



Candles	<b>YITRO</b>	Havdala	next week
4:27pm	Yerushalayim	5:43pm	4:34 / 5:49
4:45pm	S'derot	5:46pm	4:52 / 5:52
4:43pm	Gush Etzion	5:43pm	4:49 / 5:49
4:43pm	Raanana	5:44pm	4:49 / 5:50
4:43pm	Beit Shemesh•RBS	5:44pm	4:50 / 5:50
4:42pm	Netanya	5:43pm	4:49 / 5:49
4:44pm	Rehovot	5:44pm	4:50 / 5:50
4:43pm	Be'er Sheva (& Otniel)	5:45pm	4:49 / 5:51
4:43pm	Modi'in• Chashmona'im	5:43pm	4:49 / 5:49
4:27pm	Petach Tikva	5:44pm	4:34 / 5:50
4:27pm	Maale Adumim	5:42pm	4:34 / 5:48
4:42pm	GINOT Shomron	5:43pm	4:48 / 5:49
4:41pm	Gush Shiloh	5:42pm	4:48 / 5:48
4:43pm	K4 & Hevron	5:44pm	4:50 / 5:50
4:42pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:43pm	4:49 / 5:49
4:44pm	Yad Binyamin	5:44pm	4:50 / 5:50
4:45pm	Ashkelon	5:46pm	4:51 / 5:51
4:29pm	Tzfat	5:40pm	4:35 / 5:46
4:42pm	Zichron Yaakov	5:43pm	4:48 / 5:49

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - YITRO - 6:19pm

Ranges are 10 days, WED-FRI  
14-23 Shvat • January 19-28

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:46-5:43am
Sunrise	6:39-6:36am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:36-8:36am)	9:14-9:13am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:34-9:35am)	10:06-10:06am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:49%-11:52am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:20-12:22pm
Plag Mincha	3:56-4:03pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 5:00-5:09pm)	5:06-5:14pm

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lite, XL), ParshaPix, text file,  
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YYChRChPK (Some monogram, eh?)

Becherson, Dodavahuson, Zichrison, and a few from Ezra

The Hebrew-English  
Sedra-Haftara common factor

Famous gimatriya: YITRO = 606,  
representing the 606 mitzvot he added  
to the Noahide 7 when he joined Israel.

Son of Moshe with and without a NUN

If it's Tuesday, this must be \_\_\_\_

This is a math question, unrelated to the sedra or anything else:  
What is the next term of this sequence? 2, 3, 5, 11, 31, 127, 709...

לכבוד ט"ו בשבט

Foliage = עֵלֶה • Branch = עֵנָף

Twig = עֵזָב

Trunk = גֵּזַע • (Tree) stump = גֵּדֵם

Shoot = חוֹטֵר • Pith = לֵיבָה

First mentioned in Yitro; explained in Esther

👉 High ideals do not go far  
without high ideas to power them.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

## LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

We can see two different reasons for the "Yitro intro" (catchy, no?) to Matan Torah. And not only does the episode of Yitro come at this dramatic point in the Torah, the sedra in which we find the account of Maamad Har Sinai and Matan Torah is called YITRO. This fact certainly highlights the question of what we must learn from the Yitro factor.

The two different reasons just mentioned are really two features of Yitro - his non-Jewish background and his being an individual, not part of a group.

Among the brachot we have for different experiences, is a bracha that is said when one sees a multitude of Jews. Multitude is defined as at least 600,000 Jews (in Eretz Yisrael). That number is obviously not random - it is the number we associate with Bnei Yisrael. The bracha, after the usual first six words, Baruch ata... is CHACHAM HARAZIM, which means (He) who knows all secrets. At first glance, that's a strange wording for the bracha. Not one we would have guessed. Blessed are You, HaShem... who knows all secrets... of each and every person.

For all finite humans, a mass of more than a half million people is just a blurry jumble of people. It is so many, that our brains cannot get away from the large numbers. We see people, but we can't focus on individuals. It's just too overwhelming.

And we acknowledge this by declaring that G-d and only G-d is the One who

can focus on each individual in a group of so many.

From enslavement in Egypt to the events that preceded the Exodus, from then to the sea and across the sea, through the first part of our travels in the Midbar, to Har Sinai... we are such an overwhelming multitude that each individual is swallowed up in the sheer numbers.

But Yitro was one man. And he came to the Jewish people by choice. He experimented with many beliefs and he chose Judaism. We need to relate to that when we examine our own acceptance of the Torah and make our own commitment to G-d.

Interestingly, we read of Yitro together with Matan Torah and we read Megilat Ruth on Shavuot morning, for partially the same goal: She was an individual. She came to Judaism by choice. She made a commitment that we can and should relate to.

It is hard to imagine having Har Sinai lifted above the heads of all of Bnei Yisrael; it is easier to see a Yitro and a Ruth make their commitments.

At the same time that we try to identify with all of the people of Israel who shouted out together their agreement to follow G-d, we must also ask ourselves the questions that opened this Lead Tidbit.

Our goal? To be totally committed to G-d, His Torah, His Land, His People... on a personal, individual level.

# YITRO stats

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

Written on 138 lines in a Torah, ranks 46th

15 Parshiyot; 4 open, 11 closed

75\* p'sukim - ranks 47th

(only 7 sedras have fewer p'sukim)

1105 words, 4022 letters - ranks 46th

Yitro is the smallest sedra in Sh'mot

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

## MITZVOT

Yitro contains 17 of the 613 mitzvot;

3 positive and 14 prohibitions;

(14 of the 17 are within the Aseret HaDibrot)

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[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.

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

## Kohen - First Aliya

### 12 p'sukim - 18:1-18

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

**SDT:** *The straight reading of this portion indicates that Yitro heard about the Crossing of the Sea and of the battle with Amalek. These are the events recorded in the previous sedra. Other commentaries point to certain textual references about Sinai and are of the opinion that Yitro came after Matan Torah, sometime during the almost one year that the People remained camped near Sinai. If this is so, then we have an example of "there is no set order in the Torah's account of what happen(ed/s)". And we can add the events of Sinai to the list of what Yitro "heard and came". Of course, when the Torah does not follow chronological sequence, there are reasons... and sometimes we get insight into what those reasons might be. See Lead Tidbit.*

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

## Levi - Second Aliya

### 11 p'sukim - 18:13-23

On the "following day", Yitro observes Moshe judging the People from morning until night. He offers suggestions for a more efficient system. Moshe should teach the People what G-d requires of them, and he should also handle the most difficult questions and disputes. But the bulk of the daily judging should be assigned to qualified individuals who will be in charge of groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand people. Yitro explains that this new system will not only make things easier for Moshe, but the people too will be benefited.

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

**SDT:** *"On the following day..." The plain meaning would be, on the day following Yitro's arrival. Rashi, however, quotes the Midrash in saying that the day was the*

*morrow of Yom Kippur, that very first Yom Kippur when Moshe came down from the mountain with the second set of Luchot. This makes an important statement, that not only is building the Mishkan an essential part of the "getting back to life following the Golden Calf disaster" period, but so is the everyday social and civil functioning of the people.*

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

However you look at the first part of the sedra, the story of Yitro seems to be an interruption between the events of the Exodus and the Splitting of the Sea on the one hand, and Matan Torah on the other. But it is definitely NOT an interruption - it is a pre-requisite for Matan Torah. Moshe's view of the judging process, as he explains to Yitro who asks him what he's doing, is that the people come to him LIDROSH ET HA'ELOKIM, to seek G-d. Yitro's point is that there is a lack of civility among the disputing individuals which must be handled BEFORE they can pursue Knowledge of G-d. This interlude about civil justice can teach us that good interpersonal relations allows us to really benefit from Matan Torah. Similarly, DERECH ERETZ KODMA LATORAH.

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

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

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

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

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

Here begins the Torah reading for Shavuot morning

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

### **Worth repeating...**

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

After settling in at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moshe ascends to G-d (whatever that really means) and G-d tells him what he is to say to the women and men (sequence is intentional and based on the analysis of the terms Beit Yaakov and then Bnei Yisrael). A clear connection is made between G-d's having taken us out of Egypt and

His taking us to Him as His Chosen People - with the condition that we follow Him and His Torah. It is true that a Jew is a Jew regardless of his keeping the Torah or not, but it is clear that G-d has always demanded of us that we be committed to Torah and Mitzvot in order for our relationship with Him to be mutual and actively positive from both sides.

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

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

**SDT:** G-d tells Moshe that the People

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

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

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

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

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

[S> 20:2 (5)] What we call the first two commandments (or sayings, statements) are combined in a single parsha of 5 p'sukim. They can be seen as two sides of the same coin. You must believe in G-d; you may not believe in other gods... Some Chumashim consider the ANOCHI pasuk and LO YIHYEH... to be a single pasuk. In

Taamei HaElyon they are definitely joined into a single pasuk.

## MitzvaWatch

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

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

[S> 20:7 (1)] The third commandment prohibits swearing in vain [30,L62 20:7]. This is defined as (1) swearing to the truth of something that is obviously true and well-known - e.g. that the Sun is hot; (2) to swear in denial of an obvious truth - that the Moon is made of cheese (interestingly, this is not considered a lie or a false oath, since - hopefully - everyone knows that the Moon is not made of cheese. Only when the truth of a matter is unknown do we use the term lie and false oath. A vain oath is just as serious as a false one, so this

distinction is largely academic, but it emphasizes the seriousness of being flippant in regard to swearing.); (3) to swear to violate the Torah - e.g. that one will eat pork. Such an oath is immediately void since we are considered to have taken a prior oath (at Sinai) to not eat pork. Hence, the oath is in vain and is a disrespectful use of G-d's name; (4) to swear to do something that is impossible - e.g. to stay awake for a full week. The common denominator of these types of vain oaths is that they all "cheapen" the use of G-d's name and threaten the smooth functioning of society which often must rely on the seriousness of a real oath.

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

[P> 20:8 (4)] Commandment #4 deals with Shabbat and contains the positive mitzva to remember the Shabbat with Kiddush [31, A155 20:8], and the prohibition of all manner of Melacha, specific categories of creative activities [32, L320 20:10]. The mitzva of ZACHOR includes saying Kiddush as Shabbat enters, and Havdala as Shabbat leaves. (Officially, K&H are said in davening as a fulfillment of the Torah command, and again with wine, in fulfillment of a Rabbinic command. It's a

bit more complicated than that, but this is the basic idea.) Prohibitions of Melacha are divided into 39 categories, each of which contains other related activities, usually with the same goal. E.g., PLANTING is one of the 39 categories; watering, pruning, fertilizing all help the growth of plants and are TOLADOT of PLANTING, and are also considered Torah violations of equal seriousness to the parent melacha, Planting.

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

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

[S> 20:13 (2/11)] Commandment #7 against ADULTERY [35,L347 20:13] is the prohibition of having relations with a married woman, but as a "chapter heading" it also points to the other forbidden relations.

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

header of many mitzvot in the Torah.

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

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

[S> 20:13 (11/15)] specifies the prohibition of coveting one's fellow's wife, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that is his.

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

[S> 20:15 (4)] The People are awestruck by the supernatural phenomena of the Sinai experi-

ence and they keep their distance. They ask Moshe to tell them what G-d wants rather than hearing His Voice directly. After the second statement, the People panicked and asked Moshe to tell them what G-d wants, so that they would not hear "G-d's voice" directly. G-d agreed, on the condition that we listen to the word of the true prophet who speaks in G-d's name.

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

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

Parallel to the Torah's account of the awesome experience at Sinai, this passage from Yeshayahu describes his first awe-inspiring vision of angels proclaiming Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh. Both sedra and haftara present us with "visions" of G-d's awe, majesty, and holiness. Also, in the sedra, G-d tells us that we will be to Him a kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation. In the haftara we see a model of K'dusha (the angels), and

also a glimpse of a potential Moshiach.

## Divrei Menachem

Parshat Yitro describes Yitro's emotional rendezvous with Moshe whereby he sought out Moshe in the wilderness in order to, "hearken to the words of Torah" (Rashi).

From the narrative we gain insight into both Divine and human perceptions of the "other", as the two prominent individuals are about to meet. The Torah recalls that Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, came with Moshe's sons and wife to meet Moshe (Sh'mot 18:5). However, in the very next verse the family order is transposed when Yitro himself tells Moshe that he, Moshe's father-in-law, has come to him with his wife and her two sons.

Citing the Midrash, the Orach Chaim explains that when Yitro addressed Moshe he put himself down by imploring Moshe to meet him, if not for his sake, then for the sake of his wife; and then for the sake of his children. The Torah narrative, however, juxtaposed Yitro first with Moshe's children in recognition of Yitro's humility, yet initially called him "The father-in-law of Moshe" to instruct us that Yitro deserved honor just by virtue of his relationship to Moshe.

No wonder, then, that our commentators agree that it was Moshe who took the first step in the reunion of embracing his father-in-law.

## VEBBE REBBE

**QUESTION:** *I toveled a big pot in the mikveh on a sideways angle. Some bubbles came out, but I know that an air pocket remained. Do I have to redo the tevilla?*

**ANSWER:** The mishna (Mikva'ot 10:1) says that if one puts a kli (vessel) into a mikveh upside down, it is an invalid tevilla. This is due to the air pocket that prevents water from coming in full contact with all surfaces of the vessel. While this seems to invalidate your tevilla, a further look shows that matters are not so simple.

The Kiryat Sefer (Mikva'ot 3) is unsure whether the above problem is that the water must come over the entire kli, in which case there is a Torah-level problem. The other possibility is that the problem is chatzitza (something that separates between the water and the object that requires tevilla). Regarding chatzitza there are two main parameters: whether it covers most of the object; whether one is makpid (one does not want to leave the chatzitza there indefinitely). When both factors are stringent, there is a Torah-level problem; when one factor is stringent, there is a rabbinic problem (Eruvin 4b). If the problem is that an air pocket is a chatzitza, since water touches the whole outside and some of the inside, the problem is at worst rabbinic and one must assume that it is considered makpid.

First, let us see if it is possible to

require that the water touches the whole kli. If so, how could a chatzitza on a minority of the kli be fine from the Torah and permitted if one leaves it there forever? One approach is that in such cases, the chatzitza is batel to (undistinguishable from) the body or object, and it is as if the water touches everything (Sidrei Tahara, Yoreh Deah 198:1). However, the more convincing approach is that the water is required to touch only the majority of the surface, as long as the whole object is submerged and thus enveloped in water, and one has to deal with the issue of chatzitza (Chazon Ish, YD 95:3; see Badei Hashulchan 198:27).

According to the second approach, one could ask if something as "ethereal" as air can be a chatzitza. There seems to be a machloket (dispute) whether something porous is a chatzitza. On one hand, mishnayot (see Mikvaot, ch. 9) indicate that liquid objects on a surface are not a chatzitza, whereas their dried-up counterparts are. Yet, the mishna (Mikva'ot 10:6) says that tevilla on a barrel full of a not water-like liquid is invalid, and thus liquid must be a chatzitza. Tosafot (Zevachim 78b) says that a little liquid (the former cases) is permeable, whereas a barrel full is not (see Bi'ur Halacha to OC 161:1). Others say that thick liquids are not considered permeable, and the reason some liquids are not a problem is that they are not considered makpid (Shach, Yoreh Deah 198:19; see Rama, YD 198:14). If so, an air pocket, which is not permeable when the kli is at certain angles, seems problematic.

At this point, any way we understand the mishna opposing upside-down tovelling should render the tevilla in question invalid. Yet, the Shulchan Aruch (YD 202:6) says that if the kli is somewhat wide, the tevilla is valid because water gets to its bottom. The Bach and Taz (ad loc.) argue that even wide pots can have air pockets, which experimentation and scientific analysis (we did both) corroborate. Perhaps Rav Yosef Karo assumed the following. There is not a need for water on the entire surface, and air does not function like a chatzitza. It is just that a type of tevilla that is not close to getting water throughout is not a proper tevilla. However, with a great width to height ratio, even when the angle is slightly off totally upside-down, water comes in fully, and it is easier for the water to get to any given spot with minimal swiveling. Thus, in those cases, it is considered a reasonable tevilla, and this likely applies to your case.

Since the simple reading of the sources indicates the tevilla was invalid, we suggest you to do tevilla again, but without a b'racha. If it is difficult, there is some room for leniency (including other reasons beyond our present scope).

## "OLEH CHADASH: 60 YEARS AGO" [2]

by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

In every country new immigrants have to go through procedures before they

can settle and become citizens. However, since everything about Israel was different than everywhere else, this transition too was very different for us. There was no long drawn out and involved bureaucratic chaos. Instead, we, together with the many other thousands of olim, were simply processed, under the watchful and idealistic, sometimes benevolent, eyes of Big Brother. Rapidly we made our declarations for citizenship, were medically examined for tuberculosis and cholera, were photographed and then issued with a teudat oleh.

Although there was supposed to be freedom of choice, one had to be careful to ensure that you were registered as a member of the religious Hapoel HaMizrachi trade union. If not, you were automatically in the Histadrut, secular general federation of trade unions; the former meant more difficulties in finding work, housing and everything else, but without either you simply did not exist. There was no problem with seeing that you got all your benefits, grants or loans, as there weren't any - except the iron bed frame and sochnut mattress. Years later, on leaving Israel for the first time, my application for a passport was delayed until I paid for the bed and repaid the small loan that some movement institution had received in my name.

The crown of the whole process was conscription into Tzahal, quick and relatively painless. Ben Gurion was creating a unified army; the left-wing Palmach was disbanded, the right wing Irgun was disarmed and there was a

saying that summed it all up: 'the whole people is an army'. Grounds for exemption, medical or other-wise, were practically non-existent, marks and insignia of rank minimal, disrespect for orders rife and chaos everywhere. It is probably impossible to describe the difference between the technologically sophisticated army of today and that of bolt-rifles from Czechoslovakia, miniature tanks from France, training without ammunition and maneuvers without gasoline. Only the most powerful weapon still remains - self-sacrifice, innovation and individualism with every Jew in business for himself.

Ideology was the very lifeblood of the country and through party affiliation, internal factions and religion, it became all pervasive. On this basis, land for settlement was allocated, budgets granted, housing projects constructed and banking and financial institutions established. Israel was probably the most left-wing country outside of the Soviet bloc; some leaders had opposed declaring the State fearing that the U.S.A. would not recognize us for that reason. However, our national penchant for discussion, machloket and argument meant that Israeli Red was splintered and divided into every shade, variety and nuance of leftism. Ludicrous as it now seems, families and relationships foundered on marginal differences of 'principle'; a kibbutz like Ein Charod split into five settlements living close to each other over issues like whether all members had to vote for the same party. However, devotion to the national ideal, a feeling of belonging to one extend

family and the pervading understanding of a common destiny brought about a unity, even if this required pilpul and intricate mental gymnastics to square all the ideologies.

Religious Jews did not form the bulk of the pre- and early state aliyot. Only two of the major Chassidic dynasties - Gur and Belz, were present; both with only a few followers. Considering yeshiva students a dying breed, the secularists agreed to the deferment of their military army service. Rav Kahaneman, was considered by all to be a visionary when he re-established Poninwetz yeshiva in Israel. There were only 2 or 3 yeshiva high schools and no yeshivot hesder. In the preponderantly secular society, the chief rabbinate and the dati-leumi party, then the dominant religious forces, adopted a policy of minimalistic standards, striving to make at least the public domain, religious.

However, it would be wrong to say that secularism meant being like all other nations. Almost everybody in Israeli society wanted to be Jewish, irrespective of how they defined this. So the secularist Golda Meir supported making intermarriage illegal, the Law of Return applies only to Jews and our chagim are the national holidays. Israelis have undertaken great risks, even given their lives, to save Jews and bring them home; they continue to do so. Israel's social and economic thought was and is still deeply affected by the Jewish value system, even if this is done unconsciously and often distorted. A founder of Zionist-socialism could write, "The community is our existence.

Torah has concretized in law that the land is not to be sold in perpetuity; Shmita and Yovel have established a system of equality and tranquility". *More to come...* □

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

## YITRO

### The Chosen People

She couldn't have been much more than 16 years old, but she was one of the toughest interviewers I have ever encountered.

I was part of a panel of several clergymen, and I was the only Jew on the panel. We were talking to a group of high school students about the role of religion in a democracy. As I recall, it was a presidential election year about two decades ago.

The young woman addressed me and asked, "Rabbi Weinreb, do you believe in democracy?" Of course, I answered, "Yes", and then commented on how Jews have benefited from democracy.

Then she continued, politely but tenaciously, "Then how can you believe that the Jews are a chosen people? Doesn't your religion teach that Jews are better than non-Jews, and that we are not all equal?"

I have certainly considered that question frequently in my own attempts to understand the concept of a chosen people. And I had been

confronted with her question before, but never so bluntly, and in such a straightforward manner.

Every year since that encounter, when this week's Torah portion, Yitro, comes around, I have given thought to that question and have pondered my response to it.

Simply put, I do believe that the Jews are a chosen people. I fail to see how any believing Jew can disregard the many passages in the Bible, the Talmud, and in our liturgy which declare our chosenness.

But I am also convinced that, although we are a chosen people, we are not a superior people. We are chosen by God to play a special role in history, and it is a role that assigns us duties and responsibilities rather than rights and privileges.

In my personal study of the Torah portion of two weeks ago, Bo, I came across a fascinating passage in the Mekhilta, an ancient rabbinical midrash. It reads:

"Until the land of Israel was chosen, all lands were fit for communication with God; once the land of Israel was chosen, the other lands were dismissed.

"Until Jerusalem was chosen, all of the land of Israel was fit for altars; once Jerusalem was chosen, the rest of the land of Israel was dismissed.

"Until the eternal Temple was chosen, all of Jerusalem was fit for the Divine presence; once the eternal Temple, was chosen, the rest of

Jerusalem was dismissed.

"Until Aaron was chosen, all of [the people of] Israel were qualified to be priests; once Aaron was chosen, the rest of Israel was dismissed.

"Until David was chosen all of [the people of] Israel were qualified to be King; once David was chosen, the rest of Israel was dismissed."

Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna, a 20th century sage whose writings I cherish, points out that once the land of Israel was chosen, the other lands of the earth were stripped of their sanctity. And likewise through-out the passage, the land of Israel outside Jerusalem, Jerusalem itself, Jews who were not Aaron's descendants and Jews who were not David's descendants were stripped of their former sanctity or qualifications.

But, Rabbi Sarna notes, the Jews are a chosen people, but the passage does not even mention their chosenness in contrast with non-Jews. Jews are chosen, but non-Jews are not dismissed, nor are they stripped of their specialness.

Rabbi Sarna insists that this is because all human beings are equally special to God. The Jews have their special role, but that does not diminish the relationship of the non-Jews to the Almighty.

To bolster his opinion, Rabbi Sarna turns to the famous passage in Ethics of the Fathers (3:18), in which Rabbi Akiva states:

"Beloved is a man, for he was

created in the image of God...

Beloved are Israel, for they were given a precious vessel (Torah)..."

Clearly, Rabbi Akiva affirms that all of mankind is precious to the Almighty. If the Jews are special, it is only because they have been given a distinctive mission and a unique set of tasks.

One source for the concept of the chosen people is to be found in this week's Torah portion:

"... Ye shall be My own treasure from among all peoples; for the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation..." (Sh'mot 19:5-6)

Detractors of the Jewish people, nay, detractors of the Bible, see the above phrases as chauvinistic, even racist.

How differently our own commentators view those phrases! Take, as but one example, the words of Rabbi Ovadiah S'forno, the Italian Jewish exegete:

"The entire human race is more precious to me than the lowly animals... but you will be my 'kingdom of priests' to help the human race understand and to teach it to call upon the Almighty in prayer and to worship Him in unison. That is the future role of Israel."

My response to my young interviewer so long ago may not have been precisely what I have written above. I certainly did not have these references at my fingertips then. But she captured the essence of my

response when she wrote in her school newspaper, from which I have reserved a clipping to this very day, the following words:

"The rabbi did not dodge my question. He is convinced that the Jews are a chosen people. But they are not a better people. They simply have their own job to do. And so too, all God's children have their job to do. And our job is to make this a better world... together."

Wherever she is now, she may have been the toughest interviewer I have ever faced. But she also understood me very well, certainly better than many others since, on this important question.

I am afraid that many of our coreligionists misunderstand the concept of a chosen people. It is high time to correct that misunderstanding. It is certainly time to become familiar with the role our faith expects us to play in the world. In the Ten Commandments, found in Yitro, God explicitly expects certain behaviors from us. It is most certainly time for us to conscientiously demonstrate these behaviors for all who are created in His image. □

## 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*

In the midst of all the wondrous events and inspirational statements that appear in this week's parsha, there are a few words that really stand out

(Sh'mot 19:5-6):

Hashem is speaking to Moshe, just before giving him instructions regarding how Bnei Yisrael should prepare to receive the Torah. He says: "And now, if you will surely listen to my voice and observe my covenant, you will be a special treasure (S'GULA) for Me among the nations of the world. You will be for me a kingdom of Kohanim (servers), and a holy nation."

Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi in his seminal work, "The Kuzari", speaks a lot about the uniqueness of Am Yisrael. He claims that every person is defined by three things; his heredity, his education, and his environment.

He explains that the uniqueness of the Jew is determined by the uniqueness of the above three determining factors.

The heredity of the Jewish people is unique - we are descended from the Avot and Imahot who, in turn, according to Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, inherited the greatest portion of the perfection of Adam, the first man, who was created by the hands of HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself. The education of Am Yisrael is also unique, they were the only nation to accept the Torah, which provides the basis for their education.

What about the environment? A good environment is one which gives the best possible opportunity for growth and proper development. A delicate plant often needs to be in a protected place, like a hothouse. Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi uses this metaphor of a

hothouse to describe Eretz Yisrael, which is the only place wherein a Jew can live and perform all the mitzvot.

We learn from "The Kuzari" that Am Yisrael can only achieve their potential of being a S'GULA, a MAMLECHET KKOHANIM, and a GOI KADOSH when living in Eretz Yisrael according to the Torah. This is surely as true today as it was in the time of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi.

Rebbetzin Pearl Borow, Yerushalayim

## *Praying with Passion*

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

*Excerpted and reprinted with permission of the author*

## **P'sukei d'Zimra: Hodu** Praise Is Our Purpose

וַאֲמָרוּ הוֹשִׁיעֵנו אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְקַבְּצֵנוּ  
וְהַצִּילֵנוּ מִן הַגּוֹיִם, לְהַדוֹת לְשֵׁם  
קְדוֹשְׁךָ, לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח בְּתֵהֶלְתְּךָ.  
בְּרוּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד  
הָעוֹלָם, וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל הָעַם, אָמֵן, וְהִלֵּל לְה'.

**Meaning:** translation...

Say: "Save us, God of our salvation; gather us and rescue us from the nations, **to acknowledge Your holy name and glory in Your praise.** Blessed is HaShem, God of Israel, from This World to eternity." And let all the people say "Amen" and

"Praise HaShem."

**Theme:**

An essential concept of the prayer

## **The Opportunity to Praise Hashem**

Thank and praise Him endlessly for His kindness.

**Insight:** Deeper meanings...

## **A Higher Reason to Pray**

It's natural for a believing Jew to pray to Hashem to fulfill his needs and rescue him from his troubles. It's a basic aspect of EMUNA: when we pray to Hashem regarding these matters, we show that we know He controls everything and is the source of everything we need. Our prayers confirm our sense of Hashem's presence and build our feeling of closeness to Him. In fact, this is the very purpose of the challenges Hashem puts in our lives.

But what place do prayers of praise have in the scheme of things? Does Hashem need our praise? Are we trying to pander to Him before we come in with our big requests?

Praise does not benefit Hashem. It benefits us, by bringing us to think about all that Hashem does for us, putting these thoughts into words and letting them have an impact on our hearts. By acknowledging Hashem's kindness, we instill in ourselves the certainty that He cares for us and loves us. It is another route, a gentler and more pleasant route, to coming close

to Hashem. In addition, through our praise and love, we make Hashem beloved in the world, which is the mission for which He chose the Jewish people.

By reciting L'HODOT L'SHEIM KODSHECHA... BIT-HILATECHA, we reaffirm that we should praise Hashem for the good that we receive.

### **Visualize:**

Images that bring the prayer to life

### **Just to Get Closer**

A child falls down and skins his knee. Soon he is weeping on his father's lap while the father cleans the cut and puts a bandage over it. The father soothes the child. The tears quickly dry up and the child scrambles off his father's lap to continue playing. But before he runs off, he turns to his father, gives him a hug and says, "Thank you, Daddy. You made it all better!"

It's a normal scenario. Any child in trouble or pain would turn to his parents for help, and once the help has come, the child would feel grateful.

Now consider a different scenario. A father is sitting at the kitchen table drinking his coffee. His young child walks in, says good morning and then snuggles up on his father's lap and says, "I love you, Daddy. You always keep me safe and make things good for me."

The second child is not moved by need. He is moved by pure love - by the desire to reaffirm his closeness with his father. While the first child's

expression of gratitude is appropriate and valuable, the second is priceless.

When we pray to Hashem out of need, we are indeed coming close to Him. We are responding appropriately to the challenges He has sent us, which are after all only a means to prod us to reach out to Him.

When we praise Hashem from sheer gratitude, however, without any pressing need to motivate us, we go beyond the first kind of prayer. We testify that our only real, pressing need is to reaffirm our closeness to Him and revel in His presence.

### **Try this:**

The words of this prayer acknowledge that Hashem has saved us and rescued us, giving us reason to praise him. When you next say these words in davening, keep in mind that you are praising Hashem for saving your ancestors from the ravages of their times as well. ☞

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

R' Yechezkel Abramsky served as the London Beit Din for about twenty years, and in that time he made sure that the laws of kashrut were scrupulously observed by all those who sold meat. One of the butchers, who did not want to go along with the demands made by the Beit Din, went to court to force the issue. He claimed that the restrictions

placed by the Beit Din impinged on his basic freedom, and that he wanted the right to determine for himself what was kosher and what was not.

R' Yechezkel himself went to court to defend the Beit Din. In a very strongly argued statement, he noted that the primary purpose of democracy is to defend the truth. Now, when it comes to kashrut, the only ones who can truly make a decision as to whether something is kosher or not must be a Rav. For a person to sell food which he claims is kosher, but for which there is no rabbinic backing, he said, was to lie to the people who bought that meat, because they expected meat purported to be kosher to maintain certain standards. To ask democracy to overthrow the requirement of rabbinic supervision would be a travesty, because democracy would then be used to propagate a lie.

In the end, the judge, taken by the cogently argued argument by R' Yechezkel, dismissed the case.

From "**OzTorah**"  
by **Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple**  
AO RFD, Emeritus Rabbi of  
the Great Synagogue, Sydney  
www.oztorah.com

## **Yitro's 7 names**

People's names in the Bible all have a special meaning. In the case of Yitro, there are seven names and seven meanings, according to rabbinic tradition.

His two main names are connected with a root that means "additional" - he was "Yitro" because he performed extra good deeds and "Yeter" because he caused extra texts to enter the Torah. He was "Chovav" because he was beloved of God, "Re'u'el" because he was God's friend, "Chever" because he was a close associate of the Almighty, "Puti'el" because he abandoned idolatry, and "Keni" because he was zealous for God.

Many people these days acquire their names just because of what is fashionable at the time or because their parents liked the sound of a particular name. Biblical parents were more creative and thought hard about what they wanted their child's name to express. In modern Israel this type of creativity has come to the fore again, and sometimes there are names that are specially coined for the occasion. It can be a good idea. We need to encourage parents everywhere to invent names with more than mere sound to recommend them. Of course in many cases the task has already been done by family tradition and the name of a precious loved one is perpetuated in a new generation.

From **"OzTorah"**  
by **Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple**  
AO RFD, Emeritus Rabbi of  
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## The shape of the Ten Commandments

The tablets of the Ten Commandments, according to rabbinic tradition, were prepared at the eve of Creation, antedating history and humanity and independent of time and place. They were hewn from the sapphire Throne of Glory and were therefore majestic, splendid and of Divine origin. The fact that there were two of them symbolised the harmony between man's double duty, with the first tablet representing duty to God and the second, duty to man. This symmetry was made possible by having five commandments on each tablet but required the fifth (respect for parents) to be interpreted as a duty to God.

No one, however, is certain as to the exact shape of the tablets. The Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds record conflicting traditions. The Babylonian view was that the tablets were an Ama by an Ama square, whereas the Jerusalem envisaged them as oblong, an Ama by a Zeret (half an Ama).

Neither thought of them as having arched or domed tops, though this is the way they have generally been depicted for centuries. They entered Christian art in Italy, where they had the form of two rectangles. According to GB Sarfatti they acquired an arched top due to the influence of the diptych, a register folded

into two leaves with curved tops which was used by the Romans to list the names of magistrates and later by the Catholic Church to record the names of deceased people commemorated with oblations. This design spread to many branches of religious art and architecture and made its way into the arched windows of abbeys and churches.

As we can see from a statue in Lincoln Cathedral and from other contemporary sources, even old Haggadot, the Jewish badge in medieval England took the form of the tablets of the Decalogue.

Jewish communities themselves began to depict the Ten Commandments in about the 13th century and the Decalogue eventually became a wide-spread feature of synagogue buildings, almost always with the rounded shape introduced by the Christian artists of the Middle Ages.

These days some Jewish artists prefer the square or rectangular shape known in the time of the Talmud, but this is still the exception rather than the rule. The Ten Commandments figure in many areas of Jewish ritual art, ranging from Ark curtains to tallit clips. They often figure on Torah breastplates and Chanukiyot. Almost everywhere they top the synagogue ark.

Though there is a general view that the characteristic Jewish symbol is the Magen David or Shield of David, the Decalogue is more ancient and has greater authenticity. Its theological significance lies in its balancing of the inner and outer dimensions of a Jew's being.

## ParshaPix explanations

- 🔪 Hearing ear of VAYISHMA YITRO, and Yitro heard...
- 🔪 B"H was said by Yitro when he heard all the things that G-d had done for Israel. From that we are taught that one makes a bracha on miracles
- 🔪 The scales represent the justice system, Yitro's suggestions, Moshe's response, etc.
- 🔪 Yitro's advice included the assignment of "captains" of groups of 1000, 100, 50, and 10 - represented by the Roman numerals M,C,L,X.
- 🔪 Bnei Yisrael's arrival at Har Sinai is described by the word VAYI-CHAN, as Rashi puts it, we were like one person with one heart. That's the graphic under the ear.
- 🔪 The Shofar is one of the symbols of the Sinai experience, as we more than mention on Rosh HaShana.
- 🔪 The washing machine is for the people to clean their clothes during the preparatory days for Matan Torah
- 🔪 Wine cup is for Kiddush (Zachor)
- 🔪 and the negation circle is for the prohibition of Melacha, including writing, watering plants, digging, sewing, building.
- 🔪 Do not steal (the Xed out thief)

- 🔪 and do not go up to the Mizbei'ach with steps (the negated ladder) are two other prohibitions in the sedra.
- 🔪 Volcano represents Har Sinai smoking from the fire of G-d's presence.
- 🔪 An angel flew to the Heavenly Mizbei'ach and picked up a glowing coal in a pair of tongs. He then touched the coal to Yeshayahu's lips, representing a purifying process that would allow the prophet to speak on behalf of G-d
- 🔪 MEM SOFIT, which is better called a "Closed" MEM, appears in the haftara in the middle of a WORD, rather than at the end, where we are used to seeing that kind of MEM
- 🔪 Three dots and a short vertical line are the difference in the 4-commandment pasuk between the two sets of TROP-notes
- 🔪 Max Baer Jr. played Jethro (Yitro) for 9 years on the Beverly Hillbillies
- 🔪 I-18 is LOW on a roulette wheel, tea, saw as in LO TISA, Dibra #3
- 🔪 Upper right: take two wings of the eagle and the four NHL Detroit Redwings and you get six wings, as in Yeshayahu's vision of the heavenly angels, as we read in the haftara of Parshat Yitro.
- 🔪 Many hospitals are named Mt. Sinai, as the one pictured in Manhattan
- 🔪 Two different symbols for UV, ultra-violet light or radiation. In

Hebrew, AL-SEGOLI. Feminine form for the color violet is SEGULA, as in G-d's promise that we will be for Him the AM SEGULA above all other nations - hence, ULTRA- SEGULA.

- Above Jethro and to the right is a montage of characters from Scholastic Press's Goosebumps series... When Yitro came to Moshe, having heard about the Splitting of the Sea and the battle against Amalek (and maybe about Matan Torah), Moshe detailed all that had happened to Bnei Yisrael. The Torah describes Yitro's reaction with the words VAYICHAD YITRO. Rashi says that the plain meaning of the word is that Yitro rejoiced because of all the things he heard. Rashi gives a second possible explanation of the word VAYICHAD. That Yitro's skin erupted in goosebumps. A nervous or frightened reaction, perhaps, to what happened to the Egyptians, to whom he had been allied and with whom he possibly identified. From here, our Sages tell us, we learn to be extremely sensitive to the convert, who has changed his life completely by becoming Jewish, but still has memories and feelings about his former life.
- Ehud Barak is for the BARAKIM that are mentioned in the relating of the Sinai experience.
- Tommy Lapid, similarly, is for the LAPIDIM in the same description.
- The can of bug spray represents one specific brand, whose name is a word

that occurs in the sedra twice and two other times in the Torah, besides 9 more times in the rest of Tanach - RAID!

- The fat heart is a reference in the haftara.
- The words at the top and bottom of the left-hand side of the ParshaPix was a TTriddle last year. This year, we will tell you (the one reading these words) and you can challenge your children/grandchildren/guests with this TTriddle. Sweet, salty, sour and bitter are four tastes - T'AMIM. Two of them are TAAMEI HA-ELYON, the upper notes, and two are TAAMEI HATACHTON, the lower notes. Most of the Torah-reading world use the TAAMEI HA-ELYON (which treats the Asaeret HaDibrot as 10 statements) whenever the Aseret HaDibrot are read in public. Parshat Yitro, Shavuot morning, and Parshat Va'etchanan. Minhag Yerushalayim is to read them with TAAMEI HATACHTON for Parshat Yitro and Va'etchanan, and use TAAMEI HA-ELYON on Shavuot morning only. Taamei Ha-Tachton treats the Aseret HaDibrot as the 13 p'sukim they constitute, reading them like all the rest of the Torah. This helps us keep the Ten Commandments in perspective as part of the whole G-d-given Torah.

## The Puah Institute

*for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha*

### Old Trees, New Trees – Proof for Ovarian Transplants

Last week we discussed a historical [if true] medical report of an ovarian transplant recorded by an American doctor in 1906. This report gave rise to a fascinating rabbinic debate on the halachic ramifications of the procedure. As mentioned previously, the question posed to the poskim of the time was somewhat ambiguous and led them to understand that it was actually a transplant of the uterus, and not the ovaries, that had been performed. Thus most of the answers and proofs that the rabbis gave are not related to our question of ovarian transplants.

One of the responsa of the time, however, may be used to answer our halachic question: Who is considered the mother in the case of an ovarian transplant? Rabbi Binyamin Aryeh HaKohen Weiss, replying to the question posed in the Hungarian halachic journal Vayelaket Yosef, cited the Gemara in Sotah. There we read of a new tree, less than three years old, which is grafted to an older tree that is more than four years old. According to the laws of ORLAH, fruit of the first three years may not be eaten; therefore, the fruit of the young sapling would be forbidden. However, since the new tree would now halachically be considered part of the older tree - which has already produced fruit for more than four years - any fruit that grows from it subsequent to the grafting would not be

liable to the laws of ORLAH.

Rabbi Weiss claimed that the example of a grafted tree could be used as a proof that transplanted reproductive organs are considered part of the host's body; therefore, the transplant recipient would be considered the mother of a child born after such a procedure. While Rabbi Weiss may have mistakenly understood that the uterus had been transplanted, the same proof may be used for ovarian transplants. Thus, though the original ovary came from one woman, after it had been transplanted it would be regarded as part of the body of the recipient; the recipient would be considered the mother. This same proof has been used in recent years regarding the question of maternity in the case of ova donations, as well. It could be argued, though, that this analogy is not valid, since egg donations are more comparable to a case of one who grafted the fruit itself onto an old tree; that fruit would be liable to the laws of ORLAH.

Though Rabbi Weiss's proof seems valid in the case of ovarian transplants, and the recipient of the ovary seems clearly to be the mother, it is not quite that simple – more, next time.

## Parsha Points to Ponder

### YITRO

1) The Torah records that Yitro HEARD ALL THE G-D DID FOR MOSHE AND ISRAEL HIS NATION (18:1). Then the Torah relates that Moshe told Yitro ALL THAT G-D DID TO PAR'O AND TO EGYPT (18:8). What did Moshe add to what Par'o already heard and why was it only after Moshe's report that Yitro declared NOW I KNOW THAT HASHEM IS GREATER THAN ALL GODS (18:11)?

2) The Torah records that the Jewish people declared that ALL THAT G-D SPEAKS WE WILL DO and that MOSHE BROUGHT THE WORDS OF THE NATION BACK TO G-D (19:8). The Torah then relates that G-D told Moshe that He would speak to him in a way which would enable all the people to hear G-D speaking to him and that MOSHE TOLD G-D WHAT THE NATION SAID (19:9). What did Moshe tell G-D in this second verse? Didn't he already relay the words of the people to G-D in the previous verse?

3) What does the Torah mean when it relates that MOSHE WOULD SPEAK AND G-D WOULD ANSWER HIM WITH SOUND (19:19)? Wasn't it the other way around with G-D speaking and Moshe then teaching the nation what G-D had just said?

**Parsha Points to Ponder** by  
**Rabbi Dov Lipman**

**SDT** And he bowed to (and kissed) him. Who to whom. Rashi says that we wouldn't know except that it says ISH L'REI-EIHU, and Moshe is called ISH. Ktav Sofer asks: But Yitro is also called ISH? Look at the end of the pasuk in which Moshe is called ISH, says the Ktav Sofer. It speaks of Moshe being exceedingly humble. Certainly, then, he was the one to bow first.

## To, Two, Too... and TU

The title does not have much to do with what follows, but we thought it was a cute idea, based on Hebrew's contribution to the list of the homophones (same sound, different spellings; these can also be called homonyms because they sound alike, but homonyms include words that are also spelled the same - fair and fair are homonyms but not homophones; to, too, and two are both). All besides the point.

The point is illustrated by the name of the current month (no, not January) when it stands by itself, compared to when it is prefixed, as in the common name of the Rosh HaShana of Trees.

SH'VAT, the eleventh month of the year, counting from Nissan. The SH'VA under the SHIN is a SH'VA NA (as are all first letter of the word SH'VAs). The apostrophe in our transliteration is to remind the reader that the SHIN should not blend with the V sound of the BET without a DAGESH that follows it. Not SHVAT, but SH'VAT - and not SHEVAT either. That would indicated too much of a vowel sound for the SH'VA NA. It should get a delicate, brief vowel sound, and no more. This, in contrast to the Englishized Yiddish word for "to sweat" - SHVITZ. In this word, the consonant sounds of the SH and the V are blended. That works in English. Not in Hebrew. And you should know that although it comes from Yiddish, SHVITZ is recognized as an English word (some dictionaries label it slang - others do not), not only meaning to sweat, but also "A traditional Jewish steambath of Eastern European origin". In Hebrew, it also means "to boast". But, we digress... again.

When SH'VAT has a prefix, as it does in T"U BiSHVAT, the SH'VA under the SHIN changes to a SH'VA NACH. In this case, the BET prefix, which would usually have a SH'VA under it, changes to Bi, with a CHIRIK under the BET. Because this CHIRIK is CHASEIR (not followed by a YUD, which makes it a stonger vowel), the Bi captures the SHIN/SH'VA (so to speak) and forms a closed syllable BiSH. This is followed by the second syllable VAT (the DAGESH is NOT returned to the BET, even though it now follows a SH'VA NACH - but that's another discussion). SH'VAT, TU BiSHVAT.

This change in SH'VA from NA to NACH is fairly common. By the way, in neither case (NA or NACH) are the SHIN and VET blended - and that's the point.

Have a good one, hug a tree (better yet, plant one) and enjoy a fruit or two (or more - some have the custom of eating 15 fruits on TU BiSHVAT, some even more).

אַרְבֵּי חֲמֵשׁ וְשֵׁעֵרָה וְגִפְנֵי וּתְנַחֲנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ-יִתְּ שָׁמֶן וְדִבְשֵׁ: זְבֵרִים חֹם

The five fruits among the Seven Species are not ranked (for priority as to which gets the honor of the B'racha when you are having more than one type) by their order in this pasuk, but rather in their position following the word ERETZ (either one). Thus, OLIVE is first, followed by DATE (one and two after the second ERETZ), then GRAPE, FIG, and POMEGRANATE (three, four and five after the first ERETZ)

## Maharal on the Sedra

### **What did Yitro Hear - the Nigla and the Nistar**

**Sh'mot 18:1** - And Yitro, Priest of Midian, father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that ELOKIM had done to Moshe and to Israel his people, that Hashem had brought Israel out of Egypt.

**Rashi:** What particular news did he hear? The splitting of the Reed Sea and the battle with Amalek.

**Gur Arye:** Some event or events convinced Yitro, the high priest of the many gods, to abandon polytheism and accept the one God. Three opinions are presented in the gemara [Z'vachim 116a]

R' Yehoshua - the battle with Amalek

R' Elazar Hamodai - the giving of the Torah

R' Eliezer- the splitting of the sea.

Miracles in general, like the plagues, which occurred over an entire year [Eidayot 2:10] must not have convinced him, for why should this moment be the proper time to come? Besides, the plagues were "private" and limited in scope, not meant to destroy Egypt, referred to as a "finger of God." They never approached the status of all-encompassing miracles. It is known that idolaters relate private powers to their gods, for one is assigned to fire and another to water, etc. Yitro came at this juncture, finally convinced of the Omnipotence of the true God. Rashi attributes this to the miracles at the sea and during the battle with Amalek,

rejecting the opinion of R' Elazar Hamodai. R' Yehoshua is understood to have added the battle with Amalek to the splitting of the sea, and Rashi goes with this opinion.

What made the splitting of the Reed Sea such a compelling event? Recall that "the waters were split" [14:22], not just the sea, as Rashi explains, "all the waters in the world". Even "the Yardein turned backwards [T'hilim 114:3, Hallel]; even, one must assume, the waters of Midian, where Yitro must have taken notice that none of the other gods he knew could disrupt nature like this in an all-encompassing worldwide scale. This is R' Eliezer's opinion.

Why should this have not been enough to convince him? It is because he had to know that "Hashem is Elokim in the heavens above" as well as "the world below" [D'varim 4:39]. During the battle, Amalek knew the propitious time to defeat Israel would have been at night, but Hashem caused the order of the heavens to stand still [Rashi, 17:12], an all-encompassing worldwide event that demonstrated Hashem's power over all known existence, the heavens as well as the earth. This is R' Yehoshua's position.

What then was the logic of Rabbi Elazar Hamodai? Why did he require Yitro to know about the giving of the Torah? The answer is there is a world beyond the upper and lower spheres, for the Torah's level is above the heavens, as it is written [Kohélet 1:3], "What does a man profit from all the hard work that he labors under the sun?" The rabbis explain [Shabbat 30b] that he does profit from Torah, which is above the sun. It

was not known that He was Elokim and there was none but He even above the heavens above until He gave Torah, and said to them, "I am the HaShem your God...", at which time, the rabbis said [Rashi, D'varim 4:35], He split the heavens and the heavens of the upper heavens and showed them there was none beside Him, as it is written, "You taught [us] to know that Hashem, He is Elokim, no other except Him." Yitro needed to know that beyond power over heaven and earth, Hashem had power over the third world, the world of Torah, the World to Come, Giving Israel the Torah showed that even there, there is none but He. This is the [rejected] opinion of R' Elazar Hamodai.

The three worlds correspond to the three "holies" in Yeshayahu's vision, as it is written there, the seraphs called to each other and said "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the world is filled with His Honor" [Isaiah 6:3]. This is the prayer with which we establish the sanctity of Hashem in the repetition of the Amida and in the Sh'ma blessings. When we repeat this Kedusha prayer at the end of the morning prayers, we translate in Aramaic the rendition of Yonatan ben Uziel: "Holy in the high heavens above, the House of His Divine Presence; Holy on the earth where He works His powers; Holy forever and ever.

*Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhn*



Last issue's (B'SHALACH) TTTriddles:

[1] GOSANGOSAN

GOSAN is NASOG backwards, or NASOG ACHOR. That is the move of the accent of a word from the last syllable (MILRA) to the next to the last syllable (MIL-EIL). It happens to a word that is followed in the same phrase by a word that is either a single syllable or a two-syllable word that is accented MIL-EIL. In Birchot HaTorah we have the phrases BACHAR BANU and NATAN LANU. Although ba-CHAR and na-TAN are each MILRA words, when they are followed by BA-nu and LA-nu respectively - each of which is MIL-EIL - their accent "retreats" (NAGOR ACHOR) and we get BA-char BA-nu and NA-tan LA-nu. Similarly, he shall not eat of it - referring to certain people who may not eat of the Korban Pesach - LO YO-chal BO. Although the word is yo-CHAL, before BO in the same phrase, the accent shifts back a syllable. In the second bracha of the Amida - uMI DO-meh LACH (not do-MEH). NASOG ACHOR is not without exceptions, but it is a generally applied rule. Very rarely, do we find a double NASOG ACHOR (in TTTriddlese, a GOSANGOSAN). One such word is found in Shirat HaYam (which is why this was a TTTriddle for B'shalach). ne-er-MU becomes NE-er-mu before the word MA-yim.

[2] Emperor Taizong of Song and Shabbat Shira?

The Song Dynasty ruled China from 960 to 1279ce. Taizong was its second emperor (of 18), succeeding his older brother and reigning from 976-997. Aside from the obvious connection of Song to Song for Shabbat Shira, this emperor was born in 939ce, matching the TT number for this year's Shabbat Shira.

[3] The thousand p'sukim

The thousand = HA-ELEF in Hebrew. Gimatriya of HA-ELEF is 5+1+30+80 = 116. So the TTriddle actually says 116 p'sukim. The correct Jeopardy question for that is "How many p'sukim are there in B'shalach?"

[4] Sh'mot to Esther, a verbal connection between ancestor and descendant

The last portion of B'shalach is the account of the attack by Amalek against Bnei Yisrael. This 9-pasuk portion is the Torah reading for Purim. It begins VAYAVO AMALEK. So it says in the book of Sh'mot. In the book of Esther, we find the same verb (verbal connection - get it?) used for the descendant of Amalek, as in VAYO HAMAN. Those words are read with exaggerated emphasis (ZARQA-SEGOL lends itself to stretching, but the phrase invites special emphasis because it marks the beginning of the end for Haman and his plot.

[5] B'nana, VAnilla, and no topping

SHIN-LAMED-CHET, to send. Three sedra names have that root. B'SHALACH, VAYISHLACH, and the one with no topping, SH'LACH.

[6] Lavan, N'vayot, Nachshon, Aharon

ACHOT, sister of Rivka is referred to as ACHOT LAVAN. Machalat (a.k.a. Ba-s'mat) daughter of Yishmael is further identified as sister of N'vayot. Aharon's wife is Elisheva bat Aminadav, sister of Nachshon. And in Parshat B'shalach, Miriam is called a NEVI'A (prophetess) and is identified as sister of Aharon.

[7] Same rule about a month later

One of the rules concerning the manna was that the people were told not to leave over any for the morning. This came a bit more than a month out of Egypt. On the night of the Exodus, the people offered the Korban Pesach. They had the same rule - not to leave over any of KP for the morning.

[8] From Trigona minima to Megachile pluto and the subject of fulminology

There are nearly 20,000 known species of bees - in 7 to 9 recognized families (obviously, there is a dispute on the family issue). The smallest bee is the Trigona minima, a stingless bee whose workers are about as long as the uppercase T in Trigona is tall. The largest bee, Megachile pluto, indigenous to Indonesia, is big enough to cover the TTRIDD and part of the L in the heading of this column (the one in the jigsaw puzzle piece font). And its wingspan will exceed the full TTriddles of the header. Females, that is. The males are significantly smaller.

[9] V'NI'EIR PAR'O V'CHEILO V'YAM SUF ki l'olam chasdo - what's the special connection here?

This pasuk comes from T'hilim 136, with 26 p'sukim, all of which end with KI L'OLAM CHASDO. The first part of the focus of this TTriddle (pasuk 15), "And overthrew Par'o and his army in Yam Suf" comes from Parshat B'shalach. The gimatriya of that phrase is 939, the number of the Parshat B'shalach 5771 issue of Torah Tidbits. Just for your further information... Aside from the 26 p'sukim of T'hilim 136, the phrase KI L'OLAM CHASDO occurs in Tanach another 15 times. Yirmiyahu has one, Ezra has one, Divrei HaYamim has 6 occurrences, and T'hilim has seven others. And now you know!

[10] One corny Unexplained in the ParshaPix

Tee is most familiar from golf, but there is a form of baseball that is usually played by young kids as an introduction to "regular" baseball, known as T-ball or Tee ball. Pictured in the ParshaPix of B'shalach was the tee used to support the ball that a kid hits off of it with a bat, without his having to yet swing at pitches. That piece of equipment can be called a Tee-pole, as in TIPOL ALEIHEM EIMATA VAFACHAD... from Sh'mot 15:16 in AZ YASHIR. This pasuk (or part of it) is said six times in Kiddush L'vana, with TIPOL as the first word of three times and the last word of the other three.

**YITRO** Adapted from

**Unlocking the Torah Text**

by **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

## A Healthy Distance

**Context:** The physical posture of the Israelites during the Revelation at Sinai is clearly delineated in advance when, preparatory to Matan Torah, God instructs Moshe: "Set a boundary for the people roundabout saying, 'Beware of ascending the mountain or touching its edge; whoever touches the mountain shall certainly die...'"

This commandment of hagbala (setting a boundary), however, will not be divinely enforced. Instead, God commands the Israelites to execute anyone who crosses the mandated perimeter.

**Questions:** Even the most familiar scenes of our history warrant critical assessment. Why is the moment of closest contact between man and God marked by divinely mandated distance, on pain of death? Why must the Israelites remain at the foot of Mount Sinai during Revelation? What are the lessons to be learned from this God-orchestrated scene at Sinai?

### Approaches:

**A.** A fascinating rationale for the phenomenon of hagbala is offered by Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch. The physical setting at Sinai, says Hirsch, is designed to prove that the word of God came "to the people" rather than "out of the people." By insisting that the Israelites remain at the foot of Sinai to receive divine law, God clearly demonstrates for all to see that the

people themselves are not the authors of that law.

The foundations of Jewish law are objective, eternal and not subject to changes wrought by time and circumstance. The Torah is not the product of a nation contemporary with the time of Revelation, but a divinely ordained document speaking to all times and places.

**B.** Moving beyond Hirsch's suggestion, the decree of hagbala also reflects a fundamental dialectic lying at the core of man's connection to God. At the moment of Revelation, as God launches His eternal relationship with His chosen people, He uses the scene at Sinai to define the very parameters of that relationship.

The God-man relationship will be forged out of a tension between distance and familiarity.

On the one hand, God is certainly remote, existing in a realm beyond our comprehension and often acting in ways we simply do not understand. On the other hand, as the psalmist maintains: "God is near to all who call Him, to all who call Him in earnest." We are meant to see God as accessible, interested and involved in our daily lives, near enough to be "found" if we only seek Him out.

This balance between distance and familiarity in our relationship to God is reflected in many ways within our tradition. Two of them follow.

1. Each day, at climactic moments of our prayer service, we recite the Kedusha, a proclamation of God's holiness. Central to this proclamation is the vision of the prophet Yeshayahu, who witnesses the heavenly hosts exclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole

world is filled with His glory."

To be holy within Jewish thought means to be separate, removed. Three times, in the prophet's vision, the heavenly beings declare God's separateness. In Jewish law, the repetition of an event or phenomenon three times creates a reality. God's absolute remoteness is thus mirrored in the threefold proclamation of the angels.

In the very next breath, however, these very same celestial beings declare, "The whole world is filled with His glory." God, the angels say, is apparent and easily reached in every aspect of our physical surroundings. We need only look around us to find Him.

The Kedusha thus reflects the dichotomy created by a God who is beyond our ken and who, at the same time, fills the world with His splendor.

2. Two seemingly conflicting elements are essential to the formation of a personal relationship with God: YIR'A and AHAVA (fear and love): "And now, Israel, what does HaShem your God ask of you but to fear HaShem your God, to walk in all His paths, and to love Him, and to serve HaShem your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

You can only love and fear the same being when you embrace the complexity inherent in the bond between you.

This truth is perhaps best demonstrated by focusing on the human associations which, in their own small way, most closely mirror our relationship with God. Consider, for example, the contradictory currents that course through a healthy parent-child relationship or a strong teacher-student bond. These relationships are not one-dimensional. A parent who tries to become his child's friend (a

phenomenon which is unfortunately much too common in our own day) will simply not be an effective parent. A rabbi or teacher who forgoes the respect and authority due his position loses some of his ability to successfully educate. Yet, while maintaining the space demanded by the relationship, both the parent and the teacher must still remain - each to different degrees - accessible, warm and caring.

The complexity of the parent-child bond is, in fact, codified in halacha through two distinct sets of laws that are designed to mold and govern the attitude of a child to his parent.

The laws of KAVOD (honor) speak to the personal care that must be shown to parents during times of need, such as infirmity and old age.

The laws of YIR'A outline the respect that must be shown to parents at all times. Included are the prohibitions of calling a parent by his first name, sitting in a parent's seat, contradicting a parent in public, etc.

Through the laws of KAVOD and YIR'A, the halacha reflects the balance meant to be struck between the warmth a child should feel towards his parent and the awe in which that parent must be held.

In a different realm but somewhat parallel fashion, our relationship with God must be forged out of a similar tension.

God, therefore, mandates distance at the moment of His closest contact with man, striking the balance upon which their eternal shared relationship will be built.

Through these sources and others, our tradition reminds us that we must continually struggle to maintain the balance - rooted at Sinai - between distance and familiarity, so critical to our

relationship with God.

If we lose the sense of awe meant to be present in our approach to the divine, our worship becomes pedestrian, rote and uninspired. If, on the other hand, we view God as unreachable and inaccessible, we will never succeed in truly experiencing His personal presence in our lives. ❏

**The Jerusalem Institute  
of Jewish Law**  
Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 548 (part two)

## **Theft of Intellectual Property**

We have been discussing the theft of intellectual property and specifically the edicts of certain Jewish communities to protect authors from others publishing their works. Thus if one has in his possession a manuscript that he did not write, he should put the name of the author on it so that people will not be misled into thinking he wrote it. Also one may not take without the permission of the owner a book or manuscript dealing with Torah subjects with the intent to return it after he studied the contents or made notes therefrom; the study of Torah, no matter how important, cannot be seen as giving one permission to take something that is not his. If anything, it [the study of Torah] is an otherwise commendable act that comes about by means of

transgression [taking the book without permission] and such commendable acts are prohibited.

There may be exceptions, as seen from the following.

There are times that a bailee, who holds an object with permission, must do something to the object to keep it from spoiling. For example, if the entrusted object to the bailee is a Torah scroll, he must unroll it once in twelve months. If he happens to read it while he is unrolling it, he is not guilty of using the Torah scroll without authorization. He is not permitted to open it to read from it for his own use; if he does he is considered to have made unauthorized use of the Torah and becomes liable for any loss of the Torah no matter what the reason. Similar rules apply to other books and scrolls of the owner. Just as he may not read from them for his own use, he may not copy therefrom.

There is an exception to this last law in the case of a scholar who does not have a copy of this particular book, since it is assumed that the owner entrusted the scholar with the book so that he would be able to read and copy from the book.

As a corollary to this last law, if certain books are unavailable to the scholars, Beit Din may compel the owners to loan the books to the scholar to study and copy them.

There are instances where the author in publishing his work granted permission to anyone who wanted to reproduce the work to do so; in some instances the permission was granted to reproduce the work without any charge

whatsoever. In the area of photocopying from books and other publications, halacha to a great extent, also follows the law of the land. Halacha sees the act of photocopying as stealing someone else's product. This applies when the copier sells the photocopies or else distributes them to students in large quantities so that the sale of the work is reduced. Even if there is not any payment made for the photocopies they are still prohibited, since the copier uses it for the purpose of the reader not having to purchase the original, resulting in reduced sales of the work. Thus schools should not buy one copy and have photocopies made for all the students.

Next lesson IYH, end of theft of intellectual property

## Parsha Points to Ponder

### Suggested answers

1) The Kli Yakar explains that the pagan world believed that no god had control over all realms. Some had control over good, some over bad, etc. Yitro first heard that G-D did good things for the Jews and assumed that this G-D had control over good and positive things. But then Moshe told him that this same G-D punished the Egyptians and controlled punishment and death. This made Yitro realize that this G-D's powers were beyond those of the pagan deities he had explored and followed up until this point in his life.

2) Da'at Zekainim MiBaalei HaTosfot answer that Moshe went to tell G-D what the people said as indicated by the words MOSHE BROUGHT THE WORDS (VAYASHAV), but G-D wanted to first relay this important message about speaking for all the people to hear (mass revelation) and only then was Moshe able to report what the people had said.

3) The Ohr HaChayim teaches that Moshe speaking here refers to Moshe praising G-D. G-D would then answer with sounds of shofar blasts to indicate His acceptance of these praises. Thus, the verse first teaches that G-D sounded shofar blasts and then explains the context in which this was done - Moshe praising and G-D responding with these sounds.

## The Quail Kashrut Question

In last week's ParshaPix, there were two representations of the S'LAV: a picture of former US vice president Dan Quayle, and an NVtech Task Force Image Gallery image of the quail you see on the right. Leave it to Kosher animal expert (among many other things that he is expert in) Rabbi Dr. Ari Zivotovsky to contact us and comment that the particular quail we pictured is probably not kosher, and certainly does not have a "Masoret" of being kosher.

Here's some of what OU Kashrut Rabbi Chaim Loike write on the subject: "It is sometimes difficult to identify the birds described in the Bible. It is known that quail were accepted as kosher since ancient times... There are nearly fifty avian species which are called quail; these species are extremely varied being divided among a dozen genera, including Old World quail (coturnix)... tree, mountain, crested, banded, bobwhite (colinus), wood, singing, ocellated, tawny faced, quail plover, and button quail... Throughout the world a number of species of quail have been domesticated. However, the only North American quail which has historically been commercially raised for meat is the bobwhite quail... This quail is not a true quail, sharing little with the European quail other than size... "From a kosher perspective, since the bobwhite is known not to be a true quail and it was never certified as kosher, there was no way to classify the bird as kosher... For years it was rumored that the coturnix quail was the biblical quail, the very quail which had been consumed and certified kosher since the time of the Bible. There were a number of Jewish communities, which had consumed quail prior to the Second World War..." One European rabbi who survived the Holocaust was able to identify the Pharoah quail (coturnix coturnix) as kosher and as the Biblical quail...