

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet
Bamidbar 5764
 [From Efraim Goldstein efraimg@aol.com]

Tonight, the evening of Friday, May 21, will be day 46, which is 6 weeks and 4 days of the omer.

Why Was the Torah Forced Upon Us?

Rav Hershel Schachter (torahweb)

[I'll include this in the Shavuot issue. chaim]

"RavFrاند" List - Parshas Bamidbar

One Of These Associate Tribes Is Not Like The Other

This week's parsha explains the configuration by which the Children of Israel traveled in the wilderness: "The Children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his banner according to the insignias of their fathers' household, at a distance surrounding the Tent of Meeting shall they encamp" [Bamidbar 2:2]. The Torah enumerates a leading Tribe in each direction (Yehudah on the East; Reuven on the South; Ephraim on the West; and Dan on the North) and two associate tribes that traveled and camped alongside the main tribe in each direction.

The Baal HaTurim points out an interesting phenomenon. In each case, when the Torah lists an "associate tribe," they are introduced by the conjunctive "vov" (meaning 'and'), with one exception. The exception is the Tribe of Zevulun. Zevulun traveled as an associate tribe under the Banner of the Tribe of Yehudah, as did Yissocher. However, unlike all the other associate tribes, the Torah does not introduce the Tribe of Zevulun with the word 'And'.

The Baal HaTurim explains the reasoning as follows: The Tribes of Yissocher and Zevulun were really like one tribe. Since it was Zevulun who supported Yissocher, allowing that Tribe to devote themselves to the study of Torah, the two tribes are like inseparable twins. [There is a well-known Medrash that the tribe of Zevulun engaged in business, but used their profits to support the tribe of Yissocher so that they could study.] No distinction could be made between them in the encampments, and no distinction will be made between them in terms of spiritual reward in the World to Come.

Why Was Zevulun Sent to the Merchant Marines?

Each Tribe had its own banner ('degel'). We typically think of flags as a secular phenomenon. Flags began with the Tribes in the Wilderness. Each flag had the symbol of the Tribe (usually based on Yaakov's Brachos to his children). The symbol of the Tribe of Yehudah featured a lion. The lion is king of the beasts. Yehudah was the tribe of monarchy. Therefore his flag featured a symbol of a lion.

The flag of the Tribe of Yissocher featured the sun, the moon, and the stars. The reason for this was because the Tribe of Yissocher possessed "men of understanding of the times" [Divrei Hayamim I 12:33]. They mastered the astronomical sciences and served as consultants to the Sanhedrin for questions dealing with the calculation of the appearance of the new moon. The symbol of the Tribe of Zevulun was a ship. They were the merchant marine. They made their living by the sea. Consequently, their symbol was a ship.

The question can be asked; if the Tribe of Zevulun supported the Tribe of Yissocher, and G-d wanted to see to it that they earned a good livelihood, why didn't G-d make life easy for Zevulun? Why couldn't Zevulun have a nice clean job, where they sit behind desks, make some phone calls, and generate profits? Instead, they were sailors, traveling the distant seas in unsafe vessels. Those who "descend to the sea" (yordei haYam) are one of the categories of people that need to thank G-d for saving them (by 'bentching Gomer') each time they return from a trip. The Tribe of Zevulun probably had the most dangerous profession of any of the tribes. Why wasn't Zevulun given a break? He is a nice guy who is supporting his brother.

Shouldn't he be given the choicest of jobs? Why did Providence decree that his lot should be that of a sailor?

The Kol Dodi cites a Gemara [Kiddushin 82a] to the effect that the majority of sailors are pious (rubam Chasidim). The reasoning is that "there are no atheists in a foxhole." Surviving the ordeal of a journey at sea brings one closer to his Maker. Every time a sailor leaves dry land, he puts his life into G-d's Hand. Sailors see and feel Divine Providence throughout their journeys. That is why G-d steered Zevulun into the merchant marine. He wanted Zevulun to support Yissocher. He wanted Zevulun to be generous (Baalei Tzedakah). The people who are most likely to be Baalei Tzedakah are the people who see the Hand of G-d in their livelihood. I see this in my experience as well. Business people who have no idea how much they are going to earn in a certain year or how many clients or customers will come their way, always talk about the "Hashgocha" [Divine Providence] of their success. People who are salaried and receive the same paycheck every single week and know from the beginning of the year exactly how much they will be earning, are typically less sensitive to the Hand of G-d in their financial success. They are more likely to think, "I earn the living" (as opposed to "I earn the living by the Mercy of G-d"). They are more likely to think, "My strength and the might of my hand made me this great wealth" [Devorim 8:17].

People who are constantly reminded that they are dependent upon G-d are generally more generous. So, precisely because G-d wanted Zevulun to support Yissocher, He put him in a type of work where he would sense G-d's involvement in his life on a daily basis. As such, he will be more generous in his giving of charity.

Naomi Taught Rus the Fundamental of Judaism: Get Serious

Many of the laws relating to the process of conversion are learned from the book of Rus. Rus told Naomi "Do not pressure me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people are my people and your G-d is my G-d; where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried." [Rus 1:16].

Rashi quotes the teaching of the Sages that at this point, Naomi saw that Rus was totally sincere, and she started teaching her the laws of Judaism. Our Sages teach that each phrase in the quoted pasuk is an allusion to a certain set of halachic principles. "I will go where you will go" alludes to the law of Techum Shabbos [the maximum distance once is allowed to travel beyond the city limits on Shabbos]. "I will lodge where you will lodge" alludes to the prohibition of Yichud [impermissibility of sharing private quarters with a forbidden member of the opposite sex]. "Where you die, I will die" alludes to the forms of execution meted out by a Jewish Court. However, the Medrash interprets something different in this dialogue. The Medrash agrees that we learn from this pasuk [verse] that Naomi was teaching Rus the unique laws of Judaism. However, according to the Medrash, Naomi was teaching her daughter-in-law that "Jewish women do not go to non-Jewish theaters and circuses." Rus responded, "I will go where you will go." This Medrash is puzzling. One would hardly expect that the first thing that Naomi would tell a potential convert to Judaism is that Jews do not go to the theater and circuses. Even given that the theaters spoken about in the Medrash are not totally equivalent to our theaters and the circuses are not exactly referring to the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey, nevertheless this is a strange curriculum for Judaism 101.

Why is abstaining from going to the theaters and circuses so fundamental an idea, that the Medrash uses this example to illustrate Naomi's introductory lesson to her daughter-in-law regarding the basics of her new religion?

The Nachalas Yosef, a wonderful work on Megillas Rus, suggests an answer based on a Gemara in tractate Avodah Zarah [18b]. The Talmud refers to theaters and circuses as 'moshav leitzim' [places where scoffers hang out]. The question then becomes, does scoffing and mocking, in fact, represent the

antithesis of Judaism? The answer is most emphatically yes. The opening verse of the book of Tehillim says: "Praiseworthy is the man who walked not in the counsel of the wicked and stood not in the path of the sinful, and sat not in the session of scorners". The next pasuk continues: "But his desire is in the Torah of Hashem, and in His Torah he meditates day and night." Thus we see that the polar opposite of desiring the Torah of Hashem is sitting in a moshav leitzim [session of scorners]. A Moshav Leitzim is not a comedy house. It is not a theater where people make jokes. A Moshav Leitzim reflects a lack of seriousness about life. It is a way of life that says that the primary purpose of life is to 'have a good time'. This is what theaters and circuses represent and this is what Naomi cautioned Rus against.

"Rus, if you want to become a Jewess, the first thing that you must know about Judaism is that life is serious. There is a goal and purpose and mission in life. Life is not a joke. Life is not having a good time. It is serious business."

Everything flows from this idea. It is a stark distinction: The 'session of scoffers' versus 'the Torah of Hashem is his desire'. It is an 'either-or'. You cannot have both. That is Judaism 101.

"Before we can talk about anything else—Shabbos, Yichud, Sanhedrin—you have to accept one thing: Life is meaningful. You are here for a purpose. If you are willing to accept that, Rus, then we can talk about Judaism."

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Ohr Torah Stone - Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom
Parshat Bamidbar Shavuot Numbers 1:1 - 4:20
2 Sivan 5764, 22 May 2004

[I'll include this in Shavuot issue. Chaim]

Jerusalem Post May 21 2004

SEEKING DIRECTION by Rabbi Berel Wein

One of the favorite pastimes of Israelis is asking for directions. This pastime became a necessity, while walking or driving an automobile, because of the peculiar layout of the streets of our cities and the penchant of our city fathers to change the name of those streets every few blocks. When one asks for directions here in Israel, one is almost assured of receiving an answer, though oftentimes not the correct answer. The askee feels almost impelled by some supernatural drive to give directions to the asker, even if the askee has no more sense of direction or greater information than does the asker.

Having many times been both the askee and the asker (not at the same moment, though) I can personally attest to this urge for requesting and in turn giving directions. There is almost an unreasonable acceptance of the fact that even receiving the wrong directions is still better than the panic of not having any idea where one is and where to go to find one's destination. We see this tendency not only in our streets but in our politics and diplomacy as well. It is reminiscent of the bitter joke about the pilot who announces on the plane's public address system: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is that we are ten minutes ahead of schedule. The bad news is that I have no idea where we are!"

The Torah and Jewish tradition also placed great stock in seeking direction, especially regarding important personal and national issues. In Avot we read: "Do not judge (matters) alone by yourself!" Seeking advice and counsel is a Jewish trait. The Torah teaches us: "Ask your parents and they will instruct you, your elders and they will tell you." Basically this means, learn from the past, from the events of history and do not repeat errors that are now obvious and employ tactics and ideas that have proven inadequate in the past.

The great sage and savior of Israel at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, Raban Yochanan ben Zakai, expanded on this theme by teaching: "If the young tell you to build the Temple and the old men of Israel tell you to destroy the Temple, then destroy it! For the construction by the young is really destruction and the destruction by the old is really construction." This seemingly strange statement is interpreted to mean that experience is a great teacher and ignoring it brings peril, unintended consequences and destruction. "Old" and "young" in the statement of Raban Yochanan refer not to age alone but rather to experience and wisdom. Old people in their attempt to build the Temple can do foolish things and young

people with an awareness of the past and a caution bred of historic understanding already learned by previous generations of Jews will eventually help to build the Temple.

There was a time in Jewish history when prophets and spiritual leaders gave direction to the Jewish people. In sections of the Jewish world, especially in the observant Orthodox society, this is still pretty much true. However, in much of the general Jewish world outside of this core of traditional Jewish belief and behavior, the directions are being given by popular Western culture, and often with very little wisdom. The rabbis once taught that God complained about the Jewish people and their aping of the non-Jewish world: "The best of them you did not imitate; the worst traits of them you adopted." There is much in Western society that is worthy of study and imitation, but there is also much that is little more than trash and truly of no value.

The question for our society, for our schools, public institutions and leaders, is what set of directions are we to accept from Western civilization. Following directions that are patently wrong from people who do not themselves know or convincing ourselves of the efficacy of plans that have never succeeded in the past and that experience has shown us to be false will not really help us find our way. We must be careful of buying in to the illusion that we are at least doing something, that we are ten minutes ahead of schedule, when we really have no idea where we are. Nevertheless, we should continue to ask for direction in our lives. Perhaps the Lord will help us find the right person who can and will give us correct directions for our personal welfare and national existence. Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha BAMIDBAR May 21 2004

In counting the Jewish people, which is the focus of this week's parsha, the Torah details the names of the heads of the tribes of Israel who were to administer the count together with Moshe. The importance of knowing their names is a matter of puzzlement to many of the commentators to the Bible. After all, the Torah which is so sparing of words in so many cases and in its instructions of observance of ritual and mitzvot, spends a great deal of its space to inform us of the names of these heads of the tribes of Israel. What is especially surprising regarding this matter is that none of these leaders apparently played a further role in Jewish history. They were all part of that generation of Jews who died in the desert and never entered the Land of Israel. So why do they merit to be mentioned in the Torah in such detail?

I feel that the Torah teaches us an important lesson in this instance, as to Jewish leadership and its responsibilities. Leaders are to be held personally responsible for failures in leadership. If the Torah had not told us the names of the leaders of the tribes of Israel, those who failed to rally their constituents to belief and courage and thus doomed them to die in the desert, then we would assess the blame for this sad result on historical or social causes, anonymous villains or perhaps just bad luck. But, as the Torah names the leaders of the tribes, it makes them personally (and eternally) responsible for their failure. This is a harsh and unforgiving lesson, but it is one of truth and clear vision. The mantle of official leadership in Jewish life is a very heavy one. The responsibilities are great and the danger of serious error abounds. Leaders must be aware of this when they assume positions of influence in Jewish life. Their names are recorded and they will be judged for good or for better based upon the results, even those unintended, of their decisions and behavior.

Judaism preaches and teaches that history is shaped by the actions of humans. The Marxist doctrine of history, shaped and governed by irresistible and omnipotent social and economic forces unaffected by the decisions and behavior of individual people, is the antithesis of Jewish tradition. People make history and shape events, and again for good or for better. One cannot escape personal responsibility by placing the blame for what goes wrong on outside forces, fate or chance. Judaism is the faith of personal responsibility. This is true not only in leadership roles but in everyone's personal life as well. All of our names are recorded next to our decisions and actions. Personal responsibility is the watchword of Jewish faith and life. Rabbi Berel Wein

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Parshat Bamidbar

INSIGHTS - Security Check

“Take a census of the entire assembly of the Children of Yisrael”

One of the more interesting experiences I had recently was a brief to trip across the Jordan river to the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan.

This was occasioned not by a great love of tourism but because of the vagaries of the Israeli Ministry of the Interior. It's not uncommon to spend an entire day there renewing one's visa. In fact, it's possible to review great swaths of the Babylonian Talmud courtesy of the waiting room of the Ministry of the Interior. There was even a rumor that a cobweb was once seen growing between the wall and the head of someone who was waiting in line - but I can't vouch for the authenticity of this story.

On a recent trip to the north of the country, I attempted to renew my visa in a different and hopefully more time-efficient way. Just outside of Beit Shean in the northern part of Israel is the King Abdulla bridge. To cut a long, and quite interesting, story short, I presented myself at the border there, and after a short bus ride found myself on the other side of the Jordan in the midst of a very foreign culture. Had I thought about it before, I would probably have made some attempt to conceal the more obvious signs of my Jewishness, but there I was clad in a dark blue suit and a fedora, looking about as Arab as a blintz.

As I entered the immigration building on the Jordanian side of the river, something struck me as not being quite right; something was missing. However, it took me a few minutes to register what it was.

There was no security.

Absolutely no security. None. Zero. Zilch. No metal detectors. No X-ray machines. It was like walking through a time-warp into the late fifties, where hijacking was something only done by pirates under sail in the southern seas, and the word “terrorist” was virtually unused.

In spite of my eye-catching ethnic garb, no one searched me; no dog whetted its tongue nor sniffed its nose in my direction.

There was no inspection, quite simply, because they knew they had nothing to fear. When was the last time you read a news report of a phylactery-clad Jew detonating himself in downtown Amman?

Checking is a double edged blade. A check can be for the good, or for the bad.

In this week's Torah portion, G-d instructs Moshe to “take a census of the entire assembly...” The Hebrew idiom for taking a census is “to lift up the head”. This phrase has two possible connotations. Either it can mean exaltation and elevation, or, as the Torah says in connection with Pharaoh's baker (Bereishet 40:13, 19), it can mean that the head is lifted higher than the body with a rope in execution.

The result of scrutiny can go either way. Similarly, at Rosh Hashana, the “head” of the year, when G-d dissects our actions and thoughts, when He takes the yearly census of our mitzvot and negative actions and thoughts, He can “raise our heads” in one of two ways in this ultimate security check.

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Bamidbar

Hashem spoke to Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Ohel Moed. (1:1)

The Midrash notes that great significance is accorded to the fact that Klal Yisrael received the Torah in the wilderness. The midbar, wilderness thus, becomes the setting for receiving the Torah, which is intrinsic to the Jewish national character. What characteristic of the midbar evokes such consideration? Chazal derive from here that one must make himself like a midbar, whereby he is hefker, ownerless, giving up his rights to possession, totally relying on Hashem without a care in the world for himself. Horav Yaakov Neiman, zl, in his Darkei Mussar, expounds upon this concept. He explains that one who is situated in a desolate wilderness is alone - without food and drink, prey to the animals that roam there. He is there without hope for salvation. Such a person realizes that he can rely on only one Being for

salvation: Hashem. For Hashem is there for all, under all instances and circumstances.

This must be the perspective of one who seeks to acquire Torah - complete and unequivocal trust in the Almighty. Indeed, we say this every day in the Ahavah Rabbah prayer preceding Krias Shma, “For the sake of our Forefathers who trusted in You and whom You taught the decrees of life, may You be equally gracious to us and teach us.” It was our ancestors' bitachon, trust, that warranted the Torah for them.

One who worries about his sustenance cannot conceivably apply himself wholeheartedly to Torah study. On the other hand, one who trusts in Hashem and studies Torah has nothing to worry about; Hashem will sustain him. In his commentary to Pirkei Avos 3:5, the Chasid Yaavetz, cites an incredible thought from one of the distinguished leaders of his time. The pasuk in Tehillim 1:2,3 says, “But his desire is in the Torah of Hashem, and in His Torah he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree deeply rooted alongside brooks of water, that yields its fruit in due season, and whose leaf never withers, and everything that he does will succeed.” What is the meaning of a tree planted alongside the river? Such a tree cannot bear fruit, because of the moisture at the side of the river. Although it is true that its leaf never withers, it is extremely weak and wilting. What success can such a weak tree hope to enjoy, to the point that David Hamelech analogizes the talmud chacham, Torah scholar, to such a tree? We must say to the individual who studies Torah day in and day out, night and day, without thinking about parnassah, a livelihood: Hashem will provide for him. He will be like a tree, which - although it is firmly rooted on the banks of the river, a place not suitable for producing healthy fruit -Hashem, nevertheless, sees to it that it bears fruit. So, too, will the Torah scholar be miraculously sustained by Hashem.

A talmid chacham living in Manchester, England, studied diligently for many years despite his abject poverty. Many times he was offered a position that would guarantee him a set income, yet he refused to accept. He would always give the same response, “Hashem is the One Who sustains; I have nothing to worry about.” His family grew. With each child, his parents would insist that it was already enough; he must go to work. He responded in his usual calm manner, “Hashem is taking care of me.” This happened at the birth of his tenth child, the birth of his eleventh child and again when his twelfth child was born. He did not worry, as he ignored everyone and continued his devotion to Torah study.

Shortly after the Bris, circumcision, of his thirteenth child, he received an express letter from a distinguished law firm requesting his presence at the reading of the will of a Mr. John Klabari. He could not understand the meaning of this. He neither had any idea who the deceased was, nor did he have any interest in wasting a day in a lawyer's office. He quickly sent a letter to the attorney notifying him of his error in inviting the wrong person to the reading of the will. The lawyer returned a note to him to the effect that there was no error, and by law he was required to attend the reading. The court date arrived, and our hero left the bais hamedrash to attend the reading. He was shocked to discover that John Klabari had been a very wealthy man who had died childless. Prior to his death, he had asked that his entire estate be given to the family in the city who had the most children. Apparently, when number thirteen was born, it brought this young man's family “over the top,” granting him the status necessary for inheriting the entire estate, which was valued at millions of pounds. What did the young man respond when he heard the exciting news? “Hashem sustains everyone. There is nothing to worry about.”

Their count, for the tribe of Dan; sixty-two thousand, seven hundred. (1:39)

The tribe of Dan was considerably larger than most of the other tribes. This phenomenon is all the more notable given the fact that Dan had only one child. Horav Yechezkel Levinstein, zl, takes this idea further. Binyamin had ten sons. One would assume that, allowing for the course of “nature,” Binyamin's tribe should be fairly sizable. Dan, on the other hand, who had only one child, should have a much smaller number of descendants. When we look at the final tally, Binyamin's tribe was half the size of the tribe of Dan. What happened? Rav Chatzkel derives from here that Hashem listens to

the pleas of the weak and downtrodden who have no one upon whom to rely but Hashem. One who foolishly relies on his own talents and attributes quickly discovers that, without Hashem's Divine Assistance, his G-d-given gifts are of little use. One has only to look back at those in his generation/class who have succeeded. Were they the individuals whom everyone expected to succeed? Success in every endeavor is from Hashem, and the sooner one accepts this fact, the quicker envy and its ensuing consequences will be relegated to the past.

Hashem helps the weak. When life seems to push an individual up against a wall, with no place to turn, suddenly salvation occurs. One should never give up hope, for Hashem's salvation can come in a moment's notice. The Chafetz Chaim, zl, related the following story. It was the custom in Galicia that Jews would assemble in the shul on Shabbos shortly before Maariv to recite Tehillim. As the kedushah, holiness, of the day ebbed away, these people would entreat the Almighty with their heartrending pleas, employing the time-honored medium of Tehillim. One Shabbos, a Jew entered the shul and noticed that in one corner that another Jew was reciting Tehillim with extreme devotion and intense fervor. One could sense the fiery passion and extreme emotion emanating from this person. This was no usual Tehillim recitation. To see another Jew pour out his heart to the Almighty with such zeal was truly inspiring. Thus, the second Jew decided to stand next to this person as he also began to recite Tehillim.

Soon, both Jews were crying out to Hashem, each supplicating Him for his own individual needs, each elevated by his deep concentration and expression of emotion. After Maariv, the second Jew turned to the first and asked, "I know it is not my business, but I see that you are obviously anguished. What is it that bothers you so? Perhaps I could be of some assistance."

The man responded with a deep sigh, "Yes, I have what to cry about. I have a daughter who is of marriageable age, and I have no dowry for her. She sits at home all day, depressed and dejected. During the week, I am not home to witness her sorrow. On Shabbos, however, I am home and when I look at my child, it breaks my heart that I can do nothing to help her. So I go to shul and cry out my heart to the Almighty. Perhaps He will listen to my entreaty."

When the second man heard this explanation, he said, "I have a son who excels in middos tovos, exemplary character traits, and yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven. Regrettably, I have no money. If you are willing to make a shidduch, matrimonial match, with me, I am ready and willing."

The wedding took place, and the young couple was blessed with incredible nachas, Jewish bliss. Among their descendants were four gedolei Yisrael, preeminent Torah leaders: Horav Yehudah Hakohen, author of the Kuntros Hasfeikos; Horav Chaim Hakohen; Horav Aryeh Leib Hakohen Heller, author of the Ketzos Hachoshen; Horav Mordechai Hakohen, who was rav in the city of Chodrov. From the depths of despair and hopelessness, a future of shining hope bloomed forth that illuminated Klal Yisrael for generations to come. One should never give up hope.

And the leader of Bnei Gad is Eliyasaf ben Reuel. (2:14)

Interestingly, in 1:14 above, this same Nasi is called ben Deuel. Rambam comments that he actually held both names, both of which they described his essence. Reuel is a contraction of daas Keil, knowledge of God. Both names reflect the Nasi's engrossment in understanding Hashem and in getting closer to Him. The Chida cites the sefer Imrei Noam who asserts that Moshe Rabbeinu was buried in Gad's portion because Gad displayed a remarkable attribute. When Dan was selected to be the leader of his degel, flag, Gad remained silent and did not dispute his selection. He could easily have contended that he was the firstborn of Zilpah, while Dan was the firstborn of Bilhah. Why should he not have been chosen as leader of the degel? For maintaining his silence, the raish, Reuel was added to denote that he had become a reia Keil, friend of G-d, which is a reference to Moshe, who was buried in his portion.

The lesson from here is powerful. Had Gad claimed that he wanted to be head of the degel, what would he ultimately benefit from his dispute? He would have become the leader. What kavod, honor, however, would he ultimately have taken with him to the grave? Nothing! His silence, on the other hand, earned him an honor for posterity - the Adon ha'Neviim, master

of Prophets, the quintessential leader of Klal Yisrael would be buried in his portion. This distinction outweighs anything he could have received had he spoken up. This is what Chazal mean when they say in Pirkei Avos (1:17), "I have found nothing better for oneself than silence."

The author of the Sdei Chemed, Horav Chizkiyah Medini, zl, was a renowned Talmudic genius. He was proficient in every area of Torah knowledge and Talmudic jurisprudence. His encyclopedic knowledge is manifest throughout the seforim that he authored. He writes that, as a young man, he excelled in neither brilliance nor acumen. It was only after an episode that occurred, coupled with his reaction to it, that Hashem blessed him by granting him his extraordinary abilities.

When he was a young man, he studied in a kollel together with a group of distinguished bnei Torah. One member of the group, regrettably, was deficient in his ethical character. For some reason, he was envious of Rav Chizkiyah. He bribed an Arab woman to assert that when she would come to clean the bais hamedrash in the early morning, Rav Chizkiyah was there and would make inappropriate advances to her. Word spread, and Rav Chizkiyah was humiliated and scorned. His reputation was besmirched. The Rosh Kollel, knowing the impeccable character of Rav Chizkiyah, did not believe the girl, so he relieved her of her position.

After a while, the money that financed her lies ran out. The girl then went to Rav Chizkiyah and begged his forgiveness, pleading with him that she badly needed the money. She was prepared to acknowledge her miscreancy publicly in order to clear Rav Chizkiyah's name. She concluded by asking Rav Chizkiyah if, after his name was cleared, it would be possible for him to intercede on her behalf with the rosh kollel, so that she could regain her position.

At that moment, Rav Chizkiyah was in a quandary. What should he do? On the one hand, he had the opportunity to vindicate himself. On the other hand, at what expense! To clear his name meant to condemn the other kollel fellow. A chillul Hashem, desecration of Hashem's Name, of epic proportion would result from this. It would be better for him to continue suffering in his humiliation than to catalyze a further chillul Hashem. Rav Chizkiyah replied to the Arab girl, "What you ask of me, I agree to do. I will speak in your behalf to the Rosh Kollel. I forbid you, however, to ever relate to anyone any information concerning the bribe that you accepted!"

Rav Chizkiyah concluded by saying that at that moment in which he accepted upon himself a vow of silence, he felt that the wellspring of wisdom opened up, and he absorbed a spiritual flow of wisdom that enabled him to achieve proficiency in all areas of Torah erudition. All this was granted to him as a reward for maintaining his silence.

Do not allow the tribe of the family of Kehas to be cut off. This is what you shall do for them so that they shall live. Aharon and his sons shall come and assign them, each man to his work. (4:18,19)

The Midrash comments that the members of the family of Kehas were assigned to carry the Mishkan and its keilim, vessels. Recognizing that the Aron Hakodesh was the preeminent component, they neglected the Shulchan, Menorah and Mizbachos in order to run to carry the Aron. The result was contention, bickering and, eventually, a lack of respect. Hashem punished them, and members of that family died prematurely. Thus, Hashem issued the command that each family member of Kehas be assigned a specific task, thereby preventing any dispute over who had the privilege to carry each specific item in the Mishkan. The Mesillas Yesharim devotes a chapter of his magnum opus to the topic of Mishkal hachassidus. A chasid is defined as one who goes beyond the letter of the law, who truly loves Hashem and is not satisfied with merely getting by. He always endeavors to do more. Mishkal hachassidus focuses on weighing one's actions, especially those that are laudatory, to be sure that what appears to be a positive gesture is truly what it seems. The yetzer hora, evil-inclination, is crafty and has the ability to paint a sin as a mitzvah. What begins as a righteous deed can sometimes end as a tragedy. The classic case is the reaction of Bnei Kehas to transporting the Mishkan. What should have been noble, lofty and honorable was transformed into a chillul Hashem, desecration of Hashem's Name. Had they weighed their good intentions, it would be apparent that Hashem's will could not be fulfilled by bickering and in-fighting.

In his inimitable manner, Horav Avraham Pam, zl, dedicates a shmuess, ethical discourse, in The Pleasant Way, to this malady. He first cites a number of narratives in which the father of the Mussar movement, Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, demonstrates the importance of thinking before one acts piously. In these instances, to act piously would have meant taking advantage of someone else. The Rosh HaYeshivah then concentrates on some practical issues to which, regrettably, many could relate.

Hachnosas orchim, welcoming guests to one's home, is one of the benchmarks of the Jewish People which we inherited from our Patriarch Avraham Avinu. Yet, the husband and father should take into consideration that he also has a wife and children at home. His wife also puts in a hard day, and his children would like his attention at the meal. The number of guests and their frequency should be considered. Another example is that when the Chafetz Chaim had guests at his home on Friday night, he would first recite Kiddush, make Hamotzi, eat, and only then, after his guests had eaten, did he sing Shalom Aleichem. He felt that his guests, who were usually poor Jews who had not yet eaten, should eat. The Heavenly Angels could wait for their Sholom Aleichem.

Reciting Kaddish for a parent is a halachah. It is a merit for both the parent and the son. To contend in shul about who and when one says Kaddish is not only demeaning for the son, it also detracts from the parent's merit. It is probably a greater zchus, merit, for the parent if his son is mevater, concedes, and does not compete for the Kaddish.

While rejoicing with a chassan and kallah at their wedding is a great mitzvah, those who have young children at home should not do so at the expense of the grandparents, who are usually the babysitters. Even when the babysitter is a teenager who can use the money, she still has to go to school the next day. In addition, bachurim who insist on dancing into the wee hours of the morning should consider the fact that the parents of the chassan and kallah are undoubtedly exhausted and would like to conclude the festivities.

Last, is sholom bayis, matrimonial harmony. Rav Pam describes a scenario in which a young wife prepares a special dinner for her husband. I might add that she, herself, has put in a full day at two different jobs, so that she can support him in kollel. Supper is called for 7:00PM. At 8:00PM, her husband comes home. He probably has forgotten about using his cell phone for something as insignificant as notifying his wife that he was occupied with a mitzvah, so that he would be late coming home. Is this a mitzvah, or is it a lack of sensitivity?

Shabbos Bamidbar is usually the Shabbos before Shavuuous, the time that we received the Torah. As we prepare to embrace Hashem's gift to us, let us remember to properly implement the lessons the Torah teaches us.

Va'ani Tefillah

She'lo Asani Goi - She'lo Osani eved - She'lo Osani Ishah

He has not made me a gentile - He has not made me a slave - He has not made me a woman.

It is interesting that Chazal have expressed these three important berachos in the negative, when they could have easily been recited as, "He made me a Yisrael; He made me a free-man; He made me a man. In Orach Chaim 46, The Bach cites the famous dispute between Bais Shamai and Bais Hillel as to whether it is better not to have been created, or better to have been created in order to have the opportunity to do much good. On the other hand, since we enter the world where the pitfalls that lead to sin are so commonplace, where the opportunity to taint the precious neshamah, soul, is everywhere, it might be better not to have been created than to risk the chillul Hashem, desecration of Hashem's Name. Eventually, after two and one-half years, the matter was decided by a vote, that indeed it would have been better not to have been created. Now, that one is here, however, he must make the best of it and examine his deeds to be sure to improve in those areas that need improvement.

Thus, the entire concept of being created is difficult for us. We, therefore, bless in the negative, implying that under the circumstances we are happy that we are not something other than what we are.

In honor of Mr. & Mrs. Eli Goldberg upon the marriage of Ezra Goldberg to Kelly Frommer with best wishes from his dear friends in Cleveland

Bar-Ilan University 's Parashat Hashavua Study Center

Parashat Be-Midbar 5764/ May 22, p2004

Jerusalem —Kol Yisrael Haverim

In Honor of Jerusalem Day

Rabbi Dr. Isaac Krauss - Midrasha for Women

The verse, "Our feet stood inside your gates, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem built up, a city knit together" (Ps. 122:2-3) has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Rabbi Johanan explained that the city was "knit together" in a metaphysical sense, uniting heavenly Jerusalem with Jerusalem on earth (Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 5a). Rabbi Joshua ben Levi understood it in halakhic terms: "A city that makes all Israel haverim" (Jerusalem Talmud, Hagigah 2.6). Haverim was the term used to apply to those Jerusalemites who were particularly stringent about the laws of purity. Many exegetes removed Rabbi Joshua ben Levi's saying from its halakhic context and gave it social significance. In my opinion, a close look at Psalm 122 supports the social interpretation of this verse, and therein lies the special character of Jerusalem.

An expression of the social aspect of the city can be seen in the Talmudic discussion in Tractate Bava Kama (82): "Ten things were said of Jerusalem," among them: cantilevered construction and balconies are not to be built in it; garbage dumps are not to be made in it; furnaces are not to be made in it; chickens are not to be raised in it; etc. These are what today might be called municipal by-laws.

Among the ten things that do not apply in Jerusalem we find another, surprising group of items: the laws making a house with an eruptive plague unclean; the regulations of the heifer whose neck is to be broken (in cases where a murdered person is found and it is not known who is to blame); and the rites concerning a city that has been subverted to worship other gods, even if, heaven forefend, it should satisfy the criteria defining such a city. All of these do not apply. It might seem that these regulations should be followed extra carefully, not made inapplicable, precisely because of Jerusalem's status as the Holy City. So why do these regulations not apply in it?

The reason given in the gemara and common to all these cases is the fact that Jerusalem was not assigned to any specific tribe when the land was apportioned (Yoma 12a). In all three instances – the plagued house, the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken, and the rules concerning a city subverted to worship other gods – one of the criteria in the law pertains to ownership. With regard to plagued houses, it says, "when ... I inflict an eruptive plague upon a house in the land you possess" (Lev. 14:34); but Jerusalem is not possessed by any person. Since Jerusalem was not apportioned among the tribes, no possession can be had there, and therefore these laws do not hold in the city. What is the ideological significance in the observation that Jerusalem was not apportioned among the tribes? Is it that having a portion in Jerusalem would signify ownership, but Jerusalem is an ex-territorial place? If we examine this law, we observe that it has two components: In terms of ownership, Jerusalem is not the property of any one tribe nor, to be sure, is it the property of a private individual. This is the source of the gemara's remark in Tractate Yoma (loc. cit.), "Houses are not to be let in Jerusalem, since it does not belong to them."

In terms of ideology, the people of Israel is comprised of twelve tribes, each having its own individual character, as the Torah describes in the blessing Jacob gave his sons and in Moses' blessings of the tribes. The fact that Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes gives it a dimension of unity. This unity comes not from a rejection of the "other," but on the contrary, from accepting the "other" and thereby forming an integrated whole; it is like the High Priest's breastplate, comprised of twelve different hues, for the twelve tribes of Israel.

These two characteristics of Jerusalem, pertaining to property and ideology, have the power to make all Israel friends—haverim; every tribe and every individual can lend expression there to his own, unique character. In view of the above, we see that the saying, "Next year in Jerusalem rebuilt," is still relevant in reinforcing the geographical connection and the social connection. In our era it is our duty to stress the fact that Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes; one must rise above sectarian considerations that say "Jerusalem belongs to me," meaning myself and no one else. It is in the

power of Jerusalem to make everyone friends by putting into practice the concluding lines of the psalm: “‘May there be well-being within your ramparts, peace in your citadels.’ For the sake of my kin and friends, I pray for your well-being; for the sake of the house of the Lord our G-d, I seek your good” (Ps. 122:8-9). Last Update: May 19, 2004

Arutz Sheva
Yerushalayim
by Rabbi Shlomo Aviner
May 17, '04 / 26 Iyar 5764

Why isn't Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) mentioned in the Torah? What does Yerushalayim mean to us? Memories, history, the capital of Israel? Or much more? What is it really?

Turning to the Torah for the answer, we face a puzzle. Nowhere in the Five Books of Moses does the word “Yerushalayim” appear. The center of Jewish life and thought is not mentioned in the Torah! It does appear, however, indirectly: “To the place which the L-rd your G-d will choose - from within all your tribes - to set His Name there; You shall seek His dwelling place and come there.” (Deuteronomy 12:5) The “place” has been chosen, but is not named. In “Shirat Hayam”, the song the Jewish People sang at the splitting of the sea, Moshe sings, “You shall bring them in and plant them on the mount of Your legacy, the place You have made for You to dwell in.” (Exodus 15:17) There is a mount which is G-d's legacy, but the Torah does not reveal where that mount is.

Similarly, G-d directs Avraham Avinu: “Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house to the land which I shall show you.” (Genesis 12:1) He does not tell him where he is supposed to go. In the same way, G-d commands Avraham to take his son Yitzchak and “Offer him up as a sacrifice on one of the mountains where I tell you.” (Genesis 22:2) Here too, G-d does not at first reveal to Avraham exactly where that mount is.

When it comes to momentous decisions, we don't always know exactly where we're going when we start out. “If you have no faith, don't go.” We must start out and only later will we understand where to. We must start out and then we will arrive. There are things that cannot be put into words, which are incomprehensible on an ordinary human level. Even if they are spelled out verbally, they remain incomprehensible. People may delude themselves into thinking they understand, but they don't. Therefore, it is pointless to even try to speak. Better not to reveal these ‘secrets’ until the time comes. Then, they will be understood.

Thus, when Avraham Avinu first starts out from Ur of the Chaldees, the name ‘Eretz Israel’ is not mentioned. Thus, the exact spot of Akedat Yitzchak is also kept secret. Thus also, the name Yerushalayim is not mentioned in the Torah, but only when the time comes for King David to conquer it. It was not easy for the Jewish People to reach Yerushalayim. Its king, Adoni-Zedek, was killed together with the other kings of the southern city-states (Joshua 10:1), but the city itself was not conquered: “And the Jebusites who dwelled in Yerushalayim - the tribe of Judah could not drive them out. And the Jebusites dwelled with the tribe of Judah in Yerushalayim until this day.” (Joshua 15:63)

Neither was it simple for King David to conquer the city: “And the King and his men went to Yerushalayim to the Jebusites who dwelled in the land, and they said to David, saying, ‘You shall not come here, unless you remove the blind and the lame,’ saying ‘David shall not come here.’ And David captured the Fortress of Zion, which is ‘The City of David.’ And David said on that day, ‘Anyone who smites the Jebusites and touches the Tzinor, and the lame and the blind whom David hates with all his soul,’ therefore it is said, ‘Neither the blind nor the lame shall come to the house.’” (II Kings 5:6-8)

This passage is unintelligible. Who are the “blind and the lame” and how do they prevent David from entering Yerushalayim? What is the “Tzinor”? Many interpretations have been offered, from military to political to allegorical.

The simplest explanation is that the city was so strongly fortified, and the Jebusites so sure it was impregnable, that they mocked David, saying that even if they were defended by the “blind and the lame,” David would not be

able to conquer the city. Finally, the city was conquered - David entering it through the “Tzinor”, the water channel bringing water into the city. This is the simplest explanation (psbat).

Our sages interpreted the “blind and the lame” to be symbols of a peace pact between Avimelech, King of the Philistines [related or identical with Jebusites] and our forefathers: “If you lie to me, my great-grandson, or grand-son...” (Genesis 21:22-34) According to this interpretation, “the blind” is Yitzchak (who was blind in his old age), and “the lame” is Ya'akov (who limped after fighting with the angel).

Our sages were quite critical of this pact that Avraham and Yitzchak made, seeing its unfortunate consequences (see Rashi op. cit. and Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer 36). David did not see himself as bound by this pact since it had been blatantly broken by the Philistines themselves for several generations. Therefore, he was free to conquer the Fortress of Zion.

No matter which interpretation you choose, it is obvious that conquering Yerushalayim was not simple, strategically and/or politically. So, too, we did not succeed in holding Yerushalayim in the War of Independence in 1948, despite all the effort expended and numerous attempts made. We had amazing victories all over the country, but the battles in Yerushalayim were accompanied by bad luck and mishaps all along. Not until 20 years later, in the Six-Day-War, did we enter the gates of the city. Yerushalayim is rooted in the deepest level of the Jewish People's experience, and is not easily acquired. This complexity makes it necessary for the Torah not to prematurely discuss Yerushalayim.

There is however, one place in the Torah where Yerushalayim does appear: “And Malki-Zedek, King of Shalem...” (Genesis 14:18) Shalem is Yerushalayim. There are many ways to prove this: “And His succah was in Shalem, and His dwelling place in Zion.” (Psalms 76:2) In this verse, “Shalem” is obviously “Yerushalayim”. There is also “Adoni-Zedek, King of Yerushalayim.” (Joshua 10:1) “Zedek” is the title of the king of Shalem-Yerushalayim, just as the kings of Egypt are Pharaohs and the rulers of the Philistines, “Avimelech”.

Returning from the battlefield after rescuing his nephew Lot from the four kings, Avraham met an outstanding individual, Malki-Zedek, King of Shalem: “And Malki-Zedek, King of Shalem brought out bread and wine, and he was a priest of the most high G-d, and he blessed him, saying, ‘Blessed is Avraham of the most high G-d, Possessor of heavens and earth, and blessed is the most high G-d, Who has defeated your enemies through your hands.’” (Genesis 14:18) At this meeting, Avraham Avinu encountered a hospitable individual. Until now, he had always been the one to give to others, while they attempted to steal from him; now finally, someone offered him something - bread and wine. And this man blessed him in the name of “the most high G-d.” He was a monotheist who believed in one G-d, Creator and Ruler of the world.

This man was “Malki-Zedek” - “King of Righteousness” - a title which expresses the ideal of the man and of his city. The bread and wine here are symbolic, just as Pharaoh's ministers, key figures in the story of Josef, were the chief wine-bearer and the chief baker, and they dreamed about bread and wine (Genesis 40; see also Psalms 104:15). Likewise, offerings of meal and wine are offered on the altar (Rambam, Hilchot Ma'ase HaKorbanot 2:1). These are the staples of material and spiritual life. Malki-Zedek is a “priest of the most high G-d” - the spiritual leader of his time. Our sages identify him with Shem, son of Noach, as is written, “Blessed is G-d, the L-rd of Shem.” (Genesis 9:26) At this meeting, Malki-Zedek presented the ‘bread and wine’ to Avraham; according to our sages, this was a symbolic transfer of spiritual leadership to Avraham (Nedarim 32b).

What did Malki-Zedek see in Avraham that caused him to abdicate his position of leadership in Avraham's favor? Possibly, it was his readiness to fight and to sacrifice all he had for his ideals (Iturei Torah, Genesis, p.102, in the name of Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik). Perhaps it was also the noble, unselfish way he behaved during and after the battle. Making war did not turn Avraham into a cruel, greedy person, as happens so often to the best of men.

In any case, Malki-Zedek realized that Avraham was a greater leader than he, and ceded the spiritual leadership of the priesthood to him. Noach was also a

righteous person. But when G-d warned him that there would be a flood, he accepted it silently and did not protest. When G-d told Avraham that he was about to destroy Sodom, Avraham argued, "Shall the Judge of the whole world not do justice?" (Gen. 18:23-33) His sense of responsibility for mankind did not allow him to accept the decree passively (see Zohar 58:67b; Igrot HaReiya II, p. 188).

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk made the following analogy:

When you are cold, you have two choices: you can put on a fur coat, and warm only yourself, or you can light a bonfire, and provide warmth for many. Noah was the "tzadik with the fur coat" and Avraham, the one who lit a fire. He taught everyone, cared for everyone. His ideal was to redeem all of mankind from its physical and spiritual ills. Avraham was the biological father of the Jewish People, but the spiritual father of the universe. Therefore, he was named "The father of a multitude of peoples," (Genesis 17:4-5) and all nations are blessed through him (Genesis 12:3). Thus, he is worthy of receiving the priesthood from Malki-Zedek, King of Shalem, the city of justice, when Yerushalayim is still unknown, its significance not yet revealed in the world.

Later, at Akedat Yitzchak, Avraham Avinu comes to Mount Moriah and calls it "[Hashem Yireh] G-d will see", as it is said to this day, 'In the mount G-d will appear.'" (Genesis 22:14) On this mount, we see G-d, and He sees us. The Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple) has two functions - our service to G-d, and His revealing Himself to us (see Rambam, Hilchot Beit HaBechira 1:1). This special place enables us to reach a higher spiritual level than anywhere else.

Thus, the first half of the name Yerushalayim - "Yireh" - derives from the Akeda experience of Avraham and Yitzchak; the second - "Shalem", from "Malki-Zedek, King of Shalem" (Breishit Raba 56:14). Malki-Zedek, spiritual father of the universe, and Avraham Avinu, father of the Jewish People, meet in Yerushalayim, and it is called after both of them. It is the capital of the Jewish People, but also a "House of Prayer for all nations" - center of Israel and of the whole world as well.

Christianity holds Jerusalem sacred. It doesn't matter to them if Jews settle Tel-Aviv, but Jerusalem? The basis of Christian faith is that the Chosen People were rejected, as they killed god. Jews are relegated to being merely "Israel of the flesh," while Christians are now the true "Israel of the spirit," followers of the New Testament, and it is they who should return to Jerusalem. [This replacement theology is not universal, but is widespread in Christian theology. - ed.]

Today, we, not they, have returned to Jerusalem, and this is a fatal blow to Christianity. Thus, their tremendous opposition to Israeli rule over Jerusalem. In like manner, Moslems consider Jerusalem a holy city and universal spiritual center. Shortly after the Six Day War, a theological congress was held at El-Azhar University in Cairo and a resolution was passed to fight to the last drop of blood for Moslem rule over Jerusalem, not on political or strategic grounds, but for religious reasons. This city is holy to them, and they see themselves as possessors of the true faith.

Notwithstanding the above, for the Jewish People, Jerusalem is "Yerushalayim, built as a city that is joined together," (Psalms 122:3) which our sages explain is a city "which joins all of Israel in friendship." (Yerushalmi, Chagigah 3:6) This has halachic implications (see Tosaphot to Pesachim 49), but basically it means that all of the People of Israel join together in this city. "Yerushalayim was not divided among the tribes," (Yoma 12a) but rather belongs to the whole Jewish People. Here, everyone meets on festivals, and especially at the Hak'hel ceremony, held at the end of Shmitta, once every seven years (Deuteronomy 34:23; 31:10-13). Everyone comes to "see" G-d, each on his own spiritual level, and all are seen by G-d. We all see each other, too, and this encounter enriches and unites all individual members of the People of Israel - in Yerushalayim - the city "which joins all of Israel in friendship." The city of love and peace.

There is a famous story of two brothers, one poor and the head of a large family, the other well-to-do, but alone. In the middle of the night, the brother with a large family brought stacks of wheat over to his brother's field, saying, "My poor brother is all alone; let him at least take joy in his bountiful harvest." The other brother did the same, thinking, "My poor brother has so

many mouths to feed; he needs much more than I do." They met that night in the middle of the field - and on that spot the Beit HaMikdash was later built. There are those who talk about peace, meaning peace with the nations of the world. When the Torah talks about peace, however, it means peace among the members of the Jewish People. Clearly, one does not preclude the other, but peace "within our household" must take precedence.

Avraham Avinu received the priesthood, the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of mankind, from Malki-Zedek, King of Shalem, the city of justice. As "The father of a multitude of peoples," Avraham bears universal responsibility. As the children of Avraham, the redemption we experience today has universal significance. We are called upon to build a just society, which will serve as an example for the whole world. Despite our failures in the past, we, with our 'Jewish soul', are capable of doing this, and will eventually fulfill our mission.

Today, we are still in the middle of the process; it is not yet time to build the Beit HaMikdash (see Rambam, Hilchot Beit HaBechira 1:1-2). First, we must establish a sovereign Israel; i.e., a strong, wealthy, well-developed state. Then it will be time to build the Beit HaMikdash. When the time is ripe, we will also understand how to do it. As we work our way up towards our goal, that which is today still a mystery will become clearer and clearer, until Yerushalayim finally becomes the universal center of justice [From Rabbi Aviner's Tal Chermon, vol. II.]

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(Forwarded by E Goldofsky)

Yom Yerushalayim-Let us not take it for granted!

B"H

"It is impossible to forget that day," said HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook. "Well before it arrived, the situation in the city was tense.

Many of the Yeshiva's students had enlisted in the fight. On the second day of the week, the twenty-sixth of Iyar, a student approached me on my way to the morning prayer at the Yeshiva. He told me that the war had begun, and that the Arab Legion was boasting that it would conquer all of Jerusalem. Rumors reached me about battles on the outskirts of the city. A friend phoned me and related in the name of HaRav Shlomo Goren, the Israel Defense Force's Chief Rabbi, that Tzahal units were advancing and getting closer to the Old City of Jerusalem. Nerve-trembling news. Each hour, expectation quickened. One of the students who had enlisted raced back to the Yeshiva during an hour break and announced that tomorrow, with the Almighty's help, our paratroopers would reach the Kotel! All of us were filled with hope and trembling. On the fourth day of the week, an officer knocked on the door of my house. He had come with a message from HaRav Goren. 'The honored Rav is invited by the Chief Rabbi of the army to come to the Western Wall,' he announced. 'An armored car is waiting downstairs.'

"HaRav David Cohen, the 'Nazir', zt"l, joined us on the way. He too had been invited by his son-in-law, HaRav Goren. The army car crept along amidst the multitudes thronging the streets of the city, thousands singing and dancing with tears of joy in their eyes over the liberation of Jerusalem."

"On the way, the officer told me that the moment the paratroopers reached the perimeter of the Kotel, an officer who was a student of our Yeshiva climbed to the top row of stones and unfurled the Israeli flag over the heights of the Western Wall. His commander promised him a reward for his deed, and asked him what he wanted. 'The greatest honor for me,' he answered, 'Is that you send an army rabbi to bring our teacher here, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mercaz HaRav.'" "The officer also told us that among the first to reach the Kotel was HaRav Goren, in the face of fire from Arab snipers, who continued to shoot from their places of hiding. He clutched a Torah scroll in one hand, and a shofar in the other. Fighters, who had survived furious battles, cried like children when they heard the blast of the shofar by the Chief Rabbi. They cherished his courage of heart, and his self-sacrifice, to remain all the time at the head of the battle, with the paratroopers who burst through from the Mount of Olives to the Western Wall."

“Many of our boys were wounded in the charge. To my question, through which gate of the Old City had they reached the Kotel, the familiar voice of a soldier from our Yeshiva said, ‘Thank G-D. All of the gates are open.’ Another student, a rabbi in the army, rushed up to me at the Kotel and told me that he had received permission from army command to hold the ‘Mincha’ prayer at the Wall. It was the first national prayer at the Kotel after a nineteen-hundred year separation! A prayer which was utter cleavage to G-D. Every eye was filled with tears. Soldiers prostrated themselves on the ground of the square. Others wedged their fingers between the stones of the Wall. Everyone chanted the Psalm, ‘A Song of Ascent; When the L-RD brought back the exiles of Zion, we were like those who dream.’” “Before we left the liberated city, I was interviewed by radio and television reporters from Israel and from outside the Land. They wanted to know my opinion on what had transpired.” “‘Behold,’ I said. ‘We announce to all of Israel, and to all of the world, that by a Divine command, we have returned to our home, to our holy city. From this day forth, we shall never budge from here! We have come home!’”

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5764

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights

**A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav
BIRCHOS HA-SHACHAR ON SHAVUOS MORNING**

[I'll include this in the Shavuot issue - Chaim]

Parshat Bamidbar 5764 - Meaning in Mitzvot - OU.ORG

MEANING IN MITZVOT by Rabbi Asher Meir

Each week we discuss one familiar halakhic practice and try to show its beauty and meaning. The columns are based on Rabbi Meir's Meaning in Mitzvot on Kitzur Shulchan Arukh Shavuot as the Day of the Giving of the Torah One of the most fascinating halakhot of Shavuot is a halakha that isn't: a commemoration of the historical aspect of the day, the “day of the giving of our Torah”, as we say in our prayers.

All three major holidays have three aspects: historical, agricultural, and Temple ritual. Pesach is historically the time of the release from Egypt, agriculturally the time of the barley harvest, which is marked in the sanctuary by the Omer offering. Shavuot is historically the time of the giving of the Torah, agriculturally the beginning of the wheat and fruit harvests, which are marked in the sanctuary by the “Shte'i HaLechem”, the two loaves of wheat bread, and by the beginning of bringing the first fruits (Bikurim) to the base of the Mizbei'ach. Sukkot is historically a commemoration of HaShem's protection of the Jewish people in the desert, when we lived in temporary dwellings and were protected by Divinely-provided clouds of glory.

Agriculturally it marks the end of the summer and the gathering of most of the harvest; in the Temple, the agricultural aspect is recalled by the water libation and other customs which relate to our need for rain for future harvests.

Pesach and Sukkot both have mitzvot which relate to their historical aspect. On Pesach we are commanded to tell the story of the Exodus, and to eat matza and eliminate chametz to recall the haste of our departure. On Sukkot we dwell in booths to recall our sojourn in the desert. But on Shavuot there is no specific practice that recalls the momentous historical event that the day commemorates: the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai to the entire people!

A similar void is that nowhere in the Torah is it stated that Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah, although chronologically it is clear from the verses that it is very close. In fact, the historical circumstances are so shrouded in mystery that we do not have enough information from the Torah to determine exactly where Mount Sinai is, and to this day its identity is unknown.

It seems that the Torah intentionally de-emphasized the historical dimension of Shavuot. One profound explanation is that giving this day too much of a historical aspect would relegate the giving of the Torah to a distant, isolated event: one day, long ago, HaShem appeared to the Jewish people and transmitted the Torah. This happened in a specific time (Shavuot), at a

specific place (Mount Sinai), and through a specific individual (Moshe Rabbeinu). Yet we are obligated to experience the giving of the Torah as an eternal, ongoing process. Every morning we say a bracha acknowledging that HaShem “gives the Torah” – in an ongoing way. At all times, and at any place where Torah is taught, HaShem gives the Torah through all the Torah teachers who continue the chain of tradition which began with Moshe but which continues through all the generations. In order to inculcate this consciousness, the Torah did not give enough information to ascertain precisely when or even where this event took place. “Matan Torah” cannot be commemorated because it is unceasing. This column is based on a shiur of Rabbi Josh Berman.

The OU/NCSY Israel Center - TORAH tidbits

YatedUSA Parshas Bamidbar May 21, 2004

Halacha Talk

Preparing Food on Yom Tov

by Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Torah teaches us that although most types of melacha are forbidden on Yom Tov, cooking and most other forms of food preparation are permitted.

Nevertheless, some types of food preparation are prohibited on Yom Tov, such as catching fish, picking fruit, and squeezing juice.

Why on Yom Tov are some activities of food preparation permitted while others are prohibited? The critical issue the poskim consider when ruling is: how long in advance of a meal does the activity need to be performed in order for the food to be ready to eat?

For a meal that will be served on Yom Tov, and which must be performed on the day of the meal itself, the Torah permits any activity involved in the food preparation. .

To understand the authorities' perspective, imagine preparing a meal in the days of chazal. Most modern methods of preserving food, including refrigerating and freezing, did not exist so the preparation of a Yom Tov seuda required baking and cooking on the day itself.

Although it may seem strange to us, even shechita and koshering the meat by soaking and salting, are performed the day the meal is served. It is even permitted to skin the hide off an animal that has been sheched on Yom Tov since one cannot remove the meat properly without first removing the hide. However, some food preparation activities are usually performed more than a day prior to when the meal is served. . Thus, these activities are prohibited. Even in earlier times, one did not begin preparing the day's meal by catching a fish. One who planned fish for dinner would catch or purchase the fish the day before, and then leave the fish in water until it was time to prepare it. Therefore, it is forbidden to fish on Yom Tov, even if one's intention is to serve fried fish the same day.

Similarly, fruits are usually picked and squeezed when they ripen, and then the juice or oil is stored until use. Thus these activities are not permitted on Yom Tov even though they are a step in the preparation of the food. Even picking or squeezing a small amount of fruit is prohibited, since these activities are usually performed in quantity and stored for a longer period of time.

By the same token, the day one prepares a meal is not the time to begin grinding the wheat into flour, and it is certainly not the time to harvest the grain or to thresh it. One would grind the grain into flour and then store it for subsequent use, days, weeks or months in advance.

However someone serving fresh bread or pastry prepares the dough on the day the meal is to be served. Therefore it is permitted to mix flour and water on Yom Tov. This subject leads us into a discussion about kneading on Yom Tov.

KNEADING ON YOM TOV

One of the thirty-nine forbidden melachos of Shabbos is kneading, which includes any act of combining fine particles together with a liquid until they stick together.

However, since kneading dough to make bread is permitted on Yom Tov, all kneading is permitted on Yom Tov. Thus it is permitted on Yom Tov to make oatmeal, pudding or baby cereals in the usual way that these foods would be prepared on a weekday.

SEPARATING CHALLA

When dough is kneaded on Yom Tov, if there is an obligation to separate challa (based on the size and type of dough), the challa portion is permitted to be separated even though it is Yom Tov. However, one does not burn the separated challa portion on Yom Tov. Instead, one sets the portion aside to be burnt after Yom Tov (Shulchan Aruch 506:4).

If dough was prepared before Yom Tov, one may not separate the challa portion on Yom Tov. What happens if someone realizes on Yom Tov that one forgot to separate challa? The answer to this shayla depends on whether the dough was kneaded in Eretz Yisroel or in chutz la'aretz.

If the dough was kneaded in Eretz Yisroel, then there is no solution but to put aside the bread until after Yom Tov, and then separate the challa portion. However, if this dough was kneaded in chutz la'aretz, then there is a different solution. One may eat the bread on Yom Tov as long as one makes sure that some of the bread remains until after Yom Tov. After Yom Tov, one separates the challa portion from the leftover bread. This separating "after the fact" is sufficient to fulfill the mitzva of separating challa in a dough produced in chutz la'aretz (Rema 506:3).

The reason for this distinction requires some explaining. Mid'oraisa, there is a requirement to separate challa only on dough that is made in Eretz Yisroel. (In truth, the requirement is mid'oraisa only when all Jews live in Eretz Yisroel.) The requirement to separate challa on dough mixed in chutz la'aretz is to ensure that Jews living in chutz la'aretz do not forget that there is a mitzva to separate challa. However, since the mitzva is only midarabanan, Chazal allowed the leniency of separating the challa portion "after the fact" (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 322:2-3).

GRATING, GRINDING, & MASHING ON YOM TOV

The melacha of grinding is different from the malachos we have discussed above, in that some types of grinding are performed as you prepare the meal, whereas other types of grinding are performed well before the meal is being prepared. For example, when preparing a kugel, the potatoes are grated when one prepares the meal. Similarly, a gourmet chef might crush fresh pepper and other spices specifically for the meal. These types of grinding are permitted on Yom Tov, as we will explain.

On the other hand, wheat is not ground into flour on the day one plans to bake the bread. Therefore, it is always prohibited to grind flour on Yom Tov. Because grinding is sometimes performed on the day that the meal is served and sometimes it is not, the laws of Yom Tov divide the various items that might be ground into four categories:

1. Items that are usually ground well in advance of the preparation of the meal, such as flour, may not be ground at all.

2. Items that might be ground while preparing the meal, but could have been ground before without affecting the flavor at all.

The halacha is that these items may be ground on Yom Tov, but only by grinding them with a shinui; that is, in a different way from the way one would normally grind them. An example of this is salt, which at the time of Chazal was sometimes ground as one prepared the meal, even though it could have easily been ground it before Yom Tov. The mishna states it is permitted to grind salt on Yom Tov by using a wooden pestle rather than a stone one (Beitza 14a). This could have a practical difference in contemporary halacha. If someone discovers that he does not have regular salt, but has only thick koshering salt in the house, he is permitted to crush the salt on Yom Tov as long as he does not use a standard mortar and pestle (unlikely as both items are rarely found in one's house today). Thus one could crush the salt on the table rather than inside a mill.

3. Items that are better if ground fresh, but are usable if ground before Yom Tov.

These items may be ground or chopped on Yom Tov, but only by grinding or chopping them with a slight shinui (Rema 504:1), such as by placing a napkin on the base or plate on which they are being ground (Mishna Berura 504:19). Therefore someone who is accustomed to using freshly crushed pepper or spices is permitted to grind them on Yom Tov with a slight change from the way they are usually ground. Thus, it is not permitted to use a tabletop pepper mill on Yom Tov, even if that is the way one usually spices one's salad.

4. Items that will become useless if ground or chopped before Yom Tov.

These items may be ground or chopped on Yom Tov in the way that they would usually be ground or chopped on a weekday. Therefore one may mash avocado or banana, grate potatoes for latkes or kugel, or dice salad, apples or onions on Yom Tov the way one would do so on a weekday (Piskei Teshuvos 504:3).

It should be noted that even if an electric blender or food processor is set up to be operated by a Shabbos clock or another timing device, the use of a blender is prohibited on Yom Tov (Piskei Teshuvos 504:1).

MEASURING

In general, it is prohibited to measure on Yom Tov, just as it is prohibited to measure on Shabbos. Thus, one may not measure out how much flour, sugar, or oil one needs to use for a recipe (Shulchan Aruch 506:1).

However, one may use a non-measuring cup to approximate how much flour, sugar, or oil is needed. It is also permitted to use a measuring cup as long as one does not measure with it by filling the cup exactly to its measuring points (Mishna Berura 506:3).

Poskim dispute whether one is permitted to measure spices. The reason to permit measuring spices (even though it is prohibited to measure other items) is because approximating amount of spices can ruin the recipe if the estimation is in error (Beitza 29a).

Another opinion is the Magen Avraham (504:10) who contends that since most people cook without measuring spices on weekdays, but simply estimate how much they use, it is forbidden to measure spices on Yom Tov. Taking this position under consideration, the Mishna Berura rules that someone who on weekdays does not usually measure the amount of spices being used, may not measure spices on Yom Tov. However, those who measure their spices on weekdays are permitted to measure them on Yom Tov.

COOKING THAT IS PROHIBITED

One is permitted to cook and prepare food on Yom Tov only when one intends to eat that food on Yom Tov. Thus one may not cook on Yom Tov for after Yom Tov or on the first day of Yom Tov for the second.

For this reason, it is important that all preparations of meals for the second night of Yom Tov wait until the first day of Yom Tov is over. Indeed, a custom in many communities in Eastern Europe developed to delay the davening the second night of Yom Tov, in order to discourage anyone from beginning the meal preparations too early.

One is permitted to cook amply for the Yom Tov meal, knowing that there will certainly be leftovers. These leftovers could then be served on the second day of Yom Tov. However, one may not prepare individual units of a food item knowing that one is preparing more than can possibly be eaten on Yom Tov. One is not permitted to cook on Yom Tov for a non-Jew. Because of the possibility that one may erroneously cook for a non-Jew on Yom Tov, Chazal instituted an additional prohibition and forbade inviting a non-Jew for a Yom Tov seuda, in most circumstances.

An exception that is permitted is when inviting a non-Jew to a seuda for whom one would not prepare a special dish. Thus, if someone has domestic help, he or she is permitted to join the Yom Tov seuda. To reiterate, it is strictly forbidden to cook specifically for them on Yom Tov.

It is forbidden to cook or do any other melacha for an animal. It follows that, despite one being permitted to mix dry grains with liquid to create an edible cereal on Yom Tov, one may not mix these items to feed a pet.

USE OF STOVES AND OVENS ON YOM TOV

Chazal prohibited kindling a new flame on Yom Tov (Beitza 33a). Thus, although one may turn up an existing flame, one may not strike a match on Yom Tov (Aruch HaShulchan 502:6), nor may one light a stove or oven by using an electric igniter, since this is considered lighting with a new flame (Igros Moshe 1:115).

If someone has a stove or oven that does not have a lit gas pilot light, it is a good idea to have a twenty-four hour candle burning over Yom Tov to facilitate lighting the stove on Yom Tov. Another advantage to leaving this candle burning is that it enables the lighting of the Yom Tov candles on the second night of Yom Tov.

One is permitted to lower a flame in order to cook on Yom Tov. However, there are poskim who rule that one may lower a flame only when there is no option for turning up or on a different flame. According to the latter opinion, if one is cooking on a stove flame and one wants to lower the fire so that the food does not burn or boil out, one can do so only if there is no option for turning on another flame (Magen Avraham 514:2). Indeed, Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that it is permitted to lower a flame because one desires to cook with a lower flame, and certainly so that the food does not burn or boil out (Igros Moshe 1:115; 4:103).

HASHKAFKA OF PREPARING FOOD ON YOM TOV

The Torah refers to the Yomim Tovim as “moed.” Just as the term ohel moed refers to the tent in the desert which served as a “place of meeting” between Hashem and the Jewish people, so too a moed is a “time of meeting” between Hashem and the Jewish people (Hirsch, Vayikra 23:3 and Horeb). Although on Shabbos we are to refrain from all melacha activity, on Yom Tov the Torah permitted melacha activity that enhances the celebration of the Yom Tov as a Moed. Permitting the preparations of delicious, freshly prepared meals allows an even greater celebration of the festivities of the Yom Tov as we celebrate our unique relationship with Hashem.

YatedUSA May 21, 2004

Why Do We Read Megillas Rus On Shavuos?

By: Rabbi Yosef Stern

Yosef Stern is the Pastoral Care Coordinator of the The Jewish Hospice of Greater New York.

In this dvar Torah we will explore some of the reasons for the time-honored custom of reading Megillas Rus on Shavuos. We will particularly draw inspiration from the remarkable insight into the question by the saintly Sfas Emes.

THE IMPACT OF MATAN TORAH ON MANKIND

One might have imagined that when the Jewish nation received the Torah, that they, in turn, isolated themselves from the rest of mankind. By reading the Megillas Rus, which describes a Moabite woman’s challenging, but ultimately successful journey to Judaism, we emphatically declare that anyone, regardless of their previous background, is welcome to join the ranks of klal Yisroel.

Rather than segregate themselves from humanity, the acceptance of the Torah by klal Yisroel infused the entire universe with a sense of renewed vitality. By describing Shavuos as Yom Habikkurim, -the first day, (Bamidbar 28:26), the Torah alludes to the rebirth and rejuvenation that the universe felt when the Jewish People received the Torah.

Drawing the parallel between matan Torah and the universe’s rejuvenation even further, we note the similarity in the language that was employed by the Jewish people to accept the Torah-na’aseh venishmah, we will do and we will listen (Shemos24: 7), and that used by Hashem to create the first man, na’aseh odom, let us create man. (Sefas Emes 5664).

TEFILLAH AND TZEDOKAH

On the day when we celebrate matan Torah, we emphasize virtues that are critical for the development of the ideal Torah personality. By reading the story of Rus, the illustrious ancestor of Dovid Hamelech who exemplified tefillah (as he describes himself, “vaani tefillah”, (Tehillim 109:4)) and by absorbing the fascinating story of the union of Boaz and Rus which largely developed through acts of chesed, we focus on the development of the complete ben Torah. (ibid. 5643).

EMUNAS CHACHOMIM

The courageous decision by Boaz to marry Rus despite the insistence of many, reaffirms the paramount principle of emunas chachomim. Unaware of the ruling by the gedolim, he argued that by marrying Rus, he was marrying a Moabite in defiance of Halachah. . This important lesson of emunas chachomim is a basic tenet for every generation that. Only the foremost Torah scholars can interpret and apply Halachah. In fact, the introduction to the aseres hadibros implies the unique role played by the talmidei chachomim of each generation in transmitting and teaching Torah to their contemporaries. Rather than merely say, “Vayedaber Elokim es kol hadevorim haeleh, G-d spoke all of these words,” the Torah continues with

the term: “laimor, to say”. In other words, the most renowned scholars of each generation are empowered to speak out and derive novel interpretations of the Torah (according to the principles transmitted to Moshe Rabbeinu at Har Sinai) (Sefas Emes 5633).

PREPARING US FOR THE FINAL REDEMPTION

While matan torah is introduced with the term, “Anochi Hashem Elokechah, I am Hashem your G-d, (Shemos 20:2), the arrival of Moshiach is described in even grander terms:

Anochi anochi hu menachem, (I am I am your comforter. (Yeshayohu 51:12).

By reading Rus on Shavuos, we prepare ourselves as well as all mankind for a moment even greater than the Giving of the Torah. Then , the renewed Revelation of Hashem will be heralded with the words: Anochi. Anochi hu menachemchem . This association between the Revelation at Sinai and the future Revelation of Hashem is also alluded to by the Torah itself. When prohibiting the Jewish people from ascending Har Sinai during matan Torah , the Torah writes, “bimshoach hayovel haimah yaalu bahar, -when the shofar will be sounded, they may ascend the mountain.(19:13). This pasuk may interpreted homiletically as referring to the Shofar that is associated with the arrival of Moshiach (Vehaya bayom hahu yittokah beshofar godol , On that day he will sound the great shofar - (Yeshayohu 27:13). Whereas the Jewish people were able to ascend the mountain itself- and instead remained foothills of Sinai at the time of the Giving of the Torah (reference to the less-than-perfect spiritual state) , when Shofar heralding the arrival of Moshiach will be heard, will merit to ascend to the mountain top (alluding to their vastly improved status during the Messianic Era).

By reading the story of Rus, from whom Dovid Hamelech, and ultimately Moshiach emerge, we proclaim our firm in Moshiach’s arrival and the renewed revelation of Hashem in His universe. (Sefas Emes 5660).

LOOKING FORWARD TO TECHIYAS HAMEISIM (RESURRECTION)

Going even beyond Moshiach’s arrival, by reading Megillas Rus we are reminded of the ultimate destiny of world Jewish history, Techiyas Hameisim, -resurrection of deceased. The marriage of Rus to Boaz is described as an act of kindness for the deceased as well as the living, effectively restoring the souls of Machlon and Kilyon . (This similar to the ceremony of yibum that effectively restores soul of the deceased brother when his widow remarries her brother-in-law). Just as the union of Boaz and Rus helped ‘revive the souls of Machlon and Kilyon, so too, the neshomos of klal Yisroel’s deceased will ultimately be restored.

Arutz Sheva

Shiva Call

by Naomi Ragen

May 17, ‘04 / 26 Iyar 5764

This morning, I paid a shiva call to Sara and Michael Newman’s house, the parents who lost their wonderful son Eitan when his tank went over a bomb in the Gaza Strip last week. They buried him last Thursday, after his comrades, under constant fire from terrorists, combed the dangerous streets to bring his holy remains and those of his comrades home.

As I neared the Newman home, I saw army men standing in small circles, talking quietly. Some wore beards and knitted skullcaps. Friends, religious and non-religious, came and went in and out of the Newman home, fulfilling one of Judaism’s most honored rituals of comforting mourners for seven days after the funeral.

Sara and her husband sat on low chairs, as is the custom, surrounded by friends. I introduced myself.

“I want to talk to you...” Sara said softly.

I pulled up a chair.

“I understand that you write to many people around the world .

And this is what I would like you to please tell them for me.

Many people have asked what they can do, how can they help. Please tell them to go out and buy something that was made in Israel. That’s all. Just help us, we are going through such hard times. Everybody can do that.”

I felt quick tears come to my eyes, wondering at this woman who sat clear-eyed and full of courage and faith, her mind focused on what else she could

do to help the country she loved, a woman who had just given her country and her people her handsome, bright, intelligent, wonderful young son.

Who had given her son.

I nodded, wordlessly.

I told her about a conversation I had just had with my own son, who is being drafted in November.

"Maybe you could go into anti-aircraft," I urged him. "Your brother did that, and your father."

There was a slight pause at the other end of the line. "Look Mom," he said patiently, "I might as well tell you the truth. I'm not going into the army to strike a pose. I'm going because I want to do something, protect people from getting killed by terrorists. And the only way to do that is to be a foot soldier." He wanted to go into Givati, he said. The same unit as Eitan Newman.

"This is how we brought them up," I told Sara Newman. "I'm very proud of him. And I'm terrified."

She put her hand over mine. "When my son died, he was surrounded by people he loved and respected and trusted. He was on his way back from a mission he'd successfully completed. He died instantly, with no pain. I would rather he went that way then stabbed in the back by some skinhead far away from home."

Would I please, she urged me, send out her message?

When I left the Newman home, I walked up the winding stone staircase that one finds in Jerusalem's hilly neighborhoods. A cool wind was blowing, and the sky seemed strangely cloudy for spring. As I reached the top, I saw a friend coming down the road. She too was on her way to the Newmans. I hugged her, and both of us wept.

And now I am home at my computer, doing what Sara Newman asked me to do. I'm asking you to please go out and buy something from Israel. If you can't find it in your stores, you can find it on-line, I'm sure.

And if you'd like to send Sara and Michael some words of comfort, please send it to msnewman@netvision.net.il.

Naomi Ragen is a best-selling novelist and columnist who has lived in Israel since 1971.

(forwarded by H Hertzberg)

From: "Zvi & Sandy Ehrenberg"

A message from Jerusalem

Wed, 19 May 2004

Dear Friends,

Last night we were given the privilege to sit with some of the most noble people we have ever met. Sara and Michael Newman lost their son, Eitan z"l, last week in the horrible explosion where six of our wonderful soldiers were blown apart while on a mission in the Gaza Strip. Not only did this family sit Shiva, they had to wait two extra days in order to have the parts of this brave boy's body to bury so they could have a Levaya for him. Such shock and horror is almost unimaginable, and yet, when we visited the family, Sara spoke calmly and with immense dignity, welcoming visitors, many of whom she did not know personally, into her house, making all who came feel like part of her beautiful family.

Before we left the Newmans' house Sara expressed one very small request. She asked that we contact people on our mailing list and request each one of them to go out today and buy a product made in Israel. And so, with this letter, written on Yom Yerushalayim, we pass on Sara's modest request to you all. Please go out and buy one Israeli-made product with the Newman family's request in mind and, I would like to suggest, please pass this message to friends on your mailing list, too.

Zvi and Sandy

**Please address all comments and requests to
HAMELAKET@hotmail.com**