

## Shabbat Times

		€		€
London	20:27	21:40	Cambridge	20:25 21:50
Manchester	20:43	22:04	Leeds	19:30 21:59
Birmingham	20:34	22:00	Liverpool	20:43 22:11
Oxford	20:24	21:53	Jerusalem	18:51 20:08

### Coming up...

- Bogrim join us for Tikkun Leil Shavuot at Rav Ari and Chaya's for more information contact Rav Ari on Rav@bauk.org

- Summer Machane is on 3<sup>rd</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> August, email Akiva on camps@bauk.org for more information

### Shabbat Debate

Every week we will be writing weekly debates to discuss over Shabbat. The debates will then be continued on facebook, after Shabbat.

How can we choose what part of the Omer we want to allocate as a mourning period?

# SHABBAT

פרשת אמר

PARASHAT EMOR



תנועת בני אקיווה  
BNEI AKIVA UK

# LASHEM

## שבת לה'

The most widely distributed weekly Torah periodical written by our youth in the United Kingdom.

### Is it all just repetition?

Shulamit Lew

When learning the Torah, we know that every single word is important and therefore understanding seemingly unnecessary or extra words in the Pessukim can teach profound messages.

The first passuk of Parashat Emor is no exception.

ויאמר ה' אל משה אמר אל הכהנים בני אהרן ואמרת אליהם לנפש לא יטמא בעמיו

“And Hashem said to Moshe: Say to the priests, the children of Aharon and you shall say to them, each of you should not contaminate himself through a dead person among his people”.

At first glance, it seems like the verse is simply repeating itself, adding nothing new with the repetition of the word אמר and perhaps even making the passuk sound repetitive and clumsy. If Hashem's telling Moshe to say something to the Cohanim, of course he's going to say it to them!

Rashi brings an explanation from the Talmud in Yevamot 114a: “Lehazhir hagedolim al haketanim”

“To warn the adults regarding the children”

On one level the Cohanim are being told themselves to be careful not to come near a corpse (hence the first אמר). On the next level the Cohanim are being told to tell their children. The second use of the word אמר is teaching the Cohanim that they are responsible to tell their children, teach their children about all the laws that apply to them, their children and their children's children for future generations.

The message is clear. When learning something, it's all very well to take it on board ourselves, but how much better it could be if we spread what we learn and teach it to other people!

Tomorrow (Sunday) is lag ba'omer, when the Gemara ( Yevomot 72b) tells us that the talmidim of the great Rabbi Akiva finished dying. The Gemara tells us there that they were dying in the first place 'mipnei shelo nahuga kavod ze laze' - because they didn't show each other respect. However great their Torah learning was, this was overshadowed by the fact that they didn't respect, care for and help each other.

Rabbi Akiva however took a different approach - he was committed to spreading Torah and building the future of the Jewish people. After thousands of his talmidim had died, he continued to teach, starting from scratch with the only 5 that remained. One of the lessons from lag ba'omer and Rabbi Akiva himself, as well as our parsha, is the importance of looking out for others, teaching others and spreading the Torah we have to those around us.

Shulamit Lew is in Shevet Lehava and was Rosh Nivcheret 5776

This Week's Shabbat Lashem is sponsored by Sarah Cohen and Brett Bernstein on the occasion of their wedding on Lag B'omer 5777

# SUMMER MACHANE 5777



3 August - 16 August

Year 6, 7, 8 in North Wales

Year 9 in Holland

Year 10 in Spain

NEW LOCATION!



תנועת בני אקיווה  
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for more info contact [akiva@bauk.org](mailto:akiva@bauk.org)





### Spirituality and Physicality

For a person aspiring towards godliness, the world of physicality can appear as an inhibitor towards advancing. Many beliefs have shun the physical in favour of the spiritual, by means of sexual celibacy to abstinence from food and other forms of asceticism.

The tension between the physical and spiritual is expressed in the Hebrew language when describing the basic function of eating; in Hebrew bread is called *lechem*, which shares the same root letters as *milchama* – war. This tension is not only to be found in the luxury and the excess of physical life. There is an internal war waged even over the most staple food item, one that is a basic need for survival.

In our *parasha* we see a bizarre juxtaposition of topics. The bulk of Parashat Emor focuses on the holidays and their offerings. This, however, is followed by the *mitzvah* of Ner Tamid (the eternal light) and Lechem Hapanim (the showbread). The *parasha* concludes with a strange episode (Vayikra 24:10-23):

**“And the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel ... and the son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name [of Hashem], and cursed; and they brought him to Moses ... and they put him in ward, that it might be declared unto them at the mouth of Hashem.”**

Why is this story included here? What is the context of the man cursing God? The Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 32:3) provides context:

**“‘Went out’ – Where did he go out from? Rebbi Brachiya said he came out from the previous section (teaching about Lechem Hapanim). He said, ‘The way of royalty is to eat warm, fresh bread. But here it is cold...’”**

The man blasphemed because he felt the Kohen deserved the freshest bread just as food is served to royalty. The Lechem Hapanim was baked on Friday and eaten the following Shabbat – nine days later. At first thought, the man was right – why wait so long to eat the bread? The Gemara (Yoma 38a) describes how difficult it was to bake bread in such a way that it remained fresh for so long, and in fact describes this outstanding feat as a miracle (Yoma 21a).

There is a theme that emerges from the sequence of topics in our *parasha*: Judaism doesn’t shun away from the physical because of its tension with the spiritual, rather it embraces it. Judaism believes in elevating beyond the either-or of physicality-spirituality to a realm that includes these but transcends them.

Regarding the holidays, *halacha* stipulates that “one must divide their day between prayer and Torah study, and half a day for humanly pleasure” – the holidays are “half for Hashem and half for you”. This is not purely a strict chronological split, but an indication of the nature of the holy day: Holiness is the fusion between spiritual and physical, and the holy days are characterised inasmuch as they fuse both these dimensions harmoniously into one. On the holidays there is a *mitzvah* to eat and be merry. This physical indulgence is not in contrast to the spiritual dimension of the day, but compliments and harmonizes with it to create the holiness.

This is immediately followed by the *mitzvah* of Ner Tamid, which represented Torah. “It is a testament to the world that the shechina resides in Israel.” (Talmud Shabbat 22b)

It is from within this context that the Lechem Hapanim and episode of the blasphemer emerge: The secret of the Lechem Hapanim is inasmuch as it is physical that transcends these boundaries because of its spiritual properties. It remains fresh for over one-week because of this synthesis, it is “the bread of God”. The word Lechem Hapanim literally means “the inner bread” – it is the bread that represents the essential spiritual property that is “inside” all physical existence; it represents our ability to look within ourselves and develop a holistic – godly – relationship to the physical world we live in. The Lechem Hapanim would simply not be itself if it were served fresh; it would just be bread.

The man looked at the Lechem Hapanim – and this as a representation of the physical world in general – with a dualistic mind set: Priests are holy and bread is not. In Judaism, this is the greatest blaspheme imaginable. Food is not merely something consumed in order to keep us alive, it is an opportunity to encounter God as He manifests within our lives. It is a great “*milchama*” to succeed in doing so, but this war represents our very *raison-d’être* in this world.

Judaism rejects the dichotomy of physical-spiritual. It transcends the duality and unifies these two opposites in perfect harmony. Parashat Emor teaches us that physicality and spirituality are both parts of a greater whole called godliness.

### The Week that Was...

- We have been visiting schools this week promoting machane, get your forms in now.
- On Tuesday night we ran a session for Kinloss Learn to Lead programme about social action and Tikkun Olam.
- Tuesday night was also our monthly whiskey club, where we had a world night theme. Look out for our next one next month.

### *Mourning in the Omer?*

Tisha B’av is our day of mourning, the omer is supposed to be a day of celebration, the days counting to the giving of the Torah. What is so significant about the death of Rabbi Akiva’s students that merits a whole month of mourning?

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 86a) says that Rabbi Akiva was the source of the entire Oral Torah. Each one of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva was in turn meant to be a link in the chain for transmission of a unique portion of the Oral Torah that Rabbi Akiva taught. The death of the students of Rabbi Akiva was therefore not only the death of individuals but also a direct threat to the transmission of Torah. With the loss of each student another layer of Torah was forgotten forever. This is the reason why we specifically mourn the death of Rabbi Akiva’s students over other tragedies.

With this we can begin to understand why it was fitting to institute customs of mourning at a time that is compared to Chol Hamoed. The days of Sefirat Ha’Omer are meant to be a time to prepare ourselves to receive the Torah on Shavuot. However, the death of the students of Rabbi Akiva during this time and the loss of Torah that accompanied it made this period bittersweet. The Torah that we prepare ourselves to receive on Shavuot is no longer on the level of the Torah that we could have had if Rabbi Akiva’s students would have been able to transmit their Torah. This is why the days of the Omer are the most fitting time to mourn the loss of Torah that came through the deaths of Rabbi Akiva’s students.