



פרשת קדושים

CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR
Shabbos Table

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

TELL ME A STORY >>

A dvar Torah with a story.

ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה' (ויקרא יט:יח)

*Love your fellow man like yourself, I am Hashem
(Vayikra 19:18)*

Why does the Torah connect the phrase "I am Hashem" to the mitzvah of loving all other Jews? The Torah could have said this in connection to any other mitzvah just as well.

N

Naftali was a successful businessman who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. Once, while on a business trip, he met Ezra, a businessman who lived in Baghdad, Iraq. The two became fast friends. They shared their food and lodgings whenever they met and tips about good business deals as well. Naftali and Ezra loved each other more than brothers.

Years passed and Naftali fell on hard times. His business deals turned bad and he found himself deep in debt. He barely could feed his family.

Naftali's wife told him, "Listen, why don't you make a trip to visit your friend Ezra? Tell him what has happened; I am sure that he will help you. I'll manage somehow without you in the meantime. At least I will have some hope that help is on the way."

With a heavy heart, Naftali set out for Baghdad. He had no money for a camel, so he made the entire trip by foot. It took him weeks to reach the gates of Baghdad and he arrived hungry, exhausted, and covered with dust. He decided that he must not appear at his friend's door in such a state, and so he searched for a place where he could spend the night thinking that in the morning he would bathe, freshen up his clothes and then knock on Ezra's door. Naftali found an aban-

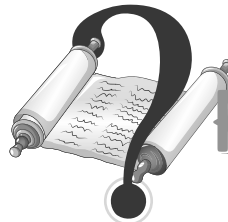


door. Naftali found an aban-

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PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

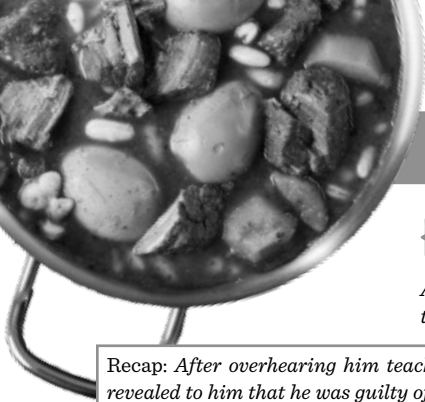
1 **It is forbidden to stand on it or eat on it. What is it?**

2 **It's almost Lag B'Omer. What hint to the custom of upsherin is in this week's parshah?**

3 **Sometimes you have to measure this down to the last hairsbreadth. What is it?**

4 **These four words appear twice in this week's parshah, but they have entirely different meanings each time.**

5 **Which mitzvah appears twice in this week's parshah? Which one appears three times?**



CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: After overhearing him teaching his sons, the innkeeper approached the chassid and revealed to him that he was guilty of terrible sins and wanted to do teshuvah. The chassid told him that he would go with him the next day to the Rebbe, Rav Tzvi Aryeh of Alik, to ask him what to do. Unable to withstand the wait, the innkeeper went out to the forest in the middle of a blizzard to daven and froze to death.



When the sun rose the next morning, everyone in the house got up and saw that the innkeeper was gone. When he didn't return, they went out to search for him. They asked in every shop and home for miles, but no one had seen or heard from him since the previous day. The *melamed*, who was supposed to travel with the innkeeper that morning to consult with the Rebbe, planned to join the search party but he decided to go first to the forest where he usually spent some time every day in private prayer and ask Hashem for help finding his employer safe and sound.

No sooner did the *melamed* enter the thick of the forest than he spotted the form of a person sprawled out in the snow. He ran over and saw that it was the missing innkeeper, who had clearly been dead for hours. Now he became frightened for his own safety, for if he reported to the police that he had found the body, they might accuse him of having murdered him. If he did not report it and someone else found the body, the police would find the *melamed's* boot prints leading to the body and away from it, and they would likely accuse him anyway. His best bet, he decided, was to run to the Rebbe.

The chassid poured out his heart to Rav Tzvi Aryeh, relating how he had faithfully followed the Rebbe's instructions and left his family alone to devote himself to the innkeeper's sons, but now he had been beset by a tremendous tragedy and was afraid to return home.

Rav Tzvi Aryeh looked at his chassid kindly and nodded with approval. "You have nothing to fear, my son," he said. "I have long known of your sincere devotion to *avodas Hashem* and your deep *yiras Shamayim*. It is precisely because of this that I chose you for this mission. I knew that with your personality, you would be able to penetrate your employer's heart and put him on the path to *teshuvah* and atonement.

"This man was guilty of such terrible sins that he would have never reached Gan Eden. Now that he has repented in full, his death will bring him full atonement for all that he did over the years, and he has already been admitted to his rightful place in Gan Eden. You ought to sing in praise of Hashem for giving you the opportunity to perform such a great mitzvah.

"You may go home without any worry. The police have already decided that there was no foul play in the death of the innkeeper. Your family will greet you joyfully, and you will find that they are healthy and strong. Bring the innkeeper's family with you so that you can continue to care for the boys' Torah education. Your father-in-law will be happy to support them until they are grown."

THE END

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIDRASH

When you come to the land, plant fruit trees (Vayikra 19:20).

If Hashem would not keep the time of each person's death a secret, no one would build a house or plant a tree. Everyone would say, "I'm going to die soon, so why should I work hard for others to enjoy what I produce?"

Once, Emperor Hadrian passed by an old man planting fig trees. The emperor scoffed, saying, "Why are you exerting yourself? By the time the trees produce fruit, you won't be here to eat them."

"Your Majesty," the old man replied, "if I will be privileged to live that long, I will enjoy the fruits myself. If not, then my children will eat them."

Hadrian spent over three years abroad. When he returned, the old man filled a basket with plump, fresh figs and brought them to the emperor. Presenting himself, he said, "You met me when you last passed this way, and you challenged me for planting trees when I would not live to enjoy their fruits. Well, Hashem has granted me life and health to eat the fruits of the trees I planted, and this basket is a sample."

Hadrian's heart softened at these words, and he ordered his guards to take the man's basket, fill it with gold coins, and return it to him. The man returned home, and his wife and children celebrated with him.

The neighbor's wife heard about this and she began nagging her husband, saying, "Here, take this giant basket and fill it with sweet apples, figs, and other fine fruits. Bring them to the king and maybe he will fill the basket with gold coins for us too."

The neighbor hurriedly filled his basket with fruits and ran after the royal procession. Instead of asking for permission to approach the king, he went directly over to the royal carriage and said, "Your Majesty, I heard that you love fresh fruit, so I brought you this basket filled with fruit."

The king told his guards to take the basket and throw all the fruits at the man's face. By the time they finished, his head was bleeding and his eyes were swollen shut. When his wife saw him, she asked, "What happened to you?"

"It's a good thing that I didn't fill the basket with *esrogim*," he replied sarcastically. "If I had, they would have stoned me to death."

The old man did his work selflessly, because he knew that it was his duty to make Eretz Yisrael fruitful. He was rewarded with long life and wealth. The neighbor did nothing for anyone else, and he brought his gift to the emperor only because he expected a reward. He received what he deserved.



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) Stand up straight to honor your mother and your father.

It's a great mitzvah, don't consider it a _____.

2) We can eat a *Korban Shelamim* in a number of ways.

The main thing is to finish it all within two _____.

3) When I harvested my wheat, one or two stalks fell down.

I left them for the poor people; so they'd have less reason to _____.

4) After fixing my house, the worker must be paid without delay.

I hurry to give him the money; I won't wait until the next _____.

5) Make sure to have an accurate scale and measure.

That way, doing business with you will be a great _____.

6) Don't mix your crops in the field or use a *kevess* with an *eiz*.

And make sure that the clothes you wear have no _____.

7) When an old man enters, it is your duty to rise.

Do the same for someone who learns Torah and is _____.

8) When you meet a worthy convert, it is time to rejoice.

He came to join our people; let's celebrate that _____.

9) A judge must follow the halachah strictly, that's for sure.

He must not show any favor to the rich or to the _____.

10) Don't say any *lashon hara*; it is bound to make a fight.

Once the words have left your mouth, you cannot make them _____.

11) Don't have hate for any Jew; fill your heart with love.

This is what brings so much happiness to the One _____.

12) Hashem promised to give us a land that is bright and sunny.

A land that is overflowing with milk and _____.

13) Hashem separated us from every other nation.

Let's dedicate ourselves to Him; it's the greatest _____.

Answers: 1) brother 2) days 3) from 4) day 5) pleasure 6) shatnez 7) wise 8) choice 9) poor 10) right 11) Above 12) honey 13) sensation

RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. The *pasuk* (19:16) says, *Lo sa'amod al dam rei'echa*—"Do not stand on your friend's blood," meaning that if someone is in danger and you can save him, you must not stand by and let him die. The *pasuk* later (19:26) says, *Lo sochlu al hadam*—"Do not eat on the blood," and Rashi explains that this means that it is forbidden to eat the meat of a *korban* before its blood is dabbed onto the *Mizbe'ach*.

2. The Torah says that when a fruit tree is planted, the fruits it grows during the first three years are forbidden to everyone, and the fruits of the fourth year are used to praise Hashem. A little boy acts wild and silly until he is three years old, and then during his fourth year he is old enough to begin learning Torah and bring pleasure to Hashem.

3. Rashi on *Vayikra* (20:25) says that if someone *shechts* an animal and suspects that he did not cut through enough of the *simanim*, he has to measure them. If he cut exactly halfway through them, the animal is a *neveilah*. If he cut a hairsbreadth more than halfway through them, it is kosher.

4. The Torah says *lo sa'asu avel bamishpat*. In 19:15, these words mean that the *dayan* must not issue a false ruling, perverting justice. In 19:31, the same words mean that it is forbidden to cheat when weighing or measuring things you are buying or selling.

5. The Torah says two times that we must observe Shabbos, in 19:3 and again in 19:30. The Torah says three times that we must become holy people, in 19:2, in 20:7, and again in 20:26.

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

HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

BACKGROUND

Amos was a *navi* during the time of the first Beis Hamikdash. When King Yeravam persuaded the people of his kingdom to worship the two golden calves that he set up, Amos publicly declared that Hashem was going to wipe out Yeravam's family. But when the priest of the idols told the king about this, he said, "I will not believe that a tzaddik as great as Amos would say such a thing." Since Yeravam did not listen to this *lashon hara*, he was rewarded and his name was mentioned by Yeshayahu along with the kings of Yehudah.

SUMMARY

In this haftorah, Amos tells the people that no matter how hard they try to reject Hashem and His Torah, Hashem will never reject them. Hashem will punish them, and He will destroy those who refuse to believe that He will punish them, but the believing Jews will survive and be brought back to the wonderful and fruitful land of Eretz Yisrael.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

Parshas Kedoshim mentions numerous times the words *Ani Hashem*—"I am Hashem and you can count on Me to punish those who sin and reward those who keep the mitzvos." In this haftorah, the *navi* accuses the sinful people of not believing that they will be punished even though they have rejected the mitzvos.

YOU KNOW NAVI

Remember saying or singing on Sukkos that *Hu yakim lanu es sukkas Dovid hanofales*—Hashem will reestablish the *sukkah* of Dovid? The words of this prayer come from this week's haftorah. The *navi* quotes Hashem saying that on that day, meaning at the same time that all the sinful Jews will be murdered, He will raise the *sukkah* of Dovid, meaning that Mashiach, a descendant of Dovid, will establish his eternal reign over the entire world.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

doned ruin on the edge of the city and fixed himself a bed of leaves in a corner. He lay down and went to sleep, but he soon woke to the sounds of a loud argument. Two burglars had come to the crumbling building carrying the spoils of the night's robbery and they could not agree on how to divide them. In the heat of their quarrel, one of them pulled out his saber and stabbed his partner to death.

Naftali could not see anything in the darkness, but he was quaking with fright. He lay still and prayed silently that he would not be discovered. Even after the murderer gathered his things and left, Naftali was afraid to move from his place.

A few hours later, police came and found the body, and they also found Naftali trying to hide close by. Seeing that he was a stranger with a roughshod appearance, they decided that he must have committed the murder. Naftali denied having anything to do with it, but they tied him to a chair and began interrogating him. In standard Arab fashion, this meant that they tortured him until he confessed to the crime. In his hungry and weakened state, Naftali did not have the stamina to withstand the pressure and pain. He confessed, making up a story of how he had killed the man in the ruin. The police brought him to court, and he was sentenced to be hanged publicly.

A large crowd gathered to watch the gruesome spectacle. The Jews of the city were ordered to come as well, and so Ezra was there, standing at a distance from the exuberant crowd of non-Jews. He looked up at the condemned man, curious to see whether he was Jewish. Despite Naftali's disheveled appearance, Ezra recognized his dear friend. Pushing his way through to the front of the crowd, Ezra starting screaming, "Stop! He didn't do it! I'm the murderer!"

When Naftali saw Ezra and heard what he was saying, he immediately told the hangman, "Don't listen to a word he says. He's deranged. Of course I'm the guilty one."

Then Ezra and Naftali began a loud argument, with each one claiming to be the guilty party who was supposed to be hanged. The executioner and other officials didn't know what to do. Such a thing had never happened before. After conferring with the police, they decided to bring Naftali and Ezra before the king.

The king heard their claims and realized that there was more to the story than what he was being told. He promised to release them both without any punishment if they would only explain themselves to his satisfaction. Feeling somewhat encouraged, Naftali told the king why he had come to Baghdad and what had happened during the night that he'd arrived.

The king looked thoughtfully at Naftali and then at Ezra. He said, "I have never seen two such devoted friends as you. Each of you offered to sacrifice his life to save the other. Please accept me as a third partner in this friendship. My first act will be to take care of Naftali's financial problems."

This is what our *pasuk* is telling us: "Love your fellow man like yourself. If you do this, then I, Hashem, will want to share your love and take care of you all."



There are two mitzvos in the Torah regarding parents. One is *kibbud av va'eim*, giving honor to them by serving them and helping them out. The second mitzvah is *morah av va'eim*, showing fear and respect by not sitting in their regular places, not addressing them by name, and not contradicting their opinions.

The Torah promises long life and happiness for fulfilling the mitzvah of *kibbud av va'eim*. What is the reward for fulfilling *morah av va'eim*?

The pasuk says *imo v'aviv tira'u* (אָמוּ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ). Each word ends with the letter *vav*.

Vav has the value of 6, and so the three final letters of these words together equal 18 – *chai*. This teaches us that we will be rewarded with long life for fulfilling the mitzvah of *morah av va'eim* as well.

TREATS FROM TARGUM

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

לֹא תִקְלַל חֵרֵשׁ וְלֹפְנֵי עֵוֶר לֹא תִתֵּן מַכְשָׁל (ויקרא יט:יד)

Do not curse a deaf person, and do not place a stumbling block in front of a blind person (Vayikra 19:14).

In this *pasuk*, Onkelos translates the word *cheireish* as *d'la shema*, meaning “someone who does not hear,” and the word *iveir* as *d'la chazei*, meaning “someone who does not see.” But earlier, in *Shemos* 4:11, Onkelos translated the same words as *chersha*, meaning “a deaf person,” and *avir*, meaning “a blind person.”

This is because our *pasuk* is not necessarily referring to someone who is deaf or blind. The word *cheireish* refers to anyone who is defenseless and cannot stop others from cursing him. *Chazal* told us that since the Torah warns us (*Shemos* 22:27) not to curse a powerful person, and it warns us here not to curse a defenseless person, it follows that it is forbidden to curse any Jew, no matter who he is.

Likewise, the prohibition of *lifnei iveir* means that it is forbidden to mislead any Jew and make him do something harmful to himself. We must not make it possible for another Jew to do an *aveirah* that he otherwise would not have done, and we must not give advice to someone when we know that it is bad advice for him. A person who does not stop himself from doing *aveiros* is “blind” to the truth that he is harming himself, and a person who does not understand that the advice given to him is bad for him is likewise “blind” to the truth.

THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY

Today, 6 Iyar, is the *yahrtzeit* of Rabbeinu Levi ben Gershom, commonly known as the Ralbag. He is most famous for his commentary on the entire Tanach, but he authored many other *sefarim* on *Shas* and philosophical topics.

The Ralbag was born in 5048/1288 in Bagnols, France. He lived at the same time as the Rosh and the Rashba. We are not sure who his parents were, but according to some historians he was the Ramban's grandson. His mother's father was Harav Levi ben Chaim of Villefranche, as he mentions in his commentary to *Parshas Ki Sisa*.

The Ralbag was well-known as a philosopher, and even the Christians wanted his *sefarim* to be translated into other languages so that they could learn his teachings. Of course, the Ralbag believed firmly in the Tanach and the Talmud, despite being a philosopher. For this reason, the Rosh and the Rashba did not fight against him, even though they strongly opposed the study of philosophy.

The Ralbag was also an inventor. He devised an instrument like a compass to enable ships to find their way when they were on the open seas.

The Rivash wrote, “The scholar Rav Levi *z”l* was a master of the Talmud who composed a nice commentary on the Torah and *Nevi'im*. He concentrated on the study of philosophy, following the path of the Rambam.”

Today is also the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Yosef Meir Weiss, the Spinka Rebbe, and of Harav Shaul Barzani, brother-in-law of Harav Chaim Kanievsky, *zichronam l'vrachah*.



HALACHAH

Customs During the Days of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*

1) The Talmud (*Yevamos 62b*) teaches that Rabi Akiva had 12,000 pairs of students spread across a wide area of Eretz Yisrael. All 24,000 students died of a painful epidemic disease within a short period – between Pesach and Shavuos. In memory of this tragedy, the custom is to observe some practices of mourning during these days as we count the *Omer*.

2) According to a tradition from the *Ge'onim*, the students did not die throughout the period of counting the *Omer*. The Rema taught that they ceased

dying by the afternoon of Lag B'Omer, meaning that the epidemic lasted for 33 days.

Other *Poskim* suggested that no one died on a day that we do not say *Tachanun*, which are the first seven days of the *Omer*, two days of Rosh Chodesh Iyar, one day of Rosh Chodesh Sivan, and six days of Shabbos. That leaves 33 days on which they died.

3) Based on this, there are two main customs regarding the days we observe mourning. Some communities be-

gin immediately after Pesach and end the mourning on the day of Lag B'Omer. In other communities, the mourning practices begin after Rosh Chodesh Iyar and continue until three days before Shavuos, but all restrictions are relaxed for the day of Lag B'Omer. According to the *Shulchan Aruch*, Rabi Akiva's students died for 34 days, and the practices of mourning must be observed until the morning *after* Lag B'Omer. Sephardic Jews follow the opinion of the *Shulchan Aruch*.

4) The mourning practices for these days are that we do not make weddings, play music, dance, have haircuts, or shave.

5) On those years when Pesach begins on Wednesday night, Rosh Chodesh Iyar is on Shabbos. Even those who begin observing the days of mourning immediately after Pesach are allowed to cut their hair or shave on that Erev Shabbos in honor of the double occasion of Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh.

6) When Lag B'Omer will be on Sunday, it is permissible for Ashkenazic Jews to cut their hair or shave on Friday before Lag B'Omer, in honor of Shabbos.

7) As explained above, Ashkenazic Jews permit weddings during the day of Lag

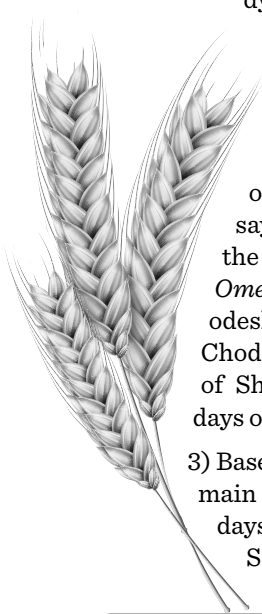
BaOmer, even if their custom is to continue observing mourning until Shavuos. Sephardic Jews permit weddings beginning from the morning *after* Lag B'Omer. On years like this one, when Lag B'Omer is Thursday, Sephardic Jews may make weddings on the night after Lag B'Omer.

8) It is permissible to have an engagement party during the days of the *Omer*, but it must be without music or dancing.

9) In honor of a *bris milah*, the baby's father, the *mohel*, and the *sandek* may have their hair cut late in the afternoon before the *bris*.

10) In some communities, the custom is to refrain from doing any *melachah* from sunset until after counting the *Omer*. This applies to both men and women, although women are not obligated to count the days of the *Omer*. In fact, some *Poskim* suggest that if a woman chooses not to fulfill this mitzvah, she should refrain from doing *melachah* all night long.

11) The custom is to fast on Monday, Thursday, and the following Monday in the beginning of Iyar. Special *Selichos* are added to the *davening* on those days, even for people who are not fasting.



THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"TELL ME WHY YOU ARE LATE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOUR EXCUSE IS GOOD OR NOT; I WON'T PUNISH YOU EITHER WAY. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I CAN TEACH YOU IS THAT YOU MUST ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH."

— Harav Yaakov Lofez, z"l, Rosh Yeshivah in Porat Yosef, whenever a student would come late to the daily shiur.



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