

For Goodness Sake

By Dylan Broder, Editor of Student Articles, 12th Grade

It is interesting to note that every letter of the Alef-Beis can be found in the text of the Aseres HaDibros with the letter “tet” as the only exception. However, in the second set of Luchos we received, among many variants from the first Luchos, the letter can be found in the fifth commandment – “Leman yitev lach.” What can we learn from this discrepancy between the first and second set of Luchos?

The Gemara in Bava Kamma explains that the letter “tet” is representative of tov, goodness, as the first time the letter “tet” can be found in the Torah is in the words, “Vayar Elokim et haor ki tov,” “and God saw the light was good.” Chazal, therefore, explain that Hashem, all-knowingly, knew that the first Luchos would ultimately be destroyed and had it contained the word “yitev,” or even just the letter “tet,” it would indicate that all goodness for the Jewish people and the entire world had come to an end. In order not to cause us anxiety, Hashem chose to omit the letter “tet” from the first Luchos but placed it in the second set. Similarly, the Baal Haturim explains that the second set of Luchos had seventeen more words than the first set, as the word tov has a gematria of seventeen.

Based on this idea, the Chasam Sofer has an incredible drasha on a pasuk in Tehillim, “Ach tov leyisrael,” which literally means only good for [B’nei] Yisrael. He explains that the word “Ach” has the gematria of twenty-one. That is one

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Personal Relationships

By David Benhamu, 11th Grade

Parshas Yitro is one of the most important parshiot in our history in that it talk about Matan Torah. Yet there is another critical event as well early in the parsha. Early in the parsha, we read about Yitro coming to visit his son-in-law Moshe Rabbeinu. When he arrives, he watches as Moshe personally presides over every case brought by the people, both large and small. He goes on to tell Moshe that this system is not effective and will end badly for him and the people. It is understandable that Moshe would get tired out from answering people in excess, but why is it bad for the people as well? They would come with their case, wait in line to have Moshe give them an answer, and be on their way - what was bad about that? The issue was that within a few days of returning home, new problems would arise with their neighbor and they would have to return to speak with Moshe again. After having to repeat this journey numerous times, it would become overwhelming. The people had no tools to help themselves.

After pointing out the flaws in the system, Yitro proceeds to give Moshe some advice. He begins by saying that he must teach Beni Yisroel the laws and rules. Additionally, he should teach them how to follow these rules and the actions they must take to fulfill the commandments. The question is that t is understandable why he must

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshat Yisro Questions

1. Besides Parshas Yisro, which other weekly parshas are named after an individual who is **not** descended from Avraham?
2. Who besides Moshe is a son-in-law of Yisro?
3. Name two people in the Torah - one male, one female, one Jewish, one not - who have similar names that mean the same. One of the people is in this parsha.
4. Where in this parsha do eagles appear?
5. In what context does this parsha include a command involving clothing?
6. Where in the Ten Commandments is water mentioned?
7. Which word in this parsha, synonymous with *shofar*, refers to a ram's horn?
8. Which verse in this parsha contains the word "*lo*" - "do not" - four times?

Answers

1. Parshas Noach and Balak are named after individuals who are not descended from Avraham.
2. In Parshas Va'era, the Torah states that Elazar the son of Aharon married a daughter of Putiel (6:25). Rashi lists Putiel as one of the seven names of Yisro (Rashi - Exodus 18:1).
3. Tziporah the wife of Moshe, and Tzipor the father of Balak (Numbers 22:2), have similar names that mean a bird.
4. Moshe reminds the Jews that Hashem carried them "on wings of eagles." (Exodus 19:4. See Rashi for an explanation of the parable.)
5. In preparation for the giving of the Torah, the Jews are commanded to wash their clothing (Exodus 19:10).
6. In the second commandment, we are prohibited from making "any graven image or picture of any creature that is in the water" (Exodus 20:4).
7. Following the regular cantillation, the commandments, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness," all appear in the same verse. (Exodus 20:13)
8. The word "*yovel*" means "ram's horn" in the phrase: "With the blowing of the ram's horn, [the Jews] may ascend the mountain." (Exodus 19:13)



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First Aliyah: Yisro, Moshe's father-in-law, having heard about all the miracles Hashem performed for the Jews, came from Midian with Moshe's wife and children to the Jews' encampment in the desert. Moshe greeted his father-in-law, and recounted to him all that Hashem had done to the Egyptians. Yisro thanked Hashem and offered thanksgiving sacrifices.

Second Aliyah: After observing Moshe adjudicating all the disputes that arose among the Jews, Yisro suggested a hierarchy system of wise judges in order that most difficult cases would go to Moshe. This would give Moshe more time to teach the Torah to the nation.

Third Aliyah: After Moshe accepts his father-in-law's suggestion and implements it, Yisro returns to Midian.

Fourth Aliyah: The Jews camp at the bottom of Har Sinai. Moshe ascended the mountain, where Hashem gave him a message to transmit to the people. Included in this message was Hashem's designation of the Jewish people as His "treasure out of all peoples" and a "kingdom of princes and a holy nation."

Fifth Aliyah: Moshe conveyed God's message to the people and the nation accepted to do all that He commanded of them. Hashem instructed Moshe to have the Jews prepare themselves because in three days' time He would reveal Himself atop the mountain to the entire nation. The Jews were commanded to sanctify themselves and were warned not to approach the mountain. On the morning of the third day, thunder, lightning, a thick cloud and the piercing sound of a shofar emanated from the mountaintop. Moshe brought the frightened nation to the base of the mountain.

Sixth Aliyah: Hashem's Schecinah descended on the mountain, and He summoned Moshe to its summit. Hashem instructed Moshe once again to warn the Jews not to approach the mountain, with the exception of Moshe and Aharon. Hashem then spoke the Aseres HaDibros to the nation: 1) Believe in Hashem who took you out of Egypt 2) Do not worship idols 3) Do not say God's name in vain 4) Remember and sanctify Shabbos for He made the world in six days and rested on and sanctified the seventh day 5) Honor your parents 6) Do not murder 7) Do not commit adultery 8) Do not steal 9) Do not bear false witness 10) Do not covet another's property.

Seventh Aliyah: The Jews were left overwhelmed by the revelation and asked Moshe to be an intermediary between them and God from then on, and Moshe agreed. Hashem tells Moshe to command the Jews not to make idolatrous images and command them to make a mizbeach, which should not be cut with iron tools and should not include steps.

Adapted from Chabad.org

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Harry Radinsky

Standing for the Aseret HaDibrot

Standing for Laining in General:

- Although the Maharam is strict in this regard, the general consensus is that there is no requirement to stand during Laining.

Assuming you follow the norm that there is no general requirement, is it appropriate to specifically stand for the Aseret HaDibrot?

- The Gemara in Berachot (12a) discusses the possibility of having the Aseret HaDibrot as part of Shema and it concludes that it wasn't instituted because of heretics.

Q: What would the heretics claim?

A: Rashi says they will say that the only part of the Torah that is true is the part that God spoke himself, but in reality everything else is false. As a result, we did not institute it in Shema.

Based on this Gemara, it would seem that you can't ever single the Aseret HaDibrot out.

- However, the Shulchan Aruch says that it is good to say each and every day
- Adding on to this, the Rama suggests that you should say it individually so you don't single it out too much, but it is important to internalize it in some way.

Famously, the Rambam writes that the minhag to sit is the correct minhag and the proofs to sit are correct.

- Not only should you sit, but if you have a shul that stands, they should change the Minhag

Q: Why? This is our Emunah at stake, and as a result you cannot do anything that the heretics might use against you. Therefore, you can't make any distinction.

Q: What about the places that do sit?

A: That's wrong, so don't follow the wrong minhag.

- For example: If a person was sick, don't go and try to get sick with him; heal him!

Rav Ovadya Yosef says to follow the Rambam, and says that you should change the minhag and sit but be nice about it and do it in a reasoned way.

Q: If you find yourself in a shul that stands, should

you separate yourself?

A: No, just stand a few pesukim early.

- Then, the heterics have a worse argument because nobody will say "The only Torah that is true is the Aseret HaDibrot plus a few pesukim."

Q: What is the Hetar to stand?

A₁: R' Sternbuch says that it might only be a problem to include it in your daily davening. However, in laining, we are going to read everything anyway, so it's not as big of a deal so it doesn't matter how you situate yourself.

- As a result, the Gemara isn't the greatest proof that you must sit.

- He goes against the Rambam, but says it is preferable to stand a few pesukim early (this is the same answer as Rav Ovadya Yosef, but he uses it lechatchila).

A₂: The Maharshal says that the Gemara only had a problem specifically by Shema, but even in other parts of davening it's ok to include the Aseret HaDibrot, there the Gemara does not even apply!

A₃: Rav Moshe Feinstein says you cannot compare two different Halachot plus we stand for other things during laining anyway, such as Az Yashir, so there is no problem to stand.

A₄: Standing is a way to recreate Ma'amad Har Sinai, which is especially prominent here as these Dibrot occurred on Har Sinai.

A₅: Rav Soloveitchik writes that even the Rambam would have no problem with what we do today.

Q: Why?

A: The Rambam's problem is when you read it as pesukim of Torah. When they are read as dibrot, it is obvious that what you are trying to recreate Har Sinai. When we lain in shul, the trup is different, as we read it as Taam HaElyon. The Rambam always read it as Taam HaTachton, but we don't! Therefore, there is no problem to stand.

Conclusion: Even with all of these Hetarim, it is preferable to stand, but try to stand a few pesukim early to eliminate the problem of heretics.

SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With Akiva
Magder*

In this week's parsha, Bnei Yisrael receives the Aseres Hadibros- the ten commandments. The fourth of the 10 commandments is to keep Shabbos. Shabbos is one of the most important parts of Judaism. It occurs every single week and has various different Halachos associated with it. While many people know the different Halachos and the forbidden Malachos of Shabbos, what most people don't know is that Shabbos has a whole other undiscovered dimension. This lesser known aspect of shabbos finds its roots in the the Gemara in Shabbos (10b). The Gemara says, "When Hashem gave Shabbos to Bnei Yisrael, He told Moshe to inform them about it. That was also taught in a baraisa: The pasuk states: "For I am God Who sanctifies you," meaning that Hashem said to Moshe: I have a good gift in My treasure house and Shabbos is its name, and I seek to give it to Bnei Yisrael." The Gemara also says in Beitzah (16a) " Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: All mitzvos that Hashem gave to the Jewish people, He gave to them in public." What we learn from these Gemaros is that Hashem told Moshe that he has a special gift in His 'treasure house' that He wants to give to the Jewish people, which would indicate that He did not give over Shabbos in public when He gave over the Aseres Hadibros. This contradicts the Gemara in Beitzah that says He gave over the Aseres Hadibros in public. Rabeinu Bachaiyah answers this contradiction by saying that the part of Shabbos that comes from Hashem's treasure house is a special neshama yeseira that was only given to us in private. The Gemara in Shabbos tells us that every Erev Shabbos we receive an extra neshamah and then on Motzei Shabbos, Hashem takes it back. If one were to stop and think about what the ramifications of this are, they would be extraordinary. Hashem literally gives us another soul specifically for Shabbos! The Marharsha comments on this Gemara and says that the caliber of kedusha that this extra Neshama has is equivalent to the Kedusha that existed in the world before Adam and Chava's sin. That level of Kedusha so far has been unbeaten and remains the highest form of Kedusha to this day. Perhaps this can shed light to help explain what we mean when we say that Shabbos is "me'ein olam haba (a taste of the world to come)." As a result of this special gift that Hashem gives us from His treasure house, we are infused with a neshama yeseira in which we are able to taste a little bit of what olam haba truly is every single week.

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less than the twenty-two-letter Hebrew alphabet, and as stated before, the letter "tet" was the only letter missing from the first set of Luchos. He darshens that because only the gematria of the word "Ach," twenty-one, of the twenty-two letters were shattered, the people knew there was still Tov leYisrael, goodness for [B'nei] Yisrael because the "tet" for tov was never destroyed.

The Shivilei Pinchas notes that because the letter "tet" was not destroyed, we are able to reveal, learn, and benefit from the hidden depths of the Torah. This is represented by the shape of the letter "tet" whose right side bends and protrudes into the interior of the letter. This alludes to the idea that because of this letter, we can reveal

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THE ONLY JUDGE

By Daniel Lebowitz, 9th Grade

Yisro saw his son-in law judging the people and he said, “מה הדבר הזה אשר אתה עשה לעם מדוע אתה יושב —” “What is this thing you are doing to the people? Why do you sit alone while all the people stand about you from morning until evening?” The question begging to be asked is that if it was known that Moshe was the judge for all the people, how do we understand the question of Yisro? Moshe wasn’t dumb. If he was doing something a certain way, surely he had a reason. Did Yisro think he was just going to join the Jews and immediately change everything? The answer I would like to suggest is that there are 2 ways to judge. You can make a compromise which only needs 1 judge, or you can rule according to the letter of the law which needs 3 judges. Yisro knew that Moshe was judging. But he understood that Moshe was not judging by compromise, but rather by the letter of the law. For this, Yisro knew he needed 3 judges. This was the impetus for Yisro’s suggestion to Moshe to change the system. Moshe explained to Yisro that although in general you need 3 judges for this type of judgement, if one is an outstanding expert he can judge alone. Therefore, Moshe felt that since he had learned from Hashem Himself, he was considered an expert and qualified to judge alone.

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“Haor Ki Tov,” the wonderful light of the Torah hidden within it.

It is also interesting to note that the protrusion of the “tet” is on its right side, as it is a famous kabbalistic idea that the “right hand” of Hashem is the hand of Chesed, kindness. For it is only through kindness that Hashem left the “tet” out of the first set of Luchos. Just imagine, Hashem saw that the Jews were going to sin with the Cheit HaEigel and abandon Him, yet He was still concerned about the anxiety the Jews would have over the inclusion of a single letter in the Luchos they themselves would cause to be destroyed! We should try to emulate Hashem to be so sensitive to people – down to the letter of the law – even when that person may not treat you the same way and may have done something to upset you.

[From the sefer “Secrets of the Hebrew Alphabet”]

(David Benhamu- Continued from page 1)

teach the rules and laws, but what does it mean to teach the actions and path of life? Is it necessary for Moshe to have to teach and model actions? Aren’t the halachot enough?

Besides teaching Torah and Mitzvot, Yitro is telling Moshe that he must teach how to act and behave. Even if one knows all the laws of the Torah, without knowing how to govern personal relationships, we will keep having legal issues. Without knowing how to interact with one another with compassion, humility, and empathy, we would have constant strife. By teaching Beni Yisroel how to behave with one another, it will increase the number of cases which are worked out amongst themselves while decreasing the amount of cases brought to Moshe. We see from here that if you learn how to act and behave in your relationships with people, you will become a better person on a personal level. By following this message, we can all learn a valuable lesson. Knowing Torah and Mitzvot is incredible, yet learning Torah is only half the battle of becoming a Ben Torah. We first must learn how to interact with one another and how to govern ourselves in order to be a valued part of Am Yisroel.

Good Shabbos.

The Power of our Torah

By Ariel Kunin, 9th Grade

From Mesorah, we know that Har Sinai was the culmination of Yetzias Mitzrayim. A Mishna in Pirkei Avos comments on the phrase saying that the Aseres Hadibros should be "Charus al haluchos", engraved on the luchos (Shemos 32:16). It says that we shouldn't simply read it as "charus," engraved, but rather as "cheirus," freedom, implying that one is only free if he learns Torah. Some people are slaves to masters and some people are just simply slaves to their own desires.

In Kiddushin 30b it explains that Hashem said, "Barasi yetzer hara; Barasi lo Torah tavlin". The antidote to these improper desires is learning Torah. Rav Zev Leff explains that, "Only when the world of Hashem [ie. Torah] totally penetrates the "stone" of the materialistic world, leaving no intervening desires to obstruct it, engraved through and through [like the words on the Luchos], is one really free. 'Barasi yetzer hara; Barasi lo Torah tavlin' means that not only when you learn Torah does the materialistic world not create a hindrance to fulfilling God's world, but it even makes the materialistic world a framework in which God's word can be best fulfilled."

In Koheles it is written, "Praised is the country whose king is a free man." The Zohar explains that this is referring to Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael praises it's King, Hashem, and His capital, Yerushalayim. According to the Zohar, Hashem is referred to as "Ben Chorin" because He gave man the ability to become free through the learning of His Torah.

When Hashem appeared to Moshe by the burning bush, Hashem told him you will lead the Jewish people out of Egypt and "taavdun es haelokim al hahar hazeh," you will serve Me on this mountain. However, Moshe didn't feel like he was qualified to lead the Jews because of his lack of political experience. Hashem responded that Moshe didn't need political experience because that wasn't the purpose of the exodus. The exodus wasn't a political freedom; it was a means to allow the Jews to study Torah. In fact, Moshe was the perfect leader of the Jewish nation because he was the best melamed of Torah. In light of this, the aforementioned pasuk takes on new meaning, as the avodah in the pasuk ("taavdun") refers to limud HaTorah. The Rambam in his Sefer Hamitzvos quotes from the Sifrei that the term "avodah" in the Torah can refer to one of three things: offering of Karbanos, Tefillah, and Torah study. The common denominator between these three things is that they're done lifnei Hashem (before Hashem).

The Gemara in Taanis explains that when someone brings a Karban it is as if Hashem is there accepting

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the gift “in-person”. In regards to Tefillah, the Rambam writes that when one davens one should carry himself as if he was speaking directly to Hashem, face to “face”. The same is true of limud Hatorah as seen in the Gemara (Brachos 8a). The Gemara explains that the Rabbis had the tradition that, “Miyom shecharav Beis Hamikdash ein lo l’Hakadosh Baruch Hu ela daled amos shel halacha,” From the day the Temple was destroyed the only place where Hashem can be found is in the four amos of halacha. When the Beis Hamikdash was standing one would go there and be in the presence of Hashem. Now that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, the best way to be in the presence of Hashem is by learning Torah. Similarly, the Gemara in Tamid 32b tells us that when one learns Torah, the Shechina will be with him.

When Hashem told Moshe that the exodus will lead to “avodah” on Har Sinai, this was referring to the Torah learning done at Ma'amad Har Sinai. These three Mitzvos of Karbanos, Tefillah, and Torah learning are referred to as avodah because specifically by these Mitzvos, there is a direct interaction with Hashem.

In the commentary Akeidat Yitzchok it is written that if one neglects Torah, there is a punishment of Midah Keneget Midah against him. In Pirkei Avos (3:5) it says that, “He who tries to divest himself of the yoke of Torah has the yoke of government and bureaucracy imposed upon him.” If one encounters certain difficulties in life, one often does not have to search very far for the reasons. It is usually due to an imbalance in the way one has handled one's priorities. Torah study, Tefillah, and Mitzvah performance have to be given equal time with the pursuit of one's economic goals.

{Adapted from Rav Hershel Schachter Shlita}




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the country. “Whichever town he chanced upon, the whereabouts of the local synagogue was usually his first question. It was there he spent his days, stretched out on a bench, eating his few slices of bread, and begging for his next meal. “But Friday night was something he always looked forward to. Eyes downcast, he would linger by the exit, hoping to be invited to join a family at their Shabbat meal. When he was, he would enjoy his only hot food of the week. “One Friday night, the synagogue teemed with an influx of guests. After the prayers were over, the man watched as one by one, the guests followed their hosts out for the night, and the synagogue grew emptier and quieter. When the last voices finally faded, he was left alone in silence. Uninvited and forgotten, he had nowhere to go. “The man sighed, painful sadness searing his heart. The rejection had hurt him deeply. He pulled out a ratty handkerchief filled with the last crumbs of dry bread, washed his hands, and proceeded to say Kiddush over the morsels. Within a minute, his Shabbat meal was finished. Not feeling tired, he glanced around the empty synagogue, looking for something to occupy himself with. The signs decorating the walls seemed interesting enough, and the man strolled around studying them. A prayer for the reading of the Torah. Modim Derabbanan. Someone’s memorial. The man would peer at each one for a moment before moving on to the next. As he turned away, something made him stop and look at one last notice. “Master of the Universe... “Only the first four words, barely legible, remained. The rest had long faded away. The words twinged his heart, and he pursed his lips into a bitter smile. “Master of the Universe, the man thought, I see your circumstances fare no better than mine...” Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech finished his story and burst into tears. The Chassidim watched, eyes moist, as it dawned on them: their rebbe never forgot nor missed Tikkun Chantzot, and this evening was no different. Instead of mourning alone, he had chosen to include them, poignantly using the analogy of the pauper to emphasize just how bitter G-d’s exile is.

Adapted from chabad.org






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TOLD OVER BY: HILLEL GOLUBTCHIK

Every night, Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, Poland, conducted Tikkun Chatzot (the mid-night liturgy lamenting the destruction of the Holy Temple) in a small synagogue near his home. That late at night, most of the synagogue's candles had already burned out and no one else was ever there. Hunched over in the gloom, he would sit on a low stool in his usual corner, reading the prayers with tears that stopped only at dawn. Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech occasionally remarked, "When Israel is persecuted to the ends of the earth and the Shechinah (Divine presence) lays trampled in the dust, how can one muster the audacity to curl up beneath the covers and sleep soundly?" Not once did he miss a night. His custom was no secret; anyone could walk over to the small synagogue and peek through the windows to see him mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple. Only a few of his Chassidim allowed themselves to do so, however. One evening, Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech sat with his close Chassidim sharing teachings of Torah. It was nearing midnight, which meant Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech would soon excuse himself from the room. But much to the Chassidim's confusion, that's not what followed. Their Rebbe appeared to be so engrossed, he simply continued speaking, even as the clock ticked closer to midnight. Knowing how conscientious their Rebbe was regarding Tikkun Chatzot, the Chassidim began to eye each other. Perhaps in the course of his words he had failed to observe the time? No one dared, however, to speak up or even hint

to Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech. Surely, the chiming of the clock would call his attention to the hour. The hands struck 12. Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech, the focus of every eye in the room, ignored the chimes in the background and continued to sit. "There once lived a wealthy man," he began, causing the Chassidim to lean forward in anticipation, "who oversaw many rewarding business deals and owned multiple estates and vineyards." Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech took his time painting a picture of the man's life and fortune in vivid colors. The Chassidim sat spellbound, the passing of minutes momentarily erased from their minds. "The day came when the man stumbled upon hardship and his affairs quickly sunk. Inundated by debt, he was forced to sell everything and, eventually, declare bankruptcy. As his life slid into further ruin, he struggled to find bread to eat. He tried his hand at menial work, but his unfamiliarity with it meant he couldn't hold a job for long. Unable to earn a single coin, he scrounged his livelihood from knocking on doors with his palm outstretched. "At first, the sight of the wealthy man walking around in rags melted the townspeople's hearts. Hoping to restore some of his dignity, they responded when they could with a donation, a meal, or an encouraging word. Eventually, memory of his past was lost to time, and he became estranged from his family, taking up the wandering staff of an ordinary beggar. The man, an empty and miserable shell, turned to roam

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