



CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR

Shabbos Table

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

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DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

THE GREATER DEBATER

לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה
וְאָמְרוּ רַק עִם חֵכֶם וְנִבְּוֹן הַגּוֹי הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה,

"In the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these laws and will say, only how wise and understanding is this great nation!" (Devarim 4:6)

What is the word רק, "only," doing in this pasuk?

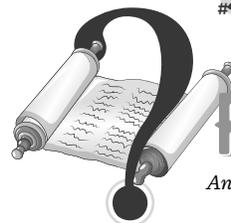
In times of old, Jew haters looked for ways to cause trouble for our people in every city and community in which they lived, often finding ways to get the local king to expel the Jews. Sometimes these troublemakers were local priests who would challenge the Jews to all types of philosophical debates.

In one town, the bishop was an expert in nonverbal communication. Instead of giving long-winded speeches, he could make powerful points with a few hand motions. He convinced the king to let him hold a nonverbal debate with the Jewish community, and if the Jews lost, they would be sent packing.

Of course, the challenge brought great fear to the community. Who could explain deep concepts with hand gestures, as the bishop could? Debates were always hard enough, but this



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PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

1

Where in *Chumash* are the seven nations of Eretz Canaan mentioned in one *pasuk*? Where are the only two other places in all of *Chumash* in which Girgashi are mentioned?

2

According to *mesorah*, the letter *kuf* in the words ואתם ואתם has crowns (*tagin*) even though most *kufs* do not. Why? (Hint: think *gematria*. See *Baal Haturim*.)

3

Can you find a *pasuk* in the *Torah* that contains all the letters of the *aleph-beis*?

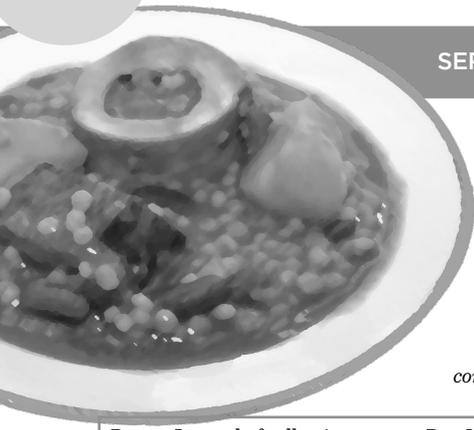
GEMATRIA

וְנִשְׁנַתֶּם בְּאֶרֶץ וְהִשְׁחַתֶּם וְעִשִׂיתֶם פְּסָל... אֲבָד תֹּאבְדוּן,
מִהָר מַעַל הָאָרֶץ

"And you will be old in the land, and you will bow and make statues... You will quickly be utterly lost from the land." (Devarim 4:25-26)

How can Moshe say we will be lost quickly from the land if we were there for 1,850 years before the exile?

We were supposed to be there for 1,852 years, the *gematria* of the word וְנִשְׁנַתֶּם. Hashem shortened our time there because had we been there that long before the exile, we would have indeed been utterly lost forever. By sending us out two years sooner ("quickly"), the curse of "utterly lost" was not triggered (*Gittin* 88a; see *Rashi*, ad loc.).



CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Instead of collecting money, Rav Yonasan Eibshutz gives away the entire dowry he had received from his father-in-law to Thomas, the church guard, to save Reb Shimon from being burned at the stake.



What about freeing your friend, you ask?"

Thomas laughed sardonically, and Rav Yonasan's heart plummeted. Was the guard about to double-cross him? No one would believe him if he said he had given him the 3,000 gold thalers; no one had known that he'd had it, and he hadn't collected it from anyone!

"What are you so afraid of?" Thomas asked. "Thomas is an honest man. I am not like those characters in there..." He nodded in the direction of the church looming ahead in the darkness. "You think the monks have been cruel to *you*—you have no idea how they treat *me*. I have no loyalty to them. Wait here; I'll send your friend." With a swish of his cloak, he turned on his heel and cut through the park, heading for the church property.

Rav Yonasan was not convinced. Could he trust the man? Why did he want him to wait? Was he going to disappear with the money? He tried to follow him, but the guard was already gone. Rav Yonasan decided to hide outside the back hedge of the church, keeping an eye on the back door of the building.

After what seemed like forever, the door inched open. Rav Yonasan's breath caught as a red-haired man appeared. Was it Reb Shimon? He looked so different. Rav Yonasan waited until he could see the man clearly. It was Reb Shimon!

As quietly as he could, Rav Yonasan hissed the other man's name. "Pssst! Shimon!"

Reb Shimon turned, looking startled. "Rav Yonasan?" He limped toward the hedge and slipped through. He had lost a lot of weight and looked pale.

"*Baruch Hashem!* Reb Shimon! Are you okay?"

Reb Shimon cracked a weak smile. "...I've been better... What a horrible place..." Reb Shimon's experiences clearly would not leave him for a while, but he was sound.

"Can you take me home?" he asked.

"Home?" Rav Yonasan said. "I'm sorry, my dear *chavrusa*, but you mustn't go home! When the monks find out that you've escaped, they will come to search your home right away. You must flee to another city, quickly. I will send your wife and children after you!"

"What? I must meet my family to let them know I am free!"

"They, and you, are still in grave danger, Reb Shimon!" Rav Yonasan warned. "But if you insist, we will make a quick stop at your home. The monks will likely not discover your absence until the morning. You must be far away by then."

The two hurried to Reb Shimon's home. There followed a scene of tearful hello, welcome, and goodbye all at the same time. The family was overjoyed to see Reb Shimon but terrified of what lay ahead.

All too quickly, it was time to go, and Rav Yonasan brought Reb Shimon to the train station. Only when he was safely aboard a train to a distant city did Rav Yonasan breathe a sigh of relief and head home.

Elke had already gone to bed; she was accustomed to her new husband keeping late hours. Usually, those hours were spent in the *beis midrash*, but this time, they were spent on the rare mitzvah of *pidyon shevuyim*. Rav Yonasan redoubled his resolve to keep Elke unaware of this whole business, for her own safety.

But it was not to be. Early the next morning, as Rav Yonasan and his wife sat down to share a bite of breakfast, there was urgent pounding on the door...

TO BE CONTINUED....

2



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.

רַק הַשְּׁמֶר לְךָ וּשְׁמֶר נַפְשֶׁךָ. הָאֵד פֶּן תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת
הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וּפֶן יִסּוּרוּ מִלְּבַבְךָ. כֹּל
יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ יְהוֹדַעְתֶּם לְבְנֵיךָ וּלְבְנֵי בְנֵיךָ.

"Just be very careful and watch yourself, lest you forget the things you have seen, lest you let them out of your heart all the days of your life, and you will teach them to your children and grandchildren." (*Devarim* 4:9)

Lest we forget the Torah and teach it to our children? If we forget it, how can we teach it to our children?



The Torah is telling us to teach *this pasuk* to our children: that it cannot be forgotten that we saw *Mattan Torah* with our own eyes, it is not hearsay or stories. That way there can be no doubt about it.



Be very careful not to forget...by teaching it to your children. The best way to avoid forgetting or losing your Torah is to teach it to your children (and *talmidim*, or write *sefarim*). That way, even when you have to be preoccupied with other things, they can be studying it, fulfilling the mitzvah of not leaving Torah for a moment.



Don't forget it *and* teach it to your children. Moshe is telling us that we can't ignore Torah study and expect our children to learn. If you forget it, don't expect your children to be interested in learning! The only way they will learn is if they see that it is valuable to you.

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.

PARSHAH SUMMARY

Moshe ends his *mussar* speech, the first of three farewell speeches to *Klal Yisrael*. He speaks of his failed struggle for permission to enter Eretz Yisrael and then gives strong warnings and *chizuk* to remember, keep, and love the Torah and mitzvos, and includes a description of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Maamad Har Sinai*. He reminds the people of Hashem's love for them and that punishment is a sign of that love.

Moshe then designates *arei miklat* and begins his next, longest, speech, in which he reviews the Torah. He begins by relating the events of *Kabbalas HaTorah*, including the *Aseres Hadibros*, and the fear it caused *Klal Yisrael*. The *parshiyos* of *Shema* and *V'hayah Ki Yeviacha* are said, and Pesach is reviewed.

This Shabbos immediately follows Tishah B'Av, the day of intense Jewish mourning. It is time to pick up the pieces and start over. We have been crushed but not destroyed; we are still Hashem's nation, and we are still loved.

AVODAH FOR THIS WEEK:

This is clearly the week to restart and refresh. We have gotten through Tishah B'Av—we have hit rock bottom—and we are getting up again. The *parshah* begins a fresh review of the Torah, and we must refresh our commitment. As practice for the upcoming Rosh Hashanah, we need a fresh commitment and dedication. Let this summer not be parched of spirituality.

1. **This is a great time to start a new *limud* or pay renewed attention to a particular mitzvah. Can you take on something that will end close to Rosh Hashanah? Can you learn a small *masechta* or section of Halachah? *Daf Yomi* is finishing *Shabbos* and beginning *Eruvin* in just over a week.**
2. **Think of something unpleasant that happened to you recently and try to figure out a way it may have been for the best. Remember that that is always the case, even if you can't see how, and feel love to Hashem for that reason.**



ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES:

1. Can you name six rivers mentioned in the *parshah*? **Pras, Yarden, Eshkol, Zered, Arnon, Yabok.** Five mountains? **Se'ir, Chorev, Emori, Chermon, Gilad**
2. What is another name for the Yam Hamelach? **Yam Ha'aravah.** What three other names does the Kinneret have? **Yam Teveriah, Yam Hagalil, Yam Ginosar.** Which mountain in the *parshah* has two names? **Chermon-Snir (also Siryon).** Which mountain has five names? **Chorev, Sinai, Har Elokim, Har Gavnunim, Har Bashan**
3. Where is there a closed *parshah* break (*stumah*) in the middle of a *pasuk*? **Devarim 2:8**
4. Which three *nevuos* read this week include the word "*Eichah*"? **The *parshah*, the haftorah, *Megillas Eichah***

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 the famous reading of Shabbos Nachamu, the haftorah read just after Tishah B'Av. It is the first of the seven Haftaros of Consolation. There is a pattern to the seven. The first four represent a conversation. In *Nachamu*, Hashem sends a *navi* to console *Klal Yisrael*. In the second, *Klal Yisrael* bewail the fact that Hashem has not come to comfort us Himself. In the third, the *nevi'im* report this to Hashem. In the fourth, Hashem speaks words of comfort directly.

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

Haftaros Nachamu comforts the nation by describing the joy and miracles that will take place when we return to Yerushalayim. It depicts the world turning over in turmoil as we return, triumphant, to the Land. The haftorah goes on to describe the ultimate power and dominion Hashem has over the universe. This reassures us that everything He has done is for us and our benefit, that He still loves us, and that nothing can impede the upcoming redemption.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH:

The *parshah* describes our redemption from Egypt, the revelation of Hashem's power at *Mattan Torah*, our fear of Him, His love for us, our exaltation before the nations with wisdom and mitzvos, and a reminder that even punishment is a sign of love.

The haftorah describes our future redemption with the coming of Mashiach, the power of Hashem that will be revealed, His awe that will be instilled in the world, and the world's future recognition of the triumph of Yisrael, and consoles us for our punishment, which was also a sign of love.

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES:

This haftorah has been the constant headline for *Klal Yisrael* for thousands of years. Daily, we plow through the terrible *galus*, holding onto the promise of redemption and the knowledge of Hashem's undying love for His people.



>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

time, there seemed to be no hope. The community fasted and prayed, asking Hashem to send a messenger.

Sure enough, a simple wagon driver passing through the town stepped forward and volunteered to debate the bishop. With no other option, the townsfolk allowed the man to take on the task.

Before long, the great day arrived. The entire city packed into an arena on the palace grounds, and the two debaters squared off on the stage. There would be three rounds of debate.

Silence reigned in the stadium.

The bishop offered his initial challenge: he swept two fingers high in the air. The crowd gasped. He was clearly saying the world could only be run by a duality of power (*chas v'shalom*)!

The wagon driver stepped forward to respond. He extended one finger and swept his arm in an upwards circle. The crowd broke into applause. What an answer! He was saying that one unified force, One G-d, is stronger than two!

Looking frustrated, the bishop issued his next argument. He spread out the fingers of his right hand, palm outward. He was pointing out that the Jews were spread across the world, too scattered to be significant. The crowd clapped lightly.

The wagon driver strode forward, sweeping his hand straight ahead and clenching it in a fist. A roar of approval swept through the stadium. He was saying that when Mashiach comes, the nation will be gathered tightly together again!

Looking furious, the bishop entered the third and final round. He produced a bottle of blood-red wine from his pack, thrust it forward, and placed it on a table. A fascinated murmur filled the audience. He was pointing out that the Jews had been rejected, and their sins were red like blood and wine! What answer could there be to that?

The wagon driver did not seem fazed. With a flourish, he produced a block of cheese from his pocket and placed it on the table near the wine. The crowd went wild! He was referencing the *pasuk* "If your sins be red as scarlet, like snow they shall be whitened" (*Yeshayah* 1:18)!

The Jews were declared the winner, and the wagon driver was carried on the shoulders of a cheering crowd while the bishop slunk home in shame.

At a *seudas hodaah* attended by the entire Jewish community, the victorious wagon driver was asked to replay a blow-by-blow account of the debate. "It was easy," he said. "He put out two fingers to say he was going to poke my eyes out, so I stuck out one to show I could take out both of his with one finger! Then he threatened to slap me, so I shook my fist at him! That must have embarrassed him, because he tried to make peace by offering me wine. I was happy to make peace, so I offered him some cheese."

The word קל in the pasuk describing the awe the nations have for the wisdom of the Jews can be read as קל, "empty." When Hashem provides wisdom, even the unlearned can defeat the brilliant!



HALACHAH

רבי מאיר אומר, כל השוכח דבר אחד ממשנתו, מעלה עליו הפתוב פאלו מתחייב בנפשו,
שנאמר רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח...
(דברים ט:ט)

“Rabi Meir says, whoever forgets one thing from his learning, the *pasuk* considers him as if he must pay with his life, as the *pasuk* says, ‘Just watch yourself and watch your soul lest you forget...’” (*Devarim* 4:9)

What actions cause people to forget their Torah learning?

WEARING CLOTHING

INSIDE OUT

Shulchan Aruch says that one must be careful not to wear clothing inside out. Magen Avraham understands that the problem is that the seams will be visible and one will look strange. (If the seams would not be visible, he would allow it.)

What about garments *designed* to show the seams? Maharsham explains that the issue is Kabbalistic and memory related; therefore, he says it is not a problem if you always intend to wear it inside out or frequently reverse it.

Reversible garments are not a problem according to both approaches. Wearing shoes on the wrong feet also causes forgetfulness.

DOUBLE

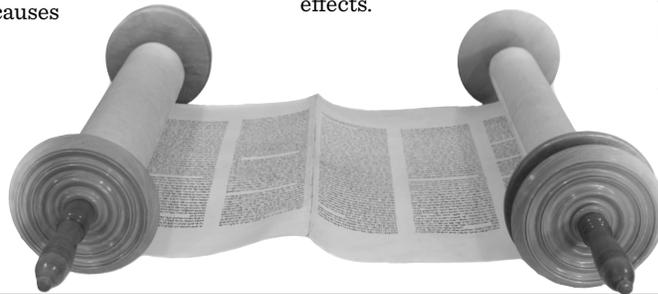
CLOTHING

The Arizal writes that donning two items of clothing at once is also problematic. Beis Baruch writes that removing two garments together is not an issue. *Aruch Hashulchan* and others say shoes are not considered clothes in this regard, and there is no problem in removing both shoes together or shoes with galoshes on them. Eishel Avraham (Butchatch) says if one of the articles of clothing is a small, insignificant item that goes together with another (like a yarmulke in a hat), it is okay. Others are stringent about yarmulkes in hats. Several *poskim* write that two garments that serve the same purpose, such as two layers of coat or sweater, also do not cause any negative effects.

OTHER

ISSUES

The Shach (*Yoreh Dei'ah* 277) writes that when one leaves a *sefer* open, the *sheid* called Shomer Dafim causes him to forget his learning. Beis Baruch writes that since the issue is the disgrace to the *sefer*, it does not help to turn to a different page. Avudraham notes that cutting one's nails in sequence also causes one to forget. Magen Avraham says that drying one's hands on his *chaluk* (shirt or undershirt) causes him to forget, and he is unsure if it applies to other garments. Other *poskim* question if this applies to all wet hands or only after washing *netilas yadayim*. Sewing clothing while wearing it causes one to forget unless he is chewing a thread (*Machzor Vitri*). The Gemara (*Horayos* 13b) lists many things that cause one to forget or have difficulty learning.



THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"HE WHO HAS NO PATIENCE TO REVIEW HIS LEARNING WILL BECOME A NOTHING."

—Rav Yitzchak Hutner *zt"l*

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