



# פרשת ואתחנן

# CIRCLE TIME AT YOUR Shabbos Table

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

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### TELL ME A TALE >

*A dvar Torah with a story.*

## CAN'T OUTSMART A YID

כי הוא חִכְמַתְכֶם וּבִינְתְכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק עִם חִכְמֶם וְנִבְּוֹן הַגּוֹי הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה

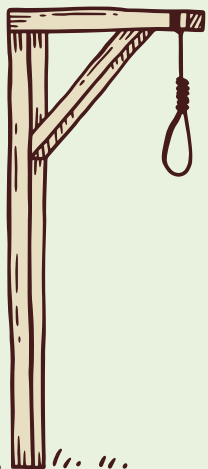
*Because it is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these laws and say, "But [how] wise and understanding is this great nation!" (4:6)*

*The unique wisdom and understanding of our gedolim, sharpened and honed by Torah study, have often saved their lives.*

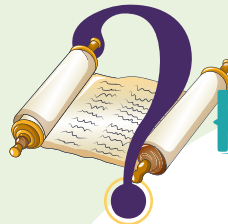
**F**or many years, the Rambam served as the personal doctor to the sultan (king) of Egypt. He was widely respected and honored for his skill and wisdom, but some members of the sultan's court were jealous and

hated him. More than once, they plotted and schemed to get rid of him.

In one such plot, the Rambam's enemies managed to convince the sultan that the Rambam was plotting to kill him. The sultan held a major trial for the Rambam, hearing testimony from all the people in on the plot. It seemed clear that the Rambam was guilty and deserved



CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >>



## PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 Which two *pesukim* in the Torah contain all the letters of the *aleph-beis*?
- 2 Which four *inyanim* in the *parshah* promise *arichus yamim*, long life?
- 3 Which two *pesukim* in the *parshah* are said at every *krias haTorah*?
- 4 Which is the only *pasuk* in the Torah that has two larger-than-usual letters?
- 5 Which two things does the Torah say should be done "with all your heart and soul"?

# CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Reb Shimon goes to the mikvah to get ready for Shabbos and Yankel “borrows” his clothing to check for hidden money.

# R

eb Yitzchak and his sons sat around the Shabbos table. The silverware gleamed, glasses sparkled, and gourmet food was beautifully served on a long line of platters. It was *kevod* Shabbos at its very best — except that the guest was missing.

Reb Yitzchak stood up and paced the room. What could have happened to Reb Shimon? Had he gotten lost? He hadn’t shown up in shul, where they had planned to meet, and he wasn’t at the house either. After more than an hour had passed, Reb Yitzchak made a decision. He called his sons.

“Boys, we’re going to look for our guest,” he said. “I have a bad feeling that something has happened to him. We’ll check the shul, the mikvah, and all the streets from there to the house.”

The menfolk stepped into the night and went searching for their guest. Reb Yitzchak looked in the shul, the streets, and the alleys. No sign of him. Suddenly, his son who had gone to look in the mikvah came running toward him. “Tatte, I don’t know if it’s him, but there’s a strange sound coming from the mikvah! It sounds like someone singing!”

The group hurried to the mikvah building. They rushed inside and beheld an odd sight: there was Reb Shimon, wearing a wild collection of mismatched, wrong-sized articles of clothing. He was singing and dancing in the middle of the mikvah changing room, looking like he had completely lost his mind! “Reb Shimon!” Reb Yitzchak shouted, snapping the other man out of his dance. “What has happened to you?! Why are you dressed like that, and why did you not come to my home as we planned?”

“Ah, my friend and benefactor. You found me. Let me explain. I realize this looks a bit strange but, you see, someone stole my clothing! I took these random garments from the lost-and-found area of the mikvah. I’m lucky there was anything there. Of course, I couldn’t go out into the street like this, so I’m kind of stuck here!”

Reb Yitzchak frowned. The explanation made sense but did not account for why the other man was singing and dancing when he should have been crying! He remembered another event, long ago, when Reb Shimon had found the money they had lost in the forest. At that time, he’d cried; now, he was laughing. It was time for an explanation. But

first, they had to get back to his house for the Shabbos meal.

Reb Yitzchak sent one of his sons to his house to fetch a full suit of clothing (there was an *eruv*). Then the group walked through the quiet streets to Reb Yitzchak’s house, where they made Kiddush, *Hamotzi*, and began the *seudah*.

After the soup, Reb Yitzchak cleared his throat. “Reb Shimon,” he began. “I must ask you something that has been bothering me about you for ten years.”

“Ten years? You’ve only just met me!”

“Reb Shimon, I am Yitzchak, your old friend and secretary. Hashem has been kind to me, and I have done well. I did not identify myself to you because I feared you would be ashamed, but now I see that you have a different idea of joy and disappointment than most people. Please explain why, ten years ago, you cried when we found the money that we were sure had been lost, and now you laughed when your clothing was stolen!” Reb Shimon’s face did not register shock. “My good friend, Reb Yitzchak. It is so wonderful to see you! Thank you so much for all the kindness you have shown me. No, I am not ashamed; this is the *gezeirah* of Hashem. Who is just in all His ways.

“I will explain why I cried when we found the money. You see, money and fortunes are like a wheel. They roll from person to person. When we found that money, which should never have still been in the forest after all that time had passed, I felt that this was the ultimate in the *chessed* of *hash-gachah*. I feared that I was at the top of the wheel and there was no place to go from there but down. That is also why I fired you. I knew I was coming upon hard times; I did not want to drag you down with me. Indeed, I have had painful *mazal* since that day.

“But back in the mikvah, I was filled with joy. Someone stole my very clothing! I had nothing left, nothing at all. Not even my own shirt! I knew when that happened that I had reached the bottom of the wheel, and there is nowhere to go from there but up.

“Things will begin improving for me from now on!”

And indeed they did.

THE END

2

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIDRASH

## The Sound That Never Ended

**Moshe Rabbeinu describes the voice of Hashem at Har Sinai as “lo yasaf” (Devarim 5:18). What does this mean?**

- Rashi understands Onkelos as describing the voice “without interruption.” Unlike people, who need to break up their speech into syllables, words, and sentences, the sound of Hashem is one unified unit. It is never interrupted or stopped and therefore never added to or continued.
- The *Zohar* explains it as never-ending, continuing until today.
- The Raavan says it means that the sound of the shofar blowing lasted 40 days and nights.
- The Ramban understands that it means that it did not hold back; it had no limit to its power.



# 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.** To Eretz Yisrael Moshe begged to go,  
**2.** But he could go no further than Har \_\_\_\_\_.  
 L  
**3.** After 515 *tefillos* a command was heard,  
**4.** "Moshe, don't daven another \_\_\_\_\_."  
 L  
**5.** We have to be careful to always try  
**6.** Never to forget what we heard at \_\_\_\_\_.  
 H  
**7.** When Hashem spoke to us all up close,  
**8.** And we heard the *Aseres* \_\_\_\_\_.

Chorus

- L  
**9.** Even when we will be scattered far and wide,  
**10.** If we call to Hashem, He'll be at our \_\_\_\_\_.  
 L  
**11.** When we search with all our soul and heart  
**12.** To reveal the truth of the world from the \_\_\_\_\_.  
 L  
**13.** We'll find there never was and never will be  
**14.** Another nation like the *Am* \_\_\_\_\_.  
 H  
**15.** Even the nations will look with approving eyes  
**16.** And say this nation is so smart and \_\_\_\_\_.

Chorus

L

- 17.** A relative killed by accident can be avenged, but  
**18.** Not if the killer ran to one of the *arei* \_\_\_\_\_.

- L  
**19.** Moshe reviewed the events at Har Sinai.  
**20.** The people came forward to beg and \_\_\_\_\_,

- L  
**21.** "We can't bear to hear Hashem; Moshe, you tell us  
 instead,  
**22.** After each of the *Dibros*, we end up \_\_\_\_\_."

- H  
**23.** The thunder and lightning were meant to make us  
 scared;  
**24.** We certainly learned that Hashem is to be \_\_\_\_\_.

Chorus

- L  
**25.** Do not let the nations of Canaan stay and tarry,  
**26.** Destroy them all, and for sure do not \_\_\_\_\_.

- L  
**27.** Don't make things easier for the *yetzer hara*,  
**28.** Make sure to smash their *avodah* \_\_\_\_\_.

- L  
**29.** A reminder about Shema and Pesach too,  
**30.** What it means to be a proper \_\_\_\_\_.

- H  
**31.** Not because of our size did Hashem choose us from the  
 rest;  
**32.** We are a small nation, but He loves us \_\_\_\_\_.

Answers: 2. Nevo 4. word 6. Sinai 8. *Hadibros* 10. side 12. start 14. *Hayehudi* 16. wise  
 18. *milat* 20. cry 22. dead 24. feared 26. marry 28. *zarah* 30. Jew 32. best

## RIDDLE ANSWERS:

- 1.** a. או הנסה א-להים לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי במסת באתו ובמופתים ובמלחמה ובניד חזקה ובזרוע נטייה ובמוראים גדלים ככל אשר עשה לכם ה' א-להיכם במצרים לעיניך (ד:לד)  
 b. זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' לקטו ממנו איש לפי אכלו עמר לגלגלת מספר נפשתיכם איש לאשר באהלו תקחו (שמות טז:טז)
- 2.** a. ושמרת את חקיו ואת מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום אשר ייטב לך ולבניך אחריו ולמען תאריך ימים (ד:מ)  
 b. כבד את אביך ואת אמך כאשר... למען יאריך ימך (ה:טז)  
 c. ושמרתם לעשות כאשר צוה ה' א-להיכם אתכם... למען תחיו וטוב לכם והארכתם ימים (ה:כט)  
 d. למען תירא את ה' א-להיך... ולמען יארכו ימך (ו:ב)
- 3.** a. ואתם הדבקים בה' א-להיכם חיים כלכם היום (ד:ד)  
 b. וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל (ד:מד)
- 4.** ושמע ישראל ה' א-להינו ה' אחד has a large V and T.
- 5.** a. ובקשתם משם את ה' אלהיך ומצאת כי תדרשנו בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך (ד:כט)  
 b. ואהבת את ה' א-להיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך (ו:ה)

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

# HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

## FIRST HAFTORAH OF CONSOLATION

This week's *haftorah* is the famous *Nachamu*, read the Shabbos after Tishah B'Av. It is the first of the seven Haftaros of Consolation. The first four of the seven represent a conversation. In *Nachamu*, Hashem sends a navi to console Klal Yisrael. In the second one, Klal Yisrael bewail the fact that Hashem has not come to comfort them Himself. In the third, the *nevi'im* report this to Hashem. In the fourth, Hashem speaks words of comfort directly.

## SUMMARY

*Haftaras Nachamu* comforts the nation by describing the joy and miracles that will take place when we return to Yerushalayim. It depicts the world turning over in turmoil as we return, triumphant, to the land. The *haftorah* goes on to describe the ultimate power and dominion Hashem has over the universe. This reassures us that everything He has done is for us and our benefit, that He still loves us, and that nothing can impede the coming Redemption.

## CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

The *parshah* describes our redemption from Egypt, the revelation of Hashem's power at *Mattan Torah*, our fear of Him, His love for us, exalting us before the nations with wisdom and mitzvos, and it reminds us that even punishment is a sign of love.

The *haftorah* describes our future Redemption with Mashiach, the power of Hashem that will be revealed then, His awe that will be instilled in the world, the world's future recognition of the triumph of Yisrael, and it consoles us over our punishment, which was also a sign of love.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the death penalty for treason and plotting to kill the king.

The sultan did not want to sentence the Rambam to death, as he was a close and trusted advisor. But the evidence was clear, what could he do? He pondered the problem deeply and finally decided on a "brilliant" solution: he would leave the Rambam's fate to luck!

The sultan announced that the next day he would have two papers put in a pot. On one would be written the word "life" and on the other "death." Whichever one the Rambam drew would be his fate. The sultan left the responsibility to make the lots in the hands of one of the Jew-haters who had testified against the Rambam in the first place. Unsurprisingly, instead of following the king's instructions, the man wrote "death" on both papers!

The next day, the Rambam, the sultan, and all the sultan's advisors stood in court. The king motioned for the Rambam to pull out a paper and learn whether he would live or die. The Rambam reached into the pot, pulled out a folded paper, and — without looking at it — put it in his mouth and swallowed it!

The courtroom broke out in an uproar, with everyone shouting at once. The sultan finally restored order and demanded an explanation. "You have destroyed the paper that held your fate!" he said angrily to the Rambam. "How are we supposed to know what to do with you now?"

"Simple," the Rambam replied. "Let's look at the other one. Whatever it says on there, we know that the one I drew said the opposite!" The sultan agreed and the Rambam pulled the other paper out of the pot. He unfolded it, and sure enough it read "death" — which meant the one he drew first supposedly said "life" and the Rambam was saved! The court case ended and the Rambam was released, saved from the plot against him with some trickery of his own.

The sultan knew something was up. He called the Rambam for a private conversation and asked for an explanation. The Rambam explained that he'd figured both papers said "death" so he used his smarts to come up with a way out of the trap. The king investigated and found that it was true, and the advisors who had plotted against the Rambam were thrown into prison!

(וְהַפִּיץ ה' אֶתְכֶם בְּעַמִּים... בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יִנְהַג... שָׁמָּה (ד:כז))

*And Hashem will scatter you among the nations, in the peoples that He will lead you there... (4:27)*

The four words describing the nations among whom we will be exiled hint at the four main exiles of Klal Yisrael:

Bavel, Paras/Madai, Greece, and Rome

- (between the Babylonians) בְּעַמִּים = 162 = בין הבבליים
- (and in Media) בְּגוֹיִם = 62 = ובמדי
- (in Greece) יִנְהַג = 68 = ביון
- (from the Romans) שָׁמָּה = 345 = מרומיים

## THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY

The 16th of Av is the *yahrtzeit* of the famed philanthropist and Jewish advocate, Sir Moses Montefiore *z"l*, who died at age 101 (5545/1784-5645/1885). Born in Livorno, Italy, of Sephardic descent, he moved to England as a young child and later made a fortune as a broker at the London Stock Exchange. He was the brother-in-law of Reb Nosson Meyer Rothschild, one of the wealthiest Jews in Europe. He was also Sheriff of London and knighted by Queen Victoria. Reb Moshe retired from business at age 40 and devoted the rest of his life to *tzedakah* and *chessed*.

Reb Moshe almost singlehandedly blocked the Reform movement from establishing itself in England. He traveled to the Sultan of Turkey in 1840 to defend the Jews of Damascus against a blood libel; to Rome in 1858 to try and free the Jewish boy Edgar Mortara, who was kidnapped and baptized by his nurse; to Russia, Morocco, and other places to ask government authorities to stop persecution of the Jews.

Eretz Yisrael was dear to his heart. He visited seven times, setting up *tzedakos*, building industry, education and health, and sponsoring several agricultural settlements. In Yerushalayim, he established the first neighborhood outside the protective walls of the Old City. The windmill he built to provide the *kehillah* with *parnassah* still stands. Most famously, he had workers add to the height of the Kosel; the small upper stones were added through his sponsorship.

## TREATS FROM TARGUM

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

לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פְּנֵי (ה:ז)

*You may not have other gods before Me. (5:7)*

תַּרְגוּם אֹנֶקְלוֹס לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים בְּרַמְנֵי

*You may not have other gods, besides Me.*

- Onkelos usually translates *avodah zarah* gods as טַעוּתָא, mistake, or sometimes דַּחְלוֹן, fear. Why does he use the phrase אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, “other gods,” here?
- The Ramban explains that this *pasuk* is not referring to stone and wood idols. It is warning us not to serve *malachim*, who are actually called אֱלֹהִים.
- Others explain that Onkelos had to use this phrase because he changed “before Me” to “besides Me.” (Onkelos never allows a phrase to ascribe any kind of form or body to Hashem.) He could not therefore write, “Don’t have **other** false gods,” because to follow that with “besides Me” would be the ultimate *kefirah*!



# HALACHAH

## Swimming Pools



### **How should men be dressed on their way to the pool?**

According to Rav Yisroel Belsky and many other *poskim*, men may not wear less than their full clothing when walking to a pool through a public area. Even a shirt and swimming shorts are not enough; they must wear pants or a robe.

### **Do I have to wear my yarmulke in the pool?**

No, the pool is considered a big bath. It is praiseworthy to wear a yarmulke when at the pool, but not in the water.

### **May I learn or read a sefer at the pool?**

Do not talk in learning without a yarmulke on. Do not read from a *sefer* without a shirt on. One should not recite a *brachah* at a pool and therefore may not eat in a pool area.

### **Do married women have to cover their hair while swimming?**

It is customary for a married woman to keep her hair covered at the pool. Although the regular rules of *tznius* do not apply fully at the pool, covering the hair does.

### **May a fully dressed woman be at the pool during men's swim times?**

No, unless she is the only available lifeguard.

### **Is a swimming pool usable as a mikvah?**

Depending on the type of pool and filtration system, it may be enough of a mikvah to be used by people who have the *minhag* to *tovel* for extra *kedushah*. It may not serve for an obligatory *tevilah*.

### **What's wrong with swimming on Shabbos?**

There are four issues with swimming on Shabbos: Carrying the water by splashing it out of the pool; squeezing water out of hair or bathing suit; a *gezeirah* that one may build a floatation device; the *issur* of bathing.

Carrying would not be an issue if there is a fence or wall around the pool. The *gezeirah* about the raft would not be a problem if there is a raised lip around the pool. Squeezing is something people can be careful to avoid. But there is a *minhag* not to bathe even in cold water on Shabbos and therefore swimming is forbidden.

### **Should a son stand up for his father at the pool?**

A son does not stand for his father in a bathhouse, but he should do so at the pool.

## THE LAST WORD

*A one-liner worth remembering*

"IF THEY ASK ME IN SHAMAYIM, 'WHY WERE YOU NOT AVRAHAM?' I'LL SAY THAT I DIDN'T HAVE HIS ABILITIES. IF THEY SAY, 'WHY WERE YOU NOT MOSHE?' I'LL SAY I DIDN'T HAVE HIS HUMILITY. FOR EVERY SUCH QUESTION, I'LL HAVE AN ANSWER. BUT IF THEY SAY, 'ZUSHA, WHY WERE YOU NOT ZUSHA?' FOR THAT, I'LL HAVE NO ANSWER." —Rav Zusha of Anipoli

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

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