



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 GOLDEN JUG

וְהִינִי מְחוּץ לְמַחֲנֵה בְּמִקוֹם טְהוֹר וְהִיָּתָה לְעֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת (י"ט)

One jug of parah adumah ashes was hidden away forever. According to the Midrash, it was buried. Why?



The people were getting nervous. It was getting late, and the Rebbe's caravan was nowhere to be seen.

Rav Shmuel Heller, *rav* of the city of Tzfas, stood beside the road at the head of the congregation, anxiously straining for a glimpse of movement showing that the Shinever Rebbe, the Divrei Yechezkel, was finally approaching. It was getting dark, and he had been due to arrive over an hour before.

At long last, a cloud of dust was spotted in the distance. Soon, the Rebbe arrived and was escorted to Tzfas with great fanfare.

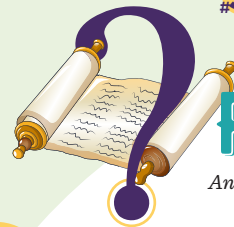
Later, a member of the Rebbe's entourage explained what had happened. "We were traveling along the road, when suddenly the Rebbe asked us to stop. He got off the wagon and *davened* an unusually long Minchah near the side of a little hill. He went on and on—much longer than usual."

Rav Shmuel Heller wanted to hear more. "Which hill?" he inquired.

The *gabai* described it, and with



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PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 Where does the Torah explicitly mention the appearance of a *malach*? (seven answers)
- 2 Which *pasuk* would be very hard to say for one who cannot pronounce the letter *lamed*? Can you find a *pasuk* in which 15 out of the 18 words contain a *lamed*?
- 3 Which three things in the Torah are called "*shirah*"?
- 4 Whose name is also the name of a type of creature? (two answers)

GEMATRIA

אֲנֹכִי יֵצְאֵתִי לְשֵׁטֶן כִּי יֵרֵט הַדֶּרֶךְ לְנֹגְדֵי (כב:לב)
הִנֵּה בְרַךְ לְקַחְתִּי ... (כג:כ)

Bilam's original plan was to invoke the curse of the *Egel*. He wanted to point to the broken *לחת*. He figured Hashem would take the *vav* of His Name away from the broken *לחת* because he was upset with *Klal Yisrael* at the time. The *gematria* of broken *לחת*—half the value of *לחת*—is 519, which is *רט*. That's why the *malach* called Bilam's plan *רט*.

But in truth, Hashem never takes His Name from *Klal Yisrael*. Therefore, the real *gematria* of the broken *לחת* is half of *לחת*, which is 222, equal to *ברך*. So Bilam ended up with *ברך לקחתי* (*Chasam Sofer*).



CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Reb Shimon, *chavrusa* of Rav Yonasan Eibschutz, vandalizes the church across the street from the main shul as “payback,” but is spotted by the guard.

Gut margin, Reb Yonasan. Always a pleasure to see you here on time, ready to *shteig*, every day.”
“Of course, Rebbi,” the young Rav Yonasan Eibschutz answered the *rav*.

“But where is your illustrious *chavrusa*, Reb Shimon? It is unlike him to be late!”

“I don’t know, Rebbi. I’m sure he will be here soon.”

But the hours passed, and Reb Shimon did not appear. Rav Yonasan figured he must be ill and was making plans to stop at his *chavrusa*’s home to be *mevaker choleh* when another *yungerman* approached.

“There is a woman here to see you. She seems terribly upset.”

That was strange. Rav Yonasan hurried to the lobby of the *shul*. A young woman stood there, clearly nervous and worried. “I am Mrs. Rosen, Reb Shimon’s wife,” she said. “Have you seen my husband?”

“What? No, I am sorry. I was sure he was at home.”

The poor woman burst into tears.

“I haven’t seen him since last night,” she sobbed.

Rav Yonasan turned thoughtful. He knew Reb Shimon’s fiery personality and how upset he had been about the church. Could something have happened?

“We’ll do everything we can to find your husband, Mrs. Rosen,” Rav Yonasan promised.

He hurried to speak to the *rav* of the town and the *parnas* of the *kehillah*. Soon, a search party was organized. The searchers combed the city of Hamburg, knocking on every door and checking every alley. But there was no sign of Rav Yonasan’s beloved redheaded *chavrusa*.

Something was bothering Rav Yonasan. In the back of his mind, he knew there was a clue he was missing. He returned to his seat in the *beis midrash* and his Gemara, but he couldn’t focus. His eyes drifted to the window, and he saw...nothing! The cross that had topped the giant cathedral across the street was gone! In a flash he knew what had happened to Reb Shimon.

Rav Yonasan rushed back to the home of the *parnas* and burst into a meeting of the *rav*, the *parnas*, and other community leaders. “I know where he is!” he exclaimed.

No one moved. The leaders sat like a stone. “I know where Reb Shimon—”

“Yes, we know too,” said the *rav*. “Reb Yonasan, meet Thomas.”

Rav Yonasan turned to the unfamiliar figure he now noticed was present. A tall, thin man with a white, sallow face, his bony figure cloaked in long black robes, loomed over the assembled. A gleaming crucifix hung around his neck.

“Thomas...the guard of St. Michael’s cathedral.”

TO BE CONTINUED....

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*.

רש"י יטב: לפי שהשטן ואומות העולם מונין את ישראל, לומר, מה המצוה הזאת ומה טעם יש בה, לפיכך כתב בה חקה, גזרה היא מלפני, אין לך רשות להרהר אחריה...

רש"י יטב: משל לבן שפחה שטיניף פלטין של מלך אמרו תבא אמו ותקנח הצואה, כך תבא פרה ותכפר על העגל

Rashi tells us that the nations make fun of us by demanding an explanation for the mitzvah of *parah adumah*, but we cannot understand its reasons. Yet, a few lines later, Rashi gives a lengthy explanation detailing how it atones for the *Chet Ha’egel*. How can he say there is no understandable explanation and then give a very clear one?



Klal Yisrael made the *Egel* with very good intentions—to create a place for the *Shechinah* to rest among them. Shortly afterward, they were commanded to do just that: to build a *Mishkan*. They used one face from the *Kisei Hakavod*, the ox, while the *Keruvim* had a different face from it.

The only problem with what they did is that they weren’t told to do so! They made their own calculations.

The *parah adumah* atones for the *Egel* and has no explanation—it atones precisely because it has no explanation! The *teshuvah* for making calculations and inventing mitzvos is doing mitzvos without understanding the reasons.



The *parah adumah* is in fact a very logical, clear *kapparah* for the *Egel*. That is why the nations ask about its reason—tormenting us by reminding us about the *Egel*! Hashem said we shouldn’t try to understand it, in order to block their taunts by cutting off the conversation.



Standing at Har Sinai was supposed to set us free from the antagonism of the nations. Why do we still suffer from them? The sin of the *Egel* ruined our protection. But shouldn’t *parah adumah* have atoned for the *Egel* and restored our protection? That is the mystery of *parah adumah*. It atones for the *Egel*, but something is missing.

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

In *Parshiyos Chukas-Balak*, *Klal Yisrael* prepare to enter Eretz Yisrael and transition to the system of *kapparah* and punishment as a reaction to mistakes, a pattern which will be more evident in life in Eretz Yisrael, away from the surreal, miraculous existence of the *midbar*.

Parshas Chukas is packed with many sin-reaction events, despite its small size. The *parshah* begins with *parah adumah*, the *kapparah* for the *Chet Ha'egel* and tool to allow a *t'mei meis* to enter the Mikdash. The *parshah* then jumps 40 years to the death of Miriam and Aharon, linked to *parah adumah* because the loss of *tzaddikim* also provides *kapparah* (*Rashi, Bamidbar 21:1*). *Klal Yisrael* loses the water and *ananei hakavod*; they complain and Arad attacks. Moshe hits the rock and is banned from entering Eretz Yisrael. *Klal Yisrael* complain about the *mann* and are punished with serpents. Edom and Sichon refuse to allow *Klal Yisrael* to pass through on the way to Eretz Yisrael, and *Klal Yisrael* fights Sichon and the Emori and destroys them.

In *Parshas Balak*, Balak hires Bilam to curse *Klal Yisrael*. The plan fails, but Bilam advises Balak to get *Klal Yisrael* to sin, and he trips them up with the *bnos Moav* and *Ba'al Pe'or*. Zimri makes a *chillul Hashem*, *Klal Yisrael* are immediately punished, and Pinchas saves the day by punishing Zimri.

This Shabbos is also the beginning of the Three Weeks period of mourning. It also foreshadows the Yamim Nora'im soon to follow. Shabbos contains the energy for the week that follows, which this week includes the 17th of Tammuz, the beginning of the period of intense mourning for Eretz Yisrael. The entire period draws from this root source. Tammuz also stands for *תמני תשובה תחשתיים ובראים*, a hint to the days of reckoning that are not far behind.

AVODAH FOR THIS WEEK:

It is never too early to begin working on *teshuvah*, and this week of *kapparah* and Shivah Asar B'Tammuz is a great starting point.

- 1. Choose something in your life that is not going the way you want it too. Focus on the thought that it is a *kapparah*.**
- 2. Try to let the above inspire you to fix something. While we can't know the reasons for certain *yissurim*, we should try to take them as a message to change in one area.**

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES:

- 1.** Where in the Torah do we find mention of an epidemic (plague)? **In Mitzrayim, after the *Chet Ha'egel*, after the story of the *Misonenim*, after the story of the *Meraglim*, after the incident with Korach, and after the sin with *bnos Moav***
- 2.** Which other incidents in *Klal Yisrael's* history involve things being swallowed into the ground? **The fall of the walls of Yericho and the swallowing of the gates of the second Beis Hamikdash into the ground during the *Churban***
- 3.** Throughout Chumash, who brought *Ketores* other than Aharon? **Moshe (during the *shemonas yemei milu'im*), Korach's men, Nadav and Avihu, the *Nesi'im* (*Parshas Naso*)**
- 4.** When did Hashem speak to Aharon alone? **After the death of Nadav and Avihu, when telling Aharon that *Shevet Levi* would not have a *nachalah*. (Previously, the *pasuk* mentions just Aharon, but Moshe was there as well.)**

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

SUMMARY:

The haftorah is from *Sefer Michah*. Michah prophesied at the same time as Hoshe'a, Amos, and Yeshayah, toward the end of the existence of *malchus Yisrael* over the 10 Shevatim. In the haftorah, Michah relays a message from Hashem reminding the people of the kindnesses He performed for them in the past and will do in the future and gently remonstrating them for their lack of gratitude.

Michah speaks of the power of the Jews in the days preceding Mashiach, when they will be a mighty economic and military power, and describes the destruction and crumbling of the nations (Gog and Magog) without a shot being fired, which will be orchestrated by Hashem.

He then reminds the people of Hashem's kindness in saving them from Egypt; leading them through the desert with Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam; saving them from Balak; and finally, bringing them to Gilgal. Michah ends with a warning not to try to do false *teshuvah* with lots of *korbanos*, but to commit to keeping to Jewish values.

CONNECTION TO PARSHAS BALAK:

In the haftorah, the Navi explicitly tells the people to recall Bilam's plan and how Hashem foiled it. Several *pesukim* in the haftorah are interpreted by the Midrash as describing Bilam's strategy to get Hashem to agree to his curses, with lots of *korbanos* and *nesachim*. The haftorah also alludes to Bilam's plot with *bnos Moav*. The Midrash finds allusion to Bilam's attempt to curse the Jews during Hashem's one angry moment per day, and the fact that it didn't happen that day. Bilam's ultimate blessings also are very similar to Michah's vision of the Jews in the time close to the coming of Mashiach. Both refer to Yisrael's "rocks" and "mountains" (the *Avos* and *Imahos*), both comment on the lack of witchcraft among Jews, and both metaphorically refer to Yisrael as a lion. Both also prophesy about the end of days.

CONNECTION TO PARSHAS CHUKAS:

This haftorah is usually read for *Parshas Balak*, but it bears a lot of connection to *Chukas* as well. The haftorah describes *Klal Yisrael's* journey through the desert, most of which passed during *Chukas*. It speaks of Aharon and Miriam and alludes to the *ananei hakavod* and the *be'er* which were in their *zechus*, and the people's continued ingratitude, which is seen in their complaints in the *parshah*.

The theme of *mishpat*, atonement and punishment for sin, is also brought out in the haftorah, as Hashem demands that the people do *teshuvah* and recognize His kindness to them (see *avodah* of the week).

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES:

The haftorah speaks of *Klal Yisrael's* surprising military and economic prowess (it compares Yisrael to a lion and to the dew and rain for the nations) during the days preceding Mashiach. That state of affairs is apparent today.

The haftorah also describes how Hashem will dismantle the institutions, symbols, and weaponry of the nations from within, without a battle. In recent weeks and months, we are watching that occur before our very eyes.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

each word, the Rav grew visibly more excited.

"Now I know that the Shiniver Rebbe is truly a great man!" the Rav said when the *gabbai* finished. "Let me tell you what is in that spot.

"A number of years ago, a local Arab farmer was plowing his field, and the plow blade hit on something buried in the ground. He dug a bit and uncovered a beautiful golden jug filled with ashes! The farmer was overjoyed.

"That night, the Arab had a dream. An old man appeared to him and warned him, 'Return that jug to the place you found it, immediately! You have no business with it!' He awoke in a cold sweat but decided to ignore the dream. He didn't want to give up on the gold jug so quickly.

"The dream recurred the next night, with an added threat: 'Return the jug and the ashes or your children will start dying!' The Arab hastened to return the ashes, but he put them in a clay jug and kept the gold one for himself.

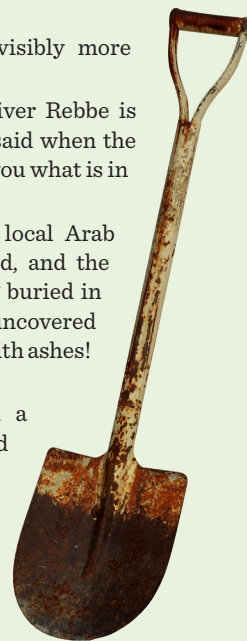
"One of his children died the next day.

"The old man in the dream appeared again. 'Put the ashes back in the gold jug and put it back where you found it. You will lose another child,' he warned.

"Still, the Arab held out. Eventually, he became sick himself. The warnings and threats continued. With his final strength, he dragged himself to the place where he had found the jug and returned the jug with the ashes."

Rav Heller turned to his spellbound audience. "Those ashes are *parah adumah* ashes! The jug was from the *klei sharess!* They are hidden, as per the instructions in *Parshas Chukas*, waiting for the days of Mashiach, when they will be used to purify *Klal Yisrael* upon the building of the third Beis Hamikdash.

"The fact that they are hidden and waiting is a great *chizuk* for us. It is a tangible reminder that Mashiach will come even though it seems to be taking so long! And that is the exact spot where the Rebbe stopped to *daven*, begging Hashem to bring that great day!"



HALACHAH

The Torah tells us that *parah adumah* water must be “*mayim chayim*.” During the days leading up to Pesach this year, people trying to *tovel* new *keilim* found *mikvaos* closed. Many questions were asked about using natural water sources for *tevilah*. The topic also came up recently in the *dafyomi*. Let’s explore this topic a little bit.

MIKVAH, MAAYAN, AND MAYIM CHAYIM

The two primary types of bodies of water that can be used for *tevilah* are *mikvah* and *maayan*. These have differing halachos and can be difficult to identify. *Maayan* refers to water flowing out of the ground. It is usually *mayim chayim* (can be used for *tevilas zav, metzora, and parah adumah*). It is kosher for *tevilah* even if the water is flowing, and does not require any minimum volume of water.

A *mikvah* is a collection of rainwater. It is not *mayim chayim*, is only kosher if it is still water, and requires a minimum of 40 *se'ah* (we use about 1,000 liters).

OCEANS, WELLS, AND PONDS

Rainwater that seeps through the ground and fills a well, stream, or lake is *maayan* water (*Maharik*). Most streams and lakes are filled by a mixture of seepage and runoff rainwater (which flows above ground or through storm drains). The level of water that is present only during or after heavy rains is therefore *mikvah* (*pasul* if moving), while the lower levels, which are always there, are *maayan*. The status of oceans, seas, and very large lakes is a *machlokes*: The Torah calls the Great Sea “*mikvei mayim*.” According to some, *all* seas are therefore a *mikvah*; others say only the Great Sea is a *mikvah*, but others are *maayan*; and some say other seas have a split *din*: they are a *maayan* but not *mayim chayim*.

PIPES AND FILTERS

Storm drain pipes do not *passel* the waters flowing through them (at least for *tevilas keilim*) because they are built into the ground and do not have a *beis kibbul* (the corrugations are for strength, not holding water). Some retention ponds have city water piped into them to help clean the rainwater, or may have filters in the bottom. These may be a problematic. Ponds that have these issues will never dry up completely.

Note: These halachos are not to be relied upon for *psak*; each situation contains many variables that can change the halachah.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

“IF THE ENTIRE WORLD HAD MY CONDITION, I WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO BE UPSET. SO WHY SHOULD IT BOTHER ME THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN JUMP AND DANCE?!”

-A man explaining to his son why he remained joyful even though he suffered from near-total paralysis caused by ALS

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