

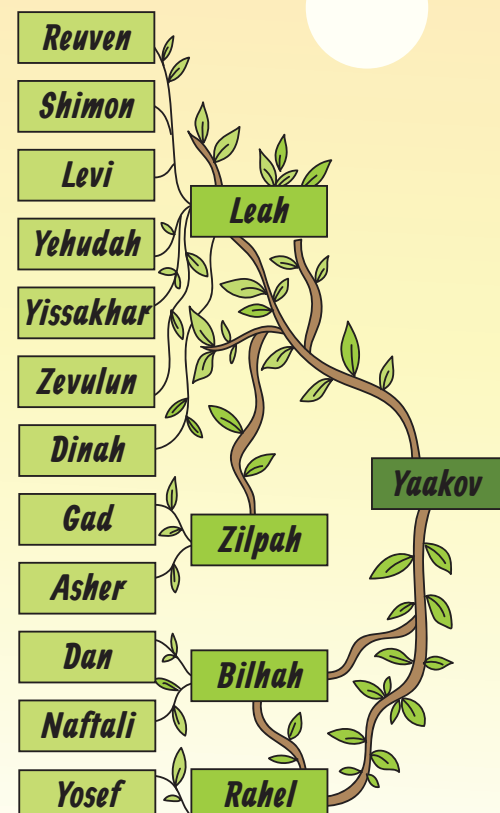


November 7 - 13, 2021 ג' - ט' כסלו תשפ"ב



קֹה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ◆ Yaakov runs away from Be'er Sheva and travels to the home of his uncle, Lavan.
- ◆ Yaakov dreams of a סֻלָּם (sulam, ladder) going up to the heavens.
- ◆ God tells Yaakov that his descendants will inherit אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן (Eretz Canaan, the Land of Canaan) and that God will protect him.
- ◆ Yaakov continues his journey until he encounters a well, where he meets Rahel, daughter of Lavan.
- ◆ Yaakov tells Rahel that he is her relative, and she brings him home.
- ◆ Yaakov works as a shepherd for Lavan for seven years in exchange for marrying Rahel, but Lavan tricks Yaakov into marrying his older daughter, Leah, instead.
- ◆ Yaakov agrees to work for an additional seven years after marrying Rahel as well.
- ◆ Rahel and Leah, along with their servants Bilhah and Zilpah, in total give birth to 11 boys and one girl.
- ◆ Lavan is upset at Yaakov, and Yaakov says that Lavan hasn't treated him fairly, so Yaakov, Rahel, and Leah decide to return home to Eretz Canaan.
- ◆ When Lavan finds out that they've left, he chases after them, but God tells Lavan in a dream not to harm them. Lavan then makes peace with Yaakov.





מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Yaakov is on his way out of אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן (Eretz Canaan, the land of Canaan) when he falls asleep and begins to dream. But the way his dream is described is a little confusing, and how you understand it depends on one particular word.

Midrashim are ideas or stories that explain the Torah. They often come from listening very carefully to what the Torah says and how it says it. Here, we will look for what clues this midrash sees in the Torah's words, and try to understand its messages.

Bereishit 28:12-13

He [Yaakov] dreamed. And behold: there was a סֻלָּם (sulam, ladder) standing on the ground, and its head reached the heavens. And behold: the angels of God were going up and down on it. And behold: God stood עָלָיו (alav, upon him / upon it).

בראשית כח:יב-יג

וַיַּחלֶם וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב
אֶרְצָה וּרְאשׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ
הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאָכֵי
אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ:
וְהִנֵּה ה' נָצַב עָלָיו:

The word, alav, can mean either "upon him"—meaning that God stood upon Yaakov—or "upon it"—meaning that God stood upon the sulam. Which is it?

Bereishit Rabbah 69:3

Rabbi Hiyya the Great and Rabbi Yannai.
One said: "upon it—on the sulam."
But the other said: "upon him—on Yaakov."

בראשית רבה סט:ג

רַבִּי חִיָּא רַבָּה וְרַבִּי יַנָּאי,
חֵד אָמַר, עָלָיו, עַל סֻלָּם.
וְחֵד אָמַר, עָלָיו, עַל יַעֲקֹב.

It's possible that Yaakov saw the sulam with angels going up and down, and then saw God was somewhere on the sulam as well (maybe at the top). Or, in the second opinion, God stood "upon" Yaakov, and not the sulam. This second opinion is elaborated here:



Bereishit Rabbah 69:2

Said Rabbi Hama bar Hanina: ...When our father, Yaakov got up, he was like "a man together with his friend" (Mishlei 27:17) for the שכינה (Shekhinah, God's presence) was together with him.

בראשית רבה סט:ב

אמר רבי חמא בר חנינא: ... כיון
שעמד אבינו יעקב "איש יחד פני
רעהו" (משלי כז, יז), שנתחדה
עליו השכינה.

If God stood "upon" Yaakov, it means that God was as close to Yaakov as a good friend, and when God spoke to Yaakov, it was like when someone talks closely and intimately with their friend.

- ◆ How do you imagine the scene of Yaakov's dream? What evidence can you find for whether God was standing on the sulam or close to Yaakov? What difference does this make to the story?
- ◆ What does it say about Yaakov that God wanted to talk to him so closely and so intimately? Have you had those sorts of conversations with people? How did it feel? How do you think this dialogue would have felt for Yaakov?



פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

When Yaakov meets Lavan, the Torah briefly describes Lavan's two daughters. We learn one detail about Leah.

Genesis 29:17

Leah's eyes were רכות (rakkot); Rahel was of beautiful appearance.

בראשית כט:יז

וְעֵינֵי לֵאָה רְכוֹת וְרַחֵל הָיְתָה יִפְתָּת־תָּאֵר
וְיִפְתַּ מְרָאָה:

What does it mean that Leah's eyes were "rakkot"? Why does the Torah share this particular detail with us?

Ha'amek Davar
(Eastern Europe, 150 years ago)

The intention is to say her eyes were beautiful, but they were delicate, so she was unable to shepherd, since the light of the sun would damage them.

העמק דבר

וְהַכֹּנֶה שֶׁהָיוּ נְאוֹת אֲבֵל מִפְּנֵי
רִכּוּתָן לֹא הָיְתָה יְכוּלָה לְרִעּוֹת
בְּצֹאן מִשּׁוּם שֶׁאֹר הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הָיָה
מְזִיק לָהֶן:

Rashi brings a totally different perspective, from the Talmud (Bava Batra 123a). In his explanation, rakkot means "worn out from crying":

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

She thought she would be destined to marry Esav and cried, because everyone said, "Rivkah has two sons, and Lavan has two daughters—the older daughter for the older son [Leah for Esav], the younger daughter for the younger son [Rahel for Yaakov]."

רש"י

שֶׁהָיְתָה סְבוּרָה לַעֲלוֹת בְּגוֹרְלוֹ
שֶׁל עֵשָׂו וּבִזְכָּה, שֶׁהָיוּ הַכֹּל
אוֹמְרִים שְׁנֵי בָנִים לְרִבְקָה וּשְׁתֵּי
בָנוֹת לְלָבָן, הַגְּדוּלָה לַגְּדוֹל
וְהַקְטָנָה לַקָּטָן:

- ◆ One of these פְּרָשָׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) thinks that rakkot is information that helps us understand the story better, and the other thinks this word teaches a lesson about the characters. Which one is which?
- ◆ Why might Leah not like the idea of marrying Esav? What could that teach us about her?



הלכה • Halakhah

תפילת הדרך (Tefilat Ha-Derekh, the Traveler's Prayer)

At the end of the parashah, as Yaakov continues his journey home, he encounters angels.



Bereishit 32:2-3

Yaakov went on his way, and angels of God encountered him. When he saw them, Yaakov said, "This is God's camp," and he named that place Mahanayim.

בראשית לב:ב-ג

וַיַּעֲקֹב הָלֵךְ לְדֶרֶכּוֹ וַיִּפְגְּעוּבּוֹ
מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים: וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב
כִּאֲשֶׁר רָאִים מַחֲנֵה אֱלֹהִים זֶה
וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מַחֲנֵי־אֱלֹהִים:

Many people say these two pesukim as part of Tefillat Ha-Derekh in the hope that God will send angels to protect them on their journeys. The source of this prayer is the Talmud:

Berakhot 29b

Rabbi Yaakov said [that] Rav Hisda said: Anyone who sets out on a journey must pray Tefillat Ha-Derekh.

ברכות כט ב:

וַאֲמַר רַבִּי יַעֲקֹב אָמַר רַב חֲסִידָא:
כָּל הַיּוֹצֵא לְדֶרֶךְ צְרוּרָה לְהַתְפַּלֵּל
תְּפִלַּת הַדֶּרֶךְ.

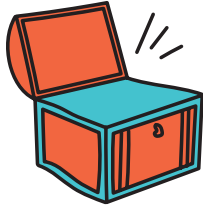
For what kinds of trips does one say Tefillat Ha-Derekh?

- ◆ The Shulhan Arukh (Orah Hayyim 110:7) rules that Tefillat Ha-Derekh is only said when traveling away from one's town farther than a פָּרְסָה (parsah, the equivalent of a few miles). This was a significant journey when the Shulhan Arukh was written 500 years ago!
- ◆ Some people do not say Tefillat Ha-Derekh if there are people living all along the path of their journey.

When does one say Tefillat Ha-Derekh?

- ◆ The Mishnah Berurah (Orah Hayyim 110:29) says that Tefillat Ha-Derekh is recited right after leaving town, when there are no more homes nearby. It's become common to recite Tefillat Ha-Derekh on airplanes, during take-off.
- ◆ Peninei Halakhah (Orah Hayyim 110:7) notes that driving can be dangerous even inside the city, so we are allowed to say Tefillat Ha-Derekh on a car ride even when we don't leave the city.





מה קרה • What's Going On Here?

As Rachel fled from Lavan's home with her family, she stole her father's תִּרְפִּים (terafim; Bereishit 31:19). What are terafim, and why did Rachel steal them?

We get a hint later in the chapter, when Lavan refers to the terafim as "my gods" (Bereishit 31:30). Rashi says that Rachel stole them because she wanted to stop her father from worshipping idols.

Ibn Ezra (Spain, 900 years ago) thinks something deeper must be going on. He says that the terafim were kinds of magical tools for reading the stars, which Lavan used to see the future. Rachel wanted to make sure Lavan did not use the terafim to find where they were running, so she took them with her.



רגע של עברית • A Moment of Hebrew

Bereishit 29:3

When all the flocks were gathered there, **they would roll** the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep; then the stone would be put back in its place on the mouth of the well.

בראשית כט:ג

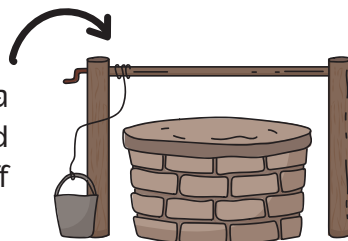
וּנְאֻסְפוּ־שָׁמָּה כָּל־הָעֶדְרִים
וְנָלְלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי
הַבְּאֵר וְהִשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַצֹּאן
וְהָשִׁיבוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן עַל־פִּי
הַבְּאֵר לְמַקְמָהּ:



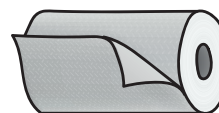
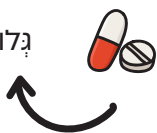
לגלל (שָׁרַט ג.ל.)

To roll up

The round stone that = גוֹלֵל
sat on top of the well and
needed to be rolled off



Tablet or pill = גְּלוּלָה



Cylinder or roll = גָּלִיל
(of paper, fabric etc.)



Rolling up = גָּלִילָה
and dressing the
Torah scroll

Find the Word!

What is another name for the scroll from which the book of Esther is read? Why do you think it's called that?



דְּבָרָה שֶׁל דִּין • One-Minute Debate

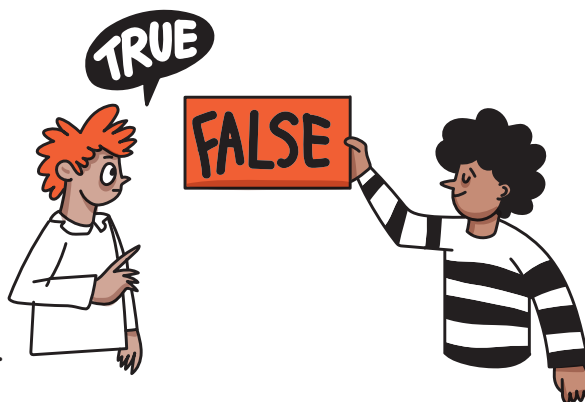
How to play:

Here is a topic for debate along with some suggested arguments, but feel free to come up with your own.

- ◆ Assign people to the "true" or "false" sides.
- ◆ Each side gets 30 seconds to make their case.
- ◆ At the end, the group votes on a winner.

Debate: It's great to have a lot of siblings!

- ◆ True:
 - ◆ There is always someone to play with.
 - ◆ Someone always has your back.
- ◆ False:
 - ◆ You have to share your toys with them.
 - ◆ It's too noisy.





שאלות השבוע • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. The answers to the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.

Good luck!

1 What was the original name of the place where Yaakov had his dream?

2 Why couldn't the shepherds remove the stone from the well?

3 Who was Yaakov's fifth son, and who was that son's mother?

4 What did Rahel want from Leah?



5 What kinds of sheep and goats belonged to Yaakov under the deal he made with Lavan?

6 What did Rahel steal?



7 There are two Aramaic words in our parashah—what are they?

8 Yaakov set up two stone pillars—what were their locations?

9 How many years did Yaakov work for Lavan in total?

10 Two separate explanations are given for the name of one of Yaakov's children. Which child and what are the explanations?



קריאת התורה • Torah Reading

In general, the text of a Torah scroll is a bunch of words that make up neatly arranged columns. But, if you pay attention, you can see that there are breaks in the words all over the place. Look at this column from Parashat Noah. You can see a bunch of different breaks in the text here.

One kind of break is called a סְתוּמָה (setumah), meaning, "stopped up." This is basically a space in the middle of a line, with words on both sides.

עֲזָה בְּאֵכָה סִדְמָה וְעִמְרָה וְאַדְמָה וְצִבְיִים עֵד לְשֵׁן
אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי זָחַם לְמִשְׁפּוּחֵהֶם לְלִשְׁנָתָם בְּאַרְצֵתָם
בְּגִוְיָהֶם וְלִשְׁם יֶלֶד גַּם הוּא אָבִי
כָּל בְּנֵי עֶבֶר אֲחֵי יִפֶּתְ הַגִּדּוּל בְּנֵי שֵׁם עֵינָם וְאַשּׁוּר
וְאַרְפַּכְשָׁד וְלֹד וְאַרְם וּבְנֵי אָרַם עֹוֹן וְזֹחַל וְגִתֵּר
וּמִשׁ וְאַרְפַּכְשָׁד יֶלֶד אֶת שִׁלּוּחַ וְשִׁלּוּחַ יֶלֶד אֶת עֶבֶר

סְתוּמָה
(setumah)



Sometimes, the break begins in the middle of the line and goes all the way until the end. This kind of break is called a פְּתוּחָה (petuhah), meaning "open," because it is open all the way to the end.

פְּתוּחָה
(petuhah)



כִּמּוֹ וַיִּזְחִי זָחַם אֲחֵר הַמִּבּוּל שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה
וּחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וַיְהִי כָּל יְמֵי זָחַם תְּשַׁע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה
וּחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת
וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת בְּנֵי זָחַם שֵׁם זָחַם וַיִּפֶּת וַיִּזְחֲדוּ לָהֶם
בְּנִים אֲחֵר הַמִּבּוּל בְּנֵי יִפֶּת גִּמְרַם וּמִגְוֹם וּמִדַּי וַיִּין וַתִּבֵּל

Most columns in the Torah have breaks in them, and almost every parashah has breaks. In fact, there are only two parashiyot that have no breaks, where the whole parashah is one long paragraph—and Vayeitzei is one of them. So, if you are ever up on the bimah reading this parashah from the Torah, you better keep your place, because there are no breaks to help you find it if you lose it!





בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

This week's עברית טל /A Moment of Hebrew highlights the meeting of Yaakov and Rahel at the well (p. 6). They are not the only couple who meet at a well in the Torah. Moshe also met his future wife Tzipporah, daughter of Yitro the priest of Midian, at a well:

Shemot 2:16-17

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock; but shepherds came and drove them off. Moshe rose to their defense, and he watered their flock.

שמות ב:טז-יז

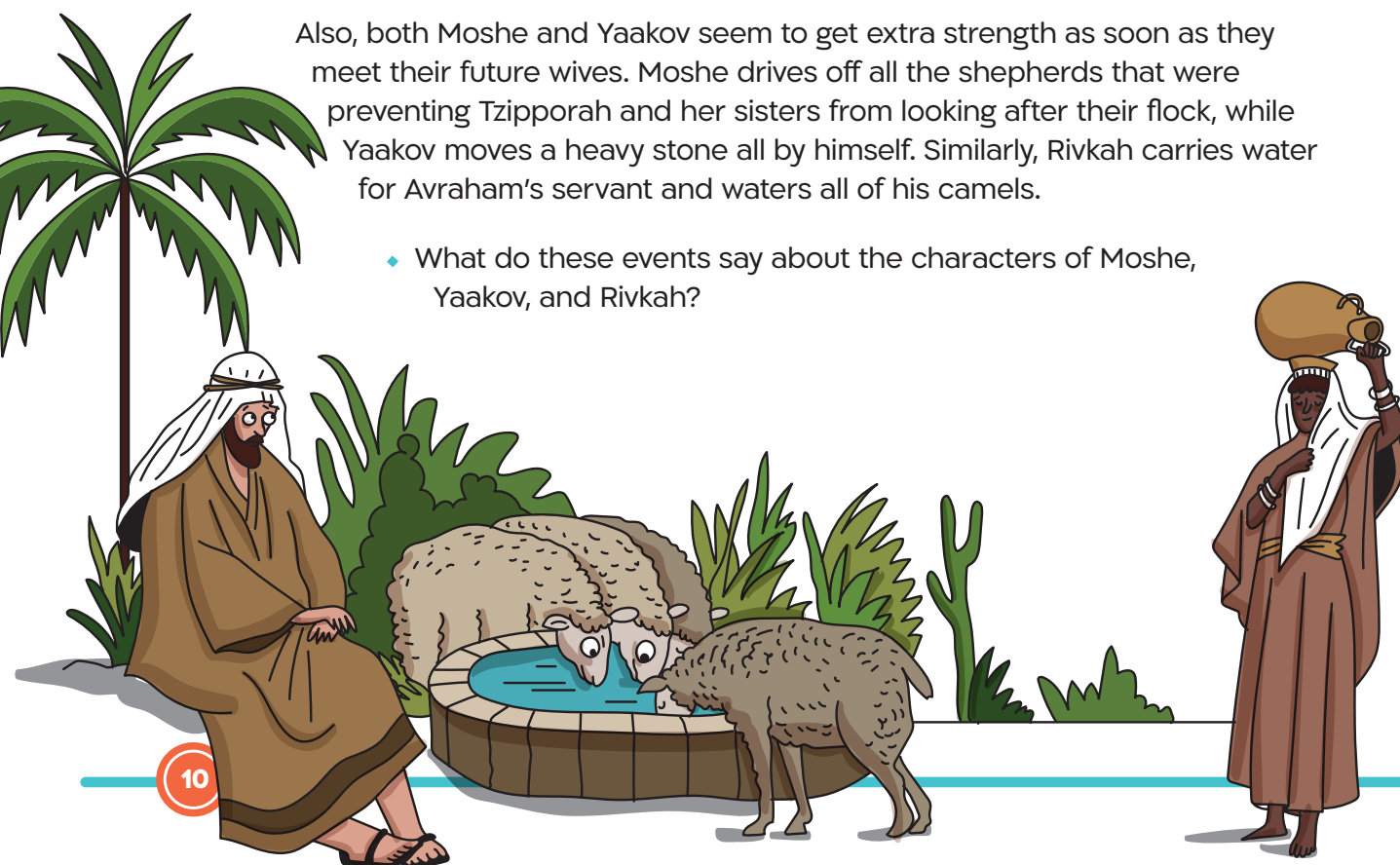
וּלְכֹהֵן מִדְיָן שִׁבְעַת בָּנוֹת וַתֵּבֹאנָה וַתִּדְלְנָה וַתְּמַלְאנָה אֶת־הַרְהָטִים לְהַשְׁקוֹת צֹאן אֲבִיהֶן: וַיָּבֹאוּ הָרָעִים וַיִּגְרְשׁוּם וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה וַיַּשְׁעֵן וַיַּשְׁק אֶת־צֹאנָם:

It's also very similar to the way Avraham's servant met Rivkah, Yitzhak's future wife (see Bereishit 24:15-22).

- ♦ In the Tanakh, it seems like wells are a place where men and women were likely to meet. Why do you think this might be?

Also, both Moshe and Yaakov seem to get extra strength as soon as they meet their future wives. Moshe drives off all the shepherds that were preventing Tzipporah and her sisters from looking after their flock, while Yaakov moves a heavy stone all by himself. Similarly, Rivkah carries water for Avraham's servant and waters all of his camels.

- ♦ What do these events say about the characters of Moshe, Yaakov, and Rivkah?





מי היו חכמינו • Who Were Our Sages?

Rashi, short for **Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki** (רש"י = רבי שלמה יצחקי), is without a doubt the most important פֶּרֶשׁן (parshan, Torah commentator) of all time. He lived a thousand years ago in France and composed extensive commentaries on the Tanakh and the Talmud. He had many students and a learned family (his daughters famously wore tefillin and married brilliant scholars), all of whom carried his teachings throughout the entire Jewish world.

His Tanakh commentary mostly uses midrashim and passages from the Talmud to explain pesukim. When a midrash is brought by Rashi, it often becomes instantly famous. His Talmud commentary is also extremely popular and useful. These are the first commentaries of their kind, and they were used by everyone who came after.

To this day, Rashi's work is the gold standard for being thorough, profound, and clear while using as few words as possible. When studying Torah or Talmud, his commentary is still usually the first one people read.





Shabbat Shalom!

~ שבת שלום ~

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Luz
2. They needed to wait until **all** the shepherds gathered (it seems the stone was too heavy to move without everyone's help)
3. The son: Dan; his mother: Bilhah
4. The דוּדָאִים (duda'im, mandrakes) that her son Reuven found in the field
5. Brown sheep, along with all spotted and speckled sheep and goats
6. Her father's terafim
7. יְגַר שְׁהִדוּתָא (Yegar Sahaduta), the name that Lavan gives the place he and Yaakov made their בְּרִית (brit, agreement)
8. בֵּית אֵל (Beit El; Bereishit 28:19) and גַּלְעָד (Gal'eid; 31:47)
9. 20
10. Yosef—אֶסֶף אֱלֹהִים אֶת חֲרָפְתִּי (asaf Elohim et herpati, God has taken away my disgrace; Bereishit 30:23) and יֹסֵף ה' לִי בֶן אֲחֵר (yosef Adonai li ben aher, may God add another son for me; 30:24)



Devash is a weekly parashah magazine that makes Torah learning sweet. By engaging directly with texts and taking kids seriously as Jews, Devash helps children and grownups discover new ideas, values, and sweet morsels in the weekly Torah portion. Devash is designed for kids aged 7-11 to read independently, or together with families and teachers.



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