



ל'ד - כ' שבט תשפ"ז February 1 - 7, 2026



## זה בפרק זה • In This Week's Parashah

- ♦ Moshe's father-in-law, Yitro, comes to meet בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Benei Yisrael, the Israelites) in the wilderness. Yitro brings Moshe's wife, Tzipporah, and their two sons.
- ♦ Yitro watches Moshe serve as the only judge for all of Benei Yisrael, and he thinks this is too much work for Moshe alone. Yitro helps Moshe set up a better system with more judges.
- ♦ Benei Yisrael set up camp at הַר סִינַי (Har Sinai, Mount Sinai). For three days, they prepare to receive the Torah.
- ♦ On the third day, there is thunder, lightning, heavy clouds, and a very strong sound of the shofar, and Har Sinai fills with smoke because God came down in fire. Awesome!
- ♦ God declares the עֲשֵׂר הֲדָבָרִות (Aseret Ha-Dibrot, Ten Commandments). These include God-oriented mitzvot (like not worshiping idols and keeping Shabbat), and people-oriented mitzvot (like not killing or stealing).
- ♦ Benei Yisrael are scared of what they see at Har Sinai. They ask Moshe to teach them instead of hearing directly from God. Moshe tells them not to be afraid.
- ♦ God gives Moshe rules for making a מִזְבֵּחַ (mizbe'ah, altar for sacrifices).



## פֶּשֶׁת הַפְּסָוקִים • Understanding the Verses

Let's take a look at the fifth of the **עֲשָׂרֶת מִדְבָּרוֹת** (Aseret Ha-Dibrot, Ten Commandments).

"Aseret Ha-Dibrot" really means "The Ten Utterances" (it's called that because they break down into ten separate statements). There are actually more than ten commands among them, so calling them the "Ten Commandments" is a bit of a mistake.

### Shemot 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long on the land that your God is giving to you.

### שמות כ:יב

פֶּסֶד אֶת אֲבִיךָ וְאֶת אֶמְמָךָ  
לְמַעַן יָאַרְכּוּ יָמֵיכָךְ עַל הָאָדָמָה  
אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֱלֹקִיךָ נָתָן לְךָ:

- What do you notice? What stands out to you?
- How do you understand the connection between the first line of the pasuk (the actual command) and the rest of the pasuk? Why might a long life on the land be linked to honoring your parents?
- Is it surprising that this mitzvah is one of the Aseret Ha-Dibrot? Why or why not?
- What do you think is involved in honoring parents? What's easy about this mitzvah and what's hard about it?
- In the Aseret Ha-Dibrot, the first group of mitzvot is considered **בֵּין אָדָם לְמִקְומָם** (bein adam la-makom, between a person and God), and the last group is considered **בֵּין אָדָם לְחֶבְרוֹן** (bein adam la-haveiro, between a person and a friend). In which group would you put the mitzvah to honor parents? Can it go in both? Why?

Before or  
after Shabbat,  
scan to listen to a discussion  
of this pasuk  
on the *Yitro* episode  
of **TORAH TIME**!





**Shemot 19:18**

Now Har Sinai (Mount Sinai) was all in smoke, for God had come down to it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled very much.



Why was there so much fire and smoke at Har Sinai? What can we learn from that?

**Mekhilta of R. Shimon bar Yohai**

"For God had come down to it in fire" - The Torah is fire, it was given from fire, and it can be compared to fire.

With fire, if you get too close to it, you get burned, and if you are too far from it, you're cold. Torah is the same; you have to come close enough to be warmed by its flames.

**שמות יט:יח**

וְהָר סִינַי עָשָׂו כְּלֹז מִפְנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עַלְיוֹ הִ בְּאֵשׁ וַיַּעֲלֵל עָשָׂנוּ כְּעַשְׂרֵה הַכְּבָשׂוֹ וַיַּחֲרֵד כָּל הַהָר מִאֵד:

**מכילתא דרשבי"י**

"מִפְנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עַלְיוֹ הִ בְּאֵשׁ" - מְגַלֵּד שְׁהַתּוֹרָה אֵשׁ, וּמַיָּשׁ בְּתִנְהָה, וּבְאֵשׁ נִמְשָׁלָה.

מִה דַּרְכָּה שֶׁל אֵשׁ, שֶׁאָמַר קָרְבָּ אָדָם אֲצַלָּה בְּכֹהֵה, רַחֲקָ מִפְנֵה צָוֹנוֹ, אַיִן לוֹ לְאָדָם אֶלָּא לְהַתְּחִיםָּם כְּנַגֵּד אָוֹרָה.

This midrash suggests that Torah and fire both have the power to keep us warm and sustained. But for both, we have to position ourselves carefully—not too close, and not too far.



- Have you ever felt too far from something or someone? What did you do to get closer, or what could you have done? If a person feels too far from Torah or God, what are some things they could do?
- How can Torah keep you warm like fire? What other things is fire good for? Can Torah be like fire in those ways too?



Check out the **בוא נדבר על זה** / **Talk About It!** (p. 10) to think more about this midrash.



## פָרָשָׁנוּת • Commentary

Moshe tells Benei Yisrael that they are about to experience **מַעַן תֹּרַה** (matan Torah, the giving of the Torah). Here's what happens next:

### Shemot 19:8-9

(8) All the people answered as one, saying,  
"All that God has spoken we will do!"  
**Moshe brought back the people's words to God.**

(9) And God said to Moshe, "I will come to you in a thick cloud, so the people may hear when I speak with you and trust you forever."  
**Moshe told the people's words to God.**

### שמות יט:ח-ט

(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר כָּל הַעַם יְחִידוּ וַיֹּאמֶר  
כָּל אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר הָאֱלֹהִים נְعַשֵּׂה  
וַיִּשְׁבַּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַעַם אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים  
(ט) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה הִגִּה אֶל כָּל  
אָלָיֶךָ בְּעֵבֶד הַעֲבָדָךְ בְּעֵבֶר לִשְׁמַע הַעַם  
בְּדָבָרַי עַמְּךָ וְגַם בְּךָ יַאֲמִינֵוּ לְעוֹלָם  
וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַעַם אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים

Moshe reports back to God twice. In pasuk 8, it's clear what he's telling God. But in pasuk 9, it's not so obvious. **Our פָרָשָׁנוּת (parshanim, commentators) wonder: What was Moshe reporting the second time?**

## Rashbam (France, 950 years ago)

"Moshe told the people's words to God" - this is the same thing as "Moshe brought back the people's words" (from before).

The Torah first makes a general statement (in pasuk 8) and then provides the details (in pasuk 9).

## רשב"ם

וילגד משה את דברי  
העם אל ה' - זהו "וילשֶׁב  
משה..." (שמות יט:ח),  
כollow ואחר כה מפרש.

According to Rashbam, the message in pasuk 9 is the same as the message in pasuk 8.

- ◆ What would make someone feel they have to repeat details when telling a story? What does that say about those details?
- ◆ Why do you think the Torah would repeat the moment of Moshe bringing the people's words to God? What about their words is worth repeating?

## Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Moshe said to God: I have already heard Benei Yisrael's answer — they want to hear directly from You. Hearing from the mouth of a messenger is nothing like hearing directly from the mouth of the King. They are saying: We want to see our King.

## רש"י

תשובה על דבר זה כבר שמעתי  
מהם שרצו לנו לשמע ממך. איבנו  
דומה שומע מפי שליח לשומע  
מפי המלך, רצוננו לראות את  
מלךנו.

According to Rashi, pasuk 9 adds something new: a request from the people to hear from God directly.



- Take a look at God's words in the first half of pasuk 9. Why might these words have prompted Benei Yisrael to request hearing directly from God?
- What is Rashi saying about how the people felt about God? Do you understand their request? How does it feel to really really want to see someone or hear their voice?
- Right after Matan Torah, Benei Yisrael say that they **don't** want to hear directly from God. (Look it up! Shemot 20:15.) How might Rashi explain this?



## רְפָטْ שֶׁל עֲבָרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

### Shemot 18:7

Moshe went out to meet his father-in-law; he bowed low and kissed him; each asked how the other was doing, and they went **into the tent**.

שְׁמוֹת יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ:  
וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה לִקְרָאת חִתְנוֹן  
וַיִּשְׁתַּחַווּ וַיִּשְׁקַׁלְוּ וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶלְעָזֶר  
לְרַעֲעָה לְשָׁלוֹם וַיָּבֹא אֶלְעָזֶר הַאֲהָלָה:



### Find the Word!

In a couple of weeks, starting with Parashat Terumah, we'll read about Benei Yisrael constructing the mishkan (mishkan, sanctuary for God in the wilderness). What other name does the mishkan have that shares this שֹׂרֶש (shoresh, root)? (Hint: One place you can find this name is Shemot 27:21.)



## 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.**

Good luck!

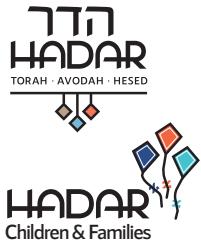
### aliyot:

- 1) Shemot 18:1 to 18:12
- 2) 18:13 to 18:23
- 3) 18:24 to 18:27
- 4) 19:1 to 19:6
- 5) 19:7 to 19:19
- 6) 19:20 to 20:14
- 7) 20:15 to 20:23

### haftarah:

Yeshayahu 6:1 to 6:13 for Sefardim and 6:1 to 7:6, 9:5-6 for Ashkenazim

- 1 Who makes a ברכה (berakhah, blessing)?
- 2 What is described as "not good?"
- 3 What does Yitro do after Moshe takes his advice?
- 4 Who is called a treasure?
- 5 What had to be cleaned?
- 6 What do your animals have to do?
- 7 What tool are you not allowed to use to build a מזבח (mizbei'ah, altar)?
- 8 Of all the עשרת הדיברות (Aseret Ha-Dibrot, Ten Commandments), which one gets the most detail about who must observe it?
- 9 Which of the Aseret Ha-Dibrot seems to be telling people how to feel (or how not to feel)?
- 10 From the haftarah: Yeshayahu describes seeing some amazing angels called Seraphim. How many wings does each one have, and what are the wings used for?



\*  
Look for  
the answers  
on page 11!



## דַקָּה שֶׁל דַי • One-Minute Debate

**Debate: Getting the Torah at Har Sinai was way too scary!**

After **מִתְּנַת תּוֹרָה** (Matan Torah, the giving of the Torah), Benei Yisrael ask Moshe to speak to them instead of God, so that they don't die (Shemot 20:16).

### 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!

- ◆ Thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, clouds, shofar sounds getting louder and louder... sounds pretty overwhelming to me!
- ◆ You can tell by the people's reaction that they were totally frightened by the experience.
- ◆ Getting the Torah is scary. There's just a lot you might get wrong.



#### Disagree!

- ◆ Matan Torah was an amazing, inspiring, awesome, uplifting, and life-changing experience for everyone who was there. Being scared was just one of the many emotions that came with it.
- ◆ What would you expect, a walk in the park? Being scared is totally normal when something that important is happening.
- ◆ Being scared and facing your fears can be a good experience. That's kind of what Moshe did when he went into the darkness to find God. (See Shemot 20:18.)



## הַלְכָה • Halakhah



Learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives

ברכוֹת (berakhot, blessings) contain God's name, and our parashah teaches us that saying God's name is serious business. One of the עשָׂרֶת הַדְבָּרוֹת (Aseret Ha-Dibrot, Ten Commandments) is not to say God's name without a really good reason. So our Sages taught that we should be very careful with berakhot:

Anyone who makes a berakhah that is not needed violates the verse "You shall not take God's name in vain" (Shemot 20:7).

כל המברך ברכה שאינה צריכה – עובר משום "לא תשא"!

Another name for this is a **ברכה לבטלה** (berakhah le-vatalah, a wasted berakhah). Examples of this include:

- Repeating a berakhah you've already said for the situation you're in, like making a berakhah for eating grapes and then saying the berakhah again while you're still eating them, or like saying havdalah after Shabbat and then saying it again later that same night.
- Making the wrong berakhah for your situation, like making a berakhah for bread when you're just drinking water or like making a berakhah over a mitzvah and then not doing it (or doing it incorrectly).
- Not doing the thing you made the berakhah on right away, like saying a berakhah to shake a lulav on Sukkot and then talking to your siblings or waiting a long time before actually shaking it.

If you make a berakhah le-vatalah by mistake, you can fix it! The Shulhan Arukh (Orah Hayyim 206:6) discusses a case where you pick up a grape, say the berakhah of **בורא פרי העץ** (borei peri ha-eitz, God creates fruit of the tree), and then you accidentally drop the grape in the garbage before you get to eat it!

What do you do?

One answer is to say **ברוך שם קבוץ מלכוות לעולם ועד** (barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed, the name of God's kingship is blessed forever), praising God's special name. That way, you haven't really taken God's name in vain, you've just praised it. (You might recall this line from Devash for Vayehi!)

But next time, hold that grape a little more carefully!





## • בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

Our midrash this week (p. 3) suggests that you might not want to get too close to Torah. What could this mean? Isn't it always a good idea to get closer and closer, and learn more and more?

Actually, lots of Jewish texts say: it depends! For some things, there are limits on how much we can know. For example, in a few weeks we'll read about God telling Moshe: "A human being may not see Me and live" (Shemot 33:20).

A mishnah highlights certain subjects that we need to be especially cautious about learning.

### Hagigah 2:1

Don't learn the part of the Torah about forbidden family relationships (Vayikra 18, 20) with three people;

Don't learn the passage about creation (Bereishit 1) with two people;

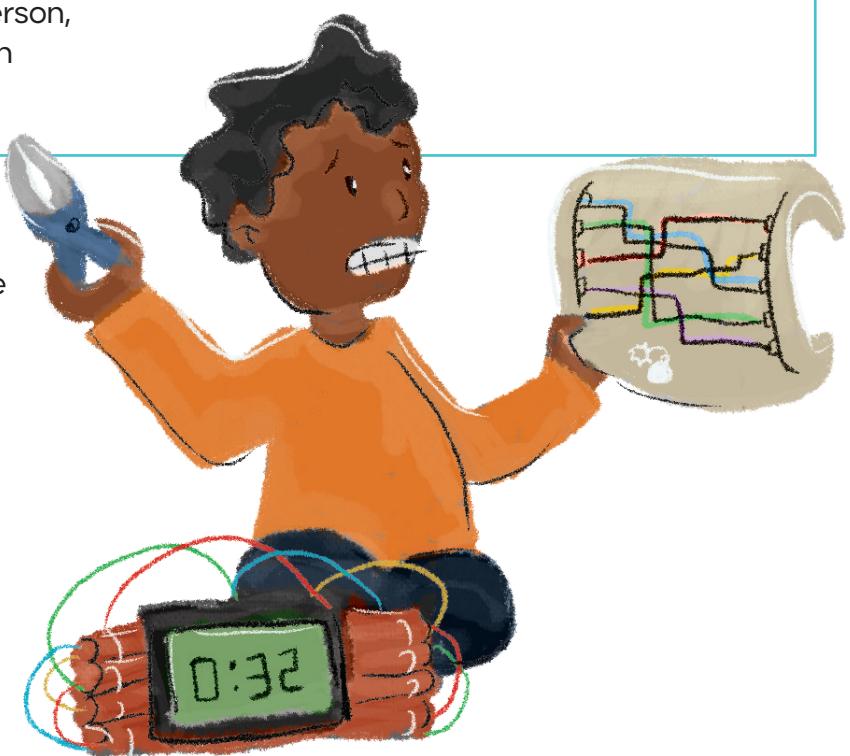
Don't learn the passage about God's Chariot (Yehezkel 1-8) with one person, unless that person is wise and can understand on their own.

### משנה חגיגה ב:א

אינו דורשין בערויות בשלשה.  
ולא במעשה בראשית בשניים.  
ולא במרכבה ביחיד, אלא אם כן היה חכם  
ומבינו מדעתו.

These are all subjects that are difficult to understand and people might get the wrong idea.

- ◆ What's the risk of getting something wrong? Why would that be considered dangerous?



## Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Yitro (18:10)
2. The way Moshe was judging all of Benei Yisrael himself (18:17)
3. Returns home (18:27)
4. The people of Israel (19:5)
5. The people's clothes (19:10)
6. Not do work on Shabbat (20:10)
7. A sword (20:22)
8. The fourth, Shabbat (20:10)
9. The tenth, the mitzvah not to be envious/not to covet (20:14)
10. Each of the Seraphim has six wings: two to cover its face, two to cover its legs, and two to use for flying (Yeshayahu 6:2)



This story in the Gemara shows a negative consequence of trying to know more than you're ready for.

### Talmud Bavli Haggigah 14b

Four people entered the pardes (orchard) and they were: Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Aher (another name for Elisha ben Abuya), and Rabbi Akiva...

Ben Zoma glimpsed and was harmed.

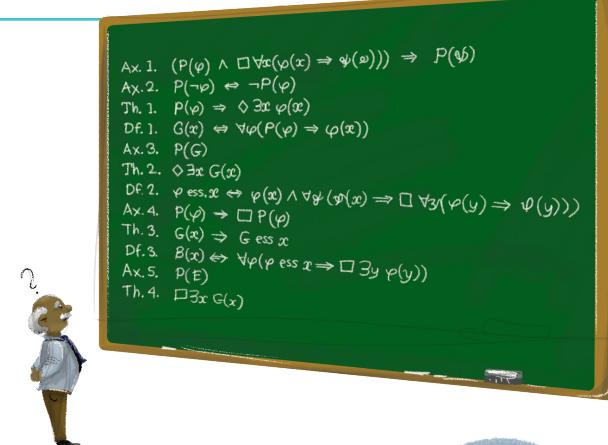
תלמוד בבלי מסכת חגיגה דף יד  
עמוד ב

אַרְבָּעָה נִכְנָסָו בְּפַרְדֵּס, וְאֶלְיוֹ הָו: בָּנו עַזְאי,  
וּבָנו זּוּמָא, אָחָר, וּרְבִי עֲקִיבָא...

בָּנו זּוּמָא הָצִיז וְנִגְפָּגָע.

Many commentators believe that "entering the pardes" means learning things about God and heaven that most people can't handle, and that Ben Zoma's mind became really overwhelmed and confused.

- ◆ What do you think that felt like? Have you ever felt that way?
- ◆ What are other areas where we're not capable of knowing certain things, or not allowed to? Why might someone not be allowed to know something?
- ◆ Are there times in your life when knowing too much is not appropriate? Are there things that are private to you and your parents or family that would not be appropriate to share with other people?

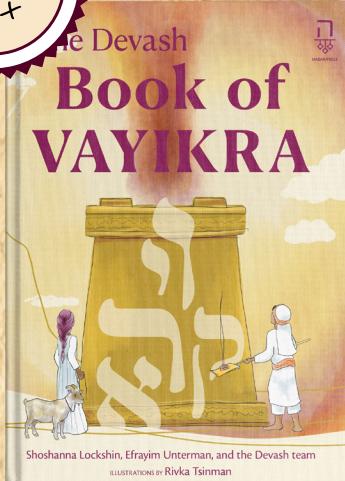


# THE DEVASH LIBRARY

Books from the educators who brought you Devash Magazine!

Ages  
8+

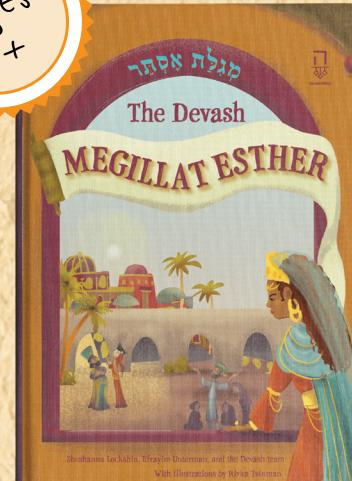
New!



How can we come close to God? And what does it mean to be holy? Unlock the mysteries of each parashah in Vayikra through midrashim, ideas from Torah commentators, and insights that make you think, wonder, and grow.

Ages  
8+

Shoshanna Lockshin, Efrayim Unterman, and the Devash team  
With illustrations by Rivka Tsimman



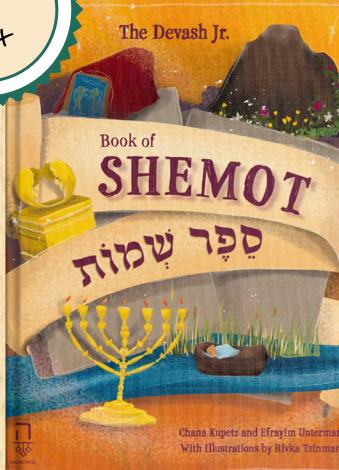
The joyous learning experience of Devash comes to the topsy-turvy world of Shushan!

A must-have for Purim



Ages  
4+

New!



Discover how the Jewish people became a nation! The story of each parashah comes with questions to spark conversation and hands-on ways to bring the Torah to life.



Order  
your books  
today!

