



י' - ט"ז כסליו תשפ"ב November 14 - 20, 2021



קַה בַּפֶּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ◆ Yaakov sends messengers to his brother Esav, letting Esav know that Yaakov and his family are returning to אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן (Eretz Canaan, the land of Canaan).
- ◆ Yaakov is scared to learn that Esav is coming to greet him with 400 men. 20 years earlier, Yaakov ran away when Esav promised to kill him. Yaakov divides his family into two camps for protection, prays to God, and sends hundreds of animals as a gift to Esav.
- ◆ An angel wrestles with Yaakov all night long, and blesses Yaakov that his new name will be Yisrael.
- ◆ Yaakov was injured in his גִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה (gid ha-nasheh, a part of the hip called the sciatic nerve) from the wrestling. Therefore, the gid ha-nasheh of an animal is not kosher to eat.
- ◆ The next day, Yaakov continues with his family to meet Esav and bows before him. Esav runs toward Yaakov and kisses him, and they cry.
- ◆ Yaakov's daughter, Dinah, is kidnapped, but is saved by her brothers, led by Shimon and Levi.
- ◆ Rahel dies in childbirth, on the road to Beit Lehem, and is buried there. The child born is Binyamin.





מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash



When Esav sees Yaakov approaching with his family, Esav runs to greet him with a hug and a kiss.

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.

Bereishit 33:4

Esav ran to greet him, and hugged him; and he fell upon his neck and **kissed him**; and they cried.

בראשית לג:ד

וַיָּרַץ עֵשָׂו לִקְרֹאתוֹ וַיַּחְבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל
עַל-צְוֹאָרוֹ וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכוּ:

In a Torah scroll, there are dots above the word וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ (va-yishakeihu, he kissed him). What is the purpose of these dots, and what can they teach us about Esav's kiss?

This midrash, reflecting on both of these questions, offers two possibilities for how to understand this verse:

Bereishit Rabbah 78:9

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said... This teaches that Esav felt compassion in that moment and kissed Yaakov with all his heart.

Rabbi Yannai said to him: If so, why is the word וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ (va-yishakeihu) dotted? Rather, it teaches that Esav came not to kiss (נָשַׁק, nashak) Yaakov, but to bite (נָשַׁח, nashakh) him. Our father Yaakov's neck became marble and that wicked one's [Esav's] teeth were hurt (קָהוּ, kahu, sounds similar to va-yishakeihu).

And why did the Torah say they cried? [Yaakov] cried because of his neck, and [Esav] cried because of his teeth.

בראשית רבה עח:ט

אָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן אֱלֶעָזָר...
מִלְמַד שְׂנוּקָמְרוּ רַחֲמִי
בְּאוֹתָהּ הַשָּׁעָה וְנִשְׁקוּ בְּכָל
לֵב.

אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי יִנָּאי אִם כֵּן לָמָּה
נִקְוֶה עָלָיו, אֵלָּא מִלְמַד שֶׁלֹּא
בָּא לְנִשְׁקוֹ אֵלָּא לְנִשְׁכּוֹ,
וְנִשְׁחָה צְוֹאָרוֹ שֶׁל אָבִינוּ
יַעֲקֹב שֶׁל שִׁישׁ וְקָהוּ שְׁנֵי
שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ רָשָׁע, וְמָה תִּלְמוּד
לוֹמַר וַיִּבְכוּ, אֵלָּא זֶה בּוֹכָה
עַל צְוֹאָרוֹ וְזֶה בּוֹכָה עַל שְׁנָיו.

According to Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar, in this scene, Esav had a change of heart. While he previously felt hatred towards Yaakov, Esav began to feel love for his brother and kissed him.

Rabbi Yannai reads the pasuk differently. He understands that the dots over וַיִּשָּׁקֶהוּ (va-yishakeihu) are a sign that the interaction wasn't as peaceful as it appeared. In this reading, Esav tried to harm Yaakov by biting him—and then a miracle happened and Yaakov's neck turned to marble.

- ♦ What are the different ways of understanding why Yaakov and Esav cried?
- ♦ Can you find hints in the text about whether Esav and Yaakov actually made peace with each other?
- ♦ Is it possible that one brother wanted peace more than the other?



פְּדָטָנוּת • Commentary

After wrestling Yaakov all night, the angel finally wanted to leave, but he first asked Yaakov for permission to go:



Bereishit 32:27

And he [the angel] said [to Yaakov],
"Let me go, for the sun has come up."

בראשית לב:כז

וַיֹּאמֶר
שְׁלַחְנִי כִּי עָלָה הַשָּׁחַר...

Why is daytime an excuse for the angel to leave? What does daytime have to do with anything?

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

רש"י

"For the sun has come up" and now, in the day, I must sing songs (to God).

"כִּי עָלָה הַשָּׁחַר" וְצָרִיךְ אֲנִי
לומר שירה ביום:

Rashi's opinion comes from the Talmud (Hullin 91b), where our rabbis talk about how all creatures sing or pray to God in their own way, even angels.

- ◆ In our Siddurim, we actually quote some of the things angels say in their tefillot. See if you can find them in the בְּרָכוֹת (berakhot, blessings) before Shema and in Kedushah (towards the beginning of the Amidah).

Abarbanel (Portugal, 600 years ago)

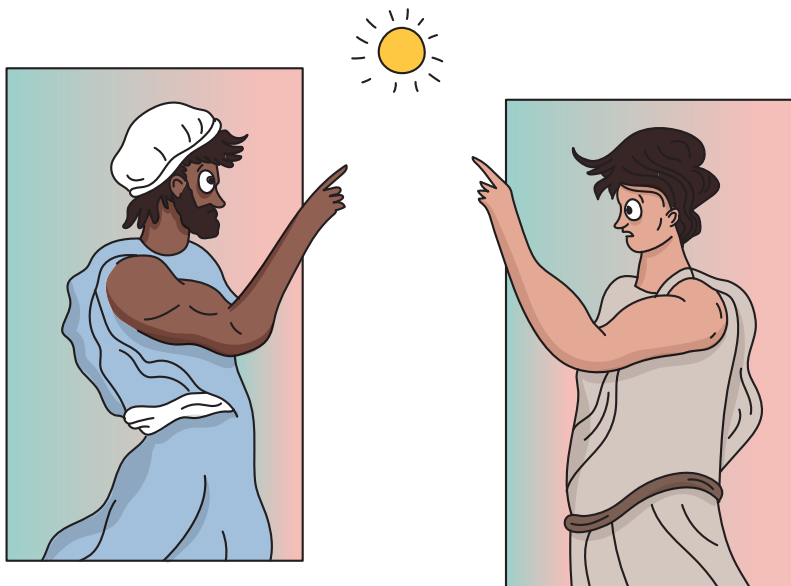
אברבנאל

The angel means to say: "Now that it's morning, you should go where you need to because Esav is coming quickly. So, for your own good, I suggest that you send me away and go your own way."

רוצה לומר ואתה צריך ללכת
לדרך כי עשו יבא במהרה על
כן להנאתך ולטובתך אינני
שתשלחני ותלך לדרךך.

According to the Abarbanel, the angel is trying to do Yaakov a favor, pointing out that he might need to take some time to get ready to meet Esav.

- ◆ Rashi and the Abarbanel disagree about which character was the one with the important morning appointment. Can you find support for either position in the pesukim of the story?





הלכה • Halakhah

In this week's parashah, Yaakov makes a point of expressing gratitude, called in Hebrew הַכָּרַת הַטּוֹב (hakarot ha-tov).

While he is praying to God before meeting Esav, Yaakov begins his prayer with gratitude, thanking God for everything God has done for him. Then he pleads with God for safety and expresses fear about what Esav will do to him (Bereishit 32:11-12). Even in this moment of danger, Yaakov acknowledges all of the חֶסֶד (hesed, kindness) that God has done for him.

Expressing gratitude is an important Jewish value. One way that Jews express gratitude in prayer is by reciting בִּרְכַּת הַגּוֹמֵל (Birkat Ha-Gomel, a blessing of thanksgiving). This is a blessing that people recite after surviving a dangerous situation, for example, after recovering from an illness or a potentially dangerous journey (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 219:1).

Normally, Birkat Ha-Gomel is said in the presence of minyan (sometimes after an aliyah in shul). The blessing is:

Blessed are You, God our Lord, Ruler of the world, Who rewards the undeserving with goodness, and Who has rewarded me with goodness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּיבִים טוֹבוֹת
שֶׁגִּמְלָנִי כָּל טוֹב.

The people gathered there respond:

Amen. The One Who already rewarded you with goodness should continue to reward you with goodness—selah.

אָמֵן. מִי שֶׁגִּמְלָךְ/לָךְ
כָּל טוֹב,
הוּא יִגְמְלָךְ/לָךְ
כָּל טוֹב סֵלָה.





מה קרה • What's Going On Here?

The night before Yaakov met up with Esav, the Torah says that Yaakov was alone.

Bereishit 32:25

Yaakov was left alone. And an angel wrestled with him until the sun came up.

בראשית לב:כה

וַיֵּתֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבִדּוֹ וַיֵּאָבֶק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ
עַד עֹלֹת הַשָּׁחַר:

Until now, Yaakov had been traveling with his very large family. How was it possible that Yaakov was by himself?

The Talmud (Hullin 91a) explains that, after Yaakov's family crossed the Yabbok River, Yaakov stayed back to collect a few jars he had left behind. From Yaakov's behavior, the Talmud teaches that צַדִּיקִים (tzadikim, righteous people) take good care of their personal property so that they do not accidentally use something stolen.



רגע של עברית • A Moment of Hebrew

Bereishit 32:8

Yaakov was very frightened; in his anxiety, **he divided** the people with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps.

בראשית לב:ח

וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיֵּצֵר לוֹ
וַיַּחַץ אֶת־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ
וְאֶת־הַצֹּאן וְאֶת־הַבָּקָר
וְהַגְּמִלִּים לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנֹת:



לחצות (שָׁרַשׁ ח.צ.ה.)

1. To halve or divide
2. To cross



Half = חֲצִי

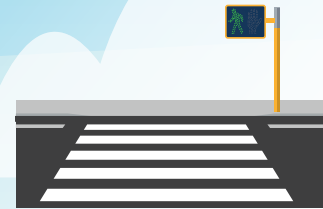


Midnight = חֲצוֹת

Find the Word!

Have you heard this word before?

- What is the name of the part of the Pesah Seder in which the matzah is broken into two pieces?



Crosswalk = מַעְבָּר חֲצִיָּה

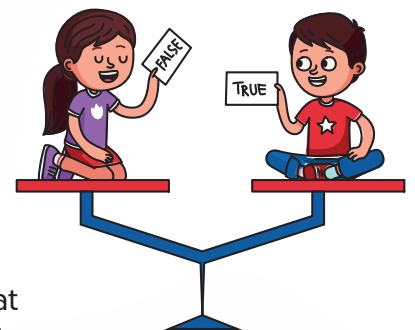


דְּבָרָה שֶׁל דִּינָא • One-Minute Debate

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: What a happy reunion between two brothers! (Take a look at *מה בפרשה*/In This Week's Parashah on p. 1 for the full context, and the *מדרש*/Midrash section on p. 2 for even more arguments).

True:

- Esav runs to Yaakov, hugs him, and kisses him. What could be more joyful than that?
- Esav has everything he could ever want. What good would it do to still be angry about something that happened so long ago?

False:

- If he came with 400 people, Esav must have been at least thinking about fighting Yaakov.
- Yaakov had to run away because Esav planned to kill him! Maybe Esav was just pretending to move on?



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.

Good luck!

1 How many men were marching with Esav?

2 What stream did Yaakov and his family cross in the middle of the night?

3 What name does Yaakov give to the place where he wrestled with the angel?

4 What is Esav's home called?



5 Who died at a place called אֵלֹן בָּכֻת (Alon Bakhut, Tree of Crying)?

6 Who names Yaakov's youngest son, his father or his mother?

7 What king of Edom has the same name as a king of Israel?

8 What future enemy of Israel is Esav's grandson? (Hint: look at Shemot 17)

9 Which name of a Jewish holiday makes a surprise appearance in our parashah?

10 Who in our parashah shares a name with an animal?

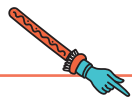

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Look for the answers on page 12!





Kadma

קדמָא

Quick Facts

- How many times does it appear in the Torah?
2,075 - Very common.
Approximately every 3 pesukim
- Does it end a phrase?
No
- Is it above or below the word?
Above
- Does it fall on the accent?
Yes, so the word is pronounced with emphasis where the kadma appears

Kadma is a common note that means "going forward" or "coming before." It looks like a little arc pointing up and to the left. Kadma is a very basic note, made up of just two sounds, a low sound followed by a slightly higher sound. It is used to lead into a whole bunch of other kinds of notes. Here it is in our parashah, setting up a darga-tevir combination:

בראשית לו:יד

בְּנֵי אֵהָלִיבְמָה בֵּת־עֲנָה



Bereishit 36:14

The **children** of Oholivamah, daughter of Anah

A kadma can be hard to tell apart from a pashta, a note we will learn about another time.



בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!



This week's Midrash section (p. 2) brought our attention to the dots above the letters on some words in the Tanakh. There are 10 dotted words in the Torah. What is going on with these dots?

The answer is: no one really knows!

One midrash (Avot de-Rabbi Natan 34) imagines Ezra the scribe writing down the Torah text and including the dots even though he wasn't really sure whether he should. In this story, Ezra says that he plans

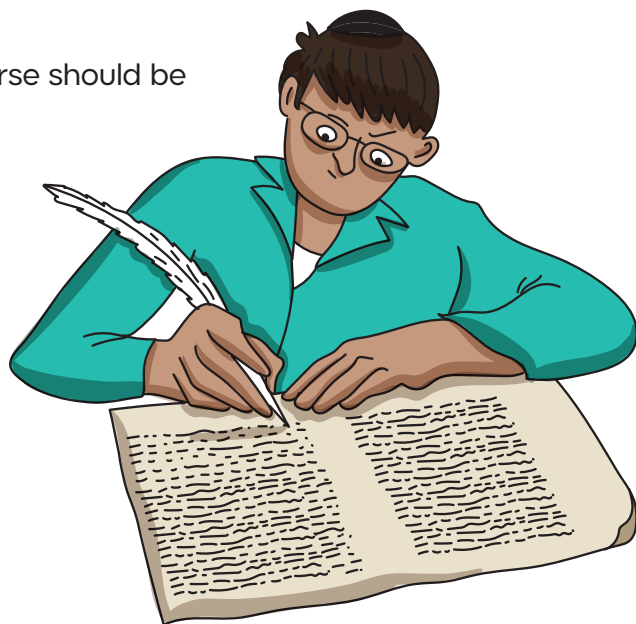
to eventually bring up the issue of the dots with Eliyahu Hanavi, whose job will be to resolve disputes at the end of days.

But in the meantime, many Torah commentators think the dots indicate some kind of emphasis, like the verse should be read with special stress on the dotted word.

Commentators also sometimes suggest that the verse should be read as if the dotted word were removed.

Despite not knowing what these dots mean, scribes have copied them exactly for hundreds of years.

- ◆ Do you think it makes sense to use these dots for interpreting the pasuk? Why or why not?





מי היו חכמינו • Who Were Our Sages?

Rabbi Yannai was one of the most important rabbis of אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel). He was a bridge between the Tannaim (the rabbis of the Mishnah) and the Amoraim (the rabbis of the Talmuds). Rabbi Yannai's teacher was Rebbe (one of the last Tannaim and traditionally the one who put together the Mishnah), and among Rabbi Yannai's students were Rabbi Yohanan and Reish Lakish (two of the most important Amoraim).

Rabbi Yannai once learned a valuable lesson when he invited a guest to his house that he thought was very well educated, but it turned out knew no Torah at all (Vayikra Rabbah 9:3). After receiving Rabbi Yannai's insults, the guest said, "It is not written here [that the Torah is] 'the inheritance of the congregation of Yannai,' but rather 'מִוֶּרְשָׁה קְהִילַת יַעֲקֹב' (morashah kehilat Yaakov, inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov; Devarim 33:4)!" Rabbi Yannai had to be reminded that he, as a scholar and rabbi, had no special ownership over the Torah, even though he knew it better than his guest. The Torah belongs to all Jews, regardless of how much they know.





Shabbat Shalom!

~ שבת שלום ~

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. 400
2. Yabbok
3. Peniel
4. Seir
5. Devorah (Rivkah's nurse)
6. Both! Rahel names him בֶּן אֹנִי (Ben Oni, son of my affliction) and Yaakov names him בְּנִימִין (Binyamin, son of my right hand)
7. Shaul
8. Amalek
9. Sukkot
10. חָמוֹר (Hamor = donkey), the leader of the city of Shekhem; דְּבוֹרָה (Devorah = bee), Rivkah's nurse; and a special bonus: דִּישׁוֹן (Dishon = addax, a kind of antelope), an Edomite chieftain



Devash is a weekly parashah magazine that makes Torah learning sweet. By engaging directly with texts and taking kids seriously as Jews, Devash helps children and grownups discover new ideas, values, and sweet morsels in the weekly Torah portion. Devash is designed for kids aged 7-11 to read independently, or together with families and teachers.



**This publication contains words of Torah,
so please treat it with appropriate reverence**

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