

B'S'D'

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON  
SHMINI ATZERES – VZOS HABRACHA - 5762

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www.torahweb.org [From last year]  
RABBI YA'AKOV NEUBURGER  
B'ZOS ANI BOTEACH

As we conclude another round of the twice daily recitation of Tehilim 27 - L'dovid Hashem Ori - at a time when our yom tov spirit is so dampened, we probably identified with many of the sentiments expressed by Dovid Hamelech more so than other years. The pasuk that associates this perek with sukkos certainly expressed the prayer in all our hearts throughout the yomim tovim, "Indeed He will protect me in His [Sukka] shelter on the day of evil; He will shelter conceal me in the recesses of His tent, He will lift me up on a rock".

In fact in an altogether different context the Yalkut in Parshas Emor says that the zechus of the mitzva of sukka will bring us divine protection. Why the mitzva of sukka more than any other mitzva? Explains the K'sav Sofer that through the mitzva of sukka one expresses one's bitachon in Hashem's protection, and one who is so keenly aware of it and open to appreciating it, will certainly merit it.

At the same time our experiences this Yom tov, must strengthen one of the age-old difficulties in understanding the central request of this perek, "One thing I asked from Hashem and that I shall seek - that I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life, to behold the sweetness of Hashem and contemplate in His sanctuary." Should this really be the one request uppermost in Dovid Hamelech's mind - the leader of all Israel? Especially at times of war, would we not expect that the one responsible for the physical and spiritual welfare of our people, would plead with all his strength for our security, and wellbeing? Isn't yearning to be personally found in Beis Hamikdosh tantamount to neglecting his duties to the people to whom he was appointed?

Explains the Harav Dovid Friedlander in his widely acclaimed sefer, Sifsei Chaim, that certainly Dovid Hamelech's primary concern and focus was the responsibilities of his leadership, the security and spiritual and physical prosperity of his people. It is precisely for this that Dovid Hamelech is praying in his request to find himself in the House of Hashem. Indeed, Dovid Hamelech wants to be continuously aware of Hashem, and appreciative of His constant protection and guidance and is begging not only for physical sustenance but protection from the hubris that affects so many successful leaders as well. That is the "beis Hashem" in which he wants to travel at all times, be it in on the battlefield or in the palace courts.

This interpretation sheds light on another very difficult passage in the perek, "Though an army would besiege me, my heart would not fear; though war would arise against me, in this [b'zos] I trust". Exactly in what is Dovid Hamelech placing his trust? Many of the meforshim have pondered this suggesting various references in the surrounding pesukim. Perhaps we are to see "bezos" as referring to the entire sequence of pesukim that follow: "Indeed He will protect me in His [Sukka] shelter on the day of evil; He will shelter conceal me in the recesses of His tent,

He will lift me up on a rock. Now my head is raised above my enemies around me and I will slaughter offerings in His Tent, accompanied by joyous song; I will sing praise to Hashem." Dovid Hamelech places his trust in the zechus that he will always see himself in the "beis Hashem", so that every moment of salvation that he experiences will give him opportunity to express his recognition of Hashem's protective wings. Similar to Yaakov Aveinu as he found himself in his most difficult time and defined for all time how we react be'es tzoro (Vayetze, 28:20-21) Dovid Hamelech promises that he will attribute any success to Hashem's mercy and love for him and Klal Yisrael.

In the zechus of our observance of the mitzva of sukka and all that it entails may we be speedily be zoche to joyously express our gratitude for His protection during this eis tzoro.

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From: National Council of Young Israel  
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Shmini Atzeret 22 Tishrei 5762 October 9, 2001 Daf Yomi: Baba Kama 74

Guest Rabbi: RABBI BOAZ TOMSKY Associate Member, YICR  
The Chag of Shmini Atzeret displays certain characteristics which identify it as an independent holiday. There are other factors, however, which make Shmini Atzeret appear to be a mere continuation of the seven days of Sukkot.

The name Shmini Atzeret, the eighth day of Assembly, is an indication that the Chag is just a continuation of the days of Sukkot. Furthermore, the Gemara (Sukkah 42B) displays this with the requirement of Simcha and the reciting of Hallel for all eight days. Rabbi Eliezer further entertains the possibility of considering Shmini Atzeret a make-up day for those who did not partake in a Seudah on the first day of Sukkot (Sukkah 27A). Nonetheless, the Gemara (Sukkah 48A) clearly indicates that Shmini Atzeret is considered a Regel Bifnay Atsmo - an independent festival with regard to six things: payis-lottery, z=man-shechyanu blessings, regel-sitting in the sukkah (Rashi), karbon-sacrifices, shira-bracha. We will focus mainly on the aspect of korbon. But first, we must understand why this independent Chag has so many attributes which give forth the appearance that it is a continuation of the days of Sukkot. How do we reconcile this conflict of a day which appears to be a hybrid?

One of the ways in which Shmini Atzeret is considered independent is due to the different amount of sacrifices brought on that day. On the first day of Sukkot, thirteen bulls were brought. Each day, the number of bulls decreased by one until the seventh day on which seven bulls were brought. Continuing with this pattern, we should require six bulls to be brought on Shmini Atzeret. However, only one bull is offered on that day. This shows that, indeed, Shmini Atzeret is a Regel Bifnay Atsmo.

These questions arise: What is the significance in the number of korbanot brought on each of the days of Sukkot? Why were there different amounts of sacrifices brought each day? A more logical pattern would be for an equal amount of bulls (ten) to be brought on each of the seven days. Also, why was one bullock less brought each successive day? We generally follow the principle of Maalin Bakodesh V = ayn Moridin - we ascend in holiness and don = descend. This being the case, we should be required to add a bullock for each successive day of Sukkot. Why, then, doesn't the Torah follow this principle in this circumstance?

The Gemara (Shabbat 21B) discusses a famous argument between Bait Shamai and Bait Hillel regarding the number of candles to be lit on each of the nights of Chanukah. Bait Hillel requires the candles to be lit in ascending order (one on the first night, two on the second, etc.) based on the dictum of Maalin Bakodesh. Bait Shamai holds that the candles should be lit in descending order (eight on the first night, seven on the second, etc.). Bait Shamai = s basis for his ruling is a similar pattern

found by the Paray Hachag-the bullocks brought on Sukkot. As mentioned previously, these sacrifices were brought in descending order on each of the days of Sukkot. This gives support to require the lighting of lights on Chanukah to be done in descending order. We must understand the correlation between the lighting on Chanukah and the sacrifices brought on Sukkot. Bait Shamai must have a deeper understanding of these concepts to Paskin against the principle of Maalin Bakodesh. What is this correlation?

What is the significance of these sacrifices brought? The Gemara (Sukkah 55B) explains that these seventy bulls correspond to the seventy nations of the world. The single bull on Shmini Atzeret corresponds to the singular nation of Israel. The Gemara further elaborates and equates this scenario to a parable of a king who said to his servants: "Prepare for me a great banquet." When it was time for the last day, he said to his beloved companion: "Prepare for me a small meal." Similarly, in the first seven days of Sukkot, the nations of the world are invited to take part in a relationship with HaShem. This is accomplished with the many sacrifices brought to the Bait Hamikdash on behalf of the whole world. Shmini Atzeret represents a special connection to the Jewish nation with a personal engagement with HaShem. Since each sacrifice corresponds to each individual nation, the appearance is that more effort and resources are expended upon the nations of the world than upon the Jewish people. This gives forth a skewed perception that HaShem has a greater desire for the sacrifices of others and little interest in those of Klal Yisrael! How could we better conceptualize the idea of Shmini Atzeret requiring merely a "small meal"?

These questions can best be answered through the advice of a professional Shadchanit. She developed specific strategies and methods for effective dating. On the first encounter, she suggests spending lavishly upon the potential Shidduch to express your desire to establish a long-term, giving relationship. The environment should be conducive to be easily confronted by outside distractions. This scenario helps to reduce undue tension by switching focus from intense conversation to the activity or program before the parties. As the relationship persists, it is less important to expend extravagant amounts of money and gifts upon the Shidduch. It is more important to concentrate solely in her or him than to shower her or him with gifts. Part of the reason for this is, that as the relationship intensifies, it no longer remains necessary to have other means of entertainment. The relationship itself should be enough. Certainly a healthy relationship between husband and wife doesn't necessitate the endless supply of material gifts to remain strong and successful. To the contrary, material giving cannot take the place of showing devotion and care for a spouse. Instead, it is the intimate times spent together that retains the relationship. Many financially successful couples recall that their closest and most beloved days were while they were struggling to make ends meet. But they had nothing to show for themselves? The answer is that their lack of material wealth didn't detract from the immense amount of devotion they had for each other. The lack of physical comforts can foster the understanding that a close relationship doesn't require gold or silver. Nothing else is truly as important in the scheme of things as the realization by a couple that they need each other.

This is the message of the holiday of Sukkot and subsequently Shmini Atzeret. During the first seven days, HaShem is creating a relationship with the nations of the world. This relationship is less established and personalized. Therefore, it warrants a great banquet to best help establish the desire in this relationship. However, this relationship is only that of a servant to a king. There remains a lack of intimacy between the two parties involved, a separation. This is why HaShem meets more than one nation each day. The lack of intimacy is depicted by the amount of bullocks that are brought each day. During the first days of Sukkot, the relationship has only begun. That is why the highest number of bullocks are brought that day. However, as the

holiday of Sukkot progresses, the intensity of the relationship with HaShem and the nations of the world increases as well. HaShem establishes a more intimate setting by relating to fewer nations during the latter days of Sukkot.

This is the connection between the Paray Hachag and Chanukah. Some explain that the connection is that these are the only two eight-day holidays. We may possibly entertain a different approach based on what we have previously established. As the oil continued to burn beyond the allotted time, the miracle intensified. Certainly the oil remaining lit for eight days is a greater miracle than if it just remained lit for two days. Because the Menorah remained lit day in and day out, there was a greater understanding of HaShem's direct involvement in the world. This is a similar message of Paray Hachag. As the days of Sukkot continue forward, HaShem's involvement increases and intensifies with the world.

Shmini Atzeret is a completely different dimension (Regel Bifnay Atsmo) altogether. HaShem wishes to partake only in a small, more intimate meal. The Gemara continues to add, "In order that I may benefit from you." It is clear that HaShem and the Bnei Yisrael have such a close-knit relationship that it is no longer incumbent upon us to offer many gifts or sacrifices to show a commitment. All HaShem desires is the smallest amount, the bare minimum, in order for us to show our commitment. After this is established, HaShem wants nothing more than to benefit from us. He wants our presence-not presents. Our relationship is compared to that of a beloved companion to a king. This special and unique relationship is displayed by HaShem specifically on Shmini Atzeret. The only way this is deduced is by comparing and contrasting Shmini Atzeret to the Chag of Sukkot. Although a Regel Bifnay Atsmo, it is necessary to consider this day like Shmini, day number eight, a continuation in the intensity of the relationship between man and HaShem.

Sukkot is also called Chag Simchatainu-a holiday of happiness and rejoicing. Some explain the reason for this name is based on the annual harvest. The harvest occurs during Sukkot and it is what gladdens hearts. The knowledge that HaShem has a vested interest in developing a relationship with all of mankind should give all of us a feeling of self-worth and value in this world. Any relationship with HaShem should be looked at as the greatest privilege, an opportunity of which to take full advantage. Our unique relationship - that of beloved companion - should increase our level of Simcha in our relationships between both HaShem and our fellow man.

In the same way, we should all merit to appreciate who our spouses and friends are - not what they give us. Let us focus on their mere presence - not their presents.

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From: National Council of Young Israel  
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Simchat Torah 23 Tishrei 5762 October 10, 2001 Daf Yomi: Baba Kama 75

Guest Rabbi: RABBI YOEL SCHONFELD Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills, NY

It is interesting to note that the Yom Tov of Shavuot which celebrates the receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and this Yom Tov of Simchat Torah which celebrates the completion of the reading of the Torah are not explicitly mentioned in the Torah. That is, Shavuot in the Torah, is only referred to as Chag HaBikkurim, the holiday of the tithing of the farmers= new yield of fruit. The Talmud teaches us that the date of 6 Sivan on which Shavuot falls, is the date of the giving of the Torah. In the case of Simchat Torah, the holiday as we know it only developed following the close of the Talmud. Until that period, Shmini Atzeret stood alone without being combined with the celebration of Simchat Torah. It seems ironic that the two holidays that should receive the

greatest attention in that they center around the Torah itself, receive the least. Perhaps the reason for this is to teach us that our relationship to Torah should not really be confined to a particular time on the calendar - it should be appreciated on a daily basis. Or, the way Chazal put it, every day we should consider the Torah as if it was given anew.

Nevertheless, human beings, such as we are, need to have a fixed time to bring a concept into focus; hence the holidays. (For this reason, I do not join those who are critical of the American idea of Mothers Day or Fathers Day. The cynics maintain that in Jewish tradition, every day is Mothers Day and Fathers Day. This may be true, but every day is Torah Day and every day is Teshuva Day. Yet, we have special days on the Jewish calendar to bring these subjects into focus.)

I heard from my father shlita in the name of Rav Solovetchik zt"l that the difference between Shavuot and Simchat Torah is that whereas Shavuot is compared to the Chupah of a Chatten and Kallah, Simchat Torah is akin to the reception where we dance in joy to celebrate the event.

There are halachic problems with this celebration, however. Dancing on Yom Tov or Shabbat is prohibited as with any strenuous exercise where we are prone to sweat (see Shulchan Aruch 328:42). How is it then that we are enjoined to dance in ecstatic fashion on this Yom Tov?

Rav Nissen Alpert zt"l in his sefer *Limudei Nissen* raises this question. Rav Alpert explains that we see that in other instances, extra legal practices were performed as well. For instance, during the Chanukas HaMishkan, the inauguration of the Mishkan, the Nisim, heads of the tribes, offered Ketores, spice offerings, upon the outer mizbeach. Normally, spice offerings were not at all brought by individuals and certainly were allowed only on the inner alter. Since, however, these offerings were brought to celebrate our being welcomed to HaShem=s dwelling, so to speak, this was considered as though it was a family event and the normal rules for these offerings were suspended.

So too, says Rav Alpert, is the practice with Simchat Torah. We are in essence celebrating a family event with HaShem=s Torah and some of the restrictions are suspended.

Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky zt"l raises another issue. The Rambam in *Sefer Hamitzvot* (Mitzvot Aseh 54) maintains that during the Yom Tov season of Sukkot, it is a mitzvah to celebrate as festively as possible and to sing and dance. Yet, the Rambam in *Hilchot Lulav* (8:14) writes that only Gedolei Yisrael and men of great piety should be dancing, the rest of the populace should come to observe them. If dancing is a mitzvah for all, as implied by the Rambam in the *Sefer Hamitzvot*, then why should it be limited in practice to Gedolei Yisrael?

Rav Yaakov explains that, while it is true that dancing is a mitzvah for everyone, nevertheless if not performed in the proper spirit, then the dancing is not dancing, but hilarity. Hilarity is not the Jewish concept of celebration. Even dancing must be done within the proper spirit. Watch Gedolei Yisrael to see how they dance.

Today, we may not all be Gedolei Yisrael, but we all do dance. To dance on Simchat Torah is a special privilege. We may not all be men of great piety but we are all part of HaShem=s family.; and, says Rav Alpert, This is reason enough to dance.

May we be zoche to be led by Gedolei Yisrael in dancing in the Beit Hamikdash with all Klal Yisrael in Yerushalayim Habenuyah. Amen.

<http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2001/10/04/Columns/Columns.35702.htm>

SHABBAT SHALOM: The inner and the outer Torah

By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(October 4) Shemini Atzeret-Simchat Torah

Most things and most people are not what they appear to be. Our most profound declaration of faith, the biblical verse "Hear O Israel the

Lord our G-d the Lord is One," is always recited while covering one's eyes with one's hand. It seems to me that this is in order to teach us not to be distracted by what we see. The world of G-d is the inner dimension, the soul rather than the face, the inner reality rather than the outer mask.

This entire Holy Day period, beginning with Rosh Hashana and culminating with Simcha Torah, is dedicated to the inner self and to the essence of things. The piercing sound of the shofar resonates with the inner cry of the human being; the liturgical poems remind us that the Almighty "searches the inner feelings of every human being," and we express on this day our deepest fears as well as our innermost desires.

On Yom Kippur each of us stands before the Almighty bereft of his/her physical trappings and even minimal bodily comforts such as food and drink. It is our inner soul that stands ready to be purified.

In a similar vein, it may be said that the Jewish calendar establishes two celebrations for two aspects of the Torah - or, if you will, a separate celebration for each of our two Torahs (Torot). The festival of Weeks, which we celebrate in the spring, marks the Revelation at Sinai, when G-d first presented His Torah. But that was an external Torah, given amidst an "external extravaganza" of thunder and fire and sounds (kolot) which were to be seen by the eye.

On Yom Kippur Moses received the second Torah, but this time in the midst of Divine silence and in the lonely splendor of intimacy with the Divine. Indeed, the Sages of the Midrash teach that the first Torah did not include the Oral Law, the Torah's innermost dimension, which can only be heard and extracted by those who are privy to the Torah's secrets.

It's not by accident that the first tablets were broken whereas the second are indestructible. It is not by accident that 40 days after the first Revelation the Israelites worshipped the golden calf whereas the second Torah remains our eternal symbol of Divine love and forgiveness.

These two Torot, the outer and the inner, are expressed in the K'tiv and Kri of the Torah as we experience it. The K'tiv literally means the "writing," the black letters as they appear in the Torah Scroll; the Kri is the way tradition mandates that we read those letters, sometimes in a different way than we would expect. One might say that the K'tiv is the external Torah and the Kri is its internal counterpart. I would submit that on Simcha Torah we celebrate the inner Torah, the Oral Torah, the Kri.

Joy, or simcha; also has an external form and an internal essence. "A beautiful wife, a beautiful house and beautiful objects enlarge the horizons of an individual," teach our Sages. Conventional wisdom would suggest that these three adornments bring joy. Nevertheless our Torah mandates that during the Festival of Joy, the holiday of Succot which leads directly into Simcha Torah, we take leave of our fancy homes and expensive furniture and move into what appears to be a most inadequate dwelling.

The message is clear: true joy is not a function of what we have but of who we are. It has nothing to do with the size of our chandeliers but rather with the presence of the Divine; it is not a function of expensive silverware, but the result of hosting Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David in our succa. In the words of the psalmist: "One thing do I ask G-d and only this do I request. Allow me to live in the house of G-d all the days of my life and to experience the sweetness of G-d."

The essence of Succot joy is: "if a husband and wife are in love, they can sleep on the edge of a plow and be very comfortable; if they are not in love, their bed can be 60 cubits wide and it is too small." This message is further underscored by the citron (etrog), which is one of the four species we must bless during the Succot festival. Interestingly enough, the citron is described as being the fruit of a beautiful tree. Our sages call the citron beautiful because it remains on the tree from year to year - that is, it is faithful and constant, and because the taste of the tree and the fruit are the same - that is, it's offspring retain the same qualities

as their forbears. Obviously the citron is teaching the lesson of internal beauty.

Finally, on Simcha Torah we read of the death of Moses. Moses' life also has a K'tiv and Kri, an external form and an internal essence. From a rather simplistic external perspective, one might conclude that Moses was a tragic figure. He began his life amidst the wealth and fame of Pharaoh's palace, a veritable prince in Egypt. He concluded his life while wandering in the desert, without even a solid roof over his head. His goal had been to take the Israelites into the Promised Land. But after a series of quarrelsome rebellions and 42 different temporary destinations, Moses leaves the world without even a monument to mark his grave.

The truth, however, resides in the Kri of Moses' life, the internal essence. It was Moses who spoke to G-d face-to-face as it were, and forged a slave people into a G-d-infused nation. His message reverberates through all the Jewish generations.

We celebrate the Torah even as we read of Moses' death because for us Moses has never really died; his grave is unmarked because through the words of the Torah that he communicated to us, he lives eternally. The essence of Moses is his inner message, the Torah which remains his eternal legacy. It is this Torah over which we rejoice on Simchat Torah.

Shabbat Shalom and Hag Sameach

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<http://acoast.com/~seh/hamaayan/9192/vzothabr.912> [9 years ago]  
HAMAAYAN /The Torah Spring Edited by SHLOMO KATZ  
v'Zot haBerachah/Simchat Torah Volume VI/Number 53 (287) 23  
Tishrei 5753/October 20, 1992

Although it is one of the 13 Principles of our faith that Moshe received the entire Torah from Hashem's "mouth" and wrote it down, one opinion in the Gemara (Baba Batra 15a) says that this does not apply to the last eight verses of this Parasha. (Those Psukim describe Moshe's death and burial.) Rather, one sage maintains that these verses were recorded from Hashem's mouth by Yehoshua.

The second opinion maintains that Moshe did indeed write the last eight verses, as he had the rest of the Torah, but that he did so "b'Dema." What does this mean? The simplest interpretation is that it means "tearfully," but if so, what is the importance of our knowing that fact? Furthermore, if Moshe wrote the last eight verses as we know them, he wrote an untruth, for he was still alive when he wrote of his death!

Some commentators state that this word means "scrambled," as in the word "Dimu'a," which describes an accidental mixture of Terumah and non-Terumah. Ramban writes in his introduction to the Torah that when Chazal say that the whole Torah consists of Hashem's names, they do not mean that "B'reishit" is a name of G-d, "Bara" is a name of G-d, and so on. Rather, the names are scrambled. Perhaps the first two letters are one Name, the next eight letters are another Name, and so on.

Based on Ramban's interpretation, commentators say, we can understand the significance of Moshe's writing the last eight verses of the Torah in a scrambled fashion. He recorded the letters as the names of G-d, while later Yehoshua was shown by Hashem how to rewrite the letters to describe Moshe's death.

The Gemara says that these eight Psukim must be read by an individual, a statement for which Tosfot offers two explanations. R' Meshulam says that the Aliyah must be given to someone who knows how to read the Torah, and the "Ba'al Korei" must remain silent. Rabbenu Tam says that these eight Psukim must be kept together as one Aliyah, and not divided between two people.

In truth, Tosfot notes, it was once customary for the Ba'al Korei and the person saying the Berachah to be one and the same. Our custom of having one person read and seven others called-upon to recite the Berachot was introduced at a time when many people were no longer qualified to read the Torah; to save them embarrassment, a Ba'al Korei was appointed. [Interestingly, many communities have the custom that

on Simchat Torah, anyone who chooses may read his own Aliyah, though some prohibit this for the reason just mentioned.] The same Tosfot also discusses the reason for having a "Gabbai" -- Tosfot calls him a "Chazzan" -- who calls up those who will read the Torah or recite the Berachot. Just as the Torah was given through a middleman (Moshe), the Talmud Yerushalmi says, so we must receive it through a middleman (i.e. the Gabbi)

In the Torah reading for Shmini Atzeret we are commanded, "You shall experience only joy." (Devarim 16:15). On this the Talmud comments, "This includes the last day of Sukkot," i.e. Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah.

R' Shlomo Yosef Zevin writes that there are two types of joy in this world. He calls them simply "direct" and "indirect."

"Direct joy" is that happiness which is achieved without any suffering before-hand. "Indirect happiness" is that which comes after prolonged preparation and agony.

Most of his world's joys, says R' Zevin, are of the latter type. A classic example is the birth of a baby which follows from difficult labor pains. Furthermore, there are times when one experiences suffering, but the likelihood of a joyous outcome is by no means obvious, and that may make the suffering even greater than that of childbirth.

In reality, we take on faith that all that transpires will ultimately work out for the best. For this reason, Chazal have enjoined us that "One is obligated to bless Hashem for the 'bad' as well as for the good."

We also take on faith that all of Hashem's deeds will become clear to us at some future time, and we will then experience true joy. When we have been purified from the state which nearly forces us to see all events in a short-sighted perspective, we will see clearly what Hashem holds in store for us, and we will understand the meaning of true joy.

On Simchat Torah, we get a taste of that ultimate happiness. The joy of Sukkot, culminating on the last day, is not the outgrowth of agony and suffering; it is a result of the purifying effects of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. As the above Pasuk promises us, on Simchat Torah we shall experience only joy. (l'Torah u'l'Moadim)

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[www.torah.org/learning/drasha/5759/zoshabracha.html](http://www.torah.org/learning/drasha/5759/zoshabracha.html) [3 years ago]  
Parshas Zos Habracha Making It by Breaking It  
by RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

The last verses of the Torah encapsulate a glorious career of leadership of the father of all prophets, Moshe, into a few brief sentences. "Never has there risen in Israel a prophet as Moses whom Hashem had known face to face: as apparent by all the signs and wonders that Hashem had sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh and all his courtiers and all his land. And by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moshe performed before the eyes of Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

Powerful descriptive. But it is as cryptic as it is powerful. What is the strong hand and that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Israel? Does it refer to the horrific plagues brought on Egypt? Perhaps it refers to the splitting of the sea or the opening of the earth to swallow Korach and his rebellious cohorts?

Rashi tells us that the words "Moshe performed before the eyes of Israel" refers to something totally different, perhaps very mortal. Rashi explains that the posuk (verse) refers to the smashing of the tablets upon descending Mount Sinai and seeing the nation frolic before the Golden Calf. He quotes the verse "and I smashed the tablets before your eyes" (Deuteronomy 9).

Rashi's comment evokes many questions. Why is smashing the Luchos counted as an awe-inspiring feat? And more important, is this the final way to remember Moshe the man who smashed the Luchos? Is that the parting descriptive of Judaism's greatest leader?

Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant, was Rav in a city when a typhus epidemic erupted. Despite the peril of the contagious disease, Rabbi Lipkin went together with a group of his students to aid the sick, making sure they had food and clothing. The roving first-aid committee imposed strict restrictions upon the townsfolk, imploring them to eat properly every day in order to ward off immunological deficiencies.

Yom Kippur was fast approaching, and Rabbi Lipkin decreed that due to the menacing disease, absolutely no one was to fast on Yom Kippur despite it being the holiest day of the year.

The town's elders were skeptical. They felt that Rabbi Salanter had no right to impose such a ruling on those who were not afflicted. Despite their protestations, Rabbi Salanter was unfazed. In fact he made his point in a very dramatic way.

On Yom Kippur morning, immediately after the shacharis services, he went up to the bimah, made kiddush, drank the wine, and ate a piece of cake!

Immediately, the townsfolk were relieved. They went to their homes and followed suit.

The elders in the town were outraged at this seemingly blatant violation of Jewish tradition. They approached

Rabbi Lipkin to protest his disregard for the sanctity of the day, but Rabbi Lipkin remained adamant. "I have taken a group of students for the last month, and together we have attended to scores of typhus victims. I guaranteed every mother that each of their children will return home healthy. On my guarantee not one of those students became ill!"

He turned to the elders and declared. "When you are able to make such guarantees then you can tell me the laws against eating on Yom Kippur!"

The Torah ends with the greatness of Moshe. It refers to his great accomplishments as his Yad haChazaka, his strong hand before the eyes of Israel -- the breaking of the two Tablets Of Law. Moshe's greatness was not only knowing how to accept the Ten Commandments, but when to smash them as well. And though not every one of us is equipped with the ability to overrule a practice or tradition, Klall Yisrael knows that when the time to act is called for the great ones will arise to build and cure by smashing what needs to be broken. Because whether it is breaking a fast or breaking the tablets, it takes a great man to understand the time to build and an even greater man to know when it is time to tear down.

Chag Sameach Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Copyright 1998 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc. The author is the Rosh Mesivta (Dean of the High School) of the Yeshiva of South Shore.

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From: Aish.com mi-oray-ha-aish@aish.com Subject: MiOray HaAish - Zot Ha'Bracha

<http://aish.com/torahportion/moray/showArticle.asp>

Parsha: Zot Habracha (Deuteronomy 33-34) Be Strong

By: RABBI ARI KAHN

The Torah Portion for Saturday, October 6 is that of Sukkot. Parshat Zot Ha'bracha will be read on Simchat Torah, which is on Wednesday, October 10 outside of Israel, and Tuesday, October 9 in Israel. Chag Same'ach!

With the Parshat Zot Ha'bracha, the Torah reaches its conclusion.

While the vast majority of this week's Torah portion contains the blessing which Moses uttered prior to his death, it also records the death of Moses.

Surely the death of such an unparalleled leader created a vacuum which is hard for us to imagine. Moses wore many hats he was teacher, warrior, and perhaps king.1 Moses was a spiritual, and religious leader par excellence. He was also the visionary who helped facilitate the transfer an enormous population from servitude in Egypt to within the distance of a shadow of the Promised Land. Of all the facets of Moses'

multifaceted personality the one which is recorded for posterity as his appellation, is Moshe Rabbenu, "Moses Our Teacher."

He is the man who ascended to Sinai and brought down the Torah. Any person who would take his place would do so with the knowledge that in any comparison they would fall short. Others could learn Torah - but who else could wrest it from the hands of angels and bring a piece of divinity to earth?

#### THE SUCCESSOR

The task of following Moses fell upon Joshua ben Nun. The leaders of that generation indeed lamented their plight:

And you shalt put of your honor upon him, but not all your honor. The elders of that generation said: "The countenance of Moses was like that of the sun; the countenance of Joshua was like that of the moon." Alas, for such shame! Alas for such reproach! (Baba Batra 75a)

Joshua glowed - but his glow was dim in comparison to Moses. When Moses died the people stopped learning.

Our Rabbis taught: "When a Hacham dies, his Beth Hamidrash is idle; when the Av Bet Din dies all the colleges in his city are idle and [the people of the synagogue] enter the synagogue[s] and change their [usual] places: those that [usually] sit in the north sit in the south and those that [usually] sit in the south sit in the north. When a Nasi dies, all the colleges are idle and the people of the synagogue enter the synagogue." (Moed Kattan 22b)

How much more so when Moses died. Tosfot (Menichot 30a) report that the custom to say Tziduk Hadin on Shabbat at Mincha emanates from the death of Moses. There is still a custom not to be involved in the study of Torah after Mincha time on Shabbat to commemorate the death of Moses.

#### LOSS OF MOSES

The rabbis articulate the loss of Moses also in quantitative terms. With Moses's death learning and knowledge were severely effected.

It has been taught: "A thousand and seven hundred lessons and specifications of the scribes were forgotten during the period of mourning for Moses. Said Rabbi Abbuha: "Nevertheless Otniel the son of Kenaz restored [these forgotten teachings] as a result of his dialectics, as it says: And Otniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it." (T'murah 16a)

With the demise of Moses, Torah was forgotten, it is interesting that it was not Joshua who restored the learning, rather Otniel. Perhaps Joshua took the death of Moses in a harsher manner than others did.4 Nonetheless the people lamented Moses's demise and therefore Joshua's ascension.

What was it about Joshua that merited his filling Moses's enormous shoes? When it comes to scholarship arguably Otniel was superior.

Rashi in his commentary to Avot implies that in scholarship Pinchas was the superior to Joshua.5 Rashi cites a verse in Malachi and applies the verse to Pinchas:

The Torah of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should guard knowledge, and they should seek the Torah from his mouth; for he is a messenger/angel of the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 2:6-7)

The priest in question who had the true Torah in his mouth was Pinchas. The verse is associated in the following passage where an additional aspect is revealed.

No other people sent to perform a religious duty and risking their lives in order to succeed in their mission can compare with the two men whom Joshua the son of Nun sent; as it says, And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two spies (Joshua 2:1).

Who were they? Our Rabbis taught: "They were Pinchas and Caleb ... When they came to seek them, what did Rahab do? She took them away to hide them. Pinchas said to her: 'I am a priest and priests are compared to angels' as it says, For the priest's lips should keep

knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the angel of the Lord hosts, and an angel, if he wishes, can be visible, and if he wishes he can be invisible. How can we infer that prophets are compared to angels?

"From the fact that it says in reference to Moses, And sent an angel, and brought us forth out of Egypt (Numbers 20:16). Was it not Moses who brought them out? Certainly, but you can infer from this that prophets are compared to angels. Similarly it says, And the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said:... I made you go up out Egypt (Judges 2:1). But was it not Pinchas who said this? Yes, but you can infer from it that the prophets are called angels. Pinchas, then, said to Rahab: 'I am a priest and do not need to be hidden. Hide Caleb, my companion. I will stand before them and they will not see me.'" (Midrash Rabbah - Numbers 26:1)

Not only does Pinchas speak true Torah, he is compared to an angel of G-d. Moses too was angelic in his subsisting without food or drink, when he behaved as the angels during the duration of his stay on Sinai.

Rabbi Tanhuma in Rabbi Eleazar's name and Rabbi Abun in Rabbi Meir's name said: "The proverb runs, when you enter a town, follow its customs (When in Rome, do as Rome does.) Above [in the celestial sphere] there is no eating and drinking; hence when Moses ascended on high he appeared like them [the angels], as it says, Then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water (Deut. 9:9). (Midrash Rabbah - Genesis 48:14)

#### TRANSMISSION TO JOSHUA

Yet Rashi stresses that Moses passed the Torah to Joshua -- specifically, exclusively Joshua. Other studied and perhaps excelled but the tradition was passed on to Joshua.

Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the great assembly. (Avot 1:1)

Surely there were others who learned at the feet of Moses, why is Joshua singled out - especially if others may have been superior?

The Talmud describes the scene of the Torah being taught in the Beit Midrash of Moses:

What was the procedure of the instruction in the oral law? Moses learned from the mouth of the Omnipotent. Then Aaron entered and Moses taught him his lesson. Aaron then moved aside and sat down on Moses' left. Thereupon Aaron's sons entered and Moses taught them their lesson. His sons then moved aside, Eleazar taking his seat on Moses' right and Ithamar on Aaron's left.

Rabbi Yehuda stated: "Aaron was always on Moses' right. Thereupon the elders entered and Moses taught them their lesson, and when the elders moved aside all the people entered and Moses taught them their lesson. It thus followed that Aaron heard the lesson four times, his sons heard it three times, the elders twice and all the people once. At this stage Moses departed and Aaron taught them his lesson. Then Aaron departed and his sons taught them their lesson. His sons then departed and the elders taught them their lesson. It thus followed that everybody heard the lesson four times."

From here Rabbi Eliezer inferred: "It is a man's duty to teach his pupil [his lesson] four times. For this is arrived at a *minori ad majus*: Aaron who learned from Moses who had it from the Omnipotent had to learn his lesson four times how much more so an ordinary pupil who learns from an ordinary teacher." (Eruvin 54b)

Where however was Joshua during this process? He seems nowhere to be found?

#### THE ONLY STUDENT

When Maimonides describes the process of the Torah being taught he states:

Elazar, Pinchas and Joshua all three received from Moses. To Joshua, who was Moses' student, he [i.e., Moses] transmitted the Oral Torah, and commanded him regarding it. (Introduction to Mishne Torah)

We see from Maimonides' formulation, that while Moses taught many people only Joshua was his student. And only Joshua was entrusted with the oral tradition. Evidently, this is Maimonides' understanding of the Mishna in Avot: "Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders."

In a subsequent paragraph Maimonides writes that Pinchas received the tradition from Joshua, which is remarkable considering that Pinchas too had studied directly from Moses. As we saw above Moses had one primary student, Joshua.

This formulation remains difficult in terms of the Talmudic statement which left out Joshua from the entire process. Where was Joshua when the Torah was being taught?

When the daughters of Zelophehad inherited from their father, Moses argued: "The time is opportune for me to demand my own needs. If daughters inherit, it is surely right that my sons should inherit my glory." The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: "Whoever keeps the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof; and he that waits on his master shall be honored (Proverbs 27:18). Your sons sat idly by and did not study the Torah. Joshua served you much and he showed you great honor. It was he who rose early in the morning and remained late at night at your House of Assembly. He used to arrange the benches, and he used to spread the mats. Seeing that he has served you with all his might, he is to serve Israel, for he shall not lose his reward." (Midrash Rabbah - Numbers 21:14)

The Midrash tells us that Joshua never left Moses's presence, this based on the passage found in the Book of Exodus:

And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the pillar of cloudy stand at the Tent door; and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he turned again into the camp; but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not from the Tent. (Exodus 33:10-11)6

Joshua never left his teacher's side therefore, even though arguably Moses may have had more talented followers, the task of replacing Moses was the lot of Joshua.7 Joshua was the one who set out the benches and tables in Moses's Beit Midrash. Before the other students arrived and after the other students left Joshua was still there at Moses's side.8 This type of dedication is institutionalized in the Talmud:

Our Rabbis taught: "Who is an ignoramus? Anyone who does not recite the Shema evening and morning." This is the view of Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Joshua says: "Anyone who does not put on tefillin." Ben Azzai says: "Anyone who has not a fringe on his garment." Rabbi Nathan says: "Anyone who has not a mezuzah on his door." Rabbi Nathan ben Joseph says: "Anyone who has sons and does not bring them up to the study of the Torah." Others say: "Even if one has learnt Scripture and Mishnah, if he has not ministered to a scholar, he is an ignoramus." Rabbi Huna said: "The halachah is as laid down by 'others.'" (Berachot 47b)

To be scholarly or "book smart" in the absence of serving a sage is insufficient at least, dangerous at worst. Knowledge is not simply a process of assimilating information, it requires far more subtle skills which can only be acquired by sitting at the feet of a sage. There was never a greater sage than Moses nor a greater more dedicated student than Joshua. Therefore, when the time came to replace Moses, G-d chose Joshua.

And Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, "Let the Lord, the G-d of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation. Who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." And the Lord said to Moses, "Take

Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is spirit, and lay your hand upon him." (Numbers 27:15-18)

#### THE ULTIMATE ORDINATION

Joshua received the ultimate ordination at the commandment of G-d by the hand of Moses -- just like the Torah itself.9

The task of Joshua would not be easy. The comparison with Moses as we saw made for a difficult situation. And the fall off in Torah study with the demise of Moses compounded the problem.

The way of dealing with problem was by bidding Joshua to be strong:

And Moses called to Joshua, and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of a good courage; for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them; and you shall cause them to inherit it." (Deut. 31:7)

Moses therefore wrote this song/poem the same day, and taught it to the people of Israel. And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, "Be strong and of a good courage; for you shall bring the people of Israel into the land which I swore to them; and I will be with you." (Deut 31:22-23)

Not only did Moses instruct Joshua to be strong, so did G-d:

And it was after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross over the Jordan, you, and all this people, to the land which I give to them, to the people of Israel... Be strong and courageous; for you shall cause this people to inherit the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the Torah, which Moses my servant commanded you; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth; but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written on it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous; be not afraid, nor be dismayed; for the Lord your G-d is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:1-9)

We are told that Joshua never left Moses's tent, and now, with the very same language, Joshua is told that the Torah will never leave him.

#### HOW TO BE STRONG

Completing any endeavor can induce mixed feelings, joy from accomplishment, yet fear from the future. As we complete the yearly Torah cycle we must pay attention to G-d's call for strength, and forge ahead and meet new challenges with joy and awe -- not self-satisfaction and complacency.

We will start the Torah anew. Dedicated to delve into our tradition to find more meaning, and take full advantage of the unparalleled opportunity to peek into G-d's mind.

Our Rabbis taught: "Four things require strength, namely, [study of] the Torah, good deeds, praying, and one's worldly occupation. Whence do we know this of Torah and good deeds? Because it says, Only be strong and very courageous to observe to do according to all the law. Be strong in Torah." (Brachot 32b)

#### CHAZAK CHAZAK VINITCHAZEK!

Rabbi Ari Kahn serves as Director of Foreign Student Programs at Bar Ilan University in Israel, and is a featured lecturer at Aish Jerusalem. You can contact him directly at: AKahn@aish.com See the full Parsha Archives: [http://aish.com/torahportion/pArchive\\_hp.asp](http://aish.com/torahportion/pArchive_hp.asp) (C) 2001 Aish HaTorah International - All rights reserved. Email: [webmaster@aish.com](mailto:webmaster@aish.com) Home Page: <http://aish.com>

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Subj: Perceptions - Parashas Zos HaBrochah/Simchas Torah Date: 10/7/2001  
From: [winston@torah.org](mailto:winston@torah.org) (Rabbi Pinchas Winston) To: [perceptions@torah.org](mailto:perceptions@torah.org) (Perceptions)

SPECIAL ESSAYS written in light of current events. Go to: [www.thirtysix.org](http://www.thirtysix.org). Visit <http://www.thirtysix.org> and see the full list of Rabbi

Winston's books and writings, not mention cassette tapes and videos. Edited by: Miriam Tovah Weinberg

#### EVENING MEAL:

And this (V'zos) is the blessing which Moshe, the Man of G-d, blessed the Children of Israel before his death. (Devarim 33:1)

In general, I write "Perceptions" two weeks in advance of the parshah, since it is only one of a few projects that I work on each week, and so that I can send it out Motzei Shabbos of the week of the parshah itself. This way people can read it in advance of Shabbos if they want to, and many seem to do just that.

I never felt that it was important to state that, until about two weeks ago. Until the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by terrorists, my parshah sheet was rarely out of step with current history, dealing with issues that were relevant long after the weekly parshah was read in synagogues.

Not any more. Now, so much happens so fast that affects the Jewish people in so many important ways that I find that what I may have written the week before may not be what is important to talk about the week of. To compensate, I have started to write additional essays and I am posting them on my website ([www.thirtysix.org](http://www.thirtysix.org)) to be available to anyone looking for such information at the time it is important.

The first word of this week's parshah, "v'zos," literally means "and this." However, the word also has a deeper meaning, which could change the meaning of the verse to: Zos is the blessing, meaning that whatever "zos" represents is in fact the blessing that Moshe gave to the Jewish people just before he left This World.

At this point, it is important to introduce two concepts, both of which are found in the following section of Talmud:

Rav Chizkiah said in the name of Rebi Yirmiyah, who said it in the name of Rebi Shimon bar Yochai: I see that the great people are few in number . . . But is that so? The master has said that the first wave that comes to greet The Holy One, Blessed is He, extends eighteen thousand miles, as it says, "All around it should be eighteen thousand" (Yechezkel 48:35). This is not difficult to explain; these see with "Esp'kilyarya Hameirah," and these see with "Esp'kilyarya sh'aino Meirah." (Succah 45b)

ESP'KILARYA: A division that separates between them and the Divine Presence; MEIRAH: like a mirror that you look into; there are some righteous people for whom it does not give off much light and they can't really see that much. (Rashi)

Although from Rashi it is still not that clear what an "Esp'kilyarya Hameirah" is, it is clear that it represents a certain level of vision along the road to prophecy. There will always be somewhat of a division between us and G-d, but there are some divisions that allow one to see beyond them, and some that block vision as well, though one may still have a sense of something beyond them.

According to the Tikunei Zohar 110d, "zos" is not just a word, but it represents a middah - a trait, specifically the trait of "Malchus" (Kingship) that also corresponds to the level of "Esp'kilyarya sh'aino Meirah, the lower less clear vision of G-d and His will. Though Moshe Rabbeinu himself was on the higher level of "Esp'kilyarya Hameirah" (Yevamos 49b), he did not possess the ability or time to elevate the Jewish people to the same level, and therefore, he settled for the level of "zos," which was far greater than no level at all.

As the Pri Tzaddik points out (Simchas Torah 48), there was precedence for this back in the days when Ya'akov Avinu blessed his own sons, the Twelve Tribes, just before he died:

And this (V'zos) is what their father said to them . . . (Bereishis 49:28)

For, by blessing his sons with "zos," and later, Moshe blessing the Jewish people, he caused the trait of Malchus to enter their hearts, and through this, they became merit worthy of the blessings that followed. And, logically-speaking this should be true of all the generations that have followed since then - the blessings can only help us when the trait of Malchus is in our hearts.

If so, then we need to know what it means to have the trait of Malchus in our hearts.

#### DAYTIME MEAL:

And this (v'zos) to Yehudah . . . (Devarim 33:7)

What better place is there to understand the concept of Malchus itself than from the source of it within the Jewish people, Yehudah, whose blessing happens to begin with the word "zos."

According to the Rokeach, the words "v'zos l'Yehudah" hint that all kings to descend from Yehudah must always learn Torah. This is because "zos" also always alludes to Torah. However, though this mitzvah may be more stringent by the kings of Yehudah, it is still one that applies to ALL Jews, and one which does not necessarily make Yehudah, the source of Malchus, unique.

To begin with, the Four-Letter Name of G-d is within Yehudah's name, which spelled, YUD-HEH-VAV-Dalet-HEH, which the Pri Tzaddik explains also corresponds to the level of Esp'kilyara Hameirah. However, that is not the only source of Yehudah's name, as the Torah reminds us:

She became pregnant again, and gave birth to a son. She said, "This time I will thank (odeh) G-d." Therefore she called him "Yehudah" . . . (Bereishis 29:35)

In other words, Yehudah's name was a testimony to Leah's, Yehudah's mother, gratefulness to G-d for her fourth son's birth. His name comes from the Hebrew word "modeh" which can mean "I thank" or "I admit." In fact, as Rashi points out in this week's parshah, Yehudah's blessing followed that of Reuvain because he had taught Reuvain to admit his mistake before his father.

In fact, admission is what Yehudah's life was all about, or at least his right to the kingship:

Yehudah, you, your brothers will acknowledge . . . (Bereishis 49:8)

You acted correctly when you admitted your guilt in the case of Tamar, and therefore, Yehudah, you, your brothers will acknowledge, for I recognize it too after having wrongly suspected you of killing Yosef. You are therefore chosen to be the king (Bereishis Rabbah 99:9).

What was this trait that Yehudah possessed that is the power of admission, but more importantly, the right to Malchus? If you think about it, admission is based upon the ability to surrender oneself to the moment, and in more general terms, history as a whole. You may be able to fool some of the people some of the time (including yourself), but you can NEVER fool G-d, and even a liar has to know that on some level.

At the moment of a truth, a person stands between two decisions: to save face but damage history, or to damage himself but save history. To save face means to do what is most comfortable for you at the moment, regardless of the long-term effects on history. To save history means to do what must be done for the sake of the bigger picture at that time, even if it means getting hurt along the way.

Yehudah could have lied. He could have denied being the father of Tamar's children, and they would have killed Tamar and her children, and no one would have been the wiser for it. However, Yehudah knew that one day the truth would catch up to him and that he would be held responsible for the distortion of truth, which would have to be rectified at his expense. That's the concept of "measure-for-measure," and given that an innocent woman and her children would die as a result, that was heavy price to pay.

Instead, Yehudah suffered complete embarrassment, and possible disownment by his father, which in the case of the Tribes meant more than just not inheriting one's financial part of the will. It even meant losing one's portion in the Jewish people altogether, and all the future rewards to come - also a VERY heavy price to pay.

But he paid it. Yehudah surrendered himself to the moment and to history, and for that, his father Ya'akov told him, he earned the Malchus. For that is the trait of Malchus - the ability to make history more important than our own individual lives, and to make the nation more important than the people who make it up.

It is THIS trait that removes the spiritual "blinders" from a person's eyes which prevent him from seeing history as it is, and Divine Providence as it really acts. It is THE difference between being able to see with the "Esp'kilyara Hameirah" or the "Esp'kilyara sh'aino Meirah," the lower less clear vision of G-d and His will. Ultimately, as we learn from the word "zos," it is the difference whether or not to be able to reap the blessings imparted to us by Ya'akov Avinu at the beginning of our history, and later by Moshe Rabbeinu.

#### SIMCHAS TORAH:

Where do I begin to tell the story of the great love I feel for you? A love, as a young boy I was unaware of, I never knew. A "Tree of Life" You have been called by the wisest of the wise, A flowing river of life, an invigorating stream, a source of light for the eyes.

You are one of the three goodly gifts that Hashem gave to his nation, Kept in waiting for them thousands of years before creation. It had been a joyous time, that saw a desert bloom and become flowery, G-d the "Chasan," the Jewish people His "Kallah," Torah His dowry.

"We will do and we will understand," we said with complete trust, We will do all the mitzvos, understanding that life with mitzvos is a must. As the Faith Shepherd climbed the mountain to fulfill his greatest role, We waited with anticipation to soon nourish our collective soul.

The time passed slowly, and evil still remained amongst us, Moshe's extended absence gave "them" cause and time to fuss. As is always the way of "the people" who left Egypt on our wings, They sowed dissension, and drove us to horrible things.

As patient as You are, some things simply cannot be or exist, Golden calves, worshipping idols, from which we were told to desist. Had we only known then that it would break the work of Heaven, We would have stopped them all, the worshippers of gold and "even."

Before our very eyes, we watched Holiness fall to the profane ground, And instantly understood that it was for destruction we were bound. But You relented, had mercy on Your people, and gave us a second chance, But not to receive the first set again of which we only were given a glance.

It took eighty days of prayer and supplication to gain atonement, The punishment for which we were able to achieve postponement. And then, on the eleventh of Tishrei Moshe Rabbeinu reappeared, Holding dearly the Second Tablets for a nation whose eyes had teared.

Thus, on Simchas Torah we celebrate the gift of the Torah, the word of G-d, Even though our lives and history still remain quite flawed, We dance with great joy with a gift that has no equal, There was nothing before it and nothing after it, it hasn't a sequel.

When we dance with the Sefer Torah do we keep it in mind, How we were almost left in the dark, left to live amongst the blind? But instead G-d came down and showered His people with love, Giving His people life, joy, and a ladder to bridge Below and Above.

In these troubled times, when we feel so distant and so estranged, And mankind commits acts and offences clearly so deranged, It remains for us, the children of ancestry much larger than life, To reunite with our G-d, His Torah, and finally bring end to all strife.

Have a great Yom Tov and Shabbos, Pinchas Winston

Rabbi Winston has authored fourteen books on Jewish philosophy (hashkafa). If you enjoy Rabbi Winston's weekly Perceptions on the Parsha, you may enjoy many of his books. Visit the Project Genesis bookstore - Genesis Judaica - <http://books.torah.org/authors/winston/> for more details! Or, send e-mail to [winston@books.torah.org](mailto:winston@books.torah.org) to receive additional information. Perceptions, Copyright 1 2001 Rabbi Pinchas Winston and Torah.org. Torah.org depends upon your support. Please visit <http://torah.org/support/> or write to [dedications@torah.org](mailto:dedications@torah.org) or [donations@torah.org](mailto:donations@torah.org). Thank you! Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B Baltimore, MD 21208

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Subj: VZOT HA'BRACHA , shiur Date: 10/6/2001 4:54pm From: [tsc@bezeqint.net](mailto:tsc@bezeqint.net) (RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG) To: [parsha@tanach.org](mailto:parsha@tanach.org)  
Mazel Tov to Reena & Paul Shindman upon the birth of a baby girl - Noa Shani! Mazel Tov to Miriam Leibtag, upon her engagement to Edwin Zaghi!  
THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [<http://www.tanach.org>] In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag

#### PARSHAT V'ZOT HA'BRACHA

V'zot Ha'bracha is a classic example of a Parsha that almost everyone knows by heart (at least the first three aliyot), but almost no one understands. [That's because it is read numerous times in shul, but its words are very difficult to translate.] In this week's shiur, we try to "break ice" by undertaking a basic analysis of the parsha's structure and theme.

INTRODUCTION Before we begin our study of what the "brachot" [blessings] are all about, let's begin with the two obvious problems that one encounters when studying their order. First of all, one tribe (SHIMON) appears to be missing, i.e. his tribe is not even mentioned within Moshe's blessings. Secondly, the order of these blessings (tribe by tribe) proceeds in what appears to be a rather random sequence.

To better appreciate these two problems, the following table lists the tribes according to their order in V'zot Ha'bracha. To accentuate the apparent lack of sequence in this list, next to each "shevet" [tribe] we note their respective matriarch and relative position according to birth.

#### THE ORDER OF THE TRIBES

#	SHEVET	MATRIARCH	POSITION OF BIRTH
1	Reuven	Leah	1
2	Yehuda	Leah	4
3	Levi	Leah	3
4	Binyamin	Rachel	12
5	Yosef	Rachel	11 [includes Efraim & Menashe]
6	Zevulun	Leah	6
7	Yissachar	Leah	5
8	Gad	Zilpah	9
9	Dan	Bilhah	7
10	Naftali	Bilhah	8

11 Asher Zilpah 10

\* Note that shevet SHIMON is missing!

Carefully study this list. Although the tribes are not listed according to age or common matriarch, they do clearly divide between the children of Yaakov's wives (Rachel & Leah) and those of the maidservants (Bilhah & Zilpah). Within these two groups, however, there seems to be little logic in the progression. For example, although it's pretty clear why Reuven is first, as he is the oldest, why does Moshe skip to Yehuda? Likewise, why does Binyamin precede his older brother Yosef, and why do the children of Rachel 'interrupt' Moshe's blessings to the children of Leah? Finally, why does Zevulun precede Yissachar, why does Gad precede Dan, and why do the children of Bilhah 'interrupt' the children of Zilpah? Even in Parshat Bamidbar, where we find the tribes listed in various orders as they prepare to organize the camp around the Mishkan (see TSC shiur), we find no list that is even slightly similar to the order of the blessings in v'Zot ha'bracha. In summary, although the list is clearly not altogether random, it doesn't appear to follow any definite order, either. In the following shiur, we attempt to identify the underlying rationale behind the sequence of Moshe's presentation. To that end, we must first consider the nature and purpose of these blessings.

**FROM YAAKOV TO MOSHE** V'zot Ha'bracha is not the first time in Chumash where we find that each tribe receives a blessing. Recall that back in Parshat Va'ychi, Yaakov Avinu blesses each tribe before his death. Unlike Moshe, however, Yaakov addresses his children in almost exact age order: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Zevulun & Yissachar [note slight deviation], Dan (first born of Bilhah), Gad (first born of Zilpah), Asher, and Naftali. [The only problem, of course, is that Zevulun precedes his older brother Yissachar (for an explanation, see Seforno Br. 49:13, based on Midrash Tanchuma Vayechi 11.). Although Gad & Asher precede Naftali, they may very well have been born first, depending on how one understands Breishit 30:5-10.]

The reason why Yaakov blesses his children in 'age order' is quite simple. As we explained in our shiur on Parshat Va'ychi, Yaakov (prior to his death) blesses each son according to his individual potential, as exhibited and manifest throughout each respective son's life. Therefore, whereas these blessings relate to personal destiny, it is only reasonable that they follow (more or less) the order of the sons' births. Moshe, by contrast, is not the 'dying father' of twelve sons. He is rather the 'departing leader' of twelve tribes to whom he has given the Torah and who are about to conquer and occupy the Land of Israel. As we would expect, his blessings accurately reflect the setting and circumstances in which they are administered. As we will see, each bracha relates in one form or another to either: \* the forthcoming military conquest of the land, \* the nature of the specific "nachala", or ["nachala" = the territory apportioned to each tribe] \* a leadership function charged upon that tribe.

We will first demonstrate that this is indeed the case, and then we will be able to answer our original questions concerning the order of the tribes' presentation.

**THE 'GIST' OF THE BLESSINGS** First, let's quickly review the gist of each blessing. Notice that almost every blessing relates to either the defining characteristic of its tribe's "nachala" or the tribe's role in the imminent conquest of the land.

**REUVEN** "Let Reuven live and not die, and let his numbers be counted." (33:6)

Rashi explains that this "bracha" addresses Moshe's concern that Reuven may not receive any "nachala" at all! Considering that Yaakov basically cursed Reuven instead of blessing him (on account of his sin with Bilhah), Reuven may have lost his right to a "nachala," just as he forfeited his claim to the "bechora" (birthright). [See also Targum Onkelos.] Additionally, the tribe of Reuven had already 'set up camp' OUTSIDE the biblical borders of Eretz Canaan (in Transjordan), another reason to doubt whether Reuven would even its place as an 'official' tribe of Israel. As Rashi explains, Moshe's blessing counters this fear and reassures Reuven that he will remain 'alive,' an integral part of the "nachala" of Am Yisrael. Chizkuni, however, offers a 'military' explanation for Reuven's blessing. Since the tribe of Reuven had promised to fight as the "chalutz" [the front line attack force - see Bamidbar 32:20- 32] in the conquest of Eretz Yisrael, Moshe confers upon them a special blessing for protection in battle. He prays on their behalf that their 'number' ["mispar"] - population - should remain the same after battle as it was beforehand. [This approach also appears in the commentary of Rabbenu Yosef Bechor Shor.]

**YEHUDA** "Hear Hashem the [battle] cry of Yehuda and help him lead his people. Make his hands strong for him, and help him against his enemies." (33:7) [See Rashi/Ibn Ezra]

Clearly, the bracha to Yehuda relates to his military leadership, as Moshe foresees that the soldiers of shevet Yehuda will be particularly enthusiastic and

diligent in the conquest of their portion in the Land (see Yehoshua chapter 14 and Sefer Shoftim chapter 1).

**LEVI** "[After a short reference to Aharon, the tribal leader and kohen gadol]... They shall teach Your laws to Yaakov and Your instructions to Israel; they shall offer KToret... and whole- offerings [OLOT] on the MIZBAYACH. G-d should bless his CHAYIL and favor his undertakings. Help him smite the loins of those who rise against him, and don't allow his enemies to succeed." (33:8-11)

The focal point of Levi's bracha is his responsibility to provide spiritual leadership, to teach Hashem's laws and officiate in His Temple. Interestingly, however, even this function is presented in 'military' jargon [= "chaylo" in 33:11].

[Note also 33:9, an apparent reference to Bnei Levi's preparedness to prosecute and execute those who sinned at Chet Ha'egel (see Rashi 33:9 and Shmot 32:26-29). Indeed, their conduct at that point was of a "military" nature.]

Whereas all other tribes earned a "nachala," a specific, designated portion of land, shevet Levi was scattered among the various tribes in order to serve as teachers throughout the country (note Devarim 18:1-2, "Hashem hu nachlatam"). Understandably, then, their blessing relates to their leadership role, rather than their allocated portion in the land.

**BINYAMIN** "Beloved to G-d, He shall allow His SHCHINA to dwell securely within him. He constantly protects [=surrounds] him, as He rests between his shoulders." (33:12)

This blessing (recently brought to fame by a popular Avraham Fried song, "uTBinyamin amar...") focuses on the special quality of Binyamin's "nachala," its designation to house the Bet Ha'Mikdash in Yerushalayim.

**YOSEF** [Efraim & Menashe] "G-d's blessing is given to his land, with the bounty of dew from heaven... with the bounty of the earth in its fullness... His 'horns' are like those of a wild ox, with them he gores other nations... these are the 'tens of thousands' of Efraim and these are the 'thousands' of Menashe." (see 33:13-17)

The precise translation of this blessing is somewhat elusive, but it clearly speaks of the bountiful nature of the "nachala" apportioned to Yosef. It appears that Yosef will bear the responsibility of forming the backbone of Israel's agrarian economy (as was Yosef's job in Egypt - see Or Hachayim here). The final verse alludes to Yosef's military competence that will grant him victory over enemy nations. Specifically, Rashi understands the final pasuk as a reference to the leadership of Yehoshua - a descendant of Efraim - who led Am Yisrael in their conquest of Eretz Canaan.

**ZEVULUN & YISSACHAR** "Rejoice Zevulun as you go out [to war; compare with Bamidbar 27:17] and Yissachar in your tents. [Their prosperity will catalyze] a call to other nations to ascend G-d's mountain [see Ibn Ezra & Seforno] where they will offer proper sacrifices, for they draw from the riches of the sea and from the hidden hoards of the sand." (33:18)

The opening sentence may refer to Zevulun's military prowess [see Ibn Ezra's interpretation, in contrast to Rashi's, and see Shoftim 5:18], but the conclusion of the pasuk clearly relates to the importance of his "nachala." His territory was situated along the sea [the coast from Caesarea to the Acco/Haifa bay area], thus forming Israel's gateway to foreign trade and, consequently, economic relations with other nations. Moshe anticipates that these business alliances will lead to the recognition on the part of those nations of the G-d of Israel - the primary long-term goal of Am Yisrael (see Devarim 4:5-8 & previous shiurim on Parshiot Noach & Lech Lecha). The "nachala" of Yissachar, too, facilitates international trade (and influence), as it lies in Emek Yizrael, at the heart of the VIA MARIS - the ancient trade route connecting Egypt with Mesopotamia. [See Seforno 33:19, who alludes to Yissachar's role in international trade.] Furthermore, Rashbam (Breishit 49:14) understands the "tents" of Yissachar as a reference to this tribe's involvement in agriculture, while Rabbenu Yosef Bechor Shor (here) associates Yissachar's tents with the cattle industry (compare with Breishit 4:20). All this, too, relates directly to Yissachar's portion: the fertile soil of Emek Yizrael renders it an ideal location for both agriculture and livestock breeding.

**GAD** "Blessed be He who enlarges [the "nachala" of] Gad. He is poised like a lion to tear off arm and scalp [i.e. military strength]. He chose for himself the best ["nachala"]..." (33:20-21) [The rest of the pasuk is very difficult, but most likely refers to his nachala as the chosen spot for Moshe's burial site - see Rashi.]

Once again, Moshe's bracha focuses on the unique nature of the given tribe's "nachala", Gads initiative to widen his inheritance in Transjordan, as well as their military capabilities.

**DAN** "Dan is like a lion's whelp that leaps from the Bashan." (33:22)

Dan's blessing obviously relates to their military might and the location of their "nachala" - at the western slopes of the Golan Heights [Bashan is the biblical name for the Golan - see Devarim 3:8-10], today the area of Tel Dan and Kiryat Shmona in the Chula valley of the Upper Galil. Anyone who has been on a tiul to

the Golan, and visited the old Syrian bunkers that overlooked the Chula valley and the area of Tel Dan and Kiryat Shemona, can easily understand how the phrase "yezaneq min ha'Bashan" describes the nachala of Dan. [Even though Devarim 4:43 indicates that the Golan region itself was included in Menashe's nachala, not Dan's, the Targum here explains, our pasuk means that Dan lived near the Bashan, and the land in his region was watered by the streams flowing down from the Bashan. Note as well that Ibn Ezra (and others) explain Moshe's bracha as having nothing to do with Dan's actual portion, rather the tribe's military strength. He interprets "yezaneq min habashan" as modifying the lion to whom Dan is compared, rather than the tribe of Dan itself.]

Additionally, Rashi explains the lion metaphor as a reference to Dan's location on the border, standing guard against enemy intrusion. [Almost prophetic!]

**NAFTALI** "Naftali should be satiated [for his "nachala"] is full of G-d's blessing, to the west and south (of his brother Dan) he shall/must conquer his land." (33:23) [See Ibn Ezra's comments regarding the word, "yarasha."] [See also Ramban - note why he quotes the Midrash.]

Again, Moshe's bracha relates to the agricultural potential of this "nachala" and the conquest of that portion. [Parenthetically, Naftali's nachala is situated in the fertile and beautiful region of the Upper Galil, to the west and south of Tel Dan (including Zefat & Har Meron).]

**ASHER** "May Asher be the most blessed of sons, may he be the favorite of his brothers and may he dip his foot in oil. Iron and copper are your door-bolts, and your security should last for all your days." (33:24)

These psukim requires further elucidation, but what is clear is that they relate to two unique characteristics of Asher's "nachala": its abundance of olive trees (and hence olive oil) and its location on Israel's northern border. [See Ramban's interpretation, that Asher's portion guards the country's northern border (and thus serves as an "iron lock" securing the country). See also Seferno, who explains that the presence of iron & copper locks on their homes reflects the wealth of their land.]

**SUMMARY** As we review all these brachot, it becomes clear that they all focus on the nature of each "nachala" and the conquest of the land. In fact, almost all the commentators, especially Ibn Ezra, Chizkuni, and Seferno (in addition to Rashi and Ramban), relate to this aspect of the "nachalot" throughout their interpretation of these psukim. Hence we conclude that Moshe Rabeinu, aware of the military capabilities of each tribe and the anticipated geographic division of the land (note 34:1-4), blesses each tribe to encourage them to achieve their fullest potential in the forthcoming conquest of Eretz Canaan. Based on this understanding of the basic purpose behind these brachot, we can return to our original question and make some sense out of the seemingly random order of their presentation.

**'INHERIT' ORDER** As you have probably guessed by now, since the "brachot" focus on the "nachalot," it stands to reason that the division of Eretz Yisrael among the tribes serves as the basis of the sequence of presentation in this parsha. Let's see how it works. (A map of the "nachalot" of the "shvatim" from Sefer Yehoshua will be helpful for the next section of the shiur.) Moshe begins his blessings with Reuven. He does so not because Reuven is the oldest, but because he is the first shevet to take his "nachala," as recorded in Bamidbar chapter 32 (see also Devarim 3:16-19). Next, we would expect to find Gad, who joined Reuven in their request to take their "nachala" in Transjordan. However, there is one important, 'overriding' rule in the "brachot" - that the tribes from Yaakov's wives (Leah & Rachel) take precedence over the tribes from the maidservants (Bilhah & Zilpah). [This principle explains why Gad later precedes Dan, even though Dan is older (and the head of a "machaneh"!); Gad is blessed first because he took his "nachala" first.]

This also helps clarify the content of Reuven's blessing. Moshe must emphasize that EVEN THOUGH Reuven's "nachala" lies outside the borders of Eretz Canaan, they retain their status as an 'official' shevet (as explained earlier).

**YEHUDA FIRST** Once we skip Gad, Reuven is followed by YEHUDA - the first of the tribes to successfully conquer his portion of land, as detailed both in Sefer Yehoshua (chapters 14->15) and in Sefer Shoftim (1:1-15). This also explains why Yehuda's blessing focuses on his military power.

**A 'SOLUTION' FOR SHIMON** Once Moshe Rabeinu begins with Yehuda's portion, the most southern region of Eretz Canaan, he now works his way 'up north,' through Binyamin to Efraim and Menashe. As we will show, this principle will explain the order of the remaining blessing. First of all, this explains why Binyamin precedes Yosef, for his nachala is located north of Yehuda, but south of Efraim. This also may provide us with a clue as to why there is no blessing for Shimon. Considering that Shimon's "nachala" is later included within the borders of Yehuda (see Yehoshua 19:1 & 19:9!), one could conclude that Shimon basically

never received their own nachala (a fulfillment of Yaakov's 'blessing' to Shimon in Breishit 48:5-7). Furthermore, in the aftermath of "chet bnot moav" their numbers were severely reduced (see Bamidbar 26:14, compare 1:23!), hence we can conclude that their army may not have played a major role in the conquest of the land as well. [Note Rashi on 33:7 (towards the end), where he quotes a Midrash Tehilim that the bracha to Shimon is actually 'included' within the bracha to Yehuda: "shma Hashem" contains the first letters of Shimon's name, "shin.mem.ayin." In fact, the same wording is used when Shimon is first named by his mother: "ki SHAMA HASHEM ki snuah anochi" (see Breishit 29:33!).]

**WHY LEVI & BINYAMIN COME FIRST** Now, we must explain why Levi follows immediately after Yehuda, before all the other shvatim. To do so, we must first answer a more basic question, i.e. why does Levi receive any blessing at all? Since Moshe's "brachot" relate specifically to the "nachalot" apportioned to the tribes, then a bracha for Levi seems out of place, given the fact that no portion was allocated for this tribe! The answer is actually quite simple. The tribe of Levi did, in fact, receive a "nachala" - "nachalat Hashem": "The kohanim-leviim - the entire tribe of Levi - shall not receive a nachala with the rest of Israel ... G-d is his nachala, as He spoke to him" (Devarim 18:1-2).

G-d separated the entire shevet of Levi to serve in the Bet Ha'Mikdash and to teach Torah to Bnei Yisrael; and hence, this responsibility is considered their "nachala". Even though this 'special' type of nachala does not carry a distinct geographical border, the Bet ha'Mikdash will become the central location for these responsibilities, and hence the tribe's central location. Considering that the permanent Bet Hamikdash is destined to be built in Jerusalem [= Har ha'Moriah, see Divrei Ha'yamim II 3:1], the tribe of Levi will be centered in that city, located between the borders of the tribes of Yehuda and Binyamin (see Yehoshua 15:8 & 18:16). This can explain why the blessing to Levi not only focuses on this tribal responsibility, but also why it given between the blessings of Yehuda and Efraim. [Recall that Jerusalem is located in between Yehuda (to the south) and Binyamin (to the north). Whereas Levi's "nachala," as it were, lies immediately north of Yehuda's, their blessing immediately follows the bracha to Yehuda. [Furthermore, although Levi receives cities within many other "nachalot," Yehuda is the first tribe to supply cities to the Leviim (see Yehoshua 21:1-4). This may be an additional reason why Levi follows Yehuda in Vezot Habracha.]

This interpretation also explains the content of Levi's bracha. Levi doesn't receive a "nachala" in the same sense as the other tribes. Their blessing therefore focuses instead on their responsibility to work in the Mikdash and teach Torah, tasks to which the Torah earlier refers as "Hashem hu NACHALATO" (18:1-2).

Binyamin thus follows Levi, as their nachala contains, as its southern border, the Bet ha'Mikdash (the site where the Leviim officiate - their "nachala"). Accordingly, Binyamin's bracha deals exclusively with G-d's promise that His SHCHINA will dwell within this tribe's borders ["shoulders"]. [Over the course of history, the Mishkan was located in other cities within Binyamin as well, such as Gilgal, Nov, and Givon, and according to some opinions, even the city of Shiloh.]

**YOSEF & THE SHOMRON / YISSACHAR & ZEVLUN** As we proceed northward from the territory of Binyamin, we enter the region settled by YOSEF, first Efraim and then Menashe. Recall as well how Moshe's blessing to Yosef focuses primarily on the land's vast agricultural potential and the tribe's military strength. Now we must once again consider the geography of the land to explain why Yissachar and Zevulun follow Menashe. The border of Yosef extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan river, covering the entire Shomron mountain range. Yissachar and Zevulun occupied the area north of Yosef's border, Zevulun to the west (along the coast) and Yissachar to the east (in Emek Yizrael until the Jordan River). As explained earlier, this nachala serves as the gateway to foreign trade, convoys and shipping, as reflected in the blessings to Yissachar and Zevulun.

Although there no 'geographical' reason seems to warrant Zevulun's precedence over his older brother, Yissachar, Moshe Rabeinu follows the pattern set by Yaakov Avinu, who also blessed Zevulun before Yissachar (see Breishit 49:13-14). It should also be noted that Zevulun precedes Yissachar in Sefer Yehoshua chapter 19, as well, in the context of the apportionment of the land among the tribes. [Rashi also provides an answer relating to the famous Yissachar/Zevulun 'work/study Torah' arrangement.]

**BNEI HA'SHFACHOT** As explained above, Moshe blesses the children of Yaakov's maidservants only after he completes the blessings to Leah and Rachel's children. However, consistent with his pattern heretofore, he presents his blessings in the order of their nachalot, rather than the order of their births. Moshe begins this group of shvatim with GAD, who, together with Reuven, took their nachala first, in Transjordan, before the other tribes established their settlements. Dan & Naftali follow, as their nachalot are situated to the north of Yissachar & Zevulun. Finally he comes to Asher, whose nachala extends along the entire northern border of Israel (today southern Lebanon).

These geographic considerations explain what would have otherwise been considered a very strange internal order within the children of the maidservants.

Once again, this analysis can help us better appreciate the content of Moshe's brachot. These four brachot focus on the beauty of the land, the tribe's need for expansion, and how they protect Israel's borders. Moshe's blessings thus encourage these tribes, who reside far away from the center of the country, to rise to the challenges that their "nachalot" present. In Sefer Yehoshua and Sefer Shoftim, we see indeed how difficult this challenge truly was.

The OPENER & THE FINALE Now that we have explained the individual brachot and their sequence, let's conclude our shiur by taking a quick look at Moshe Rabeinu's opening and concluding comments, to see how they relate to our discussion thus far. Moshe introduces his brachot with a four-pasuk 'opener' (33:2-5) and a corresponding four-pasuk 'closer' (33:26-29). The introductory psukim - the precise translation of which requires further discussion beyond the scope of this shiur - clearly point to Ma'amad Har Sinai and Moshe's role as the transmitter of the laws commanded at Har Sinai. Moshe's closing remarks focus on G-d as the Protector of Israel, Who provides close supervision (33:26), assistance in battle (26:27,29), and agricultural and economic prosperity (26:28). Not only do these opening and closing remarks form the appropriate framework for the individual blessings, they also directly relate to primary theme of Sefer Devarim (and, for that matter, Chumash as a whole). G-d has chosen the Jewish nation to represent Him as His model nation to guide mankind in the proper direction. To that end, He gave them the Torah (see 33:2-5), which contains the specific laws whose observance in the Promised Land leads to the realization of that goal. Now, before his death, Moshe blesses Bnei Yisrael that they fulfill that potential, that G-d assist them in their achievement of these goals, in the "nachala" they are about to conquer and occupy. What better way is there for Moshe to finish the Torah, thus concluding his life's mission!

chazak chazak v'nitchazek shabbat shalom v'chag samayach, menachem

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Bava Kama 60b DAVID HA'MELECH'S QUESTION QUESTIONS: The Gemara records the incident of when David ha'Melech asked, "Who will give me water to drink from the gate in Beis Lechem?" The Gemara explains that he was interested in clarifying a Halachah, and he referred to it as "water" since Torah is compared to water. Three of his mighty men (Giborim) risked their lives to bring back the answer to his Halachic question. The Gemara explains that the Halachah that he asked about was related to the incident that is discussed a few verses earlier, in which Shama ben Agei, one of David's Giborim, saved a field that was full of barley (Divrei ha'Yamim I 11:13) and lentils (Shmuel II 23:11) by miraculously defeating the Plishtim. One Amora explains that David wanted to know whether it is permitted to save oneself by destroying someone else's property (and it is not necessary to compensate the person whose property was destroyed), because he wanted to burn down the field with the piles of barley and lentils in which the Plishtim were hiding in order to save himself from them. Another Amora says that David ha'Melech wanted to know whether it was permitted to use the barley in the fields as fodder for his animals, on the condition that he later returns to the owners piles of lentils that he will take from the Plishtim upon defeating them. A third Amora says that David ha'Melech was asking whether one is Chayav to pay the full value of an object that was covered ("Tamun") by the grain of a field that was burned together with the grain.

When the Navi says that Shama ben Agei "saved the field," according to the Amora that says that David ha'Melech was asking whether he could burn the field to save himself, the verse means that Shama defeated the Plishtim by hand, making it unnecessary to burn the field. According to the opinion that David ha'Melech wanted to feed the fodder to his animals and repay with lentils, Shama stopped the troops from using the produce as animal fodder. Even according to the opinion that David ha'Melech was asking whether he has to pay for objects that were hidden in the piles of grain that his troops burned, David ha'Melech \*also\* asked about one of the other two Halachos, and Shama saved the field in one of the abovementioned ways.

There are a number of questionable points in this Gemara.

(a) The verse states that the field was "full" of lentils or barley. Why does the Gemara explain that the field had on it a "Gadish," large piles of \*harvested\* produce? (RA'AVAD cited by Shitah Mekubetzes on 117b)

(b) How could Shama have saved the field based on the ruling that David received (that if one is not a king, he must pay for what he burns or what he feeds to his animals), if the Navi says that the question was first asked \*after\* Shama saved the field, according to the order in the verses? (RADAK)

(c) Since the opinion that maintains that David asked about the Halachah of "Tamun" agrees that David also asked one of the other two questions, he obviously must be learning that the field of barley or lentils was mentioned because of David's second question (whether he could burn it or exchange it). What source, then, does he have that David asked any question about "Tamun?" (RA'AVAD)

(d) According to the opinion that David's troops wanted to use the barley for animal fodder, in what way is Shama's preventing them from using the grain for fodder related to the "great victory" against the Plishtim that is recorded in that verse?

ANSWERS: (a) The RA'AVAD explains that the Plishtim attacked twice. They first attacked when the field was full of produce, before the harvest, and they were repelled. Later, they attacked again, and Shama again repelled them, after the harvest, when there were piles of harvested produce in the field. This is inferred from the word "Ketzi" mentioned in the verse.

The RADAK in Sefer Shmuel explains that the field was "filled" with bundles of harvested crop, since the crop from the neighboring field was piled into that field.

(b) The Ra'avad explains that even though the verse records David's question \*after\* the story of Shama's great salvation, it does not mean that it occurred in that order. Rather, the verse is recording that Shama performed the salvation upon having heard the question that David sent to the Sanhedrin, as related in the verses that follow.

(c) The Ra'avad answers this question based on his answer to the previous question. The Gemara inferred that there was a second question involving Tamun because of the fact that the verses were recorded out of order. The Navi recorded David's question after recording the account of the salvation in order to show that another question was asked as well, which was not directly related to the salvation.

The Ra'avad adds (according to those who say that there was only one question asked by David ha'Melech) that the reason the question is recorded out of order, after the salvation of Shama, is because the verse is telling stories of the might of David's three Giborim, one of whom was Shama. First it records the acts that each of them did individually, and only afterwards it records David's question which all three bravely brought together to the Sanhedrin at the risk of their lives.

However, as the MAHARSHA and PNEI YEHOSHUA point out, this does not explain how we know that the second question involved Tamun. According to the Ra'avad, there is no indication at all in the verse that the question was one of Tamun and involved troops of David ha'Melech who burned a field.

The Maharsha explains that the opinion which maintains that David asked about Tamun was bothered by why the verse needs to mention both the lentils and the barley that were in the field. If David ha'Melech was asking about burning down the field, then what difference does it make if the field also contained barley? If David's question was whether he could trade the barley of the Jews for the lentils of the Plishtim, then why does the verse say that "Shama stood in the field and \*saved\* [the barley and the lentils]?" Shama only saved the Jews' barley from being taken! He certainly did not defend the lentils of the Plishtim, which were likely taken by the Jews anyway (see TOSFOS DH d'Lo). From this, the Gemara derived that there was a second question that David asked, which involved the other type of produce.

Why, though, should we assume that David asked a question regarding Tamun? Perhaps the answer is as follows. David ha'Melech apparently saw that his men were too weak to fight against the army of the Plishtim at that point. He therefore came up with a plan to burn the field in which the Plishtim were hiding in order to defeat them easily. The problem was that the field belonged to Jews, and David at that point did not have enough money to compensate the owners for the damages done to a field of lentils. (As the Radak writes, David was hiding from Shaul at this stage and was not yet accepted as the king of Israel. Nevertheless, the Gemara calls him a king, since he was already anointed by Shmuel as king.) This explains why David had to ask the Sanhedrin whether a person who saves his life with another person's money must compensate the other person. Alternatively, this is why he asked whether it would be permitted for him to burn the barley and to compensate the owners only afterwards when he would take the lentils of the Plishtim. (According to this view, he did not have enough money even to compensate for the barley.)

According to the view that David asked about Tamun, his question was also directly related to his conquest of the Plishtim. David originally thought that the field contained only barley, which was much less costly than lentils and for which he \*would\* be able to compensate the owner. After his men began igniting the barley, David noticed that there were lentils hidden underneath the barley, which were too costly for him to reimburse. He therefore asked the Sanhedrin if it would be necessary to compensate for all of the hidden lentils that would be burned.

According to Rabbi Yehudah, they replied that he must pay for all of the hidden lentils, and therefore he refrained from using this method of conquering the Plishtim. According to the Chachamim, they answered that he is exempt from paying what was already burned, because one does not expect lentils to be in a field of barley. However, now that he knew that all of the piles contained lentils underneath, he would be Chayav for burning more lentils with the barley, since one who starts a fire in someone else's field is obligated to pay for anything hidden in the field which is expected to be there (61b). (M. Kornfeld)

When the Gemara asks, according to the opinion that David asked about Tamun, "What are the verses saying," it means to ask how can the verse say that Shama saved the field if the Tamun that David asked about was already burned? If it was not burned yet, then how would David know that it was there to ask a question about it? (KOS YESHU'OS)

(d) Apparently, the Giborim of David were not strong enough to overpower the Plishtim without the help of cavalry. However, the horses were also weak, and David wanted to feed them the barley so that they would have the strength to battle. When David heard the answer of the Sanhedrin, Shama saw that David's army would not be able to defeat the Plishtim, so he single-handedly overpowered them in a miraculous manner.

BAVA KAMA 66 - This Daf has been sponsored in memory of the thousands of innocent lives that were lost in horrifying acts of terror. Sponsored by Rabbi N. Slifkin, author of "Nature's Song" (on Perek Shirah) and other works.

BAVA KAMA 67 - Dedicated by Mr. and Mrs. D. Kornfeld (Yerushalayim) in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter, Malkie, this past Yom Kipur. "May you Hashem bless you as Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Le'ah!"

Bava Kama 66b THE KINYAN OF "Y'USH" QUESTION: The Gemara discusses whether a thief is Koneh the item that he stole through "Y'ush." Rav Yosef attempts to prove from a Beraisa that one is not Koneh through Y'ush. The Beraisa says that if one steals Chametz, and then Pesach comes and passes, the thief need only give back the Chametz to the owner (saying, "Here is your item before you, take it"), and he does not have to compensate him with money, even though the Chametz is now prohibited to be used. If a thief is Koneh with Y'ush, then the thief who stole the Chametz should have acquired the Chametz through Y'ush (since the owner certainly had Y'ush once Pesach came and made the Chametz prohibited), and he should have to compensate the owner with money! Rabah answers that the case of the Beraisa is different, because there, even though the owner had Y'ush, the thief did not want to be Koneh the Chametz. In a normal case, though, where the thief does want to be Koneh the stolen item, then, asserts Rabah, he is Koneh it through Y'ush.

This answer is very difficult to understand. What difference should it make if the thief did or did not intend to be Koneh the item he stole? The fact that the original owner had Y'ush caused the item to leave his domain and the item is no longer his! How, then, can the thief say, "Here is your item before you, take it?"

ANSWERS: (a) The KETZOS HA'CHOSHEN (406:2) proves from here that Y'ush is not considered complete Hefker (as the NESIVOS (262) writes). That is, when the owner of an item has Y'ush, it is not considered as though he is making his item Hefker. Rather, Y'ush works in that it provides a "Heter Zechiyah," an allowance to take possession of the item, for whomever finds it. That is, the Torah gives permission to anyone to take possession of the item after the owner has had Y'ush. However, as long as no one has yet taken possession of the item, the item has not left the possession of the original owner completely.

A practical consequence of viewing Y'ush in this way is a case where the owner has Y'ush and then stops having Y'ush -- for example, he finds his lost object (and now he no longer despairs of ever getting it back) but before he has a chance to pick it up from the ground, someone else comes along and picks it up in order to be Koneh it. If Y'ush is considered like Hefker, then the person who picked up the item first is Koneh it. If, on the other hand, Y'ush is not like Hefker but rather it just provides an allowance to be Koneh the item from the domain of the owner, then this applies only while the owner has Y'ush. If he no longer has Y'ush (because he has found his item), the item is completely in his possession and no one else has permission to take it.

This explains why, in our Gemara, the thief can say, "Here is your item before you." Since he does not want to be Koneh it, it is still in the domain of the original owner. The original did not make it Hefker through his Y'ush, but he merely provided an allowance for anyone to be Koneh it. Since no one (such as the thief) wanted to be Koneh it, it remains in his domain. (RAV SHIMON SHKOP, in Chidushim to Bava Metzia 21:7, says that the Ketzos ha'Choshen's proof from our Gemara for this concept of Y'ush "is a proof that has not rebuttal.")

(b) The Hagahos in the TERUMAS HA'KRI (262:1), by the grandson of the author, proposes a way to refute the proof of the Ketzos ha'Choshen from our Gemara, and he gives a different answer to explain our Gemara. He points out that with regard to "mistaken\* Y'ush ("Y'ush b'Ta'us"), the Poskim write that such Y'ush does not work and is not considered Y'ush. Thus, if someone has Y'ush that he will never retrieve his object for a given reason, and then it becomes clear that that reason did not exist, the Y'ush of the object does not take effect and the object remains in his domain completely.

The case of our Gemara is a similar case. In the case of our Gemara, the owner of the Chametz had Y'ush because he assumed that the thief would burn the Chametz before Pesach in order to fulfill the Mitzvah of destroying the Chametz. The thief, though, did not burn the Chametz. Had the owner known that the thief was not going to destroy the Chametz, he never would have had Y'ush, and hence his Y'ush is a "Y'ush b'Ta'us" and does not take effect. Therefore, the thief can say to him, "Here is your item before you" and he does not have to compensate him with money.

According to this explanation, though, why does the Gemara have to answer that the thief did not want to be Koneh the Chametz? Even if he \*did\* want to be Koneh the Chametz, he would not have been Koneh it because the Y'ush of the owner turned out to be an invalid Y'ush!

The Hagahos to the Terumas ha'Kri answers that the only time that a mistaken Y'ush does not work is when the finder (or thief) of the item wants to be Koneh it after the mistake becomes evident. In our case, though, had the thief wanted to be Koneh the Chametz, his intention would have been \*before\* it became clear that the Y'ush was done in error. Consequently, even after it becomes evident that the Y'ush was done in error, the right to be Koneh does not become invalidated l'Mafre'a, retroactively. Therefore, the Gemara says that the thief did not want to be Koneh the item, and that is why the item is still in the domain of the owner after the mistaken Y'ush.

(c) RAV YITZCHAK ELCHANAN SPECTOR z'l (in BE'ER YITZCHAK) also refutes the proof of the Ketzos ha'Choshen and argues with him regarding how Y'ush works. He explains our Gemara as follows.

Even if Y'ush works by making the item Hefker, the thief can still give back the Chametz and say, "Here is your item before you." We know that even though Chametz becomes Asur on Pesach (and thus it is like it is ownerless), a person still transgresses the Isur of possessing Chametz because the Torah places the Chametz back into the owner's domain in order to be Mechayev him for "Bal Yera'eh" and "Bal Yimatzei." For this reason, the thief can say to the original owner to take back his Chametz, because the Torah itself made the Chametz be in the domain of its owner.

If, however, the thief had intention to be Koneh the Chametz, then he would have been Koneh it through Y'ush. The Torah would not have placed the Chametz back into the possession of the original owner to be Mechayev him for "Bal Yera'eh" and "Bal Yimatzei," since someone else was Koneh the Chametz (see NODA B'YEHUDAH II :63, and TZELACH to Pesachim 6a).

Rav Yitzchak Elchanan questions this answer, though, based on the words of the SHITAH MEKUBETZES (86a) and NODA B'YEHUDAH (I:20), who write that one whose Chametz is stolen does not transgress the Isurim of "Bal Yera'eh" and "Bal Yimatzei," even when the thief does not have intention to be Koneh it. We see, then, that according to the Shitah Mekubetzes and Noda b'Yehudah, the Torah does \*not\* place the Chametz into the domain of the owner in such a case. Hence, the question returns -- why can the thief say to the original owner, "Here is your item before you?"

(We can ask further on this answer that this Gezeiras ha'Kasuv -- that the Torah places Chametz back into the domain of the owner -- is \*only\* to be Mechayev him for the Isurim of "Bal Yera'eh" and "Bal Yimatzei." It does not make him, however, the full owner of the Chametz, since the Chametz is Asur to him. Rav Shimon Shkop z'l infers this from the wording of the Gemara in Pesachim that says the Torah makes the Chametz "like\* (k'Ilui) it is in his domain," but not that it actually puts it into his domain. -I. Alshich)

(d) RAV YITZCHAK ELCHANAN, therefore, gives a second answer. He writes that even if Y'ush works like Hefker and removes the Chametz from the owner's possession entirely, the thief can still say, "Here is your item before you," as long as he (nor anyone else) has been Koneh the Chametz. This is because we learn (66a) from the verse, "v'Heshiv Es ha'Gezeilah \*Asher Gazal" (Vayikra 5:23), that one must return an item "k'Ein she'Gazal," like the item that he stole. The Chametz that the thief is holding and wants to return is "k'Ein she'Gazal." If the Y'ush had been due to the negligence of the thief in taking care of the Chametz, then the thief would not be able to say, "Here is your item before you." Here, though, the Y'ush was due to the fact that Pesach arrived, and not due to any act of Peshi'ah of the thief, and therefore the thief is entitled to give back the Chametz and say, "Here is your item before you," due to the Gezeiras ha'Kasuv of "Asher Gazal."

Bava Kama 69 "FEED THE EVILDOER AND LET HIM DIE" QUESTIONS: Raban Shimon ben Gamliel rules that the requirement to mark one's fruits of Kerem Reva'i in order for people to know that the fruits need to be redeemed before being eaten applies only during the Shevi'is year, when those fruits are Hefker and may be taken by anyone. During any other year, though, one is not required to mark his Kerem Reva'i fruits, because anyone who comes to take them without his permission is a thief, and we say "feed the evildoer [a prohibited food] and let him die."

There are a number of questions on this principle proposed by the Gemara of "feed the evildoer and let him die."

(a) First, we know that the Torah commands, "Lifnei Iver Lo Siten Michshol" (Vayikra 19:14), which means that it is prohibited to cause another person to transgress an Aveirah. Why, then, is there no requirement to mark one's fruits as Kerem Reva'i in order to prevent another person (the thief) from transgressing the Aveirah of eating sanctified fruits without redeeming them?

(b) Second, if the law of "Lifnei Iver" does not apply in this case for some reason, it should still be prohibited, because in this case one is not merely "putting a stumbling block" of sin in front of a person, letting him do an Aveirah, but rather in this case it is as if one is actually feeding the prohibited item directly to the person! That certainly is not allowed, even without the prohibition of "Lifnei Iver!"

(c) Finally, we know that there is a principle of "Kol Yisrael Areivin Zeh la'Zeh" -- every Jew is responsible to help every other Jew do Mitzvos and refrain from Aveiros. Why, then, do we not say in this case that one must do whatever he can to prevent another Jew from doing an Aveirah because of the requirement of "Arvus?"

ANSWERS: (a) Perhaps the prohibition of "Lifnei Iver Lo Siten Michshol" applies only when one actively places the stumbling block of sin in front of the other person (through "Kum v'Aseh"). In the case of our Gemara, though, the prohibited item (the fruit of Kerem Reva'i) was there already, and one is passively letting (through "Shev v'Al Ta'aseh") the other person eat it. "Lifnei Iver" does not apply in such a situation.

This approach answers the first question. However, this approach seems to be contradicted by the wording of the Gemara, which says, "Feed\* the evildoer and let him die," implying that one may actively ("Kum v'Aseh") cause the evildoer to sin.

(b) The CHAZON ISH (Demai 8:9) writes that when the Gemara says "feed\* the evildoer," it does not literally mean that one may feed someone a food that is prohibited. Rather, it means that the owner of the fruit is not required to make an effort to save the evildoer from transgressing the prohibition of Kerem Reva'i. Then reason for this is because the person eating the fruit is willfully taking the fruit, knowingly transgressing the Isur of Gezeilah. Even though he does not know that he is also transgressing the Isur of Kerem Reva'i, the fact that he knows that he is transgressing the Isur of Gezeilah removes from the owner any responsibility for the thief's actions and it is not considered as though the owner is causing the thief to sin; the thief, anyway, is not permitted to take the fruit because of the Isur of Gezeilah, and yet he is still taking the fruit unlawfully. Therefore, the owner is exempt from responsibility to stop him from eating the fruit of Kerem Reva'i. Of course, to offer and feed someone such fruit is certainly prohibited.

This approach of the Chazon Ish also answers the first question. In our case, the principle of "Lifnei Iver" does not apply because the transgressor is purposely taking the item himself, knowingly transgressing a different Isur of Gezeilah. Hence, it is not called placing a stumbling block before him, and nor is it even considered passively ("Shev v'Al Ta'aseh") placing a stumbling block before him.

(We see from the words of the Chazon Ish that the Isur of "Lifnei Iver" also applies when one passively, through "Shev v'Al Ta'aseh," places a stumbling block of sin before someone else, in contrast to the approach we suggested to the first question.)

(See also SHACH in Yoreh De'ah 151:6, DAGUL MERA'VEVAH and GILYON MAHARSHA there, cited by YOSEF DA'AS here.)

(c) Regarding why the owner of the Kerem Reva'i fruits is not obligated to mark his fruits as Asur because of the rule of "Arvus," RAV YERUCHAM FISHEL PERLOW (in his Hagahos to Sefer ha'Mitzvos of Rav Sa'adyah Ga'on, 3:57, pp. 209-210) answers as follows.

The obligation of "Arvus" applies only when it is within one's ability to effectively protest against the transgressor's act of sinning (as he proves from Gemaras in Sanhedrin and Shevu'os). Here, though, the owner's protest will not be effective, because the transgressor anyway intends to transgress the Isur of Gezeilah. Raban Shimon ben Gamliel maintains that since there is no obligation of "Arvus" with regard to the Isur of Gezeilah (since he is going to steal anyway), there is also no obligation of "Arvus" with regard to the other Isur (i.e. Kerem Reva'i) that he will be transgressing if he eats this fruit.

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