

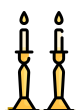


Shabbos Chizzuk

Inspirational & Interactive Divrei Torah
for the Shabbos Table

Issue #19

Parshas Vayigash



City	Candle-Lighting	Shabbos Ends
Jerusalem	4:05 PM	5:25 PM
Beitar Illit	4:05 PM	5:26 PM
Los Angeles	4:36 PM	5:35 PM
Seattle	4:09 PM	5:20 PM
New York City	4:19 PM	5:23 PM
Chicago	4:09 PM	5:16 PM
London, England	3:42 PM	4:59 PM



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Parsha Summary*

- וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה** ויגש אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה approaches Yosef to plead for the release of Binyamin, offering himself as a slave to the Egyptian ruler in Binyamin's stead. Upon witnessing his brothers' loyalty to one another, Yosef reveals his identity to them. *"I am Joseph,"* he declares. *"Is my father still alive?"*
- וַיִּשְׁלַחֵנִי אֱ-לֹהִים לְפָנֶיךָ** The brothers are overcome by shame and remorse, but Yosef comforts them. *"It was not you who sent me here,"* he says to them, *"but G-d. It has all been ordained from Above to save us, and the entire region, from famine."*
- וַיָּעֵלוּ מִמִּצְרָיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן** The brothers rush back to Canaan with the news. Yaakov comes to Egypt with his sons and their families—70 souls in all—and is reunited with his beloved son after 22 years. On his way to Egypt, he receives the Divine promise: *"Fear not to go down to Egypt; for I will make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again."*
- וַאֲתֵי הַיְהוּדָה שָׁלַח לְפָנָיו... וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן** Yaakov sends Yehudah ahead to establish a house of Torah study. Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Pharaoh gives Jacob's family the fertile county of Goshen to settle, and the children of Israel prosper in their Egyptian exile.

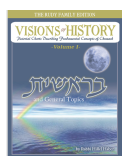
* Adapted from Chabad.org's Parsha in a Nutshell



Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah Count

0*

* However, we are taught by our Sages, that of all the mitzvos in the Torah, "Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam" – the study of Torah is equivalent to all the other mitzvos. The *Vilna Goan (Shenos Eliyahu)* explains that each and every word of Torah studied is considered its own separate mitzvah with Divine reward, unlike other mitzvos, where we only receive reward for each act of mitzvah performed. *R' Chaim of Volozhin זצ"ל* writes that the *kedusha* (holiness) of all the 612 mitzvos combined does not equal to the 1 mitzvah of Limud Hatorah which is the greatest way to connect and attach ourselves to Hashem.

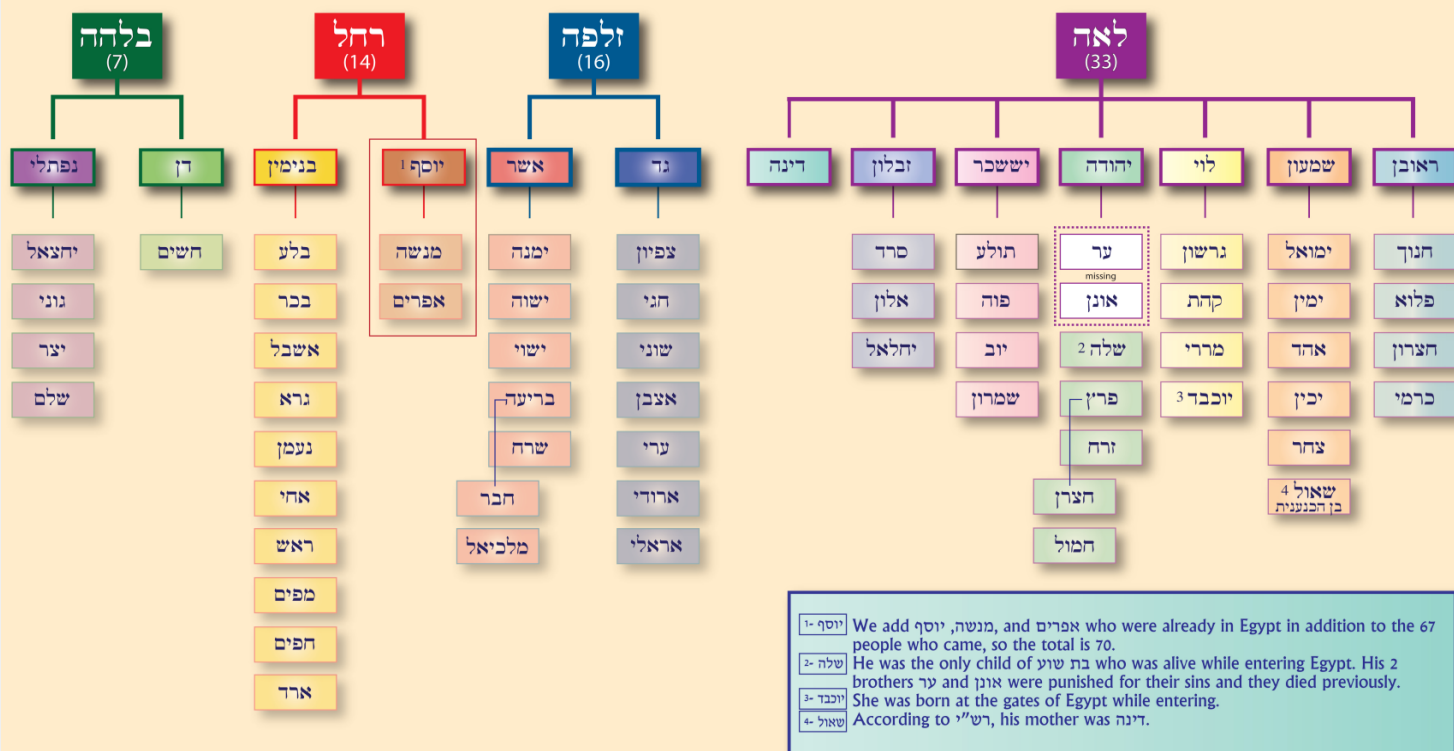


Visions of History | By R' Hillel Haber שליט"א, Rosh Yeshiva Shaare Torah

(To receive a copy, please contact Yeshivas Shaare Torah)

The 70 People Who Came Along To Egypt With Yaakov

The 70 People Who Came Along To Egypt With Yaakov כל הנפש לבית יעקב הבאה מצרימה שבעים (פרשת ויגש מ'ז, כ"ז)



 **Parsha Trivia** | Test your family at the Shabbos table with these trivia questions on the Parsha!
 From Torah Teasers by R' Rabbi Moshe Atik"ל"צ and Chabad.org by R' Menachem Posner"א שליט"א

❑ **What does "Vayigash" mean?**

Ⓐ And he (Yehuda) approached

❑ **On the shoulder of which brother did Yosef "weep over" before all the others?**

Ⓐ Binyamin

❑ **How many members of Yaakov's family accompanied him to Egypt?**

Ⓐ 67 (Yosef, Menashe, and Ephraim were already in Egypt)

❑ **What finally convinced Yaakov that Yosef was still alive?**

Ⓐ Seeing the wagons his son had sent from Egypt

❑ **Rashi bonus: Before traveling to Egypt, why did Yaakov send Yehudah ahead of everyone else?**

Ⓐ To establish a house of Torah study

❑ **In what three contexts is the number five mentioned in the Parsha?**

Ⓐ Yosef informs the brothers that five years are left to the famine (45:6). Yosef gives Binyamin five suits (45:22). Yosef brings five of his brothers to meet Pharaoh (47:2).

❑ **Who in the Parsha, is called with his name being repeated?**

Ⓐ Hashem calls "Yaakov, Yaakov" to talk to him on his way down to Egypt (46:2).

❑ **Who else in Tanach is called with the repetition of their name? (3 people)**

Ⓐ (1) In *Parshas Vayeira*, the name of Avraham is repeated by the Malach Hashem to stop him from slaughtering his son Yitzchak (*Bereishis 22:11*). The name of Moshe is repeated when Hashem calls him by the burning bush (*Shemos 3:4*). Hashem also repeats the name of Shmuel when He speaks to him the first time (*Shmuel Aleph, 3:10*).



Dvar Torah | by R' Avraham Chaim Samuels שליט"א, author of *הדרך אל ד'*. Translated by Aharon Mikail

THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION: What is the best way to bring peace between two people?

The Power of Communication

The entire story of the troublesome episode between Yosef and his brothers began in *Parshas Vayeishev*. The verse states,

וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבֵּר לְשָׁלָם:

...they hated him; and they could not speak a friendly word to him in peace" (Bereishis 37:4).

Where did the whole story of conflict conclude?

וַיָּנֶשׂ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי יְדִבְרְנָה עִבְדְּךָ דְבַר בְּאֲזְנֵי אֲדֹנָי וְאֵלֵי־יִחָר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדְּךָ כִּי כְמוֹן כִּפְרָעָה:

Then Yehudah approached him and said, "Please, my lord, let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be impatient or let your anger flare up at your servant – for you are like Pharaoh (Bereishis 44:18).

Before, the brothers weren't able to have a simple friendly conversation with their brother Yosef. However, this time, Yehuda used his power of expressive speech to save and defend his other brother, Binyamin. He cared so much about his brother's freedom and was willing to do anything to save him, even offering himself as a slave. Now, he used his power of speech to care for another person. **Good communication is one of the greatest ways and solutions to bring peace and salvation between people. When communication is effective, everyone feels satisfied and there is less potential for conflict.**

Challenge: How could you use more positive and effective communication in your relationships?



A SHORT IDEA

From *Positive Parenting* by R' Abraham J. Twersky zt"l, (who had heard it from his own father at the Shabbos table when he was about 6 or 7 years old)

Covering Our Eyes When We Say Shema

וַיֹּסֵף יוֹסֵף מְרַכְבֵּתוֹ וַיַּעַל לְקִרְיַת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיו גִּשְׁנָה וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו וַיִּפֹּל עַל-צַוְאָרְיוֹ וַיִּבְךְּ עַל-צַוְאָרְיוֹ עוֹד:

Yosef ordered his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father Yisrael; he presented himself to him and, embracing him around the neck, he wept on his neck for a while (Bereishis 46:29).

After finally reuniting with his father, Yosef wept continuously. However, *Rashi* explains that his father Yaakov neither fell upon Yosef's neck nor kissed him. Rather, he recited the Shema. Why did he do so?

In the Shema, we say "Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad." When we refer to G-d as "Hashem," we are referring to the evident attribute of mercy and kindness. When we say "Elokeinu," we are referring to the attribute of G-d when He appears to be treating us with strictness and harshness. When we use both names of G-d in the verse, we are declaring the oneness of God and proclaiming that the attributes of kindness and strictness are both *Hashem Echad*, one and the same, all kindness. Everything that God does is kindness.

At times, we are conflicted by challenges. We accept with faith that everything G-d does is kindness and for our best but our obscured human perception can view things He does as harsh. In the Shema, we announce that it is our belief that is correct, and that our frail human perception is fallible. To reinforce this, we symbolically cover our eyes, to indicate that we will set aside that which we perceive to be harshness, for our emunah (faith), in the absolute kindness of G-d, and that which appears to us as strictness is really the greatest kindness.

So too, the Zohar explains that the encounter between Yosef and his father contains this secret of the Shema. Yaakov mourned continuously over the disappearance of his beloved son, Yosef, and complained to G-d about his suffering. The Midrash states that G-d said, "Here I am planning things so that his son will become ruler over the mightiest empire in the world, yet he complains." The loss of Yosef appeared to Yaakov as a catastrophe, yet years later, he discovered that it was all for the good. That good could sometimes be delivered in an unpleasant way and a blessing in disguise.



Hilchos Shabbos

by R' Mordechai Lebhav שליט"א author *Magen Avot*, Rosh Kollel

Link Kollel Los Angeles

Redacted by Dr. Emile Amzallag

How should the Motzi be distributed?

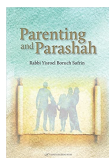
Once the blessing of *Hamotzi* is recited, many have a custom to rip apart pieces of bread by hand, as opposed to a knife, to distribute to those present at the table. Although there does not appear to be any documented source to this, it is a widespread custom, and some explain it by saying that it is improper to bring a knife to the table as it is comparable to a weapon of war.

Furthermore, there is a widespread custom that the head of the household throws the pieces of bread to all those present. The *Shulchan Aruch* (O.H. 171:1) rules that bread must be treated with honor and therefore it should not be thrown. Nevertheless, *Rabbi Shimon Sofer*, the grandson of the *Hatam Sofer*, (*Hitorerut Teshuva*, § 178) writes that his grandfather would throw the pieces of the bread to those at the table. He explains that one's table is likened to the *Mizbeach* (altar), on which the blood was thrown or sprinkled, and thus the bread represents the blood of the sacrifices.

According to the *Arizal*, there is great significance in giving a piece of the bread to one's wife before anybody else present, even an esteemed Rabbi. On a Kabbalistic level, one's piece of Motzi alludes to one letter Yud, and one's wife's piece is another Yud, and together they make one of Hashem's Names. Interestingly, in the Piyut "*Azamer Bishvahin*", composed by the *Arizal* and traditionally sung before the blessing of *Hamotzi*, the words "*Lemivtza Al Rifta*" are recited and are meant to teach that one should take an olive-sized piece for oneself, but give one's wife a larger egg-sized piece.

Regarding the passing of the Kiddush cup, *Rabbi David Sitbon* (*Ale Hadas, Hilchos Shabbat*), writes that the custom is to pass it first to one's sons and then to one's wife. One reason for this is that if one's wife is in a state of Niddah, the laws of distancing from state that one may not serve wine to one's wife. Therefore, one circumvents this by first passing the cup to one's sons and they can pass it to their mother. With bread however, there is no such restriction, and, although one may not give one's wife the bread directly due to her Niddah status, one can simply set it in front of her.

Summary: There is a custom to specifically break the bread of the Motzi with one's hands. It is permissible to throw the pieces of bread to those present. After first eating from the Motzi, one should pass a piece of bread to one's wife before anyone else at the table.



Parenting and Parashah | שליט"א R' Yisroel Boruch Sufirin

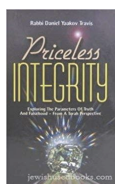
The Blessing of Nature

The Torah tells us that upon meeting Pharaoh, Yaakov gave him a blessing (*Bereishis 47:10*). *Rashi* teaches that because of this blessing, whenever Pharaoh approached the River Nile, the water would "rise to Pharaoh's feet," providing irrigation to the surrounding fields. Through the blessing, any water shortages would be relieved. It is well known that Egypt has always relied on the waters of the Nile for its water. According to current data, as recently as 2017, Egypt had only twenty cubic meters per person of internal renewable freshwater resources. As a result, the country relies heavily on the Nile River for its primary source of water. The Nile River is the backbone of Egypt's industrial and agricultural sectors and is the primary source of drinking water. The waters of the Nile rise as part of the natural course of events in that part of the world. Why is the rising of the river considered a blessing of Yaakov?

Rabbi David Pardo in his *Maskil L'David* explains that even though things may occur in this world for natural reasons, the Torah wants us to realize that Hashem is the One Who creates and designs nature. Rabbi Yehuda Are Leib Alter writes in his epic work the *Sfat Emes*, "*Hateva hagadol she'b'niflaot hamusagim lanu*" (Nature is the greatest of miracles that we may grasp). While Egypt may depend on the Nile, and it may seem to be part of nature, Yaakov blesses Pharaoh that this natural occurrence will continue through the ages. The sustainability of this natural phenomenon for all future generations is also a miracle and a blessing.

As parents, we should be teaching our children and family to view nature as a blessing. It is essential not to take life's daily blessings for granted. This is also why we begin our daily prayers with blessings to Hashem for the simple things in life such as, *pokeach ivrim* –opening up our eyes each morning – and the like.

For Discussion: Which acts of nature is, to your mind, a true miracle of Hashem? Why?



Priceless Integrity: Exploring the Parameters of Truth and Falsehood From a Torah Perspective | שליט"א R' Daniel Travis author *Praying with Joy* and *Rosh Kollel Toras Chaim*, Jerusalem

Inconsistencies

יֵאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הֲעוֹד אָבִי חַי וְלֹא-יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפְּנָיו:

Yosef said to his brothers, "I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?" His brothers were so startled that they could not respond (Bereishis 45:3).

From the time the brothers returned to Egypt with Binyamin, all their conversation with Yosef had focused upon their father Yaakov. There could have been no doubt in Yosef's mind that Yaakov was alive. Why then did Yosef ask the question again? And why were the brothers unable to answer him? On another level, the Midrash comments on this verse that if the sons of Yaakov found it impossible to answer their younger brother, how much more will we be dumbstruck when it comes to answering God on the final Day of Judgment.¹ How does the Midrash derive this? What is the connection between these two events?

Yosef's brothers had made a powerful appeal to him to release Binyamin because of the pain that his captivity would cause their father. When Yosef revealed himself with the words, "I am Yosef; is my father still alive?" he conveyed to them that if they were really concerned about their father's welfare, they should have

taken his pain into consideration when they sold Yosef into slavery many years earlier. As soon as they heard Yosef's words, the brothers realized the extreme inconsistency of their actions, and so were unable to respond to Yosef.

God effectuates His judgment in a similar manner. Thus when life ends, as a person appears before God to be judged, if he attempts to defend his paltry philanthropic activity by claiming that he lacked financial resources to cover his basic expenditures, God will show him all the times in his life he spent money frivolously. Confronted with his own actions, he will find himself unable to respond.²

Rav Meshulem Faivish from Zebriz, author of "The Way of Truth," writes that he once felt a strong desire to fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin in a way that surpassed anyone else's fulfillment of that mitzvah. In addition to wearing the tefillin accepted by most halachic opinions, he wanted to don another set considered a hiddur mitzvah (an enhancement of the mitzvah) according to some opinions. After extensive thought he decided to abandon this idea. He reasoned, had his intentions been true, his desire to wear the standard tefillin should have been equally strong. Since he felt no exceptionally strong drive to perform the standard mitzvah of tefillin, he concluded that reasons other than the truth were pushing him to wear the additional set.³

¹ Bereishis Rabba 93:10

² From the commentary of the Beis HaLevi on Bereishis 45:3.

³ MiDevar Sheker Tirchak p. 101



Stories of Tzadikim | From Sefer *Lights On The Path* by R' Yaakov Meir Shechter שליט"א, translated by R' Eliezer Shore שליט"א

Going Down and Growing

The *Maggid of Mezritch* explained the metaphor of a seed. Only after the seed decays in the earth does the sprout shoot up. Sometimes, only after a person's hopes have been dashed to nothing, does his deliverance suddenly sprout forth. Suffering is obviously not the goal of life, G-d forbid. Nevertheless, not only can we learn from it the lessons of faith and humility, but at the same time we can see our deliverance shine forth from within the difficulty itself.

As the Baal Shem Tov said, nothing annuls harsh decrees like humility and faith in G-d's Providence. This transforms evil to good, bitterness to sweetness, and darkness to light. I think this is obvious to everyone who thinks about it. Imagine that we are addressing a simple apple seed. "Do you see this dark hole filled with dirt and mud?" we tell it. "We are going to bury you down there. But don't worry. Soon you will sprout up, put forth leafy boughs, and have fragrant blossoms and delicious fruit." And so the little seed agrees to enter into the hole. We cover him with dirt and fertilizer and after a little while... he starts to rot! He cries out from deep in the earth, "What did you do to me? Is this what you call growth?! There is almost nothing left of me, and even the little taste I had before is completely gone. Where are the leaves you promised - the flowers and the beautiful fruit?"

But the truth is, the seed's great potential is deep within it, and only the earth has the hidden power to bring it out. Only after the seed has decayed and its outer layers worn away, does its inner potential become revealed. The same is true of a human being. At times, it is only the sorrows and bitterness of life that can reveal the true depths of our faith. Even though, at the moment of crisis, it seems that the very foundations of the earth are hopelessly crumbling; nevertheless, if we accept the situation properly, the light of pure faith will shine upon us, until we sprout out of the darkness like a beautiful garden. We need only to remember how to act in order to use the difficult situation for lofty ends.



Maase Shehaya | From Sefer *Tov L' Hodos* by R' A. Leib Scheinbaum שליט"א

It's All A Gift From Hashem

Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l told of an incident that had occurred at one of the shuls in Bnei Brak. After davening one day, one of the worshippers took out a tablecloth from a bag and spread it on the table. He then placed a cake and whiskey on the table and invited everyone in shul to share in his good fortune. Apparently, the day before he had been crossing the highway and was hit by a car. He was thrown up in the air and landed on his side, but, other than a few slight bruises and a soiled suit, he was fine. He provided cake and whiskey so that the participants would all have a l'chaim, good wishes "to life," in honor of his miracle.

The next day, following the morning prayers, another member of the shul took out a small tablecloth, placed it on the table, and proceeded to place cake and whiskey on the table. He invited everyone to share in his Kiddush. *"What happened to you?"* they asked. *"Perhaps you also were hit by a car?"* "No," he answered. *"Nothing of the sort. It is just that yesterday when I heard that fellow relate how he miraculously escaped serious injury, it dawned on me that I have been crossing that highway for the last twenty years, at the exact same place - and nothing ever happened to me! Is that not a miracle? I, therefore, want to thank Hashem publicly for all of His graciousness to me!"*

Rav Kanievsky continued, *"Mizmor I'sodah"* (A psalm of praise and thanksgiving) – refers to one's personal deliverance from "what might have been". *"Hariu la Hashem kol ha'aretz"* (Call out for Hashem, all the earth), seeing another person pay gratitude to the Almighty should spur one to introspect and realize how much he too, owes Hashem. True, he may not have experienced any misfortune, but that in itself is a miracle! We must stop taking our good fortune for granted. It is all a gift from Hashem.



Scenes for the Soul | by Ami Adler

In his blog, "Scenes for the Soul," (<https://scenesforthesoul.com/blog>) Ami shares a photo he has taken, along with some background details and a spiritual message that we can apply in our daily lives.



Joshua Tree National Park, California

The Background: This photo was captured in Joshua Tree National Park after dark. I wanted to experiment with night photography and so we set out during the day to find some interesting locations to return to. I had scouted out this location because of a tall rock spire "Aiguille de Joshua Tree" that was in the area. I took several shots of the formation, however, after reviewing the photos, I felt that this simpler shot of a Joshua Tree framed against the night sky really captured the essence of the park.

The Message: While traveling to this spot earlier in the day, the trail seemed very obvious and there didn't appear to be too many twists and turns. However, we decided to record the path on our GPS so that we would have a backup when we returned after dark. Sure enough, as we made our way back that night, we got to a point where the trail seemed to end abruptly, and we had to refer back to our GPS recording. After backtracking a bit, we found the original trail and were able to make it to our intended destination. The message that I took from this is that we need to establish good habits and patterns when it is easy (during the day), so that when things get hard (it gets dark) we have a path to follow. There are certain practices that might help us when we are struggling – such as prayer or connecting with others – but if we only reach for them when we need them, they will not be there. We have to lay the foundation and put in the work – even when we may not feel that we need it – so that they are ingrained in our soul and will truly help us through the light and the darkness.



Zemiros | Hakol Meito By. Joey Newcomb

Before Shabbos, scan the QR-Code below to listen and prepare this week's song for the Shabbos table!

הכל מאתו! תברך
בודאי הכל לטובה
הכל מאתו
הכל מאתו



הכל מאתו! תברך
בודאי הכל לטובה
בודאי הכל לטובה
הכל מאתו! תברך
בודאי הכל לטובה
הכל לטובה
Thank You Hashem



Jokes: Mitzvah Gedolah Lihiyot B'Simcha!

1. **Jokes**
I told my brother ten jokes to make him laugh...
No pun in ten did!
2. **Plates**
Q) What did one plate whisper to the other plate?
A) *Dinner is on me!*
3. **Cupcake**
Q) What did the cupcake tell its frosting?
A) *I'd be muffin without you!*

Wishing everyone a safe, healthy, beautiful, happy, uplifting, and restful Shabbos Kodesh!

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