

BESHALLAH בְּשַׁלָּלָה



January 9 - 15, 2022 ז' - י"ג שבט תשפ"ב



מה בפַּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ♦ God leads בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Benei Yisrael, the Israelites) out of Egypt.
- ♦ Pharaoh and his army chase Benei Yisrael, trapping them by the יַם סוּף (Yam Suf, Reed Sea). Moshe raises his staff and God miraculously splits the sea.
- ♦ Pharaoh and his army chase after them through the sea. The water returns in time to drown the Egyptians.
- ♦ Moshe, Miriam, and Benei Yisrael sing a song thanking God.
- ♦ Benei Yisrael arrive at Marah, where the water is too bitter to drink. God shows Moshe a branch to throw into the water to sweeten it. Later, Moshe is commanded to provide Benei Yisrael with more water by hitting a rock.
- ♦ Benei Yisrael complain that they do not have enough food. God rains down מָן (mann, miraculous food) from the sky. On Friday, a double portion is provided, since no mann falls on Shabbat.
- ♦ The army of Amalek attacks Benei Yisrael. Yehoshua leads the Israelite army.





מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Midrashim are ideas or stories that explain the Torah. They often come from listening very carefully to what the Torah says and how it says it. Here, we will look for what clues this midrash sees in the Torah's words, and try to understand its messages.

There are some midrashim that imagine what was going on with the angels in Heaven while the events at the יַם סוּף (Yam Suf, Reed Sea) were occurring on earth. These midrashim are prompted by a curious phrase (Shemot 14:20): וְלֹא קָרַב זֶה אֶל זֶה כָּל הַלַּיְלָה (one could not come near the other all through the night).

It's not completely clear who this is talking about, but "zeh el zeh" reminds our rabbis of another famous place in Tanakh where the words "zeh el zeh" appear, in reference to angels in conversation (Yeshayahu 6:3). (You might recognize these words from Kedushah, which quotes the angels from this story!)

Here are two versions of the midrash about what was going on with the angels above, while, down below, Benei Yisrael crossed to safety, and the Egyptians drowned:



Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 39b

At that time, the angels asked to sing a song in celebration before the Holy Blessed One.

The Holy Blessed One said to them: "My handiwork [the Egyptians] are drowning in the sea, and you want to sing before Me?!"

תלמוד בבלי סנהדרין דף לט עמוד ב

בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה בִּקְשׁוּ מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת לומר שִׁירָה לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

אָמַר לָהֶם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: "מַעֲשֵׂי יָדַי טוֹבְעִים בַּיָּם, וְאַתֶּם אוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה לִפְנֵי?!"

Shemot Rabbah 23:9

The angels asked to sing a song in celebration before the Holy Blessed One on the night that Benei Yisrael crossed the Sea. But the Holy Blessed One did not allow it.

God said to them: "My legions [Benei Yisrael] are in distress, and you want to sing before Me?!"

שמות רבה כג:ט

בְּקִשּׁוֹ הַמַּלְאָכִים לִזְמֹר שִׁירָה לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּאוֹתוֹ הַלֵּילָה שֶׁעָבְרוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיָּם, וְלֹא הֵנִיחָם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

אָמַר לָהֶם: "לְגִיּוֹנֹתַי נִתְּנוּ בַּצָּרָה, וְאַתֶּם אוֹמְרִים לִפְנֵי שִׁירָה?!"



Legion is a Latin word for an army regiment. A Roman legion consisted of 4200 to 6000 soldiers. The Hebrew word here לְגִיּוֹן is literally legion!

- ◆ How do you understand the difference between these two versions of the story? What could be motivating each version?
- ◆ Do you think God was sad about the Egyptians who died? Is it okay, like the angels in the first midrash, to want to rejoice when your enemies are suffering?



פְּדוּטוֹת • Commentary

After freeing Benei Yisrael from Egypt, God provides them with miraculous food called מָן (mann, miraculous food). But the language that God uses to introduce it to them is surprising:

Shemot 16:4

And God said to Moshe, "I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people will go out and gather each day that day's portion—so that I may test them, to see whether they will follow My instructions or not.

שמות טז:ד

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הֲנִי מַמְטִיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וּלְקִטּוֹ דִּבֶּר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ לַמַּעַן אֲנֹסֵנוּ הִילָךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי אִם־לֹא:

What does it mean that the mann was a test? Here are two different answers. See if you can find support for each in the parashah.



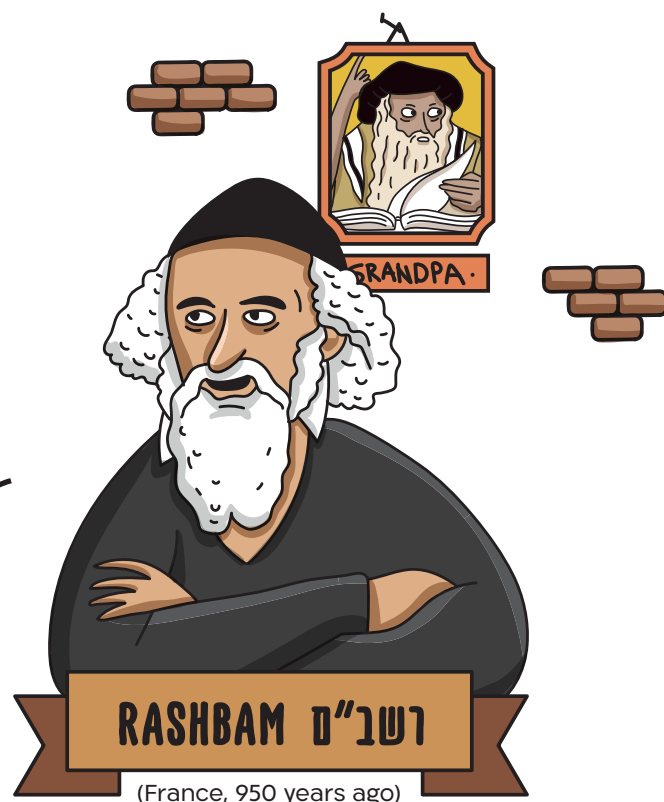
אם יִשְׁמְרוּ מִצְוֹת הַתְּלִיּוֹת
בוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא יוֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא יֵצְאוּ
בַשַּׁבָּת לִלְקוֹט:

The test was to see whether they would observe the mitzvot associated with the mann: that they should not leave any mann overnight, and that they should not go out on Shabbat to collect it.



מֵתוֹךְ שֶׁבְּכֹל יוֹם יוֹם עֵינֵיהֶם תִּלְוִיאוֹת
לְמִזְוֹנֹתֵיהֶם אֵלַי,
מֵתוֹךְ כִּן יֵאֱמִינוּ בִּי וְיִלְכוּ בְּתוֹרָתִי.

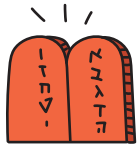
Since every day their eyes will be turned to Me for food. As a result, they will trust Me and follow My laws.



Rashi looks closely at nearby pesukim to figure out what the test is. In the very next pasuk, God outlines the rules specific to mann. Rashi concludes that Benei Yisrael are being tested to see if they will follow the rules.

Rashbam (Rashi's grandson) considers Benei Yisrael's behavior throughout the parashah. They are emotionally all over the place! Sometimes, they sing praise to God; other times, though, they express tremendous doubt about God, and even that they miss slavery (Shemot 16:3). These are people who need to learn to trust that God will take care of them. Rashbam explains the mann "test" as a learning experience, one designed to help Benei Yisrael trust and obey God.

- ◆ Which interpretation do you find to be stronger? Do you have other ideas of what the test could be in this pasuk?
- ◆ What do you think—can tests ever be things we learn from (and not just things that prove what we already know)?



Does your family cover the הללה (hallah) during Kiddush?

One of the sources for this custom comes from this week's parashah. The Talmud writes that, when the מן (mann) fell, it was covered on top and below with layers of dew (Yoma 75b). In order to remember this miracle, some people have the custom to cover their hallah on top and below (Tur, Orah Hayyim 271).

Another reason for this custom is related to the order of blessings. If you have two foods in front of you, how do you decide which one to make a ברכה (berakhah, blessing) on first? The Talmud (Berakhot 41a) says you should recite the blessings based on the Torah's order of the foods in the שבעת המינים (shiv'at haminim, the seven species of the Land of Israel). Here's the list:



Devarim 8:8

A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates,
a land of olive oil and date honey.

דברים ח:ח

אֶרֶץ חִטָּה וּשְׂעִירָה וְגִפְן וְתֵאֲנָה וְרִמּוֹן
אֶרֶץ זֵית שָׁמֶן וְדָבָשׁ:

Since wheat comes before grapes in this pasuk, the berakhah on hallah (made from wheat) would normally come before the berakhah on wine (made from grapes). However, since we begin Shabbat with Kiddush, we cover the hallah, which allows us to change the usual order.

The Tur (Orah Hayyim 271), citing the Talmud Yerushalmi, says that, since we would normally make the berakhah on the hallah first, it might feel "embarrassed" that the berakhah on the wine got priority. In order to protect the hallah from this awkward feeling, the custom is to cover it until after Kiddush.

What about covering other foods during Kiddush?

- ◆ According to the second explanation, that the hallah is covered because of the usual order of blessings, you should cover any food on the table that is made from wheat and barley (because wheat and barley come before grapes in the pasuk about the shiv'at ha-minim).
- ◆ According to the first explanation, that the hallah is covered to remind us of the mann, you only have to cover the hallah, nothing else.





הַפְּטָרָה • Haftarah

To match שִׁירַת הַיָּם (Shirat Ha-Yam, the Song of the Sea) in the parashah, the haftarah for this week includes the Song of Devorah in the Book of Shoftim. Devorah's song celebrates Benei Yisrael, led by the general Barak, along with a woman called Yael, defeating the Canaanite general, Sisera.

Yael's story is not for the faint of heart! As Sisera flees from battle, Yael risks her life and pretends to be a friend offering him shelter. She gets him to come into her tent by offering him a place to hide and rest. She lures him to sleep by covering him with a blanket and giving him some milk to drink. When he finally falls asleep, she hammers a tent peg through his head and kills him!

In her song, Devorah praises Yael:

Shoftim 5:25

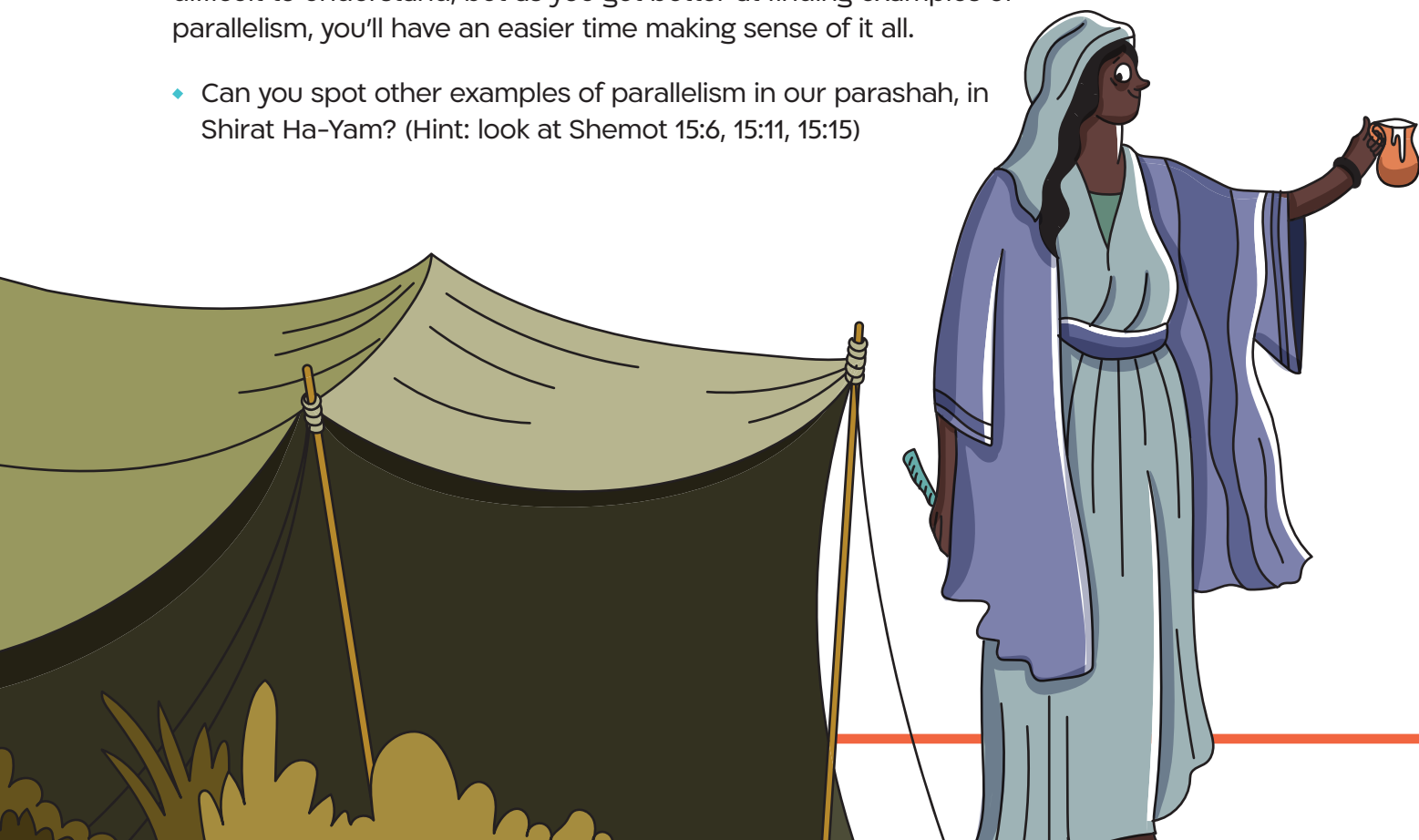
He asked for water,
she brought him milk
In a fancy bowl, she served him butter.

שופטים ה:כה

מִיָּם שָׁאַל חֶלֶב נָתַנָּה
בְּסִפָּל אֲדִירִים הִקְרִיבָה חֶמְאָה:

This phrase is an example of **parallelism**: the same general idea is expressed twice, in different words. Poetry in Tanakh can be pretty difficult to understand, but as you get better at finding examples of parallelism, you'll have an easier time making sense of it all.

- ♦ Can you spot other examples of parallelism in our parashah, in Shirat Ha-Yam? (Hint: look at Shemot 15:6, 15:11, 15:15)





מה קרה • What's Going On Here?

The taste of מַן (mann, the miraculous food from heaven) is described in our parashah (Shemot 16:31) as כֶּצֶפִּיחַת בְּדָבָשׁ, which might mean something like "honey cake" or "wafers in honey." Later in the Torah (Bemidbar 11:8), mann is described as לֶשֶׁת הַשָּׁמֶן, meaning something like "oil cake" or "rich cream."

What did mann really taste like?

According to some midrashim, the answer is: both. Mann was a miraculous food, and it tasted like whatever the person eating it desired. Some people preferred honey cake and others preferred oil cake, so the Torah describes it both ways (Shemot Rabbah 25:3).



רגע של עברית • A Moment of Hebrew

Shemot 16:4

And God said to Moshe, "I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people will go out and **gather** each day that day's portion—so that I may test them, to see whether they will follow My instructions or not."

שמות טז:ד

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הֲנִי מְמַטִּיר
לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיֵצֵא הָעָם
וְלָקְטוּ דֹבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ לְמַעַן אֲנִסְנוּ
הֵילֵךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי אִם־לֹא:

לָקַט (שָׁרַשׁ ל.ק.ט.)

To collect or gather

A collection or mix = לָקַט

The mitzvah that requires a = מִצְוַת לָקַט
farmer to leave stalks of grain that fall
during a harvest, ensuring that people in
need can come and collect



= לָקַט!
Backpack



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 the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.

aliyot:

- 1) Shemot 13:17-14:8
- 2) 14:9 to 14:14
- 3) 14:15 to 14:25
- 4) 14:26 to 15:26
- 5) 15:27 to 16:10
- 6) 16:11 to 16:35
- 7) 17:1 to 17:16

Good luck!

1 Which shortcut to אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel) did God not allow Benei Yisrael to take?

2 What do Benei Yisrael say there were plenty of in מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt)?

3 From what direction did wind come to split the sea?

4 There are five words in a row in our parashah that begin with the letter aleph. What are they?

5 How many date-palm trees were there in Eilim?

6 What happened when people tried to save some of the מָן (mann) for the next morning?

7 What did Moshe have to do to ensure a victory over Amalek?

8 What two famous characters are introduced by name for the first time in our parashah?

9 What are the names of two places where Moshe helps to provide the people with water?

10 What verse in our parashah is out of chronological order?

*
Look for the answers on page 12!



קריאת התורה • Torah Reading

אריח על גבי לבינה — Small bricks on big bricks

Let's take a break from talking about words and see how the Torah looks. This is a great week to do that because we read שִׁירַת הַיָּם (Shirat Ha-Yam, the Song of the Sea), the section that is about how Moshe and Miriam led Benei Yisrael in song after God split the sea for them. And if you open up the Torah, you can see right away that something different is happening here. It looks like this:

וּבְרוּזֹז	תִּשְׁלַח זֶרֶךְ יֹאכְלֵמוֹ כֶּקֶשׁ	קִמִּיר
זָצְבוּ כְמוֹ זָד		אֶפֶיךָ זָעַרְמוֹ מִיָּם
אָמַר	קִפְאוּ תַהֲמִית בְּכֵב יָם	זָזְלִים
אֲזַלְכָּךְ שְׁלַל תִּמְכֹּלְאֵמוֹ		אוֹיֵב אֶרְדֵּף אֲשִׁיג
זָשַׁפַּת	אֲרִיֵּךְ זָרְבִי תִּזְרִיעֵמוֹ יָדַי	זָפְשִׁי
זָלְלוּ כַעֲפֹרֶת בַּמִּים		בְּרוּזֹךְ כִּסְמוֹ יָם

What do you think it looks like? Our Sages imagined a type of building. They called this אַרְיֵחַ עַל גְּבִי לְבִינָה, a short brick on top of a long one. Meaning, they thought it looked like a brick wall of this sort, where the bricks switch positions row by row:



If you are at shul for Torah reading this week, try to sneak a peek at this part of the Torah; it's the only part of the Torah written this way!

- Why do you think you would write a poem in this style?



דְּבָרָה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

How to play:

Here is a topic for debate along with some suggested arguments, but feel free to come up with your own.

- ◆ Assign people to the "true" or "false" sides.
- ◆ Each side gets 30 seconds to make their case.
- ◆ At the end, the group votes on a winner.

Debate: Benei Yisrael were whining too much for food and water in the desert.



True!

- ◆ After the incredible miracles they saw, they immediately complain the first minute they were a little thirsty! Unbelievable.
- ◆ There are THREE instances of Benei Yisrael complaining in our parashah: first about water, then about food, and then about water again. That's a lot of complaining for one parashah.

False!

- ◆ Have you ever wandered in the desert and not had water or known where your water would come from? Sounds stressful.
- ◆ It must have been pretty disorienting to adjust to not being slaves anymore. Cut them some slack.





• **Who Were Our Sages?** • **מי היו חכמינו**

The הפטרה/Haftarah section introduced us to the Song of Devorah (p. 6). But who was she?

Devorah is the only שופטת (Shofetet, female judge or champion) in the book of Shoftim. The Tanakh tells us that she was a prophet and would sit under a tree that was named after her. There, Benei Yisrael would come to her for wisdom and judgment (Shoftim 4:4-5). It was Devorah who instructed the general Barak to go fight against Sisera. Devorah's power and influence was so great that Barak refused to go into battle without her!

Devorah is also described as אִשֶּׁת לִפְיִדּוֹת (eishet lappidot). This could mean that she was the wife of a man called Lappidot, but he doesn't appear anywhere in Tanakh. "Lappidot" also means, "lightning," and Barak means, "thunder," and this leads some people to say that Lappidot is actually another name for Barak, and that he is the one married to Devorah.

However, if we don't consider "lappidot" to be a person's name, then it might be more like Devorah's slogan: "woman of lightning." Perhaps it could refer to the flash of her armor, weapons, or chariot as she went into battle with Barak. What do **you** think?



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. The road through the land of the פְּלִשְׁתִּים (Pelishtim, Philistines; 13:17)
2. Graves (14:11)
3. East (14:21)
4. אָמַר אוֹיֵב אֶרְדּוֹף אֲשִׁיג אַחֲלֶק (amar oyev erdof asig ahalek; 15:9)
5. 70 (15:27)
6. It became full of worms and stank; Moshe got angry (16:20)
7. Keep his hands up in the air (17:11-13)
8. Miriam (15:20) and Yehoshua (17:9)
9. מָרָה (Marah) (15:23-25) and מִסָּה וּמִרִיבָה (Massah Um'rivah) (17:1-7)
10. 16:35—It reveals that Benei Yisrael will spend 40 years in the desert. Spoiler alert!



Shabbat Shalom!

~ שבת שלום ~



Send us your thoughts or questions from learning the parashah. We'll write back to you, and some will get published in future issues of Devash!

Write to us at devash@hadar.org



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