

HASHKAMA WEEKLY

פָּרָשַׁת שְׁמוֹת
כ' טבְתִ שְׁפָ"ו
JANUARY 9, 2026
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חכמה ב-AI תאמין!

By Reb Gemini

Consider the following “Torah” thought, generated by Gemini: Did the AI get it right? Do you find it to be accurate? Or did the technology miss the boat?

Morai VeRabbosai, as we open the heilige Sefer Shemos, we are immediately confronted with a list of names: “Ve’eilah shemos bnei Yisrael...” Rashi instantly asks why the Torah repeats these names when they were already counted in bereishis. The Medrash (Vayikra Rabba 32:5) reveals the depth of this repetition: the Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Mitzrayim specifically because they did not change their names. In the crushing darkness of Galus, surrounded by the tumah of Egyptian society, Reuven remained Reuven, and Shimon remained Shimon. The Beis HaLevi explains that this was not merely a technicality; it was a fortress of identity. By clinging to their names, they built a separation—a havdalah—between themselves and the moral decay of their oppressors. They refused to let the culture of Egypt define their essence. It is precisely this stubborn preservation of identity that leads us to the pivotal moment of the burning bush. When Moshe Rabbeinu shepherds the flock, the Pasuk says he saw the bush burning but not consumed, and he said, “Asura na ve’er’eh”—I will turn aside and see. Rashi explains that Moshe turned away from his business specifically to investigate the distress of the bush. The Alter of Kelm teaches us that this ability to “stop and look” is the defining characteristic of a Jewish leader. The connection is electric: because the Bnei Yisrael kept their names and refused to assimilate into the cold, indifferent culture of Mitzrayim, they produced a Moshe who possessed the sensitivity to notice suffering. The Egyptian culture was one of self-interest and blindness to the pain of others; the Jewish identity—preserved through our names—is one of empathy. By holding onto who we are, we retain the capacity to see the burning bushes in the lives of those around us.

Practical Takeaway: We often think that fitting in makes us more relatable, but the Torah teaches the opposite. This week, try to perform an act of specifically Jewish identity in a public space—whether it is reciting a bracha out loud before eating or wearing your yarmulke with a bit more pride. Remember that by strengthening your distinct identity, you are not walling yourself off from the world; you are refining your ability to bring true compassion and leadership into it, just as Moshe did.

News & Simchos!

Regular Kiddush This Week
With Cholent, Kugel, and Short Shuir

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לעילוי נשמה לאה בת רפאל חיין





Shabbus Zmanim

מנחה	1:30 pm
הדלקה	4:28 pm
מנחה - קבלת שבת	--- pm
שകיעה	4:46 pm
עלות השחר (16.1/72)	5:53/6:08 am
צ' החמה	7:20:47 am
7:15 am	שחרית
Hotkiddush & Shiur after davening	
ס"ז קראת שמע	9:06/9:42 am
ס"ז תפילה	10:05/10:29 am
חצאת היום	12:03:37 pm
מנחה גדולה (30)	12:33:37 pm
מנחה קטנה (גר"א)	2:49:08 pm
פלג המנחה (גר"א)	3:48:07 pm
מנחה	--- pm
שקיעה	4:47 pm
צה"כ ר' משה (8.5/50)	5:33/5:37 pm
5:39 pm (52)	עריב (52)
צה"כ (60/72)	5:47/5:59 pm



Next Week's Zmanim

מנחה	1:30 pm
הדלקה	4:36 pm
שקיעה	4:54 pm
שחרית	7:15 am
שקיעה	4:55 pm
עריב (52)	5:47 pm

This Week's Riddle

Riddle: In this parsha, where do five verses in a row begin with the same word?

he said."

With the word "Vayomer" - And

Answer: Verses 3:11-15 all begin



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משל ונמשל ב-אי תאമין!

By Reb Gemini

Mashal: Morai VeRabbosai, imagine a powerful King who rules over a vast empire. One day, a report comes to the palace that a distant province has been struck by a terrible famine. The King immediately orders his treasury opened and sends wagons of grain and gold. But then, to the shock of his ministers, the King announces, "I am going there myself." His generals protest, "Your Majesty! The roads are treacherous, the air is thick with dust and despair. Send your emissaries; you must remain in the safety of the palace!" The King shakes his head and says, "If I stay here, I will know of their hunger, but I will not know their hunger." Upon arriving, the King sees a peasant collapsing under a heavy sack of wheat. Without hesitation, the King jumps from his royal carriage, his velvet robes trailing in the mud, and hoists the sack onto his own shoulder to help the man. The peasant cries out in shame, "My King, this is beneath your dignity!" The King answers, "My dignity is found in feeling the weight of your burden. Only when my back aches like yours can I truly be your King."

Nimshal: The Nimshal strikes at the very heart of Parshas Shemos. We read about the beginning of the Shibud Mitzrayim (the enslavement in Egypt) and the rise of our first leader, Moshe Rabbeinu. The Torah tells us, "Vayigdal Moshe vayetzei el echav, vayar besivlosam"—And Moshe grew up, and he went out to his brothers, and he saw their burdens (Shemos 2:11). Rashi brings a crucial insight: "He set his eyes and his heart to be distressed over them." He didn't just observe the slavery as a tourist; he internalized it. The great Mashgiach, Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt"l, teaches us that Moshe didn't just look at the suffering; he looked into it. The Medrash tells us he physically put his shoulder under the bricks to help the weary Yid. Why? Because one cannot lead Klal Yisrael from a balcony. One must be nosei b'ol im chaveiro—one must carry the yoke with his fellow. Moshe Rabbeinu, living in the lap of luxury in Pharaoh's palace, understood that to be a Jew means that when another Jew bleeds, you feel the pain in your own flesh. He left the comfort of the palace not to supervise, but to share in the pain. This deep, internal empathy is the prerequisite for Torah leadership. **Practical Takeaway:** Here is a practical takeaway for us this week. We live in a world of constant distraction, where we are often desensitized to the tzaros (troubles) of others. We hear bad news, we say "Oy, nebach," and we continue with our day. The Mussar demand for us is to stop and emulate Moshe Rabbeinu. When you hear that a friend or community member is struggling—whether it is with parnassah (livelihood), chinuch habanim (raising children), or health—do not just offer a sigh. Take thirty seconds to close your eyes and vividly imagine yourself in their situation. Feel the weight of their "sack" on your own shoulders. Then, ask yourself: "What can I do to lift just one corner of this burden?" Even if it is just a phone call or a heartfelt Kapitel Tehillim said with tears, let your action stem from a place of shared pain (nosei b'ol), not just distant sympathy.

GOOD SHABBUS!