



CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR
Shabbos Table

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

DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

BULL'S-EYE

כָּל הַעֲשָׂה בּוֹ מְלָאכָה יוֹמֵת

"Whoever does *melachah* on that [day] will die"

(*Shemos* 25:1)



It's hard to imagine the holy Steipler Gaon in the army.

When he was a young man, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, the Steipler Gaon, was drafted into the Russian army. Other soldiers feared going to war, but the Steipler feared situations of *chillul Shabbos*.

Sure enough, before long, the Steipler's unit was ordered to report to the rifle range for target practice on Shabbos. The Steipler arrived as ordered, but he refused to touch the rifle. The commander spotted him and ordered him to begin firing.

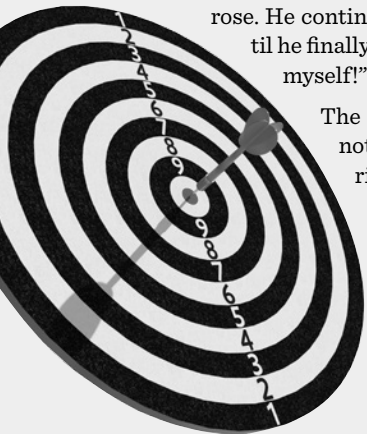
"Today is the Jewish Sabbath," the Steipler explained, "and it is forbidden to me to hold or fire a weapon."

"Fire it. Now. That's an order! You are a soldier in the Russian army, not in some religious order!" the commander shouted.

The Steipler refused, and the commander's temper rose. He continued berating the young man, until he finally said, "Fire the gun, or I'll kill you myself!"

The Steipler was unfazed. "You will not kill me. You don't have the jurisdiction or power to impose the death sentence on a soldier for insubordination."

"I may not, but my superior does!" The officer contacted his own boss and reported the situation. The Steipler could hear

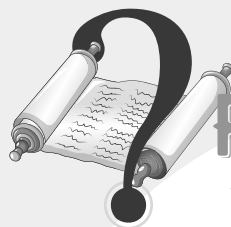


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פרשת
-ויקהל
פקודי/
החודש

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PARSHAH RIDDLES

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

- 1 **On which day was the Mishkan assembled?**
- 2 **Which three things in the *parshah* are called "עדות"?**
- 3 **What are three meanings of the word מראת? Where are they used?**
- 4 **What does the Torah mean when it says the workers טוּן אֶת הַעֲזִים, "spun the goats"? Did they spin goats? What did they do, and why?**
- 5 **Which three things in the Mishkan had *keruvim*?**
- 6 **Where does the phrase וְכָל הַנְּשִׁים נֵבִי'ם, *Nevi'im*, and *Kesuvim* (two were just read recently)?**



CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: The *kishuf-macher* puts Efraim's guardians into a deep sleep and lures him out of the *beis midrash*.



Efraim jerked awake with a start. He looked around frantically, not even noticing the three sleeping *bachurim* near him in the *beis midrash*.

"I must get out!" Something was pulling him, calling him outside the *yeshivah*! He didn't know what it was, but he felt like he had to go. He was suffocating in here! He needed to get to that something, outside!

Efraim ran toward the doors of the *beis midrash*. The Maharal and the *bachurim* with him had locked it securely; it was bolted shut and chained. Efraim shook the doors desperately.

Out! Out! Out!

The doors didn't budge. He rattled them again. Nothing. He ran to the back door. Locked! He began running between the doors, looking for an exit. Finally, he spotted a high window.

Efraim climbed on a chair on top of a table, pulling another chair with him. With a mighty heave, he threw the chair through the window, smashing the glass, which rained onto the sidewalk below. In the black carriage parked at the curb, the *poritz* stiffened. Any minute now!

Efraim scrambled through the shattered window, ignoring the cuts the broken glass edges made on his hands and feet. Passing through, he lowered himself to the ground and ran to the waiting carriage. He burst in the door, and the *poritz* instantly wrapped him in a tight hug. "Johann!" he shouted. "We missed you so! Welcome back!"

Efraim ignored the man. He had eyes only for his beautiful harp, which was in the hands of a strange old man, wearing black cloaks and playing mournful music. He reached for the harp, but the *kishuf-macher* pulled it away. "Not so fast!" he chastised. "Let's get out of the city first, and then you can play to your heart's content!"

The *kishuf-macher* turned to the *poritz*. "Let's go, drive the horses! We must get out of the city as soon as possible! As long as we are within the city, we are not safe from the Maharal. Later, you can hug and talk." The *poritz* whipped the horses savagely, and the coal-black animals charged for the city gates.

Somewhere else in the dark city of Prague, the Maharal awoke with a jump. Something was wrong! He looked at the clock: three o'clock in the morning. What was going on? He listened carefully in the night, but all was quiet. Efraim! Something must be wrong at the *yeshivah*!

The Maharal dressed quickly and rushed to the *yeshivah* building, *davening* silently that Hashem save the young *bachur*. But as he approached the *yeshivah* building, his heart sank. The window was smashed! With his heart pounding in trepidation at what he would find, he took out his keys, unlocked the doors to the *yeshivah* and *beis midrash*, and entered the room.

The three *bachurim* were sleeping soundly, slumped on the tables in the *beis midrash*. Efraim was gone.



TO BE CONTINUED...



LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI

Three different angles on a *dvar Torah*, one each in classic Litvish, Chassidic, and Sephardic styles. Can your children guess which idea comes from which school of thought!

לא תבערו אש בְּכֹל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

"Do not burn a fire in all your living quarters on the Shabbos day" (*Shemos* 35:3)

Out of all the 39 *melachos* of Shabbos, why does the Torah single out fire-lighting and mention it explicitly?



RAV YONASAN EIBSCHUTZ:

The Torah has just said (*Parshas Yisro, Aseres Hadibros*) that it is forbidden to do *melachah* on Shabbos because Hashem did *melachah* for only six days of creation. But fire was not created during the six days of creation—it was made on Motza'ei Shabbos. This may lead one to doubt that lighting a fire is considered *melachah*, so the Torah mentions it specifically. (It is not mentioned in *Chumash Devarim*, because the *Aseres Hadibros* in *Va'eschanan* give a different reason for the *issur melachah*.)



CHASAM SOFER:

- "Fire" refers to the judgment in *beis din*. It is forbidden for the court to sit in judgment on Shabbos, and this *pasuk* hints to that halachah.
- One may mistakenly think that it is permitted to light fire in the home for warmth, to increase *oneg Shabbos*.
- Don't leave the kindling of the "fire" of *dveikus* to Hashem and passion for mitzvos to be done only on Shabbos. Work on it all week!



ALSHICH:

The Torah is telling you that one who keeps Shabbos will not have a "fire" burning in Gehinnom for him on Shabbos; it will be put out for him for the duration of Shabbos.



AKEIDAH:

On Shabbos, many people get together and talk. The conversation can lead to criticism of the *rav*, the *chazzan*, the president of the shul, your boss... The Torah warns us: beware of the fire of *machlokes* (and *lashon hara*) and do not let it burn on Shabbos!



BABA SALI:

Just before this *pasuk*, the Torah instructs us to keep Shabbos. Here, it is saying that if we do keep Shabbos, we will not have any destructive fires in our homes. Fire can only damage a home that has *chillul Shabbos*.

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

Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei is nearly a repetition of *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh*. Moshe gathers the people together and teaches them all the details of the Mishkan and the laws of Shabbos. The appointed workers then make the *keilim* and parts of the Mishkan, and Moshe begins to assemble it.

The repetition is very important. It is a reconfirmation of Hashem's desire to live among us, despite the sin of the *egel*, which we committed since the instructions to build the Mishkan were first given. And this time, the description of the Mishkan is presented to all the Jews, not just the leaders who heard it the first time. We have transitioned from before sin to after sin, and we have emerged in some ways on a higher level due to our *teshuvah* and the gift of Hashem's love.

Parshas Hachodesh signifies that the month of Nissan is upon us. We have successfully transitioned through the winter and the time of Purim, and are now refreshing, renewing, and rebirthing as a nation of Hashem, formed in the crucible of Mitzrayim.

AVODAH OF THE WEEK:



1. Cleaning for Pesach is hard work, but also an honor and a privilege. Everyone should take part in it, and use the opportunity for thought and reflection on what it represents. It is not merely a removal of old dirt; it is a creation of new shine and cleanliness, a rebirth and restoration of newness. Each scrub and vacuum bring us closer to a renewed connection with Hashem.

2. The floors and shelves have done nothing to earn their renewal; it is given to them by virtue of their connection to their master. The work of Nissan is to renew, not necessarily out of deservedness, but out of connection to Hashem. Both of these thoughts should be part of our *hisbonenus* during this time.

RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. Rosh Chodesh Nissan: וַיְהִי בַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיָּת בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַיּוֹקֵם הַמִּשְׁכָּן (*Shemos* 40:17).
2. The *luchos*, *aron*, and Mishkan are all called עדות:
עֲדוֹת אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת (*Shemos* 38:21)
אֵת אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת וְאֵת בְּדִיּוֹ וְאֵת הַכַּפֹּרֶת (*Shemos* 39:25)
וַיִּקַּח וַיִּתֵּן אֶת הָעֵדוּת אֶל הָאָרוֹן (*Shemos* 40:20)
3. מְרֵאָתָא means visions, mirrors, crop of a bird:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמֵרְאֵת הַלֵּילָה (*Bereishis* 46:2)
וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַכִּיּוֹר וְאֵת כִּנּוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת וְאֵת בְּמֵרְאֵת הַצַּבָּאֵת (*Shemos* 38:9)
וַהֲסִיר אֶת מְרֵאָתוֹ בְּנִצְתָהּ (*Vayikra* 1:16)
4. The workers spun the goat hair into thread while it was still on the backs of the goats, only cutting the threads off afterward. This was a special and rare skill, and it allowed the threads to have a greater shine.
5. There were *keruvim* in the design of the *yeri'os*, the *paroches*, and on the *Aron*:
עָשָׂר יְרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי כְרִיבִים (*Shemos* 36:8)
וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַפְּרָכֶת... מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָהּ כְּרִיבִים (*Shemos* 36:35)
וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי כְרִיבִים זָהָב (*Shemos* 37:7)
6. The phrase appears in our *parshah*, in the *megillah*, and in *Sefer Yirmiyahu*:
וְכָל הַנְּשִׂיִם אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂא לְבֵן אֲתָנָה בְּחֻכְמָהּ (*Shemos* 35:26)...
...וַיַּעֲנֵנו אֶת יִרְמְיָהוּ כָּל הָאֲנָשִׁים הַיְדֻעִים כִּי מִקְטְרוֹת נְשִׂיהֶם לֹאֱלֹהִים אַחֲרַיִם וְכָל הַנְּשִׂיִם הַעֲמֻדוֹת קָהָל גְּדוֹל... (*Yirmiyahu* 44:15)
...וְכָל הַנְּשִׂיִם יִתְּנוּ יָקָר לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן... (*Esther* 1:20)

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

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

The *navi* Yechezkel describes the inauguration of the third Beis Hamikdash, which will take place on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The ceremonies will possibly last through Pesach, all the way to Sukkos! Yechezkel also details the *korbanos* of the various *chagim* and Rosh Chodesh, and specifically *korban Pesach*.

CONNECTION TO PARSHAS HACHODESH

Parshas Hachodesh, read on the Shabbos preceding Rosh Chodesh Nissan, launches our preparation for Pesach in earnest, teaching the laws of Pesach, *korban Pesach Mitzrayim*, and Rosh Chodesh, all of which occurred in the month of Nissan. The haftorah details another special event of the month of Nissan: the redemption from the current exile will occur in this month, and the dedication ceremony will begin on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The haftorah also mentions a special *avodah* to be done then, in which blood of *korbanos chatas* is placed on the doorways to the Beis Hamikdash. This is very similar to the *avodah* described in *Parshas Hachodesh*, in which the blood of the *korban Pesach* was placed on the doorways of the homes. Both *avodos* achieved a similar goal: to complete the worthiness for redemption of a people not quite there yet, and to separate them from the nations.

The haftorah also teaches about the concept of Rosh Chodesh, which is also introduced in *Parshas Hachodesh*.

CONNECTION TO PARSHAS VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

There was another great Rosh Chodesh Nissan in history: the assembly of the Mishkan also occurred on that day, as described explicitly in the *parshah*. Also, Yechezkel received this *nevuah* as part of his description of the third Beis Hamikdash. In the *parshah*, the Mishkan is described in exacting detail in its construction.

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

The entire haftorah is designed to announce the most important headline of this time: Pesach is coming! The haftorah also teaches that a system of taxation for the *korbanos* was in place, whereby the *Nasi*—possibly referring to Mashiach himself—taxed the people for funds for personal as well as communal use, and then paid for the public *korbanos* out of his own pocket. There is a lot to learn from this with regard to systems of government taxation and spending, but perhaps the most essential is that it is a privilege reserved only for great *tzaddikim*. Aharon lost the right to pay for *korbanos* himself after the *Chet Ha'egel*.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the senior officer's response clearly: "Make him do it. If he refuses, I authorize you to kill him."

The commander turned to the Steipler. "Now, take the rifle, and go practice shooting until you hit the bulls-eye. Or else...you know what will happen!" It was now a situation of *pikuach nefesh*, and the halachah therefore mandated the Steipler to indeed be *mechallel Shabbos* in order to save his life. But he was faced with an interesting halachic *she'eilah*: Should he fire with his left hand or his right hand? The Steipler was a lefty. If he used his weaker, right hand, it would be a *shinu'i*, and only an *issur d'Rabbanan*. On the other hand, doing so might mean it would take him a very long time to hit the target, and he would have to fire many more times than if he used his stronger left hand.

The Steipler decided to use his weaker hand. He would do what he could to minimize *chillul Shabbos*, and the rest was up to Hashem. He hefted the rifle awkwardly with his weak hand and tried to aim it properly. The gun swung wildly in his right hand, and he had trouble controlling it. Other soldiers began to laugh at the young man who could barely hold the rifle, let alone fire it on target! Some ran away, knowing the young rabbi was never a good marksman, even during the week. Who knew where the bullet would fly today?

The Steipler aimed as best he could and prepared to fire. An instructor shouted, "Hey, aren't you a lefty?! Why are you using your right ha—"

BANG. The Steipler fired one shot.

The bullet flew, straight and true, and slammed into the target, dead center.

No one ever hit the target on the first try! The soldiers stopped laughing, and the instructor stopped yelling. All stood with their jaws dropped to the floor, while the Steipler put down the gun and walked away. Mission accomplished.

Word of the miracle spread quickly and soon reached the commander who had initially threatened the Steipler. He quickly called the young man to his office and apologized. "I see that you are a holy man, not a crazy fanatic," he said. "I am hereby excusing you from all exercises and practice on the Jewish Sabbath. You don't need it, because your G-d will obviously care for you."

And that was not all. The Steipler's fame spread around the platoon. The commander began to treat him with respect and even asked his advice on difficult decisions. (At one point, he was asked to rule over a dispute between officers, but he refused; there was no way that would end well!) The Steipler's fame continued to grow, and now the commander began to worry. People were respecting the young Jew more than the commander himself! It was bad for morale. He needed to get him out! The commander contacted headquarters and asked for the Steipler to be released from the Russian army altogether.

Sure enough, a few days later, the Steipler went home, safe and sound.





UP FOR DISCUSSION

See this week's *Circle* magazine for the full comic story and halachic dilemma.

UNKNOWING RETURN

Generally, one must inform the owner when one is returning her object so that the owner is aware that she must now take care of her object (C.M. 355:1). If it is returned without telling the owner and the owner finds it, thereby realizing that it was returned, the thief is no longer responsible (C.M. 355:1). If Shevi's locker is a safe place to return the coat and Shevi will find it, Chavi may return it to her locker.



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אלה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכַּן הַמִּשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת...

“These are the calculations of the Mishkan, Mishkan of testimony...” (Shemos 38:21)

רש"י: המשכן משכן. שני פעמים, רמז למקדש שנתמשכן בשני חורבנין על עונותיהן של ישראל

Rashi: “The Mishkan Mishkan: [the word is] repeated to hint at the Beis Hamikdash, which was taken as collateral (*mashkon*) for the sins of Yisrael in two destructions”

The words hint to each Beis Hamikdash specifically:

- First Beis Hamikdash: 410 = מִשְׁכַּן, the number of years the first Beis Hamikdash stood (Baal Haturim).
- Second Beis Hamikdash: 415 = הַמִּשְׁכַּן + 5 letters in the word = 420, number of years the second Beis Hamikdash stood (Rabbeinu Bacheye).
- Second Beis Hamikdash: The second Beis Hamikdash stood 420 years but was missing five key elements. $420 - 5 = 415$ = הַמִּשְׁכַּן (Chasam Sofer).
- Mishkan: הַעֵדוּת = *gematria* 479, the number of years that passed from the building of the Mishkan until the inauguration of the first Beis Hamikdash.

THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY



On the 29th of Adar, in the year 1807, a fake Great Sanhedrin created by the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte was dissolved.

Napoleon was pretty fair to the Jews under his control, allowing them to be citizens and ending the terrible Spanish Inquisition. In 1806, he wanted the Jews to decide a number of questions about their religion and France. He created an organization, called the Assembly of Notables, to decide “questions” such as the following: In the eyes of Jews, are French *goyim* considered brothers or strangers? According to Judaism, how should *goyim* in France should be treated? Do the Jews born in France say France is “their” country? Will they defend it? Do they follow the law? Who elects the rabbis?

Assembly Commissioner Count Louis-Mathieu Molé was happy with the answers given by the Notables, and Napoleon decided to call them the Great Sanhedrin and make their decisions into official Jewish law (*chas v'shalom*). His men appointed 71 judges, about a third of whom were “laymen,” and seated them in a semicircle in a great hall in the Hôtel de Ville. (All the judges wore three-cornered hats!) The members all voted on the decisions of the Notables and passed them.

Napoleon may have thought the whole thing was a joke, meant to get the Jews to help him. Later, when Jews did help him win a war in Poland, he commented that he “finally got some use” out of his Sanhedrin.

On this day in history, this shameful *chillul Hashem* was finally abolished.



HALACHAH

Cleaning for Pesach (Basics)



Why do we remove *chametz* from our homes before Pesach?

The Torah teaches that it is forbidden to have *chametz* in one's possession on Pesach. This can be remedied by transferring the ownership of all of one's *chametz* away from himself—either by selling it to a non-Jew or by declaring it worthless (*bittul*). *Mid'Rab-bannan*, we are obligated to actually remove *chametz* from our homes for Pesach for two reasons: 1) *Bittul* (or even sale) is likely to be insincere, particularly if you have valuable *chametz* that you intend to guard and make use of after Pesach; 2) If you actually encounter your *chametz* on Pesach, you may end up eating it, whether out of strong desire or forgetfulness.

What types of *chametz* are included in this aspect of the mitzvah?

The only *chametz* that must be removed because of these concerns (there are others—read on!) is *chametz* you may actually eat, or to which you are too attached to do a sincere *bittul* or sale. This includes anything that we relate to as food, such as bread in the freezer, pretzels in the nosh closet, and a bottle of whiskey. This does not include anything we relate to as dirt, such as croutons under the couch, crumbs in the toaster, and gummed-

up flour in cracks of a cabinet or fridge, which would not need to be removed—barring the following...

Why do we need to clean for Pesach?

The *Talmud Yerushalmi* tells us that people would scrape their walls before Pesach. The Rosh adds that there is a *minhag* to scrape tables, chairs, and anything that may have touched *chametz*. What is that all about? There are two additional concerns. Even the tiniest flakes or grime of *chametz* found in eating areas of the house may find their way into your food without you noticing. If it happens on Pesach, the *chametz* is not *battel*, and under many circumstances, it makes all the food into which it fell forbidden to eat. To prevent this from happening, any food-related areas should be cleaned of all *chametz* and edible *chametz* residue.

What needs to be cleaned?

Under this halachah, only *chametz* found in places from where it could get into your food needs to be cleaned. This means that food storage areas, serving and work surfaces, and appliances that will be used on Pesach must be cleaned of all edible, actual *chametz*, even if we relate to it as dirt. Other areas do not need to be scrubbed. Even food areas or

appliances that will be locked up or cordoned off over Pesach do not need to be scrubbed. One who will not be home for Pesach does not have to do this level of cleaning. *Keilim* that have absorbed *chametz* flavor need to be *kashered* or locked away—but that is outside the scope of this column.

Are there any other reasons to clean for Pesach?

Yes. On Pesach, there is a mitzvah of *cheirus*, which means that we should live like royals. One should save his best china for Pesach. Part of this mitzvah may be to refresh the home as much as is practical. This is not spring cleaning; it is an expression of *cheirus*. Many *Yerushalmi*s have the *minhag* to repaint the entire house in honor of Pesach. This is similar to the *Talmud Yerushalmi*'s note that people scraped their walls—the walls were often covered with a flour-based mixture that served as paint.

There is also a well-established *minhag* in Klal Yisrael to clean the home deeply and thoroughly for *chametz*, even though it is not required *al pi din*. This is an important *minhag* and may have Kabbalistic or *mus-sar* sources. It should not be waved away but should be taken into consideration when determining one's order of priorities.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"DIRT IS NOT *CHAMETZ*, AND YOU / ME / YOUR SPOUSE / YOUR KIDS ARE NOT THE *KORBAN PESACH*."

—Popular expression, which has some truth to it. See "Halachah."



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