



יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּשְׁלַח מַהֲרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וּרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף לַפְּצוּעֵי הַמִּלְחָמוֹת, וּלְנִפְגְּעֵי מַעֲשֵׂי טְרוֹר וְאַנְטִישְׁמִיּוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהֵם - עִם שְׂאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמֵן.

May HaShem protect our soldiers and bring the hostages back safe & sound; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima to the many injured; may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel, may He help end the war with total success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever they are.



פרק
ג-ד

כי
תבוא

YERUSHALAYIM in/out times for **KI TAVO**

כ' אלול ה'תשפ"ה • September 12-13, '25



6:14PM

PLAG

5:31PM



7:24PM

R' Tam

8:00PM

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales and other halachic times

Motza'ei Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo • September 13th

First S'LICHOT (for Ashkenazim)



S'LICHOT

Ashkenazim begin saying Slichot this year, on this Motza'ei Shabbat (or Sunday morning), i.e. Motza"Sh of Parshat Ki Tavo.

S'faradim - Eidot Mizrach have been saying Slichot since Tuesday, the 2nd of Elul.

Here's the story...

Although S'fardim (EIDOT MIZRACH) say S'lichot throughout the month of Elul, Ashkenazim say S'lichot for a minimum of four days before Rosh HaShana. Furthermore, Ashkenazim always start S'lichot on a Motza'ei Shabbat (or early Sunday morning).

Parshat Nitzavim is ALWAYS read on the last Shabbat of the year - the Shabbat right before Rosh haShana. Sometimes, Nitzavim is read then on its own; sometimes it is combined with Vayeilech.

This means that Ki Tavo is always the next-to-the-last (penultimate) Shabbat of the year. Nitzavim is the buffer between Ki Tavo and its harsh, depressing TOCHACHA - not a good choice to bring us into Rosh HaShana and the Yamim Nora'im. Nitzavim has a much more uplifting and encouraging tone. It takes us into RH nicely.

Because of LO ADU ROSH, there are three days of the week that Rosh HaShana's first day cannot fall on - four days of the week that it can:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Shabbat.

When RH is Thursday-Friday (31.89% of years), then the previous Shabbat is Nitzvim-Vayeilech combined, and S'lichot begins on Motza'ei Shabbat of NV, giving us four days S'l'lichot (which is three days plus Erev Rosh HaShana, on which we say a much longer set of S'lichot).

When RH is Shabbat-Sunday (28.57% of years), then the previous Shabbat is Nitzvim-Vayeilech combined, and S'lichot begins on Motza'ei Shabbat of NV, giving us six days S'l'lichot (five days plus Erev Rosh HaShana).

When RH is Monday-Tuesday (28.03% of years), then the previous Shabbat is Nitzavim on its own but if S'lichot were to begin on that Motza"Sh, there would only be one day of S'lichot. So S'lichot begins on Motza'ei Shabbat one Shabbat earlier - Motza'ei Shabbat of Ki Tavo, giving us seven days of S'lichot (six plus Erev RH).

When RH is Tuesday-Wednesday (as it is this year, an 11.51% occurrence), then the previous Shabbat is Nitzavim on its own but if S'lichot were to begin on that Motza"Sh, there would only be two day of S'lichot. So S'lichot begins on

Motza'ei Shabbat one Shabbat earlier - Motza'ei Shabbat of Ki Tavo, giving us eight days of S'lichot (seven plus Erev RH).

Nitzavim & Vayeilech are combined 60.46% of years. The following Shabbat is Shabbat Shuva of the new year, and we read Haazinu.

Nitzavim and Vayeilech are read separately 39.54% of years. The following Shabbat is Shabbat Shuva of the new year, and we read Vayeilech. Haazinu is read on the Shabbat between Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

In all years, the calendar (so to speak) is ready for V'zot HaB'racha on Simchat Torah.

KI TAVO

50th of the 54 sedras;
7th of the 11 in D'varim

Written on 233 lines (rank: 13th)

21 Parshiyot; 5 open (P), 16 closed (S)

122 p'sukim - rank: 17 (2nd in D'varim)

Same as Vayakhel & Va'etchanan;
Ki Tavo is larger than Vayakhel,
and smaller than Va'etchanan

1747 words - rank: 16 (2nd in D'varim)

Same as Eikev. Eikev is a bit larger

6811 letters - rank: 15 (4th in D'varim)

P'sukim are longer than average for
the Torah, but short for D'varim

Haftara - 22 p'sukim; S/H: 5.5



MITZVOT

6 of the 613; 3 pos. and 3 prohibitions

To put the mitzva-count into perspective - Pinchas has 6 mitzvot, too. 22 sedras have more mitzvot than Ki Tavo; 30 sedras have fewer.

Ki Tavo follows three sedras with mitzva ranks of 3, 6, and 1 - R'ei, Sho-f'tim, and Ki Teitzei - with a total of 170 mitzvot.

Ki Tavo is followed by 18 sedras with a total of 5 of the Taryag Mitzvot. Lots of content but a huge desert of Mitzvot

It is clear to see that the 613 mitzvot are not at all evenly distributed among the Torah's 54 sedras. $613/54 = 11.35$, the average number of mitzvot per sedra. But 17 sedras have none. And others have the high count: Top six mitzva-sedras: 74, 63, 55, 53, 51, 41 - that's 53.4% of all the mitzvot in 11% of the sedras.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI;

L=LAV (prohibition). **X:Y** is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

Kohen - First Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 26:1-11

[**P>26:1**] When we come to the Land and settle it, we are commanded to take of the First Fruits [**the mitzva of Bikurim has already been counted back in Parshat Mishpatim**] of the "Seven Species", put them in a basket and go to THE Place (i.e. the Beit HaMikdash). We are to go to the kohen on duty, announce our presence and present him with the basket. He shall take it and place it before the (external) Mizbei'ach. We are then to recite the Bikurim passage [**606, A132 26:5**].

MITZVAnotes

It is said of Bikurim: "Do this mitzva, for in its merit you will enter the Land." The ARI HaKadosh singles out Bikurim as the mitzva which is the TIKUN (repair) for the Sin of the Spies. Bikurim has a Torah-commanded, built-in recitation that helps us focus our thoughts in a particular direction. With this recitation, the Jew identifies himself with his Jewish Heritage and announces to one and all the centrality of Eretz Yisrael in G-d's plans for the People of Israel. Bikurim makes the statement that we are glad to be here. Being happy about being in Eretz Yisrael grants us the Z'CHUT to be

here. Joyfully thanking G-d for our being here helps "repair" the opposite attitude as expressed by the 10 spies and echoed by the panicked multitude. The Sin of the Spies was committed by what the Meraglim SAID, and it was while they were displaying fruits of Eretz Yisrael, no less. Bikurim is the mitzva that is performed by what the Bikurim bringer SAYS (in addition to bringing the fruits), and while he displays fruits that he brought from the Land. A perfect counterpart.

Rav Menachem Zemba HY"D added a beautiful note to the above notion that Bikurim is the positive counterpart to CHEIT HAMERAGLIM. Look in Mishna, Bikurim 3:1 - How does one designate his Bikurim? A person goes into his fields and sees a ripe fig, a ripe cluster of grapes, a ripe pomegranate... The Mishna uses as an example of Bikurim, the very same three fruits that the Meraglim brought with them to show to the People. A perfect exclamation point to the statement of the ARI z"l.

Bikurim is a prime example of HAKARAT HATOV, recognition and acknowledgement of the good that G-d does for us. We must apply this lesson to other areas of mitzvot and life in general. Do all mitzvot with the recognition that we are part of the Nation that HaShem chose as His. That SIMCHA is (should be) part of

every mitzva we perform.

May we soon be privileged to bring Bikurim with all the joy and Jewish pride that says that we are truly pleased to be chosen by G-d as His People and that we are genuinely thankful for this wonderful Land.

The first four p'sukim of the Bikurim recitation form the main text for the Pesach Seder's MAGID section; they summarize Egyptian enslavement and the subsequent Exodus. The fifth pasuk (which is not in the Hagada) speaks of coming to Eretz Yisrael. This corresponds to the fifth term of redemption and is represented by Eliyahu's cup, which we don't yet drink, and a number of other Seder elements.

We all bring Bikurim (including the Levi and the convert) with feelings of joy and thanks to G-d for all we have.

SDT: The Bikurim recitation is perfectly suited to form the heart of the story of the Exodus, more so than any of the original passages from Sh'mot. The editors of the Hagada found in ARAMI OVEID AVI... the "whole" story in only four p'sukim - something we are all capable of handling at the Seder table. The original material is too copious. Furthermore, the Bikurim recitation is in first person - I, my, we, us - rather than narrative form of the original account of the Egyptian experience in the Book of Sh'mot. This fits very well

with the maxim: In every generation a person shall portray himself as if he himself came out of Egypt. There are other factors that also favor the Bikurim parsha for Seder purposes.

Levi - Second Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 26:12-15

[S>26:12 (4)] After one has completed proper separation and distribution of T'ruma, Ma'aser, and Ma'aser Ani (during the third and sixth year of a Sh'mita cycle), one is required to formally declare that none of the "holy produce" remains in his possession and that it was actually given to its intended recipients [607, A131 26:13]. This declaration is made on the last day of Pesach in the 4th and 7th year of a Sh'mita cycle.

VIDUI MAASER implies that there is something lacking in our performance of the mitzvot mentioned (based on the term VIDUI, confession). Yet the statement specifically says that we did everything that we were supposed to do. In fact, a person who might have transgressed does not make the statement, since it might not be the truth for him. Only someone who did not sin at all can make the declaration. Why then, do we get the impression that something was not 100%? Rav Soloveitchik zt"l pointed to the word K'CHOL (like all), which is mentioned twice. The implication is that our performance

was almost perfect, but not quite. Also, the statement implies that the individual did only that which he was required to do, and did not (often) go beyond the call of duty. Or perhaps we did a mitzva sort of like it is supposed to be done, but maybe without full KAVANA and/or enthusiasm. These implications might be responsible for the title VIDUI.

What an important message this is as we approach Rosh HaShana, when we have to answer for what - AND HOW - we do mitzvot. Not just the mitzvot covered by VIDUI MAASER, but all mitzvot.

It is forbidden to eat Maaser Sheni (the second tithes of years 1, 2, 4, 5 of a Sh'mita cycle, which remain the owner's property but which must be eaten "with sanctity and ritual purity" in Jerusalem - or be redeemed) while one is a mourner (here it refers to the status of the mourner before burial of the dead - ANINUT) [608, L151 26:14] or in a state of ritual impurity [609, L150 26:14] (the person and/or the food). It is also forbidden to use the redemption money of Ma'aser Sheni for purposes other than food and drink in Jerusalem [610, L152 26:14].

The literal meaning of this prohibition is not to use the money for "the dead". This can narrowly apply to shrouds, casket, etc., but is also generalized to include all non-food uses.

HASHKIFA! We next call upon

HaShem to "look down" upon His People from on high and bless us and the Land of Israel. [We have kept our promise, we say to G-d (so to speak), now You keep Yours. - Rashi]

It is a common practice (based on the Talmud Yerushalmi) for the Baal Korei (a.k.a. Baal K'ri'a) to raise his voice and emphasize the word **HASHKIFA**.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 4 p'sukim - 26:16-19

[S>26:16 (4)] This short aliya is a summary of our relationship with G-d. We are to keep, preserve, observe, practice all the mitzvot, statutes, laws which Moshe has reiterated for us, with all our hearts and souls. We have pledged allegiance to G-d, promised to follow His ways [611, A8 26:17] and to listen to Him. He pledges to take us as His "Chosen Nation" and to elevate us above the nations of the world - IF we keep His mitzvot.

MITZVANotes

To follow in G-d's footsteps means to develop and practice various traits that are attributed to Him. As He is merciful, so too shall we be merciful. As He is holy, so too must we behave in ways that lead to our becoming holy. From general traits, we can also use specific examples - as G-d clothed the naked, visited the sick, buried the dead, comforted the

grieving... so too must we. There are mitzva-counters who define this mitzva as Bikur Cholim, visiting the sick, in addition to generalizing to include all types of acts of kindness.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 27:1-10

[P>27:1 (8)] Moshe Rabeinu and the Elders command the People concerning the inscribing on 12 pillars of stone the words of the Torah (parts thereof; the Book of D'varim or parts of it); this to be done upon crossing the Jordan.

Subsequently, another set of pillars is to be erected and inscribed on Har Eival where a Mizbei'ach is to be built (of whole, uncut stones) and sacrifices are to be offered.

[S>27:9-10 (2)] Moshe and the Kohanim next declare to the People that they have grown into complete nationhood at this point - with all the mitzvot of the Torah having been reviewed. Privilege of nationhood goes hand-in-hand with the responsibilities of keeping the mitzvot.

SDT: Moshe, the Kohanim and Leviyim, say to all the people, "On this very day you have become G-d's nation." Rashi says that the Torah emphasized THIS VERY DAY, to teach us that our commitment to Torah and mitzvot should be as if we have entered into a covenant with HaShem on this very day - i.e. every day of our lives. We are challenged to refresh

our Judaism continually. This is not the only place this lesson is learned. But that fact just reinforces the significance of the idea.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 22 p'sukim - 27:11-28:6

[S>27:11 (4)] Moshe describes what will happen after the People enter the Land. Six tribes will stand on Mt. G'rizim and six on Mt. Eival. There they will hear the blessings and curses that will be the fate of those who keep or don't keep Torah and mitzvot.

Twelve curses are enumerated in this portion touching upon many diverse areas of Jewish life including "between Jew and G-d" as well as interpersonal mitzvot. Each K'LALA is a pasuk long and its own parsha s'tuma (almost). To each curse, the people are to respond AMEIN...

[S>27:15 (1)] he who makes idols...

[S>27:16 (1)] he who degrades his father or mother...

[S>27:17 (1)] he who encroaches on his neighbor's boundary...

[S>27:18 (1)] he who misleads a (figuratively) "blind" person...

[S>27:19 (2)] he who perverts the judgment of orphan or widow... he who sleeps with his father's wife... (Note that these two curses share a parsha.)

SDT: DK points out that these two

violations that share a single parsha are different from each other in that the first is a sin against others and the second is a sin against G-d. Their sharing a parsha conveys a message of equality (in a way) that sinning against others is also sinning against G-d.

[S>27:21 (1)] he who engages in sexual behavior with animals...

[S>27:22 (1)] he who sleeps with his sister (or half-sister)...

[S>27:23 (1)] he who sleeps with his mother-in-law...

[S>27:24 (1)] he who secretly strikes his fellow...

[S>27:25 (1)] he who takes a bribe and an innocent person is killed...

[S>27:26 (1)] he who does not uphold the words of the Torah to do them...

[P>28:1 (14)] Once again, Moshe Rabeinu tells us that following G-d's mitzvot will earn us superior status among the nations of the world. We will also be showered with blessings for hearkening to G-d's voice. We will flourish economically and agriculturally, and be blessed with a healthy increase in population. Our every coming and going will be blessed.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 63 p'sukim - 28:7-69

Longest of the 378 Aliyot in the Torah (not counting R'vi'i of Matot-Mas'ei)

The blessings continue with the promise of victory over our enemies. G-d will "command" His blessings upon us and the Land, and will establish us as a holy nation... provided we keep the mitzvot and follow His ways.

The Torah's expression V'HALACHTA BID-RACHAV is repeated here - emulating G-d is defined as being kind, merciful, charitable, etc.

The nations of the world will see the special relationship we have with G-d, and be appropriately reverent towards us and fearful of us. G-d's heavenly treasure-house will open for us and we will flourish. G-d's blessings are conditional upon keeping mitzvot.

HOWEVER...

[P>28:15 (54)] "...if we don't listen to G-d..." Thus begins the "Tochacha". The harsh rebuke against disobedience of the Torah.

There is a custom to read this part in a low voice because of how devastating it is to realize that G-d needs to warn us in such graphic terms, what will happen if the Jewish People are unfaithful to Him. Unfortunately, we need these harsh words of reproach. Unfortunately, they have

turned out to be prophetic more than once. The Tochacha is contained within one Aliya (resulting in the longest Aliya in the Torah) so as not to prolong the discomfort in hearing it. And it is sandwiched (so to speak) between p'sukim of "good things", so the Aliya begins and ends on a good note.

The first portion of the Tochacha is the negative mirror image of the blessings previously pronounced in the Torah. The p'sukim then proliferate and describe in shocking and grisly detail that which will occur if we do not remain faithful to G-d. The final pasuk of the Aliya reiterates the "simple" but eloquent covenant with G-d: Keep the Torah and all will be good, if not...

The contrast between the "good times" that Bikurim brings to mind and the terrible times as described in the Tochacha, is overpowering and frightening. It is the difference between contentment and respect on the one hand, and devastation, despair and degradation, on the other. Prosperity in our own Land vs poverty and exile. The key to the difference is Torah & Mitzvot.

SDT: One of the famous "sum it all up" p'sukim in the Tochacha is 28:47, which says that many of the terrible things will happen to us because we did not serve G-d with joy and a good heart (even while we still had all good things). The Kotzker Rebbe gives this pasuk an interesting spin. Because,

not only did you not serve G-d, but the not serving Him was with simcha to you. When a Jew does mitzvot, there is the extra aspect of doing them "with a smile" (on your face and in your heart). And, conversely, when a Jew sins, there is the extra aspect of sinning with a smile. Does one who eats non-kosher cry about his betrayal of G-d (probably not), or does he lick his fingers with relish and joy (sadly, probably yes). And if and when the joy of sinning leaves a person, or is driven out by him, then and only then will the person be on the path to T'shuva.

In more general terms, this pasuk speaks to Jews who just "go through the motions" of religious observance. They were brought up that way, perhaps, but there is little joy in their religious behavior. How sad! The Baal Shem Tov would say: **S'CHAR MITZVA SIMCHAT MITZVA** - the reward for a mitzva is the joy one derives from doing a mitzva.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: We are commanded V'SAMACHTA B'CHA-GECHA, to be joyous on the festivals. Perhaps this refers to an added dimension of joy, because the fact of the matter is that the Bikurim bringer was 'commanded' to be joyous for all the good that G-d has bestowed on him. That is not really a one-shot burst of joy, merely on the day that the Bikurim are brought. Rebbe

Nachman had it right when he said, MITZVA G'DOLA LIHYOT B'SIMCHA TAMID. TAMID can mean always, but it can also mean every day. We are rebuked in the Tochacha for not having served G-d with joy and a good feeling. That is an everyday kind of thing - we serve G-d every day, with every mitzva we perform. If we can re-arrange the words in the Rebbe Nachman statement, we might say that it is a great thing to be joyous in the fulfillment of mitzvot, always.

[S>28:69 (1)] After all those dreadful p'sukim of the Tochacha, this long aliya is concluded with the statement: These are the words of the covenant that G-d commanded Moshe to make with the people of Israel in the territory of Moav - besides the covenant of Sinai (Chorev).

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 29:1-8

[P>29:1 (8)] Moshe Rabeinu calls to the People, and tells them that they now have seen (and know) all that has happened since the Exodus through the 40 years of wandering until this very moment. It is incumbent upon us to keep our "deal" with G-d. "And G-d did not give you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, until this very day." This realization comes after living all the experiences and miracles of 40 years of wandering.

The last three p'sukim are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 22 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 60:1-22

The uplifting message of the haftara is the coming of the Geula, when G-d will restore His People to the Land and the nations and peoples of the world will flock to Jerusalem to pay homage to G-d and His People.

The concluding words of the haftara are enigmatic: "...I Am G-d, in its (the redemption's) time, I will hasten it."

Will the Mashiach come in his pre-set time, or sooner?

That depends upon us. If we enhance the overall conditions of Jewish Life, increase Torah observance, improve relations between Jew and his fellow, come to live in Eretz Yisrael - then we might be privileged to an "early" arrival of the Mashiach and the Geula. If we do not lay the proper groundwork for his coming, then he will come in his (pre-ordained) time.

And another difference between the Geula being hastened (by us) and its coming in its pre-set time -

If we will be able to hasten the Mashiach because of our increased faith in HaShem and our increased observance of Torah and Mitzvot... then we might be spared the harsh CHEVLEI MASHIACH, the birthpangs, trials and tribulations and war that will

be our fate - if we are not ready for the Geula.

This is a major part of our Elul challenge. Let's put it this way - the first level of our Elul-time task is personal, individual. This adds another level, that of the community, of Klal Yisrael. Rambam in Hilchot T'shuva "suggests" that we each consider ourselves, and our community, and the entire world to be precariously balanced between merits and demerits. One tiny mitzva on our part can not only tip our personal scale to the good side for us, but that of our community and that of the whole world as well. One person can make a difference.

Each of us has the power to hasten the Mashiach. So, let's get to it.

From A Candle by Day by **Rabbi Shraga Silverstein z"l**

Some are blinded by the fact that things are going so well with them, to the fact that they could be doing even better.

Bringing the Prophets to Life

Weekly insights into the Haftara by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler

Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)

What Was and What Will Be

**KI TAVO - 22 p'sukim
- Yeshayahu 60:1-22**

This Shabbat, we are privileged and, indeed blessed, to read one of the most uplifting and heartening prophecies of Yishayahu HaNavi, one that opens with the cry: KUMI ORI! But it would be a mistake to ignore the navi's earlier message from the 59th chapter (preceding our haftara from the 60th perek), for, by doing so, we would fail to absorb the significance and impact of Yishayahu's words that we will hear this Shabbat (IY"H).

Like the five earlier haftarot, this reading is one of consolation but, unlike most of the former prophecies, this haftara does not make mention of any of the nation's past sins. By doing so, this n'vu'a directly conflicts with Yishayahu's previous message. In fact, Rav Ariel lists over ten examples of prophetic promises in our haftara that contrast widely with the message we find in the last perek:

- In the 59th chapter, Yishayahu calls out the nation, telling them G-d had hidden His presence from them (v2) while in the 60th perek we read how Hashem's glory will shine upon them (v2).
- In the previous perek, the navi cries that "there was no justice" [v4] while our haftara promises that the nation will be "completely just (KULAM TZADIKIM) [v21].

- In the last chapter, the navi bemoans that "they knew no path toward peace" [v8], yet our haftara predicts "I will designate your leaders for peace" [v17].

- And, while the previous prophecy quotes the nation's lament "we pray for light but have only darkness" [v9], Yishayahu opens this n'vu'a with the clarion call: "Arise and Shine for your light has arrived!" [v1].

These juxtaposed prophecies do not contradict each other but, rather, are meant to contrast that which HAD BEEN in the past with that which WILL BE in Israel's future - thereby comforting the grieving population. And, subtle as the message might seem, it is extremely impactful.

Consider: How can the purely Moral and Ethical G-d, One Whose very existence is defined by both righteous and merciful attributes, find a just way to both punish the corrupt generations, while, at the same time, to arouse His infinite mercies in order to bring comfort to those who suffered the consequences of His necessary justice?

This is the challenge that faced the prophets both before and after the Churban - and a struggle that all later generations had to undergo. I would humbly submit that the contrast we've uncovered between these two p'rakim might help us understand the

message of Hashem's NECHAMA promised by Yishayahu throughout these weeks of SHIVA D'NECHEMTA.

The differences between these juxtaposing prophetic messages should not be seen only as a depiction of WHAT ONCE WAS versus WHAT WILL YET BE, but as a message that consolation from national tragedy does not arrive immediately. Clearly, both of these contrasting prophecies would not come about within a short time and must be understood, therefore, as a subtle message explaining that these diametrically different views would be realized only over many years. Just as the corruption of a culture spreads over many years, so full consolation will slowly grow over many years.

And yet, if this lesson is truly grasped, we wonder how any generation could accept comfort from a promise they are likely never to see? Only when they also accept that they are an undying nation!

The guarantee of eternal salvation consoles only the eternal nation.

The words of our prophets will comfort a nation confident in the truth that, no matter what we suffer today, we, i.e., our nation, will survive and realize Divine redemption. To put it simply, we should remember that -

The extent of our consolation lies in the depth of our Emunah! ★



The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests

KI TEITZEI

<=> 2 Unexplaineds

Grain growing under a grapevine

The prohibition of K'LAI KEREM

An electric drill with a green check mark and a food mixer with a red X

Taking a drill as security for a loan, but it is forbidden to take anything that is used to make food.

Ki Tavo



BIKURIM - basket of first fruits placed at the side of the Mizbei'ach <#> The bringer is smiling, as the Torah commands us to rejoice in all that G-d has given us <#> And he's reciting (speech bubble) about going down to Egypt and about being brought out of Egypt and taken to Eretz Yisrael <#> HASHKIFA - G-d, look down upon us from on high (Hubble telescope - but, we know that He doesn't need one) <#> One of the blessings in the sedra is that if we keep the Torah, then we will be "heads" not "tails". Two views of a half-shekel coin. The tails side is Xed out. FYI, heads & tails is American. The numismatic terms are obverse and reverse. In Israel, the sides of a coin are PALI and EITZ - a throw back to pre-state days, which had Palestine on the heads side and a tree on the tails side; cara o cruz in Spanish; pile ou face in French; navia aut caput in Latin <#> 12 stones upon which were engraved the Torah (or parts of it) <#> Opened treasure, as we ask of G-d. That treasure is in the form of beneficial and timely rains, and the bumper crops that result from good and plentiful rain <#> THE SKATE is for the word HASKEIT. Words that appear only once in Tanach are often difficult to translate. HASKEIT is rendered as "pay attention" or "be silent" or "form groups". It is followed by USHMA, and listen (or understand), hence the different possibilities for HASKEIT <#> The successful basketball shot is for BARUCH TANACHA, blessed is

your basket (i.e. fruit - Rashi), or V'SAMTA VATENE, and put it in the basket <#> Thumbs up pointing to a cityscape and a field is BARUCH ATA BA'IR UVARUCH ATA BASADEH <#> The orange pepper with a green checkmark and a red X on it represents the term in the Torah PRI ADAMA, fruit of the ground. YES, that's the bracha it gets (double meaning - we say BOREI PRI HAADAMA and G-d sends His BRACHA (if we follow Him) to our PRI ADAMA. On the other hand - NO, pepper is not one of the PRI ADAMA referred to in the context of BIKURIM, since we are taught that for BIKURIM, MEIREISHIT KOL PRI HAADAMA means only from the Seven Species <#> under the stones (CHAMEISH AVANIM) is an iron. The haftara says: "For bronze I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, bronze, and for stones, iron..." (Yeshayahu 60:17) In Hebrew: V'TACHAT HA'AVANIM BARZEL - and under the stones, iron. And under the iron is the Lone Ranger and his horse, SILVER <#> At the top of the ParshaPix is a spice rack, representing another promise for our faithful behavior, that will will be RACK L'MAALA, just at the top. (Hebrew-English groaner) <#> Open lock is for the prophecy in the haftara, that your gates will be open always, day and night they will not be closed <#> The flowers are "forget-me-not", as in "... I did not violate any mitzvot, nor did I forget." <#> milk and honey for CHALAV and

D'VASH, as in ERETZ ZAVAT... A phrase that occurs more in Ki Tavo than anywhere else <#> AYIN-MEM with SEGOL under it. AYIN-MEM spells AM, nation. This then is an AM SEGULA, as in Chosen Nation, a phrase that occurs twice in Parshat R'ei and once in Ki Tavo. Furthermore, the word is colored SEGOL, making it doubly AM SEGULA <#> Abundance of camels - from the haftara: SHIF'AT G'MALIM <#> Two doors with smiles is for M'SOS DOR VADOR, a joy for each succeeding generation. DOR - door, get it? <#> Seder-plate, for the p'sukim borrowed from Ki Tavo for the core of the Magid portion of the Hagada <#> The first of the two doors has a K on it, making it a reference to KEIDAR, a place mentioned in the haftara <#> Toothpicks are made of wood. Under the wood is a copper penny. And under that is a gold double eagle (\$20, worth a lot more today). This is all in the haftara, which mentions TACHAT (to replace, but literally, under) WOODS, NECHOSHET and TACHAT NECHOSHET, ZAHAV. <#> Additionally, the penny is a wheat back design (1909-1956), so we have one of the Seven Species that could be brought as Bikurim <#> what about Yitzchak in the lower-left? His known name is SID Caesar. The 12 stones were to be whitewashed with SID <#> photo of Frank Fontaine, an American Jewish comic actor who played Crazy Guggenheim on the Jacky Gleason show. Crazy as in M'SHUGA (in the Tochacha) <#> so too, the cartoon

character, Krazy Kat <#> 90 OUT and 8 IN are for the names of the sedras, KI TEITZEI with a TZADI (90) between the TAV and the ALEF, and for KI TAVO, a BET-VAV (8) <#> the two sixes are for six tribes each on G & A, Har G'rizim and Har Eival <#> the logo of the Today show is for the word HAYOM, which occurs 14 times in the sedra, occasionally the subject of a significant d'rash <#> 44 is personal - one the Wednesday (MITVOCH) between KI TEITZEI (from the USA) and KI TAVO EL HAARETZ is the 44th anniversary of my Aliya <#> One Unexplained

לע"נ

הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

Listening & Law

KI TAVO

It would be reasonable to assume that a language containing the verb "to command" must also contain the verb "to obey". The one implies the other, just as the concept of a question implies the possibility of an answer. We would, however, be wrong. There are 613 commandments in the Torah, but there is no word in Biblical Hebrew that means "to obey". When Hebrew was revived as a language of everyday speech in the 19th century, a word, L'TSAYEIT, had to be borrowed from Aramaic. Until then there was no Hebrew word for

"to obey".

This is an astonishing fact and not everyone was aware of it. It led some Christians (and secularists) to misunderstand the nature of Judaism: very few Christian thinkers fully appreciated the concept of mitzva and the idea that God might choose to reveal Himself in the form of laws. It also led some Jews to think about mitzvot in a way more appropriate to Islam (the word Islam means "submitting" to God's law) than to Judaism. What word does the Torah use as the appropriate response to a mitzva? SH'MA.

The root SHIN-MEM-AYIN is a keyword in the book of D'varim, where it occurs 92 times, usually in the sense of what God wants from us in response to the commandments. But the verb SH'MA means many things. Here are some of the meanings it has in B'reishit:

- (1) "To hear" as in: "Avram heard that his relative [Lot] had been taken captive" (14:14).
- (2) "To listen, pay attention, heed" as in: "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree" (3:17) and "Then Rachel said: God has vindicated me; He has listened to my plea and given me a son" (30:7).
- (3) "To understand" as in "Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other" (11:7).

This is how tradition understood the later phrase NAASEH V'NISHMA (Sh'mot 24:7) to mean, "first we will do, then we will understand."

(4) "To be willing to obey" as the angel's words to Avraham after the Binding of Yitzchak, "Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you were willing to obey Me" (B'reishit 22:18), when Avraham was about to obey God's command, and at the last moment an angel called upon him to stop.

(5) "To respond in deed, to do what someone else wants" as in "Do whatever Sarah tells you" - SH'MA B'KOLAH (B'reishit 21:12).

It is in this last sense that the verb SH'MA comes closest in meaning to "obey". The fact that it means all these things suggests that in the Torah there is no concept of blind obedience. In general, a commander orders and a soldier obeys. A slave-owner orders and the slave obeys. There is no active thought-process involved. The connection between the word of the commander and the deed of the commanded is one of action-and-reaction, stimulus-and-response. For practical purposes, the soldier or slave has no mind of his own. As Tennyson described the attitude of the soldiers before the Charge of the Light Brigade, "Ours not to reason why; ours but to do or die."

That is not how the Torah conceives

the relationship between God and us. God, who created us in His image, giving us freedom and the power to think, wants us to understand His commands. Ralbag (Gersonides, 1288-1344) argues that it is precisely this that makes the Torah different:

Behold our Torah is unique among all the other doctrines and religions that other nations have had, in that our Torah contains nothing that does not originate in equity and reason. Therefore this Divine Law attracts people in virtue of its essence, so that they behave in accordance with it. The laws and religions of other nations are not like this: they do not conform to equity and wisdom, but are foreign to the nature of man, and people obey them because of compulsion, out of fear of the threat of punishment but not because of their essence.

Along similar lines, the modern scholar David Weiss Halivni speaks of "the Jewish predilection for justified law", and contrasts this with other cultures in the ancient world:

Ancient law in general is apodictic, without justification and without persuasion. Its style is categorical, demanding, and commanding ... Ancient Near Eastern law in particular is devoid of any trace of desire to convince or to win hearts. It enjoins, prescribes, and orders, expecting to be heeded solely on the strength of

being an official decree. It solicits no consent (through justification) from those to whom it is directed.

The Torah uses at least three devices to show that Jewish law is not arbitrary, a mere decree. First, especially evident throughout the book of D'varim, is the giving of reasons for the commands. Often, though not always, the reason has to do with the experience of the Israelites in Egypt. They know what it feels like to be oppressed, to be a stranger, an outsider. I want you to create a different kind of society, says God through Moshe, where slavery is more limited, where everyone is free one day a week, where the poor do not go hungry, and the powerless are not denied justice.

The second, most notably in the book of Bamidbar, is the juxtaposition of narrative and law, as if to say, the law is best understood against the backdrop of history and the experience of the Israelites in their formative years. So the law of the Red Heifer - for purification from contact with the dead - occurs just before the death of Miriam and Aharon, as if to say, bereavement and grief interfere with our contact with God but this does not last forever. We can become pure again. The law of tsitsit occurs after the story of the spies because (as I explained in an earlier Covenant & Conversation) both have to do with ways of seeing:

the difference between seeing-with-fear and seeing-with-faith.

The third is the connection between law and metaphysics. There is a strong connection between B'reishit 1, the story of Creation, and the laws of K'dusha, holiness. Both belong to TORAT KOHANIM and both are about order and the maintenance of boundaries. The laws against mixing meat and milk, wool and linen, and so on, are about respecting the deep structure of nature as described in the opening chapter of the Torah.

Throughout D'varim, as Moshe reaches the summit of his leadership, he becomes an educator, explaining to the new generation who will eventually conquer and inhabit the Land, that the laws God has given them are not just Divine decrees. They make sense in human terms. They constitute the architectonics of a free and just society. They respect human dignity. They honour the integrity of nature. They give the land the chance to rest and recuperate. They protect Israel against the otherwise inexorable laws of the decline and fall of nations.

Only by recognising God as their sovereign will they guard against overbearing kings and the corruptions of power. Time and again Moshe tells the people that if they follow God's laws they will prosper. If they fail to do so they will suffer defeat and exile. All this can be understood

in supernatural terms, but it can be understood in natural ways also.

That is why Moshe, consistently throughout D'varim, uses the verb SH'MA. He wants the Israelites to obey God, but not blindly or through fear alone. God is not an autocrat. The Israelites should know this through their own direct experience. They had seen how God, Creator of heaven and earth, had chosen this people as His own, brought them from slavery to freedom, fed, sustained and protected them through the wilderness, and led them to victory against their enemies. God had not given the Torah to Israel for His sake but for theirs. As Weiss Halivni puts it: the Torah "invites the receiver of the law to join in grasping the beneficent effect of the law, thereby bestowing dignity upon him and giving him a sense that he is a partner in the law."

That is the meaning of Moshe's great words in this week's Parsha:

"Be silent, Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the Lord your God. Listen to the Lord your God and follow His commands and decrees that I give you today." (D'varim 27:9-10)

Keeping the commands involves an act of listening, not just submission and blind obedience - listening in all its multiple senses of attending,

meditating and reflecting of the nature of God through Creation, Revelation, and Redemption. It means trying to understand our limits and imperfections as human beings. It means remembering what it felt like to be a slave in Egypt. It involves humility and memory and gratitude. But it does not involve abdication of the intellect or silencing of the questioning mind.

God is not a tyrant but a teacher. He seeks not just our obedience but also our understanding. All nations have laws, and laws are there to be obeyed. But few nations other than Israel set it as their highest task to understand why the law is as it is. That is what the Torah means by the word SH'MA.

Around the Shabbat Table:

- (1) **How might the Torah's idea of SH'MA shape the way we approach other opportunities, such as learning in school or listening to parents?**
- (2) **What happens to people or societies when they follow rules without thinking?**
- (3) **Do you think faith should be more about trust, or more about understanding? Why?**

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Message from the Haftara

*Rabbi Katriel (Kenneth) Brander
President and Rosh HaYeshiva of
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Redemption In Its Time, and In an Instant

KITAVO

The last verse of this week's haftara offers a puzzling vision of redemption: "I GOD will speed it [redemption], in [its] due time." (Yishayahu 60:22). But which is it? Will redemption come "in due time" – presumably after the fulfillment of preordained conditions – or will it break forth suddenly, "with speed"? Should we be expecting a long wait? Or should we live in a state of constant hopeful readiness?

In the Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin (98a), Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi resolves this tension: "If they merit redemption, I will hasten its coming. If they do not merit redemption, it will wait until its due time." In this reading, both possibilities stand: The Jewish people may be redeemed immediately, or the redemption might have to wait until certain conditions occur in its due time. Our behavior can tip the scales and hasten salvation; if not, it will arrive at the destined time.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's teaching challenges the normally accepted

paradigm of how redemption comes about. By and large, we envision the coming of Mashiach as following a certain set script: The Jewish people repent and return to God, and this in turn leads God to have mercy on us and ending our exile and suffering.

But perhaps this is not the only possible paradigm. Maybe the exile has a fixed limit, independent of the spiritual state of the Jewish people. Even without full repentance, or any repentance, if God judges that the Diaspora is too difficult and may destroy us as a people, then the "time" of the redemption will have come, and He will save us unconditionally (in its due time).

Some have pointed out the providential nature of the establishment of the State of Israel immediately on the heels of the Holocaust. On the surface, the horrors of the war years convinced both the Jewish People and the world of the urgent need for a Jewish state.

But there is also a deeper, spiritual dimension: The destruction of the vast majority of the Jewish world and the imminent danger of the collapse of Jewish peoplehood and continuity left God with no choice, as it were, to intercede and begin the process of redemption.

This is not, God forbid, a justification or explanation for the Holocaust, which still defies comprehension. But it can provide a lens through which to

view why the greatest redemptive chapter in Jewish history opened so quickly after that catastrophe. And it can help us to understand why redemption began to progress even absent a mass movement of repentance and return to God among the Jewish people: God was bringing redemption “in its due time”.

The Ramban echoes this idea. He states explicitly that repentance is not a necessary prerequisite for redemption: “This song of Haazinu does not condition the future events it describes on repentance or service” (D'varim 32:40).

Likewise, R. Chaim ibn Attar, in his commentary Or HaChayim on Parshat B'har (25:28), writes: “When the Master [God] sees that the people have no power to suffer more blows, and that their debts [sins] have increased so greatly that they can no longer be borne, the time of his bondage will last only ‘until the Jubilee,’ i.e., until the time preordained for the redemption... This will be the end of the exile even if the people of Israel remain utterly evil”.

We likewise find many instances in Tanach where God decides to have mercy on the people for the sake of His own great name and the covenant with their ancestors, even when they have not yet had a change of heart.

As we recite this haftara, let us hope and pray to be deserving of a redemption that comes in a flash. The

Jewish people of today, in Israel and outside it, has progressed spiritually beyond recognition in the years since the founding of the State.

All around us we see Jews, even those who consider themselves “secular”, deeply and actively engaged in strengthening their personal and collective relationship with God and Israel. This movement has only accelerated during the current war, a sign of resilience shining through the darkness of October 7 and its aftermath.

Through the crucible of conflict and strife, let us be blessed to be forged by God “as silver is forged” (Zechariya 13:9) into a people worthy of receiving His grace in an instant. 🌈

MicroUlpan

מִנַּת מִשְׁכָּל

That's the Hebrew term for I.Q. - Intelligence Quotient.

M'NAT MISKAL is also called איי קיי in Hebrew.

When I.Q. was first developed at the beginning of the 20th century, it was defined as the quotient of the mental age (גִּיל שְׂכָלִי) divided by the chronological age (גִּיל טִבְעִי) times 100. The factors that determine IQ today are more sophisticated, but the term IQ is still used, even though division isn't used anymore.

Walk through the Parsha

with **Rabbi David Walk**



KI TAVO

Look at Me!

Nu? What's your HASHKAFA? That question is a request for someone to reveal their world view or philosophy of life, politics or religion. The term HASHKAFA for Weltanshaung became popular in Jewish writing during the period of the HASKALA, the so called 'enlightenment' (1770-1880). Today, I think it's used mostly in religious circles to define ourselves or the 'other'. But it really comes from the word HASHKIFA ('look down', reminiscent of Les Mis) in this week's Torah reading (D'varim 26:15), where it is an appeal to God: Look down from Your heavenly abode.

Normally, our attitude about God's looking at us is akin to that of Nathan Lane ('Don't look at me. I'm hideous', and, later, Seinfeld's Kramer). Generally, we're afraid that close scrutiny will reveal our spiritual shortcomings. Indeed, other Biblical uses of the term are negative, and scary. Sisera's mother NISHKAFA ('looks down') from her latticed window expecting her famous son who never appears (Shoftim 5:28), and Yirmiyahu warns: Disaster looks down (NISHKAFA, perhaps 'looms') from the North (6:1).

The first use of the term is when the Angels who had visited Avraham went on their way to S'dom. From the Judean Hills, where Avraham lived, towards S'dom and the Dead Sea is a steep downward journey. As they set out on their descent the verse says, 'The men set off and looked down (VAYASHKIFU) toward S'dom (B'reishit 18:16), and we know that they planned no pleasantries for S'dom.

This root also has a place in Hebrew architecture. When in Sefer Sh'mot (12:7), our ancestors were told to place the blood of the KORBAN PESACH on their doorways, they are told: And take from the blood and place it on the two posts (MEZUZOT) and the lintel (MASHKOF) of the house in which they are to eat it (KORBAN PESACH).

The commentaries explain the MASHKOF in two ways:

1. The beam over the door which looks over the dwelling, and
2. The beam that gets smacked when the door closes. These are the two ideas generally assumed to be contained in the root HASHKEF:

1. A scenic overview, and
2. A thumping.

So, why do we implore God to look down upon us and bless us. Aren't we afraid God will look us over and

decide to wallop us? Remember, later in this parsha we have the TOCHACHA, 52 verses of truly horrendous punishments. Maybe God should inspect someone else.

Rashi jumps in immediately with the most famous approach to this conundrum: Wherever the HIF'IL form of SHIN-KUF-PEI occurs in the Scriptures, it denotes taking notice for the purpose of bringing evil, except here (D'varim 26:15), for so great is the power of giving to the poor that it changes God's anger into mercy.

In other words, our context softens God's glare. Our verse appears at the end of the ceremony for giving the MA'ASER (tithe) to the needy. We're like the child who finally knows how to ride a bike or throw a curveball, and calls to a proud parent: Mom, Dad - look at this!

Cool! The Netziv adds: In this case, the word is used to show how great is the strength of people who take MA'ASROT that they can turn negative into positive, which would be lost if the verse used the word HIBITU (an ordinary term for 'look').

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch adds: HASHKIFA means to turn Your sight which examines downwards concerning our deeds. Therefore, our Sages say: Come and see the power of performing a Mitzva, that every

HASHKAFA in the Torah refers to curse, but this instance is an expression of blessing! This is different from the normal ideal of the Jewish life; here we sanctify the life of the senses (pleasure). All spirituality is based upon the question: Can a person within his pleasures be able to stand before God, and His Sanctuary... We find that essentially one's pleasure should come from ethical behavior and the sanctification of Divine service. When one sanctifies even his sensual activities one becomes a vehicle (MERKAVA) for the Spirit of God. Only when a Jew reaches this level is he able to draw upon the Truth from the well of pure spirit embodied in the Torah!

All of this is indeed wonderful! So wonderful, in fact, that this idea has been incorporated into the central prayer of Rosh HaShana davening. During our longest silent devotion (AMIDA) of the year, namely Rosh HaShana Musaf, our Sages have built in three parts: MALCHIYOT (God's Kingship), ZICHRONOT (God's perfect memory and record of our behavior), and SHOFAROT (God's remarkable appearances in history, especially the ones still to come).


In that middle section, we begin with trepidation over the reality that: Under Your gaze all hidden things are revealed and the multitude of

mysteries since the beginning of Creation, for there is no forgetfulness before Your Throne of Honor, and nothing is hidden from Your eyes.

But at the end, we're all: Hey, look me over! We say: Let the image of the AKEIDA be present before You, and Blessed are You, HaShem, Who remembers the Covenant!

Standing in shul together and praying for God's bounty, compassion and love, we remember, too. And what do we remember? The Patriarchs were great, and God loved them. As their children and heirs, God loves us, too. A pretty good idea to keep in mind over the High Holidays.

Just one last idea to remember during this difficult period for our beloved Medina. Rav Soloveitchik gave a fascinating take on HASHKIFA. He described Jewish history as a ZIG-ZAG pattern: First Avraham had no son, then God gives him a son, and then asks for the son back. And Moshe is given the Tablets, then breaks the Tablets, then reproduces the Tablets, and finally survives another 40 days of uncertainty and suffering at the top of the Mountain. The term HASHKIFA describes the ZIG-ZAG!

God, since October 7th, we've experienced a lot of ZIG. Isn't it time for some ZAG? God, please, look at us! 

Rav Kook Torah

by Rabbi

Chanan Morrison • www.ravkooktorah.com



The Farmer's Declaration

Tax reporting in the Torah? In a way, yes....

Twice every seven years, in the fourth and seventh years of the Sabbatical cycle, the Jewish farmer must testify (to G-d) that he correctly distributed tithes from his crops. He makes the following declaration, preferably in the Beit HaMikdash itself:

"I have removed all the sacred portions from my house. I have given the appropriate ones to the Levite and to the orphan and widow... I have not violated Your commandments, and have forgotten nothing." (D'varim 26:13)

What exactly is this declaration? The Mishna explains as follows: "I have not violated Your commandments" – I have been punctilious in all the laws of MA'ASEROT, such as tithing each type of produce separately. "And have forgotten nothing" – this does not refer to forgetting the mitzva, but its spiritual context: I did not forget to bless You and mention Your Name when tithing (Ma'aser Sheini 5:11).

What is special about tithing, that only this mitzva requires such a

declaration? Why must we testify that we were punctilious in all its minutiae, and remembered to praise God when distributing ma'aser to the Levite and the poor?

Meticulousness in Mitzvot

There are two aspects to every mitzva. First, each mitzva has its own unique function and purpose. In addition, all mitzvot are Divine commands, enabling us to connect to God. They elevate our emotions and character traits, as they resonate with the innermost soul.

How do we show that we are performing a mitzva as a command from God? By carefully complying with all of its rules. Many mitzvot have a clear and obvious purpose. Were they simply a matter of good citizenship or societal obligations, we would perform them anyway – but without such meticulous observance. Punctilious attention to each detail demonstrates our awareness that we are fulfilling God's Will.

The mitzva of tithing serves obvious purposes. Some of the produce goes to feeding the poor and needy (MA'ASER ANI), while the rest (T'RUMA and MA'ASER RISHON) supports Torah study and Divine service by providing for the Kohanim and Levites, the spiritual leaders of the nation. Especially with regard to mitzvot whose purpose seems obvious, it is important that we

recognize that our intellectual powers cannot fully grasp all of their significance and beauty; nor can we truly appreciate the extent of their national and universal benefit throughout the generations.

For mitzvot with revealed reasons such as tithing, it is important to declare that we discharged them meticulously. We should look at mitzvot just as any other creation of God. The commandments have exact parameters, just as the laws of nature operate according to precise rules and processes.

The Privilege of Giving

Why is it so important that we praise God by reciting a blessing when performing the mitzva of tithing?

An individual who supports others could mistakenly believe that he is the one providing assistance. He may harbor thoughts of his own greatness and importance, leading him to look down on those who receive his help. Such an attitude could undo any spiritual benefit gained from the charitable act. This danger is particularly serious with regard to the kohanim. It is not enough that the nation supports the kohanim's efforts to disseminate Torah. The kohanim and their spiritual activities need to be beloved and respected by the people. How sorry are those who measure success by the amount of

glittering metal they manage to hoard!

In order to prevent this misconception – that those giving are superior to those receiving due to their greater financial means – the benefactors must truly understand that not only are they giving, they are also receiving an immense benefit. By supporting Torah study and the Temple service, they become partners in spiritual endeavors that uplift the entire world.

Therefore, they must not forget to bless God, and express their gratitude for the wonderful privilege to be part of this great enterprise.

*Sapphire from the Land of Israel.
Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II,
pp. 406-407*

Parsha Story

Stories and Parables from
the famed Maggid of Dubno
by Rabbi Chanan Morrison

The End of Exile

KITAVO

The Banished Son

A high-ranking minister had a son named Jack – an insolent, rebellious young man who seemed to take particular delight in aggravating his father at every turn. When Jack's

behavior reached a new low and his defiance showed no signs of relenting, the minister decided it was time to take drastic action. He banished the young man from the house.

It was a harsh move, but Jack had earned it. However, Jack remained his son, and despite the banishment, the father could not simply wash his hands of him. He quietly arranged for money to be sent to Jack, just enough to keep him from starving – no fanfare, no acknowledgment, just a quiet stream of financial support from the shadows.

Weeks passed, and as time wore on, the minister grew increasingly agitated. He missed his son. But could he really write to him? Could he just invite Jack back into his life, when the boy had shown no remorse, no desire to change? How could he undo the punishment when Jack hadn't even so much as hinted at repentance? Still, the minister's heart ached.

A close friend, seeing his struggle, offered a solution. "I understand your dilemma", he said sympathetically. "It's a delicate matter, but you're right. It would be a mistake to invite Jack back without some sign that he has changed. But I think I know a way to get him back – without you lifting a finger."

The minister looked up, intrigued. "And how, pray tell, do you propose

to accomplish that?"

"It's simple", the friend replied. "You're the only reason Jack is surviving right now. He doesn't know it, but everyone else does. The money you've been quietly sending him – well, it's the only thing keeping him afloat. He's living off your generosity, but he doesn't know you're the source. As long as that flow continues, Jack will stay where he is, arrogance intact. But the minute you stop sending him money... well, then he'll have no choice but to return to you and beg for your forgiveness. And then, he'll truly be ready to come home."

Time to Come Home

At the time of the Temple's destruction, God decreed that, due to our failings, we needed to be exiled from our Land. And yet, even in our dispersion among the nations, our Father in Heaven has never abandoned us. He continues to sustain us, providing for us, so that we may endure – even in the face of hardship.

But there are times, in the depths of our exile, when we feel as if God's protection has slipped away, as if His face is hidden from us. This is not a punishment but a call to come home. As the Sages said in B'rachot 3a, "Woe to the Father Who needed to banish His children from His table!"

After all the wrong things we did, it is not God Who needs to appease us. But if God no longer supports and watches over us, if life in exile becomes unbearable – then it is time for us to return home and ask for God's forgiveness.

The Torah itself predicts this: "When you are in distress, and all these things befall you, then you will return to the Eternal your God and obey Him" (D'varim 4:30).

Adapted from Mishlei Yaakov, pp. 396-397



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

KI TAVO

What Do Jews Believe?

Everybody knows Jews have commandments. But do they have dogmas? Do Jews have beliefs which they must profess on pain of exclusion?

Some say no, and there is a "great dogma of dogmalessness".

Great minds - Rambam in particular - have tried to formulate Jewish beliefs, but no formulation has ever achieved dogmatic status, binding every Jew to its contents.

Not that Judaism lacks great principles, characteristic teachings and fundamental axioms, to which Jews throughout history have on the whole subscribed.

But what makes Judaism different is that none of these principles has been frozen into final form. Thus whilst the existence of God is axiomatic in Judaism, some perceive Him in rarefied philosophical terms whilst to others He is the Sweet Father in whose presence one feels pure ecstasy.

Joseph Albo says three principles are axiomatic: M'TZI'AT HASHEM, the existence of God; TORAH MIN HASHAMAYIM, Divine revelation; and S'CHAR VA-ONESH, reward and punishment.

All are hinted at in this week's sidra.

It commands the people when they cross the Jordan to set up large stones and inscribe on them the words of the Torah (D'varim 27:2).

The Talmud says there were three such commands; "There were three sets of stones - one that Moshe set up in the land of Moav, one that Yehoshua set up when they crossed the Jordan, and one later set up at Gilgal" (Sotah 35b).

The first, says the Maharsha, alludes to Revelation, the second to the

Existence of God and the third to Reward and Punishment.

So this must be the preferred rabbinic listing of the principles of Judaism.

A Really Good Gift

Bringing the first fruits to the kohen was an exciting moment. What a feeling of achievement!

The suffering of the slavery was over. The people were free and independent.

They had struggled through the wilderness, and now they had arrived.

They had entered the Promised Land, they had planted and sown, and the land had proved fertile and yielded a good crop.

No wonder the Torah commanded, "You shall rejoice in all the good which HaShem your God has given you!"

There is a discussion about this verse in various rabbinic commentaries. What, they ask, is the nature of "the good" that God has given?

Since our ancestors lived in societies that were ruled by kings, many of their parables had to do with kings and royal deeds and doings.

So they make the comment, "When the king gives you a present, does the actual value of the gift really matter?"

"Isn't the exciting thing the fact that whatever the gift may be, it has come from the king?"

In this case the great thing is not merely the Land, but the fact that it was the gift of God.

Modern implication?

Israel is great, with all its problems and perplexities... but never let us forget Who gave it to us and to Whom we are responsible for cherishing and looking after it. -OZ

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Sedra Highlight

- Dr Jacob Solomon, F.R.G.S.

KI TAVO

After the horrific details of the curses and suffering facing Israel for non-compliance with the teachings of the Torah, Moshe adds a new dimension to his final address to the Israelites before he died:

G-d did not give you a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear until today. I led you in the wilderness for 40 years... you did not eat bread nor did you take in strong drink, so that you may know that I am your G-d...

You shall observe the words of this covenant, in order that you will succeed in all that you do (29:1-8).

Rashi explains that it took 40 years for the Israelites to get themselves fully on Moshe's wavelength with the "heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear" that they needed to understand him properly. Henceforth they would be fully expected to follow the teachings of the Torah so that, in the Land that they were about to enter, they would succeed in whatever they do.

This point, Rashi explains, indicates more generally that it can take 40 years(!) for a person to fully understand his teacher. Until then, the teacher has to be patient: the disciple may misapply his teachings, and may not always grasp the subtleties and nuances of what he is trying to communicate. But if the student doesn't 'get it' by the 40-year mark, the teacher can be assured that he is not going to 'get it' afterwards.

The Meshech Chochma adds another dimension that teaches a fundamental message in leadership. That is that in a sense, no person however great is entirely irreplaceable. He explains that until Moshe's final speech to be followed by his death, the people tended to see Moshe as unique. Not exactly as an angel of G-d, but more than being "of flesh and blood", more than being just

human. As he was getting towards the end of his final addresses, people were beginning to grasp the idea that Moshe was human as well, that he was mortal, and like everyone else lived only for so long: that is what their "heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear" perceived "today", that day. And it was this that paradoxically gave people confidence in the future. For if they thrived under Moshe who was flesh and blood like them, they would thrive under Yehoshua who was also flesh and blood like them. There would be a future. The world of Torah and G-d's supervision would not finish with Moshe. Yehoshua, who like Moshe was flesh and blood, would continue his work. And as they were with Moshe, so they would be with Yehoshua. And as G-d guided Moshe, so He would guide his successors.

However, the Meshech Chochma emphasizes with reference to the p'sukim, there would be one great change. For the past 40 years, they lived super-naturally, with G-d openly and demonstratively taking care for them, suspending nature in the process. Their clothes had not worn out, they had not needed bread as Manna sustained them all, and they had already defeated armies and settled the lands of nations much more powerful than themselves. But the openly supernatural would cease on their entry to the Promised Land.

There, G-d would not suspend the laws of nature, but the people would live within nature's boundaries, under spiritual leaders who had contact with G-d but who were still human. That was the way forward, Moshe told them. And the people's part to make that work, so that nature would favor them, was: "You shall observe the words of this covenant, in order that you will succeed in all that you do." As long as people live according to Torah teachings and Torah ideals, G-d will see to nature that all their needs continue to be satisfied and fully gratified.

This can give a powerful message to take away. When a highly worthy and productive organization or cause loses its founder, a magnificent personality, there can often be a feeling of despondency and despair. He or she is irreplaceable. As a result, the enterprise may continue to run on the steam of the previous era, but less and less effectively. It is that leading light's duty when still alive to take care about finding the best successor possible and train him for the position, and at the same time prepare the people that it is on them to fulfil their roles so that the outstanding work will continue.

These Divrei Torah are written in loving memory of my dearest Mother, Harabanit Devora Solomon ztl, who ascended to the Yeshiva Shel Ma'ala

on Shabbat Ki-Tavo, 27 years ago. May her memory be blessed, and be a source of blessings. 📖



ParshaPlates is a concept and website - parshaplates.com - which makes a Parsha Connection between the weekly sedra and a recipe for your Shabbat Table that will hopefully trigger conversation about Parshat HaShavua, in addition to providing a tasty treat in honor of Shabbat.

Don't be a 'Sloppy Joe'

This week's parsha is often referred to as the parsha of tochacha (rebuke) because Moshe details a long harsh list of punishments that could befall upon the Jewish people if they do not follow Hashem's commandments. The food of the week is Sloppy Joes as a play on words - we do not want to be a sloppy joe, meaning we do not want to be a sloppy person. Rather we should follow in the way of Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom & B'tayavon!

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp oil
- 1 pound of ground meat
- 2 peppers, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 16-ounce jar of tomato sauce

Instructions

- 1] In a pot on medium heat, add oil and chopped peppers and onions.
- 2] After peppers and onions are softened, add ground meat to the pot.
- 3] Once the ground meat is cooked, add in the tomato sauce to the pot and mix the sauce all together with the ground meat and vegetables.



The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

KI TAVO 5784

Our Parsha, with its horrific tochacha curses, certainly is one alarmingly stark but necessary means to prepare for the Days of Awe. Frankly put, there are consequences for our religious and moral delinquencies. And to this, attention must be paid as we approach the Yom HaDin - the Day of Judgment. Accordingly, the Talmud (Megila 31b) records that Ezra enacted the tochacha to be read prior to Rosh HaShana, with Tosafot (ad loc, s.v. K'LALOT) adding that we introduce a buffer Shabbat between Ki Tavo and Rosh HaShana (Nitzavim or Nitzavim/Vayeilech) so as not to allow the harsh and frightening maledictions of our Parsha to abut with the festivity of the New Year with its mitzva of simcha.

But our Parsha also provides, as Chazal would say, a REFU'AH KODEM LAMAKA, a measure of succor and support to rescue us from the looming and threatening "strike". Thus, Ki Tavo begins with a discussion of the mitzva of Bikurim, the farmer's bringing and offering of the first fruits to the Beit HaMikdash. Let us attempt to find in this remarkable ceremony - for it was that and much more - a message which can act as a firewall against the

tochacha, and also meaningfully connect us to the Yamim Nora'im.

At first blush, it would appear that Bikurim has little to do with the coming holidays. The mitzva is generally associated with the festival of Shavuot, which is also denominated as Chag HaBikurim. But, upon closer inspection, we soon discover some unusual attributes of this commandment. The Midrash comments (Yalkut, B'reishit 2) that the world was created in the merit of Bikurim. Quite a statement given the fact that it shares company with Torah and Yisrael who are accorded a similar lofty status. And when we consider that Rosh HaShana celebrates the creation of the world, it is reasonable to conclude that there exists some intrinsic relationship between this holiday and Bikurim.

To mine one these connections, let us examine the profound message found in the following Midrash. First, the context: After the farmer recites the Bikurim passage, he declares,

And now, behold, I have brought the first fruit of the ground..." (26:10)

On the opening three words of the declaration, the Sifrei (D'varim 26:10, #301) states:

V'ATA - and now - right away,

HINEI - B'SIMCHA (with joy),

HEIVEITI - I have brought of my own.

Clearly, the central theme of the Yamim Nora'im season is the mandate to do T'SHUVA. But there are many resistances that attempt to convince us that repentance is all but futile and even impossible. Chief among them is our past. Either our age, as we grow older, persuades us that we're simply too much the senior to change and, at any rate, we're not so terribly bad after all, so why bother. Or, we imagine that our past misdeeds and blunders are so horrendous, making any possibility of absolution hopeless. In a word, we're a lost cause, so why even try. To this excuse of the past, Chazal declare, "And now," and they add elsewhere: EIN V'ATA ELA T'SHUVA - 'And now' connotes repentance" (B'reishit Rabba, 21:6). It were as if our Sages were admonishing: "Forget, for the moment, your past and embrace your now." As the often worn - but true - cliché has it: "Let today be the first day of the rest of your life." Let your now be today, and make your today, everyday! Regardless of past mistakes or failures, never mind age or mental acuity, today, right now, immediately, you can make a new start! (V'ATA - MIYAD)

A wise woman (Eleanor Roosevelt) once quipped: "The past is history, tomorrow's a mystery, today is a gift which is why it is called 'the present'"

Ah, but you say, "What can I now bring to the table; begin with what?"

To this, the Midrash asserts, "Bring whatever you have now, as long as it's yours." When even the poor farmer brought his paltry selection of first fruit in a simple wooden basket, he was accorded the same honor and celebratory greeting by the Temple prelates as the rich farmer. As the Talmud (B'rachot 17a) categorically declares - One who brings a substantial [sacrifice] and one who brings a meager one [have equal merit], as long as he directs his heart towards Heaven." And everyone has something, else your existence, in the Eyes of your Maker, would have no purpose. All HaShem wants of you, as you begin your now, is to come with whatever you've earned by dint of your own efforts. Never yield to the YEITZER HARA temptation to compare your own special something with others, those who may appear to have a something far more abundant and consequential. It's only yours that matters! (HEIVEITI - MISHELI).

Thus, if, in going forward, you can believe in and embrace your now, and do so without diminishing or devaluing one iota from whatever you've accomplished, utilizing whatever talents HaShem has blessed you with, then how can you not proceed with simcha, a genuine revitalization of your mission and purpose in life. (HINEI - B'SIMCHA)

And so, we read the chapter of Bikurim before the birth of the New

Year, reminding each of us that we can surmount and even leapfrog over the curses of the tochacha when we successfully engage in the T'SHUVA of now with whatever we have and do so with the confident optimism that HaShem will reward our faith and determination with His promise of a healthy and joyous shana tova!

No wonder the universe was created with Bikurim in mind; for without this powerful message of Bikurim, how could the world and man ever move beyond its imperfections into the bright dawn of a new beginning... again and again! 🙌

Afterthoughts -

Yocheved Bienenfeld

PO'EL G'VUROT # 5

It is probably because, recently, I had been going through some 'difficult' times, that I began to understand the bracha preceding the SH'MA almost as a formula to help at times like those.

Whenever Gd is PO'EL G'VUROT, it implies a weighty act, simply because it is termed a GEVURA. If it means He is conquering His anger or His MIDAT HADIN and thus allowing us to do T'SHUVA rather than punishing us, He has, in essence, OSEH CHADASHOT, created something new. He has allowed us to start over again.

Similarly, if He is PO'EL G'VUROT in a more active way where He performs an act involved in war, Gd forbid, or if what He does is an act which affects us as individuals, where we are suddenly faced with unexpected or/and difficult circumstances, this also leads to OSEH CHADASHOT. For when this happens, it creates a new reality for us, one that may not be so simple to deal with. And so, we are faced with confusing and challenging times. What do we do? How do we proceed? We are faced with dilemmas that we didn't previously anticipate.

Decisions we will make are sometimes complicated because they are not straightforward, not one-dimensional. Occasionally, there is an internal battle, perhaps, an approach-avoidance situation. In such cases, we need to remind ourselves that HaShem is the ultimate BA'AL MILCHAMOT, with the clear ability to help us deal with those battles.

In so doing, whether or not we realize it, He is ZOREI'A TZ'DAKOT, planting seeds of "charity", of giving us something, of helping.

Ultimately, we emerge from the predicament and see how through the difficult time, He was actually MATZMI'ACH Y'SHU'OT - paving the way for the help and the 'saving' that we needed in one form or another.

Then we look back on the episode and see how we grew, changed, benefited and, perhaps, have been, in a sense, "reborn"; healed from whatever previous behavior that Gd wanted changed, BOREI R'FU'OT - He effected the healing we needed by bringing these challenges upon us.

And when we finally realize this, we see how He is NORA T'HILOT - there is no way to praise Him sufficiently.

For we have just experienced that He is, indeed, ADON HANIFLA'OT - Master of hidden and, sometimes, mysterious events. 🌸

KI TAVO

GM Yaakov and family went down into Egypt. Two hundred ten years later, a large multitude came out of Egypt, the house of bondage. We experienced Revelation at Sinai, received the Torah and embarked on the (sadly extended) journey to Eretz Yisrael... And then - the Beit HaMikdash.

The mitzva of BIKURIM represents the completion of Israel's journey to Complete Nationhood.

D'varim 26:1 in Parshat Ki Tavo is not just the icing on the cake, it is the ultimate goal -

וְשִׂמוֹתַי בְּכָל־הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לִי

יְהִי אֵלַיךְ וּלְבֵיתְךָ אֶתָּה וְהָלוּי
וְהַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ:

Then, you shall rejoice with all the good that HaShem, your God, has granted you and your household you, the Levite, and the stranger who is among you.

SIMCHA is the key; SIMCHA is the goal. Not just any simcha, but one that contains HAKARAT HATOV to HKBH and one that emanates from a life of Torah and Mitzvot and Chesed.

The gimatriya of this pasuk is 3941.

There is only one other pasuk in all of Tanach that has the same gimatriya - Bamidbar 31:3 in Parshat Matot -

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה לְצִבָּאָה
מֵאַתְּכֶם אַנָּשִׁים לְצָבָא וַיְהִיוּ עַל־מִדְיָן
לְתֵת נִקְמַת־יְהוָה בְּמִדְיָן:

So Moshe spoke to the people, saying, "Arm from among you men for the army, that they can be against Midyan, and carry out the revenge of the Lord against Midyan.

Yes, HaShem took us out of Egypt and gave us the Torah and took us to Him as His Chosen People... but, in order to earn the whole picture, we had to work hard and sweat. This included fighting a number of wars - such as the battle against Midyan.

Our victories over Midyan and other enemies were significant pre-requi-

site that ultimately led to the privilege of fulfilling the mitzva of Bikurim and realizing the SIMCHA in all that HaShem does for us... and sharing that joy with others.

May we again and soon rejoice in the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash and be able to bring BIKURIM there, to express our great joy in it all.

RED ALERT!

KITAVO

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)*

DIVREI TORAH

- The opening of this Parsha is the discussion of the giving of Bikurim, the First Fruits, which a Jewish farmer brings to Yerushalayim and gives to a Kohen at the Beit HaMikdash. This Mitzva is first mentioned in Parshat Mishpatim (23:19) - "The choicest first fruit of your land shall you bring to the House of Hashem, your God..." The Midrash mentions this Mitzva as one of the reasons for which Hashem created Heaven and Earth. The Bikurim show that the Jew is ready to celebrate his service to Hashem. The trip to Yerushalayim was celebrated in every town and city along the way with music and parades. [Note: In 1948, when Israel was created anew,

Bikurim was celebrated joyously in every city, town, and Kibbutz, even in non-religious areas, as an expression of gratitude to Hashem for the Land of Israel.]

- There is a new Mitzva being presented here: the proclamation of ARAMI OVED AVI... An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather... a short declaration stating that we never would have received the Promised Land without Hashem's loving intervention on our behalf. In the Mishna (Sota 7:2...), our Sages itemize which statements can be said in any language (prayer, Bensching, etc.) and which items that must be recited in Hebrew: this Bikurim proclamation, the declaration during the Chalitza ceremony, Birkat Kohanim, the B'racha of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, and several other items. This elevates these proclamations to a higher level of sanctity. Just as the Torah was given in Hebrew, so shall these statements be in Hebrew. Hashem created the world by uttering the statements in Hebrew. So too, do these statements echo an aspect of Creation. When a Jew makes his Bikurim declaration in Hebrew, he is recreating himself as a Jew.

- Certain pertinent facts were omitted about this Mitzva. Which fruits are eligible to be Bikurim. Our Sages stipulate that the Mitzva must

be from only the Seven Species of Eretz Yisrael as indicated in Parshat Eikev (8:8). He could bring other fruits but they would not be considered Bikurim. When are they brought? Our Sages say from after Shavuot. If he could not do it then, he could do it and say the proclamation any time until Sukkot. After that, he could bring Bikurim and not say the proclamation until Chanuka. (This is one of very few places that Chanuka is mentioned in the Mishna - Rabi Yehuda HaNasi was not happy with Chanuka because the Chashmona'im were Kohanim and were not permitted to rule the country politically or militarily.) Nor is the detail mentioned regarding the amount of fruit to be given. The Halacha is that he can bring as much as he desires.

- Establishing that the proclamation had to be stated in Hebrew required some forethought. What would be the situation if a Jewish farmer came to present his Bikurim and did not know how to read Hebrew. Therefore an official was appointed who would dictate the declaration in Hebrew and the farmer would repeat each word after this official. And this was done even for someone who was proficient in Hebrew so as not to embarrass the ones who did not know Hebrew. (Mishna Bikurim 3:7). Noting this fact leads us to believe that in Temple times, many farmers were illiterate.

(This is surprising to me, but not shocking.)

- In chapter 27, the Torah lists 12 Curses for the public ceremony in the area of Mts. Gerizim and Eival. The Talmud (Sota 32a) notes that each Curse was accompanied by a similar Blessing on the same topic. For example, the Leviyim faced Mt. Eival and recited, Cursed be the one who moves his neighbor's boundary. The nation answered AMEIN. Then the Leviyim would face Mt. Gerizim and recited Blessed is the one who did not move his neighbor's boundary. The Torah does not mention this parallel statement maybe out of brevity. I can't think of any significance to why only the Curses are mentioned in the Torah. The Tochacha lists 98 Curses, far more than the number of Blessings, probably because Curses are more effective when addressing a large body of people.

- The Tochacha includes the mention of an illness called SHACHEFET, which in modern Hebrew means tuberculosis, but the Biblical term does not mean that. Commentators weigh in with their own interpretations. Hirsch defines it as an illness that indicates weakness and fatigue. Rashi and the Rambam define it as a disease that causes the skin to swell and become dry. The Sifra states that one with this disease wastes away. He becomes thin and has a fever, and

depression. The bottom line is that we don't know what the word really means, but we can conclude that it is not a good thing.

- In the Tochacha (28:30) - "You will be engaged to a woman and another man will 'lie' with her." The Torah word is more than to lie with her, but a stronger more vulgar term. Throughout TaNaCH, there are cases when the Sages alter a Torah word and various reasons are offered in each case. Here, the Torah word is too coarse for a public reading. The Torah chooses its words very well and wishes to convey a stronger message by using a vulgar term for a meaningful message, but wants us to publicly not use that term. Words help define who we are and we are instructed to be careful when choosing what to say. Often, Scripture finds itself in a difficult situation. How to express itself in strong language and not really say so.

- In the Curses, the Torah states "as a blind man gropes in the darkness." [the implied question is "in the darkness." For a blind person is always in the darkness!]. In daytime, when a blind man walks about, he knows that other people will see him and possibly offer him help. In the darkness of night, the blind person will also feel isolated, with no one offering to help. The isolation will be felt. (Based on Megillah 24b)

Questions by RED

From the text

1. To whom was the Bikurim given? (26:3)
2. What response did Bnei Yisrael give to the Curses given at Mt. Eival? (Chapter 27)
3. What city is at Mts. Gerizim and Eival?
4. What is the reason given in the Tochacha for deserving the various punishments? (28:47)
5. How many Curses are there in the Tochacha?

From Rashi

6. From which fruits were the Bikurim brought? (26:2)
7. How many Jews came down to Egypt from Canaan in Yosef's time? (26:5)
8. Bikurim were brought from after Shavuot on. After Shavuot, for how long could a Jewish farmer bring Bikurim and make the proclamation? (26:11)
9. Where did the Kohanim stand when the people were atop Mts. Gerizim and Eival? (27:12)
10. How will you be blessed when you enter and when you depart this world? (23:6)

From the Rabbis

11. In what way will the Jews show their Simcha when bringing their Bikurim? (HaKtav V'HaKabala)

12. After writing the entire Torah on stone, they would coat the words with a covering of plaster. What was that for? (Sota 35b)

13. What in particular will grant the Jewish people with the Blessings? (S'forno)

Midrash

14. According to the Midrash, at what time of the year will the Bikurim proclamation become a central featured phrase?

Haftara - Yishayahu

15. In the time of Mashiach, what will the nations of the world come to realize?

Relationships

- a) Shem - Ashur
- b) Mitzrayim - Canaan
- c) Efrayim - Orde
- d) Elisheva - Nachshon
- e) Amram - Chevron

ANSWERS

1. To a Kohen
2. Amein
3. Shechem
4. Since we did not serve Hashem with joy.
5. 98 Curses.
6. From the seven prized "fruits" of Eretz Yisrael. Barley, Wheat, Grapes, Figs, Pomegranate, Olives, and Dates.
7. 70 "souls"
8. Anytime from after Shavuot to Sukkot.
9. In the middle, in the valley between the two Mountains.
10. Without sin.
11. With song.
12. To protect the writing.
13. The study of Torah.
14. At the Pesach Seder.
15. That Hashem is in Yerushalayim and that the Jews are His messengers.

Relationships

- a) Father & Son
- b) Brothers
- c) First Cousins
- d) Siblings
- e) Brothers