THE ORIGINS OF THE SHOFAR FOR ELUL

It was on Rosh Chodesh Elul that Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to ascend to Har Sinai to receive the second set of the luchos. At that time, a shofar blast was sounded throughout the Jewish camp, as it served as a signal to alert everyone to the precise moment of Moshe’s departure. Moshe’s first ascent to the mountain to receive the luchos resulted in confusion. The exact count of forty days and when to expect Moshe’s return was unclear, and the ultimate result was the avodah zarah of the fashioning of the Golden Calf. With the sounding of the shofar, HaKadosh Baruch Hu was extolled, as the verse (Tehillim 47:6) states, “The Almighty rises with the teruah, God with the sound of the shofar.” It is for this reason that our sages ruled that we sound the shofar every year during Elul. — Pirkei d’Rebbe Eliezer Ch. 46

The Rosh (end of Masseches Rosh HaShanah, also cited by his son in Tur Hilchos Rosh HaShanah #581) writes that we do not only sound the shofar to signal the beginning of Elul, but throughout the entire month. The reason for our blowing the shofar is that the sound of the shofar stirs the nation to teshuvah, as the verse (Amos 3:6) states: “Will a shofar be sounded in the city and the people not shake?”

In Sifsei Chaim, Rabbi Chaim Friedlander analyzes the citation from Pirkei d’Rebbe Eliezer. It is clear that the purpose of the sounding of the shofar was only in order to mark the moment of Moshe’s ascent to Har Sinai, and this was in order to prevent the previous error of how and when to count the forty days of Moshe’s mission. Why does the Midrash then extend this event to apply it to our blowing shofar during the month of Elul, which is to encourage us to do teshuvah? That shofar in the desert was only sounded once, at the beginning of the month, so how does this serve as the source for our sounding the shofar for the entire month? Also, in what manner did this signal result in Hashem being extolled, as we find in the verse cited from Tehillim? After all, the sound of the shofar in the desert was used simply to signal the moment Moshe went up to the mountain.

The misunderstanding at the end of Moshe’s first mission at Har Sinai to receive the first luchos was not the result of a calendar oversight alone. There must have been a deeper, underlying drive among the people to resist, and even reject, receiving the luchos. As the Midrash teaches (Bereshis Rabbah 8:8): One who wishes to fail and sin, will ultimately find a way to sin. Rabbi Yerucham Leovits notes that this Midrash predicates its tragic prediction of sin upon the background that we are dealing with a person who “wishes to err”. This desire on the person’s part to sin is not always apparent on a conscious level, but it is clear that this is his will. He might later want to blame his failures on other unfortunate circumstances, such as poor fortune or a mathematical error he inadvertently makes, but ultimately, the reason for the sin is the person’s willingness to sin.

This was the source of the worship of the Golden Calf as well. If the people had wished to do so, they could have sought the truth. Had they been determined, they could certainly have figured out that the day Moshe had departed was not to be counted toward his forty-day mission on Har Sinai, and that he would therefore be returning the next day (which is actually when he did descend). But, instead, they were content with arriving at a different conclusion, a sinful and tragic one, and they chose to blame their fashioning an idolatrous calf upon Moshe’s delay, which they were willing to believe indicated that he was never to return.

We can now understand the lesson of the passage from Pirkei d’Rebbe Eliezer. When the shofar was sounded on Rosh Chodesh Elul to alert everyone as
And you shall come to the Kohen who will be in those days, and you shall say to him, ‘I declare today to God, your Lord, that I have come to the land that God swore to our forefathers to give to us.’

Devarim 26:3

The speech given by the farmer bringing bikkurim refers to the continued blessings of possession of the land into the future.

As the farmer offers his first fruits for the Kohen, he pronounces a declaration of appreciation. The theme of the speech is one of admiration for Hashem for having directed history in a manner by which the Jews survived various attempts by their enemies to destroy them, and whereby the Jews were finally brought to their homeland where they reside and worship Hashem. In reference to the land, the farmer declares that “I have come to the land that God swore to our forefathers to give to us”. This expression is clearly one which refers to the future. In other words, the statement of the farmer who brings his bikkurim is one which considers the ongoing promise to give the land of Israel to our people. It is noteworthy to point out that later, in Verse 15, we find another instance of a declaration. This is where a person vacates the gifts of tithes which he has stored for up to three years. The Torah requires that these portions be delivered to the respective Kohen and Levi to whom they belong, and the owner makes a proclamation of his conforming to the various laws of these agricultural gifts. He then concludes by referring to the land “which You gave to us”. This phrase speaks of the giving of the land in the past tense. What can we learn from this nuance? Why does the Torah use the infinitive mood in reference to the bikkurim, while it uses the past tense when speaking about giving the tithes?

Rambam (Hilchos Bikkurim 4:3) rules that a convert must bring bikkurim, and he must also read the accompanying speech. This might seem to be a problem, because the convert must declare that the land was given “to our fathers”, and he is technically not a descendant of Avraham Avinu. Nevertheless, the commentary of the Mishneh L’Melech (ibid.) explains that Avraham Avinu is also “the father of many nations” (see Bereshis 17:4), and even a convert is included under the umbrella concept of being a spiritual descendant of Avraham Avinu.

Many of the other commentaries on Rambam point out that although we can justify the phrase “to our fathers”, it is also problematic for the convert to describe the land as having been “given to our fathers”. And, in fact, it is for this reason that Rambam himself rules that a convert does not recite the proclamation which normally accompanies the distribution of tithes. Nevertheless, we can use our aforementioned insight to resolve this question. The speech given by the farmer bringing bikkurim refers to the continued blessings of possession of the land into the future. The verse in Yechezkel (47:22) suggests that converts will ultimately receive a share in Eretz Yisrael. Accordingly, a convert can legitimately declare that the land is “promised...to give to us (in the future)”. In reference to the verses accompanying the tithes, the convert cannot say that the land is that “which You gave us”.

To precisely when Moshe was departing, it was not done simply to publicize his ascent to the mountain. It was much more than that. It was an alarm to stir teshuvah in the people’s hearts. It was to shake the people to their very core, to break up the tendency to sin that was harbored deep within their hearts. After all, that was the source of the initial mistake. They had fooled themselves and had blamed their sin upon Moshe’s delay in returning with the first luchos. When the shofar was sounded on that Rosh Chodesh Elul, the very foundation of God’s reign on Earth was promoted, as teshuvah and the pursuit of truth were being highlighted. The people had learned about the subtle dangers of the yetzer hara, and they were alerted as to how to identify its evil. This willingness to improve and strive for perfection shifted God’s trait of Justice to be replaced with His trait of Mercy.

This lesson which Moshe taught as he departed the camp on Rosh Chodesh Elul was indicated with the sounding of the shofar that one day. We, however, spend the entire month in a spirit of teshuvah, as the Tur rules, based upon the words of his father, the Rosh. We use the sound of the shofar throughout Elul in order to rediscover our true motives and to purify and perfect them.
IT IS OUR HONOR

When a person brings his first fruits to the Beis HaMikdash, his presentation of the fruit to the Kohen is accompanied by a verbal declaration of reflection upon Jewish history, the destiny of the Jewish people, and an appreciation for all that Hashem has done for him. In this speech, there is a statement recognizing the Jewish nation has arrived in Eretz Yisrael. Later, as the speech continues, an emphasis upon this theme is found in Verse 3 and again in Verse 9, where the farmer acknowledges that he has been given Eretz Yisrael. We must ask, though, why this must be said twice.

Sefer Nachal Kedumim explains, based upon the Gemara (Kiddushin 7a) that when a person offers a gift to an important person, and the gift is accepted, we consider the one who gave the gift as having received a benefit. The fact that his gesture was accepted is an honor for him, in that this great person recognized his gift as being worthy in his eyes.

When a farmer comes to the Beis HaMikdash and offers his first fruits to the Kohen, the opportunity is actually an honor for the farmer, and, by giving his fruits to the Kohen, he is the beneficiary of the gift process. The verse (v. 2) therefore states that a person should take (קָנֹן) from his fruit, because, ultimately, he will be the one who is taking the most out of this exchange. This is also the intent of the statement made by the farmer in his declaration, “I have brought my fruit – and I thereby am in receipt of that which you, God, have given me.” The farmer proclaims that he realizes how both the fruit itself, and the opportunity to bring of them to the Beis HaMikdash, are both different aspects of how Hashem has given him great gifts by means of his having arrived in Eretz Yisrael.

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LOOKING OUT FOR OTHERS

Rambam describes the mitzvah of rejoicing during the festivals in the following way (Hilchos Yom Tov 6:18): “When a person partakes of his festive meal, as he eats and drinks, he is obligated to feed the stranger, the orphan and the widow, together with other needy and poor people. However, for anyone who locks the doors of his gate as he indulges with his wife and children, and does not include the poor and lonely souls, this celebration is not that of a mitzvah. He is merely feeding his belly, and in reference to such selfish people, the prophet says (Hoshea 9:4): ‘Their offerings are as bread of the forlorn. All who partake will become impure, for their bread is for themselves.’ ”

Sefer Sho’el U’Meishiv notes that the reference to “the bread of the forlorn” is clear. Just as one whose close relative has died (who is now in the halachic status of an孤儿) would eat without collecting around him friends or other company, so, too, is the closed and self-centered gathering of a person who enjoys the Yom Tov meals without inviting the needy to join. His bread is also considered “the bread of the forlorn (עֲנִיָּן).”

This is the intent of the declaration of the one who now distributes the ma’aser. He first states that he has fulfilled his obligation: “I have given that which is due the Levi and the stranger, the orphan and the widow.” At that point, the person can add the concluding statement as well. “I have not eaten as an孤儿 - in a lonely and isolated manner, because I have provided for those who were in need.”

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The following story is told about the Gr"a, the Gaon Eliyahu from Vilna. Following the execution of Rav Avrohom Patotzki, the ger tzdeek from Vilna, the authorities would not permit the Jews to gather his ashes for burial. The Gr"a took two students and, in the middle of the night, gathered the ashes and buried them. When the authorities found out what happened and who was responsible, they apprehended the Gr"a and locked him in prison to await his trial. After significant effort, Rav Chaim Volozhin was given permission to visit the Gr"a in prison. Rav Chaim mentioned to the Gr"a that he might be executed, but the Gr"a was not fazed. Rav Chaim warned that the execution would involve burning him alive, and the Gr"a was still not concerned. Finally, Rav Chaim told him that he would be burned together with a woman who was a known sinner, and the Gr"a’s response was that if that was the case, he was certain it could not happen. After hearing the Gr"a’s words at that meeting, Rav Chaim walked out confident that the Gr"a’s life would be spared.

When the trial began, the Gr"a lifted the tallis from his head and exposed his tefillin. When the judges saw the Gr"a’s tefillin, they immediately declared his innocence and cleared him of the charges.

When he was released, his students asked the Gr"a why he uncovered his tefillin. He responded, “The verse states (Devarim 28:10), ‘And all the nations of the earth will see that God’s name is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you.’ The Gemara (Berachos 6a) explains that the verse is referring to one’s tefillin shel rosh. That is why I was released.”

Those present asked, “Many people have tefillin, and the non-Jews are not frightened by them.” “Our sages did not say tefillin on one’s head,” answered the Gr"a. “Rather, chazal said tefillin – tefillin in one’s head.” In other words, the promise is only for a case where the tefillin have become a part of the person.

Halachic Corner

Pirkei Avos Chapter 3-4
Zmanim for Parashas Ki Savo 5780

According to the Gaon of Vilna
Krias Shema - Sat 9:34 Tefila - Sat 10:39
Sunset - Sat 7:19 Siman - Sat 6:20

According to the Magen Avraham
Krias Shema - Sat 8:58 Tefila - Sat 10:15
Sunset - Sat 7:19 Siman - Sat 6:20

Just as it is mandatory to sanctify the Shabbos when it is ushered in, so too is it mandatory to sanctify the Shabbos on its departure by performing the Havdalah ritual over a cup of wine. Brachos are also recited over spices and over a lit candle. Women, too, must observe the Havdalah. They should therefore listen attentively to the recital of the brachos. When wine cannot be procured, the Havdalah may be recited over any other significant beverage, such as beer, mead, or any beverage which is a national drink. Water under any circumstances should not be used.

It is meritorious to light more candles than usual upon the conclusion of Shabbos and to chant the appropriate hymns, thus escorting Shabbos upon its departure just as we escort a king upon his leaving town. The name of the prophet Eliyahu should also be mentioned, and prayers offered that he may come to bring us the tides of redemption. Eliyahu would not come on a Friday, in order not to disturb Jews from preparing for Shabbos. On Shabbos we do not pray for his coming because we are uncertain as to whether the boundary limit of Shabbos applies to an altitude above ten hand-breathds, and he therefore could not descend from the sky in order to come on Shabbos. However, when Shabbos has passed, we pray that he shall come and bring us good tidings. It is stated in the Midrash that every Saturday night Eliyahu enters Gan Eden, where he sits under the Tree of Life and records the merits of the Jewish people who observed the Shabbos. Therefore, we mention him gratefully.

Halachic Corner is dedicated by Benyomin Freeman in memory of his father Gedalia Freeman. May his memory be for a blessing.

Questions for Thought and Study

1. What are the four mitzvos listed in the first two pesukim of the parashah?
   See Ohr HaChaim 26:1
2. What is the “good” (בראשית) with which one will rejoice in Pasuk 26:11?
   See Ba’al HaTurim 26:11
3. Pasuk 27:3 implies that Bnei Yisrael merited to enter Eretz Yisrael because they...
inscribed the Torah on stones. Is that the only merit that allowed Bnei Yisrael to enter the Land? See Ramban and Ibn Ezra to 27:3
4. Why were the tribes divided the way they were on Mount Grizim and Mount Eival? See Ibn Ezra 27:10
5. When the Torah uses the term "תפילה" ("you shall watch"), what aspects of "watching" is the Torah telling us are part of mitzvah observance? See Ohr HaChaim 28:47
6. What is the double blessing of "כל הימים תשבים" ("in order that you will succeed") that is promised to someone who keeps our covenant with Hashem? See Malbim 29:8

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This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

By - Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rabbi Yosef & Bracha Polstein on the birth of a grandson, born to Moshe & Tzippi Polstein; to HTC Board of Regents member Oren Soffer and his wife Noemii on the recent marriages of their children, Avi to Perry Eckman and Noam to Avigayil Keiser; to HTC Board of Regents member Marc Pershan and his daughter Deborah on the birth of a grandson, born to Michael and Reyzl Pershan; to HTC Board of Regents member Martin Samber and his wife Esther on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Shayna Yonina, born to Shifra & Idan Scher; and to Co-Chairman of the Board Rabbi Shabsai Wolfe and his wife Debby on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Avigayil and Ari Scher.

Gourmet Torah at Shalotts Bistro is not meeting in the restaurant, so we are bringing Torah to you. Please join Rabbi Zvi Zimmerman over Zoom on Thursday, September 10, at 12:30 PM. Topic: "The Power of Teshuva". Zoom info: https://zoom.us/j/99921240863 or call in +1 312-626-6799. Zoom ID 999 2124 0863.

Don’t miss Bliststein Institute’s exciting and enriching courses! Classes begin on Tuesday, September 8th. Final class registration continues through the first two weeks of classes. For advising, call Mrs. Rita Lipshitz at 773-973-0241.

Bliststein Institute is proud to announce that, thanks to a generous grant from the Ralla Klepak Trust for Education in thePerforming Arts, we established the progressive and unique Ralla Klepak Performing Arts Leadership Program to benefit students and children of our community. Studies and activities begin this fall. We welcome our Ralla Scholars who will have major leadership positions in this program for the upcoming year. For information, please contact Dr. Malkie Eisenberg, Director, at 773-973-0241 ext. 3122.

By - Hebrew Theological College announcing that the Sunday morning shiru given by Rosh HaYeshiva Rabbi Avraham Friedman will take place this Sunday and will be the first class learning Kiddushin from the beginning, at 9:15 AM, either through Zoom (620-484-6937) or in person with masks at the Yeshiva.

The senior class of Fasman Yeshiva High School will build & take down your Sukkah. We are following Covid 19 guidelines and are limited in the number of Sukkahs we can build. Please call 224-357-6701 and leave your name and number. We will call you back to schedule. First come - first served.

JDBY-YTT is seeking an Executive Assistant to our CEO. The ideal candidate will possess excellent verbal and written communication skills, organizational and computer skills and the ability to multitask. If you would like to join the staff of a fast-growing school and assist in the chinuch approach, please remember that your tzedakah provides kosher food, rental assistance and more to Chicagoland Jews in complete confidentiality and in accordance with Halachah. Contact The ARK 773-973-0241.

10:00 PM Selichot will start September 13th at Congregation Beth Shalom Ahavas Achim, 5665 N. Jersey Avenue. All are invited – masks and social distancing will be observed. Wishing כל ליל סליחות וברכה. ONE SHELTER TO WATCH – Hillel Torah is seeking qualified Science Teachers and a General Studies Assistant to join our team for the 2020-2021 school year. Bachelor’s degree required. To apply, please email your résumé by email only to hr@jdbyytt.org with “Executive Assistant to CEO” in the subject line. Please include several references.

Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi is seeking qualified candidates for the following General Studies afternoon positions: 3rd grade teacher, 4th grade teacher. Applicants should contact Mrs. Jodi Sohl at jsohl@jdbyytt.org or 773-973-6150 ext. 209.

Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov Elementary School is seeking a 2nd Grade Teacher in the General Studies Department for immediate hire. Scheduled hours will be Monday-Thursday afternoons 12:15-4 PM and Friday afternoons 11:45-1 PM. Call 773-583-5329 x402 or email résumés to rhechler@jdbyytt.org.

The Ark is pleased to announce that its Rosh HaShanah cards are now available. As the אמן אברהםrabbit approach, please remember that your tzedakah provides kosher food, rental assistance and more to Chicagoland Jews in complete confidentiality and in accordance with Halachah. Contact The Ark at 773-973-1000 or archicago.org.

4:00 PM Selichot will start September 13th at Congregation Beth Shalom Ahavas Achim, 5665 N. Jersey Avenue. All are invited – masks and social distancing will be observed. Wishing כל ליל סליחות וברכה.

Hillel Torah is seeking qualified Science Teachers and a General Studies Assistant to join our team for the 2020-2021 school year. Bachelor’s degree required. To apply, please email your résumé to resumes@hilleltorah.org.

Congregation KINS is proud to present the second in a series of Zoom conferences focusing on STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine, and Mathematics) and its correlation with Torah. The class will take place on Tuesday, September 8, at 12:00 noon. The speaker will be Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Krohn. His topic will be “The Anatomy of ‘Bad Middos’: The Intersection of Psychology and Torah”. To access the KINS Zoom Room, just visit www.congkins.org.

The Healing Shofar – workshop for bereaved anticipating Yamim Noraim after a loved one’s death. Information on grief coping, coping strategies, Torah texts ways to memorialize, ideas to help move forward, and special support during Covid-19. Facilitators: Rabbi Joe Ozarowski, D. Min., BCC, and Marsha Raynes, LCSW. Tuesday, September 8, 7:30-8:30 PM. Registration: JCFS.formstack.com/forms/healing_shofar_20. Zoom link sent by josephozarowski@jCFS.org or 847-745-5433.

COVID-19 positive? Please complete the anonymous questionnaire at CommunityCounter.org in order to protect your family and friends as soon as you receive a diagnosis. A contact tracing team at Refuah311 is eager to help. Together, we can save lives!

Please join No Shame On U and Shira Francis on Tuesdays, September 8-29, at 8:30 PM, for a 4-part series focusing on strategies to better balance technology with activities important for relationship well-being. Shira is in private practice as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She is also a Kallah teacher. For free registration: www.noshameonu.org/events/tech.
Join Wi-Work, the brand-new kosher co-working space located in the WiFi Building in Skokie! Featuring a kosher coffee bar, member lounge, meeting spaces, private offices, open workstations and more. Be a part of the hottest trend in office space, and enjoy the kosher food and amenities the WiFi Building has to offer!

Kol Tuv has job openings! If you have any leads on office workers, stockers or cashiers please contact Kol Tuv. Anyone who gives us a successful lead and that worker stays for at least 30 days will receive a Kol Tuv Gift Card!

Coming soon! I can’t wait for NOYA, a boutique luxury condo building next to Kehilat Chovevei Tzion in Skokie. Large 2, 3 & 4 bedrooms. And I’m glad that buyers can take advantage of pre-construction pricing and an opportunity to customize their finishes. I am going to call Victoria Stein in Skokie to get more details. – Michael Daniels.

Wishing mazal tov to Rabbi Dr. Avraham Isenberg on the recent marriage of his daughter Chaya to Ephraim Montag from Queens, New York. May they be zoche to build a Bayis Ne’eman B’Yisrael. – From their many friends.

The family of Rabbi Joseph Lichtshein, י’h, thanks all the members of the community for their kindness and support during the recent shiva. Our dear husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather left a legacy of students whose lives he touched and changed. In addition, the welfare of the teachers of our city was his passion. If you have any thoughts to share with the family, please email RabbiJLmemories@gmail.com.

By the Albert Milstein family in loving memory of their father and zaydie, Shay Milstein, י’h, on the occasion of his yahrzeit on 16 Elul, and their mother and bubie, Regina (Ruth) Milstein, י’h, on the occasion of her yahrzeit on 19 Elul. May their memory be for a blessing. (Kehilath Jacob Beth Samuel)

By Rabbi Yaakov Miller and family, Kenneth Miller and family, and Glenn Miller and family in loving memory of Irving Miller, י’h, on the occasion of his 19th yahrzeit on 19 Elul. He was a loving husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, and great-grandfather, who is missed every day. The memory of his wit and wisdom continues to bring happiness to our lives. (Yerushalayim, Bnei Shalom of Buffalo Grove, Ateres Yehoshua)

In memory of our beloved husband, father, zaida, and great-zaida, Jerome Gordon, י’h, on the occasion of his 22nd yahrzeit on י”ח ע”ש כרכר. May his memory be for a blessing. We miss you. – Arlene, Lee & Gail, Mindy & Lewis, Cheryl & Gary, Eric, and their families. (Ezras Israel, Shaarei Tzedek, Eretz Yisrael, Or Torah)

By the Lorber, Freedman, and Kahnrose families, on the occasion of the seventh yahrzeit, 19th of Elul, for Sarah Lorber, י’h, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, and great-aunt, in loving memory.

By Debbic, David and Avi Dobkin, Alise and Rabbi Yoni Gold, Sarah and Rabbi Jonny Chapman, and Hallie and Avi Geller in memory of our dear brother and uncle, Larry (Baruch Leib) Dobkin, י’hui, on his 8th yahrzeit on 16 Elul.

In loving memory of our dear mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother, Sarah Rubenstein, י’h, on the occasion of her 26th yahrzeit on Elul 20. Her gentle and kind ways have been an inspiration to all who knew her. May her memory be for a blessing. – Flora Lee & Alvin Weiss. (Kehilath Jacob Beth Samuel)

By the Bulgatz family in memory of their beloved husband, father, and grandfather, Victor Bulgatz, י”ח ש”פ נ”ג ז”א ו”י, on his 19th yahrzeit on 21 Elul. May his memory be for a blessing. (Congregation Mishne U’gmono)

By Earl & Andrea Brody, Carol Vollen, Holly Kahan, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, in loving memory of their mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Alice Brody, י”ח ה”ו ז”א מ”ב ז”א מ”כ, on the occasion of her yahrzeit on 17 Elul.

Likutei Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein, י”ח. May their memory be for a blessing.

Answers:
1. The first mitzvah listed is that one should know that Eretz Yisrael will not be conquered through his strength and power, but through the gift from Hashem. The second mitzvah is that Bnei Yisrael should remove all of the inhabitants from Canaan. The third is that dwelling in Eretz Yisrael is a mitzvah by itself. Lastly, it is a mitzvah to bring the Torah in the future as they enter the Land.

2. The word י”ה is numerically equal to 22, alluding to the 22 letters with which the Torah was written.

3. Ibn Ezra says that building a ה”ג (altar) was the first commandment that Bnei Yisrael were required to perform upon entering the Land. The stones on which the Torah was written were used to build this altar. Ramban says that it means that Bnei Yisrael were allowed to enter the Land because they fulfilled the mitzvos in the Torah. Another explanation from Ramban is that it was built as a reminder that Bnei Yisrael continue to observe and learn the Torah in the future as they enter the Land.

4. The tribes from Rachel and Leah were on Mount Grizim (the mountain of blessing) and the tribes from the maidservants (Bilhah and Zilpah) were on Mount Eival (the mountain of cursing). Because there were only four tribes from the maidservants, the oldest and youngest of Leah’s children (Reuven and Zevulun) went over to Mount Eival.

5. Ohr HaChaim says that there are two aspects in “watching” each mitzvah. One must learn all of its details and ramifications to do it properly. Secondly, one must do a mitzvah with joy for it to be done correctly.

6. Malbim says that the word י”ה refers to both spiritual and physical blessings that are promised by Hashem.