



May 22 - 28, 2022 כ"א - כ"ז אייר תשפ"ב



מה בפַּרְשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- If בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Benei Yisrael, the Israelites) follow God's laws, they will experience many blessings. They will enjoy rain at the right time, healthy crops, safety, and peace. God will live among them.
- If they do not follow God's laws, they will be punished. Their land will stop producing food. Enemy armies will take over, and Benei Yisrael will be scattered among the nations.
- God will remember God's promises to our ancestors, and God will never punish the people too much.
- Sefer Vayikra closes with a discussion of donations to the מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan, sanctuary for God in the wilderness). A person could donate an amount of silver associated to themselves, according to a list of amounts recorded in the Torah.
- One tenth of your harvest and newborn animals should go to God. This is called מַעֲשֵׂר (ma'aser, tithing).





מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

After describing terrible punishments for Benei Yisrael, God promises to remember the בְּרִית (brit, covenant):

Vayikra 26:42

Then I will remember My brit with Yaakov;
and also My brit with Yitzhak,
and also remember My brit with Avraham;
and I will remember the land.

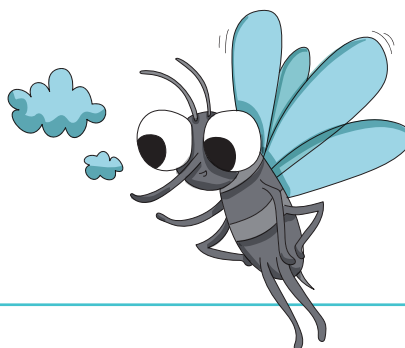
ויקרא כו:מב

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי יַעֲקֹב
וְאֶף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי יִצְחָק
וְאֶף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אַבְרָהָם אֲזָכֹר
וְהָאָרֶץ אֲזָכֹר:

In Hebrew, some vowels can be either מַלְּא (malei, full) or חֲסֵיר (haseir, missing). A malei vowel appears with a vav or with a yod, and a haseir vowel appears without these "extra" letters. For example, the holam vowel, which makes the O sound, can be either. It's malei in the word שָׁלוֹם (shalom) and it's haseir in the parashah name בּוֹ (Bo).

Bzzzz
A lot of midrashim are
bugged by something
unusual in the Torah text

In the Torah, the final syllable in the name, Yaakov, is almost always written with a holam haseir: יַעֲקֹב. But in our pasuk, it appears malei: יַעֲקֹב. Why the extra vav?



Midrash Haseir Ve-Yeter 24

Every "Yaakov" appears haseir, except in five places in the Torah.

And every "Eliyahu" appears with a vav, except in five places.

Why? It's a promise that Eliyahu will come and redeem the descendants of Yaakov.

As it says: "I will send for you the prophet Eliya" (in shortened form, without a vav; Malakhi 3:23).

מדרש חסר ויתר שבתנך (ווערטהיימר) כ"ד

כָּל יַעֲקֹב חֲסֵיר
בְּרֵ מִן ה'.

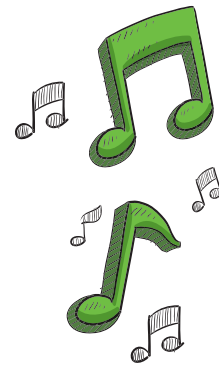
וְכָל אֱלִיָּהוּ בְּתִיב ב-וָאו
בְּרֵ מִן ה'.

לָמָּה? לְלַמֶּדֶה שְׁאֵלִיהוּ בָּא
וְגוֹאֵל זֶרַע יַעֲקֹב.

שְׁנֵאָמֵר: "הִנֵּה אֶנְכִּי שֹׁלֵחַ לָכֶם
אֶת אֱלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא" (מִלְאָכִי ג:כג).

In Sefer Malakhi (3:23-24) אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא (Eliyahu Ha-Navi, the prophet Eliyahu) is described as the one who will announce divine redemption and usher in the time when God will save the Jewish people from their troubles. We sing about Eliyahu at the Pesah Seder, and many people have the custom to sing about him weekly at Havdalah.

- ◆ This midrash suggests that the extra vav in Yaakov's name in the pasuk hints at the promise of Eliyahu coming to begin the time of redemption. Why would that hint be important after the punishments in our parashah? What is the connection between God remembering, which is mentioned three times in the pasuk, and the start of the redemption?
- ◆ How do you stay hopeful when times are tough? Do you have something you think of to remind you that the future can be better?



פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

Vayikra 26:40-41

They shall confess their sins and the sins of their parents, because they betrayed Me, and treated me carelessly.

So I will also be careless with them and I will bring them to the land of their enemies, then at last their stubborn hearts will be humbled, and they will atone for their sins.

ויקרא כו:מ-מא

וְהִתְוַדּוּ אֶת-עֲוֹנָם וְאֶת-עֲוֹן
אֲבוֹתָם בְּמַעַלְם אֲשֶׁר מָעְלוּ-בִּי
וְאֵף אֲשֶׁר-הִלְכוּ עִמִּי בְקָרִי:

אֲף-אֲנִי אֶלֶף עִמָּם בְּקָרִי
וְהִבֵּאתִי אֹתָם בְּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיהֶם
אוֹ-אֲזִי כִפְנֵי לִבָּבָם הָעֲרֵל וְאֲזִי
יִרְצוּ אֶת-עֲוֹנָם:

The connection between these two pesukim is troubling. In the first pasuk, the people, who have just suffered terrible punishments, confess their sins. **So, why does God continue punishing them in the second pasuk? Why doesn't God forgive them right away?**

Our פְּרָשָׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) offer different explanations.

Sforno (Italy, 500 years ago)

ספורנו

They shall confess their sins—only a few of them, like Daniel and Ezra.

וְהִתְנִידוּ אֶת-עֲוֹנֵם קִצָּתָם כְּמוֹ
דָּנִיֵּאל וְעֶזְרָא וְזוֹלָתָם.

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

רש"י

I will bring them—I Myself will take them. This is an act of kindness for Israel.

וְהִבֵּאתִי אֹתָם – אֲנִי בְּעַצְמִי
אָבִיָּאֵם. זֶה מִדָּה טוֹבָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

- ◆ How do you understand Sforno's justification for the harshness of the second pasuk? Can a small number of people do תְּשׁוּבָה (teshuvah, repentance) on behalf of the larger group, or does everyone have to participate?
- ◆ Rashi says that the second pasuk isn't actually so harsh! Can you read this pasuk as a statement of God's kindness? What might have been kind about God personally bringing Benei Yisrael to their גָּלוּת (galut, exile from the Land of Israel)? Is there a way you can see God with you even when things look bad?





הלכה • Halakhah

Our parashah contains the source for **מעשר** (ma'aser, tithing), which means giving away one tenth of what you have:

Vayikra 27:20

All tithes from the land, whether seed from the ground or fruit from the tree, are God's; they are holy to God.

ויקרא כז:כ

וְכָל-מַעֲשֵׂר הָאָרֶץ מִזֶּרַע הָאָרֶץ
מִפְּרִי הָעֵץ לַה' הוּא קֹדֶשׁ לַה':

Here's another place that this comes up in the Torah:

Devarim 14:22

You shall tithe **all** of your planted crops that come out in the field year by year.

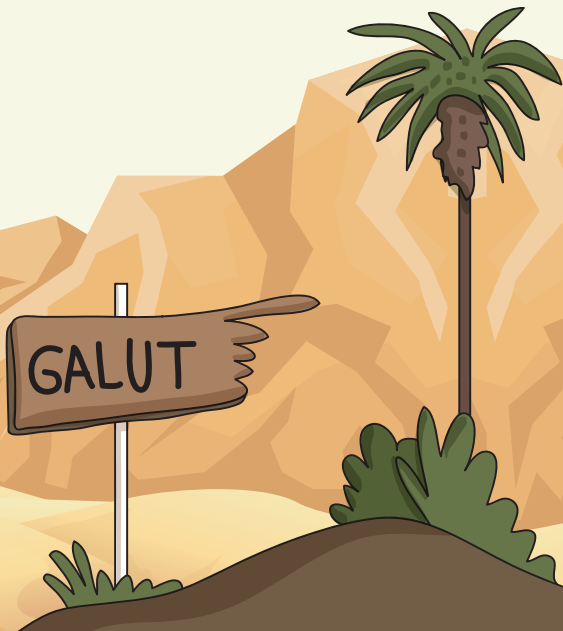
דברים יד:כב

עֲשֹׂר תַעֲשֹׂר אֶת כָּל תְּבוּאֹת
אֶרְצְךָ הַיֵּצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה שָׁנָה שָׁנָה:

From the word **כָּל** (kol, all), a midrash teaches that we have to give one-tenth of **all** our profits, and not just what grows from the ground (Tosafot on Ta'anit 9a). This is the source for **מעשר כספים** (ma'asar kesafim), the mitzvah to give at least 10% of what you earn to **צדקה** (zedakah, charity).

Rambam writes that 10% is the ordinary level, and a higher level is to give 20% (Mishneh Torah Matenot Aniyim 4:5). The Shulhan Arukh says you should give as much as you are able (Yoreh Deah 249:1).

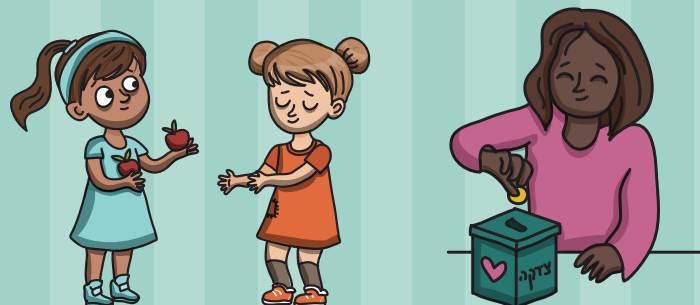
Tzedakah is powerful. In Sefer Mishlei (10:2) it says: **וְצִדְקָה תִצִּיל מִמָּוֶת** (u'tzedakah tatzil mi-mavet, and tzedakah can save from death).



What about kids? Maybe you get an allowance, or you earn money from babysitting. You might get money as a gift for your birthday, or for Hanukkah, or for your Bat/Bar Mitzvah. If you aren't already tithing from these, you could start!

Think about causes that you care about. Maybe it's providing meals to people in need, bringing toys to sick kids, or supporting education in countries far away. Grown-ups can help you find something that inspires you. It's hard to go wrong because even a little bit of help can make a big difference in the lives of those around you.

Giving ma'aser is a really great way to make the world better, and ensure that our money becomes "holy to God."



רַגַּע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Vayikra 27:13

And if they wish to redeem it, they must add one-fifth to its assessment.

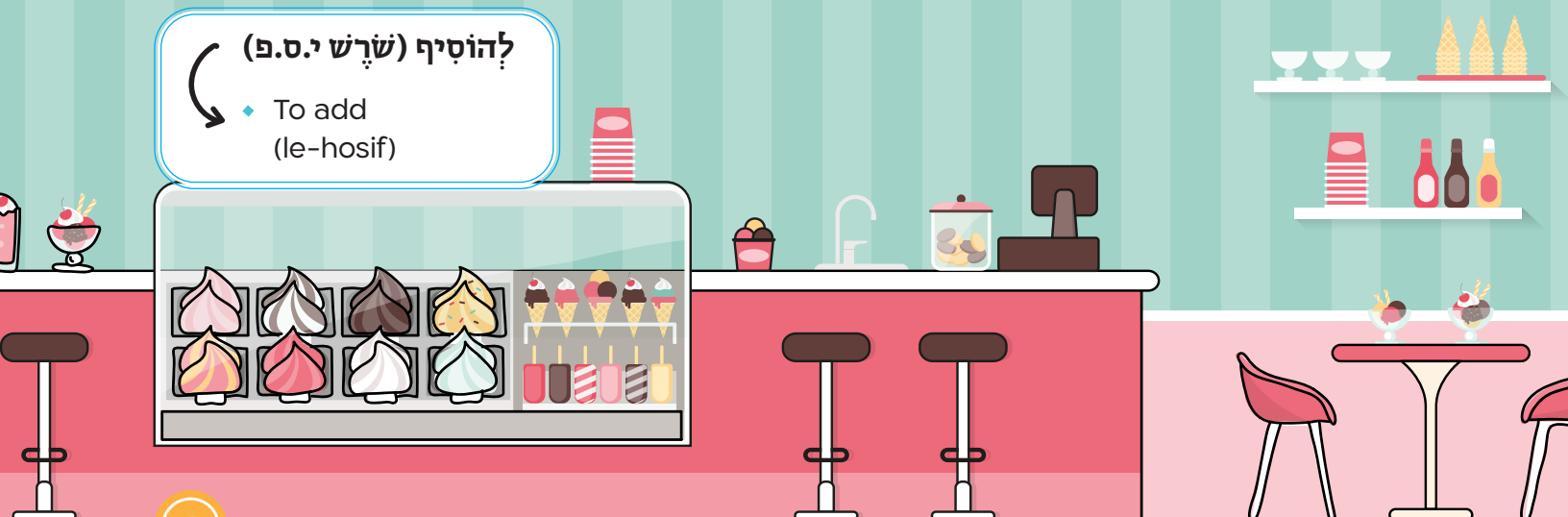
ויקרא כז:יג

וְאִם-גָּאֵל יִגְאֹלְנָה וְיִסֵּף
חֲמִישָׁתוֹ עַל-עֲרֹכָהּ:

לְהוֹסִיף (שָׁרֵשׁ י.ס.פ.)



◆ To add
(le-hosif)





דְּבָרָה שֶׁל דִּינָה • One-Minute Debate

How to play:

Here is a topic for debate along with some suggested arguments, but feel free to come up with your own.

- ◆ Assign people to the "agree" or "disagree" sides.
- ◆ Each side gets 30 seconds to make their case.
- ◆ At the end, the group votes on a winner.

Debate: Punishment is an effective way to make sure people make good choices.

Agree!

- ◆ Even adults get punished! When they get speeding tickets, it's a reminder to slow down and drive more carefully.
- ◆ If you do the right thing because you're afraid of getting punished, eventually you'll learn to do the right thing for its own sake.



Disagree!

- ◆ Getting punished just makes people angry. You don't learn anything from it.
- ◆ People should make good choices because it's the right thing to do. If you do the right thing just because you're afraid of punishment, or just because you want a reward, that's not really so good.



Find the Word!

In Sefer Bereishit, whose name comes from this שָׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root)? (Hint: He was treated differently from the rest of his brothers.)

לְהוֹסִיף שֶׁמֶן לְמִדּוּרָה =
To add fuel to the fire,
to make a situation
worse (lehosif shemen
lamedurah)

בְּעֵלֵי הַתּוֹסָפוֹת =
The Tosafists (rabbis in France
and Germany 12th-15th century,
who wrote commentaries
that added onto the Talmud)
(Ba'alei Hatosafot)

תּוֹסָפוֹת =
1. Additions or increases
2. Side-dishes (or add-ons,
like ice cream toppings)
(tosafot)

שָׁעוֹת נוֹסָפוֹת =
Overtime
(sha'ot nosafot)





שאלות השבוע • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. **The answers to the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.**

aliyot:

- 1) Vayikra 26:3 to 26:5
- 2) 26:6 to 26:9
- 3) 26:10 to 26:46
- 4) 27:1 to 27:15
- 5) 27:16 to 27:21
- 6) 27:22 to 27:28
- 7) 27:29 to 27:34

Good luck!

- 1 How many verses are in this aliyah? (Hint: It's the shortest an aliyah can be!)

- 2 What's weird about the math involving enemies in this aliyah?

- 3 What two types of metal are mentioned as signs of punishment?

- 4 What happens if you dedicate an animal as a sacrifice and then try to switch it out with another one?

- 5 When you dedicate your family field to the בית המקדש (Beit Ha-Mikdash, Temple in Jerusalem), it has a fixed value in silver, for every חומר (homer, about 50 gallons) of barley seed you can plant in it. What is that amount of silver?

- 6 What type of animal can't be dedicated as money to God?



- 7 What percentage of a person's crops and animals are part of תרומה? (Hint: It's in the name!)

- 8 How many times do words with the root ערב appear in our parashah?

- 9 Someone's name is spelled in an unusual way in our parashah. Whose name, and what is the spelling?

- 10 Where does all of Sefer Vayikra take place?

*
Look for
the answers
on page 12!





קריאת התורה • Torah Reading

Have you ever had exciting news to give someone? How did you speak to them?

Did you ever need to tell someone something really upsetting? How did you tell them? Sometimes, we change the way we speak to match the mood of what we are trying to say.

In this week's Torah reading, the third aliyah is a tough one. In it, God briefly promises lots of blessings if the people follow the mitzvot, but then horrible punishments and suffering if they don't. Some of the threats are really awful, including the whole land being destroyed and the people being thrown out into foreign countries. This section is called the תּוֹכֵּחַהּ (tokhehah, rebuke), and it is really hard to hear.

We do a few things to try to make it easier to handle:

Rule #1:



We don't break up this aliyah in the middle. We want to get it over in one shot. That's why it is so long (37 verses) when other aliyot in the parashah are so short. (The first and second aliyot are only 3 verses each!)

Rule #2:



You don't call someone up to recite the blessings for this aliyah unless they want to be called up. How could you offer someone to be on the receiving end of such horrible curses? In many communities, this aliyah is either given to the rabbi or to the person reading the aliyah; they absorb the blow for the rest of us.

Rule #3: Shhh!

Just like you might pull someone aside and give them bad news quietly, there is a longstanding tradition to read this passage softly and quickly. It is too hard for us to hear such painful things loudly. Listen carefully and you can hear the reader be loud at the beginning of the aliyah for the end of the blessings, get quiet for the curses, and then get loud again when things get better at the end of the aliyah.

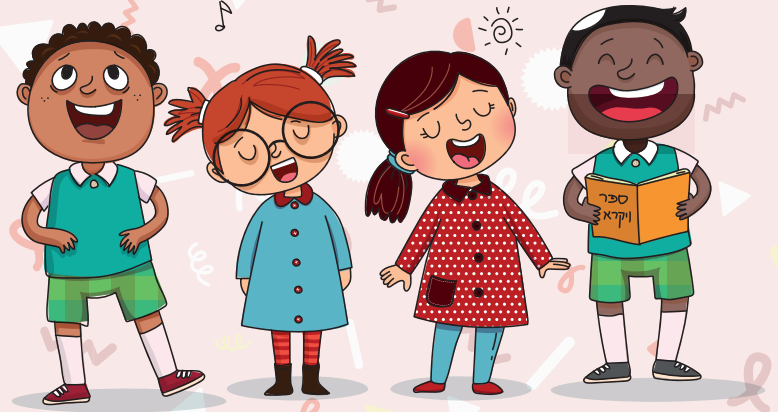




חזק חזק ונתחזק

חזרה • Vayikra in Review

This week we celebrate the completion of Sefer Vayikra! Here are some of the big themes we've covered:



קִרְבָּנוֹת
(korbanot,
sacrifices)



טְמֵאָה וְטָהָרָה
(tumah ve-taharah,
impurity and purity)



קְדָשִׁים תִּהְיוּ
(kedoshim tihyu, you shall
be holy, including rules for
treating other people well)



מִצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיֹת בָּאֶרֶץ
(mitzvot ha-teluyot ba-
aretz, agricultural laws
of the Land of Israel)

What is the most important part of Sefer Vayikra, the takeaway message that the Torah wants you to understand above all else?

According to Rabbi Akiva (Sifra Kedoshim Perek 4), there is one line in Vayikra which contains the most important rule in the whole Torah:

Vayikra 19:18

Love your neighbor like yourself

וַיִּקְרָא יט:יח

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָמוֹךָ

Rabbi Akiva calls this principle a כָּלל גָּדוֹל (klal gadol, general category or summary) of the Torah.

The Talmud (Shabbat 31a) tells a story about a time that the great scholar Hillel paraphrased this pasuk:

A person came to Shammai and asked him to teach the whole Torah while standing on one leg.

Shammai said, "No way! The Torah is way too complex for that." Then the person came to Hillel with the same question.

Hillel said, "If there's something you don't like when it's done to you, don't do it to someone else. That is the entire point of the Torah, and the rest is commentary. Now go learn it!"

- Why would Rabbi Akiva call "love your neighbor as yourself" a klal gadol, and why would Hillel think this summarizes all the details of the Torah? Can you think of Torah details that are captured by this pasuk?
- Some people think that when young children start to learn Torah, they should begin with Sefer Vayikra. Does this surprise you? Why might they say this?



בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

A major sign of God's blessing in Parashat Behukotai (and throughout the Torah) is rain. When it falls at the right time and in the right amount, rain makes crops grow and makes it possible for everyone to have enough food to eat.

The Talmud (Ta'anit 24a) wonders: What can we do to encourage God to bring us the rain we need? It tells a story about Rav.

Rav came to a place where there wasn't enough rain. He declared a fast but no rain came. The prayer leader went down to lead services. He said, "מְשִׁיב הָרוּחַ (Mashiv Ha-Ruah, Who brings the wind)," and the wind blew; he said, "מוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם (Morid Ha-Geshem, Who causes the rain to fall)," and the rain came.

Rav said to the prayer leader, "What do you do?" The prayer leader said, "I teach Torah to children, and I teach the children of the poor and the children of the rich, and I never take any money from someone who can't pay."

- Rain is a sign of God's kindness. What does God want to see in order to be kind to us? The lesson that Rav learns here is that God wants us to be kind to each other, and then God will be kind to us.





מה קורה • What's Going On Here?

The opening pasuk of our parashah states that חֻקֹּת (hukkot) are what we have to follow in order to gain God's blessing.

What exactly are hukkot (or, in singular, hukkah)?

Sforno says that hukkot are rules that don't have an obvious logical explanation.

Rashi and Ibn Ezra say the hukkah here is learning Torah.

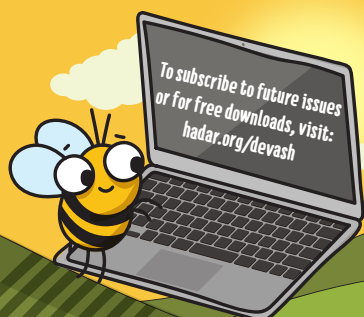
Midrash Rabbah points out that hukkah comes from the שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) ח.ק.ק, which means "to engrave." The midrash imagines God engraving the rules of nature in the sun, moon, oceans, and the earth. Following God's hukkot could mean living our lives with the awareness that everything around us is part of God's plan.



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

- Three
- Five people chase 100 enemies (20 each), but 100 people chase 10,000 enemies (100 each)! (26:8)
- בַּרְזֶל (barzel, iron) and נְחֹשֶׁה (nehushah, copper) (26:19)
- They are both holy, and you must offer both of them! (27:10)
- 50 shekels (27:16)
- A firstborn—it already belongs to God! (27:26)
- 10% (27:30,32)
- 26! Wow, that's a lot! The whole section is known as פְּרֶשֶׁת אֲרָחִין (parashat arakhin)
- יָעֻבֵּן—Normally it's spelled יָעֻבֵּן—without a vav (26:42)
- הַר סִינַי (Har Sinai, Mount Sinai) (27:34, and check back to 7:38)

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