

- DEVARIM
- VA'ETHANAN
- EIKEV
- RE'EH
- SHOFTIM
- KI TEITZEI
- KI TAVO
- NITZAVIM
- VAYEILEKH
- HA'AZINU
- VEZOT HA-BERAKHAH



ז' - י"ג אָבּוּל תשפ"ה August 31 - September 6, 2025



קה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

Ki Teitzei contains 74 mitzvot—the most of any parashah! The mitzvot here focus on individuals, families, and neighbors. Here are some examples:



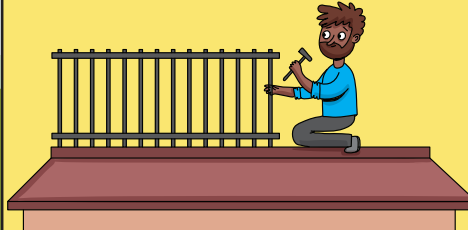
I Missed You

If you find someone's lost animal, or another lost object, return it to its owner.

If you want to take eggs or young birds from a nest, you should first send away the mother bird.



When you build a house, put a fence around the roof to keep people from falling off.




Some mixtures are not allowed. Don't plant a mixture of two kinds of seeds, or plow with two different animals together, or wear a piece of clothing made from wool and linen. That's called שְׂעִטְנֵז (shaatnez).

Keep it clean!



You have to be clean and dignified even when going to the bathroom and make sure you don't leave a mess.



Don't charge interest when you lend money to someone from Benei Yisrael.



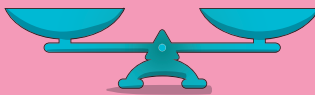
A נֶדֶר (neder) is a serious promise to God. You have to keep your word.



You must pay your workers on time, especially if they are poor.



Don't muzzle an ox while it works in the field.



Use honest measurements and weights in business.



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

If you find someone else's lost animal, there's a mitzvah to return it. And...

Devarim 22:2

If your brother does not live near you, or you do not know who they are, bring it home and keep it until they claim it; **va-hasheivoto lo** (then give it back).

דברים כב:ב

וְאִם לֹא קָרֹב אֲחִיקָה אֵלַיְךָ וְלֹא יָדַעְתָּ וְאִסַּפְתָּ אֶל תּוֹךְ בֵּיתְךָ וְהָיָה עִמָּךְ עַד דֹּרֶשׁ אֲחִיקָה אֹתוֹ וְהָשַׁבְתּוֹ לוֹ:

The final (bolded) words seem obvious. What else would you do with a lost animal that you found when your neighbor shows up to claim it?!



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

From va-hasheivoto lo, Rashi teaches that you have to spend your own money to care for a lost animal. So if I lose my dog, and you find it and keep it for me, when I come for the dog, you shouldn't present me with a bill for all the dog food you bought!

Va-hasheivoto lo means the returning has to be complete, no strings attached. Like in this story from the Gemara:





Talmud Bavli Ta'anit 25a

A person passed by the entrance to R. Hanina ben Dosa's house, and left chickens there. R. Hanina's wife found them and cared for them. R. Hanina said to her, "Don't eat their eggs (because they don't belong to us)."

The chickens laid many eggs, and more chickens hatched. The chickens were bothering them, so they sold them and got goats with the money.

Eventually the person who had lost the chickens passed by and said, "Here is where I left my chickens."

R. Hanina heard this and said, "Do you have a sign to identify them?" The person said, "Yes," and gave him the sign, and took the goats.

תלמוד בבלי תענית דף כה עמוד א

מעשה ועבר אדם אחד על פתח ביתו והניח שם תרנגוליו, ומצאתן אשתו של רבי חנינא בן דוסא, ואמר לה: אל תאכלי מביציהן.

והרבו ביצים ותרנגוליו והיו מצערין אותם, ומכרו וקנו בדימיהן עזים.

פעם אחת עבר אותו אדם שאבדו ממנו התרנגוליו ואמר לחבירו: בכאן הנחתי התרנגוליו שלי. שמע רבי חנינא, אמר לו: יש לך בהן סימן? אמר לו: הן. נתן לו סימן ונטל את העידין.

- ◆ Why do you think the Gemara says it's fair for the person who lost chickens to get goats back?
- ◆ Why does the Torah want us to be so extremely careful with other people's property?
- ◆ Have you ever returned something someone lost? Did anybody ever help you get back something you lost? How did that feel?





פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

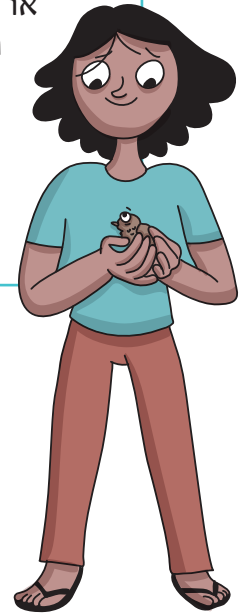
Devarim 22:6-7

If, along the road, you happen to find a bird's nest, in a tree or on the ground, with chicks or eggs, and the mother bird is sitting over the chicks or on the eggs—do not take the mother together with her young.

Send the mother away, and take only the young, so that things will be good for you, and you have a long life.

דברים כב:ו-ז

כִּי יִקְרָא כּוֹ צִפּוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ
בְּכָל עֵץ אוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ אֶפְרָחִים
אוֹ בִּיצִים וְהָאִם רֹבֶצֶת עַל
הָאֶפְרָחִים אוֹ עַל הַבִּיצִים
לֹא תִקַּח הָאִם עַל הַבָּנִים:
שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח אֶת הָאִם וְאֶת
הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח לָךְ לְמַעַן
יֵיטֵב לָךְ וְהָאֶרֶץ יִמָּיֵם:



This mitzvah is called שְׁלוּחַ הַקֵּן (shiluah ha-kein). Why do we do this mitzvah, and what are we supposed to learn from it?

It's a debate!



Talmud Bavli Berakhot 33b says:

If someone says (about shiluah ha-kein), "God's mercy extends to a bird's nest"... you should silence that person.

...Why?

...Because this statement suggests that God's ways are mercy. But, in fact, they are just decrees (that must be observed whether or not they make sense).

תלמוד בבלי ברכות דף לג עמוד ב

הָאוֹמֵר: "עַל כּוֹ צִפּוֹר יִגִּיעַ רַחֲמֵיךָ..."
מְשַׁתְּקִין אוֹתוֹ.

...מַאי טַעְמָא?

...מִפְּנֵי שְׁעוֹשֶׂה מִדּוֹתָיו שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא רַחֲמִים, וְאֵינָן אֵלָּא גְזֵרוֹת.

According to this gemara, there's something wrong with trying to explain a mitzvah as God doing something nice!

Rambam wrote **Guide of the Perplexed** in a language called Judeo-Arabic, that most people don't know anymore. We'll just give you the English!

- ♦ What could be the problem with trying to find ethical explanations for mitzvot?
- ♦ Are we supposed to do mitzvot because we agree with them and think they're nice, or are we supposed to do what God says even if we don't like it?

Rambam says we should follow another opinion in the gemara than the one quoted above.

Guide of the Perplexed (Rambam) says:

There is no difference between the pain of people and the pain of other living beings... This reason applies to the law which tells us to let the mother fly away when we take the young... When the mother is sent away she does not see her young ones being taken, and does not feel pain... From the Torah's concern with causing emotional grief to animals and birds, we learn that we must be even more careful with other people's feelings.



- ♦ When you read the pesukim about shiluah ha-kein, what does it sound like the Torah is trying to teach us? What do you notice about the outcome or reward that the Torah promises?
- ♦ Does it help you to perform mitzvot when you can understand the reasons behind them?



הלכה • Halakhah

Let's talk about...shaatnez!



Devarim 22:11

You shall not wear **shaatnez**, wool and linen together.

דברים כב:יא

לֹא תִלְבַּשׁ שַׁעֲטָנִי, צֹמֶר וּפְשָׁתִים יַחְדָּו:

A mishnah explains that the word for **the mitzvah of שַׂעֲטָנָי (shaatnez)** is an acronym, describing a piece of clothing which is שׁוּעַ (shua, combed), טָווּי (tavui, spun), and נֻז (nuz, twisted) (Mishnah Kilayim 9:8).

Nowadays, shaatnez describes any clothing that contains both wool and linen. It only applies to wool and linen that are mixed together, so you can still wear a wool shirt and linen pants at the same time.

What's wrong with shaatnez?

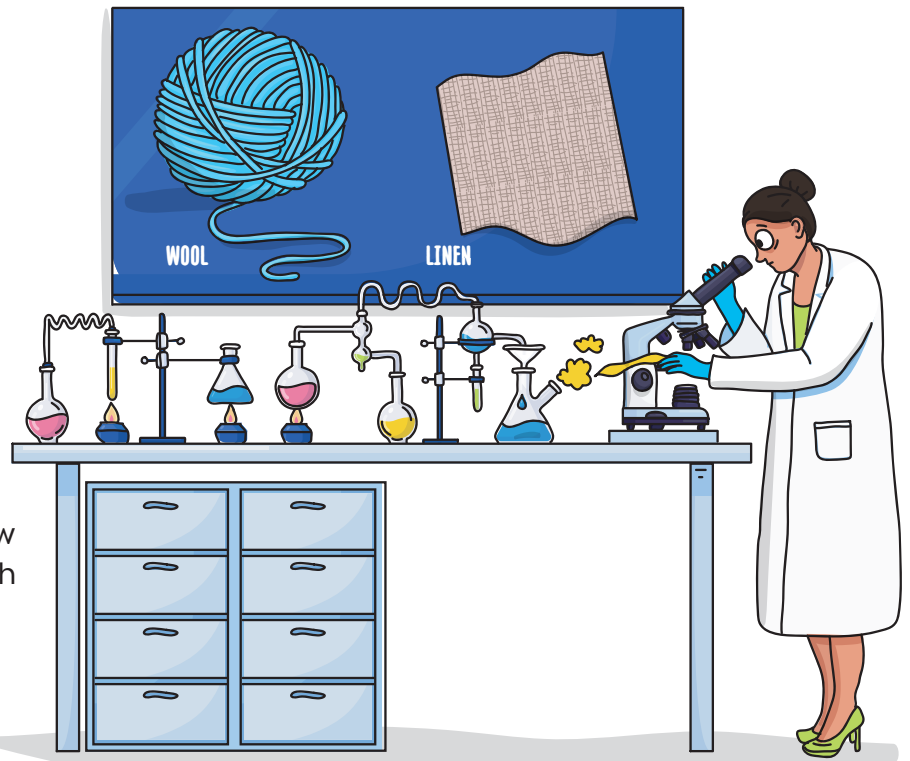
Shaatznez is usually understood to be a חֹק (hok)—a mitzvah that we observe simply because God commanded it. However, there are some other explanations. For example, Rambam says that not wearing shaatnez was a way for Benei Yisrael to distinguish themselves from the people who lived in Eretz Canaan, who wore shaatnez.

Fun facts! כְּהֹנָה (bigdei kehunah, clothing for kohanim/priests) are actually **supposed** to be shaatnez (Shemot 28:6 and 39:29). צִיצִית (tzitzit) are **allowed** to be shaatnez (Rashi on Devarim 22:12), and some sources say they are even **supposed** to be shaatnez! (See the Midrash section in Devash for Va'ethanan.)

- ♦ Can you explain why tzitzit and bigdei kehunah might be an exception to the shaatnez rule?
- ♦ Can you think of what these two kinds of clothing have in common?

Shaatznez testing

How do you know if a piece of clothing contains shaatnez? When people made their own clothes, it wasn't such a problem. Still, throughout Jewish history, there were methods for shaatnez testing. For example, sometimes a thread from clothing would be burned, because people could identify materials based on how they burned (Rema, Yoreh Deah 302:2). Today, you can take or send clothing to a special lab where experts examine it to identify if it has wool and linen.



קריאת התורה • Torah Reading

The letters in our סְפֵרֵי תוֹרָה (Sifrei Torah, Torah scrolls) have very special shapes, sometimes a little different (sometimes a lot different!) from what we're used to. Here is a comparison between what a regular letter het might look like, and how it might look in a Sefer Torah.



The het on the right is just a simple shape with two sides and a sloped top connecting them. The het on the left—the kind you would find in many Sifrei Torah—is actually a vav on the right, a zayin on the left, and a little hat connecting them!

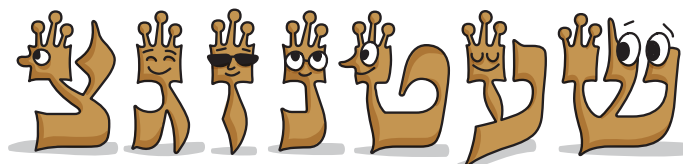
Another big difference in the letters in Sifrei Torah is that some of them have crowns! Check out these two words from our parashah:



Look carefully at the tzadi and the gimel—what do you see on top? That's right, a crown of three little lines, each one shaped like a baby zayin. If you like that, check out this word from later in our parashah:



Whoa, every letter in that word has a crown! What are they there for? We don't really know. In the Talmud, we hear stories about Moshe going to receive the Torah from God and seeing God "tying" these crowns onto the letters, and about R. Akiva learning things from every single crown (see p. 9). One thing is for sure: These crowns make the writing of a Sefer Torah more beautiful and more special. There are seven letters that get crowns—how many words can you make out of them?





דְּבָרִים שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

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.

Debate: You should not get punished or suffer consequences for other people's actions.



Agree!

- You can only be responsible for what you do.
- Why would you make good choices if you knew you could still get punished for other people's poor choices?

Disagree!

- There are situations when someone else does a problematic action, but you might have allowed it to happen. Even if it was indirect or unintentional, you share the responsibility.
- We are all interconnected:
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבִּימִם זֶה בָּזֶה (kol Yisrael areivim zeh bazeh, all of Israel is responsible for one another) (Sifra Behukotai 7:5, Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 27b).
- Parents are held accountable for what their kids do all the time!



רֵגֶעַ שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Devarim 21:10

When **you go** to war against your enemies, and God your Lord delivers them into your power, and you take some of them captive.

דברים כא:

כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל אֹיְבֶיךָ וַיִּנְתְּנֶנּוּ
ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּיָדְךָ וְשָׁבִיתָ שְׂבִיּוֹ:

לִצְאָתָא (שְׂרֵשׁ י.צ.א.)

- To go out, to leave (latzeit)

= לִצְאָתָא?
Exit
(yetziah)



= תּוֹצְאָה

Consequence or result
(totza'ah)





בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!



Did you know there was time travel in the Gemara? In this story, two of our great heroes, Moshe Rabbeinu (from the time of the Torah) and R. Akiva (from the time of the Mishnah), meet each other (Menahot 29b)! (And the story connects to the crowns we learned about in the Torah Reading column, p. 7.)

When Moshe went up to receive the Torah, he found the Holy Blessed One sitting and tying crowns on the letters.

Moshe said, Master of the Universe, who is preventing You (from giving the Torah without these additions)?

God said to him: There is a man who will be born after several generations, and his name will be Akiva ben Yosef. He will learn mounds and mounds of halakhah from each and every one of these crowns.

בְּשַׁעַר שְׁעָלָה מִשָּׁה לְמָרוֹם מִצָּאוֹ
לְהַקְדֹּשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא שְׁיוֹשֵׁב
וְקוֹשֵׁר כְּתָרִים לְאוֹתֵינוּ.

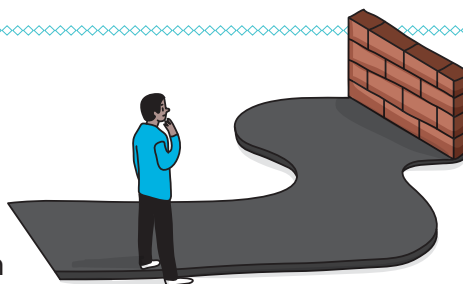
אָמַר לִפְנֵי, רַבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, מִי
מַעֲכָב עַל יָדְךָ? אָמַר לוֹ, אָדָם
אֶחָד יֵשׁ שְׁעֵתִיד לְהִיטֵב בְּסוֹף
כְּמָה דְּוָרוֹת, וְעֵקֶבָא בִּן יוֹסֵף
שְׁמוֹ, שְׁעֵתִיד לְדַרֵּשׁ עַל כָּל קוֹץ
וְקוֹץ תִּלְיֵן תִּלְיֵן שֶׁל הַלְכוֹת.

Moshe was so impressed by this that he asked God to allow him to see R. Akiva. God then sent him forward in time, and Moshe found himself sitting in the back of R. Akiva's classroom. At first, he was sad because he didn't understand what was going on. But then R. Akiva taught that all of his learning goes back to the Torah Moshe received at Sinai, and Moshe felt better.



לְצִאת יְדֵי חוֹבָה =

1. To fulfill one's obligation
2. To do the bare minimum and no more (latzeit yedei hovah)



דֶּרֶךְ לֹא מוֹצֵא =

Dead-end or one-way street (derekh lelo motza)

Find the Word!

There are a number of places in the Torah where a pair of words with this שָׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) come together. Can you find some of them? (Hint: Look at Bereishit 27:30, Shemot 11:8, and Bemidbar 35:26.)

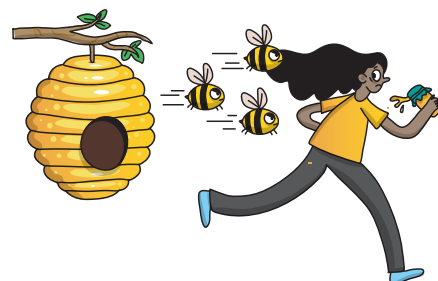


יָצָא מֵהַכֵּלִים =

Lost it (yatza me'hakeilim)

יָצָא שְׂכָרוֹ בְּהֶפְסֵדוֹ =

The loss is greater than the profit (yatza sekharo behefseido)





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 the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.

aliyot:

- 1) Devarim 21:10 to 21:21
- 2) 21:22 to 22:7
- 3) 22:8 to 23:7
- 4) 23:8 to 23:24
- 5) 23:25 to 24:4
- 6) 24:5 to 24:13
- 7) 24:14 to 25:19

Good luck!

1 According to our parashah, how much inheritance is a first-born supposed to get?

2 What is the reward for sending away the mother bird before taking her eggs or chicks?

3 What did the nations of Ammon and Moav do that was so terrible?

4 After how many generations can an Edomite or Egyptian enter the קהל (kahal, community)?

5 If you pass through someone's vineyard, what are the two rules regarding eating the grapes?

6 For how long are you free from serving in the army after getting married?

7 What must you not do if you forget a bundle of grain in the field while harvesting?

8 Which mitzvot in our parashah are connected to memory?

9 Two amounts of money are mentioned in our parashah. What are they?

10 Three combinations of things are forbidden in three consecutive verses. What are they?

*
Look for the answers on page 12!



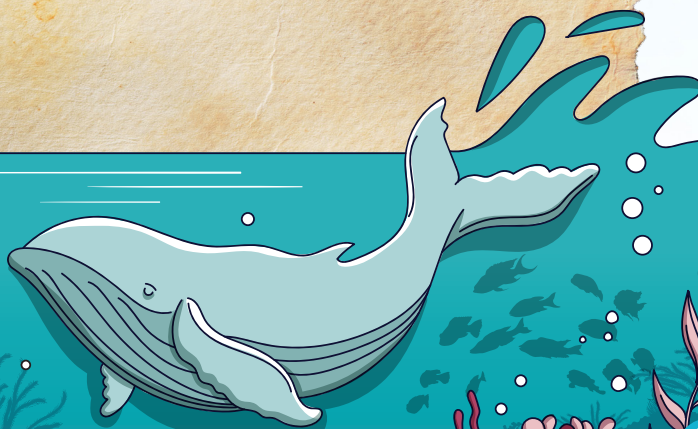
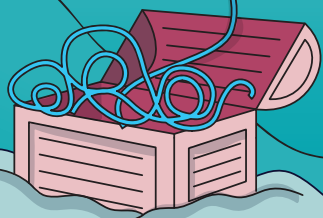


מי היו חכמינו • Who Were Our Sages?

This week's מדרש / Midrash section (p. 2) told a story of Hanina ben Dosa and his wife. There are lots of stories in which one or both of them appear, even though we don't know her name.

According to the Gemara (Taanit 24b-25a), they were so poor that Hanina ben Dosa's wife would heat the oven every Friday with nothing in it, just to convince her neighbors that she was cooking a lovely Shabbat meal. Once, one of her neighbors tried to embarrass her by opening her oven door. But God made sure that, this one time, the oven was full of bread! According to one opinion, she was so used to miracles that she went into another room to get a spatula because she knew she was about to have to take the miraculous bread out of the oven.

Hanina ben Dosa's wife was so righteous that she even will have a specific job in עולם הבא (olam haba, the world to come): making the blue threads for people's tzitzit! According to R. Yohanan, there is a chest at the bottom of the ocean which is designated to store all of her threads (Bava Batra 75b).





מה קרה • What's Going On Here?

When a person uses God's name to make a really strong promise to do something (or not to do something), that promise is called a נֶדֶר (neder). Our parashah emphasizes that once you make a neder, you must follow through (Devarim 23:24).

Since a neder is serious business, some people say בְּלִי נֶדֶר (bli neder, without a neder) any time they make a promise or agree to something. This makes it clear that they aren't committing to a neder-level obligation.

Before Rosh Hashanah, there is a custom to do הַתַּרַת נֶדָרִים (hatarat nedarim), a ceremony that cancels out any neder you made during the past year. Kol Nidrei, the prayer recited at the very beginning of Yom Kippur, is also about asking God to let us out of our nedarim.



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Twice as much as anyone else (21:17)
2. A good and long life (22:7)
3. They did not offer food and water to Benei Yisrael when they passed through their territory on the way from Egypt, and they hired Bil'am to curse them (23:5)
4. Three (23:8-9)
5. 1) You can eat as much as you want while passing through, 2) you can't collect them in a container (23:25)
6. One year (24:5)
7. Go back and get it! It belongs to people in need (24:19)
8. Remembering what happened to Miriam, by following the laws of the skin disease צִרְעָת (tzara'at) (24:8-9); Remembering that we were slaves in Egypt, by being fair to the stranger and the orphan and not seizing the property of widows (24:17-18), and by being sure to leave behind olives and grapes for the poor when harvesting (24:20-22); Remembering what Amalek did to us, and blotting out their memory (25:17-19)
9. 100 pieces of silver (22:19) and 50 pieces of silver (22:29)
10. Planting grain near a vineyard; Plowing with an ox and a donkey at the same time; Wearing fabric that mixes wool and linen (22:9-11)

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