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SPECIAL FEATURE

ROUND AND ROUND IN CIRCLES

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

The midrash describes the depth of Hashem's love for the Jewish nation. As Sukkot draws to a close, Hashem declares, "It is difficult for Me to watch you leave, stay another day with Me." And, Hashem then adds Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah (which is one day in Israel) so that the Jewish People would remain together with Him in the Holy Temple another day.

Rabbi Yosef from Dovna writes in *Yesod Yosef* that this midrash helps us understand the custom to take out all the Sifrei Torah from the Aron Kodesh on Simchat Torah. When a father loves his son, he opens all his treasuries for him. He does not withhold a thing. Similarly, Hashem bestows upon us his greatest treasure of all: His Torah.

The Chatam Sofer writes that Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah is even greater than Yom Kippur! He explains: Yom Kippur shows our love for Hashem through affliction, such as fasting and not wearing leather shoes. Whereas, on Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, we show our love for Hashem through joy, which expresses a much deeper connection.

The Zohar HaKadosh teaches that its significance stems from the fact that on Hoshana Rabbah (the last day of Sukkot), the judgment that began on Rosh Hashana is, finalized, and on Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah the blessings begin to flow. Kabbalistic sources teach that when we celebrate Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah with the correct intent, we become recipients of immeasurable blessings throughout the entire year.

Rabbi Chanoch Heinech from Alexander writes that when we read in V'Zot HaBracha about the blessings Moshe Rabbeinu bestows on his beloved Jewish nation just before passing from this world, we receive those blessings anew. He adds, for this reason Kohanim do not go up to bless the congregation as they would normally do on a Yom Tov. We are receiving Moshe Rabbeinu's blessings in their place!

However, the Imrei Emet points out that in order to tap into the extraordinary potential of Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, Hashem's not wanting to part from us must be mutual. We must also feel that we do not want to leave this sublime time of the year. That we do not want to bid farewell to the unparalleled closeness we have built up to Hashem since Rosh Chodesh Elul.

The Shulchan Aruch writes that, according to some opinions, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah is not called a *Chag*. The Ramah MiPano points out that the word *chag* means a circle, and explains that the Yamim Tovim create a circle, which is our yearly cycle. However, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah is not a part of this circle. Rather, it is the axis around which the Jewish year revolves.

In a similar vein, Rabbi Chaim Palagi (Moed L'Kol Chai) writes that we should take care to recite the prayers on Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah with tremendous intensity. There is no more fortuitous time in the year for Hashem desiring to hear our prayers.

For this reason, on Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah we rejoice together with our Father in Heaven to make a special celebration with the most precious "commodity" in existence – the Torah. We take out the Sifrei Torah and dance round and round, holding onto the Torah scrolls and the Torah tightly, as we move in seemingly never-ending circles called *hakafot*.

Rabbi Meir Shapiro describes *hakafot* as being a metaphor for Jewish history. Wherever we go, wherever we may have exiled to, we take the Torah with us. From country to country, continent to continent and hemisphere to hemisphere, we always carry Hashem's holy Torah with us. Soon, we will all come back to where we began, returning to where we all belong, the Land of Israel.

Rabbi Chaim David Yosef Azulai, known by his acronym Chid"א, writes in a special *tefillah* composed for the *hakafot*, that when we dance on Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, we demolish the iron walls separating us from Hashem. Also, Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua writes (Ateret Yehoshua) that the intensity of the circles we create on Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah can remove all plagues and troubles.

But what, exactly, are we celebrating on Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah? The Chidushei HaRim writes that we are not celebrating the end of Torah-reading cycle. Rather, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah is the celebration of the beginning of a new cycle. We do not finish the Torah and just stop. Rather, we open the holy Torah to the very first column and begin reading it anew, creating an eternal circle.

When I was a young child, I used to be particularly fond of a rather corny joke that made me laugh out loud. It went something like this: I never understood the invention of circles. They seem "pointless." (Sorry!)

However, nothing could be further from the truth. As the last, lingering, glorious moments of Sukkot come to an end, we enter a new realm. We join together with Hashem to create holy circles. Circles that not only *have a point*, but circles that *are the point* of our entire year. Circles of incomparable spirituality and infinite love for Hashem's holy Torah.

Q & A – Succot

Questions

1. According to the Torah, what three basic requirements define a material as valid for use as a succa roof?
2. If the succa causes discomfort (e.g., it's too cold) to the extent that under similar conditions you would leave your very own house, you are exempt from the mitzvah. Why?
3. What two things are forbidden to do outside of the succa all seven days of the festival?
4. What is the absolute minimum number of meals a person is required to eat in the succa during the seven day holiday?
5. Besides referring to the tree and its fruit, what does the word "esrog" mean literally?
6. What is the minimum length of a lulav?
7. What is the maximum percentage a person is required to add to the purchase price of his esrog in order to obtain an esrog of greater beauty?
8. On the Shabbos that occurs during Succos, we read the Book of Koheles, in which King Solomon refers to himself as "Koheles." Why is King Solomon called Koheles?
9. What prohibition could a person transgress simply by sitting in the succa on the eighth day of Succos?
10. We hold a tallis over the heads of the people who read the end of the Torah and the beginning of the Torah. Why?

Answers

1. It must grow from the ground, no longer be connected to the ground, and not be receptive to tumah (ritual defilement).
2. Because the commandment of living in a succa is to dwell in the succa for seven days the same way you dwell in your house the rest of the year. (Mishna Berura 640:13)
3. Eat (an 'established' meal) or sleep. (Orach Chaim 639:2)
4. One. Eating a meal in the succa the first night of Succos is a requirement. The rest of the festival, a person can eat 'snacks' which are not required to be eaten in a succa. (Outside Israel, one must eat a meal the second night of Succos as well. However, there is no requirement to live outside Israel!) (Orach Chaim 639:3)
5. Beauty. (Ramban Vayikra 23:40)
6. Its spine must be at least 4 tefachim (halachic handbreadths).
7. 33.3% (Orach Chaim 656:1)
8. Because he gathered (kihale) vast wisdom, and because he, as king, gathered the nation on Succos after the Sabbatical year. (Rashi, Koheles 1:1)
9. Bal Tosif - "Do not add to the mitzvos." The commandment to live in the succa applies for only seven days. To sit in the succa on the eighth day with intent to fulfill the mitzvah transgresses "bal tosif." (Orach Chaim 666:1)
10. It represents the wedding canopy, symbolizing that through the Torah we wed ourselves to Hashem.

Q & A – Bereishet

Questions

1. Why does the Torah start with the account of Creation?
2. What happened to the light that was created on the first day?
3. Why isn't the word "good" associated with the second day?
4. How were the trees supposed to taste?
5. On which day were the sun and moon created?
6. Hashem blessed the birds to be fruitful and to multiply. Why did He not do so with the beasts?
7. In whose likeness was man fashioned?
8. What kind of food did Adam eat?
9. Why is "the sixth day" written with the definite article?
10. At the end of the sixth day what was the world still lacking?
11. Why was man made from dust gathered from the entire earth?
12. How is man superior to the animals?
13. Why was it not good that man be alone?
14. Where do we learn that one must not add to a commandment from Hashem?
15. What does it mean that Adam and Chava "knew that they were naked"?
16. Why did Hevel choose to be a shepherd?
17. What was the marital practice of the generation who lived before the flood?
18. What did Tuval-Cain invent?
19. Why did Chanoch die at a young age?
20. What was the sign that Shem was born with great propensity for righteousness?

Answers

1. 1:1 - So that when the nations accuse us of stealing Eretz Canaan from the Canaanites, we can respond that Hashem, as Creator, has the right to give the land to whomever He sees fit, and He gave Eretz Canaan to us.
2. 1:4 - Hashem saw that the wicked would be unworthy of it so He hid it for the righteous.
3. 1:7 - Because the work with the water wasn't completed until the third day. Anything that is incomplete is not "good."
4. 1:11 - The wood was to have the taste of the fruit.
5. 1:14 - They were created on the first day and suspended in the firmament on the fourth day.
6. 1:22 - He did not want the serpent, who was to be cursed, to receive a blessing.
7. 1:26 - In the likeness of the angels.
8. 1:30 - Vegetation.
9. 1:31 "The" in Hebrew is the letter hey, which has a numerical value of five. Hashem created the world on the condition that it will endure only if the Jewish People accept the Five Books of the Torah.
10. 2:2 - Rest.
11. 2:7 - So that wherever he might die, the earth would receive his body.
12. 2:7 - He was given understanding and speech.
13. 2:18 - If he were alone, he would appear to be a god. The creation of woman emphasized man's dependence.
14. 3:3 - From Chava. Hashem commanded not to eat from the tree but she added not to touch it. Because she added to the command she eventually came to transgress it.
15. 3:7 - They had been given one commandment and they had stripped themselves of it.
16. : 4:2 - Since the ground had been cursed he refrained from cultivating it.
17. : 4:19 - They married two wives, one with whom to have children. The other one was given a potion which prevented her from bearing children.
18. 4:22 - Murder weapons.
19. 5:22 - Though he was righteous, he was easily influenced; therefore Hashem took him before his time to protect him from sinning.
20. 5:32 - He was born already circumcised.

Q & A – Noah

Questions

1. Which particular sin sealed the fate of the flood generation?
2. Why did Hashem tell Noah to build an ark, as opposed to saving him via some other method?
3. The ark had three levels. What function did each level serve?
4. What indication do we have that Noah was familiar with the Torah?
5. Why did Hashem postpone bringing the flood for seven days?
6. Why did the first water of the flood come down as light rain?
7. : What did people say that threatened Noah, and what did Hashem do to protect him?
8. What grouping of creatures escaped the punishment of the flood?
9. How deeply was the ark submerged in the water?
10. What did the olive branch symbolize?
11. How long did the punishment of the flood last?
12. A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
13. : When did humans receive permission to eat meat?
14. What prohibition was given along with the permission to eat meat?
15. Why does the command to "be fruitful and multiply" directly follow the prohibition of murder?
16. : Name two generations in which the rainbow never appeared.
17. : Why did Noah curse Canaan specifically? Give two reasons.
18. Why does the Torah call Nimrod a mighty hunter?
19. The sin of the generation of the dispersion was greater than the sin of the generation of the flood. Why was the punishment of the former less severe?
20. Why was Sarah also called Yiscah?

Answers

1. 6:13 - Robbery.
2. 6:14 - So that people would see Noah building the ark and ask him what he was doing. When Noah would answer, "Hashem is bringing a flood," it might encourage some people to repent.
3. 6:16 - The top level housed the people, the middle level housed the animals, and the bottom level, the refuse.
4. 7:2 - Hashem told him to take into the ark seven of each kosher-type animal, and two of each non-kosher type. "Kosher" and "non-kosher" are Torah concepts.
5. 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Metushelach.
6. 7:12 - To give the generation a chance to repent.
7. : 7:13,15 - People said, "If we see him going into the ark, we'll smash it!" Hashem surrounded it with bears and lions to kill any attackers.
8. 7:22 - The fish.
9. 8:4 - Eleven amot.
10. 8:11 - Nothing. It was a leaf, not a branch. (The olive leaf symbolized that its better to eat food "bitter like an olive" but which comes directly from Hashem, rather than sweet food provided by humans.)
11. 8:14 - A full solar year.
12. 8:14 - Eleven days.
13. : 9:3 - After the flood.
14. 9:4 - The prohibition of eating a limb cut from a living animal.
15. 9:7 - To equate one who purposely abstains from having children to one who commits murder.
16. 9:12 - The generation of King Chizkiyahu and the generation of Shimon bar Yochai.
17. 9:22,24 - Because Canaan is the one who revealed Noah's disgrace to Cham. And because Cham stopped Noah from fathering a fourth son. Thus, Noah cursed Cham's fourth son, Canaan.
18. 10:9 - He used words to ensnare the minds of people, persuading them to rebel against Hashem.
19. 11:9 - They lived together peacefully.
20. : 11:29 - The word "Yiscah" is related to the Hebrew word "to see." Sarah was called Yiscah because she could "see" the future via prophecy. Also, because of her beauty, everyone would gaze at her.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Enter the Garden

When Hashem created Adam on the very first Rosh Hashana, He put Adam in a place called *Gan Eden* (“the Garden of Eden”) to cultivate and guard (Gen. 2:15). On the very same day, Adam sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge and was booted out from that idyllic utopia. Ever since then, man has strived to perfect himself and the world in a bid to return to that blissfully ideal paradise. In this two-part essay, we focus on the word *gan* (“garden/park/orchard”) and how it may differ from its ostensible synonyms *pardes* and *bustan*. In doing so, we explore the etymologies of the words in question and discuss related cognates that can help us shed light on their core meaning.

Inflections of the word *gan* appear 41 times. For example, the Bible refers multiple times to “the Garden of Hashem” (Gen. 13:10, Isa. 51:3, Yechezkel 28:13, 31:8-9) and elsewhere refers to “the Garden of the King” (II Kings 25:4, Jer. 39:4, 54:7, Nech. 3:15). Cognates of this Hebrew word are also evident in various other Semitic languages, like Aramaic (*gena*), Akkadian (*gannatu*), Ugaritic (*gn*), and Arabic (*janna*). My cousin Yoninah Chagit Klein pointed out to me that the Arabic name of the West Bank city Jenin is actually a cognate of the Hebrew word *gan*. It is no wonder that a 2023 IDF military operation in Jenin was dubbed “*Bayit V'Gan*” (literally, “house and garden”) – which is incidentally also the name of a prestigious neighborhood in Jerusalem. Scholars have identified the modern-day Jenin as the site of the Biblical *Beit HaGan*, to where Ahaziah fled when running away for Jehu (II Kings 9:27), and possibly the Canaanite town Gina mentioned in the Amarna letters.

Although *gan* does not appear in the Mishna, its cognate *ginah* appears numerous times in the Mishna. In Modern Hebrew, the term *gan* also refers to a “kindergarten” as a sort of calque from the word *kindergarten*, which literally means “children’s garden” (in German).

The classical Hebrew lexicographers see the root of *gan* as the same thing as the root of the term *haganah* (“protecting/guarding”), with biliteralists like Menachem Ibn Saruk (920–970) tracing both to the biliteral root GIMMEL-NUN, and trilateralists like Ibn Janach (990–1050) and Radak (1160–1235) tracing both to the trilateral root GIMMEL-NUN-NUN. Anyone who has even some semblance of a green thumb can appreciate the connection in light of the fact that a “garden” is something that one would wish to “guard” and “protect,” so that its flora may flourish and not get destroyed. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (to Gen. 2:8) explicitly notes that just like the Hebrew *gan* relates to the Hebrew *haganah*, so does the English word *garden* relate to the English word *guard*!

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740–1814) also makes this etymology explicit in his work *Cheshek Shlomo*, when analyzing the two-letter root GIMMEL-NUN. In that work, Rabbi Pappenheim submits that that root’s core meaning is “protecting/guarding,” with the verbs related to *haganah* like *yagen* (Isa. 31:5) and *migen* (Gen. 14:20) referring to the act of “protecting/guarding.” The most obvious tributary of this meaning is the word *magen* (“shield”), a tool used by fighters for *protecting* themselves. But our word, *gan*, is another off-shoot of this idea, because *gan* denotes a protected patch of land that has been designed as a “garden” for the cultivation of flora,

and is thus “protected” by physical barriers (like fences or walls) from the treading feet of intruders who might ruin the garden.

Taking this a step further, Rabbi Pappenheim actually sees two more Hebrew words as tributaries of *gan*: The word *agan* (Ex. 24:6, Song of Songs 7:3) refers to a “container,” but Rabbi Pappenheim clarifies that it does not refer to just any container. Rather, it refers specifically to the sort of container that one might use for watering a garden. Hence, the very word for this container is derived from the word *gan*. Additionally, Rabbi Pappenheim argues that the word *niggun* (“melody”) also derives from *gan*, because a *niggun* denotes a harmonious variety of musical sounds that mimics the variety of flora that grow within a garden.

For more about the Hebrew word *gan* and its apparent synonym *pardes*, visit us online at: http://ohr.edu/this_week/whats_in_a_word/ and read the rest of this fascinating article...

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TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Kiddushin 37-64

The Reward for a Mitzvah

Rabbi Yaakov said, "There is no reward in this world for fulfilling a mitzvah."

The *gemara* explains that we see that Rabbi Yaakov holds this opinion from what he teaches in a *beraita*, that whenever the Torah stipulates the reward for fulfilling a particular mitzvah, it refers only to the reward for the mitzvah in the World-to-Come. Although this concept is a matter of dispute between Tana'im, the Rambam cites the view of Rabbi Yaakov as the halacha. (Laws of Teshuva 8:1)

The Rambam raises an apparent question on his ruling from the beginning of the next chapter, since we see, as we see in many verses in the Torah, that we are promised reward in this world for mitzvah fulfillment, such as peace and success (and punishment in this world for transgressions). We say twice daily, in the second paragraph of the *Shema*: "I (Hashem) will give the rain of your Land at its time, the early rain and the latter rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine and your oil. And I will give grass in your field for your livestock, and you will eat and be satiated. (Deut. 11:14-15) This seems to indicate a reward in this world for mitzvah observance, contrary to the teaching of Rabbi Yaakov, and the ruling of the Rambam in the previous chapter.

The Rambam explains the matter in depth and with great clarity. He writes that "Hashem gave us this Torah, which is a tree of life. Whoever fulfills what is written within it and comprehends it with complete and proper knowledge will merit the life of the World-to-Come." This is the ultimate reward for the fulfillment of the *mitzvot*. However, there are also "benefits" in this world that we are promised, not as an ultimate reward, but to help and enable our mitzvah observance, such as being bestowed with wealth and peace. This is not a "reward" inasmuch as it is an "opportunity". As the Rambam states, "He will grant us all the good that will reinforce our performance of the Torah, such as plenty, peace, an abundance of silver and gold, in order that we not be involved throughout all our days in matters needed by the body; but, rather, we will be able to dwell unburdened and have the opportunity to study wisdom and perform *mitzvot* in order that we will merit the life of the World-to-Come."

▪ *Kiddushin 39b*

Knowing the Mind and Soul

"It is a mitzvah to listen to the words of the Sages."

The question under discussion in the *gemara* is what is the source for the statement of Rava that "*devarim sheblev einam devarim*" – i.e., whatever is in one's heart (i.e., not verbalized) doesn't have the power to contradict that which he actually says.

The *gemara* attempts to provide a source for Rava from a *Mishna* that deals with a *get* for divorce. It states that if a man refuses to divorce his wife despite her being forbidden to him, the Jewish court forces him to agree to give the *get* and say "I want to give the *get*". (This is necessary because a *get* must be given by the husband

willingly.) The *gemara* suggests this a proof for Rava since we can assume that in his heart he does not want to give the get, despite the words that the court force him to say that proclaim that he wants to give it. This would prove that whatever is in one's heart (i.e., not verbalized) does not have the power to contradict that which he actually says. However, the *gemara* rejects this from serving as a proof, since "It is a mitzvah to listen to the words of the Sages," and perhaps that is why he is saying that he wants to give the get.

The Rambam (Laws of Divorce 2:20) elaborates as to what is actually taking place in the mind and soul of the man in this case, and he writes why this is different from someone pressured into doing something that the Torah does not require him to do, such as selling or giving away something that he owns.

He explains: "When someone's evil inclination has taken a hold on him to avoid fulfilling a mitzvah, or to commit a sin, and he is beaten until he does what he is obligated to do or refrains from what he is forbidden to do, he is not considered as acting against his will. Rather, it is he who has coerced himself with an evil attitude to act against his true will. We therefore view the man who is forced to divorce his wife as one who *truly wishes* to be a part of the Jewish People, and *truly desires* to fulfill the *mitzvot* and to refrain from transgressions, but who is the helpless victim of his evil inclination. Once he has been pressured to the point where his evil inclination is subdued and he declares his consent, we consider it as his having divorced of his own free will."

▪ *Kiddushin 50a*

Honoring the Torah and Its Scholars

Shimon Ha'amsoni (others say it was Nechemia Ha'amsoni) was explaining the significance of each and every time the word "et" appears in the Torah. However, when he reached the verse "et Hashem Elokecha tira" (Deut. 6:13) – fear the L-rd your G-d – he stopped. His students said to him, "Our Rabbi, what will become of your explanations of the word "et" that you taught until now?" He replied, "Just as I received reward for explaining, so too I will receive reward for abstaining from explaining." Then, Rabbi Akiva came and taught that the word "et" in the verse "et Hashem Elokecha tira" teaches to include Torah scholars (i.e., just as the verse teaches the mitzvah to fear G-d, likewise it teaches to fear Torah scholars).

This *beraita* on our *daf* is based on the idea that every word and letter in the Torah has meaning. Therefore, the word "et," a grammatical word without apparent translation, must be there to include something else that is not mentioned explicitly in the verse. This is why these Sages sought to explain what each "et" in the Torah is meant to teach. Shimon Ha'amsoni, in a sense feared to equate the fear of anything else to the fear of Hashem, and therefore could not attribute any meaning to the word "et" in the verse that appears in the command to fear Hashem. (Rashi)

Since there is nothing superfluous in the Torah, including the word "et," the Sage Shimon Ha'amsoni toiled to explain the meaning of each "et" in the Torah. Doing so was a show of the "honor of the Torah". And likewise, when he abstained from attributing meaning to the word "et" in the verse commanding fear of Hashem, his abstention was also a show of "honor of Hashem and His Torah". Rabbi Akiva, however, felt it correct to explain that the word "et" in this verse teaches to include fear of Torah scholars as well as fear of Hashem, since fearing Torah scholars is *also* showing honor to Hashem and His Torah, because Torah scholars dedicate their lives to the study of Hashem Torah. (Maharsha)

▪ *Kiddushin 57a*

INSIGHTS INTO HALACHA

by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

Fascinating Halachic Differences Due to Rosh Hashana and Yom Tov of Sukkos Being on Shabbos

This year (5784), the holiday of Rosh Hashana fell out on Shabbos. Although that may not sound so remarkable in of itself (as statistically speaking, this actually occurs over 25% of the time), it actually caused several *halachic* and *minhagic* (if that is a word) shifts. The first deviation from the norm is that the shofar was not sounded on the first (Biblical) day of Rosh Hashana, but rather only on the second (Rabbinic) day. The reason given for this ‘silencing of the shofar’ is the remarkable *Gezeira* of Chazal (Rabbinic decree) that one may come to mistakenly carry a shofar out of the permitted area on this Shabbos in order to learn how to properly blow it. Whenever a Shabbos Rosh Hashana occurs, we are collectively astounded as to the strength of this extraordinary *Gezeira* – for all of Klal Yisrael desisting from performing an outright Biblical mitzvah simply due to a seemingly far-out possibility of one person unwittingly and unintentionally transgressing another mitzvah – that of *Hotza’ah* – not carrying, is simply incredible.

Yet, there is an alternate, and perhaps more appropriate way to view this situation. Not sounding the shofar on Shabbos Rosh Hashana as per *Gezeiras* Chazal showcases to us all that the sanctity of *Shabbos* is of paramount importance in all that we do – and yes, even to the extent of pushing off a precious, once-a-year (OK, twice-a-year) mitzvah *Deoraysa*. Several of our Rabbinic luminaries, including the *Chasam Sofer*, the *Aruch LaNer*, and *Ben Ish Chai*, stressed that in a way, a year like ours is a gift – that not blowing the shofar due to Shabbos credits us with whatever spiritual gain we would have obtained had we been able to blow the shofar. Yet, there is a caveat – we need to show how much we honor, respect, and delight in our Shabbos observance in order to properly reap the spiritual rewards of a Shabbos Rosh Hashana.

No Lulav

As the Gemara continues [see *Mishnah* and following Gemara in *Rosh Hashana* (29b), *Beitzah* (17b-18a), *Megillah* (4b), *Pesachim* (69a), and *Sukka* (42b)], the same *Gezeira* holds true regarding *Lulav* and *Megillah* as well. Meaning, if the first day of Rosh Hashana occurred on Shabbos, then the first day of Sukkos two weeks later will also occur on Shabbos. And just as there was no fulfilling the mitzvah *Deoraysa* of Shofar on Rosh Hashana, but rather only the second day *M’Derabbanan*, there will also be no fulfilling the mitzvah *Deoraysa* of taking and waving the *Arba Minim* on Sukkos at all.

This is because doing so is a Biblical mitzvah exclusively on the first day of Sukkos, whereas performing this mitzvah on all the remaining days of Sukkos is only a mitzvah *M’Derabbanan*. Another spectacular testament to the prominence and centrality of *Kedushas HaShabbos*.

YaKNeHa”Zes

This also leads us into the realm of several *YaKNeHa”Zes* over the course of the year for those in *Chutz La’aretz* (but only one for those of us in Eretz Yisrael). *YaKNeHa”Z* refers to the special hybrid *Kiddush-Havdalah* that is

only recited when a Shabbos exits directly into a Yom Tov. This occurs more frequently in *Chutz La'aretz* than in Eretz Yisrael due to the prevalence of two-day Yomim Tovim.

In *Chutz La'aretz* this year there are/were the:

- Second night of Rosh Hashana
- Second night of Sukkos
- Night of Simchas Torah

Yet, in Eretz Yisrael there is only one *YaKNeHa*"Z occurring, that of the second night of Rosh Hashana.

The reason for this discrepancy is due to Yom Tov Sheini, which is observed in *Chutz La'aretz* and not in Eretz Yisrael.

Of course, along with each *YaKNeHa*"Z is the special *Havdalah bracha* addition recited in the Yom Tov Maariv Shemoneh Esrei at the time that Shabbos "is going away" - "*Vatode'ainu*," which concludes with the not too common "*HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L'Kodesh*."

The word *YaKNeHa*"Z is an acronym of the proper order of *brachos* in this Kiddush/Havdalah. It stands for *Yayin* (*Borei Pri Hagafen*), *Kiddush* (*Mekadeish Yisrael V'Hazmanim*), *Ner* (*Borei Me'orei Ha'Aish*), *Havdalah* (*Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'Kodesh*), *Zman* (*Shehechyanu*).

To help facilitate this special Kiddush that needs its own Havdalah candle(s) that will go out by itself/themselves (in order not to unwittingly transgress the prohibition of '*Kivui*', extinguishing), several companies recently started making "*YaKNeHa*"Z Candles" (a.k.a. "*avukalehs*") small candles containing several wicks (to be classified as an '*avuka*' - torch, for *Havdalah*; as opposed to the traditional one-wick candle) that go out by themselves after several minutes - made especially to facilitate easy *YaKNeHa*"Z performance. It is reported that Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv's "face lit up with joy" the first time someone brought him one of these *YaKNeHa*"Z candles, as it enabled him to properly perform this *Kiddush/Havdalah* without any potential *chashashos*. *Mi K'Amcha Yisrael!*



YaKNeHa"Z depiction in the famous Illuminated 1629 Venice *Hagaddah*.

Wabbit Season?

All of these *YaKNeHa*”Zes in one year makes this author ruminate about what is possibly the oddest connection to it. In what appears to be an interesting turn of phrase, many classic Ashkenazic Illuminated *Haggados* over the centuries, including the Cincinnati, Ashkenazic, Prague, Venice, and Augsburg *Haggados*, depict an interesting phenomenon next to the hybrid *Kiddush-Havdalah* of *YaKNeHa*”Z: a rabbit hunt. Yes, you read that right. Not even remotely related to either *Kiddush* or *Havdalah* (or in fact anything else in Yiddishkeit; except possibly the *Noda B’Yehuda*’s famous responsum regarding hunting for sport or pleasure), a full-fledged rabbit hunt. Scholars theorize that the reason this picture is placed specifically at this point of the *Haggada* is the similar-sounding German phrase “Jag den Häs,” which translates to “Chase the Rabbit” or “Hunt the Hare.” Apparently this was an easy, albeit whimsical way to remind the locals in their vernacular of the proper order of *brachos* of this *Kiddush-Havdalah* on Seder Night.

This author has recently heard a similar-type of explanation for the “*minhag*” to eat stuffed cabbage on Hoshana Rabba: “*Kraut Mit Vasser*” – “Cabbage (cooked) with Water,” sounds similar to the special *Tefilla* recited on Hoshana Rabba associated with the *klopping* of *Hoshanos*: “*Kol Mevasser.*”

Megillah Mystery

Our unique calendar setup also means that this year there is no Shabbos Chol HaMoed, which ordinarily means more time for Chol HaMoed activities. Yet, this also means that the Yom Tov days of both Sukkos and Pesach had/will have longer *tefillos*, at least for Ashkenazim. This is due to Megillah readings, Koheles on Sukkos and Shir HaShirim on Pesach. As both of these Megillos are ordinarily read on the Yom Tov’s respective Shabbos Chol HaMoed, when there is not one, they get pushed off to other days of Yom Tov. But there is another fascinating divergence between Eretz Yisrael and Chutz La’aretz. Without Shabbos Chol HaMoed, in Eretz Yisrael Koheles gets pushed forward to Yom Tov Rishon of Sukkos, whereas in Chutz La’aretz it gets pushed off further to Shemini Atzeres. Meaning, although all Ashkenazim read Koheles on a Shabbos Yom Tov day of Sukkos, in Eretz Yisrael it is leined a full week (!) before Chutz La’aretz.

Another interesting calendar quirk that distinguishes between Eretz Yisrael and Chutz La’aretz is that as Simchas Torah is Shemini Atzeres in Eretz Yisrael, and this year it falls out on Shabbos, at Mincha, the Kriya of the upcoming Parashas Bereishis will be read – something that is an impossibility to occur in Chutz La’aretz. Since in Chutz La’aretz it will still be Shemini Atzeres, and Simchas Torah starts only that evening, this means that the Torah cycle will not yet have concluded, and hence, at that same Shabbos Mincha leining albeit in Chutz La’aretz, the next parashah in the on-deck circle, *V’Zos HaBracha*, will be read.

Certainly, a fascinating time of year!

PARSHA OVERVIEWS

Bereishet

In the beginning, Hashem creates the entire universe, including time itself, out of nothingness. This process of creation continues for six days. On the seventh day, Hashem rests, bringing into existence the spiritual universe of Shabbat, which returns to us every seven days. Adam and Chava – the human pair – are placed in the Garden of Eden. Chava is enticed by the serpent to eat from the forbidden fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," and in turn gives the fruit to Adam. By absorbing "sin" into themselves, Adam and Chava render themselves incapable of remaining in the spiritual paradise of Eden and are banished. Death and hard work (both physical and spiritual) now enter the world, together with pain in childbirth. Now begins the struggle to correct the sin of Adam and Chava, which will be the subject of the history of the world.

Cain and Hevel, the first two children of Adam and Chava, bring offerings to Hashem. Hevel gives the finest of his flock, and his offering is accepted, but Cain gives inferior produce and his offering is rejected. In the ensuing quarrel, Cain kills Hevel, and is condemned to wander the earth. The Torah traces the genealogy of the other children of Adam and Chava, and the descendants of Cain until the birth of Noach. After the death of Sheit, mankind descends into evil, and Hashem decides that He will blot out man in a flood which will deluge the world. However, one person, Noach, finds favor with Hashem.

Noach

It is now ten generations since the creation of the first man. Adam's descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and Hashem resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth's inhabitants except for the righteous Noach, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the world. Hashem instructs Noach to build an ark in which to escape the flood. After forty days and nights, the flood covers the entire earth, including the tops of the highest mountains. After 150 days the water begins to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, this ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. Noach sends forth a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later, Noach again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak. After seven more days, Noach once again sends forth the dove, which this time does not return. Hashem tells Noach and his family to leave the ark. Noach brings offerings to Hashem from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose. Hashem vows never again to flood the entire world and gives the rainbow as a sign of this covenant.

Noach and his descendants are now permitted to eat meat, unlike Adam. Hashem commands the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibitions against idolatry, adultery, theft, blasphemy, murder and eating the meat of a living animal, and the obligation to set up a legal system. The world's climate is established as we know it today.

Noach plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Ham, one of Noach's sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered. Shem and Yefet, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Canaan is cursed to be a slave. The Torah lists the offspring of Noach's three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended.

The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Bavel, which results in Hashem fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Torah portion concludes with the genealogy from Noach to Avram.

PEREK SHIRA

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

THE SONG OF THE DOGS

The Dogs say: “Come, let us prostrate ourselves and kneel, let us bow before Hashem our Maker!” (Tehillim 95:6).

The dog is a dedicated and cherished pet that recognizes its master and subjugates itself entirely to his will. Dog in Hebrew is *kelev*, which is a contraction of the words *kulo lev* (lit., “entirely heart”). This refers to the dog’s wholehearted devotion to the master who feeds it, whom it will protect even at the risk of its own life. This is borne out in a saying cited by the *Zohar*: “Throw a dog a bone and it will lick the dust of your feet.” *Kulo lev* might also be understood as an allusion to the dog’s unashamed expression of its heart’s desire; even small dogs can be seen barking at creatures many times its size. The dog sings that mankind, too, should serve the ultimate Master, Hashem, with comparative allegiance.

Hashem has done more for us than any master has done for his servant and more than any king has done for his nation. He created us, removed us from the shackles of Egyptian slavery and granted us the bounty of the world in His chosen land. Day by day, He provides us with our needs of food and shelter, and a life far more blessed than that of a dog. And this is all nothing compared to what He has promised for us in the future. If a dog can be loyal to its master for the sake of a dry bone, all the more so we, who are capable of intelligent appreciation, should prostrate ourselves before Hashem, and serve with unbounded love, with all of our hearts and souls.

*Sources: Maharal (Chiddushei Aggados, Horayos 13a); Maharsha (Sanhedrin 97a); Zohar (Vayikra 63a); Sefer Halkarim; Perek B’shir

This brings the series “Perek Shira: Song of Existence” to its conclusion. For more information on this topic, contact ShmuelKraines@gmail.com.

In loving memory of Harav Zeev Shlomo ben Zecharia Leib

The Ohr Somayach family wishes our students, alumni, friends and all of Klal Yisrael a meaningful and fruitful New Year holiday season.

May you and your families be written and sealed in the Book of Life, enjoy a festive Succot, and be blessed from Above with much good health, happiness and success in the coming year — and for many more years to come.