



ParshaPix Explanations on p.37

Connecting the Dots

Sometimes the idea for the Lead Tidbit presents itself in the first moments of pondering what to write about; sometimes it takes a while. Usually, some idea says, "pick me, pick me" - and that's it. This time there was a fight between Parshat HaShavua and Lag BaOmer, with each side presenting strong arguments for the honors. The result is more than a compromise; it once again comes with the realization that Parshat HaShavua and the Calendar influence each other in our thoughts, and that messages often emerge from paying attention to the weekly sedra and its calendric background.

B'har and B'chukotai are read separately in 13 month years and combined in 12-month years. This holds true outside of Israel, but these two sedras are separated in Israel also when Pesach begins on Shabbat in a 12-month year (as is scheduled for next year, 5772). Either way - whether we read these two sedras over two Shabbatot or in one shot, they are "joined at the hip". As B'har begins with G-d speaking to Moshe Rabeinu at Har Sinai, so B'chukotai ends with "These are the Mitzvot that G-d commanded Moshe to (transmit to) B'nei Yisrael B'HAR SINAI (in/on Mt. Sinai).

B'har and B'chukotai are a package deal. We've encountered the "Take you out of Egypt to give you the Torah on the way to Eretz Yisrael" deal from G-d before. But nothing brings the point across stronger than B'har and B'chukotai. Eretz Yisrael is yours (ours). It always is, regardless of whether we are here or not. But we remain in the Land when we keep the Torah and we face exile when we don't. Pirkei Avot states that GALUT (exile) comes because of idolatry, immorality, murder, and because of (not keeping) Sh'mita. Actually, Pirkei Avot didn't make that up - it comes straight from B'chukotai.

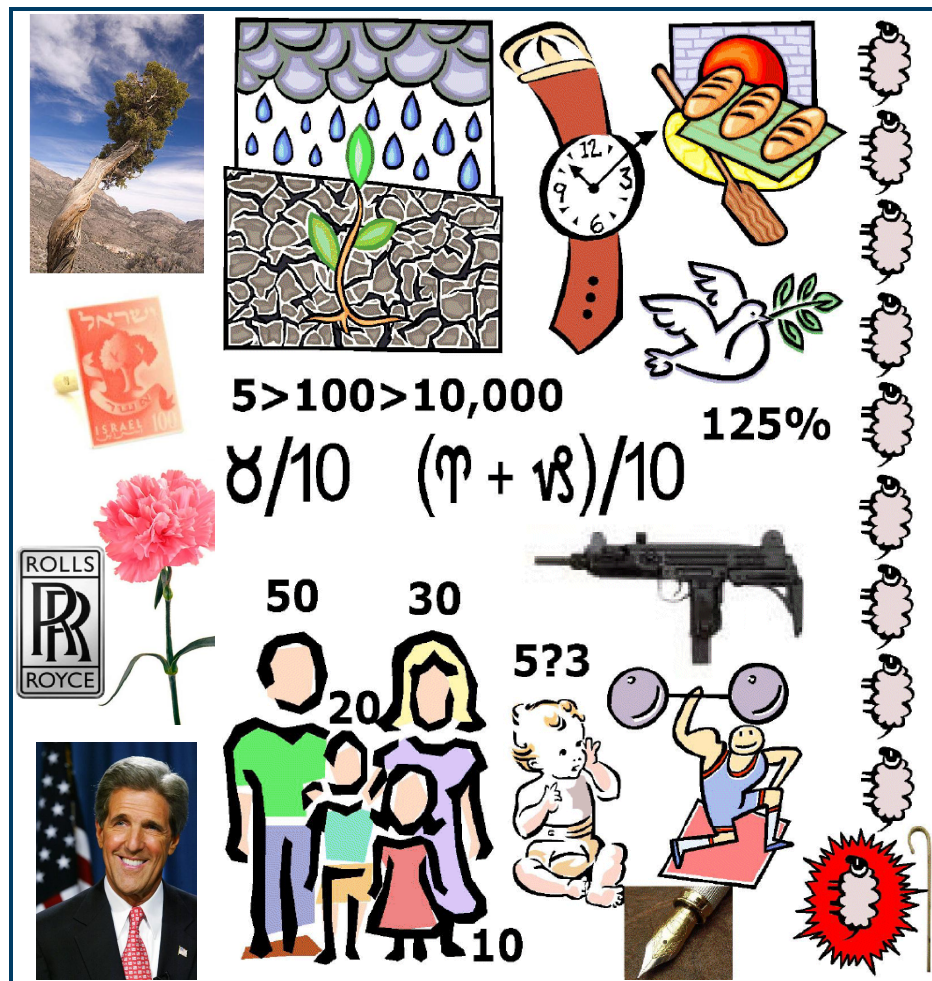
cont. p.4

Jerusalem in/out times for Parshat B'chukotai

6:57pm / 8:14pm Summer time (see page 3 for other zmanim)

Earliest - **6:06pm** • Checked and double checked for Shabbat Parshat B'chukotai

S'fira note: If you are "holding" the mournful period after Lag BaOmer and you are invited to a wedding of people who end the mournful period after Lag BaOmer, you can go... and enjoy!



Word of the Month

IYAR seems to have more different dates on the calendar than any other month. "Different" in this case means that the seven days of Pesach are not different from each other, nor are the 8 days of Chanuka... etc. IYAR even has another name in the Tanach - Chodesh ZIV. Here are the dates in IYAR: 1 - R"Ch (of course). 4 - Yom HaZikaron. 5 - Yom HaAtzmaut. (These two days can be 2 & 3 of Iyar, 3 & 4 and 5 & 6, in addition to their "regular" 4 & 5.) 14 - Pesach Sheni. 18 - Lag BaOmer. 20 - the date of first traveling away from Har Sinai after nearly a year there. 28 - Yom Yerushalayim. The entire month is during the Omer.



Candles (earliest)	B'chukotai	Havdala	next week
6:57 (6:06)	Yerushalayim	8:14	7:01 / 8:19
7:13 (6:08)	S'derot	8:15	7:18 / 8:20
7:11 (6:06)	Gush Etzion	8:14	7:16 / 8:19
7:14 (6:08)	Raanana	8:16	7:18 / 8:22
7:12 (6:06)	Beit Shemesh/RBS	8:15	7:17 / 8:20
7:14 (6:08)	Netanya	8:17	7:19 / 8:22
7:13 (6:07)	Rehovot	8:16	7:18 / 8:21
7:10 (6:06)	Be'erSheva/Otniel	8:14	7:14 / 8:19
7:12 (6:07)	Modi'in/Chashmona'im	8:15	7:17 / 8:20
6:57 (6:07)	Petach Tikva	8:16	7:01 / 8:21
6:57 (6:05)	Maale Adumim	8:14	7:01 / 8:19
7:13 (6:07)	Ginot Shomron	8:15	7:17 / 8:21
7:12 (6:06)	Gush Shiloh	8:14	7:16 / 8:19
7:11 (6:06)	K4 & Hevron	8:14	7:16 / 8:19
7:12 (6:06)	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:14	7:16 / 8:19
7:13 (6:07)	Yad Binyamin	8:16	7:18 / 8:21
7:14 (6:08)	Ashkelon	8:16	7:18 / 8:21
7:03 (6:07)	Tzfat	8:16	7:07 / 8:21

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - B'CHUKOTAI - 8:56pm

Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
14-23 Iyar • May 18-27

Earliest Talit & T'filin	4:44-4:39am
Sunrise	5:41-5:37am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:270-8:24am)	9:08-9:06am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:42-9:40am)	10:17-10:16am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	12:35½pm-12:36¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	1:11-1:12pm
Plag Mincha	6:04-6:09pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 7:30-7:36pm)	7:35-7:41pm

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

Pre-Lag BaOmer reminder

When Lag BaOmer falls on Motza"Sh-Sunday, then haircutting and shaving is permitted on the Friday before - in honor of Shabbat.

Not only is it permitted, but it is preferable to waiting until Sunday - again, because of Kavod Shabbat.

The sedra in me

MicroUlpan
daisy חיננית
daffodil נרקיס
Tulip צבעוני


K'doshim, B'har, B'chukotai, Sh'lach

Xray Xray, Charlie

Also Melachim Alef and Yechezkeil

Wake up from last week and enjoy breakfast

Breakfast consists of bread

 The beauty of logic is that even though we cannot see our goal, we are confident that by following the path of logic, we will arrive there.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

confusing house rule

LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

When we keep the mitzvot (not just going through the motions, but really keeping the Torah to the letter and its spirit) and everything will be fine. Better than fine. If we don't, then... You don't want to know, as the saying goes. But we have to know.

Pardon the abrupt change in topic, but, as the title of this Lead Tidbit says, connect the dots.

The period between Pesach and Shavuot - the period of the Omer - is not intrinsically a sad period of time. It is really supposed to be like a long Chol HaMoed between the Yom Tov of Pesach and its Atzeret, its culmination, Shavuot. We, the Jewish People, underwent a miraculous transformation from slaves who hovered at the lowest levels of TUM'A to the holy nation that stood at Sinai to receive the Torah and enter into an eternal relationship with G-d at the highest levels of spirituality.

The change in the mood of the Omer to mournful melancholy is - first and foremost - because of the Destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and the Exile. That's when the Omer offering of Barley ceased; that's when the Two Loaves offering no longer capped off that special 50-day period. That's when our joy turned to sadness and mourning. Later, the Omer became linked to the deaths of Rabbi Akiva's students (and the attributed cause) and to the Crusades.

We can even say that B'chukotai

reminded us of the good life in Eretz Yisrael and warned us of the dire consequences of abandoning the Torah and Mitzvot, which are exemplified by our "partially mournful" Omer period.

Enter Lag BaOmer. A bright spot in a dreary period. A reminder that it is not the entire Omer period that is mournful - only 33 days of the 49. (Which 33 days? Opinions differ.)

Yes, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. There is great joy yet to come (or perhaps, return is a better word).

And more recently, Yom HaAtzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim have joined the S'firat HaOmer calendar as further indications of the trend towards restoring the Omer period to its former festive character. Pesach Sheni is a reminder in that direction as well. Do you think that the establishment of the State and the reunification of Yerushalayim are only coincidentally in Iyar? Hardly.

A guy once said to me that if only Yom HaAtzmaut were not in the Omer, he would celebrate it. Wrong. Just connect the dots. The ban on weddings and haircutting is not the essence of the Omer. Lag BaOmer is. Celebrating G-d's gift to us of the return of Jewish sovereignty to Eretz Yisrael is. Rejoicing in the return of many parts of Eretz Yisrael into our hands is. We need, too, understand that we still have a way to go before the Geula Sh'leima and everything that goes with it, will completely restore to joy of the Omer.

B'chukotai

33rd sedra of 54; Last of 10 in Vayikra

Written on 131 lines in a Torah, ranks 47th

5 parshiyot; 3 open, 2 closed

78 p'sukim, ranks 46th (7th in Vayikra)

1013 words, ranks 47th (7th in Vayikra)

3992 letters, ranks 47th (7th in Vayikra)

Small sedra - only 7 sedras are shorter

MITZVOT

Contains 12 mitzvot - 7 positive, 5 prohibitions

Sefer Vayikra: 10 sedras, 36.6 columns, 1537 lines, 859 p'sukim, 11950 words, 44790 letters, and 247 mitzvot (95 pos. 152 prohibitions) Vayikra is the smallest Chumash in number of sedras, columns, lines, p'sukim, words, & letters. Its sedras (avg) have the fewest verses, words, and letters. OTOH, it has more mitzvot than any other Book, which is all the more remarkable because of its small size.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

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

Kohen - First Aliya 3 p'sukim - 26:3-5

[P> 26:3 (11)] If we keep the Torah and mitzvot, then HaShem will provide beneficent, timely rainfall and bountiful crops. The yield of the Land will be so great, that each agricultural season will blend into the next one. And we will have plenty to eat - on our own Land.

"If you walk on the path of My statutes..." Rashi comments that this is not just another way of saying "keep the mitzvot", but rather it points to our task of immersing ourselves in a Torah and Mitzvot way of life. Another commentator points to the word "walk" and says that it is insufficient to just "stand still" within an environment of mitzvot, one must take continual strides towards greater spiritual heights.

SDT: And the tree of the field will give forth its fruit. Rashi says this refers to non-fruit-bearing trees that will bear fruit when G-d's full blessing will be given. One of the commentators explains why Rashi departs from the simple meaning of the pasuk. Since if one says a Borei Pri HaAdama on a fruit, his bracha is valid, because fruits grow on trees which grow from the ground, then regular fruit are included

in the previous phrase "and the ground will give forth its yield". The phrase referring to trees is superfluous, unless it is as Rashi says.

The Gemara says that IM B'CHUKOTAI TEILEICHU is more than just stating the facts: If this, then that; if not this, then something else. The Gemara says that HaShem is asking us, pleading with us, to keep the mitzvot and immerse ourselves in Torah. If He asks, how can we not do what He wants - He created us, He put us into this world.

SDT: The promises of prosperity from the opening p'sukim of the parsha are made for Jews who live in Eretz Yisrael. The same deal, apparently, does not apply to those who live in Chutz LaAretz. This, says Torat Kohanim, in analyzing the word - B'ARTZ'CHEM. This is truly amazing and provides much food for thought. If you will follow My laws and mitzvot, says G-d, then you will be blessed with many good things - if you live in Eretz Yisrael. If you live outside of Israel, G-d still expects compliance with Torah and Mitzvot, but does not promise prosperity and peace because of it.

IM B'CHUKOTAI TEILEICHU... If you will GO in My statutes... LALECHET, to go, implies movement, constant movement upward - no stagnation in serving G-d. - *Chidushei HaRim*

Levi - Second Aliya 4 p'sukim - 26:6-9

Further reward for (or results from) following the Torah and keeping mitzvot, will be peace and tranquility in the Land (of Israel). Both natural disasters (wild beasts) as well as human enemies (sword) will be kept at bay by HaShem. And when we do encounter our enemies, G-d will grant us the ability to vanquish them mightily. If we keep to our side of the deal (so to speak), we will be blessed with fertility and G-d will keep His covenant with us.

Notice how there is a promise of peace in the land and a promise for the might to vanquish the enemy. Peace in this context seems not to refer to our enemies; it means peace among Jews. Enemies from the outside might still exist, and we are promised the ability to defeat them.

The promises of blessings in this first part of the sedra come in two forms: not only agricultural and military, but natural and subtle on the one hand and open and obvious, on the other. Beneficial and timely rain - much appreciated. Bumper crops - much appreciated (one would hope). But rain and growth of produce is part of nature. On the other hand, the magnitude of promised military success is seemingly more miraculous. Yet (on the first hand), nature also consists of no rain and drought and

failed crops. So unparalleled agricultural success is truly miraculous as well.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 37 p'sukim - 26:10-46

The longest Sh'lishi in the Torah

This Aliya begins with the last four p'sukim of the "good" part - the promises for our proper Torah behavior. G-d will be with us; He is the One Who took us out of Egypt, broke the yoke of our oppression, and led us out with heads held high.

[P> 26:14 (13)] But then we get to the "Tochacha", one of two portions of the Torah (there are actually several others, but these are the big two) containing G-d's detailed admonition to the People, warning of the dire consequences that will result from disregard of Torah and mitzvot. Because it is so painful to hear these terrible words - especially realizing how often they have come true - the custom developed to read this portion in a low voice. We are ashamed that G-d needs to threaten us in so graphic a way. There was a time when no one wanted the dubious honor of receiving this Aliya. Today the minhag is to call the Rabbi, Gabbai, or the Baal Korei himself for this portion. (In many congregations, it is the one who gives out the Aliyot who gets the Tochacha, so that no one else can feel slighted by him.) The Tochacha is always con-

tained within one Aliya which begins and ends on "cheerier" notes. This is the reason for the widely disparate distribution of p'sukim among the Aliyot of this sedra. (Almost half of the sedras p'sukim are in this one Aliya.)

On the other hand, there are those who frown on the custom of lowering the voice, because we are supposed to love reproach, since it helps us straighten ourselves out. On the other hand, most follow the custom to read the Tochacha in a lower voice. Torah readers should be careful though, not to read too low to be heard properly, and not too fast to be properly heard.

A significant theme of the Tochacha is the connection between the keeping of the laws of Shmita and our hold on the Land. We must always realize that we do not keep Eretz Yisrael without any strings attached. We have a clear commitment and responsibility to keep the Torah and fulfill the mitzvot as individuals AND as a community. Shmita was commanded in the previous sedra. In this week's sedra, we are presented with the dire consequences of the disregard of this important mitzva.

[S> 26:27 (20)] Continual reference is made of both physical and spiritual benefits from observance of mitzvot, and the opposite, for disregard of the mitzvot. This combination of promise of good and threat of

bad, together with the body of mitzvot of the Torah, constitutes the covenant between G-d and the People of Israel at Sinai via Moshe.

SDT: Yaakov is spelled with a VAV 5 times in Tanach (Once in this week's sedra and four times in Yirmiyahu). Rashi points out that the name of Eliyahu is missing a VAV five times. It is as if Yaakov takes collateral from Eliyahu to guarantee that he will eventually come to announce the coming of the Moshiach.

V'ZACHARTI ET BRITI YAAKOV
V'AF ET BRITI YITZCHAK V'AF ET
BRITI AVRAHAM V'HAARTZ
EZKOR: (Vayikra 26:42)

G-d will remember the covenant with Yaakov and the one with Yitzchak and the one with Avraham... Midrash Rabba says that the words ET in the phrase with each of the AVOT come to include the IMAHOT as well. If so, asks the ADMOR of GUR zt"l, where is the fourth mother? He answers that the fourth one is Rachel, and the Torah has already told us of G-d's remembering her, as it says:

VAYIZKOR ELOKIM ET RACEHL...
(Breishit 30:22)

R'YMP points out several distinctions between the two Tochachot in the Torah. The first Tochacha is part of the Sinai covenant and therefore is contained in B'chukotai, which is read shortly before Shavuot. The second Tochacha is in Ki Tavo because it is part of the Arvot Mo'av experience.

He also points out that the first Tochacha ends with a promise of redemption THAT IS PART OF the Tochacha. The second one does not. Only in the following sedra do you have the promise of Geula. The first is orderly - if you don't listen, then such and such will happen. And if you still don't, then worse. And if... then even worse. The second Tochacha is a series of threats and punishments, one after the other. The first Tochacha relates to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash and the exile that followed it; the second to that of the second Beit HaMikdash. The first Tochacha came from G-d via Moshe; the second came from Moshe.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 15 p'sukim - 27:1-15

[P> 27:1 (8)] In pledging funds to the Mikdash, it is possible to offer the "value" of an individual **[350, A114 27:2]**. The Torah lists amounts for individuals depending on sex and age. In the event that the donor is poor, a kohen may reduce the amount.

[S> 27:9 (26)] If a person pledges an animal to the Mikdash which qualifies as a korban, he may not exchange or redeem that animal (even for one of greater value) **[351, L106 27:10]**. If he attempts to do so, then both the original animal and its substitute (t'mura) are consecrated to the Mikdash **[352, A87 27:10]**. An animal not fit for the Altar is to be evaluated

by a kohen [353,A115 27:11], and can be redeemed by adding 1/5 of its valuation.

Actually, 1/4 of the amount is added, so that the amount added becomes 1/5 of the total amount paid. E.g. An animal was valued at 100 shekel. 1/4 of that is 25. Add that to the first amount, and the person must pay 125. The 25 which he added is 1/5 of the 125. This is how CHOMESH works in all situations that call for it.

A person can also offer the value of a house [354,A116 27:14], in which case a kohen (expert in matters of real estate) determines its value, and the house is redeemable by adding 1/5.

Ponder this... If donating the value of a male child between 5 and 20 years of age, for example, is equivalent to a pledge of 20 shekel, then why not just donate 20 shekel? What is the significance of labeling certain amounts as the "value" of a person?

Part of the answer seems quite obvious. We psychologically relate much more strongly to our giving the value of person to the Beit HaMikdash than we would to a mere sum of money. This would be especially so if the person were ourselves or a loved one. Modern fundraising psychology borrows this idea. Compare the emotional connection of contributing, let's say, \$100 to a charitable cause, compared with the same \$100 which is called "foster a child" or "feed a family" for a certain period of time. The money is the same. But the

emotional response is quite different.

MitzvaWatch

Notice the unusual, almost unique nature of T'MURA (the exchange of an animal for another sacred animal). Generally, when the Torah prohibits something, an individual is considered to violate that prohibition when he does that which was forbidden. One may not cook meat with milk. Doing so is a violation. One may not steal. Stealing is a violation. Etc. Etc. One may not exchange one animal for a consecrated one (that is fit for the Altar). But one cannot do so. The attempted exchange fails. The sacred animal is still sacred. So in this instance, that which is forbidden is not done. It cannot be done. The attempt itself then is the violation. This is highly unusual. (In addition to the attempted exchange failing, it also carries the additional penalty of the new animal also becoming sacred.) And - T'mura can be punishable by MAKOT (whipping), which makes it more unusual, since no act was done. A prohibition that involved no act is rarely punishable by human courts. Nor is a violation with a penalty additionally punished by MAKOT.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 6 p'sukim - 27:16-21

If a person dedicates the value of his property to the Mikdash, it is to be evaluated by a kohen based on quality and number of years to

the next Yovel [355,A117 27:16]. It then becomes redeemable by adding a fifth. If a person did not redeem the land, then Yovel does not release it to him, but rather to the Mikdash as consecrated property. The same applies if the officials at the Mikdash sold the property before redemption. At Yovel, it reverts to the Mikdash.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 7 p'sukim - 27:22-28

If the property in question is not hereditary, but rather purchased, then the rules differ. The land is evaluated in the same way, but at Yovel it reverts to its original owners, and not to the Mikdash.

A firstling is automatically sanctified to the Altar; one may not consecrate it as another korban [356, L107 27:26], because it is already Kodesh. This rule of not switching one sanctity for another, applies to other categories of korban as well.

A non-kosher animal offered to the Mikdash is sold off.

If something itself is consecrated to the Mikdash (rather than its value), it cannot be redeemed; it remains holy.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 6 p'sukim - 27:29-34

Consecrated property goes to the kohanim [357, 358, 359; A145,

L110, L111 27:29]. A person under a death penalty has the status of "Cherem" (non-redeemable items). The land's title (here referring to Maaser Sheni), is sacred; it is (either to be eaten in Jerusalem or) to be redeemed.

The title of the animals (cows, goats, sheep) are to be separated by counting every tenth one regardless of the quality of the animal [360,A78 27:32]. These animals are sacred and must be eaten only in Jerusalem and under conditions of ritual purity. Maaser B'heima may not be redeemed [361,L109 27:33]. Violation of this rule results in both animals being considered holy.

This 'n that about Maaseir B'heima

Two (at least) significant differences between Maaseir of produce and that of animals:

With produce, you gather your yield and take a tenth, preferably from the best of the crop. With animals, you set the newborns up so they will pass through a narrow opening in their enclosure one by one; you count and declare the 10th one to be Maaseir. You do not choose which animal is Maaseir. Whichever one "passes under your staff" tenth, that's the one. (So too for 20th, 30th, etc.) It could be the potential blue ribbon winner at the county fair or it could be a scrawny, sickly, skinny animal.

With produce, if T'ruma is not taken

from the gathered produce, the entire amount is Tevel and forbidden to eat. All tithing must be done before the rest is considered appropriately prepared. With animals, if a person has 10 newborn lambs, let's say, and he doesn't perform the mitzva of Maaseir B'heima, then he failed to do a mitzva, but the 10 lambs are all "kosher" and acceptable. Maaseir B'heima is almost like a voluntary mitzva.

And unlike B'CHOR (mentioned above), which becomes sacred the moment it is born - whether or not the owner proclaims KADOSH (which he is supposed to do). It is, in all cases, KADOSH. Not so with Maaseir B'heima. The animal is not sacred unless the owner follows proper procedure and declares the animal holy.

29 newborns - only 2 will be Maaseir.

"These are the mitzvot... at Sinai." This final pasuk of the sedra (and book of VaYikra), closes the section that was opened by the first pasuk of B'har, the usual partner sedra to B'chukotai.

CHAZAK, CHAZAK...

It is customary for the congregation to stand for the concluding pasuk of each book of the Torah. This seems NOT to raise the strong objections that standing for the Aseret HaDibrot does. The Torah-reader reads the final words with a dramatic flair, signalling the congregation to respond with "Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazak" (Strong, strong, and let us be strengthened).

Although most people seem to say V'NITCHAZEIK, a more correct pronunciation, based on Shmuel Bet 10:12 - from where the exclamation appears to come - is V'NITCHAZAK.

The reader then repeats that phrase. Some say that the person who receives the Aliya should NOT say the phrase, as this would constitute an interruption between the Torah reading and his concluding bracha, or possibly that it is to him that the congregation says Chazak...

It is considered a special honor to receive this Book-completing Aliya.

Maftir is the last three p'sukim.

Haftara 17 p'sukim Yirmiyahu 16:19-17:14

The words of the prophet contain warnings and admonitions which echo the Tochacha contained in the sedra. The haftara ends with a prayer for G-d's help in keeping us faithful to Him and His Torah. Rabbi Jacobs z"l mentions that this haftara is probably more matched to the other Tochacha sedra, Ki Tavo, but Ki Tavo needs one of the 7 Consolation haftarot, so this went with B'chukotai.

Divrei Menachem

B'chukotai is a parsha that remains embedded in our historical consciousness. For having received the Torah and having forsaken the original covenant through the Sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem now ratifies that covenant anew. Not through the "Book of the Covenant" (Sh'mot 24:4,7) nor through offerings on behalf of the nation, but by spelling out the blessings for observing His laws and the curses for abandoning the Brit.

Curiously, the rewards and blessings spelt out are all of a material nature. The Artscroll commentary defines two approaches to understanding why this is so, rather than the Torah listing the spiritual benefits that accrue from hearkening to G-d's words. The first follows the Rambam who makes the somewhat obvious, but sobering, point that one who enjoys health and prosperity is clearly in a better position to serve Hashem. Thus serving G-d loyally leads to a position where there are, indeed, increasing spiritual returns.

Ramban suggests that for the Torah to specify that spiritual reward is the price for loyalty would be to state the obvious. Paradoxically, in Ramban's eyes, material reward is also an unnatural, spiritual, and miraculous event. Consider, for example, that the observance of Sh'mita enables one hundred Jews to pursue 10,000 enemies (Vayikra 26:8) and that its violation causes a complete nation to be exiled and helpless. Surely, then, when Hashem declares that, "I will provide your rains in their time," even the morsel of bread on our table has a miraculous aspect to it!

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *Are there any sources concerning an obligation to eat food at a brit mila?*

ANSWER: There are two elements to this question. One is to what extent there is a mitzva to have a seuda (meal) in honor of a brit mila. The other is to what extent invited guests are required to take part in such a seuda.

The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 265:12) says: "We have the practice to make a seuda on the day of the Mila." The Rama adds: "and people have the practice to have a minyan for the seuda of a Mila, and it is called a Seudat Mitzva." There are several sources in Chazal to support this claim. Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer derives it from the Brit that Avraham performed for Yitzchak. The Torah writes that Avraham made a big party on the day that "higamel Yitzchak" (B'reishit 21:8), whose simple translation is that he was weaned. The Orchot Chayim derives the idea from the word's letters (the first two, based on numerical value), namely, 5+3 MAL, i.e., on the eighth day he circumcised. This, thus, was the event that prompted a party. The gemara (Ketuvot 8a) seems to assume that there is a special meal, comparable to that of Sheva B'rachot, and therefore needs to point out the difference between the bentching at the two. Before Birkat HaMazon of Sheva B'rachot one says "shehasimcha

vim-ono” (that the joy is in His abode), whereas this is not recited before Birkat HaMazon at a Brit Mila due to the pain of the child.

One of the applications of the determination that the meal for a Brit Mila is a Seudat Mitzva is the fact that invitees to this meal may eat meat and drink wine even during the Nine Days (Rama, Orach Chayim 551:10). The Rama and his commentaries point out that one should not artificially include people who are not naturally part of the festivities to compromise the standard laws of the day.

There is a well known but apparently somewhat misapplied concept relating to the invitees to a Brit Mila. Let us start with the background. The gemara (P'sachim 113b) lists people with the regrettable distinction of being *menudeh lashamayim* (roughly, shunned in Heaven) for what they do (or refrain from doing). One such person is one who does not recline (i.e. set himself to eat) with a group of mitzva. Tosafot (P'sachim 114a) says that this refers to one who does not eat in the Seuda of a Brit Mila, which he says has the ability to save one from being judged to go to *gehinom* (purgatory). From this idea developed the practice of not inviting people to a Brit Mila (Pitchei Teshuva, Yoreh De'ah 265:18), so that people not be in the situation where they should be going and refrain from doing so. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, Orach Chayim II, 95) explains that the matter is not so much that there is an obligation to take part in the mitzva of Mila.

After all, there are many mitzvot that one might miss, and the idea of *menudeh lashamayim* is not mentioned broadly. It has more to do, he says, with the lack of honor that one shows toward the father who is fulfilling the mitzva and trying to include others in it. It is told in the name of Rav Moshe Feinstein that one discharges the minimum obligation by eating anything at the meal or smaller reception. One is not required to eat bread (which should be done by the core participants - see Sefer HaBrit 165:161) or stay for the whole meal.

In any case, it is of note that many people know of the *minhag* not to invite but apparently do not do it correctly. First of all, many people just inform about the Brit Mila, but once people come to the Mila itself, they invite all assembled to the meal, even they know that many will not be coming. As we have seen, the sources talk in terms of the meal. Secondly, some people make it very clear that they want and even expect a certain friend to come, just that they do not use the word “inviting”. In this case, it appears that the spirit of the invitation is the issue, and not that there is something intrinsic about the use of the word “invite” if one transmits an expectation that friend or family attend.

Rav Daniel Mann, Eretz Hemdah Institute

FROM A MEASURE OF BARLEY TO 2 LOAVES OF WHEAT [3] by Dr. Meir Tamari

"The mitzva is to count 49 days from Korban HaOmer until the 50th day which is Shavuot, the day of Matan Torah. With this counting we show our great yearning for that distinguished day. Counting shows how much a person yearns for his deliverance and that all his desire is to reach that time, just as a servant eagerly awaits his freedom and counts the time till it comes. That is why we count, 'so many days have passed out of the total' and not, 'so many days remain till that time'" (Sefer Hachinuch, mitzva 306). An expression of the cleansing brought by this yearning is the "Ribono Shel Olam" that the Kabbalists later added to the HaRachaman for restoring the Temple service, after counting S'fira: "So that the souls of Israel may be purified; through the merit of my counting may there flow through all the worlds to rectify our lives, spirits and souls." "It was necessary to give Torah to the world of mankind so that they would have a *tavlin* for the *yeitzer hara* involved in the fulfilling of their needs. Since this *yetzer* renews itself every day, it was not appropriate to write in the Torah a specific date for Matan Torah, rather each day we have to receive it anew" (Kli Yakar).

"This counting that comes to purify and transform our animal needs and desires symbolized by the barley of the Omer,

should have come after sanctification, as in all other purifying rituals. However, the human desires for physical and material satisfaction are so strong and pervasive that we would be unable to begin unless first given the ability to connect ourselves through *korban* of barley to the Divine Source of our money" (Shem MiShmuel, Haggada).

Matan Torah was not the product of the religious genius of the Jews nor was it testimony to the spiritual greatness of Moses; rather it was pure Divine Wisdom that was revealed to Israel. This wisdom is partially evidenced by the fact that actually there were revealed both a Written Torah and also an Oral Torah that details the way the written word is to be implemented. It is logical and creditable that Pesach, S'fira HaOmer and Shavuot should therefore have been so involved with Oral Torah controversy.

"And you shall count from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the Omer" (Vayikra 23:15). For us it is clear that the seven weeks that are to be counted starts on the day after Pesach, the first day of Chol HaMoed. However, the Sadducees at the time of Bayit Sheini, who did not believe in a Torah Sheb'al Peh, taught that the verse referred to a Shabbat Bereishit (i.e. Saturday) so the Omer should be brought the first Sunday after Pesach. This would mean that the Omer would never be brought on Shabbat and that the day of Matan Torah varied from year to year, depending on which weekday was Pesach. Torah Sheb'al Peh ruled that *chagim* were included in

the term 'sabbath' so Matan Torah would always be on 6th Sivan as we observe. Furthermore, the Omer itself was brought with great publicity on the first day of Chol HaMoed, irrespective of what day of the week it was, even on Shabbat (Menachot 63b-71a). "So that all should give great attention and thought to the words of the Eternal Lord" (Sefer HaChinuch).

Like its beginning so the ending of S'firah relates to the authority of the Oral Law. This affected not merely a matter of ritual or religion but matters of personal relations and even of Jewish kingship. "Neither a Moabite nor an Ammonite shall enter the congregation of Israel' (Devarim 23:4-5); they were unfit to join Israel because in their ingratitude for Avraham's chesed to their ancestor Lot, they would not extend assistance to his descendants when they were tired, thirsty and hungry" (Ramban). Oral law ruled that the ban existed only on the males; Ruth of Moav meriting being the Mother of the Davidic dynasty. David, legitimized by the Torah Sheb'al Peh, was born and died on Shavuot when we read Megillat Rut, the sefer yuchusin of King David, which is the majestic twin story of her acceptance of Israel and its God and of her chesed to the living and to the dead. Her Zman Matan Torah, a Torah of Chesed and Emet.

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

B'CHUKOTAI **Walking the Walk**

It is good for the body and good for the soul. It helps one lose weight, provides time for contemplation, is a favorite leisure activity, it can be entertaining - even edifying - and it costs nothing. In fact, there is no down side to it at all. It is the act of walking, or more colloquially, "taking a walk".

Walking is a universal human activity. It is a means of getting from one place to another, obviously. But it is more than that. It is so much a part of the essence of the human that when the Mishna refers to the human species, it uses the phrase "mechalchei shtayim", those who walk on two legs. Humans are almost unique in that they walk on two legs so that walking is part of our core identity.

The value of walking was brought home to me once when my physician, who had been preaching the need for exercise to me for years, finally gave up on formal exercise routines and the use of various gadgets and machines for physical fitness, and just prescribed two daily walks, at any pace, each at least twenty minutes in duration.

I have experienced further value in walking as the best means to really get to know a new city. In our travels, my wife and I have become familiar with cities as disparate as

Paris and Prague and Montreal and Moscow by purchasing guidebooks of walking tours and ambling along main roads and side streets. When we returned to New York City after many years living elsewhere, we renewed our acquaintance and our love for the city by taking frequent walks all over town. And of course, walking the streets of Jerusalem is not only a profoundly emotional experience, but we are told that every four cubits that one walks there is equivalent to one mitzva.

I know of many examples of famous walks and walkers in mythology, world literature, and history. Jewish tradition knows of many examples of great sages who were fond of walking, and they range from Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues, who walked among the ruins of the Temple in Jerusalem, to the Chazon Ish (Rabbi Abraham Isaiah Karelitz, the 20th century rabbinic scholar), who took daily walks around the sand dunes outside of Bnei Brak for health-related reasons, and also to experience moments of solitude and inspiration. I vividly remember being transfixed by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's description of the walks he took during his one visit to the Land of Israel, when he walked about at night and gazed at the star-filled heavens above the Holy Land.

It is fascinating to note that even the Almighty Himself is described as enjoying a daily walk, so to speak. "They (Adam and Eve) heard the sound of the HaShem Elokim walking about in the garden at the

breezy time of day..." (B'reishit 3:8)

It is no wonder, then, that this week's Torah portion, Parshat B'chukotai, begins with the phrase, "If you walk with My statutes and observe My commandments..." (Vayikra 26:3) Granted, many translations have it written otherwise: "If you follow My statutes" or "If you obey My statutes". But the literal meaning of the Hebrew text is definitely, "If you walk with My statutes". Clearly, the Torah prefers the verb "walk" because of all of its implications. Walking is an exquisitely spiritual activity, and walking in God's ways is the ultimate way to serve Him.

The body of commentary known as Midrash is a vast compilation of rabbinic exegesis of the Bible over many centuries. The largest single collection of such exegesis is known as Midrash Rabba. For much of my life, I have tried to at least sample a bit of that work every week, ever since my grandfather gave me a small pocket size version of that work for my Bar Mitzva. Thus, I discovered the opening passage of this week's Midrashic commentary long ago, and I reflect upon it frequently.

It reads, "If you walk in My statutes..." This bears on the text, "I considered my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies..." (T'hilim 119:59). King David said, "Sovereign of the Universe! Every day I would plan and decide upon taking a walk to a particular place or dwelling-house, but my feet always

brought me to synagogues and houses of study... Hence it is written, "...and I turned my feet unto Thy testimonies..."

King David too was fond of walking. At the simplest level, this Midrash means that although David often set out for other destinations, somehow he always ended up in sacred places. Others see deeper meanings in this passage. My own way of looking at it is that even when David set out for mundane and ordinary places, he somehow found God's spirit wherever he went. He realized that even ordinary places and plain dwellings can be as charged with the Divine Presence as the shul and study hall.

In our own journeys, be they brief strolls around the neighborhood or journeys of life, we have our preconceived destinations. But it is amazing how often we reach unanticipated final destinations. Fortunate are those who set out for worldly objectives and discover themselves, unintentionally and often against their will, in shuls and study halls. Even more fortunate are those who reach destinations which are secular or even profane and are able to bestow upon them a spiritual significance equal to the synagogue and study hall.

Interestingly, it is not only in contrast to the animal world that we are called "mechalchei shtayim". But our ability to walk is what distinguishes us from the angels as well. "And I have given to you the ability to walk among those that merely stand..."

(Zechariya 3:7) Angels only stand. They do not walk. They neither change nor grow. Humans are walkers. They never stay still, but are constantly moving; hopefully ever higher, ever nobler, and ever holier.

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: **ASHREI**

Kindness and Mercy for All

חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם ה', אֲרֹךְ אַפַּיִם וְגָדֹל חַסֵּד.
טוֹב ה' לְכֹל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו.

Meaning: translation...

Gracious and merciful is Hashem, slow to anger, and great in [bestowing] kindness. **Hashem is good to all; His mercies are on all His works.**

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

An Ideal To Emulate

Hashem's traits of kindness and compassion provide us with an ideal to emulate.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

Kindness and Mercy for All

The first part of the verse, TOV HASHEM LAKOL - Hashem is good

to all, refers to all of humanity, even those who rebel and contradict His will (Eitz Yosef). Unlike kings and popular leaders, whose kindness is typically reserved for those loyal to them, Hashem's kindness is extended to all creatures, even those who violate His will (Metsudat David). This is a trait which we highlight and glorify through emulation.

The second part of the verse, V'RACHAMAV AL KOL MAASAV - His mercies are on all His works, includes all other forms of life in Hashem's world, including animals, crawling creatures (Radak) and even blades of grass and flowers. Hashem embodies and exhibits absolute kindness to all creatures - human and animal, loyal ones and wicked ones - all of whom benefit from His world.

But this verse does more than describe Hashem's traits; it sets the paradigm for the way man should conduct himself in his own interactions (Iyun Tefila, cited in Siddur Otsar HaT'filos). Tomer Devorah teaches that "it is proper for man to emulate his Creator... for the essential aspect of the Supernal image and likeness is His deeds."

The ability to exhibit this Divine trait of compassion is inborn in us, because human beings are created in the Divine image. In fact, the Torah (D'varim 28:9) commands us V'HALACHTA BIDRACHAV - "and you shall go in His ways", meaning that it is our obligation to emulate the compassionate and life-giving ways of

Hashem. As the Rambam states: "Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is called Compassionate, so should you be compassionate; just as He is called Gracious, so should you be gracious; just as He is called Righteous, so should you be righteous; just as He is called Chassid - the One Who does loving-kindness - so should you be a chassid." (Sefer HaMitzvot, Mitvot Asei 8)

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Perfect Philanthropy

There is an extraordinarily wealthy philanthropist whose charity extends over a vast spectrum of needy people. Some have inherent problems that make it unlikely that they will ever be able to function without the benefactor's help.

Others just need a temporary boost, or perhaps an opportunity - a job or perhaps additional education. Some need medical help, some need food, some need a place to live.

Among the people this man helps, there are wonderful, warm, good-natured individuals just trying to do their best in a tough situation. There are also bitter, angry people, dysfunctional people, and even some outright unkind, uncaring people who would seem to arouse no pity.

However, the philanthropist gives to all. This is the mission he has carved out for his life. If there is a need he can fulfill, he does so. No one has to be ashamed to ask him for help. He will

never say, "Why should I help you?" He feels immense pity for those who are struggling, and even if their struggle leads them to bitterness and hardens their hearts, he will keep giving in the hopes that his kindness will help to soften them.

This is the mercy of Hashem. We can know that whoever we are, whatever our failings, He feels for us and wants nothing more than to give us the help we need to perform our mission in life. Even when we fail to use His gifts wisely, we are always in "His heart", and He will never cease to help us.

Word to the Wise:

Because G-d is a RACHUM (merciful), He is slow to anger (ERECH APAYIM). Therefore, punishment, although deserved, is delayed, allowing the opportunity over time for even the wicked to repent... (Siach Yitzchok)

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Effective Amulets

Last week we looked at some unusual medical remedies suggested by the Gemara and saw that they could only be accepted and elevated to the level of medical treatment if they had been checked and found to be effective.

This then leads us to the Talmudic discussion regarding amulets that have often been used for therapeutic purposes.

The Mishna (Shabbat 6:2) states that one cannot go out in place where there is no eruv while carrying an amulet not from an expert. This implies that one is

permitted to go outside with an amulet from an expert. The idea behind this is that a non-expert amulet cannot be relied upon and there is a fear that someone will take it off in the public thoroughfare and discard it. However if it is an expert amulet then he would not take it off and simply throw it away.

The Gemara (Shabbat 61) discusses how we define "expert" in relation to an amulet. An expert amulet is one that has successfully healed three people. However Rav Pappa said in order to permit carrying an amulet, the amulet need not have been checked three times itself. Rather if it was written by someone who has been proven to heal people through his amulets then any subsequent amulet that he writes is considered "expert" and can be carried.

There is no rational explanation as to how and why amulets work, nor why some are effective and others do not help. There is a famous story of a woman who asked Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, the author of the Noda BiYehuda, the Rav of Prague and one of the foremost poskim of the 18th century, to write her an amulet. He initially refused but she was persistent and eventually he agreed on the condition that she open it after a certain amount of time. If it was erased then she would be healed. At the appointed time the woman opened the amulet and saw that indeed it was erased and she was delighted and eventually got better. Some could claim that this was a miraculous event but we could explain this story in a more rational way that the Sage employed a knowledge of psychology and it was this encouragement that helped the woman to be healed.

Either way the Talmud presents two approaches to determining whether a

particular remedy works. One is specific to the remedy itself, while the other claims that since it was given by a proven expert he does not need to prove the efficacy of each of his remedies.

This could be employed to explain other more modern forms of natural medicine. Either we need to investigate each and every remedy or we can rely on the proven expert with whatever they give.

So what are the limits of natural medicine? More on this next week.

Excerpted with permission from

Gold from the Land of Israel

A New Light on the Weekly Portion from the Writings of

Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook

by **Rabbi Chanan Morrison**

URIM PUBLICATIONS, J'lem • NY •

website: ravkooktorah.org

Why Exile?

Adapted from Ein Ayah vol. IV, p. 2

The Torah warns us that if we fail to listen to God and keep His mitzvot, we will be punished with famine, war, and ultimately, exile.

I will scatter you among the nations, and keep the sword drawn against you. Your land will remain desolate, and your cities in ruins. (Vayikra 26:33)

The Purpose of Israel in their Land

Why should the Jewish people be punished with exile? To answer this question, we must first understand the true significance of residing in the Land of Israel. If the goal of the Jewish people is to bring ethical monotheism to the world, would their mission not

be more effectively fulfilled when they are scattered among the nations?

There is, however, a unique reason for the Jewish people to live in the Land of Israel. They need to dwell together in the Land so that there will be a nation in the world upon whom God's honor rests; a nation for whom divine providence is revealed in its history and circumstances; a nation that will be a source for all peoples to absorb knowledge of God and His ways. Their goal is to demonstrate that divine morality can fill an entire nation - a morality that enlightens not only the private lives of individuals, but also guides the public paths of nations.

For the Jewish people to fulfill their national destiny, God's seal must be placed on the people as a whole. The nation must recognize its special mission as God's people living in His land. When the Jewish people as a whole abandoned God, even though many individuals still kept some of the mitzvot, the nation had lost their distinctive mark. The land was no longer recognizable as God's land, and the nation was no longer recognizable as God's nation. They saw themselves as a people like all others.

At that point, the Jewish people required exile. They needed to wander among the nations, stripped of all national assets. During this exile, they discovered that they are different and distinct from all other peoples. They realized that the essence of their nationhood contains a special quality; and that special quality is God's Name

that is associated with them.

Staying in Babylonia

We find in the Talmud (Shabbat 41a) a startling opinion regarding the nature of exile. When fourth-century scholar Rabbi Zeira wished to ascend to the Land of Israel, he needed to evade his teacher, Rabbi Yehuda. For Rabbi Yehuda taught that anyone leaving Babylonia for the Land of Israel transgresses the positive command, "They will be carried to Babylon, and there they shall stay, until the day that I remember them" (Yirmiyahu 27:22).

[Rabbi Zeira, however, disagreed with this interpretation. He held that the prophecy only referred to vessels of the holy Temple.]

Why did Rabbi Yehuda think that moving to the Land of Israel was so improper?

Babylonia at that time was the world center of Torah study. Great academies were established in Neharde'a, Sura and Pumbedita. Jewish life in Babylonia was centered around the holiness of Torah. This great revival of Torah learning instilled a profound recognition of the true essence of the Jewish people. As such, Babylonia was the key to the redemption of Israel and their return to their land. Only when the Jewish people fully assimilate this lesson will the exile have fulfilled its purpose, and the Jewish people will be able to return to their land.

Rabbi Yehuda felt that individuals, even if they have already prepared themselves sufficiently for the holiness of the Land of Israel, should nonetheless remain in Babylonia. Why? The object of exile is not to correct the individual, but to correct the nation. The true significance of the Jewish people living in the Land of Israel - as an entire nation bearing the banner of the Rock of Israel - must not be obscured by the return of righteous individuals to the Land.

For Rabbi Yehuda, each individual Jew is like a Temple vessel. A vessel cannot fulfill its true purpose by itself, without the overall framework of a functioning Temple. So too, an individual can only join in the renaissance of Israel in their Holy Land when the entire nation has been restored in its Land, via divine redemption.

[Maimonides ruled that "Just as one may not leave the Land of Israel, so too one may not leave Babylonia" (Hilchot Melachim 5:12). It is not clear, however, whether the prohibition to leave Babylonia included ascending to the Land of Israel or not (see Kesef Mishneh ad. loc, Pe'at Hashulchan, Eretz Hemdah pp. 30-34). With the gradual decline of Babylonia as the center of Jewish scholarship during the Middle Ages, this prohibition became irrelevant, and is not mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch. See also Pitchei Teshuvah (Even Ha'Ezer 75:6), who ruled that the mitzva of ascending to the Land of Israel applies to all times.]

OzTorah

Rabbi Dr. Raymond Apple

The opening verse of the sidra concerns itself with walking: "If you walk in My statutes and faithfully keep My commandments..." (Vayikra 26:3). The Sifra makes this observation: "This means that you should toil in the study of Torah". The comment seems enigmatic. One does not usually associate walking with toil.

However, there are many ways to walk. One can stroll, one can stride, one can struggle. The Sifra is urging us to adopt the third method, especially since "walking in God's statutes" is halacha - the word for Jewish law that derives from the verb "to walk". Engaging in halacha is never just a stroll in which one dawdles along without any real direction or design. It is far more serious than that. Nor is it always a stride, though that already indicates more determination and energy. Halacha requires the passionate commitment of the whole being. It often doesn't come overnight. A person reaches full engagement with halacha by stages.

Stage one is strolling - one tries it out. Stage two is striding - one moves more earnestly. Stage three is struggling - making an all-out effort. It's not easy; that's why it is a struggle. An analogy might be the four sons on Seder night. Starting at the bottom of the list, a person can move from being someone who does not know how to

ask, to a tam who is just beginning to get involved... then decide to struggle with the difficulties, and end up as a wise son who is fully committed and finds halacha an absorbing, exhilarating way of life.

Maharal on the Sedra

A Blessing in Disguise

Vayikra 26:32 - And I [ANI] will lay waste the Land, and your enemies will be desolate upon it.

Rashi: This is a benefit for Israel! The enemies will not find contentment in the Land of Israel for it will be desolate of its inhabitants.

Gur Arye: Hashem warned Israel [26:21] that He would deliver seven blows, corresponding to their sins. If they still do not listen [26:27], He will deliver seven more, all in the Land, whose purpose is that they should repent. If they still do not listen, He will cast us out [26:33]. The desolation of our verse would have been an eighth blow, followed by more blows associated with the exile. The desolation is a blessing interposed between the seven blows that precede it and the blows of the exile. Note the emphasis of ANI [I], Myself, for I am abundantly merciful. Similarly [26:41], "Also I will walk with them casually and bring them...", I Myself, comments Rashi, this too is a benefit to Israel in the midst of the curses. There is no bad from Hashem, may He be blessed,

only good, and the person, from the aspect of his attributes, brings the bad upon himself. The exile itself [26:33] is not one of the seven blows but the beginning of the cleansing process which is ultimately for the benefit of Israel.

MDK: At first glance, the blows Israel will suffer for their sins appear to be a very long list without a logical sequence. The "sevenfold" punishment [26:21] refers to the seven punishments Israel would endure while still in the Land, each an opportunity to change their evil ways. The eighth, that the Land would remain desolate, looks like a curse but is really a blessing, for no other nation would flourish and settle there, as we have seen in our time. The remaining curses pertain to exile.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr

Dr Kuhr is the author of *Lion Cub of Prague - Genesis*. The next volume on *Exodus and Leviticus* is in press.

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

Following up on last week's column on D'VEIKIM (two words, last letter of the first is the same as the first letter of the second and if one is not careful, one of the letters gets swallowed by the other).

Following is number of occurrences in Tanach. Number is distorted by doubles, and sometimes the first word has an ETNACHTA, so the letters don't really stick. Also, These go by the way we pronounce the letter - not necessarily the way they are supposed to be pronounced.

GIMEL-GIMEL (DAG GADOL, from Yona) Total of 7 in Tanach.

DALET-DALET, 71 in Tanach. B'YAD DAVID.

BET-VAV (BET at the end of a word, without a DAGESH - sounded like a V, and VAV also sounded like a V - although it really is supposed to be sounded like a W) ZAHAV VA-CHESEF, gold and silver. Many more.

ZAYIN-ZAYIN. LIVSHI OZ Z'RO'A in Yeshayahu - only one in Tanach.

CHET-CHET. ORACH CHAYIM. 60-ish in Tanach - not all actual.

YUD-YUD. Thousands, but not clear if this is a classic D'VEIKIM situation.

LAMED-LAMED. YAGEIL LIBAM. Over 1000 in Tanach. More sometime

Pirkei Avot - 4th perek

[יט] רבי ינאי אומר: אין בידנינו לא משלות הרשעים ואף לא מיסורי הצדיקים.

R' Yanai says: It is not in our power to explain either the peace of the wicked or the suffering of the righteous.

In the Koren-OU siddur with translation and commentary by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, there is a beautiful analogy to start us off to understand the famous conundrum of TZADIK V'RA LO, RASHA V'TOV LO.

"Seen from beneath, a Turkish carpet looks like a meaningless tangle of threads. Only when we view it from the other side do we see its intricately designed pattern. So it is with the justice of events... In other words, it depends on how you look at things. If a person thinks that this life is all that there is, then the question is a good one - why do bad things happen to good people (and vice versa). However, with a belief - a real, honest, firm belief in the World to Come - and not just another existence like this one with which we are familiar - but a vastly greater infinite existence than our current world... and with the belief - again, real and solid belief in Reward and Punishment that includes both OLAM HAZEH and OLAM HABA - then there really isn't much of a question.

Well that sounds simple enough. If one believes, then he can understand the seeming injustice of things that

happen in this world. So what is the mishna saying to us, when it says that it is not within our power to understand...?

Every morning as part of Birchot HaTorah, we recite a gemara that describes mitzvot and courses of conduct for which "we eat the fruits in this world but whose full reward comes in the World to Come". This might complicate things. Some reward for a righteous person is to be enjoyed in this world too. Do we always see it? Not always.

We might believe something and we might accept it, and learn to live with it - but this does not mean that it is within our power to really understand the way things are in this world.

The beliefs need to go hand-in-hand with an unwavering trust and confidence in G-d that He knows what He is doing. Our minds - even the greatest ones, are finite. Only G-d is infinite and that is why it is not within our grasp to understand many things that happen to us and those around us.

Belief, trust, faith, confidence... that's a tall order. But THAT is within our grasp. That is our challenge and that is our constant quest. Belief is not a static quantity; it is a dynamic force that has the potential to grow and grow and encompass more and more of our life's experiences. This is what G-d "asks" of us - not much more.

ParshaPix explanations

- ☀️ Prominently at the top of the ParshaPix is a graphic of rain falling from a cloudy sky (so too the bullets on this page!), onto the ground, from which a plant is growing. To the right of that image is a watch. Together they represent G-d's promise of beneficial rain in its proper time and that the ground will yield its bounty. (Add to that the unusual rain we've been receiving even as these Torah Tidbits are being prepared for publication. [Serious note: The mishna in Taanit says that if it hasn't rained until Nisan (or through Nisan), then rain after Nisan is a negative thing, a sign of G-d's (further) anger with the people. This year, B"H, we received a decent amount of rainfall (although many said VAANEINU all the way up to Pesach), so we need not consider the rain we've recently received other than beneficial.]
- ☀️ To the right of the watch is another part of the promise - that we will eat bread in abundance.
- ☀️ And below the oven and breads is another part of the promise, peace in the Land. Peace is promised on two levels - peace from our enemies and neighbors and internal peace. Just read the newspaper or listen to the radio and you will see

and hear reminders of our desperate need for both kinds of peace.

- ☀️ The non-mathematical statement that 5 is greater than 100 and that 100 is greater than 10,000, is yet another part of the promise for our following Torah and Mitzvot. Namely, that if our enemy were to attack us, five of us would repel 100 and 100 would chase away a myriad (10,000, that is).
- ☀️ Beneath that is a former TTriddle. Zodiac symbol for Taurus, the Bull, represents newborn calves, which are tithed separately from the other two kinds of kosher animals. The sign for Aries represents lambs and that of Capricorn is for goats. The newborns of goats and sheep can be combined for the purpose of MAASEIR B'HEIMA, because both kinds of animals are called by the collective term TZON.
- ☀️ Speaking of tithing one's newborn animals, along the right side of the ParshaPix is a lineup of ten lambs, counted from top to bottom. The 10th one to pass under the shepherd's crook is designated as holy, hence the star-burst around it.
- ☀️ In the lower left is a family, with each member marked with their ERECH (value) in original shekels. 50 for a male between 20-60, 30 for a female in the same age range. 20 for a boy between 5-20 and 10 for a girl that age. The baby is

marked 5?3 because we cannot tell if it is a boy or a girl. Boys from one month to five years are valued at 5 shekels and girls that age are 3 shekels. Not shown are seniors with a value of 15 and 10, male and female respectively.

- ☀️ 125% is the total amount one pays to redeem that which carries with it an addition of chomesh. (See Sedra Summary for further details.)
- ☀️ The fellow lifting the barbell with ease must be very strong, as in CHAZAK, CHAZAK...
- ☀️ That leaves the UZI, as in the opening words of the haftara.
- ☀️ At the bottom of the PP is the point of a fountain pen. It's called a nib. In Hebrew, the term is TZIPOREN (which also means fingernail and clove (the spice). The haftara speaks of the sins of Yehuda being inscribed with an iron pen and a nib of diamond (?).
- ☀️ The picture of a past US presidential contender is to refer you to Rabbi Shmuel Goldin's column on an usual word that occurs seven times in the Tochacha... and nowhere else in the Torah.
- ☀️ The tree in the upper-left of the PP is the Juniper, a member of the cypress family. There are 50-60 species of Juniper. Juniper is the translation of the word in this week's haftara ARAR, as in like an ARAR in the ARAVA...
- ☀️ ARAR is spelled AYIN-REISH-

AYIN-REISH. When a native English speaker tries to pronounce ARAR, it comes out like the name of the letter R doubled. As in the logo of Rolls Royce. Unfortunately, there is a bus stop on Rechov Arar in Modiin, from where one can get a bus or mini-van to Jerusalem. Why unfortunately? Because if one ever takes a taxi to that stop, he must ask the driver for Arar and get laughed at because of his American accent.

- ☀️ The carnation is TZIPOREN in Hebrew. As is a fingernail, talon of a bird, the spice cloves, and a pen nib, as mentioned in the haftara and earlier in these PP explanations
- ☀️ That leaves the cuff-link made from an old Israeli stamp Unexplained.

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

Lesson # 561

Not to possess and/or use dishonest weights and measures

In previous lessons we discussed rules specifying that one may not deceive another person as to discrepancies in price or quality of an object. In the case of discrepancy in price, the remedy depends upon the amount of the discrepancy. In the case of adulteration of the produce, the

remedy depends upon the percentage of adulteration. In this lesson the deceit arises from dishonest weights, dishonest measures, and erroneous counting of the cash paid or cash given in change, for example, the buyer giving the seller \$12 instead of \$11. In Shulhan Aruch there is a chapter entitled "One may not deceive in measures and weights". The title of the chapter also includes the obligation to appoint officers to supervise measurements and prices.

There are two distinct commandments regarding possessing dishonest weights and measures. There is a positive commandment to possess honest weights and measures; and there is a negative commandment not to possess false weights and measures. The positive commandment appears in Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive mitzva 208, and the prohibition is Lav (Lo Taaseh) 272. The reason that a short weight or measure must not be in possession of a merchant is that someone else in his store might use it not knowing that it is not accurate. The community laws are often controlling when it comes to weights and measures. The prohibition applies if one short-weighs, short measures or short counts any person, Jew or Gentile. The violation of possessing accurate weights and measures applies even if the community has inspectors and they have overlooked any dishonest scales and measuring devices, whether intentionally or unintentionally. However Hashem knows who is honest and who is not.

If the seller has made an error, whether

deliberately or unintentionally, in weighing, measuring or counting out the thing sold, the buyer may request Beit Din to have the seller make restitution of the amount short-weighted, short measured or short-counted. For example, the buyer orders from the seller 50 pencils and receives only 48; or he orders 50 pounds of apples and receives only 48 pounds, or he orders 50 feet of silk material and receives only 48 feet. In these cases the seller must make good the shortage by delivering to the buyer, in these examples, two pencils, two pounds of apples or two feet of silk. The laws apply whether the error is large or small. The sale remains in effect and may not be rescinded by the buyer. Similarly, if the buyer pays by counting out the money and he erroneously counts out more than the price, the seller must return such surplus to the buyer. All that has been said about the seller returning such surplus to the buyer also applies in the event the buyer has received any over-counting, over-measuring or over-weighing, or has under-counted the payment in cash or received an over-counting in change. There is no time limit to such return whether the wronged party is the buyer or the seller.

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

• The Chafetz Chayim was being driven by a Jewish wagon driver, who asked him: "Rebbe, I don't have time to sit and learn. What can I do to earn

a place in the World to Come?"

"Why don't you lend out money to people at no interest?" suggested the Chafetz Chayim. The wagon driver laughed: "Rebbe, I am struggling myself to make ends meet. I don't have money to lend others."

"What you should do," said the Chafetz Chayim, "is to set aside a few pennies each week. Soon this will add up to something significant, and then you will have enough money to extend a loan to a family which needs money to buy food for Shabbos. Gradually, the amount you have available to lend out will increase."

The wagon driver did as suggested by the Chafetz Chayim, and in the course of time his free loan fund grew into a substantial one, with which he was able to lend to others in need.

• One of the students of the Chevron Yeshiva, an orphan, came to the Rosh Yeshiva, R' Aharon Cohen, and told him that he had just become engaged.

"And did you give your fiancée a gift?" asked R' Aharon.

"No, Rebbe," replied the young man. "I don't have any money to buy any gift."

"I want you to go to a certain jewelry store, select a gold watch for your fiancée, and tell the jeweler to bill me for it," said R' Aharon.

"It was at that time that I felt that I still had a father," the student later recalled.



Last issue's (B'HAR) TTtriddles:

[1] Food with the good wine

Food is OCHEL in Hebrew. ALEF-VAV-CHAF-LAMED. Numeric value, 1+6+20+30 = 57, the number of p'sukim in Parshat B'har. With the good wine is IM HAYAYIN HATOV in Hebrew. AYIN-MEM (70+40=110), HEI-YUD-YUD-NUN (5+10+10+50=75), HEI-TET-VAV-VET (5+9+6+2 = 22), for a total of 207, the gimatriya of B'HAR (2+5+200). Food with the good wine = 57 p'sukim in B'har.

[2] Raphus cucullatus

Scientific name for the dodo bird. The word DODO, meaning his uncle, occurs 12 times in Tanach, 5 times spelled DALET-VAV-DALET-VAV and 7 times DALET-DALET-VAV. In B'har we find O DODO O VEN DODO (concerning redeeming houses or land sold off until Yovel). Hebrew-English sound alike often show up as TTtriddles. The story of the dodo bird is a sad and important story.

(from Wikipedia) The dodo was a flightless bird endemic to the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius. Related to pigeons and doves, it stood about a meter tall, weighing about 20 kilograms, lived on fruit, and nested on the ground. The dodo has been extinct since the mid-to-late 17th century. It is commonly used as the archetype of an extinct species because its extinction occurred during

recorded human history and was directly attributable to human activity.

[3] It's not like a **month of Sundays**

Vayikra 25:8 - And you shall count seven sabbaths of years to you, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty and nine years. When you read this - especially in Hebrew, with so many words beginning with SHINs, it sounds like a long period of time with many Shabbats. What came to mind was the expression "a month of Sundays". That idiom means a long period of time, of no particular length, although it could mean 30 weeks. Some dictionaries add that the long periods of time referred to a particularly dreary time, because there were many restrictions on entertaining behavior on Sunday in many countries. Just a weird association in the TTriddle-head.

[4] **2-Sh'mot, 4-Vayikra, 2-Bamidbar**

B'HAR SINAI. An important and well-known phrase. It occurs twice each in the books of Sh'mot and Bamidbar and four times in Vayikra - and that's it for Tanach. In addition to these 8 occurrences of B'har Sinai, there are another 9 HAR SINAIs, some with and some without other prefixes.

[5] **As Tonto would say: No write, him talk**

Although it is not politically correct to stereotype the way Native Americans

(American Indians, as they used to be called) speak English, those of us above a certain age who grew up with the Lone Ranger and his faithful sidekick can hear Tonto saying things like No write, him talk. What does that mean for Parshat B'har? There is a "significant K'TIV and K'RI in the sedra concerning to spellings of LO. LAMED-ALEF means no and LAMED-VAV means him or his. In speaking about a city with a wall around it, the Torah describes it as a city ASHER LO CHOMA. The word LO is written LAMED-ALEF (no write - K'TIV) but should be read as if it were spelled LAMED-VAV (him talk - K'RI). Big difference. Read as written, we have a city that has no wall. This is NOT what the Torah is saying. Read as we are supposed to read it, the Torah is referring to a city that has a wall to it.

[6] **HaRav Haber's sedra? (no, Emor was)**

HaRav in Hebrew is an anagram of B'HAR. So is Haber. So maybe Rabbi Haber's sedra is B'har. Except the Rabbi Haber that I know, who lives in the Golan and is in charge of Chabad activities in the north, had his Bar Mitzva on Parshat Emor. Happy Birthy IH.

[7] **Betzalel I I**

This is the address in Jerusalem of the Gerard BEHAR theater. And the Unexplained element in last week's ParshaPix is a photo of the Behar theatre. (See how even-handed we

are, using both the American and the British spelling.)

[8] **Days - Years = 80?**

With the counting of the days of the Omer, the Torah - in Parshat Emor - uses the command USFARTEM LACHEM, and you (plural) shall count for yourselves... For the years of a seven times seven Yovel cycle, the command is V'SAFARTA L'CHA, and you (singular - referring the the people as a unit, represented by their Sanhedrin) shall count for yourself... Take the letters of the command to count days and subtract from it the letters of the command to count the Omer and you are left with two MEMs (specifically, MEM SOFITs). MEM is 40 and two MEMs is 80, hence Days - Years = 80. [The command to count the Omer is to all Jews (required of men, optional for women) - hence, the plural form -TEM and LACHEM. The command to count years until Yovel is to the Jewish People as a single entity - as mentioned earlier, represented by its (our) Sanhedrin - hence, the singular form -TA and L'CHA.]

B'CHUKOTAI Adapted from
Unlocking the Torah Text
by **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

A Casual Curse

Context: As Parshat Bechukotai and the book of Vayikra draw to a close, God delivers a stinging rebuke and warning to the Israelites. Known as the Tochacha HaKetana, the small rebuke (in contrast

to a second, larger rebuke found in the book of Devarim), this section contains a series of frighteningly prophetic descriptions of the tragedies that will befall the nation should they fail to follow God's ways.

At the core of this Tochacha, a word is found that, in this conjugation, appears nowhere else in the Torah text. Here, however, this term, KERI, is repeated no less than seven times within the span of twenty verses. According to most authorities (see below), this term apparently connotes "casualness" or "happencance" and is derived from the root KARA, to happen.

The passages of the Tochacha within which the term KERI appears are:

1. "And if you will walk with me KERI..."
2. "And if in spite of these things you will not be chastised towards me, and you will walk with me KERI..."
3. "And then I [God], too, will walk with you with KERI..."
4. "And if with all this you will not hearken unto Me, and you will walk with Me with KER..."
5. "And I will walk with you with a fury of KERI..."
6. "And they will confess their sin and the sin of their fathers, for the treachery with which they have betrayed Me, and also for having walked with Me with KERI."
7. "And I, too, shall walk with them with KERI..."

Question: By using the term KERI so prominently at both ends of the Tochacha's equation, in both the

description of the nation's possible transgression and in the description of God's possible response, the Torah apparently emphasizes a critical idea, central to the very nature of sin and punishment. If we could only understand this concept, the text seems to say, we could finally recognize where we go wrong. We could strike to the core of our failures and their consequences, finding a way to break the recurring, tragic cycle that plagues our relationship with the Divine.

And yet, the text remains frustratingly unclear.

Why, at this point, does the Torah suddenly introduce, for the first and only time, the word KERI?

Once introduced, why is this term repeated so often in such a short span of text?

Above all, within the context of the Tochacha, in the realm of both sin and punishment, what does the word KERI actually mean?

Approaches:

A. Confronted with this puzzling term and its use in the Tochacha, numerous commentaries propose a wide variety of interpretations.

Both Rashi and his grandson, the Rashbam, for example, introduce a basic translation upon which most commentaries build. These scholars translate the word KERI to mean "casual" or "inconsistent" (derived, as stated above, from the root KARA, to happen). If the nation sins by worshiping God in an erratic, inconsistent manner, Rashi and the Rashbam explain, God will respond in kind and will relate to the nation haphazardly and unpredictably,

as well.

A number of other commentaries, including Rabbeinu Bachya and the Ohr HaChayim, choose a related but different path. The term KERI, these scholars maintain, describes a flawed world outlook that can lead to immeasurable sin. An individual who sees the world in a fashion of KERI perceives no pattern to the events unfolding around him. In place of Divine Providence, this individual observes only random coincidence; and in place of punishment for sin, accidental misfortune. For such an individual, tshuva (return to the proper path) becomes increasingly unattainable. In a haphazard world governed by arbitrary forces, after all, there exists little incentive for change.

Going a step further, the Ohr HaChayim perceives in God's reaction - "And then I [God], too, will walk with you with KERI..." - a carefully calibrated "measure for measure" response to the nation's failing. If the people refuse to see a divinely ordained pattern in the world around them, God will withdraw, making it even more difficult for them to perceive His presence. The punishments to follow will seem even more random, bearing no obvious connection to the nation's sins. The people's failure to recognize God's imminence will thus prove frighteningly prophetic, for God will respond with "distance".

A group of other scholars, Onkelos chiefly among them, diverge from the above explanations entirely and explain the term KERI to mean "stubbornness" or "harshness". If the nation stubbornly refuses to obey based upon God's law, God's response will be harsh and unforgiving.

B. A clearer understanding of the

puzzling term KERI and its repeated use in the Tochacha can be gained if we consider the basic approach of Rashi and the Rashbam (who interpret the term to mean a casual approach to God's will) in light of the "rules" that govern our own life experiences.

Many years ago, I asked the participants in one of my synagogue classes to name the one most important component in any successful interpersonal relationship. Expecting a plethora of suggestions, I was surprised when they unanimously responded with the one word which I had earlier defined for myself as my own answer: trust.

Our associations with each other, from partnerships to friendships to marriages, can endure many blows and setbacks. One wound, however, invariably proves fatal: the total loss of trust. When mutual trust is gone and cannot be regained; when the relationship no longer feels safe and secure; when each participant no longer believes that the other consistently has his partner's best interests at heart, the relationship is doomed.

God thus turns to the Israelites and proclaims: "And if you will walk with me KERI..."

If I find that you are deliberately inconsistent in your commitment to Me; if I find that you are only at My door when you choose to be; if I find that I cannot trust you to seek My presence and relate to Me continually; then I will respond in kind...

"And then I [God], too, will walk with you with KERI..."

You will no longer be able to count on My continuing presence in your lives. I will distance Myself and not be there

when you expect Me to be. Our relationship will become casual and inconsistent; all trust will be lost...

God will forgive many failings and sins, but when we lose His trust, the punishments of the Tochacha are the result. ❖

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*

B'chukotai & Perek 4

Many meaningful interpretations have been presented by the commentators to the statement expressed by Shimon Ben Azai in Pirkei Avot (4;2) "For the reward of a Mitzva is a Mitzva".

Two often quoted interpretations are expounded by Rabbeinu Ovadia MiBartenura as follows:

1) Heaven assists one who has performed one Mitzva to do another so that he will merit receiving rewards for both of them. (In his own earlier presentation of this concept, Rabbeinu Yona reminds us that the ultimate reward for the first Mitzva as well as for those that follow are in the future life, in Olam Haba).

2) The pleasure that one experiences from the rewards for doing one Mitzva is itself considered a separate Mitzva, and one is rewarded for both, for the original Mitzva performed and also for the enjoyment experienced for having performed it.

Perhaps one may say that a very different but meaningful explanation of

Shimon Ben Azai's statement can be found in the opening P'sukim of our Parsha: "If you will go in my Chukim and observe my Mitzvot and perform them, I will bring your rains in their appropriate time and the land will bring forth its produce and the fruit tree will give its fruit... You will dwell securely in your land, I will give peace in the land and you will lie down and no one will frighten you".

Hashem is clearly telling us that if we all learn the Torah and observe the Mitzvot (and thereby spiritually elevate ourselves to come close to Him), He will enable us to dwell in our land, in Israel, in peace and He will provide for all our needs.

Does this sound like Shimon Ben Azai's statement; The reward of a Mitzva is a Mitzva". The reward for the observance of Mitzvot in this world is the ability to dwell in Israel which itself is a Mitzva, (and to go even further) which enables one to do more Mitzvot. What a Privilege!

*Rabbi Yitzchak s. Handel Ph.D
Dean, Touro College in Israel*

Parsha Points to Ponder

by **Rabbi Dov Lipman** *(condensed version)*

1) The Torah relates that if we follow G-D's commands then we will experience great success including victory over enemies. This is captured by the image of five people chasing 100 and 100 chasing 10,000 (26:8). Why are the five people successful in chasing 20 times their number while the 100 chase 100 times its number?

Da'at Zekainim MiBaalei Hatosfot suggests two possible answers.

1) The power of prayer is such that more people praying leads to greater success and, therefore, the 100 people giving chase and praying will have greater success than the five.

2) The Torah says AND 100 FROM THEM (MIKEM) WILL CHASE 10,000. 100 FROM THEM can mean 100 from those five meaning those 5 people 100 times over will chase 10,000. That means 500 will chase 10,000 which is the same 1 to 20 ratio as the 5 to 100.

2) The Torah begins the curses with the words AND IF YOU DON'T LISTEN TO ME (26:14). The Torah never said IF YOU DO LISTEN TO ME with regard to the blessings so why does it shift to this different concept of not LISTENING for the curses?

The Ohr HaChayim answers that the opening words of the Parsha, IF YOU WALK WITH MY LAWS is interpreted by all to mean IF YOU LEARN MY TORAH. Learning Torah is the same as listening to G-D's words since the Torah is G-D's message to us. Therefore, DON'T LISTEN TO ME is the opposite of WALK WITH MY LAWS.