

Candles (earliest)	Bamidbar	Havdala	next week
7:01 (6:09)	Yerushalayim	8:19	7:05 / 8:23
7:18 (6:11)	S'derot	8:20	7:22 / 8:25
7:16 (6:09)	Gush Etzion	8:19	7:20 / 8:23
7:18 (6:11)	Raanana	8:22	7:22 / 8:26
7:17 (6:10)	Beit Shemesh/RBS	8:20	7:21 / 8:24
7:19 (6:12)	Netanya	8:22	7:23 / 8:27
7:18 (6:11)	Rehovot	8:21	7:22 / 8:25
7:14 (6:10)	Be'erSheva/Otniel	8:19	7:18 / 8:23
7:17 (6:10)	Modi'in/Chashmona'im	8:20	7:21 / 8:25
7:01 (6:11)	Petach Tikva	8:21	7:05 / 8:26
7:01 (6:09)	Maale Adumim	8:19	7:05 / 8:23
7:17 (6:11)	Ginot Shomron	8:21	7:21 / 8:25
7:16 (6:09)	Gush Shiloh	8:19	7:20 / 8:24
7:16 (6:09)	K4 & Hevron	8:19	7:20 / 8:23
7:16 (6:10)	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:19	7:20 / 8:24
7:18 (6:11)	Yad Binyamin	8:21	7:22 / 8:25
7:18 (6:12)	Ashkelon	8:21	7:22 / 8:26
7:07 (6:10)	Tzfat	8:21	7:12 / 8:26

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - BAMIDBAR - 9:02pm

**Ranges are 10 days, WED-FRI
21 Iyar - 1 Sivan • May 25 - June 3**

Earliest Talit & T'filin	4:40-4:36am
Sunrise	5:38-5:35am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:24-8:22am)	9:06-9:05am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:40-9:390am)	10:16-10:16am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	12:36pm-12:37¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	1:11-1:13pm
Plag Mincha	6:07¼-6:12¼pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 7:35-7:40pm)	7:40-7:46pm

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It is indeed unfortunate that our greatest experts are those who know, not what should be done, but what has, or what should have been done.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

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

More Word of the Month Rosh Chodesh Sivan cannot fall on a MON, THU, or Shabbat. LO BaHaZ (or, we can say ZaHaV). Those are the three days of the week that we read the Torah without an extra reason. R"Ch Sivan, then, always brings Torah to a day that would be without Torah reading. Not common. Just an observation.

Alvin Kelly

Listen to me, Fischel

186,400 shoppers a month?

Which father of a Nasi corresponds to Yitzchak Avinu

MicroUlpan: sunflower חמנית
cyclamen רקפת
poppy פרג

You can take Galil out of the man, but...

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LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

And yet, think about the explanation for the well-known pasuk in Yirmiyahu (2:2, well known not only from Tanach but from a haftara, the Rosh HaShana davening, and a song).

...בה אמר ה' זכרתי לך זנסד לענייך
אהבת פלולתניך לכתת אנורי במדבר
בארץ לא זרועה:

...thus said G-d: I remember you, the devotion of your youth, your love like a bride, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.

Commentaries explain this partial pasuk differently, but one school of thought is that G-d looks at us fondly for our following Him through the Midbar. We are giving credit, so to speak, for accepting upon ourselves the harsh conditions of the wilderness at G-d's command.

This does not whitewash the behavior of the people, as indicated above, but it does show us G-d's attitude, so to speak, towards His nation.

Which brings us to Yom Yerushalayim. In our own time, we not only followed Him through the wilderness, but into the Land (again), its physical conditions leaving a lot to be desired. The establishment of the State of Israel was accompanied by a murderous onslaught from our neighbors. And that has been repeated - as we know well - over and over again.

Yet we stay and are committed to

remain and thrive in the land where G-d wants us to be.

Sounds like a KAL VACHOMER coming on...

If G-d was fond of us for following Him through the wilderness in which He did not want us to live, and in which we "angered" Him repeatedly... How much more so must He be fond of us for following His mitzvot and living in His Land, and trying to build it up according to the principles of the Torah. (Yes, we are talking in ideals, not completely in reality.)

Yom Yerushalayim expresses a mutual love between G-d and His people - His love for us as manifested by the miraculous victory of the Six Day War and the reunification of Jerusalem, and our love for Him by our striving to make Jerusalem and all of Israel the most proper venue for a Torah way of life.

Let us also keep in mind that Shavuot is not just the commemoration and celebration of the receiving of the Torah, but it also celebrates our coming to live in Eretz Yisrael and the building of the Beit HaMikdash. Yom HaBikurim - a nickname of Shavuot, marks the beginning of the Bikurim-bringing season. We received the Torah outside of Eretz Yisrael, but the mitzva of Bikurim is only for Eretz Yisrael and only when the Beit HaMikdash stands. Shavuot is truly the symbol of the end goal of the Exodus and of the reason we exist.

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Bamidbar

34th of 54 sedras;
First of 10 in Bamidbar

Written on 263 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 3rd

30 Parshiyot; 23 open, 7 closed, ranks 4th

159 p'sukim - ranks 3rd (3rd in Bamidbar)

1823 words - ranks 13th (4th in Bamidbar)

7393 letters - ranks 9th (3rd in Bamidbar)

Note the difference in rank from p'sukim to words. BaMidbar's p'sukim are among the shortest in the Torah - average: 11.5 words/pasuk.

Compare: Vayelech: 18.4 (longest p'sukim),
Book of Bamidbar: 12.7, the Torah: 13.7

MITZVOT

Of the 17 sedras with none of the Taryag (613) mitzvot, Bamidbar is the largest.

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.

Kohen - First Aliya 19 p'sukim - 1:1-19

[P> 1:1 (19)] The command from G-d is to count the people,

specifically the males from 20 years and up. 20 is the Torah's age for military service. Assisting in the census are Aharon and a representative of each tribe. The command came a year and a fortnight out of Egypt, on Rosh Chodesh Iyar 2449. The census was carried out as commanded.

SDT: Commentaries point out that the command to count the people was given to Moshe and Aharon (as opposed to just Moshe) because the census was done by collecting half-shekels from the people. Since money was involved, it is not proper to have only one person dealing with the matter - even if that person is Moshe Rabeinu! This became the ethical standard of dealing with public funds.

On the other hand... Another commentator suggests that this census was not done with shekels, but rather with a direct head count. Although we learn that it is improper, and even potentially dangerous, to count people directly, in this case there was a direct command from G-d to count the people. Hence, no harm would befall them during the carrying out of these Divine orders. This, in contrast to Ki Tisa, where the Torah says, "WHEN you count, then you MUST collect the half-shekel, etc. There, the language in the Torah implies that the counting was optional or practical, but not obligatory. Therefore, the indirect method was necessary.

K'RU'EI HA'EIDA, a term for

leaders of the people, is written with a YUD in place of the VAV as in the word's pronunciation. Baal HaTurim says that we can look at the YUD as a chopped VAV, to tell us that among the leaders was a "not so worthy" individual. He says that Shlumiel b. Tzuri-shadai, the leader of Shimon, was Zimri b. Salu, who caused G-d's anger to kill many thousands of people, until Pinchas's act put an end to Zimri (and to the plague). Having G-d's name in his name didn't help him. Note that there is a broken VAV in the Pinchas story, the VAV of BRITI SHALOM. Could be a REMEZ- level connection.

Here is the list of the leaders of the tribes as presented in the opening p'sukim of the book and sedra of Bamidbar. Note the order of the tribes. They are not always listed in the same order, and not always in birth order or "mother" order. No attempt is here made to explain the order; just a suggestion to note it. After some of the names are comments from Midrashim, culled from the book ISHEI HATANACH.

Reuven: Elitzur b. Sh'dei'ur
One of the leaders of Korach's gang

Shim'on: Sh'lumi'el b. Tzurishadai
a.k.a. ZIMRI b. SALU and SHA'UL ben HaK'naanit

Yehuda: Nachshon b. Aminadav
credited as jumping into Yam Suf first,
before it split - an act that G-d
acknowledged as a Kiddush HaShem...
ancestor Naomi... died in the second

year following the Exodus

Yissachar: N'tan-el b. Tzu'ar
a Torah scholar unmatched in his tribe

Z'vulun: Eli'av b. Cheilon

Yosef...

Efrayim: Elishama b. Amihud
offered his gift to the dedication of the Mizbei'ach on the seventh day, which was Shabbat. How can this be?
Individual offerings do not push aside Shabbat? In this case, G-d decreed that one Nasi should offer his gifts each day (including Shabbat)

Menashe: Gamli'el b. P'datzur
[a note on pronunciation. The HEI in the name P'datzur is unvoiced. Such a HEI is totally silent, as is a HEI at the end of a word, unless it has a MAPIK in it. In contrast, the tribal leader of Naftali in Parshat Nas'ei is P'DAHH-EIL b. Amihud. In his name, the HEI has a SH'VA under it. A SH'VA under a HEI is ALWAYS NACH and gives a sound to the HEI, in the same way that a MAPIK gives a sound to a final HEI. More in box below.]

Binyamin: Avidan b. Gid'oni

Dan: Achi'ezer b. Amishadai

Asher: Pag-i-eil b. Achran

Gad: El-yasaf b. D'u-eil

Naftali: Achira b. Einan

Levi - Second Aliya 35 p'sukim - 1:20-54

[S> 1:20 (2)] The Torah lovingly

records the census results for each Tribe, beginning with Reuven, identified as Israel's firstborn.

In light of all the "problems" that Reuven had, and the fact that Yehuda, Yosef, and Levi each ended up with an element of that which might have been Reuven's, it is interesting that Reuven retains the title "B'chor", and not just here.

Rank in population among the 12 tribes indicated by the number in parentheses.

Reuven's count was 46,500 (7)

[P> 1:22 (2)] Shimon, 59,300 (3)

[P> 1:24 (2)] Gad, 45,650 (8)

[P> 1:26 (2)] Yehuda, 74,600 (1)

[P> 1:28 (2)] Yissachar, 54,400(5)

[P> 1:30 (2)] Zevulun, 57,400 (4)

[P> 1:32 (2)] Yosef - Efrayim, 40,500 (10)

[P> 1:34 (2)] Menashe, 32,200 (12, smallest tribe at this counting)

Note that by combining Efrayim and Menashe, Yosef's total would be 72,700, and move it into 2nd place).

[P> 1:36 (2)] Binyamin, 35,400 (11)

[P> 1:38 (2)] Dan, 62,700 (2)

[P> 1:40 (2)] Asher, 41,500 (9)

[P> 1:42 (2)] Naftali, 53,400 (6)

[P> 1:44 (4)] After the count of each Tribe, the Torah gives the

grand total as 603,550.

The figure that is generally used to describe the multitude that left Egypt is 600,000. It is obviously rounded from the actual total. And with women and children, the number of people who left Egypt is probably somewhere between 2 and 3 million.

[P> 1:48 (7)] The Leviyim were not to be counted together with the rest of the Nation, but were to be counted separately. It was the Leviyim who were charged with carrying the components of the Mishkan and with dismantling and erecting the Mishkan each time the People traveled. Non-Leviyim were not to anger G-d by approaching the Mishkan in an improper manner. This applied to the encampment as well; the Leviyim were camped around the Mishkan and the Tribes kept their distance in their camps.

SDT: LiVnei Yehuda... for all the tribes the term LiVnei is used, except for Bnei Naftali. Baal HaTurim says that they had more women than men. In the later census, "Bnei" is used for all the tribes since the men died out - all had more women.

SDT: Commentaries point out that the low population figures recorded for Levi were closer to what would be expected according to natural demographics. The figures for the rest of the people were unnaturally high. This is a result of the Torah's telling us, "and as they were tortured, so they multiplied". Among the many miracles

that occurred in Egypt, was the fact the the people proliferated so greatly under very adverse conditions. Since the tribe of Levi was not subjected to the harsh conditions of slavery, its growth was "normal".

Shlishi - Third Aliya 34 p'sukim - 2:1-34

[P> 2:1 (9)] The next command deals with the position of the Tribes during encampment and the traveling order of the units. Three Tribes each formed a "camp" under one banner at one of the compass-points around the Levite camp. The leader of each "banner camp" is the leader of the "main" Tribe of the three, as indicated by the name of the camp.

The camp of Yehuda was to the east and was to be the first to travel. Under the leadership of Nachshon b. Aminadav, the group included Yissachar and Zevulun, in addition to Yehuda. Totals for each tribe are repeated when the four flag-groups are described. Total for Machane Yehuda was 186,400.

[S> 2:10 (7)] Reuven Camp on the south followed them. Joining Reuven were Shimon and Gad. Total for Machane Reuven was 151,450.

[S> 2:17 (1)] Then the Leviyim with the Mishkan were to follow, so that they and it would be

within the people, not at its periphery.

[S> 2:18 (7)] Then follow Efrayim Camp from the west. Menashe and Binyamin were part of Machane Efrayim. This camp was all from Rachel Imeinu. Total 108,100.

[S> 2:25 (7)] And the last to travel was the Dan Camp, from the north. Joining Dan were Asher and Naftali. Their total was 157,600.

[P> 2:25 (7)] The Torah next gives the total again, 603,550, and then reiterates that Levi was not counted among the Tribes, and that the People did as commanded.

SDT: The lead tribe of each camp was based on OTOT, signs, transmitted by Yaakov Avinu. Baal HaTurim points out a correspondence between Yaakov's blessings to his sons and these camp-heads. Each son that Yaakov addressed in second person was to be a leader of a camp. "Reuven, YOU are my firstborn", "Yehuda, YOU your brothers will acknowledge", "Dan... YOUR salvation", "Yosef... the G-d of YOUR father... blesses YOU". The other sons are referred to in third person.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 13 p'sukim - 3:1-13

[P> 3:1 (4)] The Torah proceeds to name the sons of Aharon and

Moshe.

Actually, Moshe's biological sons are not mentioned. The commentaries point out that Aharon's sons are considered to be Moshe's as well, because he (Moshe) taught them Torah. This explains only why Aharon's sons are also Moshe's. It does not explain why Moshe's own sons are not mentioned. One reason given is that they were "protected" from the Egyptian experience by their maternal grandfather Yitro and as a result were never really part of Klal Yisrael. Remember that Moshe went out to see what was happening...

[P> 3:5 (6)] The Tribe of Levi is to be assigned the tasks of assisting the kohanim in their work and in safeguarding the Mishkan and its vessels.

[P> 3:11 (3)] In essence, the Levi is to replace the B'chor who was sanctified from the day of the Exodus (even before). The b'chor was originally meant to perform the sacred tasks of the Leviyim-kohanim but lost the privilege in the wake of the sin of the Golden Calf.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 26 p'sukim - 3:14-39

[P> 3:14 (13)] Moshe is commanded to count the Leviyim - males from the age of one month. The three main families of Levi are Gei-r'shon, (the proper way to pronounce the name in Hebrew, not

Ger-shon), K'hat, and M'rari. Gei-r'shon subdivides into Livni and Shim'i. K'hat divides into the families of Amram, Yitzhar, Chevron, and Uziel. M'rari's family groups are Machli and Mushi.

Gershon's count is 7500. They camp on the west of the Mishkan. Their leader is Elyasaf b. La'eil. They are to be in charge of the curtain material of the Mishkan, including the coverings and the courtyard enclosure.

[S> 3:27 (13)] K'hat's total is 8600. They will camp to the south of the Mishkan. Elitzafan b. Uziel is their leader. (One of the things

that angered Korach... or made him jealous and resentful.) They are in charge of the main holy furnishings of the Mishkan, including the Aron, Shulchan, Menora, and Mizbachot (Altars). Elazar b. Aharon HaKohen is in charge of all the Leviyim.

M'rari numbers 6200. Their leader is Tzuriel b. Avichayil, and they camp to the north of the Mishkan. They are in charge of the structural materials: the wall-boards, support rods, foundation sockets, pillars.

Moshe, Aharon and sons camp to the east of the Mishkan.

In all, 22,000 Leviyim are counted.

Clarification... If one adds up

the numbers of the three families of Levi, he gets 22,300, not 22,000, the number used in the exchange with the firstborns. Rashi explains that the 300 "missing" Leviyim were themselves B'chorim, and were not part of the official exchange...

SDT: Choose your neighbors well. Rashi points out that the proximity of the Yehuda camp to the encampment of Moshe and Aharon and family, had a positive influence on the three tribes of Yehuda, Yissachar, and Zevulun - the three tribes famed for their Torah scholarship. On the other hand, Reuven's closeness to Korach and his (Korach's) to Dan and Aviram, produces disaster.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 12 p'sukim - 3:40-51

[S> 3:40 (4)] G-d next tells Moshe to count the firstborns of the Tribes, from one month of age and older, so that there can be an official exchange ceremony of Leviyim for B'chorim. Moshe counts and finds that there are 22,273 b'chorim.

[P> 3:44 (8)] A mass "redemption of the firstborns" is conducted by an exchange of 22,000 (non-b'chor) Leviyim for 22,000 first-borns (non-Leviyim) and a payment of five silver sheqels each for the remaining 273 firstborns to Aharon and his sons.

The exchange of firstborn animals mentioned in 3:45 refers to first-

born donkeys and NOT kosher domesticated animals, which may not be redeemed. Rashi further says that one sheep of a Levi can exchange more than one donkey-b'chor (since there is no mention of a surplus).

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 20 p'sukim - 4:1-20

[P> 4:1 (16)] A second census of Leviyim is begun with the counting of the family K'hat - males between the ages of 30 and 50. This was the work-force in the Mishkan. The people of K'hat first waited for Aharon to enter the Mishkan, remove the Parochet and cover the vessels with special cloths. Only then could vessels be handled by the Leviyim. Elazar, the son of Aharon, was personally responsible for the special oils and incense of the Mishkan.

[P> 4:17 (4)] The Torah warns the kohanim not to endanger the people of K'hat by not properly preparing for their handling of the most sacred vessels.

This parsha of 4 p'sukim is reread for the Maftir.

Haftara 25 p'sukim **Hoshei'a 2:1-22**

The prophet foresees the day when a united and prosperous people will return to Zion. However, he now brings the

message of the people's unfaithfulness, their embracing of Ba'al and the punishment of exile that they will suffer because of it. But just as G-d led the people in the wilderness when they (we) came out of Egypt, He will take the people back, having abandoned idolatry, as G-d's bride, in righteousness, loving kindness, faithfulness.

The main connection between sedra and haftara, Rabbi Jacobs z"l points out is the contrast between the counted, numbered people in the sedra, and the innumerable people of Israel referred to by Hoshei'a. Midbar is a theme that occurs in both sedra and haftara.

The last p'sukim of the haftara beautifully describe the betrothal, so to speak, of G-d with Bnei Yisrael. How appropriate to read of this on our Aufruf Shabbat - the Shabbat before the "wedding" at Sinai, the occasion on which we took mutual oaths with G-d.

(This, of course, is less accurate this year - unless you say that the Shabbat-Chatan was made a week earlier to allow the Kalla to be present. ☺)

Divrei Menachem

The Book of Bamidbar, as it is commonly called, actually has two other names. The first is "B'midbar" and the other, found in various references in the Talmud, is "Chumash HaPikudim" from which evolved the English title, "Numbers", a translation of the Greek term with the same meaning.

"Bamidbar" derives from the first significant term in the opening verse of the book (in common with the other books of the Bible). It simply means, "In the Wilderness", thus lending the backdrop to the subsequent narrative. Just as the name of the following Sefer is "D'varim" rather than "Eleh HaD'varim", as written, so here the name is adapted for easy, if somewhat inaccurate, usage.

In contrast, the term "B'midbar" is the precise pronunciation of the word as it appears in that first verse. The sentence pans out as, "Vaydaber Hashem el Moshe B'midbar Sinai" - 'And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai'. Hence, in essence, this title is more exact. Moreover, it shifts the emphasis to Sinai and thus anchors the various incidents and instructions related in the Book in a more grounded historical context.

The last title is reminiscent of the "Mifkad" or census described in the opening pages of Bamidbar. It reminds us that, in the whole scheme of things, not only is each one of us precious in the eyes of G-d, but also that each of us counts in the community, and that only by the common, unified, effort can we reach our assigned tasks as the Chosen People in this world.

Following up on Divrei Menachem from page 15...

The phrase from which the book and its first sedra is taken is B'MIDBAR SINAI. B'MIDBAR means in the wilderness of. The stand alone word for In the wilderness is BAMIDBAR. Which is the "correct" name for the sedra (and book)? B'MIDBAR needs the word SINAI to complete it. Perhaps, then, BAMIDBAR is the correct single-word name. Perhaps.

But what about SH'MOT? That book and sedra's name also comes from a phrase: SH'MOT B'NEI YISRAEL, the names of the Children of Israel. SH'MOT means the names of. SHEIMOT is the stand alone word for Names. To be consistent, the second and fourth books of the Torah should be called SH'MOT and B'MIDBAR or SHEIMOT and BAMIDBAR. No one (we think) says SHEIMOT. But who says things have to be consistent.

What about Parshat P'KUDEI. Because that sedra's name comes from the phrase P'KUDEI HAMISHKAN, the reckonings of the Mishkan. When the word stands alone, it should be P'KUDIM. Or should it? And P'KUDEI's initial DAGESH drops out because of EILEH F'KUDEI. So...

VEBBE REBBE

The Best Way to Spend Money on Israel

QUESTION: *I have enough money to buy an apartment in Israel but I do not plan to live there in the near future. I could also use the money to help support people or programs in Israel. Which is the preferred way to fulfill yishuv Eretz Yisrael?*

ANSWER: According to almost all opinions, there is a mitzva in our times to live in Israel (Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael), with significant discussion about whether it is from the Torah (Ramban, Additions to Sefer HaMitzvot, Asei 4) or rabbinic (see discussion in Rav Yisraeli's Eretz Hemdah I, 1:4). In all likelihood, one fulfills this mitzva by being a permanent resident of Israel, not a tourist or even a landowner who visits often (Shut HaMaharit II, 28). Some even say that the living must be a normal, healthy inhabitation (see different applications in Shut HaRashbash 2, Eretz Hemdah op. cit. and Amud Hayemini 22). In any case, none of the options you mentioned would be a full-fledged mitzva of Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael.

There is a second part of the mitzva, which the Ramban (op. cit.) calls KIBUSH (conquest), i.e., to bring Eretz Yisrael under Jewish control. While doing so by military conquest in our times was hotly debated due to the

Three Oaths (see Ketubot 111a and many contemporary sources), it is all but unanimous that it is a mitzva to obtain control by buying land. This is the basis for the famous leniency for Yishuv Eretz Yisrael of having a non-Jew draw up on Shabbat a contract for land in Israel (Gittin 8b). However, this applies specifically when a Jew buys land in Eretz Yisrael from a non-Jew (Rashi, ad loc.; Rambam, Shabbat 4:11; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 306:11). Similar logic may apply to buying land or building a home in areas where Jewish settlement is not a given. However, buying a home in Rechavia is unlikely to contain that element of the mitzva. Acquiring a home from a Jew in order to enable aliya is a hechsher (facilitation of a) mitzva of Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael, as are steps to strengthen the ability to remain in the Land (Shut HaRashbash 1).

The matter of supporting the poor in Israel is not brought in the poskim as a mitzva of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael. Rather, the Sifrei derives from the pasuk dealing within the tzedaka priorities (relatives, neighbors, etc.) that the poor in Eretz Yisrael have precedence over the poor elsewhere. The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 251:3) paskens this precedence, while the Rambam does not mention it, for some reason. Thus, if one wants to give money to the Israeli poor, he may use ma'aser money, which he should not do for a personal mitzva like buying an etrog or, for that matter, a home in Israel. Helping someone else

buy a home in Israel so that they could afford to make aliya is helping them with their mitzva and, according to the accepted opinions, is a legitimate use of ma'aser money (see Living the Halachic Process, vol. I, F-4).

Just because something is not a full-fledged mitzva does not mean that it does not have value. It is certainly laudable to want to connect oneself to Eretz Yisrael by owning a home here. It is something he does for his Jewish self and from his own funds. Supporting different projects here may be at least a partial fulfillment of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael and can use tzedaka funds.

Practically, concerning your dilemma, it makes a lot of sense to combine the elements as follows. One can buy a home and hope to some day move into it (making aliya easier) or have their children move into it. It is proper to rent it out in the meantime (rental subsidies for the needy are a wonderful form of tzedaka). In this way, not only would Israeli society gain from the infusion of funds, but you would avoid the phenomenon of absentee homeowners (especially in Yerushalayim; see www.lightson.jerusalem.muni.il). These fine Jews unwittingly raise housing costs and drive Jews out of town, thereby hurting the day-to-day economy, exacerbating the national housing shortage, and harming demographics (including for municipal elections).

Rav Daniel Mann, Eretz Hemdah Institute

FROM A MEASURE OF BARLEY TO 2 LOAVES OF WHEAT [4]

by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

There are two customs observed today during S'fira that are not Biblical at source and seem to be quite disconnected from the Omer of Barley, the counting of seven weeks, and the Shte'i HaLechem on the 50th day. Firstly, there are the mourning customs connected with the students of Rabbi Akiva and then there are the celebrations on Lag BaOmer associated with R' Shimon Bar Yocha. Although it may seem stretching somewhat, nevertheless, there is a serious ideological connection between all of them.

“Between Pesach and Shavuot 24,000 pupils of Rabbi Akiva died; this is because they did not give honor to one another” (Yevamot 62a). “On Lag BaOmer they stopped dying” (Tur). Because of the terrible loss to Israel of these great scholars, there arose customs of mourning during this period. In all of them, although they vary according to nusach, Lag BaOmer interrupts the mourning and may even terminate it. Historically, the terrible destruction of the glorious communities in the Rhineland by the Crusaders during the weeks of S'fira, is an additional reason for the mourning.

“What led these great students of Rabbi Akiva to err with regards to the mutual honor that should be accorded to others? Now the reason for honoring ones fellows is because we discern in

them qualities that we ourselves lack. However, when all consider themselves absolutely equal there is no place for honoring, as for example, between the various organs of the human body since there is no advantage or superiority to one vis-à-vis the other. In that respect of assuming absolute equality between them, these students erred since, notwithstanding each one's greatness there nevertheless were differences in stature between them, thus necessitating mutual honor” (Shem MiShmuel).

The question is why this should have occurred during the period of S'fira and what is the connection to Lag BaOmer that should have caused the cessation of the plague? In the Chassidic school of P'shischa they saw the answers in the conflict between individualism and the demands and benefits of community-nation. Pesach with its Seder night, Korban Pesach eaten in one house by pre-registered members, and a Zodiac sign of the lamb which grazes, congregates and moves in close flocks is the epitome of family-community-nation. However, Iyar, the month in which most of S'fira occurs is the month of the individual symbolized by the Ox that grazes widely dispersed in herds without shepherds. S'firat HaOmer is counted by each individual separately and unlike many brachot, cannot be fulfilled on behalf of others. Egalitarianism often leads to patterns of social behavior that disparage the worth of the individual and this was the source of the lack of mutual respect by these great scholars.

By Lag BaOmer most of the S'fira days

are over and the spiritual light of Shavuot can already be glimpsed in the same way as one passing through a tunnel is able to see light even when he only begins to approach its end. The sign of Sivan is Twins denoting a balance between the individualism of Bikurim brought by each farmer individually and the communal-egalitarianism of Shte HaLechem which permitted use of new wheat in the national Temple service. So on Lag BaOmer the plague of the students ceased.

The centrality of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai to the celebration of Lag BaOmer seems to reflect a relatively modern change in religious thinking that downplays and minimizes nationalism and statehood. Previously, bonfires were lit, not for the yartzeit of the Sage but rather as a memorial of those lit to warn of approaching Roman troops during the Great Revolt before 70 C.E. and during the later battles of Bar Kochba. The custom of playing with bows and arrows was in honor of 'to teach the sons of Israel to hold weapons'.

The common depiction of Shimon Bar Yochai living in the cave is perhaps the ultimate example of the current negation of nationalism and statehood as an integral part of Judaism. It is true that Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was a spiritual leader, great Jewish mystic and author of the Zohar, the text book of our mysticism. It, however, is a sin of omission, to teach that he was in the cave seeking spiritual elevation or mystical meditation. Rather the truth is

that in modern terms Bar Yochai was a strong right wing political-nationalist activist. He was hiding in the cave simply because the Romans persecuted him for his strong national utterances and his public defiance of their foreign rule.

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

BAMIDBAR

My Teacher, My Father

It was November, 1938. Dark clouds were gathering over all of Europe, and particularly over the Jewish communities in countries like Poland and Lithuania. Although few foresaw the horrific extent of the Holocaust that lay ahead, everyone knew that those communities were in very grave danger.

One man, a teacher and leader of those communities, found himself in the United States at that auspicious moment. He was preparing to return to his responsibilities back home in Eastern Europe, particularly to return to his students at the yeshiva he led there.

His friends and supporters in the United States pleaded with him not to return. I personally was privileged to know one of those friends, Mr. Charles Fogel, who implored this leader to remain in the safety of the United States. He steadfastly refused. "I belong with my talmidim, with my disciples in the yeshiva", he insisted.

This leader's name was Rabbi

Elchonon Wasserman ר"ח, himself the foremost disciple of the Chofetz Chayim, the great sage of pre-World War II Europe, with whom you, dear reader, may be familiar from previous editions of Person in the Parsha. Rav Elchonon, as he was known to his many followers, already had many accomplishments to his credit, including several major published works and commentaries on the Talmud.

But Rav Elchonon's core pride and joy was the yeshiva he created for early teenage youngsters, preparatory to their going on to higher institutes of Jewish learning. The yeshiva was known by the name of the town in which it was located, Baranovitch.

Rav Elchonon insisted upon leaving the safe haven in which he then found himself in order to return to that yeshiva and to those youngsters. He said, "I am their father, and they are my children. A father does not abandon his children."

What was the source of Rav Elchonon's strong feelings? He had children of his own, some of whom were lost in the Holocaust, and some of whom survived to become teachers and leaders of a future generation. Why was he convinced that the students of his yeshiva were no less children of his than the ones who were his real offspring?

The answer to these questions is to be found in this week's Torah portion, Bamidbar. I note, parenthetically, that with this week's column I

begin my third year of writing Person in the Parsha. I began submitting these weekly essays exactly two years ago this week, and I thank all of you for following this column, for your constructive feedback, and for sharing my ideas with others, especially with your own families around the Shabbos table.

"These are the offspring of Aharon and Moshe at the time that G-d spoke to Moshe on Mount Sinai..." (Numbers 3:1). A simple verse indeed; so much so that you, my careful reader, might wonder what homiletic spin can be given to so straightforward a verse.

It is here where the words of an even more vigilant reader are so insightful. That "reader", of course, is none other than Rashi, who notes that although our verse promises to list the offspring of both Aharon and Moshe, only Aharon's offspring are enumerated. Peruse the rest of the chapter as scrupulously as you wish, and you will find no mention of the descendants of Moshe.

Rashi's answer is deep and powerful: Moshe taught Torah to the descendants of Aharon. That made them his descendants, no less than the descendants of their biological ancestor, Aharon. In Rashi's own words, "He who teaches Torah to his friend's child is considered by Scripture to be a parent of that child."

Rav Elchonon took those words to heart, and he felt for his distant students, threatened by Hitler's

clutches, what a father would feel for his children. Remaining behind in a secure sanctuary while his children were in mortal danger was inconceivable to him and completely out of the question. And so, he returned to Europe and met his ultimate fate in the Kovno ghetto at the hands of the Nazi murderers.

As powerful as this story is, there is a footnote which I was personally privileged to hear from one of those students, my own special teacher, my Rebbe, who survived the Holocaust and eventually did make his way to the United States. His name was Rav Shmuel Dovid Warshavshik, of blessed memory.

When the story of Rav Elchonon's heroism was told, my Rebbe would tell us that as magnificent as that heroism was, it was only part of the story. The rest of the story, Rav Shmuel Dovid would say, was that "we, teenage boys who were stuck alone in Baranovitch, knew that he would return. We were absolutely certain that he would not abandon us and that he would risk his life to rejoin us. We knew he considered himself a father, and we felt that way toward him. We were his children."

This is the secret of a great teacher. This is the root of all authentic pedagogy. The ability to instill in one's students the sense that they are cared for by the teacher no less than children are cared for by their parents. Students who are confident in their teacher's concern for their well-being are capable of the kind of learning that typified the students of

those yeshivot of old.

It is a rare teacher that has that gift. Rav Elchonon was one of them. But Rashi assures us that, at least to some extent, "all who teach another person's child Torah" have the gift of becoming a teacher-parent.

I close this story, and this teaching from today's Torah portion, with a reflection on what might seem to be a different topic entirely, the topic of resilience. There is much being written in the contemporary psychological literature about what makes for resilience in people. Why is it that some individuals can endure great trauma, while others fall apart under less severe stress?

One of the surprising findings is that individuals who grow up to be resilient persons were childhood beneficiaries of people in their lives who were not necessarily their parents or close relatives, but rather, mentors or random acquaintances who, even for brief periods, showed them sincere concern and gave them well-intentioned encouragement.

The students of men like Rav Elchonon, and I speak of those who survived the Holocaust, were men of great resilience. The ones who I have been able to interview attribute that resilience to their master and to the sense of his making them feel special.

Few of us, perhaps none of us, are capable of the heroism and sensitivity of Rav Elchonon. But all of us are capable of occasionally approaching

a young person in our synagogue or community and giving him or her words of sincere encouragement. You never know. You may be contributing to that young person's eventual resilience to the challenges of his or her future.

Parents must be teachers. Teachers can be parents. We all can be teachers.

Praying with Passion

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

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P'sukei d'Zimra: **ASHREI**

Living in Hashem's Kingdom

כבוד מלכותך יאמרו, וגבורתך
ידברו. להודיע לבני האדם גבורתו,
וכבוד הדר מלכותו.

Meaning: translation...

Of the glory of **Your kingdom** they will speak, and of **Your power** they will tell. To inform human beings of **His mighty deeds**, and the glorious splendor of **His kingdom**.

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

Running the Kingdom

Hashem's flawless running of every aspect of creation expresses His unique power.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

The Majesty of the Whole

This first verse in this section of ASHREI begins with MALCHUT'CHA, Your kingdom and ends with G'VURAT'CHA, Your power. The next verse, however, begins with G'VUROTAV, His mighty deeds and ends with MALCHUTO, His kingdom. The meaning of this reversal can be derived from the following allegory:

A commoner was invited into the home of a very wealthy individual. When he entered the wealthy man's home, he was impressed by the expensive paintings, artifacts and exquisite ornaments arranged in the foyer of the mansion. Then, when he was ushered into the next room, he was overwhelmed by the vision of vast heaps of gold, silver and diamonds. However, only when he contemplated the totality of the wealth which he witnessed in the mansion did he become awe-struck by the sum total of the man's immense wealth.

The concept of MELUCHA is the sum total of all the activities of a country under its king and the coordination between them. The words K'VOD MALCHUT'CHA, the glory of Hashem's kingdom, express admiration and appreciation for the sheer breadth of the activities under Hashem's control. Then, when a person comes to realize the flawlessness with which Hashem administers His control, he comes to grasp and appreciate that His kingdom is

aply described as G'VUROTAV, His mighty deeds.

Furthermore, when human beings inform others regarding His [Hashem's] mighty deeds, L'HODI'A LIVNEI ADAM G'VUROTAV, they realize that these are not individual, imperfect acts of power like the acts of a human king. Rather, Hashem's mighty deeds are awe-inspiring and comprehensive - His kingdom encompasses literally everything in Creation. Once we come to that stage of our realization, we are able to reflect back and fully comprehend UCHVOD HADAR MALCHUTO, the glorious splendor of His kingdom (The Alter from Kelm, cited in Tallelei Oros on Tefila, p.163).

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

"I'll Take Care of Everything"

The Rosen family was moving to Eretz Yisrael. Their "to-do" list seemed endless. However, the "to-do" items in America were at least manageable. Packing, selling their house and unwanted furniture, gathering necessary documents and medical records all took time, but with organization and persistence, it could all be done.

On the other side of the ocean, however, there was as much or more to do: Schools for the children; a new house; job interviews and much more. It seemed impossible to deal with all that from a distance, and get it done in time for the move. The couple began to feel a surge of panic and doubt as their moving date got closer and so much

remained to be settled.

"I don't know what to do", Mrs. Rosen told her sister, who had been living in Eretz Yisrael for many years. "There are dozens of things to take care of, and I can only deal with one at a time from here. My Hebrew isn't so good, the time difference kills half the day... it's impossible!"

"Give me the list and I'll take care of it all", her sister offered. "I'm right here. I know what you need and I speak the language. I can put it all together for you. You just pack."

One can well imagine the gratitude that welled up in the beleaguered Mrs. Rosen upon hearing her sister's offer. It was like a miracle! The entire puzzle, from top to bottom, would be put into place, leaving nothing for Mrs. Rosen to worry about except for the things that were in her direct control. Likewise, Hashem's grandeur should evoke our awe and gratitude, for He "puts it all together" for us. We do our hishtadlus, and He runs the entire world.

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**

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Flags of Love in the Desert

Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 24-25

Throughout their travels in the desert, the Israelites were commanded to set

up their tents around tribal flags:

The Israelites shall encamp with each person near the banner carrying his paternal family's insignia. They shall encamp at a distance around the Ohel Moed (Bamidbar 2:2).

What is the significance of these banners? The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 2:3) says that the inspiration for the banners came from Mount Sinai. Twenty-two thousand chariots of angels, each one decked out with flags, attended the Revelation of the Torah. The Israelites immediately desired to have flags just like the angels, and God agreed. This request for flags, the Midrash teaches, is described in Shir HaShirim (2:4): "He brought me to the wine-house, and His banner over me is love."

From the Midrash we understand that banners relate to some inherent characteristic of angels, though not of people. But we are left with many questions. Why do angels bear flags? Why does the verse refer to Sinai as a "wine-house"? And what is the connection between banners and love?

The Specialized Service of Angels

According to the Zohar, the banners of the four major encampments (in each direction: north, south, east and west) corresponded to the four sides or "faces" of the supernal Merkava (chariot) in Yechezkeil's mystical vision.

Since these four "faces" represent

fundamental Divine attributes, each encampment related to a particular divine quality.

Before we can explain the meaning of the flags and their connection to angels, we must first understand what an angel is. The Hebrew word MAL'ACH literally means "messenger." An angel is essentially a Divine messenger meant to fulfill a specific mission. An angel cannot perform a task, important though it may be, other than the specific mission for which it was designated.

Now we can better understand the function of the angels' flags. A banner proclaims a distinctive function or trait. Each angel, limited to a very specific area of Divine service, carries its own distinguishing flag.

These flags may be compared to military uniforms, where the dress and insignia indicate a soldier's unit and assignment.

Human beings, on the other hand, are not limited to serving God in one particular manner. Our Divine image encompasses all spiritual spheres (see Nefesh HaChayim 1:10). For us, a banner is too restricting; it does not reflect our true spiritual essence.

Nonetheless, the Jewish people saw in the angelic banners of Sinai an inspiring sight that appealed to them, albeit in a non-obligatory way.

Every person has special talents and interests, based on individual character traits and his soul's inner

root. We are not limited in serving God in this particular way, but we are certainly more inclined towards those activities for which we have a natural proclivity. For example, a kind-hearted person may concentrate on serving God with acts of compassion and chesed; a strong-willed individual, with acts of courage and self-sacrifice; and so on.

The Jewish people desired flags like those the angels bore at Sinai. They wanted every individual to be able to choose an aspect of Divine service that suits his personality, just as each angel executes a specific function, as defined by his flag.

The Wine-House

It is now clear why the verse refers to Mount Sinai as a “wine-house.” Drinking wine releases our inhibitions, revealing our inner character. In the words of the Talmud (Eiruvin 65a), “Wine enters, secrets emerge.” [Ed. note: the numeric values of YAYIN (wine) and SOD (secret) are both the same, 70.] The Israelites envied the beauty and joy they witnessed in Divine service of the angels. The root of this pleasantness lies in the innate affinity the angels feel towards their service. Each angel naturally identifies with its particular mission. The Jewish people sought to uncover and emphasize every individual’s personal strengths, in the same way that wine liberates and highlights one’s inner characteristics.

This individualized worship, however,

only applies to the service of the heart and the character traits. The banners reflect our feelings of love and joy when serving God - “His banner over me is love” - but the banners are not directly connected to the service itself. Within the framework of Torah study and practical mitzvot, there is no need for distinctive forms of service. Therefore, no banners flew over the central Ohel Moed where the Luchot (the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments) were kept, since the Torah and its mitzvot relate equally to all souls.

Short of Leviyim

The statistics don’t seem logical: “All the male Levites... were 22,000” (Bamidbar 3:39). In a people numbering 600,000 - and that may be without women and children, who would have brought the total up to two million or more - how could there be so few Levites? We can ignore for the moment the fact that elsewhere in the chapter the Levites add up to a further three hundred; in our verse the Torah may simply be giving us a round figure.

Ramban links this verse with the opening chapter of Sh’mot which says that the more the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the more the Israelites increased. The Levites, however, were not enslaved, and their numbers increased much more slowly.

This is of course a chapter in the long history of Jewish demography which inevitably has to take account of the influence of outside factors on the growth and decline of Jewish population figures. Looked at from the point of view of today’s Jewish world the effect of internal factors must also be considered. There is the major - external - problem of the losses caused by the Holocaust. There is the - external - problem of the effect of urban living, which tends to reduce the number of children born to a family. There are the internal influences of assimilation and outmarriage, and the positive response of Orthodox Jewish couples who believe so passionately in Judaism that they are determined to build up the Jewish population.

Maharal on the Sedra

Moshe Gives Birth to Aharon's Children

Bamidbar 3:1 - These are the generations of Aharon and Moshe on the day Hashem spoke with Moshe on Mount Sinai.

Rashi: Since Moshe taught Aharon's children Torah, he is considered to have borne them, and this began on the day Hashem spoke to him at Sinai.

Gur Arye: Rashi is compelled to explain the reference to time in the verse, the day that Aharon's children

became considered as Moshe's. Otherwise, how does Hashem's speaking relate to the rest of the verse? It is to tell us that even teaching one day or one thing is enough to make him considered having borne the student. If so, why single out Aharon's children? All of Israel was taught by Moshe - they should all be considered his children! The difference is that Hashem specifically commanded Moshe to teach Torah to the people of Israel [D'varim 4:14] and the Torah was given specifically for Israel. If it were not for the people, the Torah would not have been given to Moshe. But he taught Aharon's children more on his own account, beyond what Hashem commanded him, and for this he is considered to have borne them.

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.

HYRAX

In honor of the Book and sedra of Bamidbar, we present a desert mammal... a.k.a. dassie or rock rabbit... small furry mammal... looks like a robust, oversized guinea pig... stumpy toes with hooflike nails... bottoms of the feet have a rubbery texture to assist in climbing steep rock surfaces and trees... rock hyrax has yellowish or grayish-brown coat... they live in colonies of 50 or so in natural crevices of rocks or boulders... spend their mornings sunbathing, then short excursions to feed. They eat quickly with the family group facing out from a circle to watch for potential

predators...

Sefirat Ha'Omer: How to Make Each Day Count!

Guest article by

Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch explains that Sefirat Ha'Omer connects CHEIRUT HAGUF of Pesach with CHEIRUT HANEFESH of Shavuot. To be physically free and not to know what to do with one's life is not true freedom. One is still a slave to his YEITZER HARA. That is why Shavuot is called ATZERET, climax of Pesach, because on Shavuot we received the Torah, which was the aim and purpose of the Exodus. On Pesach, G-d took Israel out of slavery; on Shavuot, He took slavery out of Israel.

Sefirat Ha'Omer commands us to make time count. The word USFARTEM comes from the word SAPIR - sapphire. Each day should be cherished like a precious sapphire.

The counting links the physical freedom of Pesach to the spiritual freedom of Shavuot. Therefore the birth of Judaism was in two stages:

1) the Exodus from Egypt - 'Yetzi'at Mitzrayim', for which we celebrate Pesach; followed fifty days later by

2) the Giving of the Torah - Matan Torah (Revelation at Sinai), for which we celebrate 'Shavuot'; together forming the foundation and establishment of the Jewish people as a

nation (see Sh'mot 19:56; D'varim 26:16-19). This was best expressed in the classical statement by Rav Saadia Gaon, (c. 900 C.E.) (Emunot V'de'ot 3:7) "We are a Nation only by our Torah", meaning that we are a nation not by the sharing of a common land, language, history or culture, etc. as are all other nations, but by the uniqueness of having been given G-d's law.

The Kabbalists tell us that the 7 week interim period between Pesach and Shavuot has a symbolic character of Chol-haMoed, the interim days between the first and last days of Pesach itself (Ramban to Vayikra 23:36; Rab. Bachya ibid: 16). This means that Pesach and Shavuot are not simply two separate holidays, but they are in a deeper sense like the beginning and the end of one and the same holiday. How is this to be understood?

Throughout Tanach and Chazal (the Rabbis of the Talmudic period), the relationship of Hashem to the Jewish people is compared allegorically to that of husband and wife, as we know from Shir HaShirim which we read on Pesach. The Prophet Yirmiyahu says (2:2), "Thus says G-d, I remember... thy love as a bride, when thou didst go after Me in the wilderness..." In the Mishna (Ta'anit 4:8), the phrase "yom chatunato" (SH"S, 3:11), the day of His (G-d's) marriage, is referred to as yom Matan Torah, the day of Shavuot. So Pesach was the betrothal (erusin) and Shavuot was the marriage (nesuin) with the natural period of yearning in between. This idea goes further. Pesach is the time when the Jews

separated themselves from the sheep (seh) worshiped by Mitzraim (Sh'mot 8:22), (as for example, today the cow is considered sacred to the Hindus in India). The Mishna (Shabbat 9:1) says that idols, avoda zara (a"z), have the tum'ah - defilement of nida, a menstruant woman. A nida must count seven days before immersing in the mikva (ritual bath) for her tahara - purification, to her husband. So, here too, after the Jews rejected idolatry on Pesach, they needed seven weeks (not just days, because this was a whole people) of counting to become purified to accept the Torah. And then they did the ritual immersion - tevila, to be purified for Matan Torah, as stated in the Gemara, (Yevomot 46b). These then are the two parts of the beginning of Judaism, the final Covenant between G-d and His people - His Nation, allegorically composed of the betrothal and marriage, Pesach and Shavuot, with the interim period connecting the two.

On Pesach, we bring the sacrifice of the Omer from barley (seorin), basically an animal food. On Shavuot, we bring the Korban Shte' HaLehem (two Breads), from wheat (chitin), the basic food staple of human beings, not animals (Mishna Sota 14a: Menachot 76b). This is to symbolize, that just being freed from slavery, the story of Pesach, makes us free, but only like animals are free in the jungle instead of a cage in the zoo, with no real purpose. But when we used this freedom of choice, free will, to accept the Torah, we then became real human

beings, with a higher purpose in life, not just to eat and drink like animals, but in order to serve HaShem. As we quoted above from Rav Saadia Gaon, "We are only a Nation by our Torah", the Divine Instructions for life.

When we realize that the Torah is G-d's authorized manual for living, then every day of our lives is infused with fulfillment, satisfaction, purpose, and meaning.

ParshaPix explanations

- ✿ The major component of the Parsha-Pix for Bamidbar is/are the flags - 12 of them - representing the flags of the tribes, as they camped and as they marched.
- ✿ The flags here do not represent any specific tribes, but the one with the crown could be for Shevet Yehuda.
- ✿ And the one with a bunch of carrots marked 2.50 is our whimsical suggestion for the flag of Machane Yehuda.
- ✿ The one with the flower could be for Reuven, perhaps. Don't try to figure out others - they were not meant to specifically represent the Tribes. (Of course, if you do come up with a connection between a flag and a Shevet, by all means, let us know and we'll share it with the TTreadership.)
- ✿ The compass stands for the

different sides of the Mishkan the different groups camped, both among the Leviyim and the 12 Tribes.

- ✿ The parking meter represents the encampments, since the modern Hebrew word for parking has the same root as to encamp. LACHANOT.
- ✿ Abacus is for the various countings.
- ✿ The skull with the 5 on it comes from Bamidbar 3:47 in the portion of the exchange between firstborns and Leviyim (who were not themselves firstborns). We would say, 5 shekel a head. The Torah uses the term GULGOLET, skull.
- ✿ Desert scene with the cactus and blazing sun is for MIDBAR, even though our Midbar is better translated as Wilderness, rather than desert, but there's plenty of desert too.
- ✿ The three diamond engagement rings are for the final two p'sukim of the haftara, the words we say when winding the T'filin strap around the middle finger of the left hand (or right hand, for lefties), symbolic of our betrothal to G-d.
- ✿ Garlic and the chemical formula for sugar. The Sugar formula is raised to the third power, or CUBED. These then represent the sugar cube and garlic clove that are a common "gift" to those at a Pidyon HaBen. In the sedra, we find a mass Pidyon of the first-borns of the 12

tribes. One explanation given for this minhag is that it gives those in attendance something from the Seuda of the Pidyon to take home and use in their next kugel (or whatever calls for garlic and sugar), thereby "stretching" the festive meal of the Pidyon beyond its location and its day.

- ✿ HI in Morse code is and represents the 6 dots above the name AHARON in Bamidbar 3:39, indicating that he wasn't included in the count.
- ✿ The Ashkelon emblem is for the sports club there, Elitzur (the word appears in Hebrew across the middle of the emblem - you might have missed it). Elitzur b. Sh'dei-ur was the Nasi of Reuven.
- ✿ The pair of T'filin are for the last two p'sukim of the haftara - as explained earlier.
- ✿ The two fellows in the picture... we'll leave them Unexplained for you to figure out.
- ✿ The logo below the two brothers (a hint, but not a strong one) is also going to remain Unexplained.
- ✿ The two images in the lower-right are related to each other. One is the emblem of a town and the other is a photo of the same town. We'll tell you this one - it is Itamar, as in Itamar ben Aharon HaKohein, mentioned in the sedra.

TTTRIDDLES

Last issue's (B'CHUKOTAI) TTriddles:

[1] confusing house rule

House rule in Hebrew can be CHOK BAYIT, CHET-KUF & BET-YUD-TAV. Confusing is one of the cryptic crossword "code words" for anagram. Scramble the letters of CHOK BAYIT and you can get B'CHUKOTAI (which is spelled in the Torah without either possible VAV).

[2] Breakfast consists of bread

The seven double sedras in abbreviated notation are V&P, T&M, A&K, B&B, C&B, M&M, and N&V. The two that lend themselves to TTriddle fun are B'har-B'chukotai and Matot-Mas'ei because of other associations with B&B and M&M. We'll save the candy that melts in your mouth, not in your hand for later on this summer, but this set of TTriddles have two that play on Bed and Breakfast as the other B&B. B'chukotai corresponds to Breakfast and states at the beginning of the sedra that one of the rewards for keeping the Torah would be plentiful bread (we can understand bread to be a term representing food, in general). Hence, breakfast consists of bread. Ah, but there is more. The real good TTriddles always have more. Bread is LECHEM. LECHEM is spelled LAMED-CHET-MEM. Numeric value is 78 - the number of p'sukim in B'chukotai. So breakfast really consists of "lechem" p'sukim. QED.

[3] Wake up from last week and enjoy breakfast

Here's the other B&B TTriddle. Wake up from the bed part of B&B, which here is Parshat B'har - the previous week's sedra, and enjoy breakfast, i.e. B'chukotai.

[4] Also Melachim Alef & Yechezkeil

Aside from Parshat B'chukotai, there are two other occurrences of "walking" in G-d's statutes. They are in Melachim Alef and Yechezkeil. The wording is not the same as in B'chukotai, but the word B'chukotai and some form of "walking" occurs in these other two books of Tanach.

[5] Xray Xray, Charlie

The NATO phonetic alphabet, also known as the international radio-telephony spelling alphabet (and a few more names), is the most widely used spelling alphabet... assigns code words to the letters of the English alphabet acrophonically (Alfa for A, Bravo for B, etc.) so that critical combinations of letters (and numbers) can be pronounced and understood by those who transmit and receive voice messages by radio or telephone regardless of their native language, especially when navigation or persons might be endangered due to transmission static (so says Wikipedia). Xray Xray is XX and Charlie is C. XX in Roman numerals is 20 and C is 100. Vayikra 26:8 states - And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to

flight... The ratio of 100 being chased by five is 20. The ratio of 10,000 to 100 is 100.

[6] K'doshim, B'har, B'chukotai, Sh'lach

"I am HaShem your G-d Who took you out of Egypt..." occurs in these four sedras, and nowhere else in Tanach.

[7] **The sedra in me**

Me is B'CHUKOTAI, BET-CHET-KUF-TAV-YUD. "in me" is BI, BET-YUD. CHUKAT is the sedra in the middle of the word B'CHUKOTAI, between the letters BET and YUD. A nice wordplay, IIDSSM.

[8] **Unexplained** from the ParshaPix

There is a picture of an old Israeli stamp made into a cufflink. What it is made into is not relevant to this TTriddle - the picture on the stamp is. It is from a set of stamps from the mid-50s depicting the emblems of the 12 Tribes of Israel. This particular one is Shevet Asher, the 10th tribe. In the last parsha of B'chukotai, we find the mitzva of Maaser B'heimot, the tithing of newborn animals. The process of performing this mitzva is to count newborn lambs and goats (which may be combined), and calves (which are handled separately) and the tenth one to pass under the shepherd's crook (staff) is declared MAASER. The Torah ends one phrase with the word SHEVET (which means staff, but also means Tribe) which is followed immediately by the word HAASIRI, the tenth. These two words taken

together (although they are not in the same phrase in the pasuk) can be read as "the tenth tribe" - hence, the Asher stamp. Side note: Asher is the tenth son of Yaakov only if we list all of Leah's sons together, as is often done. However, he was the eighth son born to Yaakov. Some lists put Yissachar and Zevulun after Gad and Asher, making Zevulun the tenth.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Bamidbar

by **Rabbi Dov Lipman**

1) Why is 20 the army age according to the Torah (1:3)?

2) Why was Aharon excluded from leading the census done in Parshat Ki Tisa (Sh'mot 30:11) but G-D specifically instructs Moshe to include him as a leader in the census in this week's Parsha (see 1:3)?

3) Why does the Torah say the repetitive EVERY MALE FROM 20 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE, EVERYONE WHO WENT TO THE ARMY (1:20,22, etc.) repeatedly throughout the census? We already know that the the age for the army is 20 years old so why does this have to be repeated?

The Jerusalem Institute of Jewish Law

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 562

Defects in the item purchased

A buyer is entitled to purchase an item with the assumption that the seller's representations regarding the item are true and free of defects. The seller, whether a merchant or non-merchant is prohibited from deceiving the buyer or misleading him by failing to disclose the true nature of the thing being sold or defects, whether the buyer is a Jew or a Gentile. A seller may not change the appearance of the item he is selling to make it look better than it is. He may not paint old things to make them look newer than they are. The seller cannot make any statement that will mislead the buyer into thinking he is buying something better than the actual thing sold. Not only is the seller prohibited from deceiving the buyer but if the seller is aware of a defect in the thing sold he has an obligation to so advise the buyer. The seller also has the obligation to test products before he puts them on the market. The defects must be correctly stated. The statements should not be ambiguous or misleading. When advertising a product the seller must state the facts in such manner as can be understood by a reader of average intelligence. If

the product should not be used under certain conditions, this must be stated. The community standards as to the testing required of certain products must be followed, such as an electrical appliance bearing a certification of a testing laboratory. However, if the defect was obviously visible to any person who looked at the item, it is not incumbent upon the seller to make such disclosure since it is assumed that the buyer has noticed these defects.

If anything that the people of a community consider a defect is present in the item but is neither obvious or disclosed, this gives the buyer the right to void the sale. The codes give the following actual case as an example of a sale not involving a defect. Reuven and Shimon entered into negotiations for Shimon to purchase a house that Reuven owned in another city. Before Shimon performed an act of acquisition to acquire the house and unknown to either Reuven or Shimon, non-Jews vandalized it breaking doors and windows and causing smoke damage to the house. When Shimon performed an act of acquisition to acquire the house, he and Reuven were unaware of the vandalism. Shimon pleads that the house had a defect when he purchased it and he now wants to rescind the purchase. Reuven pleads that since the house can be restored to its prior state by the expenditure of money, he will give Shimon a reduction in price as necessary to restore the house to its original state. The rabbi decided the case in favor of Reuven. If a defect can be cured by a money expenditure and the item can be restored to its original

state, the seller has the option to give the buyer such an allowance. There are other examples that will be shown IYH in the next lesson.

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*

Making the Desert Bloom

You may have noticed that Parshat Bamidbar (literally, in the desert) always precedes the holiday of Shavuot, when we received the Torah at Sinai. Many reasons have been offered to explain why HaShem gave us the Torah in the wilderness. Some commentators have pointed out that God chose the wilderness to teach us that Torah can be learned and practiced everywhere, even in the darkest times and places throughout Jewish history. Others have pointed out that to accept and understand the Torah, we need to rid ourselves of arrogance and hubris, and be as simple and open as the stark desert landscape.

Rav Zevin zt"l offers another interpretation. We read Bamidbar before Shavuot to teach us that whoever accepts and practices Torah can turn a barren desert into a Garden of Eden, as the verse in Yeshayahu 51:3 tells us "For G-d shall comfort Zion, He will comfort all her destroyed places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden and her

desert like G-d's garden - Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

You have already heard about the miracles involved in turning a barren and swampy Eretz Yisrael into a land of agricultural blessing. Our pioneer fathers and mothers invested a great amount of energy to create the beautiful Israel which we know today. However, Rav Zevin is telling us that even if we are not farmers or gifted in agricultural knowledge, we can turn Eretz Yisrael into the Garden of Eden that HaShem had in mind for all of us. Yes, Torah observance and learning can take place everywhere in the world. Remember however, that the next stop after Har Sinai and the giving of the Torah, was slated to be Eretz Yisrael. Here, and only here, can we as a people fulfill all the mitzvot of the Torah. Eretz Yisrael is the Garden of Eden in potential, and our job is L'AVDAH ULSHAMRA - as God said to Adam - to work in and develop the Garden and watch over it.

You need to be here to do it. Whether you are a teacher, a lawyer, an occupational therapist, a business person or a retiree, know that you are in fact, a talented gardener as well. HaShem is waiting for your arrival in Eretz Yisrael and looking forward to your picking up your spiritual tools and bringing us closer to the fulfillment of His Divine plan. You can make the desert bloom.

AlohNaaleh! Come and join us now!

Mordechai Reich Ph.D, Efrat

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Natural Medicine - Conclusions

Over the past few weeks we have discussed the issue of using and relying on non-conventional medicine. We can conclude that one is obligated to seek medical treatment for their ailments and must seek out the expert in the field whenever possible. Treatment must be something that has undergone testing and has been proven to heal. This is even more important in cases where a potential prohibition is included, such as performing the treatment on Shabbat or where a non-kosher ingredient is involved.

When no prohibition is involved one can pursue non-conventional methods in the case where delaying conventional medical treatment does not have serious repercussions. In cases where delaying treatment has an adverse effect then one can only pursue non-conventional treatment if it has been proven.

There are many voices today that claim that all non-conventional medicine has not and cannot be proven and therefore cannot be used and one can only rely on conventional medicine. On the other hand there is a growing movement that promotes using only non-conventional medicine.

In the Puah Institute we take a middle path and encourage couples to combine conventional medicine with non-conventional methods that we have seen to be beneficial. It must also be within a normal financial limit. There is no government agency that oversees

natural healers and the market is full of people willing to "help" and a lot of money changes hands in the process.

It is relevant to consider the following source. The well-known Talmudic statement "the best of doctors go to Hell" (Kiddushin 4:14) has been interpreted in many ways. It can mean that while the doctor wants to heal he will inevitably bring about a deterioration or even death in some patients and will receive Divine punishment as a result. Some say if the doctor thinks that he is the best then he will most definitely make serious errors that will bring about punishment.

One explanation (Even Bochan) is that this does not refer to genuine doctors who are able to heal and do so, but rather to "quacks" who practice a medicine that is filled with lies and deceit. They boast their success but it is empty falsehood. One would do well to have this in mind when pursuing a path of medical treatment and considering the best method to choose.

Conventional medicine has been proven to heal, and combined with less conventional paths our prayer is that we will witness a time when no one is afflicted by disease and the true Healer grants us all good health.

**So you thought Bamidbar is
always before Shavuot and
Naso right after - eh?**

It ain't necessarily so! In 89.47% of years, Bamidbar is before and Naso is after Shavuot. But in 10.53% of years -

specifically, in 13-month years that begin on Thursday - Naso is Parshat HaShavua before Shavuot and B'haa-lot'cha follows Shavuot.

The above is correct for Chutz LaAretz - outside of Israel.

In Israel, in addition to the above years, there are two other year-types among the 13-month years that Naso precedes Shavuot. That's another 9.98% of the time, bringing Israel's total to 20.51% of the time. These additional two year-types have Pesach running from Shabbat to Friday in Israel and from Shabbat to Shabbat in Chu"l. During those years, we in Israel resume Parshat HaShavua on the 8th day of Pesach in Chu"l and remain a sedra ahead (including Naso before Shavuot) until Matot-Mas'ei are separated here but not abroad.

Addendum to the Calendar Comment above - see there first. Naso before Shavuot is matched to a spilt Matot and Mas'ei. M&M are the most often combined of the double sedras. They are read separately whenever Naso precedes Shavuot (or vice versa)

Portion from the Portion

This week we begin the book of Bamidbar, which recounts, according to the Abarbanel, the reasons for Israel's long sojourn in the desert and everything that happened to them there. For forty years of wandering the nation had to get used to live under difficult conditions, away from other inhabited locations, without a way to set up a permanent civiliza-

tion. Living through the desert experience taught the Jewish nation how to cope, survive and even thrive physically and spiritually with conditions that might not be considered optimal. We all know that life is full of surprises and we are not always given the opportunities of our choice, but we must learn to persist no matter what comes our way.

This can be learned also from the description from this week's portion about the techniques used to transport the Mishkan through the desert during the 40 years of wandering. The verse tells us that the BADIM - the poles used to carry the Ark, must never be removed. Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch says this teaches us that the Torah is not tied to one distinctive location, it is relevant anywhere, in any situation and is always ready to be moved and taken with the Jews and setup anew in its new location.

Many times through history, people thought the Jewish nation and its Torah would not survive. Who would have believed that the Jews would return to Israel from the Babylonian exile? Who thought that Judaism would rejuvenate after the destruction of the second Temple? Or the Spanish Inquisition? And yet Judaism has survived through many difficult and tragic situations. We all have a vision of the Utopian Jewish existence with the whole nation residing in Israel, the Temple rebuilt and the Kohanim and Leviyim able to do their work there. And yet we manage to continue with just the Western Wall.

The message from this week's portion

was especially meaningful to me since I had to be in Crete to give a lecture at a conference on "Pervasive Technologies Related to Assistive Environments" (about Augmentative Alternative Communication for Alzheimer's Patients and Families... For more, visit www.melabev.org

As a Jewish traveler, one always wants to know about the Jewish community in the area and Jewish sites of interest. I learned that Crete's Jewish population, which had been in Crete since the time of Alexander the Great, had all been killed in 1944. The Germans had loaded up all the inhabitants, placed them on a boat, to be shipped off to captivity. Unfortunately, the boat was bombed by a British war ship, not knowing its cargo, and all its members were killed. The Hania synagogue was left in disarray and was empty for many years. It seemed that the Nazis were successful in wiping out all the Jews of Crete and the memory of what they had accomplished.

So we might think that this is the end of a Jewish presence in Hania, Crete. But, in 1993 Nicholas Stavroulakis, whose family originated from Hania, returned to oversee the reconstruction of the medieval Etz Hayyim Synagogue. He, and all those who help him, have accomplished amazing work - the place is beautiful and is even listed in the Hania town tourist map as a place to visit. A handful of people pray at the Shul on Friday nights though there is not necessarily a minyan because there are only a few Jews in Hania. The Synagogue also houses the oldest active mikva in Greece.

The Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Crete is a good example of the lessons learned from our sojourn in the desert. It is making its statement about the eternal bond between Israel and G-d wherever and through whatever may come - and yet there is far to go to reach the perfection that we all pray and yearn for.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

- 1) The Kli Yakar answers that this relates to the fact that once a Jewish person turns 20, he begins to focus on not sinning since at the age of 20 one becomes liable for punishment from Heaven. Since success in war depends on the spiritual merits of the soldiers, it was best for the army's success to have soldiers who were focused on not sinning which, for most, began at age 20.
- 2) Baal HaTurim answers that the census in Ki Tisa came as a direct result of the sin of the golden calf. Since Aharon was involved in that sin, G-D did not want him involved in the census. The census in this week's Parsha had nothing to do with that one and, therefore, G-D specifically instructs Moshe to bring Aharon into a leadership role in this census.
- 3) The Ohr HaChayim teaches that the Torah is emphasizing that in every single tribe, every single male over the age of twenty was worthy of serving in the army. This is remarkable considering the fact that there were numerous rules relating to fear of battle and sin which, if it existed, would have relieved them of military duty.