

# DAF HASHAVUA

## אָמֹר | EMOR

### SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 9.19pm  
 Birmingham: 9.30pm  
 Bournemouth: 9.27pm  
 Cardiff: 9.36pm  
 Dublin: 9.52pm  
 Edinburgh: 9.57pm  
 Glasgow: 10.02pm  
 Hull: 9.38pm  
 Leeds: 9.36pm  
 Liverpool: 9.45pm  
 Manchester: 9.40pm  
 Nottingham: 9.36pm  
 Sheffield: 9.40pm  
 Southend: 9.15pm  
 Southport: 9.48pm  
 Jerusalem: 7.59pm

**Lag Ba'Omer is on  
 Tuesday**



## SIDRA BREAKDOWN

אָמֵר  
EMOR

8th Sidra in:

וַיִּקְרָא  
VAYIKRA

By Numbers:

**124 VERSES**  
**1,614 WORDS**  
**6,106 LETTERS**

Headlines:

**LAWS OF  
KOHANIM,  
SANCTIFYING  
GOD'S NAME  
AND YOM TOV**

**EMOR:**

Artscroll p.672  
Hertz p.513  
Koren Sacks p.797  
Soncino p.740

**HAFTARAH:**

Artscroll p.1176  
Hertz p.528  
Koren Sacks p.1541  
Soncino p.761

## SIDRA SUMMARY

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

God instructs Moshe (Moses) to tell the Kohanim not to come into contact with a corpse, with the exception of when burying specific close relatives. They are not allowed to shave their heads or wound themselves during a mourning period (Rashi). There are restrictions on whom Kohanim can marry. There is a mitzvah to show Kohanim specific forms of respect (Rashi). A *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) is not allowed to bury a close relative, nor marry a widow.

### 2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 21:16-22:16

Specific types of physical blemishes on a Kohen disqualify him from bringing offerings in the Temple; however, he may still eat from the offerings. A Kohen who is ritually impure (*tamei*) can neither bring nor eat an offering until he is pure (*tahor*). The laws of *terumah*, the first crop tithe given to the Kohanim, are stated. Whilst this tithe should not be eaten by a non-Kohen, a Kohen's wife and his Canaanite servant are permitted to eat it.

### 3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 22:17-33

Offerings brought to the Temple must be free of certain blemishes which disqualify them. An animal cannot be brought as an offering until it is at least eight days old. Offerings have to be eaten within a certain time. There is a mitzvah to sanctify God's Name.

### 4TH ALIYA (REVI') – 23:1-22

Laws of Shabbat and the festivals are listed. On Pesach, which lasts seven days, we eat matzot. The first and last days are Yom Tov, on which we refrain from specific prohibited activity (*melacha*). On the second day of Pesach, the barley *Omer* offering is

brought. There is a mitzvah to count 49 days from 16 Nisan (the second night of Pesach) until the night before Shavuot. On Shavuot itself, the double bread wheat offering (*shte'i ha'lechem*) is brought and *melacha* is forbidden.

### 5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 23:23-32

Rosh Hashana is called 'a day of shofar blasts'. Yom Kippur is a day of fasting. On these days, *melacha* is also forbidden, but the punishment for doing *melacha* on Yom Kippur is more severe.

### 6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 23:33-44

On Succot we bring the four species (*arba'a minim*) and dwell in temporary booths (*succot*). The seven days of Succot are followed by Shemini Atzeret. On the first day of Succot and on Shemini Atzeret, we refrain from *melacha*.

### 7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 24:1-23

Moshe is told by God to instruct the people to bring pure olive oil for the daily Menorah lighting in the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). Moshe is commanded to provide flour for the showbread (*lechem hapanim*) that is placed on the table (*shulchan*) and remains there for an entire week. A man is caught blaspheming and is sentenced and put to death.

**Point to Consider:** *Who was the father of the blasphemer? (see Rashi to 24:10)*

### HAFTARAH (YEchezkel 44:15-31)

The prophet Yechezkel (Ezekiel) details the *halachot* which will pertain to Kohanim in Messianic times. Some of these laws are more stringent than those listed in the sidra.



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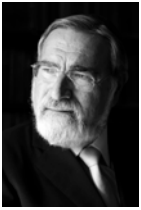
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## COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

# ON NOT BEING AFRAID OF GREATNESS

*This is an abridged version of Rabbi Sacks' 2014 and 2021 Covenant & Conversation essay. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at [www.rabbisacks.org](http://www.rabbisacks.org)*

In this week's *parasha* are two fundamental commands of Judaism that touch on the very nature of Jewish identity.

*"Do not desecrate My holy name. I must be sanctified among the Israelites. I am the Lord, who made you holy and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God." (Vayikra 22:32).*

The two commands are the prohibition against desecrating God's name, *Chillul Hashem*, and the positive corollary, *Kiddush Hashem*, the command to sanctify God's name. In what sense can we sanctify or desecrate God's name?

First we must understand the concept of "name" as it applies to God. A name is how others know us. God's "name" is therefore His standing in the world. Do people acknowledge, respect, honour Him?

The commands of *Kiddush Hashem* and *Chillul Hashem* locate that responsibility in the conduct of the Jewish people.

The God of Israel is the God of all humanity. He created the universe. He made us in His image, and cares for all of us. Yet He is not identical with nature, He created it. He is not identical with the physical universe, He transcends it. We cannot map or quantify Him through

observation, measurement or calculation. How then is He known?

The Torah claims that He is known primarily through Jewish history and the ways Jews live. As Moses says:

*Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created human beings on the earth... Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings... by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? (Devarim 4:32-34).*

Moses knew that Jewish history was and would continue to be unique. No other nation has survived such trials. Therefore God – the God of revelation and redemption – is known to the world through the people of Israel. We are testimony to something beyond ourselves, God's ambassadors to the world.

Therefore when we behave in a way that evokes admiration for Judaism as a faith and way of life, that is a *Kiddush Hashem*. When we betray that faith and way of life, causing people to have contempt for the God of Israel – that is a *Chillul Hashem*. They cause others to say: I cannot

respect a religion, or a God, that inspires people to behave in such a way.

That is the logic of *Kiddush Hashem* and *Chillul Hashem*. The fate of God's "name" in the world depends on us and how we behave. And we each have a share in this task.

Rabbi Norman Lamm (1927-2020) tells an amusing story: When the news came through of the daring Israeli raid on Entebbe in 1976, passengers on a cruise ship wanted to pay tribute, in some way, to Israel and the Jewish people. A search was undertaken for any Jewish members on board. Only one could be found: waiter Mendel. So, at a solemn ceremony, the captain of the cruise, on behalf of all passengers, congratulated Mendel, who suddenly found himself elected *de facto* as ambassador of the Jewish people. We are all, like it or not, ambassadors of the Jewish people.

The choice is ours. Will our lives be a *Kiddush Hashem*, or God forbid, the opposite? To do something to make someone grateful for God in heaven, who inspires people to do good on earth, is perhaps the greatest achievement to aspire to.

Applying to a Jewish school?

# THE NEW SEASON STARTS APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup> 2026

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**CHIEF RABBI**



# LAG BA'OMER: TO PERSEVERE

BY: **DAF HASHAVUA TEAM**

Each year on the 18th of Iyar – Lag Ba'Omer – many thousands of Jews travel to Mount Meron, in northern Israel.

At the top of the hill stands the tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, known by the acronym Rashbi. His *yahrzeit*, the anniversary of his passing, falls on Lag Ba'Omer. For generations, Jews have travelled there to pray, celebrate and honour his legacy.

But what is it about Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai that draws such enormous crowds?

To understand Rashbi, we must begin with his teacher, Rabbi Akiva.

Rabbi Akiva's life story is one of the most remarkable transformations in Jewish history. According to tradition, he began life as an uneducated shepherd. At the age of forty, encouraged by his wife Rachel, he began learning Torah. Through immense dedication he grew into one of the greatest sages of the Talmudic era.

Rabbi Akiva eventually gathered 24,000 students who studied Torah under his guidance. During the Omer period, the forty-nine days between Passover and Shavuot, tragedy struck. A devastating plague spread among the students, and thousands died. The Talmud explains that they were punished because they did not treat one another with sufficient respect.

The loss was catastrophic, wiping out an entire generation of Torah scholars. The plague paused

on Lag Ba'Omer.

Despite the devastation, Rabbi Akiva did not give up. Instead, he began again. He gathered five new students, through whom Rabbi Akiva's teachings were preserved and passed on to future generations. One of these students was Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai lived in the 2nd century CE, during Roman rule. Known for his deep scholarship and fearless faith, he openly criticised Roman oppression and was forced to flee for his life.

According to tradition, he hid with his son, Rabbi Elazar ben Shimon, in a cave for thirteen years, devoting themselves entirely to Torah study and spiritual growth.

After emerging, Rabbi Shimon became one of the leading sages of his generation. His teachings appear frequently in the Talmud, and he is traditionally associated with the foundational work of Jewish mysticism, the Zohar.

There is a tradition that on the day of his passing he revealed profound mystical teachings to his students and asked that the day be remembered with joy rather than mourning. This is why Lag Ba'Omer is celebrated with bonfires and music. It is a very popular day for weddings.

And this is why, for centuries, Jews have travelled to Meron on Lag Ba'Omer to visit Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's tomb. The day is

**“As one of the five students who carried forward Rabbi Akiva's teachings, Rashbi represents perseverance, faith and the enduring transmission of Torah from generation to generation.**

marked by prayer, singing, dancing and celebration, and it has become one of the largest annual religious gatherings in Israel.

Tragically, in 2021, a crowd crush at the Meron site caused the deaths of 45 people and injured many others. Lessons in crowd management were learned. Three years later, at the height of the current war, it wasn't safe to hold a public ceremony at all. Despite these tragic setbacks – and there have been others through the years – the legacy of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai continues to inspire. As one of the five students who carried forward Rabbi Akiva's teachings, Rashbi represents perseverance, faith and the enduring transmission of Torah from generation to generation.



## SEFER YIRMIYAHU (JEREMIAH) – PART 2

# TO DESTROY AND REBUILD

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**  
Ma'ayan and US Educator

A prophet's inaugural prophecy often sets the tone of the focus of his prophetic career. This is very clear in the case of Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah). Firstly, as previously discussed, we see Yirmiyahu's humility in his initial refusal to accept his role as a prophet. Despite this, God reaches out and touches his mouth, stating that Yirmiyahu will speak whatever God tells him. This sets him apart from other prophets, who are given an element of freedom in the manner in which they convey their prophetic message.

Secondly, his aims as a prophet are outlined: God appoints him "to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (*Yirmiyahu* 1:10). Four verbs of destruction are used, illustrating the many negative prophecies that Yirmiyahu will be forced to give. However, it is also important to note the two positive verbs, building and planting. Even before any destruction has taken place, we are told that Yirmiyahu does have a positive side. There will be prophecies of consolation within *Sefer Yirmiyahu*. In fact, this consolation comes not at the end but in the middle of the book, emphasising its centrality to Yirmiyahu's role.

These six verbs are repeated

together in this central section of consolation (see *Yirmiyahu* 31:27), once again illustrating the delicate balance in Yirmiyahu's role. The biblical commentator Malbim (1809-1879) explains that the destruction is for the purpose of rebuilding, and that the uprooting is for the purpose of replanting.

This may seem obvious to us now, with the advantage of historical hindsight. However, for the people in Yirmiyahu's generation, the idea of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was unthinkable. When it happened, they were so shocked that they believed God had disowned them, ready to select a new Chosen People in their place. By spreading this idea of planting and building alongside the destruction, Yirmiyahu was teaching them that regrowth was possible. This is an important fundamental – almost like preparing the cure before the sickness.

The next prophecy that is described is Yirmiyahu's vision of the almond tree. This provides the message that, just as the almond tree is the first to give blossom in the spring, so too God will hasten to act and bring about His promises. This is based on the word *shaked* meaning both an almond tree and to hasten. Interestingly, this verb

“ By spreading this idea of planting and building alongside the destruction, Yirmiyahu was teaching them that regrowth was possible.

also appears alongside the six verbs discussed earlier, in the central section of consolation (*ibid.*): "Just as I **hastened** to uproot and to pull down, to overthrow and to destroy and to bring disaster, so I will **hasten** to build and to plant". The message is clear: just as God worked fast to bring about the negative prophecies, so too He will work fast to bring about the positive ones.

Finally, Yirmiyahu sees a vision of a bubbling pot facing towards the north, indicating a dangerous enemy coming from the north - Babylon. God will bring the punishment for our sins through Babylon, to wreak havoc in Jerusalem. However, the chapter ends with the final promise that "they shall not overcome you... for I am with you" (*ibid.* 1:19).

Yirmiyahu's message was to be deeply unpopular with the people, and, at times, his very life was threatened. Hence, God's promise at the outset.

# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

EMOR

1-2 MAY | 15 IYAR

## WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!



BY: **YONI NEMKO**

Tribe gap year student

*Parashat Emor* is an important *parasha* that reflects *Sefer Vayikra's* theme of engaging with God. The *parasha* deals with how the *Kohanim* (priests) prepare to serve in the *Mishkan* (portable Sanctuary), as well as how we bring God into our lives with *Chagim* (festivals). However, *Parashat Emor* finishes with one of *Sefer Vayikra's* only two stories:

'A fight broke out in the camp between the son of an Israelite woman (and an Egyptian man)

and an Israelite... [the former] blasphemed the Name with a curse, so they brought him to Moshe (Moses). They put him in custody until the will of God would be made clear to them' (*Vayikra* 24:10-12).

This story seems a bit random - what is it doing here? Even more confusing is God's answer as to how Moshe should deal with this man:

'One who injures his neighbour, as he has done so shall it be done to him: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth...' (*Vayikra* 19-20).

Rabbi Sacks zt'l taught that this story shows that crimes against God and crimes against human beings are connected. What may begin as an offence against God, like blasphemy, will end as a

crime against another person, like violence. Through this story, we learn about the holiness of speech.

As *Sefer Vayikra* teaches, *Kedusha* (holiness), 'does not just belong to the *Kohanim*', writes Rabbi Sacks, but to every one of us. That's why we are a 'Kingdom of Priests **and** a Holy Nation.' *Sefer Vayikra* teaches us that there are holy places, like the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), where we go to "God's house". However, it also teaches us about bringing God into our lives, for example through *Chagim*, Shabbat and other societal laws. One of the last few messages of *Sefer Vayikra* is that it all starts with our words. Language is the first tool we can use to be the best versions of ourselves.

## Parasha Anagrams

Unjumble the letters to uncover words or phrases from the article above!

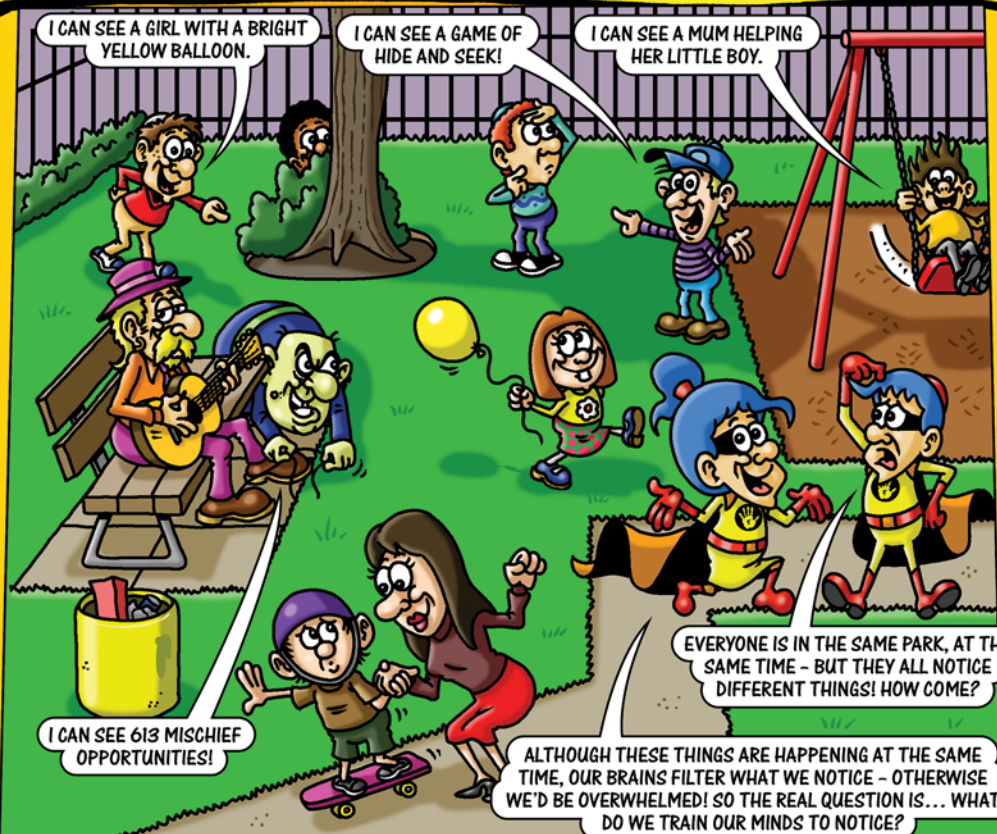
1. MORE
2. ESYA FRIVERKA
3. DEKUASH
4. GAMIHC
5. JEW HOP SPIELE
6. KISHMAN





# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

EMOR: TAKE NOTICE!



I CAN SEE A GIRL WITH A BRIGHT YELLOW BALLOON.

I CAN SEE A GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK!

I CAN SEE A MUM HELPING HER LITTLE BOY.

I CAN SEE 613 MISCHIEF OPPORTUNITIES!

EVERYONE IS IN THE SAME PARK, AT THE SAME TIME - BUT THEY ALL NOTICE DIFFERENT THINGS! HOW COME?

ALTHOUGH THESE THINGS ARE HAPPENING AT THE SAME TIME, OUR BRAINS FILTER WHAT WE NOTICE - OTHERWISE WE'D BE OVERWHELMED! SO THE REAL QUESTION IS... WHAT DO WE TRAIN OUR MINDS TO NOTICE?

IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA, THE TORAH INTRODUCES THE MITZVAH (COMMANDMENT) OF COUNTING THE OMER - COUNTING EACH DAY FROM PESACH TO SHAVUOT.

BUT COUNTING MAKES US PAY ATTENTION. SUDDENLY EVERY DAY MATTERS! ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO RECEIVING THE TORAH!

INSTEAD OF THINKING, 'JUST ANOTHER DAY', WE THINK 'DAY 28 OF THE OMER - 4 WEEKS COMPLETED!' THE TORAH INVITES US TO NOTICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH. WE BECOME AWARE OF THE JOURNEY.



WITHOUT THIS MITZVAH, THOSE SEVEN WEEKS MIGHT JUST ZOOM BY LIKE ANY ORDINARY DAYS.



IT'S LIKE ADJUSTING OUR MENTAL FILTER. COUNTING THE OMER TRAINS US TO NOTICE SOMETHING PEOPLE OFTEN MISS: SLOW, STEADY GROWTH.



GROWTH OFTEN HAPPENS SLOWLY - STEP BY STEP. WHEN WE COUNT THE DAYS WITH PURPOSE, THE DAYS START TO COUNT!

Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldweiser | Writer: Shira Chaik | Cartoonist: Paul Solomon

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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.