



# פרשת אחרי מות

## CIRCLE TIME AT YOUR Shabbos Table

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

### TELL ME A MASHAL >>

A dvar Torah with a story.

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת... וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר אֶל אַהֲרֹן אַחִידְךָ וְאֵל יִבְאֵ בְכָל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִבֵּית לְפָרְכֹת אֶל פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל הָאֹרֶן וְלֹא יָמוּת כִּי בְעֵנֹן אֲרָאָה עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת (ויקרא טז:ב)

*Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death... Hashem said to Moshe, "Speak to your brother Aharon so that he will not come at any time into the sacred place beyond the Paroches in front of the Kapores that is on top of the Aron, for I appear in the cloud over the Kapores." (Vayikra 16:1-2)*

**Rashi on Bamidbar teaches us that the term dibbur always signifies a harsh, strict tone of speech, while amirah always signifies a soft, compassionate tone. If so, these pesukim are confusing. First Hashem speaks to Moshe with a harsh tone of dibbur, but then Hashem starts over in a soft tone of amirah. Is Hashem being strict and harsh here, or is He being compassionate?**

**T**he king of Austria enjoyed peace and prosperity during his long reign, and this was in large part thanks to his brilliant advisor Wilhelm. The king conferred with Wilhelm about every issue, and he often sent the advisor on sensitive missions. Wilhelm invariably executed them to the king's satisfaction.

The king's oldest son Arthur did not like the way his father related to Wilhelm. He felt that it was beneath the king's dignity to act in such a chummy manner with a commoner. A king ought to be held in awe by everyone, he thought.

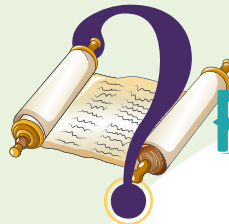
Eventually, the old king died and Arthur assumed the throne. Only one day after his coronation, Wilhelm came to the throne room for his scheduled consultation. The young king addressed him coldly, snapped some orders, and dismissed him with a wave of his hand.



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## PARSHAH RIDDLES

Answers to this week's riddles appear on page 3.

- 1 The *kohen gadol* did this three times on Yom Kippur, but we do it ten times. What is it?
- 2 The *kohen gadol* did this four times on Yom Kippur, but never on any other day of the year. What is it?
- 3 The *kohen gadol* did this fifteen times on Yom Kippur, but we are forbidden to do it even once. What is it?
- 4 These two words in this *parshah* sometimes mean a) in the *Kodesh Hakadashim*, b) in the *heichal*, and c) in the *azarah*. What are they?
- 5 This *parshah* has lots, but there are only two of them. What are they?



# CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Rav Tzvi Aryeh of Alik instructed one of his chassidim to become a *melamed* without explaining why. When an innkeeper suddenly offers the chassid to become his children's *melamed*, he accepts the position although he does not need the work.

**T**he innkeeper was very happy with the *melamed*. Every once in a while, he listened for a few minutes as his children absorbed the lessons. The *melamed* loved the Torah and was filled with *yiras Shamayim*, and his young charges were enraptured by his enthusiasm.

One day, a few months later, the innkeeper listened in as the *melamed* read and explained a selection from *Reishis Chochmah* to his students. The chassid explained it with his inimitable emotional style, the words and their meaning pouring out of his heart. The words made their way into the innkeeper's heart as well.

He knocked on the door and walked into the room. "Excuse me for interrupting your holy work," he said. "Children, please go outside for a few minutes. I want to speak briefly to your *rebbe*, and then you can come back and continue learning."

The boys happily took the unexpected recess, leaving their father alone with the *melamed*. The innkeeper looked at the chassid, trying to find his voice. Finally, he blurted out, "All those terrible sins you were just describing – that's me! I am the most wicked person on earth, for I have strayed so far from my Creator."

The Chassid looked at his employer compassionately and replied, "Oh, it can't be as bad as you are saying."

"Oh, but it is," the innkeeper insisted, and now the tears began streaming down his face as he described the terrible sins he had committed.

The chassid was shocked, but he said, "Even so, there is nothing that you cannot overcome through *teshuvah*."

"No! Don't try to contradict what you taught my sons. There is no way for me to right the wrongs I have wrought."

"Of course there is a way, despite the stern warning of the *Reishis Chochmah*. You need to go to my *rebbe*, Rav Tzvi of Alik. He will tell you what you need to do. If you want, we can travel there together in the morning, after *davening*, and I will introduce you to him."

The innkeeper agreed, feeling an inkling of hope, and he left the chassid's room. But later he felt too impatient. He needed to do *teshuvah* right then; he couldn't wait until morning. He hurriedly put on his heavy winter coat and gloves, took his *Tehillim*, and went out into the freezing night.

The ground was covered with snow and a new layer was falling quickly from the sky.

Paying no attention to the weather, the innkeeper went out to the forest. Standing between the barren trees, he began reciting *Tehillim* while heaving with sobs. As time went on, the snowfall grew even heavier and the wind began howling. He paid no attention; he was focused entirely on begging Hashem to forgive him for his terrible sins.

At one point, he felt suddenly warm, and he hoped that it meant that Hashem was accepting his prayers. He did not realize that he had been stricken with frostbite and could no longer feel the cold. Finally, he collapsed and his soul left his frozen body in the snow-covered forest.

TO BE CONTINUED

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIDRASH

During the latter era of the second Beis Hamikdash, there were bitter disagreements between the *Chachamim* and the *Tzedukim* about the way to fulfill many of the mitzvos. One of their major fights was about the way the *kohen gadol* offers the *ketores* in the *Kodesh Kadashim* on Yom Kippur. *Chazal* taught that he puts down the pan holding the coals in front of the *Aron Kodesh* and then pours the incense powder over the coals. This follows the plain meaning of the *pasuk* (*Vayikra* 16:13): *He puts the ketores on the fire directly facing Hashem (meaning in the Kodesh Kadashim) and the cloud of ketores will cover the Kapores.* The *Tzedukim* insisted that he place the *ketores* on the pan while he is holding it, before he walks into the *Kodesh Kadashim*. They argued that this is the meaning of the *pasuk* (*ibid.* 16:2): *For in the cloud (of ketores) I will appear over the Kapores.* Eventually, the office of *kohen gadol* was corrupted. The *kohen* who paid the most to the Romans would be elected to this prestigious position. Often, the new *kohen gadol* had *Tzeduki* leanings, and because of this, the Sanhedrin insisted that, on Erev Yom Kippur, the *kohen gadol* swear that he would perform the mitzvah of *ketores* as they instructed him. There was no way to know what he did, since no one was allowed in the *Heichal* while the *kohen gadol* offered the *ketores*.

*Chazal* related that one *kohen gadol* was a full-fledged *Tzeduki* and he actually offered the *ketores* in the manner of his *Tzeduki* teachers. Afterward he boasted to his father of his so-called accomplishment. His father said, "Aren't you afraid of the *Chachamim*? If they find out about this, they could punish us severely."

"I have dreamed all my life of finally fulfilling the mitzvah of *ketores* the 'right' way," the *kohen gadol* replied. "Now that I had the opportunity to do it, how could I pass it up?"

A few days later, people found this *kohen gadol's* body in a garbage dump with worms climbing in and out through his nostrils.



# PARSHAH RHYME



Review the main points of the parshah with younger children, while challenging your family to complete the rhymes (use the “grammen” tune). Answers on the side!

1) In the Mishkan, the *Kodesh Kadashim* was in the center.  
Only the *kohen gadol* was allowed to \_\_\_\_\_.

2) The *kohen gadol* pressed down on the goat’s head.  
He took all the people’s sins and placed them there \_\_\_\_\_.

3) He took *ketores* in his left hand and the coals in his right.  
He walked into the *Heichal*, he soon was out of \_\_\_\_\_.

4) He placed the pan of coals down in front of the *Kapores*.  
And then he carefully poured out the \_\_\_\_\_.

5) We cannot eat or drink, or even bathe on Yom Kippur.  
We can’t wear leather shoes, not even a soft \_\_\_\_\_.

6) We *daven* all day in the *zechus* of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.  
After it’s all over, we go home to something good on the \_\_\_\_\_.

7) Every *korban* that you bring – the Mishkan is where it suits.

If you *shecht* it somewhere else, you’re guilty of *shechutei* \_\_\_\_\_.

8) Keep the *chukim* and *mishpatim*, learn them very well.  
What’s the reason, what’s the rhyme, only Hashem can \_\_\_\_\_.

9) The mitzvot give us life in This World and the Next.  
So learn well the *halachos*, carefully study the \_\_\_\_\_.

10) Not like Egypt or Canaan, don’t follow *goyish* fashion.  
Appreciate the Torah’s way, keep the mitzvot with \_\_\_\_\_.

11) Eretz Yisrael is so holy; it can’t bear when people sin.  
If we do our best to keep the mitzvot, then we’re sure to \_\_\_\_\_.

12) Every evening we do this mitzvah, a number we count,  
Until on day fifty, we finally reach the Sinai \_\_\_\_\_.

13) Tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh, the Hallel we will sing.  
Open wide your heart and mouth, let those *pesukim* \_\_\_\_\_.

Answers: 1) enter 2) instead 3) sight 4) ketores 5) slipper 6) stove 7) chutz 8) tell 9) text 10) passion 11) win 12) Mount 13) ring

## RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. The *kohen gadol* said *vidui* three times – once for himself, once for all the *kohanim*, and once for all of Klal Yisrael. We say it ten times – twice during Maariv, twice during Shacharis, twice during *Mussaf*, twice during Minchah, and twice during *Ne’ilah*.
2. The *kohen gadol* walked into the *Kodesh Kadashim* four times on Yom Kippur – once to offer the *ketores*, once to sprinkle the blood of the *par*, once to sprinkle the blood of the *sa’ir*, and once to remove the pan of coals and *ketores*.
3. It is forbidden to wash yourself on Yom Kippur, but the *kohen gadol* washed his hands and feet ten times on Yom Kippur, and he immersed in a mikvah five times.
4. The words *lifnei Hashem*. The Torah says that the *kohen gadol* offers the *ketores lifnei Hashem* in the *Kodesh Kadashim*. He put the mixed blood of the *par* and the *sa’ir* on the golden *Mizbei’ach lifnei Hashem* in the *Heichal*, and the two goats are placed *lifnei Hashem* in the *Azarah*.
5. The *kohen gadol* cast lots to choose which goat would be used as a *Korban Chatas* and which one would be sent to Azazel.

You may be surprised to find something familiar in every haftorah.

# HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

## SUMMARY

The *navi* Yechezkel was taken into exile nine years before the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed. This haftorah (*Yechezkel 22*) includes some of the *tochachah* he gave to Klal Yisrael, hoping that they would do *teshuvah* and avoid the destruction and resulting exile. He lists many of the terrible *aveiros* that the people of Yerushalayim had committed. Hashem said, "I am so upset that I banged My hands together in despair. Now, I will have to scatter and disperse you to all corners of the globe!"

Hashem promises, however, that the exile will not be a punishment. Rather, it will be a way to cleanse Bnei Yisrael of their sins and remake them into better people. In the end, we will come to realize who we really are: We are Hashem's people, and He is our personal Master and Creator. Yechezkel compares the people to silver that has been mixed with all sorts of cheaper metals. Hashem has to cast the mixture into a furnace to burn away the impurities and extract the pure, beautiful silver that has always been there.

## CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

The final section of *Acharei Mos* lists all the forbidden relationships, the *arayos*. The Torah tells us that the Canaanite peoples who had lived in Eretz Yisrael until then were guilty of all these things, and that Eretz Yisrael is a holy land that cannot bear such behavior. Therefore, the land is "vomiting" the Canaanites out and bringing Bnei Yisrael in. The Torah warns us to be careful not to repeat the mistakes that the Canaanites made, so that the land will not vomit us out too and in the haftorah Yechezkel warned the people that they were approaching the fate of the Canaanites.

## YOU KNOW NAVI

Hashem often addressed Yechezkel as "*ben adam*." There are four Hebrew terms for a person: *ish*, *enosh*, *gever*, and *adam*. *Chazal* taught that *adam* is the most respectful term. Hashem called Yechezkel by this term to show His special love for him, and that He considered Yechezkel to be His faithful friend. Hashem used the term *ben adam* – son of *adam* – to signify that Yechezkel's parents were honest *tzaddikim* who worked to perform acts of *chessed* for others. They were willing to disgrace themselves in order to bring honor to Hashem and to His people. Yechezkel carried on all these good traits.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Wilhelm returned home and told his wife, "The new king doesn't explain in full what he wants, and he makes it plain that we'd better not ask him for details or to repeat himself. What will happen if I don't do things exactly as he wants? Judging from the way he dismissed me today, I think that he wants to find an excuse to get rid of me."

The woman ran to her father's home and told him of Wilhelm's predicament. He thought for a while and then he said, "I have a friend, a learned and wise rabbi. Perhaps he can give us some useful advice."

The old man and Wilhelm went together to visit the rabbi. After giving the matter some thought, the rabbi said, "I believe I have a solution for you. Spread the news that as a result of the new king's awe-striking demeanor, Wilhelm became so frightened that he lost his ability to speak. Even when the king sends the top doctors to heal you, make sure that not a word leaves your mouth. This way, you will escape the young king's wrath."

"It sounds good," Wilhelm agreed. "But am I condemned to pretend to be mute for the rest of my life?"

"Don't worry," the rabbi assured him. "It won't be long before the king will be happy to know that you have recovered so that he can reinstate you."

That very day, the news spread that advisor Wilhelm had been stricken dumb. The doctors and magicians who came to heal him left in despair, and when the king paid a visit, Wilhelm wept silently.

Arthur appointed a new advisor, but when he did not fulfill the king's orders and explained that he didn't really understand them, Arthur had him beheaded. The next appointee meekly asked Arthur to explain his orders in more detail, but Arthur went into a rage and roared, "Am I a kindergarten teacher?" Immediately, the advisor was placed in the dungeon and all his property was confiscated.

A few days later, the Spanish prime minister paid Arthur a visit. Arthur ordered a banquet in his honor, but the visitor, who was Jewish, explained that he could eat only raw fruits and vegetables. During the meal, Arthur voiced his frustration in finding a proper advisor.

"According to what I have heard," the Jew said, "it's all His Majesty's fault."

The king jumped from his seat. "You filthy Jew!" he exclaimed. "How dare you speak to me that way?"

"You've just proven that I'm right," the Jew replied calmly. "Why should you get angry when I'm only trying to help you? You are the king, but you must cultivate a king's traits to be successful. A real king treats his ministers and his people with respect and care so that they will remain loyal to him. If he wants things done correctly, he must make his instructions clear. If you make everyone scared, no one will be able to fulfill your will.

"This is how the King of kings acts as well. When He first gave us His Torah, He began in the stern tone of *vaydabeir*. But then He immediately changed to the soft tone of *leimor*."

"So how should I get a proper advisor?"

"My guess is that your original advisor was wise enough to invent his dumbness. Call for him and apologize, and then see what happens."

Arthur called for Wilhelm, who revealed the truth. Arthur then promoted Wilhelm, making him the prime minister, and he called for the rabbi to be his new advisor.

כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהַר אֶתְכֶם  
מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תִּטְהָרוּ.  
(ויקרא טז:ל)

**On this day He will atone for you from all your sins. In Hashem's Presence you must purify yourselves. (Vayikra 16:30)**

Chazal teach us that when someone does *teshuvah* and overcomes his *yetzer hara* completely, Hashem places a crown of light on his head. The Torah says that Yom Kippur is the best day for *teshuvah*, as it says in the above *pasuk* that we can purify ourselves by doing *teshuvah*. The word in the *pasuk* for “purify yourselves” is *tit’haru* (תטהרו) and the *gematria* of that word is 620, which equals that of the word *kesser* (כתר) – crown.

## TREATS FROM TARGUM

*So much more than just translation – quick insights into Targum Onkelos!*

דָּבַר אֶל אַהֲרֹן אַחִיד וְאֵל יִבֹּא בְּכָל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִבֵּית לְפָרְכֶת אֶל פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל הָאָרֹן וְלֹא יָמוּת כִּי בָעֵנָן אֲרָאָה עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת. (ויקרא טז:ב)

*Tell your brother Aharon that he may not enter the Kodesh beyond the Paroches at any time to be facing the Kapores that rests on the Aron, for I will appear on the Kapores with the cloud. (Vayikra 16:2)*

In the Midrash section, we said that the *Tzedukim* argued that the *kohen gadol* was supposed to pour the *ketores* powder on the pan filled with coals before he walked into the *Kodesh Kadashim*, since the Torah says, “I will appear on the *Kapores* with the cloud.”

How do *Chazal* interpret this *pasuk*? Onkelos tells us that this *pasuk* does not refer to the *ketores* at all. The word cloud in this *pasuk* refers to the Cloud of Glory that symbolizes the presence of the *Shechinah*. Therefore, it does not contradict the simple meaning of the *pasuk* (*Vayikra* 16:13): *He puts the ketores on the fire directly facing Hashem (meaning while he is in the Kodesh Kadashim) and the cloud of ketores will cover the Kapores.*

## THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY

Today, 29 Nissan, is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Moshe of Kobrin. Rav Moshe lived in the part of Lithuania that is now Belarus, and he was a *talmid* of Harav Mordechai of Lechovitz and his son Rav Noach. After Rav Noach passed away, Rav Moshe became a *rebbe* in his own right, but he remained very humble and went often to learn under Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin.

Rav Moshe emphasized the importance of *davening* with great enthusiasm. He encouraged his chassidim to immigrate to Eretz Yisrael, and they established a *Kobriner beis midrash* in Teveriah. Before he passed away, Rav Moshe instructed his *talmidim* to inscribe the following on his tombstone: “If anyone dares exaggerate anything about my *avodas Hashem*, I will take revenge on him in This World and in the Next. Still, I give permission for people to say that I loved all Jews.”

Today is also the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Mordechai Shalom Yosef Freidman, the Sadigurer Rebbe. He lived in Ukraine and was crowned Rebbe of Sadigura when he was only 16. After World War I, he traveled extensively from city to city to bring encouragement to his chassidim wherever they lived. In 1939, he visited Eretz Yisrael and ended up remaining there for fifteen years. Then he moved to the United States to help his son establish a *beis midrash* in Crown Heights. Several years later, he returned to Eretz Yisrael and established a number of *yeshivos* in several cities.

# HALACHAH

## Sefiras Ha'omer

1) The Torah tells us to count forty-nine days beginning from the second day of Pesach, and the fiftieth day will be Shavuos. Since the Torah connects this mitzvah with the *Korban Ha'omer*, most *Poskim* ruled that when we cannot bring that *korban* because the Beis Hamikdash is not built, there is no mitzvah from the Torah to count the days, and we fulfill a mitzvah *mid'Rabbanan* when we count them. The Rambam and other *Poskim* ruled that counting the days is a separate mitzvah from the Torah even if the *korban* is not brought.

2) The mitzvah is to count in the beginning of the evening, right after Ma'ariv, starting on the second night of Pesach. Many people have the custom of counting the *omer* only late at night after completing the Seder. Everyone should follow the tradition of his family and community.

On all other nights, it is best to count the *omer* right after *tzeis hakochavim*. We are supposed to stand up to fulfill this mitzvah. First we recite the *brachah* and then count, "Today is this number of days of the *omer*." Some people say the word *la'omer* at the end and others say *ba'omer*.

According to the *Shulchan Aruch*, it is permissible to count the *omer* right after

sunset, even before *tzeis hakochavim*. If you are in a shul where the people *daven* Ma'ariv and count the *omer* before *tzeis hakochavim*, and you want to count later but you are afraid that you might forget, you should count together with the congregation without reciting the *brachah*, but with a *tenai*. You should say to yourself, "If I remember to count the *omer* later on tonight, I do not want to fulfill the mitzvah at this time. If I don't remember to count it later on, I wish to fulfill the mitzvah at this time."

3) If one did not count the *omer* right after *tzeis hakochavim*, he can still fulfill the mitzvah of counting at any time of the night. If he forgot to count until morning, he may still count the next day, but he cannot recite the *brachah* over the mitzvah. On the following evening, he may resume counting with the *brachah*.

If someone forgets to count for an entire day, there is no way to make it up. He must continue to count the rest of the days, but he can no longer recite the *brachah* for the mitzvah. Instead, he should listen to the *chazzan's brachah* before he counts, or ask someone else to recite the *brachah* out loud having him in mind.

The best way to ensure that you won't forget to count the *omer* is to *daven* Ma'ariv in shul every night.

4) Before you recite the *brachah*, make sure that you know which number you are going to count that night. You should not recite the

*brachah* along with the rest of the congregation intending to listen to the number they count and then count that number. If someone does this, he does fulfill the mitzvah.

If someone asks you what number he should count and you have not yet counted, don't tell him, "Tonight is this-and-this number." If you do, you won't be able to recite the *brachah* that night, since you might have already fulfilled the mitzvah. Instead, you should answer, "Last night we counted this-and-this number."

If one recited the *brachah* thinking that tonight is the fourth night, but before he counts he finds out that it is the fifth, he may count without repeating the *brachah*. If he counted the wrong number but he corrected himself within the time of *toch k'dei dibbur*, he does not need to repeat the *brachah*. The time of *toch k'dei dibbur* is approximately one second.

5) There are really two mitzvos – one to count forty-nine days and another to count seven weeks. For the first six days we mention the number of days only. On the seventh night we say, "Today it is seven days, which are one week, of the *omer*." On the eighth night we say, "Today it is eight days, which are one week and one day, of the *omer*."

If on the eighth night one counts only the number of days and not the weeks, he may still continue to recite the *brachah* when he counts the *omer* on the following nights. The main mitzvah of counting the weeks is on the seventh night, the fourteenth night, and so on.

## THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"THE PURPOSE OF THE WORLD IS FOR PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE THAT HASHEM IS THE CREATOR. IF SOMEONE DOESN'T WANT TO RECOGNIZE THIS, HE DOESN'T BELONG HERE."

— Harav Moshe of Kobrin

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