



סיור בש"ס

Tour of the Talmud



Seder Zeraim

Chodesh Shvat 5780

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Introduction

Shalom L'Kulam,

The chinuch theme for the remainder of the year is סיור בש"ס/Siur B'Shas or Tour of the Talmud. As many of you probably know, Am Yisrael just celebrated a huge milestone called the Siyum HaShas. Hundreds of thousands of Jews worked for 7.5 years, learning one daf of Gemara every day, culminating in a siyum, completion, of the entire Talmud. Through our noseh we will experience our own mini-Daf Yomi experience by introducing our chanichim to Torah Shebeal Peh, the Shisha Sidrei Mishna and the Gemara. Each month we will focus on a different one of the 6 sedarim of the Mishna. The first peula of this choveret is meant to introduce chanichim to the theme of the year by helping them understand what Torah Shebeal Peh is and how it was passed down.

This month we start with the first seder in Shas- Seder Zeraim. Seder Zeraim is perfect for the month of Shvat because it discusses the agricultural mitzvot, and in Shvat we celebrate Tu B'Shvat, the new year of the trees, a very important concept in Seder Zeraim. The seder opens with Masechet Brachot which teaches us about how to thank Hashem for the produce He has given us through *brachot*, *birkat hamazon*, and *tefilla*. Our second peula will help chanichim understand the importance of brachot and being grateful for everything Hashem gives us. The third peula will teach chanichim about the mitzvot of Leket, Shichica, and Peah which are taught in Masechet Peah. They will learn about why we give tzedaka and experience how farmers do these mitzvot. The last peula is about Bikkurim which we learn about in- you guessed it- Masechet Bikkurim. We will go back in time and experience how it felt to bring our first fruits to the Beit Hamikdash in Yerushalayim.

This choveret includes many games, stories, and materials. You are not supposed to try to fit every game and story into your snif. Read through the choveret and customize the peula to see what works best for your snif. Do your chanichim like skits? Do games with snacks help motivate them to get involved? Do they like to run around or can they sit down and have a discussion? This choveret is meant to give you the tools but it is up to you to create the finished product.

To access an editable version of the choveret visit: tinyurl.com/choveretzeraim and go to 'File', 'Make a Copy,' and then you will have your own Google Doc to edit. The Materials Packet for this choveret can be found at tinyurl.com/choveretzeraimmaterials.

Feel free to be in touch with any questions or suggestions.

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Peula #1¹: Intro to Shas

Introduction: In this peula we will introduce chanichim to the theme of the year by helping them understand what Torah SheBeal Peh is and how it was passed down.

Tochen: The first two perakim of Pirkei Avot describe how the Torah was passed down from Hashem to Moshe to Yehoshua to the Zekeinim to the Neviim to the Anshei Kenneset HaGedola and then to the Tannaim. The **Torah SheBichtav**, the written Torah, is the 5 books of Chumash which Hashem told Moshe to write down, basically a Sefer Torah. Then there is the **Torah SheBeal Peh**, the Spoken Torah. Torah SheBeal Peh are laws that explanations and laws that the Rabbis learned and passed down. Examples of laws in the Spoken Torah are: Hashem told us to live in Sukkot during the holiday of Sukkot, but doesn't explain in the Written Torah exactly how a Sukkah needs to look, so the Spoken Torah explains. Examples of new laws that the Rabbis added are reading Megilla on Purim or lighting the Menorah on Chanukah. These are events that happened after Moshe's time but the rabbis chose to celebrate and created holidays.

Discussion Points:

- Start off this section explaining to the chanichim what the Torah SheBichtav and Torah SheBeal Peh are.
- Tell the chanichim that we have two types of Torahs
- Ask them if they know what they are, or what they're called, do they know what they are?
- What is the point of the Torah?
- What is your favorite Torah story? Mitzvah?
- Why are you proud to be a Jew and keep the Torah?
 - We can connect to Hashem, Hashem can explain to us how to live

Game: Mesorah-phone

Tell the Chanichim that they have the job of passing down the Torah. The games Telephone and Broken Telephone represent two types of transmission (passing down), Telephone represents the type that we got exactly from Hashem and hasn't changed, and Broken Telephone represents how the Rabbis explain and add to the Torah. Play each version and have them say what they said out loud at the end! Show them how even if there are new things added, it all originally comes from Hashem! (And if they mess up, especially the Telephone game, make sure to explain that when our Rabbis passed down the Torah, they didn't make mistakes!)

- Play both versions- **Written Torah-phone:** Hashem (the first person) will say something and everyone has to try and pass down the same phrase.
- **Spoken Torah-phone**, the first person (Hashem) will say a phrase and each person either says something related to the previous phrase.
 - Ex: Hashem says, "Rosh HaShana" then Moshe can say "Shofar" then Yehoshua can say "Ram"...
 - Harder option: Each person has to repeat what was said and also add to the phrase each time.
 - Ex: "During the holiday of sukkot... you have to build a sukkah... with four walls... and schach on top... and have your meals there..."

Props: Have kids wear name tags of the people in the Shalshet HaMesorah, the chain of passing down the Torah.

¹ (Printable Materials for this peula can be found on Pages 1-9 of the Materials Packet)

Mishna:

In the Mishna the chachamim were trying to understand what Hashem was telling us in the torah. To illustrate this idea have the chanichim work on puzzles or play pictionary.

Game #2: Pictionary

- Cut out shapes before Shabbat
- Pick one chanich to be the “drawer”
- Give them an object to draw with the shapes
- The other chanichim have to guess what they are drawing

A special thing about Torah Shebeal Peh is that it is full of a lot of debates. Because our chachamim were trying to understand how to do the Mitzvot the best way- they had a lot of different opinions about what that means.

- To illustrate this idea, ask chanichim to tell you what they see in different optical illusions.
- Explain that the same way 2 people can see different things in an illusion, our chachamim also had different ways of seeing our mitzvot. Like how late at night can you say shema or how does a person become tameh?

Gemara:

The way the Gemara works is that it takes the debates from the Mishna and tries to understand each side. Why did each rabbi say what he did?

- To illustrate this idea play Vote with your feet.
- After each question have chanichim move to different parts of the room but they have to explain why they picked what they did
- Examples:
 - Coke vs. Pepsi
 - Water is wet vs. water is not wet
 - LeBron James vs. Michael Jordan
 - Laurel vs. Yanny
 - Disney vs. Pixar
 - Starbucks vs. Dunkin Donuts
 - A hot dog is a sandwich vs. a hot dog is not a sandwich

Peula #2: Masechet Brachot: Gratitude²

Introduction: In this peula we will introduce chanichim to Masechet Brachot. The Gemara tells us: אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: בַּר פָּפָא: כָּל הַנִּהְנֶה מִן הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּלֹא בְרָכָה — כְּאִילוּ גֻזַּל לְהַקְדֹּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. Anyone who benefits from this world without saying a bracha, its like they stole from Hashem. Everything in the world really belongs to Hashem as we learn from the pasuk in Tehillim: לַיהוָה הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוּכָהּ - The world and everything in it is Hashem's.

We will help chanichim think about:

- The importance of saying brachot before eating
- Different types of brachot
- Gratitude, being thankful for what we have

Game #1: Socks Off

- Have 2 chanichim get on their hands and knees with socks pulled half off their feet.
- Each has to try and steal the others socks.
- Whoever has stolen the other's socks first wins.
- Or have all of the chanichim play, if they lose both of their socks they are out, and whoever has their socks on the longest wins.

Discussion Points:

- How did it feel to have your socks stolen?
- Why does it bother us when someone doesn't ask for permission?
- What are examples of things that bother you when someone doesn't ask permission?
 - Ex: Sibling borrows clothes/toys without asking, someone comes into your room without asking, a friend borrows a pen/belonging without asking, someone takes your snack without asking

To learn about the experience of getting permission play Mother May I.

- One player is designated Mother
- Standing on opposite sides of a room or field the children take turns asking "Mother may I _____?" filling the blank with a suggested movement.
- Mother replies, "Yes, you may" or "No, you may not, but you may take _____ instead" and adds a suggestion.
- Any child who forgets to ask "Mother may I?" must return to the starting line.
- The first child to reach Mother wins the game and becomes Mother.

Discussion Points:

- When you come home and take out food or snacks who does the food belong to?
- Most children will probably say their family or parents- challenge them- does it belong to anyone else?
- Why is stealing bad? Have you ever stolen? Why or why not?
- Do you think of eating without a bracha as stealing? Why is it like stealing from Hashem?
- How is saying a bracha on our food like the game "Mother May I"?

Seder Zeraim starts with a Gemara called Masechet Brachot

- What do you think Masechet Brachot is about? What kind of mitzvahs?

² (Printable Materials for this peula can be found on Pages 10-20 of the Materials Packet)

- It discusses the brachot we say before and after eating and davening
- To learn about different brachot we will play a few games.
- In Bracha Bee we are going to be challenged to see if we know the brachot on different types of foods. A more challenging round includes brachas on different types of events.

Game Option #1: Bracha Bee

- Bring in assorted food that the chanichim will have to guess the bracha on.
- You will show a food and whoever raises their hand first (have each one whisper their answer to a judge) gets to say what bracha they think the food is
- If they are correct they get a point for their team. Once the right answer is said the winner say their bracha out loud and gets to eat the snack.
- Suggested Foods:
 - **Banana**- Ha'Adama
 - **Rice Krispies**- Mezonot (Bonus Question: What is the Bracha Achrona? Borei Nefashot)
 - **Oreos**- Mezonot
 - **Frosted Flakes**- Ha'Adama
 - **Crispix**- One Crispix should be split. Recite Mezonot and eat the darker half (rice) first. Then recite Ha'Adama and eat the lighter half (corn).
 - **Grape Juice**- HaGafen
 - **Grapes**- Ha'Etz

Game Option #2: Bracha Jeopardy

- Similar to Bracha Bee but Jeopardy style- See the Materials Booklet for game pieces

In Birkat HaMazon we thank Hashem for giving us food to eat.

Play these games to help chanichim understand the importance of being grateful:

Game #1: Thank You WA!

- Play WA! But instead of passing the "WA" each person has to send a thank you to someone else in the circle
- Ex: "Thank you for being a great madrich" and the person who was sent raises their hands and says "You're welcome for being a great madrich" (players on the side can just say WA or repeat the thank you)

Game #2: Gratitude Hopskotch

- Lay out bigger and smaller circles from (using 2 colors might be helpful)
- Bigger circles should be close together and smaller circles should be further apart
- Chanichim take turns trying to jump from one side of the room to the other
- Before they hop they have to say something they are thankful for
- If they say thank you for a bigger thing (my parents, my house, food) they can hop to a big circle
- If they say thank you for a smaller thing (having snack at snif, new phone, having a warm coat) they can hop to a smaller circle
- Madrichim help determine the type circle they get to jump to

Discussion Points:

- What are things that you never realized you were grateful for?
- Why is it harder to think about the smaller things?
 - Less obvious, we're so used to having them etc.
- Why is it important to be thankful for the small things along with the big things?

Peula #3: Leket, Shichicha, Peah: Tzedaka

Introduction: The Torah in Vayikra 19:9-10 and Devarim 24:19-21 tells us about the Mitzvot of Leket, Shichicha, and Peah. In this Peula we will introduce chanichim to the mitzvot of Leket, Shichicha, and Peah. Through the triggers they will learn why it is important to help others get food or what they need. In the Leket game they will pretend they are farmers or aniyim who are collecting from the field.

Trigger Option #1: Marshmallow Challenge

- Give each Chanich a marshmallow on a stick (or M&Ms, Oreos, etc. resting on a spoon)
- Tell them that they are allowed to eat a marshmallow but...
- **There is one very important rule:** They cannot bend their elbows at all!
- This will prove to be quite challenging and pretty much impossible.
- Encourage the chanichim to keep trying until they realize that to eat a snack they will have to work together and instead of trying to eat their own snack they'll have to eat someone else's and let the other person eat theirs.

Trigger Option #2: Candy Climb

- Before Shabbat, tape candy bars onto the wall high enough so kids can't reach them without standing on chairs.
- Tell kids the object of the game is to reach the candy bars without the help of furniture
- Let kids try to grab the candy bars.
- Once they've given up (or hopefully they realize on their own) have them form groups of three and work together to reach the candy bars. Two kids can form a step by locking their hands together and lifting the third person high enough to reach a candy bar for all three.

Discussion Points:

- What did you learn from this game?
- This game was meant to show us how tzedaka works- How do you think this game is related to Tzedaka?
- Just like in the game, sometimes in life people cannot get what they need on their own. So they rely on other people supporting them and helping them so they can get what they need.
- Why is it important to give Tzedaka?

Transition to the topic of Leket, Shichicha, and Peah

- Have you ever heard of the mitzvot of Leket, Shichicha, and Peah?
- They are mitzvot in the Torah that Hashem gave to farmers
- Peah means corner, it means that farmers have to leave the corners of their fields unpicked so poor people can get food from there
- Shichicha means forgotten, if farmers accidentally forgot to collect from a part of their field they have to leave it for the poor
- Leket refers to the produce/food that the farmers dropped, they have to leave it on the ground for the poor

Leket Game

- Scatter laffy taffies or other small candies, or small objects that can be counted up, around the room
- Announce which corners of the room are left aside for Peah
- Divide chanichim into Farmers and Aniyim
- Farmers may collect candies from around the room but they have to use one hand and they cannot stick candies in their pockets or carry them in their shirts
- Farmers can drop their candies into their buckets or designated areas and then go back for more
- If the farmers drop any candy they cannot go back to pick it up
- Give Farmers 2 minutes to collect as much as they can
- Then allow the Aniyim to go, remind them that they are collecting what the farmers didn't pick up. They can collect from the corners and they are allowed to pick up what they drop.
- **More ways to play:**
 - Assign numbers or colors to each corner of the room (mark off quarters with tape before shabbat). Every few minutes call out a new corner and if Farmer chanichim are in that corner they have to drop all of their candies.
 - Before shabbat print and tape pictures of produce like wheat on the game pieces
 - Play like human hungry hungry hippos if you have scooters/buckets see:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHjKjr0kNQ4>

Discussion Points:

- How did this game show you how Leket, Shichicha, and Peah work?
- When people were Aniyim, how did it feel to see the produce being dropped by the farmers?
- Do you think farmers today still do these mitzvot?
- Show and tell the chanichim about the organization in Israel called Leket
- Leket allows farmers to do the mitzvah of Leket, Shichicha, and Peah. But instead of having poor people go to the field to collect food, they have people volunteer to collect the produce which is then donated to poor people around Israel
- Has anyone here ever done chessed at Leket?
- What are ways that you give tzedaka?



Peula #4: Bikkurim³

Introduction: Masechet Bikkurim describes how Bnei Yisrael would bring Bikkurim, their first fruits, to the Beit Hamikdash to thank Hashem for the wonderful land and produce He gave us. The bikkurim were brought from the Shivat HaMinim starting from Shavuot, but the new year was counted from Tu BiShvat. In this peula we will pretend we are bringing our own Bikkurim to Yerushalayim!

To learn about the Bikkurim, read Mishna Bikkurim 3:⁴

How were the bikkurim taken up [to Jerusalem]? All [the inhabitants of] the cities of the maamad would assemble in the city of the maamad, and they would spend the night in the open street and they would not enter any of the houses. Early in the morning the officer would say: "Let us arise and go up to Zion, into the house of the Lord our God" (Jeremiah 31:5). The flute would play before them, until they reached the Temple Mount. When they reached the Temple Mount even King Agrippas would take the basket and place it on his shoulder and walk as far as the Temple Court. When he got to the Temple Court, the Levites would sing the song: "I will extol You, O Lord, for You have raised me up, and You have not let my enemies rejoice over me" (Psalms 30:2).	ב- כיצד מעלין את הבכורים. כל העירות שבמעמד מתכנסות לעיר של מעמד, ולגין ברחובות של עיר, ולא היו נכנסין לבתים. ולמשכים, היה הממנה אומר (ירמיה לא), קומו ונעלה ציון אל בית ה' אלהינו: החליל מכה לפניהם עד שמגיעין להר הבית. הגיעו להר הבית, אפילו אגריפס המלך נוטל הסל על כתפו ונכנס, עד שמגיע לעזרה. הגיע לעזרה ודברו הלויים בשיר, ארוממה ה' כי דליתני ולא שמחת איבי לי (תהלים ל):
Those who lived near [Jerusalem] would bring fresh figs and grapes, while those who lived far away would bring dried figs and raisins. An ox would go in front of them, his horns bedecked with gold and with an olive-crown on its head. The flute would play before them until they would draw close to Jerusalem. When they drew close to Jerusalem they would send messengers in advance, and they would adorn their bikkurim. The governors and chiefs and treasurers [of the Temple] would go out to greet them, and according to the rank of the entrants they would go forth. All the skilled artisans of Jerusalem would stand up before them and greet them saying, "Our brothers, men of such and such a place, we welcome you in peace."	ג- הקרובים מביאים התאנים והענבים, והרחוקים מביאים גרוגרות וצמוקים. והשור הולך לפניהם, וקרניו מצופות זהב, ועטרת של זית בראשו. החליל מכה לפניהם, עד שמגיעים קרוב לירושלים. הגיעו קרוב לירושלים, שלחו לפניהם, ועטרו את בכוריהם. הפחות, הסגנים והגזברים יוצאים לקראתם. לפי כבוד הנכנסים היו יוצאים. וכל בעלי אמניות שבירושלים עומדים לפניהם ושואלין בשלומם, אחינו אנשי המקום פלוני, באתם לשלום:
While the basket was still on his shoulder he recites from: "I acknowledge this day before the LORD your God that I have entered the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to assign us" (Deuteronomy 26:3) until he completes the passage. Rabbi Judah said: until [he reaches] "My father was a fugitive Aramean" (v. When he reaches, "My father was a fugitive Aramean", he takes the basket off his shoulder and holds it by its edges, and the priest places his hand beneath it and waves it. He then recites from "My father was a fugitive Aramean" until he completes the entire passage. He then deposits the basket by the side of the altar, bow and depart.	ד- עודהו הסל על כתפו, קורא מהנתי היום לה' אלקיך (דברים כו), עד שגומר כל הפרשה. רבי יהודה אומר עד ארמי אבד אבי. הגיע לארמי אבד אבי, מוריד הסל מעל כתפו ואוחזו בשפתותיו, וכהן מניח ידו תחתיו ומניפו, וקורא מארמי אבד אבי עד שהוא גומר כל הפרשה, ומניחו בצד המזבח, והשתחוה ויצא:
The rich would bring their bikkurim in baskets overlaid with silver or gold, while the poor used wicker-baskets of peeled willow-branches, and the baskets and the bikkurim were given to the priest.	ו- העשירים מביאים בכוריהם בקלתות של כסף ושל זהב, והעניים מביאין אותם בסלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה, והסלים והבכורים נתנין לכהנים:
Rabbi Shimon ben Nanas says: they would decorate the bikkurim [with produce] other than the seven species. But Rabbi Akiva says: they may decorate only with produce of the seven kinds.	ז- רבי שמעון בן ננס אומר, מעטרין את הבכורים חוץ משבעת המינים. רבי עקיבא אומר, אין מעטרין את הבכורים אלא משבעת המינים:

Tell chanichim about Bikkurim and that we are going to play a game about getting the bikkurim to Yerushalayim.

Think of games or activities that can simulate the experience.

Here are some ideas:

- Simulate the people waiting in the street waiting for the Mimuneh to tell them its time to go:
- **Game Option #1: Guess the Time**
 - Have chanichim close their eyes and tell them that they have to try to guess when its been 30 seconds to pretend like they
- **Game Option #2: The Number Game**
 - Count to 10 (or higher) without having anyone say the number at the same time

³ (Printable Materials for this peula can be found on Pages 21-27 of the Materials Packet)

⁴ https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Bikkurim.3.1?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

- Then play a Relay Race to simulate bringing the bikkurim to Yerushalayim
 - Example rounds:
 - **Over Under**- Have chanichim pass a fruit or ball down a line but they have to alternate passing the ball over their head and then under their legs
 - **Neck Pass**- Using a fruit or ball, have chanichim pass the ball down only using their necks, if they drop it they have to start again
- If you know the song "Somachti B'Omrin Li Beit Hashem Neilech" teach it to your chanichim!
- Here are some games about singing that you can use to simulate Bnei Yisrael singing their way to Yerushalayim or the Leviim singing in the Beit Hamikdash:
 - <https://www.ashleydanyew.com/posts/2015/15-singing-games-for-childrens-choir>
 - Have children form a line. Choose a person on the end to be the leader.
 - As everyone sings, the leader takes them around the room.
 - At the end of the song, when everyone sings, "We will stop this way!" the leader strikes a pose and everyone copies.
 - Then, the leader joins the end of the line and the next person in line becomes the leader.

Game #2: Bikkurim Headbands

- Have one chanich hold the card on their forehead (Or if you have the game, bring the headbands)
- The chanich should ask the group YES or No questions to figure out what food they are.
- You might want to help the kids with pre-prepared questions- Ex: Am I purple or green? Do I have seeds? Am I a grain? Am I sweet? Am I sour? Do I grow on a tree?
- Tip: Try to make them guess if they would have been brought as bikkurim, are they one of the Shivat HaMinim?
 - Make sure to show the chanichim that this is how they would bring their bikkurim to the Beit HaMikdash, with a basket full of fruit on their head (or shoulder).

Discussion Points:

- Why is there a mitzvah to bring bikkurim to the Beit HaMikdash?
- Why was it such a special mitzvah?
- What do you think it means to sacrifice your first fruits to Hashem?
- What are things Hashem gives us in our lives?

Story of Oven of Akhnai: Lo B'Shamayim Hi

From: <https://www.bimbam.com/achnai/>

There once was oven made of tile and sand,
The owner didn't know if he could use to bake
So he put the question in the Rabbis hands
And their words wound the oven like a coiling snake.

Rabbi Eliezer said that it was pure; Rabban Gamliel did not agree
Rabbi Eliezer said, "I am sure."
All the other Rabbis said, "we shall see."

Lo Bashamayim Hi

Eliezer said, "I know I'm right;
Let this tree uproot if the law agrees."
Out came the tree, then the Rabbis fight,
Said, "No proof can be brought from carob trees"

He asked for the river to change its course
Prove his point, run the other way,
But the movement of the river had no force
Gamliel and the Rabbis could not be swayed.

Eliezer pleaded to the walls
and they started caving in without delay.
Rabbi Yehoshua admonished them
So they're stuck at an angle to this day.

Lo Bashamayim Hi

And then Rabbi Eliezer cried out in frustration, "If the law is on my side, let it be proved from Heaven!"

"Why do you argue with Rabbi Eliezer when you know in these matters he is always right!"

Chorus:

But Rabbi Yehoshua rose and exclaimed, "The law is not in heaven!"

Lo Bashamayim Hi

God smiles and laughs at what God sees,

"Ah, my sons have defeated me."

The Rabbis voted to cast him out
But who should let Eliezer know,
So destruction of the world won't come about?
His student, Akiva said, "I will go."

He wrapped himself in black and sat nearby
"The Rabbis separate themselves from you."
Eliezer rent his clothes and began to cry
As the crops on the earth did wither too.

The Caving Walls of the Study Hall

Talmud, Bava Metzia 59a–b

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/352329/jewish/The-Walls-of-the-Study-Hall.htm

[An oven] that was cut into parts and sand was placed between the parts, Rabbi Eliezer maintained that it is pure (i.e., not susceptible to ritual impurity). The other sages said that it is susceptible to ritual impurity....

On that day, Rabbi Eliezer brought them all sorts of proofs, but they were rejected. Said he to them: "If the law is as I say, may the carob tree prove it." The carob tree was uprooted from its place a distance of 100 cubits. Others say, 400 cubits. Said they to him: "One cannot prove anything from a carob tree."

Said [Rabbi Eliezer] to them: "If the law is as I say, may the aqueduct prove it." The water in the aqueduct began to flow backwards. Said they to him: "One cannot prove anything from an aqueduct."

Said he to them: "If the law is as I say, then may the walls of the house of study prove it." The walls of the house of study began to cave in. Rabbi Joshua rebuked them, "If Torah scholars are debating a point of Jewish law, what are your qualifications to intervene?" The walls did not fall, in deference to Rabbi Joshua, nor did they straighten up, in deference to Rabbi Eliezer. They still stand there at a slant.

Said he to them: "If the law is as I say, may it be proven from heaven!" There then issued a heavenly voice which proclaimed: "What do you want of Rabbi Eliezer — the law is as he says..."

Rabbi Joshua stood on his feet and said: "'The Torah is not in heaven!'" ... We take no notice of heavenly voices, since You, G-d, have already, at Sinai, written in the Torah to 'follow the majority.'"2

Rabbi Nathan subsequently met Elijah the Prophet and asked him: "What did G-d do at that moment?" [Elijah] replied: "He smiled and said: 'My children have triumphed over Me, My children have triumphed over Me.'"

Story about Tzedaka: Two Brothers

Once upon a time in the land of Israel, there lived an old farmer. When he died the farmer left his land to his two sons. They divided the land evenly and built their own houses on opposite sides. The younger brother soon married and had a family. The older brother did not marry but lived alone. Both brothers remained the best of friends and often helped each other on their farms.

One year at harvest time, both brothers undertook the process of harvesting their crop of (barley). They bundled the stalks of grain into sheaves, counted them, and took them into their barns to store. (Later, they would take some of it to the market to sell.) After a long day of work, the brothers usually slept well. But on this night, the elder brother lay awake.

"It is not right," he thought, "that I should reap as much grain as my brother. He has a family to feed and I have only myself. He needs more barley to sell so that he can buy all that he needs for his family." Making up his mind to set things right, he dressed and slipped out to his barn. There he took as many sheaves as he could carry across the field to his brother's barn. Feeling better, he returned to his bed and slept well.

The younger brother also had slept badly that night. He awoke and lay worrying. He too thought of his brother. "It is not right," he thought, "that I should reap as much grain as my brother. I have a family to help me, and to care for me in old age, while he works alone." So saying, he too rose, dressed, and went to his barn, not long after his brother had left. There he took as many sheaves as he could carry and walked across the fields to his brother's barn. Feeling better, he returned to his bed.

The next day the two brothers each went to their barns. They looked and looked again at their grain. There was as much there as there had been the day before. The two brothers worked again in their fields all day and did not speak of what had happened.

The next night they did the same thing. First, the older brother, taking as many sheaves of grain as he could carry to his brother's barn, and then the younger brother, narrowly missing him, did the same. Again, the next day both brothers stood in awe and counted their grain, which was as much as before they had given it away. Again, both kept their thoughts to themselves.

Then on the third night, both brothers rose late. The moon had gone down and they went to their barns. Again, they gathered as much grain as they could carry and headed out across the field to their brother's barns.

It was so dark, that they almost collided in the middle of the fields. They both stopped and peered at one another. What they saw made them smile, and then laugh. They dropped their bundles, and hugged one another for a long, long time. They promised one another that there would always be help for each other, no matter what. Then they each knelt down right there in the field, and thanked God for giving them such a thoughtful and generous brother.

It is said that one of the reasons why Har HaMoriah was chosen as the place for the Beit HaMikdash was because that is the spot where the two brothers had met.

Story about Bikkurim:

<https://ohr.edu/youth/simcha/5760/devarim/kisavo.htm>

REMEMBER HIM FIRST

Mmmm, what a yummy aroma. What is it Mom?

I just baked a fresh batch of chocolate chip cookies, Chaim. Here, you can taste the first one.

That is a wonderful offer, Mom, but I want you to have the first one.

Chaim, that is so sweet of you. Why do you want me to have the first cookie?

Because, Mom, you are the one who worked so hard on these cookies and you should be the first to enjoy them.

You're right, Chaim, I did work very hard mixing the dough and rolling out the cookies and baking them. However, I want you to enjoy the first one. Let's see. Does the Torah have an answer to the question of who should get the first cookie?

Mom, you must have read my mind. Our teacher told us a beautiful story today based on this week's parsha. Can I share it with you?

Of course, Chaim.

Imagine you lived long ago, in the days of the Beis HaMikdash. It is the beginning of the summer, a few weeks before the holiday of Shavuot.

Chaim and his mother close their eyes, and drift back in time.

Chana! Come out and look at this!

What is it Aharon?

Look, the first fig of the new season has grown on our tree!

Oh, Aharon, I am so happy! You worked so hard on that tree. You plowed the land around it, fertilized it, watered it, pruned it, and weeded it. Now you finally see the first fruit.

Chana, can you please call the children out to see this?

Children, come see what Abba has outside on the fig tree!

What is it Abba?

Look kids, the first fig of the year. What should we do with it?

Let's all eat it for dessert at the Shabbos table.

No, Abba you should eat it. You worked so hard for it.

Let's give it to a poor person to eat.

Children, those are all wonderful ideas. Let us hear what G-d tells us to do with the first fruits of the season. Chana, please bring me a piece of straw to tie around this fig. Now I must say this, "Behold this is the first fruit of the year." Next, we will wait until it ripens, and then take it, along with our other first fruits to the Beis HaMikdash in Jerusalem. There we will give it to the Kohen as a gift for Hashem.

Chaim that is such a beautiful story.

Wait, Mom, there is more. The teacher then explained to us the message behind bikurim (first fruits). It is the first mitzvah in this week's parsha.

We all have a tendency to be very proud of our work. We get satisfaction seeing it finally finished. We naturally want to enjoy the fruits of our labor. After all, we worked hard for them. The Sefer HaChinuch (Parshas Mishpatim, Mitzvah 91) explains why we bring our bikurim to G-d. We must place G-d at the head of all of our happy occasions. We must remember that all of the blessings that we enjoy in this world come from Him. Therefore, we remember Him first, which shows our gratitude to Him.

Chaim, what a beautiful Devar Torah. But we still do not know what to do with the first cookie. They are not bikurim, so we cannot give them to the Kohen. I want you to have the first cookie as a reward for being a good student, paying attention in class, and saying such a beautiful Devar Torah.

Mom, after a compliment like that, how can I refuse the cookie.

With that, Chaim takes the first cookie, and pronounces the blessing.

Boruch Atto Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ho-Olam borei minei mezonos.

Mmmm, these cookies sure are yummy.

Chaim, you first thought of G-d before you ate. You blessed Him for the food.

You're right Mom. Even eating is an opportunity to get close to G-d. As long as we remember to...

Remember Him First.

More stories:

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/470845/jewish/The-Tree.htm

The Tree

Talmud, Taanit 5b

A man was travelling through the desert, hungry, thirsty and tired, when he came upon a tree bearing luscious fruit and affording plenty of shade, underneath which ran a spring of water. He ate of the fruit, drank of the water and rested beneath the shade.

When he was about to leave, he turned to the tree and said: "Tree, O tree, with what should I bless you?

"Should I bless you that your fruit be sweet? Your fruit is already sweet.

"Should I bless you that your shade be plentiful? Your shade is plentiful. That a spring of water should run beneath you? A spring of water runs beneath you.

"There is one thing with which I can bless you: May it be G-d's will that all the trees planted from your seeds should be like you . . ."