EMOR אֱמֹר

DEVASH

Because learning Torah is sweet

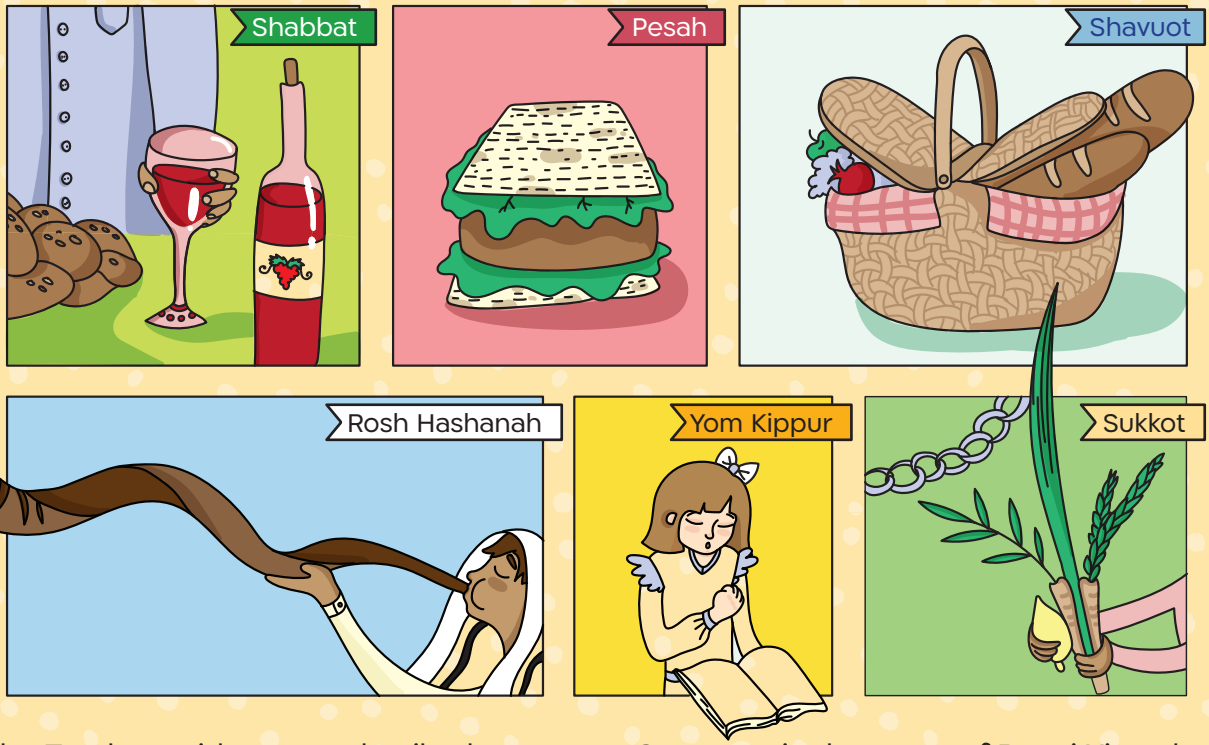
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מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- כֹּהֲנִים (kohanim, priests) have a special status of קְדֻשָּׁה (kedushah, holiness). They need to be careful to stay טָהוֹר (tahor, pure) in order to work in the Mishkan and to eat תְּרוּמָה (terumah), which are food gifts for kohanim.
- Kohanim can't come in contact with dead bodies, other than their immediate relatives.
- Certain animals can't be sacrificed in the Mishkan based on the physical shape they are in. There are certain physical characteristics which prevent kohanim from performing the service in the Mishkan.
- Kedushah also exists in time. The Torah describes מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ (mikra'ei kodesh, holy occasions).



- The Torah provides more details about the Mishkan: how to light the מְנוֹרָה (menorah) and how to prepare the bread for the שֻׁלְחָן (shulhan, table).
- Someone in the camp of Benei Yisrael curses God! His punishment is death.

מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Midrashim are ideas or stories that explain the Torah. They often come from listening very carefully to what the Torah says and how it says it. Here, we will look for what clues this midrash sees in the Torah's words, and try to understand its messages.

Vayikra 22:27

When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall stay seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be acceptable as a sacrifice to God.

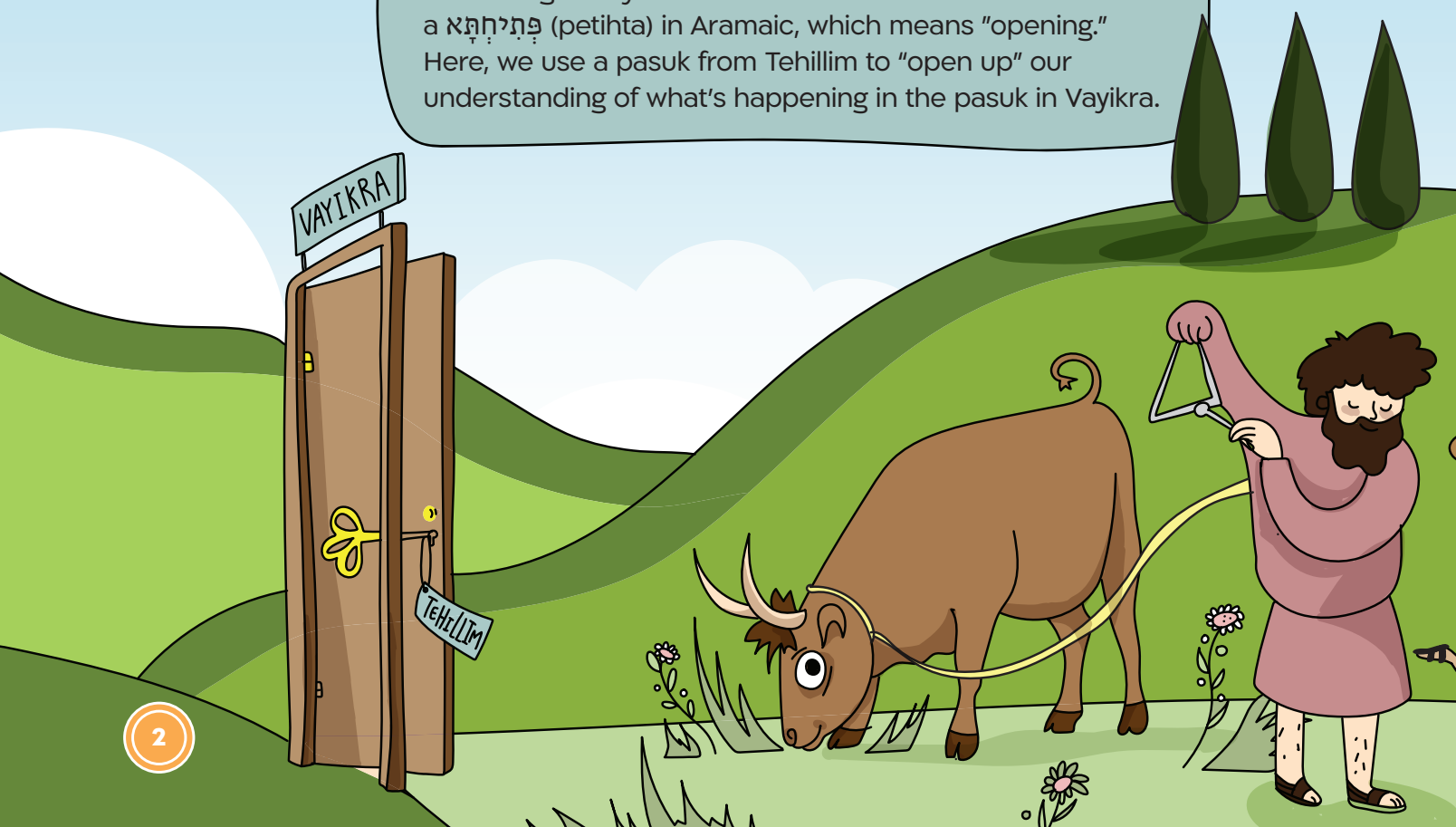
ויקרא כב:כז

שׁוֹר אוֹ־כֶשֶׂב אוֹ־עֵז כִּי יִוָּלֵד
וְהָיָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תַּחַת אִמּוֹ
וּמִיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי וָהָלְאָה יֵרָצֶה
לְקָרְבַּן אִשֵּׁה לַה':

What's special about the types of animals that could be offered as קָרְבָּנוֹת (korbanot, sacrifices)?

Here's a midrash that focuses on the significance of one of these animals: the שׁוֹר (shor, bull, a grown male cow). The midrash uses a pasuk from Sefer Tehillim, to explain what the shor represented:

What does a pasuk from Tehillim have to do with something in Vayikra!? This method of midrash is called a פְּתִיחְתָּא (petihta) in Aramaic, which means "opening." Here, we use a pasuk from Tehillim to "open up" our understanding of what's happening in the pasuk in Vayikra.



Tehillim 27:6

Now I hold my head high over my enemies around me;

I sacrifice in God's tent with shouts of joy, singing to God.

תהלים כז:ו

וְעַתָּה יָרוּם רֹאשִׁי עַל אֹיְבַי סְבִיבוֹתַי

וְאֶזְבְּחָה בְאָהֳלוֹ זִבְחֵי תְרוּעָה
אָשִׁירָה וַאֲזַמְּרָה לַה':

This midrash ties it all together:

Tanhuma Emor 16

When Israel committed the sin of the golden calf, the nations of the world said, 'There will be no recovery for them, and God will never return to them.'

When Israel learned that they could sacrifice a shor in the Mishkan, they held their heads high, as it says (in Tehillim), **"Now I hold my head high."**

They held their heads up and said, 'Now we know that the Holy One has forgiven us,' as it says (in Tehillim), **"I will sacrifice in God's tent with shouts of joy..."**

תנחומא אמר טז

כֵּיוָן שֶׁעָשׂוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹתוֹ מַעֲשֶׂה,
הָיוּ אֻמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם אוֹמְרִין, אֵין לָהֶם
תְּקוּמָה וְאֵינוֹ חוֹזֵר עֲלֵיהֶם לְעוֹלָם.

כֵּיוָן שֶׁשָּׁמְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל
שֶׁמַּקְרִיבוּ קָרְבַּן שׁוֹר,
רָמָה רֹאשָׁם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
"וְעַתָּה יָרוּם רֹאשִׁי."

וְהָיוּ מְהַלְּכִין בַּהֲרָמַת רֹאשׁ וְאוֹמְרִין,
עַכְשָׁו אָנוּ יוֹדְעִין שֶׁנִּתְרַצָּה לָנוּ
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
"וְאֶזְבְּחָה בְאָהֳלוֹ זִבְחֵי תְרוּעָה..."

- According to this midrash, Benei Yisrael knew they had been forgiven for the sin of the golden calf when they learned they could sacrifice cows. How did they know?
- What do you think this midrash is saying about forgiveness? After we make mistakes, how can we know that we have been forgiven? How do you let other people know that you have forgiven them?



פֵּרוּשִׁנוּת • Commentary

Vayikra 23:2-3

These are God's moadim (holidays), which you shall proclaim as holy occasions, these are My moadim.

For six days you shall work and on the seventh day shall be a Shabbat of complete rest, a sacred occasion. You shall do no melakhah (productive work). It shall be Shabbat for God wherever you are.

ויקרא כג:ב-ג

מוֹעֲדֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם
מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ
אֵלֶּה הֵם מוֹעֲדָי:

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ
כָּל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ
שַׁבָּת הִוא לַה' בְּכֹל מוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם:

Our פַּרְשָׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) wonder: **Why is Shabbat included here in the list of the moadim?**

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Why is Shabbat here among the moadim?

To teach us that if you violate the moadim, it's as if you violated Shabbat,

and if you keep the moadim, it's as if you kept Shabbat.

רש"י

מָה עִנְיַן שַׁבָּת אֵצֶל מוֹעֲדוֹת?

לְלַמֶּדְךָ שֶׁכָּל הַמְחַלֵּל אֶת הַמּוֹעֲדוֹת מַעֲלִין
עָלָיו כְּאִלּוּ חִלֵּל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּתוֹת,

וְכָל הַמְקַיֵּם אֶת הַמּוֹעֲדוֹת מַעֲלִין עָלָיו כְּאִלּוּ
קִיֵּם אֶת הַשַּׁבָּתוֹת.



Here's a surprising reading: Maybe the pasuk that seems to be about Shabbat, isn't actually about Shabbat!

ספר חנוכת התורה, פרשת אמור, סי' קכא

וְיֵשׁ לְפָרֵשׁ עַל דֶּרֶךְ רֶמֶז דְּהִנֵּה הַמִּסְפָּר שֶׁל הַיָּמִים טוֹבִים הֵם שִׁשָּׁה יָמִים: ב' שֶׁל פֶּסַח, וְא' שֶׁל שָׁבוּעוֹת, וְא' שֶׁל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, וב' שֶׁל סֻכּוֹת. וְהִנֵּה בְּכָל יוֹם טוֹב מֻתָּר לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכָה שֶׁל צֹרֶךְ אֹכֶל נֶפֶשׁ...

אֲבָל "וּבְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי" דְּהַיְנוּ יוֹם כִּפּוּר– "שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן הוּא," כָּל מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה, אֲפִלּוּ צֹרֶךְ אֹכֶל נֶפֶשׁ אָסוּר.

Which Heschel?

You may have heard of R. Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972), who was an important Jewish philosopher and activist. He grew up in Europe and escaped to America during World War II. His great-great grandfather was R. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apta. HIS great-great grandfather was this R. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Krakow, participating in our Parshanut conversation.



R. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Krakow (Poland, 400 years ago)

One might say that the Torah is hinting at something. The number of holy days listed in the chapter is six: the first and last days of Pesah, one day of Shavuot, one day of Rosh Hashanah, and the first and last days of Sukkot. On these six days, we are allowed to cook and prepare food... (this is what "six days you shall work" means in our verse)

"The seventh day" in our verse refers to the seventh holy day, Yom Kippur—that is the "Shabbat of complete rest," when no melakhah is allowed at all (like on the real Shabbat), not even cooking.

- R. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel calls his approach a "hint." Commentators sometimes say that when they think there could be many meanings that are all layered on top of each other. Could the Torah be saying one thing but also hinting to something else at the same time?
- Why do both parshanim seem to think that Shabbat shouldn't be counted as one of the moadim? How would you explain the biggest differences between Shabbat and the moadim?



Content and editing by Tali Adler, Anna Leah Berstein Simpson, Yitzhak Bronstein, Chana Kupetz, Shoshie Lockshin, Jeremy Tabick, Ethan Tucker, and Effy Unterman. Design by Jen Klor and Studio Dov. Illustration by Elad Lifshitz and Vered Tzin.



דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

How to play:

Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!

For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.



Debate: What makes a day holy is what people do to make it special.

Agree!



- If you didn't do anything to make Shabbat different, Saturday would feel just like any other day of the week. That's what Kiddush is all about—it's us marking the day as special!
- The dates for the מוֹעֲדִים (moadim, holidays) used to be determined by the בֵּית דִּין (beit din, court). These days became holy not by themselves but because of people's actions.

Disagree!

- Shabbat has holiness whether or not you light candles, make Kiddush, and eat a Shabbat meal. When the sun sets on Friday, it's Shabbat!
- We quote this pasuk in Kiddush on Friday night: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ (and God blessed the seventh day and made it holy). So it seems God is making it holy, not you!



דֶּגֶשׁ שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Vayikra 23:15

You shall count, from the day after the sabbath, from the day you bring the omer elevation offering, seven full weeks. They must be complete.

ויקרא כג:טו

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת
מִיּוֹם הֲבִיאֲכֶם אֶת־עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה
שֶׁבַע שַׁבָּתוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה:



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לִסְפֹּר (שֹׁרֶשׁ ס.פ.ר)

- To count (lispor)

Find the Word!

Some things are impossible to count because there are so many of them. What does God ask Avraham to count in Bereishit 15:5? How many times does this שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) appear in the pasuk?



= סֵפֶר
Book (sefer)

= מִסְפָּרַיִם
Scissors (misparayim)

בֵּית סֵפֶר
(beit sefer)

סִפְרִיָּה
(sifriyyah)

= לְהִסְתַּפֵּר
To get a haircut (lehistaper)

= סוֹפֵר סְתָ"ם
Someone who writes **S**ifrei Torah, **T**efillin, and **M**ezuzot (sofer stam)







הֲלָכָה • Halakhah

The time period we're in right now, between Pesah and Shavuot, is known as **the עֹמֶר (omer)**.

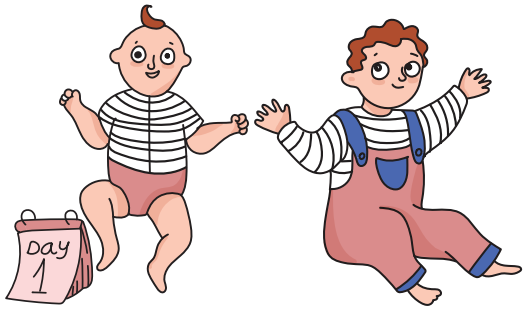
Our parashah explains that the omer was a grain sacrifice that was offered on Pesah in the Mishkan. After this sacrifice, people would count seven full weeks until Shavuot (Vayikra 23:15).

While there's no more omer sacrifice, we still have a mitzvah of **סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר (sefirat ha-omer, counting the omer)**.

There's a special בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) to recite before counting:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר.

Blessed are you, God our Lord, Ruler of the world, who made us holy with the mitzvot and commanded us about counting the omer.



- When counting, the Shulhan Arukh says to first mention the day of the omer, and then the weeks and days gone by. For example: "today is 34 days, which is 4 weeks and 6 days of the omer" (Orah Hayyim 489:1). You can count in any language, but it's nice to count in Hebrew if possible.
- It's customary to only recite the berakhah at night. If you forget sefirat ha-omer at night, you can count during the day without a berakhah.
- There's a debate about whether sefirat ha-omer is one big mitzvah or 49 separate mitzvot. Because of the opinion that it's one big mitzvah, the common practice is that people only say the berakhah if they have counted every single day. If you miss an entire day, you continue to count for the rest of the omer, but without a berakhah.
- Similarly, if you become bar/bat mitzvah in the middle of the omer, it's possible that you shouldn't continue counting with a berakhah, even if you counted with a berakhah every day before. That's because you were a kid for part of the omer, and then you became an adult. Some people think your adult self can't finish doing a mitzvah your kid self started (Shut Yabi'a Omer 3:27-28). But some people think your adult self can continue where your kid self left off (Arokh Hashulhan Orah Hayyim 489:15). Try asking your rabbis or teachers what they think!



שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. **The answers to the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.**

aliyot:

1) Vayikra 21:1 to 21:15
2) 21:16 to 22:16
3) 22:17 to 22:33
4) 23:1 to 23:22
5) 23:23 to 23:32
6) 23:33 to 23:44
7) 24:1 to 24:23

Good luck!

1. A כֹּהֵן (kohen, priest) is only allowed to be involved in the burial of very close relatives. Which ones does the Torah mention?

2. What is the word used to describe someone who is not a kohen?

3. What is the earliest day of its life that a lamb can be offered as a קָרְבָּן (korban, sacrifice)?

4. After seven weeks of counting, how many animals are brought as sacrifices on the 50th day?

5. What instructions does the Torah give for what to do, and not do, on יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים (Yom Ha-Kippurim)?

6. Why does the Torah say we should live in סֻכּוֹת (sukkot) for a week each year?

7. How many חַלּוֹת (hallot, loaves of bread) had to be baked each week in the Mishkan?

8. According to the Torah, whom can the כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל (kohen gadol, High Priest) help bury?



9. Which of the words that we use today for the four species we wave on Sukkot—לוּלָב (lulav), אֶתְרוֹג (etrog), הָדָס (hadas), and עֲרָבָה (aravah)—does the Torah use to describe them?

10. Which days are referred to as a שַׁבָּתוֹן (shabbaton) in our parashah? What's called שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן (shabbat shabbaton)? What's called מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ (mikra kodesh, holy occasion)?

* Look for the answers on page 12!



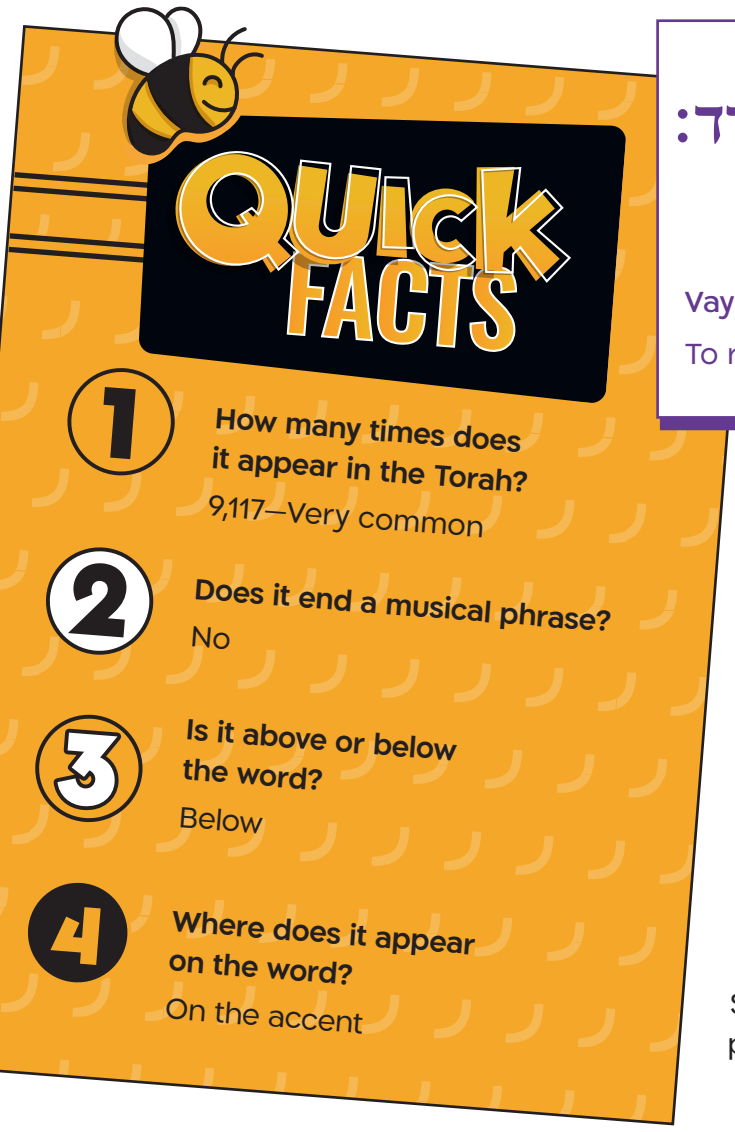
טַעֲמֵי הַמִּקְרָא • Torah Trop

Merkha מֵרְכָא

Merkha is a very common note. It has lots of uses and can come before a bunch of notes.

But mostly, a merkha comes before a tip'ha or a sof pasuk.

Merkha is always connected to the word that follows, which can help you figure out the meaning of the sentence. Here's a great example from our parashah.



ויקרא כד:ב

לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד׃

Vayikra 24:2

To regularly set up a lamp

לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד׃

To set up a lamp that burns regularly

The version on the **left** is what actually appears in our parashah. The merkha connects the word לְהַעֲלֹת (le-ha'alot, to set up) with the word נֵר (ner, lamp). The act is setting up a lamp, and that action needs to be done regularly, like once or twice a day.

The version on the **right** would mean something different. Here, the merkha would connect the word ner to the word תָּמִיד (tamid, regularly). That would mean the act is setting something up **once**, and the thing being set up is a lamp that burns regularly on its own.

So now you know that the notes are also like punctuation!



בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

In our parashah there's a list of physical characteristics that might occur in a person's body. These are called מוּמִים (mumim). If a כֹּהֵן (kohen, priest) had one of these, he would not be allowed to perform the עֲבוֹדָה (avodah, service) in the Mishkan, and later in history, the Beit Ha-Mikdash (Vayikra 21:16-23).

800 years ago, Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg (Maharam) made an important point about mumim: They might have prevented a kohen from performing the avodah in the Mishkan, but they do not disqualify a person from becoming a שְׁלִיחַ צִבּוּר (shaliah tzibbur, prayer leader).

פְּשִׁיטָא דְּרָאוּי וְרָאוּי הוּא, וְאַדְרַבָּה מִצְוָה מִן הַמֻּבְחָר.

דְּמָלֵךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים חָפֵץ לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בִּכְלִים שְׁבוּרִים, וְלֹא כְּדֶרֶךְ שָׂרִים בָּשָׂר וָדָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (תְּהִלִּים נא:יט) "לֵב נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְכֶּה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְזֶה."

דְּאֵין נִפְסָל בְּמוּמִין אֶלָּא כֹּהֲנִים.

It is obvious that this person is more than fitting to be a shaliah tzibbur. The mitzvah is even better when done by this person.

God wants us to reach out from a place of brokenness (unlike many human ministers). As it says (Tehillim 51:19): "A heart that is broken and crushed—God, You will not despise."

Mumim are only a disqualification for kohanim.

Maharam says that physical difference is an advantage in prayer. If you can find something within you that's broken, that might be the best place to pray from!

- Throughout Sefer Vayikra, we've seen how aspects of the avodah in the Mishkan are continued in our בֵּית כְּנֶסֶת (beit knesset, synagogue/shul) practices. Why do you think the rules about mumim are limited to kohanim in the Mishkan? Does this help you better understand what the Mishkan was, or what it represented?
- Why might uniqueness and brokenness be valuable qualities when praying to God? Are these qualities that all human beings can relate to?





מָה זֶּה • What's Going On Here?

Our parashah explains that we celebrate the holiday of Sukkot in order to remember that God provided sukkot for Benei Yisrael in the wilderness. What exactly were these sukkot? It's an important מַחְלֹקֶת (mahloket, dispute) from the Sifra (Emor, chapter 17)!

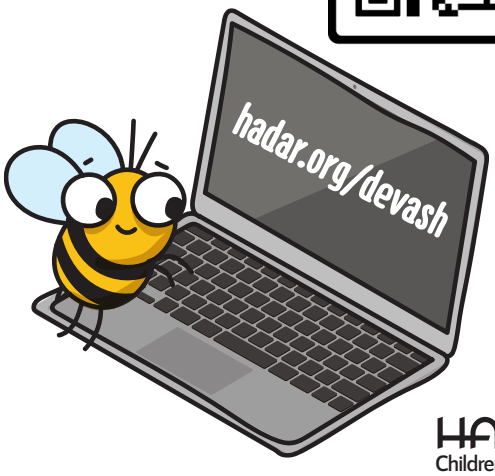
- According to Rabbi Eliezer, we are supposed to remember the actual huts that Benei Yisrael lived in while God led them through the wilderness.
- According to Rabbi Akiva, the "sukkot" we are supposed to remember are not the tents they lived in, but God's pillar of cloud that surrounded and protected Benei Yisrael in the wilderness (Shemot 13:21-22).

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Parents, kids, brother, unmarried sister (21:2-3); the kohen's wife is not explicitly mentioned, but our Sages thought she was covered by the otherwise extra phrase כִּי אִם־לִשְׁאֵרוֹ הַקָּרֹב אֵלָיו (the relative who is very close to you)
2. זָר (zar, stranger) (22:10,12,13)
3. The eighth day (22:27)
4. 13 (7 lambs + 1 bull + 2 rams as olot + 1 goat as a hattat + 2 lambs as shelamim) (23:18-19)
5. וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם... וְכָל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ (afflict yourself...and do not do any melakhah/work) (23:27-28)
6. So that later generations will understand that God housed Benei Yisrael in sukkot when they left Egypt (23:42-43)
7. 12 (24:5)
8. No one, not even his parents (21:10-11)! But the Sifra, an early midrash on Sefer Vayikra, says that even though the kohen gadol does not bury any of his **relatives**, if someone needed to be buried and no one else was taking care of it, this is called a מֵת מִצְוָה (met mitzvah), and it's such a big mitzvah to help that even the kohen gadol could do it.
9. Only aravah, in the phrase עַרְבֵי־נָחַל (arvei nahal, 23:40); all the others have totally different names!
10. **Shabbaton:** Three total—יוֹם זִכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה (the day of memory with shofar), the first day of the seventh month (what we know as Rosh Hashanah, 23:24); days one and eight starting from the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the beginning of חַג ה' (the holiday of God, days we know as Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret, 23:39)

Shabbat shabbaton: Two total—Shabbat (23:3); Yom Ha-Kippurim, the tenth day of the seventh month (23:32)
Mikra kodesh: Seven total—Shabbat (23:3); the first and seventh days of חַג הַמַּצּוֹת (the matzah holiday, what we know as Pesah, 23:7-8); the day after seven weeks of counting (what we know as Shavuot, 23:21); the day of memory with shofar (Rosh Hashanah) (23:24); Yom Ha-Kippurim (23:27); days one and eight starting from the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the beginning of חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת (Hag Ha-Sukkot, 23:34-36)

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