

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.

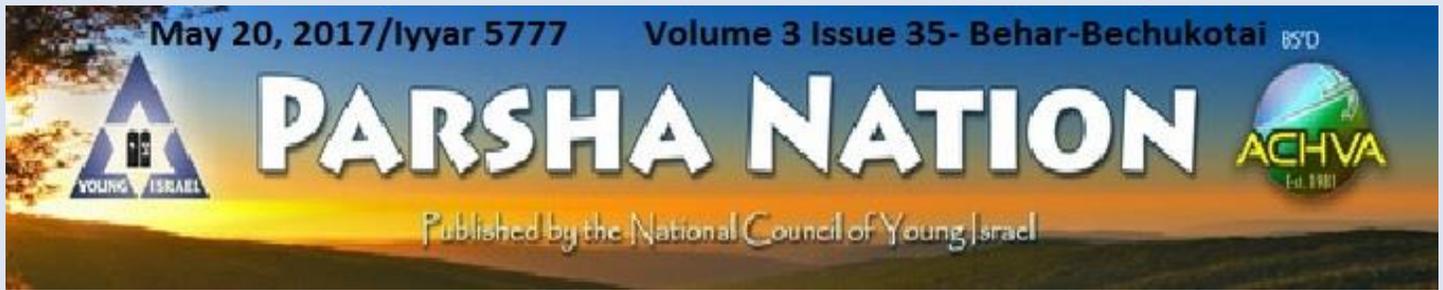
**Thank you for being a light to future generations.** You are doing incredible work that should not be taken lightly. You should be proud to call yourself a Young Israel Youth Leader as you have the unique opportunity to make a real difference in so many young people's lives. Keep up the amazing work.

We are looking forward to hearing great things from everyone.

Our doors are always open.

**NCYI Department of Synagogue Services**  
[Youth@youngisrael.org](mailto:Youth@youngisrael.org)

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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 Roundup-** 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.

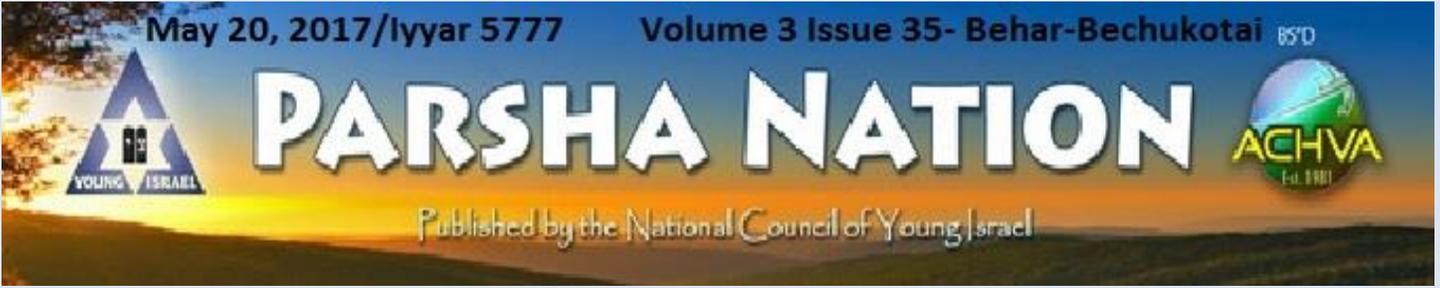
**Discussion Portion-** After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning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



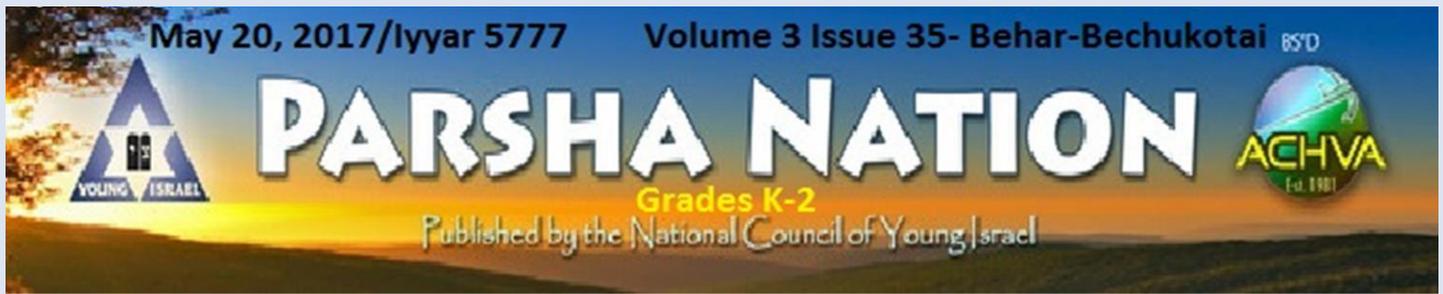
# PARSHA NATION

Published by the National Council of Young Israel



## 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 Roundup	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>	



## BEHAR ROUNDUP

### Behar Roundup

In this week's Parshah, **Behar**, we learn about some very important mitzvot that apply in the land of Israel.

First is **shemittah**. The same way the seventh day of the week is Shabbat, every seventh year is a Shabbat for the land when the land gets to "rest." This means that for six years, farmers may work on the land, **sowing** seeds so things should grow, **pruning** to help the plants grow better, and **harvesting** the fruit and vegetables so they can sell it and make money. But in the seventh year, the year of *shemittah*, the land must be allowed to rest, and there can be no planting or harvesting. Instead, anything that grows becomes free for anybody who wants to just pick and enjoy.

After seven cycles of *shemittah*, the fiftieth year ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ , it's the year following the 49th, so it's the 50th), is called *yovel* or the **jubilee**. It is also a year of rest for the land, but in addition to that, all servants go free, and all property returns to its original owner. That means that whenever somebody buys a plot of land he knows he will only keep it until the year of *yovel* when the land will go back to the original owner.

Then the Torah tells us that we shouldn't worry that we won't have enough to eat during *shemittah* and the following year because we can't plant and harvest. Because G-d promises that the year before *shemittah*--the sixth year--will produce enough food for three whole years--the sixth year, the year of *shemittah*, and the following year, when things won't grow because there was no planting during *shemittah*.

We also learn in this Parshah that it's forbidden to charge a Jew **interest**. That means that when we lend someone money, we can't take a little extra back as a thank you for doing them the favor and lending them the money. Rather, all loans must be free--the person only has to pay back exactly what you lent them.

**LEADER TIP:** Shmittah is a hard concept to understand, especially living outside of Eretz Yisrael. Try to relate it to the kids as best as possible. Be creative!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. Which year is shemitah?
2. Is a farmer living in Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemitah?
3. What happens if someone lends someone money before shemitah, and then shemitah comes before the loan is paid back?
4. When does a yovel year come?
5. How do we let everyone know when it is the Yovel year (50<sup>th</sup> year)?
6. What does keeping the laws of shemitah demonstrate?
7. Was one allowed to work his field during yovel?
8. What berachah does Hashem promise one who keeps shemittah and Yovel?
9. What should one do if his relative is sold as an eved to a non Jew?
10. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?

## Answers

1. Every seventh year.
2. NO
3. The borrower doesn't have to pay back the loan.
4. Every fiftieth year.
5. The shofar is blown on Yom Kippur
6.
  - a. A great belief in Hashem, that He will provide for us
  - b. It shows that the true master of the land is Hashem, not us.
7. NO
8. The produce of the sixth year will last three years.
9. Redeem him
10. Exile

**LEADER TIP:** Give out a "FREE" question every seventh question as a shmittah year gift!

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** In this week's parsha we discuss the laws of shmittah and yovel where in these years we cannot work our field and must leave whatever grows for anyone who wants to come and take it. In this activity we will be discussing the idea of tzedakah and giving to others and that sometimes even though it's hard to do, it's still important.

## ACTIVITY:

**Game 1:** Have the kids sit in a circle, and pick one person to sit in the middle of the circle with a box under his chair. This person is blindfolded. For this game, it is very important that everyone remain quiet. One at a time, pick kids in the circle to try and put a coin into the box. The person in the middle listens and tries to tag anyone he hears approaching. After one or two rounds this way, you may want to liven up the game by changing it around, and putting candies underneath the chair. Instead of putting coins underneath, the kids are then trying to take a candy out.

**Game 2:** Before Shabbat, make approximately 20 circles, preferably out of yellow construction paper. These will represent coins in the game. Take the coins and spread them out in your room/area. Put one or two chairs somewhere in the playing area to represent Tzedaka Boxes. Pick one person to be in the middle. Everyone else goes to one side of the room. When the person in the middle yells "Johnny Over," everyone else tries to run from one side of the room to the other, while the person in the middle tries to tag as many of them as s/he can. If s/he tags them, they join him/her in the middle and try to tag others as well. As an added twist, the coins are spread out in the room. As the people run across the room, they must try and pick up as many of the coins as possible, and deposit them in the tzedaka box. The game ends either when everyone is caught, or when all the coins are put into tzedaka.

**DISCUSSION:** In the first game, we started off putting money into the tzedaka, and later took candy out of it. In many cities, something called a G'mach is set up. This is a type of tzedaka that lends money to people. If you need money, you are allowed to take from the G'mach, but must pay it back when you have sufficient funds. When you give money to the G'mach, you make sure there is always enough money in it for people to borrow.

In the second game, it is a bit difficult to be able to give Tzedaka. First you have to get the coins, and then reach the tzedaka box to give them away. In real life, we often think about how hard we work to

earn our money, and question whether it is “fair” for us to give it to someone for free. Is this fair? Everything we have really comes from Hashem. The money we have isn’t really our own. Hashem commanded us to give tzedaka, so when we do so, we are what its real owner, Hashem, wants us to do with it.

In real life, it is not very difficult to find places to give tzedaka. What and who needs tzedaka in our city? Country? In the world? Which is the most important to give to? According to halacha, we must first look after our own city before giving tzedaka to other places.

We learn about the laws of shmittah in this week’s parsha, where in the 7<sup>th</sup> year, just like the 7<sup>th</sup> day (Shabbos), we don’t work our fields in Israel. We wouldn’t be allowed to take any of our fruits or things we’ve grown, but instead we have to leave them for anyone else to come and take. The Torah tells us not to worry about not having enough to eat during the shmittah year because we can’t plant and harvest. Hashem promises that the year before shmittah, the 6<sup>th</sup> year, will produce enough food for three whole years- the 6<sup>th</sup> year, the shmittah year, and the following year.

Sometimes when giving tzedakah or helping people we worry that we won’t have enough for ourselves or by helping other people we won’t be able to help ourselves. We learn that Hashem will always look after us and help us if we help other people and that when we give tzedakah to others, Hashem will give us “tzedakah” as well.

**LEADER TIP:** Putting others before ourselves can be very difficult at times. Try your best to talk it out with the kids. Where would we be if we didn’t have other people? What would the world be like if every person only cared about themselves? Even more so, what would it be like if Hashem didn’t always look out for us either?

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** In this week's parsha, Hashem tells the Jewish people to let their fields rest and not to plant their crops every seventh year. He promised them that if they do, they wouldn't lose out - He would perform a miracle and bring a double crop. This was a huge test of trust for the people, since in those days no crops meant no food! Each person had to face that test, and his decision really showed just how much trust he did or didn't have in Hashem.

We can apply this idea to our lives as well. Whenever we find ourselves in a dilemma where doing what is ethical and right seems like an inconvenience or loss, we can choose to trust in Hashem, knowing that if we do the right thing, in the end we will never lose out.

## "THE LONG SHORTER WAY"

It was a boiling, hot day, and Nancy and her friends were wondering if their long walk home from the neighborhood pool was ever going to end.

"Good thing we remembered our water bottles," Nancy said to her sister, Dianne.

The kids continued their trek, when suddenly someone noticed a break in the link-fence, running along the other side of the road.

"Hey, we're in luck!" shouted Dianne. "Taking that shortcut will get us home in half the time."

"Let's go for it!" agreed the tired girls. They immediately started to cross the dusty street.

But as they got closer, their hearts sank.

"NO TRESPASSING" read the old, rusty sign hanging off one side of the broken fence.

The kids looked at each other. "C'mon," said Dianne. "That sign has probably been hanging there for ten years. Nobody pays it any attention, and neither should we."

"Dianne's right," piped up Sarah. "Just look at how many people have 'trespassed'! They've beaten a path across the empty field."

"Besides," added Dianne, "who's gonna know? Who's gonna care?"

The hot and tired kids didn't need much convincing, and they started to go through the fence. But as Nancy bent down to go in, something just didn't feel right. True, she was hot and tired, but did that make it okay to trespass?

She stopped short and called out to the others. "Hey wait a minute!" The girls turned around. "Where do we get the right to cut through other people's property?" Nancy asked. "I know it's a long walk, but what's right is right, even when it's hard, isn't it?"

Dianne turned to her sister and said, "Listen, we've decided to take the shortcut. I'm sure it's not a problem. But if you want to sweat it out and take the long way around, be our guest. I'll be waiting for you, nice and cool, at home."

Nancy watched as Dianne and the others, laughing at their good fortune, disappeared through the hole in the fence, leaving her to continue on her own. Walking alone, the hike seemed even longer.

"Maybe I was dumb," she thought. "Those guys are probably all sitting in cool air-conditioned homes by now, and where am I?"

Once or twice she almost decided to go back and join them, or slip through the other openings that came up in the fence every so often. But each time she told herself, "Right is right, even when it's hard," reminding herself, as she often did, that by doing the right thing she would never lose out.

Nancy soon found her mind wandering into pleasant thoughts, and before she knew it, she was home. She walked through the door fully expecting to find Dianne lounging in air-conditioned comfort. But to her surprise, the house was empty. It was obvious that no one had been there since the morning.

"That's funny," she thought. "Maybe Dianne went over one of the kid's houses." After switching on the air conditioner, Nancy sat down with a pile of books to read for the afternoon.

A good while later, when Nancy went out to check the mail, she saw a strange sight. Coming down the road were Dianne and the other girls. They definitely didn't look happy. Huffing and puffing, a couple of the girls were scratching their legs, and Dianne was limping!

"Hey, what happened to you?" called out Nancy with a start.

The kids looked up, surprised, and a bit embarrassed. "Well," sighed Dianne, "it seems that shortcut wasn't such a good idea after all. The field was full of thorns..."

"And Poison Ivy!" added Sarah between scratches. "It took forever to get through. We thought we'd never get out."

"Were you ever lucky you didn't come with us," Dianne said.

Nancy looked at her sister and tattered friends and nodded with sympathy. "I was lucky," she thought to herself, "that I trusted enough to do the right thing."

## Discussion Questions

Q. How did Nancy feel when she first went to take the shortcut?

A. Even though she wanted to, she realized it wasn't right.

Q. How did she feel after she saw what happened to her friends?

A. She felt bad for them, but realized that she had been protected because she had chosen to do what was right.

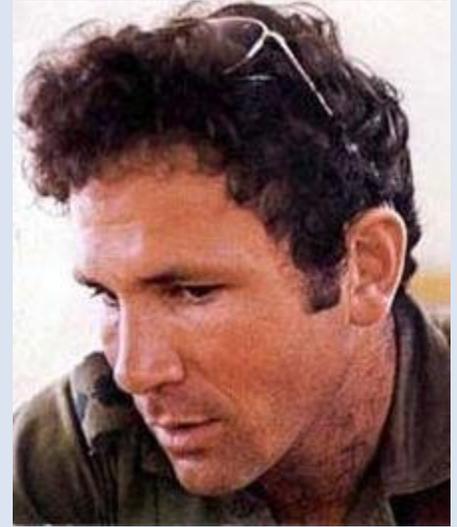
**LEADER TIP:** Trusting in Hashem is always a difficult concept to fully grasp. That being said, it's an incredible conversation starter. Take advantage!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Yoni Netanyahu

(March 13, 1946 - July 4, 1967)

Yoni Netanyahu was the commander of the elite Israeli army special forces unit Sayeret Matkal. He was the only Israeli soldier killed in action during Operation Entebbe in Uganda.



On July 4, 1976, Netanyahu led Operation Entebbe, a mission to free 105 Jewish hostages being held in Entebbe, Uganda by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who had days earlier hijacked an Air France flight out of Athens headed for Tel Aviv. The mission was a huge success as the soldiers broke in and rescued 102 of the hostages and killed all the terrorists and dozens of Ugandan soldiers. Netanyahu, however, was killed during the raid - the only Israeli casualty. In honor of Netanyahu, the raid was posthumously renamed Mivtza Yonatan (Operation Yonatan).

**LEADER TIP:** Yoni Netanyahu is one of the greatest of our heroes. He sacrificed everything in order to save other people. How much would you be willing to sacrifice for other people, your religion, or even yourself?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Birchot HaShachar

***Boruch... Rokah Ha-aretz Al Hamayim.***

**"Blessed are You... Who spreads out the earth upon the waters."**

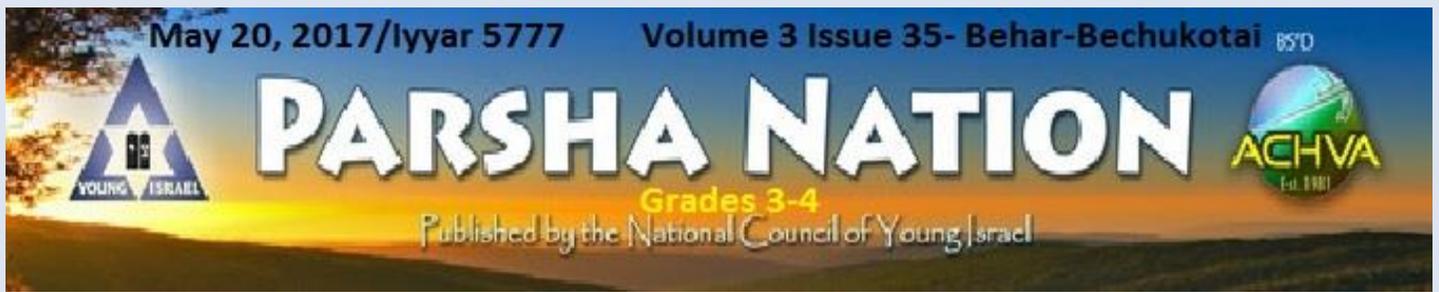
You've got two dominating surfaces in this world, water and earth. Water will spread out over the earth, if you let it. Earth has no problem sinking below the water if that's what water wants it to do. Of course, we wouldn't want to walk around wearing flippers all day! So the next time you take a solid step on the ground, thank *Hashem* for solid land!

***Boruch... Hamaichin Mitzadei Gaver.***

**"Blessed are You... Who firms man's footsteps."**

Time to take a couple of steps across the room. What a perfect time to thank *Hashem* for the ability to put one foot in front of the other!

**LEADER TIP:** Do a relay race with cups of water to tie the message of the two braches together!



## BEHAR ROUNDUP

In this week's Parshah, **Behar**, we learn about some very important mitzvot that apply in the land of Israel.

First is **shemittah**. The same way the seventh day of the week is Shabbat, every seventh year is a Shabbat for the land when the land gets to "rest." This means that for six years, farmers may work on the land, **sowing** seeds so things should grow, **pruning** to help the plants grow better, and **harvesting** the fruit and vegetables so they can sell it and make money. But in the seventh year, the year of *shemittah*, the land must be allowed to rest, and there can be no planting or harvesting. Instead, anything that grows becomes free for anybody who wants to just pick and enjoy.

After seven cycles of *shemittah*, the fiftieth year ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ , it's the year following the 49th, so it's the 50th), is called *yovel* or the **jubilee**. It is also a year of rest for the land, but in addition to that, all servants go free, and all property returns to its original owner. That means that whenever somebody buys a plot of land he knows he will only keep it until the year of *yovel* when the land will go back to the original owner.

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We also learn in this Parshah that it's forbidden to charge a Jew **interest**. That means that when we lend someone money, we can't take a little extra back as a thank you for doing them the favor and lending them the money. Rather, all loans must be free--the person only has to pay back exactly what you lent them.

**LEADER TIP:** Shmittah is a hard concept to understand, especially living outside of Eretz Yisrael. Try to relate it to the kids as best as possible. Be creative!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS

1. Which year is shemitah?
2. Is a farmer living in Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemitah?
3. May he lock his field up so that he is the only one that is able to eat the fruit?
4. Can the farmer take any food for himself?
5. What happens if someone lends someone money before shemitah, and then shemitah comes before the loan is paid back?
6. When does a yovel year come?
7. If someone who lived in Eretz Yisrael during the time of the Beit hamikdash sold his field, could he ever get it back for free?
8. How do we let everyone know when it is the Yovel year (50<sup>th</sup> year)?
9. What does keeping the laws of shemitah demonstrate?
10. Was one allowed to work his field during yovel?
11. What berachah does Hashem promise one who keeps shemittah and Yovel?
12. From whom may you buy avadim?
13. For how long do these avadim work?
14. What should one do if his relative is sold as an eved to a non jew?
15. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?

## ANSWERS

1. Every seventh year.
2. NO
3. NO
4. YES. He may take as much as anyone else can.
5. The borrower doesn't have to pay back the loan.
6. Every fiftieth year.
7. YES! He got it back for free when Yovel came.
8. The shofar is blown on Yom Kippur
9.
  - a. A great belief in Hashem, that He will provide for us
  - b. It shows that the true master of the land is Hashem, not us.
10. NO
11. The produce of the sixth year will last three years.
12. Non-Jews
13. Forever
14. Redeem him
15. Exile

**LEADER TIP:** Give out a "FREE" question every seventh question as a shmittah year gift!

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** In this week's parsha we discuss the laws of shmittah and yovel where in these years we cannot work our field and must leave whatever grows for anyone who wants to come and take it. In this activity we will be discussing the idea of tzedakah and giving to others and that sometimes even though it's hard to do, it's still important.

Each day we find people that don't care enough about things around them.

Your kids will understand, that we have to learn to take care about the people around us, and to think about them sometimes, like we want them to think about us. If we want a healthy and good society, we have to work on our Midot!

We need to pay attention not only for our self's, and family. We need to pay attention also for people that we don't know, and to take care for them, too.

The kids will understand, that to take care isn't only in the big things, it is also in the little things, during the day. If we take care of other people, other people, and more importantly Hashem, will continue to take care of us as well.

**ACTIVITY:** Ask each of your kids, to take something from his own (Watch, shoe....) and to put it inside the circle, on the floor.

You will start to tell a story, it doesn't matter which story, and while you are telling the story, you will walk between the things on the floor.

While you are telling the story, you will hear things like: "be careful on my watch! .... "

Don't pay attention to their yelling. You will pay attention, that no-one is listening to your story, because they are looking for their stuff.

After you finished your story, ask one of your kids, to repeat the story for every-one. You will see, that they may not remember anything.

Then, divide your kids to two groups.

The first group will give numbers from 1-10 to the things that important to do, when 1, is not important, and 10, is the important things to do.

The second group will decide to whom they would help if they won on 1,000,000\$ .

The sentences for the first group:

- To tide-up my room
- Clean the street, from garbage.
- To visit a sick friend.
- To visit old people in the hospital.
- To help someone with his heavy bags.
- Help my mother clean the house.
- Help my friend to study for a big test.
- Volunteering with children in risk.
- To give Tzdaka every-day.
- To listen to my little sister, when she has problems in school, or life.

To which people you will help, if you have won in 1,000,000\$ ?

- \*A friend that need to do a surgery.
- \*A cousin that don't have a house.
- \* To a place that helping to children with risk.
- \* For people that sick in cancer.
- \* For opening a big library in your area.
- \* For your father, that needs to go to the dentist.

You can discuss with your kids about their choices, and each group, can give their opinion about the other group choices.

**DISCUSSION:** In the first game, everyone put his or her things in the middle, and no-one paid any attention for the story. Did anyone pay attention for his friend's watch that was on the floor, or only for his shoe? In these games, we spoke about helping others, even though it may be difficult at times. We are our own people and it's important to look out for our best and we deserve what we work hard for. We try to be the best people we can and our hard work deserves recognition and even rewards. That being said though, Hashem put many other people on this world with us. Its important to look out for everyone around us and take a step back and recognize that were not the only people in the world. That works for people as well as every other object as well. Hashem created this world and everything in it deserves our respect and care.

**LEADER TIP:** Putting others before ourselves can be very difficult at times. Try your best to talk it out with the kids. Where would we be if we didn't have other people? What would the world be like if every person only cared about themselves? Even more so, what would it be like if Hashem didn't always look out for us either?

# PARSHA STORY

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We can apply this idea to our lives as well. Whenever we find ourselves in a dilemma where doing what is ethical and right seems like an inconvenience or loss, we can choose to trust in Hashem, knowing that if we do the right thing, in the end we will never lose out.

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The hot and tired kids didn't need much convincing, and they started to go through the fence. But as Nancy bent down to go in, something just didn't feel right. True, she was hot and tired, but did that make it okay to trespass?

She stopped short and called out to the others. "Hey wait a minute!" The girls turned around. "Where do we get the right to cut through other people's property?" Nancy asked. "I know it's a long walk, but what's right is right, even when it's hard, isn't it?"

Dianne turned to her sister and said, "Listen, we've decided to take the shortcut. I'm sure it's not a problem. But if you want to sweat it out and take the long way around, be our guest. I'll be waiting for you, nice and cool, at home."

Nancy watched as Dianne and the others, laughing at their good fortune, disappeared through the hole in the fence, leaving her to continue on her own. Walking alone, the hike seemed even longer.

"Maybe I was dumb," she thought. "Those guys are probably all sitting in cool air-conditioned homes by now, and where am I?"

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A good while later, when Nancy went out to check the mail, she saw a strange sight. Coming down the road were Dianne and the other girls. They definitely didn't look happy. Huffing and puffing, a couple of the girls were scratching their legs, and Dianne was limping!

"Hey, what happened to you?" called out Nancy with a start.

The kids looked up, surprised, and a bit embarrassed. "Well," sighed Dianne, "it seems that shortcut wasn't such a good idea after all. The field was full of thorns..."

"And Poison Ivy!" added Sarah between scratches. "It took forever to get through. We thought we'd never get out."

"Were you ever lucky you didn't come with us," Dianne said.

Nancy looked at her sister and tattered friends and nodded with sympathy. "I was lucky," she thought to herself, "that I trusted enough to do the right thing."

## Discussion Questions

Q. If instead Nancy's friend had gotten home quickly and easily, would that have proven that they were right and Nancy was wrong?

A. Not at all. A lot of times we do see how doing the right thing brings good into our lives, but sometimes we don't see it right away. The important thing is to keep on doing good, and trust that it always pays off in the end.

Q. It wasn't easy for Nancy to pass up a shortcut. How come doing the right thing can often seem so hard?

A. Part of it is that a person naturally likes to take the easy way out, and that isn't always the ethical choice. Also these choices are often sent our way to test our character and help us grow by choosing to do the right thing, even when it's hard.

Q. Can you think of a time you didn't lose out for doing the right thing?

**LEADER TIP:** Trusting in Hashem is always a difficult concept to fully grasp. That being said, it's an incredible conversation starter. Take advantage!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

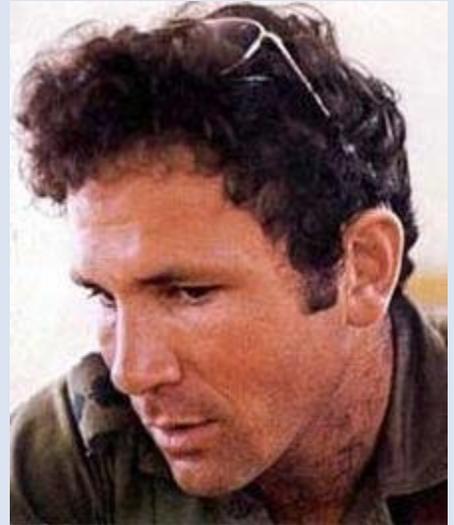
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(March 13, 1946 - July 4, 1967)

Yoni Netanyahu was the commander of the elite Israeli army special forces unit Sayeret Matkal. He was the only Israeli soldier killed in action during Operation Entebbe in Uganda.

On July 4, 1976, Netanyahu led Operation Entebbe, a mission to free 105 Jewish hostages being held in Entebbe, Uganda by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who had days earlier hijacked an Air France flight out of Athens headed for Tel Aviv. The mission was a huge success as the soldiers broke in and rescued 102 of the hostages and killed all the terrorists and dozens of Ugandan soldiers. Netanyahu, however, was killed during the raid - the only Israeli casualty. In honor of Netanyahu, the raid was posthumously renamed Mivtza Yonatan (Operation Yonatan).

Netanyahu was buried in Jerusalem's Military Cemetery at Mount Herzl on July 6, 1976, following a military funeral attended by enormous crowds and top-ranking officials. Shimon Peres, then-Defense Minister, said during the eulogy that “a bullet had torn the young heart of one of Israel’s finest sons, one of its most courageous warriors, one of its most promising commanders – the magnificent Yonatan Netanyahu.”



**LEADER TIP:** Yoni Netanyahu is one of the greatest of our heroes. He sacrificed everything in order to save other people. How much would you be willing to sacrifice for other people, your religion, or even for yourself?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Birchot HaShachar

***Boruch... Rokah Ha-aretz Al Hamayim.***

**"Blessed are You... Who spreads out the earth upon the waters."**

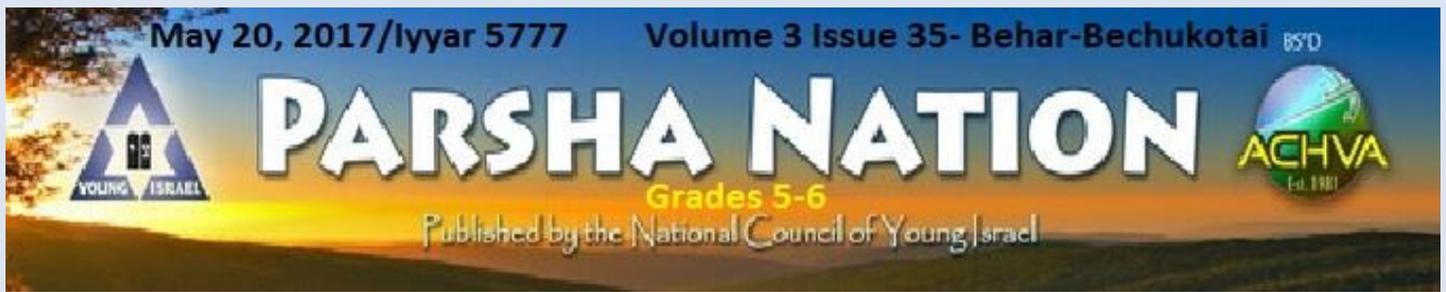
You've got two dominating surfaces in this world, water and earth. Water will spread out over the earth, if you let it. Earth has no problem sinking below the water if that's what water wants it to do. Of course, we wouldn't want to walk around wearing flippers all day! So the next time you take a solid step on the ground, thank *Hashem* for solid land!

***Boruch... Hamaichin Mitzadei Gaver.***

**"Blessed are You... Who firms man's footsteps."**

Time to take a couple of steps across the room. What a perfect time to thank *Hashem* for the ability to put one foot in front of the other! Not only that, but we thank Hashem for giving us the ability to continue life's journey that lies ahead and keep taking steps forward.

**LEADER TIP:** Do a relay race with cups of water to tie the message of the two braches together!



## BEHAR ROUNDUP

### Behar Roundup

In this week's Parshah, **Behar**, we learn about some very important mitzvot that apply in the land of Israel.

First is **shemittah**. The same way the seventh day of the week is Shabbat, every seventh year is a Shabbat for the land when the land gets to "rest." This means that for six years, farmers may work on the land, **sowing** seeds so things should grow, **pruning** to help the plants grow better, and **harvesting** the fruit and vegetables so they can sell it and make money. But in the seventh year, the year of *shemittah*, the land must be allowed to rest, and there can be no planting or harvesting. Instead, anything that grows becomes free for anybody who wants to just pick and enjoy.

After seven cycles of *shemittah*, the fiftieth year ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ , it's the year following the 49th, so it's the 50th), is called *yovel* or the **jubilee**. It is also a year of rest for the land, but in addition to that, all servants go free, and all property returns to its original owner. That means that whenever somebody buys a plot of land he knows he will only keep it until the year of *yovel* when the land will go back to the original owner.

Then the Torah tells us that we shouldn't worry that we won't have enough to eat during *shemittah* and the following year because we can't plant and harvest. Because G-d promises that the year before *shemittah*--the sixth year--will produce enough food for three whole years--the sixth year, the year of *shemittah*, and the following year, when things won't grow because there was no planting during *shemittah*.

We also learn in this Parshah that it's forbidden to charge a Jew **interest**. That means that when we lend someone money, we can't take a little extra back as a thank you for doing them the favor and lending them the money. Rather, all loans must be free--the person only has to pay back exactly what you lent them.

**LEADER TIP:** Shmittah is a hard concept to understand, especially living outside of Eretz Yisrael. Try to relate it to the kids as best as possible. Be creative!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS

1. Which year is shemittah?
2. Is a farmer living in Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemittah?
3. May he lock his field up so that he is the only one that is able to eat the fruit?
4. Can the farmer take any food for himself?
5. Is a farmer living outside of Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemittah?
6. What happens if someone lends someone money before shemittah, and then shemittah comes before the loan is paid back?
7. When does a yovel year come?
8. If someone who lived in Eretz Yisrael during the time of the Beit hamikdash sold his field, could he ever get it back for free?
9. How could you figure out how much to sell the field for?
10. Is a Jew allowed to collect interest when he lends money to another Jew?
11. How do we let everyone know when it is the Yovel year (50<sup>th</sup> year)?
12. What does keeping the laws of shemittah demonstrate?
13. Was one allowed to work his field during yovel?
14. What berachah does Hashem promise one who keeps shemittah and Yovel?
15. From whom may you buy avadim?
16. For how long do these avadim work?
17. What should one do if his relative is sold as an eved to a non jew?
18. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemittah?
19. What is the definition of a "ger toshav"?
20. Where is it permitted to prostrate oneself on a stone floor?

## ANSWERS

1. Every seventh year.
2. NO
3. NO
4. YES. He may take as much as anyone else can.
5. YES
6. The borrower doesn't have to pay back the loan.
7. Every fiftieth year.
8. YES! He got it back for free when Yovel came.
9. The closer it was to the Yovel year, the less the field cost. The further it was from the Yovel year, the more the field cost.
10. NO
11. The shofar is blown on Yom Kippur
12.
  - a. A great belief in Hashem, that He will provide for us
  - b. It shows that the true master of the land is Hashem, not us.
13. NO
14. The produce of the sixth year will last three years.
15. Non-Jews
16. Forever
17. Redeem him
18. Exile
19. A non-Jew who lives in Eretz Yisrael and accepts upon himself not to worship idols.
20. In the Mikdash

**LEADER TIP:** Give out a "FREE" question every seventh question as a shmittah year gift!

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** In this week's parsha we discuss the laws of shmittah and yovel where in these years we cannot work our field and must leave whatever grows for anyone who wants to come and take it. In this activity we will be discussing the idea of tzedakah and giving to others and that sometimes even though it's hard to do, it's still important. In this activity, the kids will understand the importance of giving to others not only when it's comfortable and easy for them but also when it's hard and they need to sacrifice of ourselves for others.

**ACTIVITY:** We tell the kids that they are residents of an apartment building; each person gets a card with his\hers personality (attached are 6 characters, you can add more or give each couple one character) in a different color and the owner of the building (the group leader) calls them all in for a meeting. He tells them that his sister, kate, with her three kids, had lived in New Orleans till not long ago, but the Hurricane Katrina destroyed they house and all she had. So according to the contract they all signed if any emergency happens to the owner or his family, if asked they must leave the house immediately. He asks them to take a minute and think of why they should and should not be the ones to leave the house.

## **Characters**

- You are an elderly women who has been living in the building for years, even before the owner came in. all your children and grand-children live away from you. Your husband died ten years ago and you are wheel-chair bound.
- You are a new immigrant from Russia, 20 year old. Left your house to go and make money in America and send it back home to your elderly parents. You go to college every day and work nights as a security guard of the building. You don't pay for the apartment because you work there and you know you can't find anything better.
- You are a young couple who just gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. He's four months old. Your wife is in college in her final year of learning medicine and you are a starting lawyer. You moved far away from home to start your life in the city.
- You are a family of two kids. A boy of 12 and a girl of 8. Your husband is a chef in a fancy restaurant and you work in real estate. You have other apartments in Miami and L.A but your main house is in the building. You help to keep the building clean and renovated and personally pay for any construction that needs to be done. You're very generous to the others in the building.

- You are a single man in your late thirties. You're a devoted teacher in a public school and organize activities for the children in the building every now and then. You were never married. You live for your students and for helping others.

- You are a single mom with three kids. A girl of 4 and twins of 2. You struggle to finish the month, Work in three jobs and spend all your money on the rent, the kids and babysitters. You hardly leave the building and if so it's to visit your brother's family who live around the block in a small apartment.

You then go round the room and every character has to explain to the rest who they are and the reasons why they should or should not leave. At this point there are no discussions.

The next stage is for them to decide together who should be the one to leave, the group leader should encourage a discussion between the whole group.

After they have reached a decision you take a vote. Each person gets a card in each color and has to pick up the color of the person he\she should leave and explain shortly why.

After all this the group leader poses a question- In reaching a decision, who here thought about themselves and who didn't think at all about themselves.

**DISCUSSION:** Sometimes when giving tzedakah or helping people we worry that we won't have enough for ourselves or by helping other people we won't be able to help ourselves. We learn that Hashem will always look after us and help us if we help other people and that when we give tzedakah to others, Hashem will give us "tzedakah" as well.

We are our own people and it's important to look out for our best and we deserve what we work hard for. We try to be the best people we can and our hard work deserves recognition and even rewards. That being said though, Hashem put many other people on this world with us. Its important to look out for everyone around us and take a step back and recognize that were not the only people in the world. That works for people as well as every other object as well. Hashem created this world and everything in it deserves our respect and care.

**LEADER TIP:** Putting others before ourselves can be very difficult at times. Try your best to talk it out with the kids. Where would we be if we didn't have other people? What would the world be like if every person only cared about themselves? Even more so, what would it be like if Hashem didn't always look out for us either?

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# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** In this week's parsha, Hashem tells the Jewish people to let their fields rest and not to plant their crops every seventh year. He promised them that if they do, they wouldn't lose out - He would perform a miracle and bring a double crop. This was a huge test of trust for the people, since in those days no crops meant no food! Each person had to face that test, and his decision really showed just how much trust he did or didn't have in Hashem.

We can apply this idea to our lives as well. Whenever we find ourselves in a dilemma where doing what is ethical and right seems like an inconvenience or loss, we can choose to trust in Hashem, knowing that if we do the right thing, in the end we will never lose out.

## "THE LONG SHORTER WAY"

It was a boiling, hot day, and Nancy and her friends were wondering if their long walk home from the neighborhood pool was ever going to end.

"Good thing we remembered our water bottles," Nancy said to her sister, Dianne.

The kids continued their trek, when suddenly someone noticed a break in the link-fence, running along the other side of the road.

"Hey, we're in luck!" shouted Dianne. "Taking that shortcut will get us home in half the time."

"Let's go for it!" agreed the tired girls. They immediately started to cross the dusty street.

But as they got closer, their hearts sank.

"NO TRESPASSING" read the old, rusty sign hanging off one side of the broken fence.

The kids looked at each other. "C'mon," said Dianne. "That sign has probably been hanging there for ten years. Nobody pays it any attention, and neither should we."

"Dianne's right," piped up Sarah. "Just look at how many people have 'trespassed'! They've beaten a path across the empty field."

"Besides," added Dianne, "who's gonna know? Who's gonna care?"

The hot and tired kids didn't need much convincing, and they started to go through the fence. But as Nancy bent down to go in, something just didn't feel right. True, she was hot and tired, but did that make it okay to trespass?

She stopped short and called out to the others. "Hey wait a minute!" The girls turned around. "Where do we get the right to cut through other people's property?" Nancy asked. "I know it's a long walk, but what's right is right, even when it's hard, isn't it?"

Dianne turned to her sister and said, "Listen, we've decided to take the shortcut. I'm sure it's not a problem. But if you want to sweat it out and take the long way around, be our guest. I'll be waiting for you, nice and cool, at home."

Nancy watched as Dianne and the others, laughing at their good fortune, disappeared through the hole in the fence, leaving her to continue on her own. Walking alone, the hike seemed even longer.

"Maybe I was dumb," she thought. "Those guys are probably all sitting in cool air-conditioned homes by now, and where am I?"

Once or twice she almost decided to go back and join them, or slip through the other openings that came up in the fence every so often. But each time she told herself, "Right is right, even when it's hard," reminding herself, as she often did, that by doing the right thing she would never lose out.

Nancy soon found her mind wandering into pleasant thoughts, and before she knew it, she was home. She walked through the door fully expecting to find Dianne lounging in air-conditioned comfort. But to her surprise, the house was empty. It was obvious that no one had been there since the morning.

"That's funny," she thought. "Maybe Dianne went over one of the kid's houses." After switching on the air conditioner, Nancy sat down with a pile of books to read for the afternoon.

A good while later, when Nancy went out to check the mail, she saw a strange sight. Coming down the road were Dianne and the other girls. They definitely didn't look happy. Huffing and puffing, a couple of the girls were scratching their legs, and Dianne was limping!

"Hey, what happened to you?" called out Nancy with a start.

The kids looked up, surprised, and a bit embarrassed. "Well," sighed Dianne, "it seems that short-cut wasn't such a good idea after all. The field was full of thorns..."

"And Poison Ivy!" added Sarah between scratches. "It took forever to get through. We thought we'd never get out."

"Were you ever lucky you didn't come with us," Dianne said.

Nancy looked at her sister and tattered friends and nodded with sympathy. "I was lucky," she thought to herself, "that I trusted enough to do the right thing."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Q. What does a person gain by trusting in God?

A. Trust in God, called "bitachon" in Hebrew, is just about the most valuable thing a person could have. Someone who has it can literally be happy and calm every moment of his life. This is because he knows that he is never alone, and that nothing that happens to him is merely by chance. Since nothing can help him or harm him unless God wants it to happen, he doesn't have to be afraid of anyone or anything. He doesn't have to flatter anyone, hoping for their help. Trust in God can transform our lives and put us into an entirely different plane. It's worth doing whatever we can to acquire it.

Q. Does trusting in God assure that things will always turn out the way we want them to?

A. To trust in God is to know that He loves us, always has our best in mind, and sends us just what we need at every moment. But our perspective is limited, and it is quite possible that what God thinks is genuinely best for us may not be the same as what we think. Trusting in God means knowing that

**LEADER TIP:** Trusting in Hashem is always a difficult concept to fully grasp. That being said, it's an incredible conversation starter. Take advantage!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Yoni Netanyahu

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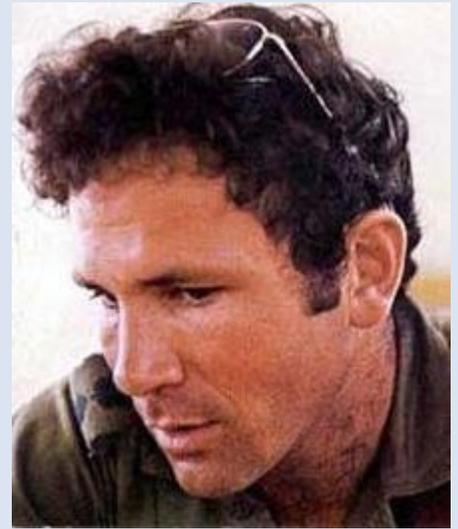
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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his "hard line against all terrorists" came as a result of the death of his brother.

In 2005, he was voted the 13th-greatest Israeli of all time, in a poll by the Israeli news website Ynet to determine whom the general public considered the 200 Greatest Israelis.



**LEADER TIP:** Yoni Netanyahu is one of the greatest of our heroes. He sacrificed everything in order to save other people. How much would you be willing to sacrifice for other people, your religion, or even yourself?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Birchot HaShachar

***Boruch... Rokah Ha-aretz Al Hamayim.***

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## This Week in Jewish History

5<sup>th</sup> of Iyar 5708- May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1948

### **Yom HaAtzmaut- Israeli Independence Day**

The idea of a modern state of Israel dates back to the ideas of Theodor Herzl. He campaigned for a Jewish state in the Middle East and was instrumental in setting up the Zionist Organization and organizing the First Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland, in August 1897. Herzl died on July 3, 1904.

Following the horrendous atrocities committed against Jewish people in the Holocaust, there were further calls for a Jewish state to be created. On May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel publicly read the Declaration of Independence of Israel. This event is commemorated each year on Israel's Independence Day, also known as Yom

Ha'atzmaut. The day before Yom Ha'atzmaut is Yom Hazikaron. This is a solemn occasion and a day of remembrance and is officially known as "Israel's Day of Remembrance for Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism".

According to the Jewish calendar, the fifth day of the month of Iyar cannot fall on a Sunday. If this date falls on a Friday or Saturday, Yom Ha'atzmaut is observed on the third or fourth day of the month. If the date falls on a Monday, it is observed on the sixth day of Iyar. This is so that the festivities do not fall just before, on, or just after the Sabbath.

### **STAT LINE OF THE WEEK– EMOR**

**32nd of the Torah's 54 sedras; 9th of 10 in Vayikra**

**Written on 99 lines in a Sefer Torah**

**7 parshiyot; 1 open, 6 closed**

**57 p'sukim, ranks 50th; last in Vayikra**

**737 words, ranks 50th; (last)**

**2817 letters, ranks 50th; (last)**

**Only 4 sedras are shorter, specifically, the last 4 of the**

**Torah: Nitzavim, Vayeilech,**

**Haazinu, V'zot HaBracha**

**B'har contains 24 mitzvot of the 613; 7 positive, 17 prohibitions;**

### ***FIND...***

- Shmittah
- Planting
- Sowing
- Pruning
- Harvesting
- Yovel
- Interest
- Loans



## TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

# WHAT IS THE TOTAL LENGTH OF ISRAEL?

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!

- **A cockroach will live nine days without it's head, before it starves to death.**
- **Butterflies taste with their feet.**
- **Elephants are the only mamals that can't jump.**
- **Starfish don't have brains.**

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

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

### Parsha Points to Ponder...

The Parsha begins by instructing us concerning the laws of Shmita or the Sabbatical year. The fields are to lay fallow, no planting and no harvesting. A number of verses later the Torah says: *וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מָה נֹאכֵל בַּשְּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת* , “If you will say, ‘What will we eat on the seventh year? Behold we will not sow and not gather in our crop.’ ” (Lev. 25,20) The question, of course, is, if they will not be able to work the fields during the seventh year, on what will they survive? The answer follows that Hashem will provide on the sixth year sufficient food to last for the time they cannot work. The Ramban wonders, what is their concern about the seventh year. They have the growth of the sixth year. Their question should have been about the eighth year. He thus explains the words of the verse should be understood as saying, “If you will ask on the seventh year, what will we eat”, the concern is about what will they eat on the eighth year. Other commentaries put a comma after the word “eat”. The meaning is, “What will we eat, on the seventh year we cannot sow and gather crop?” The Sages tell us; whoever has food and asks what will we eat tomorrow, is of little faith. (Sota 48b) A person must trust that Hashem will provide his needs. If he has food he should not fear that he will not have in the future. A person should certainly be concerned about tomorrow but he should still put his trust in Hashem that he will provide his essential necessities.

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**BRYCE CANYON, UTAH**

# **ACHVA**

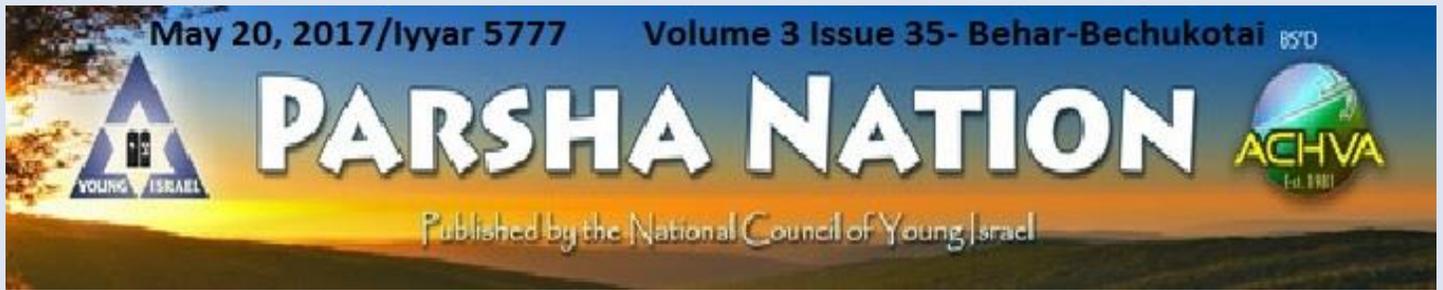
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online today!**



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.

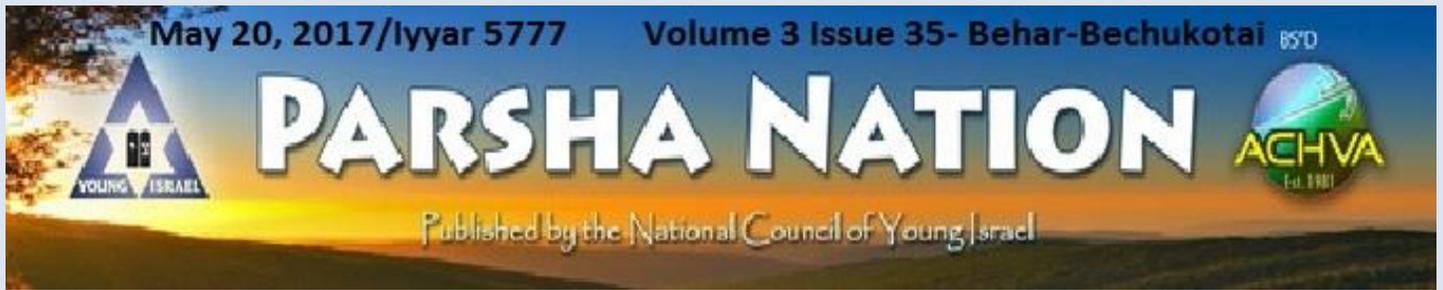
**Thank you for being a light to future generations.** You are doing incredible work that should not be taken lightly. You should be proud to call yourself a Young Israel Youth Leader as you have the unique opportunity to make a real difference in so many young people's lives. Keep up the amazing work.

We are looking forward to hearing great things from everyone.

Our doors are always open.

**NCYI Department of Synagogue Services**  
[Youth@youngisrael.org](mailto:Youth@youngisrael.org)

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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.

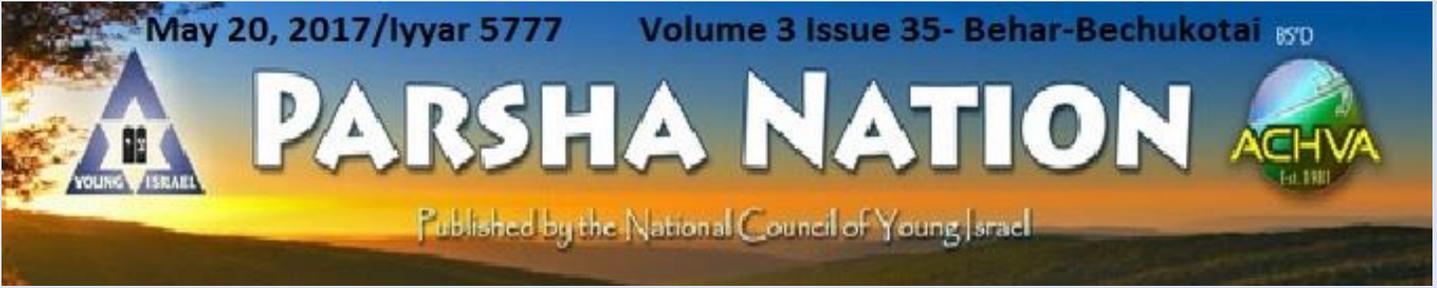
**Discussion Portion-** After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning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

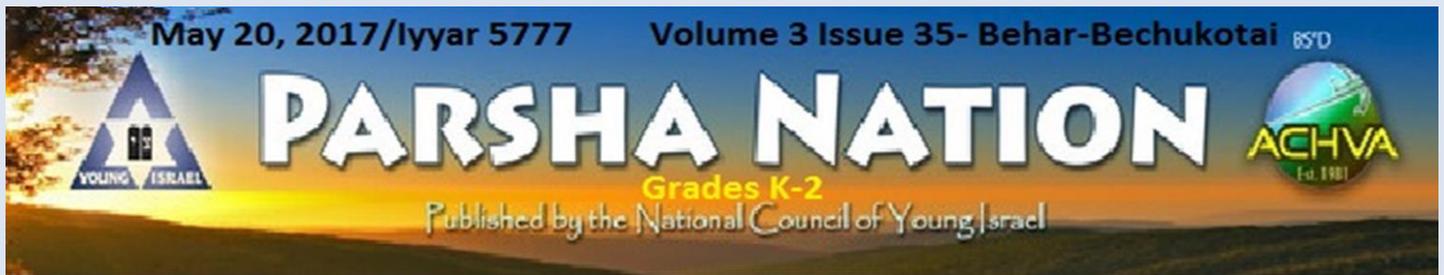
**Teen Minyan Packet-** This packet is filled with stories, riddles, points to ponder, and more.

**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>	



## BECHUKOTAI REVIEW

### Bechukotai Review

In Parshat **Bechukotai**, we read about the promises that G-d gives us if we keep the Torah and do the mitzvot:

**Rain** will come when we need it to make the crops grow

There will be enough **food** and everybody will eat until they are satisfied

We will have **peace** and security in the land

No wild **beasts** or **armies** will pass through the land

We will be successful in our battles and **victorious** over armies much larger than ours

And **G-d** will be with us.

But, then the Torah tells us that if the people don't keep the commandments, and forget about their agreement with G-d, then many unfortunate things will happen. But even if G-d is angry at the Jews and must punish them, he will never **forget** or abandon them.

The last thing we learn in the Parshah is how to calculate the **value** of different types of **gifts** that people promise to G-d.

**LEADER TIP:** This week we read the *tochacha*, which is about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don't listen to the Torah. We read it in a low voice. When explaining the parsha, use a soft voice as well and explain why!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. To what do the words "*bechukotai telechu*" (walk in My statutes) refer?
2. What is the reward for observing the mitzvot of the Torah? What is the correct time for rain? Why?
3. What is one of the most important berachot?
4. What is temurah?
5. Can one switch an animal which has a mum for an animal without a mum?
6. What happens if you do this?
7. Who decides the value of a house that a Jew gives to hekdesch?
8. How much does the owner have to pay if he wants to redeem it from hekdesch?
9. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
10. Where must "*ma'aser sheini*" be eaten?

## Answers

**LEADER TIP:** As opposed to screaming out the answers, make the kids whisper them!

1. Laboring in Torah learning.
2.
  - a. Rain in its time
  - b. When people aren't outside (like Friday night)
3. Shalom (peace)
4. Switching one animal in place for a hekdesch animal.
5. NO
6. Both animals become holy.
7. Kohen
8. He should add a fifth
9. 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 *shemita* and *yovel* years.
10. In Jerusalem

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** In this week's parsha we read about the *tochacha*. The *tochacha* is where Hashem tells us all the bad things that will happen to us if we don't follow the Torah. In this activity, we will be discussing why following rules are so important.

**ACTIVITY:** Type/write up a list of games or activities and a number of rules that go along with those games. For example:

**Basketball-** must dribble/no walking, shoot the ball in the hoop, only have 24 seconds to shoot, etc.

**Tag-** the person who's it must tag other people, if you touch safe you can't be tagged, etc.

**Checkers-** red pieces, black pieces, jump other players, move diagonal, etc.

Cut the "rules" up into slips of paper and hide them around the room. Place the "games" in different sections of the room. Have the kids find the rules and places them with their respective games. You can make it into a competition where you split the kids up into different teams and the first team to complete it wins, do it as one big group with all the kids working together, or you can just do more of a discussion style without the running around. Whichever way you do it, make sure to explain the rules clearly. (You can also add another category in addition to the rules- "what happens if you don't follow the rules". Such as the ball goes to the other team, you lose a turn, etc.)

After the kids get all the games and rules all together, discuss with them about the games and why they think the rules are a part of them. Ask them what they think would happen if there weren't rules in the game.

**DISCUSSION:** The idea of this activity is to learn why rules are so important. They give meaning to what we do. If the games we play or activities we do didn't have rules and were just a free for all, we wouldn't be able to play them and it wouldn't be fun. Sometimes there are rules we understand and sometimes there are rules we don't understand, but at the end of the day it's important to follow them because we know that they're for our own good. In this week's parsha, Hashem gives us a lot of rules and tells us what happens if we don't follow them. It can be scary to hear about punishments, but it's important to remember that the rules Hashem gives us is for our own benefit and He is always looking out for our best interest.

**LEADER TIP:** Rules and the *tochacha* are both very difficult concepts for young kids to understand. If you shift the attention more to how fun rules can be as opposed to how limiting they may be, it can be easier for kids to understand the importance.

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** 'Don't worry, be happy!' is the Torah way of living. In this week's Torah portion (25:19) God assures us that He's always watching over us, and even when things look tough, we don't have to be afraid. Once we realize that God is like a loving, caring parent to us, we will truly be happy - and not worry.

## LOST AND FOUND

Jon could hear his heart pounding even over the blaring loudspeaker music as he looked out into the crowded fairgrounds. While most people around him were smiling and having fun, he was panicking, because even though he was just with them, now his family was nowhere in sight!

Meanwhile...

"Will you look at that slowpoke!" huffed Maya, pointing at Jon, standing 20 feet behind them down the fairground lane. "Dad, it's not fair. We all want to go on to the next exhibit and Jon's holding us up. Can't we just move on?"

"You know, Maya, your brother just moves at a different pace than you do," her father said. "You know the rule. Mom and I have to be able to keep our eyes on all of you at once. But, I agree, it is about time to move on... Jon!" he called out, waving at the boy who was looking in their direction, "Come on, it's time to move on."

"Jon! If you don't come right this minute, I'm eating your whole cotton candy!" Maya added, certain that would get her brother chugging their way faster than a bullet train. But it didn't.

What should I do? Jon thought, nervously. Maybe my family is already on the other side of the park! Maybe they've forgotten all about me and left for home! He turned, looking this way and that.

"Hey, why did Jon just turn around the other way?" little Amy asked. "Doesn't he want to come?"

"You know...even though we can see him, I don't think he can see us. And the music must be too loud for him to hear us calling him," their father said. After making sure their mom was safely watching Amy and Maya, he began jogging Jon's way.

This is terrible! This is horrible! I'll be stuck here all my life -- alone! Jon shuddered.

The music was playing on the loudspeaker, "Don't worry--be happy!" the song was singing. Though Jon was way too scared to be paying much attention to tunes, the words did remind him of something his dad had once said to him: "When God is watching you, there's nothing to worry about. And since He's always watching you, you never have to worry." 'Never have to worry'... Maybe it was true...Maybe he really wasn't alone?

Still feeling tense, but a lot calmer than a moment ago, Jon realized his parents were certainly trying to find him and the best thing to do was to wait where he was and...

"Jonathan!"

The boy turned to see his father's concerned but happy face.

"Didn't you hear us calling you?"

The relieved boy shook his head.

"And you didn't see us waving?"

"Uh, uh. I just saw a lot of people."

"We were so close by, I was sure you could still see us," his dad said softly, putting his comforting hand on his son's shoulder. "I hope at least you weren't too worried and realized you were being watched?"

"Sure." The boy nodded and happily taking his father's hand. Why did he have to worry, when he was being watched by them -- and by God.

## Discussion Questions

Q. How did Jon feel at first?

A. He was very scared and worried.

Q. How did he feel in the end?

A. He felt calm and knew that God, and his parents were taking good care of him.

**LEADER TIP:** Print out the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" and teach it to the kids!

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Nechama Leibowitz

(September 3, 1905 – April 12, 1997)

Nechama Leibowitz was born in Riga, educated in Berlin, and moved to Israel in 1930. She taught for many years at the Mizrahi Women Teachers Seminary, at Tel Aviv University, and at numerous other schools, including Hesder yeshivot. In 1942 she began to distribute pages of questions on the weekly parsha, and over the years the “Pages,” which became her trademark, reached increasingly wider audiences. Leibowitz was a frequent radio commentator on the Israel Broadcasting System, and she was awarded the Israel Prize for Education in 1956. She died in Jerusalem in 1997.



**LEADER TIP:** Not only did Nechama Leibowitz have a strong passion and love for learning and teaching Torah, but she used her own creative and interesting ways to spread that passion and love. What kind of things do you like to learn about? In what ways can learning be more fun and enjoyable?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Birchot HaShachar

***Boruch... Sheh-ahsa Li Kol Tzarki.***

**"Blessed are You... Who has provided me my every need."**

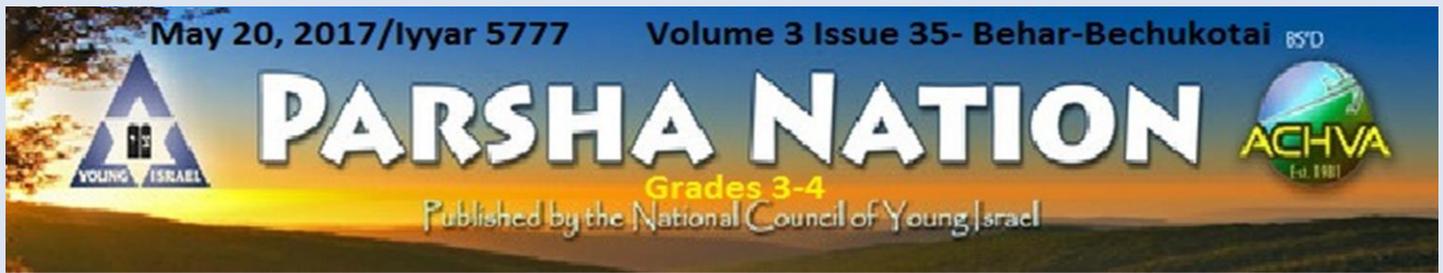
**He provided me with my every need- expresses two foundation stones of a Jew's faith. First, that all we have comes from Hashem. Second, the blessing reminds us that Hashem leaves nothing out of His provision for us. "Every need" required for us to succeed at our Hashem-given mission in life is provided to us by Hashem. It means that Hashem has given each of us exactly what we need to live the lives we are meant to live. Therefore, if Hashem has not provided you with a particular benefit, it is by definition not something you need for your spiritual growth.**

***Boruch... Ozer Yisroel Bigevura.***

**"Blessed are You... Who girds Israel with might."**

**"Gird" what's a gird? It's really a play on words. "Gird" means belt. It also means to protect. Just like a belt holds up your pants, *Hashem* is the protector and supporter of Israel's strength. Hashem constantly surrounds us. He girds His black belt on us, and gives us more strength than we ever thought we could have. When we feel weak and unstable, He gives us the extra push that we need to go on. Don't underestimate yourself. Because with Hashem's strength, we can do anything. We just need to recognize it.**

**LEADER TIP:** You can play different trust games such as "The Trust Fall" to emphasize the point of Hashem always being there for us.



## BECHUKOTAI REVIEW

### Bechukotai Review

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we will be successful in our battles and **victorious** over armies much larger than ours

and **G-d** will be with us.

But, then the Torah tells us that if the people don't keep the commandments, and forget about their agreement with G-d, then many unfortunate things will happen. But even if G-d is angry at the Jews and must punish them, he will never **forget** or abandon them.

The last thing we learn in the Parshah is how to calculate the **value** of different types of **gifts** that people promise to G-d.

**LEADER TIP:** This week we read the *tochacha*, which is about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don't listen to the Torah. We read it in a low voice. When explaining the parsha, use a soft voice as well and explain why!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS

1. To what do the words "*bechukotai telechu*" (walk in My statutes) refer?
2. What is the reward for observing the mitzvot of the Torah? What is the correct time for rain? Why?
3. What is one of the most important berachot?
4. How do we know that klal Yisrael have more strength when many people do the Mitzvot than when a few do them?
5. What mitzvah is given immediately after the tochachah (rebuke)?
6. What is Eruchin?
7. What is temurah?
8. Can one switch an animal which has a mum for an animal without a mum?
9. What happens if you do this?
10. Who decides the value of a house that a Jew gives to hekdesch?
11. How much does the owner have to pay if he wants to redeem it from hekdesch?
12. How much does one pay if he wants to redeem his maser?
13. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
14. Why does the Torah say in 26:46 "*Torot*" (plural) and not "*Torah*" (singular)?
15. Where must "*ma'aser sheini*" be eaten?

## ANSWERS

1. Laboring in Torah learning.
2.
  - a. Rain in its time
  - b. When people aren't outside (like Friday night)
3. Shalom (peace)
4. 5 pursue 100 (1:20 ratio), 100 pursue 10000 (1:100 ratio)
5. Eruchin
6. This means that if a person pledges to donate "his value" to the Beit Hamikdash, then he must contribute a certain amount, depending on his gender and age.
7. Switching one animal in place for a hekdesch animal.
8. NO
9. Both animals become holy.
10. Kohen
11. He should add a fifth
12. Add a fifth
13. 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 *shemita* and *yovel* years.
14. To teach that both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah were given to Moshe on Har Sinai.
15. In Jerusalem

**LEADER TIP:** As opposed to screaming out the answers, make the kids whisper them!

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** In this week's parsha we read the *tochacha*. The *tochacha* is where Hashem tells us about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don't follow the rules. Right after we read the *tochacha*, the Torah discusses the laws pertaining to the values of people in various stages of their lives if they are excited to donate to the sanctuary. Why is it that these seemingly opposite messages are written one after another? We will discuss the reason in this activity.

## **ACTIVITY:** "BINGO!"

Prepare a number of bingo boards using whatever theme you'd like (sports, chagim, parsha, entertainment, all of the above, or any other things you'd like. There are plenty of sites online to make them). You can also use the classic bingo boards with numbers, although if you use more fun categories you can make it more exciting than just calling out letters and numbers.

Hand out pieces for the kids to be able to cover a spot when they get it right. Have the group leader ask questions where the answer is the "bingo square". For example, this item is what we put on top of our sukkahs... SCHACH! Keep playing until someone gets five boxes in a row. The first person to get five in a row wins! You can keep the group leaders as the ones calling out the "words", or you can let the person who wins become the "caller".

If you want to spice things up, give each kid a bunch of pieces of candy or coins or something they'd be excited to have. If they get five in a row and win the game, they get a certain amount of extra pieces for their taking. Once the round ends, whoever didn't get five in a row, has to give back a certain amount of pieces to the group leader.

**DISCUSSION:** After reading the *tochacha* and the terrible things that will happen if we don't follow the Torah, one may lose all sense of his personal worth. How can he feel that his life has any value if such disastrous and dreadful predictions threaten him?

Hence the Torah sends a word of encouragement. Every person has value. The *tochacha* is a declaration of what will happen to him for disregarding the Torah, but it does not diminish the value of a person. We must all live up to the potential we are granted when we are born. Everyone is different and everyone is obligated to live up to his own promise.

In this game, it makes no difference how many bingo spots we don't get, nor does it make a difference if we get places on the board that don't connect in a row. No matter what, we still can always have a chance to win the game. Even if we get "punished" for the mistakes we've made, and we have to give

back our pieces, Hashem still loves us and will give us another chance. We all make mistakes, no one is perfect, we're human. It's important to remember that no matter what flaws we have, no matter what mistakes we make, we still always have an opportunity to be the best people we can and make Hashem proud.

**LEADER TIP:** Especially as young kids, sometimes we don't recognize the true value we have and importance we really play in the world. Compliment and point out good qualities of each kid and make them feel good and special. Not only that, but explain to them the importance they have in making the shul such an amazing place as well.

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** 'Don't worry, be happy!' is the Torah way of living. In this week's Torah portion (25:19) God assures us that He's always watching over us, and even when things look tough, we don't have to be afraid. Once we realize that God is like a loving, caring parent to us, we will truly be happy - and not worry.

## LOST AND FOUND

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What should I do? Jon thought, nervously. Maybe my family is already on the other side of the park! Maybe they've forgotten all about me and left for home! He turned, looking this way and that.

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And since He's always watching you, you never have to worry." 'Never have to worry'... Maybe it was true... Maybe he really wasn't alone?

Still feeling tense, but a lot calmer than a moment ago, Jon realized his parents were certainly trying to find him and the best thing to do was to wait where he was and...

"Jonathan!"

The boy turned to see his father's concerned but happy face.

"Didn't you hear us calling you?"

The relieved boy shook his head.

"And you didn't see us waving?"

"Uh, uh. I just saw a lot of people."

"We were so close by, I was sure you could still see us," his dad said softly, putting his comforting hand on his son's shoulder. "I hope at least you weren't too worried and realized you were being watched?"

"Sure." The boy nodded and happily taking his father's hand. Why did he have to worry, when he was being watched by them -- and by God.

## Discussion Questions

Q. What life-lesson do you think Jon learned that day?

A. When he first lost sight of his parents at the fairground, he panicked. But he came to realize that God was watching over him and he didn't have to let his worries get the best of him.

Q. Is there ever a good reason to be worried?

A. Sometimes, we can hear about or even be in situations that are difficult and in such cases, it's normal to feel tense and concerned. But even then, we can realize that worrying doesn't help us in any way and remember that God is still with us and taking care of us.

Have you ever felt that God was watching and taking care of you?

**LEADER TIP:** Print out the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" and teach it to the kids!

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Leibowitz's “Pages” were translated into many languages and reached students and educators alike around the world. They were later collected into book form and published as *Studies in the Weekly Sidra and Studies in Bereshit* (with similar volumes for the other books of the Torah). She is recognized as one of the leading teachers of the Torah of the twentieth century, as well as a role model for Orthodox women who are professional Jewish scholars and teachers.

**LEADER TIP:** Not only did Nechama Leibowitz have a strong passion and love for learning and teaching Torah, but she used her own creative and interesting ways to spread that passion and love. What kind of things do you like to learn about? Are there ways learning can be more fun and enjoyable?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Birchot HaShachar

***Boruch... Sheh-ahsa Li Kol Tzarki.***

**"Blessed are You... Who has provided me my every need."**

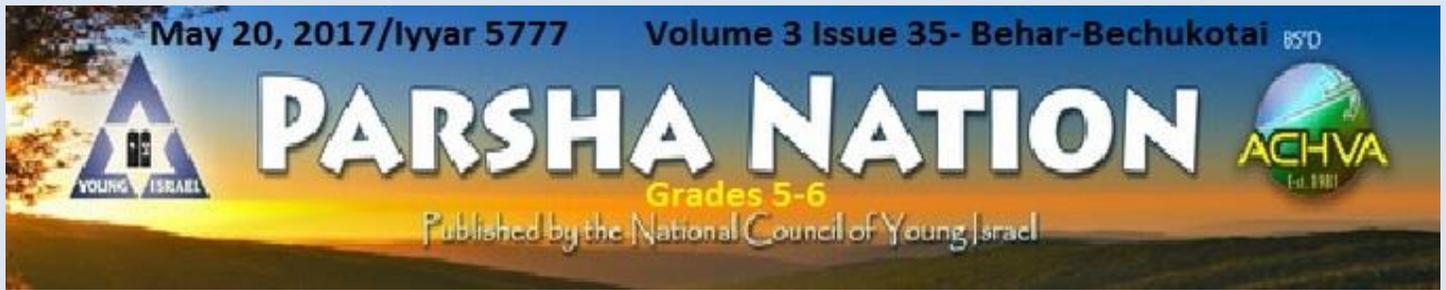
**He provided me with my every need- expresses two foundation stones of a Jew's faith. First, that all we have comes from Hashem. Second, the blessing reminds us that Hashem leaves nothing out of His provision for us. "Every need" required for us to succeed at our Hashem-given mission in life is provided to us by Hashem. It means that Hashem has given each of us exactly what we need to live the lives we are meant to live. Therefore, if Hashem has not provided you with a particular benefit, it is by definition not something you need for your spiritual growth.**

***Boruch... Ozer Yisroel Bigevura.***

**"Blessed are You... Who girds Israel with might."**

**"Gird" what's a gird? It's really a play on words. "Gird" means belt. It also means to protect. Just like a belt holds up your pants, Hashem is the protector and supporter of Israel's strength. Hashem constantly surrounds us. He girds His black belt on us, and gives us more strength than we ever thought we could have. When we feel weak and unstable, He gives us the extra push that we need to go on. Don't underestimate yourself. Because with Hashem's strength, we can do anything. We just need to recognize it.**

**LEADER TIP:** You can play different trust games such as "The Trust Fall" to emphasize the point of Hashem always being there for us.



## BECHUKOTAI REVIEW

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we will have **peace** and security in the land

no wild **beasts** or **armies** will pass through the land

we will be successful in our battles and **victorious** over armies much larger than ours

and **G-d** will be with us.

But, then the Torah tells us that if the people don't keep the commandments, and forget about their agreement with G-d, then many unfortunate things will happen. But even if G-d is angry at the Jews and must punish them, he will never **forget** or abandon them.

The last thing we learn in the Parshah is how to calculate the **value** of different types of **gifts** that people promise to G-d.

**LEADER TIP:** This week we read the *tochacha*, which is about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don't listen to the Torah. We read it in a low voice. When explaining the parsha, use a soft voice as well and explain why!

# PARSHA QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS

1. To what do the words "*bechukotai telechu*" (walk in My statutes) refer?
2. What is the reward for observing the mitzvot of the Torah? What is the correct time for rain? Why?
3. What is one of the most important berachot?
4. How do we know that klal Yisrael have more strength when many people do the Mitzvot than when a few do them?
5. What are the seven steps which cause a person to stray from Hashem?
6. What mitzvah is given immediately after the tochachah (rebuke)?
7. What is Eruchin?
8. What is temurah?
9. Can one switch an animal which has a mum for an animal without a mum?
10. What happens if you do this?
11. Who decides the value of a house that a Jew gives to hekdesch?
12. How much does the owner have to pay if he wants to redeem it from hekdesch?
13. How much does one pay if he wants to redeem his maser?
14. What is the blessing of "*v'achaltem lachmechem l'sova*" (and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction)?
15. What is meant by the verse "and a sword will not pass through your land?"
16. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
17. Why does the Torah say in 26:46 "*Torot*" (plural) and not "*Torah*" (singular)?
18. Where must "*ma'aser sheini*" be eaten?
19. When a person redeems "*ma'aser sheini*" what happens to the food? What happens to the redemption money?
20. How does a person tithe his animals?

## ANSWERS

1. Laboring in Torah learning.
2.
  - a. Rain in its time
  - b. When people aren't outside (like Friday night)
3. Shalom (peace)
4. 5 pursue 100 (1:20 ratio), 100 pursue 10000 (1:100 ratio)
5.
  - a. Not learning Torah
  - b. Stop doing mitzvot
  - c. Be upset with others doing mitzvot
  - d. Hate the Rabbis
  - e. Prevent others from being observant
  - f. Deny that Hashem gave mitzvot
  - g. Deny the existence of Hashem
6. Eruchin
7. This means that if a person pledges to donate "his value" to the Beit Hamikdash, then he must contribute a certain amount, depending on his gender and age.
8. Switching one animal in place for a hekdesch animal.
9. NO
10. Both animals become holy.
11. Kohen
12. He should add a fifth
13. Add a fifth
14. You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.
15. No foreign army will travel through your land on their way to a different country.
16. 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 *shemita* and *yovel* years.
17. To teach that both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah were given to Moshe on Har Sinai.
18. In Jerusalem
19. The food becomes permissible to him outside of Jerusalem. The redemption money must be brought to Jerusalem and used to purchase food to be eaten there.
20. He passes them through a door individually and every tenth animal he marks with a rod smeared with red dye.

**LEADER TIP:** As opposed to screaming out the answers, make the kids whisper them!

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** In this week's parsha we read the *tochacha*. The *tochacha* is where Hashem tells us about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don't follow the rules. Right after we read the *tochacha*, the Torah discusses the laws pertaining to the values of people in various stages of their lives if they are excited to donate to the sanctuary. Why is it that these seemingly opposite messages are written one after another? We will discuss the reason in this activity.

## **ACTIVITY:** "BINGO!"

Prepare a number of bingo boards using whatever theme you'd like (sports, chagim, parsha, entertainment, all of the above, or any other things you'd like. There are plenty of sites online to make them). You can also use the classic bingo boards with numbers, although if you use more fun categories you can make it more exciting than just calling out letters and numbers.

Hand out pieces for the kids to be able to cover a spot when they get it right. Have the group leader ask questions where the answer is the "bingo square". For example, this item is what we put on top of our sukkahs... SCHACH! Keep playing until someone gets five boxes in a row. The first person to get five in a row wins! You can keep the group leaders as the ones calling out the "words", or you can let the person who wins become the "caller".

Once you play an introduction round of simple asking questions to get the answer, turn the game into "Bingo Charades". In this version, the "caller" isn't allowed to use his/her voice at all. They must act out the object/action without using any words or sounds. Make sure to set a time limit to each square so it doesn't get out of hand.

If you want to spice things up, give each kid a bunch of pieces of candy or coins or something they'd be excited to have. If they get five in a row and win the game, they get a certain amount of extra pieces for their taking. Once the round ends, whoever didn't get five in a row, has to give back a certain amount of pieces to the group leader.

Additionally, to spice things up even more, let the winner of the round pick someone who must get up and either share something embarrassing about themselves or do an embarrassing challenge. If it's a small enough group, make everyone do the embarrassing challenge/admit something embarrassing.

**DISCUSSION:** After reading the *tochacha* and the terrible things that will happen if we don't follow the Torah, one may lose all sense of his personal worth. How can he feel that his life has any value if such disastrous and dreadful predictions threaten him?

Hence the Torah sends a word of encouragement. Every person has value. The *tochacha* is a declaration of what will happen to him for disregarding the Torah, but it does not diminish the value of a person. We must all live up to the potential we are granted when we are born. Everyone is different and everyone is obligated to live up to his own promise.

In this game, it makes no difference how many bingo spots we don't get, nor does it make a difference if we get places on the board that don't connect in a row. No matter what, we still can always have a chance to win the game. Even if we get "punished" for the mistakes we've made, and we have to give back our pieces, Hashem still loves us and will give us another chance. The idea behind "embarrassing" someone is to teach the kids that we all make mistakes and we shouldn't put ourselves down because of the mistakes we've made or the things we'd be embarrassed about. We all make mistakes, no one is perfect, we're human. It's important to remember that no matter what flaws we have, no matter what mistakes we make, we still always have an opportunity to be the best people we can and make Hashem proud.

**LEADER TIP:** Especially as young kids, sometimes we don't recognize the true value we have and importance we really play in the world. Compliment and point out good qualities of each kid and make them feel good and special. Not only that, but explain to them the importance they have in making the shul such an amazing place as well.

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** 'Don't worry, be happy!' is the Torah way of living. In this week's Torah portion (25:19) God assures us that He's always watching over us, and even when things look tough, we don't have to be afraid. Once we realize that God is like a loving, caring parent to us, we will truly be happy - and not worry.

## LOST AND FOUND

Jon could hear his heart pounding even over the blaring loudspeaker music as he looked out into the crowded fairgrounds. While most people around him were smiling and having fun, he was panicking, because even though he was just with them, now his family was nowhere in sight!

Meanwhile...

"Will you look at that slowpoke!" huffed Maya, pointing at Jon, standing 20 feet behind them down the fairground lane. "Dad, it's not fair. We all want to go on to the next exhibit and Jon's holding us up. Can't we just move on?"

"You know, Maya, your brother just moves at a different pace than you do," her father said. "You know the rule. Mom and I have to be able to keep our eyes on all of you at once. But, I agree, it is about time to move on... Jon!" he called out, waving at the boy who was looking in their direction, "Come on, it's time to move on."

"Jon! If you don't come right this minute, I'm eating your whole cotton candy!" Maya added, certain that would get her brother chugging their way faster than a bullet train. But it didn't.

What should I do? Jon thought, nervously. Maybe my family is already on the other side of the park! Maybe they've forgotten all about me and left for home! He turned, looking this way and that.

"Hey, why did Jon just turn around the other way?" little Amy asked. "Doesn't he want to come?"

"You know...even though we can see him, I don't think he can see us. And the music must be too loud for him to hear us calling him," their father said. After making sure their mom was safely watching Amy and Maya, he began jogging Jon's way.

This is terrible! This is horrible! I'll be stuck here all my life -- alone! Jon shuddered.

The music was playing on the loudspeaker, "Don't worry--be happy!" the song was singing. Though Jon was way too scared to be paying much attention to tunes, the words did remind him of something his dad had once said to him: "When God is watching you, there's nothing to worry about."

And since He's always watching you, you never have to worry." 'Never have to worry'... Maybe it was true... Maybe he really wasn't alone?

Still feeling tense, but a lot calmer than a moment ago, Jon realized his parents were certainly trying to find him and the best thing to do was to wait where he was and...

"Jonathan!"

The boy turned to see his father's concerned but happy face.

"Didn't you hear us calling you?"

The relieved boy shook his head.

"And you didn't see us waving?"

"Uh, uh. I just saw a lot of people."

"We were so close by, I was sure you could still see us," his dad said softly, putting his comforting hand on his son's shoulder. "I hope at least you weren't too worried and realized you were being watched?"

"Sure." The boy nodded and happily taking his father's hand. Why did he have to worry, when he was being watched by them -- and by God.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Q. Does worrying ever solve anything?

A. Not only doesn't it ever solve anything, but it causes many problems of its own. It can negatively affect a person's health and make it hard to think clearly, which is essential for effective problem solving'

Q. What is the difference if any between 'worry' and 'concern'?

A. Although the words are similar, they are worlds apart. Worry is just an ineffective waste of emotional energy--feeling anxious but unfocused on finding solutions. Concern is recognizing that a situation might be difficult and mobilizing ones inner and outer resources to handle it in the most effective way.

Have you ever felt that God was watching and taking care of you?

**LEADER TIP:** Print out the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" and teach it to the kids!

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# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Nechama Leibowitz

(September 3, 1905 – April 12, 1997)

Nechama Leibowitz was born in Riga, educated in Berlin, and moved to Israel in 1930. She taught for many years at the Mizrahi Women Teachers Seminary, at Tel Aviv University, and at numerous other schools, including Hesder yeshivot. In 1942 she began to distribute pages of questions on the weekly parsha, and over the years the “Pages,” which became her trademark, reached increasingly wider audiences. Leibowitz was a frequent radio commentator on the Israel Broadcasting System, and she was awarded the Israel Prize for Education in 1956. She died in Jerusalem in 1997. Although appointed professor at Tel Aviv University in 1968 and recognized publicly on numerous occasions, Leibowitz, known simply as “Nechama” to her students, preferred the title of teacher to other titles. Her approach to Tanach was an active one, and through her thought-provoking questions, she demanded that her students adopt a similar active role towards the text. For many years, Leibowitz's “Pages” consisted only of questions, and it was only because many students requested that she later agreed to publish answers along with the questions, yet still adding additional questions for further study. Her interpretations reflect her huge knowledge of traditional and modern Tanach commentaries, and display a sensitivity to the religious, literary, and psychological meanings of the text. She tried to infuse her students with a love of the Torah as well as the belief that its levels of meanings were to be explored by its readers.



Leibowitz's "Pages" were translated into many languages and reached students and educators alike around the world. They were later collected into book form and published as *Studies in the Weekly Sidra and Studies in Bereshit* (with similar volumes for the other books of the Torah). She is recognized as one of the leading teachers of the Torah of the twentieth century, as well as a role model for Orthodox women who are professional Jewish scholars and teachers.

**LEADER TIP:** Not only did Nechama Lebowitz have a strong passion and love for learning and teaching Torah, but she used her own creative and interesting ways to spread that passion and love. What kind of things do you like to learn about? Is there ways learning can be more fun and enjoyable?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Birchot HaShachar

***Boruch... Sheh-ahsa Li Kol Tzarki.***

**"Blessed are You... Who has provided me my every need."**

He provided me with my every need- expresses two foundation stones of a Jew's faith. First, that all we have comes from Hashem. Second, the blessing reminds us that Hashem leaves nothing out of His provision for us. "Every need" required for us to succeed at our Hashem-given mission in life is provided to us by Hashem. It means that Hashem has given each of us exactly what we need to live the lives we are meant to live. Therefore, if Hashem has not provided you with a particular benefit, it is by definition not something you need for your spiritual growth.

***Boruch... Ozer Yisroel Bigevura.***

**"Blessed are You... Who girds Israel with might."**

"Gird" what's a gird? It's really a play on words. "Gird" means belt. It also means to protect. Just like a belt holds up your pants, *Hashem* is the protector and supporter of Israel's strength. Hashem constantly surrounds us. He girds His black belt on us, and gives us more strength than we ever thought we could have. When we feel weak and unstable, He gives us the extra push that we need to go on. Don't underestimate yourself. Because with Hashem's strength, we can do anything. We just need to recognize it.

**LEADER TIP:** You can play different trust games such as "The Trust Fall" to emphasize the point of Hashem always being there for us.

## This Week in Jewish History

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1948

### **Kfar Etzion Massacre**

The Kfar Etzion massacre refers to a massacre that took place after a two-day battle between Jewish settlers and soldiers of Kibbutz Kfar Etzion and a combined force of the Arab Legion and Arab villagers, on May 13, 1948, the day before the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Of the 129 Haganah soldiers and Jewish combatant kibbutzniks who died during the defence of the settlement, Martin Gilbert states that fifteen were murdered on surrendering.

Controversy surrounds the responsibility and role of the Arab Legion in the killing of those who surrendered. The official Israeli version maintains that the settlers and soldiers were massacred by villagers and the Arab legion as they were surrendering. The Arab Legion version states that it arrived too late to prevent the villagers' onslaught, which was motivated by a desire to revenge the massacre of Deir Yassin, and the destruction of one of their villages several months earlier. The surrendering fighters are said to have assembled in a courtyard, only to be suddenly fired upon, and

that many died on the spot, while most of those who managed to flee were

hunted down and killed.

Four prisoners survived the massacre and were transferred to Transjordan. Immediately following the surrender on May 13, the kibbutz was looted and razed to the ground. The members of the three other kibbutzim of the Gush Etzion surrendered the next day and were taken as POWs to Jordan. The bodies of the victims were left unburied until, one and a half year later, the Jordanian government allowed Shlomo Goren to collect the remains, which were then interred at Mount Herzl. The survivors of the Etzion Bloc were housed in former Arab houses in Jaffa.

### ***FIND...***

- Vayikra
- Tzav
- Shmini
- Tazria
- Metzora
- Acharei Mot
- Kedoshim
- Emor
- Behar
- Bechukotai

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

- 33rd of the 54; last of 10 in Vayikra
- Written on 131 lines in a Sefer Torah
- 5 parshiyot; 3 open, 2 closed
- 78 p'sukim, ranks 46th (7th)
- 1013 words, ranks 47th (7th)
- 3992 letters, ranks 47th (7th)
- B'chukotai contains 12 mitzvot; 7 positive, 5 prohibitions
- The Book of Vayikra is written on 36.5 of the Torah's 245 columns; it contains 10 sedras, 859 p'sukim, 11950 words, 44790 letters, and 247 mitzvot (95 pos. 152 prohibitions)

## TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### HOW MANY PLANT SPECIES ARE THERE AT THE JERUSALEM BOTANICAL GARDENS?

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!

- **Polar bears are left handed.**
- **A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.**
- **An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.**
- **The longest recorded flight of a chicken is thirteen seconds.**

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

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

#### Parsha Points to Ponder...

We read this week what is known as the Tochacha, dire warning of the evil and misfortunes that will befall the Jewish people in the Land of Israel if they abandon the Torah and do not follow its practice. After all these dreadful and disastrous tragic events befall the country and the Jews do not repent, the Torah goes a step further and warns that the cities will be destroyed and enemies will inhabit the land.

The Torah warns that the land would become desolate: וְנִשְׁמְמוּ אֲשֵׁרֵי אֹיְבֵיכֶם הַיְשָׁבִים בָּהּ, "...and your foes who dwell upon it will be desolate." (Lev. 26,32) Rashi, quoting the Sifra (BeChukotai 2) maintains that this statement is a kind benefit for the Jews. The land will be so desolate that no enemy will be able to prosper on it.

History has proven this to be true. All the conquerors of Israel throughout the ages, and there were many, were never successful in making the land flourish. The land was a barren expanse for centuries with very few people living on it. It was only when the Jews started coming back, and started rebuilding it, did it start thriving and prospering.

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