



# פרשת אמור

# CIRCLE TIME AT YOUR Shabbos Table

... FOR A Meaningful and Entertaining SHABBOS WITH YOUR CHILDREN ...

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DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

## THE UNWANTED MIRACLE

ולא תחללו את שם קדושי

"And you shall not profane My holy name" (Vayikra 22:32)

**I**t is well known that the Chazon Ish, one of the *gedolei hador* living in Bnei Brak in the years following the creation of the State of Israel, forbade the use of public electricity on Shabbos. What is less well-known, as this story will show, is why.

The production of electricity involves lots of *chillul Shabbos*. In the early days of the state, the Electric Company (*Chevrat Chashmal*) made power by burning coal to power turbines. Jewish workers at the electrical plant operated bulldozers and heavy machinery, moving coal, lighting fires, fixing lines and wires, and more.

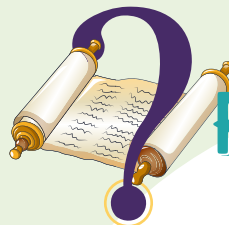
Following the *psak* of the Chazon Ish, many homes and yeshivos in Bnei Brak—and around the country—did not use electricity from the Electric Company on Shabbos and Yom Tov. They had gasoline-powered generators connected to their buildings, and they would switch to generator power just before Shabbos.

The Chazon Ish customarily visited Yeshivas Ponevezh every year on Simchas Torah and participated in the lively dancing. His visit would be a source of great encouragement for the *bachurim*, and was *mechabed*

Rav Kahaneman, the Ponevezher Rav. The Rosh Yeshivah had assured the Chazon Ish that the electricity in the yeshivah was powered on Yom Tov by a generator, and so it was.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >>



## PARSHAH RIDDLES

Answers to this week's riddles appear on page 3.

- 1** Can you find three times the Torah warns against *chillul Hashem* in this week's *parshah*? Concerning what?
- 2** Can you find five other things in the *parshah* the Torah says not to be *mechallel*?
- 3** Can you find five other meanings for the word **ללן** in the Torah, besides "profane"?
- 4** What day was *Parshas Emor* given to Moshe? Which seven other *parshiyos* were given that day?
- 5** What five things in the *parshah* are for seven days?
- 6** From the haftorah: There are four discrepancies between the *halachos* of *kohanim* described in the haftorah and those described in the Chumash. Can you find them? Extra Credit: Why are they not contradictory?



SERIAL >> CHAPTER 18

# CHOLENT STORY

A story told in parts, designed to get children to come back to the table for the main dish!

Recap: Efraim spends some time hiding in Pressburg, narrowly escaping a serious illness. His name is changed to Shlomo Efraim.

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Shlomo Efraim returned to Prague, hopeful, but nervous. The Maharal received him warmly, but Shlomo Efraim noted that his *rebbe* seemed to be aging. He related to the Maharal how he had gotten sick in Pressburg, and how the Rosh Yeshivah there had sent him back, fearing he could not protect him sufficiently.

“Rebbi, what shall I do now? Is it safe for me to stay in Prague?”

“I do not think so. I believe you need to go to a place where you will not be known and will not be recognized. There, you will hide in plain sight, and you will be safe. I advise you to go to Lvov. Take a job, get married, and live a simple life. But continue to learn every moment because you are destined for greatness.”

“Shall I stay there forever? Will I ever return?”

“When the time comes for you to return to Prague and to reveal your true identity, I will send you a letter. Two men will arrive with a letter for you in my handwriting. Make sure you do all it says in the letter; do not refuse!”

So, with a heavy heart, Shlomo Efraim set off again. He traveled to Lvov, where he set about building a life for himself as a simple Jew. He called himself “Efraim Olelos.” He did not go to the yeshivah or present himself to the *talmidei chachmim* of the town, though he longed to speak in learning.

No, Shlomo Efraim set up a business selling eggs. He would travel each day to the chicken farms, collecting eggs, and then deliver them to grocers, markets, and inns. He earned a small profit, from which he supported himself, and he studied Torah all the rest of the day and most of the night.

Shlomo Efraim married a fine young woman, daughter of another *tzaddik nistar*, and they began to build a family. He was respected in town as a fine, anonymous, *ehrlicher Yid*. People called him “Efraim the Egg Man.” No one knew his real name, and few even knew the name Efraim Olelos, which appeared only on the egg-delivery contracts he signed once per year.

Life went on, and Shlomo Efraim grew older. He wrote several *sefarim*, the first of which he named *Olelos Efraim*. All was well, and life was simple and good. He seemed to have finally achieved freedom from the *poritz* and the Satan’s endless persecutions.

Until one day, in far-off Prague, the Maharal himself passed away.



TO BE CONTINUED...

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DVAR TORAH >>

# LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI

Three different angles on a *dvar Torah*, one each in classic Litvish, Chassidic, and Sephardic styles. Can your children guess which idea comes from which school of thought!

וַיֵּצֵא בֶן אִשָּׁה יִשְׂרָאֵלִית וְהוּא בֶן אִישׁ מִצְרִי... וַיִּקָּב בֶּן הָאִשָּׁה הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִית אֶת הַשֵּׁם וַיִּקְלַל... וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ שְׁלֹמִית בַּת דְּבָרִי לְמַטָּה דָן

“And a son of a Jewish woman and Egyptian man went out and fought with a Jewish man. And the son of the Jewish woman swore and cursed the Name, and they brought him to Moshe, and his mother’s name was Shlomis bas Divri, from the tribe of Dan” (*Vayikra* 24:10–11)

הֲיֵכֵן יֵצֵא? ...מִבֵּית דִּינוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה יֵצֵא מְחֻיִּב: בַּת דְּבָרִי. דְּבִרְוֵית הֵיטָה, מְדַבֶּרֶת עִם כָּל אָדָם לְפִיכֵן קִלְקֵלָה “From where did he ‘go out’? ...From Moshe’s courthouse. He lost a case...Bas Divri: she was a blabbermouth, talked to everyone, and that is how she got into trouble...” (*Rashi*)

**How can someone fall so far as to curse the Name, *chas v’shalom*, just from losing a court case?**



RAV CHAIM SHMUELEVITZ:

When someone receives an emotional blow, he is very vulnerable to the *yetzer hara*. The court case was over which *shevet* he belonged too, as specified in Rashi. His mother’s *shevet* (Dan) rejected him because his father was Egyptian. He lost the case and had no place. When a person feels disconnected from Klal Yisrael, he becomes desperate and can fall hard, crash, and burn.



BAIS YISRAEL:

This is exactly how people devolve into *apikorsus*! It starts with making fun of *talmidei chachamim* (and their decisions) and quickly turns into making fun of *da’as Torah*, then Torah itself, and soon—even Hashem!



RABBEINU BACHEYE:

The Torah tells us that he was following the traits he learned from his foolish mother. She talked too much and ended up marrying an Egyptian; he talked too much and ended up cursing the Name.

# PERSONAL GROWTH AVODAH OF THE WEEK

## Personal growth *avodah* of the week

The coming sixth week of Sefirah represents the *middah* of *yesod*, or morality and purity, *kedushah*.

### Parshah summary

All of *Chumash Vayikra* is about *kedushah*. After detailing *korbanos* and *taharah* in the early *parshiyos*, last week's *parshiyos* focused on the *kedushah* of Klal Yisrael from among the nations, with laws and safeguards to preserve it. This week, *Parshas Emor*, is focused on the special *kedushah* of *kohanim* from among Yisrael and concludes with the *kedushah* of certain times from among the rest of the days of the year. (Next week will conclude *Chumash Vayikra* with the discussion of the *kedushah* of certain years (*shemittah* and *yovel*) and places (Eretz Yisrael and the Beis Hamikdash).

## AVODAH OF THE WEEK:

1. We worked on *kedushah* last week; this week we can take it to a higher level. Let's focus on *kedushah* in our speech, by choosing our words with special delicacy that befits a *mamleches kohanim v'goy kadosh*.
2. Let's also find a daily opportunity to tune out the world—media, messaging, imaging, radio, whatever it may be—in the interest of preserving *kedushah*. In both of these *avodos*, it is important to focus on the cognition that this is being done because of our innate *kedushah*.

## RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. a) *Kohanim* keeping their special *halachos*: וְלֹא יִחַלְלוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (Vayikra 21:6)  
b) Concerning not making *korbanos tamei*: וַיִּנְצְרוּ מִקְדָּשֵׁי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא יִחַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם קֹדֶשׁוֹ (Vayikra 22:2)  
c) General: וְלֹא תִחַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם קֹדֶשׁוֹ (Vayikra 22:32)
2. a) Father: אֵת אָבִיהָ הִיא תִחַלֵּל (Vayikra 21:9)  
b) Children: וְלֹא יִחַלְלוּ זָרְעוֹ בְּעַמּוּיָו (Vayikra 21:15)  
c) Mishkan: וְלֹא יִחַלֵּל אֶת מִקְדָּשֵׁי (Vayikra 21:23)  
d) *Terumah*: וּמִתּוֹ בּוֹ כִּי יִחַלְּהוּ (Vayikra 22:9)  
e) *Korbanos*: וְלֹא יִחַלְלוּ אֶת קֹדֶשׁוֹ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Vayikra 22:15)
3. a) Unfitting: הַזֶּה מַעֲשֵׂת כְּדָבָר הַזֶּה (Bereishis 18:25)  
b) Corpse: הַנֶּנְעָ בְּעָצָם אוֹ בְחַלֵּל אוֹ בַמָּוֶת (Bamidbar 19:18)  
c) *Pasul kohen*: אֶלְמִנָּה וְגֵרוּשָׁה וְיִחַלְּהָ (Vayikra 21:14)  
d) Redeem: וְיִשָּׁב לְבֵיתוֹ פֶּן (Devarim 20:6)  
e) Birth: צוֹר יִלְדֶךָ תִּשִׁי וְתִשְׁכַּח אֶל מַחְלָלֶךָ (Devarim 32:18)  
f) Empty: וְלִבִּי חָלַל בְּקִרְבִּי (Tehillim 109:22)
4. The Gemara (*Gittin* 60a) lists eight *parshiyos* that were taught on the day the Mishkan was assembled (Rosh Chodesh Nissan):  
a) פרשת כהנים (אמור)  
b) פרשת לויים (בהעלותך)  
c) פרשת טמאים (פסח שני)  
d) פרשת שילוח טמאים  
e) פרשת אחרי מות  
f) פרשת שתויי יין  
g) פרשת נרות (בהעלותך)  
h) פרשת פרה אדומה (חוקת)
5. a) Pesach  
b) Sukkos  
c) *Sefiras Ha'omer*—seven weeks of seven days  
d) Time from birth an animal may not be brought as a *korban*  
e) Spacing of Shabbosos
6. The haftorah lists the following *halachos*:  
a) (44:17) *Kohanim* could only wear linen, not wool. (Three—according to some, four—of the *bigdei kehunah* in Chumash contain wool.)  
b) (44:22) A *kohen* may not marry a widow. (Chumash only forbids a *kohen* from marrying a divorcee.)  
c) (44:26) Two sets of seven *tahor* days are required to achieve full *taharah*. (Chumash prescribes one set.)  
d) (44:27) After purification from *tumas meis*, a *kohen* brings a *chatas* (not mentioned in Chumash). The resolution may be that in these *pesukim*, Yechezkel is referring to a *kohen gadol*. See *Kiddushin* 78b.

One year, unbeknown to the Rosh Yeshivah and the Chazon Ish, some boys complained about the generator power. It was unreliable, often going dim or failing. They especially wanted to make sure that the lights did not go out during the dancing, which would ruin Simchas Torah! Secretly, just before Yom Tov, someone went to the electrical panel and switched the power back to public electricity, off the generator. He figured no one would ever know.

But Hashem had other plans. Just as the Chazon Ish was arriving at the yeshivah, there was a blackout in all of Bnei Brak! The lights went out in all the homes that were powered by the electric company. Buildings running on generators continued, unaffected, but the lights in Ponevezh Yeshivah went out!

The Chazon Ish was spared from using *treif* electricity by the blackout, but he was upset that the yeshivah had been powered by *chillul Yom Tov*. The Ponevezher Rav himself was furious at the trick and asked a *bachur* to shut the main circuit breaker—while the power was off—so that even when the blackout ended, the yeshivah would be cut off from the Electric Company power supply. But just as the boy was approaching the circuit breaker board, the power went back on, and he did not manage to flip the switch first.

The Ponevezher Rav sent a message to the Chazon Ish, asking him to come to *hakafos* during the day, when the electric lights would not be needed, and it wouldn't be *assur* to be in the building. The Chazon Ish agreed—on the condition that all the florescent lights in the *beis midrash* would be covered with blankets.

The lights were covered and the *gadol* came. At the yeshivah, someone mentioned in his presence that they had tried to turn off the main power while there was still a blackout.

"It's a *nes* that he didn't!" another exclaimed. "The Chazon Ish holds that flipping a switch is *boneh* or *soser*, and that is *assur* even when the main power is off! A *nes* saved the *bachur* from *chillul Yom Tov* according to the Chazon Ish!"

The Chazon Ish interrupted. "*Nes*? What kind of *nes* was that! It would have been correct to be *mechallel Yom Tov* to prevent using the electricity!"

The *bachurim* looked at each other blankly. The whole reason the electrical power was a problem was because it was made and delivered with *chillul Yom Tov*. How could it be okay to be *mechallel Yom Tov* to avoid using it?

"What don't you understand?" asked the Chazon Ish. "The problem with using electric company power is far worse than *chillul Yom Tov*; it's *chillul Hashem*! The company makes electricity by doing open, unashamed *chillul Yom Tov*. If we were to use it, that would show that convenience is more important than Shabbos and Yom Tov, *chalilah*. That is a terrible *chillul Hashem*. Sometimes it is permitted to be *mechallel Shabbos* and Yom Tov in order to avoid a *chillul Hashem*, which is like *avodah zarah*!"

Did you notice that the story of the haftorah, besides relating to the depth of the parshah or day, usually sounds like it is right out of current events?

# HAFTORAH FROM THE HEADLINES

## HAFTORAH SUMMARY

The haftorah of *Parshas Emor* describes the many special mitzvos and *halachos* of *kohanim*, just as the *parshah* does. Even the language of the haftorah very closely parallels the *parshah*.

The haftorah appears at the very end of *Sefer Yechezkel*, after the description of the Third Beis Hamikdash. The *navi* details the laws of the *kohanim* who will serve there. He adds one surprising fact: only *kohanim* descended from Tzadok Hakohen will be allowed to serve in the Third Beis Hamikdash!

Tzadok was a very righteous *kohen gadol* in the time of Shlomo Hamelech. After the death of Shlomo and the splitting of the kingdom, many Jews turned to *avodah zarah* and stopped giving *terumah*. *Kohanim* had no income and were starving. Many became priests to idols in order to earn enough to survive. The descendants of Tzadok refused, and they suffered great hardship because of their insistence on avoiding *avodah zarah*. In return, they will be the only qualified *kohanim* in the future. Even during the Second Beis Hamikdash, only they were allowed to serve.

## RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

As has been stated many times by many *gedolim*, the time of Mashiach is near. The Third Beis Hamikdash will soon be here. Only those dedicated to Hashem will be included in the redemption. It is not too late—we can all do *teshuvah* and get on board now!





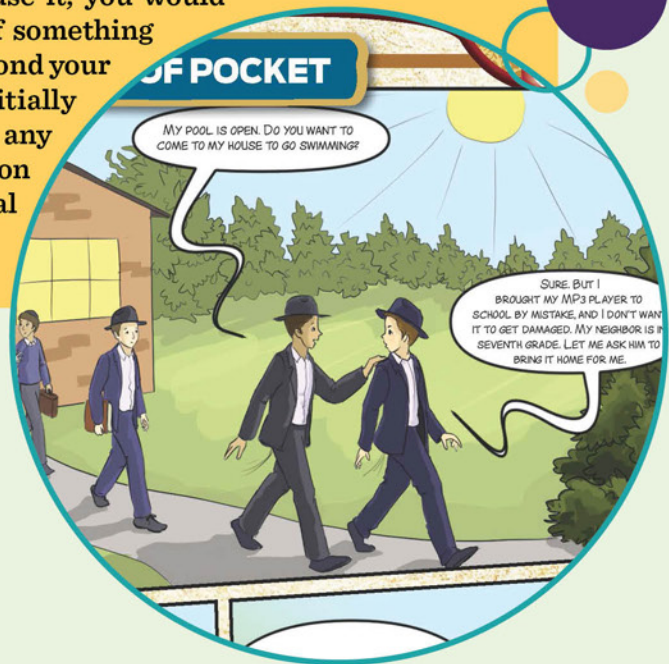
# SET UP FOR DISCUSSION

See this week's *Circle* magazine for the full comic story and halachic dilemma.

## OUT OF POCKET

Since Shlomo gave permission to Yehudah to use it and Yehudah did use it, he became a *shomer sachar* rather than a *shomer chinam* and thus is liable when it gets stolen (*Shach* 72:30; *Machaneh Efraim, Shomrim* 28).

However, if he gave it to you initially without permission to use it and subsequently granted you permission to use it, you would be categorized as a *shoel* and are liable even if something happens to the device due to circumstances beyond your control (*ones*). The reason is that once you initially agreed to watch his device without expecting any sort of remuneration, subsequent permission to use it is not part of the original custodial agreement, and you become a borrower.



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Shabbos is once a week. But a person can make Shabbos every day! How? By learning Torah and connecting to Hashem. This is the hidden meaning of the *pasuk* (Vayikra 23:2-3):

מוֹעֲדֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי שִׁשְׁתַּיִמִּים ... תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶה

We can read the bold words: “If they call themselves holy, these are My holy days for all six days!”

This is also hinted in the *gematria* of Hashem’s names, Torah, and Shabbos:

65 = א-ד-נ-י

26 = the ה' שם as it is written

611 = תורה

702 = שבת

Any day, even a weekday, connected to Hashem and Torah is holy, like Shabbos!

(Chasam Sofer)



# THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY



**On the 19th of Iyar in the year 5053**, Rabbi Meir of Rottenburg died in prison.

The Maharam m’Rottenburg was walking in the mountains near Lombardy, France, when he was kidnapped by thugs on the 4th of Tammuz, 5046. He was imprisoned in a fortress near Ensisheim, in Alsace, for seven years. His captors demanded 23,000 silver marks—a huge ransom—from the Jewish community for his release. His *talmid*, the Rosh, set out to raise the funds. Of course, the community pooled all their resources and gathered the money together to free the great *gadol*.

But he refused to be freed.

Rav Meir knew that if his captors’ plan was successful, they would do it again, capturing other *rabbanim* and holding them for large ransoms. He *paskened* that it was forbidden to allow such a practice to work, and he refused to allow himself to be redeemed. He remained in captivity for seven years, until he passed away on this day.

The *resha'im* holding him did not even release his body for burial, holding it for ransom as well. Fourteen years after his death, a ransom was paid for his body by Alexander ben Shlomo Wimpfen. He was buried on the 4th of Adar 5067, 14 years after his passing, in the Jewish cemetery in Worms, Germany.



# HALACHAH

## Lag B'Omer



### What is the reason for the joy of Lag B'Omer?

The Rama writes that Lag B'Omer is the day the dying of R. Akiva's *talmidim* ceased. Other early sources (see *Siddur Ya'avetz*) say the *yahrtzeit* of a *tzaddik* is a day of *simchah*, and this is the *yahrtzeit* of R. Shimon bar Yochai. On this day, he taught much of the *Zohar* and the hidden Torah, and it was like another *Matan Torah*. Also, on this day, R. Akiva gave *semichah* to his five remaining *talmidim*, and the future of Torah was rejuvenated.

Some add that the day may be a celebration of R. Shimon's escape from the Romans, because had he been caught, he would not have been buried. Therefore, the day he was buried is the one on which his escape is celebrated—at his gravesite. The *Aruch Hashulchan* writes that he left the cave on this day. One old source says R. Shimon bar Yochai did not die on this day at all, but he had a *מש'*. That has been mistakenly read as *תמש'*, but in truth it means he made a *החמם*. Some say today was his birthday. Others note that he promised to save Klal Yisrael from punishment, and that likely took place on the day he died. The Sadigura Rebbe says the three thousand *halachos* forgotten after the death of Moshe were restored on Lag B'Omer. The Chasam Sofer says the *mann* began to fall on Lag B'Omer. Many other reasons for the *simchah* are brought *al pi kabbalah*.

There was a custom for people who turned 60 to make a *seudah* on Lag B'Omer of that year, to cel-

ebate their escape from *kares*. On Lag B'Omer, the Maharil made a *siyum* on all the *mesechtos* he had finished with his *talmidim* that year.

*Tachanun* is not recited on Lag B'Omer, and many do not say it at *Minchah* on the 32nd day of the Omer either.

### When do the halachos of mourning end?

For those who keep the custom of mourning from Pesach until Lag B'Omer, there is a dispute when precisely the mourning ends. Sephardim follow the *Shulchan Aruch*, who holds that it ends on the morning of the 34th day of the Omer. The Rama rules that it ends on the morning of Lag itself; some go further to allow haircutting and music the evening of the 33rd. In cases of pressing need, or Erev Shabbos, even Sephardim may be lenient.

### Are there any changes to seftras ha'omer?

On the evening of Lag B'Omer, one must be careful not to say "today is Lag B'Omer" before counting with a *brachah* (this is especially likely to happen for those who do not say *Tachanun* at *Minchah* on the 32nd day and may tell others the reason. According to some, even if one said so before *shkiah*, but after *plag haminchah*, he may no longer count with a *brachah*.

According to some sources, from the 34th day of the Omer and on, one may not count with a *brachah* after *chatzos* of the night.

### Why are there bonfires on Lag B'Omer?

Many sources record the custom of lighting fires

on Lag B'Omer, usually burning clothing and oil. Light lit in honor of a *neshamah* on its *yahrtzeit* brings it pleasure, and this is a large *ner neshamah*.

Other reasons include: to memorialize the miracle that the sun did not set on R. Shimon's final day of life until he finished teaching the *Zohar*; to celebrate the restoration of the bonfires announcing *kiddush hachodesh*, which were stopped by the Romans (R. Shimon is the symbol of rebellion against them); because the *pasuk* אֵשׁ חֲצִב לְהָבוֹת אֵשׁ קוֹל ה' חָצֵב ה' קוֹל ה' is the fifth of the seven *קולות*, and this is the fifth week of Sefirah; burning clothing to memorialize that R. Shimon lived in the cave buried to his neck, without clothing except to *daven*; because he reached the level of Adam Harishon before he sinned, when clothing was not required.

Several *Acharonim* spoke out against the custom of burning clothing, on the grounds of *bal tashchis*. Others defended it, saying there is no *bal tashchis* when something is done for a mitzvah. The Chasam Sofer questioned the justification to make a "new holiday" altogether.

### Are there other customs of Lag B'Omer?

There are many customs in many circles, including: boys who turned three during Sefirah receive their haircut; playing with bows and arrows, specifically three times; eating dates, carob, and dairy, but not eggs; making a *seudah* and hosting a guest from Eretz Yisrael; giving extra charity; making a *siyum*; learning *Zohar* and the statements of R. Shimon in *Shas*.

## THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"WE DON'T NEED TO STAND IN PEOPLE'S PATH. WE DON'T MIND FINDING ANOTHER WAY."

—The Chafetz Chaim



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