

# ב"ה *Torah* **Tidbits**

ISSUE 1658

UNITED  
WE STAND

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ישראל

MAY 2<sup>ND</sup> 2026  
ט"ו אייר תשפ"ו

EMOR - אמור

AVOT 4



**Simchat Shmuel**  
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**Shaul, David and Sovereignty**  
Mrs. Leah Feinberg  
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כִּי־תִבְאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וְיִקְרָא כ"ג:

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT EMOR ZMANIM

CANDLES 6:43 PM • EARLY 5:55 PM • HAVDALA 7:59 PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:37 PM



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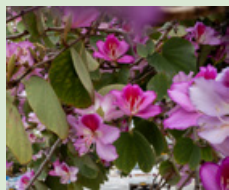
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## COVER PHOTO

**Photographed by Howard Gordon** - My wife and I made Aliyah from Manchester UK in September 2023. We live in Ramat Beit Shemesh Aleph, close to three of our children. We are blessed that all of our children now live in Israel and many grandchildren too. This is a photo of the blossoms on Nahal Dolev, Ramat Beit Shemesh. They make a wonderful spring display.

## HELPFUL REMINDERS

🕒 Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: 14 Iyar/ Thurs. night April 30

🕒 Lag BaOmer is celebrated Monday May 4th and Tuesday May 5th

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat  
April 29 - May 9 | 12 - 22 Iyar

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>5:01-4:51</b>
Sunrise	<b>5:56-5:47</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:16-9:11</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:37-8:31</b>
Sof Zman Tefila (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	<b>10:23-10:19</b>
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:36-12:35</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:10-1:09</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>5:53-5:59</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:22-7:29</b>



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	EMOR			BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI		
	Candles	Early	Havdala	Candles	Early	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	<b>6:43</b>	5:55	<b>7:59</b>	6:48	5:59	8:05
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	<b>7:01</b>	5:57	<b>8:01</b>	7:06	6:01	8:07
Beit Shemesh/RBS	<b>7:02</b>	5:56	<b>8:00</b>	7:07	6:00	8:06
Gush Etzion	<b>6:59</b>	5:55	<b>7:59</b>	7:04	5:59	8:05
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	<b>7:01</b>	5:57	<b>8:01</b>	7:06	6:01	8:07
Modiin/Chashmonaim	<b>7:00</b>	5:56	<b>8:00</b>	7:05	6:00	8:06
Netanya	<b>7:01</b>	5:57	<b>8:02</b>	7:06	6:01	8:08
Be'er Sheva	<b>6:59</b>	5:56	<b>8:00</b>	7:04	6:00	8:05
Rehovot	<b>7:00</b>	5:57	<b>8:01</b>	7:05	6:01	8:07
Petach Tikva	<b>6:43</b>	5:57	<b>8:01</b>	6:48	6:01	8:07
Ginot Shomron	<b>7:00</b>	5:56	<b>8:00</b>	7:05	6:00	8:06
Haifa / Zichron	<b>6:51</b>	5:58	<b>8:02</b>	6:56	6:01	8:08
Gush Shiloh	<b>6:59</b>	5:55	<b>7:59</b>	7:04	5:59	8:05
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	<b>7:01</b>	5:57	<b>8:02</b>	7:06	6:01	8:07
Givat Ze'ev	<b>7:03</b>	5:55	<b>8:00</b>	7:08	5:59	8:05
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>6:59</b>	5:55	<b>7:59</b>	7:04	5:59	8:05
Ashkelon	<b>7:01</b>	5:58	<b>8:02</b>	7:06	6:01	8:07
Yad Binyamin	<b>7:00</b>	5:57	<b>8:01</b>	7:05	6:01	8:06
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	<b>6:54</b>	5:55	<b>8:01</b>	6:59	5:59	8:07
Golan	<b>6:59</b>	5:55	<b>8:00</b>	7:04	5:59	8:05
Nahariya/Maalot	<b>6:50</b>	5:57	<b>8:02</b>	6:56	6:01	8:08
Afula	<b>7:00</b>	5:56	<b>8:01</b>	7:05	6:00	8:07

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Emor - 8:37 PM • Behar-Bechukotai - 8:42 PM

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities; 40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat, Nahariya, Maalot and Haifa)

Daf Yomi: Chulin 2



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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OU ISRAEL  
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It's important for every person to know what their strengths and their weaknesses are. I happen to know that one of my weaknesses is that I am horrible at remembering dates. Some people are excellent at preparing for birthdays, anniversaries, and so on. Not me. But since I know that I am not naturally gifted in this area, I use calendars and set reminders, or ask friends to remind me, so I don't miss an important date.

*Parshat Emor* hands us the master calendar of *Klal Yisrael*: Pesach, the counting of the *Omer* that begins on *Motzaei Shabbat* of the first day of Pesach and brings us to Shavuot, then Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Shemini Atzeret. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* Himself sets these dates into our year, and with these dates as our anchor, we have a beautiful Jewish calendar that our lives revolve around.

Yet since the Torah was given, many more dates have been added to that calendar. There are fast days that mark the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, as well as Chanukah and Purim, which commemorate miracles after

the destruction of the first *Beit HaMikdash*. And in our own generation, there are the days we have lived through together over these last weeks and the weeks ahead: Yom HaZikaron, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Lag BaOmer, which will be celebrated this week, and Yom Yerushalayim, which is coming the week after.

The excitement that many others and I have for Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim is just tremendous. These are days that shape who we are, what our State is all about, and where we are heading. Beyond the joy of OU Israel's annual Yom Ha'atzmaut Musical Tefila with Rabbi Shlomo Katz and beyond our Yom Yerushalayim *davening* on the *Tayelet* still to come *be'ezrat Hashem* - both events done in close coordination with the Jerusalem municipality - there is one more thing I look forward to every year as Yom Ha'atzmaut approaches: the release of the annual statistics by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

These numbers tell the story that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is writing in front of our eyes. As the State of Israel marks her 78th Yom Ha'atzmaut, our population stands at 10.244 million, an increase of about 146,000 over last year, growing at 1.4 percent. That is well above the global average of around 0.9 percent. Roughly 76 percent of our population is Jewish, and approximately 177,000 babies were born here this year. As I read these figures, I find myself thinking of the letter the Ramban wrote to his son after arriving in Yerushalayim in 1267, in which he describes a city in ruins where he could find only two Jews, brothers who worked as dyers, to make

In loving memory of  
our dear mother, grandmother  
and great grandmother  
on her 16<sup>th</sup> Yartzheit  
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*The Reutlinger  
and Mayerfeld families*



a *minyán* with on Shabbat. I can only imagine what the Ramban would give to walk through Yerushalayim today, where on a single street, in a single traffic jam, you can find more Jews than he found in the entire city.

There is more. Life expectancy in Israel today is roughly 82 years for men and 85 for women, among the highest in the world and higher than nearly every Western country, even while in the midst of war and the painful loss of so many of our young soldiers in battle. When the *Madad HaOsher*, the global happiness index, was published this year by researchers who are not always looking to flatter Israel, the Jewish State once again came in eighth in the world, for the second year running. The Central Bureau of Statistics also found that 91 percent of Israelis describe themselves as *merutzim* or *merutzim me'od*, satisfied or very satisfied, with their lives in this country, even after more than two years of war. These are numbers that bring tremendous *simcha* and joy when we see that, *Baruch Hashem*, we really have a society that is happy, living long lives, in our homeland.

These numbers came alive for me this past

week, when I had the privilege of meeting two very special people who, between them, have witnessed the entire arc of modern Jewish history. People have asked me who came to our Yom Ha'atzmaut *davening*. Who, they wanted to know, made up the 2,000 people who filled the Ramada that night? The honest answer is everyone. Every kind of person was there. I saw infants in their parents' arms. I saw teenagers and yeshiva and seminary students. And I had the privilege of sitting next to Walter, a 102-year-old Holocaust survivor who came to be with us that evening. This is a man who not only survived the Nazis but went on to join the British army, fighting on the beaches of Normandy and working in counter-intelligence. Remarkably, he holds the Guinness World Record for being the oldest working journalist and radio show host in the world, and even went skydiving to celebrate his 100th birthday.

When the singing began and the crowd rose to dance, Walter was on his feet before most of the youngsters and teenagers. He told me the only reason he uses a cane is for going up and down stairs and hills. On flat ground, he said with a smile, the cane is just for decoration. He came with me into the dancing and kept urging the circle to move faster. To dance with a man who survived the Nazis and is now living in Israel at 102, with a big smile on his face that fills the room, was really so incredible.

May the Torah learned  
from this Torah Tidbits be  
לעילוי נשמת and in loving memory of

**Herbert Scheer ז"ל**  
**יהודה צבי בן בן ציון ז"ל**  
on his 10<sup>th</sup> yahrtzeit - ח' אייר

*Steven Scheer and family*

I had a similar privilege in Teaneck, New Jersey, this past Shabbat, where I spent quality time with dear friends and spoke at length with Mrs. Laub, who is also 102. She is the mother of close friends of mine, and on Shabbat afternoon I sat with her and her two daughters for over an hour. She was born in Austria, survived the Nazis, and built a beautiful family in the United States. *Baruch Hashem*, she has the joy of seeing many of those grandchildren now living in Israel, building families, getting married here this past year, with more grandchildren making *aliyah* this coming summer. Although she cannot fly to Israel anymore, she told me how proud she is to see photographs of her grandchildren in IDF uniforms, serving the Jewish people in the Jewish State.

Sitting with Walter and with Mrs. Laub, I understood the reason we have the generation we have today, a generation that is happy, that wants to live, that wants to bring more children into the world, a generation that is building and thriving. It is precisely because we have not forgotten where we came from. They survived so that we could be here, and they take genuine joy in seeing what we are building. The Jewish people have a State of our own. We have a country in which we are

growing, prospering, and living with endless *siyata di'shmaya*.

I told both Walter and Mrs. Laub how grateful I am for the endless miracles *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is doing for the Jewish people in our days, and how their generation's *mesirut nefesh*, together with the *mesirut nefesh* of the parents, soldiers, and families building *Klal Yisrael* today, is what carries us forward. *Be'ezrat Hashem*, may we continue to add good dates to our calendar, dates we can celebrate together, with many more Jews coming home, *ad me'ah ve'esrim* in good health, and may the OU continue, with *siyata di'shmaya*, to be a force in Israel that helps every Anglo who joins us here build a meaningful life in our homeland.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

  
Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

**In loving memory of our father,  
grandfather, great-grandfather  
and great-great-grandfather**

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# OU... BEYOND KASHRUT

## OU Israel Signature Events: From Remembrance to Rejoicing

Since 2017, OU Israel's Yom HaAtzmaut Musical *Tefila* has become one of the most moving and uplifting annual gatherings for the English-speaking community in Yerushalayim, and this year's event at the Ramada was no exception. More than 2,000 people filled the room on a night that captured the very soul of Medinat Yisrael, carrying the emotion of Yom HaZikaron straight into the gratitude and joy of Yom HaAtzmaut. It was not simply an event. It was the kind of evening that reminds a person what it means to be part of Am Yisrael in this generation.



The night was filled with unforgettable moments. Yachad Israel's Sima Kelner shared the story of her nephew who fell in battle, bringing the crowd into the heartbreak, courage, and sacrifice that stand behind our independence. Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Arie King was honored at the event, adding to the sense of *kavod* and national pride that filled the hall. Then came the *tefila* itself, led by Rabbi Shlomo Katz: passionate, musical, and overflowing with feeling. The singing rose from every corner of the room. The dancing was full of life. Generations stood side by side, from a 102-year-old Holocaust survivor to a two-week-old baby, all part of one extraordinary celebration of Jewish resilience, faith, and gratitude.

There are some evenings that end when people walk out the door, and there are others that stay with you long after the music stops. This was one of those nights. It was a living expression of memory and hope, of tears and song, of the incredible privilege of celebrating Yom HaAtzmaut in Yerushalayim surrounded by thousands who feel the miracle of Medinat Yisrael deep in their hearts. Anyone who was there will not soon forget it, and anyone who was not can only hope not to miss the next opportunity, including OU Israel's upcoming Yom Yerushalayim *tefila* on the Tayelet facing Har HaBayit, which promises to be another deeply meaningful gathering for our community.

**Each week, we share one OU Israel initiative empowering lives and communities in our homeland, supporting English-speaking *olim* in their *klita* and supporting Israel's most**



ירושלים, אין כמוה בעולם

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# With Gratitude TO OUR PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful to the partners whose support helped make OU Israel's Yom HaAtzmaut Musical Tefila such a meaningful and uplifting evening for our community



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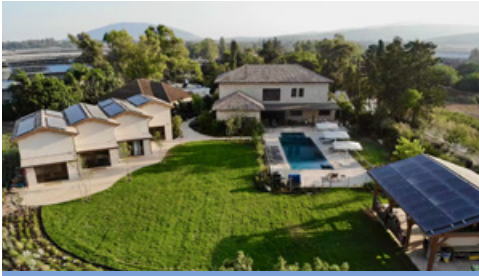


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## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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### PARSHAT EMOR

Our parsha continues the discussion of holiness. The details of korbanot already discussed in Sefer Vayikra are the “how” of Divine Service. The details of Tuma are the “who” of Divine Service. And in our parsha, once we already know the how and the who of Divine Service, we focus on the “conduits” of Divine service, the kohen and the offerings themselves. And then holiness in time.



#### 1ST ALIYA (VAYIKRA 21:1-15)

Kohanim may not come in contact with the dead except for their nuclear family. Nor may they adopt non-Jewish mourning practices such as balding their head and beard or cutting their flesh. Kohanim shall be holy to G-d, for they serve Him. A kohen may not marry a divorcee. You are to sanctify them. The Kohen Gadol may never become tamei, for he is anointed. He may not marry a divorcee or widow.

The kohen has to stay away from the dead as his main job is service in the Mikdash. A person who is tamei cannot serve in the Mikdash.

But what is more instructive is not when he cannot become tamei. But rather when he can, and in fact must become tamei.

He must become tamei for his immediate family. This is a powerful statement concerning the centrality of family. And the nature of the holy man.

In other religions, asceticism is viewed as holy. In that view this world of ours is

a mixture of holy and profane. The soul is holy. The physical is profane. Food, pleasure, and marriage are the physical part of life that drags the soul down. The holy person is celibate. Lives a life of simplicity, resisting the temptations of the flesh.

That is not our view. The kohen marries. Has a family. That family even overrides his kohen function; he is required to become tamei for his immediate family, even though becoming tamei will mean he can't do his kohen work.

Man was created dust from the earth, with his soul breathed in through his nostrils. We are a hybrid; physical body, spiritual soul. It is the balance of the two that we embrace. We avoid the extremes on both sides; we are not hedonists, embracing physicality, nor ascetics, rejecting the physical. Let's not overstate our embrace of the physical. We can go too far. Moderation is the Torah's way. But asceticism, the complete rejection of the physical is not. This is the way we were created.

The kohen does have marriage restrictions. But modest ones. And those restrictions operate in the context of our embrace of marriage and family, even for the holy man.



#### 2ND ALIYA (21:16-22:16)

A kohen who has a blemish may not serve in the Mikdash. This includes blind, lame, broken limbs, eye conditions and others. He may consume holy items but not perform the service. A kohen may not serve while Tamei, as this desecrates

the holy. While a non-kohen may not consume the holy (teruma), those who are a part of the kohen's home may. His daughter, before marriage or after if childless, is part of his home and may consume the holy. The holy is profaned when consumed by others.

The kohen serves in the Mikdash. And he also receives certain benefits, like Teruma (2% of produce grown in the Land of Israel). If he has certain quite dramatic blemishes, he may not serve. But that does not mean he may not enjoy the benefits, like Teruma. His Kedushat Kehuna, his status as a kohen is unaffected by blemishes.

Perhaps this is to convey to the kohen: a blemish limits *what* you may *do*, but not *who* you *are*. You are a kohen with a blemish but a kohen you remain.

And this message resonates not only for the kohen. We all could use this reminder: we are created in His Image. Some with greater abilities some with less. And over time, our abilities wither and we aren't what we used to be; can't do what we used to do. Time limits *what* we *do*, but not *who* we *are*. Created in His Image we remain.



### 3RD ALIYA (22:17-33)

An animal offering may not have a blemish. This includes blind, broken limbs, eye conditions and others. This applies to a non-Jew's offering as well. An animal with a blemish is not pleasing. An offering must be at least 8 days old. A mother and offspring may not be slaughtered on the same day. An offering may not be eaten after the 2nd day. Do not profane My Name, rather sanctify Me in your midst.

Blemishes disqualify the kohen from serving in the Mikdash. And the blemished offering is disqualified as well.

The idea of bringing the best in the

Mikdash makes sense. But not only in the Mikdash. There is a tendency due to the routine of mitzvot, to fall into a minimalist approach to mitzvot. Just do the minimum of what is required. The example of the more maximalist requirements of the Mikdash should perhaps be aspirational for us in our private lives as well. When we celebrate special occasions, we want everything to be just right; the flowers, the catering, the lighting. We should be vigilant to avoid being maximalists when it comes to our occasions, but allow ourselves to be minimalists in mitzvot. We should aspire to do mitzvot to the full and not suffice with the minimum.

The conclusion of this section states the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem and Hillul Hashem. Actions done by little ole me can cause G-d's Name to be desecrated, Hillul Hashem. Or sanctified, Kiddush Hashem. The Holiness of G-d's Name hovers over our every action. Our care and kindness, the gentle manner of our speech, the pleasantness of our demeanor can be a Kiddush Hashem, unbeknownst and unintended by us. What a weighty responsibility. And wonderful opportunity.



### 4TH ALIYA (23:1-22)

These are the holy days: 6 days work, 7th day is Shabbat. Pesach is on the 14th of the 1st month; for 7 days eat matza. The first day is holy, no melacha should be done, as is the 7th day. The Omer offering of freshly harvested barley is brought the day after the first holiday day of Pesach. It permits consumption of the new grain. Count 7 full weeks and on the 50th day bring an offering of new wheat as baked chametz. That day (Shavuot) shall be a holy day on which no melacha shall be done. When harvesting, leave the corners and the

dropped items to the poor and stranger.

The Torah here introduces us to a new theme of Kedusha: holiness in time. The holiness of proximity to G-d has been expressed in holiness in space, the Mishkan. And through food and relationships, we are holy. And kohanim have holiness. Now, time too. Shabbat and holidays are a rendezvous with G-d, not only in a particular place but in a particular time.

This listing of the holidays begins with Shabbat. Shabbat has come up numerous times in the Torah, focusing on different themes. There is the good employer theme; you know what it means to work as a slave with no reprieve. Grant a reprieve to your workers. There is the Creator theme; He created the world in 6 days, resting on the 7th, you doing the same attests to His Creation. There is the Exodus theme; His Pulling you out of Egypt demonstrates the unique covenant, Shabbat is a sign of that covenant.

Here we have the Holiness theme. Rendezvous. Special time unfettered by weekday concerns.

In all the wonderful ways we honor Shabbat and observe it, we need to remember that at its core it is time akin to prayer. In prayer we stand in isolation, communicating directly with G-d. On Shabbat we live a day in rendezvous with Him.



#### 5TH ALIYA (23:23-32)

The first day of the 7th month (Rosh Hashana) is a truah remembrance. No work shall be done. The 10th day (Yom Kippur) is a holy day on which to afflict your soul, for it is a day of atonement. No work shall be done. From evening til evening.

The brevity of the Torah's description of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur belie their drama in our lives. But their description,

remembrance and atonement – those are resonant words. These are not historically rich like Pesach. But relationally rich; G-d noting us. And granting us atonement.



#### 6TH ALIYA (23:33-44)

The 15th of the 7th month begins a 7-day holiday of Sukkot. The first day is holy, no work shall be done. The 8th day is holy, no work shall be done. These are the holy days each with its offerings, besides the offerings of Shabbat and voluntary ones. And also, on the 15th of the 7th month take a Lulav and Etrog and rejoice before G-d for 7 days. Dwell in Sukkot so you shall know that I had the Jews dwell in Sukkot upon the Exodus.

In the Torah, Sukkot is the end of the year. For the holidays. And so, we have extra joy and appreciation for the holiday cycle that began with Pesach. People need rhythm in life. Something to look forward to. To anticipate. To expect. Every culture has its special days. Our special days are holy, uplifted, change of routine, change of locale (in going to Jerusalem). And for that we are blessed. And appreciative.



#### 7TH ALIYA (24:1-23)

Bring oil for a permanent light in the Menorah, set outside the Holy of Holies. Bake 12 loaves to be placed in 2 groups of 6 on the Shulchan every Shabbat. The kohanim shall eat this holy bread in the Mikdash. 2 men fought. The Jewish man cursed G-d. He was held until his sentence would be determined by G-d. He shall be stoned. These crimes are punishable by death: cursing G-d, murder. Others have financial penalties: property damage and bodily assault.

Oil, flour and wine figure prominently in the Mikdash. Oil in the Menorah. Bread on

the Shulchan. Wine, though not mentioned here, is brought with the animal sacrifices.

It is noteworthy that each of these 3 is processed. Grain is the natural item; the bread is processed by people. Olives, natural; olive oil processed. Grapes, natural; wine processed. None of these occur naturally; they are all processed by people.

Perhaps this is to emphasize the uniqueness of mankind. Only human beings can make wheat into bread. Human beings have creativity and ingenuity. We serve G-d specifically with the unique qualities of mankind. The products of our creativity and ingenuity; oil, bread, wine.

Holiness and its laws are expressions of the elevated and noble station of man.

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## HAFTORAH YEchezkel 44:15-31

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This week's haftorah echoes the parsha, in that it discusses various laws pertaining to the *kohanim*.

We are privy in this memorable section to learn about the service of the *kohanim* in the third Holy Temple through the elevated prophecy of Yechezkel. The realities he describes will come to fruition at the time of the Final Redemption.

As part of his vision, we learn about the unique vestments worn by the priests, laws of who they can marry, and the laws regarding coming in contact with a dead body.

There is also a call to the *kohanim* to serve as teachers and leaders of the nation of Israel.

Being that the *kohanim* are to serve solely as the emissaries of the Almighty, they do not receive a portion of the Land of Israel but are given the meat of the sacrifices and tithes which support their holy work. ■

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## STATS

31st of 54 sedras; 8th of 10 in Vayikra.  
Written on 215 lines (rank: 20th).  
17 parshiyot; 11 open, 6 closed.  
124 pesukim, rank: 15; 1st in Vayikra.  
1614 words, rank: 22; 2nd in Vayikra.  
6106 letters, rank: 23; 2nd in Vayikra.  
Relatively short pesukim account for its drop in ranking for words & letters.



## MITZVOT

63 of 613 mitzvot; 24 positive,  
39 prohibitions.  
Emor has more than one mitzvah per two pesukim, five times the Torah's average. Only Ki Teitzei (with 74) has more mitzvot than Emor.

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## A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

וכי תזבח זבח תודה לה' לרצונכם תזבחו (כב:כט)

"And when you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to G-d, from your own **free will**, you shall sacrifice it." (22:29)

The Korban Todah is offered when a person is saved from a perilous situation and mortal danger, to express thanksgiving to G-d. However, how can an individual be commanded to bring such an offering of one's **own free will**, when no one would have wanted to be placed in this situation in the first place? Rashi expresses this conundrum by saying "At the start of your sacrificing, be careful that it should be **acceptable** to you. And how is it acceptable?"

The Ktav Sofer (Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer 1815-1872, Pressburg) offers an interesting insight. A person should be accepting of all that happens to him, whether the incident is rewarding or includes anguish. We should always consider that the experience that unfolds before us is in our best interest; perhaps due to our errors we need to overcome these trials and deflect worse outcomes. We now can understand the need to bring this "thanksgiving" offering in joy and full acceptance, for G-d has removed these difficulties from us through His mercy. Thereby, the Torah instructs us to bring this Todah offering with our free will in a positive way, accepting all that happens to us with benevolence.

- Shabbat Shalom

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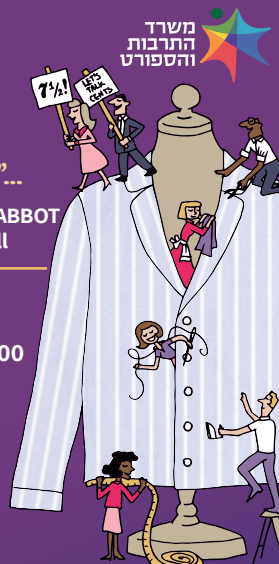
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Modi'in, Heichal Hartarbut	24th May

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## THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB  
OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, EMERITUS

# “To Be Holy is to Be Kind”

Those were the days. I reflect upon them often lately. They occurred more than sixty years ago when I and about a dozen of my fellow Yeshiva classmates were preparing for our *semicha* examinations.

A committee of several esteemed rabbis helped us prepare for and eventually administer the oral examinations. Ultimately, they signed our *semicha* documents, ordaining us as full-fledged Orthodox Jewish rabbis.

One of those rabbis was Pinchas Mordechai Teitz, of blessed memory. He was then known as the founder of the Orthodox Jewish community in Elizabeth, New Jersey. On the first day that we met him, he shared some of his background with us. He was born in the small town of Subot, Latvia, just outside the larger

city of Dvinsk, now known as Daugavpils. As a child he was close to both of that city’s major rabbinic figures, Rav Yosef Rosen (the Rogatchover Gaon) and Rav Meir Simcha (the *Ohr Sameach*).

At that time, quite frankly, I had not heard of either of those two rabbinic giants. Thanks to Rabbi Teitz, however, I was motivated to study the writings of Rav Meir Simcha: *Ohr Sameach al HaRambam*, *Ohr Sameach al HaShas* (which my dear friend, Rabbi Dovid Greenwald discovered some years later in a post-Holocaust archive), and his commentary on *Chumash* known as *Meshech Chochma*.

I also learned much from Rabbi Teitz about Rav Meir Simcha, especially about his kind devotion toward his diverse constituents. One heroic example of this kindness is his refusal to abandon his community when it was under siege during the first World War, insisting that “as long as there are nine Jews remaining in Dvinsk, I will be the tenth!”

Like any great writer, Rav Meir Simcha expressed his personal kindness in his commentary to this week’s Torah portion, *Emor* (Leviticus 21:1-24:23). The passage which he brings to our attention extends from Chapter 22 verse 26 until verse 32. This latter verse proclaims: “Do not profane My holy name (*chillul Hashem*)—so that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelites (*kiddush Hashem*).”

This verse is the culmination of the passage beginning with verse 26. Rabbi Yehuda Coperman, in his outstanding “supercommentary” on *Meshech Chochma*, summarizes the entire passage as follows:

**In loving memory of our dear father,  
grandfather and great-grandfather  
on his 11<sup>th</sup> Yartzheit - י"א א"י**  
**Henry Mayerfeld z"l**  
**May the Torah learned  
from this issue be in his merit**  
**Missed by his wife Lore Mayerfeld,  
and children, Danny & Elana,  
Debbie, Mark & Susie  
the grandchildren  
and great-grandchildren**

“This is a beautiful example of the author’s teachings about the essentials of Jewish thought. It is based upon our understanding of the sequence of these verses:

1. “The prohibition against offering an animal less than eight days old as a sacrifice (verse 27);
2. The prohibition against slaughtering an animal and its own offspring on the same day (verse 28);
3. One may only slaughter animals in an “acceptable” fashion (verse 29);
4. Do not profane the Lord’s name = (*chillul Hashem*);
5. Sanctify the Lord, i.e. be a “holy” people (*kiddush Hashem*).”

Rabbi Copperman, of blessed memory, the founder of the Michlalah Jerusalem College for Woman, thus offers us a very helpful but very brief sketch of Rav Meir Simcha’s lesson: Avoid cruelty, even to animals, so that you may be a “holy people.”

Rav Meir Simcha’s full text is both more elaborate and more convincing. Here it is, subject to my own translation:

“It is well known that pagan idolators sought to appease their gods via human sacrifices, burning their own sons and daughters at the stake, scarring their own bodies and disfiguring themselves. Cruelty, sadism, revenge! As Hosea (13:2) puts it, they are *zovchai adam*, they sacrifice humans.

“So it was until the Holy One Blessed Be He caused the light of Torah to shine... teaching us the values of compassion and sympathy and kindness and mercy, with no distinction between *Kohanim* who must be treated with honor; *Leviim* whom we must gladden; *Yisraelim* whom we must treat charitably and not treat as chattel; the *ger toshav* whom we must sustain; the *eved Kenaani* whom we must not degrade; and animals to which we



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may not cause pain.

“Think too of the prohibition against having one’s non-Jewish employees work for us on our Sabbath, the prohibition against muzzling work animals, and the fact that danger of death or serious illness overrides Torah proscriptions. In short, The Torah and its commandments teach mercy, kindness, compassion—all the ways of His Blessed Name.”

The *Meshech Chochma* eloquently concludes:

“Be careful, my children, not to teach cruelty, but rather ‘Keep my commands and fulfill them... do not profane My holy name.’ His ‘holy name’ expresses His creation and maintenance of the Universe; His desire to preserve them and not, heaven forbid, to destroy them and thereby profane His own name... There is therefore a *mitzvah* to act in a holy manner to sanctify His name, and to thereby ‘illuminate the eyes of the rest of Israel’ as to how to worship the Master of All Creation.”

At moments like this, rereading the brilliant and instructive words of Rav Meir Simcha, I vividly recall the man who introduced me to this great sage and spiritual master. I remember Rabbi Pinchas Mordechai Teitz, who passed away decades ago. I can never forget his many kindnesses as he coached us in our studies, encouraged us to surmount the difficulties we encountered, and complimented us on our

accomplishments. And all this with a smile, a humorous anecdote, and a warm handshake - sometimes even a hug. If kindness equals holiness, he was indeed a holy man.

I encourage you, dear reader, to reflect upon kind individuals that you have experienced in your lifetimes. Can you re-define them to yourselves as having been holy men and women?

I close by sharing with you exemplary individuals whom I identify as supremely kind and distinctively holy. I write these words on the fourth day of Iyar, Yom HaZikaron, the day in which we recall those heroes and heroines of the wars and victims of terror that have so deeply bereaved the State of Israel since its inception.

There are too many to list by name in this weekly column. But they were all exemplary of kindness. Those who were killed in active duty were infinitely kind in their dedication to our defense and for having made the ultimate sacrifice. When one hears descriptions of the many victims of terror from their friends and family, one invariably hears tales of their profound kindness during their tragically interrupted lives.

Yes, they were kind. But they are known in Hebrew as *kedoshim*, holy souls! Indeed! To be kind is to be holy! A lesson for us all from the kind and holy author of *Meshech Chochma*, Rav Meir Simcha HaKohen. ■



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THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

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# Faith as a Journey

In its account of the festivals of the Jewish year, this week's parsha contains the following statement:

For seven days you shall live in huts [*succot*]. All those native-born in Israel must live in huts, so that future generations may know that I had the Israelites live in huts when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God." (*Vayikra 23:42-43*)

What precisely this means was the subject of disagreement between two great teachers of the Mishnaic era, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva. According to the Talmud Bavli (*Succah 11a*), Rabbi Eliezer holds that the reference is to the Clouds of Glory that accompanied the Israelites on their journey through the desert. Rabbi Akiva maintains that the verse is to be understood literally (*succot mammash*). It means "huts" – no more, no less.

A similar difference of opinion exists between the great medieval Jewish commentators. Rashi and Ramban favour the "Clouds of Glory" interpretation. Ramban cites as proof the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the

end of days:

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain. (*Isaiah 4:5-6*)

Here the word *succah* clearly refers not to a natural but to a miraculous protection.

Ibn Ezra and Rashbam, however, favour the literal interpretation. Rashbam explains as follows: the festival of Succot, when the harvest was complete and the people were surrounded by the blessings of the land, was the time to remind them of how they came to be there. The Israelites would relive the wilderness years during which they had no permanent home. They would then feel a sense of gratitude to God for bringing them to the land. Rashbam's proof-text is Moses' speech in *Devarim 8*:

And when you eat and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you. Take care not to forget the Lord your God...

Otherwise, when you have eaten and been satisfied, and have built fine houses and lived in them, when your herds and flocks have grown abundant, and your silver and gold is

abundant, and all that you have has grown abundant, your heart may become proud, forgetting the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, the house of slaves... you might be tempted to say to yourself, 'My power, the strength of my own hand, have brought me this great wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the power to do great things, upholding the covenant that He swore to your ancestors, as He is doing on this day. (*Devarim 8:10-18*)

According to Rashbam, Succot (like Pesach) is a reminder of the humble origins of the Jewish people, a powerful antidote to the risks of affluence. That is one of the overarching themes of Moses' speeches in the book of Devarim and a mark of his greatness as a leader. The real challenge to the Jewish people, he warned, was not the dangers they faced in the wilderness, but the opposite, the sense of wellbeing and security they would have once they settled the land. The irony – and it has happened many times in the history of nations – is that people remember God in times of distress but forget Him in times of plenty. That is when cultures become decadent and begin to decline.

A question, however, remains. According to the view that the *succot* are to be understood literally as huts in the wilderness, what miracle does the festival of Succot represent? Pesach celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt with signs and wonders. Shavuot recalls the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the only time in history when an entire people experienced an unmediated revelation of God. On the "Clouds of Glory" interpretation, Succot fits this scheme. It recalls the miracles in the wilderness, the forty years during which they ate *mannah* from heaven, drank water from a rock, and were led by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night



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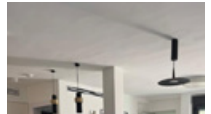
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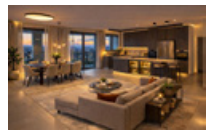
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(In 1776, Thomas Jefferson chose this image as his design for the Great Seal of the United States). But on the view that the *succah* is not a symbol but a fact – a hut, a booth, nothing more – what miracle does it represent? There is nothing exceptional in living in a portable home if you are a nomadic group living in the Sinai desert. It is what Bedouin do to this day. Where then is the miracle?

A surprising and lovely answer is given by the Prophet Jeremiah:

Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

“I remember the devotion of your youth, how - as a bride - you loved Me and followed Me through the desert, through a land not sown.” (*Jeremiah 2:2*)

Throughout Tanach, most of the references to the wilderness years focus on the graciousness of God and the ingratitude of the people: their quarrels and complaints, their constant inconstancy. Jeremiah does the opposite. To be sure, there were bad things about those years, but against them stands the simple fact that the Israelites had the faith and courage to embark on a journey through an unknown land, fraught with danger, and sustained only by their trust in God. They were like Sarah who accompanied Abraham on his journey, leaving “his land, birthplace and father’s house” behind. They were like Tziporah who went with Moses on his risk-laden mission to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. There is a faith that is like love; there is a love that calls for faith. That is what the Israelites showed in leaving a land where they had lived for 210 years and travelling out into the desert, “a land not sown”, not knowing what would befall them on the way, but trusting in God to bring them to their destination.

Perhaps it took Rabbi Akiva, the great lover

of Israel, to see that what was truly remarkable about the wilderness years was not that the Israelites were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory but that they were an entire nation without a home or houses; they were like nomads without a place of refuge. Exposed to the elements, at risk from any surprise attack, they nonetheless continued on their journey in the faith that God would not desert them.

To a remarkable degree, Succot came to symbolise not just the forty years in the wilderness but also two thousand years of exile. Following the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews were scattered throughout the world. Almost nowhere did they have rights. Nowhere could they consider themselves at home. Wherever they were, they were there on sufferance, dependent on a ruler’s whim. At any moment without forewarning they could be expelled, as they were from England in 1290, from Vienna in 1421, Cologne, 1424, Bavaria 1442, Perugia, Vicenza, Parma and Milan in the 1480s, and most famously from Spain in 1492. These expulsions gave rise to the Christian myth of “the wandering Jew” – conveniently ignoring the fact that it was Christians who imposed this fate on them. Yet even they were often awestruck by the fact that – despite everything – Jews did not give up their faith when (in Judah Halevi’s phrase) “with a word lightly spoken” they could have converted to the dominant faith and put an end to their sufferings.

Succot is the festival of a people for whom, for twenty centuries, every house was a mere temporary dwelling, every stop no more than a pause in a long journey. I find it deeply moving that Jewish tradition called this time *zeman simchatenu*, “the season of our joy”. That, surely, is the greatness of the Jewish spirit that, with no protection other than their faith in God, Jews were able to celebrate in the

midst of suffering and affirm life in the full knowledge of its risk and uncertainty. That is the faith of a remarkable nation.

R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once explained why the festival of Nissan has two names, *Pesach* and *Chag haMatzot*. The name *Pesach* represents the greatness of God who “passed over” the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. The name *Chag haMatzot* represents the greatness of the Israelites who were willing to follow God into the wilderness without provisions. In the Torah, God calls the festival *Chag haMatzot* in praise of Israel. The Jewish people, however, called it *Pesach* to sing the praise of God. That, it seems, is the argument between R. Eliezer and R. Akiva about Succot. According to R. Eliezer, it represents God’s miracle, the Clouds of Glory. According to R. Akiva, however, it represents the miracle of Israel – their willingness to continue the long journey to freedom, vulnerable and at great risk, led only by the call of God.

Why then, according to Rabbi Akiva, is Succot celebrated at harvest time? The answer is in the very next verse of the prophecy of Jeremiah. After speaking of “the devotion of your youth, how - as a bride - you loved Me,” the Prophet adds:

Israel is holy to God, The first fruit of His harvest. (*Jeremiah 2:3*)

Just as, during Tishrei, the Israelites celebrated their harvest, so God celebrates His – a people who, whatever else their failings, have stayed loyal to Heaven’s call for longer, and through a more arduous set of journeys, than any other people on earth. ■

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(תשובה ב"ח' הר"מ סימן קס"ד ובסמ"ע שם, ובסימן ק"סא סעיף ה')

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OU ISRAEL 25



## PROBING THE PROPHETS

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# “Kohanim” AND “B’nai Aharon”

Chazal’s haftarah selection for this parasha is taken from Sefer Yechezkel [44: 15-31] which is part of the closing section of the sefer. That section includes nine p’rakim [40-48] of visions that describe the future of the Bet HaMikdash, Yerushalayim and Eretz Yisra’el. Many of the past articles regarding this haftarah have focused upon the contrasts-even conflicts- between the rituals that, as Yechezkel promises, would be followed by the kohanim in the future Bet HaMikdash and those well-known practices that are instituted in the Torah itself.

And yet, we would have a better understanding of the entire nevu’ah were we to comprehend the introduction of the haftarah itself. The opening expression “V’haKohanim haL’viyim” presents us with a number of

queries:

Does Yechezkel refer to the Kohanim **or** the Leviyim?

Or does he speak of **both**?

And, if he **IS** referring to the Kohanim alone-why call them “HaKohanim HaL’viyim”?

Are not ALL Kohanim also L’viyim – being part of Shevet Levi??

Indeed, the earlier part of navi’s message does speak of the Levites alone...and not positively at all. And, upon hearing Yechezkel’s message to them, we will realize why our haftarah begins as it does. The navi tells the L’viyim that:

They are idolators – “asher ta’u me’Alai acharei gilulehem” [v. 10]

Nonetheless, they will guard the Temple, tend gates of the Mikdash and serve the Israelites offerings. [v. 11]

But they will not be allowed to serve Hashem directly nor have any role in the sanctuary itself. [v.13]

Having condemned the Levites for their past sins – including idolatry – and, as a result, had them prohibited from fully returning to serving G-d, Yechezkel then turns to the Kohanim. The prophet would now call them “V’HaKohanim HaL’viyim” -those Kohanim who were **also** L’viyim - who would be considered as an exception from the other Levitical families.

Indeed, we note carefully how the honors to be bequeathed upon these Kohanim would **not** be given to all of the priestly families, but to the most faithful alone, “B’nei Tzadok”,



the descendants of Tzadok. It is they who the navi depicts as remaining loyal to G-d when the majority of the nation - both Israelites and Levites - strayed away from Hashem [see v.15].

And so, what connection does this have to our Torah reading, a parasha that delineates the responsibilities and services that the Kohanim must fulfill in the Mikdash?

I submit that the underlying message of Yechezkel HaNavi is one that rings true in his era and in future generations as well and is subtly intimated in Parashat Emor.

In delineating the multiple mitzvot incumbent upon the Kohanim, i.e. avoiding defilement to the dead, choosing proper marriage mates or limiting certain kohanim from sacrificial worship, the Torah opens our parasha by referring to the Kohanim as “B’nai Aharon”. This additional designation seems to be quite unnecessary, as ALL kohanim must be “B’nai Aharon”! But, perhaps, Hashem is directing Moshe to remind the descendants of Aharon must always carry on the name of their holy forefather. Their biological connection to the priestly family would not always guarantee their sanctified position or service alone. As kohanim, they must constantly be aware that they are “B’nai Aharon” and, therefore, are expected to reflect his sanctity and greatness. If not....well, just read the warnings of Yechezkel!

“Z’cut Avot”, the righteousness of our holy patriarchs does not guarantee that we will receive Hashem’s benevolence and compassion ....unless we remember WHO we come from and whom, therefore, we must emulate. ■

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# “Why Use the Term “MeMacharat HaShabbat”?”

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת

“Begin counting from the day after the day of rest.” (Vayikra 23:15)

In Parashat Emor we encounter a famous *pasuk* that generated significant controversy throughout Jewish history. The Torah instructs us to begin counting the Omer “from the day after Shabbat.” Chazal teach that here the word **Shabbat** refers not to the weekly Shabbat, but to the **first day of Pesach**.

The *Tzedukim* (who did not believe in the Oral Torah), rejected this interpretation. They insisted that *Me Macharat HaShabbat* refers to the day after a literal Shabbat, and therefore they always began counting the Omer on Sunday. This meant that Shavuot would fall on a different date every year, detached from the fixed calendar of Yom Tov.

This raises a powerful question:

**Why would the Torah use such confusing**

**language?** Why refer to Pesach as “Shabbat” rather than simply “Yom Tov”?

## TWO CATEGORIES OF MITZVOT

The Meshech Chochmah offers a brilliant and insightful explanation. He suggests that mitzvot fall into two broad categories:

**Mitzvot that bring us closer to God** - such as tefillah, tzitzit, and tefillin.

**Mitzvot that bring us closer to other people** - such as *gemilut chasadim*, terumah, leket, and other forms of support for those in need.

There is, he argues, a similar distinction between **Shabbat** and **Yom Tov**.

## SHABBAT VS. YOM TOV

On **Shabbat**, we may not carry outside, leave the techum, or cook. These restrictions naturally limit social interaction. Shabbat is a day designed to pull us inward and upward, allowing us to focus more fully on God.

But **Yom Tov** is different. On Yom Tov we may cook, carry, and move more freely. The halachic framework encourages hosting, inviting, and celebrating together. Yom Tov is structured to strengthen our bonds with other people.

## THE FIRST PESACH IN EGYPT

With this distinction in mind, the Meshech Chochmah reads *MeMacharat HaShabbat* in a new light. On the night of the very first Pesach in Egypt, the Jews were commanded:

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“None of you may go out of the entrance of your house until morning.” (Shemot 12:22). That first Pesach was not a social, communal Yom Tov at all. It was experienced in isolation, behind locked doors, the nation hiding from the plague of the first born that swept Egypt.

In that moment, the first Pesach resembled Shabbat far more than Yom Tov. It was a night stripped of social connection, and focused entirely on God. Therefore, explains the Meshech Chochmah, the Torah refers to the first day of Pesach as **Shabbat**, because that is precisely what it functionally resembled.

## SHAVUOT: TURNING OUTWARD

It is no coincidence that when the Torah later describes Shavuot, it interweaves laws of *Pe'ah* and *Leket* - mitzvot that require us to leave behind parts of our harvest for the needy.

Perhaps the Torah is highlighting a profound shift:

**Pesach in Egypt** was inward-facing, like Shabbat, fostering connection with God.

**Shavuot**, the conclusion of the Omer, is outward-facing, calling us to embrace others, to build community, and to care for the vulnerable.

The journey from Pesach to Shavuot is thus the journey from inner faith to outer responsibility, from personal redemption to communal mission. It also underscores that

although the first Yom Tov of Pesach was an exception and was more similar to Shabbat, the first Shavuot is more of a typical Yom Tov—focusing on our connection to our fellow man.

The Meshech Chochmah explains that the Torah’s language is not confusing, but intentional, reminding us that genuine *avodat Hashem* requires both dimensions: drawing close to God and drawing close to each other.

As we count the Omer, day by day, we retrace that national journey.

Each day asks us:

Are we deepening our connection with the *Ribbono shel Olam*?

Are we expanding our care for those around us?

May our mitzvot be performed with clarity and purpose, lifting us upward toward our Creator while drawing us closer together as one people. And may the journey from Pesach to Shavuot transform us—so that we stand together at Matan Torah not only as individuals who believe, but as a nation that loves, supports, and walks with one another in unity. ■



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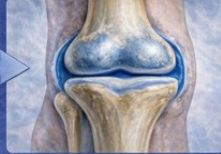
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**“Emor el haKohanim bnei Aharon ve’amarta aleihem le’nefesh lo yitama be’amav — Speak to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: Let none [of you] defile himself for a dead person among his people.” (Vayikra 21:1)** Hashem tells Moshe Rabbeinu to speak to the Kohanim and instruct them in the laws pertaining to their clan. Rashi explains that this double expression of “speak...say” comes to admonish the adult Kohanim to be responsible for the minors. How can we apply this teaching to the broader community?

Rav Sorotzkin zt”l in *Oznayim La’Torah* offers an insight relating to education. Children are primarily influenced by two groups, their parents and teachers and their peers. Sometimes, their peers can have an even greater impact on them than their elders. It has been said that it is more important for parents to daven for their children to have good friends than it is for them to daven for their children to be good. To that end, parents will carefully choose their neighborhood, their children’s schools and their children’s playmates. The Kohanim often lived scattered among different tribes whose children may not have been as careful with the laws of purity and impurity. It was therefore imperative for the elder Kohanim to continuously reinforce these laws so that their children would

guard them appropriately, even without the support of their peers.

Accordingly, any value or custom that is important to a family must be regularly emphasized and esteemed so that the children will absorb, prioritize and revere it as well and stay true to their family tradition. If children do not experience this element in their education, their peers will sway them in a different direction.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l in *Darash Moshe* shares an additional lesson learned from the twofold expression. He notes that a parent wants to impart two components in Torah education. Firstly, there are the actual laws and instructions, what to do and what to avoid. This is “Emor — Speak.” Then there is the feeling and connection that accompanies the directive. This is “ve’amarta — and say,” explain that living with Torah values is not simply a challenging rulebook to follow, rather it is a precious commodity that gives shape to life with meaning and purpose.

In *Ohel Miriam*, Rav Pincus zt”l notes that cultivating *ahavat Hashem* must begin when a child is very young. We can teach babies to kiss a mezuzah, a siddur and holy books. Such precious moments become fixed in a little one’s psyche and form the building blocks of his love for Hashem, His Torah and mitzvot. ■

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR  
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,  
OU ISRAEL

This Friday, we commemorated *Pesach Sheini*, literally the second *Pesach*.

The *Torah* instructs us in *Parshat BeHaalotcha*, regarding this second opportunity for those who were unable to offer the *Korban Pesach* at its proper time to be able to participate and fulfill this *mitzva*.

*Since there were some men who were unclean, having come in contact with a corpse and could not offer the Korban Pesach on that day. Appearing that same day before Moshe and Ahron, those men said to them, "Unclean though we are by reason of a corpse, why must we be prevented from presenting Hashem with an offering at its set time with the rest of the Jewish People?" Moshe said to them, "Imdu- Stand by, and let me hear what instructions Hashem gives for you." Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Jewish people, and say: When any of you or of your posterity who are defiled by a corpse or are on a long journey would be unable to offer the Korban Pesach to Hashem, they shall offer it in the second month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and they shall not leave any of it over until morning. They shall not break a bone of it. They shall offer it in strict accord with the law of the Korban Pesach..."*

The **Chidushei HaRim**, the first **Gerer Rebbe zy'a**, explains that the word **Imdu** does not mean to stand by and wait, rather it means **Imdu stand up**, even though you may have been unable to perform the *mitzva* initially, don't fall into despair. **Imdu- stand**

**up- Hashem** gives us the opportunity for a second chance!

So too in our days, in the absence of the *Korban Pesach*, there is an eternal message of *chizuk*, inherent in these verses, and represented by this sacred day of *Pesach Sheini*. **Imdu-** Stand up! Each of us can stand upright once again before *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* through *teshuva* and *tefila*. It is never too late!

This important idea is similarly reflected and developed even further in a powerful teaching from **Rebbe Naftali Tzvi of Rop-schitz, zy'a**. The *Ropschitzer* taught that a person might think that as a result of their many mistakes or flaws, that there is no hope for them, that it is impossible for them to turn their lives around, to improve their circumstances. Giving up, selling oneself short, explains the *Ropschitzer*, is not only counter-productive, but is also an act of great heresy! *Teshuva*, the opportunity for growth and change, the opportunity to move forward, and leave our mistakes or missed opportunities in the past, is a great gift from *Hashem*! One who feels that they are not capable of *teshuva*, explains the *Rebbe*, is not simply selling himself short, but rather denying the endless kindness, compassion and love that the *Ribono Shel Olam* has for each and every member of *Klal Yisrael*.

We see this idea summed up succinctly in a beautiful short teaching from the great **Reb Tzadok HaKohein Milublin, zy'a**:

כשם שצריך אדם להאמין בהש"י כך צריך אה"כ  
להאמין בעצמו.

*Just as a person is required to believe in*

*Hashem, so too one is subsequently required to believe in one's self.*

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* endows each of us with incredible innate strengths, talents and potential. Just as we must believe that *Hashem* is there to see us through life's challenges, we must also believe that we are deserving of opportunities to re-calibrate and recuperate, and move forward with the confidence and spiritual fortitude to bounce back from those challenges, and reach heights we previously never imagined we could achieve.

The message of *Pesach Sheini*, is precisely this idea: leave behind past mistakes or missed opportunities, move forward with confidence and self esteem, embrace the potential for growth and success, tap into the innate strength that *Hashem* has endowed each of us with, and in so doing, transform ourselves and the entire world. ■


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# Shining

Rav Yehuda Amital, zt'l, was a unique *talmid chacham*, visionary and builder of Torah. After his family was killed in Auschwitz, Rav Amital came to Eretz Yisrael, fought in the Haganah and was the founding Rosh Yeshiva of Har Etzion (“the Gush”). Respected for his penetrating genius and fierce independence, Rav Amital was beloved as a humble *gadol b'Torah* and deeply caring and dedicated *rebbe*.

Students of Rav Amital relate that he often shared the following *ma'aseh*:

“Soon before Mincha one Erev Shabbos, a simple farmer entered the *beis medrash*, exasperated. He finally spotted the rebbe there, who, having just come from the mikvah, was immersed in reciting *Shir haShirim* with holy fervor and intensity. The farmer cried out, urgently interrupting the rebbe’s *deveykus*, ‘Rebbe, Rebbe, my cow is sick! Please help me!’ Raising his head from




Rav Yehuda Amital zt'l

his sefer with a look of empathy, he responded, ‘Oy! Your cow is sick? Let’s go take a look!’ Following the farmer to his barn, the rebbe looked at the cow, and sighed. ‘May this cow be blessed,’ he said. He then placed his hand on the the farmer’s cheek, ‘And you, my precious friend, may you be blessed!’ As the farmer shone with contentment and the cow turned to munch some tasty clover, the rebbe made his way back to *beis medrash*.

“When he arrived, the *chasidim* gathered around their revered teacher with questions in their eyes. The rebbe smiled and explained. ‘So, you want to know how I could possibly interrupt *Shir haShirim*, the holy of holies, to go bless a cow minutes before Shabbos? When one of you experiences a desire to draw close and strengthen his *kesher* and relationship with his rebbe, he can interrupt the learning in the *beis medrash* in order to ask him for guidance in *avodas Hashem*. Well, a simple farmer also yearns for a *kesher* and a blessing from his rebbi, but he may not have any entry point other than his cow!’”

Rav Amital, zt'l, would encourage his students to come to him to discuss any issue, whether in his personal life or in his learning. Even if a *talmid* would knock on his door and cry out, “*HaRav, ha-parah ha-parah* — the cow, the cow...,” really having nothing specific to discuss, he would still have the full attention and presence of his

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rebbe, which he craved.

.....  
"Speak (אמר) to the Kohanim, and say (אמר) to them...." [21:1]

Rashi teaches us that the apparent repetition of "speak to" and "say" teaches us *l'hazir gedolim al ha-ketanim*, "the adults should *l'hazir*, 'warn' the young." As the older, more experienced Kohanim, they were to instruct the younger generation in the ways of the priesthood.

*L'hazir* is etymologically connected with the word *zohar*, 'illumination'. The Lubavitcher Rebbe tells us that this term implies not just about *what* we impart to others, but *how* we transmit it; how we view, educate and influence them. To influence the listener positively, our *l'hazir*, our admonition, must bring him *zohar*; our words must 'shine' and illuminate him with positivity.

As the Klausenberger Rebbe said, every craftsman has his own special tools through which he performs his work and succeeds in his trade. A teacher, too, has special tools that allow him to succeed in his trade: his love for his students and his kind words. He uses these tools to polish the student's heart, reveal the pure *emunah* within, and make it shine.

*Eilu Metzios*, the second perek of *Maseches Bava Metzia*, addresses different scenarios and halachos of returning lost objects to their owner. The Mishna (33a) clarifies the order of priority in which lost objects belonging to various people need to be returned. After tending to one's own lost objects, "If one finds his father's lost item and his teacher's lost item, tending to his teacher's lost item takes precedence," שאביו הביאו לעולם הזה ורבו שלמדו "as (even though) his father brought him into this world, his teacher, who taught him the wisdom of Torah,

brings him to life in the World to Come." The Mishna continues to discuss the order and priorities of *kavod*, honor: if one's father and teacher had each been carrying a burden, one first takes his teacher's burden and puts it down, and then takes his father's burden and puts it down.

A number of opinions of the Sages in the Mishna then work to clarify what is meant by *Rabbo*, 'his teacher'. Rav Yehuda says, כל שרוב חכמתו הימנו, "*(Rabbo* refers to) a teacher from whom one learned most of his knowledge," be it Bible, Mishna, or Talmud. Rav Yossi says, אפילו לא האיר עיניו אלא במשנה, "Even if he enlightened him in the understanding of only one mishna, that is his teacher." The Gemara concludes that one's teacher is given precedence over one's father when the teacher has a status of רבו מובהק, *rabbo muvhak*, one's outstanding, preeminent, primary teacher.

Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller, the "Tosfos Yom Tov", interprets the term *muvhak* as deriving from the word *bohak*, 'shining'. Indeed, a *rebbe muvhak* is a teacher that makes his student shine, and by means of this, becomes a primary source of knowledge for him.

We are all teachers to each other, modeling wisdom and extending kindness blessings to all those who are connected with us. So, even if it feels like an interruption, may we provide a listening ear, care and concern, to our children, students, teachers, parents, friends, and to everyone (even cows!) whom we meet along the way. And may we help one another shine. ■

.....  
Excerpt from Rav Judah's upcoming "Baderech: Along the Path of the Torah" (Summer 2026/5786)



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## This Week's Inspiration

### SUNDAY MAY 3

7:30 PM

Men's Safrut (The Bais)

**Rabbi Tzvi Maurer**

7 Hartum Street, 2nd Floor

**SPECIAL EVENT:**

**9:15 AM - 1:00 PM**

Shmuel Aleph Yom Iyun  
for Women at Beit Knesset  
Hanassi, Ussishkin 24

### MONDAY MAY 4

8:30 PM

The Bais (for Men)

**Semichat Chaver Program**

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Classes @ Bet Knesset Nitzanim, 3 Asher Street, Bakaa

**9:20 AM**

Understanding Tefila

**Rabbi Yossi Goldin**

**11:25 AM**

P'shat in the Parsha

**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

**10:10 AM**

Rambam: Letters & Introductions

**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

**12:20 PM**

Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**

## TORAH TUESDAYS WITH THE WOMEN'S DIVISION

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# This Week's Inspirational Torah Learning with OU Israel

**WEDNESDAY  
MAY 6**

## **COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN REHAVIA**

@ Bet Knesset HaNassi,  
24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

**9:15AM**

Holy Poetry **Rabbi Dr. Aharon Adler**

**10:20AM**

"The Hidden Meaning of the Omer:  
What Are We Really Counting - And  
Why Does It Matter?"

**Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg**

**11:25 AM**

Mussar and Self Improvement:  
A study of Rav Kook's sefer  
Midot HaRayah

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

**12:30 PM**

Jews in the Middle Ages:  
External Threats and Internal  
Developments **Dr. Deborah Polster**



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**THURSDAY  
MAY 7**

## **COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN ARNONA**

@ Bet Knesset Shai Agnon,  
11 Rechov Leib Yaffe, Arnona

**9:15 AM**

Parshat HaShavua **Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:30AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**

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Trailblazing the Text of Tanach  
**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

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- Yerushalayim - Baka (Matnas) - Sun May 10
- Yerushalayim - Ramot (Ramatayim Tzofim) - Sun May 10
- Modiin - (Darchei Zion) - Sun May 10
- Maaleh Adumim - the "UP" Shul - Sun May 10
- Carmei Gat - (Carmei Zion) Mon May 11
- Chashmonaim (Rimon Shul) - Tues May 12
- Pardes Chana (Klal Yisrael) - Tues May 12
- Beit Shemesh (Menorat Hameor) - Wed May 13
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# Kashrut in Israel - Part Two

Last we introduced the complexities of Kashrut supervision in Israel. This week is a continuation.

### UNIFIED STANDARDS

The kosher system in Israel consists of two main tracks: the Chief Rabbinate (*Harabbanute Harashit*), which is a state-owned enterprise, and the private certifications, which are formal business enterprises. (Due to numerous factors, the law does not allow kashrut organizations to be non-profit.) The Chief Rabbinate was built out of the vision of Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook zt”l to initiate a unified system which he hoped would bring about the reinstatement of the Sanhedrin. Regarding kashrut, the system of the Rabbanute is quite complex. It is headed by two Chief Rabbis, Sephardi and

Ashkenazi, and has an elected body called the Chief Rabbinical Council, consisting of twelve rabbis. This council, along with the Chief Rabbis, sets kosher standards for the entire country. From time to time, new issues must be addressed, such as new findings of bug infestation in vegetables or cultured meat. The council also sets standards regarding products and supervision.

The Chief Rabbinate has an extensive staff whose job is to apply the standards set by the Council. And therein lies a formidable challenge. In essence, kosher supervision is in the hands of local rabbis and their staffs. Every city or municipal council has its own independent rabbinical body in conjunction with the municipality and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and sometimes there are gaps between the standards the Chief Rabbinate would like to apply, and those the local rabbis are willing to impose. There are cases where municipal rabbis would like to be more stringent than the Chief Rabbinate, and vice versa. Since the municipal rabbis have the sole license to give kosher certification to all establishments under their jurisdiction (restaurants, wedding halls, caterers) there can be large discrepancies between one city and another.

Another important factor is the setup of each local *Rabbanute*. In far too many cases financial and political issues can affect the level of certification. For example, there are cities where the municipality is very generous to the local *Rabbanute* and supports initiatives for better certification, such as more



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supervisors. In other municipalities the budget is so low there can be one part-time supervisor on 170 establishments, with a minimal number of *mashgichim*. In such a case, maintaining an acceptable standard is very difficult. Then, there are many situations where government funding is held up. There have been instances in regional councils where the local chief rabbi or the kosher supervisor has retired, and instead of replacing this official, the council asks a rabbi or supervisor from an adjacent municipality (who is already flooded with work) to take over. There are cases where one rabbi oversees two or even three regions at once, with no way of adding more personnel. No one is in favor of this situation. Obviously, to run a professional kashrut system, adequate staff and budget are critical.

The lack of unified standards challenges the kosher consumer. There can be a Rabbinic certification that runs smoothly, while others can barely function. This is one of the reasons why there is such a lack of clarity regarding *rabbanute* certifications.

#### MEHADRIN AND NON-MEHADRIN

One of the most common questions related to kashrut in Israel is “Do you keep *mehadrin*?” This term has almost nothing to do with the actual laws of kosher supervision. The term *mehadrin* is rarely found in the Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries in regard to the laws of kosher food. The term is applicable to many other halachic areas, such as *arba'ah minim* (the lulav and its accompanying species). Another example is with regard to Chanukah candles. Our Sages discuss the

basic requirement to fulfill the mitzvah of *ner Chanukah* and call higher levels of fulfillment “*mehadrin*” and “*mehadrin min hamehadrin*.”

Regarding kashrut, the term *mehadrin*, as used today, denotes a level of kashrut where, due to issues of dispute between different authorities, the higher standard is upheld. The term came into use in Israel over 40 years ago, when there was a need for a unified, basic level of kashrut without subjecting the less religious public to constraints. *Kasher Lemehadrin* is supposed to represent a level of kashrut which is undisputable. This, however, is impossible since every certification has its own stringencies and systems. In the “*mehadrin*” arena there is no way for consumers to discern if the hechsher is truly up to everyone’s standards, as each individual rabbinate can decide what is and isn’t considered *mehadrin*.

Another issue for the consumer who truly wants to keep kosher in Israel is that once there are two levels, then an organization or establishment that does not keep *mehadrin* standards can be completely subpar, since, as explained above, a majority of kosher

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There are, however, certain standards that have become universal in Israel, which differentiate *mehadrin* from non-*mehadrin*. All dairy products labeled *mehadrin* are *Chalav Yisrael* (an observant Jew witnessed the milking, as opposed to the American *Chalav Stam* ruling), all baked goods are *Afiat Yisrael* (a Jew lights the oven), and all products containing any of the five grains are *Yashan*. Restaurants will have only Jews cooking to abide by the opinion of the Beit Yosef that a Jew has to take an active part in the cooking process in order to prevent transgressing the prohibition of *Bishul Akum*. Israel has a large industry of non-glatt meat, something not available overseas today, and *mehadrin* establishments will only use glatt products. It should be noted that not all *mehadrin* standards are equal even for these specific issues. For example, certain standards of *Chalav Yisrael* in Israel do not meet the OU's requirements, and therefore we do not accept every product labeled *Chalav Yisrael*.

In general, OU Kosher recommends following a *Mehadrin* standard and such policy is used in our food establishments in Israel as well as our certified manufacturing facilities throughout the country. ■

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That same pattern appears among the Kohanim, who enable religious experience in the Mikdash. They are granted certain privileges, including the twenty-four gifts, yet these come together with added layers of obligation. Parashat Emor defines three primary areas in which a Kohen must exercise heightened caution: contact with death, the parameters of marriage, and the preservation of bodily dignity. The Kohen Gadol stands at an even higher level, bound by more restrictive marital limitations and a more exacting standard regarding contact with death.

### A NATURAL EXTENSION

These special guidelines for Kohanim do not appear in a vacuum. The concluding sections of both Parashat Acharei Mot and

Kedoshim carefully lay out the framework of issurei bi'ah, defining which relationships are permitted and which are forbidden. Within that broader structure, it is natural to introduce the more demanding marital standards expected of a Kohen in Parashat Emor. Once the general boundaries of marriage are drawn for all of Klal Yisrael, the Torah then sharpens those expectations for those who stand closer.

Likewise, the prohibitions against contact with the dead in Emor continue the discussion begun in Parashat Tazria and Metzora, which lay out the many forms of tumah that apply to every Jew. Against that backdrop, the opening sections of Parashat Emor, which detail the distinct tumah restrictions of the Kohanim, unfold as a natural extension of Tazria and Metzora.

Except for one thing.

### RESOLUTION DELAYED

Each form of tumah introduced in Tazria and Metzora is followed by the halachic manner in which that tumah is resolved. At times the resolution is immediate, such as immersion in a mikvah. At other times it unfolds slowly and with greater complexity. The clearest example is the Metzora, whose process culminates in korbanot and singular ceremonies, with oil and blood applied to his body.

Yet the laws of tumah through contact with

the dead, introduced in Emor, are not followed by any parallel process of resolution. The rhythm established in Tazria and Metzora, of tumah followed by procedures of purification, is suddenly disrupted. Emor presents the reality of tumah through contact with the dead, but offers no pathway to remove it.

This disruption in the Torah's rhythm did not go unnoticed. The Midrash (Kohelet Rabbah 9:8) records a striking exchange between Moshe Rabbeinu and Hashem surrounding this textual gap. Moshe is troubled by the absence of any process of purification in Parashat Emor. This parsha presents the tumah of contact with the dead, yet offers no way forward.

Only later, when the Torah reaches Parashat Chukat, an entire sefer after Emor, does Hashem reveal that the Parah Adumah is the mechanism through which tumah from death is addressed.

Why did Hashem delay the laws of Parah Adumah? Evidently, this delay itself carries a message.

### NOT YET READY

In part, the halachot of Parah Adumah are postponed because we were not yet ready to appreciate their meaning. Death remains the one mystery that human beings cannot penetrate. We do not understand it, we cannot prevent it, and we encounter it most painfully in those we love. It is a dead end, philosophically and emotionally, a place where human answers simply do not reach.

At that point of paralysis, we require something beyond ourselves. The response must come from a higher wisdom, a wisdom we cannot fully grasp. Unable to solve death, we turn to Hashem, who enters our world with a process that lies beyond human comprehension. The very opacity of Parah Adumah

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sharpens our awareness of the higher wisdom of Hashem. Death itself resists understanding, and even the process that addresses it remains beyond us. We are not given an explanation. We are given a *chok*, the quintessential *chok*, and that experience deepens our awareness of how much remains in Hashem's domain.

But that awareness only takes shape when a person is forced to confront it.

This awareness could not yet take root at the stage of Parashat Emor. The Mishkan had just been erected. The nation stood at a high point, poised to enter the Land, living in a more elevated and protected reality. We had experienced death: the three thousand after the *eigel* and the tragic loss of Aharon's sons. But those moments were tied to specific failures. Death had not yet settled into daily life.

Only later, after the sin of the spies and the uprising of Korach, did our reality shift. It became clear that an entire generation would not enter the Land. Year by year, that generation moved toward its end. Death was no longer exceptional but commonplace.

It was in that setting that Parah Adumah was given. Hashem was teaching that even within an atmosphere heavy with loss, He alone provides a path forward. The halachic solution to tumah gestures toward something broader, a response to how we live with death

and how we endure national tragedy.

Had these laws been introduced in Emor, they would have remained abstract. We had not yet encountered death as an ongoing condition, and we could not yet receive the message embedded within the *chok*.

By the time we reach Chukat, the experience of loss has deepened, and we were more prepared to turn upward, seeking a response that does not come from within the human realm.

### THE CLARITY OF DANGER

The past two and a half years have exposed our own vulnerabilities. We continue to live with loss and with wounds that will not fully heal. During the recent war with Iran, the threat of death felt immediate, as missiles could reach any part of the country. That exposure, as frightening as it was, sharpened our awareness of the protection we were granted.

Before the missiles fell, we knew in theory about systems like the Iron Dome, but only afterwards could we begin to grasp how much death and destruction were averted. Encountering danger deepened our appreciation for the mercy we were shown, even when that mercy was partial and the pain remains.

### NOT ALWAYS IMMEDIATE

There is a second reason the Torah delays the laws of Parah Adumah. Hashem does not want to leave us with the impression that every halachic rupture is met by an immediate and accessible repair. Had Parah Adumah appeared alongside the laws of tumah from contact with death, the sequence would suggest a predictable rhythm, problem followed by solution, break followed by restoration.

But Parah Adumah does not function within that rhythm. It unfolds slowly, across several days, and demands a level of precision that resists simplification. Even after it is performed, it remains difficult to grasp. By

delaying its presentation, the Torah reflects that very character. The answer exists, but it is not immediate, and it is not straightforward. The distance between the problem and its resolution is part of what we are meant to notice.

We are drawn toward immediacy. In confronting external threats or tensions within our own society, we look for clarity, for something that resolves tension quickly. The structure of Parah Adumah quietly unsettles that expectation. Some processes take time. Some forms of repair unfold gradually, without revealing their full logic along the way. Over these past years, we have come to recognize this reality more deeply. We continue forward even when the path is not yet clear, holding to Hashem even when the process is only partially understood.

This too is part of what it means to live at a higher level. Not only to carry more mitzvot, but to inhabit a world in which not everything is immediately resolved. The closer a person stands before Hashem, the less life is reduced to clear formulas and predictable outcomes. Parah Adumah does not only address tumah. It establishes that even when understanding is partial and resolution is delayed, a person continues to stand before Hashem and to live within His presence, even without full clarity. ■



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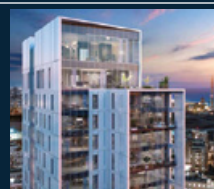


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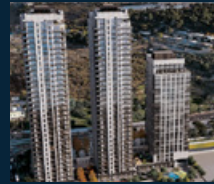
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# The Sensitive Heart of Shmuel Hakatan

## Rav Kook on Pirkei Avot 4:24

Shmuel HaKatan says: “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles...” (*Mishlei* 24:17) (*Pirkei Avot* 4:24)

Rav Chaim Volozhin comments on this Mishna that praying for the destruction of one’s adversaries and enemies is often not the best solution. As a proof he cites the talmudic story of Rav Meir and his wife Brurira who were being tormented by local hooligans. Rabbi Meir prayed for their demise. Brurira taught her husband that it is better to pray that the wicked repent. As Rav Meir’s wife inferred from the verse, “Sin will be gone from the earth”: sin will cease, but not the sinners, for “the wicked will be no more,” they will repent (*Berachot* 10a on *Tehillim* 104:35). (*Ruach Chaim* 4:24).

Rav Kook comments on this talmudic passage saying that it is essential that one never lose sight of the divine image that is found in others. Even when interacting with a fellow Jew who is corrupt and sinful, Rav Kook advises to perceive the potential and see the

sanctity embedded within the soul of each person. Brurira’s advice was taken to heart by her husband, Rav Meir. He prayed for the wellbeing of his antagonists. They changed their ways and repented. (*Ain Aya, Berachot* 10a and see Rav Kook’s *Midot HaRaayah, Aha-va* #9)

The teaching of Shmuel HaKatan in the mishna in *Pirkei Avot* cited above is unique in that it has a sage quoting a verse from the book of *Mishlei*. Rav Kook explains that the verse quoted by Shmuel HaKatan in this mishna captures the core of the sage’s personality: his sensitivity and exquisite righteousness.

The Talmud (*Berachot* 28b) recounts a significant moment in Jewish history following the destruction of Jerusalem. Rabban Gamliel who presided over the Sanhedrin in Yavneh recognized the urgent need to amend the daily Amidah. The Jewish people needed Divine protection against heretics and informers. Who could possibly compose a prayer that calls for destruction of others?

In the end, Shmuel HaKatan - Samuel the



Rabbi Aryeh Levin zt”l

modest - agreed to formulate the prayer, called *Birkat Haminim*. Why was it so difficult to find a sage to compose the blessing? What made Shmuel HaKatan qualified for the task?

Rav Kook suggested that a prayer which petitions for the demise of heretics and slanderers touches on the powerful emotions of hostility and anger. It is natural to feel hatred towards those who seek to harm us and our community. To compose a fitting prayer against enemies requires an individual who is utterly pure and holy, one who has succeeded to remove all hatred and petty resentments from his heart.

Only Shmuel HaKatan was a suitable candidate to compose this challenging prayer. His life's guiding principle was "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls" (Avot 4:24). Shmuel succeeded in removing all enmity from his heart, even towards personal enemies. (Sid-dur Olat Reiyah, vol 1, p. 278)

In one's determination and zeal to uproot evil, Rav Kook warns us that our actions must be carefully assessed to be certain that excessive hate does not seep in and that our actions are purely for Heaven's sake.

Rav Kook elegantly expresses this critical notion in his classic work *Orot HaKodesh* (vol. 3, p. 244):

"We must refine the attribute of zeal, so that it enters into the realm of the holy, it will be a zeal for God. Since zealotry often harbors some slight influence of human failings, our powers of self-examination must determine its primary motive. We must be sure it is not rooted in personal jealousy, which rots one very bones, but rather a genuine zeal for God, which provides a covenant of peace."

Rav Kook himself was forced to deal with others who expressed enmity towards him. It was not uncommon for Rav Kook to be

harassed by students and followers of leading rabbis who disagreed with him, and they often crossed the line by mocking him, posting defamatory broadsides, and even physically attacking him.

One time, Rav Aryeh Levin's daughter witnessed, with horror, zealots knocking Rav Kook's fur hat off his head. Rav Levin felt that he needed to go give Rav Kook his support after this latest incident. So as not to disturb his studies, he visited him late at night. He sat at a distance from Rav Kook in the study hall. When Rav Kook finally broke his concentration and noticed Rav Levin's presence, he told him that he knew why he was there.

He said: "It is especially during these trying times and when I am silent and compassionate towards those who intend to insult me that I merit a surge of divine help in my studies and 'chidishei Torah.' I see the words of *Kohelet* spring forth to life: God seeks those who are persecuted" (*Kohelet* 3:15). (Raz, Tzaddik for Eternity, p. 259-261)

Evidently, along with Rav Kook's ability to withstand the torment of others, he turned the experiences of mistreatment into opportunities to feel God's closeness. He was able to elevate times of turmoil into service of God. (See Torah United vol. 1, Goldscheider, pp. xxxix-xl) ■



Rabbi Goldscheider's most recent OU Press Publication, "Torah United" on the weekly Parsha, can be ordered directly from Rabbi Goldscheider at [arong@ouisrael.org](mailto:arong@ouisrael.org) at a special price for Torah Tidbits readers.

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## Does One Fix a Mistake in a Complex *Al Hamichya*?

**Question:** I ate cake and dates and therefore needed to say a *Me'ein Shalosh* that includes both “*al hamichya*” and “*al pri ha'etz*.” While saying the beracha, I forgot about the dates until near the end. At that point, could I have salvaged the beracha by adding “*al hapeirot*” at the end, or should I have finished the *beracha* just for the cake and then said a separate *beracha acharona* for the dates?

**Answer:** We start with the possibility you ended off with “*Baruch ata ... al hamichya v'al hapeirot (peiroteha in Israel)*.” As a rule, the determinant of a *beracha*'s efficacy is how it is completed (Berachot 12a). Therefore, presumably with such an ending, you would have been *yotzei*. However, some *poskim* say that in this case, it is **unclear** if fixing this long *beracha* only at its end will remedy the lacking opening (see Ot Hi L'olam vol. I, p. 35a; Petach Had'vir 208:20). Almost all *poskim* rule (see *ibid.*; V'zot Haberacha, p. 47) that after the fact, one should assume he was *yotzei* due

to the proper ending, and not make another *beracha* on what he left out from the first *beracha*'s opening, as it would be *l'vatala* if he was previously *yotzei*.

Because of the doubt involved, some *poskim* recommend your second option – obviate the question by sticking to a simple *Al Hamichya*, and do *Al Ha'etz* afterward (*ibid.*). It is true that one is required to incorporate both elements that require a *beracha* in one *beracha acharona* (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 208:12). Presumably, splitting them into two *berachot acharonot* without justification makes the second one a *beracha she'eina tzricha*. However, a major rule in *beracha she'eina tzricha* is that if the ostensibly extra *beracha* is needed to avoid a halachic doubt, it is no longer unnecessary (see Kaf Hachayim, OC 208:82). Still, though, if there is an easy alternative to obviate the need for an extra *beracha*, we should use it.

The Maharshag (I:53, cited and accepted by Piskei Teshuvot 208:19) indeed has the following simple solution, if caught in time. Go back to the place of the omission, fix it, and continue from there. Admittedly, after “... *rachem na Hashem Elokeinu*,” backing up means repeating Hashem's Name. However, even unnecessarily saying Hashem's Name in the midst of a long *beracha* is not nearly as problematic as saying Hashem's Name in what turns out to be a *beracha l'vatala*. For example, even though it is not critical to say *Al Hanisim*, if one remembered before he finishes the *beracha*, he goes back to say it (Shulchan Aruch, OC 682:1), even though this

means that he repeats part of the *beracha*, including Hashem's Name. (See also Ginot Veradim (1:28) regarding R'tzei in *bentching* at *seuda shlishit* after nightfall.) According to the Maharshag, it is too late to go back only if he has said Hashem's Name at the *beracha*'s conclusion.

The Petach Had'vir (208:15, inspired by his understanding of the Magen Avraham 59:1) has a complicated explanation why it is too late to attach one's addition of that which he left out to the opening of the *beracha* with Hashem's Name. Therefore, he reasons that the best remaining option is to keep the *me'ein shalosh* focused on the cake and make later on the dates. While the Sdei Chemed (vol. VI, p. 319) and V'zot Haberacha (ibid.) endorse his basic approach, they discuss cases where he did not fix the *beracha* until close to the end of the *beracha* (confirmed by a phone call I had with the author of V'zot Haberacha), which might be what makes it improper to go back to the beginning. However, the Petach Had'vir's opposition is even from the "middle" of the *beracha*.

While it is difficult for me to decide between

the opinions in this *machloket Acharonim*, the Maharshag's approach seems in line with more mainstream halachic rules. Therefore, I would recommend going back to the place of the omission unless he has said Hashem's Name at the end of the *beracha*. Apparently, the Petach Had'vir does not consider this a *hefsek*, and he agrees that one can assume he was *yotzei* even if we only count the inclusion of *al hapeirot* at the end. ■

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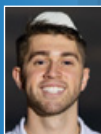
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# Shaul, David and Sovereignty

The Talmud poses a conundrum suggested by Rav Huna: If Shaul sinned once and David sinned twice, why was Shaul punished with the loss of his kingdom while David's kingdom remained firmly established? The discussion in the Talmud continues with attempts to clarify which specific sins Rav Huna alluded to, concluding that the sin for which Shaul was punished was the failure to completely eradicate Amalek, and David's two offenses were his treatment of Uriah and the census he conducted.<sup>1</sup>

Commentators on the Talmud are quick to pounce. Doesn't this seem like favoritism? What distinction between Shaul and David would merit such a profound difference in the way each was treated? Opinions vary. Maharsha cites an opinion that Shaul's offense was directly linked to his kingship; he failed in a divinely ordained mission assigned to him as king of Israel, while this was not true of David's sins. He offers his own opinion

that the critical difference between the two was that Shaul offered excuses and tried to rationalize his failures, while David admitted his shortcomings, accepted the punishment decreed upon him and did complete Teshuvah, serving as an eternal model for the Jewish people.<sup>2</sup>

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz teaches that this difference reveals a character flaw deeply embedded in Shaul's personality, making him unworthy of establishing a monarchic dynasty. When Shaul sinned, both in the case of not waiting for Shmuel before offering his sacrifice in Gilgal and by not killing Agag and the choice animals of Amalek, the excuse he proffered was that he was pressured by the people. Shmuel responded scathingly, "Even if you are small in your own eyes, you are head of the tribes of Israel, and Hashem has anointed you as king over Israel." There is such a thing as misplaced humility. A king has to act with dignity, integrity and conviction. Shaul's failure to do so was emblematic of his inability to serve as an arm of divine authority over the nation, and thus rendered him incapable of founding the monarchy that would lead the Jewish people eternally. David's ability to admit his own shortcomings in the face of divine authority proved the opposite: He acknowledged his own status, as a king and as a human being, and humbled himself before Hashem while maintaining his integrity as a leader.<sup>3</sup> Rav Nevenzal, shlit"a, explains that Shaul's desire to please all parties led him

1. Yoma 22b. The Talmud notes that these were not the exclusive misdeeds committed by the two kings, but rules out other options as having been the direct cause of the loss of the kingship, in Shaul's case, or its potential loss, in the instance of David.

2. Maharsha, Hiddushei Aggadot Yoma 22b

3. Sichot Mussar Ma'amar 53

to compromise rather than adopt a strong stance, and Hashem wants a king of Israel who will act steadfastly in keeping with his principles.<sup>4</sup>

The Netziv notes a further distinction between Shaul and David that resonates profoundly. When enumerating the military successes of Shaul, the Navi concludes, “וּבְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִפְנֶה יִרְשִׁיעַ”. Literally, the word “ירשיע” means to cause harm; thus, among all the nations to which Shaul turned his attention, he caused damage. When describing the victories of David, the Navi exclaims, “וַיְהִי דָוִד לְכָל דָּרָכָו מַשְׁכִּיל” - and David was successful in all his ways.” The root of the term used here to express success is שכל - intellect. David applied his intelligence to his successes. The Netziv explains that Shaul’s victories remained temporary because he didn’t follow through. He weakened his enemies, but then left them to their own devices so that they were able to retrench and recover. In contrast, David subdued his enemies and then placed governors over them, firmly applying his sovereignty over the newly conquered enemy and rendering them incapable of reasserting themselves through renewed attack. In this manner he prepared the way for the enduring peace of Shlomo’s kingdom, allowing for the building of the Beit HaMikdash.<sup>5</sup>

May our contemporary leaders be inspired to follow in the footsteps of David HaMelech. ■

4. Sichot L’Sefer Bereshit Parashat VaYeshev

5. Ha’amek Davar Bemidbar 24:8

**Mrs. Leah Feinberg** is a master educator who taught at the SKA High School for Girls in Hewlett for twenty-one years, also serving as Tanach Department chairperson and New Teacher Mentor. Leah is currently on the faculty of the OU Israel Center and has taught in all three cycles of the OU Women’s Initiative Nach Yomi program

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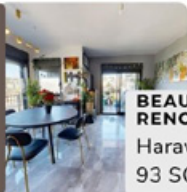
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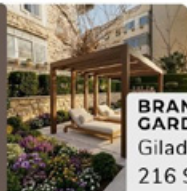
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# Whose Responsibility Is It to Solve the Shidduch Challenge of Our Generation?

לעילוי נשמת  
 מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

It's a question many people quietly ask themselves, and often answer incorrectly.

We tend to assume that the responsibility lies with the singles themselves. If only they would try harder, be more open, get more suggestions, join another app, be less picky, pay for another service. The messaging, spoken or unspoken, is clear: *this is your problem to solve*.

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<p><b>BEIT SHEMESH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RBS A</li> <li>• 5 bedrooms</li> <li>• All on one level</li> <li>• Renovated</li> <li>• Turn key</li> <li>• Perfect for families</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Price on request</b></p>	<p><b>EFRAT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zayit</li> <li>• Renovated cottage</li> <li>• 5 bedrooms</li> <li>• Garden</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Great community</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>₪5,700,000</b></p>


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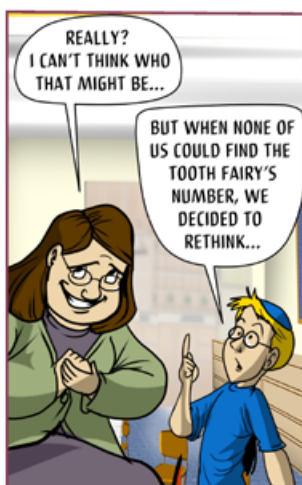
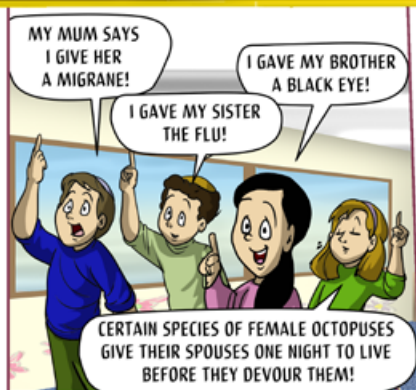



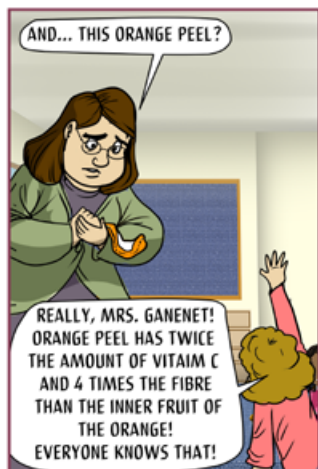
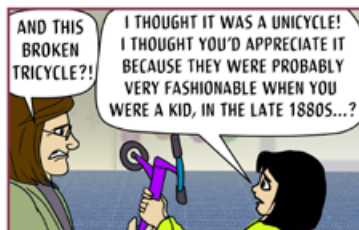
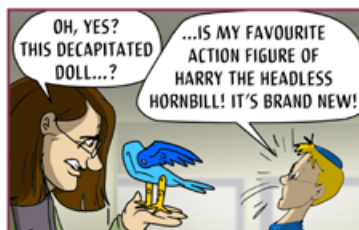
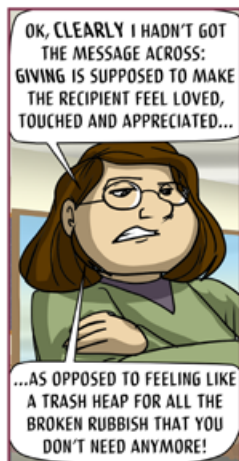
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# TORAH 4 TEENS

## BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



**TALI SILTON**  
CHASHMODIIN CHAPTER,  
DIRECTOR

### BOUNDARIES THAT ELEVATE

Parshat Emor talks a lot about boundaries and restrictions: with time, with details regarding the Kohanim, and more. This may feel very restrictive and intense, but in reality, these limitations are what allow us to tap into the kedusha that lies within us. As the Torah says, וְשַׁמְרֶתֶם מִצְוֹתַי וְעִשִּׂיתֶם אֹתָם... וְלֹא תַחַלְלוּ, “וַיִּקְרָא אֶת שֵׁם קִדְשִׁי, וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל” (Vayikra 22:31–32), we are commanded to guard the mitzvot and thereby sanctify Hashem’s name.

In a world where rules and boundaries aren’t always appreciated, we as Jews are given special instructions on how to live our lives through the Torah. This is not meant to restrict or limit our potential; it is actually the opposite. It is meant to unlock our full potential as Jews and as individuals. The boundaries and limits that have been set for us allow us to reach even higher levels of kedusha that we may not have

been able to achieve without them.  
Shabbat Shalom!



**Yael Lubchansky**  
11TH GRADE, MODIIN

### YOUR OWN PATH TO KEDUSHA

Parshat Emor begins with special laws for the Kohanim. Though they are already holy, they receive additional laws to follow, showing that they are held to a higher standard. We might think this means only Kohanim are holy, but the parsha concludes with laws for all of Klal Yisrael. The Torah states, “One law shall be for you, for the stranger and for the citizen alike,” showing that every person possesses a basic level of holiness.

I think there’s a lot to learn from this contrast. While Kohanim have a unique role and responsibility, so does the rest of Klal Yisrael. Every person is holy and has something unique to contribute. We should all find our own path in Avodat Hashem and strive to be the holiest versions of ourselves.

Shabbat Shalom! ■

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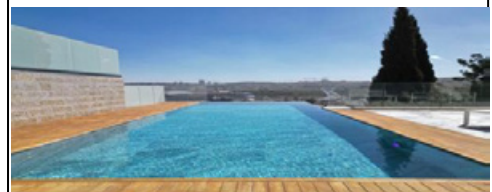
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