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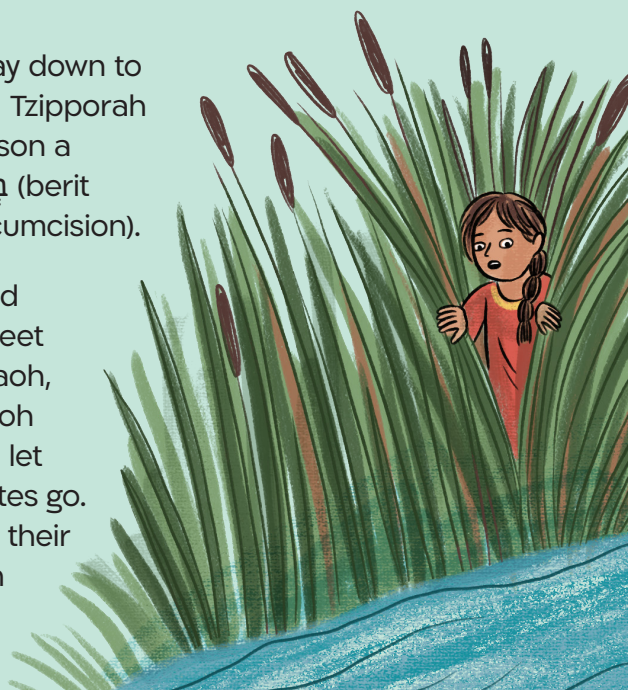
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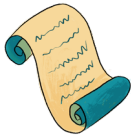


**מה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah**

- ◆ Yosef and his brothers die, but their children's families grow very large.
- ◆ A new Pharaoh comes to power and enslaves בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Benei Yisrael, the Israelites).
- ◆ Pharaoh instructs two midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill Israelite baby boys. They disobey him, and God rewards them. Pharaoh decrees that all Israelite baby boys must be thrown into the river.
- ◆ Yokheved gives birth to a boy and hides him in a basket in the river. His sister, Miriam, stands nearby to see what will happen to him. Pharaoh's daughter finds the baby and adopts him. She names him Moshe.
- ◆ Years later, Moshe sees an Egyptian beating an Israelite. Moshe kills the Egyptian, and flees to Midian.
- ◆ Moshe marries Tzipporah, Yitro's daughter.
- ◆ Moshe is a shepherd. One day, he sees a bush that's on fire but not being consumed. God speaks to Moshe from the flames and tells him to go to Pharaoh and demand that Pharaoh free Benei Yisrael.

- ◆ Moshe tries to turn down the job. God shows him some miracles that can help convince Benei Yisrael, and tells him that Aharon, his brother, will help him.
- ◆ On the way down to Mitzrayim, Tzipporah gives her son a בְּרִית מִילָה (berit milah, circumcision).
- ◆ Moshe and Aharon meet with Pharaoh, but Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go. He makes their work even harder.





## מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

How do you know when you're grown up?

### Yalkut Shimoni #166

"Moshe grew" (Shemot 2:11) –

R. Yehudah says: Don't all children grow?! So why does the Torah have to tell us that Moshe grew?

... What was his growth? That he went out to his brothers.

Great question!



### ילקוט שמעוני קסו

– וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה (שמות ב:יא)

רב יהודה אומר, כל בנים אינן גדלין שהוא אומר ויגדל?!?

... מה היתה גדלתו, שיצא אל אחיו.

It seems like the pasuk is just telling us that Moshe was once a child and then grew up. So what?! R. Yehudah suggests the Torah is telling us something deeper. Moshe didn't just grow physically into an adult, but he also grew ethically as a kind and caring person.

We see this from the next words in the pasuk (Shemot 2:11): "וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אָחָיו וַיֵּרָא בְּסִבְלָתָם" – Moshe grew, **and went out to his brothers and saw their suffering.**"

- ◆ What's a moment you can think of when you've grown like Moshe and become more sensitive to others?
- ◆ In what way is becoming aware of others' pain a kind of growth? How can we create more of that kind of growth in ourselves?



## דִּקְדוּקָה • Grammar

**וַתָּבֹאנָה וַתִּדְלְנָה וַתִּמְלְאנָה** אֶת הַרְהָטִים **va-tavonah va-tidlenah va-temallenah** et ha-rehatim

they came, they drew (water), and they filled the troughs (Shemot 2:15)

Do you notice how all three of the bolded words begin with וַת (va-t) and end in the sound נָה (nah)? These show that a verb (action word) is being done by a group of women.

In English, we just say "they came." But in Hebrew, the word is וַיָּבֹאוּ (va-yavo'u) if it's a group of boys coming, and וַתָּבֹאנָה (va-tavonah) if it's a group of girls coming. In this case, the people we're talking about are the daughters of the priest of Midian, one of whom is Tziporah and becomes Moshe's wife.

Sometimes verbs being done by groups of women are spelled a little differently - without the ה (heh) at the end. **Can you find these three in our parashah?**

וַתְּחַיֶּינָהּ

va-tehayena (they kept alive)

וַתִּירָאָה

va-tire'na (they were afraid)

וַתֹּאמְרָה

va-tomarna (they said)

It's not so often you see a vowel on a final nun. Keep your eyes open for other examples!



## מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

### What was Pharaoh's daughter's name?

The Torah doesn't say! But there is someone called "Bitya, daughter of Pharaoh" mentioned in Divrei ha-Yamim Alef 4:18. Many midrashim assume this is the daughter of Pharaoh who saved Moshe from the Nile, except that her name is often pronounced "Batya" instead of "Bitya."

### Vayikra Rabbah 1:3

R. Yehoshua of Sikhnin said in the name of R. Levi: The Holy Blessed One said to Bitya, daughter of Pharaoh, "Moshe was not your son, but you called him your son. So, you are not My daughter, but I call you My daughter." As it is said, "These are the children of Bitya"—pronounce it Batya (daughter of God).

### ויקרא רבה א:ג

רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ דְּסַכְנִין בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי לְוִי אָמַר לָהּ  
הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְבַתֶּיהָ בֵּת פְּרַעֲוָה, מִשָּׁה לֹא  
הָיָה בְּנָהּ וּקְרָאתוּ בְּנָהּ אֵף אֵת לֹא אֵת בְּתִי וְאֲנִי  
קוֹרָא אוֹתָהּ בְּתִי, שְׁנֹאמַר: "אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי בְּתִיהָ"  
(דְּבַרֵי הַיָּמִים א ד:יח) – בֵּת יְ-הוּ.

God was so impressed with Batya adopting Moshe, that God returned the favor by adopting her!

- ◆ What is this midrash teaching us about how God views adoption? Why do you think God might see it that way?
- ◆ What would it mean for God to "adopt" Batya? What does that say about the relationship God shared with her as a result of her kindness?





## 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) Shemot 1:1 to 1:17
- 2) 1:18 to 2:10
- 3) 2:11 to 2:25
- 4) 3:1 to 3:15
- 5) 3:16 to 4:17
- 6) 4:18 to 4:31
- 7) 5:1 to 6:1

### Haftarah for Ashkenazim:

Yeshayahu 27:6 to 28:13 and 29:22 to 23

### Haftarah for Sefaradim:

Yirmeyahu 1:1 to 2:3

*Good luck!*



1 What were the names of the storehouse cities that Pharaoh forced Benei Yisrael to build?

2 Who gave Moshe his name?

3 What did Moshe do immediately before he killed the Egyptian?

4 What was God's sign that God was really with Moshe on his mission?

5 How did Moshe turn the snake back into a staff?

6 Who kissed whom?

7 Moshe and Aharon ask Pharaoh to let Benei Yisrael journey in the desert for how many days?

8 What word does Pharaoh use three times to insult Benei Yisrael?

9 Who in this parashah is described as God-fearing?

10 **Haftarah for Ashkenazim:** What accessory is God compared to?  
**Haftarah for Sefaradim:** What was Yirmeyahu's first vision?



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Look for the answers on page 8!



# הַפְּטָרָה • Haftarah

## Haftarah for Sefaradim

This Shabbat, Sefaradim read a haftarah that describes God appointing Yirmeyahu as a prophet. It's a good fit for Parashat Shemot, which is about God appointing Moshe as a prophet and a leader.

As you read the parashah and the haftarah, try to find pesukim that show these things happening:

- ◆ God calling
- ◆ Moshe/Yirmeyahu resisting God's call, expressing self-doubt
- ◆ God giving reassurance
- ◆ Why might Moshe and Yirmeyahu have been scared to become leaders? Why might that be a good quality in a leader?

## Haftarah for Ashkenazim

Ashkenazim read a different haftarah, from the prophet Yeshayahu. It opens with the word **הַבָּאִים** (ha-ba'im, those who arrive), and this reminds us of the first pasuk in Parashat Shemot, which contains that same word.

One big theme of Yeshayahu's prophecy is that, in the future, God will again redeem the Jewish people:

### Yeshayahu 27:13

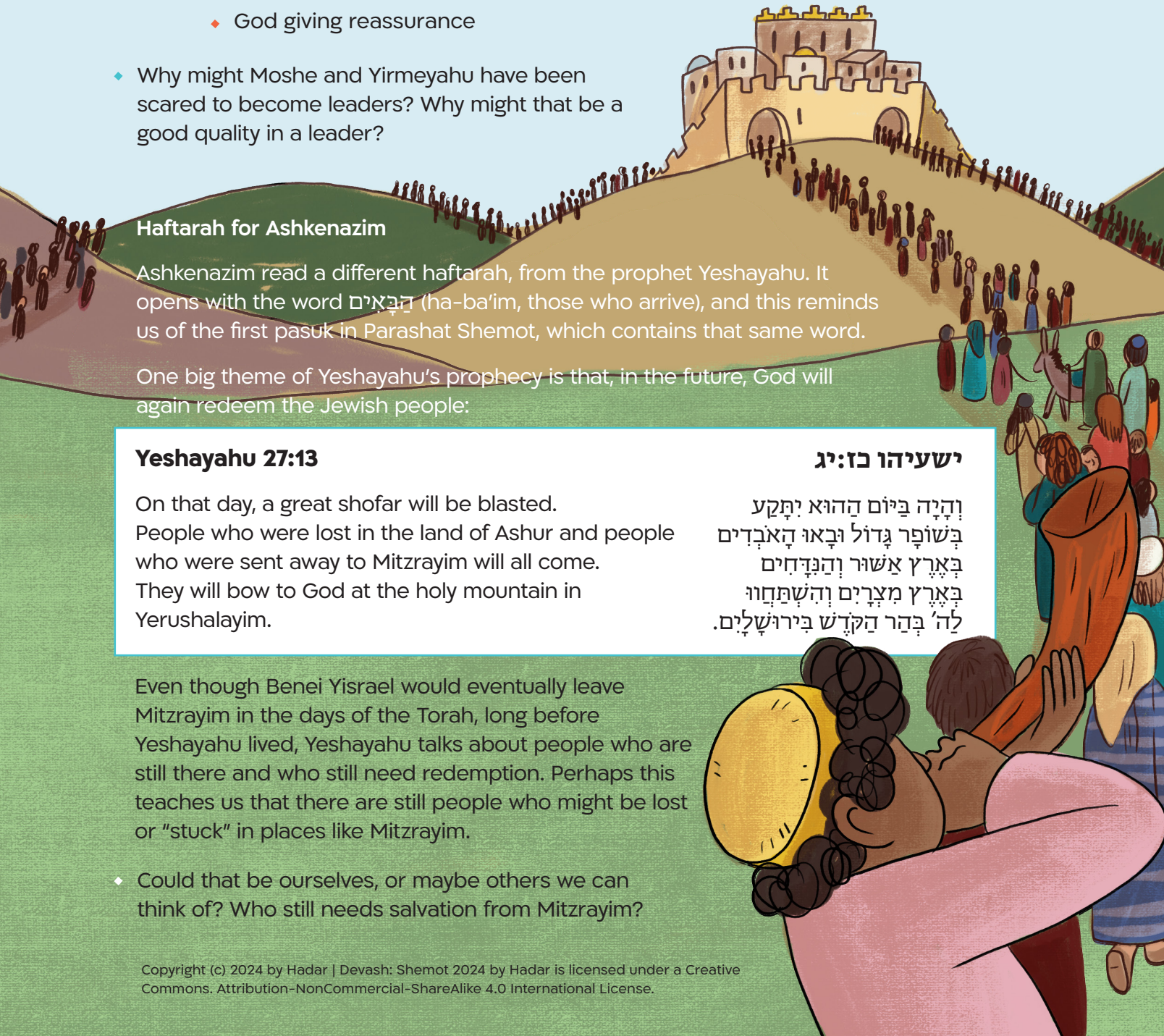
On that day, a great shofar will be blasted. People who were lost in the land of Ashur and people who were sent away to Mitzrayim will all come. They will bow to God at the holy mountain in Yerushalayim.

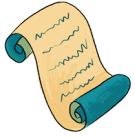
### ישעיהו כז:יג

וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתְקַע  
בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל וּבָאוּ הָאֲבָדִים  
בְּאֶרֶץ אַשּׁוּר וְהַנְּדָחִים  
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ  
לַה' בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

Even though Benei Yisrael would eventually leave Mitzrayim in the days of the Torah, long before Yeshayahu lived, Yeshayahu talks about people who are still there and who still need redemption. Perhaps this teaches us that there are still people who might be lost or "stuck" in places like Mitzrayim.

- ◆ Could that be ourselves, or maybe others we can think of? Who still needs salvation from Mitzrayim?





# מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Moshe is commanded to tell Benei Yisrael that God chose him to lead them out of slavery. But Moshe worries: "They will not believe me" (Shemot 4:1).

Reish Lakish says that Moshe accused Benei Yisrael of something before even giving them a chance. That's called חוֹשֵׁד בְּכַשְׁרִים (hoshed b'khesheirim), which means suspecting innocent people of doing something wrong.

According to Reish Lakish, a person who unfairly blames others of doing something wrong usually ends up doing the very same thing! He explains that this is what happens to Moshe.

**1** תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף צז עמוד א  
אמר לו: הוּ מְאֲמִינִים בְּנֵי מְאֲמִינִים, וְאַתָּה  
אֵין סוֹפֵךְ לְהֶאֱמִין.

**Talmud Bavli  
Shabbat 97a**

God said to Moshe:  
"In fact, they are  
believers, the  
children of believers.  
But you will eventually  
not believe."

**2** הוּ מְאֲמִינִים — דְּכָתִיב: "וַיֵּאֱמָן הָעָם" (שמות ד:לא).  
They are believers — as it is written: "The people believed" (Shemot 4:31).

**3** בְּנֵי מְאֲמִינִים — "וְהֶאֱמִין בֵּה" (בראשית טו:ו).  
The children  
of believers —  
"And he (Avraham)  
believed in God"  
(Bereishit 15:6).

**4** אַתָּה אֵין סוֹפֵךְ לְהֶאֱמִין — שְׁנֵאֲמַר:  
"יֵעָן לֹא הֶאֱמַנְתָּם בִּי" (במדבר כ"ב).  
But you will  
eventually not  
believe — as it  
says: "Because  
you did not  
believe in Me"  
(Bemidbar 20:12).

In this midrash, God quotes three pesukim to Moshe which prove to him that (1) Benei Yisrael actually do end up believing that God would save them from slavery, (2) they have a long tradition of faith that began with their ancestor Avraham, and (3) that, later on, Moshe is the one who would not show faith.



- ◆ Have you ever wrongly suspected someone before knowing if it was true? Has anyone ever wrongly suspected you? How did that feel? Why do you think people do that so often?
- ◆ What can you do to make sure that you don't suspect innocent people?
- ◆ What could it mean for Benei Yisrael to be "believers, the children of believers"? How does it feel to have faith run in your family?



## דְּבַשׁ שֶׁל דִּיּוּ • One-Minute Debate

**Debate: You're innocent until proven guilty.**



### 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!

- ◆ You have to give everyone the benefit of the doubt.
- ◆ It's really stressful to be accused of something you didn't do.
- ◆ If you don't need to prove someone's guilt, then a lot of innocent people will be punished for no reason.
- ◆ Moshe assumed Benei Yisrael were guilty of lacking faith – and he didn't even give them a chance. And then when he told them God was going to save them, they actually did have faith!



### Disagree!

- ◆ Not being able to prove something doesn't mean it's not true. Sometimes you know the truth even if you can't prove it.
- ◆ Sometimes you don't have enough proof, and that allows bad people to get away!
- ◆ Why shouldn't you be guilty until proven innocent? If you can't prove your innocence, then maybe you're not as squeaky clean as you claim to be!



After Pharaoh made the evil decree that all baby boys must be thrown into the Nile, adults in Benei Yisrael were left with a horrible choice: Should they risk having children, knowing that a boy may be born and then killed by Pharaoh?

A midrash teaches that, because of Pharaoh's decree, Amram and Yokheved decided to stop having children together. Amram was a leader, and he encouraged others in Benei Yisrael to do the same. Then Amram's daughter, Miriam, argued with him.

### Talmud Bavli Sotah 12a

His daughter said to him: Father, your decree is more harsh than Pharaoh's. Pharaoh only made a decree about baby boys, but you are decreeing that neither boys nor girls will be born. Pharaoh's decree only affects this world, but your decree affects this world and Olam Ha-Ba (the World to Come).

### תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוטה דף יב עמוד א

אמרה לו בתו: אבא, קשה גזירתך יותר משל פרעה. שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ואתה גזרת על הזכרים ועל הנקיבות. פרעה לא גזר אלא בעולם הזה, ואתה בעולם הזה ולעולם הבא.

Miriam points out that Amram's position has the potential to lead to a terrible outcome: the end of the Jewish people! This is what she means when she says that he is also affecting Olam Ha-Ba.

According to this midrash, Miriam's argument is successful. Thanks to her, Amram and Yokheved have one more baby - Moshe!

- What's courageous about having a child when times are hard? What can children represent?
- What was Miriam able to teach her father?
- Is it surprising that the child in this midrash is wiser than the parent? What perspectives or pieces of wisdom do children have today that adults could learn from? What insights do you have that you can share with the adults in your life?

### Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Pitom and Ra'amses (Shemot 1:11)
2. Pharaoh's daughter (2:10)
3. He looked this way and that way and saw no one there (2:12)
4. When Benei Yisrael leave Mitzrayim, they will eventually worship God on the very mountain where God and Moshe were speaking (3:12)
5. He grabbed its tail (4:4)
6. Aharon kissed Moshe (4:27)
7. Three (5:3)
8. חַלְשֵׁי וְרַמְסֵי—weak and lazy (5:8, 5:17)
9. The midwives (1:21)
10. Haftarah for Ashkenazim: A crown (Yeshayahu 28:5)  
Haftarah for Sefaradim: The branch of an almond tree (Yirmeyahu 1:11)

