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מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah



- Shemini means eighth, and it refers to the day after the seven days of מִלּוּאִים (milluim, inauguration) that we learned about in last week's parashah. It is the first day of the regular routine of using the mishkan.
- Aharon prepares קָרְבָּנוֹת (korbanot, sacrifices), and he and Moshe bless בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Benei Yisrael, the Israelites).
- A fire from God consumes the korbanot! This is a powerful sign of God's presence. Seeing this, all the people sing out and bow down.
- Nadav and Avihu, two of Aharon's sons, bring a "strange fire" before God. They are consumed by fire. When Aharon finds out, he is silent.
- God teaches the rules about which animals are kosher:
  - Land mammals: if they have split hooves and chew their cud
  - Fish: if they have fins and scales
  - Birds: the Torah lists around 20 birds that are **not** kosher, so any bird not on the list is kosher
  - Insects: if they are the kinds of grasshoppers or locusts listed in the parashah



בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

Why do we keep kosher? Here are three different explanations!

1

Vayikra 20:25-26

ויקרא כ:כה-כו

You shall separate animals that are pure from those that are impure, and between pure and impure birds. Don't make your souls detestable through animals or birds or anything alive on the ground which I have separated as impure.

You shall be holy to Me, for I am your holy God, and I have separated you from other nations to be Mine.

וְהִבְדַּלְתֶּם בֵּין הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהֹרָה לַטְּמֵאָה וּבֵין הָעוֹף הַטָּמֵא לַטָּהֹר וְלֹא תְשַׁקְּצוּ אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בַּבְּהֵמָה וּבָעוֹף וּבְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּרְמֹשׂ הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר הִבְדַּלְתִּי לָכֶם לְטַמֵּא:

וִהְיִיתֶם לִי קְדֹשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' וָאַבְדִּל אֶתְכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים לִהְיוֹת לִי:



- Can you see a theme in these pesukim? What sticks out to you?
- How does kashrut keep Jewish people distinct?
- Why is it important to God that the Jewish people make themselves a little different by how they eat? How can this help you serve God?

2

Rambam, The Guide of the Perplexed, III:48 (Spain and Egypt, 850 years ago)

The major reason why the Law is against it (non-kosher food) is its being very dirty and feeding on dirty things.

Rambam thinks that the rules of kashrut protect us from getting sick.

- Can you think of other mitzvot that could protect our well-being in other ways?
- Lots of people eat non-kosher food, and they don't all get sick! But is it possible that being conscious of what you eat because of keeping kosher might help you to make more healthy choices? When could that happen?

Ramban (Spain, 800 years ago)

The reason for certain birds being forbidden is their cruel nature. It is also possible that the reason for certain animals being forbidden is similar, since no animal that chews its cud and has a split hoof is a beast of prey, while the rest all devour others.

רמב"ן על ויקרא יא:יג

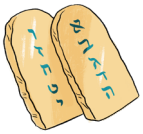
וְהִנֵּה טַעַם הָאִסּוּר בְּעוֹפוֹת,
מִפְּנֵי אַכְזָרִיּוּת תּוֹלְדוֹתָם,
וְהַבְּהֵמוֹת יִתָּכֵן שֶׁיִּהְיוּ כֵּן,
מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֵין בְּבַעֲלֵי הַגֵּרָה
וְהַפַּרְסָה הַשְׁסוּעָה דּוֹרֵס,
וְהַשְׁאָר כֻּלָּם יִטְרוֹפוּ.

Ramban thinks that "you are what you eat." So we don't eat certain animals because we don't agree with their values!

- Why could it be a problem to eat a predator? What impact would that have on a person?
- How can we make ourselves kinder people as we eat?

Learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives





הֲלָכָה • Halakhah

Did you know that some insects are kosher?!

Vayikra 11:21

But these you may eat among all the winged swarming things that walk on fours: all that have, above their feet, jointed legs to leap with on the ground.

ויקרא יא:כא

אַךְ אֶת זֶה תֹּאכְלוּ מִכֹּל
שֶׁרֶץ הָעוֹף הַהֹלֵךְ עַל
אַרְבַּע אֲשֶׁר לוֹ כְרָעַיִם
מִמַּעַל לְרַגְלָיו לְנַתֵּר
בָּהֵן עַל הָאָרֶץ:



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From this pasuk, we know that kosher insects must have four legs plus an additional set of legs used for jumping. Hazal add another two kosher signs for bugs:

Mishnah Hulin 2:7	**משנה חולין ב:ז**
For locusts, all that have four legs, four wings, leaping legs, and wings covering the greater part of its body (are kosher).	וּבַחֲגָבִים, כֹּל שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ אַרְבַּע רַגְלַיִם, וְאַרְבַּע כְּנָפַיִם, וְקַרְסֻלַּיִם, וּכְנָפָיו חוֹפִין אֶת רֻבּוֹ.
R. Yose says it also has to be called "locust."	רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר, וּשְׁמוֹ חָגָב.

The Torah lists some names of insects that would fit into these categories (11:22), but most communities believe we aren't totally sure about how to identify them. It seems they are all some type of locusts, crickets, or grasshoppers.

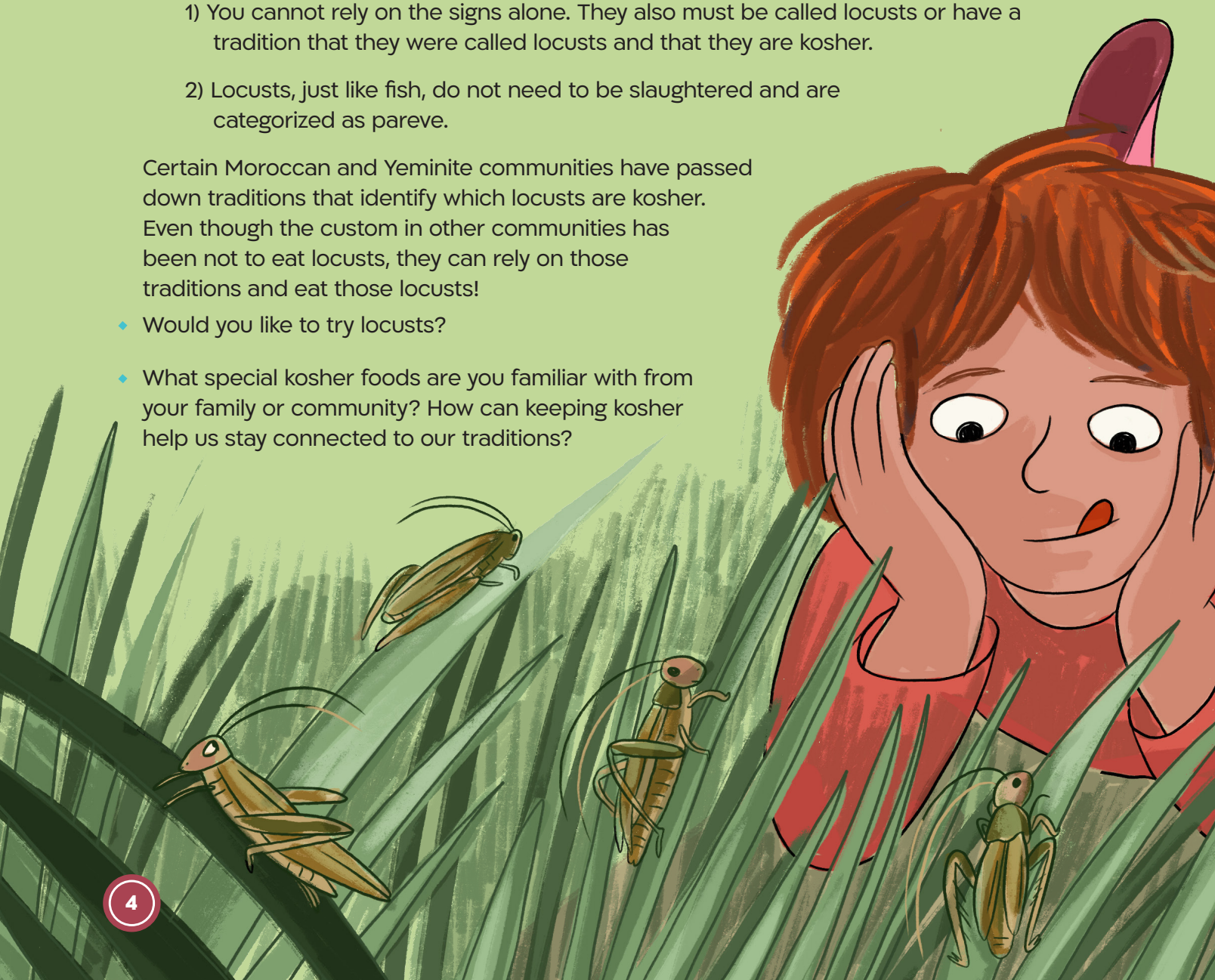
The Shulhan Arukh (Yoreh Deah 85) teaches two halakhot about kosher insects:

1) You cannot rely on the signs alone. They also must be called locusts or have a tradition that they were called locusts and that they are kosher.

2) Locusts, just like fish, do not need to be slaughtered and are categorized as pareve.

Certain Moroccan and Yeminite communities have passed down traditions that identify which locusts are kosher. Even though the custom in other communities has been not to eat locusts, they can rely on those traditions and eat those locusts!

- Would you like to try locusts?
- What special kosher foods are you familiar with from your family or community? How can keeping kosher help us stay connected to our traditions?



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 questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.**

aliyot:
1) Vayikra 9:1 to 9:16
2) 9:17 to 9:23
3) 9:24 to 10:11
4) 10:12 to 10:15
5) 10:16 to 10:20
6) 11:1 to 11:32
7) 11:33 to 11:47

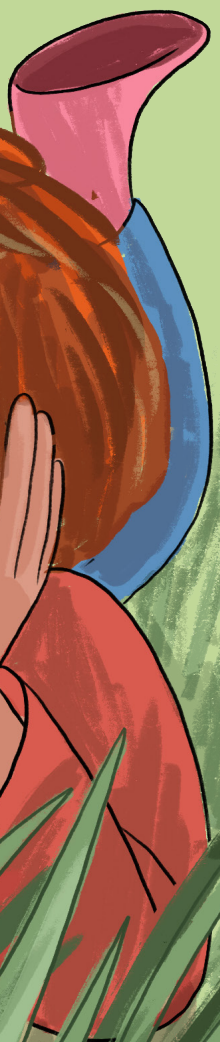
Haftarah for Shabbat Ha-Hodesh: Yehezkel 45:16 to 46:18 for Ashkenazim

Yehezkel 45:18 to 46:15 for Sefardim

Good luck!



1. What letter is larger than the rest?
2. Can you find the name of a מַכָּה (makkah, plague) from Egypt?
3. What rule did God give the כֹּהֲנִים (kohanim, priests) after Nadav and Avihu died?
4. What were the names of Aharon's sons that stayed alive?
5. What didn't Aharon do that Moshe told him to do?
6. If a שֶׁרֶץ (sheretz, creepy crawly creature) dies and falls on your clothing, how long do you stay טָמֵא (tamei, impure)?
7. What type of sheretz can be eaten?
8. Who gets angry in this parashah?
9. How many types of birds are listed in our parashah as forbidden to eat?
10. **From the haftarah:** On what dates does God say to take a cow for a חַטָּאת (hattat) to purify the Beit HaMikdash?





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* Look for the answers on page 7!

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הַפְטָרָה • Haftarah



This Shabbat, the final Shabbat of the month of Adar, is called Shabbat Ha-Hodesh.

We read a maftir that opens with the word הַחֹדֶשׁ (ha-hodesh, this month). It's talking about the month that's coming up, Nisan, and the message is: Get your קָרְבָּן פֶּסַח (korban pesah, pesah sacrifice) ready! Pesah is soon!

The maftir talks about the korban pesah that Benei Yisrael offered on the night before they left slavery, sometimes called פֶּסַח מִצְרַיִם (pesah Mitzrayim, Passover in Egypt). It also talks about the korban pesah that was offered in later years, sometimes called פֶּסַח דּוֹרוֹת (pesah dorot, Passover for generations).

- In the maftir, can you tell which rules about the korban pesah apply just to pesah Mitzrayim, and which apply to both pesah mitzrayim and pesah dorot?

One big difference between pesah Mitzrayim and pesah dorot is the requirement to smear the blood of the sacrifice on the doorposts. This was only in Mitzrayim, on the night of the Exodus.

But in our haftarah, blood smearing comes up again! The נָבִיא (navi, prophet) Yehezkel talks about a time in the future when the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ (Beit HaMikdash, Holy Temple) will be rebuilt, and the כֹּהֲנִים (kohanim, priests) will smear blood to prepare the Temple for Pesah:

יחזקאל מה:יח-יט

כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹקִים בָּרִאשׁוֹן
בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ תִּקַּח פַּר בֶּן בָּקָר
תָּמִים וְחִטֵּאתָ אֶת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ:

וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדַּם הַחַטָּאת וְנָתַן
אֶל מְזוּזַת הַבַּיִת וְאֶל אַרְבַּע
פִּנּוֹת הָעֲזָרָה לַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְעַל
מְזוּזַת שַׁעַר הֶחָצֵר הַפְּנִימִית:

Yehezkel 45:18-19

Thus said God: On the first day of the first month, take a bull without blemish, and use it to purify the Mikdash.

The kohen (priest) should take some of the blood of this hattat sacrifice and place it on the doorposts of the House, and on the four corners of the ledge of the mizbe'ah (altar), and on the doorposts of the gate of the inner court.

- In Mitzrayim, what was the meaning of the blood on the doorposts? How is this blood similar to the blood that Yehezkel describes in the Beit HaMikdash of the future? How are they different?

דִּקְדּוּק • Grammar

In an earlier week, we learned about פִּיעֵל (pi'el). This is one of the forms of Hebrew verbs (action words). We have a great example in our parashah:



Pi'el

כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי

Ka'asher **tziveiti**
As I **commanded**
(Vayikra 10:18)

Compare to this bolded word, a few pesukim earlier. It's almost exactly the same word, just one vowel different!

Pu'al

כִּי־כֵן צֻוִּיתִי

Ki khein **tzooveiti**
For so I **was commanded**
(Vayikra 10:13)

The kibbutz vowel (three dots in a diagonal) under the tzadi shows that this is the פּוּעַל (pu'al) form of the word.

Pi'el and pu'al are a pair. While pi'el is about actively doing something—like commanding someone else to do something—pu'al is about having something done in a passive way, like being commanded.

Pu'al is not very common in the Torah. You can look for it by finding the kibbutz vowel and then looking for a dagesh in the following letter. (In this case, the vav.) But this is the only example of pu'al in our entire parashah!

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. The letter ב (vet) in וַיִּקְרְבוּ (vayikrevu, they came close) (9:5)
2. דָּם (dam, blood) (9:18 and also 9:9, 9:12)—also later, in the 6th aliyah, אַרְבֶּה (arbeh, locusts) (11:22)
3. Don't drink wine or other alcohol before entering the אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד (ohel mo'ed, tent of meeting) (9:9)
4. Elazar and Itamar (10:12)
5. Eat the חַטָּאת (hattat, sin offering); instead, he burned it (10:16-18)
6. Until nightfall (11:32)
7. None! (11:41)
8. Moshe (10:16)
9. 20 (11:13-19)
10. The first day of the first month (Yehezkel 45:18) and the first day of the seventh month (45:20)

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בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!



Aharon had no response to Moshe's explanation of the deaths of his sons. The Torah tells us: וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן (Aharon was silent) (Vayikra 10:3).

What is the value of silence?

Talmud Bavli Megillah 18a

When Rav Dimi came to Bavel from Eretz Yisrael, he reported that they say there: "A word is worth a sela (a coin), but silence is worth two selas!"

תלמוד בבלי מגילה דף יח עמוד א

כִּי אֲתָא רַב דִּימִי, אֲמַר: אָמְרִי בְּמַעְרְבָא: מִלָּה בְּסֶלַע, מַשְׁתּוֹקָא בִּתְרֵין.



- Why do you think silence would be more valuable than speech, even twice as valuable? In what circumstances might this be true?
- What was the value of Aharon's silence? Why might it have been best for him to say nothing? Is there something that he actually might have said? If so, what?



One-Minute Debate

חוּט הַשָּׁנִי

Debate: Silence is golden.

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.



Agree!

- Peace and quiet is the best. After a hectic day, when you get off the bus or out of carpool, it's so nice to be able to hear your own thoughts.
- Shabbat is quieter than every other day of the week, and that makes it really special.
- If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all!



Disagree!

- Silence can be awkward.
- In our parashah, Aharon's silence seems to express really terrible pain.
- When you're at a sports event, you have to cheer really loudly for your team! LET'S GO!!!!!