

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHIOT NITZAVIM-VAYELECH-HA'AZINU · 5768-5769 · 2008 · VOL. 15 NO. 52

S P E C I A L C H A G I M I S S U E

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Nitzavim

THE COUNTRY CLUB

"And it will be that when he hears the words of this curse, he will bless himself in his heart, saying, 'Peace will be with me...' (29:18)

On hearing that the country club to which he belonged discriminated against Jews, Groucho Marx sent the following letter of resignation, "Dear Sir, I do not wish to belong to any club that will have me as a member."

In last week's Torah portion we read 98 terrifying curses that result from neglecting the Torah and failing to serve G-d with joy and goodness of heart.

How, after this terrifying litany, could anyone think that they could just turn their back on G-d and get away with it?

If you look at the curses in Ki Tavo you'll notice that they are in the singular. When the Torah uses the singular it means that it is talking to the Jewish People as a *klal*, as a group. So,

someone hearing those curses might think, "Those curses are only for the group. I'll resign from the group and I'll be fine."

Thus Moshe, on the day of his departure from this world, brings the Jewish People into a separate covenant that defines the two previous covenants (at Sinai and 40 years later at Arvot Moav). That covenant teaches we are all both jointly and separately responsible for keeping the *mitzvot* of the Torah. A person cannot voluntarily decide to opt out from keeping the Torah.

The Jewish People is not a country club from which one can resign.

THE SAME BOAT

"You are standing, today, all of you..." (29:9)

Quietly, he entered his cabin and closed the door behind him. Down here in the bowels of the ship you could hear the massive turbines droning and the ocean slipping under the keel inches beneath the steel floor.

Opening a small closet he removed an anonymous-looking briefcase, laid it on the bed and moved the combination to its correct position. The latches of the case sprung open. He lifted the lid. There it was. The smallest and most powerful laser blowtorch that you could buy anywhere in the Far East. He removed it from its velveteen bed and held in lovingly in his arms. Then he pushed aside the bed and took up the rug to reveal the dull steel of the hull. He flicked the switch and the laser sprang to life. As the beam met the metal floor the ship gave out a banshee wail like a smitten beast.

Within a minute, there were loud knocks on the door. "What are you doing?" "Open the door!" "Open this door!" "What's going on in there?"

"I'm cutting a hole in the floor. Go away."

"Are you crazy, you'll kill us all!"

"Mind your own business. What's it to do with you? I'm only cutting a hole in my own cabin..."

In the first of this week's Torah portion of Nitzavim Moshe assembles every member of the Jewish People on the last day of his life. From the youngest to the oldest, from the least to the most exalted, Moshe initiates them into a new covenant. Why did they need a new covenant? Hadn't they already entered a covenant with G-d at Sinai, and again Arvot Moav

What was different about this covenant was that it created a mutual responsibility between all Jews. Not just responsible in the sense that we have to look after each other, feed and clothe the sick and the poor, but I am responsible for everything you do, like a big brother. This idea is hinted to by the very first words of the *parsha*, "You are standing, today, all of you..." meaning, "You are all standing over each other."

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Nitzavim

On the last day of his life, Moshe gathers all the people, young and old, lowly and exalted, men and women, in a final initiation. The covenant includes not only those who are present, but even those generations yet unborn. Moshe admonishes the people again to be extremely vigilant against idol worship because, in spite of having witnessed the abominations of Egypt, there will always be the temptation to experiment with foreign philosophies as a pretext for immorality. Moshe describes the desolation of the Land of Israel which will result from failure to heed G-d's *mitzvot*. Descendants of that generation and foreigners alike will remark on the singular desolation of the Land and its apparent inability to be sown or to produce crops. The conclusion will be apparent to all — the Jewish People have forsaken the One who protects them in favor of powerless idols. Moshe promises, however, that the people will eventually repent after both the blessings and the curses have been fulfilled. However assimilated they will have become among the nations, eventually G-d will bring them back to *Eretz Yisrael*. Moshe tells the people to remember that fulfilling the Torah is not an impossibility; rather it's within the grasp of every Jew. The *parsha* dramatically concludes with Moshe comparing the Jewish People's choice to follow the Torah to a choice between life and death. Moshe exhorts the people to choose life.

Vayelech

On the last day of his life, Moshe goes from tent to tent bidding farewell to his people, encouraging them to "keep the faith." Moshe tells them that whether he is among them or not, G-d is with them. He summons Yehoshua, and, in front of all the people, exhorts him to be strong and courageous as leader of the Jewish People. Thus, he strengthens Yehoshua's status. Moshe teaches the mitzvah of *hakhel*: Every seven years on the first of the intermediate days of Succot, the entire nation, including small children, is to gather at the Temple to hear the king read from the Book of Devarim. The sections read deal with faithfulness to G-d, the covenant and reward and punishment. G-d tells Moshe that his end is near, and he should summon Yehoshua to stand with him in the *Mishkan*, where G-d will teach Yehoshua. G-d tells Moshe and Yehoshua that after entering the Land the

people will be unfaithful and worship other gods. G-d will then completely "hide His face," so that it will seem that the Jewish People are at the mercy of fate, hunted by all. G-d instructs Moshe and Yehoshua to write down a song — *Ha'azinu* — which will serve as "witness" against the Jewish People when they sin. Moshe records the song in writing and teaches it to *Bnei Yisrael*. Moshe completes his transcription of the Torah and instructs the *levi'im* to place it to the side of the Holy Ark, so that no one will ever write a new Torah Scroll different from the original, for there will always be a reference copy.

Ha'azinu

Almost all of *Ha'azinu* is a song, written in the Torah in two parallel columns. Moshe summons the Heavens and the earth to stand as eternal witnesses to what will happen if the Jewish People sin and do not obey the Torah. He reminds the people to examine the history of the world and note how the Jewish People are rescued from obliteration in each generation — that G-d "pulls the strings" of world events so that *Bnei Yisrael* can fulfill their destiny as His messengers in the world. G-d's kindness is such that Israel should be eternally grateful, not just for sustaining them in the wilderness, but for bringing them to a land of amazing abundance and for defeating their enemies. But this physical bounty leads the people to become over-indulged. Physical pleasures corrupt the morals of the people. They worship empty idols and powerless gods and indulge in all kinds of depravity. G-d will then let nations with no moral worth subjugate Israel and scatter them across the world. However, their only purpose is as a rod to chastise the Jewish People. When these nations think that it is through their own power that they have dominated Israel, G-d will remind them that they are no more than a tool to do His will. The purpose of the Jewish People is fundamental — that man should know his Creator. Neither exile nor suffering can sever the bond between G-d and His people, and eventually in the final redemption this closeness will be restored. G-d will then turn His anger against the enemies of Israel, as though they were His own enemies, showing no mercy to the tormentors of His people. G-d then gives His last commandment to Moshe: That he should ascend Mount Nevo and be gathered there to his people.

Gittin 79-85

- Divorce on the roof
- Problem of an “old get”
- Incorrect information on get and its consequences
- Why the get mentions the nation in which it is written
- If an ineffective get disqualifies a woman from marrying a *kohen* after her husband’s death
- If being together after divorce requires a second get
- The “get of knots” of a *kohen* with insufficient signatures of witnesses
- A get which excludes marriage to a particular individual
- If *ella* – except – is an exclusion or a condition
- The challenges of the four Sages to the position of Rabbi Eliezer on the get excluding one party
- Conditions in a get which limit the divorcee’s freedom or which demand the impossible from her
- A get excluding marriage to a forbidden partner
- The proper text of a get and a document of emancipation for a slave

DEMANDING THE IMPOSSIBLE

A man divorcing his wife has the option of entering into the get a condition, which, if it is not fulfilled, the get is null and void.

What if he makes a condition that she must do something impossible such as descending to heaven or crossing the ocean on foot?

One opinion is that since it is a foregone conclusion that this condition cannot possibly be fulfilled the get is null and void. Rabbi Yehuda ben Taima, however, contends that the get is valid because the husband cannot seriously expect such a condition to be fulfilled and we therefore assume that he did not intend this to be a stipulation.

Tosefot calls attention to another *gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 94b) that states in connection with the first opinion that if the woman does fulfill the impossible condition the get is valid. How, asks Tosefot, is it possible for her to do the impossible?

The answer he gives is that impossible feats can be accomplished by proper use of the Ineffable Name of G-d. In his footnotes Rabbi Akiva Eiger raised a challenge to this from another Tosefot (*Chagigah* 14b) that states that even with the use of the Name one cannot actually reach heaven.

• *Gittin* 84a

Gittin 86-90

- Three types of get which are invalid for marriage but have some validity if the woman marries
- Rabbi Elazar’s position on the role of witnesses signing on

- a get and other documents
- The mixed up get and the multipurpose one
- Adjoining *gittin* with signatures below running in opposite directions
- When the signature of the witnesses is on a second page or not at the end of the get
- How witnesses sign their names and the use of family names for husband and wife
- The idol worshipping kings of Israel who brought about destruction of the Land
- The one good deed of idol-worshipping King Hoshea ben Aleh
- Divine timing of Babylonian exile
- Validity of a coerced get
- The force of rumors regarding marriage or divorce
- A woman who claims her husband divorced her
- What is the justification for divorce

BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK

What is the status of a Jewish child born out of wedlock? Contrary to the gentile definition of such a child as a bastard, the Torah does not consider such a child a *mamzer* unless its parents were forbidden in relations punishable by death or extirpation.

Nevertheless, we do find some consideration for avoiding suspicion of fathering a child out of wedlock.

Should a man write a get to his wife but delay delivering it to her for an extended period of time, he can no longer make use of this “old get” for the purpose of divorce. This ruling of Beit Hillel in our *mishna* is based on the fear that the wife will conceive a child from her husband during the interim and it will then appear to people that this took place when they were no longer married as mistakenly indicated by the date of the get.

Rashi explains that despite the fact that the child born out of wedlock is not a *mamzer* and has no halachic limitations on whom he can marry, such status is nevertheless considered as being flawed because it is the product of a forbidden premarital relationship.

• *Gittin* 86a

Kiddushin 2-9

- How marriages begin and end
- Analysis of the terminology used in this and other *mishnayot*
- Which forms of acquisition are invalid for *kiddushin*
- The source for the effectiveness of money in creating *kiddushin*
- A father’s rights regarding his daughter’s marriage and

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- other matters
- When a Jewish girl sold by her father into servitude goes free
- Whether a *chupah* can also create *kiddushin*
- Who must do the giving of money and making the proposal for *kiddushin* to be valid
- An incomplete proposal or one in an unusual form
- Proper and improper terminology used in a *get* to a wife or an emancipation document to a slave
- *Kiddushin* created through a forfeited loan or a gift which must be returned
- *Kiddushin* created without the money going directly from man to woman
- The validity of a partial *kiddishin*
- When the man gives her materials which he declares to be of a certain value
- Subjective value in regard to redeeming a first-born
- When a woman can back out before gift is completed
- When the woman's reaction to receiving money is considered a rejection
- The source for the two other methods for creating *kiddushin*

WHEN GIVING IS CONSIDERED RECEIVING

In order to acquire a woman as a wife the Torah requires a man to give his wife money or something of value and not for her to give to him. The Sage Rava raises the question of whether there is a possibility of this *kiddushin* process to be valid if the woman offers the man money in order to become his wife. The answer given by Rabbi Papa is that such a *kiddushin* is valid on the condition that the man involved is an important person. Since his acceptance of a gift from her gives her significant pleasure, it is considered as if he actually gave her something of value.

What is the definition of an important person?

Rashi establishes a simple criterion: if he is not in the custom of accepting gifts from everyone.

Rabbeinu Osher (ROSH) is more reserved as he states that serious thought must be given as to whom is *not* considered an important person in order to justify negating *kiddushin* when the woman is the giver.

An interesting point is made by a commentary on the ROSE, the Korban Netanel. He limits the reservation of the

ROSH to a case where it is the man who makes the initial proposal for *kiddushin*. In the case described in our *gemara*, where it is the woman who is initiating *kiddishin*, there is no longer a need for investigating whether the man is objectively considered important since she indicates by her offer that he is important to her and his receiving money from her is like giving to her.

• *Kiddushin 7a*

Kiddushin 10-17

- Nullifying the sale of a slave
- Why *Beit Shammai* insist on a *dinar* as the minimum amount of money for *kiddushin*
- The value of money specified in the Torah or in rabbinic law
- How much is the *perutah* mentioned by *Beit Hillel* as the minimum for *kiddishin*
- An item used for *kiddushin* which lacks the value of a *perutah* here but may have such value elsewhere
- Improper ways of making *kiddushin*
- When a woman's reaction to proposed *kiddushin* is or is not considered consent
- The need for expertise in matters of marriage and divorce
- Sources for marriage ending with man's death and for how a *yivamah* is acquired and freed
- How Hebrew slaves are acquired and how they gain their freedom
- The *ha'anakah* severance pay given to a Hebrew slave
- Which slaves are inherited and which are not

“KUBIYUSTUS” – KIDNAPER OR GAMBLER?

In three places we find the unusual term *kubiyustus*: In our own *gemara* we learn that if someone sells a slave who turns out to be a *kubiyustus* the sale is valid because it is assumed that the buyer had been aware of something which was public knowledge and made his purchase notwithstanding.

In another *gemara* (*Bechorot 5a*) a Roman officer challenged Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai about the accounting made by Moshe of the *shekalim* donated by the Jewish People for the building of the Sanctuary, suggesting that the apparent discrepancy was the result of his being either a *kubiyustus* or of his inability to properly count.

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TALMUDigest

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KIDDUSHIN 2 - 17

The Midrash (*Rabbah Parshat Vayishlach*) mentions a dialogue between the Patriarch Yaakov and the angel with whom he wrestled throughout the night. When the angel begged to be released from Yaakov's hold because it was already morning, Yaakov asked him whether he was a bandit or a *kubiyustus* that made it necessary for him to vanish at daybreak.

Rashi's definition of *kubiyustus* as a kidnaper fits with the first and third above-mentioned sources but not with the

second one. Tosefot, however, cites the definition given by Rabbeinu Chananel that *kubiyustus* is a gambler. This definition fits very comfortably into the first two sources. In regard to the third source the understanding of Yaakov was that if his mysterious combatant was a gambler he probably had many creditors whom he was determined to avoid in the light of day.

• *Kiddushin 11a*

WHAT THE Sages SAY

"You cannot challenge the lion after his death."

• *Rabbi Yehoshua to his colleagues who challenged Rabbi Eliezer's position after he died - Gittin 83b*

"Whoever divorces his first wife even the altar sheds tears for him."

• *Rabbi Elazar - Gittin 90b*

"It is better to live together than to live alone (even if only for the sake of company- Rashi)."

• *Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish*

"Whoever is not expert in the laws of marriage and divorce should not be involved in them."

• *The Sage Shmuel*

"Those who rule in such matters without being expert in them can do more damage to the world than the generation of the Deluge."

• *Rabbi Yochanan - Kiddushin 13a*

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PONDERING PAST AND FACING FUTURE

As Jews mark the last Shabbat of the year 5768 it is a time for pondering the past and facing the future. “You stand this day before the L-rd your G-d” begins this week’s Torah portion, which follows the preceding week’s awesome warning of 98 curses that will befall those who abandon the Torah. The stress on “day”, say our Sages, is to serve as a comfort to the nation struck with fear as a result of those warnings. “Just as the day has its dark period and then there is light, so too will you enjoy light after darkness, for the curses and suffering preserve

you and enable you to stand before Him.”

All suffering that Jews in Israel and elsewhere have endured during the past year and all past years serves a double purpose. It atones for the sins of the past and deters them from sinning in the future.

This is a message of both comfort and challenge. It is our prayer that we be blessed with the ability to appreciate the suffering of the past and to learn their lesson for the future.

“May the old year with its curses come to an end; let the new year with its blessings begin!”

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

A PROFITABLE INVESTMENT

A teenage girl’s great desire to spend her summer vacation in a sleep-away camp ran into difficulty because of the financial situation of her family. Determined to pay her own way she began taking on babysitting jobs and developed a fine reputation for reliability, which landed her enough offers for her services to earn the money she needed.

On the way to one particular job, her father who was driving her there mentioned that the family she was about to serve was having a very hard time and it would be nice

if she gave them a break in regard to payment. He quoted a passage about “casting your bread upon the waters” and the returns which can come from a generous act of kindness.

At the end of that babysitting job she adamantly refused to accept any payment. The extremely surprised lady of the house never forgot this gesture and when her brother began searching for a soul-mate she immediately arranged a match with her ex-babysitter which resulted in a very happy marriage.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

BEIT LECHEM – A ROSH HASHANA ECHO

On the second day of Rosh Hashana Jews throughout Eretz Yisrael and the world will hear an echo of a Divine response to the weeping of a matriarch. The haftara that is read on that day speaks of Rachel *Imeinu* weeping for her children in exile.

Tradition has it that she was buried in Beit Lechem and not in Me’arat Hamachpela in Chevron along with the other patriarchs and matri-



archs, so that her tomb would be on the route taken by her people on the way to exile in Babylon. She would then arise from her grave and tearfully pray for their return.

“Keep your voice from weeping,” came the Divine response found in our haftara, “and your eyes from tears, for your efforts will be rewarded and they shall come back home.”

PARSHA Q&A ?

Nitzavim

1. Why did Moshe gather the Jewish People together on the day of his death?
2. Who are the wood-cutters and water-drawers mentioned in verse 29:10?
3. How do two parties “pass” into a covenant?
4. What is the connection between the verse “*Atem nitzavim*” and the curses in the previous parsha?
5. Why can't G-d disassociate himself from the Jewish People?
6. How many curses were listed in *Parshat Ki Tavo*?
7. Which two leaders followed Moshe's example and assembled the people at the end of their rule?
8. With whom did Moshe make the covenant and oath?
9. Why did the Jewish People see only idols of wood and stone in Egypt?
10. What is meant by the punishment of “adding drunkenness to thirst (29:18)”?

Vayelech

11. How old was Moshe when he died?
12. Why was Moshe unable “to go out and come in” (31:2)?
13. What happened to Moshe's Torah knowledge on the day of his death?
14. How did Moshe foresee the relationship between Yehoshua and the Elders?
15. What did G-d tell Yehoshua concerning his relationship with the Elders?
16. How often does the *hakhel* (assembly of the Jewish People) take place?
17. Why does the Torah call the year of the *hakhel* the “*shemita* year”?
18. What sections of the Torah does the king read at the *hakhel*?
19. In what physical location does the king read at the *hakhel*?
20. Why were the men commanded to come to the gathering?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Netzavim and Vayelech's Questions!

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

1. 29:9 - To initiate them into the covenant with G-d.
2. 29:10 - Canaanites who came to join the Jewish People.
3. 29:11 - The two parties place objects in two parallel lines and pass between them.
4. 29:12 - The Jewish People asked, “Who can survive such curses?” Moshe comforted them, saying, “You've done a lot to anger G-d, and yet — ‘*Atem nitzavim*’ — G-d didn't destroy you ...you're still standing before Him.”
5. 29:12 - Because He told them He wouldn't and because He swore to the *Avot* (Patriarchs) that the Jewish People would always remain His nation.
6. 29:12 - Ninety-eight.
7. 29:12 - Yehoshua and Shmuel.
8. 29:14 - With the people standing before him and all future generations.
9. 29:16 - Because these were exposed openly. The idols of gold and silver, however, were locked away by their owners for fear of theft.
10. 29:18 - Even unintentional sins will be considered by

G-d as if they were committed intentionally.

“Drunkenness” refers to sins committed unintentionally. “Thirst” refers to sins committed intentionally.

11. 31:2 - Exactly 120.
12. 31:2 - G-d did not let him because the power of leadership was being transferred to Yehoshua.
13. 31:2 - The well-springs of knowledge were closed up for him.
14. 31:7 - He foresaw that they would work in partnership.
15. 31:7 - That he alone would be the leader — for there can only be one leader in each generation.
16. 31:10 - Once every seven years, in the first year of the new *shemita* period.
17. 31:10 - Because the laws of *shemita* still applied to the harvest.
18. 31:11 - From Devarim: 1:1-6:9; 11:13-21; and 14:22-28:69.
19. 31:11 - On a wooden platform erected in the *azara*.
20. 31:12 - In order to learn.

PARSHA Q&A ?

Ha'azinu

1. Why were heaven and earth specifically chosen as witnesses?
2. How is the Torah like rain?
3. How is G-d "faithful without injustice"?
4. Why is G-d called "tzaddik"?
5. How many major floods did G-d bring upon the world?
6. What group of people does the Torah call "fathers"? Cite an example.
7. Why did G-d separate the world's nations into exactly 70?
8. Why is the merit of the Jewish People's ancestry called a "rope"?
9. How is G-d's behavior toward the Jewish People like an eagle's behavior toward its offspring?
10. Regarding the Jewish People's punishment, G-d says, "I will spend my arrows on them." What is the positive aspect of this phrase?
11. How does the idea of "chillul G-d" prevent the nations from destroying the Jewish People?
12. What will happen to the nations that conquer the Jewish People?
13. When G-d overturns a nation that persecutes the Jewish People, His attribute of Mercy is "replaced" by which attribute?
14. When G-d punishes the heathen nations, for whose sins does He exact punishment?
15. How will G-d's punishment change the way the nations view the Jewish People?
16. On what day was *Ha'azinu* taught to the Jewish People?
17. Verse 32:44 calls Yehoshua "Hoshea." Why?
18. In verse 32:47, what does "it is not empty from you" mean?
19. Why did G-d tell Moshe that he would die a similar death to that of Aharon?
20. If Moshe had spoken to the rock rather than striking it, what would the Jewish People have learned?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Ha'azinu's Questions!

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

1. 32:1 - They endure forever.
2. 32:2 - The Torah gives life and promotes growth like rain.
3. 32:4 - He is "faithful" by rewarding the righteous, and "without injustice" by rewarding even the wicked for any good deeds.
4. 32:4 - All will agree that His judgments are righteous.
5. 32:7 - Two. One in the time of Adam's grandson Enosh and one in the time of Noach.
6. 32:7 - The Prophets. Elisha called the Prophet Eliyahu "My Father." (*Melachim II 2:12*)
7. 32:8 - To correspond to the 70 *Bnei Yisrael* who entered Egypt.
8. 32:9 - Their merit is "woven from" the merits of the *Avot*.
9. 32:12 - He mercifully wakes them gently, hovering over them, and carrying them on His "wings."
10. 32:23 - "The arrows will be spent" implies that the afflictions will cease but the Jewish People will not.
11. 32:27 - The nations would attribute their success to their might and the might of their gods. G-d would not let His name be desecrated like this.
12. 32:35 - They will eventually be punished.
13. 32:41 - His attribute of Justice.
14. 32:42 - For their sins and the sins of their ancestors.
15. 32:43 - They will view the Jewish People as praiseworthy for cleaving to G-d.
16. 32:44 - The Shabbat upon which Moshe died.
17. 32:44 - To indicate that although he was the Jewish People's leader, he still maintained a humble bearing.
18. 32:47 - That you will receive reward for studying Torah and that there is nothing meaningless in the Torah.
19. 32:50 - Because Moshe wanted this.
20. 32:51 - The Jewish People would have reasoned as follows: If a rock, which receives neither reward nor punishment, obeys G-d's commands, all the more so should we.

WHAT A BLAST

From: Roland in Chicago

*Dear Rabbi,
If the Torah tells us to hear the shofar on Rosh Hashana, why do we make so many blasts? Wouldn't it seem from the Torah that one would be enough? I think we make a hundred!*

Dear Roland,

The Torah mentions blowing the shofar three times, using the term “*teruah*” which is a type of emotive blast. It is known that this *teruah* is to be introduced and concluded by a straight, stable blast called “*tekiah*”. This means that the Torah requires three *teruot* with their accompanying *tekiot* before and after, totaling nine blasts. Thus a person is required to hear on Rosh Hashanah at least nine shofar sounds: *tekiah-teruah-tekiah*; *tekiah-teruah-tekiah*; *tekiah-teruah-tekiah*.

As it turns out, many years of persecution and exile resulted in uncertainty as to what the middle, emotive *teruah* sound is. Therefore, the number of blasts that one must hear increases in order to make sure one fills the mitzvah by hearing all the different possibilities.

One option is an undulating wail which rises and falls, like the sound one would utter while wailing in regret or lament – this sound is called “*shevarim*”. Another is described as a quick, repetitive sighing or crying like the sound one would make in a state of anxiety or anguish – this possibility retains the name “*teruah*”. A third option is a combination of both wailing and crying since this is the way of one in great remorse: first he slowly wails and then breaks forth into rapid, uncontrolled crying. This duo combination is therefore referred to as “*shevarim-teruah*” and is considered two different tones.

Accordingly, the minimum number of tones one must hear to fulfill the Torah requirement must include all these possibilities where each one of the three possible *teruot* is heard three times, preceded and followed by a *tekiah* each time. This is accomplished as follows: after the Torah reading and before the Musaf prayer, the shofar blower makes the blessing over the performance of the mitzvah having in mind fulfilling the mitzvah for the individuals of the congregation, just as each individual intends to make the shofar blower his representative. He then blows the following combinations A-BC-A; A-B-A; A-C-A three times each where A is *tekiah*, B is *shevarim* and C is *teruah* for a total of 30 tones:

Tekiah, shevarim-teruah, tekiah; Tekiah, shevarim-teru-

ah, tekiah; Tekiah, shevarim-teruah, tekiah — 12 tones.

Tekiah, shevarim, tekiah; Tekiah, shevarim, tekiah; Tekiah, shevarim, tekiah — 9 tones.

Tekiah, teruah, tekiah; Tekiah, teruah, tekiah; Tekiah, teruah, tekiah — 9 tones.

Since these blasts are heard before the beginning of the obligatory standing Musaf prayer, they are called the “*tekiot meyushav*” meaning sitting *tekiot*. They are nevertheless heard while standing. They are then followed by another 30 blasts in the Musaf prayer service during which one must stand. Thus these are referred to as “*tekiot me'umad*” or standing *tekiot*. These are sounded after each of the 3 central blessings of the Rosh Hashana Musaf prayer “*malchuyot*”, “*zichronot*” and “*shofrot*”. Since the order of these blasts and the exact part of the continuation of the service in which they are sounded is subject to custom, before the service one should check his family's custom and/or the custom of the congregation in which he'll be praying in order to avoid confusion.

Regardless of the particular custom, by the end of the Musaf service, one hears another repetition of the 30 blasts, plus another combination of 10 (A-BC-A; A-B-A; A-C-A) during the final Kaddish. This totals a full 100 blasts, as you noted, where the last *tekiah* is prolonged and therefore called the “*tekiah gedolah*” or great/long *tekiah*. The Sefaradim have the custom to add one additional *tekiah* to the customary 100 for a total of 101, which equals the numerical value of “*Michael*” (mem=40, yud=10, kaf=20, alef=1, lamed=30) – Israel's protecting angel on high.

THE FAST OF GEDALYAH

From: Anthony

*Dear Rabbi,
What is the Fast of Gedalyah and what does it have to do with the period between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur? Is it some type of practice fast in preparation for Yom Kippur? Is it mandatory? Why is it called “Gedalyah”? Please pardon my ignorance.*

Dear Anthony,

Thanks for your valuable questions. They are in the spirit of our Sages who taught, “One who is embarrassed to ask won't learn”.

The fast of Gedalyah does not seem to have any direct thematic relation to the period between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, nor is it viewed as a practice run for the full day fast. Rather, it is observed on the day after Rosh Hashana, the third of Tishrei, to commemorate an event that took place on that particular date. The historical background is as

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follows:

When Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed the First Temple and exiled the Jews from Israel, he permitted a remnant of Jews to stay in the land and appointed the Jew Gedalyah ben Achicham as his governor. Many Jews who had fled to neighboring countries returned and renewed settlement in the Land of Israel.

This nascent renaissance aroused the jealousy of the king of Ammon who dispatched a Jew named Ishmael to assassinate Gedalyah. Although Gedalyah had been forewarned of Ishmael's evil intentions he refused to believe the reports and considered them slander. He received Ishmael with honor, and while in his palace, Ishmael murdered him and others present, including the Babylonian guard posted by Nebuchadnezzar.

Fearing retribution from Babylon against what seemed to be an internally inspired Jewish rebellion, the Jews fled the country and this put an end to the revival. Any Jews that stayed in Israel were either murdered or exiled. To commemorate these events, the Sages established a fast on the day Gedalyah was assassinated. Scripture refers to this as "the fast of the seventh month" (Zecharia 7:5), which is Tishrei. Some maintain that the assassination took place on the third of Tishrei. Others maintain that it actually occurred

on Rosh Hashanah, resulting in the fast being postponed until immediately after the festival.

This is daytime fast from dawn until night. Only eating is forbidden, but bathing, wearing leather shoes and the like are permitted. It is one of the more lenient fasts regarding pregnant or nursing women, the elderly or one who is ill. In such cases a rabbi should be consulted. Regarding the prayers, the day is similar to the other fast days where "aneinu" is recited in the Morning Prayer only by the chazan. The customary fast-day Torah passages are read. One recites "aneinu" during mincha during his silent prayer.

If there is a thematic connection between this fast and the period of repentance, it might be to consider how horrible Jewish infighting can be and what destruction it can cause. One might contemplate how in those times at this season, the Jews were given an opportunity for rebirth and renewal but they lost it. We should be very careful, then, not to waste the opportunity afforded to us during these days to return to G-d and rebuild our relationship with Him.

Our Sages also noted: "This teaches us that the death of the righteous is equal to the destruction of the Temple. For just as a fast was ordained for the commemoration of the destruction, so too was a fast ordained to commemorate the death of Gedalyah" (Rosh Hashana 18b).

WHAT 'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

SO FAR FOR SHOFAR

Question: As the mother of infants I approach Rosh Hashana with trepidation as to how I will be able to hear the blowing of the shofar while caring for my babies. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: Although women are exempt from the obligation to hear shofar blowing on Rosh Hashana since it is a time-oriented mitzvah, Jewish women have universally accepted it as a solemn duty and make every effort to fulfill it.

In many communities there are more than one service on

Rosh Hashana, so that you can tune in to a later one while your husband who has already completed his prayers babysits. In some places mothers park their carriages just outside the synagogue in order to hear the shofar blowing without disturbing anyone. There are even special shofar blowing services held later in the day for the benefit of women who could not make it in the morning.

Whatever solution you find, please remember that you only have to hear thirty blasts of the shofar, which last for a few minutes, and may leave the hearing of a hundred to the men.

The Ohr Somayach Family wishes you and yours and all of Israel a year filled with happiness, health and peace.

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'Religious coercion! Big Brother is watching you!' All too often we hear these words screaming from newspaper headlines. And what a tragic mistaken idea it represents. When a Jew cries out 'Shabbos!' to someone driving past his home on Shabbat, he's crying in pain. He feels the responsibility that we all accepted for each other.

The Jewish People are but sparks of one soul. A mystical connection exists between us all. What each of us does affects all the rest of us. A Jew cannot say: "Look if you guys want to keep Shabbat that's fine, but why should I be coerced into doing things that I don't believe in? It's my life. I'm my own person."

With utmost respect — it's not your life. You were given it. And you're not just your own person. Every action we do ripples across the physical and the spiritual world. There is no action without re-action. No man is an island entire to himself. And no man has a cabin in which he can cut a hole in the floor. We are all in the same boat.

Sources:

- *The Country Club* — Aderet Eliyahu
- *My Own Boat* — Heard from Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

Vayelech

COSMIC HIDE AND SEEK

"I will surely hide My face." (31:18)

Once, there was a great Rabbi who came upon a young child crying his heart out. "What's the matter, yingele?" asked the Rabbi, his eyes shining with sympathy and concern. "We were playing..." The child struggled to speak between sobs. "We were playing hide and seek...and I was the one who was supposed to go hide..." The boy looked up into the Rabbi's face. "Yes, I'm listening," said the Rabbi. "So I went and hid but...but..." The child broke down again in gales of sobs. "Tell me what happened," said the Rabbi softly. Finally, the boy managed to finish the sentence, "...but nobody came to look for me!"

After a few moments, the Rabbi smiled his warm smile and said, "You know, you shouldn't feel so bad. You're in very good company." The child heaved a little, his tears abating. The Rabbi looked into the child's eyes and continued: "You're in very good company indeed. G-d feels a lot like you. Not many people are coming to look for Him."

This world is like a cosmic game of hide-and-seek. We are given an invitation to this world; the invitation is called life. This invitation itself is a challenge: Who brought us here? Who sustains us here? What are we doing here?

To make the game more challenging and our success more meaningful and rewarding, there are various distractions and "false leads" which can take us away from the game. But our "Host" has not left us without a "crib sheet" to help us navigate this ultimate virtual adventure. He has provided a clear manual that is guaranteed to allow us to unmask Him and the purpose of our existence. This manual is called the Torah.

When we keep the Torah we see our "Host" more and more clearly. But if we don't keep the Torah, He will hide him-

self more and more deeply, and finding Him will be very difficult indeed.

"I will surely hide My face."

In the Hebrew language, the emphatic "to surely do" something is expressed by the repetition of the verb. In other words, the literal translation of the phrase "I will surely hide My face" is "Hide, I will hide My face."

The very structure of the Hebrew language gives us an insight into this "hiding." There are two kinds of concealment. One is a concealment where you know someone is there but you just can't see him. The other is a concealment where you don't even know if he is there at all. In this second type, the very fact of his being hidden is concealed. This is the ultimate hiding, where the very hiding is hidden.

When we are aware that G-d has "hidden" from us, He is not really concealed, because we realize that our hiding from Him has been reciprocated by His hiding from us. And so, we humble ourselves and return to Him, imploring his forgiveness. However, when the hiding is itself hidden, and we think that this is the way the world is supposed to be, then we are in big trouble because nothing awakens us to return to G-d. We think to ourselves, "This is the way things are supposed to be, isn't it?"

Ignorance, they say, is bliss. But only while we're ignorant of our ignorance. One day we will all wake up in the real "Supreme" court and we will then have to pay the price for our years of "bliss." On Yom Kippur we have a chance to shake ourselves out of our self-inflicted ignorance. A once-a-year opportunity to throw ourselves on the mercy of the King. If we search with all our hearts we will find Him.

Ha'azinu

THE FIRST SHABBAT

This is the first Shabbat of the year. It is the prototype, the blueprint for the whole year. Because of this, we must be especially careful to guard its sanctity. The Talmud tells us that if the Jewish People had kept the first Shabbat properly, no nation could have ruled over them.

On Rosh Hashana a new order is created for all the days of the year. Thus if the first Shabbat of the year is correctly observed, then the whole year follows suit.

Man was created on *Erev Shabbat*, on Friday afternoon, in order that he could immediately enter straight into Shabbat. But before Shabbat came, Man had already sinned.

Shabbat is an aid to *teshuvah*. As our Sages teach (*Berachot 37*), a *tzaddik gamur* (completely righteous person) cannot stand in the place of a *ba'al teshuva* (someone who returns to Judaism).

Tzaddikim uphold the world, as it says in Proverbs "The *tzaddik* is the foundation of the world," but "*teshuvah* preceded the world" (*Pesachim 54*), so the level of the *ba'al teshuva* is before the world and above the world.

Just as the *ba'al teshuva* is before the world, and thus above it, so too Shabbat has a radiance which is higher than the seven days of the week — a reflection of the World-to-Come.