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THE LEARN IT UP NEWSLETTER

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The Significance of a *vav*

By Elliot Moshe Levian

As we all know, our beloved Torah concludes with *V'zot HaB'rakha*, the ultimate blessings/prophecies concerning the 12 tribes of *Yisrael*, supplementing the trend started by Ya'akov Avinu in *Parashat Vaychi*. However, before we begin the study, we are faced with a question, as always. Why does the holy, great Torah start off this parasha with the letter "*vav*?" I don't think it would have been much of a problem for anyone if it started off saying "*Zot HaB'rakha*."

We should all know that this perfect book, written by a non-human author, never makes a mistake. Not even a grammatical one. Being a conjunction, "*vav*" is the connector between two points of emphasis, the same way an "and" is in English. To better understand what is going on, we should review what is surrounding this conjunction.

On one side, we have *parashat ha'azinu* concluding with Hashem basically telling Moshe Rabbeinu off. He tells Moshe that he will not enter the land of his dreams, putting an end to all his efforts, desires and prayers. Moshe's life seems to be ending on a sour note. On the other side of the "*vav*," Moshe Rabbeinu wants to bless his people on his final day of life.

So what's the connection? We must understand that Moshe was not allowed entry into the Holy Land because of a mistake he made resulting from his people's corrupt nature. In a sense, he was not allowed entry because of the Jews! Any normal human would be upset at a group of people who cost him his ultimate prize. Anyone except Moshe, that is... You see, Moshe was so excep-

tional that on this climactic final day of life he was considered half man/half angel. For a mortal to reach that level of holiness is as rare as it gets. The closest thing to that is a mermaid!

Now we see the mission of the "*vav*." The Torah wants to put these blessings into perspective. The man who should have been upset at the Jews put his pride aside and blessed them ANYWAY! Moshe Rabbeinu was the ultimate lover of the Jewish people, and this *vav* was the epitome of it. Moshe was and always will be the ideal role model for any Jewish leader in history of this planet. He did not mix personal emotions with the fiduciary duty of leading, or in this case blessing the chosen people. In hindsight, without the *vav*, the blessings would have been nothing more than ordinary.

It's funny how at the other end of the book, Adam HaRishon was booted from another very desirable land (Gan Eden) because of his mistake which resulted from the corruption of others (*Chava* & the *Nachash*), yet he wasn't too thrilled with either of them to say the least... *Tiqoon*?

Furthermore, the *Alshikh* (R. Moshe Alshech; Safed, 1508-93) comments that the purpose of the *vav* is to show that Moshe's upcoming words are just as holy as all the words spoken by God himself found previously in the Torah. The reason is because Moshe Rabbeinu was "a man of God," and thus his words came from divine inspiration.

May we see the second coming of Moshe Rabbeinu in *Techiat HaMetim bimherah b'yamenu amen* "*v*" *amen*!



Mashal of the Week

Imagine you are sitting on a bus. You see a guy in the back of the bus, and every few minutes, he throws \$5 out the window. This goes on for the entire ride. At the end of the ride, the guy comes to you and says "Hey, can I borrow some money, please?" This guy is insane, right!?

So too, many people go through life and when it comes their time to pass on, they pray and beg for

more time. But often they haven't used their time wisely, so what are the chances their request for more time will be granted?

Don't waste your precious time on this earth on things that are meaningless. Use it well, and hopefully you will be blessed with tons of it!



Parasha Trivia!

1. Which was created first?

- Fish
- Stars
- The wheel
- Sliced bread



2. What was created on the Seventh Day?

- Man
- Simchat Torah goody bags
- iPhone 5s
- Nothing



Spotlight on a Mitzvah

Peru u'Veru

In this week's *parasha*, we encounter the first *mitzvah* in the Torah.

What we are speaking of, of course, is God's instruction to Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply, fill the land and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, and all creatures which swarm over the earth:" (1:28).

There are specific laws which pertain to this *mitzvah*, but there is also a deeper message to be learnt from it. While God tells Adam and his wife to procreate, He also instructs them to subdue the earth, and

3. Which of the following characters is not mentioned in *parashat bereshit*?

- Cain
- Abel
- Noah
- Bob Barker
- All of the above



4. How old was Adam at the time of his death?

- 930
- 120
- 84.5
- 613



Answers: 1 (b), 2 (d), 3 (d), 4 (a)

becomes rulers of it. Mankind, therefore, is meant to reign over God's creations and become control them to his ability.

Nowadays, we do this sort of thing nearly every day! Sending a man to the moon, exploring the depths of the sea, and harnessing natural gases and energy are all ways we accomplish this.

We can not forget though that Adam also received the instruction to "cultivate (= *le'ovadah*)" the Garden of Eden, but also to "watch over it (= *u'lshomerah*)" (2:16). May we always strive to preserve the planet we live in, while at the same time subduing it.

Questions? Comments? Ideas? Email us at MYCRiU@gmail.com



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