



# CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR  
Shabbos Table

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

DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

## THANKS! THAT HURT!

וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת כָּל הַדְרֹךְ אֲשֶׁר הִלִּיכָה ה' אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה  
אֲרָבָעִים שָׁנָה... וַיַּעֲנֶךָ וַיִּרְעַבְךָ... וַיֹּאכְלֶךָ אֶת הַמָּן...  
שְׁמֹלְתְךָ לֹא בִלְתָה מֵעֲלֶיךָ וְרַגְלֶךָ לֹא בָצָקָה,

“And you should remember everything that Hashem did to bring you along the way these 40 years...He pained you and starved you and fed you the *mann*...your clothing did not wear out, and your feet didn't crack.” (*Devarim* 8:4)

**How does “He pained you and starved you” fit into the list of Hashem’s kindnesses?**

**C**zar Nikolai, king of Russia, would at times disguise himself as a peasant and, together with one of his servants, walk among the common folk in order to find out what they thought of his government. On one of these expeditions, the undercover king and servant entered a café and were seated at a table among the other diners. The table nearest theirs was occupied by a group of soldiers from a foreign country that was often at war with Russia. The men were drinking and making merry, and the king listened carefully to their conversation, hoping to glean some important information.

Suddenly, one of the soldiers froze mid-guffaw. His eyes narrowed as he looked at the undercover king. He nudged his

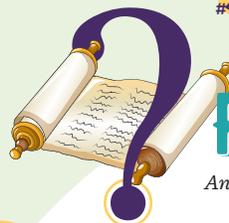


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## PARSHAH RIDDLES

Answers to this week's riddles will appear in next week's issue.

1

Which of the six *mitzvos temidios* (mitzvos that apply to every Jew every second of their life) is found in this week's *parshah*? Which is in last week's *parshah*? Can you name all six?

2

What specific *mitzvah* is *תעבד אתו* (Not *temidi*)

3

Can you find two *pesukim* in a row that have three consecutive *mems*? Can you find a third such *pasuk*, also in this week's *parshah*?

4

Where in the words *שנה אחרית ועד השנה מרשית* is there a hint that the year begins in Tishrei?

## GEMATRIA

וְהָיָה עִקֵּב תִּשְׁמָעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם  
אִתְּם וּשְׁמַר ה' אֶלְקֵיךָ לְךָ אֶת הַבְּרִית

“And because (עקב) you will listen to these principles and you will keep and do them, Hashem will keep the treaty [He made with you].” (*Devarim* 7:12)

The history of the world is divided into three sets of 2,000 years. The final third, called the “two millennia of Mashiach,” began in the year 4,000, which was 172 years after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Mashiach would have come right then had we kept our side of the bargain.

עקב = 172

The *pasuk* is telling us: עקב, והיה עקב, it would be 172, if תשמעוּן, you would listen...

(Rav Chaim Kanievsky)



# CHOLENT STORY

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

*Recap: The morning after Rav Yonasan Eibschutz secretly gives away his entire dowry to free Reb Shimon, there is an urgent pounding on his door.*

**R**

av Yonasan froze. Did the pounding on his door have anything to do with his late-night meeting with the church guard? He had to prevent his wife, Elke, from getting involved in this!

"I wonder who that could be, so early in the morning," Rebbetzin Elke said, starting for the door.

"That's alright, I'll get it," Rav Yonasan said.

But he was too late; Elke had already opened the door. Two young men stood there, with very serious looks on their faces. Two *Jewish* men.

"Yaakov and Shmuel! To what do we owe the honor of this early-morning visit?" Rav Yonasan asked.

"You may have heard about the imprisonment of our dear friend Reb Shimon Rosen," Yaakov began. "We have been sent to collect funds in order to free him from a terrible fate. It is extremely urgent."

Then Rav Yonasan remembered. The *yungeleit* had been sent to knock on every door in the city to raise funds! They didn't know that the money had already been paid and the captive freed!

"Yes, yes, of course," he said to the men. "Quickly, come into my study."

The men followed Rav Yonasan. When they were safely inside the room, he shut the door firmly. He did not want Elke to overhear this conversation.

"There is no need to worry," he said softly. "It is over! He is free!"

"What's over? How can he be free? What are you talking about, Rav Yonasan?"

"Reb Shimon. He is free! I paid off the church guard myself last night. All three thousand gold thaler. You can go home! The crisis has passed!"

But the men did not share Rav Yonasan's excitement.

"What do you mean?" they asked. "We have been collecting all of last night and this morning. We have over a thousand gold thaler already. What are we supposed to do with all this money?"

"Why is that a problem? The main thing is that Reb Shimon is free!"

"We worked hard for this mitzvah, and we don't want to give it up!" the collectors said. "All the people who gave money also want a part in the mitzvah! Here, take the money we collected thus far, so at least everyone will have a share in the great mitzvah of *pidyon shevuyim*."

Rav Yonasan considered this. He had given away a tremendous sum of money, and it was meant to support him for years...

"No!" he said firmly. "Hashem granted me the opportunity to do the mitzvah, and I won't sell it for a few thaler! You can return all the money; I'm not selling even a small part of the mitzvah."

The argument continued for a while, and eventually the three went to the leaders of the *kehillah*. Everyone pressed Rav Yonasan to take the collected money in exchange for part of the amount he had given the church guard, but he stood steadfast. "Hashem gave me the opportunity, and He will support me!"

On his way home, Rav Yonasan was preoccupied with a different problem. Elke checked on the family finances every few days. She was bound to discover, sooner or later, that the money was missing, and what would he do then? She would probably be extremely upset. How would he explain to her what he had done?

Rav Yonasan pondered his options for a while and finally decided that the best course of action was to travel out of town for a few days. In the meanwhile, Elke would probably discover that the money was missing and assume there had been a break-in while her husband was away. Even if she realized what had happened, she would come to terms with it. And whatever was going on within the church walls would probably blow over by then; the monks would stop searching for the source of Reb Shimon's freedom, and Elke would be out of danger.

"Something came up," Rav Yonasan told his *rebbetzin* that evening. "I must travel to a nearby town for about a week. I will take the nine o'clock train."

He packed a small bag and set out for the train station, praying to Hashem that he was doing the right thing for his family.

Had Rav Yonasan known what was taking place within the walls of St. Michael's Cathedral at that moment, he may not have gone. At the very least, he would have *davened* much harder...

TO BE CONTINUED....

2

DVAR TORAH >>

# LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI

Three different angles on a *dvar Torah*, one each from Litvish, Chassidic, and Sephardic sources. Can be split between the three *seudos*.

וַעֲתָה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ שָׂאֵל מֵעַמְּךָ כִּי  
אִם לִירְאָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּכָל דַּרְכָיו  
וּלְאַהֲבָה אוֹתוֹ וְלַעֲבֹד אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ  
וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ

"And now, *Yisrael*, what is Hashem asking of you [already]? Just to fear Hashem, go in His ways, love Him, and serve Hashem with all your heart and soul." (*Devarim* 10:12)

*Moshe* says, "What is He asking...?" and continues with a long and daunting list!

How can he make it sound like it's no big deal?

## RABBEINU YONAH:

If we work on *yiras Shamayim*, the first and only significant thing on the list, everything else follows easily. We just need to focus on that.

## BAAL SHEM TOV:

וְאֵל here means "with." Hashem is asking that we fear "with" Him, i.e., that we understand how terrible sin is and learn to fear it for all the reasons He wants us to avoid it, not just because we fear punishment. It is so much easier for a child to listen to their father's warnings when they understand the dangers he is concerned about, as opposed to when they just fear punishment.

## U'MASOK HA'OR:

When one orders "just a steak" at a restaurant, they also get a cup, knife, fork, plate, and napkin. These items are not extra; they are part of the steak order. When Hashem asks for *yiras Shamayim*, the other things on the list are not extra or additional. They are part and parcel of the request for *yiras Shamayim*.

# PERSONAL GROWTH AVODAH OF THE WEEK

This section views the procession of *parshiyos* and *Yamim Tovim* as a ladder for personal growth. It identifies a theme in the *parshah* and a related area that needs growth, and assigns a weekly mission based upon it.

## PARSHAH SUMMARY

Like many other *parshiyos* in *Devarim*, *Eikev* focuses heavily on reward, punishment, and *teshuvah*.

Moshe continues the speech in which he reviews the mitzvos of the Torah. Having discussed several major areas of Halachah, before continuing to others, he pauses to urge *Klal Yisrael* to keep the mitzvos. He emphasizes again and again that our success and *bracha* are dependent on our close relationship with Hashem. He reminds us of all the *chessed* Hashem has done for us in Egypt and the desert and all the kindnesses He will do in Eretz Yisrael, if we do our part. He also reminds us of our failings, including the *Chet Ha'egel* and Korach's rebellion.

Specifically, Moshe warns that pride precedes a fall; we will lose our focus on mitzvos and Hashem if we become haughty or think we earned or deserved any of our success. It is all a gift from Hashem, not due to our own might, genius, or righteousness. Forgetting this precipitates disaster.

## AVODAH FOR THIS WEEK:

- 
1. Let's focus on remembering to be grateful for what we have, and not consider it "money in the bank." Choose your greatest assets in the areas of finance, family, health, and personality and work on remembering that they are gifts, not things you earned or deserved.
  2. Think of someone you consider a bit of an unfortunate soul. How many gifts of yours, had they been granted by Hashem to them instead, would make the two of you switch places?

## ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES:

1. Where in Chumash are the seven nations of Eretz Canaan mentioned in one *pasuk*? **Parshas Va'eschanan 7:1.** Where are the only two other places in all of Chumash in which Girgashi are mentioned? **In the lists of nations at the end of Parshiyos Noach and Lecha Lecha.**
2. According to *mesorah*, the letter *kuf* in the words היום כלכם חיים אלקיכם בה' אלקיכם has crowns (*tagin*) even though most *kufs* do not. Why? **It is hinting to the 100 brachos one should say each day, which help us stay חיים כלכם היום (Baal Haturim).**
3. Can you find a *pasuk* in the Torah that contains all the letters of the *Aleph-Beis*? **Parshas Va'eschanan 4:34:**  
או הנסה אלקים לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי במסת באתת ובמופתים ובמלחמה וביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובמוראים גדלים ככל אשר עשה לכם ה'; אלקיכם במצרים לשיניך.

Did you notice that the story of the haftorah, besides relating to the depth of the parshah or day, usually sounds like it is right out of current events?

# HAFTORAH FROM THE HEADLINES

This week's haftorah is the second of the seven Haftaros of Consolation. *Klal Yisrael* bewails the fact that Hashem has not come to comfort us Himself, and Hashem responds with a glorious expression of love and a description of the upcoming redemption.

## HAFTORAH SUMMARY

The haftorah is a conversation between Hashem and Tziyon, who sounds like a broken, bereft woman who has lost her husband and children. The Midrash relates that after the *Churban*, Yirmiyahu Hanavi met a woman dressed in black sitting on a mountaintop and screaming uncontrollably. Yirmiyahu asked if she was a demon or human, and she answered in riddles, making the point that she was a representation of Tziyon.

The haftorah opens with Tziyon wailing that Hashem has forsaken her. Hashem replies that a mother would sooner forsake her children, and with other expressions of His dedication. Later, Tziyon mourns her lost children (*Yisrael*) and estrangement from her husband (Hashem).

Hashem attests to His undying love and then describes the triumphant return of her children and husband. In glowing terms, He describes the future return of *Klal Yisrael* to their home and to Hashem.

Then the haftorah emphasizes that all this is dependent on *Klal Yisrael's teshuvah*. Hashem can subdue all the nations and keep all His promises, but we must do *teshuvah*.

## CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH:

Both the *parshah* and haftorah describe Hashem's close relationship with us, all He has done and will soon do for us, and His willingness to subdue the nations, but stress that our ultimate success is contingent on our devotion to Torah and mitzvos. Both urge us to love Hashem and to *teshuvah*.

## RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES:

The haftorah describes *Klal Yisrael* streaming back to Eretz Yisrael, to the point that the land becomes overcrowded. It talks about our amazing revival and success. Some people claim that this has already happened. The haftorah, though, describes the nations subdued, not objecting, and even assisting our return. This has clearly not happened, and the phenomenon of the recent return of Jews to Eretz Yisrael is still far from what it will become. Our success is an expression of Hashem's love, but the haftorah underlines the point: in order for all this to happen, there must first be *teshuvah*.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

friend and whispered something.

Alarmed, Czar Nikolai averted his eyes and busied himself with his drink, trying to look nondescript. If the soldiers figured out who he was, they would kill him in an instant!

But it was too late. The soldier told his pals, "Hey, look at that guy! That's Czar Nikolai!"

The other soldiers dismissed him loudly. "Eh, had too much to drink already?" they shouted. "What a lightweight! Nikolai, indeed! Here in the bar! Ha!"

But the soldier, who was clearly unconvinced, continued to stare at the czar, who pretended he hadn't noticed anything amiss.

A while later, the man told his friends again, "I'm telling you, that's Nikolai! I would know that face anywhere!"

The other soldiers waved him away again, but a few began to look carefully at Nikolai's face, and they mumbled to each other.

Nikolai began to sweat. What could he do? He might be discovered at any moment! If he ran for it now, that would be a clear giveaway.

Suddenly, Czar Nikolai's servant yelled to his king, "Hey, boy! Go buy me a beer from the counter!" He shoved a coin in the surprised czar's hand. "Be quick, you hear?!" he shouted. "And don't spill a drop!"

The czar headed meekly for the beer spigot on the bar. He filled a mug with beer and rushed back to his table. In his hurry, he tripped on a chair, banged his head on a table, and dropped the mug, which smashed on the floor, spilling the beverage all over himself. He tried to get up but slipped in the beer again.

The servant came over to Nikolai and instead of helping him up, smacked him across the face, knocking him back into the beer puddle. "Fool!" he shouted. "How can you be such a klutz! Can't you do anything right?"

The soldiers, who had been watching the scene, turned to each other. Surely this was not the czar, they muttered. His companion would never dare to speak to him that way! Even the first soldier admitted he had made a mistake.

The soldiers ignored the czar and his servant while the two finished their meal and quietly slipped back to the palace.

Back on his throne, dressed in his royal garments, Czar Nikolai considered punishing his servant for his rude behavior. He called one of his advisers and told him the story.

"Punish him?" the adviser said. "You should reward him! Each slap and insult he gave you was saving your life!"

*In this world, we often cannot see how pain and suffering can be kindness. But one day, when the grand scheme of things will be revealed, it will be obvious that each drop of suffering we endured was pure kindness and love!*

# HALACHAH

אֶרֶץ חִטָּה וּשְׂעֵרָה וְגִפְנֵי וּתְאֵנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ זֵית שֶׁמֶן וְדָבָשׁ

“A land of wheat and barley and grapes and fig and pomegranate, a land of olives of oil and honey.”  
(Devarim 8:7-8)



This *pasuk* is cited by *Chazal* to teach us the proper order of *brachos*.

## ORDER OF BRACHOS

## WHICH BRACHA

## WHICH FOOD

*Chazal* tell us that part of expressing the proper appreciation to Hashem when saying *brachos* on food is showing respect for the seriousness of *brachos* by saying them in their proper order and applying each *bracha* to the most dignified food to which it can be applied. In fact, when the proper order is not observed, a *bracha* on a lower-ranking food does not cover a higher-ranking food of the same *bracha*. The considerations for the proper order of *brachos* are generally (there are exceptions), in order: a) specificity of *brachos*, b) seven species with which Eretz Yisrael is praised versus others, c) rank within the seven species, d) whole versus broken, e) personal preference.

*Brachos* that are more specific, i.e., apply to a smaller class of foods, are considered greater praise to Hashem than more general *brachos*. Therefore, when one has foods of multiple *brachos* before him, the first consideration is the specificity of the *brachos*. The proper order, based on specificity, is as follows: *Hamotzi*, *Mezonos* from the five grains; *Hagafen*, *Mezonos* on rice, *Ha'etz*, *Haadamah*, *Shehakol*. If one also has to say a *bracha* on a scent, that comes last. If there is a natural order to the foods, such as wetting the mouth with a drink before eating a dry food, or when one prefers the *Haadamah* food before the *Ha'etz*, this order is overridden.

When one has multiple foods with the same *bracha* before him, they must say the *bracha* on the most dignified food. The rules to determine priority are, in order: a) Foods from the seven species are first. The five grains are included in wheat and barley. Within the list of seven, priority is given to the foods most closely following the word “*eretz*” (which appears twice) in the *pasuk*. The order, therefore, is: wheat, barley, spelt, rye, oats, olives, dates, grapes, figs, pomegranates. b) Within the same species, or if all are not from the seven, whole fruits beat cut ones, and solid foods beat liquids (i.e., a *Mezonos* should be said on cake rather than oatmeal). c) All else being equal, one should say the *bracha* on the food they *usually* like more.

## THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

“NO ONE IS AS DIFFICULT TO RESPECT AS THE ONE WHO GOES BEGGING FOR KAVOD.”

—Rav Noach Orlowek

Would you like to dedicate or sponsor an issue of Circle Time: At Your Shabbos Table? Contact [circletime@circmag.com](mailto:circletime@circmag.com).

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