

- VAYIKRA
- TZAV
- SHEMINI
- TAZRIA-METZORA
- AHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM
- EMOR
- BEHAR-BEHUKOTAI

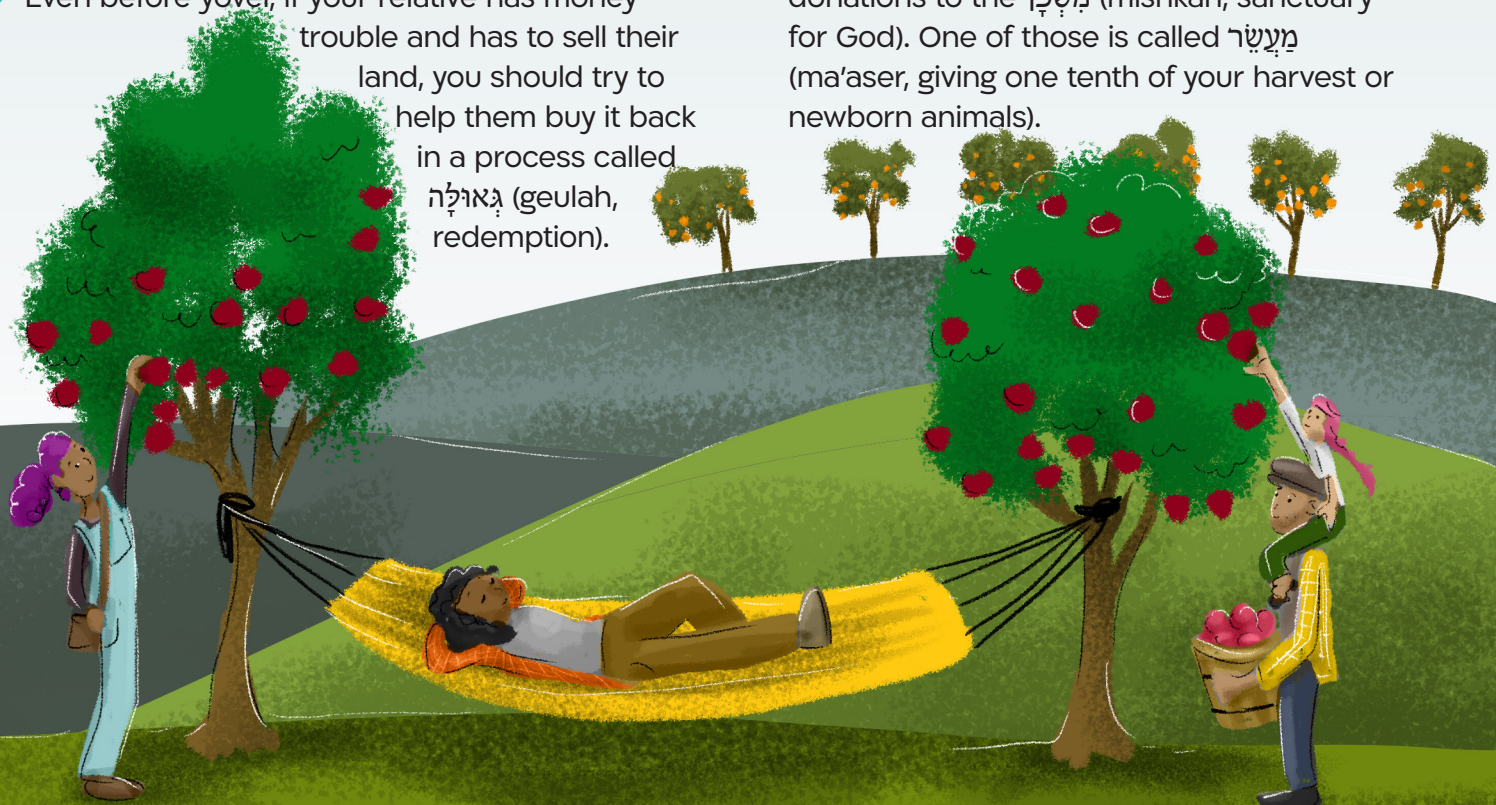


ט"ז - כ"ב אָזַר תשפ"ו May 3-9, 2026



קָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ◆ It's a double parashah this week! We combine Behar and Behukotai.
- ◆ In Eretz Yisrael, שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release) happens every seven years. During this 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.
- ◆ Even before yovel, if your relative has money trouble and has to sell their land, you should try to help them buy it back in a process called גְּאוּלָּה (geulah, redemption).
- ◆ There is a mitzvah not to overcharge for a sale. If someone is in debt to you, treat them with compassion.
- ◆ God promises blessings if Bnei Yisrael follow the mitzvot, and some frightening punishments if they don't. This section is called the תּוֹכְהָה (tokhehah, rebuke).
- ◆ God will remember God's promises to our ancestors, and God will never punish the people too much.
- ◆ Sefer Vayikra closes with a discussion of donations to the מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan, sanctuary for God). One of those is called מַעֲסֵר (ma'aser, giving one tenth of your harvest or newborn animals).





פְּנִיט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

Here's how the the Torah describes the יוֹבֵל (yovel) year:

Before or after Shabbat, scan to listen to a discussion of these pesukim on the Behar-Bebukotai episode of TORAH TIME!



Vayikra 25:9-10

You shall sound the shofar on the tenth day of the seventh month.

On Yom Kippur you shall sound the shofar throughout your land.

You shall make the 50th year holy.

You shall proclaim freedom throughout the land for everyone living there.

It shall be a yovel for you.

You shall return to your ancestral land and family.

ויקרא כה:ט-י

וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ שׁוֹפָר תְּרוּעָה
בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבַעִי בְּעֶשְׂוֹר לְחֹדֶשׁ
בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים תַּעֲבִירוּ שׁוֹפָר
בְּכָל אֲרָצְכֶם:

וְקִדַּשְׁתֶּם אֶת שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה
וְקִרְאתֶם דְּרוֹר בְּאָרֶץ לְכָל יֹשְׁבֵיהָ
יֹבֵל הוּא תְּהִיָּה לָכֶם
וְשִׁבְתֶּם אִישׁ אֶל אֲחֻזָּתוֹ
וְאִישׁ אֶל מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ תָּשׁבוּ:

- ◆ What do you notice? What questions do you have about these pesukim?
- ◆ Why do you think the shofar blasts are on Yom Kippur in the yovel year? What do you think that moment might feel like?
- ◆ In the second pasuk, there are three things to do: make the 50th year holy, proclaim freedom, and return to ancestral land and family. What's the connection between these things? How do they fit together?
- ◆ How does sounding the shofar in the first pasuk relate to the mitzvot in the second pasuk? What can this teach us about what the sound of the shofar represents?
- ◆ In yovel, Hebrew servants are sent free and land that had been sold in the last 49 years would go back to its original owners. What words in the pesukim say this? What's the connection between freeing servants and returning land? What are these mitzvot teaching us?





מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

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

There's something a bit unusual about the first pasuk in our parashah, which introduces the rules of שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release).

Vayikra 25:1

God spoke to Moshe at Har Sinai (Mount Sinai), saying:

ויקרא כה:א

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר:



I'm used to hearing וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר (God spoke to Moshe, saying...)! This is the most common pasuk in the Torah; it introduces tons of mitzvot. But I notice that the pasuk introducing shemittah is different. Why does it mention that God's speaking happened at Har Sinai? What's that telling us?

Sifra

What does shemittah have to do with Har Sinai? Weren't all the mitzvot taught at Sinai?!

This teaches us that all of the rules and details of shemittah came from Sinai, and that is also true for all other mitzvot. All their rules and details came from Sinai too.

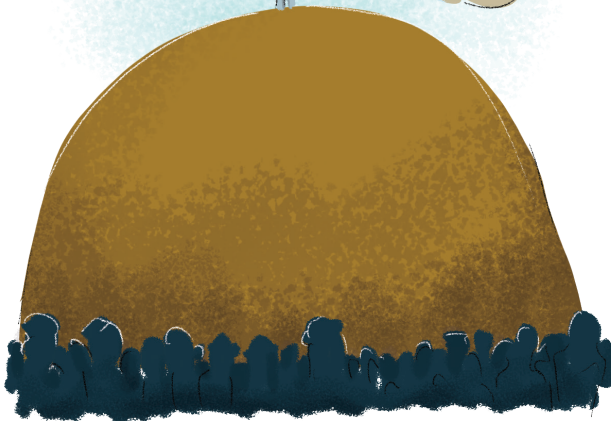


ספרא בהר

מָה עֲנִינוּ שְׁמִטָּה אֶצֶל הַר סִינַי? וְהֲלֹא כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת נִאֶמְרוּ מִסִּינַי?!

אֲלֹא מָה שְׁמִטָּה נִאֶמְרוּ כְּלָלוֹתֶיהָ וְדִקְדוּקֶיהָ מִסִּינַי אִם כֻּלָּם נִאֶמְרוּ כְּלָלוֹתֶיהֶם וְדִקְדוּקֶיהֶם מִסִּינַי.

In our parashah, we learn a lot of details about shemittah. This midrash wants us to see that the Torah seems to be emphasizing that God gave these details to Moshe at Har Sinai. And the midrash is also suggesting that the reason the Torah is making this point is to teach us that the same is true for all other mitzvot as well—all of their details also came from God at Har Sinai!



- ◆ What are your favorite mitzvot? How do their details help shape your experience? Can you imagine them without their details? Can you imagine your favorite book or toy or game or experience without all their details?
- ◆ What would Shabbat feel like without all its details? What do the details add?
- ◆ How does it affect the way we do mitzvot to think that even the smallest details can connect us back to Har Sinai?
- ◆ This midrash represents the position of R. Akiva (in Talmud Bavli Hagigah 6a). But R. Yishmael has a different take! He says that Moshe only received the general principles at Har Sinai, and the details came later. Why does it matter? How does our understanding of Torah, Moshe, and the Har Sinai experience change if you follow R. Akiva or R. Yishmael?



פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

Vayikra 25:2

Speak to Benei Yisrael and tell them:
When you come to the land that I (God) am giving you,
the land shall observe **a Shabbat for God**.

ויקרא כה:ב

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם
כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם
וְשָׁבְתָהּ הָאָרֶץ שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה:

What does it mean that שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release) is a שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה (Shabbat la-Shem, Shabbat for God)?

**וְשַׁבְתָּהּ הָאָרֶץ
שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה**

Rabbeinu Behaye (Spain, 700 years ago)

The land should be off limits for any human melakhah (productive work) in the seventh year. A person shouldn't do any work on the land, like plowing and planting.

רבנו בחיי

שְׁתֵּהִיָּה הָאָרֶץ בְּטֵלָה מִכָּל מְלָאכָה
אָדָם בְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית וְלֹא
לְשִׁתְּדֹל כָּלֵל בְּעִבּוּדַת הַקֶּרְקַע לֹא
בְּחָרִיֶּשֶׁה וְלֹא בְּזָרִיעָה.

Sforno (Italy, 500 years ago)

During this whole year, instead of serving the land, farmers are prepared to serve God.

This makes shemittah like Shabbat, which the Torah describes as "Shabbat for God your Lord" (Shemot 20:9).

ספורנו

שְׁתֵּהִיָּה כָּל הַשָּׁנָה הַבְּטָלָה מֵעִבּוּדַת
הָאָדָמָה מוֹכֵנֶת לְעִבּוּדָתוֹ. כְּמוֹ
שְׁכִיּוֹן בְּשַׁבַּת בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּאֶמְרוֹ
"שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ" (שמות כ:ט).

Rabbeinu Behaye views shemittah as being "la-Shem" in the sense that it's a time for us human beings to sit back, not work, and just leave everything to God.

Sforno thinks "Shabbat la-Shem" is a statement of the spiritual purpose of shemittah. Like the day of the week Shabbat, shemittah is a time for us to dedicate our time and attention to God.

- ◆ Could Shabbat la-Shem mean both things?
- ◆ Think about how we observe Shabbat every week. In addition to refraining from melakhah, what can we do to make sure the day is set aside "for God"?
- ◆ How can we make sure that we make times that are for God in the work we do during week, even if we aren't farmers or it's not shemittah?





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) Vayikra 25:1 to 25:18
- 2) 25:19 to 25: 28
- 3) 25:29 to 25:38
- 4) 25:39 to 26:9
- 5) 26:10 to 26:46
- 6) 27:1 to 27:15
- 7) 27:16 to 27:34

haftarah: Yirmeyahu
16:19 to 17:14

Good luck!



1 During a יובל (yovel) year, what's the date when the shofar is blown?

2 Why can't you sell land permanently?

3 What land can never be sold?

4 How many times are we told not to force workers to do really hard labor, called פְּרֶכֶת (perekh)?

5 What will God not smell?

6 Are substitutions allowed in sacrifices?



7 What goes under a staff?

8 When will the land produce triple the amount of a normal year?

9 What's the cheapest time to buy land? How do you know?

10 **From the haftarah:**
Who or what is compared to a tree that is planted close to the water, with leaves that are always fresh?

GET DEVASH IN THE MAIL!
hadar.org/devash



*
Look for the answers on page 11!



בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

Our midrash this week (p. 3) showed the opinion that every single detail of Torah came from God at הר סיני (Har Sinai, Mount Sinai). This is one common perspective in Hazal, but there are also many other views about what exactly came from Har Sinai. Here's how the Ramhal (Amsterdam, 300 years ago) explained the experience at Har Sinai.

R. Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto (Da'at Tevunot 335)

Understand what God did at Har Sinai. God didn't give them the entire Torah there in one standing. The experience was rather a general preparation for all mitzvah service...

So God first gave them the power to keep all of God's mitzvot, and that their actions in serving God could be fruitful enough to perfect creation.

רמח"ל (דעת תבונות של"ה)

וְתִרְאֵי כִּי זֶה מָה שֶׁעָשָׂה הָאֱדוֹן בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהַר סִינַי, שֶׁהֵנָּה לֹא נָתַן לָהֶם שֵׁם הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָהּ בְּמַעֲמַד הַהוּא, אֲבָל הִיטָה הַכֵּנָה כּוֹלֶלֶת לְכָל עֲבוֹדַת הַמִּצְוֹת...

וְאִזּוֹ נָתַן לָהֶם תְּחִלָּה הַכֹּחַ לְשִׁמּוֹר כָּל מִצְוֹתָיו, וְשִׁמְעֵשִׂיהֶם בְּעֲבוֹדָתוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה הַפְּרִי הַטּוֹב הַמִּצְטָרֵף לְתַקוּן הַבְּרִיאָה.

According to the Ramhal, the Har Sinai experience may not have included every detail of mitzvot, but it still impacts every mitzvah because our strength to be able to keep mitzvot—and our power to be able to impact the world through mitzvot—come from Har Sinai.

- ◆ What power or strength do we need to keep mitzvot? What strength do you use when you perform mitzvot?
- ◆ Where do your powers, strengths, and talents come from? How does it affect your experience of keeping mitzvot to think that your power comes from Har Sinai?
- ◆ What is the Ramhal saying about what it meant to receive the Torah at Har Sinai?





דְּקָה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Debate: I don't want to be responsible for others.

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.

The idea of עֲרִבוּת (areivut) comes from our parashah. It means we're all responsible for each other; even for other people's mistakes! (See Halakhah on the next page.)



Agree!

- ♦ I don't want to have responsibility for everyone else's mess-ups. It's hard enough keeping myself out of trouble!
- ♦ If I'm too young to drive, I'm too young to have responsibility for the entire Jewish people.



Disagree!

- ♦ It's nice to know we're all in this together.
- ♦ I'm glad I can do mitzvot for other people, and they can do mitzvot for me.



רִמּוֹעַ שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Vayikra 25:19

The land shall produce its fruit and you shall eat your fill, and you shall live upon it in **security**.

ויקרא כה:יט

וַיְהִי כִּי יֵצֵא אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וְאָכְלֶתֶם לֶשְׂבַע וְיִשְׂבַּתֶּם לְבֶטַח עֲלֵיהֶּ:

לְבֶטַח (שָׂרֵשׁ ב.ט.ח.)
To trust (livto'ah)

"Of course!"
(betah)

בְּטָחוֹן
Security (bitahon)

בְּטָח!

It's a deal!

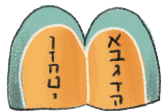
בְּטוּחַ / בְּטוּחָה
Sure of
themselves
(batu'ah,
betuhah)

בְּטוּחַ
Insurance
(bitu'ah)

בִּטּוּחַ
HOME-CAR
HEALTH-LIFE

Find the Word!

Before he dies, Moshe blesses the different שְׁבֵטִים (shevatim, tribes). Check out the blessing for shevet Binyamin. Can you find this שָׂרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) there? (Hint: Look at Devarim 33.)



הַלְכָה • Halakhah

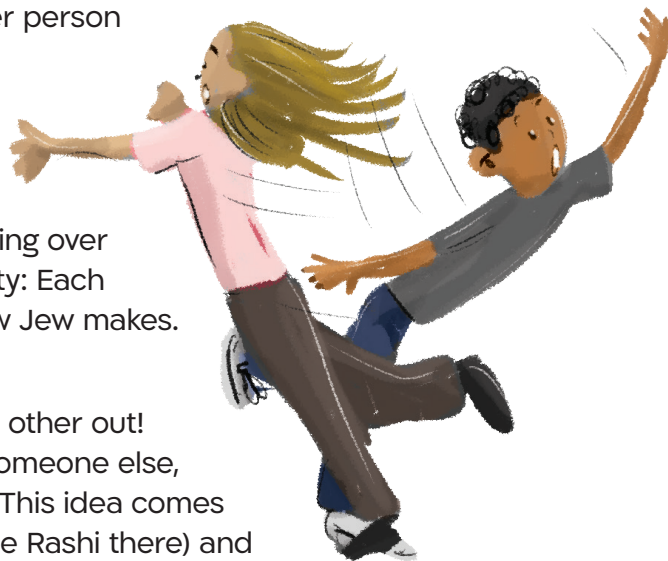


Learn one way
the parashah
practically impacts
our lives

There is a famous saying that goes: כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרֵבִים זֶה לָזֶה (kol Yisrael areivim zeh la-zeh). It means that every Jew is responsible for every other Jew. That sounds nice, but you might be surprised that the idea here is that we are responsible whenever another person does something wrong, even if it wasn't our fault!

We learn this from Parashat Behukotai, where it says (Vayikra 26:37): וְכָשְׁלוּ אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו – Each person will stumble over their neighbor. A midrash says this isn't talking about actually tripping over other people's feet, but rather about responsibility: Each person is responsible for the mistakes their fellow Jew makes. This idea is called עֲרֵבוּת (areivut).

One nice part of areivut is that we can help each other out! You are able to perform a mitzvah on behalf of someone else, because all Jews are connected to one another. This idea comes up in the Talmud (Bavli Rosh Hashanah 29a-b; see Rashi there) and Rambam summarizes it this way:



Rambam Berakhot 1:10

Even if you already said a berakhah (blessing) and fulfilled your own obligation, you can make that berakhah for other people who haven't said it yet, in order to help them fulfill their obligation...

רמב"ם הלכות ברכות פרק א הלכה י

כָּל הַבְּרָכוֹת כֻּלּוֹן אִף עַל פִּי שֶׁבֵרַךְ וְיָצָא
יְדֵי חוֹבְתוֹ מִתַּר לֹו לְבִרְךָ לְאַחֵרִים
שֶׁלֹא יָצְאוּ יְדֵי חוֹבְתוֹ כִּי לְהוֹצִיאָן...

This rule is not true for all berakhot. You can't say a berakhah over food for someone else if you aren't eating that food yourself!

But for mitzvot it's ok. You can say a berakhah over food multiple times if that food is a mitzvah! So, on Shabbat, a person can say Kiddush over wine (or grape juice) lots of times for lots of other people, even if the person saying the blessing isn't drinking that wine (or grape juice). Rabbeinu Nissim says this is because "every Jew is responsible for one another, and if someone else hasn't fulfilled their mitzvah, it's like you haven't fulfilled yours" (his comments on Rif Rosh Hashanah 8a).

If you ever get the chance to make Kiddush for someone, remember that it's all thanks to our parashah and the idea of areivut!



בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

In our Halakhah section this week (p. 8) we talked about עֲרֻבוֹת (areivut), and some of the ways that Jewish people are all responsible for each other.

But here's a midrash that talks about the limits of our responsibility for others. In the midrash, two rabbis interpret one line from our parashah in two different ways.

Sifra

There were two people walking through the desert and only one of them had a jug of water. If one of the people were to drink it, that person would be able to stay alive and make it through the desert to a town. But if the two people share the water, they would both die (because it wouldn't be enough to keep either person alive).

Ben Petori taught: They should both drink and die, because the Torah says, "**your brother shall live with you**" (Vayikra 25:36).

Rabbi Akiva replied: "your brother shall live **with you**" – this means that your life comes before another person's life.

ספרא

שְׁנַיִם שֶׁהָלְכוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר, וְאֶיֶן
בֵּינָם אֶחָד מֵהֶם אֶלָּא קִיתוֹן
אֶחָד שְׁלָמִים. אִם שׁוֹתֵהוּ אֶחָד,
מִגִּיעַ הוּא לְשׁוּב, וְאִם שׁוֹתֵין
אוֹתוֹ שְׁנַיִם, שְׁנֵי־הֶם מֵתִים.

דַּרְשׁ בֶּן פֶּטוּרִי: לְשִׁתּוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶן
וְלָמוּתוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְיָחִי אֶחֱיָךְ
עִמָּךְ" (ויקרא כה:לו).

אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָה: "וְיָחִי
אֶחֱיָךְ עִמָּךְ" – תְּחִילָה קוֹדֵם
לְחַיּוֹ.

It's an intense situation and we certainly hope to never encounter anything like this! Ben Petori seems to focus on וְיָחִי אֶחֱיָךְ (ve-hei ahikha, your brother should live). He thinks the Torah is telling us: Take actions to save your brother, no matter what (even if it won't work, or it puts you at risk). R. Akiva seems to focus on עִמָּךְ (imakh, with you). He thinks the Torah is telling us: Only save someone else in a way that keeps you safe too. You have to keep your brother alive, but only in a way that you will also live!

The accepted interpretation here is Rabbi Akiva's. Based on this, there are many complicated questions in halakhah about how far we have to go in order to help save other people.



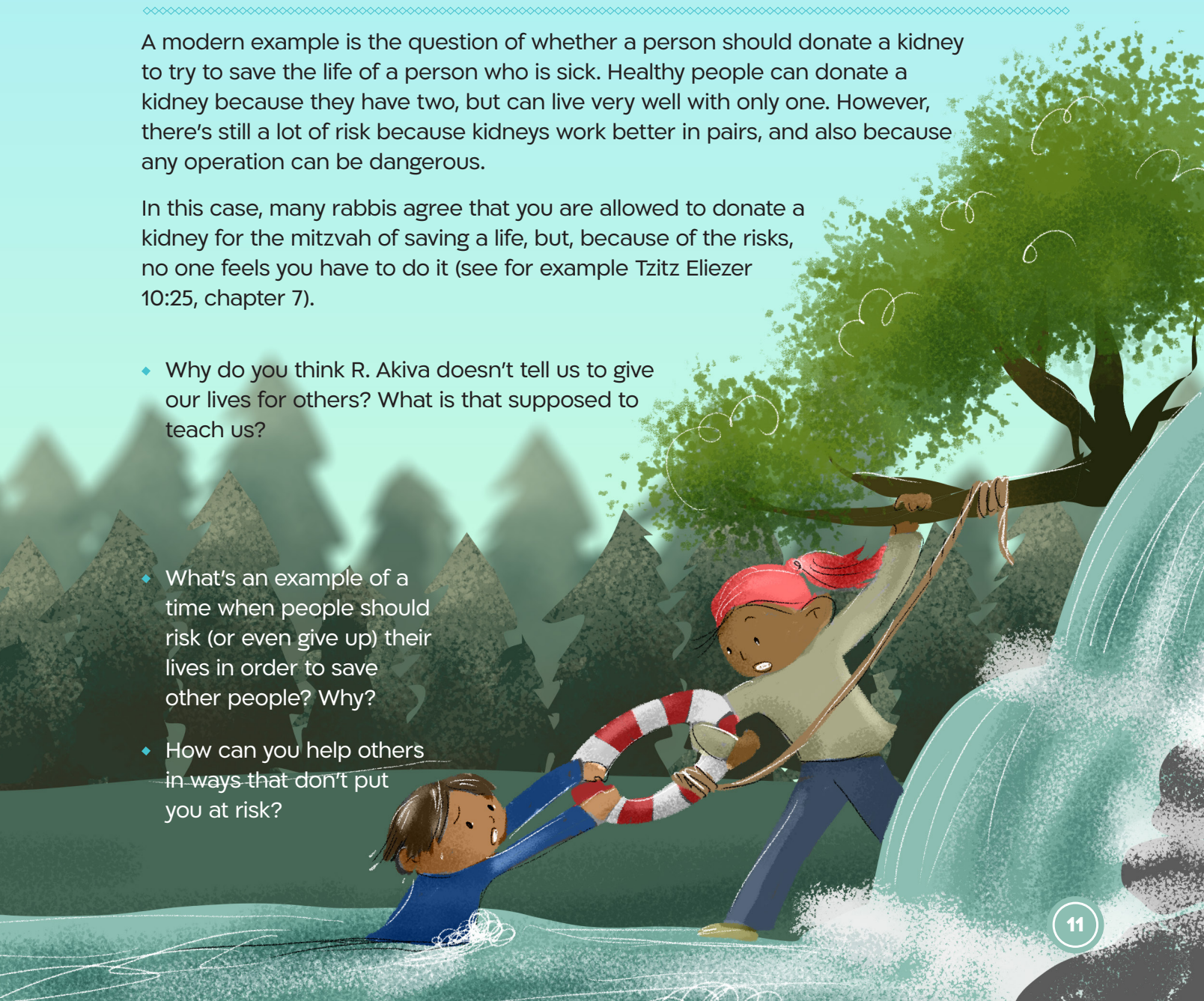
Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. The tenth day of the seventh month, which is Yom Kippur (25:9)
2. Because the land belongs to God, and we are גֵרִים וְתוֹשָבִים (geirim ve-toshavim, strangers living on it) (25:23)
3. The open fields that surround the cities where לְוִיִּם (Levi'im, members of the tribe of Levi) live (25:34)
4. Three times (25:43, 25:46, 25:53)
5. The pleasant smells of Benei Yisrael's offerings (26:31)
6. Nope! If you dedicate an animal as a sacrifice and then try to switch it out with another one, they are both holy and you must offer both of them (27:10)
7. All the cattle as it's being counted for מַעֲשֵׂר (maaser, one tenth being donated to God) (27:32)
8. The sixth year, right before שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release) (25:21)
9. Right before a יוֹבֵל (yovel) year - the price would be lowest since the land would soon be returned to its original owner because of yovel (25:15-16)
10. A person who trusts in God (Yirmeyahu 17:8). Bonus! In this pasuk, can you find the שָׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) that is featured in this week's Moment of Hebrew, p. 8?

A modern example is the question of whether a person should donate a kidney to try to save the life of a person who is sick. Healthy people can donate a kidney because they have two, but can live very well with only one. However, there's still a lot of risk because kidneys work better in pairs, and also because any operation can be dangerous.

In this case, many rabbis agree that you are allowed to donate a kidney for the mitzvah of saving a life, but, because of the risks, no one feels you have to do it (see for example Tzitz Eliezer 10:25, chapter 7).

- ◆ Why do you think R. Akiva doesn't tell us to give our lives for others? What is that supposed to teach us?
- ◆ What's an example of a time when people should risk (or even give up) their lives in order to save other people? Why?
- ◆ How can you help others in ways that don't put you at risk?





תּפִּילָה • Prayer in the Parashah

Every 50 years, יוֹבֵל (yovel) would be announced with shofar blasts. Hebrew servants would be freed, and land would return to its original owners. (See Understanding the Verses, p. 2.)

In the 10th בְּרַכָּה (berakhah, blessing) of the weekday Amidah, we make a request from God that also combines shofar and freedom:

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵירוּתֵנוּ
Sound the great shofar
for our freedom

The word for freedom in our parashah is דְּרוֹר (deror) and in the Amidah it's הֵירוּת (heirut). But it's all the same idea; you can see that the Aramaic for deror is הֵירוּתָא (heirutā)! (Check out Onkelos on our parashah, 25:10.)

In this section of the Amidah we are asking God for קְבוּץ גְּלוּיּוֹת (kibbutz galuyot, the gathering of the exiles), which is a certain kind of freedom. But when we say the words about the "great shofar" we can also think about the shofar of yovel that appears in our parashah, and we can remember how servants would become free in the yovel year.



- ◆ Why is the gathering of the exiles considered a kind of freedom? What's "not free" about being in exile?
- ◆ Do you know of people who are not free? What might help them?
- ◆ What makes you feel free or not free? Can you think of different kinds of freedom, like some that are physical and some that are spiritual or emotional?
- ◆ In the Torah, people sometimes became servants and lost their freedom because they didn't have enough money. How might this influence what you think about when you say this berakhah in the Amidah?

