



CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR

Shabbos Table

... FOR A Meaningful and Entertaining SHABBOS WITH YOUR CHILDREN ...

CONTENTS

- #1 DVAR TORAH IN A STORY
- #1 PARSHAH RIDDLES
- #1 GEMATRIA
- #2 CHOLENT STORY
- #2 LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI
- #3 PERSONAL GROWTH AVODAH
- #3 ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES
- #4 HAFTORAH FROM THE HEADLINES
- #5 HALACHAH
- #5 THE LAST WORD

DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

DON'T BET AGAINST THE REBBE!

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר מֹשֶׁה...
(דברים א:א)

מדרש רבה: זֶה שְׂאֵמַר הַכְּתוּב (תהלים נ, כא):
אֵלֶּה עֲשִׂיתָ וְהִחַרְשְׁתִּי דְמִית הָיֹת אֶהְיָ כְמוֹךָ וּגו'



The mitzvah of *emunah chachamim* is a difficult one," Yaakov* remarked to his friend Nachman Kalish. The two were walking in Nachman's neighborhood.

"Well, for me, it's actually impossible!" Nachman replied.

"Impossible? Why?"

"Well, *emunah* is about being faithful to something you can't see or feel. But my Rebbe, Rav Shmuel Abba of Zichlin, clearly has *ruach hakodesh*. I can see it every day! So it is impossible for me to have *emunah*—it's all visible!"

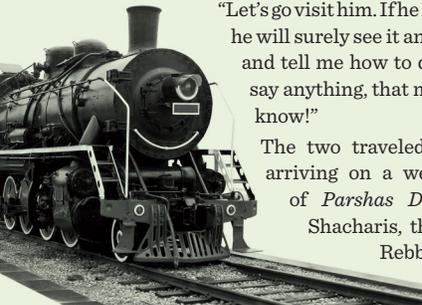
"Oh, come on," Yaakov said. "No one has that kind of *ruach hakodesh* nowadays."

The two continued discussing the subject for a while and finally decided to test the Rebbe of Zichlin.

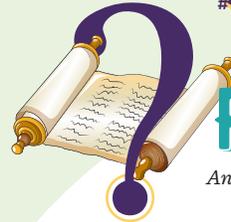
"I have a serious 'blemish' in my personal history," Yaakov said.

"Let's go visit him. If he really has *ruach hakodesh*, he will surely see it and give me *mussar* about it and tell me how to do *teshuvah*. If he doesn't say anything, that must mean that he doesn't know!"

The two traveled to the city of Zichlin, arriving on a weekday during the week of *Parshas Devarim*. After *davening* Shacharis, they lined up to greet the Rebbe.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >>



PARSHAH RIDDLES

Answers to this week's riddles will appear in next week's issue.

1

Can you name six rivers and five mountains mentioned in the *parshah*? What is another name for Yam Hamelach? What three other names does the Kinneret have? Which mountain in the *parshah* has two names? Which mountain has five names?

2

Where is there a closed *parshah* break (*stumah*) in the middle of a *pasuk*?

3

Which three *nevuos* read this week include the word "*eichah*"?

GEMATRIA

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר מֹשֶׁה אֶל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל

(דברים א:א)

Chumash Devarim has two names: *Devarim*, referring to the speeches Moshe made to Yisrael, including rebukes and *brachos*; and *Mishneh Torah*, referring to the review of many halachos it contains. The opening *pasuk* refers to both of these names:

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים — this is *Devarim*

מִשְׁנֵה תוֹרָה = 2006 = אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר

(Rav David Abuchatzera)



CHOLENT STORY

A story told in parts, designed to get children to come back to the table for the main dish!

Recap: Thomas, the church guard, offers to save Reb Shimon from being burned at the stake in exchange for a bribe.

T

Three thousand golden thalers! It was a mammoth sum, but Rav Yonasan Eibschutz knew just where to find it. While the community leaders were making plans to collect the money, he slipped out the door, just quickly enough to see Thomas's black cloak whip around the corner.

Rav Yonasan was a young man, married just a few months, but he had to hurry to keep Thomas in sight. He followed the tall, thin man for a few blocks, until he was far from the *rav's* house, and then quickened his pace to catch up with the church guard's long strides.

"Thomas!" he called.

The other man whipped around, looking startled.

"What is it? What do you mean by following me?"

Rav Yonasan motioned for Thomas to step into an alley. The tall man followed him into a quiet passageway, suspicion written on his face.

"What is this about?" he hissed. "Do you know what will happen if we are spotted? To your friend?" He drew a finger across his throat.

"Shh," Rav Yonasan whispered. "The money. I will have it by tonight. How shall I deliver it to you?"

Suspicion, greed, and envy flickered across the other man's eyes. "Already? How is that possible? I warn you, if this is a trick..."

"No trick! I wouldn't play games with my best friend's life. Where shall I meet you?"

"Tonight, in the park on Englische Planke, around the corner from St. Michael's. Come alone, or you may join your friend in the dungeon!"

Rav Yonasan hurried home, his mind awl. His wife, Elke, was the daughter of Reb Isaac Spira, who was known as a wealthy and pious man. He given a large dowry of three thousand gold thalers when his daughter had married Rav Yonasan. The gift was meant to support them for a few years, but Elke was earning a bit of money, and the sum hadn't been touched throughout the months of their marriage. What better use could there be for the money than to rescue his dear friend, Reb Shimon Rosen, from a horrible fate?

Rav Yonasan entered his modest house and rushed to the bedroom. Elke was out for a short while. He wanted to be gone before she came home—it would look strange if he was home during the day, and he did not want to endanger her by including her in the plan. The priests of St. Michael's would not be happy when they'd discover that their prisoner was missing, and an investigation was sure to follow. The less she knew, the better.

He moved a piece of furniture and pried up a floorboard. The sack of gold coins was still there. What an opportunity to do the mitzvah of *pidyon shevuyim*! He lifted the sack, hid it in his coat, replaced the board and furniture, and hurried out of the house, heading for Englische Planke and his rendezvous with the church guard who was willing to betray his priests.

The sun had set, and the park was dark by the time Rav Yonasan arrived. Thomas was already there, waiting in the shadow of a tall oak.

Rav Yonasan looked around carefully and then approached. "Here it is," he said.

Thomas took the sack and ran his bony fingers through the pile of gold coins, clearly enjoying the feel of them. "Ah, good old gold," he breathed. "How did you collect it so fast?" he asked.

"I didn't collect it," Rav Yonasan answered. "It was mine."

"And now it's mine!" Thomas laughed, a bit wildly. "You would give away all this just for a friend?" He shook his head. "You Jews are something else." He stuffed the bag in his cloak and turned to leave.

"Wait!" Rav Yonasan called. "What about freeing my friend?!"

TO BE CONTINUED....

DVAR TORAH >>

LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI

Three different angles on a dvar Torah, one each from Litvish, Chassidic, and Sephardic sources. Can be split between the three seudos.

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר מֹשֶׁה אֶל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל

"These are the words Moshe spoke to all of Yisrael..."
(*Devarim* 1:1)

Why does the *pasuk* stress that Moshe spoke to all of Yisrael? Moshe spoke to them many times before, and the *pasuk* never said that?

ZICHRON ELAZAR

Rashi explains that Moshe wanted to make sure that no one was missing, so that no one would say later, "Had I been there, I would have defended myself." The defense would have been that it was easy for Moshe to sound holy, because he came from a family of tzaddikim! But Moshe spoke in front of all the people, and everyone realized his words were accurate.

MEGALEH AMUKOS (ALSO KESEF NIVCHAR)

The word אלה stands for לשון הרע אבן. Moshe was including that in his rebuke. The Torah is noting that *all* Jews have to do *teshuvah* for that, as the Gemara says in *Bava Basra* 145 that all Jews are guilty of לשון הרע אבן.

BEN ISH CHAI:

Moshe wanted to rebuke the people respectfully. One way to do this is to talk about the problem with someone who is *not* guilty of it while the person to whom the *real* message is directed listens in. Moshe made sure *all* the Jews were there, including those who were *not* guilty, and he spoke to *them*.

PERSONAL GROWTH AVODAH OF THE WEEK

This section views the procession of parshiyos and Yamim Tovim as a ladder for personal growth. It identifies a theme in the parshah and a related area that needs growth, and assigns a weekly mission based upon it.

Introduction to *Chumash Devarim*

The vast majority (all but the last few *pesukim*) of *Chumash Devarim* records three final addresses that Moshe made to *Klal Yisrael* before his passing. The first speech is the first four *perakim*. It includes all of *Parshas Devarim* and contains words of *mussar*. The next, *perakim* 5–27, is a review of the mitzvos of the Torah. The last runs until Moshe's passing and is primarily warnings of curses and blessings.

PARSHAH SUMMARY

Parshas Devarim tells of Moshe's initial rebuke to the people for their behavior over the 40 years in the *midbar*. The rebuke is presented in hints and codes. Throughout the *parshah*, Moshe reviews the events of the last 40 years, with many references to *Klal Yisrael's* mistakes. Some are explicit, but most are veiled because of Moshe's respect for the people he leads. He also relates Hashem's kindness in feeding and supporting the nation and defeating its enemies.

This Shabbos immediately precedes Tishah B'Av, the day of intense Jewish mourning. We bewail all our losses, and particularly the Batei Mikdash lost on this day. One was lost because of the people's sins, the other, because of a lack of interpersonal respect.

AVODAH FOR THIS WEEK:

There are times when we must attempt to influence the behavior of another person, but we must use utmost care not to wound their self-respect. We must also have proper motives.

1. If you see someone making a mistake and you think it is appropriate for you to speak up, first focus on purifying your motivation. Make sure you are speaking from a place of *ahavas Yisrael*, not *sinah*.
2. Find a way to address the issue indirectly. Plant a seed of change in the person's mind and let it grow; don't force the change on them.
3. Can't do that with another person? Do it with yourself.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES:

1. Which three very rare *trops* appear in this week's *kriah*? Where else do they appear? **The only *yerach ben yomo* and *karnei parah* in the entire Torah appear in *Parshas Massei*, 35:5. There is another set in *Megillas Esther*. There is a *merchah kefulah* in the last *pasuk* of *Parshas Mattos*, one of five in the Torah (the others are found in *Toldos*, *Shemos*, *Shemini*, and *Shelach*).**
2. Can you find three consecutive *pesukim* that end with the same three words? ***Bamidbar* 35:16–18—each ends with *מות יומת הרצח*. Where are there 33 consecutive *pesukim* that all begin with the same word? *Bamidbar* 33:5–37. The *מסעות* all begin with *ויסעו*.**
3. How many places were called תוח יאיר? Why does the *pasuk* in *Mattos* (32:41) call Yair “ben Menashe” when in *Divrei Hayamim* (I 2:22) it says clearly that he was from *Shevet Yehudah*? **According to *Metzudos Dovid*, there were three places by that name: one founded by Yair ben Menashe, another by Yair Hagiladi, and a third by the Yair from *Shevet Yehudah* in *Divrei Hayamim*. Ibn Ezra holds there was only one place, and the one in *Divrei Hayamim* is the same as the one in *Mattos*. Although he was from *Shevet Yehudah*, his mother was from Menashe.**
4. Where does the word תחנן appear without an *aleph* (three times in the Torah and once in *Eichah*)? **The *Shevatim* told Yosef, תחננו בני איש אחד נחנו; the *bnei Gad* and *bnei Reuven* said, נחנו נעברו הלוצים; Moshe and Aharon said, תחננו ה; *Eichah* 3:42 וחינו. Can you give a reason for the missing *aleph* in at least one? **The *Baal Haturim* explains that the *pasuk* about *bnei Gad* and *bnei Reuven* begins and ends with a *nun* because they promised to cross the Yarden, which was 100 *amos* wide.****

Did you notice that the story of the haftorah, besides relating to the depth of the parshah or day, usually sounds like it is right out of current events?

HAFTORAH FROM THE HEADLINES

This week's haftorah is that of the famous *Shabbos Chazon*, the haftorah read just before Tishah B'Av.

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

Haftoras *Chazon* is the beginning of *Sefer Yeshayahu*, the first of the *Nevi'im Acharonim*. Yeshayah prophesied about 150 years before the *Churban*. The haftorah introduces him and his family and the four kings whose reigns his lifetime spanned. Yeshayah was a cousin of King Uziyah and was related to the other kings as well. It is a matter of dispute whether the current haftorah took place before or after the exile of *Malchus Yisrael*.

In the haftorah, Yeshayah is critical of the people, warns *Klal Yisrael* of impending doom and destruction, exhorts the people to do *teshuvah*, and adds a note about ultimate redemption and forgiveness.

His rebuke focuses on two issues. Although the people are keeping mitzvos—including Shabbos, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh,—bringing *korbanos*, studying Torah, and praying, Hashem is rejecting all of that because it is done robotically, without meaning and feeling. Also, the Navi condemns some leaders as corrupt, passing false judgment and misleading people.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH:

Yeshayah is compared to Moshe. Both led a new generation of prophecy and experienced exceptionally clear prophecy themselves. This haftorah introduces the speeches of rebuke of Yeshayah just as the *parshah* introduces those of Moshe. It is not the first prophecy of either—Yeshayah's first prophecy appears in *perek 6* of the *sefer*. Throughout his *sefer*, Yeshayah uses wording similar to those used by Moshe in *Chumash Devarim*, such as "*haazinu*" and "*artzechem shemamah*."

The haftorah, *parshah*, and *megillah* read on Tishah B'Av all contain the phrase "*Eichah...*"

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES:

Yeshayah's rebukes remain as relevant as ever. Though institutions of Torah and mitzvos are strong and robust, *Klal Yisrael* still struggles to break out of doing mitzvos by rote, without feeling. The Beis Hamikdash remains destroyed; we remain guilty. And leaders of "Jewish denominations" continue to mislead their adherents.



>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Rebbe greeted them each warmly...and did not say a word to Yaakov about his "blemish"!

"You see!" Yaakov hissed when they were out of the shul. "Your Rebbe obviously does not have any more *ruach hakodesh* than I do!"

Nachman was not perturbed. "This doesn't prove anything yet," he said. "The Rebbe was probably just waiting to talk to you when you come to give *shalom* before you leave the city. He often gives his *mussar* when people depart."

"If he really had *ruach hakodesh*, he would know that I am not coming to say goodbye!" Yaakov exclaimed. "In fact, I'm going to the train station right now! This was all a waste of time."

Yaakov headed to the nearest station and looked up the time for the next train back to his hometown. He was disappointed to discover that the train wasn't scheduled to travel until late that evening. With nothing else to do, he headed back to the *Zichlin beis midrash* to wait for Minchah.

Shortly afterward, the Rebbe entered the study hall, as did a crowd of people. It was time for the Rebbe's weekly *parshah shiur*. Yaakov had no choice but to listen.

The Rebbe began by quoting the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* that *Chazal* link to the first *pasuk* in *Devarim*.

"אלה עשית והחזרשתי דמית היות אהיה כחןך," the Rebbe recited. "This is what you have done, and I kept silent, and you thought I was like you," he translated. "What does this have to do with *Parshas Devarim*?"

The Rebbe explained, "This is why Moshe gave *mussar* to *Klal Yisrael*. People do *aveiros*, and they come to see the tzaddik. They think that '*hecherashti dimisi*'—if the tzaddik doesn't say anything, that means he doesn't know about it and that he is unseeing—'*eheyeh kamocho*'—like them!"

Yaakov squirmed uncomfortably in his seat. Was the Rebbe referring to...?

"They don't realize that the tzaddik didn't say anything in order to save them from embarrassment!" the Rebbe continued. "Especially since they came with a friend. That is why Moshe had to say something. It is damaging to people's *emunas chachamim* to think that way, and the tzaddik needs to correct the false impression for the sake of *kavod haTorah*."

Yaakov felt his cheeks burning. The Rebbe knew!

But the Rebbe was not done.

"For example," the Rebbe continued, "let's say someone visits a Rebbe, and he has done *aveiros* such as..." He proceeded to list all the "blemishes" Yaakov had referred to! The Rebbe then spoke about the severity of those *aveiros*, the importance of fixing them, and the proper manner of *teshuvah*.

After the *shiur*, Yaakov hurried to find Nachman. "You were right!" he said. "The Rebbe knows everything. Now I must say *shalom* to him before I leave, but I am embarrassed to face him after what I thought about him!"

"Not to worry," Nachman reassured him. "He is exceedingly humble. I am sure he did not take offense at all."

Shamefacedly, Yaakov approached to shake the Rebbe's hand. The Rebbe greeted him as warmly as before, with no indication of the sharp rebuke he had issued moments earlier.

*Name has been changed

HALACHAH

What are the halachos of the fast of Tishah B'Av during COVID-19 times?

OTHER FASTS WHEN

ONE IS ILL

A sick person does not have to fast on fast days other than Yom Kippur and Tishah B'Av, since these other fast days are *divrei kabbalah* or *d'rabbanan* and do not apply to people who are ill, even if they are not in danger. This applies to a level of sickness that would allow one to take medication on Shabbos—i.e., either one feels weakness in the entire body or they belong in bed.



TISHAH B'AV

The Mechaber (*Sephardim*) applies the above to Tishah B'Av as well. The Rema (*Ashkenazim*) notes that the custom is to fast unless there is “some element of danger.” That means that there is concern that one’s illness could, theoretically, develop into a situation of danger. That could apply to COVID-19. A *posek* well versed in medical questions should be consulted for each individual scenario. This also applies to one who is in a weakened condition. It *excludes* generally healthy people who are suffering from a cold or standard virus.

AVOIDING A

PANDEMIC

The Biur Halachah writes that when there is an epidemic (he refers to cholera) and one is concerned that if they fast, they will be weakened and may catch it, they should eat *shiurim*, which amounts to drinking an ounce of juice every nine minutes. Generally, there is no halachah of *shiurim* for any fast other than Yom Kippur, where the fast is meant to be an *inuy*, and *shiurim* preserve the *inuy*. With regard to Tishah B'Av, one who is allowed to eat is *ptur* and is therefore usually allowed to eat any amount. The Biur Halachah is applying *shiurim* here because he refers to a healthy person who has no *ptur* from fasting. Although he has a legitimate reason not to fast, he may not abandon the fast altogether and should eat only minimal amounts.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

“WHAT IF ALL YOU HAD TOMORROW WERE THE THINGS FOR WHICH YOU THANKED HASHEM TODAY?”

Would you like to dedicate or sponsor an issue of Circle Time: At Your Shabbos Table? Contact circletime@circmag.com.

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