



# פרשת משפטים

# CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR  
Shabbos Table

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

TELL ME A MASHAL >>

A dvar Torah with a story.

## A WAIT FOR A WAIT

נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע (שמות כד:ז)

"We will do and we will listen!" (Shemos 24:7)

Klal Yisrael told Hashem that they would keep the Torah with *zerizus*, energetically running to do mitzvos even before they know what they are.

**I**n the times of Rav Yoel Sirkis, known as the Bach (after his *sefer*, *Bayis Chadash*), there lived a righteous wealthy man. This man was always careful with the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, and he would learn its halachos *b'chavrusa* with the Bach every day to make sure he got it right.

One day, after the pair had finished learning, there was a knock at the door of the Bach's study. A local innkeeper stood at the door with a pained expression and familiar story.

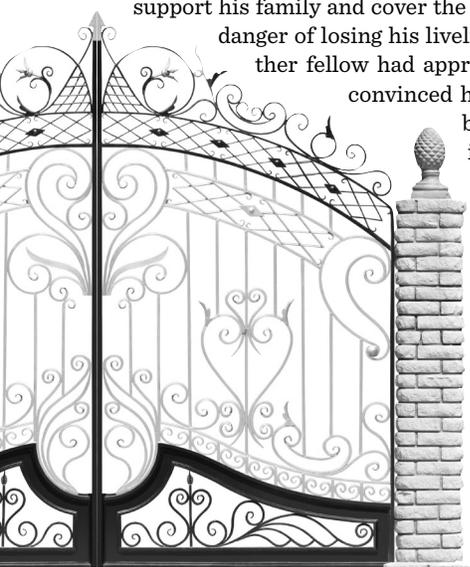
"Rebbe, please help me!" he cried out.

He explained that he rented a small business from the local landowner, or *poritz*, and struggled daily to earn enough to support his family and cover the rent. Now, he stood in

danger of losing his livelihood altogether. Another fellow had approached the *poritz* and convinced him that he could do a

better job running the inn. He had offered the nobleman higher rent, which the current innkeeper couldn't match. The *poritz* had agreed to kick him out and rent it to the new fellow!

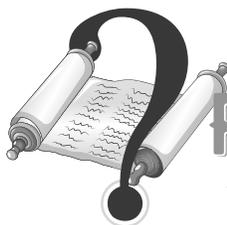
The Bach turned to the wealthy man



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## PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 There are four seas mentioned in the Torah, but with six different names. What are they? Which two have two names?
- 2 Can you think of seven words in this week's *parshah* that are each three letters long, and the middle letter is a *vav*? (Hint: think about the beginning of *Bava Kamma*.)
- 3 How many "double words," like *אֶלֶלֶל*, can you find in this week's *parshah*? (We found 21.)
- 4 Can you find 15 words in a row in this week's *parshah* that are all three letters or fewer?
- 5 In which six *parshiyos* are Nadav and Avihu mentioned?
- 6 Where is Yitzchak's name spelled in an unusual way? Why?



## CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Reb Moshe of Lelov has painstakingly raised enough money to move to Eretz Yisrael with a minyan of men. He is sure that davening near Har Habayis will bring Mashiach. He bids farewell to the Ruzhiner Rebbe and prepares to leave.



As Reb Moshe left the home of the Ruzhiner, a poor woman came hurrying over to him.

"Rebbe, Rebbe! Please! You have to help me!" she cried.

"Of course," Reb Moshe responded. "How can I be of assistance?"

"Rebbe, it's terrible! My daughter is a *kallah*!"

"That's wonderful news. Mazal tov!"

"No, but the *chassan's* family..."

"Is something wrong?"

"No...yes! It's a wonderful family, but...they expect a minimum amount of money to be contributed toward the wedding and setting up a home for the young couple, and I have not a zloty to my name!"

Without hesitation, Reb Moshe reached into his pocket for the satchel of money he had so carefully saved for the trip to Eretz Yisrael. "How much do you need?"

The woman named a figure high enough to ruin Reb Moshe's plans to go to the Holy Land. He heard the *yetzer hara* screaming in his ear, "Don't you want to bring Mashiach? Don't you know what your *tefillah* at the ruins of the Beis Hamikdash could accomplish?"

Ignoring the voice, Reb Moshe reached into the bag and counted out the money the poor woman had requested. "What?" screamed the *yetzer hara*, trying to sound very *frum*. "If you went to Eretz Yisrael, she wouldn't even *need* money! Mashiach would come and save all the poor people in the world from their *tzaros*. How can you *do* this?"

But Reb Moshe wasn't fooled. He knew that it was the *yetzer hara's* argument. "Hashem runs the world," he thought firmly. "If He brought this mitzvah to me at a place and time that I can do it, then that is my responsibility and privilege right now. He will figure out what to do about Mashiach!" He wished the grateful woman mazal tov again and continued on his way home.

Reb Moshe was getting older and he knew he did not have much time left in This World. He would start saving money to travel to Eretz Yisrael again, but he did not see how he would manage to get it quickly enough. Time was running very short...

Arriving home, Reb Moshe headed to his study to return to his beloved *sefarim*. If he couldn't get to the *Eretz Hakedoshah* just yet, at least he had *sifrei kodesh*. He was soon deeply immersed.

After a while, the time arrived for Reb Moshe to receive visitors who had come for *brachos*, advice, and *tzedakah*. Immediately, there was a knock at the door.

There was another woman standing on the step, very different from the poor woman in the street. She was not from Lelov, and she was clearly very wealthy. A handsome carriage waited behind her at the curb, and an attendant stood beside it. But for all that, this woman was clearly in great distress, possibly even more so than the poor woman had been. She told the rebbe she had come a long way to see him—all the way from Neustadt.

"Rebbe, I have come to ask for a *brachah* for children," she said. "My husband and I have been married for 20 years, and Hashem has not seen fit to grant us children. We have seen the greatest doctors and specialists; we have spared no expense. They all tell us we will never have children. Please, Rebbe, we know that you have a special power of *brachah*. Will you bless us?"

Reb Moshe answered carefully. "You are from Neustadt," he said. "Your husband must be a Chassid of the famous 'Gitte Yid' of Neustadt. Why do you not ask him for a *brachah*?"

"We have!" the woman cried. "He has told us that you are our only hope!"

TO BE CONTINUED...



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIDRASH

This week's *parshah* ends with Klal Yisrael's arrival at Har Sinai, which took place before *Parshas Yisro* (according to one approach). On the fifth of Sivan, the day before *Mattan Torah*, Klal Yisrael all immersed in a *mikvah*. Moshe built a *mizbe'ach* at the bottom of the mountain, and the *bechorim* brought *korbanos*. Moshe then taught Klal Yisrael the words of the Torah from the beginning of *Bereishis* until *Parshas Yisro*. He also reviewed the *halachos* they had learned at Marah.

Klal Yisrael all proclaimed, "*Na'aseh v'nishma*."

Pleased, Hashem asked, "Who revealed this secret formula to My children?" He commanded the *malachim* to give each member of Klal Yisrael two crowns, one for each word they had said. "Now, Klal Yisrael has taken your place; they are like *malachim*!" He told them. The 600,000 *malachim* flew to Klal Yisrael with the crowns.

Later, after the *Chet Ha'egel*, the crowns were taken away. We will get them back when Mashiach arrives!





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

# HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

## BACKGROUND

The haftorah for *Parshas Mishpatim* is often skipped in a non-leap year, because that week is usually *Parshas Shekalim*. The haftorah takes place during the final years of the first Beis Hamikdash. The Babylonian Army has already captured most of Eretz Yisrael; only Yerushalayim remains free, under the rule of King Tzidkiyahu. The Babylonians surrounded it, but they were scared away by the Egyptian army.

## HAFTORAH SUMMARY

In order to thank Hashem for saving them, the people of Yerushalayim agree to free all their slaves, as they should have done in accordance with the laws of *Parshas Mishpatim*. However, they later recapture all of them. Hashem tells the *navi* Yirmiyahu that this will incur a terrible punishment. Klal Yisrael violated the laws in *Parshas Mishpatim*, which were the terms of their salvation from the slavery in Mitzrayim. They therefore no longer have a merit to be free and will be taken as slaves again. They will be struck with something resembling the plagues.

The haftorah concludes with a promise of the ultimate *yeshuah*, when Mashiach arrives.

## YOU KNOW NAVI

This week's haftorah contains the *pasuk* from which *Chazal* learn that all of the universe only exists in the merit of Torah and mitzvos:

כֹּה אָמַר ה' אִם לֹא בְרִיתִי יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה חֻקוֹת שְׁמַיִם וְאָרֶץ לֹא שָׁמַתִּי  
(ירמיהו לג:כה)

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sitting near him. "You have good relations with the *poritz* through your business dealings with him. Can you speak to him about this matter?"

"Sure," the wealthy man responded. "I think he'll listen to me."

The innkeeper and the wealthy man took leave of the Bach. Once in the street, the innkeeper turned to the man. "Will you speak to the *poritz* right away?" he asked. "The deal is set to close any minute now, and I will be left out in the cold!"

"As soon as I can," the wealthy man promised. "I have to travel to Leipzig for a business expo right now, but I'll do it as soon as I get back."

"Please, could you do it before you go? I'm really afraid that by the time you get back, the contract will be signed, and then it will be much harder to cancel. The new tenant may have even moved in by then!"

"I'm sorry, my dear friend, but I must go now. I stand to lose my whole fortune if I don't go to the fair early! I'll only be away for a week, and I promise I'll speak to the *poritz* as soon as I get back to town. I won't even go home first!"

"But..."

"It will be okay. I'm confident that the *poritz* will listen to me. Don't worry. It's all in Hashem's hands—all we are doing is *hishtadlus*!"

The two parted. The businessman set off for the fair and the innkeeper went home, still nervous.

Sure enough, the wealthy man kept his word. A week later, before going home, he spoke to the *poritz* and the deal was reversed. The innkeeper was allowed to stay in his inn.

Years later, the wealthy man died. Shortly thereafter, he visited the Bach in a dream. "How was your judgment in *Shamayim*?" the Bach asked.

"*Baruch Hashem*, I was judged for merit and taken straight to a high place in Gan Eden," the man said. "A parade of beautiful *malachim* walked me to my place. But just as I was about to enter, I met another *malach* at the gate. He was very beautiful, but also very stern. He would not let me pass.

"Who are you?" I asked him.

"I am the *malach* created by your intervention on behalf of the poor innkeeper," the *malach* answered. "It was a great mitzvah and it created a beautiful *malach*, but I cannot let you into Gan Eden! You made that poor man wait for a week while you took care of your business, after you lectured him about *bitachon* and *hishtadlus*. Where was your own *bitachon* and understanding of *hishtadlus*? Do you know how much fear, worry, and angst he suffered during that week? I demand that you return to the *Beis Din shel Ma'alah* to be judged again!"

"So it was. I was brought back to face the court and they heard my case again. I was ordered to stand outside Gan Eden and watch longingly for as long as I had made the poor man wait. Rebbe, you cannot imagine the pain of watching and waiting and not being allowed inside! How I regret not doing that mitzvah with *zerizus*!"

The Bach told the story to his *kehillah* and often repeated it to emphasize the importance of performing mitzvos with *zerizus*, right away, with energy and excitement.



וְהִסְרֹתִי מִחֻלָּה מִקִּרְבְּךָ... לֹא תִהְיֶה...  
מְשַׁכְּלָה וְעִקְרָה בְּאַרְצְךָ  
(שמות כג:כה-כו)

לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּךָ עֵקֶר מִן הַתְּלִמִּידִים  
(בכורות דף מד:)

*I will remove illness from among you...  
There will be none bereft or barren in your  
land... (Shemos 23:25-26)*

*None barren... of talmidei [chachamim].  
(Gemara Bechoros 44b)*

ישראל = 541

חלה = 83

When חלה (83) is removed from ישראל, (541) we are left with 458, which equals חתן. This refers to *talmidei chachamim*, who are “engaged” to the Torah. That is why the Gemara says that this *pasuk* means we will not be “barren” of *talmidei chachamim*.

(Chasam Sofer)

## TREATS FROM TARGUM

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

עֵצָב תִּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ ... (שמות כג:ה)

מְשַׁבֵּק תִּשְׁבּוֹק מֵאֲדַבְּלָךְ עֲלוּהִי וּתְפָרֵק  
עִמָּה ... (תרגום אונקלוס)

*Surely you shall help (with) him... (Shemos 23:5)*

The Torah tells us that one should help his enemy unload his donkey. Onkelos adds a few words into his translation: “Surely you shall remove **what is in your heart against him**, and **unburden** with him.”

Perhaps the *Targum* is indicating that when one sees a person with whom he does not get along in a vulnerable position, he should have feelings of mercy. That is a great opportunity to make up with him and clear the air.

# THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY



Today, 27 Shevat, is the birthday and *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Alexander Sender Schorr, author of the *Simlah Chadashah*, the foremost *sefer* on *hilchos shechitah*.

Rav Schorr was a direct descendant of Rabbi Yosef Bechor Schorr of Orleans, one of the most famous of the French *Baalei Tosafos*. At a young age, he was appointed head of the *beis din* of the town of Hovniv, near Lvov, Ukraine.

The *sefer Simlah Chadashah* and a commentary he wrote on it, called *Tevuos Shor*, have been reprinted more than a hundred times. *Simlah Chadashah* is the most widely used *sefer* by Ashkenazim to learn the laws of *shechitah*. *Shochtim* complete it every 30 days and use it more authoritatively than even the *Shulchan Aruch*. In the *sefer*, the author takes a strong stand against the *Pri Chadash*, a popular Sephardic *sefer*. Many Sephardim do not learn *Simlah Chadashah*.

Rabbi Alexander Sender Schorr passed away in the town of Zhovkva (Zelkava) on the 27th of *Shevat* in the year 5497 (1737). His tombstone is still accessible in the Jewish cemetery in Zelkava.

# HALACHAH

## Shemittah in Chutz La'Aretz

Parshas Mishpatim teaches us about shemittah, which is going on right now in Eretz Yisrael! Some halachos of shemittah are relevant in chutz la'Aretz as well.

### Can I get special shemittah fruits and vegetables in chutz la'Aretz?

Produce that belongs to the shemittah year (vegetables picked during shemittah and fruits that blossomed during shemittah) have a special holiness, called kedushas shevi'is. It is forbidden to send such produce out of Eretz Yisrael. Flowers exported from Israel also have kedushas shevi'is.

### If I find Israeli produce here, can I buy it and eat it?

Fresh fruits and vegetables from Eretz Yisrael always need a reliable hechsher because they require terumos and ma'asros to be taken from them properly. During shemittah, there is no issue of terumos and ma'asros, but there are other halachic concerns. Although it is not forbidden to eat kedushas shevi'is if it was inadvertently exported, the land and trees may have been worked during shemittah to help the fruits and vegetables grow, and that would make such produce assur. Also, one is not allowed to purchase shemittah produce in the normal way. One should therefore not buy any Israeli

produce — fresh, canned, dried, or bottled — without a reliable hechsher (during shemittah and otherwise). If one discovers that he has done so, a rav must be consulted to determine whether it is from shemittah and the proper way to deal with it (or dispose of it).

### Can I assume fruits and vegetables with a hechsher do not have a shemittah issue?

Yes, as long as it is a known, reliable hechsher. On products like wine and other bottled drinks and canned produce, check for words like "heter mechirah," which most communities do not rely on, or "otzar beis din," which should not be taken out of Eretz Yisrael as it has kedushah. (A product with a good hechsher will not have those words and their presence should

definitely raise a red flag as to the hechsher's reliability.)

### Do I need to be careful with shemittah produce even after shemittah has ended?

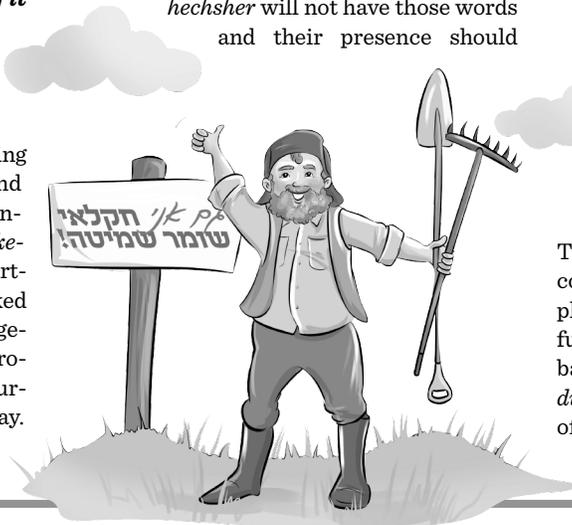
Shemittah wine can be around for a long time. Wines will usually list their production year—2022 (and 2015) are shemittah product years. Canned fruits and vegetables, as well as bottled drinks, can also still be made from shemittah produce. Fresh vegetables from the shemittah year can be on the market until as late as Chanukah after shemittah, and fruits can be around until the following summer.

### Can I trust a storekeeper to tell me from where his produce was imported?

A storekeeper who is a Torah-observant Jew can be trusted in this regard. Store employees should not be relied upon.

### I'm visiting Eretz Yisrael. What do I need to look out for?

The halachos of shemittah in Eretz Yisrael are complex. In addition to the halachos that apply to everyone there, a visitor must be careful not to bring any produce with kedushas back with him. Also, money can acquire kedushas shevi'is if it was earned from the sale of shemittah produce. Those coins may not leave Eretz Yisrael either.



## THE LAST WORD

### A one-liner worth remembering

### "B'ZEI'AS APECHA (BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW) WAS A CURSE, NOT A BLESSING!"

— The Alter of Slabodka, reminding a talmid (Rav Dovid Leibowitz) that although a good doctor (or any other person with a successful career) deserves respect, we should not be too much in awe of him—for his career is ultimately just a means of parnassah.



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