



פרשת נשא

CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR
Shabbos Table

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

TELL ME A TALE >>

A dvar Torah with a story.

SIMPLE TRICK TO BRING MASHIACH?

דַּבֵּר אֶל אַהֲרֹן (ו:כג)
Speak to Aharon (6:23)

The Rokeach points out that the name of Aharon appears 300 times in Sifrei Shemos, Vayikra, and Bamidbar. This teaches that if 300 kohanim would stand on Har Hazeisim (avoiding the cemetery) and say Birkas Kohanim, Mashiach would instantly arrive.

Why haven't we done it yet?

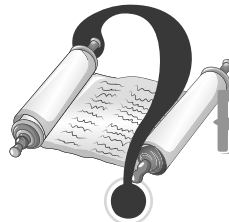
Rav Hai Gaon was one of the greatest *talmidei chachamim* of the era of the *Geonim*, which followed that of the *Amora'im*. He lived just before the birth of Rashi and the beginning of the time of the *Rishonim*.

Like most *Geonim*, Rav Hai was the *rosh yeshivah* of the big yeshivah in Bavel.

Rav Hai had a special *minhag*. Each year, just before Sukkos, he would travel to Yerushalayim with many *talmidim*. The group stayed the whole Yom Tov and had a unique *avodah* on Hoshana Rabbah. Instead of walking around the *bimah* in a shul seven

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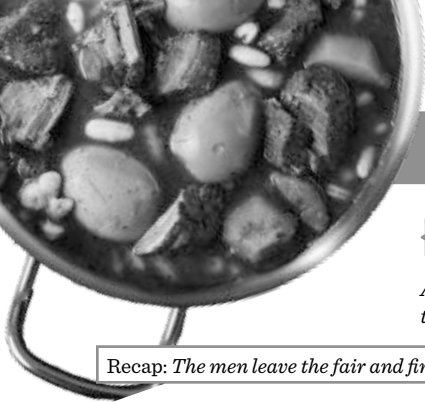
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PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 Which two *korbanos* contain barley? Where else does the Torah mention barley? (3)
- 2 Which two *Korbanos Asham* are mentioned in the *parshah*? What are all 6 types of *Asham*?
- 3 The word usually used for "flour" is *soles*. Where does the Torah mention *kemach*? (2)
- 4 Who had to cut hair with a razor? Who was not allowed to use a razor?
- 5 When the Torah lists the *korbanos* of the *nesi'im*, which two sons of Yaakov are not mentioned among the *Shevatim*?



CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: The men leave the fair and find the missing box of money in the forest.

Reb Yitzchak stopped dancing and stared at Reb Shimon. The other man was standing still, tears flowing silently down his cheeks.

“Reb Shimon! What’s the matter? What’s wrong? This is great! We found the money! It’s here, all of it! You don’t have to worry anymore.

It’s okay!”

Reb Shimon just shook his head silently and cried harder. “Oy, Reb Yitzchak,” he sobbed. “This is terrible.”

“Terrible? TERRIBLE?? It’s fabulous! It’s amazing! Reb Shimon! What’s going on with you?” Reb Yitzchak’s confusion knew no bounds. One bewildering thing had followed another on this business trip. What was wrong with his boss? Why had he not wanted to look for the money? Why was he sad to have found it? Reb Yitzchak moved closer to Reb Shimon, grabbed the other man by the shoulders, and shook hard.

The normally strong, confident Reb Shimon put up no resistance, wobbling in his employee’s hands like a rag doll. What had gotten into him?

“Reb Shimon! What is the meaning of this? What is going on?” But Reb Shimon didn’t answer. He just looked away, not meeting Reb Yitzchak’s eyes.

Reb Yitzchak eyed him carefully. It almost seemed like Reb Shimon didn’t want the money. He had insisted on stopping in the forest and had suspiciously “left” the money behind. He hadn’t wanted to go looking for it, and now he was upset that they had found it. Could it be that he was *trying* to get rid of the money? Reb Yitzchak knew that his boss was scrupulously honest in all his business dealings and wouldn’t touch a nickel that might not be rightfully his.

“Reb Shimon, is there something wrong with this money?”

“Ah, Reb Yitzchak. There’s something wrong with all money. It makes people do funny things...”

Reb Yitzchak’s eyes narrowed. Was that a confession? “Yes, but I mean this money in particular. Is something odd about it?”

“Odd? No. No more than any other money.”

“So why are you crying when you should be dancing?”

“My dear, dear friend and partner, Reb Yitzchak. You’ll understand some day. You must be very confused right now, and you are about to get even more confused. But all will be clear one day, perhaps far in the future.”

“Reb Shimon, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?? What do you mean, I’m about to get more confused?”

“Reb Yitzchak, you have been a wonderful secretary and employee all these years. I thank you for your service.”

Reb Yitzchak couldn’t believe his ears. He *was* really getting confused now. “Wh-what do you mean, ‘have been’? Are you trying to say...?”

Reb Shimon smiled through his tears. “My good friend, I’m afraid our time working together is over. When we return home, you will no longer be my employee. I wish you the best and goodbye.”

TO BE CONTINUED...



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIDRASH

Serach’s Cows?

קח מאתם והיו ליעבד את עבדתי אהל מושב (ה:ז)

Take from them, and they will be of service to the Ohel Moed. (7:5)

The Midrash teaches that when the nesi'im donated oxen and wagons for the use of the levi'im in the Mishkan, Moshe did not want to accept them. He feared that they would get old and broken at some point, and they would have to be disposed of. Essentially, they would become big pieces of “sheimos,” and how would they get rid of sheimos cows or wagons? Hashem promised him that they would never get old and broken.

What happened to those oxen?

- One opinion in the midrash says that when the Mishkan arrived at Gilgal they were brought as *korbanos* since the Mishkan was no longer going to travel.
- According to another opinion, they were brought as *korbanos* later, at Nov; a third says it was at Givon. A fourth holds they were brought as *korbanos* in the first Beis Hamikdash, over 480 years later!
- The final opinion says that the oxen are still alive! Hashem promised they would never age. Indeed, they are living somewhere today, healthy, young looking, and without a *mum*. Perhaps they are at a farm near you!
- This is a lesson for Klal Yisrael: If oxen that had brief contact with the Mishkan could live forever, Klal Yisrael, who are firmly attached to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, will certainly last forever!



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!

- L
1. Shevet Levi is divided into three groups.
2. Count those old enough to join the _____.

- L
3. The total number then was known
4. Of the families of Kehas, Merari and _____.

- L
5. *Levi'im* aged thirty to fifty years old
6. Who carried the Mishkan and its precious _____.

- H
7. Jobs were given by the *kohen* Isamar,
8. Who carried what, when they traveled real _____.

Chorus

- L
9. To Gershon's wagons were loaded in,
10. Curtains, cloth, and *tachash* _____.

- L
11. On Merari's, loaded high but did not fall,
12. Beams, sockets, and panels of the _____.

- H
13. Moshe taught about *Korban Asham* and an extra fifth to pay,
14. And no *tamei* people in the camp; send them _____.

Chorus

- L
15. *Sotah* water was a *nes* in the Mikdash times,
16. If a person was accused of terrible _____.

- L
17. A lady heard a warning, which she chose to ignore,
18. So the *kohen* took dust from the Mishkan _____.

- L
19. Hashem's Name was erased, he washed off the ink,
20. It all went into a very bitter _____.

- H
21. If the *sotah* drank it, and a sin hadn't been done,
22. Then she would be blessed with a healthy _____.

Chorus

- L
23. Anyone who saw it and got a real scare,
24. Should be smart and become a _____.

- L
25. For thirty days, he had to take special care
26. Not to become *tamei* or cut his _____.

- L
27. It wasn't so easy, not simple and fine,
28. To go all that time without drinking _____.

- H
29. If you say, "Big deal, now who are you praisin'?!"
30. Remember, he also can't eat a grape or a _____.

Chorus

- L
31. The *kohen's* special job, given from Above,
32. To bless all of Yisrael with _____.

- L
33. May Hashem bless you and guard you too;
34. He will shine His face on every _____.

- H
35. Each *nasi* gave the same donation for *chanukas haMishkan*,
36. And the Torah repeats the list for every _____.

Answers: 2. troops 4. Gershon 6. gold 8. fur 10. skin 12. wall 14. away 16. crimes 18. floor 20. drink 22. son 24. *nazir* 26. hair 28. wine 30. raisin 32. love 34. Jew 36. one

RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. The *Korban Minchas Kina'os* of the *sotah* and the *Korban Ha'omer* were made from barley. The Torah also mentions barley in context of:
 - a. The plague of hail: (שמות ט:לא) והפֿשֿטָה וְהשֻׁעֵרָה אָבִיב וְהפֿשֿטָה גִבְעֹל (שמות ט:לא)
 - b. The *erech* of a field: (ויקרא כז:טז) זָרַע חֲמֹר שְׁעָרִים בְּחֲמָשִׁים שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף (ויקרא כז:טז)
 - c. The *shivas haminim*: (דברים ח:ח) אֲרָץ חֲטָה וְשֻׁעֵרָה וְגִפְן וְתַאנָּה וְרִמּוֹן אֲרָץ זֵית שֶׁמֶן וְדִבְשׁ (דברים ח:ח)
2. The *parshah* mentions the *Asham Gezeilos* and the *Asham Nazir*. The other types of *Korban Asham* are: *Asham Talui*, *Asham Me'ilos*, *Asham Shifchah Charufah*, and *Asham Metzora*.
3. *Kemach* is mentioned only in the description of the *Korban Minchas Kina'os* of the *sotah* (עֲשִׂירֵת הָאֵיפָה קֶמַח) and when Avraham brought food for the *malachim*: (בראשית יח:ו) מִהָרִי שָׁלַשׁ סָאִים קֶמַח סֵלֶת (בראשית יח:ו)
4. The *nazir* is told not to use a razor (תַּעַר). The *levi'im* had to shave all their hair with a razor. A תַּעַר is not mentioned anywhere else in Chumash (including in the *issur* of shaving one's beard and the *taharas metzora*)
5. Yosef is not mentioned, because he is represented by Menashe and Efraim. Shevet Levi did not bring any of the items for *Chanukas HaMishkan*.

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

HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

SUMMARY

The haftorah relates the story of the announcement of the birth of Shimshon Hagibor. Fifty years before the end of the era of *Shoftim*, Klal Yisrael were suffering under raids from the nearby Plishtim and there was no one to lead the nation against them.

Manoach and his wife (whom the Gemara identifies as Tzlelponi) were a barren but saintly couple living near today's Beit Shemesh. A *malach* appeared to Tzlelponi as a man and announced that she would have a son who would lead the people in victory against the Plishtim. He would be a *nazir*, and she must begin keeping the laws of *nezirus* immediately.

Manoach wanted to hear the report himself and asked for the “man” to reappear. It did, but again only to his wife! She called Manoach to hear the report. He was not sure if he was speaking to a man or *malach*, but when he laid out a *korban*, fire sprang out of the rock and the *malach* stepped into the flames and shot up to *Shamayim*.

Manoach was terrified that they were going to die because they had been looking at a *malach*, but his wife explained that Hashem would not have shown them the *malach* and promised a child if they were about to be killed.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

The *parshah* details the laws of a *nazir*, and the *malach* taught Shimshon's parents the laws of *nezirus* as well. The *parshah* also reveals how Hashem is willing to “suffer” many things to bring peace between a husband and wife, even having His Name erased in *sotah* water. In the haftorah, the *malach* appeared to Tzlelponi alone to raise her prestige in the eyes of her husband and conceal the fact that she was the one who was barren. It returned a second time to affirm that she was correct in her report, appearing to her again to emphasize her greatness.

YOU KNOW NAVI

You recognize the phrase וַתִּפְּלֵא לְעֵשׂוֹן from the *brachah* of Asher Yatzar. The only place this phrase appears in Tanach is in this haftorah, describing the vision of the *malach* soaring Heavenward in the flame of the *korban*.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

times, Rav Hai and his *talmidim* walked around the entire Har Hazeisim seven times! Rav Hai wrote special *tefillos* and chose *perakim* of *Tehilim* to be said during the event.

One year, Rav Hai gathered hundreds of *kohanim* to come along and join his *talmidim*. He had them all dress in very fancy, kingly clothing. He organized them in a group and instructed them to walk around the mountain with him while saying *Birkas Kohanim*. Rav Hai split the crowd; he walked alone with a large group walking a hundred yards or so ahead of him and the rest a similar distance behind him.

After the entire procedure ended, Rav Hai could be seen smiling broadly, even laughing. One man, a new arrival to *Yiddishkeit*, did not understand what was going on. He approached Rav Hai and asked, “Rebbi, why did you walk apart from everyone else? And what’s so funny?”

“Each year,” Rav Hai answered, “my *talmidim* and I do this procedure. I purify myself and work very hard before Hoshana Rabbah, because Eliyahu Hanavi always joins me on this day. There is a big space between myself and everyone else because I am talking to Eliyahu, and no one else is permitted to hear the conversation.”

“What did he say? What was the joke?”

“A few days ago, on Chol Hamoed, I had received Eliyahu Hanavi and asked him when Mashiach was going to come. He had told me that Mashiach would come when I surrounded the mountain with 300 *kohanim* saying *Birkas Kohanim*. I did it, but nothing happened, so I asked him to explain.

“He told me that all the *kohanim* walking proudly with their fancy clothing, looking like they were on top of the world, were not even real *kohanim*! All the ones who were so proud of themselves were false. There was only one actual *kohen* in the entire group. At the back, there was one old man, humble and poor, wearing torn clothing, limping and missing an eye. He was the only true descendant of Aharon Hakohen in this entire crowd.

“I thought that was very funny. The only *kohen* in the place was the humble one, and he has a *mum* (injury).”

This segulah won't help us, because until Mashiach comes, we won't know who the real kohanim are!



GEMATRIA

וּבָאוּ בָּהּ הַמַּיִם הַמְאָרְרִים לְמַרִּים
(ה:כז)

*And the bitter waters will come within her for
bitterness... (5:27)*

- The *gematria* of the word **הַמְאָרְרִים** is 496, which equals 248×2 .
- There are 248 limbs in the human body. The midrash *Pesikta Zutresa* says this *gematria* refers to the fact that the *sotah* water checks the honesty of two people – not only of the *sotah*, but also of her husband who brought her there. If either did an *aveirah*, the *sotah* punishment would befall them.
- The double phrase **וּבָאוּ בָּהּ**, “come within,” also refers to two checkings.
- The Chida points out that the *Gemara (Bechoros 45a)* says that a woman has 252 limbs, not 248 like a man (see his answer in *Devash L’fi 60:1*).

TREATS FROM TARGUM

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

יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ... (ו:כד)

Hashem will bless you and guard you... (6:24)

- Does your Chumash have a *Targum Onkelos* on the three *pesukim* of *Birkas Kohanim*?
- Rabbeinu Yonah and Rav Yehudah Hachasid (see commentary to Rif, *Brachos 8a*) say that there is no *Targum Onkelos* on *Birkas Kohanim*. The same appears in writings of Rav Hai Gaon, the *Shibbolei Haleket*, and many other *Rishonim*. Many old manuscripts and printings of *Onkelos* do not have any translation on these *pesukim*.
- According to many *Acharonim*, we do have a *Targum* on these *pesukim*! (See Rebbi Akiva Eiger to *Brachos 8a*; the Shelah, quoted in *Machatzis Hashekel 285:2*.) How do we explain this?
- The mishnah (*Megillah 4:10*) says that *Birkas Kohanim* should not be translated. Some say the mishnah was referring to reading it in shul out loud, but there is still a real *Targum* (and one should say it as part of *shnayim mikra*).
- Some say the *Targum* found in many Chumashim on these words is a false addition. Onkelos never translated it because the mishnah said not to do so to make sure *kohanim* don't say the translation instead of the real text (this is especially important in the Beis Hamikdash, where the *Shem Hameforash* is used).
- Others explain that Onkelos didn't translate these *pesukim* because they describe Hashem as having a face, *chalilah*, and showing favoritism to Yisrael, both of which sound like heresy. Onkelos always avoids such translations.
- Should you say the *Targum* in your Chumash or not? When saying *shnayim mikra*, one should say the *Targum* and then repeat the actual *pesukim* a third time, to be certainly *yotzei* (Shelah).

THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY

The 12th of Sivan is the *yahrtzeit* of Rav Yitzchak Hakohen of Prague (son-in-law of the Maharal of Prague) who was *niftar* in 5384 (1624). Rav Yitzchak is not as well known as his illustrious father-in-law and is also not as well known as the legend he supposedly helped create.

According to the original stories written about the Golem of Prague, Rav Yitzchak, as son-in-law of the Maharal, was one of the three people present at the creation of the Golem and the infusion of life-force within him. The original story is written in his voice, from his perspective, as if he wrote it.

According to the legend, the Maharal, Rav Yitzchak, and a *talmid* named Rav Sasson gathered at the riverbank late one night and formed the body of a man out of clay. They then walked around it many times reciting Kabbalistic formulas, and it came to life. This was the Golem, who had a long career saving Jews from evil plots against them. He was eventually retired and put to rest forever in the attic of the Altneu Shul in Prague.

Many people doubt the truth of the story. According to Jewish historian and scholar Professor Schneur Zalman Lyman, the story was a fictional tale, never meant to be taken seriously at all... it just took on a life of its own.

A proper perspective, stated by many *talmidei chachamim*, is that while there may be some doubt as to whether or not the Maharal ever made a *golem*, there is no doubt that he was able to do so.

Another healthy perspective is that the Maharal definitely “made” *talmidim* like the Tosafos Yom Tov (Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller) and the Kli Yakar, and that is a far greater miracle than making a *golem*!



HALACHAH

Washing the Hands of the Kohanim



Why does the kohen have to wash his hands before Birkas Kohanim?

The Gemara (*Sotah* 39) learns from *Tehillim* (134) that a *kohen* who does not wash his hands may not participate in *Birkas Kohanim*. Before the *kohanim* raise their hands in blessing the people, they must first be *mekadesh* them by washing (*Mishnah Berurah* 128:19). *Shulchan Aruch* (128:6) rules that even if a *kohen* already washed his hands upon awakening in the morning, he must do so again prior to blessing the people.

Who washes the kohen's hands?

The Gemara does not mention that other people should wash the *kohanim's* hands. However, the *Shulchan Aruch* (128:6) rules that the privilege of washing the *kohanim's* hands is specifically given to the *levi'im*. The source for this *halachah* is a teaching of the *Zohar* (Vol. 3, p. 146a-b) that the *kohen* gains extra *kedushah* by having his hands washed by holy people—the *levi'im*.

According to the *Zohar*, this cannot be accomplished by a *kohen* washing his own hands, or by a fellow *kohen* washing them, but specifically by them being washed by a *levi*. The Maharash Halevi writes, "Perhaps this is the means by which the Divine Presence will rest on the hands of the *kohanim* and Hashem will thus agree to the blessing, because the hands are sanctified by the *levi*."

The *Aruch Hashulchan* (128:15) adds an additional reason: In the Beis Hamikdash, the *levi'im* assisted the *kohanim* in the *avodah*. Blessing the people is all we have left of the special *avodah* of the *ko-*

hanim, so the *levi'im* should play a supporting role.

Does the levi have to have clean hands?

Citing *Safra d'Tzniusa*, the *Zohar* says that before washing the hands of the *kohanim*, the *levi'im* should wash their own hands. This *halachah* is quoted by the *Shulchan Aruch*. The Rema (128:6) writes that the *minhag* today is that *levi'im* do not wash their own hands before washing the *kohanim's* hands. The *Mishnah Berurah* (23) writes that if a *levi* isn't sure if he touched something unclean, he should wash his own hands first.

Can hands be washed on Tishah B'Av and Yom Kippur?

The *kohanim's* hands are washed on Yom Kippur (and on Tishah B'Av in Eretz Yisrael) all the way to the wrist. The *levi'im* should wash only to the knuckles on those days.

Can a levi leave shul to wash a kohen's hands?

Levi'im should wash the hands of the *kohanim*, even though they will miss part of *chazaras hashatz*. They should not leave the shul if they are needed for a *minyan*. During *chazaras hashatz*, a minimum of six people must always remain in shul. If the door to the shul is left open and the *kohanim* and *levi'im* outside the shul are able to see people inside, they still count as part of the *minyan* (they should make sure to answer amen). Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch writes that if there are other *levi'im* available to wash the *kohanim's* hands, one should not leave fewer than ten people in the *minyan* — except on Yom Tov.

Does a levi have to go wash the kohen's hands?

It is not an obligation, it's a privilege, but on Yom Tov it is very important to go. By washing the *kohen's* hands, he asserts his status as part of *Shevet Levi*.

Is a levi allowed to walk in front of someone davening Shemoneh Esrei in order to leave to wash a kohen? Is a kohen allowed to do so in order to be washed?

The *kohen* may walk in front of someone *davening* in order to have his hands washed, but the *levi* may not do so in order to wash the *kohen*.

What if there are no levi'im present?

Some say that where no *levi'im* are present, a *bechor* (from his mother) should wash the hands of the *kohanim* (*Taz* 128:4; *Magen Avraham* 128:7). Many dispute it, and it is not done. *Poskim* add that a *yisrael* should not wash the *kohanim's* hands, and if there are no *levi'im* or *bechorim* present, they should wash their own hands. Some say the *kohanim* should wash each other's hands.

What if there are too many levi'im?

Rav Elyashiv and Rav Sternbuch question whether it is appropriate for multiple *levi'im* to hold the washing cup together. The common custom in Ashkenazi communities outside Eretz Yisrael is to do so, because *Birkas Kohanim* takes place only on Yom Tov. Ashkenazim in Eretz Yisrael and Sephardim everywhere, who recite *Birkas Kohanim* much more often, do not usually do shared washings.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"PARENTS FEEL THE PAIN OF THEIR CHILDREN, BUT THE CHILDREN DON'T SEE THE SUFFERING OF THEIR PARENTS. LIKewise, HASHEM FEELS OUR PAIN, BUT WE ARE BLIND TO HIS."

— Kotzker Rebbe

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