

whY I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

כח' אייר - סיון ז' ה'תשע"ח

May 13 to 21 '18

Volume 19 #31

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Bemidbor - Shavuot

במדבר - שבועות

זמנים

Weekdays

Shachris	
Sunday	6:50, 8 & 8:30
Weekdays	5:50, 6:50, 7:30 & 8:30
Weekday Rosh Chodesh	5:40, 6:40, 7:30 & 8:30
Sunday Rosh Chodesh	6:30, 8:00 & 8:30
Mincha	7:50
Maariv	after mincha

שבת במדבר

Candle Lighting	7:50 PM
Mincha	7 & 8:00 PM
Shachris	7:30, 8:50 & 9:00 AM
Mincha	8:00 PM
Maariv Shabbos ends	9:00 PM

שבועות

Candle Lighting	not before	9:01PM
Sunday Shachris	4:55, 7:30 & 9:00 AM	
Monday Shachris	7:30, & 9:00 AM	
Monday Night candle lighting		9:02 PM
Mincha	Both days	8:00 PM
Maariv Motzoi Yomtov		9:00 PM
Yomtov ends		9:06 PM

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Pirke Avos

“Our Sages taught in the style of the mishnah; blessed is He who has chosen them and their mishnah.” Rashi z”l writes that the first phrase teaches that this chapter was not originally part of Pirkei Avot. (Some explain that it was added later so that the number of chapters would equal the number of weeks between the two holidays.) But what does the second phrase mean? R’ Amram Zvi Gruenwald z”l (dayan / rabbinical court judge in Oyber-Visheve, Hungary) explains: We read (Yeshayah 30:20), “Your eyes shall behold your teacher.” We also are

taught that hearing words of mussar / character improvement is more effective than merely seeing (reading) them. Therefore, one who studies Pirkei Avot should picture each of the Sages speaking to him and imagine that he is hearing the words from that Sage. That is why, in Pirkei Avot, unlike in any other tractate, every single mishnah is attributed by name to one of the Sages. That is also why nearly every mishnah in Pirkei Avot is in present tense: “Rabbi So-and-so says,” rather than “Rabbi So-and-so said.” And, that is the meaning of the phrase, “Blessed is He who has chosen them and their mishnah.” These mishnayot were not taught by just anybody, and one who learns them needs to appreciate from whom he is learning them. (Zichron Amram Zvi)

My beloved

“ויודבר ד’ אל משה במדבר סיני באהל מועד, באחד לחדש השני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים לאמר” - משל למלך שנשא אשה ראשונה ולא כתב לה כתובה, לאחר זמן גרשה ולא כתב לה גט. וכך לאשה שניה ולשלישית, שלא כתב להן כתובה ולא כתב להן גט. לזמן ראה עניה אחת יתומה בת טובים ובקש לישא אותה לאשה. הלך ואמר לשושבינו: את זו אני רוצה לישא, ואל תנהוג בה כשם שנהגת בראשונות - זו בת אבות היא, צנועה היא במעשיה וכשרה - רצוני שתכתוב לה כתובה: באיזה יום ובאיזה שבוע, באיזה חדש ובכמה בחדש ובאיזה שנה, ובאיזה עיר ואיפרכיא [מדינה]... [במדבר רבה א', ה']”

“Five acquisitions the Holy One, Blessed Is He, acquired for Himself in His world, and they are: the Torah, one acquisition; heaven and earth, one acquisition; Avraham, one acquisition; Yisrael, one acquisition; the Bet Hamikdash, one acquisition.”

(Chapter 6) R’ Yitzchak Berachiah Mi’Fano z”l (Italy; 1583-1658) asks: From whom did He acquire these five things? Indeed, what does it mean that Hashem acquired something when everything in the world already is His? He explains: It is G-d’s desire that man have free will so that the righteous will earn reward. (It follows, also, that the wicked earn punishments by misusing their free will.) A strong argument could be made that man’s exercise of his free will should be unlimited, even to the point that he could destroy the world if he chose. However, the five things listed in our mishnah are so precious

לכבוד האי גברא וב”ב הרוצים בעילום שמם על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו שיהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם הקב”ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב מיט יידישע נחת בעושר ואושר ואריכת ימים בבריאות בזה ובבא עבגצב”ב

to G-d that He took steps to protect them without limiting man’s free will. In this sense, He “acquired” them back from mankind. How so? [A full explanation of all five “acquisitions” would not fit in the available space, but we present two examples.] R’ Yitzchak Berachiah continues, Hashem knows that the Torah is best off in the hands of the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Still, fairness required Hashem to offer the Torah to all of the nations. What did He do? The midrash says that, when Hashem offered the Torah to each nation, it asked what is in the Torah. Hashem answered one nation, “Do not steal,” another, “Do not commit adultery,” etc. R’ Yitzchak Berachiah explains that He answered each with a detail that that particular nation would find unpalatable. He did this with the intention of discouraging them. Each of those nations still had the free will to overcome its nature and accept the Torah. The end result, however, was that Hashem “acquired” the Torah back to give to the nation that He knows is the most appropriate recipient. **Another example:** Avraham Avinu was born into a family steeped in idol worship. Left alone, Avraham would have been no different than his father Terach, exactly what that wicked generation would have wanted. Hashem did not negate their free will. He did, however, give Avraham an opening, as the prophet says (Yeshayah 41:2—the haftarah for Parashat Lech Lecha), “Who aroused [Avraham] from the east, who would proclaim His righteousness at every footstep?” By “awakening” Avraham, Hashem “acquired” him for His purposes, but Avraham did the rest using his free will. (Chanoch La’na’ar)

It says (Shmot 32:16), “The Tablets are G-d’s handiwork and the script is G-d’s script, charut / engraved on the Tablets” – Do not read “charut,” but rather, “cherut” / freedom, for there is no freer man than one who engages in the

study of Torah. (Ch.6) In what sense is one who engages in Torah study free? **R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l** 1865-1935; Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael) explains: Freedom is man's greatest aspiration. This is why the memory of our own Exodus from slavery to freedom is the most active memory among the collective holy memories of the Jewish People; it is why the sanctity of our holy days is tied to remembering the Exodus [as we mention in kiddush on Shabbat and yom tov]. This is why the Torah declares about the Yovel / Jubilee year, which symbolizes the Jewish People's attainment of its ultimate perfection, (Vayikra 25:11), "Proclaim liberty throughout the Land for all its inhabitants." True freedom, however, is that freedom which is suitable for man's inner character, freedom which is in his soul. [Unlike physical freedom,] the spirit's tendency toward freedom cannot be subdued by any outside force, and it cannot be broken by any fact of geography [i.e., exile]. The symbol of such freedom is a species of bird which the Gemara (Shabbat 106b) calls a "tzipor dror" (literally, a "liberty bird"). [The Gemara explains that the nature of this bird is to behave exactly the same way in captivity as in the wild.] Because of its nature, it cannot be subdued by any master. It does not surrender its natural tendency to feel free, regardless of the surrounding conditions. R' Kook concludes: This tendency to be free regardless of one's surroundings should be a part of every person's life and a part of our national life, in general. [This means being true to our "free" souls,] lifting high the banner of Torah, which is perfectly suited to our souls. From that heroism will come true freedom, and then we will realize the goal represented by the Yovel — "Proclaim liberty throughout the Land for all its inhabitants." (Ein Ayah)

Right after Shabbos, we observe Shavuot, the time of the Giving of the Torah. Regarding that event, the Midrash Rabbah comments on the verse (Mishlei 4:2), "For I have given you a good teaching; do not forsake My Torah," as follows: Is an item's seller usually sold with the item? Hashem says to Yisrael, "I sold you the Torah, and I, so-to-speak, was sold with it." The situation may be

compared to that of a king who married off his only daughter to the king of a distant land. When the groom wanted to go back to his kingdom, his father-in-law said, "I cannot part from my only daughter, nor I can I tell you not to take her to your home, for she is your wife. Therefore, do me this favor: build me an apartment so that I can live near you." Similarly, Hashem says, "I cannot separate from the Torah, nor can I tell you not to take it. Therefore, build Me a place where I can dwell amongst you." [Until here from the Midrash] **R' Shmuel Shmelke Güntzler z"l** (1834-1911; rabbi of Oyber Visheve, Hungary) explains: We read (Devarim 30:12), "It [the Torah] is not in heaven." Hashem gave us the Torah to interpret and to apply to the Halachic questions that arise in our lives. Whatever rulings we make become the Torah, provided that they are consistent with tradition and with the rules of interpretation handed down from Sinai. Like the king who cannot prevent the groom from taking his bride to his home, Hashem "cannot" keep the Torah after He has given it to us. At the same time, the king is not willing to part entirely from his daughter. Similarly, Hashem demands that we make a "home" for Him where we study Torah. (Meishiv Nefesh)

"Had He brought us before Har Sinai, but not given us the Torah, dayenu / it would have sufficed for us." (From the Pesach Haggadah) What would we have gained by coming to Har Sinai but not receiving the Torah? **R' Menachem Mendel Hager z"l** (1886-1941; rabbi, rosh yeshiva and chassidic rebbe of Oyber Visheve, Hungary; the Visheve Rebbe) explains: When Moshe Rabbeinu first ascended Har Sinai and then descended to speak to the nation, the nation declared (Shmot 19:8), "Everything that Hashem has spoken na'aseh / we shall do!" That verse concludes, "Moshe brought back the words of the people to Hashem." The Targum Yerushalmi—an Aramaic translation and commentary of the Torah dating to the Sages of the Mishnah—comments: "Moshe brought back the words of the people to Hashem with a prayer." What was that prayer? The Visheve Rebbe answers: The

Ba'al Shem Tov z"l (1698-1760; founder of the chassidic movement) would frequently cite the verse (Tehilim 121:5), "Hashem is your shadow." He would explain: Like a shadow that mimics everything a person does, Hashem's interaction with each Jew is a reflection of that person's own behavior. Thus, when Bnei Yisrael said, "We will do," without even asking what was involved, it was only right that Hashem act toward them in kind. That was Moshe's prayer: May You always respond to the Jewish People before they call to You. And, Hashem agreed, as we read (Yeshayah 65:24), "It will be that before they call, I will answer." That relationship is what we gained just by coming to Har Sinai. The Visheve Rebbe concludes: We read (Devarim 4:9-10), "Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes beheld and lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life, [rather] make them known to your children and your children's children, the day that you stood before Hashem, your Elokim, at Chorev [i.e., Har Sinai] . . ." Merely standing before Har Sinai was momentous. Why? The Gemara (Berachot 26b) teaches (in a different context) that "standing" is a reference to prayer. What happened at Har Sinai, apart from receiving the Torah, was that Moshe's prayer was answered, such that we have a relationship with Hashem in which He may answer our prayers even before we utter them. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Sh'eirit Menachem)

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With help from Above
 - "ויפקד אותם משה על פי ד' כאשר צוה"
 אמר משה לפני הקב"ה: אתה אומר לי שאמנה אותם מבן חדש, יכול אני להיות מחזר ומסבב בחצרותיהם ובתוך בתיהם ולספור כל אחד ואחד, שאתה אומר לי: "כל זכר בן חדש תפקדם". אמר לו הקב"ה: אתה עשה את שלך ואני אעשה את שלי, אמר ר' יהודה הלוי בר' שלום: היה משה הולך ועומד לו על פתח אהליהם של הלויים, והשכינה מקדמת ואומרת לו: חמשה תינוקות יש בבית הזה, שמונה תינוקות יש באהל הזה, עשרה תינוקות יש באהל הזה, וזהו שנאמר: "ויפקד אותם משה על פי ד'".
 [במדבר רבה ג', ט']

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מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כל-יצא צבא בישראל תפקדו אתם לצבאתם אתה ואהרן
...according to the number of names...(1:3) Chazal refer to the fourth book of the Torah as Sefer HaPekudim – The Book Of Counting.

Presumably this is because of the census found in this week's Parsha. However, this is not the first census Bnei Yisroel took. We find a similar census in Sefer Shemos. What is unique about this census that Chazal would define an entire Sefer by it? Counting can be used for two purposes. One purpose for counting is to combine individual elements as a group. The other purpose for counting is to give each of the different elements within a group its own identity, giving the individual the feeling that "he counts". This is accomplished by focusing on each individual separately, rather than on the group as a whole. The purpose of the counting found in Sefer Shemos is to unify the Jews as a nation following their exodus from Egypt. In Sefer Bamidbar we find the expression "bemispar shaymos" – "they were counted according to their names". The reason for this is that the focus of the counting is to emphasize the individuality of each person within the group. Identifying a person by his name is a way of focusing upon his individuality. This expression does not appear in Sefer Shemos, for if the function of the counting is to unify the people as a nation, there is no need to identify individuals by name. Very often when a person is part of a large group, he senses a loss of his individuality and self-expression. To compensate for this, he has a tendency to break away from the group. The message of the counting in Sefer Bamidbar is that there is room for individuality and self-expression within the confines of the group. Indeed, interpersonal relationships within the group can enhance individuality and offer the opportunity for self-expression. This explains why the division of tribes and their banners are mentioned in the census of Bamidbar, and not in that of Shemos. (See 1:20-44, 2:2) The ability to identify oneself in connection with a particular tribe and represented by a particular banner, further enhances a person's sense of individuality. (Rabbi Yochanan Zweig)

והלויים יחנו סביב למשכן העדת ולא יהיה קצף על עדת בני ישראל ושמרו הלויים את משמרת משכן העדות

"The Levi'im shall encamp around the Mishkan . . ." (1:53)

R' Amram Zvi Gruenwald z"l (dayan / rabbinical court judge in Oyber Visheve; later rabbi in the Fernwald

Displaced Persons camp; died in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1951) writes: The center of the camp, where the Levi'im camped, represents the heart within the human body. Although a person has 248 organs, he can live without many of them. But, one cannot live without a heart. Thus, in a case where a young girl was cutting up a chicken and did not find a heart, the **Chacham Zvi** (R' Zvi Ashkenazi z"l; 1656-1718) ruled that the chicken was kosher; it was not considered to be missing a major organ, because it is impossible that it did not have a heart. R' Gruenwald continues: The name Levi comes from the root meaning "to accompany" or "to attach." Thus, the fact that the Levi'im camped in the "heart" of the camp is a reminder of the importance of attaching one's heart to Hashem and the Torah [— the Luchot were in the center of the Levi'im's encampment —] at all times. Notably, the picture on the flag of the tribe of Levi was the Urim Ve'tumim, which sat over Aharon's heart. (Zichron Amram Zvi)

במספר כל זכר מבו חדיש ומעלה שנת אלפים ושש מאות שמרי משמרת הקדש

"The number of every male from one month of age and up . . . the keepers of the holy charge." (3:28) Rashi z"l (on verse 15) comments: As soon as the infant reached the age of one month, he could be counted as a "keeper of the holy charge." **R' Shimon Schwab** z"l (1908-1995; rabbi of the "Breuer's" community in Washington Heights, N.Y.) asks: How can we be so certain that young Levi'im would grow up to be "keepers of the holy charge"? He answers: The Levi'im of that generation knew the secret of successful Torah education. Specifically, we read about the tribe of Levi (Devarim 33:9), "The one who said of his father and mother, 'I have not favored him'; to his brothers he did not give recognition and his children he did not know; for they [the Levi'im] have observed Your word, and Your covenant they preserved." This means that parents told their children, "I love you more than everyone in the world except Hashem. Never forget that I love Hashem more than I love you." This, writes R' Schwab, was the secret of successful Jewish parenting, as demonstrated by the Levi'im. [R'

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Schwab related that his own father expressed this sentiment to his sons when the Four Sons were mentioned at the Pesach Seder.] (Selected Speeches) **A related thought: R' Shalom Mantzura** z"l (Yemen; 1800-1884) writes that **his father** once came to a Jewish town where people cried when a child was born and rejoiced when a person died. The elder R' Mantzura wondered at this custom, and the townsfolk explained: When a child is born, we cry in prayer that he not go off the straight path when he grows up. In contrast, when a person dies righteous, we rejoice that he succeeded in living his life properly. Regarding this, King Shlomo wrote

(Kohelet 12:13), "The sum of the matter, when all has been considered--fear God and keep His commandments, for that is man's whole [duty]." I, too, continues the younger R' Mantzura, heard of a grandmother who prayed upon hearing of the birth of her grandson: "Master of the universe! If this child who was born to my son will live an eternal life in Your service and with awe of You, then protect him and strengthen him. But, if the opposite, G-d forbid, then please take him from us now." R' Mantzura records that that grandmother's prayer was answered, and the newborn grew up to be **R' Yichiyeh ben Yosef Tzalach** z"l [known as "Maharitz," one of the great sages of early 19th century Yemen, and the teacher of R' Mantzura's teachers]. Fortunate was that grandmother's lot, adds R' Mantzura. Similarly, he concludes, every parent should pray that his children will be dedicated to the service of His Name. (Ha'pedut V'ha'yeshuah)

בא אהרן ובניו בנסע המחנה והורדו את פרכת המסך וכסו בה את ארון העדות

"When the camp is to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come and take down the Parochet / partition-curtain and cover the Aron Ha'edut / Ark of the Testimony with it . . . Thus you shall do for them [the Levi'im] so that they shall live and not die-- when they approach the Holy of Holies, Aharon and his sons shall come and assign them, every man to his work and his burden. But they [the Levi'im] shall not come and look as the 'holy' is covered, lest they die."(4:5, 19-20) **R'Moshe David Walle** z"l (Italy; 1697-1777) explains: The Levi'im should not approach to carry the Aron before it is covered so that they will not touch it or even see it. The reason for this is that different souls are capable of tolerating different spiritual "lights." The soul of a Kohen can tolerate the "light" of the Aron, while the soul of a Levi cannot. Wherever the soul does not belong, it is called a "zar" / "stranger," and this state is abhorrent to kedushah / holiness. As a result, death may follow, as it did when Nadav and Avihu offered a "strange fire" (Parashat Shemini--Vayikra ch.10) and when Uza touched the Aron (Haftarah for Parashat

Shemini-- Shmuel II 6:7-8). R' Walle continues: The One Who Shines Light from Above has established boundaries for all types of kedushah, and every person must know his place and be happy with his lot. One who breaks through these boundaries only harms himself, as we find regarding the otherwise righteous King Azaryah / Uziyahu [who attempted to serve as a Kohen]. He was struck with tzara'at, which is equated with death, and he was forced to live out his days in a cemetery (see Melachim II ch. 15 & Divrei Ha'yamim II ch.26). (Shivtei Kah)

R' Meshulam Yissachar Horowitz z"l was born in 1805 or 1808 in Stanislau, Galicia (now Ivano-Frankovsk, Ukraine), where his father was rabbi. It is recorded that he was a mischievous child who was not interested in learning. As a teenager, however, he began to learn avidly, often studying for 16 hours without an interruption. After his marriage, he continued to study while his wife attempted to support their family. Although he received semichah at age 18 from **R' Yaakov Lorberbaum** of Lissa and other leading sages, R' Meshulam claimed that he was unqualified to seek a rabbinic post. Eventually, though, his poverty became so great that R' Meshulam's father secretly arranged his son's appointment to the rabbinate. Presented with a signed contract back-up by his father's command that he accept it, R' Meshulam became rabbi of Zelozitz in 1827. In approximately 1840, R' Meshulam was called to Stanislau to serve as Assistant Rabbi under his aging father. Soon after, he was elected rabbi of Tismanitz. During his time there, his fame spread until even **R' Shlomo Kluger**, one of the leading halachic authorities of mid-19th century Galicia sought his opinion. In 1844, R' Meshulam returned to Stanislau to succeed his father, who had passed away. R' Meshulam was succeeded in Tismanitz by his young son, R' Shaul, who would hold the rabbinate in that town for 43 years. R' Meshulam was beloved by his congregants, who told stories of miracles that he brought about. He was opposed to chassidus and he prevented the movement's spread into Stanislau. Nevertheless, he had

cordial relations with a number of chassidic rebbes. Although his primary occupation was Torah study, he was also known for the beauty of his prayers. At times, people would eavesdrop under his windows just to hear him daven. When the Machzikei Ha'das organization (considered by some to be a forerunner of Agudath Israel) was founded, R' Meshulam participated in its deliberations, but he later withdrew over political differences. At the convention of 1880, he proposed that the organization's charter be written in Hebrew (rather than Yiddish), but his proposal was defeated. He died in 1888, leaving distinguished children and several written works. (Encyclopedia Le'Chachmei Galicia; Melizei Aish- Hamaayan).

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**יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי
ואלקי אבותי שתשלח מהרה
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בתי בת שרה
בריינדל בת פעשא לאה
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משה שלמה בן גאלדע רעכל
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