HADAR Children & Families
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Because learning Torah is sweet

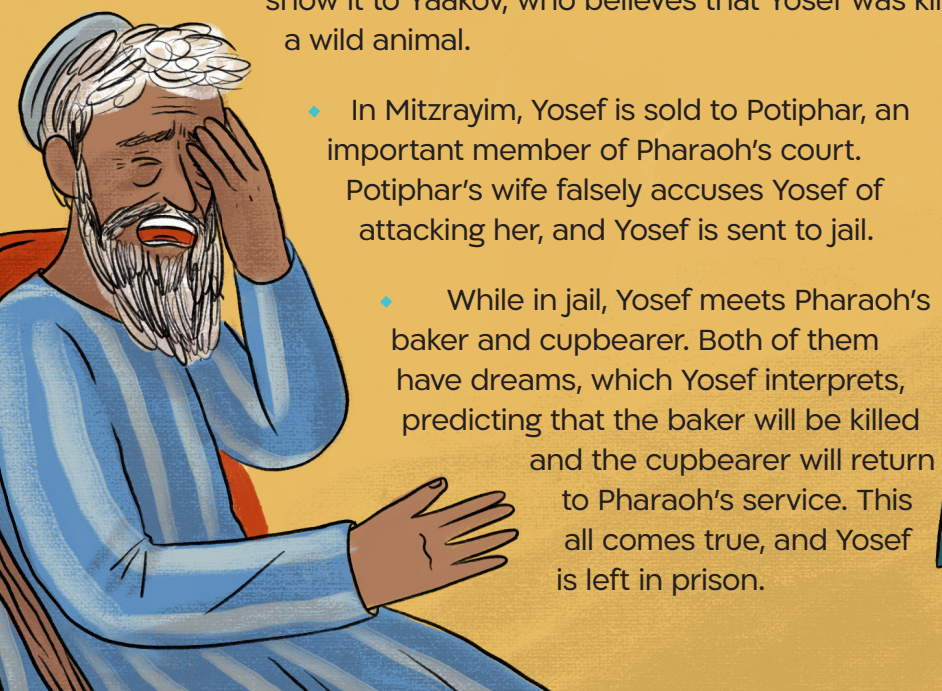
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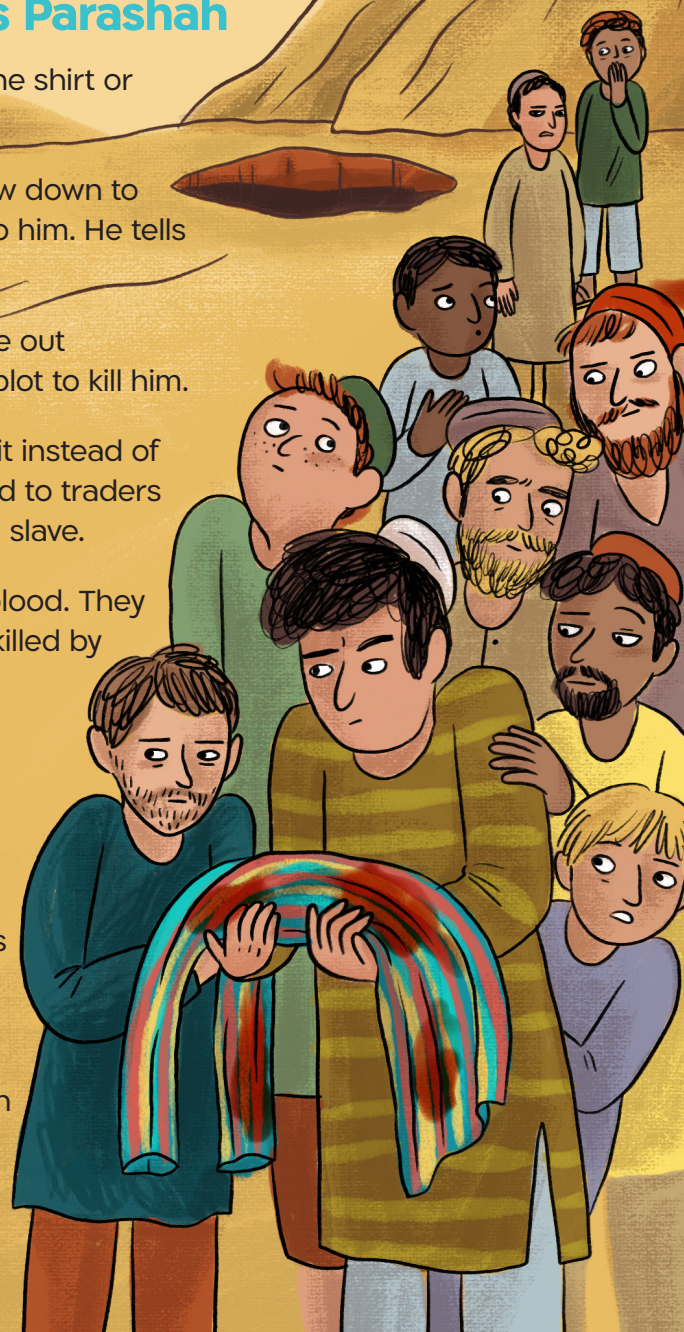


י"ט-כ"ה כִּסְלֵו תשפ"ז November 29–December 5, 2026

מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Yaakov gives Yosef a כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים (ketonet passim, a fine shirt or coat). Yosef's brothers feel jealous and hate him.
- Yosef dreams that his brothers' bundles of wheat bow down to his, and that the sun, moon, and 11 stars bow down to him. He tells his brothers, and they hate him even more.
- Yaakov sends Yosef to check on his brothers, who are out shepherding. When they see him approaching, they plot to kill him.
- Reuven persuades the others to throw Yosef into a pit instead of killing him. Yehudah proposes selling him. Yosef is sold to traders passing by and taken to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt) as a slave.
- The brothers dip Yosef's ketonet passim in goat blood. They show it to Yaakov, who believes that Yosef was killed by a wild animal.
- In Mitzrayim, Yosef is sold to Potiphar, an important member of Pharaoh's court. Potiphar's wife falsely accuses Yosef of attacking her, and Yosef is sent to jail.
- While in jail, Yosef meets Pharaoh's baker and cupbearer. Both of them have dreams, which Yosef interprets, predicting that the baker will be killed and the cupbearer will return to Pharaoh's service. This all comes true, and Yosef is left in prison.





פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Bereishit 37:2

When Yosef was 17 years old he was a shepherd with his brothers.
He was "na'ar et" the children of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives.
Yosef brought bad reports about them to their father.

בראשית לז:ב

יוֹסֵף בֶּן שְׁבַע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת אֶחָיו בַּצֹּאן

וְהוּא נַעַר אֶת בְּנֵי בִלְהָה וְאֶת בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה נְשֵׁי אָבִיו

וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל אֲבִיהֶם:

The word "na'ar" can mean "young person," "child," or "servant."

The word "et" could mean lots of things: "of" or "to" or "with." It depends on context.

What does "na'ar et" mean here? What was the nature of Yosef's relationship with the children of Bilhah and Zilpah? (Bilhah and Zilpah were Yaakov's wives who had come into the home as Leah and Rahel's servants.)

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Yosef would spend his time with the children of Bilhah because his brothers made fun of them for being the children of servants; but Yosef would bring them close.

רש"י

רָגִיל אֵצֶל בְּנֵי בִלְהָה, לְפִי שֶׁהָיוּ אֶחָיו מְבַזִּין אוֹתָן וְהוּא מְקָרְבָן.

Rashi thinks that "na'ar et" here means "child with." So the pasuk is saying that Yosef and the children of the servants were doing childish things together. In other words, they were friends!





Ibn Ezra (Spain, 900 years ago)

Yosef was the youngest, so the children of Bilhah and Zilpah made him their servant.

ר. אברהם אבן עזרא

בַּעֲבוּר הֱיוֹתוֹ קָטָן שָׂמוּהוּ בְּנֵי הַשְּׁפָחוֹת שַׁמַּשׁ לָהֶם.

Ibn Ezra understands "na'ar et" as "the servant of." This means the children of Bilhah and Zilpah were taking advantage of Yosef.



- How do you understand the bad reports that Yosef brought to his father according to each interpretation?
- What different picture of Yosef and his brothers do you get from each of these interpretations?
- How might the time that Yosef spent with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah have influenced his later behavior? What would Rashi say, and what would Ibn Ezra say?
- As you read the rest of our parashah, what evidence can you find for each interpretation?



דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate



Debate: It's ok for parents to raise their kids in different ways.



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!

- Every kid is different, and needs to be raised in the way that best meets their needs and personalities.
- Really negative consequences can result when kids are treated as if they're all the same when actually they have important differences from each other.
- Some kids deserve better treatment than others. It's not their fault!
- Not everything can be exactly equal all the time.



Disagree!

- Everyone needs to be treated fairly, and that means being treated equally!
- If one kid gets 17 sprinkles on their cupcake, then all the kids should get 17 sprinkles on theirs.
- When things aren't fair, someone usually gets taken advantage of, and it ruins any sense of justice.

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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 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) Bereishit 37:1 to 37:11
2) 37:12 to 37:22
3) 37:23 to 37:36
4) 38:1 to 38:30
5) 39:1 to 39:6
6) 39:7 to 39:23
7) 40:1 to 40:23

Haftarah for Shabbat Hanukkah: Zekhariah 2:14–4:7

Good luck!

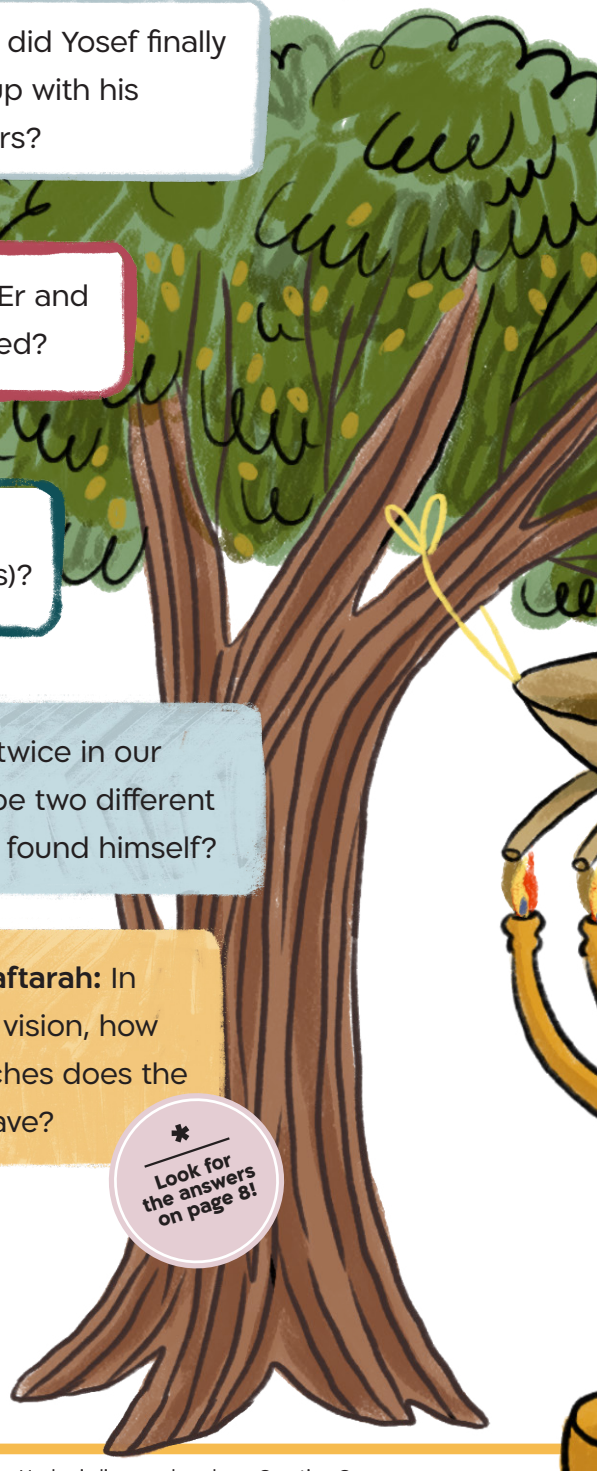


1. In Yosef's second dream, who bowed down to him?
2. Where did Yosef finally meet up with his brothers?
3. What items for sale were the Yishmaelites carrying in their caravan?
4. How were Er and Onan related?



5. From whom did Potiphar purchase Yosef?
6. Who does חֶסֶד (hesed, kindness)?
7. Who forgot to uphold their end of a deal?
8. What word is used twice in our parashah to describe two different places where Yosef found himself?
9. Two people in the parashah refuse something, with the word וַיְמָאֵן (vayema'ein). Who are they?
10. **From the haftarah:** In Zekhariah's vision, how many branches does the menorah have?

* Look for the answers on page 8!



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הַפְטָרָה • Haftarah

Hanukkah means "initiation" or "dedication," starting something new or celebrating doing it for the first time. (That's why the word for "education" in Hebrew is חִנּוּךְ (hinukh) – because it's about teaching people new things for the first time.) When the Jews re-lit the menorah, it was a way of starting over fresh or dedicating it after the Greeks made it impure. On Shabbat Hanukkah, we read a maftir (additional reading) and a haftarah that describe other times when our ancestors celebrated initiating holy spaces for God.



Maftir: We read from Sefer Bemidbar about חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ (hanukkat ha-mizbe'ah), when Benei Yisrael celebrated using the altar in the newly built מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan, sanctuary for God) for the first time.

Haftarah: We read from Zekhariah about rebuilding and rededicating the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ (Beit Ha-Mikdash, Temple in Jerusalem) following גָּלוּת בָּבֶל (galut Bavel, the Babylonian exile). Zekhariah's prophecy encourages the Jewish people to take this job seriously.

Our haftarah also contains an image that is obviously appropriate for Hanukkah: a really fancy menorah that appears to Zekhariah in a vision! (Look it up! See Zekhariah 4:2-3. What do you imagine when you read these pesukim?)

An angel explains the meaning of this vision:

זכריה ד:ו

לֹא בְחַיִל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי אִם בְּרוּחִי אָמַר ה'.

Zekhariah 4:2-3

Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says God.

The idea here is that true success happens through God's spirit, and not through physical or military strength.

- How can this message apply to our Hanukkah celebration? Should we focus more on the Maccabees' victory, or on God's miracles? What would Zekhariah say?

Almost every Hebrew verb (action word) is made up of a three-letter שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root). When you look at a verb, it's usually possible to see all three letters of its shoresh. Like in these:

Shoresh	Verb
ח.ל.מ (to dream)	וַיַּחֲלֹם (vayahalom, he dreamed)
ק.ר.א (to call)	וַתִּקְרָא (vatikra, she called)
א.מ.ר (to say)	וַיֹּאמְרוּ (vayomru, they said)

But sometimes you get a verb that seems very short, like this one, which appears twice in our parashah:



וַיֵּט (va-yei-t)

This seems like a one-letter shoresh! Is there anything else to this verb other than the tet?

Actually, the shoresh here is נ.ט.ה (to turn towards or to pitch a tent) and it gets shortened like this in two steps:

1 The letter nun drops out. This happens with a lot of verbs when a nun is the first letter of the shoresh. Like here:

Shoresh	Verb
נ.פ.ל (to fall)	וַתִּפֹּל (vayipol, she fell)
נ.ק.ב (to make a hole)	וַיִּקֹּב (vayikov, he made a hole)
נ.ש.ק (to kiss)	וַיִּשַּׁק (vayishak, he kissed)

No nun in these!

2 The letter heh drops out. This happens with a lot of verbs when a heh is the final letter of the shoresh. Like here:

Shoresh	Verb
ב.נ.ה (to build)	וַתִּבֶן (vativen, she built)
ק.נ.ה (to buy)	וַיִּקֶן (vayiken, he bought)
ש.ת.ה (to drink)	וַתֵּשְׁתְּ (vatesht, she drank)

No heh in these!

Coming back to וַיֵּט (vayeit): Once the nun and heh drop out, all that is left is the tet!

There are only two other shorashim like this in the Torah. These are the shoresh נ.ז.ה (to sprinkle) and the shoresh נ.כ.ה (to hit or attack).

Stay on the lookout for verbs from these shorashim. They won't have many letters!

פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Yaakov sends Yosef to check on his brothers, and someone finds him wandering in the fields and asks Yosef what he's looking for (Bereishit 37:16-17).



אֶת אַחַי אָנֹכִי מְבַקֵּשׁ הַגִּידָה נָּא לִי אֵיפֹה הֵם רֹעִים:

I am looking for my brothers. Please tell me where they are pasturing.

נָסְעוּ מִזֶּה כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי אֹמְרִים נֵלְכָה דֹתָיְנָה

They have traveled from this, for I heard them say: Let us go to Dotan.

What does it mean that Yosef's brothers have "traveled from this"? What's the "this" that they traveled away from?

Sforno (Italy, 500 years ago)

They have certainly traveled from this pasture and it is not worth looking for them in one of these fields.

ספורנו

אֵין סָפֵק שֶׁנָּסְעוּ מִזֶּה הַמִּרְעֶה וְאֵין לְבַקְּשָׁם בְּאֶחָד מֵחֲלָקָיו.

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

They took themselves away from brotherhood.

רש"י

הִסִּיעוּ עַצְמָן מִן הָאַחְוָה.

- One of these commentators thinks "this" is the place, and the other commentator thinks "this" is the relationship. Which is which? Can you find evidence for each "this" in Yosef's statement in 37:16?
- How do you imagine the scene here? What were their tones of voice in the conversation? Did Yosef get the message he was supposed to get? How would Sforno answer these questions, and how would Rashi?
- If you follow Rashi's interpretation, Yosef was saying: I'm looking for people who will treat me as a brother. And the response back to him was a painful truth: "They're not your brothers anymore." What would it be like to hear this response? What might it be like to look for brothers - for people to trust and love - but not to find them? How could this conversation help us better understand Yosef's personality?

Devash is a weekly parashah magazine that makes Torah learning sweet. By engaging directly with texts and taking kids seriously as Jews, Devash helps children (ages 7+) and grown-ups discover the weekly Torah portion.



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Yosef is sold to a caravan of Yishmaelites that was on the way to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt). The caravan was carrying נְכֹאת וּצְרִי וָלֹט — spices, balm, and labdanum (that's a sticky part of a plant used for making perfume) (Bereishit 37:25).

Why does the Torah give the details about what the Yishmaelites were carrying? Does this matter to the story of Yosef and his brothers?



Rashi wonders about this, and he brings an answer based on a midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 84:17).

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

This teaches us how God protects tzaddikim (righteous people). These caravans would normally carry kerosene and tar, which have bad smells. But God made sure this caravan had spices, so Yosef wouldn't be harmed by a bad smell.

רש"י

לְהוֹדִיעַ מַתָּן שְׂכָרָן שֶׁל צַדִּיקִים, שֶׁאֵין דַּרְכָּן שֶׁל עֲרָבִיִּים לָשֵׂאת אֶלָּא נֵפְט וְעִטְרָן, שֶׁרֵיחָן רַע, וְלָזֶה נִזְדַּמְּנוּ בְּשָׂמִים, שֶׁלֹּא יִזּוֹק מֵרֵיחַ רַע.

God knew that Yosef was suffering. His brothers had pushed him into a pit and now he was being dragged away from his home to be sold as a slave. God wanted to make things a little easier for Yosef.

Traveling with nice-smelling spices definitely did not solve all of Yosef's problems. But maybe, in this small pleasant experience, Yosef was able to experience God's kindness and gain a little strength from that.

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. The sun, moon, and 11 stars (37:9)
2. Dotan (37:17)
3. נְכֹאת וּצְרִי וָלֹט (spices, balm, labdanum) (37:25)
4. They were brothers (38:3-4)
5. From the Yishmaelites, who brought Yosef to Egypt (39:1)
6. God (39:21)
7. The cupbearer (40:23)
8. בּוֹר (bor): describing the pit where his brothers threw him (37:24), and the dungeon where he was imprisoned (40:15)
9. Yaakov (37:35) and Yosef (39:8)
10. Seven (Zekhariah 4:2)

- Were you ever going through a hard time, and a small gesture of love and kindness - from a family member, friend, or God - made things a lot better for you even if it didn't solve your problems?
- How does this connect to the miracle of the oil on Hanukkah? (Did that miracle solve the bigger issues caused by the war? If not, what good was it?)
- You may not be able to solve most people's problems, but don't give up! What small things can you do for people around you to make their lives a lot better even if you can't solve everything?

