

Shabbat Parashat Naso 12 Sivan 5776 ● June 17-18, 2016

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# THE PERSPECTIVE PAGE

## Drash V'DaSh, A Shabbat Message and Greeting: "A Bona Fide Bulletin"

Twenty-five years ago, while majoring in Semitic Languages at Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, I was required to take a year-long survey course in Jewish Philosophy: one semester of Medieval, and one semester of Modern. Each class required a term paper on a topic related to the course-material. For the former, I did a comparative study of three understandings of prophecy: (1) The position of the philosophers of Ancient Greece who deemed prophecy to be the automatic outcome of a natural process, attainable upon perfection of one's personal qualities and qualifications. (2) The view of Rabbi Judah ha-Levi in his magnum opus *Sefer Ha-Kuzari* who felt that, on the contrary, prophecy was strictly a supernatural phenomenon, a gift from G-d limited to those whom He had selected to be His messengers. (3) The hybrid approach of Maimonides who insisted that *as a pre-requisite*, man must first achieve greatness of character, but then it is still ultimately up to G-d whether to bestow upon that individual the ability to prophesy.

The professor, a renowned scholar of Medieval Jewish Philosophy who then also served as Dean of the Graduate School, not only graded the papers but — despite a busy teaching, researching, and publishing schedule - also took the time to sit with each student and review his comments together. The professor noted that I had used the word "bonified" when I probably intended "bona fide". I conceded my error, probably due to a spellcheck gone awry, but have since learned that an Ivy League-educated ABC News Editor made the same senseless switcheroo. Score one for the professor! Next, he questioned my citation of a Talmudic sage from *Haifa*, given that Haifa is a city in the modern State of Israel. Fortunately, there was a Shas in his office and I was able to show him the citation, on Bava Batra 12a, where R. Avdimi *of Haifa* famously asserts that "upon the destruction of the First Temple, prophecy was taken from the Nevi'im (Prophets) and given to the Chakhamim (Sages)." (In fact, believe it or not, Haifa was settled at least 3000 years ago, and is mentioned in the Talmud some 100 times.) Score one for the student! Finally, he expressed concern over my style of writing which he deemed inconsistent with a serious research paper and more "typical of synagogue bulletins". Score 500 issues of synagogue bulletins for Young Israel of New Hyde Park!

As I celebrate with you this milestone of #ParkPage500, I express my appreciation to all our readers near and far, some whom I see every day and others that I have yet to meet. I acknowledge the encouragement of our shul President Art Feldman, in his oral announcements and written "Count On Me" campaign, and the generous response from the congregation in the form of Yerushalayim Shel Zahav (gold-level) and Ke'arot Kesef (silver-level) sponsorships of this commemorative issue. [I note, aside from any traditional associations between numerical thresholds and precious materials, the significance of these categories: just last two weeks ago (the day of the Celebrate Israel Parade – see the pictures elsewhere in this issue), we marked the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yom Yerushalayim, while Ke'arot Kesef (silver platters) feature prominently in the Tabernaclegifts of the tribal princes in this week's Torah portion, Parashat Naso.] On this eve of Father's Day, I have the opportunity to recognize my wellspring of "nachas" - our children Sara, Yael, Atara, Yedida, Temima and Binyamin - and my endless gratitude to my wife Nehama who not only made me into both a husband and a father, but - Semikha from YU-RIETS notwithstanding - I can say in earnest that as Rebbetzin par excellence, she also made me into a Rabbi. The occasion is made even more special with the presence this Shabbat of my mother Mrs. Joyce Teitelman and mother-in-law Mrs. Rochelle Kutliroff, each part of the socio-spiritual bedrock of their respective communities Albany and Memphis, and acclaimed brother-in-law from Israel, Dr. Gershom Kutliroff. Finally, I say to the Supreme Giver of the Page of Pages and the Scroll of Scrolls, Baruch Shehechiyanu Vekiyemanu Vehiqianu Lazman Hazeh – "Blessed is He Who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion." - LT

## THE PATRONS PAGE

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## THE PARK-IVES PAGE

(Drash v'DaSh on Parashat Naso/Shavuot, from the archives of The Park Page)

## "Buffett and the Buffet " (Naso 2010)

There is hardly a more reputed name in "Corporate America" than that of billionaire-extraordinaire Warren Buffett. As CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, Buffett is known as the "Oracle of Omaha" for his success as an investor, industrialist and philanthropist. Yet today's column is not about Warren Buffett but rather his son Peter, formerly a musician and now working for his father's charitable foundation.

In his new book *Life is What You Make it: Finding Your Own Path to Fulfillment*, Buffett Jr. has "an old-world spiritual message for today's money-rich parents: teach your children values and do not give them everything they want." Peter goes on to warn that "people who are born with a silver spoon in their mouth can fall victim to ... a 'silver dagger in your back,' which leads to a sense of entitlement and a lack of personal achievement." For his part, he notes that when his mother died in 2004, he inherited some money, but by then, he had already learned his lessons. At the core of his philosophy – which seems to be learned from his parents – is the sense that enjoyment must be earned, merit precedes the material. It is this notion that is also the essence of our Shabbat observance.

To be sure, the Seventh Day is intrinsically holy - already during The Creation, G-d blessed and sanctified it - yet we cannot take that quality for granted. We have an individual and communal mandate to endow the Shabbat with a quality of holiness. It is no wonder that the Shulchan Arukh specifically stresses the importance of saying Kiddush immediately following the onset of Shabbat, a requirement not necessarily found in other areas of Jewish law. Before we enjoy the tranquility of Shabbat - the respite from a week's work - we must personally consecrate the day, through our lighting of the candles, our prayers, and then Kiddush. Indeed, the custom to have no food on the table prior to Kiddush - or where that is practically infeasible, to at least cover it with a cloth (pores mapa u-mekadesh) - is, in the words of Rav Achai Gaon's Sheiltot, ki hekhi de-teti seudata miykara de-Shabta. The food should clearly come out of honor of the Shabbat, not because of insatiable impulses, but as we extend the sanctification over the wine into the buffet or dinner. A la the Mishna in Pirkei Avot, our rites and rituals "turn the tables" and convert our counters of cuisine into altars of appetizing. The "Sheva Shabbatot Temimot" - the seven weeks of seven that we just counted - reiterate that theme, with the Mincha Chadasha, the new sacrifice of Shavuot, being permitted only following this protracted period of anticipation and sanctification. Shabbat is a time when we bring forth the silver spoons and insert them into our mouths, but only after Kiddush has first been made over a silver becher.

## "The Arboreal and the Laborious" (Naso 2011)

The Shalosh Regalim – our three "pilgrimage festivals" Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot – are characterized not only by the events they commemorate and the ideals they communicate, but also by an agricultural-seasonal dimension: Pesach is Chag HaAviv, the "springtime festival"; Shavuot is Chag HaKatzir, the "harvest festival"; Sukkot is Chag HaAsif, the "gathering festival". These associations are not merely points of theoretical interest but of practical import, as they influence the halakhic practices of the respective holidays: the intercalation of the calendar before Nisan so Pesach falls in the Spring and the eating of a karpas-vegetable at the Seder; the gift of bikurim (the first fruits) and the offering of Shtei HaLechem (bread sacrifice) on Shavuot; and the Daled Minim (Four Species), Nisukh HaMayim (water libations), and Sekhakh the organic material used to construct a Sukka-rooftop.

This agricultural aspect of Shavuot is further highlighted by two subsequent customs: reading the Book of Ruth whose story occurs during the harvest season, and ostensibly, decorating the shul with greenery - grasses, plants,

flowers, and even trees. Although some opposed the latter practice on the basis of emulating gentile conduct (Levit. 18:3) or resembling the idolatrous ashera-tree (Deut. 16:21, cf. Park Page #195), the interior decorators won out, as this Minhag Yisrael also mirrors the lush green landscape of Mount Sinai, the venue at which the Torah was received by the Israelites on the very first Shavuot.

Yet a family visit on Memorial Day to Long Island's "Planting Fields Arboretum" helped me understand that these two symbolisms – the seasonal and the Sinaitic – are also interrelated. While the outdoor gardens at Planting Fields are breathtaking, it is the greenhouses and their *indoor* orchards that is the most outstanding attraction. To take fig, cacao, orange, and papaya trees – citing just a few examples – out of their natural habitat and raise them to fruit-bearing fruition, is a powerful illustration of what mankind can accomplish if amply motivated. So on Shavuot, we adorn our synagogues with botanical bounty as a metaphor for the Torah that was taken from *its* initial environs, in the Heavens and then at Sinai, and brought into the synagogues and studyhouses, where with proper cultivation, it is capable of flourishing. On this Chag HaBikurim, we may bring the first fruits of our physical efforts in the fields to the Beit HaMikdash, but we simultaneously nurture the fruits of our intellectual and spiritual powers in the Beit HaMidrash and Beit HaKeneset.

## "Hair Do's and Don'ts – the Nazirite's Knot" (Naso 2012)

While there are quite literally "ten commandments" additionally incumbent upon the Nazir during or immediately following his consignment (Rambam, Introduction to Laws of Nezirut), it is the management of his hair – or non-management, as the case may be – that most stereotypically characterizes his unique status.

Granted, the Torah begins its description of the hypothetical Nazirite with the proscription of wine and assorted grape products before proceeding with the prohibition for him to shave. However, when introducing us to Samson, the first recorded actual Nazarite, Scripture seems - at least initially - more exclusively focused on the interdiction against hair-cutting: "Behold you [the barren wife of Manoah] will conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite unto G-d from the womb." (Judges 13:5) Later, in the events leading up to the birth of Samuel, the also-barren Hannah beseeches G-d, "If You will ... give Your maidservant a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (Samuel 1:11; cf. Mishnah, Nazir 9:5) Indeed, despite the standard term of a Nazir being only thirty days - a period one surmises to be shorter than the typical duration between haircuts in contemporary society - our mental image of the Nazirite is one with long locks of hair growing completely out of control. His abstinence from wine, on the other hand, seems only secondary, even if the Talmud (Sota 2a, cited by Rashi to Num. 6:2) uses that to motivate the Nazaritic experience. "Why is the section dealing with the Nazirite juxtaposed to the section of the adulterous woman? To tell us that whoever sees an adulteress in her disgrace should vow to abstain from wine for it leads to adultery." The lack of the Nazirite's visitation rights at the cemetery and the injunction against other forms of his corporal contamination hardly play into the picture at all, even if they are equally binding upon the Nazir.

Yet while the Torah hints, through the aforementioned juxtaposition, at the underlying concern with imbibing wine, we are left to speculate on our own as to the significance of growing one's hair. One popular approach is to see an obsession with hair as a sign of childishness and immaturity (perhaps thus explaining, al derekh ha-tzachut – in jest, why adults progressively lose their hair as they mature). Witness Joseph, who constantly played with his hair, being described as a na'ar (young lad, with the added connotation of "foolish" in Yiddish). The Nazir, in stark contrast, is identified as Kadosh – a holy

person – who presumably has his priorities in order and is not frivolously preoccupied with his appearance.

Alternatively, we might observe, it is much easier to keep *short* hair well-kempt. Long hair – when left to its natural predisposition - tends to curl, tangle, even knot. While potentially a source of beauty and even erotic attraction (*se'ar be-isha erva* – see Solomon's *Song of Songs* for multiple manifestations), constant care is required to preserve its presentability. The Nazir then paradoxically exhibits that pursuit of his noble goal of increased sanctity, when not properly managed, can be counterproductive, just like hair grown to glamorous proportions can compromise one's countenance. Spiritual development, while at once our religious *raison d'être*, must also be constantly in check to ensure that it does in fact fulfill its intended mandate.

## A Blessing on a Blessing? (Naso 2013)

In the midst of last night's post-Shavuot shuffle, I eked out a few minutes to peruse the *Jewish Week* that had arrived earlier in the day. I soon discovered an article by a friend from yeshiva-days, Rabbi Neil Fleischman, who at one time had the distinction of being "New York's Funniest Rabbi". [See http://www.thejewishweek.com/jewish-life/sabbath-week/word-love.]

Discussing the imperative that the Priestly Blessing (*Birkat Kohanim*) be delivered *with love*, Rabbi Fleischman refers to "the rabbinic blessing that the kohanim recite to G-d *before* blessing us" and then notes, "it is the *only* blessing on which a blessing is recited" (emphases mine).

After digesting that claim and accepting that there are no obvious counterexamples, I proceeded to wonder about the apparent redundancy in "a blessing on a blessing". Of course, the two blessings differ structurally: one has the standard form "Barukh atta etc.", while the other is the concatenation of three verses from our Parasha. One is directed to G-d, the other is addressed to the congregation. For the former, the Kohanim are on their own, whereas for the latter, the Kohanim take their cues from the prompting Sheliach Tzibbur. Yet something still seems superfluous: is it necessary to introduce a blessing with a blessing?

I was reminded of a beautiful insight into the formulation of Rambam when describing the various types of blessings:

According to Rabbinic law, a person must bless on each food first, and [only] then derive benefit from it. Similarly, if he smells a pleasant fragrance, he should bless and [only] then enjoy it...

And just as we bless on enjoyment, so too must we bless on each commandment, and only then perform it...

(Mishneh Torah, Laws of Berakhot 1:2)

While blessing before *benefitting* seems like proper etiquette, and as per the Talmud (Berakhot 35) a way of redeeming for personal use that which originally belongs to G-d, why is it also necessary to bless before performing a *mitzva*. If we are obligated, why still ask permission?

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik famously explains that this is precisely the point. Mitzvot - like tangible sources of pleasure - really belong to the Divine. It is a prerogative to be able to perform them, but before taking advantage of that opportunity - even if it is our mission and mandate - we must express our appreciation to the Almighty, and redeem that mitzva from its Heavenly habitat for our personal performance.

For the Kohanim to offer the "priestly blessing" - nay, for anyone to bestow even a *birkat hedyot*, a "commoner's blessing" - requires a gift of *ayin hatov*, a "good eye". It is a special quality to always discern the positive in a given individual or situation, call attention to it, and attempt to share that with others. If we are inclined and inspired to offer a blessing to others, then indeed we must express *Hakarat Hatov* as well to G-d for that proclivity and predisposition. And if we are still working on it, we should heed the words of the Talmud, *yelekh etzel chakham ve-yilmad berakhot*, "seek out a sage and

learn blessings": not only the texts, not only the laws, but also the underlying techniques ... and then celebrate that achievement with a blessing.

### "Naso: Getting a 'Lift'" (Naso 2014)

It was some fifteen years ago that I was driving down to Silver Spring, Maryland, for a Shabbat to be spent with close friends, when one of the passengers inserted an audio-cassette into the tape deck. The prominent rabbi on the tape – a "dynamic, highly sought-after speaker" (as such lecturers are often billed) – was poking fun at a conference where thousands of individuals would spend Thanksgiving weekend together with what they called their "family", those possessing a particular brand of automobile. I remember sharing the sentiment of the speaker, how sad it is that people define their most precious relationships in terms of vehicle ownership. Resonating in my mind were the words of the *Hadran* recited upon a Siyum: anu ratzim ve-hem ratzim — "they travel, and we travel…"

And yet this week I found myself taking delight not only in the milestone of Nehama's graduation (see dedication above) but also upon my "new" car (relative to the one I was driving to Silver Spring) – the 1997 Toyota Camry – reaching 111,111 miles. As an instructor of Discrete Mathematics, I undoubtedly took delight in the uniform pattern of digits and its associated number-theoretic properties. But as a rabbi, there was also a feeling of hakarat hatov, a sense of gratitude toward this vehicle that has stood me well, enabling me to participate in levayot (including that of my father z"I) and many semachot (including bringing the twins home from the hospital after their birth in 2008). There were many times where it was "running on empty", but the "little engine that could" persisted and persevered to transport me to my next appointment or back home.

On this upcoming holiday of Shavuot, we celebrate Zeman Matan Toratenu – the anniversary of the giving of the Torah. It was the Ark containing that Torah that, per the theme of our Parasha, miraculously is nosei et nosav – transports those that transport it. We rejoice in the uncountable number of miles that the Jewish people have travelled by and in this vehicle – the Torah – in the three millennia since we received it and will share a holy convocation this Yom Tov with our "family" who share ownership in this treasured brand.

## "The Octateuch?" (Naso 2015)

On ABC's new weeklong game-show "500 Questions", the following challenge was posed to the contestants: "What are the first eight books of the Bible?" (Hat tip to Mr. Selig Lenefsky for the reference.) According to Halakhic sources, the answer should be "Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. [The division of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles into two "parts" each is not a Jewish one and was not part of the original Biblical canon of 24 books distributed over Torah (5), Neviim (8), Ketuvim (11).]

However, the official answer – as far as the game-show host was concerned – was "Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth". This sequence, adopted by both Catholic and Protestant versions of the "Old Testament", while not the traditional Jewish sequence, is not without some Rabbinic roots. The Talmud (Bava Batra 15b) interprets the opening words of the Book of Ruth, Vayhi bimei shefot ha-Shoftim - literally meaning, "And it happened in the days when the Judges judged" - as referring to the era of the Judges (hence the juxtaposition of Judges and Ruth) when the "Judges were judged" for their own apparent infringements. The Talmud elaborates: If a judge said to a man: "take a splinter from between your teeth" - refrain from a minor infraction, the defendant would retort, "Remove the beam from before your eyes" - refrain from the major transgression you committed. Paradoxically, the Judges appointed – in times of antiquity - to decide the Law, instead made it a habit to deride the Law." One wonders, as they ask in Rome, "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? - Who will guard the guards themselves?" The Book of Samuel - the true eighth book of Tanakh - instituted a system to do exactly that: provide the "checks and balances" afforded by the Prophets.

### THE POINTER PAGE

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# THE PARADE PAGE

YINHP at the Israel Day Parade, June 1969 and June 2016







# THE PAPA PAGE

### Sponsors of the Father's Day Kiddush

Aliza and Levi Afrah in honor of Stan Schwartz, a wonderful father and grandfather

Ellen Barth, Aron & Yehudis, Jordan & Faigy, and Jeremy in honor of Larry Barth

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Stephanie and Ben Zaientz

### THE PROGRAM PAGE

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Haftara	Artscroll 1181, Soncino 602		

Schedule of Services and Classes				
Friday, June 17 / 11 Sivan		Bava Kama 17		
Shacharit		6:15 am		
Mincha / Maariv		7:00 pm		
Candle-lighting before		8:11 pm		
Saturday, June 18 / 12 Sivan		Bava Kama 18		
Rambam Shiur		8:15 am		
Shacharit		8:45 am		
Latest time for Shema	MA 8:34,	GRA 9:10 am		
Sermon: "Observations About Orlando"		10:30 am		
Shiur:		7:20 pm		
Mincha, followed by Seuda Shelishit		8:00 pm		
Maariv / Shabbat ends		9:14 pm		
Sunday, June 19 / 13 Sivan		Bava Kama 19		
Shacharit		8:10 am		
Gemara Shiur – Masekhet Shavuot (5a)		8:50 am		
Mincha / Maariv		8:15 pm		
Monday, June 20 / 14 Sivan		Bava Kama 20		
Shacharit		6:10 am		
Mincha / Maariv		8:15 pm		
Tuesday, June 21 / 15 Sivan		Bava Kama 21		
Shacharit		6:15 am		
Mincha / Maariv		8:15 pm		
Wednesday, June 22 / 16 Sivan		Bava Kama 22		
Shacharit		6:15 am		
Mincha / Maariv		8:15 pm		
Thursday, June 23 / 17 Sivan		Bava Kama 23		
Shacharit		6:10 am		
Mincha / Maariv		8:15 pm		
Friday, June 24 / 18 Sivan		Bava Kama 24		
Shacharit		6:15 am		
Mincha / Maariv		7:00 pm		
Candle-lighting before		8:12 pm		

#### **Schedule Notes:**

- During the summer months, Candle-lighting on Friday evenings should be done by 7:15 p.m. - the time at which the shul accepts Shabbat - but no later than the times appearing in the schedule.
- **Daf Yomi** meets weekday mornings at 5:30 a.m. and Saturday and Sunday mornings at 7:30 a.m.
- The last time for Kiddush Levana during Sivan is Monday, June  $20^{th}$  at 6:06 a.m.
- Woman wishing to make a Mikvah appointment, call 718-343-5700.



#### Sefer Torah in Memory of Rabbi Meir Bilitzky zt"l

Participation forms are available at the shul and on our website at http://yinhp.org/docs/TorahlnMemoryOfRabbiBilitzky.pdf
Contributions can be made on-line using Credit card or PayPal at http://tinyurl.com/RabbiBilitzkyTorah

### THE PROPHETS PAGE

Study for June 18-24, per Rabbi Jack Abramowitz's Nach Yomi Companion. For more info, visit www.ou.org/torah/nachyomi.

Isaiah 38: Chizkiyahu's Illness, Recovery and Psalm

Isaiah 39: "What Was THAT All About?" Isaiah 40: Nachamu, Nachamu Ami

Isaiah 41: "Worm of Jacob?"

Isaiah 42: "That Deaf, Dumb and Blind Nation..."

Isaiah 43: Waterproof and Fireproof

Isaiah 44: Cook with Half, Worship the Other Half

### THE PRIZE PAGE

### Winners of the Mega-Myriads Raffle

Grand Prize, \$100,000 – Isaac Schwartz
Four Tickets to Israel – Avrahom Miller
\$2000 Visa Gift Card – Hilky Blumstein
\$2000 to FCD Jewelers – Donor #3253
Berletta Watch – Michael Young
\$1000 to Focus Camera – M. Mahgerefteh
Otzar Hachochma USB Drive – Chanina Kushner
\$1000 to Zundel Berman Books – Sakhai
Master Bedroom Ensemble – Yechezkel Eis
Kiki Wig – Yaakov Franco
Florida Vacation – Shalom Emert

#### **Tablets:**

- Yaer and Chaya Sara Adler, Faigy Schwartz, Yehoshua Kugelman, Leon Betesh, Elazar Manis, Sheldon Reich, Yehuda Jacobson, Tzvi Carmel, Gedalya Zweig, Member #3328, Collin Abraham, Binyomin Feit, Indorsky, Shalom Wilhelm, Yaakov Alon, Jerold Applebaum, Yaakov Alouieh, Raymen Dayan, Sheldon Braunstein, Leah Simon

> YINHP-Exclusive Prizes: \$360 Gift Card – Barbara Snyder \$180 Gift Card – Rabbi Boruch Wolf \$180 Gift Card – Dr. Danny Zaghi

### THE PUBLIC INFO PAGE

- Yasher Koach to David Rouhani for his leining this Shabbat.
- Condolences to Drs. Daniel and Abby Basaley and family on the passing of Daniel's grandmother Mrs. Heshnat Basaleli a"h. Daniel's mother Rozita Basalely will continue shiva Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 128 Colonial Road, Great Neck, NY 11021, with a memorial service 7:30 p.m. on Sunday night at the Mashadi Jewish Center, 54 Steamboat Road in Great Neck. May the family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.
- Food Certificates for Fairway, Shop Rite, and Stop & Shop and Chesed Dollars for many Jewish businesses can be purchased from Art Feldman 516-227-0707, Paige Finkelstein 718-343-4821, Rena Gombo 718-343-3855, and Ilene Horowitz 718-470-9474. Proceeds finance capital improvement projects at the shul.
- The Clothing Gemach is looking for volunteers. Please contact Mark Krieger at 917-703-4694 or visit BeautifulMemoriesGemach.org. Also check out the Gemach's new Facebook page.
- Office Hours this week are Tuesday and Friday 10-2.

# THE PARK-O PAGE

(inspired by the sequencing games RACK-O and PARSH-O)

Instructions: arrange these 24 images in chronological order of (first) appearance in *The Park Page*, nos. 1-499.

















































