

MORE Puzzle Tov!

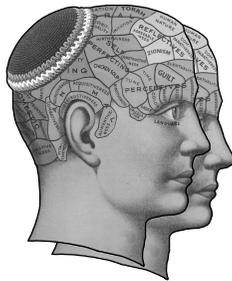
MORE
PUZZLE TOV!
A COLLECTION OF
Jewish Brainteasers, Puzzles, and Enigmas
to Drive You Totally Meshuggeneh!

by

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&

Alex Freuman



MORE Puzzle Tov!

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*For Peter's grandchildren.
Ezra, Zella, Benno and May
and
Alex's children.
[INSERT names]*

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INTRODUCTION

Jews have always been a puzzling people. In both senses of the word. We have certainly caused consternation and bewilderment over the ages (just contemplate the mysteries of gefilte fish, for example). And, we have, as a people, always enjoyed a good intellectual challenge. Examples abound.

The Passover Seder comes to mind with its refrain of “Who Knows One?” in which the entire spectrum of Jewish theology is laid out in a “One-Two Buckle My Shoe” guessing game.

Jewish sacred texts, such as the Talmud, are filled with brain-benders and riddles. “How do you divide an estate so that everyone is treated fairly?” And don’t get me started on Gematria!

From Dreidels to Dungeons & Dragons, Jews have always loved a good mental challenge. And that’s why I wrote the first book, *Puzzle Tov!* It contained some of my favorite puzzles, lovingly collected over the years. Some of them I created and some I borrowed. I tried to give each one a bit of a Jewish twist to add to the flavor. But, like they used to say about the rye bread...

You Don’t Have To Be Jewish to Enjoy This Book!

Not long after the publication of *Puzzle Tov!* in 2017, I met a gentleman in Nyack, NY who loved Jewish puzzles as much as I did. An accomplished math teacher, Alex had likewise been collecting brainteasers and riddles for years. After reviewing his collection, I realized that these were some of the finest and most delightfully confounding puzzles I had yet to discover. “Now we had to do a sequel,” I thought and invited Alex to be my co-author for the next

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edition. The result is in your hands. I loved working with Alex as we assembled these Jewish gems and I know you will likewise love solving them.

You'll notice that we've rated the difficulty of each puzzle on a one (easiest) to five (hardest) Jewish star scale.

If you have your own favorite Kosher-style brain-teaser, please send it to me and, if I like it, I'll include it in a future edition. Also send along any corrections you discover to: peter@peterweisz.com with the words "Puzzle Tov" in the subject line.

Meanwhile, try your hand at this fresh batch of Kosher conundrums and, if you do well, then congratulate yourself and say: MORE Puzzle Tov!

—Peter Weisz

July, 2018



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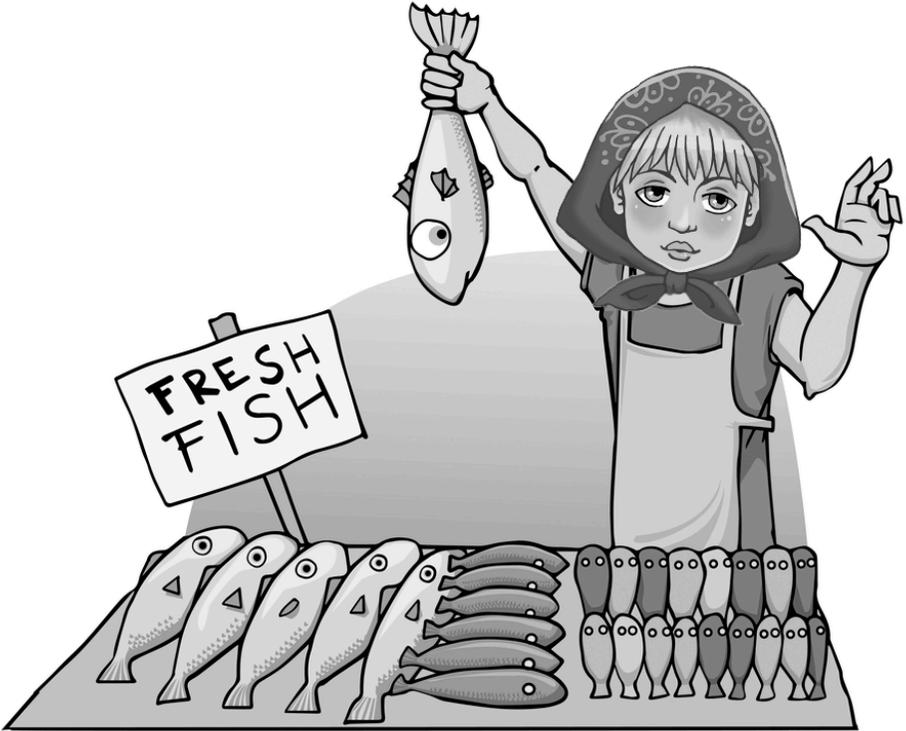
1. A Shekel for Your Thoughts

Israel's national currency is the shekel, but did you know that in biblical times, a shekel was a unit of weight? The shekel is based on the “*gerah*”, which is classical Hebrew for “bean.” It is believed that a single grain of barleycorn was used as a basis for a *gerah*.

If a shekel weighs 10 *gerahs* plus half it's own weight, how much does a shekel weigh?



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2. The Missing Kopeks

In the fish market in old Krakow there were two fishmonger ladies, Golda and Sarah. Golda sold large salted herring at 2 fish per kopek. Sarah sold small salted herring at 3 fish per kopek.

Every morning they would both start the day in their side-by-side market stalls with 300 fish each. At the end of each day, when all the fish were sold, Golda would have 150 kopeks in her cash box and Sarah would always find 100 kopeks in hers.

One evening, as they were cleaning up, Sarah, who was 9 months pregnant, said to Golda:

“Oy, I’m starting to feel the pains. I’m probably going to have the baby tonight, God willing, and I can’t be here tomorrow. I still have 300 fish ordered for tomorrow and it’s too late to cancel the order. Golda, could you please sell my fish for me tomorrow?”

Golda thought for a moment and said: “Why not? I’ll mix them together with mine and I’ll sell them at “5 for 2.” Five fish for two kopeks. Then the next day when you come back, we’ll divide the money.” Sarah agreed and Golda made a new sign that read: “Salted herring. 5 for 2 kopeks.”

When Sarah returned to work two days later, after having delivered her new baby girl, Golda wished her a Mazel Tov and reported that she had sold all 600 fish at 5 for 2 kopeks. Golda opened her cash box and took out 100 kopeks and gave it to Sarah. She then counted the remaining cash and let out such a shriek:

“Eeeek! I’ve been robbed!,” Golda shouted, counting the money over and over.

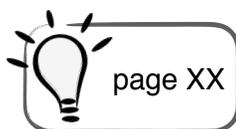
“What do you mean?” asked Sarah.

“I gave you your hundred kopeks, but when I went to count my 150 kopeks there are only 140! Somebody took ten kopeks!”

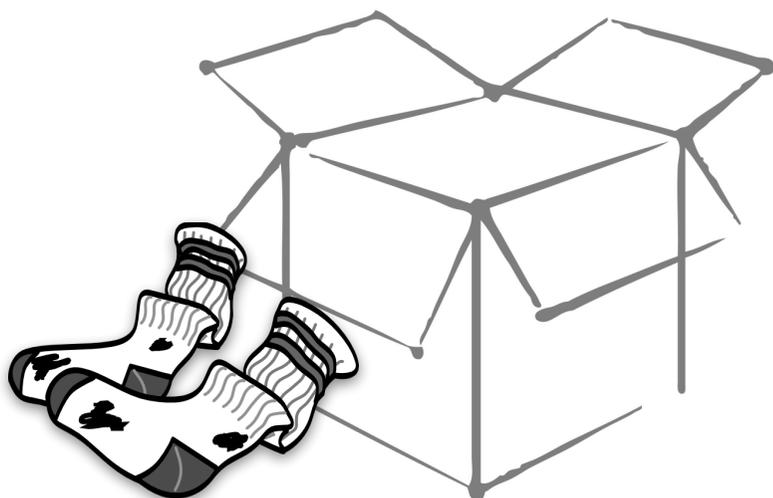
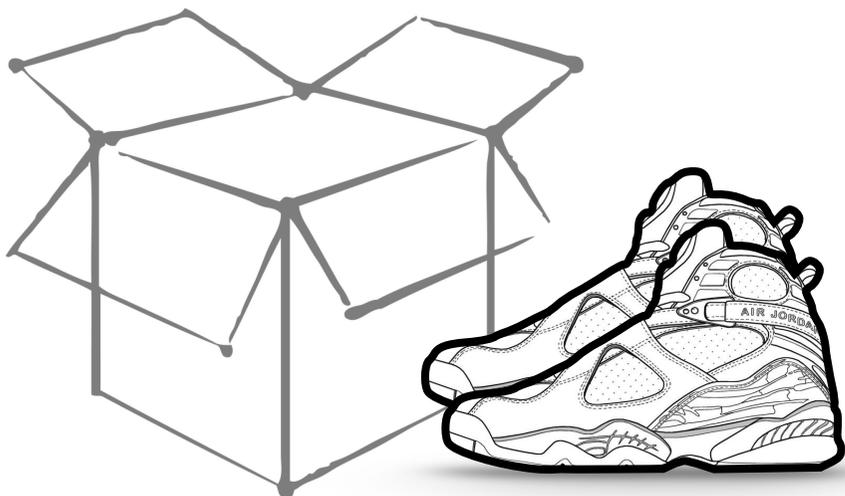
After some thought, Sarah said: “*Royk. Royk.* Calm down. Nobody stole anything. Here’s five kopeks back. Now it’s right.”

“But why?” asks Golda. “Why did we both lose 5 kopeks just by combining our businesses?”

What is the correct answer?



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3. Socks and Sneakers

The “ganza Meshpuchah” (*entire family*) was gathered for Joshua’s Bar Mitzvah. At the reception Josh’s father took the microphone and announced:

“Joshie, we know how much you love those high-end sneakers, so we’d like for you to have a special pair to mark your Bar Mitzvah. But, as you know, your mother and I are also concerned about your intellectual development, so we have devised a little puzzle to challenge you. In order to obtain the sneakers, you will have to correctly solve our little puzzle.”

Joshua’s father waved his hand and a waiter rolled out a cart containing two large identical gift boxes. The boxes were numbered 1 and 2 and each bore a sign. Joshua’s father continued: “Josh, these boxes have been set up in one of three possible ways:

A) A pair of 1994 Michael Jordan Dual signed Nike Air 10th Anniversary Sneakers valued at \$10,000 in one box and a pair of gently used gym socks in the other.

or

B) A pair of the sneakers in each of the two boxes.

or

C) A pair of the gym socks in each of the two boxes.

“Josh,” his father went on, “your job is to pick one of the two boxes. Whatever is inside the box you pick is what you get to keep. You’ll notice that there is a sign on both of the boxes. You should read both signs. They will help you make the best decision.” Joshua looked at the signs and saw that that Box No.1’s sign read:

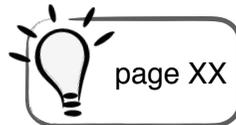
“This box contains the sneakers and the other box contains the socks.”

He then read the sign on Box No.2:

“One of these boxes contains a pair of sneakers and the other one contains a pair of socks.”

“And oh, one more thing,” Josh’s father said: “One of the signs is true and the other one is false.”

Which box should Joshua pick, assuming he wants the sneakers, which he does?



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4. Iron Dome Question

Israel is known to have the world's most sophisticated and powerful missile defense system. It is known as Iron Dome and it can literally knock incoming enemy missiles out of the sky.

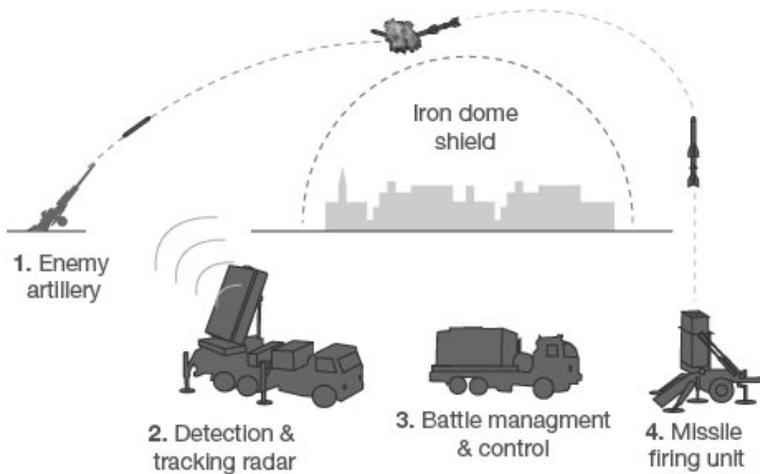
Prospective IDF members who are recruited to operate Iron Dome equipment are required to answer the following question correctly without using paper, pencil or a calculating device. Let's see if you qualify:

A missile traveling at 9,000 kph (kilometers per hour) is launched from Teheran aimed at Tel Aviv.

At the exact same moment an Israeli missile traveling at 21,000 kph is launched from Tel Aviv aimed at the incoming missile.

The distance from Teheran to Tel Aviv is 1925 kilometers.

How far apart will the two missiles be one minute before impact?



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5. Riddles of the Queen of Sheba

According to the Talmud (*Bava Batra, Tractate 15b*), the Queen of Sheba ruled the only land that was not under the dominion of King Solomon. When he summoned her to Jerusalem, she arrived three years later bearing many gifts. The Queen had heard of Solomon's great intellect, so among the gifts was a collection of 19 riddles. Some were rather simple, such as:

Q. What cannot move while it is alive, but can move when its head is cut off?

A. A tree, whose trunk may be crafted into a boat

But others were more challenging. For example, the following riddle she presented to the king:

“Your majesty, I set before your eyes two identical bags of gold. One of the bags contains twice as much gold as the other. You must pick one, without touching either, and may keep the gold you find inside.”

The king examined both bags visually and could see no difference between the two.

“It is equally likely that the bag on the right has the greater gold as the bag on the left,” said the comely Queen.

The king said nothing.

Finally she announced: “I will assist you, your majesty.”

At this she opened one of the bags and removed the entire contents: 100 dinars of gold.

King Solomon immediately pointed to the other unopened bag and stated; “I choose the unopened bag”

Was he correct in doing so? If so, why?

If the Queen of Sheba had presented the king with 100 pairs of bags and offered to play the same game with each pair, always opening a bag with 100 dinars, how much gold would the king have likely amassed by the end of the 100th game?



SOLUTIONS



SOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS

1. A Shekel for Your Thoughts

The answer is NOT 15! It is actually 20 gerahs.

To verify this is correct, we can add 10 gerahs to half of the shekel's weight, which is 10 gerahs (half of 20) to get a total of 20 gerahs.

To find this value algebraically, we can write the equation:

Let S = the weight of a shekel:

$$10 + \frac{1}{2} S = S$$

Subtracting $\frac{1}{2} S$ from both sides gives us

$$10 = \frac{1}{2} S$$

Multiplying both sides by 2 gives us our answer

$$20 = S.$$

SOLUTIONS

2. *The Missing Kopeks*

The correct answer is that there is no reason to balance the money taken in on a normal day ($100 + 150 = 250$ kopeks) to the money taken in on this special combination day. When Golda sold 600 fish at 5 for 2 kopeks, she conducted 120 transactions (600 divided by 5). Each transaction brought in 2 kopeks. 2 times 120 equals 240 kopeks.

To understand this more fully, you must realize that Golda selected the fish randomly. Sometimes a package consisted of five big fish, sometimes it would be all small fish, usually it would be a mixture.

So let's try to figure out what the correct price for an average bundle should have been.

The big fish usually sold "2 for a kopek." So the value of a single big fish is half a kopek. The small fish usually sold "3 for a kopek." So the value of a single small fish is one third of a kopek. There were the same number of big and small fish (300 each) on the combination day. So the average price of any randomly selected single fish was $.4167$ ($(.5 + .3333)$ divided by 2) kopeks.

Multiply this by 5 to get the true price of a bundle of five fish and you get 2.083 kopeks. But she was selling a package of five fish for only 2 kopeks. Golda was losing .083 on every sale! Multiply this loss per sale times the number of transactions (120) and you get 10 kopeks. The missing ten kopeks have been found.

SOLUTIONS

3. *Socks & Sneakers*

Consider Box No.1. If the sign is true, that means the sign on Box No. 2 must also be true. But this cannot be, since only one of the two signs can be true, not both. Therefore, the sign on Box No.1 must be false.

But how is it false?

There are three possible scenarios that would render Box No.1's sign false:

1. There are socks in Box 1 and sneakers in Box 2.
2. There are socks in both boxes.
3. There are sneakers in both boxes.

But which one is it?

Actually, it doesn't matter, since in all three cases, Joshua should select Box 2.

In case number one, he will pick the box with the sneakers.

In case number two, he will wind up with socks no matter which one he picks.

In case number three, he will wind up with sneakers no matter which one he picks.

But, he need not worry about winding up with socks because if the sign on Box No.1 is false, that means the sign on Box No. 2 must be true. And that sign rules out cases number 2 and 3.

Hence, Joshua can select Box No.2 with full confidence that he will receive the Nike Jordan Dual sneakers.

SOLUTIONS

4. Iron Dome Question

The trick here is to ignore the extraneous information; mainly the distance between the two cities. This number, although accurate, is not needed to find the solution.

What is needed is the rate at which the distance between the two missiles is shrinking. This may be done by adding the speeds of the two approaching missiles. If one is traveling at 21,000 kmh and the other at 9,000 kph, then the space between them is being reduced at the rate of 30,000 kph.

We wish to know how much distance there will be at one minute prior to impact. We know that 30,000 km are consumed every hour. But we are concerned with minutes and not hours. We need to divide that 30,000 by 60 (the number of minutes in an hour).

This yields 500. The two missiles combined cover a total distance of 500 km every minute..

Hence, the two missiles will be 500 km apart one minute prior to impact.

SOLUTIONS

5. Riddles of the Queen of Sheba

Before the queen reveals the 100 dinars, the king has a 50% chance of picking the bag with the greater sum of gold. So, without the hint, it doesn't matter which bag he chooses.

But when the queen reveals the 100 dinars, everything changes. Now the king may deduce that the other bag contains either 50 dinars or 200 dinars. Since either of these two outcomes have an equal probability, the king can take an average of the higher and the lower amounts to determine what his expectation will be. 50 plus 200 equals 250 , divided by 2 equals 125 . So he is always better off selecting the unopened bag because, over the long run, he will average 125 dinars each time he does.

As for the 100 game series, if he selects the opened 100 dinar bag each time, he will have $10,000$ dinars (100×100) in the end. But if he selects the unopened bag he may expect to have $12,500$ dinars.

In order to be able to open the 100 dinar bag correctly each time, the queen must know which bag contains which amount. She employs that knowledge when she selects which bag to open. This knowledge is transmitted to the king who is wise enough to understand that the odds have now shifted and it is no longer an even money proposition.

And so the king makes a Solomonic decision and chooses the unopened bag every time

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About the Author

Peter Weisz has been collecting and authoring puzzles for years. He is an educator, author and publisher of personal history books. He lives in West Palm Beach, Florida.

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