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Torah and Y2K

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January 1, 2000, is a [Sabbath](sabbath.html). On the Biblical [calendar](calendar.html) it corresponds to Saturday, Tevet 23, 5760. I would like to examine the Torah readings, for this [Sabbath](sabbath.html), for both the [annual](annual.html) and [triennial](shmita.html) [cycles](cycles.html), to see if there is any hint as to what Y2K may have in store for us.

The **Torah** reading, on the [*annual*](annual.html) [cycle](cycles.html), for the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) of January 1, 2000, is:

[Exodus](exodus.html) 1:1-6:1.

The **Haftarah** for the [*annual*](annual.html) [cycle](cycles.html) is taken from:

Isaiah 27:6 - 28:13 and Isaiah 29:22-23.

The **Torah** reading for the [*triennial*](shmita.html) cyle is:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 24:1 – 25:14

The **Haftarah**, for the [*triennial*](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) is taken from:

Isaiah 24:2ff,

Hosea 14:7, Zephaniah 1:12, Ezekiel 34:1-31, Jeremiah 36:6, Jeremiah 32:6-27

## The [Triennial](shmita.html) [Cycle](cycles.html)

Torah: Leviticus 24:1 – 25:14

***Leviticus 24:1-18*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying,* [*Command*](cmds613.html) *the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *continually: [it shall be] a statute for ever in your* [*generations*](toldot.html)*. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *continually. And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *cakes thereof:* [*two*](two.html) *tenth deals shall be in* [*one*](one.html) *cake. And thou shalt set them in* [*two*](two.html) *rows,* [*six*](six.html) *on a row, upon the pure table before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon [each] row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, [even] an* [*offering*](korbanot) *made by* [*fire*](fire.html) *unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. Every* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *he shall set it in order before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *continually, [being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall* [*eat*](eating.html) *it in the holy place: for it [is] most holy unto him of the offerings of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *made by* [*fire*](fire.html) *by a perpetual statute. And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father [was] an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish [woman] and a man of Israel strove together in the* [*camp*](stages.html)*; And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the* [*name*](name.html) *[of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*], and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's* [*name*](name.html) *[was] Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the* [*tribe*](tribes.html) *of Dan:) And they put him in ward, that the mind of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *might be shewed them. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the* [*camp*](stages.html)*; and let all that heard [him] lay their* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *upon his* [*head*](body.html)*, and let all the congregation stone him. And thou shalt* [*speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his* [*sin*](sin.html)*. And he that blasphemeth the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, he shall surely be put to death, [and] all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the* [*name*](name.html) *[of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*], shall be put to death. And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him [again]. And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death. Ye shall have* [*one*](one.html) *manner of* [*law*](law.html)*, as well for the stranger, as for* [*one*](one.html) *of your own country: for I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God. And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the* [*camp*](stages.html)*, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *commanded Moses.*

***Leviticus 25:1-14*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses in mount* [*Sinai*](stages.html)*, saying,* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.* [*Six*](six.html) *years thou shalt sow thy* [*field*](field.html)*, and* [*six*](six.html) *years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and* [*gather*](gather.html) *in the fruit thereof; But in the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *year shall be a* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *of rest unto the land, a* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *for* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: thou shalt neither sow thy* [*field*](field.html)*, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither* [*gather*](gather.html) *the grapes of thy vine undressed: [for] it is a year of rest unto the land. And the* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, And for thy cattle, and for the beast that [are] in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat. And thou shalt* [*number*](nchart.html)[*seven*](seven.html) *sabbaths of years unto thee,* [*seven*](seven.html) *times* [*seven*](seven.html) *years; and the space of the* [*seven sabbaths of years*](seven.html) *shall be unto thee* [*forty*](forty.html) *and* [*nine*](nine.html) *years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth [day] of the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *month, in the* [*day of atonement*](kippur.html) *shall ye make the* [*trumpet*](file:///D:\Word\DOC1\shofar.html) *sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor* [*gather*](gather.html) *[the grapes] in it of thy vine undressed. For it [is] the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall* [*eat*](eating.html) *the increase thereof out of the* [*field*](field.html)*. In the year of this* [*jubilee*](yovel.html) *ye shall return every man unto his possession.*

Haftarah: Isaiah 24:2,

Hosea 14:7, Zephaniah 1:12, Ezekiel 34:1-31, Jeremiah 36:6, Jeremiah 32:6-27

***Isaiah 24:1-23*** *See,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its* [*face*](body.html) *and scatter its inhabitants-- It will be the same for* [*priest*](priests.html) *as for people, for master as for servant, for mistress as for maid, for seller as for buyer, for borrower as for lender, for debtor as for creditor. The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has spoken this word. The earth dries up and withers, the* [*world*](worlds.html) *languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the* [*laws*](law.html)*, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left. The* [*new*](new.html)[*wine*](wine.html) *dries up and the vine withers; all the merrymakers groan. The gaiety of the tambourines is stilled, the noise of the revelers has stopped, the joyful harp is silent. No longer do they drink* [*wine*](wine.html) *with a song; the beer is bitter to its drinkers. The ruined* [*city*](city.html) *lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred. The ruined* [*city*](city.html) *lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred. In the streets they* [*cry*](mashal.html) *out for* [*wine*](wine.html)*; all joy turns to gloom, all gaiety is banished from the earth. The* [*city*](city.html) *is left in ruins, its gate is battered to pieces. So will it be on the earth and among the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, as when an olive tree is beaten, or as when gleanings are left after the grape harvest. They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *majesty. Therefore in the* [*east*](east.html) *give glory to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; exalt the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we hear singing: "Glory to the Righteous* [*One*](one.html)*." But I said, "I waste away, I waste away! Woe to me! The treacherous betray! With treachery the treacherous betray!" Terror and pit and snare await you, O people of the earth. Whoever flees at the sound of terror will fall into a pit; whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare. The floodgates of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls--never to rise again. In that day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will punish the powers in the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. The* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *will be abashed, the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *ashamed; for* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, and before its elders, gloriously.*

***Hosea 14:7*** *Men will* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the* [*wine*](wine.html) *from Lebanon.*

***Zephaniah 1:12*** *At that* [*time*](time.html) *I will search* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like* [*wine*](wine.html) *left on its dregs, who think, '*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will do nothing, either good or bad.'*

***Ezekiel 34:1-31*** *The word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You* [*eat*](eating.html) *the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the* [*sick*](illness.html) *or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became* [*food*](food.html) *for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no* [*one*](one.html) *searched or looked for them. "'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become* [*food*](food.html) *for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, Therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: This is what the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their* [*mouths*](body.html)*, and it will no longer be* [*food*](food.html) *for them. "'For this is what the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the* [*nations*](nations.html) *and* [*gather*](gather.html) *them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. "'As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: I will judge between* [*one*](one.html) *sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your* [*feet*](heel.html)*? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your* [*feet*](heel.html)*? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your* [*feet*](heel.html)*? "'Therefore this is what the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will* [*save*](salvation.html) *my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between* [*one*](one.html) *sheep and another. I will place over them* [*one*](one.html) *shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *have spoken. "'I will make a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and* [*sleep*](mashal.html) *in the forests in safety. I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. The trees of the* [*field*](field.html) *will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will* [*know*](daat.html) *that I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no* [*one*](one.html) *will make them afraid. I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of* [*famine*](famine.html) *in the land or bear the scorn of the* [*nations*](nations.html)*. Then they will* [*know*](daat.html) *that I,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *their God, am with them and that they, the* [*house of Israel*](file:///D:\Word\DOC1\israelja.html)*, are my people, declares the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.'"*

***Jeremiah 36:6*** *So you go to the* [*house of HaShem*](hashem.html) *on a day of fasting and read to the people from the scroll the words of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *that you wrote as I dictated. Read them to all the people of Judah who come in from their towns.*

***Jeremiah 32:6-27*** *Jeremiah said, "The word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came to me: Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my* [*field*](field.html) *at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.' "Then, just as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, 'Buy my* [*field*](field.html) *at Anathoth in the territory of* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html)*. Since it is your right to* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *it and possess it, buy it for yourself.' "I* [*knew*](daat.html) *that this was the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; So I bought the* [*field*](field.html) *at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen shekels of silver. I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. I took the deed of purchase--the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy-- And I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)[*sitting*](mashal.html) *in the courtyard of the guard. "In their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: 'This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long* [*time*](time.html)*. For this is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.' "After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: "Ah, sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, you have made the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*'* [*sins*](sin.html) *into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose* [*name*](name.html) *is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty, Great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your* [*eyes*](body.html) *are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. You performed miraculous* [*signs*](signs.html) *and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. You brought your people Israel* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html) *with* [*signs*](signs.html) *and wonders, by a mighty* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and an outstretched arm and with great terror. You gave them this land you had sworn to give their* [*forefathers*](file:///D:\Word\DOC1\fathers.html)*, a land flowing with milk and honey. They came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey you or follow your* [*law*](law.html)*; they did not do what you commanded them to do. So you brought all this disaster upon them. "See how the siege ramps are built up to take the* [*city*](city.html)*. Because of the sword,* [*famine*](famine.html) *and* [*plague*](plagues.html)*, the* [*city*](city.html) *will be handed over to the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you said has happened, as you now see. And though the* [*city*](city.html) *will be handed over to the Babylonians, you, O Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, say to me, 'Buy the* [*field*](field.html) *with silver and have the transaction witnessed.'" Then the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came to Jeremiah: "I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?*

## The [Annual](annual.html) [Cycle](cycles.html)

***Shemot 1:1-17*** *These are the names of the* [*B'nei Yisrael*](file:///D:\Word\DOC1\gen-jew.html) *who came to Egypt. Each man with his* [*household*](househld.html) *who came with* [*Yaakov*](israelja.html)*. Reuvein, Shimon, Leivi and Yehudah. Yissachar, Zevulun, and Binyamin. Dan, Naftali, Gad and Asher. All the souls that emanated from the loins of* [*Yaakov*](israelja.html)*, [numbered]* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *souls, [including] Yoseif who was [already] in Egypt. Yoseif died. All his brothers and all that* [*generation*](toldot.html) *[also died.] The B'nei Yisrael were fruitful and prolific, and their population multiplied. They were exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them. A* [*new*](new.html) *king came into power over Egypt, who did not* [*know*](daat.html)[*Yoseif*](file:///D:\Word\DOC1\joseph.html)*. He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the B'nei Yisrael are becoming too numerous and strong for us. Come let us deal wisely with him. Lest he increase so much, that, if there is war, he will join our enemies and fight against us, driving us from the land. They* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *conscription officers over him to oppress him with their burdens. He [B'nei Yisrael] built supply cities for Pharaoh, Pisom and Ramseis. But the more [the Egyptians] oppressed him, the more [the B'nei Yisrael] increased and spread. [The Egyptians] came to loathe the B'nei Yisrael. The Egyptians enslaved the B'nei Yisrael, with* [*body*](body.html)*-breaking labor. They made their lives bitter with harsh labor involving mortar and bricks, and all kinds of work in the fields. All the work they made them do [was intended] to break them. The king of Egypt* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *to the* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html) *midwives. The* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*one*](one.html) *of them was Shifrah, and the* [*name*](name.html) *of the other was Puah. He said, "When you deliver* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html) *women, you must look at* [*the birth*](thebirth.html)*stool. If it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." The midwives [however] feared El-him and did not do as the Egyptian king had told them, and they kept the infant boys alive.*

**Sheini (Second Aliyah)**

***Shemot 1:18-22*** *The king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why did you do this? You let the infant boys live." The midwives said to Pharaoh, "The* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html) *women are not like the Egyptians. They* [*know*](daat.html) *how to deliver. Even before a midwife gets to them, they have already given* [*birth*](birth.html)*." El-him was good to the midwives, and the people increased and were very mighty. Because the midwives feared G-d, He gave them houses. Pharaoh then commanded all his people, saying, "Every boy who is born must be thrown into the river; but every girl shall be allowed to live."*

**\* \* \***

Verse 1: These are the names of the B'nei Yisrael.

Though [Scripture] has previously enumerated them during their lifetime by their names,[[1]](#footnote-1) it again enumerates them at their deaths. [This is] to show how dear they are [to G-d], because they are compared to the [stars](mazaroth.html) which He brings out and brings in by [number](nchart.html) and by their [individual] names; as it is said: "Who brings out their host by [number](nchart.html), and calls each by its [name](name.html)."[[2]](#footnote-2)

Verse 5: Yoseif [who] was [already] in Egypt.

But, were not he and his sons included in the [seventy](seventy.html)?[[3]](#footnote-3) Then what does [Scripture] intend to [teach](teacher.html) us? Would we not [know](daat.html) ourselves that he was in Egypt? But, [the purpose is] to let you [know](daat.html) how righteous [Yoseif](file:///D:\Word\DOC1\joseph.html) was--- the same Yoseif who tended his father's sheep, is the same Yoseif who was in Egypt and he became king, [yet] he remained steadfast in his righteousness.

Verse 7: And Prolific.[[4]](#footnote-4)

They bore [six](six.html) children at [one](one.html) [time](time.html).[[5]](#footnote-5)

Verse 8: A [new](new.html) king came into power.

Rav and Shmuel [disagreed as to the meaning of {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ]. [One](one.html) said, literally a [new](new.html) king while the other said, [he was actually the same king] but his edicts were [new](new.html).[[6]](#footnote-6)

Who did not [know](daat.html).[[7]](#footnote-7)

He acted as if he did not [know](daat.html) [him].

Verse 10: Come let us deal wisely.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Wherever {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} [appears in Scripture] it means "preparation and readiness" for a given matter; that is: "Prepare yourselves for this!"

Wisely with him.[[9]](#footnote-9)

[ {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ---to him---refers] to the [nation](nations.html) [of Israel]. "Let us wisely determine what to do to him." Our Sages [however] explained [the singular {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ] as: "Let us deal shrewdly with the Savior of Israel (G-d) by bringing about their fate through water for He has already sworn that he will never again bring a flood upon the [world](worlds.html)."[[10]](#footnote-10) (They [the Egyptians] did not realize that [His promise was] not to flood the entire [world](worlds.html) but He might flood [one](one.html) [nation](nations.html). [From an old Rashi text]).

Driving us from the land---

against our will.[[11]](#footnote-11) Our Sages, however, explained it: [Pharoah [spoke](mashal.html)] as a person who expresses a curse about himself but attaches his curse to others.[[12]](#footnote-12) It is as if it had been written: "And we will go up out of the land and they will [inherit](inherit.html) it."

Verse 11: Over him.

[Meaning:] upon the [nation](nations.html).[[13]](#footnote-13)

Conscription officers.

[ {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ] is derived from the word {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} --- tribute. [Thus, {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} are] officers who collect tribute from them. And what is the tribute? That they build warehouse [storage] cities for Pharaoh.

To oppress him with their burdens.

I.e., [the burdens] of the Egyptians.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Supply cities.

Should be translated as Onkelos does.[[15]](#footnote-15) Similarly: "Go to this ( {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ) treasurer."[[16]](#footnote-16) [ {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} refers to] the treasurer who is in charge of the warehouses.

Pisom and Ramseis.[[17]](#footnote-17)

For they were originally not fit for this purpose so they strengthened and fortified them for warehousing.

Verse 12: The more [the Egyptians] oppressed him.[[18]](#footnote-18)

To the extent that they set their hearts to oppress [them], G-d set His [heart](body.html) to increase and strengthen them.

The more [the B'nei Yisrael] increased.

[Meaning:] so did they increase and become strong.[[19]](#footnote-19) That is the plain interpretation. [However,] the Midrashic explanation is: the Holy Spirit is saying this, i.e., "You say, 'lest he increase', but, I say, 'yes, they will increase'."[[20]](#footnote-20)

[The Egyptians] came to loathe.

Their lives became abhorent to them. Our Sages explained: They were as thorns ( {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ) in their [eyes](body.html).[[21]](#footnote-21)

Verse 13: With [body](body.html)-breaking labor.

[Meaning:] with work that is so hard that it crushes ( {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ) the [body](body.html) and breaks it.

Verse 15: Midwives.

{[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} has the same meaning as {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref},[[22]](#footnote-22) but it sometimes comes in the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} (light) conjugation[[23]](#footnote-23) and sometimes in the "heavy" {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} conjugation as in {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ({[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}) or {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ({[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref})[[24]](#footnote-24) or {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ([speak](mashal.html)) [in the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} conjugation] and {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ([speak](mashal.html)) [in the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} conjugation]. Similarly {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} [{[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}] and {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ---[ {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ].

Shifrah.

This is Yocheved, [and she was called {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ] because [ {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ] she would put the newborn into proper [[physical](physical.html)] condition.

Puah.

This is Miriam, [and she was called {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}] because she would make loud noises and [speak](mashal.html) and articulate to the newborn, as do women who pacify a child that is [crying](mashal.html). [The word] {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} means shouting loudly as in: "I will scream like a birthing woman."[[25]](#footnote-25)

Verse 16: When you deliver.[[26]](#footnote-26)

{[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} [in the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} conjugation] is the same as {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} [in the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} conjugation].

Birthstool.

The seat of a woman who is giving [birth](birth.html). In another place [in Scripture[[27]](#footnote-27)] it is referred to as {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} . Similarly: "He did work on the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}"[[28]](#footnote-28) ---the seat upon which are kept the tools of the pottery maker.

If it is a boy, etc.

He was particular only in regard to the [male](male+female.html) children because his astrologers had told him that a son was to be born who would liberate them.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Let her live.

[{[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} being the same as] {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ---"and she shall live."

Verse 17: And they kept the infant boys alive.[[30]](#footnote-30)

[Meaning:] they provided water and [food](food.html) for them. Onkelos' translation of the [first](one.html) [ {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ][[31]](#footnote-31) is {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ---and they [the women] preserved [the newborn]; whereas the second [time](time.html) [that {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} appears---v. 18] [he translates it] {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ---and you [women] have preserved. This is because, in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), this word and any form thereof[[32]](#footnote-32) is used to mean: "they" (fem.) did something as well as: "you" (fem. pl.) did something. E.g., "( {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ---) They said,[[33]](#footnote-33) "an Egyptian, etc.,"[[34]](#footnote-34) which is [fem. pl.] past tense as would be {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ---for masculine. [Another example:] "({[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}) you [women] have spoken with your [mouths](body.html)"---the same as {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}[[35]](#footnote-35) corresponding to {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} in the masculine. Similarly: ({[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}) "you [women] have maligned me to my [nation](nations.html)"[[36]](#footnote-36)---which is in the past tense. The same as {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} corresponding to {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} in the masculine.

Verse 19: They [know](daat.html) how to deliver.

[Meaning:] they are as knowledgeable as midwives. Onkelos' translation of {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} (midwives) is {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} . However, our Sages explained [ {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} as "animals"] [i.e.] they may be compared to animals of the [field](field.html) who do not require midwives [when giving [birth](birth.html)]. And where is it that they are compared to animals? "[Yehudah] is like a young lion,"[[37]](#footnote-37) "[Binyamin] is like a wolf that preys,"[[38]](#footnote-38) "[Yoseif] is like the [first](one.html)-born of his ox,"[[39]](#footnote-39) "[Naftali] is a gazelle-like messenger."[[40]](#footnote-40) And [those of the [Tribes](tribes.html)] where no reference is made [to animals], Scripture includes them [in the comparison] [in the statement:] "And he blessed them."[[41]](#footnote-41) It is also written: "What a lioness is your mother!"[[42]](#footnote-42)

Verse 20: Elokim was good.

[{[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} means:] He did good to them. The following is the difference concerning a word whose root [letters](letters.html) are [two](two.html)[[43]](#footnote-43) and it is prefixed by a {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} and a {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref}:[[44]](#footnote-44) When it intends to convey the idea of causing someone else to do something, the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} is vocalized with a {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} which is also called a kometz koton. For example: "( {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ) G-d did good to the midwives."[[45]](#footnote-45) " {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} [the [mourning](mourning.html)] of the daughter of Yehudah"[[46]](#footnote-46) [meaning:] He caused great [mourning](mourning.html).[[47]](#footnote-47) Similarly: " {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} the remnant"[[48]](#footnote-48) [which is written] concerning Nevuzaraddan [meaning:] he caused the [exile](galuyot.html) of the remnant. [Or:] " {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} tail to tail"[[49]](#footnote-49) [meaning:] he caused the tails to turn to each other. All these examples have the meaning: he caused others to do something.[[50]](#footnote-50) But, when it speaks in terms of "he did"[[51]](#footnote-51) the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} is vocalized with a {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} . For example: " {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} in his [eyes](body.html)"[[52]](#footnote-52) [meaning:] it was good [in his [eyes](body.html)]. Similarly: " {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} the [nation](nations.html)"[[53]](#footnote-53) [meaning:] the [nation](nations.html) increased; " {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} Yehudah"[[54]](#footnote-54) [meaning:] Yehudah was [exiled](galuyot.html); "( {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} ) He looked all around"[[55]](#footnote-55) [meaning:] He turned here and there. Do not reject my [explanation] [because of the words] {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref},[[56]](#footnote-56) because these [words] are not from the same [type](types.html) of verbs as those [above] for the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} in these are part of the root--- [in the words:] {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} the {[Hebrew](hebrew.html) Ref} is a [third](three.html) root [letter](letters.html).[[57]](#footnote-57)

Elokim was good to the midwives.[[58]](#footnote-58)

What was this good [that was done to them]?

Verse 21: [It was that] He gave them houses.[[59]](#footnote-59)

Houses of the Priesthood and the Levites and Royalty which are referred to as "houses" (dynasties), [as is written:] "And he built the [House of G-d](housegod.html) and the house of the king;"[[60]](#footnote-60) the Priesthood and the Levites[[61]](#footnote-61) [descended] from Yocheved and Royalty[[62]](#footnote-62) from Miriam; as is cited in Maseches [Sotah](hair.html).[[63]](#footnote-63)

Verse 22: All his people.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Also upon them (the Egyptians) did he issue the decree. On the day that Moshe was born his astrologers told him, "Today, their savior was born, but we do not [know](daat.html) whether he is from the Egyptians or the [Jews](gen-jew.html), but we forsee that he is destined to be smitten through water." Therefore, on that day, he (Pharaoh) issued a decree also regarding the Egyptians, as it is said: "Every son that will be born" and it does not say: "that will be born to the [Hebrews](bereans.html)." They (the astrologers), however, did not [know](daat.html) that he (Moshe) was destined to be smitten by the waters of Meriva.[[65]](#footnote-65)

## [Annual](annual.html) Haftarah

The Haftarah is taken from:

Isaiah 27:6 - 28:13 and Isaiah 29:22-23.

***Isaiah 27:6 – 28:13*** *In days to come* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the* [*world*](worlds.html) *with fruit. Has [*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*] struck her as he struck down those who struck her? Has she been killed as those were killed who killed her? By warfare and* [*exile*](galuyot.html) *you contend with her--with his fierce blast he drives her out, as on a day the* [*east*](east.html) *wind blows. By this, then, will* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*'s guilt be atoned for, and this will be the full fruitage of the removal of his* [*sin*](sin.html)*: When he makes all the altar stones to be like chalk stones crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or* [*incense*](ketoret.html) *altars will be left* [*standing*](mashal.html)*. The fortified* [*city*](city.html) *stands desolate, an abandoned settlement, forsaken like the desert; there the calves graze, there they lie down; they strip its branches bare. When its twigs are dry, they are broken off and women come and make fires with them. For this is a people without understanding; so their Maker has no compassion on them, and their Creator shows them no favor. In that day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will thresh from the flowing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O Israelites, will be* [*gathered*](gather.html) *up* [*one*](one.html) *by* [*one*](one.html)*. And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were* [*exiled*](galuyot.html) *in Egypt will come and worship* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *on the holy mountain in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*. Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, to the fading* [*flower*](flower.html)*, his glorious beauty, set on the* [*head*](body.html) *of a fertile valley--to that* [*city*](city.html)*, the pride of those laid low by* [*wine*](wine.html)*! See, the Lord has* [*one*](one.html) *who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour, he will throw it forcefully to the ground. That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, will be trampled underfoot. That fading* [*flower*](flower.html)*, his glorious beauty, set on the* [*head*](body.html) *of a fertile valley, will be like a* [*fig*](bethphag.html) *ripe before harvest--as soon as someone sees it and takes it in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, he swallows it. In that day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people. He will be a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. And these also stagger from* [*wine*](wine.html) *and reel from beer:* [*Priests*](priests.html) *and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with* [*wine*](wine.html)*; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions. All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth. "Who is it he is trying to* [*teach*](teacher.html)*? To whom is he explaining his message? To children weaned from their milk, to those just taken from the breast? For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there." Very well then, with foreign lips and strange* [*tongues*](spirit.html) *God will* [*speak*](mashal.html) *to this people, To whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest"; and, "This is the place of repose"--but they would not listen. So then, the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *to them will become: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there--so that they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured.*

***Isaiah 29:22-23*** *Therefore this is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, who* [*redeemed*](redemption.html)[*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, says to the house of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*: "No longer will* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale. When they see among them their children, the work of my* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*, they will keep my* [*name*](name.html) *holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*, and will stand in* [*awe*](fear.html) *of the God of Israel.*

## Other Essays

**The Y2K bug from a** [**Jewish**](gen-jew.html) **perspective**

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

By now, you've heard the warnings. A glitch in computers could cause havoc around the [world](worlds.html) on the evening of Dec. 31, 1999. Today, the Y2K bug from a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) perspective. As in the general media, you can find a perspective ranging from deep concern to a feeling that the entire subject has been overblown. Jonathan Libber says it is impossible to [know](daat.html) what disruption may occur, but he does have some cautionary advice, such as having on [hand](fourteen.html) ample firewood, bottled water and a battery-powered transistor radio [http://www.y2kosher.com/y2kprep2.htm]. He also suggests that should disruptions occur and you are not able to get to work, this would be an ideal [time](time.html) to catch up on Torah learning, organize classes and plan how you can help your neighbors. Rabbi Arthur Waskow draws a parallel between a famous story in the Torah and the Y2K bug [http://www.jewishaz.com/1998b/981030/2000.shtml]. The story of the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html) "describes what happens when humanity becomes so arrogant as to use a 'universal language' to 'storm [heaven](heaven.html).' Today, our universal language is the 0-1-0-0-1-1-0-1-0-0-0-0-1 of the computer, and we have used it to make the whole human race dependent on a single technology. Suddenly we have realized how flawed that technology is." He suggests that this would be the ideal [time](time.html) to rebuild our ties to our [community](community.html) and rethink our "societal addictions" to the computer. Waskow is extremely concerned by the threat posed by the Y2K and his site has articles such as Checklist to Prepare for Y2K, From [Yom Kippur](kippur.html) to Y2K: A [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Response, and When [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Meets [Millennium](millenium.html) [http://www.shalomctr.org/html/[community](community.html).html]. On the other [hand](fourteen.html), when asked about the Y2K bug and the [Jews](gen-jew.html), Ohr Somayach's Ask the Rabbi site takes a very different perspective [http://www.ohr.org.il/ask/ask227.htm#Q1]. "The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people have survived for 3,500 years and we have experienced much worse than the Y2K bug. I am a [Jew](gen-jew.html) living in [Jerusalem](city.html) (a miracle in and of itself), son of a Holocaust survivor (another miracle) actively [teaching](teacher.html) Judaism to thousands of [Jews](gen-jew.html) around the [world](worlds.html) (another miracle). The Torah guarantees that there will always be [Jews](gen-jew.html) around observing, studying and [teaching](teacher.html) Judaism - the only thing that you have to worry about is will you be [one](one.html) of them?" If you decide that you want to hunker in a bunker on the night of Dec. 31, you can do so in style. A company called Y2Kosher.com will sell you ready-to-[eat](eating.html) glatt kosher meals (with a shelf life of [five](five.html) years) [http://www.y2kosher.com]. During those years, you can feast on Chicken and Noodles or Old [World](worlds.html) Stew. Or you can splurge on the "fully Y2K compliant [Shabbat](sabbath.html) meal in a basket" that includes grape juice, candles, gefilte fish and "Bible bread, the original fast [food](food.html) of the [Exodus](exodus.html)." Finally, there's [matzah](chametz.html), guaranteed to work in the year 2000.

**\* \* \***

Is Year 2000 bug a modern-day Tower of [Babel](bavel.html)?

RABBI ARTHUR WASKOW Special to [Jewish](gen-jew.html) News

The recent Torah portion on the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html) describes what happens when humanity becomes so arrogant as to use a "universal language" to "storm [heaven](heaven.html)." Today, our universal language is the 0-1-0-0-1-1-0-1-0-0-0-0-1 of the computer, and we have used it to make the whole human race dependent on a single technology. Suddenly we have realized how flawed that technology is.

Will computers and chips that do not recognize the Year 2000 actually bring on a near apocalyptic global disaster simply because they get the date - the simplest [number](nchart.html) - wrong? Some believe this might happen, if chips and computers that are embedded in electric power systems and other crucial infrastructures fail as the [millennium](millenium.html) turns. This could be even more serious than failures in bank records and other commercial enterprises.

What is to be done? The Bible points the way. When [Babel](bavel.html)'s arrogance brings disaster on its builders, God not only baffles and "babbles" them - but also creates a remedy by forcing upon them a multiplicity of [tongues](spirit.html). "Back to the space where you [speak](mashal.html) [face](body.html)-to-[face](body.html)," God seems to say. "Re-create your local cultures and [communities](community.html), to replace the towering machinery of global arrogance!"

Out of that crisis, if we look to Torah, came the family of [Abraham](avraham.html) and Sarah, the people Israel - and all the other peoples that [speak](mashal.html) their own local mother-[tongues](spirit.html) in their own localities on Mother Earth. So whether the Y2K bug creates a major disaster or merely serious problems, the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html) solution applies: Re-create local and regional eco-[communities](community.html), intimately intertwined with the Earth.

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi should be thanked for [first](one.html) raising this issue in the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html). So in [communities](community.html) - not in isolated households - we should begin now to [gather](gather.html) information and discuss the possible Y2K outcomes. Panic is born of ignorance. And in [communities](community.html) - not in isolated households - we should again learn how to keep warm through local resources, how to stock and share essential [foods](food.html), and how to share synagogues and similar communal buildings as emergency living spaces.

In other words, imagine a post-tornado or post-earthquake scenario, and prepare for it. Then if disaster comes, we will be able to meet it without martial [law](law.html) and catastrophe. If disaster does not come, we can relish the joy of [new](new.html) [communities](community.html) and the [knowledge](knowledge.html) that all the plants, the animals, the rivers and the human faces bear in them the spark of God.

Perhaps parts of our global superstructure, our Tower of [Babel](bavel.html), are about to die. If not, surely our "societal addictions" - to the computer, to the fuels scorching the globe - have begun to ride our backs with a deadly grin. Those addictions need to cease if we are to live.

Yet we also need a lesson that is not so clear in the Bible's [Babel](bavel.html). This [time](time.html) we must keep alive the [knowledge](knowledge.html) that will keep us alive: Each local space and [face](body.html) - not only the [one](one.html) we see when we wake up each morning - is a spark of the Divine. And our loving of what we see [face](body.html)-to-[face](body.html) is a lie unless we also love what we see only from the [moon](chodesh.html): the [face](body.html) of Earth. The whole Earth.

From the death of our habitual addiction to the [world](worlds.html) machine, we can draw forth renewal and rebirth of the organic Earth, in which both the individual organism and the whole are sacred. From the reconnection with our beloved places in the Earth, we can relearn an arithmetic of sacred spaces and of sacred faces.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow is director of the Renewal movement's Shalom Center in Philadelphia and the author of several books, including "Down to Earth Judaism: [Food](food.html), Money, [Sex](marriageact.html) and the Rest of Life." This commentary originally appeared in the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Bulletin of Northern California and was distributed by [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Telegraphic Agency.

Information on Y2K can be found on the Internet at www.cy2kr.com, www.[millennia](millenium.html)-bcs.com, www.berkana.org and www.co-intelligence.org.

**\* \* \***

**From** [**New**](teruah.html) **Year 5760 to** [**New**](teruah.html) **Year 2000:**

**Building Stronger** [**Jewish**](gen-jew.html)[**Communities**](community.html) **as a Response to Y2K**

By Rabbi Arthur Waskow

[This precis is a summary and "overture" to a longer report on Y2K and the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html), available as Shalom Report #7. See the note at the very end of this entry for information on how to receive the full report.]

FOR Y2K: WE CHOOSE TO TAKE A BREAK INSTEAD OF SUFFERING A BREAK-DOWN.

The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html), like others in America and around the [world](worlds.html), faces the possibility that early in the Year 2000, there may be disruptions of some important services as a result of the Y2K computer glitch.

The interwoven pattern of computer-driven systems is so elaborate that sober observers like the US Senate Subcommittee on Y2K and Consumer Reports report: — No [one](one.html) can say with certainty either that there will or there won’t be serious disruptions. In some areas, quite possibly; in others, probably not.

If there is trouble, the most vulnerable — the old, the poor, the [sick](illness.html) — will suffer most. Only [communities](community.html) can protect them — and only by preparing. We can see the [time](time.html) we put into preparation both as buying "insurance," a caring response to uncertainty — and as sharing, out of joyful celebration.

What if we ourselves decide to make this [time](time.html) a joyful celebration of [community](community.html) and sharing — no matter what Y2K does or doesn’t do? What if we make an extended [Shabbat](sabbath.html) — take a break, instead of suffering a breakdown?

This is a win-win game. If Y2K makes trouble, we are ready; and if there is no trouble, we have built stronger [Jewish](gen-jew.html) congregations and [communities](community.html). At "worst," we build [communities](community.html) that care about each other more deeply, help each other more effectively, understand Torah more fully, and celebrate together more joyfully.[Jews](gen-jew.html) will be [gathered](gather.html) in great [numbers](nchart.html) just [three](three.html) months before 2000, to celebrate [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h and [Yom Kippur](kippur.html). In a High [Holiday](festival.html) sermon, rabbis can urge their congregations to prepare for [four](four.html) to [ten](ten.html) days of simple living and [community](community.html) sharing — "Take a Break" days from Erev [Shabbat](sabbath.html), December 31, 1999, to January 3 or January 9, 2000.

This High Holy Day sermon would also explain how congregants and neighbors could spend part of their [time](time.html) during the fall preparing to address both the dangers of disruption and the joyful opportunities for [community](community.html)-building that may unfold from Y2K.

Joy from a thorn bush? We could easily see Sukkot, [Pesach](passover.html), and [Shabbat](sabbath.html) as life-deprivations — a flimsy house, a restricted diet, no purchasing. But [Jews](gen-jew.html) have learned to see them as joyful life-enhancements, [time](time.html) to celebrate and share.

In this way we choose for a limited rhythmic [time](time.html) to live a simple life-style in [community](community.html), protecting the vulnerable, without asceticism or permanent deprivation.

Sermons, of course, are only a start. Beginning during Sukkot 1999, congregations bring members and neighbors together to be trained in how to do this.

We suggest the following [time](time.html)-table, from mid-199 to February 1, 2000:

1. As soon as possible, the congregational leadership (rabbinic and administrative) briefs the [synagogue](synagog.html) board and key members on Y2K and dealing with it; starts the process of the congregation’s own self-assessment; and selects some people to act as trainers and facilitators for the Y2K training [event](feasts.html) that will happen in late September.

2. In early September, synagogues announce that they will set up a special Y2K self-assessment and preparatory training. Many congregations may find it most convenient to do such a program on Sunday September 26, during Sukkot. (Information on such a training is in the full Shalom Report # 7.)

3. For [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h (Saturday, September 11) or for [Yom Kippur](kippur.html), the rabbi preaches on the deeper meaning of Y2K. The sermon might invoke [three](three.html) elements:

the origins of the Y2K problem in the weakening of [face](body.html)-to-[face](body.html) [communities](community.html) and the success of techno-[idolatry](idolatry.html) and reckless globalism (as in the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html) story; see below). [Jonah](jonah.html)’s warning to Nineveh as a model for warnings intended to heal the society through stirring action to cancel out the danger that they warn of; and Isaiah’s [teaching](teacher.html) in the [Yom Kippur](kippur.html) haftarah that by communally protecting the most vulnerable among us, we can achieve the real delights of [Shabbat](sabbath.html) joy and rest.

The Sermon’s Goal: To prepare for Y2K not out of [fear](fear.html) but out of intention to strengthen and celebrate [community](community.html). And to begin giving basic information on how to prepare this way. The rabbi could also announce the [coming](coming.html) training workshop and strongly urge all to attend.

4. On Sunday, Sept. 26 or soon after, the [synagogue](synagog.html) holds a training workshop, using Sukkot itself as a symbol and [teaching](teacher.html) toward a simple-living, [community](community.html)-sharing "[festival](festival.html)" at the turning of the year. This training continues through the fall. People form teams for involving neighbors and congregation members in preparedness groups who can turn disruptions or shortages into communal-sharing and simple-living celebration [time](time.html).

5. From about December 31 to either January 3 or January 9, the [synagogue](synagog.html) makes itself available as a [meeting place](settimes.html); an "indoor sukkah," if that turns out to be necessary for the old or the poor; and a center for [prayer](prayer.html) and celebration. To do this it prepares back-up [food](food.html), warmth, and medicine.

AND SO WE CHOOSE TO TAKE A BREAK, INSTEAD OF SUFFERING A BREAK-DOWN.

6. From January 1 till about February 1, 2000, there are [four](four.html) possibilities:

a. Synagogues do what Shalom Paper #7 recommends, and Y2K in some areas does become a serious problem.

Result: [Community](community.html) does reasonably well in coping, neighbors have gotten to [know](daat.html) each other much better over period of preparing, not just January crisis. Neighbors and congregants are very happy they took the trouble to train and prepare. [Synagogue](synagog.html) has less money in bank (having bought some items for preparedness) but when the neighborhood bounces back after the crisis, people are grateful to it, see their down-to-earth lives bound up in it.

b. Synagogues do what Shalom Paper #7 recommends, and Y2K does not become a serious problem anywhere.

Result: Extra stocks of [food](food.html), water, etc are gradually used up, or used for soup kitchens, any longer-term equipment purchased is stored away for other possible emergencies like hurricanes, etc. or used in camping trips or an adventurous Sukkot, or sold at a loss to surplus stores; [community](community.html) members get to [know](daat.html) each other much better and more deeply (from sharing info about skills, life situation, etc).; some people sneer at [synagogue](synagog.html) leadership for taking all that trouble; others feel good about the communal connections ; "the day nothing happened and we REALLY made Shabbos" becomes a congregational memory and joke. [Synagogue](synagog.html) has less money in bank.

c. Synagogues do nothing, and Y2K in some areas does become a serious problem.

Result: Some people who need medicines that are not available get very [sick](illness.html), people flee from hardest-hit metro areas, some old people die from lack of fuel or water. [Synagogue](synagog.html) stays as (ir)relevant to people's real lives as it has been before but other institutions (Red Cross, Natl Guard, maybe [church](church.html) soup kitchens), become much more important to them. [Synagogue](synagog.html) has same money in bank that it did but there may have been damage to unprepared building, etc. Some congregants mutter that they wish someone had urged them to prepare.

d. Synagogues do nothing, and Y2K does not become a serious problem anywhere.

Result: Nothing changes.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

[Four](four.html) major questions about Y2K, with sources for working out our answers:

1. Is there really still a problem, or has it already been solved??

There could be major problems, and there may not be. Some sober-minded comments follow, [one](one.html) on a specific industry; [one](one.html), an over-all assessment. There are many others. (See the full Shalom Paper # 7 for more citations.)

From Consumer Reports ([Travel](mashal.html) [Letter](letters.html), May 1999, p. 14):

"Modern ships rely on scores of embedded computer chips, [one](one.html) in [five](five.html) of which may be Y2K-vulnerable. Failures could affect the ship’s navigation, communications, safety and security, control, and electrical systems, say US Coast Guard officials. Y2K snags in port operations (like fueling) or international telex lines . . . could stall maritime traffic, leaving even debugged ships stranded in port indefinitely."

Consider that much of our [food](food.html), medicines for long-term use, and oil/ gasoline come to us by ship, often from [third](three.html)-[world](worlds.html) countries where Y2K preparation is abysmal.

From Senators Robert Bennett and Christopher Dodd, co-chairs of US Senate Subcommittee on Y2K, writing in March 1999:

"Those who suggest that this problem will be nothing more than a ‘bump in the road’ are simply misinformed. Quite simply, Y2K is [one](one.html) of the most serious and potentially devastating [events](feasts.html) this [nation](nations.html) has ever encountered. In some cases, lives could even be at stake."

After the text of this summary, there appears an excerpt from a major Business Page article in the [New](new.html) York Times, 5/27/99. PLESE BE SURE TO READ IT.

2. How did we stumble into this? How prevent another analogous stumble?

Here the key is in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) teachings about [idolatry](idolatry.html): the danger that human beings can turn good and useful aspects of the [world](worlds.html) into idols. It was "techno-[idolatry](idolatry.html)" — far more crucial than the original [two](two.html)-digit glitch — to make the whole [world](worlds.html) economy computer-dependent with few resilient back-ups. The "Tower of [Babel](bavel.html)" story in particular [lights](lights.html) up what went wrong and points toward what to do. For [Babel](bavel.html)’s "universal [tongue](spirit.html)," today read "0110010011100," the digital language; for "storming [Heaven](heaven.html),’ read totalizing our dependence on computers. God’s solution is to renew local [communities](community.html) and cultures with their own languages.

3. Can we talk calmly about Y2K?— neither in panic nor denial? With prospects so uncertain, might rabbis and other [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leaders be embarrassed if the problem is brought under control and no major difficulty follows?

Here the key is the story of [Jonah](jonah.html). He prophesied danger, the people responded, and the danger subsided. [Jonah](jonah.html) was angry. But we who read the story can learn the lesson: Warn, and be clear that we are warning — not making hard-and-fast predictions. Then be joyful if the people heed the warning by acting to change their "[city](city.html)," and thus heal it.

4. What vision of a decent [community](community.html) do we hold before us now?

Here there are [two](two.html) keys: [One](one.html) is the tradition of a life-rhythm that includes the joyful simplicity of [Shabbat](sabbath.html), [Pesach](passover.html), and Sukkot. The other is Isaiah’s choice of [Yom Kippur](kippur.html) itself to remind us that sharing with the poor is the [seed](flower.html) of joy.

These teachings are at the [heart](body.html) of our hope to build life-giving [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [communities](community.html). They are also the [seed](flower.html) of a successful response to Y2K. If Y2K brings disruptions, this response will help us meet them with least pain. If Y2K brings little or no disruption, this response will help us meet the [future](future.html) with more confidence, more joy.

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N Y Times, May 27, 1999, Thursday , page C1, major story

By BARNABY J. FEDER

After months of weighing options, businesses and governments are acknowledging that some disruptions are inevitable when computers encounter dates beyond 1999 and that they now [face](body.html) deadlines for investing in contingency plans. . . . Most are worried less about failures in their own systems than how they will respond to breakdowns in the supplies, transportation or communications links on which they depend.

As the plans are developed, millions of workers who previously had little exposure to Y2K, as the Year 2000 problem is [known](daat.html), are getting their [first](one.html) good look at how seriously their employers are taking it.

It is not a subject that executives and their project leaders like discussing in any detail. Unlike most repair work, contingency plans have to take into account not just the computer user's own systems, but all the outside forces the user cannot control, like public power, telephones, water and the readiness of both suppliers and major customers. The planners [fear](fear.html) offending partners, inviting lawsuits and, in some cases, alarming customers or the public.

. . . Major computer users like Paine Webber are booking hotel rooms for [New](teruah.html) Year's Eve in back-office sites like Weehawken, N.J., to make sure technicians are near their data processing centers.

It is also clear that growing confidence that major disruptions are unlikely — at least in the United States — is putting pressure on managers not to propose costly investments.

Still, the effort is opening a [new](new.html) window on how seriously the [world](worlds.html) is taking the Year 2000 challenge.

Most Year 2000 contingency planning by big computer users is aimed at coping with local disruptions similar to those society often experiences from equipment failures, bad weather and earthquakes. But big enterprises are also considering how to respond to a global blitzkrieg of disruptions.

''The danger of Y2K is a wide variety of things hitting simultaneously,'' said Charles Snyder, [head](body.html) of the Year 2000 project at Levi Strauss & Company in San Francisco. Levi has scrutinized how it might shift or delay production of its jeans and other products factory by factory. Mr. Snyder advocates ignoring the nature of specific Year 2000 problems and simply looking at whether the interruption at a factory would be a matter of hours, days or longer. ''You'd go insane if you try to handle it without some kind of streamlined game plan,'' he said.

Intel has begun installing extra power generators at factories in Asian countries and Latin American countries with shaky power grids. And its purchasers and technicians have been visiting companies it does not buy from today to see if they could step in if a supplier faltered.

Business leaders hope contingency planning will reinforce the prevailing cautious optimism that the Year 2000 challenge is being met. ''It shouldn't signal a sense of alarm,'' said Dana Bennett, who has overseen the Year 2000 project at Aetna, the insurance giant based in Hartford.

Jay Golter, co-founder of the Northern Virginia Year 2000 [Community](community.html) Action Group, disagrees. ''It's just human nature that planning for disruptions will make people who haven't been paying attention more nervous,'' he said. But if nervousness raises consciousness, he said, the public will benefit.

Last month, many utilities drilled [field](field.html) employees who will be stationed at power plants and distribution sites over the [New](teruah.html) Year [holiday](festival.html) on how to use radio and other backup communication systems to deliver vital data that normally flow electronically to [command](cmds613.html) centers.

The State of Washington's National Guard plans to mobilize 3,000 soldiers, about half its ground forces, in December to be available to help deal with loss of utilities, water or other essential services or to quell potential civil disorder. The plan is virtually cost free because the same soldiers would otherwise have been reporting for routine training a few weeks later.

Lubbock, Tex., is buying materials for 1,200 stop [signs](signs.html) in [one](one.html) order this fall instead of spacing them out through the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2000, and is suspending its normal replacement program.

Experts say Year 2000 contingency planning becomes complicated because the possibilities are more varied than in typical disruptions. Humana's standard 20-page disaster recovery plan for its regional service centers swelled to 66 pages when adapted for Year 2000 problems.

Training, staffing and equipment decision deadlines are also looming for some. Auto makers say they need to settle contingency plans in the next month to take advantage of summer production shutdowns for training. Union contracts require Kaiser Health Plans to make up its mind — and negotiate next month — for extra hourly employees it [wants](needs.html) on duty for the [New](teruah.html) Year [holiday](festival.html), according to Deborah Reinhold, director of Kaiser's Year 2000 project.

Companies also need to worry about what happens if too many others are thinking about the same backups they expect to use. Take all the companies planning to rent generators.

''There's no way in the [world](worlds.html) our industry could supply the demand that is in the planning [stages](stages.html),'' said Mark Conrad, United States marketing director for Aggrecko, the

Consultants say a few shortcomings show up repeatedly in plans they see. Many companies, for example, are not ready to confirm and evaluate disruptions quickly.

Louis Marcoccio, [head](body.html) of Gartner Group's Year 2000 research program, says another failing is assuming that contingency plans are needed only for the [first](one.html) week of the [new](teruah.html) year. Gartner estimates that fewer than 10 percent of software failures will show up that quickly.

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\* Copyright (c) 1999 by Arthur Waskow. This precis summarizes a 22-page report on [Jewish](gen-jew.html) responses to Y2K. Its author, Rabbi Arthur Waskow, is director of The Shalom Center and author of Down-to-Earth Judaism, Seasons of Our Joy, and Godwrestling — Round 2.

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**From** [**Yom Kippur**](kippur.html) **to Y2K:**

## A [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Response to Techno-[Idolatry](idolatry.html)

By Rabbi Arthur Waskow \*

### I: Healing Nineveh

For a moment, imagine being [Jonah](jonah.html).

But this [time](time.html), the [Voice](voice.html) seems much more ambiguous. Not what the original [Jonah](jonah.html) heard: "Yet [forty](forty.html) days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed."

Instead, the [Voice](voice.html) calls out: "Beginning January 1, in some of your cities you may suffer major disruptions of your lives. No [city](city.html) will be utterly destroyed, and some will probably feel little damage. Which is which, I cannot say. Much will depend on whether you prepare. So I call on you to warn your fellow-citizens!"

If you are [Jonah](jonah.html), what to do?

According to tradition, the original [Jonah](jonah.html) had several answers:

[One](one.html): "Warn Nineveh? -- Who [needs](needs.html) it! Don't we have enough [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tzuris of our own?"

Another: "There's always an escape clause. Even assuming You are right in the [first](one.html) place, You have such a leaning toward compassion that I'm sure nothing will happen. For this I should put my reputation on the line? If nothing happens, I will feel ashamed. Ridiculous."

And, bottom line: "I'd rather [sleep](mashal.html). Or drown."

But as we [know](daat.html), [Jonah](jonah.html) finds there is no escape, not even in drowning. -- In [Hebrew](hebrew.html), "Nineveh" can be heard as "Nun-neveh," "Fish-place." When [Jonah](jonah.html) tries to run away from The Fish-place, he discovers he is doomed to the Fish-place anyway.

In other words, if you try to run away from Reality, it catches up with you -- only worse.

[Jonah](jonah.html) seems to have heard an unequivocal warning. (But as he expected, it turned out to be equivocal after all.) Now what if the issue that we [face](body.html) in our own lives is indeed equivocal?

Today, prophecies of trouble are circling the globe. But some of the prophecies say to expect massive trouble; others, just a glitch. Some of the claims come from Authorities, but the more Authoritative the speaker, the less clear is the prophecy.

In fact, the most Authoritative Voices say precisely that it's all unclear, and that in some ways that's the greatest danger -- because it's harder to prepare for a range of possible problems than for [one](one.html) clearly defined [event](feasts.html). Most of the Authoritative Voices say that on the [one](one.html) [hand](fourteen.html) it's not likely that the sky will fall -- a [world](worlds.html)-wide catastrophe -- and on the other [hand](fourteen.html), it is likely that some neighborhoods, cities, and regions will have important problems.

What is this global problem?

Y2K.

The glitch that began so small it seems laughable -- leaving [two](two.html) digits off the date to [save](salvation.html) a little computer space and money -- How could such a little thing make so much trouble?

Only an expert in gematria could pay so much attention to a [number](nchart.html)!

But when the President of the United States, in his State of the Union Address, a bipartisan pair of US Senators, and sober non-political [bodies](body.html) like Consumer Reports and the [New](new.html) York Times all warn there might be serious trouble, it makes sense for us to pay attention.

Even if we hear less sober voices -- including the wildest fantasies of apocalyptic Christians -- we should not shrug off the issue simply because some strange groups are focusing on it.

What is the evidence that there may be serious problems in some places?

\* Senators Robert Bennett and Christopher Dodd, co-chairs of the Senate Committee on Y2K, transmitted their detailed committee report with a somber [letter](letters.html) of warning, in March 1998. For the Committee report as a whole, see

http://www.best.com/

mgoodfel/senateY2K.htm

\* Consumer Reports [Travel](mashal.html) [Letter](letters.html) (May 1999) warns that shipping and rail service as well as air traffic could be seriously affected. If so, these could then affect supplies of fuel, [food](food.html), and medicine.

\* Such countries as Pakistan, Indonesia, and Brazil, important sources crucial raw materials, medicines, etc., are [known](daat.html) to be riddled with Y2K problems they cannot afford to fix.

\* The [New](new.html) York Times, in a major report on the [first](one.html) business page on May 27, 1999, reports that most major companies have concluded they cannot really fix the problem by January 1, and are now working on fall-back and contingency plans. Many of those, especially by US companies operating in the [Third](three.html) [World](worlds.html), involve the purchase or rental of back-up electric generators. But the [head](body.html) of the [world](worlds.html)'s biggest generator-producing company reports they cannot produce enough generators by January 1 to meet the demand already on [hand](fourteen.html).

Y2K is not just other peoples' problem. Nineveh is not a foreign country. We have all been affected already, whether we [knew](daat.html) it or not. For example: Governmental and business efforts to [clean](purity.html) up the problem are estimated to cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

Remember what we learn from [Yom Kippur](kippur.html). Imagine what a gentle [Jonah](jonah.html) might have been and done! God calls on [Jonah](jonah.html) to warn Nineveh of possible danger. By doing so, [Jonah](jonah.html) convinces its citizens to change their ways. Since they do, the danger is averted. [Jonah](jonah.html) is disappointed -- but of course the [city](city.html)'s changing and then healing was what God intended all along.

Today, the only way to prevent Y2K from becoming a serious problem is to act in advance. In short, becoming Jonahs who are happy if Nineveh is healed.

Might we be embarrassed if the problem is brought under control and no major difficulty follows?

Not if we make clear at every step that in the Prophetic tradition we are not predicting "Shall!" -- that is, predicting doom. We are warning "If!" about a possible problem. "Choose!" says the Prophet, and then the people choose. The more we all listen and act upon the warnings, the fewer dangers that become reality.

Like insurance: There is a small danger that during the next year I will suffer a terrible auto accident and need massive medical help whose cost would leave me penniless. A small danger, but a real [one](one.html). If I make no preparations at all, nothing bad might happen at all. Or -- the danger might become a disaster.

Do I stop driving? No. Do I buy insurance and drive with care? Yes.

Now broaden our horizon. Suppose the Weather Service tells us that on January 1, an enormous winter storm is going to sideswipe the [East](east.html) Coast. It may slam directly into [New](new.html) York [City](city.html) and cause huge problems, or it may spin over ocean and out to sea again with almost no effect.

Do we ignore the warning, or act on it?

If we act, do we prepare only to avert disaster, or take the steps that will help the [City](city.html) turn the [event](feasts.html) into a [community](community.html)-building adventure in neighborly cooperation?

God's solution: Send [Jonah](jonah.html).

Remind people that there could be disastrous [consequences](conseq.html) of their life-choices, and by the very warning encourage them to do what will reduce the danger. And remind them if they behave like neighbors, that is exactly what may [save](salvation.html) them from disaster.

And that is what we need to be telling our congregants, our neighbors, our political and business leaders: Take some care now, to prevent disasters later. Become neighbors now, to heal your neighborhoods later.

The hard part is that with most insurance, we simply write the check. With Y2K, the insurance [needs](needs.html) to be some action of our own. Much harder, because we need to wrench ourselves out of some of our routines to add a [new](new.html) routine. Like deciding to jog, to reduce the danger of a [heart](body.html) [attack](attacks.html). What do I stop doing, in order to start jogging?

The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html) has [one](one.html) great advantage. Not only do we have this story of [Jonah](jonah.html) in our treasury of wisdom -- we read it every year when hundreds of thousands of [Jews](gen-jew.html) come together in our various sacred places. On [Yom Kippur](kippur.html).

Irony of ironies! -- This year, we can use our own [New](teruah.html) Year to help heal a problem that has emerged by the back door from another [New](teruah.html) Year -- the [new](teruah.html) year of a [millennium](millenium.html) that is defined by Christian culture and by its global impact.

So any rabbi, any congregation, that [wants](needs.html) to [teach](teacher.html) and lead the [community](community.html) to address the issues of Y2K can draw on the presence and the mood of self-assessment that will imbue the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html) during the High Holydays this fall.

The [festival](festival.html) season begins the evening of September 10. [Yom Kippur](kippur.html) falls on September 19-20. [Simchat Torah](simchat.html) ends on October 3. That leaves [three](three.html) months to prepare for January 1, though some problems may begin appearing earlier and some may appear only later in 2000, as social and economic interactions keep popping (like the earliest kernels of corn to pop in a kitchen popper, soon to build to a thunder of pops, then to trail off over [time](time.html)).

[Three](three.html) months may be shorter than it sounds, but it is enough [time](time.html) to make a difference if [communities](community.html) can focus on preparing.

Of course, for anyone to [teach](teacher.html) during [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h and [Yom Kippur](kippur.html), it is [first](one.html) necessary to learn -- ahead of [time](time.html).

What is it that we need to learn? Can [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition [teach](teacher.html) us any more than we have already noted, about how to respond to Y2K?

### II. From [Babel](bavel.html) to [Community](community.html)

[One](one.html) way of thinking about what to do is to distinguish between [two](two.html) levels of learning. The [first](one.html) is a set of tools for immediate use in dealing with a range of possible emergencies as 2000 begins. The second is more basic: What is the deeper problem that Y2K points to, and what [new](new.html) life-path would help us avoid such problems in the [future](future.html)?

We may hope there are some ways in which the second set of answers points to the [first](one.html). For the best way of dealing with a immediate problem is to do so in such a way as to fit into our long-term goals and values.

[One](one.html) of the Torah's gem-like stories -- The Comput(ow)er of [Babel](bavel.html) (Genesis 11) -- defines both the problem and how to deal with it.

That story tells what happens when humanity becomes so arrogant as to use a "universal language" to "storm [Heaven](heaven.html)."

Today our universal language is the 0-1-0-0-1-1-0-1-0-0-0-0-1 of the computer. Our version of "storming [heaven](heaven.html)" is that we have used this language to make almost the whole human race dependent on a single technology.

The Year-2000 bug reminds us of an ancient, earthy wisdom: Don't put all your eggs in [one](one.html) basket. Don't grow all your wheat from a single genetic variety. Don't gamble on a single culture to have all the wisdom the human race will need someday.

Y2K has reminded us how dangerous is that kind of monolithic life. And how arrogant it is to think that any of our technologies could be totally bug-free.

So now we [face](body.html) the question: May computers and chips that do not recognize the Year 2000 actually bring on a recession as businesses fail to get supplies they need or find their banks can't complete a loan? Is there even a chance that in some areas, the electric power grid may fail simply because some computers get the date -- the simplest [number](nchart.html) -- wrong?

What is to be done? Here too the Bible points the way. When [Babel](bavel.html)'s arrogance brings disaster on its builders, God does what at [first](one.html) seems only a disaster -- God baffles and "babbles" their language, so that they cannot talk to [one](one.html) another. --

But this heightened fever actually becomes a path of healing. For the people learn a multiplicity of [tongues](spirit.html).

"Back to the space where you [speak](mashal.html) [face](body.html)-to-[face](body.html)," said God: "Recreate your local cultures and [communities](community.html), to replace the towering machine of global arrogance!"

Out of that crisis came the family of [Abraham](avraham.html) and Sarah, the people Israel -- and all the other peoples that [speak](mashal.html) their own local mother-[tongues](spirit.html) in their own localities on Mother Earth.

Whether the Y2K bug creates merely serious problems or some major disasters, the solution is the same -- because the values that the story of [Babel](bavel.html) [teaches](teacher.html) are the same:

Regrow local and regional eco- [communities](community.html), intimately intertwined with earth.

For this purpose, that means:

In [communities](community.html), not in isolated households, begin now to [gather](gather.html) information and discuss the possibilities. Panic is born of ignorance.

And in [communities](community.html), not in isolated households, relearn how to keep warm with local resources, how to stock and share some essential [foods](food.html), how to share synagogues and similar communal buildings as emergency living spaces.

In other words, imagine a post-tornado/ earthquake scene, and prepare for it.

Then if disaster comes, we will be able to meet it without martial [law](law.html) and catastrophe. If disaster does not come, we can take [new](new.html) joy in the [communities](community.html) of human beings and the earth they live in. These plants, these animals, these rivers, these human faces bearing in them the Spark of God.

Perhaps parts of our global super-structure, our Tower of [Babel](bavel.html), are about to fall apart. Perhaps not. Even if the Tower still offers enough stability for us to [walk](walking.html) gingerly across this narrow bridge between the centuries, surely others of our "societal addictions" have become not useful vehicles to carry us across that chasm, but giant burdens riding on our backs as we tiptoe our way.

Which of these burdens may make us collapse and fall? For example: if not the computer, then possibly the gasoline addiction that heats our air to global scorching. If not the gasoline, perhaps the kind of genetic manipulation that in the effort to kill corn borers cheaply, released a poisonous pollen that kills Monarch butterflies.

If we are to live, we need to make these habits our vehicles, not our riders.

Yet we also need a learning that is not so clear at the end of the Bible's [Babel](bavel.html). This [time](time.html) we must keep alive the [knowledge](knowledge.html) that will keep us alive:

Each local space and [face](body.html) is a Spark of the Divine, not only the ones we happen to see close by when we wake up each morning,

Loving what we see [face](body.html)-to-[face](body.html) is a lie, unless we also love what we see only from the [Moon](chodesh.html): the [face](body.html) of earth. All Earth.

From setting aside our habitual addictions to the [World](worlds.html) Machine, we can draw forth renewal and rebirth of the Organic Earth, in which each organ is sacred and the whole is sacred too. From the reconnection with our beloved places in the earth, we can relearn an arithmetic not of 1-0-0-1-1-0-1 but of sacred spaces, sacred faces.

### III: Planning [Community](community.html), Living Sukkot

So: What does it mean to restore, renew, and strengthen [face](body.html)-to-[face](body.html) [communities](community.html), both in the short run of the next several months to ease the Y2K transition, and in the long run to prevent the next [five](five.html) versions (whatever they may be) of the Y2K Mistake?

Most people learn better when they get a chance to talk over [new](new.html) ideas with each other, and see that other people are also stepping into [new](new.html) places. So let us imagine the following arrangements:

1. Beginning as soon as possible, the congregational leadership (rabbinic and administrative) briefs the [synagogue](synagog.html) board and key members on Y2K and dealing with it; starts the process of the congregation's own self-assessment; and selects some people to act as trainers and facilitators for the Y2K training [event](feasts.html) that will happen in late September.

2. In August or very early September, synagogues announce that they will set up a special Y2K self-assessment and preparatory training. Many congregations may find it most convenient to do such a program on Sunday September 26, during Sukkot.

3. For [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h (Saturday, September 11) or for [Yom Kippur](kippur.html), the rabbi preaches on the deeper meaning of Y2K, as we have explored above. This sermon focuses on preparing for Y2K not out of [fear](fear.html) but out of intention to strengthen and celebrate [community](community.html). The sermon also begins to give basic information on how to prepare this way, and announces the [coming](coming.html) training workshop and strongly urges all to attend.

4. On Sunday, September 26 or soon after, the [synagogue](synagog.html) holds a training workshop, using Sukkot itself as a symbol and [teaching](teacher.html) toward a simple-living, [community](community.html)-sharing "[festival](festival.html)" at the turning of the year. This training continues through the fall. People form teams for involving neighbors and congregation members in preparedness groups who can turn disruptions or shortages into communal-sharing and simple-living celebration [time](time.html).

4. On the day chosen for the Y2K training program, the congregation should ---

(A) Provide copies of a good Y2K handbook.

[One](one.html), aimed chiefly at individual households, is the Utne Reader's Y2K Citizen's Action Guide (available on-line at www.utne.com/y2k and in batches of 50 or more, for $1 apiece plus shipping costs by calling 800/736-UTNE and asking for Bulk Order. Another is The Y2K Survival Guide by Bruce Webster (Prentice-Hall, $19.99).

Perhaps more important, for a guide focused on [community](community.html) and neighborhood, see All Together Now, by the Global Action Plan. (See below for its address.)

(B) Alert people to continuous flows of information, changed as [experience](experience.html) grows. See the [World](worlds.html) Wide Web at --

http://www.cy2kr.com

http://www.[millennia](millenium.html)

bcs.com

http://www.berkana.org

http://www.co-intelligence.org

http://www.wild2k.com

http://www.y2ksupply.com

http://www.globalactionplan.org

( C) Present workshops to cover the following areas of concern:

Households:

Financial and similar records;

Emergency [food](food.html) and water supplies, storage, etc;

Health concerns, especially around the provision of drugs and medicines for chronic illnesses where the supply might get interrupted;

Dealing with sanitation and refuse if regular services are interrupted;

Arranging lines of communication if normal forms are interrupted;

Transportation.

Neighborhood and [Community](community.html)

Should synagogues and other congregations designate themselves centers for shelter and [food](food.html) if there are emergencies (as they might in case of tornado or earthquake, or in meeting the [needs](needs.html) of the poor through soup kitchens, etc.)? Have they stored [food](food.html), fuel, water, etc? Do they have emergency generators? (Note that many of these arrangements might be useful back-up for natural disasters.)

Are your schools -- neighborhood and [city](city.html)-wide, public and private -- [teaching](teacher.html) children about the possible problems and workable solutions, and by doing so preventing panic if there are problems?

Should block groups be setting up neighborhood watches in case police facilities are strained?

Are neighbors asking the [city](city.html) government whether it is prepared -- and using [letters](letters.html) to the editors and similar public pressure to find out?

For both households and congregations, there are many other such questions. We append a checklist, to help people turn away from either denial or panic. What can we turn toward? Toward concrete actions that can not only help us prepare for 2000, but help us shape the stronger [communities](community.html) that people yearn for.

Although we hope the checklist will be useful, we must note its shortcomings. Few people, given a piece of paper that lists a lot of work to do, will carry out that work on their own. It is working together, with friends and neighbors who stir and remind each other, that is more likely to get the work done. And in addressing the dangers of Y2K, the greatest joys will come from sharing skills and tools with neighbors, finding out who can supply a wood stove, who can chop the wood to fuel it, who can ferry large amounts of canned [food](food.html) from a warehouse [food](food.html) store, who can do [first](one.html) aid.

Facing a danger alone, we realize how helpless we are -- and retreat into silence and denial. Facing the same danger together, we realize how as a [community](community.html) we have the wherewithal to deal with it.

So in some ways, the crucial checklist is the [one](one.html) listing the friends and neighbors you have called, met with, talked with, shared with.

The Global Action Plan has actually developed [two](two.html) step-by-step guides for empowering a neighborhood to address Y2K. [One](one.html) is called All Together Now: A Y2K Program for Personal and Neighborhood Self-Reliance, and the other, All Together Now: Y2K [Community](community.html) Preparedness Organizing Tools. We especially recommend the [first](one.html). We cannot supply these handbooks here, but you can download them from the [World](worlds.html) Wide Web at www.globalactionplan.org. Call GAP at 914/679-4830, or write GAP at P. O Box 428, Woodstock NY 12498 or through Email at info@globalactionplan.org.

We have found the GAP guide is best understood by literally reading it aloud with a friend, and then the [two](two.html) of you joining to [teach](teacher.html) it to others. Here the existing congregational [community](community.html) can give you a good beginning. If the congregation has called its members together on a Sunday in October to explore how to deal with Y2K, that guide may be the most useful tool.

Why do we include the checklist at all? Because it is a key reminder of the areas in which we need to prepare ourselves. And for households that are motivated enough to act even before there are neighborhood teams, the list is already useful.

The [Teaching](teacher.html) of Sukkot

What about the long-range questions: How did we get here, to a [time](time.html) when [one](one.html) minor technological decision can cost billions to remedy, 25 years later?

Y2K is not the only case we could cite. DDT. On a smaller but universally visible scale, the Challenger space-ship. On a global scale, burning so much coal and oil as to choke the atmosphere with CO2, and trigger global scorching. And many others. What in the short run looked convenient, quick, profitable, became in the long run deadly.

The [Babel](bavel.html) story is a warning. A single language, reducing all the quirks of different cultures and [communities](community.html) to [one](one.html) "objective" [tongue](spirit.html): What could be more convenient? Perhaps it is -- until we use it to "storm [heaven](heaven.html)," Till we think it is the Ultimate in Truth, Unquestionable.

In our era, [one](one.html) form of [idolatry](idolatry.html) -- turning technology itself into the Unquestionable -- can make enormous trouble. As [Psalm](psalms1.html) 115 says, "[Mouths](body.html) that cannot [speak](mashal.html), [eyes](body.html) that cannot see, [ears](body.html) that cannot hear, a [nose](body.html) that cannot breathe -- and those who make them will become like them." That is, dead. With a [heart](body.html) that cannot feel.

Not that technology is ipso facto evil. Used with care to meet human [needs](needs.html) in a human way, shaped with care taken to assess its long-term impacts, some technologies are valuable. But never Ultimate. Never as a stake with which to gamble the planet's life, or human civilization.

But since we cannot [know](daat.html) the [future](future.html), cannot [know](daat.html) for certain whether we have asked the right questions about the longer term, how do we limit our danger while reaping the harvest of human ingenuity?

There is a rich [teaching](teacher.html) of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition, a practice that may light up the path into the 21st and the 59th centuries.

For [seven](seven.html) days in the fall, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people [taught](teacher.html) itself to live in frail and open huts -- sukkot. [Taught](teacher.html) itself to leave behind the houses that were the solid, strong, convenient technology of an evolving people.

For [one](one.html) week, to live in the simplest of all houses. We built them: we could not [walk](walking.html) into a cave and call it a sukkah, we could not huddle under a tree and call it a sukkah. Built. Technological, as indeed we humans are. But very simple.

[One](one.html) week. We did not burn our houses when we left them; they were convenient, efficient pieces of technology.

For [one](one.html) week, we remembered what it meant to [camp](stages.html) out. We renewed our skills. And we went back to our houses with a sense that we [knew](daat.html) how to live without them, however briefly.

How could we transcribe that tradition into our computerized lives today?

Imagine -- just a fantasy, an imagining -- that for [one](one.html) week every year, the [world](worlds.html)-wide computer network were turned off. A cyber-Sukkot. (Direct life-saving devices would, of course, continue -- just as we transcend the prohibitions of [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and [festivals](festivals.html) to [save](salvation.html) life -- pikuach nefesh.)

To do without the [world](worlds.html) computer net, we would of course have to keep the older forms of communication and [connection](connection.html) going, or restore them. For [one](one.html) week, we would turn the computers off and turn the older systems on. Less convenience, less efficiency, more resilience. The adventure of camping out. The whole human race, camping out. All the 70 [nations](nations.html), celebrating Sukkot -- as the Prophet Zechariah envisioned.

Of course this is a fantasy. Simply by quoting Zechariah, we are saying how hard it would be to achieve such an arrangement. Yet fantasies and visions have their purpose: They [teach](teacher.html).

If we hold that vision of a cyber-Sukkot before our inner eye, we may awaken [new](new.html) channels of thought that could draw on the deepest meanings of Torah to address the danger of techno-[idolatry](idolatry.html). For example --

\* Should we be urging that for [one](one.html) week every year, engineers, scientists, ethicists, politically active citizens, and the [spiritually](physical.html) / religiously concerned sit together in a myriad neighborhood meetings, to reexamine where our technology is taking us?

\* Should we be urging that [one](one.html) year in every [seven](seven.html), technological research and development pause for an entire shmitah/ [sabbatical](shmita.html) year of reexamination and redirection?

These social changes might not be easy to achieve, but are within the boundaries of what is practical.

Torah was intended to renew our [communities](community.html) across the [generations](toldot.html) and [millennia](millenium.html) that separate us from -- and connect us with -- our forebears. For Torah to renew us, we must reawaken Torah. Today, that means reassessing how its teachings address the techno-[idolatry](idolatry.html) that endangers human civilization and the lives of many species on our planet.

**\* \* \***

THINKING TWICE/ TWICE ABOUT Y2K by Rabbi Arthur Waskow

From January 1 till about February 1, 2000, there are [four](four.html) possibilities:

a. Synagogues do serious preparation, and Y2K in some areas does become a serious problem.

Result: [Community](community.html) does reasonably well in coping, neighbors have gotten to [know](daat.html) each other much better over period of preparing, not just January crisis. Neighbors and congregants are very happy they took the trouble to train and prepare. [Synagogue](synagog.html) has less money in bank (having bought some items for preparedness) but when the neighborhood bounces back after the crisis, people are grateful to it, see their down-to-earth lives bound up in it.

b. Synagogues do serious preparation, and Y2K does not become a serious problem anywhere.

Result: Extra stocks of [food](food.html), water, etc are gradually used up, or used for soup kitchens, any longer-term equipment purchased is stored away for other possible emergencies like hurricanes, etc. or used in camping trips or an adventurous Sukkot for b'[mitzvah](cmds613.html) kids, or sold at a loss to surplus stores; [community](community.html) members get to [know](daat.html) each other much better and more deeply (from sharing information about skills, life situation, etc).; some people sneer at [synagogue](synagog.html) leadership for taking all that trouble; others feel good about the communal connections ; "the day nothing happened and we REALLY made Shabbos" becomes a congregational memory and joke. [Synagogue](synagog.html) has less money in bank.

c. Synagogues do nothing, and Y2K in some areas does become a serious problem.

Result: Some people who need medicines that are not available get very [sick](illness.html), people flee from hardest-hit metro areas, some old people die from lack of fuel or water. [Synagogue](synagog.html) stays as (ir)relevant to people's real lives as it has been before, but other institutions (Red Cross, National Guard, maybe [church](church.html) soup kitchens), become much more important to them. [Synagogue](synagog.html) has same money in bank that it did but there may have been damage to unprepared building, etc. Some congregants mutter that they wish someone had urged them to prepare.

d. Synagogues do nothing, and Y2K does not become a serious problem anywhere.

Result: Nothing changes.

**\* \* \***

## When [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Meets [Millennium](millenium.html)

By Reb R' Yair Hillel Goelman

The issue of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) response to Y2K takes on even greater urgency when we note that the day on which Y2K begins is [Shabbat](sabbath.html), the 23rd day of Tevet, 5760.

The Torah reading that week is Parshat Shmot and that shabbos is also [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Mevorchim ha Hodesh Shvat when we announce that the [new](new.html) [moon](chodesh.html) will begin (on the following [Shabbat](sabbath.html)). Whether any particular damage, cataclysm or glitch results from Y2K is also unknown at this [time](time.html). But we do have an ancient tradition of learning and deriving meaning from the flow of [time](time.html) within and across every moment and the Shabbos/Y2K contrast/confluence says to us all "darsheyni" -- explore me for meaning and understanding. And so I've been thinking.

As the B'nai Yissasschar and other holy texts have [taught](teacher.html) us, [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [time](time.html) does not have the linear, sequential quality of the daytimers we use to plan our linear, sequential activities. Reb Zalman has [taught](teacher.html) us that the verse in Shir HaShirim "[kol](voice.html) dodi dofek" refers not just to the beating on my door by my beloved, but the "defika" the beating of my [heart](body.html) moment by moment by moment.

We attune ourselves to the rhythms and qualities of [time](time.html) by attending to the flow or energies throughout the year, across and within months, through the periodicity of the holy days, and the ways in which our [bodies](body.html), souls, minds and hearts respond to and accompany the flow of [time](time.html) with our harmonies.

The daily, weekly, monthly and yearly [cycles](cycles.html) [speak](mashal.html) to us as we prepare for Shabbos, as perhaps we have never prepared before, for the 23rd of Tevet, Shabbos Parshat Shmot, Shabbos Mevorchim HaHodesh. This Shabbos will come 5760 years following the [creation](bara.html) of the [world](worlds.html), "ha ba aleynu l'tovah " for goodness and peace in just about 57 weeks from now.

The daily and weekly [cycle](cycles.html). Shabbos is [coming](coming.html) and the question is whether we will be ready. The technology of [time](time.html) has given us nano-seconds, carbon dating and 24 hour banking but the basic software of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [time](time.html) is Shabbos. [Six](six.html) days we live in a [world](worlds.html) governed by the means and ends of production. Shabbos, as Rabbi Heschel said, is a palace in [time](time.html) and we are facing the possibility that the palace itself could be severely damaged. Instead of [sitting](mashal.html) in the warmth and light of shabbos, we may be [sitting](mashal.html) in cold and darkness.

Outside our homes there may be technological and social chaos; a massive disruption which can threaten what is supposed to be for us a day which is a "ta'anug" an utter delight. Will I be prepared for that Shabbos? Will my friends and neighbors be prepared? For that shabbos, my friends, we prepare enough cholent for many days, for many friends and many families. This "mother of all Shabbosim" provides an opportunity for gatherings of [heart](body.html) and home and healthy fare to honour a day we call "yom sh' kulo tov" and a day which is completely good

Where I live, on the west coast, Shabbos will come in that week around 4:00 PM or 12:00 midnight, Greenwich Mean [Time](time.html) which is when and where Y2K will "officially" begin. I'm supposed to be lighting Shabbos candles just as electricity grids around the [world](worlds.html) may be shutting down. The only [lights](lights.html) on my block may well be my Shabbos candles. And then? Traditionally, in the erev [Shabbat](sabbath.html) davenin', we recite the "Ba meh madlikin" section from the Mishnah which asks, "From what substances can we make Shabbos candles?" In preparing for that Shabbos, we have to ensure that we, our friends, families and neighbors all have reliable sources of light, heat and sustenance.

The monthly [cycle](cycles.html). The bios in our computers may have trouble understanding that last click from 1999 to 2000, but Shabbos Mevorchim runs on a different set of control statements. How can we bring the wisdom and [insights](insights.html) of Shabbos and Rosh Hodesh to inform our actions and understandings in response to the hazards of relying too heavily on the flimsy artificial and technological devices of our [time](time.html)?

On the monthly [cycle](cycles.html) we will be preparing for Rosh Hodesh, the vessel which will hold the blessings for the month of Shvat. That shabbos is the 23rd day of the month of Tevet. In the [last days](lastdays.html) of Tevet the [moon](chodesh.html) will be getting smaller, the reflection of the source of all light will be getting fainter. In the dark of the [moon](chodesh.html) in the dark of the winter we ask that the life-sustaining rhythms and sequences of [time](time.html) continue to nourish us and all [creation](bara.html) in the month of Shvat.

The B'nai Yissasschar points out that the symbol of Shvat, the bucket (Aquarius), gives us the means to access the deepest well-springs of [knowledge](knowledge.html), understanding and Torah, the [Tree of Life](eternal.html) whose existence and re-awakening we celebrate on Tu B'Shvat. On the 15th of Shvat, the [New](teruah.html) Year of the Trees, the roots of trees begin to awaken, to run sap, to begin again to reach out to sustain [new](new.html) life.

How will we greet the [new](new.html) [moon](chodesh.html) of Shvat on that Shabbos, the 23rd of Tevet 5760?

Traditionally, we [pray](prayer.html) that the [new](new.html) month will bring us sustenance and prosperity, honourable ways of making a living, the healing of [body](body.html) and mind, and for peace, shalom. We must work hard to prepare ourselves and our vessels - our work, our planet, our actions - to ensure that Shvat is indeed a month of the "d'lee" the bucket of Aquarius.

If we are not prepared, the B'nai Yissaschar [teaches](teacher.html), the yud, the last [letter](letters.html) of "d'lee", will disappear. And with the disappearance of that little yud which symbolizes God's presence in the [world](worlds.html), we are nothing by "dal" - poor, weak and impoverished.

Preparing for Rosh Hodesh means holding on to the [letter](letters.html) yud and the entire bucket, the d'lee. Little things, indeed, will make a big difference for bringing in the blessings of Shvat like the little tiny points of sap beginning to stir deep beneath the ground. We will need to attend to our collective [needs](needs.html) for continuing access to Torah into the month of Shvat and beyond.

And, to remember, even in the [face](body.html) of possible social and technological breakdown, that we have a continuing commitment to serve as stewards of this precious earth and all that grows within and upon it. Tu B'Shvat 5760, will be a [New](teruah.html) Year of the Trees like [one](one.html) we have never witnessed in our lifetime. It is a z'chut a [merit](merit.html) which we have been given and [one](one.html) which will try our [physical](physical.html), emotional, intellectual and [spiritual](physical.html) readiness for Shabbos, the 23rd of Tevet.

The yearly [cycle](cycles.html). Shabbos, Parshat Shmot. We begin reading the second book of the Torah that Shabbos. A [new](new.html) reality, a [new](new.html) paradigm. "Vayakom melech hadash asher lo yadah et [Yosef](joseph.html)," a [new](new.html) king arose who did not [know](daat.html) [Joseph](joseph.html). The bounty and wealth of the good life was abruptly ended for our ancestors and instead of being the beneficiaries of an advanced civilization and technology, we became its slaves instead.

For our ancestors things changed quickly, dramatically, and tragically. The book of Shmot is about massive disruptions, social breakdowns, and the loss of hope in a [world](worlds.html) enamored of its power, strength and technological prowess. In what way(s) will we be entering our own [new](new.html) book of Shmot, attempting to recount the names of our ancestors as we [face](body.html) a [new](new.html) [world](worlds.html) with possibilities of slavery, [plague](plagues.html), death.

A [Midrash](orallaw.html) asks why Ribbono Shel Olam let us live in slavery for 400 years before acting to [redeem](redemption.html) us from slavery. The answer given is that for those [first](one.html) 400 years we had hope that [redemption](redemption.html) was near. Then, more tragically than the loss of our [freedom](freedom.html), was our collective loss of hope that our slavery would ever end. It was at this point that God heard our cries of despair and the wheels to free us from slavery were put in motion.

What paradigm will be entered - either profoundly or subtly - on Shabbos, Parshat Shmot? What learnings have we gained to avoid slipping back into hopelessness and despair and oppression?

Leading up to Parshat Shmot 5760, we must re-double our energies regarding the social, economic and political slaveries and oppressions which are already upon us. That as many people as possible should be working gainfully; that social systems are attending to the [sick](illness.html), the poor, the orphan and the stranger; that [food](food.html) banks for the hungry should be full and shelters for the homeless are provided. A running [head](body.html) start into Shabbos Parshat Shmot can provide the means and the momentum for preventing the transition from d'lee to dal.

Havdalah. With [lights](lights.html) or without, with heat and water or without, Shabbos the 23rd of Tevet will come to an end. The B'nai Yissasschar calls the moments prior to the end of [Shabbat](sabbath.html) an ait [ratzon](needs.html), which is usually translated as "a [time](time.html) of will." It is more. It is a [time](time.html) of yearning, of intentionality, when the Source of all [Creation](bara.html) is open and receptive to our [prayers](prayer.html) and wishes for the [coming](coming.html) week.

More than anything, on that Havdalah, we will [pray](prayer.html) that the [coming](coming.html) week will bring sweet tastes, sweet fragrances and sweet light to guide us from [one](one.html) Shabbos to the next. And the next [Shabbat](sabbath.html) will be Rosh Hodesh Shvat. Reb Zalman has [taught](teacher.html) in the [name](name.html) of Rabbi Heschel that on Friday night we say Kiddush to bring in the special holiness of the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and on Saturday night we say Kiddush to bring in the special holiness of the weekdays. God willing, preparing for that Shabbos will provide us with the opportunity to intensify our holy work towards [tikkun](tikkun.html) olam. It is only through incredibly hard work -melacha, the work of [angels](angels.html) - that we can truly enjoy an incredibly joyful Shabbos.

Get out your daytimers and start calling. Teshuva, tefilah u'tzedaka - by doing the hard karma-stopping work of repentance, [prayer](prayer.html) and good deeds, we can do our part towards the [creation](bara.html) of a sustainable and equitable place for us to live in, for our children and our children's children. Who is [coming](coming.html) for dinner that Shabbos? Pot-luck or small groups? Is everyone looked after? Better call some more. Who is davening and reading Torah that week? And who is giving the D'var Torah? There is much to be done. And, if there is no computer crash?

Thank God. And then we can prepare for the next Shabbos with the same level of intensity and love.

Gut Shabbos, gut yontof,

R' Yair Hillel Goelman

**\* \* \***

### [Shabbat](sabbath.html) 2000

By Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

(This article is from the [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h 1999 issue of [New](new.html) Menorah, the quarterly journal of ALEPH: Alliance for [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Renewal. The journal is free to all members of ALEPH or The Shalom Center.)

It will be [Shabbat](sabbath.html), Parshat Shemot when we encounter Y2K. After having had a period of relative prosperity under the protection of [Joseph](joseph.html), Pharaoh's Vizier who managed to put the Egyptians into serfdom, the dark period descended on our ancestors.

We became the serfs, worse slaves under cruel task masters, and our children were drowned and massacred.

The significance of all this does not escape us. We will find ourselves like our ancestors thinking that we are secure after a period of excessive rise of the DOW, engendered by high tech vaporware. We become aware at moments of clarity of the excessive workloads that are the lot of people who want to hold on to their jobs in a period of corporate downsizing. We realize that our children are not safe when schools become scenes of massacres.

With Y2K we enter the unknown territory of the more than 10 [plagues](plagues.html) that will be loosed on us for the lack of 2 digits. All this looms ahead beyond the already threatening catastrophes of our ecological mismanagement of our stewarding the planet.

Y2K shows us that even if there will only be minor disruptions and as some have spoken of it, a speed bump, we need to slow down. It would under much gentler circumstances still be a compassionate warning to us to take it seriously and to shift course. I need not detail the shifts for you. There are so many profound and prophetic voices addressing you on this topic and giving clear and good direction to which - if you have not silenced the in-tuition, the inner [teacher](teacher.html) you can hear your innermost agreement and longing to commit to voluntary simplicity.

But if we are not willing to hear the warnings it is likely that the fall out of that [Shabbat](sabbath.html) will be more dire. Therefore treat the occurrence of the critical date on the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) not as a mere coincidence. It is a most significant confluence of meaning. In our preparation we realize that all of us will need to light candles for this [Shabbat](sabbath.html), will have to prepare [food](food.html) and fuel. As the [Talmud](orallaw.html) ( [Avodah Zarah](idolatry.html) 3a)has God saying: "Only [one](one.html) who exerted himself in preparing for the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) will [eat](eating.html) on the [Shabbat](sabbath.html). If [one](one.html) has not exerted himself - wherefrom will that [one](one.html) [eat](eating.html) on the [Shabbat](sabbath.html)?"

The preparations will be best done during the approaching High Holy Day Season. What is so clear is that not only do we need to do our individual t'[shuvah](shuvah.html) but there is now a [time](time.html) for a collective tshuvah that would radically alter the fabric of society, commerce and morality.

So from [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Shemot we will move toward [Sinai](stages.html) - and on the level of our own lives we need to do the same and receive the Torah that this millennial moment forces on us no less than at the classical [Sinai](stages.html) when we were given the choice to accept to [new](new.html) Torah or be buried under the mountain.

It is not only that Y2K [Shabbat](sabbath.html) that counts but if we could apply its lessons and live the next [Shabbat](sabbath.html) also in that way we would fulfill the promise we find in the [Talmud](orallaw.html) ([Shabbat](sabbath.html) 108 b) If only we would keep [TWO](two.html) sabbaths we would immediately be [redeemed](redemption.html).

We could invite as many as possible to spend a strict [shabbat](sabbath.html) with us -- No [fire](fire.html) at all, no [connection](connection.html) with the media etc. Or we might take a model from the [first](one.html) [Passover](passover.html) in Egypt. How wonderful it will be if we all could invite our neighbors, [Jews](gen-jew.html), [Gentiles](gen-jew.html), people who work with and for us to a Y2K [Seder](haggada.html) that would also have some balloons (not [blood](body.html)) at our doors to show that we would welcome others to drop in - and celebrate with us. We could develop a Haggadah for the Y2K [Seder](haggada.html). We could tell the story of PROGRESS and ENSLAVEMENT.

We could have only organic and not bio-engineered [food](food.html) at this simple meal. We could -- let your own imagination help you design this [Seder](haggada.html). Talk it up with your neighbors and prepare. I can imagine a Had Gadya that would detail the domino effect of the missing [two](two.html) digits.

I offer these thoughts as a focus for our common Tshuvah at this season and prepare in this way not only for our own 5760 but also for the general millenium.

L' Shanah Tovah um'tuqah - u-L'[millennium](millenium.html) Tov --- tikatevu v't'chatemu

Meshullam Zalman Hiyya ben Haya Gitl Schachter-Shalomi

**\* \* \***

**News Rabbi Gafni Warns on**

**Y2K Shabbos Desecration**

by Betzalel Kahn

The Y2K problem is liable to cause massive Shabbos desecration with legal backing. This is evident from the demands of officials to permit local authorities' personnel to man their posts on the 1st of January, 2000, which falls on Shabbos. UTJ's MK Rabbi Gafni, however, warns that UTJ will not remain in the coalition if public Shabbos desecration continues.

The beginning of the year 2000 (according to the common system of counting the years) is liable to cause disruptions to many computerized systems. This is because older systems used only [two](two.html) digits to designate the year. When computers were originally introduced, they were very limited in space for storing information, and programmers commonly cut corners by using only [two](two.html) digits to store the year. As long as the [two](two.html) digits of the years were steadily increasing, this caused no problems, but next year the [numbers](nchart.html) will go from '99 to '00, which may confuse many computers and their programs. This in turn could cause many problems, since so many things nowadays depend on computers.

The developed countries have been working hard to ensure that there will be no disruptions by this imminent [event](feasts.html). Governments and companies have invested billions of dollars in an effort to make sure that things will be ok. Yet despite all the investment, and even after extensive testing, no [one](one.html) can be sure that his computer system will not be disrupted when the date changes from December 31, 1999 to January 1, 2000.

This critical day is a Shabbos, which means that most people will not be at work, and will thus not be able to monitor the change to fix any last minute problems.

The chairman of the Local Government Center, Edi Alder, asked Labor Minister Eli Yishai to grant work permits to 25,000 [city](city.html) employees, so that they may man their posts on that day in the [event](feasts.html) that unforeseen difficulties arise to the various systems under their jurisdiction.

Alder said that local authorities are doing everything possible to prepare for the Y2K bug. Nonetheless, a [number](nchart.html) of unexpected problems are liable to occur. He adds that the local authorities are responsible for vital infrastructure systems, such as water, sewage and traffic [lights](lights.html) and, as a result, they must man their posts on the 1st of January, despite the Shabbos desecration involved.

MK Anat Maor of Meretz made a similar appeal to the Director General of the Office of the Prime Minister, Yossi Kochik, who heads the Director General Committee for the Problem of the Y2K Bug.

Rabbi Moshe Gafni said, "There is [law](law.html) and order in the State of Israel which determines that the [Law](law.html) of Work and Rest must be observed and that licenses to work on Shabbos are given only in cases of pikuach nefesh. I am very sorry that there is an attempt to undermine the Shabbos under the guise of preparing for the year 2000. Just as in the case of the turbine components, there is no need to desecrate so sacred a value to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html) as Shabbos, when pikuach nefesh is not involved," Rabbi Gafni said.

Rabbi Gafni warns that UTJ will not remain in the coalition much longer if there is continual public Shabbos desecration.

## Rabbinic comments

The Rabbis of yesteryear made predictions and prophecies, hundreds of years ago, concerning the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) year 5760, which happens to coincide with the year, you got it--2,000.

The father of the Chidah[[66]](#footnote-66) said that 5760 will be the last year of history as we [know](daat.html) it.

**\* \* \***

[Avraham](avraham.html) Scheiman: Rav Mordechai Etziah (duties for Aliyah), cites :

“In the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) year which is 240 years before the [seventh](seven.html) [millennium](millenium.html) – 5760, The depth will rise up and flood the [world](worlds.html) and their will remain the land of Irael that wll be likened to the [ark](ark.html) of [Noah](noach.html).“

***Chesed L’***[***Avraham***](avraham.html) (Rav [Avraham](avraham.html) Azuli – Sephardic [authority](authority.html)) says that a [mikveh](forty.html) contains 5760 eggs, which is 40 seahs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Log | = | 6 Eggs |
| Kab | = | 4 Logs |
| Seah | = | 6 Kabs |
|  |  | 24 Logs |
|  |  | 144 Eggs |
| Ephah | = | 3 Seah |
| 40 Seah | = | 5760 Eggs |

“And [know](daat.html) that the size of the [mikveh](forty.html) measures 5760 eggs in volume, and the [secret](sod.html) of the matter, at the end of 5760 the verse of ***Zechariah 13:2*** will come true.”

***Zechariah 13:2*** *"On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more," declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty. "I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of* [*impurity*](purity.html) *from the land.*

This passage [teaches](teacher.html) that [impurity](purity.html) will be removed from the [world](worlds.html).

Leviticus 26:6 will be fulfilled. Removal of [impurity](purity.html) from the [world](worlds.html):

***Leviticus 26:6*** *"'I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no* [*one*](one.html) *will make you afraid. I will remove savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country.*

[Exile](galuyot.html) is punishment for [Jews](gen-jew.html). The diaspora is not good. [Jews](gen-jew.html) will be the scapegoat because that is what has happened in the past. Alan Greenspan is a [Jew](gen-jew.html). When [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) lose their money they become a savage animal:

[Time](time.html), September 17, *Malaysia’s financial problems are a results of the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html).

The Sages say that [Esau](edom.html) hates [Jacob](israelja.html). There is a natural animosity between the [Jew](gen-jew.html) and the non-[Jew](gen-jew.html). This tension causes the hatred.

## Y2K / Jabbok River [Experience](experience.html)

Yisroel [Isreal] was born "Ya'akov," [[Jacob](israelja.html)] and Ya'akov later became "Yisroel" at the age of ninety-[seven](seven.html), on his way to Eretz Yisroel [[land of Israel](city.html)] in the year 2205/1556 BCE.

The truth is, as the [Talmud](orallaw.html) points out, Ya'akov never really became only "Yisroel" (Brochos 13a), and we see that the Torah uses the [name](name.html) interchangeably. It seems that Ya'akov's [name](name.html) change represents a potential, a [spiritual](physical.html) potential, that was achieved that fateful night.

What fateful night? The night that, according to the Torah, Ya'akov fought with a "stranger" (Bereishis 32:25), and according to the [Midrash](orallaw.html) (Bereishis Rabbah 77:2), with an [angel](angels.html). And not just any [angel](angels.html), but the protecting [angel](angels.html) of [Edom](edom.html), the [future](future.html) [nation](nations.html) of his brother, Eisav [[Esau](edom.html)].

This episode was towards the end of Ya'akov's long [journey](stages.html) home. After cunningly taking Eisav's blessings from their father [Yitzchak](isaac.html) [[Isaac](isaac.html)], Ya'akov was forced to flee a furious, vengeful murderous brother, Eisav. After [fourteen](fourteen.html) years of Torah learning in the yeshivah of Shem and Eiver, Ya'akov headed off to Padan Aram (Mesopotamia), and his uncle Lavan's house.

[Twenty](twenty.html) years, [two](two.html) wives, and [eleven](eleven.html) children later, Ya'akov sensed it was [time](time.html) to leave his deceitful father-in-[law](law.html), and return to the land of his [fathers](fathers.html), Eretz Yisroel. He did exactly that, knowing full well that he would once again have to cross paths with his dangerous brother, Eisav. It was a high price to pay, but a necessary [one](one.html), if Ya'akov was ever going to return home to Eretz Yisroel.

Or was it? The [Midrash](orallaw.html) seems to paint a different picture of Ya'akov's so-called fateful confrontation:

Rav Huna began, "Like [one](one.html) who grasps a passing dog by the [ears](body.html), so is [one](one.html) who becomes impassioned over discord that is not his own." (Mishlei 26:17). Shmuel bar Nachman said, it can be compared to leader of thieves who was [sleeping](mashal.html) by the crossroads, of whom a person passed and aroused saying, "Get up! It is dangerous here!" He asked him, "Are you the bad person? Why did you wake me up? (Matanos Kehuna) You awoke the bad person and endangered your own life!" So said The Holy [One](one.html), Blessed is He, to Ya'akov, "He [Eisav] was going his own way (i.e., his anger had subsided; Matanos Kehuna), and you sent to him [messengers] and said to him, 'So says your servant Ya'akov ...' ." (Bereishis Rabbah 75:3)

According to the [Midrash](orallaw.html), Ya'akov antagonized Eisav, and picked a fight that could have been avoided. Why would Ya'akov do a thing like that? Why would the gentle-natured Ya'akov actually go looking for a fight? Yet, on the other [hand](fourteen.html), it was a move that eventually led to Ya'akov's struggle with the [angel](angels.html), that led to his crucial [name](name.html) change:

"Your [name](name.html) shall no longer be called Ya'akov, but Yisroel, for you have struggled with a heavenly being and with man, and have prevailed." (Bereishis 32:29)

-a very positive [sign](signs.html).

Perhaps we can understand Ya'akov's intention and success by recalling an earlier dialogue that also involved Ya'akov, and his [new](new.html), unintended wife, Leah. [Rachel](rachel.html) had warned Ya'akov that Lavan would try to make the switch, and Ya'akov had been prepared. However, after the [marriage](mashal.html) took place, Ya'akov found out that, in spite of his best efforts to counter Lavan, he ended up being married to Leah instead of [Rachel](rachel.html).

Ya'akov would have to deal with Lavan later. In the meantime, Leah, too, had been party to the ruse, and she had to answer for herself:

"How could you pretend to be [Rachel](rachel.html), and answer me when I called you her [name](name.html)?" an angry Ya'akov demanded. "I am your student! Didn't you come to your father, dressed as Eisav, and when your father called you "Eisav," you responded? I only imitated you!" Leah defended. (Aitz [Yosef](joseph.html))

In other words, Leah was pointing out the irony of the situation. "You disguised yourself as Eisav, and [deceived](garment.html) your father to accomplish what you thought was best," Leah countered, "and I have done the same to you!"

However, was Leah correct and justified? Not only do [two](two.html) wrongs not make a right, but perhaps Ya'akov could have proven that his had be a "right," while Leah's was clearly an act of deceit. For, Ya'akov could have answered, "There is a difference here. I was saving the [future](future.html) of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, and you were merely saving yourself! Furthermore, legally, [marriage](mashal.html) demands that each partner accept the other as his or her spouse, and I do not accept you as my wife! You were meant for Eisav!" (Rashi, Bereishis 29:17)

True. However, in spite of this answer to Leah, we must note that Ya'akov never abandoned Leah, nor was their [marriage](mashal.html) annulled. In fact, as the Torah testifies, Ya'akov grows to love Leah. Eventually, it becomes clear that Leah was also meant for Ya'akov from the beginning. How? Why? What changed Ya'akov's perspective on the situation?

Perhaps, there was an additional element to the dialogue mentioned above by the Aitz [Yosef](joseph.html), and perhaps it went something like this?

"How could you do this to me?! How could you pretend to be [Rachel](rachel.html) when all along you were Leah!?" Ya'akov asked angrily. "What are you asking me about?" Leah answered innocently. "What do you mean what am I asking you about?" Ya'akov demanded. "You [know](daat.html) full well that you were supposed to marry Eisav, not me!" Ya'akov pressed. "I did!" Leah answered.

Pause. Leah's answer would have been confusing, and it would have forced Ya'akov to ask, "How's that?" to which Leah would have had to explain, "When you bought [the birth](thebirth.html)right and took the blessings, you, for all intents and purposes, became Eisav!"

After all, [Yitzchak](isaac.html) did state:

"It is the [voice](voice.html) of Ya'akov, but the [hands](fourteen.html) of Eisav." (Bereishis 27:22).

-as if to say:

"Whoever stands before me now can't be the Ya'akov I [knew](daat.html), because he is a simple person who does little else other than learn Torah. It certainly can't be the Eisav I [knew](daat.html), because he's not so quick to thank G-d for his successes. Whoever you are, you are a hybrid of the [two](two.html)!"

In other words, what Ya'akov learned that day from Leah was that buying [the birth](thebirth.html)right and taking the blessings in place of Eisav was far more than a symbolic gesture on history's part. Rather, as different as Ya'akov felt from Eisav to that very day, he found out from Leah that there was a lot of Eisav within him. After all, they were twin brothers to begin with!

What a shock that must have been for Ya'akov, a real awakening for a man that, up until then, had done everything he could to distance himself from his evil brother and his ways. Now, it seemed from Leah and history, that there was a part of his brother that had been following him around everywhere he went-inside his very being!

The implications of this reality would have been frighteningly clear to Ya'akov immediately. Within the father of the [future](future.html) [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, and therefore within the people themselves, was a potential to become Eisav-like (we see the truth of this throughout [Jewish](gen-jew.html) history, in almost every period). Therefore, for the sake of all his [future](future.html) descendants, Ya'akov personally felt compelled to confront Eisav, but not just any Eisav, but specifically the "Eisav" within himself, to purge himself of his own "Eisavness" as much as he could. That meant, apparently, a rendezvous with Eisav's protecting [angel](angels.html), wherever and whenever that might be.

It turned out to be by the Yavok [Jabbok] river, an [eastern](east.html) tributary of the [Jordan](stages.html) river, north of the Dead Sea:

He arose that night, and took his [two](two.html) wives, [two](two.html) handmaids, and his [eleven](eleven.html) children, and crossed the Yavok river ... Ya'akov was left alone, and there he wrestled ... (Bereishis 32:22-24)

Rashi seemingly senses nothing extraordinary about the [name](name.html) of this river, and says nothing other than "Yavok" was the "[name](name.html) of the river." Then again, as Rashi points out from [time](time.html)-to-[time](time.html), he only comments to provide clarity on the simple explanation of the verse. Deeper explanations are the role of the midrashim and Kabbalah. And, in this case, they provide exactly that.

To begin with, there is:

Within [the [name](name.html)] "Ya'akov" is the mystery of "Yavok," whose [letters](letters.html) (yud, bais, kuf) stand for the words, "y'aneinu v'yom kareinu"-"on that day He will answer us"; the mystery of "Yavok" is very, very deep, because [three](three.html) names [of G-d] numerically equal "Yavok" ... (Yalkut Reuveini, Aikev, 2)

According to this [midrash](orallaw.html), the word "Yavok" is actually an abbreviation for [three](three.html) words which mean, "on that day He will answer us." On which day, and who will answer us? Well, according to every other usage of this phrase, it always refers to G-d redeeming the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people from [exile](galuyot.html) once-and-for-all-an [awesome](awesome.html) day in history.

This would make a lot of sense, given that the rabbis view Ya'akov's all-night struggle with the [angel](angels.html) of Eisav as an allusion to the "night" of [exile](galuyot.html) the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people were destined to endure (Rabbeinu Bachaye; Targum Yonason; Tanchuma). Surviving the [angel](angels.html) and proving victorious in the morning is, therefore, the allusion to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people reaching the Final [Redemption](redemption.html) in the days of Moshiach.

In fact, of all the accounts in the Torah, very few are the source of as much symbolism as the battle with the [angel](angels.html) that night. Therefore, the more symbolic the struggle was for Ya'akov to become Yisroel, the more symbolic the [name](name.html) "Yavok" becomes of that struggle. Ya'akov was the twin-brother of Eisav; Yisroel is not, and the Yavok river, therefore, symbolized the transformation from Ya'akov to Yisroel, as the following reveals:

... If a person will endeavor to learn the hidden wisdom of Torah, that is, the secrets of Torah (Kabbalah), then he will [merit](merit.html) to receive his Neshamah ([third](three.html) level of soul after "Nefesh" and "Ruach") ... and add level to level, and wisdom to wisdom, then he will be called a "Complete Person" ... When a person only has his Nefesh, then he receives only from "aleph-dalet-nun-yud"; If he [merits](merit.html) to receive his Ruach, then he receives from "yud-heh-vav-heh"; when he learns the mysteries of Torah, then he receives also from "aleph-heh-yud-heh". When the [three](three.html) names are added together, the gematria is "Yavok" ... (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Hakdamah 18, p. 51)

From this quote of the Arizal, it is clear that "Yavok" is not merely the [name](name.html) of the river that Ya'akov just happened to meet an [angel](angels.html), fight with him, prevail, and receive a [name](name.html) change. Yavok is the word that alludes to the very [spiritual](physical.html) perfection-and [redemption](redemption.html)-that transforms a "Ya'akov" into a "Yisroel." This is why, perhaps, the [name](name.html) Ya'akov itself has the word yavok within it, as if to allude to Ya'akov's potential to become a Yisroel.

And, this is why Yavok speaks of the [time](time.html) that G-d will answer us, because that is the day of [redemption](redemption.html), the [time](time.html) that we stop being the twin brother of Eisav, and stop sharing his tendencies, which we have done so meticulously at times throughout history. We have been, to borrow the vernacular, better Greeks than the Greeks themselves at times. Ya'akov may have [physically](physical.html) crossed the Yavok river thousands of years ago, but every [Jew](gen-jew.html) since has had to cross his own Yavok river at some point in [time](time.html), to become a true and eternal Yisroel.

How much more so is this the case in our fast-paced, fast assimilating society, where almost anything goes! How many [Jews](gen-jew.html) today even [know](daat.html) about Ya'akov, and their inherent potential to rise above our surrounding Eisavian society, to become a Yisroel? How many [Jews](gen-jew.html) care to change their lifestyles?

It is interesting to note, a rabbi pointed (half-seriously), that the [letters](letters.html) "Y2K," which stand for the "Year 2000," when translated into [Hebrew](hebrew.html) spell the work "Yavok":

y = yud 2 = bais k = kuf

Does this mean anything special? Perhaps not. Then again, the [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells us that everything that happens in life is a function of Divine Providence (Chullin 7b). In other words, according to Torah, there are no coincidences, though sometimes what we perceive as a "[sign](signs.html) from [Heaven](heaven.html)," may in fact, be a test of faith. And sometimes, what we perceive as a test of faith, may be a [sign](signs.html) from [Heaven](heaven.html). And, sometimes, it may be both.

The trick in life is knowing how to understand and interpret what [one](one.html) perceives. This is a function of knowing Torah, and the more [one](one.html) knows, the better his perception of reality will match G-d's-the ultimate accomplishment for a flesh-and-[blood](body.html) being. The deeper and more profound that [knowledge](knowledge.html) of Torah is, the deeper and more profound his understanding and interpretation of reality will be.

Who even [first](one.html) coined the term, "Y2K"? Personally, I don't [know](daat.html), but it is an interesting and unusual term, and that's what counts the most:

"That which is from G-d is wondrous in our [eyes](body.html)." (Tehillim 118:23)

What are the odds of these [three](three.html) [letters](letters.html) spelling the word "yavok"? Does it really make a difference in the end? At the very least, it is reminder that all of us have to cross our own "Yavok river" at some point in our lives. And, as the [nation](nations.html) struggles for a definition of "What is a [Jew](gen-jew.html)?," we, as a [nation](nations.html), are approaching a national Yavok river in need of crossing as well-"forced" upon us by the computer age. Remember, if it catches our attention, it is a [sign](signs.html) from [Heaven](heaven.html) regardless of what others think.

We live in very, very interesting times. Everything is moving so fast these days. There are so many influences, so many distractions. It is so very difficult to be simple these days, pure, and therefore, Torah-true. What does the year 5760/2000 hold for the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, and the [world](worlds.html) in general? No [one](one.html) quite knows for sure, but everyone wonders with mixed emotions, curiosity combined with an element of concern, that, for some, grows with each passing day.

What we have to realize is that it is the Yavok river that we are approaching, that [awesome](awesome.html) day that G-d "will answer us," after thousands of years of [exile](galuyot.html). What does it depend upon? It depends upon a willingness on the [nation](nations.html)'s part to confront the Eisav within us, to expunge ourselves of it, to fight with heavenly beings and man, and to prevail.

Then, and only then, will we finally assume the [name](name.html) "Yisroel," forever.

(Mon, 9 Aug 1999, Rabbi Pinchas Winston, Perceptions - Parashas Shoftim: Shudder or Blind?, http://www.torah.org)

**\* \* \***

Strong’s defines “Jabbok” as:

***Genesis 32:22*** *And he rose up that night, and took his* [*two*](two.html) *wives, and his* [*two*](two.html) *womenservants, and his* [*eleven*](eleven.html) *sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.*

+--------------------------------------------------+

2999 Yabboq, yab-boke'; prob. from 1238; pouring forth; Jabbok, a river E. of the [Jordan](stages.html):-Jabbok.

----------------- Dictionary Trace -------------

1238 baqaq, baw-kah'; a prim. root; to pour out, i.e. to empty, [fig](bethphag.html). To depopulate; by anal. to spread out (as a fruitful vine):-(make) empty (out), fail, X utterly, make void.

The word “Jabbok” is found only [seven](seven.html) times in Torah. I have listed those [seven](seven.html) for your further [study](study.html):

***Genesis 32:22*** *And he rose up that night, and took his* [*two*](two.html) *wives, and his* [*two*](two.html) *womenservants, and his* [*eleven*](eleven.html) *sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.*

[***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***21:24*** *And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon [was] strong.*

***Deuteronomy 2:37*** *Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, [nor] unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God forbad us.*

***Deuteronomy 3:16*** *And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, [which is] the border of the children of Ammon;*

***Joshua 12:2*** *Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, [and] ruled from Aroer, which [is] upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, [which is] the border of the children of Ammon;*

***Judges 11:13*** *And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto* [*Jordan*](stages.html)*: now therefore restore those [lands] again peaceably.*

***Judges 11:22*** *And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto* [*Jordan*](stages.html)*.*

## Conclusion

[Yaakov](israelja.html) crossed to the Yabak (Y2K) river in order to retrieve his possessions. I believe that we need to emulate [Yaakov](israelja.html) and retrieve our possessions. Even though we may have to fight the [Angel](angels.html) of [Esau](edom.html) (the banking system and the whims of the [world](worlds.html)), we should do so in order to retain our possessions.

**\* \* \***

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1. See Bereishis 46, 8-27 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Yeshaiyahu 40,26 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In Bereishis 46, 27 they are included in the seventy who descended to Egypt. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. {Hebrew Ref} from {Hebrew Ref} --- insect i.e., they swarmed." [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. {Hebrew Ref} --- lit. in one womb. The Midrash bases this on the six words: {Hebrew Ref} . [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. If he was a new king, Scripture would have mentioned the death of the previous king. (Eiruvin 53a, Sotah 11a) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. If he was called the old king, then how is it that he did not know Yoseif? (Rashi in Sotah, however, states that this question also applies to the former opinion---that he was literally a new king---for is it possible that the new king had never heard of Yoseif?!) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Rashi, Bereishis 11, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. To whom is the reference--- {Hebrew Ref} ---" with him" (in the singular)? [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Since G-d punishes {Hebrew Ref} ---measure for measure, Pharaoh thought that if he subjects the Jews to death by water, G-d would have no comparable way to exact retribution. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. I.e., they will so overpower us that they will stay or go at will. (M., G.A.) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Because he can't bear to utter such a thing about himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. If {Hebrew Ref} refers to the {Hebrew Ref} why is the singular {Hebrew Ref} , rather than the plural {Hebrew Ref} used? [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Rashi has previously established that in these verses the {Hebrew Ref} are referred to in the singular. Therefore, the plural {Hebrew Ref} must be a reference to the Egyptians. (M., G.A.) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. I.e., {Hebrew Ref} ---warehouses. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Yeshaiyahu 22, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The syntactic structure of the verse {Hebrew Ref} (rather than: {Hebrew Ref} ), indicates that {Hebrew Ref} already existed prior to this narrative (M.). Also, it would not have been necessary to build totally new cities for the purpose of warehouses. (G.A.) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Grammatically {Hebrew Ref} means "they will oppress---in the future tense. Rashi, therefore, explains that intent is expressed in the future tense. (M., G.A.) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Obviously, here, the future form {Hebrew Ref} does not convey intent. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Thereby explaining why {Hebrew Ref} is in the future tense. (G.A.) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. When the Egyptians witnessed the proliferation of the {Hebrew Ref} they felt as if their own bodies were full of thorns. (M. from Rashi, Sotah 11a) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Both referring to women who assist in birthing. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. I.e., {Hebrew Ref} ---without a stress {Hebrew Ref} in the {Hebrew Ref} is in the {Hebrew Ref} (or {Hebrew Ref} ) conjugation. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. {Hebrew Ref} and {Hebrew Ref} both meaning to break, the former being in the "light"--- {Hebrew Ref} conjugation and the latter in the "heavy"--- {Hebrew Ref} conjugation. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Yeshaiyahu 42, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See Rashi, previous verse {Hebrew Ref} . [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Yeshaiyahu 37, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Yirmiyahu 18, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. If Pharaoh's intent had been only to limit the Israelites' numbers it would have been more efficient to kill the

    females. (M. G.A.) [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Once it has been stated that the midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's orders, what is added by {Hebrew Ref} ? (S.C.) Also see Sotah 11b {Hebrew Ref} [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. In this verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. I.e., the {Hebrew Ref} or {Hebrew Ref} endings. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The daughters of Yisro. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Below 2, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Yirmiyahu 44, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Yechezkel 13, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ber. 49, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ibid. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Devarim 33, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ber. 49, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ber. 49, 18. I.e., by including all the tribes in this one statement, what is said for one is implied to all. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Yechezkel 19, 2. "Your mother" is a reference to the progenitors of Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. There is an age-old dispute whether all Hebrew verbs have three root-letters. Here Rashi assumes Menachem ben Saruk's opinion that some have two root-letters. See, also Rashi below 2,10 and II Melachim 17, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. I.e., third-person, masculine, singular in the {Hebrew Ref} (causative) conjugation, with a {Hebrew Ref} that converts future to past tense. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. This verse. The root of {Hebrew Ref} is {Hebrew Ref} . [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Eichah 2, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The root of {Hebrew Ref} being {Hebrew Ref} . [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. II Divrei Hayamim 36, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Shoftim 15, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. I.e., the {Hebrew Ref} conjugation. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. I.e., the {Hebrew Ref} conjugation. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Vayikra 10, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Our verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. II Melachim 25, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Below 2, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. These words being in the {Hebrew Ref} conjugation, yet their letters {Hebrew Ref} are vowelized with a {Hebrew Ref} , whereas according to Rashi's explanation the {Hebrew Ref} should have taken a {Hebrew Ref} . [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. This group of verbs has three root-letters, where the first root-letter is a {Hebrew Ref} , which is dropped in the future tense. (The group is called {Hebrew Ref} ---i.e., the first root letter {Hebrew Ref} is omitted.) e.g. {Hebrew Ref} --- The root in the third person--- {Hebrew Ref} is not a root-letter but the third-person-future-prefix. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. I.e., Yocheved and Miriam. See Rashi above v. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Thus, {Hebrew Ref} , of the previous verse, and {Hebrew Ref} here, are a reference to the same thing. (G.A.) [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. I Melachim 9, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. I.e., Moshe and Aharon. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. I.e., King David. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. 11b. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Why were the Egyptians also subjected to this terrible decree? [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. And not by the waters of the Nile. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai, known as the Chidah, a most prolific rabbinical author. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)