



הַמִּזְרָחִי

HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT EMOR 5783 • 2023



ISRAEL



Parsha Picture

Lag Baomer in Haifa









בְּרִיּוֹת יוֹחָאִי,
נִמְשַׁחֶת אֲשֶׁרֶיךָ,
שָׁמוֹן שָׁשׂוֹן מִחֲבֵרֶיךָ:

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


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The Sages and The Sadducees

Unlocking the The Mystery of Matan Torah



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrahi

One of the great mysteries of the Torah is fully evident in this week's parasha – why is there absolutely no connection in the Chumash between the festival of Shavuot and the giving of the Torah?

This is in blatant contrast to the other two pilgrimage festivals, Pesach and Sukkot. Parshat Emor is famous for its lengthy chapter 23, which encompasses all of the biblical Jewish festivals. When it comes to the first festival, Pesach, the mention of the Korban Pesach and the matzah is clear. They are the symbols of the epic events of the great Exodus from Egypt which have been recorded at length in Chumash. The chapter closes with the final festival – the last pilgrimage festival, Sukkot, where the verses give a clear historical reason for their observance – Hashem placed us in sukkot when He brought us out of Egypt during our sojourn in the desert. Both Pesach and Sukkot are clearly anchored in the Chumash in historical events and enshrining their eternal significance. Remarkably, when it comes to Shavuot – the Chumash makes no such connection. Of course there is a connection, as our Sages emphasize in many places and as we celebrate it as *zman matan toratנו* – the time of the giving of the Torah. The question which beckons is why does the Torah mysteriously consistently omit any such linkage between Shavuot and the Revelation at Sinai.

A Dateless Festival

That is only the beginning of the mystery – the enigma goes even deeper. Shavuot is the **only** festival in the entire Torah which has **no** specific date. Whereas Pesach and Sukkot are clearly mentioned as beginning on the 15th of Nissan and Tishrei respectively,¹ Shavuot has no date on the calendar. Rather, it is the culmination of a 50 day count linking two grain offerings – beginning with the waiving of the Omer offering and ending with the Two Loaves of Bread Offering 50 days later. Although this counting is unusual in and of itself, a major problem arises regarding the date of the 50th day because of the nature of the Hebrew lunar calendar – the 50th day can be one of **three** dates; the 5th, 6th, or 7th of Sivan.² This is unlike any other biblical festival which all have a clear date.

Not only is the end date when Shavuot falls out unclear, so is its beginning date of these 50 days shrouded in confusion. Famously, the Torah states: וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבְּרִיאֲכֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שֶׁבַע שָׁבָתוֹת תְּמִימֹת – that the day that the omer is weighed from whence we begin the 50 day count, is to be on 'מחרת השבת' – the day after Shabbat. Since festivals are also days of rest, and indeed are sometimes called Shabbat in the Torah, the Sages in the oral tradition famously interpreted this to mean not the Shabbat itself, but rather the festival of

the first day of Pesach. As we know, we begin counting the omer on the first day of Chol HaMoed Pesach, immediately after the first chag, and not after Shabbat. This unusual reference to Yom Tov as Shabbat led to great confusion and disputes.

The Sadducees, who tended to ignore our oral traditions and looked only at the literal wording of the Written Torah, interpreted this literally as Shabbat – that the counting of the Omer begins on the day after the Shabbat of Chol HaMoed Pesach. Authentic Jewish tradition is unequivocal that it is indeed the day after Pesach. But why then is it necessary for the Torah to use a confusing reference – Shabbat which means a Chag – which lends itself to differing interpretations which led to confusion and discord?

In short, the day that the omer is brought – the beginning of the 50 day counting – is confusing and the day of Shavuot fifty days later can be one of three different days. Why does the Torah go out of its way to confuse us as to when the date of Shavuot is? And if that is not enough, as we mentioned at the outset, the Chumash makes no linkage whatsoever between the festival of Shavuot and the Giving of the Torah? We aren't done yet with the confusion.

What is further confusing is that the Sages debate (Shabbat 86b) on which date exactly was Matan Torah? Precisely what day was the Torah given? Here we have a dispute between the Sages.

The Sages maintain it was on the 6th of Sivan, while Rabbi Yosef says it was on the 7th. We normally rule in accordance with Rabbi Yosef and indeed the Magen Avraham (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 494, 1) points out that we do – incredibly he says that while Matan Torah itself was on the 7th of Sivan as Rabbi Yosef rules we celebrate Shavuot today on the **day before!**

What is going on?

Why the systematic secrecy and confusion around the date of Shavuot in general and the avoidance of linking Matan Torah to Shavuot?



The day that the Torah was given is really less about the day itself, and more about every day, where we commit and recommit to live our lives according to its values, and to imbue all material life with the G-dly imprint of spiritual life.

Every Day is Matan Torah

A brilliant answer is given by Rabbi Ephraim of Lunschitz in his commentary on the Chumash (Vayikra 23,16) known as the Kli Yakar.³ He sees the hint in the unique offering to be brought on the 50th day. The verse states clearly that on this day a מנחה חדשה – a new meal offering consisting of two loaves of bread – is brought: עַד מִמְחֶרֶת הַשְּׁבִיעִית תִּסְפְּרוּ הַמִּשִּׁים יוֹם הַדְּשָׁה הַקָּרְבָּנֹתָם מִנְחַת הַדְּשָׁה. This is referring to the offerings of the new harvest of grain known as Chadash which will be the first of the new wheat grains brought to the Temple.

Why are these offerings called a Mincha Chadasha, a new offering, and how is it related to Matan Torah and Shabbat? Herein lies the key to the secret. Matan Torah can never be limited to one day. It has to be a **new** and **renewed** experience – not only every year, but every day. The very essence of the Torah is to inspire a lifelong quest of spiritual growth and daily renewal and revitalization. Limiting the giving of the Torah to one day would mean limiting its vibrancy and vitality. As opposed to the other festivals which celebrate elements of national and spiritual life, as central as they are, Matan Torah is about the very giving of the Torah itself – the totality of our G-dly value system. This has to be something which stirs the soul and invigorates the spirit every single day.

The Kli Yakar brings a support for his thesis from the words of the Sages that Rashi quotes on the verses of Shema. 'And these words (commandments) which I command you this day, shall be placed

on your heart.' (Devarim 6:6). Rashi comments that 'this day' refers to **every** day that we say the Shema. Every day that we say the Shema we are committing and recommitting to the giving of these commandments. He says that the Torah should not seem to us as an old document received generations ago, אלא כחדשה – rather as a brand new as though you are just today being commanded to keep them for the first time.

This might also explain why Shavuot and the giving of the Torah is part of a daily and weekly counting the culmination of the process of Sefirat HaOmer, where there is a daily counting. Every day and week is carefully reckoned as part of a process of a 'count up' – of ongoing day by day spiritual growth. The name of the festival has become known by 'Shavuot' meaning 'weeks', referring to this ongoing daily and weekly process of spiritual upward growth.

What emerges about Torah life is crystal clear. It is a dynamic ongoing process where every day and week is imbued with significance. The day that the Torah was given is really less about the day itself, and more about *every* day, where we commit and recommit to live our lives according to its values, and to imbue all material life with the G-dly imprint of spiritual life.

Every day is the day the Torah ought to be given and the daily Shema is an echo of Sinai – an ongoing daily reacceptance of freshness and relevance of Torah to our daily lives.

1. Another unusual aspect of Shavuot is that it is the only pilgrimage festival observed for one day as opposed to seven and therefore has no intermediate days of Chol HaMoed.
2. This is because the new month is based on the sanctification of the new moon, which is done through sighting the new moon. Since there are two new months between Pesach and Shavuot – the months of Iyar and Sivan – where there can either be one or two days of Rosh Chodesh, there can be a discrepancy on any year (before the calendar was fixed in the time of the Talmud) of up to three days.
3. This towering rabbinic figure became the chief rabbi of Prague after the Maharal, and was known as an exceptional talmid chacham, leader, and darshan. His commentary on the Torah is a masterpiece in terms of connecting the lofty values of the Torah to the relevance of daily life.

PIRKEI AVOT

Owing What We Own



Rabbi Reuven Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

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רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אִישׁ בְּרִתּוֹתָא אָמַר, תָּן לּוֹ מִשְׁלוֹ, שְׂאִתָּהּ וְשֶׁלְךָ שְׁלוֹ.
וְכֵן בְּדוֹד הוּא אָמַר (דברי הימים א כט) כִּי מִמֶּךָ הִכְלִל וּמִדָּדָה נִתְּנָו לך (אבות ג:ז)

Rebbe Elazar Ish Bartuta encourages us to “give Him (Hashem) what is His, because you and that which is yours are really His.” When we donate our money, time or effort to Hashem, we naturally assume that we are giving Him something that is our own. In truth, we are merely giving Him what is (already) His. This is why Hashem formulates the donations to the *Mishkan* as “*vayikchu Li terumah*.” It is Hashem taking what is His, not the Jewish People giving a donation.

Ownership Through Creation

Why do our possessions belong to Hashem? The simplest explanation is that Hashem's ownership is rooted in His creation of the world and all of its content. The Torah begins with the story of Creation not just because our world begins there historically, but also because it starts there philosophically. The creation narrative helps us appreciate where everything we see came from and (thus), who their true owner is.

This is how Rashi begins his commentary to the Torah. He explains that the Torah begins with the creation narrative, rather than with the first *mitzvah*, to teach us where our rights to Eretz Yisrael come from. The response to those who call our settlement of Israel thievery is that Hashem created and (thus) owns the world and gives lands to the nations he chooses.

Our appreciation of this idea — Hashem's creation and, thus, ownership — is a critical part of our *hashkafa*. We express it by reciting *berachot* — all of which speak of Hashem's role as creator — before deriving pleasure from His world. Our recognition of Hashem as creator permits us to partake of and enjoy His creations.

We reaffirm our recognition of this idea each Yom Rishon (which parallels the first day of creation) when we recite the *pesukim* “*LaHashem ha'aretz u'meloah teivel v'yoshvei vah*. *Ki Hu al yamim yisadah v'al neharot yichonenehah*” in the *shir shel yom*. The *pesukim* assert Hashem's ownership over two distinct

components of the world: the frameworks (*aretz* and *teivel*) and the content (*melo'ah* and *yoshvei vah*). During the first three days of creation, Hashem created the frameworks; during the last three, he filled them with content and inhabitants.

How We Get What We Have

The Midrash bases Hashem's ownership on a second factor. In addition to His creation, Hashem is the one who gifts us with what we have. We mistakenly think that we acquire our possessions “on our own.” In truth, it is Hashem who facilitates our acquisition. The Midrash explains that Hashem, therefore, “owes” no one for the *mitzvot* they perform. We are only able to post *mezuzot* on the doorposts of our homes and separate tithes from the crops of our fields after Hashem gifts the homes and fields to us.

Similarly, the Midrash reads the word “*honcha*,” simply translated as “your wealth,” as “*chininecha*” — the gifts with which Hashem graces us. We ought to view our acquisition of wealth and property as emanating from Hashem's good graces.

These Midrashim remind us that our possessions belong to Hashem not only because He created them, but also because he arranges for us to attain them.

We Too

As a proof-text for his teaching, Rebbe Elazar Ish Bartuta quotes the words of Dovid HaMelech: “Because it is all from You and from your hand we give to You.” Dovid HaMelech clarified to those collecting money for the building of the Beit HaMikdash that their “donations” were merely returning what Hashem owns to Him.

As Dovid HaMelech already taught this idea, what did Rebbe Elazar Ish Bartuta add? I believe that the answer lies in his usage of the word “*atah*.” It is not just the world and its contents that are Hashem's, but we are, as well. What we “own” is actually owned by Hashem not only because the objects are His, but because we, the “owners,” are also

His creations and, thus, also owned by Him. As the gemara in *Pesachim* teaches: “What a servant acquires is (automatically) acquired by his master.”

Our very lives and bodies are not our own. They and we belong to Hashem — their creator. This is why we are prohibited from damaging our bodies and are charged with the responsibility of safeguarding them. Hashem is our creator and, thus, the owner of our bodies and lives.

Hashem's ownership of us is also included in the aforementioned *pesukim* we recite on Yom Rishon: “*LaHashem ha'aretz u'meloah teivel v'yoshvei vah*.” It is not only the land and its contents, but also its residents, that belong to Hashem.

Hashem's far-reaching ownership is what we refer to in the first *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* when we describe Hashem as “*konei ha'kol* — the owner of all.” We turn to Hashem in prayer as His creations who are grateful for His having created us.

The Goal of It All

The Ramban saw our recognition of this fact as the goal of creation, all of the *mitzvot*, and all of our *tefillot*:

“The goal of all the *mitzvot* is for us to believe in our G-d and admit that (/thank him for) He created us.

This is the goal of creation. We have no other reason for the initial creation because G-d above has no desire for a world below besides man knowing and thanking his G-d for creating him.

The goal of raising our voices in prayer, the goal of shuls and the merit of the prayers of the masses is for people to have a place where they can gather and thank Hashem, publicize the fact that G-d created them, and say before Him, “We are your creations.”

We express this appreciation in the *tefilla* of U'Vah L'tziyon: “*Baruch elokenu she'bi- ra'anu lichvodo v'hivdilanu min hato'im, v'natan lanu Torat emet, v'chayei olam nata b'tocheinu*”

Continued on page 7

Yom Ha'Atzmaut and Pesach Sheini Celebrating Our Dual Identity Take Two



Rabbanit Shani Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

This Shabbat in Parashat Emor we read of the Moadim, beginning with the holiday of Pesach, followed by the commandment to count seven weeks to Shavuot. Nine days following Yom Ha'Atzmaut, we celebrate *Pesach Sheini*, a divinely instituted opportunity to sacrifice the Korban Pesach on the fourteenth of Iyar if one was in a state of impurity or unable due to travel restrictions to sacrifice on the fourteenth of Nissan. The allowance to celebrate a month later came as a response to the cries of people in the desert (Sefer Bamidbar 9:7) – “We are ritually unclean as a result of contact with the dead, but why should we lose out (*lamah nigarah*) and not be able to present Hashem’s offering at the right time **among the children of Israel?**” Their argument is not based on their appetite for a delicious Paschal lamb dinner. Rather, they are unsettled by their absence from the most significant national ceremony – the sacrifice and celebratory feast of the korban Pesach, signifying the birth of the nation upon our miraculous salvation on the eve of exodus from Egypt! (See Ramban Bamidbar 9:1 regarding the importance of commemorating our national independence.)

ChaZa”L debate (Sukkah 25a-b) the identity of these righteous impure people. According to Rabbi Akiva, they are Mishael and Eltzafan, Moshe Rabbenu’s first cousins, the two Levi’im implored by Moshe to remove the corpses of Nadav and Avihu from the mishkan, and thereby became defiled. The Levi’im who were

recently chosen to represent Bnei Yisrael in the mikdash and assist with sacrificial worship, cannot fathom not participating with the people. Hashem concedes, and assures that the national celebration of the Pesach sacrifice may be celebrated exactly a month later in a state of purity (“Pesach Sheini”).

Perhaps their argument serves as a basis for the five daughters of Tzelofchad to approach Moshe Rabbenu thirty-nine years later: “Why should our father’s name be **lost out (*lamah yigara*) from among his family** because he did not have a son? Give us a portion of land along with our father’s brothers.” (Bamidbar 27:4). Just as the impure members of Israel did not want to “**lose out**” on the Pesach ceremony celebrating historical-national identity, so too the daughters of Tzelofchad did not want their father’s family name/legacy to “**lose out**” on national identity through the Land. Both groups approached (“*Vayikrevu*”, “*Vatikravna*”) Moshe Rabbenu to request participation in celebrating two aspects of national identity – the people and the Land; Hashem answered affirmatively to both.

We often associate the celebration of Yom Ha'Atzmaut as a continuum of Pesach, marking independence as a nation from oppression and exile (see Sefat Emet, Chanukah 1880 alluding to the creation of a Pesach-like holiday). We express gratitude to Hashem through public Hallel for the salvation of the people of Israel

and marvel at the renewal of modern nationhood, particularly this year as we celebrated 75 years of Medinat Yisrael.

B’not Tzelofchad, however, remind us that there is another aspect of national identity achieved through the Land and perpetuated through the continuum of families rooted and inheriting the *nachala* of their ancestors. It is very befitting that nine days after we celebrate national identity through the Land on Yom Ha'Atzmaut, we commemorate Pesach Sheini, reminding us of our national identity expressed through unity and participation of the people in our common history. This juxtaposition enables us to focus on, appreciate and continue the legacies of our ancestors who like Tzelofchad, longed for, but did not have the *zechut* to enter the Land and celebrate our holidays together.

We begin reciting *Mikra Bikkurim*, our religious-national “pledge of allegiance” and gratitude to Hashem (“*Arami Oved Avi*”) on the night of the Pesach seder. We are commanded to recite the declaration in its entirety when we bring our first fruits of the Land (*Bikkurim*) commencing with Shavuot (Devarim 26: 5-11) when we thank Hashem for our national Homeland. This year, Yom Ha'Atzmaut and Pesach Sheini should be celebrated not just as a continuum of the Pesach redemption, but also as a prelude to Chag HaShavuot, grateful that we may perpetuate our national legacy of connection to our Land.

Halachic Q&A



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

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Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

Question: Very often, I am not yet finished with shema by the time the chazan says “Hashem Elokeichem Emet.” What is the best thing to do? Should I say those three words again when I finish so that my shema reaches 248 words?

Answer: The Shulchan Aruch (OC 376:3) writes that the chazan repeats “Hashem Elokeichem Emet” in order that there should be 248 words of shema. The accepted practice, based on the Gra, is for the chazan to say “Ani Hashem Elokeichem” quietly before saying “Hashem Elokeichem Emet” aloud. According to the Pri Megadim, the chazan should say “Ani Hashem Elokeichem Emet” quietly before saying “Hashem Elokeichem Emet” (see MB 69:3).

When davening alone, how does one reach 248 words? One option is for the individual to repeat “Hashem Elokeichem Emet”, just as the chazan does in a tzibur. This is the solution of the Kaf HaChaim, and a common practice amongst Sephardim (see Yalkut Yosef). The Rema (OC 61:3) presents a different opinion, stating that an individual praying alone should add “El Melech Ne’eman” before saying shema.

Now let’s turn to your question. When the chazan says Hashem Elokeichem Emet, even if you are not yet at that part of shema, those extra words count for you as well (Sha’arei Teshuva). Some opinions hold that you should finish with saying “Hashem Elokeichem Emet” (Ben Ish Chai, Kaf Hachaim). The Sephardic custom is to say it over again, while the Ashkenazic custom is not to repeat it.

If you would like to do even better, you have another option.

The Shulchan Aruch writes that there is another way to reach 248 words. Immediately after kriyat shema, there are 15 words which begin with the letter “vav”. The letter “vav” is 6 in gematria. $6 \times 15 = 90$. Hashem’s name (Yud Kay Vuv Kay) is 26. With four letters of the name, the total is 30. Therefore, you can have kavanah when saying these 15 words starting with vav, which total 90, thus amounting to Hashem’s name (30 total) 3 times, and those 3 extra get you to 248. (This is confusing for many people, and the other options presented earlier are good).

Question: I received medication for a chronic skin illness that other medications could not solve. The medication comes in a bottle which releases foam when you press on the top. Then, you rub the foam in and it's absorbed into the skin. Can this be used on Shabbat?

Answer: Rav Moshe Feinstein was concerned that creation of foam on Shabbat is prohibited because of nolad (see Revavot Efraim 8:154). However, the more accepted approach is that there is no issue of nolad, as the creation of foam is insignificant and does not hold its form for more than a short period of time. This is the approach of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and Rav Elyashiv. This same ruling applies to foamy hand soap.

Question: I am in the infantry in the army. This morning we have a long bus ride for a military operation. The bus ride will be our only chance to daven. Can we daven while sitting down? Can we have a minyan in this fashion? Can we do Birkat Kohanim sitting down?

Answer: Whenever one cannot daven standing up, it is permissible to daven sitting down (SA, OC 94:9 and MB there). When davening the amidah while sitting, one should keep their feet together. If possible, you should stand a bit at the places where one bows and when you take steps back at the end. Generally, people daven in these circumstances b’yichidut, but theoretically you can make a minyan in this fashion as well.

Regarding Birkat Kohanim, the Gemara in Sotah 38a says that it should be said standing (“Ko Tevarchu” and the response of “Ele Ya’amdu Levarech”). According to Tosfot, this ruling is essential and Birkat Kohanim can never be said while sitting. According to the Shevut Yaakov, a kohen who cannot stand may say Birkat Kohanim while sitting. The Mishna Berurah (128:51) rules stringently, in line with the Panim Me’irot and Noda B’yehuda. (There is more to discuss regarding a kohen in a wheelchair, as we may define his sitting as standing, but this is beyond the scope of this discussion).

Therefore, in your case, you may daven while sitting down, but Birkat Kohanim may not be said. Your only option would be to ask the bus driver to stop for two minutes when you are at this point in tefillah.

● Compiled by Yaakov Panitch.

פרשת אמור

הרבנית שרון רימון
Tanach teacher and author



נראה כי באופן מעשי ההלכה מעדיפה את הגישה השנייה, הרואה את טובת הנפגע לנגד עיניה, ומתמקדת בתיקון חיובי.

למרות הפסיקה ההלכתית, נראה שאי אפשר להתעלם מהעובדה שהתורה לא כתבה בצורה פשוטה שהפוגע חייב בתשלום ממון, אלא בחרה לנסח את הצינוי כפגיעה ממשית בפוגע. נראה כי מאחרי הכתובים הללו עומדת תפיסה מהותית, שמן הראוי היה שהפוגע יינזק באותה מידה שפגע בחברו: אם הוא גרם לחברו נכות מסוימת, מן הראוי היה שיהפוך לנכה בעצמו. מבחינה עקרונית, לא יתכן שהאדם הפוגע ימשיך את חייו כרגיל, כאילו לא קרה דבר. עליו להיענש, לשלם את חובו לחברה (ולא רק לנפגע), וללמוד על בשרו מהו כאב וסבל, על מנת שלא יחזור על מעשיו.

השילוב של פשט הכתובים עם הפרשנות ההלכתית מביא להבנה שאדם הפוגע בחברו צריך לקחת אחריות מלאה על מעשיו, להרגיש על בשרו את הפגיעה, להצטער ולנסות לכפר עליה, ולפצות את האדם הפגוע ככל יכולתו.

מה הסיבה לפער בין ההלכה לבין פשט הכתוב? נראה שכאשר באים ליישם את העונש בפועל, מבחינים ש"עין תחת עין" הוא דין קשה ליישום, משתי סיבות:

ראשית - אין אפשרות לגרום לפגיעה מדויקת באותה מידה. סביר להניח שהוא יינזק יותר ממה שפגע, או פחות ממה שפגע. יתר על כן - אפילו אם הפגיעה תהיה מדויקת פיזית, אין אפשרות לשלוט בהשלכות של הפגיעה, ועבור כל אדם הכאב והצער הם שונים. כך שאין באמת אפשרות להשיב לפוגע מידה כנגד מידה במדויק.

בנוסף לכך - הפגיעה בפוגע איננה מועילה לנפגע. עדיף לשלם לנפגע על הנזק שנגרם לו, ובכך לפצות אותו, להיטיב איתו ולעזור לו להשתקם.

אם כן - יש שתי נקודות מבט לטיפול בפגיעה: האחת - מתמקדת בפוגע ודורשת ענישה למטרת כפרה על מעשיו והרתעה לעתיד; השנייה - מתמקדת בנפגע ודורשת תשלום לפיצוי על הסבל ועזרה בשיקום.

אִישׁ כִּי יִתֵּן מוֹם בְּעַמִּיתוֹ כְּאִשׁוֹ עֲשֵׂה לוֹ כְּעֲשֵׂה לָךְ... לֹא שֶׁבֶר תַּחַת שֶׁבֶר עֵינַי שֶׁן תַּחַת שֶׁן... (ויקרא כ"ד, יט-כ).

בפסוקים אלה (וכן בפסוקים דומים מאד בשמות כ"א), התורה מלמדת את האדם לקחת אחריות מלאה על מעשיו. בין אם פגע בחברו במכוון, ובין אם פגע בו בטעות. ומוסיף רבנו מיוחס (בפירושו לפס' ט): "לרבות צער ובשת, כגון שציער או שביישו בכולן חייב."

לפי לשון התורה נראה שצריך לפגוע באדם הפוגע באותו אופן בדיקוק שבו הוא פגע: "שבר תחת שבר, עין תחת עין... כאשר יתן מום באדם כן ינתן בו", וכך הבינו הקראים (ראו בפרוש האבן עזרא, המתווכח עם בן-זוטא). ההגיון העומד מאחרי ענישה כזו הוא שהאדם הפוגע צריך להענש על מעשיו מידה כנגד מידה. עליו להנזק באותה מידה ולחוש אותו כאב וצער שנגרם לנפגע.

אולם, ההלכה קובעת שלא זו כוונת התורה, אלא הפוגע צריך לשלם לנפגע על הנזק של הפגיעה, כפי שאומרת הגמרא: "עין תחת עין - ממון" (בבא קמא פ"ד ע"א).

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— Blessed is our G-d who created us for His honor, separated us from the wanderers, gave us a true Torah and implanted eternal life within us."

Appreciating Our Lives

Sadly, we often take our lives for granted and forget that they are "G-d-given." Iyov is an example of someone who made this mistake. Though Iyov maintained his faith even after the loss of his children and possessions, he faltered when he lost his health. Iyov recognized his children and property as G-d-given, but saw his health as his. When Hashem allowed Satan to take his health away, Iyov felt that a line had been crossed. Iyov, and people in general, take existence and good health for granted. In truth, we should appreciate that we are created and sustained by Hashem. This point was made by Yirmiyahu HaNavi in Sefer Eichah when he asks those complaining about their suffering why "a living person should complain"? The Midrash explains that one who appreciates Hashem's gift of life does

not complain about his circumstances. We should appreciate the gift of life and know that the G-d who gives us life is a good G-d who has our best interests in mind.

The Kuzari saw this as the deeper significance of the Shehecheyanu *berachah*. One who attributes their continued existence to Hashem's good graces and thanks Him for it will have an easier time dealing with inevitable sickness and death.

In addition to the Shehecheyanu *berachah*, we express this appreciation with the words of Modeh Ani we recite each morning upon opening our eyes. Though not yet able to mention Hashem's name before washing our hands, we immediately recognize and thank Him for reviving us. After we wash our hands, we repeat and elaborate upon this fact and mention Hashem by name in the *berachah* Elokai Neshamah. We also commit ourselves to continuing to express our appreciation of Hashem as creator and owner as long as our soul remains within us: "kol zeman she'ha'neshamah b'kirbi..."

We determine our perspective on life the moment we awake. Many take this moment for granted. Missing the opportunity to remind themselves of their creator leads them to view their existence as random and meaningless. By reciting Modeh Ani and Elokai Neshamah, we, in contrast, internalize the fact that Hashem has recreated us. We understand that we are Hashem's creatures, placed here by Him for particular purposes and missions we aim to accomplish in the course of each day of the lives He grants us.

May the words of Rebbi Elazar Ish Bartuta remind us of where we and what we own come from and help us appreciate our existence and its purpose.

In our next piece, we will see how this perspective should impact our appreciation of everything we encounter in G-d's world.

● Summarized by Yedidyah Rosenswasser.

On motivating our children, our employees, ourselves



Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

Here's a thought: Do you want to start a project? Do you want to motivate someone else to do something? Explain why. Connect that person to something grand and transcendent.

On Shabbat we read the Torah portion of Emor that begins as follows: "And the Lord said to Moshe: Speak to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon." This is the introduction to providing the details of 63 mitzvot which the Kohanim must teach to the people.

Our commentators ask us to pay attention to the instructions that open the parasha: "Speak to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon." Before anything else, tell the kohanim that they are the sons of Aharon, remind them of who they are, their special qualities and their importance. They are the successors of Aharon HaKohen. Now they will be receptive to receiving instructions as to their position and responsibilities.

Each one of us can say: I am the descendant of Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah. Knowing this, we are then prepared to ask, "What is my mission?"

If we want to motivate people to participate in a project or activity – whether our children, our employees or even ourselves – we need first of all to connect them to a great and meaningful ideal. Once we have achieved this, we can then go into detail as to what needs to be done.



The following text was sent to me by Rabbi Yoni Lavi: "400 years ago Shakespeare asked: To be or not to be? The

modern era has given a surprising answer to this question: To be and not to be, at the same time. Many of us choose not to be present, even when they are here. They are constantly available to everyone. They are on vibrate mode. Not the phones, the people. When you are everywhere, you are nowhere. We run around and juggle many tasks simultaneously, and insist on doing everything at the same time. In such a world, every face-to-face meeting occurs 'on borrowed time' – only until the next text message or phone call comes in and our attention immediately shifts to other places. When someone sits in front of you and holds a smartphone, you know that in fact, they are not completely with you.

The commandment of the Counting of the Omer which we perform these days, and which appears in this week's Torah Portion, has an interesting suggestion for us. One moment before we perform the daily counting, we stop and say: 'I am here, ready and prepared to perform the commandment of the Counting of the Omer.' It takes just a few seconds, but we focus, get ready, silence our minds and our phones, making ourselves ready for this moment, because it will never return. We do the simplest, yet most wonderful thing there is: we are simply present, completely so. If only we want, we can take this gift with us to other ares of our lives: in our time together with our spouse, during the bedtime story with our child, in prayer, in ourselves. I am here, ready and prepared. I am here. And only here."



Lag BaOmer starts this week. It is appropriate at this time to learn from Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai. Two of these statements follow, not only to mark his passing that took place on Lag BaOmer, but also in memory of the souls of the 45 who perished in the Meron disaster two years ago:

"It is better for a person to throw himself into a fiery furnace than to embarrass his fellow in public" (Talmud Bavli, Berachot 43b) – It was to such an extent that Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai was concerned with the honor of others. The one in whose honor bonfires are lit is telling us that it is preferable to be immolated in a fire than to insult or shame someone in public.

"Strife within the home is worse than the war between Gog and Magog" (Shemot Rabbah 1:28) – Relationships within the home are the foundation of society. A war between Gog and Magog sounds like a deadly event, but according to Rebbi Shimon, strife between children and parents or between siblings can have even more catastrophic consequences. The culture of the home, the language spoken, and the honor given from one family member to the next are the necessary prerequisites for peace in the home and in society at large.

May we never embarrass others in public and may we promote a respectful attitude and proper conduct in our homes.



לפעמים נדמה לי שהמילה שאנחנו ההורים משתמשים בה הכי הרבה היא "נו". קשה לספור כמה פעמים נתתי הוראות וביקשתי בקשות, רק הבוקר.

פרשת השבוע ("אמור") מתחילה ברצף של אמירות והוראות וציווים, ורש"י מסביר בתחילת הפרשה

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For the Shabbat Table



Rabbi Danny Mirvis

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“Six days work shall be done and on the seventh say, a Shabbat of solemn rest, a holy convocation, you shall not do any work, it is a Shabbat for Hashem in all of your dwelling places” (Vayikra 23:3).

The section dealing with festivals in this week's Parsha commences by telling us that for “six days, work shall be done”, but on the seventh day, we should refrain from work and keep Shabbat. This is not the only occasion where the Torah introduces Shabbat by telling us to work for six days. Why do we need to be told that we are allowed to work on normal weekdays? Does it not go without saying that if we should refrain from work one day a week, work can be done on the other six days?

Avot D'Rabbi Natan explains that the Torah is not coming to tell us that we CAN work. The Torah is telling us that we MUST work. Man was placed in this world “to work it and to preserve it” (Bereishit



Even those who do not need to work in order to make a living should still find ways to be proactive and develop the world.

2:15). We should not only work in order to make a living. There is inherent value in working and contributing to the world, so much so that R' Yehuda ben Beteira taught:

“What should somebody who has no work to do, do? If he has a courtyard in ruins or a field in ruins, he should go and deal with it, as it says, ‘You shall work for six days and do all your work’ (Shemot 20:9). And what does it teach us (i.e. what does it add) ‘by saying, ‘and you shall do all your work’? To include somebody who has

courtyards or fields in ruins – he should go and deal with them” (Avot D'Rabbi Natan 11:1).

Even those who do not need to work in order to make a living should still find ways to be proactive and develop the world. Rambam lavished great praise on the value of work:

“It is a great quality for one to make a living from the work of his hands, and it is a trait of the early pious ones, and through this he merits every honour and goodness in this world and in the world to come” (Rambam, Hilchot Talmud Torah 3:10-11).

Just as we must refrain from work one day a week, we must be productive the other six days of the week. We were not placed in this world to refrain from work all week long.

“Shemaya says: Love work” (Avot 1:10).

Shabbat Shalom!

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אהבה ורוח חיובית, זוהרת. “להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים” זה אומר שהקטנים פשוט ייראו אצל הדור שמעליהם המון אור וטוב, וממילא – המסרים יעברו אליהם הלאה. הם פשוט ירצו בכך, לא כי מזהירים אותם, אלא כי זוהרים מולם.

חינוכית אחרת. וכך מסביר הרבי מלובביץ':
המטרה היא לא רק להזהיר מלשון אזהרה, אלא גם מלשון זוהר. להזהיר זה לא רק להגיד “תעשה את זה כבר!” או “אני מזהירה אותך”, להזהיר זה גם לזהור, להאיר, להשפיע דרך דוגמה אישית,

שהאמירות האלה נועדו “להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים”. כלומר, שהגדולים יורו ויגידו לקטנים מה לעשות, יזהירו את הקטנים.

הביטוי המפורסם הזה במקורותינו, “להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים”, זכה לאורך השנים לפרשנות

Holy Times



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

The parsha of Emor contains a chapter dedicated to the festivals of the Jewish year. There are five such passages in the Torah. Two, both in the book of Exodus (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:18, 22-23), are very brief. They refer only to the three pilgrimage festivals, Pesach, Shavuot and Succot. They do not specify their dates, merely their rough position in the agricultural year. Nor do they mention the specific commands related to the festivals.

This leaves three other festival accounts, the one in our parsha, a second one in Numbers 28-29, and the third in Deuteronomy 16. What is striking is how different they are. This is not, as critics maintain, because the Torah is a composite document but rather because it comes at its subject-matter from multiple perspectives – a characteristic of the Torah mindset as a whole.

The long section on the festivals in Numbers is wholly dedicated to the special additional sacrifices [the *musaf*] brought on holy days including Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh. A memory of this is preserved in the Musaf prayers for these days. These are holy times from the perspective of the Tabernacle, the Temple, and later the synagogue.

The account in Deuteronomy is about society. Moses at the end of his life told the next generation where they had come from, where they were going to, and the kind of society they were to construct. It was to be the opposite of Egypt. It would strive for justice, freedom and human dignity.

One of Deuteronomy's most important themes is its insistence that worship be centralised "in the place that G-d will choose," which turned out to be Jerusalem. The unity of G-d was to be mirrored

in the unity of the nation, something that could not be achieved if every tribe had its own temple, sanctuary, or shrine. That is why, when it comes to the festivals, Deuteronomy speaks only of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot, and not Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, because only on those three was there a duty of *Aliyah le-regel*, pilgrimage to the Temple.

Equally significant is Deuteronomy's focus – not found elsewhere – on social inclusion: "you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites within your gates, and the stranger, the orphan and the widow living among you." Deuteronomy is less about individual spirituality than about the kind of society that honours the presence of G-d by honouring our fellow humans, especially those at the margins of society. The idea that we can serve G-d while being indifferent to, or dismissive of, our fellow human beings is utterly alien to the vision of Deuteronomy.

Which leaves Emor, the account in this week's parsha. It too is distinctive. Unlike the Exodus and Deuteronomy passages it includes Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It also tells us about the specific mitzvot of the festivals, most notably Succot: it is the only place where the Torah mentions the *arba minim*, the "four kinds", and the command to live in a sukkah.

It has, though, various structural oddities. The most striking one is the fact that it includes Shabbat in the list of the festivals. This would not be strange in itself. After all, Shabbat is one of the holy days. What is strange is the way it speaks about Shabbat:

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: The appointed times [*moadei*] of the Lord, which you are to proclaim [*tikre'u*] as sacred assemblies

[*mikra'ei kodesh*]. These are my appointed festivals [*mo'adai*]. Six days shall you work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of sabbaths, a day of sacred assembly [*mikra kodesh*]. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord."

There is then a paragraph break, after which the whole passage seems to begin again:

These are the Lord's appointed times [*mo'adei*] festivals, the sacred assemblies [*mikra'ei kodesh*] you are to proclaim [*tikre'u*] at their appointed times [*be-mo'adam*].

This structure, with its two beginnings, puzzled the commentators. Even more was the fact that the Torah here seems to be calling Shabbat a *mo'ed*, an appointed time, and a *mikra kodesh*, a sacred assembly, which it does nowhere else. As Rashi puts it: "What has Shabbat to do with the festivals?" The festivals are annual occurrences, Shabbat is a weekly one. The festivals depend on the calendar fixed by the Bet Din. That is the meaning of the phrase, "the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times." Shabbat, however, does not depend on any act by the Bet Din and is independent of both the solar and lunar calendar. Its holiness comes directly from G-d and from the dawn of creation. Bringing the two together under a single heading seems to make no sense. Shabbat is one thing, *moadim* and *mikra'ei kodesh* are something else. So what connects the two?

Rashi tells us it is to emphasise the holiness of the festivals. "Whoever desecrates the festivals, it is as if he had desecrated the Sabbath, and whoever observes the festivals it is as if he had observed the Sabbath." The point Rashi is making is that we can imagine someone saying that he respects the Sabbath because it

is G-d-given, but the festivals are of an altogether lesser sanctity, first because we are permitted certain kinds of work, such as cooking and carrying, and second because they depend on a human act of fixing the calendar. The inclusion of Shabbat among the festivals is to negate this kind of reasoning.

Ramban offers a very different explanation. Shabbat is stated before the festivals just as it is stated before Moses' instructions to the people to begin work on the construction of the Sanctuary, to tell us that just as the command to build the Sanctuary does not override Shabbat, so the command to celebrate the festivals does not override Shabbat. So, although we may cook and carry on festivals, we may not do so if a festival falls on Shabbat.

By far the most radical explanation was given by the Vilna Gaon. According to him, the words "Six days shall you work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of sabbaths," do not apply to the days of the week but to the days of the year. There are seven holy days specified in our parsha: the first and seventh day of Pesach, one day of Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first day of Succot and Shmini Atseret. On six of them we are allowed to do some work, such as cooking and carrying, but on the seventh, Yom Kippur, we are not, because it is a "Sabbath of Sabbaths" (see verse 32). The Torah uses two different expressions for the prohibition of work on festivals in general and on the "seventh day." On the festivals what is forbidden is *melechet avodah* ("burdensome or servile work"), whereas on the seventh day what is forbidden is *melachah*, "any work" even if not burdensome. So Yom Kippur is to the year what Shabbat is to the week.

The Vilna Gaon's reading allows us to see something else: that holy time is patterned on what I have called (in the Introduction to the Siddur) *fractals*: the same pattern at different levels of magnitude. So the structure of the week – six days of work followed by a seventh that is holy – is mirrored in the structure of the year – six days of lesser holiness plus a seventh, Yom Kippur, of supreme holiness. As we will see in two chapters' time (Lev.

25), the same pattern appears on an even larger scale: six ordinary years followed by the year of Shemittah, "release."

Wherever the Torah wishes to emphasise the dimension of holiness (the word *kodesh* appears no less than twelve times in Lev. 23), it makes systematic use of the number and concept of seven. So there are not only seven holy days in the annual calendar. There are also seven paragraphs in the chapter. The word "seven" or "seventh" occurs repeatedly (eighteen times) as does the word for the seventh day, *Shabbat* in one or other of its forms (fifteen times). The word "harvest" appears seven times.

However, it seems to me that Leviticus 23 is telling another story as well – a deeply spiritual one. Recall our argument (made by Judah Halevi and Ibn Ezra) that almost the entire forty chapters between Exodus 24 and Leviticus 25 are a digression, brought about because Moses argued that the people *needed G-d to be close*. They wanted to encounter Him not only at the top of the mountain but also in the midst of the camp; not only as a terrifying power overturning empires and dividing the sea but also as a constant presence in their lives. That was why G-d gave the Israelites the Sanctuary (Exodus 25-40) and its service (i.e. the book of Leviticus as a whole).

That is why the list of the festivals in Leviticus emphasises not the *social* dimension we find in Deuteronomy, or the *sacrificial* dimension we find in Numbers, but rather the *spiritual* dimension of encounter, closeness, *the meeting of the human and the divine*. This explains why we find in this chapter, more than in any other, two key words. One is *mo'ed*, the other is *mikra kodesh*, and both are deeper than they seem.

The word *mo'ed* does not just mean "appointed time". We find the same word in the phrase *ohel mo'ed* meaning "tent of meeting". If the *ohel mo'ed* was the *place* where man and G-d met, then the *mo'adim* in our chapter are the times when we and G-d meet. This idea is given beautiful expression in the last line of the mystical song we sing on Shabbat, *Yedid Nefesh*, "Hurry, beloved, for the appointed time [*mo'ed*] has come." *Mo'ed* here means a tryst

– an appointment made between lovers to meet at a certain time and place.

As for the phrase *mikra kodesh*, it comes from the same root as the word that gives the entire book its name: *Vayikra*, meaning "to be summoned in love." A *mikra kodesh* is not just a holy day. It is a meeting to which we have been called in affection by One who holds us close.

Much of the book of Vayikra is about the holiness of place, the Sanctuary. Some of it is about the holiness of people, the Kohanim, the priests, and Israel as a whole, as "a kingdom of priests." In chapter 23, the Torah turns to the holiness of time and the times of holiness.

We are spiritual beings but we are also physical beings. *We cannot be spiritual, close to G-d, all the time*. That is why there is secular time as well as holy time. But one day in seven, we stop working and enter the presence of the G-d of creation. On certain days of the year, the festivals, we celebrate the G-d of history. The holiness of Shabbat is determined by G-d alone because He alone created the universe. The holiness of the festivals is partially determined by us (i.e., by the fixing of the calendar), because history is a partnership between us and G-d. But in two respects they are the same. They are both times of meeting (*mo'ed*), and they are both times when we feel ourselves called, summoned, invited as G-d's guests (*mikra kodesh*).

We can't always be spiritual. G-d has given us a material world with which to engage. But on the seventh day of the week, and (originally) seven days in the year, G-d gives us dedicated time in which we feel the closeness of the Shechinah and are bathed in the radiance of G-d's love.

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- Why can we not be spiritual always, and in the presence of G-d always?
- Why do we need to have specific holy times to be in the presence of G-d?
- How the chaggim, and Shabbat, help us to be close to G-d?

Tum'as Kohanim For Relatives



Rabbi Hershel Schachter

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Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them: Each of you shall not contaminate himself to a [dead] person among his people; except for the relative who is closest to him ... to her shall he contaminate himself. (Vayikra 21:1-3)

There is a *machlokes* between Rebbi Yishmael and Rebbi Akiva as to whether the phrase *לֹא יטמא* reflects a *reshus* or a *chovah*. According to Rebbi Yishmael, the Torah merely extends permission to a Kohen, who may be *metamei* himself for one of his close relatives. However, we accept the opinion of Rebbi Akiva, that the Torah is expressing an obligation; a Kohen must allow himself to become *tamei* upon the death of a close relative.

When a Kohen becomes *tamei* for his close relative, we may view the nature of the dispensation to waive the *issur* of *tum'as Kohanim* as *hutrah* (permitted) or as *dechuyah* (overridden). *Hutrah* means that at the very outset, when the prohibition was given, it never applied in a particular situation. If a prohibition is *dechuyah*, however, the *issur* exists in principle in all situations. Only when the performance of a *mitzvah* comes into conflict with the *issur* do we recognize that the need to fulfill the *mitzvah* pushes off the *issur*.

The Gemara in Berachos establishes the principle that Biblical prohibitions always takes precedence over considerations of *kavod habriyos* (human dignity), if the *aveirah* would be violated actively. Accordingly, Rashi and Tosfos are bothered by the *din* that a Kohen is obligated to become *tamei* for a *meis mitzvah* (an unattended corpse) and for close relatives. Here is a case in which the Torah indicates that considerations of *kavod habriyos* actually supersede an *issur d'oraisa*!

To resolve this difficulty, Rashi explains that in allowing a Kohen to bury a *meis mitzvah* or a relative, the Torah did not override the *issur* of *tum'as Kohanim*. Instead, the nature of the dispensation is *hutrah*; the *issur* of *tum'as Kohanim* was never formulated with regard to these *meisim*. Indeed, this is the simple reading of the *passuk's* exclusionary clause, *כִּי אִם, לִשְׂאֵרוֹ הַקָּרוֹב אֵלָיו*: The Torah only prohibited a Kohen to be *metamei* to ordinary *meisim*.

Tosfos offers a different distinction to explain the exemption granted a Kohen in these cases. The *issur tum'ah* is not directed to all Jews, but rather only to a Kohen (and *nazir*), and, as such, the demands of *kavod habriyos* more easily override it. Thus, according to Tosfos, the *issur* of *tum'as Kohanim* for close relatives is merely *dechuyah*; the need to participate in the *mitzvah* of *kevurah* pushes off the *issur*.

A practical outcome of this *machlokes* may relate to the question of whether a Kohen may be *metamei* for a relative not for the purpose of *kevurah* – for example, on Shabbos. Here, there is no *mitzvah* of *kevurah* to override the *issur* of *tum'as Kohanim*. Thus, if *tum'as Kohanim* for relatives is merely *dechuyah*, a Kohen may be forbidden to come into contact with the *meis* without cause. On the other hand, if a Kohen's immediate relative is simply not included in the *issur tum'ah*, he would be permitted, and even obligated, to be *metamei* himself, even on Shabbos.

Rav Soloveitchik noted that the Rambam in Hilchos Avel clearly views *tum'as Kohanim* for relatives as *dechuyah*, like Tosfos: "*Tum'ah* for relatives is overridden, not permitted to all." Yet, unlike Tosfos, the Rambam understands that it is not the *mitzvah* of *kevurah* that overrides the *issur*

tum'as Kohanim, but instead the *mitzvah* of *aveilus*. As the Rambam writes in the *koseres* (heading) to Hilchos Avel: "[There is a *mitzvas aseh*] to mourn over relatives, and even a Kohen becomes *tamei* and mourns over his relatives." The Rambam writes further: "How strict is the *mitzvah* of *aveilus*, for [the *issur*] *tum'ah* was overridden for it with regard to relatives."

The source of the Rambam's position connecting *tum'as Kohanim* to *aveilus* seems to be the Beraisa cited in Mo'ed Katan: "All those [relatives] about whom it is stated in the *parsha* regarding Kohanim that a Kohen must be *metamei* himself for them, an *avel* mourns for them as well."

As further evidence for this idea, the Rav pointed to the exclusion of those executed by *beis din* from the *din* of *tum'as Kohanim*, despite the fact that there is a *mitzvas kevurah* regarding these *meisim*. Apparently, since there is no *aveilus* for *harugei beis din*, there is no allowance for a Kohen to be *metamei* for them. *Tum'as Kohanim* is dependent on the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *aveilus*.

The Mishkenos Ya'akov explains that the principle that we rule in accordance with the lenient opinion in the realm of *Hilchos Aveilus*, is based on the correspondence between *tum'as Kohanim* and *aveilus*. The Sifra expounds *לֹא יטמא* to teach that a Kohen is not *metamei* for a *meis* who is only questionably his relative, and this idea carries over to *Hilchos Aveilus*. Therefore, we decide any doubt with regard to a *halachah* regarding *aveilus* leniently. This rule applies even on the first day of *aveilus*, despite the view of many Rishonim that this is a *d'oraisa* obligation (if both the death and the *kevurah* occur on this day).

Rav Soloveitchik elaborated on this notion, explaining that it is not merely

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It's a Process



Rabbi Yisroel Reisman
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As Kabbalat HaTorah and Shavuos continue to approach us, it seems rather fitting that Parshat Emor deals with both the Mitzvot of Sefirat HaOmer as well as Shavuos.

Rav Gedalya Schorr (Ohr Gedalyahu) throughout his sefer explains that by each Mitzvah there is a point that is not the same as any other Mitzvah. By Yom Tov we have a special emphasis on שמחה. Of course, this is something that should be implemented within everything we do but it is specifically emphasised but it is something that is extra special by Yom Tov.

If this is the case, what is it that we find to be unique by Sefirat HaOmer that we do not find throughout the other 612 Mitzvot we are commanded to do? The Satmar Rebbe explains that by Sefirat HaOmer one should not view the Mitzvah just as what is presently being done but a person must also view what they are doing as a preparation. Throughout these weeks, the counting of Sefirah is something we should see as helping us in getting ready for Shavuos within the days and weeks leading up to Kabbalat HaTorah. The Satmar Rebbe compares this to an impure woman who must count seven days leading up to when she may go to the Mikvah to purify herself. Here as well the significance of the counting is twofold – both each day singularly is important as well as on a greater level of the full seven

days as to what they are leading to in addition to the counting itself.

The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah 16B teaches חייב אדם לטהר את עצמו ברגל – one must purify themselves on Erev Yom Tov. This is because, as the Satmar Rebbe teaches, one cannot simply wake up on the morning of a Moed being ready to go to the Beit HaMikdash without having done the proper preparations beforehand. Part of reaching the proper level of Kedusha for a Chag is that which is done in advance of the day itself.

In the fourth Aliyah, the Torah deals with the different Halachot of the Moadim. The unique expression with the Lashon of היום הזה – “*In the day itself*” is used by each Yom Tov and Shavuos that is discussed throughout the Perek. What is supposed to be learned from this phrasing the Torah uses? What is it about Shavuos that it must be היום הזה?

The Netziv in his commentary *HaEmek Davar* explains that Shavuos is a Yom Tom that must begin at night, it cannot have time added onto it beforehand. The Meshech Chochma as well teaches שאין תוספות יום טוב בכלל בשבועות – there is no addition of Yom Tov at all for Shavuos. We learn by every other Yom Tov, Shabbos, and Shemittah that there is a Mitzvah to add onto it, why is this not so by Shavuos?

To answer this, it is brought in the Magen Avraham that a certain level of תמימות

is needed before the Moed can be brought in. One must go through the complete seven weeks from Pesach before Shavuos can begin. There is a certain value in addition to the Yom Tov itself which is the preparation needed before the Chag is brought in. It is not just about filling up a gas tank so you can drive away as quickly as possible, but recognizing that there is an inherent value to the complete and proper self development that takes place to be ready for Kabbalat HaTorah. It adds to the anticipation and the excitement one will have for Shavuos without trying to speed up the process sooner by going through the full seven weeks even though it may seem that it would be preferable to bring in Yom Tov sooner. Shavuos therefore, must be בעצם היום הזה and not earlier in the slightest because it must be viewed that this would not just be adding onto Yom Tov but rather taking away from our preparation. May we understand that these days we find ourselves are not just a means to an end leading up to Shavuos but they are really an end unto itself. The way we will be ready for Kabbalat HaTorah is dependant on how we use our time now in preparing for *Zman Matan Torateinu* and the understanding of the significance that Sefirat HaOmer is more than just a daily Mitzvah but a process that must be done in its complete and genuine way.

● Edited by Zac Winkler.

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that the *mitzvah* of *aveilus* overrides the *issur tum'ah*. The connection between *aveilus* and *tum'as Kohanim* is more fundamental – the Kohen actually fulfills the *mitzvah* of *aveilus* through allowing himself to become *tamei*. In other words,

אדם לטהר את עצמו ברגל serves as the source for the institution of *kavod habriyos*, which is the basis of *aveilus*. In allowing himself to become *tamei*, a Kohen demonstrates *kavod hameis*, and thereby fulfills the *mitzvah* d'oraisa of *aveilus*.

Thus, unlike the view of Tosfos mentioned above, according to the Rambam, the *nihug aveilus* to become *tamei* would apply on Shabbos as well, even though there is no *kevurah* on this day.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha II.

Lag B'Omer and the Power to Recreate



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein
Chief Rabbi of South Africa

This week we celebrate Lag B'Omer. During the Omer, we remember the tragedy of the plague that struck down 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva – one of the greatest sages of the Talmud. Rabbi Akiva was already an old man, but he had the courage to start again from the beginning. Lag B'Omer is the day he restarted his yeshiva with just five students – and it was those five students who rekindled the fire of Torah and restored it to the Jewish people.

On Lag B'Omer, the 33-day period of mourning is put on hold as we celebrate Rabbi Akiva's heroism and tenacity and strength in the face of adversity.

We learn this idea of rebounding from a setback from G-d Himself. The Talmud explains that we have a great mitzvah to emulate G-d: "Just as G-d is gracious and compassionate, so too should you be gracious and compassionate."

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik expands this mitzvah to include the act of creation itself. Just like G-d is the ultimate Creator, we, too, are creators. To create is deeply embedded in our souls, which are a reflection of the Divine. And just as G-d created the world, we, too, are called on to create the world; to bring into the world flourishing families and societies, to build institutions and infrastructure and make technological advances that move the world forward.

But it goes further. Rav Soloveitchik refers to what our sages of the Talmud teach in a *midrash* that before this world was created, there were many other worlds that G-d created and subsequently destroyed, and then rebuilt again.

From this *midrash*, says Rav Soloveitchik, we learn that there is not only a mitzvah to create, but also a mitzvah to re-create after a period of destruction; to rebuild after setbacks. We do so on a personal

level and we do so on a national level, drawing on G-d's own example.

It is this spirit of renewal and rededication that has animated so much of Jewish history. We have witnessed this particularly in the years since the Holocaust – through the miraculous re-creation of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel through our very own Jewish state, and the miraculous rebuilding of the great yeshivas after they were all but blotted out, such that today there are more people learning Torah than at any other time in our history. Together, these developments have led to a rebirth of Jewish life worldwide.

And this is the message of Lag B'Omer, of Rabbi Akiva – who, against all odds, rebuilt Torah, and with it, the Jewish people. On this day, we celebrate the light of Torah – the sacred tradition and Divine values that give life to the Jewish people.

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Omer – Food For Thought



Rabbi Shalom Rosner
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

In Parshat Emor, we are introduced to the *Korban Ha'omer*. We begin the counting of *Sefirat Ha'omer* on the day that the Omer offering is made. This offering consists of barley. Very few offerings are from barley. In addition, one is required to raise and waive the barley – והניף את העמר (Vayikra 23:11). What is the purpose of requiring one to “raise and waive” the barley? Most other sacrifices do not require “hanafa” (raising up).

Rav Zevin in *L'Torah V'Lmoadim* derives an important lesson from this action. Barley is known as a food that is fed to animals. In fact, a *sotah* (woman who is accused of acts of impropriety) brings a sacrifice from barley and the Gemara (Sotah 14) explains “just as she did an animalistic act, so too she should be fed the food of animals.”

Why are we obligated to offer a sacrifice from barley at this juncture – on Pesach at a time when we initiate the counting of seven weeks to Shavuot (Matan Torah)? Rav Zevin suggests, perhaps it is to teach us that man is no different than an animal in that he requires food and drink as nourishment to survive. What man has to do, however, is to “raise” the bar – and infuse the consumption of food with *kedusha*. To ensure that no transgressions were committed when obtaining the food. Nothing was stolen or acquired improperly. To refrain from eating forbidden foods (non kosher), and to recite the appropriate blessings before and after the meal.



We are obligated to raise the korban ha'omer physically as it is being brought to the altar perhaps as a reminder that we are to infuse holiness into the mundane.

When Bnei Yisrael were in the desert, they were provided with the *mann*, which had a certain spiritual aspect to it. Upon entering the land of Israel and having to work the land in order to yield produce, suddenly action was required to elevate the food from mere animal fodder. We are obligated to raise the *Korban Ha'omer* physically as it is being brought to the altar perhaps as a reminder that we are to infuse holiness into the mundane. Recognizing that although our food no longer falls from the sky, we are to acknowledge and appreciate its source.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Moadei HaRav, 170), asks why it is that after we eat fruit, which we easily obtain from a tree, we recite a short *bracha* (*Borei Nefashot*), while after we eat bread, which required us to toil and go through several processes (from cultivating the grain to producing flour and ultimately to baking bread), we recite a long *bracha* (*Birkat HaMazon*). One might have thought the opposite would be more appropriate. With respect to a

fruit, I had little to do with creating it. I just picked it off the tree; therefore, the blessing after eating a fruit should be longer and more detailed so I can express my gratitude to Hashem for creating the fruit. Meanwhile, with respect to the bread, I worked hard to turn the grain into bread. Since I had to perform the activity that made the bread edible, I would have thought that the blessing could be shorter, since it was not solely “provided” by Hashem.

Birkat HaMazon is precisely where we need to be reminded to offer our appreciation to Hashem for having provided us with our food – when we may erroneously take credit for creating our bread and lack gratitude to Hashem for having provided us with the requisite ingredients. Therefore, a much longer and more detailed *bracha* is required after eating bread. With respect to a fruit, it is crystal clear that it was provided by Hashem in its finished form. As there is no risk of forgetting its source, a concise blessing is sufficient.

Raising the *omer*, provides us with *food for thought!* To appreciate the source of food on our table when it may be overlooked. Specifically during this time of year, as we prepare for the celebration of receiving the Torah, we are reminded to raise our consciousness and infuse our lives with holiness.

Parshas Emor: Counting Time



Michal Horowitz
Judaic Studies Teacher

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Emor*, we learn of the *mo'adim* (appointed festival times) by which the Jewish calendar is marked. *And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: Hashem's appointed festivals which you shall designate as callings of holiness - these are My appointed festivals* (Vayikra 23:1-2).

The Torah first commands us regarding Shabbos and *Rosh Chodesh/Kiddush Ha'Chodesh*, and then moves through our entire calendar year, beginning with Pesach, moving to the *Omer* offering and the counting of the *Omer*, the *chag* of Shavuos, then Rosh Hashanah, Yom Ha'Kippurim, and Succos.

On the significance of the *Mo'adim*, appointed times during the year when we meet (*keviyachol*) with the RS"O, Rabbi S. R. Hirsch beautifully and movingly writes, "The Jewish festivals and New Moons are not fixed by astronomic factors; the day does not become sanctified automatically as a festival of New Moon with the arrival of its proper time according to the astronomical calculation. Rather, we designate times for the festivals and New Moons, and we sanctify them as *mo'adim* on which Israel meets with G-d, only that this designation is made on the basis of astronomical calculations and in accordance with the course of the sun and moon.

"By virtue of this principle, our New Moons and our spring, summer and fall festivals are divested of any resemblance to pagan cults of sun or moon worship, which stem from the deification of nature; and the times set aside for the meetings between G-d and Israel are elevated from the bondage relationship of servant and master to the loving relationship of parent and child. The meetings times are set by mutual choice, and are meant to satisfy mutual feelings of love and yearning...

"The fruits of our soil and of our trees do not ripen, and our granaries are not filled, by the grace of the sun. Rather, G-d, in His sovereignty, judges us with righteousness and kindness; and if we have kept His Torah which rests in His Sanctuary, He will flower our fields in the spring, ripen our fruits in the summer, and fill our barns in the fall. We must subordinate all our moral and social conduct to His rule; we must let the light and fire of the Torah awaken, develop and fashion our actions, even as the seeds of plant and fruit awaken, develop and take shape beneath the light and fire of the law He has given to nature. In other words, only if we effect a *moral flowering*, development and maturation *within ourselves*, will G-d flower our fields, ripen our fruit, and fill our barns with His plenty" (The Hirsch Chumash, Feldheim, Vayikra, p. 773, 775).

As we journey through these weeks of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*, anticipating with great excitement Chag Ha'Shavuos - the time of the giving of our Torah - the "*moral flowering, development and maturation within ourselves*" must occur as a prerequisite for the receiving of the Torah. Our nation moved up forty-nine rungs of the spiritual ladder, from the impurity of Egypt to the purity of *Har Sinai*, so that they would merit the Revelation at Sinai and the giving of the Torah.

We too, every year during these seven weeks, must undergo a similar spiritually transformative journey.

And you shall count for yourselves - from the morrow of the rest day, from the day when you bring the omer of the waving - seven weeks, they shall be complete (Vayikra 23:15). And so, we count these seven complete weeks, hoping that as we count time, we make our time count.

R' Shalom Rosner quotes the Ksav Sofer (R. Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer,

1815-1871) who "teaches us an important lesson from one word that appears in the *pasuk* introducing the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*: וְסָפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם, מִמּוֹחֶרֶת הַשָּׁבֹּת - can be translated as: *And you shall count yourselves (lachen), from the morrow of the rest day.*

"The word '*lachen*' appears infrequently with respect to *mitzvot*, and when it does, it plays an important function. The Ksav Sofer suggests that the word '*lachen*' here, used in context of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*, highlights that the commandment is not just a perfunctory, quantitative counting, but rather that the goal of counting is *qualitative*.

"When Hashem commanded Avraham to depart to Eretz Canaan, He said: לֵךְ-לְךָ, *lech licha, go for yourself* (Bereishis 12:1). Rashi comments: וּלְטוֹבוֹתָיִךָ לְהַנְיֹתָיִךָ, *for your own benefit and for your own good.*

"Similarly, counting the *Omer* is for *our own benefit*, and for our own good. It is an opportunity to grow in an area of our choice. One should utilize this period between Pesach and the holiday of the giving of the Torah to improve oneself spiritually. It is as though we ourselves are climbing the mountain, trying to reach the peak before forty-nine days are up, so that we are prepared to receive the Torah on Shavuos... It is up to us to make our *sefira* meaningful and truly make *Sefiras Ha'Omer* count!" (Shalom Rav, v.2, p.117-118).

To give meaning to these weeks of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*, and to bask in the joy of the *mo'adim*, we must ensure that *every day* counts. R' Zvi Hirsch Broide of Kelm (1865-1913) used to say: "It is not time that passes by man, but rather it is man that passes through time" (Great Jewish Wisdom, p.133).

Let us learn these lessons well, as we value and cherish each day, *for the past is no longer here, the future is not yet, and the present passes in the blink of an eye.*

The Double Nature of the Chagim in Parshat Emor



Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

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Parshat Emor, like Pinchas, presents the chagim in order of their LUNAR dates (month/day). Nevertheless, Emor is different. When introducing the special mitzvah to be performed in the Mikdash on each of the SHALOSH R'GALIM, the agricultural season (i.e. the SOLAR date) is mentioned as well: CHAG HA'MATZOT Omer: "When you enter the Land... and YOU HARVEST the fields, you must bring the "omer" the FIRST HARVEST to the Kohen (23:10); SHAVUOT Shtei Ha'lechem: SEVEN WEEKS LATER - "and you shall bring a NEW flour offering..." (23:16); SUCCOT Arba Minim: "On the 15th day of the 7th month WHEN YOU GATHER THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND... and you shall take on the first day a 'hadar' fruit..." (23:39).

Why must the structure of Emor be so complicated? Why doesn't the Torah employ one standard set of dates? Why are the agricultural mitzvot presented independently?

A special agricultural-related mitzvah for each of the shalosh r'galim is detailed: Chag ha'Matzot: The Korban Ha'Omer - from the first BARLEY harvest. Shavuot: The Korban Shtei Ha'lechem, from the first WHEAT harvest. Succot: Taking the 'Arba Minim', the four species.

These mitzvot relate directly to the agricultural season in Eretz Yisrael in which these holidays fall. In the spring, barley is the first grain crop to become ripe. During the next seven weeks, the wheat crop ripens and is harvested. As this is the only time of the year when wheat grows in Eretz Yisrael, these seven weeks are indeed a critical time, for the grain which is consumed during the entire year

is harvested during this short time period. The 'arba minim' which are brought to the Mikdash on Succot, also relate to the agricultural importance of the fruit harvest ("pri eytz hadar v'kapot tmarim") at this time of the year, and the need for water in the forthcoming rainy season ("arvei nachal").

It is specifically when the Torah relates to these agricultural mitzvot that these holidays are referred to as SHABBATONIM. The reason is quite simple. Shabbat relates to the days of the week, and thus, to a natural cycle caused by the sun. So too, the agricultural seasons of the year. They also relate to the natural cycle of the sun (the 365-day cycle of the earth revolving around the sun that causes the seasons). As these holidays are celebrated during the most critical times of the agricultural year, the Torah commands us to gather at this time of the year in the Bet HaMikdash and offer special korbanot from our harvest. Instead of relating these phenomena of nature to a pantheon of G-ds, as the Canaanites did, we must recognize that it is G-d's hand behind nature and we must thank Him for our harvest.

Even though the agricultural calendar provides sufficient reason to celebrate these holidays, the Torah finds HISTORICAL significance as well in these seasonal holidays: The spring commemorates our redemption from Egypt. The grain harvest coincides with the time of Matan Torah. During the fruit harvest, we recall our supernatural existence in the desert under the "annanei kavod" (clouds of G-d's glory) in the desert. Just as the Torah employs the 'solar' date of the chagim in relation to the agricultural mitzvot, the Torah employs the lunar date of these

chagim in relation to their historical significance. For example, when describing Chag Ha'Matzot which commemorates the historical event of Yetziat Mitzraim, the lunar date of the 15th day of the first month is used (23:6). Similarly, when the Torah refers to Succot as a Mikra Kodesh, it employs solely the lunar date and emphasizes the mitzvah of sitting in the succah, in commemoration of our dwelling in succot during our journey through the desert (see 23:34-35,43).

Specifically, the lunar calendar contains historical significance, for we count the months in commemoration of our Exodus from Egypt, the most momentous event in our national history. This is reflected in the very first mitzvah given to the Jewish nation in Sefer Shmot: "ha'chodesh ha'zeh lachem ROSH CHODASHIM..." This month (in which you are leaving Egypt) will be for you the FIRST month... (see Shmot 12:1-3).

From the repeated emphasis in Chumash that we celebrate our redemption from Egypt in the early spring, it would appear that it was not incidental that the Exodus took place at that time. Rather, G-d desired that our national birth take place at the same time of year when the growth cycle of nature recommences. One could suggest that the celebration of our national redemption specifically in the spring emphasizes its proper meaning. Despite its importance, our freedom attained at Yetziyat Mitzraim should be understood as only the INITIAL stage of our national spiritual 'growth', just as the spring marks only the initial stage in the growth process of nature! Just as the blossoming of nature in the spring leads to the grain harvest in the early summer and the fruit harvest

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Seeking Guidance



Rabbi Eli Mansour

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Parashat Emor begins with laws relevant to the Kohanim, starting with the prohibition against their becoming Tameh (impure) through contact with human corpses. Our Sages noted the juxtaposition between these laws and the final verse of the previous Parasha, Parashat Kedoshim, which presents the prohibition of Ob Ve'yid'oni – consulting with sorcerers. The Ob and Yid'oni were oracles that allegedly could tell a person his future and give him advice and instruction by consulting with the spirits of deceased people. The Torah strictly forbids the use of such devices, going so far as to require the execution of those guilty of this offense. The Sages of the Midrash wondered what connection there might be between this prohibition and the subject of Kohanim which the Torah discusses immediately after that of Ob Ve'yid'oni.

The Sages explain that the Torah seeks to allude to the fact that people seeking advice have an address – the Kohanim. In ancient times, the Kohanim had access to the Urim Ve'tumim, a device worn by the Kohen Gadol which would provide answers to questions. We have no reason

to consult with Ob Ve'yid'oni, with witches and sorcerers, because we have direct access to Hashem's guidance, in the form of the Kohanim. And thus the Torah presents the laws of the Kohanim immediately after the prohibition of Ob Ve'yid'oni.

Rav Yehonatan Eibshutz (1690-1764) suggested that for this same reason the Torah focuses here on the specific prohibition of Tum'at Met, forbidding the Kohanim from coming in contact with corpses. G-d wanted to make it clear that the Urim Ve'tumim used by the Kohanim does not derive its power from spirits, like the pagan priests claim to receive their alleged powers. The information relayed by the Urim Ve'tumim was the authentic guidance given by G-d through His chosen tribe, and was not just another form of pagan witchcraft. And thus while the priests of other religions would spend time at graveyards claiming to tap into spiritual forces associated with the dead, our Kohanim are specifically forbidden from coming in contact with the dead. This is meant to underscore the point that their guidance comes from Hashem, and not from imaginary spirits.

This insight should remind us of the importance of exercising care and caution in deciding from whom to seek guidance and advice. Today we no longer have the Urim Ve'tumim, but we do, Baruch Hashem, have great Torah scholars who have the knowledge, wisdom and sensitivity to offer sound guidance to those in need of help. But just as the Torah noted the distinction between the Kohanim and the Ob Ve'yid'oni, we must similarly discern between genuine Torah guidance and unreliable sources. In today's "Harry Potter generation," magic and mysticism have become in vogue, and there are many charlatans who try to take advantage of this trend to make a quick buck by charging innocent "customers" high fees for making all kinds of promises and predictions. Unfortunately, some of these men give the appearance of being accomplished Torah scholars so people will think they are genuine and authentic. Care must be taken to ensure that we receive guidance, advice and instruction based on authentic Torah wisdom, and not from sources that are very far from Torah-true Judaism.

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in the late summer, so too our national freedom must lead to the achievement of higher goals in our national history. Thus, counting seven weeks from chag ha'matzot until chag ha'shavuot (sfirat ha'omer) emphasizes that Shavuot (commemorating the Giving of the Torah) should be considered the culmination of the process that began at Yetziat Mitzrayim, just as the grain harvest is the culmination of its growth process that began in the

spring. By combining the two calendars, the Torah teaches us that during the critical times of the agricultural year we not only thank Hashem for His providence over nature but we also thank Him for His providence over our history. This is an extremely important concept, that not only is Hashem the Force behind nature, but He also guides the history of nations. In a polytheistic society, these various attributes were divided among many

G-ds. In an atheistic society, man fails to see G-d in either. According to Chumash, man must recognize G-d's providence in all realms of his daily life; by recognizing His hand in the unfolding of our national history, and through perceiving His greatness in the creation of nature.

Kohanim – Made of Honor



Rabbi Moshe Weinberger
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As the Jewish people, Hashem's bride, walk away from Egypt and toward the acceptance of the Torah under the *chuppah* of Har Sinai with our *chossan*, Hashem, we may feel unworthy, shy, and hesitant. But the truth is that in *Yiddishkeit*, neither a *chossan* nor a *kallah* walk to the *chuppah* alone. They must each be accompanied by the best man and maid of honor, respectively. Who is Hashem's "best man?" Who is our maid of honor?

According to the *Zohar HaKadosh*, Moshe Rebbeinu is called *shushbina d'Malka*, Hashem's "best man." On some level, Moshe Rebbeinu escorts the Holy One to His encounter with us. But the Jewish people, who felt so defiled by their immersion in the forty-nine levels of impurity of Egypt, still need to be escorted to the foot of Sinai by someone less "intimidating" than Moshe, who was on such a lofty level that he subsequently had to cover his face with a veil because of the shining light emanating from his face.

The *Zohar* therefore says that the one who encouraged and escorted the demure and shy Jewish people to the *chuppah* was Aharon HaKohein. He was there to encourage the *kallah* to recognize that that she was fit to approach her *chossan* and receive the *kesubah* – the Torah, Hashem's wedding contract with us. That is the deeper meaning of what the *Mishna* in *Avos* (1:12) says about Aharon: "lover of peace, pursuer of peace, lover of all people who brings them close to the Torah." Aharon was the one who escorted us to Sinai to bring us close to the Torah.

That is why one opinion in the *Gemara* (*Yuma* 19a) calls the *kohanim* "agents of Hashem." Hashem sends Aharon and his descendants, the *kohanim*, to bring us close to Him. When a Jew comes to a *kohein* to

bring a sin offering, he pours out his feelings of guilt and the secrets of his heart to the *kohein*. And that *kohein* encourages the Jew to recognize that he deserves to be in Hashem's house, that he is loved and welcome in the *chossan's* home.

This is the message of the beginning of our *parshah*, which says, "Speak to the *kohanim*, the children of Aharon, and say to them, to a life among his nation, he shall not defile himself" (*Vayikra* 21:1). The Tosher Rebbe *zy'a*, teaches regarding this *passuk* that the *kohanim* were responsible to ensure that no one among the nation become defiled. He teaches that the word for defiled (*טמא*) is related to a homonym (*טמ*) which means "mix," as this word is used by the *Gemara*, "so that he should not become mixed [*טמ*] among the nations" (*Kiddushin* 20b). The *kohanim* escort every Jew back to the *chossan* and back to holiness.

Today, the *tzaddikim* and leaders of the generation take on the role of the *kohanim* in our lives (*Megillah* 22a). They are sent by Hashem to us to escort us back to Hashem, to take on the responsibility to ensure that no Jew is written off from holiness. No matter how far a Jew has strayed, our *tzaddikim* and *mashpi'im* may not give up on anyone. They must work with all the effort they can muster to ensure that no Jew is left behind (see *II Shmuel* 14:14).

On a simple level, the *passuk* in our *parshah* teaches that a *kohein* may not come into contact with any dead body. If a Jewish person's body requires burial, others must attend to the task. But as for the *kohein*, "to a life among his nation, he shall not defile himself." *Rashi* is bothered by a question on this *passuk*. Why must it specify "among his nation?" He explains that this phrase indicates that

the prohibition against contact with the dead only applies if the body is "among his nation," i.e., being attended to by other members of the nation. If, however, a body is left alone with no one to ensure a proper burial, then the prohibition against contact with the dead does not apply. What do we learn from this today?

The *tzaddikim* and leaders' responsibility to ensure that every Jew knows he or she is wanted and needed as part of the totality of the Jewish people exists primarily where no one else is there to ensure that someone is not left behind. If someone has family, teachers, *rebbeim*, friends, or teachers who are actively working with this person – if he or she is still "among his nation" – then the *kohein* of the generation is less accountable. But when a Jew feels like he is thrown out, abandoned, ownerless, and alone, it is then the obligation of the *tzaddikim* ensure that he or she is escorted back to Hashem, who is sitting on pins and needles, so to speak, waiting for His messengers to bring His *kallah* back to Him.

All of us in the small minority of Jews who still have a connection to Hashem and the Torah despite two thousand years of exile and concealment can also have some part in being the *kohanim* of today, Hashem's messengers sent to bring our brothers and sisters who feel lost, alone, abandoned, defiled, and full of guilt back under the *chuppah* – back under the shelter of the Holy One, our *chossan* who never stops waiting for us. May Hashem cause everyone who feels pushed aside and abandoned back under the wings of the Divine Presence with the arrival of *Moshiach* and the revelation of the complete redemption, may it be soon in our days.

The Quantum Mechanics of Judaism



Rabbi YY Jacobson
TheYeshiva.net

A man comes to the psychiatrist, shouting that he is in dire need of help. The psychiatrist attempts to calm him down but to no avail. The man is in a state of panic, screaming that it is an emergency and he must be helped immediately.

The psychiatrist informs him that if he continues hollering this way, he won't be able to help him. "Please sit down and tell me the whole story from the beginning." The patient finally gives in. He sits down, and starts talking silently: "In the beginning," he says, "I created heaven and earth."

Lag B'Omer is the anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Rabbi Shimon, who lived in Israel under Roman occupation was an extraordinary scholar and author of the Zohar, the most basic work of Kabbalah.

Before his passing, Rabbi Shimon instructed his disciples to observe his *yahrzeit* as a time of joy and festivity, since the day of a person's death marks the culminating point of all that he achieved in the course of his life on earth.

One particular custom practiced on the day of Lag B'Omer is unique: Children go to parks and fields to play with bows and arrows.

What is the reason for this peculiar custom? One well-known explanation is that during Rabbi Shimon's lifetime, no rainbow ever appeared in the sky. The Torah states that the rainbow represented G-d's covenant never to destroy the world again even humanity is corrupt. But as long as Rabbi Shimon was alive, his merit and piety alone were enough to ensure that G-d would not regret His creation, with no need for the rainbow.

On the day of Rabbi Shimon's passing, however, the world was in need of the rainbow. So each year on that day we recall this man's greatness by playing with the bow.

Yet, this explanation is enigmatic. First, it seems far-fetched to associate the

archer's bow with the celestial rainbow, just because they both include the word 'bow' in English and share the same term in Hebrew, "keshes." Second, according to this interpretation, playing with bows and arrows on the day of Lag B'Omer constitutes a negative symbol, reflecting the tragic potential of humans to destroy the world.

There is another way to explain this interesting tradition. The bow and arrow represent a positive symbol, one that fits into the joyous nature of the day, celebrating the life and vision of Rabbi Shimon. Indeed, Rabbi Shimon's book, the Zohar, states: "Do not anticipate the coming of Moshiach until you see the shining colors of the rainbow." From the Zohar's perspective, the bow represents a powerfully positive symbol.

The first weapons devised by man were designed for hand-to-hand combat: the sword, the spear, the ax, and the like. But a person's enemy or prey is not always in arm's-length, or even within sight; soon the warrior and hunter were inventing an array of weapons capable of reaching targets that are a great distance away or that are invisible. Chief among these new weapons was the bow and arrow, invented early on in human history. For many countries and cultures, the bow and arrow have served as the main projectile weapon for a long time.

The person who invented this weapon had to grasp the paradox that the arrow must first be pulled back toward one's own heart in order to strike the heart of the enemy; and that the more it is drawn toward oneself, the more distant it can reach. Indeed, virtually all long-range weapons (including the rocket) operate on this principle: they cause an action by the means of an opposite action; they impel up and away by means of a force that is exerted down and back toward the launch point.

Every one of us has two types of adversaries: The exposed challenges, those behaviors and emotions that overtly threaten

our well-being and happiness. Immoral and hurtful words and deeds, the expression of negative emotions, and outbursts of anger and animosity are openly destructive. But we also possess an entirely different array of skeletons: Our subliminal paradigms and feelings invisible to the conscious brain.

To confront my invisible adversary, the "sword" won't do the trick. I need a new style weapon: the bow and arrow. To confront and conquer my unconscious traumas, pain, and brokenness, I need to pull back and retreat to the core of my soul; I need to open myself to trailblazing pathways that have never been charted. I must discover what I look like on the inside.

Judaism contains these two types of weapons. The Torah is generally comprised of two parts, the "niglah" and the "nistar," the revealed Torah, and the concealed part of Torah. The former can be compared to the "sword," the latter to the "bow."

The first stream of Torah, Jewish law and ethics, is like the close-range weapon that could confront the obvious enemy. It delinates for me right from wrong, moral from immoral, holy from profane, good from bad. It teaches us to distinguish between the desirable and the disgraceful, between noble and coarse behavior. It is the foundation of living a moral, meaningful, and good life.

But how about confronting the pain and trauma in the depth of my being? What about the chaos at the core of my consciousness? How about facing my existential loneliness and angst? How about my questions about ultimate purpose, meaning, and truth? How about dealing with my inner confusion, anxiety, insanity, and uncertainty?

This is where the "hidden" part of Torah becomes a life-saver. The teachings of Kabbalah and Chassidus are the "quantum mechanics" of Judaism, where infinity and finiteness merge, where paradoxes abide side by side, and where G-d and the human

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Pesach Sheini: Again, From Close



Rabbi Judah Mischel

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Rav Yisroel Yitzchak haLevi Reisman, zt'l, was a Lelover chasid, born in the Old City of Yerushalayim. A trusted *gabai tzedakah*, he served Hashem with extraordinary humility, and was invited by Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld to serve as a *dayan*, a judge for the Eidah Chareidis. Known for sweeping expertise in Shas and poskim, he was one of founders of Yeshivah Sefas Emes and ultimately became the *Ra'avad* (*Rosh Avos Beis Din*) of Yerushalayim.

Rav Yisroel Yitzchok once arrived in Bnei Brak for a meeting with the elderly *gadol ha-dor*, the Chazon Ish. As he was ushered into the office, he saw that the Chazon Ish was preoccupied, mentally absorbed, and perhaps unaware of his presence. “Shalom Aleichem,” he intoned gently, after waiting a minute or two, “may I ask what the Rav is doing?” The Chazon Ish looked up and answered, “Aleichem Shalom. What am I doing? I am doing what *Yidden* do... I’m doing *teshuvah!*” The visiting *dayan* looked at the sage inquisitively. “I do a *cheit*, a sin, and then I do *teshuvah*,” continued the Chazon Ish, “again I sin... and again I do *teshuvah*.”



One year after *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, in the Desert, Am Yisrael was commanded in bringing the Korban Pesach. The People followed through and observed the Yom Tov as Hashem had requested — except for one ‘unforeseen’ issue:

אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי־הִיָּה־טָמֵא לְנֶפֶשׁ אוֹ בְּדַרְךָ רְחֹקָה...

Anyone who is ritually impure or on a distant road (and as a result is unable to bring the Korban Pesach in the commanded time)...

(*Bamidbar*, 9:10)

A group of Jews were at that time *tamei l'nefesh*, ritually impure, having come into contact with death. When *Chag haPesach* came, meaning the 14th of Nisan when the Korbanos were to be offered, they were unable to bring a Korban, as one can only bring the offering in a state of *taharah*. Not wanting to lose out on the mitzvah, however, *vayikr'vu el Mosheh*, “they drew close to Moshe”, and presented their *she'ilas rav*: למה נגרע, “Why should we be prevented from bringing a Korban and drawing close?”

Moshe responded, ‘*Imdu*, stay where you’re standing; please hold, I’ll ask Hashem and get back to you.’ Moshe stepped away, rang the *Ribbono shel Olam*, and received an immediate response: “Anyone who is *tamei l'nefesh* — and not only that, but anyone who is on a *derech rechokah*, a distant road, and not just now but for always — they shall bring a Korban Pesach on the *Second Month* (*Iyar*), on the 14th day...”

They would have a second chance. They would have Pesach just like everyone else, only a month later.

Rebbe Yisroel of Ruzhin expounds upon the Mishnah (*Pesachim*, 93b): “What is the definition of a *derech rechokah*, a distant road? Rabbi Eliezer says it is מאסקופת העזרה ולחוץ, from the threshold of the *Azara* (Temple) courtyard and beyond.” This teaches us that a person can be *zocheh* to arrive in Yerushalayim, ascend *Har haBayis*, and even make it all the way to the entrance of the *Azarah*, the Courtyard of the Beis haMikdash — and yet he still is on a ‘distant road’; he still has a long way to go, because he is still sees himself as impure, in a state of *cheit*, having missed the mark.” In his *nefesh*, his consciousness, he is not yet *tahor*, pure, and so despite his physical proximity to where he is to bring

the Korban Pesach, this Jew experiences an *inner* distance.

We may be proficient in performing mitzvos according to all the *halachos* and *minhagim*. We may be ‘close’ to where we need to be, both physically and intellectually. Yet, at times we can feel spiritually far away, *baderech rechokah*, as if we are on a distant road. It may seem as if we are unable and unworthy of entering the ‘Courtyard’ of Hashem’s Presence to ‘bring our offering’.

Reb Chatzkeleh of Kuzmir suggests an understanding of the roots of the Pesach Sheni narrative: “Imagine. A Jew is standing at the threshold of the *Azara*, yet does not enter! Only because of our excessive, false humility and low self-esteem, we doubt ourselves, as if to say, ‘Who am I to approach this holy place?’ Prevented by haunting feelings of guilt and shame, again and again we attempt to enter, but are not able. The distance is imagined; a construct of our yetzer hara and hardened hearts...Therefore *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* says, ‘If so, just for that I will make a (new) Yom Tov for you, to show you how I desire your closeness!’”



A Jew once asked Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin, “Rebbe, I so deeply desire to do *teshuvah*, but I don’t know what to do about it.”

“And when doing an *aveirah*, you knew then what to do?”

The Jew blushed and confessed, “Yes, but that was simple: I had a *taavah*, a desire, and I just acted upon it.”

“Aha,” said the Ruzhiner. “Exactly! Now do the same... You have a *taavah* for *teshuvah*; just act upon it!”

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Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's Legacy & Building Oneself

Mrs. Shira Smiles

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Rabbi Shimon wrote the Zohar, a book that contains the deep hidden secrets of the Torah. One of the key lessons he taught us was the power of each individual Jew. Everyone has a portion and a letter in the Torah. If even one letter is slightly cracked, the Torah becomes pasul (invalid). This teaches us that every Jew is essential and that together we comprise the word of Hashem. If even one person doesn't live up to his potential, then the Torah in a sense becomes flawed. The world cannot function at its fullest state. Rabbi Shimon taught that every person contains great holiness that deserves respect. When we rejoice on Lag Ba'omer, we not only mark the death of Rabbi Shimon, but celebrate his life and the lessons he left us.

The seven weeks of sefirah parallel the seven species for which the land of Israel is praised for. Lag Ba'omer falls out in the fifth week, which corresponds to the rimon (pomegranate), the same letters as Miron, the city where Rabbi Shimon is buried. The sages said, "Even the empty ones among Israel are filled with mitzvot like a rimon." This echoes the message of

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person stand face to face with each other. Just like the bow, the Kabbalah and Chasidic teachings guide the person toward the quintessence of his or her consciousness, uncovering the "fragment of G-d" that constitutes the core of my soul, teaching me how the complex notes of the human psyche are a Divine symphony, and how the entire universe is pulsating infinity.

Rabbi Shimon. Every Jew, no matter how low he has fallen, deserves respect.

The bonfires on Lag Ba'omer signify the fiery passion for Hashem that is awakened within us on this day. Rabbi Shimon taught that if we would know the tremendous love Hashem has for us, we would be filled with a deep reciprocal love for Him that would erupt within us.

Lag Ba'omer is a time to recognize our significance, to feel and awaken within ourselves our connection to Hashem, to sense his deep love for us. It is a day of intense prayer, when we can pour out our hearts in supplication before our Creator. It is a time to pause and experience that feeling of the heavens opening up and accepting our prayers. May all our deepest wishes be answered for good.



Chazal say, "Derech erez kadma l'Torah." Before we can become a receptacle for Torah we need to work on our middot. The sages say, "If a person says, 'Let me learn, let me be filled with wisdom, and then I will work on my middot,' all of one's wisdom and much of one's Torah will be lost." The period of sefirat haomer

There was a time in history when the revealed part of the Torah sufficed. The Kabbalah remained concealed from most of the people and only a select few passed it on from generation to generation. But as the world became a much more complicated place, and as the consciousness of redemption and full healing become more manifest, we must extricate the last traumas hidden inside of us, obstructing our full alignment with the Divine. Hence,

is a time to work on the 48 ways through which the Torah is acquired. The sixth chapter of Pirkei Avot lists these qualities, which include listening attentively, serving Hashem with joy, knowing one's place, and making a Rebbe for oneself. These 48 ways parallel the 48 days between Pesach and Shavuot. The 49th day is a review.

In Pirkei Avot, Rabbi Elazar ben Arach says that the most important thing is to have a lev tov (good heart). The numerical value of lev is 32, tov is 17; together they equal 49. The first 32 days of sefirah correspond to lev. It is a time to focus on our hearts and to internalize the message of the death of the students of Rabbi Akiva. It's a time to work on mitzvot between man and man, to treat others with respect, and to become kinder and more giving people. Lag Ba'omer is the turning point. As we approach the last two thirds of sefirat haomer, we concentrate on the lekach tov, the goodness that is Torah. We should focus on mitzvot between ourselves and Hashem and to prepare to receive the Torah anew. Only after we have ascended the 49 rungs of sefirah, having worked through all the middot, can we stand ready to receive the Torah on Shavuot.

Divine providence sent the great mystical masters, chief among them Rabbi Shimon, to teach us how to open windows to the super-conscious forces of our soul; how to discover the oneness in all of reality, how to perceive your darkness as a manifestation of infinite light, how to see yourself as an ambassador of love, light, and hope.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai gave the Jewish people and the world the bow and arrow.

The Holiday of the Kabbalists



Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi
Popular Torah teacher and author

She stood at the back of the class, at the end of the line, with long curls and big, wet eyes. “How can I help?” I asked, and she replied, “I am a student at a religious girls’ high school, and I have no friends.” Life has already managed to immunize me in a terrible way, but I do not have the strength to listen to it. When I hear about lonely single women who have grown up and have to constantly improvise an available friend, about young mothers who only meet others in kindergarten, about grandmothers whose house is empty... I started to tell her that she is still young and may be slower than others to make friends, but her great light has yet to reveal itself, until I saw a woman crying on the sidelines, her only friend, her mother, and again my words died.

This Shabbat is right at the seam between Pesach Sheini and Lag Bo’Omer, and if Lag Bo’Omer is the holiday of the Kabbalists (in Hebrew *mekubalim*), then Pesach Sheini is the holiday of the unaccepted (in Hebrew *lo mekubalim*).

It is the holiday of those who were rejected because their time had passed and their sacrifice was declared invalid. It is the holiday of Rabbi Akiva, an ignorant and unknowing shepherd: “Is it not cold? Water will wear down a stone!” They will condescend to explain it to him.

It is the holiday of Rachel, a woman who is portrayed as a slave because, according to those who push her aside, she has given up far too much for love.

It is the holiday of Elisha ben Abuya, the rabbi of Meir, who has the miracle of hearing a voice from the back of the synagogue explode and say, “Come back, you naughty boys, except for one!”

And it is the holiday of the fringe child in our parsha. The rejected son.

“There came out among the Israelites a man whose mother was an Israelite and whose father was an Egyptian...” And the Sages persist in asking, “Where did he go out?” This is an important question. This child has nowhere to go out because he has nowhere to go in either. It is a child who has no place. His origin, “the son of an Egyptian man”, does not give him a portion determined according to “the house of their ancestors”.

Rejected child.

“He went out from (by his blasphemous utterance he lost) his eternal life (עולמו); evidently ויצא is connected with the last word of v. 8; “the everlasting covenant, ברית עולם”). Others explained in a different, mysterious interpretation: just before this incident, the Torah recalled the lechem hapanim that stays warm

all week: “He set forth (אצא) (started his argument) from the above section. He said sneeringly: ‘Every Sabbath he shall set it in order!?’ Surely it is the way of a king to eat fresh (lit., warm) bread every day; is it perhaps his way to eat bread nine days old (lit., cold bread of nine days)?!”

This child has not eaten warm bread for so long! His face has not been lightened for so many years! He will painfully mock this warm home he misses so much... and he blasphemes.

He is easy to understand. It is difficult to understand the two women of Shavuot, the outcasts, the unacceptable, without house and without bread, who set out for Bethlehem and never stop blessing.

Pesach Sheini is an opening for the rejected people: “And the exaltation of Pesach Sheimi over Pesach Rishon is incomparable!” Pesach Rishon is only the opening, “and G-d saw and passed over the opening,” and Pesach Sheini, of which it says, “When I met you in the street? I could kiss you!”

The “kiss” of bread, its crunchy side, is waiting these days for those who have been cast out of the community. They are given a new chance to create a feast, to bless and not curse, to build a home again with infinite courage, a home where they feel accepted.

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Pesach Sheini, is the ‘headquarters’ of our belief that desire for holiness, our taavah for another chance, matters. It is a Divine invitation to collapse the imagined

distance and just walk right into the ‘Courtyards’ of His presence.

No matter how far we may feel on our individual or collective *derech rechokah*, no matter our sense of *tumah* or lack, this

Pesach Sheini may we “do what *Yidden* do”. May we have the confidence and faith to take one more step toward actualizing our *ratzon*, and enter the realm of holiness.

Hebrew Language in the Parsha



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Parashat Emor includes a list of the Torah's holidays. The date of the holiday of Shavuot is not given, but instead is described as 50 days after the *omer* offering:

וּתְסַפְּרֶתֶם לָכֶם מִמִּקְרַת הַשָּׁבֹת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכֶם אֶת־עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שֶׁבַע שָׁבֹתוֹת תְּמִימֹת ... עַד מִמִּקְרַת הַשָּׁבֹת הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּסְפְּרוּ הַמַּשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִזְבֵּחַ ...

“And from the day on which you bring the *omer* of the elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: you must count until the day after the seventh week—fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD.” (Vayikra 23:15-16)

The date of the *omer* offering is also not stated, but since the laws of bringing the *omer* immediately follow the laws of Pesach, tradition teaches that Shavuot

comes 50 days after the beginning of Pesach.

This period of time is generally identified with the season of spring. However, unlike in some Western countries where there is an equal division between the four seasons, from a climate standpoint, the Land of Israel really only has two seasons – summer and winter.

Between each season there is a transitional period that is a very sensitive time for agriculture. Untimely heat, rain or winds can cause great damage to the crops. As part of the prayer for a successful transition, both periods include mitzvot that involve waving in all the directions of the wind. The Sages explain both the waving of the *lulav*¹ and the *omer*² as connected to a prayer that the winds be favorable.

During the time between Pesach and Shavuot, we still experience these hot,

dry winds. In modern Hebrew this wind is colloquially called a *תְּסִיָּה*. While some might mistakenly think the word comes from *חם* – “hot” – that’s not actually the origin. It derives from the Arabic *hamsun*, which is cognate with the Hebrew *חֲמִשִּׁים* – both meaning “50”. The Arabic word originates in a similar tradition of 50 days of dangerous winds.

Each day counted therefore constitutes both thanks to God that the previous days passed without damage to the crops, and a prayer that the remaining days will be successful.

1. Sukkah 37b.
2. Vayikra Rabbah 28:5
3. The official Hebrew term is *תְּסִיָּה*, which appears in Yeshayahu 35:7 and 49:10.

Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh

Mizrachi Melbourne

Who is mentioned second when appearing for the first time, and mentioned first when appearing for the second time?

Answer to the Parsha Riddle

The father is mentioned second (after the mother) when first appearing in the Parsha amongst the close relatives to whom a Kohen makes himself “tamei” (impure) after they die. (Refer 21:2)

The father is mentioned first (before the mother) when appearing for the second time when the Torah prohibits a Kohen Gadol to defile himself to any person, close relative or not, unless the case is a “i.e. תמא מן תמא” where there is no one available to bury the deceased (Refer 21:11)

The Ozayim LaTorah explains that in the case of an ordinary kohen who does makes himself tamei to the seven closest relatives, the mother is mentioned first because she is considered the closest relative, having carried and nursed the child from birth. In the words of Chazal

“אמר ערב ערב” “a foetus is an extension of its mother”, in the case of a Kohen Gadol who cannot defile himself to any person, the father is mentioned first, then the mother, to leave the bigger chidush for last, i.e. to inform us that even the closest relative, namely the mother cannot have her son who is a Kohen Gadol, defiling himself for her, after her passing.

Refer Ibn Ezra 21:2 for an alternative explanation regarding an ordinary kohen.

DUST AND STARS THIS WEEK in Jewish History

- Iyar 15, 2448 (1313 BCE):** Manna, which sustained the Jewish people during their 40 years of wandering through the desert, began to fall for the first time.
- May 7, 1945:** Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies, ending WW II.
- May 8, 1943:** Mordechai Anilewicz, commander of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and publisher of *Against the Stream* newsletter, was killed in the main bunker, at age 24.
- Iyar 18:** Lag ba-Omer, and Yahrzeit (3930–170 CE) of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Rashbi), one of the greatest disciples of Rabbi Akiva, and author of the Zohar.
- May 10, 2010:** Recognizing its economic achievements, the 31 states of the OECD voted unanimously to invite Israel to become a member.
- Iyar 20, 2449 (1312 BCE):** The Jews of the Exodus left the vicinity of Mt. Sinai on the first stage of their 38 year journey through the desert on the way to Israel.
- May 12, 1949:** Israel was admitted as the 59th member nation of the U.N.

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Yeshivat Hesder Lev HaTorah

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Congregation Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn
Congregation Etz Chaim of Livingston
Congregation Israel of Springfield
Congregation Ohr Torah
Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill
Kehilat Keshet
Ma Tov Day Camp
Ohav Emeth
Pal Foundation
Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center
Yavneh Academy
National Council of Young Israel
Young Israel of Teaneck

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Ramaz
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MTA - Yeshiva University
High School for Boys
Young Israel of Merrick
Congregation Beth Torah
Congregation Etz Chaim of
Kew Gardens Hills
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun
Congregation Ohab Zedek
Great Neck Synagogue
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth
Hadassah Synagogue
Irving Place Minyan
Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach
Kehilath Jershurun
Kingsway Jewish Center
Lincoln Square Synagogue

Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park
North Shore Hebrew Academy
Young Israel of Merrick
NYC Department of Correction
OU-JLIC at Binghamton University
OU-JLIC at Cornell University
Queens Jewish Center
Stars of Israel Academy
The Jewish Center
The Riverdale Minyan
Vaad of Chevra Kadisha
West Side Institutional Synagogue
Yeshiva University High School for Girls
Young Israel of Hillcrest
Young Israel of Jamaica Estates
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst
Young Israel of New Rochelle
Young Israel of North Woodmere
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Young Israel of Scarsdale
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