

# Shoftim Wrap-Up

by Sammy Schaechter

Parshat Shoftim speaks about fundamental issues regarding the leadership of the Jewish people. It starts with talking about judges, then speaks about the rules for the kings, prophets, and kohanim.

Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael to assign judges and law enforcement officers in every city. Whenever a crime is being investigated, a minimum of two witnesses is required in order to convict or punish. These judges must always judge fairly and without any bias. We are also commanded to follow the rulings of the Sanhedrin and the oral law. Moshe also tells Bnei Yisrael to appoint a king after they enter Israel. The king must write two Sifrei Torah for himself—one of which should remain with him at all times in order to remind himself to stay humble and follow Hashem’s rules.

Shoftim talks about the prohibitions against idolatry and sorcery and explanations on the creation of arei miklat, “cities of refuge”, for when someone kills accidentally. Shoftim also speaks about the rules of war: the exemption from battle for someone who just built a home, planted a vineyard, got married, or is “afraid and soft-hearted”; the requirement to offer terms of peace before attacking a city; and the prohibition against excessive destruction of something of value, demonstrated by the law that forbids to cut down a fruit tree when attacking a city.

The Parshah ends with the law of the eglah arufah—the special procedure to be followed when a person is killed by an unknown murderer and his body is found in a field. Five judges are sent to the

**LEADER TIP:**  
*Moshe assigns judges and laws to Bnei Yisrael. Together, you can come up with a list of rules and laws for your group!*

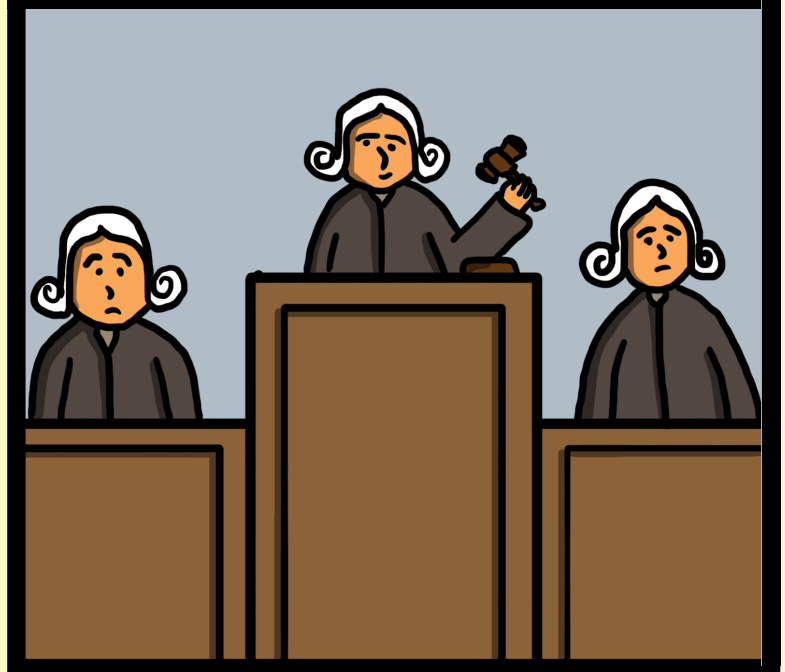
murder scene on the orders of the Sanhedrin. They measure the distance between the body and all surrounding cities to see which city is closest. Once this is determined, they make sure that the body is buried.

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## TORAH COMICS

**Judges must be fair and hear from two witnesses.**



Excerpt from ANDiDREW Torah Comics. Get the book or draw your own at [TorahComics.com](http://TorahComics.com)

### The Defender

*You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show favor to people (16:19)*

It was the rebbetzin's word against that of the maid. The wife of R' Zev of Zibariz accused her maid of having broken an expensive dish; the maid denied it.

"You broke it! You must pay the cost!"

"I did not break the dish! I refuse to pay damages for something I did not do."

Neither woman was willing to give an inch. Finally, the rebbetzin saw that they were getting nowhere and decided to take her servant to a din Torah. She put on her street clothes; her husband, promptly, put on his Shabbos suit.

"What is this?" she asked in surprise.

"I am coming along with you to the din Torah," he said.

"There is no need for that," she as-

sured him. "I know exactly what to say."

"I have no doubt about that," he said, drily. "It is the poor servant girl that I am worried about. How will she defend herself against you? Poor orphan girl, all alone in the world. Will she have the courage to stand up against you in court? I want to be there to help her out, if she needs me."

And R' Zev went to defend the Jewish maid.

### The "Urim Vetumim"

*According to the law which they shall teach you (17:11)*

When he was but a lad, R' Chaim of Sanz visited the Chozeh of Lublin. He entered the Rebbe's room with the many eager chasidim. It was crowded and, with difficulty, the little fellow squeezed himself into the small space behind the Rebbe's chair.

Suddenly, the Chozeh announced that everyone was to leave the room. All left, except for little Chaim, crouched behind the Rebbe's chair. He watched the great man's every movement, full of curiosity and wonder. The Chozeh began pacing the room, reviewing the mishnah "Eizehu mekoman," his face aglow with spirituality. Little Chaim was awestruck by the overpowering sight.

Suddenly, the Chozeh noticed the lad and smiled. He explained, "When the Beis Hamikdash still stood, it was the center for all Jewry. Anyone who had a question or needed advice would go up to Jerusalem and put his question to the urim vetumim which were in the breastplate of the kohen gadol. The engraved letters upon the jewels would light up, spelling out the answer. But now, due to our many sins, the Beis Hamikdash is destroyed and we no longer have the urim vetumim. But we have the Torah! And if we know how to look into the myriad letters of the Torah and see the holy Names of Hashem, we are able to answer those who come seeking the word of Hashem, for advice or help.

"This room was packed with Jews

who came to hear the word of Hashem. I was no longer able to see the illumination of the letters and could no longer advise them. I told them all to leave the room, so that I could learn. By doing so, my eyes would again be lit by the wisdom of the Torah.

"As you heard, I chose the familiar mishnah 'Eizehu mekoman' so that the chasidim might return quickly, receive advice and be on their way home."

Thus was R' Chaim privileged, while yet a child, to learn a secret of the power of Chasidic leaders, whose strength and divine intuition is derived directly from the light of the Torah, which, now that the Beis Hamikdash is no more, substitutes for the urim vetumim of the kohen gadol.

### Which Moshe?

*You shall not veer from the word that they shall declare to you to the right or the left (17:11)*

A local landowner once quarreled with his Jewish tenant. He became so enraged that he canceled the Jew's lease on the inn and on the lands which

he managed.

The Jew was desperate. His only means of livelihood had been cut off. How would he be able to support his family? Where would he go? What would he do? In his plight, he went to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach

Tzedek, for advice and a blessing, and poured out his heart before him.

The Rebbe listened sympathetically. When the innkeeper finished, he wrote a note and gave it to him. "This is for Reb Moshe, who lives in your town. I think that he may be able to help you."

# PARSHA STORIES

Reassured that there was still hope, the Jew took the letter and left.

Once outside, he looked at the address. The letter was to Reb Moshe Ratner. Was there not some mistake here? Had the Rebbe not confused one Moshe with another?

There were, in fact, two Reb Moshe's living in the village. One of them was nicknamed "Little Moshe" because he was short. He was a wealthy Jew who was on excellent terms with the nobility of the countryside. The other Moshe, known as "Big Moshe" for his height, was a decent person, but not especially involved in communal affairs. This man's family name was Ratner.

The Jew wondered why the Tzemach Tzedek had addressed his letter to Moshe Ratner, a man who kept mainly to himself. Could the Rebbe have made an error?

Confused and helpless, the innkeeper stood there, hesitating, wondering if he should go back in and clarify the matter. To question the Rebbe? That was impossible! To deliver the letter to Big Moshe? He was too embarrassed to do that. He, finally, decided to go consult the members of the Rebbe's household and follow their advice.

He made his way back to one of the sons of the Tzemach Tzedek, who told him, "My father did not err! Go home and follow his instructions to the letter."

The innkeeper went directly to the home of Moshe Ratner and handed him the Rebbe's letter. The latter was surprised to receive a letter from the Rebbe, but stood in awe of that holy figure and promised to do what he could.

"Go to the shed on my property," he said, "and wait. Let us see what develops. Recite Tehillim, meanwhile. Who knows, perhaps, your rescue will come through me, after all."

The innkeeper did as he was bidden. He began reciting the Tehillim, pouring his entire heart into those holy words. Tears streamed down his cheeks all the while. He prayed and prayed. One day passed, then another, but still no news, no developments.

On the third day, a magnificent coach passed by, not far from Reb Moshe Ratner's house. It became embedded in the thick mud and an axle broke. The occupants of the coach were none other than the landlord and his daughter. They sat inside the coach shivering with cold, wondering whence would come their help, but no one passed by. Night fell and still they sat there, utterly helpless. The poritz looked out the coach window, hoping to see another coach approaching, when he spied a faint light. There was a house nearby. He left the coach and went towards it. He knocked on the rickety door of the wooden shed. It was opened by the innkeeper, who stared wide-eyed at the poritz who had deprived him of his livelihood. But the landlord did not recognize him.

"Perhaps you can help me," wept the landlord, shivering. "My carriage has broken down in the deep mud."

The innkeeper aroused Reb Moshe and told him who was standing at his very doorstep. Reb Moshe invited the landlord in and offered him a hot cup of tea. The gentile first returned to the coach to fetch his freezing daughter and, together, they enjoyed Reb

Moshe's heartwarming hospitality. They remained overnight, since nothing could be done at that late hour. In the morning the carriage was soon repaired; it was ready for the journey.

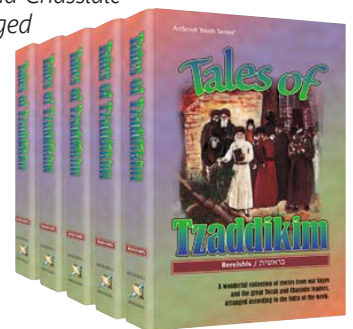
Before he took leave of his kind host, the poritz said, "I am grateful for your gracious hospitality. Please, allow me to reward you. Name your price and I will be most happy to give you the sum."

"G-d forbid!" Reb Moshe hastened to reply. "I wouldn't take any money for helping someone in need. But," he continued, "there is something which you can do, if you really want to. A friend of mine was, until recently, one of your tenants. He leased the inn that belongs to you, but, now, that you dismissed him, he has no source of income, whatsoever. His situation is truly pitiful, for he has many young children to feed. If you wish to please me, reinstate him."

"Why not? Indeed, I will tell him that he may return to the inn. In fact, if it will make you happy, I will give it to him rent-free to show you how deeply I am indebted to you for your kindness."

The innkeeper returned to his home, which the poritz gave him as an outright gift. And from then on he knew, "Never, never, question the Rebbe."

**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 & Dovid Saleman

Answers on page 7.

### EASY Qs

1. How must all judges judge?
2. How can we know if someone is a false prophet?
3. When is this done and from where do we take this calf?
4. What is needed in order to convict someone of a crime?
5. What are Edim Zomemim?
6. What must one do if he killed someone accidentally?
7. What is their special punishment?
8. What is the ceremony of Eglah Arufah?
9. From where do we take this calf?

### LEADER TIP:

If you do a raffle every week, give back everyone tickets at the end and give them a second chance to win! #recycling

10. What does bribery do to a person?

11. How should we view the king?

12. What are some practices of other nations that HaShem finds revolting?

13. When is this done?

14. What is a zaken mamrei?

15. What is the punishment and why?

16. What are some of the special mitzvot of a king?

17. How many judges were in each town?

18. How many Arei Miklat are there?

19. What sort of people could be free from going to war?

20. What is a mum and are we allowed to use an animal that has a

## CRACK THE PARSHA CODE

by Rabbi Yaakov Levine  
Answers on page 7.

1. B Y was C to A J in their cities
2. The J had to be H and cannot A any B
3. a T used for A Z is called an "A tree"
4. The P for someone who S A Z, is that he gets S
5. A Jewish K cannot have too many H, M, or W
6. a K should W 2 T and always C 1 with him
7. if someone K by mistake, he can R to an U M, and will be safe
8. the M must stay in the U M until the K G dies
9. you need a minimum of 2 W to T in C
10. someone who B a new H, plants a new V, or is E, does not have to go F in W
11. it is an A, to C down a T that G F
12. if a D B is found between 2 C, and you don't know who K him, the E of the closer C, brings an "E A"

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mum for a korban?

21. Which three mitzvot did Bnei Yisrael have to perform when they entered Eretz Yisrael?

# PARSHA PUZZLERS

## TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

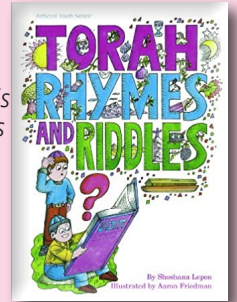
Answers on page 7

1. Honest judges must be found  
In every city, every town.  
And we make sure the people do  
What the judges tell them to.  
The \_\_\_\_\_
2. I may not marry many wives  
Or gather too much gold,  
Or buy too many horses.  
That's what I've been told.  
The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_
3. When a king first takes the throne  
He must write me for his own.  
He shall keep me by his side

- And never get puffed up with pride.  
The \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_
4. I need a partner who watched with me.  
Only then may I feel free  
To speak before a court of law  
And say exactly what I saw.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  5. Have you planted, now, a vineyard  
Or built a home that's new?  
Are you planning to get married  
And a young bride waits for you?  
Do you have fears within your heart  
That you cannot ignore?  
All of these are reasons  
You should not go out to \_\_\_\_\_

6. When you go out to battle,  
And camp around a town,  
Look to see if I give fruit  
And do not cut me down.  
A \_\_\_\_\_

**Torah Rhymes and Riddles** by Shoshana Lepon (Author) and Aaron Friedman (Illustrator) is filled with rhyming riddles that test young children's comprehension of the weekly Parsha. For more great children's Torah books, visit [artscroll.com](http://artscroll.com)



# PARSHA STORIES

## STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

### Total Concentration

*"It shall be with him, and he shall read from it all the days of his life, so that he will learn to fear Hashem, his G-d" (Devarim 17:19)*

**R'**Zelmaleh, brother of R' Chaim of Volozhin, came to Volozhin to participate in his nephew's wedding. R' Chaim, the father of the chasan, wanted to make his brother happy. "I will send musicians to play before you!" he declared.

When the musicians entered R' Zelmaleh's room, they saw him sitting in his chair as though waiting for them. They began to tune their instruments and then burst into a lively melody — one man playing the drum, the second a fiddle, a third a trumpet, and the fourth clashing cymbals. As they played, R' Zalmaleh's lips moved continuously, learning Torah.

When the musicians had finished their performance, they turned and left the room.

R' Chaim entered immediately afterward. His brother glanced at him and remarked, "I thought you said you were going to send me musicians. Where are they?"

**R'**Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz told his students how moved and inspired he had been by the way R' Aharon Kotler used his time. As the two men left a public meeting and walked toward the elevator, R' Shraga Feivel heard R' Aharon murmur to himself, "Now I understand R' Akiva Eiger's question ..."

"I was extremely moved," R' Shraga Feivel said later, "at the rosh yeshivah's ability to dive to the depths of a sugya in the blink of an eye — without wasting a second. Just a minute before, literally, he had been completely absorbed in the public matter about which we had been meeting."

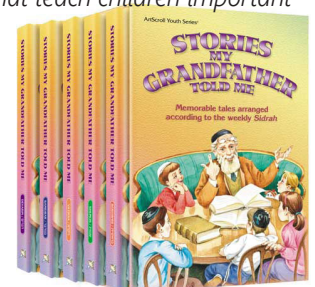
**R'**Raphael Baruch Toledano, one of Morocco's Torah giants, made the arduous trip from Meknes to Ushda in order to spread the word of Torah.

It was at the height of World War II. The roads were clogged with army units. The weather was unpredictable. R' Raphael Baruch's health was poor. But the news reached R' Raphael Baruch that the children's Talmud Torah was being shut down in Ushda. And despite all the barriers, he made an instant decision: He would not wait even a day, but would leave at once for Ushda in the middle of a storm.

He made his way to the train station,

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# PARSHA STORIES

accompanied by R' Yitzchak Ochana. All the cars were filled to capacity. The Arab passengers beamed hatred at the Jewish "Rabbino" and insolently spat in his face. With great difficulty, R' Raphael Baruch managed to get a seat on the steps of the railway car, exposed to the elements and in real danger of toppling off the train at any moment. After a harrowing journey, he arrived at long last, exhausted and shivering, at Ushda. But even then, he refused to rest.

Quickly, R' Raphael Baruch called a meeting of the community leaders and tried to persuade them to reopen the Talmud Torah immediately. Oth-

erwise, he said, their very existence during this critical time stood in danger. As it says in Tehillim: "Out of the mouths of youngsters and sucklings You have founded strength against Your enemies, to subdue the enemy and take revenge."

But Ushda's leading members refused to heed the Rabbi's advice. They had no plan to reopen the Talmud Torah.

In front of all the onlookers, R' Raphael Baruch burst into a storm of tears. The crowd was moved and uneasy. Someone begged his pardon, and others pleaded with him to calm himself.

But R' Raphael Baruch could not be calm. "Do you think I am crying for you? I am crying for myself! Our Sages, may their memory be blessed, have said, 'Whoever has fear of Heaven, his words will be heeded.' Here I've stood, talking and talking to you — and no one is listening! It's a sign that I do not have fear of Heaven. It is my fault."

He spoke with honest simplicity, and the words, which emerged from his heart, came to rest on his listeners' hearts. Ushda's leaders bowed to his will, and R' Raphael Baruch left victorious. That same day, the Talmud Torah of Ushda was reopened for the community's precious children.

## TORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

# The Rebbe Arranges Matters

*"Judges and officers shall you appoint"*  
(Devarim 16:18)

A stranger once came to see R' Baruch of Vizhnitz with a problem. He was a visitor from Poland who had traveled to the area on business, and had found lodgings with a household-er in the town of Kotzman for a few days. As he prepared to depart, he went into his room and reached under his pillow for the wallet he had kept there. To his shock, the wallet wasn't there!

The businessman went to the owner of the lodgings and explained what had happened, but the owner claimed to know nothing about the wallet. He claimed that no one had entered the man's room. In fact, he accused the traveler of making up the whole story in order to get out of paying his bill.

R' Baruch listened to the story, and

then said, "Be patient. Please go wait in the next room." Then he summoned the owner of the lodgings. When the man came in, the Rebbe began to discuss various public matters with him.

In the midst of the conversation, the Rebbe suddenly got up and left the room. A few moments later, when he came back in, he asked the man, "Please lend me your gold watch." With the watch in hand, R' Baruch left the room a second time.

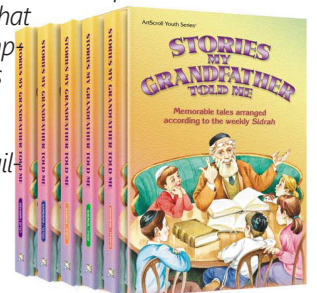
He told his assistant, "Hurry to the wife of the man who is sitting in my room and tell her as follows: 'Your husband sent me to ask you for the wallet that is under his pillow. He gave me this gold watch as a sign that the message is indeed from him.'"

R' Baruch returned to his room and continued to converse with the man.

His wife accepted the tale she was told and it wasn't long before the Rebbe's assistant returned with the wallet. Hearing his assistant's footsteps in the corridor, R' Baruch hurried out, took the watch and wallet from him, and returned to the room, where he gave the watch back to its owner. The talk wound to a close, and the man took his leave.

He had no clue as to what had happened until he got home and learned the whole story.

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# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Kalman Samuels

born on September 7, 1951

**K**alman Samuels, born Kerry, is the Founder of SHALVA, the Israel Association for Care and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. SHALVA provides therapy, vocational training, family support and support for members of the special needs community.

Kalman was raised in a nonobservant Jewish home in Vancouver, Canada where he went to Sir Winston Churchill High School. When he graduated in 1969 he was given academic and basketball scholarships to the University of British Columbia. After his first year studying Philosophy he traveled Europe with plans to take a semester in France. However, his mother re-

quested that he stop in Israel to visit relatives, as he had never visited Israel before. Blown away with Jewish culture and heritage, he cancelled his trip to France, stayed in Israel and enrolled in several Yeshivot, and in 1977 he received semicha and became a rabbi.

In 1973 Kalman married Malki Klein and moved to an apartment in Jerusalem. In 1977, their second son, Yossi, at the time 11 months old, was injured by a faulty vaccination and was left blind, deaf and acutely hyperactive. After 7 years with no communication, Yossi's special education teacher, Shoshana Weinstock achieved an amazing breakthrough by communicating sign language into the palm of his hand,

teaching Yossi his first word, 'Shulchan', table.

Because of their experiences raising Yossi, Malki and Kalman established an afternoon playgroup for children with special needs. Over time, the program expanded to meet the needs of a larger range of special needs, from birth through adulthood. Today SHALVA offers a ton of therapies and programs every single day that include inclusive education, social and recreational programs, and vocational training to hundreds of individuals with disabilities, as well as family support, respite, and global advocacy initiatives. SHALVA helps close to 1,000 kids every single day.

## PUZZLERS ANSWERS

### PARSHA CODE

1. BNEI YISROEL was COMMANDED to APPOINT JUDGES in their cities
2. The JUDGES had to be HONEST and cannot ACCEPT any BRIBES
3. a TREE used for AVODA ZARA is called an "ASHEIRA tree"
4. The PUNISHMENT for someone who SERVES AVODA ZARA, is that he gets STONED
5. A Jewish KING cannot have too many HORSES, MONEY, or WIVES
6. a KING should WRITE 2 TORAHs and always CARRY 1 with him
7. if someone KILLS by mistake, he can RUN to an URAY MIKLAT, and will be safe
8. the MURDERER must stay in the URAY MIKLAT until the KOHEN GADOL dies
9. you need a minimum of 2 WITNESSES to TESTIFY in COURT
10. someone who BUYS a new HOUSE, plants a new VINEYARD, or is ENGAGED, does not have to go FIGHT in WAR
11. it is an AVEIRA, to CUT down a TREE that GROWS FRUIT
12. if a DEAD BODY is found between 2 CITIES, and you don't know who KILLED him, the ELDERS of the closer CITY, brings an "EGLA ARUFA"

### TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

1. Honestly, without taking any types of brides.
2. a. If he says something will happen and it does not, b. If he tells us not to follow one of the Mitzvot of the Torah
3. a. When a dead body is found and nobody knows who killed that person, b. From the city which is closest to the place that the body was found
4. Two witnesses
5. Witnesses who try to frame someone for a crime. (They claim that a person did a certain crime in a certain place at a certain time. However, they could not possibly know if the crime happened since they were somewhere else at that time).
6. Run to one of the Arei Miklat (cities of refuge)
7. They receive whatever punishment they intended for the other person.
8. A calf is taken to an unplowed area and its neck is broken
9. From the city which is closest to the place that the body was found
10. Blinds him
11. He should be a role model for us, and help us to better appreciate the "King of all Kings"-HaShem.
12. Other nations sacrifice children, practice witchcraft and fortune telling, and communicate with the dead
13. When a dead body is found and nobody knows who killed that person
14. A Torah scholar who goes against the Torah.
15. He receives the death penalty because he was a leading Rabbi and people followed his incorrect decisions.
16. He may NOT have too many wives, too many horses, too much wealth; and he must write a Sefer Torah for himself.
17. The smaller cities had courts of three judges and the larger cities had courts of twenty three judges. In Yerushalayim was the great Sanhedrin of seventy one judges.
18. Six – three in Eretz Yisrael and three in Ever Hayarden
19. a. Someone who built a new house and did not yet live in it b. Someone who planted a vineyard and did not have a chance to take fourth year fruits to Yerushalayim c. Someone who was engaged but not yet married d. Someone who was weak-hearted and afraid.
20. a. A blemish, b. NO
21. a. Appoint a king b. Destroy amalek c. Build the Beit Hamikdash

### TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

1. The policemen.
2. The King of Israel.
3. The Torah Scroll of the King.
4. One witness.
5. War.
6. A fruit tree.

# PARSHA GAMES

## Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.

by Sammy Schaechter

**GOAL:** To teach the kids about the importance of not wasting.

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

**HOW TO PLAY:** Gather a TON of random items (plates, shoes, legos, dolls, bananas, etc.) and scatter them on the floor. Split the kids into groups and give them each several items. You can let them pick their own items or give them out on your own to prevent fighting. The challenge will be for them to find uses for all of the random things.

### **LEADER TIP:**

*Perfect time to start a recycling project in your shul!*

Announce something that each

group must create using their items. For example, every group must make a serving utensil. Then a hat. Then a bus. You can even let the kids decide what they will make. It can even be their own miniature city! Eventually you can combine all of the groups and have them create something together. The more random the items, the better!

**DISCUSSION:** The Torah commands us not to cut down fruit trees for no reason. This is the basis for bal tashchit, the prohibition against wasting. What does this say about our responsibility towards the world? What does it mean to "recycle"? How important is it to give meaning and appreciate every single thing, living or not, in this world?

# TEFILAH TREASURES

## Shir Shel Yom

Every day at the end of davening we say a special paragraph connected to the day of the week. Each day of the week has its specific paragraph and it opens by opening with a count towards Shabbat (ex: Today is the first day of the Shabbos... Today is the second day of the Shabbos...To-

day is the third day of the Shabbos... on which the Levi'im would say in the Beit HaMikdash.). The reason for this is that we make our entire week revolve around Shabbat and connect our everyday lives to the upcoming Shabbat.

Every one of the special paragraphs

for each day is connected in some way to that day of Creation. It gives us a daily reminder of a different part of Hashem's awesome creative power.

### **LEADER TIP:**

*What is one thing you can do each day of the week in order to prepare for Shabbat?*

# PARSHA NATION<sup>2.0</sup>

*A Weekly Publication of National Council of Young Israel*

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