



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 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.

**NCYI Department of Synagogue Services**

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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.



## *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

## YITRO REVIEW

Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, heard about all the miracles that Hashem did for Bnei Yisrael and came together with Moshe's wife and kids from his native Midian to where Bnei Yisrael were encamped in the desert. Moshe warmly greeted Yitro and told him all about the miracles. Yitro thanked Hashem for all the miracles, and offered thanksgiving *korbanot*. Yitro watched Moshe judging all the arguments that came about among Bnei Yisrael. He suggested to Moshe that it would wear him down to be judging everything on his own. Instead, he recommended Moshe to appoint a group of wise and righteous judges, and to delegate his responsibilities—with Moshe judging only the most difficult cases. This would also give Moshe more time to teach Bnei Yisrael Torah. Six weeks after leaving Mitzrayim, Bnei Israel arrived in the Sinai Desert and encamped at the foot of Har Sinai. Moshe went up the mountain, where Hashem gave him a message to give over to Bnei Yisrael that they are His "treasure out of all peoples" and a "kingdom of princes and a holy nation." Moshe told this to Bnei Yisrael and they accepted upon themselves to do all that Hashem commanded them. Hashem then told Moshe to have Bnei Yisrael prepare themselves, because in three days He would reveal Himself over Har Sinai to the entire nation. Bnei Yisrael were commanded to sanctify themselves, and were warned not to come close to the mountain until after Hashem spoke to them. On the morning of the third day, thunder, lightning, a thick cloud and the strong sound of a *shofar* came from the mountaintop. Only Moshe and Aharon were allowed on the mountain during this time. Hashem then announced the Ten Commandments to Bnei Yisrael. They are: 1) To believe in G-d. 2) Not to worship idols. 3) Not to say G-d's name in vain. 4) To keep the Shabbat. 5) To honor parents. 6) Don't murder, 7) Don't commit adultery, 8) Don't steal, 9) Don't be a false witness 10) Don't be jealous. Bnei Yisrael were left traumatized by the overwhelming revelation, the awesome "light and sound" show. They turned to Moshe and asked that from then on he should serve as a messenger between them and Hashem hearing Hashem's words and giving it over to the people.

**LEADER TIP:** If you can, bring your kids into shul to **quietly** listen to the Aseret HaDibrot!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. What is the name of this week's Parsha?
2. What was the name of Moshe's father-in-law?
3. How many names did Yitro have?
4. Why did Yitro come to the Bnei Yisrael in the midbar?
5. On which mountain did Hashem give the Torah?
6. When was Matan Torah and which Yom Tov (holiday) celebrates it?
7. When Hashem asked the Bnei Yisrael if they want the Torah, what did they answer?
8. Who was the only one to go up Har Sinai?
9. What was written on the Luchot?
10. The fourth statement of the Aseret Hadibrot states that we are commanded to rest on Shabbat. Why?

## Answers

1. Yitro.
2. Yitro.
3. Seven.
4. He heard about the miracles that Hashem did for the Bnei Yisrael.
5. Har Sinai.
6. On the sixth and seventh of Sivan. The name of this holiday is Shavuot.
7. Naaseh VeNishmah (we will do and we will listen).
8. Moshe.
9. The Aseret Hadibrot.
10. Because Hashem rested on Shabbat.

**LEADER TIP:** Most of the Aseret HaDibrot may go over the kids' heads. Try and relate them to the kids as best as possible. Ask them what they think the "Top Ten" most important mitzvot are.

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** To teach the kids about respect, one of the Aseret HaDibrot

## **ACTIVITY:**

### **“Respect Scenarios”**

Have the group leaders act out a few different scenarios for the kids to decide whether the characters are being or not. You can even give out colored index cards for them to raise their hands whether they think they are either respectful or not respectful. After each scenario is acted out, ask the kids to raise their hands (or cards) if they think the characters were respectful and then raise their hands (or cards) if they thought they were disrespectful. Once you see how everyone voted, discuss it with them and explain to them how the characters were respectful or not. Examples of scenarios to act out are...  
A friend is over and you have a wonderful time playing together. Toys are spread all over the playroom. Your friend leaves without offering to help clean up the toys.

An older man comes to your home to visit and your little brother asks him how old he is.

A teacher is trying to teach a class and students raise their hand and wait patiently until the teacher calls on them.

Another option is to make it a multiple-choice game where your children select the correct answer. The laughs gained with playing the game this way can add some fun, given your children have the maturity and judgment to understand that the humor is funny to listen to, but not funny if it is acted out. Some examples include:

You feel a sneeze coming, so you a) look for someone to sneeze on b) cover your mouth and nose with your hands c) turn your head away from people and let the sneeze out as loudly as possible.

Company is over. You notice that after the meal, your mom has a big piece of lettuce on her tooth. You a) point at it and start laughing as loud as you can, b) ask if anyone can tell which of your mom's teeth is not like the other, c) quietly whisper in your mom's ear that she should check her teeth in the bathroom.

Once your children understand the idea behind making up scenarios for the game, they may want to make up some of their own, too.

### **“Mother May I?”**

In this game, one person is chosen as the “mother” (or father if it’s a male). They stand facing away from a line of kids. One by one the kids in line ask the mother or father if they can take a specific number of a certain type of step either forwards or backwards. For example, they would ask “Mother may I take seven giant steps forward?” and the mother/father would respond either yes or no. The first kids to reach and touch the mother/father wins and becomes the new mother/father. You can introduce a number of different kinds of steps to the kids, be creative and come up with your own.

Some examples are: bunny hops (hopping like a bunny), frog hops (going down on all fours and hopping like a frog), scissors steps (jump while crossing your feet, then jump while uncrossing them as one step), skip steps (steps as though one is skipping) and banana step (the child lies down with their feet at their current spot, noting where the top of their head is, and standing up there for their new spot).

**DISCUSSION:** In these games we learn all about respect. It is so important to show respect to others because they are Hashem's creations. In this week's Parsha we get the Aseret HaDibrot. We learn that we need to honor and respect our parents. They are the ones that brought us into the world and help us live our lives as happy as possible. Our parents give us everything. They worry about us 24 hours a day. Who else would buy you clothes, feed you, let you hang around on their property. It is important that we treat our parents with great respect. We must do whatever our parents ask us to. The Torah tells us that whoever honors his or her parents will be rewarded with long life. Sometimes we may not recognize everything they do for us, but we should always try to say thank you and respect and honor our parents as much as we can.

**LEADER TIP:** Respect and honor are very important lessons to learn. Make sure you practice them too before you preach them to the kids.

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** Once there was a tiny, absolutely helpless baby who was all alone. He couldn't feed or clothe himself. He could hardly move. Left on his own, it seemed impossible for him to survive for even one day. Yet he did! How did he ever make it? This baby was very fortunate. As out of nowhere, certain people came along and voluntarily agreed to take on the enormous expense and responsibility of providing for his every need. They took him into their home, bought him plenty of food and clothing, and even changed his dirty diapers. They spent many long and sleepless nights watching after him when he didn't feel well. They loved him and worked hard to teach him everything he needed to know to grow up and lead a good and successful life. As the child grew up and realized what these amazing people had done, he felt a tremendous sense of gratitude. He would always treat them with the utmost respect and do whatever he could to please them. He felt that it was the least that he could do. In truth, each of us is that baby. And those special, wonderful people are our parents. In this week's Torah portion, God presents the Jewish people with the Torah, including the Ten Commandments. One of these ten things that God chose to especially emphasize was to remind us to appreciate and honor our parents. It's the least we can do.

## "MOTHER'S DAY"

It was a clear, cool winter afternoon as Cindy Houseman sat bored on her living room sofa. Usually she and her mom would spend these Sunday afternoons together, chatting and catching up on each other's week. But today her mom got called into the office with some emergency work and Cindy was left by herself with nothing to do.

The girl could tell that her mother felt bad leaving. But she also knew that her mom needed this job to help support them, and that she didn't have a choice. "I'm sorry, dear. I'll be back as soon as I can," her mom said with a sigh as she went out the door.

"Mom always tries so hard..." thought Cindy. Suddenly, the girl got an idea. She was going to make her mom a special supper to greet her when she returned! After all, she thought, my mom must have made me about a million suppers over the year, why not return the favor for once!

Enthused, Cindy scanned the refrigerator and pantry shelves. Finally she settled on a menu: spaghetti and meat sauce with salad. She knew it was one of her mom's favorites. She had just assembled all of the ingredients on the kitchen counter when the phone rang. It was her friend Laura. She and another girl had managed to get their hands on three tickets to the popular, sold-out ice show that was in town. The show was going to start in a half an hour, and they wanted her to join them!

"We'll pick you up in ten minutes."

Cindy couldn't believe it. She had been dreaming of seeing the ice show, and now it was going to happen. She was about to say "yes" when she noticed the food on the counter in front of her. She thought of how tired her mom would be when she got home, and how much nicer it would be for her to find a nice hot meal on the table instead of an 'I'll see you later, Mom' note on the door. How many times had her mom given up going out in order to take care of her? But what about the ice show?

"Well, what do you say?" asked Laura, impatiently.



Cindy took a deep breath and explained to her friends that she was sorry but was in the middle of a very important project.

The girl started cooking and felt really good doing it. Just when she finished everything, Cindy heard the front door open as her mom came home. Although she looked really tired, her face lit up when she saw Cindy was still home. "Hi dear, I'm sorry it took so long. I tried to rush home. You must be starving, poor thing. I'll just whip up some..."

Cindy flashed a smile which grew bigger and bigger. She motioned to her mom to follow her into the kitchen where the table was set with two beautiful place settings, and a tempting meal sat waiting on the warming tray. "Oh, Cindy!" exclaimed her mother. "Thank you so much. You just made my day."

Mother and daughter sat down and had wonderful leisurely meal together. Cindy felt great and sure that she had made the right choice. "There will be other ice shows" she thought, "But I only have one mother."

### **Discussion Questions:**

Q. How did Cindy feel when her friends invited her out?

A. She felt torn. While she really wanted to go, she also wanted to honor her mom with a special surprise.

Q. How did she feel about her decision after her mother came home?

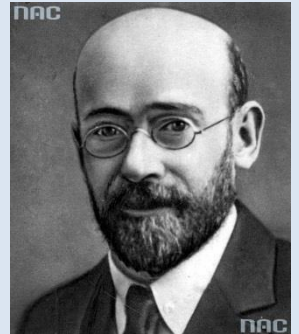
A. She was really happy that she had decided to do something nice for her mom, who had done so much for her.

**LEADER TIP:** The commandment about respecting and honoring parents works for older siblings, teachers, and even group leaders as well!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Janusz Korczak

(July 22, 1878- August 6, 1942)



Janusz Korczak was born Henryk Goldsmit in Warsaw on July 22, 1878. When he was young, he played with children who were poor and lived in bad neighborhoods. He always had a passion for helping others and his help of youth who here disadvantaged continued into his adulthood. He studied medicine and also had a strong career in literature. When he gave up his career in literature and medicine, he changed his name to Janusz Korczak, a penname that came from a 19<sup>th</sup> century novel, Janasz Korczak and the pretty Swordsweperlady.

In 1912, Korczak established a Jewish orphanage, “Dom Sierot”, in a building that he designed to advance his advanced educational ideas. He envisioned a world in which children created their own world and became experts in their own matters. Jewish children between the ages of seven and fourteen were allowed to live there while attending Polish public school and government-sponsored Jewish schools, known as "Sabbath" schools. The orphanage opened a summer camp in 1921, which remained in operation until the summer of 1940.

In 1934 and 1936, Korczak visited Palestine and was influenced by the kibbutz movement. Following his trips, Korczak was convinced that all Jews should move to Palestine.

The Germans occupied Poland in September 1939, and the Warsaw ghetto was established in November 1940. The orphanage was moved inside the ghetto. Korczak received many offers to be smuggled out of the ghetto, but he refused because he did not want to abandon the children.

**LEADER TIP:** How far would you go to sacrifice something you've worked your life for and the people you care about?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei: Tekah b'Shofar

Until this point, we have asked Hashem for our personal needs – health, sustenance, wisdom, forgiveness, etc. With this bracha, we change our focus from the needs of the individual to the needs of Israel as a nation. Specifically, we ask that Hashem gather us all together to reunite us as one nation.

In the tenth bracha, we ask Hashem to “sound the great shofar” and “raise the banner” in order to gather the exiled Jews from all around the world and to return all of us to the land of Israel. The use of the shofar and the banner to signal the return of all those exiled are themes in the Book of Yeshaya. The word for banner–neis–also means a miracle, which we could certainly use!

We ask that Hashem gather Bnei Yisrael who are dispersed from the “four corners of the Earth”. Israel is the place that we want Hashem to gather us to. The Midrash Tanchuma describes Israel as the center of the world. Furthermore, Yerushalayim is in the center of Israel, the Beit HaMikdash is in the center of Yerushalayim, and the Kodesh HaKodashim which holds the Aron is in the center of the Beit HaMikdash. Therefore, the most important point of the “four corners of the Earth” is not only our land, but ultimately the Beit HaMikdash, the main place of our service to Hashem. We can't wait to be reunited with all of our brothers and sisters of Am Yisrael, becoming again a unified Jewish people.

**LEADER TIP:** Do you have family and/or friends who live around the world? What's the farthest Jewish community from where you live you've ever been to?



## YITRO REVIEW

Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, heard about all the miracles that Hashem did for Bnei Yisrael and came together with Moshe's wife and kids from his native Midian to where Bnei Yisrael were encamped in the desert. Moshe warmly greeted Yitro and told him all about the miracles. Yitro thanked Hashem for all the miracles, and offered thanksgiving *korbanot*. Yitro watched Moshe judging all the arguments that came about among Bnei Yisrael. He suggested to Moshe that it would wear him down to be judging everything on his own. Instead, he recommended Moshe to appoint a group of wise and righteous judges, and to delegate his responsibilities—with Moshe judging only the most difficult cases. This would also give Moshe more time to teach Bnei Yisrael Torah. Six weeks after leaving Mitzrayim, Bnei Israel arrived in the Sinai Desert and encamped at the foot of Har Sinai. Moshe went up the mountain, where Hashem gave him a message to give over to Bnei Yisrael that they are His "treasure out of all peoples" and a "kingdom of princes and a holy nation." Moshe told this to Bnei Yisrael and they accepted upon themselves to do all that Hashem commanded them. Hashem then told Moshe to have Bnei Yisrael prepare themselves, because in three days He would reveal Himself over Har Sinai to the entire nation. Bnei Yisrael were commanded to sanctify themselves, and were warned not to come close to the mountain until after Hashem spoke to them. On the morning of the third day, thunder, lightning, a thick cloud and the strong sound of a *shofar* came from the mountaintop. Only Moshe and Aharon were allowed on the mountain during this time. Hashem then announced the Ten Commandments to Bnei Yisrael. They are: 1) To believe in G-d. 2) Not to worship idols. 3) Not to say G-d's name in vain. 4) To keep the Shabbat. 5) To honor parents. 6) Don't murder, 7) Don't commit adultery, 8) Don't steal, 9) Don't be a false witness 10) Don't be jealous. Bnei Yisrael were left traumatized by the overwhelming revelation, the awesome "light and sound" show. They turned to Moshe and asked that from then on he should serve as a messenger between them and Hashem hearing Hashem's words and giving it over to the people.

**LEADER TIP:** If you can, bring your kids into shul to **quietly** listen to the Aseret HaDibrot!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. What was the name of Moshe's father-in-law?
2. How many names did he have?
3. What was the name of Moshe's wife?
4. Who were Moshe's two sons?
5. Why did Yitro come to the Bnei Yisrael in the midbar?
6. What did Yitro see that he didn't like?
7. What was Yitro's advice to Moshe?
8. What special zechus (reward) did Yitro get for giving advice?
9. How many days did the Bnei Yisrael prepare for Matan Torah?
10. What are these days called?
11. When was Matan Torah and which Yom Tov (holiday) celebrates it?
12. When Hashem asked the Bnei Yisrael if they want the Torah, what did they answer?
13. Why did Hashem command us to rest on Shabbat?
14. How does the kohen walk up the mizbe'ach?
15. Why did Hashem say to build the mizbe'ach without steps?

## Answers

1. Yitro.
2. Seven.
3. Tzipporah.
4. Gershom and Eliezer.
5. He heard about the miracles that Hashem did for the Bnei Yisrael.
6. Moshe was judging the Bnei Yisrael from morning until night. 9
7. He said that Moshe should appoint judges to help him answer the questions that the Bnei Yisrael have. If the judges have questions, then they would come to Moshe.
8. The Parsha is named Yitro after him.
9. Three days.
10. Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah.
11. On the sixth and seventh of Sivan. The name of this holiday is Shavuot.
12. Naaseh VeNishmah (we will do and we will listen).
13. Because Hashem rested on Shabbat.
14. He walks up a ramp, not steps.
15. Tzeniut (modesty).

**LEADER TIP:** Most of the Aseret HaDibrot may go over the kids' heads. Try and relate them to the kids as best as possible. Ask them what they think the "Top Ten" most important mitzvot are.

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** For the kids to learn about not being jealous, one of the Aseret HaDibrot

## **ACTIVITY:**

### **“Mother May I?”**

In this game, one person is chosen as the “mother” (or father if it’s a male). They stand facing away from a line of kids. One by one the kids in line ask the mother or father if they can take a specific number of a certain type of step either forwards or backwards. For example, they would ask “Mother may I take seven giant steps forward?” and the mother/father would respond either yes or no. The first kids to reach and touch the mother/father wins and becomes the new mother/father. You can introduce a number of different kinds of steps to the kids, be creative and come up with your own. Some examples are: bunny hops (hopping like a bunny), frog hops (going down on all fours and hopping like a frog), scissors steps (jump while crossing your feet, then jump while uncrossing them was one step), skip steps (steps as though one is skipping) and banana step (the child lies down with their feet at their current spot, noting where the top of their head is, and standing up there for their new spot).

### **“Every Man For Themselves Cause It’s No Competition”**

Before Shabbat, print out/draw shapes or designs on pieces of paper (one per page). Hand out a design to each kid. What they must do is collect as many jelly beans as possible, by answering questions or accomplishing tasks, and fill out the design on their page. On each design, specify how many jelly beans are required to fill out the design. Make sure that each design requires a different amount of jelly beans, some requiring a lot, some only a little. Tell the kids that you will ask questions and say challenges for them to do and based on their performance/answers the group leaders will decide how many jelly beans each kid will get. You can ask them fact questions on the Parsha, chagim, sports, math, entertainment, etc. or also opinion questions where there isn’t only one right answer. Challenges can include doing jumping jacks, doing their best group leader impression, find Parshat Yitro in a chumash, make a human pyramid, do a special talent, etc. Make note of how many jelly beans each kid needs to fill their design and reward them accordingly. The idea is to give everyone different amounts. If someone finishes their design, they can use the jelly beans they earn to help others complete their design.

**DISCUSSION:** In these games, we don't get the same amount as everyone else and this could be very frustrating. What we must realize though is that what may help one person may not necessarily help another. Each person has their own goals and are given what they need to accomplish them. We shouldn't worry about what other people have because it doesn't affect us. Hashem looks out for what we need and gives us what WE need, not what someone else needs. The tenth commandment is an interesting one. How can I be sure not to be jealous of something? After all, isn't it natural for a human to desire things which appeal to him? And also, what is the harm in it? All I am doing is fantasizing about the ownership of someone else's object.

The actual text of the tenth commandment goes as follows:

“Do not covet your friend's home. Do not covet your friend's wife, his slave, his maid, his ox, his donkey, and all that your friend has.”

It is interesting that the commandment is repeated. What more needs to be said than "Do not covet your friend's home"? What is the purpose of the second sentence?

There is one rule that we need to know in order to decipher this puzzle. When we speak of coveting, we are not referring to merely being jealous. This commandment specifically speaks of coveting the objects which your friend owns. This means that you want HIS car or HIS computer. Not that you merely want a similar one. What can this mean? If I am jealous of my friend's new Lexus, wouldn't I be satisfied to have my own? Why would I only covet his?

The answer to this lies in the formulation of the commandment. The first line is the commandment, the second is the explanation. When we speak of not coveting your friend's home, we are speaking not of a residence composed of brick and mortar. We are speaking of the home which is the entirety of one's life and existence. When I covet someone's home in this sense, I am coveting his life. I wish to live his life, to own his car, to be married to his spouse. To own his livestock. I do not wish similar things. I want HIS things.

As a matter of fact that second line concludes with a powerful message. "...and all that your friend has." This does not mean that you may not covet many other things besides his wife, ox, etc...It is referring to the nature of the coveting. When I am not satisfied with merely owning a similar object, but I must have HIS object I am coveting more than just a car, I need "all that your friend has".

The root of this commandment is to realize that the life that G-d has given you is the life that you were meant to live. The challenges that G-d has given you are yours to overcome. To ignore these challenges and reject who you are and your ability to achieve things exactly within the life which you have been placed is what we must avoid. This is one of the great lessons of this commandment.

**LEADER TIP:** Not being jealous and appreciating what you have are important lessons to learn. Make sure you practice them too before you preach them to the kids.

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** Once there was a tiny, absolutely helpless baby who was all alone. He couldn't feed or clothe himself. He could hardly move. Left on his own, it seemed impossible for him to survive for even one day. Yet he did! How did he ever make it? This baby was very fortunate. As out of nowhere, certain people came along and voluntarily agreed to take on the enormous expense and responsibility of providing for his every need. They took him into their home, bought him plenty of food and clothing, and even changed his dirty diapers. They spent many long and sleepless nights watching after him when he didn't feel well. They loved him and worked hard to teach him everything he needed to know to grow up and lead a good and successful life. As the child grew up and realized what these amazing people had done, he felt a tremendous sense of gratitude. He would always treat them with the utmost respect and do whatever he could to please them. He felt that it was the least that he could do. In truth, each of us is that baby. And those special, wonderful people are our parents. In this week's Torah portion, God presents the Jewish people with the Torah, including the Ten Commandments. One of these ten things that God chose to especially emphasize was to remind us to appreciate and honor our parents. It's the least we can do.

## "MOTHER'S DAY"

It was a clear, cool winter afternoon as Cindy Houseman sat bored on her living room sofa. Usually she and her mom would spend these Sunday afternoons together, chatting and catching up on each other's week. But today her mom got called into the office with some emergency work and Cindy was left by herself with nothing to do.

The girl could tell that her mother felt bad leaving. But she also knew that her mom needed this job to help support them, and that she didn't have a choice. "I'm sorry, dear. I'll be back as soon as I can," her mom said with a sigh as she went out the door.

"Mom always tries so hard..." thought Cindy. Suddenly, the girl got an idea. She was going to make her mom a special supper to greet her when she returned! After all, she thought, my mom must have made me about a million suppers over the year, why not return the favor for once!

Enthused, Cindy scanned the refrigerator and pantry shelves. Finally she settled on a menu: spaghetti and meat sauce with salad. She knew it was one of her mom's favorites. She had just assembled all of the ingredients on the kitchen counter when the phone rang. It was her friend Laura. She and another girl had managed to get their hands on three tickets to the popular, sold-out ice show that was in town. The show was going to start in a half an hour, and they wanted her to join them!

"We'll pick you up in ten minutes."

Cindy couldn't believe it. She had been dreaming of seeing the ice show, and now it was going to happen. She was about to say "yes" when she noticed the food on the counter in front of her. She thought of how tired her mom would be when she got home, and how much nicer it would be for her to find a nice hot meal on the table instead of an 'I'll see you later, Mom' note on the door. How many times had her mom given up going out in order to take care of her? But what about the ice show?

"Well, what do you say?" asked Laura, impatiently.



Cindy took a deep breath and explained to her friends that she was sorry but was in the middle of a very important project.

The girl started cooking and felt really good doing it. Just when she finished everything, Cindy heard the front door open as her mom came home. Although she looked really tired, her face lit up when she saw Cindy was still home. "Hi dear, I'm sorry it took so long. I tried to rush home. You must be starving, poor thing. I'll just whip up some..."

Cindy flashed a smile which grew bigger and bigger. She motioned to her mom to follow her into the kitchen where the table was set with two beautiful place settings, and a tempting meal sat waiting on the warming tray. "Oh, Cindy!" exclaimed her mother. "Thank you so much. You just made my day."

Mother and daughter sat down and had wonderful leisurely meal together. Cindy felt great and sure that she had made the right choice. "There will be other ice shows" she thought, "But I only have one mother."

### **Discussion Questions:**

Q. Do you think a person is still required to honor his parents after he himself grows up and is on his own? Why or why not?

A. The concept of honoring ones parents really has nothing to do with age, or being under parents' supervision. It is a lifetime expression of gratitude and respect toward the people who gave us our lives, and so much more. While the ways in which a person will express this honor will change according to his age, the basic value remains the same.

Q. What are some practical ways that a person can honor his parent?

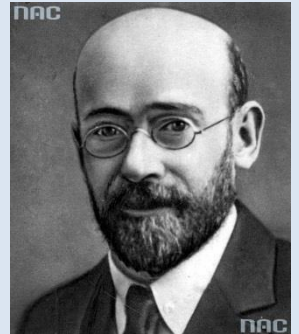
A. Two of the most important ways are through doing things for them that we know they like, and by treating them with extra respect. For example, like the girl in the story, we can make our parent their favorite foods, or we can make or buy them meaningful gifts when we have the chance. We should always listen to our parents and speak to them courteously, not call them by their first names. Even if we may disagree with our parents, we should express our feelings respectfully. Imagine if your greatest hero had suddenly come to visit you, how would you treat him? Treat your parent that way.

**LEADER TIP:** The commandment about respecting and honoring parents works for older siblings, teachers, and even group leaders as well!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Janusz Korczak

(July 22, 1878- August 6, 1942)



“My aim is to love and be righteous instead of being loved and adored . . . ”

Janusz Korczak was born Henryk Goldsmit in Warsaw on July 22, 1878. When he was young, he played with children who were poor and lived in bad neighborhoods. He always had a passion for helping others and his help of youth who here disadvantaged continued into his adulthood. He studied medicine and also had a strong career in literature. When he gave up his career in literature and medicine, he changed his name to Janusz Korczak, a penname that came from a 19<sup>th</sup> century novel, Janasz Korczak and the pretty Swordsweperlady.

In 1912, Korczak established a Jewish orphanage, “Dom Sierot”, in a building that he designed to advance his advanced educational ideas. He envisioned a world in which children created their own world and became experts in their own matters. Jewish children between the ages of seven and fourteen were allowed to live there while attending Polish public school and government-sponsored Jewish schools, known as "Sabbath" schools. The orphanage opened a summer camp in 1921, which remained in operation until the summer of 1940.

In 1934 and 1936, Korczak visited Palestine and was influenced by the kibbutz movement. Following his trips, Korczak was convinced that all Jews should move to Palestine.

The Germans occupied Poland in September 1939, and the Warsaw ghetto was established in November 1940. The orphanage was moved inside the ghetto. Korczak received many offers to be smuggled out of the ghetto, but he refused because he did not want to abandon the children. On August 5, 1942, Korczak joined nearly 200 children and orphanage staff members were rounded up for deportation to Treblinka, where they were all put to death.

**LEADER TIP:** How far would you go to sacrifice something you’ve worked your life for and the people you care about?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei: Tekah b'Shofar

Until this point, we have asked Hashem for our personal needs – health, sustenance, wisdom, forgiveness, etc. With this bracha, we change our focus from the needs of the individual to the needs of Israel as a nation. Specifically, we ask that Hashem gather us all together to reunite us as one nation.

In the tenth bracha, we ask Hashem to “sound the great shofar” and “raise the banner” in order to gather the exiled Jews from all around the world and to return all of us to the land of Israel. The use of the shofar and the banner to signal the return of all those exiled are themes in the Book of Yeshaya. The word for banner–neis–also means a miracle, which we could certainly use!

We ask that Hashem gather Bnei Yisrael who are dispersed from the “four corners of the Earth”. Israel is the place that we want Hashem to gather us to. The Midrash Tanchuma describes Israel as the center of the world. Furthermore, Yerushalayim is in the center of Israel, the Beit HaMikdash is in the center of Yerushalayim, and the Kodosh HaKodashim which holds the Aron is in the center of the Beit HaMikdash. Therefore, the most important point of the “four corners of the Earth” is not only our land, but ultimately the Beit HaMikdash, the main place of our service to Hashem.

The bracha ends by saying that Hashem is “M’kabeitz nidchei amo Yisrael” – the One Who gathers the dispersed of His nation, Israel. The word nidchei–dispersed–is found in both Yeshaya 11:12 (the pasuk about raising the banner) and 27:13 (the pasuk that refers to sounding “the great shofar”). The middle part of 27:13 is familiar because of the song “U’va’u HaOvdim,” where we sing that Hashem will collect everyone who were lost in Assyria and dispersed in Egypt. Not only do we wish for our lost brethren to be returned from exile, we wait to be reunited with them ideologically, becoming again a unified Jewish people.

**LEADER TIP:** Do you have family and/or friends who live around the world? What’s the farthest Jewish community from where you live you’ve ever been to?



## YITRO REVIEW

Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, heard about all the miracles that Hashem did for Bnei Yisrael and came together with Moshe's wife and kids from his native Midian to where Bnei Yisrael were encamped in the desert. Moshe warmly greeted Yitro and told him all about the miracles. Yitro thanked Hashem for all the miracles, and offered thanksgiving *korbanot*. Yitro watched Moshe judging all the arguments that came about among Bnei Yisrael. He suggested to Moshe that it would wear him down to be judging everything on his own. Instead, he recommended Moshe to appoint a group of wise and righteous judges, and to delegate his responsibilities—with Moshe judging only the most difficult cases. This would also give Moshe more time to teach Bnei Yisrael Torah. Six weeks after leaving Mitzrayim, Bnei Israel arrived in the Sinai Desert and encamped at the foot of Har Sinai. Moshe went up the mountain, where Hashem gave him a message to give over to Bnei Yisrael that they are His "treasure out of all peoples" and a "kingdom of princes and a holy nation." Moshe told this to Bnei Yisrael and they accepted upon themselves to do all that Hashem commanded them. Hashem then told Moshe to have Bnei Yisrael prepare themselves, because in three days He would reveal Himself over Har Sinai to the entire nation. Bnei Yisrael were commanded to sanctify themselves, and were warned not to come close to the mountain until after Hashem spoke to them. On the morning of the third day, thunder, lightning, a thick cloud and the strong sound of a *shofar* came from the mountaintop. Only Moshe and Aharon were allowed on the mountain during this time. Hashem then announced the Ten Commandments to Bnei Yisrael. They are: 1) To believe in G-d. 2) Not to worship idols. 3) Not to say G-d's name in vain. 4) To keep the Shabbat. 5) To honor parents. 6) Don't murder, 7) Don't commit adultery, 8) Don't steal, 9) Don't be a false witness 10) Don't be jealous. Bnei Yisrael were left traumatized by the overwhelming revelation, the awesome "light and sound" show. They turned to Moshe and asked that from then on he should serve as a messenger between them and Hashem hearing Hashem's words and giving it over to the people.

**LEADER TIP:** If you can, bring your kids into shul to **quietly** listen to the Aseret HaDibrot!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. What was the name of Moshe's father-in-law?
2. How many names did he have?
3. What was the name of Moshe's wife?
4. Who were Moshe's two sons?
5. Why did Yitro come to the Bnei Yisrael in the midbar?
6. What did Yitro see that he didn't like?
7. What was Yitro's advice to Moshe?
8. What special zechus (reward) did Yitro get for giving advice?
9. When did the Bnei Yisrael come to the wilderness of Sinai?
10. How many days did the Bnei Yisrael prepare for Matan Torah?
11. What are these days called?
12. When was Matan Torah and which Yom Tov (holiday) celebrates it?
13. When Hashem asked the Bnei Yisrael if they want the Torah, what did they answer?
14. Who was the only one to go up Har Sinai?
15. What was the punishment for touching the mountain?
16. Until when were the Bnei Yisrael not allowed to touch the mountain?
17. List the Aseret Hadibrot.
18. Why did Hashem command us to rest on Shabbat?
19. How does the kohen walk up the mizbe'ach?
20. Why did Hashem say to build the mizbe'ach without steps?

## Answers

1. Yitro.
2. Seven.
3. Tzipporah.
4. Gershom and Eliezer.
5. He heard about the miracles that Hashem did for the Bnei Yisrael. 10
6. Moshe was judging the Bnei Yisrael from morning until night.

7. He said that Moshe should appoint judges to help him answer the questions that the Bnei Yisrael have. If the judges have questions, then they would come to Moshe.
8. The Parsha is named Yitro after him.
9. On the first day of Sivan.
10. Three days.
11. Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah.
12. On the sixth and seventh of Sivan. The name of this holiday is Shavuot.
13. Naaseh VeNishmah (we will do and we will listen).
14. Moshe.
15. Death by stoning.
16. Until the blast of the shofar.
17. There are ten commandments in the Aseret Hadibrot. They are:
  - a. Believe in G-d .אנכי ה' אלקיך
  - b. Don't have any other G-ds .לא יהיה לך אלקים אחרים
  - c. Don't use G-d's name in vain .לא תשא את שם ה' אלקיך לשוא
  - d. Keep Shabbat .זכור את יום השבת לקדשו
  - e. Honor your parents .כבד את אביך ואת אמך
  - f. Don't kill .לא תרצח
  - g. Don't commit adultery .לא תנאף
  - h. Don't steal .לא תגנב
  - i. Don't be a false witness .לא תענה ברעך עד שקר
  - j. Don't be jealous .לא תחמד
18. Because Hashem rested on Shabbat.
19. He walks up a ramp, not steps.
20. Tzenius (modesty).

**LEADER TIP:** Most of the Aseret HaDibrot may go over the kids' heads. Try and relate them to the kids as best as possible. Ask them what they think the "Top Ten" most important mitzvot are.

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** Being that the Torah and Mitzvot were given in this week's Parsha, this activity's goal is to show that Halacha\Torah is not old and inapplicable but contains information to cover all situations that futuristic technology can conceive. This activity aims to instill in all of us a certain appreciation for the adaptability of Halacha and how it can help to live our lives properly.

## **ACTIVITY:**

### **“Every Man For Themselves Cause It's No Competition”**

Before Shabbat, print out/draw shapes or designs on pieces of paper (one per page). Hand out a design to each kid. What they must do is collect as many jelly beans as possible, by answering questions or accomplishing tasks, and fill out the design on their page. On each design, specify how many jelly beans are required to fill out the design. Make sure that each design requires a different amount of jelly beans, some requiring a lot, some only a little. Tell the kids that you will ask questions and say challenges for them to do and based on their performance/answers the group leaders will decide how many jelly beans each kid will get. You can ask them fact questions on the Parsha, chagim, sports, math, entertainment, etc. or also opinion questions where there isn't only one right answer. Challenges can include doing jumping jacks, doing their best group leader impression, find Parshat Yitro in a chumash, make a human pyramid, do a special talent, etc. Make note of how many jelly beans each kid needs to fill their design and reward them accordingly. The idea is to give everyone different amounts. If someone finishes their design, they can use the jelly beans they earn to help others complete their design.

### **“Torah For the Ages”**

Halacha and technology can be a difficult concept to grasp and has the potential to be incredibly boring. To avoid that, this activity moves to the extreme, using wacky cases to prove the point.

It should be fun and try to get the kids as involved as possible. The basic format will be to present the kids with a halachic problem, set in a strange scenario. The weirdness of the case should help get them interested, but to answer the question they'll need to use some sort of Torah knowledge. Let the kids try to answer the question and if they get stuck, give them some of the information provided right after the question. You can have the kids act out the situations or you can just embellish the stories and tell them as an interactive, interesting long story of you last trip to outer space.

**1A)** You are travelling through space to visit some distant relatives. On the way, you stop overnight at a planet inhabited by Zyberkloids. As you finish Shacharit and are wrapping up your tefillin, a curious Zyberkloid asks you what they are. When you tell him, he becomes very interested and wants to put them on. As you look at the Zyberkloid you realize that there might be a problem: It has 14 arms and 6 heads. How many pairs of tefillin does it need to wear?

Answering this question is dependent on what is the nature of the obligation to wear tefillin. If the obligation falls on each arm, the Zyberkloid might need 14 pairs. But if the obligation is on the person,

he'd only need one pair. The obligation is on the person, to remember that Hashem took us out of Egypt.

**1B) Which arm should the tefillin go on?**

Answering this question should be easy. It is based on the same principle that tells us to put it on our weak arm, generally being the left. We learn this from the spelling of the word "Yadcha – your hand" in the Torah, which has an extra "Hey" at the end. (We explain the word to be "Yad Keha – your weak hand".) So the Zyberkloid should put the tefillin on its weakest arm, or one of its weakest if some of them are equal.

**2) You're vacationing on a strange planet known for its beautiful night skies, lit up with exciting colors and star formations that you never see from earth. One Motzei Shabbat, you go outside to say Kiddush Levana and discover a drawback to such a peculiar sky. One of the nice things about it was that it had four moons. Do you have to say Kiddush Levana\* for each moon?**

Your initial response might be that you have to say Kiddush Levana over each moon as it begins its new cycle, even if that means having to do it four times a month. However, is the Mitzva to bless any new moon or just the one that the calendar is based on? This would mean that you would only say Kiddush Levana over one moon. These are some of the principles which would have to be used to answer this question. Something to think about: If none of the moons there followed the cycle of the one that we use to set up our calendar, would say Kiddush Levana at all?

**3) You are travelling from one galaxy to another. It's a long distance but your spaceship is equipped with warp speed. Using it allows you to arrive at your destination in several minutes. Should you say Tefillat Haderech?**

There are different opinions regarding the saying of Tefillat Haderech. One opinion is that it is dependent on a minimum distance that you travel, the other opinion says that it is based on a minimum time spent travelling. According to the first opinion, you'd still have to say Tefillat Haderech but not according to the second one.

**4) You are being transported from a spaceship to a planet. Baruch Hashem, you arrive safely. The next day is a Monday. Do say a Birchat HaGomel at Shacharit when they lein from the Torah?**

Birkat Hagomel is dependent on whether or not your trip was dangerous. For example, while most of us say a Birkat HaGomel after flying over an ocean, some people say that flying is so statistically safe that it does not merit a Bracha. The same would be true for transporting. While being broken down into atoms, sent across space and reassemble later sounds dangerous to us, it may be a foolproof technique at some point. Saying Birkat Hagomel will probably be dependent on whether or not transporting is considered safe.

**5) After transporting, do you say Modeh Ani?**

We say Modeh Ani in the morning to thank Hashem for returning our Neshama to our bodies. The question is, when your body gets split up into individual atoms and then put back together, does your Neshama leave your body or not?

**6) There is a woman married to a man...and then he gets cloned. Is the woman now married to both of them? Can she be?**



As scientists start talking seriously about cloning people, this question becomes more interesting. Basically, the halacha is that no person can have more than one spouse. It used to be that a man could have more than one wife but a few centuries ago, Rabbeinu Gershom made a Takana that they couldn't do that anymore. So it doesn't matter if it is the woman or man being cloned, nobody can be married to two people. You can only be married to someone if you do a certain process called Eirusin and then Kiddushin. So the woman would not be married to the clone...unless the clone is considered to be halachically the same person as the original. Then it would get interesting.

Important: The purpose of this sicha is to show that halachic principle that we use nowadays can be applied to any situation. The examples used are not supposed to be real halachot. Psak Halacha for a new situation can only be decided by a Rabbi who knows all the relevant material. Don't confuse this sicha with reality.

**DISCUSSION:** This activity deals with the meeting of Halacha – received from Hashem thousands of years ago at Har Sinai – with the ever-changing, always advancing technology of the soon to be 21st century. Some people would like to say that Halacha is outdated, it doesn't apply anymore or holds us back from being part of modern society. We know better. The rabbis of every generation have the ability to apply the principles of Halacha to any possibility that you can imagine. Their amazing knowledge of the Torah ensures that for every new product that technology can create, there is a halacha to go with it, telling us how to use it. The idea is the important part. Halacha is applicable to all situations and should always be looked at in order so that we know what to do. A lot of times, halacha combines with technology to provide us with benefits.

**LEADER TIP:** Being passionate about the mitzvot and always looking to learn more are important lessons to learn. Make sure you practice them too before you preach them to the kids.

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** Once there was a tiny, absolutely helpless baby who was all alone. He couldn't feed or clothe himself. He could hardly move. Left on his own, it seemed impossible for him to survive for even one day. Yet he did! How did he ever make it? This baby was very fortunate. As out of nowhere, certain people came along and voluntarily agreed to take on the enormous expense and responsibility of providing for his every need. They took him into their home, bought him plenty of food and clothing, and even changed his dirty diapers. They spent many long and sleepless nights watching after him when he didn't feel well. They loved him and worked hard to teach him everything he needed to know to grow up and lead a good and successful life. As the child grew up and realized what these amazing people had done, he felt a tremendous sense of gratitude. He would always treat them with the utmost respect and do whatever he could to please them. He felt that it was the least that he could do. In truth, each of us is that baby. And those special, wonderful people are our parents. In this week's Torah portion, God presents the Jewish people with the Torah, including the Ten Commandments. One of these ten things that God chose to especially emphasize was to remind us to appreciate and honor our parents. It's the least we can do.

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### **Discussion Questions:**

Q. Does honoring your parents require compromising one's independence?

A. Real independence is an ability to make mature decisions and act upon them. A person who develops a mature attitude toward his parents will realize that they are people who brought him into the world and who do their best, according to the level of their abilities to provide for his various needs. For this alone they deserve our recognition and respect. Far from being a sacrifice of our independence, the decision to rightfully honor one's parents is an act of maturity and self-confidence.

Q. Do you think that all the hard work parents have to put in to raise their children makes it harder or easier for them to feel love for their kids?

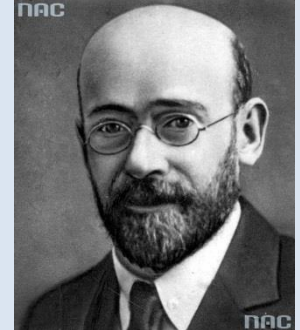
A. On the surface one might think that it would be harder. After all, parents do have to give up a lot of their own personal comfort for the sake of their kids. But in reality it makes it easier. A surprising aspect of human nature is that when we give to someone we come to feel a greater closeness and love for that person. Since in so many ways a parent relates to a child through giving, it follows that strong feelings of love will develop.

**LEADER TIP:** The commandment about respecting and honoring parents works for older siblings, teachers, and even group leaders as well!

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(July 22, 1878- August 6, 1942)



"We dream of a better life with truth and justice, a life that is not but will some day be . . ." "My aim is to love and be righteous instead of being loved and adored . . ."

Janusz Korczak was born Henryk Goldsmit in Warsaw on July 22, 1878. When he was young, he played with children who were poor and lived in bad neighborhoods. He always had a passion for helping others and his help of youth who here disadvantaged continued into his adulthood. He studied medicine and also had a strong career in literature. When he gave up his career in literature and medicine, he changed his name to Janusz Korczak, a penname that came from a 19<sup>th</sup> century novel, Janasz Korczak and the pretty Swordsweeperlady. In 1912, Korczak established a Jewish orphanage, "Dom Sierot", in a building that he designed to advance his advanced educational ideas. He envisioned a world in which children created their own world and became experts in their own matters. Jewish children between the ages of seven and fourteen were allowed to live there while attending Polish public school and government-sponsored Jewish schools, known as "Sabbath" schools. The orphanage opened a summer camp in 1921, which remained in operation until the summer of 1940. Besides serving as principal of Don Sierot and another orphanage, "Nasz Dom", Korczak was also a doctor and author, worked at a Polish radio station, was a principal of an experimental school, published a children's newspaper and was a guide at a Polish university. Korczak also served as an expert witness in a district court for minors. He became well-known in Polish society and received many awards. The rise of anti-Semitism in the 1930's restricted only his activities with Jews. In 1934 and 1936, Korczak visited Palestine and was influenced by the kibbutz movement. Following his trips, Korczak was convinced that all Jews should move to Palestine. The Germans occupied Poland in September 1939, and the Warsaw ghetto was established in November 1940. The orphanage was moved inside the ghetto. Korczak received many offers to be smuggled out of the ghetto, but he refused because he did not want to abandon the children. On August 5, 1942, Korczak joined nearly 200 children and orphanage staff members were rounded up for deportation to Treblinka, where they were all put to death.

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Until this point, we have asked Hashem for our personal needs – health, sustenance, wisdom, forgiveness, etc. With this bracha, we change our focus from the needs of the individual to the needs of Israel as a nation. Specifically, we ask that Hashem gather us all together to reunite us as one nation.

In the tenth bracha, we ask Hashem to “sound the great shofar” and “raise the banner” in order to gather the exiled Jews from all around the world and to return all of us to the land of Israel. The use of the shofar and the banner to signal the return of all those exiled are themes in the Book of Yeshaya. The word for banner–neis–also means a miracle, which we could certainly use!

We ask that Hashem gather Bnei Yisrael who are dispersed from the “four corners of the Earth”. Israel is the place that we want Hashem to gather us to. The Midrash Tanchuma describes Israel as the center of the world. Furthermore, Yerushalayim is in the center of Israel, the Beit HaMikdash is in the center of Yerushalayim, and the Kodesh HaKodashim which holds the Aron is in the center of the Beit HaMikdash. Therefore, the most important point of the “four corners of the Earth” is not only our land, but ultimately the Beit HaMikdash, the main place of our service to Hashem.

The bracha ends by saying that Hashem is “M’kabeitz nidchei amo Yisrael” – the One Who gathers the dispersed of His nation, Israel. The word nidchei–dispersed–is found in both Yeshaya 11:12 (the pasuk about raising the banner) and 27:13 (the pasuk that refers to sounding “the great shofar”). The middle part of 27:13 is familiar because of the song “U’va’u HaOvdim,” where we sing that Hashem will collect everyone who were lost in Assyria and dispersed in Egypt. Not only do we wish for our lost brethren to be returned from exile, we wait to be reunited with them ideologically, becoming again a unified Jewish people.

Looking at Yeshaya 27:13, it is interesting to note the two nations named as examples of exile. Assyria–Ashur in Hebrew–suggests happiness and wealth. The name for Egypt–Mitzrayim–suggests “tzarot”–that is, suffering. In some lands of exile, the Jews prospered and assimilated (“lost in a land of ashur”). In other lands, they suffered and were disregarded (“scattered in a land of tzarot”). No matter the circumstances, exile is exile and we daven to Hashem to be reunited with all of our brothers and sisters of Am Yisrael.

**LEADER TIP:** Do you have family and/or friends who live around the world? What’s the farthest Jewish community from where you live you’ve ever been to?



## This Week in Jewish History

February 1, 2003

### Ilan Ramon's Space Shuttle Destroyed

Colonel Ilan Ramon was an Israeli Air Force combat pilot and the first Israeli astronaut to take part in a space mission, the fatal Space Shuttle Columbia mission. Ramon (born June 20, 1954; died February 1, 2003) grew up in Tel Aviv, Israel. In 1972, Ramon graduated from high school and in 1987, during a long and highly distinguished career in the Israeli Air Force, he received his bachelor of science degree in electronics and computer engineering from Tel Aviv University. In 1974, Ramon graduated as a fighter pilot from the Israel Air Force (IAF) Flight School. In 1994, Ramon was promoted to the rank of Colonel and assigned as Head of the Department of Operational Requirement for Weapon Development and Acquisition. Ramon also served in the Yom Kippur War and Operation Peace for Galilee. In 1997, Colonel Ramon was selected by NASA to serve as a Payload Specialist on the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. In July 1998, he reported for training at the Johnson Space Center, Houston. The seven member crew of STS 107, including Col. Ramon, successfully launched aboard the Space Shuttle *Columbia* at 10:39 a.m. EST from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on January 16, 2003, for a 16-day mission. During the mission, Ramon conducted a number of experiments and the flight was considered a great success. "Being the first Israeli astronaut -- I feel I am representing all Jews and all Israelis," Ramon said. Referring to his mother and grandmother, who both survived imprisonment



in Auschwitz, he added, "I'm the son of a Holocaust survivor -- I carry on the suffering of the Holocaust

generation, and I'm kind of proof that despite all the horror they went through, we're going forward." Although Ramon described himself as a secular Jew, special kosher meals were made for his journey and he consulted with rabbis before leaving about the proper way to observe Shabbat from space. Ramon's journey into space occurred as Israelis continued to suffer through a horrendous period of violence and helped lift the nation's spirits. Ramon was a national hero and a symbol of hope. Tragically, just minutes before landing on February 1, the *Columbia* exploded; Ramon and the six American astronauts aboard with him were killed. Miraculously, Ramon's in-flight diary was discovered almost completely intact and legible despite the fact that the shuttle had completely disintegrated upon re-entry with burning debris falling across the southern United States. In the diary, Ramon wrote: "Today was the first day that I felt that I am truly living in space. I have become a man who lives and works in space." Ramon posthumously received the U.S. Congressional Space Medal of Honor, and is still the only non-American to be awarded the prestigious honor.

### **FIND...**

- Yitro
- Judges
- Hashem
- Aseret HaDibrot
- Har Sinai
- Shabbat
- Parents
- Jealous

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

17th of 54 sedras; 5th of 11 in Shemot

Written on 138 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 46th

15 Parshiyot; 4 open, 11 closed

75 pesukim – ranks 47th

(only 7 sedras have fewer pesukim)

1105 words, 4022 letters – ranks 46th

Yitro is the smallest sedra in Shemot

Of 620 letters in the Aseret HaDibrot, 68 are ALEF (11%).

Not one is a TET.

**MITZVOT**

Yitro contains 17 of the 613 mitzvot;

3 positive and 14 prohibitions;

(14 of the 17 are within the Aseret HaDibrot)

## TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### WHAT DOES ISRAELI VAT STAND FOR?

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!

- **Your ribs move about 5 million times a year, every time you breathe!**
- **Banging your head against a wall uses 150 calories an hour.**
- **Starfish have no brains.**
- **Children grow faster in the springtime.**

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

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

#### Parsha Points to Ponder...

After Moshe relates to Yitro all the happenings and all the miracles that Hashem had performed for the Jewish people, Yitro's reaction was to say: בְּרוּךְ יְקֹוֹק אֱשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם, "...Blessed is Hashem, Who has rescued you from the hand of Egypt...". (Ex. 18,10) Chazal make a very strange observation regarding this statement of Yitro. They say: "It was a disgrace for Moshe and the six hundred thousand (the Israelites who left Egypt) that they did not bless (Hashem) until Yitro came and did so." (Sanh. 94a) This is strange, for after the miraculous crossing of the sea they offered a beautiful song of thanks to Hashem for all He did in saving them from the Egyptians. Was this great song of lesser significance than the few words uttered by Yitro? What then did Chazal mean? The answer may be that the Jews had offered their thanks and appreciation to Hashem for all the favors he bestowed on them. Thanking Him for the blessings He showers on others, this is what Yitro demonstrated. Yitro thanked Hashem, not for what he had been granted, but for what Hashem did to others. This was the great lesson that he taught. We should be grateful, not only for our blessings, but also for blessings that other people receive.

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