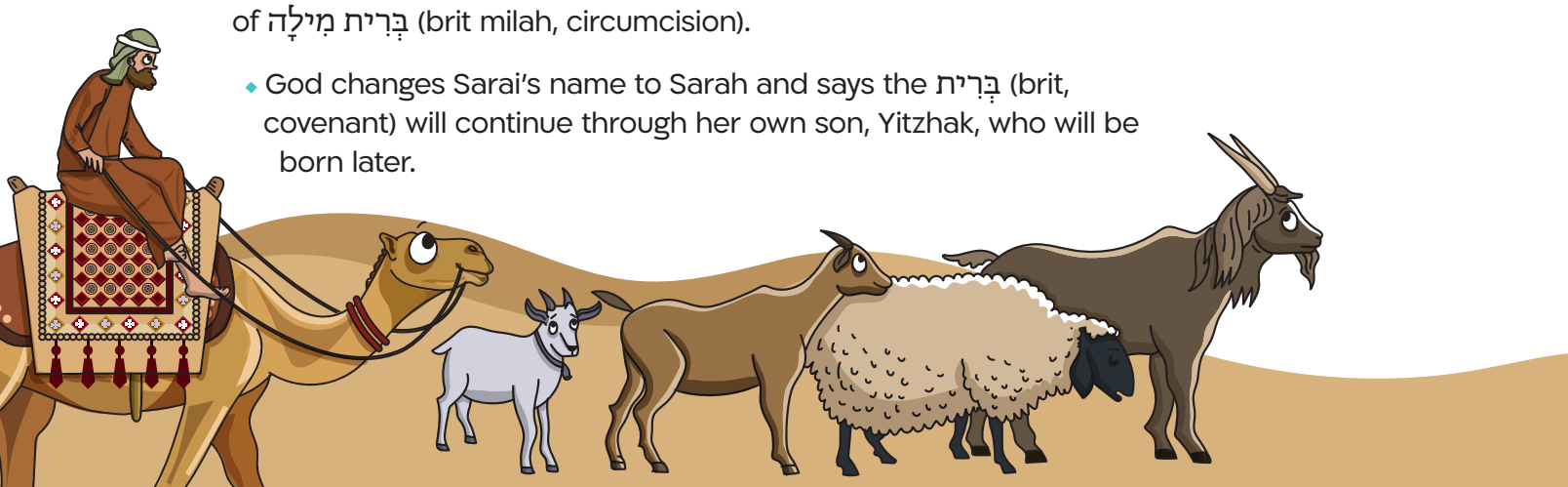
- BEREISHIT
- NOAH
- LEKH LEKHA
- VAYERA
- HAYYEI SARAH
- TOLDOT
- VAYEITZEI
- VAYISHLAH
- VAYEISHEV
- MIKEITZ
- VAYIGASH
- VAYEHI

DeVaSh
Because learning Torah is sweet
פָּרָשַׁת לֶךְ־לְךָ Lekh Lekha
HADAR Children & Families
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3
ב׳ - ח׳ מַרְחֶשְׁוָן תשפ״ה November 3 - 9, 2024

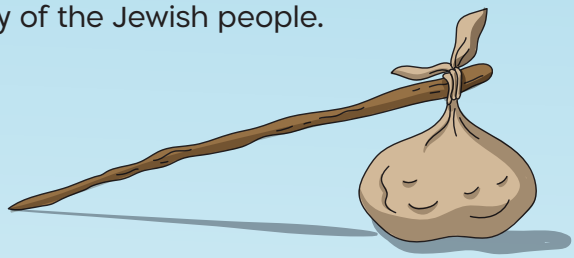
מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- God commands Avram to go from his home to a land God will show him.
- Avram and Sarai travel to אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן (Eretz Canaan, the land of Canaan) together with their nephew, Lot. (We'll call these two characters Avram and Sarai in all the parts of the story before their names are changed.)
- Avram and Lot each own large herds of cattle, but their shepherds argue, so Lot decides to move to Sedom, which is a wicked city.
- A group of four kings wages war against a group of five kings. The four kings win, conquering Sedom and taking Lot captive.
- Avram chases down the four kings, defeats their armies, and rescues Lot.
- God makes a special promise to Avram that he will have children as numerous as the stars in the sky, and they will inherit Eretz Canaan.
- Sarai has her servant, Hagar, marry Avram in order for them to have children. Hagar and Avram have a son named Yishmael.
- God changes Avram's name to Avraham and gives him the mitzvah of בְּרִית מִילָה (brit milah, circumcision).
- God changes Sarai's name to Sarah and says the בְּרִית (brit, covenant) will continue through her own son, Yitzhak, who will be born later.



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

In the opening פָּסוּק (pasuk, verse) of Parashat Lekh Lekha, God chooses Avram for a special mission, and commands him to go on a journey that becomes the first part of the story of the Jewish people.



There are often gaps in the Torah's telling of the story and there are also phrases that are curious and draw our attention. Midrash tries to fill in gaps in the story while also answering questions or resolving difficulties. You can think of midrash as where the text and an idea meet.

Bereishit 12:1

God said to Avram, "Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house to the land that I will show you."

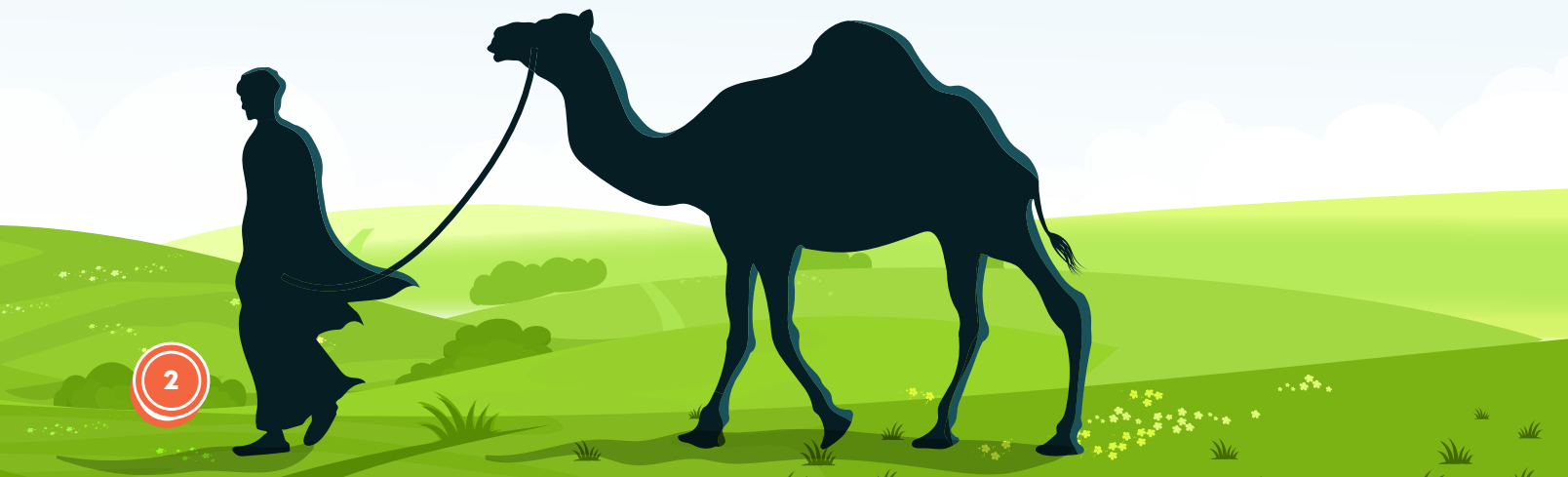
בראשית יב:א

וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־אַבְרָם לֶךְ־לְךָ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַרְאֶךָּ׃

This is similar to the opening pasuk of last week's parashah, when we were told that God chose Noah for a special mission, too.

However, there is a big difference between these two פְּסוּקִים (pesukim, verses). The Torah explains *why* Noah was chosen, saying that he was righteous (Bereishit 6:9). But the Torah does not tell us anything about Avram's background to help us understand why God chooses him.

This midrash helps us fill in this gap.



Bereishit Rabbah 39:1

Rabbi Yitzhak said: This may be compared to a person who was traveling from place to place and then saw a palace on fire. He said, "Is it possible that this building has no one in charge?" The owner of the building appeared to him and said to him: "I am the master of the palace." So, too, since our father Avraham said, "Is it possible that this world has no one in charge?" the Holy Blessed One appeared to him and said to him, "I am the master of the world."

בראשית רבה לט:א

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק מָשָׁל לְאֶחָד שֶׁהָיָה עוֹבֵר מִמָּקוֹם לְמָקוֹם, וְרָאָה בִּירָה אַחַת דּוֹלֶקֶת, אָמַר תֹּאמַר שֶׁהַבִּירָה הַזּוֹ בְּלֹא מַנְהִיג, הֵצִיץ עָלָיו בַּעַל הַבִּירָה, אָמַר לוֹ אֲנִי הוּא בַּעַל הַבִּירָה. כָּךְ לְפִי שֶׁהָיָה אָבִינוּ אַבְרָהָם אוֹמֵר תֹּאמַר שֶׁהָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּלֹא מַנְהִיג, הֵצִיץ עָלָיו הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וְאָמַר לוֹ אֲנִי הוּא בַּעַל הָעוֹלָם.

According to this midrash, there is an important story that takes place *before* God selects Avram. First, Avram notices that there is a kind of "fire" in the world and wonders who is looking after it. Only then does God respond to Avram and choose him for his mission.

- What do you think it means that Avram noticed that the world is on fire? What different kinds of "fires" should we be noticing around us?
- Why does it matter whether God chooses Avram out of the blue or because Avram did something that made him worthy?

בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

The Hebrew word דּוֹלֶקֶת (doleket) that describes the building in this midrash is not clear.

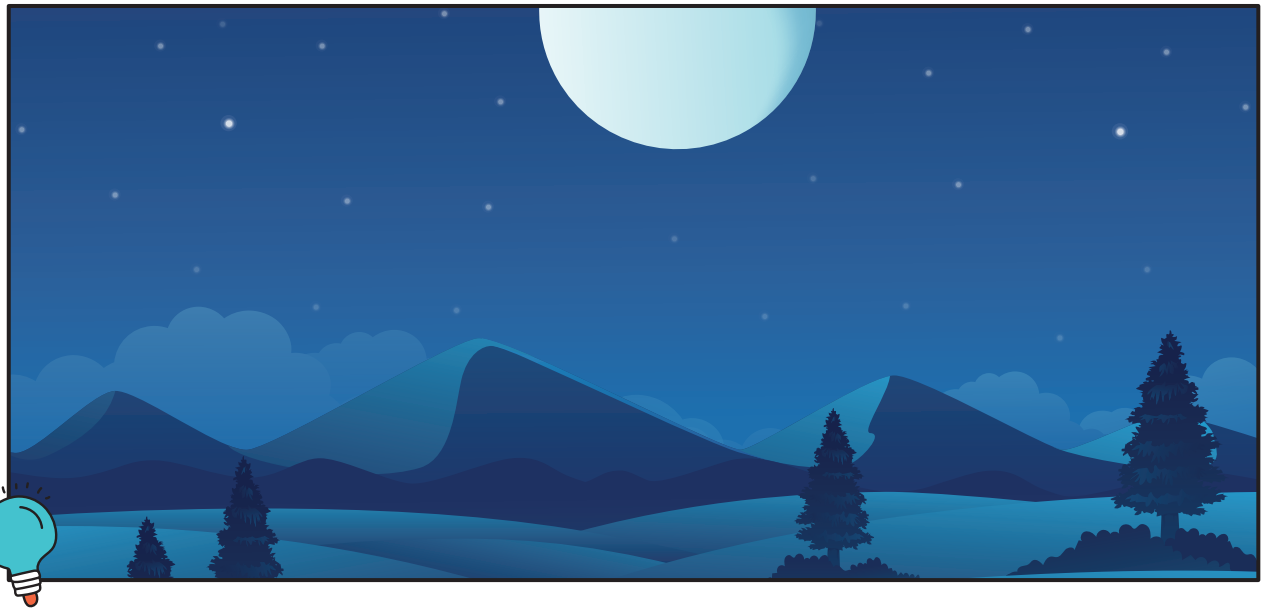
One interpretation is that the building (which represents the world) is on fire. According to this reading, Avram sees everything wrong with the world and cries out for the owner to come and fix it.

But it could equally mean that the building is lit up or glowing. This second interpretation would suggest that Avram doesn't see bad things about the world, but instead he sees how bright and beautiful it is. When he cries out for the owner, he wants to know who owns such an amazing place.



We can discover God's footprint in the world by doing either—by noticing the fires that we might have to put out, or by realizing how magnificent and beautiful the world can be.

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Design by Jen Klor. Illustration by Elad Lifshitz.



פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

God promises Avram that his descendants will be like the stars, and that they will live in אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן (Eretz Canaan, the land of Canaan). But Avram replies to this promise with a question:

Genesis 15:8	**בראשית טו:ח**
And he said, "God, how will I know that I will possess it?"	וַיֹּאמַר ה' אֱלֹקִים בַּמָּה אֵדַע כִּי אִירָשֶׁנָּה:

What, exactly, is Avram asking for? Here are two opinions on this question. Try to see if you can explain the difference between them!

Sforno (16th century, Italy)	**ספורנו**
Perhaps my descendants will sin and not be worthy to receive this inheritance.	כִּי אוּלַי יֶחֱטְאוּ הַבָּנִים וְלֹא יִזְכּוּ לְיֵרֵשׁ:

Bekhor Shor (12th century, France)	**בכור שור**
It is not possible to say that he is asking God for a sign [that his children will inherit the land], since he already believed this... Rather, "How will I know that I will possess it?" is as if he is saying: I know that I will inherit the land, but "How will I inherit it"—during which time and in which generation, and when will it be?	אֵין לוֹמַר שֶׁשָּׁאַל אוֹת לְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁכְּבָר הֶאֱמִין... אֶלָּא בַּמָּה אֵדַע כִּי אִירָשֶׁנָּה כְּלוֹמַר יוֹדֵעַ אֲנִי שֶׁאִירָשֶׁנָּה אֶלָּא בַּמָּה אִירָשֶׁנָּה בְּאֵיזֶה זְמַן וּבְאֵיזֶה דּוֹר וּמָתַי יִהְיֶה...





According to Sforno, Avram's question is rooted in doubt about whether his children would deserve what God was promising. He is asking: "How can I be sure that my children will actually deserve to receive these blessings?"

Bekhor Shor, however, believes that Avram is just asking God for more specific information, saying: "How and when will my children actually inherit the land?"

- In the Talmud (Nedarim 32a), Shmuel says that it was inappropriate for Avram to express doubt about God's promise. Does either one of the questions presented by Sforno and Bekhor Shor seem inappropriate to you? What else could Avram have said after God made that promise to him?

- Even though Sforno and Bekhor Shor don't agree on what Avram is asking, it seems they do agree that he is very concerned about what will happen to his descendants. What do you think that tells us about Avram?



הֲלָכָה • Halakhah



After Avram defeats the armies holding Lot captive, he receives a בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) from Malkitzedek, king of Shalem. Malkitzedek first blesses Avram (Bereishit 14:19) and then blesses God (Bereishit 14:20). How do we respond when somebody else makes a blessing?

Nowadays, the custom is to say, "בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּבָרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ (barukh hu u-varukh shemo, blessed is God and blessed is God's name)," when you hear another person saying God's name in a blessing. The first mention of this custom is in the Tur of Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher:

Tur, Orah Hayyim 124
(14th century, Germany and Spain)

I heard from my father and teacher (Rabbeinu Asher, known as the Rosh), that upon every blessing that one hears in any place, one should say, "barukh hu u-varukh shemo." This is derived from what Moshe, our teacher, said: "When I call out the name of God, give greatness to our God" (Devarim 32:3). Moreover, even when a righteous person is mentioned, one needs to bless them, as it says, "The memory of the righteous is for a blessing" (Mishlei 10:7).

טור, אורח חיים קכד

וְשָׁמַעְתִּי מֵאַבָּא מוֹרִי
שֶׁהָיָה אוֹמֵר עַל כָּל בְּרָכָה
וּבְרָכָה שֶׁהָיָה שׁוֹמֵעַ בְּכָל
מָקוֹם בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּבָרוּךְ
שְׁמוֹ וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר מֹשֶׁה
רַבֵּינוּ כִּי שֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא הָבוּ
גֹדֶל לֵאלֹקֵינוּ וְעוֹד אֲפִילוּ
כְּשֶׁמַּזְכִּירִין צַדִּיק בָּשָׂר וָדָם
צָרִיךְ לְבָרְכוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מִשְׁלֵי
י:ז) "זֵכֶר צַדִּיק לִבְרָכָה".

This teaches us that calling out the name of God, such as in a berakhah, requires a response of giving "greatness to our God," meaning that a person should say, "barukh hu u-varukh shemo."

When shouldn't you say "barukh hu u-varukh shemo"?

The Mishnah Berurah (Orah Hayyim 124:21) brings two examples of when not to say, "barukh hu u-varukh shemo," upon hearing God's name in a berakhah.

If the person who hears the berakhah is at a point in their own prayers where interruptions aren't allowed, such as during the blessings before Shema.

If you're going to fulfill the mitzvah through the person making the berakhah. For example, during Kiddush, or the berakhah recited before hearing shofar or Megilat Esther, you don't say barukh hu u-varukh shemo. Instead, you listen to the berakhah without interrupting, and then answer "amen" at the end.



מָה זֶּה • What's Going On Here?



Why is מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt) spared from the famine?

When faced with a severe famine in אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן (Eretz Canaan, land of Canaan), Avram and Sarai decide to travel to Mitzrayim (Bereishit 12:10). Later on in Bereishit, the same thing happens again when the sons of Yaakov travel down to Mitzrayim during a famine in search of food (Bereishit 41:57).

Why is Mitzrayim not affected by the famines in Eretz Canaan?

One possibility is the difference between agriculture in Mitzrayim and Eretz Canaan. Farms in Eretz Canaan are dependent on rain. So, if there is a drought (meaning that there is no rain), food can't grow. Mitzrayim, however, had an irrigation system connected to the Nile river, so food could grow even when it wasn't raining.





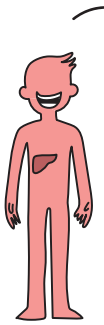
רֶגַע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Bereishit 13:2

Now Avram was very **heavy (rich)** with cattle, silver, and gold.

בראשית יג:ב

וְאַבְרָם **כָּבֵד** מְאֹד
בַּמִּקְנֶה בַּכֶּסֶף וּבַזָּהָב:



כָּבֵד = Liver (the largest and heaviest internal organ in the human body)



כְּבוּדָּה = Luggage



כָּבוֹד = Respect, honor (showing respect is a way of "giving weight" to a person and acknowledging their importance)

כָּבֵד (שֹׁרֶשׁ כ.ב.ד)
Heavy



Find the Word!

Where else can you find this שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) in the Torah?

Look at Shemot 4:22. What words does Moshe use to explain why he cannot speak to Pharaoh and lead בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Benei Yisrael, the Israelites) out of מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt)?



דַּקָּה 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: It was good that Avram and Lot separated.

Agree!

- Distance makes the heart grow fonder.
- Why should they be crowded and fight if there is so much land that God promised them?



Disagree!

- Out of sight out of mind, they are family and they should stick together.
- It's important to work things out and figure out how to get along and share with each other.



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שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • 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.

Good luck!

1. What leads Avram to go to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt)?



2. What Hebrew words does the Torah use to describe Avram as having been very rich?

3. What city was said to be filled with terrible, horrible people?

4. In the war of the five kings against the four, who wins?

5. What does God tell Avram to count?

6. How old was Avram when his son, Yishmael, was born?

7. How many princes will Yishmael give birth to?

8. The midrash says that the phrase וְאֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ בְחָרָן (ve-et ha-nefesh asher asu ve-Haran, and the life/soul that they made in Haran) refers to people Avram and Sarai converted to Judaism. Where else in the parashah is the word נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, life/soul) used to refer to people?



9. What is the name of the priest of אֵ-ל עֶלְיוֹן (El Elyon, God Most High)?

10. There are three young men who help Avram recapture his nephew. What are their names?

* Look for the answers on page 12!



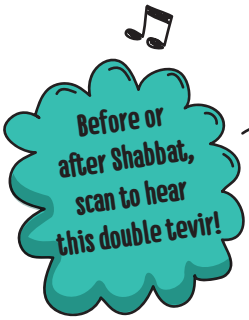
טַעֲמֵי הַמִּקְרָא • Torah Trop

Tevir תְּבִיר



This week's note is tevir, which looks like a dot being scooped up. The name, tevir, means "broken" and it makes a sound that goes down and then comes back up—just like when you scoop something up! Tevir usually leads us into the middle or the end of a verse; it's kind of like the airplane gear that gets us ready to land.

Although the tevir itself is very common, there are only seven times in the Torah when there is a double tevir! Check it out from this week's parashah:

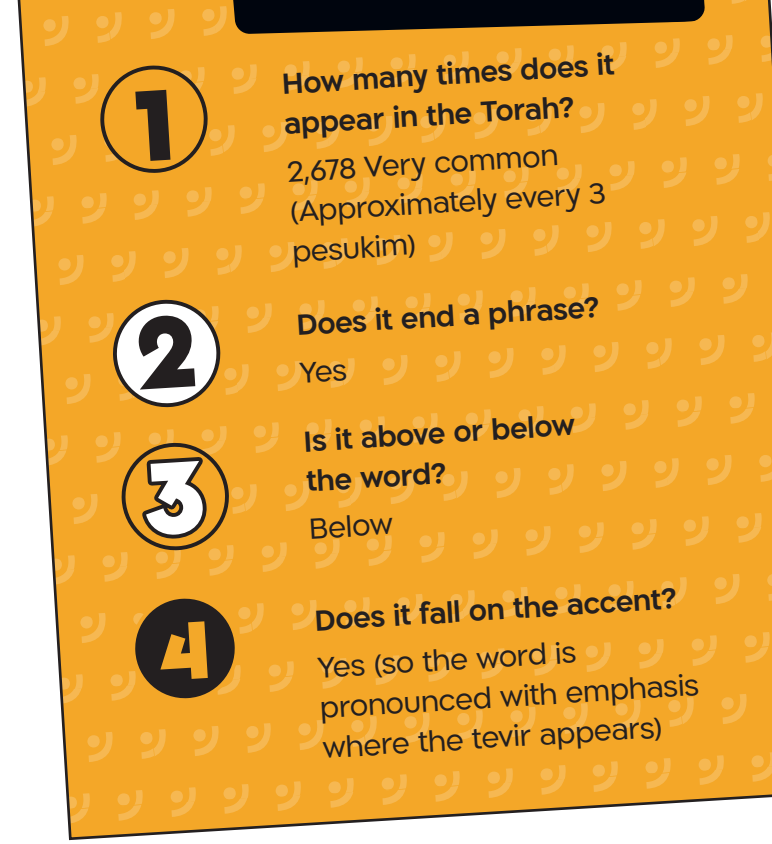


Bereishit 13:18

And Avram pitched his tent, and **came to dwell** at the oaks of Mamrei, which are in Hevron

בראשית יג:יח

וַיְאָהֶל אַבְרָם וַיָּבֹא וַיֵּשֶׁב
בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא אֲשֶׁר בְּחֶבְרוֹן



Pay attention and see if you can catch the other six throughout the year!

בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

We saw a big difference in the מַה זֶּה (What's Going On Here?) section (p. 6) between the lands of מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt) and כְּנַעַן (Canaan): Mitzrayim gets its water from the Nile, while Eretz Canaan gets its water from rain. This is seen by the Torah as one of the best features of Eretz Yisrael:

Devarim 11:10-12

For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like Eretz Mitzrayim from which you have come. There, the grain you sowed had to be watered by your own effort, like a vegetable garden; but the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. It is a land which God your Lord looks after, on which God your Lord always keeps God's eye, from year's beginning to year's end.

דברים יא:י-יב

כִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בָא־שָׁמָּה
לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא כְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הִוא אֲשֶׁר
יְצָאתֶם מִשָּׁם אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ
וְהִשְׁקִיתָ בְרַגְלְךָ כְּגַן הַיָּרָק: וְהָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ
אֶרֶץ הָרִים וּבְקָעֹת לִמְטַר הַשָּׁמַיִם
תִּשְׁתֶּה־מָּיִם: אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ
דֹּרֵשׁ אֹתָהּ תָּמִיד עֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בָּהּ
מֵרֵשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה:

In Mitzrayim, you have to walk to the Nile with a bucket, get your water, and then bring it back to wherever you need it, or else spend a ton of effort digging an irrigation ditch. So tiring! In Eretz Yisrael, though, all you need to do is sit and wait for God to bring rain. In Mitzrayim you have to water your plants yourself, but in Eretz Yisrael God does it for you.

Think about a big task that you have to do. Which would you prefer—to have to put in all the work yourself but for every part of that task to be within your power? Or to have to do none of the work but not control when or how it is done?





מִי הָיוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ • Who Were Our Sages?

One of our פַּרְשָׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) this week is **Yosef ben Yitzhak from Orléans**, a rabbi, poet, and author who lived in France during the 12th century. He is most famous for his commentary on the Torah called **Bekhor Shor**.

It's very common for these kinds of books to be named after some quote from Tanakh that in some way relates to the author's name. In this case, בְּכוֹר שׁוֹר (bekhor shor, firstborn bull) is a reference to Moshe's blessing, describing the strength of the biblical Yosef: בְּכוֹר שׁוֹרוֹ הָדָר לוֹ וְקַרְנֵי רְאֵם קַרְנָיו (like a firstborn bull in his majesty, [Yosef] has horns like the horns of the wild-ox).

He is known in this commentary to stick closely to the plain meaning of the text. He commented on passages in the Talmud as part of the Tosafot, a close-knit community of French rabbis who were some of the greatest legal and talmudic experts of all time. He was very good friends with fellow Tosafist Rabbeinu Tam, Rashi's grandson.

As if that wasn't enough, he also wrote a bunch of poems. Some of them appear in his commentary, and some he wrote to be recited in Selihot during the High Holiday period.



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. A famine
2. כָּבֵד מְאוֹד (kaveid me'od, literally: very heavy)
3. Sedom
4. The four: Amrafel, Aryokh, Kedorla'omer, Tid'al
5. The stars
6. 86
7. 12
8. The captives from Sedom (Bereishit 14:21)
9. Malkitzedek (Bereishit 14:18)
10. Aner, Eshkol, Mamrei (Bereishit 14:24)



Shabbat Shalom!

~ שבת שלום ~



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