



December 25 - 31, 2022 א' - ז' טבת תשפ"ג



קַה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ◆ Yehudah begs Yosef to release Binyamin, and offers himself as a slave instead.
- ◆ Yosef can no longer bear to keep his identity secret. He orders all of the Egyptians out of the room and reveals his true identity to his brothers.
- ◆ Yosef tells his brothers to go home, get their father, and come back to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt).
- ◆ God tells Yaakov not to be afraid of going to Mitzrayim, and that his descendants will return to אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel) one day.
- ◆ Pharaoh meets Yosef's brothers and Yaakov. He gives them permission to settle in the land of Goshen.
- ◆ The famine in Mitzrayim worsens. The Egyptians use all of their money, animals, and land to buy food from Yosef.
- ◆ Yaakov's family prospers in Goshen.





פֶּשֶׁט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

In order for Yaakov to be reunited with Yosef after finally learning that he is still alive, Yaakov has to move to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt). Along the journey, God appears to Yaakov in a vision and says:

Before or after Shabbat,
scan to listen to a
discussion of these pesukim!
The Varigash episode of
TORAH TIME
will be live on
December 26, 2022.



Bereishit 46:3-4

I am God, the God of your father.
Do not be afraid to go down to Mitzrayim,
for I will make you into a great nation there.

I will go down with you to Mitzrayim,
and I will also bring you back;
and Yosef shall place his hand upon your eyes."

בראשית מו:ג-ד

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי הֵא-ל אֱלֹקֵי אָבִי
אֶל תִּירָא מִרָדָה מִצְרַיִמָּה כִּי לְגוֹי גָדוֹל
אֲשִׁימָה שָׁם:

אֲנֹכִי אֵרֵד עִמָּךְ מִצְרַיִמָּה
וְאֲנֹכִי אֶעֱלֶךָ גַּם עֹלָה
וַיֹּסֶף יָשִׁית יָדוֹ עַל עֵינָיו:

- What do you notice? What stands out to you?
- Next week, we'll read about Yaakov's death (Bereishit 49:33). It takes place in Mitzrayim. What, then, is the meaning of God's promise here?
- What was Yaakov feeling about going down to Mitzrayim just before these pesukim? Why do you think he was feeling this way?
- What three promises does God make to help him feel different? For each one, what is the meaning of that promise and why is that important to Yaakov?
- Notice where God is going to be during the remainder of Yaakov's journey. What do you learn from that?





Bereishit 45:27

The brothers told Yaakov all of Yosef's words that he had said. Yaakov saw the agalot (wagons) that Yosef had sent to carry him, and Yaakov's spirit was revived.

בראשית מה:כז

וַיַּדְבֵּרוּ אֵלָיו אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵהֶם
וַיֵּרָא אֶת הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף
לְשֹׂאת אֹתוֹ
וַתְּחִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם:

The agalot (wagons) in this pasuk are an unusual detail! Why would agalot revive Yaakov's spirit?



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

Bereishit Rabbah

R. Levi said in the name of R. Yohanan bar Shaul:

Yosef had told his brothers: If our father believes you (that I'm alive and ruling Egypt), that's great. But if he doesn't believe you, remind him that the last thing he and I learned together before I left him was the mitzvah of eglah arufah!

That's why the pasuk says: "Yaakov saw the agalot...and his spirit was revived."

בראשית רבה צד

רַבִּי לֵוִי בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בַּר שָׁאוּל: אָמַר לָהֶם אִם יֵאֱמִין לָכֶם הֲרִי מוֹטֵב, וְאִם לֹא אַתֶּם אוֹמְרִים לוֹ בְּשַׁעַה שֶׁפָּרַשְׁתִּי מִמֶּךָ לֹא בִּפְרָשְׁתָּ עֲגָלָה עֲרוּפָה הֵייתִי עוֹסֵק?!

הֵדָא הוּא דְכְּתִיב: "וַיֵּרָא אֶת הָעֲגָלוֹת... וַתְּחִי רוּחוֹ."



Do you see what the midrash is doing here? It's a play on words! The word "agalah" (wagon) sounds a lot like "eglah." According to the midrash, what actually revived Yaakov's spirit was the reminder of eglah arufah.



Eglah arufah is a mitzvah that appears in Sefer Devarim (21:1-9). It's a ritual for when someone is mysteriously killed in the middle of nowhere. The leaders of the nearby community have to make a kind of sacrifice out of an עֵגְלָה (eglah, calf) to remind people that we must take responsibility for each other and that no one should be left unprotected.



- ♦ Why would it be powerful for Yosef to remind Yaakov that he still remembered a lesson from when they learned Torah together so many years earlier?
- ♦ Why might it be relevant that this lesson was about leaders assuming responsibility? Is there a connection to this story that goes beyond eglah sounding like agalah?
- ♦ Can you think of a special lesson that you have learned with a parent or a teacher? Does that lesson represent a goal or a value that you share?



פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

Bereishit 46:29

Yosef ordered his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father Yisrael;
He presented himself to him, and he fell upon his neck, and he cried on his neck a lot.

בראשית מו:כט

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף מְרַבְּבוֹתוֹ
וַיַּעַל לְקִרְיַת יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו גִּשְׁנָה
וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו וַיִּפֹּל עַל צַוְאָרָיו
וַיִּבֶקֶעַ עַל צַוְאָרָיו עוֹד:

Our פְּרָשְׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) notice that the Torah seems to say that one person—not both—fell upon the other's neck and cried. The question is: **Who fell on whose neck and cried, and why wasn't the other one crying as well?**

Ramban thinks Yaakov did the crying. He makes his point with a question (called a rhetorical question).



Ramban (Spain, 800 years ago)

Who is more likely to cry—an old father who finally finds his son alive after having given up on him and mourning for him, or the young son who is now a kind of king?

רמב"ן

מי דמעתו מצויה, אם האב
הזקן המוצא את בנו חי
לאחר היאוש והאבל, או
הבן הבחור המולך?

- ♦ What evidence can you think of for Ramban?
- ♦ Why do you think Ramban believes a king or another ruler like that would be less likely to cry?

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

He (Yosef) wept greatly and continuously, more than is usual. But Yaakov didn't fall on Yosef's neck or kiss him. Our Rabbis say this is because he was busy reciting Shema.

רש"י

הרבה והוסיף בבכי יותר על הרגיל.
אבל יעקב לא נפל על צווארי יוסף
ולא נשקו. ואמרו רבותינו: שֶׁהָיָה
קוֹרֵא אֶת שְׁמַע.

- ♦ Can you find evidence for Rashi in the first half of the pasuk? Can you think of other evidence from the story? (Check out question nine in the Parashah Scavenger Hunt!)
- ♦ Why do you think Yaakov was saying Shema right at that moment? What could this teach us about the Shema?
- ♦ Rashi and Ramban make such good arguments! Why might the Torah describe this important moment in a way that allows for these different possibilities? What do we learn by being encouraged to see it from both perspectives?





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 44:18 to 44:30
- 2) 44:31 to 45:7
- 3) 45:8 to 45:18
- 4) 45:19 to 45:27
- 5) 45:28 to 46:27
- 6) 46:28 to 47:10
- 7) 47:11 to 47:31

haftarah:

Yehezkel 37:15 to 37:28

Good luck!

1 What are two different ways that Yehudah describes the relationship between Yaakov and Binyamin?

2 What do the Egyptians overhear when Yosef reveals his identity to his brothers?

3 What does Pharaoh think about Yosef's brothers showing up?

4 How does Yaakov first react when he is told that Yosef is alive?



5 Who is Asher's daughter?

7 After they ran out of money, how did the Egyptians pay Yosef for grain?

6 Whom does Yaakov bless?



8 How long had the famine been going on when Yosef revealed himself to his brothers?

9 How many times in the parashah does it say that Yosef cried?

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your school, check out PoP! hadar.org/pop

10 **From the Haftarah:**
What do the two sticks
represent?

*
Look for
the answers
on page 11!



דְּבָרָה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Debate: Family reunions are fun!

Our parashah features some really dramatic moments of family reunion: Yosef with his brothers (Bereishit 45:3-15), and Yosef with his father Yaakov (Bereishit 46:29-30).

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!

Agree



- ◆ It's so cool to get to know more about people who are related to you. You learn more about yourself when you are better connected to your family.
- ◆ Everyone has fond memories of things they did with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, second cousins, etc. Reunions are great for reminiscing, and creating new memories too.

Maybe both?

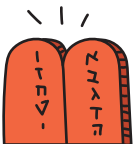


Disagree!

Disagree



- ◆ It can be hard to figure out what to talk about with people who you haven't seen in a long time.
- ◆ Just because you're related to someone doesn't mean you necessarily share values or interests.
- ◆ If there's a history of conflict, like in Yosef's family, reunions can get very awkward!



הִלָּכָה • Halakhah

learn one way the parashah



Practically impacts our lives



At first, Yosef spoke to his brothers in Egyptian with a translator (Bereishit 42:23). Rashi (drawing on a midrash), says that once Yosef switched to speaking לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ (leshon ha-kodesh, the holy language, aka Hebrew), his brothers believed that he was who he said he was (comment on Bereishit 45:12).

For Yosef, speaking Hebrew did the trick!

In our lives, it's exciting to learn to understand and speak Hebrew. But did you ever think of learning Hebrew as a mitzvah?

A tosefta (Hagigah 1) teaches that as soon as a child learns how to speak, their parents should teach them the Shema, and some Torah, and Hebrew language.

A mishnah in Pirkei Avot (2:1) says that we should give equal treatment to מצוות קלות (mitzvot kalot, "light" mitzvot) and מצוות חמורות (mitzvot hamurot, "serious" mitzvot). Rambam says that learning Hebrew is an example of one of these mitzvah categories. Can you predict which?

Rambam's Commentary on the Mishnah

The mishnah says that we need to be careful with mitzvot that are thought of as light - like rejoicing on a holiday, and studying Hebrew - just as we are careful with mitzvot whose seriousness is more obvious - like berit milah (circumcision) and tzitzit and the Pesah sacrifice.

פרוש המשניות לרמב"ם

אמר שצריך לזהר במצוה
שיחשב בה שהיא קלה -
בשמחת הרגל ולמדת לשון
הקדש, במצוה שהתבאר לה
חמורה שהיא גדולה - במילה
וציצית ושחיטת הפסח.



רִמֵּעַ שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Bereishit 45:6

It is now two years that there has been famine in the land, and there are still five years to come in which there shall be no plowing or **harvesting**.

בראשית מה:ו

בִּי זֶה שְׁנָתַיִם הָרָעָב בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ וְעוֹד
חֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין חֲרִישׁ וְקָצִיר:

לקצר (שָׁרֵשׁ ק.צ.ר.)

◆ To harvest
(liktzor)

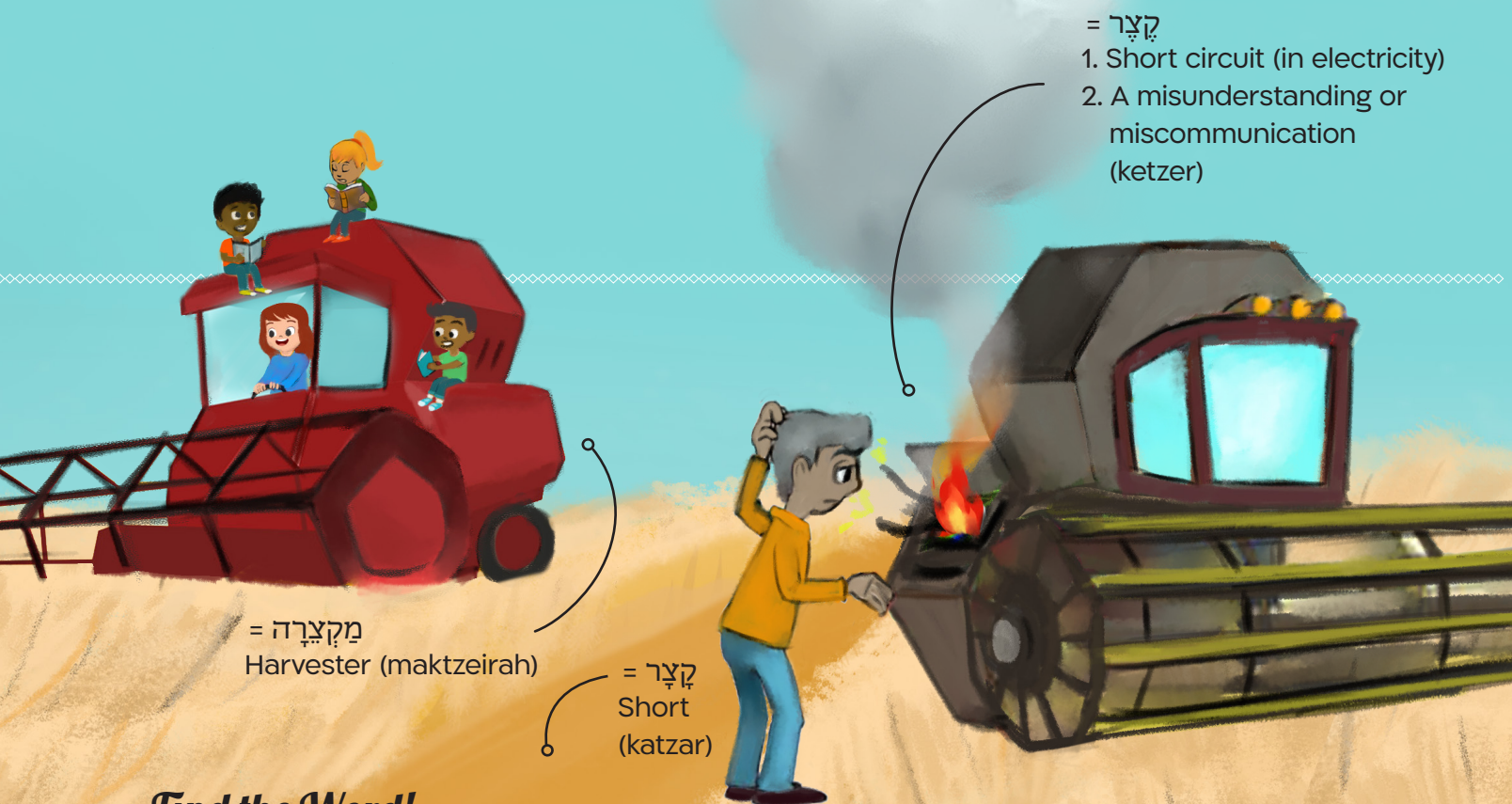
קצור דרך
(kitzur derekh)



קצר נשימה =
Shortness of breath
(kotzer neshimah)



- ◆ Are you surprised to think of learning Hebrew as a mitzvah kallah? Why or why not?
- ◆ In Rambam, "light" might connect to the mitzvah's reward, or the amount of effort the mitzvah takes, or the monetary cost of doing the mitzvah—or something else! How do you understand "light" here?
- ◆ When you learn Hebrew, you can become better at noticing and understanding things in the Torah. Can you think of other reasons that learning Hebrew is important enough to be called a mitzvah?
- ◆ Remember to check out Devash's **נֶגַע שֶׁל עֵבְרִית / A Moment of Hebrew**—it just might be a mitzvah!



Find the Word!

- ◆ Where in the Torah is Shavuot named **חַג הַקִּיצִיר** (Hag Ha-Katzir, the harvest holiday)? Look at Shemot 23 and see if you can find it!
- ◆ When Moshe tells Benei Yisrael that God will take them out of Egypt, they didn't listen to him because they were short on patience from all their hard work. The Hebrew phrase used to describe this shares our **שֹׁרֶשׁ** (shoresh, root). Can you find it in Shemot 6:9?



בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

A pronoun is a word that replaces a noun (a person, place, or thing). In English, some of the most common pronouns are: they, it, she, he, I, you.

Hebrew uses pronouns too, and sometimes pronouns in the Torah can get a little confusing. For example, in our פִּרְשָׁנוֹת / Commentary section (p. 4), we wondered about the phrase עָלָיו צָוָאֲרִיו (he cried on his neck): Who is "he" and who is "his"? There was more than one way to understand who's who.

Here's another example of an ambiguous pronoun:

Shemot 34:6

God passed before his (Moshe's) face.
He called, "Lord! Lord! God of mercy and compassion, slow to anger and full of love and truth..."

שמות לד:ו

וַיַּעֲבֵר ה' עַל פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא: ה' ה' אֱ-לֹ-
רַחוּם וְחַנוּן אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב-חֶסֶד
וְאֱמֶת:

Who's doing the calling, God or Moshe? It's unclear!

What to do with an unclear pronoun

Try to look for evidence inside your pasuk, or in pesukim nearby. Ask:

- ♦ Who's the person or thing we were just talking about?
- ♦ What are the options and which makes most sense in the bigger context of the story?
- ♦ How might the story change depending on which explanation is used?



תפלה • Prayer in the Parashah

The Torah uses the word וַיִּגַּשׁ (vayigash, he approached) to describe Yehudah coming towards Yosef. What feelings was Yehudah experiencing and expressing when he made this approach? A midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 93) records a few opinions, based on other places that "vayigash" comes up in Tanakh.

R. NEHEMIAH

R. YEHUDAH



Yehudah approached for war, just like Yoav the general who was also described with the word "vayigash" (Shmuel Bet 10:13).

He approached to make peace, like when the people approached Yehoshua to smooth things over, and the word "vayigshu" (plural of "vayigash") is used (Yehoshua 14:6).



THE SAGES



It was an approach in prayer (asking for something), like when Eliyahu approached God to pray, also with the word "vayigash" (Melakhim Alef 18:36).

It's very important to realize that tefillah is about approaching God, which means both that we get to come close to God, and that the tefillah experience might be different based on the person who is approaching.

Like these different opinions in the midrash, when we come to pray we might be feeling any of these things at different times.

Maybe we are feeling determined and ready to take courageous action about something;

maybe we are looking to make up and say we are sorry;

or maybe we need to ask for something.

- ♦ What could it mean to "approach" God (especially if God does not have a body)? Is it possible for people to be "close" without being physically next to each other? How can they do that? What about tefillah is like being close to someone?
- ♦ Can you think of a time that you've approached another person, or approached God, in each of the three attitudes listed in the midrash above?
- ♦ In tefillah, which stance feels most natural to you? Which would take some practice? Are there different times, or different tefillot, when you're more likely to feel one more than the other?

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Yehudah says that Yaakov loves Binyamin (44:20), and that their souls are tied together (44:30)
2. Yosef crying (45:2)
3. He thinks it's good (45:16)
4. He does not believe it (see Midrash p. 3 for an explanation of what makes Yaakov believe) (45:26)
5. Serah (46:17)
6. Pharaoh (47:10)
7. With their animals (47:17)
8. Two years (45:6)
9. Four times: when he first revealed himself (45:2), while embracing Binyamin (45:14), while embracing his brothers (45:15), and when reuniting with his father (46:29) – though in this last one it's not obvious who is doing the crying, see פְּרָשְׁנוֹת / Commentary, p. 4
10. The two kingdoms, Yehudah and the rest of Yisrael (led by Efrayim, who is Yosef's son), joining together to become one unified kingdom (Yehezkel 37:16-19)





בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

In our פְּרָשְׁנוֹת / Commentary section (p. 4) we saw a midrash (quoted by Rashi) about Yaakov being busy saying the Shema prayer at the time of his reunion with Yosef. **But why didn't he just stop saying Shema for a moment to reunite with the son he had not seen in so long?**

One answer could be that he didn't have a choice:

- ♦ There's an obligation to say Shema twice a day, once in the morning and once at night. This is based on the words וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ (uveshokh'bekha uvekumekha, when you lie down and when you get up; Devarim 6:7). And when the morning or night is over, that's it—you lose your chance to fulfill the mitzvah of saying it then. So, it could be that Yaakov had to say Shema before time ran out!
- ♦ Also, we're really not supposed to interrupt Shema while we're saying it (Talmud Bavli Yoma 19b).

The Sefat Emet has a different answer. He believes that Yaakov was just as overcome with emotion as Yosef was. He had never been happier! And what would have been the best way to express that joy and love, thank God for that miracle, and bring God into that special moment? Saying Shema, which is all about loving God.

According to the Sefat Emet, it wasn't that Yaakov had to say Shema instead of greeting Yosef. Just the opposite—he chose to say Shema as a way to make that moment even more special.

