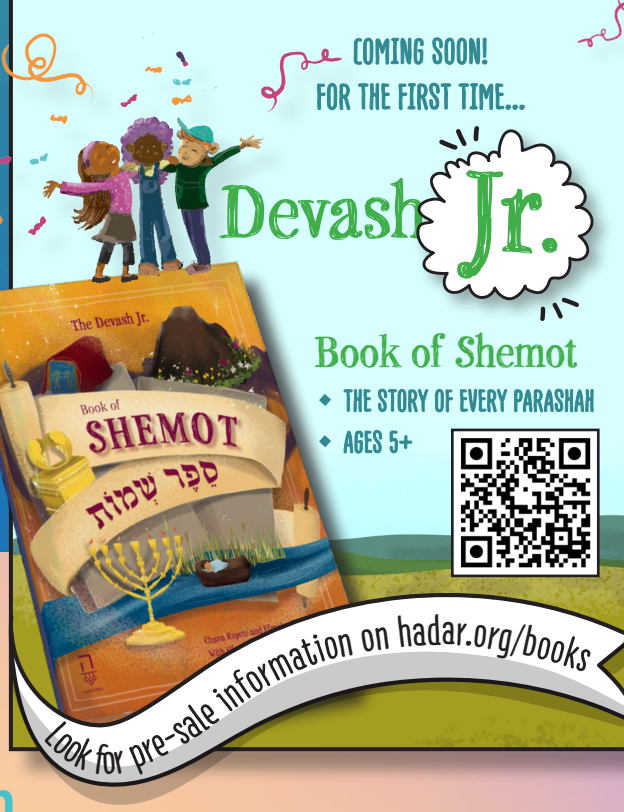
HADAR
Children & Families
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4

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וַיֵּרָא Vayera

וַיֵּרָא - י"א - י"ז מַרְחֶשְׁוָן תשפ"ו November 2 - 8, 2025



מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Avraham sits outside his tent on a very hot day, sees three figures in the distance, and runs out to invite them over for food and drinks.
- The guests are actually angels, and they tell Avraham and Sarah that Yitzhak will be born in the coming year.
- God tells Avraham that Sedom is going to be destroyed because of the people's horrible behavior there. Avraham pleads on Sedom's behalf, but there are not enough righteous people in the city to save it.
- Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters run away while Sedom is destroyed by fire from the sky, but his wife turns back to look and becomes a pillar of salt.
- Yitzhak is born when Sarah is 90 years old and Avraham is 100.
- Sarah sends Yishmael away with his mother, Hagar.
- God tests Avraham by commanding him to offer Yitzhak as a sacrifice. They travel for three days to the mountain God shows Avraham. An angel calls out to Avraham at the last second, telling Avraham not to harm Yitzhak at all. Just then, he sees a ram caught in a bush by its horns, and the ram is offered in place of Yitzhak. This story is called עֲקֵדַת יִצְחָק (Akeidat Yitzhak, the binding of Yitzhak).



פְּשַׁט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

God plans to destroy the city of Sedom because the people there have been terrible. But Avraham tries to convince God not to destroy the city. Avraham wonders if there are 50 good people in the city. In that case, he says:

Bereishit 18:25	**בראשית יח:כה**
"Far be it from You to do such a thing, to kill the innocent together with the guilty,	חָלִלָה לְךָ מֵעֲשֹׂת כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה לְהָמִית צַדִּיק עִם רָשָׁע
so that innocent and guilty are treated the same way.	וְהָיָה כַצַּדִּיק כָּרָשָׁע
Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?!"	חָלִלָה לָךְ הֲשֹׁפֵט כָּל הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט:

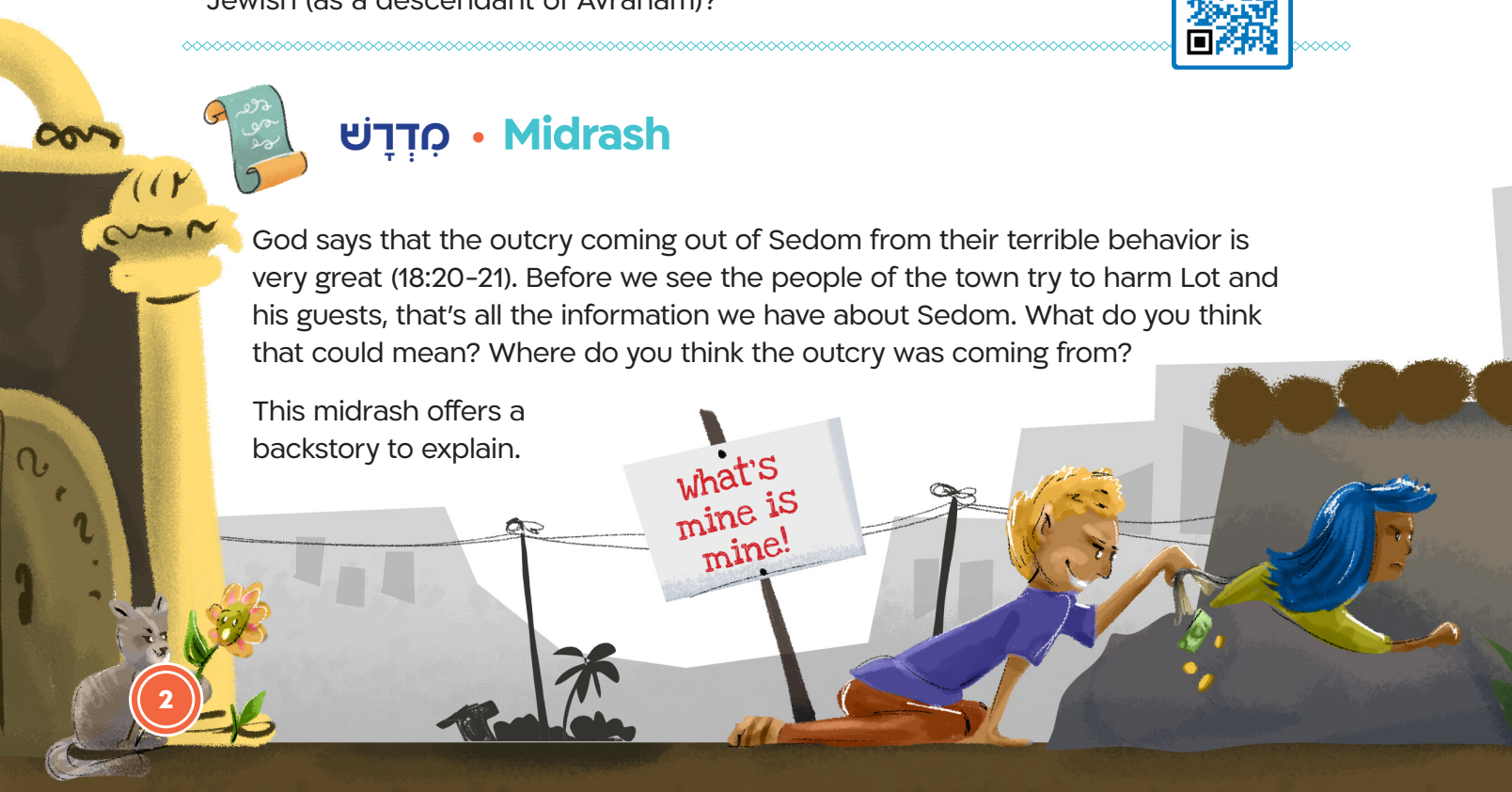
- What are Avraham's arguments? Would saving a whole city of wicked people for 50 righteous people be strict "justice," or is that something else? What are other solutions to the problem Avraham raises, instead of his suggestion (which is to save everyone)?
- Are you surprised by Avraham's tone? Why is he talking that way? Why does God allow him to?
- What can Avraham's words teach us about what it means to be Jewish (as a descendant of Avraham)?

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

מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

God says that the outcry coming out of Sedom from their terrible behavior is very great (18:20-21). Before we see the people of the town try to harm Lot and his guests, that's all the information we have about Sedom. What do you think that could mean? Where do you think the outcry was coming from?

This midrash offers a backstory to explain.



Pirkei De-Rabbi Eliezer

R. Yehudah said: They made a proclamation in Sedom: Everyone who helps the poor shall be burnt by fire.

Pelitit, Lot's daughter, was married to a leader of Sedom. She saw a very poor man in the street, and she felt pained for him.

What did she do? Every day when she went out to draw water, she put food from her home into her pitcher, and she would give it to that poor man to eat.

The people of Sedom said: How is this poor man still alive? When they figured out what was going on, they took Pelitit out to be burnt.

She cried out: Ruler of all worlds! Do justice for me from the people of Sedom!

Her cry went up before the Throne of Glory. The Holy Blessed One said: "I will now descend, and I will see" (Bereishit 18:21) whether the people of Sedom have committed the crime this young woman is crying about...

פרקי דרבי אליעזר כ"ה

ר' יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר, הִכְרִיזוּ בִּסְדוֹם כָּל מִי שֶׁהוּא מַחֲזִיק בְּפַת לֶחֶם עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן יִשָּׂרֵף בָּאֵשׁ.

פְּלִיטַת בִּתּוֹ שֶׁל לוֹט הָיְתָה נְשׂוּאָה לְאֶחָד מִגְּדוֹלֵי הָעִיר, וְרָאֲתָה עָנִי אֶחָד מְדַקְדֵּק בְּרְחוֹב הָעִיר, וְעָגְמָה נַפְשָׁהּ עָלָיו שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְעָגְמָה נַפְשִׁי לָאֶבְיוֹן" (איוב ל:כה).

מֶה עָשְׂתָה? בְּכָל יוֹם הָיְתָה יוֹצְאָה לִשְׁאֹב הָיְתָה נוֹתֶנֶת בַּכַּד שֶׁלָּהּ מִכָּל מְזוֹן בֵּיתָהּ וּמַאֲכִלֶת לְאוֹתוֹ עָנִי.

אָמְרוּ אַנְשֵׁי סְדוֹם: הֶעָנִי הַזֶּה, מֵאַיִן הוּא חַי? וּכְשֶׁיָּדְעוּ בַּדָּבָר הוֹצִיאוּ אוֹתָהּ לְהִשָּׂרֵף.

אָמְרָה: רִבּוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים, עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּטִי וְדִינִי מֵאַנְשֵׁי סְדוֹם!

וְעָלְתָה צַעֲקָתָהּ לִפְנֵי כִּסֵּא הַכָּבוֹד. בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא "אֵרְדָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה" (בראשית יח:כא) אִם כְּצַעֲקַת הַנַּעֲרָה הַזֹּאת עָשׂוּ אַנְשֵׁי סְדוֹם...

- According to this midrash, why did Sedom have to be destroyed?
- Does it matter that Sedom had made cruelty part of its society's laws? Is there a difference between people happening to act with cruelty or selfishness, and actually making cruelty or selfishness part of the law? Why?





The story about Pelitit is inspired by an unusual word in these pesukim! Do you see which word it is? (We helped you by bolding it.)

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

Bereishit 18:20-21

God said, "The outcry of Sedom and Amorah is so great, and their sin so serious!

I will go down to see whether they have acted **according to its outcry** that has reached Me; if not, I will know."

בראשית יח:כ-כא

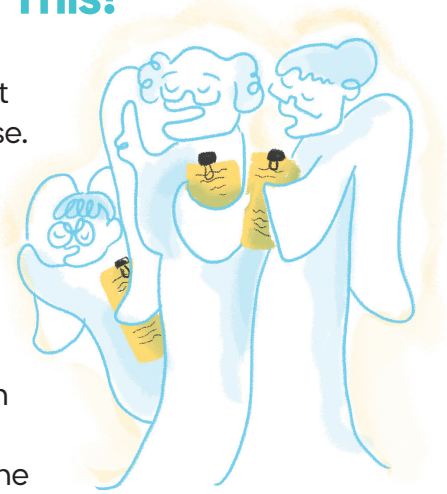
וַיֹּאמֶר ה' זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי רָבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד:

אֵרְדָה נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה **הַכְּצַעֲקָתָהּ** הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ כָלָה וְאִם לֹא אֵדָעָה:

Yup, it's הַכְּצַעֲקָתָהּ (haketza'akatah, according to its outcry)! This word could also be translated as, "according to **her** outcry." That possibility is why the midrash thinks the destruction has something to do with this story of Pelitit!



בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!



In these pesukim above, before God talks to Avraham about Sedom, it seems as though God is speaking to someone else. **Who is God talking to?**

The Tanakh and Talmud tell us that God has a heavenly council of angels. God talks to them and takes their advice sometimes. According to Rashi, that's to show us how to be humble (because why else would God need advice?). Another great example is when God wants to create human beings and uses the plural נַעֲשֶׂה (na'aseh, let us make) (Bereishit 1:26). Who is the "us"? Bereishit Rabbah says it's the heavenly council.

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שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

aliyot:

1) Bereishit 18:1 to 18:14

2) 18:15 to 18:33

3) 19:1 to 19:20

4) 19:21 to 21:4

5) 21:5 to 21:21

6) 21:22 to 21:34

7) 22:1 to 22:24

Haftarah: Melakhim Bet 4:1–23 for Sefardim and 4:1–37 for Ashkenazim

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. What question do Avraham's guests ask?
2. According to Avraham, there might be some righteous people in Sedom. How many? What are the six possible numbers that Avraham mentions?
3. There is a rare note called שַׁלְשֶׁלֶת (shalshelet) in this parashah. It looks like this: ֮ On what word does it appear?
4. Who are the two people that God "remembers" in this aliyah?
5. Why does Avraham throw a party?
6. What does Avraham plant in Beer Sheva?



7. How many times are Avraham and Yitzhak described as "walking together"?
8. Where was Hagar from?





9. In this parashah, who calls whom a שֹׁפֵט (shofeit, judge)?
10. **From the Haftarah:** How is the woman able to repay her debts?

* Look for the answers on page 11!

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פֵּרוּשִׁנוּת • Commentary

Here's how the story of עֲקֵידַת יִצְחָק (Akeidat Yitzhak, the binding of Yitzhak) is introduced:

Bereishit 22:1	**בראשית כב:א**
And God tested (nissah) Avraham	וְהָאֱלֹקִים נִסָּה אֶת אַבְרָהָם

Our פַּרְשָׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) wonder: **Why would God test Avraham? Why would God test any person?**

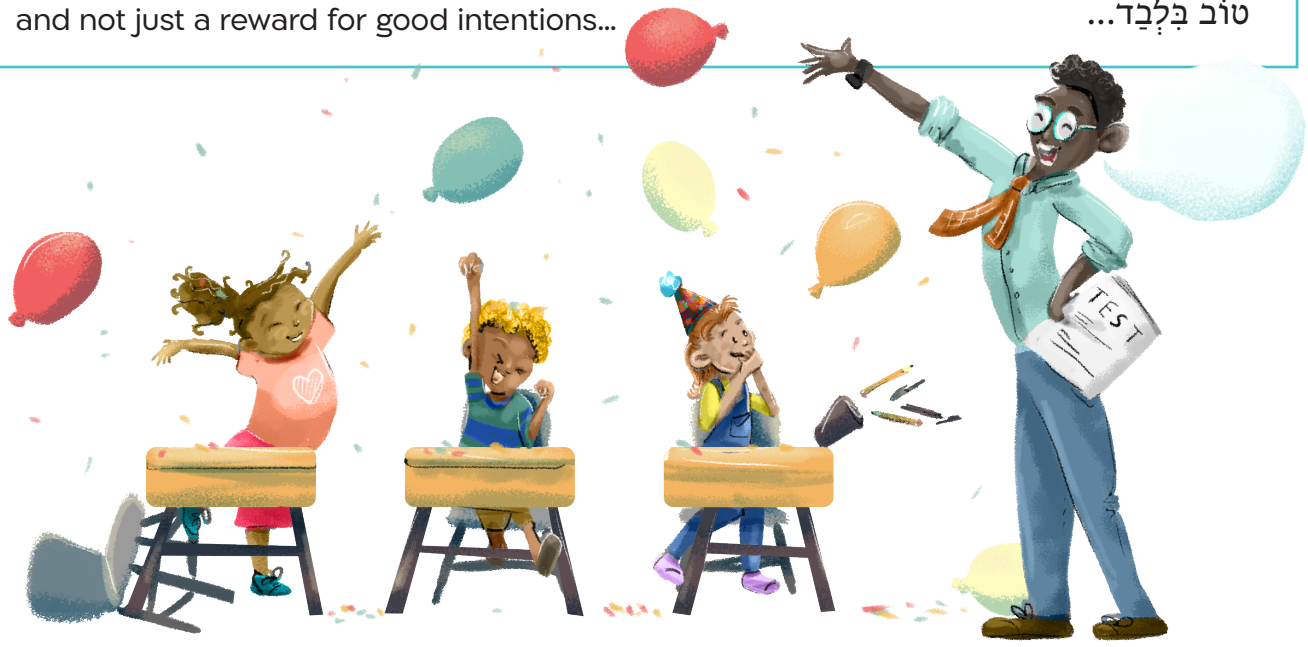
Ramban explains that the purpose of this test is not what you might think:

Ramban (Spain, 800 years ago)

It's called a "test" but it's for the benefit of the person being tested. The Blessed Tester commanded Avraham to do this action so that Avraham could collect a reward for a good deed and not just a reward for good intentions...

רמב"ן

יִקָּרֵא "נִסָּיוֹן" מִצַּד הַמְּנֻסֶּה. אֲבָל הַמְנַסֶּה יִתְבָּרַךְ יְצַוֶּה בּוֹ לְהוֹצִיא הַדָּבָר מִן הַכֹּחַ אֶל הַפֹּעַל לִהְיוֹת לוֹ שְׂכַר מַעֲשֶׂה טוֹב, לֹא שְׂכַר לֵב טוֹב בִּלְבַד...



According to Ramban, God is a bit like a teacher who gives you a test that she knows you can pass, because she really wants to throw you an ice cream party!

- Why does Ramban want to avoid the idea that God is trying to see how Avraham will do on the test?

Ran also focuses on the way the test impacted Avraham.

Ran (Spain, 700 years ago)

The test aimed to strengthen the faith of the one being tested (Avraham), so he would be even more empowered in serving God. There's no doubt that hard work develops our character, just like acting bravely creates even more strength in the character of a brave person.

ר"ן

...כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּתְחַזֵּק אֱמוּנָה בְּנֶפֶשׁ הַמְנֻסֶּה,
עַד שֶׁיִּהְיֶה יוֹתֵר חָזָק בַּעֲבוֹדַת ה'
יִתְבָּרַךְ. כִּי אֵין סָפֵק שֶׁכֹּל מַעֲנֶה חָזָק
יוֹלִיד תְּכוּנָה בְּנֶפֶשׁ מִתְיַחֶסֶת אֵלָיו,
כִּי כְּמוֹ שֶׁפּוֹעֵל הַגְּבוּרָה יוֹלִיד בְּנֶפֶשׁ
הַגִּבּוֹר תְּכוּנַת גְּבוּרָה.

- Can you think of an experience that made you stronger, or a better person? Do you think you learn more from difficult experiences, or pleasant experiences? Why? If exercise weren't hard, would it make you just as strong?
- How do these different interpretations help you better understand the Akeidah? What questions about the Akeidah do you still have?



בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

In עֲקֵידַת יִצְחָק (Akeidat Yitzhak, the binding of Yitzhak), God tells Avraham to do something that's difficult for us to think about: to offer his son Yitzhak as a sacrifice! If the story makes you feel confused or surprised, you're not alone.

It's extra confusing because we know that the Torah wants us to love all human beings and preserve human life. And we also know that in Judaism we really, really care about children. In fact, later in the Torah (Vayikra 18:21), we learn that sacrificing children is considered to be a kind of עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה (avodah zarah, idolatry)!



So, what are we supposed to learn from this story?

What God tells Avraham at the end of the story may contain the answer:

Bereishit 22:12

God said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your cherished one, from Me."

בראשית כב:יב

וַיֹּאמֶר אַל תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל הַנַּעַר וְאַל תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי יְרֵא אֱלֹקִים אַתָּה וְלֹא חָשַׂכְתָּ אֶת בִּנְךָ אֶת יְחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי:

Avraham showed willingness to make the biggest possible sacrifice for God.

In our lives, we also have to be willing to make sacrifices (though less dramatic ones!). When we spend an hour helping someone, or when we give tzedakah, we sacrifice our time or money for those in need. Sometimes we need to sacrifice for our relationship with God, as well.

- Why is it important to be able to give things up for God?
- What are the sacrifices you can make in your life? What sacrifices do you see people around you making?





רֶגַע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Bereishit 22:3

Early next morning, Avraham **saddled** his donkey and took with him two of his servants and his son Yitzhak. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place that God had told him.

בראשית כב:ג

וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיְבַקַּע עֲצֵי עֹלָה וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר לוֹ הָאֱלֹקִים:

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דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

God instructs Avraham to offer his son Yitzhak as a sacrifice, and then when Avraham is just about to do it, God stops him (Bereishit 22:1-19).

Debate: Avraham should have known that God would never really want him to kill Yitzhak.

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!

- God told Avraham to "take" and to "bring up" Yitzhak, but not to actually slaughter him!
- God had just promised Avraham that Yitzhak would be the start of his great nation! How could Yitzhak do that if he were dead?



Disagree!

- How could Avraham know what God was thinking?
- When God gives you a command, you have to follow it without asking questions.

לַחֲבֹשׁ (שׁ.ר.שׁ חֹ.ב.שׁ)

- To saddle
- To bandage
- To wear something on your head
- To imprison (lahavosh)

Find the Word!

Another person in the Torah woke up in the morning and saddled his donkey—but on a mission to curse Benei Yisrael. Can you figure out who this person is, and find this שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root)? Hint: Look at Parashat Balak in Sefer Bemidbar.





הֲלָכָה • Halakhah



Learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives

Avraham serves his guests a surprising meal made of dairy **and** meat (Bereishit 18:8). Wait a minute, isn't that against the rules of keeping kosher?

There are some simple answers like: 1) The laws forbidding mixing milk and meat hadn't been given yet, and wouldn't be for many generations. 2) Who says the people being served had to follow these rules?

Whatever was happening in this story, this is a good chance to learn some of the traditions around that. The Mishnah (Hullin 8:1) says not to even **serve** meat and dairy on the same table, much less to eat them together. But how long are you expected to wait between eating them? Here is one simple rule laid out in the Talmud:

Talmud Bavli Hullin 105a

Rav Hisda said: If you ate meat, you **may not** then eat cheese; if you ate cheese, you **may** then eat meat.

תלמוד בבלי חולין דף קה עמוד א

אָמַר רַב חִסְדָּא: אָכַל בָּשָׂר - אָסוּר לֶאֱכֹל גְּבִינָה, גְּבִינָה - מֻתָּר לֶאֱכֹל בָּשָׂר.



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. "Where is Sarah, your wife?" (18:9)
2. 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10 (18:24-32)
3. וַיִּתְמַהְמָהּ (va-yitmahmah, he delayed) (19:16)
4. Avraham (19:29) and Sarah (21:1)
5. For Yitzhak's weaning (21:8)
6. An אֶשֶׁל (eshel, tamarisk tree) (21:33). According to R. Azariah in Midrash Tehillim, the three Hebrew letters in this word are an acronym for the ways that Avraham observed the mitzvah of הַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים (hakhnasat orhim, welcoming guests). Avraham provided אֲכִילָה (akhilah, food) and שְׁתִיָּה (shtiyah, drink) and לְוָיָה (leviya, accompanying his guests on their way).
7. Twice – once before Yitzhak asks where the animal for the sacrifice is, and once after (22:6,8)
8. Mitzrayim (Bereshit 21:9)
9. Avraham calls God שֹׁפֵט כָּל הָאָרֶץ (shofeit kol ha-aretz, Judge of the whole world) (Bereshit 18:25)
10. Miraculous oil (Melakhim Bet 4:7)



Lots of different traditions emerged around this. Here are a few:

Waiting after meat to eat dairy

The basic standard is that, after meat, you can't eat dairy until the next meal. There were three main interpretations of this:

1. Clear the table or move to a new location, make a בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) over the food you just ate, rinse your mouth, and wash your hands! In some Ashkenazi communities, this meant waiting just one hour after meat before eating dairy (see Rema, Yoreh Deah 89:1).

2. Wait the normal time between meals, which is about six hours (see Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah 89:1).

3. Wait three hours—which might have been considered a normal time between meals in the winter, when days are much shorter (see Darkei Teshuvah, Yoreh Deah 89:6).



Waiting after dairy to eat meat

We don't usually require any specific waiting period after dairy before eating meat. But the Rema (Yoreh Deah 89:2) states that if you eat hard cheese that has a strong taste and can get stuck in your teeth, you have to wait just as long as you would after meat.

Based on this, perhaps Avraham **was** following the laws of keeping kosher here. Note that he brings the dairy foods **first**. Maybe he meant for his guests to finish them before eating the meat (Daat Zekeinim 18:8)!

תְּפִלָּה • Prayer in the Parashah



In our parashah the Hebrew word for praying, לְהִתְפַּלֵּל (lehitpalel), appears for the first time in the Torah:

Bereishit 20:17-21:2

Avraham prayed to God, and God healed Avimelekh and his wife and his servants, so that they could give birth.

For God had closed every womb of the household of Avimelekh because of what had happened with Sarah, the wife of Avraham.

Then God remembered Sarah as God had promised, and God did for Sarah as God had spoken.

Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son to Avraham in his old age...

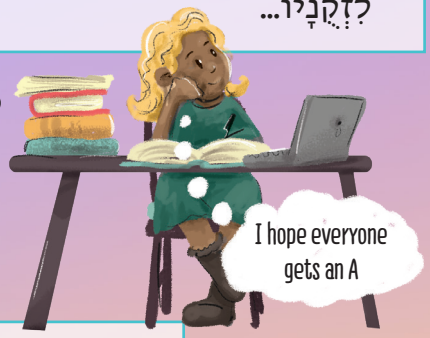
בראשית כ:יז-כא:ב

וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אַבְרָהָם אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים
וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹקִים אֶת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ
וְאֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאַמְהֹתָיו וַיֵּלֵדוּ:

כִּי עָצֹר עָצַר ה' בְּעַד כָּל-רֶחֶם
לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל דְּבַר שָׂרָה
אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָהָם:

וַה' פָּקַד אֶת שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמָר
וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֵּר:

וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֵּן
לִזְקֻנָיו...



Avraham first prays for the women in Avimelekh's kingdom to be able to become pregnant. And then, one pasuk later, we hear that Sarah, who also wanted to have a child for so long, becomes pregnant!

In the Gemara, Rava teaches a lesson based on this:

Talmud Bavli Bava Kamma 92a

If someone prays on behalf of another person, and the asker needs that kind of help also, they will get answered by God first.... I learn this from, "Avraham prayed to God and God healed Avimelekh and his wife and his servants," and then, right after that, the Torah says, "God remembered Sarah as God had promised."

תלמוד בבלי בבא קמא דף צב עמוד א

כָּל הַמִּתְפַּלֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים
עַל חֲבֵרוֹ וְהוּא צָרִיךְ
לְאוֹתוֹ דָּבָר, הוּא נַעֲנָה
תְּחִלָּה... אֲנָא אָמִינָא
מֵהָכָא "וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל
אַבְרָהָם אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים
וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹקִים אֶת
אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וְאֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ
וַאֲמָהֹתָיו," וּכְתִיב,
"וַה' פָּקַד אֶת שָׂרָה
כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמָר."

- Why do you think it's extra powerful to pray on behalf of someone else?
- Who could you pray for, other than yourself? What do you want other people to experience that you yourself might also want?

