



Dear Youth Directors, Youth chairs, and Youth Leaders,

**NCYI is excited to continue our very successful Parsha Nation Guides.** I hope you're enjoying and learning from Parsha Nation as much as we are. Putting together Parsha Nation every week is indeed no easy task. It takes a lot of time and effort to ensure that each section, as well as each age group, receives the attention and dedication it deserves.

**We inspire and mold future leaders.** The youth leaders of Young Israel have the distinct honor and privilege to teach and develop the youth of Young Israel. Children today are constantly looking for role models and inspirations to latch on to and learn from. Whether it is actual sit down learning sessions, exciting Parsha trivia games, or even just walking down the hall to the Kiddush room, our youth look to us and watch our every move.

**It's not always about the things we say, it's about the things we do.** Our children hear and see everything we do whether we realize it or not. This year we are taking our Youth Services to new heights as we introduce our Leadership Training Shabbaton. This engaging, interactive shabbaton led by our Youth Services Coordinator, Sammy, will give youth leader's hands on experience and practical solutions to effectively guide your youth department.

**Informal education is key.** What the summer shows us as educators is that informal education can deliver better results and help increase our youth's connection to Hashem. More and more shuls are revamping their youth program to give their children a better connection to shul and to Hashem. The NCYI is here to help you reconnect with your youth departments and bring more participation.

**Thank you for being a light to future generations.** You are doing incredible work that should not be taken lightly. You should be proud to call yourself a Young Israel Youth Leader as you have the unique opportunity to make a real difference in so many young people's lives. Keep up the amazing work.

We are looking forward to hearing great things from everyone.

Our doors are always open.

**National Council of Young Israel Department of Synagogue Services**

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# PARSHA NATION



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## Program Guide Breakdown

**Theme-** Each year our curriculum will focus on a theme. By centering the entire year around one overarching theme, our youth group participants will understand different characteristics and concepts that will help them achieve this lofty goal. This year's theme is Manhigut (leadership). Our goal is for our children to view themselves as leaders and to inspire them to play a leadership role every day.

**Parsha Review-** Each week group leaders will have the opportunity to roundup the parsha in two or three paragraphs. By giving over the parsha in a short and simple way, group participants will be able to grasp the parsha as a whole and to get them to think globally and conceptually.

**Parsha Questions-** No Shabbat morning group is complete without a list of parsha questions. These questions allow group participants the opportunity to win fun prizes while increasing their Torah knowledge. Questions vary from basic understanding of story line to challenging source-based material. The answers are provided as well.

**Tefillah Treasure-** Many youth directors have asked for help when it comes to teaching tefillah to children. This is a problem that not only shuls are dealing with. Schools, camps, and youth organizations are having trouble developing creative ideas to help children understand tefillah. Over the course of the year, this section will highlight one aspect of davening by providing both the Hebrew and English text, and one explanatory idea. The older the age group, the more we delve into the idea. This section is designed to help group participants follow the flow of tefillah while understanding what they are saying.

**Group Activity-** Now the fun begins! We start off with a GOAL. Each game has a purpose. The youth leaders should familiarize themselves with the goal before implementing the game.

**Discussion Portion-** After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning groups.

**Story-** Each week we will include a story that addresses a modern day concern with lesson taken from that week's parsha.

**Jewish Leader of the Week-** In keeping with our theme of Manhigut, every week a different Jewish Leader from modern Jewish history will be highlighted. This will allow group participants to expand their knowledge of history and to learn how they can be a Jewish leader in today's society.

**Teen Minyan Packet-** This packet is filled with stories, riddles, points to ponder, and more.

**Leader Tip-** Each section has some great tips for leaders and how they should conduct that section.



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## Shabbat Morning Groups Lesson Plan

Time Duration	Activity	Notes
5 min	Registration	Welcome parents and children in to the group room.
10-35 min	Davening	Depending on your group size and level.
5 min	Introduction to Yearly Theme (Manhigut)	Refer to Handout
5 min	Parsha Review	Prep participants for parsha questions.
10 min	Parsha Questions	Prizes and awards should also be given out if participants answer correctly
2 min	Understanding the Goal	Leaders should start prepping for Shabbat activity
30 min	Activities	Your choice of two games to play
10 min	Follow Up Discussion	Refer to materials
10 min	Parsha Song	This is for younger groups only.
20 min	Free Game Play	Groups can break for free game play or continue their own programing.
5 min	Story	Assemble in a circle and have participants read sections of the story out loud.
5-10 min	Discussion	Refer to handout
4 min	Jewish Leader of the Week	Refer to handout
4 min	Tefillah Treasures	Refer to Handout
5 min	Parent Pick up/Dismissal	Parents pick up their children.
<b>Total Time:</b>	<b>2 hours &amp; 40 min of programing!</b>	



# PARSHA NATION



GRADES K-2

## VAYIGASH REVIEW

At the end of last week's Parsha, Yosef demanded that Binyamin stay behind in Egypt as his slave. This week's Parsha starts off with Yehudah begging Yosef to let Binyamin go back to his father in Canaan since Yaakov was so hesitant to send Binyamin in the first place being he was his only remaining son from Rachel. Yehudah explained to Yosef that he took personal responsibility for Binyamin that he would return safe and sound and requested that he stay as a slave instead of Binyamin. At this point, Yosef couldn't hold up the act any longer. He asked all the Egyptians to leave the room, and he revealed himself to his brothers. "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" Yosef asked. He then comforted them, and asked them not to be upset or blame each other about selling him as a slave. Yosef told his brothers to go back to Canaan and bring Yaakov and the rest of their families back to Egypt where Yosef would give them food until the famine ends. The brothers went back to Canaan loaded with tons of gifts from Paroh and Yosef. They told Yaakov that Yosef was still alive and ruling over Egypt and together (70 in total) they all headed to Egypt. Yaakov and Yosef are reunited after 22 years. On his way to Egypt, Yaakov got a promise from Hashem not to worry, that Hashem will make of him a great nation and He would go down with them to Egypt and bring them up again. Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Paroh gives Yaakov's family the abundant county of Goshen to settle.

**LEADER TIP:** Before you tell the kids the ending of the Yosef/brothers story, ask them how they would finish it.

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. What did Yosef want to do with Binyamin when he “found” his goblet in his bag?
2. Who begged Yosef not to take Yosef? Why him?
3. What did Yosef do before he revealed his identity to the brothers?
4. What was the brother’s reaction to the news?
5. What did Yosef tell the brothers to do?
6. What did Yosef and Paroh give the brothers before they left?
7. How many people went down to Egypt?
8. What did Hashem promise to Yaakov on his way to Egypt?
9. What land did Paroh give Yaakov and his family?
10. How many years was it that Yaakov and Yosef didn’t see each other?

## Answers

1. Keep him in Egypt as a slave
2. Yehudah. Because he told Yaakov that he would take full responsibility that Binyamin would return safe and sound. Yaakov couldn’t lose Binyamin since he was the only remaining son of Rachel.
3. He sent all the Egyptians out of the room
4. They were shocked and silent
5. To go back to Canaan and bring back Yaakov and the rest of the family
6. Lots of money and presents including wagons
7. 70
8. Not to worry going down to Egypt since He will be with him and that He will make a great nation out of Yaakov and bring him back up from Egypt
9. Goshen
10. 22

**LEADER TIP:** In honor of the brothers finally all working together, have everyone split up into teams to work on answering the questions together!

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** The brothers of Yosef were obviously not Yosef's biggest fans, hence them wanting to kill him and then selling him into slavery. They were not acting the way the brothers should. When they came to Egypt to get food because of the famine, Yosef took Shimon and then almost Binyamin as captives. In the beginning of this week's Parsha, Yehudah comes to Yosef to beg for the release of Binyamin, offering himself as a slave to the "Egyptian ruler" instead of Binyamin. It is at this point that Yosef sees the brother's true loyalty to one another and reveals to them who he really is. In this activity, the kids will learn about the importance of working together and helping each other out.

## **ACTIVITY: "Sit Up Together"**

Ask all the kids to find a partner and pair up. The pairs sit on the ground with their backs to each other. What they must do is try to stand up together as one. The partners should reach behind their backs to link arms with each other. When the group leader says go, the partners try to stand up without separating. Once the pairs of two are able to do it, have them get in groups of three and try it. To make it even harder, tell the kids that they aren't allowed to talk at all. See how many people they can group and stand all together without separating. This may be a little difficult for the kids at first but with the group leaders help it can be really cool and fulfilling for the kids to see what they can accomplish.

## **"Human Knot"**

Have the group make a large circle. If it's a big group of kids you can split the group into two or three smaller groups. Have everyone put their left hand in the middle and hold hands with someone in the circle not directly next to them. Repeat this with the right hand and make sure to hold hands with a different person who is not directly next to them. You can use 1-foot "buddy ropes" to reduce the arm twisting if you'd like. Then the group must use teamwork (and a little bit of group leader help) to unravel themselves into a circle again without disconnecting. Helpful hint- To make sure that everyone is in the same circle, send a "pulse." One person begins by gently squeezing their right hand. The person who is squeezed gently squeezes their opposite hand, which passes the pulse to the next person. Continue until the first person has their second hand squeezed.

**DISCUSSION:** When Yosef sees such togetherness between the brothers, he can't help but to finally reveal his identity. Many commentaries say that Yosef reprimanded the brothers when he told them who he was saying "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" This doesn't seem like much of a lecture though. What exactly is the strong rebuke that made the brothers regret so strongly what they did to Yosef? Rav Pam points out, "I am Yosef" is really Yosef saying to the brothers I'm the Yosef that you hated and belittled. You didn't think about who I really might be. You never imagined that I would end up being the 2nd in command in Egypt! In your wildest dreams you never thought that I would be Hashem's messenger to save the entire land with food during these years of famine! Can you imagine that you sold such a person as a slave, with such a mission in life! Rav Pam concludes that the lesson to us is that in our view of others, and in our view of ourselves, we need to understand that we often attribute much less worth than what is truly there. We often treat others with much less respect than what they deserve. Imagine how we will feel when we see how special these people really are! When we stop to think about Rav Pam's insightful words, and consider who we most need to apply them to, many will agree that it is to those we are closest to. We should take to heart that our family members, our parents, our siblings, and our friends often receive the impact of an under-evaluation of their true worth. In these games we learn how to work together and appreciate the skills and qualities each of our friends bring to the table. When we work together appreciating each other that is when we can really accomplish anything and make the world as great of a place as it could be.

**LEADER TIP:** These games are going to take a lot of teamwork which means group leaders are going to need to be on their game making sure everyone's working together and not fighting.

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** Forgiving people and not holding grudges against them is not only good for them -it's also good for us. Sometimes the anger we hold inside against someone who has treated us unkindly hurts us even more than what they did to us in the first place. But forgiving can be hard; how can we do it? This week's Parsha reveals the secret. Yosef's brothers had treated him very unkindly and sold him into slavery. Yet when he met them again many years later, he didn't hold any grudge whatsoever against them. How was that possible? Because Yosef realized the amazing truth that everyone in our lives are, in a deeper sense, Hashem's 'messengers.' Whatever they say or do is only because Hashem is sending us some sort of a message, and what's the point of getting angry at the messenger? Not only that, since the message is coming from Hashem, ultimately it's for our best. Once we learn to live with this outlook, we will lead much happier lives filled with forgiveness and free from the pain of grudges.

## "ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEON"

The kids in Mrs. Kaplan's history classes felt like they had stepped back into the Middle Ages. As a special class trip she had taken them to Manor Castle, a history museum inside a real 800-year-old castle that had been brought, brick by brick, from overseas and reconstructed just as it had been.

"This place is absolutely amazing, isn't it Ellen?" said Naomi, with wide open eyes, as they made their way through the stately, candle-lit halls and chambers.

"Yeah, I guess so," muttered the girl under her breath. Even though the unheated castle was pretty cold, Ellen was boiling.

"Hey, what's the matter with you?" asked Naomi, surprised at her usually bubbly friend's curt answer.

"I'm sorry Naomi," she said, "I'm just really upset."

"Why?"

"You mean to tell me you're *not* upset about how all those kids from the older class just pushed ahead of us like we didn't exist and took all the good seats on the bus? I'm lucky I didn't have to sit in the baggage compartment!"

Naomi shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, that? Yeah I guess it wasn't so nice, but forget it, and let's enjoy the trip. What's the point of letting a couple of minutes of unpleasantness ruin our whole day? Anyway, they were only 'messengers.' Hey, did you hear that? The guide just said we're going down to the dungeon next!"

The dungeon was just where those pushy kids belonged as far as Ellen was concerned. How could her friend just forgive and forget like that? And what in the world had she meant by 'messengers'? But before she had a chance to ask, the guide began leading everyone down a thin, curving stairway. Ellen tried to calm down as she held tight to the metal railing. But she was also holding tight to her grudge. How could she just forgive those thoughtless kids?

"Now nobody get scared..." bellowed Tom, the big, redheaded guide who looked like he fit right into the medieval setting, "...but this is the chamber where the master of the castle would take his prisoners. You know, back then the kings were very cruel. They would even punish, or kill, a messenger that brought them bad news!"

The kids gasped. "Wow, wasn't that dumb?" commented Ellen to Naomi. "What was the point of getting mad at the *messenger*?"

"So why do you do the same thing?"

Ellen was taken aback by her friend's strange comment. "Do the same thing? What are you talking about?"

Naomi smiled. "Like I said, those kids on the bus were also just messengers - from God."

"Messengers from God? What are you *talking* about?"



"Nothing happens for nothing. Whatever happens is really just God's way of talking to us and giving us a message that somehow we need to hear."

"Like what kind of messages?"

"There are lots of different messages. Maybe we had once done something similar to someone else, and God sends us a messenger to teach us how it feels so we won't do it again..."

Ellen blushed, remembering how she had jumped in front of a little kid to grab a seat on the way to school just that morning.

Naomi went on. "Or maybe the messenger is coming to stop us from doing something we think will be good for us but really isn't, or to get us to do something we didn't know that we should. Sometimes the message is pretty clear, and other times we may not understand the message, or why it's good right away, but the message is always there."

Ellen nodded. "Okay, let's say that those kids on the bus really were 'messengers,' but wasn't it still wrong of them to act that way?"

"Maybe it was, but that's their business to work out. What matters for us is that we had to hear a message, and one way or the other God was going to tell it to us. If those kids hadn't been the ones to deliver the message, someone or something else would have. So why not just forgive and forget instead of feeling angry and miserable by holding a grudge?"

"It's like we learned in Torah class about how Joseph met up with his brothers who sold him as a slave. That's how he was able to forgive them, by realizing they were God's messengers. And that's why staying mad at people doesn't make any more sense than one of those medieval kings who used to kill their messengers."

In his booming voice, Tom announced, "Now follow me upstairs to the royal banquet hall!"

Ellen thought about what Naomi said. It would certainly make it easier to drop a grudge and go on with life. She breathed easier as she climbed the stairs and felt ironically like she had begun to climb out of the 'dungeon' of grudge-bearing, and entered the 'banquet hall' of forgiveness.

### **Discussion Questions:**

Q. How did Ellen feel at first about the idea of not holding a grudge against the kids who pushed her on the bus?

A. She felt that since they did something wrong, she should stay angry at them.

Q. How did she feel in the end?

A. She realized that she could think of those kids as being God's 'messengers' and forgive them instead of staying mad.

**LEADER TIP:** Is there anyone in groups that you've been holding a grudge against? Or did you do something wrong to someone else? Now would be a great time to forgive or apologize!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Hannah Greenebaum Solomon

(January 14, 1858- December 7, 1942)



Hannah Greenebaum Solomon founded the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893, the oldest active Jewish women's volunteer organization in America. She was also active in charity and the community life of Chicago. Hannah was the fourth of ten children of Sarah and Michael Greenebaum. On May 14, 1879, she married Henry Solomon and had three children Herbert, Helen and Frank. Hannah Solomon and her sister, Henriette Frank became the first Jewish members of the Chicago Women's Club. In 1890, Hannah Solomon was asked to organize a national Jewish Women's Congress. She was able to get together many Jewish leaders and their organizations for the first such gathering in America. This Congress made this gathering a permanent organization called the National Council of Jewish Women. Their goals were to teach all Jewish women their obligations to their religion and community. Hannah Solomon was elected as the Council's first president and served until 1905 when she was made honorary president for life. Hannah Greenebaum Solomon died on December 7, 1942. Her legacy to the United States and Judaism was the establishment and the development of the National Council of Jewish Women, an outstanding Jewish women's volunteer organization.

**LEADER TIP:** Solomon was always looking to help others. How do you help others?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei- Ata Chonein

Our ability to think and reason, although it happens within us, comes to us as a continuous flowing gift from Hashem. In this bracha, we praise Hashem for the gift of wisdom, then we ask Him for the ability to evaluate things and come to appropriate conclusions. The Talmud says that we can see how important understanding is since it was made the first bracha of the “request section” of weekday Shemoneh Esrei. Even before health or nourishment, we ask Hashem to give us awareness, knowledge and understanding. The Talmud says that Hashem only gives wisdom to a person who already has wisdom. We first thank Hashem for the wisdom we already have before asking Him to improve our mental abilities. On Motzei Shabbat and following holidays, a version of havdalah is inserted in this bracha before we say it later with wine. Aside from the fact that Binah is the first blessing in the weekday series, havdalah perfectly reflects the theme of this bracha in that we need Hashem’s gift of understanding in order to distinguish between the holiness of Shabbat and the everyday life of the other days. Interestingly, the Hebrew initials of the four brachot we say each Motzei Shabbat – besamim, yayin, ner and havdalah – actually spell “binah.”

**LEADER TIP:** Some people are smarter or more knowledgeable in different things. What is something you’re really good or smart in? Try to recognize that as good or smart as you are in that specific thing, that talent is coming from Hashem. Be proud of that talent but remember to thank Hashem for it



# PARSHA NATION



GRADES 3-4

## VAYIGASH REVIEW

At the end of last week's Parsha, Yosef demanded that Binyamin stay behind in Egypt as his slave. This week's Parsha starts off with Yehudah begging Yosef to let Binyamin go back to his father in Canaan since Yaakov was so hesitant to send Binyamin in the first place being he was his only remaining son from Rachel. Yehudah explained to Yosef that he took personal responsibility for Binyamin that he would return safe and sound and requested that he stay as a slave instead of Binyamin. At this point, Yosef couldn't hold up the act any longer. He asked all the Egyptians to leave the room, and he revealed himself to his brothers. "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" Yosef asked. He then comforted them, and asked them not to be upset or blame each other about selling him as a slave. Yosef told his brothers to go back to Canaan and bring Yaakov and the rest of their families back to Egypt where Yosef would give them food until the famine ends. The brothers went back to Canaan loaded with tons of gifts from Paroh and Yosef. They told Yaakov that Yosef was still alive and ruling over Egypt and together (70 in total) they all headed to Egypt. Yaakov and Yosef are reunited after 22 years. On his way to Egypt, Yaakov got a promise from Hashem not to worry, that Hashem will make of him a great nation and He would go down with them to Egypt and bring them up again. Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Paroh gives Yaakov's family the abundant county of Goshen to settle.

**LEADER TIP:** Before you tell the kids the ending of the Yosef/brothers story, ask them how they would finish it.

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. What did Yosef want to do with Binyamin when he “found” his goblet in his bag?
2. Who begged Yosef not to take Yosef?
3. Why was he the one to beg?
4. What did Yosef do before he revealed his identity to the brothers?
5. What was the brother’s reaction to the news?
6. What did Yosef tell them when he revealed who he was?
7. What was the first question Yosef asked the brothers?
8. How were the brothers sure it was Yosef?
9. What did Yosef tell the brothers to do?
10. What did Yosef and Paroh give the brothers before they left?
11. How many people went down to Egypt?
12. What did Hashem promise to Yaakov on his way to Egypt?
13. What land did Paroh give Yaakov and his family?
14. How many years was it that Yaakov and Yosef didn’t see each other?
15. What bracha did Yaakov give Paroh?

**LEADER TIP:** In honor of the brothers finally all working together, have everyone split up into teams to work on answering the questions together!

## Answers

1. Keep him in Egypt as a slave
2. Yehudah
3. Because he told Yaakov that he would take full responsibility that Binyamin would return safe and sound. Yaakov couldn’t lose Binyamin since he was the only remaining son of Rachel.
4. He sent all the Egyptians out of the room
5. They were shocked and silent
6. He told the brothers not to fight or worry about having sold him, since it was all Hashem’s doing. He needed to be there to provide them with food during the famine.
7. Is my father still alive?
8. He spoke Hebrew, showed them his Brit Milah, and he told them he was sold
9. To go back to Canaan and bring back Yaakov and the rest of the family
10. Lots of money and presents including wagons
11. 70
12. Not to worry going down to Egypt since He will be with him and that He will make a great nation out of Yaakov and bring him back up from Egypt
13. Goshen
14. 22
15. That the Nile should overflow and irrigate the land

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** The brothers of Yosef were obviously not Yosef's biggest fans, hence them wanting to kill him and then selling him into slavery. They were not acting the way the brothers should. When they came to Egypt to get food because of the famine, Yosef took Shimon and then almost Binyamin as captives. In the beginning of this week's Parsha, Yehudah comes to Yosef to beg for the release of Binyamin, offering himself as a slave to the "Egyptian ruler" instead of Binyamin. It is at this point that Yosef sees the brother's true loyalty to one another and reveals to them who he really is. In this activity, the kids will learn about the importance of working together and helping each other out.

## **ACTIVITY: "Human Knot"**

Have the group make a large circle. If it's a big group of kids you can split the group into two or three smaller groups. Have everyone put their left hand in the middle and hold hands with someone in the circle not directly next to them. Repeat this with the right hand and make sure to hold hands with a different person who is not directly next to them. You can use 1-foot "buddy ropes" to reduce the arm twisting if you'd like. Then the group must use teamwork (and a little bit of group leader help) to unravel themselves into a circle again without disconnecting. Helpful hint- To make sure that everyone is in the same circle, send a "pulse." One person begins by gently squeezing their right hand. The person who is squeezed gently squeezes their opposite hand, which passes the pulse to the next person. Continue until the first person has their second hand squeezed.

## **"Thirsty Straws"**

Thirsty Straws is a funny relay race where players must quickly drink as much water as they can and then pass it on to the next person. You'll need about a liter of water per team in a big container, straws for everyone long enough to reach the bottom of the container, or a bunch of cups of water if that's easier.

Split everyone up into groups of four. As a team, choose the order in which each person will drink. The object of the game is to be the first team to drink the entire liter (or all the cups) of water- with the requirement that each member of the team can only drink once. Meaning, once person A comes back to the line, they can't go back to drink any more. The catch is that if each person doesn't drink his/her share, the last person is left to finish off whatever is left. This is usually a very difficult task and usually hilarious to watch. The first team to finish off their liter/cups of water is the winner!

**DISCUSSION:** When Yosef sees such togetherness between the brothers, he can't help but to finally reveal his identity. Many commentaries say that Yosef reprimanded the brothers when he told them who he was saying "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" This doesn't seem like much of a lecture though. What exactly is the strong rebuke that made the brothers regret so strongly what they did to Yosef? Rav Pam points out, "I am Yosef" is really Yosef saying to the brothers I'm the Yosef that you hated and belittled. You didn't think about who I really might be. You never imagined that I would end up being the 2nd in command in Egypt! In your wildest dreams you never thought that I would be Hashem's messenger to save the entire land with food during these years of famine! Can you imagine that you sold such a person as a slave, with such a mission in life! Rav Pam concludes that the lesson to us is that in our view of others, and in our view of ourselves, we need to understand that we often attribute much less worth than what is truly there. We often treat others with much less respect than what they deserve. Imagine how we will feel when we see how special these people really are! When we stop to think about Rav Pam's insightful words, and consider who we most need to apply them to, many will agree that it is to those we are closest to. We should take to heart that our family members, our parents, our siblings, and our friends often receive the impact of an under-evaluation of their true worth. In these games we learn how to work together and appreciate the skills and qualities each of our friends bring to the table. When we work together appreciating each other that is when we can really accomplish anything and make the world as great of a place as it could be.

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"You mean to tell me you're *not* upset about how all those kids from the older class just pushed ahead of us like we didn't exist and took all the good seats on the bus? I'm lucky I didn't have to sit in the baggage compartment!"

Naomi shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, that? Yeah I guess it wasn't so nice, but forget it, and let's enjoy the trip. What's the point of letting a couple of minutes of unpleasantness ruin our whole day? Anyway, they were only 'messengers.' Hey, did you hear that? The guide just said we're going down to the dungeon next!"

The dungeon was just where those pushy kids belonged as far as Ellen was concerned. How could her friend just forgive and forget like that? And what in the world had she meant by 'messengers'? But before she had a chance to ask, the guide began leading everyone down a thin, curving stairway. Ellen tried to calm down as she held tight to the metal railing. But she was also holding tight to her grudge. How could she just forgive those thoughtless kids?

"Now nobody get scared..." bellowed Tom, the big, redheaded guide who looked like he fit right into the medieval setting, "...but this is the chamber where the master of the castle would take his prisoners. You know, back then the kings were very cruel. They would even punish, or kill, a messenger that brought them bad news!"

The kids gasped. "Wow, wasn't that dumb?" commented Ellen to Naomi. "What was the point of getting mad at the *messenger*?"

"So why do you do the same thing?"

Ellen was taken aback by her friend's strange comment. "Do the same thing? What are you talking about?"

Naomi smiled. "Like I said, those kids on the bus were also just messengers - from God."

"Messengers from God? What are you *talking* about?"



"Nothing happens for nothing. Whatever happens is really just God's way of talking to us and giving us a message that somehow we need to hear."

"Like what kind of messages?"

"There are lots of different messages. Maybe we had once done something similar to someone else, and God sends us a messenger to teach us how it feels so we won't do it again..."

Ellen blushed, remembering how she had jumped in front of a little kid to grab a seat on the way to school just that morning.

Naomi went on. "Or maybe the messenger is coming to stop us from doing something we think will be good for us but really isn't, or to get us to do something we didn't know that we should. Sometimes the message is pretty clear, and other times we may not understand the message, or why it's good right away, but the message is always there."

Ellen nodded. "Okay, let's say that those kids on the bus really were 'messengers,' but wasn't it still wrong of them to act that way?"

"Maybe it was, but that's their business to work out. What matters for us is that we had to hear a message, and one way or the other God was going to tell it to us. If those kids hadn't been the ones to deliver the message, someone or something else would have. So why not just forgive and forget instead of feeling angry and miserable by holding a grudge?"

"It's like we learned in Torah class about how Joseph met up with his brothers who sold him as a slave. That's how he was able to forgive them, by realizing they were God's messengers. And that's why staying mad at people doesn't make any more sense than one of those medieval kings who used to kill their messengers."

In his booming voice, Tom announced, "Now follow me upstairs to the royal banquet hall!"

Ellen thought about what Naomi said. It would certainly make it easier to drop a grudge and go on with life. She breathed easier as she climbed the stairs and felt ironically like she had begun to climb out of the 'dungeon' of grudge-bearing, and entered the 'banquet hall' of forgiveness.

## Discussion Questions:

Q. Why did Ellen feel better after talking with Naomi?

A. Naomi helped her realize that whatever people do or say to us isn't just by chance. God is watching over us and wouldn't let anything happen to us unless it was to give us a message and teach us something we needed to know. Once she heard this, she was able to drop her grudge against the big kids, and that felt good because the only ones that holding grudges hurt - are us.

Q. Why does God send us messages?

A. One of our main purposes in life is grow into better and kinder people. Therefore, God sends us hidden messages along the way to help us reach our goal. Those messages come to us from the people we meet, and what they say and do. It's a pretty amazing system, but then again God is pretty amazing.

**LEADER TIP:** Is there anyone in groups that you've been holding a grudge against? Or did you do something wrong to someone else? Now would be a great time to forgive or apologize!

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# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Hannah Greenebaum Solomon

(January 14, 1858- December 7, 1942)



Hannah Greenebaum Solomon founded the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893, the oldest active Jewish women's volunteer organization in America. She was also active in charity and the community life of Chicago. Hannah was the fourth of ten children of Sarah and Michael Greenebaum. On May 14, 1879, she married Henry Solomon and had three children Herbert, Helen and Frank. Hannah Solomon and her sister, Henriette Frank became the first Jewish members of the Chicago Women's Club. In 1890, Hannah Solomon was asked to organize a national Jewish Women's Congress. She was able to get together many Jewish leaders and their organizations for the first such gathering in America. This Congress made this gathering a permanent organization called the National Council of Jewish Women. Their goals were to teach all Jewish women their obligations to their religion and community. Hannah Solomon was elected as the Council's first president and served until 1905 when she was made honorary president for life. During her time there, local chapters were created throughout the country and they became active with many social issues of their communities. Solomon was active in many other organizations in the Chicago area. She and Susan B. Anthony represented the Council of Women of the United States at a convention of the International Council of Women in Berlin in 1904. Hannah Greenebaum Solomon died on December 7, 1942. Her legacy to the United States and Judaism was the establishment and the development of the National Council of Jewish Women, an outstanding Jewish women's volunteer organization.

**LEADER TIP:** Solomon was always looking to help others. How do you help others?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei- Ata Chonein

Our ability to think and reason, although it happens within us, comes to us as a continuous flowing gift from Hashem. In this bracha, we praise Hashem for the gift of wisdom, then we ask Him for the ability to evaluate things and come to appropriate conclusions. The Talmud says that we can see how important understanding is since it was made the first bracha of the “request section” of weekday Shemoneh Esrei. Even before health or nourishment, we ask Hashem to give us awareness, knowledge and understanding. The Talmud says that Hashem only gives wisdom to a person who already has wisdom. We first thank Hashem for the wisdom we already have before asking Him to improve our mental abilities. We say in this bracha, “Atah chonein la’adam daas” – “You (Hashem) grace a person with knowledge.” The verb “chonein” means to give as a gift; Hashem has given every person a little bit of intelligence to start with, even though we have done nothing to deserve it. It is our job to work to increase our ability to figure things out and understand them. The Talmud tells us that in intellectual matters, effort and success go hand in hand. On Motzei Shabbat and following holidays, a version of havdalah is inserted in this bracha before we say it later with wine. Aside from the fact that Binah is the first blessing in the weekday series, havdalah perfectly reflects the theme of this bracha in that we need Hashem’s gift of understanding in order to distinguish between the holiness of Shabbat and the everyday life of the other days. Interestingly, the Hebrew initials of the four brachot we say each Motzei Shabbat – besamim, yayin, ner and havdalah – actually spell “binah.”

**LEADER TIP:** Some people are smarter or more knowledgeable in different things. What is something you’re really good or smart in? Try to recognize that as good or smart as you are in that specific thing, that talent is coming from Hashem. Be proud of that talent but remember to thank Hashem for it



# PARSHA NATION



**GRADES 5-6**

## VAYIGASH REVIEW

At the end of last week's Parsha, Yosef demanded that Binyamin stay behind in Egypt as his slave. This week's Parsha starts off with Yehudah begging Yosef to let Binyamin go back to his father in Canaan since Yaakov was so hesitant to send Binyamin in the first place being he was his only remaining son from Rachel. Yehudah explained to Yosef that he took personal responsibility for Binyamin that he would return safe and sound and requested that he stay as a slave instead of Binyamin. At this point, Yosef couldn't hold up the act any longer. He asked all the Egyptians to leave the room, and he revealed himself to his brothers. "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" Yosef asked. He then comforted them, and asked them not to be upset or blame each other about selling him as a slave. Yosef told his brothers to go back to Canaan and bring Yaakov and the rest of their families back to Egypt where Yosef would give them food until the famine ends. The brothers went back to Canaan loaded with tons of gifts from Paroh and Yosef. They told Yaakov that Yosef was still alive and ruling over Egypt and together (70 in total) they all headed to Egypt. Yaakov and Yosef are reunited after 22 years. On his way to Egypt, Yaakov got a promise from Hashem not to worry, that Hashem will make of him a great nation and He would go down with them to Egypt and bring them up again. Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Paroh gives Yaakov's family the abundant county of Goshen to settle.

**LEADER TIP:** Before you tell the kids the ending of the Yosef/brothers story, ask them how they would finish it.

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Taken from *Ohr.edu*

1. What threatening words did Yehuda say to Yosef?  
**44:18 - He threatened that Yosef would be stricken with leprosy, like Pharaoh when he took Sarah from Avraham; alternatively, Yehuda threatened to kill Yosef and Pharaoh.**
2. Why did Yehuda say his missing brother died?  
**44:20 - Yehuda feared that if he said his missing brother was alive, Yosef would demand to see him.**
3. Why was Yehuda the one to plead for Binyamin?  
**44:32 - He was the one who took "soul" responsibility for him.**
4. What do we learn from Yosef telling his brothers "Go up to my father"?  
**45:9 - We learn that *Eretz Yisrael* is higher than all other lands.**
5. What two things did the brothers see that helped prove that he was really Yosef?  
**45:12 - He was circumcised like they were, and he spoke *lashon hakodesh*.**
6. Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck?  
**45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of *Mishkan Shilo* built in Yosef's territory.**
7. Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov?  
**45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine.**
8. What did Yosef mean when he said "Don't dispute on the way"?  
**45:24 - He warned that if they engage in halachic disputes, they might not be alert to possible travel dangers.**
9. What happened to Yaakov when he realized Yosef was alive?  
**45:27 - His *ruach hakodesh* (prophetic spirit) returned.**
10. Why did G-d tell Yaakov, "Don't fear going down to Egypt"?  
**46:3 - Because Yaakov was grieved to leave Eretz Canaan.**
11. "I will bring you up" from Egypt. To what did this allude?  
**46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan.**
12. What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram?  
**46:6 - He traded it for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah.**
13. Who was the mother of Shaul ben HaCanaanit?  
**46:10 - Dina *bat* Yaakov.**
14. When listing Yaakov's children, the verse refers to Rachel as "Rachel, wife of Yaakov." Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are not referred to as Yaakov's wives. Why?  
**46:19 - Rachel was regarded as the mainstay of the family.**

15. Yosef harnessed his own chariot instead of letting a servant do it. Why?  
**46:29 - Yosef wanted to hasten to honor his father.**
16. Why were shepherds abhorrent to the Egyptians?  
**46:34 - Because the Egyptians worshipped sheep.**
17. Why did Yosef pick the weakest brothers to stand before Pharaoh?  
**47:2 - So Pharaoh wouldn't see their strength and draft them.**
18. What blessing did Yaakov give Pharaoh when he left his presence?  
**47:10 - That the waters of the Nile should rise to greet Pharaoh.**
19. Yosef resettled the land of Egypt, moving the people from city to city. What were his two motives for this?  
**47:21 - In order to remind them that they no longer owned the land, and to help his family by removing the stigma of being strangers.**
20. Whose fields were not bought by Yosef?  
**47:22 - The Egyptian priests.**

**LEADER TIP:** In honor of the brothers finally all working together, have everyone split up into teams to work on answering the questions together!

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** The brothers of Yosef were obviously not Yosef's biggest fans, hence them wanting to kill him and then selling him into slavery. They were not acting the way the brothers should. When they came to Egypt to get food because of the famine, Yosef took Shimon and then almost Binyamin as captives. In the beginning of this week's Parsha, Yehudah comes to Yosef to beg for the release of Binyamin, offering himself as a slave to the "Egyptian ruler" instead of Binyamin. It is at this point that Yosef sees the brother's true loyalty to one another and reveals to them who he really is. In this activity, the kids will learn about the importance of working together and helping each other out.

## **ACTIVITY: "Thirsty Straws"**

Thirsty Straws is a funny relay race where players must quickly drink as much water as they can and then pass it on to the next person. You'll need about a liter of water per team in a big container, straws for everyone long enough to reach the bottom of the container, or a bunch of cups of water if that's easier.

Split everyone up into groups of four. As a team, choose the order in which each person will drink. The object of the game is to be the first team to drink the entire liter (or all the cups) of water- with the requirement that each member of the team can only drink once. Meaning, once person A comes back to the line, they can't go back to drink any more. The catch is that if each person doesn't drink his/her share, the last person is left to finish off whatever is left. This is usually a very difficult task and usually hilarious to watch. The first team to finish off their liter/cups of water is the winner!

## **"Stranded on an Island"**

This is a great teambuilding activity that asks people to identify what object they would bring if they were to be stranded on a deserted island. Each person discusses why they brought the object. Within groups, people decide how to improve their chances of survival by combining their various objects.

Form groups of about five to ten people and give them the following instructions: "Unfortunately, you will all be relocated and stranded on a deserted island for an indefinite amount of time. You may each only bring one item to the island, and you only have a few minutes notice. What will you bring? Share with your group your object, why you chose it, and what you plan to do with it." Once everyone has shared with the rest of their group what their item is and why they chose it, instruct the groups to figure out how they can combine all their objects in the most creative way possible in order to improve

their chances of survival. Once each team comes up with their ideas, have them present it to the rest of the group as a whole. If you have time after each team presents, see if as a whole group together they can come up with ideas on how to combine each smaller groups' ideas together.

**DISCUSSION:** When Yosef sees such togetherness between the brothers, he can't help but to finally reveal his identity. Many commentaries say that Yosef reprimanded the brothers when he told them who he was saying "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" This doesn't seem like much of a lecture though. What exactly is the strong rebuke that made the brothers regret so strongly what they did to Yosef? Rav Pam points out, "I am Yosef" is really Yosef saying to the brothers I'm the Yosef that you hated and belittled. You didn't think about who I really might be. You never imagined that I would end up being the 2nd in command in Egypt! In your wildest dreams you never thought that I would be Hashem's messenger to save the entire land with food during these years of famine! Can you imagine that you sold such a person as a slave, with such a mission in life! Rav Pam concludes that the lesson to us is that in our view of others, and in our view of ourselves, we need to understand that we often attribute much less worth than what is truly there. We often treat others with much less respect than what they deserve. Imagine how we will feel when we see how special these people really are! When we stop to think about Rav Pam's insightful words, and consider who we most need to apply them to, many will agree that it is to those we are closest to. We should take to heart that our family members, our parents, our siblings, and our friends often receive the impact of an under-evaluation of their true worth. In these games we learn how to work together and appreciate the skills and qualities each of our friends bring to the table. When we work together appreciating each other that is when we can really accomplish anything and make the world as great of a place as it could be.

**LEADER TIP:** These games are going to take a lot of teamwork which means group leaders are going to need to be on their game making sure everyone's working together and not fighting.



# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** Forgiving people and not holding grudges against them is not only good for them -it's also good for us. Sometimes the anger we hold inside against someone who has treated us unkindly hurts us even more than what they did to us in the first place. But forgiving can be hard; how can we do it? This week's Parsha reveals the secret. Yosef's brothers had treated him very unkindly and sold him into slavery. Yet when he met them again many years later, he didn't hold any grudge whatsoever against them. How was that possible? Because Yosef realized the amazing truth that everyone in our lives are, in a deeper sense, Hashem's 'messengers.' Whatever they say or do is only because Hashem is sending us some sort of a message, and what's the point of getting angry at the messenger? Not only that, since the message is coming from Hashem, ultimately it's for our best. Once we learn to live with this outlook, we will lead much happier lives filled with forgiveness and free from the pain of grudges.

## "ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEON"

The kids in Mrs. Kaplan's history classes felt like they had stepped back into the Middle Ages. As a special class trip she had taken them to Manor Castle, a history museum inside a real 800-year-old castle that had been brought, brick by brick, from overseas and reconstructed just as it had been.

"This place is absolutely amazing, isn't it Ellen?" said Naomi, with wide open eyes, as they made their way through the stately, candle-lit halls and chambers.

"Yeah, I guess so," muttered the girl under her breath. Even though the unheated castle was pretty cold, Ellen was boiling.

"Hey, what's the matter with you?" asked Naomi, surprised at her usually bubbly friend's curt answer.

"I'm sorry Naomi," she said, "I'm just really upset."

"Why?"

"You mean to tell me you're *not* upset about how all those kids from the older class just pushed ahead of us like we didn't exist and took all the good seats on the bus? I'm lucky I didn't have to sit in the baggage compartment!"

Naomi shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, that? Yeah I guess it wasn't so nice, but forget it, and let's enjoy the trip. What's the point of letting a couple of minutes of unpleasantness ruin our whole day? Anyway, they were only 'messengers.' Hey, did you hear that? The guide just said we're going down to the dungeon next!"

The dungeon was just where those pushy kids belonged as far as Ellen was concerned. How could her friend just forgive and forget like that? And what in the world had she meant by 'messengers'? But before she had a chance to ask, the guide began leading everyone down a thin, curving stairway. Ellen tried to calm down as she held tight to the metal railing. But she was also holding tight to her grudge. How could she just forgive those thoughtless kids?

"Now nobody get scared..." bellowed Tom, the big, redheaded guide who looked like he fit right into the medieval setting, "...but this is the chamber where the master of the castle would take his prisoners. You know, back then the kings were very cruel. They would even punish, or kill, a messenger that brought them bad news!"

The kids gasped. "Wow, wasn't that dumb?" commented Ellen to Naomi. "What was the point of getting mad at the *messenger*?"

"So why do you do the same thing?"

Ellen was taken aback by her friend's strange comment. "Do the same thing? What are you talking about?"

Naomi smiled. "Like I said, those kids on the bus were also just messengers - from God."

"Messengers from God? What are you *talking* about?"

"Nothing happens for nothing. Whatever happens is really just God's way of talking to us and giving us a message that somehow we need to hear."

"Like what kind of messages?"

"There are lots of different messages. Maybe we had once done something similar to someone else, and God sends us a messenger to teach us how it feels so we won't do it again..."

Ellen blushed, remembering how she had jumped in front of a little kid to grab a seat on the way to school just that morning.

Naomi went on. "Or maybe the messenger is coming to stop us from doing something we think will be good for us but really isn't, or to get us to do something we didn't know that we should. Sometimes the message is pretty clear, and other times we may not understand the message, or why it's good right away, but the message is always there."

Ellen nodded. "Okay, let's say that those kids on the bus really were 'messengers,' but wasn't it still wrong of them to act that way?"

"Maybe it was, but that's their business to work out. What matters for us is that we had to hear a message, and one way or the other God was going to tell it to us. If those kids hadn't been the ones to deliver the message, someone or something else would have. So why not just forgive and forget instead of feeling angry and miserable by holding a grudge?"

"It's like we learned in Torah class about how Joseph met up with his brothers who sold him as a slave. That's how he was able to forgive them, by realizing they were God's messengers. And that's why staying mad at people doesn't make any more sense than one of those medieval kings who used to kill their messengers."

In his booming voice, Tom announced, "Now follow me upstairs to the royal banquet hall!"

Ellen thought about what Naomi said. It would certainly make it easier to drop a grudge and go on with life. She breathed easier as she climbed the stairs and felt ironically like she had begun to climb out of the 'dungeon' of grudge-bearing, and entered the 'banquet hall' of forgiveness.

### **Discussion Questions:**

Q. How can we learn to become more aware of the messages God is sending us?

A. Once we realize that God is truly sending us messages, we are well on the way to becoming more aware of them. It is helpful to remind ourselves of this concept from time to time because it is easy to forget when we're in the middle of a busy day. Of course, we can't know for certain what God is telling us, but often we can get a pretty good idea of which direction He's guiding us to go.

Q. Why does God hide His messages in the words and actions of other people instead of just talking to us directly?

A. There are a number of reasons, but a big one is that God wants us to have free choice whether or not to listen to Him. This is because we grow much more if we freely choose to come close to Him rather than feel compelled. If we were to hear 'directly' from God we would be so blown away by the experience, that we would have virtually no choice but to listen.

**LEADER TIP:** Is there anyone in groups that you've been holding a grudge against? Or did you do something wrong to someone else? Now would be a great time to forgive or apologize!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Hannah Greenebaum Solomon

(January 14, 1858- December 7, 1942)



Hannah Greenebaum Solomon founded the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893, the oldest active Jewish women's volunteer organization in America. She was also active in charity and the community life of Chicago. Hannah was the fourth of ten children of Sarah and Michael Greenebaum. On May 14, 1879, she married Henry Solomon and had three children Herbert, Helen and Frank. Hannah Solomon and her sister, Henriette Frank became the first Jewish members of the Chicago Women's Club. In 1890, Hannah Solomon was asked to organize a national Jewish Women's Congress. She was able to get together many Jewish leaders and their organizations for the first such gathering in America. This Congress made this gathering a permanent organization called the National Council of Jewish Women. Their goals were to teach all Jewish women their obligations to their religion and community. Hannah Solomon was elected as the Council's first president and served until 1905 when she was made honorary president for life. During her time there, local chapters were created throughout the country and they became active with many social issues of their communities. Solomon was active in many other organizations in the Chicago area. She and Susan B. Anthony represented the Council of Women of the United States at a convention of the International Council of Women in Berlin in 1904. She was involved in helping the Russian-Jewish immigrants who were crowding into Chicago in the 1890s. With funds received from the Chicago section of the National Council of Jewish Women, she formed the Bureau of Personal Service, an organization designed to give guidance and legal advice to these new Jewish immigrants. Her interests were wide when it came to working for the betterment of life for women. Solomon worked with the Illinois Industrial School for Girls in 1905 and had the school transformed and moved to a more appropriate area. In 1907, she became president of the school and instituted many positive changes. She was an active member of the Women's City Club and was responsible for many community improvements including helping to improve the laws and regulations affecting juvenile delinquents and the underprivileged. Hannah Greenebaum Solomon died on December 7, 1942. Her legacy to the United States and Judaism was the establishment and the development of the National Council of Jewish Women, an outstanding Jewish women's volunteer organization.

**LEADER TIP:** Solomon was always looking to help others. How do you help others?

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# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei- Ata Chonein

Our ability to think and reason, although it happens within us, comes to us as a continuous flowing gift from Hashem. In this bracha, we praise Hashem for the gift of wisdom, then we ask Him for the ability to evaluate things and come to appropriate conclusions. The Talmud says that we can see how important understanding is since it was made the first bracha of the “request section” of weekday Shemoneh Esrei. Even before health or nourishment, we ask Hashem to give us awareness, knowledge and understanding. The Talmud says that Hashem only gives wisdom to a person who already has wisdom. We first thank Hashem for the wisdom we already have before asking Him to improve our mental abilities. We say in this bracha, “Atah chonein la’adam daas” – “You (Hashem) grace a person with knowledge.” The verb “chonein” means to give as a gift; Hashem has given every person a little bit of intelligence to start with, even though we have done nothing to deserve it. It is our job to work to increase our ability to figure things out and understand them. The Talmud tells us that in intellectual matters, effort and success go hand in hand. On Motzei Shabbat and following holidays, a version of havdalah is inserted in this bracha before we say it later with wine. Aside from the fact that Binah is the first blessing in the weekday series, havdalah perfectly reflects the theme of this bracha in that we need Hashem’s gift of understanding in order to distinguish between the holiness of Shabbat and the everyday life of the other days. Interestingly, the Hebrew initials of the four brachot we say each Motzei Shabbat – besamim, yayin, ner and havdalah – actually spell “binah.” This bracha, which starts with “You graciously give man knowledge,” is the first of six brachot in Shemoneh Esrei where we voice our requests for personal needs. Yet, “ata chonein” is the only request in Shemoneh Esrei that does not immediately start with a request but rather, with a statement of praise “ata chonein l’adam da’at: You graciously endow Man with knowledge.” The Meiri writes that the word “chonein”, which means that Hashem “provides kindness” by giving us knowledge, refers to our own ability to think which is granted at birth, and which is unrelated to our efforts. Whatever Hashem gives us in the way of knowledge is “chonein”, a free gift. At times we tend to view our ability to think and to reason as man-made, since thought is internal. We say it all the time. “Sure, I thought of that.” “That is my decision.” Or, “Hey, that was my idea.” Other purposes, such as making a living, are external and therefore, it is more clear that Hashem is involved. That is why this bracha must start with a statement of praise “ata chonein l’adam da’at: You graciously endow man with knowledge.” In fact, the verb of “chonein” is used three times in this short bracha in order to emphasize that all of our knowledge, insight, perception and understanding is a complete gift from Hashem.

**LEADER TIP:** Some people are smarter or more knowledgeable in different things. What is something you’re really good or smart in? Try to recognize that as good or smart as you are in that specific thing, that talent is coming from Hashem. Be proud of that talent but remember to thank Hashem for it.



# PARSHA NATION



Teen Minyan Kol Haniarim

## This Week in Jewish History

December 28, 2002

### Noam Apter in Yeshivat Otniel

On erev Shabbat, Dec. 27, 2002, more than 100 Israeli teenagers and young adults sat down for the Shabbat meal at the yeshiva of Otniel. These are people who study in yeshiva before and sometimes during their army service. Four of the students whose turn it was to be the evening's waiters went into the kitchen adjoining the dining room to serve the main course. They were Noam Apter, 23; Yehuda Bamberger, 20; Zvi Ziman 18; and Gabriel Hoter, 17. Outside the kitchen, two terrorists, members of the Islamic Jihad organization, were wearing IDF army uniforms and toting M 16's, ammunition, and hand grenades. The two terrorists burst into the kitchen and sprayed the four waiters with fire from their M-16s. Hit by the bullets and mortally wounded, Noam managed to run to the door connecting the kitchen and the dining room and close it from the kitchen side. He locked the



door and threw the key into a dark corner. He then collapsed and died, lying against the door. The terrorists tried to open the door. Seeing it locked, they tried to spray fire through a small glass window into the dining room. After realizing that this fire was inaccurate and wild (it only wounded six more students) and having already murdered the four student waiters, the terrorists fled the kitchen, later to be hunted down and killed by the Israeli army. According to 18-year-old Yaacov Ohana, a wounded survivor of the attack who was quoted in the Israeli daily Ma'ariv, "Our great luck was that Noam succeeded in locking the door to the dining room and throwing the key into a dark corner, otherwise the terrorists would have massacred dozens."

### **FIND...**

- Yehudah
- Yosef
- Canaan
- Seventy Souls
- Beer Sheva
- Goshen
- Shepherds

### **STAT LINE OF THE WEEK- VAYIGASH**

11th of 54 sedras; 11th of 12 in Bereishit  
 Written on 178.07 lines in a Torah, ranks 34  
 Vayigash is composed of 3 parshiyot, all closed, one VERY closed. Actually, Vayigash has only 2.89 parshiot; it ends after 34 pesukim of a 38-pasuk parsha; Vayigash is the only sedra that does not end with a parsha break. (This shows up in a Chumash by there not being a PEI-PEI-PEI or SAMACH-SAMACH-SAMACH between Vayigash and Vaychi.)  
 106 pesukim – ranks 28; tied with Toldot and Bo. Actually it is considerably smaller than Bo, and a bit larger than Toldot  
 1480 words – 30th; 5680 letters – 29th  
 9th (of 12) in Bereishit in all 3 categories  
 MITZVOT  
 None of the 613 mitzvot are found in Vayigash

## TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

# WHY DO WE FAST ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> OF TEVET?

Email your answers to [YOUTH@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG](mailto:YOUTH@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG) along with your **NAME** and **AGE** for a chance to win **AWESOME PRIZES!** Each correct answer will enter your name into a raffle that will happen once a month. Behatzlacha!

### THIS JUST IN!

- **Camels chew in a figure 8 pattern.**
- **India has a Bill of Rights for cows.**
- **Jackals have one more pair of chromosomes than dogs or wolves.**
- **Dartboards are made out of horse hairs.**

For more info please feel free to contact us at [Youth@youngisrael.org](mailto:Youth@youngisrael.org)

### Parsha Points to Ponder...

After all the hardships that Yosef caused his brothers he finally admits to them who he is. He knew that they would now fear that he would take revenge upon them for having sold him into slavery. Instead, Yosef tells them not to worry. He forgives them. In fact he says you have done me a favor. It was really Hashem's will that I end up in Egypt. He declares to them KI LEMICHYA SHELACHANI ELOKIM LIFNECHEM, "for it was to be a provider that Hashem sent me before you." (Gen. 45:5) What he was saying is that he was sent to provide food for everyone during the years of famine. Yosef could have taken out all his anger that he experienced during so many years that he was in Egypt. He would have been justified in the eyes of his brothers if he did take revenge upon them. He was, however, a magnanimous person and found a way to turn the entire episode around so that their terrible act really seems like a favor. There was also another advantage in Yosef being in Egypt. Hashem had prophesied to Avraham that his descendants would be living in Galut in a strange land. They could have come to this foreign land through war as slaves or through other tragedies. Instead, now that Yosef was such a powerful person in this land, Yaakov was able to come with dignity and given great respect. All this shows us that we may find ourselves in a difficult position but we must never despair. We should always look at the bright side and realize that things could turn out for the best. Have faith and patience.

J	E	C	S	O	S	N	U	Z	F	Z	Y
U	O	O	D	T	E	Y	A	A	T	M	Y
Z	T	O	R	B	V	Y	O	A	M	Z	L
N	V	N	E	H	E	A	J	S	N	W	F
R	E	Y	H	X	N	V	Q	E	E	A	M
G	V	P	P	R	T	E	H	M	L	F	C
O	I	O	E	A	Y	H	A	Y	E	K	M
S	E	K	H	V	S	S	D	U	C	C	Z
H	A	H	S	X	O	R	U	A	F	A	O
E	R	U	P	X	U	E	H	L	H	I	X
N	G	U	E	D	L	E	E	D	K	Z	E
R	S	O	K	B	S	B	Y	W	E	J	K

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