum) ppp@ouisrael.org

Answers are elsewhere in this issue • Ponder the Qs first, then...

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 532 (part 1)

Current Status of the Jurisdiction of Non-Ordained Judges

We have been discussing the jurisdiction of the courts beginning with the Great Sanhedrin while it existed, and the courts of 23 judges in capital cases. We also discussed the jurisdiction of the courts of three judges (the Beit Din) and this court had very broad jurisdiction while judges were ordained. We discussed the lapsing of ordination and now a Beit Din is composed of non-ordained judges, and thus their jurisdiction is somewhat curtailed. One of the Talmudic passages which discusses the jurisdiction of the non-ordained judges deals with divorces. The non-ordained court was coercing a man to divorce his wife according to the prescribed law, a function that was previously limited to ordained judges. When a jurisdictional objection to the proceeding was raised it was answered that courts of non-ordained judges have jurisdiction over the types of matters which occur frequently. This case in Tractate Gittin (88b) seems to make the frequency of the occurrence the test as to whether non-ordained judges can judge cases that were formerly within

the sole jurisdiction of ordained judges. Alfasi (1013-1103) quotes the Talmudic text without comment as do Asheri (1250-1327) and Maharshah (1510-1574). Ran (d. ca 1375), however,

commenting on Alfasi says that the Talmud shows that two criteria must be met before non-ordained judges may exercise jurisdiction over cases which according to Torah law were limited to ordained judges. That is, in addition to being the type of case which occurs frequently, it must also involve a loss of money. It would seem, however, that the reason why in Tractate Gittin the sole test discussed is that of frequency, and no mention is made of money loss, is that Talmudic case is a non-monetary case. The issue raised in it is limited to the question of jurisdiction over a coerced divorce. In a similar manner in a situation of overriding importance, courts of non-ordained judges were given jurisdiction to accept the conversion of proselytes (a matter where there is clearly no involvement of money and is of infrequent occurrence). In Tractate Baba Kama (84b), by contrast, in discussing the remaining types of cases encompassed by the jurisdiction of non-ordained judges the Talmud states a two-prong test that the case must be of a type that (1) occurs frequently and (2) involves a loss of money.

Thus if a certain type of case occurs frequently but the claimant has not suffered a monetary loss (such as the case of embarrassment) the non-ordained judges cannot judge the case. Conversely, if it is the type of case which involves a loss of money to the plaintiff but is not the type that occurs frequently (such as a person maiming another) the non-ordained judges are not empowered to judge the case if it was of the type that the Torah had delegated to ordained judges only.

All the codes and authorities cite the

statement of the Talmud as enunciating the present status of the law. There exists unanimity of opinion on this matter. In the next lesson IYH, we will give examples of cases in which non-ordained judges presently have jurisdiction.



Last issue's (KI TAVO) TTriddles:

[1] Rise and Shine!

Simple one. This is the English translation of the first two words in the haftara for Parshat Ki Tavo - Yeshayahu 60 - KUMI ORI...

[2] Johann Carl Friedrich Gauss

This is a variation of an old one. Five times in the book of D'varim, SICHON is identified as MELECH CHESHBON. And another three times in the book of Yehoshua. CHESHBON means calculation and is the term in Hebrew for arithmetic or math. This makes SICHON the king of math. But who do mathematicians and historians consider to be the all time greatest mathematician - the king of math. A search on the web turned up a number of different lists, with different people in first place. The most consistent holder of first place is Gauss. He is actually known by some as the prince of math. Close enough. By the way, in Shoftim, SICHON is identified as Melech EMORI Melech CHESHBON. In Nechemiya, there is reference to ERETZ SICHON and ERETZ MELECH CHESHBON.

[3] (Oldie) The Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot, Chanuka, Purim connections to Bikurim

The Pesach connection is the Hagada, which uses the Bikurim declaration p'sukim as the main body of MAGID. The p'sukim are then analyzed and explained with many other quotes from Tanach. Shavuot is Yom HaBikurim and it is the beginning of the Bikurim season. Sukkot is the deadline, according to the Mishna, to bring Bikurim AND recite the declaration. Bikurim can still be brought, but without the declaration, until Chanuka (this is what the Mishna says, but we pasken otherwise and allow the recitation until Chanuka, as well). Purim's Mishlo'ach Manot baskets are decorated, reminiscent of the Bikurim Basket. (Okay, that's a stretch, but we didn't want to leave Purim out of this TTriddle. And Yom HaAtzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim can definitely be added, since they represent some of the conditions of the Bikurim situation. [4] **When doves are attached to Bikurim basket - Where?**

The Bikurim basket is called a TENE. With doves attached to it (they served as a live decoration until the Bikurim were given and then were used as bird-sacrifices), the TENE can appear to fly. Where? TENAFLY, New Jersey, of course. Tenafly is considered "is an affluent suburb of New York City", although it is in Bergen County, NJ. (The name comes from Dutch and means Ten Swamps - now you know!)

[5] After 20 Shabbatot, we finally

get to the source on this Shabbat

On the Shabbat after Pesach, we started reading/learning Pirkei Avot. Each chapter is introduced by the famous (first part of the) Mishna in Sanhedrin - All Israel has a share in the World to Come. The pasuk in Tanach that the Mishna quotes is from Yeshayahu 60, the haftara of Ki Tavo. V'AMEICH KULAM TZADIKIM... So 20 weeks after we first quoted this pasuk, we read its source.

[6] Onion rectangle like a deer

Onion = BATZAL = $2+90+30 = 122$, the number of p'sukim in Ki Tavo (side point: Vayaqhel and Va'etchanan also have 122 p'sukim). Rectangle = MALBEIN = $40+30+2+50 = 122$. Like a deer = K'TZVI = $20+90+2+10 = 122$

[7] .3670886075949 &

.5531914893617021276595744680851063829787234042

The first decimal fraction is the equivalent of $29/79$. 29 is the atomic number of copper and 79 is the A.N. of gold. The haftara tells us that G-d will bring gold TACHAT copper (in the time of the Geula). TACHAT means "in place of", but it also means "under". If gold is under silver, then the fraction $29/79$ results. Similarly, the second fraction is equivalent to $26/47$ (those being the atomic numbers of iron and silver, respectively). (The first fraction has a repeating period of 13 digits. The second fraction shows the period of 46 digits. The computer's calculator only shows the first 31 digits; the rest were obtained by good, old fashioned, pencil and paper, long division. Can

today's kids do that?)

[8] 3/5 D'varim, 3/12 Torah, 3/15 Tanach in Ki Tavo

Eretz Yisrael is referred to 15 times in Tanach as flowing with milk and honey - 3 of those references are in Ki Tavo (that's 3 of the 5 in D'varim, 3 of the 12 in the Torah, and 3 of the 15 in Tanach).

[9] Her oldest and youngest for hers

Leah's sons' tribes were on Har G'rizim, with the oldest (Reuven) and the youngest (Zevulun) not there, but their place (so to speak) being taken by Rachel's oldest and youngest (not exactly correct terms for her two sons, but it works for this TTriddle).

[10] So where do they get the stones?

Just a whimsical question. In Eikev, Eretz Yisrael is described as a land whose stones are iron (among other descriptions). In Ki Tavo, the people are told that they will build a Mizbeich on Har Eival with stones that iron has not been in contact with - then where do they get the stones? The answer, of course, is the altar was to be built with stones that were not hewn with a metal implement.

[11] May the first part of 60:18 come true doubly in a good way

This pasuk from the haftara of Ki Tavo begins with the continuing description of what G-d will do for us in the time of the Complete Geula. "No longer shall violence be heard in your land...

The word for violence in this pasuk is HAMAS, hence we hope and pray that there will be a fulfillment of this prophecy with both meanings of the word.

[12] ParshaPix Unexplaineds

There were three graphic images representing words in the haftara.

The many camels represents SHIF-AT G'MALIM, an abundance of camels.

A pair of eyes with a C around it stands for S'I SAVIV EINAYICH... lift your eyes about you...

The two doors with smiles is for M'SOS DOR VADOR, a joy for each succeeding generation. DOR - door, get it?

5771 has 385 days - the most any Jewish year can have. Approx. 16% of our years have 385 days

Parsha Points to Ponder Suggested answers

1) The S'forno explains that the Torah is relating that the people will recognize that this destruction came from G-D and it could not be explained away as a natural disaster. The only similar event was the destruction of S'dom which everyone recognized G-D OVERTURNED WITH HIS ANGER AND FURY. Thus, a significant lesson is learned from the details related regarding the destruction of S'dom.

2) The Kli Yakar teaches that a mistake that Jews make in exile is

thinking that G-D has cast us aside and has no interest in a relationship with us or our mitzva observance. This is captured by the first word HIDICHACHA, describing our mistake which leads to our sinning. However, in the end, we will come to the recognition that G-D was not pushing us away from Him but simply scattering us physically as captured by the second word, HEFITZCHA.

3) The Ohr HaChayim explains that the descriptions of LIFE and DEATH refer to the good and bad which we can bring upon ourselves in this world, and the second description refers to the good or bad which we can bring upon ourselves after death in the next world.

Portion from the Portion The consolation in the words "a root whose fruit is gall and wormwood"

Rashi on the verse (29:12) of our portion cites a Midrash explaining that this portion ATEM NITZAVIM - You are all standing today, before Hashem" (29:9) was said by Moshe as a way to console the nation after they had heard nearly 100 curses said in the previous portion of KI TAVO. But if we read Moshe's words, only a few verses later (17-27) they seem anything but conciliatory.

"Perhaps there is a man or woman... whose heart turns away today from Hashem... perhaps there is a root

flourishing with gall and wormwood... Hashem will not be willing to forgive him... Hashem will erase his name from under Heaven."

Are these words of consolation? They seem more negative consequences. Maybe if we delve into the deeper meaning of these verses we will better understand the consolation meant by them.

"Whose heart turns away" refers to the individual whose perspective is perverse. He deviates in order to search for value systems which are more to his liking.

"A root flourishing with gall" refers to character traits of the soul. But Moshe is not referring to traits which are completely corrupted or those that are explicitly forbidden by the Torah. Here he refers to traits that could lead one to sin. A root flourishing with gall - means that the outcome of this particular character trait is not yet visible since it is only a root - but if left untreated it can become "sulphur and salt, that burns the entire land".

Rav Avigdor HaLevi Nebenzahl, Rav of the Old City, in his book Sichot L'Rosh HaShana explains, for example, miserliness in and of itself is not prohibited by the Torah, as often we should be frugal. But miserliness could lead one to transgress the prohibition "You shall not harden your heart or close your hand against your brother who is poor" (15:7). Or one's miserliness may cause him not to spend money for mitzva performance (i.e. on a beautiful etrog). Hashem can see these "roots" of evil.

This is one of the ideas we mention on Rosh Hashana in the Zichronot section of Musaf - that Hashem

constantly supervises everything, at all times and in every situation:

"You remember the deeds done in the universe and You recall all the creatures fashioned since earliest times. Before You all hidden things are revealed..." Not only does Hashem take accounts of our actions, but He alone is able to see into the depths of the minutest hidden details - "Man's thoughts and schemes, and the motives behind man's deeds". Hashem knows each person's innermost thoughts - which the best psychologist can never uncover and which the person himself may not even recognize due to insufficient introspection.

Let's get back to our original question - how are these verses consolation? It is true that a mere 'root flourishing with gall and wormwood' may produce a state of 'sulphur and salt, a conflagration of the entire Land' which 'cannot be sown and it cannot sprout.' Firstly, Hashem searches out every corner of our hearts to see any tainted ideas or character traits for the purpose of helping us refine them - to bring judgment to light and grant us life. In this process He also uncovers every pure thought hidden in our hearts, and He gives great rewards for even the slightest holy desire. The TOSEFTA in SOTA (4:1) tells us that the reward for a good character trait outweighs the punishment for a negative one, according to the ratio of five hundred to one. So even if Hashem finds the "root" of wickedness within our heart if He also uncovers even just a spark of good intentions (as little as 1/500 of the bad) that will tip the scales in our favor. That is consolation. Also, just

as a "root" of wickedness may lead one to sin, a drop of goodness in our hearts (the pintele yid) can lead us to do many good deeds.

So we should spend some time during the remaining days we have before Rosh Hashana to increase these sparks of good intentions. Sure we should go out of our way to do more mitzvot at this time of year, if we can. But we know that the successful performance of any act we do is dependent on Hashem wanting it to succeed - so we might not always succeed. But our thoughts to perform a mitzva are fully in our hands (CHOVOT HALEVAVOT). So we should make time to reinforce the positive sparks that are already inside us. We should bring out the good intentions in the deeds that we perform already.

For example if we remind ourselves that we truly want to follow in Hashem's path of being GOMELI CHASADIM - being kind, and we increase our intention of performing this mitzva, Hashem will notice and reward us accordingly. This can be done with even any small action that we perform during the day - giving someone directions, telling them the time when asked, saying good morning to a passing stranger... the list goes on. The ultimate test lies in our desire, in the yearnings of our heart; and the reward for even the hints of positive desires for doing Hashem's will is beyond our comprehension.

Here is a recipe that can be served Rosh Hashana night since it uses two of the SIMANIM. This recipe is courtesy of my cousin, Sima Navon, a healer and healthy cooking instructor.

Check out her site: justaddflax.com for other Rosh Hashana recipes, or sign up for her cooking class - Six Super Quick meals for a 3 day Rosh HaShana. And while you are at the computer you can check out her husband Emmanuel Navon's website www.navon.com/multipage.aspx?id=11 who is running for the Knesset.

Beet & Pomegranate Salad

- 2 beets
- 1 onion, chopped small
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ½ tsp pomegranate concentrate
- salt
- pepper

Place the beets in a dutch oven. If necessary, put a little bit of water at the bottom so that the pot won't burn. Bake in a preheated oven (180°C) until soft, approximately 1-1½ hours.

Cut the beets into small cubes. Mix in the remaining ingredients. Serve cold.

#####

A reminder to all those who would like to register for Melabev's annual walkathon to benefit Alzheimer's care...

<http://www.melabev.org/posts/243>