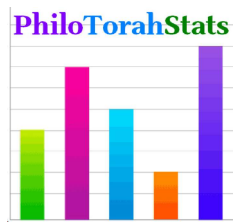


KI TAVO



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 - 91, A125
Sh'mot 23:19] 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 and the money be spent on food & drink in Yerushalayim) 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 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'I - 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 (Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Yissachar, Yosef, Binyamin) will stand on Mt. G'rizim and six (Reuven, Gad, Asher, Zevulun, Dan, Naftali) 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 (figuratively) a "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, it is 51.6% of Ki Tavo. (R'vi'i of Matot-Mas'ei is 72 p'sukim but is made up of a number of aliyot)

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'CHAGECHA**, 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.