

Seder Zeraim | Masechet Berachot, Daf 2-8 | Shabbat Parashat VaYechi | 8-14 Tevet (Jan. 5-11)

JOIN  
**TALMUD  
ISRAELI**  
TO START THE 14TH CYCLE  
OF *DAF YOMI* LEARNING  
— WELCOME TO —  
**Masechet  
Berachot**

**Daf 2: מִצְוַת קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע – THE MITZVAH  
OF RECITING THE SHEMA YISRAEL PRAYER**

מִסְכַּת בְּרַחוֹת

On the first *daf* of *Masechet Berachot* we learn about the *mitzvah* of *K'riyat Shema*. "*K'riyat Shema*" is the recitation of three Scriptural paragraphs, the first of which begins with the famous verse "*Shema Yisrael, HaShem Elo'key'nu, HaShem Echad*" (Hear O Israel, *HaShem* is our God, *HaShem* is One). Tradition calls on Jews to recite *K'riyat Shema* twice daily, once in the evening and once in the morning.

The evening recitation may be done as early as nightfall, identifiable when three stars appear in the sky. The window of opportunity to fulfill the *mitzvah* extends until the crack of dawn. However, the sages ruled that it is best to fulfill the obligation before midnight. This rabbinic safeguard was enacted lest people be negligent, inadvertently doze off, and consequently forget to recite *K'riyat Shema*.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל...

**Daf 3: בְּגוּרֵי דָוִד הַמְּלֶכֶת – KING DAVID'S LYRE**



Rabbi Shimon Chasida said that for many years King David would wake up at midnight and study Torah. In the absence of modern technology, how did King David know the exact moment of midnight? King David hung a lyre over his bed. When midnight arrived, the northern wind would blow and cause the strings of the lyre to vibrate and play on their own. King David would hear the sound of the lyre music and immediately jump up to study Torah.



FROM THE TALMUD  
SEDER ZERAIM  
MASECHET BERACHOT  
DAF 2

מִן הַתְּלִמוּד:

סדר זרעים, מסכת ברכות דף ב':  
”ואף על פי שאין ראייה לדבר זכר לדבר, שנאמר ואנחנו עושים במלאכה וחצים מחזיקים ברמחים מעלות השחר ועד צאת הכוכבים, ואומר והיו לנו הלילה משמר והיום מלאכה”

**Explanation**

From the verses that describe both *melacha* (labor) and *mishmar* (priestly guard) during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Talmud learns that "*Tzayt HaKochavim*" (the appearance of stars) marks the beginning of the night.

**HISTORY  
OF ISRAEL**

Talmud Israeli is delighted to welcome you to the 14th cycle of *Daf Yomi* learning! As we celebrate this momentous occasion, we are pleased to offer a novel way to learn about Israeli history. From now through Shavuot, each Talmud Israeli — *Daf Yomi For Us* publication will include a chronologically-driven section entitled "History of Israel". This week's publication covers early Zionism and the series will conclude with a look at Israel in 2020. Accompanying each section is a link to a short, unique video, created especially for the Talmud Israeli family of learners. The videos expand upon the materiel covered in each "History of Israel" segment of the publication. We are confident you will enjoy *Masechet Berachot* and this wonderful learning opportunity.



# גא'ל ישראל

## Daf 4: בְּרַכַּת הַגְּאֻלָּה – THE BLESSING OF REDEMPTION

*Birkat HaGeulah* (Blessing of Redemption) concludes with the words, “*Baruch Atah HaShem, Ga'al Yisrael.*” We bless God for redeeming our ancestors from Egypt. The blessing is recited after *K'riyat Shema* and immediately before the *Amidah*. It is prohibited to pause for any reason (e.g., to speak) between reciting “*Ga'al Yisrael*” and the *Amidah* (also known as “*Shmoneh Esrei*”).

Why is absolute silence essential at that juncture of the service? Because during the *Amidah* one stands before God, the King of Kings. How should a person behave when standing before a king? First, praise the king, approach, then submit various *bakashot* (requests). We too, praise the God for redeeming our people from Egypt and immediately after that, we offer the *Shmoneh Esrei* prayer in which we include our *bakashot*.

## Daf 5: 400 חֲבִיּוֹת הַיַּיִן שֶׁהִתְקַלְקְלוּ – 400 BARRELS OF WINE THAT FERMENTED

The Amora Rav Huna suffered a great financial loss. He had 400 barrels of wine, all of which fermented and turned to vinegar. When his friends, the other *Chachamim*, were informed of what had happened, they commented that when a person receives a Heavenly punishment, he must examine his actions to determine whether he has violated a prohibition and what he can do to rectify his behavior.

The *Chachamim* continued: “We heard you had a worker, an *a'rees* (tenant farmer) who tended to your grapevines, whom you did not pay the full share he deserved. Can you justify your actions?” Rav Huna explained that the worker had not been honest and that numerous times he took grapes from the vineyard without permission. The sages told Rav Huna that even though they believed his accusations against the worker to be true, he nonetheless needed to pay the worker his full salary. Rav Huna heeded the sages guidance. He paid the tenant farmer's full salary. Afterward, it appeared that a miracle had occurred. Some say Rav Huna's vinegar turned back into wine, and others say the price of vinegar rose until it was identical to the price of wine!



## Daf 6: מַתִּי עָרִיד לְרוֹדֵץ? – WHEN MUST ONE RUN TO ACT?

According to Rabbi Chelbo, Rav Huna stated: A person who leaves a synagogue should walk in a slow, relaxed manner, and should not run or take long strides. Running gives the impression that a person did not really want to be in the synagogue. On the other hand, when one approaches a synagogue, it is a mitzvah to show enthusiasm by rushing to get there. Although it is discouraged to rush on Shabbat, when heading to learn Torah it is encouraged to move quickly for the purpose of *limmud Torah*.

## Dvar Torah VAYECHI

“אָרוּד אֶפֶס כִּי עוֹלָם  
וְעִבְרַתֶּם כִּי קִשְׁתֶּה  
אֲחִלְקֶם בִּיעֲקֹב  
וְאֶפְיָעֶם בִּישׂוּרָאֵל”

Parshat Vayechi features Yaakov Avinu's end-of-life blessings to his children. More than simple well-wishes, they were poetic hints about the future that awaited the various tribes. Yaakov's relationship with Shimon and Levi was strained after the incident at Shechem, when Yaakov chastised those two sons for their murderous rampage. Years later, Yaakov was still concerned about Shimon and Levi's tendency toward violence. He decided that it was best to split them up lest they join together in another foolish round of bloodshed. "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." This was accomplished by denying the Levites a fixed portion in the Promised Land (they received 42 scattered cities). Yet despite Yaakov's less than favorable attitude toward Shimon and Levi, he does not curse them. Rather he cursed their worst attributes. "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel." From here we learn to avoid developing ill feelings toward a fellow; restrict one's animus toward the evil deed or trait and not toward the human being.



**Daf 7: כְּחֹהֵה שֶׁל תְּפִלַּת צְבוּר – THE POWER OF PUBLIC PRAYER**

Rabbi Yitzchak asked Rav Nachman why he did not pray in a synagogue. Rav Nachman replied that he was sick and did not have the strength to get to the shul. In response, Rabbi Yitzchak inquired why Rav Nachman did not gather nine others to pray together in his home. Rav Nachman contended that gathering a minyan in his home was also beyond his ability. Rabbi Yitzchak then told Rav Nachman: “If that is the case, then at least pray at the same time that the minyan prays in the synagogue!”

At this point, Rav Nachman questioned Rabbi Yitzchak: “Why are you making such a fuss about this matter?” Rabbi Yitzchak answered that Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai maintained that even a person who is forced to pray at home alone — and not in a minyan — should pray at the same time the minyan prays in the synagogue because that hour is considered an *et ratzon* (“time of favor”), when God is especially attentive to our prayers.

**Daf 8: שְׁנַיִם מִקְרָא וְאַחַד תַּרְגוּם – TWO TIMES IN HEBREW AND ONCE IN TRANSLATION**



Rav Huna Bar Yehudah said in the name of Rav Ami that during the course of each week a person should read the entire *Parashat HaShavua* (weekly Torah portion) that will be read in synagogue on Shabbat. The obligation is known as “*Shnayim Mikra v’Echad Targum*.”

The phrase “*Shnayim Mikra*” calls for reading the Torah portion twice in Hebrew, while “*Echad Targum*” connotes an additional reading of the Aramaic translation, Targum Onkelos. In many printed *chumshim*, Onkelos appears in a column next to the original Hebrew text. For those unfamiliar with Aramaic, it is appropriate to read a translation in one’s own vernacular. “*Shnayim Mikra v’Echad Targum*” is a meritorious practice that may result in a lengthy life.



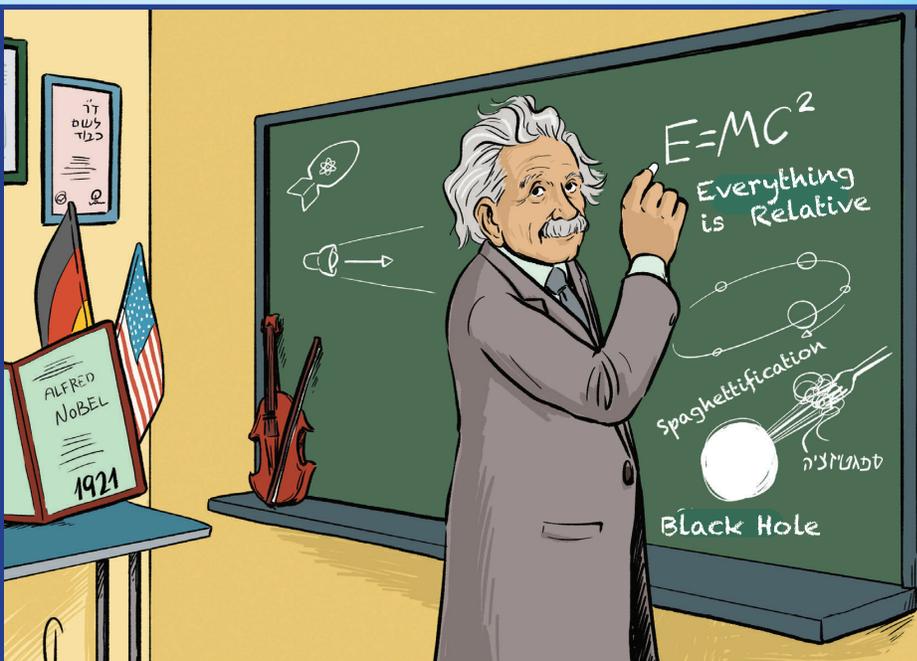
**QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

1. In what case is it permitted and even a considered a *mitzvah* to run on Shabbat?
2. What is “*Birkat Geulah*” and why is it forbidden to stop and speak between recitation of this blessing and the *Amidah/Shmoneh Esrei*?
3. How did King David know the precise time of midnight?
4. What is the *mitzvah* of *K’riyat Shema*, and how many times per day is it observed?

**\*NOTE**  
ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THIS DAF YOMI PUBLICATION

Please email answers to questions to:  
[answers@talmudisraeli.co.il](mailto:answers@talmudisraeli.co.il)  
for a chance to win a \$50 Amazon Gift Card!

**CAN YOU GUESS WHO?**



Look closely at the illustration and answer the following questions:

1. Who is depicted in the illustration?
2. What important award did he receive and in what year?
3. What is the relationship between the word is “Everything is relative” and this man?
4. What job was offered to him, which he refused to accept?

1) Albert Einstein; 2) The Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921; 3) Einstein developed “The Theory of Relativity”; 4) President of the State of Israel.





# HISTORY OF ISRAEL

[The Rise of Zionism — World War II]

**1862** ... Moshe Hess Publishes **ROME & JERUSALEM**

**1880** ... First Aliyah Begins; Petach Tikvah Established

**1896** ... Herzl Publishes "THE JEWISH STATE"

**1897** ... First Zionist Congress

**1909** ... First Kibbutz Founded

**1909** ... Tel Aviv Founded

**1917** ... Balfour Declaration

**1918** ... Allenby Liberates Jerusalem

**1920** ... Haganah Founded

**1929** ... Hebron Massacre

**1932** ... Hitler comes to Power

**1936** ... Arab Revolt

**1939** ... Germans Invade Poland; WW II Begins

**1939** ... British White Paper



In 1880, the first wave of settlers (known as the First Aliyah) moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. After Theodore Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897, practical steps were taken both to help Jews settle in the land and to achieve political recognition for the creation of a Jewish homeland. In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, promising to establish a Jewish homeland. After World War I, the British were given the mandate to rule Palestine based on that promise.

Jewish settlement of the land grew rapidly during the 1920's and early 1930's. In 1936, following the rise of Hitler, immigration to the *Yishuv* from Germany accelerated, and the Arabs who lived in the land revolted. The British put down the revolt. However, in 1939, with World War II on the horizon, the British issued the White Paper, severely restricting Jewish immigration and their ability to buy land in *Eretz Yisrael*.



“ We are here to lay the foundation stone of the house which is to shelter the Jewish Nation. Anti-Semitism has given our strength again. We have returned home...” — Theodore Herzl at First Zionist Congress



“ His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object,.....” — Excerpted from *The Balfour Declaration*, Lord Arthur Balfour, Nov. 2nd, 1917



“ We need people ready to serve at any cost, to do whatever task Palestine requires. The metal, whatever is needed to forge anything, whatever the national machine will require. Is there a wheel lacking? I am that wheel. Nails? screws? A block? ... I am willing to do it all.” — Yoseph Trumpeldor, 1917

Modern Zionism began in Eastern Europe in the 19th century, when a group of rabbis, began to write about the need to immediately achieve the ancient Jewish dream of returning to *Eretz Yisrael*.