



CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR

Shabbos Table

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

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DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

THE RELUCTANT TEA MAKER

Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, *rosh yeshivah* of Telshe Yeshivah in Poland, often was forced to travel to collect funds for the yeshivah. Reb Lazer, as he was called, traveled to Russia to visit Kalonimus Wolf Wissotzky, founder of the Wissotzky Tea company.

Wissotzky was an old *cheder* classmate of Reb Lazer's, and his tea company held 75 percent of the Russian market at the time. Russians drink more tea than the English, and more than they drink vodka. It was a very profitable business, and Wissotzky was a wealthy man.

Reb Lazer was shown into Wissotzky's living room to wait for the tea magnate. Scanning the room, he noticed books on philosophy, science, culture, and *haskalah*, but no *sifrei kodesh*.

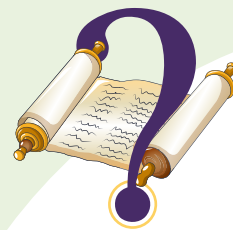
Reb Lazer was stunned. All thoughts of fundraising fled his mind.

When Wissotzky entered the room—bareheaded—Reb Lazer leapt from his seat. "Wolf!" he shouted. "What has happened to you? What is the meaning of all this? Where is your yarmulke? Where are your *sefarim*?"

Wissotzky smiled glibly.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >>



PARSHAH RIDDLES

1

There is a common theme in Rashi's first comment in each of the five Chumashim. What is it?

2

After the first *Shevet's* numbers are told, the Torah uses the same format to list the numbers of all the remaining *Shevatim*. There is one difference in one letter introducing one *Shevet*. What is it? Why the change? (Hint: see *Baal Haturim*.) Where in *Nach* is there a list that features the same letter missing from one of the entries on the list?

3

Who were the middle *Shevatim* for each *degel*? What are the names of their *Nesi'im*? What about those four names is different from the names of all the other *Nesi'im*? (Hint: see *Rabbeinu Bachaye*.)

1





SERIAL >>

CHOLENT STORY

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

R

When Harav Naftali Katz was a young boy, he was a bit of a wild kid. His parents hired a *melamed* to teach the rambunctious child, but...it didn't go too well. Little Naftali was often found exploring, playing, or stirring up trouble instead of learning with his *rebbe*.

One day, a buzz spread throughout the town of Prague, where he lived. Kaiser Nikolai III had announced the he would be coming to visit the Jewish ghetto in Prague in six months' time. It would be a great opportunity for the community to improve its relationship with the Kaiser, who was no friend of the Jews but tolerated them when it suited him.

The *rabbanim* and community leaders of the town planned a marvelous celebration to greet the king, hoping to impress him with the honors they would show and influence him to ease some of the frequent difficulties the Jews faced.

A carefully choreographed greeting was arranged. Streets were decorated, a band arranged, a parade and procession organized. No expense was spared, no stone unturned. There was too much at stake. Everyone in town knew exactly where they were to stand and what they were to do on the big day.

Except little Naftali.

On the grand day of the Kaiser's arrival, Naftali climbed a tall tree, hoping for a good view of the procession. Sure enough, after months of anticipation, Kaiser Nikolai's royal carriage finally came into view in the distance. The king and queen were seated in the open forward compartment with their 12-year-old son, Crown Prince Andrew, between them.

Naftali was quickly bored. There wasn't much to do atop the tree, and the procession was dull. He felt in his pockets for some entertainment and soon discovered a few pebbles and a slingshot. Absentmindedly, he fit a stone into the slingshot and launched it.

Suddenly, an idea occurred to him. Wouldn't it be funny if a stone came flying near the parade? What a commotion that would raise!

Naftali placed a rock in the slingshot, pulled hard, fired...

...and watched with growing horror as the stone described a neat arc, heading straight for the forehead of the king himself.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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.

יִדְבַר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי (א:א)

Why was the Torah given to *Klal Yisrael* in the desert, where few mitzvos can be done? Wouldn't it have been more appropriate for it to be given in Eretz Yisrael?

RAV YOSEF SHALOM ELYASHIV

answers that at Har Sinai, *Klal Yisrael* saw all the forces of the world arrayed against it—thunder, fire, and lightening in a barren desert. Even in a situation like that, one must learn and keep Torah. The Midrash in *Shir Hashirim* says that when someone learns Torah in a stressful situation or outside his proper place, his *schar* is 1,000 times greater!

REBBE SIMCHA BUNIM OF PESHISCHA

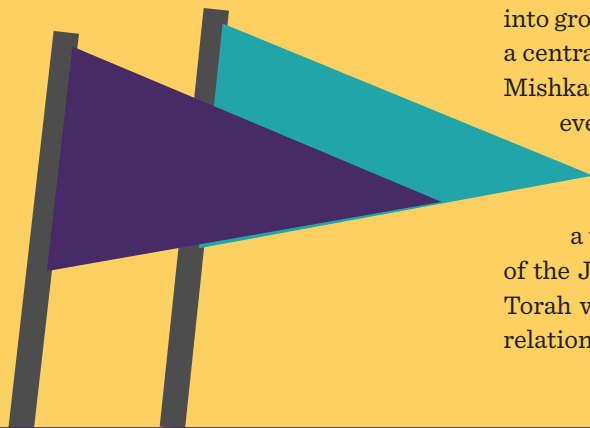
says that a person must view himself through humble eyes, as if he is empty, desolate, and *hefker* like a desert, in order to be receptive to the study of Torah. The Rebbe used to say, "I love the *hefker* people...who are *mafkir* themselves, not others."

THE ASHIV AVRAHAM

notes that the desert is the symbol of *yiras Shamayim*, as the *navi* said, "*Lechtech acharai bamidbar b'eretz lo zeruah*—You followed me in the desert, in a land that is not planted." That is the secret to acquiring Torah.

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:

A central theme in *Parshas Bamidbar* is the unity of *Klal Yisrael* despite, or perhaps because of, our internal differences.

The *parshah* has three main sections:

1. Each *Shevet* is counted separately, after which all Jews are counted together.
2. A description of how the nation was separated into camps, each with a distinct flag, travel orders, and location, and they all marched in formation.
3. A discussion of the elevation of the *Levi'im* over the rest of the people and their exchange for the *bechorim*.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky asks, why were the flag and travel formations only set up in the second year of the Jews' time in the desert? Why not set it up right away? He explains that the people could only be divided into groups representing their roles and individual traits once there was a central force holding them all together: their encampment around the Mishkan. This unifying force is the embodiment of the Torah, which even today is the common link between Jews of all types, stripes, and nationalities.

Parshas Bamidbar is read close to the end of *sefiras ha'omer*, a time for working on our relationships with others and the unity of the Jewish people. Shavuot is less than a week away, and the gift of Torah we are about to re-receive can reset some of our more strained relationships.

AVODAH FOR THIS WEEK:

1

Share a Torah thought with someone with whom you have a strained relationship.

2

Share a Torah discussion with someone foreign to you whom you feel estranged from due to differences in culture, nationality, language, or manner of avodas Hashem. Try to let Torah elevate you both above your differences.

3



HAFTORAH FROM THE HEADLINES

SUMMARY:

This week's haftorah comes from the *Navi Hoshe'a*. Hoshe'a begins his *nevuah* by blessing the Jewish people, saying they will become too numerous to count. He then blasts the people for their faithlessness to Hashem, comparing them to a disloyal wife. The Navi tells us that Hashem has threatened to strip us bare (of all mitzvos) like the day we were born (without any mitzvos or Torah) and leave us in the *midbar*. He concludes by promising a renewed bond between Hashem and the Jewish people, the famous *Verastich Li* prayer.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH:

The *parshah* recounts Hashem's love for the Jewish people, which is expressed by counting, and describes the nation's travels in the *midbar*. The haftorah begins with blessings and love expressed by calling us "too numerous to count" and talks about *Klal Yisrael* going back to the *midbar*.

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES:

The haftorah tells us that Hashem will take away our mitzvos, but in the end we will get them back and have a renewed bond with Him. We have lost many mitzvos due to the coronavirus pandemic, but we are getting them back slowly and experiencing renewed appreciation for them!



>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Come on, Lazer," he said scornfully, "don't tell me you still believe all that stuff."

Reb Lazer rose to his full height. "Of course I do. And so do you."

Wissotzky cast his eyes downward. "OK, I accept *Torah shebichsav*. But the writings of *Chazal*? Please. They are full of wild exaggeration."

Reb Lazer's eyes narrowed. "You say you believe in *Torah shebichsav*. Everything *Chazal* say is from *Torah shebichsav*."

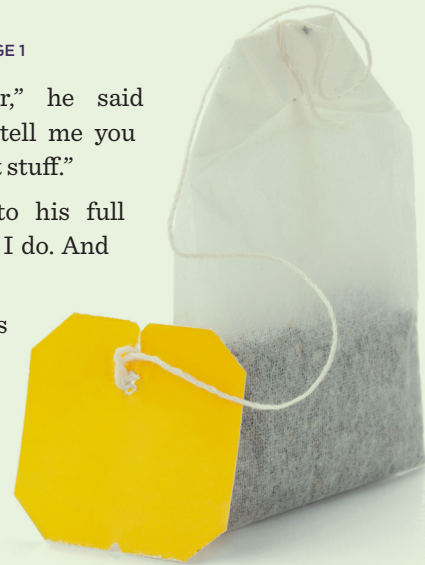
Wissotzky snorted. "Impossible. Six babies born at a time to the women in Egypt! Everyone knows that is medically impossible!"

"Perfect example!" Reb Lazer cried. "Now I will show you where that is proven from *Torah shebichsav*."

"In *Parshas Bamidbar*, Moshe counts the *bechorim* of all the Jewish people and finds 22,273. He counts the Jewish males aged 20 and older and finds 603,550. Now, Wolf, you were always good at math. Even assuming half of the families did not have a firstborn male *bechor*, if there were 22,273 *bechorim*, there were about 44,400 families. How many children were there in each family? Divide the total by the number of families, and you get about 30. (Keep in mind that *bechorim* were counted from one month old, and the rest of *Klal Yisrael* were counted from 20 years old.) So, if the average woman gives birth five times, how are there 30 children per family? Six children were born at one time.

"*Chazal* did not 'make up' anything, *Rachmana litzlan*. It's all in the Torah."

Some people claim there's a slight flaw in the calculations. What do you think?



HALACHAH



In preparation for the upcoming Yom Tov of Shavuos, here are some halachos about waiting between the consumption of meat and dairy. There are three parts, for the three seudos.

ONE

WHY DO WE NEED TO WAIT AFTER EATING MEAT, BEFORE EATING DAIRY?

The Gemara tells us two possible reasons: a) there may be bits of meat stuck between our teeth, and b) there is an upwelling of meat flavor from the throat that lingers in one's mouth. After waiting the required time, the bits of meat are disintegrated to the point that they do not count as meat anymore, and the flavor of the meat is gone.

What is the difference between the two reasons? If one didn't chew any meat, the first reason doesn't apply, and if one didn't swallow, the second reason doesn't apply. So, for example if someone drank clear chicken broth, they would only have one reason. If one chewed meat and spat it out, they would only have the other reason.

TWO

HOW LONG DO WE NEED TO WAIT?

The Gemara says one should wait from "meal to meal." The Rishonim discuss what that means. According to the Rambam, it means the length of time that separates the two standard daily meals that were eaten in the days of *Chazal*. He defines that as "about six hours." That is the *psak* of the *Shulchan Aruch*. Some have the custom to wait six hours, and others wait *into* the sixth hour—the Rambam's "about" six hours.

Tosfos understands that "meal to meal" means one should not have meat and milk in the same meal, but they can start a milk meal immediately after a meat meal.

How does the Rema *pasken*? He says three things: **The halachah** is like Tosfos' opinion: we don't need to wait at all. **The custom** is to wait at least an hour (the Gra explains that the source for that is from the *Zohar*) and clean our teeth. **The correct thing to do** is wait six hours. The Maharshal, quoted by many Acharonim and *poskim*, says that "anyone that has a whiff of Torah" waits six hours.

Some communities wait three hours. This custom's source is a comment found in *Rabbeinu Yerucham*, quoting Rashi. But no such ruling is found in *Rashi*, and some say that the comment in *Rabbeinu Yerucham* is a misprint.

THREE

WHAT IF ONE FORGOT HOW LONG AGO THEY ATE MEAT?

The Noda B'Yehudah says that if one truly doesn't know if six hours passed or not, it is a *safek d'Rabbanan*, and since we rule that *safek d'Rabbanan l'kula*, they can eat dairy. Others say that one should wait because *safek d'Rabbanan l'kula* only applies if there is no clearly permitted way of reaching one's goal, and in this case, one can just wait. The Noda B'Yehudah disagrees. He says waiting is not reaching one's goal; the goal is not to eat a specific piece of dairy. The person wants to eat dairy now, and maybe later too!

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