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Children & Families



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ב"ז נְסִלוֹ - ד טַבַּת תּשפ"ד December 10 - 16, 2023



## מִקְצֵץ • In This Week's Parashah

- Pharaoh has two dreams that he can't understand.
- Pharaoh's cupbearer remembers Yosef and recommends him to interpret the dreams. Pharaoh sends for Yosef, who says that God is sending a message that there will be seven years with plenty of food followed by seven years of famine.
- Yosef advises Pharaoh to store food during the years of plenty. Pharaoh is impressed with his wisdom, and appoints Yosef as his second-in-command.
- Seven years later, a famine begins. Yaakov sends his sons to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt) to buy food, but not Binyamin.
- When the brothers come before Yosef to buy food, he recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. Yosef accuses them of being spies, imprisons Shimon, and insists that the others return with Binyamin.
- Yaakov first refuses to let Binyamin go to Mitzrayim because he's nervous about losing him like he lost Yosef. But Yaakov finally allows him to go because they need more food.
- The brothers go back to Mitzrayim with Binyamin.
- When Yosef sees Binyamin, he leaves the room to cry. He has a meal with his brothers, but still doesn't tell them who he is.
- Yosef gives the brothers the food they came to purchase. He secretly has his silver goblet placed in Binyamin's sack. When the goblet is discovered, Yosef accuses Binyamin of stealing from him and says Binyamin should stay behind as his slave.





## 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 questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.**

### aliyot:

- 1) Bereishit 41:1 to 41:14
- 2) 41:15 to 41:38
- 3) 41:39 to 41:52
- 4) 41:53 to 42:18
- 5) 42:19 to 43:15
- 6) 43:16 to 43:29
- 7) 43:30 to 44:17

**haftarah:** Melachim Alef 3:15-4:1

Good luck!



1 What two things did Yosef do to prepare for his meeting with Pharaoh?

2 According to Yosef, why were Pharaoh's dreams doubled?

3 What is described as being so much that it was impossible to measure, like the dust of the earth?

4 How many times does the Torah mention that Yosef recognized his brothers?

5 Which two brothers argued with Yaakov that he should let Binyamin go down to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt) with them?

6 What lie did the man in charge of Yosef's house tell the brothers?

7 What does Yosef say about how he uses his silver goblet?

8 What makes Yosef cry in this parashah?

9 What did Yosef—supposedly a total stranger—do that shocked his brothers?

10 **From the haftarah:** What did everyone see that caused them to be in awe of King Shlomo?



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Look for the answers on page 8!



## מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

### What can we learn from the brothers' suffering?

Yosef's goblet is found in Binyamin's bag. The brothers believe that now Binyamin will be taken as a slave, and they tear their clothes in mourning (Bereishit 44:13).



Hey, this is familiar. It reminds me of something...



### Midrash Tanhuma

"They tore their clothing" - The Holy Blessed One said to them: You caused your father to tear his clothes in sadness for no reason (when he thought Yosef had been killed), so now you will tear your clothes in sadness for no reason (now that you think Binyamin will become a slave).

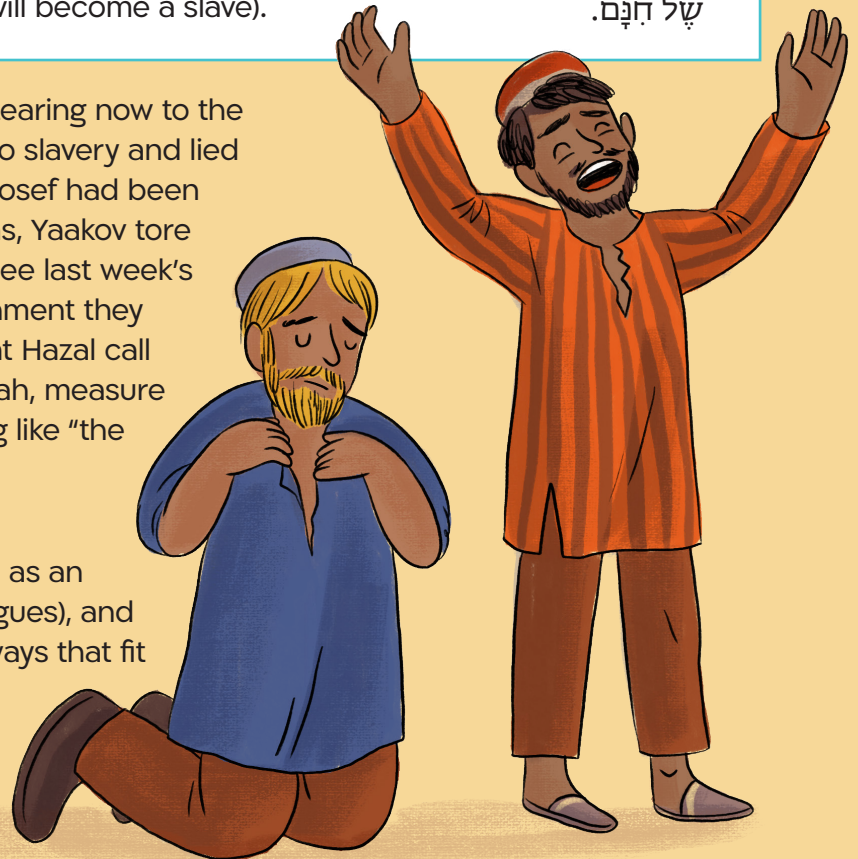
### מדרש תנחומא

"וַיִּקְרְעוּ שְׂמֹלֵתָם" - אָמַר לָהֶם הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אַתֶּם גְּרַמְתֶּם לְקִרְעַת בְּגָדֵי אַבְיָיִם בְּדַבַּר שֶׁל חֲנָם, כִּי תִקְרְעוּ אֶתֶם עַל דָּבָר שֶׁל חֲנָם.

This midrash connects the brothers' tearing now to the time when the brothers sold Yosef into slavery and lied to Yaakov about it, making him think Yosef had been killed. Because of the brothers' actions, Yaakov tore his clothing in his sadness and pain (see last week's parashah; Bereishit 37:34). The punishment they experience now is an example of what Hazal call מִדְּדָה כְּנִגְדַּת מִדְּדָה (middah k'neged middah, measure for measure), which means something like "the punishment fits the crime."

We saw the idea of middah k'neged middah last year in Devash for Va'era, as an explanation for the מַכּוֹת (makkot, plagues), and how God punished the Egyptians in ways that fit how they hurt Benei Yisrael.

When punishments are middah k'neged middah, it helps us see justice and fairness in the world, and also helps us understand the consequences of our own behavior.



- ◆ What can we learn from the way the brothers suffer in this story? What does it teach us about what they had previously done wrong?
- ◆ This midrash focuses on the pain the brothers caused to their father, Yaakov. What was so wrong about that? What about the pain they caused Yosef - what might be the punishment for that?
- ◆ What's it like to receive a punishment that feels "random" or unconnected to what you did? What are the kinds of punishments you learn and grow from, and what punishments are not that way?



## הַפְּטָרָה • Haftarah

King Shlomo was known for his wise judgment. In our haftarah, we hear about his decision in a difficult case.

Two women who live in the same house each have a newborn baby. One of the babies dies.

One woman claims: The other woman's baby died. Then, while I was asleep, she took my living baby and left me with her dead one.

The second woman denies this. She insists that the living baby is hers.

Shlomo tries a trick to figure out which one to believe.

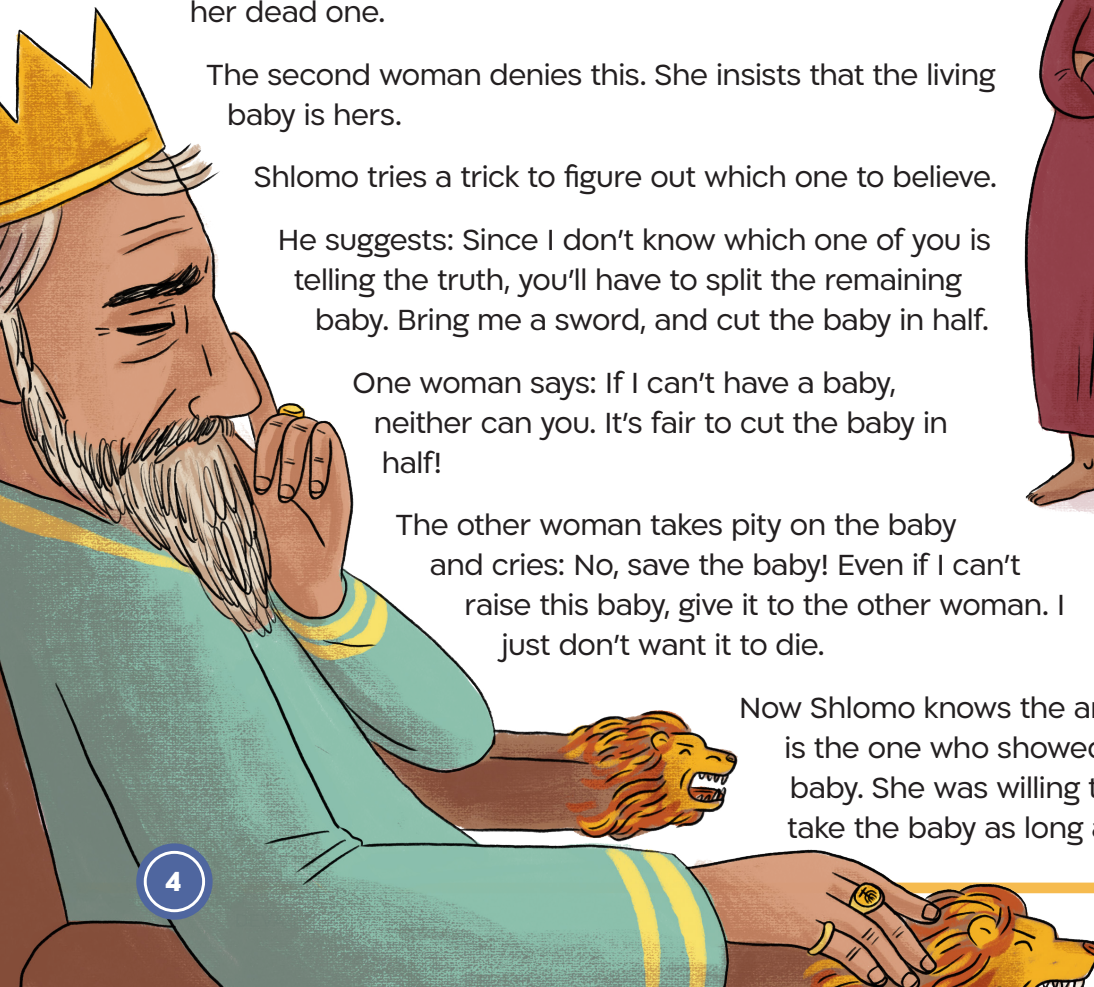
He suggests: Since I don't know which one of you is telling the truth, you'll have to split the remaining baby. Bring me a sword, and cut the baby in half.

One woman says: If I can't have a baby, neither can you. It's fair to cut the baby in half!

The other woman takes pity on the baby and cries: No, save the baby! Even if I can't raise this baby, give it to the other woman. I just don't want it to die.

Now Shlomo knows the answer. The true mother is the one who showed compassion for the baby. She was willing to let the other woman take the baby as long as it would live.

The next time we read this haftarah will be in 2040! That's because Shabbat Parashat Mikeitz is almost always Shabbat Hanukkah, so we generally replace the Mikeitz haftarah with a special haftarah for the holiday.



## What's the connection to Mikeitz?

The opening line of the haftarah is very similar to a line in our parashah:

וַיִּקְצֵץ שְׁלֹמֹה וַהֲגִידָה חֲלוֹם

Shlomo woke up. It was a dream!  
(Melakhim Alef 3:15)

וַיִּיקְצֵץ פַּרְעֹה וַהֲגִידָה חֲלוֹם

Pharaoh woke up. It was a dream!  
(Bereishit 41:7)

In addition, the haftarah talks about Shlomo's wisdom (Melakhim Alef 3:28) in a way that's similar to how the Torah describes Yosef's wisdom (Bereishit 41:38-39).

- ◆ How does Yosef show his wisdom, and how does Shlomo? What do they use their wisdom for?
- ◆ The Rabbis chose this haftarah because they wanted us to compare Yosef and Shlomo. How does this comparison affect the way we think about each of these characters?



## דְּבָרָה שֶׁל דֵּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

**Debate: You shouldn't take your dreams too seriously.**



### How to play:

- ◆ Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!
- ◆ For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.



### Agree!

- ◆ Weird things happen in dreams. They don't usually make sense.
- ◆ Most dreams are almost impossible to remember in the morning.
- ◆ The best kinds of dreams are not the ones you can't control, but the goals and hopes you have in life. Those are the kinds of dreams you should be worrying about.

### Disagree!

- ◆ The Rabbis say that dreams are one sixtieth of prophecy (Berakhot 57b). That's likely the most prophecy you're ever going to get. Listen to it.
- ◆ If you have a recurring dream, your mind is trying to tell you something, and it might be worth talking to someone about it.
- ◆ It's a good thing Pharaoh took his dreams seriously. He got them interpreted and that made it possible for Egypt to survive and thrive during a famine.



## בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

Here's how Pharaoh shows everyone that Yosef is in charge:

### Bereishit 41:43

He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command,  
and they announced before him: "Avreikh!"

### בראשית מא:מג

וַיִּרְכַּב אֹתוֹ בְּמִרְכָּבַת הַמִּשְׁנָה  
אֲשֶׁר לוֹ  
וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְפָנָיו אַבְרִיךְ

What's the meaning of calling out "Avreikh"?

**Rashi** thinks it's connected to the Hebrew word בִּרְכַיִם (birkayim, knees). It was an announcement telling everyone to kneel or bow (by bending their knees) before Yosef.

**The Tur** connects it to the word בְּרַכָּה (berakhah, blessing), and he thinks it was a command to everyone around to give berakhot to Yosef.

**Targum Onkelos** says it was an announcement that Yosef's new title was אָב (av, father) + רֵיךְ (reikh, king), meaning that Pharaoh (the king) was saying that Yosef is now like a parent to him because of his good advice. This word reikh is probably related to the Latin word, "rex," which also means king. You might know it from the Tyrannosaurus Rex! It was considered a kind of king because it was a top predator in its time.



## פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

Yaakov finally agrees to let his sons go back to the second-in-command of Egypt (who is secretly Yosef!). He tells them to take gifts with them, including זִמְרַת הָאֶרֶץ (zimrat ha-aretz). What does this mean?

The simple meaning is that it's connected to the שֹׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) מ.ז.מ, which means to prune, or to cut off plants. So Yaakov was telling his sons to bring fruit or spices that they cut from trees or plants.

Rashi connects the word to a different meaning of the shoresh מ.ז.מ, which means to sing!



## Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Bring from the best parts of the land (that get praised in songs), things that make everyone sing because they're so glad it exists.

רש"י

מִשְׁבַּח הָאָרֶץ, שֶׁהַבַּל מְזַמְרִין  
עָלָיו בְּשֵׁהוּא בָּא לְעוֹלָם.

- ◆ According to Rashi, it seems that Yaakov wants the second-in-command to think that the land of Canaan is so good that it's worth singing songs about. Why do you think this is?

## לקוטי מוהר"ן תניינא סג'

בִּי כָּל עֵשֶׂב וְעֵשֶׂב יֵשׁ לוֹ שִׁירָה... בִּי יַעֲקֹב רָצָה לְפַעֵל אֶצְלוֹ עַל יְדֵי הַנְּגוּן מֵהַ  
שִׁהִיָּה צָרִיף, עַל בֶּן שְׁלַח לוֹ אוֹתוֹ הַנְּגוּן שֶׁל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

## Rebbe Nahman of Breslov (200 years ago)

Even every blade of grass has its own song... Yaakov wanted to impact the ruler through music. Therefore, he sent him the song of Eretz Yisrael.

- ◆ Rebbe Nahman is talking about an idea from Perek Shirah, an ancient text that describes the songs that plants and animals sing to God. What do you think it means to say that everything sings? What kinds of songs is the world around us singing about God? What can we learn from those songs?
  - ◆ Rebbe Nahman suggests that Yaakov was trying to use the song of Eretz Yisrael to influence a ruler of Egypt to do the right thing.  
What does that teach us about Eretz Yisrael?
- ◆ Does listening to music have an influence on you?  
How so?
- ◆ What are your favorite Jewish songs?  
What are your favorite songs to sing about (or to) God?





## דקדוק • Grammar

By now, you have probably figured out that you can do lots of things with Hebrew נְשָׂרָשִׁים (shorashim, roots)! Sometimes you can take a word, make small changes to its letters and vowels, and its meaning can become something related but also totally different.

We have a great example of this in our parashah. It happens when Yosef finally reunites with ten of his brothers, but they don't realize it.

Bereishit 42:7

וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת אֶחָיו וַיִּכְּרָם וַיִּתְנַכֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם...

Yosef saw his brothers and **he recognized them (vayakirem);** but **he made himself unrecognizable (vayitnaker)** to them...

The two bolded Hebrew words are basically the opposite of each other, but they have the same shoresh: ו.כ.ר.

## Parashah Scavenger Hunt

### Answers:

1. He shaved (or had a haircut) and changed his clothing (41:14)
2. As a sign that the message behind the dream was going to come true very quickly (41:32)
3. The food that Yosef collected (41:49)
4. Twice (42:7 and 42:8)
5. Reuven (42:37) and Yehudah (43:8)
6. That he received their money for the grain and that the money in their sacks must have been a gift from God (43:23)
7. For drinking and for practicing magic (44:5)
8. Overhearing his brothers talking about their guilt for mistreating him (42:24) and seeing Binyamin together with the other brothers on their second trip to Mitzrayim (43:30)
9. He seated them in age order (43:33)
10. That he had divine wisdom in him (Melakhim Alef 3:28)

### וַיִּכְּרָם (vayakirem, he recognized them)

- ◆ In הִפְעִיל (hif'il), the verb focuses on doing something to someone else.
- ◆ The verb is לְהַכִּיר (lehakir) and it means to recognize. (The nun of the root disappears — see last week's Devash!)

### וַיִּתְנַכֵּר (vayitnaker, he made himself unrecognizable)

- ◆ In הִתְפַּעֵל (hitpa'el), the verb focuses on doing something to yourself.
- ◆ The verb is לְהִתְנַכֵּר (lehitnaker) and it means to make yourself a stranger, so that other people don't recognize you.



What an amazing way for Hebrew grammar to capture this uneven moment between Yosef and his brothers with two similar but different verbs!