



פרשת חקת

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.

TURKISH MEDICINE

כָּל הַנִּשְׁחָן וְרָאָה אֹתוֹ וְחִי (כא:ח)

...All those who were bitten will see it and be healed. (21:8)

וכי נחש ממית או נחש מחיה? אלא בזמן שישראל
מסתכלין כלפי מעלה ומשעבדין את לבם לאביהם
שבשמים היו מתרפאין (ראש השנה כט.)

*Does a snake kill or revive? Rather, when Yisrael looked
upward and made themselves subservient to their Father in
Heaven, they were healed. (Rosh Hashanah 29a)*

**How did the copper snake heal the people who were
bitten by the real snake? Was there no other way to get
people to look upward? And shouldn't the cure have
been different than the cause?**

"Yankel, come quick. Something is wrong with Tatty!"
Chaim shouted.

Yankel ran to join his brother. Their aging father was
slumped in his chair, clutching his chest. "Tatty, Tatty,
what's going on?"

The older man's mouth opened and closed, but he did not
speak. Something serious was happening. His face was begin-
ning to tinge blue!

"Chaim, I think he is having a heart attack. Quick, we must
run for the doctor!" This was in the 1800s, and there
was no Hatzolah or ambulance to call.

"I don't know if we have enough time to get the
doctor. It seems really severe. Let's run to the
rebbe!"

"You go to the rebbe, I'll run to the doctor. I'll
tell Akiva to come stay with Tatty!" The two
men raced out the door, missions decided.

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PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 Who buried Aharon?
- 2 Which two sections of the Torah begin with the phrase "zos chukas haTorah"?
- 3 Which three things in the Torah included the use of a bunch of *eizov*?
- 4 Which three items does Hashem command to be made using the introduction: "Make for yourself..." (*aseh lecha*)?
- 5 What are three words the Torah uses for "stone"? Which one is used when referring to the Be'er Miriam?
- 6 How many nations did Klal Yisrael try to pass through peacefully on the way to Eretz Yisrael? Which ones?



SERIAL >> CHAPTER 8

CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Reb Shimon joins a group of poor people who collect for a living. He unknowingly takes up a spot outside one of Reb Yitzchak's stores.

R

eb Yitzchak approached his store, keys in hand, ready to open shop for the day. As he drew nearer, he saw a poor man standing close to the door. *I wonder who it is this time*, he thought. It seemed that there was someone different collecting there every day. He reached into his pocket for some change.

When he was close enough to see the man, he could scarcely contain his shock. It was his former friend and boss, Reb Shimon! But what had happened to him? He had not seen him in years, and he was barely recognizable. How had he been reduced to this? *Oy vey!*

Reb Yitzchak pressed some coins into Reb Shimon's hand and peered at his face. Yes, it was definitely the same man. The quiet confidence and strength were still there. The *middos* and *ehrllichkeit* that had made him a great employer were yet visible in his eyes.

Reb Yitzchak had also changed significantly over the years. He was older, had a long beard, and was dressed like the wealthy man he was. Reb Shimon obviously did not recognize him.

Reb Yitzchak went into his store, deep in thought. He wanted to help Reb Shimon, but he needed to preserve the older man's dignity.

Later, around lunch time, he stepped out of his store. "My dear friend," he said to Reb Shimon. "I am all alone for lunch. Perhaps you will consent to join me?"

"I would be honored," Reb Shimon answered politely. "Thank you for inviting me, but I did not bring a lunch."

"That's all right, of course," Reb Yitzchak answered. "You are my guest." Reb Shimon entered and enjoyed his first complete meal in months — perhaps years!

As the two men were sitting together, Reb Yitzchak began a conversation. He turned the topic to Torah, which he knew Reb Shimon would be comfortable discussing — and about which he would have a lot to say! The two old *chavrusos* were again talking in learning — but only one of them knew that they had once been *chavrusos*!

After the meal wrapped up, Reb Yitzchak turned to his guest. "I very much enjoyed speaking with you," he said. "You are wise and learned. Perhaps you will come here again tomorrow?"

"I cannot," Reb Shimon replied. "We beggars have a system. We rotate positions around the city and pool the money collected for the day. Someone else will be here tomorrow."

"In that case," Reb Yitzchak said, "please join me for dinner at my home tonight. I wish to talk with you further."

Reb Shimon had to think carefully. He knew he had to share all collections with the other poor people, but this was a personal invitation. He did not think he was obligated to share it.

"Yes, I will be there!" he replied. "Thank you, kind gentleman."

Several hours later, Reb Shimon visited Reb Yitzchak in his home. Meanwhile, all the other beggars gathered to share their collected money. Reb Shimon's absence was quickly noted. "Hey, where's Shimon?" someone said. "Do you think he is trying to make off with his collections?"

"Where was he stationed today?" another asked. "Outside the store on Fifth Street? That is a good spot. He may have collected a lot and decided to keep it for himself!"

"I knew it!" a third person exclaimed. "I never trusted him, since he took my spot that first day outside a shul. I've been waiting for this to happen!"

"Relax, men," the leader said. "Give him another hour or two. If he doesn't show up, we'll track him down. Don't worry, we'll get to the bottom of this."

TO BE CONTINUED...

2

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIDRASH

The Elixir of Wisdom

What happened to the Be'er Miriam? Where is it today?

- The Gemara (*Shabbos* 35a) relates that Be'er Miriam can be seen from the top of Mt. Carmel. One who climbs the mountain and looks toward the [Mediterranean] Sea can spot something that looks like a sieve in the water. That is the *be'er*.
- *Midrash Vayikra Rabbah* (22:4) reports that the *be'er* is near Teveriah, in the Kinneret. Rashi (21:20), based on *Midrash Tanchuma*, combines the two and says the sieve can be seen from the top of a mountain near Teveriah, in the Kinneret.
- The Chida writes (*Shem Hagedolim*, entry on Rav Chaim Vital) that before the Arizal taught Torah to Rav Chaim Vital, he took him out on the Kinneret in a boat. At a certain spot, he drew water and gave it to him to drink. This was water from the Be'er Miriam, he explained, and it imparts wisdom to those who drink it.
- The midrash in *Vayikra Rabbah* also relates that a man who suffered from blisters all over his body went swimming in the Kinneret. The time had come for him to be healed, so the *be'er* floated to him and washed him with its pure, life-giving waters and he was healed.
- The *Kolbo* writes (quoted in *Shulchan Aruch*) that there is a *minhag* to draw water from wells and springs on Motza'ei Shabbos, right after *Borchu*. During that time, the well of Miriam cycles among all the wells and springs in the world, and some of its water is present briefly and can be collected.



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. The golden calf was an *avodah zarah*,
2. Its mess is cleaned by its mother, the _____.
L
3. One that never worked and is purely red,
4. It's not a *korban*, brought on Har Hazeisim _____.
L
5. Shlomo Hamelech didn't understand how
6. A *kohen* became *tamei* from this purifying _____.
H
7. Today, *parah adumah* has disappeared without a trace,
8. Which is why we are all considered *tamei* _____.

Chorus

- L
9. Miriam was *niftar*, I'm sorry to tell,
10. And we also lost her miraculous _____.
L
11. The people complained to Moshe and Aharon—
12. There's no water, no *gefen*, no *te'ainah* or _____.
L
13. Hashem told Moshe a great miracle will be shown,
14. Water will flow when he speaks to the _____.
H
15. But Moshe, to our surprise and shock,
16. Instead of talking, hit the _____.

Chorus

- L
17. Moshe told Edom, “We have no quarrel with you.
18. Let us go by, we just want to pass _____.”
L
19. Edom said no and set out for war,
20. So Klal Yisrael headed for Hor _____.
L
21. There it was time for Aharon to pass away;
22. Klal Yisrael mourned him for thirty _____.
H
23. Without Aharon, the *Ananei Hakavod* were gone,
24. And they were attacked by Arad, one of the nations of _____.

Chorus

- L
25. Some people kvetched for food that is fun,
26. Instead of the “same old” *heilige* _____.
L
27. Hashem sent snakes to give them each a bite,
28. Until they admitted that what they did wasn't _____.
L
29. To prevent a snakebite from taking its toll,
30. They looked up at a copper snake on a _____.
H
31. Finally, they passed through the city of Cheshbon,
32. Not before conquering it from its king, _____.

Answers: 2. *parah* 4. instead 6. cow 8. *meis* 10. well 12. *rimon* 14. stone 16. rock 18. through 20. Hahar 22. day 24. Canaan 26. *mann* 28. right 30. pole 32. Sichon

RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. The Torah does not say that Aharon was buried at all. The Shach writes that no one buried him. The cave in which he died opened for him and closed behind him on its own. Rashi tells us that he found a candle burning and a bed in the cave and he lay down there.
2. *Parah adumah* and *kashering keilim* (see *Bamidbar* 31:21).
3. Purification of the *metzora* (*Vayikra* 14:6), *parah adumah* (*Bamidbar* 19:6), and the *Korban Pesach* in *Mitzrayim* (*Shemos* 12:22).
4. In this *parshah* (21:8), Moshe is commanded, “Make for yourself a copper serpent.” In *Parshas Beha'aloscha* (10:2), Moshe is commanded, “Make for yourself two silver trumpets.” In *Parshas Noach* (6:14), Noach is commanded, “Make for yourself a *teivah* of gopher wood.”
5. A rock or stone can be called אֶבֶן, לֵטֶשׂ, or חֶץ. The Be'er Miriam is called חֶץ in *Parshas Beshalach* (17:6), but in this *parshah* it is called a לֵטֶשׂ (20:11).
6. 3. The Torah tells us clearly about our attempt to pass through Edom and Emori (Sichon). The *haftorah* adds that we also tried to pass through Moav.

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

HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

THE STORY OF YIFTACH SUMMARY

Yiftach was the firstborn son of Gilad, but all his brothers were from a different mother. They treated Yiftach unfairly and drove him away. He left Eretz Yisrael and moved to Tov, where he formed a band of thugs that conducted raids against Klal Yisrael's enemies.

When the nation of Ammon moved troops to the border, threatening to invade the Jewish cities of Menashe, the elders begged Yiftach to return and lead them in battle. In exchange, they made him the *shofet* over all of Klal Yisrael, cleared his name, and restored his inheritance.

In preparation for war, Yiftach, who was a tzaddik, *davened* extensively and then sent diplomatic messages to the king of Ammon, seeking peace. To make sure Klal Yisrael weren't guilty of some unknown sin, he asked the Ammoni why they were attacking — Klal Yisrael had never fought them! Ammon said they had come to take back the land Yisrael had stolen from them 300 years earlier on the way to Eretz Yisrael from Mitzrayim.

Yiftach responded with a lengthy description of the events of *Parshas Chukas*. He described Klal Yisrael's attempts to pass through Edom and Moav and the ultimate attack from Sichon. He made the point that the land in question belonged to the Emori, and Yisrael had been forbidden from conquering Ammoni lands. Even Balak and 300 years of history confirmed their right to it. He argued eloquently that the Ammoni had no legitimate claim, but they did not agree and war was inevitable.

Yiftach promised a special *korban* to Hashem and then attacked. The Ammoni army retreated and Yiftach's men followed them deep into their own territory, taking twenty cities, to rout the problem at the source.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

The *haftorah* repeats the actual events from the *parshah*, describing in detail the attempts of Yisrael to pass through Edom, Moav, and Emori. Some commentators point out another connection: Moshe was punished for his actions at the Mei Merivah, which were considered hasty. Yiftach was another leader who took hasty action, promising to bring the first thing that left his house as a *korban*. He was punished as well.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Yankel charged up the block and around the corner, heading full steam for the nearest doctor's office. On the way, he banged on the door of their youngest brother, Akiva, and sent him to their father.

In the meanwhile, Chaim ran full tilt to the Divrei Chaim, the holy rebbe of Sanz. Tossing an explanation over his shoulder to the shocked *gabbai*, he rushed into the rebbe's room.

"Rebbe!" he gasped. "Rebbe, my father!" Chaim was panting for breath. "I think he's having a heart attack!"

Unruffled, the rebbe looked up. "Not to worry, Chaim'ke," he said. "Your father is a wonderful man with lots of merit. Give him a strong cup of black, bitter Turkish coffee and he'll be fine."

Turkish coffee? Chaim wondered. That stuff was strong enough to kill a horse, let alone a frail old man having a heart attack! But if the rebbe said, the rebbe said! He gasped out his thanks and ran back to his father's house just as the doctor was beginning to examine the old man. "The rebbe said to give him strong black Turkish coffee!" he shouted, swinging cupboard doors open as he looked for the kettle.

"Turkish coffee?" the doctor said in alarm. "That's the worst thing possible, after vodka. He is definitely having a heart attack and the caffeine in the coffee could push him over the edge!"

"If the rebbe said it will help, it will help!" Chaim said.

"Science says it will kill him!" the doctor insisted.

"So, what do you suggest?" Yankel asked. "A doctor has permission to heal."

"I have no solutions, but anything is better than coffee. If you leave him alone, he may recover on his own."

"A doctor has permission to heal, not to order that nothing be done," Yankel said firmly. "We trust the rebbe. Give him the coffee!"

"If the rebbe said... the rebbe said!"

The brothers brewed a strong cup of Turkish coffee and poured the hot, bitter liquid down their father's throat. Sure enough, his color soon began to return to normal. After a few minutes his breathing regulated, and he opened his eyes and spoke normally. It was a miraculous recovery!

"Well... I never," muttered the doctor, as he walked out.

Three years later, their father had another heart attack. The same symptoms began to appear, but this time they knew what to do. They quickly brewed a strong Turkish coffee, administered it to the patient and waited.

This time, though, the results were different. Their father clutched his chest tighter and fell to the floor. His breathing grew more labored and his eyes bulged. It was getting worse! In terror, Chaim ran back to the Sanzer Rebbe as fast as he could.

"Rebbe, Rebbe!" he shouted. His words tumbled out in a rush. "My father had another heart attack and I gave him Turkish coffee like you said to do last time but it didn't work! What should we do?"

"What? Are you crazy?" The rebbe looked horrified. "You gave black Turkish coffee to a man having a heart attack? Don't you know that is the worst thing possible? It could kill him in a second!"

"*Oy vey!* What should we do now? Rebbe, help! We'll do anything you say!"

"Okay, so go back and give your father a strong, black Turkish coffee."

Healing comes only from Hashem. The Torah teaches us that we can only be cured once we realize that. At that point, it doesn't matter what the means are — the cure can even come through the snake itself.

ותמת שם מרים ותקבר שם כ:א
*And Miriam died there, and she was
 buried there. (20:1)*

Miriam's passing is told right after the *parah adumah*, because the *parah adumah* brings *kapparah* for the *egel* and the passing of tzaddikim also brings *kapparah*. The Torah stresses twice that Miriam died *sham*, there.

- שם = 340
- פרה אדומה = 340
- מכפר = 340
- זה על עון עגל = 340
- אסור הנאה הוא = 340
 (referring to the *parah adumah*)
 (Ba'al Haturim)

TREATS FROM TARGUM

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

על כן יאמר בספר מלחמות ה' את זהב בסופה ואת הנחלים ארנון (כא"י)

Therefore it states in the book of wars of Hashem, **Es and Vaheiv** in the reeds, and the streams of Arnon. (21:14)

תרגום אונקלוס: על כן יתאמר בספרא קרבין דעבד יי על ימא דסוף וגבוין דעל נחלי ארנון

Therefore it states in the book of wars, **that which** Hashem **did** on the **Sea of Reeds** and the **power that was** on the streams of Arnon.

- The Gemara (*Brachos* 54a) explains that the words *Es* and *Vaheiv* are actually *names*. They were two *metzora'im* who could not enter the camp of Yisrael and therefore trailed behind the *Ananei Hakavod*. They were the only ones to witness the miracle performed at Nachal Arnon. Several armies of the Emori had hidden in caves in the mountains that flanked the streambed in which Klal Yisrael were walking. They intended to ambush Yisrael and attack them from above. But the passage of the *Aron* flattened mountains, and so it drove the two mountains in which they were hiding into each other, crushing the men in the caves. Klal Yisrael didn't notice; only *Es* and *Vaheiv* saw the blood running down the sides of the mountain and told them the news. This is the great miracle to which the *pasuk* is referring. (This is *pshat*, not *drush*. See Ibn Ezra — a word cannot begin with a *vav* unless it is a name.)
- Onkelos does not translate the *pasuk* this way at all. He explains *es vahev* as “that which Hashem did.” Standard translations follow this approach, in accordance with Rashi, who follows Onkelos and translates *es vahev* as “the gift.” Why does Onkelos veer from the explanation given by the Gemara?
- The Tzlach explains that Onkelos was a *talmid* of Rabi Eliezer (see *Megillah* 3a) and the Targum follows his *rebbe's* teachings. In *Menachos* (95a), Rabi Eliezer says that *metzora'im* were allowed to enter the *Ananei Hakavod* while the nation was traveling (because at that time, there was no “camp”). Accordingly, the Gemara's explanation does not work, and he had to hold of a different one!
- Onkelos also adds words to explain that “reeds” refers to the Sea of Reeds — i.e., the Yam Suf; the “book of wars” is about what Hashem *did*, not a book *belonging* to Hashem (for everything belongs to Him); and “streams of Arnon” refers to miracles done there.

THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY

The 10th of Tammuz is the day of the 1834 Druze riots in Tzfas.

Between the years 1831 and 1841, the Ottoman Turks lost their rule over a large portion of Eretz Yisrael, including Tzfas. The area was claimed by Egypt, led by its governor, Ibrahim Pasha. Pasha did not have the situation under control, and Bedouin and Druze kept up a constant rebellion against him.

On 10 Tammuz, 1834, Druze attacked the Egyptian garrison in Tzfas, quickly overcoming it. Reinforcements sent by Abd al Haji were also defeated, and the Druze swarmed into Tzfas to plunder the city.

Joined by the local Arabs of Tzfas, the Druze smashed a number of shuls, ransacked Jewish houses, and chased the Jews into the cemetery, where they beat them, demanding to know where their valuables were hidden. Many of the Jews fled to the ancient shul in Ein Zeitun.

The *rav* at the time was the Bas Ayin, Rabbi Avraham Dov of Avritch. A group of rebels kidnapped him and demanded that he write a ransom letter to the people. He refused, so they stuffed him in a sack and prepared to beat him too. Suddenly, the Druze heard the sound of many horses approaching. They fled and left the Bas Ayin alone.

After three days, Ibrahim Pasha's troops retook the city. Miraculously, no one died in the riots. Many Jews moved away from Tzfas, looking for a safer place to live. In 1837, a major earthquake shook the city, and almost all the remaining Jews left.

HALACHAH

Medicine on Shabbos

The parshah tells us about the passing of Aharon and Miriam and the cure given to the people bitten by the snake. What are some halachos about medical care on Shabbos?

Are you allowed to be mechallel Shabbos to seek medical care?

Any situation that might be life-threatening, or may possibly lead to or develop into a life-threatening situation, must be treated immediately, with no worries about *chillul Shabbos*. One should not be *machmir* to have a non-Jew administer treatment or be the one to call Hatzolah, and one should not use a *shinui* unless it absolutely will not affect the quality of the treatment.

How do I know if a condition is life-threatening?

This is obviously a major question with wide-reaching importance. *Poskim* have written extensively on the subject, and many Hatzolah members have been given guidelines to help answer this question.

I'm not an expert posek or Hatzolah member. What should I do?

Learn the *sugya*! Until then, know that the halachah provides that a person knows his own body best. If a person feels faint, like he might pass out, that is to be considered life-threatening. Some other quick guidelines: Any internal injury or

wound to the body cavity is considered life-threatening. Pain that can be rated a "seven" or higher on a scale of one to ten is also considered life-threatening. There are many other circumstances that qualify as well — if you can't figure it out and have no one to ask, always prioritize health and life!

Are there any leniencies for a person who is sick but has no risk to life or limb?

For someone who is truly sick, *issurei d'Rabbanan* may be done with a *shinui*. This means he can explicitly ask a non-Jew to do *melachah d'Oraisa* for him. "Truly sick" is defined as needing to lie down or feeling general body weakness. (Someone is sick if he should be lying down, even if he is not actually doing so.) One should not leave the *techum* to seek treatment, as this cannot be done without a *shinui*.

What about someone who does have a risk of loss of limb?

To save a limb, a person may violate all *issurei d'Rabbanan*, even without a *shinui*. He may ask a *goy* to do *issurei d'Oraisa* and may even leave the *techum*.

Risk to limb means a situation that may develop to the point of the loss of even partial function of a limb or organ. *Poskim* dispute whether it applies to a tooth. NOTE: A break to a major bone, a broken bone that breaks skin, or a severed limb is considered life-threatening!

What about someone who has aches and pains but is not generally weak and does not need to be in bed?

One certainly may not violate Shabbos in order to treat simple aches and pains. In fact, there is an additional *issur* that applies: It is forbidden to take medicine or do a healing procedure even if it does not involve *melachah*. "Aches and pains" are defined as anything that does not reach the level of sickness and does not seem to be developing into a sickness. Children under three years old, or people who are generally weak, can be considered "sick" even if they just have aches and pains.

What is included in the *issur* to take medicine?

It is *assur* for a person to treat aches and pains with any food or activity that healthy people would not eat or do. There are exceptions: a course of treatment begun before Shabbos is permitted to be continued on Shabbos according to many *poskim*. Preventative treatment for a person who is currently healthy is permitted. Foods eaten by healthy people (example: eating a lot of oranges in order to get vitamin C to treat a cold) are permitted.

Can I take vitamins?

Vitamins on Shabbos are the subject of a major dispute. A general consensus is that they may be taken for general strength and wellness but not to treat an existing condition.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"IT'S NOT HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE YOU HAVE THAT MAKES YOU GREAT OR SMALL, BUT HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE YOU ACCOMPLISH WITH WHAT YOU HAVE."

— Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch



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