

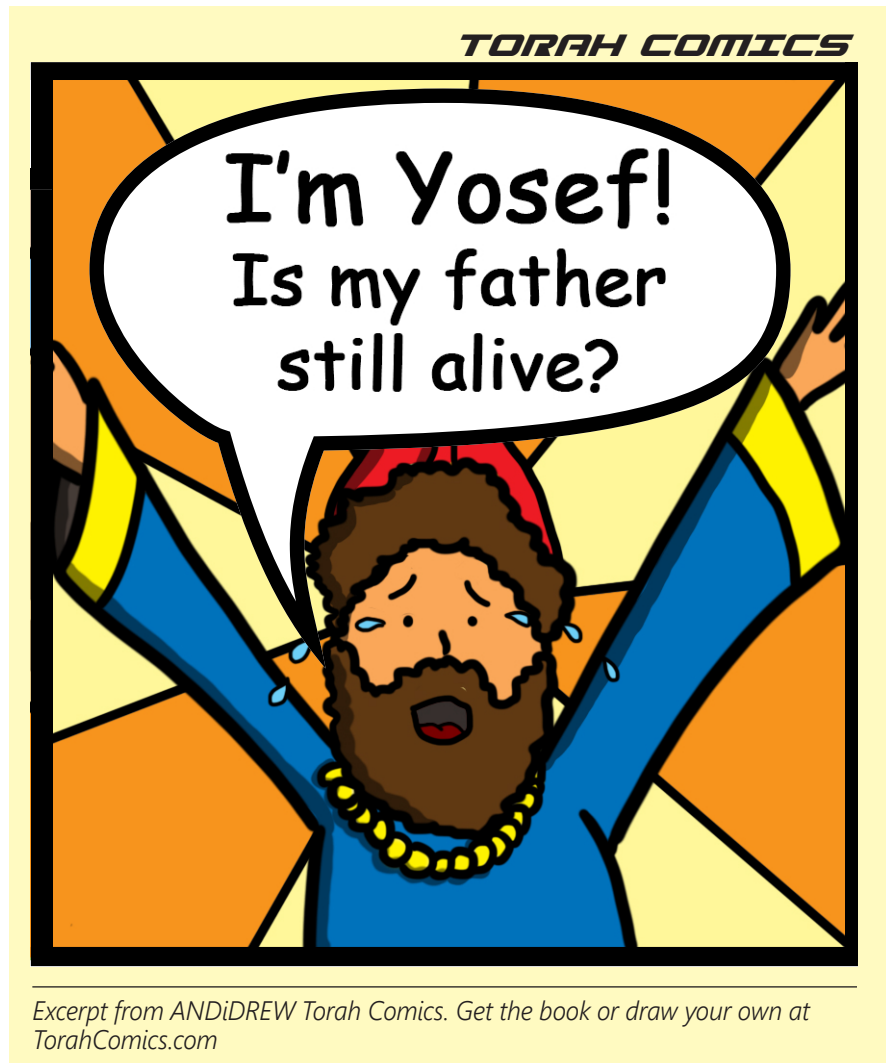
## Vayigash Wrap-Up

by Sammy Schaechter

At the end of last week's Parsha, Yosef demanded that Binyamin stay behind in Egypt as his slave. This week's Parsha starts off with Yehudah begging Yosef to let Binyamin go back to his father in Canaan since Yaakov was so hesitant to send Binyamin in the first place being he was his only remaining son from Rachel. Yehudah explained to Yosef that he took personal responsibility for Binyamin that he would return safe and sound and requested that he stay as a slave instead of Binyamin. At this point, Yosef couldn't hold up the act any longer. He asked all the Egyptians to leave the room, and he revealed himself to his brothers. "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" Yosef asked. He then comforted

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Yaakov that Yosef was still alive and ruling over Egypt and together (70 in total) they all headed to Egypt. Yaakov and Yosef are reunited after 22 years. On his way to Egypt,

them, and asked them not to be upset or blame each other about selling him as a slave. Yosef told his brothers to go back to Canaan and bring Yaakov and the rest of their families back to Egypt where Yosef would give them food until the famine ends. The brothers went back to Canaan loaded with tons of gifts from Paroh and Yosef. They told

Yaakov got a promise from Hashem not to worry, that Hashem will make of him a great nation and He would go down with them to Egypt and bring them up again. Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Paroh gives Yaakov's family the abundant county of Goshen to settle.

### Among the Poor

*I am Yosef your brother whom you sold to Egypt (45:4)*

**R'**Akiva once went to the market to sell a precious pearl. Along the way he met a poor, unfortunate person dressed in rags who always sat in the beis knessess amongst the poor.

How surprised R' Akiva was when that poor man approached him, gazed at the precious stone and said, "I want to buy that!" When he noticed R' Akiva's astonished look, he added, "Come along home with me. I will pay for the stone when we get there."

R' Akiva was certain that the man was playing a joke on him. How could such a ragged person have the means to buy such a precious gem?

Nevertheless, he followed him. His house was a huge mansion. When they approached it, the servants came out to greet their master. They carried out a golden chair, placed him upon it and began washing his feet.

The ragged man said to them, "Give R' Akiva the price he is asking for his gem, then set a table for us."

R' Akiva now understood that the man was not poor at all. On the contrary, he was very wealthy indeed!

After they had eaten, R' Akiva turned to his host and asked, "Why do you degrade yourself, going around in rags and sitting among the poor?"

The man replied, "R' Akiva, it says:

"Man is compared to vapor; his days are like a passing shadow." I am well aware that money has no lasting power and cannot accompany a person after death. Thus I realize that keeping company with the downtrodden and the miserable is good for me. It prevents me from boasting about the wealth which Hashem has granted me. That way I feel akin to everyone, equal to all men. For do we not all have one Father; did not one G-d create each of us? Is it not better for me to sit among the poor than to be boastful, sin and end up in gehennom? Hashem despises the haughty."

R' Akiva's eyes lit up at this explanation and he left the magnificent home after praising and blessing his host.

## TALES OF TZADIKIM

### The Power of Good News

*And the spirit of Yaakov, their father, was then revived (45:27)*

**T**he Ziditchover Rebbe's grandson lay ill. Everyone was praying for him, all the sons and grandsons of the Rebbe. Nevertheless his condition grew worse from day to day. R' Sender Lipa, the Rebbe's first-born and the child's father, was distraught.

The situation grew so critical that late one night the doctor feared that the end was near.

The Rebbe was accustomed to devote the late hours to holy study and prayer. No one ever disturbed the Rebbe when he secluded himself in his attic room, shutting the entire world out of his consciousness to concentrate on his sublime thoughts. But if the Rebbe was not told now — it might be too late... The Rebbe's sons — the sick boy's uncles — thought and thought. Whom could they send to disturb the Rebbe without incurring his wrath? They finally decided to send Yehudah

Tzvi, who later grew up to be the famous Doliner Rebbe, the Rebbe's favorite grandson.

With a small lantern in his hand, the lad climbed up the narrow staircase leading to the attic where his grandfather secluded himself. When he reached the door, he hesitated and then coughed.

The Rebbe heard, rose and went to open the door. "Nu?" he asked.

Little Yehudah Tzvi beamed up at his saintly grandfather, his cherubic face aglow. "I have come to tell you good news, Zeide! Your grandson is feeling better! But you still must pray for his complete recovery!"

The Rebbe beamed with joy and motioned to the boy to enter his study. He then went over to a cupboard and took out some herbs. He put them in a small paper bag and handed it to the boy. "Tell your aunt to boil this up into a tea and give it to the patient while it

is still hot. It will make him sweat and he will get better!"

The little boy thanked him and rushed out of the room, down the stairs and straight to his uncle, R' Sender Lipa, with his instructions. The tea was made and given to the patient, spoon by spoon. Within hours he had passed the crisis and recovered completely!

The next morning R' Sender Lipa went to his father to tell him that his son had recovered.

The tzaddik looked sternly at his son and said, "You can learn a lesson in chasidus from your nephew, Yehudah Tzvi! You, with your long face and worried looks, only increased my own anxiety and suffering. But that little boy knew exactly what to do to change my mood to a happy one. And once my spirits were lifted I felt divine intuition returning to me and I knew at once what to do to bring about the patient's recovery!"

### Following Yaakov's Example

*And Yosef harnessed his carriage and went up to greet his father Yisrael (46:29)*

**R'** David of Lelov, who lived in Jerusalem, sent his son abroad. He knew that it was for his son's own good that he spend a few years in Poland studying Torah. Still, those years dragged on endlessly for the doting father.

Finally, the time came for the son to return to his father. Both awaited the reunion with aching, yearning hearts. The entire city rejoiced with the Rebbe over the imminent return of the young man.

Then one day he was finally there! He

reached Jerusalem towards evening and rushed to his father's beis medrash. The Rebbe did not give his son more than one fleeting glance, then turned to the baal tefillah and nodded that he begin the maariv prayers.

It was only when the prayers were over that the father finally turned to his beloved son with a warm shalom aleichem and enveloped him in a loving embrace.

The chasidim who were present understood exactly what the Lelover Rebbe had done: he had followed the example of Yaakov Avinu. Yaakov, when

he met with his beloved Yosef whom he had not seen for twenty-two years and whom he had thought to be dead, did not fall upon his son's neck but, says the Midrash, recited the Shema. Yaakov wished to capture the love which welled up in him when he saw his son and dedicate it wholly to Hashem. He wished to show that his love for Hashem was even greater than that for his beloved son, to bear out the verse of the Shema — "And you shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart..."

R' David of Lelov wished to follow this very same example.

## TALES OF TZADIKIM

### A Speedy Peace-making

*And I will make them into one nation in the land (Haftorah Parashas Vayigash, Yeehezkel 37)*

**T**here was a fierce controversy raging in a Jewish community. The entire town was split down the middle. One half would not speak to the other half or if it did, it was only with harsh words and angry shouts. People from neighboring villages heard about it and were deeply concerned. What a terrible state of affairs! They rushed to R' David of Lelov, begging him to

arrange a peace settlement between the two fighting factions.

R' David took along his closest disciple, R' Yitzchak of Vorki, and traveled to the town. They reached it just in time for davening. Without even stopping to talk to anyone, they began praying along with the rest of the congregation. When they had finished praying, R' David ordered the coach and they traveled back.

R' Yitzchak was very puzzled and

asked, "Rebbe, we did not even do anything. Why didn't you stay to speak to the people? What have we accomplished? Why are we returning already?"

The Rebbe allayed his fears. "Don't worry. By uttering the words in the shemoneh esrei prayer 'Oseh shalom bimromav... — He Who makes peace in His heavens, He shall make peace amongst us and over all of Israel' — I already accomplished everything that there was to do in this city!"

## TALES OF TZADIKIM

### How to Punish

*Do not be grieved and do not be distressed that you sold me here (45:5)*

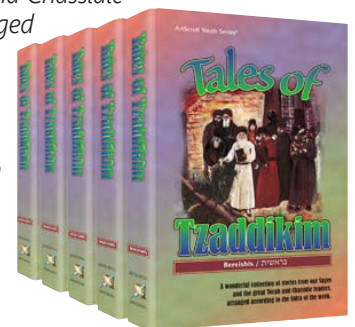
**I**t was a joyous occasion, a wedding at which many prominent rabbis were present, among them the Admorim of Trisk and of Husyatin. During the wedding a young man somehow insulted the Rebbe of Trisk. The Rebbe was willing to overlook the matter but when the Rebbe of Husyatin learned of it, he said,

"We cannot let this go by! I demand that the young man be brought to a din Torah! R' Yaakov Weidenfeld, the noted author of 'Kochav MiYaakov' should judge this case."

However, the Rebbe of Husyatin saw that the Rebbe from Trisk was not at all pleased with the turn of events.

And so, looking at the young man, who stood trembling, he held up his

**Tales of Tzadikim** by G. Matov is a wonderful collection of stories from our Sages and the great Torah and Chassidic leaders, arranged according to the Sidra. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or online at [artscroll.com](http://artscroll.com).





# PARSHA PUZZLERS

## TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

by Sammy Schaechter  
and Dovid Saleman  
Answers on page 7.

### EASY Qs

1. What did Yosef want to do with Binyamin when he "found" his goblet in his bag?
2. Who begged Yosef not to take Yosef?
3. Why was he the one to beg?
4. What did Yosef do before he revealed his identity to the brothers?
5. What was the brother's reaction to the news?
6. What did Yosef tell the brothers to do?

### CRACK THE PARSHA CODE

by Rabbi Yaakov Levine  
Answers on page 7.

1. Y approached Y to S B
2. Before Y R himself to his B, he KO everyone from the R
3. Y said 2 Y of F passed, but there are 5 Y of F left
4. When the B left to go to Y their F, Y told them to not F during the T
5. Y C on the N of B, and B C on the N of Y
6. All the B got N C, but B got 5 N C, and 300 pieces of S
7. Y sent W's to Y TO R him of the T they L
8. S B A sang to Y that Y was S A
9. Y F came to M with 70 P, and L in G
10. Y B P when he saw him
11. The B told P that they were S

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7. What did Yosef and Paroh give the brothers before they left?
8. What did Hashem promise to Yaakov on his way to Egypt?
9. How many people went down to Egypt?
10. How many years was it that Yaakov and Yosef didn't see each other?
11. What land did Paroh give Yaakov and his family?

### MEDIUM Qs

12. What did Yosef tell them when he revealed who he was?
13. What was the first question Yosef asked the brothers?
14. What bracha did Yaakov give Paroh?

### HARD Qs

15. Why was Yehuda the one to plead for Binyamin?
16. Why did Yehuda say his missing brother died?
17. What threatening words did Yehuda say to Yosef?
18. Why did G-d tell Yaakov, "Don't fear

going down to Egypt"?

19. "I will bring you up" from Egypt. To what did this allude?
20. What two things did the brothers see that helped prove that he was really Yosef?
21. Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck?
22. Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov?
23. What did Yosef mean when he said "Don't dispute on the way"?
24. What happened to Yaakov when he realized Yosef was alive?
25. What do we learn from Yosef telling his brothers "Go up to my father"?
26. According to Rashi, who was the mother of Shaul ben HaCanaanit?
27. When listing Yaakov's children, the verse refers to Rachel as "Rachel, wife of Yaakov." Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are not referred to as Yaakov's wives. Why?

### SUPER HARD Qs

28. What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram?

# PARSHA STORIES

## TALES OF TZADIKIM

# How to Punish

continued from page 3

hand and said,

"Just one minute. Let me tell you a story before you do anything hasty. There was once a similar case of a young man behaving disrespectfully to the parnasim of Ostrow. He was summoned to a din Torah before R' Yaivi.

This is how R' Yaivi settled the matter: Turning to the trustees, he said: 'You realize that this young man is poor. He has no means. If I were to fine him, he would be unable to pay up. Find some task for him, some way to serve the community. Thus he will learn the val-

ue of communal responsibility and will gain a new respect for you too!

"Here, too," the Rebbe of Husyatyn concluded, "this young man who in-

sulted the Rebbe of Trisk is penniless. How can we fine him? I suggest that instead, the Rebbe of Trisk bless him with prosperity. Then, when the bless-

ing is realized, the young man will surely appreciate his greatness and will feel all the more remorse for having been disrespectful to him!"

# PARSHA PUZZLERS

## TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

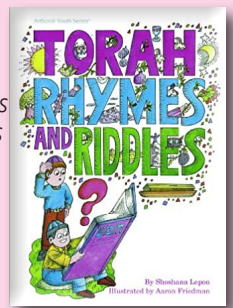
Answers on page 7.

1. To free my little brother  
Was the promise that I made.  
I spoke to Egypt's ruler  
And did not feel afraid. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I sent my servants from the room  
And wept such happy tears.  
My brothers stood before me now,  
After so many years! \_\_\_\_\_
3. Said I, "Go, bring your father,  
And your wives and children, too!"  
(Their brother saved my country.  
It's the least that I can do.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. I sang a song that Yosef lives  
And dropped some gentle clues.  
Because my grandfather is too old  
To hear such shocking news!  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. I said, "Yaakov, do not fear.  
Go to Egypt, I'll be near.  
Your sons shall grow to many men,  
And then I'll bring them back  
again." \_\_\_\_\_
6. Seventy people —  
Daughters and sons,  
Children and grandchildren  
And great-grand-ones.

All come to Egypt  
By Pharaoh's command,  
Escaping the famine  
That's dried up their land.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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# PARSHA STORIES

## STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

### Outrageous Demands

"I will have sinned to my father for all time." (Bereishis 44:32)

The book *Sipurei Chassidim* (Chasidic Tales) tells a story about R' Yosef of Turchin, the son of the Chozeh of Lublin. One day, just before the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, R' Yossel entered the beis midrash and announced, "Let me tell you a story.

"In a certain city, there lived a wealthy talmid chacham who earned his living by selling wine. One day, the rabbi of the city decided to honor this man with a visit. Seeing the rabbi approach his house, the wine merchant was overjoyed, and hastened to welcome him with every sign of respect. Then he ordered his servant to go down to the cellar and bring up a bottle of fine wine.

"Some time passed, but the servant did not reappear. The host was surprised and upset. Begging the rabbi's forgiveness, he descended to the cellar himself to see what had delayed the servant. At the entrance to the cellar, he came upon a shocking sight. Some of the wine barrels were uncovered. Others had been tipped over onto their sides, and wine was pouring from them in a steady stream. The cellar itself was a shambles, aside from the loss of his wine! There was no sign of the servant anywhere.

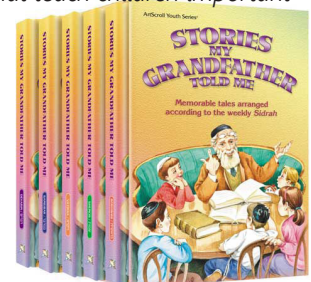
"Brokenhearted, the merchant returned upstairs and began to search for the servant who had caused all the trouble. In the end, he found the man peacefully asleep on top of the stove. When his boss shook him awake, the

servant opened one eye and brazenly said, 'I demand a raise in salary!'

"On Rosh Hashanah," concluded R' Yossel, "we are like that servant. All year long we sin and we damage Hashem's world, and on Rosh Hashanah we come before Him demanding that He inscribe us for a good life."

**Stories My Grandfather Told Me** by Zev Greenwald (Author) Libby Lazewnik (Translator) and Tova Katz (illustrator) is packed with short pleasant stories that teach children important life

lessons from the weekly Parsha. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or at [artscroll.com](http://artscroll.com).



# PARSHA STORIES

STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

## All for the Children

*"For how can I go up to my father if the youth is not with me?" (Bereishis 44:34)*

The settlement of Mevasseret Zion, near the entrance to Jerusalem, had two schools: one religious, the other secular. One year, during the season when parents traditionally register their children for school, the settlement was invaded by a group of secular activists whose goal was to eliminate the religious school. Local parents called on R' Yehudah Tzadkah, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Porat Yosef, to help them in this crucial battle for their children's spiritual lives.

One Motza'ei Shabbos, a group numbering several hundred residents gathered in a large hall to listen to important speakers from Jerusalem, including R' Yehudah Tzadkah. It was R' Yehudah who opened the assembly.

"I am Yehudah Tzadkah, of Yeshivah Porat Yosef in the Holy City. I have brought you three important men, men from all sides of the spectrum. One is the wise Yaakov Douek, a businessman by profession and a man of the world. The second is Yosef Edem, a righteous and elevated man, a chassid and an ascetic whose every blessing comes true. And the third, R' Naim Eliyahu, a teacher and school principal."

One by one, R' Yehudah introduced the speakers, who had a single message for their listeners: not to heed the call of those who agitated in favor of secular education.

But it was R' Yehudah himself who proved the most inspiring of all. He ascended the dais after the others, and spoke with such fiery conviction that his listeners' hearts were ignited as well. When he finished, emotional cries rang out in the crowded auditorium: "We are ready to follow you through fire and water! We will do whatever you tell us!"

For their precious children's education, no course was too difficult or dangerous.

The Bobover Yeshivah was in debt over its head, and anxiety over his financial difficulties was weighing heavily on the spirit of the Rebbe, R' Ben Zion. The yeshivah's administrators decided that the only course open to them was for the Bobover Rebbe himself to travel to Vizhnitz for Shabbos, in order to collect money with which to satisfy the yeshivah's creditors. On Motza'ei Shabbos, a great crowd gathered at the inn where R' Ben Zion was staying, all of whom wished to enter and present the Rebbe with their kvittels. To their surprise, R' Ben Zion sent word that he was too tired to see anyone that night. The people were obliged to return disappointed to their homes.

But instead of going to sleep, the Rebbe summoned a certain young man, the son of a Vizhnitz butcher, and had a long conversation with him.

"In a sense, I was your parents' shadchan (matchmaker)," R' Ben Zion told the youth. "When someone came to your father's father to suggest a match between your father and your mother, your grandfather became insulted. He said, 'Is it possible that I will ever agree to become connected, through this shidduch, with a butcher?' I went to your grandfather then and explained to him that the bride's father is a respected and good man, from a fine family, and that his first son-in-law is a genuine talmid chacham. I talked to him until I persuaded him, and the match went forward.

"You should know, however, that I never received a single penny for that shidduch," the Rebbe continued. "I've finally decided not to wait any longer. The time has come for the debt to be paid and I have come to collect it. The payment I require is that you walk a straight path and live in fear of Heaven."

The Rebbe continued to converse with the young man until he had ignited in the other's heart a flame of desire for holiness and piety. When his visitor had departed, R' Ben Zion sent for other youths and spoke to them as well, for

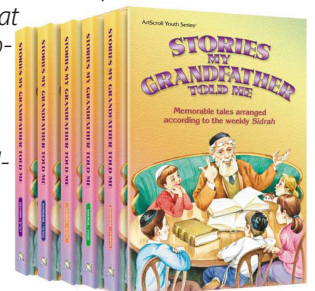
many hours. His words of rebuke overflowed from a heart filled with love and compassion.

The next day, the Rebbe again told the innkeeper that he had no strength. The innkeeper, a devoted follower who knew all about the Rebbe's financial worries, could not contain himself. "Of course the Rebbe is tired!" he exclaimed. "Yesterday, the Rebbe sent away all the householders who came with their kvittels and money for the yeshivah, with the excuse that he was tired. And then he spent the entire night talking with youngsters!"

The Rebbe knew that the innkeeper's impulsive words came from real concern and loyalty. Patiently, he explained. "Tell me this. Suppose someone owns a large factory from which he earns most of his livelihood, but he also has some small business dealings on the side. Suddenly, all sorts of business problems crop up and he lacks the time to take care of everything. What should he do? Surely we would advise him to set aside his minor concerns, and devote all his energy to running his factory, because that is his primary business and to lose that would be to lose everything.

"Those young boys are my primary 'business.' Even when I had no strength, I felt compelled to find some energy to help them uproot their evil inclination, and to bring them back to the correct path in life before it is too late. Lacking the strength to do both, I decided to put aside the smaller matter of the money."

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# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Hannah Greenebaum Solomon

January 14, 1858- December 7, 1942

Hannah Greenebaum Solomon founded the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893, the oldest active Jewish women's volunteer organization in America. She was also active in charity and the community life of Chicago. Hannah was the fourth of ten children of Sarah and Michael Greenebaum. On May 14, 1879, she married Henry Solomon and had three children Herbert, Helen and Frank. Hannah Solomon and her sister, Henriette Frank became the first Jewish members of the Chicago Women's Club. In 1890, Hannah Solomon was asked to organize a national Jewish Women's Congress. She was able to get together

many Jewish leaders and their organizations for the first such gathering in America. This Congress made this gathering a permanent organization called the National Council of Jewish Women. Their goals were to teach all Jewish women their obligations to their religion and community. Hannah Solomon was elected as the Council's first president and served until 1905 when she was made honorary president for life. Hannah Greenebaum Solomon died on December 7, 1942. Her legacy to the United States and Judaism was the establishment and the development of the National Council of Jewish Women, an outstanding Jewish women's volunteer organization.



# PUZZLERS ANSWERS

## TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

1. Keep him in Egypt as a slave
2. Yehudah
3. Because he told Yaakov that he would take full responsibility that Binyamin would return safe and sound. Yaakov couldn't lose Binyamin since he was the only remaining son of Rachel.
4. He sent all the Egyptians out of the room
5. They were shocked and silent
6. To go back to Canaan and bring back Yaakov and the rest of the family
7. Lots of money and presents including wagons
8. Not to worry going down to Egypt since He will be with him and that He will make a great nation out of Yaakov and bring him back up from Egypt
9. 70
10. 22
11. Goshen
12. He told the brothers not to fight or worry about having sold him, since it was all Hashem's doing. He needed to be there to provide them with food during the famine.
13. Is my father still alive?
14. That the Nile should overflow and irrigate the land
15. 44:32 - He was the one who took "soul" responsibility for him.
16. 44:20 - Yehuda feared that if he said his missing brother was alive, Yosef would demand to see him.
17. 44:18 - He threatened that Yosef would be
18. 46:3 - Because Yaakov was grieved to leave Eretz Canaan.
19. 46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan.
20. 45:12 - He was circumcised like they were, and he spoke lashon hakodesh.
21. 45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of Mishkan Shilo built in Yosef's territory.
22. 45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine.
23. 45:24 - He warned that if they engage in halachic disputes, they might not be alert to possible travel dangers.
24. 45:27 - His ruach hakodesh (prophetic spirit) returned.
25. 45:9 - We learn that Eretz Yisrael is higher than all other lands.
26. 46:10 - Dina bat Yaakov.
27. 46:19 - Rachel was regarded as the mainstay of the family
28. 46:6 - He traded it for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah.

## TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

1. Yehuda.
2. Yosef
3. Paroh
4. Serach bat Asher
5. Hashem
6. Yaakov's family

## PARSHA CODE

1. YEHUDA approached YOSEF to SAVE BIN-YAMIN
2. Before YOSEF REVEALED himself to his BROTHERS, he KICKED OUT everyone from the ROOM
3. YOSEF said 2 YEARS of FAMINE passed, but there are 5 YEARS of FAMINE left
4. When the BROTHERS left to go to YAAKOV their FATHER, YOSEF told them to not FIGHT during the TRIP
5. YOSEF CRIED on the NECK of BINYAMIN, and BINYAMIN CRIED on the NECK of YOSEF
6. All the BROTHERS got NEW CLOTHING, but BINYAMIN got 5 NEW CLOTHING, and 300 pieces of SILVER
7. YOSEF sent WAGONS to YAAKOV to REMIND him of the TORAH they ED
8. SERACH BAS ASHER sang to YAAKOV that YOSEF was STILL ALIVE
9. YAAKOV'S FAMILY came to MITZRAYIM with 70 PEOPLE, and LIVED in GOSHEN
10. YAAKOV BLESSED PHARAOH when he saw him
11. The BROTHERS told PHARAOH that they were SHEPHERDS

# PARSHA GAMES

## Sit Up Together

by Sammy Schaechter

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

**TYPE:** Moderate, indoor, group game

**HOW TO PLAY:** Ask all the kids to find a partner and pair up. The pairs sit on the ground with their backs to each other. What they must do is try to stand up together as one. The partners should reach behind their backs to link arms with each other. When the group leader says go, the partners try to stand up without separating. Once the pairs are able to do it, have them get in groups of three and try it. To make it

even harder, tell the kids that they aren't allowed to talk at all. See how many people they can group and stand all together without separating. This may be a little difficult for the kids at first but with the group leaders help it can be really cool and fulfilling for the kids to see what they can accomplish.

**DISCUSSION:** When Yosef sees such togetherness between the brothers, he can't help but to finally reveal his identity. We often treat others with much less respect than what they deserve. Imagine how we will feel when we see how special these people really are! When we stop to think and consider who we most need to apply more love to, many will agree that it is to those we are closest to. We should take to heart that our family members, our parents, our siblings, and our friends often receive the impact of an under-evaluation of their true worth. In these games we learn how to work together and appreciate the skills and qualities each of our friends bring to the table. When we work together appreciating each other that is when we can really accomplish anything and make the world as great of a place as it could be.

# TEFILAH TREASURES

## Shemona Esrei - Ata Chonen

Our ability to think and reason, although it happens within us, comes to us as a continuous flowing gift from Hashem. In this bracha, we praise Hashem for the gift of wisdom, then we ask Him for the ability to evaluate things and come to appropriate conclusions. The Talmud says that we can see how important understanding is since it was made the first bracha of the "request section" of weekday Shemoneh Esrei. Even before health or nourishment, we ask Hashem to give us awareness, knowledge and understanding. The Talmud says that Hashem only gives wisdom to a person who already has wisdom. We first thank Hashem for the wisdom we already have before asking Him to improve our mental abilities. We say in this bracha, "Atah chonein la'adam daas" – "You (Hashem) grace a person with knowledge." The verb "chonein" means

to give as a gift; Hashem has given every person a little bit of intelligence to start with, even though we have done nothing to deserve it. It is our job to work to increase our ability to figure things out and understand them. The Talmud tells us that in intellectual matters, effort and success go hand in hand. On Motzei Shabbat and following holidays, a version of havdalah is inserted in this bracha before we say it later with wine. Aside from the fact that Binah is the first blessing in the weekday series, havdalah perfectly reflects the theme of this bracha in that we need Hashem's gift of understanding in order to distinguish between the holiness of Shabbat and the everyday life of the other days. Interestingly, the Hebrew initials of the four brachot we say each Motzei Shabbat – besamim, yayin, ner and havdalah – actually spell "binah."

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