

EMOR
5780

MAY 8TH,
2020

have a Nageela Shabbos

CANDLE
LIGHTING:

SCOTTSDALE 6:58
HENDERSON 7:15
LAS VEGAS 7:17
SAN DIEGO 7:17
IRVINE 7:22
LOS ANGELES 7:25
RENO/TAHOE 7:42

A KID FRIENDLY WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF NAGEELA WEST COAST JOYFULLY JEWISH EXPERIENCES

SEASON 4
EPISODE 22

COUNT ON ME BY RABBI DANI LOCKER



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“You can count on me, like 1, 2, 3, I’ll be there...” It’s not just a Bruno Mars song.

You might have heard of Sefiras Ha’omer- counting the days from Passover until Shavuot. In case you need a quick reminder, Passover arrives in early spring. On the second day of Passover we begin counting each day for 49 days, or in other words, seven weeks. Each day, we count one step closer. For example, assuming you’re reading this on Shabbos, May 9th, it’s currently the 30th day (4 weeks and 2 days) in the counting of the Omer.

The normal way to understand this is that we’re excited about the Torah (which was given to us on the fabulous holiday of Shavuot) and we’re counting the days until that happy (and cheesecakey) occasion. Buuuut, it’s not that simple. If it was just about the Torah, why would we call it the counting of the Omer? We should call it counting of the Torah, or counting of the steps to wisdom, or counting pickles, or something like that. What’s an Omer, anyway?

Glad you asked, my friend. Glad you asked. The Omer was barely an offering. Sorry, I misspelled that. It was a barley offering. On the second day of Passover, a barley offering was brought, and waved all over the place. Why are we counting FROM the

Omer, and why do we call it the counting of the Omer?

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GUESTS THIS TUES!

A number of classic sources give a completely different understanding of what the counting of the Omer is for. You see, the Omer comes at the beginning of the growing season, and we count the days until the harvest. The Omer is a reminder to thank God for the success we’ve had and a reminder to pray for a successful harvest.

It’s interesting to note that we find similar themes during other holidays as well. Some of the symbolism behind waving the Lulav and Esrog on Sukkos deals with thanking God for our produce. The Omer on Passover and the 2 loaves offering on Shavuot, all point to God’s help in our financial success.

But it seems that’s not enough. There are times when we need a daily, constant reminder. During the 7 weeks of the Omer, we mention daily and remind ourselves constantly that everything we have comes from God and we need to pray for His goodness.

We can know something is true. We can know it well. Yet we still need to remind ourselves. And perhaps that’s also why it’s connected to our receiving the Torah. In order to truly appreciate and understand Torah, we need to be in the zone when it comes to appreciating God and His constant goodness and kindness toward us. Let’s remember that in these days of the omer. Let’s appreciate the bounty (not that bounty. You always think silly things!) we have, and realize our dependence on God for all of our future success. Honestly, in the crazy world of COVID, it’s not so hard to realize that we don’t control our own successes. Then we’ll be ready (in just under 3 weeks) to receive the Torah!

Ncsp+

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Hi Rabbi,

Ali-yawn

I just found out my Bar Mitzvah parsha, and it's crazy huge! It's like 5,000 pages, and I'm not even exaggerating (much)! I started thinking. Why are some parshas big and some are tiny? Same with Aliyos, which are totally random in size. Can you explain?

Thanks,

Devorah Izhen



**stump the
rabbi**

*Stump the Rabbi is a
forum where kids can ask
ANY Jewish question.
Have a question? Please
send it in to
stump@nageelawest.org*

*Questions here are real. Names
and some wording have been
changed.*

Dear DevIzhen,

This conversation happens basically every night in my home, with slight variations.

"It's bed time. Please close the book and head upstairs."

{crickets}

"AHEM. Do you hear me? Please go to bed."

{generic shoulder shrug} "Hmmmmm"

"Your hair is on fire!"

"What?!?!?!?"

"Now I have your attention. Please close the book."

"Can I just finish the chapter? Pleaaaaaassssse???"

"OK. Fine. Finish the chapter, then go right to bed."

{forty minutes pass}

"Are you still reading?"

"It's a really long chapter."

This is actually my kids' revenge for me doing the same thing to my parents, if that makes any sense. Every book uses a different system for how long its chapters are. Some books may have "book 1" with several chapters inside it. Some books use *** in middle of a chapter to break things up. Let's go through the various ways the Torah is split up and try to explain each one:

1. Seforim - Books.

The Torah has 5 books, also known as the Chumash, the Pentateuch or the 5 Books of Moses. In a Torah scroll, these books are separated by 4 blank lines.

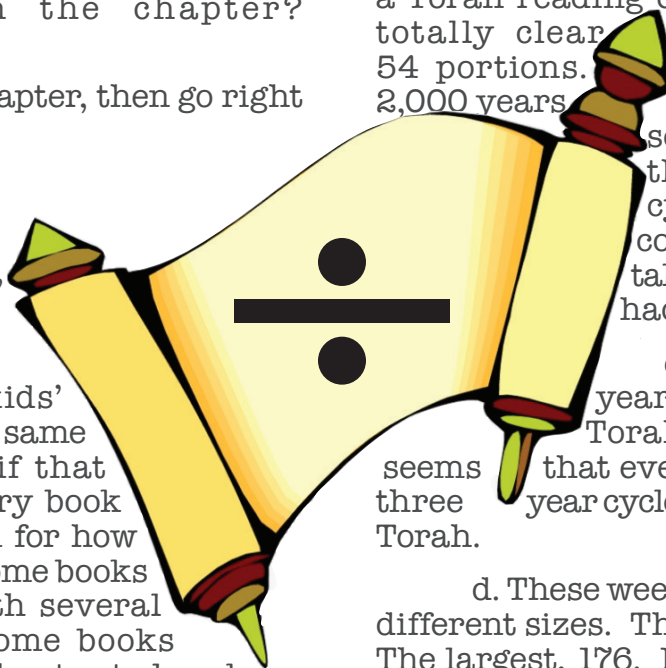
2. Parsha - Sidra - Weekly Portion.

a. There are 54 portions that the Torah is split up into. Generally one or two of each are read each Shabbat. Depending on how the holidays (which have their own Torah readings) are broken up.

b. Moses himself set things up to have a Torah reading every Shabbat. Yet it's not totally clear when it was split into the 54 portions. In Talmudic times (nearly 2,000 years after Moses) there were some communities in Israel that followed a three year cycle, while the Babylonian community (where the main talmudic study took place) they had a one year cycle.

c. The cycle is set to end each year on the holiday of Simchat Torah (right after Sukkot). It seems that even communities who used a three year cycle would celebrate on Simchat Torah.

d. These weekly portions are drastically different sizes. The smallest is 30 sentences. The largest, 176. Mostly, they are divided by topic. But not always, and I don't have a great explanation for exactly why it's broken up the way it is, except that it's an ancient tradition.



3. Aliyot - Personal sections.

a. It has long been tradition for 7 people to be called up to the Torah each Shabbat (different numbers for different holidays). Each weekly portion is therefore subdivided into 7 sections.

b. In the earlier days people who got called up read from the Torah themselves! Nowadays, there's usually an assigned person who practices ahead of time (cuz it's hard!), and those called up for aliyot make the blessings before and after.

c. 7 is the minimum number. Sometimes synagogues will add more by stopping in the middle of one.

d. The exact stopping points were not set until a few hundred years ago. Readers were allowed to stop pretty much wherever they wanted,

as long as they followed a few basic rules. Each aliyah had to have at least 3 sentences, and could not end with something negative, for example. Even today, different editions of the Chumash might show slightly different division points.

e. The aliyot are also of drastically different length. Often that is based on topic, or based on the paragraph divisions (mentioned below).

4. Perakim- chapters.

These are not Jewish in origin. In the 13th century, Christian bible scholars divided the Torah into chapters, and these have been included in many editions of the Chumash.

5. Pesuchot and Setumot- paragraphs in the Torah.

In a Torah scroll, paragraphs end with space. Some are closed, meaning, another word

appears before the end of the line, like so.↓ Many editions

בן יעקב חזק אמת יהיה לכם ולבית ולעמך
ויהיה הקים את
המלך בשר העליון את המלך לזאת הנחה

of the Chumash mark this with the letter Samech ס (for Stumah- closed). Some are open, so no more words appear

המלך בשרים בן יעקב חזק אמת יהיה לכם ולבית ולעמך
בן יעקב
בשר החמשה ויהיה לכם ולבית ולעמך

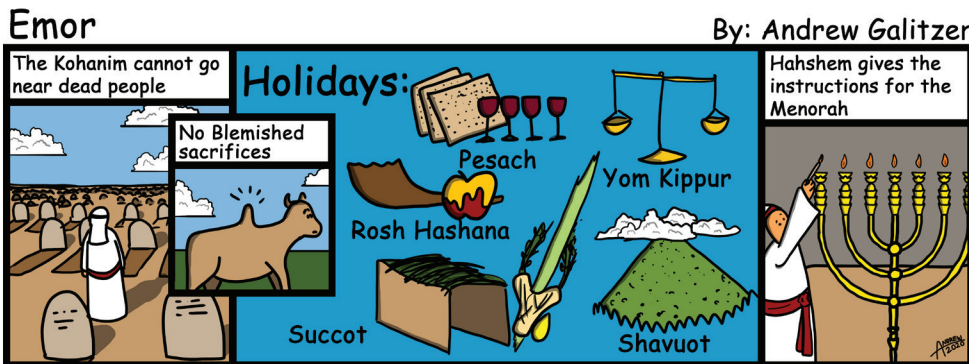
until the next line. These are marked with the letter Pay פ (for Patuach- open).

6. Pesukim- sentences.

It's worth noting that there's a talmudic tradition that there are 600,000 letters in the Torah, representing the 600,000 Jews of the Sinai era. I dare you to count them. It's a bit over 304,000. So where did the other half go? Some say that we count 'the space between the letters.' Just as we learn from all the things the Torah tells us, we can also gain wisdom from examining what the Torah leaves out.

Have a Nageela Shabbos,

the Rabbi.



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**DEEP
THOUGHTS**



**EVERY MIRROR YOU'VE EVER BOUGHT
HAS BEEN USED MERCHANDISE**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to family members who
have celebrated recently:

David Kalen
Asher Dubowsky
Asher Fanebust
Jaden Bernal
Shany Elmaleh
Shayna Roberts

Allie Weeks
Eliran Gazala
Moriah Dubowsky
Rosie Polonsky
Hannah Bernstein

DID JEW KNOW?

For hundreds of years, during the times of the Holy Temple, the majority of Jews did not make or eat in a Sukkah during that holiday.

Because the men traveled to Jerusalem for the holiday, they were considered 'mitzvah agents' (shiluchi mitzvah) and were exempt from Sukkah.

I did not know this till yesterday!
Even Rabbis learn new stuff!

camp nageela west BIG BEAR 2020

Girls session: June 23-July 13

Boys Session: July 15- Aug 4

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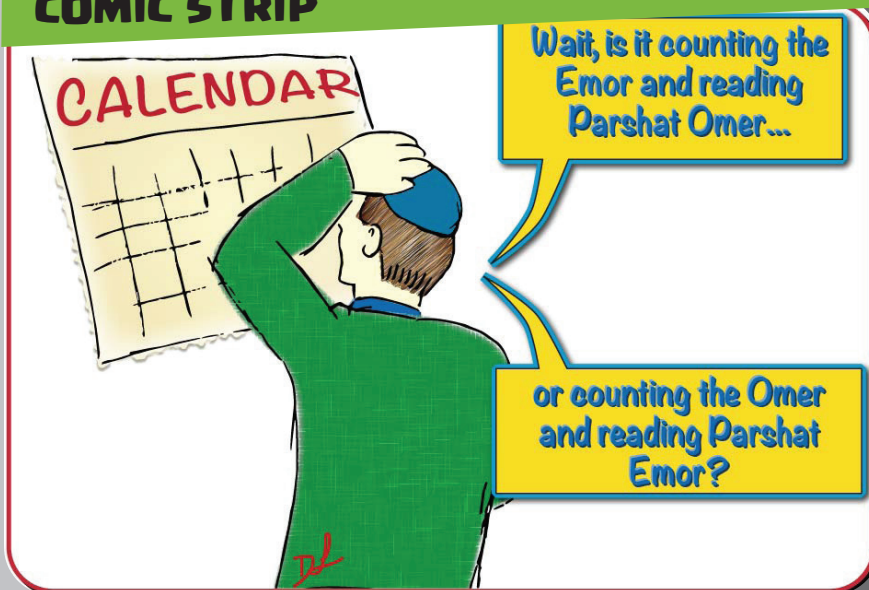
DAYS TO CAMP
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GIRLS SESSION

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DAYS TO CAMP
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BOYS SESSION

Find out about our Grand Tour 2020 and see photos from GT2019 at
nageelawest.org

PICKLE JEWS GALACTICALLY SYNDICATED COMIC STRIP



My math teacher called
me average.

That was mean of her.

OUCH! GROAN!
got a better joke?
Email it to dlocker@nageelawest.org



Nageela West breaks the mold of old school Jewish outreach by providing out-of-the-box social and educational programs for Jewish children across the west coast. Through afterschool activities, weekend retreats and our signature summer camp, we engage elementary and middle school children in a fun and meaningful experience.

Our "questions encouraged" mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.

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