

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT NASO · FOR THE WEEK ENDING 7 SIVAN 5760 · JUNE 10, 2000\* · VOL. 7 NO. 36

PARSHA INSIGHTS

\*IMPORTANT NOTE:

Parshat Naso is read this week June 10, 2000 / 7 Sivan 5760 in Israel  
and next week June 17, 2000 / 14 Sivan 5760 outside Israel.

COGITO ERGO...

“Raise up...” (4:21)

René Descartes, the French philosopher, said, “I think, therefore I am.” Maybe we could extend his idea and say that most of us believe that “We think — and therefore everything is.” That is, we perceive the world’s existence as predicated on our own existence. If I exist, the world also exists. If I don’t exist, then maybe the world will vanish with me.

The Jewish idea is: “I exist, therefore I am obligated.” This is where spirituality begins. Accepting G-d’s authority means that the perception of my existence is identical to the knowledge that I start from a point of prior obligation.

The Torah portion *Naso* is the longest in the whole of the Torah. *Naso* also contains the greatest number of *Midrashim*, the homiletic expositions which contain the Torah’s hidden mystical depths. And, *Naso* always follows the festival of Shavuot, the giving of the Torah at Sinai. What is the connection? Why is it that after the Jewish People accepted the Torah, the Torah itself seems to “blossom” and expand?

At Sinai, the Jewish People said, “We will do it and we will hear it.” How can you do something that you haven’t heard about? The answer is that Israel’s acceptance of the Torah was not predicated on understanding it, “hearing” it. “We will do it”

means “We understand that our very existence makes us obligated.” They accepted the Torah, not because they thought it was a good idea or that it would be spiritually fulfilling; rather, they understood that their very existence obligated them.

We live in a generation which is on a very low spiritual level. People are more interested in *feeling* spiritual than *being* spiritual. We want a quick spiritual fix. We have been taught that fast is good, instant is better. Fast is what we want from our food, our cars, our computers. Instant is what we want for our gratification. Instant religion, instant feel-good spirituality. Instant Kabbala. Mail order mysticism.

What does it mean to *be* spiritual? It means to be in synch with reality. From the outside, Judaism may look like a life full of strictures: You can’t do this. You can’t do that. You can’t eat this. You can’t eat that....

In spite of its outside appearance, everything in Jewish life, each and every *mitzvah*, connects us to spirituality. Otherwise there would be no use for that particular *mitzvah*. But before we can connect to spirituality through the *mitzvot*, we must first align our thinking, re-orient ourselves. We do this twice a day by saying *Shema*, in which we accept upon ourselves the “yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven,” in order to create in ourselves the perception, not “I think, therefore I am,” but “I am, therefore I am obligated.” This is the beginning of spirituality.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah assigns the exact *Mishkan*-related tasks to be performed by the families of Gershon, Kehat, and Merari, the sons of Levi. A census reveals that over 8,000 men are ready for such service. All those ritually impure are to be sent out of the encampments. If a person confesses that he wrongfully retained his neighbor’s property after having sworn in court to the contrary, he has to pay an additional fifth of the base-price of the object, and bring a guilt offering as atonement. If the claimant has already passed away without heirs, the payments are made to a *kohen*. In certain circumstances, a husband who suspects that his wife had been unfaithful brings her to the Temple. A *kohen* prepares a drink of water mixed with dust from the Temple floor and a special ink

that was used for inscribing Hashem’s Name on a piece of parchment. If she is innocent, the potion does not harm her; rather it brings a blessing of children. If she is guilty, she suffers a supernatural death. A *nazir* is one who vows to dedicate himself to Hashem for a specific period of time. He must abstain from all grape products, grow his hair and avoid contact with corpses. At the end of this period he shaves his head and brings special offerings. The *kohanim* are commanded to bless the people. The *Mishkan* is completed and dedicated on the first day of Nisan in the second year after the Exodus. The Prince of each tribe makes a communal gift to help transport the *Mishkan*, as well as donating identical individual gifts of gold, silver, animal and meal offerings.

**P**arshat Naso features the laws of a *nazir*, and its *haftara* deals with the birth of Samson the *nazir*.

In a prophetic vision, an angel tells Manoach's wife that she will bear a child who will free the Jewish people from their current oppression at the hands of the Philistines. The angel instructs her that this child shall be a lifelong *nazir*, and that she herself must observe the laws of *nazir* until the baby is born.

The woman relates this to her hus-

band, who prays for the angel to return and instruct them as to the child, and G-d answers his prayer. Following the encounter, the angel departs in a flame.

## PROPER EDUCATION

**T**he angel instructs Samson's future mother to observe the laws of the nazerite vow, as her child is to be a *nazir* "from the womb" (13:5). Why must she observe the

laws of *nazir*?

Education begins before a child is born. A baby is influenced from the earliest stages of his existence as a scion of his parents. Just as an embryo is poisoned by a mother who smokes, so too his character is influenced by her lifestyle and the moral traits she favors. Parents can't live without restrictions if they wish their child to be a good Jew; they can't expect him to lead a life that differs from their own.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

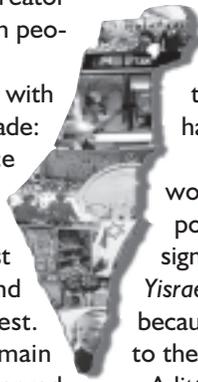
Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

## THE "DESIRABLE LAND"

"I gave you a desirable land" is how the Creator describes His gift of *Eretz Yisrael* to His chosen people. (*Yirmiyahu 3:19*)

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim 7:19*) explains with a parable the manner in which this Divine gift was made:

A king once made a great feast at which his most beloved friend was a guest. When the main course was served



on a communal platter, the king signaled to this friend to take one portion which he knew to be the best. Since the friend failed to understand the hint, the king himself took the portion and handed it to him.

When the Creator divided all the lands of the world amongst the nations, each of them chose a portion at least twice the size of *Eretz Yisrael*. He signaled to the People of Israel to choose *Eretz Yisrael*. When they showed reluctance to do so because it was so small, He took the land and handed it to them.

A little land but a most "desirable" one.

# OHRNET

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## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

**"And he instructs the woman to drink the bitter, cursing water..." (5:24).**

Verses from the Torah are written with ink on parchment, and the parchment is then erased into the water. The dissolved ink is what gives the water its bitter flavor.

• Ramban 5:18 quoting Sifri; Abarbanel

לע"נ  
 ר' דוד בן ר' אהרון ז"ל הי"ד  
 מרת לאה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה הי"ד  
 ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

How outstanding the Sage Mar Ukva was in his performance of the *mitzvah* of *tzedaka*, charity, is illustrated by one incident: Each year on the day before Yom Kippur he would distribute the generous sum of 400 zuz to a poor family in his neighborhood. One year the son he sent to deliver the money returned and reported that he was convinced that the family did not require assistance. When asked what he observed to create such an impression, he replied that he saw them indulging in the luxury of spraying their home with old wine to give it a fragrance. Upon hearing this, Mar Ukva doubled the amount he had intended to give and sent it, for he realized that if the recipients were so desperately in need of even such comforts then their dependence was even greater than he had anticipated.

Just before his death, Mar Ukva asked to see the record of his charitable gifts. Although he had given away an extraordinarily large sum, he was concerned that he had not done enough, exclaiming: "I take along such meager provisions for the long journey ahead of me." He thereupon distributed half of his fortune to charity.

How could he do so, asks the *gemara*, when we learned earlier in our *Mesechta* (50a) that the Sages prohibited a person from giving away more than a fifth of his resources to *tzedaka*? This rule, explains the *gemara*, applies only during one's lifetime, because such excessive generosity may impoverish him and make him dependent on charity. When one is about to leave the world and wishes to gain an extra measure of merit for his afterlife, no such restriction applies.

Why did Mar Ukva give away only half, and not all his fortune, in order to better prepare for his "long journey?" The answer is to be found in the attitude of our Sages towards disinheriting children. The Sages, says the *gemara* (*Bava Batra* 133b), were displeased with one who gave away his wealth to others and left nothing for his children. Mar Ukva therefore struck a balance between caring for his soul and for his heirs by giving away only half.

Is the formula this sage used the only one, or may one give away even more? Rema (*Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 249:1) rules that at the time of death one may give away as much as he wishes. How do we reconcile this ruling with Mar Ukva's caution to leave half for his heirs?

One possibility is that the text which Rema had in our *gemara* read that Mar Ukva gave away his entire fortune, a text which the Birkei Yosef suggests was the one known to some earlier commentaries. Another possibility is the one which emerges from the Bayit Chadash (Bach) in his commentary on the Tur. Mar Ukva gave away so much in his lifetime that there was no need for him to give away everything

before his death. Someone who has not been that generous, however, may give away everything for the sake of his soul. This is not considered disinheriting because he is not giving away to enrich others but to save himself.

• *Ketubot* 67b

## TAKING LIFE AND DEATH TO HEART

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of celebration, for this is the end of every man and thus will the living take it to heart." (*Kohelet* 7:1)

Rabbi Meir explained the practical application of King Solomon's advice in this fashion: The living will take to heart the things that go along with death — one who eulogizes others will himself be eulogized, one who buries others will himself be buried, one who cries out in sorrow for others will be wept for, one who escorts others will be escorted, and one who carries others to their final resting place will be carried by others.

Rashi understands this *gemara* as a lesson in the reciprocity which runs through human affairs. Don't feel uncomfortable at having to eulogize another, because you too will be eulogized — and so it is with all the other expressions of respect to the dead.

This interpretation blends in beautifully with the preceding *gemara* which explains that a man who forbids his wife to go to funerals is compelled to divorce her, because he is denying her the opportunity to gain the respect of others when she dies.

Maharsha, however, suggests a very different approach. It is important for every living person to take to heart the fact that he is not immortal and that the "house of mourning" is the inevitable "end of every person." Such an awareness disciplines a person, but it is difficult to always reflect on human mortality. If a person involves himself, however, with those actions connected with death, he increases his awareness that he too will someday reach his own end. When he eulogizes or helps bury another, he will inevitably take to heart that what he is doing now for another will someday be done for him.

This same section of Maharsha contains another interesting observation. The preference King Solomon gives to participating in a funeral over participation in a celebration refers to a celebration which is not connected to a *mitzvah* such as a wedding. In an earlier part of our *Mesechta* (17a) we learned that a funeral procession must give the right of way to a wedding procession, an indication that celebration of such a *mitzvah* takes precedence even to the "house of mourning."

• *Ketubot* 72a

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What is the significance of the number 8,580 in this week's *Parsha*?
2. Besides transporting the *Mishkan*, what other service performed by the *levi'im* is mentioned in this *Parsha*?
3. On which day did Moshe teach the command to send those who are *teme'im* (ritually impure) out of the camp?
4. Name the three camps in the desert.
5. Who was sent out of each of the camps?
6. A person stole from another and swore that he was innocent. If he later confesses his guilt, what are his obligations?
7. Who determines which *kohen* receives the gifts that must be given to the *kohanim*?
8. What does the Torah promise a person who gives *matnot kehuna*?
9. Why are the verses about *matnot kehuna* followed by the verses about the *sotah*?
10. Why is the *sotah* given water from the holy basin?
11. What does the *kohen* do to the hair of a *sotah*?
12. When a *sotah* who is guilty of adultery drinks the water, she dies in a very specific fashion. What happens to the adulterer?
13. Before the name of Hashem is erased, the *sotah* has the option either to admit guilt or to drink the water. Does she have a third option?
14. What are *chartzanim*? What are *zagim*?
15. What sin does a *nazir* commit against himself?
16. Where was the cut hair of a *nazir* placed?
17. A *kohen* should bless the people "with a full heart." What Hebrew word in the *Parsha* conveys this idea of "a full heart?"
18. What is the meaning of the blessing, "May Hashem bless you and guard you?"
19. What is the meaning of the blessing, "May Hashem lift up His countenance upon you?"
20. The tribe of Yissachar was the second tribe to offer their gifts. Why did they merit this position?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 4:47-48 - It is the number of *levi'im* between ages thirty and fifty.
2. 4:47 - Singing and playing cymbals and harps to accompany the sacrifices.
3. 5:2 - The day the *Mishkan* was erected.
4. 5:2 - The Camp of the *Shechina* was in the center, surrounded by the Camp of Levi which was surrounded by the Camp of *Yisrael*.
5. 5:2 - A *metzora* was sent out of all three camps. A *zav* was permitted in the Camp of *Yisrael* but excluded from the two inner camps. A person who was *tamei* from contact with the dead had to leave only the Camp of the *Shechina*.
6. 5:6-8 - He pays the principle plus a fifth to the victim, and brings a *korban asham*.
7. 5:10 - The giver.
8. 5:10 - Great wealth.
9. 5:12 - To teach that someone who withholds the gifts due the *kohanim* is deserving of eventually bringing his wife to the *kohanim* to be tried as a *sotah*.
10. 5:17 - The holy basin was made from the mirrors of the righteous women who left Egypt; the *sotah* strayed from the example set by these women.
11. 5:18 - He uncovers it.
12. 5:22 - He dies a similar death.
13. 5:27 - Yes, she can refuse both: She can refuse to admit guilt and also refuse to drink the water. (After the Name of Hashem is erased, she loses this option.)
14. 6:4 - *Chartzanim* are seeds. *Zagim* are peels.
15. 6:11 - He abstains from enjoying wine.
16. 6:18 - It was placed on the fire under the pot in which the *nazir's shelamim* offering was cooked.
17. 6:23 - "*Amor.*"
18. 6:24 - "May Hashem bless you" that your property may increase, "and guard you" from robbery.
19. 6:26 - "May He suppress His anger."
20. 7:18 - The Tribe of Yissachar was well versed in Torah. Also, they proposed the idea that the *nesi'im* should offer gifts.

## KASHA! (KASHA MEANS "QUESTION")

**W**hy was the honorable duty of taking care of the *Aron* given to the family of Kehat son of Levi (*Bamidbar* 4:4-6) instead of to the family of Levi's firstborn, Gershon, who were assigned the task of taking care of certain parts of the *Mishkan* (*Bamidbar* 4:24-26)?

**Answer:** If the duty of taking care of the *Aron* — the prime representation of Torah — was given to Levi's firstborn, people might think that Torah is received as an "inheritance," as is the Crown of Royalty and the Crown of *Kehuna*. The Crown of Torah, however, is available to anyone who toils in the study and fulfillment of Torah.

• Kli Yakar

Do you have a KASHA? Write to [kasha@ohr.org.il](mailto:kasha@ohr.org.il) with your questions on any Parsha!

## SIX SIX SIX

**From: Prof. Zev bar-Lev, Dept. of Linguistics & Oriental Languages in San Diego State University**  
<zbarlev@mail.sdsu.edu>

Dear Rabbi,

You recently wrote: "The numerical value of "Meah Shearim" is 666, a number which has esoteric and kabbalistic meaning in Judaism, as indicated by the Vilna Gaon in his commentary to the Zohar." Now you've got me curious: In American media, I only hear of 666 for its mystic significance in Christianity — a negative meaning, associated with "Satan." So what is the mystic significance of 666 in Judaism?

**From: M. Brinn in Greenville, SC <MRBrinn2@aol.com>**

Dear Rabbi,

Could you tell us more about the kabalistic meaning of 666? I live in a community with a large conservative Christian presence. Recently there was a big uproar over a supermarket's ad campaign because they believed the numbers 666 were hidden within. Thank you.

Dear Professor Bar-Lev and M. Brinn,

Oh, I can't tell you the answer to your question...It's a mystical secret!

Just kidding. Sort of. The truth is that the key to mystical secrets are not in any book, they're in your heart. Even if someone "reveals" a "kabbalistic secret," it remains a secret as long as you are not able to understand it. (So have no fear: The secrets of Kabbala are perfectly safe with Madonna.) But I will explain as much as I know on the subject:

The number 666 has significance as the numerical value of the Hebrew verse: "Ata yigdal na koach Ado-nai — Now, I pray, let the Power of my Lord be great." (Numbers 14:17). This was Moshe's prayer invoking Divine Mercy on behalf of the Jewish People.

"Mosad Hayesod" cites the Vilna Gaon's commentary on the Zohar that "the number 666 contains hidden within it exalted and lofty messianic potential." No other explanation is offered there.

We do know that the number six represents the physical world. The Torah describes the creation of the universe as a six part, six day, process. Our ancient sources describe the universe as emanating in six directions — north, south, east, west, up, down — from a central point. All physical space and all physical objects have these six dimensions.

666 is six repeated three times. Repeating a concept three times represents the affirmation and strength of that concept. The number 666 could thus represent the strength and perfection of the physical world, which Judaism teaches will occur in the messianic era, when the physical world will reach its ultimate purpose, to be a vehicle through which the created experience the Creator.

Sources:

- Mosad Hayesod pp. 204-205
- Rabbi Dovid Rossoff, author of "Where Heaven Touches Earth," Guardian Press

## HOW MUCH DOES A PENTECOST?

**Name@Withheld wrote:**

Dear Rabbi,

Does Pentecost mean Shavuot?

Sort of. Pentecost is Greek for "the fiftieth day." It's a non-Jewish term for our Shavuot holiday, which occurs 50 days after Passover.

We call it Shavuot, meaning "weeks." The Torah tells us to count "seven weeks" after Passover and then to celebrate a holiday.

Whatever you call it, Shavuot is not given a specific calendar date in the Torah, but instead is designated as being a certain number of days from Passover. This emphasizes the fact that Passover and Shavuot are not separate holidays; they are connected.

What's the connection between Passover and Shavuot? Freedom. Passover is freedom from Egypt; Shavuot is freedom from inner evil. Shavuot celebrates the Torah and the commandments we were taught at Mount Sinai. The Torah teaches us how to conquer the enemy within; the commandments turn all our talents and actions toward doing good.

## PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

**Re: Mother Superior (Ohrnet Bechukotai):**

In your recent posting, you wrote about a 52 year old woman who learned that her maternal grandmother was Jewish and had been orphaned and raised as a Catholic. You answered that, since Judaism follows the mother, she and her children are Jewish.

Thanks for answering this. I am in the same situation; and so is the priest at our church who was orphaned.

• Shaw <ksc8@concentric.net>

In order to “whitewash” the questionable behavior of others, we might only need to realize that we ourselves are engaged in...

## MONEY LAUNDERING

I was in a yeshiva in Lakewood, New Jersey. The coming Shabbos was an “off-Shabbos,” free for the students to make their own plans, and I planned to go home to Brooklyn. The bus I needed to take cost eight dollars at that time, and I had the money in my jacket pocket.

At yeshiva the next morning a friend of mine took the money out of my pocket, and started playing around with it. When he finally gave it back to me there was only three dol-

lars. I knew that I had put eight dollars there, so I demanded that he give me the other five dollars, which he did.

The next week, he kept on asking me to give him back the five dollars. He claimed that he only took three from my pocket, and that he gave me the other five as a loan as a favor since I needed it for the bus.

The next time I did laundry, I found five dollars among the clean clothes. Then I realized what had happened: I thought I had put all eight dollars in my jacket pocket, but really I had left five dollars in my shirt pocket, and it went through the wash. I apologized to my friend, and I learned my lesson to judge other people favorably.

• An Ohrnet reader

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

In the song at the end of the Pesach Seder we describe the significance of the numbers from 1 to 13 as they relate to Jewish life and thought: “Three are the fathers, Four are the Mothers... 12 are the Tribes of Israel...” What about the next 13 numbers? And after those? What significance do they have in Jewish tradition?

This week, we challenge you: **“Who knows 17?”**  
Write to [info@ohr.org](mailto:info@ohr.org)

**Here are some reader responses regarding previous numbers:**

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (5:25) states “a 15 year old begins the study of Gemara.”

• Jacob Floran <[jflorans@trebnet.com](mailto:jflorans@trebnet.com)>

Fifteen is the number of words in the blessing we say over the Yom Tov candles.

• Yehuda Avrunin <[jaa23@cornell.edu](mailto:jaa23@cornell.edu)>

The 16th of Nissan is day the day the Omer was brought and the new grain is allowed. There are 16 strings on a Tallis (4 strings, doubled over, on each corner).

• Sidney Stern, Highland Park NJ  
<[Sid.Stern@ProcessPlants.BOC.com](mailto:Sid.Stern@ProcessPlants.BOC.com)>

The day in Nisan that permits new wheat. The day we brought the Omer offering and start “counting the Omer.”

• Levy Van Leeuwen <[levyvan@netvision.net.il](mailto:levyvan@netvision.net.il)>

Sixteen *adanim* (sockets) at the east side of the Mishkan (Exodus 26:25).

• Raffi <[raffias@shaam.gov.il](mailto:raffias@shaam.gov.il)>

The *Ta'z*, the *Turei Zahav* (*Ta'z* is *gematria* 16; this is stretching it).

• Haim Roman, Jerusalem <[roman@megila.jct.ac.il](mailto:roman@megila.jct.ac.il)>

Minimum width of *reshus harabim* — public domain: 16 *amos* (cubits).

• Zvi Freund, Kew Gardens, NY  
<[zvifreund@juno.com](mailto:zvifreund@juno.com)>

Quoting from your January 16, '99 issue of “Ask the Rabbi”: Which verse in the Torah has all the letters of the *Aleph Beis*? Answer: Exodus 16:16.

• Randall Rowlett, MD  
<[Psyetc@compuserve.com](mailto:Psyetc@compuserve.com)>

Sixteen descendants of Zilpah who went down to Mitzraim (Egypt).

• Michael Turniansky <[turnip@bcpl.net](mailto:turnip@bcpl.net)>

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

### RAMBAN

5:2, 5:6 Organization of this Parsha  
5:20 Waters of the *Sotah*  
6:11 Sin of the *Nazir*  
6:24 Blessings of the *Kohanim*

### SFORNO

7:13 Gifts of the *Nesi'im*

### SEFER HACHINUCH

362 *Tumah* and *Kedusha*  
364 Confession  
365 Marital Peace  
366 *Sotah* Offering  
374 Appropriate Asceticism  
378 The Blessing of the *Kohanim*

# THE EQUATION OF THE UNIVERSE

Does the number 123456789101112131415161718192021...have any meaning to you? At first glance it appears like a random list of numbers with some recognizable sequences such as 1 through 9 at the beginning, and three 1's in the middle. On closer inspection "Champernowne's Number C" is revealed as an orderly sequence of integers from 0 through 21 and upward. How about the number .42857142...? That's a bit harder, as no sequence is apparent. However, when we learn about what are commonly called "algorithms," we can recognize an algorithm of 3 divided by 7, the decimal equivalent of  $3/7$ .

Human beings need order. The mind is unsettled when confronted with a disarray of perceptions.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, in the introduction to his classic philosophic exposition "The Way of G-d," contrasts two types of people: One person has a wealth of information, and he also understands how all the information is interrelated. Another person has the same information as the first, yet he does not understand how all the different bits of information relate to one another. It's like the difference between looking at a well-arranged garden, planted in rows and patterns, and seeing a wild thicket or forest growing in confusion.

Without order, one is not only dissatisfied but can literally "go crazy." From birth a person is equipped with a unique tool, by which he surpasses the rest of Creation, suited to the task of making order from chaos — the human mind.

"For the commandment is a candle, and Torah is light, and the path of life is ethical edification (*Proverbs* 6:23). At the beginning of his introduction to his great commentary "Derech Chaim" on "Ethics of the Fathers," the Maharal of Prague

explains that man is lost in the dark of an opaque body, ensconced in the darkness of this world, until he wearies searching for the portal of light from above. The capacity of reason sets man apart from the animals, it enables him to explore, comprehend and seem to reign over his universe. Yet, reason alone is not a sufficient tool in the human endeavor to *truly* reign, to *fully* comprehend, and to *sincerely* and *objectively* explore. For man is trapped in the opaqueness of his physical nature. The commandments are the candle that lights our way, illuminating the path through the forest of this world as well as the rocks and stumps to avoid; the Torah is like an enormous bonfire which illuminates the entire countryside, giving meaning to the entire universe.

The Shavuot festival is called the "Festival of Weeks" because of the counting of seven weeks between Pesach and Shavuot. It is the only Festival for which a calendar date is not specifically mentioned; rather it is identified by its relation to another festival, Pesach.

Seven, explains the Maharal of Prague, is the number of the physical world. There are 7 days of the week and 7 "sides" to a room (the 4 walls, ceiling, floor, and the interior living space). Shabbat is the "interior living space" that gives definition and meaning to the 3 days that precede it, and to the 3 days that follow it.

By counting 7 weeks of 7 days, we explore every facet of the natural world and elevate these facets from their physical status, carrying them with us to the 50th day that is above nature. We bring light into the darkness of this world and "make sense" of a world of random numbers. May we merit, with Hashem's help, to raise ourselves to ever greater spiritual heights and assist in solving the "equation of the universe."