



# CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR

## Shabbos Table

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

DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

### THE HONEST THIEF

וְתִמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס

"And the land was filled with theft" (*Bereishis* 6:11).

*If the world was destroyed because people stole from shopkeepers, why were the shopkeepers also punished?*

**T**he king scowled at the hapless prisoner from his place high on the judge's bench.

"Do you understand what you have done?!" he thundered.

"Y-yes, Your Honor, Your Majesty," the prisoner responded, trembling in his striped jail pajamas. "I am so sorry and I promise I'll never do it again, it was—"

"You're right you'll never do it again, ha ha! I'll see to that!" The king cleared his throat. "And now," he boomed, "I, His Majesty the Great, do declare this man guilty of stealing from my royal kingdom, duly judged and found guilty, and now confessed before the court, sentenced to..." (The king took off his glasses and squinted at the paper clenched in his fist.) "Death by hanging! The sentence shall be carried out immediately!"

The king looked around the courtroom with a satisfied expression on his face. "How about that!"

"Well said, well said, Your Majesty," the finance minister offered.

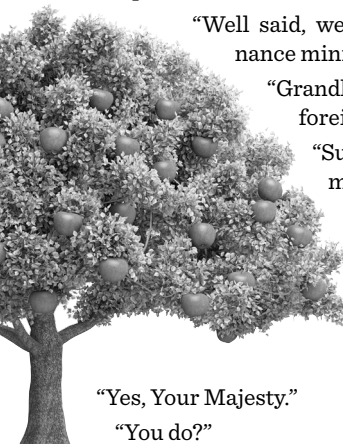
"Grandly done, Your Excellence!" the foreign minister squeaked.

"Superb, superb!" the defense minister piped.

"Well then, knave, have you anything to say for yourself before we carry out this fair and just sentence?" the king demanded of the condemned prisoner.

"Yes, Your Majesty."

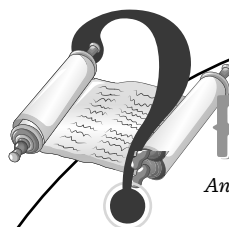
"You do?"



# פרשת נח

## CONTENTS

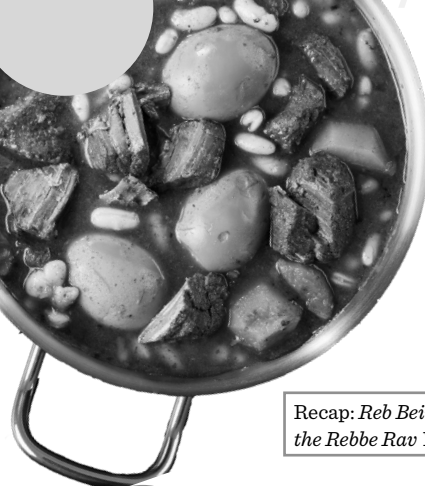
- #1 DVAR TORAH IN A STORY
- #1 PARSHAH RIDDLES
- #2 CHOLENT STORY
- #2 LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI
- #2 PERSONAL GROWTH AVODAH
- #3 ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES
- #4 HAFTORAH FROM THE HEADLINES
- #5 GEMATRIA
- #5 THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY
- #6 HALACHAH
- #6 THE LAST WORD



## PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 **When was the only time in history that the sun rose in the west and set in the east? Also, during the *Mabul*, there was no rising and setting of the sun. How did Noah know how many days passed (as the *pesukim* say he did)?**
- 2 **If all the trees outside the *teivah* were destroyed, where did the dove find an olive branch?**
- 3 **What was Noah's wife's name? (Hint: Her name also starts with a *nun*. Can you think of any other couple in *Tanach* whose names start with the same letter? There are seven.)**



## SERIAL >> CHAPTER 2

# CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Reb Beirish feels he must travel to spend Shabbos Chanukah with the Rebbe Rav Yisroel of Ruzhin, despite the gathering blizzard.

R

eb Beirish pulled his gloves tighter and wrapped his muffler snugly around his face. He jumped into the cart, waved goodbye, and set off, the horse jogging into the swirling, darkening, windy edge of visibility.

The cold bit deeply through his coat and the wind howled, but one thought kept him going: he was on the way to the Rebbe! The image of the spiritual fire that was the *heilige* Ruzhiner kept him warm.

The old horse made good time on the hard, frozen ground, but after an hour or so, the first flakes began to swirl. They soon increased in frequency and intensity, and before long, a raging blizzard enveloped the lonely traveler and his horse. Visibility dropped to a few feet, and the going become rough as snow piled up quickly.

Reb Beirish plowed ahead. He peered through the flying flakes, trying to make out the road and stay on course. He urged the old horse to keep trudging forward and said a few *kapitlach* Tehillim, praying that the wagon wheels would continue to find traction in the snow.

But it soon proved too much. The wagon began slipping and sliding, and the horse couldn't struggle through the snow anymore. There was an inn up ahead somewhere, a place he often visited on the way to Ruzhin. If only he could make it there before nightfall, he would have a warm fire and a hot meal.

The horse stopped, defeated. Reb Beirish looked around. All was white as far as his eyes could see, which wasn't very far. The driving snow and blasting wind bit into him and tore at his eyes. The horse wouldn't move, and the chill seeped into his bones. He was stuck in the middle of nowhere.

Reb Beirish shivered and pulled his coat tighter. Should he wait for the snow to stop and try to push forward afterward, or try to push the wagon now?

He stumbled up to the horse's head. The poor old fellow looked miserable. "It's alright, old boy, you did your best," he said. "Hashem will help! Come, let's give it another shove!" Reb Beirish attached the horse's hitching harness to his own shoulders and proceeded to heave forward alongside the horse. The lighter cart sledged forward a little bit. Reb Beirish stopped to rest and then gave another heave forward.

He wasn't going to make it very far like this, but all he needed to do was find that inn...if he hadn't already passed it in the blinding snowstorm.

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.

נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורו

"Noach was a completely righteous man in his generation"  
(Bereishis 6:9).

יש מרבתינו דורשים אותו לשבח, כל שכן שאילו היה בדור צדיקים היה צדיק יותר, ויש שדורשים אותו לגנאי, לפי דורו היה צדיק, ואילו היה בדורו של אברהם לא היה נחשב לכולם

"Some of our rabbis interpret this as praise: had he lived in a generation of righteous people he would have been a greater tzaddik; and some interpret it as a denigration: he was righteous only relative to his generation; had he lived in the generation of Avraham, he would not have been considered anything" (Rashi, ad loc.).

**Why would anyone interpret the Torah's statement that Noach was a tzaddik as a denigration (if it could just as easily be a praise)?**

## BE'ER SHEVA (LITVISH):

The second opinion holds that this *pasuk* has to be interpreted negatively because the Torah later says Noach only entered the *teivah* when the rain forced him to, which shows that he also didn't believe Hashem when He said He was going to bring a *mabul*. (The other opinion holds he knew Hashem's mercy was so strong, and he figured He wouldn't do it in the end.)

## PARDES YOSEF (CHASSIDISH):

The Torah is teaching us that every tzaddik has people who are opposed to him, and that is okay. Every tzaddik in history faced challengers—even Moshe Rabbeinu. *Chazal* are showing us that some people will always denigrate tzaddikim, but that doesn't mean they aren't tzaddikim. The first person the Torah called a tzaddik, Noach, was denigrated by some. But as long as some people also praise him, he can still be holy.

## BEN YEHOYADA (SEPHARDI):

Before Noach was saved from the *Mabul*, he had many *zechuyos*. At that point, he was praiseworthy. After he was saved, he had used up many of his *zechuyos* and was nowhere near the level of Avraham's generation. The two opinions do not contradict each other. One says this *pasuk* refers to the time before the *Mabul*, because it calls him a tzaddik; the other says it refers to the time after the *Mabul*, because it says "*hayah*"—he was once a tzaddik, but not anymore.



# 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

The central event of *Parshas Noach* is, of course, the *Mabul*, a terrifying act of Divine surgery in which Hashem determines that creation is sick beyond repair and needs a reboot. Mankind has not fulfilled the purpose for which the world was created—to choose good over evil and cling to Hashem. It has quickly rotted to the point that it needs to be mostly redone; only the barest skeleton of existence is worth saving.

The central ill of the generation of the Flood is in their *bein adam l'chaveiro*, including the sin of theft. Later in the *parshah*, people get along with each other just grandly, but use that unity to attack Hashem—sinning *bein adam laMakom*.

We may find that our *kabbalos* of the Yamim Nora'im are diseased or on life support. Now is the time for special surgery to try and save the operation.

## AVODAH OF THE WEEK:

1. Review the *kabbalos* and commitments you made over the Yamim Nora'im. How are they going? Identify the essential theme you are trying to fix and redo the list entirely, making different commitments following similar themes. Make sure to focus on at least one *bein adam l'chaveiro* and one *bein adam laMakom*.
2. This new list will be reviewed again next week, but for now, try to see how this reworked list plays out over the course of this week. Track progress carefully once per day.

## ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES:

1. What letter does the Gemara say is missing from the entire story of creation, until Chavah was created? **Samach**. Where does it appear in the beginning of *Bereishis*, and why doesn't that count? **In describing the rivers of Gan Eden, it says הוּא הַסּוּבב. It doesn't count because it is not about creating anything.**
2. Who was the only person in history that never had a name? **Adam Harishon. He was not named "Adam"; the Torah just refers to him as "ha'adam—the man." That was his species. Why not? He was the one who named every creature, and he didn't name himself!**
3. What are the 10 *ma'amarim* of the creation of the world?  
בְּרָאשִׁית בְּרָא  
יְהי אור  
...יְהי רָקיעַ...  
...יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם...  
...תִּדְשֵׂא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא...  
...יְהי מְאֹרֶת...  
...יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם...  
...תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה...  
...נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם...
4. Which one did not really make anything new? **The last—it just designated plants as food. הִנֵּה נִתְּתִי לָכֶם ...לֶאֱכֹל.** Which one does not begin with "Vayomer"? **The first. Why not? The phrase "Bereishis..." was the creation of time. One can't say "And He said" before time exists! (Vilna Gaon).**

*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

The haftorah for *Parshas Noach* (according to the Ashkenazic *minhag*) includes the haftorah for *Parshas Re'eh*, which is the third of the Haftaros of Consolation. (Sephardim stop the haftorah immediately before that section.)

## HAFTORAH SUMMARY

Hashem promises a wonderful and rich future for the Jewish people. He speaks of the expansion of Eretz Yisrael and of riches and wealth spilling from every corner in the times of redemption. Hashem emphasizes that He keeps His promises and that when the redemption finally arrives, nothing can ruin it. Yisrael will be experts in Torah and will live in peace and prosperity. The nations of the world will cease to torment the Jewish nation. He compares Yisrael to a wife who is always beloved and has a covenant that nothing can ruin.

## CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

The haftorah explicitly mentions the “waters of Noach” when Hashem stresses that His vow to Yisrael will never be broken just as His vow never to destroy the world again was never broken. The haftorah also decries theft and people chasing after riches, describing no shortage of such riches in the days of redemption. Similarly, the Flood was caused by avarice and stealing.

On a deeper level, the *parshah* describes the paring down of the world’s population to the group charged with fulfilling its destiny. Most of the planet was unsuccessful and was therefore destroyed during the *Mabul*. The rebuilt mankind fails as well and is split into 70 splinters during the *Dor Haflagah*. The end of the *parshah* brings us to Avraham, who will father the nation that will realize the world’s purpose. The haftorah describes the ultimate realization of the world’s purpose in the days of redemption and the eventual awareness of the nations and their withdrawal from oppression.

## RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

Has this process already begun? It depends whom you ask. We are clearly in the era of the footsteps of Mashiach; the expansion of Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael is undeniable, and its acceptance among the Arab world is growing. On the other hand, protests regarding perceived anti-Semitic injustice are spreading in the United States. We pray that the redemption is nigh.

“Why certainly. I have a particular skill, a great invention, that would serve mankind, and even the king. It would be a shame for me to take the secret to the grave. Let me teach it to you now, before I go.”

The king stroked his chin and nodded.

“Very good, very good! What is your special skill?”

“I know a special chemical mixture that I can use to cook pits from fruits. Then I plant them in the ground and a full tree, filled with fruits, grows within minutes!”

The king was impressed. “Profound, profound! I have heard of such a mixture, but I did not know you possessed the secret. Do tell! Do tell!”

The ministers all nodded and murmured wisely.

The condemned prisoner began listing ingredients while court scribes composed the list. When it was complete, the prisoner added, “Please send someone to bring the chemicals, and I will show you how to mix them properly.”

The king’s couriers raced to the royal storehouses, laboratories, and apothecaries. Soon, a pile of ingredients lay before the prisoner. He began mixing and boiling the potions in a big pot, stirring this way and that, issuing instructions, and demonstrating the proper technique.

At last, the potion was ready, steaming and bubbling gently in the cauldron. “Now,” said the prisoner, “we dip a pit in this mixture and bury it. Within minutes, we will have a tree filled with fruit!”

The king rubbed his hands together eagerly.

“Go ahead!” he cried. “Plant it, plant it! Quick!”

“Oh, not me,” said the prisoner. “Only a person who never stole in his life can plant it, or it won’t work! I, as you know, have stolen. Surely the finance minister is an honest man; let us honor him with the privilege of planting the first pit!”

The finance minister squirmed uncomfortably in his seat. “Well, I think I would rather pass on the great honor... You see, many millions of dollars pass through my hands every day—who’s to say a nickel or two didn’t get stuck to my fingers at some point? Maybe the defense minister should do it!”

The defense minister did not look happy. “No, sir! When I was a young lad, I once stole a cherry off a tree! Perhaps the foreign minister should be the one to...”

The foreign minister coughed, hiccupped, and spasmed. His face turned red and he coughed uncontrollably. He wagged his finger at the assembled and quickly excused himself.

The prisoner turned to the king. “Well, Your Majesty, it’s up to you. You are the only honest man among us. Please plant it!”

But the king declined. His face red, he mumbled something about mistakes of youth. “No, no, not me,” he said.

The prisoner jumped up. “Your Majesty, everyone in this room has been guilty of stealing. Why should I be the only one punished? All the people accusing me are just as guilty as I am!”

*That’s how it was with the generation of the Mabul, the Ben Ish Chai notes. The shopkeepers accusing the thieves of stealing were just as guilty of stealing from others!*

## את האלקים התהלך נח

“Noach walked with Hashem” (*Bereishis* 6:9).

ובאברהם הוא אומר אשר התהלכתי לפניו, נח היה צריך סעד לתומכו, אבל אברהם היה מתחזק ומהלך בצדקו מאליו

“About Avraham it says, ‘That I walked before him’; Noach needed help to support him, but Avraham strengthened himself and walked in his righteousness on his own” (*Rashi*, ad loc.).

נח את האלקים התהלך נח (including the four words) = 1014

נח צריך סעד לתומכו = 1014

# THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY



The 6th of Cheshvan was a terrible day in Jewish history. Tzidkiyahu, the last king of Yehudah, was captured by the Babylonians. His children were executed in front of him, and then he was blinded and taken to Bavel in chains. *Chazal* relate that Tzidkiyahu had prepared an escape tunnel from his palace leading deep into Midbar Yehudah. When Yerushalayim was overrun by Nevuchadnetzar, Tzidkiyahu fled to the tunnel. Hashem caused a deer to catch the attention of several Babylonians, who chased it right to the exit of Tzidkiyahu’s tunnel just in time to see him emerging.

Also on this day, the Greek armies massacred hundreds of Jews in the town of Beit She’an shortly before the Chanukah story.

# HALACHAH

## Rainbows

**1.** Upon seeing a rainbow, one recites the *bracha* זֹכֶר הַבְּרִית נֶאֱמָן וְקִים בְּמַאֲמָרוֹ בְּבְרִיתוֹ. The *bracha* is praising Hashem for keeping His promise never to bring another *mabul*. One must see the rainbow to say the *bracha*. According to some *poskim*, one must see the entire semicircle rainbow, or at least most of it. Other *poskim* say the rainbow must exist in a full semicircle but one can say the *bracha* even if part of it is blocked from their view. When there exists just a piece of rainbow, it is a subject of dispute, and one should mentally recite the *bracha* but not speak it with Hashem's Name. The *bracha* may be recited while seated, although many are *makpid* to stand.

**2.** It is not proper to point out a rainbow to others because that constitutes *lashon hara* about the world—it indicates that the world is worthy of destruction. One should also not stare at it for this reason;

rather, they should just see it long enough to say the *bracha*. The Gemara (*Chagigah* 16) says it is damaging to one's vision, and the *Zohar* says it is surrounded by forces that damage vision (and blur its colors—if one sees a rainbow with sharp colors, Mashiach is certainly coming!).

The *poskim* discuss whether it is *lashon hara* if one merely hints to another person that there is a rainbow. There is a custom that one should merely say, "There's a *bracha* over there." If one is told that there is a rainbow, they are not obligated to go outside to see the rainbow and say the *bracha*, certainly if they are in the middle of learning or *davening*. One may say the *bracha bein haperakim*.

The Yaaros Devash holds that the *bracha* is only recited on miraculous, unexplained rainbows, but not on today's rainbows, which are natural phenomena. Most *poskim* disagree and say the meaning of the rainbow is unchanged even

though it has clear natural causes. They add that even permanent rainbows, like those found in the spray of waterfalls or rivers, should not be stared at, since they also damage vision.

**3.** Most *birchos hashevach*, *brachos* of praise, can only be recited once in 30 days. If one sees the Great Sea, mountains, or rivers a second time in 30 days, they would not say the *bracha* again. The *bracha* on thunder and lightning, though, may be recited again the next day, or even multiple times in one day if the sky cleared completely since the last *bracha*. Many *poskim* hold that the *bracha* on rainbows can be recited again for each new rainbow even if the sky did not clear. If the rainbow disappeared, which may happen when clouds block the sun, and then reappears, one may say the *bracha* again. Others say the rules of thunder and lightning apply.

## THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"BECOMING AN ADULT IS LIKE LOOKING BOTH WAYS BEFORE YOU CROSS THE STREET...AND THEN GETTING HIT BY A PLANE."



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

AT YOUR SHABBOS TABLE IS COMPILED BY RABBI YITZCHOK LANDA. COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS: [CIRCLETIME@CIRCMAG.COM](mailto:CIRCLETIME@CIRCMAG.COM)

No part of *Circle Time: At the Shabbos Table* may be reproduced without permission and credit.



CALL . TEXT . ☎ 732-592-5437 • EMAIL [SUBSCRIPTIONS@CIRCMAG.COM](mailto:SUBSCRIPTIONS@CIRCMAG.COM) • [WWW.CIRCMAG.COM](http://WWW.CIRCMAG.COM)

