

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON CHUKAS - 5758

B'S'D'

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If you can volunteer to help Michael Fiskus distribute the Parsha Sheet in Shul beginning in Sept. (using my Thurs. evening e-mail of this), please contact him or me. Also, please send your e-mail address, if you have one, to me at cshulman@cahill.com & crshulman@aol.com, so that you can be sure not to miss any issues. C. Shulman

weekly@virtual.co.il * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Chukas <http://www.ohr.org.il/tw/5758/bamidbar/Chukas.htm>

Flying First Class "This is the `chok' (statute) of the Torah" (19:2) If you think about it, strapping small black leather boxes to your arm and your forehead must look pretty weird. I remember flying on a British Airways morning flight. When it was time for me to pray, the cabin crew were extremely helpful. I was ushered right up to the front of the first class, just behind the cockpit door, and given as much room as I needed. Some of the first class passengers gave me some strange looks though. I guess they weren't expecting live, in-flight entertainment. There's an interesting contradiction between this week's Parsha and Parshas Va'eschanan in the Book of Devarim. In Va'eschanan it says that the nations of the world will see us observing God's decrees such as wearing tefillin and will say "Surely a wise and discerning people is this great nation!" (4:6) However in this week's Parsha, Rashi notes that the nations of the world laugh at the Jewish People for observing the mitzvos which seem to have no logic. So which is it? Do the nations look at the chukim, the supra-logical mitzvos, and scoff? Or do they look at them and think that we are a wise and discerning people? Flying never fails to amaze me. A huge metal contraption hurtles down a narrow concrete path at over a hundred miles an hour, and then suddenly you're in the air, looking down on match-stick people and houses. I have no doubt in the incredible skill it takes to design and build a plane. If I had any doubts, I wouldn't be on the plane in the first place. However, I have no idea how or why a plane works. That it works is beyond argument. How it works is beyond comprehension -- at least beyond my comprehension. The same is true of the chukim. When the Jewish People do the mitzvos properly, the nations of the world look at tefillin, or any of the supra-logical mitzvos, like an airplane. They don't know how they work -- but they ascribe their lack of comprehension to themselves.

If however, we don't do the mitzvos properly -- then the world looks at the mitzvos as weird. They won't blame it on their lack of knowledge; they will scoff at the mitzvos themselves. It all depends on whether we make the mitzvos "fly" or we treat them like a dead weight hurtling down to the end of the runway.

So Far -- So Good "For Cheshbon -- it was the city of Sichon, king of the Emori; and he had warred against the first king of Moav and took all his land from his control until Arnon. Regarding this, the poets would say `Come to Cheshbon -- let it be built and established as the city of Sichon.'" (21:26-7) A man once jumped off the Empire State Building. As he reached the thirteenth floor, someone stuck their head out the window and shouted "Are you okay?" "So far, so good!" he replied. The Talmud takes the above verse and extrapolates the subtext: Regarding this, the poets (moshlim) would say "Come to Cheshbon." This means that the moshlim -- those who rule over their negative drives -- say "Come and make a cheshbon -- a calculation: Let's evaluate the eternity that we gain when we do a mitzvah and what we lose when we neglect it, and weigh that against the damage we do when we succumb to sin as opposed to the minor loss of not fulfilling our every appetite in this world. Superficially, it's difficult to

see how the Sages saw in this verse a hint to the eternal battle between man and his own negativity. Moav knew that G-d had commanded the Jewish People not to attack them and therefore they felt complacent about their future. "So far, so good!" However, they didn't foresee that Sichon would conquer them and that they would thus lose their immunity. For Hashem had placed no similar restriction against the Jewish People fighting Sichon. Thus Moav lost both its defense and its complacency. When tragedy strikes, the natural reaction is to examine our lives and ask ourselves why these things are happening. Not so when everything seems to be going to plan. Then it's much more difficult to see where we're heading. Then it's very easy to think "So far, so good."

In The Dog House "And Hashem sent the fiery serpents amongst the people" (21:6) A dog is not a very bright animal. When you throw a stick at it, it grabs the stick in its jaws and proceeds to growl and bite it. Who threw the stick doesn't cross its little mind for an instant; it's too busy punishing the stick for attacking it. The Talmud describes our generation, the generation of the "footsteps" of the Mashiach, as follows: "The face of the generation is like the face of a dog." When we find ourselves threatened and attacked by a hostile world, rather than growl and bite at the stick, maybe we should consider Who it is that threw the stick at us in the first place, and why He is throwing it at us.

Sources: * Flying First Class - Divrei David, heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer * So Far -- So Good - Malbim, heard from Rabbi Elimelech Meisels * In the Dog House - based on Chafetz Chaim Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180, Israel <http://www.ohr.org.il> (C) 1998 Ohr Somayach International

Ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Chukas This week's "RavFrاند" is dedicated in memory of Rabbi Joe Feinstein, HaRav Yosef Hillel ben HaRav YomTov a"h by the Feinstein family.

Seeking the Meaning of the Red Heifer in the Garden of Eden In this week's parsha we learn of the mitzvah of the Red Heifer. When a person comes into contact with a dead body he becomes 'tameh', spiritually impure, and the only way for him to regain his state of purity is to be sprinkled with the water which was mixed with the ashes of the Parah Adumah, the Red Heifer, which make him 'tahor' once again. Parah Adumah is the classic example of a Torah law which seems to have -- at least for us -- no rationale. Not only that, but it is paradoxical in nature: although it can purify the impure, the people who are involved in the process of preparing and administering the ashes of the Red Heifer become impure. Therefore, it remains the quintessential 'chok' -- a law without an apparent reason. The passage discussing the Red Heifer begins "This is the Chok of the Torah..." [Bamidbar 19:2]. The Or HaChayim HaKadosh asks, should it not read "This is the Chok of Tumah"? He says, on the contrary, that this is indeed the Chok of the Torah, that this Commandment embodies the very essence of Torah. Why? Because Torah -- no matter how much we delve into its laws and no matter how much we try to understand it -- ultimately presents a religion which one must practice even though he does not understand the why and the wherefore. The basis of accepting Torah is "We will do and we will listen" [Shmos 24:7]. One has to be prepared to accept even without fully understanding. That is why the verse emphasizes "This is the Chok of the Torah". This law personifies Torah. This law teaches what Torah is all about: we must do it even if we don't understand. Our next question is: why is this particular law used to teach us this principle? Forbidden mixtures (sha'tnez) are a chok; Milk and Meat is a chok; there are dozens of 'chukim.' Yet this is THE law that represents the fulfillment of Torah even when we do not understand. Why Parah Adumah?

I saw an interesting interpretation in the Shemen HaTov. Chazal tell us that this world received a terrible punishment called 'Death' as a result of the incident with the Tree of Knowledge. Up until Adam and Chava ate from

that tree, there was not supposed to be anything in this world called 'Death'. Once they violated the prohibition to consume the fruit of that tree, Death descended into the world. What was the key behind the sin of the Tree of Knowledge? It was so that "You may be like Elohim -- knowing Good and Evil" [Bereishis 3:5]. The motivating factor behind that original sin was because people wanted to know 'Why'. Man does not want to be a robot. He has curiosity. He has a desire (ta'avah) to know 'Why'. That passion led to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. As a result of that we received an appropriate punishment -- death. How does one deal with death? When one has confronted death, he needs to subsequently confront the Parah Adumah, the Red Heifer. The Parah Adumah represents our inability to know why. That is why this is the appropriate punishment for the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. Man's burning desire to know why led him to death, and death makes man deal with the Parah Adumah, which teaches him that he cannot always know why. That is what life is about -- sometimes not knowing why. That is why specifically this mitzvah represents the essence of what Torah is about: doing, even without necessarily knowing why we are doing.

Sources and Personalities Or HaChayim HaKadosh -- Rav Chaim ben Attar (1696-1743); Livorno, Italy and subsequently Jerusalem; Kabbalist and Talmudic Shemen HaTov -- Rav Dov Weinberger; contemporary author, Rav, Brooklyn, NY. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@clark.net Now Available: Mesorah / Artsroll has recently published a collection of Rabbi Frand's essays. The book is entitled: Rabbi Yissocher Frand: In Print RavFrand, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215

shabbat-zomet@virtual.co.il Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Parshat Chukat EXPLAIN A MIDRASH: A Leader and His Generation by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv The events at "Mei Meriva" were tragic, especially so because of the consequence for Moshe and Aharon, that "you will not bring this community to the land" [Bamidbar 20:12]. The Midrash comments as follows: "The Almighty said to Moshe: In what capacity would you want to enter the land? This can be compared to a shepherd who went to guard the king's sheep, which were stolen. When the shepherd asked to be allowed into the castle, the king said: What will the people say if I let you in now? ... Similarly, the Almighty said to Moshe: Your accomplishment was that you redeemed 600,000 people from Egypt. But you buried them in the desert, how can you now take a different group into the land?" [Bamidbar Rabba 19:6]. According to this approach, Moshe's sin was not the main reason for G-d's decree, but it served as an excuse. It may be that Moshe's angry response to the complaints, "Listen, you rebels" [Bamidbar 20:10], demonstrates the wide gap between Moshe and the new generation (see Shemona Perakim of the Rambam, chapter 4, as opposed to the Ramban, Bamidbar 20:1). Moshe, who was the leader of those who were redeemed from Egypt, accompanied them during their life in the desert, and was destined to join them in death. He will lead them once again when they return to life. As is written in the continuation of the above Midrash: "People will now think that the people of the desert generation have no part in the world to come; you stay at their sides, and return with them." The true leader cannot be separated from his generation, as he and the generation are one and the same. As is written, "'And Yisrael sent ...' [Bamidbar 21:21] - All the words of the Torah are necessary, for what is unclear in one place is clarified in another. In this verse, it is written that Yisrael sent the messengers, while in another verse the task is attributed to Moshe, as is written, 'And I sent messengers' [Devarim 2:26]. These two verses are both required for a complete understanding; Moshe is Yisrael, and Yisrael is Moshe. This teaches us that the head of the generation is the equivalent of the entire generation." [Bamidbar Rabba 19:17].

yhe-sichot@virtual.co.il Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries of Sichot Delivered by the Roshei Yeshiva Parashat Chukat Sichah of Harav Aharon Lichtenstein Shlit"A

"He Has Defiled My Temple" Summarized by Ari Mermelstein

The opening section of this week's parasha relates to the prohibition of entering the Temple in a ritually impure state. The Torah twice condemns a person guilty of this act as having "defiled the sanctuary of the Lord" (Bamidbar 19:13, 19:20). What is the significance of this description?

In general, we can speak of two categories of sin. The Torah often prohibits an act because of the severity of the act itself; eating leavened bread on Passover is forbidden because the Torah considers the act itself a repugnant one. There are other times when the Torah outlaws an act not because the act itself is a terrible one, but because its ramifications are so severe. It is to this latter category of sins which entering the Temple in an unclean state belongs. Although the Torah certainly considered the entrance itself as taboo, probably serious enough to deserve lashings, the severity of the act, as expressed by the punishment of excision (karet), is tied with the resulting defilement of the Temple. While in a strictly formal, halakhic sense, the air of the Temple can not acquire ritual impurity, nonetheless the entrance of an unclean person into the Temple "defiles the tabernacle." Thus, the Torah does not focus on the severity of the act itself, but rather on the metaphysical blemish it leaves on the Temple. This view has several ramifications. The Rambam (Hilkhos Beit Ha-bechira 3:16) states that someone who himself does not enter the Temple in an impure state, but rather places another impure item into it, receives karet as if he himself had entered the Temple while impure. Thus, it is clear that the sin is primarily connected to the consequences, and therefore applies even when one is responsible for those consequences without having entered the Temple at all. The concept of defilement of the Temple appears elsewhere, outside of the world of ritual impurity. In describing the prohibition for a priest with a blemish to work in the Temple, the Torah (Vayikra 21:23) justifies his exclusion by explaining "that he profane not my holy places." Again, we see the focus of the sin is not on the act itself, but rather on the ramifications. This concept arises elsewhere as well. The Torah bans the Molekh ritual "because he has given of his seed to Molekh, to defile My sanctuary" (Vayikra 20:3). What is the connection between the Molekh ritual and defilement of the Temple? It is safe to assume that the ritual was not performed in the Temple itself. Rashi (Vayikra 20:3) was troubled by this question and explained that the reference to the Temple in that context was really to "the Congregation of Israel, which is holy." Thus, the Molekh ritual, performed in public, has a deleterious effect on society at large. The Congregation of Israel, like its Temple of worship, is a sacred entity whose holiness is defiled by the sins of the people who comprise it. The Kuzari glorified man as a "mikdash me'at" - the embodiment of the Temple itself; like the Temple, man is not immune to the effects of wrongdoing. A person must know that his actions, for good and bad, leave their mark. Some Rishonim give expression to this concept when they remark that the consumption of foods forbidden by the Torah dulls the intelligence. We need not necessarily understand that our actions have physiological consequences, but rather that on some metaphysical level, our deeds can either bolster the world we try and build for ourselves, or, God forbid, destroy it. There are two different approaches which we can take to sin. One approach is to isolate each sin as an independent entity, an unintentional slip, whose impact is not felt. Such an approach allows us to leave our misdeeds behind us, looking forward to the potential which each new day represents. However, this approach is antithetical to developing ourselves as benei Torah. We must regard our entire existence, all of our service of God, as an organic unit, which in the wake of a wrong turn becomes tarnished. We don't have the luxury of isolating our acts and ignoring their importance in the larger picture. This notion of our acts having broad ramifications is logical; the mishna (Avot 4:2) expresses this in noting that "one mitzva leads to another mitzva, and one sin leads to another sin." However, even if a person insures that his misdeeds do not have practical consequences,

on some metaphysical level, his world does not escape untarnished. This is the message of "he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord," which we must internalize and act upon. (Originally delivered at Seuda Shelishit, Shabbat Parashat chukat 5757.)

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hk-nebenzahl@virtual.co.il WEEKLY SICHA OF HARAV NEBENZAHLE There was no sicha given in the Yeshiva this week. This is a translation of the sicha of Parshat Chukat 5756. The following is a translation of the sicha delivered by HaGaon HaRav Avigdor Nebenzahl every Monday night in the Beit Midrash of Yeshivat Hakotel. We try our best to accurately present to you the Rav's words. The transition from spoken to written word and subsequent translation do not always allow for a literal word for word translation. We would like to thank HaRav Nebenzahl for allowing us to send you this sicha without his first reviewing the translation. Although it does expedite matters in getting this sicha out to you, it does mean that if there is anything in the sicha that may not be understood, the fault is with us and not with HaRav Nebenzahl. We would like to express our gratitude to the Adam Smith Company which has so generously donated and maintains the computer center at the Yeshiva in memory of HaRav Aryeh Bina zt"l, founder of Yeshivat Hakotel. This enables us to communicate this sicha to you each week - "lehagdil Torah ulehaadira".

Please say a tefilla for refuah shlema for Baruch Yoseph ben Adina Batya he is the seven year old son of one of our alumni who is in great need of "rachamei Shamayim".

PARSHAT CHUKAT

"Vayomer Hashem el Moshe ve-el Aharon beHor Hahar al gevu Eretz Edom lemor: ye-asef Aharon el amav ki lo yavo el haAretz asher natati liBnei Yisrael, etc." "Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon on Mount Hor on the border of the land of Edom, saying: 'Aharon shall be brought in to his people, for he shall not enter the Land that I have given to the Children of Israel, etc.'" (Bamidbar 20:23). The reason provided by the pasuk for Aharon's death is: "al asher meritem et pi lemei meriva" "because you defied My word at the waters of strife" (ibid.). Rashi explains that the reason the Torah emphasizes that Moshe and Aharon were informed of Aharon's upcoming death while on the border of Edom is: "shemipnei shenitchabru kan lehitkarev leEsav HaRasha nifretzu maaseihem vechasru hatzadik hazeh" "This tells us that because they had some connection here with the wicked Esav, by coming close to his descendants, Edom, their undertakings were broken and they lost this righteous one".

At "Mei Meriva" it was decreed that both Moshe and Aharon not enter the land of Israel. Rashi explains that the reason Aharon died a half a year prior to the people's entry into the Promised Land was that the people were no longer worthy of having Aharon in their midst - Aharon's passing was indeed a tremendous loss to the nation. The Jewish people had no choice but to camp out adjacent to the border of Edom, for their traveling and encampments were directed by the cloud that hovered overhead. Nonetheless they should have had enough strength to withstand Edom's negative influence. The Torah does not detail for us exactly how the nation was influenced by Edom, presumably the consequences of this influence were not as great as those resulting from the influence Moab had on the nation in the Shittim. It caused sufficient damage, however, that they were now unworthy of having Aharon with them. Perhaps Aharon, and not Moshe, was chosen to die as a result for he had more personal involvement with the people and thus his loss was more strongly felt.

Edom succeeded in influencing Israel in spite of the terrible relations they harbored. Edom would not let Israel pass through their land and even threatened them with the sword. The extent of these negative relations was so great that the Torah had to specifically command us: "lo teta-ev Adomi ki achicha hu" "You shall not reject an Edomite, for he is your brother" (Devarim 23:8). If Edom would have given Israel passage through their land who knows how much more influence they would have had. In fact Hashem was doing a great kindness to Bnei Yisrael by keeping them away from Edom.

The main lesson to be learned from this is "harchek mishachen ra" "Keep away from a bad neighbor" (Pirke Avot 1:7). One of the Rishonim in his commentary on Pirke Avot explains that at times a bad neighbor is worse than a bad friend. One sees one's neighbor, as opposed to one's friend, on a daily basis. The neighbor has the capability to influence by his actions without either party even realizing it. Rashi on the pasuk: "vayisa lot mikedem" "and Lot journeyed from the east" (Bereishit 13:11) quotes the Midrash that Lot said: "ee efshi lo be-Avram velo be-Elokav" "I want neither Avram nor his G-d". It was certainly not easily discernible that Lot felt this way. We see the contrary, Lot risked his life to observe Avraham's Torah - he fulfilled "hachnassat orchim" and even baked Matzot even though he was not among those in the exodus from Mitzrayim. Lot's main justification for remaining with all the terrible people in Sodom as opposed to remaining with Avraham and learning Torah at all cost was "ki kula mashke" "that it was well watered everywhere" (Bereishit 13:10). Had Lot at least chosen a neighborhood where the people were not so bad, even if not on the level of Avraham Avinu, perhaps he would not have exclaimed "ee efshi lo beAvraham velo beElokav".

We see how important it is to reside in an atmosphere of Torah and Yirat Shamayim. This refers not only to not living amongst non-Jews, one should take care not to live among Jews who are not Talmidei Chachamim and Yirei Shamayim. Chazal tell us: "im talmid chacham no kem venoter kanachash hu chagreihi al matnecha, im am haaretz hu chasid al tagur bishchunato" "Even if a Torah scholar exacts revenge and bears a grudge like a serpent, gird him to your loins; if an unlearned man is pious, do not dwell in his neighborhood" (Shabbat 63a). The Gemara seems to be telling us that it is preferable to live amongst Talmidei Chachamim whose character seems questionable to us, rather than living amongst pious ignorant people - the influence that can be attained from the Talmid Chacham is greater. Many claim that it is better to live among secular Jews in order to bring them closer. We must realize that there is a grave danger of becoming distanced ourselves before we succeed in bringing them closer to Hashem.

Yehoshafat, king of Yehuda, was a very righteous person whose great deeds are recorded throughout Tanach and the Gemara. He subsequently joined forces with Achav king of Israel in

capturing Ramot Gilad from the Aramites. Despite the noble cause they were fighting for, the prophet chastises Yehoshafat: "halarasha laazor ulesonei Hashem te-ehav" "To aid the wicked? Will you love those who hate Hashem!?" (Divrei Hayamim II 19:2). Chazal tell us that in this war, Yehoshafat had a sword around his neck and was surrounded by Aramites ready to smite him. The pasuk describes Yehoshafat's reaction: "vayizak Yehoshafat vaHashem azuor vayeitem Elokim minenu" "Yehoshafat cried out, and Hashem came to his aid; Hashem induced them away from him" (Divrei Hayamim II 18:31). When describing what year this occurred, the years of his son's reign are also mentioned. Rashi explains that Yehoshafat is already viewed as being dead because he joined forces with Achav.

We are told in the Tanach of Yehoshafat's joining forces with Achav's son for the purpose of building ships in Etzion Gaver. The prophet informs Yehoshafat: "kehitchabercha im Achazyahu paratz Hashem et maasecha" "Because you have allied yourself with Achaziah, Hashem has wrecked your undertakings" (Divrei Hayamim II 20:37) and the boats were subsequently destroyed. One should not associate with a wicked person even for positive reasons such as military purposes or business ventures.

Today there are many among us who come under the category of "tinok shenishba" "a child who was captured" (Shabbat 68b) (note: this refers to one who was not given the opportunity to learn about and observe Mitzvot and thus cannot be held accountable for his actions). Even though one cannot fault them for the way they are, we must be careful not to become too close to them for they will teach us what is wrong. Amatzya, in his quest to fight against the king of Edom took along with him soldiers from the kingdom of Israel. The prophet warns him that he will not succeed: "ki ein Hashem im Yisrael kol bnei Ephraim" "for Hashem is not with Israel, all the children of Ephraim" (Divrei Hayamim II 25:7). If he would do without these soldiers then he will be successful, indeed this is Amatzya's ultimate decision which results in victory. The people of Ephraim, to a large extent, were "tinokot shenishbu", having grown up in a kingdom that had left the ways of the Torah hundreds of years earlier. Despite this, we see that joining forces with them carries with it the danger of defeat.

Amatzya was able to win the war with less soldiers, because the deciding factor is not the quantity of soldiers but rather the quality - are they observant of Torah and Mitzvot or not. The prophet warned Amatzya not to use soldiers from Ephraim, even if they could not be replaced. The Torah commands: "haish hayareh verach halevav yelech veyashov leveito" "the man who is fearful and fainthearted, let him go and return to his house" (Devarim 20:8). The opinion of R' Yossi Haglili is that the pasuk refers to "hamityareh min haaverot shebeyado" "on who is afraid because of the transgressions he had committed" (Sotah Perek 8, Mishna 5). The Gemara explains that R' Yossi Haglili goes so far as to say: "sach bein tefilla l'etefilla aveira hee beyado vechozer aleha meorchei hamilchama" "one who speaks between donning the Tefillin of the arm and that of the head has committed a transgression and returns home under the war-regulations" (Sotah 44b). Such a person cannot go to war unless he repents, for it is liable to bring about defeat to the Jewish nation.

In today's army we have no choice but to fight alongside our fellow soldiers regardless of who they are. In other areas of life, however, we do have a choice. We must attempt to cleave to Talmidei Chachamim. We must identify neither with the leftist camp nor with the more nationalistic camp, but only with the camp of the Divine Presence, for that is the only one we can depend on.

The pasuk states "holech et chachamim yeckam, veroch kesilim yeroa" "One who walks with the wise will grow wise, but the companion of fools will be broken" (Mishle 13:20). Whoever joins the wise will himself become wise. The opposite is also true, for we see that Lot, who learned so much from Avraham, lost everything, his fortune, his wife, and his sons, when he befriended the people of Sodom. His children became part of the decree of: "lo yavo Amoni uMoavi bikehal Hashem ad olam" "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of Hashem forever" (Devarim 23:4). This all came about as a result of Lot's leaving Avraham.

We can observe with our own eyes the positive influence Talmidei Chachamim have. This applies not only to physically being in their midst, but even from reading their words. One cannot compare a child raised in a house full of Shas and Poskim, a house where the father's evenings are spent toiling over the words of the Ri"f and Rambam, to a child raised in a house where the evening is spent listening to the radio and other nonsense. Physical proximity to Talmidei Chachamim, is a positive Mitzvah as well. Chazal tell us that "uvo tidbak" "to Him you shall cleave" (Devarim 10:20) is not to be taken literally for it is impossible to cleave to Hashem. The intent of the pasuk is that one should cleave to Talmidei Chachamim, beginning with living in their midst and eventually becoming close to them.

It is important to influence and bring secular Jews closer. We must first, however, know how to go about this. Yirmiyahu was sent by Hashem to bring the nation to repentance, which he does with tremendous self sacrifice. Hashem tells him: "im tashuv vaashivecha lefanai taamod" "If you repent I will bring you back, let you stand before Me" (Yirmiyahu 15:19). Chazal learn from this pasuk: "kol hamelamed et ben chavero Torah, zocheh veyoshev beyeshiva shel maala" "whoever teaches his fellow's son Torah merits and sits in the Academy on High" (Baba Metzia 85a). In the continuation of the pasuk, Hashem tells Yirmiyahu "veim tozi yakar mizolef kefi tihye" "if you bring forth an honorable person from a glutton, then you will be like My own mouth" - if you succeed in teaching Torah to the son of an am haaretz, then even if Hashem makes a decree, you can nullify it, what you decree will take effect. We see the importance of bringing people back to a life filled with Torah and Mitzvot.

The pasuk, however, continues "yashuvu hema elecha ve-ata lo tashuv aleihem" "They will return to you, and you will not have to return to them". Even one on the level of Yirmiyahu is warned against being influenced by them. When we try to bridge the gap, it is liable to be bi-directional. Even in real life there is always the question of "ilaa gavar o titaa gavar" "does the bottom one win out or the top one" (Pesachim 66a) (note: this refers to when a hot and cold item come in contact, there is a dispute as to whether the bottom one wins and thus gives off its flavor to what is on top of it, or is the opposite true - the top wins out and thus gives its flavor to the bottom). When in contact with secular Jews, even in an attempt to bring them back, who knows whether you will be successful in bringing them back, or they will win you over to their side. It is true that we must attempt to bring our fellow Jews closer, this, however means setting aside time for this, not looking to live in a mixed neighborhood or going to study in a secular environment.

Chazal tell us that Rebbe, a man who embodied all that is great in the Torah, felt that he owed all that he merited to having had the fortune of seeing R' Meir behind him. How much more

could he have attained had he seen R' Meir in front of him! Rebbe was taught by his father R' Shimon ben Gamliel, the Nasi of Israel, and also by R' Yaakov and other scholars. With all those great teachers, Rebbe owes his accomplishments in Torah to having seen R' Meir behind him. He was able to see R' Meir, rather than seeing people we are forbidden to look at - (for there is a halacha that one is not permitted to look at the face of an evil person). We see from this the importance of cleaving to Talmidei Chachamim and Yirei Shamayim.

Moshe Rabenu wished that his sons inherit his position, presumably they were worthy of it, yet Yehoshua was chosen because: "lo yamish mitoch haohel" "he would not depart from within the Tent" (Shmot 33:11). Yehoshua tried to see Moshe Rabenu whenever possible. Just as he eagerly awaited Moshe's descent after forty days atop Har Sinai, he was eager to be the first to hear and see Moshe Rabenu teaching Torah.

Shmuel HaNavi in his childhood is described thus: "vehanaar haya mesharet et Hashem et pnei Eli Hakohen" "the boy served Hashem" before Eli the Kohan (Shmuel I 2:11). Shmuel merited becoming who he was, not only because he himself was present in the Mishkan, but also because of his association with Eli HaKohen. Had he befriended Eli's sons or others who would have been a bad influence, the result would have been otherwise.

One of the king's servants said of Elisha: "po Elisha ben Shafat asher yatzak mayim al yedei Eliyahu" "Elisha son of Shafat is here, who poured water over the hands of Eliyahu" (Melachim II 3:11). Chazal learn from this: "gedola shimusha shel Torah yoter melimuda ... 'lamad' lo ne-emar ela 'yatzak', melamed shegedola shimusha yoter milimuda" "Attending to Torah is greater than studying ... the verse does not say that he 'studied' under him, rather he 'poured water over his hands', this teaches us that attending is greater than studying" (Brachot 7b), having learned Torah from Eliyahu was of lesser importance than having washed his hands. Elisha was in contact with Eliyahu even during the hours in which they were not learning. (Although there are those who explain that the pasuk refers to pouring of the water in Mt. Carmel, this explanation also shows us the importance of observing a Rav and thus learning how one should act).

There is so much to be gained from being in proximity of a Rav day and night. Baruch ben Neria felt that because he faithfully served Yirmiyahu he deserved prophecy. Baruch ben Neria claimed that Yehoshua was granted prophecy as a result of serving Moshe, and Elisha was granted prophecy because he attended to Eliyahu. In the heavens it was felt that that point in time - the period of destruction was, not an appropriate one in which to grant prophecy, however Chazal tell us that the end result was that he did prophesy during the second year of the reign of Daryavesh (Megilla 15a).

The Torah tells us: "vayehi Yitzchak ben arbaim shana bekachto et Rivka bat Betuel haarami miPadan Aram, achot lavan haArami lo leisha" "Yitzchak was forty years old when he took Rivka, daughter of Betuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram, sister of Lavan the Aramean, as a wife for himself" (Bereishit 25:20). Rashi explains that the detailed description of Rivka's lineage is: "lehagid shivcha, shehayta bat rasha, vaachot rasha umekoma anshei resha velo lamda mimaseihem" "to tell of her praise that she was the daughter of a wicked person, and the sister of a wicked person and her place was of wicked people yet she did not learn from their deeds". She was the righteous woman, the "shoeshine bin hachochim" "like the rose maintaining its beauty among the thorns" (Shir HaShirim 2:2). She was the one who was worthy of establishing the Jewish nation for generations.

Despite all this, the Torah continues "vaye-etar Yitzchak lenochach ishto ki akara hee vaye-ato lo Hashem" "Yitzchak entreated Hashem opposite his wife, for she was barren, Hashem allowed himself to be entreated by him" (Bereishit 25:21). Rashi explains that Hashem answered Yitzchak's prayers and not Rivka's because "ein domeh tefillot tzaddik ben rasha litefillat tzaddik ben tzaddik" "for the prayer of a righteous person who is the child of a wicked person is not comparable to the prayer of a righteous person who is the child of a righteous person". Despite all the positive attributes of Rivka, Yitzchak was raised in a home where he learned different ways to daven then Rivka learned in her house. Yitzchak had the ability to reach a much higher spiritual level.

Perhaps from the viewpoint of "lefum tzaara agra" "According to the exertion is the reward" (Avot 5:23), Rivka's reward is greater. Observing Mitzvot in Avraham's house was much easier than in Betuel's house. Although Rivka cannot be faulted for her background, Yitzchak due to his having been raised in Avraham's house was able to attain greater spiritual heights and thus his prayers were more far-reaching in the higher worlds. The Torah describes to us how the Plishtim stopped up the wells that Avraham dug and Yitzchak reopened them. Chazal tell us that this alludes to Yitzchak's discovery of the G-d of Avraham Who was with him from birth, and then his continually discovering new ways to serve Hashem until Hashem becomes "Elokei Yitzchak" "G-d of Yitzchak". Yitzchak was not satisfied in merely continuing with what his father had left him, but needed to "dig wells on his own".

HaRav HaGaon HaRav Nachum Pertzovitz z"l once related the story of a Talmid Chacham who gained tremendous understanding in Shas without learning the words of the Achronim. He did not study the Achronim because he wished to arrive at these insights on his own. He managed to learn an enormous amount, yet R' Nachum z"l compared this to a man who journeyed on foot from one country to another, a feat not easily equaled by others. If the goal is to arrive at a particular destination, it would be less time consuming to arrive by plane. From the point of view of "lefum tzaara agra" what this Talmid Chacham was able to accomplish was tremendous. One can, however, achieve far more by studying the words of R' Chaim and R' Shimon and building from there. These are the two sides of the coin: on the one hand, being in the company of evil people and succeeding in remaining true to Hashem's words is a great accomplishment from the viewpoint of "lefum tzaara agra", on the other hand one can only reach very high levels by building upon the words and lives of the righteous.

Even in the area of choosing a spouse, Chazal tell us that there is a preference to marrying the daughter or sister of a Talmid Chacham. Chazal tell us: "leolam yidbak adam betovim, sheharei Moshe shenasa bat Yitro, yatzta mimenu Yehonatan, Aharon shenasa bat Aminadav yatzta mimenu Pinchas" "Let one always cleave to righteous people, for Moshe who married the daughter of Yitro, we find that Yehonatan descended from him; Aharon who married the daughter of Aminadav, we find that Pinchas descended from him" (Baba Bathra 109b). Moshe's grandson, Yehonatan became a priest of Avoda Zara despite his father having been raised in the house of Moshe Rabenu. As best we can, we must join forces with those who learn Torah and are G-d fearing. We must only rely on the camp of Hashem: "shivti beveit Hashem kol yemei chayai" "Would that I dwell in the House of

Hashem all the days of my life" (Tehillim 27:4).

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<http://www.ou.org/torah/ti/> Torah Insights Parashat Chukat 5758 July 4, 1998 Rabbi Adam Mintz
At the end of Parshas Chukas, the Torah describes two battles that the Jewish people fought en route to the Land of Israel. The first battle took place with Sichon, king of Emori, who did not permit the Jews to pass through his land. The Jews were victorious and conquered much of the land of Emori. Next, Og, king of Bashan, prepared to do battle with the Jews. At that point in time, one would expect the people of Israel to be confident, following their decisive victory over Emori. But this was not the case. Rather "G-d said to Moshe, Do not be afraid of him, because I have given him and his people and his land to you, and you will do to him what you did to Sichon." Why was G-d's reassurance necessary? Why did Moshe fear battling Og?

Rashi explains Moshe's fear as stemming from an earlier role that Og had played. According to the Midrash, Og was the one who is described in the Torah as the messenger who ran from the battlefield and informed Avraham that his nephew, Lot, had been taken captive during the War of the Four Kings and the Five Kings. Moshe was afraid that Og would be rewarded at this decisive moment for his earlier act of kindness and be granted a victory over the Jews. Thus G-d needed to reassure Moshe that the Jewish people would prevail.

The Maharal further clarifies Moshe's fear--and G-d's subsequent reassurance--with a quote from the Talmud: "The height of Moshe was ten cubits. He took an ax ten cubits long, leaped ten cubits in the air, and struck [Og] on the ankle, killing him." According to the Maharal, Og's height was the source of Moshe's fear. How, Moshe wondered, could he defeat this giant? This was G-d's reassurance: through a desperate leap and a simple strike on the ankle, Moshe defeated Og.

Victory does not always go to the biggest or the strongest, the Maharal tells us. Rather the G-d's help and supervision are the only factors in determining our fates. Though our enemies seem formidable and our task insurmountable, a small leap of faith is all we need to claim our victory.

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Measuring Jerusalem In measuring the distance of 2,000 amos which constitute the techum of a city -- the distance which one may walk beyond the city limits without the need of an eruv -- there are specific requirements for both the nature of the measuring instrument and its length. The instrument must be a rope made of flax and its length must be fifty amos -- no more and no less. As an explanation for the size of the rope, the gemara tells us that if it is shorter it is so flexible that it can easily be stretched by the people holding it at opposite ends and thus increases the distance. If it is longer than fifty amos its weight is likely to cause some sagging in the middle and the distance is shortened.

But why not use a metal chain for measuring which would eliminate both the danger of stretching and that of sagging? The answer is that our Sages saw in the words of a passage in the book of Zecharia (2:5) an indication that measuring in connection with a city must be done with a rope. The prophet Zecharia describes his vision of a man with a rope in his hand who informed him that he was measuring Jerusalem to determine its breadth and length. This was a Heavenly message that the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile to Jerusalem which took place in Zecharia's day would result only in a limited settlement in the city. Then came an angel, Zecharia continues, to inform him that there will be another redemption and return to Jerusalem which will render measuring the city obsolete. At that time "Jerusalem shall be inhabited like unwalled towns because of the multitude of men and cattle in it." Will this population explosion which leaves Jerusalem without protective walls endanger the security of the city's inhabitants?

"I, says Hashem, will be to her like a wall of fire all around her and will be the glory in her midst."

* Eruvin 58a

Balance of Forces An interesting problem of violent conflict between two Jewish communities in Eretz Yisrael came before the leader of the generation, Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi (Rebbi). The inhabitants of Geder were a rather rough bunch, and when they became a little inebriated on Shabbos they would attack the residents of the neighboring city Chamsan who came to visit their town. Rebbi's solution to this problem of violence was to forbid the residents of Chamsan to enter Geder on Shabbos. Since he did not wish to create a complete rift between these two neighboring communities he did permit the residents of Geder to enter Chamsan on Shabbos. But does this eliminate the danger of violence, asks the gemara, if the spirited visitors from Geder are let loose on their neighbors in Chamsan?

"A dog removed from his habitat will not bark for seven years" is the folk saying applied to explain Rebbi's strategy. Although the fellows from Geder may be aggressive on their own turf, there was little likelihood that they would make trouble away from home.

"What about the residents of Chamsan?" asks the gemara. Won't they take advantage of this weakness of their visiting neighbors to attack them in retribution for the pain they suffered at their hands on earlier visits? The answer given is a brilliant application of the principle of coexistence based on a balance of forces. The edge which the Gederites had over the Chamsanites in terms of aggressiveness was offset by their being on foreign ground, so that each side was deterred from any action against the other. * Eruvin 61a

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daf-insights@shemayisrael.com Insights to the Daf: Eruvin 54-59 INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld daf@shemayisrael.co.il ERUVIN 53 - dedicated by Benjie Gerstman and family in honor of the Lomdei Daf ha'Yomi. ERUVIN 54 - has been dedicated by the Feldman family in honor of the Yahrzeit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Nishmaso b'Ginzei Meromim.

Eruvin 54 EAT AND DRINK WHILE YOU CAN OPINIONS: Shmuel told Rav Yehudah, "Grab and eat, grab and drink, because the world is passing quickly like a wedding party [and if you have any money, use it for yourself and do not save it]." What was the point of this advice? (a)

RASHI explains that Shmuel's point was to warn his student not to wait until tomorrow to use his money, because a person has no assurance that he will be alive tomorrow to enjoy his money. It seems that Rashi does not mean simply that a person should take advantage of his money and use it before he dies. Rather, Rashi means that a person can never be sure of himself, and he should realize that he might die tomorrow. Therefore, *all* of a person's activities should be done with that in mind, and that will lead a person to concentrate more on performing Mitzvos and taking advantage of the time that he has for Avodas Hashem. As the Gemara says in Berachos (5a), when a person's Yetzer ha'Ra starts enticing him, he should remember the day of death. (b) The SEFAS EMES explains that Shmuel is advising Rav Yehudah not to spend time and money on luxuries, such as on more tasty food and on things that he does not need. Rather, one should "grab and eat" without being so particular about what one is eating or drinking. Rashi (DH she'Masrachas) also expresses this idea later when he says that a Talmid Chacham should not waste his time on acquiring fancy foods. (c) Perhaps Shmuel was answering a dilemma that people often face: Should one save his money so that when he retires, he will be able to learn Torah unencumbered by the burden of a livelihood, or should one continue to work harder even though he has enough for himself, in order to save money for his children so that they will be able to provide for their needs? Shmuel says that one should "eat it while he has it," because it is better to take advantage of it while one is alive, meaning that one should use what he earns for one's own learning Torah and performing Mitzvos. If so, Shmuel's theme is similar to the theme of the following Gemara, that says that one should not leave money to one's children because Hashem will take care of them, rather one should use his money for one's own performance of Torah and Mitzvos. (M. Kornfeld)

HEALING ONESELF WITH TORAH QUESTION: The Gemara says that one who has a headache should toil in Torah. Likewise, one who has a soar throat, a sick stomach, and aching bones should toil in Torah. The Gemara concludes that one whose entire body is sick should toil in Torah. The Gemara in Shavuos (15b) says that it is forbidden to heal oneself with words of Torah. What does our Gemara mean, then, when it says that someone who is sick should toil in Torah? (MAHARSHA) (See Insights to Shabbos 67a) Furthermore, if learning Torah heals the entire body, as the Gemara concludes, why did the Gemara have to mention specific types of illnesses (headache, soar throat, stomach ache, aching bones)? It should have said simply that if one is sick in his entire body, he should toil in Torah, and we would know that certainly learning Torah is effective for illnesses that affect only part of the body! ANSWERS: (a) To answer the first question, the MAHARSHA says that the prohibition to heal oneself with words of Torah applies only to one who recites a verse with the specific intent that it serve to heal him. If he learns Torah for the sake of learning, but also with intention that he should become better, that is not forbidden. The PERISHAH (YD 179:17) explains similarly, that the prohibition applies only when one pronounces a verse from the Torah expecting it to heal him superstitiously, like an incantation. However, when he studies Torah in order to do the Mitzvah of Hashem and he trusts that Hashem will heal him in the merit of the Mitzvah, that is permissible. The MAHARSHA gives a second answer, and says that the Gemara does not say that one is "sick." Rather, it says "Chash* b'Rosho... *Chash* b'Grono... *Chash* b'Chol Gufo," which means that he is *fearful* and worried of getting sick and he feels an illness coming on. In such a case, he is allowed to use Torah study as a "preventative", and that is not included in the prohibition of healing oneself with words of Torah. (The Maharsha brings a proof for this definition of "Chash" from the Gemara in Shabbos (31a).) (b) To answer the second question, the MAHARSHA points out that these illnesses (headache, soar throat, stomach ache, and aching bones) are the only parts of the body for which we do not find any alternative cure in the Gemara. Therefore, the Gemara specifies these bodily parts, and then makes a general statement that Torah is a curative for the entire body. The MAHARAL (Nesiv ha'Torah 1), as part of a lengthier explanation, suggests another answer. He explains that the Gemara is referring to spiritual illnesses for which it is permissible to use the Torah to heal (the Maharsha in Shabbos 67a says a similar answer). When the Gemara says that one whose head is ill should toil in Torah, it refers to one who has sinful thoughts and attitudes that are counter to the Torah. He can cure his spiritual illness by toiling in Torah. One whose throat is ill refers to one who sins with his throat (such as by speaking Lashon ha'Ra). He can cure his illness by learning the Halachos of that Aveirah. An illness in one's stomach refers to the internal parts of one's body which are the source for Midos such as Kinah (jealousy) and Ta'avah (lustfulness), which are also cured by toiling in Torah. The bones of a person are the medium through which he brings forth his thoughts and desires into action. When one's actions are sinful, this is called being ill in one's bones. Toiling in Torah is a remedy for this illness as well. The Gemara concludes that one who is ill in all of his body should toil in Torah. The Gemara is adding that not only does the Torah cure the illnesses of the soul, but it also cures the illnesses of the physical body (which, until now, the Gemara was not discussing).

54b "SHOGEH" FOR TORAH OPINIONS: The Gemara cites the verse in Mishlei (5:19) which teaches that one must be enraptured with love for Torah at all times, as it says, "b'Ahavasah Tishgeh Tamid" -- "be ravished always with her love." What exactly does it mean to be "ravished with love" for the Torah? (a) The RAMBAM (Hilchos Teshuvah 10:6) explains that one must strive to reach a level of love for Hashem so that one is not interested in any other matter. The way to come to such a love is by studying Torah and Hashem's wisdom as it is manifest in the world. (b) The RA'AVAD says that the Rambam does not explain the meaning of the word "Tishgeh." He explains that "Tishgeh" in the verse means that one must constantly *rejoice* in the Torah, like one who sings out of joy ("Shigayon" means rejoicing song, KESEF MISHNAH; the IBN EZRA (Tehilim 7:1), however, explains that "Shigayon" means "pleasure," and thus in the context of our Gemara it means that one should constantly have pleasure in the Torah). In addition, it means that one must love the Torah so much that it preoccupies him so that everything else that he is involved in becomes like "Shogeg." That is, his involvement in all other matters is done without much attention to those matters, because his attention is focused exclusively on Torah. This second way of explaining "Tishgeh" according to the Ra'avad is also the way RASHI (Mishlei 5:19) explains it. (According to this explanation, the word "Tishgeh" refers not to one's relationship to Torah, but to his relationship with all other matters.) (c) The ZOHAR (Vayikra, 85b) explains that one who *stutters* ("Tishgeh," also from Shogeg) in his study of Torah and makes mistakes is nevertheless beloved unto Hashem, if he learns Torah out of his love for Hashem. (see Shabbos 63a) (d) REBBI MOSHE HA'DARSHAN (cited by Rashi in Mishlei 5:19) explains that "Tishgeh" is a word in Arabic which means "Ta'asok" -- "be constantly immersed" in Torah.

REVIEWING FOUR TIMES QUESTION: Rabbi Eliezer states that when teaching Torah to

one's students, one must teach the subject four times. He derives this from Moshe and Aharon, who learned every lesson four times. RAV YAKOV EMDEN says that this obligation applied only until the times of the Tana'im and Amora'im, when Torah she'Ba'al Peh was not permitted to be written down. Nowadays, though, that all of the Gemara and the foundations of Torah she'Ba'al Peh have been written down, the obligation to review four times no longer applies. According to Rav Yakov Emden, does this mean that one does not have to review his learning, since it is all written down? ANSWER: Certainly one must review his learning in order not to forget it. The Gemara is not referring to one's individual learning. Rather, the Gemara is referring to the Jewish people's preservation of the perpetuity of Torah. When a Rebbi transmitted Torah to his students, he had to ensure that they properly absorbed and understood each detail, because otherwise there would be a serious fear that elements of Torah would be forgotten, G-d forbid. Therefore, it was incumbent upon him to teach it to them four times. Rav Yakov Emden is pointing out that in our days, the fear of the Torah being forgotten is not such a serious concern, because it is now written down. However, each student must constantly review it as much as he needs to in order not to forget it. (Y. Shaw)

Eruvin 56 SUMMARY: THE LENGTH OF THE YEAR The Gemara quotes Shmuel who makes an important statement about the seasons of the year. Shmuel says that the four Tekufos of the year are exactly 91 days and 7 1/2 hours long, which means that the year is 365 days and 6 hours long (91 days and 7 1/2 hours X 4). Consequently, the time of day that each Tekufah occurs will be 7 1/2 hours later in the day than the previous one. How accurate is Shmuel's measurement according to present-day calculations? Julius Caesar, in the year 3714 (46 B.C.E.) arranged a *solar* calendar, the first calendar based on the earth's relationship with the position of the sun, which is very similar to the one used by the modern world today. At that time, his astronomers advised him that the solar year is exactly 365 1/4 days (365 days and 6 hours), the same as Shmuel's calculation. However, in truth this figure is inaccurate; it is a bit too long. The true solar year is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds. Shmuel's calculation was off by some 11 minutes per year, which means that with the passage of time, the actual solar year lags behind Shmuel's year. The equinoxes and the solstices slowly migrate through the calendar with the passage of time; every 128 years the equinoxes and solstices arrive one day too early. At a later time, the astronomers noted that they were slightly off and corrected the length of the year to 365 days 5 hours, 55 minutes, and 25 seconds, cutting out about half of the 11 minute discrepancy between Shmuel's year and the actual year. Rav Ada, a third century Amora, recalculated the Jewish lunisolar calendar based on this calculation and organized it into the present 19-year cycle, which has as leap years the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th year of the 19-year cycle. This was done in order that the lunar year, divided up among those 19 solar years, will average out to the length of the solar year mentioned, and thus every 19 years the lunar and solar years will meet. (NOTE: In 1582 C.E., the non-Jews, not wanting the summer months to fall during winter and the winter months to fall during summer, modified the Julian calendar and adopted a new version called the Gregorian calendar. The first change they made to the calendar was to cut out the 11 days that were mistakenly added to the year due to the miscalculation of the Julian astronomers. (The day after September 3 that year was not September 4, but September 15.) They also adjusted the calendar to by subtracting one leap year every 400 years. This means that they worked with a year of 365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes and 12 seconds -- which is still off by approx. 26 seconds, but close enough for most practical purposes. At the time, the we instituted *no* parallel changes to the Jewish lunisolar calendar.) In the final analysis, we follow Rav Ada's calculation in our lunisolar calendar, breaking it into a 19-year cycle. However, for the Halachos which depend on the Tekufos, such as when to say the prayer of "v'Sen Tal u'Matar" in Galus and when we recite Birchas ha'Chamah, we rely on Shmuel's calculation. ("V'Sen Tal u'Matar" in Galus is added in Shemoneh Esreh starting 60 days after the autumnal equinox, and Birkas ha'Chamah is said on the day of the vernal equinox every 28 years, as calculated through Shmuel's calculation. This is why "v'Sen Tal u'Matar" is said in Galus beginning from the 5th or 4th of December, depending on whether the following year is a leap year. This date will not change after the year 2000, since the year is not affected by the Gregorian calendar.) Dr. Norman Bloom of Miami, Florida, points out that since we are working with two different solar calendars, the time when Jews in Galus start saying v'Sen Tal u'Matar will migrate towards the summer even faster than the spring festivals will migrate towards the summer. This means that eventually, the time to start saying "v'Sen Tal u'Matar" will catch up to Pesach, and the first day to say "v'Sen Tal u'Matar" coincide with day on which we stop saying it! Fortunately, we will not encounter this problem for another approx. 42,000 years, which will be long after the Ge'ulah will have come and all of the Jews will be living in Eretz Yisrael.

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