

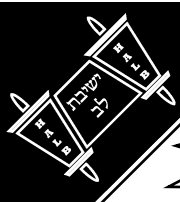
היוצאים

דברים



Volume XVIII - Issue I

The DRS Weekly Torah Publication



**Special
Editor's
Edition**

True Inspiration

By Mayer Adelman, Editor-in-Chief, 12th Grade

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In this week's parsha, the pasuk states, "Today, Hashem commands you to fulfill these statutes and ordinances." The obvious question is, weren't the commandments given 40 years prior on Har Sinai? What could the Torah possibly mean when it says "Today"? Rashi famously answers that the Torah is teaching us that every day, one must view the Torah as if it were given to him on that day.

Keeping this explanation of the pasuk in mind, let us examine another pasuk at the end of parshas Ki Savo.

After discussing the great miracles and wonders that Hashem did for us when taking us out of Mitzrayim, Moshe says, "But Hashem did not give you a heart to understand or eyes to see until today." What does the word "today" mean in this pasuk? Were Bnei Yisrael incapable of appreciating the miracles that Hashem had performed for them while taking them out of Mitzrayim? How is it possible that they only appreciated the wonderful acts of Hashem so many years later?

Based off the aforementioned interpretation of the first pasuk, it is possible to understand the meaning of this pasuk as well. The pasuk is telling us that although we may experience many miracles throughout our lifetime, one does not have "a heart to understand or eyes to see" until the inspiration is relevant

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PARSHAS KI TAVO
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Who's is it?

By Chaim Alper, Editor-in-Chief, 12th Grade

Every day of life we have a list of things done. A cacophony of choices and accomplishments that help us look back on our day and proclaim that we had spent our time well.

This week's Parsha, one of the last, turns out to open with a discussion of a seemingly random mitzvah: The giving of the first fruits.

When giving these first fruits to a Kohen, we are required to enumerate our thanks to G-d. For what reason? Well obviously to express our acknowledgement of His overarching influence upon everything that we have so proudly done. Nothing we do is truly autonomous; going by the concept that G-d is recreating us over the course of each moment of existence, it is clear that none of our achievements are independent of G-d's involvement. Especially the seemingly natural course of growing the yearly crops.

However, let us take this a step further. What is commanded of us right after the above mitzvah?

It is the requirement to set aside portions of our crops also to the Leviim, the orphans, the strangers (Geirim), and the widows.

In addition to being placed adjacent to each other due to the common denominator of removing a part of

(Continued on page 4)

Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

**Parshas Ki Tavo
Questions**

1. In this parsha, which four consecutive verses are read on a holiday - but not in the synagogue?
2. What item is mentioned in this parsha four times - but nowhere else in the Torah?
3. Where is plaster instructed to be used?
4. Besides this parsha, where else does the Torah record lengthy words of rebuke (tochacha)?
5. Where in this parsha is a "tail" referred to? (2 answers)
6. In this parsha, which of the Ten Plagues are mentioned in the lengthy words of rebuke (tochacha)? (3 answers)
7. What response is stated 12 times in this parsha - and only one other time in the Torah?

Answers

1. The verses beginning with the words "*Arami Oved Avi*" (Deut. 26:5-8) are read at the Passover Seder.
2. A fruit basket (*teneh*) is mentioned four times in this parsha: (1) Pilgrims place their first-fruits in a basket, and bring it to the Holy Temple. (2) The priest then takes the basket and places it near the Altar (Deut. 26:2, 4). (3-4) In the list of blessings and curses, the fruit basket is mentioned twice, as an indicator whether the Jewish people are following the Torah (Deut. 28:5, 17).
3. When the Jews cross the Jordan River, they are to set up huge stones, coat them with plaster (Deut. 27:2), and then write upon them all the words of the Torah.
4. A lengthy tochacha is also found in parshas Bechokosai (Leviticus 26:27-43).
5. One of the blessings for Jews following the Torah is to be "as a head and not a tail" (Deut. 28:13). The reverse is also stated: our enemy can be "as a head, and you (the Jews) will be as a tail" (28:44).
6. These plagues are mentioned: pestilence (*dever*) (Deut. 28:21), boils (*shechin*) (28:27, 35), and locusts (*arbeh*) (28:38).
7. When the Jews enter the Land of Israel and declare each of the 12 curses, the nation is to respond "Amen" (Deut. 27:15-26). The response of "Amen" appears only one other time - in parshas Naso, when an alleged adulteress is told about the dire consequences of her actions, she responds "Amen Amen" (Numbers 5:22).

The Haftarah Corner*Written By Adam Zahler*

The Haftarah for Ki Tavo is the penultimate one in a series of seven between Tisha Bav and Rosh Hashana. These seven help provide us with a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel. They help provide comfort to a nation that has been through so many hardships, notably, the destruction of the two Batei Hamikdash and the Holocaust. In the Haftarah for Ki Tavo, Isaiah focuses on images of light to remind the people that although they may be experiencing a dark time, Hashem will illuminate the world with his light once again. The Haftarah begins with this famous line from Lecha Dodi, "Arise, shine, for your light has dawned; the Presence of the Lord has shone upon you!" (60:1). Isaiah goes on to speak about how we will all be united, as well as how peace will be attained when he states, "The cry 'Violence!' shall no more be heard in your land" (60:18).

We really can see from the descriptions contained in this Haftarah what the ultimate redemption shall entail. Many of these things, however, can be obtained, to a certain degree, even before the redemption, and it may be the obligation of every individual to help increase these things in the world. We as a people continue to speak about the redemption as a somewhat distant concept, but maybe Hashem is waiting for us to make the first move. As the song Veuhatvu goes, "Everyone's waiting hoping and praying for mashiach; it can only happen if we all get along." We need to put a great emphasis on increasing our love and tolerance for our fellow Jew. In this way, may we be zocheh to witness the promised light at the end of the tunnel, in the form of the ultimate geulah. Have a great Shabbos.



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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Zachary Goldberg

L'Dovid Hashem Ori

Our minhag to say L'Dovid Hashem Ori from Rosh Chodesh Elul through Chag:

We will discuss the minhag to say L'Dovid during Chodesh Elul. The nusach one davens, Ashkanaz or Sefard, is the determining factor whether one says L'Dovid during mincha or maariv. Ashkanazim say L'Dovid during maariv; Sefardim recite the k'pital at mincha.

Several practical issues arise; what should one do in the following scenarios:

1. One who normally davens nusach sefard, but finds himself in a nusach ashkenaz minyan for mincha (that will not recite L'Dovid): Should he say L'Dovid at the nusach ashkenaz minyan by himself, or should he follow the ashkenaz minyan and not recite L'Dovid at mincha?
2. One who davens in a nusach sefard minyan for Minchah and then davens at a nusach ashkenaz shul for maariv: Would one say L'Dovid both times?
3. What about the reverse? Would one only say L'Dovid by shacharis and not by the other two davenings?

To answer these shai'los, let's discuss the history of L'Dovid.

What is the origin of reciting L'Dovid?

The Mishnah Berurah quotes the minhag to recite L'Dovid after shacharis and after maariv. In Ma'seh Rav, the Gra did not accept the minhag to say L'Dovid. One could also find several groups of chasidim who did not take on the minhag to say L'Dovid. This appears odd, since it is a kipitul tehilim, and people say tehiliim after davening all the time.

What is the earliest source?

§ Dr. Leiman teaches that the earliest source is found in the sefer "Shem Tov Katan" published in 1709. The sefer advises that anyone who says L'Dovid from Chodesh Elul until Simchas Torah, even if he has terrible gzeiros against him in shamayim (chas v'shalom), will

come out zaikai, and everything will be fine. That sefer was not the most popular sefer in the world, and probably was not seen by the gedolim and rabanim of the time.

§ There was another sefer published in 1709 called "Sefer Zechira" which echoes the same advice; say L'Dovid by morning and night, thereby guaranteeing a good din for oneself.

§ In 1739, the sefer "Chemdas Yamim" was published, which includes the minhag to say L'Dovid during Elul. An issue, however, arose with this sefer, leading to much controversy over the validity of its content. Included in the sefer was a poem written by Nasan HaBavli, a false prophet and leading figure in the movement of Shabtai Tzvi. This could be a reason why many chasidim rejected the minhag.

Why did this minhag catch on – specifically this time of year?

§ The Mateh Efrayim writes that it is based on a Midrash in Esther, which reads that "uri" is Rosh Hashana, "yishi" is Yom HaKippurim, and "suko" is Sukkos. So there is a remez within the paragraph to this time of year.

§ The Haflaah presents a different explanation, which is also the very first source found in the "Shem Tov Katan". He explains that if one looks at the paragraph carefully, and calculates the number of times that the shem Hashem is mentioned, one will count thirteen times. This is reminiscent of the yud gimel midos of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, which is obviously front and center this time of year. Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu that whenever we are in trouble, we should say these yud gimel midos harachamim of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. What better time of the calendar than Elul to remind ourselves of the yud gimel midos harachamim.

§ Rav Shay Schachter quotes from his Rebbe, Rav Asher Weiss, a phenomenal explanation. He quotes a Gemara in Taanis on daf ches. The Gemara tells us that

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EVERYTHING HAS A PURPOSE

By Yehuda Shetrit, Editor of Student Articles, 12th Grade

In this week's parsha, we have the set of pesukim that discusses the curses that befall us if we do not serve Hashem correctly. The Torah goes on to explain that the reason for all of these curses is the fact that we did not serve Hashem with simcha—happiness. The question is, what is reason for the juxtaposition of the various curses and the supposedly fitting cause of not serving Hashem with joy?

To answer this question, R' Yechiel Spero tells a mashal. The mashal begins with an alien landing on Earth and asking the "humans" to show him the place to which they go in order to enjoy themselves. The humans bring the alien to a gym where people exercise and work out. The alien observes everyone's strenuous labor and exhaustion and is astonished as to how this could be the place where humans go to enjoy themselves, so the alien asks the humans why this is. The humans answer that happiness is not something that is represented by the temporary joy attributed to worthless and insignificant actions, but rather is attributed to the actions that have a purpose and to those that are significant. Even though there may be pain involved in the process, it is worth it for the ultimate gain. In this case of the exercise, the purpose is to be healthy and fit.

This is the reason why a lack of simcha is the cause of all the horrific curses. If we are not happy when performing Hashem's commandments, it shows that we do not have a clear understanding of their purpose, that we don't see the connection to the Ribono Shel Olam these actions will bring and the great reward that will come along with them.

As we begin our school year, there are going to be some difficult and stressful times, maybe even times when we think that all of the work is pointless. However, if we take the time to understand the purpose of our efforts and the success they will bring us in the future, they will be worth the struggle. Let us hope that by doing so we can create an everlasting keshet with Hakodosh Baruch Hu and bring Mashiach Bimhera Viyamenu! Good Shabbos!

(Mayer Adelman—Continued from page 1)

"today." That is, unless the inspiration is always with a person the same way it was when he first received it, it is dull and devoid of true meaning. Moshe is telling us that even after witnessing a great wonder, we still may not have a "heart to understand or eyes to see" until we add one necessary component—*today*.

As we approach the month of Tishrei, it is important to keep in mind that a truly meaningful Yomim Noraim is only accomplished if it spurs change in the way we conduct ourselves throughout the entire year. Have a Good Shabbos.

Derived from Parsha Parables

(Chaim Alper—Continued from page 1)

our hard-earned produce, there is another lesson to be learned from their closeness.

That whilst praising G-d for being kind and generous with us, we should never neglect the other side of the coin. The people who are with us, and have not been blessed the same way we have. Who need our assistance as much as we need G-d's mercy.

May we all realize these people and not forget that we are striving to imitate G-d, who is described as one who opens His hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing. The best way to see His work and charity, is to look at our own.

Aramean Anti-Semitism

By Nachi Shulman, Editor of Rabbinic Articles, 12th Grade

In this week's parsha, the pasuk states regarding that which one says after giving his bikurim to the Kohen, "Arami oved avi vayeired Mitzrayma": that an Aramean wanted to destroy the Jewish nation, and my father went down to Egypt. The correlation between the two phrases is difficult to understand. How does Lavan wanting to destroy the Jewish people cause them to go down to Egypt?

The Netziv explains, based on a Gemara in Pesachim, that at the time of the destruction of Bayis Rishon, we were destined to be exiled to Aram. However, when Hashem saw the Arameans' hatred towards us, Hashem exiled us to Bavel instead. The same is true of Yaakov Avinu; he was destined to be exiled in order to fulfill Hashem's covenant with Avraham. Yaakov's twenty two years in Aram were supposed to be the start of the exile, but when Hashem saw the cruelty of Lavan, who wanted to destroy Yaakov, Hashem chose to let Yaakov out of Aram immediately and to be exiled to Egypt instead.

Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank gives an alternative explanation. The Gemara in Maseches Shabbos states that because Yaakov showed a special love towards Yosef, his other brothers set the stage for going down to Egypt. One of the ways Yaakov favored Yosef was by giving him a double portion of his inheritance, because he considered Yosef his bechor. Had Lavan not tricked Yaakov by giving Leah instead of Rachel, Yosef would have rightfully been the bechor. Through this instance of trickery, Lavan caused this jealousy to develop amongst the brothers. Therefore, Lavan's desire to destroy Yaakov really did lead to him going down to Egypt. Good Shabbos!

Adapted From Sefer Talelai Orot

(Ten Minute Halacha—Continued from page 3)

during the times of Rav Shmuel Bar Nachmeini, the community was suffering from two major catastrophes: a tenacious famine and a widespread plague. The Gemara, however, explains that they were not able to daven to be saved from both the famine and the plague simultaneously, and they had to select one. After much debate, the people concluded to daven for the plague to end.

Rav Shmuel Bar Nachmeini told them that he had a better idea: they should instead daven to be saved from the famine. The thought was that Hakadosh Baruch Hu would in turn save the community from both. If Hashem were to feed the community, the members of the community would have to be alive to be fed – hence, saved from the plague as well.

The Gemara then asks how do we know that one is not permitted to daven for multiple requests? The Gemara answers by quoting a pasuk in sefer Ezra which reads that Klal Yisrael davened to Hashem for "this". That implies that they needed other remedies, but they were only allowed to ask for one. So there is some kind of yesod that one is only allowed to ask the Ribono Shel Olam for one request at a time.

So now comes Yomim Noraim, where we realize that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is deciding our parnasah, health, simachos etc. How is one going to decide what to daven for? It is impossible to just pick one thing. Says Rav Asher Weiss, we take the cue from the Gemara. The Gemara says to try to find one nekuda that if Hakadosh Baruch Hu answers that, it will solve all our other needs. So we daven for "achas she'alti me'eis Hashem osa avakeish shivti b'beis Hashem kol yemei chayai". We daven that we want to be close to the Ribono Shel Olam. So the best way to be close to the Ribono Shel Olam, is by not having to be distracted by health issues or parnasah issues, so that one can focus and dedicate oneself solely to avodas Hashem.

That is exactly the reason why the Torah omits any explicit mention of Olam Habah. The Torah commands that if one does the mitzvot, then it will rain, one will have food and everything will be good. What about

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Olam Habah? The Rambam explains that the Torah's list of all the good we will earn when we do the ratzon Hashem is in itself not the reward. The real reward is the relationship with the Ribono Shel Olam. It makes it a lot easier to get to the reward when one is not distracted by the lack of food and all the physical ailments. So that is for what we daven; we daven shivti b'veis Hashem and that encapsulates and covers everything else.

In conclusion, the minhag to recite L'Dovid in Elul came about in the eighteenth century. Since it was not an accepted minhag neither by the Gra nor several groups of Chasidim, it probably does not matter if one wanted to recite the k'pital by mincha or maariv. However, because of the lav of "lo tisdodidu", one should follow the minhag of the tzibur. Therefore, if one is davening mincha at a nusach sefard minyan, then daveing maariv at a nusach ashkenaz minyan, one would in fact recite L'Dovid twice. In the reverse scenarios, one would refrain from saying L'Dovid. If one desires to say L'Dovid after the minyan, of course one is permitted.

(Stories of Greatness—Continued from page 8)

er was greeted by an open door flapping in the breeze. Suspecting the worst, he entered his store and was surprised to see that none of the merchandise had been disturbed. In fact, even the cash was still in his box, save for a single coin. Word spread quickly, and people began to talk about the strange robber who took just one coin. After the poor man and his family finished their bread, the man tried his hardest to resist the temptation to "borrow" another coin. But the sight of his hungry children proved too much for him, and he found himself once again walking among the deserted market stalls. Once again he located an open door, and was soon holding another coin.

This became a regular occurrence. Every few weeks a single coin would be missing from another shop, and no one had the slightest idea who could be the one behind the rash of mini-robberies. Guards were posted at every store in town. But the honest thief managed to slip through their fingers. After all, the righteous Rabbi Yisrael had assured him that he would find success in thievery. One night, the mayor himself decided to stay up late and see if he could solve the mystery. Dressed as a civilian, he waited in the shadows, watching for any sign of movement. Finally, he saw a hunched figure hurrying away from a shop. "I got you!" he cried, grabbing hold of the man's collar. "You thought you could run away, but I'm not going to let go of you. Tomorrow I'll bring you to the mayor, and he'll see to it that you are properly dealt with." "Please have mercy on me," begged the distraught thief. "I'm just a poor man trying to borrow a few coins to support my starving family. Everyone can attest that I never took even a single penny more than what I needed. If the town finds out that I was the one, I will be ruined. This will stain my good name and standing in the community forever. Believe me, G-d is my witness that I plan to pay every penny back just as soon as I am able."

The thief continued to beg, and the undercover mayor finally relented. "I'll tell you what," he said. "You're obviously a skilled thief. Do me this one favor, and I'll let you free. I have secret knowledge that the mayor of this town just received a large sum of money. He has it in a box under his bed. There is a small window to his bedroom. If you can manage to squeeze into his room and come back with the box of treasures, we can split it evenly between ourselves, and I'll let you go free." "I cannot do that," protested the chassid. "I'm not a burglar or criminal. I took just what I needed. How can I rob an innocent man of what is rightfully his?"

"That's your decision," replied the mayor. "Either you do as I say, or I report you in the morning." Left with no choice, the chassid made his way to the mayor's house, but soon returned empty-handed. "Thank G-d, I did not take a thing," he told his captor. "I crept into the room and was about to look for the box, when I heard

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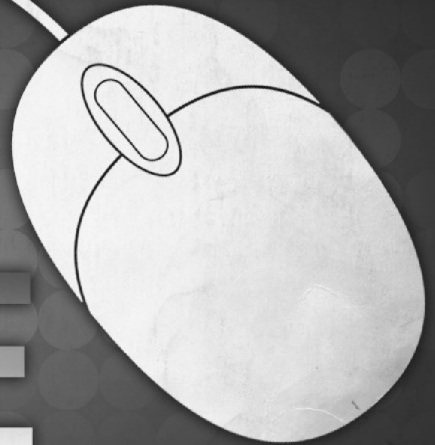
(Stories of Greatness—Continued from page 6)

voices. The mayor's household assistants were talking among themselves, saying that they were planning to slip some poison into their master's morning tea and then make off with his treasure. We must warn the mayor as soon as possible. He may even reward us." As soon as the mayor heard the man's words, he said, "You go home, and I'll warn the mayor. Just give me your hat, so that I can later identify you." With that, the mayor returned to his mansion.

The following morning, as soon as his tea was served, he had it fed to one of the dogs, who immediately began showing signs of distress. He had caught his servants in their treacherous act. As soon as the drama of his near-death had subsided, the mayor summoned the leaders of the Jewish community. "Do you know who owns this hat?" he asked them. "He is the one who has been stealing from the market." "It cannot be," they replied. "We know the owner of that hat. He is one of the most respected men in our community, a gentle, G-d-fearing scholar of the highest order." "No matter," replied the mayor. "Summon him immediately." When the broken-hearted man was brought before him, the mayor asked, not unkindly, "Is this your hat?" The leaders of the community have told me about you, and it is truly out of character of you to have been out pilfering coins in the market," continued the mayor, whom the man now recognized as his captor from the night before. "It seems to me that you must have been sent by heaven to save me from the plot of my staff, who tried to take my life and steal my money. It is only right that you should have half of the treasure as reward for your actions last night." The poor man had never seen so much money in his life. He immediately set aside a significant portion for charity, and then went back to repay all the shopkeepers from whom he had taken coins. He then devoted the remainder of his life to charity, prayer, Torah study and other lofty pursuits.

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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: NETANEL YOMTOV

Hello, and welcome to a new year of Dvarim Hayotzim. My name is Netanel Yomtov and I will be your Maggid for the coming year. Throughout this year I will be sharing many uplifting and inspiring stories to hopefully enhance your Shabbasim. Each story will have a lesson that we can take and apply in our everyday lives. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or stories that you feel should be shared with your fellow Jews, you can email me at netanel.yomtov@drshalb.org. Looking forward to an amazing year. Shabbat Shalom!

Of all the stories told about the great Rabbi Yisrael, the Maggid of Kozhnitz, this is perhaps one of the strangest and the most wondrous. Among Rabbi Yisrael's many chassidim was a learned man, a pious Jew who was regarded by all as a righteous individual. Like so many others in Poland in those years, he was beset by poverty. He had, thank G-d, many mouths to feed, but no steady source of income. "Rebbe," he said one day to Rabbi Yisrael, "please advise me. How can I support my wife and children? I simply cannot bear to watch them suffer, hungry and inadequately clothed. Is there anything I can do?" "It appears to me," replied the holy man, "that all avenues of earning are closed to you. There is but one channel through which you can receive your sustenance, but it is a profession you would never consider." "My dear teacher," replied the man, "I am so desperate to feed my family that I will do an-

thing. No profession, no matter how lowly, is beneath my dignity." "If you insist," said the sage grudgingly, "I can tell you, but you will not be happy with what you hear. It is revealed to me from the heavens that the only profession in which you can succeed is thievery. If you turn to stealing, nothing can stand in the way of your success."

Sadly, the chassid returned home. "How can I ever steal?" he thought to himself. "It is against the will of G-d." Time passed, and the chassid and his family grew more and more hungry. One night, he began to reason with himself. "G-d allows us to break the holy Sabbath for the sake of saving a life," he figured. "Why should stealing be any different? My family will soon starve to death. Let me go out and see if I can steal a little something. As soon as G-d wills it, I will have a few coins of my own, and I will pay them back." With that, he went to the deserted marketplace. He walked among the shuttered stalls and shops, trying the locks. Finally, he found an open door. He quietly slipped inside, tiptoed toward the back and rummaged around until he located the cash box, which was unlocked. With his heart in his throat, he withdrew a single coin and fled homeward as fast as his legs would carry him. The next morning, he went to the baker and bought bread for his wife and children.

The following morning, the shopkeep-

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