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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BAMIDBAR – SHAVUOS - 5778

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**L'iluy Nismos Nachum Tzvi ben Moshe, Ya'akov ben Meir, Sara Tziv'ya bas Avraham and Faiga Malka bas Yona** - Heshie's grandparents who perished on the second day of Shavuos al Kiddush HaShem in the Shoa.  
And for a refuah shleimah for **Nachum Tzvi Ben Yenta**.

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From [sefira@torah.org](mailto:sefira@torah.org)  
Sefira reminder for Friday evening, May 18. The count is: 49  
Today is the 49th day, which is 7 weeks, of the omer.

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From: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <[ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org)>  
to: [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org)  
date: Thu, May 17, 2018 at 8:29 PM  
subject: Rav Frand - Man Plans and G-d Laughs/Shavuos Reenactment  
**Parshas Bamidbar**

**Man Plans and G-d Laughs/Shavuos Reenactment**  
These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1077 — Can A Father Give Son His Position (Rabbi/Chazan) While Still Alive? Good Shabbos

Man Plans and G-d Laughs

Parshas Bamidbar contains one of several instances in the Torah where the Jewish people are enumerated by shevet [Tribe]. In addition to this census at the beginning of the Wilderness sojourn, there is another census towards the end of Sefer Bamidbar, at the conclusion of the 40 years of desert "wandering." For this reason, in Rabbinic literature, the Book of Bamidbar is referred to as the "Chomesh HaPikudim" [the Chumash dealing with enumerations]. It is for the same reason that in English (which most likely comes from the Latin), Bamidbar is called "Numbers" — because it begins and ends with counting.

The Jewish people, as a whole, were counted from the ages of twenty to sixty. However, the Tribe of Levi was not included in this tally. The Levites were counted separately, from when they were one month old. The Ramban notes that even though Levi was counted from thirty days and up, rather than

from the age of twenty years and up (as were the other tribes), there were only 22,000 Levites. If you would limit the age range of the Levites to the ages of thirty years to fifty years, there were only 8,500 of them! [See Rashi to Bamidbar 4:49]

The Ramban wonders how it was that even with counting the Levites from the age of one month old, their numbers did not reach even half of the size of the next smallest tribe (who was counted from the age of twenty years and above). The Ramban says the explanation cannot be that the Levites had a "dangerous profession," being that it was their job to carry the Aron [Holy Ark] and other keylim of the mishkan [Tabernacle Vessels]. Granted that a person in that profession who did not have the right intentions when carrying out his sacred duties would be smitten by Heaven, however, at the time of this counting, the Levites were not yet assigned to those potentially dangerous tasks.

The Ramban speculates that this discrepancy in the population of the Tribe of Levi compared to the other Tribes, provides support for the Rabbinic tradition that the Levi was not subjected to the bitter experience of Egyptian bondage. The rest of the Jewish people, who were subjected to "back breaking labor and embittered lives," were compensated by Heaven with the blessing mentioned at the beginning of the Book of Shemos: "But as much as they (the Egyptians) would afflict it (the Jewish nation), so it would increase and so it would spread out..." [Shemos 1:12]. The miraculous phenomenon of "six births at one time" accounts for the unnatural population boom within the rest of the Jewish people. This miracle was performed for the tribes who were tortured by the Egyptian bondage. Hashem said to the Egyptians, as it were, "You think you can destroy the Jewish people — let's see how successful you will be in that endeavor." This miracle did not apply to the tribe of Levi who were not enslaved and who increased in number strictly based on natural fertility rates.

We see one of the great truths of life from the Ramban: As the Yiddish expression goes — A mensch tracht, un G-t lacht [man thinks and G-d laughs]. If a statistician or a census taker were to estimate who is going to be the most populous tribe — the tribe that endures terrible enslavement and persecution, or the tribe that lives in peace and does not need to work or suffer — clearly the tribe that lives in peace will be projected to be by far the most populous tribe three or four generations later. For sure, they would say, Shevet Levi will be the most populous! However, it does not work like that. Hashem has His plans. That which we think should happen — based on natural and logical projections — is not necessarily going to be what actually occurs.

Rav Chaztkal Levenstein [1895-1974] writes that the biggest proof to this is that the second most populous tribe (after Yehudah) was Dan. Dan had a population of 62,700 people in the census. Dan himself had only one son (Chushim ben Dan), who was deaf. Binyomin had 10 sons. So anyone can do the math: One tribal patriarch had 10 sons and another had a single son who was hearing-impaired. Who is going to be more populous? "The plan of Hashem will be established." [Mishlei 19:21] Dan turns out to be the second most populous tribe, and the Tribe of Binyomin turns out to be just somewhere in the middle.

Man plans and G-d laughs. That is what we see from Shevet Levi, and that is what we see from Shevet Dan.

### **Shavuos: Reenactment Rather than Mere Commemoration**

In a regular year, Parshas Bamidbar is always immediately prior to Shavuos. In fact, the Tur notes that this factor is part of the system by which the decision is made when to read two parshios on the same week (such as Acharei Mos and Kedoshim).

When we read the Aseres HaDibros [the 10 Sayings, which are commonly called the "Ten Commandments"], there are two sets of trop [cantillation notes] that are associated with these Biblical passages. The first is known as ta'am elyon [the upper notes] and the second is known as ta'am tachton [the lower notes] When we read the Aseres HaDibros publically (i.e., with a

minyan), as we do on the Yom Tov of Shavuos, we read them using the ta'am elyon. When someone is merely reviewing the Torah portion privately, he reads them with the ta'am tachton.

The Chizkuni writes that when we read the Aseres HaDibros on Shavuos, we read with ta'am elyon (what he calls the neginos haGedolos – the “large notes”). One of the distinguishing features of the ta'am elyon is that it parses the associated pesukim into ten distinct “commandments” (something which is not apparent when reading with the ta'am tachton). For example, even though the prohibition against idolatry and the mitzvah to observe Shabbos (Commandments #2 and #4, respectively) each consist of multiple pesukim, the sof pasuk [e[end of sentence]ote is ignored in the ta'am elyon, so that multiple pesukim are read as if they are one long pasuk, emphasizing that each group of pesukim is a single “commandment” within the Aseres HaDibros. Therefore, it is most appropriate that on Shavuos, which commemorates the giving of the Aseres HaDibros, the narration is read with these “upper notes”.

The Chizkuni comments that in the month of Shevat, when we read Parshas Yisro, we read this same section containing the Aseres HaDibros with the ta'am tachton, such that the pesukim dealing with idolatry and the pesukim dealing with Shabbos are each read as four distinct pesukim.

This is an interesting custom — which we in Chutz L'Aretz, to the best of my knowledge, do not follow. I am told that in Yerushalayim, where there is widespread practice to follow the Minhagei haGra [c[customs of the Vilna Gaon]they do read with ta'am tachton on Yisro, even b'Tzibur [p[publicly]/p>

Regardless of our custom, the Chizkuni is informing us of a fantastic concept: Krias HaTorah on Shavuos is a reenactment of Kabalas HaTorah. On the original day of Shavuos, the Almighty gave us Ten “Commandments”. So, when we read the Torah on Shavuos, we need to reenact the original scenario. Therefore, we read the Torah portion in a way that emphasizes that there were ten dibros. For this reason, on Shavuos we read “Lo Sirtzach” and “Lo Sin'af” (Thou shalt not murder and Thou shalt not commit adultery) as two separate pesukim; even though when reading those pesukim otherwise, we read them together. There is no such thing in the Torah as a two-word pasuk! In fact, according to the ta'am tachton, Lo Sirzach; Lo Sin'af; Lo Signov; Lo Sa'aneh b'Reyacha Ed Sheker (commandments #6-9) are all read as a single pasuk [S[Shemos 20:13]But on Shavuos we are not reading pesukim; we are reading Ten Commandments.

The Chizkuni adds (again, this is not our custom) that on Shavuos, when we read the Aseres HaDibros, we read it with the Targum [A[Aramaic translation]s well. This too, is part of the reenactment of the Har Sinai experience.

The question is, what was the source of the Chizkuni for these specific customs? I heard a tape of Rav Isaac Bernstein, who quoted something he heard from Rav Shlomo Fisher (a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshivas Itri, Yerushalayim) who apparently was a student of the Brisker Rav. Rav Fisher told the Brisker Rav that he has a Talmudic source for this Chizkuni. In the Gemara [B[Berachos 5a]Rav Shimon ben Lakish expounds the pasuk “...and I shall give you the Tablets of stone (Luchos) and the Torah, and the commandments (Mitzvos) that I have written (asher kasavti), to instruct them (l'horosam)” [S[Shemos 24:12]Luchos – refers to the Aseres HaDibros; Torah – refers to Scripture; Mitzvah – refers to Mishna; “asher kasavti” – refers to Nevi'im and Kesuvim [P[Prophets and Writings]“l'horosam” refers to Talmud. This teaches that all of Torah, Nevi'im, Kesuvim, Mishna, and Talmud were all given to Moshe at Sinai.

Rav Shlomo Fisher asks – why is “Luchos” (i.e., the Aseres HaDibros) listed separately as if it was not part of “Torah”? It must be, he says, that we see from this Gemara that there was a separate place for the Aseres HaDibros, independent of the rest of Torah. The Ribono shel Olam gave Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai something called the Aseres HaDibros that must be related as ten separate utterances. The rest of the Torah is known as “Mikra”

[S[Scripture]but the Aseres HaDibros has its own status.

There is also another indication that the Aseres HaDibros is special. The Gemara says [B[Berachos 45a]hat Rav Shimon ben Pazi taught, “How do we know that the one reading the Targum cannot raise his voice louder than that of the Torah reader? As it is written, ‘Moshe would speak and G-d would respond to him in a voice.’ [S[Shemos 19:19]What is the meaning of the seemingly unnecessary words ‘in a voice’ at the end of that sentence? They teach that the Almighty would respond ‘utilizing the same voice as Moshe.’” This means that at the time of Revelation, Hashem uttered one Commandment and Moshe offered the Targum [i[interpretation]Hashem spoke the four pesukim prohibiting idolatry as one utterance and that is why we need to read it as one commandment. As Moshe interpreted each utterance, so do we need to say Targum for each utterance. This is the Chizkuni's source for the Shavuos customs he quotes, because Shavuos is a reenactment of Revelation.

Rav Bernstein further quotes from a Rav Zev Wolfe Hildenheimer that the latter found a 750-year-old Shavuos Machzor, and in that Machzor, not only did the Torah reading include the Aseres HaDibros, but it also included the Targum for the Aseres HaDibros along with the reading. This answers one of the great questions of life: Why on earth, on Shavuos, do we recite Akdomos prior to the Torah reading? At six o'clock in the morning, when people can hardly keep their eyes open (following being up all night at a Leil Shavuos Mishmor), the Baal Koreh reads Akdomos. 99.9% of the people in shul do not have a clue about the meaning of Akdomos (even with an Art Scroll). Where did this come from? There is no comparable public reading the entire rest of the year!

The answer is that this came from the ancient Jewish custom that on Shavuos they read the Revelation narration including the Aseres Hadibros just as Hashem gave it to the Jewish people through Moshe, when they translated the entire section! As a preface to the Targum they were going to say during the Torah reading itself, they wrote something called Akdomos Milin [w[words of introduction]This is how it happened on Har Sinai. This is the reason for Akdomos.

The question still is, when did it stop, such that we no longer read the Targum of the Aseres HaDibros, and we only say Akdomos? I don't know where or when that happened, but apparently it was sometime between 750 years ago and the modern era. But at least we understand the source.

Shavuos is a reenactment of Kabalas haTorah. This is why the Abudrahm argues with the Rambam. The Rambam says that a person should not stand for the Aseres HaDibros (because we do not want to give the impression that some parts of Torah are more important than others). The Abudrahm insists that we should stand during the public recitation of the Revelation narrative on Shavuos because “they stood beneath the mountain” [S[Shemos 19:17]nd we reenact that scenario with all its details.

We do not merely commemorate the giving of the Torah on Shavuos, we try to make it as real as possible, involving a total reenactment. Just as on Pesach we try to see ourselves as if we are actually leaving Egypt that night; so too, on Shavuos, we try to see ourselves as if we are standing by Har Sinai, receiving the Torah that very day!

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com  
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### **Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Bamidbar – Shavuos 5775**

1. Let me start with Mattan Torah. Regarding Mattan Torah the Gemara says in Maseches Nedarim 38a (9 lines from the top) (לא ניתנה תורה אלא למשה (ולדורו) the Torah was given to Moshe Rabbeinu and to his children and the Gemara says (משה נהג בה טובת עין ונתנה לישראל) that Moshe was kind and he shared it with Klal Yisrael. The Gemara says that can't be, of course the Torah was given over to the whole Klal Yisrael. The Gemara says that the

power of Pilpul Torah was given over to Moshe and his descendants and (משה נהג בה טובת עין ונתנה לישראל).

Rav Pam had an incredible insight into this Gemara. Of course Pilpul was going to go to Klal Yisrael. The Kiyum of Torah is through Pilpul. After all, after Moshe Rabbeinu passed away and Mitzvos were forgotten from Klal Yisrael it says (in Maseches Temurah 16a first wide line) Asniel Ben K'naz through Pilpul those forgotten Mitzvos came back (החזירן עתניאל בן קנז מתוך) (פלפולו). Why then do it in such a strange way, give it to Moshe Rabbeinu to give it to Klal Yisrael voluntarily. Rav Pam explained that that is the way Torah always has to be passed on from a Rebbe to a Talmid, with Tovas Ayin. The way HKB"Y gave it to Moshe Rabbeinu telling him it is yours and give it to the ones you love and Moshe Rabbeinu gave it to Klal Yisrael with Tovas Ayin was the original example of a Rebbe to Talmid relationship. That (נהג בה טובת עין) is the only way Torah has a Kiyum B'chol Dor 'dor from Moshe Rabbeinu, the Rebbe of every generation has to give it with great joy and with great Simcha.

Rav Pam would quote the Chasam Sofer from the beginning of Parshas Chukas. It says that the reason for Parah Adumah was known to Moshe Rabbeinu but Moshe Rabbeinu was forbidden from giving it on to the rest of Klal Yisrael. The Chasam Sofer explaining one of the Divrei Chazal says that Moshe Rabbeinu had Tzar on not being able to share the reason for the Parah Adumah to Klal Yisrael. To the degree that Moshe Rabbeinu said Halevai I wish I didn't know the reason. The pain of knowing the reason and not being able to teach it is so great that it overrides the Simcha I have in knowing the reason. That is the Middah of Moshe Rabbeinu a Middah of Moshe Rabbeinu being Noheig Tovas Ayin with Klal Yisrael with looking at Klal Yisrael with such a beautiful eye.

To add to this, Rav Hutner once said and this is something I once heard on a recording that it says by Maaseh Beraishis as is found in Beraishis 1:31 (וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד what he did and declared it to be either Tov or Tov Meod. Rav Hutner explained that the creation gives a Metzios, gives an existence to things. The (וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד) gives it the ability to continue. In other words, HKB"Y put into the Briya that while things could exist, for them to continue and have a success they need a good eye, they need someone to look at it with a good eye. Just as HKB"Y said (וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד). A thinking person will realize that it is that way. Nothing is successful unless there is someone there who looks at it with a good eye. Not in business, not in sports, not in any area of success. If a person looks at it with an optimistic eye then it has success.

Getting back to Rav Pam's Vort. (נהג בה טובת עין ונתנה לישראל). Torah is very much that way. It is not a study, it is not a textbook, it is something that is given over on a personal level with an Ahavah. The Kiyum of Torah is through that (וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד). The Kiyum is with a feeling of Tov Meod.

I believe that Rav Pam once added that Moshe Rabbeinu went up at Milchemes Amaleik to the top of the mountain to look down at Klal Yisrael and he did so as it says in the Ramban 17:9 (ועלה שם כדי שיראה את ישראל) (הנלחמים) as they are doing battle (וישים עינו עליהם) (וישים עינו עליהם). Why? Rav Pam explained along those lines. Moshe Rabbeinu's Middah as a Rebbe, as a Manhig, as a leader was to look and see with a Tovas Ayin. What an incredible lesson. Besides the teachings, besides the facts that Moshe Rabbeinu taught, besides the Mussar that he taught, he gave Klal Yisrael an Ayin Tov. The Gemara says Nedarim 38a (12 lines from the top) regarding Moshe Rabbeinu (ועליו הכתוב אומר טוב) (עין הוא יבורך). That the Tov Ayin is the one who can give a blessing. This is a thought for Kabbalas Hatorah.

3. Let me share with you a story with a little Mussar that I heard regarding the Chag Hashavuos in Eretz Yisrael. Rav Pinchas Chaim Sheinberg had the custom of staying up in his Yeshiva, Torah Ohr on Shavuos night and then accompanying the boys of his Yeshiva and walking to the Kosel to Daven

Vasikin. As many of you know, it is quite a long walk. As Rav Scheinberg got older he started to question whether he should make the walk. One Shavuos or Erev Shavuos his wife told him you know that it is a long walk and afterwards you have been up all night, to walk back, I don't think you have the strength for it. Rav Scheinberg disagreed and said I can do it and his Rebbetzin said no I don't want you to do it. Rav Scheinberg decided to do the Gorel HaGra. To do that very special Gorel that great people can do with a Sefer and opening it up and finding a Posuk. Rav Scheinberg used a Tanach for the Gorel HaGra because he came to the Posuk that is found in Tehillim 29:11 (יְרֵךְ--עֹז, לְעֲמֹד יְתֹן). He understood that the Gorel HaGra was telling him (יְרֵךְ--עֹז, לְעֲמֹד יְתֹן) that Hashem gives strength and you can do it, you can walk to the Kosel.

A Talmid later asked him I don't understand, the end of the Posuk is (יְרֵךְ, יְרֵךְ, יְרֵךְ). You came to that Posuk, maybe the Posuk was telling you to watch out for your Sholom Bayis and listen to your wife. How do you know that the lesson is in the (יְרֵךְ--עֹז, לְעֲמֹד יְתֹן) more than in the (יְרֵךְ, יְרֵךְ, יְרֵךְ)?

To which the answer that was given, Sholom Bayis! It is not Sholom Bayis when my wife and I disagree. People can disagree, it is not personal. We had a disagreement and we did a Gorel HaGra, whatever it is we are B'sholom. Whether the Gorel goes my way or her way is totally irrelevant. What a basic and important thought in Sholom Bayis. When there are disagreements, normal intelligent people can disagree over things. It doesn't become personal. It is not a question of Sholom. A Geshmake thought.

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from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com>

date: Thu, May 17, 2018 at 10:25 AM

subject: Shavuot: Inspiring, Insightful Articles & Videos

### **Jewish Heroes and Shavuot by Rabbi Benjamin Blech**

The power of Torah is the influence of the giants of our past to shape the dreams and the aspirations of our future.

"I believe," Abraham Lincoln famously said, "the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man."

Shavuot is the holiday which commemorates the giving of that gift to the Jewish people. According to Jewish tradition, God offered it to all of mankind, but they refused to accept it. They weren't ready to be bound by its laws or to be guided by its values. So that's part of the reason why the world is in the shape that it is, still far from having reached its potential for peace, for love, and for messianic fulfillment.

But we, descendants of those who stood at Sinai, made an everlasting commitment to treasure the words of the Torah and to live by its teachings.

The Torah is not merely a book of law. It is also filled with narrative. It is the story of many people, some of whose lives are inspirational – others personifications of deceit and wrongdoing.

No other legal book so artfully mingles laws with stories, rules and regulations with the lives of historic personalities.

What is the meaning of this remarkable fusion? The Torah was given primarily not for our information but for our transformation – and in order to be truly transformed by ideals we need role models, stories of those who succeeded in order to inspire us and stories of those whose failures serve as warning against wasted lives and legacies of evil.

Warren Buffett, the brilliant prognosticator of Wall Street, shared a profound prediction beyond the stock market. "Tell me your heroes," he declared, "and I will tell you how your life will end up."

According to a remarkable article in Psychology Today, heroes today are almost an extinct species. In a recent poll of more than a thousand Americans, more than half couldn't name a single public figure that they admired or considered a hero. With great ease they could mention dozens of celebrities. But celebrities aren't heroes. A celebrity is created by the media; heroes are created by their actions. Celebrities create fashions; heroes create

values. Celebrities are only interested in fame and glory; heroes are motivated by morals, by courage and by universal ideals.

There is a heavy price to be paid when society turns its celebrities into role models and – perhaps for want of true examples – ignores heroes of character, of virtue and of ethical nobility. The power of Torah on our lives and the lives of our children is the strength of example, the influence of the giants of our past to shape the dreams and the aspirations of our future. The narratives of the Torah are the necessary illustrations for the possibility of its fulfillment.

There's a famous story told about the Chafetz Chaim, Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan (1838-1933), the Talmudic and rabbinic scholar, ethical and religious teacher, venerated by Jews all over the world for his saintliness and learning. The Chafetz Chaim was called once to testify in court, and the lawyer wanted to explain to the court what an honest man the Rabbi was. He said that once the Chafetz Chaim caught a thief stealing property from his small home. So as not to have the thief be guilty of so heinous a crime condemned in the Ten Commandments, he pursued the thief, shouting, "It's yours! I forgive you!" The judge looked at the lawyer and asked if he truly believed this amazing tale. "I'm not certain, your honor," said the lawyer, "but I do know that they do not tell such stories about you and me."

The fact is that people did tell many such stories, not only about the Chafetz Chaim but many other pious and holy Jewish figures. That is because those who studied Torah became living exemplars of Torah. Laws became the narratives of their lives. Torah is not a list of do's and don'ts but a thrilling history of great men and women, of our patriarchs and our matriarchs, of Moses and of Aaron, and of common people who when the world said they can't, confidently responded that they could – and that they would.

Jews not only have loved Torah since Sinai, they have lived it. Jews have shown it is possible to live life in accord with Divine will, not only studying the Torah but striving to imitate its author.

And that is why we celebrate Shavuot with such fervor and passion. The rabbis have a fascinating image for the moment when we received the greatest gift of history. The midrash tells us God lifted the mountain over our heads. One of the most beautiful interpretations is that the purpose was to create a symbolic chuppah, the bridal canopy used to sanctify a marriage. Sinai was a marriage made in heaven linking us metaphorically to God as husband and wife.

It is a marriage we continue to celebrate every Shavuot. We treasure the Torah He entrusted to us at that time. We thank Him as well for giving us the opportunity to challenge ourselves to live up to our potential for greatness - because that is why we do not lack for role models and magnificent heroes.

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<http://matzav.com/rav-yeruchem-olshins-new-sefer-on-shavuos/>

Rav Yeruchem Olshin's New Sefer on Shavuos

May 16, 2018:19 pm

Seforim in Review

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman for the Five Towns Jewish Times

If one were asked to describe Rav Yeruchem Olshin's maamarim in just one word – it would be "inspirational." And now, just in time for Shavuos, we have the complete set of Yare'ach LaMoadim the Schweid Edition – for the final regel. Like the other volumes, this outstanding sefer will not only take over the Yom Tov, but it will imbue it with deeper meaning and understanding.

Generally speaking, this can either happen in Talmudic and halachic lomdus or in maamarei ruchnius and Hashkafah. Rav Yeruchem Olshin's new sefer like its predecessors – does it in both. The first volume (434 pages) is devoted to shiurim in lomdus and halacha. The second volume is devoted to ma'amarim (492 pages). The shiurim and maamarim are a compilation of years of thought, and it is easily seen in the sheer depth and exhaustive nature of the material.

THE DEEPER REASON WHY WE LEARN ALL NIGHT

A typical example of the ma'amarim explains the deeper reason why we learn Torah all night on Shavuos:

"The Gemorah in Psachim 68b tells us: Rabbi Elazar says, "All admit that on atzeres – we require lachem – it should be for you as a holiday. What is the reason? Because it is the day that the Torah was given."

The Meforshim explain that this Gemorah means we should be happier on this yom tov than on others. Indeed, Rav Yechiel Yehoshuah Rabinowitz, the Biala Rav, in his Seder HaYom writes this explicitly. The yesod veshoresh haAvodah (Shaar HaTzon 10) develops this idea explaining that it is because we received this remarkable treasure of the Torah.

The Shla HaKadosh (Meseches Shvuos Ner Mitzvah 18) adds another level of insight. He writes that it is the day we merited the "Crown of Torah." He cites the Gemorah in Psachim where Rav Yoseph states that were it not for this day, he would be just another "Joe" in the marketplace.

It is not just the fact that we received the Torah that makes us happy – it is the fact that we merited its crown.

To understand this thought, the Rambam tells us (Hilchos Talmud Torah 3:13), "Even though it is a Mitzvah to learn Torah day and night, a person only learns the majority of his Torah at night. Therefore, someone who wishes to merit the crown of Torah should be careful to study it each night not missing even one of them in sleeping, eating, drinking, conversation etc. He should only engage in Talmud Torah and Divrei Chochma. This is called the Rina of Torah.

The Av Beis Din of Ponovech explained (cited in Zichron Shmuel p. 574) that there are two aspects of studying Torah. There is the aspect of studying it in fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Limud HaTorah. There is also an aspect of learning it as "HaShira HaZos." In other words it is the song of the life of the person. In it he delights and takes pleasure. He does not delay in sticking to it on any account. Any difficult situation he engages in it and he sleeps in the depth of its halacha. Even when he is tired he studies it. This is the fundamental idea of the Crown of Torah.

We can now better understand the Shla's explanation of Shavuos.

The custom of Klal Yisroel learning all night is now also understood better. It is not just to make up for the fact that we slept then. No, the essence of the problem in that we slept was that we were not yet at the state where it was "the song of our life." We are thus correcting this flaw in who we were or are as a nation.

We should take greater pleasure and joy in this Yom Tov because it symbolizes the song of our lives."

Rav Olshin studied in Yeshiva Torah V'Daas under Rav Eliyahu Moshe Shisgal zt"l (son-in-law of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l) and primarily in Lakewood under Rav Sheur Kotler zt"l. He is, of course, one of the four Roshei Yeshiva of the Lakewood Yeshiva. The Sefer was collated by Rav Olshin's son, Rabbi Yisroel Shraga Olshin Shlita, a Rosh Chaburah in BMG. Rabbi Moshe Gruen and several other Talmidei Chachomim spent much time and effort in editing the sefer. Each volume has a general table of contents and a very extensive and detailed table of contents as well. There is no index, however, which will hopefully be added in further editions.

THE SHIURIM VOLUME

The fifty-one shiurim in the first volume contain numerous Chiddushim and insights into various topics, beginning with Sfiras HaOmer, Shavuos itself, Birchas Hatorah and then Talmud Torah.

In his introduction, Rav Olshin explains the necessity of Bitachon, faith in Hashem, to acquiring Torah. Indeed, in Ahavah Rabba we say the words on account of the faith of our forefathers – you taught them the laws of life. Bitachon is a condition in Torah. Indeed, the entire Sefiras haOmer is a preparation for the day of Matan Torah. This explains why a shehecheyanu is not recited on the Mitzvah of Sefiras HaOmer – because it is preparatory in nature.

THE MA'AMARIM VOLUME

The sixty five Maamarim of this volume deal with Sfiras HaOmer, the Students of Rabbi Akiva, LaG BaOmer, preparing for Kabalas haTorah, Shavuos itself, Matan Torah and Talmud Torah. Why do we mourn for the students of Rabbi Akiva to such an extent? Rav Olshin answers that we are mourning the loss of the continuity of Torah – because the students who did not display the proper honor to each other were not worthy of carrying on that continuity.

These two volumes are filled with inspiration, insight, and chiddushim.

<http://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Shavuot>

### Preparing for Shavuot

Some say that thirty days before Shavuot one should start learning the halachot of Shavuot, whereas others say that one should start from Rosh Chodesh Sivan. [1] All agree that on the holiday itself one should learn the halachot of Shavuot. [2] The notion that one should learn in preparation for the holiday doesn't mean that a talmid chacham should stop his regular learning in order to learn halacha of the upcoming holiday, rather it means that a question about hilchot shavuot is given precedence to questions not about shavuot.[3] Some, however, dispute this point.[4]

Decorating the Shul for Shavuot Some have the custom to decorate the shul for Shavuot with flowers, trees or nice smelling fruits. [5] While some communities abstain from this custom because it may be considered a chok akum,[6] others justify the practice.[7] Similarly, some have the practice to hand out scented herbs so that people can smell them and recite a beracha.[8] This should not be done between Baruch Sheamar and the Shemoneh Esreh.[9]Some also place flowers on the Sefer Torah itself[10] or distribute flowers to be thrown at the Sefer Torah[11] in honor of Shavuot. If Shavuot falls out on a Sunday, one should not place the greenery on Shabbat in preparation for Shavuot but should do so either on Yom Tov or before Shabbat.[12]

Reading Megillat Rut on Shavuot The Ashkenazic minhag is to read Megillat Rut on Shavuot.[13]

Eating Dairy on Shavuot The minhag Yisrael is to have dairy foods on Shavuot. [14] It is preferable to eat meat at the Yom Tov meals. While some consider this to be an obligation, others hold that there is no technical requirement to do so. [15] It is preferable to have meat both at the nighttime and daytime meal of Yom Tov. Those who have a practice to eat one dairy meal, however, have what to rely on. [16]

Shavuot night

Kiddush One shouldn't say Kiddush on Shavuot night until Tzet HaKochavim.[17]Some say one should even wait to say Arvit,[18] while others argue.[19] If one forgot to say shehecheyanu during Kiddush on Shavuot, one cannot say it after Shavuot even within the seven days after the holiday. [20]

Learning all Night Many have the custom to stay up Shavuot night learning torah in anticipation of accepting the Torah on Shavuot. [21] Some even stay up the second night of Shavuot in the diaspora. [22] If staying up all night, and one plans on drinking multiple times throughout the night, it is best to make a Shehakol and Borei Nefashot for each drinking. However, if when making the first Shehakol of the night, one has explicit Kavanah (intention) for that Bracha to cover all other drinkings of the night, that works as well, and one would then not need a new bracha at each drinking. [23] The minhag to stay up all night applies to men and not women. [24] If yeshiva boys would prefer to learn gemara rather than reading the tikkun for shavuot, there is no need to stop them because they have on who to rely. However, if most of the congregation is reading the tikkun, individuals should not break off to learn gemara. [25] If, on account of the exhaustion of learning Torah all night, he cannot daven Shacharit in the morning with proper concentration, it is better not to stay up since davening properly is a clear obligation [26]

Shavuot morning As previously mentioned, many have the custom to stay up Shavuot night learning Torah. [27] There are several halachot that those who follow this practice should bear in mind: According to Ashkenazim, after daybreak [28], one should use the bathroom, thus dirtying one's hands, wash his hands for Netilat Yadayim with a Bracha, and then say Asher Yatzer. [29] One should hear Elokai Neshama, HaMaavir Sheinah, and Birkot HaTorah from someone who slept. The rest of the Birkot HaShachar may be recited as usual. [30] If one normally wears a Tallit for Shacharit,

one should have intent that the bracha on his Tallit should cover his Tallit Katan as well. If, however, one doesn't wear a Tallit, one should hear the bracha from someone else. [31] If one slept a Sheinat Kevah the day before staying up all night, he may recite the Birkot HaTorah in the morning for himself. [32] According to Sephardim, after using the bathroom one should say Asher Yatzer and not the bracha of Al Netilat Yadayim. [33]One may say Elokai Nishama, HaMaavir Sheinah, and Birkot HaTorah for himself. [34] The bracha recited over the Tallit covers the Tallit Katan as well. [35] Netilat Yadayim One who didn't sleep at all at night should wash Netilat Yadayim in the morning without a bracha, since there's a dispute whether there's an obligation to wash Netilat Yadayim in the morning if one did not sleep the night before. According to Ashkenazim, one who didn't sleep but goes to the bathroom in the morning should wash Netilat Yadayim with a Bracha. [36] One should not learn after Olot HaShachar until he washed his hands in the morning. [37] If one slept less than 30 minutes [38] or slept in a temporary fashion (putting one's head on the table) [39], then it is as if he did not sleep at all. [40]

Asher Yatzer According to Ashkenazim, if one slept at night, one should make Asher Yatzer in the morning whether or not one went to the bathroom; however, if one didn't sleep, he should only recite Asher Yatzer if he goes to the bathroom. [41] According to Sephardim, one can only recite Asher Yatzer if he used the bathroom. Even if he does though, he would not recite the beracha of al netilat yadayim [42]

Tzitzit If one went to sleep (or stayed up) in Tzitzit, preferably one should make a Bracha on wearing a Tallit to cover the Bracha for Tzitzit, however if that's not possible, one may make a Bracha on those Tzitzit in the morning, and as one makes the bracha one should shake the Tzitzit strings. [43] Birkot HaTorah For ashkenazim, if one didn't sleep at all during the night, one shouldn't recite Brachot HaTorah but should hear them from someone who is obligated to make them (both must have kavana, and after the Bracha, both learn some pesukim such as Parshat Birkat Cohanim). [44] For Sephardim, the minhag is to recite these berachot even if you remained awake all night. [45] One should not say birkot hatorah until after alot hashachar. [46] If one slept Shinat Kevah the day before staying up all night, one should make the Brachot HaTorah in the morning after one didn't sleep. [47]

Birkot HaShachar If one didn't sleep at all, according to Ashkenazim, one should listen to Elokai Nishama and HaMaavir Sheinah from someone who did sleep. [48] However, the rest of the Birkot HaShachar one can make oneself. [49] However, according to Sephardim, one may recite these brachot oneself.[50] One should not learn after Olot HaShachar until he said Birkot HaShachar. [51]

Isvu Chag It is prohibited to fast or hold a eulogy on the day after Shavuot. [52] The Sephardic minhag is not to recite tachanun, lamnatze'ach, or tefilla lidavid from Rosh chodesh sivan until the 12th. [53]

Sources  
1. In Gemara Pesachim 6a, Rabbanan hold that one should begin to learn Hilchot Pesach thirty days in advance of Pesach, whereas Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel holds only 2 weeks. Rabbanan learn this idea from Moshe who taught the laws of Pesach Sheni thirty days in advance which was Pesach in Nissan. Shulchan Aruch 429:1 rules like the opinion of the Rabbanan. Mishna Brurah 429:1 quotes some who extend this to other Yamim Tovim such as Shavuot, whereas the Gra held that it does not apply to Shavuot and it is sufficient to begin learning the halachot of shavuot from Rosh Chodesh Sivan. 2. Gemara Megillah 32b states that one should learn the halachot of Shavuot on Shavuot. Mishna Brurah 429:1 quotes this as halacha. 3. Chazon Ovadyah (Pesach pg 1) explains that the halacha in Gemara Pesachim 6a is relevant in regards to the laws established in Tosefta Sanhedrin 7:5 which state that a person should ask relevant questions and a relevant question has precedence over the irrelevant questions. 4. See Beir Halacha 429 s.v. Shoalin 5. Rama O"C 494:3 (quoting Maharil pg. 160) explains that the custom commemorates the joy of Matan Torah. Birkei Yosef 494:6 says that this custom is an ancient one dating back to the time of the Midrash Targum Sheini on Megillat Esther 3:8 which writes that Haman mentioned this minhag of ours to Achashverosh. Magen Avraham 494:5 explains that trees are used for decoration so that we should pray for a good fruit harvest because Shavuot is the day we are judged regarding the fruits of the year. The Levush 494:1 writes that this minhag is based on the pasuk "גַּם-הַצֵּאֵן וְהַקֵּר אֶל-יְרֵעוּ, אֶל-מוֹלֵד" (Shemot 34:3) which implies that there was pasture on Har Sinai. Sefer Minhag Avoteinu Biyadenu vol. 2 pg. 578 suggests the Maharil himself felt that the minhag was a fulfillment of added simcha of the holiday itself, not a commemoration of the simcha of Matan Torah. He writes that this minhag developed specifically on Shavuot because there is an added level of happiness which

manifests in physical pleasures, as the Gemara Pesachim 68b writes that though there is a machloket Tanna'im if the holidays should be 'מכיל לה' or 'הני לה' and 'הני לה' all opinions agree that there is an aspect of ללב on Shavuot. With this, he explains why the Maharil writes that the greenery should smell nice. Thus, according to the Maharil, it is our joy in essence of the Torah itself and our ability to learn it that we are celebrating by putting out decorations, while according to the Rama the celebration is more focused on the historical fact that Hashem chose us as His nation and gave us His Torah. see also Yechave Daat 4:33. See further in Sefer Minhag Avotenu Biyadenu vol. 2 pg. 573-604 for a lengthy discussion of the development of this minhag and the various reasons. 6. This is the opinion of the Gra as quoted by the Chayei Adam 131:13 and Maaseh Rav Siman 191. He felt that since it was only a minhag and not a real din, we should abolish it since it became a religious practice of the non-Jews. This seems to be accepted by the Aruch Hashulchan 494:6 and Rav Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe YD 4:11:5). The Munkatcher Rov (Shaar Yissachar vol. 2 pg. 119) writes that although the minhag is well-founded, the best option is to refrain. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (quoted in Ve'alehu Lo Yibol 1:page 184) argues that the Gra only wanted to abolish the custom of placing trees in shuls and not flowers. The Steipler (Orchos Rabbeinu vol. 2 pg. 99) agrees. 7. Chacham Ovadia Yosef (Yechave Daat 4:33 and Yabia Omer YD 3:24, see also Yalkut Yosef Kitzur S" A 494:17) explains that the custom is justified based on the Sh"t Maharik Shoresch 88 who explains that there is no concern of "Bechukoteihem lo telechu" (Vayikra 18:3, the prohibition regarding following non-Jewish practices and laws) by a custom that has a good reason for its practice. See also Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson (Yosef Daat Siman 348) and Maharsham (Daat Torah 494:3 and Shu"t Maharsham 1:127), ad Chut Hamishulach pg. 128 who argue in favor of the minhag. Minhagei Edot Yisrael writes that Persian Jews call Shavuot Moed'eh Gol, meaning holiday of flowers. In conclusion, Piskei Teshuvot 494:10 writes that the minhag in most places is to place flowers in the shuls. 8. Derashot Chatam Sofer 5562 where he writes that this is based on the Gemara Shabbat 88b which says that "with every single statement that emanated from the mouth of Hashem the whole world became filled with besamim — the fragrance of spices." see also Birkat Yaavetz of Rav Dovid Cohen on Moadim vol. 2 pg. 263 9. Magen Avraham 494:9 quoting the Shela Hakadosh, Kaf Hachaim 494:57, Torat Hacham Baruch pg. 27 10. Minhag Avoteinu Biyadeinu 2, page 602. 11. Kaf Hachaim Sofer 494:58 12. Magen Avraham 494:5, Shulchan Aruch Harav 494:14, Mishna Berura 494:9 write that even though there is not a problem of muktzeh since they were designated from before Shabbat for this purpose, there is still a problem of preparing on Shabbat for Yom Tov. 13. The Rama 490:9 writes that the minhag is to read Megillas Rut on Shavuot. The Birkei Yosef 694:11 quotes the midrash which says that the reason we read Rut on Shavuot is because it emphasizes the sacrifice Rut made to accept the Torah and because it describes an awesome act of kindness, which is one of the core themes of Torah. • See Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz for Ten Reasons to Read Rus on Shavuot. 14. Rama 494:3 writes that the minhag is to eat dairy foods on Shavuot. He explains that by having a dairy meal, one ensures that will have two loaves of bread, one for the dairy meal and one for the meat meal, and the two loaves of bread are in commemoration of the Shte HaLechem brought in the Beit HaMikdash on Shavuot. The Mishna Brurah 494:12 adds an alternative reason for the custom: the Jews had only dairy food immediately after Matan Torah because preparing kosher meat takes a long time. Thus, we eat dairy in commemoration of Matan Torah. • Additionally, the Olelot Efraim (Ma'amar 141) writes that the reason for the minhag is that Chazal (Eiruvin 52b) compare learning Torah to a baby suckling milk: just as a baby always finds a new and sweet taste in the milk, so too the learner always a new and sweet taste in Torah. • Rav Moshe Shternbuch in Moadim U'zmanim 8:319 says that prior to matan torah, milk was a problem because it could have been considered "ever min hachai," eating from a live animal. Therefore, we celebrate our first opportunity to eat dairy products which occurred at Matan Torah because if the torah in shemot 3:8 praises Israel for being a land filled with milk and honey it has to be that it is permissible for consumption. • Additionally, Rav Shternbuch in Teshuvot Vehanagos 5:161 suggests that we specifically eat cheese on the day of matan Torah since, unlike other foods that spoil with time, aged cheese is actually better than new cheese. As such, we eat cheese on Shavuot to remind us that the 3000 years since Matan Torah doesn't mean the Torah is "outdated," but that it is even greater and just as applicable to our lives. • The Yeshuot Yaakov 494:2 gives another reason. He says that the primary change at kabbalat hatorah was that even though the avot could keep mitzvot they didn't have a yetzer hara. We received the yetzer hara at Har Sinai and that's why the gemara tells us that the reward for someone who is commanded in a mitzva is greater than someone's who isn't because he doesn't have a yetzer hara not to fulfill it. Our goal now is to control the yetzer hara and defeat it to achieve the ultimate good. Based on a gemara in Nidda he says that blood is the symbol of tumah so we take the potential for impurity and turn it around completely to achieve the purity of milk. • The Bais Halevi on Parashat Yitro gives his own reason. The gemara says that we were given the torah and not the angels because many mitzvot require performance with the body and angels don't have bodies. We have milk and then we have meat to fulfill simchat yom tov, so we show how our observance of the laws of milk and meat requires physicality. • The Torat Chaim on Bava Metzta 86b says that we eat dairy based on an Aggada that when Hashem gave us the torah and the angels complained that they should be the ones receiving the torah, Hashem showed them Avraham, and we are told in Bereishit 18:8 that they ate milk and meat together but the Jews don't eat milk and meat together. see also Yalkut Yosef Moadim page 444 and Noda Biyehuda YD 64. • see Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz for elaboration on some of these reasons 15. The Rambam (Yom Tov 6:18) rules that the Mitzvah of Simchat Yom Tov is fulfilled through consumption of meat and wine. The Bet Yosef 529:2 asks why the Rambam codifies the consumption of meat on Yom Tov when the Gemara (Pesachim 109a) states clearly that the mitzvah of Simcha is fulfilled through eating meat only during the time of the Beit HaMikdash, while nowadays the mitzvah is fulfilled through wine alone. Accordingly, the S" A 529:1 writes that one must have wine at each Yom Tov meal and makes no mention of the consumption of meat. The Eliyah Rabba 529:6 and Bei'ur Halacha 529 s.v. Keitzad explain that Shulchan Aruch intentionally omitted the obligation to eat meat because of his question in the Beit Yosef. • The Yam Shel Shlomo (Beitzah 2:5) answers the Beit Yosef's question by reinterpreting the Gemara to mean that nowadays, one must have wine in addition to meat, as opposed to the times of the Beit HaMikdash when one could fulfill the Mitzvah through meat without wine. Thus, Mor

U'Ketziyah 529, Kitzur S" A 103:7, Aruch HaShulchan 529:5, and Chazon Ovadia (Yom Tov, p. 319) rule that it is an obligation to eat meat on Yom Tov. • The Bach 529, however, explains that although there is no obligation to eat meat nowadays, there still is a mitzvah to do so, and one would fulfill the Mitzvah of Simcha thereby. The Magen Avraham 529:3, Shulchan Aruch HaRav 529:7, Mishna Brurah 529:11, and Kaf HaChaim 529:28 agree. • See also the Sha' agat Aryeh (Siman 65), who argues that Simchat Yom Tov does not obligate one to eat meat in particular; rather, it is fulfilled by what is subjectively considered enjoyable by each person (see Pesachim 109a). Birkei Yosef 529:4 agrees. Darkei Teshuva 89:19 quotes Rav Chaim of Sanz as disagreeing with the Sha' agat Aryeh. 16. The Darkei Teshuva (89:19) mentions a number of minhagim: • (A) Some people eat only dairy on Shavuot in order to fulfill the minhag. The Darkei Teshuva disapproves of this practice because he accepts the view of the Rambam that there is an obligation to eat meat on Yom Tov. See note 1 above. • (B) Some people eat dairy for the nighttime meal and meat for the daytime meal. Such was the minhag of the Steipler (Orchos Rabbeinu v. 2 p. 98). The Darkei Teshuva comments that this is reasonable according to the Sha' agat Aryeh's (Siman 68) view that Simchat Yom Tov is only d'rabanan at night; however, others disagree with the Sha' agat Aryeh. Oztrot Yosef (Rav Dovid Yosef 13:7) quotes this as a minhag. Rav Hershel Schachter (Bikvei HaTzon p. 81) suggests that Simchat Yom Tov follows the schedule of Korbanot for which the night follows the day, implying that eating meat for Simchat Yom Tov does not apply the first night. Therefore, he said (oral communication) that if one enjoys dairy, one may have a dairy meal for the night of Yom Tov. This approach is supported by the Sfat Emet (Sukkah 48a), who writes that Simchat Yom Tov can be fulfilled with one meat meal, either during the night or day. Rabbi Mordechai Willig (Pesachim Shiur 110, min 40-50) agrees with this reasoning. • Tangentially, Rav Ovadia Yosef in Meor Yisrael (Beitzah 36b v. 2 p. 313) writes that Shulchan Aruch 546:3 might also hold that simcha at night is only derabanan. Pitchei Teshuva YD 341:13 quotes the VShav Hakohen 95 who argues that there is a mitzvah of simcha deoraita even at night. He proves his contention from Rambam (Chagiga 2:13) unlike the Maharik ad loc. Rashbam (Pesachim 108b s.v. yedey yayin yatzah (2)) implies that he agrees with Rambam. • (C) Some eat a dairy meal and then a meat meal. The Torat Chaim (Chullin 83a) writes that it is better to abrogate the minhag of eating dairy rather than have meat after eating dairy, which is forbidden according to the Zohar. The Darkei Teshuva responds that in order to fulfill this minhag, one may be lenient against the Zohar. Mishna Brurah 494:16 notes that one need not make Birkat HaMazon as long as he cleanses his mouth with bread and water as well as washes his hands (S" A Y.D. 89:2). • (D) Some eat a dairy Kiddush, wait an hour, and then have a meat meal. The Darkei Teshuva finds this to be the most preferable minhag. 17. Magen Avraham (Intro to 494). Chacham Ovadia Yosef in Sh"t Yechave Daat 6:30, Halichot Olam 2: page 3, Chazon Ovadia Yom Tov p. 305, Sh"t Chazon Ovadia 1:1 and Sh"t Yabia Omer 5:6:5 says that ideally one should wait until 20 minutes after sunset but if necessary one can be lenient and say Kiddush earlier, but still should ideally wait until after sunset and try to eat a kezayit of bread after tzet hakochavim. • Rav Yakov Pollack (cited by EmeK Bracha 69c, Yachava Daat 6:30) is quoted as explaining that one shouldn't make kiddush of Shavuot early since we want the temimot of the sefirat haomer to extend to the very end of the 49th day and not end it early. This is cited by Magen Avraham 494:1 and Taz 494:1. • Netsiv (Meishiv Dvar OC 18 cited by Yachava Daat) explains that one shouldn't say kiddush of Shavuot early since regarding Shavuot it says וקראתם בעצם היום הזה (Vayikra 23:21). • Hitorerut Teshuva 3:68:4 writes that one could accept Yom Tov of Shavuot early and it doesn't impact temimot. He explains the reason not to daven early is because either way we're going to be up all night so we might as well say kriyat shema at the right time which is after tzet hakochavim. 18. Mishna Brurah 494:1, Taz 494:1 19. Kaf HaChaim 494:1, Moed Likol Chai 8:23, Sh"t Yechave Daat 6:30 20. Chazon Ovadia Pesach page 134 21. Mishna Brurah 494:1 writes based on the Magen Avraham that the practice is to stay up all night to learn. He quotes Arizal who said that one who learns all night on Shavuot will long the next year without being damaged. He also quotes the Magen Avraham who explains that since Bnei Yisrael overslept on the day of Matan Torah we stay up all night in order to rectify that mistake. 22. Kaf Hachaim 494:6 23. Halichot Shlomo 12:3 24. Sh"t Rav Pealim 1:9 in sod yesharim 25. Yalkut Yosef Moadim page 439, Sh"t Yechave Daat 3:32. 26. Rav Shlomo Aviner 27. Magen Avraham (Intro to 494) quotes the Zohar that says that the early Chasidim would learn all of Shavuot night. Birkei Yosef 494:8, Mishna Brurah 494:1, Kaf HaChaim 494:6, Yalkut Yosef Moadim page 438, and Aruch HaShulchan 494:3 also record this minhag. 28. Regarding Netilat Yadayim and Birkot HaTorah, it's clear that if they are to be made, they shouldn't be said until Alot HaShachar. Nitei Gavriel 18:1 and 20:1 writes so explicitly. Regarding Birchot HaShachar, Kaf HaChaim 46:49 writes that one can say all of them at Chatzot, however, Piskei Teshuvot 46:14 rules that one should wait until Alot HaShachar. Regarding Tallit, S" A 18:3 rules that one may not make the Bracha until MeSheYakir. 29. • The Rosh (Brachot 9:23) writes that the reason a person must wash his hands in the morning is that one's hands almost certainly touched an unclean area. The Rashba (responsa 1:191), on the other hand, writes that the reason is that a person is created anew each morning. The Bet Yosef 4:13 writes that according to the Rosh, one who stays up all night doesn't have to wash because one can ensure that his hands stay clean, while according to the Rashba, one is created anew whether he slept or not. Because of this dispute, S" A and Rama 4:13 rule that one should wash without a bracha. Magen Avraham 494, Taz 4:9, Beur HaGra 4:13, Birkei Yosef 46:12, and Mishna Brurah 494:1 agree. See, the Bach 4, Aruch HaShulchan 4:12, and Maaseh Rav (#2) who argue that one who didn't sleep can say the Bracha. • Hagahot Rabbi Akiva Eiger 4:12 writes that if one went to the bathroom, one can make the bracha. Olat Tamid 4:8, Eliyah Rabba 4:8, and Pri Megadim (E" A 494) agree. Artzot HaChaim 4:1 and Chaye Adam 7:6 seem to agree as well. Thus, Mishna Brurah 4:30 rules one should use the bathroom, thus dirtying his hands, wash his hands with a Bracha, and then say Asher Yatzar. • Some achronim (Nitei Gavriel 18:1, Weekly Halacha Discussion, vol 2, p. 363, Halachically Speaking vol 7, issue 6, p. 9) quote the Mishna Brurah as saying that one should use the bathroom and leave out dirtying one's hands. Rabbi Mordechai Willig and Rabbi Hershel Schachter (cited by Halachipedia Article #22) explained that although the Mishna Brurah certainly meant to be precise, one can make the Bracha even if one merely touches an unclean area of the body. • Derech HaChaim 1:17 adds that even by touching an unclean area, one can make the Bracha. Beur Halacha

s.v. Veyitlem agrees. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichot Shlomo 2:24), however, argues that it is insufficient to touch an unclean area. • Maamar Mordechai 4:8 disagrees with Rabbi Akiva Eiger because even according to the Rashba there is a doubt as to whether one is considered created anew if he didn't sleep (see Magen Avraham 4:12). Kaf HaChaim 4:49 and Yalkut Yosef 4:9 agree.

30. • The Tur and S" A 47:12 write that if one is learning at night one doesn't have to make new Birkot HaTorah as long as one didn't fall asleep. Beirur HaGra 47:12 explains that sleep is a hefsek and if one didn't sleep, one doesn't need new Brachot. Chaye Adam 9:9, Mishna Brurah 47:28, and Rabbi Hershel Schachter (cited in Bet Yitzchak vol 30, p. 592) agree but advise hearing them from someone who slept. Magen Avraham (47:12, 494) argues that essentially Birkot HaTorah are like Birkot HaShachar, which are said every day. He adds that it's preferable to hear them from someone who certainly is obligated. Eliyah Rabba 47:9, Birkei Yosef 46:12, and Aruch HaShulchan 47:23 concur. Kaf HaChaim 47:26 and Chazon Ovadyah (p. 312) write that the Sephardic minhag is to make Birkot HaTorah oneself. • Rama 46:8 writes that one may say all the Birkot HaShachar whether one experienced the event described in the particular Bracha or not. Although the Shulchan Aruch argues, Kaf HaChaim 46:49 writes that the Sephardic minhag is to follow the Rama. • Eliyah Rabba 46:12 quotes the Ateret Zekenim 46:3 who says that if one didn't sleep, one shouldn't say Elokai Nishama or HaMaavir Sheinah. Thus, Mishna Brurah 46:24 writes that one should hear these Brachot from someone who slept. However, Pri Megadim (E" A 46:2) wonders why Elokai Nishama and HaMaavir Sheinah should be different than the other Birkot HaShachar. Aruch HaShulchan 46:13 rules that one may say these brachot even if he didn't sleep. Also, Birkei Yosef 46:12 and Yalkut Yosef 489:13 Moadim page 441 write that the Sephardic minhag is to say these Brachot even if one didn't sleep. 31. Although S" A 8:16 rules if one slept in one's Tzitzit one should make a Bracha upon arising, the Bach 8:15, Taz 8:15, Eliyah Rabba 8:18, and Kaf HaChaim 8:61 argue that one shouldn't make a Bracha. Magen Avraham 8:21 writes that one should have in mind that his bracha on the Tallit should exempt his Tallit Katan. Mishna Brurah 8:42 agrees. Rabbi Hershel Schachter (cited in Bet Yitzchak vol 30, p. 591) rules that if one doesn't have a Tallit, one should hear the Bracha from someone else and feel his Tzitzit at the time of the Bracha. 32. Hagahot Rabbi Akiva Eiger 47:12 writes that if one slept during the day prior to staying up all night, according to all opinions one has to recite Birkot HaTorah in the morning. Mishna Brurah 47:28 specifies that the sleep should be a Sheinat Kevah. Chatam Sofer (cited by Netah Sorek YD 63), Hilchot Chag BeChag (p. 131), and Rabbi Mordechai Willig ("Inyanei Chag Hashavuos", min 48) agree. See Beirur Halacha (vol 7, p. 20) who quotes the Chazon Ish as questioning Rabbi Akiva Eiger. 33. #netilat 34. #birkothashachar 35. #tzitzit 36. Mishna Brurah 4:30, 494:1. The Artzot Hachaim (Eretz Yehuda 4:14) writes that a person who went to the bathroom can recite a bracha on netilat yadayim. According to the Rashba a bracha is automatically required since maybe a person is recreated each day even if he didn't sleep. According to the Rosh a bracha is required since a person's are dirty and require netilat yadayim after going to the bathroom. His conclusion is that it is necessary either go number two or number one and to wipe off the urine drops from oneself. This definition of what requires Netilat Yadayim for dirty hands is discussed in Bet Yosef 7. Ishei Yisrael (ch. 2 n. 99) cites the Shulchan Aruch Harav who holds that it is sufficient to touch the areas that are uncovered. However, he quotes Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach who disagrees and holds that touching an uncovered area doesn't require a bracha. 37. S" A 4:14 says that if one was awake from before Olot HaShachar and washed his hands earlier, he should wash again at Olot HaShachar without a Bracha because of Safek. Piskei Teshuvot 494:5 says once there's an obligation to wash one's hands one shouldn't learn Torah. 38. Kitzur S" A 2:8, Dinei Nieyot Kol HaLaylah (pg 42) in name of Rav Chaim Kanievsky 39. Ishei Yisrael 2:33 note 110, Piskei Teshuvot 494:6 40. Mishna Brurah 4:27, Ishei Yisrael 2:33 41. Mishna Brurah 4:3 42. Yalkut Yosef Moadim 441. 43. S" A 8:16 rules that if one slept in Tzitzit one may make a new Bracha on it in the morning and at the time of the Bracha one should shake the Tzitzit strings. Mishna Brurah 8:42 explains that really this issue depends on whether there's a mitzvah of Tzitzit at night and so it's preferable to make the Bracha on a Tallit and cover the Bracha for Tzitzit. Piskei Teshuvot 8:30 adds that someone who that option is unavailable, such as bochrim who don't wear Tallit, should make the Bracha oneself like S" A. 44. Mishna Brurah 47:28 45. Yabia Omer 5:5, Yechave Daat 3:33. 46. Yalkut Yosef Chelek 1 page 137. 47. Mishna Brurah 47:28 in name of Rabbi Akiva Eiger 48. Mishna Brurah 46:24 49. Piskei Teshuvot 494:7 50. Yalkut Yosef 489:13 51. Mishna Brurah 47:28 52. Kaf Hachayim 494:48 53. Yalkut Yosef Moadim page 445, Chazon Ovadia Yom Tov page 329.

[Halachapedia is edited by Rabbi Ike Sultan]

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### Home Weekly Parsha BAMIDBAR Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

I realize that I am making a very bad pun, but I must state that numbers really do count. The Torah takes us through the counting of the Jewish people many times and in detail. Though it may be difficult for us to understand why this should be so, the basic lesson that it teaches us is an important one for national survival. Simply put, we are being instructed that for Judaism and Jewishness to survive there must be a significant Jewish population.

The Jewish people have always been a small people, numerically speaking, and since they suffered great persecution and attempts at extermination, maintaining significant numbers has always been a challenge and a necessity for Jewish survival. The interesting thing is that Jewish demographics are hard to measure in our time. Much of it depends on our defining who is Jewish and, perhaps even as important, who is likely to remain Jewish and have Jewish children and grandchildren.

Estimates on the size of the Jewish community in the United States for instance ranges from 5 million souls to as many years 15 million people. Seventy years ago, the estimates for the American Jewish community stood at 5 million people. Under a normal rate of population growth and in the blessed absence of pogroms and plagues, there should be about 20 million Jews now living in the United States. Sadly, that is certainly not so and stands as mute testimony to the ravages of intermarriage and assimilation that so undermines the future of the Jewish community in the United States. Here in Israel the Bureau of Statistics records that as of 2017 there were 6.58 million Jews living in the country. This is perhaps the greatest number of Jews living in the land of Israel in our history. It is an astounding amount when we recall that 70 years ago, when the state was founded, only 600,000 Jews were present in the country. Much has happened in these 70 years that accounts for this dramatic increase.

The process of the ingathering of the exiles from the Arab countries and the Soviet Union as well as the immigration of the survivors in Europe after World War II, plus the continuing small but steady immigration of Jews from the West has provided for this astonishing growth in the Jewish population in the land of Israel. Population matters.

One of the most hopeful statistics here in Israel is the continuing strength of the fertility rate amongst all segments of the Jewish population here in the country. Having children is the ultimate vote of confidence in the permanence and success of the Jewish people in creating a state in our ancient homeland. The pessimists amongst us have long threatened that the demographics of the area are against us. It seems that they were unduly pessimistic about our future. The necessity to rebuild the Jewish people physically and spiritually remains the ultimate task that lies before us in our generation.

Shabbat shalom  
Rabbi Berel Wein

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### The Two Journeys (Bamidbar 5778) Covenant & Conversation. Judaism & Torah

The books of Shemot and Bamidbar have some striking similarities. They are both about journeys. They both portray the Israelites as quarrelsome and ungrateful. Both contain stories about the people complaining about food and water. In both the Israelites commit a major sin: in Shemot, the golden calf, in Bamidbar, the episode of the spies. In both, God threatens to destroy them and begin again with Moses. Both times, Moses' passionate appeal persuades God to forgive the people. It is easy when reading Bamidbar, to feel a sense of déjà vu. We have been here before.

But there is a difference. Shemot is about a journey from. Bamidbar is about a journey to. Shemot is the story of an escape from slavery. Exodus, the English name of the book, means just that: departure, withdrawal, leaving. By contrast, in Bamidbar the people have already left Egypt far behind. They have spent a prolonged period in the Sinai desert. They have received the Torah and built the Sanctuary. Now they are ready to move on. This time they are looking forward, not back. They are thinking not of the danger they are fleeing from but of the destination they are travelling toward, the Promised Land.

If we had never read the Torah before, we might have assumed that the second half of the journey would be more relaxed, the people more optimistic, the mood more hopeful. After all, the great dangers had passed. After prolonged refusal, finally Pharaoh had let the people go. Miraculously they had been saved at the Red Sea. They had fought and defeated the Amalekites. What else did they have to worry about? They knew that when God was with them, no force could prevail against them.

In fact, though, the opposite is the case. The mood of Bamidbar is palpably darker than it is in Shemot. The rebellions are more serious. Moses' leadership is more hesitant. We see him giving way, at times, to anger and despair. The Torah, with great realism, is telling us something counterintuitive and of great significance.

The journey from is always easier than the journey to.

So it is in politics. It may take a revolution to depose a tyrant, but it is easier to do that than to create a genuinely free society with the rule of law and respect for human rights. The Arab Spring, with its high hopes and its legacy of failing states, civil war and terror, is a compelling example. So is the history of post-Tito Yugoslavia or present-day Russia.

Likewise in the life of individuals. There have been endless stories in the modern world of Jews who were determined to break free of "the ghetto" and what they saw as Jewish provincialism and backwardness. They became great successes in one field after another, only to find themselves – like the marranos of fifteenth century Spain – deeply conflicted and doubly alienated, having lost a home in the old world and failed to find full acceptance in the new.

There is a biological reason why this is so. We are genetically predisposed to react strongly to danger. Our deepest instincts are aroused. We move into the fight-or-flight mode, with our senses alert, our attention focussed, and our adrenalin levels high. When it comes to fleeing-from, we often find ourselves accessing strengths we did not know we had.

But fleeing-to is something else entirely. It means making a home in place where, literally or metaphorically, we have not been before. We become "strangers in a strange land." We need to learn new skills, shoulder new responsibilities, acquire new strengths. That calls for imagination and willpower. It involves the most unique of all human abilities: envisaging a future that has not yet been and acting to bring it about. Fleeing-to is a journey into the unknown.

That was the difference between Abraham and his father Terach. The Torah tells us that "Terach took his son Abram ... and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there" (Gen. 11:31). Terach had sufficient willpower for the journey-from (Ur Kasdim) but not for the journey-to (Canaan). It was left to Abraham to reach the destination.

To be a Jew is to know that, in some sense, life is a journey. So it was for Abraham. So it was for Moses. So it is for us, collectively and individually. Hence the importance of knowing at the outset where we are travelling to, and never forgetting, never giving up. Leaving is easy, arriving is hard. Which is why, when students ask me for advice about their careers, I tell them that the most important thing is to dream. Dream about what you would like to do, to be, to achieve. Dream about the chapter you would like to write in the story of our people. Dream about what difference you would like to make to the world. "In dreams," said W. B. Yeats, "begin responsibilities." I'm not entirely sure what he meant by that, but this I know: in dreams begin destinations. They are where we start thinking about the future. They signal the direction of our journey.

I am amazed by how many people never really dream a future for themselves. They can spend months planning a holiday, but not even a day planning a life. They take it as it comes. They wait, like Charles Dickens' Mr Micawber, for "something to turn up." This is not the best recipe for a life. "Wherever you find the word Vayechi, 'and it came to pass,'" said the sages, "it is always the prelude to pain." [1] Letting things happen is passive, not active. It means that you are letting outside factors determine the course of

your life. Of course, they will always affect it. However sure we are of what we want to achieve, we are always subject to unexpected occurrences, wrong turns, bad decisions, setbacks and failures. But if we know where we want to be, eventually we will get back on track.

Timothy Ferris, compiler of the book *Tribe of Mentors*, asked me an interesting question: "When you feel overwhelmed or unfocussed, what do you do?" I told him that just before I became Chief Rabbi, in 1991, I realised that the sheer pressure of unexpected happenings, especially when you are in public life, can blow anyone off course. When someone asked British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan what he most feared, he replied, "Events, dear boy, events." So it became clear to me that I had to set out my objectives in advance, in such a way as to ensure I would never forget or be distracted from them.

In 1991 we did not yet have smartphones or computerised diaries. I used a pocket notebook called a Filofax. So on the first page of my Filofax I wrote my life goals. This meant that I saw them every time I looked in my diary. I was reminded of them several times daily. I still have them, and they have not changed in all the intervening years. How far I was successful, I do not know. But this I know: that I never forgot where I was travelling to. I never lost sight of the destination.

Travelling-from is easy. I knew I had to overcome my ignorance, Jewish and secular. I knew I had bad habits I had to cure – I am still working on them. But the real challenge is to know where Hashem wants us to travel to. What task were we put in the world, in this time and place, with these gifts, to do? The answer to that constitutes the destination we key in to our satellite navigation system for the journey called life.

The Israelites, in their journey, made a series of mistakes. They focussed too much on the present (the food, the water) and too little on the future. When they faced difficulties, they had too much fear and too little faith. They kept looking back to how things were instead of looking forward to how they might be. The result was that almost an entire generation suffered the fate of Abraham's father. They knew how to leave but not how to arrive. They experienced exodus but not entry.

So, in answer to Tim Ferris's question, "What do you do when you feel overwhelmed or unfocussed?" I replied with this life-changing idea: Remember your destination. This will help you make the single most important distinction on life, which is to distinguish between an opportunity to be seized and a temptation to be resisted.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva

Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

**Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a**

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample: Denigrating Gedolei Yisrael

Q: My friend said disparaging things about the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I told him he was transgressing the prohibition against denigrating a Torah scholar. He showed me quotes from Ha-Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach against the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Is he correct?

A: No. He is not Rav Shach.

Charvona, Remembered for the Good

Q: Why do we say that Charvona should be remembered for the good?

A: Our Sages teach that Charvona was wicked, and part of Haman's plan against Mordechai. When he saw that the plan was not going to work, he fled. Megillah 16a. In the song "Shoshanat Yaakov", we say "Charvona, remembered for the good", because he told King Ahasverosh that Haman



had arranged gallows for the hanging of Mordechai (In the book "Divrei Chana Ha-Shalem" [p. 282], it is related that Ha-Rav Chana Halberstam, Av Beit Din of Kalashitz, once related on Purim that he dreamt that Eliyahu Ha-Navi appeared to him as the Belzer Rebbe, R' Yehoshua, and that R' Chana asked the Belzer Rebbe: why is this non-Jewish servant of the king remembered for good? After all, we only use this phrase for Eliyahu Ha-Navi who did good for the Jews. The Belzer Rebbe answered: since Charvona merited Eliyahu Ha-Navi appearing in his likeness, this is enough to remember him for the good. We find this idea among our Sages that Eliyahu Ha-Navi once appeared to Rebbe Yehudah Ha-Nasi in the guise of Rebbe Chiya and helped in healing a problem with his teeth. From then on, Rebbe Yehudah Ha-Nasi gave great honor to Rebbe Chiya since Eliyahu Ha-Navi appeared in his likeness [Yerushalimi, Kilayim 9:3. Bereshit Rabba 33:3, and at the end of Parashat Tzav]. Rebbe Chana concluded that it was extremely dear to him that we merited to see Eliyahu Ha-Navi in his dream in the guise of the Belzer Rebbe).

Davening in Front of a Picture of the Even Sheteiya

Q: Is it permissible to Daven in front of a picture of the Even Sheteiya (The Foundation Stone, which is on the Temple Mount and was in the Holy of Holies) on my cell phone, in order to help me imagine that I was in the Beit Ha-Mikdash, as mentioned in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 95:2?

A: No. One should not Daven in front of a picture since it distracts one from having proper intention when saying the words. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 90:22. See Piskei Teshuvah ibid. By the way, it is not clear whether the rock in the Dome of the Rock is the Even Sheteiya or not.

Chevruta with Someone Who Goes onto the Temple Mount

Q: I have a friend who has Midot Tovot and is a Torah scholar, but goes onto the Temple Mount. Is it permissible for me to learn in Chevruta with him?

A: No. 1. This is a very severe error. To our great distress, we have become used to it and it does not shock us. But all we need is two lines from Maran Ha-Rav Kook to know that one infringement on the holiness of the Temple Mount undoes all of the merit of building millions of Yishuvim in Eretz Yisrael (Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah Volume 2, p. 285). 2. You can certainly be his friend and fulfill Mitzvot with him, but one should not learn in Chevruta with him, since Torah learning is the foundation of having a proper Torah philosophy, and something clearly went wrong with his understanding. Pri Tzadik (end of Vayikra, end of the article "Amala Shel Torah").

Q: But Ha-Rav was asked if one should cancel a Shiduch with someone who ascends on the Temple Mount, and he responded: No, since a person is judged according to the majority of his actions. Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 3:1 (Piskei Shlomo Volume 6, p. 183)?

A: A person is human, and every person has virtues and deficiencies, and therefore he is judged by the majority of his actions. This is true for friends, fellow soldiers in Tzahal, etc. But the Torah is Divine. It therefore must be exact and we cannot put blurred or confused ideas into it.

Q: We should therefore invalidate such a person?

A: G-d forbid! Differences of agreement: Yes - division of hearts: No! We have great love for all of Am Yisrael, but this does not mean we always agree with them. We love and respect all Rabbanim in Am Yisrael, but this does not mean we always agree with them (See Eruvin 14a-b). We follow our Rabbis.

Q: Is there a list of books and people from which\whom we should not learn?

A: G-d forbid! This is what the Vatican has: Index Librorum Prohibitorum, a list of forbidden books, and there is also a list of excommunicated people.

1. We are not discussing specifics but rather the principle of the matter. 2. One needs to use his intellect. 3. It all depends on whether an alternative exists. If there is a better alternative, he should learn with someone else. If a better alternative does not exist, he should be satisfied in the meantime with what he has, i.e. learning with him.

Many Massechtot or One Massechet

Q: What is preferable – learning many Massechtot of Gemara or learning one Massechet really well?

A: One Massechet.

Religious Yishuv

Q: I live in a small Yishuv where everyone is religious. What is the advantage and what is the disadvantage?

A: The advantage is that together you exist with fear of Hashem (Yirat Shamayim) and radiate a pure life to the entire Nation which lives in Eretz Yisrael. The disadvantage is that all of Klal Yisrael should live together.

Lost Kippah

Q: My Kippah blew away and I can't find it. Can I walk with my head uncovered or should I cover my head with my hand?

A: You should cover your head with something. Your hand does not help since you cannot cover your head with a part of your own body.

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**There are many articles on the website RabbiKaganoff.com specifically germane to Shavuos observances, including:**

**Preparing side dishes or desserts that I may serve both with milchig and fleishig meals.**

Making dairy bread

Should I observe one day of Yom Tov or two?

Preparing food on Yom Tov

Showering on Yom Tov

Reciting personal supplications on Yom Tov

Why are most of the "Double Parshiyos" clustered in and around Sefer Vayikra?

I was able to find all these articles on the website under the search words "Shavuos" or "Yom Tov."

To Repeat or not to Repeat?

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: Shul Feud

"There is an ongoing dispute in my shul between the baal kerī'ah, who is not particularly careful how he accents words, and the gabbai, who periodically insists that the baal kerī'ah reread a word because it was accented wrongly. Who is correct?"

Question #2: Reading, Righting...

"Since the Torah prohibits humiliating someone, and particularly in public, why do we correct a baal kerī'ah who errs during the reading? Isn't this embarrassing someone in public?"

Question #3: Monday Morning Quarterback

"We finished the kerī'as haTorah and now realize that the baal kerī'ah misread a word. What do we do?"

Answer:

Anyone who is the shaliach tzibur for the public, either to fulfill the mitzvah of reading the Torah (the baal kerī'ah) or to lead services as the chazzan or baal tefilah, must be alert to recite everything correctly. This includes reading and accenting each word properly, being careful not to run words together, reading the passages so that their implication is correct, and understanding their connotation. A person unable to prepare the reading properly should decline the honor and defer to someone who can recite it acceptably. The only excuse for a chazzan or baal kerī'ah not being appropriately prepared is that there is no one else available to read the Torah and he does not have the ability to prepare it properly (Terumas Hadeshen 2:181). The halachic discussion germane to the last circumstance is a topic for a different time.

Correcting errors

What is the halachah if a baal kerī'ah misread part of the reading? Are we required to correct him so that we hear an accurate rendition? On the one hand, the Torah is very adamant about not embarrassing a person, and more particularly so in public. On the other hand, distorting a passage of the Torah is a serious offense. (See Yam shel Shlomo, Bava Kama 4:9, who explains how strict we must be.) Thus, if someone read inaccurately, the entire tzibur failed to observe the mitzvah of reading the Torah. Indeed, whether one should correct an errant baal kerī'ah is a dispute among the rishonim, some contending that one is required to ignore the error, because correcting the baal kerī'ah embarrasses him in public. Tosafos (Avodah Zarah 22b s.v. Rigla) quotes a midrash that someone reading the Torah who skipped a syllable, thereby saying 'Haron' instead of 'Aharon,' has fulfilled his requirement to read the Torah -- we do not correct the misreading, even though the letter aleph was skipped. This midrash is quoted

also by several other rishonim (Hagahos Ashri, Shabbos 6:13; Sefer Hamanhig, Laws of Shabbos). (I was unable to locate this midrash as the rishonim quote it. Presumably, the manuscript source of this Chazal has been lost or distorted during the intervening centuries.)

On the other hand, the Talmud Yerushalmi (Megillah 4:5) states that one is required to correct a baal keriah who errs in his reading: "Rabbi Chinina, the son of Andrei, quoted Rabbi Zakai of Kabul: 'If someone erred and read the wrong word during the reading of the Torah, we have him reread the passage correctly.' Rabbi Yirmiya said to Rabbi Zeira: 'Do we indeed follow this practice [despite the fact that it involves embarrassing a person in public]?' Rabbi Zeira replied: 'We correct even a more minor error, such as if he had omitted the letter vav.'"

We see that it was an early dispute among Chazal whether the community's hearing a meticulously accurate reading is more essential, or whether embarrassing the baal keriah is more of a concern. (However, we will soon see an alternative way to resolve the seemingly incompatible passages of the midrash and the Yerushalmi.)

Among the rishonim, we find that Tosafos and the Baal Hamanhig quote the midrash that one should not correct an error, notwithstanding the fact that the Talmud Yerushalmi disagrees. On the other hand, the Rambam (Hilchos Tefillah 12:6) rules in accordance with the Yerushalmi, that a reader's error cannot be left uncorrected.

Is there a resolution?

Can we possibly resolve the two statements, the midrash and the Yerushalmi, so that they do not clash?

The Beis Yosef, quoting the Mahari ibn Chabib, provides an answer to resolve the conflict: The midrash is discussing a case where the inaccuracy does not affect the sense of the passage, whereas the Yerushalmi refers to a situation in which the error does change its meaning. According to this approach, all agree that one must correct any inaccurate reading in which the meaning of the passage is distorted.

How do we rule?

When the author of Beis Yosef records his decision in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 142:1), he states very succinctly: "One who read and erred, even in a detail regarding only one letter, must repeat the reading." The early acharonim dispute to what extent the Shulchan Aruch ruled this way: The Rema contends that the Shulchan Aruch's conclusion requires rereading only when the error changed the meaning of the passage, whereas the Pri Chodosh rules that one must reread, even when the blunder did not alter the meaning (Chayei Odom 31:31). According to the latter opinion, although the Beis Yosef had quoted the Mahari ibn Chabib's resolution of the conflict between the midrash and the Yerushalmi, in Shulchan Aruch he agreed with the more obvious way of understanding the Rambam and the Yerushalmi, which concluded that any inaccuracy must be corrected.

Most late authorities rule, in agreement with the Rema, that we reread only when the meaning was changed by the error (Mishnah Berurah 142:4; Bi'ur Halachah 142:1 s.v. Ein). We also correct someone who skipped an entire word, even if the passage's meaning does not change as a result (Bi'ur Halachah 142:1 s.v. Aval).

Common error

I have heard people assume that certain types of errors, such as where one accents the word and how one chants a passage of the reading (called the taamei hamikra or the trop), never require repeating. This assumption is halachically inaccurate. Many times these errors affect the meaning of the verse. An error in the "trop" or in accenting the wrong syllable may change the meaning of the passage and invalidate the reading, as I will now explain.

Taamei hamikra

The Torah is read with a specific tune, determined by certain note symbols on each word. In Yiddish, these notes are called the trop and in Hebrew they are usually called either taamei hamikra or taam hanikud. Which notes apply to each word in Tanach is a halachah leMoshe miSinai (Chayei Odom 31:31). Although most people think that these notes affect only how the Torah reading is chanted, this is not accurate, since the meaning of the Torah is often affected by the taamei hamikra.

One can divide all the taamei hamikra into two general categories, called in Hebrew mesharsim, servants, and mafsikim, stops. Just as in English, the meaning of a sentence depends on where one puts commas and the period, so, too, in Tanach, the meaning of a passage depends on the punctuation, which, in this case, are the mafsikim. The mesharsim are on words where one should not stop. The Mishnah Berurah (142:4), quoting the Shulchan Atzei Shittim, rules that misreading the taamei hamikra in a way that changes the meaning requires that the passage be reread acceptably.

Here is an example. When Pharaoh instructed Yosef about his family's accommodations, he told Yosef to settle them in the best area of Egypt -- Goshen. However, understanding Pharaoh's instructions to Yosef depends on how you read the pasuk. Reading the verse according to the taamei hamikra, it states: "In the best of the land settle your father and your brothers. They should live in the land of Goshen (Bereishis 47:6)." This means that the land of Goshen is, indeed, the best part of

Mitzrayim, and that all of Yosef's family should move there. However, reading the verse without concern about the taamei hamikra could result in the following: "In the best of the land settle your father. And your brothers should live in the land of Goshen." This would mean that Yaakov was directed to choose the best part of Mitzrayim, whereas the brothers were assigned Goshen, which may not have been the best part. This misreading is a falsification of Torah. According to halachah, if the passage was read without proper respect for the taamim, such that it would now be "stopped," or punctuated this way, the passage must be reread.

Stop sign

It is important to note that not only should one be careful to read according to the taamei hamikra, but that one must also be careful to follow the rules of mafsikim and mesharsim, meaning to pause slightly at all mafsikim and not to pause at mesharsim. In some well-meaning communities, it is rather common that baalei keriah read as quickly as they can and not make any noticeable stops, until they need to pause for breath. It is possible that this approach does not fulfill the mitzvah of kerias haTorah, because the reader may stop for breath at inappropriate places and not pause at the correct ones.

Wrongly accented

As I mentioned above, many people are under the mistaken impression that how one accents the words while reciting the Torah or the prayers is not a serious concern. However, emphasizing the wrong syllable may change the meaning of a word, with the result that one does not fulfill the mitzvah of kerias haTorah. This requires a brief explanation of some of the rules of correct Hebrew diction.

Accenting the wrong syllable

In correctly pronounced Hebrew, all words are accented either on the last syllable of the word, called mi'lera, or on the next to last syllable, called mi'le'eil. The word mi'lera is the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew mitachas, meaning below or later (see, for example, Targum Onkelos, Bereishis 35:8, 49:25 and Shemos 2:3), whereas mi'le'eil means above.

In most instances, accenting the wrong syllable does not create a word that changes the intended meaning. Although the word was mispronounced, since the error does not create a new meaning, one does not need to reread the word. However, there are occasions in which a word has two distinctly different meanings, depending on whether it is pronounced mi'lera or mi'le'eil. In these instances, accenting the wrong syllable changes the meaning, and, as a result, one has not fulfilled the mitzvah in his reading. In such cases, the baal keriah has prevented the entire tzibur from fulfilling the mitzvah of reading the Torah.

For example, the word ba'ah changes its meaning depending on which syllable is accented. Accented on the first syllable, the word is past tense, meaning she has come, whereas, inflected on the second syllable it is present tense, meaning she is coming. Thus, the meaning of the two pesukim in parshas Vayeitzei, Perek 29, pesukim 6 and 9, changes, if one accents the words incorrectly, as Rashi notes there.

Here is a far more common error. In the mitzvah that we fulfill twice each day, reading the Shma, we read a sentence, ve'avhava es Hashem elokecha bechol levavcha uvechol nafshecha uvechol me'odecha. Following the rules of Hebrew grammar, the word ve'avhava has two different meanings, depending on whether it is accented on the last syllable, ta, or on the previous syllable, hav. When accented on ta, as is required when reciting Shma and reading kerias haTorah, the passage means "and you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your abilities." However, accenting the word on hav distorts its meaning to "you have loved Hashem your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your abilities."

Similarly, the word vedibarta, two pesukim later in Shma, changes meaning when not accented on the last syllable. Accenting the word on the middle syllable, bar, changes its meaning to "and you spoke to them [the words of Torah]," rather than "and you shall speak it to them." Again, one wrong accent, and one does not fulfill the mitzvah.

Shul feud

At this point, we can address our opening question:

"There is an ongoing dispute in my shul between the baal keriah, who is not particularly careful how he accents words, and the gabbai, who periodically insists that the baal keriah reread a word because it was accented wrongly. Who is correct?" The halachah is that the baal keriah is required to learn the rules for properly accenting Hebrew, and he must also be careful how he reads the passages. There are certainly places where accenting the word on the wrong syllable changes its meaning. In these instances, one who misread the passage must read it over correctly.

Taking out the Torah again

At this point, let us examine the third question above:

"We finished the kerias haTorah and now realize that the baal keriah misread a word. What do we do?"

If the reader misread a word in a way that one did not fulfill the mitzvah, we noted above that one is required to reread the passage. Does this halachah change if one has already completed the Torah reading and returned the sefer Torah to the aron kodesh?

Let us examine some background to this question.

Mesechta Sofrim (11:6) teaches the following: Someone who skipped a pasuk during kerī'as haTorah, but nevertheless read ten pesukim correctly does not return to kerī'as haTorah. If the original kerī'as haTorah was exactly ten pesukim, then he is required to return. When do we follow this approach? On weekdays and mincha of Shabbos... However, if he forgot a pasuk during the main Shabbos reading, he must return to the kerī'as haTorah, even if, in the interim, they recited the haftarah and davened Musaf." We see that one who missed part of kerī'as haTorah on Shabbos morning must take out the sefer Torah again to read the missing passage. One is not required to do so if one missed part of the reading on Monday, Thursday or at Shabbos mincha, provided that one read enough to fulfill the minimum mitzvah on those days, which is to call up three people, each of whom reads at least three pesukim, and to read in total at least ten pesukim.

How much must I reread?

In a situation where one is required to take out the sefer Torah again, how much of the reading must be repeated? Again, Mesechta Sofrim comes to our rescue, where it says (21:7): If he skipped a pasuk and said kaddish, he must reopen the sefer Torah, recite a brochah, read [a pasuk] and two others." Based on this quotation of Mesechta Sofrim, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 137:3; 282:7) rules that if, on Shabbos, the baal kerī'ah skipped a pasuk of the reading, and now the reading has been completed, the sefer Torah returned to its place, and musaf has been davened, one must take out the sefer Torah again to read the omitted verse. Since Chazal required that one may not read an aliyah of less than three pesukim, this means that the requirement will be to read three pesukim, including the previously omitted pasuk. The Mishnah Berurah (282:35) notes that this same halachah is true if one omitted a word of the reading. Since one has missed an essential part of the reading, one must take out a sefer Torah and read three consecutive pesukim, one of which includes the word that was previously missed. The Mishnah Berurah rules this way, also, if one misread part of a word or the taamei hamikra in a way that changes the meaning. However, in the last instance, he concludes that although one should take the sefer Torah out of the aron kodesh again and reread three pesukim, one should not recite a brochah prior to the reading (Bi'ur Halachah 142:1 s.v. Machzirin). Furthermore, the requirement to repeat what one missed is only at the Shabbos morning reading, but on weekday readings or Shabbos mincha, one does repeat the reading for a missed word or even a missed pasuk (Bi'ur Halachah 142:1 s.v. Machzirin).

Conclusion:

The Gemara (Brachos 15b) teaches that whoever reads Shma and is meticulously careful about enunciating the words merits that Gehenom is cooled for him. What is meant by this very strange passage of Gemara? In what way is cooling the fires of Gehenom a reward for reciting Shma slowly?

This could be explained in the following way. Often, we are in a rush to finish davening – there is so much to do, I need to get to work. We know too well the yeitzer hora's methods of encouraging us to rush through our davening. In order to daven and read the Torah properly, one needs to do these mitzvos slowly and carefully.

Now, at the end of a person's days on earth, he is called for his final judgment. We are all aware, ein tzadik ba'aretz asher yaaseh tov velo yecheta; everyone has done some aveiros that will require punishment. The Satan, who operates Gehenom, has measured out his cauldron according to the punishment deserved, particularly if the person performed aveiros for which he did not do teshuvah. At this point, the mitzvos of having read the Shma slowly and carefully rise to the forefront. After all, this individual slowed down for the sake of Hashem's honor, and the Satan has to admit that attempts to get him to rush were, at times, not fruitful. These mitzvos force the Satan to wait until his boiling cauldron is cooled off and is only a bit uncomfortably warm, barely enough to be considered a punishment for the aveiros committed (see Iyun Yaakov).

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**Bemidbar: Jacob's Signs**

**RAV KOOK TORAH**

Ancestral Signs

During their sojourn in the Sinai desert, the Jewish people were instructed to encamp according to tribe:

"The Israelites shall encamp with each person near the banner carrying his paternal family's signs." (Num. 2:2)

What were these ancestral signs?

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 2:8) explains that this deployment of twelve tribes surrounding the Tabernacle was in fact a 200-year-old family tradition. Once before, the Jewish people had marched through the wilderness, from Egypt to the Land of Israel. This took place when Jacob died in Egypt. Each of Jacob's twelve sons took his place around the coffin, as they brought their father to burial in Hebron. Before his death, Jacob informed his sons where each one would stand around his coffin. The arrangement that Jacob established was the "paternal family's signs" that would later determine the position of each tribe around the Tabernacle, as they traveled in the wilderness.

Why did the tribes need separate encampments? Would not an integrated camp bring about greater national unity? And why was it Jacob who determined the tribal formations in the wilderness?

Jacob and Moses

We find that the Torah is associated with both Jacob and Moses, as it says (Deut. 33:4), "Moses prescribed the Torah to us, an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." Yet, the relationship of these two great personalities to the Torah was not identical. The Zohar states that Jacob's connection to the Torah was "from the outside," while Moses' connection was "from within." What does this mean?

In any field of study, there are two ways in which the student connects to the subject material. First, there is the student's innate interest and aptitude for that particular topic. And secondly, there is the bond that is created through the study of the subject matter.

So too, our relationship to Torah contains two aspects. The first is an innate readiness and inclination to assume the yoke of Torah study. We inherited this readiness to accept the Torah from Jacob - "an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." Through his profound holiness, Jacob was able to transmit to his descendants a natural receptiveness to Torah.

This quality of the soul is like a pot-handle, enabling us to better grasp the Torah. But when compared to the Torah itself, the soul's predisposition towards Torah is like an outer garment. Therefore, the Zohar refers to our spiritual inheritance from Jacob as being external - "from the outside." Moses, on the other hand, exemplifies a connection to the Torah itself. The Torah is called the "Torah of Moses" (Malachi 3:22). In the formulation of the Zohar, the connection through Moses is internal - "from the inside."

Uniformity and Plurality

The Torah itself is unified. "There shall be one Torah and one law for you" (Num. 15:16). Within the Torah itself, there are no divisions, no room for divergent paths. The Torah reflects the inner soul, which is indivisible. Thus, in the center of the encampment in the wilderness, there stood a single Communion Tent, a focal point for God's instructions to His people. The soul's natural receptiveness to the Torah, on the other hand, is a function of individual character and personality traits. Here, there exist numerous paths. In these external aspects, in the ways we choose to approach the Torah and fulfill its mitzvot, in the kavanot and intentions by which we focus our minds, it is natural that there will be diversity.

When Jacob's twelve sons brought their father back to the Land of Israel, each son found his own place around the coffin. Each son positioned himself in accordance to his soul's natural disposition. Jacob's holiness imprinted upon each of his children a special connection to the Torah according to his individual nature. That holy procession determined the future arrangement of the tribes of Israel, as they marched to Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. Each tribe had its own special flag and unique place within the encampment of Israel.

(Gold from the Land of Israel (now available in paperback), pp. 230-232. Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 26-7)

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subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

## Shema Yisrael Torah Network

### Penim on the Torah - Parshas Bamidbar

#### You shall count them according to their legions – you and Aharon. (1:3)

Hashem commanded Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen, working together with the tribal leaders, to take a census of all males over the age of twenty. Rashi and Ramban offer reasons for making the census at this point. One of the reasons offered by Ramban is particularly striking. Each member of the nation had an inherent right to benefit from the personal attention of Moshe and Aharon. What is a better opportunity for such interaction than a census in which each Jew would come before these two leaders and, after telling them his name, be counted as an individual of personal worth. Furthermore, as Sforno comments, to present one's name to these Torah giants was a unique honor. A person's name was Divinely inspired to indicate his personal virtues. Imagine an individual telling Moshe and Aharon his name and looking at their countenance as they think about the virtues which his name implies. Certainly, after hearing the name, these two leaders would issue their blessing and pray for the individual. What an unparalleled experience this must have been.

From time immemorial, Jews have presented themselves before a tzaddik, righteous person, a Torah leader steeped in Torah and virtue, to petition the blessing of these holy individuals. We believe that the tzaddik serves as a conduit for Hashem's blessing. To believe in a tzaddik's power to the exclusion of Hashem is not only ludicrous – it is false. A non-practicing Jew once came to a tzaddik to petition his blessing. He prefaced his request with the following introduction of himself: "I have heard great things about you. I have heard that you are a miracle worker, and I am in need of a miracle. As for my background, I went through the Holocaust. I neither pray to G-d, nor do I believe in Him. Nonetheless, I still believe in the power of tzaddikim. My father was a Bobover chasid, and he always went to the Rebbe for a blessing. This has remained with me throughout my life."

The Rebbe replied that a tzaddik (understandably) has no power of his own. He is merely an extension of Hashem in this mortal world, for the purpose of helping people. He does so by tapping into Hashem's powers. One who does not believe in G-d (chas v'shalom, Heaven forbid) cannot possibly believe in a tzaddik.

One thing is for certain: a person who has achieved tzaddik status is on a level far beyond that of the average person. He sees farther and deeper; thus, he is able to make decisions and render advice far beyond that of the average person. The following vignette quoted by Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, is but one example of the uncanny ability of a tzaddik.

Horav Chaim Brim, zl, served as a member of the faculty of Yeshivas Slabodka. Prior to that, he had been very close with the saintly Chazon Ish, zl. Rav Chaim maintained the unique custom never to leave Yerushalayim. The Chazon Ish, who lived in Bnei Brak, heard of Rav Chaim's brilliant mind and his extraordinary erudition; thus, he wanted to speak with him in learning. Aware that Rav Chaim would not under normal circumstances leave Yerushalayim, the Chazon Ish "suggested" to Rav Chaim that a trip to the sea shore would be greatly beneficial to his health. Rav Chaim understood that to make a trip to the sea without paying a visit to the Chazon Ish was unthinkable. This was the beginning of a strong Torah relationship between these two gedolim.

Rav Chaim Brim related that a Jew by the name of Rav Klapholz lived in Meah Shearim. He was a holy Jew who studied Torah every waking minute of the day. In fact, rumor had it that he did not remove his shoes the entire week. Whatever sleep he had was over his Gemorah. Rav Klapholz once met Rav Chaim Brim and asked if he could come with him to meet the Chazon Ish. He required his blessing for an undertaking that he was considering.

Traveling from Yerushalayim to Bnei Brak was indeed a journey – half-a-day by bus. Rav Chaim related that, despite the hardship of travel, to accompany a holy Jew of Rav Klapholz's stature was well worth it. Alas, when they came to the home of the Chazon Ish, they were informed that the

Chazon Ish was too weak to accept visitors. They decided to remain in Bnei Brak until the sage was up to receiving visitors. They went to the shul where the Chazon Ish would usually daven, and they began to do what they did best – learn Torah. A few hours later, the gabbai, secretary, to the Chazon Ish notified them that the Chazon Ish was coming to daven Minchah. The gabbai told Rav Klapholz, "Your window of opportunity to speak to the Chazon Ish is when he washes his hands prior to Minchah."

"Why are you here?" the Chazon Ish asked Rav Klapholz. "I have a question to ask of the Rebbe," he replied. "What is your question?" the Chazon Ish asked. "I have a daughter who has reached marriageable age, and I have no money whatsoever to marry her off. Perhaps I should go to America to raise money?" he asked. "Whose idea is this?" the Chazon Ish asked. "It is my idea," Rav Klapholz replied. "If that is the case, go and have hatzlacha, be successful."

Rav Klapholz prepared for his journey. He had very little to pack. After purchasing a "bare-bones" ticket to New York, he left for the airport, where he met Rav Menachem Porush, one of Yerushalayim's most distinguished and prolific citizens. Rav Porush asked, "Where are you going?" "I am going to America for the purpose of raising money to marry off my daughter," Rav Klapholz replied. Rav Porush was brutally honest when he said, "You are not cut out for such a mission. You would achieve more by just sitting in Meah Shearim learning Torah." "But the Chazon Ish said to me, 'Go and be successful!'" "Well, if the Chazon Ish blessed your journey, then go!" Rav Porush rejoined.

Rav Klapholz landed in New York and immediately proceeded to Williamsburg, where he sat himself in a shul to learn (apparently, he thought that people would line up at his seat in shul and bring him money). The Satmar Rav, zl, lived in Williamsburg, and, for health purposes, he would walk daily on a route that took him past the shul where Rav Klapholz was learning. Rav Klapholz had a halachic query which he figured he would present to the Satmar Rav. He did and was pleased with the explanation. He now realized that the saintly Rebbe walked by the shul as part of a daily routine. He decided that he would walk alongside the Rebbe and pepper him with his halachic questions. After two weeks of adhering to this arrangement, the Satmar Rav asked Rav Klapholz, "What is a Jew from Yerushalayim doing in America?" "I came to raise money." (Imagine how he was raising money. He still adhered to the notion that all he had to do was go to New York, and the money would just rain down from Heaven.)

"If this is the case," the Satmar Rav said, "I will call a meeting of my close baalei batim, laymen, and raise the money for you." When the Rebbe asks, the baalei batim give. There was now sufficient money to marry off this daughter and the next one (coming up). The Rebbe told Rav Klapholz, "You should know that I very often make appeals for hachnosas kallah, wedding arrangements. I have never had such extraordinary success!"

Rav Chaim Brim was not surprised, since the Chazon Ish had blessed the endeavor. When a tzaddik issues his blessing, it makes all of the difference. There is, however, a postscript to this story. Prior to leaving for America, Rav Klapholz went to receive the blessing of the Tchebiner Rav, zl, Horav Dov Berish Weidenfeld, with whom he was very close. The Tchebiner's parting words were: "When you arrive in America – do nothing – just go to the Bais hamedrash and learn. Nothing more. Just learn."

We now have a glimmer of the power of a tzaddik.

כל יצא צבא בישראל תפקדו אתם לצבאתם אתם ואהרן

Everyone who goes out to the legion in Yisrael – you shall count them according to their legions, you and Aharon. (1:3)

Tifkedu osam, count them. The root of tifkedu is pakod, which means to appoint. While it does have other connotations, its root (as explained by Ramban) usually has the implication of concern for something or taking cognizance of the individual under discussion. It can be used as "remember," as in "Hashem remembered Sarah" (Bereishis 21:1) or U'b'yom pakdi u'pokaditi aleihem, "And on the day that I make My account, I shall bring their sin to account against them" (Shemos 32:34), following

the sin of the Golden Calf. Ramban feels that in the context of the census, pakod implies that the count should be made through half-shekel contributions, which atone for the contributors. The Malbim suggests that herein they are counted as members of the legion, as soldiers, part of the Jewish army. The counting is, thus, an appointment.

I recently came across a poignant story which inspired me to interpret tikedu osam, count them, to mean: present them with their tafkid, purpose, raison d'etre, in life. Each and every Jew has his own unique tafkid, purpose in life. There is, however, one tafkid that is endemic to every Jew across the board – regardless of background, religious affiliation or level of scholarship. The following story (which is taken from the preface to Rav Yissachar Frand's commentary to the Haggadah) expresses this idea.

A Rosh Yeshivah who was spending Shabbos in a small Moshav in Eretz Yisrael was asked to deliver the Shabbos Hagadol drashah, lecture. The populace was not very erudite, but, nonetheless, quite sincere and wanted to hear words of Torah. While rabbanim usually expand on the intricacies of the laws of Pesach, the Rosh Yeshivah felt that the following inspirational story was more in tune with the crowd.

An Austrian Jew, who, as a child in war-torn Europe, was able to make it on his own to Germany, was providentially saved from death when he was able to obtain safe passage to England on one of the Kindertransports. Thousands of Jewish children were saved in this manner – most of them alone – never again to see their parents. Eventually, this resourceful youth made his way to the Holy Land, where he settled in Petach Tikva. Spending much of his childhood on the run, he did not have the opportunity to receive a formal Jewish education. Davening and some Chumash selections comprised the sum total of his Jewish educational repertoire.

After finding a job, the man sought an avenue for spiritual sustenance. Learning was out, but spending time in shul helping others to learn was more within his realm. He found a shul that did not have a shamash, sexton, and he volunteered for the "job." He saw to it that there were shiurim, Torah classes, in the shul, and he also took care of minor maintenance. His job was his vocation and source of livelihood; the shul was his life. Somehow, he raised a beautiful Torah family of sons, talmidei chachamim, Torah scholars, and saw to it that every one of his daughters was likewise married to a distinguished ben Torah.

The Rosh Yeshivah (who related this story) was close with the family (having himself attended yeshivah with the sons of this man). Thus, when the man passed away, he came to be menachem avel, comfort the bereaved. He sat there looking at the family and, in wonderment, he turned to the deceased's eldest son and asked, "Your father never had the good fortune of receiving a Torah education. Yet, he raised such a beautiful Torah family. How did he do it? He was able to triumph over life's spiritual challenges. He not only maintained his own fidelity to Hashem, but he also saw to it that the next generation was more than aptly prepared for Torah scholarship and its adherence."

The son's reply provides serious food for thought for all of us. "We take our parents for granted," the son began. "They each have a story, a history, a heritage upon which he has built his life. Some had it easy, and some experienced great difficulty before achieving and realizing their lives' missions. As children, we grow up with our parents, never stopping for a moment to ask them, 'What was your life like growing up?' One day, I asked my father, 'How did you do it? How were you able to achieve so much, to raise such a family? You had no Jewish education to speak of. You were an orphan on your own, first in England and then in Petach Tikva. How did you remain an ehrliche yid, observant Jew, and raise your children to be talmidei chachamim?'"

"My father replied, 'Originally I was supposed to leave Austria together with my father. There was a problem with his passport, so he had no choice but to have me travel alone by train to Germany. Sadly, the last time I saw my father was when he put me on the train.

"As the train pulled out of the station, my father began to run alongside the train to say goodbye. He called out, "Zei a gutteh Yid, be a good Jew!" He kept on running as the train began to pick up speed, screaming those words, "zei a gutteh Yid; zei a gutteh Yid!" The train moved faster and my father tripped and landed flat out on the platform, all the while screaming to me, "zei a gutteh Yid!""

"This was the parting message my father received from his father," the son continued. "You should (always) be a good Jew!" My father concluded his 'life story' saying, 'I did not know how to learn, but one thing I knew and always remembered, I had to be a good Jew!'"

This was a father's legacy to a son whom he would never see again. How many parents throughout the generations wanted to impart this most fundamental message, but for some reason never got around to it? We are always conversing with our children – at times it is a dialogue – more often, it is a monologue, but do we ever share our yearnings, aspirations, outlook on life, our legacy with them? We see here how a father's parting words influenced his son's life with a message that resounded for future generations!

I think this might (homiletically) be interpreted into the words, tikedu osam. Hashem instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to look each and every Jew in his face and inform him of his tafkid, raison d'etre, as a Jew. We each have this tafkid – to be a good Jew. Those who continue to debate the meaning of "good" just do not seem to get the message. Why? Well, that is a critical point for discussion.

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**The Halachic Challenges of the Cheesecake**  
**by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz**

The upcoming holiday of Shavuot, aside from its most common name, has several others: Chag HaKatzir (The Holiday of the Harvest), Atzeres (Assembly), Yom HaBikkurim (Day of the offering of the first fruits), and Zman Mattan Toraseinu (The Time of the Giving of the Torah). Yet, in Israel, it has gained a new moniker: Chag HaGevinah - The Holiday of the Cheese! Amazingly, and only in Israel, will you find a Jewish custom that has become so commercialized. Although no one really minds paying a lot less for all the various cheeses on sale during the weeks leading up to Shavuot, still, the idea that a "holiday" can be commercially sponsored (by the cheese companies, no less), should give us pause. Interestingly, having cheesecake on Shavuot is one minhag with which many non-practicing Jews are stringent! Have you ever met someone who turned down a piece of cheesecake? But where does this time-honored traditional custom of consuming cheesecake on Shavuot come from? Korban Cheesecake?!

It seems that one of the earliest mentions of such a minhag is by the great Rema, Rav Moshe Isserles, the authoritative decisor for all Ashkenazic Jewry, who cites the 'prevailing custom' of eating dairy items specifically on Shavuot (Orach Chaim 494, 3). Although there are many rationales and reasons opined through the ages to explain this custom[1], the Rema himself provides an enigmatic one, to be a commemoration of the special Korban, the Shte HaLechem[2] (Two Loaves) offered exclusively on Shavuot during the times of the Beis Hamikdash.

However, since the connection between dairy food and a bread offering seems tenuous, the Machatzis HaShekel[3] (Orach Chaim 494, 7 s.v. h"v) offers a remarkable glimpse as to the Rema's intent. The halacha states (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 89, 4 and relevant commentaries) that one may not use the same loaf of bread at both a dairy meal and a meat meal. The

reason for this is that there may be some (possibly unnoticed) residue on the bread, and thus one might come to eat a forbidden mixture of milk and meat[4].

Therefore, in order to properly commemorate this unique Korban which had two loaves of bread, one should have a separate dairy meal aside from the traditional meat meal one has on Yom Tov. This way, he will be mandated to have separate breads for each of these meals, as the challah meant for the dairy meal cannot be used for the meat meal and vice versa.

It is well known that our tables are compared to the Mizbe'ach and our food to Korbanos[5]. Therefore, serving a food item at a meal is considered an appropriate commemoration for a Korban. Consequently, by having an additional dairy meal, the outcome is a suitable commemoration for this unique Korban, as now on Shavuos, two separate distinct breads are being served. In fact, the venerated Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu"t Igros Moshe Orach Chaim vol. 1, 160) cites this explanation as the proper one for maintaining two separate types of meals on Shavuos, one milky and one meaty.

Terrific! So now we can appreciate that by eating cheesecake on Shavuos, we are actually commemorating a special Korban! But before we sink our teeth into a luscious calorie-laden (it can't be sinful - it's commemorating a Korban!) cheesecake, we should realize that, potentially, there might be another halachic issue involved: the prohibition against baking dairy bread.

**Dairy Dilemma**

Bread has been mankind's basic staple since time immemorial[6]. Therefore, Chazal worried that an unsuspecting person might mistake dairy bread for plain pareve bread and eat it together with meat. He would thus inadvertently violate the prohibition of eating a forbidden mixture of milk and meat. They thereby decreed (Gemara Pesachim 30a and 36a) that one may not bake dairy bread unless certain criteria are met[7]: either changing the shape of the dough prior to baking[8] (known as making a shinui), thereby making it instantly recognizable to all[9] as milky[10], or baking dairy bread exclusively in small quantities.[11] The same prohibition and exclusions apply to meaty bread as well, due to bread's propensity to be eaten with a dairy meal.

**Bullseye!**

The hetter is called by Chazal (Gemara Pesachim 36a) "k'eyn tura" (like the eye of an ox; possibly the source for the expression 'bullseye'). Although this expression is debated by the Rishonim, with Rashi (ad loc. s.v. k'eyn tura) explaining that it means a small amount (seemingly taking the bull's-eye idiom literally), while the Rif (Chullin 38a), Rashba (Toras HaBayis HaKatzar Bayis 3, Sha'ar 4, 86a), and Rambam (Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros Ch. 9, 22) maintain that it is referring to a changed shape that makes it obvious to all that it is dairy or meaty, nonetheless, the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 97, 1) rules that both are acceptable ways to ensure that the dairy bread will not be mixed-up.

Even so, there is a practical difference between Sefardic and Ashkenazic psak. According to the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) the small amount of milchig bread that is permissible to make is only enough for one meal. This is how Sefardim rule [See Ben Ish Chai (Year 2, Parshas Shelach 17), and Kaf Hachaim (Yoreh Deah 97, 7)]. The Rema (ad loc. & Toras Chatas 36, 9), however, is a bit more lenient, allowing an amount necessary for one day, meaning a 24-hour period. This is the custom that Ashkenazim follow. [See Pri Megadim (ad loc. Sifsei Daas 1, s.v. v'im), Chavas Daas (ad loc. Biurim 3), Yad Yehuda (ad loc. Pirush HaKatzar 6), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 4), Atzei HaOlah (Hilchos Basar BeChalav 12, 1) and Darchei Teshuva (ad loc. 17)].

**Let Them Eat (Cheese)Cake!**

Although several authorities extend this prohibition to include other baked goods, such as cookies and bourekas[12], which, if baked milky, might be mistakenly eaten with meat, nevertheless, the prevailing ruling is that the prohibition only applies to bread[13]. Even so, aside from the signs in the bakeries proclaiming which items are dairy and which are pareve, it is

nonetheless a widespread practice throughout Israel that bakeries form the dairy baked goods (cheese bourekas, anyone?) in a triangular shape and the pareve ones in a rectangular shape as an extra safeguard against mix-ups. Since at busy bakeries the potential for mistakes is quite high, this is done as an added precaution, even though m'ikar hadin it is deemed unnecessary by most authorities.

So...does this ruling affect our beloved cheesecake in any way?

Actually, not much. In a typical cheesecake, since the cheese aspect of it is quite conspicuous[14], it would be considered as if produced with a changed shape from standard dough. Additionally, cheesecake is universally recognized as... containing cheese (!), and thus known world-wide as being dairy[15]. No one would make a mistake confusing cheesecake with pareve bread. Therefore, even according to the opinions of those authorities who maintain that the prohibition of dairy bread extends to cakes, even so, they all agree it would be permissible to make plenty of cheesecake for Shavuos, even in large quantities.

Thankfully, when it comes time to indulge in a piece of traditional cheesecake on the holiday of Shavuos, we can "have our cake and eat it too", both in the literal sense as well as in the spiritual sense; knowing we have fulfilled the halachic requirements and are even commemorating a unique Korban.

Postscript: Another common question related to cheesecake concerns the proper bracha to recite, whether Mezonos or Shehakol. This topic is discussed at length in many recent sefarim including V'zos HaBracha, V'sein Bracha, and Rabbi Binyomin Forst's Pischei Halacha: The Laws of Brachos. It seems that the consensus of contemporary authorities is that the correct bracha is subjective, depending on the makeup of each individual cheesecake and its crust, based on the laws of primary and secondary food (Ikar and Tafel)[16]. If the crust is indeed deemed significant and adds necessary taste and crunch, many poskim maintain that two separate brachos be recited. One should ascertain a final ruling on the matter from his or her own local halachic authority.

The author wishes to thank friend and colleague Rabbi Elie Schoemann, Rabbinic Coordinator of the London Beth Din Kashrus Division (KLBD), as his relevant article served as the impetus for my interest and research on this topic.

Lezechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua teikif umiyad.

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**Rav Yochanan Zweig - ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS**

**"They proved their lineage according to their families and their fathers' houses" (Bamidbar 1:18).**

Rashi (ad loc) explains that every individual in Bnei Yisroel was required, at this time, to bring proof of his lineage in order to establish the shevet to which he belonged. Yalkut Shimoni (Bamidbar 1-684) states further that the nations of the world actually asked Hashem to give them the Torah as well, but Hashem refused to grant their request because they were unable to establish their own genealogy. Why is the establishment of genealogy a prerequisite to receiving the Torah?

The ultimate goal of the Torah is the proper development and refinement of one's character; the Torah emphasizes the importance of maintaining moral and ethical standards. Unfortunately, in today's society, we are constantly inundated by influences that run counter to this ideal.

For example, contemporary culture not only values the notion of amassing great wealth, but in particular, it idealizes the concept of amassing wealth without working for it. This shift in values is evidenced by the great success of Ponzi schemes, which have netted countless victims. The reason so many people are taken in by these con artists is not that people have become less intelligent; rather, it is that they have absorbed the message of society that work is not a prerequisite for making a living. The appeal of these schemes lies in their promise of massive profits without the need to invest any time or effort.

Thanks to the influences of modern society, people tend to wish so desperately for those promises to be true that they become willing victims of the purveyors of any such hope. How can a person develop an inner moral compass that will help him resist the temptation to search for shortcuts, or worse even, to cheat and steal? For this purpose, it is crucial to have role models at home. Thus, Hashem told the nations of the world that since their genealogy was uncertain (they did not even know who their own fathers were) it was impossible for them to have grown up with proper role models. This made them unworthy of receiving the Torah.

This understanding should serve as the source of a tremendous insight into the significance of parental influence and teach us how we must deal with our own children. The key to raising good children is being an honest and moral person. External displays of frumkeit are merely the trimmings; the essence of a person is measured by his moral compass. Unfortunately, this is a fact that is lost even on members of the "religious" community. Many families have no issue breaking the spirit of the law as long as they aren't breaking the letter of the law.

An example of this is buying something that you intend to use, but with the knowledge that after using it you will return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. Or amassing many tens of credit cards (sometimes hundreds) in order to receive all the incentives offered by each credit card issuer without ever intending to use the cards. In fact, in many ways this is more devastating to a child's moral development than growing up with parents who steal outright. Eventually a child might learn that stealing is wrong, but he will almost certainly never learn that breaking the spirit of the law is wrong. The only hope for developing a child's moral character is with strong parental guidance. This is why a strong family structure is crucial to the process. If a child grows up without the proper role models he will not have a proper example to guide him through life. Even if some individual children can overcome this disability, an entire nation without a strong family lineage cannot overcome this as a society. For this reason HaShem didn't want to give the Torah to those nations that were unable to establish a proper family lineage.

#### MISPLACED GIVING

"Nadav and Avihu died before Hashem when they brought a strange fire before Hashem in the Sinai desert, and they did not have children" (Bamidbar 3:4).

The Torah's comment that Nadav and Avihu had no children appears to be a curious non sequitur in the account of the sin that cost them their lives. According to Chazal, however, it is very much in place.

The Gemara derives from this passuk that had they indeed had children, Nadav and Avihu would not have died. As a result, the Gemara concludes that a person who does not attempt to fulfill the mitzvah of "be fruitful and multiply" is liable to the heavenly death penalty.\*

This is very difficult to understand in light of the fact that the Torah explicitly identifies their sin as the act of bringing "a strange fire." How can the Gemara contend that they incurred the death penalty because they did not attempt to have children?

The answer to this question lies in understanding the nature of their sin. Why, in fact, did Nadav and Avihu bring a "strange fire" to the Mishkan? What is the source of the temptation to commit such a sin?

Imagine the following scenario: One Friday morning, a woman receives a phone call informing her that one of her neighbors is ill. The unfortunate woman, she is told, has been bedridden and does not have food for Shabbos. Naturally, the altruistic neighbor decides to help out.

There are two theoretical ways for such a situation to be handled. One is for the woman to prepare Shabbos food for her neighbor in her own kitchen, package it, and deliver it to the recipient's door. The other is for the woman to be invited to her neighbor's home, where the recipient of her largesse will place her own kitchen and supplies at her disposal so that she can prepare the Shabbos meals. Is there any question as to which option the neighbor would prefer? Cooking in her own home and sending the food to her neighbor makes her a benefactor; cooking in her neighbor's home, in contrast, would mean that she is simply playing the role of a maid. Any ordinary human being would naturally wish to be perceived as a benefactor and not as a servant.

This explains the motivation for Nadav and Avihu's actions. Rather than bringing a fire of their own making, they were commanded to allow the korbanos to be consumed by a fire sent from above. But Nadav and Avihu knew that by doing so they would be relating to Hashem merely as "servants" with assigned tasks to perform. Their true desire, however, was to play the role of "benefactors," which they felt they could do by offering a contribution of their own - a fire of their own creation. Rather than simply performing a service, they would actually be bringing a gift. Unfortunately, they were misguided in their efforts, for Hashem's true intent was indeed for them to play the role of His servants, not to act as His benefactors.

Since Nadav and Avihu lacked children of their own, they did not have a way to express their need to act as benefactors within an appropriate and healthy context. Instead, they sought to fulfill that need in their relationship with Hashem, a context in which it was

highly improper. The natural drive to be a giver was therefore channeled in an unhealthy and sinful way.

Thus, when the Gemara teaches us that Nadav and Avihu would not have died had they had children, it reveals to us the underlying motivation of their sin. This is even reflected by their very names; the name Nadav itself means "benefactor," and the name Avihu is a contraction of the phrase avi hu, "he is my father," referring to the epitome of a giver. In this passuk, then, the Torah explains the root cause of their fatal error: the channeling of a natural human need into a wholly inappropriate context.

\*This means, of course, that they were not married; had they been married and simply not blessed with children, then they certainly would not have been blamed for their lack of progeny.

Did You Know...

In this week's parsha the Torah describes the encampment of Bnei Yisroel and which shevet was on each side with their individual flag (surrounding the encampment of Shevet Levi and the Mishkan). However, the Torah doesn't specify any details about the flags, what colors they had, or what picture was displayed on them. The Midrash Rabbah (2:7) explains; "There were distinguishing signs for each shevet; each had a flag and a different color for every flag, the same color as their precious stone on the Urim VeTumim. It was from these flags that governments learned to provide themselves with flags of various colors."

The Midrash continues to tell us exactly what each flag displayed, both their color and picture. "Reuven's color was red, and mandrakes were drawn on it. Shimon's color was green, and the city of Shechem was drawn on it. Levi's color was one third white, one third black, and one third red, and the choshen was drawn on it. Yehuda's color was similar to the color of the sky, and a lion was drawn on it. Yissachar's color was black, and a sun and a moon were drawn on it. Zevulun's color was like the moon, and a ship was drawn on it. Dan's color was similar to black and a snake was drawn on it. Gad's color was not white and not black but a mixture of black and white, and a military camp was drawn on it. Naftali's color was like diluted wine whose red color was no longer strong, and a deer was drawn on it. Asher's color was like a precious stone that women decorate themselves with, and an olive tree was drawn on it. Yosef's color was very black, and the [picture] drawn on it for the two leaders, Ephraim and Menashe, was Egypt, because they were born in Egypt. On the flag of Ephraim was drawn an ox, and on the flag of Menashe was drawn a re'em [oryx]. Binyamin's color was like all the colors of the twelve colors, and a wolf was drawn on it, as it is written [Genesis 49:17]: 'Benjamin is like a scavenging wolf.'"

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<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/What-miracle-can-be-greater-556299>

What miracle can be greater?

Fortunate are we and our children and grandchildren that we live at a time in history where with our own eyes we have seen the fulfillment of this great miracle.

**By Rabbi Marvin Hier**

I remember in my Yeshiva days reading about the great 18th Century scholar, Rabbi Yaakov Emden's commentary that the continued existence of the Jewish people is a miracle as great or even greater than G-d's splitting of the Red Sea. Miracles greater than at the time of the Exodus? No way.

Yet, if we carefully trace the winding path that led to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, we are left with the conclusion that it was no less miraculous than baby Moses' floating down the Nile to be saved by none the tyrant's daughter.

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Today, many of us believe that miracles are inspirational fables of yesteryear. Too few of us believe that 3,500 years after Abraham there is still a master conductor who from time-to-time directs the symphony of Jewish destiny even if He refuses to take a bow. Let us begin by examining one day in history.

On July 20, 1944, Adolf Hitler survives an assassination attempt. He goes on radio to tell the German people that his survival was proof that "fate has selected me for my mission." In fact, that was Hitler's last public speech he would ever deliver. Fearing for his safety, his aides never permitted him to speak in public again.

On that very same day, July 20, 1944, perhaps an even more shocking event occurs thousands of miles away in Chicago. The Democratic National Convention had gathered to re-nominate a Franklin D. Roosevelt for a fourth term. Because of wartime restrictions, the President could not accept the nomination in person. Instead, he arrived in San Diego by train where he delivered his acceptance speech to stand for reelection in November.

However, at that same time, a few months before the convention, Unbeknownst to the public, a few months earlier Roosevelt's cardiologist, after an extensive evaluation, informs the President's senior staff, that with good care Roosevelt might live another year at best. This dramatic development meant that FDR, would when choosing his

running mate would also be choosing the next US president, with the world still engulfed in war.

Now let's leave the convention for a moment and go back to November 2, 1917, when Lord Arthur Balfour stuns the world with the Balfour Declaration stating that the British government supports the establishment of the national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. 30 years later this declaration would be the legal instrument that facilitated the establishment of the State of Israel.

A few months later and a few hundred miles away in France, two young GIs who had only briefly known each other as teens, became fast friends, serving in the same US Army unit during World War I.

Returning home to Missouri a year later, they decide to go into business together. Their names were Harry Truman and Eddie Jacobson.

Back to the 1944 Democratic National Convention.

Senator Harry Truman has no interest in seeking the vice presidency. He wasn't on the president's radar and hadn't even seen Roosevelt in more than a year. In fact, in the lead-up to the convention, he writes a speech nominating Jimmy Byrnes for vice president of the United States.

Truman is understandably shocked when just before the convention an aide to the president tells him that Roosevelt had confided that "Truman is the right man" to run for vice president. He reluctantly agrees and informs Byrnes that he will be unable to nominate him. What he doesn't know is that Roosevelt told the current vice president, Henry Wallace, "while I cannot say so in public, but I hope it will be the same old team."

Truman is not at all surprised when the results of the first round of voting showing that, Henry Wallace, the well-known sitting vice president has a few hundred ballot lead over the little-known Truman, but not enough to clinch the nomination.

But then on the second ballot, there is an unexpected surge from all the state delegations, who suddenly coalesce behind Truman.

Remarkably, the man who did everything he could to run away from the vice presidential nomination, wins it by a landslide with 1031 delegates to 105 – defeating a sitting vice president of the United States.

Veteran Senator Alben Barkley, who had been to 11 conventions said he had never seen anything like this before in politics!

Just nine months later, on April 12, 1945, just as the president's cardiologist predicted, Franklin Roosevelt dies, and Harry S. Truman becomes President of the United States. Truman has little experience in foreign affairs and is almost totally dependent on his Secretary of State, Gen. George Marshall, who had played a major role in helping defeat the Nazis.

Marshall vehemently opposes the creation of a Jewish State, arguing such a move would be a major blunder, giving the Soviets-America's adversary in the emerging Cold War – an edge in the Arab World and their oil. General Marshall backed a UN trusteeship, which would mean the end of any hopes for a Jewish State. Marshall tells Truman, "...if he declared statehood, he would resign as Secretary of State."

Working diligently with Jewish leaders, Eddie Jacobson, Truman's longtime partner in the haberdashery business intervenes seeks to sway the president to back statehood. But first, United Nations must be persuaded to vote for the partition of Palestine.

This happens on November 29, 1947, with the UN voting to partition Palestine into two states – one Jewish and one Arab. That Shabbat, the Torah reading in synagogues was Parashat Va'Yishlach which remarkably contain the verse- "Your name shall not be called Jacob but Israel shall be your name!" (Genesis 35:10).

But George Marshall's State Department remained adamant that US recognition should be avoided. Alerted to developments in Washington, Eddie Jacobson urgently arrives at the White House on Saturday, March 13, 1948, and insists on seeing the president without an appointment. The President's Chief of Staff warns him not to bring up Palestine.

Once in the Oval Office, Jacobson tells the President that Chaim Weitzman, despite being very ill, came to the US and waited in vain for a meeting- "but you won't see him". Emphasizing the importance of the moment, Jacobson chides Truman- 'just like you have a hero in Andrew Jackson, whose statute you've placed in the Oval Office; Chaim Weitzman is my hero.'

The president looks up at his longtime partner and responds, "you win you baldheaded SOB. I will see him!"

So, on that Shabbat, the day Jacobson barged into the Oval Office uninvited, once again, another remarkable coincidence, in the weekly Torah reading It was Parshat Terumah, time for Truman to offer his Terumah "tithes" for the Jewish people. Indeed, that is just what he did.

Five days later, on March 18, Chaim Weitzman was ushered into the Oval Office and summarizes the situation in a follow-up letter to the president. He writes, "The choice for our people is between statehood and extermination. History and providence have placed this issue in your hands."

Truman got the message. On April 11, 1948, Eddie Jacobson returns to the Oval Office where the President assures him that if a Jewish State is declared, Truman would recognize it.

So, it was on May 14, 1948, the two soldiers Harry Truman and Eddie Jacobson, who reunited at the time when the Balfour Declaration was first declared, were now reunited again – chosen by the Almighty as messengers to help make that unforgettable day a reality.

Fortunate are we and our children and grandchildren that we live at a time in history where with our own eyes we have seen the fulfillment of this great miracle. Not only have we walked "on the mountaintops of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem" as our ancestors did before us and as our great grandchildren will do after us. Here, we are not only to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the creation of Israel, but to witness, thanks to President Trump, the opening of the new American Embassy in Jerusalem the eternal capital of the Jewish people forever.

So, you see, Rabbi Yaakov Emden was quite correct in predicting in the 18th Century that the future miracles of the Jewish people would be as astounding as the miracle of the Exodus!

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