



CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR

Shabbos Table

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

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DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

THE UNUSUAL SHADCHAN

Rus married Boaz. How did she land such a great shidduch shortly after moving to town? Why would Boaz, the gadol hador, marry a girl of dubious roots?

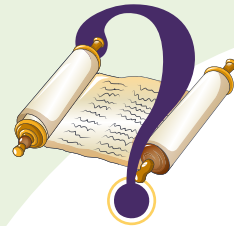
Working to protect Jewish graves is not an easy job. Rabbi Dovid Shmidel, a Jew from Eretz Yisrael who rescues graves around the world, tells about a time when the Russian authorities destroyed an entire Jewish cemetery in the city of Grodno and dumped all the remains in a warehouse.

Rabbi Shmidel pushed buttons, pulled strings, and twisted some arms until he received permission from the Russians to rebury the bones in a Jewish cemetery. He sent a man named Akiva to Grodno to arrange for the remains to find a resting place.

“When you get them, make every effort to rebury the bones before sunset, to fulfill *“Kavor tikberenu bayom hahu—You shall bury them on that day,”* Rabbi Shmidel told Akiva.

Akiva arrived at the officials’ office early in the day, with plenty of time before sunset. But the Russians hassled

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SHAVUOS RIDDLES

Answers to this week’s riddles will appear in next week’s issue.

- 1 There is a *machlokes* in the Gemara regarding which day of the month of Sivan the Torah was given, but all agree on the number day from the beginning of *sefirah* on which it was given. Which day is it?
- 2 In the days of *Chazal*, Shavuos sometimes fell on the fifth, sixth, or seventh day of the month of Sivan. How is this possible?
- 3 Why are there two days of Shavuos outside Eretz Yisrael? Can’t we just count 50 days from the second day of Pesach?
- 4 How old was Boaz when he married Rus? How much longer did he live afterward?
- 5 Dovid Hamelech’s *yahrtzeit* is on Shavuos. On which day of the week did he pass away? What halachos do we learn from the incidents surrounding his passing?
- 6 There are 88 *pesukim* in *Megillas Rus*. The name of one central figure in the story of Rus has a *gematria* of 88. Who is it? There is another hint to his name in the *pesukim* count in *Rus*. What is it? (Hint: look at the first letter of most *pesukim*.)





CHOLENT STORY

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

Recap: Naftali Katz, an orphan growing up in medieval Prague, playfully launched a stone at the procession of the Kaiser through the Jewish Quarter.



Naftali watched with growing horror as the stone described a perfect arc from his slingshot, heading straight for the royal wagon. The rock plummeted toward the crown prince, who was seated between the Kaiser and the queen, and struck the boy's forehead with a sickening thud.

The prince screamed as blood spurted into his eyes. The Kaiser jumped, the queen shrieked, the music stopped, the parade halted, and everyone began running about in pandemonium, trampling the carefully laid roses and stampeding the band. The royal guards quickly marched through the screaming crowd, shouting, "Where is he? Where's the murderer? Who tried to kill the crown prince?!"

Naftali had wanted to cause a commotion, but not this type of commotion. Now he was in serious trouble. He quickly slithered down from the tree and tried to get lost in the chaos.

But not quickly enough. He was spotted by two members of the community, who grabbed him and hauled him off to the guards. There was serious risk to everyone's life if the shooter was not apprehended; the Kaiser could easily spark a pogrom or worse. No one helped Naftali.

The day that had been so carefully planned, with so much hope for a brighter future for the Jewish community, was in shambles.

Naftali was quickly cuffed, bound, and gagged and tossed in the back of a police wagon. The crown prince was rushed to a nearby hospital, and the Kaiser gave severe orders. "Deal with the perpetrator most severely!" he commanded. "A lesson must be taught to this community! I am heading back to the palace, and I will never set foot in this wretched ghetto again!"

Within two days, Naftali was hauled before the magistrate, trembling and alone. He was a poor, wretched boy who had brought great danger to the entire Jewish community. He had no father, and his mother was stuck at home tending to her other children. She cried for *askanim* to help her son, but no one wanted to associate with him.

The verdict was swift; the Kaiser wanted justice. The judge glowered menacingly at the quivering nine-year-old as he prepared to deliver his verdict.

TO BE CONTINUED...

LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI

Three different angles on a *dvar Torah*, one each from Litvish, Chassidic, and Sephardic sources. Can be split between the three *seudos*.

יְשִׁלֵּם ה', פְּעֻלָּךְ וְתִהי מְשֻׁכָּרְתְךָ שְׂלֵמָה מְעֵם ה', אֶלְקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בָּאת לְחַסוֹת תַּחַת כְּנָפָיו

[Boaz tells Rus,] "May Hashem, G-d of Israel, reward you for your good deeds, that you came to shelter under His wings (i.e., converted to *Yiddishkeit*)" (*Rus* 2:12).

The Midrash comments: "The reason you will get rewarded is because you came to shelter under His wings" (*Rus Rabbah* 5:4).

What is the Midrash adding?



Boaz was blessing Rus with reward in *this* world. *Chazal* say there is usually no reward for mitzvos in this world. The Rashba explains that that is because every mitzvah we do bears testimony to Hashem's dominion, and if a witness gets paid to testify, his testimony is void. But there is an exception. In *Hilchos Eidus*, the Rema rules that if someone is paid to go find out about an event and testify about it, that is valid. So Rus could get rewarded even in this world for becoming a *giyores* since that reward was like getting paid for going to find out about Hashem's dominion and then testifying about it (by doing mitzvos).



Boaz was blessing Rus with reward like a Yid receives. Hashem plants every mitzvah that a Yid does in a level of *shamayim* called *Aravos*. The mitzvah grows fruit, which he can enjoy even in this world, while the mitzvah itself waits for him in the next world. But non-Jews don't get any fruit in this world, they only enjoy the mitzvah which waits for them after they pass. So Boaz blessed Rus with the fruit of her mitzvah...because she converted.



Boaz was blessing Rus with reward like a *born* Jew. The souls of Yisrael reside, *kavyachol*, on the wings of the *Shechinah*, while the souls of non-Jews and *geirim* reside under the wings. Boaz promised Rus that her reward would be from "Hashem, G-d of Israel"—even though she was a *giyores*, she would reside *on* the wings of the *Shechinah*.

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.

SHAVUOS IN THE CYCLE OF MOADIM



Shavuos is the second of the *shalosh regalim*. On Pesach, we were given a free gift from Hashem and were drawn close to Him although we may not have deserved it, as *Klal Yisrael* left Mitzrayim on the 50th level of *tumah*. After 50 days of *sefirah* in which we worked our way upward, level by level, we arrived at Shavuos,

ready for the Torah and its laws, ready to *earn* our way, ready to proudly accept accountability for our actions.

Unfortunately, it doesn't last. *Klal Yisrael* fled from Har Sinai and quickly floundered in the dry, hot desert.

We are entering the dry, hot summer, which includes a morass of historically terrible times—Tammuz and Av, with their history of and potential for miseries.

Too much spiritual decline occurs over the summer. School is out, the *zman* is over, and the *yetzer hara* is on a parade. Now is the time to plan for our spiritual health during the dangerous time ahead so we can come to Rosh Hashanah—our next *chag*—on a higher level than we were on last year.

AVODAH FOR THIS WEEK:



Put some thought into identifying an area of *avodas Hashem* that was disappointing last summer.

Devise a solid strategy to make it a tiny bit better this time around.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES:

1. There is a common theme in Rashi's first comment in each of the five Chumashim. What is it? **Each Rashi speaks about Hashem's love for the Jewish people.**
2. After the first *Shevet's* numbers are told, the Torah uses the same format to list the numbers of all the remaining *Shevatim*. There is one difference in one letter introducing one *Shevet*. What is it? **The account of each *Shevet* starts with "V'nei" except Naftali, for which the lamed is missing.** Why the change? **Naftali was counted last. They weren't counted and sent home like everyone else since they were the only ones left!** Where in *Nach* is there a list that features the same letter missing from one of the entries on the list? **Koheles, chap. 3. The pasuk lists different types of times, and all begin with "eis l" except for "eis rekod" and "eis sfod."**
3. Who were the middle *Shevatim* for each *degel*? **Yissachar, Shimon, Menashe, Asher.** What are the names of their *Nesi'im*? **Nesanel, Shlumiel, Gamliel, Pagiel.** What about those four names is different from the names of all the other *Nesi'im*? **These are the only ones whose names end with the Name of Hashem.**

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 OF THE FIRST DAY OF SHAVUOS

SUMMARY:

The *navi* Yechezkel describes a vision of the *Shechinah* itself in a “Divine Chariot.”

Eleven years before the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash, thousands of *talmidei chachamim*, including Yechezkel, were exiled to Bavel. They were crushed and despairing and felt terribly alone and abandoned. The *Zohar* (2:2) explains that Yechezkel’s *nevuah* was sent to comfort them. In it, Yechezkel hears the *Shechinah* declare to the *malachei elyon* that He will not be distant from the Jews that were sent away from the rest of *Klal Yisrael*, and Yechezkel “sees” the *Merkavah*, the Divine Chariot, traveling to Bavel to accompany the *talmidei chachamim*.

Yechezkel’s vision is so deeply mystical, so transcendent, that it is forbidden to analyze it too deeply. It forms the basis for parts of our daily *tefillah* in which we describe the praise of the *malachim*.

CONNECTION TO SHAVUOS:

At Har Sinai, the Jewish people experienced the clearest revelation of the *Shechinah* possible. In the haftorah, Yechezkel describes the vision of the *Shechinah* in astounding detail.

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES:

We have been separated from each other by the coronavirus. Distance is all that surrounds us. The haftorah, according to the *Zohar*, relates that when the group of Jews was separated from the rest of the nation, Hashem went with them to comfort and accompany them. Today, as then, we are not alone. Hashem is with us in this isolation as well.



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him, and by the time he received permission to collect the remains, it was getting late. He hired a local non-Jew with a truck to transport the remains to the nearest Jewish cemetery and rebury them before sunset. But when they arrived at the cemetery, the fellow refused.

“There’s too much work,” he insisted. “It would take fifty men to bury all this before sunset!”

Akiva realized that the man was right. He closed his eyes and turned heavenward, asking Hashem to take over. “I’ve done all I could,” he said.

While his eyes were still closed in prayer, he felt a tap on his shoulder. There stood a young *yeshivah bachur*.

“Excuse me,” he began, “where can we find the *kever* of—”

“Who’s ‘we’?” Akiva interrupted.

The young man pointed to a bus behind him. It was filled with 50 *bachurim*.

Akiva boarded the bus and told them the story.

“I’m not telling you what to do,” he said. “But this is what’s going on.”

In a flash, the *bachurim* piled off the bus and rolled up their sleeves. All the remains were reburied before sunset.

On the flight back to Eretz Yisrael, Akiva turned to Hashem again. “Thank you for allowing me to do this mitzvah. But please, do something for my two daughters! They are thirty-five and thirty years old and waiting for the phone to ring!”

Within two months, both young women were engaged. Akiva hurried to tell his *rebbe* about the miracle.

“Not surprising,” the *rebbe* said. “Naomi plainly told Rus, ‘Hashem will do kindness for you, as you have done for the dead... You will find peace in the home of your husband!’ What does the *bracha* to find a husband have to do with the mitzvah of helping the dead? When you help others come to the place they belong, Hashem brings you and your family to their proper place.”



HALACHAH



In honor of Shavuos, here are some halachos that are important to know when staying up all night.



EATING BEFORE DAVENING

The Torah says, “Do not eat on the blood” (*Vayikra* 19:16). The Gemara (*Brachos* 10b) explains that it is dangerous and rude to eat before *davening* to Hashem. When is “before *davening*,” i.e., when does the prohibition begin? From a half hour before *alos hashachar* (dawn), one may not begin to eat. From *alos hashachar* itself, he may not eat at all, even if he started a while before. The *Zohar* says that one who slept until after *chatzos* (midnight) may not eat during the rest of the night, but he may drink. Although the Magen Avraham quotes the *Zohar*, this does not seem to be the *minhag*.

LEARNING ALONE

Most people will not be able to go to shul to learn this year. The Gemara (*Taanis* 7a) says that one should learn with a *chavrusa*, not alone, and the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* brings this as halachah. Many *gedolim*, such as the Chazon Ish, Rav Elyashiv, and the Steipler, learned alone and explained that it is okay to learn alone when there are many *sefarim* explaining the topic one is learning. Rav Chaim Kanievsky has told people that “the *shtender* can be your *chavrusa*.” It is notable that although Rav Elyashiv learned alone, he voiced all his thoughts—everything he was learning—as if speaking with someone. The Yaavetz says that it is OK to learn alone in Eretz Yisrael because *avira machkim*, the Land’s air makes one wise. All agree that it is certainly better to learn alone than to not learn at all.

GOING TO SLEEP IN THE MORNING

Krias Shema al Hamittah and *Hamapil* are only recited before one goes to sleep at night. One who goes to sleep after *alos hashachar* should not say them, and one who sleeps before *alos hashachar* should say them. What about someone who lies down to sleep before *alos hashachar* but will probably not fall asleep until after *alos hashachar*? There is a discussion in the *Biur Halachah* about that, and it remains a *safek*. One may therefore say Shema, but not the *bracha* of *Hamapil*.

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