

DAF HASHAVUA

שמיני | SHEMINI

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 8.40pm
 Birmingham: 8.49pm
 Bournemouth: 8.48pm
 Cardiff: 8.55pm
 Dublin: 9.09pm
 Edinburgh: 9.06pm
 Glasgow: 9.11pm
 Hull: 8.52pm
 Leeds: 8.51pm
 Liverpool: 9.00pm
 Manchester: 8.55pm
 Nottingham: 8.52pm
 Sheffield: 8.55pm
 Southend: 8.36pm
 Southport: 9.02pm
 Jerusalem: 7.43pm

Shabbat Mevarechim

**Rosh Chodesh Iyar is
 next Friday and Shabbat**



*"This you may eat from everything
 that is in the water: everything that
 has fins and scales in the water, in the
 seas and in the streams, you may eat"
 (Vayikra 11:9)*

SIDRA BREAKDOWN

שְׁמִינִי SHEMINI

3rd Sidra in:

ויקרא VAYIKRA

By Numbers:
91 VERSES
1,238 WORDS
4,670 LETTERS

Headlines:
**INAUGURATION
OF THE MISHKAN;
LAWS OF
KASHRUT**

SHEMINI:

Artsroll p.588
Hertz p.443
Koren Sacks p.703
Soncino p.651

HAFTARAH:

Artsroll p.1168
Hertz p.454
Koren Sacks p.1519
Soncino p.667

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – VAYIKRA 9:1-16

The sidra begins almost a year after the Exodus from Egypt, on Rosh Chodesh Nisan. After seven days of inaugurating the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), Moshe instructs Aharon to bring two special offerings, an elevation offering (*olah*) and a sin offering (*chatat*). The people are also told to bring a *chatat*, two *olah* offerings and two peace offerings (*shelamim*). Aharon approaches the altar (*mizbeach*), together with his sons, and they begin the process of bringing these offerings.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 9:17-23

Aharon and his sons finish the offerings, after which Aharon blesses the people with the priestly blessing (Rashi). Moshe and Aharon then bless the people that the Divine presence will rest upon them (Rashi).

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 9:24-10:11

A fire comes from heaven and consumes the offerings on the *mizbeach*. The people fall to the ground in awe of God. Nadav and Avihu, two of Aharon's sons, bring an incense offering (*ketoret*) in a pan, which they had not been commanded to do. A fire descends from God, killing them instantly. Aharon is silent. Moshe asks two of their cousins to remove the bodies. Moshe tells Aharon and his two surviving sons, Elazar and Itamar, not to display any mourning in public. God says to Aharon that no one is allowed to perform the service in the *Mishkan* when drunk.

Point to Consider: *What reward did Aharon receive for his silence? (see Rashi to 10:3)*

4TH ALIYA (REVI'1) – 10:12-15

Moshe tells Aharon and his sons to eat the remaining parts of a special meal offering (*mincha*) that they themselves had brought that day, as well as parts of the *shelamim* offering which they had also brought.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 10:16-19

Moshe criticises Elazar and Itamar (Aharon's other sons) for burning one of the *chatat* offerings instead of eating parts of it. Aharon defends their actions, based on their status as mourners (Rashi). Moshe accepts Aharon's justification.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 11:1-32

God teaches Moshe and Aharon some of the laws of *kashrut*. Only an animal with completely split hooves and which chews the cud is kosher. Therefore, animals like the camel and pig, which have only one of these characteristics, are forbidden. Fish are only kosher if they have both fins and scales. The Torah lists forbidden birds by name. Flying insects are also prohibited food, with limited exceptions (that are today difficult to identify). Kosher animals which die without proper slaughter (*shechitah*), as well as dead non-kosher animals, transmit ritual impurity (*tumah*) to one who touches them.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'1) – 11:33-47

The Torah lists some basic laws of how certain utensils can become impure (*tameh*) and how they need to be treated thereafter. All creeping insects are forbidden to eat. Keeping these laws allows a person to become sanctified and holy.

HAFTARAH (II SHMUEL 6:1-7:17)

This reading relates the journey of the ark to Jerusalem, led by King David. Tragedy strikes on this journey, when Uzzah, the son of Avinadav, dies trying to stop the ark falling. Upon its eventual arrival in Jerusalem, David dances joyfully in public and is criticised by his wife Michal, the daughter of Shaul (Saul). Natan the prophet tells David that his line of kingship will last forever and that his son Shlomo (Solomon) will build the Temple.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

BETWEEN HOPE AND HUMANITY

This is an abridged version of Rabbi Sacks' 2019 Covenant & Conversation essay. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

It should have been the great day of celebration. The Tabernacle was complete. For seven days Moses had performed the inauguration. Now, the eighth day, the first of Nisan, had arrived. The Priests, led by Aaron, were ready to begin their service.

It was then that tragedy occurred. Two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, brought "strange fire, which [God] had not commanded them." Fire "came forth from the Lord" and they died. What follows are two exchanges between Moses and Aaron, revealing their responses to tragedy.

The first is a moment of attempted consolation. Moses says to Aaron:

"This is what the Lord spoke of when He said, 'Among those who are near to Me I will show Myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured.'" Aaron remained silent (Vayikra 10:3).

According to Rashi (1040-1105), Moses meant: "Now I see that they were greater than you and me." The holier the person, the more God demands of them. Moses was trying to give meaning to the tragedy, to tell his brother that Nadav and Avihu did not die because they were evil but because they were holy. Yet despite Moses' words, "Aaron remained silent." His grief

was too deep for speech.

The second exchange concerns the service of the day. Moses discovers that Aaron and his remaining sons burned the sin offering instead of eating it, as prescribed, and he is angry:

"When Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering and found that it had been burned up, he was angry with Elazar and Itamar, Aaron's remaining sons, and asked, 'Why didn't you eat the sin offering in the Sanctuary area? ... it was given to you to take away the guilt of the community by making atonement for them before the Lord...' Aaron replied to Moses, 'Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the Lord have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?' When Moses heard this, he approved" (ibid. 10:16–20).

Here Moses speaks for duty and continuity. Aaron answers from the depths of his humanity. Perhaps he is saying: I know the law forbids a High Priest to mourn like an ordinary person. I accept that. But had I acted today as if nothing had happened, would that not have suggested that service of God requires the denial of human feeling? This

time Moses is silent. Aaron is right.

In this exchange, a vital balance is born. Aaron has the courage to grieve without consolation. Moses has the courage to carry on despite grief. Together they model a tension that will come to define the Jewish people.

Jews are a people who have known suffering. Like Aaron, they did not allow grief to be dulled or denied. Yet like Moses, they found the strength to continue. That balance was tested after the Holocaust. We may say that the victims were innocent and holy, that they died *al kiddush Hashem*. Yet after every explanation has been given, "Aaron remained silent." Grief remains.

However, like Moses, the Jewish people went on. Three years after standing face to face with the Angel of Death, they established the State of Israel.

Faith does not shield us from tragedy. It gives us the strength to mourn — and then, despite everything, to carry on.





FACES OF TORAH: THE COMMENTATORS' STORIES

INTRODUCTION

BY: **SHIRA JACKSON**

US Education

Open a *Chumash*, and you are stepping into a journey that has been walked for centuries. The text is the same one our ancestors held, but the way we read it – the questions we ask, the meanings we uncover – has been shaped by generations of guides.

Those small lines of commentary – sometimes a single word, sometimes a paragraph – are the way Jews have learned Torah for thousands of years. They are the voices that sit beside us at the table, nudging, questioning, explaining, arguing, comforting. They remind us that Torah was never meant to be read in silence, it was meant to be learned in conversation.

This series is an invitation to meet some of the people behind those voices. We quote them constantly – Rashi, Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, the Ohr HaChaim, the Malbim – but who were they? Where did they live? What was happening in their world? Why does each of them hear something slightly different in the same verse? Their lives were separated by geography, language, culture and history, and each of those worlds left its imprint on the way they learned. To understand their commentary is to understand the lens through which they saw the Torah.

That is the heart of *parshanut*, exegesis: the meeting point

between an eternal text and human existence. Rashi, living in medieval France, wanted every Jew – child or adult – to understand the Torah's plain meaning, so he blended *peshat*, the literal meaning, with *midrash*, a deeper explanation, in a way that feels almost effortless. Ibn Ezra, the wandering Spanish poet, was obsessed with language and grammar; he hears nuances in Hebrew that most of us miss entirely. Ramban, writing in the shadow of exile and persecution, reads the Torah with layers of *peshat*, *midrash* and mysticism intertwined. Sforno, a Renaissance thinker and physician, brings a moral clarity shaped by the intellectual world around him.

None of them are simply "explaining the text". They are listening to it through the filter of their own lives. A commentator who has known displacement will notice every promise of homecoming. A grammarian will be drawn to a strange verb form. A mystic will sense a hidden pattern.

Each week in this series, we'll explore a comment from one commentator on the *parasha*,

and then step back and ask: Why this? Why did this verse resonate for them? What life experience shaped their reading? When we do that, the commentators stop being names in the margin and become real people – teachers whose lives were shaped by Torah, and whose Torah was shaped by life.

Torah is not static, and it is meant to speak to each of us, in each generation, in a way that makes sense of our own experiences. We read the same stories each year, but it never feels repetitive; we ourselves have changed over the course of that year, and the story we thought we knew well may resonate in a different way. The commentators model how to do that. They show us that bringing our questions, our fears and our hopes to the text is not a modern invention – it is the Jewish way of learning.

The hope is that, as we meet these masters of *parshanut*, we also learn to read the Torah with the same courage and curiosity they brought to it. The purpose is not only to understand *their* voices, but to awaken our own.





KOSHER, GLATT AND CHALAK BEIT YOSEF: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

BY: **RABBI SHAUL KHALILI**

KLBD Rabbinical representative and Senior *Menaker* for the London Board of Shechita

Many people know what kosher meat is – meat prepared according to Jewish dietary laws. But within the world of kosher meat, there are further layers of certification and stringency that can be confusing, even to those who regularly shop at kosher butchers or eat at kosher restaurants. Terms like *glatt* and *chalak Beit Yosef* often appear on packaging or menus, but what do they actually mean? Are they marketing terms – or something more meaningful?

To understand this, let's start with the basics.

Kosher meat, at its core, comes from an animal that is permissible according to the Torah (like a cow, sheep, goat or deer), and that has been slaughtered through *shechita* – a precise, humane method carried out by a trained *shochet* (ritual slaughterer). After slaughter, the internal organs, especially the lungs, are inspected to ensure the animal was healthy and free of significant defects, which could render it *treifah* (not-kosher).

This is where the term ***glatt*** comes in.

Glatt is a Yiddish word meaning "smooth." In the kosher context, it refers specifically to the lungs of the animal. If these are found to be completely smooth – with no adhesions or scars – the meat is considered *glatt kosher*. Tiny imperfections might be considered kosher, and this part of the process is carried out by a trained *Bodek*

(inspector) who rules on the status of the animal, depending on inspection. This is a higher standard, followed primarily by Jews of Ashkenazic (Eastern European) background who want to be especially strict.

However, not all adhesions disqualify the animal. According to traditional *halacha* (Jewish law), certain minor adhesions are permissible if they can be removed and the lung is otherwise intact. Meat from such animals is still kosher – but it is not *glatt*. Historically, this fact was very important, especially in smaller communities, where declaring a Jewish-owned animal not-kosher meant a significant financial loss.

Chalak Beit Yosef is slightly different than *glatt*: The word *chalak* is the Hebrew equivalent of *glatt* – it also means "smooth." *Beit Yosef* refers to Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575), the halachic authority best known as the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the definitive code of Jewish law. Sephardic tradition follows the stricter opinion of Rabbi Karo, who ruled that **any adhesion on the lung disqualifies the animal** – even those approved at a *glatt* level. In other words, for meat to be kosher according to Sephardic standards, it must meet the most stringent level of lung inspection. Therefore, meat which is labelled *chalak Beit Yosef* is also *glatt* kosher – but to the stricter Sephardic standard.

“ Understanding the distinctions between kosher, *glatt* and *chalak Beit Yosef* helps us appreciate that *kashrut* is not one-size-fits-all.

Why does this matter? For some, these labels are a matter of personal religious commitment or community standard. Sephardic Jews, for example, often insist on *chalak Beit Yosef* meat, while Ashkenazim normally opt for the *glatt*-kosher standard. In recent years, many *kashrut*-certifying agencies have adopted *chalak Beit Yosef* or *glatt* as a universal standard to appeal to a broader population. All KLBD restaurants use *glatt*-kosher meat as standard policy.

For others, especially those less familiar with these nuances, it is easy to mistake these terms as simple indicators of quality. While *glatt* and *chalak* meat only come from healthy animals, their meaning is halachic.

Understanding the distinctions between kosher, *glatt* and *chalak Beit Yosef* helps us appreciate that *kashrut* is not one-size-fits-all. It reflects centuries of legal reasoning, regional customs and personal commitment. Behind each label is a careful effort to uphold not only a diet – but a discipline rooted in *emunah* (faith), precision and respect for *mesorah* (tradition).



ESCAPING AUSCHWITZ

BY: **RICHARD VERBER**

Director of Communications, US

In April 1941, a single unnamed Polish political prisoner slipped out of Auschwitz and vanished into the surrounding countryside. His name was never recorded, and his fate remains unknown, but his escape became a significant moment in the camp's history.

When the SS discovered he was gone, the Commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss, ordered ten men from the same block to be starved to death in the basement of Block 11. Block 11 was used as a prison and an execution site. You might have seen the starvation and standing cells in the basement if you have visited.

This was the first time starvation was used as a formal execution method in Auschwitz, and it set a precedent for collective punishment that would define the camp's atmosphere of terror.

As Auschwitz expanded, escape attempts continued, though the odds were overwhelmingly against the prisoners. Historians estimate that across the entire Auschwitz complex – Auschwitz I, Birkenau, Monowitz and the many sub-camps, some 900 prisoners attempted to flee. Of these, fewer than 200 succeeded. The number is an estimate because not all escapes were recorded and the Nazis destroyed much of their documentation in 1944-1945 to hide what had happened there.

Many prisoners escaped not from the camps but from worksites where they were taken each day. Most of the successful escapees were Polish political prisoners and many were supported by local Polish civilians and the Polish underground.

Birkenau, established in 1941 and later the epicentre of the genocide, was much harder to escape from. Constructed originally as a camp to hold 125,000 prisoners of war, when it was opened in March 1942 it became both an extension of Auschwitz I to hold slave labourers and then the main extermination site for Europe's Jews.

It was vast, isolated and encircled by electrified barbed wire. A large 'no-man's zone' was established around the camp and it was surrounded by two rivers on a flood plain, making escape close to impossible.

The population was overwhelmingly Jewish, and most arrivals were murdered within hours or days. Only a few dozen escape attempts from Birkenau are documented and most ended in failure.

But a few were successful and changed the course of history. In April 1944, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler hid for 3 nights in part of Birkenau and then managed to escape, eventually reaching Slovakia. Their report, later known

“ To escape only for my own sake would be ridiculous because I had the information, in considerable detail, that the Hungarian Jews were going to be murdered *en masse* in a very short time.” — Rudolf Vrba

as the Vrba-Wetzler Report, provided one of the first detailed accounts of the extermination process, including the layout of the gas chambers and crematoria. It contributed to international pressure that helped halt the deportation of Hungarian Jews later that year.

When asked decades later why he wanted to escape, Vrba said: “To escape only for my own sake would be ridiculous because I had the information, in considerable detail, that the Hungarian Jews were going to be murdered *en masse* in a very short time.”

His act of defiance brought truth to the outside world. Eighty-five years after that first April escape, remembering these stories on Yom Hashoah (beginning this Monday night) honours not only those who fled, but also those who never had the chance.

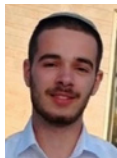
THE TRIBE WEEKLY



PARASHAT SHEMINI

10-11 APRIL | 24 NISAN

I CAN DO THIS!



BY: **TAL HARRIS**

Tribe gap year student

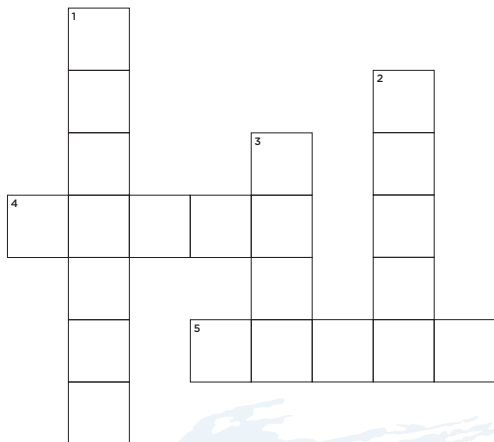
The first part of *Parashat Shemini* deals with the completion of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), with Aharon and his sons being made *Kohanim* (priests) to serve there. In *Vayikra* 9:7, Moshe (Moses), who had prepared Aharon and his sons to be *Kohanim* for seven days, tells Aharon, "Approach the Altar and offer up your sin-offering and your ascent-offering, atoning for yourself and for the people, and offer up the people's sacrifice, atoning for them, as

God has commanded." Rashi (1040-1105) explains that Aharon was embarrassed and afraid to approach the altar, and therefore Moshe asked him "Why are you embarrassed? You were chosen for this role!" Rashi portrays Moshe as stunned at Aharon's hesitation, and understandably so. Even after seven days of preparation, could Aharon not bring himself to approach the Altar and make these two offerings? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt'l explains that Aharon was experiencing *Imposter Syndrome*, which is a feeling of being overwhelmed by being in a position that one feels that they do not deserve to be in, and one may feel that they are unable to carry out the roles that the position

requires. Despite initially feeling this way, after being prompted, Aharon steps up and carries out his relevant duties, as described in the rest of chapter 9.

This episode is very much relatable to what we all feel sometimes. As we progress through life, we may increasingly find ourselves in unfamiliar situations, thinking: how on earth did I get here? Or, is this the right place for me? This feeling is entirely normal, and we can learn from Aharon that despite this feeling of *Imposter Syndrome*, even if we require some encouragement, we should embrace every challenge, because God only puts us in situations in which He knows we can succeed.

Parasha Crossword



Down:

1. What were Aharon and his sons appointed as?
2. Who was Aharon's brother?
3. In which chapter of Vayikra does this story take place?

Across:

4. Which rabbinic commentator said that Aharon was hesitant?
5. How many days did Moshe prepare Aharon?





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

SHEMINI: BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT!

THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** DISCUSSES HOW TO KEEP **KOSHER** - BUT NOT JUST AT **SHUL** OR AT HOME! CHECK OUT WHAT HAPPENED WHEN **BUCKINGHAM PALACE** WENT **KOSHER**...



28th February 1997
Queen Elizabeth II hosted Israeli President Weizman for a state banquet at Buckingham Palace. Not your average Friday night dinner...



The tables were dazzling! Six glasses at every plate, each napkin exactly 17 inches apart! Every detail carefully inspected by the **Queen** herself!

BUT THIS STATE BANQUET HAD A DIFFERENCE - MANY OF THE GUESTS ATE **KOSHER**! COULD THE ROYAL KITCHEN MANAGE IT? ENTER **KASHRUT** SUPERHERO **RABBI JEREMY CONWAY** FROM **KLBD**.



THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD WAS INCREDIBLY HELPFUL. THEY REALLY WANTED EVERYONE TO FEEL COMFORTABLE KEEPING **KOSHER** AND WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ACCOMMODATE **KOSHER** NEEDS.



THE **BUTLER OF SILVER PANTRY** SHOWED US GOLD, SILVER AND CHINA DISHES. WE CHOSE THE GOLD PLATES AND BOWLS AS WE COULD EASILY **KOSHER** THEM.



THE **KOSHER** MENU WAS SORTED BUT FINDING A **KOSHER** WINE FIT FOR A **QUEEN** WAS TURNING OUT TO BE A RIGHT ROYAL HEADACHE!



After searching across Europe, the answer was right under their noses! A fine **kosher** wine already in the Palace cellar! A gift from the **Israeli Embassy** years before... just waiting for the right moment.



L'CHAIM!



IT WAS INSPIRING TO SEE HOW, WHEN WE ARE PROUD OF OUR TRADITIONS, OTHERS HONOUR THEM TOO!



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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.