

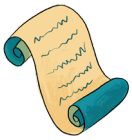
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מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- The earth belongs to God. In the Land of Israel, you might buy land, but it is never fully your property. This idea is expressed in a few different mitzvot:
  - שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release) happens every seven years. During a shemittah year, no one can work the land, and crops become public property. Anyone can come and eat.
  - יוֹבֵל (yovel) is the 50th year, when the rules of shemittah continue to apply as they do in the 49th year, plus all land gets returned to its original owners. A person who was having money trouble might have had to sell their home or farm. During yovel, they get it back.
  - And they don't have to wait for yovel. Their relatives should help them buy back their land as soon as possible in a process called גְּאוּלָּה (geulah, redemption). The person who bought or seized their land must be prepared to sell it back for a fair price.
- There is a mitzvah not to overcharge for a sale. If someone is in debt to you, treat them with compassion.





מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Vayikra 25:35

If your family member becomes poor, and their hand becomes shaky with you—**you must strengthen them** even if they are a stranger or a resident, and let them live by your side.

ויקרא כה:לה

וְכִי יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ
וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ׃

What's the meaning of וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ (ve-he-hezakta bo, you must strengthen them)? How do we do this?

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



Rashi's explanation comes from a midrash.

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Do not let them fall down to the point that it will be hard to pick them up. Instead, strengthen them as soon as they start to be in trouble.

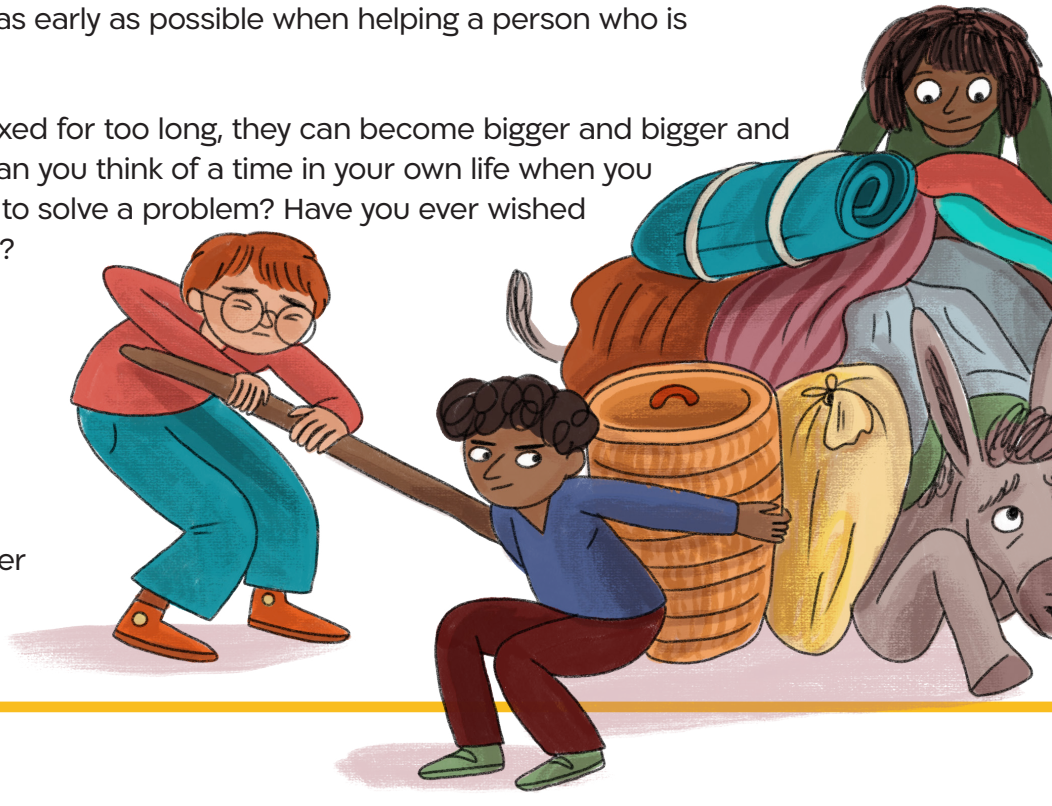
What's this like? It's similar to a heavy package on top of a donkey. While it is still on the donkey, one person can hold onto the load and help keep the donkey standing. But once the animal falls to the ground, five people couldn't pick it up!

רש"י

אַל תַּנִּיחֵהוּ שֶׁיֵּרֵד וְיִפֹּל וְיִהְיֶה קָשֶׁה לַהֲקִימוֹ, אֶלָּא חַזְּקֵהוּ מִשְּׁעַת מוֹטַת הַיָּד.

לְמָה זֶּה דּוֹמֶה? לְמַשָּׂאוֹי שֶׁעַל הַחֲמוֹר, עוֹדֶהוּ עַל הַחֲמוֹר אֶחָד תּוֹפֵס בּוֹ וּמַעֲמִידוֹ, נָפַל לָאָרֶץ, חֲמִשָּׁה אֵין מַעֲמִידִין אוֹתוֹ.

- Why is it important to act as early as possible when helping a person who is having money troubles?
- If you let problems go unfixed for too long, they can become bigger and bigger and much harder to fix later. Can you think of a time in your own life when you were glad you acted early to solve a problem? Have you ever wished you asked for help sooner?
- How does this explain the phrase, "you must strengthen them"? What is the difference between strengthening someone before things get too bad and helping save them after everything got ruined?



דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate



Debate: When you see a problem developing, solve it right away. Don't wait.

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!

- That's the idea in the midrash that Rashi quotes on p. 2. You should help a person who's having trouble paying their bills before their situation gets even worse. Don't let them end up like the collapsed donkey.
- It's often easier for kids to change than it is for adults to change. So it's a good idea to help kids solve their problems right away, while they are still kids.



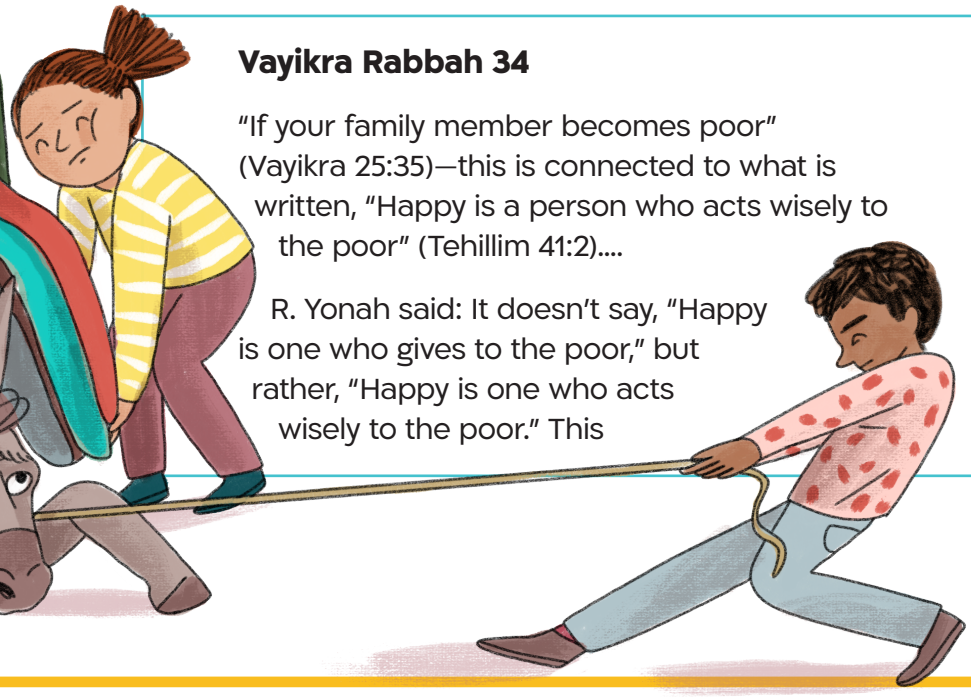
Disagree!

- Some problems solve themselves if you give them some time.
- You should at least slow down enough to really understand the problem. Otherwise your solution won't necessarily work.



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Here's another midrash about the pasuk on the previous page (Vayikra 25:35).



Vayikra Rabbah 34

"If your family member becomes poor" (Vayikra 25:35)—this is connected to what is written, "Happy is a person who acts wisely to the poor" (Tehillim 41:2)....

R. Yonah said: It doesn't say, "Happy is one who gives to the poor," but rather, "Happy is one who acts wisely to the poor." This

ויקרא רבה לד

"וְכִי יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ" (ויקרא כה:לה)—הֲדָא הוּא דִכְתִיב "אַשְׁרֵי מַשְׂכִּיל אֶל דָּל" (תהלים מא:ב)....

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָה אַשְׁרֵי נוֹתֵן לְדָל אֵין כְּתִיב כָּאן, אֶלָּא אַשְׁרֵי מַשְׂכִּיל אֶל דָּל, הֱוֵי מִסְתַּכֵּל בּוֹ הֵיאַךְ לְזַכּוֹת עִמּוֹ.

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means you should understand a person who is poor to figure out the best way to help them.
When R. Yonah would see a person who grew up wealthy but then lost their money, and who was embarrassed to take tzedakah, he would go to this person and give them money while saying, "I heard that you gained an inheritance overseas..."

רַבִּי יוֹנָה בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁרָאָה בֶּן גְּדוֹלִים שֶׁיָּרַד מִנְּכָסָיו וְהוּא מִתְבַּיֵּשׁ לְקַח, הָיָה הוֹלֵךְ אֶצְלוֹ וְאוֹמֵר לוֹ בִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁשָּׁמַעְתִּי שֶׁנָּפְלָה לְךָ יְרֻשָּׁה בִּמְדִינַת הַיָּם..."



This midrash is pointing out that, in order to give tzedakah, we don't just have to be generous. We also have to be wise!

- What kinds of wisdom are needed when giving tzedakah? Can you think of different examples?
- It's usually not good to lie, but in this story we hear that R. Yonah would lie in order to help a person feel more comfortable accepting tzedakah. What can we learn from that?
- Could this midrash also be offering an interpretation of the words וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ (ve-he-hezakta bo, you must strengthen them)? What kind of strengthening is described here?





שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

aliyot:
1) Vayikra 25:1 to 25:12
2) 25:13 to 25:18
3) 25:19 to 25:24
4) 25:25 to 25:28
5) 25:29 to 25:38
6) 25:39 to 25:46
7) 25:47 to 26:2

haftarah: Yirmeyahu 32:6 to 32:27

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.

Good luck!



1. During a יוֹבֵל (yovel) year, what's the date when the shofar is blown?
2. Does the price of a field go up, go down, or stay the same the closer you get to the next yovel?
3. Why can't you sell land permanently?
4. There are two words in this aliyah that, together, form a palindrome (they read the same backwards and forwards). What are they?
5. What land can never be sold?
6. Why do Jewish servants go free at the yovel?



7. How should a servant be in your eyes?
8. How many cycles of שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, year of release) have to pass before getting to the yovel?
9. What do you do on Yom Kippur of a yovel?
10. **From the haftarah:** Why was it a strange time for Yirmeyahu to purchase his cousin's land?

* Look for the answers on page 8!



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דִּקְדּוּק • Grammar

Here is a chart to help remind you:

Short Vowel תְּנוּעָה קְטַנָּה		Long Vowel תְּנוּעָה גְּדוֹלָה	
patah פַּתָּח	ַ	kamatz קָמָץ	ָ
segol סֶגוֹל	ֶ	tzeirei צֵירֵי	ֵ
kibbutz קִיבּוּץ	ֻ	shuruk שׁוּרוּק	וּ
hirik haser חִירִיק חָסֵר	ִ	hirik malei חִירִיק מָלֵא	ִי
kamatz katan קָמָץ קָטָן	ָ	holam חוֹלָם	וֹ

Time to do more שְׁוָא נָע (sheva na) hunting!

Remember we learned a lot about vowels?

This chart is really important for our third rule for finding a sheva na: **Whenever a sheva follows a long vowel, it's a sheva na!**

Here are three examples from our parashah:



Really careful Torah readers make sure to pronounce this. Sometimes it can actually change the meaning! For instance:

וַיִּרְאוּ (vayiru, they saw) וַיִּירְאוּ (vayire'u, they feared)

Here it's important to keep your sheva na and sheva nah straight. You wouldn't want to say that the people **saw** God, when you actually mean to say that the people **feared** God!

פַּרְשָׁנוּת • Commentary

At the end of our parashah, the Torah puts two important ideas together in one very short pasuk:

ויקרא כו:ב

אֶת שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ וּמִקְדָּשִׁי תִּירָאוּ אֲנִי ה׳:

Vayikra 26:2

You shall keep My Shabbatot and fear My Mikdash (holy space). I am God.

What's the connection between the different parts of this pasuk: Shabbat and God's Mikdash?



1

Sifra Kedoshim 7:7

Could the mitzvah of building the Beit HaMikdash push off Shabbat? The Torah teaches: "You shall keep My Shabbatot and fear My Mikdash."

ספרא קדושים ז:ז

יָכוֹל יְהֵא בִּנְיַן בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ דּוֹחֶה שַׁבָּת? תַּלְמוּד לוֹמַר "אֶת שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ וּמִקְדָּשִׁי תִּירָאוּ."

According to Hazal, our pasuk teaches that even though building the Beit HaMikdash is really important, we cannot build it on Shabbat.

- Why would the rules of Shabbat be prioritized over building the Beit HaMikdash? What can this teach us about each of these things?

2

Talmud Bavli Shabbat 49b

Why are there 39 categories of melakhah (productive work) that are not allowed on Shabbat? R. Hanina bar Hama said: They match the actions involved in the Mishkan.

תלמוד בבלי שבת דף מט עמוד ב

אֲבוֹת מְלָאכוֹת אַרְבָּעִים חָסֵר אַחַת, כְּנֶגֶד מִי? אָמַר לְהוּ רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בַּר חָמָא: כְּנֶגֶד עֲבוֹדוֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן.

Most of the activities we aren't allowed to do on Shabbat—known as melakhah—are not mentioned in the Torah. Hazal have a tradition that there are 39 categories of melakhah based on the different kinds of work that were involved in building the Mishkan.

- Can you think of some activities that are forbidden on Shabbat? How do you think they were part of building the Mishkan?



- Try it! When you avoid doing a certain melakhah on Shabbat, can you think about the ways that melakhah might have happened in building the Mishkan and Beit HaMikdash? Does that change your experience of observing Shabbat?

פַּרְשָׁנוּת • Commentary



How do you understand what freedom is? Our parshanim learn about it from its Hebrew word, דְּרוֹר (dror), which the Torah uses to describe the יוֹבֵל (yovel) year (Vayikra 25:10).

רש"י

אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה מַהוּ לְשׁוֹן דְּרוֹר?... שֶׁדָּר בְּכָל מָקוֹם שֶׁהוּא רוֹצֶה וְאֵינוֹ בִּרְשׁוּת אֲחֵרִים.

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

R. Yehudah said, "What is the meaning of the word "dror"?... A person who can דָּר (dar, live) in any place they want, and is not controlled by others.

- Rashi highlights two important parts of freedom. Can you name them?
- How do these explanation of freedom fit with a servant who is being released in the yovel year?

Ibn Ezra points out that there's a kind of bird called "dror":



אבן עזרא

יָדוּעַ, כְּמוֹ: חוֹפֵשׁ, "כַּדְּרוֹר לָעוּף" (משלי כו:ב). עוֹף קָטָן מְנַגֵּן כְּשֶׁהוּא בִּרְשׁוּתוֹ, וְאִם הוּא בִּרְשׁוּת אָדָם לֹא יֹאכַל עַד שֶׁיָּמוּת.

Ibn Ezra (Spain, 900 years ago)

The meaning of the word is known. It means free "as the flying דְּרוֹר (dror, swallow)" (Mishlei 26:2). This is a small bird that sings when it's free. But if it's taken captive, it refuses to eat until it dies.

- How does this bird represent freedom?
- Why would this bird only sing when it's free, but not sing (and not even eat) when it's not? What can that teach us about freedom?
- What is Ibn Ezra adding that wasn't included in Rashi's interpretation?
- Can both Rashi and Ibn Ezra be right? How so?

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. The tenth day of the seventh month, which is Yom Kippur (25:9)
2. It goes down; the price is based on how many harvests are left before the next yovel (25:15-16)
3. Because the land belongs to God, and we are גֵּרִים וְתוֹשָׁבִים (geirim ve-toshavim, strangers living on it) (25:23)
4. יָדוֹ דַּיּ (his hand is sufficient, 25:28)—and the next letter in the adjacent words in either direction is a ה!
5. The open fields that surround the cities where לְוִיִּם (Levi'im, members of the tribe of Levi) live (25:34)
6. Because Jews are really servants of God (25:42)
7. Like a year-long employee, and not worked too hard (25:53)
8. Seven (25:8-10)
9. Blow the shofar (25:9)
10. Because the land was being threatened by invading enemies (Yirmeyahu 32:25)