

CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR
Shabbos Table

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

TELL ME A MASHAL (OR TWO)>>

A dvar Torah with a story.

אַק בָּה' אֵל תִּמְרֹדָן (י"ט:ט)

Just don't rebel against Hashem. (14:9)

The Chafetz Chaim related two meshalim explaining why it is both sad and special to live in our generation...

1. JUST DON'T THROW POTATOES

The czar of Russia was going on tour.

The great and mighty ruler planned to set out to see the countryside. He scheduled visits to villages and towns across the vast land; he wanted to see the people and how they lived. More importantly, he wanted *them* to see *him*, to learn about his greatness and to honor him.

The czar's office sent messages to employees of the government in every city and town, telling them about his impending visit and warning them that they had better prepare a royal welcome as befit the czar!

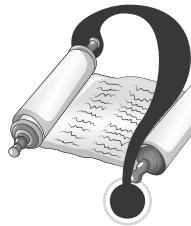
Sure enough, wherever he went, the czar was greeted by an honor guard, cheering crowds, decorated streets, and a hundred-piece band. The villagers tripped over themselves to show the greatest honor to the czar.

Except in one town.

In a far-flung corner of Russia, the people had never heard of the czar. They were lowly, suffering peasants who knew nothing about manners, honor, or royalty. There was one government worker in the town — a policeman.

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PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 Where does the Torah mention middos? Where does it mention derech eretz?**
- 2 Can you find the same six-word string mentioned twice in the parshah, in the middle of two different pesukim?**
- 3 Which three words in the Torah all mean "unwalled cities"?**
- 4 Where does the Torah mention the pomegranate? (5 places)**
- 5 Which two people does Hashem call "avdi — My servant"? (Hint: this week and last week)**

CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: After Reb Shimon fires him, Reb Yitzchak starts a successful business, while Reb Shimon loses his money. They both move to different towns.

R

eb Shimon's life went from bad to worse.

He lost his house and store in a fire. He moved to a tiny apartment in another village, but even that proved too expensive and he had to sell it. He tried opening a business, but it soon failed. He tried getting a job, but that didn't work out either.

With nothing left to try, Reb Shimon began to beg for *tzedakah*. He stood outside the local shul, jingling a few coins in his hand. Thankfully, no one in this town knew of his former wealth, and he was spared that embarrassment.

Reb Shimon was not pushy, and the coins he collected were never enough. The small village did not have any rich people; almost everyone there was living on a tight budget and did not have much to give.

Reb Shimon decided to try the next town over. He stood outside the shul collecting. Again he got a few coins, but not enough to support his family. Having no choice, he moved on to the next town.

All this traveling took its toll. His coat, once fine, became ripped and dirty. He could rarely afford a trip to the barber, and his hair and beard grew long and unkempt. His shoes got holes, and he had to patch them. He was nearly unrecognizable.

Through it all, Reb Shimon continued to learn Torah whenever he could. He remained kind and pleasant, though few people wanted to talk to him. He did not cry or sulk over his fate but accepted it with faith.

One day, Reb Shimon arrived in a big city where wealthy people lived. He hoped to be able to stay a while and live off the charity he could collect, while sending some back to his family. He took up his usual spot outside the shul.

Suddenly, another beggar came over to him, an angry look on his face. "Hey!" he said. "This is my spot. I've been collecting here for a while. You'll have to go somewhere else!"

"Sorry," Reb Shimon said. "I didn't know there were reserved spots. I thought it was each man for himself."

"It is each man for himself!" the other said rudely. "And I'm kicking you out!"

"I'm sorry, I don't think you have halachic right to reserve a spot," Reb Shimon said politely. "I'll be glad to go to a *din Torah* and have a *rav* decide."

"We beggars cannot afford to pay a *beis din*," the man snapped. "We have our own system of justice." Throwing Reb Shimon a nasty look, he hurried away. What was he up to? Reb Shimon wondered. Were there really politics even among beggars?

He did not have to wait long to find out. A few minutes later, a group of about ten poor people, led by the man who had challenged him, could be seen headed his way.

They did not look happy at all.

TO BE CONTINUED...

HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THE
MIDRASH

The Pomegranate Cave

Various midrashim tell the story of the spies and the pomegranate peel. The midrash Pisron Torah cites it as follows:

- A daughter of one of the giants in Eretz Yisrael was walking through a field eating a large pomegranate. She threw the empty peel on the ground. The *Meraglim* saw it and it appeared to them to be a cave, which could provide shelter from the sun. They went inside.
- Meanwhile, the giantess reconsidered. "If my father realizes that I threw litter on the floor, he'll be upset," she thought. She picked up the *rimon* peel, exposing the spies, and threw it out of the orchard. The spies marveled at her strength — she had picked up a whole cave and tossed it! "We're like grasshoppers compared to her!" they thought. And that is what they reported to Klal Yisrael: "*We were in their eyes like grasshoppers.*"
- How tall were the *Meraglim* themselves? The *Hadar Zekeinim* (written by *Rishonim*) quotes Rav Yochanan that the *Meraglim* were each 60 *amos* tall!
- It's not a coincidence that this story happened with a *rimon* peel. Many *sefarim* (see *Midrash Shir Hashirim* 4:3) say that a *rimon* has exactly 613 seeds. The empty *rimon* peel was warning the spies not to empty themselves of all 613 mitzvos by speaking badly about Eretz Yisrael, as *lashon hara* is equal to the whole Torah!



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 *Yidden* did not want Eretz Yisrael to be a surprise,
2. They wanted to check it out by sending _____.

L

3. Moshe asked Hashem what to do.
4. He said, “I’m leaving it up to _____.”

L

5. Moshe told them, “Go, and then come back.
6. Report the best way to _____.”

H

7. “But trust in Hashem, as you always should,
8. When He says the land is _____.”

Chorus

L

9. Each spy sent was a really great man,
10. But they came up with a terrible _____.

L

11. To say the land was impossible and wrong,
12. They couldn’t conquer, the people were too _____.

L

13. They said the Canaanim were way too big,
14. Like this huge bunch of grapes, *rimon*, and _____.

H

15. No way to beat them, it’s impossible, we can’t,
16. They saw us looking like tiny _____.

Chorus

L

17. Moshe asked that Yehoshua be saved;
18. He didn’t join and neither did _____.

L

19. The people started to moan and groan.
20. Yehoshua and Kalev, they tried to _____.

L

21. Hashem said since they had no need for tears,
22. They’ll have to wander for 40 _____.

H

23. The whole generation will die in this sand;
24. Their kids will be the ones to enter the _____.

Chorus

L

25. When you bring a *korban* from all your toil,
26. Add a *Minchah* of flour and _____.

L

27. If the leaders of the people teach them a mistake,
28. There’s a special *korban* they need to _____.

L

29. Take *challah* for the *kohen* from all your bread.
30. Today we are *tamei*, so we burn it _____.

H

31. A special gift from the King of kings,
32. On a four-cornered garment, attach *tzitzis* _____.

Answers: 2. spies 4. you 6. attack 8. good 10. plan 12. strong 14. fig 16. ants
18. Kalev 20. stone 22. years 24. land 26. oil 28. make 30. instead 32. strings

RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. **וְכָל הָעָם אָשֶׁר רָאָינוּ בָּתוֹךְהָ אַנְשֵׁי מִדּוֹת** (במדבר יג:יב)

ולא נִחְתַּמְמָם אֶלָּקִים **דָּרְךָ אֶרְץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים** (שמות יג:ז)

2. **וְעַשְׂתֶּם אֲשֶׁר לְהָעַלְהָ אָזְבֵּחַ לְפָלָא נִדְרָ אָזְבֵּחַ** (במדבר יג:ז)

וכי מְעֻשָּׂה בְּנֵי בָּקָר **עַלְהָ אָזְבֵּחַ לְפָלָא נִדְרָ אָזְבֵּחַ** או שְׁלָמִים לְהָעַלְהָ (ט:ח)

3. **מִחְנִים:** (במדבר יג:יט) **הַבְּמִחְנִים** אָם בְּמִבְצָרִים
חֲצָרִים: (וַיָּקָרָא כְּהֵלָא) וּבְעֵת הַחֲצָרִים אָשֶׁר אָנוּ לְהָמָם חֲמָה

פְּרִזִּי: (דברים ג:ה) כָּל אֶלְהָ עָרִים בְּצָרֹת חֹמֶה גְּבָהָ דְּלָתִים וְכָרְבָּנִים
רִיחָן? בְּדַעַת הַפְּרִזִּי הַרְבָּה מִאֵד

4. **פְּעַמֵּן זָהָב וּרְמֹנֹן** (שמות כה:לד, לט:כו)
וַיַּשְׁאַחֲרָה בְּמִזְבֵּחַ בְּשָׂנִים וּמִן הַרְמֹנִים וּמִן הַתְּאַנִּים (במדבר ח:ח)
לֹא מִקּוּם זָרָע וְמִזְרָח וְגַפֵּן וּרְמֹנֹן וּמִים אֵין לְשִׁתּוֹת (במדבר כ:ה)

וַיִּשְׁעַו מִרְתְּמָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּרָמָן פְּרִזִּי (במדבר לג:יט)
אֶרְץ חַטָּה וְשַׁעֲרָה וְגַפֵּן וְתַאֲנָה וּרְמֹנֹן (דברים ח:ח)

5. **וְעַבְדֵּי כָּלְבָן עַקְבָּה הַיְתָה רָוח אַחֲרָת עַמּוֹ** (במדבר יד:כד)
לֹא בְּן עַבְדֵּי מֹשֶׁה בְּכָל בֵּיתֵי נָאָקָן הַוָּא (במדבר יב:ז)

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

HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

SUMMARY

Within 30 days of the passing of Moshe Rabbeinu and the close of *Sefer Devarim*, Yehoshua, who has taken over the leadership of Klal Yisrael, sends Pinchas and Kalev to spy on the people of Yericho and discover their feelings about Jews.

The spies are spotted by the local king's militia, who search for them. They are hidden by Rachav, a woman of ill repute. She misleads the soldiers, gives the Jewish spies the information they need, helps them escape the city wall, and advises them on where to hide. In return, they promise to spare her life and her family. Rachav eventually converts, becomes a very spiritual woman, marries Yehoshua, and has descendants who are kings and prophets.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

In both the *parshah* and the *haftorah*, spies are sent to scout Eretz Yisrael. In both, there is also a double-cross: Kalev pretends to be in cahoots with the *Meraglim*'s evil plan in order to be able to argue against it (see Rashi); Rachav has a reputation as a wicked woman and consort of kings, but she uses her knowledge and position to benefit the Jews.

YOU KNOW NAVI

When speaking to the spies, Rachav uses the phrase we say in *davening* many times a day: ה' (אלקיכם) הוא אלקים בשמי מ' מפעל ועל הארץ מחתת

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When he received the message about the czar's visit, he began to worry. The custom in the town was to get angry at any wagon that passed through, because the dust kicked up by the wheels bothered people. They usually threw rotten potatoes at the offending vehicle, which was probably what they would do when the czar's entourage caused huge clouds of dust!

The policeman called the townsfolk together and explained how the czar took care of all their needs, fought wars for them, and kept the country running. He managed to impress them, and they all shouted, "Long live the czar!"

Seizing his opportunity, the policeman said, "Look, the czar is coming for a visit. Let's all honor him as best we know how, so... no one throw potatoes, okay?"

The pasuk quoted above describes our generation, said the Chafetz Chaim. We cannot show the honor to Hashem that the malachim, Avos, or early generations did. Our goal: Just don't rebel. Don't throw potatoes – don't do aveiros.

2. SELLER'S MARKET

A very well-to-do wheat merchant in Russia came to his *rebbe* for a *brachah*. "Rebbe," he said, "please give me a *brachah* for *parnassah*."



"You need a *brachah* for *parnassah*?" the *rebbe* asked in shock. "You sell tons of wheat every day!"

"Rebbe, I really need a *brachah*!" the man insisted. The *rebbe* gladly gave him a hearty *brachah* for livelihood.

A short while later, the Communist Revolution began and the Bolsheviks took over Russia. In an instant, there was no food for anyone to eat. People subsisted on bare rations of bread and lived in terrible poverty.

At the time, there was an illegal black market where one could still sell some products for profit. The *rebbe* was once walking through the area where the black market sellers hung out when he spotted the same merchant. He was carrying a small sack of wheat and looked very happy.

"How is business?" the *rebbe* asked. "I guess my *brachah* didn't work too well, did it?"

"Rebbe, your *brachah* was the best thing that ever happened to me!"

"Really? But you used to sell truckloads of wheat and now you only have a tiny sack to sell!"

"In the old days, I invested thousands to buy wheat. I tried to find buyers, but people would turn up their noses at it. This one claimed it was wormy, the other one thought he smelled mold... It was always a battle to sell, and I barely made a profit on each bushel."

"Today, people chase after me to sell. No one else has grain! If they want to see the merchandise or haggle over the price, I tell them, 'Chutzpah! You'll be lucky if I let you pay double!'"

Today, said the Chafetz Chaim, mitzvos and kevod Shamayim are rare commodities. If you can produce them, they are worth so much more!

ואותה שעה נשרים היו רשי יג:ג

*At that time (literally, that hour) they were good [people]
(Rashi, 13:3)*

יום לשנה יומם לשנה תשאו את עונתיכם ארבעים שנה יד:לז
A day for each year, you will bear you sin forty days.

(14:34)

If Klal Yisrael were punished a year for each day that the spies were spying, how much were they punished per hour?

- How many hours are in 40 days? $24 \times 40 = 960$
- How many months are in 40 years? $12 \times 40 = 480$
- This means every 2 hours caused a month of wandering, so every hour caused 15 days.

Klal Yisrael were punished 15 days less than 40 years

- Had they not sinned, they would have still had to spend 11 days in the desert (see *Devarim* 1:2).
- They entered Eretz Yisrael on the 10th of Nissan (see *Yehoshua* 4:19), 4 days less than 40 complete years after they left Egypt. Total: 15 days less than 40 years of punishment.

If 15 days are missing from the punishment, the spies must have been tzaddikim for one hour of the trip. That is why Rashi says:

"That hour, they were good people!"

THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY

The 26th of Sivan is the date of the miracle of Olyka.

Olyka, Ukraine (also called Alik), was home to many Jews. In 1649, it was attacked by the brutal Bogdan Chmielnicki and his hordes of Cossacks. The Jews of the town hid in the shul, which was a big, fortified building with ancient cannons on the roof. (According to another version of the story, they hid in the castle of Prince Radzivil.)

Among the townspeople was the Taz (Rav Dovid ben Shmuel Halevi Segal), who had fled from his hometown, Ostroh, when the Cossacks destroyed it. The people *davened*, fasted, and did *teshuva* in the building, while the Cossacks attacked and tried to breach the walls. Weakened by the fasting, the Taz passed out. In his sleep, he heard a voice reading a *pasuk* from *Melachim* (II 19:34), *I will protect and save this city for My sake, and for the sake of My servant Dovid*. The Taz awoke and told the people they would be saved.

The historian Abraham Rechtman (1880–1972) records what happened next:

A miracle ensued: Suddenly the old and rusty cannons began to fire of their own accord. The murderous bands fled to the four winds, and the town of Alik was saved. In commemoration of the miracle that had occurred, the Taz composed special penitential prayers. The Jews of Alik had the custom of reciting them every year on the day that the miracle occurred, 26 Sivan.



TREATS FROM TARGUM

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

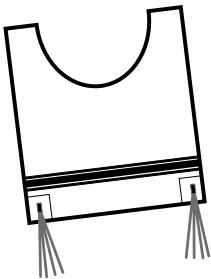
וחברון שבע שנים נבנתה לפניו צען מצרים
(יג:כב)

And Chevron was built seven years before Tzoan, Egypt.

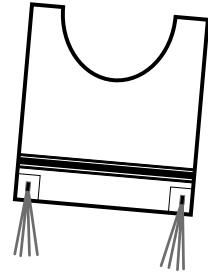
תרגם אונקלוס: וְחֶבְרוֹן שְׁבַע שָׁנִים אֶתְבְּנִית
קָדֵם טְרֵס דְּמָקִים

And Chevron was built seven years before Tunis of Egypt.

- Onkelos always cites the Hebrew names of cities *in Eretz Yisrael* directly, without giving the Aramaic name for them. However, he identifies cities *outside Eretz Yisrael* by the common name by which they were known at his time.
- Onkelos identifies Tzoan as Tunis, a city on the northeastern part of the Nile River Delta.
- The Ramban points out that the city is called Munyus by the Egyptian locals, but that Onkelos is identifying it to the Aramaic-speaking public, who called it by the name he used.



HALACHAH



Kids' Tzitzis

From what age should a child wear tzitzis?

Each mitzvah begins at an appropriate age. According to the poskim, a child should begin wearing *tzitzis* when he is old enough to put them on alone. The Rema adds that he should be able to keep two corners in front and two corners behind him. He should also know to hold the strings in his hand during *Krias Shema*. Varying ages are given for this, but it can differ from child to child. The common custom today is to begin from age three.

What about a child who is still in diapers?

There is no *issur* to wear *tzitzis* and a diaper. Although *tzitzis* must be treated with respect, they may be brought into the bathroom. (A *tallis* should not be brought into the restroom because it is designated for *davening*.)

What should I do with *pasul* *tzitzis*?

The cloth part of the *tzitzis* does not require *genizah* and may be thrown in the trash. It should not be made into a *shmatteh*. The strings require *genizah* (according to Ashkenazi *minhag*) and should be cut off the cloth and put into *sheimos*. *Tzitzis* strings may be double-wrapped and tossed in regular trash. It is forbidden to cut *tzitzis* strings with metal, so the cloth should be cut at the hole to release the strings.

My *tzitzis* get ripped and frayed. When are they *pasul*?

The *tzitzis* strings must be about 12 inches

long, measured from the edge of the cloth. Four of those inches should be the knots and wraps, and 8 inches should be the free-hanging strings. The 8 *tzitzis* strings are made from four strings folded; only one side of the fold needs to have the minimum length. Most *tzitzis* today are made with care that two ends of the same long string do not end up on the same side of the final knot. Therefore, as long as the ripped strings are all on one side of the knot, the *tzitzis* are still kosher. Once strings on both sides of the knot are ripped to less than 12 inches, it is *pasul*. If any loop near the cloth is torn, it is also *pasul*.

What about unraveled and frayed *tzitzis*?

The *tzitzis* are kosher even if the knots and wraps came loose, as long as one set of knots still holds. Even so, they should be fixed. Frayed *tzitzis* ends are counted as if they are missing.

Do I have to check *tzitzis*?

It is proper, but not an obligation, to check *tzitzis* each day before saying the *brachah*. They should also be untangled, so that the strings hang free, and the knots should be tightened. Do NOT check, untangle, or tighten on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

Sometimes, the hole in the cloth in the corner tears and becomes very big. Is that a problem?

The hole should be between 1.3 and 2.6 inches from the edge of the cloth, measured per-

pendicular to the edge (not to the corner). If the edge of the hole tears, and there is no longer at least 1.3 inches of un torn cloth, it must be repaired.

How can it be repaired?

The strings must first be taken off that corner (the other ones can stay on, as long as there are still four well-defined corners). The hole can then be repaired. The *tzitzis* strings must be put back on by a person over bar mitzvah age, who is doing it for the purpose of the mitzvah of *tzitzis*.

How large does the cloth have to be?

Opinions for the proper size of a *begged* range from 17 to 24 inches. This is the measurement from side to side, as well as from the bottom of the neck hole to the lower edge of the garment. These measurements ensure that the *begged* covers most of an average-sized man. A child under bar mitzvah may wear a smaller size, but it should be proportionate to his body size, using the same standard as his father.

What if the neck-hole tears?

It is proper for the combined width of the intact shoulders of the garment to total more than half of the total width of the garment. If the neck hole tears sideways, this measure may be lacking. If it tears down toward the bottom of the garment, the measure from neck hole to edge has gotten smaller. It must still meet the minimum requirement — see previous answer.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"DON'T BE A FLY, BE A BEE. FLIES LOOK FOR GARBAGE; BEES LOOK FOR FLOWERS AND HONEY. FIND THE GOOD IN PEOPLE."

—Ben Ish Chai



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