

# Parsha Primer

מפרי  
הפרשה

# 16 January 6, 2001

Vayigash

ויגש

בס"ד י"א טבת תשס"א

**Vayigash** brings the long and fascinating story of **Yosef and his brothers** to its end. The dreams of his brothers bowing to him, that set off this drama, were fulfilled. All can see that Yosef didn't abuse this power, but used it help his family, and the entire Middle Eastern world, through the difficult famine. In **Middah of the Week** we'll discuss **Ahavat Yisrael**, an appropriate closing lesson for the story of Yosef and his brothers. In **Mitzvah of the Week** we'll see how even in Yaakov's rush to get settled in Mitzrayim, Yaakov knew how to plan ahead for the truly important things in life. **Shabbat Shalom!**

Breishit 44:18- 47:27

ליל שבת

## PARSHA IN A NUTSHELL- סיכום הפרשה

*Parshat Vayigash* continues the story of Yaakov's sons, as eleven of them stand before the most powerful man in Mitzrayim, unaware that he is their missing brother, Yosef. Yosef claimed that Binyamin stole his silver goblet, and demanded that Binyamin remain with him in Mitzrayim as his slave.

Yehuda stood in front of Yosef (prepared to use force, if necessary- *Rash"i*) and explained that if Binyamin was to remain in Mitzrayim, Yaakov, their father would surely die of heartache. Yehuda offered to remain as Yosef's slave instead of Binyamin.

When Yehuda finished his speech, Yosef could no longer contain his emotions. He asked that everyone (except the brothers) leave the room. He then said: "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?"

Yosef calmed his brothers' fears, insisting that he would not seek revenge for what they did to him. He then sent wagons to bring Yaakov and his brothers' families to Mitzrayim. Yosef gave each of them gifts, and sent Yaakov ten donkeys loaded with the finest items, and ten female donkeys laden with food.

The brothers reached Yaakov, told him that Yosef was still alive and was the ruler of Mitzrayim. When Yaakov saw the wagons, he felt his spirit renewed.

On the way to Mitzrayim, with seventy family members, Yaakov stopped in Beer Sheva. Hashem appeared to him and told him to continue to Mitzrayim. Yaakov had a joyful reunion with Yosef. Yosef presented his father and a few of his brothers to Paroh. The famine in Mitzrayim was difficult. The Egyptians turned to Yosef, and were required to sell their property and possessions to Paroh, in exchange for food.

## SHABBAT VAYIGASH 5761



Candle lighting:

Havdala:

The *haftara* is a prophecy of a time when the rift between the tribes, which caused the downfall of the first *Beit Hamikdash*, will be repaired. The *shvatim* (tribes) are split into two groups that include all the others: Yosef and Yehuda, who face off at the beginning of this week's *parsha*.

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Planning for Avodat Hashem

סעודה שניה

## MITZVAH OF THE WEEK- מצות השבוע

וְאֶת יְהוּדָה שָׁלַח לְפָנָיו אֶל יוֹסֵף לְהוֹרֹת לְפָנָיו גֹּשֶׁן...  
[Yaakov] sent Yehuda ahead of him to make

preparations In Goshen. (46:28)



The *midrash* explains what sort of preparations Yehuda had to make in Goshen:

Rav Chanina the son of Rav Acha and Rav Chanina (another Rabbi named Chanina) discussed this. One explains that Yehuda was sent to set up a house for Yaakov's large family. The other claims that Yehuda was sent to set up a *Bet Midrash*- a house of Torah study. *Midrash Rabba* 95

Before heading towards Mitzrayim, Yaakov sent Yehuda to prepare an environment in which Yaakov's family could continue to serve Hashem. Rabbi Yeshayahu Horowitz z"l (known as the *Shl"a*, the acronym of his famous book, *Shnei Luchot Habrit*) recognized an important lesson in this.



One who has the *z'chut* (merit) to build a house, should plan which room in the house will be dedicated to *tefilah* (prayer) and Torah study, and which room will serve as a gathering place for

*chachamim* (Torah scholars). Only after these rooms are planned should he think about the rest of his needs (the number of bedrooms and size of the kitchen...).

Based on the *Shl"a*

Rabbi Horowitz taught that this could serve as a rule of thumb for life. Before every big move in life, plan ahead where Hashem (serving Hashem, *mitzvot*, Torah study, etc.) will fit in. It doesn't matter whether it's a new house, a new job, or a new school. Even founding a new community requires planning a central place of *tefilah*, schools to teach Torah and all the other institutions necessary for *avodat Hashem* (kosher food, *chessed committees*, a Rav who can serve as a spiritual guide and more).

**Middah of the Week מידת השבוע**

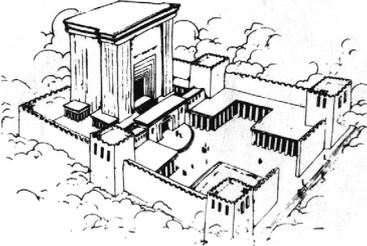
**ויפל על צוֹאֲרֵי בְנֵימִן אָחִיו וַיִּבֶדּוּ וּבְנֵימִן בָּכָה עַל צוֹאֲרָיו:**  
 [With that Yosef] fell on the shoulders (literally necks) of his brother Binyamin and wept. Binyamin [also] wept on [Yosef's] shoulders (literally necks) ...” (45:14)

Did Binyamin have two necks? Rabi Elazar ben P'dat explained: Yosef saw through divine inspiration (*Ruach Hakodesh*) that in the future two Batei Mikdash would be built in Binyamin's territory, and both would be destroyed.

Binyamin cried because he saw that the Tabernacle (*Mishkan Shiloh*) would be built on Yosef's territory and would be destroyed.

The *Mahara"l* of Prague (Rabbi Yehuda Levai

zt"l) explained the significance of Yosef and Binyamin's crying on each others necks. The neck connects the head to the body. Similarly- the *Beit Hamikdash* connects the Jewish people to *Hashem*.



It is not unusual to read about *tzaddikim* crying over future tragedies, but notice that Yosef and Binyamin each cried over events that would occur to the **other's** descendents.

Through their display of care for each other, Yosef and Binyamin taught us the significance of the *Beit Hamikdash*: *Ahavat Yisrael*- love for all Jews.

Based on "Reachings" Rabbi Yaakov Haber

See questions for the Shabbat table below

**QUESTIONS FOR THE SHABBAT TABLE-**

1. Can you think of a *mitzvah* (or more) related to the *Beit Hamikdash* that serves to bring *Bnei Yisrael* closer to each other?
2. As Yosef and Binyamin embraced and wept, the other ten brothers stood by watching. What thoughts do you think were going through their minds?

**PICTURE RIDDLES**

Look at the three sets of pictures below, and see if you can find the *pasuk*, concept or *halacha* that they refer to. Find the appropriate *pasuk* for each of the picture riddles.

1

18

+

Hint: read from right to left

3

בנימין

2

**SEDRA STATS**

**Note:** In this section we refer to the *Parsha* as a *Sedra*, and the term *Parsha* refers to the sections separated by spaces in the *Sefer Torah*.

- ◆ 11<sup>th</sup> of 54 *sedras* in the *Torah*, 11<sup>th</sup> of 12 *sedras* in *Sefer Breishit*.
- ◆ Contains: 3 *parshiot*. all *stumot* (closed). *Vayechi* begins in the middle of the third *parsha*.
- ◆ 106 *p'sukim*, #28 in the number of *p'sukim*, equal to *Toldot* and *Bo*
- ◆ 1480 words, ranks #30
- ◆ 5680 letters, ranks #29
- ◆ Contains none of the *Tarya"g* (613) *mitzvot*



Thanks to *Torah Tidbits* for permission to reprint this column

**ANSWERS TO PICTURE RIDDLES FOR MIKETZ**

All three riddles last week were in the same *perak*, relatively close together. 1. *Paroh* tells Yosef that he is appointing him second to the King, "Only by the throne I will outrank you." The literal translation of this is "Only my chair will be larger than yours." "רק הכִּסֵּא אֲגִדֵּל מִמֶּךָ" (41:40). 2. "...but in *Mitzrayim* there was bread." "וּבְכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הָיָה לֶחֶם" (41:54). 3. When *Paroh* appointed Yosef, he said: "Without your say, no man will lift a hand or foot in all *Mitzrayim*." "וּבְלִעְדֵיךָ לֹא יָרִים אִישׁ אֶת יָדוֹ וְאֶת רַגְלוֹ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם" (41:44)

# Parsha Primer

מפרש  
הפרשה

# 23 February 24, 2001

Mishpatim- Sh'kalim

מישפטים - ש'קלים

א' אדר תשס"א

Law is usually studied by students in colleges and universities, and by those who decided to study or work with the law as their profession. **Mishpat**, law and justice, is such an integral part of Judaism that every Jewish child who studies Chumash, Mishna and Talmud is familiar with the basic laws of damages (nezikin), courts, witnesses and other aspects of law and justice. These topics are considered by most religions to have little or nothing to do with religion, yet in Judaism these laws which define the relationships between people and neighbors are important to all. Parshat Mishpatim introduces us to these laws. **Shabbat Shalom!**

Shmot 21:1-24:18

ליל שבת

## PARSHA IN A NUTSHELL- סיכום הפרשה

ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניך:

These are the laws that you must set before [the Israelites]...(24:1)

Our *parsha* contains many *mitzvot*, and we couldn't possibly cover all of them. In this week's summary we'll review several of the *mitzvot* in the *parsha*.

**The laws of *eved ivri*, a Hebrew slave-** This is a Jewish man who sells himself as a slave because of his difficult financial situation, or one who was sold by a bet din (Jewish court of law) because he was unable to pay back a person whom he stole from. The Hebrew slave works for six years, and goes free on the seventh.

**One who murders intentionally**, is punished by death. (The *Talmud* tells us that this was a very rare occurrence because of the strict rules of testimony and the warning that must be given before the act.) One who caused a death unintentionally is to run away to the city of refuge (עיר מקלט).

**Damages-** The *parsha* discusses the responsibility of a person whose bull gored a person or damaged property, as well as that of one who dug a pit or who was responsible for a fire that spread. In each case, the bet din has to decide if carelessness

was involved and to what extent the person is responsible.

**One who steals an ox or sheep**, and slaughters or sells it, has to pay five oxen for each ox, and four sheep for each sheep that he stole.

**One who agrees to watch over his friend's valuables** is responsible for his friend's property to varying degrees. The *halacha* depends upon whether he borrowed the object for his own use, rented the object, was being paid to watch the object, and on whether he took proper care of it.

Continued on back...

## SHABBAT MISHPATIM-SH'KALIM 5761



Candle lighting:

Havdala:



Luach  
Notes

Two *Sifrei Torah* are taken out of the *aron* this week. In the first we'll read *parshat hashavua*, and in the second we'll read *Sh'kalim*. A special *haftara* is read for *parshat Sh'kalim*.

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Shemita מצות שמיתה

סעודה שניה

## MITZVAH OF THE WEEK- מצות השבוע

ושש שנים תזרע את ארצך ואספת את תבואתה:

והשביעת תשמיטנה ונטשתה...

You may plant your land for six years and gather its crops. But during the seventh year, you must leave it alone and withdraw from it... (23:10,11)



Every seventh year is a *Shemita* year in *Eretz Yisrael*. During this year the *Torah* commands us to refrain from working the land. This *halacha* has practical meaning this year, since this year is a *shemita* year. Here are a few interesting *halachot* (laws) pertaining to the seventh year.

According to most *halachic* authorities, the Biblical laws of *Shemita* don't apply today. We continue to keep *Shemita*, as a *Rabbinic mitzvah* (a *mitzvah* instituted by *Chaza"l*, "medrabanan").

The four *melachot* (types of field work) that the *Torah* prohibited on the *Shemita* are:

- Planting
- Pruning grapevines (cutting branches in a manner that helps the growth of the vine).
- Harvesting crops
- Gathering grapes
- A fifth prohibition according to the opinion of many rabbis includes certain types of plowing (*Radba"z*).

*Chaza"l* (our sages) prohibited other types of field work, but these are permitted if necessary to maintain the basic health of trees or fields.

For example: it is permitted to water a tree which might die, or suffer irreversible damage if it won't receive water. It is not permitted to water a tree in order to improve it.

You might be wondering what the people in Israel eat during the *Shemita* year. In addition to not being able to do regular fieldwork, the fruit of the *Shemita* year have *kedusha* (holiness), and cannot be sold in the regular manner. *B'ezrat Hashem* (with G-d's help), we'll explain how fruit and vegetables get to the market in Israel, in a future *Parsha Primer*.





**Middah of the Week מידת השבוע**

One of the great *Torah* leaders about 70 years ago was Rabbi Shalom Mordechai HaCohen Shwadron zt"l. He is also known by the acronym of his name: *Maharsha*"m. He left us 9 volumes of responsa (answers to *halachic* questions people sent him), as well as other volumes of *halacha* and Biblical commentary.

*Maharsha*"m was well known as a *shofet tzedek*: a fair judge. One of his students wrote: *Maharsha*"m would personally preside over the sounding of each side's claim in every dispute that was brought before him and his *bet din*. He would follow up with questions, to make sure that each side's claims were clear. The first thing he always tried to do was have the two sides reach a compromise agreement (*p'shara*). He would always tell the litigants:

My *Rebbe muvhak* (who taught me the most) was named *Shalom* (Rabbi Shalom of Belz z"l),  
 My name is *Shalom*,  
 Most of the books that I wrote have the word "*Shalom*" in their

titles,

In addition, I am a *cohen*, a descendent of *Aharon the Cohen*, and am obligated to follow his lead and actively seek *Shalom (Rodef Shalom)*.

Please, listen to me and reach a compromise. In merit of your agreeing to compromise you will succeed and prosper. A weak compromise is always better than a powerful court decision.



After deciding each case, *Maharsha*"m would carefully watch to see if one of the litigants felt wronged. If so, he would sit him down, and explain his judgement at length, until he was sure that the person understood the rationale behind his judgement. If the man was learned, *Maharsha*"m would show him sources to back up the *bet din's* decision. If not, he would ask that the litigant send a learned family member or friend, and *Maharsha*"m would explain his judgment to that person.

Occasionally the litigants would have to wait in *Maharsha*"m's presence for two additional *dayanim* (judges) to arrive. They would tell *Maharsha*"m not to wait- "Rebbe, we rely on your knowledge, and accept your decision." He would smile and tell them, "I don't rely on myself. You came for a *din-Torah* (judgement of a *Torah* court), and a *din Torah* requires three *dayanim*!"

**Parsha in a Nutshell**, continued from page 1

The *parsha* contains many other *halachot*, among them the obligation to return lost objects, maintain justice in courts, keep the *Shemita* year, go to *Yerushalayim* three times a year, and the prohibition of eating milk and meat together.

*Sh'kalim* tells of the funds gathered for communal sacrifices (these are general sacrifices, not ones given by individuals).

**PICTURE RIDDLES**

Look at the three sets of pictures below, and see if you can find the *pasuk*, concept or *halacha* that they refer to. Find the appropriate *pasuk* for each of the picture riddles.

**SEDRA STATS**

**Note:** In this section we refer to the *Parsha* as a *Sedra*, and the term *Parsha* refers to the sections separated by spaces in the *Sefer Torah*.

- ◆ 18th of 54 *sedras*; 6th of 11 in *Shmot*
- ◆ 33 *parshiot*; 6 open and 27 closed
- ◆ 118 *p'sukim* - ranks 22nd
- ◆ 1462 words - ranks 31<sup>st</sup>
- ◆ 5313 letters - ranks 37th

The noticeable drop in ranking for words and letters is a result of *MISHPATIM's* having relatively short *p'sukim*.

- ◆ *MISHPATIM* has 53 *mitzvot*; 23 positive and 30 prohibitions; only 3 *sedras* have more *mitzvot*
- ◆ The *Maftir* for *Sh'kalim* adds 1 (open) *parsha*, 6 *p'sukim*, 90 words, 336 letters, 1 (positive) *mitzvah*

Thanks to *Torah Tidbits* for permission to reprint this column

**ANSWERS TO PICTURE RIDDLES FOR YITRO**

1. These "long days" represent the reward one is given for honoring his father and mother, literally "long days", meaning, a long life **כבוד ... את אביו ואת אמו למען יארכו ימיו** (*Shmot* 20:11). 2. Here we see a thought bubble, containing a soldier and a person thinking, or remembering. These are the two aspects of *Shabbat* that are mentioned in *Aseret Hadibrot*, one in *Shmot* and one in *Sefer D'varim*. *Zachor v'Shamor*- remember and guard. In the *Kabbalat Shabbat* prayer we say that these two aspects of *Shabbat* were said *b'dibbur echad*, or in one "breath". 3. This is part of *kiddush* on *Shabbat* morning, in which we state who is not permitted to do *melacha* on *Shabbat*. "You, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maid, your animal..." **לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך ובהמתך**.

# Parsha Primer

מפרי  
הפרשה

# 27 March 24, 2001

Vayakhel-Pekudei

ויקהל-פקודי

כ"ט אדר תשס"א

This week we have a double header, and a special maftir. At the end of Pekudei, Bnei Yisrael see the cloud representing the Shechina (presence of Hashem) settle on the completed Mishkan. This is an appropriate ending to Sefer Shmot, displaying that Bnei Yisrael were well on their way to fulfilling the goal of having Hashem dwell among them. In **Mitzvah of the Week**, we'll study a topic from the special maftir- the Jewish calendar. In **Middah of the Week** we'll try to understand what "wisdom" means in Judaism. **Shabbat Shalom!**

Shmot 35:1-40:38

ליל שבת

## PARSHA IN A NUTSHELL- סיכום הפרשה

In our parshiot Bnei Yisrael carry out Hashem's command to build the Mishkan.

Vayakhel- Bnei Yisrael donated the various materials that were needed to produce the Mishkan. At some point the workers turned to Moshe and told him that they already had more materials than necessary. Moshe then commanded Bnei Yisrael to stop bringing the materials. The leaders of the tribes donated the precious stones that were needed for the clothing of the Cohen Gadol.

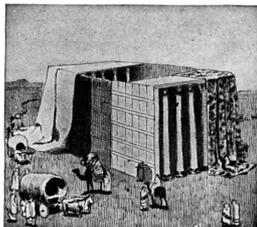
The parsha details the building of the Mishkan and its vessels. Bnei Yisrael prepared the structure of the Mishkan, (the beams that formed the walls, the coverings and the curtains that separated each section) and the vessels: the Aron, the shulchan (showbread table), the menorah, the golden altar, the copper altar and the washstand (kiyor).

**Pekudei-** The funds used to build the Mishkan were carefully counted, and accounted for.

The garments of the Cohanim were produced.

Moshe blessed the workers who built the Mishkan when he reviewed the various items, and saw that they were all built as Hashem specified.

Hashem commanded Moshe to put the Mishkan together (on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, almost a year after leaving Mitzrayim), and to anoint and sanctify the vessels and the Cohanim. Moshe did everything as Hashem commanded, and placed the vessels in the Mishkan.



The Jewish Calendar

סעודה שניה

## MITZVAH OF THE WEEK- מצות השבוע

In this week's special maftir, we read of the mitzvah to count the months starting from Nissan, and follow a lunar (moon-based) calendar, adjusted by the solar (sun based) seasons. We'll explain how our unique calendar works, and how it compares to the other common calendars.

### What are calendars usually based on?

The secular calendar that most of us use is a solar (sun-based) calendar. This means that the seasons of the year (which are set by the sun) occur on the same dates each year. The months though, are not dependent upon any natural phenomenon (sun or moon). They are just adjusted to complete a cycle (12 months), by the end of the sun-year.

The Moslems use a strictly lunar calendar. Since the lunar year is a few days shorter than the solar year, their holidays can occur in different seasons. It is common in Israel to see the Moslems celebrate "Ramadan" (a Moslem holiday) in a different season every few years. (It's also common to hear people who don't understand the Moslem calendar ask: "I thought Ramadan was in the summer, why are they celebrating it in the winter this year?" or the opposite.)

### The Jewish Calendar-

Our calendar is based upon the sun and the moon. The months are based on the moon. A month is the time between the appearance of one new moon, and the appearance of the next new moon. Our months are 29-30 days, because the month is actually 29 and 1/2 days long (29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 3 1/3 seconds to be exact). On the other hand, our years are based on the sun. Pesach must occur in the spring, and the other holidays (Shavuot and Sukkot) are also seasonal.

### How does the Jewish calendar balance the sun and the moon?

In order to ensure that that the calendar remains adjusted seasonally, we add a month to the year (13 months) 7 out of every 19 years. This helps the lunar months remain synchronized with the solar years. A 13 month year is known as a leap year, or a "shana mi-uberet" (שנה מעוברת).

For more information, see "Understanding the Jewish Calendar" by Rabbi N. Bushwick

## VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI-HACHODESH 5761



Candle lighting:

Havdala:



Two Sifrei Torah are taken out this week. The maftir is read from the second one, Parshat Hachodesh (Sefer Shmot, from Parshat Bo). Before Mussaf we pray that the upcoming month of Nissan be a good month.

This week's Primer is dedicated in memory of **Esther (bat Yehuda Leib) Harris z"l**, 2 Nissan 5759

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## Middah of the Week מידת השבוע

A careful review of our *parsha* will reveal that the *Torah* uses the phrase "wise hearted" (לב חכם in various forms), many times.

Usually we associate the term wise, with man's head, and particularly with his brain. Why does our *parsha* stress over and over the wisdom of the heart?

Our association of wisdom with the brain is not totally correct. Often, the brain-wise person is not smart at all. He might know all the answers, he might sound intelligent, but is he really wise?

If he knows how to use his wisdom to benefit himself and others- then he is truly a wise person. If his knowledge remains in his brain and mouth, but is not put to any use, then it is worthless. In fact, the *Torah* is



teaching us that this is not considered "wisdom".

Let's take for example someone who has studied the medical benefits of plants and herbs. Ask him about any plant, he'll tell you if this one is poisonous, and that one can be used to cure some disease, and so on. Sounds like a very wise man, doesn't he?

Now, let's say you see this "wise man" eating one of the plants that he just told you was poisonous. Can we still consider him "wise"? His vast knowledge remains just...knowledge. It's not put to any use. This is not wisdom. In fact, we can even compare this man to a donkey, who has an entire set of encyclopedias loaded on his back. Does the encyclopedia make the donkey "wise"?

The *Torah* is teaching us that wisdom is the ability to use knowledge to help and benefit others.

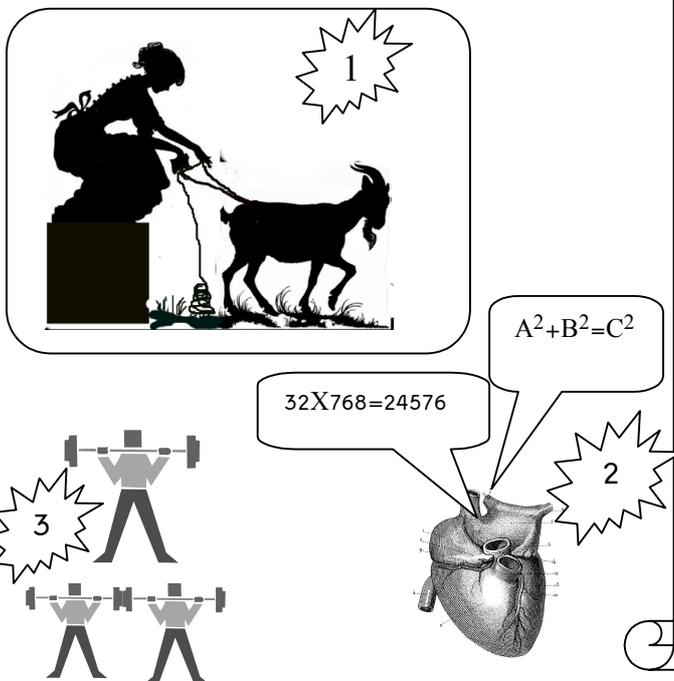
Based on Ohr Yahel, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chasman z"l, illustration of L. Frank Baum's Scarecrow and Tin Woodman by W. W. Denslow, 1900

### QUESTIONS FOR THE SHABBAT TABLE- WISDOM OF THE HEART

- Based upon our definition of true wisdom, how would you define a *Torah* scholar?
- A few weeks ago (*B'shalach*) we explained what *emuna* (faith, belief in *Hashem*) means in Judaism. In what way are our definitions of *emuna* and wisdom similar?

### PICTURE RIDDLES

Look at the three sets of pictures below, and see if you can find the *pasuk*, concept or *halacha* that they refer to.



### SEDRA STATS

**Note:** In this section we refer to the *Parsha* as a *Sedra*, and the term *Parsha* refers to the sections separated by spaces in the *Torah*.

**Vayakhel** \* 22nd of the *Torah's* 54 *sedras*; 10th of 11 in *Shmot* \* 13 *Parshiot*; 7 open, 6 closed \* 122 *p'sukim* - ranks 17<sup>th</sup>, tied with *VaEtchanan* & *Ki Tavo*; shorter than both in words & letters \* 1558 words - ranks 24th tied with *Vayeshev*, \* 6181 letters - ranks 21<sup>st</sup> \* Overall, *Vayakhel* ranks 22nd in the *Torah* \* *Vayakhel* contains 1 *mitzvah* of the 613, a prohibition

**Pekudei** \* 23rd of the *Torah's* 54 *sedras* 11th of 11 in *Shmot* \* 20 *Parshiot*; 7 open, 13 closed \* 92 *p'sukim* - ranks 40th \* 1182 words - ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> \* 4432 letters - ranks 44th (10th) \* Overall, *Pekudei* ranks 43rd in the *Torah*; it is a short *sedra* \* *Pekudei* is always "involved" in the Four *Parshiot*; it is the only *sedra* with that distinction.

\* *Pekudei* contains no *mitzvot*, although it does "contain" several *mitzvot* related to the *Mishkan* and *Cohen's* garments, which have been previously counted. It is one of 17 *sedras* without *mitzvot*.

**Vayakhel-Pekudei** First of 7 pairs that are sometimes read together. Combined, V-P has 214 *p'sukim*, more than all single *sedras*, and more than all other doubles, except for *Matot-Mas'ei*. Even with the *maftir* adding 20 *p'sukim*, it still falls short of M-M's 244 *p'sukim* plus 7 more when it is *Shabbat Rosh Chodesh*. In most 12-month years, *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* are read together, and they are usually *Parshat HaChodesh*, as they are this year \* The *maftir* for *HaChodesh* contains 1 closed *parsha*, \* 20 *p'sukim*, \* 313 words, \* 1207 letters, \* 9 *mitzvot* - 5 positive and 4 prohibitions

Thanks to *Torah Tidbits* for permission to reprint this column

### ANSWERS TO PICTURE RIDDLES FOR Ki Tisa

1. In this picture we see a measuring cup, with top line measuring 13 units. A measure in *Ivrit* is a *middah*, and 13 *middot* are the 13 phrases of mercy that *Moshe* used in his prayer to *Hashem* (13 *middot rachamim*) (34:6-7). 2. 1/2=20, this represents the 1/2 *shekel* coin, which must be given by all males over 20 years old. 3. This represents the *pasuk*, פְּהַרְיֹשׁ וּבְקִצֵּיר תִּשְׁבֹּת refrain from plowing and harvesting. Although the *pasuk* clearly refers to *Shabbat*, some understand the second half of the *pasuk* as referring to *Shemita*. (34:21).